



Results-Driven
Web Solutions

Laying the Groundwork for a Successful Website Redesign

Best Practice Guidelines & Questions to Ask



Best Practice Guidelines & Questions to Ask

Whether your association is large or small, professional or trade, these best practice guidelines will help your organization lay the groundwork for a successful website redesign.

The goal in sharing these best practices is to take the intimidation out of planning for a website redesign and provide a **roadmap and goals-based foundation for success**.

These tips will save you countless hours and dollars as you redesign your website to provide more value, grow revenue, and better connect members including:

- Getting the team ready for a successful redesign
- Reimagining the user experience
- Choosing the right tech & partner
- Organizing content to create impact
- Creating a roadmap to guide continued success

Throughout this guide, you'll see examples of **organizations that have worked closely with Results Direct** to create digital strategies to drive their website efforts and future success.



RESULTS DIRECT CAN HELP

Results Direct is here to help you on your website redesign journey, from **Digital Strategy** to **Website Redesign, CMS** and **AMS/Systems Integration**.

We'd love to discuss your upcoming website project:



Laura Graham
Sr Solutions Consultant
lgraham@resultsdirect.com
703-988-1007

Redesign Best Practice #1:

Engage Your Team with Forward-Looking Strategy



When undertaking a website redesign, it's tempting to focus on a pretty face. A redesign is about making the website look better, isn't it? Well, that's only part of the story...

A redesign is a valuable opportunity to improve form and function, engagement, and conversions. If we only focus on putting a prettier face on our website, we've missed the opportunity to be better at serving the needs of our members, customers, and staff.

This is a chance to reimagine “what currently is” and envision “what could be” by gathering input from internal teams and external stakeholders (members and customers) - through surveys, small focus group calls, and 1:1 conversations.

1. **Gather a cross-functional team** and talk about how your website can support your organizational mission and goals

What challenges can the website solve? What unique value can the website contribute? Ask these questions and summarize what you discover into key findings.

2. **Identify success measures** to know that you did things right

Increases in website visits, customer retention, event registrations, sponsorship investments, and social sharing can all be ways to measure success.

3. **Brainstorm potential strategies** to meet your goals

Don't bound yourself to just what's practical right now. It's too easy to limit innovation with “we can't do that” or “it's too expensive” or “we've always done it this way.”

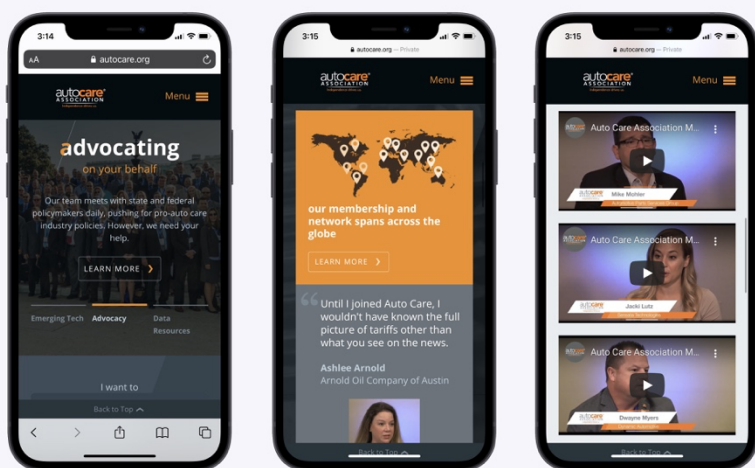
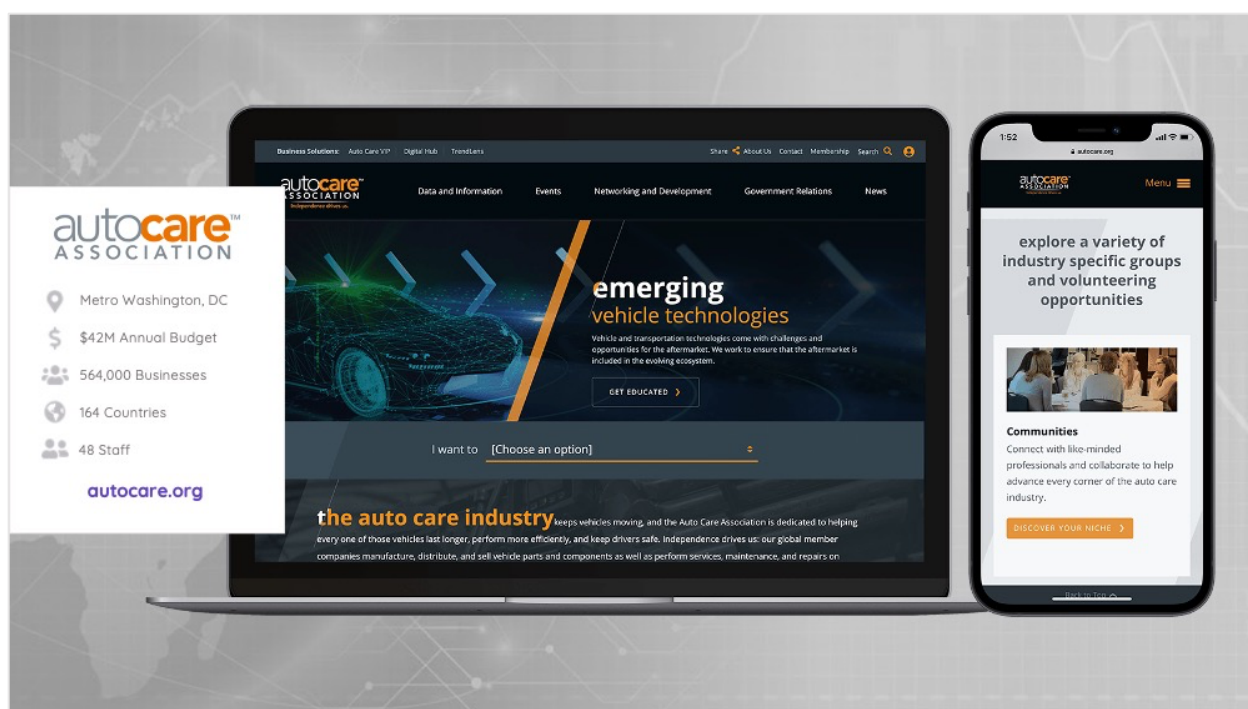
Prioritize strategies based on impact and what is achievable, creating short- and long-term plans:

1. **Quick wins** – What can we do right now to improve the membership experience?
2. **Short-term tactics** – Where will we generate the most positive impact with this website redesign project?
3. **Long-term strategy** – Where do we aspire to be 36 months from now?

Results Direct | Laying the Groundwork for a Successful Website Redesign

Your new digital strategy provides an aspirational vision of the future that aligns with your mission and goals. By circulating your strategy among your organization's leaders, you gain buy-in for the future vision while breaking down silos.

Don't put your strategy up on a shelf! It should be a living, breathing narrative that's revisited at least quarterly and provides priorities and a roadmap to keep your teams (and partners) on track.



The Auto Care Association worked with Results Direct to create an innovative Website Strategy Brief to guide future website development. DIY member updates have tripled the number of logins.

Redesign Best Practice #2: Put Your Members & Customers First



Without a doubt, the **website home page and navigation are the most politically-charged** aspects of any website redesign project, with different departments often jockeying for prime real estate.

But your website isn't about you. **Your website is about the unique value that you deliver to your members and customers.** If you don't put them first, your redesign project will fail.

The good news is that, if you've gathered input from your members/customers, you have a better understanding of their needs and expectations. By focusing on those needs, you can successfully communicate and provide value through your website.

Here's how to achieve success and avoid common mis-steps in the redesign process:

1. Avoid industry jargon and branded terms

Talk to your newest members. Do they understand what you're saying? Rather than using jargon on your website, employ common words and phrases. Clarity will improve navigation and conversion rates throughout your website and in search engine optimization (SEO).

2. Ignore the departments

Thinking back to your last redesign project, how did you decide on the navigational categories? The odds are that each department fought for its section of the website and lobbied for its place on the home page.

Instead of focusing on organizational structure, focus your website on essential tasks. What do your users come to your website to do?



The Auto Care Association created navigation and quick paths to its Top 8 User Tasks to facilitate quick-and-easy access for members to frequently-requested content & tools.

Results Direct | Laying the Groundwork for a Successful Website Redesign

3. Adhere to the 80/20 rule

Your website visitors may vary in age, demographics, and tech-savvy. However, the thing that all your website visitors have in common is zero patience. They expect to complete their task, find their needed information, and be on their way without reading an instruction manual. By focusing on website experiences that enable 80-90% of visitors to complete their tasks online – instead of designing for every exception – you ensure a high level of satisfaction. Your staff can handle the handful of exceptions.

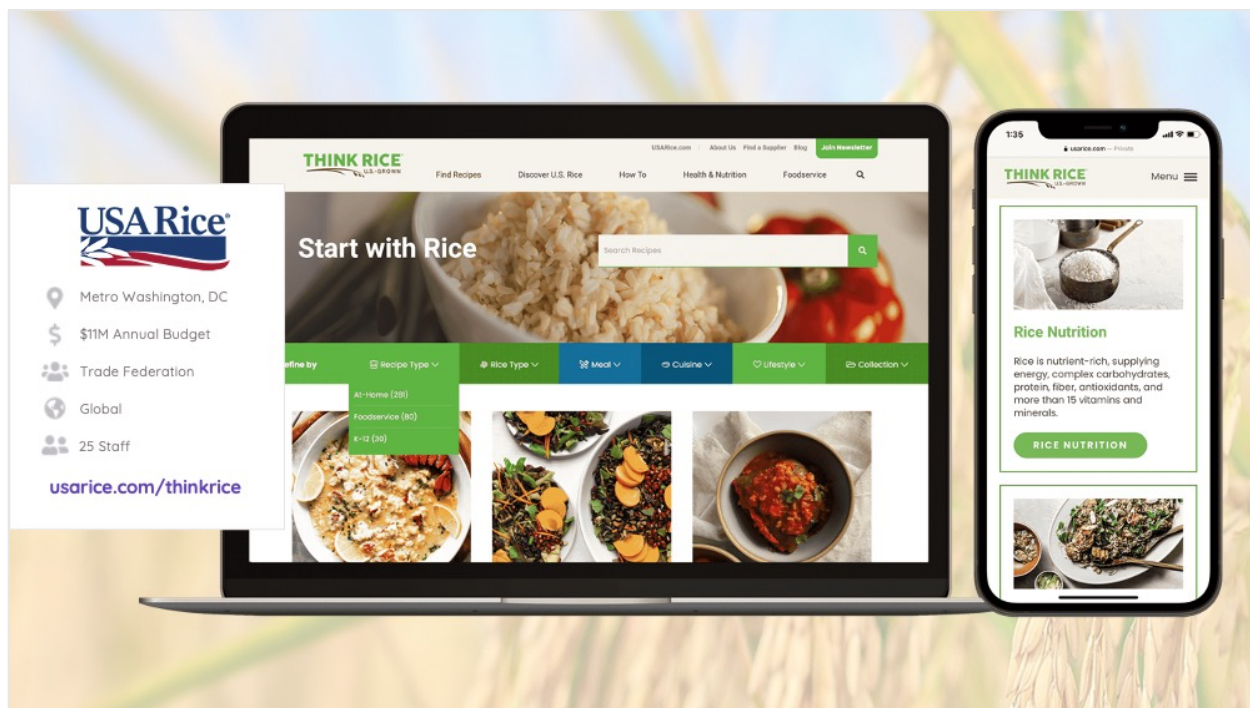
4. Break old habits

“We’ve always done it this way” is the enemy of simplicity. Do the reasons for certain processes still exist? Is the complex online form to gather membership information still necessary when you can leverage the data in your AMS instead? Where you can, eliminate custom business rules and customizations.

5. Put ease-of-use ahead of trendy bells and whistles

You’ll achieve a greater return on your investment by investing in the “timeless” when redesigning your website. While the shiny bells and whistles can be exciting, they rarely have a positive impact on your visitor’s ability to complete a needed task. In fact, oftentimes, they create a level of frustration that undermines your goal of providing a seamless website experience.

Your website redesign success begins by being a vocal member advocate and putting member needs and expectations ahead of the association’s. **Your members will thank you with increases in member satisfaction**, reductions in customer service requests, more successful web transactions, and more engagement dollars.



Redesign Best Practice #3: Reimagine the User Experience



“Our new website needs to do everything our current site does, with no steps back.” While this view may seem reasonable, it can create some significant stumbling blocks when planning a website redesign. After all, if your current website was perfect, you wouldn’t be redesigning it.

Rather than recreating what already is, look for ways to improve the experience. If you were starting from scratch, would you make the same choices that you did years ago? What lessons learned have you gathered? What previous obstacles have you eliminated?

It’s natural to be attached to what’s already in place, but it’s essential to **challenge assumptions so that you can deliver the simple and intuitive experiences that your users want.** Is there an easier way to deliver on member expectations?

Technology is rapidly-evolving, making automation more attainable for associations of every size to **leverage systems and reduce the number of steps in conducting online transactions** (registering for events, purchasing products, renewing memberships, and more). Automation should focus on the 80/20 rule to ensure simplicity. “I hate simpler experiences,” said no one, ever.



Redesign Best Practice #4:

Pick the Best Culture Fit



How should an organization go about **choosing the right technology (and partner) to ensure a successful website redesign**? In the case of choosing a web content management system (CMS), first envision the website experiences that you want to deliver and back into the technology that best aligns with those goals.

Looking at your strategy, **create a list of desired website experiences**, for example:

- We want to restrict content to members but show teasers to non-members to drive recruitment and improve SEO
- We want to deliver a dynamic calendar of events so members can filter by their geographic region
- We want to increase member satisfaction by improving single sign-on (SSO) and creating a seamless experience for members as they travel across our different websites/systems

Don't get caught up in tech features that don't align with your organization's goals. Instead, determine which experiences are critical for a successful website launch and which features are "nice-to-haves" that can be rolled out later. **Prioritization is valuable as you assess CMS platforms and budget for your redesign project.**

Then schedule tours of CMS systems that align with your goals. Which systems feel most comfortable to you and your staff? **The most successful CMS is the one your team is willing to use!**

A new CMS is a multi-year investment. It's essential to **consider current as well as future needs** and select a platform that can scale. Does the license model let you add new features later, or do you need to buy upfront? **Look for a tiered licensing model** or "a la carte" upgrade options so that you don't over-invest in functionality that you're not yet ready to use.

Just as important as choosing the right CMS is **selecting an invested partner who will champion your ongoing success** with the platform. Do they provide software support and upgrades? Can your staff get advice and training when they need it? Is there ongoing consultation to help you get the most out of your CMS investment?

Redesign Best Practice #5: Commit to Ongoing Investments



Planning for a website redesign is a time-consuming process but, when done correctly, ensures superior experiences for your members and **lays the groundwork for future growth**. A strategy-focused redesign creates a solid framework to support iterative and cost-effective enhancements over time.

With a clear and shared vision, your stakeholders stay focused on goals and priorities. **A good strategy also empowers your website team to say “no”** to the shiny distractions that interfere with those priorities and direct attention and dollars away from your goals.

As part of your website strategy, you should **create a business case for ongoing investment and improvement**. This empowers you to try and test new approaches on your website without having to redesign every few years. Regular reviews of your analytics can provide valuable data points to inform decisions and drive new efforts – and results.

