Wespace had a challenge many companies recognise – bringing a website up to speed and future-proofing it for an environment of constant change.

1. The strategy was simple. To bring the best people to the party to create one team with one goal.

To accomplish this task, one tight team (OTT) was created from five specialist companies: Wespace, digital, SilverStripe content management system, Infinity – web design, Cactuslab web-app developers, Infinity IA/designers, and Indiego’s team of strategists/digital writers.

2. Paying more than lip service to the user experience.

There’s an expression that usability experts know well: “Any dare fool can make something complex; it takes a genius to make something simple.”

For Wespace, usability meant making the site easy for customers to navigate, research and compare products, then take action.

3. Sell it like the teller. And tell it with attitude.

Open the home page and the new brand hits you with emotive brand imagery. From a copy perspective, there’s a fresh, jargon-free tone. But the website is also a lean, mean conversion machine.

“Good sales people help customers find what they want,” says Wespace Senior Digital Manager, Cameron Jardine. “Some users want information. Others want to compare products and buy. So we structured information and built tools enabling both customer types to get answers and take action.”

The elephant in the room was the content. Outdated but compliant copy was a huge task to change. But Indiego’s team of writers took the beast down – all 800 pages. Wespace’s product managers tamed it, their legal experts revisited it, and the writers transformed it!

Page by page all bank products were broken down to their core difference and re-written from the customer perspective. Whenever the writers got stuck they considered the best source of practical help – what would a bank teller tell you? That became the project mantra: Tell it like the teller.

4. With innovation as a core belief, we had a licence to thrill.

To be a leader you also need to innovate. “The ‘rest as a mortgage’ calculator is a star of the site,” says Cameron. “People don’t buy a mortgage – they buy a house. So Cactuslab created a calculator to help customers realise the possibility of owning their own home could happen sooner than they thought.”

The current rent is entered into the calculator and it figures out how much the customer might be able to afford as a mortgage. Then – here’s the clever bit – the calculator detects their location based on IP or GPS and brings up three houses for sale on Trade Me today in the same price range and in their neighbourhood.

5. Three letters we need to talk about: CMS.

“People don’t buy a mortgage. So Cactuslab created a rent as a mortgage calculator is a star of the site,” says Cameron. “People don’t buy a mortgage – they buy a house. So Cactuslab created a calculator to help customers realise the possibility of owning their own home could happen sooner than they thought.”

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6. It isn’t finished until it’s finished.

Turning a good job into a great one comes down to adding the last 6% – or over 4,000 Wespace staffers to be more precise.

In a bold move, the entire company was given three months to proofread and provide feedback on the user experience: “We had hundreds of responses and tweaks and came out stronger for it. It lived as a tight team project but the final touches were added by consulting with the wider Wespace team,” concludes Cameron. On April 2nd (seriously, that was actually the date) the site was launched to customers. On April 3rd, the same team started evolving the site with a new section for Westpac Institutional Bank. But that’s another story.

The clock started ticking…

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