PARADOWSKI

EST. 1977

DESIGN FOR ALL BRANDKIND

A PROPOSAL TO REDESIGN THE

Donald Danforth Plant Science Center Website

September 14, 2018

DONALD DANFORTH
PLANT SCIENCE CENTER

DISCOVERY | COMMUNITY | IMPACT

A PROPOSAL TO REDESIGN THE

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For those who like
to know their future, a

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Hooray, Science!

We love this stuff. Plant science. Biotechnology. Traditional breeding and precision gene editing. The relationships between plants and the environment at large, or between the tiniest of microbes. Modern agriculture. Digital tools and data analytics. All in the pursuit of protecting Earth's natural resources while feeding a growing world population.

There might not be any greater challenge facing humanity and for over two decades, we've helped clients large and small who are working toward solutions. Why? Because we love plant science.

In fact, we're pretty wild about all kinds of science.

Finding answers nobody else has, to questions no one has thought to ask. The rigorous adherence to a principled, time-tested methodology. The wholehearted trust in data, reason and logic. The unmistakable structure we recognize in the world around us, and yet, the realization that we still don't know the bounds of what's possible, if there are any.

We love reading about science, thinking about science and arguing about science at lunch tables and cocktail parties. We'd love to do science, but we don't think anyone would trust the really big, expensive, fun tools to someone who says "do science."

Be that as it may, deductive reasoning is still one of our favorite hobbies. Even as creatives, we have a very special place in our hearts for objectivity and rationality. We are **science** people.

Before we go any further, however, there's something else you should know about us.

We believe humans (even scientists) make decisions…emotionally *(gasp).*

We know. ***We know.*** And in a cruel twist, this has actually been proven scientifically. The Internet Site Redesign RFP asks for perspectives on responsive design, search engine optimization and accessibility, all of which we'll address in the sections that follow. But our most important recommendation is this:

A RECOMMENDATION

Design an experience
that connects emotionally.

The response that follows will offer our perspectives on storytelling and design and human emotion and the science behind choice. These aren't necessarily critical to a successful web migration. But they're essential to tackling your most intriguing challenge: raising brand awareness and inspiring visitors to becomes supporters and donors.

We love this stuff. We want to help you inspire others to love it too.

Storytelling and the Human Condition

That darned amygdala. As one of the most primitive areas in our human brains, we could be forgiven for assuming that humankind has moved past its base instincts and raw emotions. As it turns out, our emotions are critical to higher-order decision making.

"Without emotion, we are biologically incapable of making decisions. Logic is often the last step in the process. The conscious intellectual brain steps in to produce a rational backstory to justify impulses generated in the murky corners of the unconscious mind."

JANET CRAWFORD

Janet Crawford sits at the intersection of neuroscience and business, and she's not alone in her perspective. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio confirmed as much while studying subjects with damage to the portion of their brain responsible for emotion. They were able to logically describe what they should do, but were incapable of making even the simplest decision.

Chicken or turkey?

Subjects with a compromised emotional center in their brain couldn't even decide what to eat for lunch.

The decisions we're asking of visitors to the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center website are more meaningful and more lasting.

- Will they decide to read about the possibilities our investigators are pursuing?

- Will visitors choose to share what they learn?

- Will they attend an event?

- Will they make a commitment to donate their time or money?

- Will they pursue a career among the ranks of the center's innovative scientists?

These are emotional decisions. We need to connect with our audiences via stories that make emotional connections.

Humans love a good story

We're biologically predisposed to stories. In early history, they're how we passed down traditions, taught lessons, communicated danger. To this day, stories are a powerful way to learn and share those learnings with others.

Stories can inspire giving as well.

"Donors invest money and effort in charitable organizations when they feel a strong emotional and psychological connection to them."

GALLUP, 2016

A compelling narrative can create that connection while giving supporters something else of value, a memorable way to tell others about the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center.

There are SO many stories to tell

Let's tell the stories waiting to be told at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center. Let's move beyond what science is possible and inspire visitors with stories of what's possible because of the science.

The Bellwether Foundation Phenotyping Facility is a perfect example. It's more than an automated, high-throughput platform allowing repeated non-destructive image capture and multi-parametric analysis of up to 1,140 small- to medium-sized plants at multiple time points.

That's admittedly a mouthful. Admittedly very cool sounding. And yet, the tool is **still more than that.**

The phenotyping facility is helping plant scientists grow tomatoes.
IN THE DESERT.

That's…amazing. And it's true. But that's not all that makes it a good story. It's compelling because it does what all good content does. It approaches the story through the lens of what's important, inspiring and motivational to the audience, more so than the teller.

A RECOMMENDATION

Tell stories at the intersection of the brand's passion and audience interest.

The
Author's
Interest

The
Story

The
Audience's
Interest

It's how we create and how we consume.

This audience-centric approach is how we've created digital content for existing clients. It's what draws us to some of the best content we've consumed from other brands. And it's one of the unifying traits among the reference sites included in the RFP.

THE BEECONOMY

(a story told by Paradowski)

Pollinators contribute tremendous value to the global economy, but how do we make their role more tangible to our business-minded ModernAg.org audience? Let's ask, "What if pollinators were a publicly held company?"

THE PANTANAL

(a story told by the World Wildlife Fund)

More than 4700+ different plants and animals call the world's largest tropical wetland home, but only two percent of the area has federal protections. How does the WWF emotionally connect with their audience to support conservation efforts? They're featuring five amazing animals that are threatened by human impact and/or habitat loss.

Stories told, beautifully

You'll notice something else in today's best-in-class examples of digital experiences and content creation. They're beautiful.

That's not just because of the emotional impact aesthetics have on a user, which would be more than enough justification. A website is the single most accessible articulation of a brand, its greatest ambassador. And first impressions—aesthetic, design impressions—are critical, because we know…

Visitors make brand judgements WITHIN SECONDS.

Visual storytelling is also important because we are visual learners. We process images 60,000 times faster than text, and 90% of what's transmitted to the human brain is visual.

A RECOMMENDATION

## Create a highly visual experience.

What could this visual, emotional, science-based storytelling approach look and feel like for the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center?

In truth, the science of web design is like all other disciplines. We need to follow the right processes to make sure we get to the right strategic framework. We look forward to the opportunity to do that work with you. In the meantime, we can't help but imagine how that story about the phenotyping machine might be different in the future.

Currently, the data is all there.

Now let's tell a story that captures what's possible.
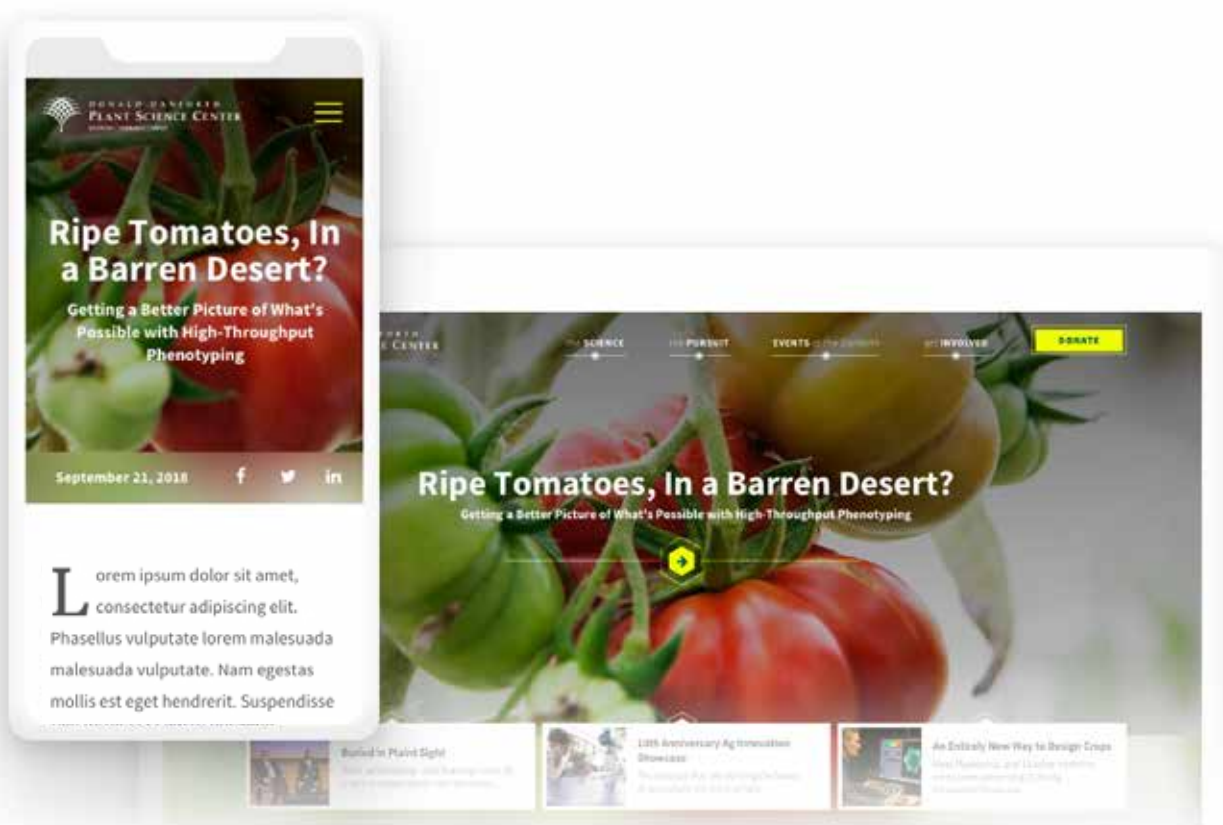
You asked about photography assets.

The short answer is we recommend a combination of original photography and stock resources. Custom assets give us the most creative and compositional control, and will be vital for images unique to the center (our people, spaces, key brand-defining visuals, etc.). A highly visual experience, however, isn't exactly sustainable with custom assets alone. We're all for sustainability, and can establish a style guide for selecting stock assets as well as creating original art that isn't photographic.

The Science of UX

What does date night have to do with best-in-class UX? We thought you'd never ask.

Let's go out to dinner. We have two different options: a quaint bistro from one of the city's highly regarded restaurateurs and a Tex-Mex joint where you can order Combo #59. Putting food quality aside for a moment, which menu offers a better user experience?

(caveat: let's assume both restaurants make an equally impressive margarita and that, for once, is not a factor)

Decisions, decisions…

We're tempted to give users (or diners) all the options. Every possible way in which we can prepare beans, cheese, protein and rice, in the case of our Tex-Mex example. Choice is good, right?

HERE'S THE PROBLEM:

Too many choices creates fatigue and perhaps even a negative experience.

NN/g, the self-proclaimed (and oft-credited) "World Leaders in Research-Based User Experience," point out another peril of too many options in this article. Once a decision has finally, exhaustively, been made we're left with "a nagging feeling that [we] missed something important."

Simplicity always wins

The better dining experience is the bistro where the chef interprets local tastes, seasonal timing and delivers a simple, easy-to-navigate menu that anticipates the flavors for which her guests are looking.

This is true, by the way, universally. The types of relevant content vary by audience. The precise image of beauty varies depending on who you're targeting. But according to a joint study by Harvard, the University of Maryland and the University of Colorado one thing is true for all of us.

The more visually complex a website is, the lower its visual appeal.

Many audiences, one site

Scientists, donors, educators, job seekers, event goers, granting agencies and casual science-minded browsers. How can we create a simple, intuitive user experience when we have so many audiences?

To **fully** answer that question, we need to do the research, with you, into your audience behaviors and analytics. We can't guess.

We aren't your user. You aren't either.

When evaluating a site's user experience design, empirical data is always better than guessing — even if that data is small. Some form of user research is required to 'get into the minds' of users, to understand their behaviors and motivations, what they are trying to achieve, and the wider context of their actions. This can involve research techniques ranging from user interviews and surveys, to insights from help-desk staff and web analytics. To avoid bias, you need to learn about your users, involve them in the design process, and interact with them.

To **partially** answer the question, there are two broad ways.

1 Design for intent

Instead of structuring navigation and site architecture around who the audience is, design it based on the intent of what they're hoping to experience. As an example, this might manifest in two primary paths:

An experience designed for those who are intrigued by WHAT SCIENCE IS POSSIBLE.

Another for those who are inspired by WHAT'S POSSIBLE *because of* THE SCIENCE.

2 Personalization

The idea of a "single" landing page or homepage is obsolete. With a modular, templated design approach, backed by a robust content strategy, we can better anticipate needs and deliver users to the information they need when they need it.

- If a visitor searches terms related to bioinformatics, we prioritize related stories

- If a user arrives from a Fall Symposium email, they'll readily find event details, and also content topically related to the symposium's subject matter

- Once on the site, visitors interested in a story about gene editing and its benefits for smallholder farmers will be given recommendations for similar, related, pieces

We'll test, learn and optimize along the way. Like any science, web design and user experience requires constant curiosity and ongoing analytics. But our fundamental UX design philosophy has always proven to be true:

A RECOMMENDATION

Design, simply. Give users what they need, when they need it, and not a moment sooner.

But…
I'm just
here for
the hors
d'oeuvres

A BONUS RECOMMENDATION

Don't forget about your transactional audiences, but know they behave differently and have different user expectations. If a visitor is looking for something specific (a job listing, employee directory, or how much it costs to rent the auditorium), then we know this to be true:

Insight

They're willing to do a little bit more work to find it. It should still be intuitive and easily accessible, but…

Implication

…we can prioritize site navigation and architecture so that more utilitarian, transactional tasks don't compete with our brand purpose and the impression with which we leave our primary audiences.

Moving People to Action

We know we're preaching to the choir when we say this, but it's important and worth saying: **websites don't exist in a vacuum.** Danforthcenter.org is just one of many ways your audiences will interact with your brand online or "in the real world" as you work to raise brand awareness.

Understanding the role of your website within the larger digital landscape (and development efforts) is a crucial step in the discovery and planning process that will provide a strategic framework to inform decision making across design, development and content strategy. It also provides a framework for measuring success.

| A visitor from an @DanforthCenter tweet | → | Spends 60 seconds reading an article | → | Shares the article with colleagues |

| A job seeker from organic search | → | Successfullly navigates off site to a paycom portal in 35 seconds |

| Guest clicks through email after a Seeds of Change event | → | Spends 5 minutes researching Young Friends Giving Society | → | Donates at the Advocate tier |
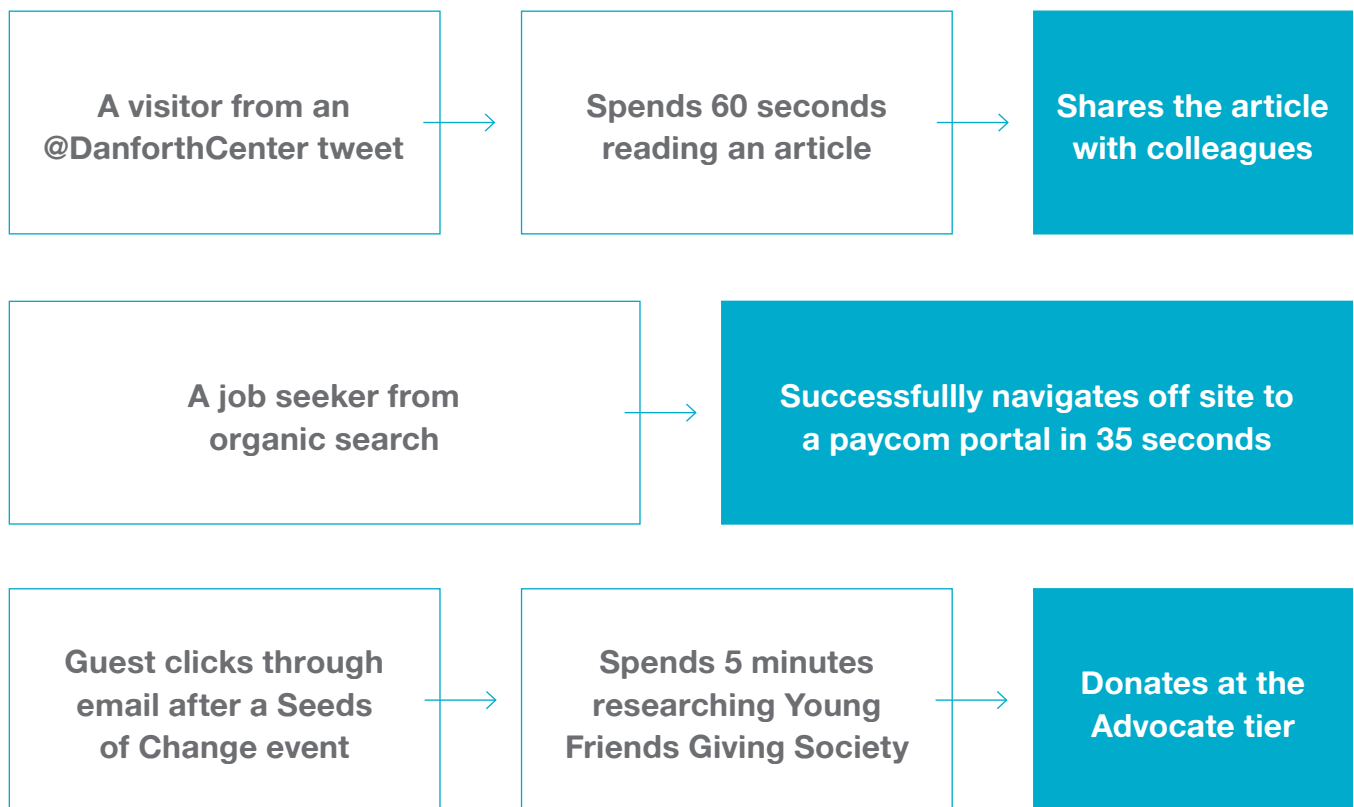
Beyond the emotional, brand building benefits of storytelling, there's another advantage to an audience-centric content approach...

Stories don't exist in a vacuum either

The narratives we're creating for site visitors can help fuel, and optimize, other parts of the center's communications mix.

That story about the tomatoes and the phenotyping facility? Assets and copy from that content piece can inform and extend to:

Organic Social Posts

Paid Social — Targeting key donor/development demographics

Digital Display and/or Retargeting Ads — Reaching users who visited donation pages without converting

SEO — Expanding our universe of relevant audience intersections

Email Content

Event Collateral

Print Publications

Time for a quick stretch and a recap

Driving brand awareness and converting visitors to donors is a challenge we can't wait to help you tackle. Here's how we'd do the tackling:

• Design an experience that connects emotionally

• Tell stories at the intersection of the brand's passion and audience interest

• Create a highly visual experience

• Design simply, giving users what they need, when they need it, and not a moment sooner

Technically Speaking

At Paradowski we know beautiful design and
a truly moving brand experience are equal parts
big picture and meticulous attention to every
executional detail. So, let's talk details.

Responsive Design

Responsive design is responsible design. We approach all web projects with this in mind. While print media has physical constraints, the Web doesn't and therefore can be more flexible. The user must have a superior brand experience. That means creating a site that responds to every device on which it's displayed, with special attention given to a dominant (and growing) mobile audience.

Content Optimization (including SEO)

Our SEO efforts will be swimming upstream. The Danforth name has left its mark on a variety of search results as much as it has institutions of learning & research all over the St. Louis area. Then there's that other regional science center to contend with. The bulk of the 649 search terms where danforthcenter.org may appear in the first 50 results are largely devoted to:

- Names of your leadership and principal investigators
- Misspellings of your corporate partners
- And yes, "science center st. louis."

Let's refine what we really need from an SEO strategy: a content plan to ensure every piece of content can work as hard as it can for you and for your audience.

As part of the content migration process, we'll incorporate the data we've gathered along with keyword research and site structure into a content plan, highlighting among other items:

- New URL structure
- Content source (legacy, new)
- Content author
- Target keywords
- Relevant metadata needs

Accessibility

Plant science for all. Paradowski enacts several accessibility guidelines to ensure all users have the best site experience possible regardless of limitations or disabilities. These include:

- Designing every page to be easy to read and consume
- Using color contrast between text and backgrounds
- Establishing a logical focus/order for content without relying on color as the only visual cue
- Supporting easy keyboard navigation with page flow, focus indicators, and providing landmarks

Measurement

Measurable behavior and actionable insights. A key piece of the site redesign is laying the groundwork for capturing user behavior in meaningful ways. Our strategic approach cuts through the noise of data collection and allows you to focus on identifying trends that lead to better conversion rates. We have used this approach to support large-scale site redesigns for corporate websites, as well as small, transaction-focused sites. This approach can be adjusted to scale with the scope, existing audience research, and the availability of legacy data from your social media channels and websites.

Progress Sitefinity 11

Designing for Sitefinity. We've worked with a number of Content Management Systems. We've even built a few ourselves, because there's a right tool for every job. That's probably how you feel about Sitefinity. You're confident it's the best tool to get you the most security, is the easiest to use, and you can efficiently develop for it.

Our designers will collaborate with our 12 expert in-house developers to ensure our solutions utilize Sitefinity's capabilities and maximize dynamic editing through an understanding of the CMS and its architecture.

We will develop for Sitefinity too, if needed. Our developers are highly adept and capable to work with ASP.NET MVC and Sitefinity.

Design Language

A note about style and the visual language. As the most accessible, and often the most robust representation of your brand, a website should also be a shining example of the brand standards. Throughout the design process, however, we will make recommendations for web-specific fonts, composition, illustration or animation styles, video guidelines and color selections. As part of the deliverable, a working danforthcenter.org style guide will provide parameters against which other content owners and contributors can execute.

Content Creation

Content development for the rest of us. This proposal includes scope to create ten introductory content pieces for the launch of the new site. It will also include tone, voice and story direction to be included in the style guide. Those guidelines will help non-specialists and outside parties create content consistent with the creative direction for danforthcenter.org.

That being said, the life of a web property is more critical to its success than its launch. If afforded the opportunity, Paradowski Creative would love to remain involved in ongoing site maintenance, optimization and content creation. Á la carte estimates to each end have been included in the Time and Budget section.

Time and Budgets

We're eager to get started. When we do, this is what the process might look like (pending any key milestones on your calendar).

PHASE 1: DISCOVERY 4 Weeks

We'll work with Danforth team members and meet with key stakeholders to gather qualitative research. Additionally, we'll perform an audit of your overall digital presence along with complementary sites. We'll leverage the qualitative research and quantitative findings—including website analytics, insights and best practices—to assess your current position and opportunities. We'll provide a detailed SOW and timeline for approval.

DELIVERABLES

- Discovery report (includes competitive landscape, keywords, UX/UI, current design and development)
- Detailed SOW and project timeline

PHASE 2: DEFINITION 3 Weeks

We'll define our recommended digital presence for danforthcenter.org and determine all the details such as how the site will work/interact. We'll refine the SOW if needs change based on strategic recommendations.

DELIVERABLES

- Site Personas and User Journey
- Initial Content Audit (completed in Phase 3)
- Initial SEO/Keyword Exploration

PHASE 3: DIAGRAM 4 Weeks

Creative prep starts in this phase. We'll outline your website through a sitemap and interactive wireframe (which will later inform the actual website design). Website content will be defined through keyword research and a content hierarchy document (which will later guide copy development).

DELIVERABLES

- Content Strategy
- Sitemap
- User Flows
- Wireframes
- Proposed CMS Modules Comps
- Finalized SEO Keyword Map
- Content Audit & Migration Recommendations

PHASE 4: DESIGN 8 Weeks

Creative design comes to life. We'll start with initial home page and a few site pages (based on the approved wireframes). Once you sign off on a creative approach, we'll design and write copy for all site pages. In addition, we'll create key content stories (articles) to bring to life our storytelling approach. We'll then provide a content and photography style guide for Danforth team members to utilize for future page needs.

DELIVERABLES

- 2 website creative approaches to choose from
- Design and copy for ten site pages
- Final copy document that includes keyword research
- Content/photography style guide
- Final design templates and site documentation

Let's invest in this together

This budget, and our own investment in the project, is a reflection of our appreciation for—and support of—the Danforth Plant Science Center. We warned you at the beginning. We love the work you do and the mission you're working toward. We want to be part of it.

PHASE 1: **DISCOVERY** ⟶ **$2,500**

PHASE 2: **DEFINITION** ⟶ **$2,000**

PHASE 3: **DIAGRAM** ⟶ **$12,000**

PHASE 4: **DESIGN** ⟶ **$25,000**

PC will provide all design files and a functional requirements document

MISC COSTS ⟶ **$4,000**

Stock photography, language translation services, font licensing, etc. Any out of pocket costs will be approved prior to Paradowski purchasing

TOTAL INVESTMENT ⟶ **$45,500***

PARADOWSKI INVESTMENT ⟶ **$15,000**

PROJECT TOTAL ⟶ **$30,500**

*This estimate is preliminary based on the information provided so far. It is subject to change once detailed project specifications are agreed upon. Our estimates are built at +/- 10%.

There, when you need it

Beyond the initial strategy and design scope, Paradowski is invested in making danforthcenter.org an ongoing success. Additional agency offerings are currently out of scope, but are available for consideration. We are willing to provide a 20% discount, as shown below in parentheses.

Development   / $35,000 ($28,000)

Back-end and front-end development and integration of API's or 3rd party features, analytics setup and quality assurance testing on a variety of browsers and devices.

Website Maintenance   /   TBD

A website maintenance SOW can be prepared based on needs following the site launch.

Analytics and Reporting   / $12,000 ($9,600)

Initial setup and configuration for goal conversion tracking within Google Analytics, including Google Tag Manager for custom event tracking. Also includes monthly reporting on visitor types, engagement and identified site conversions for one year.

Brand Voice Guidelines   / $2,500 ($2,000)

Provide guidance for future content updates, ensures that multiple authors of the site are contributing with a consistent tone and style of voice.

Ongoing Content Strategy and Development   /   TBD

Based on learnings from Phase 1, we can discuss your needs for developing a content strategy plan that works towards business goals in tandem with the new site.

Photoshoot   / $15,000 ($12,000)

Captures the Danforth space, people, key brand-defining visuals, etc. to provide custom assets to further support stock photography.

Annual Refresh   /   TBD

Based on brand needs, we can provide design and copy support to refresh content each year. We can further discuss and develop a custom plan.

Hi, We're Paradowski Creative

Paradowski is a full-service creative agency based in St. Louis, Missouri. If you dropped by the agency right now, you'd find roughly 70 writers, designers, strategists, producers and developers working on all kinds of amazing stuff.

We build brands, campaigns and digital experiences for some of the largest companies on the planet, as well as some of the smallest, not-for-profit organizations. Basically, we do work we believe in, for clients we believe in. We believe in design for all brandkind.

If you look at our business cards, you'll see titles like art director, writer, strategist, developer and account director. But our dirty little secret is that each one of us is really a designer.

We don't create "ads," "websites," "post cards" or "content." We design amazing experiences.

Want to know more?

Great. We built a website—we mean, an experience—where you can find out more about the agency, our work and all the people who really make this place unique.

Don't forget about the case studies

At paradowski.com, you'll inevitably find yourself reading about how many chicken wings Gus, our President, can eat during lunch. Or marveling at Brad's hairstyles in the 90s. It happens.

But don't miss the case studies. These efforts, in particular, are relevant examples of the kind of work we'd love to have to the opportunity to create for the Danforth.

Monsanto.com Corporate Website

In the past twenty years, Monsanto has brought numerous seed technology and innovation to modern agriculture. Clearly, a brand demonstrating such strong industry leadership deserves an online experience to match.

Visitors to Monsanto.com include farmers, shareholders, journalists, consumers and prospective employees. Within each of these groups are differing desires and intended uses for the site. Monsanto.com also needed to work across various browsers, devices, translate into dozens of languages and house various forms of content. With all this in mind, the design and navigation of the new Monsanto.com required considerable strategy and thought.

To consolidate content across several legacy websites, we audited 2,000+ pages of content. Based on performance metrics and qualitative guidelines, our digital strategists refined the site down to approximately 550 pages. Pages that met specific criteria were updated to reflect SEO best practices and a new URL structure and site design.

A new content deployment tool gave publishers the ability to privately share, create and edit posts. When content is ready for production, users simply publish within the CMS, which automatically migrates content to the live site.

ModernAg.Org Modern Agriculture Campaign

To help inform and motivate influential consumers, we created an integrated messaging initiative under the heading "Modern Agriculture." TV, print and digital advertising drove our audience to ModernAg.org for in-depth content about how human innovation is reducing the volume of natural resources humanity needs to feed itself.

On ModernAg.org, each piece is intended to cultivate a new fascination within the readers. The content is tasked with sharing how the industry is using technology, intelligence and digital tools not to conquer Mother Nature, but to conquer human impact.

A wide range of video, interactive 3D elements, long-form editorials and motion graphics are housed on the site, making for an immersive and engaging user experience.

Since inception, ModernAg.org has received over 2 million lifetime cumulative sessions with 83% being new visitors. Engaged sessions account for 42% of total lifetime sessions. And according to brand health research, favorability of conventional, non-organic agriculture increased from 25% to 47% after campaign exposure.
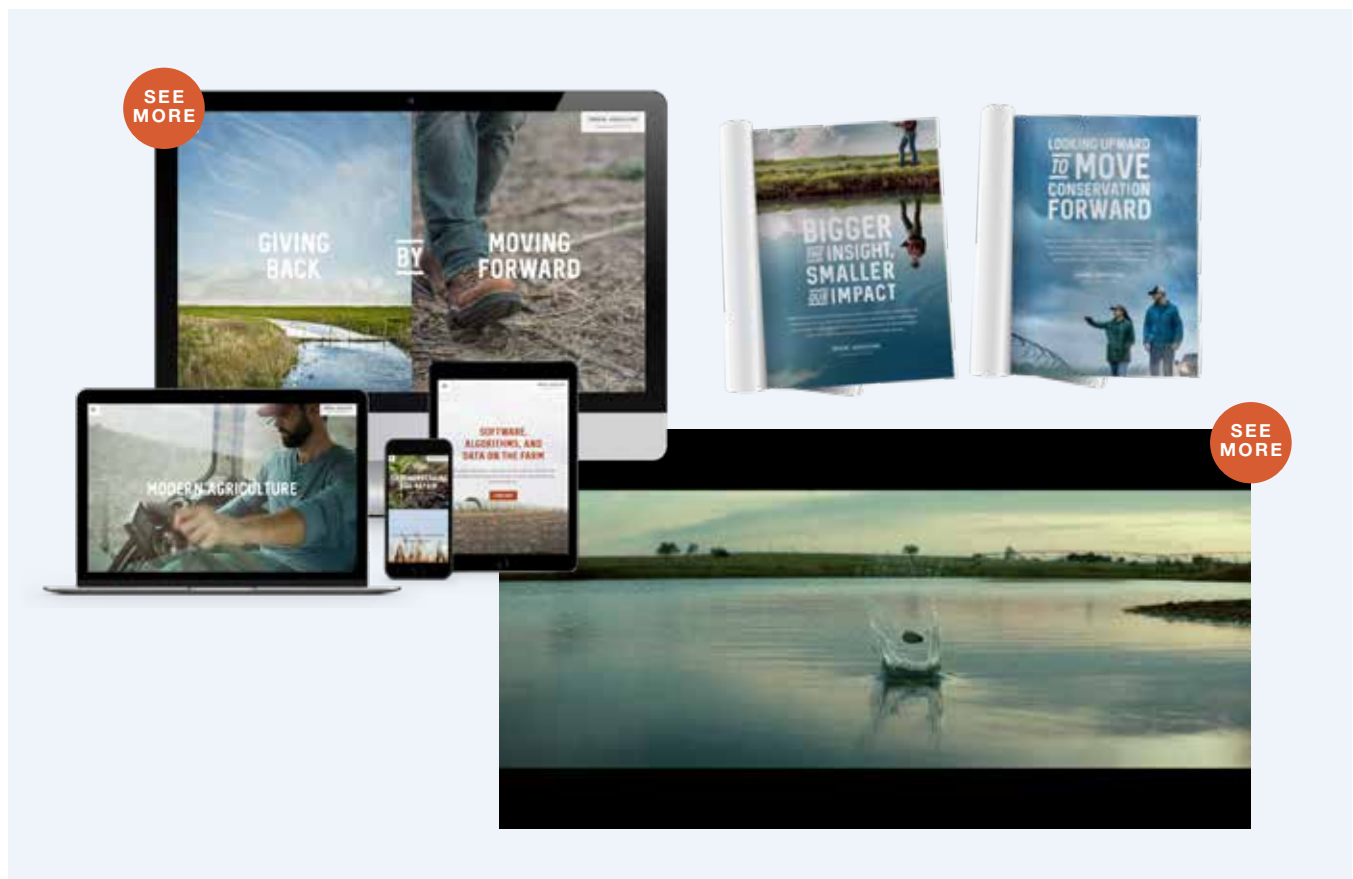
Laumeier Sculpture Park 40th Anniversary Website

One of the gems of the St. Louis arts and culture scene is a 105-acre wonderland called, "the Laumeier Sculpture Park." In 2015, Laumeier was awarded an Artworks grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. This grant gave Laumeier the opportunity to create an online archive of content where visitors can explore the history of the Park—from 1976 to now.

We worked with Laumeier to create history. laumeier.org. Organized by decade, the site highlights milestones of park history, stories, memories, as well as past and present artwork. Through this immersive and interactive experience, the site demonstrates Laumeier is a place committed to developing and promoting creativity at the intersection of art and nature. The site's most noteworthy element is so called, "data sculpture," which uses geolocation tags from Instagram to create a dynamic, ever-evolving work of art.

A recent recipient of a 2018 Webby award, history.laumeier.org was singled out as best in category (Art), and among the top 10% of all work entered across the 13,000 entries from all 50 U.S. states and 70+ countries.
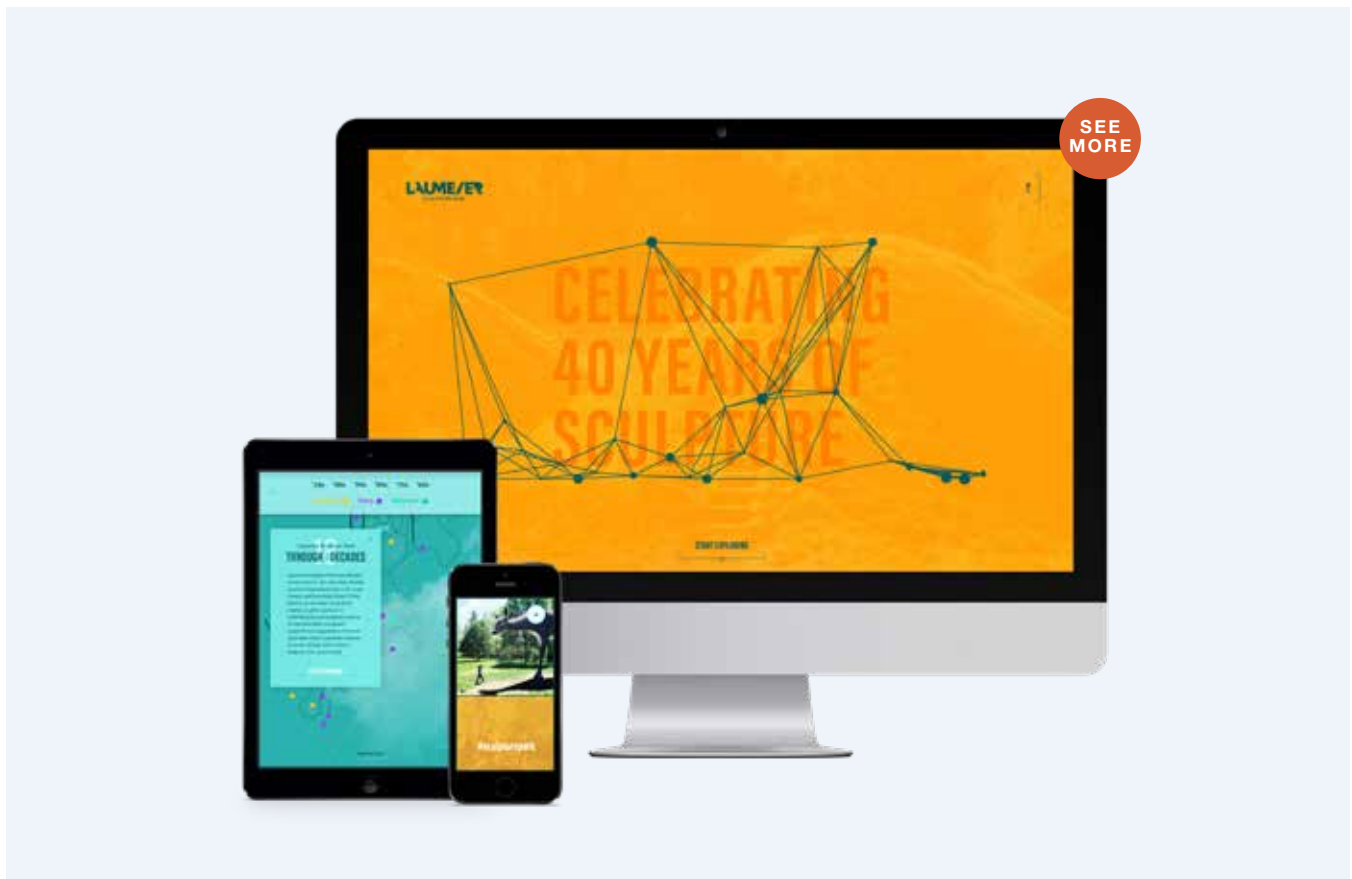
The Climate Corporation Brand Campaigns, Collateral and Website

Since becoming their agency partner, we've helped Climate Corp. build overall awareness of their FieldView platform and positioned the brand as a science-based industry leader.

We partnered with the brand on primary research and developed a two-year brand strategy roadmap. After helping them launch a new logo and initial branding efforts, Paradowski developed a unified voice and consistent creative aesthetic across all marketing materials — including, but not limited to: two fully integrated product campaigns (TV spots, radio, print, and digital ads), an extensive collection of testimonial and instructional videos, product brochures and

other collateral pieces, immersive trade show experiences, direct mailers and event invitations, presentation support, and social media and content strategy.

Through the development of new creative materials, a primary need for a website refresh was identified. Taking the end user into consideration, we set out to deliver a clean, straightforward user experience, showcasing the features of their FieldView platform and letting those features lead the user to a purchase path.
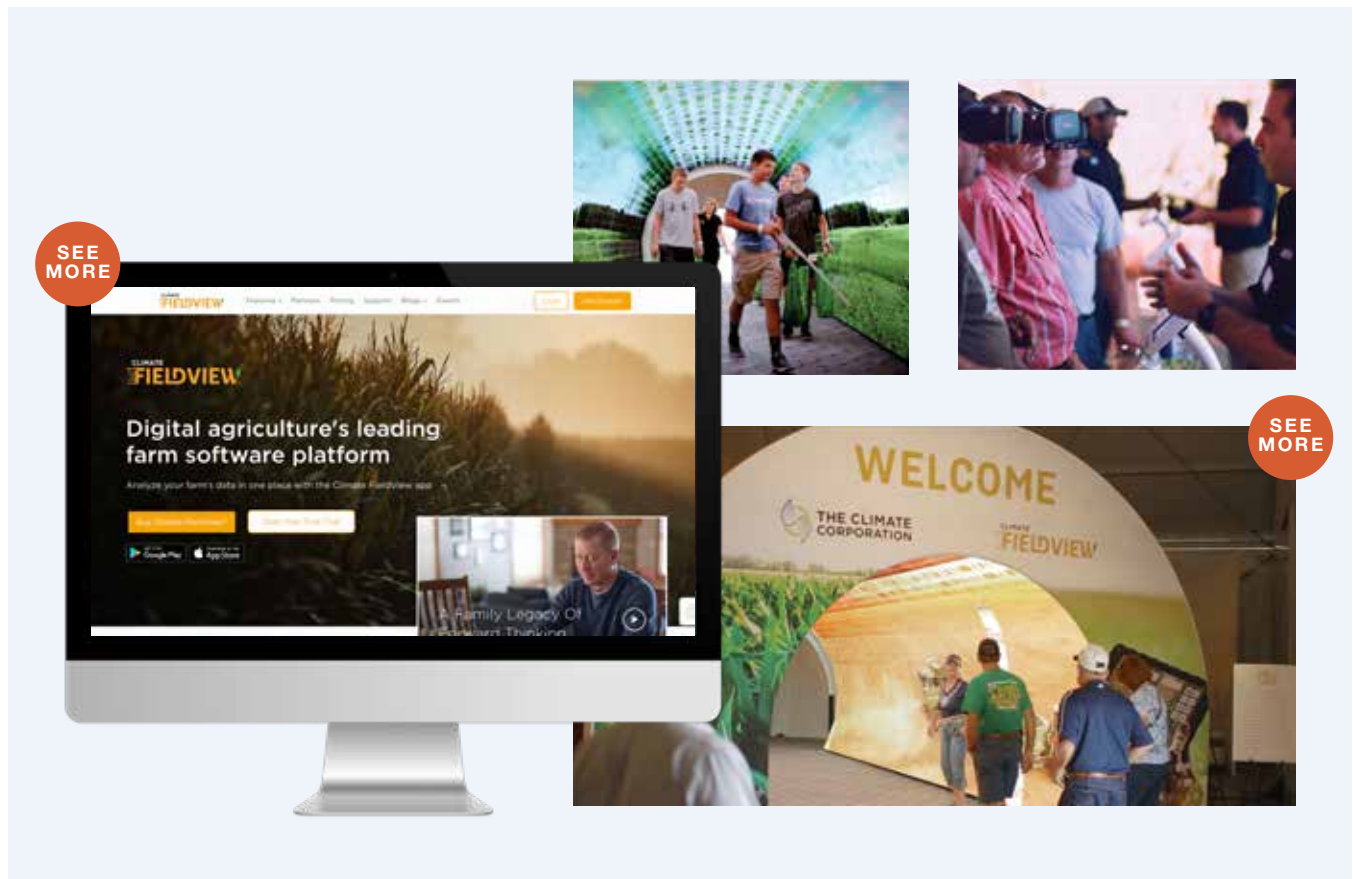
Thank You

This has been fun already. And we hope it's just the beginning. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss more about the future of danforthcenter.org. If you have any questions, we're just down the road. Stop by. Give us a call. Or we're always available… online.

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EST. 1977

PARADOWSKI

DESIGN FOR ALL BRANDKIND