

Is your website like a broth? 🍲

Hey 🙋

I don't know about you, but I love a good veggie broth.

I also love a good website.

NerdCow was born as a reaction to my frustration with the state of the web design industry. Below is the example from the top of my list that shows why our industry is in a bad state.

Too many cooks spoil the broth

If you haven't seen that coming, the saying is at the heart of our newsletter today. I want to tell you about the concept of something being "designed by a committee".

Having learned about our

collaborative process, occasionally, our prospects raise a concern that the outcome could fall into that trap. We had the question pop up just last month in conversation with [Charlotte](#), Marketing Director at [Doddle](#). She asked:



I am interested in the Design [Sprint] phase that you mentioned and how you avoid a ‘designed by committee’ solution?

Charlotte, Marketing Director @ Doddle

Our process of building websites starts with a [Design Sprint](#), a series of collaborative workshops. The name, coined by Google Ventures, draws attention to the “design” part. Originally it refers to “product design”. However, in our context, the words “design” and “collaboration” understandably trigger a question about designing by a committee.

Of course, Design Sprint is all about ideation and testing, not actually designing. But let me unwrap the concept for you anyway, and hopefully, I can illustrate how it impacts your clients and your business.

Design by a committee is not collaborative

Contrary to collaborative design, **“design by a committee” is effectively an agglomeration of individual ideas that were implemented without any validation.**

We encourage collaboration as a direct response to the issue of design by a committee. It's healthy to involve people from all walks of life in company-level projects, such as building a new website.

Everyone gets a platform to have their voice heard, but first, we ensure their vision is aligned. We decide on a long term goal, the

biggest challenges, and so on. In the end, every member of the Design Sprint team can point to something on a website and say “that was my idea”.

But it’s an idea that came from a level playing field with others in terms of context. It’s an idea that was consciously picked as a potential solution, validated and then implemented. That is much different from a hunch which often drives projects designed by committee.

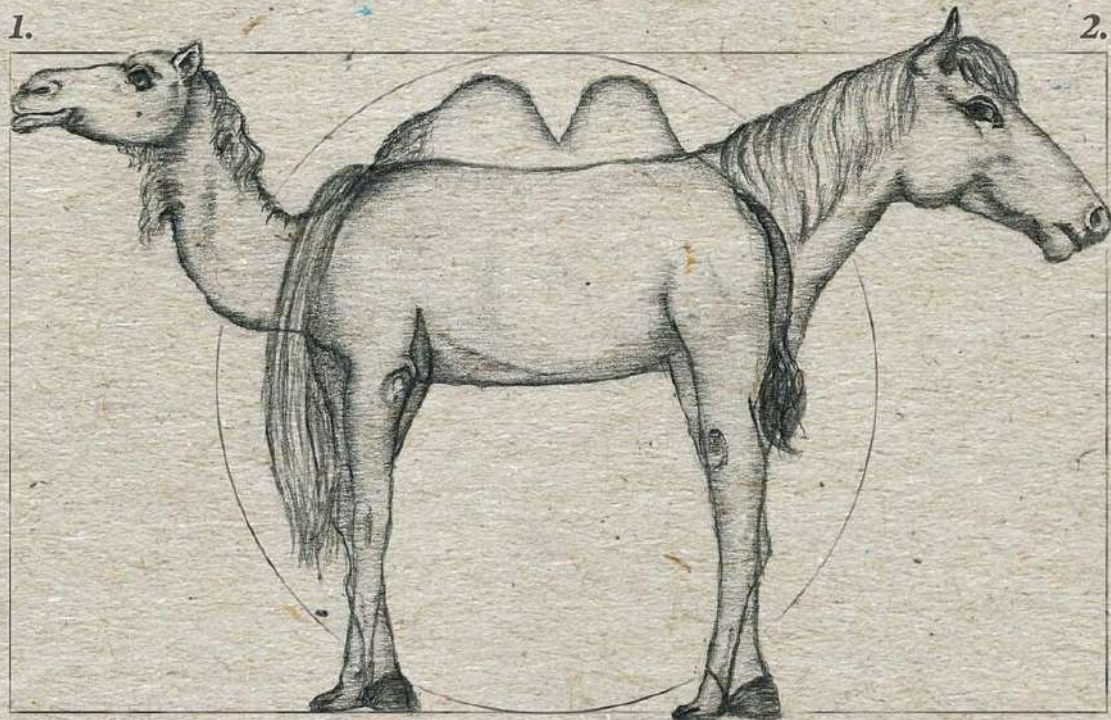
A camel is a horse designed by a committee

Apologies for another saying, but this one is a perfect metaphor for us. Camels are lovely creatures, but in the realm of websites, design by a committee ends up being camels instead of horses.

Except, the humps on their back are not a key feature. They are obstacles that your visitors deal

with every single day.

Except, the humps on their back are not a key feature. They are obstacles that your visitors deal



A Camel (1.) is a Horse (2.) designed by a Committee

Creating something on a hunch serves just one person, the author of the idea. That's not to say that all of them are horrible. Most of them are probably net-zero.

But this isn't to say that a website should be designed by a single

person in a truly autocratic manner. I've been in situations where I've proudly designed something, only for Dawid (our Product Manager) to barge in and say "hey, we can't have that as a slider on mobiles for this audience - it needs to be visible at all times."

He had a point. I did my best to make it work, and I know Dawid wouldn't have any issues using that feature, but he noticed it might be challenging for the visitors.

Say it with me - "I don't know my users as well as I think I do."

I don't know our users as well as I think I do.

This is not to just reiterate the above heading, I truly mean it.

We use HotJar to watch session recordings on our website, and we recommend the same for our clients. Sometimes I spend hours

looking at the recordings and after each session, I get a full A4 page of notes and improvements that blow my mind.

I've spent thousands of hours designing websites, developing them, testing prototypes with users, facilitating Design Sprints, and everything in between. I used to say: "I've got had an idea, let's do X". But I don't anymore.

Instead, I'll say: "what if we did X?" to my team. This helps us define and validate the idea instead of throwing resources at it and seeing what sticks.

Let's design horses, not camels.



Tomasz @ NerdCow

Don't forget our list of helpful resources on the next page!

Resources to help you escape the “design by a committee” mindset

- [How to put yourself in the shoes of your visitors](https://nerdcow.co.uk/blog/writing-user-stories/) - <https://nerdcow.co.uk/blog/writing-user-stories/>
- [A collection of user testing tips](https://nerdcow.co.uk/blog/tag/user-testing-tips/) - <https://nerdcow.co.uk/blog/tag/user-testing-tips/>
- [Articles about design & UX](https://nerdcow.co.uk/blog/category/design-ux/) - <https://nerdcow.co.uk/blog/category/design-ux/>



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I hope you enjoyed reading this article.

Feel free to give me feedback and share it with friends!

Tomasz Lisiecki

Helps with website design and workshop facilitation.

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