

## Andy Schultz

Design leader who treats design decisions as business constraints, not aesthetic choices.



## Design Beliefs

### **Decisions beat consensus.**

Progress requires clear calls and ownership.

### **Execution reveals truth.**

Tradeoffs only become real when strategy meets constraints.

### **The bar must be explicit.**

Teams fail from unclear standards, not lack of talent.

# Why Now

Past



Future

## What I've already proven

0-1 products that drive  
revenue and scale  
through systems

## What I chose to leave

A stable environment  
with predictable  
outcomes

## What that cost me

Certainty and  
guaranteed wins

## What I'm deliberately optimizing for

Executive accountability  
for business outcomes

# How my definition of impact changed

## Foundations

1.  
**Earning trust at the moment of action**

Products succeed when belief leads to action, not polish.

2.  
**Building systems that survive scale**

UX, research, and quality bars that hold under pressure.

3.  
**Making decisions inside real constraints**

Operating where judgment matters more than taste.

## Outcomes

**Design with accountability for outcomes**

Direct responsibility for business growth and measurable outcomes.

*730% CTR lift and 5.2% conversion increase on a core initiative.*

Three examples of making irreversible decisions under real business constraints.

## QuillBot UI Refresh

Reframing aesthetic debt as a growth constraint and aligning design, engineering, and leadership around outcomes.

## QuillBot Navigation

Pushing decisions through ambiguity on high-friction initiatives with low confidence and shifting priorities.

## Masonite.com Redesign

Challenging organizational assumptions and redesigning systems around real user decision-making.

## CASE STUDY

# QuillBot UI Refresh

Modernizing a revenue-critical surface with zero margin for error

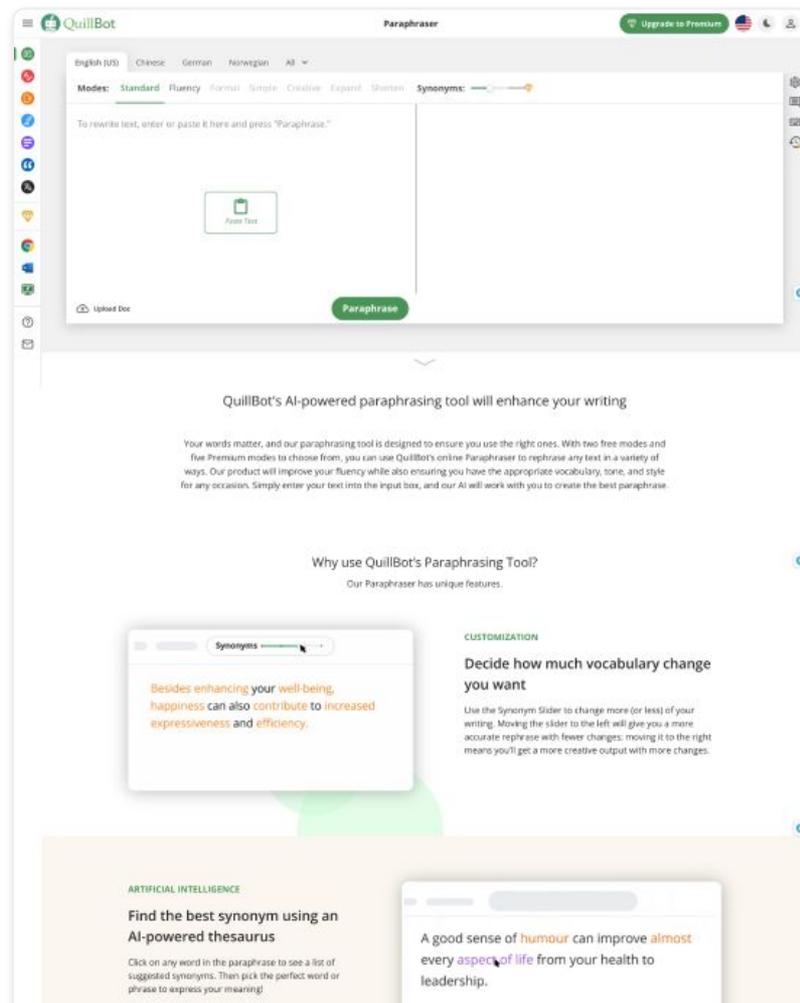
Aesthetic debt became a growth constraint that required structural decisions to protect business performance.

## Context

High-traffic, SEO-driven product with strong conversion and retention metrics.

## Risk

Any visual regression would directly impact revenue.



# QuillBot UI Refresh

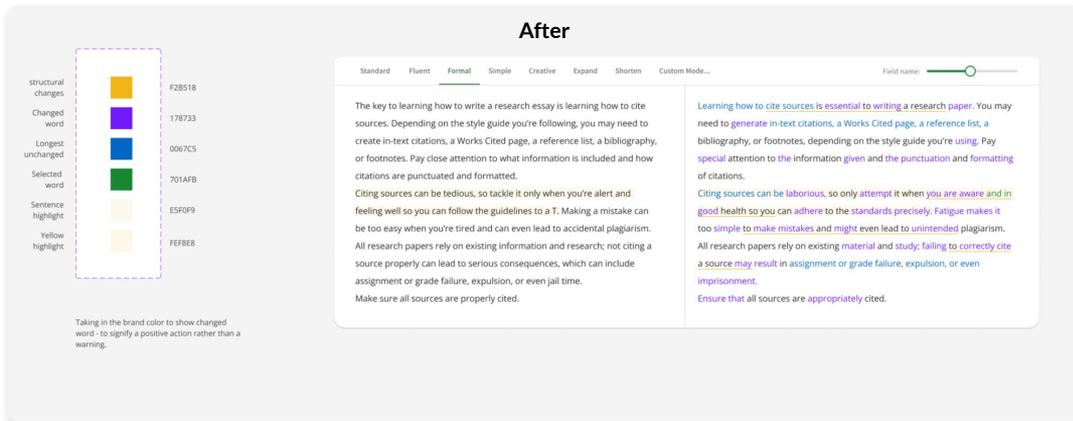
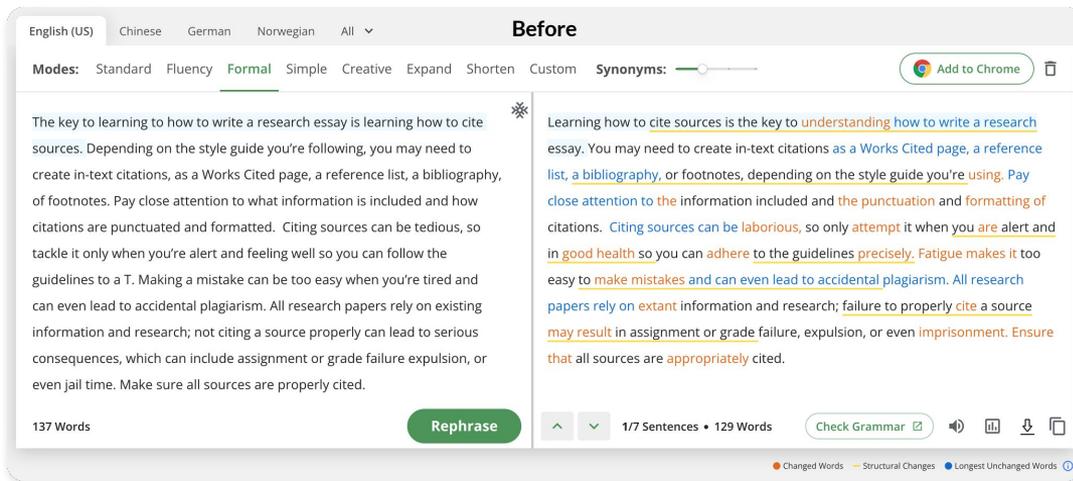
The decision under constraint

## The constraint that mattered

- UI perceived as outdated
- Zero tolerance for SEO or conversion regression

## The decision I made

- Isolated a small team from full roadmap pressure
- Anchored changes in the design system to ensure scalability
- Validated accessibility and first impressions before executive reviews



# QuillBot UI Refresh

## Tradeoff and outcomes

### The tradeoff I accepted

- Slower rollout in exchange for zero regression risk
- Narrowed scope to what could be systematized and maintained

### The outcome that changed

- Zero negative impact on SEO, conversion, or retention
- New system adopted before official launch
- Accessibility components standardized across teams

The image shows a screenshot of the QuillBot website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the QuillBot logo and a user profile icon. Below that, there's a main content area with a large heading: "QuillBot's AI-powered paraphrasing tool will enhance your writing". Underneath this heading, there's a sub-heading: "Our Paraphraser has unique features". To the right of the main heading, there's a small inset image showing the QuillBot interface with a text box and a dropdown menu. Below the main heading, there's a paragraph of text: "Your words matter, and our paraphrasing tool is designed to ensure you use the right ones. With two free modes and five Premium modes to choose from, you can use QuillBot's online Paraphraser to rephrase any text in a variety of ways. Our product will improve your fluency while also ensuring you have the appropriate vocabulary, tone, and style for any occasion. Simply enter your text into the input box, and our AI will work with you to create the best paraphrase." Below this text, there's a green box with the text: "Why use QuillBot's paraphrasing tool?". Underneath the green box, there's a section titled "CUSTOMIZATION" with the heading "Decide how much vocabulary change you want". To the right of this heading, there's a small inset image showing a slider control for "Vocabulary change" with a green bar indicating the current level. Below the heading, there's a paragraph of text: "Use the Sentence Slider to change more (or less) of your writing. Moving the slider to the left will give you a more accurate rephrase with fewer changes; moving it to the right means you'll get a more creative output with more changes."

# QuillBot UI Refresh

How my judgment evolved

## What I misjudged

I underestimated the systems thinking required and staffed too heavily for visual execution.

## What changed

I stepped in earlier to take ownership of system-critical decisions and aligned scope to real engineering capacity.

Judgment:  
Stepping in when systems thinking  
broke down

Before	Judgement	After
Fragmented ownership	Leader intervention	Clear ownership
Visual execution prioritized	Rebalanced ownership	Scalable components
Assumed engineering capacity	System-level decision making	Aligned design and engineering capacity

# QuillBot Navigation

Strategy, scope, and confidence were all in motion

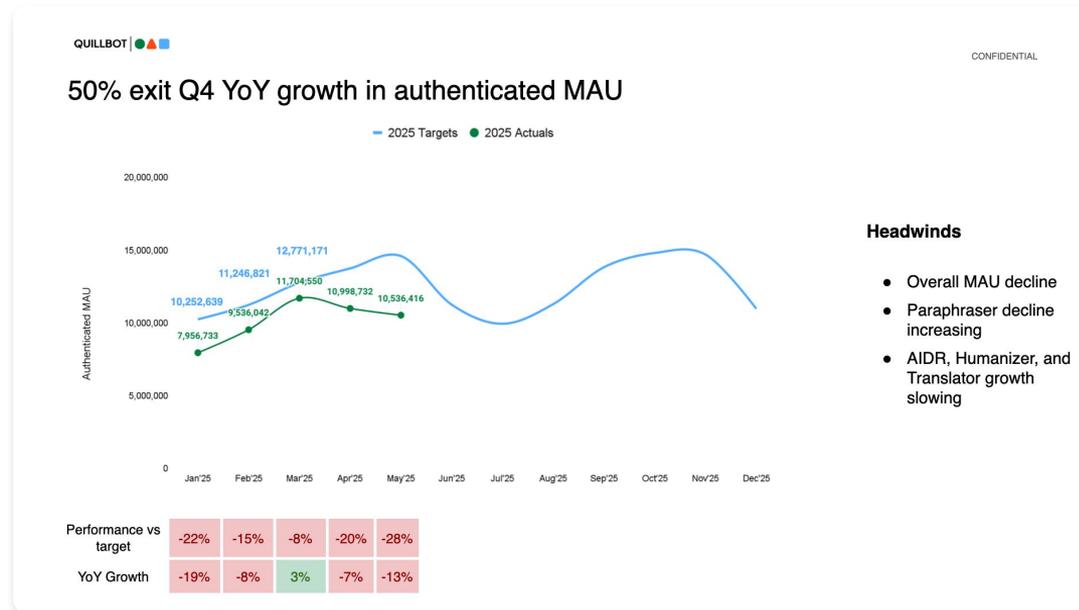
I made structural decisions that create clarity and momentum when strategy, scope, and confidence are still in motion.

## Context

AI writing product undergoing a pivot from single-purpose tool to a communications platform supporting hundreds of tasks.

## Risk

Delaying decisions would stall the pivot; premature structure risked long-term IA debt.



# QuillBot Navigation

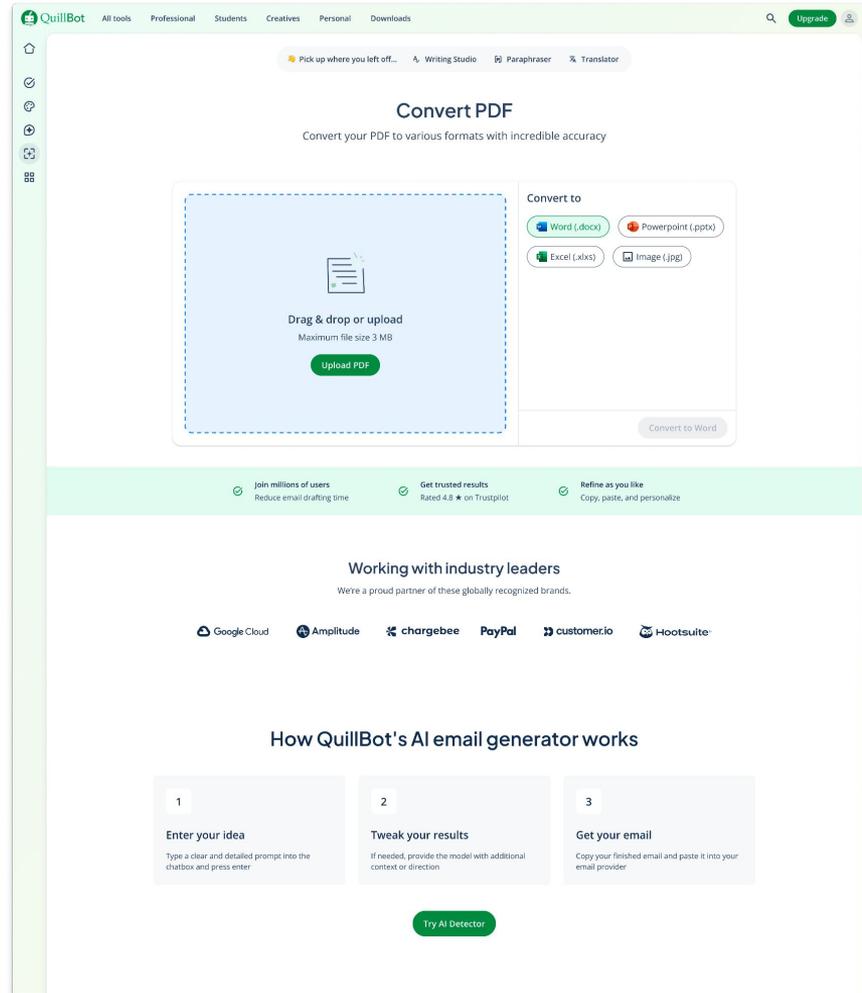
The decision under constraint

## The constraint that mattered

- Core differentiation collapsed after ChatGPT
- 600+ tools planned without stable taxonomy
- Navigation needed to scale before certainty

## The decision I made

- Anchored navigation around user intent and jobs to be done, not internal structure
- Committed to a persona- and task-based IA before the ecosystem was fully defined
- Stepped in hands-on when execution risk threatened structural integrity



# QuillBot Navigation

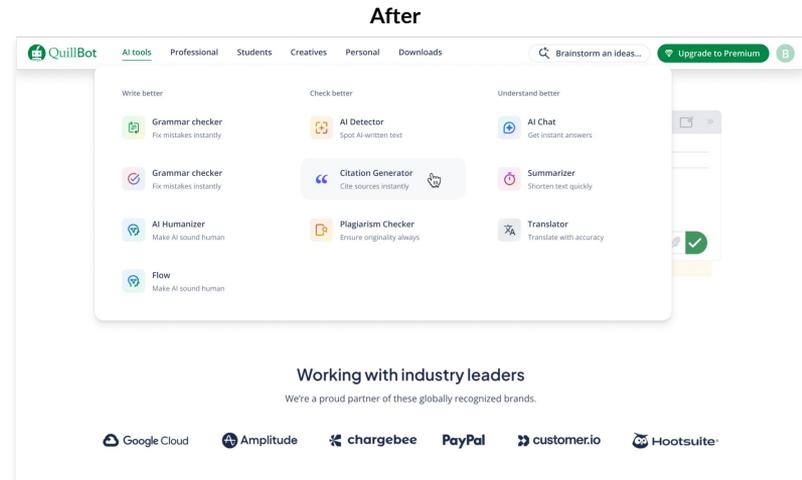
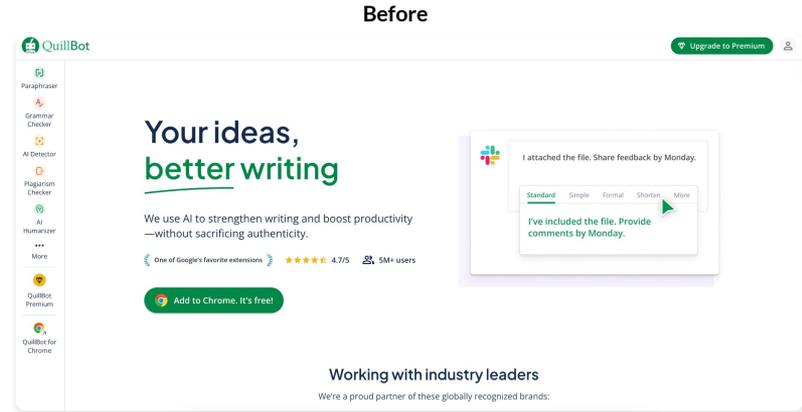
## Tradeoff and outcomes

### The tradeoff I accepted

- Made irreversible structural decisions before full validation
- Traded process purity and ideal ownership for momentum and clarity
- Accepted short-term tension to avoid long-term IA rework

### The outcome that changed

- Launched a persona-based navigation capable of supporting 600+ tools
- Improved discoverability by aligning structure to user intent
- Established a flexible IA that could evolve as strategy matured
- Positioned design as a stabilizing force during a company-wide pivot



# QuillBot Navigation

How my judgment evolved

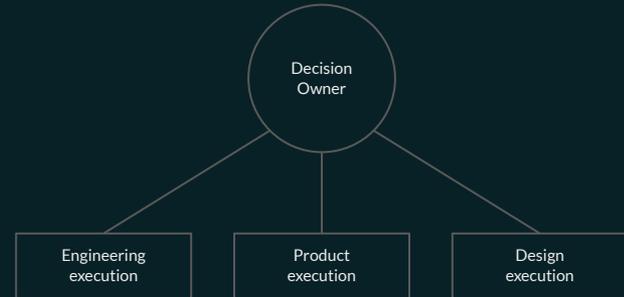
## What I'd do differently

I tolerated ambiguity around ownership too long, which delayed accountability for how the navigation would scale.

## What I would change

I would establish a single decision owner for system-critical decisions earlier, even while keeping execution distributed.

Judgment:  
Enforcing single ownership under  
ambiguity



## CASE STUDY

# Masonite.com Redesign

Buyers could not learn, compare, or choose with confidence.

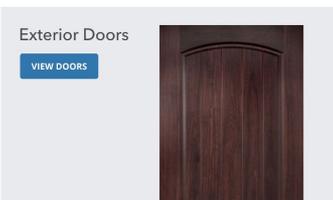
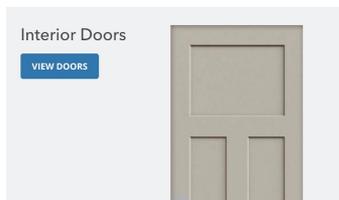
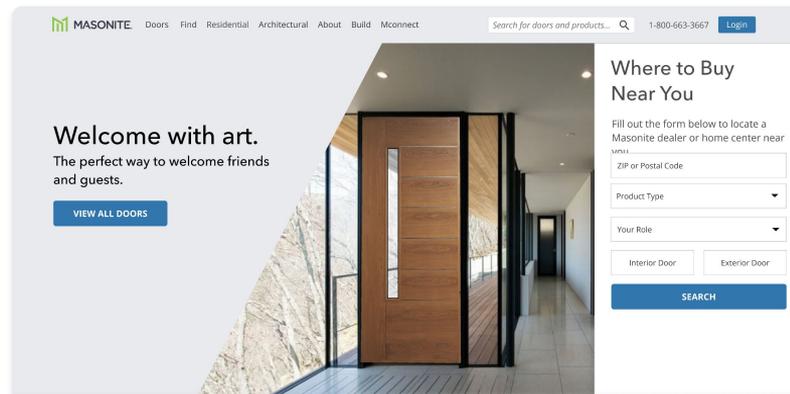
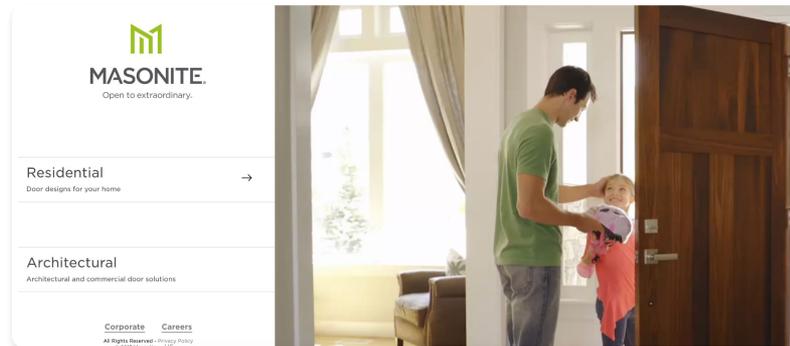
I challenge foundational assumptions and redesign systems around how people actually make decisions, not how organizations are structured.

## Context

Global manufacturer with a complex catalog, long purchase cycles, and multiple competing buyer audiences.

## Risk

Optimizing for internal stakeholders was actively suppressing buyer confidence and conversion.



# Masonite.com Redesign

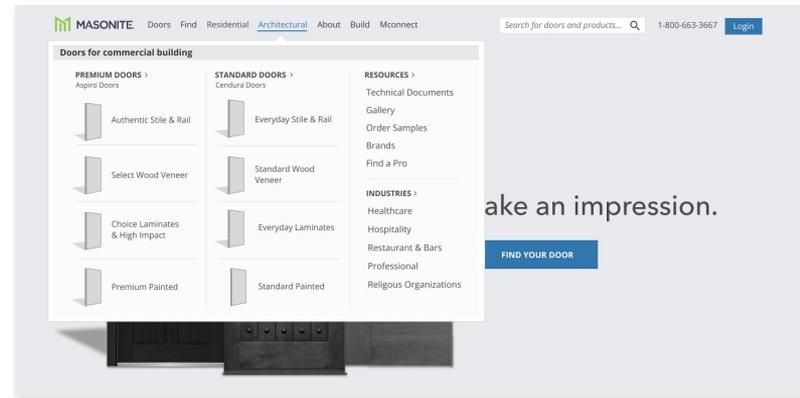
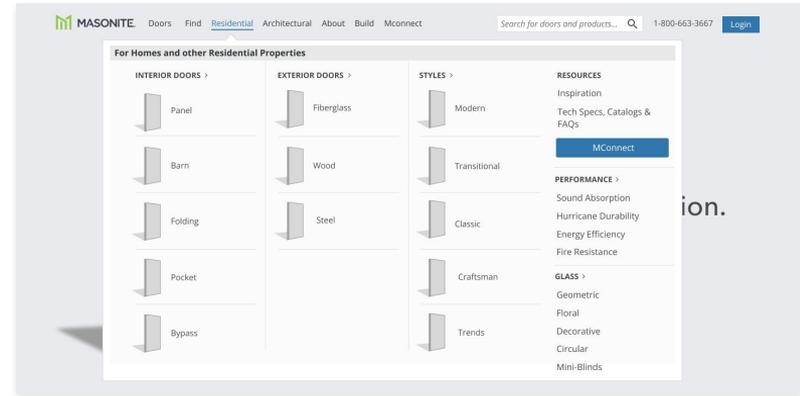
The decision under constraint

## The constraint that mattered

- Built for internal teams, not buyer decisions
- Eight personas created noise, not clarity
- Mobile users could not learn, compare, or choose

## The decision I made

- Collapsed eight personas into two primary decision-makers
- Reframed the site around education and confidence
- Redesigned navigation and product pages as decision tools
- Prioritized mobile-first flows despite desktop resistance



# Masonite.com Redesign

## Tradeoff and outcomes

### The tradeoff I accepted

- Reduced internal flexibility in favor of user clarity
- Accepted stakeholder discomfort to remove cognitive load

### The outcome that changed

- Made education the primary driver of conversion
- Simplified site architecture and reduced navigation depth
- Eliminated sales workarounds through centralized documentation
- Raised the bar for digital experience in a conservative category

## The Honest Truth

"Pinterest is a huge driver... so is Houzz"

"Trends are high end things for boardrooms, not for the guy on the street"

"The website has to teach customers about doors"

"You're setting me up for failure as a dealer" (on Max)

"We are not comfortable talking to customers about Digital products."

"I had to drive the catalog to his home because he couldn't use the website"

## Personas: the redesign foundation

Two personas, one that starts the conversation and the other that delivers the goods



**HOLLY / HOMEOWNER / PRIMARY USER**  
Professional upgrading to a bigger home

- Educational content on doors
- Easy paths to find doors from an image
- Easy paths to buy doors
- Content that inspires a door purchase

and



**DEAN / INSIDE SALES AGENT / SECONDARY USER**  
Using work-arounds to satisfy door desires

- Access to tech specs
- A source for clients to learn about doors
- A source to send clients to find doors
- A place to store client doors

# Masonite.com Redesign

How my judgment evolved

## What I misjudged

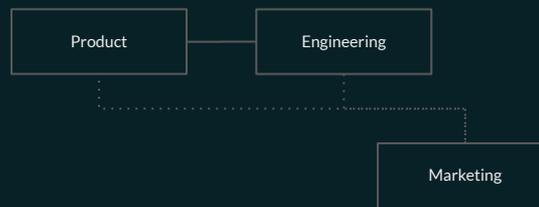
Marketing held final authority over visual storytelling and adoption, not Product or Engineering.

## What I would change

I would bring Marketing into core decision reviews earlier to reduce friction and accelerate alignment.

Judgment:  
Recognizing real power structures

### Formal Ownership



### Actual Ownership



## Leadership Evidence: **Raising the bar under disruption**

The leadership move	
<b>The bet</b>	Better decisions, not faster shipping, would create leverage during disruption
<b>The context</b>	When OpenAI's free launch triggered a ~30% revenue decline, QuillBot needed differentiation, not incremental execution.
<b>The leadership decision</b>	I repositioned design from a delivery function to a decision-making partner during a period of instability.
<b>What I changed</b>	<p>Required interactive prototypes for major work to reduce downstream ambiguity</p> <p>Shifted designers into facilitation roles during product planning</p> <p>Built internal research capability to validate decisions without bottlenecks</p>

*This was a deliberate bet that **better decisions, not faster shipping**, would create leverage.*

## Leadership Evidence: **Raising the bar under disruption**

### What moved as a result

- Product teams began using prototypes to resolve ambiguity earlier
- 90% of all designers incorporated AI into their workflow
- Design became a core input into roadmap and prioritization discussions
- Developers experienced fewer late-stage design reversals
- Research insights informed decisions continuously, not episodically
- Designers were trusted as strategic collaborators, not just executors

# Testimonials

Wednesday, October 1st



**upasna.gupta** 7:53 AM

Hey @Andy, I have to skip the meeting today because I am in high-priority focus mode, but I didn't want to miss the chance to share this as my farewell message for you. It has truly been an honor working with you. You've not only been a great manager but also a mentor who inspired me with your clarity, calmness, and support. I've learned so much from your leadership style and the way you approach challenges with patience and perspective. Your encouragement has made a real difference in my journey, and I'll always be grateful for that. I hope we stay in touch, and I wish you nothing but success, happiness, and exciting opportunities ahead. You'll be greatly missed, both professionally and personally. ❤️

Today



**Saurabh Hejib** 6:46 AM

Hi Andy, I was on leave on Wednesday, so I missed your send-off meeting. I went through the presentation though, and really loved the kind words and amazing images you had created for everyone, including me!

It's been a pleasure working with you for the past 2 years, and I have learned a lot. I hope our paths cross soon, and I wish you all the best for your future endeavors! Hope to stay in touch on LinkedIn. If you ever visit India again, let me know and we'll try to locate the elusive 'Perfect Paneer Chilly' 😊



**Nova Ding** 10:59 AM

Today

Andy, happy last day! 🎉 I just want to say, you've been the energy that kept us moving! I'll always picture that hanging bicycle 🚲 in our calls, a perfect symbol of your drive. To me, you are like a magician ✨, always able to motivate, guide, and inspire.

I will miss your leadership and spirit, but your impact stays with us. Wishing you magic, momentum, and joy in the next chapter! 🙌

For Andy.PNG



# My next role

## What I'm optimizing for

Roles where design is expected to shape decisions, not just execute them.

## Where I'm most effective

High-stakes environments where clarity is incomplete and judgment matters.

## Fit matters

If a team wants comfort, alignment theater, or incremental polish, I'm not the right fit.

If a team wants clear decisions and durable progress, **I'm in.**

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