

DeSoto Donovan

Senior Product Designer

Hello - thanks for taking the time to look through my work. The four case studies that follow span B2B SaaS, enterprise redesigns, startup MVPs, and zero-to-one product work. Each is shown the way I work in practice: business context, users and constraints, the specific product decisions I drove, and the outcomes they produced.

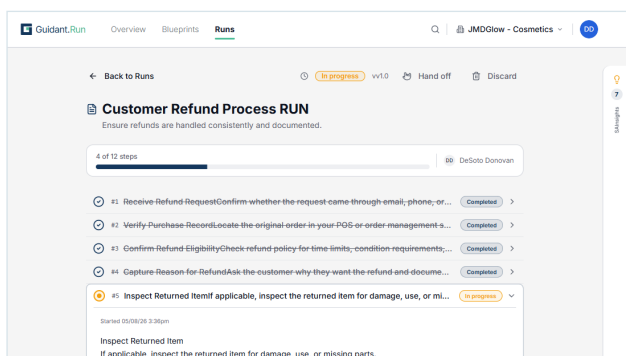
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INSIDE THIS DOCUMENT

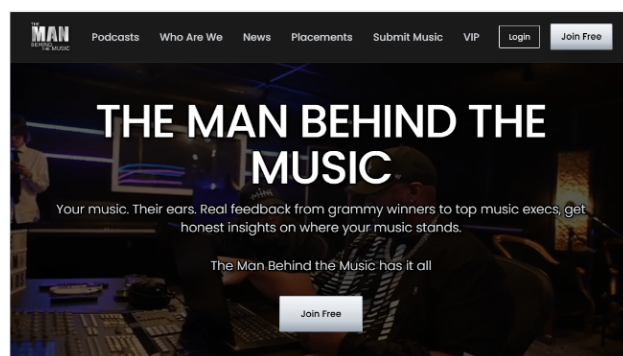


B2B SaaS · Operational Tooling

Guidant Run

Designed an operational execution platform that turns tribal knowledge into structured, runnable SOPs. 25 founding customers, 800+ SOMs, 1,500+ guided runs in beta.

B2B SaaS · Design Systems · AI Workflows

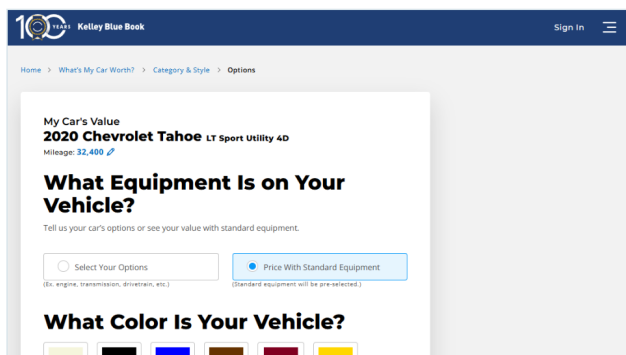


Zero-to-One · Subscription Media

The Man Behind The Music

Two-sided subscription product connecting aspiring creators to a Hollywood producer - web MVP to native, with billing kept on Stripe instead of Apple IAP.

Product Design · Mobile · MVP · Cross-Platform

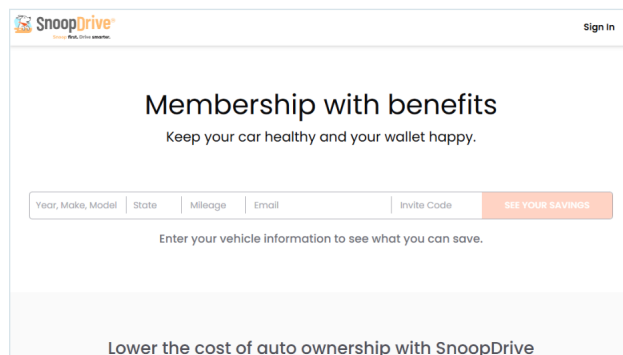


Enterprise · Automotive

KBB Owner's Path Redesign

Drove a \$379M revenue impact by redesigning KBB's highest-traffic valuation experience, raising conversion from 86% to 92% and CSAT scores across devices.

UX Strategy · Design Systems · Enterprise



Startup · Automotive

SnoopDrive Warranty Platform

Reduced funnel exit rates by 84% and CS inquiries by 80% by redesigning the warranty quote experience at an early-stage startup.

UX Design · Startup · HCD · Complex Flows

Turning tribal knowledge into a runnable operating system

ROLE	COMPANY	PLATFORMS	STATUS
Senior Product Designer	Guidant.Run	Responsive web SaaS · Mobile capture	Beta · guidant.run

Guidant.Run Overview Blueprints **Runs** 🔍 JMDGlow - Cosmetics DD

← Back to Runs ⌚ In progress vv1.0 🔄 Hand off 🗑 Discard

Customer Refund Process RUN
Ensure refunds are handled consistently and documented.

4 of 12 steps DD DeSoto Donovan

- ✓ #1 Receive Refund Request Confirm whether the request came through email, phone, or... **Completed** >
- ✓ #2 Verify Purchase Record Locate the original order in your POS or order management s... **Completed** >
- ✓ #3 Confirm Refund Eligibility Check refund policy for time limits, condition requirements,... **Completed** >
- ✓ #4 Capture Reason for Refund Ask the customer why they want the refund and docume... **Completed** >
- 🟡 #5 Inspect Returned Item If applicable, inspect the returned item for damage, use, or mi... **In progress** ▾

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Inspect Returned Item
If applicable, inspect the returned item for damage, use, or missing parts.

SAL Insights 7

The business problem

Operational knowledge at most companies lives in three broken places: people's heads, stale documents, and Slack threads no one can find. When the person who "knows how we do it" is out or quits, work either stops or goes wrong.

Existing tools split the world into docs (Notion, Confluence) and tasks (Asana, ClickUp), so almost nothing lets teams define a single artifact that both describes the process and powers day-to-day execution - with every run feeding back into improving the blueprint. Guidant.Run was built to close that gap.

Users and roles

- **Owners** - Ops leaders, COOs, and founders responsible for consistency, onboarding speed, and visibility. They create and approve Blueprints, manage workspaces, and control security and billing.
- **Editors** - Team leads and SMEs who author and iterate on Blueprints, publish new versions, and review feedback from live runs.
- **Runners** - Frontline operators in fulfillment, support, logistics, or onboarding. They execute, not author - they need fast, unambiguous, mobile-friendly steps.

- **Platform admins** on our side support customers, manage access requests, and tune plan overrides.

Roles & Needs			
Who uses Guidant Run, what they own, and what gets in their way.			
ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES	NEEDS	PAIN POINTS
Owner	Lead the workspace. Approve Blueprints. Manage members & billing.	Confidence the team is actually running on the latest playbook.	Can't see what's stuck or stalled across active Runs.
Editor	Author Blueprints. Publish versions. Review Run feedback.	Edit safely without breaking work that is already in flight.	Old tools force a choice: edit live or fork & lose history.
Runner	Execute Runs. Capture evidence. Flag issues at the step.	Fast, unambiguous steps. Mobile capture without logging in.	Long PDFs, dead links, no way to record what actually happened.
Platform Admin	Support customers. Manage access & plan overrides.	Visibility and safe levers without touching customer data.	Without scoped tools, support equals risk.

guidant.run

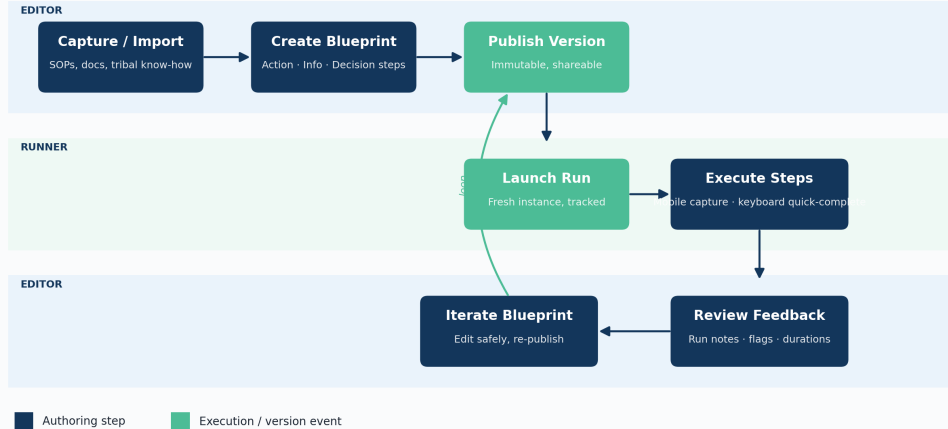
Roles & Needs matrix - responsibilities, needs, and pain points mapped to permissions in the data layer.

Why the problem was hard

- **Two modes, one product.** Authoring (Blueprints) and execution (Runs) have different mental models but share the same data; conflating them is the number-one reason competitors feel confusing.
- **Safe versioning.** Editors needed to improve templates while existing runs were mid-flight - new Blueprint versions had to ship without breaking in-progress work.
- **Serious multi-tenancy.** Workspaces, role-based access, org-level MFA, and soft-deleted users all enforced at the data layer, not just in the UI.
- **Low-friction mobile capture.** Runners on a warehouse floor needed to attach photos without signing into a full session on every device.
- **Language that makes sense.** Internal terms like SOM, Process, and Work were engineer-speak that added cognitive load.

The Guidant Run Lifecycle

How knowledge moves from someone's head into a system the team runs on — then improves.



Guidant.Run lifecycle - Capture → Create Blueprint → Publish Version → Launch Run → Execute → Review Feedback → Iterate, mapped across Editor and Runner swimlanes.

Key product decisions

A few deliberate product decisions reset the experience:

- **Lifecycle as the backbone.** Rebuilt the IA around: Create Blueprint → Publish → Launch Run → Review.
- **One source of truth.** Removed a duplicate "Runs Library" surface; Blueprints are "how we do it," Runs are "what's happening now."
- **Explicit publishing.** Replaced a casual toggle with a clear publish action that creates immutable versions without touching in-flight runs.
- **Step types named for humans.** Manual / System / Branch became Action / Info / Decision.
- **Inline decisions.** Decision steps expand the relevant instructions in place when a choice is selected.
- **Never hard-delete users.** Soft-deleting preserves historical attribution and run history.
- **Defensive role model.** Roles in a separate table, checked via secure database functions, with RLS on every tenant-scoped table.
- **Org-first security defaults.** Owners enforce 2FA at the workspace level (email OTP or TOTP).

Key Product Decisions

The forks in the road — what we picked, and why.

DECISION	OPTIONS CONSIDERED	CHOSEN	WHY
Authoring vs execution surfaces	Single combined view vs separate Blueprint and Run spaces	Separate, lifecycle-anchored IA	Keeps mental models clean and reduces 'where am I?' confusion
Publish model	Auto-save / toggle vs explicit publish with immutable versions	Explicit publish, immutable versions	Editors can iterate without breaking in-flight Runs
Mobile capture auth	Force login on phone vs tokenized RLS-scoped capture link	Tokenized, RLS-protected capture	Frontline users won't sign in on a phone — friction kills usage
Step type naming	Engineer terms (task, branch, doc) vs runner-facing labels	Action · Info · Decision	Names match the runner's intent at the moment of use
Org-level MFA	Per-user opt-in vs workspace-wide enforcement	Owner-enforced, org-wide MFA	Security posture is a workspace decision, not a personal one

Key product decisions - alternatives weighed for authoring vs execution surfaces, publish model, mobile capture auth, step types, and org-level MFA.

Outcome and impact

- **Faster activation.** Time from new workspace to first published Blueprint dropped significantly; AI-assisted import reduced the blank-canvas problem.
- **Less confusion.** Support questions like "where do I publish?" and "what's a SOM?" effectively disappeared.
- **Safer iteration.** Editors ship new versions without fear of breaking live work.
- **Better operational visibility.** Owners see In Progress, Stalled, Completions (7d), and Active Blueprints at a glance.
- **A defensible foundation.** Every run tied back to a Blueprint version captures step durations, skips, flags, and notes - the data substrate for recommendation intelligence.

FOUNDING CUSTOMERS 25 Operator companies onboarded in beta.	ACTIVE USERS 140 85-95 daily active across founding accounts.	SOMS & RUNS 800 / 1,500+ SOMs authored and guided runs executed; ~350 runs/day.
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A two-sided subscription product connecting aspiring creators to a Hollywood producer

ROLE

Senior Product Designer

COMPANY

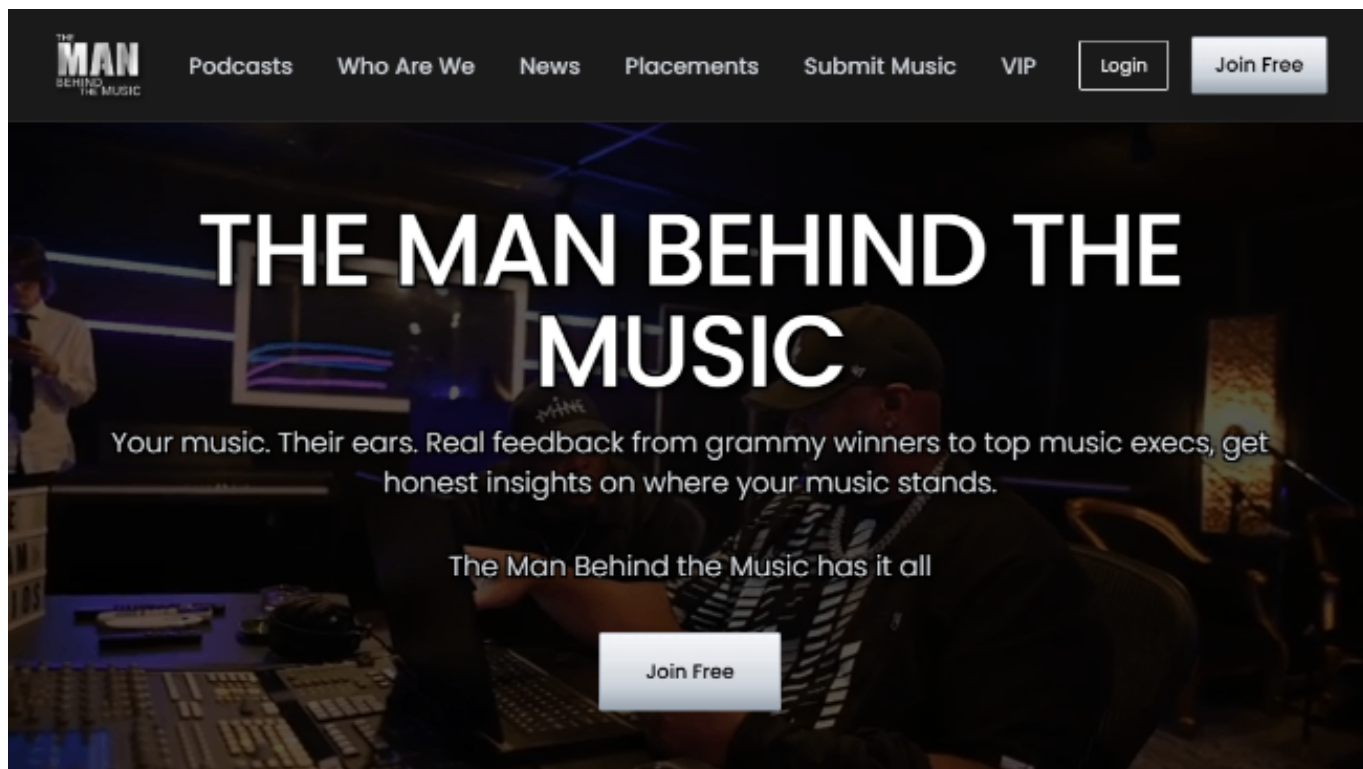
The Man Behind The Music

PLATFORMS

Web · iOS · Android

FOCUS

Two-sided MVP ·
Subscription · Cross-platform



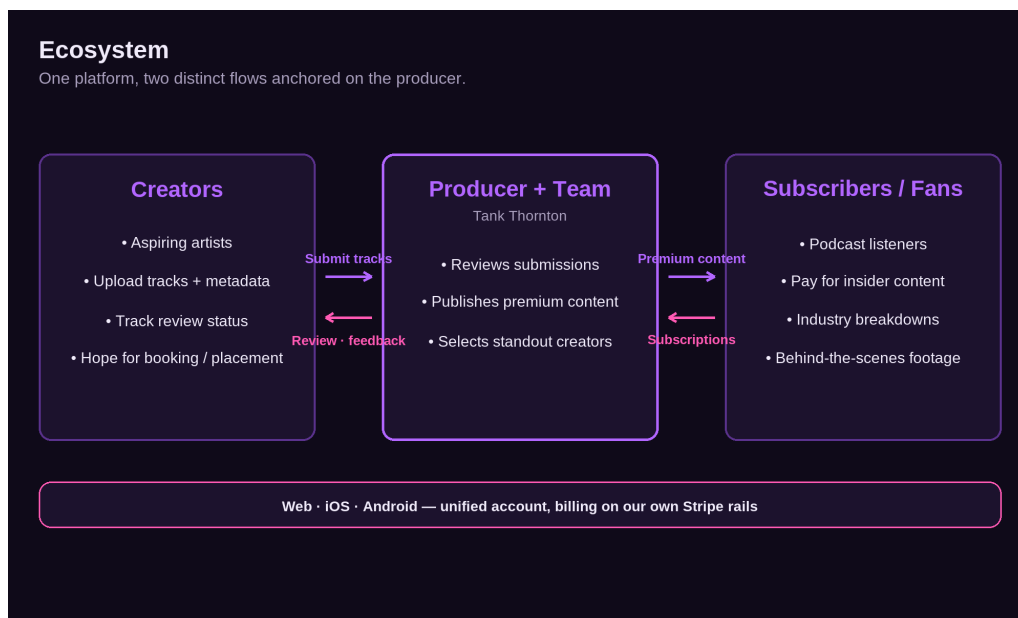
The challenge

The Man Behind The Music needed more than a fan site. Creators wanted a credible way to get tracks in front of a real Hollywood producer; podcast fans wanted subscription-only access to his playbook for landing placements in TV and film.

Off-the-shelf subscription tools couldn't handle that dual reality under one brand and one producer - without slipping into "yet another social music app" across web, iOS, and Android.

Users and ecosystem

- **Creators** - Aspiring artists uploading tracks with basic metadata and tracking review status.
- **Subscribers / fans** - Podcast listeners paying for industry breakdowns, sync-packaging guidance, and behind-the-scenes footage.
- **Producer + team** - Tank Thornton and staff, who need a focused submission queue and lightweight tools to review, respond, and publish.



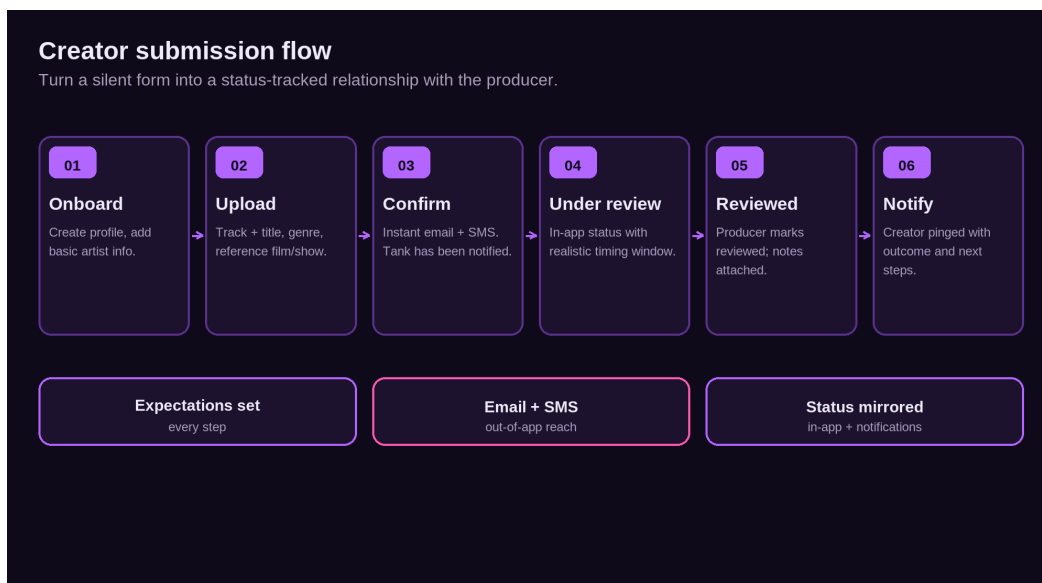
Ecosystem map - two distinct flows anchored on the same producer.

MVP scope and product evolution

- **v1 - Web MVP.** Creator onboarding, track upload, expectation-setting submission flow, subscriber paywall, and Stripe billing end-to-end.
- **v2 - Depth for both sides.** Structured content library, batched producer alerts, direct messaging, and SMS review notifications.
- **v3 - Native parity.** Full iOS and Android apps once web traction was proven and funded.

Key product and platform decisions

- **Web-first, then native.** Launching on web validated pricing, content format, and upload behavior; native came in v3 after hundreds of paying subscribers proved the model.
- **Own the billing system.** Subscriptions stayed on Stripe instead of Apple IAP - extra work through Apple review, but it preserved revenue margin and pricing control.
- **Unambiguous submission feedback.** Added immediate email/SMS confirmation stating Tank was notified and when to expect a review, mirrored in-app.
- **Cross-platform continuity.** Aligned core flows and terminology across web and apps; account creation and subscription on the site, auto-login back into the app.



Creator submission flow - Onboard → Upload → Confirm → Under review → Reviewed → Notify.

Outcome and impact

- **Validated demand before heavy investment.** Web-first gave us real subscriber and submission data without app-store timelines; hundreds of paying subscribers green-lit native funding.
- **Clearer expectations for creators.** The redesigned submission and notification flow set a professional tone for every interaction with Tank and his team.
- **Higher leverage for the producer.** Review queue, alerts, and messaging let the producer batch work and decide which creators to pull into deeper conversations.
- **Sustainable business mechanics.** Owning billing preserved revenue, kept pricing experiments open, and avoided a future migration away from IAP.

Redesigning KBB's Highest-Traffic Valuation Experience

ROLE
UX Lead

COMPANY
Kelley Blue Book / Cox
Automotive

PLATFORMS
Responsive web (desktop &
mobile)

FOCUS
Design system migration ·
Enterprise scale

100 YEARS Kelley Blue Book Sign In

Home > What's My Car Worth? > Category & Style > Options

My Car's Value
2020 Chevrolet Tahoe LT Sport Utility 4D
Mileage: 32,400

What Equipment Is on Your Vehicle?

Tell us your car's options or see your value with standard equipment.

☐ Select Your Options
(Ex. engine, transmission, drivetrain, etc.)

☒ Price With Standard Equipment
(Standard equipment will be pre-selected.)

What Color Is Your Vehicle?

Color swatches: White, Black, Blue, Brown, Red, Yellow

The business context

Kelley Blue Book is a **\$57 million company** where the Owner's Path valuation experience is the primary revenue driver. Any redesign had to improve metrics without disrupting financial projections - a high-stakes constraint that shaped every decision.

"As a \$57 million dollar company, we must be sensitive to drastic changes that can affect our financial projections while continuously enhancing our product."

The problem

KBB's Owner's Path had been steadily losing traffic to competitors. An independent analysis of all Cox Auto products confirmed that dated aesthetics, inconsistent UI patterns, and a non-responsive experience were driving users away.

AUDIENCE VISITS Declining ~23M/mo with consistent decreases.	CSAT SCORES 79% / 81% Desktop / Mobile - below targets.	DESIGN SYSTEM Legacy ARGO Outdated, non-responsive, slow to iterate.
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OKRs & success criteria

Cox had spent 18 months building the Orion Atomic Design System to modernize their properties. In addition to migrating to Orion, we set specific OKRs:

- Increase visits to the Owner's Path from Cox products by **at least 10%**
- Increase conversion to 3rd party products by **5%**
- Raise CSAT - Desktop: 79% → **85%** | Mobile: 81% → **85%**
- Implement Orion without impacting financial projections

Analytics, research & HCD

I partnered with UX Research and the in-house analytics team to understand where users were struggling and where competitors were pulling traffic, then facilitated HCD workshops with stakeholders and end-users to validate assumptions before committing to development.

- Analyzed site traffic, conversion rates, and satisfaction data
- Confirmed Orion would reduce friction at the Owner's Hub entry point
- Identified confusion with ICO (Instant Cash Offer) entry on the hub and YMMT flow
- Discovered massive user loss from ad and ad-blocker barriers to entry
- Ran Controller/Challenger testing across Hub Mobile V1, Hub Desktop V1, and Hub Final V2

From legacy ARGO to Orion

A core part of the work was translating older ARGO-based screens into Orion's componentized system while improving hierarchy, simplifying steps, and making the experience fully responsive - desktop and mobile sharing the same atoms, only changing density and orientation.

Results

The redesign delivered measurable impact within the first 4 weeks of deployment:

TRAFFIC CONVERSION 86% → 92% Highest conversion of any Cox Auto product post-launch.	CSAT SCORES 85% / 87% Desktop / Mobile - both exceeded targets (83% / 85%).
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Broader impact

The success of this project on KBB.com directly informed the business case for migrating AutoTrader.com to the Orion Design System. Over my 7.5-year tenure, the UX-driven improvements I contributed to across KBB and Autotrader resulted in an additional **\$379 million in revenue** and CSAT scores improving from 65% to 86% across the portfolio.

Reducing Funnel Exit Rates by 84% Through HCD-Driven Redesign

ROLE

Senior Product Lead

COMPANY

SnoopDrive, Inc.

PLATFORMS

Responsive web · Multi-role
admin tooling

FOCUS

HCD · Rapid iteration ·
Complex flows



Sign In

Membership with benefits

Keep your car healthy and your wallet happy.

Year, Make, Model

State

Mileage

Email

Invite Code

SEE YOUR SAVINGS

Enter your vehicle information to see what you can save.

Lower the cost of auto ownership with SnoopDrive

The startup context

SnoopDrive was an early-stage startup providing automotive warranty coverage at a fraction of dealership prices. As their first dedicated UX hire, I wore multiple hats - UX lead, HCD facilitator, researcher, and culture change agent - building design practices from the ground up.

The problem

The warranty quote funnel - SnoopDrive's primary revenue path - was hemorrhaging users. High exit rates and a flood of customer service inquiries signaled fundamental UX problems, but the team lacked the design maturity to diagnose or solve them.

FUNNEL EXIT RATE

Critical

Users dropping off at alarming rates through the quote flow.

CS SCALING

Unsustainable

Support volume growing faster than the team could handle.

My approach

I took a ground-up approach - bringing consistency to the web-based UX, evaluating platforms for quick-win optimizations, and guiding the team through their first exposure to human-centered design practices.

- Conducted stakeholder meetings and design sprints
- Defined user personas from existing user input and CS responses
- Mapped and optimized user flows end-to-end
- Implemented dynamic paths and progress indicators
- Reduced required information for initial quotes
- User interaction testing with Smartlook and rough prototyping

The "A-Ha" moment

Initial customer service data suggested plenty of user insights to be gained. Several HCD sessions I led uncovered a critical finding: **29% of all customer support questions dealt with the quote pages**. This validated a new OKR for the project and confirmed the quote flow wasn't just losing users - it was actively confusing them badly enough to call support.

Results

Within 5 weeks of deployment, the redesigned funnel delivered dramatic improvements:

FUNNEL EXIT RATE -84% Post-home funnel exit rate reduced within 5 weeks.	CS INQUIRIES -80% Customer service inquiries dropped within 3 weeks.	PATH LENGTH -2-3 pages Shortened funnel with less required info for initial quotes.
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Takeaway

All aspects of my UX experience were leveraged to produce a product that could be confidently handed to the permanent team for Phase III development. This project reinforced the value of HCD facilitation in startup environments - where user insights don't just improve the product, they can fundamentally redirect the business strategy.