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???Josh Werkstell



Every brand wants their **website development** project to be a success. But for that to happen, close collaboration between every team member across multiple departments needs to take place.

Anyone who has been through this type of project knows that lots of decisions are made before things ever move to development. Decisions that are not only vital to the success of a particular website build, but also for the brand.

Here we'll outline how a strong foundation is built ahead of website development, and how the decisions we make in early stages impact a website's ability to reach or

exceed desired KPIs, address user pain points and motivations, and provides brands with a flexible and scalable digital business tool for years to come.

### Assembling the right team is critical

While the makeup of a team varies per project, and largely depends on the initiative and goals outlined in early discovery, a well-rounded project team consists of the following resources:

- Digital Strategist
- Analytics Specialist
- IA/Planning (UX Planner)
- Content Specialist
- Designer
- SEO Specialist
- Technical Project Manager
- Account Director
- Client Partner

Throughout a project, there are constant touch points and collaboration between team members. With all this talent in place, we ensure a project's vision is being developed intelligently and followed closely, and that knowledge and expertise is being conveyed and leveraged to position the project for success.

## Determining phases and top-level objectives is key

We could speak at length about each of the goals, processes, and deliverables that each phase covers. But rather than digging too deeply into our process and capabilities ,we'll touch on the core elements and objectives for each phase of a project before it moves to development.

### Discovery

During discovery, the project team works to gather knowledge about the client, their business, and project goals, and looks at how they relate to their current digital presence, brand, and business goals.

In this phase, we take a hard look at a brand's conversion process, product or sales lifecycle, competitors, industry positioning, and current marketing initiatives. But more importantly, we uncover what kinds of experiences users are having across a brand's entire engagement landscape.

By understanding the ecosphere the client currently operates in, we better position ourselves for providing strategic recommendations that enhance the buyer journey and achieve business impact.

**Strategy**

Strategy incorporates all of the learnings from discovery and then develops a guiding strategic vision for the project.

To create this vision, BFM strategists start by clearly outlining objectives and recommendations using a variety of powerful, insightful tools. Through analytics, competitive analysis, a current site audit, key stakeholder interviews, and audience research, our strategists explore ways to achieve a brand's business objectives by leveraging human-centric solutions.

As part of the collaborative process, strategists work closely with other project team members across each department to ensure their insight and expertise becomes part of the strategic plan. Once the team's feedback is collected, each member's recommendations are incorporated into the strategy, helping to shape the remainder of the project.

**IA/Planning**

IA/planning, and the decisions made around shaping user experience, is directly

informed by the website strategy. But where the strategy team delivered a comprehensive knowledge base and strategic direction, IA/planning experts help convert the strategy into practical application. This is when the architecture of the site is created, a UX-driven layout is defined, and content is arranged in an easily digestible format for users.

Common deliverables during the IA/planning phase include: a defined list of site features and technical integration considerations; a site map that details the number of pages, where these pages will be located on the site, and how they relate to each other; user journeys that demonstrate how a user will interact with the site; and desktop and mobile wireframes that provide a visual blueprint of the arranged elements per page prior to design.

**Design**

After strategy and IA/planning comes design. Working with strategist and IA/UX recommendations, design experts take the approved site architecture, client- or BFM-created style guides, and create a look and feel that brings the website to life.

At BFM, our designers combine human-centered design and visual storytelling to create memorable and engaging user experiences. But we also consider design best practices, trends, and industry guidelines, which includes ADA compliance among them.

Then, employing our mobile-first approach to design (and ultimately, development), concepts are created in the following device breakpoints: mobile, desktop, and tablet.

For clients and our team, design is a fun and collaborative process, that when executed correctly, enables a brand to reach their websites objectives and provide users with people-focused, story-driven experiences.

## What comes next?

At this point in the project, the site has been touched and shaped by nearly every department and project team member. And with these foundational elements in place, it’s time to hand the project over to development, who executes on the team’s strategic, creative, and user-focused vision.

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