User Experience Design Process: Critical Path

Project Initiation | **Kickoff Meeting** | **Initial Design Cycle** | **Design Iteration / Testing / Iteration / Early Refinement** | **Refinement / Copy / Final Visual Design / Robust Testing** | **Production Build / Reviews / Design Team Sign Offs**

Product Marketing

Project is initiated by Product Marketing with Program Management

Prod. Marketing does P&L, content evaluation, creates materials that describe needs, goals, objectives, dependencies, partnerships, business issues and any other relevant content or functionality issues, pulls together cross-functional team

Prod. Mktg. feeds team any results from Market Research

Product Team meets- Design presents functional user flow, potential user scenarios and high level screens needed
Approval cycle here

Product Team meets- Review recommendations from testing

Product Team meets- Review revisions

Product Team meets- Design meeting with Product Marketing, Engineering, and Usability to review recommendations

Product Team
Approval cycle here

Product Team meets- Hand off to production, engineering and operations mode of the product cycle

Usability

Feasability Studies / Field Research
What do Users want
How do they want to do it
(Usability Conceptual Phase)

Expert advice on previous research and new research needed (Usability 2nd Phase)

feedback cycle

feedback cycle

Functionality/ Conceptual model testing with early prototypes

iteration cycle

iteration cycle

Detailed Product testing - both for functionality and specific content and visual design

iteration cycle

iteration cycle

Experience Design

Initial concept brainstorms with Product Marketing to collect and gather requirements and understand competitive landscape

UE Team member assigned to project

Meeting coordinated by Program Management

UE Team member assigned to project attends meeting

Takes input from all memberas related to UI design

Receives Requirements Document

Needs:
List of team members,
contact info, initial schedule,
approval process (people)

Create Design Spec/Creative Brief
Material is from MRP/PRD and brainstorming notes and other requirements, distills info, looks at competitive landscape, reviews scope in context of network and site precedence

UE Team brainstorm with Usability - led by project team member

what's the best scenario for users

Early functionality designs and definitions of pages needed for developed functionality

Rapid prototype for proof of concept and early testing w/ usability

Could be paper prototype, functional static HTML, Flash interaction, Mockups/ Wireframes as image maps

User Ed develops user education plan

Design works with User Education to begin any Help and FAQs and other instructional text and all error messages

Design takes recommended changes and input from Team - including Product Marketing, Engineering, Exp. Design Team and Usability Research

Revises user flow and works through greater detail of individual screens

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Design team brainstorms, iterates and collaborates on visual representation of functionality and screen designs
Work can begin while user flow and functionality is iterating

Visual Design exploration, copy written and finalized

Experience Design team review Visual direction

Design works with Usability to provide prototype and guidance of what priorities of discovery should be - i.e. business constraints, technical constraints, optional versions to test

Refine Visual direction, copy, user instructions, help and UI components as necessary

Design team presents wireframes and mockups to production with full set of style specs [font size & color, line spacing, colors, images, links, etc]

User Ed. delivers all Help text and associated screenshots and specs to Production

Final functionality & visual design signoff
- Production
- Engineering
- QA
- Partner (if applicable)
- Usability
- Creative Director
- Product Marketing
- VP (as necessary)

HTML

Initial exposure to scope of design and functionality

Assess technical limitations and alternatives

Production receives approved mockups and works with Design on product area as needed

Production builds site and features working with Engineering as applicable

Engineering

Engineering might begin coding work from initial functionality specs

Discussion with engineering about any potential new technology and its impact on schedule and desired user tasks

Engineering informs Design if there are changes, issues with planned functionality

Credits: Erin Malone: Designed for AltaVista November 10, 2000