Article published on August 13th 2012 | Web Design

The key to success of any project is the right approach. We should never be limited in what we can accomplish; to enlarge the perimeter of our success we must have the right understanding of the world around us. The key to Valueboundâ€™s success on project after project starts with the right mindset as personified by a core set of design principles; a core set of values that we use to approach each and every project.

Understanding the goals

The foundation of a successful project begins before you even start to plan things. The chief thing that you are trying to accomplish with the project may get lost in the hundreds of details that youâ€™re trying to capture in these documents. So, the first thing we want to understand are the real motivators behind the project and how to translate these into business and user goals. Many times, through the process of discovery, we uncover goals that the client wasnâ€™t even aware of. At other times, we even identify conflicting goals. We realize conflicts within departments or even conflicts in what the client is trying to accomplish and what is being asked for. This leads us to our second principle: Question assumptions.

Questioning assumptions

We try our best not to take anything for granted. If the client specified something in the RFP, we want to know why itâ€™s in there and how important it is to the projectâ€™s success. We want to know wh functionality can be exchanged for other functionality or ideas that might help you better achieve your goals. Nothing is off-limits here. This process has actually proven to deliver results. Itâ€™s something like, if you ask for an apple, then Iâ€™ll give you an apple. But what if it was an orange that you really wanted? Then itâ€™s my fault for not really probing into your mind to understand what you really wanted, for not questioning your assumptions about what youâ€™re looking for. Itâ€™s the same wi functionality. Often clients have very specific requirements around some functionality that they want. However, itâ€™s always better to question why each bit of functionality has been requested for and concentrate the feature-set on our real goal.

Thus, by understanding and questioning the underlying, we can handle the real problems that the project is trying to solve.

Understanding the userâ€™s needs

You have your goals, and ask for functionality that you want. Now, depending on them maybe weâ€™ve even created some compelling designs around your powerful goals, but how do we know that what you want to build will actually achieve your goals? We are missing some key information here that we can only obtain by talking to your users.

Talking to your users or potential users is the best and only way to actually understand how they want to interact with your website or web application, and this is itâ€™s a crucial way of how we work.

Having said that, donâ€™t assume that we call up random users and ask them: â€œHow do you want to interact with this website?â€• We donâ€™t do that, because it does not work that way.

Itâ€™s not your user's job to know this; itâ€™s really your job. We can use a range of techniques from contextual interviews to iterative usability testing to understand the userâ€™s real needs (versus how

they describe the need), and often we combine these two techniques together to achieve great results.

Iterate

A perfect website cannot be created at one go. What weâ€™ve learned over the years of our experience is that websites are not fixed; they change and evolve with the user's changing needs over the time. Just because the project has been completed does not mean that the product is finished. As we accomplish meeting your user's need, it does not mean that their needs wonâ€™t change over time or that new needs wonâ€™t arise.

Thus, what we create is the basic building block, the right start. This building block has all the right ingredients and potential that can ultimately become something great. With Drupal as your backend, you will have the technology to grow and adapt your web presence as your audience needs change and grow. With this comes our last principle, that is what we want to deliver is a product that is as simple as possible. This is because we donâ€™t want you spend time and money building something immense only to find, after launch, that you only needed half of what you built.

Starting simple

Giving in to a common human trait, we all tend to want to launch a web product in the most perfect, and complete state possible. If we think of a gallery, we visualize Flickr. If we think of a blog platform, we imagine Blogger or Wordpress. We never stop to think that these services started out very different than what they have become today and maybe have different goals or are meeting a different need than what youâ€™re trying to achieve with your web product.

The conclusion in fewer words is - start as simple as possible. The first version of the gallery on your website might not be an exact replica of Flickr. And thatâ€™s perfectly fine, because you donâ€™t wa to be just another version of Flickr, otherwise why would the users use your site and not Flickr? You want to gain your own territory as an individual business, that is unique and thus, having its own set of userâ€™s. This is why, by starting with fewer features and concentrating on outcomes, we give you more space to learn from your users, to understand what they really want. We also help you to understand and explore how you want to interact with your customers, and how you can build a truly unique user and brand experience for your users. When you truly understand your userâ€™s needs and accomplish to provide what they want, your website automatically grows to take the shape of what it actually should be and continue to evolve. This is how we deliver the project and help in itâ€™s process of growth.

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