

## ACS Wayfinding Project MVP Case studies

# Outline

[Executive Summary](#)

[Problem Statement](#)

[Contribution and solution implementation](#)

[Methodology](#)

## Executive Summary

This case study highlights my internship project, **“Onboarding/Wayfinding,”** which focused on addressing key challenges in member navigation and retention within the American Chemical Society (ACS) digital ecosystem. The project was initiated to resolve long-standing issues around fragmented onboarding experiences, low awareness of membership benefits, and difficulties in accessing essential resources.

By implementing a streamlined and user-centred onboarding solution, the initiative aimed to personalize the member journey, improve visibility of benefits, and strengthen long-term engagement. Through close collaboration with cross-functional teams, iterative development under a hybrid Scrum model, and active stakeholder involvement, the project successfully delivered a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) that not only simplified navigation but also laid the foundation for future enhancements driven by user feedback.

Ultimately, this project demonstrated how thoughtful design, agile practices, and continuous communication can transform the onboarding experience into a strategic lever for improving member satisfaction and retention.

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**New Member Onboarding & Wayfinding**

**Background & Problem:**

- Generic Experience:** Members see the same list of benefits as non-members—no personalization based on membership type or status.
- Disconnected Journey:** No direct, web-based link to benefits creates confusion and reduces engagement.
- Low Awareness:** Many members are unaware of the full value of their membership, especially during onboarding.
- Overlooked Onboarding Materials:** Key resources like PDFs and emails are often missed, particularly by student members.
- Engagement Impact:** These gaps contribute to lower satisfaction, reduced interest, and weaker long-term retention.

**Project Objectives:**

- Personalize the Member Experience:** Tailor benefits and resources based on membership type, status, and interests.
- Improve Visibility & Access:** Create a seamless onboarding experience by making resources easier to find and understand.
- Boost Engagement & Retention:** Address member needs at key points in their journey to increase satisfaction and long-term involvement.

**Tools & Platforms:**

- Jira— Agile project tracking and backlog management
- Adobe AEM – Web content management
- Figma – UI/UX design and prototyping
- Slack – Team communication and collaboration

**Skills & Methodologies:**

- Agile & SCRUM – Sprint planning, iterative delivery
- Quality Assurance (QA)– Test planning, case creation
- Fast Tracking - MVP developed under one month
- Jira Tickets - 38 Jira tickets utilized for development

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**Development Approach**

AGILE METHODOLOGY

PLAN, DESIGN, DEVELOP, TEST, DEPLOY, REVIEW, LAUNCH

**Future Phase:**

- User Feedback-Driven Development:** Insights from the MVP rollout will guide future enhancements to ensure alignment with member needs.
- Enhance Personalization:** Continue evolving the experience to deliver tailored content, timely updates, and member-specific journeys.
- Support Retention & Growth:** Strengthen ACS.org as a personalized hub that supports long-term member engagement and satisfaction.

**Implementation Roadblocks:**

- Challenging Transition:** Back-to-back initiatives limited focus and ramp-up time.
- Compressed Timelines:** Tight deadlines added pressure, especially given the MVP's scope and complexity.
- Design-Development Misalignment:** Early design choices were made before technical feasibility was validated, resulting in rework and delays.
- Coordination Delays:** Cross-team alignment issues led to a two-week delay in deployment.

**Lessons Learned:**

- Prioritize Communication:** Continuous, open dialogue across teams is critical for alignment and project momentum.
- Value Documentation:** Maintaining detailed records of decisions and rationale ensures clarity and continuity.
- Align Scope with Capacity:** Early consideration of bandwidth and technical constraints enables realistic planning and delivery.
- Plan Transitions Strategically:** Structured handoff processes help teams onboard smoothly and maintain project momentum.

**My Contribution:**

- Backlog Refinement:** Improved ticket clarity, defined acceptance criteria, and supported sprint planning.
- Team Alignment:** Facilitated Scrum sessions and check-ins to maintain cross-functional coordination and momentum.
- QA Support:** Developed test plans, test cases, and QA tickets to streamline testing and ensure smooth MVP deployment.

## Problem statement

New ACS members receive a PDF outlining their benefits at the start of their membership. However, over time many members either misplace this document, forget its contents, or struggle to locate the information again. Compounding this issue, ACS maintains a vast network of websites serving diverse audiences, which often overwhelms members and makes it difficult to quickly find relevant resources.

This lack of clarity in navigation and benefit visibility has led to confusion, reduced engagement, and frequent reliance on customer support for assistance. As a result, members may feel disconnected from the value of their membership, increasing the risk of dissatisfaction and attrition. Addressing these challenges became critical to improving the onboarding experience, enhancing accessibility, and ultimately strengthening long-term member retention.

## My Contribution & Solution Implementation

When I joined the Digital Product Experience (DPX) team, the **Onboarding/Wayfinding** project had just been transitioned from another department—meaning it was a new challenge for both the team and myself. Recognizing this as an opportunity for hands-on learning, my manager entrusted me with a project management role, allowing me to experience firsthand how complex initiatives are executed within a large organization.

My first responsibility was to **gain a deep understanding of the project's scope and value**. I reviewed existing surveys, research, and pitch documents, and consulted both my manager and the previous project lead to fully grasp the problem space and intended impact. This foundation enabled me to align my work with the project's objectives of improving member navigation, enhancing visibility of benefits, and ultimately boosting retention.

Once the groundwork was set, I **facilitated sprint planning and stakeholder engagement**. I organized meetings to assign story points, created detailed Jira tickets with clear acceptance criteria, and ensured all stakeholders were actively involved in decision-making. This approach fostered consistent communication and kept cross-functional teams aligned throughout development.

During execution, the project faced significant **resource and timeline constraints**. Developers were still completing another initiative, limiting the time they could dedicate to this project. To mitigate this, a phased transition of development resources was coordinated, enabling progress while respecting existing workloads. In parallel, I prepared the **QA management plan**, developing test cases directly aligned with acceptance criteria and Figma designs.

As development advanced, it became clear that additional time was required to deliver a high-quality MVP. I coordinated discussions with business units (BUs) to secure an extension, ensuring quality was not compromised. When new requirements emerged mid-development—a natural outcome of ACS's hybrid Scrum model—I elicited those requirements, updated Jira tickets, revised test cases, and worked with developers to incorporate changes without derailing momentum.

Beyond project management, I also **contributed directly to QA testing across all stages—dev, staging, and production**—gaining hands-on experience in validation and quality assurance. Ultimately, the MVP was delivered successfully, meeting stakeholder expectations and establishing a solid foundation for future enhancements.

### Key Contributions:

- Acted as project manager for the Onboarding/Wayfinding initiative.
- Conducted research and documentation review to understand project value and scope.
- Facilitated sprint planning, stakeholder meetings, and backlog refinement.
- Created and maintained Jira tickets with clear acceptance criteria.
- Developed the QA management plan and authored test cases.
- Supported cross-team coordination under tight timelines.
- Assisted in QA testing across all stages of development and release.
- Ensured successful delivery of the MVP, while maintaining stakeholder alignment.

## Methodology

The **Onboarding/Wayfinding** project was executed using a **hybrid Scrum model**, which blended agile iteration with milestone-based delivery. This approach provided the flexibility to incorporate new requirements while maintaining a clear path toward the MVP launch.

### Workflow Cycle:

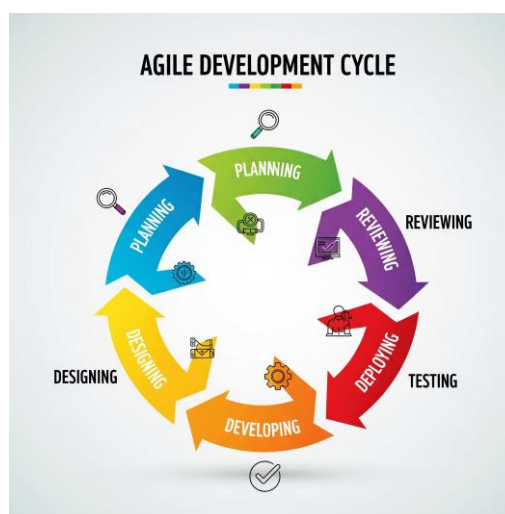
**Plan** – Conducted sprint planning with stakeholders, assigned story points, and created Jira tickets with clear acceptance criteria.

**Develop** – Developers transitioned onto the project in phases, building features iteratively while balancing other commitments.

**Test** – QA plans and test cases were developed alongside features, enabling early and continuous validation.

**Review** – Stakeholders reviewed sprint outcomes, provided feedback, and aligned on adjustments.

**Iterate** – New requirements were integrated, Jira tickets updated, and improvements refined before moving to the next sprint.



### Tools & Platforms:

**Jira** – For backlog refinement, sprint tracking, and task assignments.

**Confluence** – For documenting requirements, decisions, and project knowledge.

**Figma** – For design prototyping and aligning UI/UX with development.

**Adobe AEM** – For content management and implementation of the onboarding solution.

**Slack** – For daily team communication and cross-functional collaboration.

This structured yet flexible methodology ensured **continuous feedback, adaptability, and transparency**, allowing the team to deliver a high-quality MVP within a compressed timeline.