

## Transcription

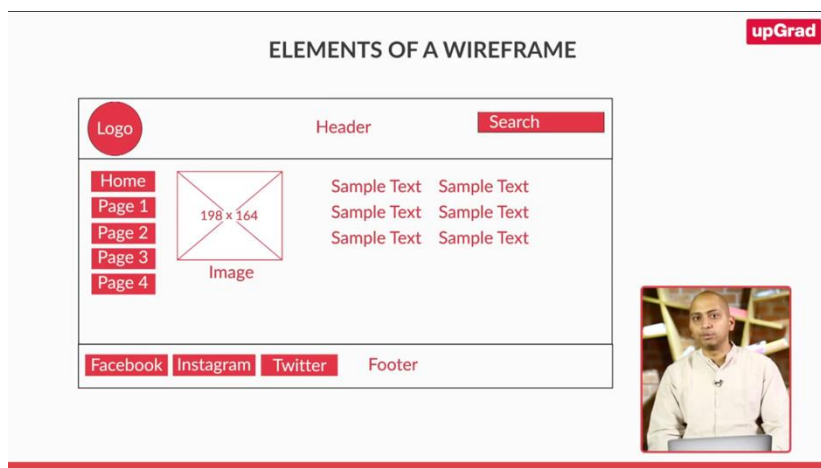
# Wireframes and mockups



What are wireframes? Wireframes are the skeleton structure of your product. They're built using tools on the computer. Wireframes help you communicate complex features and ideas in a structured format. They're used to get a high level of user flow in your product interface.

A wireframe is usually in greyscale and comes with placeholders for the images and text. You don't have to add visual details here as well. Now you might be thinking how is wireframe better than a pen and paper sketch? That both are in grayscale and they both provide a low fidelity version of your product or app.

The benefits are the same as having a digital page, with text typed versus a physical page with text written on it. On a digital medium, you can make as many copies as you like, make edits and collaborate in real-time without too much hassle. So think of wireframe as a method to convert your sketch into digital format. Wireframes for different products and websites look different. Let's now look at an example of a wireframe.

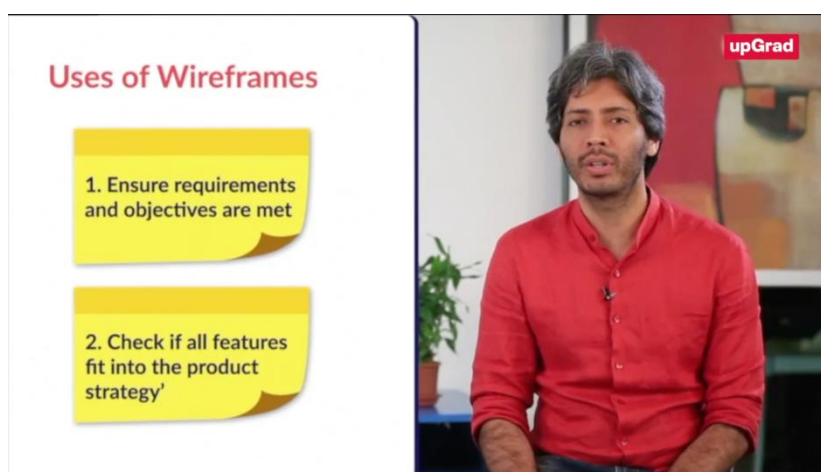


What are the elements that form a wireframe? Let's see them through with this website. Some of the common elements which go into wireframe are product logo, search field, header, navigation bar which showcases product navigation, image placeholder text placeholder, where you add text content, social share buttons and footer, where you can include content and copyright information. This is not an exhaustive list of all the elements that can be there in the wireframe. You can use other elements available in various libraries online or you can create new ones for your product from scratch.



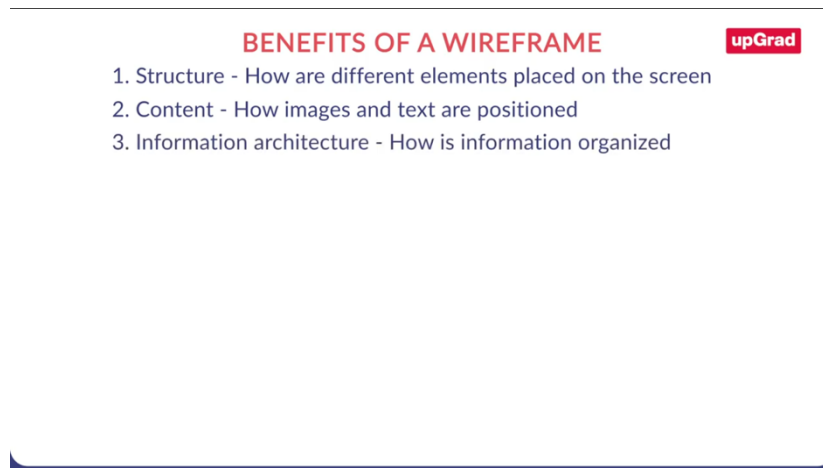
So how do you create a wireframe? You can use any design software like Photoshop, Sketch or Illustrator. But over time excellent tools specifically for developing wireframes have also been developed like Balsamiq, Axure and UXPin. These are especially good for those with limited design capabilities and have pre-developed libraries for various elements making the process of creating wireframes quicker and simpler. As a product manager it is important for you to understand that for mobile products, the user experience elements are different from those of traditional web applications.

For example, elements like menu bars and tables are configured differently for web and mobile. They look different and are positioned in a different way on the two screens. A wireframe for a mobile device looks different from that of a web-based one.



So there are specific tools you can use to create wireframes for mobile devices. Some of the more popular ones are, Dark, Marvel and POP. But as a PM, you will use wireframes to ensure that requirements and objectives are met through the design and check if the features fit into your overall product strategy.

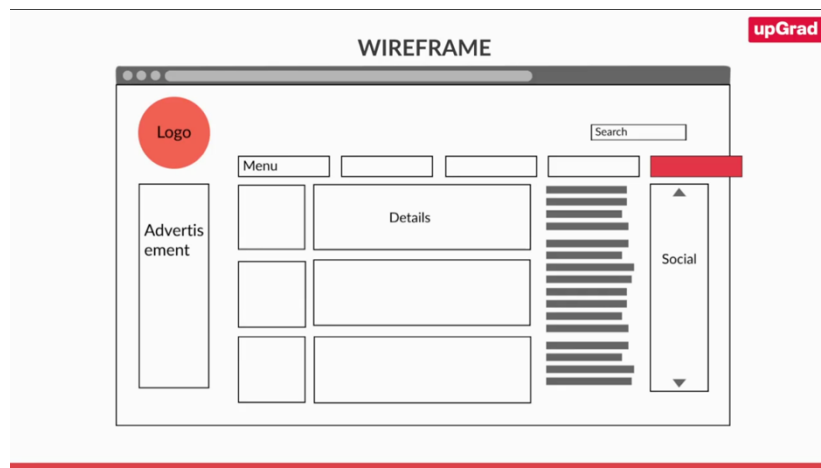
Why should you use wireframes? Wireframes are the blueprints of your product that connect the underlying conceptual structure or information architecture to the surface or visual design of the application or mobile app. To be specific, they are visual representations of an interface and are used to communicate the following details.



- Structure. How are the different elements of your product placed on-screen?
- Content. Where will the images and text be displayed on the site?
- Information architecture. How is information organised and displayed?

So suppose you and your team are in the process of building a fairly complicated product, say an enterprise product, which has multiple workflows. Let's take, for example, something which is used by SMB's right like a software like Tally, which is used for, used by people to do their records, to do their taxes.

Now you have multiple workflows involved here. Over time you won't just be working on one single screen, but your product might have something like 150 screens or 200 screens. Having your entire team on the same page is very critical for you to move fast. You can quickly iterate on the designs, come up with multiple wireframes and actually get across the structure and architecture of your app very, very clearly to your team and everyone will be on the same page.



With a wireframe, it's possible to have an early revision of your product. For example, let's say you built your first draught of your wireframe. Here you can see, the fifth element is going further away than planned. If there are 6 items on the menu instead of 4, they would not fit. The two items will have to be shown in a submenu inside existing menu or, it might have to get restructured.

If all the buttons are not fitting on the screen, you will have to go back to the sketch and change the position of your features. There are some common wireframing mistakes that you can avoid while creating your own wireframe. These are skipping a part. This can lead to an important feature being missed out at a later stage of the product development.

For example, let's say you have a blog website and you don't have added contact us or about us page. You may not give much importance to this feature initially since the user comes to your website, to read the blog and not to read about us section. But having this page will be helpful in building trust with our users and hastily creating one at the end before launching the product without proper planning might leave a bad impression.

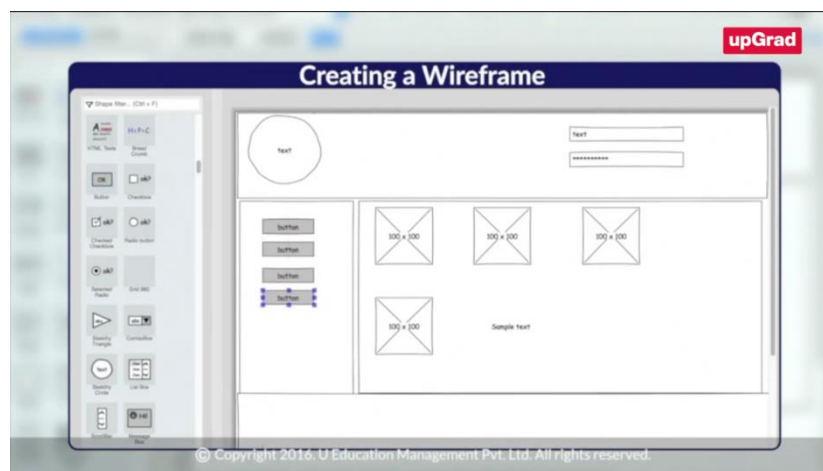


Including too many features or components. This may lead to an increase in the cost of building the product without adding much value. It is also possible that adding too many features get counterproductive for your product. Let's look at the following wireframe, which is a wireframe for a blogging website. The relevant content of this wireframe is the blog, which is a small portion, and instead, we have so many features, surrounded which is bloating the whole screen or adding so many features and reducing the emphasis on the blog.

Using colours or making it pretty. Wireframes are in grayscale because their purpose is to zero in on the structure, colours come in at the next stage. Adding them brings unnecessary attention to things that don't matter at the stage.

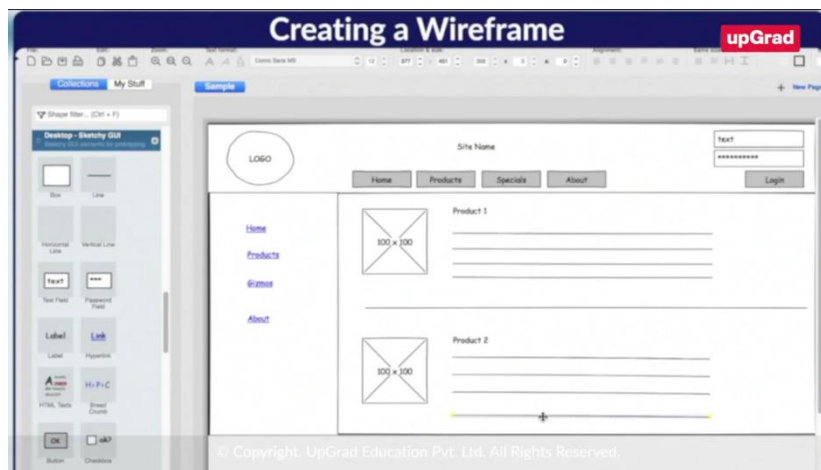
Not keeping it consistent. Consistency becomes more important when there are multiple screens and the flow might get disrupted due to inconsistency. For example, let's say you have 10 screens in your product? One of the features that you are supposed to include on each of the screen is a notification icon. Between multiplied iterations, you might miss out adding this, which will lead to problems at later stage with designers or with developers.

Finally, getting too attached. Wireframes can be tested and changed multiple times before finalising it. Getting attached to the design can hinder your ability to make changes.



Let's see how to create a simple wireframe. The first step is to set up the background layout depending upon the device your are building your product for. Determine the layout that you want by placing larger boxes to differentiate different segments. The information architecture in interaction design that you worked on will help you decide on the layout.

Now that you have a basic layout, you should add various elements that you want to include. After these elements, the image and text placeholder should be added. You can fill in dummy text, but it is preferable to use actual text content because it helps in determining factors like placement and sizing.

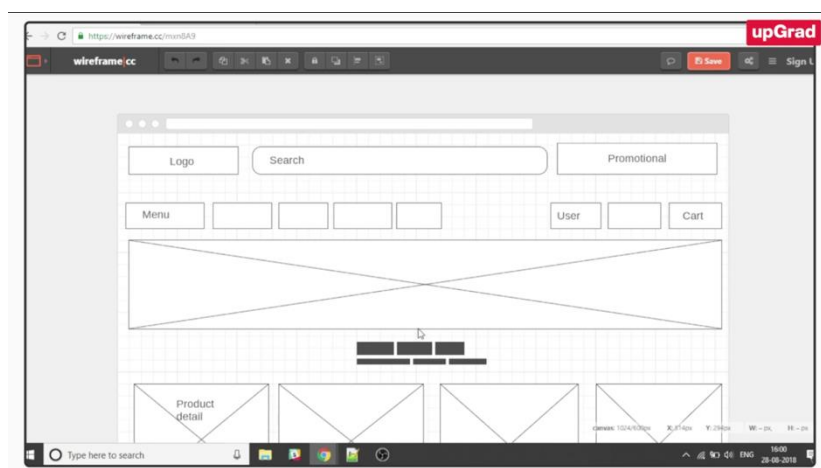


Typically, while building wireframes, we can use 1, 2 or 3 column layouts. So this sidebar will be my navigation bar, and now we put in a photo. We now have a very common layout ready with header, left column, main area, footer layout.

Next, I'll put in local navigation on the left handside and add some sort of site name up at the top and then I would put a placeholder for the logo. You might have a spot for people to login and then you would add a button for that. You can also do top level navigation up here.

Now when you doing these, this represents navigation, but you shouldn't leave them all saying button. You would say things like home, products, specials, about, etc.

So, let's now make it as a product page. view. We will show images for different products and add placeholders for the same. Now different products would be separated by a line and also each product would have a title and a detailed description. We will now add these elements. Typically to represent text, you should drop thick lines and not worry about the copy of the text. Now we have a simple wireframe for a product page ready.



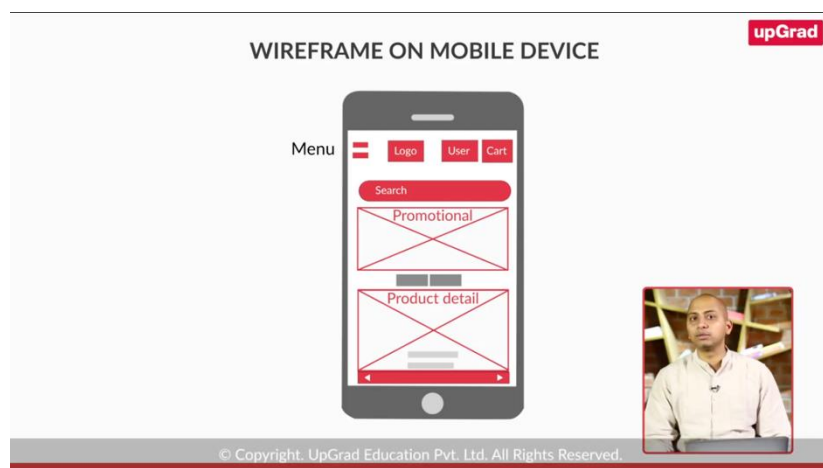
Let me create a quick wireframe for you. I will show you how easy it is to do it. In fact, anyone can do it very quickly. I am doing this using a website called wireframe.cc but you can use any tool that you are comfortable with. Sketch, a popular tool in the design community is also an amazing wireframe and it's my personal favourite. Unfortunately, it's

available only in Mac and it isn't free, but then again there are dozens of tools available online and tools are just means to an end. Now recall that we had couple of objectives in the beginning, which we used to create a sketch. Using that as the background, I will create this wireframe.

First I will put in a logo. Now I will put in a search bar on the side? I can put some promotional link, it can be to subscribe to a new offer or it could feature a quick buy in case of holiday season, such as Christmas gift. Next a menu item. This could be various categories of toys. On the right-hand side, I have included user details.

Now, when I was sketching this, I received feedback from the user that he would also like to look at the current cart. So on the homepage I'll put a small box with a quick link on the cart. Next, I will put a placeholder for promotional images, it can be slider of discounts or launch of a new toy or anything you would like to get attention to.


Moving on I will add the products in a bucket. Here I have included these type of lines depicting certain handling and next I have put in placeholders for product images and some more lines depicting product details. In this way I have converted the sketch that I had into a wireframe.



If I were to create a wireframe for the same website on an app, then this is how it would look like. You will notice that the elements are same, it has a menu, it has a logo, it has user details, cart and all of them. Next, you can see the search bar, promotional area and product details. Since a mobile screen has limited space. You can see a scrollbar while showing products. As you can see due to a smaller screen, the way all these elements are organised is different?

This is why many companies go for a mobile-first design. This means if they can fit the user needs into a mobile screen, which happens to be the biggest user segment, then it is easier to expand it to the page for a bigger screen.






**ADVANTAGES OF MOCK-UP**

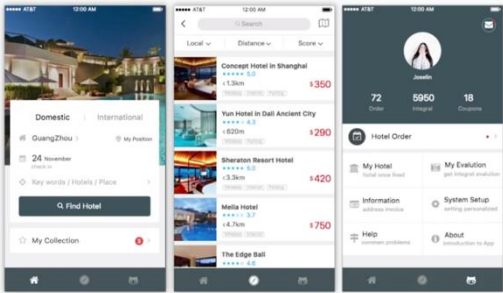
1. Provides clarity of ideas to stakeholders and investors
2. Makes it easier to explain your product

What is a mock-up? Mock-up is created when you add visual details into wireframes. This is still a static version of the product. It will look like what it is. It has a lot more details than wireframes. This is usually created by designers and not a PM. Unless it's a start-up or a very small team, even in a start-up it is sometimes or most of the times offshored to a freelancer.

Having a mock-up or a prototype provides clarity of idea to stakeholders and investors. Having visual details help you develop a better understanding and make it easier for you to explain your product to others. At this stage, you are ready to present it to your marketing team, to get feedback on the branding; tech team, to get estimates and dependencies and users to assess how easy or how difficult the product is to use. And even sometimes investors.



**SAMPLE MOCK-UPS**



Here is a sample mock-up of screens taken from a website called [mockingboard.in](https://mockingboard.in). You can see how much visual detail this has. Everything from image selected, to the line and the font, colour, icon, spacing and gaps. Everything that you can see is in will be almost like how your final product will be.

Such a mock-up is created for all the screens of the product. As you can see, this looks very close to the final version that you would expect from the app. Next, let's see how our product would look when we add interactivity into it



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