Project Methodology

Technical report

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Assessment

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Report Summary

The report explains in details the work process and tasks that were performed in building a website for the company Lofthus Frukt og Saft. Further, the report elaborates on the different stages in the project, divided into four phases: Discovery/ analysis, Outline, Design and Develop, test, launch. The project had clear objectives and goals, and a timeline (Gantt) with assigned tasks for different team members. The team included Project manager, Front End developer, Graphic designer, Content manager, UX Designer, Photographer and Copywriter. The entire project was scheduled to take just short of 11 weeks, and included in this timeline there are also several several meetings between project team and customer to ensure that the task is going according to plan.

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Introduction

In this assignment we are asked to plan a project of developing a new website for a medium sized Norwegian company called Lofthus frukt og saft. The new website is an important part of their new expansion strategy. The main part of the website is promoting and selling products, thus the presentation of these is a key area in the development process.

The project is large, and it thus demands collaboration between several participants with different areas of expertise. To keep all parties in the loop the project manager has created a Gantt timeline, which has several functions in this project: In addition to being a timeline to the participants and client, is tries to express visually the order of tasks and also phases the project goes through from start to end. In the project process there are also several meetings with the customer, which both serves as milestone deadlines, and a way to join the team with the project leader and customer.

Thought Process

I have no direct experience of planning a project in web design of such magnitude and with external resources. Thus, the tasks and their order has been set up in an order I felt appropriate. Further, the same goes for the time span of each task. I have tried to do research both through the internet and with people i know to get a feel for the time that is necessary to do these tasks in a good manner. I have also made an assumption that not all tasks will finish in accordance with deadlines, and therefore there also meetings with the customer throughout the process to adjust expectations on the finish date along the way.

The tasks are set up in chronological order, and the tasks with numbering like i.e 1.1 and 1.1.2 are tasks that belong together and where I think that they can be performed simultaneously by the same person/ team. Each phase has its own color, and the chart displays which tasks are performed at the same time and the person in charge of the task.

Process

Phase one - Discovery/ Analysis

The first step in the project is project definition. The need for a new website is triggered by a new strategic direction and to be present in new markets. We have an understanding that product promotion is a focus area in the campaign. The goals and objectives that are established at the outset of the project inform all future decisions , from site structure, navigation, content, call to action buttons etc. We interview stakeholders, and make a project summary with goals, target audience, communication key points etc. By building user pesona we seek to ensure that we know who will be using our site.

All the tasks at hand, as well as the persons in charge for each task is defined in a Gantt chart. By creating a well design project scope we set the expectations to our client. We have also given our team slightly more time on each task than what we thought would be spent in phase three and four of the project, as there tend to be some obstacles and/or errors that occur in testing before deploying.

Promoting the brand and their products is a focus area for this project, thus we quickly establish a need for a good photographer and content designer as well as a few other external resources. Our client, Lofthus Frukt og Saft will have a client contact that will be involved in all the steps that needs sign off in order to move forward in the right direction. The project Manager on our team is in charge of task delegation, keeping track of deadlines and also have budget responsibility. The content designer will help with the content on the site, and also making sure that all communications is in favour of strengthening the brand. The photographer makes the photographic portfolio, and the graphic designer is in charge of the visual elements and the web site style. The front end developer will have sketches

from the graphic designer, and build the website. The project timeline is 10 weeks and 2 days from initial meeting to hand off.

Phase two - Outline

Once the scope is well- defined we can start making the site map, defining how the content and features we defined in the scope definition will interrelate. When creating the sitemap and low definition wireframes we got insurance that we have considered all the key pages in the site and their relationship to each other. The designer also focused on making the navigation intuitive, and in style with use of large product photos.

Phase three - Design

Content design: Since we know that visual presentation of the products is a key element, the content manager early on establish a content hierarchy to ensure that the page does not overflow with text and information. We also make strategy for SEO, we want the site to be visible to many users.

In regards to visual design the graphic designer explore brand, fonts, colors and usability. To establish and express a creative direction he will make mood boards and a style tile. These are not only presented to the rest of the team, but also to the client for sign off before the process move forward. The complete look of the site is expressed in high definition wireframes and sketches in Illustrator that the Front End developer will use when building the sire.

Phase four - Develop, test and launch

The website is programmed by converting designs into HTML and CSS. We keep focus on developing a responsive site, that works well across devices.

The testing is done throughout the building phase, and includes testing user interface. Before the site is launched we placed it on a production server where only internal audience could view it. We also expect to come across some issues that needs to be addressed before going live.

Further we will run our site through "W3C Link checker", which looks for issues in links, anchors and referenced objects in a Web Page. The site will be reviewed on multiple browsers (Safari, Google Chrome, Firefox and Internet Explorer) and multiple devices. With the help of a website crawler we are able to review website structure and try to get higher ranking with Google and more traffic.

After the testing is verified we launched the site according to the time plan. Even if the site is launched we are prepared for feedback from users and also that the client that might demand some adaptation of the site.

After the website is live, we maintain a partnership with the customer by providing support assistance and ongoing maintenance to the website.

Tools

There are several tools available when building a website, and as the Project Manager I tried to make sure that each member work with tools that they are comfortable with, but at the same time makes collaboration across processes smooth.

For communication within the team we use Slack, and we also make a separate channel where Lofthus' representative is present.

For file sharing we use Google Drive, as all team members know how to use it and appreciate the opportunity to comment on changes etc. The design team will use Adobe Illustrator for the style tile and wireframes, and Adobe InDesign for moodboards.

The photographer will edit photos in Lightroom and Adobe Photoshop. Our Front End developer huses VS Code when building the site, and uploads his work in a GitHub repository.

Conclusion

The project is best summed up through the phases the work process was divided into. After interviewing the client the discovery and analysis phase continued a clear project

definition and scope as a basis for the design of the site. The outline was based on these findings, and was the "rough draft" of wireframes and site outlines. After ensuring that we had included all key elements, the visual and content design could start. The focus was on product images, and a content hierarchy with focus in information relevant for the user persona that we had designed. The visual content was illustrated in mood boards and sketches that was signed off by the client. The last phase is the development phase, that included testing and launching.

The project was finished on time without delays, and the team consisted of Project Manager, Company representative from customer, Graphic designer, UX Designer, Content designer, Copywriter, Photographer and Front End developer.

References

Link checker referred to in Process, Phase four, page 5 in this report :
https://validator.w3.org/checklink

Website crawler referred to in Process Phase four, page 5 in this report:
https://sitechecker.pro/website-crawler/

GitHub repository

https://github.com/monicamt/2019_03_09_Projectmethodology_Monica-Mulelid-Tynes