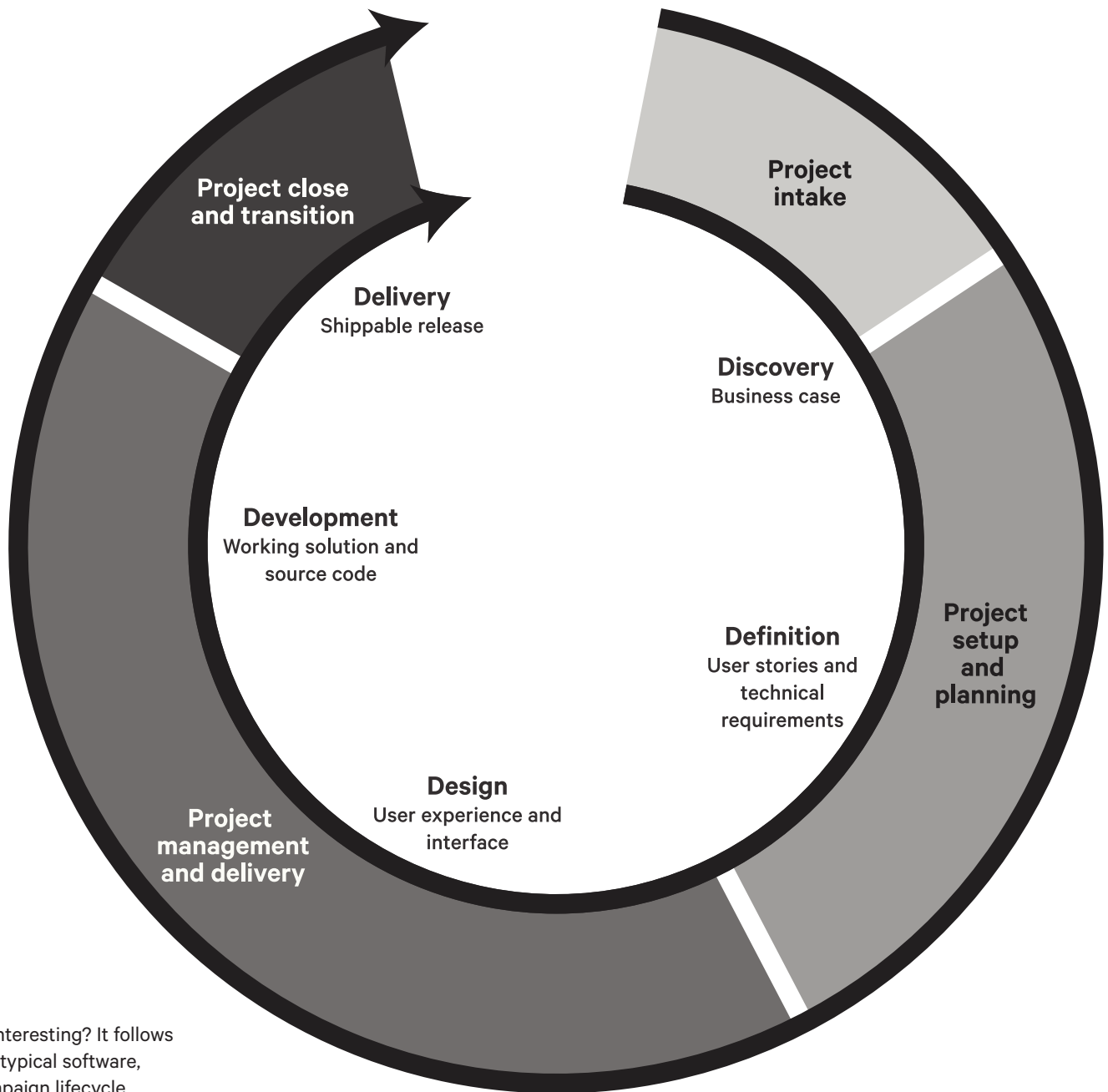




The digital project lifecycle

A quick example of typical processes in a project's lifecycle

Here's a brief version of one type of digital project lifecycle and some typical steps for design and software development. Be aware: organizations may run wildly different processes depending on the product, services offered, and partnerships they offer. Use this as a loose reference to guide your own organization.



Notice anything interesting? It follows similar steps as a typical software, marketing, or campaign lifecycle.

Project intake

These are all the steps you complete during project intake or sales.

Sales

- Lead comes in
- First call
- Initial review of overall scope, schedule, budget, and risk analysis to determine project fit
- Second call (third call or more if needed); project lead vets all likely leads
- Successful leads (75%+) vetted with anticipated project team to confirm high level scope
- Sale closes with a signed agreement outlining understanding of scope (for part of the project like discovery only, a full project, or a retainer) and first payment to hold the spot

Project intake (if internal facing team)

- Project concept announced
- Team scopes, budgets, and prioritizes project based on impact, effort, and reach
- Initial project summary and roadmap drafted

Project setup and planning

These are all the steps you complete to setup and plan your project.

- Upon receipt of first payment, schedule:
 - Pre-kickoff: PM and point of contact re: what to expect at kickoff
 - Internal kickoff: Project team to discuss goals and strategy
 - Kickoff: Project team and external or client stakeholders
 - Post Kickoff: Quick follow up between PM and internal project team
- Onboard and welcome stakeholders
- Setup project tools/folders/systems, establish process, constraints, any relevant milestones
- Review, post, and share kickoff notes

Research and Discovery

Begin discovery phase and prepare research sprint(s) (documentation and exploration)

- Determine and flesh out project scope and requirements, budget, flexible schedule, people resources, risks, communication, QA/QC, and launch plan
- Create strategy doc or research summary and present findings
- Create formal project plan; share with stakeholders; get approval for rest of project
- Mandatory re-estimate of scope; add any addendums to agreement

Project management and delivery

These are all the steps you complete to manage and deliver your project.

Definition/strategy

- Information architecture, user flows, content strategy, wireframing or prototyping begins
- If not in code, clickable wireframe is created (aka static mockup). Also called low fi prototype
- Additional research related to technical specs (e.g., server setup, APIs, integrations), content structure and hierarchy, legal or regulatory outline
- Content is organized and developed
- Team and PM note any risks, scope, budget, or schedule changes and communicates back to stakeholders

Design & development

- Style guide, brand guidelines, front-end design system developed
 - If Branding: logo and other assets created
- Hi-fi prototyping
- CMS development is integrated (if relevant)
- If app, development sprints are staggered after design sprints
- Documentation and technical specifications incorporated
- Regular reviews and sign-offs take place for each iteration
- Change control: estimate additional scope/ sprints for out of scope items
- Quality control: Testing, bug fixes, and feature prioritization occurs throughout
- Document scope, schedule, budget changes and notify stakeholders throughout

Project close and transition

These are all the steps you complete to close and transition your project.

Launch/deployment/ongoing phases

- Batch all final requests and questions
- Bundle all assets and final files and await final payments/approvals before final handover
- Stakeholder offboarding and training to CMS/ app use (documentation required)
- Quality assurance and additional threshold testing
- User testing and ongoing metrics tracking (e.g., ROI)
- Point domain, if relevant
- Submission for approval for app store, if relevant
- Ensure all final payments received
- Retrospective with team and other stakeholders
- Plan schedule and scope details for next phase
- Launch
- Celebrate!
- Post-launch adjustments as needed
- Begin next phase