

User Experience

Make usability “usable”:

Communicate, establish and embed the value of usability throughout the organization and client base.

Create a user-centric process that easily allows usability to touch every project, initiative and corporate decision making.

Strategic Principle

Quantify the user experience

Shift from incorporating usability as a theory up to measuring usability as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI).

User experience

A term used to describe the overall experience and satisfaction a user has when using a product or system.

Information Architecture

The organization of patterns inherent in data, making the complex clear; the structure, map or blueprint of information which allows others to find a path of knowledge.

We advocate and sell user experience, but we deliver IA.

Strategy

Set tactical and strategic goals, maximize efforts and diminish redundancy

- establish core methodologies and best practices for information architecture, business analysis and usability testing
 - Integrating other tools and resources to best assess user experiences quantifiably (web analytics, SEO/SEM strategies, etc.)
 - Ongoing discussion and collaboration between the user experience group and other disciplines within Studiocom.
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Actions | Impacts

- Worked collaboratively and concurrently with the creative team on CVS to reduce redundancies in meetings, transfer of information
 - Throughout restructuring of navigation and creating templates, sitting with the designer(s) and giving input on concepts as they work allows for instant feedback of what is flexible/inflexible in terms of placement, functionality, etc.

 - With team leads, devised (and designed) the approval process flow for CVS
 - This flow gave the CVS stakeholders reassurance that we were taking actionable steps to improve and speed up the processes
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Actions | Impacts

- Documentation lives on CVS' Sharepoint, accessible via CVS laptops (Alan, Chris, Thurston). Access is not only challenging physically, but the file structure is not intuitive
 - As the UX/BA, Devra has taken a "usable" structure and created a repository in SVN, and is working on a Traceability Matrix, a Glossary/Business Dictionary, and a document that illustrates the relationship between the Use Cases (written by a 3rd party through CVS), and the related use cases, and the Functional Specs.
 - [See documents in folder, emails flagged]
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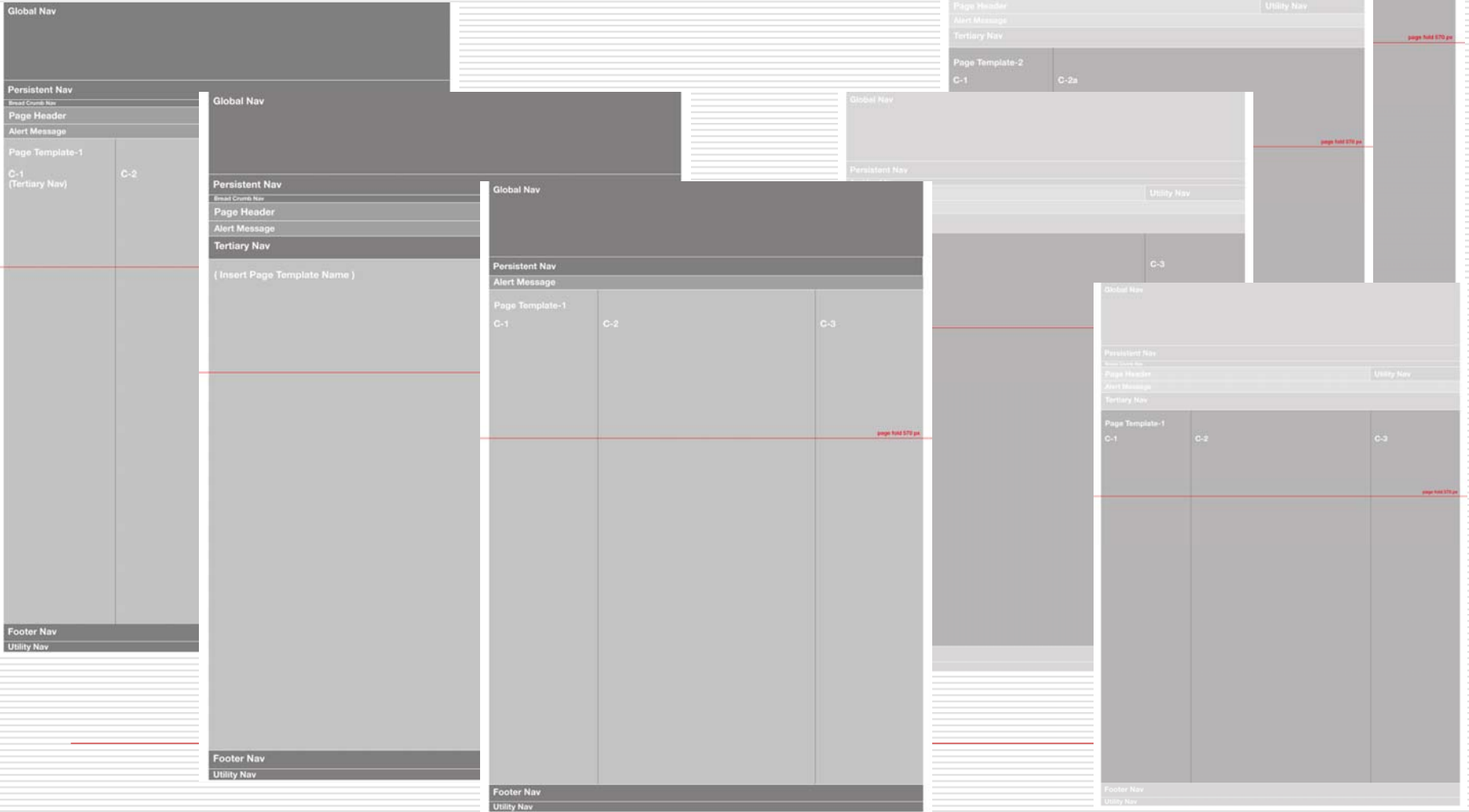
Actions | Impacts

- Annotations have been complex in both execution and assignment; this is normally a UX role, but a team has been established to support the stringent deadlines
 - As the UX/BA, Devra is heading the team comprised of Alpesh and Maryanne. She has developed a process to alleviate the multiple questions to Alan, manage and organize similar questions, and streamline the Screen Specs document's descriptions in a legend (ie, radio button behaviors, validation, values).
 - [See documents in folder, emails flagged]
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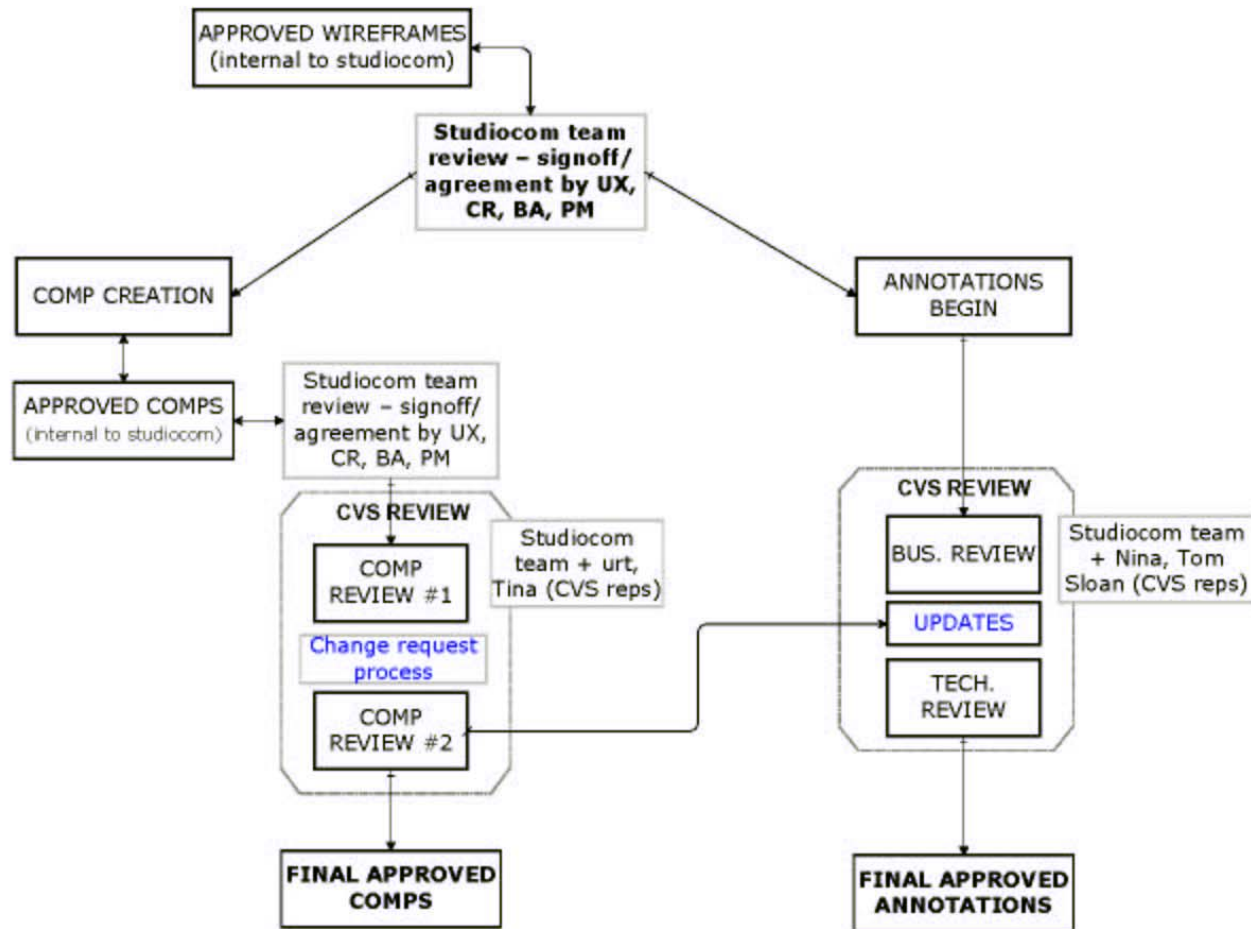
Actions | Impacts

- Content strategy is critical to the successful user experience, so have brought in a contractor I have worked with many times to create the strategy, with Thurston's approval
 - Because the BR/Use Cases have been written in a very linear fashion, I have been flowing the user experiences to cross multiple BRs.
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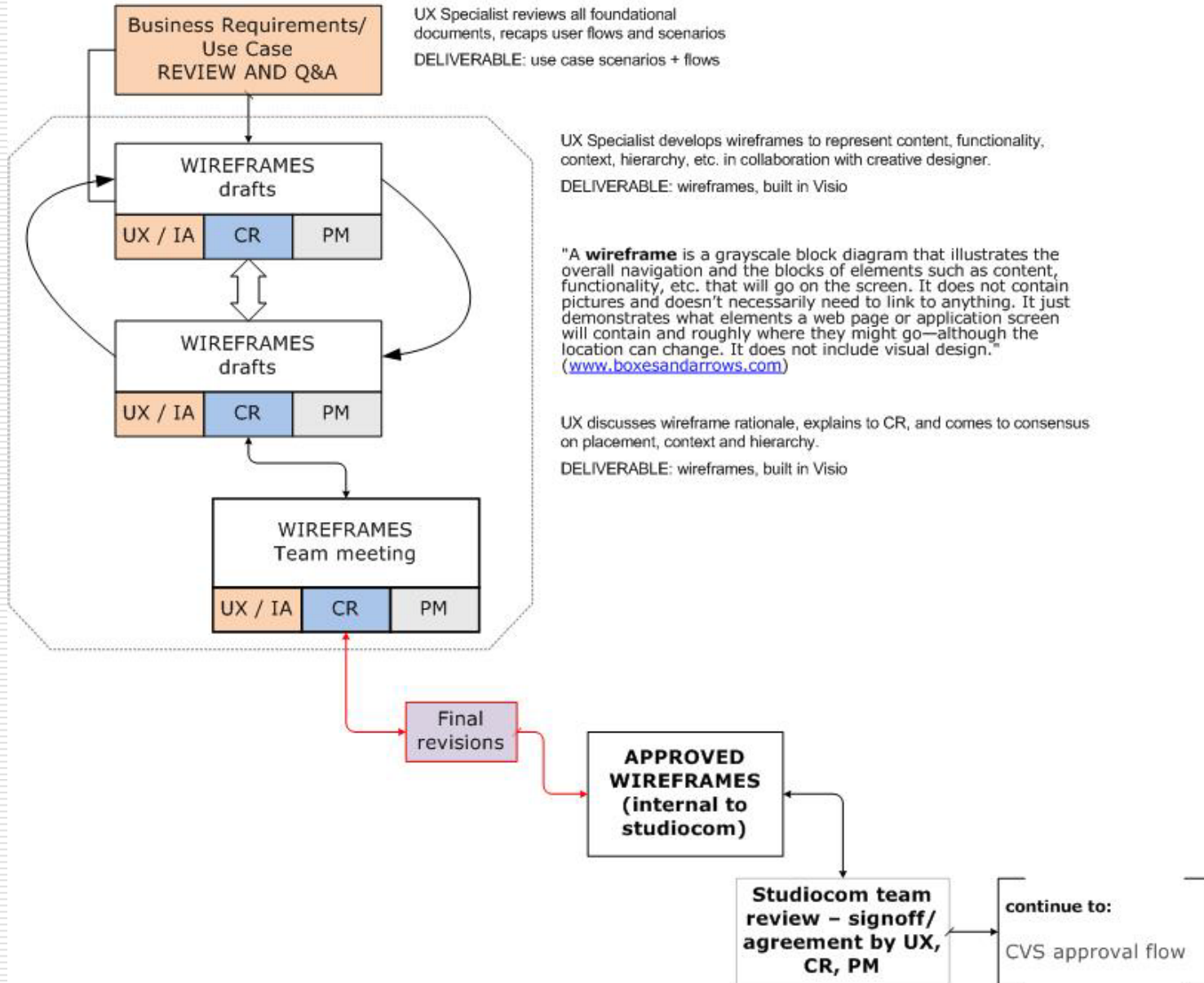
Low-Fidelity Templates



WIREFRAMES, COMPS AND ANNOTATION APPROVAL PROCESS



WIREFRAMES, COMPS AND ANNOTATION APPROVAL PROCESS



MCR Usability Lab

- When I first met with Jean Mertz, she was very reluctant to approve the Usability SOW. She expressed a lack of trust in our being able to deliver, based on the issues with the MCR 2007 project.
 - I gave her my assurances as the UX Director that any miscommunications within Studiocom would be monitored and closely followed by me, and that I was building processes to avoid any similar issues in the future. I also offered to do a heuristic evaluation of the site to show both my knowledge, as well as give quantifiable insight in to the user experience.
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MCR Usability Lab

- The heuristic evaluation was presented, and Jean told us to move forward with the usability test
 - The budget was capped at \$20,000, so I went to Alucid and renegotiated their proposal. The final bid was lowered significantly by having the eye tracking analysis at no cost, and taking on one of the tasks that they would normally have handled.
 - Collaboration on the screener and protocol document has been completed and forwarded to the client.
 - [See documents in folder]
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Other Strategy Goals

- Establish and build user experience knowledge base using both project related and independently conducted studies, in anticipation of web and user trends, by:
 - Conducting multiple methods of primary and secondary research including interviews with key stakeholders, observation, surveys, market research, Web analytics, etc.
 - Analyzing user segments and their information and functional needs in order to create personas/scenarios.
 - Researching and analyzing industry trends and competitive information
 - Conducting ongoing usability testing and assessment
 - Defining metrics for assessing success
 - Authoring and publishing whitepapers, case studies, etc.
 - Lead local industry groups (i.e., Atlanta chapter, UPA), host industry community meetings, collaborate with other complementary groups (SIGCHI), development partnerships with educational institutions (i.e., Georgia Tech).
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Other Strategy Goals

- Support growth exposure and credibility of Studiocom as top tier interactive agency through participation at key conferences as a presenter and/or panelist discussing user experience methodologies, case studies, successes and/or key learnings.
 - Share emerging user experience trends, testing methodologies, significant shifts in perceptions, etc. through company wide presentations at “brown bag” get-togethers (“bring your own lunch”, talk, learn, ask questions).
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Other Strategy Goals

- Participate in and lead special projects such as innovation teams, process development, etc.
 - I've been invited to give actionable input on pitches for Lowes, Del Puma/Eclipse, and Lending.com. Diane is currently using an email campaign that uses the "8x8" real estate philosophy (Andres)
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8x8 Touchpoints

TOUCHPOINT #1 Building Persuasion Scenarios to Increase Conversion by Bryan and Jeffrey Eisenberg, Future Now, Inc. [see document in folder]

TOUCHPOINT #2 Podcast – The Battle between SEO and Conversion (Bryan and Jeffrey Eisenberg) – see attachment

TOUCHPOINT #3 The Paradox of Choice by Barry Schwartz

Barry Schwartz is a sociology professor at Swarthmore College and author of **The Paradox of Choice**. He persuasively explains how and why the abundance of choice in modern society is actually making us miserable.

TOUCHPOINT #4 <http://www.baddesigns.com/>

A funny look at bad usability – in every day life.

TOUCHPOINT #5 Entrepreneur Magazine article:

Seal the Deal: Easy solutions to keep your online customers from ditching their shopping carts during checkout <http://www.entrepreneur.com/magazine/entrepreneur/2004/june/70916.html>

TOUCHPOINT #6 To live chat or not... how NOT to do it: try this? Pick to have a live person help you with your search... <http://chacha.com/>

TOUCHPOINT #7 Search Marketing Measurement – a white paper by Jupiter Research (see attachment)

TOUCHPOINT #8 How to spread the word about your company: build an associates program (affiliate program).

Here's how Expedia does it: <http://www.expedia.com/daily/associates/default.asp?rfr=-952>

See how an Expedia widget is embedded in a news article about travel (see attached jpg)

See Travelocity's widget is on Frommer's page – the ultimate travel bookguide resource

User Ability or Usability?

"Usability is about human behavior. It recognizes that humans are lazy, get emotional, are not interested in putting a lot of effort into, say, getting a credit card and generally prefer things that are easy to do vs. those that are hard to do."

"[Move] usability thinking into our buildings, call centers, forms and products. It's common sense: If your business is easier to use than your competitor's, people will be more likely to do business with you."

A usable business is a more competitive business."

-- David McQuillen in "Taking Usability Offline" Darwin Magazine, June 2003

Usability is the degree to which something - software, hardware or anything else - is easy to use and a good fit for the people who use it.

-- Usability Professionals Association

User experience group

- Manage UX specialists in LA, Boston and Atlanta, comprised of 3 multi-faceted User experience specialists with cross-functional skill sets in the user experience discipline (information architecture, user testing, business analysis, project based QA) as well as industry-related (i.e., flash, community, ecommerce, hospitality, SEO/SEM).
- Acts as hiring manager for the user experience group for all office locations, with a goal of increasing permanent staff, mentoring leadership and creating a pool of highly competent contractors
- Defines, maintains and updates all group job descriptions
 - **Senior** User Experience Specialist, who has a broad knowledge of information architecture deliverables and usability testing methodologies, plus has shown skill in successfully working with clients in all levels of communication (face to face, telephone, email and written reports/presentations). This Senior UX Specialist believes in a collaborate process for problem solving and brainstorming across disciplines, as well as within the user experience group.
 - User Experience Specialist/Information Architect, who shows an ongoing habit of increasing their knowledge and expertise of information architecture deliverables and usability testing methodologies, has had some exposure to direct client contact via face to face and/or written avenues, and is interested in gaining more expertise in working directly with clients. This UX Specialist believes in a collaborate process for problem solving and brainstorming across disciplines, as well as within the user experience group.
 - User Experience **Strategist**/Business Analyst, who shows an ongoing habit of increasing their knowledge and expertise of information architecture deliverables and usability testing methodologies, has had some exposure to direct client contact via face to face and/or written avenues, and is interested in gaining more expertise in working directly with clients. This UX Specialist believes in a collaborate process for problem solving and brainstorming across disciplines, as well as within the user experience group.

User experience group

- Reports short and long term status/staffing needs to HR staff/senior team
 - Advocates for and mentors the user experience specialists across all office locations, with a goal to develop and mentor leadership roles for each office location.
 - Create professional development plan to expand on knowledge and skills. Discover and incorporate trainings into the group's schedule both internally and externally.
 - Understand each person and how they are best nurtured, and maintain open lines of communication at all times.
 - Establish regular "field trips" to one office location; by rotating visits, one group "hosts" and creates an agenda that includes meeting staff, reviewing current projects, discussing industry topics, etc.
 - Set "no work" days which requires that each group member does research and creates a presentation delving in to a new aspect to testing, research, documenting, etc., then presents it to the rest of the group. Ideally, this is one day between the traveling field trips, as a way not only to pursue the discipline, but also to maintain the feeling of community between all the offices.
 - Manage performance of the group by establishing baseline of expectations (internally within the group, as well as outfacing to the company and clients), setting appropriate measurements to conduct performance assessments. Establish consequences for each potential outcome of the reviews
 - Communicates recommendation for approval of department promotions
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Process

- ❑ Author documentation to address user experience needs for all phases of a project – both direct and supporting; ensure that each type of document addresses the needs of the project, disciplines and client
 - ❑ Promote the importance of consistency of each document via training and communication within the user experience group.
 - ❑ Validate usefulness of each document throughout projects and fine tune as necessary; manage process iteratively to understand what elements are unchanging and what should to be flexible based on client needs. Publish process of user experience group, including reference to documents and/or services.
 - ❑ “Own” the Intranet development, and its ongoing improvement and integration in to the developing company wide process changes.
 - ❑ Maintain SVN version control folders
 - ❑ Maintain shared documents and communications on wiki.studiocom.com
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UX Supporting Documents

- Strategy questionnaire – broken down by disciplines
 - Brand questionnaire
 - Functional Specs Doc
 - Background | Rationale | Objectives | Goals & MOS
 - Heuristic Evaluation
 - Competitive Analysis
 - Flows
 - Use case scenarios
 - Wireframes
 - Comps
 - Screen specs
 - Design specs
 - QA test plan
 - Post Mortem
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Projects | Immediate UX needs

- ❑ Dunkin | 802 hours
 - ❑ Baskin | 200 hours
 - ❑ Activision | 288 hours
 - ❑ Impremedia | ~280 hours
 - ❑ Wonka/Nestle | 200 hours +
 - ❑ Fx | 16 hours
 - ❑ McCormick
 - ❑ MCR
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My Favorite Quotes

"Each problem that I solved became a rule which served afterwards to solve other problems. "

Rene Descartes

"Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous."

Confucius

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."

Albert Einstein
