BA Case Study: Technical/Web Development

Development of a Website with Integrated Widget

Effective Communication with Business and Technical Stakeholders to Facilitate a Smooth Successful Design and Development of the Solution

BA Skills Covered: Full-cycle contribution, contextual/historical analysis, stakeholder communication and management, problem/solution identification, scope definition, requirement gathering and documentation, use cases, business process modelling, wireframes, diagrams, report writing, presentations, supporting business and technical implementation, creating instructional materials, project evaluation and self-evaluation.

BA Documents Utilised: Contextual/competitor research, resource analysis , stakeholder management plan, communication plan, root cause analysis, SWOT analysis, GAP analysis, scope statement, BA work plan, legislation and regulation summaries, business requirements, software requirements, functional requirements, use cases, requirements traceability matrix, wireframes, diagrams, process models, impact analysis, roll out plans, change/transition management plans, UAT plan and evaluation, training materials and success log, data analysis and visualisation, and project evaluation.

BDCR, Powys, Wales	2018

My Role: *Business Analyst*

I joined the project to analyse all processes comprising of the company's online presence, including their website, social media, branding, and online marketing and to provide tailored solutions based on business analysis and UX best practices to improve their products. I was the key point of contact for the web designer and web developer working on the website which included an integrated live data feed widget.

I worked very closely with the project manager and senior stakeholders throughout and facilitated workshops at key moments in the life cycle.

Project Summary

Powys locals came together via a renewable energy ownership scheme to create the non-profit Bro Dyfi Community Renewables. The group had previously created and published a website, but they had very limited modern understanding of the online world. Their website was very outdated and quite disorganised and in general great need of modernisation and rational

organisation.

They had done very well to become established and to generate the interest they had so far, but to grow, they knew they had to modernise and improve their business processes and their online presence. They were also keen to establish mutually beneficial relationships with external partners but did not have the knowledge of the requirements, or the processes required to make a success of the relationships.

The above had been identified as the key requirements for growth and the successful achievement of their goals, and providing rational informed solutions was what I was hired to help with.

The Main Challenges

First and foremost was the organisation-wide almost complete lack of knowledge and understanding of the realities of the online world. This made engaging with key stakeholders difficult as they often perceived the subject matter to be impenetrable, without giving them fair hearing.

Second was that the web designers and developers that the group had historically used hadn't modernised their skillset. This was compounded because some of the members of BDCR were friends of the designer and developer and were quite insistent that they must be used for the project.

Third was that given the nature of the organisation, it was difficult to be able to meet with key stakeholders together regularly, and this made communication, teamwork, and progress challenging.

At first, it seemed like the stakeholders expected the project manager and I to do literally everything without needing their input. The biggest challenge at first was educating the stakeholders regarding what would be required of everyone involved for the project to be a success – and then achieving consistent buy in and cooperation.

Solutions

I worked closely with the project manager throughout, and he had good technical understanding and a respect for business analysis and UX processes. That meant that we worked together well and were most often on the same page. He was based locally in the BDCR office, and I was working remotely. It was great help to have someone there in-person, as that was the mode of communication most favoured by the stakeholders.

To at least partially solve the issue with not being able to regularly bring all key stakeholders together, I came up with the idea of the project manager making a presentation/q and a when it was the monthly stakeholder meeting when most stakeholders would already be in attendance. They wanted the project manager and I to 'get on with things' – but they also wanted to be 'involved' – whilst not wanting to actually consistently be involved!

Examples of some of the well-received presentations I created are available to view by request.

I also created a business process for enhanced communication, and ensured all stakeholders were set up with access to email and knew what to do etc via basic online training. We also took everyone's phone numbers but ensured them they would only be contacted if it was absolutely essential for us to progress. We now had a much more effective business communication model whereby the project manager would present the summaries each month – and then update by email in the interim – then call if urgent. The model was approved and successfully implemented – and adhered to most of the time.

I created engaging presentations for the project manager to present whereby they were visually interesting – and the information was concise and clear and jargon free. I incorporated startling statistics about the return on investment of business analysis, UX, and online marketing that were hard to ignore. This helped ensure that our plans were approved, and the required funds released.

The organisation has a few different user groups – so I created user stories, user journeys and user personas so that the stakeholders could understand what the users come to the website looking for – and how best to arrange and showcase the content on the website most effectively.

Working with the web designer and developer was difficult because initially they would basically assure us with confidence that they knew exactly what to do to meet all our requirements, but they were frequently hard to reach and not the best communicators in general. They unfortunately seemed to resent contact. It reached the point where the project manager had to make it clear that they either did things the way we were requesting, or we would need to look elsewhere for solutions. This was all done very diplomatically – and the key stakeholders were informed as to the reasons why etc.

*Ultimately, we were able to make it work – but I had to essentially become a web designer and web development guide for the duration of the project. I basically had to make our requirements as clear and simple as possible and did so by creating hi-fidelity wireframes/prototypes with annotations so all the designer and developer had to do was reproduce what they could see – the prototype essentially looked like a complete site (*screenshot available by request).*

The web design went smoothly, but the development proved more challenging. I solved this with the use of effective communication and motivation skills with the developer. Fortunately, I have basic HTML/CSS/JS/Python knowledge and skills, and this really helped. I assured the developer I'd stick with him if he took on board what I was suggesting – and when he saw the progress being made and goals achieved – our relationship and outputs improved a lot. He ended up acknowledging the project had been great for his CPD because I would send him links to video tutorials for what he needed to work on next etc.

The organisational culture and ways of working were outdated and quite slow when I came on board, and while it took a lot of work at first, to their credit they did develop the organisation how they needed to give themselves a realistic chance of achieving their goals. After about a couple of months, enthusiasm started to grow – the presentations helped – and then when we were showing prototypes etc. and they looked good to them – then things got progressively easier for us to manage. Progress was a lot smoother and faster from then to completion.

As well as the communication business process models, I also worked on creating social media management process models, and online marketing models. This was to support the impressive online presence we helped to create to hopefully be manageable and sustainable once the project was complete. I also produced training resources which the project manager used as part of staff

training on the processes.

I created basic 'skeleton' versions of the documents listed at the top of this study. The stakeholders were reluctant (especially at first) to give much time and energy to trying to understand the details of the project, so I kept the documents as brief as possible while containing the essentials and ensuring that while brief, all boxes were ticked. The documents were very useful for working collaboratively with the project manager and the designers/developers.

Results

The project was a success, and all our goals were achieved. The project morphed somewhat in size, and new goals were set and subsequently met (scope creep management).

In terms of deliverables, BDCR had a UX optimised visually pleasing and engaging website with accessible and very well-structured content designed to meet all their user's needs. The website housed a live output feed from the key wind turbines in the local area. This was one of the biggest technical/development challenges, and a great feature to showcase, engage, and impress.

The stakeholders were very pleased – and the project manager reported back to me how good the feedback had been generally in the community – which was very pleasing.

They now also had understanding of (and respect for) social media, and online marketing, training materials for both, and easy to implement business processes for both.

As a result of the project BDCR modernised as an organisation and were given all the tools required for them to manage their new online presence, marketing, and user engagement.