Letter B Four Step Process
Distance Learning

Letter B uses a Four Step Approach to working with our clients that guides how we iteratively work on projects. This document outlines those steps when applied to Distance Learning Solutions. This repeatable process is to ensure that the software truly meets the needs and wants of, not only the primary stakeholders, but the people that will be using the system every day.

Plan

Client and User Interviews

Brainstorm and Conceptualize

Use Case Mapping

Functional Specification Analysis

DESIGN

Rapid Prototype Design

Information Architecture

Interaction Design

Page Flow

Wireframe

Persona Design

YOUR USERS

TEST

Government 508 Test

Usability Test

Accessibility Test

Collect Test Results

Test Result Reporting

Feedback and recommendations

DEVELOP

Style Guide

CSS Stylesheets

Ajax Javascript development

Graphic Design

Step One, Listen

We listen to the stakeholders, learners, and system administrators to get a true feel of the working situation that the courseware must enter into. During this time, in order to learn more, we ask questions about processes and needs. We intently listen to the answers to collect and categorize them. We then take that information and turn it into a set of initial training requirements that are sent back to all for review. After refining the requirements, the initial solution is clarified in a set of delivered requirement documents.

Step Two, Design With Change in Mind

Through Step One of the process we learned about the training needs, the actors and environment, and turned those into an initial set of requirement documents. In this step, we start by taking those actors that were discovered, and turn them into personas. A persona, in design terms, defines a detailed view of a type of person, outlining who they are, their major and minor objectives to be learned from the training and what their goals are. Additionally we work to get an initial dissection of the major parts and functions of the learning management system using information architecture activities. We apply the developed personas to a prototype of the initial training materials. Through rapid prototyping activities like creating wireframes or storyboards, an initial view into the look of the training interface and its content organization can be seen by learners and stakeholders. These activities are being conducted at the same time the development team is setting up LMS environments. Before completion of this process, both teams need to work together to make sure there is a good understanding of the training goals and objectives to be taught, as well as how the technologies used to deliver the training will affect development.

Step Three, Develop Iteratively

Deliverables from Step Two such as prototypes, storyboards, learning paths, site maps and LMS decisions go into Step Three, the actual development of the training system. At this point, the team has worked hard to get a good picture of what the training system is to look and function like. However, things will be discovered during development that may change the course of the documentation and require that documents that are affected, be updated. For this reason, we work with the development team closely to make sure that designs and layouts fit the task being performed. We also work with stakeholders to set iterations and create reference points that can be tracked back to decisions. Project management abilities to manage change is integral at this step in the cycle. Upon completion of an iteration of development testing, review and redesign can commence.

Step Four, Test Continuously

During the development stage of the process, testing is imperative to providing a deployment-ready solution. Usability testing can be conducted with users in both design and development stages to help designers clearly get an idea of how users understand system functionality. We use this form of testing to link how functionality can be presented to users for a more refined interface. Section 508 defines initial guidelines for making accessible software. Accessibility testing must be done during and after development to make sure that users with disabilities still have access to the information provided by the system. Additionally, functional and customer testing of completed portions are needed to make sure that the training system meets the needs of stakeholders and can perform in the production environment.