



A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO WEBSITES

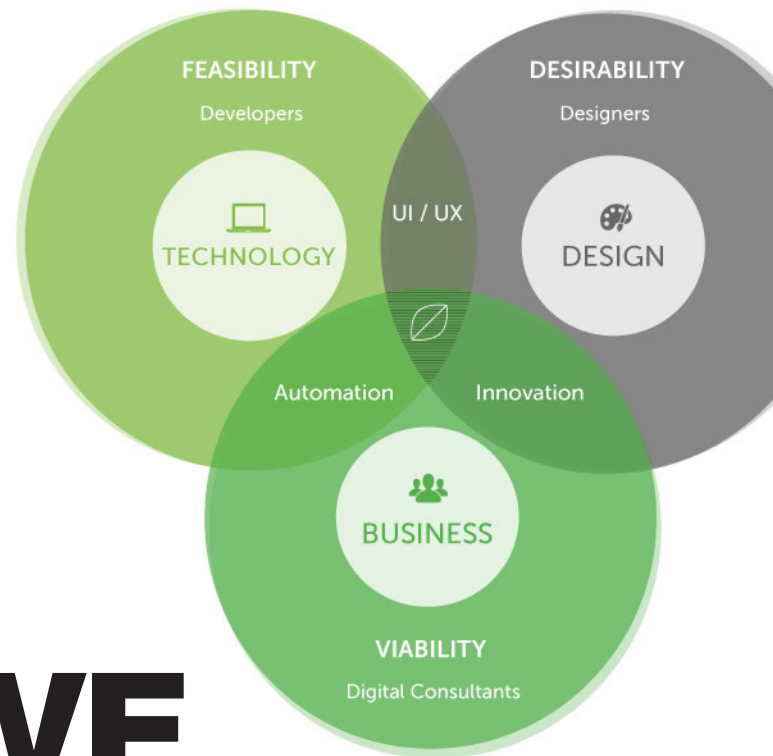
BY FRESH CONSULTING

freshconsulting.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS



| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Why Holistic | 1 |
| Holistic vs. Fragmented | 2 |
| Design | 4 |
| Technology | 5 |
| Business | 6 |
| Pay Off | 7 |



HOW WE DO WEBSITES

Executive leadership, marketing, and IT often have different priorities, but they almost always agree on one thing: creating a website can be a beast of a project... What is our story? Does it make us look good? Is it user friendly? Is it integrated into our sales and operations? Does the messaging resonate with our target audience? There is a lot to cover and even when priorities and goals are clear, it can take months, sometimes years (so we've heard), for companies to build something right on their own.

We recently talked with a 20M company whose digital partner took two years to build their site (ouch). Every month the website failed to go live cost them in lost opportunity and profit. In spite of the two years spent building tons of pages, the finished website delivered

a poor experience, further hurting sales and global perceptions of their brand.

What happened? While the company worked heavily with an external developer in coding the site, they forgot the ten other aspects that go into a successful website. The contracting company underbid the project and then delivered a single developer to help execute. People without design experience were in charge of design, and there was no help on messaging. The wrong infrastructure plagued the project and both the client and contractor underestimated the effort, making for a painful relationship throughout. Elements of this story may be familiar if you haven't taken a holistic approach to building a high-end website in your past.

HOLISTIC FULL-SERVICE APPROACH VS. FRAGMENTED APPROACH

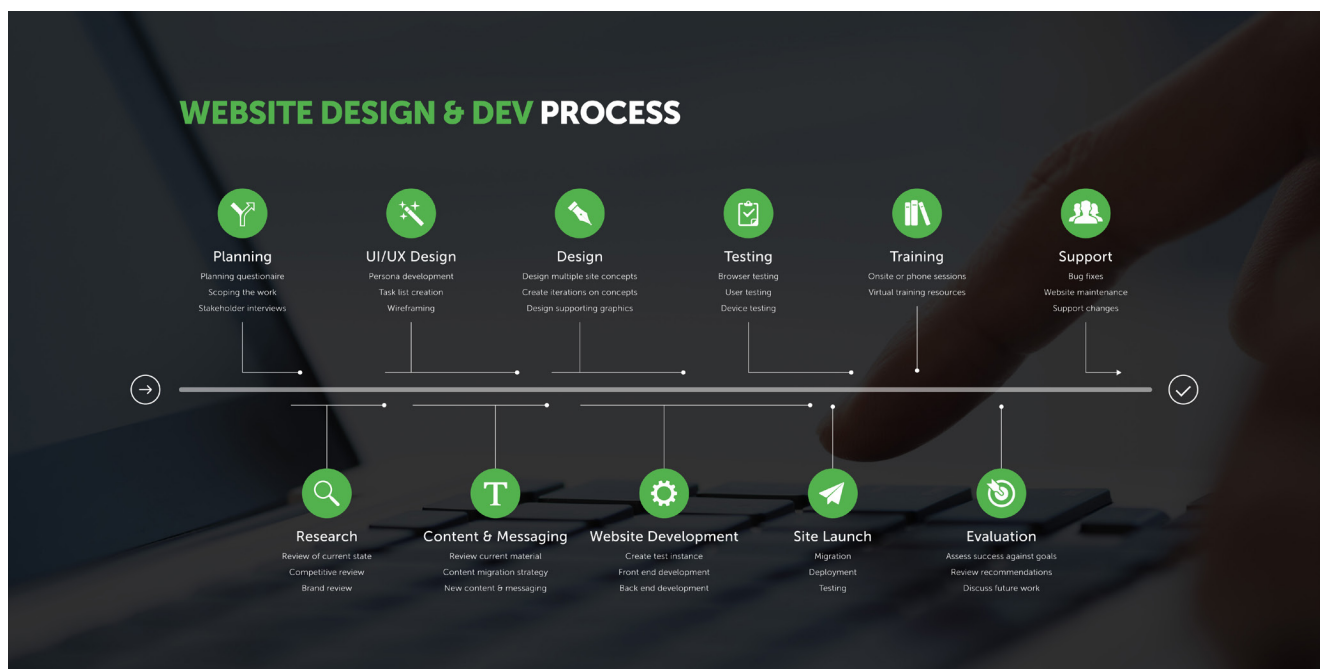
At Fresh, we believe that a full-service holistic strategy is the best way to address user experience and get the website right the first time...whether that's with your team, ours, or a hybrid approach.

Put simply, holistic website creation dictates that each piece of the process matters to the success of the project. A website contains many design, technical, and business elements, all of which must be included in the plan and the process. Neglecting any one element has an impact. For example, on the front-end, poor copy and messaging can kill an experience. So can poor graphics. So can poor performance. So can poor layout. So can poor navigation and information

architecture. So can poor calls to action. So can poor interactivity. And that's just the front-end.

Our most basic holistic process for website design and dev is shown below and we have additional processes for heavier UI/UX projects, brand identity projects, and motion graphics that can be integral to website success. Note that the actual "Website Development" component is only 1 of the 11 areas of consideration below.

Without a holistic approach, website projects suffer. For example, strategies focusing on the user experience but not the technology infrastructure



and business processes may not help the website or business scale, while a plan that centers on the technical perspective might not deliver an experience that connects with its target audience, losing out to competitors.

Creating a website is definitely an investment of time and dollars, but when executed well, it can easily pay off in customer conversion, employee attraction, brand amplification, and sales process automation... to name a few overarching key benefits one can expect.

In the process of doing it right, much more than code gets reviewed and impacted: Messaging, story and

value proposition. Sales and marketing collateral. Integrated business productivity tools. Customer targeting and analysis. Business processes and technology integration. Technology frameworks and infrastructure. Brand story and Employee Connection. Every one of the aforementioned components can tie to a website project and to the business with positive short and long term impacts.

'Nuff said. Beyond a holistic process, what else goes into a holistic approach? The following 3 key areas articulated below merge the essential technical, creative, and business aspects of a successful website project.



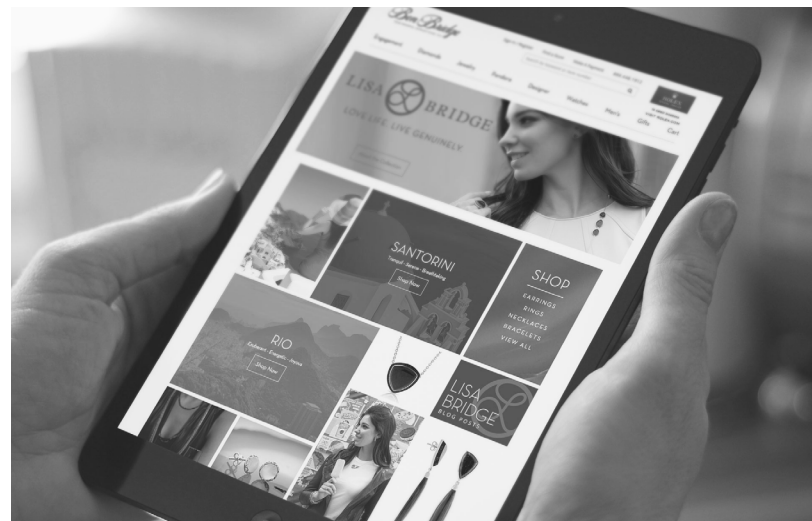


DESIGN: Holistically Designed Customer Experiences

A website is both the face of your company and a brand connection to anyone who doesn't visit your offices. It might be the only touch point for the majority of your potential customers and employees. So how do you approach creating an awesome customer experience?

Impactful Messaging That Centers on Storytelling. All content and messaging needs to be consistent with your brand messaging and brand story to reinforce who you are and what you have to offer in a way that connects with people. Stories are key because we buy from emotion.

High-end Graphics with Meaning. High-end graphics play a big part in impactful experiences that resonate. Graphics should give the content more meaning and save you from writing unnecessary text. That means spending time choosing imagery and creating graphics that fit the visual narrative, not just dropping in some stock photography.



Elegant Motion, Video, and Subtle Interactivity. Elegant motion and subtle interactivity can make an interface more intuitive and more exciting. Drawing a user into the experience can be done more easily with purposeful animations that create a desire for more discovery. Video also helps amplify your message in a more engaging manner.

A Strong Layout, with Efficient Information Architecture. Data-driven UI strategy (from personas, user stories, and focus groups) should be carefully packaged in design that makes your site easy to use while still getting your value proposition across and positioning your brand in a positive light.



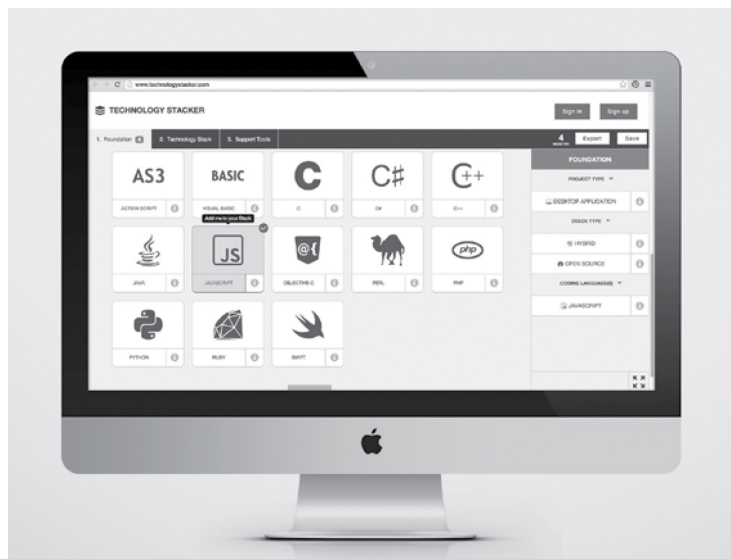
TECHNOLOGY: Holistically Technical Architecture Planning

Tech Stack. There are front-end technologies, back-end technologies, and sometimes middle tier technologies to consider that can speed up a website project or slow it down. Your own technologies and whether you have proficiency or the availability of other developers should be considered. Decisions around content management systems can have huge ripple effects.

Performance. Google recently pointed out how important this is by indicating performance will affect search rankings. Your site needs to be fast, and that means evaluating all layers of the tech stack to see what needs to be improved. Actions like optimizing JavaScript and using a CDN add up to make a faster site. Faster sites not only improve the experience, but can also lower bounce rates.

Integrations. Good websites are integrated with other systems that a business uses. For example, at Fresh, we tie our website into at least 5 other systems. Analytics, CRMs, customer data, user feedback, customer service, application processes, customer portals, employee portals, and ticket management are all samples of other systems that can be integrated into your website. Take a look at the APIs at Programmable Web to get a sense for the world of integrations.

Back-end CMS/Admin. Content management systems make maintenance easier. It can be burdensome for marketing and business team members to route simple edits to developers. Rather, basic edits must be able to be done easily in-house, unless you want to have a developer upload new photos and make edits to employee bios. We use many CMS's but platforms like WordPress give multi-dimensional value: customization, user friendliness, and reasonable setup and maintenance costs.





BUSINESS: Holistic Business-Facing Considerations

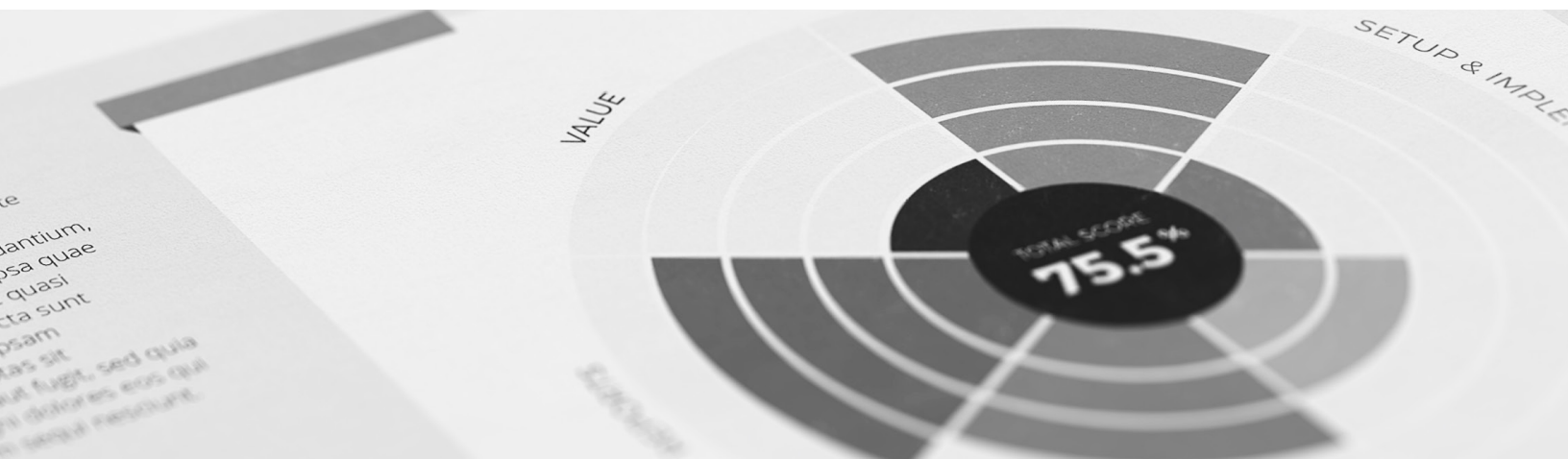
Whether a site is B2C or B2B, features that don't work well or aren't provided can damage the customer experience. If a customer submits a request or places an order that isn't efficiently received and tracked, direct loss of trust and subsequently business can occur. Businesses that utilize technology to automate and streamline processes can enhance operations, and websites are no exception.

Workflow Planning. How does the existing funnel help the sales team, marketing team, support team, or other operational teams and how could it be enhanced? Sales and marketing workflows, customer support workflows, employee recruiting workflows, and business operations

workflows should be analyzed to see how the website could tie in or support.

Insightful Analytics. A site needs to be set up and compatible with tracking and analytics that can be extracted and interpreted in-house by those in charge of marketing. This requires understanding your customers and setting up some key metrics to evaluate success.

Connection to Digital Channels / Strategy. A website is one of many channels in digital marketing today. How does it tie to your campaigns, your advertising, your existing marketing efforts, and also help you measure what is working?



A HOLISTIC APPROACH PAYS OFF



Starting with a 360-degree project view from the design, technology and business lens will mean fewer details get missed along the way that could derail the project benefits and timeline.

Including the right stakeholders from the beginning can also help provide a holistic approach. Marketing, sales, and customer support teams often have a lot to contribute to the design and customer experience, the IT team often contributes for the technical aspects, while leadership, operations and sales often have perspectives for the business aspect. This is where an independent party can be helpful in coordinating inputs and keeping opinions balanced.

As you start planning your new site, be sure to be holistic in your approach when planning for the effort

required of your team and when comparing proposals from companies that might be involved in helping out. There is a big difference in what companies offer and what you get once a proposal is signed. For example, are they doing any UX design work and are they providing customer insights? Do they care about the business strategy and prior analytics? How will the new site support the sales team and continue to bring value in the future? What are the plans for content migration, testing, and training? How will the site be updated?

The effort associated with a full service offering is vastly different from simply coding up some designs. Starting with a holistic process and executing a holistic plan centered on your company's goals will benefit your business long after launch.

HOLISTIC CHECKLIST

To both prepare your team and evaluate vendors



DESIGN

Content and Messaging

- ☐ The most important points/high-level messaging is identified
- ☐ Value proposition is clear
- ☐ Messaging & content focuses on storytelling
- ☐ Content inventory and migration plan of who owns what is included in building process
- ☐ Other content builds upon core company messaging and target audience
- ☐ Target audience(s) are identified and content is tailored appropriately

Graphics and Interactivity

- ☐ Custom graphics convey brand, messaging, and meaning
- ☐ Motion or interactive elements reinforce discovery
- ☐ Video content is evaluated and planned
- ☐ Videos are engaging and fit brand, messaging, and services

Layout

- ☐ Information architecture is efficient and tells a story
- ☐ Strong layout fits information architecture and planned graphics and media
- ☐ Site is responsive to various devices with good experience
- ☐ UI is based on data from personas, user stories, and focus groups
- ☐ Value proposition is clear and represented by design elements

Branding

- ☐ Name is authentic to brand
- ☐ Domain name is easy to remember
- ☐ Logo supports brand messaging
- ☐ Colors and patterns support brand meaning and desired emotional feelings
- ☐ Photos and graphics reinforce messaging and emotions
- ☐ Typography fits the brand style
- ☐ Messaging and brand speak to target audience



TECHNOLOGY

Tech Stack

- ☐ In-house developers are experienced in the new site's technologies/platform, or it is easy to secure outside developers
- ☐ Chosen platform and technologies support needed API integrations

Performance

- ☐ Front-end code is optimized (JavaScript)
- ☐ Database queries are optimized (as needed)
- ☐ Proper infrastructure is recommended based on site usage

Integrations

- ☐ Existing systems are identified and evaluated for integration into the existing site (e.g. CRM, Support, Demand Gen)
- ☐ New SaaS systems (sales, marketing, customer support, recruiting, and operations) are evaluated and suggested for integration

Back-end CMS/Admin

- ☐ CMS is customized so that content can be updated in-house
- ☐ CMS has reasonable setup and maintenance costs
- ☐ Teams who will be accessing site are trained on CMS and platform

Testing

- ☐ Site is tested by developers across devices and browsers
- ☐ Stakeholders or customers thoroughly test features and functionality
- ☐ Bugs are detected and fixed

Backups & Deployment

- ☐ Site server is backed up
- ☐ Content is backed up
- ☐ Code is backed up/version control in place
- ☐ Deployment is done with staging server first
- ☐ Deployment checklist is in place



BUSINESS

Insightful Analytics

- ☐ Web analytics software is implemented
- ☐ Key metrics to evaluate site performance are chosen
- ☐ Advertising tracking codes are integrated
- ☐ Social reputation tracking in place

Sales

- ☐ CRM is integrated
- ☐ Lead intelligence is in place to capture maximum data
- ☐ Drip campaigns are planned or integrated
- ☐ Sales workflows are analyzed and evaluated to see how the website can support or enhance
- ☐ Site supports sales efforts and goals

Marketing & SEO

- ☐ Digital campaigns & social media channels are integrated
- ☐ Editorial plan is created and assigned for regular content updates
- ☐ Email marketing and other lead generation sign up forms are integrated into site
- ☐ SEO keywords are identified and targeted in URL structure and content
- ☐ XML sitemap is submitted to key search engines
- ☐ Marketing workflows are analyzed and evaluated to see how the website can support or enhance
- ☐ Call to actions are clear and roll into sales or marketing workflows

Strategy & Operations

- ☐ Competitor sites are reviewed for strategy
- ☐ Goals of new site established and success of new site is assessed against goals of new site
- ☐ Roadmap of future value-add work is discussed
- ☐ Website maintenance plan is viable and fits needs
- ☐ Operations are analyzed and evaluated to see how the website can support (e.g. customer support, recruiting)