

## analyze

Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought.

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi



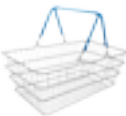
**Ask questions.** Interview corporate stakeholders, users and customers for opinions on current systems or ideas for the future in order to gather **Requirements**.



**Sketch solutions & inspirations as they come up.** Keep track of great ideas for future iterations, even if they're not feasible for the scope of this immediate project.



**Study the competition.** Aggressively analyze what at least the top 3-5 strongest competitors are doing, and document their strategies, strengths and weaknesses in a **Competitive Analysis**. Tape their site images to your wall... this is who you will "design to outshine."



**Use what you will sell.** If an ecommerce site exists, buy something. If the company sells tangible products, get your hands on them and use them. To think like a customer, you must be a customer.



**Focus on people, not technology.** If there are multiple people across different departments working on the ecommerce site and marketing, **Personas** of fictitious users and hypothetical **Scenarios** can keep everyone focused and on target.



**Research, read, review.** A wealth of information exists online about virtually every industry, product or sales concept imaginable. Find news, product & site reviews, reports, trends, statistics and comments made on message boards online to add to your perspective.



**Document your strategy.** Requirements, user experience, testing & marketing plans, personas and written goals should be the outcome of a thorough analysis and provide a foundation for successful visualization.

## visualize

Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions.

Albert Einstein



**Start with a roadmap.** A **User Experience Roadmap** can provide a high-level visual plan and help keep the project on course.



**Prototype at a high level.** Showing **Visual Prototypes** can help the client visualize how the ecommerce site will enhance the brand, and can be used to elicit agreement about ideas and intentions, before a lot of detailed information architecture work.



**Define visual guidelines.** Use existing company brand guidelines, or define them if none exist, to create an **Ecommerce Design Guide** for developers with standards, styles and interface instructions.



**Sitemaps provide organization.** Putting the **Sitemap** down on paper allows people to see the site taxonomy and structure from the larger perspective so usability specialists and subject matter experts can assess user comprehension.



**Wireframe detailed interactions.** Designing site **Wireframes** in HTML makes it easy for developers in remote locations to access them, and allows you to create simulated prototypes so that staff and clients can "walk through" areas.



**Interface design brings features to life.** Formal acceptance of visual prototypes will drive the **Interface & Interaction Design** that developers will implement.



**Usability testing validates visual theories.** **User Testing** should be conducted using sketches, wireframes, visual prototypes or a rough working site to identify usability and learning issues.

## realize

The only way anything has ever been invented or created is because one person saw a picture in his mind.

Rhonda Byrne



**Set developers up for success.** Communication with technical experts during the interaction design phase and comprehensive **Design Documentation** creates a spirit of cooperation and speeds development time.



**Experience consultation never ends.** It is critical for the user experience specialist to work closely with creatives, developers and marketing for the life of the project in a cycle of design, review, and correction.



**Look through the eyes of the customer.** Request to see iterations of the site as frequently as possible so that as the user experience specialist, you can catch problems early enough to correct them or address them.



**Usability testing finds future requirements.** **User Testing** at this time can identify both last-minute fixes, and future interaction requirements to make your ecommerce site even better.



**Conduct a formal design review.** A formal **Design Review** should be led by the user experience manager and include stakeholders from management, marketing, user experience, development and others. It must be done when the site is complete enough to get an accurate depiction of the user experience. Issues discovered should be prioritized for correction before launching.



**Ask for feedback on your new site!** Getting feedback from customers and visitors using **Feedback Surveys & Interviews** should be an essential activity following the site launch. Document this information for future requirements and use it to prioritize new features and content your users need.