

How to add value:
If the site map is overwhelming, consider adding a content map to the process. These maps set key messages, find existing sources for copywriters to start from, and identify any remaining gaps.

How to add value:
Leverage reporting on the legacy site to learn about how your audience accesses the Internet. Many tools tell you average connection speed and display/monitor size--information that could set your designers free to create larger displays and more interactive media.

How to add value:
If your gut tells you the experience is too complex, the navigation is wrong ... any red flags, bring it to your client's and team's attention. At this point in the process, field testing is relatively inexpensive and won't greatly impact the timeline ... once it's built, the all-around costs get much more daunting.

How to add value:
Re-test. Before you let the client know it's fixed, prove it to yourself. In the environment it didn't work in before and at least one other one. The number of reasons why it may have worked on the programmer's computer and not in the rest of the world is frighteningly long.

How to add value:
When the 'omigod it's broken' call comes, be ready with a standard list of questions about the when and where of the problem. Make sure to understand as much as you can about the environment the error happened in (browser, network, type of computer) and if it was repeated.



Strategy
Audience ethnography, site strategy, key metrics, conversion, strategies, etc.

Site map
A visual outline of all the key pages on the site and how they relate to each other

Wireframe
A quick schematic of the content and flow of key pages (frames) before the designers bring them to life

Design
Look and feel of the site and concepting of any multimedia components

Develop content
Key search terms, page content, associated documents, form content, etc.

Review and Finalize
Client review of key components, usability testing, final approval of design and content

Programming / Multimedia creation
Creating the data architecture, building key functionality, associating content and design

QA
Testing in lots of environments, punch lists of corrections, final approval of the working site

Launch
Loading the files on the live server, pointing any records and reporting tools to the new site

Support
Immediate post-launch break-fix support and go-forward updating tools and strategy

How to add value:
Talk to your client about what their goals for the site are and make sure the plan matches up. For example, if the goal is increasing traffic 500%, a redesign might not be the right tool. The design can't impact traffic like a marketing or advertising campaign could.

How to add value:
Bring lots of people to the table. This is the point in the project where having you, the programmers, the content creators and the designers brainstorming about 'how it could work' is most valuable. Don't underestimate how creative technical guys really are.

How to add value:
Create a clear numbering system that attaches the squares on the site map to the volumes of content. And, be creative about content sources - if you've seen a great article on the industry or a how-to for prospective employees, consider adding it.

How to add value:
Talk to your client about what systems the site has to connect to and what they think the site will "do" three years from now. If they know what's coming, programmers can enable future development in the initial build - so, you'll be the hero now *and* later.

How to add value:
If you're changing hosting environments, make sure a process is in place to repoint the URL from the old server to the new server. Also, double check that the Web analytics you're about to connect to deliver the answers you'll need for your identified metrics.