

project life cycle

BrandBlocks project life cycle

A Work Life Cycle is the basic methodology that is followed for each project to ensure its success. At BrandBlocks marketing we have experienced professionals handling each stage of the Work Life Cycle.

1. PROPOSAL

Once we have received a brief about a project from a client the Sales Team will write a detailed proposal explaining the main deliverables in the project, the cost involved and the technologies and methodologies that could be used to complete it. Often the proposal will contain many options for each requirement to provide the client with greater choice. At this stage there is no obligation from the client to commit to working with BrandBlocks marketing.

If the proposal is accepted by the client, a contract will be signed and a deposit taken. Once the deposit is received the project will be handed over to the Analysis Team who will break the project down into its core components.

2. ANALYSIS & DOCUMENTATION

The analysis and documentation stage is the most important part of the project as it ensures that every detail is planned before any work begins. This ensures that the project flows smoothly and minimises errors, thereby speeding up delivery. Depending on the type of project (i.e. design or development) the analysis phase will differ and the questions asked may vary. For this reason, Analysis & Development has been broken down further into Design and Development.

Design

The analysis for design will cover topics such as the goals that the client wants to achieve, looks and styles they would like to have created and other options such as colour schemes. It is important that we have a clear understanding of your expectations as design can be a very subjective topic. Discussions and the exchange of ideas with the client is very important at this stage and we have many ways to aid this process, including sample websites, documents with key questions and helpful links.

For larger website projects documents called wireframes will be created for each page based on the site map (site navigation). They describe where items such as navigations and content will be placed as well as the direction that the eye should follow when looking at a page (for example, leading the eye to key areas). Creating wireframes allows the analyst and the client to decide on the structure and flow of the website before any graphic design starts. This allows many different concepts and ideas to be trialled quickly and effectively.

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Development

Two documents will be created for development analysis; a High Level Design Document (HLD) and a Low Level Design Document (LLD). These two documents are the reference manual which will be used by the programmers when completing the build and it ensures that the code written matches the requirements of the client precisely.

HLD: This document outlines the major modules and features contained in a system with a brief explanation for each section written in layman's terms. This is often referred to as a detailed brief or specification and is sent to the client for their approval. Once approval is received on the basic concept of the HLD it is then broken down further into what is known as the LLD

LLD: This document takes the HLD and breaks it down into much greater detail. It will describe database structure, data flow, inputs, error checking and more. Describing the build into the smallest detail ensures that it is created exactly to the original requirements of the client and ensures that full and accurate testing can be performed by the Testing Team. As mentioned before, the LLD is the build manual of the project and will be referred to through the entirety of the build.

3. DESIGN

After gathering all the design requirements and details during the Analysis & Documentation phase we will move onto the design stage. The design stage often happens at the same time as the build as these two parts can be worked on independantly. On a larger project, the build may have to wait for the design to be completed as the two will be much more closely linked.

We will create a number of concepts (whether it be logo design, website design or graphic design or public event) which will be sent to you for comments and review. This feedback will be taken on board and the process will be repeated until you are happy with the designs created. The number of revisions to a concept will depend on the scale of the project and the available budget.

Before the project can proceed to the next step of the work life cycle, the design work must be signed off by the client.

4. BUILD

The build is often the quietest part of the project in terms of communication with the client. Due to the fact that the majority of the time spent by the Programming Team is building the 'engine' that powers the website there is not much that can be shown to the client until it is close to being completed for testing. Ongoing tests and checks by the Testing Team are made throughout the build to ensure that any mistakes are caught and don't get compounded.

During the development documentation phase it is often the case that design work would commence. This ensures that the design can be connected to the build at the earliest possible moment shortening delivery time for the project.

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Once the build has been completed and the website connected it will be referred to the Testing Department who will perform 'Alpha Testing'.

5. TESTING

Without testing a project could contain bugs that cause the system to malfunction, break or be open to malicious attacks by hackers. The testing team has two types of tests they perform to ensure this does not happen; usability and functionality.

Usability Testers: Focused on the user experience these highly skilled individuals work through the website testing every aspect of interaction from forms to navigation flow and structure to ensure that the site is intuitive, leads the visitors to the key areas of the website and is easy to use.

Functionality Testers: This testing involves checking that all the code is written correctly and that only the correct actions are allowed within the system. For example, a test could be as simple as ensuring that an email address field in a form follows the correct structure or as complex as load testing to ensure that the website will still be able to function even if it is being accessed by thousands of people at the same instant.

We often encourage our clients to get involved in the 'Beta Testing' (second round) stage to ensure that they are happy with the system and that it is functioning correctly in the usability arena.

6. DELIVERY

Once testing is completed we will deliver the project to you. Delivery involves publishing the website, or in the case of graphic design work, sending source files to the client. We can publish a website on our own servers or alternatively your own. Once a relationship is established with a client it is possible to upload or send files before the delivery phase.

7. MAINTENANCE

The success of your project is also a success for BrandBlocks marketing and for this reason we offer 1 month of free support for any bug fixes or issues that may arise due to complications caused by code written by us. This gives peace of mind that if there are any issues with the website they will be resolved quickly and professionally to minimise disruption.

We also offer maintenance contracts for a low monthly fee (on a per project basis) to ensure the upkeep of your website. It will include:

- Monitoring of traffic and bandwidth usage: action will be taken to reduce complications if there are bottlenecks or excessive uses of bandwidth in the system
- Search Engine Optimisation: depending on the contract signed with the client, we will continually monitor the success of your SEO campaign and will tweak content and code to maximise results

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- General Maintenance: this could include regular optimisation of databases, streamlining code and cleaning up of any redundant files generated by the system. General Maintenance will vary depending on the type and scale of the project.

GET YOUR PROJECT STARTED, CONTACT BRANDBLOCKS TODAY!

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