

Overview of Discovery Phase Projects



How the customer explained it



How the project leader understood it



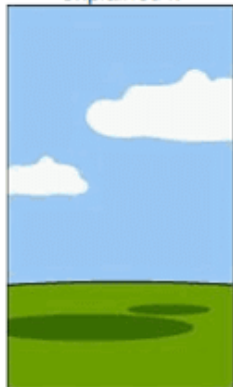
How the engineer designed it



How the programmer wrote it



How the sales executive described it



How the project was documented



What operations installed



How the customer was billed



How the helpdesk supported it



What the customer really needed

Why do you need a discovery phase project?

If you've never taken on a detailed project, such as an app development project or a complex website, you may not have had your vendor require that before jumping in with a full proposal and price quote, what is actually needed first is discovery work.

See, you need a **discovery phase project** to detail exactly what it is that's going to be developed *before* you start with a web developer. At the end of the day, your website should meet the needs of your members, stakeholders and organization. Web development requires a deep dive to ask the technical questions about how the website will work, such as –

- Who are the different users and stakeholders?
- What do they need to see... when and where?
- What information is repeated on every page?
- How does the data flow through the website?
- What technology and features are required?

Most website projects are more complex than originally thought. Without first doing a discovery process, it's typical that you'll get a range of quotes, you may pick the lowest bidder or based on portfolios, and often you end up thousands of dollars down the road with a website that doesn't do everything you need it to do or one that members and stakeholders don't want to use.

What do you get in a discovery phase project? And how do they help you?

With our discovery phase projects, **you'll get a detailed plan for creating your website**, including:

1. Workflow
2. Business rules
3. Wireframes
4. Database diagrams
5. Technology and security recommendations
6. Realistic estimate for your complete requirements

How do we define these terms?

Workflow

Essentially, workflow is about making the website more automated and user friendly, where possible, yet, this stage of the project is often not thoroughly thought out. Reminders, dashboards, overviews, summaries, and highlighting priority items are all workflow considerations. It is critical to get these questions and workflow issues identified early on, e.g. does a member get an alert after taking a certain action? Does the member have a dashboard they can see and use? And so on. We identify, articulate, and suggest workflows based on top tasks, next steps and data flow.

Business rules

Business rules essentially describe the detailed flow of data through the website. A simple example is: does a password need to be a certain length? These rules are the decision points, the conditional rules for the interface and the data. Think: *if this, then that*. They identify detailed rules for data and screen flows depending on how the data is entered, accessed and acted upon, and then and how that data flows through the website. The rules are the glue that binds the whole website together and are, basically, the first level of the programming process.

Wireframes

The wireframes outline the key elements in the website and approximately how they will be laid out. They are better defined later, but wireframing is an important discovery step. Our discovery phase estimates the number of pages and sections the final website will have.

Database diagrams

With database diagrams, we decide the actual structure of the underlying database and how the data will be organized. For instance, we'll define how the data is broken into tables and fields, and how that information is connected.

Technology recommendations

We recommend the most appropriate technology to complete your website. This includes the CMS platform, programming language, frameworks, which database to use, integration points, APIs, code libraries and open source tools.

Realistic estimate for your complete requirements

This gives you, as close as we're able to come at this point, a cost to develop the website. If our estimate is to your satisfaction, we will develop our agreement to take the project to the next step.

What happens *after* the discovery phase? You decide what to do next.

One of our key deliverables in the discovery phase project is to provide a realistic estimate of what it will cost to build the final website. Sometimes clients decide they need to scale the project up or down based on the discovery phase. The results from the discovery phase are *your intellectual property*. You own this document.

How does a discovery phase save you money?

Our extensive experience in web development has shown us that doing a discovery phase to develop a detailed requirements document saves our clients considerable money because:

1. Now it's crystal clear what your requirements are – making development more efficient.
2. It greatly reduces the chance for misunderstandings or disputes.
3. You get an apples-to-apples quote to accurately compare bids.
4. You may decide to go a different direction or scale the project down.
5. You get the website your members, stakeholders, and organization needs.
6. You're halfway there!

Apples-to-apples quotes

Say you're required by your company's procurement rules to get three bids. You now have a document—a very detailed requirements document—that you can use for your project bids that makes bids more realistic and easy to compare as all bidders are working from a detailed description of the project (detailed through the lens of the information a developer needs to bid on it).

Reduced contract disputes

You've provided the developer with a technical contract that outlines what they need to do, exactly and specifically. It protects your organization and reduces misunderstanding and disagreements about the project scope.

Maybe it's a no-go

Rather than contracting a developer from the get-go to build your website and finding out down the road that the project is much more complex than you originally thought it was, the discovery phase process gives your organization an understanding of what lies ahead in terms of time, cost



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and involvement to complete the website. Your decision may be not to proceed. And we think it's better to know this when you're early on in the process rather than mid-way or toward the end.

Getting what you want

At the end of the day, the website is only worth developing if it supports your stakeholders and their needs, and if it provides the organization what it needs. A detailed requirements doc makes sure that the final product and deliverables are not only understood, but have been assessed for usability and many other factors.

You've already done much of the work for your website development

You've probably heard this quote before: "Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe." That's what the discovery phase is: it's sharpening the axe so your project goes more smoothly, costs less and delivers the result you want.

What's next?

Discovery phase projects typically cost between \$6,000 to \$18,000 to conduct. We may require some documentation and probably a call or two with you to gather more information. Oftentimes we require access to your data to see how that is currently set up. You probably want us to sign an NDA too. We have one ready for you to sign, or we can sign the one provided by your organization.

The Atigro Team

Atigro is a full-cycle digital marketing company with deep technical expertise in website development, search engine optimization, conversion tactics, web analytics, high-performance hosting, search engine marketing and information architecture. [Our team](#) of a dozen-plus employees focuses on meeting the overall goals of the client, collaborating with other marketing and design teams and providing full, ongoing support for all technical digital marketing issues for our clients.

In addition to our staff, we have a long-time, almost-daily relationship with an extended family of 300+ full-time developers, which allows us to scale up and down, depending on our client load.