

What We Don't Know WILL Hurt Us!

How to Gather Technical
And Business Requirements

A decorative graphic at the top of the slide featuring a blue gradient background with white and light blue wavy lines that sweep across the width of the page.

Blue Atlas Interactive

- Web design and development company since 1996
- Examples of our services include web site re-design, online learning management systems, e-commerce applications, online collaboration and content management solutions
- Examples of our clients include the U.S. Department of Commerce, Drexel University, Merriweather Post Pavilion and Maryland Public Television

Why has Blue Atlas Succeeded?

- In general terms because we deliver web-based solutions that solve our clients' problems
- We do this by:
 - listening to our clients
 - documenting requirements
 - using standard software development practices
 - managing the deployment of the application
 - providing client training
 - providing ongoing application maintenance

Listen, Listen, Listen!

- How the client explained what they needed
- Client said they needed a swing that could do lots of things



Be Careful About Over-Selling

- What the sales guy told the client they would get
- We gain client's trust by not promising the moon
- Our job is to educate the client about the possibilities, costs and schedules



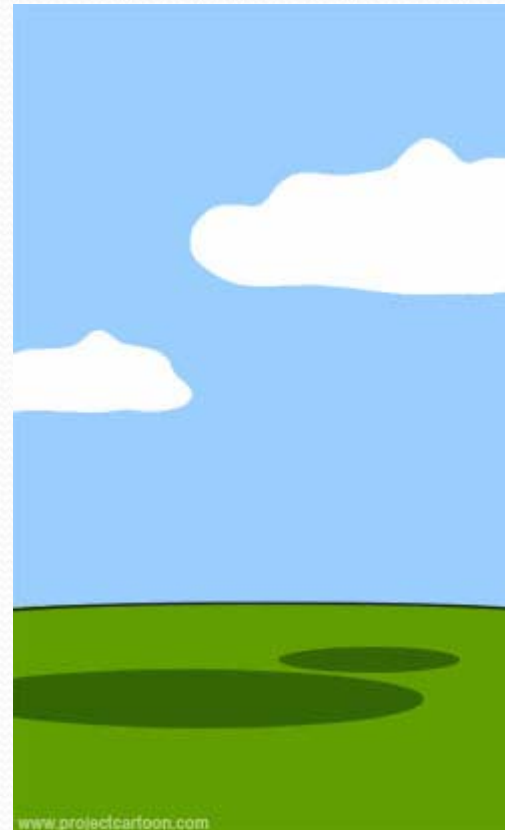
We Won the Job!

- How the requirements were given to the developers
- The developers likely weren't in the sales meetings
- The importance of a kick-off meeting



Yes, Documentation is Boring

- How the project was documented
- Documentation doesn't necessarily need to be formal
- Get all stakeholders to agree about what is being built



Oops.....

- What the client really needed – a round tire to both swing and twirl
- We need to guide the client through the requirements phase by asking questions
- The client must play an active role in finalizing the requirements



Requirements Questionnaire

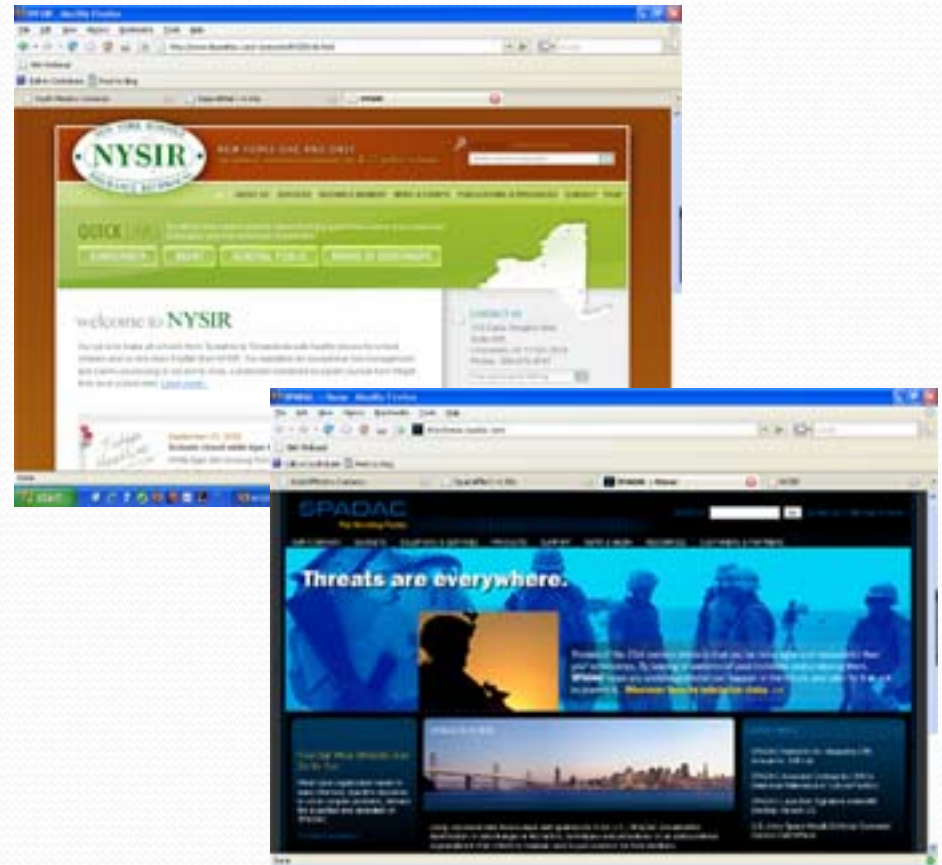
- No more than 2 pages long
- Send to client prior to the project's kick-off meeting
- Gets the client thinking and brainstorming
- Can help bring consensus in case the client's staff have a lot of different opinions

Kick-off Meeting

- All stakeholders should attend
- Bring one of your developers along to the meeting
- Include discussion of questionnaire input received
- Requirements to discuss:
 - design
 - content
 - web applications
 - content management
 - hosting
 - maintenance

Design Requirements

- What the client likes AND doesn't like
- Is there a logo to be incorporated?
- Are there color requirements?
- What do competitors sites look like?



Content Requirements

- What sections will the web site need to have – this will lead to completion of the site map.
- Are we porting content (text, graphics, photos) from an existing site?
- Is the client writing their own content or do they need a copywriter?
- Best to get all content provided at one time in a zip file.

Web Applications

- A web application refers to any dynamic portion of a web site
- Web applications can be as simple as site search
- Be sure to document what the application is expected to solve/provide
- Examples:
 - content management
 - e-commerce
 - online catalogs
 - online learning
 - blogs
 - forums
 - online polls/surveys
 - slideshows

Content Management

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California Children's Health Initiatives (CCHI) is a project of the Tides Center.

- Examples of CMS applications:

- DotNetNuke
- FarCry
- Expression Engine
- WordPress
- Contribute
- Joomla
- Plone

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Risk, Security & Resilience
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Predictive Analytics
More precise decision-making

Hosting

- Where will the site be hosted? Internally or at an ISP?
- Does the client have an existing relationship with an ISP that they are happy with?
- Will the hosting platform be Windows or Linux?
- Is there a requirement for a DEDICATED hosting plan?

Maintenance

- Who will be responsible for maintaining the web site once it's deployed?
- Web sites should be considered 'living things' that must be taken care of
- Options are:
 - client maintains themselves (ie, have a webmaster)
 - client outsources the maintenance to developer
 - combination of the two