GRAPHIC DESIGN 02 READING NO. 4

Designers routinely face design projects that are more and more complex. In particular, information design projects require careful thought, collaboration, planning, and a process that goes beyond the intuitive, gut-level, and sometimes solitary approach that many designers have been trained to use.

PROCESS: DISCOVERY

2

→ **Politics, Diplomacy, and Consensus**

→ **Wrangling Audience and Content**

→ **The Creative Brief**

→ **Personas and Scenarios**

Politics, Diplomacy, and Consensus

WHAT MAKES YOUR CLIENT TICK?

Many factors that determine the success of a design piece are unrelated to the formal aspects of design but have everything to do with the context in which the design is created.

More and more information designers find that to create relevant solutions for their clients, they need to find out about the inner workings of the organization, its politics, its goals, and agendas. Why is that? First, by finding out what makes an organization tick, you'll be able to offer smarter solutions. Second, by understanding the inner workings of an organization, you'll be able to create the kind of teamwork, collaboration, and consensus with your client that you need to achieve project success.

INTERNAL BUSINESS STRUCTURES

Understanding your client's business structure has enormous value, especially when there's a complex business hierarchy in place. What departments will participate in the project? What will their involvement be? Who has a stake in the outcome?

Client History 101. Have similar projects been undertaken within the organization before? Who participated and will they be involved in this project? Was the experience positive or negative overall? What were the roadblocks or challenges? How did they measure success? Learning a little bit of background about what happened prior to your arrival can be quite illuminating and useful. Understanding your client's internal challenges and decision-making methods allows you to be proactive in terms of both your process and the design solutions you ultimately present.

Cultivate Allies. Who among your client team understands the project process already, and who can be educated about the process to the point where they will be your best advocates? It helps to make sure you cultivate allies both at the

> "We regarded it as unacceptable to say that a design might have worked but for the politics. Given the major role that political, social, and economic issues played in the outcome of design projects, we thought it important to develop methodologies that took account of these issues." —David Sless

→ A microsite design project for Nike Investor Relations needed to fit into the overall business hierarchy and Web organization structure of Nike.com. This diagram was created to help the diverse client teams understand the navigational challenges. **KBDA**

NIKE.COM

NIKEBIZ MAIN MENU

NIKEBIZ SUB MENU

NIKE IR
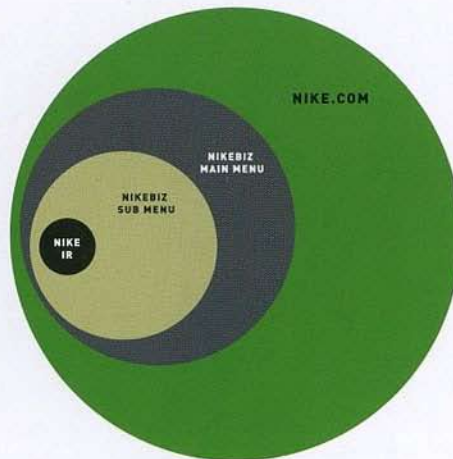
grassroots level of the organization and at the higher decision-making levels. Obviously, having great rapport and understanding with people at the highest decision-making levels will aid you greatly in obtaining buy-in for your designs. Developing solid relationships with the grassroots people in the organization can give you additional insight into the client's internal machinations and can help you grease the project's wheels.

Who Wields the Power? The person who is the ultimate decision-maker should be at the table for the kickoff meeting. This is critical. If the person with veto power isn't present, you could spend weeks or even months creating a design solution that has no chance of being approved because, for example, the ultimate decision-maker hates the color green. Be sure to ask at the outset: Is there anyone else who could swoop in and change the rules or nature of the project? Is there any other circumstance or internal client agenda that could impact the project?
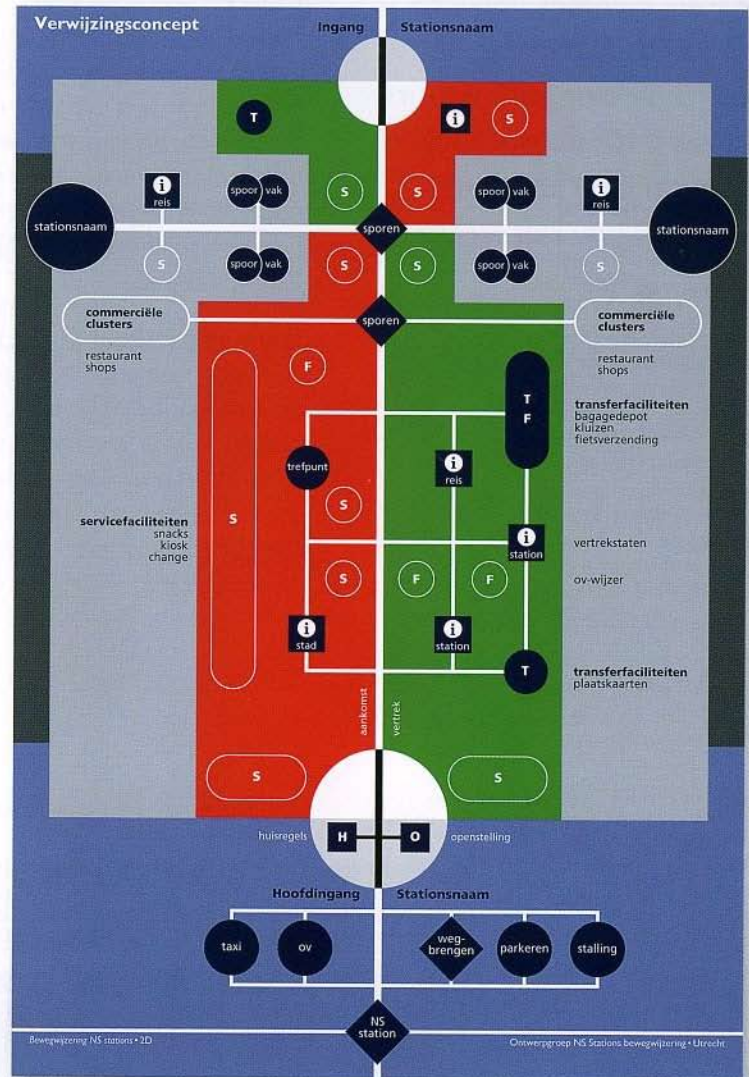
⬆ Sometimes design projects require balancing the needs of different constituencies. For example, in planning a wayfinding system for a public transit hub such as an airport, commercial interests are balanced with travelers' needs. (See case study on page 204.) **Bureau Mijksenaar**

> "What Americans call politics, Europeans call bureaucracy. Ultimately it comes down to competing departments defending their own turf. Politics sounds as if it's untouchable, as if you can't do anything about it. But you can create change." —Paul Mijksenaar

OUTLINE THE PROCESS, TEAM, AND ROLES

Diagram the Process. Even before project work begins, explain and outline the process so that everyone involved gets the big picture. Make sure everyone working on the project, including your design team and the client team, understands their roles and responsibilities. Document the steps in the process so that team members can refer to it down the line.

Who's on the Team? Make a list of everyone's roles, responsibilities, and contact information, including email, snail mail address (in case you have to ship something overnight), fax numbers, and office and cell phone numbers. You can't always assume that the project manager has al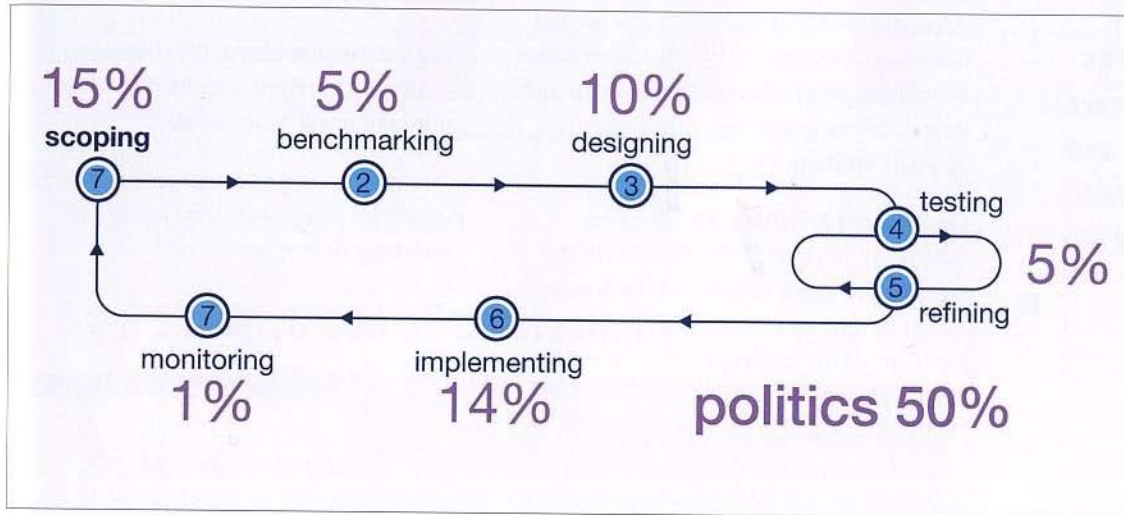l the info. There may be an emergency where the PM isn't available. Of course, you'll want to set up contact protocols. Most of the back-and-forth contact will happen between the two project managers (one on the design side and one on the client side). And while it's true that you may not want the junior designer to randomly phone the client's CEO just for the heck of it, you do want to make sure that any critical contact info is handy for the team in case of an urgent situation.

Assign Point People. Who will be the day-to-day point person on your team and on the client team? You'll need to make sure you've got people on both sides of the project to guide it throughout all stages.

This work plan diagram breaks down a project week by week to help the team plan ahead.
Matter

Summary of the New Options Work Plan for Phase One
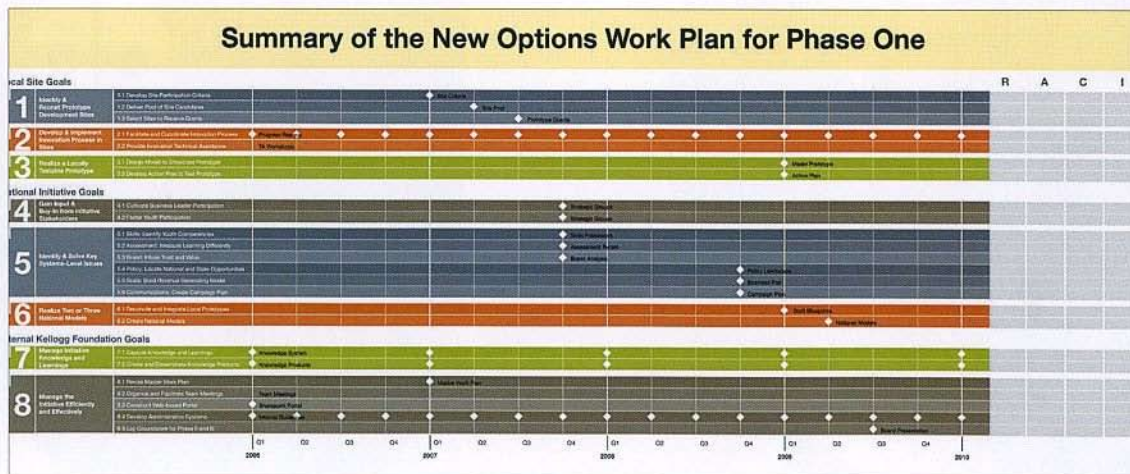
> **"Politics is about people's interests. People argue for and define what is of interest to them materially and organizationally. People's eyes will often roll at this unpleasant stuff called politics, but the reality is that it's ever-present and will up and bite you."** —David Sless

15% **scoping** (7)

5% benchmarking (2)

10% designing (3)

testing (4)

5% refining (5)

(7) monitoring 1%

(6) implementing 14%

politics 50%

The Communication Research Institute in Australia points out that an inordinate amount of time in every information design project is spent in meetings, and on tasks related to process and project management. For a long time, the organization hadn't been able to charge for this time. Now the method they use to budget for projects is simple: They go through all the technical and design specifications, figure the time that will be required, and then double it. **Communication Research Institute, Australia**

The Timeline. Before you create the project timeline, find out about client expectations and make sure they are realistic. Determine which of the drivers for the timeline are truly fixed, and which can't be changed. (For instance, the client is going on national television and the website needs to be up and running in plenty of time.)

Of course, every client wants the project done yesterday, if not sooner. Most projects have a sense of urgency, which is a good thing. A healthy sense of urgency ensures that everyone takes the job seriously, and

this means the work will get done in a timely manner to the benefit of the team, client, and end users. But try to see if you can separate the truly important deadline situations from false urgency. You want to set up the project in a way that will give you the best work within a reasonable timeline. Sometimes clients impress upon you a false sense of urgency and you rush to completion. You may not have quite enough time to do what you really want to do and may be forced into cutting corners only to find out that the deadline was based on something relatively inconsequential.

Conclusion: The Water's Fine. While it's true that you can just dive into the project head-first and figure things out as you go along, we don't recommend that approach. A little bit of planning and setup, a clearly defined team, some knowledge about the client—all of these things can really help the process so there are fewer surprises and pitfalls once you get down to the business of designing.

Wrangling Audience and Content

KNOW THY AUDIENCE

A huge part of the planning process for an intelligently planned information design piece centers on the audience. Before you strategize with your client about what the piece says, the team first has to learn more about audience needs and goals, and about how audience goals align with a client's business strategy.

Identify and Prioritize. It's critical to identify all the possible audiences for the piece you're about to design. Why is each audience type vital to the client? Which members of the audience are most important? Many clients will emphatically insist: They're all equally important! But at the end of the day there is usually a short list of audience members who take precedence. Help your client identify who is on the short list and then prioritize them. As you move forward with the design of the piece, you may run into situations where audience needs are in conflict. Informed decisions can be made based on who is at the top of the heap in terms of priority.

UNDERSTAND THE REQUIREMENTS

What does the audience need to know and why do they need to know it?

Emotional Requirements. How do you want your audience to respond emotionally to the information? Do you want to reassure them? Inspire them? Motivate them to do something?

Physical Requirements. It's critical to anticipate the physical context in which information will be reviewed.

- Are they going to be interacting with the designed piece while they're walking, working, or in repose?

- Does this audience like to read?

- Will they be reading the piece in one sitting, or over time?

- Is the piece meant to be read only once, or will the audience need to refer to it repeatedly?

- Will the piece be designed and presented in a single language, and if so, will the audience be fluent in that language? Will the piece need to be translated?

- Will an older demographic and poor eyesight be a factor?

- Will the tendency for readers to want to avoid dense material need to be accommodated?

(See "Personas and Scenarios," page 58, for more information on how to map out useful details about audience needs and requirements.)

> "Insight is what is created as we add context and give care to both the presentation and organization of data, as well as the particular needs of our audience." —Nathan Shedroff

2:5

Chances that an American is shy:

How can information design address emotional aspects of information? This graphic depicts the percentage of Americans who claim they suffer from shyness.
Sonia Chia

7th St/Metro Center Connections

1.800.COMMUTE
metro.net

M Metro

L.A. Metro's connections map orients customers as they exit a train, helping them reach their ultimate destination. The map lists connecting services in addition to important surface street landmarks, so travelers can see where they are and where they're headed. (See case study on page 196.)
Metro Design Studio

Organizing Content: The Alphanumeric Solution

Information-dense projects such as books or websites can contain heaps of content. In cases where a large amount of content needs to be developed, there are often multiple producers or writers. The process of organizing different pieces of content from various sources can be a bit like herding cats, and can take its toll on the project budget, not to mention team members' sanity.

Here's a simple but effective "best practice" you and your clients might consider using to create and maintain order throughout the life of a project. It shows how—using a simple alphanumeric device—content was organized for a text-heavy website, from project inception through the site launch. The point is not to create complexity for the mere sake of it, but to create a simple tool that can be used across project phases.

⬇ This full sitemap for the KBDA project for the Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF) shows the alphanumeric system when it was first put into place for the project.
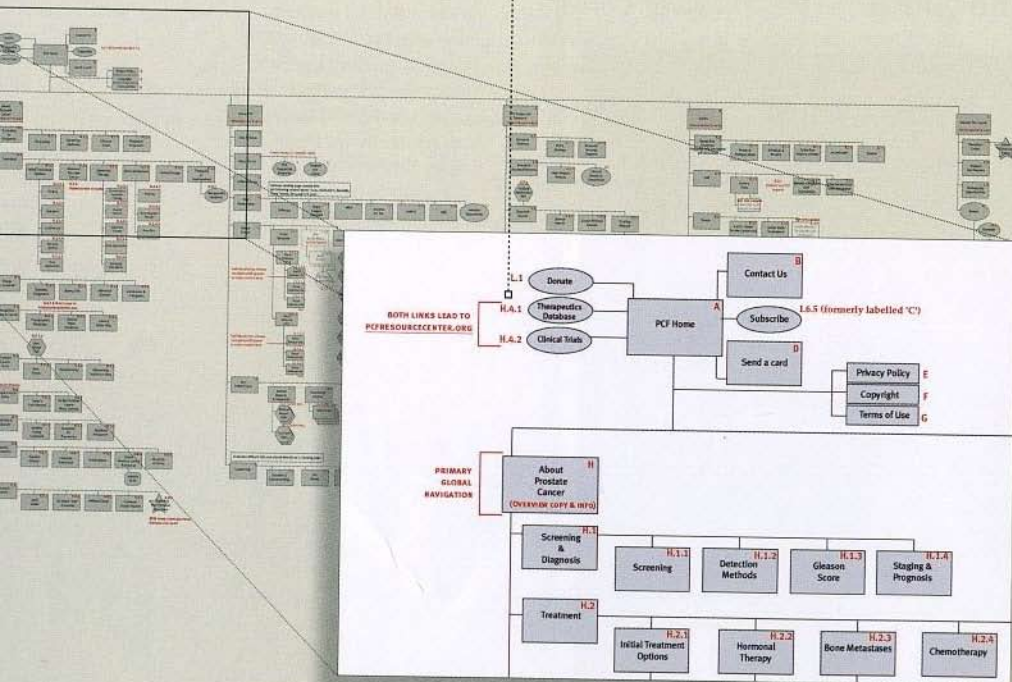
1 Devise a numbering system and use it to organize and label content from day one. The following examples show an effective model, but feel free to experiment. The system just needs to be simple to use and work for the team.

2 Apply your numbering system to documentation early in the process. For example, early-stage documents for most websites include the sitemap and wireframes. Each section of the sitemap chart is assigned a letter and its subsections follow a predetermined numeric code. The wireframe pages should also be numbered according to the system. Again, the alphanumeric system is a simple device, but helps the team stay focused on what they're looking at as the project documentation evolves.

⬆ A close-up view of the sitemap for this project shows the alphanumeric system at work.

⬆ The file name for this MS Word file and the document header include the numbering system.

A SYSTEM YOU CAN LOVE

An alphanumeric system is a simple way to effectively communicate with the team about assorted pieces of content over the long course of a complicated project.

The system becomes a kind of shorthand method for the team. The project manager, looking for a particular piece of content from the client, can ask, "Do you have the content for page H.2.3, Bone Metastases?" The client might reply, "Yes, we are just finishing up H.2.3, but we changed the title."

Things like nomenclature changes or changes in content order are much easier to track and are much less confusing with the numbering system in place. When you can plug each piece of content into the system, it's also much easier to track which pieces have been delivered and what's still missing from your content deck. By setting up and using a simple system like the one outlined here, you can eliminate a lot of pain and suffering from the content wrangling process.

3

Continue to apply the numbering system to other documents as they are produced throughout the project. Update the system as necessary when content is reorganized, added, or deleted from the project. For example, if the order of pages on the site changes, the numbering system is revised so the hierarchy is accurately documented and the numbering system can be used as a reference point during project discussions.
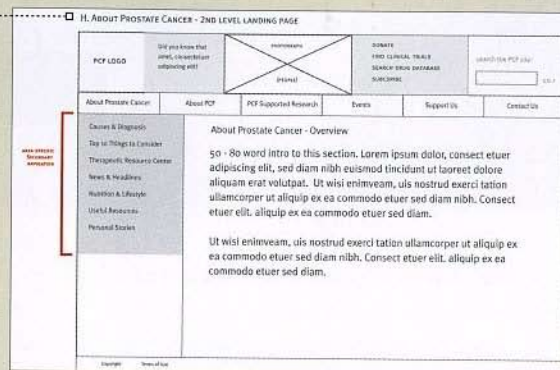
This wireframe image shows the layout for site section H., About Prostate Cancer. Notice how the wireframe page header uses the numbering system set up on the sitemap.

The design layout file itself should also be labeled with the alphanumeric system. This way, everyone understands which part of the project is being mocked up, and can refer to the previous documentation if there are questions or discussion points.

File folders for the digital assets of the project can also be organized according to the numbering system. Notice how the file folders themselves mirror the system on the sitemap. The MS Word document file name is also labeled according to the system.
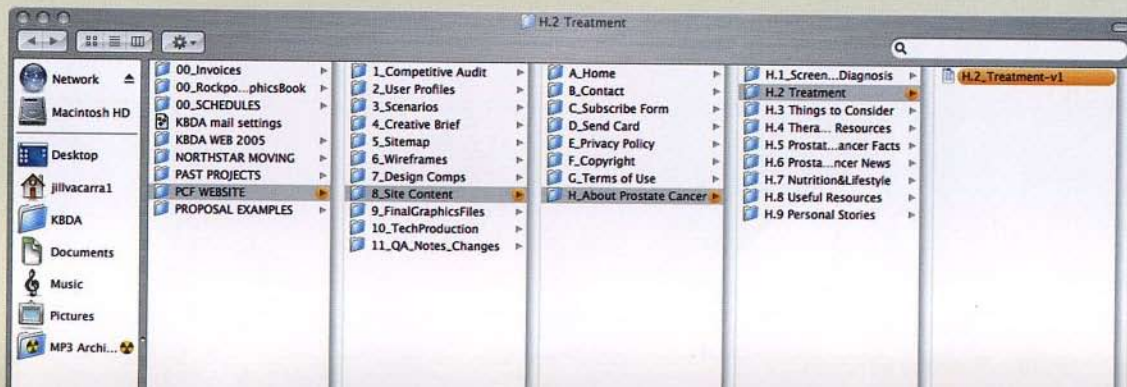
Pull quotes, captions, and timeline graphics were introduced into this annual report to provide multiple entry points to readers and to ensure that key messages surfaced.
KBDA

Gain insight into what may be less obvious. In this way, you can create a path others may overlook.

Frequent subheads, short text line lengths, and captioned before-and-after graphics made this annual report easy to scan for information.
KBDA

CONTENT CAN BE A MOVING TARGET

The business world has changed dramatically over the last decade. Companies must constantly redefine their markets and business models, while seeking higher rates of productivity. They must often accomplish these Herculean tasks with fewer internal resources and a leaner workforce. Long ago, clients approached designers with final content ready to be produced. In a business environment that is constantly evolving, today's clients are often hard-pressed to find the time and clarity to think through their communications issues, much less develop refined, on-target content.

Guide the Content Creation Design. It's safe to say that information design combines communication and content more directly and thoroughly than almost any other design discipline. Design and content processes continually inform each other.

Today's information designer may be faced with the unexpected challenge of having to help the client think through the content at several stages of the project.

There are times when a client will deliver content and you'll discover real challenges with the writing tone or the message. Other times the copy may only need simple refinements.

Information Design as Advocacy. Even the most organized clients may need your help, or at the very least your "bird's-eye view." In addition to thinking through the design issues, you can be a key advocate for the end user. If you have a difficult time immediately grasping the content, chances are the reader will have a hard time too—especially since a typical reader will quickly turn away from information that is difficult to absorb. You'll be most valuable to clients when you are simultaneously "half in" and "half out" of their organization so that you can offer informed, objective advice.
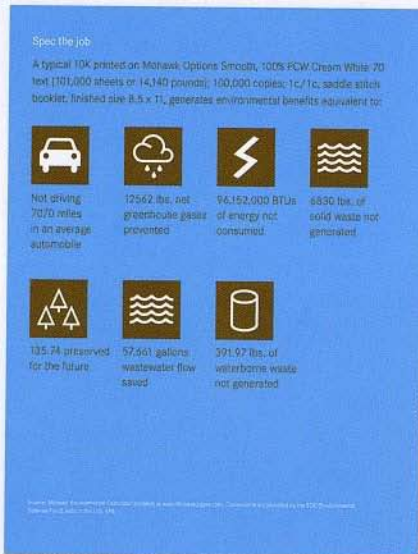
CONTENT ANALYSIS

There Could Be Gold in Those Mountains of Data. Whenever we start a new project, we like to hear the beep-beep-beeping sound of a large dump truck backing up to our office to unload mountains of data and documentation. The more you know about a client's history, their business sector, and past projects, the better you can solve the design problem at hand.

- Ask the client for access to any related strategic plans, or information on tangential initiatives, that may impact your project directly or indirectly. The idea is to align your design approach with the client's long-term goals.

- Often, clients have existing market research, which you can leverage to better inform the project team and process.

- Review and analyze previous versions of the project, if available.

- Review other previously produced client materials. Your project, once complete, will likely be seen in conjunction with these other materials.

- Consider auditing relevant competitor materials and building a competitor matrix that compares and contrasts your client's competitors.

- With client input, locate "best of breed" examples of similar kinds of projects and discuss these with the project team.

Content Strategy: See the Forest and the Trees. As you assist your client in thinking through the strategic development of content, we recommend you address the following:

- Are the project goals clear and well thought out?

- What does the project need to achieve? (This usually includes multiple goals: for the audiences, for the client, and possibly for other constituents.)

- Define success. If the project is wildly successful, what results will be gained?

- Identify any assumptions that have been made about the audiences, the need for the project, and the specific deliverables. For example, while KBDA was developing a new website design for the UCLA Anderson School of Management, the client team felt certain that the content should be targeted toward faculty users. However, post-launch site-traffic data confirmed what we originally suspected: The majority of site visitors are still prospective students. Consequently, KBDA continues to work with the school to adjust the site design to reflect a more student-focused sensibility.

Spec the job

A typical 10K printed on Mohawk Options Smooth, 100% PCW Cream White 70 text (101,000 sheets or 14,140 pounds); 100,000 copies; 1c/1c, saddle stitch booklet, finished size 8.5 x 11, generates environmental benefits equivalent to:

Not driving 70/70 miles in an average automobile

12562 lbs. net greenhouse gases prevented

96,152,000 BTUs of energy not consumed

6830 lbs. of solid waste not generated

135.74 preserved for the future

57,561 gallons wastewater flow saved

391.97 lbs. of waterborne waste not generated

The design team for this Mohawk brochure project was involved at the beginning of the process to help define the content approach. This ensured a perfect integration of writing and design. (See case study on page 140.)
And Partners

Micro Therapeutics, Inc. 2004 Annual Report

a focus on
neurovascular disease

total net sales
cagr 58%
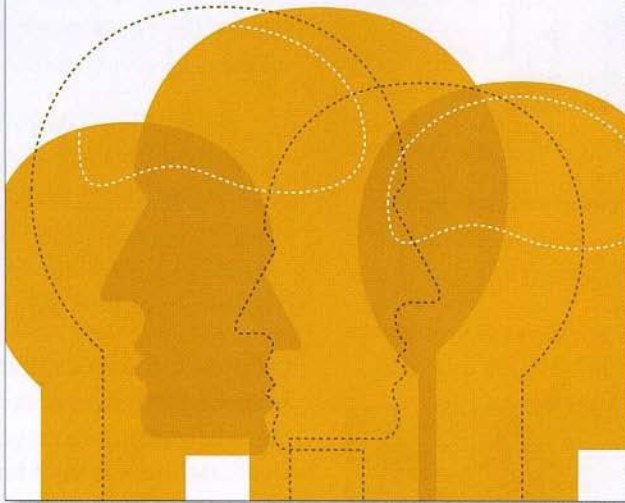
Micro Therapeutics, Inc. developed products for the treatment of neurovascular disorders associated with stroke. The company's annual report needed to help doctors understand the cutting-edge technology, while communicating the financial picture to potential investors. Facts were presented in a graphic way to enhance readability. **KBDA**

"Design, initially, is knowing how to ask the right questions." —David Macaulay

This exhibit for Brigham Young University's athletic hall was designed to accommodate frequent updates and additions to exhibit materials. (See case study on page 216.)
Infinite Scale Design Group

> "Information design is still to some degree the prisoner of an old either/or paradigm in which words and images exist in completely separate domains of use." —Robert E. Horn

Review Content While in Development. Once the client provides you with the content, review it carefully:

- Do you have all the pieces of the puzzle? Is the content complete and written in a thorough manner? If the original content is vague, it may be difficult or impossible to create clear information design around it.

- Is the messaging on target? Based on everything you've learned from prior conversations, research, and analysis, does the content feel authentic to the previously stated goals?

- Has the messaging been prioritized for the audience(s)? Here is where you can reference your personas, audience analysis, and research. Is the tone on target? Does the tone fit the client's brand?

- Is the content final and approved? If not, can word counts be provided? At this point, it's critical to have a sense of the depth and breadth of the content so that you can determine the best design approach and format. It's hard to know how to design a piece when you don't know if you're dealing with 500 or 5,000 words.

Conclusion: Master Content Wranglers Make Better Designers. Even though content wrangling may appear to be more work than you bargained for, in the end, several benefits emerge as a result of being involved in this part of the process. If you're naturally curious and drawn to information design, you probably already have an affinity for content. Whether you're a content junkie or an unsuspecting designer who's been thrown into an information design quagmire, staying on top of the content development process helps you:

- Eliminate surprises that can sneak up on you when you're already knee-deep into the project.

- Design effective solutions that are well organized and on target.

- Cement client relationships. Getting down and dirty with content development provides added value to your client, and pulls you up the design food chain so you're perceived as much more than a decorator.

- Stay engaged. One of the great things about being a designer is learning about different worlds and ideas. Being part of content development allows you to fully engage your intellect during the process.

Additional Firepower. Some designers can find themselves overwhelmed by the idea of being asked to help resolve content issues. If you and your team have writing communication skills and bandwidth, you may be able to offer this as a billable service to your clients. Alternatively, you can partner with skilled writers and copy editors who can become key allies in the process. Not every good copywriter is adept at thinking through the complex issues inherent in information design projects. If you do seek out partners, look for writers whose particular skill sets and experience match the project requirements.

Planning for the Long Run. In the past, many design artifacts had an expected shelf life of several years, but now changing business and information needs means a shorter shelf life for many projects, and the need for frequent updates. For ever-evolving projects, such as websites, newsletters, or public information graphics, how will future updates be accomplished?

It's important to ascertain any content updating issues early in the project so you can make informed decisions about file formats and other logistics. Here are some good questions to ask about content updating:

- Throughout the project, who will be responsible for managing this content, getting final approvals, organizing the drafts or revisions, and proofing?

- How often will the content need to be updated?

- What type of content will need to be updated? Just text or images also?

This website was built using a custom content management system allowing the client to continually update the site. (See case study on page 172.)
Hello Design

**MICA'S CURRICULUM OFFERS A
UNIQUE BALANCE OF**

tradition ●   ● innovation

liberal arts ●   ● visual arts

technology ●   [and]   ● touch

fine art ●   ● design
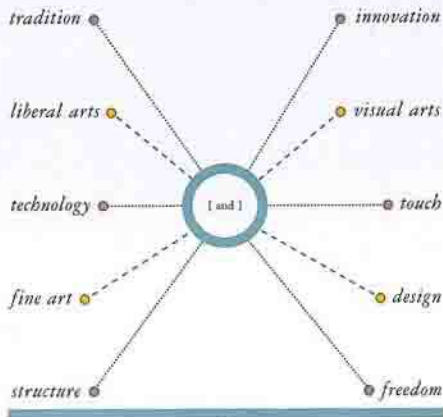
structure ●   ● freedom

*Your learning at MICA will take place in the studio,
in conversations with accomplished faculty and your peers, and in a
range of real-world experiences.*

Your four years at MICA will provide a balance of structure and freedom, disciplined, rigorous study and opportunities to take risks, explore your unique vision—laying a groundwork for a life of continual exploration and achievement. At MICA, you'll gain the intellectual foundation, technical mastery, critical insights, and creative vision that will give you an advantage in this fascinating, exciting world.

---

a solid foundation program that prepares you for success at MICA by offering both the technical and conceptual groundwork for your major

intellectual challenge through the liberal arts core curriculum and opportunities for deeper study through liberal arts majors and minors

a major in which you'll develop technical expertise and conceptual sophistication in your discipline

career preparation—internships, alumni networking, career-focused courses and seminars—to help you build a toolkit of professional skills and real-world experience for success after graduation

studio concentrations that offer coherent programs of study to complement your major, expand your career options

a senior thesis program in which you'll make meaningful connections between art-making and theory and focus on producing a significant body of work

structure

&

freedom

a curriculum that minimizes barriers among disciplines and encourages collaboration

flexibility to cross disciplines, combine mediums, and experiment in art-making

opportunities to experience other cultures during a summer or a semester of study abroad

a generous number of electives in your major that let you take advantage of the wide array of courses offered by MICA's studio and liberal arts departments

coursework that lets you explore the connections between art and music, science, critical writing, literature, entertainment, and community involvement

courses at Baltimore-area universities like Johns Hopkins that allow you to explore additional academic interests—from foreign languages and anthropology to entrepreneurship and environmental science

independent study options and self-designed majors and minors

---

JAMILAH ABDUL-SABUR / FRESHMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY MAJOR / VIDEO CONCENTRATION

My work often has a political, environmental, or social justice focus, picking up on the activism that's always been important to me.

- Can a non-designer make the updates easily, or will they require professional typesetting and design to ensure the integrity of the piece?

- Who will be responsible for gathering or creating material for content updates?

- Will the people updating the content have (or need) access to the software you are using to create the original files?

- Will multiple users be needed to update the design/information? Is there a workflow process in place to ensure the updates are made correctly and in a timely manner?

- What are the skill sets of the people updating the content? Will they need to be trained?

- How will the updated designs be produced? Will they need to be reprinted or published online? Will this require additional assistance from a printer or a technical development team?

People absorb information in various ways. For this art and design school catalog, content is displayed using multiple methods: illustrations, photographs, captions, diagrams, sidebars, as well as excellent use of pull quotes. The combination of information layout types makes for a very intriguing sense of pacing for the entire piece.
Rutka Weadock Design

Is It Bigger Than a Breadbox? "Form factor" is a term used in computing and engineering to describe size, format, shape, packaging, or housing of devices and mechanisms. We find ourselves appropriating the term to refer to design projects as well. There are plenty of considerations to take into account when deciding on the final "form factor" for an information design piece.

- The final form may not be what you first thought. For instance, you may have started out thinking of the project as a printed brochure, but discover your client's audiences will be more likely to access the information online.

- How will budget implications influence the format? Are there printing budgets, programming budgets, or content updating budgets to take into account? Are there mailing costs? For example, a square-format mailer will result in extra postage charges for the client— good to know.

- Are assumptions about the format hindering your ability to move in the right direction? Sometimes the client has a particular format in mind for a deliverable. It's also possible that a practical requirement has been assumed that later turns out to be inconsequential.

- The frequency with which the content needs to be updated should be a major consideration for the form factor.

> **"There is no such thing as objectivity. Even acts as simple and seemingly innocent as organizing data are subjective. Indeed, organizing data and the creating of information may have a profound impact on its meaning."** —Nathan Shedroff

A thoughtful and considered approach to information design can make all the difference in the success of a project. The following sections explore best practices in the field today and give practical tips and advice on creating planning documents and testing your design.

PROCESS: PROTOTYPES AND TESTING

3

Structural Overviews

GUIDES TO UNDERSTANDING THE BIG PICTURE

Because information design projects often have a deeper level of complexity and volume of information than other design projects, you will probably need to create one or more supporting documents to aid you in the process before you begin visual design.

Supporting structural-overview documents such as sitemaps and page maps (both of which are, in essence, flowcharts) can help you gather and organize information elements and help you figure out information flow. It's true that flowcharts and other overview charts can seem dry, boring, or even confusing to the untrained eye. However, in cases where an information design project contains many parts or levels of information, a flowchart or other diagram that visually outlines the structure of the project can often be a huge help in creating order out of apparent chaos.

WHAT IS A SITEMAP?

With projects that include very deep layers of information (such as websites, exhibitions, complex publications, or other information-dense projects), you'll be doing your visual design team a huge disservice if there is no overall map of the project from a structural point of view. Working on a complex project without a big-picture overview is enough to make even the most patient designers run screaming.

A sitemap or similar flowchart outlining all project components is one of the first documents you may need, and it should be created long before visual design begins.

Basically, the sitemap (or a similar overview map if you're working on something other than a website) should give a visual outline of all the components and informational elements of the project. It's a high-level, organized laundry list of everything that

> "Design, after all, has the unique capacity to shape information by emphasizing or understating, comparing or ordering, grouping or sorting, selecting or omitting, opting for immediate or delayed recognition, and presenting it in an entertaining fashion."
>
> —Paul Mijksenaar

→ The use of a main navigation bar in the Nike investor relations microsite was determined by the overall sitemap, but this did not preclude designers from experimenting with several different designs for the home page.
KBDA

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

Hall of Fame Inductees
- 2003 Inductees : 4
- Change out once each summer

AV
- Alphabetical menu
- Biography of each Hall of Fame Inductee
- Photos, action video, interviews, induction speech

FIRST TEAM ALL- AMERICAN

- Photos and Names

AV
- Alphabetical menu
- Biography of each First Team All-American
- Photos, action video, sound bytes

East Wall Treatment
- Issue with doors opening
- Needs to be flat graphic
- Could be one large photo or photo collage

LEGEND
- ★ AV
- 🔊 SOUND
- ▯ BENCH
- | FIRE ALARM PANEL

HISTORIC TIMELINE
- Does not go the entire length
- Graphics needs to be basically flat
- AV along hallway (10-15 seconds)
- Concern of circulation issues

COACHES CORNER
- Coach of the Year
- National Coach of the Year
- Coaches Hall of Fame

CURRENT AREA
- Change out once each summer
- Easy to add/remove exhibits or memorabilia
- Team picture/Individual picture

Retired Jersey Display
- Losing prime space on fire panel wall
- Possible solution : create low glass case

Outstanding Alumni Athletes
- Change out every 6 months
- Former athletes doing good things
- Does not have to be sport related

RECEPTION AREA

Waiting Area
- Benches to match the style of the mesh metal drop ceiling

Directory Map
- Low profile
- Map of all three levels

Exhaust Vent
- Must be protected in case of emergency
- Possible Solution : fill air space with metal banner cluster
- Careful to not be too obtrusive

INTERACTIVE AREA
- SPECS - the big picture (teach what BYU Athletics is about)
- 2 options for AV location (1 along wall, 1 in center - double sided)
- AV needs to be high enough to see from front entry

AV
- Possibly interview former athletes about their experience at BYU (thought the eyes of post athletes - goose bumps)
- Possible use of headphones and/or wands

SUPERLATIVE AREA (MAIN ATTRACTION)

Case A
- Heisman, Doak Walker, Outland
- 1984 National Championship Trophies
- Football National Championship Trophies

AV
- Possible short loop AV
- Show the announcement of the Heisman Trophy winner
- Other major awards & campaigns

Case B
- Davey O'Brien, Sammy Baugh Johnny Unitas, NCAA Top VIII

Case C
- National Athlete of the Year
- Other National Awards/Honors

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS AREA

Team & Individual Championships
- Needs to be expandable for future
- National Championship Trophies

Diagram labels: HISTORIC TIMELINE, ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME, FIRST TEAM ALL-AMERICAN, COACHES CORNER, RECEPTION, SUPERLATIVE AREA (MAIN ATTRACTION), INTERACTIVE AREA, CURRENT AREA, NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AREA, Water Fountain being removed, Not high traffic, East Wall Treatment, Some traffic from Legends Grille, Window, Case A, Case B, Case C, Exhaust Vent, Directory Map & Bench, Coach of the Year, Bench, Trophy Cases, Possible Front and Rear Projection, Team National Championship, Individual, Nat Championships, Alumni Athletes, Current Awards, Current Awards

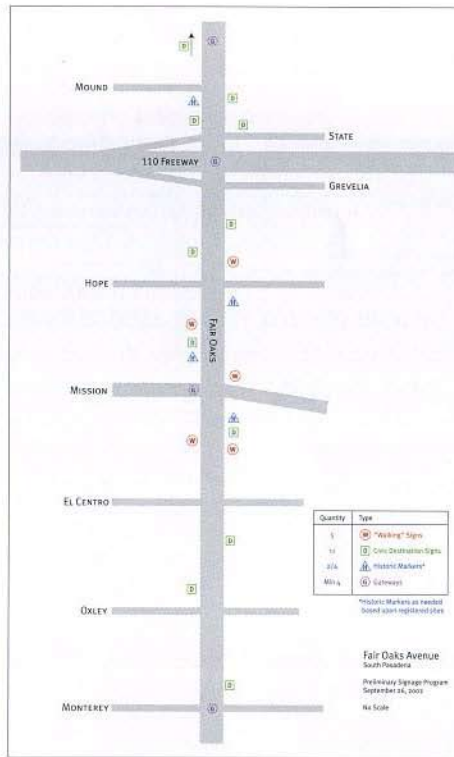This sitemap documents the content and site requirements for the first level of Brigham Young University's Student Athlete Center. The 10,000-square-foot (929 sq. m), three-level athletic hall of fame encapsulates 100 years of BYU sports. The plan helped the design team determine the best allocation of space for the exhibits. **Infinite Scale Design Group**

A streetscape enhancement project for the City of South Pasadena was designed to reinforce a sense of place and encourage pedestrian traffic. This map helped the community evaluate the proposed placement of sign types—destination wayfinding, historic documentation, and storytelling. (See page 73 for wireframe diagrams that show signage details.)
KBDA

Similar to sitemaps, page maps are usually generated for complex print projects such as books and magazines. Page maps help the design and client teams understand the flow of a multipage piece and help the team come to an agreement about the ordering and hierarchy of information and the allocation of space for the entire piece at a macro level. This working page map captured, at a high level, the storytelling arc of the piece.
KBDA

should be included in the project. Sitemaps are foundational tools of information architecture, related to the master planning documents that architects have traditionall used when designing extremely complex building projects such as hospitals or univer sity campuses.

HOW IS A SITEMAP USED?

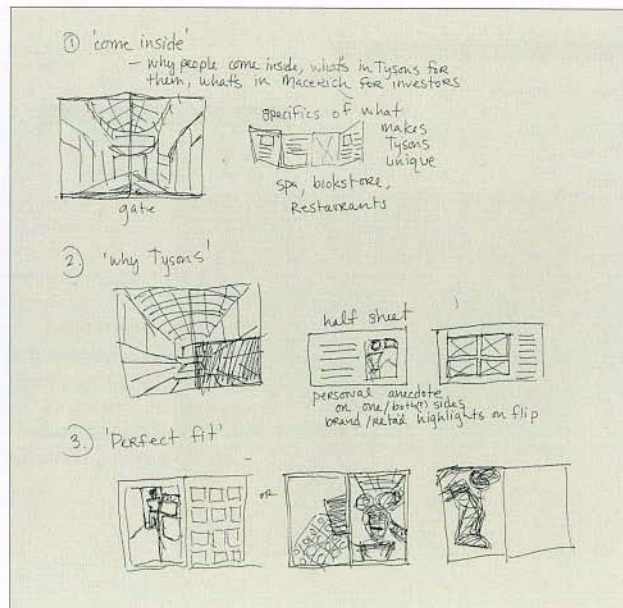### Coherent Diagrams: Elegant Solutions.

Sitemaps are most commonly found in the world of Web and interactive design. In this context, a sitemap is an invaluable tool in helping the project team figure out the overall site structure, navigation flow, and navigation nomenclature. A well-organized sitemap gives you an at-a-glance view of the entire site, with all its main sections, pages, and sublevel pages.

Organizing the data is the first step. Once the initial diagram is in place, components can be shuffled and reordered, and categories changed, all with the goal of meeting overall project objectives.

Sitemap-style documents aren't only useful for websites, although in terms of information design projects, they're most often used for deliverables that have an interactive, screen-based component. However, there are many other types of projects that might make use of a sitemap or similar flowchart. Interactive games, DVD menu sequences, museum exhibits, and even banking kiosk projects might be served by having a sitemap.
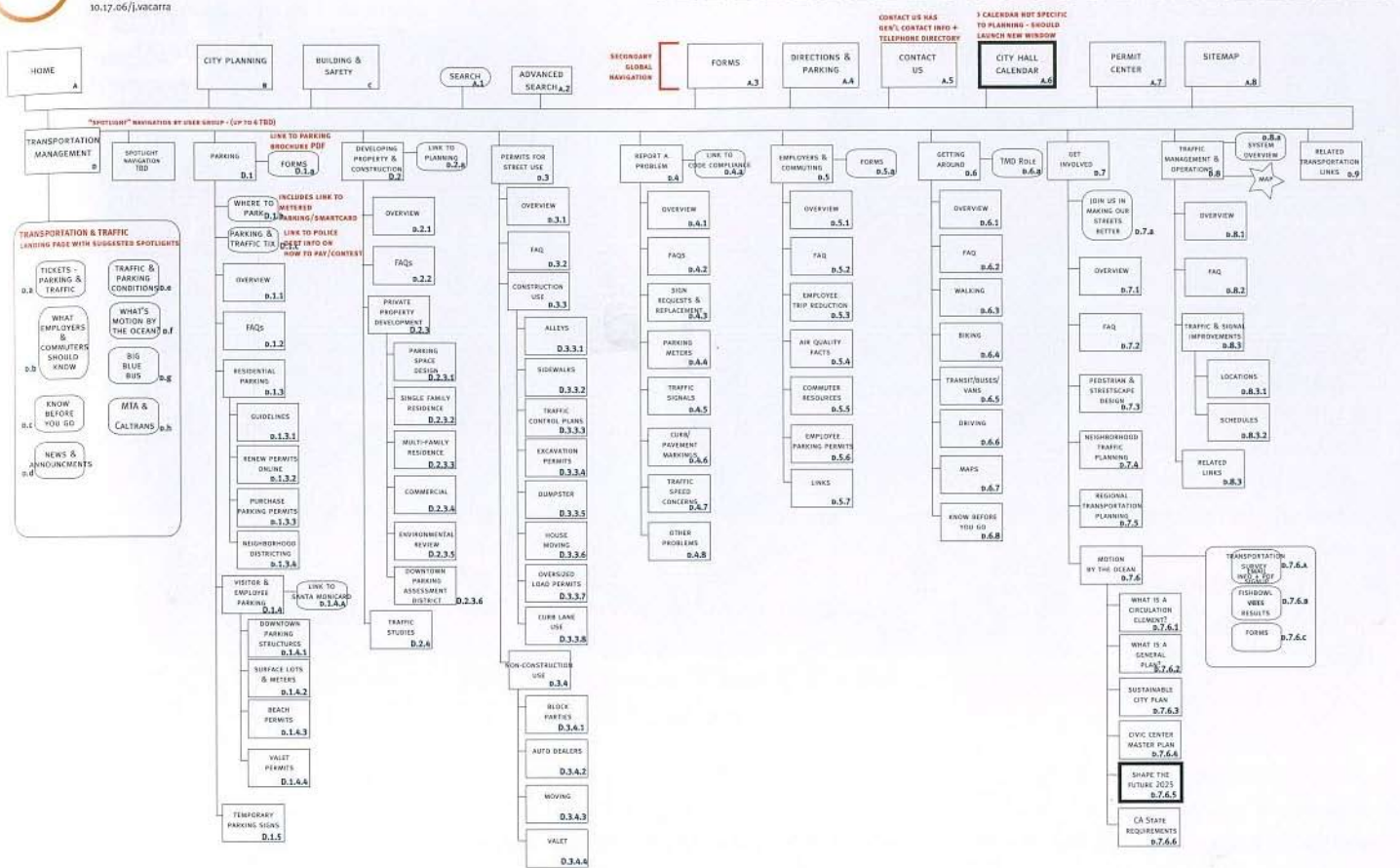
MAP KEY

= WEB PAGE = PDF DOWNLOAD = CONTENT CONTAINER = MULTI PAGES = CONTENT PAGE NAVIGATION = OFF-SITE PAGE

This is a standard sitemap for a Web project. Note how the map includes a key explaining the different diagrammatic elements on the map, such as which shape constitutes a Web page, which pages are actually PDF downloads, and which links lead someplace off the main site.
KBDA

This sitemap created by Funnel Incorporated started out as a typical black-and-white flowchart with boxes and lines. To better communicate with the client's internal nontechnical audience, Funnel designed a 3-D diagram of the site from both the functional perspective and the perspective of three main customer profiles. This alternative sitemap is designed to be very user-friendly, with color coding and dimensionality. This more accessible and richly detailed approach enabled the client's internal team to understand, approve, and fund the solution for their site.
Funnel Incorporated
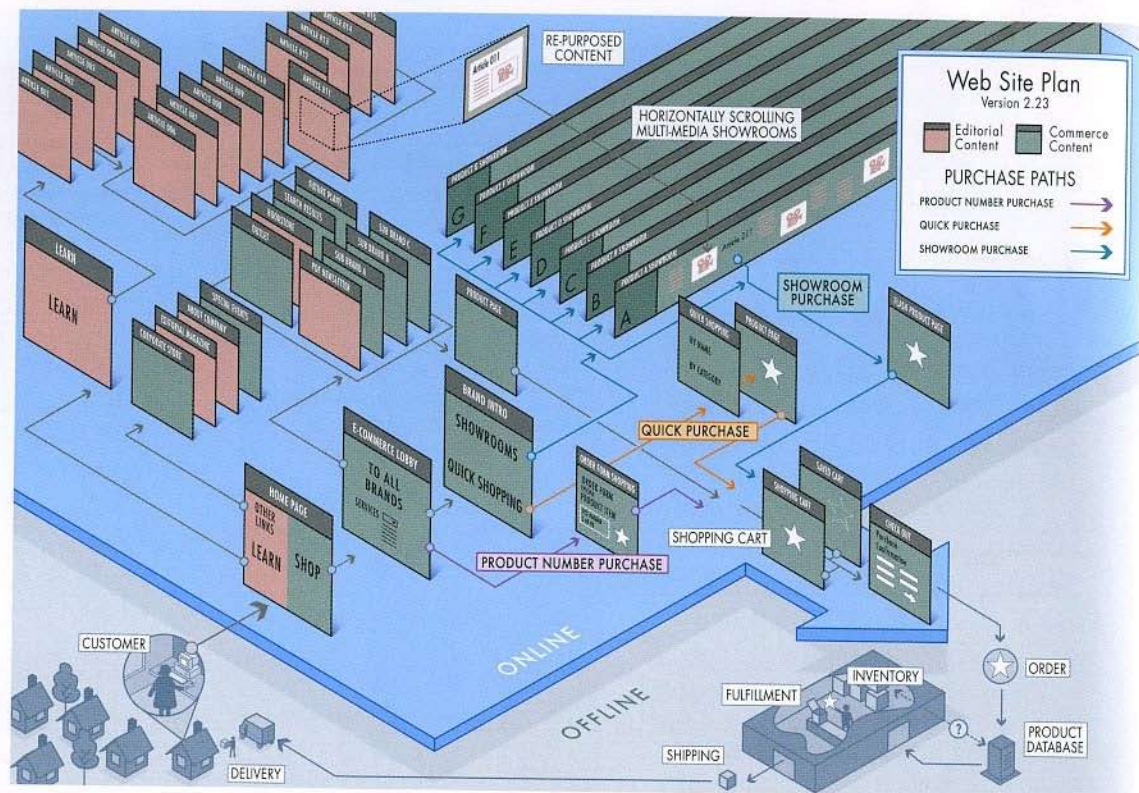
If you have a project with several layers of information, you could probably use a sitemap-style framework, especially if the project has multiple information flows or sequences that need to be mapped out. An innovative and thoughtful approach to an information design project in big-box retail, for example, could illuminate new approaches to customers' experiences of the aisles, shopping categories, and wayfinding in a store.

Sitemaps and Team Consensus. A sitemap helps ensure that a sound plan is approved and in place before the team proceeds to subsequent project phases of design,

programming, content development, and build-out. With design projects that include many layers of information, you definitely don't want to jump into the design phase without a solid framework. Designing a complex, information-intensive project without a plan tends to lead to haphazard solutions.

It's often said that the only constant is change, and this is especially true of information design projects. Having an organized map of the project allows you and the client to capture details about the project's evolution so you can plan for revisions and future versions of the design.

Discussion and Signoff. The sitemap, or another similar map/planning document, is often the first document the client will see after the creative brief. Clients may not understand the sitemap immediately and will probably need some handholding from you. That's okay. The point here is to catalog everything at a high level for the purpose of discussion with the client and team. At this point in the project, a lot could change in terms of the informational structure and content. Trust us, it's much better to change an elemental flowchart document than page after page of actual screen design.

> "Designers can learn from library science. In trying to deliver information, what are the cognitive frameworks or resistances to absorbing information? We're always trying to make information delivery as painless and seamless as possible. Even to the point that the person has no conscious perception of how the information is being delivered." —Micki Breitenstein

Don't be surprised, however, if your sitemap goes through several iterations. Once the client and design team have a plan in front of them, they will have new ideas, discover opportunities, and debate options. The sitemap allows this discussion to take place in an organized fashion. Sitemaps can be revised and revised again. Several versions are often necessary and healthy for the project. Try not to start the next phase of the project before the sitemap is approved, though, or you could find yourself wasting precious hours revising more time-intensive design documents.

WHAT SHOULD A SITEMAP LOOK LIKE?

Sitemaps and similar flowchart overview documents can come in all shapes and sizes. There are probably infinite ways to create a sitemap or other map-type diagram. You can draw it using an illustration program or a flowchart program. You can create a simple index/listing in a word processing program. You can create a sitemap out of index cards displayed on a board. You can sketch one on a napkin. Sitemaps can be simple black-and-white diagrams. They can be animated or interactive if necessary. They can be 3-D models if you think that's useful. Hey, you can even make a sitemap out of modeling clay if that works for your project. Your project content and goals should guide you.

Whatever you need to communicate about the informational components of your project can be reflected in the sitemap. Like many maps and diagrams, a good sitemap might have a key to explain the meaning of certain map elements. Are there pieces of information that are different from the others? Let the sitemap show that. This chapter provides samples of some typical and not-so-typical sitemaps to give you an idea of how you might apply this type of document to your project.

CURSE OF THE WINCHESTER HOUSE

Sarah Winchester, famous rifle heiress, built her notorious Winchester House without any real plan. She built the house based on the advice of a medium, who had told her that as long as she kept up construction of the house, the evil spirits of those killed by Winchester rifles would be appeased. Construction went on for 36 years, 24 hours a day. With no master plan, Sarah would review her hand-sketched ideas with building foremen each morning. Rooms were added to other rooms, which then became entire new wings. Now, multiple staircases lead to nowhere. Doors open to sudden drops to the lawn below. The long-since completed house has a current estimate of 160 rooms, but the house's floorplan is so confusing that initial room counts yielded different totals each time.

Don't let your project turn into a Winchester House! Create and document a plan using something like a sitemap or page map. Make sure the client approves the plan before you move forward with the project's next steps. As part of the natural process, you may need to update the plan while the project is under way. However, with your documented plan in place, you'll be able to avoid creating the information design equivalent of a door that leads to a two-story drop to the lawn below.
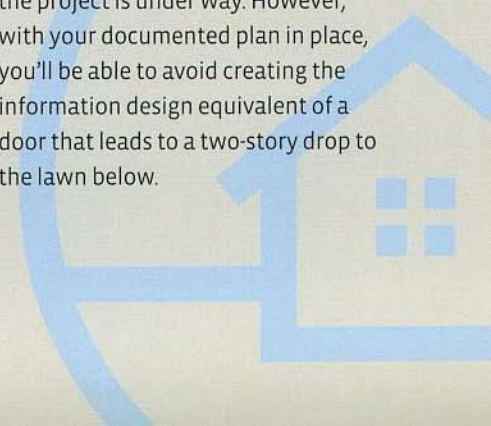
Creating the Blueprints

> "Psychologists and experts in the field of human perception tell us that human beings take in data through the senses and turn it into something that is memorable and has meaning. This can then become permanent knowledge. Designers have to find ways to make the information meaningful."
>
> —Krzysztof Lenk

WIREFRAMES FLESH OUT A PROJECT

Big-picture overviews are extremely helpful and often necessary, but they may not allow for the level of detail that your team will need to determine the right approach for the visual design of the project. If the sitemap or structural overview is a kind of skeleton, wireframes add a bit more flesh and muscle. Like sitemaps, wireframes (sometimes also referred to as schematics) are often found in the worlds of environmental and interactive design, and are also used for complex print projects. Like sitemaps, wireframes are planning documents and, thus, are not concerned with

design details such as typography, shape, and color. At this point, you're still in the planning stages and using broad strokes.

Like a blueprint for a house, the wireframe acts as a detailed guideline for layout and functionality within the information design piece. With the sitemap, you generally figure out the hierarchy of information and determine the master plan for the piece. In essence, you decide which rooms will be included in the house, and the flow of traffic between them.

The wireframes begin to give shape to the structure and provide detail for all the rooms and features within the structure.
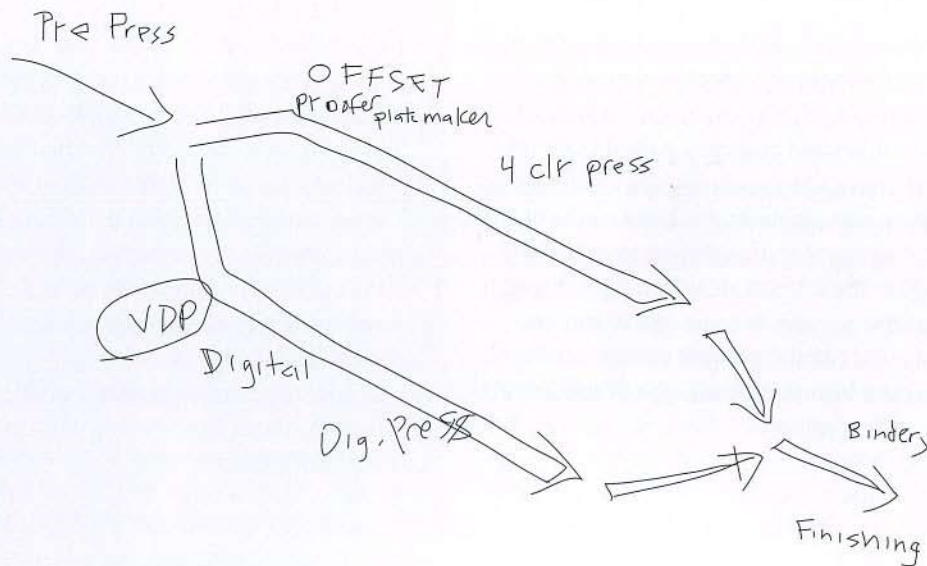
◄ Funnel Incorporated's process includes preliminary whiteboard sketches done in work sessions with their clients to get a sense of the information flow and layout of a project. The sketching process happens before visual design begins and helps everyone "get the story right" in advance. **Funnel Incorporated**

You begin by asking questions: Are all the rooms the same size or different? Does each room have the same function? How much wall space will there be? How much furniture do we need to accommodate in each room? How many doors and windows are there, and how do those doors and windows function? Are they standard doors, sliding doors, or French windows?

Wireframes map out which elements in the design are most and least important to determine the focal points for the design of the house. Which rooms are the central showcase areas for the house? Which part of a room is its focal point (fireplace, sofa, great work of art)? (Since this is a precursor to visual design, you won't have chosen the fireplace style, the sofa, or the art; you're just making the space for it. Wireframes allow you to plan without making specific choices about shape, color, or other visual components.)

DON'T BUILD WITHOUT A BLUEPRINT

While the sitemap or structural overview provides a bird's-eye view, wireframes flesh out the finer details of a complex information design project. They help answer questions: How much content will we need to consider as we create the design? What kinds of specific information do we need to design around? Do we need headers and subheaders for the content? How much main text is there? Are there pieces of related content that live alongside the main content but in a separate area of the layout? What other types of information does the design need to accommodate and how should we display that information? Will we need lists? Diagrams? Charts? Illustrations? Few, if any, of these issues can be planned
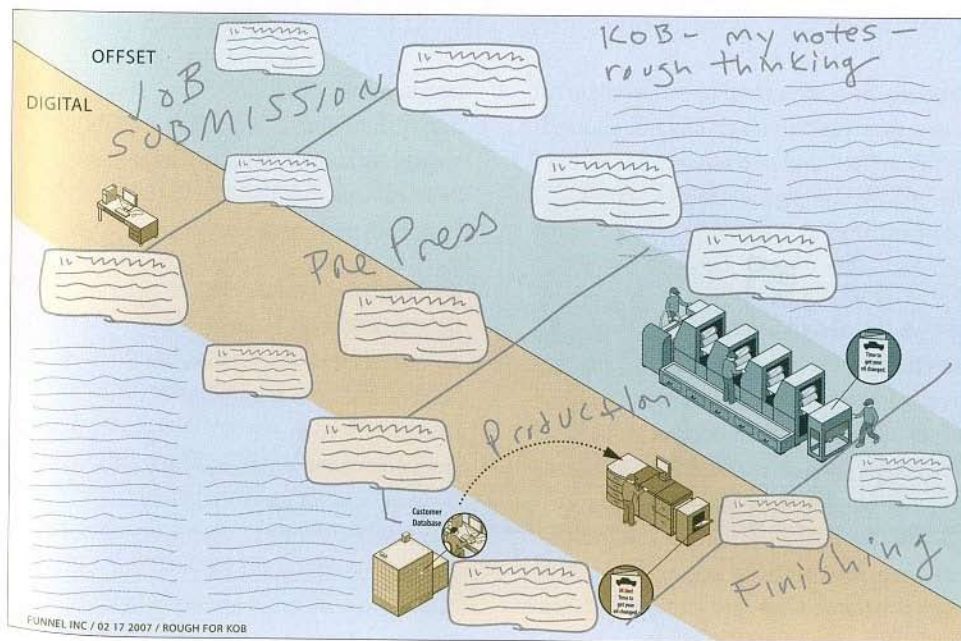
From the whiteboard sketch, designers then execute a rough sketch that introduces layout and look and feel without dealing specifically with all of the content that will be used in the final piece.
Funnel Incorporated

This final version of the Funnel design shows how preliminary elements of the sketch evolved into the end deliverable. Planning in advance helped to organize the complex information in terms of flow, hierarchy, layout, and storytelling.
Funnel Incorporated
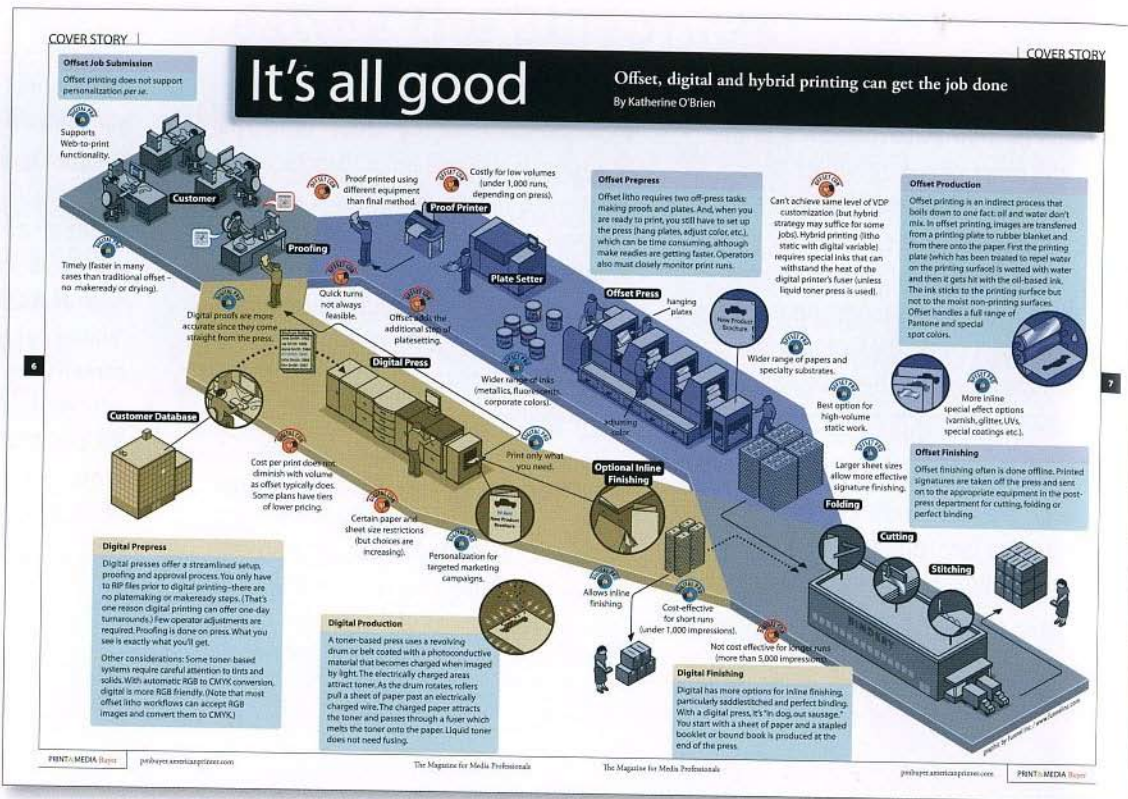
> "Information is the beginning of meaning. Information is data put into context, with thought given to its organization and presentation." —Nathan Shedroff

properly on a structural overview diagram like a sitemap. There's simply not enough detail in that kind of overview document. Wireframe sketches allow you to carefully envision all of these details.

A wireframe is, in a sense, a sketch that allows the design team and client to see a detailed view of how the content will be organized on just a few given pages or sections of your project. For websites, you might choose a series of representative site pages (often called page types) for your set of wireframe sketches. For instance, for a website, you might start with the home page and a few drill-down pages. Book or magazine content sketches might show rough templates for how the typical feature or department content will be organized into headers, introduction text, body text, and sidebars.

Without wireframes, you can spend a lot of time and budget creating highly detailed design deliverables only to find that not all of the project parameters have been thought through. If you're designing a website home page based on three spotlight areas for content and suddenly the client wants five spotlights, it's much easier to revise and update a simple wireframe sketch than to rework a fully realized layout.

Wireframes help ensure your design planning is thorough and deliberate. By the time your team is ready to begin visual design, you'll have thought of most, if not all, of the issues related to the organization and display of the information you need to include in your project.

WHAT SHOULD A WIREFRAME LOOK LIKE?

Wireframe documents tend to look like their moniker: plain, wirelike drawings with basic text labels. Nothing too fancy. Nevertheless, there are no hard-and-fast rules for creating wireframes. You can draw them using a variety of tools and methods, depending on project content and goals. The main

goal is to catalog all the information in layout form but without spending time and thought applying any specific visual design elements.

Wireframes don't have to be ugly (Why should anything you create be ugly?), but it doesn't make sense to spend an inordinate amount of time making them beautiful. For one thing, people might wrongly assume your gorgeously nuanced wireframes are reflective of the final look and feel for the piece. Wireframes should be sketches that are clear, thorough, and free from extraneous graphic elements and details.

Some information designers use color in their wireframes sketches. If you use color, limit your palette to one or two colors that you use to emphasize certain information.

By primarily sticking to black and white or grayscale, you won't run the risk of confusing your clients into thinking they're looking at visual design deliverables. And you won't be inadvertently starting or pre-empting the visual design process before that phase has begun.
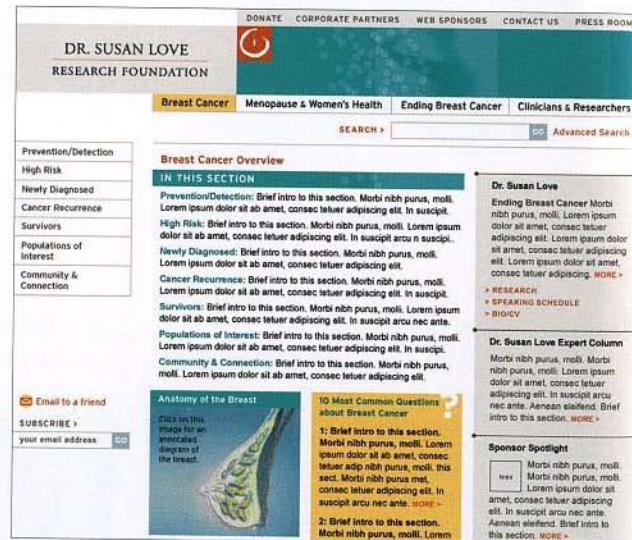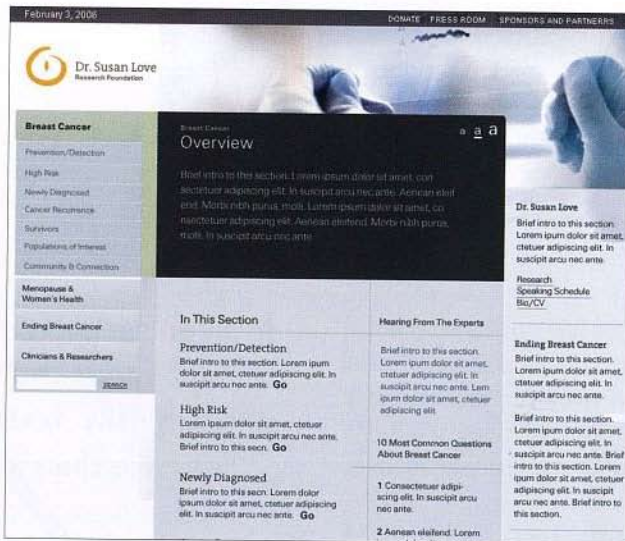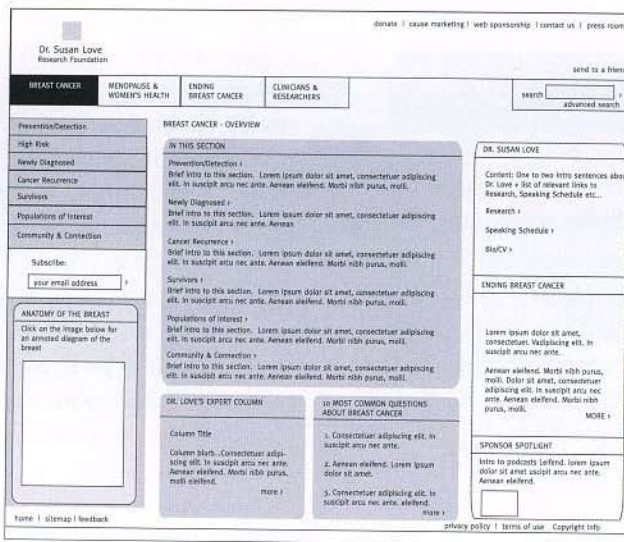
THE BEAUTY OF INTERPRETATION

Most of the time, wireframes will look absolutely nothing like the final design. And, ideally, during the next phase of the project when you present the visual design options, you will have diverse visual solutions that look radically different from each other, all based on the same set of wireframes.

These content sketches were created in generic sign templates as part of the planning phase of the City of South Pasadena's streetscape enhancement project. The goal was to get the community to approve the content requirements for two proposed sign types before actual design commenced. (See the sitemap on page 66 for the structural overview of the Pasadena signage project.)
KBDA

24"

Images

Mission District

1/2" x 4" flat bar legs and support structure Powder Coated finish

8"

Bend

A wireframe (top left) was given to three different designers for the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation website redesign project. The designers (David Handschuh, Keith Knueven, and Liz Burrill) each interpreted the wireframe quite differently, giving the client several options to choose from.
Jill Vacarra Design

Make It Just Real Enough. Wireframes should look enough like the final piece so a layperson can understand, with a little explanation, what they're looking at. As we've discussed, you don't have to come close to a final design at this stage. But, for example, if you're creating a website wireframe, you'll want to make the document look enough like a website so that the person gets the gist. You probably want to use the same dimensions as a typical Web screen and use some detailing to clarify navigational elements. If you're creating wireframes for signage, it helps to give the diagram a few recognizable visual cues, like a signpost or sign frame, to help viewers instantly understand that the sketch represents a sign.

ACHIEVING CLIENT CONSENSUS

Wireframes give you a way to map out the piece in advance and to reach team consensus regarding the form and content of your final design. The wireframe stage of a complex information design project can go through many, many iterations. Once you have team and client approval, the design team will then use the wireframe sketches as a detailed reference guide as they begin to address the visual design.

Continued Research with Wireframes. It's a really good idea to test key elements of your information design at the wireframe sketch stage with target audience members. Even before you've spent time and effort on the detailed visual aspects of the design, you can test your thinking.

The client and design team may be making assumptions that you can avoid if you ask end users for their feedback at this stage in the process.

By showing the wireframe sketches, you can ask users if they understand how the information in your project is categorized, organized, and named. You can find out if you've inadvertently made choices that cause confusion for users. Wireframes can allow you to find out quite a bit about how audiences will react to the information design piece even before you and your team have spent the time and budget on look and feel.
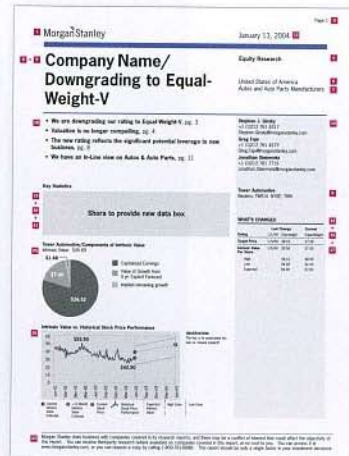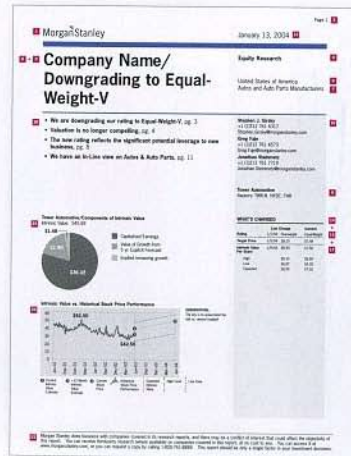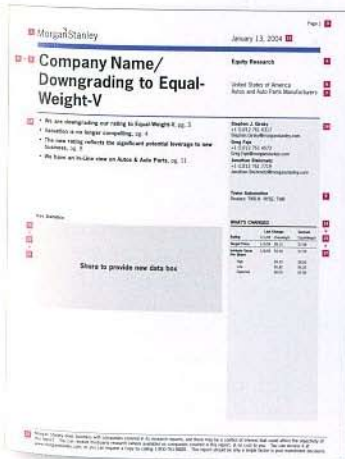
Carbone Smolan Agency worked to develop a comprehensive way for Morgan Stanley to publish their global equity research reports. After thorough research, CSA created wireframes to illustrate possible options for organizing the content. (See case study on page 124.)
Carbone Smolan Agency