

ENSURING SUCCESS

10 points to remember when planning
an interactive project

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INTRODUCTION

Interactive projects often call on many different disciplines to achieve their goals. Add to that the different internal departments such as marketing, IT and product development and you quickly get lost as to how to plan for an interactive implementation.

The end user's expectation has also raised the bar on what is acceptable. Ignoring their experience will often result in a project that fails to achieve the expected usage.

Listed below are the 10 key points we use to help focus the project and ensure the important factors are covered at the planning stage. Remember to get all parties involved early on, especially your development partner. This will ensure the best possible solution to what you are trying to achieve.

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1. Match the project to your business goals:

It is imperative that the project be linked to business goals. This focuses the project development phases and makes it measurable. Defining realistic business models will also ensure that the project funding is taken care of upfront and does not leave the project hanging half way without funding.

2. Bottom up design:

The industrial revolution brought with it a product focused business model – build the product then convince the buying public they need it. The information revolution has turned this concept on its head. Listen to the needs of you buying audience then develop the product to suit the need. In effect you let the customer develop the product. This applies to touchscreen development as well. Projects that succeed are those that constantly engage with the audience and develop the learning's into the next version of the software.

3. The experience economy:

We have entered into an experience economy. Customers are exposed to constant entertainment and stimuli and are looking to bring these experiences into their interaction with business. The information revolution has resulted in the average person being bombarded with information on a daily bases. Audiences have developed a blinker mentality that naturally blocks out unnecessary information exposure. The bar has therefore been lifted and simply popping your message in text on screen won't suffice anymore. One way around this is to seek the entertainment value in your project. This will generate perceived value and open the user up to receive your message.



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4. To craft or not to craft:

Daihatsu or BMW? Both do the same job but with a different user experience. Some projects simply don't have the budget or requirement to be crafted. On the other hand certain projects are looking for crafting to differentiate the brand or project. Understanding which is required will eliminate misunderstandings on deliverables as well as allow the work to be quote accurately for the task at hand.

5. Agile development:

Project scope can quickly get out of hand and it is very tempting to get every feature implemented in the initial release version. The downside of this is a dramatically extended development time for the first release, huge upfront costs and risks, and inability of the project to adapt to learning's from the field or changing developments in the market place. With an agile development approach you start with a subset of functionality, develop and deploy then take the learning's and the next set of functionality into version 2. The end result is small quick updates that organically grow the project.

6. The front end is only half the story:

There is a plethora of components that need to come together to deliver a successful touchscreen deployment. These include hardware, peripherals, remote management tools, networks, maintenance plans, content maintenance tools. Most of these develop with the project but need to be considered upfront. Failing to consider these components could result in them eating your project profits while you scramble to keep the project going after it is deployed.

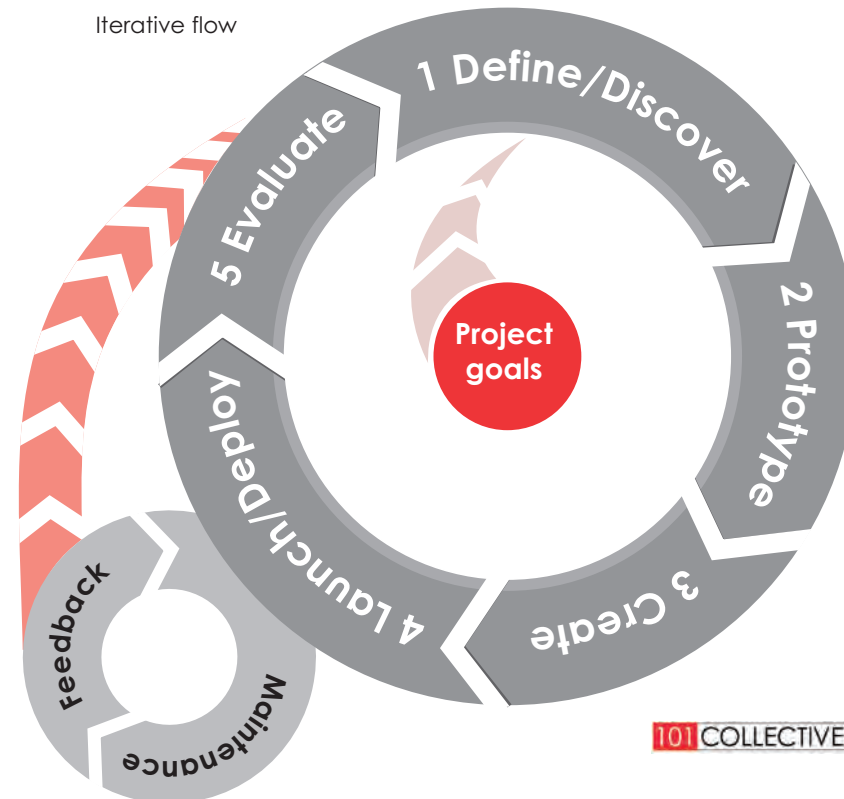
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7. Digital is 2 way communication – start the conversation:

Digital is by its nature 2 way communication. Projects should look for opportunity to encourage this two way flow of information. This can be done behind the scene by tracking the user, by soliciting a direct feedback or through functionality that can continue to engage with the client after they have left the unit.

8. Iterate:

Iteration and agile development go hand in hand. Projects that fail to plan for ongoing iteration get stuck in version one syndrome. They place all their budget and hopes on getting everything right in the first release and are unable to improve the project or adapt to changing market opportunities once deployed.



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9. No interactive project is an island:

Simply dropping a touchscreen deployment anywhere in the public space and expecting it to be an overnight success is wishful thinking. The project needs to be integrated into other business activities. Create a campaign and brand around the unit, make it part of your advertising campaign and have content from other business efforts spill over onto the touchscreen. Get staff involved and showcase the benefits of the project for them.

10. Make it easy:

Most interactive projects require relatively short interactions with a user in infrequent intervals. The interface needs to be intuitive as there is no time to learn how the application works. If the user struggles to use the application they will abandon what they are trying to do. The application is a touchpoint between the user and the organization and as such it is a brand building opportunity. A negative experience will equate to a bad brand experience.



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RESOURCES

Here are some articles to get the brain working. Grab a coffee and click a link.

- **The Cluetrain Manifesto:**
The end of business as usual...old but still very relevant.
- **The customer is not an idiot:**
Check your marketing motives. We create the world we ourselves live in.
- **Making things work:**
Ease of use is still a bonus rather than the norm.
- **The secret behind apple loyal customers :**
Satisfied consumers not more choice.