Project design process by Heartgrenade

The following document aims to familiarize you with the process of software development that we carry out with our Clients. We divided it into subsequent **steps** and each step results from previously finished stages.

Design work process

Step 1: Project concept and specification

Important:

Many Clients do not know that while choosing an IT partner they **definitely** should pay attention to the "soft" skills and not only programming capacity or works presented in a portfolio.

Before we undertake development or graphic designing of a given project we take to heart the very first step of the process in which the "soft" skills are of vital importance (not development-based skills but rather "structural"/conceptual ones).

We do believe that in order to carry out an IT project well we should **understand** the Client in the first place. At the initial stage of project development we aim to discover the Client's **needs** about the project, understand why it must be developed, what needs it should satisfy and what goals should be met.

To achieve that we organize a number of meetings (that we call "**workshops**") during which we talk with the Client about the project and ask necessary questions which bring us closer to the project's vision.

The result of such workshops is creating an initiatory **project specification**. It is a document in which we describe in easy language **our concept** for project realization. We expect that after providing you with the initiatory specification you will be able to define if the given framework and functionality of the project suggested by us meet all your expectations.

At this stage it often turns out that after reading the specification the Client, even without realizing it before, is reminded of lacking components/features or some other features which might work in a different way. Working together provides additional quality in the form of

organizing the Client's issues and knowledge about the project.

What results from the initiatory project specification and your comments/changes is the final **Project Specification**. The document includes all fundamental information which is necessary for carrying out the subsequent steps of the project.

At that point we are ready to estimate the cost of the whole project (based on the prepared specification).

Important:

Having in mind that most Clients expect to know an estimated price before starting the project execution, we always try to provide estimated **price brackets** at the beginning of smaller projects.
Before carrying out a more complex project that requires deeper analysis we expect an initial charge which let us take the time to evaluate the project and prepare to its execution. **The final estimate of the whole project always takes place at the end of Step 1.**

We happened to sign an agreement just for Step 1 and after carrying it out and estimating the cost of the project we signed another agreement for the whole project.

Step 2: User Experience Designs (UX designs)

Important:

We often come across a situation when a Client is not aware of the necessity of making UX designs and its presence in a project is a positive surprise. From our perspective UX design is vital for the proper project execution because it directly depicts the project to the Client and at the same time is very easy to modify.

What is user experience design?

User experience design is a black-and-white **graphic** design which answers the following questions:

a) how many subpages/views the project is going to have and of what types
b) how components will be arranged on subpages, taking into account good design practices and usability (it is the main expert value of UX design)
c) what features the project is going to offer, what you can do in it and what tasks can be performed

We prepare UX design on the basis of the Design Specification. Preparing UX design is also more of a "soft" step in project development and a very important one from our point of view because it shows the Client what is going to be graphically designed or developed.

The **Client's presence and comments** are crucial during this step – UX design is easy to modify, so during this step the Client can make any adjustments/modifications to subpages (if changes fall within the scope of previous arrangements).

User Experience Design together with the Design Specification clearly determine the scope of work for the project in the subsequent steps.

Step 3: Graphic Design

This step is the first **production** stage of the project – the stage that follows the previously acquired **information and arrangements** (that were listed in Specification and UX design) and in which we **produce** specific steps of the project and show their outcomes to the Client for approval.

Graphic Design is made directly on the basis of previously approved UX design. A designer adds colors, fonts, icons and other components, creating – in other words – the whole **graphic tone of the project**.

Obviously, to prepare graphic design it is necessary to collect your requirements in this regard (you can send us your brandbook if the project needs to be consistent with it and if such a brandbook exists). All requirements are collected via a short survey in a form of simple questions.

A good practice is to provide us with some examples of graphic design/styles that you like (and describing what is appealing in them).

Step 4: Development (front-end and back-end)

This is another **production** stage of the project which usually takes the most time to perform.

This step is usually divided into **previously arranged, smaller stages**.
After developing each stage we present it to the Client for approval.

Development consists of two main components:
Front-end, which is converting graphic design into a form of a HTML code – these are all components visible to the naked eye.

Back-end, which is the whole development background meaning all components not visible to a user (operations on servers, data processing, database etc.)

Step 4, from the development point of view, is **fully** based on arrangements listed in the Design Specification and represents their **faithful image**.

We use technologies such as:
Front-end: HTML5, CSS3, Javascript (jQuery, Angular.js, ReactJS)
Back-end: PHP, Ruby on Rails, Python, .Net, Node.JS

Step 5: System testing

This step consists of polishing and improving the quality of the created project.
Knowing their complexity, IT systems require testing in various situations and from different angles.

We always put into use the project that was both tested by us and the Client.

We test the project on various web browsers and mobile devices. Tests are conducted by testers, the Client and developers who make corrections and polish the app, getting rid of encountered errors.

Important:

> Elimination of errors (and the fact that errors do exist) is an indispensable part of the specificity of software development. A good IT partner can be recognized not by the number of errors he found during tests, but by how quick he was able to correct them.

We provide **12 months warranty** for a project so that the Client has our full support if during the warranty period any previously undiscovered errors appear.

Step 6: System implementation on production server

System support

A working system is used by several people who often have various ideas for its improvements and extensions. Upon the Client's decision the system might be further developed. New features are priced separately.

Having in mind that most projects are „made to measure" by us, we can always develop a given project further in **any desired way** and add any new features at the Client's wish.

We also offer system maintenance for a monthly subscription fee.

Project roles

1) **Account Manager / Project Manager** – contacting the Client, work coordination and project management
2) **Business Analyst** – polishing the concept of the project, creating functional specification
3) **UX Designer** – creating UX designs
4) **Graphic Designer** – creating graphic designs
5) **Front-end Developer** – developing HTML views of the project based on the graphic designs
6) **Back-end Developer** – developing back-end code (saving/editing/data processing, databases etc.)

The role of a Project Manager

From our own experience we know that the work of a project manager/account manager is a vital part of a well-conducted project and is an indicator of the quality of the final effect.
A **Project Manager** is responsible for the success of the whole project and in our company plays the role of a "Client's Advocate", which means he or she takes care of the Client's needs and convenience.
We are well known for taking control over the whole project process with emphasis being placed on "soft" skills (analytical/management) and not only developing/designing skills.
This is why a Project Manager is often the most important person in a project who performs most of the work from all people involved in the project.
Another added value is the role of a Product Owner played by such a person. It means that he or she will perfectly know the scope of the project, take care of the consistency of the whole concept and make sure it meets all needs of the Client.

The Project Manager's cost takes into account his or her heavy workload: all arrangements with the Client, suggesting solutions, informing and explaining reasons for applied solutions, mediating in effective communication between staff members and the Client, accepting work and presenting it properly to the Client, collecting comments, passing them to the team and then back to the client after their implementation etc.

About Heartgrenade

For years we have been carrying out IT projects. We work for Polish and foreign Clients and hire only high-level specialists.

It is worth noticing that a large part of our Clients come to us after bad experiences with our competitors. We regularly **save the day** and help our Clients to carry out projects at risk.

We place our emphasis on the **high quality** of our projects, that's why we always provide Project Manager's care who assures coordination, efficient communication and refines the quality of solutions.

Our portfolio contains both large corporate projects but also apps for smaller clients. We helped in creating numerous online businesses. We are distinguished by our **quality of service**.

Projects

We carried out over 50 projects that lasted from a few weeks to several months. These are mostly web systems and mobile apps for various industries (financial, medical, entertainment, musical and others).
We have encountered tons of business and web apps ideas. Thanks to that we have a vast knowledge of our job and can suggest interesting solutions.

We mostly develop systems from the scratch, taking part in defining their concept. Sometimes we further develop existing solutions, mostly in cases when we take over a project after other contractors.

Developers

We also delegate deeply experienced developers/consultants (experience of several years) for long-term contracts based on working in virtual teams for a Client (mainly Clients from the USA, UK and Scandinavia).

Our Clients are usually:

- average and large companies for which we develop dedicated systems that operate internal processes of the company, CRM and others

- start-ups, new businesses which need a unique software, for example extended social networking platforms Mobile + WWW.

What distinguishes us

1. **A good sense of time.**
We always try to finish project before the deadline specified in the agreement so that the Client has the peace of mind knowing the work will be carried out in time (and usually even faster :))

2. **Working with the best.**
We gladly hire developers with several years of experience (even 10-15). Thanks to that our Client is provided with the warranty of quality and can be sure the project will be carried out well and according to the guidelines.

3. **Besides providing the high quality of development we pay attention to the communication with the Client and the way a given project is carried out.**
Based on our experience we created our own management system which provides the Client with the feeling of good organization and control.

Our work standards

1. We support the Client with our knowledge and ideas backed by our experience in developing online businesses.
2. We adopt clear and straightforward rules of cooperation and communication with the Client. We support sincere communication – out Client is always informed about the project's status.
3. We engage the Client in the project. We deliver necessary technological information that simplifies taking good business decisions.
4. We carry out projects in agile methodology (scrum) or waterfall model. We choose the most effective methodology for a given project according to the Client's needs.
5. We deliver subsequent steps of the project for the Client's approval and improve them according to the received comments.
6. We always exhaustively test the app. To speed up testing and improve its accuracy we can involve more people (testers) in a given project if needed and approved by the Client.
7. We use project management systems (mainly Asana, Trello).
8. You can contact us via phone, e-mail or Skype.