

GETTING TO WHAT MATTERS

Collaborative activities anyone can use to bring content strategy into your next web project.

Not a content strategist? No problem. You can still get people working on content early in your project—and avoid the last-minute scrambles, design rework headaches, and other problems caused by not having a content strategy. Try adding these collaborative activities to your process.

At the kickoff

Mad lib content strategy (30-45 minutes)

Goal: Avoid meandering "what ifs" by quickly aligning teams around a rough strategic framework for content decisions.

Use it when: "Cool ideas" without a purpose or audience keep distracting the team.

How to do it:

1. Create a generic sentence about the brand/organization, leaving blank spaces that ask the team to identify: audience(s), the content they'll publish, and what that content should accomplish for both users and the business. For example:

| | publis | nes | , | content |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Organization name | - 1 | descriptive adj | ective | descriptive adjective |
| that helps them | | | and | |
| accomplish | | ıplish goal | | accomplish goal |
| by making | | | | _feel, |
| | ıdience(s) | | descriptive adjective | |
| , and | | | , and convincing them to | |
| descriptive adjective | | descriptive adjective | 2 | 0 |
| | | and | | |
| take desired | | take desired action | | |

- 2. Break into small groups. Give each team 10 minutes to draft their statement.
- **3.** Have the groups share their results. Spend 10 minutes discussing areas of disagreement, and 10 minutes merging them into a single statement. Don't worry if it's awkward; your goal here is to get rough alignment, not polished language.

Also try: Messaging card sort

Goal: Get diverse teams to make hard choices about brand and voice guidelines.

Use it when: People keep saying "edgy," but no one knows what that means.

How to do it: Check out chapter 2 of *Content Strategy at Work* by Margot Bloomstein: <u>appropriateinc.com/book/</u>.

Sara Wachter-Boettcher | Content Strategy Consulting, Workshops, and Training sarawb.com | (541) 517-2870 | 1839 S. 15th St., Philadelphia PA 19145

During the design process

Reframe and rewrite (2+ hours)

Goal: Help authors feel confident owning the strategy and applying it to real content.

Use it when: Strategy and voice are defined and you want to kickstart revision/editing.

How to do it:

1. Find a few examples of existing content—both prominent pages, like a homepage or landing page, and deep pages. Print these out and tape them to a wall.

emphasizes

our simple

nessage Lo

- **2.** At the start of the workshop, refresh everyone on the content strategy, voice, and messaging they all agreed to earlier in the process. Keep this up as a reference.
- 3. Give each participant two colors of stickies (red and green, if possible). Have them go around the room and look at each page on the wall. When they see something that fits the new strategy and voice, have them write it on a green sticky. When they see something that *doesn't* work, have them write it on a red sticky. Spend no more than 3 minutes per page (if needed, use a stopwatch and tell the group when it's time to switch).
- **4.** Have the group break into teams of two. Each group should take a page from the wall, and all the stickies that go with it. Have them rewrite the page to fit the site's strategy, brand, and goals, using the stickies to help identify problem areas and things to keep.
- **5.** Workshop the results: Have each pair read its draft out loud to the group. Ask the group to identify ways the new content better serves the strategy, then anything the new content might be missing.

Also try: Content priority guide

Goal: To identify all the content a page needs to include so authors know what to write, designers know what to design, and developers know what to support.

Use it when: You need to decide content priorities—but you don't want to distract the team with layout decisions yet.

How to do it: Follow along with Sparkbox's example: <u>seesparkbox.com/foundry/</u> <u>content_priority_guide</u>.