

Web Developer Digital Positions Gets Clarity from Dynamic Answers

Digital Positions is an Atlanta-based Internet Strategy and Web Development firm. Founded in 1995, Digital Positions has distinguished themselves by working closely with clients to define, design, and deliver highly effective web-based solutions that go beyond eye candy and help to address the customer-facing as well as operational issues of an individual business.

One of the toughest parts of Digital Positions' business is helping customers articulate their business model and the role they expect their website to play in that model.

"We refer to this as scoping the scope," David Taylor-Klaus, Principal of Digital Positions explains. "Before we can determine the scope of a project, we have to define the project by going through a formal requirements gathering process."

Part of this process is to ask customers the tough questions ranging from 'Why are you in business?' and 'Why are customers selecting you over the competition?' to 'How do you want your customers to be able to work with you over the web?' and 'How will that work for your internal departments like HR and sales?'

Unfortunately some clients are unable to reach a consensus internally or provide clear direction to Digital Positions. It was one such instance that sent them in search of a different approach.

"We had a client who could only partially articulate their business model and the role that they expected the web to play in that model," continued Taylor-Klaus. "We quickly realized that we needed someone with the experience to go



in and tear apart their opinions and give us the information necessary to build the system."

An internal evaluation of resources determined that Digital Positions

neither had nor could afford to maintain a full-time professional with expertise as both a project manager and a business analyst. A brief search for an external resource led them to seek help from Dynamic Answers.

Introducing the Disambiguator

"Before we were introduced to Dynamic Answers, we were doing large projects without clear definition and those projects became energy and profit-sucks," said Taylor-Klaus. "They were an emotional drain on our staff and were crushing blows to our profitability."

"Michael Wilkes (President of Dynamic Answers) looks at the WHY first instead of the HOW," continued Taylor-Klaus. "And that is why we work with him."

For Digital Positions, the early identification of two major risks at the beginning of any project signal a need for Dynamic Answers.

"When a client can't tell us what they do and they can't articulate their [marketing] messaging, we call Michael," explains Taylor-Klaus.



Armed with a 'disambiguator' who can bring clarity to their projects, Digital Positions now employs a different approach to new clients.

Securing a concrete messaging platform is critical to the development and measurement of every project.

“We hold up the messaging information as a mirror for every decision that is made about the functionality of the web environment,” continued Taylor-Klaus. “They have to know how this cog is going to fit into their business engine or they won’t recognize the value in it.”

Another trigger for Digital Positions to call in Dynamic Answers is demand for extremely large and complicated projects.

“When I see a project that looks more like a 35-floor condominium than a two-bedroom house, that is when we bring in Michael,” exclaimed Taylor-Klaus. “Scale and complexity are the triggers. It can be a combination of both but when it is both, then it becomes ‘Oh God, we need Michael’.”

Finally, partnering with Dynamic Answers provides a competitive solution for Digital Positions who faces competition from two distinct levels: guys in their garage and large consulting firms.

“Usually we are either crushing small and mid-size firms with our disambiguator or we’re playing catch up to the large firms,” elaborated Taylor-Klaus. “In the second instance, we are able to offer them a tremendous value without the overhead.”

Partners in Action

Having a ‘disambiguator’ enables Digital Positions to capture a clear definition and establish common language with the client to discuss what has to be built.

“When somebody comes to an architect to build a house, most often they haven’t built a house before and don’t know what they are doing. If you have never done it before, you can get lost in language that you don’t understand,” began Taylor-Klaus.

“75% of the time when our clients come to us, they have never done a project of this scope or scale before. It is not something they are familiar with. The more clarity that we can bring to the project the more successful we can be in building a project that makes an impact on the client’s business,” concluded Taylor-Klaus.

Armed with better data and a blueprint for their work, Digital Positions is now able to identify and solve ambiguity problems sooner and, as a result, can now scale their disciplined approach to much larger client projects. The new process has also stimulated a ripple effect of change - from the way they help clients fully articulate their needs to the way they manage projects internally.

What have they learned?

“In addition to getting our clients to ‘surrender’ to our process, Michael has taught us to be steadfast in our approach,” said Taylor-Klaus. “By not yielding to clients who inadvertently attempt to stray from the defined path, we are able to greatly improve the success of the project.”

“I’m of the opinion if people don’t have a clear definition - and consensus around that definition - the project will never deliver,” continued Taylor-Klaus. And with help from Dynamic Answers, “we’ve successfully delivered projects that we would never have been able to complete.”

Dynamic Answers delivers clarity in a blueprint that Digital Positions can follow to complete a project.

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