WEBSITE OVERVIEW REPORT

CITY OF GAHANNA

BACKGROUND

In October 2016, the City of Gahanna issued an RFP for website design services. ZED Digital was one of eight agencies that submitted a proposal. The City of Gahanna awarded ZED Digital the contract. Council approved Mayor Kneeland to enter into a contract in January 2017. ZED Digital began discovery meetings in March with internal stakeholders and Council leadership to determine what their department needs were for the new website. ZED Digital also conducted the first round of usability studies with eight external users and two internal users in March of 2017. Data was compiled from the feedback received during the testing from internal and external user groups, as well as analytics from the city of Gahanna's current website. Utilizing this quantitative and qualitative information, ZED Digital began building the infrastructure and platform for the new website. ZED Digital conducted testing with internal and external user groups on the new website. Prior to the official launch on 9.12.17, ZED Digital will allow users to preview the new site and provide feedback on their experience to help enhance the website in the months to come.

WEBSITE PERSONALIZATION

An important feature of this new website is that it will be personalized to residents of Gahanna based on where they live. **Gahanna will be the first city in the State of Ohio to offer a Personalized Website**. Residents will be able to create a personalized home page where they will be able to obtain information based on where they live:

- Their trash and recycle pickup schedule
- Road paving schedule for their street
- The ward they belong to and the contact for their council member
- Find job postings based on their interests in and outside Gahanna
- Plan a bus ride around Central Ohio based on bus schedules, current traffic conditions
- View construction and road conditions in and around Central Ohio
- View public safety stats in Gahanna
- School ratings

Once a user creates a profile, this personalized information will be shown as their new home page. This feature will enable citizens of Gahanna to obtain specific information personalized to their lifestyle needs.

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER DISCOVERY

ZED Digital began its internal stakeholder discovery meetings by obtaining massive data about the current website by conducting interviews with employees and staff about the. The ZED Digital team also immersed themselves in the current experience to better understanding what was known, and to identify knowledge gaps. During this phase of discovery, prior research was reviewed and the current

processes, including pain points shared during this discovery, were documented. The team also analyzed the back-office technologies of the current site to further gain insights about the website.

During the next phase of the internal stakeholder discovery process, ZED Digital conducted a gap analysis to help determine whether the business requirements were met, and if not, to establish the appropriate business requirements needed to plan for the website's desired performance. A thorough competitive analysis assisted in this phase to determine the unique characteristics of the city of Gahanna. This analysis included reviewing the city's strategic marketing goals and objectives, current and past marketing strategies, and the strengths and weaknesses of these performance indicators when compared to the city of Gahanna' competitors as compared to other nearby cities as well as similar municipalities around the country.

Primary research was conducted to gather internal stakeholder input on the topic, including a stronger knowledge of the desired end-to-end experience for the internal stakeholder as well as the objectives for the customer as important interactions that take place on www.gahanna.gov. The main goal was to obtain a detailed, contextual understanding of a customer's needs that could be used to discover opportunities and design meaningful future-state experiences.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

ZED Digital employed Usability Testing, our user-centered approach that assists in identifying opportunities to improve software inefficiencies. From ZED Digital's internal research, this testing process increases navigation with end-users by over 80%. Therefore, this enables the development to be researched-based, objective and based on facts or data. This approach also allows the user to be in control of the process as the user navigates the website.

For the external stakeholder discovery meetings, ZED Digital began the assessment with two internal users and eight external users. This enabled the ZED Digital assessment team to gain a more in-depth understanding of the current environment and web user experience. It also enabled ZED Digital to adequately prepare the task scenarios for further test phases. These task scenarios were selected to evaluate the current website.

The Cognitive Task Analysis is ZED Digital's unique website methodology with end-users where the assessment team conducts the following research based on some of the following questions:

- What they already know?
- How they think?
- How they organize and structure information?
- How they learn when pursuing an outcome they are trying to achieve?

This feedback was gathered through talk-aloud protocol and data was collected on measurable results that ensured each iteration of the site was empirically improving the user experience.

KEY FINDINGS & RESULTS

A primary observation that emerged from the study of the city of Gahanna's current website was that there was a large volume of tasks, which users were expected to complete on the site. The tasks came from combined lists compiled by departments in the city that captured:

- the most frequent calls from customer service
- website analytics for the current website
- information provided during the discovery sessions with internal stakeholders

Interestingly, the data from the current site did not indicate an overwhelming importance for any one task. In other words, individuals go to the www.gahanna.gov for a multitude of reasons.

Another important examination from our findings included uncovering that some segments of users were severely underserved. Business users, in particular, had difficulty completing tasks. While there was a menu titled "Doing Business" on www.gahanna.gov, it did not adequately address all the needs of business users –businesses already located and doing business in Gahanna as well as those companies looking to relocate or do business in Gahanna.

During the research, ZED Digital found that there were a wide variety of tasks, which proved to be overwhelming for internal and external users. The users would then leave the website since it was difficult to find information.

A repeated comment expressed throughout the stakeholder discovery meetings was the website was not visually appealing.

To address these concerns, ZED Digital:

- Developed a rich menu and pulls data from ZED Digital's search engine optimization that enables each user to navigate the entire site from the menu as each user visits the website for different reasons;
- Implemented a website organizational structure based on data gathered from the usability testing results to specifically address Residents, Businesses, Visitors and Government;
- Created a dynamic and aesthetically pleasing website design and layout based on qualitative feedback and research;
- Applied a personalized link on the new www.gahanna.gov portal that enables a user to customize his/her experience on the City's website that will deliver a personalized home page;
- Used current and vivid imagery from the city, interactive and real-time data maps as well as embedded video to create a vibrant experience about the services the city of Gahanna offers; and
- Improved on the mobile device experience of the website by having a fully responsive and users can easily navigate the site on any mobile device or tablet;

Prior to the redesign of the www.gahanna.gov, the average user satisfaction with the current site was rated as a 5.4 out of a 10- point scale. After ZED Digital's redesign efforts, the site received an average user satisfaction rating of 8.55. The most frequently cited comments were that the new website was much more visually engaging and now easier to navigate.

CONCLUSION

ZED Digital was honored to support the city of Gahanna's website redesign for www.gahanna.gov. The ZED Digital team hopes you are as pleased with the end result of this new interactive, data-driven, and visual website. We thank the city of Gahanna for the opportunity and if you have any questions, please direct them to Sumithra Jagannath at sumithra@zeddigital.net or 614.523.3974. Thank you!