



Working with Advanced Learning-Edge

When we work with clients to create e-Learning courses, we use a very structured and rigorous development process. This document describes the things considered and phases included in a typical project.

CONTROLLING THE BUDGET	2
ACTION PLAN	3
DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	6
DEVELOPMENT METHODS AND ACTIVITIES	7
Instructional Designer Activities and Deliverables	8
Media Development and Programming Activities and Deliverables	11

Controlling the Budget

Over many years of providing solutions and serving clients' e-Learning needs, we have learned one very important lesson: there's no "standard" solution to a given e-Learning need. The appropriate solution must take into account such factors as your audience, the nature of the content, the desired level of proficiency, appropriate delivery methods and platforms, your budget, your timeline, and so on. Our development methodology ensures that we work closely with you to create the best solution for your unique needs.

The Four Budgets

Everyone recognizes the importance of budgeting in controlling and managing a project. Our experience has shown that *four* budgets must be considered when addressing an e-Learning need: dollars, timeline, content, and treatment.

Most people are familiar with the *dollar* and *timeline* budgets. These determine the amount of money you've set aside to solve the need, and the date you want or need the solution implemented. The two other budgets are less obvious but are no less important. The *content* budget determines the amount of material included in the course. And finally, the *treatment* budget determines how the information is presented. For example, in most e-Learning solutions, choosing whether to present information statically through text or dynamically with audio and a graphical animation is a treatment issue. In addition, adding features such as glossaries or searchable indexes is a treatment issue.

Understanding how these budgets interrelate is essential in directing us on how you want to address your e-Learning needs. In fact, the art of producing the best solution for your e-Learning need is essentially one of striking the optimum balance among these four budgets. For example, the dollars and timeline budgets may be the most important issues on a given project. In this case, appropriate decisions must be made concerning content and/or treatment to ensure that the project can be produced on time and on budget. On another project, "making a splash" may be the primary objective. In this situation, treatment would be the most significant consideration, with the other budgets being secondary in importance.

Regardless of the particular constraints of your project, the most important thing to keep in mind is that, with Advanced Learning-Edge, *you're always in control of your project*. Our experts will work with you throughout the project to make you aware of tradeoffs, so that you can make informed decisions as your project evolves.

Summary of Budgetary Control

By working with you to assess the four budgets throughout development, Advanced Learning-Edge gives you complete control over your project. Throughout the project, our experts work with your best interests in mind to create the optimum solution for your need -- but the final decisions remain yours.

Action Plan

The Four Phases of the Action Plan

This Action Plan describes the normal/typical development cycle. The Phases in this Action plan may vary from the phases that make sense for your project. However, this section describes the typical development of a custom project. Details for your project will be in your Project Scope and Design document. Additional details about project tasks are covered in the Development Methodology section that follows this Action Plan section.

Creating custom e-Learning is an evolutionary process. At the outset, our knowledge of your needs is imperfect. But by the end of the project, you need a solution that will meet your unique needs. The Advanced Learning-Edge development methodology breaks each project into four implementation phases:

- Project Scope and Design document (sample PSD is included on our web site)
- Prototyping
- Production
- Testing and Evaluation

Phase 1: Project Scope Document

Objective:

During this phase, which typically lasts from one to four weeks, a team of experienced professionals analyzes your needs, works with you to establish priorities, and architects a solution.

Stage 1: Kickoff

The project begins with a kickoff meeting, led by a dedicated Project Manager, where you meet with the Design team assembled for your project. In addition to the Project Manager, the Design team may include a Senior Instructional Designer, plus senior specialists in the disciplines needed for your project, such as programmers, graphic artists, and audio/video producers. Project expectations are discussed and agreed upon.

Stage 2: Analysis

The project team examines relevant existing materials, conducts audience and task analyses, establishes or validates learning objectives, investigates delivery platform issues, evaluates risk factors, and works with you to refine the four budgets.

Action Plan (continued)

Stage 3: Create Project Scope and Design Document

The Project Manager assembles the data and conclusions of the analysis and produces a Project Scope and Design (PSD) document that summarizes our findings, describes our recommended solution, and establishes the initial scope of the project. The PSD includes a macro instructional design of the course (General Content Outline), and may include a variety of work samples that were created during the PSD phase or have been selected from other projects.

Phase 2: Prototyping

Objective:

During this phase, the Design team produces a representative portion of your project. The prototype allows you to evaluate the look and feel of your project, as well as factors such as presentation and interactivity. Also, the Prototyping phase allows you and the Design team to evaluate the recommended solution against the budget and project schedule and make any necessary adjustments before proceeding to the Production phase.

Stage 1: PSD Approval

After your review, feedback, and approval of a modified PSD, the document becomes the blueprint for this phase of the project: Prototyping.

Stage 2: Sample Selection

The Project Manager works with you to identify a representative portion of the e-Learning. The selected portion will serve as the model for the prototype production as well as the next phase: Full Production.

Stage 3: Script and Storyboard Approval

The instructional design for this portion will be used to create a storyboard and script for your approval. Appropriate navigation schemes, art and media elements will also be identified and approved by you.

Stage 4: Production and Documentation

The prototype is produced according to the approved script. Members of the Design team document the processes used in the prototype phase to ensure efficient operations during the following Production phase.

Action Plan (continued)

Phase 3: Production

Objective:

During this phase, the e-Learning is produced according to approved scripts and feedback from the prototype. The process steps identified in the prototyping phase will be used.

Stage1: Resource Loading

Additional resources selected by the Design team are integrated into the project to ensure efficient and timely production of the deliverables. These resources may include additional instructional designers, writers, programmers, graphic artists and audio/video producers.

Stage 2: Full Production

Using the processes developed in the Prototyping phase and working to the design, standards and examples established with the prototype, the Production team completes the rest of your project.

Stage 3: Iterative In-process Quality Review

The Design team reviews work to ensure that consistency and quality are maintained and assists in resolving any unanticipated problems that may arise. You typically receive "rolling handoffs" of work for your review as it's completed. And a mid-production checkpoint is included to evaluate the project and make any final adjustments needed.

Phase 4: Testing and Evaluation

Objective:

During this phase of the project, beta and acceptance testing occurs.

Stage 1: Beta Testing

A group of people from your company and Advanced Learning-Edge will thoroughly test the program.

Stage 2: Final Changes, Master Delivery and Project Review

Final changes are made to the deliverable, and the final product is delivered. Implementation issues are addressed, and a plan for post-rollout evaluation is developed, if desired.

Development Process

The methodology we have developed in designing and producing complex creative programs is reflected in detail in the Project Scope and Design document (PSD) mentioned earlier.

The following table excerpted from a typical PSD summarizes the design process described above in the Action Plan and used by Advanced Learning-Edge to develop e-Learning programs.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Output</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Step 1: Determine Project Scope	Proposal	
1.1 Identify Instructional Goal		
1.2 Identify Target Audience		
1.3 Identify Instructional Tasks		
1.4 Develop Preliminary Materials, Time and Cost Estimates (Proposal)		
1.5 Review/Approval of Proposal By Client		
Step 2: Conduct Learner/Task/Job/Content Analysis	Objectives, Content	
2.1 Plan Information Gathering Strategy		
2.2 Evaluate Existing Product		
2.3 Identify Gap in Learner Information/Skills		
2.4 Conduct Observations, Interviews, Attend Training, and Review Documentation to Gather Content		
2.5 Identify Performance Objectives and Content		
Step 3: Develop Project Scope Document (PSD)	Project Scope Document	
3.1 Confirm/Revise Instructional Goal and Audience		
3.2 Develop Detailed Design For Courseware to be Developed		
3.3 Set up Project Plan; Assign Team Members; Plan Kick-Off Meeting		
3.4 Review/Sign Off of PSD By Client		
3.5 Revise PSD Based on Comments		
Step 4: Produce Prototype Materials	Prototype	
4.1 Select representative course segment		
4.2 Produce interface		
4.3 Incorporate prototype material in interface		
4.4 Review/Revise/Approve Prototype by Client		
Step 5: Produce Materials for Full Production	Preliminary/Revised Drafts	
5.1 Create Draft Materials		
5.2 Review Materials With Project Team and Subject Matter Experts		
5.3 Review/Approval of Materials By Client		
5.4 Revise Materials as Needed		
Step 6: Test Draft Materials (optional)	Tested Drafts	
6.1 Plan the Test Strategy		
6.2 Set Up the Test Site		
6.3 Run the Course		
6.4 Write Up the Test Results; Make Recommendations		
6.5 Review/Approval of the Recommendations By Client		
Step 7: Produce/Distribute Master Materials	High-Quality Masters	
7.1 Edit/Proof Materials		
7.2 Produce Final Materials		
7.3 Review of Final Materials By Advanced Learning-Edge		
7.4 Revise Final Based on Comments		
7.5 Review of Final Materials By Client		
7.6 Revise Final Based on Comments		
7.7 Distribute Materials and/or Send Final to Client		

Development Methods and Activities

We attempt to describe every aspect of the project in the PSD, including program goals, audience profile, description of the program, responsibilities of all parties, timelines, media detail, and so on. The final section of the PSD is a detailed project plan showing due dates and current status. Numerous client approval points are designated during the project and are included in the PSD. The project plan and the PSD are updated as changes occur during the project and all updates are distributed to the customer and Advanced Learning-Edge project staff.

As a matter of course, formal weekly status reports are distributed to both Advanced Learning-Edge team members and client representatives.

The methodology we use helps ensure that projects are completed within budget and on time. Advanced Learning-Edge would like you to fully understand our process and methodology before we begin working together. To accomplish this level of understanding, a sample PSD is often reviewed with you by an Advanced Learning-Edge representative before you make a commitment to work with us.

Project Management

An experienced Project Manager will be assigned to your project from start to finish. This person will be your key contact and will be responsible for ensuring that the PSD and project deliverable(s) meet your expectations.

Delivery Platform, Development Tools/ Platform/ Methodology

The delivery platform, development tools, development platform and development methodology are also detailed in the PSD.

Project Activities and Deliverables

The following pages contain tables showing the typical activities and deliverables involved in creating our all of our e-Learning solutions.

Development Methods and Activities (continued)

Instructional Designer Activities and Deliverables

Activity	Deliverable
<p>Analysis</p> <p>This phase identifies e-Learning requirements for specific skill(s), knowledge, or task(s). Needs Assessment steps typically include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observe the job performance. 2. Interview the performers, peers, and supervisors. 3. Review relevant documentation. 4. Determine problems in performance. 5. Note any problems resulting from change. 6. Recommend solutions. 7. Review problems, causes, and solutions with the customer. <p>Task Analysis steps typically include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interview subject matter experts. 2. Obtain copies of existing materials. 3. Document the task analysis. 4. Review documentation for technical accuracy with subject matter experts. 5. Review documentation with the client. 	<p>Needs Assessment</p> <p>A Needs Assessment is a systematic evaluation that accurately identifies job performance discrepancies and their solutions. If e-Learning improvement is determined to be a solution to the performance problem, the Needs Assessment document typically includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of business goals • Identification of performance problem • Definition of the target audience • Selection of the e-Learning methods • Identification of terminal learning objective(s) <p>Task Analysis</p> <p>A Task Analysis is the breakdown of an individual task to determine the skills and knowledge required to perform the task. The Task Analysis document typically includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of steps and related knowledge to perform a task • List of reference materials for the task
<p>Design</p> <p>This phase is the initial definition of the scope of work and program deliverables within time and budget constraints. Typical steps for the Project Scope include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct project kickoff with all team members. 2. Review scope of work activities and issues with team members. 3. Prepare document draft for team member review. 4. Finalize and approve the document. 	<p>Project Scope</p> <p>The Project Scope document serves as an initial understanding between the client and development staff regarding the scope of work. This document typically includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project goals and objectives • Project assumptions • Project deliverables • Project roles and responsibilities • Milestones and timelines • Detail work plans • Project measurements
<p>Design (continued)</p> <p>Typical steps for the Program Design are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review design expectations and issues with team members. 2. Prepare document draft for team member review. 3. Finalize and approve the document. 	<p>Program Design</p> <p>The Program Design document serves as an initial understanding between the client and development staff regarding program deliverables. This document typically includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program concept • Breakdown of learning objectives • Program evaluation/measurements • Program flow • Program treatment • System requirements

Development Methods and Activities (continued)

Instructional Designer Activities and Deliverables (Continued)

Activity	Deliverable
Development <p>This is the actual production phase of materials based on the results of the analysis and design phases. Typical developmental steps are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft the Written Content from outlined analysis documentation. 2. Review the document with subject matter experts for technical accuracy. 3. Review the document with the customer. 4. Draft necessary Media Specs, Storyboards, Scripts, and Sketches, and Tests from the Written Content. 5. Review all documents with subject matter experts for technical accuracy. 6. Review all documents with the client. 7. Submit all documents for production. 	Written Content <p>This is a Word document that contains the actual layout and text to be produced for the presentation portion of an e-Learning program. In addition, this document contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References for links • Placeholders for additional media
	Media Specs <p>This document contains a complete listing of media to be produced for the e-Learning program.</p>
	Storyboards <p>This document defines and references graphic animations for the e-Learning program.</p>
	Scripts <p>This document contains the actual scripts used for video and audio recordings to be incorporated in the e-Learning program.</p>
	Sketches <p>This document defines and references static graphics to be incorporated in the e-Learning program.</p>
	Tests <p>This document contains the text and interactivity for self-checks, pre-tests, and post-tests incorporated in the e-Learning program.</p>
Delivery <p>This phase includes activities performed when handing off the final deliverable(s) to the client. Typical steps include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify representative members of the target audience to conduct the evaluation. 2. Observe program completion by students. 3. Interview students, instructors, and administrators. 4. Compile the program evaluation document. 5. Review the document with the customer for proposed revisions and improvements. 	Evaluation <p>Program evaluation provides the feedback loop to ensure the e-Learning program transfers the desired skills and knowledge to the target audience.</p>

Development Methods and Activities (continued)

Instructional Designer Activities and Deliverables (Continued)

Activity	Deliverable
Project Management Includes tasks such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assembling the project team▪ Managing team activities to ensure deliverables are produced according to spec and are delivered on time and within budget▪ Communicating with client formally (e.g. Status Reports) and informally (e.g. meetings and phone calls) to ensure client is informed and involved Note: Experience has shown that Project Management can constitute approximately 20% of the total time spent on a project.	

Development Methods and Activities (continued)

Media Development and Programming Activities and Deliverables

Activity	Deliverable
Graphics Development – Static This is the actual production of the graphics specified by the Instructional Designer, as defined by the approved sketches.	Graphics Files These files are typically GIFs and JPEGs. They are handed off to the website production team for incorporation in the course.
Graphics Development – Animations This is the actual production of the graphics specified by the Instructional Designer, as defined by the approved storyboards.	Graphics Files These files are typically GIFs and JPEGs. They are handed off to the animator, who adds the audio and develops the Flash animation files.
Audio Production This is the recording, editing and encoding (digitizing) of the audio scripts produced in the course development phase.	Audio Files These files are handed off to the animator, who programs them together with graphics and outputs the Flash animation files.
Animation Programming This is the actual production of the animations specified by the Instructional Designer, as defined by the approved storyboards.	Flash Files These files are handed off to the production team for incorporation in the course.
Video Production (if applicable) This is the recording, editing and encoding (digitizing) of the video scripts produced in the course development phase.	Video Files These files are handed off to the animator, who programs them together with graphics and outputs the Flash animation files.
Theme Creation This is the design and production of the banners and buttons that will give the e-Learning a unique look.	

Development Methods and Activities (continued)

Media Development and Programming Activities and Deliverables (Continued)

Activity	Deliverable
Programming This is the actual production of the final e-Learning program, including all text, static graphics, animated graphics, audio and video files, as well as the course map and all buttons and hotspots used by the student to navigate through the course. Tasks include: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Setup and maintain the site2. Create and edit the navigation table3. Create and edit the graphics table4. Create and edit map source file5. Convert Word documents to raw HTML source6. Process HTML source7. Program JavaScript and VBScript code to enable graphics, glossary, and hotspots8. Program self checks and tests9. Publish site (3 revs)	Copy of Website on CD This is the actual production of the website, including all text, static graphics, animated graphics, audio and video files
Quality Control This occurs at every step throughout the process to assure that the final deliverable conforms to the PSD and is completely accurate and without error.	An efficient and effective e-Learning course