Sample Project Specification Document

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>25 Jan 2007</td>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>Draft document – placeholders for content</td>
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[some put version and distribution lists at the close of the document]

Distribution List
Members com585 – winter 2007

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I. Introduction
This is a working document that is intended to capture detailed requirements and to document outstanding considerations and questions. The document has been developed through meetings with key stakeholders and appropriate experts.

Subsequent changes to project scope will need to be approved through formal change control; if approved, they will be incorporated into the project specification.

II. Project Objectives
What is this project trying to accomplish and why?
List key deliverables and dates in this section, including prototypes or go-live dates.
III. Success Criteria
As much as possible, define what constitutes success. This gives the team yardsticks to measure against. Some measures for web projects include:
- Lead generation
- Site performance (uptime, lack of errors, lack of broken links)
- Page impressions
- Number of unique visitors
- Cost savings

IV. Site Map
This is a visual representation of the content areas of the site, showing varying levels of content and how they relate to one another, usually in a navigational hierarchy. The site map could be produced as a Word document, HTML page, Visio diagram … there is no set format for site maps.

The site map does not attempt to show what the navigation system will look like – merely the relationships between content.

V. Functional Specification
What does the site do? What do I do when I visit? This isn’t why the information or site is here. The functional specification and site map are two key documents that form the basis for the project.

VI. Technical Specification
What technologies are going to be used (web server, databases, middleware)? What technologies are assumed as a given for the customers using the site (machine, monitor size/color/rez, operating system, browser, existing plug-ins)? Security issues and performance metrics. Conformance with ADA or Section 508. This may include information about file naming conventions.

VII. Privacy Policy
Some sites specify a privacy policy when they use cookies. Others do so only when they ask for personal data.

VIII. Content Plan
Some site content is recycled, some non-site content is repurposed, some content is created from scratch, other content is purchased. The plan outlines who is responsible for the different types of content, the format that content should be in, who manages the content, deadlines, and who can alter content (and under what circumstances). The content plan may include a requirement to development a style guide.
IX. Wireframes/storyboards

Wireframes are page design representations that contain content and functional elements of a page (or template) without color or graphical embellishment.

- They provide an outline of the design approach
- They define and refine elements that need to go on the page
- They show navigational architecture and information flow – this contributes to user experience
- They should be easy for anyone to create, distribute and manipulate. As such, they are very cost effective.

The project specification may detail information as to how wireframes will be developed or when they will be developed; the actual wireframes are not part of the project specification.

X. Marketing
Who is responsible for marketing the site? How will marketing occur? This may include specifications about meta tags as well as page titles.

XI. Testing
There are several types of testing: user acceptance, functional, load testing, content proofing, usability testing, security testing. Testing requirements are outlined here.

XII. Updates/Maintenance
Schedule, responsibility. Will content be updated on an ad hoc or versioned basis?

XIII. Critical Path
Timeline with dependencies. Also include key milestones, meetings, and sign-off points. Be sure to add contingency time.

XIV. Budget
Developed last and includes all resources (monetary, staff, otherwise).
The person in charge of the project plan should make certain all assumptions about these topics are articulated and agreed to by all decision-making parties.

Your project specification document must include details in the following sections:

- Section 1 – Introduction
- Section 2 - Project Objectives
- Section 3 – Success Criteria
  - What you think are reasonable measures of success for the website and project
- Section 4 – SiteMap
  - We will focus in classroom on how to structure a sitemap. The sitemap itself is a separate deliverable.
- Section 5 – Functional Specification
  - How your team thinks the site should “behave” – the functional specification should bear a direct relationship to what you think your audience wishes to do when they visit the site
- Section 6 – Technical Specification
  - The site will be hosted at the University of Washington on Apache webservers with PHP capability. You should articulate your assumptions about site visitor technical capability – broadband/dial-up, browsers, installed software, etc. What resolution monitor are you targeting? Do you want to support user-generated content – if so, what software might you use?
- Section 7 – Privacy Policy
  - Consider using a privacy policy from the UW web.
- Section 8 – Content Plan
  - You will brainstorm to identify the types of content a site like this should contain. Use your personas as well as your competitive analyses to guide the process. Some content may be “static”, such as profiles of media companies. Some content may be “dynamic,” such as an RSS feed that provides headline updates. There may user-generated content; if so, provide details about how this might be solicited and monitored. For the database information, brainstorm the type of data you’re interested in and the kinds of relationships you think need to be available.
- Section 9 – Wireframes
  - State that black-and-white or greyscale wireframes are being produced. They are a separate deliverable.
- Sections 10-14 are beyond the scope of this course.