

Elevating eLearning Design

BLUEPRINTING PROCESS

- **Gather (and refine):** Determine the course objectives, evaluate content against length, map the content to the objectives.
Summarize: Create an executive summary of the desired experience, specify business goals along with performance and learning objectives, note the affective goals, and provide an outline of the content.
- **Design:** Envision and summarize each screen.
 - What is the key content/message of each screen? What is its source material?
 - What is the specific instructional method you will use for each course screen?
 - What is the seat time taken as a result of your method?
- **Refine:** Were all objectives covered? Is seat time allotted in the right places, for the most important objectives? How does the total design compare to the overall seat time goal? Do you have a variety of activities and instructional methods?
- **Build:** Once approved, build to your blueprint. The hard work is already done.

ENGAGING OPENERS

- **Tell a Realistic Story:** Immediately immerse the learner in a story that sets up their role or plays out what happens when the desirable action for the course does or does not happen.
- **Use an Analogy or Fable:** Start out with something compelling and interesting, like an analogy or fable that then relates to the point of the content.
- **Give the User a Role:** Ask the user for their help and show them what interesting/relevant tasks (usually to a story) they'll need to accomplish during the session.
- **Create a Villain:** Adding to the previous idea, set up a villain character with destructive intentions, let the user help defeat them.
- **Object Lesson:** Use an 'object lesson' approach to gain attention: this can be done just as easily in eLearning as in the classroom.
- **Illustrated Concept Video:** Create an interesting animated concept to illustrate the "WIIFM" of the course using GoAnimate or basic animation functions in your rapid tool.

- **Elephant in the Room:** If there's something undesirable about the course or goal, play it out in a story or other form to get it out in front of the learner, address their objections, and address the value of the course. *"Does it ever seem like a total waste of time to input your task hours..."*
- **Put Them On the Spot:** Ask the user for their opinion, decision, judgement, or "bet."

ENGAGING ACTIVITY ELEMENTS

- **Jump Right In:** When appropriate, let the learner jump right in and make a decision, using your content to provide support resources (rather than making them sit through several presentational slides).
- **Make it Fun:** Through visuals or controls, make interacting with the page fun and appealing.
- **Match Story, Role, and Task:** In a course that has a central story and where the learner has a role, have the activity's task align with the user's role and progress the story.
- **Show Impact:** After the user interacts, don't provide feedback. Show them the IMPACT of their choice first, then let them modify their choice. This is a great way to address common mistakes and understanding and use emotional impact to increase retention.
- **Full Bleed Immersion:** Find a way to make the screen 'full bleed' to create the feeling of immersion and ask the learner to interact with the 'environment' by exploring a desk or peering inside someone's inner thoughts.
- **Approximate Reality:** Ask the user to do what they'd be doing back on the job. Approximate reality to the degree possible in an electronic format. Relevance is engaging. Theoretical disconnect is not.
- **Let Them Play/Easter Eggs:** Build some fun elements into the page that don't have anything to do with learning, but encourage the user to stay engaged and maintain curiosity. *(letting them change the radio station on someone's desk...showing the seasons changing outside a window)*
- **Violate Their Expectations:** Any time someone expects something and the opposite happens, you have their attention. Ask yourself what they expect, then do the opposite (for important points).

