Standards in the Enterprise

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Which standards do I mean?

Not just Web standards...

- Coding standards
- Naming conventions
- Design specifications
- Interaction patterns
- Usability guidelines
- Accessibility requirements

Why do you need standards?

Consistency and uniformity

- Standardizes how people work and make decisions
- Results in faster production cycles and quicker time to market
- Allows the organization to keep pace with emerging trends
- Protects the user experience

Common complaints...

- *The standards change to often or are out of date.*
- *The standards don't address a specific need, concern, or edge case.*
- *The standards prevent individuals from being creative problem-solvers.*
- *It's too difficult to read and remember all of the standards.*
- *Management told me not to follow the standards.*

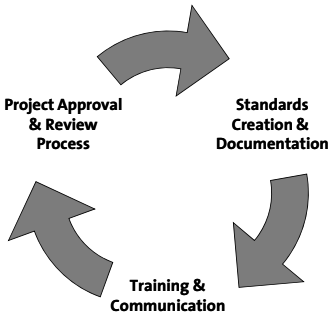
...point to common problems

- The standards aren't thorough, well-documented, or well-maintained.
- Standards documentation efforts are lagging behind project work.
- Lack of training and communication is causing confusion or misunderstanding.
- Management isn't demonstrating commitment to standards.

Keys to successful standards

- Timely updates
- Regular, well-crafted communications
- Constant reinforcement
- Assigning an owner!

The Circle of Standards



Standards Creation & Document.

- Start with the fundamentals
- Investigate the live site and work in progress
- Think ahead to future needs
- Review regularly
- Monitor projects for efforts that require standardization

Training & Communication

- Make training mandatory for everyone
- Offer training regularly
- Communicate on a regular basis
- Make information available in a convenient format

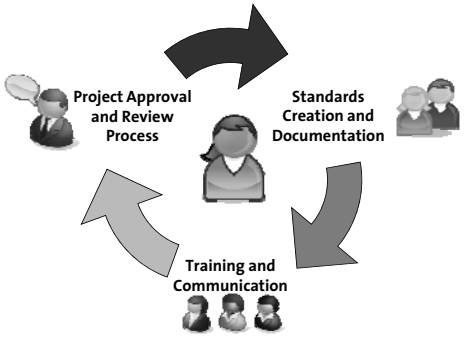
Project Approval & Review Process

- Make adherence to standards part of the project requirements and acceptance or launch criteria
- Formal design and technical/code reviews look for standards-related issues
- New work gets fed back into the Standards Creation phase

The Standards Manager

- Champion for standards
- May run a team dedicated to standards
- Must understand the related disciplines and work to be effective

The Circle of Standards *in motion*



Bootstrapping standards

1. Organize:
   Find like-minded folks and band together.
2. Execute:
   Inventory, propose, document, evangelize.
3. Diplomacy:
   Identify influencers and speak their language.
4. Help:
   Be the support system for others.

What makes a good standard?

- Detail on reason/need for standard
- Justification for standard solution
- Use cases, including edge cases
- Examples
- Supporting files
- Cross-discipline buy-in

Get creative with communications

- Set up an intranet, enable comments and other sticky features
- Hide easter eggs in standards content and run contests to find them
- Be visible – go to staff meetings, hang signs to promote standards

Don't complicate the process

- Work reviews into existing PDLC
- Be available regularly
- Set expectations
- Use the process as another opportunity to educate

Celebrate successes

- Highlight projects that make use of standards
- Document savings from use of standards
- Recognize others that advocate standards

Thank you!

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