Guest Writer

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No More Boring Project Page Descriptions

What to ask your technical team for a great project summary

We know that our technical teams and project managers are doing complex and creative work for their clients, but often, it's difficult to get them to explain how they "do what they do." From the marketer's perspective, we really need a project sheet that tells a story and wows potential clients, telling more than just what systems are in place or what spaces are in the building. The beauty of using storytelling in a project description, is that stories give meaning to a process that is otherwise impersonal to the evaluator.

In order to tell a good story of how a project came to life, you need details, and not just the technical details, but the bones of what made this project worth talking about. These details need to come directly from those that worked on the project; those that have a personal connection to taking something from concept through completion. Here are a few conversational questions to get your technical team members talking in more helpful language (i.e., marketing language) which you can then take and create better project write-ups:

- What was the owner's goal with this project?
- What problems did the owner need to fix?
- What problems did you solve, maybe in addition to the owner's original list?
- What concerns did you have on this project at first, and how did you and the project team overcome them?
- What are you proud of on this project?
- What were some lessons-learned on this project?
- Were there any new technologies or strategies used?
- Do you have any positive quotes/kudos from the owner that we could capture?

In addition, be flexible with your conversation. If your technical staff ends up starting a bit of a complaining session, let them do it! Take notes and see if you can deduce what the root of the problem was and listen for how your technical staff met the challenge. Was the client always changing their scope? Ask your technical staff member about what your team did to adjust their schedules and coordination efforts to work with the new information. Were there major budget constraints? Write about what systems, finishes, etc. DID go into the project as appropriate substitutes.

These questions can help your technical staff open up and explain not just "what" the project was, but "what happened" as a result of their hard work, and ultimately, what story you need to tell in your project sheets that engages with your reader and leaves a lasting impression.

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