

STYLECampaign



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Responsive workflow

Workflow when working with clients to build a modular responsive template. Typically there's nothing in these builds we've not done before – using the same core patterns like 2 column to 1 - so we take a more traditional approach. Though workflow can change project to project, depending on what works.

If it's a technically challenging build, some internal R&D or an experimental responsive pattern, we'll build an HTML prototype off the bat after a chat / sketch.

Talk (lead designer will project manage)

- Discussions and brainstorming with clients
- Get up to speed on their business, customers and email program
- Lots of content strategy questions get unearthed
- Review their existing email creative
- I need to get a feel for branding - web / apps / style guide?

Text list

- Start with a text list of potential modules e.g. article from blog– 'Thumbnail image, short title, one sentence copy with button CTA. I will sometimes email this to the client, as a very rough kicking off point.
- Some sketching – pencil and paper - as I run through ideas

PDF (flesh out text descriptions with visuals)

- I'll add supporting images to the text document, from their website, app, a sketch or from the web.
- Notes, explanations to back up my suggestions, and explain any terminology.

Finalized PDF

- The pdf might go a few rounds before we're all agreed. The client signs off on a list of modules.

Wireframes

- I don't use mockups / wireframing tools everytime (Hotgloo / Invision). I usually have it well visualized and described via the process above.

Photoshop

- Create a mood board type folder in PS: existing creative, site screenshots, colors, text, bits from around the web, style guide and from my pdf.
- Build out small components like fonts, color palette, CTA.
- Build one or two modules to deliver to client for feedback
- Happy client then crack on with the remaining modules, 10-20 usually

- Present a draft of desktop and mobile layout (all modules) side-by-side
- Present a few mock ups of individual emails built out from 'master'
- Send an image mockup via email to client (stick it in HTML file).
- Have a review and talk through initial design
- Might only do one comp before taking it to code and revise from there

Code

- Hand PSD, assets and notes to coders...have a chat.
- Small team so coders will have seen comps, if there's anything tricky in there we can discuss early on. Worked on large no. of responsive emails together, so there's a shorthand.
- Coders use Ultra Edit on PC
- Add comments to the code for easy use

QA / finesse

- Run through device lab – 33 devices, various desktop and web clients
- Fix any rendering issues (have QA docs).
- Finesse the layout in the email client
- Litmus as backup

Delivery

- Send clients tests and final code
- Support through first send or two

Training (optional)

- Supporting documentation explaining their responsive code.
- Screencast explaining code and how to use their modular template.

Basic tools

Paper / pencil

Word / pdf

Photoshop

Ultra Edit

Device lab

Blat and Campaign Monitor (send ourselves tests)

Basecamp

Dropbox

Yousendit

joinme

Designing in the browser

Was chatting with Graeme about this – he’s mainly a coder but also has a background in design – he said, “If I’m in the browser it’s all about function. I’m thinking as a coder not as an artist”.

We tend to find it slower to work up ideas in the browser, and a time drain to make client revisions that way compared to PS. There is also the temptation to do lazy design that's native to the medium, "I'd never do another rounded corner again" came up.

Saying that we do create HTML prototypes straight away for internal R&D, and anything out of the ordinary that's technically challenging. Just not our, 'everyday' responsive design work if that makes sense.

This is just what works for our team, our skills and history together. We also have to consider what is client and budget friendly. I will say just because something works for web devs, doesn't automatically make it a natural fit for email designers.

Hope this answers some of your workflow questions. I always feel a bit pretentious talking about workflow, like an actor talking method. My tools and process is pretty basic and not set in stone, so ask me again in a year.

What have I missed?

Didn't find what you were looking for? Email Anna Yeaman at anna@stylecampaign.com

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