

Tracking Dynamics between Digital Design Agencies and Clients of Hybrid Outsourcing in the Double Diamond Website Development Process

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Abstract

Background The increased insourcing of digital capabilities and the impacts of human-centered design thinking on driving innovation have caused considerable changes in the digital marketing landscape. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the dynamics between the digital design agencies and the clients for website innovation by analyzing both the client- and agency-side workflows and interactions in the Double Diamond website development process.

Methods Based on the literature reviews of the agency-client relationships and design thinking approaches, case studies of two award-winning South Korean websites were conducted with an emphasis on context-aware insights from the website project journeys of real companies. The research data was collected by using both published and unpublished information and in-depth interviews with key practitioners from the client companies and agencies. Then, the collected data was organized, interpreted, synthesized, and generalized through within-case and cross-case analytic processes.

Results By scrutinizing client- and agency-side key tasks and roles for the website renewal projects, their workflows and interactions were identified across all phases of the expanded Double Diamond website development process (i.e., advanced research, web planning, web design and development, and test and maintenance), particularly in terms of typical themes of design thinking practices. In addition, several hands-on guidelines for successfully managing hybrid project teams were also suggested for best digital marketing practices and project optimization: planning performance-based strategic resource allocation, facilitating effective communication both internally and externally, and building trusted long-term agency-client partnerships.

Conclusions These findings will help digital immigrant companies develop and manage innovative websites through successful hybrid outsourcing while keeping a long-term partnership with digital design agencies. This will also contribute to expanding the theoretical foundation and knowledge of agency-client dynamics and the design-thinking-driven website development processes by considering the real, complex context of the current digital marketing landscape.

Keywords Digital Design Agency-Client Dynamics, Hybrid Outsourcing, Website Innovation, Design Thinking, Double Diamond Model

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1. Introduction

As more consumer touchpoints move online, companies have significantly increased their annual marketing budget on digital initiatives to expand their brand approaches and constantly communicate with their consumers. According to eMarketer, worldwide digital ad spending has been rapidly growing, with forecasts indicating that digital media will account for roughly half of the global ad market in 2019 (Enberg, 2019). Indeed, digital ads are more measurable and targetable than traditional advertising channels (Goldfarb & Tucsjer, 2011). Given the growing importance of digital relationships between companies and consumers in the online and mobile contexts, the literature has widely highlighted the impacts of digital marketing on brand communication and loyalty (Confos & Davis, 2016; Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012; Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014) and consumer behaviors (Kannan & Li, 2017; Shi & Zhang, 2014; Stephen, 2016).

In the meanwhile, in the early stages of the digital marketing industry in the late 1990s, few companies had been in a position to build in-house digital marketing or design organizations for a variety of reasons, such as a low comfort level with digital media or a lack of digital design capability. Conversely, numerous small- and medium-sized digital design agencies have been founded around the world (Kim, 2008). Moreover, many traditional advertising firms have morphed into digital design agencies and/or have expanded their capabilities and business areas into digital marketing markets (Digital Marketing Institute [DMI], n.d.; Norris, 2017). For example, BBDO, a major worldwide advertising agency founded in 1891, built its digital marketing organization called Digital BBDO in 2010 to cope with the fast-evolving digital marketing landscape. In these circumstances, many companies have outsourced their digital marketing tasks to digital design agencies and currently tend to work with multiple agencies to manage diverse digital marketing channels, including websites, social media sites, and mobile platforms.

As an ever-increasing volume of digital marketing content and services has been generated, client-side marketers or designers have been under increasing pressure to not only manage their digital channels but to also out-innovate their competitors; therefore, they have been looking for strategic digital marketing consulting partners, which can provide innovative digital transformation solutions or services (SoDA and Forrester, 2017). Simultaneously, more clients from both digital and non-digital companies have fostered their in-house digital capabilities to handle innovation duties while harmoniously orchestrating diverse digital touch-points (McKinsey & Company, 2018). Moreover, Hirt and Willmott (2014, p. 2) stated that “digital capabilities will increasingly determine which companies create or lose value.” Statistically, the 2015 Digital Marketing Outlook reported by SoDA indicated that an increasing number of clients was not working with outside agencies on their brand’s digital efforts (27% in 2015, up from 13% in 2014). Moreover, client-side marketers have become more adept at delivering digital initiatives with their in-house digital teams and have been recently increasing fully-insourced social marketing, consumer insights/analytics, and web/mobile digital experiences (SoDA & Forrester, 2017).

As a result, this increased insourcing of digital capabilities and outsourcing of strategic digital marketing have caused considerable changes in the digital marketing content development process. Conspicuously, the digital marketing planning stage has been reinforced by adapting empathetic and human-centric design thinking practices, once used primarily in the product design field, for solving the right problems in unique and novel ways (Newcomer, 2017). That is, at the beginning of the process, up-front user research and usability testing are performed by multidisciplinary staffers iteratively. Previous research has shown that digital design agencies and clients have recently made great efforts to actively incorporate design thinking into their website development process by adopting the British Design Council’s Double Diamond design thinking model (Kim, 2017).

In this vein, the present study aims to explore the dynamics between the digital design agencies and the clients for website innovation by analyzing both the client- and agency-side workflows and interactions in the Double Diamond website development process. Among diverse digital marketing channels, this paper concentrated on how to innovate a website, which is still an important starting point and the centerpiece for digital marketing because its content and operation can be fully controlled by a company, unlike

social media sites (Garett, Zhang, & Young, 2016). Based on a review of the literature on the agency-client relationships and on design thinking approaches, case studies of award-winning Korean websites were empirically conducted.

2. Literature Review

2. 1. In-house, Out-sourced, and Hybrid Relationships

While undergoing a digital transformation, companies might consider which digital marketing activities they should keep in-house, which they should outsource, or which should be managed in a hybrid manner. Several practitioners and researchers have addressed the pros and cons of these approaches, particularly in the creative marketing industry, as follows.

Firstly, the main benefit of an in-house solution is a deep understanding of the company, brands, products or services, consumers, and other intricacies, which influence the company's digital marketing strategies and messages (Lavska, 2017). With reference to extensive internal business knowledge and research data, in-house teams can also immediately work on identifying the relevant marketing needs or solutions, while closely engaging internal staffers on site (Swayne, 2016). Although in-house marketers can immerse in their businesses 24/7, extending their digital capabilities and skills is not easy, considering their ongoing routine workload; however, the adaptability to trendy and first-rate digital workflows is crucial in today's ever-shifting media marketplace (Mamnoon, 2017). According to Circle Marketing Research, about 80% of business-to-business (B2B) leaders reported "noticeable skill gaps" in their teams, ranging from data analysis to core digital marketing techniques to consumer insights (Anderson, 2015). Moreover, finding the right talent is also challenging with the increasing demand for the best digital marketers. Moreover, scaling in-house teams requires large amount of time and money.

Next, seasoned marketing agencies and consultancies have vast experience in solving diverse marketing issues within multiple digital channels as well as firsthand knowledge of marketing trends across their client lists. Another key advantage is an outside perspective on consumers' interests and needs. The agencies can take a step back from internal biases that may influence the strategic marketing directions; however, their new ideas and solutions may be "off-brand," unsupportable, or unviable in the client business environments due to a lack of background knowledge (Best, 2006).

Finally, a blend of in-house and agency resources can be another approach. The 2019 In-House Creative Industry Report shows that about 80% of in-house teams partner with external agencies (The Boss Group & Cella Consulting, 2017). An advantage of such a mixture is strategic resource allocation according to marketing goals and activities. For example, in-house marketing teams can hire an agency to bring expertise to specific digital channels while they create a big picture by performing user research and data analytics. However, striking the right balance between internal and external work might take some adjustments (Brevity, 2017); therefore, a clear channel of communication between the two parties is critical for this hybrid approach. In some cases, one or more dedicated in-house marketers are in charge of providing insights to the internal organization and to the agency while mediating these two parties.

Along with choosing the right team for digital marketing, developing robust agency-client relationships is also extremely challenging. Moreover, the proliferation of digital and social media channels and new technologies has increased the complexity of agency-client relationships as more clients work on diverse digital marketing activities with a network of multiple agencies (Keegan, Rowley, & Tonge, 2017). To date in the B2B literature, significant attention has been paid to the agency-client relationships in both the traditional advertising and digital marketing industries (Beverland, Farrelly, & Woodhatch, 2007; West & Paliwoda, 1996). In 1986 and 1987, Wackman, Salmon, and Salmon identified four sets of influential factors on the success of agency-client partnerships, including work products, work patterns, organizational factors, and relationship factors (as cited in Fam & Waller, 2008). Among them, they found that the relationship factors (i.e., the level of trust, respect, rapport, and comfort between agency and client personnel) were the most significant predictors of a client's satisfaction with their agency. Other

studies also supported the importance of these personal attributes in agency-client relationships (Marshall & Na, 1994; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Of course, an agency's excellence (i.e., creativity, performance, or service skills) is also one of the most significant factors (Henke, 1995).

Conversely, conflicts between agencies and clients have been investigated as a key predictor of severed relationships (Doyle, Jens, & Michell, 1980; West & Paliwoda, 1996). First of all, dissatisfaction with agency performance might split the agency-client partnership. In 1992, Michell, Cataquet, and Hague found that poor creative skills and a lack of closeness to the business resulted in a negative evaluation of the agency performance (as cited in Waller, 2004). Sometimes, the agency-client dynamic can deteriorate because of the imbalance between skills that clients greatly value and those that agencies value (Vizard, 2016).

2. 2. Adopting Design Thinking Approaches for Website Innovation

In the last decade, "design thinking" has garnered much attention in the popular press and has been adopted as a novel problem-solving methodology by many companies. A generally accepted definition of design thinking has yet to emerge, but several scholars and practitioners have suggested various discourses about design thinking. The design theorist and academic, Richard Buchanan noted "designers' professional way of thinking as a matter of dealing with wicked problems, which are ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decision-makers with conflicting values..." (Buchanan, 1992, p. 15). The innovation consulting firm IDEO has significantly contributed to the evolution of design thinking. Its CEO, Tom Brown, defined design thinking as "a discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and marketing opportunity" (Brown, 2008, p. 86). Research by Chang, Kim, and Joo (2013) pointed out that companies with multiple functions pursued team-level design thinking—defined as achieving a balance between intuitive and analytic teams—for strategically facilitating the process of innovation.

Moreover, the term "design thinking" can be characterized by several themes, including human-centeredness, research, awareness of the surrounding context, collaboration, optimism, non-linearity, and experimentation (Shapira, Ketchie, & Nehe, 2017). Lockwood and Papke (2017) also suggested key tenets in design thinking as follows: the right problem-solving with a deep understanding of the users, empathy coupled with multidisciplinary collaboration, hands-on experimentation with a visualization of rough prototypes for getting usable feedback, and integration of business model innovation during the design thinking process. Indeed, to drive innovation outcomes, a design thinking process prioritizes deep empathy for end-user desires, needs, and challenges to define the right problem, as well as iterative prototyping and testing phases to find an appropriate solution. Many organizations have applied this empathetic, collaborative, and iterative design thinking approach to drive their digital transformation journey for creating new customer experiences, business models, and value in today's digital economy (SAP, 2016).

This design thinking process has been formulated in various ways, such as the following popular frameworks: (1) IDEO's Human-Centered Design (HCD) process: inspiration, ideation, and implementation (IDEO.org, 2015); (2) Stanford d.school Design Thinking process: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test (Plattner, 2010); (3) Four-question Design Thinking approach: what is?, what if?, what wows?, and what works? (Liedtka & Ogilvie, 2011); and (4) the British Design Council's Double Diamond: discover, define, develop, and deliver (Design Council, 2015). Among them, the Double Diamond model, which is based on the four distinct phases of design, has been universally accepted as a clear, comprehensive, and visual representation of the design and innovation process (Ball, n.d.). Its two diamond shapes represent how divergent and convergent thinking methods fit within each stage, and clearly depicts the iterative cycle between confirming problems and creating solutions. In addition, the Double Diamond outlines four core principles for problem solvers: put people first, communicate visually and inclusively, collaborate and co-create, and iterate (Design Council, n.d.).

On the other hand, the marketing of products and services using digital channels enables companies to create value (e.g., brand equity, customer satisfaction and retention, and higher margin) through

new customer experiences and through interactions among customers; therefore, in digital marketing, customers emerge as the central focus of the key touchpoints in the marketing process and strategies while the conventional marketing strategy process starts with an analysis of the environment (Kannan & Li, 2017). Along with focusing on this customer-centric digital marketing process, digital marketers' roles in iteratively seeking relevant and compelling marketing strategies and solutions as problem solvers (i.e., design thinkers) have been in increasing demand in an ever-evolving and highly complex digital landscape.

In these circumstances, the present research adopts the Double Diamond model into the general web development process, which goes through an iterative cycle of web planning and design/development steps for building web-based digital marketing channels and platforms, as shown in Figure 1. This Double Diamond website development process highlights the importance of the web planning stage where the right problem is defined, in contrast to conventional website processes that focus on solving existing or predefined problems.

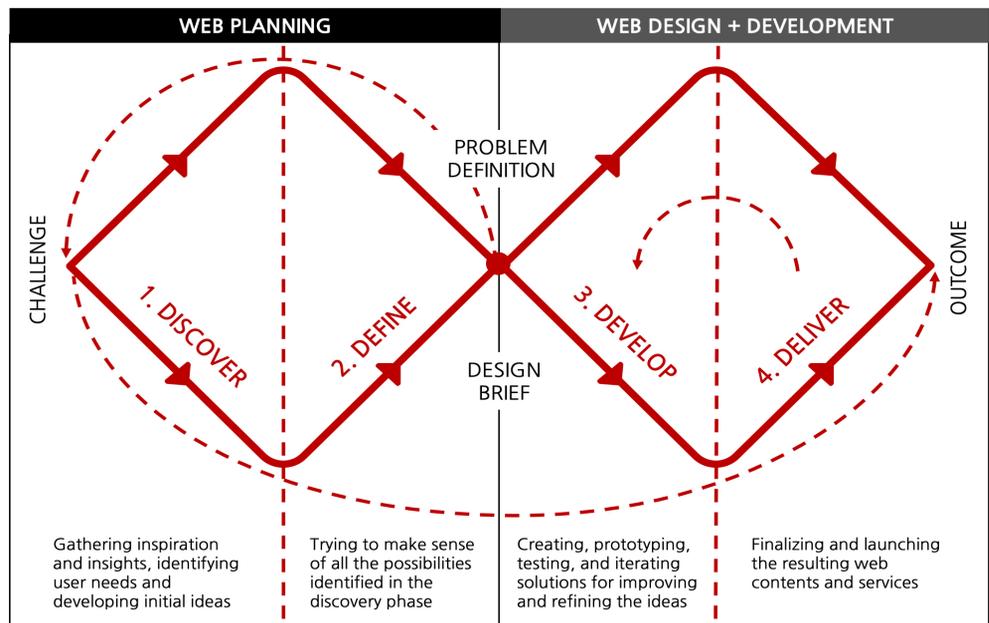


Figure 1 The Double Diamond website development process (Adapted and modified from Design Council (n.d.) and Kim (2018))

3. Methodology

3. 1. Case Studies for Context-aware Implications and Guidelines

Among a variety of research methodologies, this study adopted a qualitative case study analysis for tracking the real-context project process in the rapidly changing digital marketing landscape. According to Yin, “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (2003, p. 13).” The present research focused on more practical implications and guidelines by conducting case studies of Korean digital immigrant companies, which are defined herein as an older organization that is actively learning and adopting new technologies in comparison with digital natives (Prensky, 2001). Moreover, these digital immigrant companies are more suitable for this study on the agency-client dynamics because they are vigorously utilizing external resources as well as internal digital capabilities for their evolving digital marketing practices.

3. 2. Case Selection

The award-winning websites of two companies were selected as examples of well-managed digital design agency-client dynamics for their website innovation: (1) Chungjungone Brand's website (the Brand Innovation Prize in 2016), and (2) KEB Hana Card's official website (the UI/UX Innovation Prize in 2017). These winners received higher scores on six evaluation criteria (i.e., visual design, UI design, technology, content, service, and marketing) at the Web Award Korea, one of the most prominent domestic web competitions. Along with distinctive brand management and digital marketing solutions, these two companies have actively pushed for their digital transformation and digital marketing in the food manufacturing and financial service industries, respectively. Each case could inform and promote understanding of the strategic website renewal practices for similar industries.

3. 3. Data Collection and Analysis

This research employed multiple sources of evidence. The research data was collected by using both published and unpublished information and in-depth interviews with key practitioners from the client companies and agencies. The case studies started with obtaining published information about the companies (or brands), the agencies, the website renewal projects from books, magazines, websites, seminars, and others. Emails requesting interviews were sent to the practitioners. Afterwards, some unpublished written material and further information mentioned during the face-to-face interview sessions were collected by voice recordings and notes. These interviews focused on specific website project journeys from the perspectives of both clients and agencies along with asking about their company, organization, work, and other issues.

The collected data were organized, interpreted, synthesized, and generalized through multiple levels of analysis to link data with conclusions (implications or theories): the within-case analysis for generating insights, cross-case tactics for going beyond initial impressions by diverse lenses on the data, and overall impressions (Eisenhardt, 1989). The results of the within-case analysis of each case are described in detail in Section 4. Based on the results of the cross-case analyses, in Section 5, both the client- and agency-side workflows and interactions were identified in their development processes rooted in the Double Diamond model, as well as several guidelines of successful hybrid outsourcing with challenges. The interview data and internal/external documents referred to in this paper have been authorized for publication by the related parties.

4. Results

4. 1. Case 1: Chungjungone Brand's Website

4. 1. 1. Evolving Digital Organizations and Marketing Practices

In 1996, Daesang Corp. created its flagship food brand, called Chungjungone, for creating a new food culture. Since then, Chungjungone has strived to enhance awareness through various offline events targeting active housewife communities as well as online marketing activities. In 2008, Daesang created an online marketing division to promote its brands and manage the member database, as well as to boost sales across its e-commerce channels. Then, this division firstly developed the Chungjungone brand community website by an outside web design firm in order to provide better communication channels. This website created friendly community services, which were distinctively designed with bigger typography layouts as well as informed brand storytelling using 3D movies. Four years later, its renewal project was outsourced to another digital agency in order to improve service usability and take out flash animation parts while maintaining the tone and manner of the previous website.

Meanwhile, to reinforce the brand values of its food products, the company redesigned Chungjungone's brand logo and visual system under the motto of "food specialists" in 2013 and 2014. Eventually, through re-branding, Chungjungone intended to represent its business strategy, aiming to provide diverse and

professional food products as well as to initiate a new food culture and trend. After this brand renewal, Chungjungone communicated its new brand identity through various marketing practices (i.e., TV commercials, digital films, and online events). Furthermore, it concentrated on cooking solutions and experiences, rather than just food products, by providing a variety of brand experiences: online food channels, offline cooking classes, new cooking tools, and others.

In line with revitalizing these brand touchpoints, the company reorganized its marketing department in 2015, particularly, by integrating the online marketing division and brand teams in order to enforce competitive branding across diverse digital platforms. This new organizational structure makes it possible to facilitate close collaboration between online marketers and brand managers under the marketing planning team in the marketing department. Along with this reorganization of the internal online marketing group, there was the prevailing necessity for an innovative digital hub that integrates and manages numerous offline and online brand experiences strategically and continuously. Therefore, the third project of the Chungjungone brand website was initiated by an online marketing group in late 2015.

4. 1. 2. Chungjungone Brand Website Renewal Project

The online marketing group is in charge of managing several brand websites, SNS channels, and digital promotions and events. Simultaneously, this group is always tracking consumers' behaviors and needs across diverse digital channels, directly hearing their voices, and continuously communicating with them. Based on these tasks, the group discovered that the current users prefer open communities rather than private closed ones. In addition, they realized that the target group can be expanded from just housewives to men or unmarried people (called Chungjungone friends) who are interested in cooking. Therefore, Chungjungone undertook user research to identify the diverse needs of different target groups as well as to discover relevant brand experience contents. Recruiting participants in the user research was not difficult because the company had effectively managed its membership communities by offering diverse benefits (points, food boxes, and cultural event tickets) and hosting offline events (local offline meetings, family camping, and cooking classes).

Based on the results of user research and web trends, the online marketing group suggested renewal strategies for the Chungjungone website: (1) building a digital hub for total brand experiences, (2) providing various food content and services to attract diverse target groups, and (3) meeting web and mobile accessibility standards. With these strategies, the group invited three digital design agencies to pitch a project proposal for this renewal work. The bidding winner was W-mark Inc. This web design agency had a better understanding of the website content and services because it had already worked on maintaining its previous websites over the past few years.

In November 2015, the renewal project for the Chungjungone website started. As shown in Figure 2, the external web design agency W-mark closely collaborated with the internal online marketing group, which simultaneously managed Daesang's technology subsidiary for the back-end web programming. During the project, the online marketing group mediated the related departments and teams (e.g., brand, food law, and food labeling teams) for better communication between the agency and web content providers. Specifically, in the web planning stage, the client-side scope of work mainly concentrated on collecting a great deal of raw data from food product groups, and it then created relevant web content after checking with the related internal teams to confirm that the created content were in line with food information regulations and laws.

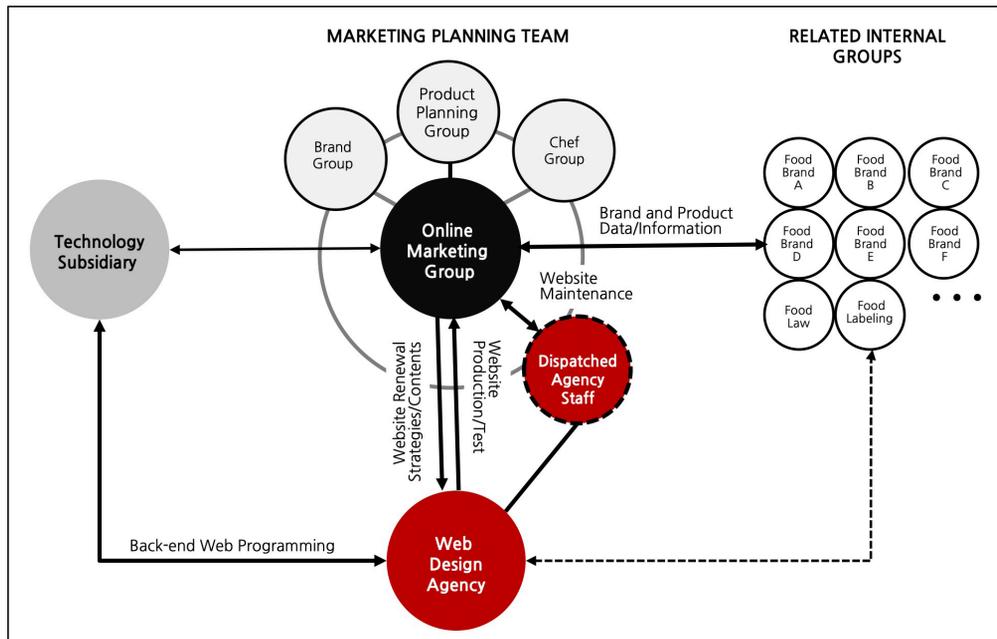


Figure 2 The digital design agency-client interactions for the Chungjungone website renewal project

Through these agency-client collaborative works, the Chungjungone brand community website was launched in March 2016. To intuitively display a variety of food content as Chungjungone's core digital brand community platform, responsive card-based user interfaces were created with friendly illustrated images and cheerful background color schemes of the card modules (Figure 3). In particular, the card UI modules were well suited to the mobile environment because they are easy to scan and consume at a glance as they offer great capabilities for user manipulation. In particular, while selecting and refining this card module design, the online marketing group communicated with the agency through low- or high-fidelity prototypes (e.g., wireframes and visual mock-ups).

Since its debut, along with the continuous creation of high-quality brand content (e.g., Foodcast videos and food tips), this website focuses on interconnecting with its other social media content, such as on Facebook, Instagram, Naver blogs, and KakaoTalk (a free mobile instant messaging service in Korea). Moreover, in order to promptly update and maintain this growing content, the agency dispatched their staff, which consisted of a planner, designer, and publisher, to Daesang's headquarters where the online marketing group is located, as illustrated by the small dotted circle representing the dispatched agency staff, as shown in Figure 2.

Due to these efforts, the website's usability across PCs and mobile devices was dramatically improved and thereby was awarded a web accessibility quality mark. The site's Unique Visitors (UVs) and Page Views (PVs) have been increasing, and it has been expanding the company's loyal customer base. The site's mobile connectivity was also up 100% from the previous year.

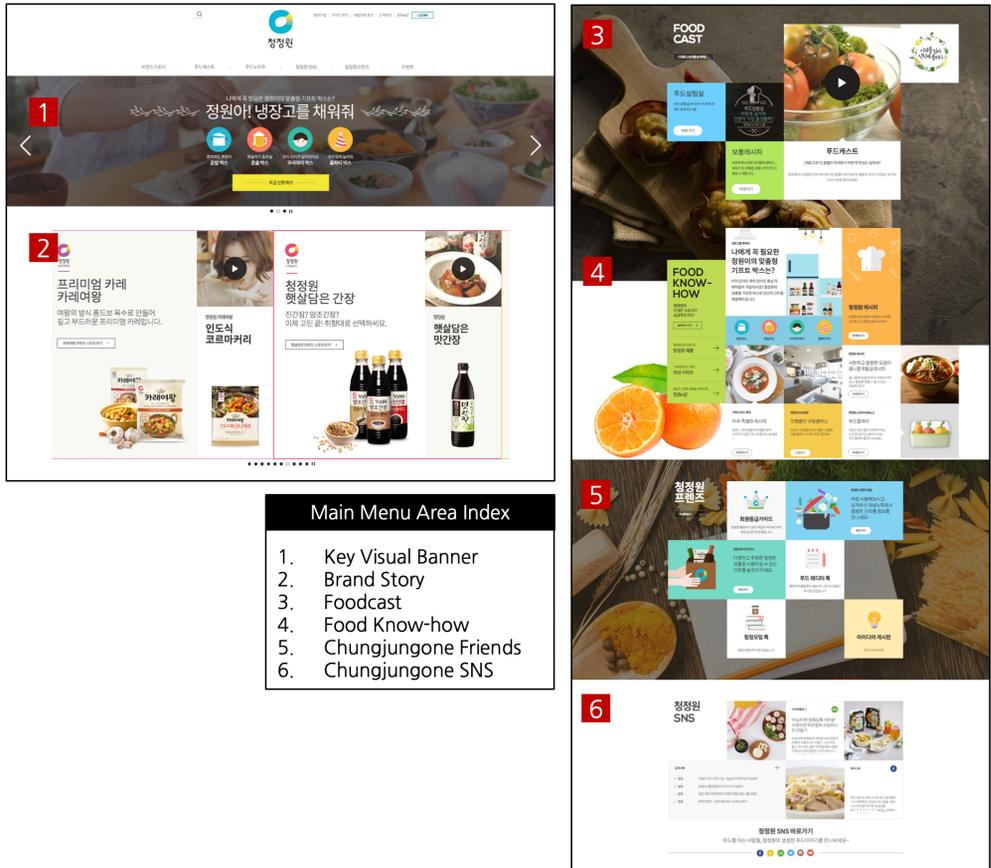


Figure 3 The Chungjungone website's landing page divided into two parts: a card UI-based one-page design (Source: <http://www.chungjungone.com>)

4. 2. Case 2: KEB Hana Card's Official Website

4. 2. 1. Fostering Digital Organizations and Digital Channels

KEB Hana Card Corp. has strived to become “a smart financial innovator, leading a smart life” for securing new customers since it launched the first mobile-only credit card in 2015. Moreover, in 2017, KEB Hana Card developed a digital innovation strategy called “Digital Transformation (DT),” along with the following three tactics: process digitalization, intelligent platform, and digital connectedness (Kang, 2017). The CEO, Su-Jin Chung, also announced a 2018 brand slogan, “New digital leader,” and emphasized that “Digitalization is not an option but a requirement throughout the whole organization” (Im, 2018). With the CEO’s digital support, the company has aggressively integrated fintech solutions into their services.

Under the direction of the CEO, KEB Hana Card has a Future Business Division for handling its company-wide digital services. In particular, according to the growing importance of digital marketing and platforms, five subgroups of the division were recently reorganized (see Figure 4): the digital marketing group, digital innovation group, global business group, Hana members operation group, and Hana members marketing group. Among them, the digital innovation group is mainly in charge of managing various digital platforms (e.g., websites and applications) and digital payment systems. Simultaneously, the division’s workforce also increased by 7.4% (mostly, IT staff).

Meanwhile, over the last few years, the Future Business Division has focused on improving its online channels. First, as the majority of Internet users move from PCs to mobile devices, the division outsourced a renewal project of its mobile website to two companies in 2016: Frameout Inc. for its design and publishing works and K-smartech for its solution development. Led by the fintech business group (renamed the digital innovation group), the outside project teams optimized key menus, which were

frequently used by customers on the company’s desktop website, to a mobile environment. This mobile website was designed in an intuitive and useful UI style by highlighting key information. Particularly, this renewal project concentrated on developing distinctive customized financial services via a “My page” menu (Web Award Committee, 2017). After launching the successful mobile websites, the company immediately started to innovate its desktop website, which had barely changed over the past half-decade, with the aim of insuring compatibility with the mobile websites.

4. 2. 2. KEB Hana Card Website Renewal Project

Ever since the debut of web services in the early 2000s, the online financial market has evolved from information channels to business supporters (e.g., electronic payment and e-commerce) to new business creators (e.g., easy payment, personalized services, and intelligent platforms). In light of the great importance of the online financial market, KEB Hana Card initiated its official website renewal in order to provide competitive values and solutions for both its stakeholders and consumers. Without competitive bidding, the same two agencies, which worked on the previous mobile website project, joined this renewal project. Consequently, the website renewal project was undertaken by collaboration between four parties, including two in-house groups (the digital innovation group and technology subsidiary) and two agencies. Figure 4 illustrates the digital design agency-client interactions for the KEB Hana Card website renewal project. Like the Chungjungone project, after terminating the project, the design agency dispatched their key staff to Hana Card’s headquarters where the digital innovation group is located, as illustrated by the small dotted circle representing the dispatched agency staff in Figure 4.

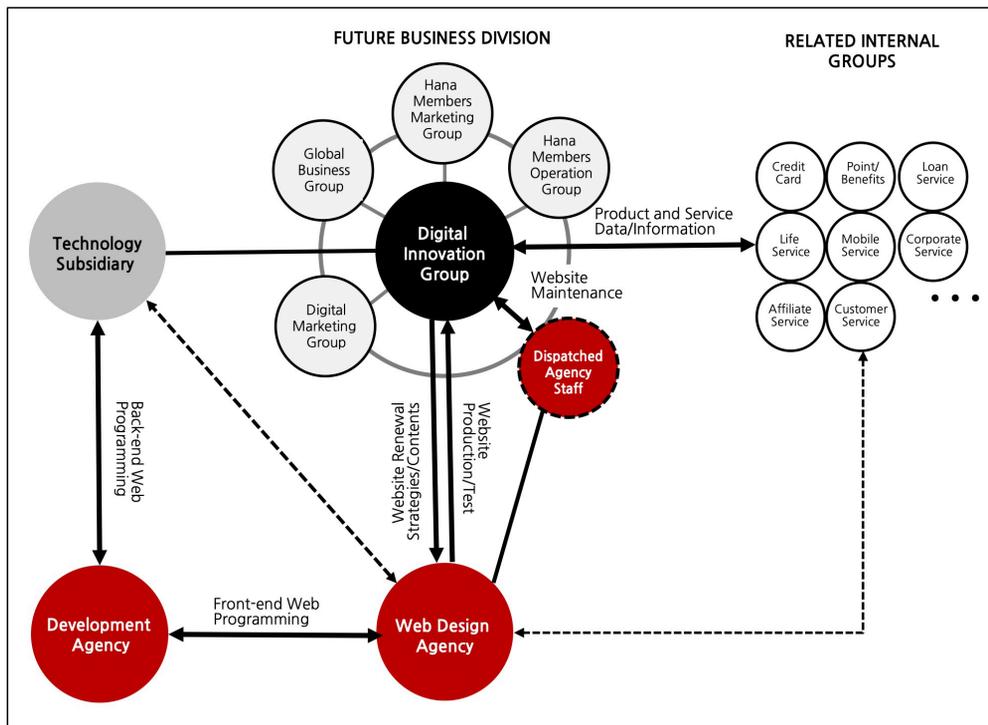


Figure 4 The digital design agency-client interactions for the KEB Hana Card website renewal project

Before the official kickoff meeting held in December 2016, the digital innovation group established a renewal strategy, “building familiar and new experiences” to vitalize customers’ digital channel usage. Familiar experiences included checking, information, application, inquiry, and benefits, and new experiences included easy payment, personalization, implication, and platform services. This strategy was derived from key insights of periodic loyal customer interviews and market trend research.

In particular, in the web planning stage (discovery and define phases), the digital innovation group conducted an additional FGI for usability testing and usage pattern analysis of the website as well as in-depth interviews with internal stakeholders (service and sales representatives) for the competitive digital services. Therefore, the group could identify key problems of the previous websites and then find feasible solutions with planners, designers, and developers from the agencies at the same time. Moreover, as depicted in Figure 4, the digital innovation group collected and prioritized numerous financial content and needs of the related internal groups in order to make up for the design agency's lack of financial knowledge.

Before starting the actual webpage design, the digital innovation group collaborated with the agencies to create a low-fidelity website prototype. In fact, the KEB Hana Card website consists of more than 6,000 pages; therefore, the project team tried to reduce critical changes and solve internal and external conflicts, which would arise during the design and development stages. This prototype helped internal stakeholders make the right decisions and enabled customers to explain their preferences visually and concretely.

In August 2017, the new KEB Hana Card official website was released. First, under the renewal strategy to build both familiar and new experiences, the web design agency prioritized and designed them according to intuitive and flat UI design style guides. Furthermore, the landing page layout varies from before to after logging in to deliver different content or feedback while increasing the efficiency of its screen space, as shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5 The landing page screenshots before (a) and after (b) logging in (Source: <http://www.hanacard.co.kr/>)

Next, the website offers different values and useful feedback according to customers' lifestyles and spending patterns. These personalized financial services are provided using its Responsive Pattern Analysis (RPA) program that was developed solely for the website. Along with the website usage, this program also analyzes customer patterns from other digital channels and card transaction histories and curates the customized service scenarios and products. Above all, the new website customized an online card application process with various card recommendation services as well as improved its usability with micro-interactions. These enhanced experiences contributed particularly to increasing the online card application (about 10% over the previous year). Furthermore, the UVs and PVs of the website increased by 15%, boosting online revenue performance.

5. Discussion

5. 1. Client- and Agency-side Workflows and Interactions

The growing prevalence of technology and data has caused a more technology-oriented approach to digital marketing; however, an equally important key factor is excellence in design and creativity (Econsultancy & Adobe, 2018). In particular, design thinking mindsets for an empathetic understanding of users' unmet needs empowers innovation in digital marketing by delivering seamless, consistent, and engaging experiences (Hertzfeld, 2019).

In this vein, the present study scrutinized the client- and agency-side workflows and interactions in the theoretical model of the Double Diamond website development process (see Figure 1). Interestingly, it was discovered that their whole development could be illustrated by expanding the Double Diamond website development model, as shown in Figure 6.

Ultimately, beyond the actual web planning and design/development phases, this extended model shows the iterative arrangement of the diamond shapes that represent seamless divergent and convergent idea (or solution) generation workflows related to the whole journey of the projects. In order words, by specifically clarifying the up-front advanced research and latter test/maintenance phases, this modified model reflected the dynamic and evolving characteristics of digital content and services that must be updated and improved more frequently than non-digital products and services.

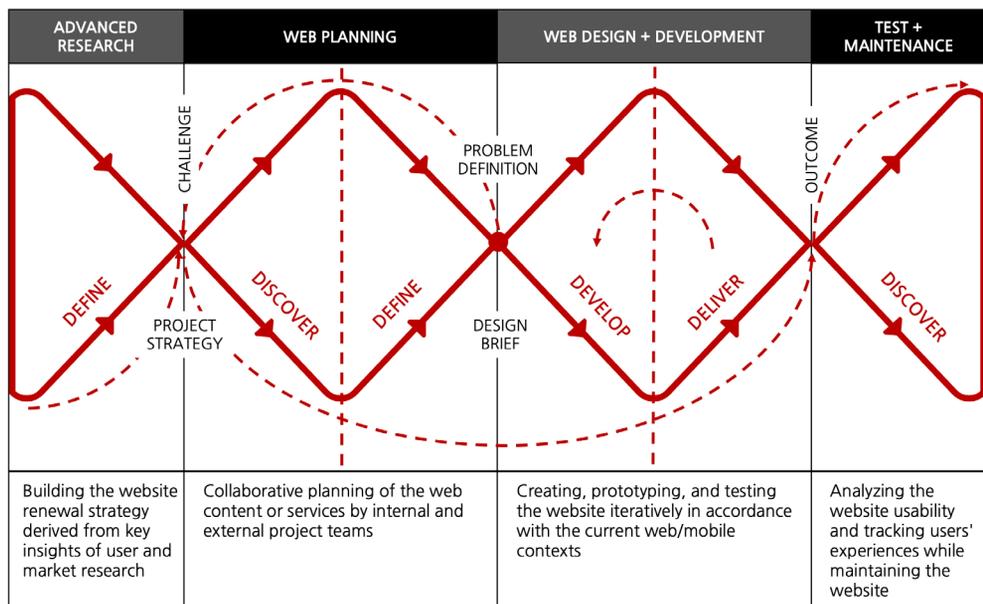


Figure 6 The extended Double Diamond website development process

Next, along with the overall practices undertaken across the four phases depicted in Figure 6, client- and agency-side specific workflows and interactions were tracked in the real context (see Table 1).

Table 1 Client- and agency-side key tasks and duties in the extended Double Diamond development process

	Development Phases	Advanced Research	Web Planning	Web Design + Development	Test + Maintenance
Case 1: Brand Storytelling-driven Website	Client-side Scope of Work	- Conducting user research for discovering consumers' behaviors and needs across diverse digital channels	- Collecting brand/product data and information from the internal groups	- Choosing design concepts and communicating them internally with low- or high-fidelity prototypes	- Planning high-quality brand contents
	By Online Marketing Group	- Investigating web trends	- Bridging between the related internal groups and the agency		- Tracking users' responses and feedback (e.g., community boards)
	Agency-side Scope of Work	- Building the website renewal strategies	- Planning web contents after checking their viability		
	By Digital Design Agency	- Participating in the project bidding process while maintaining the previous website	- Creating the website IA and structure	- Visualizing brand contents and services by using responsive card-based UI layouts	- Dispatching its staff to the client office for website maintenance
Case 2: Digital Service-driven Website	Agency-side Scope of Work	- Developing the website with the client's technology subsidiary while meeting web and mobile accessibility standard			- Updating and maintaining the brand contents
	Client-side Scope of Work	- Conducting periodical loyal customer interviews and market trend research	- Performing FGI and in-depth interviews with internal stakeholders	- Reducing critical changes and solving internal and external conflicts with low-or high-fidelity website prototypes	- Analyzing the website usage patterns (e.g., RPA program)
	By Digital Innovation Group	- Building the website renewal strategy	- Prioritizing financial contents and needs of the internal groups		
	Agency-side Scope of Work	- Maintaining the previous website	- Initiating web planning stage	- Building UI design style guides	- Dispatching its staff to the client office for website maintenance
By Digital Design Agency + Development Agency	- Joining the project without bidding	- Participating in web planning	- Visualizing the financial services and contents	- Improving and maintaining the service	
		- Investigating the feasibility of the planning results	- Developing the websites in collaboration with the development agency and the clients technology subsidiary		

As described in Table 1, the key tasks and duties of the clients and agencies were identified across all phases of the extended development process. Importantly, their tasks fit into typical themes of design thinking (Lockwood & Papke, 2017; Shapira et al., 2017), as follows: (1) human-centeredness: putting users' needs and behaviors at the center of the process; (2) research: conducting user/stakeholder research and usability testing; (3) context-awareness: keeping up with a constantly changing digital/mobile landscape; and (4) multi-disciplinary collaboration: fostering and validating diverse ideas from more internal and external project team members and stakeholders.

Moreover, there were distinctive design thinking practices of the two companies respectively representing the following two types of websites according to their major challenge areas (i.e., content vs. service): 1) the Chungjungone brand website: a brand storytelling-driven type, and (2) the KEB Hana Card website: a digital service-driven type. The brand storytelling-driven website focuses on tracking users' responses and feedback for delivering killer brand content. On the other hand, the digital service-driven website concentrated on analyzing users' usage patterns and journeys for incorporating various task-based applications and programs (e.g., online account application and payment systems).

In addition, the dominant roles of these two parties were identified in their collaborative and interactive workflows. In these cases, the internal online marketing groups (i.e., the online marketing group of Chungjungone and the digital innovation group of KEB Hana Card) played an initiative role (e.g., web strategy initiators, web content/service generators) in website renewal strategy formulation, while their agencies mainly focused on implementing the renewal strategy (as web content/service planners,

form-givers, solution-providers, or operators defined by Chung and Kim (2011) in spite of involving in translating the strategy into the actionable web planning phases. More specifically, in the beginning of the actual development process followed by the advanced research stage, the internal online marketing group led the website planning stage as a content and service generator and closely collaborated with the design agency as a decision-maker or internal and external communication facilitator during the website development process. In particular, designers and developers from the agencies also participated in their web planning stage to investigate and confirm the feasibility of the planning results. Remarkably, due to the difficulty in understanding very complex financial information and services in the case of the KEB Hana Card website, the internal marketing team engaged in the web planning stage more than the Chungjungone's internal groups did. In the development stage, the clients also collaborated with the digital development agency specializing in programming the tricky financial services alongside with the digital design agency (see Figure 4).

Given that digital products and services are constantly evolving, websites could be updated in response to users or internal staffers immediately, even in real time. For example, many of Chungjungone's loyal users visit its website, even on a day-to-day basis, and actively participate in the "Chungjungone Friends" community board while writing various stories about their daily life on the website. Then, Chungjungone's internal marketers devotedly manage numerous posts for better relationships with their customers.

In general, after launching the new websites, the in-house marketers continuously test and manage their websites by outsourcing to either the same or different agencies. Instead, in the present research, both of the companies brought a couple of staffers from the agency partners inside the company for an agile collaboration with them, as they physically sit next to the company's core marketing staff (that is, the dispatched agency staff illustrated in Figures 2 and 4). Moreover, the internal digital marketing teams continuously track their users' responses and journeys on their websites and then analyze them in order to provide better digital experiences.

5. 2. Lessons and Challenges of Hybrid Approaches in Digital Marketing

Although an increasing number of companies have focused on cultivating their internal digital capabilities, their in-house digital marketing teams have still partnered with external agencies to complement their service offering for getting new ideas and specialized skill sets. In this situation, through cases studies, the present research identified several practical insights of successful hybrids between the clients and digital agencies along with their challenges, from the project kick-off to the project termination (even, after the project), as follows.

(1) Planning performance-based strategic resource allocation

Hiring a digital marketing agency in collaboration with in-house marketing representatives or teams can be the most effective way to optimize limited marketing budgets (Brevity, 2017). Actually, it would cost a great deal to build an entirely in-house team of specialized and experienced specialists who keep pace with the latest marketing trends and practices. Tae-Jun Chang, chief manager of the Digital Innovation Group in KEB Hana Card, mentioned that his group still faced challenges in staffing for multi-faced digital marketing due to the lack of an organizational budget and a corporate recruitment system mainly focusing on hiring financial specialists.

In terms of the limited marketing budgets, as shown in Table 1, the two case companies managed their marketing resources well according to the distinctive capabilities and expertise of their in-house groups and outside agencies by initiating marketing planning (website strategies and contents) internally, while outsourcing marketing production (website design and development). Along with effectively utilizing their digital market budgets, this strategic resource allocation enabled the hybrid project teams to accurately understand specialized field-oriented contents and services (e.g., food and finance industries), as well as to keep up with rapidly changing dynamic digital/mobile marketing environments (e.g., the latest web design trends and development technologies).

(2) Facilitating effective communication internally and externally

In the case of the hybrid (or blended) agency-client partnerships, the success or failure of their project depends on effective communication to resolve their conflicts (Greenup, 2019). As discussed in the literature review, conflicts between the two parties are likely to sever their relationships. Having an open and empathetic approach helps facilitate a meaningful conversation by setting aside one-sided viewpoints. In the case projects of this study, there were more than four main parties (i.e., outside digital agencies, internal digital marketing group, technology subsidiary, and other related internal groups), as shown in Figures 2 and 4. For striking the right balance between internal and external work, the dedicated in-house project managers of each company facilitated discussions and mediated conflicts between diverse internal organizations and agencies. For example, these committed managers prioritized their numerous contents or services, which the related internal groups insistently requested to promote on the website's main location, based on the website renewal strategies. Then, the internal project managers delivered these distilled contents or services to the agencies after translating them into the right web contents or services. Along with this communication facilitating staff, the companies used effective communication tools. During the deciding and refining of the web design and UI/UX styles, the agencies created low- or high-fidelity website prototypes (e.g., functional wireframes and visual mock-ups), which made it easy for the clients to iteratively influence web design and UI/UX styles before the agencies spent large amounts of time in fleshing out and materializing the website.

Another strategic communication tool was meaningful and actionable insights derived from a variety of user research and usability testing. Among the numerous challenges that the two companies faced during the project, one of the most difficult issues was persuading their top executives (influential decision-makers) and internal departments (business/brand content providers). Noticeably, the project teams brought their target users' needs and stories to the negotiation table. For example, the KEB Hana Card project team created friendly supplementary website color palettes, which fit well with the key color, the company logo's dull green (Figure 5); however, their executives strongly desired to only use the logo color. Thus, the project team investigated website color preferences with its VIP customer panels and internal representatives. With these results, the team could eventually get its top management to support this color scheme issue.

(3) Building trusted long-term digital design agency-client partnerships

Many researchers have discovered that relationship factors are the most significant predictors of successful agency-client partnerships (Fam & Waller, 2008; Marshall & Na, 1994; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In the present research, it was found that the clients could develop a good partnership with their agencies by treating them as equal business partners rather than simply reservoirs of creative talent. Moreover, both companies have worked with the same agencies, even the same staffers, while keeping their long-term partnerships based on mutual trust and respect.

Given that poor agency performance causes severe conflicts between clients and agencies (Vizard, 2016; Waller, 2004), the present study discovered that these long-term agency-client partnerships also contributed to improving agency performance. The case agencies could provide better service with a deeper understanding of the client business across diverse digital platforms as well as know-how and solutions for materializing strategic digital marketing contents or services.

6. Conclusion

In recent years, the complexity of the digital design agency-client relationships has increased with many organizations bringing digital marketing capabilities in-house (e.g., web/mobile digital experiences, social marketing execution, and consumer insights/analytics) or using several specialized digital design and marketing agencies (namely, by building network partnerships with multiple actors). In this vein, the present study performed case studies for exploring hybrid relationships between in-house digital

marketing teams and digital design agencies for compelling web-based digital marketing. Consequently, the client and agency-side workflows and interactions were identified across all phases of the expanded Double Diamond website development process. Along with the design-thinking-driven workflows and interactions, several hands-on guidelines for successfully managing hybrid project teams were also suggested for best digital marketing practices and project optimization: planning performance-based strategic resource allocation, facilitating effective communication internally and externally, and building trusted long-term agency-client partnerships.

Finally, even though this study focused on the contemporary digital marketing practices and context-aware guidelines derived from real companies, a further study that includes a variety of the latest domestic and overseas digital marketing projects will be conducted in order to propose more generalized theoretical frameworks and knowledge for the agency-client dynamics. Furthermore, a longitudinal ethnographic study for one or more digital immigrant companies can suggest more dynamic, realistic insights from their project journeys observed by diverse analyzing lenses.

There is not a one-size-fits-all solution to organize the best digital marketing team. However, these findings will help digital immigrant companies develop and manage innovative websites through successful hybrid outsourcing while maintaining a long-term partnership with digital design agencies. This will also contribute to expanding the theoretical foundation of agency-client dynamics and the design-thinking-driven website development processes by considering the real, complex context of the current digital marketing landscape.

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