**Decker**

# The 4 Stages of a Robust Design Discovery Process

The discovery phase of any design or branding project is all about research and information gathering. It's a critical part of the process that goes far beyond the project brief. No two agencies handle the discovery process in the exact same way. However, you should strive to partner with a firm that takes a more robust approach. At Decker Design, we've developed a comprehensive, research-driven process that paves the way for the strategy phase that follows. Our discovery process includes the following steps:

## 1. Current website assessment

We start by digging into the details of your existing website to take stock of what's there and how it is performing. Take user flows, for example. We do a deep dive into Google analytics to understand how users are interacting with your current website. By mapping your users activities, persona by persona, we uncover which specific pages on your current site are doing the heavy lifting. Those are the pages we'll want to prioritize during the design phase.

## 2. Competitive analysis

Next, we perform a competitive analysis. We look at your firm's current competitors (the ones you most frequently compete with for business) and your aspirational competitors (the ones you want to compete with).

By reviewing each of your competitors' websites, we can uncover the top trends in your category. Are your competitors' websites designed with an emphasis on recruiting? Customer loyalty? Employee retention? PR issues? What features are they putting on their websites? And to what extent are they using design elements like motion to deliver a more visceral brand experience?

By the time we finish our competitive analysis, we can easily point to the most overused design clichés within your market—and identify fertile areas of design opportunity for your firm.

## 3. Stakeholder interviews

The only way to really know what authentically sets your firm apart is to talk with the people who know you best: your employees and customers. Our stakeholder interviews are about so much more than learning your team's aesthetic preferences. We use these key conversations to understand how your firm is currently perceived both internally and externally.

Even if you are determined that you know your market well, our findings may surprise you. What we learn in these conversations allows us to refine your firm's positioning and chart a design direction to support and amplify it.

## 4. Consensus-building

Finally, we gather all of the key stakeholders within your firm together to discuss our findings. Our goal is to share fresh insights, make actionable recommendations, reconcile differences of opinion—and build consensus as we prepare to craft a strategy to guide your website's design.

Curious to know more about the discovery process? Check out our white paper.