Web Strategy

What It Is & Why We Need to Care

Jason Pamental | @jpamental

Do It With Drupal |NYC 2011

thinking in pencil.com
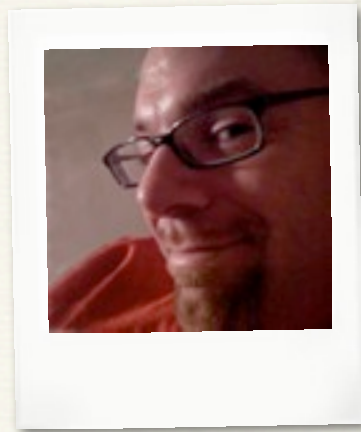
About me

- ✳ Jason Pamental *Web Strategist, Designer, Technologist*

- ✳ Have worked as strategist, designer, developer and cat-pixel-wrangler since roughly the launch of Netscape 1

- ✳ Can be found @jpamental in most places

Write this down

* **What we do as web professionals is awesome**
  (and I don't mean just cool)

* The web has the potential to be the single most pervasive & transformative development in the history of business

"I need to hire a web designer"

and why this is the worst possible thing to hear from a potential client

because when they say
"I need to hire a web designer"
what they really mean is

"I need a web solution"

Thursday, October 13, 11

The bad news first

✳ They probably don't know what's involved

The bad news first

business analysis

discovery

prototyping

stakeholder interviews

development

requirements/needs analysis

deployment

social media integration

* They probably don't know what's involved

testing

visual design

content development

information architecture

IxD

ux

user research

Here's the good news

✳ They're asking **you** for the solution

✳ You're the expert – be one

✳ Communicate. Educate. Illuminate.

✳ An educated, engaged client is **always** a better client

This is where web strategy comes in

Web strategy: a definition

Web strategy is about using knowledge of your client's business & your fresh perspective to find opportunities that transform your client's business. It's selecting the right technologies to solve problems & create opportunities by applying them with great design

Web strategy is NOT content strategy

∗ It's broader than that – it's about leadership and the growth of our industry

∗ It's about seeing the whole picture

∗ Look across silos – within your client's organization and within your own group

∗ Help your client see new possibilities through your lens of design and technology

Head of the tripod

* We're not just designers or developers

* We're consultants
  (sorry – wasn't supposed to use profanity)

* We must understand our client's business & see the things they can't

* Use you knowledge of design & intimacy with technology to truly transform

* Don't forget that your client is likely a user too

Um, OK. How?

Get out of your silo

∗ Inspiration and innovation come from looking outward for a better view in

∗ FOWD 2008: Hillman Curtis' James Victore movie, Transit maps – look everywhere & at everything

∗ Look at new ideas in business education and management (design thinking, motivation, psychology – see bibliography on last slide)

Why we should care

✳ Happier clients = better recommendations and more work

✳ Greater opportunities to do great work

✳ Progression in our field leading to greater acceptance/integration of web design and technology throughout our clients'/employers' businesses

✳ (leads to more of points one & two)

thinking in pencil.com

Who are these mythical creatures?

(here's some examples)

Dan Mall

* ✳ Senior Designer at Big Spaceship

* ✳ Technical Editor at A List Apart

* ✳ Flash guru (sorry, but it fits)

* ✳ Knows tech backwards & forwards – a comfy pencil in his design kit

thinking in pencil.com

Paul Boag

* Been designing/ developing sites since he had hair

* Is near-terminally curious

* Always looks through the eyes of the client & the user

You (if you want to be)

✳ You have two sides of your brain – **engage both**

✳ Be curious & **act on it**

✳ Be a "Mad Scientist" - **experiment, try stuff**

✳ Learn about business – how it works, how to influence it

thinking in pencil.com

Businesses are like people, only bigger

but challenges are different for organizations & agencies

Corporate/In-house web teams

* ✳ Web team usually part of marketing, corporate communications or IT

* ✳ Usually very little incentive/interest in working across those boundaries (time, cost, executive ego)

* ✳ Needs to start at the top: CWO & team should focus on customer while serving all departments *but not reporting to them*

Agencies/Interactive Design Shops

✳ Too often reactive and not willing/able to look more closely at client's business

✳ Must look behind request to understand the 'why'; study the client to find value we can deliver based on ideas they couldn't have imagined

✳ Better off with smaller starter project to sort out the 'why' & the 'what' – show the value of our expertise rather than load up a huge budget to counter what we don't know
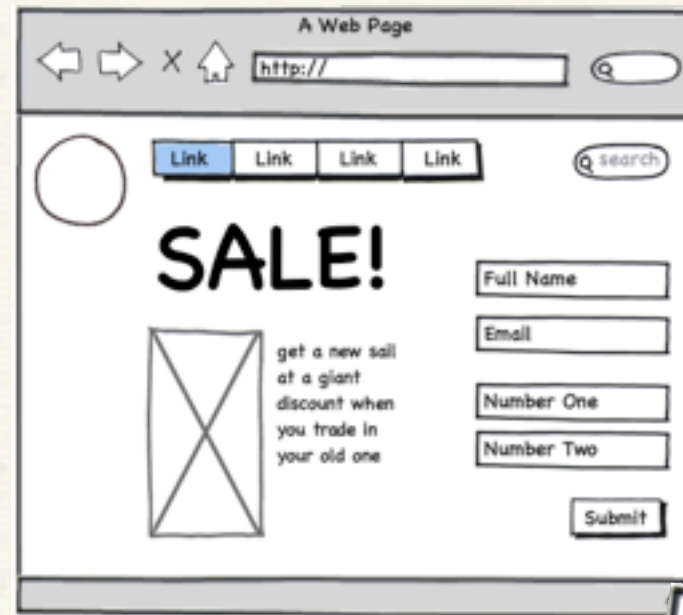
thinking in pencil.com

Project: Sail Trade-in Program

✳ North Sails runs a yearly promotion called 'Trade In/Trade Up'

✳ Involves direct mail, print ads, invoice stuffers, online promotion, receiving, fulfillment and accounting (for the rebates)

✳ Marketing, Sales, IT (data), Accounting (4 departments, 4 budgets, 4 execs)
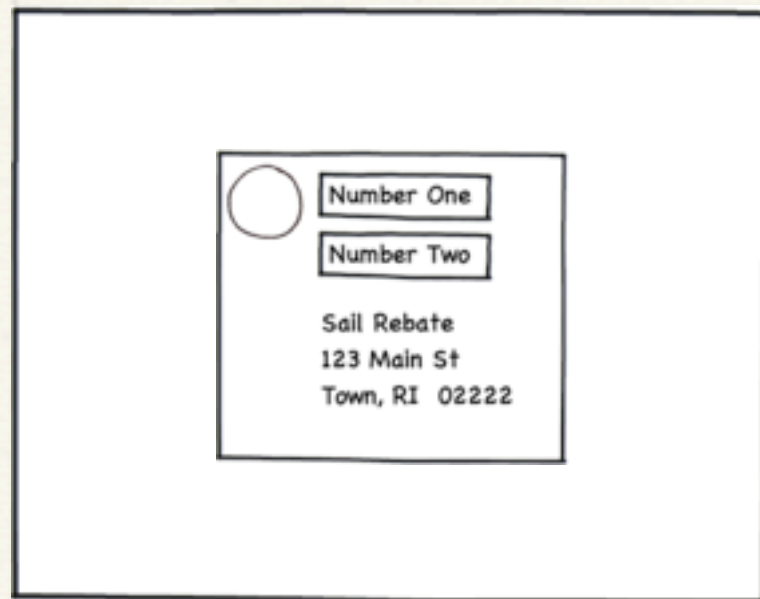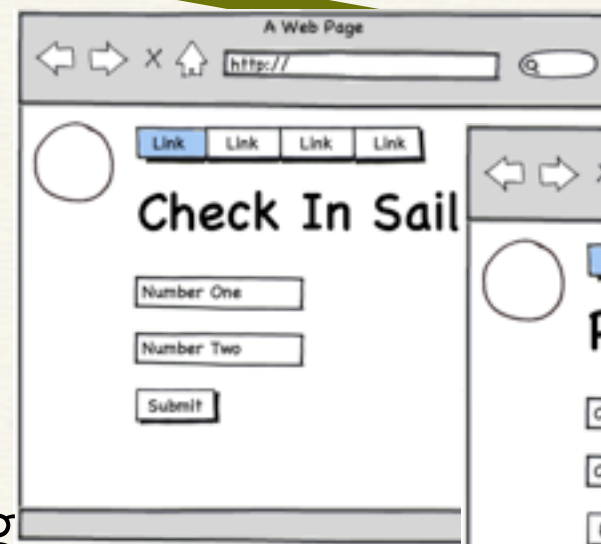
Process Flow

SALE!

get a new sail at a giant discount when you trade in your old one

Mr. Smith
123 Main St
Town, RI 02222

Marketing:
Print/online
campaign

A Web Page

http://

Link Link Link Link   search

SALE!

get a new sail at a giant discount when you trade in your old one

Full Name

Email

Number One

Number Two

Submit

Item One	3203	4
Item Two	9322	3
Item Three	2320	1
Item Four	2380	7
Item Five	0293	3
Item Six	1249	5
Item Seven	5340	6
Item Eight	9430	4

IT:
Nightly data
load

Number One

Number Two

Sail Rebate
123 Main St
Town, RI 02222

A Web Page

http://

Link Link Link Link

Check In Sail

Number One

Number Two

Submit

A Web Page

http://

Link

Ready to Issue

Check One
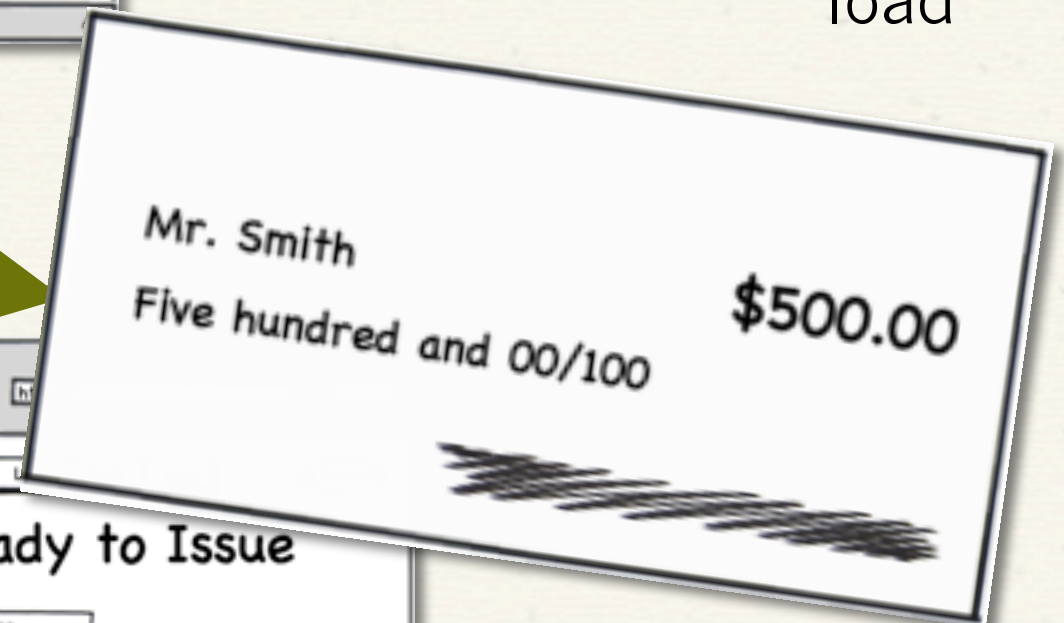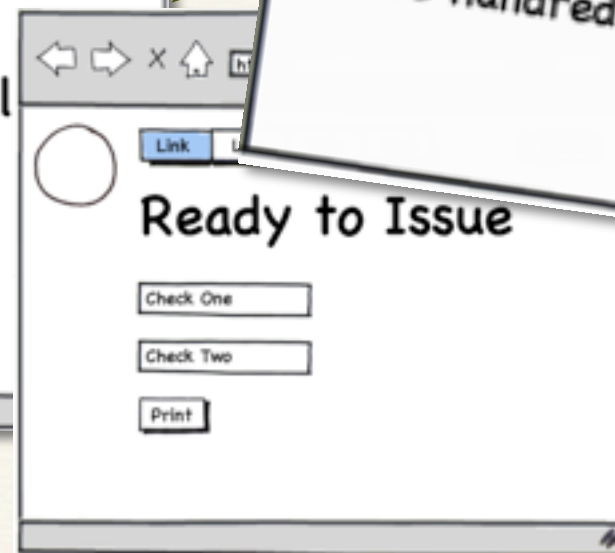
Check Two

Print

Mr. Smith
Five hundred and 00/100 $500.00

Customer: ship sail to receiving

Check-in notifies acct'ing

Accounting sends check

Outcomes

* ✳ Eliminated dozens of hours of labor every week

* ✳ Cut Rebate time from 8wks to 2wks or less

* ✳ Took ~3 days to build

* ✳ Has been reused for several years w/no re-coding

* ✳ All it took was some observation and a few good questions to discover the pain points and big opportunities for efficiencies

So how do we get there? Education

Who are the ideal candidates?

∗ It's not for beginners, other than in concept

∗ Ideal for those who have been working in the field for a number of years

∗ More suited to designers/design thinkers with aptitude for technology & business rather than the other way around. Creativity harder to teach than technology

∗ Could be Continuing Ed or Grad level

What to teach

✱ Communication – if we can't get our ideas across, they don't exist

✱ Look at new MBA programs like Rotman - Innovation in business & design thinking are tremendously relevant to what we do in the best web projects

✱ Examine/understand how business works: open your eyes & look across enterprise to see points of intersection - that's where the opportunities are to use web technologies to create the greatest, most innovative solutions

Wrap it up

✳ We have to define, embrace and espouse the role of web strategist – *which in turn*

✳ Leads to needing classes to help develop those who seek to fill those roles – *which in turn*

✳ Creates a culture that recognizes value of strategy & design in making most out of web technology on any device/platform in the most useful, usable ways, both within companies and with the agencies/shops they hire

Thank you!

It's been an honor to speak with you

Hello.

I'm a web professional and I make

Awesome

*web strategy **FTW***

Been there, done that – buy the t-shirt: http://www.cafepress.com/
thinkinginpencil

Suggested Reading

✳ *The Design of Business* (Roger Martin)

✳ *Subject to Change* (Peter Merholz, Todd Wilkens, Brandon Schauer, David Verba)

✳ *DRiVE* (Daniel Pink)

✳ *Linchpin* (Seth Godin)

✳ *The Tipping Point* (Malcolm Gladwell)

✳ MTIV (Hillman Curtis)