

# Web Strategy

What It Is & Why We Need to Care



# 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
- \* Post thoughts, work and pics from Instagr.am @ [thinkinginpencil.com](http://thinkinginpencil.com)



# 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
- \* But only if we learn enough about that organization to see how it can be applied

**“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”**

# The bad news first

- \* They probably don't know what's involved

# The bad news first

business analysis      discovery  
stakeholder interviews      prototyping      development  
requirements/needs analysis  
deployment      social media integration  
\* They probably don't know what's involved  
testing      visual design  
content development      HTML/CSS  
information architecture  
UX      user research      IxD

# 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)

# 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



# 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



# **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**

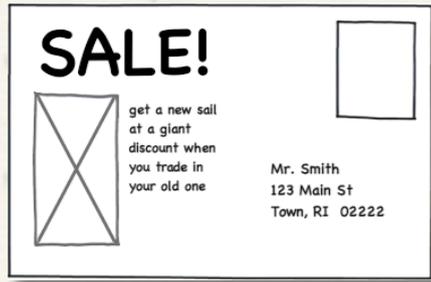
# Agencies/Interactive Design Shops

- \* 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

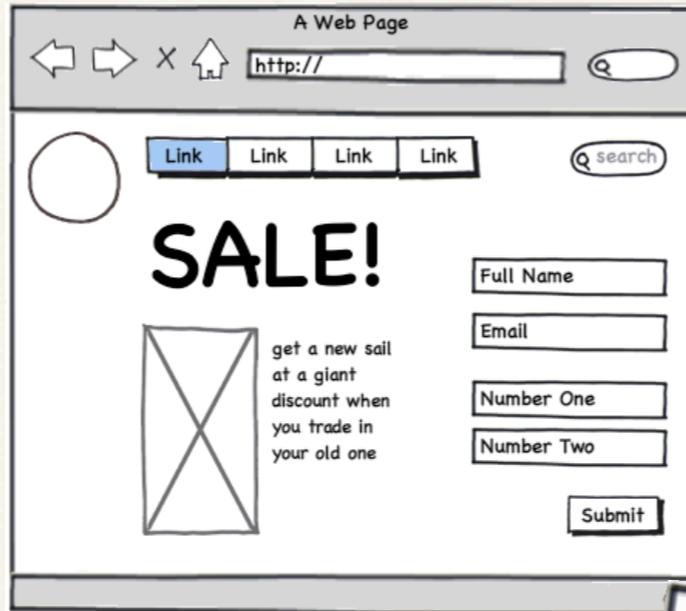
# Project: Sail Trade-in Program

- \* 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

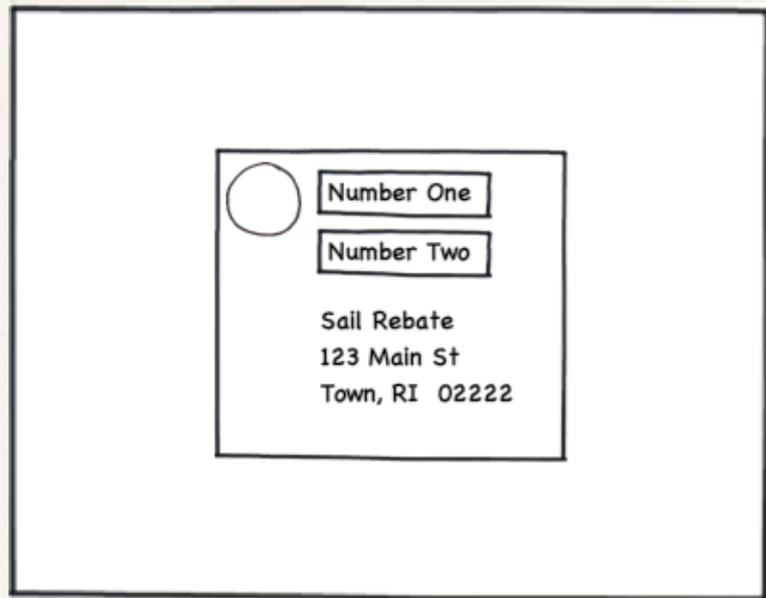


Marketing:  
Print/online campaign

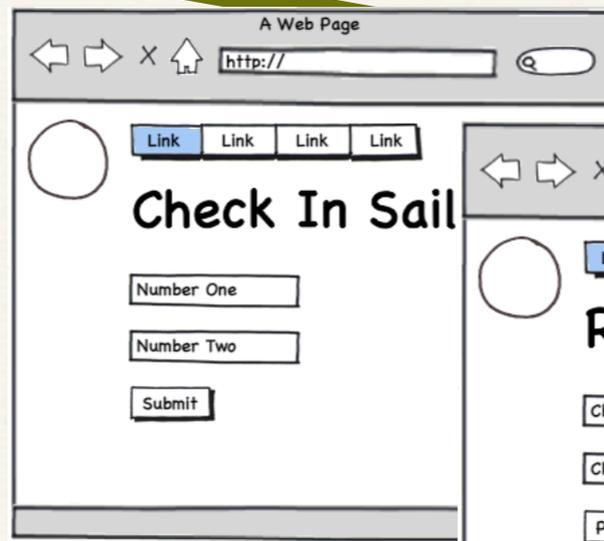


Item One	3203	4
Item Two	9322	3
Item Three	2320	1
Item Four	2380	7
Item Five	0293	3
Item Six	1249	5
Item Seven	5340	6
Item Eight	9430	4

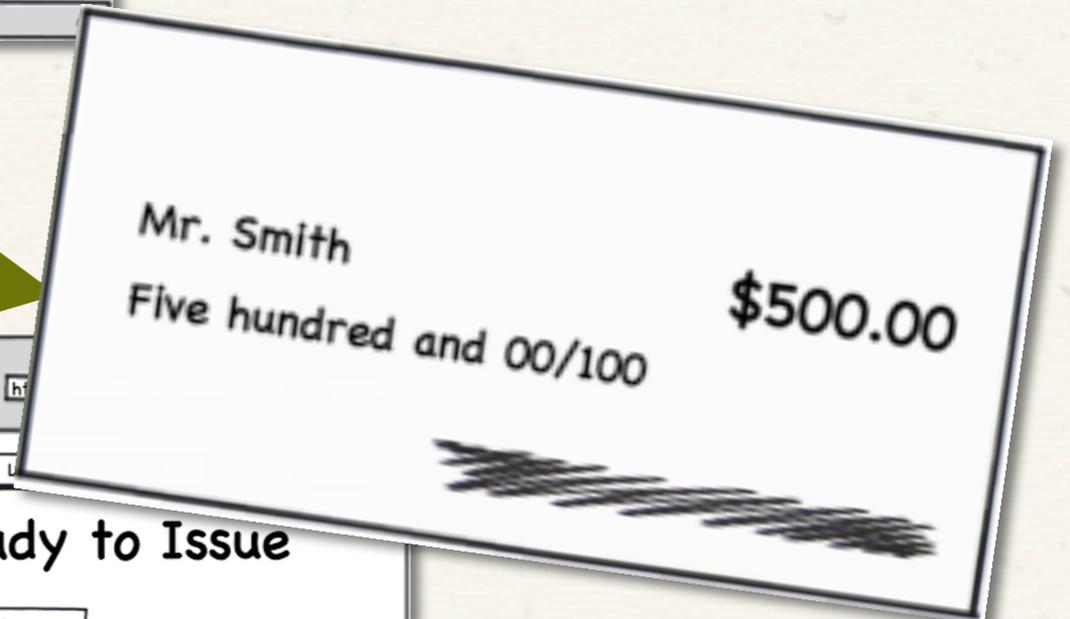
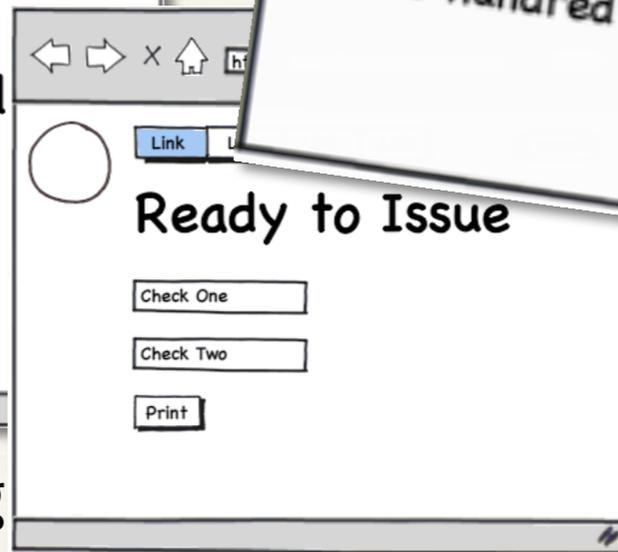
IT:  
Nightly data load



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*

# 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)