INTRODUCTION

Contents of this document:

1. My CV
2. My advice to show my skills in UX ()
3. Top expert's opinion about my advice ()

What's the point?

- I tried this with Pipedrive (my advice is for them), but they had too formal an approach in HR and didn't communicate at all.
- **But it seems a good idea to send this to Nortal, as you are looking for talented people with strong analytical skills.**

Also:

- Additional demo of my strong analytical skills: optim.ee/pt.pdf (in Estonian)
  My advice in the niche of political marketing. It shows that I'm capable of analytically digging into something completely new for me and to provide high quality suggestions.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Aivar Alle

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Education

ESTONIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MOSCOW   1990-1995

A.TVARDOVSKY'S HIGH SCHOOL N279 IN MOSCOW   1996-2000
Lyceum class

MOSCOW STATE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY "STANKIN"   2000-2005
Information Technology (Bachelor)

MOSCOW STATE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY "STANKIN"   2005-2006
Information Systems and Technologies (Engineer)

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU   2008-2011
Public Relations (Master, but not fully finished, my thesis is still waiting for me)

Work experience in Estonia (rather projects than regular jobs)
I'll just list my bigger projects here. In general: Web Development, E-Commerce, SEO, PPC.

OPTIM TECHNOLOGY – SEO STARTUP   2009-2013
My work: All technical work
Pay-for-TOP10 SEO company, company started in Estonia and expanded to Northern Europe. Service
was based on some methods that due to the changes in Google's algorithms didn't last forever.

E-COMMERCE STARTUP (GARDEN BUILDINGS)   2014-2017
My work: Web developer, SEO, PPC
hansagarten24.de, summerhouse24.co.uk and other shops. Helped the startup to become profitable.
Worth highlighting as big & successful, up & running examples among my projects. Their
recommendation (from R. Alt) is available in LinkedIn.

CLEVERHAUS – ANOTHER E-COMMERCE STARTUP   2018-2020
My work: All technical work, SEO, PPC
Technically better than previous. However, due to the pandemic and problems with the factory this
project became too risky and was stopped. How it looked like: optim.ee/cleverhaus

OPTIM TECHNOLOGY 2.0   2020-2021
An attempt to restart an old project in the new niche: rare & interesting advertising solutions.
However, not very successful.

Work experience in Russia

FORMOZA GROUP   2002
Installer of computer classes in educational organizations

ESTONIAN EMBASSY IN MOSCOW   2003
Visa Officer

FREELANCER   2004-2008
~10 customers, Web Development, SEO & PPC
Continued working with some of these customers after moving to Estonia until ca. 2011-2013

MOSCOW STATE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY "STANKIN"   2006
Engineer-Programmer

Professional skills

Usability (I'm good at it; UX was always a part of my work in different Web projects)
SEO
PPC (Google Ads, Social Media, Russian systems)
E-Commerce
HTML, CSS, PHP, SQL, C++, JavaScript (still, not a professional coder)
WordPress + WooCommerce, other CMS platforms
Some experience with image processing software
Some knowledge in psychology
Strong analytical skills

Languages: ESTONIAN (native speaker), RUSSIAN (native speaker), ENGLISH

Hobbies: Geeky things from philosophy to cosmology.

I have an INTJ personality type, MBTI says that I'm "Mastermind", but Socionics says that I'm "Analyst" (that's more correct). **Natural analytical skills!**
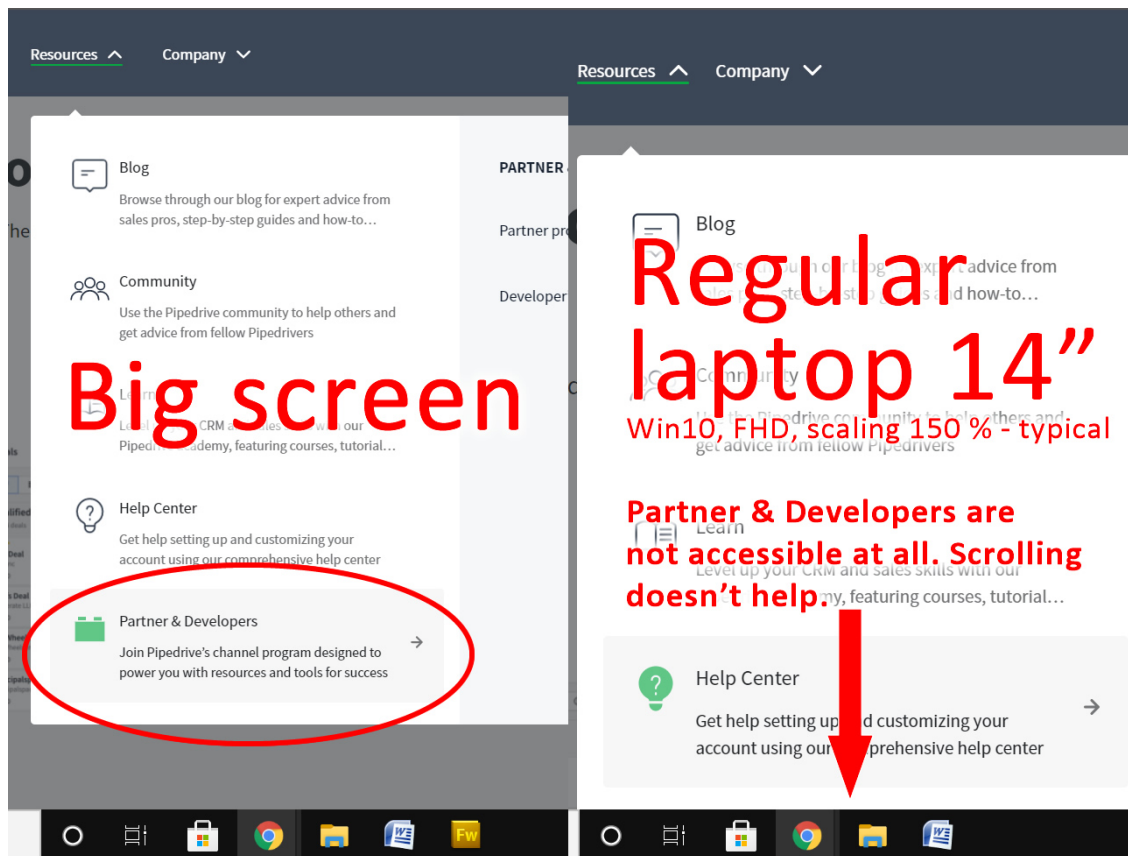

See my suggestions for Pipedrive and expert's opinion about these suggestions below…

A QUICK PROOF…

*...that **Pipedrive** still needs good UX specialists.*

1. Website's menu

This should never happen on a billion-dollar project. Website's menu wasn't properly tested on a regular laptop.

POWERFUL IDEAS FOR PIPEDRIVE

These three ideas may require a lot of work, not just tuning something.
However, these could be also extra effective for the growth of your business.

2. Instant access to a demo account

A good idea is to **provide instant access to a demo account (1-2 clicks)**. Whatever reasons Pipedrive had not to do it till now, but it should be super-effective for gaining new customers:

- On a competitor's website users are still thinking whether they should sign up or not. Also, there are tens of competitors and it's a huge amount of work to sign up everywhere.

- On Pipedrive's site they will be already exploring the software, being 1 step ahead in a "pipe" (higher probability of converting into Pipedrive's customers).

- **UPDATE:** If you want a good example of a demo access being organically combined with a regular "Try it free" button: promopult.ru – see a small modal window at bottom-left (on Desktop). It invites you to check out the demo account (well, they should add clearly visible buttons like "Exit demo mode" & "Sign up" inside the demo account & do more tuning, but these are details). Btw, a full demo mode is technically hard to do, but a read only demo access is technically very easy.

3. Local times for interstate/international sales

Many salespeople sell to other states/countries, but Pipedrive doesn't show local times of contacts (current time and for future events). It's hard to plan calls without knowing local times, there are 6 time zones in the US and many more worldwide.

Adding such functionality will make Pipedrive more suitable for this target group than competing Sales CRMs. More users. More profit.

## 4. Themes & a choice of visual style at set-up

It even sounds trivial, but people have different emotional preferences, for some something like black-grey-green is perfect, but some prefer a more emotional style like stripe.com (but some other people will think that's "too much").

A visual look is an important "addictive" factor that affects a choice of a CRM, especially if competing against CRMs with similar functionality. So, giving a choice between two styles on set-up (let's keep it simple) with a note that more themes are available in settings is an idea that directly increases the number of users and profit.

BASIC USABILITY

5. Website's menu - 2

A very basic usability issue, as we are talking not about some complex software like CRMs, but about very basic principles of navigation on any website.
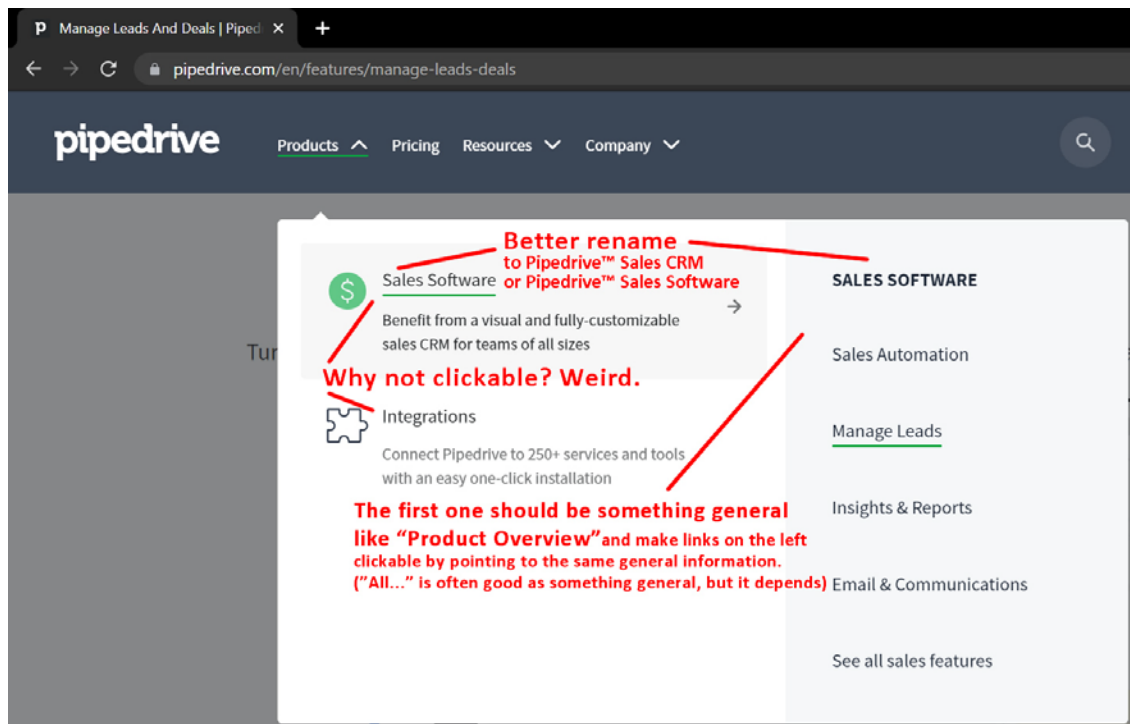
6. Main idea/purpose

According to usability, you should communicate the main idea/purpose of your website/software from the beginning. Basically, just write "CRM" or (even better) "Sales CRM" somewhere in the beginning of your home page.

UPDATE: I see changes in this, maybe someone (finally) reads my emails or maybe (more likely) tests/feedback showed a variant with "CRM" to be better, but my suggestion was true.


Even if most of your visitors are aware of what it is, there are a lot of visitors who are not aware that Pipedrive is a Sales CRM and it is important to tell them that. Currently they have to scroll down or go to the menu to find out what it is, which is not good according to usability.

REGULAR USABILITY

7. Software's menu

As the best usability experts suggest, an ideal interface should be understandable at the first look...
It's not always possible to make everything that simple, but the main menu is for sure one of the
most important elements to be tuned wisely:

- Pipedrive's logo in the menu looks like a standard element in navigation, but it just redirects
  elsewhere. It's like having 8 tabs opened in Chrome, all behave normally, but the first one
  redirects to some other tab – that's confusing for a regular user.
- The solution is to make **logo or its background** visually different, so it won't look like other
 elements in the menu.
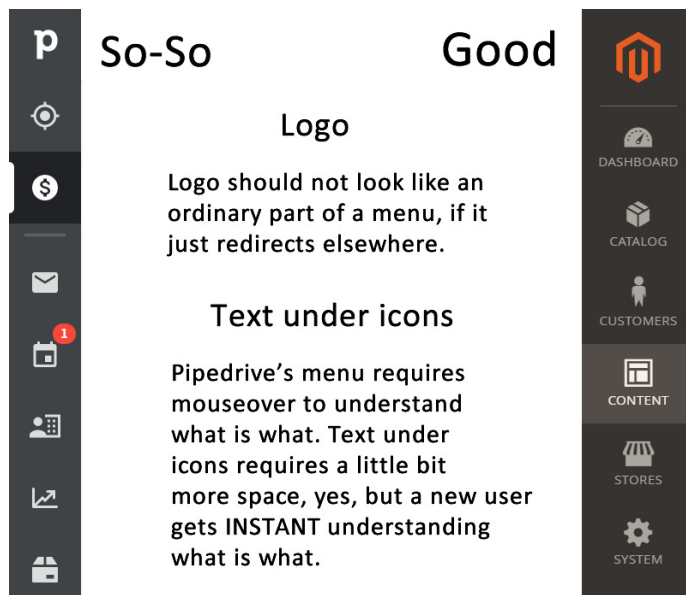
- Adding text under icons gives an instant understanding of what is what. It may require some
  extra pixels, but it's worth it.
- Yes, there could be issues with other languages (too long words). You may keep the current
  style for such languages, but it's not the reason to avoid tuning your main (English) version.
- Yes, a compact/minimal menu may even look better for an experienced user, but not for a
  new one. Basic principle of usability is „Don't make me think" and the current menu
  unfortunately makes me think.
- **A good variant is to introduce an option to „collapse/expand" this menu, this allows to
  combine versions for both new and experienced users.** Btw, users often prefer an expanded
  variant even if a collapsed one is available (unless extra screen space is needed).

8. Activities

In activities I expected to see a list of 1) **WHEN** and 2) **WHAT** in chronological order. I was able to
change the order of columns to get the desired result. But in default configuration date/time was at

the other end of the table and not visible (or maybe visible only on big screens). Was there some reason to use such default configuration? My variant seems more logical at the moment.

Activities - AFTER I changed the order of columns.
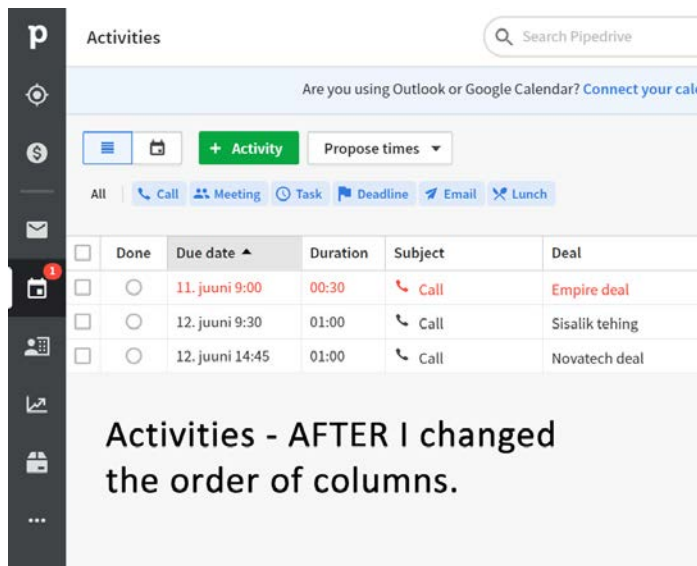
9. Tooltips

Pipedrive clearly needs more tooltips to suggest new users „what is what"or „what to do".

- In order to not overload the interface with regular tooltips, you may make some of these appear at the top/bottom/etc of the page.
- Such an approach also allows creating longer and more informative tooltips.
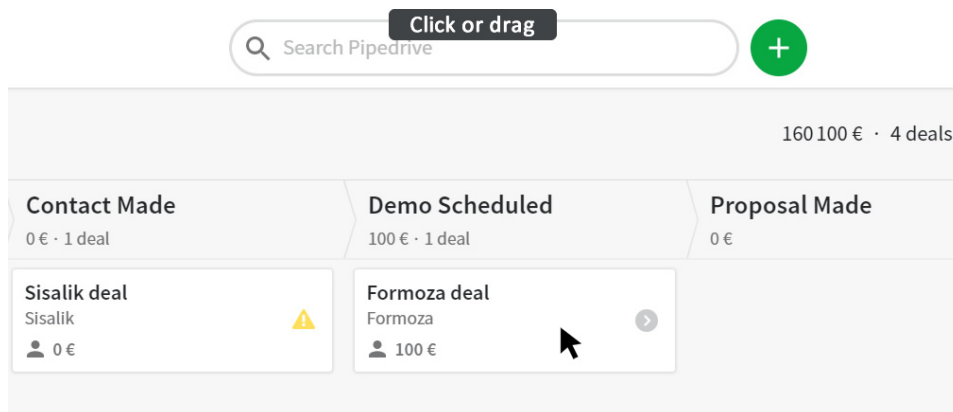
10. Back button

Technically I can use a browser's back button, but that's not obvious. It is common that a browser's back button may lead to „confirm form resubmission" and other errors in different web-based solutions, and software's own back button is often preferred by users.

It's very good to support a browser's back button, but for usability, your own back button will clearly make the interface more simple and understandable for new users.
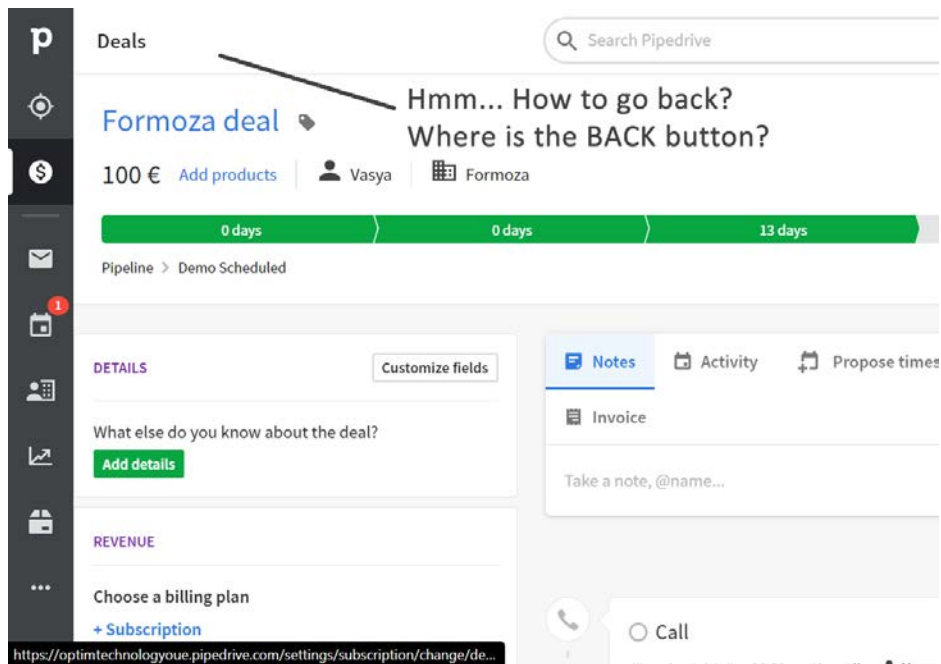
11. Expandable areas

Another good idea is to consider using „expandable/collapsible" areas. I'm not saying that it will be 100% suitable for Pipedrive, it needs a deeper analysis, but it's probably suitable.

It's a common usability technique in modern software; it reduces visual noise and makes everything easier. Also, a user may keep everything expanded.
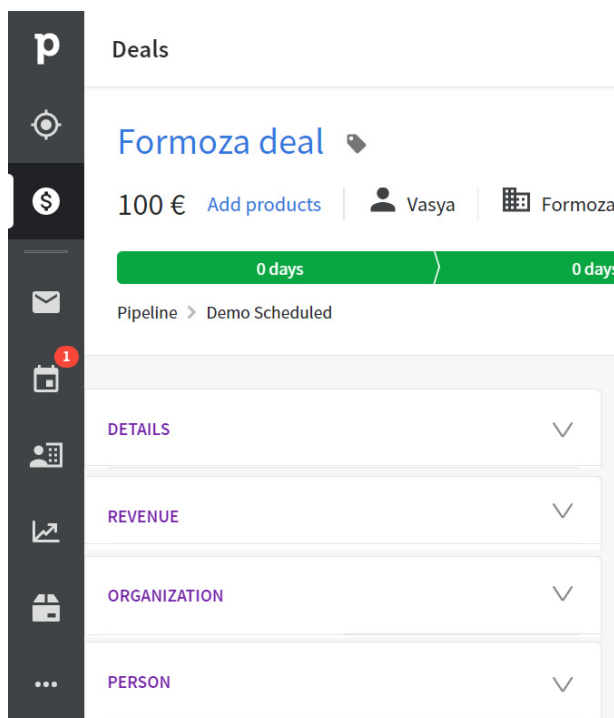
12. Sales Assistant

- Very important usability issue: https://youtu.be/EtbAUpb4ycY (40 seconds)
- Also, assistance with planned activities requires more tuning in general.
- Nice idea for Sales Assistant etc: add a clock (current time). There's a clock in Windows/Other_OS, but it's far away on a screen (more eye movements, less comfortable).

Yes, I already have more things on radar, too…

For example, I saw complaints about too much scrolling when there are many things inside deals – I already have some ideas for this. And there are more things to fix or improve…

Thanks!

Maybe you have already considered something from this list and please note that I'm not criticizing - **I'm just showing my skills in usability** and it took time to figure out what can be improved in the system.

See expert's opinion about my suggestions on the next page…

TOP EXPERT'S OPINION ABOUT MY SUGGESTIONS

Steve Krug <skrug@sensible.com>   P, 29. aug 01:08 (13 päeva eest)

saajale mina

He is a top expert - try googling "usability best sellers" - just answering me already means something.
TAKE A LOOK AT THE HIGHLIGHTED PARTS

Aivar…

I'm sure you've been checking your email constantly, hoping for word from me. I've been there myself, and I didn't want to keep you hanging.

But unfortunately, you handed me my worst-case-scenario: an email from someone asking for a favor that *seems* reasonable--so I feel like I'm not being a good guy if I don't do what they're asking for—but that's really hard for me to do. It's the kind of email that sits in my inbox forever, haunting me, because I don't know how to respond, for a number of reasons:

1. It's difficult for me to put in a good word for you, because I don't know you. I've always stuck to a policy of only recommending people I know. In fact, I'm not on LinkedIn specifically because for me it would amount to hundreds of people asking me to implicitly "recommend" them by adding them to my network.

2. You say "a couple words from you could help in getting their attention" but apart from recommending you I have no idea what the "couple words" from me would be. Me saying that usability is important? (They don't need me to tell them that.) It seems like only a recommendation would help, and I can't do that.

3. I actually did read your suggestions and look at their site, and the suggestions are good (although probably not things they haven't already thought about themselves) and show effort and initiative on your part but… (See next few points.)

1. Top expert's opinion about my work (my skills): "the suggestions are good"
2. Probably they have already considered, don't have the resources etc -
he doesn't know that; this is not about my work; probably he wrote this to make all look not like a direct recommendation. Still, <u>my work</u> got approved!

4. One of the things I learned a long time ago:

   People almost never appreciate unsolicited advice, matter how good it may be.

   I used to offer it occasionally, and in my entire career there was only one case where it was appreciated. (The New York Times thanked me for a suggestion, and made the change that same day.)

   You have to understand that there's a lot going on internally at almost any organization. They're probably already seriously overextended, and have more on their plate than they can handle. They have tons of changes they'd like to make, but they don't have the resources—or support from above--to make them. And the fact is, they've usually already thought about the things you're suggesting, and there are reasons why they can't do them.

5. I don't know how you worded your email(s) to them, or what you're looking for from them (I assume you'd like it to be an entre into working for them), but it matters. So here's some unsolicited advice on offering unsolicited advice:

   - Be humble and helpful. Nobody likes some smartass suggesting they know how to do their job better than they do. Consider phrases like "You clearly do an excellent job, and have probably considered some of these things already." Avoid praising your own ideas with words like "Supereffective," "Powerful ideas," and "extra effective." If you're looking for a job, the quality of your advice is important, but you also have to come across as somebody they'd want to work with.

   - Sound like a fan; praise them. Make it clear that you're only making suggestions because they're clearly a market leader and do a lot of great UX/UI work, not because they're a train wreck in need of your help.

Sorry I can't be of more help; I know how hard it is to break into the business. All I can say is, keep trying; you'll get there.

Steve

Steve Krug   Advanced Common Sense
skrug@sensible.com

This is the absolute maximum that I (or anyone) can get via e-mail.
They really have a policy of not giving loud & clear recommendations for people from the internet (otherwise they will be overloaded with these requests).