



Dustin Franklin

Marketing Intern

Blue Bird Corporation

402 Blue Bird Boulevard
Fort Valley, GA 31030

Supervisor: Erin Lake

Manager of Marketing

Internship Dates: 23 May 2011 – 31 October 2011
Presentation Date: 23 September 2011

COUNT ON BLUE BIRD



23 September 2011

Technical Communication Department
Mercer University
1400 Coleman Avenue
Macon, GA 31207

Attention: Dr. Helen Grady, Department Chair

Subject: Letter of Transmittal

In accordance with the requirements of the Mercer University Technical Communication department, I am submitting my Final Internship Report and Portfolio for TCO 498.

My report details the internship I held with Blue Bird Corporation from May 23, 2011 through September 23, 2011, in Fort Valley Georgia. My responsibilities and learning objectives are detailed in the report. This report describes my personal growth and experience that I gained during my internship. Additionally, I have provided an evaluation of my work based upon my own reflections and observations. I have attached my daily blog to illustrate what I did on a day-to-day basis. Finally, I have made recommendations to the department that I believe could help improve the TCO curriculum.

I would like to acknowledge my manager, Erin Lake, along with the rest of my co-workers at Blue Bird for all of their help and guidance this summer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dustin Franklin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Dustin" on the first line and "Franklin" on the second line, which is slightly higher.

Dustin Franklin



Final Work Report

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Executive Summary

Beginning May 23, 2011 through the date of presentation, I have been working as an intern in the Marketing Department at Blue Bird Corporation in Fort Valley, Georgia. This report details how I obtained the internship, the learning objectives for the internship, and the responsibilities I held. Additionally, I will describe my experiences in a corporate work environment and will provide recommendations to the students and faculty of the Technical Communication Department at Mercer University.

Introduction

Finding the Internship

I technically started looking for an internship in January of 2010 in order to obtain an internship per the TCO graduation requirements. Because of the economic situation at the time, I was very worried about finding an internship that met all of the TCO requirements — especially 40 hours/week, paid. Many of the positions I applied for had been paid positions in the past, but were no longer. In fact, I interviewed with a former Mercer TCO student for a position at Collinson Media in Norcross, Georgia, but was later informed that they could no longer offer a paid internship, so I had to look elsewhere. By mid summer of 2010, I had still been unsuccessful in securing an internship, so I had to wait until the following year to try again.

I started applying for a summer 2011 internship late in 2010. There wasn't a lot being posted at the time, but by the following spring, more positions became available. At the end of March I applied to DHL and Blue Bird. Both have had interns from the TCO department from Mercer in the past. I interviewed at DHL and went through the most informal interview yet. My interviewer wasn't the one in charge of hiring and didn't have much to say or ask. I showed up in a suit and tie, he was wearing torn jeans and a T-shirt. I didn't have a good feeling about that experience! A couple weeks later, I applied for the Blue Bird internship. This interview was much more professional and went much more smoothly. When it was all said and done, I had sent out more than 20 applications with resumes.

Interview

I set up a face-to-face interview with Erin Lake at 1:00PM on a Thursday (I opted to take the first available interview time) in the Career Services department at Mercer. I spoke with Erin for 30 minutes and we discussed all that was needed in the internship, what I had to offer Blue Bird, and what I expected to get out of the internship. I felt MUCH better about this interview than the DHL interview, and Erin said I would be contacted the following week.

I sent Erin a follow-up email, thanking her for the interview and said I would be interested in an on-site interview. She invited me down to Fort Valley, Georgia the following week where I met with her and Matt Rinderle. During my on-site interview, she outlined some of the projects I would be working on, if I were hired. She also said that it was no issue that I needed a week and a half off for my wedding and honeymoon, and that that would have no



bearing on her hiring decision. This was a relief for me as this was something that my (now) wife and I were concerned about. Fortunately, I received a phone call from Erin the following week saying that I'd gotten the job. Needless to say, I was quite ecstatic!

Company Overview

Albert Luce built Blue Bird #1 in 1927, one of the first school buses to utilize steel construction. In 1935, the first dedicated school bus plant opened in Fort Valley, Georgia under the name Blue Bird Body Company. Blue Bird is now under the Traxis Group; B.V. Traxis is a sub-company under Cerberus, the same investment company that owns Chrysler, Dodge, and Jeep.

Blue Bird is the only company in the school bus industry that is all-purpose built. Meaning that all they build are school buses.

Blue Bird Corporation offers a complete line of Type A, C and D school and activity buses in a variety of options and configurations. For over 80 years, Blue Bird Corporation has continued to set industry standards with its innovative design and manufacturing capabilities. Today, Blue Bird has over 1,800 employees, a Georgia-based manufacturing facility and an extensive network of dealers and service-parts facilities throughout North America. Blue Bird's global presence can be seen in more than 60 countries through sales into Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East.

Setting and Work Environment

For my internship, I was responsible for the development and implementation for marketing endeavors for the sales and marketing department at Blue Bird. The marketing department is located in Fort Valley, Georgia. It is about a 40-minute drive from where I live. My work station is in the Marketing and Sales room with Matt Rinderle and 3 other people. It was very spacious and gave me room to spread out current initiatives and projects. I assisted with developing print and electronic marketing materials, collaborating on major marketing initiatives, participating in the launch of Blue Bird's latest product, updating the corporate website, and developing and implementing a social media strategy.

Narrative

The following narrative is a description of:

- The essential functions as the marketing intern at Blue Bird.
- The final deliverables that I produced.

Essential Functions

Marketing

- Organize documents and images into use for future product brochures
- Maintain and update corporate website
- Collaborate on marketing materials in both print and electronic format
- Review and update Sales Document information, including corporate Intranet site
- Aid in returning market inquiries
- Consult with Sales and Marketing Management on brochure layout
- Participate in major marketing initiatives such as product launches
- Distribution of marketing tools throughout Dealer organization

Additional Duties

- Interact daily with Sales and Marketing team, MIS, etc...
- Ability to handle a variety of assignments simultaneously and successfully
- Ability to work under deadline pressure

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

- Proficient in Adobe Creative Suite, including InDesign, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, & Illustrator (Required)
- Proficient in Microsoft Software, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook (Required)
- Thorough knowledge of Blue Bird business segments, products and systems
- Excellent oral and written communication skills (requirement)
- Positive interaction with co-workers and Dealers



Final Deliverables

During my 18 weeks at Blue Bird Corporation, I completed a considerable number of document updates, publications, website edits, and distribution material. A sampling of my projects is listed below:

- Web Banners
- Press Release
- Blue Bird E-Blast
- STN Flyers
- New Campaign AD's
- Blue Bird "Go Green" Logo
- Security and Ambulance Bus Brochure
- Social Media Strategy and Facebook Page Development
- All Dealer Meeting Flyers
- BBOND Updates
- Blue Bird Website Updates

Evaluation of Performance

Overall, I was very pleased with my performance this summer at the Blue Bird Corporation. I feel that I learned a great deal about the corporate environment. Based on the feedback I have received from Erin and my co-workers, I believe the work I did this summer was more than satisfactory. I also believe that my education at Mercer University had prepared me for the experiences I had, and the professional standards both the corporate world and TCO department hold.

Erin gave me a lot of freedom on the creative side and on timelines that were expected. She respected me as a person for my opinions and did not down play me just because I was an intern. I am grateful for the experiences she made possible for me.



Pros and Cons

Pros

- Working in a corporate environment
- Applying knowledge I learned at Mercer
- Being expected to produce
- Contributed to meetings
- Traveling to trade shows
- Not having to wear a suit every day, casual Fridays
- Pay rate
- Often laid-back environment

Cons

- Long drive to and from work
- Requires knowledge outside of standard TCO curriculum

Observation and Reflections

I have learned a great deal during my time here as an intern. I have furthered my understanding of design as well as my knowledge of the design software. This internship has also pointed out weaknesses and areas in which I need work.

Overall, I believe that the TCO department has done well in preparing me for this position, as well as life beyond this internship. The broad spectrum of the TCO program opens up many possibilities and opportunities. Prior to taking this position, I never would have considered Marketing to be an optional field in which to work; however, after working here for the past four months, I can see a great deal of relation between marketing and the principles taught in the TCO program.



Recommendations to the Department

I believe an internship requirement for the BSTCO degree is very beneficial and adds experience that you can equate to a real work environment. I feel that the TCO department has done a great job preparing me for the corporate environment; however, I do believe I can offer recommendations to the department and to future TCO students to improve both their experience, and the department as a whole.

Department

While I feel that TCO did an adequate job in teaching the basics of design principles, the instruction on the software was extremely lacking. The more recent version of Adobe Suite should be taught much more in depth. I took a number of courses regarding design and was only ever taught the basics of Photoshop and Dreamweaver. While I think that the E-Learning course was useful and is a good complement to Instructional Design, it should not take up the Advanced Multimedia spot. The AM course should be used to further explore the design software. If not for the extensive research and practice I did outside of the normal course load, I would not have been ready and would not have qualified for this position.

Students

If you were going to pursue a career in marketing, I would highly recommend a minor in marketing and/or computer science. Much of what I have done, as well as what I have seen in other marketing job postings, requires a solid background in computer science. I spent a great deal of time *hand coding* the Facebook page as well as sifting through code on the corporate website. Taking a few art courses outside of the TCO department would also be beneficial.

Regarding internships in general, make sure to be persistent, start looking early, and don't get discouraged if you don't find anything right away. Also, utilize the TCO faculty and Career Services staff! Career services will help you with your resume and will keep you notified about relevant job postings.



Internship Documents



Title

Dustin Franklin



May 2011

Heading

Report Template

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Social Media Strategy

Prepared by Dustin Franklin



26 May 2011

Overview

Thomas Built, IC Bus, Starcraft, and Blue Bird all have basic Facebook pages that include information from Wikipedia.org; none of the companies use Twitter pages. Thomas Built is currently the only one that also has a Facebook page (created Feb 2011) that is maintained by members of their company; it is updated daily. Of the bus company pages, it currently has the most followers with 585. They also use the page to "like" the business pages of some of their dealers as well as others, such as Cummins and America's School Bus Drivers which allows them to further branch out and put forward their company name.

Examples of the content they post include:

- Trivia questions pertaining to the industry (Every Tuesday)
- TBB History and pictures (old buses, etc; every Thursday)
- Photos of company events and expos
- Photos of employees at work/seminars
- News articles pertaining to the industry and/or to their company (i.e. Zero Waste to Landfill)
- Links to various parts of their company website (homepage, company store)
- A section on their company history (labeled "Milestones")
- A welcome screen (superfluous, in my opinion)

Goal

Our primary goal in expanding into social media networks is to extend our brand presence. To do this, we have to meet a number of objectives. These include:

- Build a page with interesting content in order to attract new members
- Seek out potential new members by linking to and posting on other relevant pages, groups, and forums
- Maintain and update our page so people will keep coming back
- Respond to any queries that people post in order to keep interest high and show people that we care

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Analysis

Usage	Thomas Built – Company Run	IC Bus – Fan Run	Starcraft – Fan Run
Created:	February 2011	March 2011	October 2010
Number of Followers:	585 (as of 26 May 2011 at 16:15)	50	25
Photos:	Posted at least weekly – Historic bus pictures are posted every Thursday. They also create photo albums for company events, expos, and road shows.	Posted monthly by followers	1; posted in October 2010
Videos:	Occasionally; links to videos on their website.	1	None
Frequency of Updates:	Daily; Updates include weekly trivia, weekly “historic bus image”, news articles, links to their website, links to their company store, and company updates.	Weekly; most updates are from users posting pictures of IC Buses they’ve seen.	None since shortly after the page was created.
Primary Uses:	Used to connect with and inform followers about various aspects of TBB: “Join the conversation as we talk about school bus safety, green buses, trends & news.” –from their page description.	Used for fans of IC Buses to post photos and discuss IC buses.	N/A

As of May 26, 2011, Thomas Built Buses is the only one of our competitors that is utilizing a social networking site – the others appear to be operated strictly by fans of their respective companies. Of the primary social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and LinkedIn), TBB is only using Facebook to promote their company.

Strategy

While some of our dealers and suppliers also have a presence in social media (in this case, Facebook), based on what I've seen the majority of the people that we would be communicating with would be bus drivers and bus enthusiasts. These people can be divided into two main sub-groups: those who have brand/company loyalty, and those who do not. One of the biggest advantages of utilizing a social media network is that it directly links us to the customers and gives us insights into what people are saying and thinking about our products. In order to reach this level of communication, however, we have to make people aware of our page's existence. One of the ways we can achieve this is by posting a link to our page on the appropriate forums, for example, the School Bus Fleet forums. Another method for expanding our presence would be to link our page to other industry pages (such as the School Bus Fleet page, Blue Bird Corporation Fans page, etc) via the "like" button. This will allow us to post information to each of these groups' walls, it will give us a greater presence in social media, and it will help us build our "fan base." This will also give people the sense of having a more direct line to the corporation which would energize our brand loyalists.

Recommendation

In researching our competitors pages as well as relevant forums such as those on the School Bus Fleet website, I have noticed that there has been a strong push towards social media in the past couple years. So much so that activity within the forums themselves has severely diminished. Based on the research I've done, I would recommend setting up a Blue Bird Corporation Facebook fan page. None of our competitors use Twitter, and I do not believe it would be necessary for us to do so as it requires more maintenance in order to be as effective as a Facebook page. While it would require significant information to launch the page and build a fan base, it would be relatively easy to maintain and update, which could be done once or twice a week as necessary. In following what has worked for our competitor (while trying not to mimic them entirely), we could include:

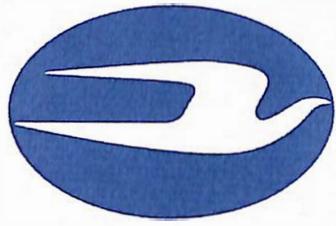
- Photos of Blue Bird events (both within the company as well as external events such as expos and road shows)
- Photos of Buses, both current and past/retro. There are a number of photos of historic Blue Bird buses on the network drive.
- Photos and/or photo album of buses as they move along the production line*
- Polls – Facebook allows for page administrators to create poll questions (i.e. "What is your favorite bus style?"). The application keeps track of polls statistics
- A section on company history
- Blue Bird in the news (provided it sheds a positive light on the company)
- Trivia and other random factoids
- Videos from YouTube – there are a number of videos concerning Blue Bird on YouTube. While these videos do not necessarily belong on the corporate website, a Facebook page would be an excellent place to utilize them.

*I'm not sure what Blue Bird's policy is on this

The trivia, photos of company events, and photos of historic buses seem to spark the most interest and responses from users. Thomas Built has "Trivia Tuesdays" and "Turn back the clock Thursdays." If we followed suit and put out a picture of an historic bus every week or two, we would have to differentiate ourselves from them. This could be done by using the tagline "Way Back Wednesdays" or "Throwback Thursdays," depending on which day is designated.

The thing we have to be most cautious about in setting up and running this page is that we don't want to over promote ourselves. We do not want people to feel like they are constantly sitting through a Blue Bird commercial. If that becomes the case, people will not return to the site and they certainly won't promote it themselves. Posting things like trivia, photos, videos, and relevant news articles will keep the page more interesting and at the same time it will keep the Blue Bird name out there.

This type of page could easily be maintained by two people. If given the green light to begin constructing this page, we could begin immediately.



BLUE BIRD

For more information, please contact:

Erin Lake
Marketing Communications Manager
Blue Bird Corporation
(478) 822-2578
erin.lake@blue-bird.com

For Immediate Release

BLUE BIRD DEBUTS FACEBOOK PAGE AND TWITTER ACCOUNT

FORT VALLEY, Ga. (August ##, 2011) – Press “Like” to become a Fan!

Blue Bird launches its corporate Facebook Fan Page! The page can be viewed at www.facebook.com/BlueBirdCorporation. Fans have access to Blue Bird’s history, news, and events as well as photos and videos. Blue Bird also adds Twitter to its social media repertoire. Follow Blue Bird on Twitter @BlueBirdBuses or text “follow @BlueBirdBuses” to 40404 to receive text message updates on your mobile phone.

In a continuously evolving social media environment, the Blue Bird Facebook page and Twitter are extensions of Blue Bird’s commitment to staying connected with customers and Fans.

For more information, visit:

www.facebook.com/BlueBirdCorporation

@BlueBirdBuses on Twitter

www.blue-bird.com

About Blue Bird:

Blue Bird offers a complete line of Type A, C and D school buses in a variety of options and configurations. For more than 80 years, Blue Bird Corporation has continued to set industry standards with its innovative design and manufacturing capabilities. Additionally, Blue Bird provides comprehensive financial solutions through Blue Bird Capital Services. Today, Blue Bird has more than 1,200 employees, Georgia-based manufacturing facilities and an extensive network of Dealers and service-parts facilities throughout North America. Its global presence can be seen in more than 60 countries through sales into Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East.

For more information, visit the Blue Bird Corporation web site at www.blue-bird.com.

#

Facebook Presentation

- Discuss the objective(s) of utilizing FB Pages (pull up Thomas Page)
 - Branding – Extending brand presence
 - Social Networking – Staying connected with customers and fans
 - FREE Advertising – Free advertising!
- Show Thomas Bus FB page
 - Welcome Page
 - Wall (recent photos at top, communicate daily, trivia, retro photos, respond to Q's)
 - Photos
 - Milestones (History) – Static Page, no interaction, no photos (aside from top)
- What did we accomplish/what are we trying to accomplish?
 - Branding w/in the FB parameters/guidelines
 - Limited design ability (520px window, not on every page)
 - COBB Bar on every page (where possible)
 - Interaction with customers/fans
 - Cannot post to wall/photos/comments/etc
 - Information on users' FB pages – users already on FB; open invite to BB Page

USE FACEBOOK AS PAGE TO GET RID OF ADS!!!



September 12, 2011

DEALER MEMO
11-38

MEMO TO: Blue Bird Dealers
FROM: Erin Lake
SUBJECT: **BLUE BIRD LAUNCHES FACEBOOK AND TWITTER**

Blue Bird is pleased to announce the launch of our corporate Facebook Fan Page.

The page can be viewed at www.facebook.com/BlueBirdCorporation. After clicking the "Like" button, you will have access to Blue Bird's history, news and events as well as photos and videos.



Blue Bird also adds Twitter to the social media repertoire. You can follow us on Twitter [@BlueBirdBuses](https://twitter.com/BlueBirdBuses) or text "follow @BlueBirdBuses" to 40404 to receive text message updates on your mobile phone.

In a continuously evolving social media environment, Facebook and Twitter are extensions of Blue Bird's commitment to staying connected with customers and fans. Feel free to contact Blue Bird Marketing should you have any questions.



Erin Lake
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JULY 2011

Blue Bird • Products • News



JOIN US
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OFFICIAL
UNVEILING
TUESDAY, JULY 26
STN EXPO
IN RENO

BLUE BIRD – THE LEADER IN PROPANE-POWERED SOLUTIONS

Blue Bird is pleased to unveil the Next Generation Propane-Powered Vision, powered by industry leaders, Ford and ROUSH CleanTech.

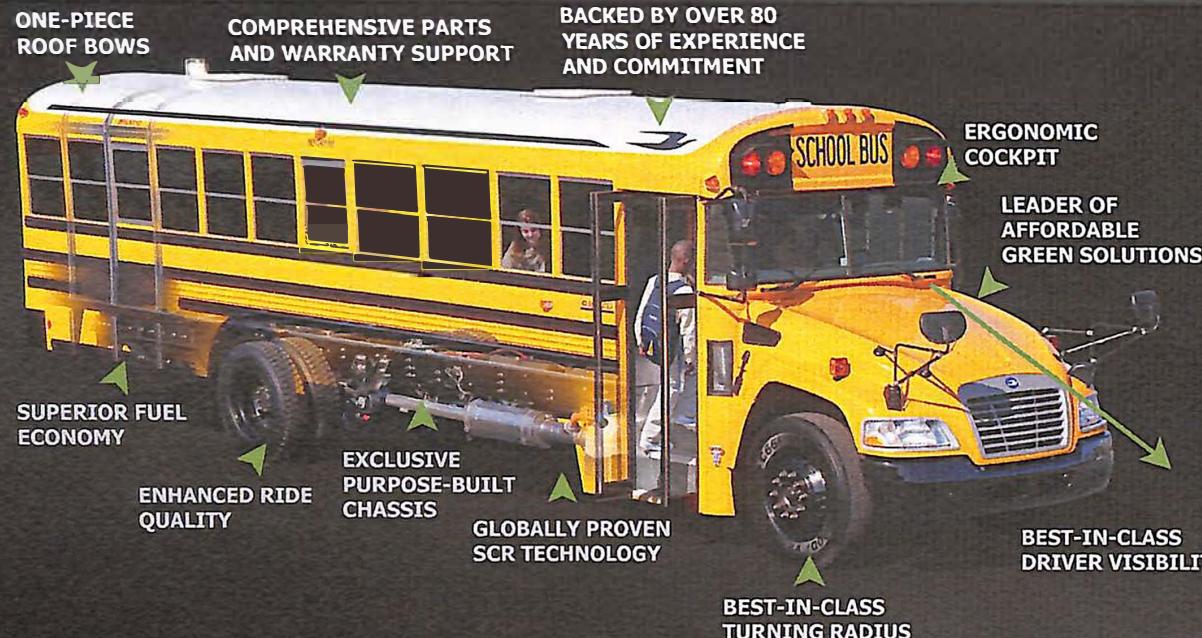


The Next Generation Propane-Powered Vision offers increased fuel economy, greater horsepower and torque, and the largest available fuel tank. Additionally, the Next Generation Propane-Powered Vision offers best-in-class serviceability and 5-year/100,000 mile engine and propane system coverage.

Next Generation Propane-Powered Vision Features

- ▶ 5-year/100,000 mile engine and propane system coverage. Maintenance can be performed at any authorized Blue Bird or Ford repair center
- ▶ ROUSH CleanTech's proven propane technology, backed by more than 35 years of engineering expertise
- ▶ Increased horsepower and torque
- ▶ Largest available fuel tank
- ▶ Ergonomic engine design with greater engine compartment space for easier maintenance access
- ▶ Most advanced fuel delivery system

To learn more, contact a Blue Bird Dealer in your area or visit www.blue-bird.com.



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FOR SMART SOLUTIONS THAT DEFINE THE DIFFERENCE



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Blue Bird thanks you for your dedication to
safely transporting Georgia's School Children



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SMART SOLUTIONS
THAT DEFINE THE DIFFERENCE



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For more information on Smart Solutions, contact an
Authorized Blue Bird Dealer in your area.

 blue-bird.com

Not all buses are created equal.

Blue Bird's Smart Solutions provide you, our customer, with the greatest advantage. From our best-in-class Driver visibility to the best-in-class turning radius—Blue Bird provides customers with Smart Solutions that further enhance our highest commitment to safety and reliability.

Blue Bird's Smart Solutions—experience the difference.



Blue Bird Welcomes You!

JOIN US TOMORROW IN THE **BLUE BIRD** BOOTH

MONDAY, JULY 11

7:00 am - 1:00 pm

- On display in the Nevada Exhibit Hall, Booth B - 2011 Blue Bird Vision
- Learn about Blue Bird **Smart Solutions** that **Define the Difference** and Blue Bird's **Next Generation Propane Technology** featuring industry leaders, Ford and ROUSH CleanTech
- Enter to win the Blue Bird grand prize - an Apple iPad!

12:30 pm

- **iPad** drawing held in the Blue Bird Booth. *Must be present to win.*



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FOR SMART SOLUTIONS THAT DEFINE THE DIFFERENCE



 blue-bird.com

BLUE BIRD

iPAD

Complete and bring to Blue Bird Booth to enter for your chance to win an **Apple iPad!** Drawing to be held at 12:30 pm. *Must be present to win.*

Prefix (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss)

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Company/Organization _____

Company Address _____

Job Title _____

Phone _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Yes, I would like to receive periodic e-mail updates from Blue Bird and/or my Blue Bird Dealer.

Yes, I would like to be contacted by a Blue Bird representative or dealer.



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WELCOME TO PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA

Nothing gives us more pleasure than sharing information about our wonderful county and the people, places and events that make it so special. Whether you're planning to relocate, open a business or just want to visit, we'll be glad to help. If there's anything you can't find on our website, feel free to visit us at the Troutman House. We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you in person!

The Chamber provides opportunities for all businesses and individuals who have a stake in Peach County. We believe business thrives in a healthy community with exceptional quality of life. The Chamber's major areas of work include promoting economic development within Peach County. Providing services to member businesses and organizing community events. The Peach County Chamber can help you save money, enhance your knowledge, gain visibility, influence your community and connect with others.



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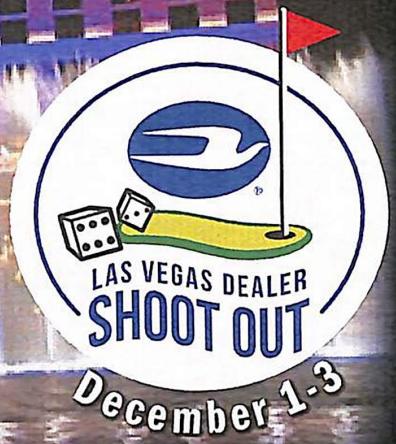


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KEEP AN EYE ON THE PRIZE—



NETWORK WITH KEY DEALER PERSONNEL AT THE 2012 BLUE BIRD ALL-DEALER MEETING



Wednesday, November 9, 2011
2:00-6:00pm

The Westin Beach Resort & Spa
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

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\$2500 Includes a 6-foot skirted table, directly adjacent to Dealer Registration

This event is a strategic opportunity to network with all **key Dealer personnel**— Dealer Principals, Sales Managers, Parts Managers, CFO's—in one location. Over 150 Dealer participants will be on-hand to network. Room rates start at \$159/night. Don't miss this opportunity—space is limited.

Contact your Blue Bird Regional Parts Manager (RPM) by October 31 to reserve your space.

Professional Log

box at the office, so I'll have something to eat tomorrow. Incidentally, my fiancée had a chicken dinner ready for me when I got home. All in all I'd say it's off to a good start.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 0: [T - 11:35:42]

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: May 26, 2011 8:03 PM

I start work in a few hours and I've spent the past few days refreshing my memory on the Adobe Creative Suite, among other things. I've also contacted Ms. Lake again to verify dress code, hours, and various procedural things. Out of all of the internships for which I applied, Blue Bird was the one I wanted the most; however, I admit that I am mildly apprehensive, given the hectic schedule that has been described to me. Task One will be trying to get on a regular sleep schedule.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

[Close this window](#)

be doing this summer. After our meeting, we had a brief lunch in at the office, where I was finally able to eat the lunch my fiancée packed me, and then we headed down to a presentation by the CEO and project managers. This was also fairly informal, to my surprise, as the CEO was a very down-to-earth kind of guy and kept everything light and entertaining. As it turns out, he and the COO will be cooking hamburgers for the entire company tomorrow. I have no idea how that's going to work since there are over 1400 employees, but it'll be interesting to see.

I forgot to mention the other two people in the office. To the right of my workstation is Ms. Monica Drexler. She is in charge of international sales. She is quite a character and is very outspoken. I don't know if she's realized yet that I also speak Spanish, but based on some of the conversations I've overheard (small office), I'd guess probably not. Come to think of it, I doubt it would make a difference! To the left of my workstation is Ms. Cindy; I can't remember her last name. Ms. Cindy has been at Blue Bird for 33 years and is also part of the sales team. She has been very helpful so far and has done a lot to make me feel welcome and comfortable.

I stayed until 17:30 today in order to finish my write up on a social media strategy. All Blue Bird employees have Friday off, so staying past 17:00 is optional for everyone. I also updated my notes on the corporate website and briefly discussed some of my ideas with Ms. Lake. Matt printed out a map of the website for me, but the map is of the original site layout from 2008 and hasn't been updated. When we begin revamping the website, I'm going to suggest remapping it as well, time permitting.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 1: 23 May 2011

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: May 26, 2011 8:05 PM

First day at work! Blue Bird employs over 1400 people at its Fort Valley plant, so parking is... scarce. Although I arrived at Blue Bird sufficiently early, I didn't not make it to the front lobby until 8:02. This worked out in the end because I had to wait for Ms. Michelle Frizzel, the HR rep, who didn't arrive until 8:35. I would just like to point out the magical irony of someone named Ms. Frizzel working for a company that makes school buses - this epiphany made my morning. After filling out a mound of paper work, I had to go down to medical for my drug screening. I probably should have been expecting them to administer a drug test, but didn't think about it during my morning preparations and, suffice it to say, I had to wait quite a while drinking lots and lots of water before I could take the exam. All of the hard work and preparation paid off though as I passed with flying colors. Initially I was made an ID card that would grant me access to the building, but the system was malfunctioning, so now I have to wait until Wednesday for that.

After two hours of waiting, paper working, drug testing, and more, I was FINALLY ready to begin work. I sat down with Ms. Lake to hash out a few things and go over some of the projects I'd be working on. The first thing she mentioned was a redesign of the brochure for their security buses. This became self-evident when she showed me the brochure and everyone in it had a giant mustache. In looking at the back cover, it turns out the last time the brochure was updated was 1989. My initial tasks, however, are going to be to research and develop a social media strategy and to familiarize myself with the company website.

My workstation is much, much more spacious than I was expecting and I have my own computer (w/ dual screen monitors), company email address, and telephone extension! As the day went on and I was getting things set up in my office space, Rinderle handed me a copy of the contact information for everyone at Micro Bird, a division of Blue Bird. As it turns out, Micro Bird is headquartered in Quebec. Looks like all of those French classes I took just for fun are actually going to pay off!

My fiancée was adamant about packing a lunch for me on my first day of work and, with virtually every penny we have spent on our wedding, finding something in the house to pack for a lunch was quite the task. I ended up having a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, club crackers, and muskmelon (cantaloupe). As it turns out, Ms. Lake decided to take me and Matt out to lunch since it was my first day. So I had Mexican instead. It all worked out though because I forgot my lunch

During the meeting yesterday, Ms. Lake outlined a number of things for me to do - mostly little tasks like organizing folders on the network and pulling the background off of the existing brochures to use in the new ones. I started by organizing the folders and then sought out to pull the background off of one of the flyers. The task sounds simple enough, and if you saw how many Photoshop files there were on the network, you'd think it'd be a piece of cake... but you'd be wrong! Turns out Blue Bird has had a number of interns, all of whom had their own ways of doing things. The most recent intern (not Rinderle), had a nasty habit of "Flattening" ALL of his Photoshop images and did not save any of the original background files. (Un)fortunately for me, he was also the one who designed the previous flyers. After hours of delving through network files and coming up empty handed, I concluded that trying to find a PS file that wasn't flattened and/or trying to find the original background file was futile (just to note, I did ask around about the background before wasting so much time!). So I developed a way to create a new background file using the existing images. Since all of the flyers used the same background but not all buses are the same size and neither were they oriented the same, the flyers could be overlaid, one on top of the other, and then each layer could be erased little by little, exposing the most possible amount of background. The new bus image would then just be placed on top of what remained of the old, covering it completely. I explained my plan to Rinderle (which took some time since English is not my forte...) and then set about to do just that. Much to my dismay, I realized that the images I had found that would make this possible were low resolution and could not be used, so it was back to the drawing board. Fortunately (I guess), at about this same time Rinderle returned from Ms. Lake's office and informed me that she had decided that she wanted a different background anyway, so my efforts were all for naught!

After lunch, I resumed work on fine tuning my Social Media Strategy and sent it in at the end of the day. I don't think I've ever been quite that apprehensive about hitting the "Send" button...

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Welcome to the corporate world

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: HELEN M. GRADY

Date: May 31, 2011 11:41 AM

Dustin, sounds like you are off to a good start. I know it was a short work week for you and that you will be gone next week. Hope that your wedding day was all that you hoped for and that you are enjoying your honeymoon. Congrats!

I look forward to more entries when you return.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 2: 24 May 2011

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: May 26, 2011 8:07 PM

Today I felt much more confident, despite leaving earlier for work, still getting a horrible parking spot, and still just barely making it by 8:00. I was, however, the second one there (out of six of us), so I don't feel too bad about it! Today I went straight to work on typing up a basic proposal regarding our social media strategy. I had taken extensive notes on sticky notes and placed them on my computer monitors yesterday so I could jump right in today. Using the sticky notes helps me keep things organized and helps me visualize the flow of whatever document I'm working on. They also draw my attention and make it quite impossible to forget things! As I complete a task, I just remove the sticky note and go on to the next. I also use the sticky notes program on Windows 7 to help me prioritize (you can change the color of the note and I have my own color code for things). I spent more time analyzing our competitors social media outlets and developing a plan for Blue Bird. I also read through forums that are used by school bus enthusiasts (I had no idea there was such a thing) to get some ideas as to what people were saying about the company and what sorts of things they'd like to see. I had my first conference today (the contents of which I'm not permitted to discuss) with Matt, Ms. Lake, and Rusty (head of sales and walking bus database). It was rather informal, but it was still interesting and helped me get a feel for some of the things I'll

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)**Comments****1 Author:** HELEN M. GRADY**Date:** June 9, 2011 4:37 PM

Dustin, welcome back to the working world! Hope that you had a relaxing honeymoon. I understand Jamaica is beautiful. Sounds like you are fitting in well at Bluebird. No more calling your mom...now you need to call your wife. :)

Subject: Day dontMatter: Somethin thru Somethin Else**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** June 8, 2011 2:11 AM

Jamaica is awesome and I may not come back

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 4: 26 May 2011**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** June 8, 2011 1:07 AM

Best. Hotdog. EVER! Okay maybe second best (the first being from a hotdog stand next to Sweet Melissa's Pizza in Savannah, but that's entirely irrelevant). Everyone at work got a hamburger, a hotdog (that's right, BOTH), a bag of chips, and a coke for lunch today. And when I say everyone, I mean all 1400 of us! And the CEO and COO really were out front grilling them, with some help of course.

It just occurred to me that the phrase "down hill" has both positive and negative connotations... English is a silly language...

After lunch, the day was all down hill (the good kind). I used my preliminary SMS report to design and develop a template in MS Word, which I'd never done before and is quite handy! This will make future report-writing go more smoothly. Ms. Lake asked me to add an analysis of our competitors fan-operated sites as well (I had focused primarily on the outlets that were maintained by our competitors themselves in my preliminary report). Once I finished this, I submitted the final report, which Ms. Lake said was "great work." I won't outright say that I called my mom to tell her that my boss praised my work, but I won't deny that claim either.

I still don't have CS 5 on my computer and still no luck with resetting my voice mail, but so far, I haven't really needed either.

At around 14:45, Ms. Lake came in to check on us and just out of the blue decided she was going to buy us ice cream since today is effectively our Friday! Towards the end of the day, Rusty started playing entirely wedding themed music on his computer. Why on earth he has THAT many wedding songs at the ready, I'll never know. This was of course in honor of my up coming wedding, since this is the last time everyone will see me before I get married and go on my honeymoon. That said, this will be the last post for a while too! The day ended with us gathered around Rinderle's computer watching Family Guy, hanging out around the office listening to wedding songs, and just plain celebrating a busy yet successful week. Suffice it to say, we went home a little early. I have of course been assured that, while Fridays are more laid back, this sort of thing is not the norm! Still, it's a great way to end my first week at Blue Bird (and my last as a bachelor)!

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 3: 25 May 2011**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** June 8, 2011 12:37 AM

Got my days mixed up - turns out the cook out will be TOMORROW, not today. Fortunately, I had forgotten that I originally thought that it was today and brought my own lunch anyway, so I'm all set on that front.

frames, unless you paste it and do away with all formatting altogether. I decided working with the frames would take slightly less time, so I just dealt with it. I finally got a hard copy of the style guide though, so that was good. And when I send the memo back, ERIN told me I could call her "Erin" which was exciting and relieving, given the generally casual atmosphere around the office.

I also figured out that you can directly link Facebook and Twitter so that every time you update your FB page, it automatically updates your Twitter page, and vice-versa. This makes maintaining the two much easier (since you really only have to maintain one) and expands our potential contacts. This also means we don't have to go through a 3rd party platform like Tweetdeck, which updates everything simultaneously. I went over some things with Erin and explained the trouble I was having w/ the network connection and that that was drastically slowing me down. She had mentioned that we would be discussing other projects this week so I asked if there was anything else I could be working on as well so that I could be more productive and she said that because of their schedule this week they couldn't start any other projects and that I could just focus entirely on the Social Media (we're getting ready to release info regarding Phoenix and... we'll say the Star Trek Technical Manual). But she said that as soon as they release the Star Trek Technical Manual, she'll be able to get a number of projects lined up for me.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 5: 06 June 2011

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 8, 2011 2:11 AM

Today was my first day back after my wedding and honeymoon (both of which were a blast!). I was met with a flurry of emails from IT regarding a number of queries I had submitted. I have CS 5 now! They also reset my voice mail, so I'm officially extension 2216 and not "Roseline Ferrel." They did not, however, set up a password for me, neither did they tell my how to change it, so I'm still left with no access to it - but it's a start! I also had an email from Ms. Lake saying that she wanted for me to present my findings on my SMS later in the afternoon. In the meantime, she wanted me to "streamline" one of the graphics on the website because it was too "busy." I was very excited about this since it was really my first graphic design assignment since I've been working there. She said she wanted me to give it my own flavor and make it my own while at the same time making sure that one could easily recognize the ad from which it came (it was pulled directly from a flyer)... no pressure... My redesign can be seen on the corporate website (www.blue-bird.com) in the Flash slide show - it's the first page. The image is a bus on a black background with labels and little green arrows pointing to corresponding points on the bus. The original contained both technical and company information. For example, one arrow pointed to the BB logo on the bus and read "Over 80 years experience" while another pointed to the windshield and read "Ergonomic View". I decided to remove all non-technical data and space out the remaining arrows to thin it out a bit. I also reworked the gradient, re did the text and the improved the color scheme, etc, etc, etc. Ms. Lake came in to check on my progress and gave me the go-ahead to put it on the site once I was done. This would require a system called Ektron, which is what is used to update the site. Of course that meant putting in another request with IT, so... who knows. In the mean time, Rinderle showed me a roundabout way to get files put on the site, which will work for simple things like image swapping.

The meeting with Ms. Lake went well and she asked me to research our dealers' Facebook pages, if they had them, to see how they used them and how many followers they had. She said she wanted to actively pursue a Social Media Strategy and asked me to come up with a timeline for developing a Facebook page. After the meeting she asked how the redesign was coming and was pleasantly surprised to hear that it was already live and said that it was "much better" than the other one and to keep up the good work - another call to mom!

Once I figured out that a Facebook page can be created and kept from going live until you are ready (much like a regular website), Ms. Lake gave me the go ahead to start developing it however I wanted, based on the notes I took during our meeting. I could have gotten a lot more accomplished on it, but my computer kept getting disconnected from the network some how and I kept having to start over!

saved me some panic, but c'est la vie! The redesign w/out the frames didn't take as long as I thought it would, so I'll know that for future reference. The rest of the day was spent delving through code so I could work on writing the custom pages (tabs) for our Facebook page, and so I could find where certain files that are on the BB website were located on our server. Later in the day, I got a call from IT, wanting to do a remote desktop in order to install Ektron on my machine so I could edit the corporate website. Since I couldn't use my computer during this process, I took the opportunity to familiarize myself with the corporate style guide - I'd found a digital copy regarding logo use on the network, but this was a complete guide.

Eventually, IT realized they weren't going to be able to get it to work remotely, so I went back to coding the Facebook page. I kept trying to think of a cool "Thing" that would differentiate us from our competitor's site and that would be more interesting for our users. I got to thinking that all of Thomas's custom pages (history, welcome, etc.) are entirely static; it's just text with a photo at the top. To set us apart, I wanted to add a degree of interactivity to our pages. For example, on our History page, I set it up so that the font color of the subject of each year is in the "Blue Bird Blue" color and when you mouse-over it, a picture pops up of that subject. The picture is outlined in the official "School Bus Yellow." This gives people the ability to see what the timeline is referring to while not cluttering the limited area (520px) with static images (thus unnecessarily spreading out each year, making it harder to follow).

Later on, Erin asked me to resize all of the pictures of the new propane bus. This would have taken some time, but Rinderle told me that PS has scripting in it that allows you to set a predetermined resolution and then provide a source and destination folder and it will run through and resize everything by itself. It took us a minute to figure it out (Google), but once we got it set up, it did 20 minutes worth of work in about 45 seconds. Back to coding... I finished out the day with a hefty bit of tech editing (one of my least favorite things to do, but... c'est la vie) of the brochures before they went to press. All in all a good day.

Erin took us out to lunch again where I accidentally created a bit of an awkward moment, but it seemed to go unnoticed by the rest; least wise it was brushed past quickly. Theme of the day: c'est la vie!

[Comments](#)

[Forward](#)

Comments

1 Author: HELEN M. GRADY

Date: June 17, 2011 4:00 PM

Sounds like the BlueBird IT folks cut from the same cloth as the Mercer IT folks. :)

Subject: Day 6: 07 June 2011

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 8, 2011 2:12 AM

Today was not my day! For starters, my card still doesn't work, so I still have to walk 27 million miles to the front entrance to get in the building and I can't clock in so I still have to manually keep track of hours and email HR at the end of the week. Still no voice mail access and now I don't even have to option to enter a password anymore; I'm completely locked out. The internet is STILL cutting in and out - literally at every 45 to 60 second intervals (ANOTHER email to IT) - which makes it quite impossible to get anything done (since all files I need are on a network drive) and at 08:15 a big ol' spider dropped down from the ceiling and landed right next to my hand on the pad I was writing on.

My main task in developing the FB page is coming up with an easily maintainable "Thing" that will keep people interested and make them want to come back to the site. My initial suggestions were turned down, or rather, were modified and while I understand and agree, it certainly doesn't make my job any easier! It wouldn't be as bad if the internet would at least work long enough for me to do research on some ideas, but alas! No such luck. Ms. Lake also had me re-brand a script that we got from a company (not sure the name has gone public yet, so we'll call them... Phoenix). Basically I just had to replace Phoenix's address and logo with our own. Simple enough, except that the memo we got was a PDF and when converted to a word doc it puts every paragraph in

unless you're only going to use Firefox, YOU'D BE WRONG! Of the four major browsers, FF is the only one that would recognize the borders as I had them. After much research, I found out that in order to make IE and the others put a border around an imbedded file (it's easy with a static image), you first have to cast that file as an object - which I tried - and then set up borders. After much much trial and error, I decided it wasn't worth it and set up another CSS sheet for browsers that are not Firefox. For this style sheet, all other browsers use a gradient for the background. While this isn't as good at dividing sections as the border, it's better than nothing and still looks good.

Still no Ektron...

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Comments

1 Author: Heather Rowland

Date: June 17, 2011 10:59 AM

You make me smile, Dustin. You sound just like the department here at DHL in your hatred of IE, except they sound resigned and you still are indignant. The joys of programming and the internet, in general. :)

2 Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 29, 2011 12:54 PM

lol thanks Heather! :-)

Subject: Day 8: 09 June 2011

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 14, 2011 11:58 PM

I wish the calendar date was shifted back one day so that my subjects would line up to read like - Day 8: 08 June 2011, but oh well.

Erin is gone today and will be tomorrow and asked me to focus entirely on the Facebook page, which is a good thing since I hit a bit of a snag with coding the site (and since I still don't have Ektron on my computer). To put it simply, Firefox rocks my face off and Internet Explorer should die. And upon further review, so should Safari and Google Chrome. I don't have a whole heap of a lot of experience coding HTML by hand (BY HAND!), but it's pretty straight forward and follows many of the same principles of the languages that I AM familiar with. Firefox reads the code and displays it EXACTLY as I would expect it to (obviously, since I coded it). Unfortunately, it's the only one!!! My problem with it is because of the limited 520px width that I'm given to work with on FB. When the images pop-up on the history page (mouse-over), they sometimes get cut off if IE tries to display them too far to the right. FF compensates for this and will shift the image as necessary, but none of the others do! I spent the majority of the day trying to remedy this.

Later on, we got a call from someone needing pictures of one of our activity Vision buses (the white Vision). So Matt and I set out trying to find one. The Blue Bird lot is much MUCH bigger than white Vision). It looks at first - Thank God for golf carts!!! Of the 600 some odd buses on the lot, we found ONE that qualified (only one other activity Vision on the lot, but it didn't have the rub rails painted) and that was at the FARTHEST end of the lot. And it was very hot out. Anyway, I was pretty sure for a while that we were gonna get to drive it forward for the picture, but one of us (the one that is not me) didn't want to take the remote chance of something going wrong, so someone came out to move it forward for us. Oh well. There's always tomorrow.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 7: 08 June 2011

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 14, 2011 11:39 PM

Today started off with an email from Erin regarding the script that I re-branded saying, "Come to my office. Let's talk about this." Fortunately she just wanted me to remove the frames from the document so it'd be easier to edit. I sorta feel that that could have been said in the email and

to the anchor associated with that link. The HTML works fine in all browsers, BUT Facebook loads everything on the internal frame and expands the outer frame, instead of having the scroll bar on the inner frame. Since the code is running on the inner frame, the anchor links don't communicate with the outer scroll bar, the NONE of the anchors work! If I can't solve this problem by COB tomorrow, I'll have to figure something else out. It's not an entire waste though because the code could be implemented on the company website and would be far FAR more efficient than the method that is currently in place. That was pretty much it for today: coding, coding, and more coding. I expect about the same tomorrow too. I did finally break down and start to use Dreamweaver for this part though. It was much MUCH faster than hand coding the names, addresses, phone numbers, and websites for all of our dealers... My cache of Mountain Dew is running low too. I shall have to remedy this.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 11: 13 June 2011

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 15, 2011 12:35 AM

More Facebook and coding today... I finally got everything working the way I want it to and it looks good! Erin asked me to add a "links" page that links to our website, as well as our partners' sites. She also said we'd be meeting to go over the site again today before we get ready to go live... no pressure...

I got a little bit more experience with InDesign today, modifying raffle cards for an upcoming trade show. I also went through the InDesign file that Matt created for the Options Brochure since I'm going to be creating the Options Brochure for the prison bus. Before the meeting, I took notes on the FB page as it stands, since Erin asked me to take her and Matt through it. I went through the Facebook Best Practice Guide to get some more ideas on how to optimize the usage of our site. I also noted some ideas that I was planning on pitching.

So! 15:30 rolls around and it's meeting time! We went through the site with a fine-toothed comb and I scribbled notes on changes that needed to be made and suggestions that Erin and Matt had. The meeting went very well and virtually all of my ideas were incorporated in some form or fashion. We decided to add a few more tabs to the page as well, and Erin wants to go live next week. She said that the site looked really great and that I was doing a great job! PHONE CALL TO... wife...?! She asked me to work on the changes and additions for the next couple of days. Should be pretty straight forward.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Comments

1 Author: HELEN M. GRADY

Date: June 17, 2011 4:00 PM

Call to wife first, then mom. :)

Subject: Day 9: 10 June 2011

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 15, 2011 12:14 AM

Jesusmaryandjoseph I HATE INTERNET EXPLORER!!! Again Firefox behaves exactly as one would expect and none of the others do! This time with something as simple as borders around an embedded file (swf, in this case). Fortunately I created a method that solves my problems. After coding the CSS for my page, I added code that basically says, "If this browser is NOT Firefox, use THIS style sheet!" and then wrote a separate style sheet for other browsers. For the History page, the new style sheet sets the image display to 'block' instead of 'inline'. In other words, the image will always appear to the left of the screen instead of above the linked text. It's not as cool looking, but it works.

In continuously looking for ways to attract people to our site and increasing interactivity, I decided to add a tab with virtual bus tours. The swf files already existed, so you'd think it would be as easy as resizing them to fit in the confined space and then separating them with a border, right? Well,

to the next beast to battle - FLASH.

Before I go on, I forgot to mention that I did not have internet access AGAIN this morning. Same problem, same solution, but every time I restart my computer, I lose internet and have to have IT remote desktop me! Moving on!

In the follow-up review of the Facebook site, Erin wanted to split the swf files of the interactive bus tours that I had posted. One is of the bus body, the other of the chassis (these were made by someone else and I decided to incorporate them on the FB page). The user switches between the two by clicking on a button on the bottom-left corner. I prefer it like this because it looks better to me, but unfortunately it's not my call. When she first asked me to do this, Rinderle and I shot each other a glance before he explained that doing so is rather "involved" and complicated, especially since we're not the original authors and would have to dig through the code of it in order to see where to split it. I told her I'd figure it out though. It ended up being one of the easier tasks I've had to do for this site! I still like the original design better, but it works the way she wanted it to, so that's good.

I spent the bulk of the day tying up loose ends on the site before Rinderle asked me to work on a couple of web banners for the STN and SBF websites. I'm glad I ended up getting the Dealer page to work, because Erin came in to check on my progress and that was the first thing she wanted to see. She was very pleased with the site thus far.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 13: 15 June 2011

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 20, 2011 12:29 PM

Well today was magical. It started off with more computer problems. Now my computer can access the intranet, but cannot go beyond that. After spending more than an hour on the phone with IT while they did a remote desktop (which is really cool btw), they finally got it working so I could access the internet and work on the website.

Erin was out sick today, so it was just me and Rinderle in the office. I made a list of all of our individual tabs on our Facebook page and noted what was left to do for all of them so I could check it off as I went along. By some miracle, the Dealer page started working the way it's supposed to! I guess it just needed a good night's rest. Come to think of it, so could I...

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Request for revised learning objectives

Author: HELEN M. GRADY

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 17, 2011 4:03 PM

Dustin, now that you have a few weeks under your belt, it's time to send me your revised learning objectives, deliverables, and Gantt chart. See the template on the Blackboard home page.

Looks like you are doing a great job. Lots of challenges and frustrations are to be expected. Welcome to the corporate world!

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 12: 14 June 2011

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 15, 2011 12:45 AM

Should have been pretty straight forward... I had suggested adding a tab that listed our Dealers which Erin liked. What I didn't consider is that we average 1 dealer per state, and that's just for stateside sales! There's also Canada and other international dealers that have to be included! I had an idea for organizing this that is straight forward and would work great, but unfortunately Facebook is stupid. I coded the Dealer page so that you can click on your state and then be taken

1 Author: Dustin Franklin**Date:** June 28, 2011 12:26 AM

Dr. G,

Will get those to you ASAP

Subject: Day 16: 20 June 2011**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** June 23, 2011 1:16 PM

Today was VERY Monday and started off VERY slow (which is not a good thing). Matt went to set up an Ektron account for me since IT never got back to me (after THREE tickets had been put in) and when he tried to log in, he got a message about a licensing error. Apparently this happens every 30 days now because IT never took the time to actually fix the problem. Anyway, this means we have no way to update the website. I finally heard back from IT about my voice mail and was finally able to go through the set up process with it. Unfortunately, it didn't remember my password and it erased the default so they had to reset it again and I had to go through the set up AGAIN. But now it works and I can actually access my voice mail AND I'm no longer just "Extension 2216", but Dustin Franklin.

I worked more on the web banners today and made a few variations to submit to Erin. Then at about 14:00, we got a call from HR that said they needed a banner to be made for the Dealer visit on Wednesday. It had to be 2.5' by 3' and say, "Blue Bird Legacy: Past Present Future" on it. That was literally all the instruction we got. The best part is that we had to have it submitted to the print company NLT 15:00 in order for them to be able to print it on time. Naturally this task fell on me. For reasons I will never fully understand, I decided to create the poster in Adobe Illustrator (InDesign was the correct answer here - Life:1, Dustin:0). I was frantically racking my brain for ideas, which I had lots of down time to do, since Illustrator kept crashing. This has only happened this consistently when we had a deadline that was rapidly approaching. We got it done in time though. At the end of the day, we had a meeting to go over stuff that is coming up. Meeting went well enough.

[Comments](#)[Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 15: 17 June 2011**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** June 22, 2011 1:10 PM

Erin was working from home today and Matt had the day off. It was pretty slow over all. I had computer problems AGAIN this morning. They usually get it fixed right away, especially since they know that it happens every day, but the guy that usually does it wasn't here today I guess and it ended taking a couple hours for them to get it working right - Erin was... displeased. I tried to remain as productive as possible by doing stuff around the office until they fixed my computer. On the bright side, when they finally did fix it, it stayed working this time, so hopefully there won't be as many issues in the future. After this I went back to work on the banners and Erin wanted me to work on a Dealer page for the corporate website as well, since right now the zip code search can take anywhere from 3 to 5 minutes to find the results - it's not indexed. Slow day overall.

[Comments](#)[Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 14: 16 June 2011**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** June 22, 2011 1:00 PM

Well the Good Lord giveth and the Good Lord TAKETH AWAY! Apparently my Dealer page was up all night partying or something because it's back to being worthless again this morning. Fortunately, I have a backup plan. Instead of hard coding the dealer page directly into Facebook, I created a separate HTML file (or rather Dreamweaver did) and uploaded it to a folder on the BB website server. I had to use a round-about way to access the server because I STILL don't have access to Ektron! I then coded the Facebook Dealer page to read and display this file inside an <IFRAME>. This allows me to set the dimensions of the file so that it doesn't try to display the entire thing on the page, thus rendering the anchors useless. This method worked, so now it's on

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 18: 22 June 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** June 28, 2011 1:03 AM

Today was pretty awesome too. Erin is at the trade show all week and she sent me an email asking me to design the CD label for the CDs that will be sent to the Dealers with other BB materials. Rusty had shown Matt an ad that Thomas Built had done that was animated - where the bus looked like it was driving. Later on, Erin called Matt and said she wanted another web banner designed and he brought up doing an animated one. Long story short, that got passed to me - since I think I have the most Flash experience in the group. It turned out to be a pretty tall order because of the size (both dimension and data size) limitations of the banner. Well, that coupled with my trying to remember how to work Flash... I spent most of the day experimenting with various techniques, since I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted it to look like. There's a certain background image that we use pretty frequently that I had to significantly alter to fit the parameters of this banner and yet keep the same over all feel, and it turned out pretty well. I'm definitely becoming more familiar with the adobe creative suite. The poster I designed earlier this week ended up having to be printed on a really nice PVC type material because the printing company was having difficulty with the coloring of it for some reason. One of the "higher-ups" made the comment that this means they'll be able to reuse the poster for a while to come, which is pretty cool.

Rusty's Quote of the Day: "Weather is here, wish you were beautiful."

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 17: 21 June 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** June 28, 2011 12:46 AM

Well today went much more smoothly. Rinderle and I started the day off by digging out and refolding a bus cover since it will be used to hide the demo bus and Erin wanted to know if it needed to be cleaned... it most definitely did. There was much more work to be done today and I had plenty to do. We had Dealers touring today and Rusty invited me to go on the plant tour with them so I could get the full tour w/ the headsets this time. He was going to call Cindy and have her send me down, but unfortunately she was in a meeting when he called, so I didn't end up being able to go. I got the web banners finished and approved and sent off - pretty exciting. I was also assigned the eBlast article where I'll be designing an article and writing about the New Thing that will be unveiled in July. I ALSO had to rework some things that Rinderle started - place settings for the folks that were going to be visiting. After a number of reviews, we got those approved too and sent to print. I learned that we not only have to know which version or changes we like best about a design we're working on, but we also have to know WHY we like them. I had the "OK why?" question sprung on me regarding a change to one of my designs. It caught me a little off guard, but I already knew the reasons I liked it better, so I was able to give my opinion, which Erin accepted and said "OK we'll go with that then." One of my better days so far, with one exception: I have drained the supply of Mountain Dew - both my own stash and the vending machine. I'm considering seeking professional help...

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)**Subject:** Feedback**Author:** HELEN M. GRADY**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** June 25, 2011 2:55 PM

Dustin, sorry to hear about all your IT issues. Glad they were finally resolved. Please send me your revised learning objectives, deliverables, and Gantt chart for meeting those deliverables. Thanks.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)[Comments](#)

poked around in it for a while to familiarize myself with the structure.

I also finished round one of the eBlast article. I was primarily following the existing design (this is something that is released every few months and they have a template that they follow), but it turns out that Erin decided to revamp the article design, so I've got a bit of work to do yet.

Around the office:

~Rinderle and I work pretty well together. He has me review stuff before going to Erin - usually tech editing and I have him look over stuff before submitting it for an official review too.
~I frequently bounce my leg w/ out thinking about it or realizing it (I just realized I'm doing it now). It generally starts up on its own and can be difficult to control if I'm not focused on it. WELL my workstation adjoins Cindy's and she couldn't figure out for the longest time why her computer monitor was shaking! She finally put 2 and 2 together and hollered over at me. She said Matt did the same thing, and he's a lot bigger than me so it was a lot more noticeable!
~The copier- I went to print out a shipping label and actually remembered everything correctly and had it set up right, but it just wouldn't print. So I went back down the hall to grab Rinderle and have him show me what was wrong and, hand to God, he did the EXACT same thing I did and it worked! He said that's the way it always goes - it won't work until you ask someone for help and then it works perfectly. C'est la vie.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Comments

1 Author: HELEN M. GRADY

Date: July 1, 2011 2:55 PM

Dustin, sounds like you are really doing a great job. Good for you. Don't forget....you owe me revised learning objectives ASAP!!!

Subject: Day 20: 24 June 2011

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 28, 2011 1:19 AM

Today was pretty darn awesome. I finished the animated ad and showed it to Rinderle and Rusty... that sounds like a sitcom... Anyway - they thought it was pretty awesome. The three of us also had lunch together in the office and we lost track of time. That was the longest I've ever seen Rusty in one place (he's pretty high in demand)! It was also the hardest I've laughed in a while. Long story. Later in the day, I worked more on the eBlast letter until a little before 16:00 when Rinderle and Rusty came into my office(space) to hang out. Rusty wanted to see pictures of my wedding, so we went through a bunch of those (he is also a bit of a Star Trek fan and I naturally had a Star Trek themed wedding). Rinderle and Me - Hey that's a good one too! Maybe more of a kids show. Cartoon perhaps? - Anyway, we cleaned out and organized the Marketing storage room so stuff is more easily accessible now. I got a shirt and a water bottle. Overall it was a very productive and yet laid back kind of day. I was told that Fridays are typically like that.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 19: 23 June 2011

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 28, 2011 1:09 AM

Today was largely consumed with working on the animated banner and learning more about Flash. I also put together two different web banners for the home page. I've started doing that with various assignments - the CD one for example. I'll create one design in order to get all of my thoughts out, and then I'll look at it from a different perspective and create another. This also allows Erin to have different options and pick what she likes best from both - this has worked well so far.

On a side note, I noticed that my "Work Station" - fancy word for cubicle - often turns in to the office hang out place where Rusty and Matt or whoever will come to chill and hang out for a while. Pretty cool.

today and our ad is on the inside front cover! Pretty cool...

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 22: 28 June 2011

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: July 12, 2011 12:34 PM

Erin is out for the rest of the week, so it's just me and Rinderle here, getting everything ready for the big release. I worked a little more on the eBlast article... I don't think that one is ever going to go away. Then I focused the rest of the day getting access to and working on BBond - the Blue Bird intranet site. This ended up taking the majority of the day. Never in my life have I dealt with a site that made me want to cry as badly as this one! There are some 10 different menu navs, and no consistent navigation design! Every single page has a different nav menu. Rinderle told me that he would just go in and edit every page individually as needed. This was blaspheme to me, so I spent the bulk of today designing a template so that everything would be consistent and that way when it needs to be updated, only one file needs to be changed. They originally gave me access via Filezilla, which is largely useless for my purposes except to see the files. So I had to extract the IT password from a metafile in order to get the same set up and work on everything via Dreamweaver. Matt said it's a lot easier to get things done if you don't have to rely on IT and I've found this to be true so far.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Comments

1 Author: Heather Rowland

Date: July 12, 2011 1:57 PM

It's sad how ineffective IT can be. Lots of places do the email us and we'll get to you but it's so much easier and more effective if you can get walk to the people and ask them how to resolve your issue.

Subject: Where are you?

Author: HELEN M. GRADY

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: July 7, 2011 4:20 PM

Dustin, you have yet to respond to my requests for revised learning objectives. And, you have not posted an entry since 27 June. Neither of these is acceptable. Get with the program!

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Comments

1 Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: July 12, 2011 12:56 PM

Dr. G,

I have my LO on my home comp and will post email them as soon as I get home. As far as deliverables go, should I also post samples of work I've done w/ the journal entries as well as at the end? I noticed Zach was doing something like that too.

Subject: Day 21: 27 June 2011

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: June 28, 2011 1:39 AM

Today was another busy and productive day. I started out by taking the banner designs to Erin for her to review. She said she liked them both and had trouble choosing between the two of them. Ultimately she decided on the same one that I was thinking. I inquired about the CD designs as well. Apparently she sent an email about them, but I never got it. Same deal. She said she really liked them both but having to choose, she went with the same one I was leaning towards. She also reviewed my Flash banner. She liked it overall and wanted a few minor changes to be made, but she was still unsure about the idea as a whole. If it does end up getting scrapped altogether, at least I'll have learned a lot about Flash in the process! I also FINALLY have access to Ektron! I

MORE stuff for the tradeshows and worked on the GA Trend ad. The original one that Rinderle sketched out for me to do was VERY basic because we were told that it had to be done in black and white which was taken to mean BLACK and WHITE. Turns out they meant grayscale, so I had to scrap that ad altogether, which I was fine with because it was pretty bad. I also worked on the Welcome breakfast cards for SESPTC next week.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 25: 5 July 2011

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: July 12, 2011 12:35 PM

Well the Stone Mountain show was cut short due to rain, but it's still the best 4th of July show in the country! I had an incredibly full plate today. I spent the bulk of the morning getting stuff ready to be shipped and taking it down to the guard shack for pick-up. Matt called early in the morning and I had to help him with a password reset so he could access the VPN while on vacation. I got the spec sheets and registration cards printed and picked up for cutting. The spec sheets get taken to Kinkos (my task after work) and the registry cards get cut by hand/board (my task during work). I had to help Rusty do a digital image of his signature since he didn't have tools to do it. I also went by HR to inquire about my ID card since I STILL do not have access to any of the doors here. Suffice it to say, I STILL do not have access to any of the doors here... I worked on entering the data from the GA tradeshow registration cards... there's a lot. I had to track down our banner stands and have them shipped and I walked all over the lot trying to find the gal that had them and when I finally got a hold of her, I found out that the stands are in a big black case that weights over 70lbs and I had to drag it inside to get the label made and then drag it back out to the guard shack. It's been a busy day and I still have to go to Kinkos when it's over!

Oh and my wife came down for lunch, so that was fun.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Comments

1 Author: HELEN M. GRADY

Date: July 12, 2011 3:17 PM

I have been to Stone Mtn several times to see their show. I agree; it's spectacular. Sorry about the rain, though.

Subject: Day 24: 30 June 2011

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: July 12, 2011 12:35 PM

Well today is my Friday and I won't be back until Tuesday! Rinderle and I worked on wrapping everything up and getting the website ready for launch. With our CMS, we have the ability to set a delayed launch for the site, so we tinkered around with that for a while. There was a brief scare when it looked like something wasn't posting when it was supposed to so Rinderle went to post it manually and it still wasn't. Then I asked if he was posting to the website or to the stage and it turned out he was posting to the stage, so of course it wouldn't show up on the actual website. He went over a bunch of stuff for me to get ready next week since he will be gone all week and Erin won't be in until the end of the week.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Day 23: 29 June 2011

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: July 12, 2011 12:34 PM

Applied the template to the BBond site today and went thru the entire site to set up a consistent style and update the information and documents contained within. I can't believe that THIS is what our Dealers are expected to use to do business! I worked more on the eBlast article and we're getting all of our propane documents together for review so we're ready to go live with everything this Friday. The School Bus Fleet Magazine came

Subject: Day 28: 8 July 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** July 12, 2011 12:36 PM

Today I worked on the GA Trend ad for the bulk of the day. Erin asked me to change the heading to something that was way too crowded for the allotted space. I made it fit as best I could and adjusted the margins to make it look not as crowded. When I showed her the design, she explained that this was a test and she had wanted me to "take the initiative" and reword it myself to that it would fit better and be less redundant. This certainly thru me for a loop because she was very specific with what she wanted it to say and if I designed something that went against what she asked, it seemed to me that would be a complete waste of time...

There was also a bit of a breakdown in communication at some point, regarding the bus cover. Matt and I received an email at the end of the day yesterday saying that the bus cover was supposed to have been shipped already and that this was the second time we were told and we needed to get it out right away Friday. Matt and I never received this alleged first email... This sort of thing seems to happen with some frequency around here actually. So anyway, I had to ship out the bus cover this morning. 50+ pound box that I had to carry to the guard shack. And I thought this was gonna be a desk job! We also got all of the shirts out and separated for the conference next week. Overall it was a mostly easy going day and I got the GA Trend ad send out for publication. Erin did comment that she really liked my design for the ad too, which is good because this one was largely from scratch and didn't relate too closely to the others.

We had a meeting at the end of the day to go over my experience to far and I brought up my thought process regarding the GA Trend ad and explained my reasoning behind just blindly doing what she asked and explained that now that I was more aware of what she expected and what she'd like to see, I'd be better prepared in the future. She said that she'd been meaning to meet with me for a while but has barely been in the office at all this month but that I had been doing excellent work and that I've shown to be very reliable. She also said that she wants me to go to STN in Reno this year and she'd like to extend my contract at least until September 15th. She also brought up that Blue Bird is unfortunately not hiring, but that that could change in the next couple of months, but she understands that I'll need to be looking for something more concrete and that she'd be happy to help in any way that she could, be it letters of recommendation or otherwise. After work I'll be taking the (finally) printed breakfast cards to Kinkos to be cut before droping them off at Erin's house. Then I'm driving to Iowa. It's going to be a long couple of days.

[Comments](#)[Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 27: 7 July 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** July 12, 2011 12:36 PM

Today I focused on the GA Trend ad and the Breakfast Cards. And that's--- about--- it... It was a bit frustrating because we seemed to be working backwards today. With the breakfast cards, it went from: "Looks good, change this one thing and send it to print"--- to "play with the header a bit and see if you can make the title more fun and stand out"--- to "Let's shore up all of the margins down here and bring everything in and realign it all and make sure the focus is on the right place and reword these sentences." The final product that I ended up actually sending to print bore very little resemblance to the product that I was originally told to "send to print".

[Comments](#)[Forward](#)**Comments**

1 Author: HELEN M. GRADY

Date: July 12, 2011 3:19 PM

Pretty amazing, huh, that folks can start off wanting one thing and then change their minds a lot! A good lesson learned today. :)

Subject: Day 26: 6 July 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** July 12, 2011 12:35 PM

Stonewall Jackson's business card came across my desk today. Speaking of, there ended up being around 217 of the registration cards that had to be turned into an excel spreadsheet. I shipped out

track down the packages, have them intercepted, and redirect them to the correct address. The item that was needed immediately was a CD with high resolution spec sheets on it, so I went ahead and uploaded all of the files to my Dropbox public folder and sent the link to the Dealer so he could access them immediately. I'm going to suggest to Erin that a Blue Bird Dropbox be set up for this exact purpose so we don't have to rely on overnighting CD's (which is insanely expensive, even for as small as the package is). Matt often uses yousendit.com, which is free up to 50MB, but \$10 after that where as dropbox is free up to 2GB+. Fortunately, I still have the original handwritten note from with the shipping info on it, so I saved that with the confirmation of the address change. Keeping detailed notes comes in handy, not just to keep track of where you are, but also to save your skin in this sort of situation! So anyway, that was all what my family would call a "fuster cluck". But my Chick-fil-A customer service skills came in handy when I had to apologize to the Dealer for our mistake and let him know how I was working to fix it and so on!

The rest of the day was spent working more on eBlast... again. I swear this is never going to go away. I had to completely redesign it, as I mentioned, and that came out good, so know I'm turning the press release into a more "grab-and-go" format (note to Dr. Davis: Writing For the Web is coming in handy!!! Content! Content! Content! It was actually something Erin made a note of when going over my resume).

On a side note, the door to the marketing closet was broken and coming off it's hinges, so I fixed that and hung it correctly so it doesn't drag the ground anymore. Who would have thought that my job in construction would come in handy in the Blue Bird Marketing Department!

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

2 Author: HELEN M. GRADY**Date:** July 24, 2011 9:34 AM

Site visit can be moved to the first week of August if that works better for Erin.

Subject: Day 31: 13 July 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** July 18, 2011 1:11 AM

Today I worked almost entirely on the STN place setting. The only real instruction I was given was to "heavily promote propane." This goes without saying, since STN is going to be the big reveal of the new Propane-Powered Vision (registered trademark). I was pretty much given complete creative control of this one and I wanted to make it relatable to the other ads while standing apart from them and being something "new" and attractive. For the front, I did the somewhat standard ad appearance but I replaced the background with a deep blue sky with clouds that I gradiented down to allow the text to stand out and the bus to "pop." Then on the back I did something completely different. I took the standard Count on Blue Bird box that is usually Blue Bird Blue and turned it all to the Smart Solutions Green. I used the same cloudy sky image w/ gradient that was on the front (so that the front and back are relatable as well) and made it more transparent. Then I added random facts about propane to the body under the header "Did you know..." with a faded watermark-like question mark in the middle, behind the text. I had each fact stand alone, each w/ a different font (but all in the same family). However, I still wanted them to flow, lexically, so I arranged them in a zig-zag pattern so that at first glance they appear random, but they still follow a natural flow.

After a few hours, I took a break from the STN project to work a little on the Security and Ambulatory bus options brochure, which will eventually become my main project. I learned quickly that this is going to be a most difficult project because these two buses are not a standard product. In fact, neither one has been made in several years and as a result, its difficult to find anyone that knows what options are even available! Not exactly looking forward to this one...

Comments**Forward****Comments****1 Author:** HELEN M. GRADY**Date:** July 19, 2011 9:34 AM

Sounds like you have been given some challenging tasks, Dustin, which is a good indication that Erin has faith in your abilities. Good work!

Subject: Day 30: 12 July 2011**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** July 18, 2011 12:56 AM

Dan Clarke, one of the Vice Presidents, came in to the office today and chatted with me for a while. He congratulated me on my recent marriage and offered that "it's a lot of work, but it's worth it." I happened to have just opened the Facebook Fanpage to go through it when he walked in and he asked to see it really quick so I ran him through some of the features and he said it looked great. Then I returned to working on the eBlast... of course. It's been very difficult to get some of these things wrapped up because Erin has only been in the office a couple days over the past few weeks because of tradeshows, etc and is often difficult to reach. Furthermore, she only has internet access on her phone, so the review process is severely hindered. After completing the eBlast for its next review submission, I started work on the place setting.

Comments**Forward****Subject:** Day 29: 11 July 2011**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** July 12, 2011 12:52 PM

Speaking of miscommunication... I got to my desk this morning (running on less than 4 hours of sleep due to travel I might add) and found an email from the person who is waiting on a couple items I shipped out on Friday. I was told to ship them to LocA - and I double checked this to be absolutely sure it was correct - and it turns out it was supposed to be shipped to LocB! One of the things was sent overnight because it was needed promptly too. So I had to get in touch with UPS,

review them as I go along, and nothing was said about it. I talked to Matt about it and he said that that sort of thing happens a lot around here. So now I'm back to square one... or maybe 1.5, since I at least have a design in mind that I know Erin likes. This has been extremely frustrating. Suffice it to say, I've begun keeping all of my daily notes in French.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Comments

1 Author: HELEN M. GRADY **Date:** July 24, 2011 9:37 AM

One way to avoid this kind of miscommunication is to ask, "I think I heard you say do XXX. Am I correct?" This kind of question then gives you the opportunity to verify what you think you are being asked to do. :) Good lesson learned today.

2 Author: Heather Rowland **Date:** July 25, 2011 3:33 PM

I keep some of my "people centered" notes in shorthand, since I don't know any other languages.:P

Subject: Day 32: 14 July 2011

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: Dustin Franklin

Date: July 22, 2011 5:13 PM

Today was a pretty laid back day. I spent the majority of the day working on the STN place setting. Erin, Matt, and Rusty are all back at work now, and all are in a surprisingly good mood. Rusty and Erin were pulling out as I was walking to my car for lunch and Rusty stopped and invited me to go with them, so I got to have lunch with Erin and Rusty in a much MUCH more casual setting today, which was both fun, and a good experience. Towards the end of the day, we had a meeting to go over everything for STN.

Rusty Interaction of the Day:

Original Scenario involves a 3rd party and will be kept private

Me - "yeah thanks for that imagery Rusty; I'll be stuck with that forever now."

Rusty - *laughing* "OK ok how 'bout this for imagery: Same scenario, but with Grandma!"

Me - *laughing harder* "Wait wait wait! My grandma, or yours???"

*I like to include little office quips because they demonstrate how Corporate American Life doesn't have to always be stoic expressions and suits, but can be fun too - and stuff still gets accomplished.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Time to schedule a site visit

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Author: HELEN M. GRADY

Date: July 19, 2011 9:42 AM

Dustin, I would like to schedule a site visit soon. Please let me know if you (and Erin/Matt) are free on July 27, 28, or 29. I need to spend about an hour with you, then 30" or so with Erin. Thanks, Dr. G.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Comments

1 Author: Dustin Franklin **Date:** July 21, 2011 8:11 AM

Dr. Grady,

I'll talk with Erin and see when works best.

Author: Dustin Franklin**Date:** July 29, 2011 2:10 PM

FINALLY done with STN stuff and got everything sent to print. Our network was hacked today and it messed up the intranet for our dealers. Nothing too severe, but still a pain to have to deal with. I also finished the cards for the dealer drawing and got all of those sent to print. I realized today, in reviewing some of my designs, that gradients, dropshadows, and emboss are definitely my friends! I use them a lot to draw focus to a particular part of the text and it almost always yields what we're looking for.

After finishing STN stuff, I went back to working on the E-Blast... GOD I hate this assignment! It's almost there though...!

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 35: 19 July 2011**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** July 29, 2011 2:05 PM

Well today was a pretty lax day, except for the part where it was decided to completely change a design and start from scratch on the schedule for STN. It wasn't bad though, I basically just had to take my ideas and mold the PPV ad into them to create a sort of hybrid. I got the drawing cards approved though and those were sent off to print.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)**Subject:** Site visit**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** HELEN M. GRADY**Date:** July 28, 2011 10:36 AM

Dustin, need to get going about scheduling a site visit next week. Please email me. Thanks. Dr. G.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 34: 18 July 2011**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** July 22, 2011 6:41 PM

Well today was a hell of a day. On Thursday, along with things for STN, I was assigned a place setting design for NSTA (an actual place setting design). I knew that NSTA was this week, but what I didn't realize was that NSTA was today. So they didn't get done. I talked with Erin about this and accepted responsibility for the blunder. She was understanding and said that she wanted to make sure that, going forward, we were all on the same page, because this sort of thing cannot happen again.

Then it was back to the E-Blast. I have done my best to add energy to this article and have completely redesigned it from the original, but it's still not there yet. Originally, I was told to use the E-Blast template and just fill in the information from the press release where necessary. Now, I have something that, after countless reviews and edits, looks little like the original and has way more energy and is way more skimmable, but is still not there. I will be glad when this one is over! Fortunately, today went VERY quickly, for whatever reason.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 33: 15 July 2011**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** July 22, 2011 5:36 PM

Well today was a bit more rough. It turns out that when Erin told me to make the "place setting for STN that is like the one [I] did for SESPTC," what she MEANT to say was that she wanted me to do the schedule for STN - two completely different things. This largely negates the past 4 days worth of work. What's weird is that I've been bringing them to her to show her my progress and have her

Subject: Day 38: 22 July 2011
Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin
Date: August 2, 2011 1:16 PM

Today is the last day of work before the STN tradeshow in Reno! With everything for STN already completed, it should have been a no-issue day. SHOULD have been.

Yesterday, before I left to go home, Dan Clarke, the VP of sales, came rushing into my office and asked if I had submitted the eBlast yet - I had. He then told me that they needed to reword something regarding the engine warranty on the new PPV. Long story short, someone above me was misinformed about warranty info and supplied incorrect information that was then written into the E-Blast. So Dan had me open the file and had me reword it and resubmit it to SBF for distribution. I was just fixing to shut down and head out when Rusty walked in with Dan on the phone, who wanted to talk to me. He had to make another correction to the warranty wording. So I opened everything back up and made the correction and resubmitted to the publisher again. Fortunately, the guy at SBF was really nice and understanding about it.

Which brings us to today...

All of the STN flyers had been printed, cut, and perforated [tear off drawing card - my idea :-)]. And of course they all contain the incorrect wording. So first thing this morning I get a call from Erin saying that we need to reword and reprint all 775 of them today since we leave Sunday morning EARLY. The irony of it all is that when I originally did the STN flyer (and the eBlast), I used the information that was in the printed ad, word for word - my logic being "if it was submitted, reviewed, and sent to print, it must be accurate, to date." I was correct in thinking that, BUT the person in charge of the review was the person who told me to change the wording to what ended up being incorrect, and I had no reason to suspect that they didn't have correct information. Anyway, enough finger pointing. It was a minor/easy fix, but I had to wait for Erin to get here to review it before I could submit it to print and then have them cut and perforated. This is as down-to-the-wire as it gets for us. Printing takes several hours and the cutting/perforation is done in Macon. Not only that, but we have to give well advance notice to have an order that big done because the machines have to be set up. We lucked out though because they still had everything set up for us w/ our dimensions and everything. Another long story short, we got them to print, had them printed, and Rinderle left at lunch to get them cut. Erin left a little before lunch and said we could leave when everything was taken care of. I stayed behind a little later to tie up some loose ends.

On a side note:

While we were waiting for Erin to get here to verify everything (she didn't come in until 10:00am because she had to pick up the polos for STN, which added to the time constraints), Rusty and Rinderle dug out the Blue Bird mascot costume and I got to wear it around the office for a while. People would be walking by and just freeze and bust out laughing and grab their phones to get pictures. And a lot of folks, some of whom I've never met, came by and hung out in the sales office with us to get pictures, etc. All in all it was a good day! Now on to Reno!

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Topic: Dustin Franklin
Date: July 29, 2011 2:40 PM

Subject: Day 37: 21 July 2011
Author: Dustin Franklin

E-BLAST IS DONE!!! Thank you Jesus! I spent the majority of the remainder of the day workings on the registration cards from SESPTC and putting all of that information into an Excel spreadsheet. This is a tedious task, but is a bit of a break from everything else, so I don't mind so much right now. But it occurred to me that there will be significantly more of them to do when we get back from STN, and that I do NOT look forward to.

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Subject: Day 36: 20 July 2011

senior moment, but rather that I fit in better than other interns have and he often forgets that I'm an intern. That's high praise coming from Rusty!

I learned A LOT during my first ever business trip! During some down time I had, I was thinking about what an incredible experience this has been. One of the biggest things for me was improving upon my social skills and connecting with people whom I've just met. Especially considering it was with regards to professional relationships in a not-so professional environment. I was right on the "front lines" with some of our dealers and other folks in the industry. They even had me do a brief on-camera interview regarding my opinion of the Keynote Speaker on Monday night. It wasn't my preference to do it, but they said "someone needs to represent Blue Bird!" and then literally shoved me in front of the camera. This was a trip I will certainly always remember!

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

After a good bit of socialization, a group of us went to the sushi restaurant. Rinderle was the only one in the group that I knew, so it gave me the chance to get to know more people from Blue Bird. It was a ton of fun. After dinner, we all went to go gamble. I called my wife to talk about how much would be OK to spend and what the cut off amount would be. Although I'm in charge of our finances, I definitely didn't want to gamble our money without talking to her first! I explained that, aside from the remote possibility that I might actually win some money, it was important to gamble at least a little, just for the sake of socializing with everyone, especially given that the "higher-ups" were all there playing. Turns out we both had the same amount in mind so we agreed and I was off! We claimed a Blackjack table and started in. After a few minutes, Dan, the Executive VP, sat down at our table and bought in. He gave me and Rinderle each \$50 for our hard work earlier that day! After a while, the CEO, COO, and COO's wife (Dana) came up and were hanging out with us. Now, I know the rules of Blackjack, but definitely not all the nuisances. Ms. Dana was giving me a hard time about it and finally decided she was going to sit in next to me and play so she could help me out. Dan and Dana said I catch on real quick! Rinderle has the best dumb luck I've ever seen (long story). I was an absolute blast playing with everyone and even if I had lost the money I gambled, it still would have been worth it – now all the higher-ups at Blue Bird know me, the lowly marketing intern, by name! ☺ Monday night was definitely the most fun – and I just so happened to walk away with double the amount I sat down with.

Tuesday: The big day. This morning came VERY early. We got downstairs at 9:00 to finish getting ready. We set up a bunch of flyers and finished touching up the buses. Our primary responsibility for the day was greeting people, getting them signed up for the drawings, and handing out the giveaways. This was from 10:00-16:00 and we were on our feet the entire time, but I was pretty used to that; another instance where working at Chick-fil-A came in handy. At 10:30, we had the big unveiling of the NGPPV and Rusty, Rinderle, and I were all in charge of hiding behind the bus and pulling the cover off on cue. Afterwards, we broke everything down, had it shipped back to Fort Valley, and headed to dinner (nutshell version). Tonight, it was me, Rinderle, Rusty, Erin, and Dan; we decided on Italian. Dan and Erin kept saying how pleased they were with the work we did today and how smoothly things went and how much things had improved from previous years. This dinner was important to me because it was with my boss and my boss's boss in a more or less unofficial capacity and everyone was much more relaxed than normal and "let their hair down." I also learned that Erin was one of the people that got a fridge from Oprah when she was in town and actually got to have the VIP one on one time with her! And of course afterwards we went back to the tables – we even got Erin out there! At first, the night didn't go so well for us. I quickly lost the amount I had set aside to play with and was left to sit and watch. Dan is very big about being done when you're down and not losing too much money, but he broke his rule and went back into his wallet for more, so I decided to do the same (I was still up overall and was under the amount my wife and I agreed on). I pointed this out when he gave me a hard time for it too! And then I quickly lost most of that amount. Finally, Rinderle and I decided to cash in and play penny slots. Those were dumb. I couldn't figure out what anything meant. Then, just for the sake of being able to say I did, I took my last \$5 and decided to play the \$1 slots (I really wanted to pull the lever). And just like that, I won all of my money back and then some. I'd go to cash out and come back to play another \$5 just for fun and I'd win again. It was crazy and I made sure to stop by the table to check on Dan's situation. He ended up "donating \$100 for the cause," as he put it. We had to be down at the front at quarter to 5, so at about 02:00, I decided I'd better go get packed.

Wednesday: Most of the Blue Bird folks were on the same flight today, so we were all sitting at the terminal, talking about the week. Everyone kept saying what a great job Rinderle and I did with everything, and of course, what dumb luck we had on the gambling floor! Someone had \$0.60 left on their person at the airport and one of the execs said they should give it to me because I'd turn it into \$90 in no time! That was the fun part. Then came the flight delay. I didn't realize it at the time because I fell asleep on the plane, but we were delayed for more than 30min. Not a huge deal, but we were late for our connecting flight and 15 people missed the flight to ATL. I would have thought they would have held the next flight for the 20 minutes we were late (we made up time in the air) and then made up that time in the air, but they didn't, so we were stranded. I was 7th priority (about half) for the next flight to ATL and ended up being THE LAST person allowed to board that plane. Rusty road home with me and Rinderle and we stopped at CFA for lunch. He was talking about a future tradeshow and said something about "you guys" going to it (meaning me and Matt) and had to correct himself since I won't be here at that time. He explained that it wasn't just a

day's worth of work, working on them off and on and there were about 120 of them in the end. I estimate there to be about 400+ from STN. This could be a long week... Fortunately Rusty stopped by for a while later in the day and we all hung out for a few minutes. Those kinds of distractions keep me going through this kind of work!

Random Tidbit:

Madison, who is an intern that works on inspecting buses and usually has lunch with us, stopped by today and told us that he wrecked a bus when he was moving it to the scales. I'm really glad I'm not in his shoes!

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Days NULL

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: August 4, 2011 1:31 PM

Had Thursday off. Was originally supposed to work Friday, but Dan said we'd worked hard enough for the week and we could have it off if we wanted. I decided to stay home with my wife :-)

[Comments](#) [Forward](#)

Subject: Days 39-42: 24-27 July 2011

Author: Dustin Franklin

Topic: Dustin Franklin

Date: August 4, 2011 1:30 PM

Sunday: Stayed up all night getting stuff together and spending time with my wife before having to leave for Reno!!! Rinderle and I were on the same flight, so he's picked me up around 03:00 to go to the airport (he lives spittin' distance from me). We weren't on the road more than 5 minutes and we got pulled over! Turns out, the intersection of Forest Hill and Northside is a No Turn on Red. I drive that way all the time and I had no idea! The cop just gave us a warning and sent us on our way. I think the fact that we were neither high, nor drunk helped us in that case. It doesn't make since for that to be a No Turn on Red lane anyway. Stupid. Anyhow, we got to Reno without incident and got to work cleaning the buses right away. Afterwards, we all went to dinner at a really nice restaurant on the resort...

Now, ever since I started working here, I've heard about "issues" with previous interns, especially regarding the STN Tradeshow in Reno. Suffice it to say, I was cautioned to: 1) Remember that this is a business trip BUT 2) Relax and enjoy myself, socialize, and above all else, eat with everyone else! I was told not to worry about the price of the meals we were getting, just order what I wanted. Rinderle and I ended up getting the same thing (Surf 'n Turf... wow, just... wow). I couldn't help but add it all up and my meal alone came out to be around \$100 (granted, it was overpriced resort food) and mine wasn't even the most expensive! It may be the poor, newlywed, college kid in me, but it's hard to fathom spending that kind of money on a single meal! After dinner, I was unbelievably exhausted but absolutely REFUSED to be the first one to go to bed! Everyone hung out for a little while and got drinks, and as the crowd thinned out, I went ahead and went upstairs too - 21st floor suite, King sized bed, all to myself. Definitely some kind of awesome.

Monday: Got up early to be downstairs and start getting everything set up for the tradeshow. Today was almost entirely spent cleaning the buses. Now, I've spent many a day detailing boats and cars, but buses... that's a whole new ball game. Little bit more surface area... We took a break for lunch and went to one of my favorite restaurants (very scarce in GA), Jonny Rockets! I was told it was tradition to go there and get the Egg Salad Sandwich. I about died when I heard that because when my dad and Grandparents would drive down to Kansas to visit me, we would always go to Jonny Rockets and I always got the Egg Salad Sandwich - I hadn't had one since and it was every bit as good as I remember! Then it was back to cleaning buses. After we were about finished with the cleaning, the CEO stopped by to check on our progress and OK everything. Then we put the freakin' huge cover on the Next Generation Propane-Powered Vision (we're not allowed to call it the 'new' PPV) and called it a day. Afterwards, we went to set up for the Monday evening Keynote speaker, Chris Gardner. He was really good. I got my picture taken with him and bought his book that he autographed.

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Compiled Messages

[Print](#)[Save as File](#)**Subject:** Day 47: 5 August 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** August 21, 2011 9:19 PM

Spent most of the day reorganizing the Marketing closet. I threw junk out, condensed everything, labeled everything, and sorted it by job function. The floor is completely clear now and we had trash stacked 2/3 the way to the ceiling out in the hall. Not exactly degree related work, but part of the job and it was a good change of pace.

[Comments](#)[Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 46: 4 August 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** August 5, 2011 12:24 PM

I started off today working on setting up a skeleton of the Security and Ambulatory Buses Options Brochures. I also got a hold of the schedule to see when the Ambulatory buses will be coming off the line... There's some time yet... Then Cindy sent me some documents to put on BBond, so I updated all of that. After lunch, I started working on the marketing closet and cleaning it out and reorganizing it. That's going to be a task!

Rinderle and I haven't heard from Erin all week and can't get in touch with her via email or cell phone...

[Comments](#)[Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 45: 3 August 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** August 5, 2011 12:21 PM

Today I finished work on the STN cards. FINALLY. Then I helped Rinderle with some things on the website. It's set up really weird and uses a CMS rather than Dreamweaver, which is what I'm used to. This means pretty much everything is coded in C# as opposed to HTML. I only have basic knowledge of C# and, while I can read it, I'm not familiar enough with the syntax to do a lot of writing, and neither is Rinderle. Rinderle got it all pretty much figured out though. Fortunately, we were able to just use the exact code that I wrote for the Facebook Dealer page and use it for the new official Blue Bird Dealer page. This saved a TON of time!

[Comments](#)[Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 44: 2 August 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** August 5, 2011 12:15 PM

Today I worked on entering the information from the STN registry cards and organizing them all into an Excel spreadsheet and that's... about... it...

[Comments](#)[Forward](#)**Subject:** Day 43: 1 August 2011**Author:** Dustin Franklin**Topic:** Dustin Franklin**Date:** August 5, 2011 12:15 PM

Today was pretty lax - Back to data entry. I finished up entering all of the information from the registration cards from SESPTC and started on the ones from STN. The SESPTC cards took about a