IBM

Process Book

This process book consist of various selected pieces that I worked on while I interned at IBM in terms of my objectives, processes, take aways and what I provided for the company.

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Overview

For my second and third Co-op term, I had the privilege to intern at IBM located in Ottawa, Canada. In the first term, I worked mainly as a User Experience Designer for the Business Analytics User Experience Team, followed by getting hired as a Visual Designer on the Business Analytics Samples Team in the second term. However, I worked interchangeably between my two roles and teams upon project requests since having visually appealing design software products is the basis of a cohesive and enjoyable user experience.

By heavily exposed and practiced UX and visual design through graphical user interface elements for software products, various learning outcomes were acquired, as well as provided new insights for the teams. With a new design language created, I was responsible in directing design approaches for projects given to align with the company's new design language. Additionally, I learned to communicate across peers internally and worldwide, programming to build reports and designing for accessibility. Furthermore, I managed to apply high visuals in plain business intelligence reports by taking considerations of graphic design principals and interactions, as well as influencing the teams in responsive web design.

TM1 Chrome Extension Plugin
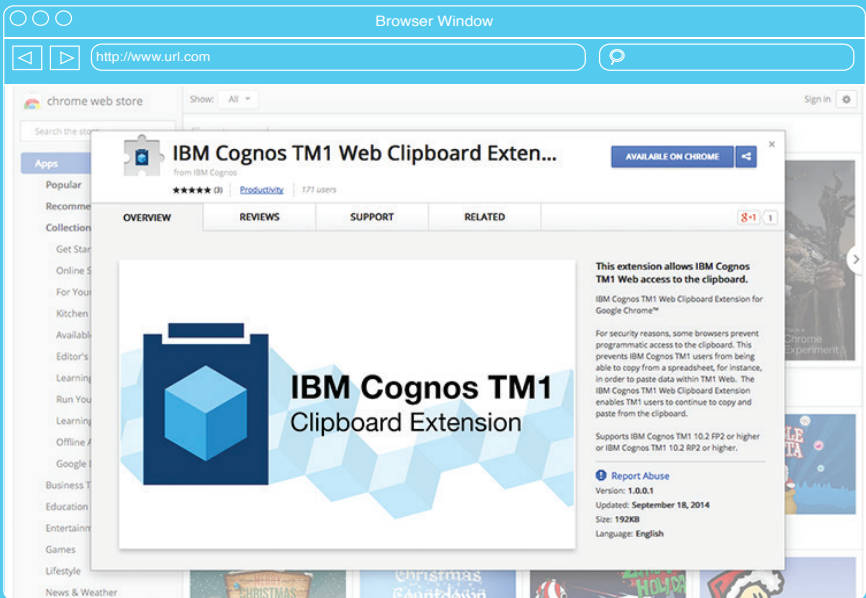
Objective

With security issue for some browsers (Google Chrome) that blocks programmatic access to the clipboard for the IBM Cognos TM1 product to copy spreadsheets and paste the data to the TM1 web version, this feature was created where I was in charge of designing an icon and title page for users to download on the Google Play Store.

Process

The project started with a request by the TM1 team where background information were given about the product and the new feature required. Afterwards, I began to do some research based on the information given, as well as questioning the product for clarification. Once everything was understood, my brainstorming stage consisted of discovering competitor means of visual representation of their feature and doing sketches. As seen in the sketches below, I tried to abstract the idea of cube modelling used in the IBM Cognos TM1 product with the addition of a clipboard. Then I showed my sketches for the team to pick, polished the favourable ones using Adobe Illustrator, followed by various iterations until the final result.
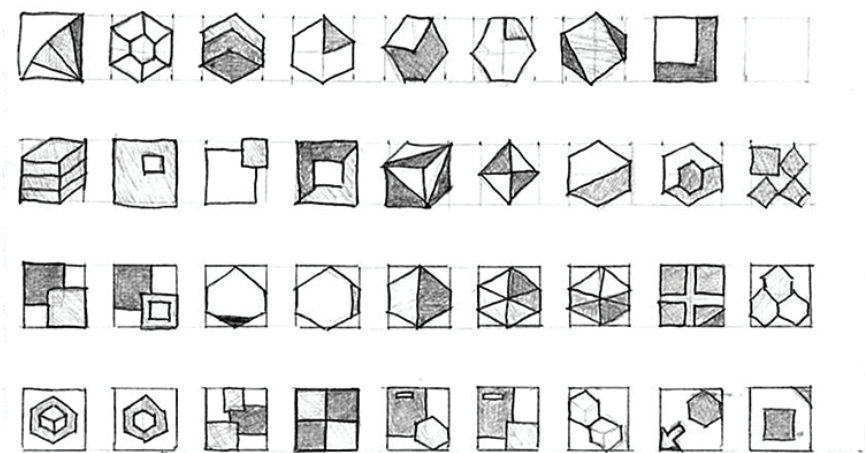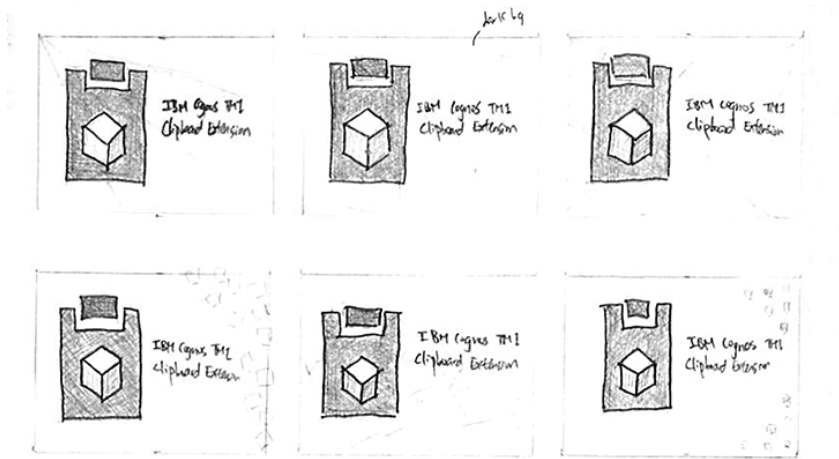
Result

In this project, I learned to communicate with team members spread across the world, where I provided visuals and concise explanations to execute the the icons at a feasible manner. Since it was the first time the team had to face this problem, many did not know about the necessary deliverables, but I exceeded clients' needs by not only designing a small icon, but showing them that they needed a title page as well.

Link

https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/ibm-cognos-tm1-web-clipbo/hifjegnejppkpnikhppoafdghppgcjpj?hl=en

Report Samples

Objective

A release took place under the project name of Danube where various report samples are now accessible for the public community to download on IBM Analytics Zone. Due to a new release and the publicity of the numerous samples, I was responsible in giving a cosmetic redesign for the reports by taking considerations of the visual and content layout.

Process

It was quite challenging at the beginning phases of the project because I was not proficient in using IBM products (where it was necessary to build my visuals using IBM Report Studio and Cognos Workspace for customers to dowload and modify if they want). However, after playing more with the products by applying visual graphics and colours, as well as getting help from colleagues, I managed to turn reports into something more visually appealing. To begin my task for each report such as this Employee Satisfaction report, I started with hand sketched wireframes to determine the visual and content flow, followed by implemented it in Adobe Illustrator. Then, I would run it with the team member who is responsible for the report to make sure the content is correct and I would follow my mockup to build the visuals on the report. For the Employee Satisfaction report, it is an accessibility report where the accessibility feature can be turned on for certain impairments, but for those who don't have a high degree of visual disability, I decided to section off the content in blocks with a large title block for readability.

image of samples
before redesigned
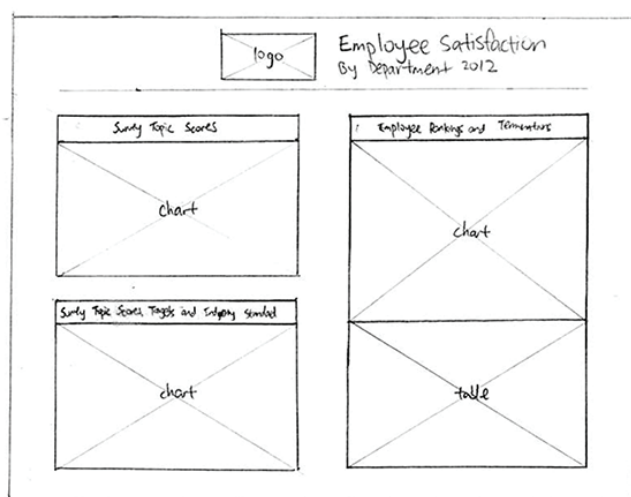
Result

By doing this project, I had the chance to try new softwares which were IBM Report Studio and Cognos Workspace and gaining more knowledge in the field of designing for accessibility. For instance, I learned that dash lines or dotted items across the screen can cause some people to feel nauseated and how visual data is displayed in correspondence to audio.
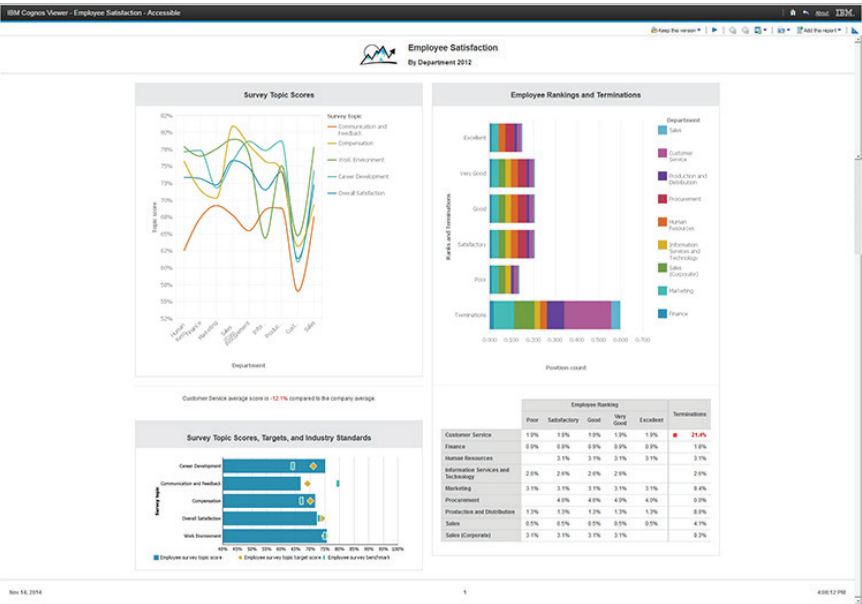
Link

https://www.analyticszone.com/homepage/web/displayMarketplacePage.
action#catalog/assets_activereport_visreport

Infographic
Reports
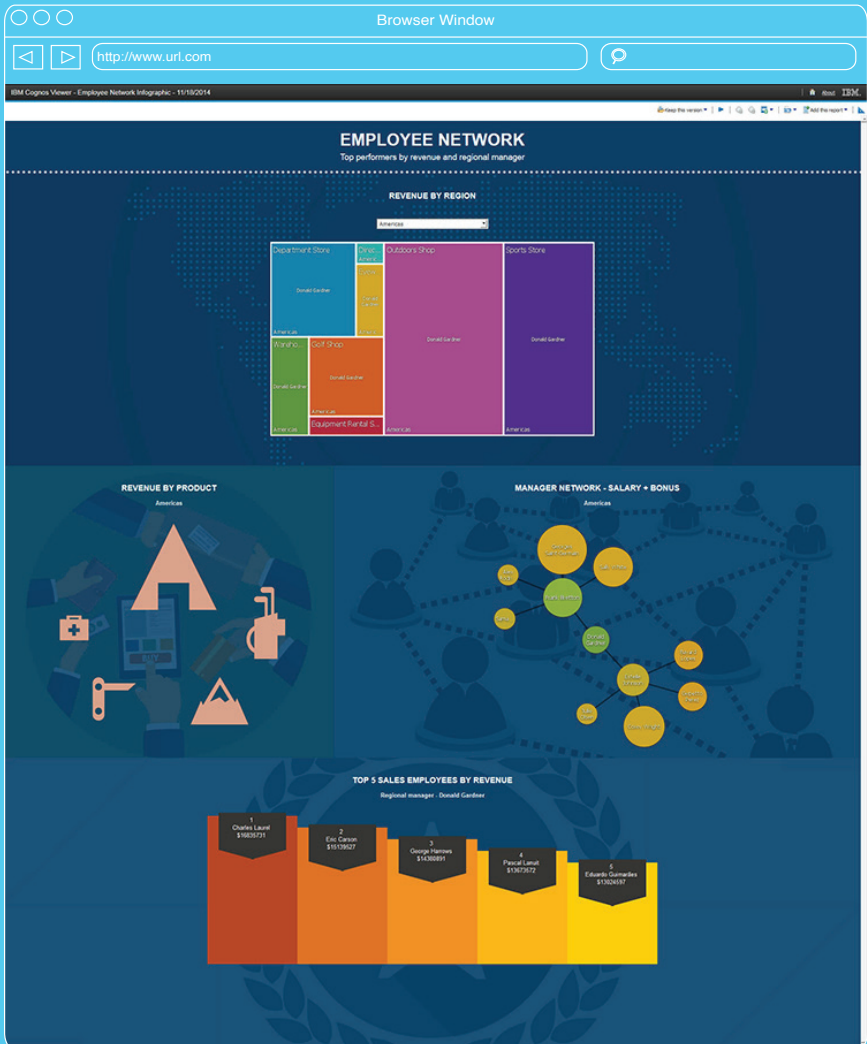
Objective

With my skills in visual and user experience design, I assisted in introducing a new chapter of reporting through infographics for the Samples Team. As seen, visuals have more power to compel stories, where the manager did not want to simply have reports that spits out data, but for users to read through their data at an immersive flow.

Process

Similarly to designing report samples for the Danube project, I started by choosing a report that had enough data to drive a story. Next, research was done on static and dynamic infographics in terms of how the content is laid out and how interaction take place. Then, I would sketch up some wireframes to see how content can be laid out. Afterwards, I would run my ideas with the developer and other team members, followed with bringing the ideas to a mockup in Adobe Illustrator, edited images in Adobe Photoshop, and the design was revised through an iterative cycle. Once everything was agreed upon, I would send the mockup, instructions of the visuals and the GUI elements for the developer make the infographic functional. Since we were required to develop using IBM Report Studio, as the infographic reports would be release to the public as well, we had to take in consideration of the product's capabilities by first testing an interactive feature or layout in normal HTML and CSS, then bring it into Report Studio.
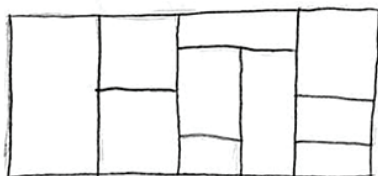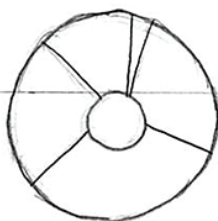
image of original report

EMPLOYEE NETWORK
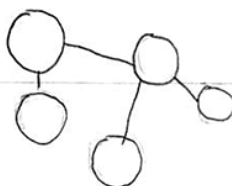Top performers by revenue and regional manager

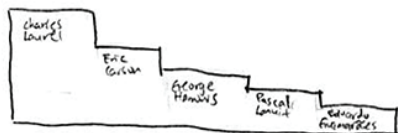REVENUE BY REGION
Americas

REVENUE BY PRODUCT
Americas

MANAGER NETWORK - SALARY + BONUS
Americas

by image

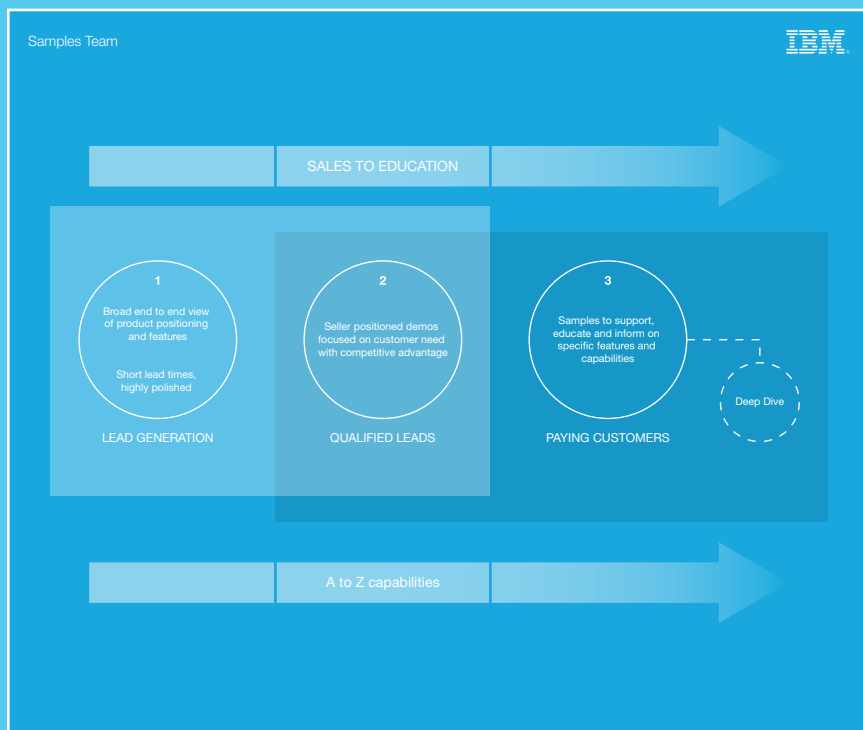TOP 5 SALES EMPLOYEES BY REVENUE
Regional manager - Donald Gardner

charles laurel
Eric Carter
George Hankins
Pascal Lemuit
Eduardo Fernandes

Result

This experimental project is still underway, but examples have been shown internally where positive feedbacks were received and that the team hope to provide business clients with nice and enjoyable product to look and use. On the other hand, I was thrilled to work in a more typical design environment where I was taking the role as a designer to make everything looking pretty and making sense, while working with a developer to make the features functional and producing a working product. By making workable infographic reports, I also had the chance to work on some programming skills such as HTML5, CSS3 and dappled a little on Javascript.

Samples
Model

IBM

SALES TO EDUCATION

1
Broad end to end view of product positioning and features

Short lead times, highly polished

LEAD GENERATION

2
Seller positioned demos focused on customer need with competitive advantage

QUALIFIED LEADS

3
Samples to support, educate and inform on specific features and capabilities

Deep Dive

PAYING CUSTOMERS

A to Z capabilities

Objective

For Product Day at IBM (where teams would show off projects that they have been working on), I contributed my visual skills in creating presentation slides for the Samples Team. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to design an info model to display the cycle process of works done by the Samples Team.

Process

The content was first given by my manager where I organized the flow of content and sketched out an infomodel. Then I showed it and we iterated the information to visually represent how products of report samples are used that are produced by the Samples Team. When all the content were arranged properly, I made the end result using Adobe Illustrator.
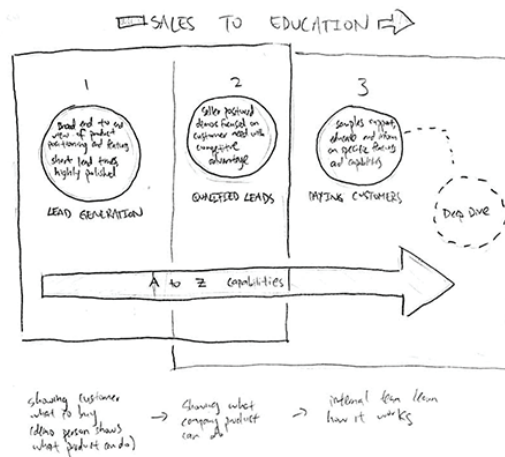
Result

After obtaining some practice in creating infographics and infomodels in my classes, I felt a sense of satisfaction to make one in the industry for the audience to understand the efforts done by the Samples Team and the importance that they have contributed to the company.

Disclaimer