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Introduction

It's Sunday morning, each week I check the interwebs for remote jobs, today was no different. I point the browser to weworkremotely.com and start scrolling down. Wait, back up, what was that highlighted in yellow at the top? Basecamp, the highly revered (and sometimes lambasted) Basecamp is looking for a Product Designer and I almost missed it! *frantically clicks link*. Would they consider a design noob?

> "We are not looking for someone who's already expert in everything they do."

Great! No disheartening years of experience listed, there is hope yet. But how will I impress them? Perhaps kill on the cover letter with honesty and the absence of hubris.

Good Day folks, I recently completed a four course Graduate Certificate in Information Design; the syllabus has exposed me to the disciplines of Humans Computers & Cognition, Information Architecture, User Research, and Interface & Interaction Design. I am an experienced Front-end Developer but perhaps I can garner your interest in offering me my first design job.

I happened across a tweet sharing a Quora post where your Product Manager Ryan Singer elaborates on the dimensions he looks at in designers. I've chosen to use his post as a template to illustrate how I meet Basecamp's requirements.

Writing

I like words, I'm the kind of guy that tweets the dictionary.com word of the day if I find it interesting. I find that words are excellent for organizing my thoughts, as such Automattic's Simplenote is my must-have app on any platform. For examples of my writing please visit blog.byronbuckley.com.

UI Design

In my understanding, UI Design should be influenced by established best practices, user research and trends of the day. Once I've gathered data on my audience I now have a context to determine flows and overall layout while iterating against best practices, trends and user testing. Here are some examples of how I approach interface design:

- Easy Budget: Description, Demo

- Notifyer: Demo

Product

I consider my self a user advocate. I noticed this from the type of questions I asked when discussing applications among friends. If a colleague shared an application idea, I would first ask about the application's utility to his target user or the nebulous "average man"; are you trying to solve a problem, or make something cool? If a friend wanted feedback about an interface I would try to dissect it, not just take the interface as is, but try to consider its efficacy in various contexts. I also like the process of task analysis as a means of learning user motivations and figuring out what user's are trying to achieve and how to simplify that process.

I've found that Clay Christensen's jobs model resonates with my thoughts on product design. In this model, users/customers "hire" products to do "jobs" for them. Using this model the designer can ask the user to fill in the blanks below as a way of determining user needs and goals.

When _____, I want to _____, so I can _____.[1]

Development

Having been employed as a Front-end Developer for the last 3 years, I've completed work for companies such as AutoZone, NAPA Auto Parts and David's Bridal. Project details are available in my résumé below.

Character

I got into design to find out how design professionals created interfaces. I thought it was all about gut feeling and talent, colours and typography. I soon found that there was more to design; that it had various facets that could accommodate both the generative designer and the designer who excels in synthesis. Design theory intrigued me, from discovering that visual design is distinctly different from interaction design, to learning how interfaces can cause cognitive overload.

I am optimistic that I've provided you with an effective snapshot of my skills and capabilities, and I look forward to sharing with and learning from the great team at Basecamp. Please see below for details of my employee history.

Thank you for your time.

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[1] The Dribbblisation of Design by Paul Adams

Employment History

Skills & Tools

Design: User Research, Usability Testing, Prototyping, Photoshop, Axure RP, Morae.
Front-end: HTML, CSS, SASS, JavaScript, jQuery, AngularJS, JSP, Spring, ASP.NET,
Wordpress Theming.

Front-end Developer

RealDecoy Inc. | March 2011 – Present

I am responsible for the construction and maintenance of web pages for both internal
and external projects. I work with the UX team to maintain the integrity of the visual
and interaction designs during development and/or implementation. Project tasks
include markup development for client implementation, as well as UI development for
Java and ASP.NET web and mobile-web applications. Client projects include:

- **CAFM** (cafmuseum.techno-science.ca) -   The Canada Science and Technology
  Museums Corporation (CSTMC) provided mockups to be developed for their
  suite of websites. An adaptive website implementation was recommended to
  the client. As the supporting Front-end Developer, I implemented markup
  consistent with the breakpoints as well as various JavaScript plugins that
  ensured the page elements rendered correctly on mobile devices.
- **ICMA-RC** – Fixed layout, markup development for internal use, utilizing HTML5,
  CSS3, JavaScript, jQuery and jQuery plugins from Bootstrap. Provided cross
  browser compatibility for dominant web browsers and backward compatibility
  starting from IE7.
- **Autozone Mobile** (m.autozone.com) – Client provided a style guide and a few
  pages from which I derived new pages and modules to implement in a Java web
  application. Tasks included HTML5 and CSS3 markup, JavaScript development,
  jQuery and AJAX interactions. I was also tasked with ensuring UI and interaction
  consistency across mobile devices with various screen resolutions and pixel
  densities. Compatibility was required for iOS browsers, stock browsers for
  Android OS 2.2 and later, Firefox for Android as well as Internet Explorer for
  Windows Phone 7.5 and later.
- **GPC/NAPA Auto Parts** – This project began as fixed layout markup
  development for internal use, utilizing HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript, jQuery and
  jQuery UI. I was later required to implement this UI on an ASP.NET web forms
  back end. Cross browser compatibility for dominant web browsers and
  backward compatibility starting from IE7 was required.

Business Support Officer

Capital & Credit Financial Group (CCFG) | April 2008 – March 2011

As Business Support Officer, my activities resided in the domains of Software Developer and Webmaster. As a Developer, I was responsible for developing and maintaining applications and modules for the group's foreign exchange remittance systems as well its core banking system. Responsibilities included:

- Developed and Maintain communication interface between CCFG and its partners
- Created Batch Posting Application that streamlined fund transfers for standing orders
- Coordinated CCFG Website Redevelopment with contracted service provider (in 4 months)
- Created training documents and trained staff to use Drupal CMS
- Provided website technical support and maintained site content

Education

- **University of Baltimore - Graduate Certificate in Information Design (Fall 2013)**
  Coursework includes:
  - User Research Methods
  - Information Architecture
  - Interaction and Interface Design
  - Humans, Computers and Cognition

- **Northern Caribbean University - B.Sc. Information Science (Fall 2007)**