

Day in the Life of... Ryan Cantin

Title: User Interface Designer | Dealertrack Canada



1) How would you describe your role?

I build prototypes and mockups to demonstrate user interface (what you see on the screen) and user experience (the flow of an application). With many

projects and tickets, I participate in design sessions and gathering requirements to make sure the user will be happy with the end result. They are also coded in a way that allows them to be reused by our Software Engineering team during implementation.

2) In your role, how do you work towards keeping our customers happy?

The team I work with is primarily focused on the end users of our systems (i.e. dealers). The challenge is that our main platform, called the Dealertrack Network (DTN) is free for them. It's the lenders/banks that pay to process and fund applications coming through DTN.

There is a natural tendency to sway in the direction of the people paying for something, but it's not the best approach. Helping them see DTN from the dealer's perspective is often best.

3) What's the most difficult part of your job?

I tend to refer to myself as a "logical creative professional." My brain is definitely weighted far towards the creative side, but I always have to balance that with the logical side. As much as I would love to have unlimited time and resources to create cutting-edge designs, I understand that my designs need to fit within timelines and existing systems. I often

need to reel myself in so I can end up creating realistic but effective designs.

4) What's your background? What led you to a role at Dealertrack?

I have always done design and creative work “on the side”, but I actually come from a professional background in quality assurance. In 2002, I started working at a company called Curomax. I was brought in as a dealer support representative and after six months, I took on the role as the company's first quality assurance team member. As the company grew, I took on the role of QA team lead, and then eventually QA Manager. But I eventually realized that management was not the track for me.

In 2006, Curomax was acquired by Dealertrack and the QA team continued to grow. In 2009, I made the move into a user interface role where I focused on design and interface programming... an excellent fit for me.

5) Do you have a mentor and if so, who is it and how have they helped you?

There were eight founding members of Curomax. It was a good mix of creatively minded and logically minded employees, all balancing each other out. Since my job at Curomax was my first real “career,” I looked up to our founders and watched how they interacted with each other, dealt with opposing viewpoints and always managed to come to a viable conclusion that they could all work towards.

One of our corporate beliefs was that “*we understand the emotion that travels with passion.*” I've always remembered this statement. There will be disagreements and differences of opinion, but things need to be handled with respect and the final outcome needs to support the good of the organization.

6) What's something people might not know about you?

I'm kind of the go-to for creative work. Photoshop, PowerPoint or anything design related seems to find its' way to me, and I actually like it that way. It gives me the opportunity to help with projects that might've never come my way. As an example, I just finished designing and organizing the build of a 12 foot wide Lego structure of the Dealertrack Technologies logo.

7) What's a piece of career advice you would give to your 20-year-old self?

Keep an open mind. The reason I am where I am today is because I haven't shut doors before at least peeking through them first. I've followed any path that sparked my interest to see where it would take me.

When I was a kid, I went to a computer camp. Even though it was a tad geeky, I was interested in technology and decided it was worth the ridiculing from other kids. That computer camp is where I started programming. It gave me the foundation to teach myself most of what eventually turned into the foundation of my career. This kind of passion and commitment has never done me wrong. *After all, how do you know something isn't right for you if you never give it a chance?*

8) What are some things on your bucket list, professionally and personally?

I'd like to travel the Australian Outback. I know it seems weird... an outdoorsy tech nerd? But it's true.

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The "A Day in the Life" (DITLO) interview is an internal profile that showcases a team member's day-to-day work at Dealertrack. DITLO interviews serve to introduce an individual to team members across the organization and to highlight roles and responsibilities within various functional teams.

To nominate a team member for a 'Day in the Life' interview, please send an email to Daily@Dealer.com with the name of the team member and why they will make an interesting subject.