Building Great Products

With Empathy

—2014 Experience: Dev—

@jasonvanlue

#expdev
We Don’t Sell Saddles Here

The memo below was sent to the team at Tiny Speck, the makers of Slack, on July 31st, 2013. It had been a little under seven months since development began and was two weeks before the launch of Slack’s ‘Preview Release’. It is presented verbatim, as written (including original pull-quotes), with two exceptions: the removal of an introductory section discussing launch logistics and replacement of a link which pointed to an internal company resource with the equivalent public link.

Build Something People Want

We know that we have built something which is genuinely useful: almost any team which adopts Slack as their central application for communication would be significantly better off than they were before. That means we have something people want.

However, almost all of them have no idea that they want Slack. How could
Sir Henry Cole
1847
"Of high art in this country there is abundance, of mechanical industry and invention an unparalleled profusion. The thing still remaining to be done is to effect the combination of the two, to wed high art with mechanical skill".

—Sir Henry Cole
Form & Function
The 1930s
“Manufactured goods served the purpose for which they were intended, but they came off production lines with a stagnant sameness.”

—Henry Dreyfuss
The Industrial Designer

Make things prettier.
Good industrial design is a silent salesman.

*Increased efficiency.*

*A better look & feel*

*Assurance*

*Confidence*
The Industrial Designer

Decorator → Designer
The Industrial Designer

Polish → Purpose
Products which valued and included design from the beginning drastically outsold those which did not.
Design not only contributed to the physical worth of the product, but also to the financial worth of the product.
The Golden Age of Industrial Design
Sound Familiar?
Industrial Design

↓

Digital Design
We're realizing (again) that design is much more than decoration.

That it isn't all about how something looks, but it's how something works.
Just like the mid-20th century was a renaissance for industrial design, I believe we're entering a renaissance for digital design.
What’s the Common Denominator?
We Build for People
When we focus only on the utility of a product, and neglect the user of the product, we tend to focus on what the product is, instead of who it's for.
The result tends to be products that may perform a job well, but aren't that enjoyable to use.
Safety shouldn’t be annoying.

We all know why smoke alarms are torn off the ceiling or missing batteries: because every time you make stir-fry, the smoke alarm cries wolf. Or just as you’re falling asleep, you hear a low-battery chirp. They’ve become annoying. And that’s a safety issue.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), almost two-thirds of US home fire deaths happened in homes with no smoke alarm or no working smoke alarm.

So we made something new. Meet the Nest Protect smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarm.

We made a smoke and CO alarm you’ll love, because hating it is dangerous.
It's not just about what a product is used for. We must also consider who uses it.
We Must Design with Empathy
"the ability to understand and share the feelings of another."

—Oxford Dictionary
"You cannot understand good design if you do not understand people; design is made for people."

—Dieter Rams
"the most efficient machine is the one that is built around a person"

—Henry Dreyfuss
We Must Design for The Other Side of The Screen
Guidance
USER

1. What is the purpose of this page?
2. What should I do on this page?
3. Can I do this easily?
4. Do I want to do this?

YOU

1. What is the purpose of this page?
2. What is the primary user action?
3. Is the action clearly understood?
4. Is the design compelling?
Silverback has been invaluable as we make tweaks/test the new mN site. Thank you, Clearleft!

so says Brendan Dawes, interaction designer | Next testimonial +

**Silverback 2.0**

Guerrilla usability testing software for designers and developers

- Capture screen activity
- *Video the tester’s face
- *Record the tester’s voice
- Add chapter markers on-the-fly
- Control recording with the remote
- Export to Quicktime

**Features in 2.0 include**

**Preview**
Watch sessions within Silverback

**Tasks & Highlights**
Set tasks and mark noteworthy moments within a session

**Batch Export**
Save selected sessions, tasks, highlights or projects in one go

**Performance**
Faster export, better usability

Silverback requires Mac OS X (10.5-10.8*).
*Currently not compatible with Mid-2013 Macbook Air Cameras.

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FREE FOR 30 DAYS

**Buy NOW**
$69.95 FREE upgrade for existing users
QUALITY CONTROL FOR YOUR DIGITAL PROJECTS
WE HUNT DOWN THE BUGS. YOU FLATTEN THEM.

PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS
We find the bugs so your team has the time to do what they do best.

MAINTAIN YOUR FOCUS
Stay billable and on task while QCat takes on the disruption of testing.

BE CURRENT
We test on the latest browsers and are on top of browser bugs, so you can know ‘em down.
Actions speak louder than page views.

The most advanced analytics platform ever for mobile and the web.
Google Analytics tells you what happened, KISSmetrics tells you who did it.

KISSmetrics fills this gap by showing you every action each individual did. Finally, you'll know who your most valuable customers are and how to get more of them.

Customer Acquisition Funnel

896 people | Last 30 days: Jun 28, 2013 - Jul 27, 2013
448 people | View people in this step?
0 people

Funnel Overview | Visited Marketing Site | Signed Up | Billed

2.6%
Create User Profiles

THIS IS: Aimee
SHE IS AN: Intermediate Developer
INTERESTED IN: Advanced Rails, JavaScript, Front-End
SHE IS: Married, works in the industry, community advocate
TIME: Likely takes courses at night / on weekends / 30m-1hr at a time
Who are your Joe and Josephine?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Posts</th>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<td>162</td>
<td>28 Jan</td>
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<td>4</td>
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Hi Jason,

Thanks for signing up to Brandisty. I sent some time taking a look at the Envy Labs site and love the homepage. The scroll bar with all the different cartoon faces introducing members of the team is really cool! I also noticed the logo you uploaded is different from the one on your landing page. Are you guys going through a rebrand?

We’re actually on the verge of pretty large update that will include a ton of new features. I’d love to set up a quick call and let you know what will be happening in the next 1-2 weeks. Are you available for a 10-15 min. call on Wednesday, February 26th at 3pm EST?

Best -

Andrew
Simple, personal messaging for businesses and their customers

Intercom is an integrated platform for the whole company to use for support, marketing, product, and sales communication.
Make it Easy to Cancel
Designers
and
Developers.
“if we want design to be seen as more than decoration, we must treat development as more than plumbing.”

—Cameron Koczon
“We enter into close co-operation with the engineers. Perspective drawings are fine up to a point, but they can be misleading. So, as soon as possible, we get a form into clay and actually do our designing in this pliable material.”

—Henry Dreyfuss
The goal is to get to a place where you can test, then iterate. Then repeat.
"You cannot understand good design if you do not understand people; design is made for people."

—Dieter Rams
"the most efficient machine is the one that is built around a person"

—Henry Dreyfuss
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Design with empathy.
Thank You!

@jasonvanlue