

Pete Mutolo – Experience Design Case Study

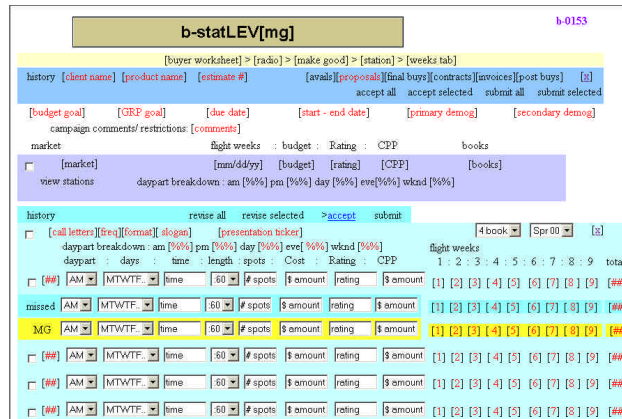
[t] 646.872.0753 [e] pete@mutolo.com [w] www.mutolo.com/pete

Project: MediaGravity
Objective: Create a closed loop, web-based application to facilitate the research, negotiation, sale and tracking of advertising media
Role: Lead Information Architect, Usability Specialist
Date: Project began 06.2000

Status: Currently in the beta phase of development [as of 01.02]
Artifacts: Content Tree, Use Cases, Wire Frame [Html], Prototype [Html], Discovery Notes

Summary: My biggest challenge was to understand the end-user requirements of the buyers and sellers, as each currently rely on legacy systems that, due to limited functionality and crude interfaces, created many unnecessary workflows. I spent several weeks with the subject matter experts [SME], and together with our discovery team developed a clear understanding of their current work habits. In collaboration with the tech and creative teams, I developed the content tree and functionality diagrams, isolating individual threads within the larger process. I created the HTML wire frame, incorporating the same functionality threads, which were individually tested for content, and flow. Once approved, the wire frame modules were used as the skeleton for the prototype development.

Samples: HTML wire frame screen contains data types and functionality required to complete current stage of process.



Detail:

Designed to accommodate campaigns covering the full media spectrum, and to be used by all agency types, the biggest challenge was to understand the end-user requirements on both the buyer and seller side. Each currently rely on legacy systems that, due to limited functionality and crude interfaces, create many unnecessary workflows. Our discovery team spent several weeks with the subject matter experts [SME] from both industries to develop an understanding of their current work habits. We then distilled that information down to the steps necessary to fully process their work. Once we had established that baseline, we built strategies to leverage the power and flexibility of the new system and began to formulate the functionality specification.

Buying and selling media time requires a series of complex, data intensive steps that involve research, negotiation and interpersonal sales skills. The solution we were designing had to accommodate each of these needs and present them in a way that employees would feel comfortable and confident using the system with minimal training. The functionality required detailed content to be entered at specific points, which could be manipulated during negotiation. To track the data variants we developed a content plan to describe each element, including: type, location, purpose, origin, destination, and status, which we incorporated into the spec. Working closely with the tech team, I developed the content tree and functionality flow diagram. I then isolated individual threads of functionality within the larger processes, populated each with the necessary content and created sub-flow diagrams that formed the basis of the wire frame.

I created an HTML wire frame, incorporating the same functionality threads, which were individually tested for content and flow. The tech and creative teams used the wireframe modules to map high-risk functionality, and to begin creative treatments. Once approved, the wire frame modules were used as the skeleton for prototype development.

The methodology that I rely on is cyclical, promoting the creation of small, incremental iterations, in collaboration with the tech and creative teams, and reviewed by the client and SMEs. This creates a fluid process, enabling risk assessment, usability testing and content assessment to occur much earlier, mitigating costly oversights and redesigns that plague other methods of development.

The project is currently [as of 01.02] in beta, with platforms in key locations to test the closed-loop system from the buyer and seller side. For more information on the system, visit MediaGravity.com.