

## **JOE RANFT**

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### **EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, USER INTERFACE DESIGN & USABILITY**

- Strategic leader and tactical director with a successful background building and leading top performing teams focused on creating best-in-class user interface designs and customer experiences
- Dynamic creative director skilled in building design teams and shaping design processes that contribute to the completion of hundreds of online, e-commerce projects per year, which result in a highly productive and revenue generating channel
- Innovative thinker and idea generator, looking both within and outside the organization to synthesize trends in technology, service and experience for an ever evolving and improving online customer experience
- Advanced communicator and cultivator of key relationships at all levels of the organization, internal business leaders and executives, and external industry leaders
- Skilled manager, motivator and recruiter of highly skilled design team with a very high retention rate

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**March 2009 – Present**

**Design, Usability, and User Experience Consultant**

**Joe Ranft Design LLC**

Specializing in product strategy and management, online strategy, design, customer experience, usability, and user research. My clients have included Fidelity Investments, Putnam Investments, Merrill Lynch / Bank of America, athenahealth, Motley Fool, Weather.com, Cars.com, SmarterTravel Media, and several early stage Internet start-ups.

Specific projects have included:

- Full-day user experience and usability seminars
- Onsite and remote usability testing
- Expert Reviews of live site for key usability and design feedback
- Strategic prototype design for new business initiatives
- Organizational consulting for creation of new design groups within client's existing structure
- Creative direction for new features
- Wireframing pages for new features
- Product mapping and management, creating product roadmaps and schedules to fit into Agile development timelines

**July 2008 – March 2009**

**Vice President, Design & Product**

**UpDown.com, Cambridge, MA**

UpDown.com, a Cambridge-based, angel funded start-up, is a fantasy stock market, social community, and education site, with over 125,000 registered members who trade \$1,000,000 virtual portfolios.

I started as a design and product consultant in March, and continued in this full-time role as VP of design and product. In my short time there, my accomplishments included:

- Created and maintained long-term product roadmap, breaking it down into smaller features and projects that could be designed, developed and launched in a two-week agile development process.
- Developed product specifications and designs for dozens of new features, including: investing contests, friends, member networks, trading, Twitter integration, stock analysis, improved customer profiles.
- Conceived of and launched successful Facebook application.
- Worked with strategic partners on partnership concepts and finalizing deals.
- Reworking of e-mail templates to double conversion rates.
- Conducting user research including usability tests and surveys.
- Also acted as UpDown community manager, monitoring member communication on site and in other social networks, such as blogs, Twitter, and Facebook.

**December 1999 – March 2008**  
**Vice President, Design & Customer Experience**  
**Fidelity Investments, Boston, MA**

I held a primary user experience and design role for many different Fidelity businesses over 7 years with the company, developing online strategies with senior executives in business and development and translating strategies into highly interactive customer experience vision designs and prototypes. I also evangelize and present strategies across the company, develop budgets and project plans for implementing strategic vision, Break down strategic visions into multi-year, multi-part, concurrent, cross-company projects and releases, manage the design teams who implement the projects as tactical designs, and ensure that tactical releases remain within the intentions of the original strategic vision. Specific accomplishment include:

- Introduced concept of information architecture to www.fidelity.com, leading a redesign project in 2000 that increased customer satisfaction numbers by 20 percentage points
- Currently design director for www.fidelity.com, which handles 95 percent of Fidelity's retail trading, serves over 1 billion pages per month and is consistently awarded #1 in class by Watchfire Gomez, Dalbar, Smartmoney, among others
- Created vision for and directed implementation of Active Trader Pro, a windows-based workstation or Fidelity's. Release of this product doubled Fidelity's market share, far exceeding original business goals of the project
- Directed first large-scale redesign of www.netbenefits.com, Fidelity's 401k and work benefits site. Redesign resulted in customer satisfaction ratings doubling and a first ever #1 in class award.
- Directed redesigns of Fidelity's broker-dealer and advisor windows applications and Web sites, once again resulting in vastly higher customer satisfaction numbers and best in class awards
- Planned and participated as part of the teaching team in a Fidelity-sponsored design course at the Stanford d.School
- Responsible for numerous design and customer experience and research innovations at Fidelity, including introducing information architecture to the company, rapid usability testing in branches, ethnographic customer research, paper prototype testing, remote testing with WebEx
- Helped create and refine the Fidelity design process, a rapid process used in designing across 10 Web sites and Windows applications, and repeated hundreds of times per year
- Led the creation of the first Fidelity style guide, which ensures a consistent user experience across all design projects
- Hired, trained, managed and directed dozens of great information architects, visual designers, and copywriters
- Earned 2 promotions, from Principle Designer, to Design Director, to Vice President in first 3 years.

**November 1998 - December 1999**  
**Information Architect**  
**iXL, Memphis, TN**

iXL was an interactive design and strategy consulting agency, specializing in end-to-end solutions, from original vision and strategy designs, to final implementations. I was hired as the first information architect in the Memphis office in order to build the information architecture and usability practice for the office. I was also the key creative lead for major client proposals and led the office's major projects. Specific successes included:

- Developed and delivered project proposals for the three largest projects the office won during my time there
- Hired and managed the teams of information architects and writers for a 2000-screen interactive training CD-ROM
- Created strategies and solutions for other large Web and other interactive projects
- Developed creative treatment, structure, market analysis, navigation guidelines, and content
- Conducted research and client interviews to identify audiences and goals
- Wrote high-level site design documents and site maps and outlines
- Created storyboards for individual pages to guide designers and programmers
- Managed staff of other information architects and writers assigned to large project development

**November 1996 - November 1998**  
**Internet Producer**  
**Morgan Keegan and Company, Inc., Memphis, TN**

Morgan Keegan & Company is an investment firm offering full-service investment banking, brokerage, trust and asset management. I was hired to design, write and code their first Web site. Specific responsibilities and accomplishments included:

- Planned and developed Morgan Keegan's first public Web site, working closely with the business and technology teams to define the site strategy and scale
- Created and implemented strategy for site support, including identifying and routing high quality customer leads that came through the site
- Wrote and edited content, converting dry, lengthy printed brochures into shorter, internet appropriate content
- Led the development and implementation efforts of new Web initiatives
- Wrote and edited all HTML and JavaScript, with one of the Web's first dynamic menu structures and drop-down site navigation
- Created content management system that allowed site changes several times per day by one person
- Designed and implemented site branding strategy and visual design assets

## **EDUCATION**

Master of Arts, English and Education  
The University of Iowa  
May 1996

Graduate Studies, English, Fiction Writing  
The University of Memphis  
August 1990 - December 1992

Bachelor of Arts, English  
The University of Memphis  
August 1990

## **CORE COMPETENCIES**

Online Customer Experience Strategy • User Interface Design • Redesigning Large-Scale Web Sites & Applications  
Design Team Management • Usability • Information Architecture • Customer Experience Vision Design  
Rapid Design Processes • Agile Development • Online Accessibility • Search Engine Optimization • Web 2.0  
Estimates and Budgeting • Personnel Recruiting and Development • Design Presentations • Project Proposals