

COMM-6961: Information Architecture*Client Profile Assignment*

January 17th, 2008

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Team PST

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**Company: PSTIA*****Business Group: Linked In.com***

We are a small information architecture firm called PSTIA that has been contracted by the company Linked In.com to develop a new module for their website. Linked In is a business and professional networking site with over 17 million subscribers. When Linked In first started out, it was a simple social networking site that allowed a person to establish virtual networks with past and present colleagues, partners, and customers. The idea was that most successful job seekers land new opportunities through their business networks. Basically, who you know is more important than what you know.

Linked In has grown so successful, that many employers now use the site to research potential employees. Through their own networks, they try to discover a person that both they and the potential employee have in common, in order to obtain recommendations.

Due to its popularity, Linked In has added many new services for both employers and job seekers, such as the ability to post job openings and search for candidates among Linked In's subscribers. Linked In would like to expand their employment tools further by adding a section where site users can get salary information on jobs of interest. In addition to allowing its subscribers to search from a selection of salary reports prepared by the government and various private parties, Linked In wishes to harness the power of its enormous subscriber base by anonymously collecting salary information from its subscribers (optional) and making it available to site users.

Exploratory research conducted by Linked In, suggests that users of existing salary sites are dissatisfied with the data gained because it is far too generalized. Users said they would like to see information such as specific location (city or zip code), number of years experience, level of education, whether the education is in a related or unrelated field, size of company, and industry. Users also wanted the ability to search on this more specific information and conduct queries to answer questions they may have such as what kind of jobs/salaries do people in my zip code hold that pay at least 60K per year with a bachelors degree. The management at Linked In feels that this kind of information could best be obtained from site users themselves, as it is not realistic to get this from the reports that are currently available from outside sources.

Engagement Objectives

PSTIA is to architect a new system for collecting, browsing, and searching on salary information that will fit within the structure, look, and feel of the current Linked In website.

PSTIA is to deliver design specifications for the following modules:

- A salary collection tool that is an optional component of user profile creation to include definition of information fields, list values, mandatory and optional fields, etc. This information must be editable at any time by the user, but not appear in the user's private or public profile (since anonymity is of prime importance). User's should be able to enter salary information for multiple jobs, if held within the last 3 years (older than that, and the salary information becomes irrelevant).
- A new salary section which is to become a top level menu item and appear between the tabs for Jobs & Hiring and Services. This section will also include the ability to add salary information to the network, as well as being the launch point for searching and browsing through the salary reports and self reported salary information.
- Creation of a powerful and flexible search engine for locating the specific salary information of interest to the end user. In addition to being able to choose from many search fields, users should be able to specify whether output contains itemized lists of the relevant information found, or whether that information should be combined and summarized (and if so, using what criteria/sort fields)

Linked In does not have any specifics defined about exactly what data fields should be included or the specifics on how data is viewed or reported. Since PSTIA are experts in such areas, Linked In expects that recommendations will be made that are based upon the exploratory research that has been conducted, along with the results of heuristic analysis of competitor sites, and best practices.

It is expected that only registered users of Linked In will have access to the salary information, and will be encouraged (though not required) to contribute personal salary information (anonymously) for the betterment of the community of job seekers.

Metrics

Linked In will measure the success of this implementation first by the number of users who complete a salary profile. Goals are to have 5% of subscribers in the first 90 days, 10% in the first 120 days, and 40% by the end of 1 year. In addition to measuring the number of contributions to the salary data, salary data will be compared with that of job postings as well as statistical peers to verify the salary contributions are accurate and useful.

Scope

PSTIA is not responsible for site engineering, development, or visual design, but will be expected to consult with these teams to make sure that the design recommendations are viable given various constraints.

Deliverables

Heuristic Analysis: PSTIA will assess and deliver a detailed analysis of the two largest competitor salary sites; Salary.com and Payscale.com

Personas: PSTIA will assess the key users of Linked In.com and develop a report identifying characteristics and requirements of the site's target audience.

User Experience Design: PSTIA will determine the tasks that would be typical of user of this new salary section, and develop a set of narratives that describe the process for completing each of these tasks. (use cases)

Task Flows and Site Map: PSTIA will create flow charts that detail the core tasks, noting entities and relationships. We will assign names to different pages, and create a site map based on the architecture (and showing where it fits into the existing site).

User Evaluations: PSTIA will conduct additional user research to verify that all user requirements are being met and to verify the task flows and scenarios are correct.

Wireframes: PSTIA will develop some mockups of the new site functionality (wireframes) which show each state in a task flow, all the field choices, and all the possible field values for drop-down lists. This will also include error messages.

Project Report and Presentation: PSTIA will deliver a detailed final report and presentation that explains the rationale for the design decisions made and also explains how everything works.

Budget & Schedule

Budget - \$200,000

Schedule

Heuristic Analysis: February 6, 2008

Personas: February 20, 2008

User Experience Design: March 5, 2008

Task Flows and Site Map: March 19, 2008

User Evaluations: April 2, 2008

Wireframes: April 16, 2008

Project Report and Presentation: April 21, 2008

Key Players

PSTIA consists of:

Sara Smith in San Jose, CA

Dustin Kirk in San Diego, CA

Kenneth Bowen in Seattle, WA

Linette Williams, in Minneapolis, MN

Each team member will be involved in all phases of the project, however PSTIA reserves the

right for different team members to take the lead on separate modules in order to capitalize on the strengths and expertise of each individual.

Linked In Project Team

Rupert Tadell - Senior Software Architect

Nancy Kline - Business Management

Candice Noodlee - Product Manager