
User Interface Design Vision

for

Cognetics Corporation Website Redesign

This document expresses the User Interface Design Vision for the Cognetics Corporation Website Redesign. Its purpose is to document the project mission--a shared vision of the product: it's business objectives, target users and design and usability goal – as they affect the user interface.

This document is made available as a sample of the content and approach of a User Interface Design Concept / Vision Document for a Cognetics design project. Typically, the contents of this report are developed at a team workshop which includes key stakeholders in the product design.

High Concept

Create a brief product concept summary which identifies what business needs the product will meet, for whom, and how.

The Cognetics web site will allow potential clients and other interested users to learn about Cognetics capabilities and background, presenting a clear, attractive and professional image in an easy-to-use interface.

Business Objectives

List the business objectives for the product which are relevant to the design of the user interface. This section is not intended to be a complete business case, but should include any important competitive considerations.

Cognetics' current web site does not clearly convey Cognetics' capabilities and is difficult to maintain. The web site information and graphics need updating. The goals of this site include:

- Clearly convey the capabilities, image, products, services of Cognetics.
- Develop branding of Cognetics – incorporating the new logo and other collateral material



A LUCID Deliverable
51 Everett Drive, #103B
Princeton Junction, NJ 08550
Phone 609.799.5005
Email info@cognetics.com
Web <http://www.cognetics.com>

- Design interesting/high-impact graphics to reinforce the new branding/logo “look” of Cognetics. This site should be a showpiece for visitors.
- Use screen shots, pictures and examples to provide concrete and specific examples of the work
- Provide customers and prospects with a way in which they can contact and communicate with Cognetics.
- Provide Cognetics’ salespersons with viable leads.

Note: See the Background section below for more information about Cognetics business background and general goals.

User Segments

Define the groups of people who will use this product, including a brief description of their relationship to the product, key needs the product will meet and characteristics which distinguish them from other users.

User Segment	Description	Key Characteristics
Potential clients in management position: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CIO ▪ Project Manager ▪ Product Mgr. ▪ Programmers 	People in a potential client company who have identified a problem in their software development process, but have not yet identified the solution to this problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not familiar with UCD (design/usability) domain, but will have some key that led them to the site ▪ Probably have (or are working directly for someone with) decision-making power ▪ May have to enlist support from staff, and may need help in this ▪ Wants to see credibility in their industry and type of problem ▪ Impatient – needs to ‘recognize themselves’ quickly
Potential clients in design/usability positions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Product Mgr ▪ UI Designer ▪ Usability Specialist or Manager ▪ Documentation or Training ▪ Corporate Style Guide Lead 	People in a potential client company who hold a design or usability position and already believe in user-centered design Similar to colleagues in attitude, but have a more targeted goal in investigating the company.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Familiar with the design/usability domain language and ‘buzz words’ ▪ Can differentiate between design and usability evaluation ▪ Already have an idea of the services they need and are looking for a match. Want to know ‘exactly’ what we do ▪ Want to see experience in situations similar to theirs and other validation ▪ Want to understand company

		<p>philosophy (for a match to theirs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerned about too-generalized consulting ▪ May be 'out on a limb' pushing UCD in their company and need support ▪ May not have full decision making power
Job Seekers	<p>People looking for work in the user-centered design / usability field.</p> <p>May also be colleagues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Want to know if jobs are available ▪ Want to develop a picture of the company to see if they think there is a match
Colleagues	<p>Other usability and design specialists who want to assess Cognetics' capabilities or find papers and presentations on the site</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curious ▪ Looking for specific papers or presentations
Headhunters	<p>Undesirable visitors, except that they might also have names for us, and occasionally make a match between a client and company</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Looking for names to target

If we had to prioritize these user segments, their order (and the rationale for this order) would be:

1. **Potential clients in management position** – These users have the greatest decision-making authority. In addition, they are the group we are reaching least effectively right now, so making the site work for them is a priority.
2. **Potential clients in usability positions** – These users are our allies and advocates in their organizations. They have many of the same issues as those in management positions, but are easier to reach because they already talk much of our language
3. **Job seekers** – Making the company an attractive target for job seekers is important for our future growth. Outside of needing easy access to job information, they will have many of the same needs as colleagues.
4. **Colleagues** – This is still a small industry, and our reputation among our colleagues matters. They can also be a source of work or employees through referrals, or could be potential partners. They will be tolerant of “messages” as long as they don't interfere with their reaching the information they want (services, papers and presentations) easily.
5. **Headhunters** – Generally undesirable, they can also be a source of referrals. This group can be treated as an intersection of job seekers and colleagues.

Usability Goals

Identify the usability goals for the product. Using the “Five E’s” below, assign a percentage value to each to indicate its relative importance in this context, as well as describing specific goals in each categories. Include metrics (such as time or percentage success) where appropriate. Usability goals are not a re-statement of the business objectives, but should address issues of user performance and satisfaction.

Usability Characteristic	Weight	Specific Objectives for this Product
Effective	30%	The most important goal is for the site to be effective in helping potential customers identify Cognetics as a solution to their needs. Users should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find the answer to key questions (such as “What does Cognetics do?”) Recognize the applicability of Cognetics to target situations
Engaging	25%	An important goal of the site is for users to favorably remember their experience. Users should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believe the site projects a professional appearance Feel comfortable exploring the site Be able to read information without strain or extra effort. Be able to identify all of the pages of the site as being part of “Cognetics” <p>Note: Download time is an important consideration that must be balanced against the high rating for engaging.⁽¹⁾</p>
Easy to Learn	25%	Most visits to the site will be by first-time users, who must be able to learn to use it transparently <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate paths should be provided to reach key information
Efficient	15%	Pages on the site may be cited by users for others to find. If a direct URL is not provided, they should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to reach any page through an efficient path (no more than 3 pages deep to any information) Be able to find related information from any page, without needed to go back to a home or menu page <p>Note: Need to consider carefully how well the site can optimize citations</p> <p>Note: Efficiency of page load time is a primary goal, higher than the navigation efficiency indicates.⁽¹⁾</p>
Error Tolerant	5%	There is little calculation or forms-type interaction on the site, so this characteristic is not as important (assuming that the site is constructed without link or script errors)
Total	100%	

Note 1: Page load time may be a trade-off between Engaging and Efficient. In considering load time, efficient load times will supercede an engaging screen despite their relative placement on the overall weighting. The only exception to this rule would be large screen images (or related displays of project details) which load only on request or Acrobat versions of white papers.

Technical Constraints

Identify any technical or environmental constraints which will affect the design of the product. Include any information about the delivery platform, user access methods, software development environment, etc. which are known at this time – or the range of options under consideration.

The site must display correctly in all popular browsers. According to theCounter.com, 94% of the market in December 1999 used IE 4.x, IE 5.x and Netscape 4.x. We need to consider whether Netscape 3.x (the next most frequent browser) should also be considered.

The following technical capabilities can be used

- HTML 3.2
- CSS (ensuring cross-browser correctness and acceptable degradation)
- Javascript (cross-browser only)

- Web Accessibility Guidelines (a W3C Recommendation) should be followed.

- Any resolution-dependent screen layout should be optimized for a non-maximized browser on an 800 x 600 screen (80% run in this resolution or better).

- Images should be optimized for rapid download. Ideally the web-safe 256 color palette should be used for greatest universality. However, 88% or better of the market run in 16-bit or better, so high-color may be selectively used if images are (a) be efficiently small in file size and (b) degrade to 256 color intelligibly. Colors must also work effectively on a wide variety of monitors including laptops, as many of our potential clients travel extensively and are likely to be using LCD screens.

Plug ins may be used under the following conditions:

- Acrobat is acceptable for document download, and when a summary is available in HTML
- The plug-in is free and widely available (Flash, Shockwave, etc)
- Use of the plug in is not required, and no information is available only through this technology

High Level Functionality Description

List the key functionality of the product. It is not intended as a complete functional requirement, but to state – from a user's point of view – the capabilities of the software. If use case analysis will be used or is already underway, this section should be structured as a list of essential use cases. Where simple diagrams can help explain the business model or navigational model currently envisioned, include them.

Although this list is not intended as a site structure map, the site contents will include:

- Cognetics' capabilities both at a general and detailed level
 - "What we do"

- Services
- Industries where Cognetics focuses
- How we work
- Portfolio
 - Case studies
 - Live samples when available
 - Bio type stuff on employees & affiliate companies
- Credibility and background
 - Awards
 - Client lists
 - History
- Design industry information
 - Papers & presentations
- LUCID
 - What it is
 - Documentation
 - “Endorsements”
 - How it relates to Cognetics’ projects
- Information for visitors and job seekers
 - Contacting Cognetics
 - Directions to Cognetics
 - Job opportunities

It will be important to consider different “platform” interests in our users (web vs legacy vs client server or internal user vs external user) and be sure that we have good entry points for each.

Keywords

These keywords were selected by polling the sales and management leadership, and so might well represent Cognetics’ current self-image:

usability, user interface design, usability consulting, interface, user interface development, human factors, screen design, software interface design, LUCID, usability analysis, user interviews, Web design, call center re-engineering, design consulting, software interface development, redesign, knowledge management, electronic publishing

Screen Sketches

When appropriate, screen sketches which illustrate the design concept can be included. Be careful that these are not premature forays into screen design, but if the Design Concept Workshop has included rough sketches they should be preserved for discussion here.

