

Deanna Bird Vignettes

Worked at Maptech 1995 - 2008

User Interface Designer:

Maptech Inc
2000-2008

The company provides navigational mapping software for land, marine, aeronautical, weather and other applications.

Less than 100 employees

- Responsible for creation of icons and GUI art for Maptech software products
- Work with Development Staff to translate UI specifications into final artwork
- Explore new strategies for designing and implementing artwork into software products.
- Stay current with Graphics Arts Software packages to fully understand the tools available to us for UI design.
- Work towards becoming an experienced resource for knowledge and understanding of UI design concepts and practices.
 - Attended training program at Cooper, San Francisco, CA. 2007 Interaction Design with an emphasis on usability, human-computer interaction (HCI) and user-centered design (UCD)
- Understand what our competition as well as industry software leaders are doing from UI design perspective.
- Management of all phases of graphics user interfaces design for desktop applications.
- Assessment of client needs and developed style guides; plan and implement projects from initial conceptual design, final delivery and client approval.
- Oversight and successful delivery of completed software projects.
- Responsible for wire frame creation and design.
- Creation of user interface diagrams, designs and layouts to match requested specifications.
- Presentation of design ideas using prototypes and mock-ups.
- Management of simultaneous and multiple, ongoing software projects.

TOPIC: As the sole UI designer at Maptech I implemented the concept of Interaction Design.

BACKGROUND: Maptech's earlier versions of software products had for the most part the look and feel of a Microsoft software product. Users complained about a "dizzying array of buttons and dials staring them in the face" The UI style was clumsy and boring, menu and tools were often difficult for the user to find. Engineers were supplied a list of software features to implement with no input from the users or a UI Designer. The software developers were playing the roles of engineers and designers. The company needed to start thinking more about objectives to reduce user frustration and increase user productivity and satisfaction. The UI needed to be simple to use, sophisticated, and sexy.

ACTION: I started to research the concept of Interaction Design via the internet and books. Eventually I made two trips to San Francisco to attend Interactive Design training at Copper U. A good design helps the customer focus on goals instead of fighting with the interface. We tapped into our beta testing customers to understand their needs and expectations. In addition I worked with the Sales, and Marketing staffing to gain a better understanding of user goals, skills, experience and needs. I worked with the Development staff to translate UI specification into wireframes and prototypes. I translated all the visual information/specification into a Visual Style guide for final approval.

RESULTS: The result was customer satisfaction. A much more popular, easy to use, user friendly product. The look and feel was more modern and exciting for the user. Everything was integrated into a highly intuitive—simply touch and drag your finger across the screen. There are no confusing buttons, keys or dials, just an elaborate, do-everything, touch-screen graphical user interface (GUI). Customers have been quoted to say, "It's all simplicity by design. Anyone can use it after a few minutes of familiarization. After a few hours you'll be a wizard with the system."

Intuitive features and touch screen display provide the boat owner with an out-of-the-box easy to operate system. The UI eliminates the confusing buttons, keys or dials found on typical navigation systems. Instead, the boat owner with just a touch of a finger can view and change charts, create routes, see high resolution navigation photos, get tide charts, drop-in radar overlays, control the auto pilot and much more.

I designed the ultra-simplified "On the Water Mode" interface for Maptech's legacy software, which was widely enthusiastically received.

<http://www.asktog.com/basics/firstPrinciples.html>

- Effective interfaces are visually apparent and forgiving, instilling in their users a sense of control. Users quickly see the breadth of their options, grasp how to achieve their goals, and do their work.
- Effective interfaces do not concern the user with the inner workings of the system. Work is carefully and continuously saved, with full option for the user to undo any activity at any time.
- Effective applications and services perform a maximum of work, while requiring a minimum of information from users.

Few samples of interfaces I designed at <http://www.deannabird.com/pages/uiDesings.html>

Software Development Manager:

2003-2007

This position is responsible for managing Maptech's software development group. This includes software design, development schedules, development documentation, and user guides.

Software Development

- Create realistic schedules

- Managed :Create and maintain test plans
- Managed: Create, refine, and maintain specifications and design documents
- Managed: End-user documentation creation, quality, and accuracy.
- Managed: End-user help creation, quality, and accuracy.
- Work with Quality Assurance staff to ensure highest quality software
- Monitoring and reporting on scheduled progress
- Strive to implement software that is clean, efficient, and bug free.
- Understand all software, features, and designs.
- Work with Release Engineering staff
- Strive to keep unscheduled projects to a minimum.
- Create, maintain, and assign task breakdowns
- Estimate task sizes
- Take proactive steps to ensure that all deadlines are met
- Collaborate with development group and others around the company to ensure the best solutions are designed for various problems, issues, and designs.
- Ensure all raised technical issues are resolved in a time efficient manor.
- Ensure dependencies do not cause undo delays.

Management

- Supervise staff of 12, including 4 contractors.
- Assigning tasks to development staff
- Estimating task sizes
- Tracking and reporting on progress
- Taking steps to ensure that all deadlines are met
- Hold weekly staff meetings.
- Evaluating performance
- Motivating and helping development staff
- Recruiting and train effective development staff
- Terminate poor performers.
- Manage employee salary and timesheets
- Manage manpower status.
- Contribute to bi-weekly management meetings.
- Contribute to monthly company-wide management meetings.
- Direct and compensate staff in a positive manner.
- Collaborate with hardware and IT groups to solve development problems
- Organize and re-organize Development work space as required. Coordinate with Facilities. Order Development office furniture etc as necessary.

TOPIC: Improve Development department/team communication.

BACKGROUND: Programmers have never been known for their ability to communicate well with each other (or their managers). They worked in a vacuum. There was hardly any communication between engineers or management. As a result they were constantly reinventing the wheel because there was no communication among the team.

ACTION: I made it my goal to reverse the situation. 1) I hired and promoted Software Engineers into the newly created positions of Project Leads. A total of 5 new Lead positions were created for Maptech's major software products. This position was responsible for the project leadership,

technical leadership, and the design, implementation, and delivery of Maptech's navigational software products. In addition to interfacing with Maptech internal staff resources, customer and partner interactions was required for product features, usability, and acceptance. This position also had the responsibility for the management of contract developers in-house and out-of-office resources and recruiting team members. The Leads had teams ranging from 1 to 5 engineers on their teams. Team members reported to the Leads. The Leads reported to me.

RESULTS: The Development department ran smoother than it ever had. There was improved communication between the groups/teams, and sharing of knowledge. The result was an efficient working environment. Most importantly projects were being completed on time. We were meeting our deadlines for the first time in 7 years!

TOPIC: Construct and maintain realistic schedules and goals.

BACKGROUND: When I took over the management of the development team there were no concrete schedules. The Software Engineers worked off specifications that were continually being modified. This resulted in "feature creep". Features added as the project was underway. The Development team was always being blamed for late dates even though Sales was requesting additional features added while the project was underway. Software bug fixes were always being added as the project was underway. This was a real drain on resources and would interrupt the work flow. Sales also requested Software point releases be made to fix bugs for previously releases software while the team was working on the next release of software. This usually resulted in a complete change of priorities and completion dates. The engineers and QA team would have to put all their attention on the point release.

At any given time I was responsible for coordinating around 10 Software Development projects at a time.

ACTION: The writing and approval of software specifications was built into the development schedules. All the schedules were built and maintained in Microsoft Project. The schedules were then posted on the intranet for all in the company to view and monitor progress. Feature requests were approved by upper management before development got underway. Time estimates for every task/line item was maintained in MS Project.

I met with the Team Leader to review schedule progress weekly.

If additional software features were requested while the project was underway approval was required from upper management. An official Software Change Request form needed to be filled out by the requesting party. If approved the line items and time estimates were added to the schedule. All involved were informed that the project would be delayed and a new completion dated was posted on the intranet.

RESULTS: Everyone involved knew exactly what the software feature for the next scheduled release consisted of. Everyone had access to the schedule and couldn't claim they didn't know the intimate details. The Development team was no longer working in a vacuum. Everyone involved was accountable for reviewing the schedules daily. Communication was at its best. The cardinal rule was if it wasn't on the schedule it wasn't going to make it into the next software release. There was no longer the mystery of what the Software Development department did.

* Most importantly projects were being completed on time. We were meeting our agreed upon deadlines for the first time in 7 years!

Sea Ray Project Manager:

2001-2003

Sea Ray Navigator is navigation made easy.

Sea Ray Navigator gives you all the information needed to keep you headed in the right direction. Its unsurpassed simplicity allows you to become a navigation expert instantly.

The intuitive Touch Screen Command system helps you outline your course, conditions and contours with the touch of your finger. And the precise charts and visuals will keep you confident whether planning a long voyage or enjoying the waters close to home.

This sophisticated navigation and information system is standard on Sea Ray Yachts and optional on Sport Yachts. Visit your Sea Ray dealer today to touch one for yourself.

The new and exclusive Sea Ray Navigator can plot your boating course with the touch of a finger. This navigation system will make you an expert navigator in minutes while tracking your course through aerial pictures or bottom contours. The system is based on the principles of simplicity and accuracy while keeping the entire experience fun for our customers. The Sea Ray Navigator is a revolution in the marine industry.



- As Project Manager I reported to the development director and was responsible for the following tasks:
- Worked closely with the Lead Developer to set up and maintain a detailed work schedule for the team using an online task tracking system. I was the central point of contact for the team, fielding phone calls and responding to email requests from productions, ensuring they are reviewed promptly, actioned and added to the schedule. The role included: preparing weekly reports, tracking resources used on projects and general administrative duties e.g. arranging meetings and updating the team's Intranet page.
- Collaborated with the software development management team on employee initiatives, organization changes, solution delivery strategies and department goals
- Assist in the preparation of management reports and presentations
- Monitor and report monthly on department issues and trends, progress against department goals, and critical software development metrics
- Lead process and workplace improvement efforts
- Organized department functions, such as all-hands meetings and celebrations

TOPIC: Organized and acted as communications liaison for the development of a new navigational software and hardware line both within Maptech and within an outside vendor.

BACKGROUND: Sea Ray Navigator was a new product hardware/software line. Maptech had made an exclusive agreement with [Sea Ray](#) to offer the system only on the builder's top-of-the-line yachts. I was promoted into the position to oversee, organize and communicate all aspects of the project.

ACTION: I was responsible for coordinating schedules for both the hardware and software. I was responsible for disseminating this information to Sales, Marketing, Technical Writer, CTO, CEO, Upper management, software engineers, QA, Graphics, and [Wytan](#), the hardware company tasked with building the water-proof touch-screen computer, etc. In this role I had to work, interact and coordinate with employees from every department. Held weekly meetings with team members. Reported to upper management monthly.

Reported to the Software Development Manager, Responsible for monitoring and managing the delivery of Sea Ray software within agreed time scales; involving coordination with the resource teams (software developers and testers) whilst also supervising department workload (analyzing tickets and delegating responsibility).

Interacted with both the software development and QA teams to plan, assign and monitor development tasks – communicating with other departments to report progress of all software development activities.

This product was either going to make us or break us as a company. I worked very closely with all involved. I conducted weekly Sea Ray meeting with the key players. I was extremely vigilant. Nothing fell through the cracks on my watch.

RESULTS: The product was a success. Upon successfully organizing the Sea Ray project and organizing the team, Sea Ray signed a contract for a substantial number of units per year. I was able to move onto more challenges within the company now that everything was in place. I was promoted to Software Development Manager.

- Sold 400 to 500 unit per year
- Retail was 12.5k
- Net to Sea Ray was 8k

Digital Designer:

1995-2008

TOPIC: I was asked to wear many different and challenging hats over the course of my tenure and I always took the ball and ran with it.

BACKGROUND: I was often asked to help with varying, miscellaneous artwork. If another department was facing a tight deadline I would volunteer my time to help in anyway I could. This

ranged from icon designing, cd labels, state overview drawings, GIF animations for PowerPoint presentations, InDesign page layout etc.

I was eager to assist in conceptual artwork for project approval presentations.

Palette Specialist:

- Responsible for creating Photoshop index color palettes for a wide range of maps, charts and aerial photos.
- I determined the color palettes, style and schemes for Maptech's paper chart product line, which was No. 1 in the market share domestically and, ultimately the world's No. 1 private chart maker.
- Developed process for compressing and colorizing topographical maps, marine charts and aeronautical maps for software products.

Graphics Artist:

- I assisted the Paper Production/Publishing division by putting my design and layout skills to work on the 600-page Embassy Cruising Guide book. I successfully combined text, photos, and nautical charts into book chapter using Adobe CS3 InDesign. I used my problem solving skills to overcome design challenges and worked with editors to proof and update layouts. I'm a conscientious worker and a strong team player. I'm a true artist, and I know to use my creative thinking to make smart decisions.

Continuing Education:

- Currently enrolled in Great Bay Community College's *Web Style and Design* certificate program. Developed web sites using XHTML, and CSS. Used software applications such as HTML-Kit and Dreamweaver to perform basic file and server management tasks including file transfer and site maintenance on the local machine. Furthering CSS skills, typography, color theory, download time and solid design principles. Course topics include information architecture, site design, layout, type, color, image manipulation and formats, copyrights, element integration, and compatibility issues with multiple browsers.

ACTION: Learned new software technologies. I was always eager to take on new challenges. I would volunteer my time and expertise to help in anyway I could.

RESULTS:

- The recently published, 560-page *Long Island Sound* Embassy Cruising Guide wouldn't have been completed on time if I hadn't volunteered my time to help.
- I adapted to an ever changing job role and I always accepted new challenges and met the needs of the company. Whether just a concept or detailed spec I would always take the jobs on willingly, add value to it, and return quality material. The combination of being well organized, a professional business person with broad and strong graphics arts talent resulted in me wearing many hats during my tenure at Maptech.

Color Matching Manager:

1988-1995

- Department manager. Oversaw two employees and overall growth of the department.
- Skilled color matcher. Managed a department for 7 years that matched and formulated Pantone colors and custom colors using an IBM Color Computer and Macbeth Color-eye Spectrophotometer.
- Photo engraver
- Paste-up artist/graphic designer. Traditional board paste-up, shooting, preparing film for processing.
- Camera ready/darkroom artist

TOPIC: Promoted to Color Matching Manager. Previous manager left the color matching department in a shambles when she left the company abruptly.

BACKGROUND: I had been splitting my time between the photo-engraving department, graphics and color matching department when the Color Matching Manager left the company without notice. Color orders had piled up and the general organization of the department was in need of being revamped.

ACTION: I eagerly took on the challenge of cleaning up the department and getting overdue orders out the door. I got authorization to hire an assistant. We both put in the overtime to get the overdue orders out the door while taking on new jobs requests.

RESULTS: After successfully getting the orders back on track and the department organized I was offered the fulltime position of Color Matching Manager. I was fast, efficient and have a great eye for color.