Designs User Experiences for Rack Room Shoes

ADAM WHITTEN

School
The Art Institute of Charlotte, a branch of Miami International University of Art & Design

Program of Study
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Web Design & Interactive Media, 2015

Job Title & Employer
Lead Interactive Designer, Rack Room Shoes

Adam Whitten is the lead interactive designer for Rack Room Shoes. He works alongside ecommerce and other internal teams and creates and maintains the style guide for both Rack Room Shoes and Off Broadway Shoe Warehouse. "I also design user experiences from low-fidelity sketches to hi-fidelity pixel perfect mockups and those mockups into working and production ready coded files. And I measure recently released product features to establish benchmarks and to identify potential areas of improvement," he says.

Adam built his experience in positions for Galoree.com and Off Broadway Shoes before earning his current position. A typical day involves updating the company's website with notifications of flash sales, posting customer targeted story updates, and updating links. "I'm always working on the next seasonal update. This includes look and feel, photography, graphical elements, photoshoot location, and models." He's also working on a redesign of the company's current website.

He admits that it was difficult to find his niche. "I was stuck in a weird career spot where I was just designing what my boss gave me. I'd get a mock up, I would wireframe a layout, do some more mock ups, and eventually code it out. I would then schedule it for the production website to go live on a specific date. I was getting bored (I thought), but really, I was getting comfortable." He wanted to find a challenge, so he pushed himself to learn more about user interface and user experience. "I took some online classes to help me. I would work 8- 9 hour days at work and come home and work 3-5 hours on learning user interface and user experience. It paid off."

Adam adds that working in both web and graphic design can be challenging. "Both have their pros and cons. For me, web has always been tough because you're learning new languages all the time. In order to succeed my field, I had to really want to do it and I had to keep pushing myself to keep learning new things."

Adam, who in 2015 earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Web Design & Interactive Media from The Art Institute of Charlotte, says that he received an honest education that explained the pros and cons of the industry. "I had talented and knowledgeable instructors who really took the time and energy to make sure they always tried to get 150% out of me. When I would do something, they knew I could do better. Even if I was done they would push me to redo things. I look up to a lot of these men and women and thank them."