ELEVATE YOUR UX TEAM TO SUPERHERO STATUS:
Forge a Guild!
Is your UX team (or, maybe it’s just you) over-committed and under-resourced?

Have you successfully fought for buy-in, only to find you can’t deliver on all the requests for UX inputs?

We have the answer of you...
FORM A GUILD!

- Scale UX without extra headcount
- Delegate appropriate design decisions
- Raise awareness for UX needs
- Create advocates throughout your organization
WHAT IS A
UX GUILD?

The most trusty sidekick a UX team could have...
WHAT IS A UX GUILD?

× A league of empowered developers and QA engineers
× Each member volunteers to
  × be the UX advocate for their product line or feature area
  × oversee smaller UX stories: small UI additions or text changes
× Target membership: at least 1 champion from each scrum team that works on customer-facing functionality
× The sidekicks: buddy system, pattern library, and UX reviews
INSPIRATION: SPOTIFY

http://blog.crisp.se/2012/11/14/henrikkniberg/scaling-agile-at-spotify
INSPIRATION: SECURITY CHAMPIONS

- Another centralized team
- Veracode’s Security Team needed to increase capacity and improve the security of our software.
- Security is Job #1
- Security Guild = More secure software
- UX Guild = More User-friendly software
The kickoff was a 2-day event aimed at introducing developers to basic user experience concepts. We discussed:

- Cognitive psychology for UX
- Nielsen’s Heuristics
- CSS building blocks
10 Usability Heuristics for UI Design

1. Visibility of system status
   - Elements should be visible to users and need not necessarily be padlock locked.

2. Match between system and the real world
   - Provide feedback indicating successful or unsuccessful actions.

3. User control and freedom
   - Provide means ofma and feedback for accurate results.

4. Consistency and standards
   - Ensure consistent and predictable interface.

5. Error prevention
   - Reduce risk of errors through clear instructions.

6. Recognition rather than recall
   - Use clear and consistent labels and icons.

7. Flexibility and efficiency of use
   - Allow for different actions and responses.

8. Aesthetic and minimal design
   - Use consistent design elements and avoid clutter.

9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
   - Provide clear and concise error messages.

10. Help and documentation
    - Provide comprehensive help and documentation.

The Psychology of UX

Memory
- Short-term memory: 3-5 seconds
- Long-term memory: 30 seconds

Cognitive Load
- Cognitive load reduces as information is processed.
- Load can be minimized by reducing the complexity of tasks.

Perception
- Familiarity: Recognize objects or symbols.
- Distraction: Avoid distracting elements.
- Continuity: Maintain consistent design elements.
VERACODE UX - A CENTRALIZED TEAM

- Team composition:
  - 5 UX Designers, 1 Designer/Manager, 1 User Researcher; 3 UA Writers; 1 UX Sr. Director

- UX team is centralized and serves ~20 development scrum teams

- UX maintains a separate backlog
Stories requiring UX are labeled “ux_needed”
Those stories become visible on our bat signal board
In grooming we decide UX Guild or UX Designer
If UX Guild, we:
  × Label the story ux_guild
  × Add a sub-task for UX Review
  × Provide guidance to the dev on where to find patterns and component code
UX and Dev Process Diagram: A guide for development teams

**KEY**
- Development Team Task
- User Experience Task

**When story or epic is created**
- Will this impact the user experience?
  - Yes: Apply "ux_needed" label
  - No: UX Team reviews "ux_needed" tickets weekly

If the work needs to be completed by a UX designer?
- Yes: Groom, assign to designer, and add to sprint.
- No: UX work

UX work
- Provide deliverables to development team

Development work
- Was there UX on this?
  - Yes: UX review of work
  - No: Scrum team finalizes work

When project is ready for QA, assign a UX review outtake to UX Team member.

Dev scrum master assigns UX guidemember to task

The work impacts the UX if it changes any of the following:
- Information display
- Interface
- Navigation
- Accessibility
- Usability
- User stories
- Use cases
- User interviews
- Any other touchpoints between the product and user
UX GUILD RESPONSIBILITIES

- UX Guild members are accountable to their managers and goal on the following:
  - Apply ux_needed to stories that impact UX/UI
  - Guide team members to adhere to common patterns
  - Raise user experience questions during all team activities
  - Perform design work for stories that have been marked as ux_guild
  - If/when you encounter topics outside common patterns or prior experience, escalate to UX
  - Notify UX buddy when the design is ready for review
  - Attend and participate in a minimum of 80% of the monthly guild meetings.
How did it go? Year 1

- Low participation #s
- Low engagement
- Over committed developers; lack of enthusiasm for subsequent meetings
Improving the Original Model

- UX team members gained empathy for the often over-committed developer (UX guild volunteers tend to volunteer for many other things as well)
- As time went on we were able to discuss topics that were relevant and interesting to the guild members
- Guild meetings are designed to develop Guild member’s UX super powers
At the beginning of every year we send out a questionnaire with seven questions around what they like, don’t like, and want out of the UX Guild.

We have gotten useful feedback from roughly 70% of members.

The feedback has been very actionable, and the members appreciate that they get input into the UX Guild goals, and teaching process.
MONTHLY MEETINGS

× One hour/month
× Developers share learnings from the past month
  × Solutions to difficulties
  × Time saving techniques
× Next, the UI framework developer fields questions
× Then we move on to the “main event” of the meeting...
EXAMPLES OF MAIN EVENTS

- CSS labs
- Advanced layout techniques discussions
- Movies on design thinking

The meeting concludes with the UX Guild leader asking the members for feedback on the meeting.
**PROCESS STICKERS AND BRANDING**

- UX Guild buttons for members
- Laptop stickers that show part of our UX process in JIRA
- Emails to the Guild get branded with the UX Guild logo
UX Guild Slack Channel

- Building community
  - 50 people on the UX Guild Slack channel from all over the organization
  - Not just UX Guild members
- Spontaneous Design Critiques - exposing our guild members to giving and receiving critiques
- “Bad Design Tuesday”
Going Forward

× Accomplishment badges
× More UX Guild outreach
What works well

- Scaling UX designers across multiple projects
- Increases UX designer’s ability to focus on the important stories
- Developers gain empathy for the difficulties of UX and design work

What could be better

- Educating dev teams + PMs on UX Guild role is ongoing
QUESTIONS?

Jennifer Bullard: jenbullard@gmail.com
Carol Bergantino: cbergartino@veracode.com
Taylor Hayward: thayward@veracode.com