COPILOT

Tips to Pick
the Right Web Developer

MCN Communications & Technology
Conference

Feb. 21, 2017

My name is Cary Walski, founder and nerd-in-chief of Copilot. When I hatched the idea for this panel, I was thinking of more of a horror story theme.

Let the Right One in – Nonprofit Website Edition. Where we'd all trade scary stories of project gone terribly awry. You'll be relieved to know that it evolved into a nautical theme instead! But I still have one scary slide to share with you and that's the next one…

30%

At Copilot, around 30% of people who approach us about a new website have launched a website within the past year. The project fell short for some reason. As a nonprofit your work is too important for this to happen to you!

YOUR NAUTICAL GUIDE TO SUCCESS ON THE HIGH SEAS OF WEB DEVELOPMENT!

OUR DESTINATION

We want you to select the right web developer, so the stage is set for you to complete your next redesign on budget, and on time.

C☺PILOT

OUR COURSE

- Step 1: Trade Tales
- Step 2: Get Yer Staff on Board
- Step 3: Chart Yer Course (And Stay Ye Upon It!)
- Step 4: Recruit Yer Crew

C🐾PILOT

WHO ARE WE?

- **Cary Walski,** nerd-in-chief, Copilot
- **Eric Howard,** digital strategist, Fourth Sector Consulting
- **Brooke Thomson,** development and communications director, Annex Teen Clinic
- **Austin Wiebe,** marketing and communications director, CLUES – Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio

C⊗PILOT

WHO ARE YOU?

(Hint: Smart People)

COPILOT

Feel free to ask questions, also feel free to share your own advice too. If you have a specific example that illustrates something that we're talking about here go ahead.

How many are thinking of doing a new site in the next year?
How many are currently doing a new site?
How many just launched a site?

Before you begin your recruitment process for a web developer, it's incredibly helpful to have conversations and learn from outside sources about redesigning a website. The landscape of technology changes so quickly – there's always something new to learn!

Question for Panelists: What sorts of things have you done to get up to speed before embarking on a new web development project?
(One-on-one conversations, books, blogs, reports, membership associations, etc.???)
Brooke: Redesign conveniently came on heels of a Strategic Planning Process

ASK AUDIENCE FOR IDEAS
In case not mentioned – Talk about NTEN, MCN Communications Lunches, TechTalk Listserve, MSP NPTech

STEP 2: GET YER STAFF ON BOARD

You know you need a new website, how did you go about convincing others that you did? (A new website, we just did that 5 years ago?) Who did you need to convince and how?

Did you do anything to get staff input on what they'd like to get from a new website?

Which staff members did you tap to get their perspective? Did you recruit any of them to serve on a "web team"?

(If not mentioned, be sure to talk to administrative staff)

Not only good to take a sounding on what people want from the new website, but also what staff members can offer it…
Brooke: Polled staff to figure out who could write, who could take photos, etc.

How did you get input while managing expectations of who would have the final say about decisions? 'Cause there's always that gal or guy who's all like…

Managing expectations: Who gives input, and who "decides"?

Speaking of, how was your board involved in your project? Did you need to manage expectations with them?

(Good time to point out small/new org experience versus new, Eric was the right board member to have on a web team, ask him about that.)

Any tips on managing up when you're the expert, but there may be higher-ups that need persuading? (Austin)

Cary – This step is all about figuring out your goals, where you want to be after this website redesign is completed. A firm believer in talking about this in advance. It doesn't mean figuring out the technical requirements that are going to get you there, but you should have an idea of where you'd like to be!

So how did you go about figuring out what you wanted from your new website?

Did you do any discussion or research about your audiences or who you were trying to connect with? What did that look like?

Did you document these decisions about your goals and audiences in anyway?
Austin – Need for multilingual website.

Were there any other technical needs that you knew would affect your website?
Brooke – Need to integrate other systems with your website.
Austin – Need for a very secure website and a need for ADA Compliance. Does your org know what's expected if they get government grants?

How did you figure out your project budget range?

How did you figure out your project timeline?

SPEAKING OF TIMELINES, ONE OF THE BIGGEST THINGS THAT CAN DERAIL YOURS IS…

**AVOID THE BRAND-MUDA TRIANGLE!**

BIG PROJECT HANG-UP – NOT HAVING A SOLID BRAND IN ADVANCE!

Did you double check to make sure your brand was solid before you started your website redesign?

Did who you work with as a web developer change based on a need to have someone with good branding skills as well?
Austin – Recruited a web developer that could work well with their graphic designer

STEP 4: PICK YER CREW
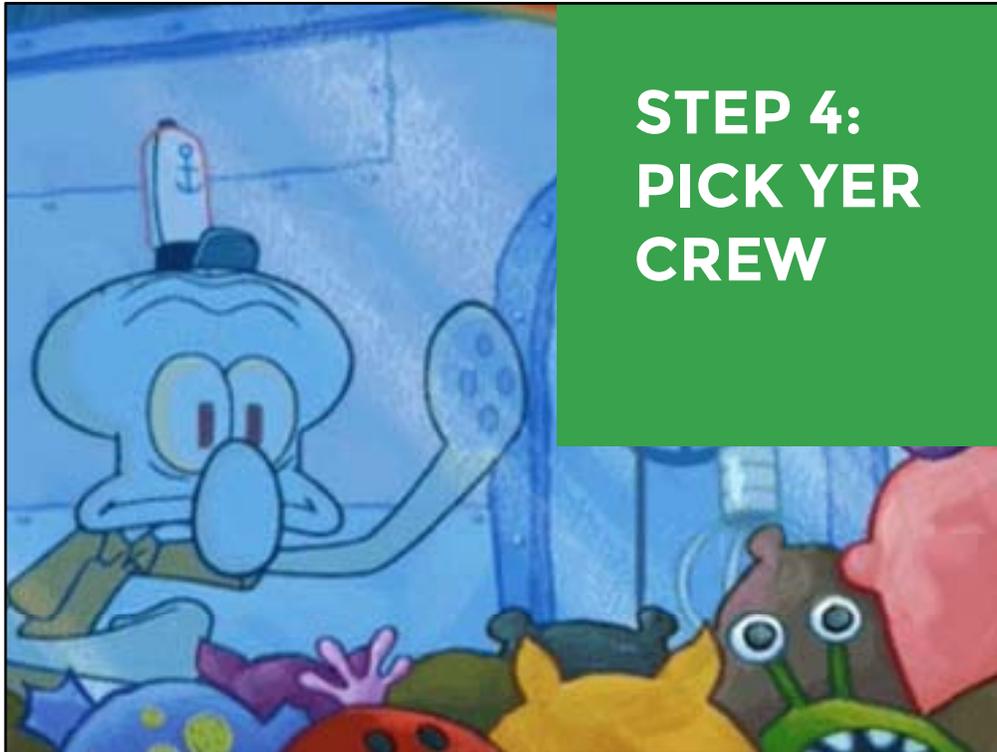
Now that you know your web team, got your staff on board, and understand where your ship is headed, you're finally ready to recruit your crew of web developers.

How did you get recommendations and find leads for web developers?

What did your selection process look like?
- Did you do an RFP? (Austin – Hiring a consultant to do process?)
- Did you talk to their other clients?
- Did you ask for examples of their work? (Eric – Ask for similar budget sizes!)

What do you think the most important questions that you asked them were?

What did you wish you asked your potential web developers?

Did you recruit help for any other aspects of the project, like photography, content writing, etc.?

Did you consult a lawyer or other outside help?

How long did the process take?

What final factors made the decision for you?

Now it's time for your questions!

THANKS FOR JOINING US!