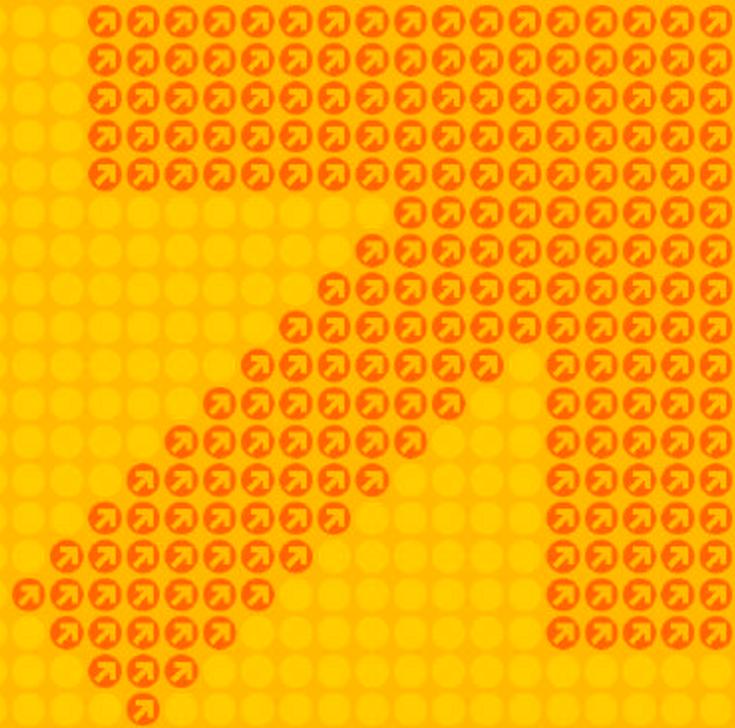


User Experience: Well Worth the Investment



August 16, 2001



plural
strength.multiplied.



Agenda

- Introduction to User Experience
- The Cost of Neglecting User Experience
- Defining User Experience
- Creating User Experiences Through Process
- Defining the Audiences
- Assessing a User Experience
- When to Assess a User Experience

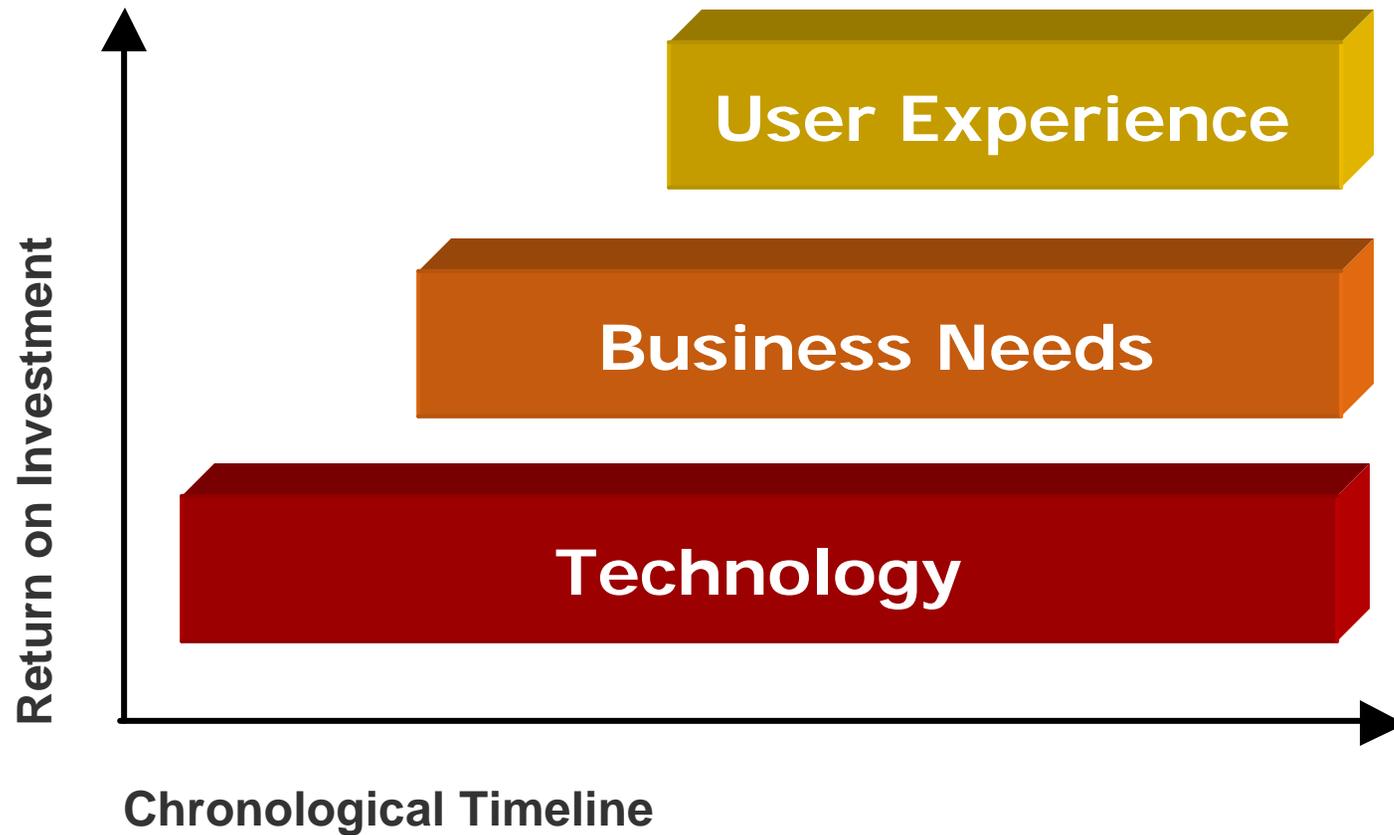


Introduction to User Experience

- Every user has an experience when they interact with an organization's online presence, and these user experiences are directly related to that organization's success.
- To build long-term, profitable relationships, it is critical to ensure that the user experience is positive and that the user derives the most value from the interaction.
- Though measured differently, the goal of profitable relationships applies equally well to lifetime value of customers and partners as it does to employee productivity.
- Businesses that assess, architect, and measure the real experiences of users will create better value for those users; leading directly to increased profitability.



The Evolution of Business Solutions





The Cost of Neglecting User Experience

Forrester reports Fortune 1000 companies spent between \$1.5 and \$2.1 million on Web site redesigns in 1999 -- without knowing whether the experience of customers improved.

What do they have to show for this investment?

- 67% of shoppers click out of the shopping cart before completing a purchase.¹
- 35% of people who experience problems on a particular site left that site for another.²
- 45% abandon Web sites with poor navigability, slow response times, and confusing content.³

1 Net Effects

2 Anderson Consulting

3 Boston Consulting



Defining User Experience

While opinions vary, here are some core definitions to remember.

- A User Experience encompasses all aspects of the end user's interaction with the company, its services, and its products.
- A User Experience must be a merging of services of multiple disciplines, including engineering, marketing, interface design, and graphic design.
- A User Experience must go beyond giving customers what they say they want or duplicating the competition.
- A User Experience always exists whether or not it is planned to meet the expectations or needs of the users.



Goals of a User Experience

A User Experience must be:

- **Useful**

Users must be able to do what they came to do. The users' needs and desires must be accommodated through the utility of content and functionality.

- **Usable**

Users must be able to effectively interact with content and functionality. Usability characteristics include: accessible, intuitive, learnable, and contextual.

- **Satisfying**

Users must be compelled to return to or continue the relationship or activity. While this is the most subjective goal, it's not difficult to quantify.



Reaching these goals

We address three aspects of a User Experience to reach its goals of being Useful, Usable, and Satisfying

- **Information**

The identification, creation, collection, categorization, structure, access, distribution, and management of content, functionality, and assets.

- **Interactivity**

User definition, scenario development, task flow, feedback, control, consistency, predictability, presentation, and interface layout.

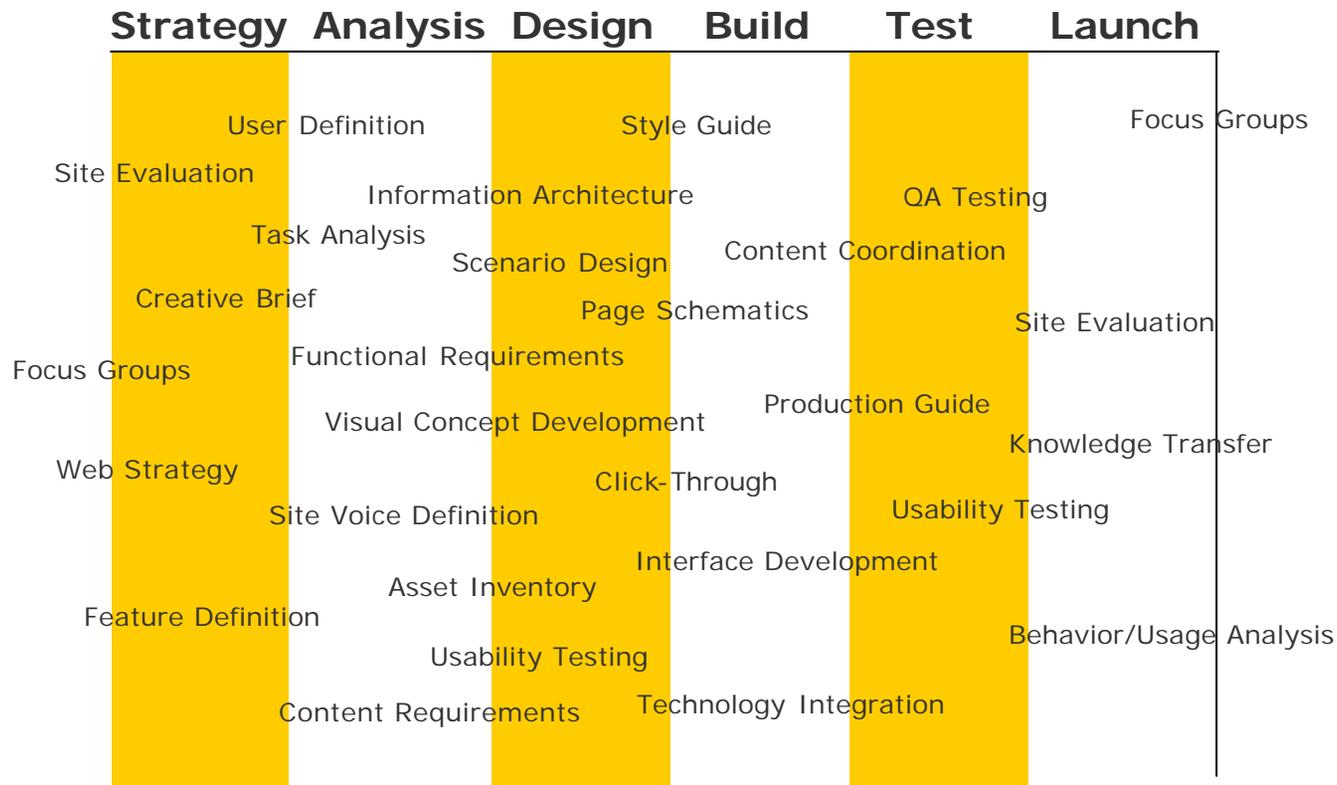
- **Sensory**

Brand identity and reinforcement, affinity, relevance, quality, trust, assurance, convenience, and confidence.



Creating User Experiences through process

User-focused tasks and deliverables for conceiving and building User Experiences must be integrated throughout any development methodology.





Defining the Audiences

- This is the most critical decision.
 - Determine who the real users of the real system are (target audience definition).
 - Profile and characterize these users (goals, needs, and behaviors).
- Focus on the most important users out of all audiences defined. We don't want to create specific experiences for everyone who comes to the site.
- When possible, audiences should be determined by many factors such as lifetime value, profitability, user needs, etc., and not just partitioned by product or net worth.



Assessing a User Experience

To understand the experience you're currently offering your users, perform an Experience Assessment to achieve the following goals:

- Review and update target audience definitions as needed.
- Find measurable user experience opportunities that can result in revenue gains or cost savings. Cancel planned changes that can't be measured or don't affect the bottom line.
- Develop a user experience baseline to create, validate, or update your organization's user experience strategy.
- Develop an actionable, phased plan to begin implementing user experience initiatives right away.
- Match user experience goals with business goals.



Experience Assessment Activities

Activities in an Experience Assessment provide a complete view of the user's experience.

- Define organizational goals and User Experience benchmarks.
- Interview users and conduct field observations.
- Assess site experience focusing on five specific areas: content, functionality, usability, brand/messaging, and relationship building.
- Analyze usage and behavior – leveraging Web Analytics tools, such as WebTrends.
- Assess competitive experience – for publicly accessible Web sites only.



When to Assess a User Experience

Guidelines to decide if an Assessment is right for your situation.

- Existing sites
 - Market or product changes, site redesign, addressing known problems
 - Whether it's Internet, extranet, or intranet
 - Whether you are new to "user experience" or this is a periodic checkup as part of their ongoing experience strategy
- New sites
 - During the site's design prior to launch
 - Just after the site's launch
- Additionally...
 - If an assessment has never been performed
 - If an assessment is more than six months old
 - After any major release or marketing initiative



The Takeaway

- Everyone who interacts with your business is having an experience with you – whether you planned it or not. A failure to understand and accommodate the target audiences is the primary problem of most unprofitable Web sites.
- Improving the experience people have with your business is the best way for you to form lasting and profitable relationships with your customers, partners, and employees.
- Businesses that assess, architect, and measure the real experiences of real people will create better products and services than the competitors.



Questions, Comments, Feedback

Contact:

Steve Gilmore
Creative Director, Western Region
Plural, Inc.

gilmores@plural.com
www.plural.com
415.786.7575