

Creating Great Experiences:

Five Ways to Enhance Your Customers' Digital Experience

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AGILE | DATA | DIGITAL | MODERNIZATION



Introduction

We are all experts in using digital products like websites and mobile apps to perform various tasks. At a bare minimum, we use websites to learn about something, accomplish something, and/or communicate something to others. However, we don't always pay attention to the reasons we gravitate towards certain sites, returning to the same ones over and over.

All too often, organizations build products that are merely functional without genuinely understanding why their customers keep coming back (or not). The site or app may enable the customer to do what they need to do, but the relationship ends there. If the organization doesn't take the time to understand the "why," they miss opportunities to ensure customers keep coming back and get a true ROI from their web development efforts.

Companies often engage Excella when they're looking to create a digital product that helps customers move through their site with ease with a goal of achieving ROI and increasing customer loyalty. By understanding the customer's goals and needs and using our expert's five keys to creating great customer experiences, your goal of a delightful user experience can be less elusive.





Read through this eBook to learn how to:

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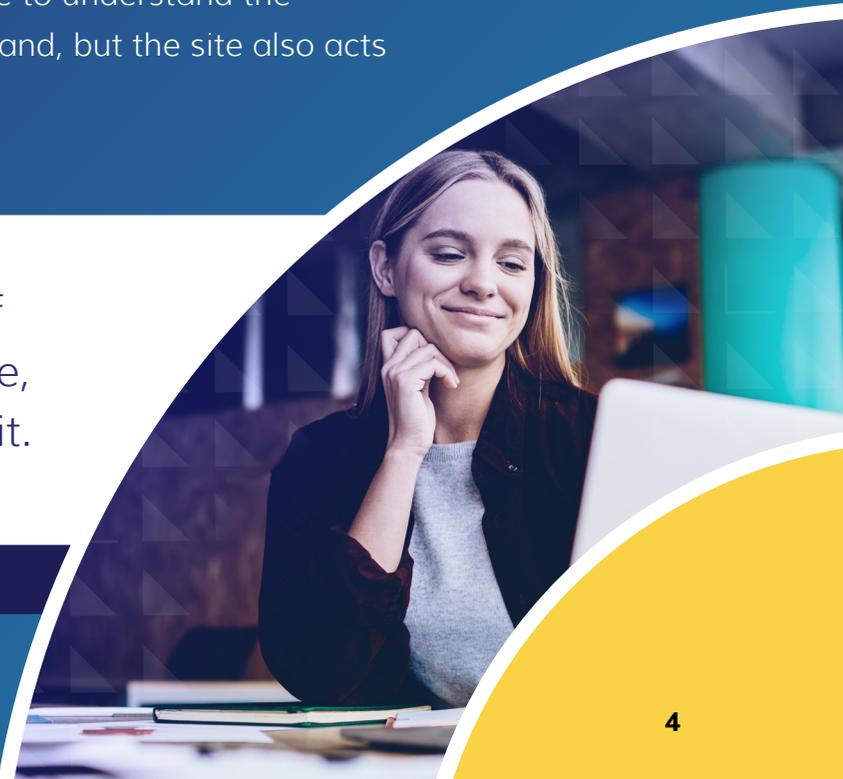
01 Establish Trust and Credibility



Have you ever heard, “I hate this site!”? Pretty strong words, but websites do have the ability to provoke strong reactions. How often do customers trust a site they dislike? How often will they follow through on the task they came to complete? How ready are they to call customer support and give them an earful or just ditch the site altogether? This is not welcome news for an organization that has invested time and energy designing and developing their site.

Your organization can get ahead of this frustration by taking the time to understand the customer. Yes, the site must function well and facilitate the task at hand, but the site also acts as a proxy for the organization.

If your organization can foster a sense of humanity, even through its digital presence, customers are more likely to engage with it.



01 Establish **Trust** and **Credibility**

Like persuasive people, persuasive sites draw customers to them. And the first steps to establishing that human appeal is to be:



Credible



Authoritative



Familiar

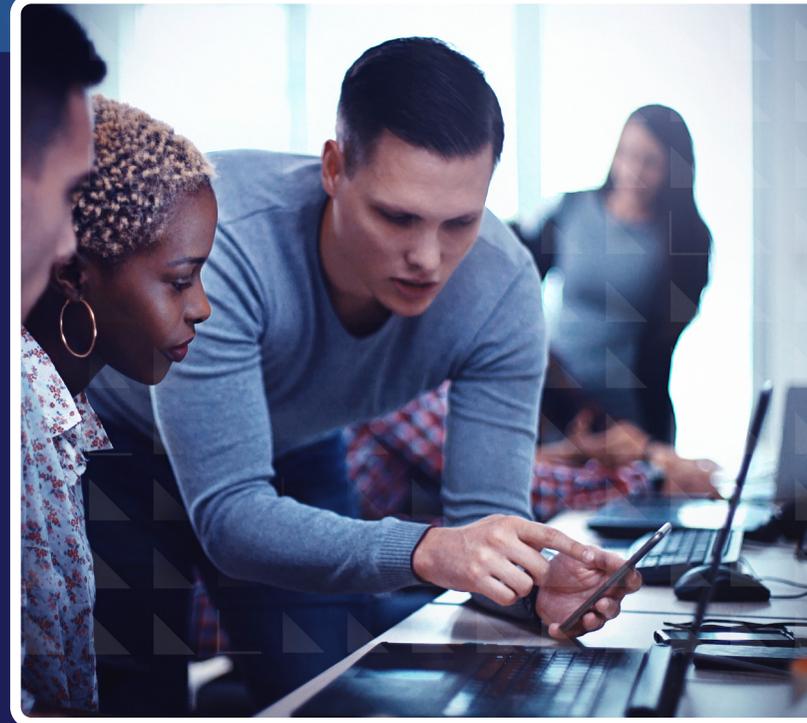


Respectful



Likable

Keep these design principles in mind when designing or updating your site. Conduct [user research](#) and usability testing throughout the design and development process to assess improvements to a site's trust and credibility. This helps answer the questions, "What are customers thinking when they come to the site? Is the site connecting with them at all?"



02 Reduce Customer Cognitive Load



Style trumps substance, and people do judge a book by its cover. That means customers must immediately find what they need—whether they know what they need or not! If they are using an app, they must quickly recognize the benefits of using the app, as well as the disadvantages of not using it.



When making design improvements, ask customers the kinds of “signals” that give them confidence while on your site or app. How do customers know they can get the job done? What would persuade them to commit to completing the task? Answer these questions and you have a better chance of understanding why customers might trust and use your digital product.

In less than one second, customers judge whether an organization’s site or mobile app can help them with their task.



02 Reduce Customer **Cognitive Load**

Help reduce the cognitive load (brainpower required to perform the task) for your customer by doing the following:



Insist on plain language



Create clear calls to actions along the path of least resistance



Facilitate decision-making and avoid creating analysis paralysis



Break down large tasks into digestible chunks and let them feel that they are making progress



Limit the number of paths a customer can take that lead to a very specific result



Never leave a customer hanging

Some of these tactical improvements may be easier to implement than others, so prioritize based on feasibility and expected ROI. Nevertheless, any of them will help your digital product stand out when a customer makes that first judgment.

03

Use the **Spectrum of Engagement Methods**



Not everyone comes to a site with the same intention or need. Some customers come to a site to get an overview while others come for information so they can make a decision.

Generally, customers fall within seven levels of engagement:

1. **Aware** of the site
2. **Getting acquainted** with the site
3. **Motivated** and **wanting to learn** more
4. **Deciding** whether or not to engage with the site
5. **Confident** and **trusting** that the site can facilitate the task
6. **Acting** in the short term to get the task done
7. **Maintaining** a longer term relationship

A word about #4 - Deciding whether or not to engage with the site: customers often make decisions based on impulse that's driven automatically by emotion and mental shortcuts. Simultaneously, they consciously assess the options and make logical decisions based on the information the site provides.

If your organization can appeal to both impulse-driven and logic-based decision-making at different engagement levels, you will have more success in maintaining engagement with your customers.

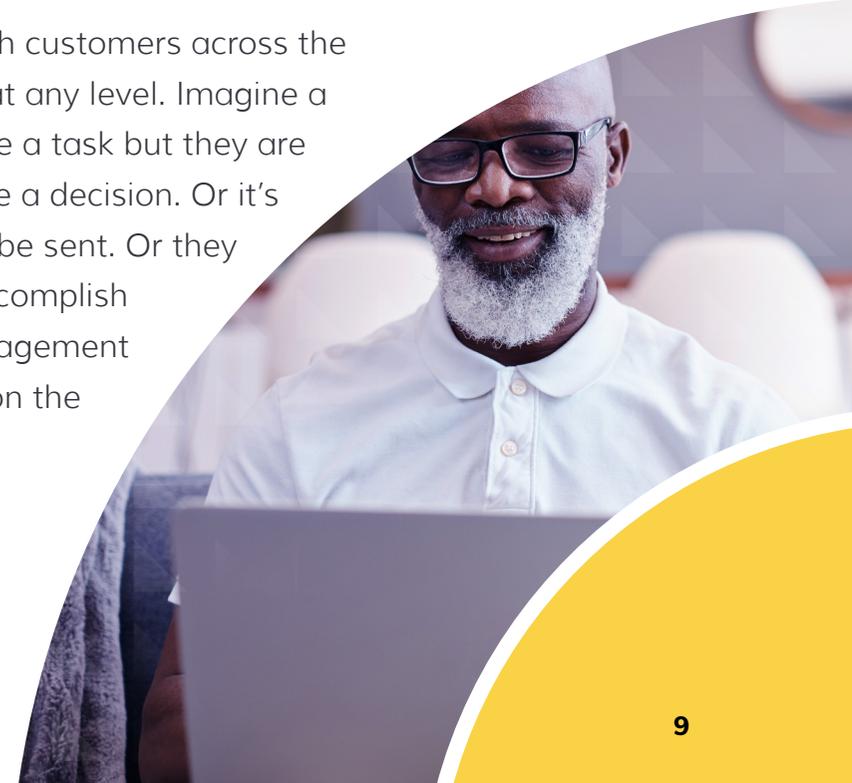


03 Use the **Spectrum of Engagement Methods**



Your organization should engage with customers across this spectrum to capitalize on their range of needs. For example, a web page that provides information engages on several levels: it has a headline, descriptors, authoritative images, and calls-to-action.

Organizations that do not engage with customers across the spectrum run the risk of losing them at any level. Imagine a customer coming to a site to complete a task but they are not given enough information to make a decision. Or it's not clear where their information will be sent. Or they don't understand how they should accomplish the task at all. Without these key engagement levels, they are highly likely to abandon the site for good.



04

Ask for **Feedback** and **Listen**

Feedback is a gift. It is the insight an organization needs to determine if it has built the right solution that solves the right problem. All too often, an organization invests time and money on a digital product without enabling customers or even their stakeholders to provide feedback. When this happens, the organization misses a tremendous opportunity for understanding why customers do what they do. Nevertheless, customers will find ways to give their feedback. Just take a look at all of the online complaint boards dedicated to aggregating feedback about organizations and their products. For your organization to take advantage of this valuable insight, you must put channels in place to gather feedback.



04 Ask for **Feedback** and **Listen**

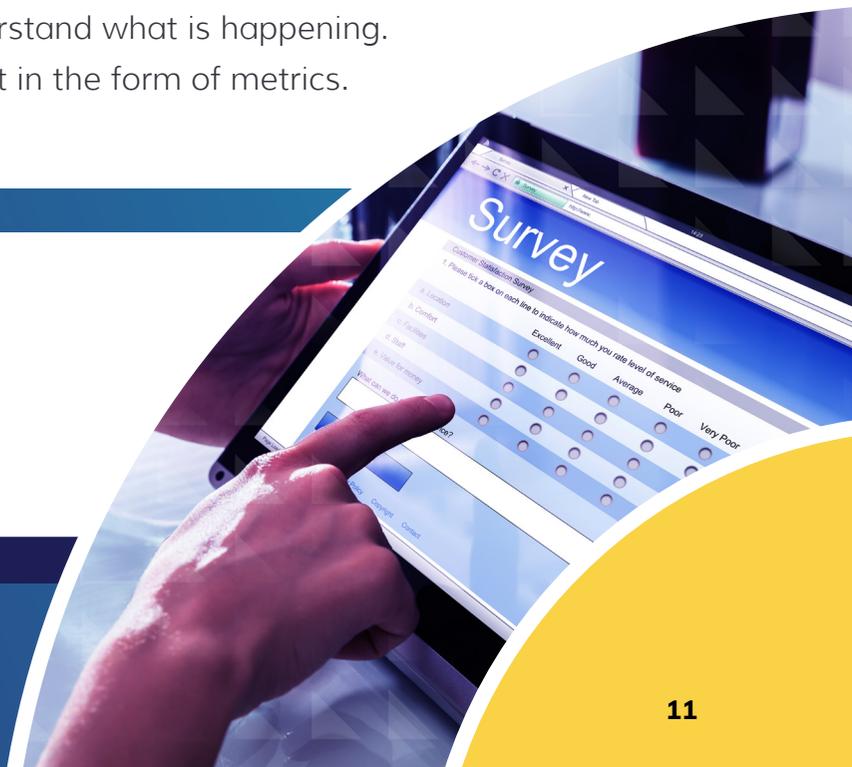
Customers will take the path of least resistance when driven to give feedback, so make it easy for them to send you the type of feedback you need:

1. **Motivate them** to provide feedback
2. **Give them a simple and direct means** to give feedback
3. **Proactively ask** them where the product is difficult and uncover why they're having trouble
4. **Let them know** their feedback is valued
5. **Demonstrate that their feedback has a positive influence** on the product's evolution

Customers who have an outlet for their frustrations and feel the organization is listening are more likely to trust and even evangelize a product.

Providing a feedback mechanism to hear from users is one way to understand what is happening. Another way is to analyze what users are doing with your digital product in the form of metrics.

Nothing promotes loyalty like empathy.
Valuing and responding positively to
customers demonstrates that empathy.





05 Assess Customers' Behavior



Customers often say one thing and then do another. Hopefully, as your site or mobile app matures, customers start exhibiting the behavior that your organization desires.

For example, customers should be:



Getting the information they need more quickly and easily



Entering information more accurately



Completing the tasks they came to do



Coming back





But as your organization assesses customers' behaviors, triangulate those behaviors with their feedback.

- Do customers say they're happy with the app but struggle to complete transactions?
- Do they say it's difficult to find what they're looking for, yet metrics show that they get through the site quickly?
- What's the real story then?



If your organization can drill deeply into why customers say one thing but behave differently, you will have better insight into improving their experience.

Summary

Understand why your customers come to your site. It has to be more than just the functions the site was built for. Otherwise, you would already be seeing significant ROI. Welcome your customers. Engage with them and facilitate what they came to do. Ask for their feedback. Assess their behavior. Act. Improve the site based on everything you've learned, and you will start to see real ROI.

ROI can be measured in various ways:



Sustained improvements in customer satisfaction, conversion, and loyalty



Boosts in user comprehension



Lower customer support costs



Higher acquisition and retention rates



Increased compliance



At a minimum, by following these design principles, talking to your customers, and observing their behavior, you will understand where they have trouble with the site and how you might fix those issues. You will discover how to satisfy their goals and needs to create the strong customer relationship that your organization is striving for.



Contact us to learn more about how Excella can help your organization **optimize its digital product to increase ROI and enhance customer loyalty.**

[Contact Us](#)

Excella is an Agile technology firm and transformative partner to leading organizations. Since 2002, federal agencies, prominent brands and trailblazing non-profits have turned to Excella to transform bold ideas into elegant technology solutions. We believe technology exists to solve challenges and evolve thinking—we help organizations harness this power to make real progress.

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