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IMPROVING
UX WITH

USER JOURNEY MAPPING

- Determine user personas
- Leverage data
- Clarify users' entry points
- Prioritize visitors' tasks
- Practice empathy
- Visualize users' journeys

A
Zoho
Academy
Workbook

What is a User Journey Map?

User journeys are the steps users take to accomplish a predefined task on your business website—whether it’s purchasing a product, downloading a whitepaper, subscribing to an email list, and so on. Such journeys often involve a sequence of webpages and decision points. User journey *maps* are visualizations of those itineraries, in which the flow of the entire process is diagrammed. In some cases, the map is descriptive, demonstrating how users *currently* interact with your website. In other cases, the map is *ideal*, demonstrating how users *could* interact with your website.

Both map types are ultimately meant to facilitate incremental site improvements by helping you identify user behavior and psychology, as well as pain points, flaws, and gaps in the user experience. With this intelligence, you’ll take steps to optimize users’ experience of completing tasks on your site.

User journey maps ask you to consider users’ questions, motivations, and expectations at all touchpoints. In other words, they’re great exercises in empathy. And when users feel empathized with, that impacts their trust... and *your* bottom line.

Determine Your User Personas

Before you break out the markers to draw their journeys, you've got to have an acute sense of your users. They'll be grouped into user "types" called **personas**... and the more detail you have about these personas, the better. They'll include:

- **Demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, profession and areas of expertise, income, geographic location, relationship status)**
- **Psychographics (personality, attitudes, opinions, values, interests, habits, character, lifestyle)**
- **Their relationship to your business and website (what stage of the buyer's journey they're in; why they're looking for the product you sell or service you offer; how they conducted their research and why they ended up on *your* site rather than your competitors'; whether they're first-time visitors, and so on)**

In short, who are your site visitors and what do they want? Humanize them. You'll ultimately be creating at least one journey map for each of your primary personas.



Exercise: Fleshing out Your User Personas

Notes on primary user persona 1:

Notes on primary user persona 2:

Notes on primary user persona 3:

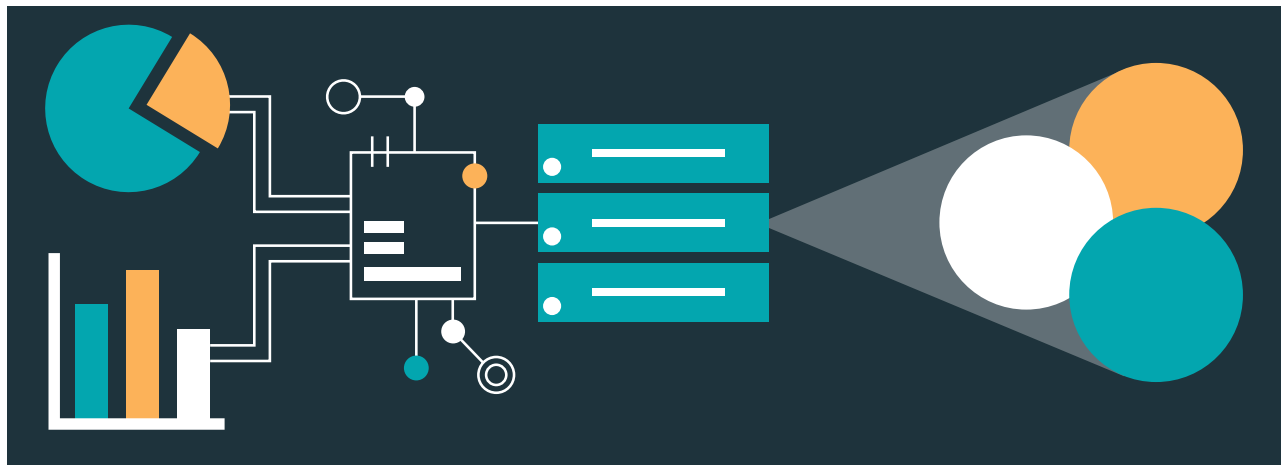
Leverage Data

Your user personas don't come to life out of guesses or gut instincts. You'll get qualitative (or anecdotal) data about them from the following places:

- **customer and user surveys (including on-site surveys)**
- **one-on-one interviews**
- **social media listening**
- **customer support logs and conversations with front-of-line staff**
- **user experience research/usability testing**
- **market intelligence and competitive intelligence**



Quantitative data, on the other hand, can be acquired through Google Analytics, heatmaps and scroll maps. Quantitative data will show you the pages with the highest exit rates. It'll show you the pages users most often click into your FAQ from. It'll let you track what search terms users enter into your site's search feature, or which step in your form field people are dropping off at, or where most first-time visitors go *next* after landing on your homepage. It'll tell you how long users are staying on each page, at which point on the page they stop reading... and whether their patience (or lack thereof) is different when they're on your mobile site.

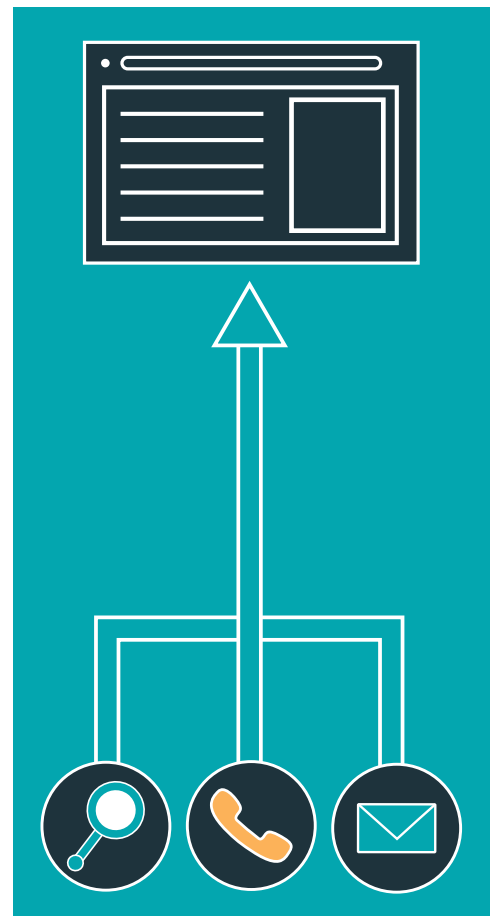


Combined, qualitative and quantitative data will alert you to points of friction, frustration, boredom, and abandonment. *Those* are the places you'll be looking to optimize.

Clarify the Entry Points

One important data set you can capture through analytics is where your site visitors are coming from. This intelligence is no small thing, because it alerts you to what those visitors expect to see when they land on that page of your site.

Visitors who discover your business through organic search, for example, will likely land on your homepage (where they'll expect to see a broad overview of your company) or a product page (where they'll expect to see the details and specs of your product). Those who arrive from an email campaign or a paid advertisement will expect to see a landing page that both visually coheres with the email or ad they clicked on *and* tells them more about what that email or ad hinted at. Visitors who clicked on a confirmation email may expect to be taken directly to your site's support page of post-purchase questions. And so on.



Exercise: Mapping the Entry Points

Other points of entry to your website may include press articles, review and comparison sites, social media posts, and more. The point is that not every visitor will (or should) be landing first on your homepage. They'll be arriving through a variety of channels with a variety of intentions... and you've got to make sure that every "landing page" is meeting those intentions head-on.

My site visitors' primary entry points are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Prioritize Tasks

With all the data you've collected, you'll be able to discern the tasks users are undertaking on your site—whether that's purchasing a product, learning your business hours, donating, getting a quote, signing up for a webinar, and so on. There may be many of these tasks. You'll choose a handful of them to prioritize, based on some combination of:

- **your own business goals**
- **which tasks bring the most revenue**
- **which pages or tasks see the highest number of drop-outs**
- **which tasks prompt the highest number of customer service calls or complaints**



Exercise: Choosing Top Tasks

The top five visitor tasks I'm prioritizing right now are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Once you've prioritized your top tasks, it's time to make sure that progression and completion of these tasks is as simple and intuitive as possible.

Walk a Mile in Your Users' Shoes

Data such as analytics and usability testing will already have alerted you to many of the friction points in your user journeys. Using these as a starting place, work through the journeys yourself, considering your persona's state of mind at every step. (Remember that different user journeys will be made by different personas, so you'll be making quite a few maps!)

For each user journey, ask yourself these questions along the way:

- **Who is my persona in this particular user journey and what is their primary goal? (And how does it align with my business goals?)**
- **What is their context? (What's their physical environment? What device are they using? What functionality does their device have?)**
- **What is their initial emotional state? (Annoyed? Curious? Excited? Anxious?)**
- **How does each step of the process guide them to the next step?**
- **Is the next step I offer what my visitor *expects* to see?**
- **What are the friction points-or points of possible confusion-in every step?**
- **How can any ambiguity be clarified? How can I get users past their hesitation?**
- **Are they getting the information they need in each of these steps? Is any of these steps ultimately unnecessary?**
- **Can they see the light at the end of their "task tunnel"?**

Visualize the Journey

Of course, it's not necessary that your site is already up-and-running to map your user journeys, or to ask yourself the questions we posed on the previous page. But as you're documenting the answers to those questions, you should clarify exactly *what should ideally be happening* at each step, at each touchpoint, and on each page.

Your map will tell a visual narrative of the user journey. It will include:

- a title that summarizes what the journey is (i.e. "Signing up for a webinar")
- an image of the persona who is taking the journey, along with information about them
- the series of steps the visitor takes to complete their goal (note that every new webpage, click, or action is a discrete step)
- a visualization of what's happening in every step
- the visitor's emotional state at every step (you can employ quotes from your research here)
- users' motivations and questions, your site's corresponding functionality, decision points, and pain points at every step (again, you can employ statistical and anecdotal evidence here)

I've Drawn My User Journey Maps! Now What?

Of course, the map is only as good as your capacity to implement it. This means that, as you draw it, you've got to be realistic about the functionality your website can offer. Make sure your developer or designer is a part of the mapping process... because the map will ultimately go into their hands for implementation.

If they weren't involved in the process, share your journey maps with your company's stakeholders. This is something you may have needed to do early on to convince them of the importance of great UX to your company's bottom line. But after all that work, your maps should be a point of pride. Socialize them.

Remember, too, that the user journey map is not a one-time undertaking. You'll return to update it when analytics suggest that user behavior is changing, or when you make changes to your site (after a new product release, for example). But even if there aren't any notable changes happening on your site, set a regular time—maybe quarterly or annually—to review how your current UX is holding up against your documented user journey.

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