



**UX Design Process Strategies for Website success**

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## Abstract

**Research Title :** UX Design Process Strategies for Website success

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In the modern era of massive information release, influx of technological devices and magnanimous increase in number of businesses going online, the importance of having an effective e-commerce or information website has become increasingly important. This has led to the importance of provision of higher user satisfaction levels and the need for improved user experiences. This documentary research focuses on factors and processes that can ultimately lead to the success of website translated as: an increase in effectivity level of the websites (website meets its goals) along with improvements in the experience of its users (improved user satisfaction levels). Persona Development has been seen as a major component for website success which serves as an input for all design decisions and processes. Careful planning and execution of Information Architecture, Visual and Interaction Design processes along with Usability Engineering can ultimately lead to website success. Businesses can formulate an an effective website success strategy from our established framework at the end of study. Recommendation for implementation of this study on executive, managerial and operational level have also been discussed along with practical and valuable recommendations for other businesses and industries.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Research Background

Visual symbols play a vital role in our daily lives and the importance of visual communication cannot be ignored. Every form of visible expression on the screen is said to possess the power of communication. As soon as a visual clue is made, a word is typed, an image has appeared, a color has emerged, or any other form of expression has made its mark on the screen, its power to unleash a message is released to the world. The dilemma to this fact is that whether the visual expression or effect produced is deliberate/intentional or unintentional, visual communication has already occurred (no matter whatever the case). For the very reasons discussed we need to understand the importance of the fact that the visual communication requires to be structured and planned in order to avoid the element of surprise or unintentional communication so that the right message can be delivered through the website (Pennington, Chapman, Fry, Deschenes, & McDonald, 2016).

Web sites today are increasingly becoming the preferred choice of media for a common man who is in search for information, social contact building, education, entertainment and shopping (Thorlacius, 2007). The number of interfaces a user interacts with today on daily basis has also increased due to the massive increase in the number of computational devices each person possesses (Blair-Early, & Zender, 2008). The advent of technological devices such as smart phones and tablets, which possess a lot of variation in their interface sizes, has given rise to varying requirements from a single website. Now the website has to fit into varying sizes without appearing unappealing, unattractive or challenging to the end user (Nielsen, & Budiu, 2013). With information also being produced in geometrically increasing amounts, man has now become a primary bottleneck through whom this information needs to be squeezed in. This massive production and squeeze of information has also contributed to making the interface design process very important and has given birth to the concepts and studies relating to usability, user experience and User Centered Designs (Bias, Moon, & Hoffman, 2015)

Communicating the right message to the audience and creating the best Experience for the user to decode that message has become increasingly important which has led to User Experience (UX) studies. Application of UX, being a set of strategies, help us in understanding the needs and behaviors of the users and then putting this understanding to the designing of useful, usable, and aesthetically pleasing systems and services (Pennington, Chapman, Fry, Deschenes, & McDonald, 2016). These strategies can help to deliver the right intended message to make any website effective allowing it to achieve the purpose of its creation. Processes to enhance experience of user can help create a massive increase in customer base and loyalty advocacy, while improving user productivity and efficiency whereas a non-effective/poor website created without the implementation of these processes and principals will have the tendency to destroy any business, for it being a simple fact that if people are unable to understand the message given they won't act in the way expected and required of them (Preston, 2003). This has given rise to the field of creating best User Experiences for the clients which ultimately lead to increase in user satisfaction levels.

### **Research Problem**

An effective website has the potential to work as a great Marketing as well as a sales tool. It can build brand images, impressions and personalities for a business. They offer important marketing vehicles fitting into one of the two broad categories including: a. Websites building relationships with prospective customers through informing them about different business brand or services, b. Websites featuring products and allowing consumers to purchase online (serving as direct selling platforms) (Chingching, 2012). This is the reason why organizations throughout the world give so much importance to research on building effective websites as they have the potential to lead to improved user satisfaction levels and thus contributing to the effectivity of a website (Wilkie, Romance, & Rosendale, 2012).

Website success calculation or derivation of an exact ROI figure for a website can be considered as an inexact science but effectiveness of only two types of websites a. Ecommerce websites (by calculating sales). b. intranets (by comparing and calculating increased employee productivity) can still be calculated. Still in the competitive world of today organizations are thriving to creating best user experiences for their users to improve user's satisfaction levels and to compete

with competitors and simultaneously reach their goals while keeping the user the center of their design. (Preston, 2003).

The problem at hand is to study and learn how different processes can improve the experience of website users and also translate into the production of an effective website. UX design processes can help us formulate a strategy through the implementation of which we can reach website goals as well as enhance user satisfaction level (user experience). We can divide our research problem into various sub problems and then approach the overall picture and develop a framework later on how these processes effect each other in the process of achieving our goals:

Goals:

- a. Improve User Experience
- b. Improve Website Effectivity

Main Problem Statement:

Identifying UX Design Processes that can help us improve

- a. User Experience
- b. Website Effectivity

Sub Problem Approach:

- a. Role/Effect of Personas in the design process for the achievement of goals
- b. Role/Effect of Information Architecture Process in the achievement of goals
- c. Role/Effect of Interaction Design in the achievement of goals
- d. Role/Effect of Visual Design in the achievement of goals
- e. Role/Effect of Usability Engineering in the achievement of goals

### **Research Objectives**

The main objective of this research is to identify necessary design processes that can be implemented to form a strategy for ensuring success of a website. Website success being an unquantifiable or unmeasurable variable cannot be calculated absolutely and for this reason we associate the measurement of a success as a combined effect of these two factors:

1. How Effective the Website is?
2. How satisfied are the users of a website from the website?

The Objective of research is therefore to study:

1. Processes that can improve Effectivity of a website
2. Processes than can Enhance the level of User Experience

### **Research Scope**

In the era of instant communication and online competition, users instantly withdraw from services that are not effective or do not provide them with a certain expected level of satisfaction. All web sites in the world, regardless of differences in linguistics, effects, aesthetics and functionality, are required to meet the criteria of a. effectiveness b. provision of best user experience.

This study focuses on processes that can help websites in the achievement of these two major aspects of website success. For this study I have reviewed literature from 46 published papers and studies in the Ebsco Database and selected around 30 studies, referenced at the end of my work, for building up my research points, conclusions from the study, establishing of my framework and then suggesting recommendations for practical implementation in this area. The method of documentary research was carried out on the processes that can lead to the improvement in the areas of website effectivity and user experience, ultimately leading to website success and formulation of strategies for website success.

### **Research Significance**

X Implementation of processes to improve the users experience or to create an effective website have become crucial in the fast-paced world of today where the new century has led to the requirement of instant communication. It is believed that if users cannot instantly or easily figure out how a website works they are viable to conclude that it is not worth their time. This conclusion translates into frustration and giving up on searching of the required information, leading to non-achievement of the website goals (Wilkie, Romance, & Rosendale, 2012). Also, the fact that the number of computational devices has massively increased over the years (Blair-Early, & Zender, 2008) the improvement of user experience has become crucial. Modern devices such as smart phones and tablets which vary widely in screen sizes and Designs have led to an increased demand

for optimal small screen designs, more structured content, small displays, simple navigational options and optimization of design (Nielsen, & Budiu, 2013) resulting in an increase in the requirements of websites to fit into varying sizes without appearing unappealing or becoming challenging for the end user.

An Effective websites design Is highly recommendable as an inaccurate design can lead to production of a negative impression on the consumer mind whereas a high-quality professional website can help to create the feelings of initial trust on the source of information, thus making the content seem more credible. This can help to transmit a sense of responsive, personal and sociable contact through the web interface resulting in high levels of perceived social presence (which can definitely help in the achievement of website goals such as improving purchase intentions) (Karimov, Brengman, & Van Hove, 2011). Effective processes for the creation of user experience help to reduce the cognitive load on the users by delivering the most quality content and features in the most structured way (Pennington, Chapman, Fry, Deschenes, & McDonald, 2016).

Companies believe that is due to the results in the investment on user experience that their websites are becoming more exceptional, more compelling and more complete resource services for the customer (Schiller, 2011). Effective designs both visual and functional of a website connect strongly with each other to meet and to serve higher levels of user satisfaction (Lee, 2013). Satisfaction status achieved when a user achieves his/her goals from the website when a website works smoothly, responds positively, fulfills expectations thus bringing pleasure to the user (Wilkie, Romance, & Rosendale, 2012).

The earlier focus of development in which the statement: ‘developer knows the best’ was true has been transformed towards the fact that ‘the user knows the best’. The earlier technique that focused on development processes in which the end user was not given much importance is becoming obsolete in the world of today where user has become the primary focus of attention (Massanari, 2009). User experience does not only put greater impact on brand perception but also imparts a direct impact on an e-commerce website. Studies in this area have also revealed that superior user experience has the tendency to translate into as much as a 400% increase in sales lead conversions (Schiller, 2011).

This topic of study is significant due to the fact that effective websites can help in the achievement of several objectives such as:

- Improvement in user satisfaction level: The main objective of study is to understand the processes behind the construction of User Experience as this will leads to positive emotion of user satisfaction (Wilkie, Romance, & Rosendale, 2012).

- Reduction in Cognitive Load: Visual chaos leads to enhanced cognitive load. Load reduction or reduction in cognitive load is only possible if we can identify, plan and deliver the highest quality of content and features (Pennington, Chapman, Fry, Deschenes, & McDonald, 2016).

- Improvement in User Trust Level: An initial experience of a consumer with an inaccurate website can lead the consumer to infer a negative belief about the attributes of a retailer (thus resulting in distrust). This lack of trust can lead the user to opt or chose another website whose initial impression is professional, high-quality and positive (all the attributes that lead to trust building).

- Improvement in User Retention: Effective Websites have the quality of retaining the users and bringing them back again by creating a positive impression.

- Reduction in Switching to Competitor Website: Effective web sites can help companies to ensure a competitive edge over the competitors. A negative Experience by the user can lead to distrust, leading the user to opt or chose for a competitor website with a professional and high-quality impression (Karimov, Brengman, & Van Hove, 2011).

- Help in Coping with Increased Technology and Device Usage: In the fast-paced world people possess multiple computing devices. It has become crucial to have UX experienced professionals to deal with different experiences of users on varying screen sizes, without appearing unappealing or becoming challenging for the end-user (Nielsen, & Budiu, 2013).