



Increasing Website Conversions With a UI Facelift

Joely Gardner, PhD

Human Factors Research, Inc.
San Marcos, CA 92078

760.994.6314
www.humanfr.com

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Go Beyond Search Engine Optimization	1
Invest your money to create revenue	1
Design with a purpose	1
The ROI of a successful user experience	2
Check out the top reasons for abandonment.....	2
Face lift reconstruction	3
Seven predictors of conversion	3
Map your users' experience	5
Technology as an enabler of the customer experience	6
About Us	6
Cosmic Bridge Services	6
Contact Information	6
Citations	7

Introduction

User Interface “facelifts” can improve the user experience, and importantly, can increase customer conversion rates.

Search engine optimization is a thriving, and sometimes costly, business. Done well, SEO can succeed in driving traffic to your website, but it is the expense side of the equation.

And if the people who visit your website don’t stay and buy, then the money you’ve spent is wasted.

Go Beyond Search Engine Optimization

In today’s global and extremely competitive economy, customer experience is the market differentiator. Think of your own experience as a consumer. Have you ever said, “I bought this item at Store B and I actually paid a little more than I would have paid at Store A, but I was willing to pay a little more because ...”? When you think of the reasons why you were willing to pay a little more, you’ll see they had nothing to do with the product itself and everything to do with the *experience* of dealing with that particular store. Most of your customers feel the same way. This doesn’t mean that price is unimportant; it means that experience is as important or, sometimes, more important.

Invest your money to create revenue

Converting website visitors to buyers is the investment half of the equation. Investing in creating an easy-to-use website that meets your users’ needs is where you make your money. And it’s where you have the most control.

Design with a purpose

User interface design is not about creating a pretty face. UI design is about:

- Designing a useful and usable site.
- Making it easy for your users to accomplish their goals.
- Designing your website around your users’ expectations instead of your corporate organization chart.
- Creating a wow! customer experience that keeps people coming back to *you* despite the fact that your competitors are constantly wooing them away.



The ROI of a successful user experience

How does your conversion rate compare to the Top 10 Online Retailers? The chart below from MARKETINGCHARTS.COM shows the top 10 converting websites for August 2009*.

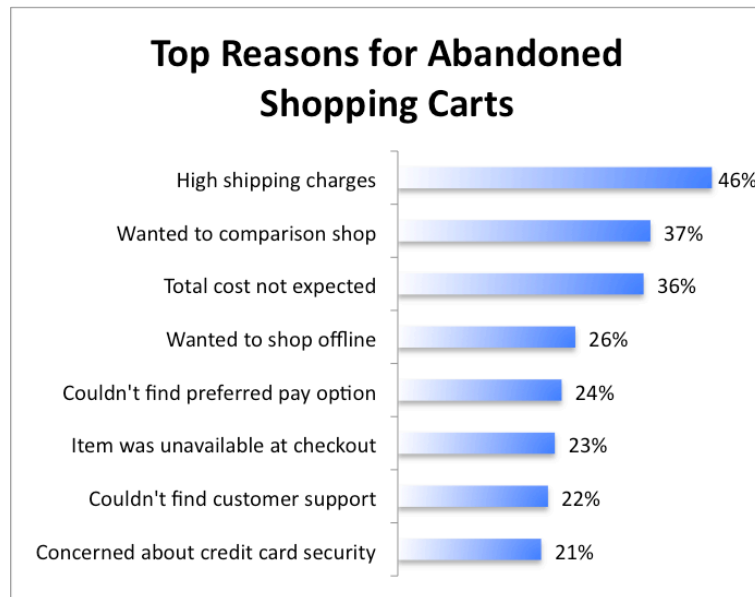


These are based on Nielsen Panel data. Conversion-rate data is based on visitor conversion rates, not session conversion rates: i.e., number of unique customers divided by the number of unique visitors.

These companies invest heavily in customer experience research, design, and management. Their user interface reflects a best-practices model of all of the known techniques that optimize conversion rates.

Check out the top reasons for abandonment

PayPal recently published the results of their second annual Checkout Abandonment survey.



*Source: Paypal-media.com

One of the reasons discovered by PayPal for why visitors abandon a shopping cart can be addressed very easily. Shipping charge amounts, for example, are determined internally.

The other reasons can be addressed in a user interface facelift.

Face lift reconstruction

There is a rigor to reconstructing the user interface of your website so that it better meets your users' needs. Start with an analysis of how visitors evaluate your customer experience.

Seven predictors of conversion

In the research we have conducted for e-commerce sites, we have found seven predictors of a visitor's willingness to buy from you. These predictors are equally true for consumer sites (B2C) as well as corporate sites that sell to business customers (B2B). The predictors are universal because they deal with the human component of conversions. These seven categories are comprised of over 70 individual items. Here are some key user definitions of each predictor:

1. Do users see your site as trustworthy? One criteria that users define as trustworthy relates to how easily they can find your contact information. In tests, potential buyers have said, "If I can't contact them when I want to *buy* something, I don't trust that I'll be able to get them

if there's a problem. I'm out of here."

2. Is it engaging? Have you done research with representative users to find out if *they* consider your call to action compelling? It doesn't matter that marketing thinks it's terrific and matches your new marketing campaign if your users don't respond emotionally and literally by clicking and buying. Customers want to be able to zoom in on a product and see it from various angles and in various colors (where appropriate).
3. Is it easy to use? If you make your users think about what you mean, you've lost them. Your internal folks undoubtedly think your nomenclature and menu structure are crystal clear, but we've tested many sites where users are unclear or downright clueless about a label. When in doubt, they opt out.
4. Do they find it easy to buy on your site? How do your users indicate quantity for an item? If you're using a drop-down menu, make sure the selection is not changed by the use of the scroll button on the mouse. If the customer does not click off the drop-down number and it remains highlighted when they use their mouse button to scroll, it will change the number in the quantity box. Users probably won't notice and will only see it in the shopping cart. They'll doubt you and the integrity of your site.
5. Does it help them accomplish their goals? Do users have the ability to compare items? Have you made it easy to bookmark a page so that shoppers can return and find the product detail page?
6. Do they find it attractive? You think your site is attractive. Have you actually tested that with your customers? Research shows that web browsers make up their mind within seconds whether they will stay on your site or go elsewhere. Do you know what the determinants of that decision are as they relate to your site?
7. Have you integrated "alert" information that makes users feel you know them and that you're paying attention? Does your search function recognize misspellings? Are you making good use of predictive and correlational analytics to let a shopper know that people who bought X also bought Y? Is your shopping

The \$300 Million Button:

Jared Spool tells the story of how usability testing and a subsequent redesign of a site generated revenues of \$300 million dollars!

By identifying user resistance and then fixing the sequence of when users had to complete a form, the number of customers purchasing went up by 45%.

The additional purchases resulted in an extra \$15 million the first month. For the first year, the site saw an additional \$300,000,000.

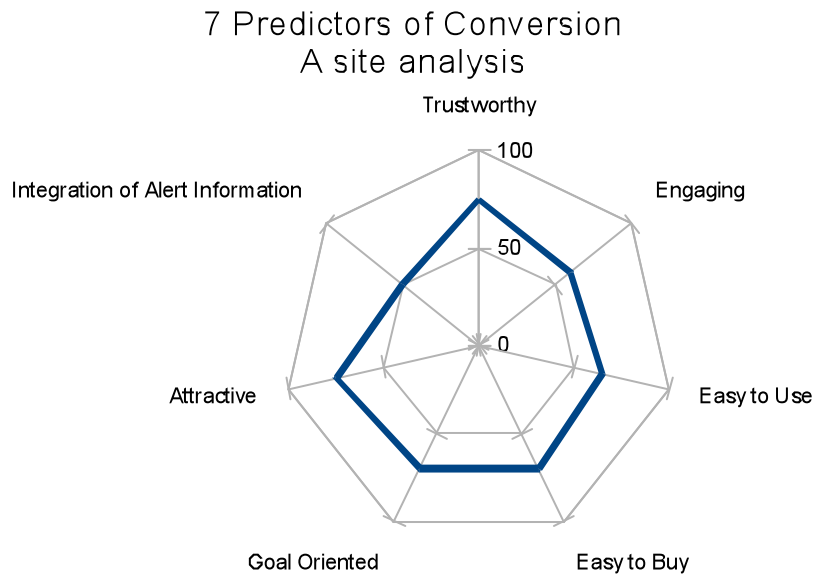
<http://www.uie.com/articles>

Do you have any unidentified "button" issues that will increase your conversion rate?

cart aware of what's in it and does it approach up selling in a customer supportive way, for example, letting the shopper know that she didn't get insurance for her phone and letting her select it in the shopping cart.

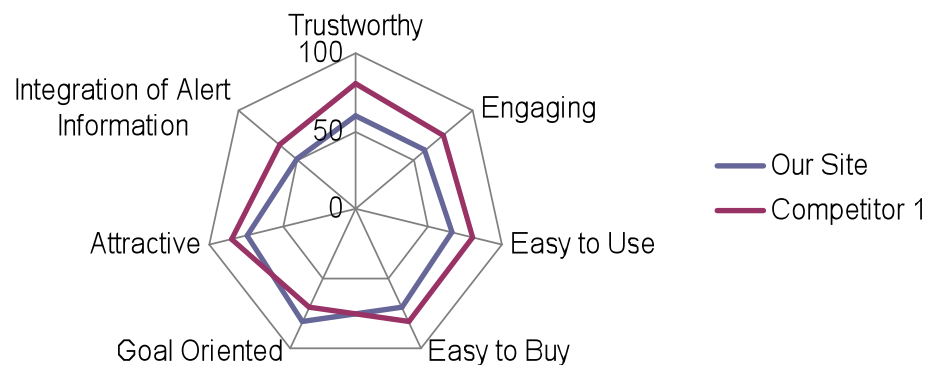
Map your users' experience

Get a visual image of what your site looks like to your customers. The following radar diagram, often called a spider diagram because of its web-like appearance, is a useful visualization.



You can use this same process to see how you stack up against your competitors.

7 Predictors of Conversion A competitive analysis



Technology as an enabler of the customer experience

When you've done the right kind of research to fully understand your customers' needs, wants and delights, use technology to operationalize the desired experience.

And then test. Do usability testing of alternate designs with representative users and then do A/B testing of alternate designs before you actually mount the change.

About Us



Joely Gardner, PhD is a licensed psychologist specializing in usability research and customer experience roadmap development in large-scale e-commerce websites, software, and mobile devices.

Her strategic partnership with CosmicBridge.net allows her to offer a complete package of customer research, customer experience design and development.

Cosmic Bridge Services

The Cosmic Bridge team brings decades of experience in User Interface design, website and software development, outsourcing and professional in-placement services.

Dr. Gardner and the Cosmic Bridge team offer a staged engagement plan, which minimizes your risk and up-front costs and provides the best path to successful project completion:

1. Initial Professional Assessment (FREE)
2. Detailed UI Assessment of all 70 predictors of conversion
3. Actionable Usability Testing
4. Definition of Market Requirements
5. Prototyping and Alpha Testing
6. Production Coding and A/B Testing

Contact Information

Human Factors Research, Inc.
San Marcos, CA 92078

760.994.6314

www.humanfr.com

[mailto: Joely Gardner, PhD](mailto:Joely.Gardner@humanfr.com)

LinkedIn Profile: [Dr. Joely Gardner](#)



Citations

Under Construction graphic: [Dreamstime.com, Artist: Pei Ling Hoo](#)

Top 10 Online Retailers: *[Source: Nielsen Online / Marketing Charts](#)

http://www.marketingcharts.com/direct/top-10-online-retailers-by-conversion-rate-march-2009-8854/?utm_campaign=rssfeed&utm_source=mc&utm_medium=txtlink

Top Reasons for Abandoned Shopping Carts: <https://www.paypal-media.com/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=391252>

The \$300 Million Button: By Jared M. Spool.

Originally published: Jan 14, 2009. User Interface Engineering.com
http://www.uie.com/articles/three_hund_million_button/