

USER EXPERIENCE CORE PRINCIPLES

Reference document

Prepared by: Paul Blunden

UX24/7



UX24/7 User Experience Principles

Introduction

This document provides a detailed explanation of the core user experience principles that guide our organisation – UX24/7. Our mission is to change the world, one interface at a time so that everything is usable for everyone, everywhere all of the time. We believe it would be better for both businesses and consumers if this was the case.

Our core user experience principles connect all of our methodologies and services to our mission and provide clarity about where and how each delivers value.

User experience is seen by many as a 'nice to have' rather than a strategic imperative and this is often due to the difficulties connected with trying to connect it with corporate goals. Our core user experience principles provide a framework for every organisation to place user experience strategy in the context of their own organisation and crucially to measure their performance.

It is our hope that by sharing our core user experience principles we can help organisations to create better user experience strategies with more clearly defined goals that relate specifically to their strategic business objectives.

In this document, we will describe the core principles in detail and explore how they relate to Forrester's customer experience pyramid. We will show how they underpin our services and methodologies and connect with user experience strategy. Finally, we will consider how they can be related to your own organisation.

Our Core User Experience Principles

We have 15 core user experience principles that together describe the quality of the experience a user has when they interact with your organisation through a digital interface. They can be applied to websites and apps, smartphones, tablet PC's, eReaders, laptops or PC's and any other multiplatform device.

Although all the principles apply to every organisation it is not expected that every organisation will aspire to be perfect in every area. This is discussed further in our section on relating them to your organisation.

To help organise the user experience principles we use the Customer Experience Pyramid created by Forrester Analysts' Harley Manning and Kerry Bodine and featured in the book – 'Out Side In' The customer experience pyramid describes how customers want their experiences to be in three simple aspects: useful; easy; and enjoyable.

The diagram from Forrester below explains this further:



Against each level of the pyramid we map our core principles as follows:

Useful – the experience offers value

<i>Usability Principle</i>	<i>User outcome to be measured</i>
Available	I can always do what I want to do when I want to do it
Consistent	The information provided, interface and interaction stays consistent throughout
Effective	It does what it says it will do; it functions successfully; it delivers what I want; what I expect happens; it enables me to do what I want to do
Standard	Established methods adopted by device, operating system and browser are supported where expected
Supportive	I can get the help I need when I require it
Visibility	I can see what I need and expect to see

Easy – it's easy to access that value

<i>Usability Principle</i>	<i>User outcome</i>
Accessibility	I can interact in the way I want to and affect a change in the interface to meet my physical and non-physical needs
Clear & understandable	I always understand what I read, watch and hear
Efficient	I can do what I want to do quickly and easily
Intuitive	I know what I can do and how to do it
Relevant	My needs are always met
Trustworthy	I have confidence in the information provided

Enjoyable – the experience is emotionally engaging

<i>Usability Principle</i>	<i>User outcome</i>
Attractive	It looks good and promotes a sense of quality
Engaging	I want to use it
Informative	It's useful, valuable and helpful and provides the information I need.

By evaluating an interaction using these 15 areas we can gain a comprehensive picture of the user experience being delivered and consumed.

Core Principles and User Experience Strategy

The 15 core principles provide a framework against which we can describe a user experience strategy, particularly when placed in the context of Forrester's customer experience pyramid. As we move from the bottom of the pyramid to the top we describe a functional experience rising to one that is positively differentiated. Similarly the different elements from the user experience principles explain aspects of the user experience to be delivered and that have varying importance to a business's strategy.

If your organisation doesn't have a customer experience strategy it is worth considering how the pyramid relates to your corporate objectives. The broad categories of useful, easy and enjoyable give context to the detailed goals you will set for each of the core principles. For example Disney may feel it is most important to be 100% enjoyable but may be prepared to compromise on ease and usefulness. A more transactional business such as Ryanair may feel that it is most important that the experience is easy and could compromise on the elements at the top of the pyramid.

Even without a clear customer experience strategy the user experience principles provide a method for articulating the user experience strategy in the context of your overall business strategy.

Each principle has a specific role to play as illustrated by the following table:

User experience principle	Influence on business strategy
Available	Supports multichannel strategy, aligns with uptime SLA's
Consistent	Delivers on brand strategy, international strategy
Effective	Addresses operational efficiency goals
Standard	Aligns with IT strategy, governance goals
Supportive	Reduces operational [call centre] costs
Visibility	Reduces operational costs, improves operational efficiency
Accessibility	Mitigates legal risk, opens new market, supports older users and therefore reduces support costs/offline costs
Clear & understandable	Delivers on brand, international and multiplatform strategies
Efficient	Aligns with transaction volume, ARPU targets
Intuitive	Reduces operational costs, improves efficiency, aligns to brand
Relevant	Delivers on marketing strategy
Trustworthy	Delivers on brand strategy and enhances operational efficiency
Attractive	Delivers on brand, margin and customer strategies
Engaging	Delivers on marketing, finance [ARPU, margin] and customer strategies
Informative	Delivers on marketing, finance and customer strategies



The table above provides some generic examples of ways in which the core user experience principles influence strategy. To make it relevant, organisations need to align each with their own strategies and plans. For organisations struggling to explain how user experience maps to the business goals they at least provide a start point. Once put in place the next step is to establish a target, identify the gap and implement improvement plans.

Summary

The core user experience principles are present in everything UX24/7 does as a business. They create the link between our aspirational mission and the tangible services we deliver. They allow us to think about how we are adding value to our clients in more meaningful ways and most importantly, in ways that they understand.

The principles are designed so that they can be applied to any platform, whether smartphone, tablet PC, desktop or other and whether software, application or website. They describe the entire experience from functional to engaging and allow us to understand how to evaluate the various aspects of the user experience. They can be used to create a connection between user experience strategy and business strategy.

They also provide a framework against which we are able to establish a user experience index to identify current performance and the gap between this and our future goal.

We are happy to share them so that organisations can better understand and articulate their user experience goals and ultimately deliver better experiences. This would be better for both consumers and businesses alike.

If you would like to learn more get in touch at hello@ux247.com.