

Understanding mothers through remote user testing

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CUSTOMER PROFILE:

Location: Europe
 Industry: Retail
 Employees: 201-500

THE GOAL:

- Understand the site's visitors, develop user personas, and learn their desires
- Study the site's high exit rate and discover how to combat it
- Research web users in a stress-free environment

THE SERVICES PROVIDED:

1. UXTesting's Remote Testing Software
2. Global Tester Recruitment
3. Happy Diagnosis Program - UX strategy and user testing consultancy

THE OUTCOME:

- Search engine traffic increased by 120% in 3 months with a new forum.
- Impulse purchases increased by 44% by shortening the buying process.
- Successful test purchases increased from 20% to 70% for left-handed mothers with a new mobile site.
- Satisfaction rate in the tests increased from 49% to 78% by emphasizing product reviews and key product information.

The Challenge:

As one of the largest multi-channel retailers of baby and children's goods in Europe, the client sells everything a mother might need both online and offline.

In this case, the client faced three main challenges:

1. User Personas

Most purchases on the e-commerce site are by mothers.

In a consultancy project, UXTesting's research team researched how a mother's purchasing behavior changes as their infants grow up, and what mothers experience as they use the website by defining personas of the client's web users and by discovering which types of users are the most valuable.

2. Understanding analytics

Analytics of the e-commerce site show a high exit rate with many users browsing the site for up to five minutes and exiting on a product page.

UXTesting studied what causes users to leave and how users could be nudged to complete their purchases.

3. Stress-free testing

The client studied the experiences of mothers with infants in the past with in-person user tests, but saw that most mothers felt uncomfortable during the research. As mothers felt that they had to stay focused on the research and refrain from interacting with their child.

Remote user testing was used to study testers in a stress-free environment acting how the site's users act at home.

The Discoveries:

The project discovered half a dozen design opportunities to help the client understand their users and enhance their website. The most influential findings included:

1. User personas

UXTesting's research team studied soon-to-be mothers, mothers who just had their first baby, and mothers with their second baby. The team found that mothers with their second child are most likely to buy products for their children online, while mothers prefer to buy goods for their first child in physical stores and visit the e-commerce site to browse products and get inspired.

2. Understanding analytics

Mothers with a baby were often distracted after a few minutes during the remote user tests and paused the test to tend to their child, which aligns well with the site's high exit rate. Designing around inevitable distractions could nudge mothers to complete their purchases before exiting the site.

3. One-handed interaction

While testing the client's mobile site, merely 20% of left-handed mothers could complete a test purchase without pausing the test for distractions. Compared to 80% of right-handed mothers completing a test purchase. Right-handed mothers could interact with the site one-handed while holding their baby, whereas left-handed mothers struggled to reach all features one-handed and had to lay their baby down to use the website two-handed. Increasing distractions as mothers had to pause the test to tend to their child.

4. Unconfident shoppers

Many mothers testing the site felt unconfident that the product they picked is the best choice for their child. Stating they were searching if a product contained chemicals or could give off dye, found the product pages cluttered with irrelevant information, or were looking for customer reviews. Some mothers attempted to find a blog or forum where other mothers recommend the best products and share tips on what to look for, besides the customer reviews for each individual product. The mothers rated the buying process in the user tests with a satisfaction rate of 49%.



The Results:

With UXTesting's advice, the client created several design alterations. The most noticeable are:

1. A new forum on the website lets mothers share their experiences and tips with other mothers. Here soon-to-be mothers can read the experiences of other mothers, spend time on the website, and get acquainted with the e-commerce part of the site before their interest in online shopping increases as they have a second child.
2. Buying or saving a product was made easier by removing several steps from the purchasing process. Allowing users to finish their purchase before their attention shifts away from the site.
3. A left-handed version of the mobile site was created, allowing left-handed mothers to browse the mobile websites one-handed while they hold their baby.
4. Simple icons have been introduced to product pages that show if a product has certain chemicals and the product reviews have been enlarged on the product pages.

These alterations resulted in:

1. Search engine traffic increased by 120% in 3 months after launching the forum.
Many users now exclusively visit the forum and ad revenue from the forum is expected to cover its development cost within eight months of launching it.
2. The site's analytics showed that after reducing several steps from the purchasing process, more users saved products for later and impulse purchases increased by 44%.
3. A second testing project on the improved mobile website saw completed test purchases by left-handed mothers increase from 20% to 70%. On par with the 80% success rate among right-handed mothers (visualized in figure 1).
4. Confidence in their chosen products among mothers increased slightly in the second testing project, as key product information and the product reviews confirm their decision. The satisfaction rate for the purchasing process increased from 49% to 78%.

With this case the client gained a better understanding in what their users experience as they interact with the e-commerce site, and encountered a profitable side-business of managing a forum in the process.

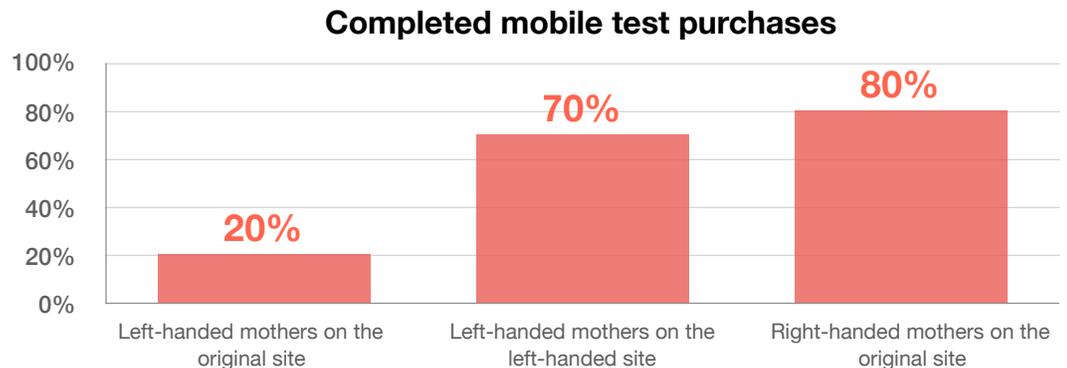


Figure 1: Percentage of mothers who completed a test purchase without distractions in the remote user tests by dominant hand on the original mobile site and the new mobile site optimized for left-handed use.

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