



UX: A Guide To Understanding User Experience Strategy

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Design isn't just what
it looks like and feels like
—design is how it works.

– Steve Jobs

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UX Strategy Overview

A UX strategy is basically a detailed plan that helps connect a company's brand with the experience it wants users to have at every touchpoint. Touchpoints are those moments when a user interacts with a product, service or brand. They can happen online or in person. What's really interesting about touchpoints is how crucial they are. For one, they help shape how users see and experience the brand. Plus, every single touchpoint plays a role in the overall customer journey. They also give brands a chance to connect with users and even influence their decisions.

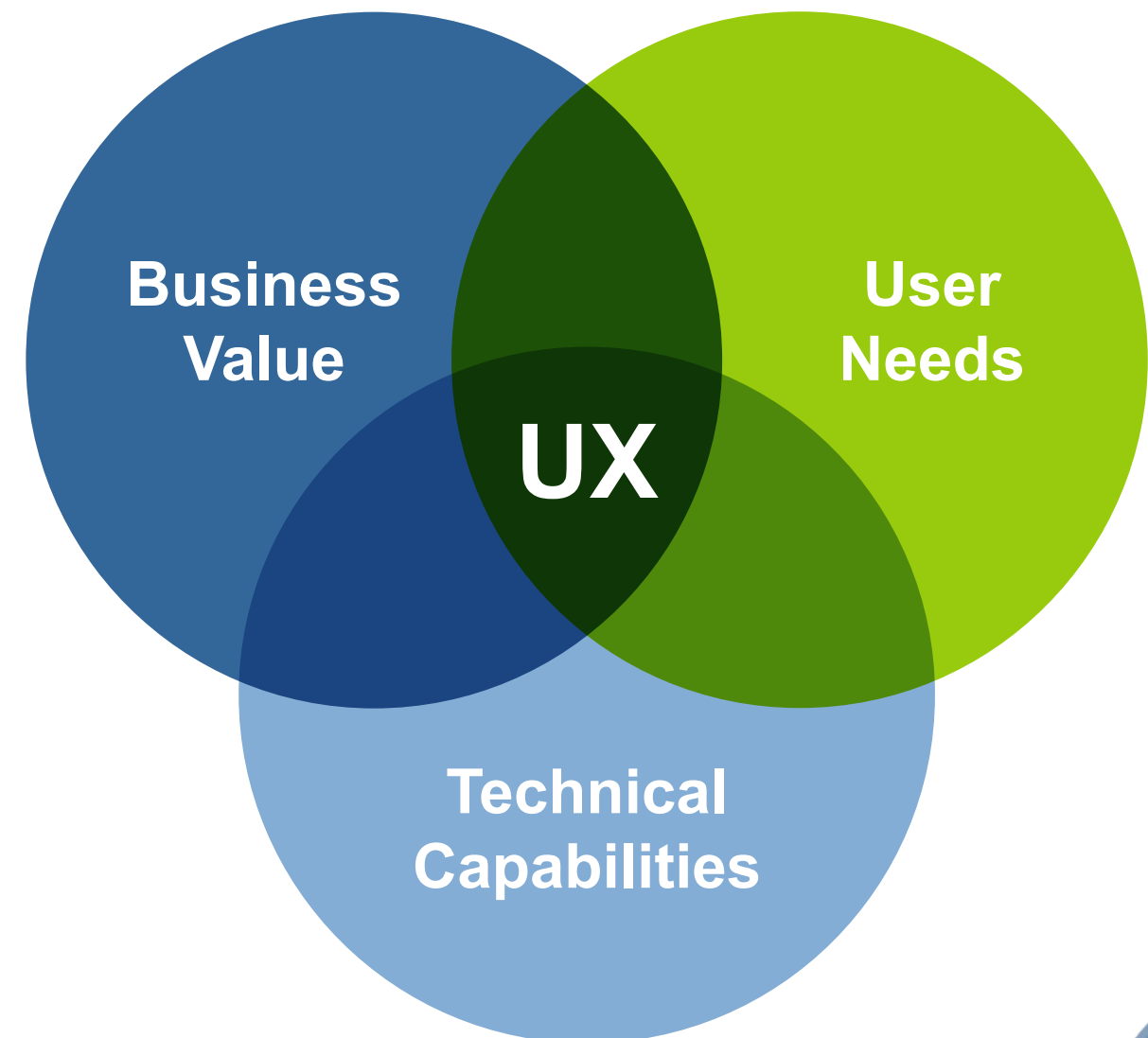
Consider UX strategy as a roadmap for designing user experiences. It makes sure that what users need, what the business aims to achieve, and what the technology can do all work together smoothly. This way, everyone enjoys a consistent and effective experience.

New projects offer an exciting opportunity for pushing the boundaries of design and technology. You know how it feels when you use an app or website that just flows perfectly and looks amazing? That's the sweet spot where great user experience meets stunning visuals, and it's where innovation really takes off.

When we focus on making users happy and giving them a smooth experience, while also creating eye-catching designs, we're setting the stage for digital experiences that truly mean something. They're not just functional, they can actually make a lasting impact—and they are driving business goals as well.

A solid UX strategy can propel a business across myriad platforms. But it's not just about one person or team doing all the work. You've got designers, researchers, marketing folks and sales teams all working together. When you have a company working on a project with a clear UX strategy, it's like everyone's speaking the same language. Different teams start collaborating better, breaking down those vexing department barriers. It's all about open communication and teamwork. When everyone knows what they're working towards, it can boost morale and productivity. People feel more focused, guided, and like they're part of something bigger than just themselves.

What Makes A Good UX STRATEGY



Importance of UX Strategy

You know how frustrating it can be when you're using an app or website that just doesn't seem to work the way you want it to? Of course you do. Nobody wants that. That's where UX strategy comes in.

Instead of frustration and lost business opportunities, a good strategy helps create and design products that people actually love using. When you put users first in your design process and align that with what the business needs, everybody wins. Users are happier and stick around longer, and the product is more likely to be a hit.

A strong UX strategy establishes a process by which such products and their experiences will be embraced and built by your teams in a focused manner that does not waste time and resources on aspects of the project that don't genuinely improve the user experience.

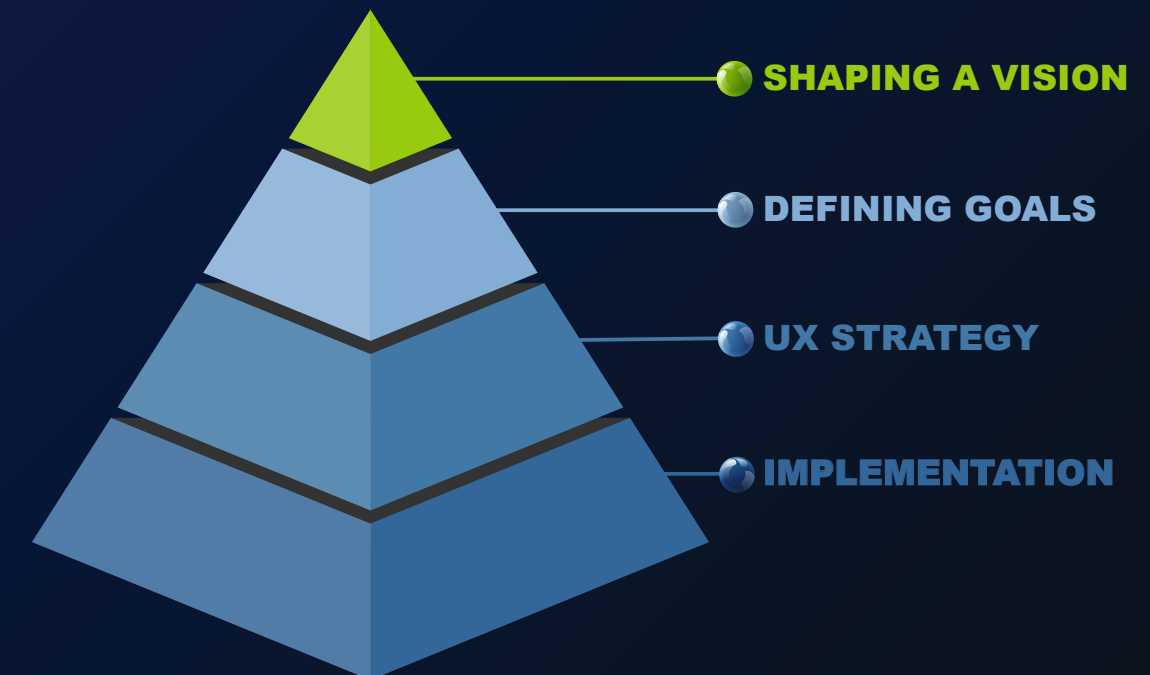
It's important to note how things have changed in this space. Back in the day (which isn't all that long ago) UX pros were mostly worried about making sure website content looked good and loaded fast. Today we're talking about creating entire experiences that keep people coming back for more, which is what audiences demand—88% of online consumers are less likely to return to a site after a bad experience.

Search engine algorithms have even evolved to prioritize user experience as a key ranking factor. Google, in particular, has incorporated various UX metrics into its ranking criteria, making it crucial for site owners to focus on providing a positive user experience to maintain or improve their search engine performance. Websites with subpar UX design may see a decline in their search engine visibility and rankings.

Having a solid UX strategy isn't just nice to have anymore—it's essential if you want to create something that connects with users and helps your business succeed. It's all about making sure every interaction with your product is meaningful and effective.

Components of UX Strategy

1. Your UX strategy is driven by a clearly shaped Vision for where you want your user experience to go. You're not just pulling ideas out of thin air—this vision should be based on solid research and what's actually possible in the market. It's not about getting bogged down in minute details, but rather giving your UX team a clear sense of purpose and direction. It's the North Star that helps guide all your UX decisions and keeps everyone moving in the same direction.



2. Goals and Measures are your UX game plan. Consider setting specific targets you can actually measure to see how well your UX improvements are doing. It's not just about making things look pretty – these goals need to tie in with what the business wants to achieve overall. You'll want to use metrics and KPIs that show both how happy your users are and how well the business is doing.
3. Now comes the Action Plan. This is where you figure out how to make your UX dreams a reality. It can be compared to mapping out your journey. You'll need to decide which areas to focus on first, set some strategic goals and create a sequence for hitting those goals, which helps you prioritize what needs to be done and when. It's all about breaking down that big UX vision into manageable steps over time, which will drive your Implementation.

Creating a UX Strategy

Developing a successful UX Strategy requires a process and strategy all its own. Specific details will be determined by the unique needs of your business, industry and products, but as building blocks for strategy creation, these six steps are foundational:

1. Research

Perform comprehensive research to grasp user requirements, business aims and market prospects. This step includes conducting user interviews, engaging in stakeholder discussions and performing competitive analysis to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

2. Develop UX Vision

Create a clear vision that captures the intended user experience and aligns with business objectives. This vision should be shared across teams to ensure a common understanding.

3. Set Goals and Strategic Objectives

Define specific, measurable goals that align with user needs and business priorities. Formulate a strategic plan that outlines milestones, key initiatives and timelines for achieving these objectives.

4. Develop a UX Roadmap

Construct a plan that details the order of UX activities and projects. This aids in visualizing the strategic plan and ensures that all team members are synchronized regarding priorities and timelines.

5. Iterate and Evolve

Consistently collect user feedback and refine the UX strategy to accommodate evolving user needs and market conditions. This ongoing process ensures the strategy stays relevant and effective throughout the product's life cycle.

6. Make Data-Driven Decisions

Leveraging data and analytics to guide design decisions can result in more effective and user-friendly solutions. By recognizing and addressing common UX challenges, designers can create products that are more effective and user-friendly, meeting both user needs and business goals.

Four Key Ingredients of UX Design Strategy

A positive user experience is driven by consistency in look, functionality and feel within a specific product, across product families and ecosystems, and within the broader brand itself. At the heart of any UX strategy for UX designers to implement, place the focus on four key areas:

1. Visual Consistency

Color palette, typography, spacing and overall layout / user interface

2. Functional Consistency: Interactions, Controls and Components

Interactions: Guaranteeing that similar actions, such as clicking buttons or navigating menus, produce similar results

Controls and Components: Applying the same design for similar controls and user-interface components (e.g., buttons, forms) across different areas

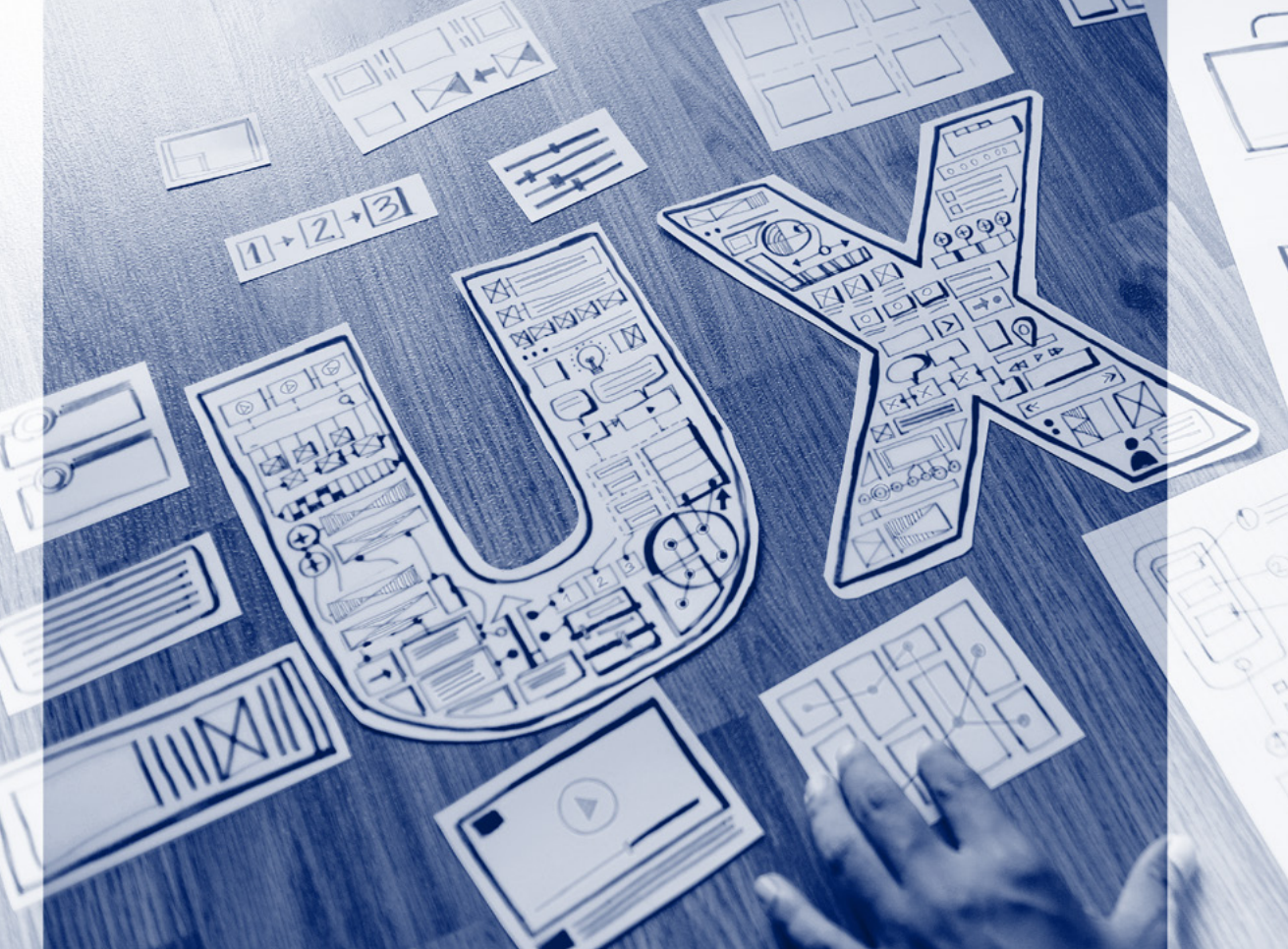
3. Internal Consistency

Ensuring that all elements of a single product or system are visually and functionally consistent, even when used across various platforms, by utilizing a Unified Design System (DSM)

4. External Consistency

Harmonizing design elements and interactions with other products within the same ecosystem or brand family

By way of example, look at how Nike's brand consistency is showcased through its iconic swoosh logo and the empowering 'Just Do It' tagline. These elements, combined with a uniform color palette and typography, are featured in all of Nike's marketing campaigns and product designs, creating a robust brand identity that resonates worldwide.



Benefits of Consistent UX Design

Design Consistency = Design Power

As this paper has said many times already, it's all about making things user-friendly. When everything looks similar and works in a similar way, you can pretty much guess how things will behave when you come upon something new. That makes for a much smoother experience and it actually helps users learn faster. Once a user figures out one part of a system, they can breeze through the rest.

Airbnb provides a seamless and adaptable browsing experience, featuring an appealing interface that swiftly displays rental options. The platform's search functionality is designed to be intuitive, allowing users to effortlessly navigate through available accommodations. With its visually engaging presentation, Airbnb enables travelers to quickly identify and assess potential rentals that match their preferences.

Instagram, for another example, is recognized for its sleek and visually attractive interface, ensuring functional consistency through intuitive navigation and simple functionality. This consistency is reflected in how users engage with visual content, resulting in a seamless browsing experience across various devices.

Good Design

Consistency isn't just about function, it's about style as well. When everything matches and flows together, it looks more polished and professional and conveys the brand more effectively.

Apple's website, for example, showcases a sleek, minimalist design characterized by intuitive navigation and high-quality interactive features. It's like having a well-coordinated outfit—everything just works.

Fewer Unexpected Moments

When you can predict how things work, you're less likely to make mistakes or become frustrated. One of the most frustrating experiences in using an app or website, for example, comes in those moments when you accidentally click the wrong button, and it delivers an unexpected (and often unwanted) result. That happens much less with consistent design. It's like building in a safety net for user interactions. Design consistency is like the secret sauce that makes using tech easier and more enjoyable.

Google's search engine exemplifies outstanding user experience through its streamlined design and powerful functionality. The core elements that contribute to its exceptional UX include minimalist interface, speed and efficiency, intelligent algorithms and user-friendly enhancements.

Brand Power

When a company uses the same look and feel across all their offerings, the branding is etched in a user's mind. You start recognizing their brand without even thinking about it, and its power and influence grow with every interaction.

Coca-Cola serves as a prime example of design consistency leading to brand consistency, which in turn leads to lasting influence. Its never-changing logo, steady marketing efforts like the "Share a Coke" campaign, and timeless themes of happiness, family and sharing are tailored to fit local cultures while preserving a universal look and feel.

The central concepts evident in all the instances illustrated above revolve around consistency, streamlined functionality, tailored user experiences, user-friendly interfaces and a laser focus on addressing fundamental user requirements and objectives. Through the application of user-centric design philosophies, these companies craft digital interactions that are both captivating and efficient.

7 Common UX Issues (and Solutions)

It's all about finding that sweet spot between what users want and expect, and what the business requires.

Balancing Act

As a UX designer, you're always trying to make users happy while keeping the business goals in mind. It's like being a matchmaker between user needs and company objectives. You have to dive deep into understanding your users - who they are, what they like, what makes them tick. But at the same time, you can't forget about what the business wants, like generating revenue and keeping users engaged.

Netflix's hover auto-play feature, which automatically starts previews when you hover over a title, has garnered some criticism for being intrusive and annoying. Some people find it disruptive, especially when they're just browsing and not quite ready to watch something right away.

Device Dilemmas

Your design must work everywhere. It's been a long time since it was just about looking good on a desktop or laptop. Your design needs to shine on phones, tablets, smartwatches—any and every device. It can like trying to fit a square peg in a round hole sometimes, but that's where a UX strategy and solid design system come in handy. And don't forget to play by the rules of each platform. It's all about giving users a smooth experience, no matter what devices they're using.

For instance, WhatsApp's "Delete for Everyone" has been cited by critics for creating a notable user experience flaw. While it allows users to retract messages sent in error, it leaves behind a conspicuous "This message was deleted" notification. The feature's implementation inadvertently highlights the very thing it aims to conceal, diminishing its effectiveness and user satisfaction for some.

Intuitive Interfaces

Creating interfaces that are both pretty and easy to use. It's like arranging furniture in a room. You want it to look good, but you also need to be able to walk around without bumping into things. That means setting up a clear visual hierarchy and using design elements like colors and fonts smartly. It's all about guiding the user's eye to where it needs to go.

Snapchat, while widely embraced, faces criticism for its user interface complexity, especially among newcomers. The app's unique navigation system, relying heavily on swipe gestures, coupled with its concealed features, can present a significant learning curve for some. Critics have said that the design approach often hinders users from fully exploring and leveraging the platform's diverse capabilities.

Accessibility for All

Accessibility of the most important aspects - making sure everyone can use your product, including folks with disabilities. It's not just a nice-to-have, it's a must-have. Think of it like building a ramp alongside stairs. You're making sure everyone can get in, no matter their situation. It's about following accessibility standards and thinking inclusively from the get-go.

Decluttering the Interface

Ever walked into a messy room and felt overwhelmed? That's what a cluttered interface does to users. The solution? Get rid of anything that's not absolutely necessary and make sure users can find their way around easily.

Ryanair's online booking system, for example, has faced criticism for what some have called its complexity and unwieldiness. Some users have said they struggle to navigate the booking process, resulting in frustration.

Information Overload

Too much information can overload a user. It's like trying to drink from a fire hose. The fix? Keep things short and sweet. Cut down on text, declutter your interfaces, and serve up information in bite-sized, easy-to-digest pieces.

Feedback and Errors

Last but not the least, keep users in the loop. When they do something, they should know it worked. It's like giving a thumbs up or a gentle nudge in the right direction. Make sure buttons visibly change when clicked, and if something goes wrong, explain it in plain English. No one likes cryptic error messages. Remember, it's all about making things work smoothly for users while keeping the business satisfied.

Overcoming UX Implementation Challenges

1. Gaining Stakeholder Support

Many companies struggle to fully appreciate the value of UX. To approach this:

- a. Present case studies and ROI data to illustrate UX's business benefits
- b. Engage key decision-makers early to secure their backing
- c. Build credibility through quick, impactful UX enhancements

2. Maximizing Limited Resources

UX teams often face time, budget and staffing constraints. Consider these strategies:

- a. Focus on high-impact UX initiatives aligned with business objectives
- b. Employ lean UX techniques like guerrilla testing for swift, cost-effective insights
- c. Justify additional resources by showcasing tangible outcomes

3. Enhancing Cross-Functional Collaboration

UX work demands teamwork across departments, which can be challenging. To enhance:

- a. Establish clear protocols for UX integration throughout product development
- b. Utilize collaborative tools and workshops to unite teams
- c. Integrate UX team members into product and engineering groups

4. Harmonizing User Needs and Business Goals

Balancing user desires with business requirements can create tension. To address this:

- a. Link UX improvements to business metrics and KPIs
- b. Use data to demonstrate how meeting user needs drives business success
- c. Develop innovative solutions that satisfy both user and business demands

5. Adapting to Technological Advancements

The rapidly evolving tech landscape impacts UX. Stay ahead by:

- a. Dedicating time to continuous learning and exploring new tools and techniques
- b. Participating in industry events and networking with UX professionals
- c. Fostering a culture of innovation and calculated risk-taking

6. Quantifying UX Impact

Measuring UX value can be quite complex. To respond to this:

- a. Define clear, business-aligned success metrics from the outset
- b. Combine qualitative and quantitative data to showcase improvements
- c. Utilize analytics and A/B testing to measure the impact of UX modifications

By proactively tackling these common obstacles, UX teams can develop more effective strategies and drive greater impact within their organizations.

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