

DO YOUR MEMBERS VISIT MULTIPLE PLANETS FOR NEW ACCOUNTS, LOANS AND EVERYDAY BANKING?

Four easy steps to create a consistent experience with members in mind

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Many credit unions take members to what feels like three different planets to open an account, apply for a loan and use online banking. Giving users access to all products and services through a simple, consistent experience is critical to being competitive. Credit unions no longer only compete with big banks and other credit unions. Consumers hold them to the higher standard of everything digital that commands their time and money—from Uber to Amazon and Spotify to eTrade. Delivering a consistent, convenient member experience across products is especially vital since Millennials and Generation Z, who have grown up using technology, now comprise 42.4 percent of the U.S. population.¹ While Baby Boomers and Generation X may be more accepting, younger generations won't tolerate a bad interface.

This article presents four steps for credit unions to better understand member behavior so they can focus product design on members. CIOs, CTOs, CEOs, and those responsible for member experience can use these human-centered design methods in-house or to influence partners to deliver better experiences.

Four steps to focus product design on members

Credit unions are proud to consider members their top priority, so why stop at the digital experience? Functional mobile products keep members coming back. Banks and other organizations know this, and credit unions need to catch up.

Human-centered design is a method that helps better understand members' and prospects' needs, expectations and behaviors. It also helps prioritize design improvements that offer the biggest payback. While not all credit unions have in-house human-centered design capabilities, trusted partners can help as with Desert Financial Credit Union and its technology CUSO, SwitchThink Solutions. A few years ago, Desert Financial enrolled an average of six new members a day through its online channel. Since SwitchThink adopted human-centered design and Desert Financial increased marketing, they now enroll as many as 50 a day. "We're determined to increase self-service," said Ron Amstutz, executive vice president, Desert Financial, "and our investment in digital design pays off handsomely."

With efficient, focused product designs that center on members, credit unions can deliver consistent, simple digital experiences to compete more effectively with big banks. They can also create upsell opportunities within the natural flow of the experience. Let's look at the four-step script to build and improve products that focus on member experience.

1. Seek direct member input to design and hone navigation and flow.

The goal is to understand your members so you can deliver an experience that most members find simple and intuitive. Since you won't be next to them to help them figure it out, avoid acronyms and industry-specific terms. Talk to a wide variety of users, including novices and experts, to uncover what they care about, how they think, what step they expect next, and how much they relate to what you say. You also want to learn their patience level so they hang with you through the flow. Card sorting, a digital exercise that asks users to sort and group topics that feel similar, is a useful way to help you present information and input fields according to the way members think.

2. Identify the experience that works best.

Start by building prototypes that look like the real product. For example, create a prototype of your new online account opening flow and encourage members and coworkers to evaluate it. Better yet, build two and use A/B testing to identify which experience works best and which causes users to stumble. While prototyping may sound mysterious, plenty of products can help. Your prototype can be as simple as a PowerPoint walkthrough of product screens.

Wireframe prototypes use blank boxes for images and sample text to approximate screen layouts. Removing visual design lets you concentrate on the user interaction. High fidelity prototypes present a more finished product design after you hone the basic flow. These are especially useful for user testing because they approximate the look, feel and flow of the finished product.

3. Monitor each step a member takes so you can fix heavy abandon points.

The goal is to understand where and why members abandon so you can fix the issues. Once you measure the heaviest abandon points, you'll want to know why. One way is to ask users through a popup when they navigate away from a step. Include multiple choices like "I don't understand the membership requirements" or "I was trying to apply for a credit card". Be sure to leave room for freeform answers.

4. Track user clicks, page scrolling and mouse movement to observe how users interact with the design.

Various tools can help you get an aggregated view of how users interact with each step of the flow. Click maps show the most frequent touch/click areas, and red "rage clicks" indicate when users keep selecting or deselecting areas that aren't active (see figure 1).

Understanding and watching user behavior identifies what works and doesn't work. SwitchThink used rage click insight to redesign how they introduced membership savings in the Open Account flow when they found applicants didn't understand the requirement. Replay

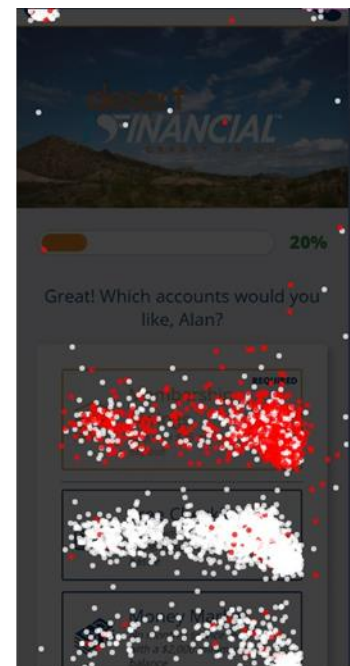


Figure 1: This Click Map shows rage clicks (red) where users repeatedly tried to unclick the required Membership Savings selection as part of Desert Financial CU's original account opening process.



software can help you track how long members linger on each step, where they go next, and what happens if they go back.

Credit unions take pride in building lasting member relationships. These steps can help you develop functional products that people have fun using and keep members loyal.

¹ Source: Statista.com, "Population distribution in the United States in 2021, by generation," June 2022.

About the Author

Wayne Oleksak leads digital product strategy for SwitchThink Solutions, a digital product and IT services CUSO. He has a passion for delivering simple member solutions such as mobile/online banking, online account opening, and online loan applications. Wayne brings 30 years of product leadership and user experience expertise from NortonLifeLock, GoDaddy and various .coms to the SwitchThink team. Wayne combines his Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering with a Master of Business Administration for a deep understanding of how products work and a passion to make them easy.

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SwitchThink Solutions is an IT Services CUSO formed in partnership with Corelation. As credit union professionals dedicated to optimizing & expanding **KeyStone's** capabilities for our clients, we've developed deep domain expertise in the areas of conversion, development, hosting, & operational best practices. Leverage our knowledge to unlock new strategic possibilities through performance improvement & rapid innovation.

Services include managed & infrastructure cloud hosting solutions; disaster recovery solutions; development & consulting services; conversion support services; & our new SaaS Essentials featuring KeyStone (offering a fully outsourced suite of mission-critical applications to support your enterprise). Whether you're an existing user or preparing for implementation, let our experts help you rapidly apply the transformational powers of **KeyStone & Cloud Computing**. Rethink what's possible with SwitchThink.