Think Experience

Learn actionable strategies for your charity to improve engagement, reach and revenue through your digital platforms.

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Foreword - why we did this.

So why have we done this?

After reading about the gap in digital skills in the charity sector in the recent NPC report 'Charities Taking Charge', we decided that we wanted to do something about it. We noticed that despite there being a lot of information out there on UX, digital products and the like, hardly any of it is presented in an approachable and actionable way.

Not all charities can afford to work with a digital experience agency to help them design and deliver their next website or digital product. We believe, however, that many of the techniques, strategies and tools can be used to improve the way they approach these types of projects.

We have created this free eBook series to help debunk some of the fears around digital projects. We always recommend putting the user at the heart of what you do. We have tried to give people some straightforward, plain-talking, accessible, and most importantly, actionable information.

By changing the way charities approach digital products and services, and by giving away the information that big agencies will charge a lot of money for in consultancy fees before a project even starts - we hope to help define a brighter digital landscape for charities in the future. By approaching projects in the 'Think Experience' mindset, you will retain focus, save money and see more success when trying to create engaging and focused experiences for your audiences. And most importantly, you will start creating digital experiences with humans at the centre. Improving their experiences will improve your chances of success.

Over the next 3 months we will be releasing more chapters - and giving charities the digital skills they need to understand how to define and create digital products that deliver on their promises. It will give you the knowledge to work in better ways with your internal teams, or empower you to work with external suppliers in a more efficient and successful way.

But most importantly, it will help to ensure that you and your charity maximise the value that can be gained from digital technologies - and improve the impact you make on a daily basis to the causes and lives you care about the most.

Enjoy and good luck

Jenny Kitchen - Managing Director

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Step away from the Functionality Spec.

Be goal-focused and make objective decisions.

# Experience Design: Focus on the human - not the machine.

The biggest mistake charities and companies alike make when creating digital products such as websites, mobile apps and other services is forgetting about the people that they are making them for.

99% of the time it's not intentional - exciting new technology, opportunities to push push push for donations and an internal focus on the business goals mean that often the user's experience is the last thing that is truly considered - if at all.

And if it is, it is only normally considered within the constraints of the site or application without the realisation that there is a whole world outside of it - most of which is vastly more important to the people you are trying to engage.

The good news is, there is no better time to change this. This guide will help you transform the way your charity looks at digital. It will give you actionable strategies and techniques to start making those changes today - as well as helping you to better plan those new products over the horizon.

Think beyond the website or mobile app - think about the journey you want to take people on. **Think Experience.**
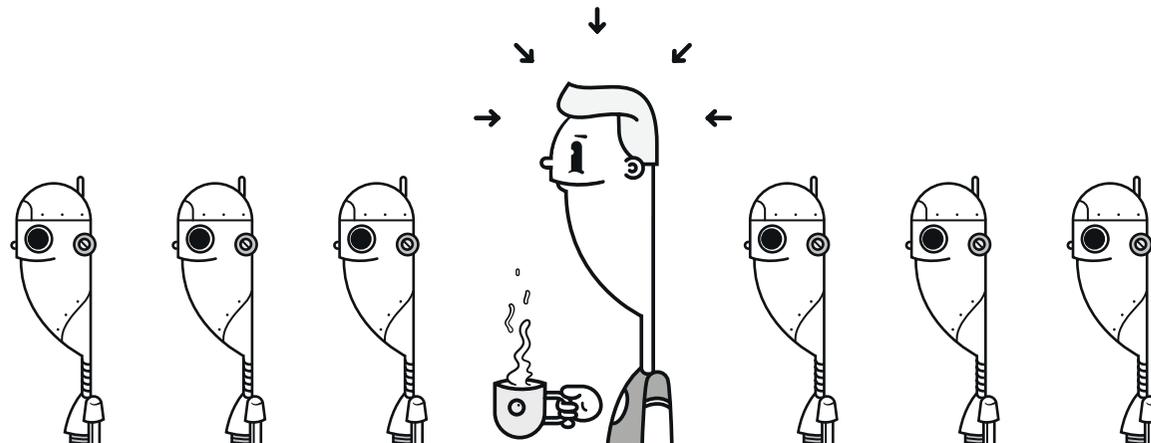
We built it... But they didn't come.

So after months of blood, sweat, tears, debate and debugging, the site is live. Time to sit back and watch those Google Analytics numbers go through the roof, right? In fact, what are we going to do with all those extra donations?

But unfortunately, as is often the case, the views spike and then plateau. Donations don't seem to go up. In some cases, after spending a significant amount of money redesigning and redeveloping your site from the ground up, the opposite happens. Numbers drop off, key content isn't viewed and donations go down. How could this happen? Awkward questions are asked and boards suddenly don't want to invest people's money in more 'risky experiments'.

Sound familiar? Good. That means you have a real opportunity to make some changes that can have a massive impact. In most of these cases, boxes have been ticked from a shopping list of functionality, these amazing areas of functionality have not been weaved together in a way that puts your users (a human - in most cases) at the heart of the experience.

"Time to sit back and watch those google analytics numbers go through the roof, right?"

There is a lack of Experience Design, and to design the right experiences, you need to first understand what you are trying to achieve and empathise with the people you are trying to reach.

Step away from the Functionality Spec

Be goal-focused and make objective decisions

Why are we building this again?

The trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never score.

Before you started your last website refresh or build, did you identify a list of goals you wanted it to achieve?

Most people answer 'yes' to this question. It would be crazy to start a project of this scale without these in mind, right? In truth, I think all projects are started with these intentions, but in a lot of cases somewhere along the line the focus is lost. Bob from marketing is raving about a great instagram API, Julie from IT has been looking at a really powerful CMS and Tim from the graphic design team has been looking for an opportunity to apply a new design trend.

Next thing you know, you have a two page list of functionality spec'd out and out it goes to tender, or design and development starts in-house. 9 out of 10 times what you end up with is a site that ticks the many, many boxes of functionality you asked for but falls short on delivering the value expected. It is then hard to qualify success or failure. Technically the team has delivered everything you asked for - but it does not seem to have all the impact imagined in those initial meetings.

So how do you counter the distractions and slip of core focus that can easily derail a project? In truth, it really comes down to **defining focused, measurable goals** that can be captured and evaluated post launch. These goals should not only be set at the beginning of the project and evaluated once it has launched, but as a criteria to evaluate and approve any and all decisions during every step of the project. When Bob starts raving about instagram API's, assess the value that can be derived and evaluate this against the defined goals. If your top 3 goals are not helped by this functionality, say thanks to Bob and earmark the Instagram API integration for a second release.

There are no wrong ideas, just a list of priorities that need to be delivered in order.

Clear, concise and measurable goals can be intimidating to define. Some common (and unhelpful) ones you will come across can be the following :

- Increase revenue
- Increase time on pages
- Make it look better

Although these go some way towards helping, they actually are not easy to directly measure, nor completely relevant to what you are actually trying to achieve. Take for example "increase revenue". With so many variables outside of the website that can affect this, it becomes a very subjective goal to measure. Instead, try to define it to be more precise, ie " Increase donation revenue from x target user group via the website". This is clearly relevant, measurable and cannot be misinterpreted - it either does or it doesn't.

Other goals simply measure the wrong things. A good example of this is "Increase the time people spend on pages". Although easy to measure and available in many analytic tools, this is not an indication of engagement or a good experience.

Depending on the goal a user is trying to achieve, spending too long on one page is not always a good thing, and could actually highlight a problem with content or how a user navigates the site (UX). A more focused goal would be to understand what you are trying to get a user to engage with, and the reason that sits behind it. What is that engagement going to translate to? More or higher donations? A higher uptake on signing up to a newsletter?

Once you have these goals, you need to prioritise them. And I don't mean 10 high priority goals and 2 medium priority goals. You need to define what is your highest, what is your second highest and so on.

Top tip : A good technique here is to sit in a room with the major stakeholders. Give them a stack of post-its and a sharpie each. Tell everyone to write what they think the website should achieve and give them 5 minutes to quickly write them out and stick them on a wall in any order. Once everyone has completed the task, go through the post-its with them, combining duplications, and refining the goal language if required. A good format is: "we want the site to do x for the charity" ("We want the site to convert more one-off givers to monthly donators on a direct debit"). Once you have these in place, get everyone involved to stand up (very important) and go to the wall as a team to organise the goals from top to bottom in order of priority. Be strict - no side by sides, no exceptions. Break up any fights swiftly. No one can leave until it is done. The room need to decide which priority the goals sit in - so make sure that the key stakeholders are there to sign it off afterwards. Congrats - you now have your prioritized goals.

Now you understand what the business needs - it's time to focus on what the most important people want to achieve - your users.

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and all other chapters, **click here.**