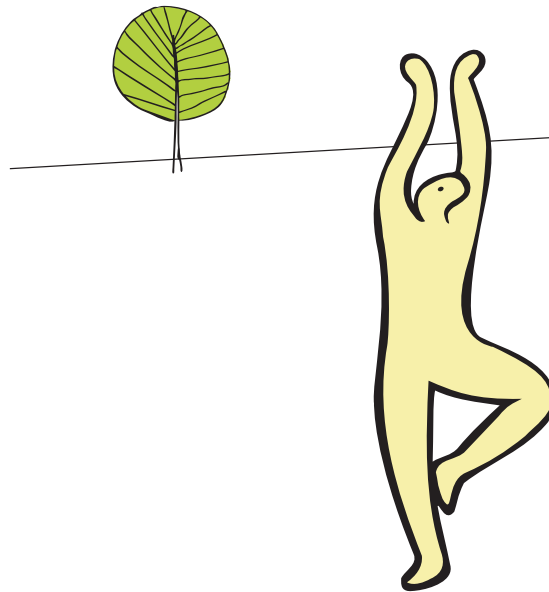


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# What makes good 'customer experience'?

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Generally, online customer experience experts seem to agree that there are five planes to consider when developing a website centered on delivering a good online customer experience. These planes start at the abstract strategic level and gradually move upwards towards the concrete area of surface deliverables. i.e. they work from brainstorming what you want right up to delivering a finished version of it.

## The five planes of customer experience

Together the five planes provide a conceptual framework for talking about developing good online customer experiences, identifying issues and how to solve them.

- **Strategy:** It's vital to understand customer needs - what they want from the site and how that may fit in with their other goals. This needs to be balanced against the organisation's objectives for the website.
- **Scope:** This defines the features and functions that are available to the customers at a website.
- **Structure:** The site structure defines how users get to a page and where they go when they're finished there.

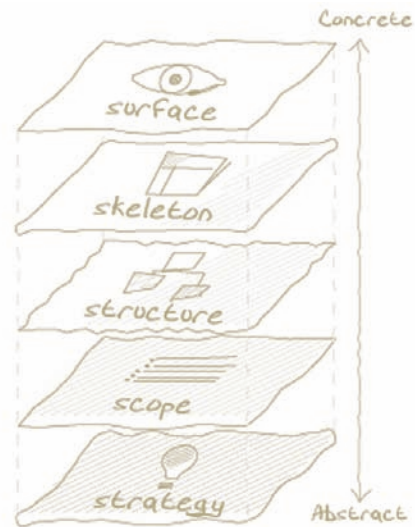


Diagram based upon 'The Elements of User Experience' by Jesse James Garrett

- **Skeleton:** The skeleton is designed to optimise the arrangement of text, call to actions, buttons, tabs and so on for maximum effect and efficiency - so that your customers remember the logo and can find the 'buy now' button when they need it.
- **Surface:** At the surface a customer sees a series of web pages, made up of images and text.

## Then there's a bunch of fine-tuning

Thinking about the five planes will help make a good customer experience, but will not necessarily aid the development of an exceptional one.

To do that you need to do a lot of fine-tuning.

The Eisenberg Brothers in their seminal work 'Call To Action' identify five discrete areas where extra attention can enhance the customer experience (*along with sales, loyalty and conversion ratios*).

**Planning:** This involves everything that happens before a potential customer reaches the website, from getting traffic to the site's unique selling point, to planning the elements for the surface plane. It means understanding the marketplace, the customer, brand and brand positioning. Ultimately, planning is about understanding visitors so that you can anticipate their knowledge levels, moods and mindsets.

**Structure:** Fine-tuning the structure of a website includes analysing and evaluating the effectiveness of the navigation, information architecture, design/style, colour, copy versus images, layout, technology, font (*size, style, and colour*), speed and the perception of speed.

**Momentum:** The elements motivating visitors to go from one page to the next and eventually take an action on a website are 'momentum'. To improve momentum you need to focus on how to get people to take action at the required point. If you want your visitors to do something, don't just hope they'll figure it out, tell them to 'click here'. This needs to go beyond usability and isn't simply about removing obstacles. It's about creating the desire that drives action. To achieve momentum you must make sure there are clear calls to action on every page. This means locating important information at the point where it will have the most impact, i.e. placing the 'money back guarantee' at the checkout page. It's important to balance opportunity with overload and prevent 'analysis paralysis'. This happens when prospects are so overloaded with choices that they become overwhelmed and freeze or abandon their website journey.

**Communication:** The internet is a powerful, fast and flexible communication tool. Communicating effectively involves: improving a site's copywriting style, evaluating the balance of images and copy, expressing value, setting the appropriate mood, developing policies and procedures that instil trust, selling style versus substance, timing your messages for best effect, incorporating scannable and skimmable text,

effectively managing follow-up communications, knowing when long or short copy should be used and much more. It all needs attention because communication isn't what you intend, it's what your customers perceive.

**Value:** Value is not the same as price, and price alone is actually a lower priority for most buyers. Whether a sale is achieved and a customer will return is determined by the value the customer finds. Customers search for products or services, but they buy value. Does the website effectively sell benefits rather than simply list features? Does the style of the website equate with the unique selling points? Does the site delight customers with the way orders are fulfilled or does it merely satisfy or, even worse, disappoint them? Does the website's products or services address customer needs or is it trying to push something that no one wants? The customer must be able to readily determine a site's value, not have to guess at it.

**This is what we do...**



**Aardvark Media Ltd.**

101 The Chambers, First Floor,  
Chelsea Harbour,  
London, SW10 0XF

[enquiries@aardvarkmedia.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aardvarkmedia.co.uk)

[www.aardvarkmedia.co.uk](http://www.aardvarkmedia.co.uk)

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7582 7711

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7022 8740