

## Progressive's UX Lead Says Think Like A DJ

Crafting an engaging user experience is like DJ'ing a wedding: It's all about getting people to dance.

By Carl Winfield | June 22, 2022

The link between designing an engaging user experience (UX) and DJ'ing isn't immediately apparent but, for **Progressive's** Lead UX Researcher **Marc Majers**, the strategies that get people out on the dance floor are the same as those needed to bring people back to a website again and again.

Majers, in a **Society of Insurance Research** webinar entitled "Make Your Customers Dance," said that, for both DJ's and UX developers, knowing who your audience is, and creating a memorable experience for them, is key. However, to do that, it's important to identify the audience first, and then conceptualize and evaluate the product before moving to development.

Many service providers across a range of industries could say, with a high degree of surety, that they know their customers, Majers said. But he advised insurers to consider the depth of their knowledge, particularly whether it reflects an understanding of their customers' requirements, goals and constraints. Majers also highlighted the importance of collecting and examining hard data in order to avoid making assumptions about the customers.

Surveys, focus groups and workshops are invaluable resources that can reduce the amount of time spent reworking a new feature since they enable insurers to understand what the user's needs are, validate the technical constraints, and work through their business goals. With that done, the insurer can start developing the feature with a glidepath in mind rather than saying "I'm going to develop it and find out later," Majers said. At the same time, he warned that firms shouldn't rely exclusively on group feedback because of the potential for bias.

Majers noted that, as a DJ, he continuously monitors how the crowd responds to the music he plays, in effect conducting an empirical analysis of whether people are motivated to get up and dance. While UX designers are unable to see exactly how customers respond to their work, Majers said that existing data could provide insights into what's driving their behavior. However, he warned that both DJs and UX designers must always be prepared to pivot. "Be ready to defibrillate," Majers said. "If you're noticing low users it could be a field you're jumping off of, maybe you need to add an information icon. Or if you're seeing that, all of a sudden, your newsletter for the last two editions is dropping, maybe you need to do something there. Don't just sit on your hands: make a change."

The competitive nature of the insurance industry is driving innovation and making processes more efficient, Majers noted. Customers could begin to engage with the product via mobile phones before moving to a laptop, and then cycling between the two, he noted. However, he also highlighted the need to limit the number of features so that customers remain engaged.

“We get frozen when there are too many options,” Majers said. “On mobile, if there are too many options, the customer may say ‘I’m [just] going to call.’ There are line dances that go on for nine minutes and will fade out, but some applications will go for full nine minutes and the consumer will fade out.”

For insurance groups that are taking their first steps in UX integration, allocating time to experiment is among the most important things to do, according to Majers. That experimentation could start with a survey or even an a-b test. While he acknowledged that doing so would take time, he assured viewers that building that process into the project will help to ensure that the designers have clarity about what the goals are, how long it’s going to take and set the team up to meet the delivery deadline.

Majers also suggested allocating time to engage with the development team in order to make sure that their feedback is incorporated into the user experience, as well as provide advice when necessary. He recommended scheduling meeting time with the development team once a week, or bi-weekly, in an open forum where anyone can drop in. Even if no one shows up initially, he said that, in his experience, people will eventually start showing up and asking questions that may help to inform or refine the development process.

While Majers declined to comment on competitors, he noted that, in general, the latest chatbot iterations and expedited quote processes represent best-in-class examples of UX design as they enable consumers to engage across formats. Moreover, he added that some firms are exploring augmented reality and virtual reality with an eye toward incorporating them into their user experience.

Ultimately, building an engaging user experience is all about getting people on the dancefloor, Majers said. Identifying who the end users are, conceptualizing ideas, developing them and then constantly making adjustments is key to keeping customers engaged.

As with any enterprise, there are a range of different personality types. Majers noted that some customers will prefer a high-touch experience while others may engage only with the device or devices of their choosing. The user interface may change but, in many cases, the key to creating a memorable and positive user experience is by being an advocate for the consumer, he said.

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