Rocket®software

The Value of a Modern UX

Revenue Strategies, Risk Aversion, and Design Excellence

Contents

Introduction

User experience (UX) is not just a nice-to-have. It drives business success and encompasses every interaction users have with a company, from products to services. User satisfaction, brand loyalty, and revenue generation are all subject to UX success, which is why modernizing UX is not just about updating visuals. You're also setting the table for organizational performance, accessibility, and overall product satisfaction. This white paper will explore the value of modernizing UX, the risks associated with neglecting UX updates, and how you can successfully navigate the transformation.

User experience:

What's the big deal anyway?

User experience, UX, or sometimes "product design" in application development, refers to a user's overall journey when interacting with an application — and how the app functions, looks, and feels. A well-designed UX means the app is educating and appealing to users while assuring them that they can achieve their goals with ease and satisfaction.

Key elements of UX in application development:

Usability:
Can users navigate the app and complete tasks without confusion?

Accessibility:
Can everyone, including people with disabilities, use the app effectively?

Design:
Are the visuals and interface appealing and coherent while aiding usability?

Functionality:
Does the app perform well and reliably?

Performance:
Does the app load, run, and respond quickly and smoothly?

User-centered design:
Are features and workflows based on user research and feedback?

Why does UX matter?

Think about the last time you visited a slow-loading, out-of-date website or application that was difficult to navigate and lacked intuitiveness. Not such a great experience, right?

UX design creates the interactions between users and business applications that produce the moment when those users can choose to invest in your business or choose to investigate other options.

A modern UX:

Your secret weapon for business growth

User-centric approaches to digital design are producing interactions that foster long-term loyalty and open doors to new revenue opportunities. Let's take a look at six ways that investing in modern UX can unlock new business potential:

1. Enhanced user satisfaction, engagement, and retention

Modern UX design emphasizes user needs and preferences, and creating applications that are intuitive, efficient, and enjoyable. When users interact with an application that feels seamless and responsive, they stay for longer periods of time and are more likely to return for more interactions. Studies have shown that improving UX directly boosts key performance metrics such as conversion rates and user retention, with Forrester Research reporting an increase in conversion rates by up to 200%.

SEO software vendor Moz recently implemented improvements to help increase its conversion rates. The enhancements focused on improving user experience, such as optimizing site speed, simplifying navigation, and making the website more user-friendly. The results were a 37% increase in business inquiries and more than $780,000 in new sales opportunities generated within six months, underscoring the tangible business value of a well-designed user interface.

2. Improved accessibility

The World Health Organization reports that 16% of the world's population lives with some form of disability. But only 3% of the internet is accessible to these individuals. If you neglect accessibility, your businesses risk missing out on the revenue potential of a population with $1.9 trillion in disposable income. There are also legal risks, as demonstrated by Target's $6 million settlement over missing "alt" tags — essential for enabling screen reader navigation for users with disabilities.

The most common website failures include:

- Low-contrast text
- No alternative text for images
- Empty links
- No form input labels
- Empty buttons
- Missing document language

Implementing features like text-to-speech, color contrast adjustments, and keyboard navigation enhances the user experience for a broader audience, improves user satisfaction and complies with legal standards, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Accessible websites are shown to have higher user retention rates, which help companies reach untapped markets and build a more inclusive digital presence.

3. Competitive advantage

A superior UX gives companies a head-and-shoulders advantage. Users are more likely to choose applications with intuitive and enjoyable experiences. And businesses that prioritize user-centered design are more likely to stand out from the crowd. This is why Airbnb co-founder and design school graduate, Joe Gebbia, doubled down on an innovative and customer-centric design strategy in the company's early days. The fledgling startup, once earning $200 per week in 2009, has now grown into a nearly $10 billion powerhouse (three times larger than its closest competitor), and credits that success to their emphasis on design as a core company value.

Seamless UX enhances customer satisfaction and improves a company's reputation, creating a strong foundation for customer loyalty. Organizations that stay ahead of the curve by continuously improving their UX are better positioned to attract and retain customers in crowded marketplaces.

4. Streamlined operations and efficiency

Modernizing UX also has internal benefits. By creating a user-friendly interface, businesses can improve operational efficiency and reduce the time required to complete tasks. Employees benefit from reduced training requirements, fewer errors, and a more efficient workflow. In turn, savings and productivity increase, both of which improve your business's overall performance, like it did for General Electric (GE).

By 2010, GE had become the world's 14th largest software developer. But its software lacked consistency and quality compared to its hardware. In response, GE established a Software Center of Excellence, including a UX Center of Excellence, to unify its software platforms and improve user experience. Through collaboration among leaders, engineers, and designers, GE implemented culture-changing processes, design tools, and success metrics. This initiative doubled development team productivity and saved $30 million in its first year, laying the groundwork for GE Digital — and the company's leadership in the industrial internet.

5. Data-driven insights

Modern UX design often integrates with analytics tools that provide valuable, data-driven insights into user behavior. It also enables organizations to optimize their applications. By tracking user journeys, identifying pain points, and analyzing feature usage, businesses can make informed decisions about product enhancements, marketing strategies, and customer service improvements. The next time you settle down for a family movie at home, consider the amount of analysis that went behind that next movie recommendation that pops up on the screen.

Netflix utilizes A/B testing extensively to optimize its user interface. By analyzing user behavior and preferences, they have made numerous updates to improve content discovery and user experience. This data-driven approach helps improve user satisfaction, increase engagement, and reduce friction. Through data insights, Netflix has powered higher adoption rates, stronger retention, and more effective support. Additionally, data allows for targeted marketing, improved targeting, and proactive issue resolution, contributing to continuous product improvement and business growth.

6. Positive brand perception

A thoughtfully designed UX can significantly enhance a brand's reputation. Users expect seamless digital experiences; companies that meet and exceed these expectations build trust and a positive emotional connection with their users.

In 2014, Virgin America (now owned by Alaska Air) partnered with Work & Co to redesign their digital experience, focusing on enhancing brand perception through a user-centric approach. They set the digital standard in the airline industry by creating a seamless and efficient booking process with a responsive design that worked across all devices. The clean, minimalistic aesthetics and engaging interactions aligned with Virgin America's stylish and innovative brand identity.

Personalization features remembered user preferences, making future bookings faster and more enjoyable. This fostered brand loyalty and positioned Virgin America as a forward-thinking, customer-friendly airline. When businesses invest in user-centric design, they demonstrate their commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. This level of care translates to greater customer loyalty, higher retention rates, and more frequent recommendations. A positive brand perception fueled by superior UX design becomes a long-term asset that propels business growth.
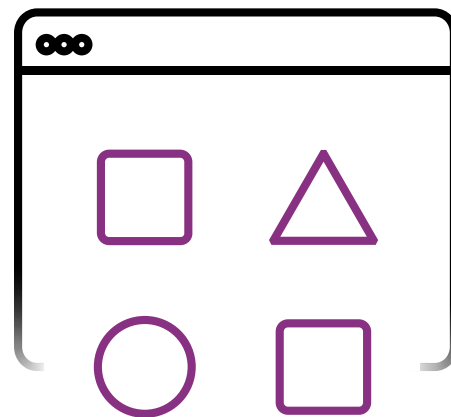
The perils of standing still:

Modernize or lose your competitive edge

Modernizing the UX has become increasingly critical to staying competitive, in tandem with the increasing importance of the customer experience. Outdated UX creates a range of risks that hinder user satisfaction and business growth. The following are some of the key dangers of failing to update your UX design:

1. User frustration and drop-off

Did you know that nearly three out of four online users surveyed say they would abandon a slow or underperforming website and choose a competitor? An outdated or poorly designed UX frustrates users, encouraging them to "bounce" — to leave the application or web page. Common issues like difficult navigation, slow load times, and overly complex interfaces create negative user experiences that lead to increased drop-off rates. Even small delays in load times can significantly impact user engagement, making it essential to optimize performance and usability. When users encounter friction, they're more likely to switch to a competitor.

2. Increased support, maintenance, and development costs

An outdated UX increases support, maintenance, and development costs by creating inefficiencies and challenges for users and developers alike. Confusing interfaces and poor usability mean frustrated users, higher error rates, and more frequent support inquiries, driving up customer support costs. IBM reports that every 1% of failed UX design results in a 5% increase in support costs. Outdated systems are also expensive due to compatibility issues, bloated codebases, and security vulnerabilities. Scaling or adding features to them becomes cumbersome and extends development timelines and raises costs.

You also have to confront the lost productivity for internal users and missed opportunities with potential customers, shrinking revenue and inflating customer acquisition expenses. Training and onboarding are also more resource-intensive due to the steep learning curve and frequent updates to workarounds or training materials. Modernizing the UX reduces these costs, improves user satisfaction, and ensures the system remains efficient and competitive.

3. Loss of market share

Competitors with modern UX designs draw users away from applications with outdated interfaces. User expectations are high. And they're more likely to switch to a competitor if they find a smoother, more intuitive experience.

As technology evolves, so do user needs and preferences. Companies that stay ahead of the curve by continuously enhancing their UX are better equipped to attract and retain customers. Investing in UX design not only improves customer satisfaction but also fosters brand loyalty, helping businesses build long-term relationships with their users and strengthen their competitive position.

4. Security vulnerabilities

An obsolete UX compromises security by relying on legacy systems and technologies that lack modern updates and protections, with 17% of all cyberattacks targeting vulnerabilities in web applications.

In addition, an older UX may not support advanced authentication methods like multi-factor authentication or proper encryption. Confusing interfaces can lead to user errors, such as mishandling sensitive data or falling for phishing attempts. By modernizing UX, companies build platforms that meet the latest security standards, protect user data, and maintain trust — especially as threats from cybercriminals become more sophisticated.

5. Negative brand image

A poor UX harms a brand's reputation and signals to customers that the company is falling behind with the latest trends or technology. This lack of attention to UX can give users the feeling that the company is out of touch with their needs, reducing trust and loyalty. As a result, these brands struggle to maintain a positive public image and attract new customers or retain existing ones.

6. Missed business opportunities

McKinsey & Co research revealed that companies with a design-forward strategy, as measured by the McKinsey Design Index, enjoyed nearly double the growth in revenues and shareholder returns compared to their industry counterparts. Failing to modernize UX causes companies to miss out on important growth and innovation opportunities. By incorporating the latest UX trends and technologies, businesses tap into new customer segments, offer new features, and outperform their competition.
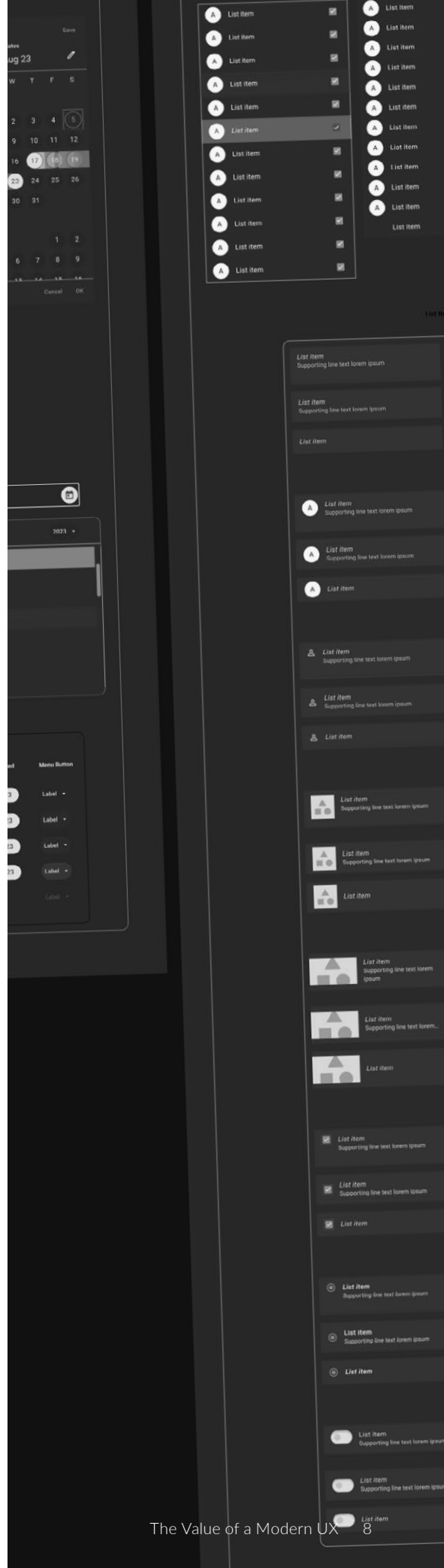
UX glow-up:

Best practices for a modern makeover

Modernizing UX goes beyond aesthetic updates. It involves adopting best practices, integrating innovative technologies, and ensuring a seamless, user-centered design. This improves usability and enhances customer satisfaction, loyalty, and business outcomes.

Keeping up with the latest UX trends is essential for:

- Optimizing workflows.
- Creating personalized experiences.
- Maintaining consistency across platforms.

Let's investigate key strategies for modernizing UX and how tools like Rocket Uniface can help drive these efforts efficiently and effectively.

1. User-centered design principles

Thorough research and testing help reveal deeper understandings of how users interact with a product or service, allowing designers to succeed with work that focuses on user needs and preferences.

By adopting a user-centered approach, designers work toward every aspect of the interface being intuitive, seamless, and tailored to the needs of the audience. When the design process centers around real user feedback, it becomes easier to identify pain points and optimize the experience, ultimately leading to better outcomes for both users and businesses.

2. Continuous feedback and iteration

Establish user feedback channels like surveys and in-app forms, and use behavioral analytics to understand user behavior. When you adopt an agile methodology, you allow for rapid prototyping and regular updates, ensuring constant improvement.

Also, engage with users through interviews and usability testing, and transparently communicate changes based on their feedback. Monitor key performance indicators to assess the impact of UX changes and experiment with A/B testing for data-driven decisions. This approach leads to dynamic and responsive user experiences that evolve with user needs, resulting in higher satisfaction and loyalty.

Consistent iteration minimizes confusion and reduces the time users need to re-learn an application's layout or user flow. Why? Because design changes are introduced in small, focused updates rather than all at once. These updates can be easily highlighted through a dialogue window when users log in, allowing them to engage with features like "take the tour" and understand changes effectively. Such incremental updates are far more successful than a complete redesign of the app's interface.

3. Responsive and adaptive design

Adopt a mobile-first approach to blueprint applications that are accessible and functional on all devices. Design for smaller screens first and then scale up. Use flexible grids and images to create layouts that adapt to various screen sizes and orientations, providing a consistent and seamless experience across different devices and platforms.

4. Accessibility and inclusivity

Your application becomes accessible to everyone — including individuals with disabilities — by adhering to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). These guidelines provide a framework for creating content that is perceivable, operable, and understandable for all users, regardless of physical, cognitive, or technological barriers. The following are accessibility features that contribute to applications meant to be usable by people with visual, auditory, motor, or cognitive impairments:

- Screen reader support.
- Keyboard navigation.
- Proper color contrast.
- Alternative text for images.

Prioritizing accessibility not only broadens your user base by making your application inclusive but also improves usability for everyone, including those without disabilities. It also demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, aligns with legal compliance in many regions, and builds goodwill and trust among users. Accessibility isn't just about meeting standards; it's about creating equitable experiences that empower all users to interact with your application seamlessly.

5. Performance optimization

Optimizing performance ensures fast load times and smooth interactions; minimize the use of heavy assets and implement lazy loading where appropriate. Continuously monitor and improve application performance based on user feedback and analytics. And release frequent updates to address any issues and keep the application running efficiently.

6. Visual and interaction design

Adopt a clean design with intuitive navigation and visually appealing elements. Use whitespace effectively to enhance readability. Incorporate subtle animations and feedback mechanisms to create delightful interactions. These are known as "microinteractions" — small design elements that enhance user engagement by providing feedback and making interfaces more intuitive.

Examples include:

• Button animations

• Loading spinners

• Form validation

• Pull-to-refresh gestures

Microinteractions improve usability, add delight, reinforce brand identity, and enhance accessibility.

7. Personalization and customization

Modernizing your UX with data-driven personalization delivers tailored experiences based on preferences, behavior, and contextual information like location. Allow users to customize their experience, use real-time data for relevant interactions, and leverage AI to refine recommendations over time. Platforms like Amazon generate 35% of their revenue through personalized product suggestions, while personalized emails drive six times higher transaction rates than generic ones. This is how

your business can boost retention, increase conversions, and create a competitive advantage — by meeting the growing expectation for personalized user experiences.

8. Security and privacy

Prioritize user privacy and data security by implementing robust security measures. Communicate transparently about how user data is collected, stored, and used. You'll build trust with users and deepen their confidence in the application. Demonstrating a commitment to security and privacy is essential for maintaining a positive user experience.

Conclusion

The need to modernize UX is critical. A modern UX not only enhances user satisfaction but also drives business growth by improving user engagement, retention, and productivity. Failing to update and optimize UX results in higher costs, lost customers, and a weakened brand image. But by integrating the latest technologies and adhering to best practices, organizations deliver exceptional user experiences that meet and exceed user expectations. Investing in UX modernization is an investment in the future of your business.

Did you know? You can do all of this and more with the latest version of Rocket® Uniface

With the introduction of Rocket Uniface 10.4.03 — including the new Uniface UX and UX Interface features — UX modernization is faster and more efficient than ever. By leveraging its advanced tools and capabilities, your business can incorporate modern technologies like accessibility features and responsive design, without the need for extensive coding. Uniface's flexibility empowers businesses to respond quickly to changing user needs and preferences.

Uniface UX has an out-of-the-box design system that brings a consistent look and feel to applications, and helps create a seamless and professional user experience. Based on Microsoft's fluent web components, it also provides pre-designed widgets for developing applications, without the need for additional coding. UX Interface empowers developers to design and implement reusable, customizable widgets that encapsulate UX layout, interactions, and functionality, ensuring a clear separation between UX/UI logic and business rules or validation. This approach simplifies maintenance, promotes cleaner code, and enhances application scalability. Developers can now create bespoke widgets, craft design systems, or extend and refine the out-of-the-box experience provided by Uniface UX, offering full creative control over data visualization, user interactions, and screen layouts.

Rocket Uniface simplifies the process of UX modernization.

To learn more, reach out to your Account Executive or contact uniface@rocketsoftware.com.
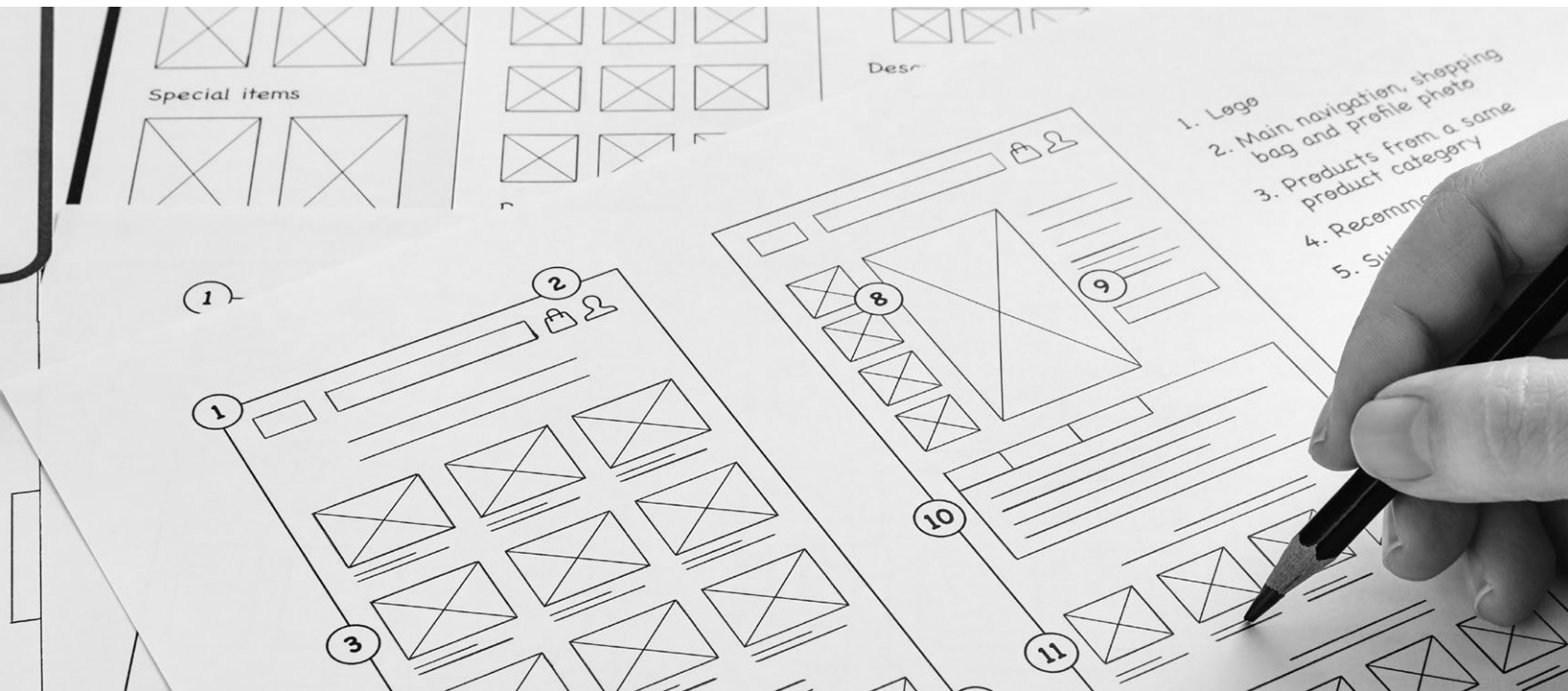
About Rocket Software

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