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useletter



## Online Processes



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In today's age of interactive Web 2.0 applications, an online process designed to be user-friendly becomes even more important. Many users "give up" when faced with poorly structured online processes, soon become frustrated customers and move on to a competitor's site.

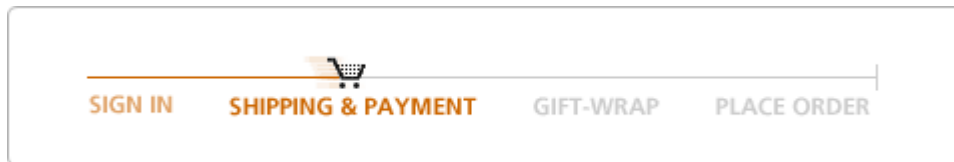
And this is not only a problem of core processes like online shopping: unusable and incomprehensible interfaces are common even in self-service sections of websites. The implementation of proper online processes is complex and cannot be explained in a few words. But, if you consider some elementary rules described in this Useletter, your online processes can perform better and thus, your website will be more successful.

Best Regards,

Thomas Klotzowski

## Turn user into customers

Typical features of a contemporary Website are functions that invite the visitor to interact, e.g. giving comments on products, rating products or creating relationships. There are complex online processes behind it, pulling the user easily and elegantly into the 'Social Web'. The visitor becomes involved, changing from a "Consumer" into a "Producer".



Orientation aids, such as Amazon's step navigation, allow people to move sequentially through pages.

The increasing popularity of Web 2.0 enforces the importance of web processes. Besides innovative applications, there remain classic form-based online processes - for example, those used by banks and insurance companies. However, even these companies cannot afford to abandon new trends, which are mostly driven by:

- // Technologies such as Ajax or RIA (Rich InterNet Applications), offering new possibilities for process design.
- // The permanent online competition between companies and their sites, raising the consumers' expectations regarding usability/comfort and functionality.

Naturally, the end-game of this concept is a higher economic efficiency of online processes. Therefore, many websites have clearly improved their success measurement. Terms such as 'Leads' or 'Conversion Rate' are generally established vocabulary of online professionals. All optimisation measures are evaluated in order to increase the single most important success ratio: Website visitors (customers, coworkers, suppliers) are to be

directed directly to the online process which is relevant for them.

Once landed, the users should go successfully through their process to the end state they desire - or at least leave relevant information in case of an abort (ideally, there is even a process designed for the abort analysis). No matter how you define and measure your success, you can transform your Website visitors into satisfied customers by paying attention to some elementary rules.

## ↑ Checklist for online processes

Are you checking your Website processes regularly for possible traps?

Are you analysing traffic data and the relevant feedback of your Website visitors? The following five key questions give you an initial overview about the status of your online processes. Shift into the role of a typical "target user" and go through all process steps:

### 1. Do you have site-orientation ensured at any time?

- I know at any time, where I am in the process.
- I know at any time, where I came from.
- I see at any time, how to return to my starting point.

### 2. Is the process-flow transparent to you?

- I see at any time, at a glance, where and how to continue.
- The offered options are easy to grasp, especially error messages.

### 3. Are you being kept inside the process?

- In the final phase of the process (e.g., payment procedure), I am no longer distracted from it.
- I can save already completed steps and return later to continue.
- There is an abort function (In contrast to just closing the browser window, this function offers the chance of a further dialogue).

### 4. Does the process focus on the essentials?

- Only indispensable information is queried.
- Only necessary actions are demanded.

### 5. Does the process give you sufficient feedback?

- The submission of my online inquiry has been confirmed - ideally by a summary of my input.
- I am informed about the next steps after termination of the process.



### Conversion Rate

Index number indicating the proportion of website visitors, who achieve a given target.  
A typical conversion rates for online shopping is between 1 to 5%.

Having accomplished a process successfully, the next process can start by an invitation for feedback. Always make sure that terminated processes are no dead ends: Offer options for continuing, ideally adjusted to the needs of the individual user.  
Thus you increase the number of your Leads, and your Conversion rate.

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