10 INGREDIENTS FOR
HIGH-END APPLICATIONS

BY FRESH CONSULTING

freshconsulting.com

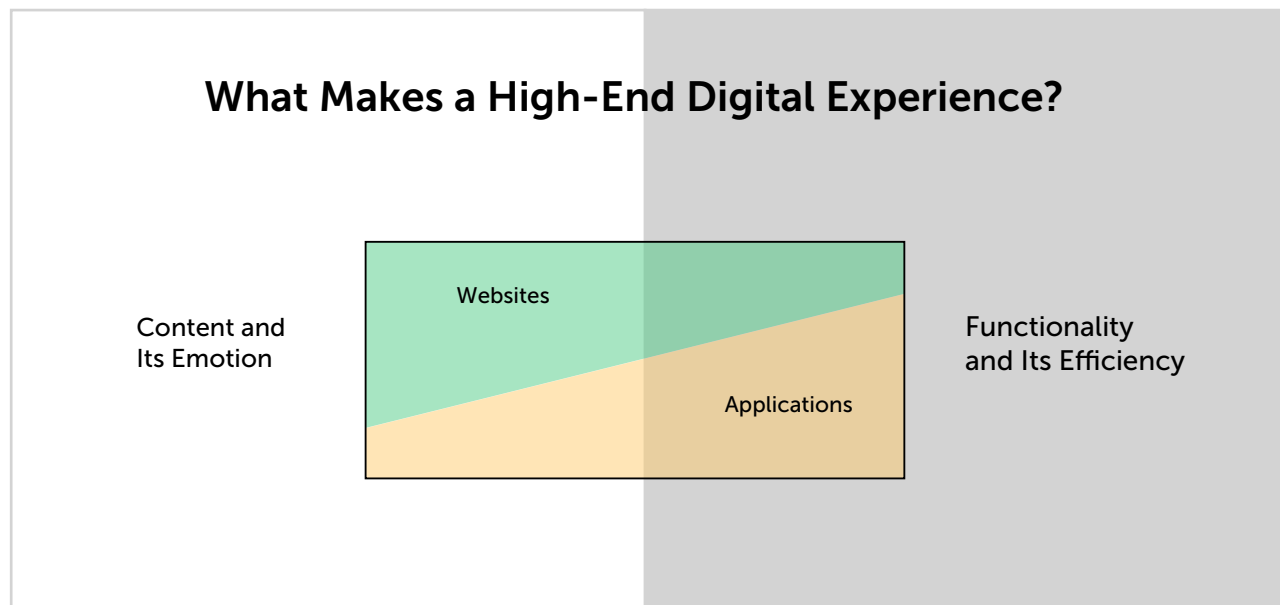# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CREATING A HIGH-END APPLICATION

Application design should focus on creating an experience that users remember. While high quality aesthetics, branding, and intuitive interactivity matter for both websites and applications, the memorability of websites ties in primarily to content and emotion, whereas the memorability of applications is typically associated with efficiency and functionality.

High-end applications can also have an emotional effect, but primarily, they should be efficient and usable with a streamlined workflow that allows users to accomplish their goals. With applications, intuitive functionality should be placed front and center.

Applications and websites each contain emotion, content, functionality, and efficiency. As shown below, the difference is the emphasis!

What Makes a High-End Digital Experience?

Content and Its Emotion

Websites

Applications

Functionality and Its Efficiency

The purpose of this white paper is to allow you to benchmark where your application currently stands. Beyond benchmarking, we'll discuss how to truly set your application apart. The 10 Ingredients mentioned in this paper – providing a blend of efficiency and emotion – can provide the special sauce that makes your application stand above the competition.

Using the scorecard below, as well as the rubrics located throughout this white paper, you can assess where your application currently stands and identify concrete approaches to improving it. Many applications are either developing or sufficient. The end goal is to be high-end across multiple categories in order to create a lasting impression with users and set yourself apart from the competition.

(sample scores shown)

HOME SCREEN & DASHBOARD

A best practice of web design states that users should be able to find anything on a website within three (or fewer) mouse clicks. When more clicks are needed to find information, users can become frustrated and leave the page.

Jacob Nielsen refers to the homepage of a website as "The most valuable real estate in the world." The same wisdom holds true for applications. The home screen or dashboard of an application should communicate to users what the application is (purpose), what it does (functionality), and why users should care (how it solves a problem).

As you strategize how to draw users into your application, keep in mind that your home screen or dashboard is the best way to do so. First-time visitors form a positive or negative impression of a digital experience in less than 5 seconds. As a result, home screens often have the most important information and most recent updates.

This is where onboarding becomes critical as well. Two models to think about are 1) What is the most critical functionality – or updates – that I can communicate with the dashboard? and 2) How can I summarize what the app does, as a gateway to everything else it has to offer?

For data-focused applications, consider the principle of "data density." How is data organized visually? How is it distributed across the interface? Whatever final layout you choose, ensure that your dashboard allows users to understand and comprehend data with ease. We recommend starting at the high-level – snapshot data, summaries, and graphs – and then drilling into lower-level as needed.

Related UX Principles:
Home(pages) – Convincing Your Users to Come Inside
Manage Data Density, High-Level to Low-Level

Proof Analytics was looking to build a marketing & sales analytics application that would show how marketing impacts sales. Fresh was called in to do the UX design and build a real prototype that would paint a product vision for building a team and support raising capital to launch the company.
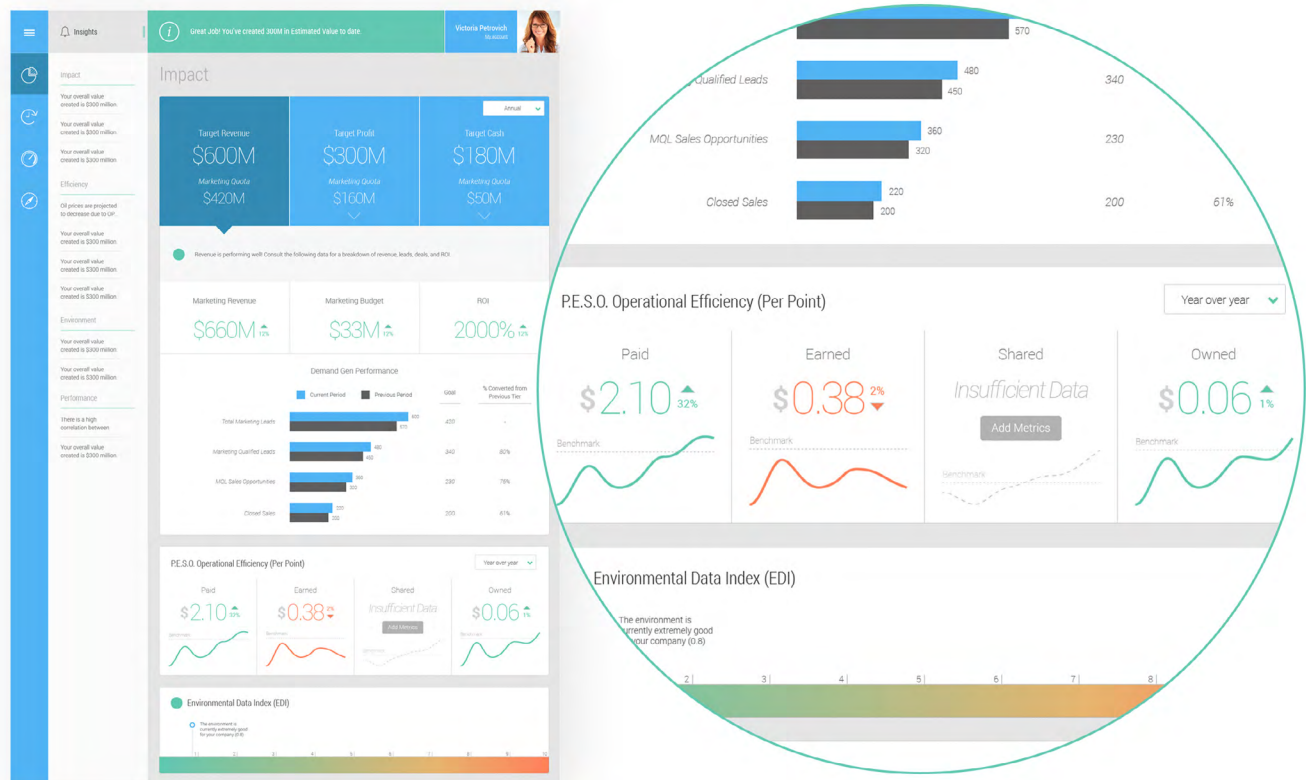
The sample above shows how you can surface critical functionality on the home screen or dashboard —in the form of updates, a summary of what the app does, and as a gateway to all of its other functionality. The emphasis was a layout that was clutter free and appropriately dense with data.

HOME SCREEN & DASHBOARD

DESIGN AESTHETIC
INTERACTIVITY
LAYOUT
SUPPORT/
ONBOARDING
INFO. ARCHITECTURE
NAVIGATION
GUIDANCE
HOME/
DASHBOARD
DATA INPUT/
FORMS
SEARCH
WORKFLOW
EFFICIENCY

Developing

The home screen or dashboard provides little context for the experience. The application lacks branding and/or looks unprofessional. Key content and tasks aren't prominent. The structure of the application is illogical. Hierarchy isn't clear. Data visualization, if present, is cluttered and confusing.

Sufficient

The home screen or dashboard provides context for the experience with good branding overall. Users are given direction as to content, tasks, and functionality. The application generates some interest, with a mixture of positive and negative first impressions. Data visualization, if present, isn't sophisticated but communicates what it needs to.

High-End

The home screen or dashboard provides exciting context for the experience. It clearly communicates what the application is and what it does. The application has high-end branding. In just a few seconds, users understand key functionality, leading to further exploration. First impressions are overwhelmingly positive. Data visualization, if present, is sophisticated and clean, organized from high-level to low-level.

DESIGN AESTHETIC

Some degree of an application's credibility and usability is tied to aesthetics. We recommend thinking through the aesthetics of layout, typography, color, consistency, and iconography.

In an article titled In Defense of Eye Candy, Stephen Anderson writes, "Researchers in Japan set up two ATMs, 'identical in function, the number of buttons, and how they worked.' The only difference was that one machine's buttons and screens were arranged more attractively than the other [. . .] The attractive machine actually worked better."

Another study worth noting is The Stanford Web Credibility Project. The research group conducted a study with 2500+ participants on how people assess the credibility of a website, finding that: "Nearly half of all consumers (or 46.1%) in the study assessed the credibility of sites based in part on the appeal of the overall visual design of a site, including layout, typography, font size and color schemes. (...) Beautiful graphic design will not salvage a poorly functioning Web site. Yet, the study shows a clear link between solid design and site credibility."

The core findings of the Stanford Study – that people assess credibility via aesthetics – also applies to applications. Aesthetics in applications plays a large role in determining usability. Buttons and screens that are consistent, clean, and attractive will be better received by your customers.

Related UX Principle:
Powerful Imagery Drives User Experience

For Airbnb – an application that offers users a preview of their accommodations – the inclusion of high-end imagery is crucial. Without it, users would be at a loss for what they can expect when they book with a host. Airbnb's early growth success was contributed to by proactively by adding high-end imagery and photos. Design aesthetics are in the smallest of details. As an example, simple changes – such as going from a "star" to a "heart" – helped engagement go up 30% for Airbnb's wish list feature.
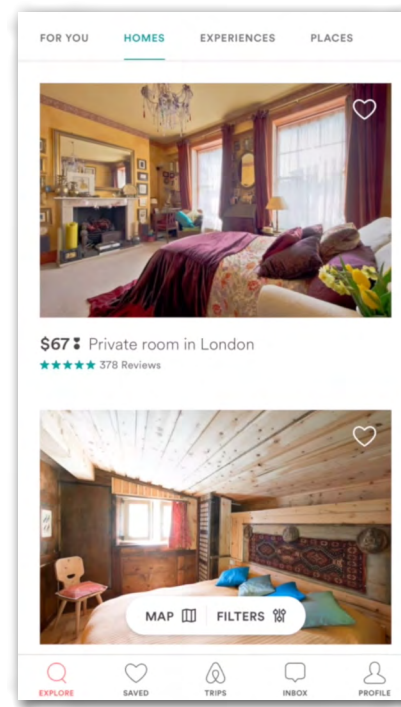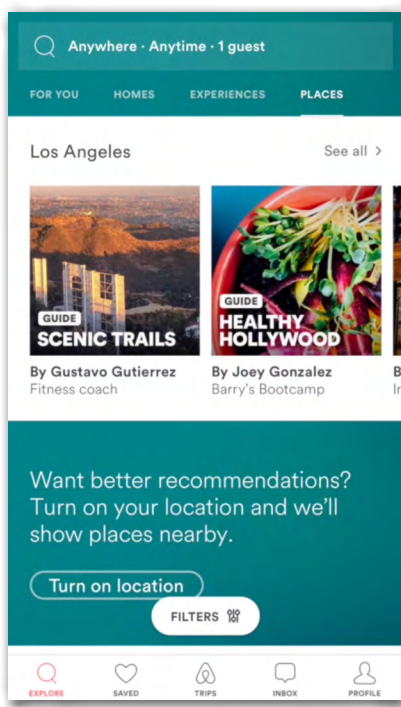
In the case of Airbnb, users are more likely to convert if attractiveness is emphasized. Before booking a room or facility with a host, users need visual proof (via high-end photography and iconography) that instills confidence in trusting strangers. Not only do the previews above provide users with key information (city guides, home descriptions, reviews, etc.), but they also foster a positive first impression by hiding nothing. Everything is available to make users feel confident in making an informed choice.
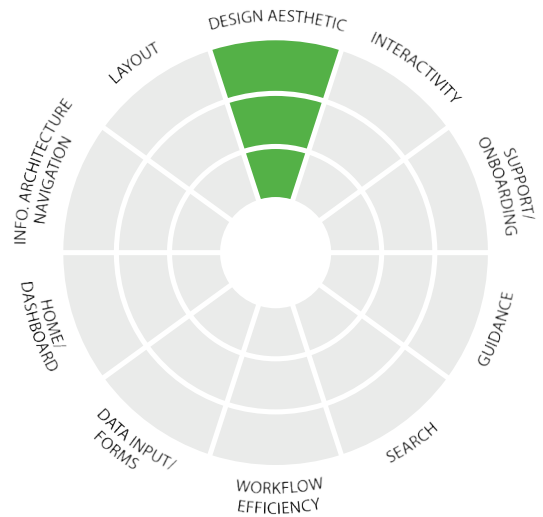
DESIGN AESTHETIC

Developing

The interface of the application is unattractive. Key visual cues are inconsistent. The aesthetics may confuse users rather than aiding their understanding. The design may also fail to meet basic accessibility requirements for the web. No style guide is used, resulting in inconsistency, unneeded complexity, and decreased usability.

Sufficient

The interface of the application is acceptable. Key focal points are clearly defined, allowing users to access the application's functionality and content. The design meets the basic level of accessibility requirements. A style guide may have been used, but there are several notable instances of inconsistency and unneeded complexity.

High-End

The interface of the application is attractive and draws a high level of interest. Key focal points are communicated with clarity, due to aesthetic design choices. The design meets appropriate accessibility requirements for users with a variety of different needs. A well-designed style guide is used to ensure consistency, simplicity, and sophistication.

INTERACTIVITY

Steve Jobs stated "It's not just about what design looks and feels like. Design is how it works." While "how it works" boils down to much more than interactivity, interactivity can make an application more usable and in many cases, delightful.

Interactivity boils down to elements of the interface that can be clicked, scrolled, hovered over – and much more – by the user. The concept of creating motion, rather than a static interface, is a key aspect of interactivity. Motion is dynamic and can span the page. For example, a button can be static and clickable, but it can also be dynamic and clickable, signaling to the user that it has been clicked with visual feedback and two-way communication. Similarly, a search bar can be static, or it can expand upon being clicked to give more length or show advanced features, providing the user the ability to perform a tailored and personal search.

If you're looking to increase the engagement factor of your application, consider adding interactivity and motion to your macro and microinteractions.

Interested in reading more about Interactivity? [Download the white paper](#).

THE FUTURE OF MOTION IN
DIGITAL EXPERIENCES

BY FRESH CONSULTING
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Airtable is an application that functions like a spreedsheet paired with the power of a database, allowing users to truly customize their workflow. With that amount of sophisticated functionality, high-end interactivity is a must.

In the examples below, Airtable allows users to take their workflow into their own hands.

In the workflow above, we see a typical spreadsheet view, which contains all of the information you might expect: categories, dates, priorities, pariticipant names, and more. Users can drag and drop, click into rich field types (dropdowns, checkboxes, color coding, icon usage, and more). As opposed to being a static spreadsheet, Airtable places control in the user's hand through interactivity.
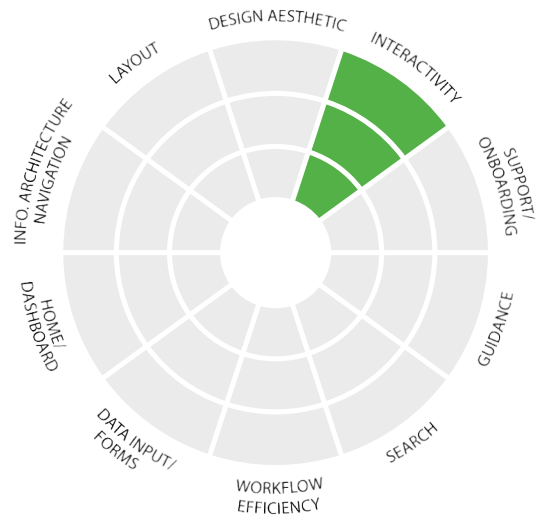
INTERACTIVITY

Developing

Interactivity is either absent from the application, or included in an unmeaningful way, distracting users and decreasing usability. If present, interactivity may make the application workflow and navigation more difficult than needed. Interactivity and motion may also be used as pure flair, rather than as a tool that aids usability, creating unneeded visual complexity.

Sufficient

Some level of interactivity is included in the application, but in certain cases, it's distracting or unnecessary. Interactivity may highlight key interactions, but isn't seamlessly integrated. The interactivity presents a mixture of flair and functionality, but is noticeably out of balance.

High-End

Interactivity is used throughout the application in a way that supports and improves usability. Motion draws attention and interest, signalling to the user that different elements of the application can be interacted with. Via interactivity, the application communicates with the user meaningfully, providing feedback with microinteractions, contextual transitions, and animated layouts.

SUPPORT & ONBOARDING

90% of all downloaded apps are used only once and then eventually deleted by users. People often abandon apps because of a poorly designed interface or negative overall experience. Instead of having problems solved, people are confused by menus, screens, and buttons. Therein lies the value of onboarding.

While your application may be so well designed that users know intuitively how it works, some level of support is warranted and onboarding is required. In fact, this can mean the difference between making an application high-end.

Does your onboarding or support center need to be as robust as that of Salesforce? Only if the workflow, functionality, and usability are similarly complex. The good news is that support and onboarding can be integrated with tooltips, wizards, and inline learning. When included, support and onboarding elements should supplement the application, not distract from it.

Related UX Principles:
Create Two Way Communication, with Frequent Feedback
*Great Experiences Still Need Great Onboarding*

The topic of onboarding is incredibly broad, with dozens of methods and approaches to crafting an effective onboarding experience. Effort required and sophistication of onboarding to make it easy for users is often underrated. The example set by Quora illustrates some of the key methods it utilizes. Because the information on Quora is crowdsourced, user onboarding is essential.
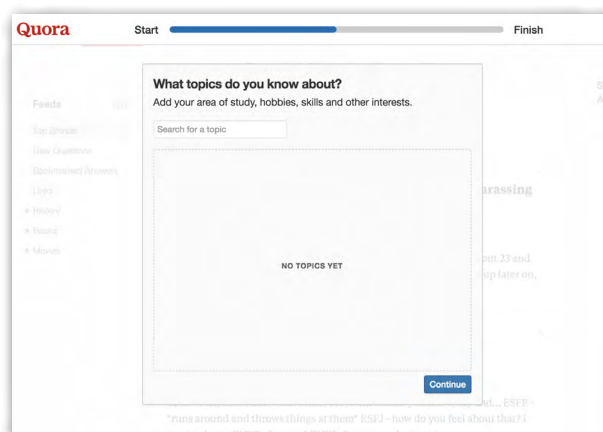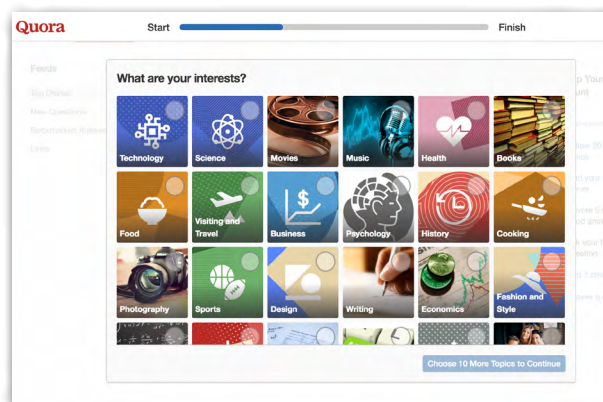
The designers behind Quora's onboarding experience surface relevant topics to users by asking what their interests are and what topics they know about from the outset. After users have finished onboarding, they are given a simple checklist to complete more action items that round out their profile. Instead of feeling distinct from the interface, Quora bundles in the onboarding experience seamlessly, leading to more immersion and more engagement.
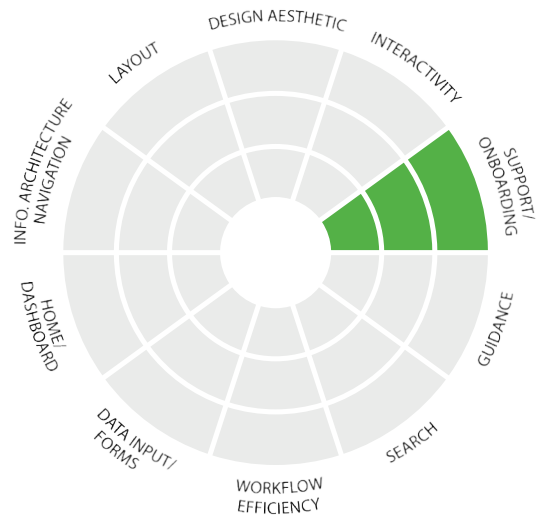
SUPPORT & ONBOARDING

Developing

An onboarding element is either not included or is poorly designed. If onboarding is included, inline, tooltips, and/or instructional interface text is poorly designed, leading to confusion.

Sufficient

An onboarding wizard or help center is included, but could be better designed. An emphasis is placed on training, rather than empowering users to learn. In-line learning, tool tips, and/or text on the interface are included but could be better executed.

High-End

Onboarding is integrated in an engaging way and replaces the need for training. Inline learning, tooltips, and text on the interface are included and well executed. The onboarding experience feels congruent with the user experience, creating a sense of continuity and immersion.

GUIDANCE

In regard to web design, Steve Krug writes, "Since a large part of what people are doing on the web is looking for the next thing to click, it's important to make it obvious what's clickable and what's not."

The same principle applies to designing applications. Ideally, users are guided (by both the language and design of the application) to key interactions. In the best case scenario, unnecessary cognitive load (a potential cause of frustration) is eliminated and the app is intuitive.

It's important to balance convention and innovation when designing an application. While thinking outside the box can be effective, ease of use should always be prioritized. This comes from guiding users through the experience with information architecture, color, notifications, and other visual clues.

Additional guidance elements include things like instructional messages, hover tips, FAQs, contextual support, and more. Users typically expect some degree of conventionality when using your application, so it's vital to cater to what they know and expect.

Related UX Principles:
Buttons Should Look Like Buttons, Links Should Look Like Links
Guide Users to Important CTAs

Invent Value, Fresh Consulting's proprietary app for fostering a culture of innovation, allows users to create challenges – from naming a product to brainstorming features, from gathering research sources for a white paper to debriefing on a project – in a few simple steps. We understand that the best time is spent actually innovating rather than setting up the challenge, so we emphasized making the process of creating a challenge streamlined and efficient.

The overall process and current step is clear, positioned in the top right of the screen. Instructions are included at left, with help tips if users want more. The correct button to click is also clear. It seems basic but the goal is to guide users through each step, mitigating the risk of user error and ensuring that the majority of time and creative energy are spent innovating, rather than dealing with a cumbersome interface.

GUIDANCE

Developing

Common tasks in the application are difficult to complete. Very little guidance is provided to the user. Complicated tasks lack access to instructions or other forms of help (FAQ, support, live chat). Design elements don't follow convention. This leads to confusion, errors, frustration, and a variety of other pain points.

Sufficient

Common tasks are simple to complete, with some guidance provided. Complicated tasks may be too challenging to complete, but users have access to instructions and help (FAQ, support, live chat). The application meets the basic language/accessibility guidelines.

High-End

Common tasks are exceptionally easy to complete with design and information cues in step. When needed, short video demonstrations are available for common tasks. Complicated tasks provide clear and easy access to instructions and help (FAQ, support, live chat). Design elements – buttons, links, modals – are clearly differentiated. The application accommodates language/accessibility guidelines.
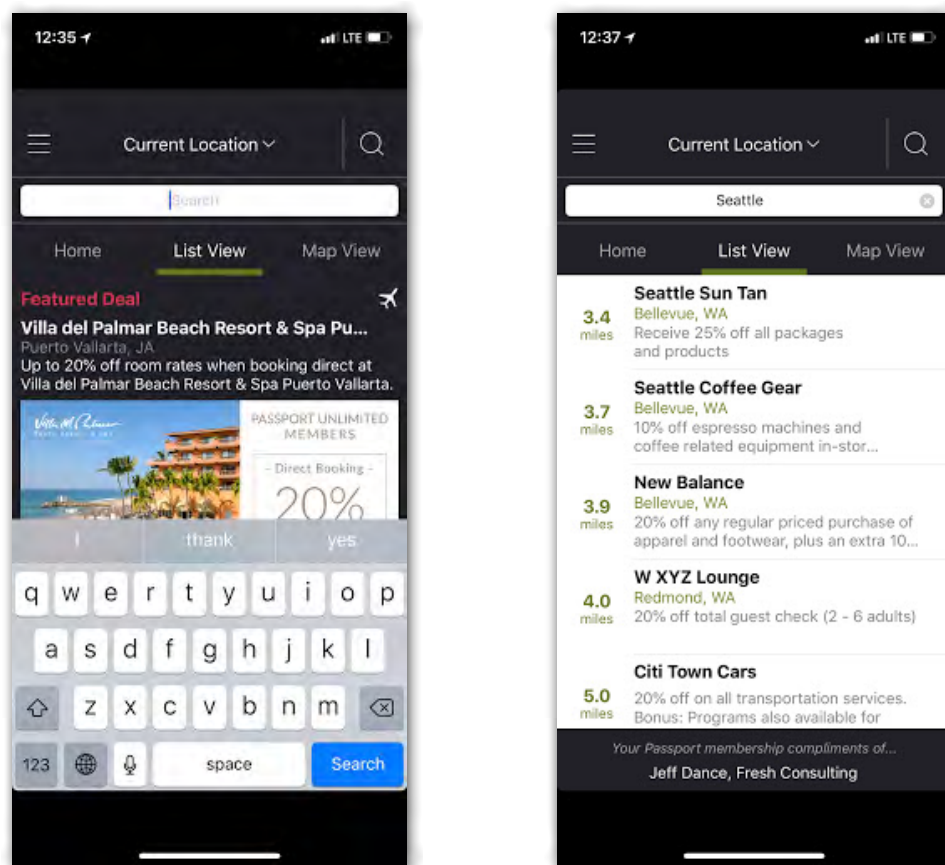
SEARCH

For applications heavy with content and functionality, search and lookup features are important. In applications – as with websites – new users often see search as a universal starting point. For returning users, search functionality provides a helpful shortcut to the content or workflow they need to access.

Search functionality can be as simple as a search bar, with basic helpful aids such as autofill suggestions and spell check. More advanced search functionality includes accommodation of natural search language or robust filtering settings that often go hand-in-hand.

Consider your user's natural environment when using the application as well. If users are on the go and need to use the app to pinpoint their location geographically, pairing manual search with a map API is imperative. If search is more of a secondary function, it can be less prominently featured, but should still be available for users who want to make use of it.

Regardless, for high-end applications that are information-heavy, some degree of search functionality is typically a must. It doesn't have to be advanced for every application. Consider what your users need, then include some level of search functionality to simplify their workflow and allow them to more easily accomplish their goals.

The Passport mobile app allows users to make the most of their Passport Unlimited membership – from viewing participating locations to reviewing offer details, from searching for a location by a specific keyword to switching to a list view. With so much information to sift through, an optimized search was important.

Fresh spent time making the search function of the app effective for people on the go. With ease, users can filter participating locations by proximity to their geographical location or by using a traditional view such as a map. The filtering and sorting options – as well as the search layout on the UI – makes the process of using the Passport app and conducting searches seamless.
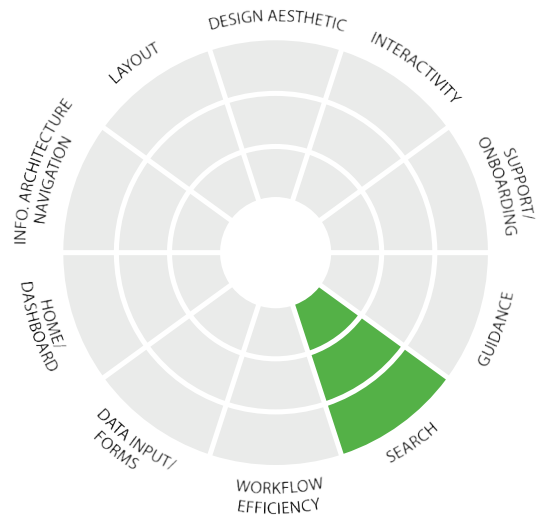
SEARCH

Developing

Search functionality is not included or is designed in a way that negatively impacts usability. The search bar may be unintuitively located, insufficiently long, or poorly labeled. The search mechanism doesn't use natural language and/or spell checking, yielding inaccurate search results. Advanced search functionality is absent from the application or negatively impacts usability.

Sufficient

Search functionality is included in the application; however, the workflow may place too much emphasis on search. The search bar is intuitively located and labeled, but some design elements may present usability issues. Search uses natural language and checks spelling. Advanced search is included, but less effectively than users demand.

High-End

Search is included, but the application caters to a variety of workflows. Search is intuitively located (top right or centered) and is properly labeled. Search adheres to natural language, spelling is automatically checked, and suggested items are included. Advanced search functionality, as needed, includes a variety of intuitive filtering and sorting options.

WORKFLOW EFFICIENCY

When designing an application, remember to ask yourself if the design workflows solve your user's problem. When building an application, it's important to focus on building the right product before building the product right.

One key component of doing this effectively is observing users go through the workflow and documenting process workflows. By understanding and observing users you can make the existing workflow simpler. This means removing friction wherever possible and completing steps for the user wherever possible. Sometimes more sophistication is added to do so via the principle of addition by subtraction.

In UX, experience is important. This seems basic, but apps should deliver functionality that is, first and foremost, usable. Your users will notice redundancies and pain points, and these wear down on patience. Intelligent usability matched with smart functionality can guide users effortlessly through an app.

Related UX Principles:
Observe and Document Process Workflows
Use Progressive Disclosure to Simplify Complexity

Jenny Life is a life insurance app designed specifically for mothers who need a quick and easy route to choosing a life insurance policy from their smartphone. The process is as simple as the user uploading a photo of their driver's license, then checking the information before choosing coverage from a carrier.
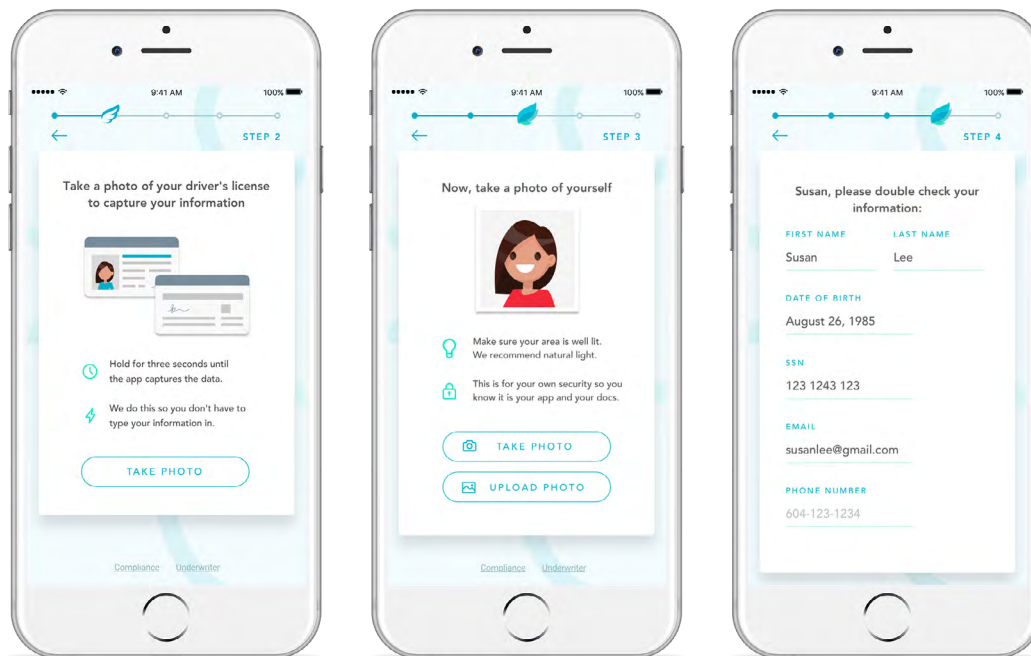
Taking into account the fact that time is important for mothers, Fresh designed the workflow using OCR (Optical Character Recognition) technology that converts the image of a driver's license into editable data. This is an example of hiding unnessecary complexity — that is, filling out a form manually — as well as making the steps chunked, clear, and easy to complete.
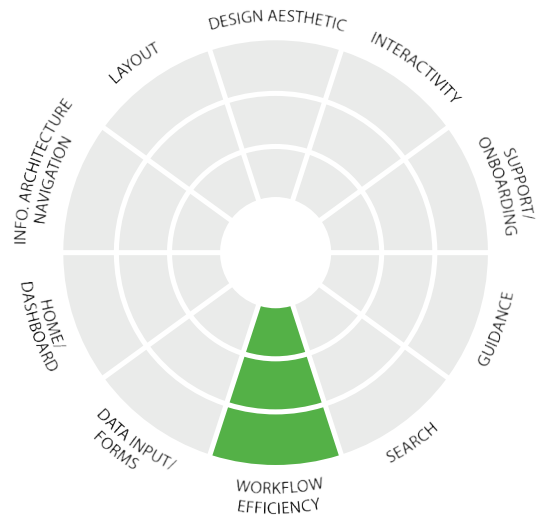
WORKFLOW EFFICIENCY

Developing

The application surfaces too much steps, functionality, or info at once, leading to unnecessary complexity and information overload. Common tasks are difficult to complete. New users need training to use the app, and returning users may have difficulty remembering how it works. Irrelevant, unnecessary, and distracting information is included, leading to confusion.

Sufficient

The application surfaces the right functionality up front, but might be overly complex. Layered interactions would lead to higher satisfaction. Common tasks can be completed with confidence. Some level of training might be needed for new users, but returning users can use the application unassisted. The application may have minor organization issues.

High-End

The application is designed with chunking and progressive disclosure in mind, while still being fast. Complex functionality is surfaced when a user needs it. Only the information for a given task is provided, limiting extraneous information. Interactions are built in layers, rather than providing all of the functionality up front. Common tasks are exceptionally easy and fast to complete. A typical first time user will be able to figure out how to use the

DATA INPUT & FORMS

Well-designed forms and data entry workflows are challenging to create. That's why many applications suffer in this category. If your application's workflow requires users to enter data or information, streamlining the process and prioritizing usability is key. Given that information or data entry is frustrating, taking as much heavy lifting out of the process as possible is important.

In order to increase ease of use when it comes to data input and forms, we recommend:

• **Mitigating the risk of errors** – Making mistakes while completing forms or entering data is frustrating. Ensure that users will be less likely to.

• **Focusing on formatting** – Ideally, users shouldn't run into a problem where a text box isn't long enough or they don't understand the input interface. Allow users to focus on the information they enter, rather than struggling to understand how the form is formatted.

• **Emphasizing "Chunking"** – Breaking up text and information into smaller "chunks" allows users to more easily process and understand it. In the case of forms, information that is chunked is easier to handle, one step at a time.

Related UX Principle:
Chunk Information to Create Focus
Give Data Context to Make it Useful

Vitamin Packs has serious science in their recommendation engine that incorporates over fifty questions to build personalized recommendations for the user. We were tasked with keeping the experience simple and fast. Combining UX principles like chunking, progressive disclosure, and motion to enhance usability, we delivered the science in an easy-to-use experience.

Fifty questions is a high number, but in order to provide an accurate reccomendation that was truly personalized it was necessary. The risk was that with such a lengthy form, engagement was in jeopardy.

By chunking and mitigating errors and ensuring the users stay engaged with an interactive guide — providing two-way communication — Vitamin Packs quickly collected the information needed while helping the user learn along the way, keeping the experience at top of mind.
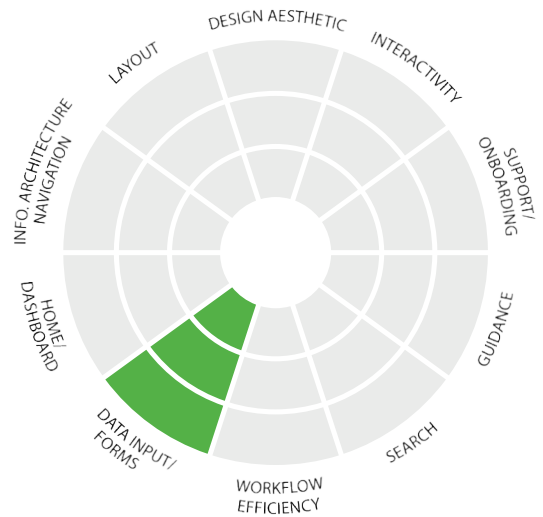
DATA INPUT & FORMS

Developing

Data entry is unnecessarily difficult and forms are cumbersome. Tasks that could be automated (entering information) are not. Required sections are unclear, and data isn't autosaved. Manual text entry is required when alternatives (drop-downs, radio buttons, etc.) could be used. Formatting makes data input more difficult than needed.

Sufficient

The data entry workflow is in need of improvement, but forms are easy to comprehend and navigate. Tasks are automated in some cases, making the process of entering information simpler. Required sections are clear and data is autosaved. Manual text entry is required when alternatives (drop-downs, radio buttons, etc.) could be used, presenting usability concerns.

High-End

The app prioritizes automation and error prevention. Form fields and text entry are easy. Manual text entry is used sparingly. Alternatives such as drop-downs and radio buttons are provided. Clean formatting is enabled through chunking. Related sections are logically grouped. Instructional copy is clear, written in simple, relatable language.

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE & NAVIGATION

How do you ensure that the information contained in your application is accessible, relevant, and organized in a user-friendly way? One key consideration when creating a high-end app is information architecture.

As you're thinking about Information Architecture, key questions you should consider include:

- What needs to be in the navigation, and what doesn't?
- What are the key CTAs allowing users to dive into the app's functionality?
- Is information organized logically, in line with user stories?
- Are there clear entry paths for different types of users?

Users should be able to find the information relevant to their workflow due to consistency across screens, logically organized navigation elements, and a structure for text and content that is easy to scan and digest.

Interested in reading more about Information Architecture? Download the white paper.

*Related UX Principles:*
Focus on Consistency Across Screens
When and When Not to Use Tabs
Flatter Navigation is Better than Deeper Navigation

METHODS OF
INFORMATION
ARCHITECTURE

BY FRESH CONSULTING
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Bigfoot Maintenance Software serves the needs of maintenance professionals in managing a variety of assets: maintenance, inventory, work orders, equipment, as well as tracking logistical considerations such as reporting and analysis. With so much to inventory in a small amount of space on a mobile screen, deliberate and strategic information architecture was key to our collaboration with Bigfoot.
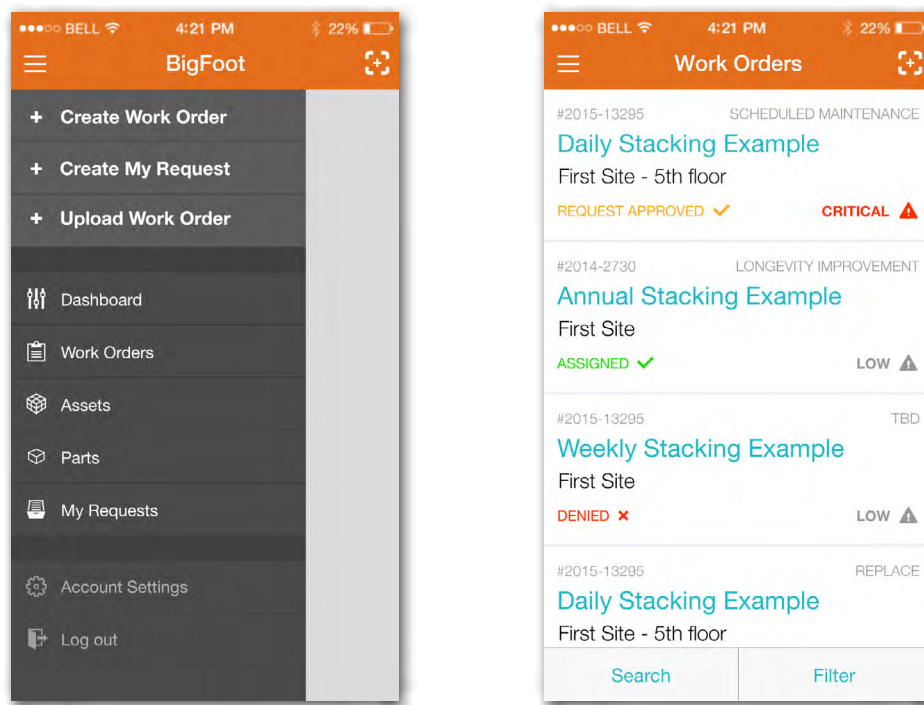
Some of the key components of Bigfoot's information architecture and navigation include a persistent navigation, always available from the menu in the top left, as well as collapsible menus — deep for users who need to access more sub-levels, and shallow for users who need to access different menus. Once the "Work Orders" inventory has been selected, each work order is color coded and lists important information the app user would need. Users are also afforded the ability to filter as needed. With other aspects of an application, innovation can be a priority, but with information architecture and navigation, simplicity and efficiency lead to a high-end interface.

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE & NAVIGATION

Developing

Navigation is unintuitive or doesn't match the target user's workflow. Users can lose track of where they are in the application due to a lack of persistent navigation, breadcrumbs, and headers. Returning to home/dashboard can be challenging. Links and navigation labels are either poorly labeled or unconventionally labeled.

Sufficient

Navigation is adequately intuitive and generally matches the target user's workflow. With a persistent navigation, breadcrumbs, and headers, users can keep track of where they are in the application. Pages are labeled well overall. The structure of the application may be a mixture of deep and shallow, but inconsistency makes navigation challenging.

High-End

Navigation actions are organized with user tasks and workflows at top of mind. The application includes persistent navigation with breadcrumbs and headers to ground users. The major sections of the application are available from every page, with no dead ends. Links are jargon free. Navigation is broad and shallow (many items, potentially in a megamenu), rather than deep (many menu levels). Application structure is simple overall.

LAYOUT

While your application might have great aesthetics and interactivity, it's possible to go overboard. This negatively affects usability.

A clean, legible layout will allow you to match visuals and interactivity with a design that allows users to accomplish their goals. Remember that user attention spans are short – typically 5 seconds or less – and ensure that you surface the most important information and capture attention with a well-designed layout.

When designing your wireframes and mockups, keep whitespace in mind too – it makes content is easier to read, absorb, and scan. This eases message comprehension and directs the user experience. As with website design, also keep the concepts of horizontal and vertical real estate in mind. Modern experiences span large screens, and you can expand your experience to fit, providing more space and more focus after capturing attention up front.

Related UX Principles:
White Space is an Essential Design Asset
*Use Horizontal and Vertical Real Estate Effectively*
Put Related Information on a Single Page
Chunk Information to Create Focus

Below is a visual of CBRE's Market Builder application. The most relevant information is surfaced front and center for the user, with a data visualization (illustrating market shares in various Seattle neighborhoods), a sidebar for filtering through the data, and quick stats on the far right.
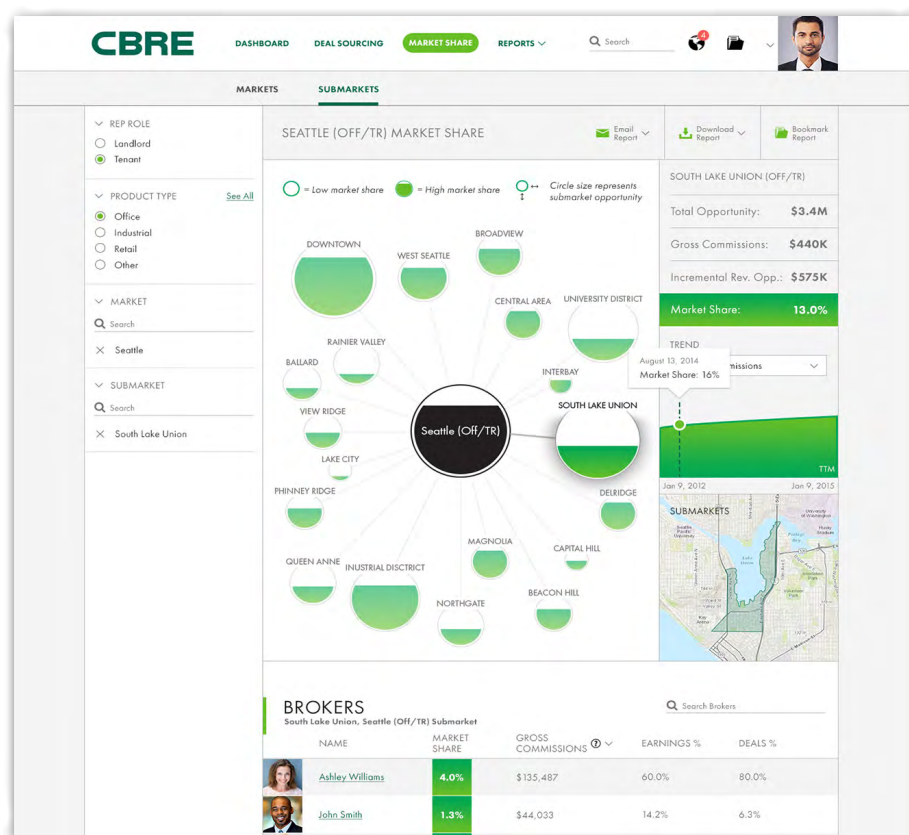
With an application so dense with data, layout becomes even more essential. The emphasis was to provide a layout that made it easy to scroll, scan, and absorb information. After their attention is captured up front, users find more case specific information with realitive ease, such as commissions and percentages of deals closed for individual brokers.
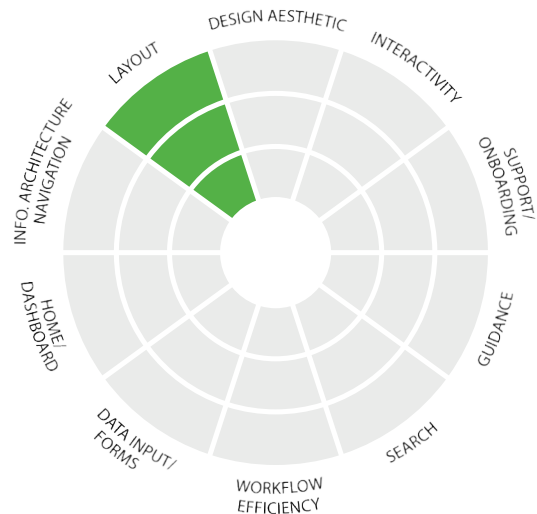
LAYOUT

Developing

The interface of the application is unnecessarily dense, lacking whitespace. Pages are overloaded with information, creating confusion. Due to the inconsistency across pages, the experience feels "broken" or unrecognizable. Users have to look for information, rather than the information surfacing itself at the appropriate point in their workflow.

Sufficient

The interface of the application is clean overall, but may have some unneeded density and a lack of whitespace. Some pages may be overloaded with information. Each interface of the application is recognizable and consistent. All important information is available to users via a reasonably clean layout. The layout adequately supports the information architecture structure.

High-End

The application has a strong balance between information density and use of white space. Individual pages are free from clutter and irrelevant information. Content pages are clean, avoiding information overload. There is a consistent, recognizable layout across pages. The application's recognizable look and feel engages users and draws them in. The layout clearly conforms to the overall information architecture, leading to better usability.

BENCHMARK TO SET YOUR APPLICATION APART

In a world where there's an application for everything – from managing your money to brokering real estate deals, from booking rental properties to organizing work tasks – setting your application apart is more important than ever. While the core focus of an application should be functionality and ease of use, emotional aspects can keep users coming back, and that's accomplished with clean branding and aesthetics, as well as delightful imagery.

While your application may be strong in certain areas, there's value in identifying where there's room for improvement. The end result is an application that wows users and brings value to your organization.

That's where we hope this guide comes in handy – in benchmarking where your application is or where you want it to be, and using that understanding to create a plan of action for achieving your goals.