



CASE STUDY

USER INTERVIEW:

Exploring Users' Motivations to Uncover Business Opportunities

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Weight Management app

The client runs a food diary and a calorie counter app that aims to assist people in their goal of gaining or losing weight. Although the launched app has a good downloading rate, many people discontinue using it after a few days. The organization wants to investigate why people don't find it engaging enough to continue using it on a daily basis.

Problem

Over the last decade, people have become more conscious about nutrition for better weight management. For this reason, they often use weight management apps to make better food choices and successfully change their eating habits. Although the trend is popular, the client wants to offer more than just another calorie-counting app. The main objective of the business is to integrate the physiology of weight loss and use its principles to encourage people's motivation. Coupled with the struggle to retain new users and the idea to distinguish the app from competitors, the client applied to 2ASK to conduct generative research and gather qualitative information on people's needs, pain points, and motivations. The objectives of this research were established as follows:

- To learn more about people's experiences in losing/gaining weight.
- To discover motivational factors, contributing to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- To find ways to make the app more engaging.

Solution

Since the client wanted to discover the psychological background of the problem of weight management, our goal was to develop a set of effective qualitative research questions that could unfold the lives and perspectives, attitudes and challenges of the people trying to manage their weight. We started from developing initial generative questions and then framed more specific questions to shape the results of this study.

We focused on mapping the why and how of all related activities within the process of losing/gaining weight.

Next, we recruited 12 people, representing the demographic of the app's users whose goal was either to lose or gain weight. Over a week we conducted 12 interviews, where a sample size of 6 participants was interviewed in each category.

Using a branching structure in our interview script allowed as changing the interview direction to reflex an increased understanding of the uncovered issue and dig deeper into the root causes of it. We used this hierarchical structure as a navigation tool and it helped us to map insights into four sub-domains: the process, the information sources, motivations, and tracking. This approach revealed the complexity of people's experiences in relation to different phases of their experience journey and enriched our findings with detailed and valuable insights.

Based on our research findings, we ran a workshop to build an affinity map, clustering the insights by predefined categories. By doing this exercise, we could organize all our findings in a meaningful way and see a bigger picture of the explored problem. As a final step in this research process, we translated the results of the affinity map into the impact map, where the

hierarchical structure described the experience from users' goals to particular steps they need to take to achieve them. Developing the impact map turned out to be an ideal way to illustrate the rationale behind the proposed design recommendations. Moreover, aligning this map with the impact map from the business perspective, highlighting the goal to increase the main conversion, provided the client with a sound insight on how to prioritize the development of proposed features.

The Outcome

As a result of collecting and synthesizing research data, we generated a list of 24 suggestions that could be developed into the app's functionality to enhance the overall user experience. The key insights included:

1. We found that one of the most powerful motivations that can help people to pursue their goals is social engagement. The opportunity to follow others in a similar situation evokes inspiration and using a sharing feature allows people to tell others about their experiences, thereby reducing the feeling of isolation. Because of this finding, we strongly suggest employing a networking approach and building the app resembling a social media platform, providing users with the opportunity to share their experiences and learn more about the experiences of others.
2. Another factor that could support motivation is the gamification approach. It has been found that people are more engaged in the process when they can be rewarded. Even though the benefit of achieving the goal of losing/gaining weight is obvious and is well described in numbers, people perceived it as rather abstract and endless. Many people reported that achieving a goal itself is not that encouraging if there is no reward afterward. Introducing a reward system can significantly improve motivation to achieve the goal and, therefore, make the app more engaging.
3. Effective tracking, including tracking of self-defined goals as well as physical activity, was found as another expectation of users. In particular, we identified that goal setting, reminders and feedback are among the most common factors contributing to the effectiveness of using the app in weight management. Our suggestion is to elaborate on this insight by building a Customer Journey Map where tracking features of each part of the user experience can be implemented and analyzed.
4. Although the automated feedback system is a quite common feature in weight management apps, we

discovered that people consider its quality to be quite low. Almost every interviewed person expressed a wish to receive customized feedback correlating to the current situation of one's health condition and progress. Since selling a personal nutrition plan is the main conversion of the organization, we suggested aligning this goal to the stated customers' needs and developing a strategic marketing plan, where customized feedback can act as an implicit tool to make people opt for a personal nutrition plan as well.

Overall, optimizing such behavioral components as social engagement, self-monitoring, and tailored feedback can increase the effectiveness of the weight management intervention and people can greatly benefit from the use of such application.

What made this unique

Conducting generative interviews is a standard research method to uncover pain points and hidden opportunities. In this example, we developed an alternative approach to building a set of interview questions that could give a researcher more flexibility to develop a conversation in a natural, flow-like way. This technique, flexible yet controlled, showed excellent results in better engaging people in conversation, building better trust, and, as a result, diving deeper into the explored topic. In particular, thorough preparation and a conscious approach to selecting interview questions on motivations resulted in gaining actionable insights that established a concrete foundation for the proposed app's features. A practical takeaway from this case was a clear understanding of the importance to explore people's motivations and how the insights drawn from it can inform strategic design decisions. explicit indication, it could affect the way people approach the task. In other words, the results could be considered biased and our goal was to avoid prompting at all times. Another thing that proved to be effective was using follow-up surveys. Gathering extra information through short questionnaires provided additional insights from the cards sort study which definitely added value to the method. Our further goal is to learn how to optimize analyzing stage of this research to reduce the amount of time we spent on attaching valuable comments to the final results.



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