

Alternative UX interventions for improved customer acquisition, retention and engagement for creative video production

Abstract

This project investigates alternative modes of **usability, engagement, search engine optimisation (SEO) and changing customer dynamics** for Bold Content Video, a creative video production company based in London. The goal of this thesis is to identify the underlying issues faced by the Bold Content's website.

The shifting nature of user engagement and customer dynamics result in different expectations for the user experience of services like those offered by Bold Content Video. **Issues pertaining to SEO can represent a greater reflection of underlying usability issues**, such as information overload and unclear information architecture. The user studies comprised of **surveys, interviews, a tree test and heuristics evaluation** confirmed the existence of the aforementioned issues.

The results of these studies were conducive to recommendations for improved information architecture and website usability. **The ultimate goal is to have a better understanding of their user base in order to act upon design and strategy changes that will result in long-term customer acquisition and retention.**

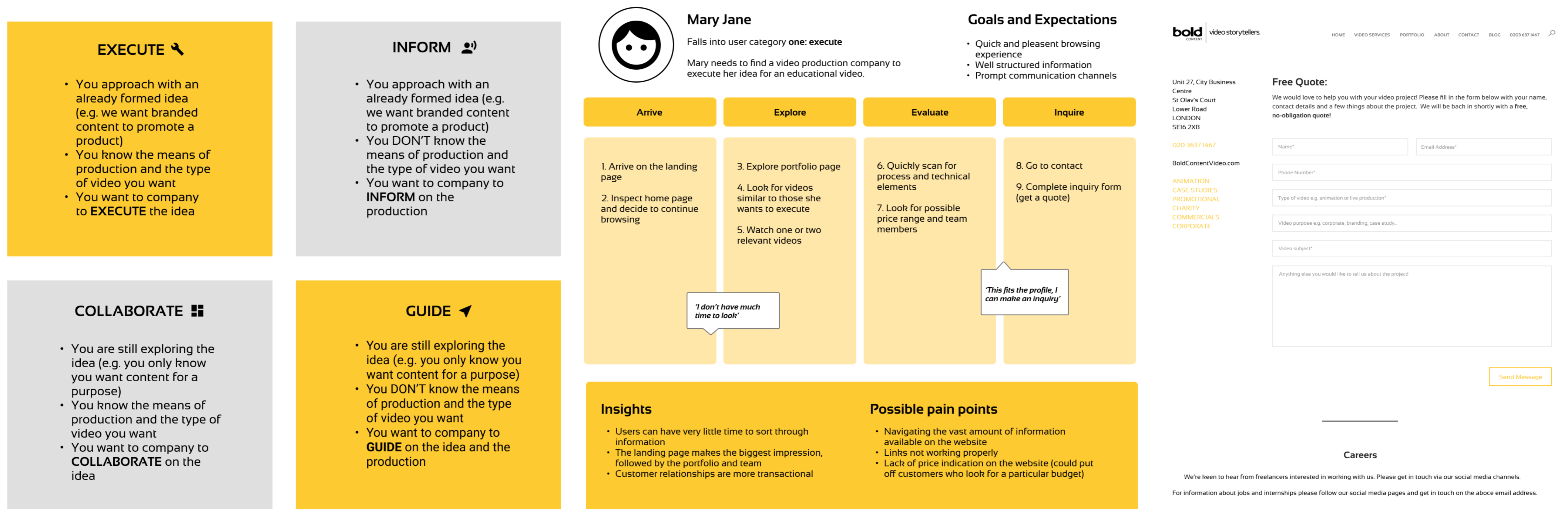
Introduction and Background

The problem the company first identified was their lowering SEO ranking, which impacted their incoming business. Further discussions and a deeper look into literature related to SEO uncovered underlying usability, information architecture and customer relation issues, which became the focus of my project. The objective of this project is to offer Bold Content Video a better understanding of their customer base and the changing nature of customer relations from a user experience perspective.

Therefore, the literature review focused on these main areas:

- **SEO** - SEO also plays an important role in keeping user on the website, not only help them land on the page (Egri & Bayrak, 2014);
- **Brand Community** - brand community is an important step in successful marketing and content strategies (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001)
- **Social Capital** - the voluntary influence individuals have on a network or community, but not as common quality (Siisiainen, 2003)
- **Engagement** - there can be different types of user engagement (Lehmann et al, 2012) and user engagement can be understood through search behaviour too (Zhuang et al, 2017)

This thesis sits at the intersection of these areas of research. The project aims to solve the problem by suggesting improvements to the information architecture and design of the website, as well as a larger scale strategy to slowly build durable relationships with the customers, thus changing the dynamic from transactional to relational.



Research Methodology

The questions that required answering were:

1. Who are the users and why do they use the services of Bold Content?
2. How do they interact with the website and how do they feel about it?
3. Is the information architecture clear?
4. At what point in their exploration do customers decide to drop off and why?

As such, the research methods most appropriate for exploring these questions were surveys, interviews, tree testing and a heuristics evaluation.

Evaluation/Research Results

The survey and interview provided a well-rounded, in-depth description of the process a user from the EXECUTE category would experience in their search for a video production service. It was particularly good for gauging **impressions of the website, reviews of the interface and general opinions about working with video services**. The results of these two were conducive to a journey map for a specific user category and contributed to the recommendations made to the company.

The heuristics evaluation uncovered some issues with the user interface, such as a lack of error messages when links are missing. The tree test pointed towards some misunderstandings about the location of information on the website. The entirety of the user research informed a series of **recommendations for improving information architecture, landing/contact page and long term customer relationships**.

Conclusions and future work

Engagement and usability interventions could improve SEO and help with acquisition and retention of customers. User dynamics are changing, and they impact the design and considerations for the user experience of the online presence.

Things to explore in the future are how customer relationships will continue to change over time from a user experience perspective. Also, better ways of measuring engagement and usability for companies like Bold Content Video could be further reviewed. Lastly, as a user researcher, motivating users to participate in more user studies in the digital age is valuable for the integrity of research as a whole.