How We Conducted a UX Audit of Checkout that Resulted in a 10% Decrease in Overall Abandonment Rate

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The Client:

A shoe manufacturing company.

Region:

USA

Client in Figures:

4,000

Employees

$2.3

Billion revenue

2002

Date of establishment

Challenges

Our agency was working with the client on redesigning several pages for their website, including product and category layouts, using the client's Google Analytics data to introduce UX improvements.

At some point while researching Google Analytics, we found out that the checkout abandonment rate was too high and surpassed 50%. It was the reason why we came up to the Project Manager on the client's side to suggest improving the whole process. During our conversation, it also turned out that the client regularly receives negative feedback from customers about the difficulties of completing checkout on the website.

As a result of our meeting, we decided on our primary goal, which was optimizing the checkout process, which consists of the shopping cart and checkout flows, to make them more user- and conversion-friendly, which we finally broke into the list of tasks:

- **Identifying main usability issues and analyzing them to offer a better UX;**
- **Providing improvement suggestions that solve the customers' pain points and affect the conversion rate.**
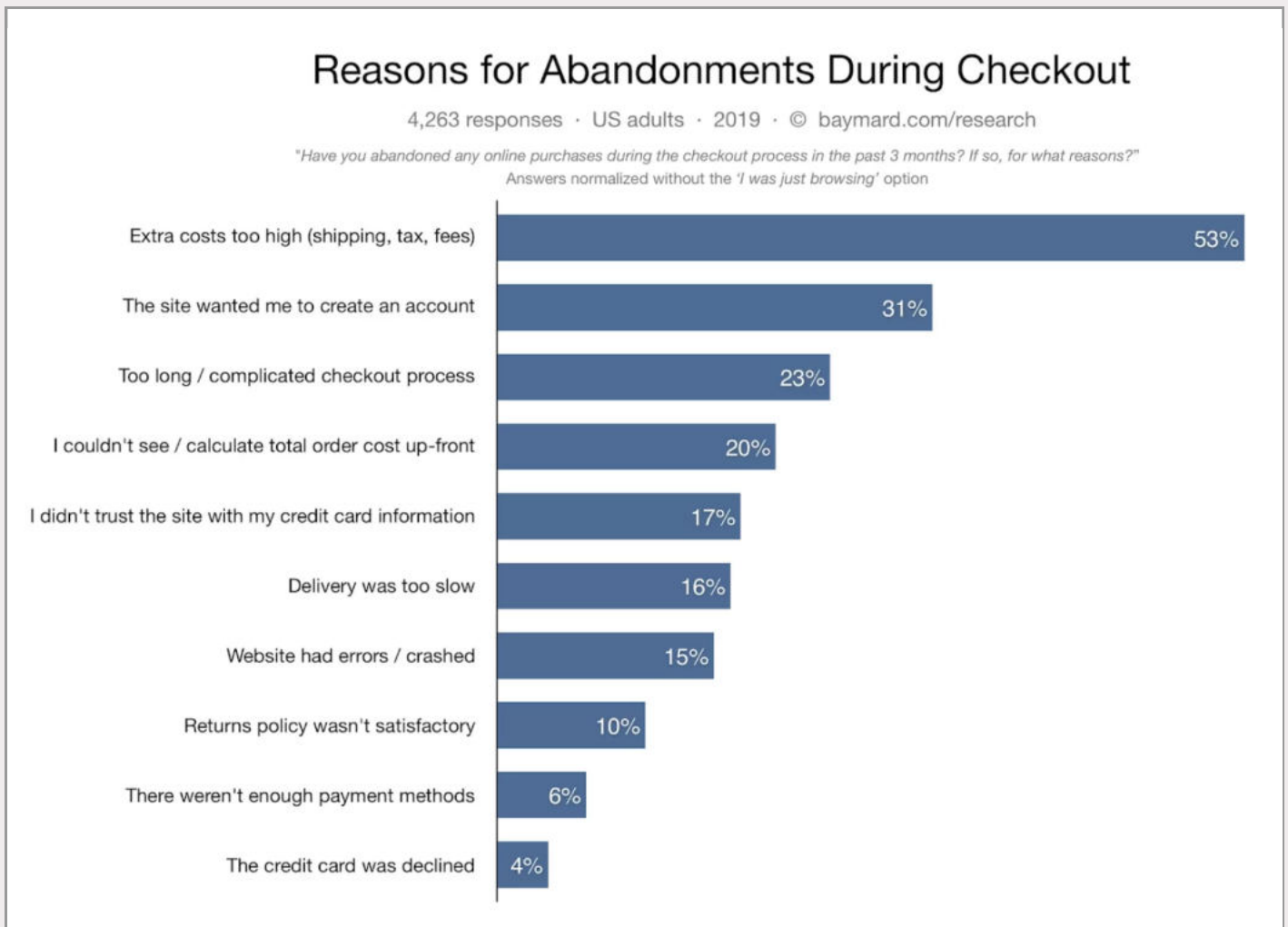
Discovery

Our UX/CRO team started working on the project by analyzing the customer feedback, holding a series of meetings with a customer support team, and recording all the observations, insights, and conclusions.

The team also analyzed in-depth research and studies on shopping cart and checkout abandonment in parallel to find figures and insights. **Baymard Institute** is one of those trustworthy resources we rely on in working and researching benchmarks.

According to one of their studies, a shopping cart abandonment rate usually occurs due to the list of the following reasons:

Reasons for Abandonments During Checkout

4,263 responses · US adults · 2019 · © baymard.com/research

"Have you abandoned any online purchases during the checkout process in the past 3 months? If so, for what reasons?"
Answers normalized without the 'I was just browsing' option

Reason	Percentage
Extra costs too high (shipping, tax, fees)	53%
The site wanted me to create an account	31%
Too long / complicated checkout process	23%
I couldn't see / calculate total order cost up-front	20%
I didn't trust the site with my credit card information	17%
Delivery was too slow	16%
Website had errors / crashed	15%
Returns policy wasn't satisfactory	10%
There weren't enough payment methods	6%
The credit card was declined	4%

The list of concerns from the Baymard study fully conformed with the pain points we received from the customers based on the feedback analysis.

These statistics gave us an idea of how we can influence these reasons with the help of UX and web design and eliminate the main objections of users:

- **Extra costs too high (shipping, tax, fees).** It might be solved by making it more transparent for users with the appropriate UI and making shipping and return information on the website clearer and easier to find.

- **The site wanted me to create an account.** We could find an efficient way for both business and customers to avoid creating an account.

- **Too long/complicated checkout process.** Optimizing the checkout UX, including steps, fields, microcopies, user interactions & distractions, should help eliminate this issue.

- **I couldn't see/calculate total order cost up-front.** It might be solved by making it more transparent for users with the appropriate UI.

- **I didn't trust the site with my credit card information.** We should visually emphasize the security of the credit card fields and make the payment process look secure and credible with the help of UX/UI and copywriting.

- **Website had errors/crashed.** It's worth completing a checkout process from the point of view of a regular user and writing down all the errors and issues both technical and UX/UI that need to be fixed in the future.

- **There weren't enough payment methods.** The only way to fix it is to introduce more payment integrations if it's relevant to the client's website. Attention should also be paid to express checkout integrations (Amazon Pay, Google Pay, Apple Pay) and local providers in demand in the specific market.

- **The credit card was declined.** UX/UI improvements might help avoid confusion and offer alternatives.

Based on our experience working with eCommerce projects, there are also other popular reasons for cart abandonment that can be solved with UX/UI improvements, including:

- **Re-entering info (for example, credit card, shipping fields).**
- **Discount/promo code doesn't work.**

In order to delve into the industry benchmarks and find solutions and recommendations from usability experts based on hundreds of studies, we chose the Baymard Institute Premium Version again and analyzed buying behavior patterns of 15+ apparel & shoe industry players.

After our brainstorming and video sessions, we came up with the list of common metrics for both pages:

- % of exit rates from the page
- % of moving to different pages from the conversion funnel (e.g. homepage)
- % of overall abandonment rate across all the devices to see the difference

We also decided to track the % of the average abandoned order value for the shopping cart separately and the % of checkout abandonment click-through rate (the percentage of recovery emails/messages opened that resulted in a customer clicking and returning to the website).

After that, we decided to form our own opinion and test the website from the point of view of a regular user. During our testing, our UX/CRO team noticed that the shopping cart and checkout pages usually have slightly different patterns and even UI features, and they also differ according to various regions – Germany, UK, US, etc.

It means that it might be pretty tricky for a user landing on the German version with the English language applied, who wants to buy a pair of shoes for a friend with the shipment to London. Web design and brand consistency are crucial to user experience for such use cases, meanwhile, language, currency, shipping methods, and payment options should be easily and quickly changed at any time to meet customers' expectations.

To maintain design consistency, we had to take into account common elements across all countries and regions:

- Cart: navigation, estimated subtotals, product suggestions, footer;
- Checkout: shipping & billing address, order totals.

We also paid attention to some regional differences that include:

- Cart: different versions of carts depending on the country;
- Checkout: currency, language, shipping and payment methods.

Planning

After analyzing dozens of reports in Google Analytics and visualization funnels, we concluded that every next step in the checkout process is a possible conversion killer for the client's business.

An in-depth research allowed us to see which blocks of checkout needed optimization to decrease an overall abandonment rate:

- Shopping cart content;
- Shipping information;
- Payment options and information.

Based on our research, previous experience working in the client's niche and areas of improvement on the existing website, we built forecasts for the client and came up with the following metrics:

- **-10%** of the overall abandonment rate across all the devices;
- -**10%** of exit rates from the page;
- **-5-10%** of moving to different pages from the conversion funnel (e.g. homepage);
- **-15-20%** of checkout abandonment click-through rate (the percentage of recovery emails/messages opened that resulted in a customer clicking and returning to the website).

Interface design with recommendations

All the information gathered from the previous stages helped us conduct a UX audit and come up with the list of recommendations divided by the following blocks:

- **Shopping cart content:**
  - Added a feature to edit the shopping cart content without leaving a checkout page.
  - Introduced a functionality that allows seeing similar items right on the checkout by clicking the button 'Similar items'.
  - Implemented an option of splitting items to ship them to different places in order to save customers' time to make multiple orders with different shipping addresses.

- **Shipping information:**
  - Added a feature to enter address/postcode, which automatically preselects the city so that a user needs to enter or select less data manually.
  - Made delivery options more concise and limited available ones to fastest and cheapest only in order to avoid customers' confusion.
  - Provided a delivery date/range ('Delivery on Wednesday 25.09–Friday 27.09') instead of a delivery speed ('2-4 Working Days') depending on the shipping information entered to set up clear expectations for users and potentially decrease customer support requests.

- **Payment options and information:**
  - Introduced additional legal information for payments depending on the specific region or country entered on shipping.
  - Highlighted a relevant payment system according to the card number provided.

- Duplicated order totals at the very end of the checkout process near the button with a call to action 'Complete a purchase' to set up clear expectations.
- Made an order summary block on the right sticky and flexible depending on the delivery entered, since a customer sees an updated information.

- **UX writing.** We also made headings of checkout blocks more user-friendly and encouraging for customers, such as 'What a wonderful choice!' for cart content, 'We ship wherever you are' for shipping information, and 'Secure and flexible payments' for payment information.

This is a Figma draft we got, which we eventually showed to the client:

After receiving positive feedback from the client, we were ready to move to the collaboration with the client's web designer and visualize solutions with wireframes of the improved checkout process. At this stage, we often accompany a designer and supervise the implementation so that the layout matches both our recommendations and brand identity attributes.

At the moment when we analyzed the indicators a month after the implementation of our recommendations, we recorded a drop in an overall abandonment rate by

10%

We achieved all the forecasts we offered the client:

- **decrease by 10% of exit rates from the page;**

- **decrease by 5-10% of moving to different pages from the conversion funnel (e.g. homepage);**

- **decrease by 15-20% of checkout abandonment click-through rate (the percentage of recovery emails/messages opened that resulted in a customer clicking and returning to the website).**

Choose the most convenient way of communication for you — write an email or contact us in one of the messengers. We'll discuss your project — provide individual calculations and offer our suggestions on how to upgrade your business.

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