



Shift Left to Do Right: Better Business Outcomes Start with Earlier UX Research

Good UX Drives Business Results

Smart organizations know that user experience (UX) is more than just a box to check during the development process. Instead, it's a commitment to look at experiences from the customer's point of view rather than the company's, and design digital experiences and other offerings in a way that caters to the customer.

But conducting UX research is only the first step. **To become truly, validly, authentically customer-centric, an organization has to be insights-led.** That is, UX research data should be driving product creation, not added in after the product is almost complete. Unfortunately, much UX research is done in later stages of the development process, when actual experiences have been built. That means hundreds of hours of development time/personnel have been spent on something that might not succeed in the market.

Fortunately, it's easier than you think to move this concept from moonshot to regular practice. It can be reliable and effortless, even. The best way to avoid negative outcomes late in the game is to look for potential pitfalls earlier in the development process – in other words, shift UX research left.



Here's why it matters and how you can get started.

Six Reasons to Shift Left

By shifting left and incorporating UX research earlier in the development process, companies can reap a host of benefits because they'll:

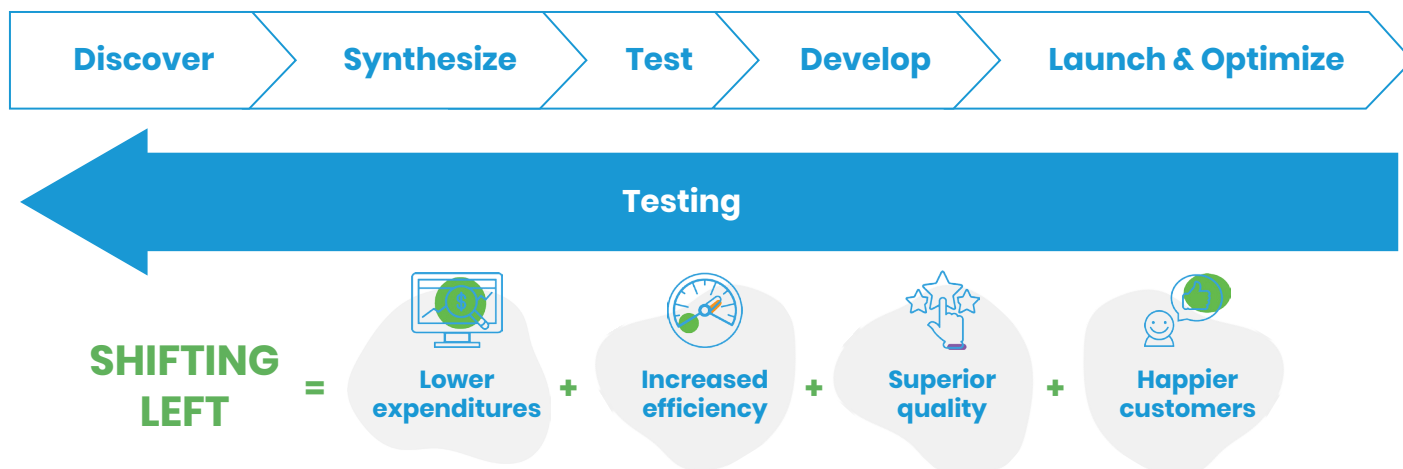
1. De-risk investments in resource allotment and business decision-making.

From ideation to prototyping to production, the upfront investment in development both from a financial and time standpoint can be staggering. Teams can spend months and even years on large projects, running up large internal and external costs along the way.

Early UX research gives teams check-ins along the way, instead of waiting for the big reveal to know if the gamble paid off. By understanding where the project is connecting with its intended users and where it is falling short, **teams will have solid information that informs their decision-making every step of the way.**

2. Ensure that the right features and experiences are being designed and developed in the best way.

At some point, development often starts to feel like a Choose Your Own Adventure book as the options for which features and options to build out are seemingly infinite. But what looks good on paper may not pan out in real life, and without user feedback you could end up with fancy tools that don't deliver.





The early incorporation of reliable user experience research testing helps avoid this outcome, while streamlining the later stages of the development process. The more usability testing you do, the better you'll understand how your users think, which helps you design around what they want and need. **There are platforms and tools that help make this effortless.**

3. Pivot early to avoid rework.

Finding issues late in development can throw timelines and budgets for a loop. The earlier bugs are identified, the less expensive they are to fix. What may start out as an easy fix often becomes a much larger task later in the process as systems and ideas become increasingly intertwined. Getting better intel on the front end, and throughout the design process, can help you salvage the best concepts and prototypes early by redeveloping or re-iterating on them.

4. Cultivate an iterative approach to product design.

It's easy to get fixated on one idea or approach, but often the best ideas emerge by being open to new ways of thinking. Creating a team-based, iterative approach to product design allows teams to discover next steps throughout the process instead of being tied to one outcome from the beginning.

Building and testing one phase before moving on to the next enables teams to deliver greater business value every step of the way, while remaining adaptable to changes that arise from shifting business requirements or additional customer input.

There will be greater confidence that what is being developed is truly meeting the business objective, rather than clinging to an idea that may not turn out to be the right solution. When this is made effortless with the right tools, there's no excuse not to do this.

5. Help program teams take more ownership of their product experience.

Companies invest a lot of time and resources in recruiting the best and brightest minds. Why, then, would they micromanage the development process rather than letting these folks do what they do best?

Early UX research gives teams the tools they need to be more empowered throughout the process and create the best end result. And, the data gathered allows them to report back to the business with confidence so everyone can be on the same page throughout the process.

6. Directly tie the effectiveness of the end customer experience to business results.

UX research gives everyone a reason to have more skin in the game, and a fair way to approach it. For instance, while lead generation and conversion are common goals of many company websites, it takes much more than just adding a form to make that happen. There are many steps involved in getting someone to the desired web page and then prompting them to take action.

UX research allows us to understand the experience we're creating for the customer in this journey. Rather than hoping for results, teams can know that they've designed digital experiences in a way that makes it easy for users to find and complete the form. Common errors such as complexity or requiring too many actions can be weeded out early, reducing the chances that a user will bounce. Then, knowing that they've done their homework, teams can deliver on business-critical KPIs.



How Hilton has succeeded in shifting left

As a brand that lives and dies on delivering customer experiences that matter and spur unbreakable loyalty, our friends at Hilton Hotels have shifted left and aren't looking back.

They know—and eagerly leverage—that when you put the right-brain qualitative work and testing on the left side of the timeline of operations you:

- Get to know your customers first
- Lead with qualitative work when you collect feedback
- Get the data that tells you where best to spend your time and focus
- Understand why things might win when you put them into AB testing and strengthen your test hypotheses
- Prioritize your roadmap based on actual customer wants and needs, instead of guesses, intuition or the opinion of the highest paid person in the room
- De-risk the new opportunities and big-bet decisions that drive your organization to the front of the pack.

As noted in our webinar “[User Research and Optimization: Shifting Left to Win Right](#),” Paula Sappington, Hilton’s Senior Director of Experience Design Research, told us that when they recently ran the numbers on their A/B testing:

- Their win rate was 22% without user research
- Their win rate was 38% when qualitative user research informs A/B testing first



This is an increase of more than 70%.

The further left you can shift – gathering insights earlier in the process – allows you to drive toward a truly insights-led organization.

Shift left with WEVO

When you're ready to become an insights-led organization, it's easier to shift left when you add WEVO to your tool stack to uncover statistically significant insights with a fraction of the effort of typical tools.

Why WEVO?

- ✓ Research, product and marketing teams get synthesized quantitative and qualitative insights, scores and benchmarks with less than 30 minutes of effort.
- ✓ Our statistically significant feedback de-risks decision-making, delivering the confidence to build valuable customer experiences.
- ✓ WEVO's high number of target customers (120-150) and AI help provide better statistical confidence and also streamline the process (50-100 hours) of doing a user study.

Ready to shift left? Contact us today to get started: hello@wevo.ai



ABOUT WEVO

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