

Structuring Information With the User in Mind: **Helping Users GAIN**

How People Think

Graphical

G

Structures

- Contrast
- Repetition
- Alignment
- Proximity

Strategies

- Ensure important tasks receive emphasis
- Incorporate patterns throughout
- Build document on grid
- Place similar information together

Usability Rule

- Help users see structure
- Match user expectations/mental models
- Think visually about text “chunks”

Action Focused

A

- Audience
- Context
- Purpose

- Identify different audiences; 50+ tasks for each
- Ensure you can name 5 tasks for each new piece of content
- Remember, your audience may want to compare, contrast, or choose
- Identify measures of success for audiences
- Ask, “How do user needs differ from business needs?”

- Deliver essential information
- Provide user-focused help
- Meet expectations
- Let characters act | Omit needless words)

Inter-connected

I

- Location
- Alphabet
- Time
- Category
- Hierarchy

- Incorporate maps, visual relationships
- Did you avoid the “disease of familiarity?”
- Process (provide overview to the story), Procedure (Numbered instructions), Timeline (Visualization)
- Do your categories make sense to the user?
- Does this structure make sense to your audience?

- Test labels and categories with users
- Help users see connections (Don’t make them remember)
- Craft cohesive text by using building sentences on what audience knows

Navigation

N

- Recognizable
- Routed
- Responsive
- Rhetorical

- Do you have consistent structure/visual navigation throughout?
- Are there multiple routes through the document?
- How do you let your user know where you are?
- What visual message does your website send? What “purposeful action” does it inspire?

- Incorporate consistency and standards
- Give the user different routes (user control and freedom)
- Provide expert routes
- Test, test, test... watch REAL HUMANS use prototypes
- Anticipate and prevent errors
- Provide “clear rhetorical” message