

CRAFTING SUCCESS: STRATEGIES FOR MEASURING USER RESEARCH IMPACT

USER RESEARCH ACADEMY

A top-down view of a workspace. On the left, a white mug with a blue rim sits on a wooden coaster, filled with dark coffee. In the center, a silver laptop is open, with a hand holding a pencil over the trackpad. To the right, another hand rests on the desk. In the bottom right corner, there is a spiral-bound notebook with an orange cover and a pair of white earbuds.



Hi! I'm Nikki

- Been a user researcher for a decade (!!!)
- Worked in b2b, b2c, b2b2c, tiny start-ups to large corporations
- Was a UXR hiring manager for three years
- Run my own company mentoring others in user research
- Love PokeMon & World Of Warcraft

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN TODAY...



What impact means when it comes to user research

Ways to think about measuring impact internally and externally

A framework for tracking impact over time

WHAT DOES IMPACT MEAN?

Impact is when user research influences a(n):

- Person and their way of thinking
- Organization and their goals
- Product experience
- Direction of strategy
- A team or teams' processes

EXTERNAL IMPACT

External impact means looking at areas such as product metrics or strategic change for the product or organization

INTERNAL IMPACT

Internal impact means looking at your team and processes, and how they effect user research value and perception across the organization

External impact

BUSINESS METRICS

FIRST - WHAT ARE BUSINESS METRICS

Business metrics are what your company or organization strives to achieve

- They are dependent on the company's goals
- They are determined by high-levels
- They sit within OKRs and KPIs

FIRST - WHAT ARE BUSINESS METRICS

Business metrics are what your company or organization strives to achieve

- They are dependent on the company's goals
- They are determined by high-levels
- They sit within OKRs and KPIs

PIRATE METRICS

Acquisition

How do customers find you?

Activation

How quickly can you convert your customers?

Retention

How many are staying & why are others leaving

Referral

How can you make customers advocates?

Revenue

How can you increase revenue?

HOW CAN USER RESEARCHERS USE BUSINESS METRICS?

Tying business metrics to user research helps us prove the value and impact we bring to an organization.

- Use them as success metrics to measure after a study
- Points us in the direction of a new study
- Allows us to answer specific business questions
 - Why are people dropping out of the check-out funnel?
 - Why are people not using X or Y feature?
- Start with understanding the business problem and how that translates to user problems

BUSINESS METRICS

Conversion rate

Click-thru rate

Retention rate

Session length

Customer lifetime value

Daily/weekly/monthly usage data

To RESEARCH GOALS

Determine the usability of a check-out flow

Understand how successful people are in a flow (ex: forms, sign-up)

Discover why people are leaving and what is missing

Assess the quality of information on a page

Evaluate the overall value a product or service brings to users

Identify motivations behind using (or not using) a product or any blockers to usage

Using business metrics in a project

Business problem: After the initial discount to our product, people are canceling their subscription

Goal: Understand why people are canceling subscription after trial - including unmet needs, pain points

Method: Data analysis (high cancelation rate after discount), 1x1 interviews, and surveys

Success metric: Decrease in cancelation rate after discount, fewer 1-star ratings



Secure your discount! ⓧ

What is your e-mail adress?

Ensure a discount

Without continuing

The offer is exclusively for new customers

Internal impact

TEAM METRICS

WHAT ARE INTERNAL UXR KPIs

Success does not only mean looking outwardly but also at your user research practice's internal mechanics. There are many great ways to track the impact of user research across an organization.

By looking into these metrics, you can understand how effective your current user research practice is and spot improvement areas.

As soon as I set up a research practice, I usually try to track certain metrics quarterly

Internal KPIs for research teams

1. Increased (or decreased!) number of usability tests run
2. Decreased amount of time from request to research
3. Increased number of research requests
4. Increased number of hours stakeholders spend in research sessions
5. Decreased customer support calls/tickets
6. Increased number of usability issues fixed
7. Increased number of insights on the roadmap
8. Increased number of projects based on research
9. Increased number of generative research sessions run
10. Increased satisfaction score from stakeholders
11. Increased number of activation workshops after projects

Number of usability tests run

The number of usability tests run over a certain period can show increased user research maturity in an organization.

This metric can also indicate if you are over-capacity or focus too much on usability instead of a balance of evaluative and generative work.

Amount of time to research

The amount of time from an idea to study is a great metric to track because it gives you an idea of how long it takes research to get started. Ideally, there is a short amount of time between an idea and research beginning.

Tracking the time can point out areas you could streamline (e.g., creating email recruitment templates).

Number of research requests

I always use the number of research requests to help determine the user research maturity of an organization. If there are few requests, people may not know how and when to utilize research.

Similar to usability tests, it can also show when you are over-capacity.

Number of usability issues fixed

This is my favorite metric to track internally. Yes, it is excellent if we are running research, but how much gets actioned?

This metric shows you the number of usability issues fixed in a given amount of time (e.g., three or six months) and can indicate that research is successful.

Number of generative sessions run

Like tracking usability tests, the number of generative research sessions run indicates a higher user research maturity since you are looking into a product or service's holistic experience.

When colleagues are interested in generative research, there is an appetite for real change and innovation. By combining this metric with usability testing, you can balance the number of generative and evaluative sessions.

Number of features from user research on the roadmap

This metric maps nicely with the number of generative research sessions run. If the product/tech team uses insights from research to create a roadmap, user research is influencing the company strategy.

Using internal KPIs on a team

Objective: Understand the impact of user research on teams/organization

Key results:

1. Decrease the amount of time to research
2. Increase the number of generative research sessions run
3. Increase the number of insights on the roadmap

Timeline: Q1 & Q2

Action items

1. Amount of time to research
 - a. Find a recruitment agency
 - b. Hire one more user researcher
 - c. Create recruitment templates (email and scheduling)
 - d. Streamline the intake document and process
2. Number of generative research sessions
 - a. Reeducate teams on generative research
 - b. Save 60% of capacity for generative research
 - c. Start a continuous generative research program
3. Number of insights on the roadmap
 - a. Embed researchers within teams
 - b. Researchers attend planning meetings
 - c. Constantly share insights in valuable ways

Impact framework

COMPONENTS TO AN IMPACT FRAMEWORK

1. Impact metric or description
2. The study or source
3. The researcher(s)
4. Research type
5. level of support
6. Impact type
7. Impact level/scale
8. Area

Impact metric or description

Note the impact metric or description.

This could be external or internal metrics, such as an increased stakeholder satisfaction score, increase in usage data, or could also be a qualitative comment from a stakeholder, such as "we used the insights to move forward with the next step of iteration."

This shows you the exact impact you had, making it easier to track

The study or source

Write down the associated source this impact came from.

For instance, a particular research study or multiple studies, a presentation, a workshop.

Referencing which source the impact came from helps you track exactly what study had the impact so you can potentially replicate similar studies

The researcher(s)

Note which researcher(s) were involved with this particular impact and study. This helps you track who to potentially follow-up with if there are more questions on that topic

Research type

Documenting the type of research that had the impact is key to understanding what types of research have the largest influence across an organization.

It can also show you if you are conducting too much of one type of research or if you have the space to expand the teams' toolkit to have a wider impact.

Level of support

Looking at how much support you gave to the team can show you, on average, what teams need in order to be successful.

For instance, if you are able to achieve impact with only a low to medium level of support, the team can look into other projects to place their time outside of supporting teams with research (ex: larger generative efforts)

Impact type

Impact type shows you what the research activity led to, such as a change/iteration in the product, optimizing processes, or changing the product strategy.

Keeping tabs on impact type allows you to see what kind of impact research is having in the organization, what the next level is, and if you are having the impact you are intending to have.

For instance, a research team that has been impacting product iterations might try to move on to influencing product strategy or evangelizing research.

Impact level/scale

The impact level looks at the level within the organization that you are impacting. This can include individual stakeholders, teams, cross-departmental, organizational, community, and internal team

This ensures you are tracking how widespread the team's impact is and also indicates if only one team is getting value

Area/team

If at a team level (or multiple teams), note which are impacted by this research as it helps us go back to better understand the impact, if necessary

As well, this helps us determine, again, if only one team/stakeholder is really benefiting from research

Relevant links

Link to research plans/briefs, roadmaps, reports, or insights that are relevant for the particular impact. Keeping track of the exact links helps you reference for additional context

Notes/comments

A space for any notes or comments from this particular impact

1	Impact metric or description	Research study/source	Researcher	Research type	Level of support	Impact type	Impact level/scale	Area/team	Relevant links	Notes/comments
2				▼	▼	▼	▼			
3				▼	▼	▼	▼			
4				▼	▼	▼	▼			
5				▼	▼	▼	▼			
6				▼	▼	▼	▼			
7				▼	▼	▼	▼			
8				▼	▼	▼	▼			
9				▼	▼	▼	▼			
10				▼	▼	▼	▼			
11				▼	▼	▼	▼			
12				▼	▼	▼	▼			
13				▼	▼	▼	▼			
14				▼	▼	▼	▼			
15				▼	▼	▼	▼			
16				▼	▼	▼	▼			
17				▼	▼	▼	▼			
18				▼	▼	▼	▼			
19				▼	▼	▼	▼			
20				▼	▼	▼	▼			
21				▼	▼	▼	▼			
22				▼	▼	▼	▼			
23				▼	▼	▼	▼			
24				▼	▼	▼	▼			
25				▼	▼	▼	▼			
26				▼	▼	▼	▼			
27				▼	▼	▼	▼			
28				▼	▼	▼	▼			
29				▼	▼	▼	▼			
30				▼	▼	▼	▼			
31				▼	▼	▼	▼			
32				▼	▼	▼	▼			
33				▼	▼	▼	▼			
34				▼	▼	▼	▼			

Date	Impact metric or description	Research or initiative study/source	Researcher(s)	Research type	Level of support	Impact type	Impact level/scale	Area/team	Relevant links
Jan 6, 2023	Time to research decreased from 10 days to 5 days	Time to research initiative	Nikki Anderson	Internal rese...	N/A	Optimizing process	Product team	All product teams	
Jan 23, 2023	Overall stakeholder satisfaction survey metric increased from 60% to 80%	Q4 stakeholder satisfaction survey	Nikki Anderson	Survey	N/A	Stakeholder engagement with users/r...	Product team	Growth, Acquisition	
Feb 2, 2023	Persona was used as a way to prioritize Q2 projects across all product teams and was cited as a reason for prioritization for projects	Pesona study	Nikki Anderson	Deliverable	High	Influencing product strategy	Cross-department...	All product teams	Link to Persona study
Feb 17, 2023	Daily usage of X feature increased from 5% to 20% after research on how to improve the onboarding experience and subsequent design changes	Onboarding process research study	Nikki Anderson	Qualitative u...	Medium	Product change/iteration	Product team	Onboarding team	Link to study
Feb 28, 2023	Presentation of how to engage better with users at UXInsights conference, made many connections within the community	Conference talk	Nikki Anderson	Community	N/A	Community	Community		Link to talk
Mar 2, 2023	Reduction in bugs within the holistic experience by 20%	Holistic heuristic evaluation study	Nikki Anderson	Heuristic eval...	High	Product change/iteration	Cross-department...		
March 6, 2023	Identified top three reasons for churn in customers	Churn study	Nikki Anderson	Survey	High	Further research	Product team	Growth and retention teams	

Resources

[Metrics for usability testing](#)

[Product analytics to support qual research](#)

[Tracking UXR Impact Spreadsheet](#)

[Stakeholder satisfaction survey](#)

[How user research impacts the AARRR metrics](#)



TIME FOR QUESTIONS

STAY IN TOUCH (& LEARN!)

 [FOLLOW ME ON LINKEDIN](#)

 [JOIN MY SUBSTACK](#)

 [JOIN MY MEMBERSHIP](#)

reflections
next steps
challenges

- Collaboration with others

Job Interview Prep

...IT PROCESS!!

How would you approach
a problem?

on
...WER!

hiring
man...

User
plan...