



Barriers to Buy-in for UX Research

What they are and how to work towards removing them.

Ona Anicello, UX Research Manager @ Alaska Airlines



Tonight's Topics!

- About me & 3 ideas
 - Barriers to getting buy-in and what to do about it
 - Final Thoughts and Resources
 - Questions
- 



Background



About me

- 18 years in the UX Research Discipline
- UX Research Manager at Alaska Airlines
- Based in Seattle



✈ UX Research at Alaska Airlines

- July of 2017 with 1.5 researchers supporting e-commerce.
- Today, 7 researchers and 6 Programs supporting e-commerce and company wide initiatives.

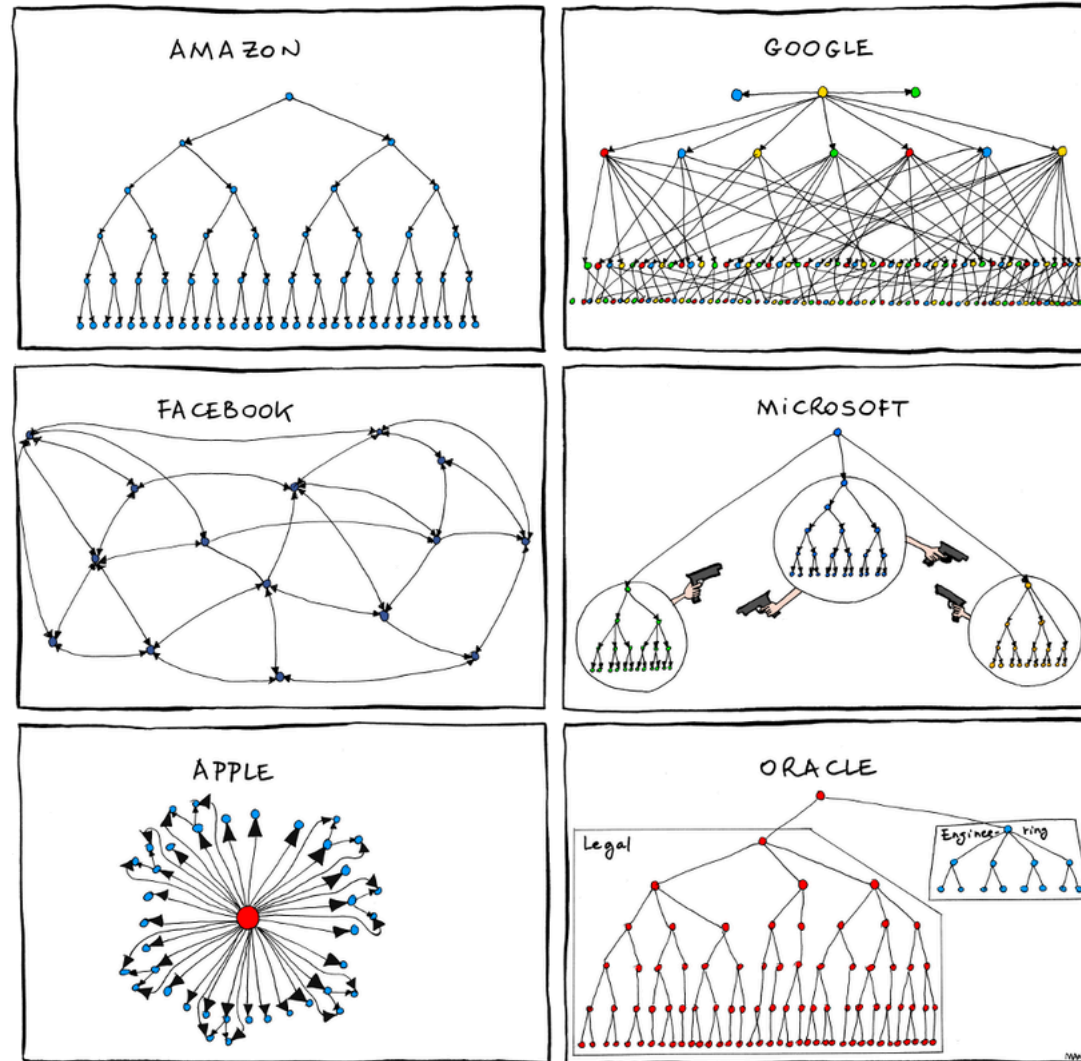




**3 ideas to keep in mind as
we walk thru this
presentation.**

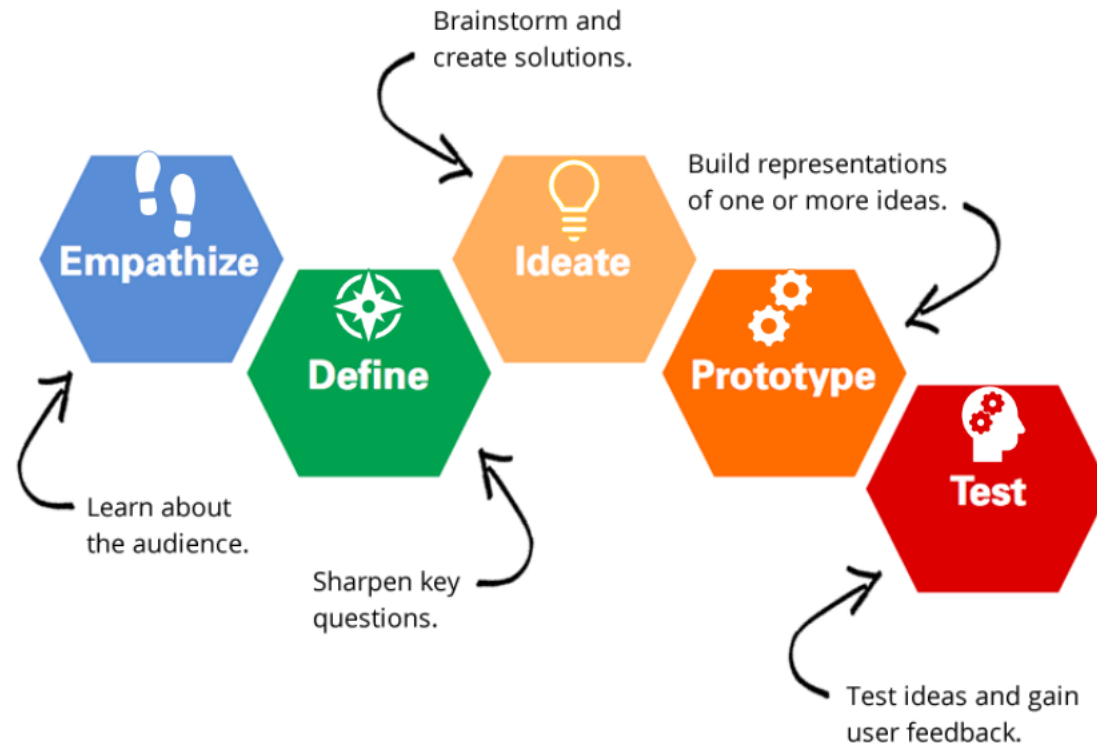
➔ 1. Culture

Know the company culture in which you are working in



✈️ 2. User Centered Design and Empathy

User centered design process and empathy for your teams



✈️ 3. Trust

Building and maintaining trust as a foundation for buy-in



✈ 3. Trust

Building and maintaining trust as a foundation for buy-in





Barriers to Buy-in and what to do about it.



Barrier #1: My team and organization doesn't understand what I do and the value I bring.



Prepare Elevator Speeches

Helps people understand what you do and why it's important.



Examples

- Hallway and elevator conversions
- Grabbing coffee or lunch with team members to learn each others' roles
- Chat with team member before and after meetings



Prepare answers to these questions

Sound bites, brief snippets to prepare:

Describe your role as a UX Researcher?	What is the impact of your work?	Why do we need a UX Researcher on our team?
Describe what your team does?	Why did you become a UX Researcher?	What does a typical day look like for a UX Researcher?
What value does your role bring?	What is the difference between a UX Researcher vs Market Researcher?	What is a biggest misconception about UX Research?

This chart is a spin on the “Take 12 Approach” – from Alaska’s Empowering Women Workshop



Office Hours

Be available for your team to answer their research questions and concerns.



Example: Café UX Research – walkups to chat about research questions and/or to have a snack!



Interactive Lab Tours

Learn by doing



Example Agenda for Tour

- 1 hour interactive tour to include:
 - Presentation about UX Research (who, what, when, where)
 - Demo of Usability Study (ask for a volunteer!)
 - Debrief with Food, Drinks and Goodie Bags



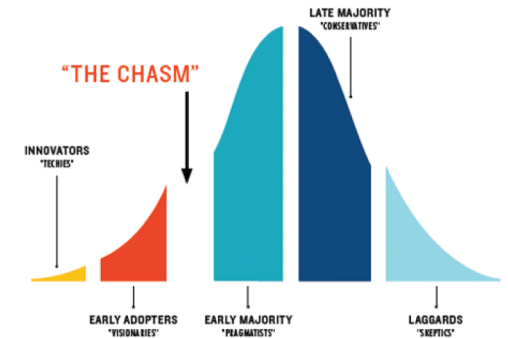
UCD Workshop

Learn by doing

✈ Why is UX important?

Today, your user's experience *is* a differentiator!

- Increased revenue
- Repeat sales
- Market share, and is not a barrier to entry
- Gain a broader customer base
- Reduce liability and risk
- Increase brand reputation & word of mouth
- Reduced support costs



Example: 2 hour Workshop - topics to include:

- The History of UX Research, Methods, Value
- UCD Process, Create Personas, Paper Prototype, and conduct Usability Study
- Empathy discussion



Activity



Prepare an elevator speech

- Envelope #1:
 - It includes a question, note card, and pen.
 - On the note card, write a one to two sentence sound bite in response to the question (3 minutes).
 - Partner with someone next to you and read what your wrote (1 minute).
 - Ask your partner to critique what you wrote (3 minutes).



**Barrier #2: No one is
interested or excited about
UX Research...it's boring.**



Unique Study Announcements

Draws interest, is
memorable and peaks
people's curiosity to
come to your session.



- Have a Theme
- Email with Podcast or Video
- Picture of Food and Drinks
- Gif with announcement
- Reminders in Slack/Teams channels



Include a catchy Study Title

*A cool title peaks
people's interest*

~~“Travel Stress Research Presentation”~~



“What’s stress got to do with it?”



Interactive Sessions

Engaging sessions helps teams understand, internalize, and have a common understanding of the issues and themes.



- Activities for observers
 - Positives, Negatives, Additional Questions
 - Do, think, feel sheet
- Slack/Teams chat channel for questions
- Debrief between sessions
- Provide Snacks



Flip Board Notes





Notetaking form

Interview note taking guide		Note taker name: _____	
Think & Feel	Noteworthy Quotes		
<div>About Participant # _____</div>			
Say & Do	Frustration	Delight	



Activity



Create a catchy title

- Note card with a research study title and summary.
- On the note card, rewrite the title making it catchy, in order to peak the interest of your team/organization (5 minutes).



Barrier #3.
**My recommendations aren't
taken.**



Bring them with you

Make sure your team is attending
your sessions. If they are in the
field, bring them with you.

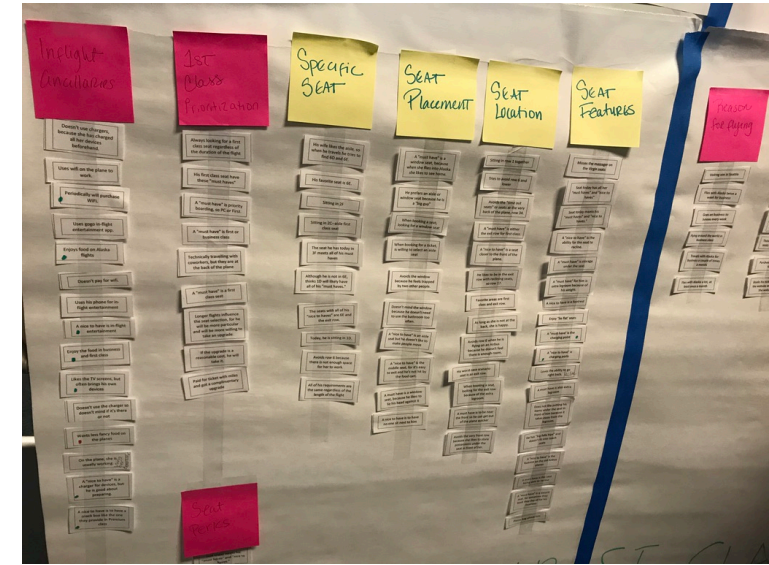


Take the team to the airport to observe



Participate in the Data Analysis

Include product team in the data
analysis process (and really the
entire process)



Affinity Diagramming Data Analysis Session



Review findings prior to presenting the report

Meet individually with team members to review presentation and feasibility of findings



Scott Berkun – UX Researcher turned PM



Interactive Research Reporting

In the meeting, present your
findings and have problem
solving workshop



Mental model research about how people book.
Presented insights and how might we statements,
followed by a workshop.



**#Barrier 4. Leadership doesn't
value nor want to invest in UX
Research.**



Regularly Communicate the Value of UXR

Define and talk about the
impact of your work
regularly especially with
leaders.

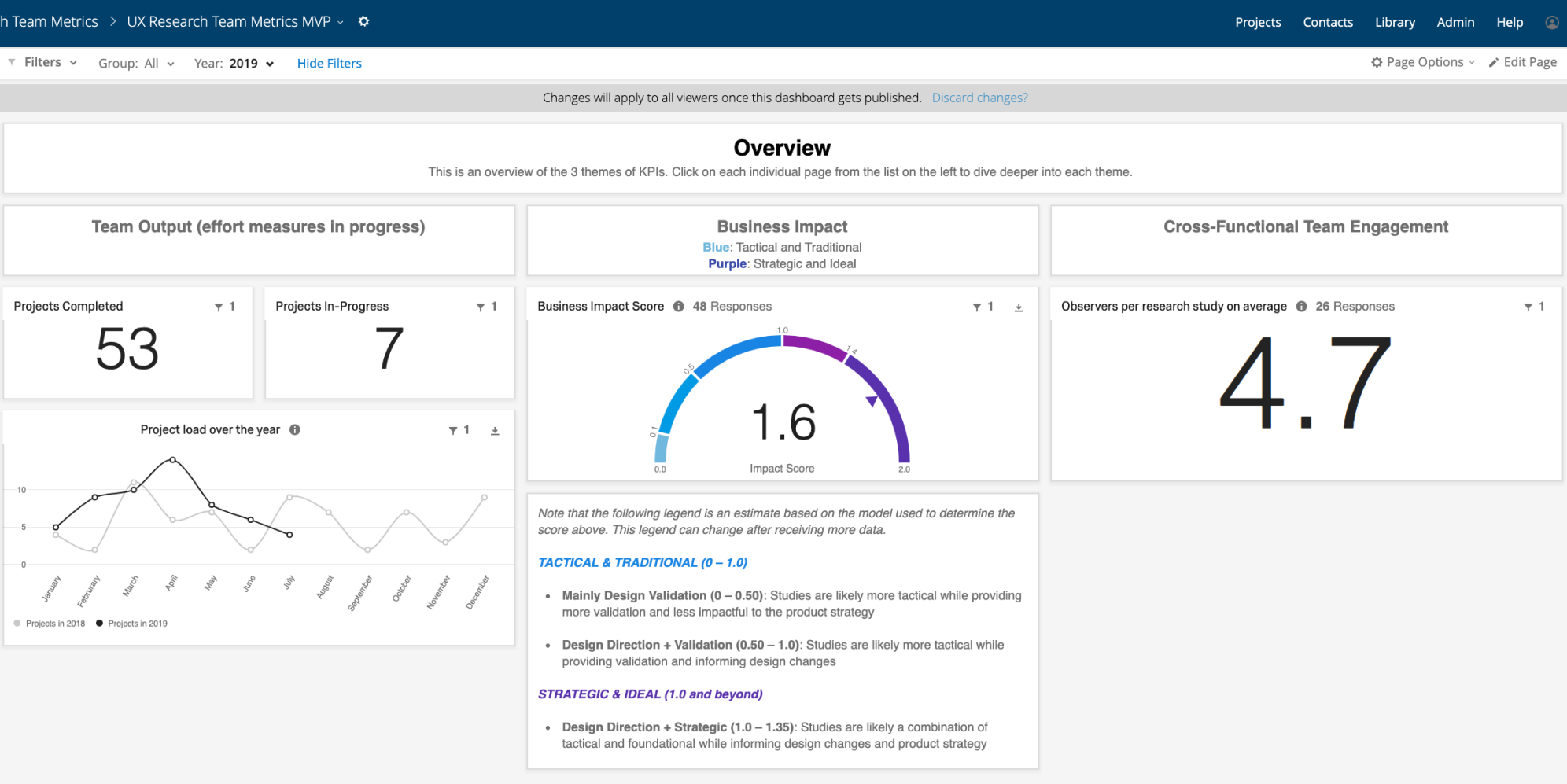


Examples

- 1:1 Research Readouts with leaders (if possible)
- Self Service Impact Dashboards
- Monthly Newsletters
- Monthly Impact Meetings
- List type(s) of impact in reports



UX Research Team Metrics Dashboard





Explicitly list types of impact in the report

Impact List

- ✓ Increase Revenue
- ✓ UX Improvement
- ✓ Bug detected
- ✓ Common Understanding
- ✓ ...
- ✓



Give visibility to your work in the physical space

Leaders need reminders of the work you are doing. Post on white boards, walls, in restrooms, etc.





Get other disciplines to be UXR champions.

This gives creditability to the work you are doing and the value you bring.





Be prepared and be persistent

This time it might be no,
but next time it might be
yes.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: UX Researcher Contractor
Duration: 6 month – with potential for extension
Start date: June 24th or sooner (if possible)

Role Summary

Come join Alaska Airline's UX Research Team! We are a group of passionate researchers focused on bringing engaging and delightful experiences to the planning and purchasing of airline tickets, the check-in process at the airport, and much more.

We are looking for a UX researcher to contribute and conduct research with little guidance and oversight. Alaska Airline's UX Research Team is a collaborative group, who works together on generative research activities to help inform business strategies and directions, in addition to conducting evaluative studies to detect user experience issues and maintain the health of our digital offerings.

Scope

As an individual contributor, you'll work across several e-commerce product teams, partnering with other researchers, designers, product managers to develop and maintain the user experiences for AlaskaAir.com, our mobile apps, and kiosks. You should be familiar with Agile development, Lean UX, developing inclusive products, and have the ability to work independently. Having a passion for teaching stakeholders about the user centered design process and user research is a plus, in addition to an appetite for delivering unique and interactive reports to the teams.

Key Duties

- Advocate for usability, accessibility, and good user experience design throughout the product development process.
- Conduct large scale research activities with little guidance, including interviews, contextual inquiries, field visits, prototype evaluations and more, focused on understanding our customers and their behaviors and motivations.
 - o Create generative and evaluative research plans, identifying goals, methods and timelines, developing participant screeners and writing discussion guides.
 - o Moderate sessions and participate in notetaking and affinity diagramming activities to gather data and developing
 - o Synthesize insights into actionable insights and guidance: personas, journey maps, mental models, usability reports, etc. for shared and future use. Balance the level of detail for documentation with time.
 - o Present research insights in a digestible story at different levels of depth depending on the audience. Reports will be interactive and engaging.
 - o Present to diverse audiences including e-commerce team members and executives in an easy to understand way, leveraging best practices of storytelling.
 - o Leverage existing sources of customer feedback and data such as analytics, satisfaction surveys, and best practices research



Don't force it, let
it happen
naturally

Sometimes its best to
see how things grow
organically.



Experience Mapping Program Example



**Having the support
from your manager
and skip level can
immensely help.**

Your manager can be your
best advocate.





Final thoughts and resources



Final Thoughts

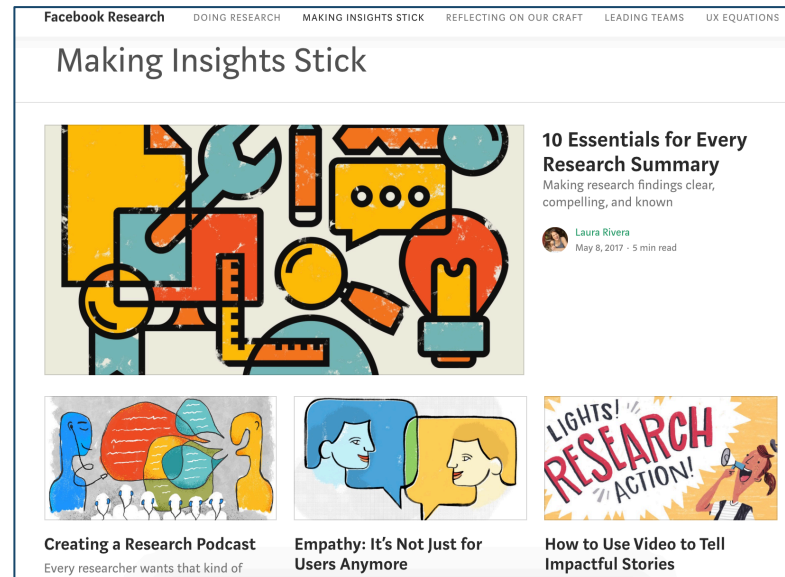
- Work on developing an insights driven culture.
- Don't look too far into the future.
- Don't expect everything to happen all at once.
- Have empathy for your team and organization.



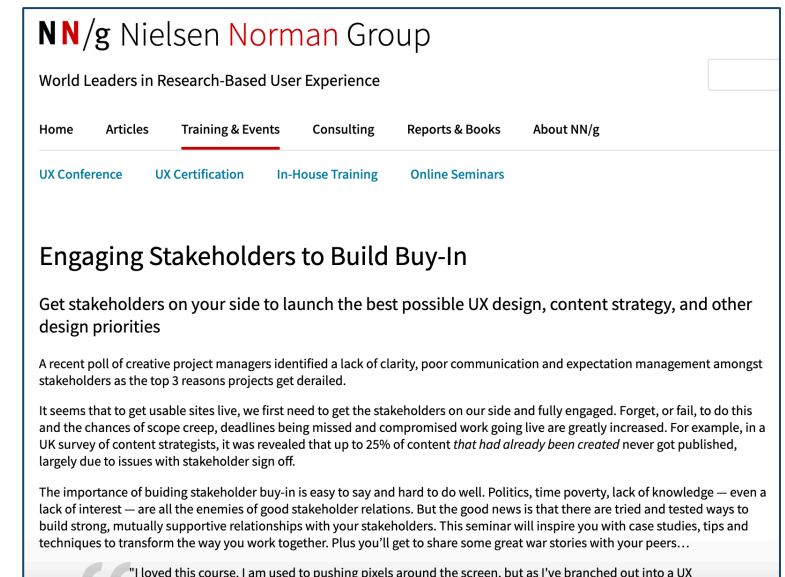
Favorite resources



www.amazon.com



<https://medium.com/facebook-research/insights/home>



<https://www.nngroup.com/courses/stakeholder-ux-approval/>



Thank you!

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