

**”Ok, our
application
doesn’t work,
now what?”**

15 TIPS FOR THE MOST COMMON PROBLEMS

toughlex

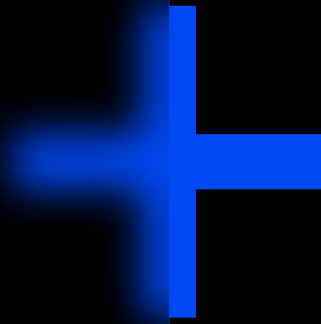


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It happens.

You've invested into a digital application that was meant to boost your business and empower your customers in ways they've never dreamed of. And sometimes, it just doesn't seem to work in reality.

Innovations don't come without their fair share of mistakes. In application development those mistakes can appear especially damaging and costly. But the worst thing you can do is to get disheartened and miss the chance to learn, improve and make it work. Open any of the applications you use most often - each of them has gone through thousands of iterations, mistakes, issues and they are still far from perfect; hence the regularity of new updates.

That's how the digital world works, its products are always work in progress. Having developed an application, even if it's an average one, already gives you a competitive edge. Now it's just a question of improving it.

And we are here to help you with that.

We don't know yet what are the problems



"Only 55% of companies are currently conducting any user experience testing"

- Skyhook

TIP 1. LOOK AT THE USAGE METRICS

Usage metrics can give you a good initial understanding of potential problems.

- Not enough downloads / visits mean the problem might be with marketing. Your clients might simply not know about the application or why they should use it. Another reason can be that current users were left unhappy and have spread negative feedback.
- High bounce rates can mean that users leave the application without using it to perform the action they'd initially intended to use it for. Or they simply get impatient waiting for it to upload.
- **A lot of short interactions can mean that people have trouble finding what they came for and leave the application frustrated.**

The numbers alone can only help you to make assumptions, so make sure to add extra layers of information. Talk them through with your client service representatives:

- Which complaints do they hear most often?
- When do they receive calls from frustrated clients?
- Which actions were they trying to complete at that time?

TIP 2. TALK WITH YOUR USERS

Test your assumptions by interviewing actual users. What are they saying?
Make sure to learn:

- What are they trying/willing to use the application for?
- What do they struggle with?
- **What do they find important?**

Any client will say that it's important for an application to be easy and fast to use, but go deeper, ask additional questions and make sure you understand what's underneath these words. Invest in researching how they are actually using your application, so you know what actual troubles they face with your current interface.

Map or renew your customer journeys marking all the elements that currently are not working as good as they should or have been missed when developing the initial application.

**"Every 1\$ invested in UX results in a return
between 2\$ and 100\$"**

- The American Genius

TIP 3. REVIEW YOUR BUSINESS GOALS

What business results should your application bring? How has it succeeded until now?
Look at numbers like:

- Customer satisfaction rates.
- Customer retention rates.
- Customer value metrics.
- Amounts of customer support tickets received and solved.
- Percentage of customers using application for self-service or other goals.

The end result should be clear financial gains, increased competitive advantage or recognition as an innovative market leader. Adding a layer of business goals onto your customer journeys will help you to create a list of priorities and evaluate how much you should invest into updating the application right now. **Sometimes small quick fixes can be enough and if not, you will have a detailed plan of the bigger changes you need to make.**

PROBLEM

Clients can't find their way around our application



"74% of people are likely to return to a website if it is optimized for mobile"

- Red Website Design

One of the most common issues is that users find the application too complicated. This can be solved by redesigning the user interface and making it more people (think finger and eye) friendly. Why fingers? You'll find out in our next tip.

TIP 4. PUT MOBILE-FIRST

Your customers probably told you that they want convenient 24/7 access to your services. Making an application truly mobile friendly can help you to fast track it to success.

- **Make sure your application has a responsive design that adapts itself to different screens.**
- **When analyzing usage metrics, pay attention to how behavior differs according to device.** What functions are most used/ requested by mobile users? Does your mobile version respond to their needs?
- **Enable trendy functions that people find attractive: dark mode, fingerprint recognition, offline functionality and so on.**
- Enable push notifications and reminders, so that your users don't have to worry about forgetting important actions and don't need to log in to the application to check the status of different tasks.

TIP 5. MAKE USING YOUR APPLICATION INTUITIVE

Both desktop and mobile versions have to be highly intuitive, helping users to easily complete any task they want to.

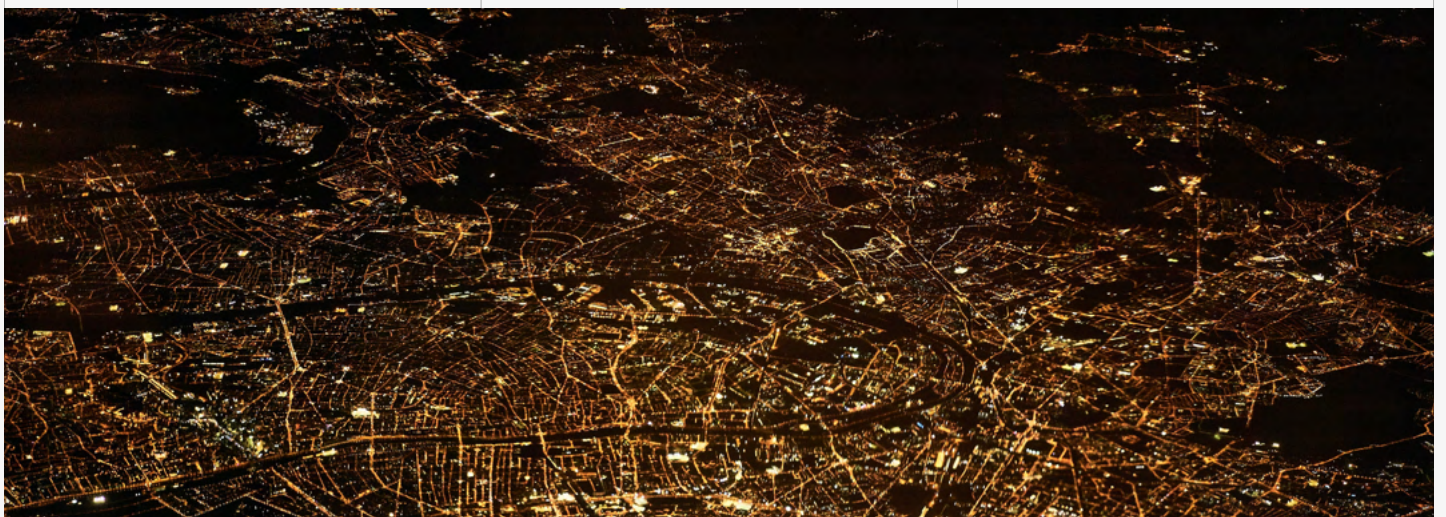
- **Apply what you've learned about your users and pay attention to their task flows. Optimize for the most important tasks so that they can be completed with the least amount of effort and clicks. You get bonus points for making the UI not only satisfying, but even enjoyable.**
- Personalize experience. Different users have different needs and preferences – they should sense that your app understands this and responds.
- Make the app experience feel human. Users shouldn't feel like they are communicating with a robot, even if they really are. UI design should speak your brand's language, transfer emotions and recreate the feeling of being in contact with your client representatives.

TIP 6. SUPPORT IS ALL YOU NEED

Talking about being human, it's very common for people to have questions and run into problems. Few companies, though, want to have their customer support answering questions that are often predictable, repetitive and not that hard to reply to.

Which gives you a direction to solve the matter:

- Create tutorials for first time users that go through your app's main functions and tips.
- Make a concise FAQ section.
- Use AI to answer most common user inquiries.



PROBLEM

Our service center gets too many calls that could be solved by self-service



“63% of people would consider messaging a chatbox to communicate with business or a brand”

- Mindshare

If basic client support solutions don't help, you should first of all re-check if the UI is really working at its best. Review the questions your service center gets from users and check whether they can be solved by design upgrades.

For more complex applications with wide functionalities, you will need more in-depth client support solutions.

TIP 7. INVOLVE YOUR USERS

Some users don't wait for updates and find shortcuts and hacks to improve app performance. Others are very good at helping other users and enjoy doing that. If you don't create an environment for their conversations they will find somewhere else to chat. And that place will be outside your channels.

- Support forums still do the job and give you a chance to follow / curate conversations.
- Arrange user focus groups to check your assumptions and get additional insights.

- Organize consumer success events to allow users to meet each other, get a sense of your community, and thank or recognize your most active users.

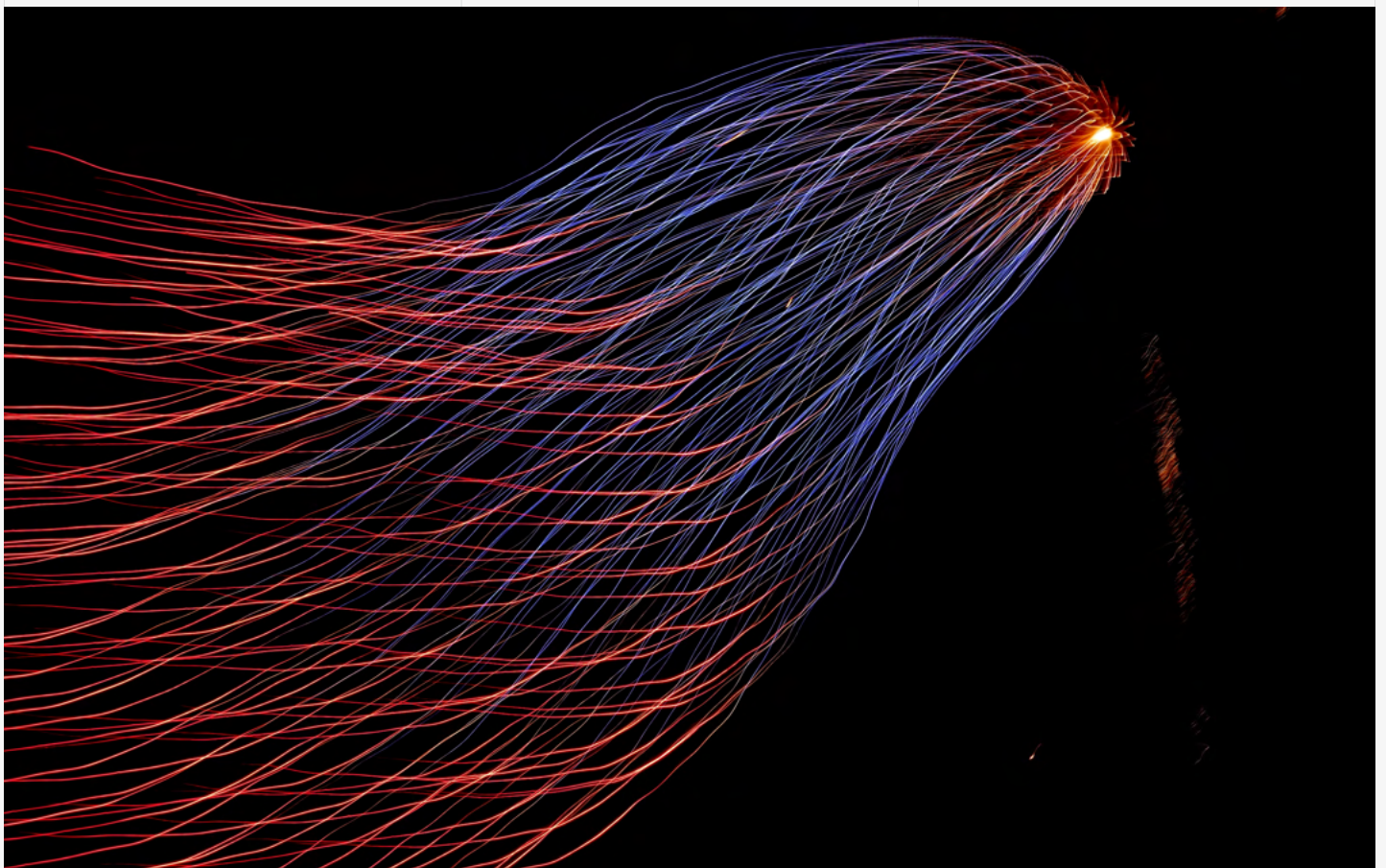
TIP 8. BUILD A KNOWLEDGE BASE

Having an active user community will help you to build a quality knowledge base that's focused on what users themselves find important. **Make it open and encourage collaboration – in this way it will always be updated and growing.**

TIP 9. MAKE IT A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Some applications require more than basic knowledge. If this is the case for your app, curate not only knowledge exchange between your users, but also give them opportunities to learn. **From quick online tutorials to certified learning programs – all of this will show your users that you care** about their experience and want to help them make the most of your product.

Gamification can also be used for basic learning quests. If you notice that users explore only part of your functionality, use challenges and progress tracking to encourage them to go deeper and **maximize what your application has to offer.**



PROBLEM

Clients still go to physical locations to get their tasks done



"In 2020 the number of companies investing in the omni-channel experience has jumped from 20% to more than 80% (compared with 2010)."

- PWC

It's one thing when clients use the app, and have some questions or troubles. But it's another issue entirely when they choose not to transfer to digital at all, and continue using traditional methods to order their services, request invoices and so on.

Self-service is one of the most common goals for business applications. There are plenty of ways to embrace it.

TIP 10. ENABLE YOUR CLIENTS TO SERVE THEMSELVES

Your clients should be able to complete most of tasks online that they might contact your representatives for assistance with:

- Check the invoice and make a direct payment.
- Check order/ service status.
- Check stock inventory.
- Order and reorder.
- Create lists.
- Request samples.

- Request quotes.
- Report an issue.
- See upcoming payment due dates.
- Get alerts on overdue bills.
- Get informed about service outages.
- See statistics on their usage, payments or other relevant interactions.

“67% of customers prefer self-service over speaking to a company representative”

- ZenDesk

TIP 11. ADD VALUE BY APP-ONLY FUNCTIONALITIES

There are many things that you can do to make your application so user friendly and attractive to use that your users simply never consider trying to visit, email or call you.

- Simple dashboards and other visualizations help users to feel more in control and gain a better understanding of what it is exactly that they care about - from invoices paid to your product-specific information.
- Automatization. If your users make regular orders or payments, the application can remind them to make them again, or even automate some of the actions so that they can be performed without the user’s involvement.
- Cross selling. If you are making sales through your application, you will be collecting enough data to understand your client’s needs and preferences. Leverage this data to **offer them something extra.**
- Enable access to your product catalog and other useful information. **This way your clients can explore your offerings on their own terms, find what they need and order it straight away.**

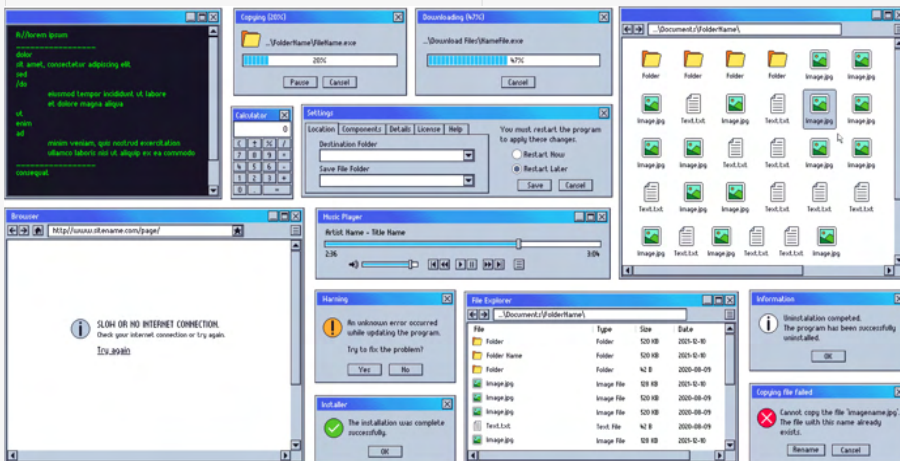
TIP 12. MAKE SURE YOUR APP IS SECURE AND RELIABLE

These are the basics, but sometimes they get forgotten. An application is harder to trust than human interactions, that’s why so often clients turn to real people they can talk to. And that’s why it’s not only essential that you ensure that your application is fully trustable, you also need to explain to your clients why they should trust it.

- Enable secure login.
- Explain how you utilize users data and what you don’t do with it (like sharing it with 3rd parties).
- Don’t send unrequested notifications and allow your users to turn them off.
- Have a system that allows you to flag irregular activities in your users’ accounts and have preventative measures in place to ensure their safety.

PROBLEM

Our app doesn't look innovative enough yet



“Out of 10 smartphone users have tried voice search at least once in 2018”

- Quadra creative

You know and have it all but you still don't think that's enough. Applications are developing fast and depending on your product or service there are plenty of other opportunities that will accelerate you past the obvious must-haves.

Our general advice is to always focus on your clients' needs and innovate with their experience in mind. That's the best way to make sure your users are happy and their happiness reflects in your business results. And here, the sky's the limit.

TIP 13. INSIDE THE APP ALSO MATTERS. EMBRACE THE BIG DATA

Your application produces loads of real-time data. Invest in advanced data analytics or machine learning to help you make this data work for your business.

- Forecast demand and plan resources
- Identify changes in user behavior to improve retention or upsell
- Learn about users to innovate and improve your products or services

TIP 14. MAKE USING YOUR APPLICATION INTUITIVE

If physical products are part of your offering, it's important that you keep in mind how any improvements in their performance or function can be reflected in your application. These days, it's very common for businesses to experiment with the internet of things by turning their products into devices and connecting them to the cloud. They provide their clients with applications that allow them to control these devices simply and remotely and give them access to data and added functionality.

- **Connecting your devices to your customers' smartphones enables them to access usage data quickly, and receive real time notifications about possible issues and necessary actions.**
- Give additional functionality to your products by enabling them to be controlled from mobile application.
- Deliver an extra security layer by keeping devices safe from children or unwanted users and by sending alerts to the connected application.

TIP 15. ADD A LAYER OF VIRTUAL REALITY

Another way to make your application truly innovative is to give users a touch of virtual reality.

- Show 3D visualizations of your products, allowing customers to interact with them by rotating, zooming or even viewing the product in their real-life environment.
- Create product demonstrations that allow for an actual real world experience.
- Power your online training modules by giving them elements of reality.
- Assist your clients in identifying their problems and sharing information on their issues with you.
- **For those clients who long for human contact – offer a virtual client service manager.**

Summary

If your application does not work, it is not the end of the world. Actually, in the most cases all of your current or potential problems can be easily solved by using some good practises, analytics and innovative technologies.

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