Zillow changes the face of online real estate with UserTesting

A successful housing and real estate company reduces their UX team’s workload while building a robust online presence for property seekers and industry professionals.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Headquarters: Seattle, WA  
Founded: 2005  
Industry: Technology  
URL: zillow.com

THE GOAL

Improve customer experience and increase conversions while maintaining a competitive edge.

THE RESULT

- 8% increase in conversion

UserTesting services used by Zillow

- Desktop testing  
- Mobile testing  
- Benchmarking  
- Research team support
Committed to creating great experiences

To ensure that their website visitors are able to find their dream home quickly and easily, the Zillow User Experience team focuses on a constant flow of website improvements and new features. Their team is responsible for directing the visual and functional experience of the Zillow website. Their process includes conceptual design and prototyping as well as testing and validating their ideas through research.

An expansive approach

In addition to hosting surveys on services like Foresee and SurveyMonkey, the Zillow team has an extensive arsenal of UX tools. They host their own in-person interviews and run video conferences with their target market to gather feedback on new features.

Zillow has come to rely on UserTesting to provide them with the insight they need to make informed decisions on how to solve their users' pain points, and improve both their mobile and full site experience.

Increasing team efficiency

With such an active project load, Zillow turned to UserTesting as a way to reduce the administrative burden of recruiting and managing their own testing panel. By doing this, they have been able to free up valuable time to work on additional business-critical projects while gaining the usability and user performance insights their team relies on to create an engaging user experience.
Prioritizing work and focusing energy

Over time, the Zillow team has found added value in UserTesting because it helps them build out their project roadmap. The feedback from UserTesting research efforts has uncovered a variety of experience issues and customer frustrations and that, in turn, has helped the company prioritize how they spend their money and resources. At one point, their team realized that slow loading pages were creating a highly dissatisfying experience, so they re-allocated their resources to improve their search page performance and responsiveness. By focusing on the highest priority projects that specifically addressed their users’ needs, they saw an increase in revenue and customer satisfaction.

“One of the things I appreciate most about UserTesting is that testers are in their own live environment, so you really get to see how people are actually using the web. It’s a good dose of reality.”

Hernan Savastano | V.P. of User Experience at Zillow.

Driving home the competitive advantage

As the housing industry continues to capitalize on new and emerging trends, Zillow has taken strategic measures to stay ahead of the curve. For several years, their team has invested in significant benchmarking studies in order to analyze their competitors’ web and mobile service offerings. Partnering with the UserTesting research team, they have implemented System Usability Scale (SUS) studies to gauge testers perception of usability. The metric-driven scoring system allows them ease-of-use insights for a variety of websites. This comparative benchmarking helps them gauge their success over time and measure their test participants’ satisfaction with their online experience.

“Benchmark studies help us understand where we stand against our competitors.”

— Savastano
When the Zillow team decided to redesign their search results experience, they were acutely aware of the possible negative impact to their revenue model. With important business revenue on the line, they gingerly tested the page’s map placement, advertising options and a reformat of their search results listings. “UserTesting feedback showed us the importance of maintaining geographic context for home shoppers triaging homes,” stated Savastano.

Feedback from their UserTesting panel revealed that people loved seeing the map and the list of available homes side by side, noting that the geographic context helped them make their decision to inquire on the listing. The results? Higher user engagement, which led to a lift in real estate agent contacts of up to 8%, and a positive boost in the company’s bottom line.
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About Zillow

Zillow is a home and real estate marketplace dedicated to helping homeowners, home buyers, sellers, renters, real estate agents, mortgage professionals, landlords and property managers find and share vital information about homes, real estate, mortgages and home improvement.

About UserTesting

UserTesting provides the fastest and most affordable web, desktop and mobile app testing in the market. Watch videos of your target market using your site and gain the insights you need to increase your organization’s customer retention, conversion, and profitability. Improve customer experience and boost your company’s success.