

Great! SCHOOLS

Headquarters: Oakland, CA

Founded: 1998

Industry: Consumer Technology

THE CHALLENGE

To better serve a diverse community of parents across the US.

THE SOLUTION

Quickly get insights from a more geographically and economically-diverse audience.

THE RESULT

The company adopted a mobile-first approach to better serve all families which also secured on-going funding for the nonprofit.

GreatSchools makes the grade by leveraging fast feedback to better serve parents

Fast customer feedback from people across the country provide valuable insight for the site's desktop and mobile experiences

The Challenge

GreatSchool's guiding principle is to provide the most accurate and helpful information about K-12 public schools for families. They provide important information about schools and allows parents to leave reviews of their child's experience. Parents rely on this information to help them choose the best possible school for their children.

In addition to adhering to the organization's guiding principles, GreatSchool's product team, led by Ji Kim, Lead Product Manager, knew they also had to meet the high expectations of consumers—people expected the same level of experience as the likes of Amazon or eBay—with less funding, time, and resources. Ji notes,

"We have challenges with resources as a nonprofit. That means that we have to do a lot of things with very little resources. We have to utilize our time, money, and our people really well."

As the platform continued to grow, the team noticed a pattern with the reviews left on the site—they were primarily condensed within a specific demographic and didn't reflect a representative sample of the parents in some of America's most diverse school districts. This prompted the team to question if parents from varying backgrounds and geographies were utilizing the site. To stay relevant and true to their mission, the team needed to find better ways to quickly understand the pain points of parents from a wide variety of regions and socioeconomic backgrounds across the US.

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- JI KIM,
LEAD PRODUCT MANAGER
AT GREATSCHOOLS

The Solution

Once Ji's team pinpointed the need to gain insights from a wider demographic, they turned to UserTesting to get quick feedback from parents across the US.

Because tests could be conducted quickly, anytime, anywhere, the team could now reach individuals all over the country at a fraction of the cost and time—saving up to \$80,000 in travel expenses per person alone. Ji said,

“Any product team, whether they're with a non-profit or a Fortune 500 company, needs to make decisions at the speed of the business. Having the ability to quickly iterate and reach multiple, diverse audiences simultaneously not only represented huge cost savings, but it also helped inform more accurate and relevant product decisions as we continued to improve the site.”

A key component to the success of the team's customer research was the diversity of the UserTesting panel. Ji adds,

“UserTesting helped us achieve something that was nearly impossible before. Once we had access to the UserTesting panel, we were able to connect with a diverse group of parents, more accurately representing our target audiences. One of our key goals is to provide all parents, regardless of where they live or how much they earn, helpful information they can use to choose the best possible school for their children. UserTesting enabled us to almost instantly reach those voices we were missing out on.”

The Outcome

Prior to integrating the UserTesting platform into their product development cycle, the company had a desktop-first design approach. However, after gathering insights from a more diverse population, Ji's team discovered that 50% of their target audience was using mobile as their primary method to access the site. This prompted the team to adopt a mobile-first approach to meet the needs of more of their target parents.

“We knew that we weren't reaching all parents that could utilize our site to find the best educational opportunities for their children. UserTesting enabled us to quickly connect with parents everywhere, anytime, across the country. Each iteration of the product was informed by the feedback of real people in our target markets—something we had no way of achieving before.”

GreatSchool's performance towards fulfilling their mission is regularly reviewed by a board of directors. Ji's team was particularly excited to showcase the changes his team made based on the insights gathered through the UserTesting platform.



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Ji adds,

“When we shared the redesigned site and showed how fast insights better informed our product decisions and enabled us to iterate and improve quickly, our board was really impressed—one of them even clapped! The UserTesting platform immediately proved to be a necessary and invaluable way for us to be useful to all parents.”

About GreatSchools

GreatSchools is the leading national nonprofit empowering parents to unlock educational opportunities for their children. The organization provides school information and parenting resources to help millions of American families choose the right school, support learning at home, and guide their children to great futures.

GreatSchool's guiding principle is to help provide the most accurate, helpful information about public schools for families of all backgrounds. They're also committed to helping other nonprofits replicate best practices, as everyone in the non-profit sector is working with less, but the communities they serve still deserve a great experience with their product.



HEADQUARTERS
690 5th Street,
San Francisco, CA 94107

CONTACT US
1-888-877-1882

ABOUT USERTESTING

UserTesting enables every organization to deliver the best customer experience powered by human insight. With UserTesting's on-demand Human Insight Platform, companies across industries make accurate customer-first decisions at every level, at the speed business demands. With UserTesting, product teams, marketers, digital and customer experience executives confidently and quickly create the right experiences for all target audiences, increasing brand loyalty and revenue. UserTesting has over 1,200 subscription customers including half of the world's top 100 brands, and has delivered human insights to over 35,000 companies to-date. Backed by Accel and OpenView, UserTesting is headquartered in San Francisco, CA. To learn more, visit www.usertesting.com