👤 CUSTOMER PROFILE

Headquarters: Pittsburgh, PA
Founded: 2002
Industry: B2C Technology

⊕ THE GOAL

To introduce user feedback through all stages of a website redesign

THE RESULT

Developed a deep understanding of personas, eliminated usability problems, and improved site features with the help of UserTesting

Niche redesigns and improves website with continuous user testing

School and neighborhood review website undergoes a user-centered redesign to engage users more effectively.

NICHE'S CHALLENGE

When it was time for Niche to embark on a redesign of their review website for schools, colleges, and neighborhoods, the team wanted to include user feedback in their process. In the past, they had run usability studies in a traditional, in-person usability lab. However, the process was so expensive and time-consuming that they could only do it once or twice a year.

Jennie Johnson, Director of Product at Niche, knew that they'd need user feedback much more frequently if they wanted to get their redesign right from the start. That's when she turned to UserTesting.

THE SOLUTION

The Niche team's first task with UserTesting was to evaluate the existing site to find areas of opportunity for improvement. They identified several key usability issues, such as a series of pages where users couldn't find the information they were seeking. However, the team didn't stop with basic usability testing. They also used their user tests to answer broader market research questions that would inform their redesign, such as, "What information is important to you in your college search?" and "What isn't here that you need?"

Johnson and her six-person team were pleased with how rapidly they could get feedback with UserTesting, allowing them to quickly incorporate their findings into their product. "One of the things we like about UserTesting is that we can do a lot of iterative testing on every single release, so that we can learn before we invest too much of our engineers' time," said Johnson. The team tested prototypes of their designs to validate and refine them before spending time on code.

They also used UserTesting in conjunction with A/B testing to get both qualitative and quantitative insights on what users were doing—and why. The insights they gathered from their user tests informed their A/B test ideas, and they ran additional user tests to gain a more complete understanding of the outcomes of their A/B tests.

The team ran user tests weekly and gathered on Friday afternoons to watch the videos together and discuss the results. Johnson said that this improved the team's approach to making decisions, "We have just so much more legitimacy behind our design choices when the entire team can see examples of what motivated them." Instead of relying on personal opinions or guesswork, they turned to the users to find out what was working and what was not.

THE RESULT

By running user tests every week, the team developed a deeper understanding of their user personas. They discovered that they'd originally designed a product for people like themselves. However, by watching real users interact with the site, they found that different people approached the product with different objectives. "People weren't using it badly; they were using it differently," said Johnson.

"We now have a much broader mindset about how different personas are going to approach it."

Most importantly, Johnson and her team now feel confident that every feature of their new site has been validated before they launch publicly. "No feature goes to the public without being scrutinized first. UserTesting has been a huge part of validation throughout development," said Johnson. She added that having the evidence of user feedback has made her team "infinitely more confident" in their redesign than they would have been otherwise.

She shared one final piece of advice for other companies looking to improve their digital products:

"Don't save UserTesting for special occasions. Make it a routine part of your week."

ABOUT NICHE

Niche is a website that helps you discover the schools and neighborhoods that are right for you. They rigorously analyze dozens of public data sets and millions of reviews to produce comprehensive rankings, report cards, and profiles for every K-12 school, college, and neighborhood in the U.S.

Learn more: **www.niche.com**

ABOUT USERTESTING

UserTesting is the fastest and most advanced user experience research platform on the market. We give marketers, product managers, and UX designers on-demand access to people in their target audience who deliver audio, video, and written feedback on websites, mobile apps, prototypes, and more.

Learn more: **www.usertesting.com**