

Channel Shift Case Study: #3 Effectively Communicating Merits of Digital Service to Users

Provided By: Driving Standards Agency

Sector: Central Government

Service: Driving Test Booking Service

The Service

Aimed at all learner drivers and currently handles about 220k transactions a month 96% being online with 4% via telephony. DSA data shows that users fall into three categories: (1) the candidates themselves; (2) driving instructors booking on behalf of their pupils; and (3) family or agents of the candidate making the booking on their behalf.

Data also shows that the age range is biased towards the 17-24 year olds, over 60% fall in this age group, but tests are booked by adults of all ages as well. DSA does not collect other demographic data on those booking driving tests.

What DSA Did:

Usability Testing

DSA conducted usability testing to *work out the benefits valued by their core user groups*. They then used this information to (1) tailor their messages to these groups and (2) to redesign the service. The usability testing also helped to identify features that candidates wanted from the digital services – such as information about the test centre, availability of time slots, booking confirmations, and being able to change bookings if required.

Example 1: The benefits of 'out of hours' access was stressed because many users are in full time education and driving instructors are at their busiest during late afternoon and evening periods therefore convenient access to online bookings is an important benefit to them.

Example 2: In designing and delivering the digital service, DSA took care to meet candidate needs:

- The service was designed from scratch to work with mobile devices as well as desktop/laptop computers

- Information is provided about test centres – location maps, opening times, transport links, etc
- Availability of time slots so that candidates can book the most convenient time for them
- Immediate confirmation of booking and ability to print out confirmation of booking
- Unique booking reference number making it easier to cancel or change a booking if required

Example 3: DSA uses exit surveys to ask customers about their user experience at the end of transactions. Questions asked can be (and are) changed to test specific aspects of the online service. DSA has introduced a continuous improvement programme (see lessons learnt) to make improvements to the service based on this customer feedback.

All future changes will be made in keeping with the principles in the Government Service Design Manual including user testing etc.

Working With Partners

DSA *works with delivery partners to ensure that they are aware of the benefits of using online services* and that they help to get information about their digital service into the publications / websites of organisations that its target users might go to for other reasons

Example 1: The Automobile Association (AA) provides information about driving tests on the AA website with *embedded links* to the DSA digital service. In this way, the AA makes it easier for their customers to book driving tests.

Providing information via digital and non-digital channels

DSA makes sure that correspondence (e.g. confirmation emails) promote the online service, including *embedded email links* to the relevant services. Also, wherever possible, when service users contact DSA (*whatever the channel used*) they are encouraged to provide email addresses and DSA will embed dedicated URL into the reply.

Communicating using jargon-free language

DSA checks that all the information about their services and guidance for using the service is set out in jargon-free language that users find comprehensible. This includes using GOV.UK guidance and user testing of all changes or new services.

Key Lessons Learnt:

The redesigned service led to an increase in take-up from 92.5% to 96% - representing a 45% reduction of the residual telephone transactions. Designing the service to enable delivery via mobile devices from the outset avoided the need to adapt the service later to allow access from mobiles – over 44% of visits are now via mobile devices.

Whilst a good communications strategy is important, it is no substitute for striving to deliver a service based on meeting user needs. Continuous customer feedback helps identify where improvements can be made so it is important to put in place a mechanism to maintain and further improve the service, DSA has, therefore, implemented a continuous improvements programme. This is a virtual team using DSA staff plus contracted resources (UX designer, developer, tester, and 'scrum master') led by a DSA Digital Service Manager that will deliver further incremental improvements to the service, via an Agile iterative process, based upon on-going feedback from users.