

Sojourn - The Path of Research

Problem Statement: We need a way to appeal to end users who are interested in exploring where they are living and finding hidden gems around their locations. The interface and the experience of the app as a game-like and interactive way to explore their local surroundings need to be sleek, attractive, desirable to use for its immersiveness and rewards system - because there's an opportunity to break through as a novel app and a general shift among the public towards experiences as a premium leisure activity.

We will know this to be true when we see users utilizing our app to discover their local hotspots (number of installs/reviews) and small business brand names become more of the local buzz.

Research Method #1: User surveys

User surveys would be wonderful in really discovering the demand for Sojourn. At this point, we don't know why there aren't a ton of apps like this. And I think that using these surveys to gauge peoples' interest levels in there being an app to do this would really allow us to see the demand, both among business owners and users. I think the beauty of surveys lies in the fact that people feel less human pressure because they can partake of it just through a couple quick clicks, and we can easily get quantifiable feedback on not only interest level, but also questions that deal with the details - like asking about content, what people would like to do and what kind of rewards users are interested in.

Research Method #2: User Interviews

I think that user interviews would allow us to gauge the actual emotions and attitudes that people have towards an app like this that would encourage them to go out and explore the different things around them. Is this something that they think would improve their day-to-day? What do they value and how do they want to spend their leisure time - ideally speaking? These interviews would provide us with an avenue into seeing real people, basing our project personas off of them, not losing out on aspects that can't be gathered through surveys alone. The likes and dislikes of real people, their schedules and contexts, it will lead us to see with more clarity who we're designing for and will give us direction as we build Sojourn.

Research Method #3: Diary Study

In psychology, these would be called longitudinal studies, studies that follow people over an extended period of time. I think this is a really cool way to gain insight into how users would use our product, both on the business end, as well as the user end. We could be more in touch with how they feel as they use it, the pain points, and the delights of certain features, I think this would be a really valuable research method, a little later on in the life cycle, where the product is functional, just so we can get detailed and live feedback from our users.

Conclusion:

I think that at every point of the process, there needs to be refinement that is discovered through user research. And because each research method is different both in quality and scope, it is necessary that we do use multiple different research methods. Different places in the timeline will call for different methods, and as always, the question of what it is that we want to measure is something super important, and depending on that, I think we'll need to employ the most suitable research method.