# Final Project: Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management

## Case study

An eCommerce company, Northwind Trading, has been operating successfully for the past four years. Sales have been steady through this time, with some small seasonal fluctuations. However, last month's sales figures showed a downward trend for the first time, and the company also noticed that several customers posted negative comments on social media about the online store.

Ali, the Northwind Trading website administrator, reported that the eCommerce website was redesigned a month ago. The redesign included implementing a new checkout process that now requires the customers to register before completing the sale. The registration was implemented because the marketing team needed to collect customer data for promotional purposes and to track purchase history. Ali has not noticed any technical issues with the website. Pages are loading slower than he would wish, however he expects that the performance will be dramatically improved once he has completed the optimization of all the product images.

According to the report completed by Sua, the sales manager, there aren't any obvious problems with the sales. However, Northwind Trading management believes that "it is better to be safe than to be sorry" and decide to investigate the situation before the sales problem gets any worse.

## Step 1: Problem identification

### DELIVERABLE 1: Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis and Recommendations

| Sales Statistics Comparison | TOTAL FEB | TOTAL MAR | Difference | % difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total sales value | $71,626.00 | $ 40,620.00 | $ (31,006.00) | -43% |
| Total number of website visits | 3,136 | 2811 | $ (325.00) | -10% |
| Total number of sales transactions | 477 | 302 | $ (175.00) | -37% |
| Average daily sales value | $2,558.07 | $ 1,450.71 | $ (1,107.36) | -43% |
| Average number of transactions per day | 17 | 11 | $ (6.21) | -37% |
| Average transaction value | $150.16 | $ 134.50 | $ (15.66) | -10% |

**Most common complaints:**

| Ref | Complaint type | Quantity | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Poor Website Design | 2 | 13% |
| | Limited Payment Options | 3 | 20% |
| | Confusing Checkout Process | 8 | 53% |
| | Other Technical Issues | 2 | 13% |

**Conclusion:**

March 2024 shows a 43% decrease in total sales value and 37% decrease in the number of sales transactions compared to February 2024. However, fluctuations within March indicate that there may be other factors contributing to the decline, rather than a consistent downward trend.

The March sales data shows a decline in both transactions and total sales value, despite a consistently high website traffic. It suggests that there is a problem affecting customer engagement and conversion rates, once they visit the website.

Further analysis of customer behavior, website performance, and external factors is necessary to identify the root cause of the decline in sales.

The customer complaints and social media comments provide qualitative evidence of user dissatisfaction and frustration with the website's functionality and design.

The most common complaints are related to:

- Confusing checkout process. Lack of guest checkout, customers required to register before completing their purchase.

- Limited payment options, only accepting credit cards.

- Poor website design, including inconsistent product grouping and poor product descriptions, leading to confusion and frustration.

- Technical issues such as slow loading times.

To prevent a further decline of sales it is paramount to improve the checkout process, add additional payment options e.g. PayPal, Apple Pay, Google Pay, improve product grouping, tagging and descriptions and resolve the issues with the page loading speed.

## DELIVERABLE 2: Root Cause Analysis Questions (Whys root-cause analysis method)

| | Questions |
|---|---|
| 1. | **Why are the sales down?** Because the customers are not happy with the new website design. |
| 2. | **Why are the customers not happy with the website design?** The checkout process is confusing and slow, limited payment options, only accepting credit cards, technical issues, such as slow loading times, navigation is confusing due to inconsistent product grouping. |
| 3. | **Why is the checkout confusing and slow and there are limited payment options?** The website requires customers to create an account before completing their purchase. There is no guest checkout, and for added security payment is only available using Paypal. |
| 4. | **Why does the website require customers to create an account?** Because the marketing department wants to gather customer data for marketing purposes and to track purchase history. |
| 5. | **Why does a marketing department want to gather customer data?** The company wants to gather customer data because they believe that having customer accounts will lead to increased customer retention and personalized marketing strategies. |
| 6. | **Why does the company prioritize gathering customer data over providing a smooth checkout experience?** Because they haven't conducted any market research to understand customer preferences and behaviours regarding checkout processes. |

**Root Cause Diagnosis:**

The root cause of the problem is the marketing department's decision to redesign the website without conducting market research to understand customer preferences and behaviors regarding the checkout process and payment methods. The best course of action would be to redesign the checkout process once again, taking into consideration the customers' complaints.

| User role | Role description | Concerns/Requirements |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Customers | Individuals browsing and purchasing products | They want to have quick and easy navigation, logical grouping of products, multiple payment options, simplified checkout process with a guest checkout option (no data or minimal data collected at checkout). They are also concerned with secure payment processing and protection of their personal information. |
| Website Administrator | Website administrator responsible for managing and updating the website (product listing, pricing, promotion) and maintaining customer accounts | Website Admin wants easy-to-use tools for updating product listings, images, pricing, and promotional banners. Also wants features allowing for easy management of user accounts, permissions, and access levels, features for implementing security protocols, managing SSL certificates, and protecting against cyber threats. Of interest are also features for monitoring and optimizing website performance. backup and recovery solutions. |
| Sales Manager | The sales manager oversees sales operations and strategies, including monitoring sales performance, and optimizing sales processes to achieve revenue targets. | Access to sales data and analytics tools for tracking sales performance, identifying trends, and making data-driven decisions. Tools for managing leads, tracking customer interactions, and nurturing leads through the sales funnel. may need integration with customer relationship management (CRM). |
| Marketing Team | Responsible for creating and implementing marketing campaigns to drive traffic and sales. | The marketing team needs tools for managing website content, creating landing pages, and publishing blog posts, articles, and other promotional content. Analytics tools for tracking the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, monitoring website traffic, and measuring conversion rates. integration with social media platforms. tools for improving conversion rates through data-driven experimentation. |
| Customer Representatives | Handling inquiries, complaints, and providing assistance to customers. | Customer service representatives need communication tools for interacting with customers via live chat, email, phone, or social media to address inquiries and resolve issues promptly. Representatives need a ticketing system for managing customer inquiries, assigning tasks, and tracking resolution times to ensure timely and efficient customer support. |
| Web Development Team/ IT | Responsible for website development, maintenance, and troubleshooting technical issues. | Developers require access to development and testing environments for building and deploying website updates, plugins, and custom features. |

This analysis will be used by the Northwind Traders IT team to better understand website user needs, prioritize website improvements, design user interfaces and validate website redesign objectives.

To summarize, user role analysis is a valuable tool for project teams to ensure that the products, services, or systems they develop are designed with the end-users in mind. By understanding the roles, responsibilities, and needs of different user groups, project teams can create solutions that are intuitive, efficient, and effective in meeting user needs and achieving project objectives.

## DELIVERABLE 4 - Stakeholders Analysis and Mapping.

| Stakeholder | Project Responsibility | Interest/Concerns | Influence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northwind Management | Overall strategic Direction, decision-making, project budget, approval of project plan. | Normally their interest in a website project would be low as they are responsible for the overall strategic direction of the company. However they are concerned about the company's financial performance and reputation, so this project is on their radar – High Interest. | High influence as they have the authority to allocate resources, approve budgets, and make strategic decisions regarding the project. |
| Marketing Manager | Oversees marketing efforts, including website design and promotional campaigns.<br><br>Monitors social media accounts. | High interest as they are responsible for marketing efforts, including website redesign and promotional campaigns. They are concerned about improving customer engagement, driving traffic to the website, and increasing sales. | High influence over website design and project success as they provide valuable insights into customer preferences and market trends. The marketing manager might be reluctant to re-design the checkout process as he will be losing valuable customer data. |
| Sales Manager | Oversees website sales | High interest as they are concerned about the impact of the project on sales performance and revenue generation. | High influence as they can provide input on customer preferences and drive website improvements. |
| Customer Service Team | Deals directly with customer inquiries and complaints related to the website. Provides sales support. | High interest as they deal directly with customer inquiries, complaints, and feedback related to the website. They are concerned about providing excellent customer service and addressing customer issues promptly. | Although they have firsthand knowledge of customer pain points and usability issues with the website, their influence over website design may not be very high. |
| IT Department | Involved in website development, | High interest as they are responsible for website | High influence as they are responsible for implementing |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | maintenance, and technical support. | development, maintenance, and technical support. They are concerned about the website's performance, security, and functionality. | website changes and resolving technical issues. |
| Website Administrator | Responsible for managing and updating the website content (e.g. product listing, pricing) and maintaining customer accounts. | High interest in website design as they are directly responsible for updating the website. Provides insights into website performance. | Low influence as they only have control over website content. |
| Suppliers | Responsible for supplying products. May be impacted indirectly as depending how products are described and grouped on the website, it may impact the sales of these products. However, in this case the impact is negligible and you could omit this stakeholder from further analysis | May have some interest in website design, but it will be low. | Low Influence over website design. |
| Business Analyst – Project Manager | Responsible for leading and managing the website improvement project, running workshops, and ensuring project success within budget and timeline constraints. | Has a high interest in the project's success because they are responsible for gathering requirements, conducting stakeholder analysis, analysing business needs, and ensuring that the project meets its objectives. | High Influence - Plays a central role in driving project success through effective analysis, planning, and stakeholder management. |
| Customers | Directly impacted by the usability and functionality of the online store. | High interest as they are the end-users of the website and directly impacted by its usability and functionality. They are concerned about finding products easily, navigating the website smoothly, and completing transactions hassle-free. Also concerned about payment security and personal data privacy. | Low influence individually, but collectively high as their feedback and behaviour shape the design and ultimately success of the project. |

Stakeholder analysis is a critical process in project management that involves identifying, assessing, and managing stakeholders' interests, involvement, and influence on a project.

It is used to identify all individuals, groups or organizations that may be impacted by the project, understanding their interests and influence over the project outcomes, and allocating the resources to manage stakeholder expectations, engagement and communications.

Stakeholder mapping is also a useful tool for mitigating project risks related to stakeholder's resistance to change.

In this scenario, stakeholder mapping was used to carefully manage conflicting needs of the stakeholders - a Sales Manager (who was predominantly interested in growing sales), with the needs of a Marketing Manager who wanted to collect as much data as possible about the clients to improve effectiveness of the marketing team.

As both the Sales Manager and the Marketing Managers had significant influence over the project outcome, their expectations and communications needed to be carefully managed.

## POWER - INTEREST GRID

| Low Interest – High Influence | High Interest- High Influence<br>• Customers<br>• Northwind Management<br>• Business Analyst – Project Manager<br>• IT Department<br>• Sales Manager<br>• Marketing Manager |
|---|---|
| Low Interest – Low Influence<br><br>• Suppliers | High Interest – Low Influence<br><br>• Website Administrator<br>• Customer Service Team |

# DELIVERABLE 5 - RACI MATRIX

| | Project Task | Northwind Management | Marketing Manager | Sales Manager | Website Administrator | IT Department | Customer Service Team | Customers | Business Analyst – Project Manager |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Identify website issues (survey, focus groups, quantitative and qualitative analysis) | I | R | R | R | I | R | C | A/R |
| 2 | Requirements analysis, prioritization and User stories | C | C | C | C | I | C | | A/R |
| 3 | Checkout process re-design (workshops) | I | R | R | R | R | R | | A/R |
| 4 | Usability testing | I | C | R | I | I | I | C | A/R |
| 5 | Development of the new checkout and website re-design | I | I | I | I | A/R | I | | C |
| 6 | Website launch | I | I | I | I | R | I | I | A |
| 7 | Monitor website performance and user feedback | I | R | A/R | R | I | R | | I |
| 8 | Provide customer support and assistance | I | I | I | I | | A/R | | I |
| 9 | Review and analyze sales data and customer feedback | I | R | R | C | C | C | | A/R |
| 10 | Evaluate the effectiveness of implemented changes | I | C | C | C | C | C | | A/R |

The purpose of completing a RACI matrix in this scenario was to clarify roles and responsibilities for each task and prevent ambiguity as to who is supposed to do what.

Here is a sample allocation of the tasks. To avoid confusion, it was important to make sure that Accountability for a task was allocated to only one person. While the responsibility for completing the task can be shared by several people, the accountability for the task completion shouldn't really be shared.