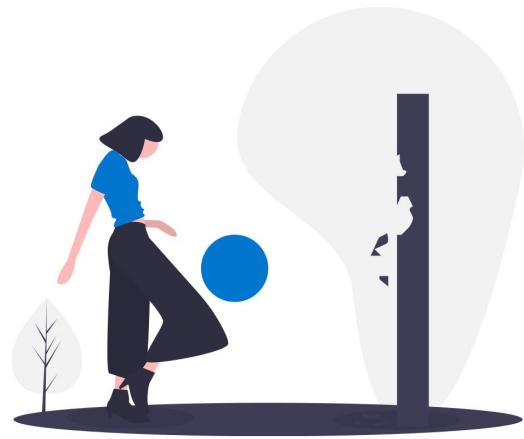


What bootcamps don't teach you about UX Research

Jiaorui Jiang | Senior UX Researcher @ Dell Technologies
(jyow-ray)

Who is this talk for?



Career Switchers

You might already have these skills from your previous career. You'll learn why these skills are important and how you should highlight them.



Students

You will be learning about skills you may not know were important for a UX Researcher to have. You should start developing them now.

My path



BA, Psychology



MS, Human Factors in Information Design



UXR Internship (healthcare startup)



What you learn from schools and bootcamps...

Research Methods

- Usability testing
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Contextual Inquiries
- Card sorting
- Affinity mapping
- ...

Research Tools

- UserTesting
- UserZoom
- Qualtrics
- Optimal Workshop
- EnjoyHQ
- Dovetail
- ...

What you learn from schools and bootcamps...



What you need to know as a researcher...



What you need to know as a researcher

Research communication + Research execution

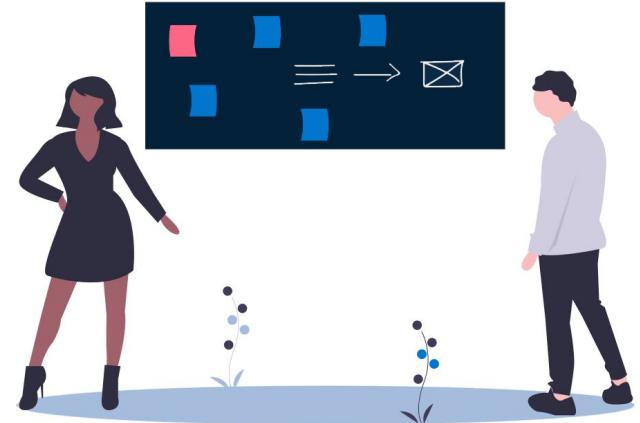
Making sure the right research is done



Conducting research and analyzing data



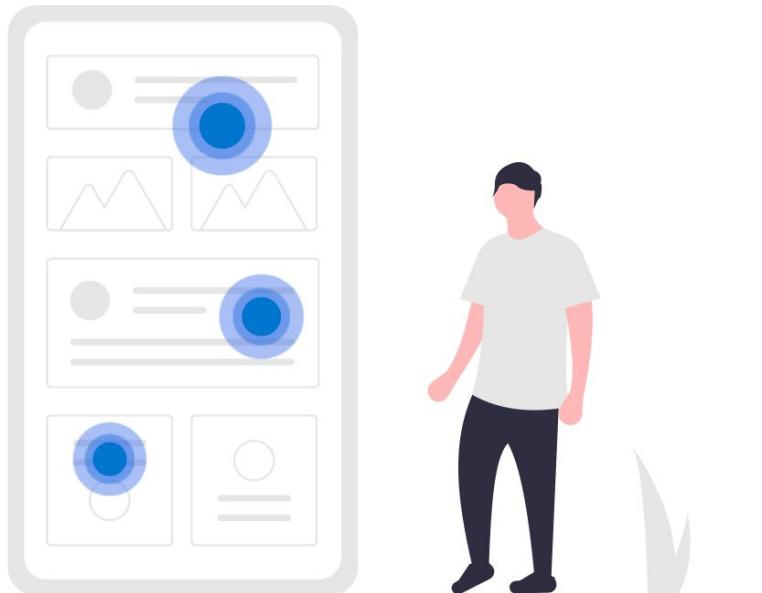
Making sure research has impact





**Before research is even
conducted...**

You might get a research request like this...



“People are not buying things from our website. I think we should build an app. Can you go test this design?”

You might start to plan...

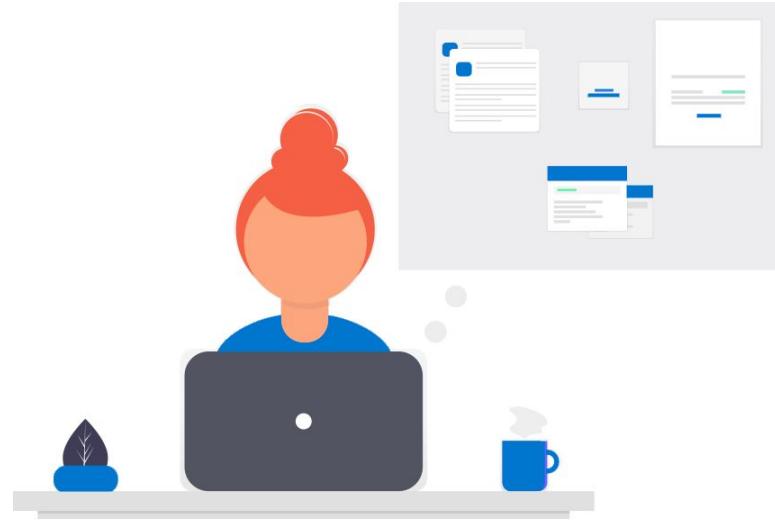
30 min usability study

Recruit 8-10 users

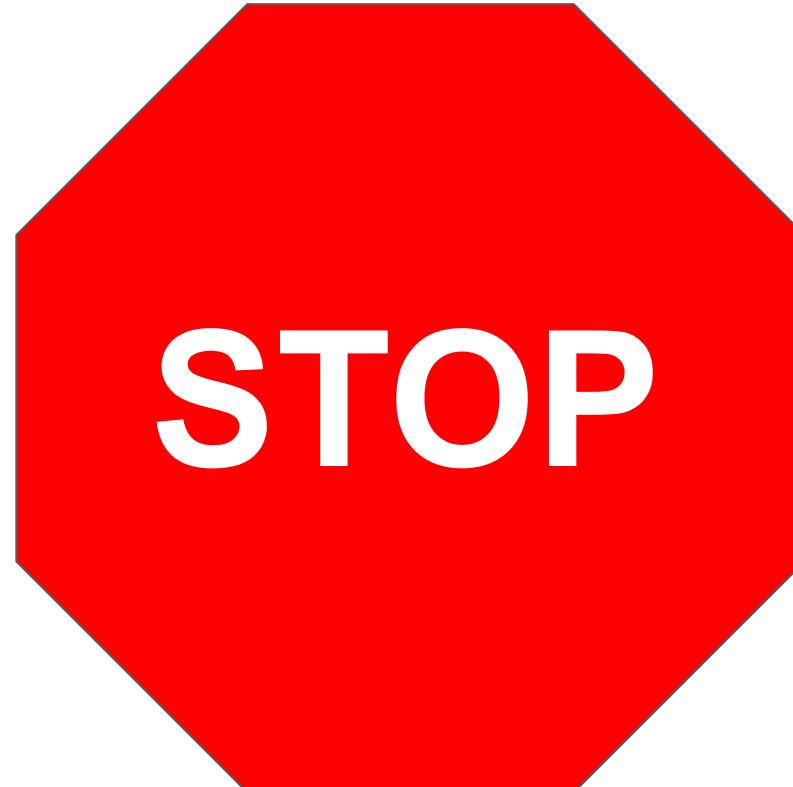
5 Tasks

SUS scores, success rates, lostness

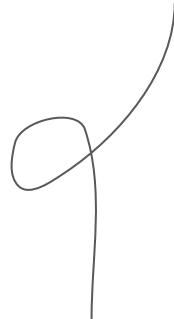
...



But are you doing the right research?

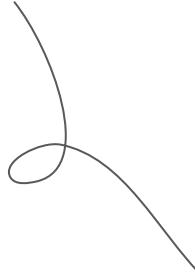


*“People are not buying things from our website. I think we
should build an app. Can you go test this design?”*



**“If we build an app, then more people will be buying our
products.”**

“People are not buying things from our website. I think we should build an app. Can you go test this design?”



“I already decided on a solution before the problem has been fully identified. I’ve come up with a design and I need you to prove that I’m right.”



“People are not buying things from our website. I think we should build an app. Can you go test this design?”

This is the ACTUAL problem we are trying to solve. To find the right solution, the researcher needs to find out what is causing the problem.

Common problems to solve

Understanding people, current experiences, problems

- Who are my customers (how do they think, feel, behave, what motivates them)
- How can we improve XYZ (faster, better, more intuitive)
- Why did this metric go up or down (what's going on)

Finding the right solution to the problem

- What should we build?
- Are we building the right thing?
- Are we building the thing right? (Are we taking the right approach)
- Should we implement this feature? (pros/cons)
- Do they understand this (how do they interpret it, does it make sense)

Identifying the appropriate method

Finding the right questions to ask

Why are people not buying stuff?

“Are people interested in the stuff we sell?”

“How are people accessing our website?”

“Where do people drop off in the purchasing process?”



Identifying the appropriate method

Finding the right questions to ask

Why are people not buying stuff?

“Are people interested in the stuff we sell?”

“How are people accessing our website?”

“Where do people drop off in the purchasing process?”

“What do users come to the website to do?”

“How do they make a purchase decision?”

“What prompts the users to leave?”



Making sure the right research is done

Managing stakeholder expectations: why it needs to be done, how it benefits them

Understanding the real question(s) behind the request

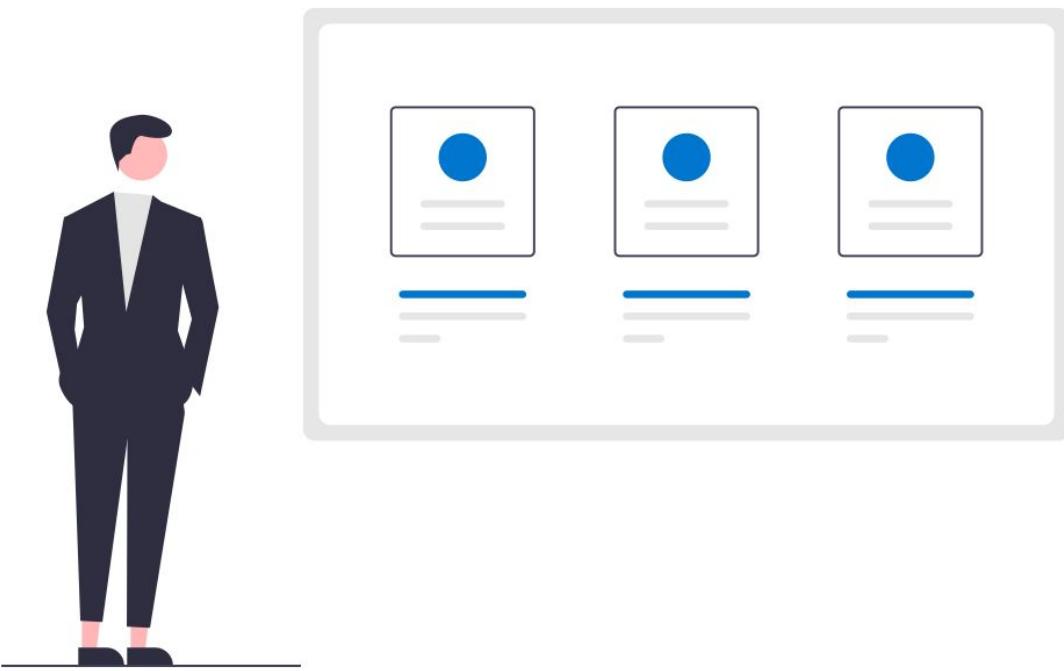
- Stakeholders may not realize they are coming to you with solutions/assumptions
- As a researcher, you need to be able to reorient your stakeholders and convince them the right research needs to be done

Choosing the right method

- As a researcher, you should be able to select the most appropriate method for a study
- Method selection is dependent on the questions being asked

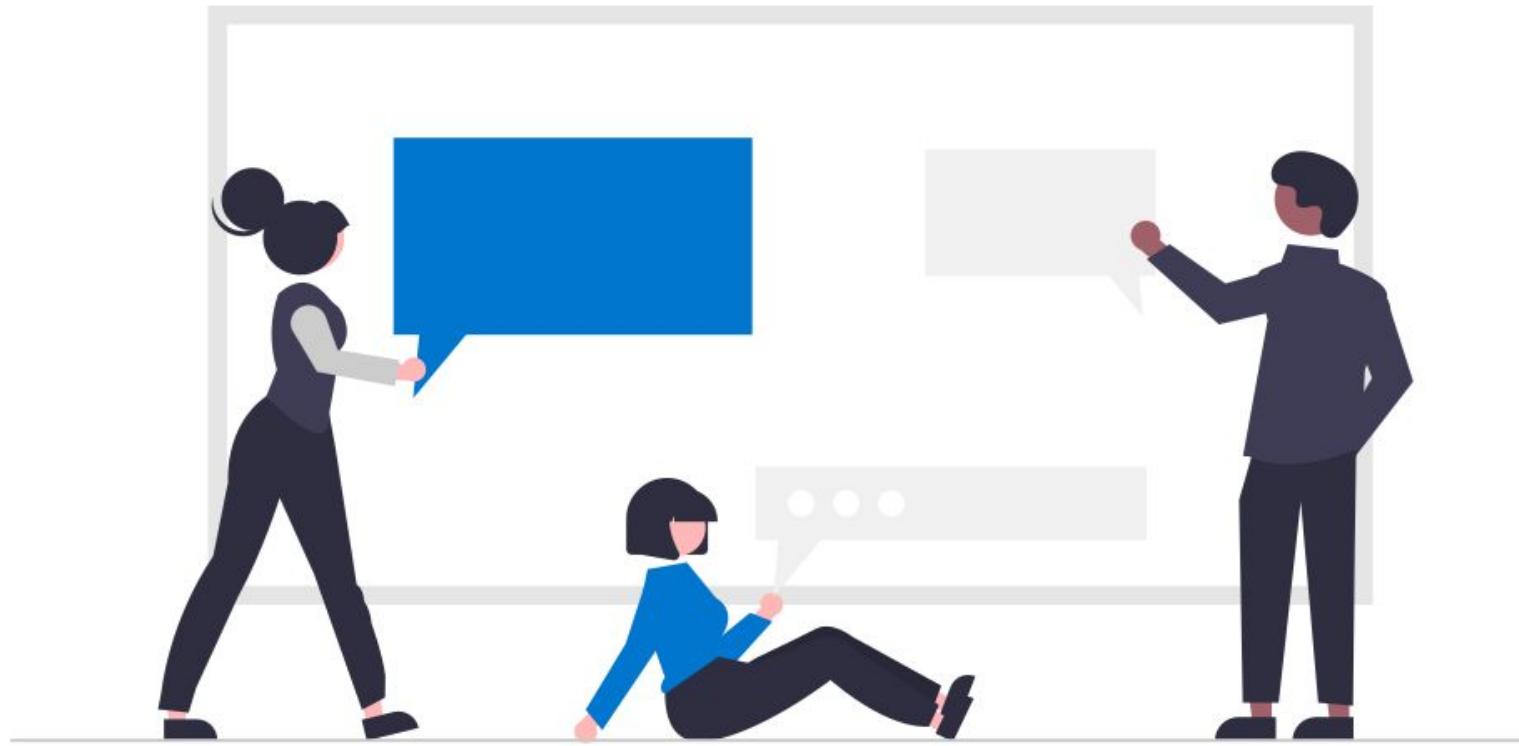
**After the research has
been conducted and
data has been
analyzed...**

You might present your findings...

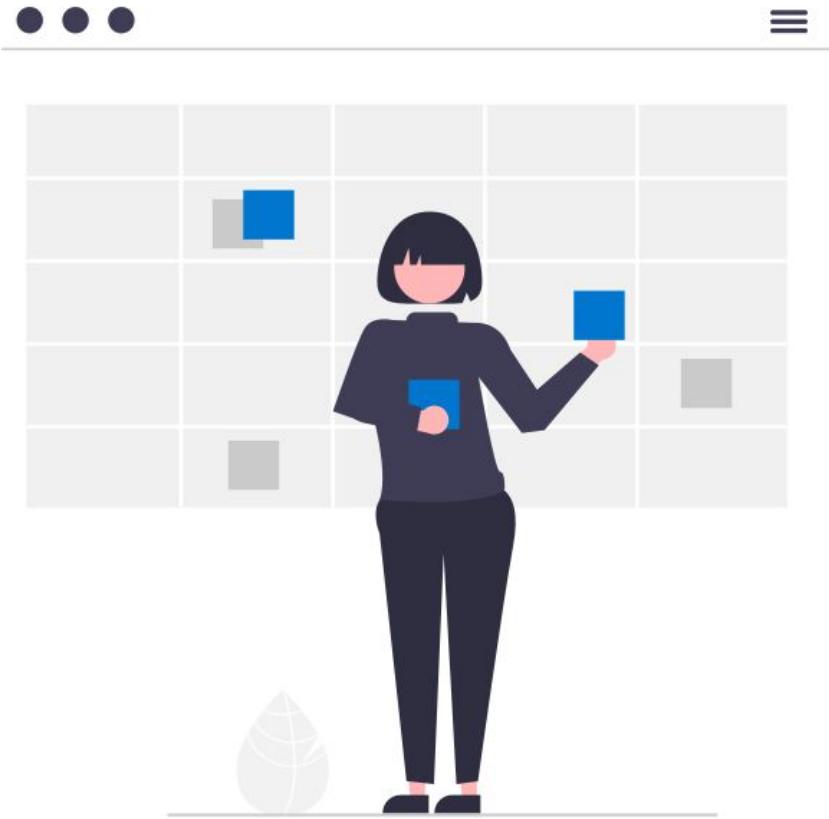


*“Great job! Really interesting
findings.”*

But are changes actually happening?



*Different types of insights
require different types of
communication.*



Users can't check their order status without an account created.

User Needs:

- Ability to check on status of the order with an order number
- Ability to track order once it's shipped
- Ability to create an account after order placement

Solution:

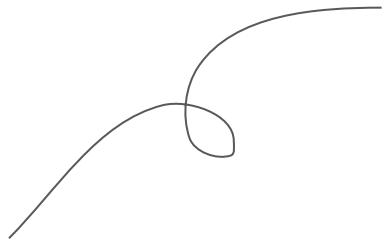
- Make sure customers receive order confirmation email with the order number
- Make sure order updates are sent
- Allow account creation from order confirmation emails

Users can't check their order status without an account created.

Straightforward

Actionable by product team

Solutions can be implemented quickly



Solution:

- Make sure customers receive order confirmation email with the order number
- Make sure order updates are sent
- Allow account creation from order confirmation emails

Users are overwhelmed by all the emails sent by the company.

User Needs:

- Only get emails that are relevant to them
 - Order emails and updates
 - Discounts for the items they are interested in
 - ...

Solution:

- Coordination among different departments
- Consolidate tools used for automated emails
- Standardize communication guidelines across the company

Users are overwhelmed by all the emails sent by the company.

Conflicts with existing agenda

Requires buy-in from multiple teams

Legacy problem would take a while to solve

Solution:

- Coordination among different departments
- Consolidate tools used for automated emails
- Standardize communication guidelines across the company

Making sure research has impact

Be strategic about how you communicate

- **Find the appropriate audience at the appropriate time**
 - Your research may be relevant beyond your immediate product team
 - Be prepared for your insights to conflict with someone else's agenda
 - Your research may be more helpful for a later strategic conversation, but now is not the time
- **Get people invested in what you are trying to say**
 - Risk of not changing/What do they stand to gain
- **Effective communication**
 - Understand how people digest information
 - Right level of information for different audience: Facts -> Data -> Insights
 - Provide concrete paths to move forward

What types of impact can you have with research?

Tactical

- Feature improvements
- Product improvements
- ...

Strategic

- Product strategy/direction
- Cross-product consistency
- Reduce duplicate work by UX/engineering teams
- Improvements in employee experience (support, services, sales, etc.)
- Visibility of UX in the organization
- ...

What you need to know as a researcher

Research communication + Research execution - You may already have these skills!

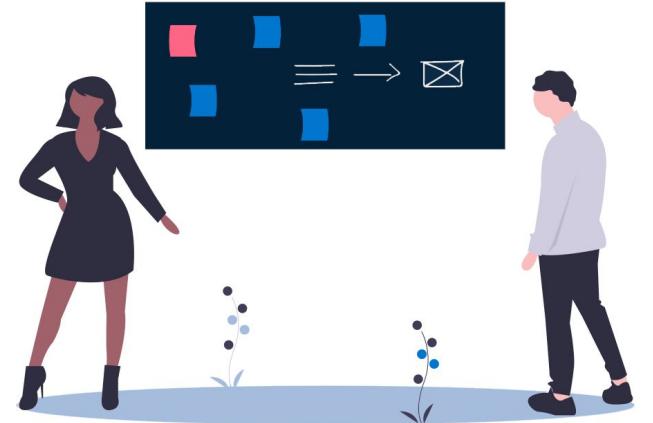
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You are more than a “bootcamp grad”

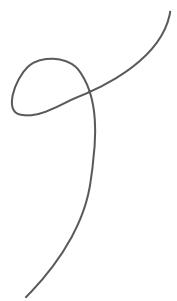
Leverage and contextualize your previous experiences



Storytelling is a crucial skill in UX.

How do you showcase that skill if you can't even tell a good story about yourself and your own experiences?

Your portfolio is NOT a list of things you did



“I did surveys...then I did interviews...then I did usability tests...then I did card sorting...”

I have used all of these research methods

Research Portfolio Project Structure

Applies to student projects AND projects under NDA

- What was the problem?
- What did you do to identify the root cause of the problem?
 - **Process**
 - **Rationale for decision**
- Challenges you faced and how did you overcome them
- Brief results (your audience is NOT your project stakeholder!)
- **Impact**

Thank You!

Special thanks to Natashia Tjandra, Maggie Qian, Caleb George

