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Introduction

Project Overview

We achieved a 30% improvement in product discovery and buyflow through the design and rollout of a Global Search feature for Apptium's Cloud Commerce Platform. The new search empowered resellers to find products, customers, and orders faster, directly improving sales velocity and operational efficiency.

Goals

The primary goal was to improve resource and product findability within the platform to enhance the reseller experience and create a seamless purchase flow.

- Role: Product Designer
- Tools: Figma, Google Analytics, UserTesting, Miro

Project Overview

Project Context

Apptium's Cloud Commerce platform enables resellers to manage, purchase, and sell cloud products to end customers. Despite offering comprehensive tools, users struggled to find specific resources, especially as the product catalog and order volume grew. The absence of a Global Search capability fragmented workflows, leading to frustration and drop-offs.

Problem Statement

How might we help resellers quickly find products, orders, and customer details without friction, enhancing their ability to manage cloud business operations efficiently?

Project Scope

The scope covered:

- ✓ Designing an intuitive Global Search experience across major modules (Products, Orders, Customers)
- ✓ Ensuring progressive disclosure for deep results
- ✓ Validating usability through beta testing
- ✓ Rolling out improvements based on user feedback

Constraints included tight timelines for regional launches and the need to align with existing platform architecture.

Design Process

Design Methodology

We followed a hypothesis-driven, iterative design approach, combining qualitative feedback with quantitative data to validate solutions.

Key Decisions

- Users preferred seeing more immediate, relevant results upfront
- Autocomplete and suggestion features significantly reduced search effort
- A blended approach of conventional patterns and innovative elements created familiarity while improving efficiency

Tools & Techniques

- Google Analytics: Identifying user drop-off points and search behavior gaps
- User Interviews: Gathering pain points and expectations
- Wireframes & Prototypes: Testing low to high-fidelity designs iteratively

Discovery Stage

Research Methodology

We conducted mixed-method research:

- Quantitative: Platform usage data, search behavior patterns
- Qualitative: User interviews and feedback sessions with resellers across Asia-Pacific

Participants

- 15 active resellers
- Mix of new and experienced platform users
- Regions: Primarily APAC (pilot group), reflecting a diversity of workflows

Data Collection

- Search term logs
- Time-to-completion metrics for key tasks
- User journey mapping sessions

Key Insights

- ✓ 30% of users instinctively look for a search bar upon login
- ✓ Lack of search led to time-consuming navigation and task abandonment
- ✓ Users struggled to filter or locate precise resources, especially with growing catalogs

Synthesis

We synthesized data into opportunity areas using affinity mapping:

- High demand for cross-module, unified search
- Expectation for smart suggestions based on history and relevance
- Need for in-context filters to refine results dynamically

![Image placeholder for research synthesis visuals, affinity maps, user personas]

Define Stage

Problem Definition

The absence of Global Search paralyzed users, especially when product catalogs scaled. Resellers lacked efficient tools to locate key resources, impacting their ability to manage transactions and grow their businesses.

User Needs & Goals

- Quickly locate products, orders, and customer information
- See relevant suggestions based on past behavior
- Refine searches with minimal effort using dynamic filters

Hypotheses

HMW 1: Implementing a tabbed Global Search with progressive disclosure will help users explore all major modules efficiently.

HMW 2: Showing the most common, high-relevance results upfront enhances comprehension and drives faster task completion.

Validation & Testing

We tested two prototypes with APAC resellers:

- Version 1: Full tab-based structure with deep drill-down options
- Version 2: Focused on top, frequently-used suggestions upfront

Outcome:

- Mixed feedback on Version 1; users found deep results but needed extra clicks
- Version 2 performed better; users valued immediate, contextual suggestions

What Worked Well

- ✓ Indexed Autocomplete Suggestions: Reduced search time by surfacing top 3 personalized suggestions based on history and search keys
- ✓ Dynamic Filters: Enabled users to narrow results rapidly within the search dropdown

Challenges

- Over-Invested in the complexity of Version 1, assuming deep drill-down would be the preferred experience
- Early filter placement inside dropdowns confused users (violating Miller's Law—cognitive overload)

Design Highlights

Module Search & Filter Evolution

We balanced conventional search patterns with dynamic innovations to meet both familiarity and efficiency needs.

Dilemma:

Innovate radically or evolve trusted conventions?

User Testing Results:

- Initial filters inside dropdown created cognitive overload
- Users struggled with first-time discoverability of filters
- Moving to simplified tags and external filters improved usability
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![Image placeholder for wireframes, before/after comparisons, UI iterations]

Lessons Learned

Key Takeaways

- Users clearly express pain points—listening closely simplifies design choices
- Search is not only functional but deeply tied to user trust and platform adoption
- Progressive disclosure works when balanced with immediate, high-value suggestions

Challenges

- Overcomplicating early iterations with heavy drill-down features
- Balancing innovation with user comfort zones requires disciplined iteration

Impact of the Project

- 30% improvement in product discovery time
- Reduced search-related support tickets
- Faster buyflow for resellers, leading to improved satisfaction metrics

Next Steps

- Explore AI-driven suggestions based on contextual usage patterns
- Continuous A/B testing to refine result ranking algorithms

Final Reflection

Designing the Global Search taught me the critical role of search in building user confidence and platform efficiency. By blending user feedback, behavioral data, and iterative testing, we created a solution that meaningfully improved discovery and purchase flows for cloud resellers.