User Research: Show Hiring Managers You Understand Users

User empathy trumps visual flair. Above all, you have to show hiring managers that you understand users and you know how to go about understanding them. This skill is a non-negotiable for UX design and essential to demonstrate in your portfolio.

In this step-by-step guide and worksheet, you'll learn how to write about user research so it feels purposeful, comprehensive and well-executed. Follow this framework and your user research sections will address every hiring manager's expectations.

How to Write About User Research
Catch the Eye of Hiring Managers and Recruiters

1. Define Your Objective

Question: Why did you conduct this research? What problem were you aiming to address?

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2. Research Methods

Question: What methods did you use to gather data and why?

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3. Synthesize Your Insights

Question: What conclusions did you draw from your data and how they informed the design challenge? What patterns or key themes emerged?

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4. Application of Research to Design Decisions

Question: How did your findings influence the design process? Demonstrate how your findings influenced the design process. Link specific insights to your design choices.

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5. Reflect

Question: What did you learn from the research process? How did it impact the project's outcome? What might you do differently in the future?

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How to Write About User Research
Catch the Eye of Hiring Managers and Recruiters

1. Define Your Objective

Question: Why did you conduct this research? What problem were you aiming to address?

The objective of this research was to understand the pain points users faced while navigating the current checkout process on an e-commerce website. The business goal was to decrease abandoned baskets by at least 15%.

2. Research Methods

Question: What methods did you use to gather data and why?

We used a combination of user interviews, surveys, and usability tests. User interviews provided in-depth insights into individual experiences, surveys helped gather quantitative data from a larger audience, and usability tests allowed us to observe real-time user interactions with the checkout process.

3. Synthesize Your Insights

Question: What conclusions did you draw from your data and how they informed the design challenge? What patterns or key themes emerged?

Our research revealed three key pain points: users found the checkout process too lengthy, they were confused by unclear instructions, and many encountered issues with payment options. These insights were critical in informing the redesign of the checkout flow.

4. Application of Research to Design Decisions

Question: How did your findings influence the design process? Demonstrate how your findings influenced the design process. Link specific insights to your design choices.

Based on the findings, we simplified the checkout process into three clear steps, improved the instructional text for better clarity, and added more payment options to accommodate different user preferences, making sure they all function properly. Each of these changes directly addressed the pain points identified during the research phase.

5. Reflect

Question: What did you learn from the research process? How did it impact the project's outcome? What might you do differently in the future?

The research results underscored the importance of user feedback in identifying critical issues. The iterative testing and continuous user involvement led to a 22% decrease in abandoned baskets post-implementation. In future projects, I would start usability testing earlier to catch issues sooner, as it is obvious how big of an impact it can have on the business.

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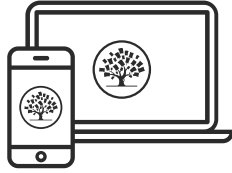
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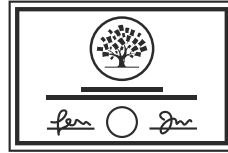
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