Thrive user Portal: Step 2.

1) Competitor Analysis:

Thrive is a new personal development tool for business professionals in the corporate space. Thrive helps business professionals gain insight into how cognitive biases impacts their decisions. Thrive competes with organizations like Gallup, Towers Watson and Myers Briggs to name but a few companies that have models and/or tools to help develop the human element in strategic business.

Thrive’s competitors do not have user portals that allow the user to log into their profile and view their data from their interaction with a personal development tool or psychological model (one of Thrive’s competitive advantages). Therefore I broadened my competitor analysis to a few interfaces in the quantified self industry that are more applied in the use of user portals. These Interfaces are designed specifically to feedback information to the user that accumulated that information over any given time period. The are especially well versed in making that information attractive, intuitive and interesting to review. I reviewed Fitbit, Jawbone’s Up and myfitnesspal application interfaces.

I found many similarities and some differences between the interfaces of the above mentioned products. Generally all three interfaces did a very good job of communicating the most important and relevant information on their home screens. Myfitnesspal did so by communicating how many calories you have left to consume on a given day and how many you have consumed already. Keeping all of the user’s focus on calories, I think this is valuable because it achieves the goal of instantly and simply informing the user about their exact calorie intake and outtake and that is exactly the purpose of the app (keeping fit through food logging). At the bottom of their screens is a horizontal menu, that gives you easy access to other important information that you might have accumulated through your interaction with the application. This is nice as it keeps the attention of the user on the calories but with the option to investigate more information should the user so choose (these options are secondary in priority). One of the menu buttons is labeled “more” and it functions as a neat closet where users can find even more information, generally information that they might not use everyday neatly sorted in a vertical menu. This helps simplify the number of options available to the user per screen- and keeps clarity and context on the different parts of staying healthy that is most important. The Interface also uses some smart design to make the app more intuitive, for instance the plus sign in the middle of the bottom menu is large and blue (while the rest of the application is grey- apart from the calorie counter at the top.). Your eyes move from the top of the screen where you have your calorie counter straight down to the big blue plus sign that is centered on the bottom of the screen (contrast between the blue and the grey allows you to make that journey smoothly, big and centered makes it stand out even more). This is important because the plus sign is where you add your calories as you consume them (making it the most crucial part of the entire application- without this function the app doesn’t exist). Overall I think the Interface has an intuitive layout that makes sense. (See Appendix for screens)

Fitbit has a similar approach in their interface. They also make use of a nice horizontal menu at the bottom of their screens. The focus on the home screen is your activity which shows you the summary of how many steps you have taken and how many calories you’ve burned. From here you can choose to either scroll down and see the summaries of your food and water intake as well or you could hit the activity button on the
bottom of the screen to access a more detailed version of your activity. The “more” option in the menu, similar to myfitnesspal, gives you access to more information without crowding the current screen. Design wise I think Fitbit uses color effectively as a way for you to help structure and sort the different pages. Each link has a different color associated with it. For instance I have only been interacting with the page for a short while when I noticed that I was aware of the fact that the red screen is my activity screen and the green screen is my food screen. They do this in a way that is not overwhelming, but I think you need to be careful as I have seen examples of where too many different colors can get distracting. In Fitbit’s case the color makes these screens a little more fun than the screens on myfitnesspal- however the deep blue in myfitnesspal and the grey communicated stability to me (which is something you need when trying to eat right). (See Appendix for Screens)

Jawbone’s interface differs from the other two by not having a horizontal menu at the bottom. Instead Jawbone uses a 3 horizontal line icon as a metaphor for a menu in the top left of the screen. If you hit it, it opens a vertical drop down menu from the side. Other than this icon in the top left corner, the entire home screen is occupied with 2 colorful bars that is sensitive to your activity (really emphasizing the core use of the interface in a fun yet informative way, even though it is just a summary). Each bar visually shows you how many steps you have taken or how many hours you have slept (you know how you are doing without even looking at any numbers). Each bar functions as a link to more information about that activity, this more in depth screen does a wonderful job in displaying a lot of information in an exciting and aesthetic way without being overwhelming. Jawbone does a great job on visually demonstrating information to the user. I really like Jawbone’s approach, however, the menu icon in the top left is not really very apparent and if you don’t know that it is there you might get annoyed looking for more information. The lack in defined structure might cause the user to have to play around with the app once or twice before understanding the intuitive nature of it. This is different from the other two interface layouts that have more clear cut boxes and buttons to click. (See Appendix for Screens)

Overall all three interfaces had a theme that was consistent and did a good job using color and metaphors to convey information with explicitly having to word it out (i.e. the bars in Jawbone’ up that corresponded to how many steps you have taken or hours you have slept).

2) Audience Specifics

I have been fortunate to speak with many different thrive users and listen to their aspirations for a user portal. The biggest hurdle that I ran into is that many people told me they would love instant feedback or a way to check their feedback- but little of them could actually tell me what that feedback should be. Many users did mention that they would like to see how they “scored” on many of the experiences, and that is why we made sure to supply a screen with their current Subjective Well-Being ratios (SWB) these include Positivity, Communication and Contribution.

Largely our audience is comprised of men and woman (23-55) whom are working in corporate America. Generally our audience is affluent, tech savvy and very busy. This is why we believe that supplying them with a user portal that they can log into at their convenience is a promising value added to Thrive. It is part of our mission to display the information in the portal to them as cleanly and clearly as possible so that
their experience on the portal is not timely or frustrating. We addressed this issue by thinking about how we can effectively use accordions to expand and collapse a lot of information, we also took some time thinking about how we can structure the information in terms of hierarchies so that it is intuitive when you jump around in the portal. Containing the information in a structure that easy for the user to load cognitively. Similar to Jawbone we also thinking that an important part of our design needs to be our approach to visual metaphors and color. We don’t want our app to feel like corporate america (the environment they spend most of their day in)- we want it to feel professional and carry a professional image but be a little softer around the edges so that the user finds it easier to establish a personal relationship with us.

3) Personas

Persona 1: John

John is 49 years old and a senior manager in his workplace. He is responsible for both new business development as well as making sure the operations of his team is moving in the right direction. He has a loving wife whom is supportive but requires a lot of John’s time, energy and cognitive load as well as 4 daughters of various ages- making their needs very diverse. As a consequence John finds much of his time spent in the car driving the girls places. John also has a bad knee and bad hip from a football energy and therefore moves a little slower than the average manager in his position. He loves technology and innovation but he himself finds it rather difficult to break through his learning curve on new technologies. He is pretty old school.

John’s Goals on the website:

John is really intrigued by this new personal development tool: Thrive. He has been in corporate america for a long while and has always thought that Human Resource Management is a crucial part of any companies future: especially in big firms that have become quite routine. Up to this point he has not yet seen a tool or model that really captures the essence of the human factor within the organizations he has been a part of. In the past he has seen lots of expensive tools, surveys and consultants move through the door...but very few of which has had a lasting impact on the organization mentality. Hopefully Thrive is different. His goals are to hopefully gain some insight into how to communicate and contribute effectively with his team to achieve a higher combined output of productivity.

John’s Task on the user portal:

His task on the interface will be to study some of the inquiry he has answered and to relate that to his Subjective Well Being scores. This will give him a greater understanding of what made him answer specific questions in a specific way- this insight could prove valuable when motivating and delegating tasks to his team.

Persona 2: Sue

Sue is a 24 year old recent graduate. She just got head hunted and hired at a big pharmaceutical firm. Although she performed great in school and in various organizations, this is her first time experiencing
corporate america. She is amazed at how much work there is to do and how quickly you have to make important decisions in the wake of uncertainty. This gives her a little anxiety at times, but she keeps telling herself that it is just part of the experience. She also finds the new conversations a lot different from the ones she used to have with her peers in college as the average co worker is at least 5 years older than her. Weekends she catches up with her friends from college by going out and having a couple of drinks. This can sometimes put her at a little disadvantage when it comes to critical thinking on Monday- but she finds the change of pace refreshing and the mood relaxing.

Sue’s goals on the user portal:

Sue’s head is spinning a little as she has learned so many new processes and procedures over the last 3 months. They really had her up and running straight from the beginning. Her direct supervisor asked her to consider “Thriving”; she said that it will help her in her new work environment. Sue, with no real consideration, decided that she will Thrive if her supervisor suggests it. Her main goal is to go through the process of answering experiences and every now and again look at her portal, just in case her supervisor asks her a question regarding her Thrive.

Sue’s tasks on the user portal:

Sue logs on once and a while to take note of her Subjective Well Being and how it has changed over time. She also makes sure to look at what programs she has completed, just in case her supervisor asks.

3) Audience Language

Our audience language is generally very technical in their various fields of work under the corporate umbrella. However, our language needs to be a lot more conversational, as our goal is to start developing a personal- human like- relationship with the user. I believe a lot this communication can get done non verbally too: in the icons, colors, structure and fonts we use. We will be using a lot of words like “my” and “your” in order to express a more relational informal tone (differentiating us from many competitors where they are and feel like a number on a report sheet).

4) What are the main goals and tasks off the user portal?

The Primary goals of the interface are to:

- Establish a more personal, human, connection with the Thriver
  - Which drives an increase in participation and excitement as we become more relational
  - A more relational connection leads to increased sustainability (retaining customers)
- Facilitating an enjoyable interaction between Thrive and the Thriver
- A fun, interactive and informative page that gets people talking and advocating
- Provoke self insight and
The Primary tasks of the interface are to:

- Allow users to access and eventually interact with their Subjective Well-Being ratio’s
  - Both their current ratios of Positivity, Communication and Contribution
  - As well as their ratios over time
- Allow users to access all completed programs and experiences and review them in an intuitive and exciting manner that provokes self insight.

5) The main content Categories:

- The main content categories for the Thrive user portal are:
  - Current Program: which is the current program the user is enrolled in.
  - Completed Programs: programs that the user have been enrolled in, in the past.
  - Subjective Well Being Ratios: the current and over time ratios of the Thrivers.

Appendix:

My Fitness Pal Screens:

Fitbit Screens:
Jawbone’s Up Screens: