

GPS Phase 2 Usability Evaluations

Purpose

Usability evaluations help us to design systems that are relevant, satisfying, and easy to use. After achieving positive results with the technique during GPS phase 1 design, we knew we wanted to conduct usability evaluations during phase 2 to test basic conventions in the user interface design and verify that the workflow made sense to end-users.

The evaluations were structured to test the following areas of concern in the design of the system:

- Would the idea of development KTOs appear seamless and integrated?
- Would users understand the shape of the total workflow and where they were in that process?
- Would users be overwhelmed by the apparent complexity of this new, longer process?
- Would users understand the interplay between online and offline benchmarks and find their way back to the system at the appropriate times?

Methodology

Phase 2 usability evaluations took place from March 22nd – March 29th, 2005. The evaluations were Individual test sessions with one or two participants looking at a paper prototype of the system. There were two types of tests – one designed for “managers” (people with one or more direct reports), and one designed for “employees” (people with no direct reports). Both test types included four tasks that were designed to exercise a specific area of concern. The tests broke down as follows:

- 3 “employee” tests with a total of four participants
- 4 “managers” tests with a total of six participants

As we identified major themes during the course of testing we updated the screen designs to correct and retest the issues.

Findings

#	Description	Resolution
1	Buttons need to be more straightforward, like “save and come back later.” Also need to add previous page and cancel buttons, where appropriate	Implemented
2	Need more transparent process guide/overview	Implemented
3	Users want more explanation of how the process goes at the beginning, including conventions of the system (like “you can save and come back later”)	Implemented
4	It needs to be easier to jump into the “view” state during mid-process reentry into the system	Implemented through improved process indicators
5	Development plan should be distinct from mid-year update	Implemented
6	“Importance” ranking doesn’t work for competencies that have already been selected from a longer list based on importance	Removed
7	Lots of confusion around the “recommended” competency	Removed
8	Need very explicit breaking points to enforce stopping and thinking about what should be done before next step	Implemented
9	Managers still need visual status indicators to help survey the group as a whole	Implemented
10	Users think of “filing” as “approving” – the filing step should be called approving.	Implemented
11	The process for managers recommending changes (especially around competencies) feels a little awkward	Update workflow so manager can pick their own list in competencies section
12	Some disconnect around user’s mental model of recommending changes/unlocking. They think the MYR would be frozen after submitting, approving, etc., but they also say they would go have a conversation offline with their 14 employees and expect their employees to be able to go back into the system and make updates without any additional steps required of the manager.	Lean more toward the concept of unlocking or returning the documents and test various labels during

	Users need to understand that this works differently from the KTO process and that the manager needs to “release employee’s document” if changes are requested.	user acceptance testing in June.
13	Should users be able to go back and edit their comments before acknowledging?	No
14	Focus more on “how” of performing KTOs instead of “what”	To be addressed in content and messaging outside system.
15	Confusion around why we’re doing competencies now instead of at the beginning of the year	To be addressed in content and training outside the system
16	Clarify how to select competencies (purpose, process, assessment and number to select) and process for establishing development plan around a competency.....what is relationship to KTOs and job performance. Development plan for some will be output of discussion with manager not input to manager.	To be addressed in content and messaging outside system.
17	Need lots of supporting material around how to write a development plan, why you would mark a KTO as inactive, what a personal development KTO is, and the real purpose and opportunity of the second half of the review (“here’s your opportunity to...”)	To be addressed in content and training outside the system