Role of a User Experience Designer (UX)

by Devmountain Tutorials

In this lesson, you will learn how to explore the responsibilities and job characteristics of a user experience designer. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

Hi, I'm Mori. I'm the User Experience Designer for Poodle Jumper and I've been working here for seven months. Before I started here, I worked for a decade as a communications manager at a large bank. I wanted to make a change to something that let me use more of my creativity and love for technology. I enrolled in a User Experience Design bootcamp at DevMountain and that helped me make the career pivot I was looking for. This job is a little different than what I anticipated so let's dig in a little deeper about what it is like to be a User Experience Designer.

1. Design Goals

Let me ask you something. Have you ever pushed on a door that said "pull" only to feel silly afterward? Well, it's probably not your fault that you pushed that door. Everything about the way the door was designed told you subconsciously that you had to push the door to get through. These are called Norman Doors. Named after Don Norman, who is considered by many to be the Godfather of User Experience Design. The word "Pull" shouldn't need to be on that door. The door's design should tell you instinctively that you're going to pull open the door. That is the user experience. It's the overall experience of someone using a product. This includes physical and digital products like websites or apps. It's my job to make sure the experience of Poodle Jumper is a pleasant one and not one that makes people feel dumb or frustrated.

One of the ways I do this is by talking to people. I talk to the people who use our products. I talk to the service reps who help our customers. I talk to the developers who help build our products. I even talk to the people who run the company. By having conversations with these different people, I can start to understand the goals, frustrations, and pain points of our customers as well as the goals of the business. I can then use that knowledge to empathize with our customers and design something that will truly help make their lives easier and help the business reach their goals. That's one reason I love my job. There is nothing quite like seeing the joy in someone's face when you save them hours of work with something you designed. I also find great

satisfaction in knowing that the work I do has a direct impact on the business.

2. How a UX Designer Does the Work

As you may have noticed, I spend a lot of time talking to people. This makes excellent communication a very important part of my job. It's probably my biggest asset as a designer. I am constantly relaying and gathering information from different groups of people. I need to consider who I'm talking to and customize my communication to match their level of understanding. I wouldn't talk to a user the same way I would talk to a developer or a design manager.

For example, I've noticed that in our organization, leadership responds to recommended changes much better when I have data to back up what I'm suggesting. If I come to them saying "Hey, we need to include a call-to-action button on our homepage." then I'm not going to get very far. If I say "Hey, I've been running some A/B tests on our homepage and have discovered that a call-to-action button above the fold increases our lead generation by 200%," I'm going to pique some interest, to say the least. It's not what you say, it's how you say it.

As a UX designer, it's my job to advocate for the users to ensure they have a good experience using our products across the entire journey. I'm constantly having to evaluate "Is this design going to resonate with our users?" or "Am I addressing frustrations or helping the users achieve their goals?" I need to make sure to push back when the people I work with suggest something that I know will not be in the best interest of the users. This may seem counterintuitive or may suggest that I'm not a team player, but having someone on the team who is in-tune with the customer can prevent disastrous decisions from going through. This is where solid communication skills are invaluable. I can't just tell my boss their idea is dumb. That's not very productive and I run the risk of getting on my boss's bad side. I must speak in terms that resonate with them. This is probably the hardest part of my job. It's difficult to stand up and challenge an idea. Especially if it comes from someone who has authority over me. However, our leaders rely on me being able to do that.

When I have the understanding, insights, and support for an idea, then I bring it to life. I create rough sketches or mockups early in the idea process so the team can visualize what we are trying to do and get on the same page. I test the mockups with users before we start development to validate that we are on the right track. This is called usability testing. It saves us time and money by limiting the amount of development we have to throw away. After the usability test, I organize the feedback, regroup with the team, and iterate the early designs into a version the Product Manager leverages for development requirements.
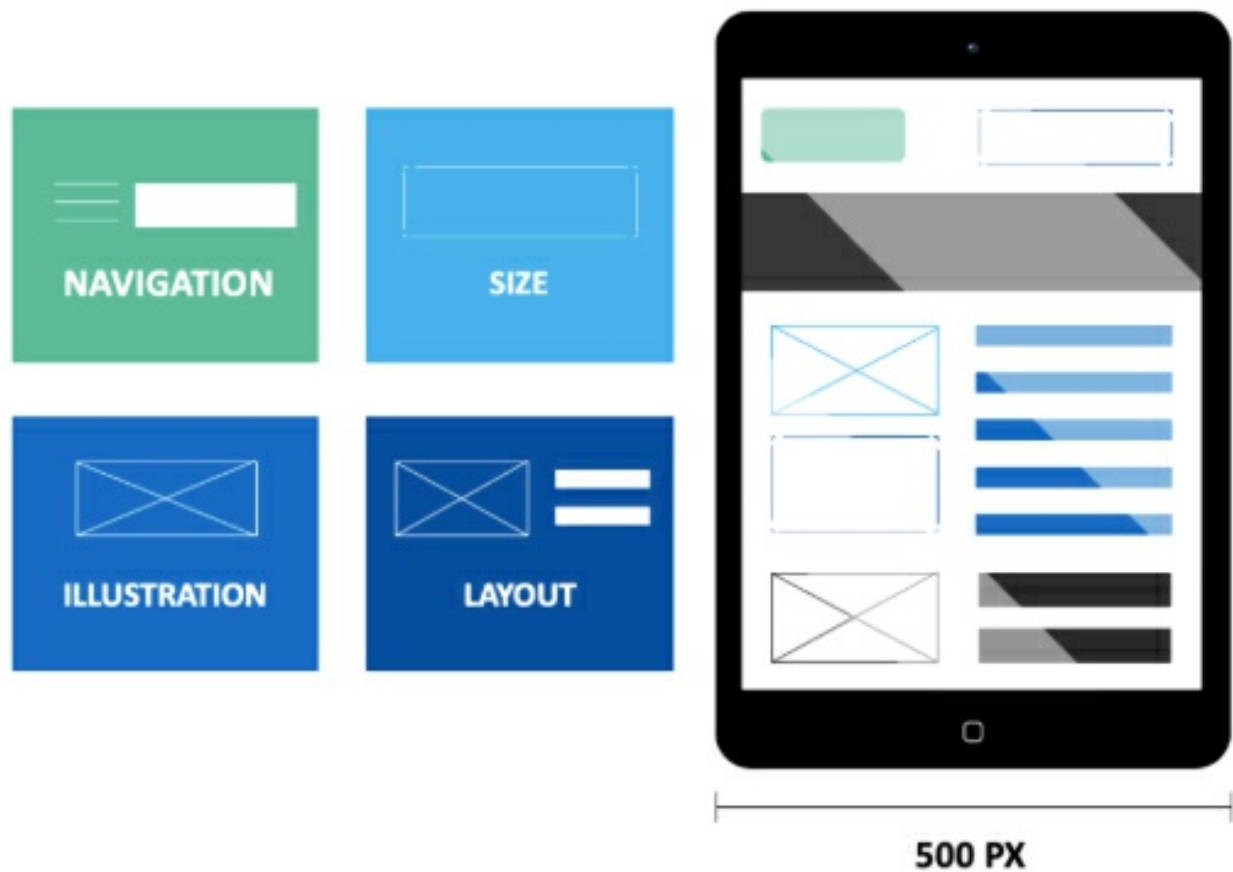
Visual Layout for Mobile Design

As a UX Designer, I'm a collaborator, an advocate, a visual designer, and researcher all rolled into one. I analyze data, I present designs and research to stakeholders, I sketch wireframes with pen and paper, I create prototypes and many other things. In the next section, I will tell you a little bit more about how this breaks down and what a typical day looks like.

📋 SUMMARY

This lesson discussed the role of a user experience designer (UX) and the importance of their work. It highlighted the **design goals** of a **UX designer does their work**, as well as the techniques and skills necessary to be successful in this field. The lesson emphasized the importance of communication and collaboration with various stakeholders, including customers, developers, and management. Additionally, it touches on the iterative design process and usability testing, which are crucial to ensuring that the final product meets the needs and expectations of the user.

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