


WHY THE IT-BUSINESS DISCONNECT IS HURTING DIGITAL QUALITY

A Perfecto Insights Report





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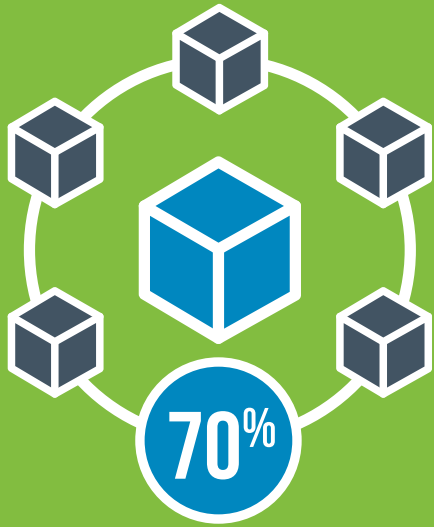
In the not-so-distant past (pre-2007), business and IT interaction was for matters concerning only web development. This still required collaboration between groups, but it was a longer, slower waterfall process that lacked the urgency of the mobile age.

Now, companies are discovering the financial and brand loyalty rewards of being a fast-moving, agile, mobile development shop. Mobile apps are in demand and need to be updated frequently. Responsive websites that work consistently across devices are becoming the norm. New mobile devices are released each month and constant innovation is now table stakes.

Thanks to this shift, it's necessary to consolidate different technology groups through a new department called "digital", where websites, mobile apps, and any brand properties are all designed to work together as one unified strategy that's aligned with business goals.

Yet there are still web and social media groups within organizations pushing out experiences that may look different from the mobile app. While the fast release cycles of mobile development necessitate more conversations between business and IT teams, the two groups often have different goals and objectives and remain wary of each other. In a 2015 Forrester survey of IT and business decision-makers at companies going digital, 42% of respondents "struggle with differences in culture between marketing, technology management and the business."

In this report, we'll discuss how poor IT and business alignment can have a direct effect on the quality of mobile apps and websites. We'll also offer three tips for overcoming those "differences in culture" so both groups can target the same goals.



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The Disconnect and its Consequences

Despite a growing awareness about the risks of having a disconnect between business and IT, it persists all the same.

PricewaterhouseCoopers found that 62% of business leaders stated they were not consistently working on IT governance-related matters. At the same time, Forbes reported that 77% of organizations feel as though siloed information and processes are hindering them from achieving optimal performances, and that they don't have the solutions necessary to break down those barriers.

There are two core consequences for this kind of disconnect.

We Don't Know Who Our Customer Is – and It Shows

If there's no communication between business and IT teams about who the target customers are, the user experience will suffer because app development is not done using company personas and apps are not tested against real user conditions such as switching networks, user load spikes and phone call interruptions.

This is not a small problem. Mobile testing that's based on assumptions – and the shoddy user experience that inevitably follows – will negatively impact revenue, perhaps even stock price. On the flip side, a joint report from Forrester Research and IBM found that "great apps" generate five times more revenue than "good apps" on average, with the former being defined by mastering reliability, uptime, ease of use and battery usage.

Your brand integrity is also sure to get knocked down by poor digital quality. For example, McDonald's is an iconic American brand, but on app market data site App Annie its mobile app gets a lowly average of 2 stars along with a litany of negative reviews. There are various root causes for McDonald's app problems, but with complaints of slow load times, log-in issues and crashes, the app was likely developed and tested in a vacuum.



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CONSIDER THIS

Business and IT teams should identify target personas and test for how those people interact with apps and websites. **Here are six disruptive user conditions to test against:**



Switching networks
(Wi-Fi to 4G to 3G)



Phone call or text
message interruptions



Short on memory



Sudden spikes in
mobile traffic



Apps running in the
background



Low battery

Paying for Poor Digital Quality

When IT and business groups work in silos and digital quality suffers, there are external and internal costs.

The external costs include:

- Lost revenue from someone who tried to buy something and the app wouldn't let them make the purchase, so they left.
- More money spent on trying to get angry customers back by providing coupons and discounts.
- The "brand hit" from negative word-of-mouth on social media and poor ratings and reviews on app stores.
- For public companies, the stock price could fall (for example, an airline website or app goes down, people can't book flights, and there's an overall dip in the company's valuation).

Internally, the costs are more related to trust, morale and, ultimately, job security:

- The IT team is seen as incompetent and its reputation is tarnished.
- Business leaders start to lose faith in IT management and roles and responsibilities are reduced.
- Executives assume that the IT team can't deliver great digital products and consider outsourcing the development team entirely.



How to Close the Gap

Just getting the two teams to talk is not enough. A methodical digital quality plan needs to be at the heart of collaboration between IT and the business. Development and testing practices that are not based on the company's customer analytics and target personas are effectively being done in the dark.

Making the leap from disconnected to fruitful collaboration can be difficult, but following these three tips can help close the gap more quickly and efficiently:

1. Build a human bridge

Create a role that essentially acts as the human link between the two departments. The "chief digital officer", "application owner", "project manager" or whatever title he or she goes by would straddle the business and IT worlds. This is not purely an IT or business role but a bit of both and should be tasked with unifying and measuring the digital user experience and helping DevTest teams deliver on business goals.

2. Have the same goal

Create a feedback loop that connects the chief digital officer (requirements) to IT (Dev/Test) and the company's customer feedback and analytics data. Business groups should work to determine the best personas (demographic information, devices usage, mobile traits) and user conditions (types of apps running in background, incoming calls and alerts) to build and test against, and get DevTest teams the necessary customer analytics data from marketing. When technical and business groups are targeting the same customer and the same goal, the gap between teams will naturally rescind.

3. Make quality job one:

Companies have to think about "continuous quality" as a core deliverable, whether it's the 5-star digital quality of a web or mobile user experience or the physical quality of a brick and mortar store. Both business and IT teams should make decisions regarding their digital experience with the same care, budget and thought as if they had an offline store. Every digital touch point must be evaluated based on the quality of the user experience, and how that reflects on the brand.



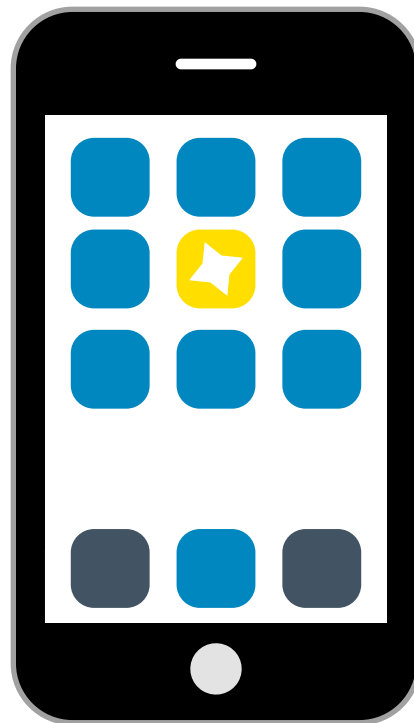
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Define and Demand Digital Quality

So what's
our plan?

In today's mobile-first world, it's not enough for executives to assume that IT and business departments are working toward the same end-goals. The best way to truly achieve this is by creating a dedicated team that focuses on the digital experience, creates goals that span departments and demands a high-quality UX across all web and mobile products.

Organizations that do this will be on the right path to delivering digital quality of the highest caliber.



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