

Major Pharmaceutical Company – Findings and Recommendations

Note: This is an excerpt from a findings and recommendations report I wrote based on a series of interviews I conducted. The goal of the research project was to determine user needs and requirements for a client planning to implement single sign-on for a family of web sites. All potentially proprietary information has been redacted and bracketed, e.g. [the site].

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Single Sign-On

Customers report that the current login process is easy to use, but managing multiple logins is difficult and single sign-on would be a very valuable addition to [the site]. Single sign-on should be implemented with an improved method of retrieving passwords to increase its "ease of use" factor. Customers reported that single sign-on would encourage them to use [the site] more, particularly in tandem with other features such as the [user group] status queue.

[user group]

Most customers do not currently use the [user group] section of the site, but are interested in using it. Those customers who do use the [user group] queue use it as a practice management tool, and offered a variety of creative suggestions for how to enhance the [user group] queue as a useful, online practice management tool for providers' offices.

[interactive tool]

Customers generally do not use the [interactive tool], and those customers who do use the [interactive tool] use it as a form generator or storage tool. The [interactive tool] does not appear to offer advantage over the common practice of handwriting forms.

Online Enrollment

The suggestion of online enrollment sparked the most enthusiasm among interviewees, who unanimously agreed it would be a valuable addition to [the site]. Customers also raised interesting points to consider when planning online enrollment.

Current Usage

Customers interact with [the site] to submit forms and follow up on patient coverage status, and prefer to contact [the site] by telephone or fax. Few customers log in to [the site] (3 of 13 customers interviewed log in regularly) and most use the site primarily to download forms and documents. Although a few intrepid customers have "repurposed" features of the site to fit into their offices' workflow, most customers will be more likely to use [the site] when it provides a more efficient means to accomplish tasks than currently available means, such as providing electronic submission of forms or increased [user group] information.

Promoting Usage

There is a lack of awareness and confusion about the features available on [the site] and clinical specialists should be an integral part of further promoting the site to customers. Also, technical problems with the site in the past have discouraged customers from using the site, and further additions to the site should be thoroughly tested.

Researcher's Assessment and Recommendations

Although implementing single sign-on will add a valuable convenience to [the site], it is unlikely to encourage customers to use the site more heavily unless it is implemented in tandem with substantial features customers need and unless the site is more heavily promoted through clinical specialists.

The researcher's key recommendations are:

- Implement single sign-on.
- Increase the amount of information available in the [user group] queue for all brands.
- Pursue online enrollment.
- Use clinical specialists to promote the site and the new features heavily to customers.

Introduction

The findings of this research project are divided into six categories: Single Sign-On, [user group], [interactive tool], Online Enrollment, Current Usage, and Promoting Usage. When relevant and appropriate, quotes from interviewees and/or recommendations follow the findings. Some quotes have been edited for the sake of readability, but retain their original meaning.

Single Sign-On

Finding 1: Customers report that the current login process is easy to use, but managing multiple logins is difficult.

Customers reported that the actual login process for [the site] is very easy, but found it more difficult to manage the logins for multiple providers in their practice. Many customers regularly have to log into several systems or web sites at work and simply find it difficult to keep track of many passwords (see finding 5 for related issue with retrieving lost passwords). Others simply found the process of logging in separately for each provider to be onerous.

It's fine. I had a problem initially because I couldn't remember the password. That was my only issue; now that I have the password, there's no problem.

It's very easy. I store my password on my computer.

[on a 1-5 scale] 5. It's pretty simple. I tried to log in all of the doctors separately but only one person has access to it. I started creating separate logins for each admin, but realized we could only use one. So we never tried logging in all the doctors.

[interviewer asks] Managing the logins can be difficult but the process is easy? Yes.

Finding 2: People report that single sign-on would be a very valuable addition to [the site].

Interviewees unanimously agreed that Single Sign-On would be a very valuable addition to [the site] and customers agreed that, given a choice between the current login scenario and single sign-on, they would prefer single sign-on. Internal interviewees were also optimistic that implementing single sign-on would encourage their customers to use the site more.

Given the choice, I would always prefer that [single sign-on]; it's much simpler.

[on a 1-5 scale] 4. It will probably be good, especially for the bigger offices.

[on a 1-5 scale] 5. It would be very valuable to create one login; people will go to the website more since it would be so easy.

[on a 1-5 scale] 5. The less you have to do, the better.

It would save them [customers] time and would make them more inclined to use the website. If you're in charge of all of those [form]s, you can get overwhelmed.

Finding 3: Some providers may prefer the current login process to a single sign-on process.

As two internal interviewees suggested, there may be cases in which a provider would prefer that she and her patients not be included in single sign-on. A practice may have internal privacy concerns or office politics where separate logins per provider would be more appropriate to their needs. (See finding 5 for related security concern.)

I have so many people concerned with [legal restrictions]. [interviewer asks] Even within a practice people would want their own password to maintain privacy? Yes.

Recommendations:

- Users should be informed of implications of single sign-on for sharing patient lists within a practice.
- Users should be presented with an easy, clearly visible means to opt out of single sign-on if they prefer to log in per provider.

Finding 4: People are concerned about perceived security risks involved in single sign-on.

Several interviewees expressed concerns about possible security risks involved in single sign-on, such as the possibility that others could access data on their computer more readily than with the current login process. (See finding 3 for related confidentiality concern.)

I like it [single sign-on] as long as I'm the only one on my computer. If someone else is at my computer, then they could get my information. That's the only issue I have. But I wouldn't want to login separately.

[END OF EXCERPTED FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS]

Research Methods

Research was conducted through conferenced telephone interviews with three samples: clinical specialists, [sales reps], and [the site] users in providers' offices. The interviews generally lasted 15-45 minutes and audio recorded. The research team consisted of an interviewer, Steve Kurzman, a note taker, [name], and the appropriate [the site] product lead. Project manager [name] also participated in several interviews.

The [the site] product leads recruited appropriate interviewees using criteria suggested by [web services company]. Interviews were conducted between [date] and [date].

Prior to each interview, the interviewer described the research project, introduced the participants, informed the interviewee of the audio recording, and offered a disclaimer about how research results would be used.

Data consisted of notes taken during the interviews and supplemental notes taken following subsequent review of audio recordings. The researcher entered the notes into a Qualitative Data Analysis software package (TAMSAAnalyzer), coded the notes with a series of codes describing topics of interest, and cross-referenced the codes with the various samples of interviewees to analyze the data.