Improving Usability of Operational Materials for Frontline Employees of Banner Bank

An Applied Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

Operational materials--the procedural guides provided to frontline employees of Banner Bank--act as a guide to completing complex banking transactions. Being able to successfully navigate these materials and complete the complex transactions the materials assist with are essential to meeting both the client's expectations and maintaining federal regulations; however, employees have noted a lack of usability with these materials, resulting in confusion and frustration while trying to navigate the operational materials to successfully complete client requests. Employees who try to use these guides commit errors that result in negative client impact, as well as putting the bank at risk for being out of compliance with federal regulations.

To analyze and address this situation, I designed a usability test of three employees who use the operational materials on a regular basis (at least once, weekly), as well as designed and deployed a survey of ten open ended questions be given to division branch management. The usability study is designed using Steve Krug's methods and is intended to locate potential usability improvements and to preserve features that facilitate use. The survey elicited division branch management perspectives and informed them of the imperatives of the teams, so that any improvements to help employees navigate the operational material would be guided by larger business needs.

The usability study and survey provided a clear picture of areas that exist for improved usability and provided the necessary data to move forward with a proposal report to Banner Bank's training and operations department on alterations that should be done to increase usability of the procedural guides. Both the training and operations departments share the responsibility of managing and circulating the documents to all frontline employees and administrators, so they make ideal places to disseminate the findings of the proposal plan that emerges from this testing. The proposal plan includes six phases designed to make the updates to the procedural guides a smooth transition for all involved.

Introduction

This applied project creates a study to analyze the usability of our operational material and formulate a plan to improve the user experience of frontline employees using the operational material located on our Microsoft SharePoint site. The study is divided into two sections, the first comprises a usability test, and the second contains the proposal to our training and operations department that ties together my research findings and provides a plan for improvement while maintaining financial regulatory standards.

My research focused on identifying enabling and disabling features of our operational materials, especially zeroing in on the areas that can be optimized for maximum usability improvement. Three employees were tested during the usability study of operational materials located on the SharePoint site. To cross-check the aims of the study and the operational materials, I solicited an online survey of ten division branch managers who supervise their employees use of the procedural guides. I analyzed the results of the usability study, filtered

the results through branch manager perspectives, and formulated a proposal for change (included as Document 2 in this project) to improve usability of the procedural guides while maintaining regulatory standards utilizing a six-phase plan.

Due to the complexity of the operational materials used within our industry, we have struggled to produce materials that are both user friendly and meet regulatory standards. The operational materials referenced in this project include our group of seventy-two procedural documents that are specifically designed to aid our frontline employees in completing tasks such as placing a stop payment on a check or establishing overdraft protection on a client's account. These materials cover all tasks that may be asked of our frontline employees to complete either by a client, management, or back office department personnel. The materials vary in length between three pages and twenty-two pages. f

Literature Review

To review the importance of the operational materials that were the focus of my usability study, I have gathered literature concerning the major government departments that oversee and control how our industry operates from an operational standpoint. The two areas that I have chosen to highlight are the FDIC and the Federal Reserve. Together, the FDIC and the Federal Reserve outline in detail the accountability that financial institutions must comply with in terms of operational practices and policies. I have included a list of definitions for terminology used throughout the project. The list is located after the reference section.

Deposit Laws and Regulations

We, as an industry are required to comply with a number of laws and regulations that affect accounts held at our institution. Each bank establishes policies designed to ensure compliance with such laws and regulations. Failure to comply or be neglectful in compliance can and will result in penalties and bank liability issues. For example, Regulation D- Reserve Requirements of Depository Institutions defines the types of deposit account a regulated financial institution can have. In addition, Regulation D allows a limited number of third-party transactions to occur in a savings account if the account is to maintain its savings account statue which aids in calculating and maintaining deposit reserves for the bank (Banner Bank, 2017). To comply, our bank must either prevent restricted transfers in excess of the prescribed number or monitor these transfers and take appropriate action in connection with excess transfers. The penalties for failing to comply with Regulation D can be substantial. Our bank could be fined for failing to meet its reserve requirements, lose its income tax deduction for interest improperly paid, and the bank's board of directors could be held personally liable for the improperly paid interest (Banner Bank, 2017) (Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 2017).

FDIC Deposit Insurance

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is an independent agency of the United States government that protects the funds depositors place in banks and savings associations. FDIC insurance is backed by the full faith and credit of the United States government. (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, 2016).

In relation to the operational material tested in this study, the FDIC concerns themselves with how information is presented to clients, as well as how account maintenances are completed. The FDIC examines how banks are operating and looks for flaws in operational safety and soundness. If weak areas are found in operational soundness, major consequences could be imposed on the financial institution. The operational material is vital for ensuring all frontline employees are processing transactions properly.

The Federal Reserve

The Federal Reserve System often referred to as the Federal Reserve or simply "the Fed," is the central bank of the United States. It was created by Congress to provide the nation with a safer, more flexible, and more stable monetary and financial system. The law sets out the purposes, structure, and functions of the System as well as outlines aspects of its operations and accountability (Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 2017).

Microsoft SharePoint

In 2017, Banner Bank made the transition to the SharePoint cloud-based platform as many other financial institutions have due to the benefits to users and administrators. Changes in the standard banking model have led to a transformation of the way information is presented to users. The older versions of intranets have become obsolete and costly to maintain. The SharePoint site reduces the workload of financial institutions IT departments for technical support and also creates a digital infrastructure and data processing solution that allows for information to be implemented and updated easily by administrators (Microsoft, 2017). The SharePoint site also has the look and feel of other Microsoft programs, making it a familiar tool to use for our employees. It is well known our industry is under enormous pressure to comply with rules and regulations established by the Government. While the SharePoint site makes accessing the operational materials easier, if the materials themselves are not usable, Banner Bank is making ourselves vulnerable to breaking the established rules and regulations from the FDIC and Federal Reserve through employee mistakes that could have been avoided by providing sound operational materials.

Methodology

Research Questions:

- What features enable/disable understanding of Banner Bank's operational materials?

- Of these features identified as disabling, which ones will result in the greatest increase in usability if they are changed?

Usability Study Goal

The goal of this usability study was to determine which features enable and disable the understanding of Banner Bank, and of these features, what improvements will result in the greatest increase in usability if they are changed.

Study Design

The usability study was designed to involve three employees utilizing Steve Krug's methods outline in *Rocket Surgery Made Easy- The Do-It-Yourself Guide to Finding and Fixing Usability Problems*. The usability testing script and user tasks are included as Appendix C. When I selected the user tasks I chose them based on the ability to truly test the full usability of the operational materials. While I was observing my participants, I wanted to better understand what our employees thought about the operational material. I documented the time spent on finding particular information in the operational materials, followed their steps in finding the information, and calculated their task completion percentage (Krug S. , Rocket surgery made easy: The do-it-yourself guide to finding and fixing usability problems, 2010). Another tool I utilized for the study design included the usability test checklist which I formatted to fit my needs for this study. The checklist used is included as Appendix B. I found the checklist especially helpful to keep the project on track and make sure my tasks were completed properly (Krug S. , Usability Checklists, 2010).

Survey Design

The survey portion was constructed of questions presented to ten division branch managers given using Qualtrics through ASU. The questions were designed to be open-ended and gather qualitative data that was analyzed using a coding and categorization method within Qualtrics using assigned codes of "enabling" or "disabling" and analyzed using a bar graph for ease of visibility of the results. The survey results have been included as Appendix D. The results indicated areas that needed attention to improve usability, as well as areas that are working well, and areas that were split between enabling and disabling user satisfaction with usability (Hughes & Hayhoe, Conducting a Qualitative Study, 2008) (Hughes & Hayhoe, Conducting Surveys, 2008).

Participant Selection

The participants were selected based on their fit for my project goal. The participants selected were current Banner Bank employees who dealt with processing complex account transactions using operational procedure materials located on Banner Bank's SharePoint site. The usability study used three tellers who have varying years of experience of two years, twelve years, and twenty years, and use the operational materials on a regular basis (at least once a week). The survey participants were selected due to their hands-on management of employees that use the operational materials on a regular basis (at least once a week). The survey participants were ten branch managers who operate a Division within Banner Bank (Krug S. , Recruit loosely and grade on a curve, 2010). Each participant involved was given an Informed Consent Agreement, a copy is included as Appendix A.

Research Location

The survey was taken online using Qualtrics by the ten branch manager participants; the usability study was performed in person with the three tellers. The research locations were chosen based off of what was most convenient for my participants. The three tellers are current

bank employees, and I was able to schedule time with them during slower days, which allowed me to set up a test environment that was reflective of a realistic workday in terms of time allowed, setting, and task requests made. Due to the division managers working throughout Oregon, an online survey was the best option to accommodate varying schedules.

Presenting Results

Once the results of my study were analyzed the findings were compiled into a proposal for improved usability to be presented to Banner Bank's training and operations department. I developed a detailed proposal that includes a six-phase plan to improve the operational materials in the most cost effective and timely manner. The proposal was designed to be a higher level, detailed proposal targeted at the decision makers of the operational materials. The proposal for improved usability is referenced as Document 2.

Survey Results

The survey of division branch managers returned six out of ten survey requests. The surveys were taken through the Qualtrics program and the consent forms were emailed out, see Appendix A. The importance of the survey was to present a fuller understanding of the manager's opinions concerning the enabling and disabling features of the operational material, and the areas that exist for improved usability. Due to the business design and tight FTE model that the bank follows, managers are often dealing hands on with complex transactions. They provide a unique insight into the true usability of the materials.

Coding

Once the survey results were in, they were coded within Qualtrics using assigned codes of "enabling" or "disabling" and presented using a bar graph for ease of visibility of the results. The results indicated areas that needed attention to improve usability, as well as areas that are working well, and areas that were split between enabling and disabling usability in terms of ability to complete client requested tasks and the time it takes to complete the task. Ideally, an odd number of participants would have replied which would have allowed for tie breakers. I decided due to the ties that existed in my data, to make a third section (tied results) that allowed me to document and analyze areas that had the equal results (Hughes & Hayhoe, 2008).

Enabling Features

Search Feature

The enabling feature that was identified was the search feature. Survey results indicated that the search tool worked well and provided results that made it easier for the user to find exactly what they are looking for in a quick and efficient manner. Of the six respondents, five reported this feature as enabling, one as disabling. Due to the high positive feedback concerning the search function, I concluded no improvements need to be done to the search function to improve usability.

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Disabling Features
The disabling features that were identified included four items that had an overwhelming negative response in terms of usability. The four features identified as disabling usability are four areas that will be of top priority to correct.

Material Format
Survey results indicated the operational material format forced users to make unnecessary steps to complete complex tasks. All six survey participants indicated this as a disabling feature. Due to the results of this question I concluded the operational material format needs improvement with how each step is organized and how the explanations are given for the step to improve usability.

Overall Impression
Survey results indicated the overall impression of the operational materials as a disabling feature, five out of six respondents reported their impressions of the operational materials as negative. Due to the results of this question I concluded the user impressions of the operational material needs addressed to help change the user satisfaction or lack of satisfaction.

Additional Research Needed
Survey results indicated additional research is needed to complete tasks indicating this is a disabling feature, with four out of six respondents reporting the need for additional research beyond what is provided in the operational materials. Due to the results of this question I concluded the need for improved usability to eliminate or minimize the needs for additional user research beyond what the operational materials provide.

Exhibited Frustration and Anxiety
Survey results indicated users exhibit frustration and/or anxiety during task completion. Results were split on when the frustration and/or anxiety sets in. Four participants responded that they felt some form of frustration and/or anxiety. Of those four, three responded this occurs during the middle of using the operational material, one reported at the start, and one at the end. Due to the results of this question I concluded the need for increased usability to help minimize and hopefully eliminate all frustration and/or anxiety exhibit by users while using the operational material.

Tied Results
The results that ended in a tie demonstrate that managers are split in their opinions on these questions; I inferred that this has to do in part to their staffing size, and experience. Managers with newer employees on staff report the questions as disabling, while the managers with seasoned staff, or staff that have completed all training reported them as enabling.

Missing Information

Survey results indicated half of the managers feel there is important information missing from the documents while the other half does not feel there is information missing.

Targeted Landing Page

Survey results indicated half the managers feel the targeted landing page to access the operational material is well laid out, while the other half reported it not being well laid out.

Material Presentation and Layout

Survey results indicated half the managers feel the material presentation and layout meets their expectation, the other half reported room for improvement. I concluded that due to this split in answers, there is room for improved usability, but it is not a vital component needed to change. Due to this, I have sectioned these into a second tier for improved usability and analyzed these areas should be improved after the major issues are addressed.

Manager Opinions

I included a question on the survey to give the managers an opportunity to list exactly what they thought needed improved. The results showed a clear picture of what needed to be focused on according to the managers, four out of the six included organization in their answers, two addressed formatting concerns, one mentioned needs for improved navigation, and one for needing examples provided to help staff walk through the steps.

Usability Testing

The observations of three tellers provided a user insight from the individuals that have the most hands-on usage of the operational materials. The observations were conducted using a semi-structured format utilizing a checklist for each participant allowing me to notate the different behaviors during task completion by each participant. The observations were designed to be candid, to allow for the participant to fully divulge what they are thinking while completing requested tasks. I used a non-participant approach as my goal was simply to observe and notate, not help with the task completion. I am a note taker by nature and I chose to use the journaling strategy to record my findings and capture the description of the study.

Coding

The observation results were coded similarly to the survey assigning codes to answers as "enabling" or "disabling". Since the surveys were candid I also documented participant suggestions and desires for added elements to the operational material to increase usability (Hughes & Hayhoe, 2008).

Enabling Features

Search Feature, Document Preview, and Hyperlinks
The observation results indicated the enabling features include the search feature within the operational material, the document preview by hovering over material links, and the hyperlinks within the operational material, all three participants reported these features as enabling. Due to the high positive feedback concerning the search function, document preview, and hyperlinks, I concluded no improvements need to be done to these features to improve usability.

Disabling Features

Material Formatting
The observation results indicated the disabling features to be the mix of literature within the steps. Two of the three observations indicated this was a major issue for them. The current design presents a step, and then talks about the who/what/when/where/why of it before starting the next step. I have concluded the need for separating the steps and the literature into separate sections as a major finding and correcting this would greatly increase the operational material usability.

Visuals and Examples
The observation results indicated the desire for visuals and examples incorporated into the operational material in the form of an image or additional section with a hyperlink to the visual and/or example. All three of the participants expressed some form of a desire to see this incorporated. I have concluded the need for visuals and/or examples a high priority for improved usability and the lack of these has resulted in this being a disabling feature in terms of usability.

Material Titling
The observations results indicated the materials either need to be renamed using the common parlance used to refer to the documents or alter the search function to bring up the common parlance used as well as the proper name for the operational material. While research data indicated the search function works well, it is not set up to include other commonly used terms such as "bonds", "savings bonds", "EE series", when trying to find the "savings bond redemption" operational material which is listed as "Redemption" with "savings bonds, EE series" as a subtitle (Banner Bank, 2017). This is a simple change in title or search function capabilities that would greatly increase user satisfaction and has been identified as a high priority to fix.

User Frustration

The observations I completed concluded user frustration is occurring in the middle to the end of the procedure. Two participants started to show signs of frustration towards the middle, and one participant towards the end of the task completion.

Additional User Desires

Observation participants expressed desire for added information to the operational materials included a way to filter to search the "most used" procedures that could be flagged for quicker reference access. The desire for searching document in alpha order was mentioned. This feature was eliminated with the introduction to the SharePoint site and was used regularly by participants and is missed (Banner Bank, 2017). While these items were not deemed as top priorities to fix usability they are something to consider as the top priorities are being completed and would help with user satisfaction. I have classified these findings as secondary priorities.

Analysis

Combined results from the usability study and survey have been divided into top and secondary priorities for improving usability to fully analyze the findings.

Top Priorities

The top priorities that need addressed to correct usability include reorganizing the document layout to have better separation between steps and literature, as well as sections that include examples, or images added with the steps. Because the results indicated users have to make additional, unnecessary steps to complete tasks, re-organizing content layout and adding user desired features should greatly improve usability.

Another top priority for improved usability is renaming operational material using the common parlance used to refer to the documents or alter the search function to bring up the common parlance used as well as the proper name for the operational material. While research data indicated the search function works well, it is not set up to include other commonly used terms such as bonds, savings bonds, EE series, when trying to find the savings bond redemption operational material which is listed as Redemption with savings bonds, EE series as a subtitle.

The issues with document layout have been shown to be causing user frustration and/or anxiety during the middle to end of the task completion. To counter this, the improved documents should be presented in a positive light to our employees and express the desire to make things better for them and include an update that goes over the new and improved user features that have been updated to enable usability. The update could be presented in a PowerPoint format and presented either by management in a branch level meeting or presented by the training department through a Go-To Meeting webinar (Banner Bank, 2018).

Secondary Priorities

Secondary priorities were identified through the observations and survey as having tied or close results, meaning a portion of participants felt the particular feature enabled usability, while the other half felt it disabled usability. Due to this, these secondary priorities are areas where usability is formed, but can be improved upon with a few simple adjustments. These features were identified as adding in more information into the literature section to provide more information for newer employees who may or may not have banking experience. Slight improvements to the targeted landing page could be done for improved visual effect. As the research showed, our employees would like the operational material to be able to be searchable in an alphabetical format and sectioned better to divide up the materials as they once were before the latest system update occurred.

Plan of Action

To accomplish the top and secondary usability enhancements to better enable user satisfaction and usability I have developed a six-phase plan to implement the findings. I have summarized the six-phase plan and thoroughly explained my plan within Document Two.

Phase One: Preparing the Operational Material for Wide Release

To prepare the operational material for its future usage, additional user testing and procedural refinements will need to be completed. The operational material is currently available to all of our employees and administrators, in its current form and testing documents should be released once the final corrections have been made. Having multiple versions could cause procedures to be completed incorrectly, adding to the user dissatisfaction.

Phase Two: Training and Supporting Administrators

Though the operational material offers its most obvious benefits to our employees, it provides several benefits to you as administrators, as well. In addition, the operational material requires active involvement from administrators to function at a top-tier level of efficiency for all users. Thus, it is proposed that there is a period of time dedicated to training and supporting you as administrators in your usage of the operational material.

Phase Three: Generating Employee Support for the Updated Operational Material

Using Banner Bank's current marketing department, we will broadcast information on the improved operational material quickly and in a variety of formats, tailored to the different characteristics of the distribution lists. The goal of this project phase is to gradually introduce employees to the improvements made (since it is currently available to all employees) and alert employees to the deadline by which all operational materials will be discontinued and the new versions released. New and incoming employees will receive their own trainings on how to use the SharePoint system (without mentioning the old/pre-existing operational material).

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Phase Four: Eliminating Unnecessary Information

After campaigning and raising awareness about the updated operational material, we will discontinue the links to the current materials. The process of discontinuing these materials will ideally take place on a weekend, so that no branch operations will be disrupted by the deployment of the updated materials. Once the old links are disabled, IT and administrators will navigate the SharePoint site in staging modules to ensure that the old materials are completely gone. Administrators will test the system to ensure that updated operational materials feed into the SharePoint site properly from IT's view and that they are accessible from the administrator/employee view as well.

Phase Five: Monitoring the Usage

Once the updates have been completed and the SharePoint site is restored, an email notification will be sent out to all users alerting them to the completed change. During the first few days of the update, higher level IT and administrators will be monitoring the SharePoint site ensuring any issues are identified and fixed in a timely manner while offering a work around in the meantime if possible.

Phase Six: Processing Feedback and Additional Opportunities for Improved Usability

I will be available to receive and process feedback from administrators and employees on how the operational material is being received. Additional refinements may be necessary based on this feedback.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the operational material has several areas that have been identified as top priorities to fix the disabling features that are hindering the material's usability. The identified top priorities include: material formatting, include visuals and examples, correct material titling, and counter user anxiety issues.

Due to Banner Bank's changing environment, now is an appropriate time for us to reevaluate the current setup and make the necessary changes before additional company growth happens. In addition to my findings I feel strongly that this research will evolve as our organization grows and federal regulations update. Future research can positively impact additional changes and continue to see user satisfaction increase while using the operational material.

Document Two
Banner Bank-Improving Usability of Operational Material Located on the SharePoint Site

Introduction
Improving Usability of the Operational Material Located on the SharePoint Site

I have examined the current methods used to present operational procedure materials to employees located on the Microsoft SharePoint Site, and the areas that exist for improving the employee user satisfaction. Due to the complexity of the material, the training department and operations department often struggle to produce operational material that are user friendly and meet regulatory banking standards to be used by the employees while assisting clients. My research focused on finding enabling and disabling features that have created areas for improved usability of the operational material located on the Microsoft SharePoint site to better serve the employees who rely on these documents to guide them through complex transactions.

CURRENT SITUATION
Assessing the Problem

Our clients only see what goes on as they approach the teller counter, what our client doesn't see is just how complex transactions can be from our employee's side of the counter. When a complex issue or transaction arises, our employees turn to the SharePoint site to access the operational material. Much of what goes on becomes the daily norm for our tellers, and soon does not require reviewing the operational material; however, for those rare or complex transactions that employees are requested to do, those operational procedures act as an error-free guide to get from start to finish. While this seems simple enough it can be a difficult and stressful encounter. Sadly, as a bank employee much of the complex issues also come with complex emotions from the clients. It can involve fraud, elder financial abuse, incapacitated person situations, and death of a friend or family member. While employees are serving clients during these difficult times, employees tow a fine line between the human aspect of wanting to help the clients the best they can and having federal regulations to uphold while they process client requests. When the employee turns to the provided operational material for help, a lack of usability can severely hinder the user experience for the employee as well as for our client. Having operational material presented in a user-friendly manner is a critical component to aid employees in completing complex transactions.

As a Branch Manager, I have spent many years navigating bank intranets and assisting with complex transactions. Through my years of experience, I have used a variety of operational materials and have found an interesting commonality between them. This commonality is that the usability of the material is lost while ensuring regulatory standards are met. During my time as a branch manager I have been selected to help with bank mergers and have been selected to

be on a conversion team whose main goal was to successfully switch a bank from their current brand, to another brand. This task has given me a unique opportunity to view and utilize a variety of bank operational materials located on a bank intranet.

My research has provided an analysis of our current industry standards for presenting operational material to employees through the use of a SharePoint site, the areas that exist for improved usability, and a proposed framework for implementation in the most time and cost-effective manner that will result in long-term operational success.

To accomplish this research, I have utilized a mixed method approach to gain the most well-rounded and fullest picture of the current situation. I have chosen to conduct surveys with ten division branch managers and perform a usability test with three bank employees to fully evaluate the situation and determine the best course of actions to improve usability.

Usability Test and Survey Findings

The usability study was conducted with three current bank employees with varying years of banking experience of two, eleven, and eighteen years. I constructed a survey for ten division branch managers that included ten open ended questions to allow open discussion about the varying degree of effectiveness a particular banking procedure has. I chose to use a complex procedure that is equally completed by the three employees on a daily/weekly basis. The procedure chosen was on how to place a stop payment both under and over one thousand dollars.

Testing Results

Enabling Features

Search Feature
The enabling feature that was identified was the search feature. Survey results indicated that the search tool worked well and provided results that made it easier for the user to find exactly what they are looking for in a quick and efficient manner. Of the six respondents, five reported this feature as enabling, one as disabling. Due to the high positive feedback concerning the search function, I concluded no improvements need to be done to the search function to improve usability.

Search Feature, Document Preview, and Hyperlinks
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Visuals and Examples

The observation results indicated the desire for visuals and examples incorporated into the operational material in the form of an image or additional section with a hyperlink to the visual and/or example. All three of the participants expressed some form of a desire to see this incorporated. I have concluded the need for visuals and/or examples a high priority for improved usability and the lack of these has resulted in this being a disabling feature in terms of usability.

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they are something to consider as the top priorities are being completed and would help with user satisfaction. I have classified these findings as secondary priorities.

PROJECT PLAN

Improving Usability and User Satisfaction

Improving the usability of the operational material located on the SharePoint site will require careful implementation to maximize benefits to our employees and you as administrators while minimizing confusion and frustration during the implementation process.

Therefore, the implementation plan was designed around the following objectives:

- Mitigate user confusion and dissatisfaction over the operational material usability
- Provide an effective and efficient system for organizing improvements to usability
- Refine and support the current SharePoint site that will benefit users and the training department and operations department

To meet these objectives, we will coordinate as a group comprised of the training department, operations department, as well as the SharePoint representative to simplify the amount of information provided in each procedure and revamp the material to improve usability.

A simplified version of the current operational material would encourage more consistent and proper usage across all branches, alleviating confusion for employees, and help make our client's experience more enjoyable. Implementing the proposed changes will potentially result in higher client satisfaction, fewer client complaints, and heightened user and administrator satisfaction with the operational material.

Phase One: Preparing the Operational Material for Wide Release

To prepare the operational material for its future usage, it will need to undergo additional user testing and refinement. The operational material is currently available to all employees and administrators, in its current form and testing materials should be released once the final corrections have been made. Having multiple versions could cause procedures to be completed incorrectly, adding to the user dissatisfaction.

The training and operations department will then work with IT and the SharePoint representative to identify and prioritize the current issues that will need to be fixed prior to the material wide release. If additional improvements will take an extended time to address (i.e., more than three months), a plan will be developed regarding the long-term implementation of such improvements.

At this stage, additional feedback will be gathered from our employees to identify any additional errors, or glitches that have occurred when utilizing operational material. The employees selected to participate in the additional user studies will be provided with a series of tasks to complete using the updated materials and asked to report back concerning the materials ability to meet the user needs. At the end of this phase, a report on the improvements made, any plans for long-term refinement of the material, and user feedback on the current improvements will be delivered to the training and operations department.

Phase Two: Training and Supporting Administrators

Though the operational material offers the most obvious benefits to our employees, it provides several benefits to you administrators, as well. In addition, the operational material requires active involvement from administrators to function at a top-tier level of efficiency for all users. Thus, it is proposed that there is a period of time dedicated to training and supporting lead administrators such as yourselves in your use of the operational material.

Through a step-by-step plan, it is proposed to train administrators on using/updating the operational material on the SharePoint site. Using the SharePoint site consistently across all departments will mitigate confusion for users, will save administrators time, and will track user satisfaction in real time. Training guides available on the SharePoint site will reinforce the operational material procedures and always be available to all users.

As a manager who has worked her way from entry level to upper level branch management, I fully understand the different sets of languages that exist between frontline employees and administrators. Although the two are referencing the same materials or procedures, the titles used to reference these differ from the commonly accepted name verses the title provided by the regulators and government. To combat this and increase usability for all employees using the operational materials, I suggest Banner Bank sets an acceptable list of terms to be used by frontline employees and administrators that will remove the disconnect that occurs. I suggest this process is included during this phase while administrators are set to have their training sessions. The training department has the best working knowledge of what frontline employees commonly refer to different operational materials as and will be able to provide guidance to sections that can be adjusted, while the operations department can oversee the name changes and confirm the requested changes are well within Banner Bank's ability without acting out of regulatory guidelines.

Banner Bank will need to emphasize to administrators that understanding information of the new, improved operational material is required before a new procedure can go live on the SharePoint site. Requiring this will ensure consistency for users and will guarantee the viability of the operational material.

It is estimated that this phase will require three months to complete, allowing time for the material to be made and distributed (via email and the SharePoint site) to administrators.

Phase Three: Generating Employee Support for the Updated Operational Material

In this phase, a shift will be made to a marketing-style campaign that raises employee awareness of the updated operational material and its versatility and improved usability. Using Banner Bank's current marketing department, we will broadcast information on the improved operational material quickly and in a variety of formats, tailored to the different characteristics of the distribution lists. The goal of this project phase is to gradually introduce our employees to the improvements made (since it is currently available to all our employees) and alert employees to the deadline by which all operational materials will be discontinued and the new versions released. New and incoming employees will receive their own trainings on how to use the SharePoint system (without mentioning the old/pre-existing operational material).

Gaining frontline employee buy in to the improved operational material is going to be a vital part of the operational materials success. I propose the method we use to introduce this to our employees be different than how we have introduced other changes at Banner Bank. I suggest the updates be presented to the employees in a similar fashion as our bank campaigns are presented to our clients. In that I mean, create excitement, create intrigue, and gain their attention. Our marketing department does a splendid job at putting together marketing campaigns throughout the year and I suggest we utilize that in-house knowledge and expertise during this phase.

Employee feedback will be recorded throughout this campaign period, which is estimated to last ten days (to raise awareness while also not bombarding employees with the message).

Phase Four: Eliminating Unnecessary Information

After campaigning and raising awareness about the updated operational material, links will then be discontinued to the current materials. The process of discontinuing these materials will ideally take place on a weekend, so that no branch operations will be disrupted by the deployment of the updated materials. Once the old links are disabled, IT and administrators will navigate the SharePoint site in staging modules to ensure that the old materials are completely gone. Administrators will test the system to ensure that updated operational materials feed into the SharePoint site properly from IT's view and that they are accessible from the administrator/employee view as well.

It is expected this transition period to last one weekend. Additional time needed will only be scheduled if needed, and highly used procedures will be converted first to minimize the possibility of system outages come Monday morning.

Phase Five: Monitoring the Usage

Once the updates have been completed and the SharePoint site is restored, an email notification will be sent out to all users alerting them to the completed change. During the first few days of the update, higher level IT and administrators will be monitoring the SharePoint site ensuring any issues are identified and fixed in a timely manner while offering a work around in the meantime if possible. Potential issues that could be experienced include broken links,

missing forms, and access denied to employees. While these are issues that occur even with the most stringent of testing before implementation, the appropriate staff needs to be ready to react to any and all issues that arise.

Phase Six: Processing Feedback and Additional Opportunities for Improved Usability

I will be available to receive and process feedback concerning the operational material improvements. Additional refinements may be necessary based on this feedback. I will gather this feedback and compile the findings into a progress report to be reviewed by our training and operations department.

Reports

Reports will be submitted weekly in the form of progress reports that discuss the findings, progress, conclusions, and suggestions for future action. At the end of the project period, a final progress report discussing the cumulative actions and future actions will be detailed. This report will be presented to our executive leadership team.

QUALIFICATIONS

Professional Summary

A project like this requires personnel to organize and manage its research, design, development and implementation. I have the needed skill-set to aid in managing such a large project through extensive user experience. My background demonstrates robust experience and expertise in skills relevant to the project's implementation.

Professional Summary- Experienced leader in the financial industry, responsible for both growing business and maintaining high operational standards. Similar projects I have been a part of include various group projects at Oregon State University and Arizona State University, as well as community projects with different organizations I volunteer with. In the past two bank conversions Banner has been involved in I have been selected to represent my company and be a "branch buddy" who oversees going into newly acquired branches and fully converting them. Doing this requires immense dedication and perseverance through difficult challenges, under tight timelines. I have a B.S in Business Administration, Management from Oregon State University and am currently a Graduate student at Arizona State University in Technical Communication.

Project Role

I will serve with the project managers. I have professional and organizational skills to collaborate with high-end developers and organize the outsourced work. I will also be responsible for quality assurance checks to make sure the final product is effective and professional meeting the goal of improving the usability of the operational material.

COSTS AND BENEFITS

Assessing the Budget

This proposal to increase usability is highlighted by its affordability and can be implemented for between $0–$5,000. While these usability improvements do contain some soft costs—expenses that are legitimately present but do not represent any money out of pocket—it is largely free of any major financial inhibitors.

The first two steps are mechanical in nature and can accomplished without costs above and beyond that of wages already being paid to employees. Phase Three, generating employee support for the new operational material, can be accomplished for no costs via email, employee meetings, etc. Phase Four and Phase Five will require the majority of the budget due to the extra employee time and resources need to accomplish the phases. Phase Six will incur cost if additional refinements are indicated through the feedback gathered.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make suggestions on improving the usability of the operational material currently put forth by our bank. Feedback and suggestions for revisions to the proposal may be sent to Amanda Nash, anash@bannerbank.com.

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List of Definitions

A

Active account

An open bank account in which transactions can be made; usually an account that has had activity within the last 3 years.

Annual percentage yield (APY)

The total amount of interest paid by the bank on your deposit account (checking, savings, CDs, IRAs) during the year. Includes interest paid on the amount held in the account as well as compounded interest for the year.

Automated Clearing House (ACH)

A nationwide funds transfer network that enables participating financial institutions to electronically credit, debit and settle entries to bank accounts.

Automatic funds transfer

An arrangement that automatically moves funds from your account to another internal or external account on a date you choose; for example, every payday.

Automatic payment

An arrangement that automatically deducts funds from your account on the day you choose in order to pay a recurring bill (for example, a car loan payment or a mortgage payment).

B

Bill Pay

A service from Bank of America that lets you pay your bills online.

C

Cashier's check

A check issued by a bank and paid from its funds. A cashier's check will not usually bounce because the amount it is written for is paid to the bank when it is issued, and the bank then assumes the obligation.

Certificate of Deposit (CD)

A time deposit that is payable at the end of a specified amount of time or "term." CDs generally pay a fixed rate of interest and, depending on the market rate environment, can offer a higher interest rate than other types of deposit accounts. Terms can range from 7 days to 10 years. CDs are insured by the FDIC up to applicable limits. If early withdrawal from the CD prior to the end of the term is permitted, a penalty is usually assessed.

Certified check

A check for which the bank guarantees payment.

Collected balance

The balance in a deposit account, not including items that have not yet been paid, or collected.

Compound interest

Interest that is calculated on both the accumulated interest and the principal balance in the account. The more frequently interest is compounded, the higher the effective yield.

D

Deposited Item Returned Fee (or Cashed Item Returned Fee)

A fee we charge each time a check or other item that we either cashed for you or accepted for deposit to your account is returned to us unpaid.

Direct deposit
A service that automatically transfers recurring deposits into your checking or savings account. Deposits can include salary, pension, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, or other regular monthly income.

Disclosure
Information pertaining to an account's services, fees and regulatory requirements.

E

Electronic funds transfer (EFT)
Any transfer of funds initiated by electronic means from an electronic terminal, telephone, computer, ATM or magnetic tape.

EMV/Chip Card
An EMV or chip card is a standard card that contains an embedded microchip as well as a traditional magnetic stripe. The chip encrypts information to increase data security when making transactions at terminals or ATMs that are chip-enabled.

F

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)
The FDIC is an independent agency of the United States government that protects people who have funds on deposit with FDIC-insured banks and savings associations against the loss of their insured deposits if their bank or savings association fails. FDIC insurance is backed by the full faith and credit of the United States government. The FDIC guarantees deposit accounts (checking, savings, money market savings and CDs) up to applicable limits, which is $250,000 per depositor, per insured bank, for each account ownership category.

Float
The time between the date when a check is deposited to an account and the date the funds become available.

I

Inactive account
A bank account in which there have not been any transactions (excluding direct deposit) for an extended period of time. In some cases, when there has been no activity in the account within a period specified by state law (generally at least 3 years), the law requires the bank to turn funds in the account over to the state as unclaimed property.

Interest-bearing account
An account that earns interest.

J--

L

Linked account
Any account linked to another account at the same financial institution so that funds can be transferred electronically between accounts. In some cases, the combined balance of all linked accounts may determine whether monthly maintenance and other fees are applied to the account.

M

Minimum daily balance

The lowest end-of-day balance in an account during a statement cycle; a certain minimum daily balance is often required with interest-bearing accounts to avoid a monthly maintenance fee or qualify for special services.

N--

O

Overdraft

An overdraft occurs when a bank makes a payment that has been requested (such as a check), even though there are not enough funds available in the account to cover it. This type of payment is known as an overdraft and the account is said to have been overdrawn.

Overdraft protection

Overdraft Protection links your eligible Bank of America checking account to another Bank of America account (such as savings, credit card, eligible second checking account or line of credit) and automatically transfers available funds to cover purchases and prevent returned checks and declined items when you don't have enough money in your checking account.

P

Personal identification number (PIN)

The unique number you must use to access your account at an ATM or make a purchase with a debit card. Your PIN should always be kept confidential.

R

Regulation E

Regulation E carries out the purposes of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act, which establishes the basic rights, liabilities and responsibilities of consumers who use electronic fund transfer services and of financial institutions that offer these services. The primary objective of the act and Regulation E is the protection of individual consumers engaging in electronic fund transfers.

Electronic fund transfer systems include automated teller machine transfers, telephone bill-payment services, point-of-sale (POS) terminal transfers in stores and preauthorized transfers from or to a consumer's account (such as direct deposit and social security payments). The term "electronic fund transfer" (EFT) generally refers to a transaction initiated through an electronic terminal, telephone, computer or magnetic tape that instructs a financial institution to either credit or debit a consumer's asset account.

S

Savings account

A deposit account that generally earns higher interest than a checking account and limits you to no more than a total of 6 automatic or preauthorized transfers, telephone transfers or payments (including check, draft and point-of-sale transactions, if checks or debit cards are allowed on the account) from a savings account each monthly statement cycle.

Stop payment

A request that the bank not pay a check or payment you have written or authorized. Stop-payment orders are generally placed for checks that have been lost or stolen, or in situations where a purchase is disputed. Stop payment orders generally expire after 6 months and a fee is usually charged for this service.

T

Time deposit

An agreement to deposit a stated amount in the bank for a fixed length of time during which a fixed rate of interest will be paid (unless disclosed as a variable rate). Penalties are typically assessed if the funds are withdrawn before the end of the agreed-upon period.

Transaction limitations

Refers to a Federal Reserve Board regulation that limits certain types of withdrawals and/or transfers you can make from your savings and/or money market deposit accounts. With such accounts, no more than 6 pre authorized or automatic transfers (including check, draft and point-of-sale transactions, if checks or debit cards are allowed on the account) or telephone/PC transfers (including bill payments) may be made each month.

U

Uncollected funds

Items deposited in an account that have not yet been collected by the bank on which they were drawn.

V

Variable rate

An interest rate that may fluctuate during the term of a loan, line of credit or deposit account. Rates may adjust due to changes in an index rate (such as the prime rate); in some situations, the bank may set its own rate.

W

Wire transfer

An electronic payment service for transferring funds (for example, through the Federal Reserve Wire Network or the Clearing House Interbank Payments System).

Z--

(Bank of America, 2018)

Informed Consent Agreement

You are invited to participate in a survey about the usability of the operational material presented by your current employer. You are selected for this survey because you are someone who regularly uses the operational material. The survey is conducted by Amanda Nash, a graduate student in the Technical Communication program at Arizona State University.

You can participate in this study by completing a brief survey that should take no longer than 15 minutes of your time. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study.

There are no foreseeable risks to your participation: Your responses to the survey questions will be anonymous. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Amanda Nash at arnash3@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Thank you for your participation.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must be 18 years of age or older. By signing the consent form, you are giving your consent to voluntarily participate in this research project.

_____
Printed Name of Subject/Legally Authorized Representative

_____   _____
Signature of Subject/Legally Authorized Representative   Date

Usability Testing Checklists

Three weeks before
- ❑ Secure location
- ❑ Create your list of tasks to test
- ❑ Decide what kind(s) of users you want to test with
- ❑ Recruit participants
- ❑ Get approve from Banner Bank to complete testing as planned

Two weeks before
- ❑ Get feedback on your list of tasks from Professor
- ❑ Arrange incentives for participants (e.g., order gift certificates, requisition cash)
- ❑ Start screening participants and scheduling them into time slots

One week before
- ❑ Send email to the participants with directions
- ❑ Line up a stand-by participant in case of a calls ins

One or two days before
- ❑ Speak with participants to reconfirm and ask if they have any questions
- ❑ Finish writing the scenarios
- ❑ Do a pilot test of the scenarios
- ❑ Get any user names/passwords and sample data needed for the test
- ❑ Make copies of handouts for participants
    - ❑ Recording consent form
    - ❑ Sets of the scenarios on individual pieces of paper
- ❑ Make sure incentives for participants are ready

Test day (before the first test)
- ❏ Make sure network is fully operational (no updates pending or network outages)

- ❏ Turn off or disable anything on the test computer that might interrupt the test (e.g., email or instant messaging, calendar event reminders, scheduled virus scans)

- ❏ Create bookmarks for any pages you'll need to open during the test

- ❏ Make sure you have any phone numbers you might need:
  IT contact-for network or server problems

Before each test
- ❏ Reload sample data, if necessary

- ❏ Clear the browser history

- ❏ Open a "neutral" page (e.g., Google) in the Web browser

At the end of each test
- ❏ Take time before the next session to jot down a few notes about things you observed

(Krug S. , Usability Checklists, 2010)

Usability test script - Web sites
Reprinted from *Rocket Surgery Made Easy*
© 2010 Steve Krug

THE INSTRUCTIONS

Web browser should be open to MyBannerNet homepage

Hi, _____.

Before we begin, I have some information for you, and I'm going to read it to make sure that I cover everything.

You probably already have a good idea of why we asked you here but let me go over it again briefly. I'm asking three employees to navigate the SharePoint site, MyBannerNet and complete certain tasks so I can see whether it works as intended. The session should take about 30 minutes.

The first thing I want to make clear right away is that I'm testing the *site and material*, not you. You can't do anything wrong here. In fact, this is probably the one place today where you don't have to worry about making mistakes.

As you use the site, I'm going to ask you as much as possible to try to think out loud: to say what you're looking at, what you're trying to do, and what you're thinking. This will be a big help to me.

If you have any questions as we go along, just ask them. I may not be able to answer them right away, since I'm interested in how employees do when they don't have someone sitting next to them to help. But if you still have any questions when we're done I'll try to answer them then. And if you need to take a break at any point, just let me know.

If you would, I'm going to ask you to sign a consent form for me. It just says that I have your permission to observe you, and that the data collected will only be used for my project at ASU.

Do you have any questions so far?

THE HOME PAGE TOUR

OK, great we can start looking at the site and material.

First, I'm going to ask you to look at the home page and tell me what you make of it, just look around and do a little narrative.

You can scroll if you want to, but don't click on anything yet.

Allow this to continue for three or four minutes, at most.

THE TASKS

Thanks. Now I'm going to ask you to try doing some specific tasks. I'm going to read each one out loud and give you a printed copy.

I'm also going to ask you to do these tasks without using Search. I'll learn a lot more about how well the operational material works that way.

And again, as much as possible, it will help us if you can try to think out loud as you go along.

Allow the user to proceed until you don't feel like it's producing any value, or the user becomes very frustrated.

Repeat for each task or until time runs out.

- From the MyBannerNet home screen (SharePoint Site) please navigate to the Operations Department landing page without using the search function
- Next, go to the Document Vault page

- Please find and select the Stop Payment procedure

- Once the procedure has opened up please talk me through the steps to place a stop payment on an item over $1,000.00, please remember speaking out loud helps me a lot

- Please talk me through the steps to place a stop payment on an item under $1,000.00, please remember speaking out loud helps me a lot

- Please close the procedure tab

- Please navigate to the Training Department landing page without using the search function

- Next, go to the Compliance Training page

- Please explain this page to me, highlighting information that you find valuable/important/helpful

- Please close this tab and return to the MyBannerNet home page

WRAPPING UP

That's it! Do you have any questions for me, now that we're done?

Give them their incentive

Thank them for their time and participation

(Krug S. , Usability Test Script, 2010)

APPENDIX D
SURVEY AND CODING REPORTS

1

Q1 - What is your opinion of the targeted landing page (MyBannerNet home page)?

I like the look of it

There are a lot of tabs and sub tabs and sometime it seems items aren't where they should be

I like the look of the page, it looks modern and fresh

Easy to use

Improvement could be made to its design

Hard to navigate, usually just use the search function as I don't know what category things are in.

I like the look of it

There are a lot of tabs and sub tabs and sometime it seems items aren't where they should be

I like the look of the page, it looks modern and fresh

Easy to use

Improvement could be made to its design

Hard to navigate, usually just use the search function as I don't know what category things are in.

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Q2 - Does the search feature produce search results meeting your needs as a user?

Yes

Yes

No, it only works if you know the exact name

Yes

Usually

Yes

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Q3 - Does the document presentation and layout meet your expectation as a user?

It is ok, not great

No, i'd like it to be more streamlined

No, to many steps to download

Yes

Yes

Yes

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Q4 - Does the operational material format and layout force you as a user to make unnecessary steps?

Yes, to make clicks to get to where you want to go, should be organized better.

I usually scroll up and down a few times figuring out where all the parts are that I need

Yes, the organization of the steps are not well thought out

Yes, steps are listed all over the pages, it is obvious there is no set format for the material

Yes, I have to search around for all the information I need

To many steps to open, very generalized examples would help

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Q6 - Are you using the operational documents in the way as it was designed, or is additional research needed to complete tasks?

Are you using the operational documents in the way as it was designed, or is additional research needed to complete tasks?

No, I tend to just call someone who I know has done it before and have them walk me through it

Yes, but I do have to double check on some tasks

No, I've had to figure out work arounds for a number of the procedures

Yes

Additional research is often needed

I often have to go to several different places to final my answers

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Q7 - What added features and functionality would the operational material benefit from?

What added features and functionality would the operational material benefit from?

Allow employees to make suggestions, divide up information by job title, go back to organizing material my topic

Better organization, steps with steps, information with information

Better layout and organization

Rewrite everything and work on how the information is given and make it all the same layout

Improve landing page navigation

Examples

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Q8 - Can you complete key tasks with no unanswered questions?

No, only if I completely know how to do the task

No

Yes, unless I get stuck due to an update when the procedure wasn't updated as well.

Yes, but a new manager probably could not

No

No

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Q9 - Is there important information missing from the documents?

Yes, probably but nothing it coming to mind

No

I don't think so, they just all seem to long most are over ten pages long

I don't think so, I just think things are jumbled into various areas

Sometimes, department changes are not document well in the material

Yes, which makes me search additional material

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Q10 - Do you exhibit frustration or anxiety during task completion? If so, at what phase of completing the task?

No, I don't feel like I do.

Yes, at the end when I'm checking if I've done everything properly

Yes, the middle when I feel like I've been working thought the issue for to long with the client waiting

No

Yes, middle

I do experience frustration at the start and middle

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11

Q1 - What is your opinion of the targeted landing page (MyBannerNet home page)?
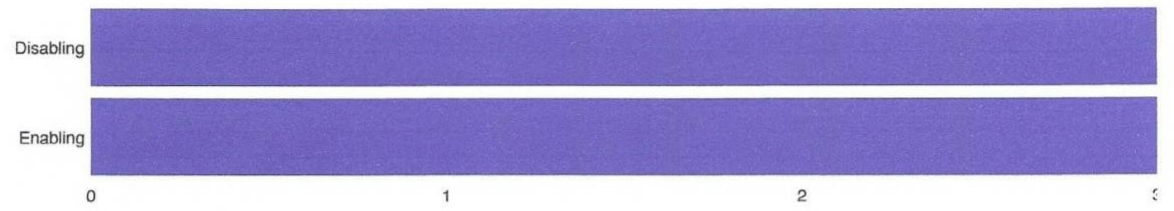
Field	Count
Disabling	3
Enabling	3

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Q2 - Does the search feature produce search results meeting your needs as a user?

Q2 - Does the search feature produce search results meeting your needs as a user?
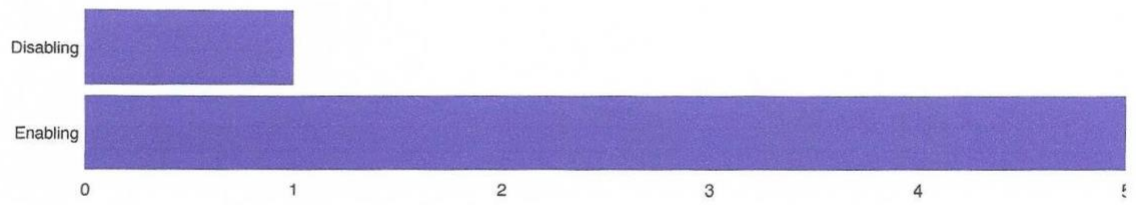
Disabling	1
Enabling	5

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Q3 - Does the document presentation and layout meet your expectation as a user?
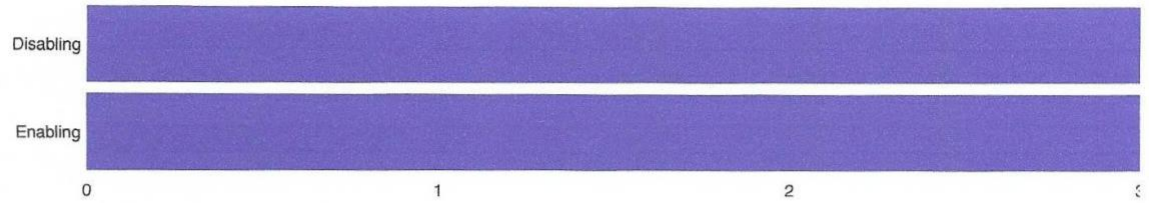
Disabling	3
Enabling	3

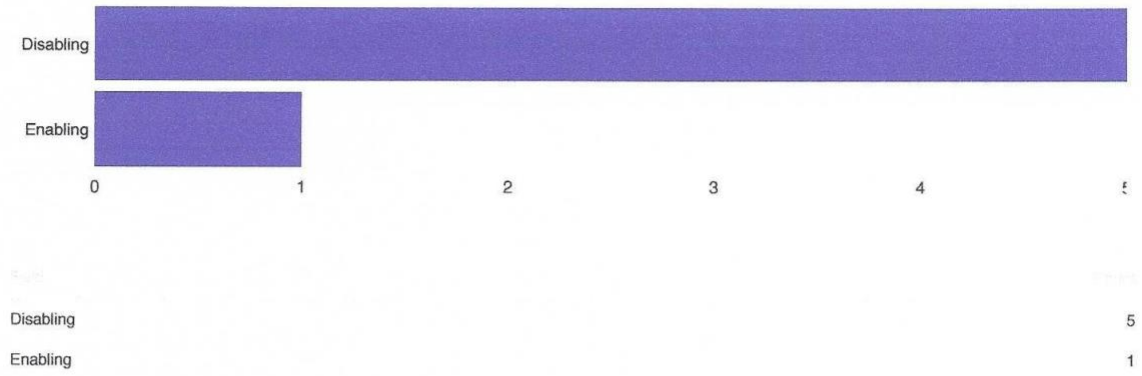Q4 - Does the operational material format and layout force you as a user to make unnecessary steps?

Disabling	6

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Q5 - What are your impressions of the operational materials?

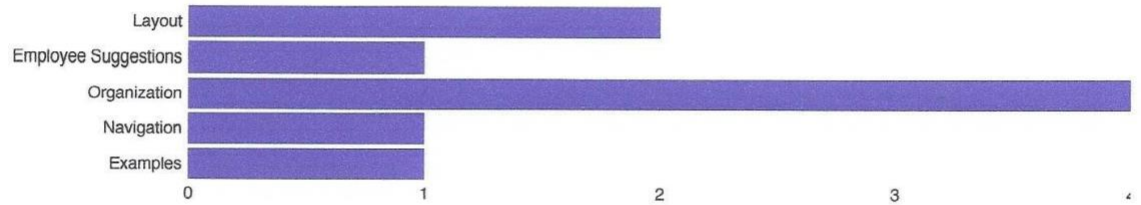|	
Disabling	5
Enabling	1

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Q6 - Are you using the operational documents in the way as it was designed, or is additional research needed to complete tasks?
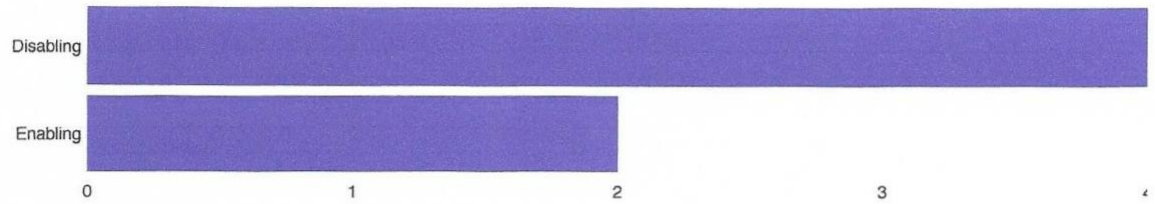
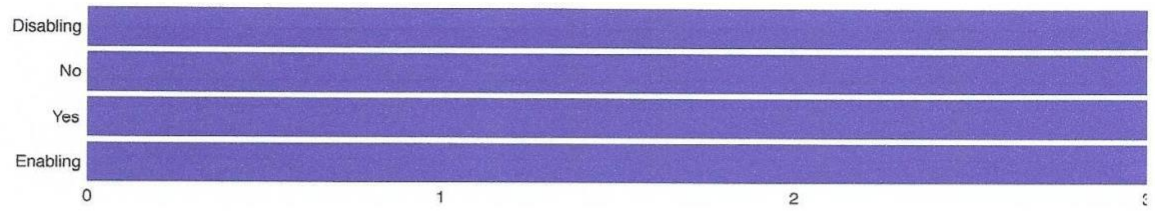| Field	Count
Disabling	4
Enabling	2

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Q7 - What added features and functionality would the operational material benefit from?

Layout	2
Employee Suggestions	1
Organization	4
Navigation	1
Examples	1

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Q8 - Can you complete key tasks with no unanswered questions?

Disabling	3
No	3
Yes	3
Enabling	3
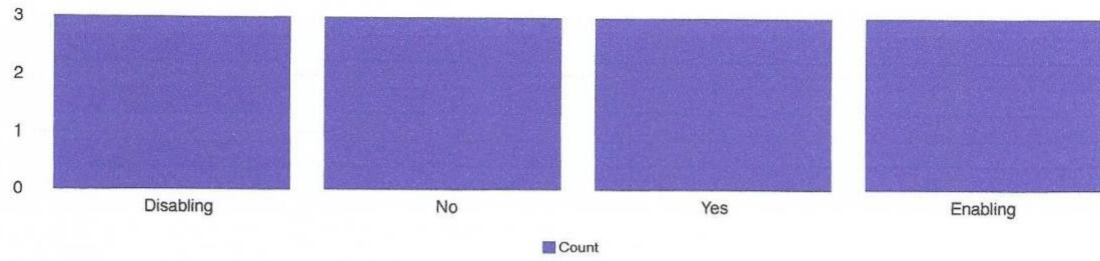
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Q9 - Is there important information missing from the documents?

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Q10 - Do you exhibit frustration or anxiety during task completion? If so, at what phase of completing the task?
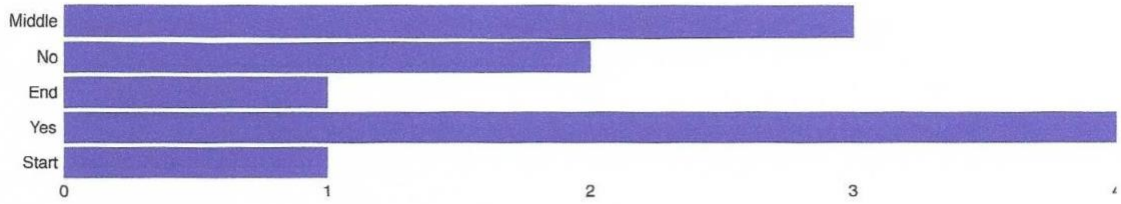
Field	Count
Middle	3
No	2
End	1
Yes	4
Start	1

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Amanda Roxanne Nash was born in Roseburg, Oregon on February 12, 1988. She received her elementary education at Riddle Elementary. Her secondary education was completed at Riddle High School, both in Riddle, Oregon. In 2006, Amanda entered Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon majoring in Business Administration, Management. Upon graduation in 2006, she entered into the financial field as a bank teller and worked her way to become a branch manager. In Amanda's first two years of management she was awarded at the 2015 and 2016 annual sales conference for her efforts in branch growth and development. Amanda has been selected as a team lead as part of a conversion team to assist with bank conversions. In August 2016 she entered the Graduate College at Arizona State University to pursue a MS in Technical Communication. Amanda plans to continue to advance in her career and move into the operational sectors of banking and financial services. Amanda is an active volunteer in her small Oregon community; she is secretary for the Riddle Area Chamber of Commerce as well as an annual budget committee member for the City of Riddle and Douglas County School District.