

## UX Strategy Plan

Unfortunately, this scenario lacks almost every piece of information I would want in order to craft a UX strategy. Here, then, is a plan to get the information I would use to make such a strategy.

The most critical missing piece is the business goals. The scenario tells me that the airline has multiple “products” but not what they are nor how they relate to the company’s business goals. Therefore, the first step is for Alice to meet with Bob and likely the heads of product strategy & marketing for Gamma.

Key questions to answer:

- Which of the company’s products are new? Which are legacy?
  - What is the adoption rate of the new products?
  - What is the use of the legacy products? Is it steady, declining?
- What was the motivation for developing the new products?
- How does the existing product suite match the company’s growth strategy?
- Who are the target customers for these applications?
  - Are there internal-facing applications? If so, which parts of the company need them?
- Are all the applications bespoke, or are any of them licensed or contracted products?
  - Are the contracted/licensed products obtained from enterprise partners or are they commodities that could be replaced easily?

With these questions answered, Alice should now have a better sense for what products might be part of her strategy. Since she has only been there three months, a great deal of legacy knowledge is going to be missing. At this point, she should ask Bob to identify at least one experienced employee who knows the suite and can be her go-to person for detailed questions.

Next, she needs to gather information on the company’s strategy and roadmap plans from these same senior executives. Example options:

- Is Gamma at a stable size, and focused on (existing) customer satisfaction?
- Is Gamma targeting growth?
  - If so, what market segments are seen as the best growth targets?
- What does the company have in terms of customer profiles and how does that align with the company’s intended customer profiles?
  - Ideally, Alice can access the primary research used to determine these profiles so she doesn’t have to redo work in drawing up personae.
- Where does Bob see Gamma in three years? What are the biggest obstacles to getting there?
  - She will need to focus on which of these obstacles relate to the product suite. One way to do that is to ask about competitors and what those competitors have for a product suite. There’s no use making a UX strategy to fix defects in an existing product if the business needs customers moved to a new platform.

Once Alice has enough information on the company's business roadmap, she can begin to draw connections between the product suite and its contribution to that roadmap. From here she can do her own competitive research to identify crucial CX elements in competitor offerings.

Ultimately, the goal is to produce a well-grounded set of personae and customer journey maps (or equivalent artifacts) then demonstrate links between this UX-centric picture of the company and the business-centric view that Bob and his senior staff have.

Once those links are identified it's time to start drawing up a UX strategy. The strategy should describe how weaknesses or gaps in existing product UX lessen their ability to support the business goals, or may even impede goals. The strategy should contain one or more concrete steps to be taken to alleviate each of the top 3-5 deficiencies identified.

Here are some examples of what those might be:

- Alice determines that Gamma's nearest competitor has rolled out a slick mobile app and is poised to steal valuable young high-spending customers with this app. The strategy details how to create a competitive app in a short time, perhaps by hiring an outside agency.
- Alice determines that usability defects in Gamma's booking system are causing people to miss high-margin "flight extras". This aligns with the current cross-sell/up-sell strategy, so she proposes a series of studies with representative customers based on her personae to identify and remove specific obstacles to profit here.
- Alice determines that an inward-facing app is hard to configure and slow to respond, resulting in Gamma not showing potential flyers all the trip options they might want. She proposes sunseting the bespoke app in favor of a highly rated third-party inventory management tool that can be whitelabeled to look like a new Gamma product. She can show how increased availability of flights reduces abandoned visits and results in more full and profitable flights.

You get the idea: gather the right data and create a strategy that shows how UX effort will align with business goals and improve profit.