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**complete membership management
for you and your members**

the digital advantage:
crafting better member journeys

the combination of design and technology

Digital design and technology can play a crucial role in addressing various pain points in a member's journey.

In a recent live webinar, Farshad Vahdat, Head of Digital Services at oomi, and Gavin Lawrence, Managing Director of Movimo, online payment speiialists, discussed creating digital advantge through improving the online member experience.

They considered the following:

• how to enhance the initial member experience, guiding potential members into the most appropriate subscription

• online payment solutions for membership fees and how they contribute to a smooth joining process.

• the importance of seamless data sharing between your core membership CRM and your website and payment solutions

• practical insights and lessons from real-world experiences and examples

This document gives some brief highlights from their discussion. Watch the full live webinar **here**.

the initial member experience

Farshad: The first point to get across is the importance of the first impression. Prospective members possibly won't return if they feel like they've had a bad experience on your website. That initial judgement is based on visual design - 64% of people believe that a simple design is a good design.

Simplicity is the key in all of this. In the world of membership, we start off with a disadvantage simply because of the types of content, types of resourcing, the types of things that we offer. We tend to have complexity within memberships, within subscriptions, within signing up and conversions, lots of user inputs. So there are numerous entities, and lots of user options. Members are coming with high expectations now of the online experience, of what they're expecting to see. So we need to ensure people can digest information, and provide clean and easy navigation, on whatever device they are using.

For example, with calls to actions or buttons - try and be as informative as you can. Things like making a button red could increase conversion by 21%, and by adding an arrow could increase conversion even more.

Ensure that people have a cohesive journey rather than being let down when they land on your website.

Jakob Nielsen, a User Experience (UX) guru, suggests paying attention to what users do, not what they say. There are tools available, such as Hotjar , that allows you to see how people are actually interacting with your visuals, the actions they are taking.

Gavin: Your website is really your shop-window, where prospective members get their first impression. They will then want to come in and browse, and take a look around. You need to make it easy for them to do that.

why accessibility is important

Farshad: Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) give a guideline of where your website should be to support the widest audience. So for example if you are awarded a level A, it's usually on the low end. AA is where I would say you want to be. It's about focusing on the elements that people interact with - are they clear enough, is there good contrast. And some examples of that could be the choice of colour, or having consistent navigation. Often good accessibility comes from following good practice, and a good level of web accessibility usually means well-built, easy to use website.
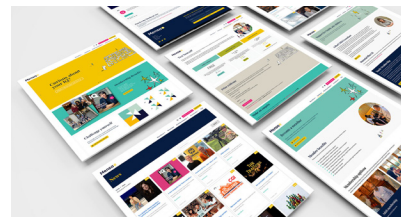
focus on the critical stages of the journey

Farshad: When you design a website, you won't get every single page, every single visual aspect right. There will be areas where you will have to compromise. But you really need to prioritise on the key user journeys and the focus should be on those journeys without which you wouldn't have a conversion. Say for example, members joining.

In a recent project, we looked at when it comes to the members picking the right subscription. We looked at how we could use design to guide members down the right subscription path. Making it easy for them to digest information, and using icons to reduce the load on people so they understand exactly what type of content it is.

Pricing transparency is also important at this stage- and provide, say, subscriptions side-by-side, if you have different membership plans. You might want promote a specific sub-section, and use design to be prescriptive and show which ones you think would be the most popular, whether that's choice of colour or whatever it might be.

Gavin: And checkout is the critical stage in that member journey.

online payment - the critical step in a member journey

Gavin: This is about understanding the payment part of the process, If you've done all the hard work with technology and design, and they've decided that they definitely want to go ahead, the last thing you want to do is to is to now create an extra barrier in that process.

Direct debits are critical. You have to make sure that your member journey acts within the rules of the direct debit scheme, and the processs needs to be signed off by a sponsoring bank. Make sure you test, and there there are no dead ends. One of the things that really frustrate people is when you're trying to click on something and you just cannot get to the correct page.

Repeat form filling is a real source of frustration we hear from people - asking for the same information for delivery and billing for example. There's often a tick box, if it's well designed, to say auto fill.

Farshad: Pricing transparency is also important at this stage.

Gavin: Yes, one of my massive frustrations is misleading prices, extra fees. Another one is an unnecessary numbers of clicks. I was filling out something the other day where I had to give my date of birth and I literally had to just scroll back through every single month from the date we're at now and then finally click on the number that I wanted. And that was an awful experience.

You also have to give a choice of how members would you like to pay. When there are options, you can always auto-populate or point to the method that you would prefer them to use, such as direct debit.

Direct debit payments is a very, very tried and tested method. But if you make it the only option, you will alienate perhaps some of the younger generation who are not as likely to pay by direct debit. There is a real growth in digital wallets. During a checkout journey now, people don't actually get their credit and debit card out that often and input the details. We're looking at rates now where digital wallets - such as Google Pay and Apple Pay - are used for 49% of global e-commerce payments.

the importance of data sharing

Farshad: To support member journeys, a lot of business logic, a lot of work flows tend to happen within the CRM and the website. The CRM should be the single source of data, and the website is just a way for members to get that information. Also, if you have a single source of clean data, it's a lot easier to integrate with tools available online.

Gavin Lawrence
Managing Director
Movimo

Gavin's payment expertise has been developed through working in the payments / fintech sector since 2006. He has experience across technology and professional services and has focused on Bacs Direct Debits and Credits.

Farshad Vahdat
Head of Digital Services
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Farshad joined oomi in 2021. He has a background in creative web design and development. He is responsible for all oomi's web and digital projects and keeping us at the forefront of digital communications technology.

find out more

You can get access to more resources, including webinars and customer stories, on our website **www.oomi.co.uk**

If you would like to discuss your technology challenges related to membership management, we would love to hear from you.

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