

case study: product development



1
The introductory screen outlines the features and benefit of participating and using the season map.



2
More detail and privacy information, along with a prompt to start an account.



3
Input of basic information for your account.

A customer's information is input in three phases so that they can assess their comfort. Some customers expressed apprehension with storing such critical and private information on a web site. As such, the system was designed to work with varying degrees of customer information.



4
Enter and account name and secure password...



5
... and the main menu.

This is the page that would greet them from now on.



6
A quick synopsis of financial goals and accomplishments organized by season.

The highlighted section shows the customer which of the seasons they are currently working in. It also displays which goals and accomplishments have been achieved and those that are pending.

Seasons Map - Generations Bank

Situation:

The executive team, along with the founders at Generations Bank had developed a unique philosophy that included nature's changing seasons as a metaphor for the phases of a person's financial planning.

In our early years – our spring, most of us are just getting a handle on the concepts of money... and the power that money affords us in terms of comfort, security and the future. We are investing in skills and practices that we hope to pave the way for future earning. In the summer, we are often consumed by the expenses of family. We invest in housing and provide assurances to our family's longevity and stability through insurance and mortgage products. In the fall as our earnings peak we save and invest aggressively while planning for such investments as children's college and our own indulges... such as a summer home or travel. Winter is often a cautious time when earnings have peaked and our sound investment strategy pays off.

Generations Bank's model built an ideal platform for education and promotion of sound financial practices and development of savings and investment skills. This combination of philosophy, knowledge and practices went hand in hand with a full offering of financial products and services. Offering a mechanism for customers to plan, track, learn and store their progress financially was the next goal.

Problem definition:

Generations Bank approached us with a unique question: how can we make use of web and internet technology to give their customers better tools. Tools that facilitate the customer's needs, while at the same time promoting healthy fiscal practices and echo the bank's investment philosophy.

Process:

We set about to help provide answers. We talked with customers, with staff and the bank's executives. We learned first hand about their needs. We studied others in the industry to see where some things had worked – and where others had failed.

Once we had assembled enough information we assembled an internal team of diverse thinkers and began a series of brainstorming exercises. Our modulation of divergent and then convergent thinking – our use of personas and scenarios provided benchmarks and measuring points for what was practical, and what was possible.

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7
Compare your progress to others.

The use of simple tools for prototyping and concept testing helped us to keep the budget down and maximize the precious resources we had available.



8
Review your information and make any updates.

In a short amount of time we developed a set of tools that would enable customers to learn about financial planning and to plan their own goals. They could build their financial road map and check progress on an ongoing basis. The ability to compare their progress and goals against others was a very important gauge.



8
The seasons map as revealed over time, accomplishments and goals. The current season expands to show more detail. Family members can be tracked, and goal categories can be turned on and off for a more clear display.

The technology, development, and deployment requirements were kept to a manageable level. This we determined could be done with existing tools and widely available band width.

The success of this project was in no small way a combination of a company with a vision, a team with great insight and imagination, and a relationship that included trust and freedom. This project was a win|win for everyone – especially the bank's customers.



9
Chart the progress and phases of financial progress for all members of your immediate family on a single screen.



10
Financial goals are hyper linked to an educational portal. This portal also maintains links to related products offered by Generations Bank and their associated companies.