



Discovery Report

External Version

Prepared by GRID Impact
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01. Stakeholder Interview Findings

Stakeholder Interviews

Learnings

1. Low maturity of providers in relation to design

Findings

- The level of market maturity in relation to user experience design is low, and even lower with human centered design. Most providers do not understand the value of good design; if they recognize design as being important they likely do not have a very sophisticated view of what constitutes good design.
- Two of the most mature organizations with respect to design seem to be best positioned to understand its value; they have people within their organization who are advocates for design or customer-centered innovation.
- One of the technology service providers, is interested using our work outputs as a way to help them sell services to providers.

Implications

- We need to continue our efforts to promote the value of good design among the providers so that when this project comes to an end there may be at least a few organizations ready to adopt our work outputs in some way.
- We should be careful about how sophisticated we get in the topics we explore through design and research in this project. If providers have only a basic understanding of the value of design, they are more likely to be interested in “usability” improvement more than “customer journey optimization”.
- The general appetite to absorb our design outputs might be low unless it is easy for providers to integrate our work into their existing systems. For example, it would be easier to adopt icons than redesigned transaction flows.
- Service providers, could be considered a secondary audience for this work, as they could use the outputs of this project to help sell services to providers.

Stakeholder Interviews

Learnings

2. Providers are already working on apps

Findings

- All branchless banking providers we spoke with (with the exception of one) either have smartphone apps in the market or are planning to launch an app within the coming months. One has an app in market. Four others are all working on apps to launch this year.
- Some providers have either released or are about to release apps, and so already have some level of existing investment. One provider is rebuilding their current app from scratch for technical reasons, but decided to keep their current design largely intact.

Implications

- Given that all providers have existing smartphone app design and development work ongoing (and most will deliver their first release to market some time this year) it may be difficult to encourage them to reassess their application designs in any significant way. They will be investing significant time and money in customer and merchant education with the first releases of their apps, and would probably only consider significant changes if substantial problems emerged after launch.
- There may be a window of opportunity to have a more significant impact on providers who will be coming to market later this year, but the expected end date of this project is probably getting late in the design and development cycle.
- It is important we identify strategies to increase excitement and engagement for this work among providers. This may mean adapting our final deliverables or communication strategy when we have insights and outputs. If possible, we should try to find ways to help providers absorb design changes after we finish this project.
- It may be more feasible for providers to adopt simpler changes (e.g icons or smaller improvements to transaction flows) in the near term. Other more significant changes may need to wait until “Version 2.0” apps are pushed into the market.
- It is likely that our design work will not “match” the designs of different providers’ applications, and so it may be harder for them to integrate our design recommendations into their work. We need to maintain a watch on what providers are releasing, and consider how we position our final outputs in relation to market activity.
- This also implies that it may be valuable to show different ways our design recommendations could be instantiated at the end dissemination event so that it is easier for providers to imagine how the design work could integrate into their own applications.

Stakeholder Interviews

Learnings

3. Leader-follower mentality

Findings

- Providers often follow each other in terms of service offerings or pricing, which results in a leader-follower business mindset.
- Most seem to be focused on “feature-level” customer acquisition and competition. This is characterized by either the extent of their agent network, fees or services available (e.g. bill payment). Customer experience is not a significant point of competition.
- One of the market leaders is about to launch a smartphone application that appears to be better designed than the current offerings on the market at the moment (though with lots of opportunity for improvement). The release of this application may encourage providers to rethink their smartphone strategy to follow this provider’s move.

Implications

- Karandaaz and GRID Impact’s advocacy for the importance of good design may be less impactful in relation to attitudes of the providers overall than a single provider adopting our recommendations and the others following.
- It would be useful to focus on seeding interest the most likely organizations to be ready to adopt our work (and spend the time and money needed to do so) as we work through this project. See Appetite for adoption for details.
- It may be more fruitful to get one (or more) providers who are interested in our work ready to adopt the design outputs to take advantage of the leader-follower mindset that is prevalent in this market. This would not preclude Karandaaz from sharing the insights, outputs and recommendations with the broader stakeholder group but might ensure at least one provider carries this work forward.

Stakeholder Interviews

Learnings

4. Mixed appetite for adoption of project outputs

Findings

- A few of the providers seem very interested in our work. Other organizations did not demonstrate significant interest in this project, as they did not perceive its relevance to their needs.
- The organizations who were interested were both interested in specific design outputs (onboarding, PINs, transaction flows) as well as customer insights (research outputs, segmentation).
- The reasons some organizations were not interested were likely because human centered design is a novel concept, and that designing the customer experience is not seen as an important activity. As noted above, “feature-level” competition seems more important.

Implications

- The end deliverables of this project should communicate the value of design (through examples and evidence) at a basic level to help providers understand the value of our work. Some basic explanations of design concepts may also be required.
- It may be useful to include examples of successful smartphone application designs from other countries to help providers understand the value of design.
- We should continue to understand which stakeholders at each of the providers would be the primary audience for the project outputs and make sure the end deliverables speak strongly to their focus and interests. For example, if we need to convince C-level executives, our pitch may focus more on the business opportunity than the design solution. Karandaaz should continue to identify the right people to engage with as this project continues.

Stakeholder Interviews

Learnings

5. Skepticism about smartphone adoption in low income segments

Findings

- All the providers we spoke with believe it will be closer to five years before smartphones will be adopted across the market. Many first adopters of the lower income segments will likely acquire smartphones over the coming 2-3 years, but most providers interviewed believed it would be closer to 5 years before lower income segments had sufficiently high smartphone usage to warrant attention.
- Thus, providers see the potential addressable market for smartphone owning, low-income and low-literacy customers as small and not worth attention at the moment.
- Subsequently all providers are focusing their smartphone efforts on mid-to-high income and higher educated segments.

Implications

- It is important to be conscious that our desire to focus on low-income / low-literacy segments is not in line with where providers are focusing at the moment, and so may not be relevant to current market needs.
- If we focus our design and research on low-income and low-literacy segments of the market, it's likely that providers will not see our work as particularly relevant to their current business needs. It may be more than one year before they are ready to begin to focus on this segment.
- Even if we focus on this segment in our work, we need to be careful about how we position the design and evidence so that providers are not turned off by a focus on low-income or low-literacy. If providers see our design recommendations and outputs as created “exclusively” for the low-income or low-literate populations, they may be turned off from adopting and implementing.
- If possible, we should show providers evidence for smartphone adoption rates to support our focus on these segments.

Stakeholder Interviews

Learnings

6. Strong interest in blue collar salaried and youth segments

Findings

- A few providers expressed strong interest in targeting blue collar salaried and youth segments. They believe that these groups are the most likely adopters of branchless banking through the smartphone channel due to levels of smartphone ownership and willingness to adopt.
- For salaried people, some will be driven to branchless banking through salary disbursements. For students, their interest in adopting new services and interest in the smartphone channel will likely be a driver to adoption and usage.
- One organization was interested in the smartphone as a part of building a better system for disbursing loans and facilitating transactions, but expected to provide loan recipients with a smartphone to participate in such a program.

Implications

- Providers are more likely to get excited about designs that target higher income and higher educated segments.
- In-depth design research is probably less important to design effectively for these segments. These segments are analogous to other customer segments who have been targeted by mainstream design efforts. In general, we believe that applying “good practice” design examples and templates would likely add value to any smartphone apps designed for these segments.
- If we want to encourage providers to focus on low-income low-literacy segments we might need to demonstrate how significantly better it is to deliver branchless banking services through the smartphone channel than USSD, thus making the relatively small addressable market more appealing.

Stakeholder Interviews

Learnings

7. Marketing and product delivery platform

Findings

- Some providers indicated that they were excited by the potential for smartphones to help their organizations better deliver a more extensive range of products and services to customers.
- The smartphone provides a flexible platform on which to offer and explain different products and services. The large, flexible and rich displays of smartphones make it easier to promote products and services through different forms of marketing messages. USSD provides very limited options for marketing.
- The large displays and rich interactivity of smartphones makes it easier to provide customers with access to a broader range of services (i.e. “better menus”), and also interactions with each of those services can be much richer and more usable than through USSD. Some categories of products and services (e.g. insurance) were almost impossible to deliver through USSD due to additional data entry requirements.

Implications

- Providers are likely to be interested in understanding how to organize and design a smartphone application not just to deliver basic transactional services, but also for a rich set of products and services.
- Providers are likely to be interested to understand how to design for a variety of different products and services in a consistent and usable way so that customers can easily adopt different kinds of service offerings without needing to re-learn.
- There would also likely be interest in understanding how to communicate service offerings to customers in ways beyond simple “banner advertising”, and how to find ways to integrate product or service offers within the usage experience in a way that is meaningful and relevant to customers (e.g. social marketing, ‘upsell’ as part of product usage).

Stakeholder Interviews

Project Focus

In the context of the learnings from the stakeholder interviews, we have identified the following themes to help focus the work on this project.

Persuade that our work matters

If this project is focused on developing design outputs that are a common good for the community of providers, we may struggle to get their attention and buy-in. At the moment, our work is probably interesting to a few providers, but those providers have not yet demonstrated a significant willingness to adopt the outputs of this project. We must make sure our final deliverables both show good design and clearly justify why the design recommendations should be adopted.

Stay focused on basic building blocks

Given the sophistication of the market, it will likely be more useful and impactful to focus on solving some of the basic design problems (e.g. transaction design, navigation, icons) rather than bigger systemic problems. It will likely be hard to sell “design for financial inclusion”, but much easier to sell “branchless banking made easy”.

The customer voice is going to be key

Customer research needs to be used to support our design recommendations to help get the attention of providers. This means we need to think carefully about how to focus the round of design research to capture the responses of customers to the design that will most appeal to providers, as well as show how our solutions address some of the known pain points for either existing smartphone or USSD channels.

Digestible outputs

We need to focus making sure that we communicate the value of design, and then provide the providers with digestible, accessible and actionable design outputs that do not require providers to invest too much to adopt. This could take the form of a design pattern library (so that they can pick design elements “off the shelf”). Even though it may not result in the best integrated design solutions, it may be a way of delivering outputs that are more easily adopted and integrated into ongoing smartphone application development work.

Validate low-literacy / low-income focus

Karandaaz’s interest in designing for lower literacy (and lower income) populations is not where providers are currently focusing in the smartphone channel. The market’s appetite to absorb design ideas that are sold as “good for low literacy” is low. The project team needs to understand this risk, and work to mitigate it as much as possible. Mitigation may take the form of changing focus or thinking about how the results of the work are positioned to providers throughout this process. Ultimately, Karandaaz may choose to continue with a focus on lower literacy segments with the understanding that this may not be of interest to the providers in the short-term.

Stakeholder Interviews

Design Focus

Given the needs and attitudes of providers, the following design focus areas are suggested

Transaction optimization

Good design for basic transactions will be valued. Sending money or bill payments are good prototypes for this. Both have their own complexities (sending money with identifying recipients, bill payment with identifying providers).

Onboarding and authentication

Getting customers started using branchless banking on a smartphone application offers a big opportunity to use application as a channel for education. Helping onboard customers, then understand the service basics, as well as better design for authentication could be valuable.

Visual language

Guidelines for the use of visual language (e.g. icons and other visual cues) could help providers optimize their application designs to make them easier for everyone to understand. Icons, transaction histories, balances, limits, transaction statuses are all things that use visual cues to aid understanding. Providers are not yet paying attention to these things, and this could easily be integrated into their existing work.

Two factor authentication

The Internet Banking regulation requires all internet banking transactions to use two factor authentication. Because of the way USSD is designed, customers only need to provide a PIN. Smartphone apps could make two factor authentication more difficult for a variety of technical reasons, and so this could be a useful area of exploration. It may be that providers will be sufficiently motivated to solve this problem themselves that any work we do on this topic is redundant.

Design pattern library

Our outputs are most likely to be successful when providers can borrow elements at different levels of granularity and adapt them to suit their specific needs and existing applications. So a design “pattern library” would probably be most impactful (rather than a “complete app design”), as it will be easier for the providers to see how they can pick and choose elements as they need. Pattern libraries are collections of re-usable design elements that help accelerate the work of designers as they create new designs. The library could include icons, terminology, sample screen layouts as well as sample transaction structures.

02. User Interview Findings

User Interviews

Learnings

FINDING 01 -

Alternative uses of mobile money services are not made salient to customers, which causes many people to limit their usage to one service - money transfer - which is seen as the 'default' use of mobile money.

“When something works for something, you don’t think of what else it can do. You think that that’s what it was meant to do.”

We came across this mindset often. Customers do not seek out additional uses of mobile money beyond the first use they encounter.

Customers are basic functional users of technology and smartphones, not exploratory and active users.

Customers use smartphones for very basic purposes, not the full range of features they allow. Similar behavior was observed with mobile money services; customers use one feature of MM, not more. And they do not expend additional resources in exploring their phones and seeking out additional functionality past the basics. In mobile money, they do not seek alternative services and uses, they focus solely on the basic transaction function.

The current design of the UI doesn’t make multiple uses obvious and apparent to customers.

User Interviews

Learnings

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make other uses, services and features more salient for customers?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we highlight the multiple uses of MM in the UI design?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we help customers identify alternative ways they can use these features and services in their lives?

User Interviews

Learnings

FINDING 02 –

Customers do not perceive smartphones as being of high utility; rather, smartphones are luxury goods used for entertainment and non-essential services. As a result, customers rarely have active data plans, necessary to run a mobile money app.

“Bought it for class. To be classy.”

People acknowledged that they bought the device for social reasons.

Work/utility apps were the least commonly used after social networking, communication and entertainment.

The only utility commonly used app was Google Search.

“Smartphones are for people who sit at home and play with their phones.”

Smartphones are perceived as luxury goods used for entertainment.

“I have to have a smaller phone too. It’s fun and easier to type on. And if you’re sitting with family, you can still discreetly use it.”

Some customers said “smartphones are less durable”, “more complicated”, “harder to type on...”; the smartphone is not perceived as absolutely superior to feature phones.

Many smartphone users did not have an active data plan, meaning they were disconnected from the Internet for large portions of their day.

As long as the smartphone is used primarily for entertainment, people will be less likely to keep an active data plan. People will continue to rely on agents if they are not using a data plan.

User Interviews

Learnings

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make the smartphone more relevant for essential or non-entertainment uses so people are more likely to regularly carry a data plan?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make the smartphone have utility even when someone is not connected to a network?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we frame smartphones and MM services as the easiest and most desirable option among potential users by making clear their most resonant benefits?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we design more aspirational apps so people might be more inclined to interact with them (e.g. by hooking into social networks)

User Interviews Learnings

FINDING 03 –

Distrust in technology prevents customers from independent use of mobile money services and persistent reliance on professional intermediaries, even when they are aware of the convenience of independent use.

Additionally, customers display satisficing* behavior.

If interacting with the MM agents is currently a “good enough” experience, there is little incentive to explore independent use, which will require an upfront investment of energy or time and unknown returns.

Adoption of independent use of MM may be influenced by previous experiential reference points, leading to satisficing behavior.

If potential users have past experiences with sub-optimal financial services (such as long cues at branches or no access to financial services whatsoever), then current available options – using OTC or relying on agents to conduct transactions for them – appear “good enough”, meaning better relevant to their past experiences.

“We have always done it through the agent, and it works, so don’t need to try anything else.”



The distrust of technology could be noticed in other places too, including the metro station we visited. While some users knew how to use the ticketing machine there, they explained that they preferred going to the agent because if something goes wrong there, the agent could fix it.

* “Satisficing is a decision-making strategy or cognitive heuristic that entails searching through the available alternatives until an acceptability threshold is met.”

Colman, Andrew (2006). A Dictionary of Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 670. ISBN 0-19-861035-1

User Interviews

Learnings

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make the independent use of MM more enticing than OTC?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make the benefits of using MM more salient so non-users are able to envision themselves using it easily?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we design a system where agents help the customers transition to independent usage?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we increase customers' trust in technology and MM services?

User Interviews

Learnings

FINDING 04 –

Agents are not compelled to highlight the multiple and varied uses of mobile money and are not incentivized to educate customers about how to use mobile money independently.

“My agent told me that if he makes a mistake he can reverse it (without a penalty) however if I make a mistake, there is no way he will be able to help and I may lose money.”

If a customer's experience with OTC is positive enough, the perceived additional value of figuring out how to transact independently is low. Customers display satisficing behavior by not exploring beyond the basic functionality they learn initially or by learning how to transact without the agent.

“I asked the agent about the whole procedure. He said that you just have to hand me the cash and not worry about anything else, it will be sent instantly.”

Transactions are done quickly and without much discussion. Agents do not inquire about additional needs of customers. There is no offer of a “menu of services” to customers.

User Interviews

Learnings

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make the multiple uses of MM more salient to customers so they explore and inquire about its full potential?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make the interactions between MM users and agents more dynamic and interactive?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we improve the user interface so independent exploration of MM is easier, more intuitive and less scary?

User Interviews

Learnings

FINDING 05 –

Customers' mental models of smartphones cause them to engage with the device as if the phones were a computer. The distinction between apps and websites is not made clear and customers default to the web browser when seeking new services.

“Smartphones are great, I no longer have to carry my laptop around everywhere.”

People use their browser (Chrome, Opera) to access Facebook and other websites even though they have a smartphone and could access the corresponding applications.

When one customer demonstrated how they listen to music, he/she visited dailymotion.com in the web browser.

Agents do not educate customers about apps because “customers don't know their iTunes password”

Some smartphone users do not understand the concept of an app store.

User Interviews

Learnings

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make the distinction between websites and apps more salient and clear for people?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make apps the primary channel on a smartphone, rather than web browsers?

OPPORTUNITY

How do we make the app discoverable via the web?

User Interviews Learnings

FINDING 06 –

Customers believe that the telcos who design the mobile money apps “know best” so if something goes wrong during a transaction customers believe it must be them who made a mistake. Customers do not consider design flaws as a potential reason for why an experience is negative or unsuccessful.

When users were unable to perform a task on their phones, they often assumed that they were either at fault or just incapable of performing it.

This mindset might be a significant reason behind the fact that no one pointed out any flaws or possible usability improvements in any apps.

User Interviews

Learnings

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make it clear that some errors are due to technical or design issues, rather than human error?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we make “design” a more appreciated element of good customer experience?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we create a system that allows customers to ask questions and/or provide feedback so they can help improve the overall design and experience?

User Interviews

Learnings

FINDING 07 –

Customers who independently use mobile money successfully are more likely to use it again. First time experience matters a great deal for future use.

“I was planning to go to the bank to transfer money but [my cousin] suggested that I use mobile money services and she guided me through the whole process”

Once customers became regular users of the system, they encouraged others to use it too. The users who were confident that the service would work even on their first use were usually ones accompanied by a friend or family member who had already used it.

“I never had any trouble figuring out phones. Everyone in my house also has a phone, and ask me to help if they need to figure something out.”

People who are confident about their ability to use technology also take pride in being a resource for friends/family that need help

User Interviews

Learnings

OPPORTUNITY

How might we help customers have a low-risk first time experience with MM that allows them to explore and test the services?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we start and end each MM experience on an exceptionally high note so users remember it positively?

OPPORTUNITY

How might we coach or guide the customer through a first time use?

User Interviews

Design Focus

Given the needs and attitudes of users, the following design focus areas are suggested

Onboarding

There is an opportunity to design the customer onboarding experience in a way that builds understanding to help users see how this new service is both relevant and beneficial to them. It should educate the customer about the service offers while also helping them understand how it meets their personal needs.

First Time Use for Key Transactions

There is an opportunity to design unique first time use experiences for key transactions that build a user's confidence in themselves and trust in the service so that they do not feel the need to transact with an agent.

Make Features & Benefits More Salient

We should focus on making secondary use cases and more "advanced" features easier to discover. We should do this without overwhelming them during their initial experience.

Multiple Touchpoints

We need to consider how this app fits into the larger service ecosystem and how the user interacts with other touchpoints (i.e. mobile website, agent, etc.).

Usability & Desirability of Key Flows

We should focus on improving the user experience of key use cases (send/receive money, pay bill, airtime reload, etc.) to help build a user's confidence, drive repeat usage and ensure that users do not need to rely on agents or other intermediaries for help.

Thank You!

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