



Customer Carewords®
Top Task Management for Websites

Online Professionals Principles & Challenges 2012

Gerry McGovern
Customer Carewords

February 20, 2013

Contents

Executive summary: time for action	3
Vote Trend Analysis	4
Detailed Analysis of Principles vote	6
Analysis by voting category	8
What is your primary role?	8
Which phrase best describes the nature of your work?	9
What type of organization do you work for?	10
How many people work in your organization?	11
Where are you located?	12
What do you mostly work on?	13
Challenges online professionals face	14
Management challenges	15
Resource challenges	16
Content challenges	17
Customer-centric challenges	18
Background to survey	19
Profile of respondent	19
Which phrase best describes the nature of your work?	19
What is your primary role?	19
What type of organization do you work for?	19
How many people work in your organization?	19
What do you mostly work on?	20
Where are you located?	20
Voting method	21
About Customer Carewords	23

Executive summary: time for action

We are sitting on a goldmine when it comes to our online presence; but we are managing it like a coalmine. There is tremendous consensus among the 1,000 online professionals surveyed in this report that we must:

1. Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks.
2. Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions.
3. Identify our customers' top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do.
4. Keep content as concise and simple as possible.
5. Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it.

However, there is also widespread frustration. We feel that professional management is grossly lacking, that there is a chasm between online professionals and senior managers. That we lack resources to do even the basics such as updating and removing content. Many of us feel that organizational ego is what drives decision-making. This is true whether people are working on intranets, public websites or mobile web. It is true whether we work in the public or private sector.

Enough complaining. It's time to act. What are we going to do about it? It's not as if we're trying to justify the pony express in the age of the automobile. We are selling the future, and we need to sell it better. We need to communicate better. Our primary role is as change managers. Our first job is to make our organizations Internet-ready. We need to sell the vision with passion, reason, and logic.

We need good metrics. Surprisingly few of us saw metrics as a key challenge, but in my opinion it is **the** challenge. The metrics we use today—HITS, visitors, page views, time spent—belong to the Cult of Volume. They don't communicate value.

We voted overwhelmingly that our number one principle must be to "ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks." Well then, what should our key metric be? Task completion. We must measure how quick and easy it is for our customers to complete their top tasks. We need to consistently inform senior management of such things as:

- 50% of our customers can't even complete this top task.
- 40% of customers take more than 4 minutes to complete this top task when it should only take them 1 minute.
- An improvement in task completion has led to a 10% reduction in support calls.
- Conversion has gone up by 50% after we reduced time on task by 20%.

"Every customer task is important. Give all tasks equal priority." This is the absolute bottom principle. It received 25 of your votes out of 15,135 cast. That's progress. 10 years ago the idea that we should publish everything and the magical content management system or search engine would sort it all out was all the rage. We have our principles right. Now we need to convince the rest of the organization. Let's rise to the challenge.

Vote Trend Analysis

- Yellow is a top principle. It is within the first 25% of the vote.
- Green is an important principle. It is from 26-50% of the vote.
- Turquoise (light blue) is from 51-75% of the vote. It represents a principle of lesser importance.
- White is the final 25% of the vote, from 76% to 100%. It is definitely a tiny principle.

The top principles are:

1. Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks.
2. Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions.
3. Identify our customers' top tasks based on what they do, not what they say they do
4. Keep content as concise and simple as possible.
5. Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it.

The following table shows the voting trend. It looks at how the voting stood at:

- The first quarter of the vote (250 voters)
- half of the vote (504 voters)
- three quarters of the vote (756 voters)
- 100% (1009 voters).

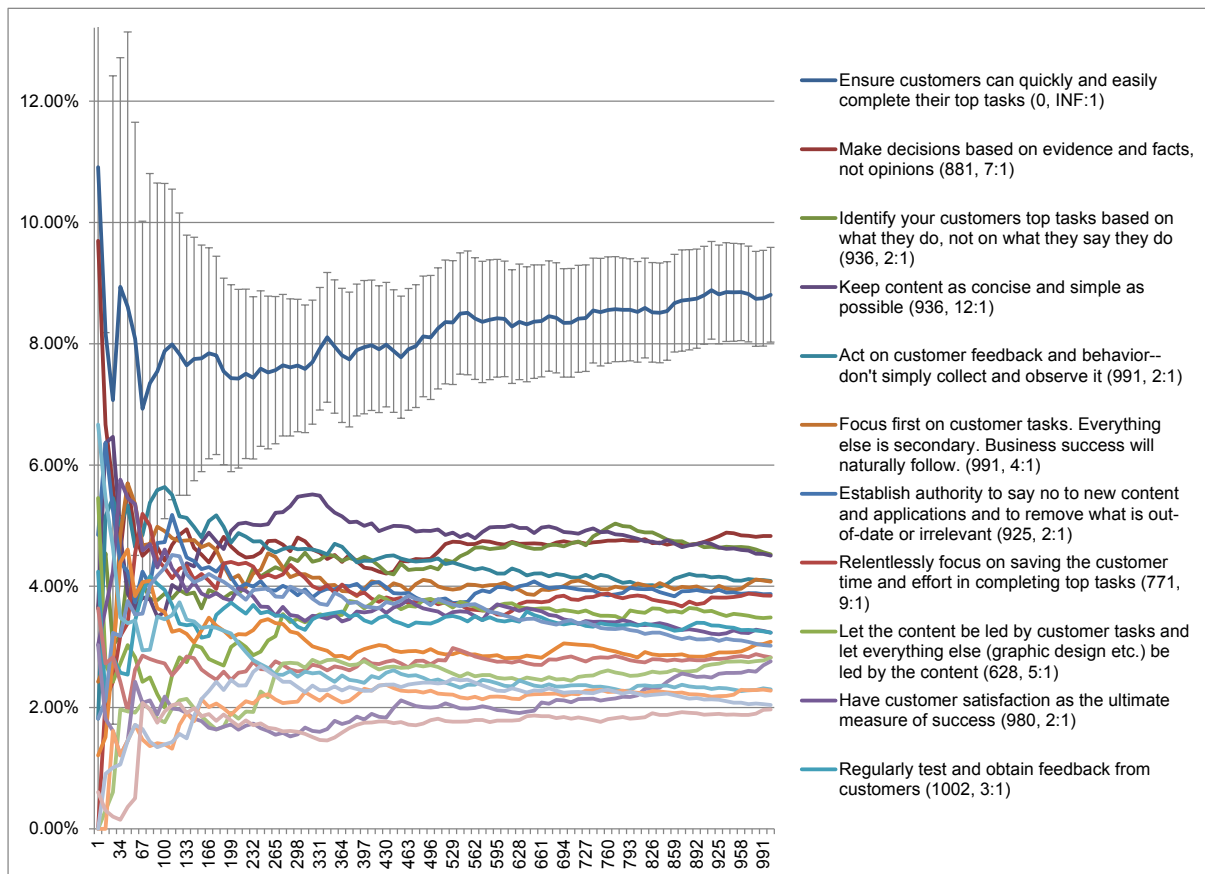
If we look at the table and see lots of fluctuations in the colors we know that the vote is not stable. However, from the following table we can see that we have a very stable vote. From very early on in the voting process the top principles had emerged.

Tasks	252 Voters	504 Voters	756 Voters	1009 Voters
1 Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks	7.3%	8.3%	8.6%	8.8%
2 Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions	4.7%	4.6%	4.7%	4.8%
3 Identify your customers top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do	4.1%	4.3%	4.9%	4.5%
4 Keep content as concise and simple as possible	5.0%	5.0%	4.9%	4.5%
5 Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it	4.8%	4.5%	4.2%	4.1%
6 Focus first on customer tasks. Everything else is secondary. Business success will naturally follow.	4.5%	4.0%	3.9%	4.1%
7 Establish authority to say no to new content and applications and to remove what is out-of-date or irrelevant	4.1%	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%
8 Relentlessly focus on saving the customer time and effort in completing top tasks	4.1%	3.7%	3.9%	3.8%
9 Let the content be led by customer tasks and let everything else (graphic design etc.) be led by the content	3.0%	3.6%	3.5%	3.5%
10 Have customer satisfaction as the ultimate measure of success	3.7%	3.6%	3.4%	3.2%
11 Regularly test and obtain feedback from customers	3.5%	3.5%	3.4%	3.2%
12 Manage for the customer's world--whatever device, channel, website or app they want to use	3.3%	2.9%	2.9%	3.1%
13 Make sure everything has an owner who takes responsibility for ongoing review and improvement	4.0%	3.8%	3.3%	3.0%
14 Encourage collaboration between technology, design, content, usability	2.7%	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%
15 Build a sustainable site; one you can adequately resource	2.2%	2.7%	2.6%	2.8%
16 Have task completion as the ultimate measure of success	1.7%	2.0%	2.1%	2.8%
17 Build a strong, centralized team with an independent capacity to make decisions	2.8%	2.4%	2.3%	2.3%
18 Embrace built-to-change rather than a built-to-last philosophy	2.2%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%
19 Hire people who are passionate about serving the customer	2.7%	2.3%	2.3%	2.0%
20 Create a consistent experience across platforms and channels	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	2.0%

Top 25%
26-50%
51-75%

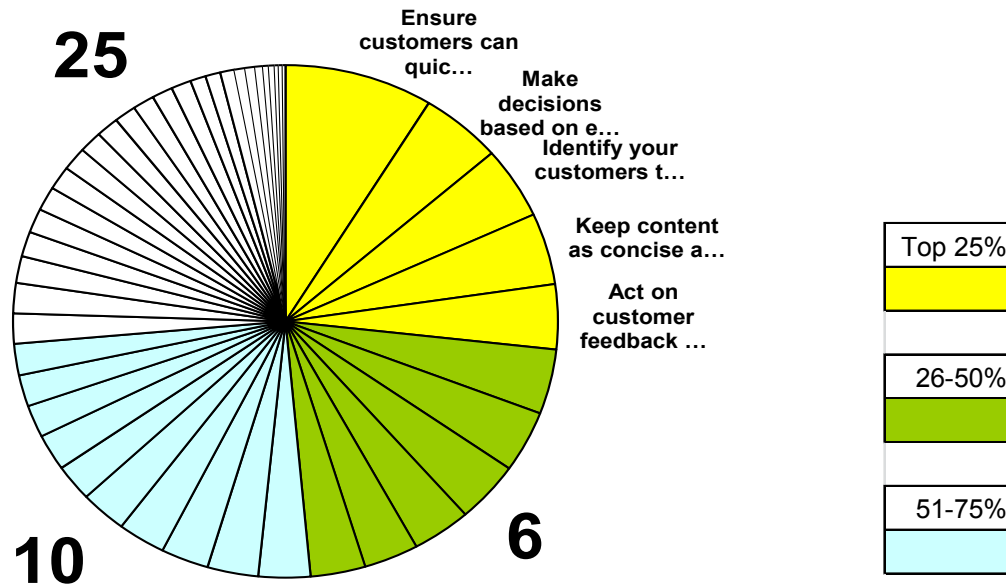
The following chart looks at statistical confidence. We use a 95% confidence threshold. Essentially, what the chart shows is that the number one principle (Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks) is way out in front. It became the number one principle at the very first voter and there is no statistical chance that it could be moved out of first place.

The grey bands around the top principle show its potential range of movement. So, based on this statistical analysis, it could go up to about 9.5% and it could go down to about 8%. While the first principle is way out in front we see that the other top principles cluster together.



Detailed Analysis of Principles vote

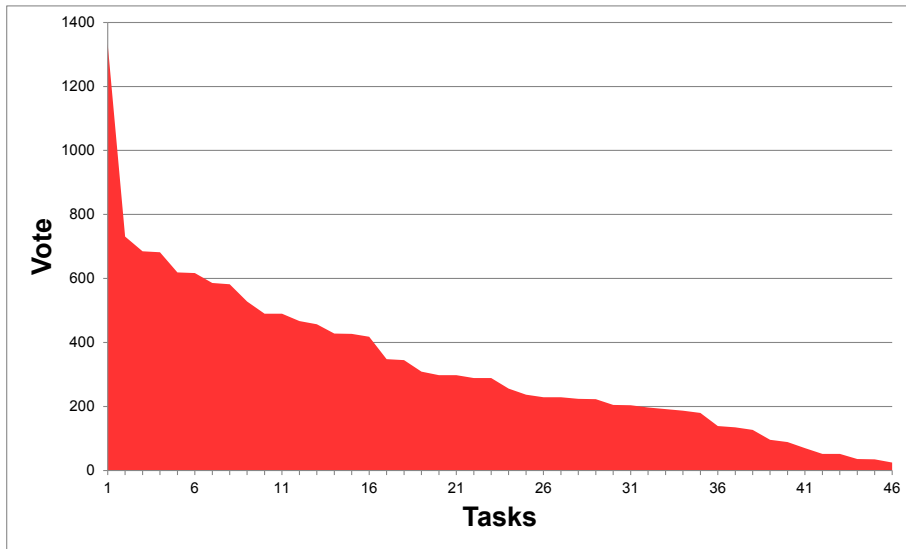
The following pie chart shows the breakdown of the vote in quartiles. Out of a total of 46 principles voted on, 5 principles get the first 25% of the vote. 6 get the next 25%. 10 get the next 25%. The final 25% goes to 25 tasks. So, 5 principles get as many votes as the bottom 25. This is what we call the long neck/long tail concept.



The following table goes into more detail on how the votes were cast. So, the top principle got 1,333 votes out of 15,135 cast, or 8.8% of the total vote.

Tasks	Total Vote	% of Total Vote 15135	Cumulative Vote	Cumulative Tasks
1 Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks	1333	8.8%	8.8%	2.2%
2 Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions	731	4.8%	13.6%	4.3%
3 Identify your customers top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do	685	4.5%	18.2%	6.5%
4 Keep content as concise and simple as possible	682	4.5%	22.7%	8.7%
5 Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it	619	4.1%	26.8%	10.9%
6 Focus first on customer tasks. Everything else is secondary. Business success will naturally follow.	617	4.1%	30.8%	13.0%
7 Establish authority to say no to new content and applications and to remove what is out-of-date or irrelevant	586	3.9%	34.7%	15.2%
8 Relentlessly focus on saving the customer time and effort in completing top tasks	582	3.8%	38.6%	17.4%
9 Let the content be led by customer tasks and let everything else (graphic design etc.) be led by the content	528	3.5%	42.0%	19.6%
10 Have customer satisfaction as the ultimate measure of success	490	3.2%	45.3%	21.7%
11 Regularly test and obtain feedback from customers	490	3.2%	48.5%	23.9%
12 Manage for the customer's world--whatever device, channel, website or app they want to use	467	3.1%	51.6%	26.1%
13 Make sure everything has an owner who takes responsibility for ongoing review and improvement	457	3.0%	54.6%	28.3%
14 Encourage collaboration between technology, design, content, usability	428	2.8%	57.4%	30.4%
15 Build a sustainable site; one you can adequately resource	427	2.8%	60.3%	32.6%
16 Have task completion as the ultimate measure of success	418	2.8%	63.0%	34.8%
17 Build a strong, centralized team with an independent capacity to make decisions	348	2.3%	65.3%	37.0%
18 Embrace built-to-change rather than a built-to-last philosophy	345	2.3%	67.6%	39.1%
19 Hire people who are passionate about serving the customer	309	2.0%	69.7%	41.3%
20 Create a consistent experience across platforms and channels	298	2.0%	71.6%	43.5%

The following chart shows the long neck on the left, the substantial body and then the tail.



The next chart shows the principles that got the least votes. The very last principle, “Every customer task is important” got 25 votes out of 15,135 cast, compared to the top principle “Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks”, which got 1,333 votes. That’s a big difference.

	Tasks	Total Vote	% of Total Vote 15135	Cumulative Vote	Cumulative Tasks
27	Regularly explain how online strategy supports business / organization strategy	229	1.5%	83.7%	58.7%
28	Evaluate new ideas based on how they help customers complete tasks	224	1.5%	85.2%	60.9%
29	Continuously engage key stakeholders to create understanding and commitment	223	1.5%	86.6%	63.0%
30	Fast and easy content management review and removal process	205	1.4%	88.0%	65.2%
31	Facilitate collaboration and sharing of ideas across silos	204	1.3%	89.3%	67.4%
32	Hire people who are passionate about Web technology and content development	197	1.3%	90.7%	69.6%
33	Establish an effective governance body that represents key stakeholders	192	1.3%	91.9%	71.7%
34	Consistently review task performance and adjust as needed	187	1.2%	93.2%	73.9%
35	Make the top tasks easy to do even where that means making the tiny tasks harder to do	180	1.2%	94.3%	76.1%
36	Provide ongoing training to improve web team skills	139	0.9%	95.3%	78.3%
37	Make it part of everyone's job to interact with and observe customers	135	0.9%	96.2%	80.4%
38	Constantly track trends and identify best practices	127	0.8%	97.0%	82.6%
39	Don't flood your organization with analytic data--limit it to specific goals and objectives	96	0.6%	97.6%	84.8%
40	Ensure all possible customer tasks can be completed online	89	0.6%	98.2%	87.0%
41	Make sure team and stakeholders develop the expertise to properly interpret data	70	0.5%	98.7%	89.1%
42	Decentralize management. Allow each department / unit to control their online presence	52	0.3%	99.0%	91.3%
43	Monitor customer behaviour in real-time	52	0.3%	99.4%	93.5%
44	Give every customer a personalized experience	36	0.2%	99.6%	95.7%
45	Be comprehensive and thorough, publishing all possible information that might be of help to the customer	35	0.2%	99.8%	97.8%
46	Every customer task is important. Give all tasks equal priority.	25	0.2%	100.0%	100.0%

Analysis by voting category

There is very little disagreement between online professionals about the management principles they find important. Whether they work in IT, content, usability; whether they work for public or private sector; whether they are based in the United States or Denmark, the basic principles are still the same.

What is your primary role?

Role doesn't have much of an effect on the principles chosen. However, there are some subtle differences:

1. "Keep content as concise and simple as possible" is not so important for management but is important for everyone else.
2. "Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it" is important for most groups with the exception of usability and IT.
3. "Embrace built-to-change rather than a built-to-last philosophy" is very important to IT people but is not important to any other group.

Tasks	Content creator, editor	IT, developer	Management	Marketing, Sales, PR, Communications	User experience, design	Total
1 Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks	9.3%	7.4%	7.4%	11.6%	8.0%	8.8%
2 Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions	3.6%	4.1%	5.2%	4.6%	6.2%	4.8%
3 Identify your customers top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do	3.8%	4.3%	4.9%	4.3%	4.8%	4.5%
4 Keep content as concise and simple as possible	5.7%	3.8%	3.4%	4.5%	4.6%	4.5%
5 Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it	3.9%	3.3%	4.8%	5.0%	3.1%	4.1%
6 Focus first on customer tasks. Everything else is secondary. Business success will naturally follow.	4.5%	5.2%	3.6%	4.8%	3.9%	4.1%
7 Establish authority to say no to new content and applications and to remove what is out-of-date or irrelevant	4.9%	3.7%	4.1%	2.4%	3.0%	3.9%
8 Relentlessly focus on saving the customer time and effort in completing top tasks	4.6%	3.4%	4.0%	2.8%	3.7%	3.8%
9 Let the content be led by customer tasks and let everything else (graphic design etc.) be led by the content	4.6%	4.0%	2.6%	2.4%	3.5%	3.5%
10 Regularly test and obtain feedback from customers	2.7%	3.5%	3.5%	2.8%	4.7%	3.2%
11 Have customer satisfaction as the ultimate measure of success	3.2%	4.3%	3.2%	3.8%	2.8%	3.2%
12 Manage for the customer's world--whatever device, channel, website or app they want to use	3.0%	3.7%	3.8%	3.4%	2.9%	3.1%
13 Make sure everything has an owner who takes responsibility for ongoing review and improvement	3.2%	3.0%	3.6%	2.6%	2.1%	3.0%
14 Encourage collaboration between technology, design, content, usability	2.2%	1.8%	3.8%	2.9%	3.3%	2.8%
15 Build a sustainable site; one you can adequately resource	3.3%	2.2%	3.0%	2.3%	2.2%	2.8%
16 Have task completion as the ultimate measure of success	3.0%	1.2%	2.5%	2.7%	3.2%	2.8%
17 Build a strong, centralized team with an independent capacity to make decisions	2.6%	2.8%	1.6%	1.7%	2.7%	2.3%
18 Embrace built-to-change rather than a built-to-last philosophy	2.0%	4.9%	2.1%	2.2%	2.0%	2.3%
19 Hire people who are passionate about serving the customer	1.7%	2.0%	2.1%	1.8%	2.9%	2.0%
20 Small improvements are generally better than big redesigns	1.3%	2.5%	2.0%	1.4%	3.4%	2.0%

Which phrase best describes the nature of your work?

There is practically no difference between the principles of a consultant and those of someone working within an organization.

Tasks	I consult with organizations on their...	I work within an organization on our...	Total
1 Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks	7.6%	9.3%	8.8%
2 Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions	4.4%	4.9%	4.8%
3 Identify your customers top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do	5.6%	4.2%	4.5%
4 Keep content as concise and simple as possible	4.0%	4.5%	4.5%
5 Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it	4.3%	4.0%	4.1%
6 Focus first on customer tasks. Everything else is secondary. Business success will naturally follow.	4.6%	3.9%	4.1%
7 Establish authority to say no to new content and applications and to remove what is out-of-date or irrelevant	3.4%	4.1%	3.9%
8 Relentlessly focus on saving the customer time and effort in completing top tasks	3.1%	4.0%	3.8%
9 Let the content be led by customer tasks and let everything else (graphic design etc.) be led by the content	5.3%	3.2%	3.5%
10 Regularly test and obtain feedback from customers	2.5%	3.4%	3.2%
11 Have customer satisfaction as the ultimate measure of success	2.0%	3.5%	3.2%
12 Manage for the customer's world--whatever device, channel, website or app they want to use	1.3%	3.6%	3.1%
13 Make sure everything has an owner who takes responsibility for ongoing review and improvement	1.5%	3.3%	3.0%
14 Encourage collaboration between technology, design, content, usability	4.0%	2.5%	2.8%
15 Build a sustainable site; one you can adequately resource	1.9%	3.0%	2.8%
16 Have task completion as the ultimate measure of success	2.8%	2.6%	2.8%
17 Build a strong, centralized team with an independent capacity to make decisions	2.4%	2.5%	2.3%
18 Embrace built-to-change rather than a built-to-last philosophy	1.8%	2.4%	2.3%
19 Hire people who are passionate about serving the customer	3.2%	1.9%	2.0%
20 Create a consistent experience across platforms and channels	2.2%	2.0%	2.0%

What type of organization do you work for?

Whether you work for public sector, private sector, non-profit; the online management principles are still the same.

Tasks		Private sector	Public sector	Non-profit	Total
1	Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks	8.7%	8.5%	11.0%	8.8%
2	Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions	5.0%	4.8%	4.4%	4.8%
3	Identify your customers top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do	4.5%	4.5%	4.8%	4.5%
4	Keep content as concise and simple as possible	3.5%	4.9%	5.1%	4.5%
5	Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it	4.5%	3.6%	4.4%	4.1%
6	Focus first on customer tasks. Everything else is secondary. Business success will naturally follow.	4.2%	4.4%	3.4%	4.1%
7	Establish authority to say no to new content and applications and to remove what is out-of-date or irrelevant	2.9%	4.8%	3.2%	3.9%
8	Relentlessly focus on saving the customer time and effort in completing top tasks	3.9%	4.1%	3.1%	3.8%
9	Let the content be led by customer tasks and let everything else (graphic design etc.) be led by the content	3.8%	3.5%	3.0%	3.5%
10	Regularly test and obtain feedback from customers	3.5%	3.1%	3.6%	3.2%
11	Have customer satisfaction as the ultimate measure of success	3.3%	2.9%	4.2%	3.2%
12	Manage for the customer's world--whatever device, channel, website or app they want to use	3.5%	2.8%	3.5%	3.1%
13	Make sure everything has an owner who takes responsibility for ongoing review and improvement	2.1%	3.6%	3.1%	3.0%
14	Encourage collaboration between technology, design, content, usability	3.0%	2.7%	3.0%	2.8%
15	Build a sustainable site; one you can adequately resource	2.0%	3.4%	2.4%	2.8%
16	Have task completion as the ultimate measure of success	3.2%	2.5%	2.1%	2.8%
17	Build a strong, centralized team with an independent capacity to make decisions	1.8%	2.7%	2.6%	2.3%
18	Embrace built-to-change rather than a built-to-last philosophy	2.3%	1.9%	3.3%	2.3%
19	Hire people who are passionate about serving the customer	1.8%	1.9%	2.7%	2.0%
20	Create a consistent experience across platforms and channels	1.9%	2.2%	0.8%	2.0%

How many people work in your organization?

The number of employees within an organization had very little effect on the vote. One anomaly is that “Identify your customers top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do” is a top principle for everyone except those in organizations with 500 to 999 employees.

Tasks	1 to 99	100 to 499	500 to 999	Over 1,000	Total
1 Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks	8.9%	8.5%	12.4%	8.2%	8.8%
2 Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions	4.6%	5.0%	3.4%	5.0%	4.8%
3 Identify your customers top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do	4.8%	5.9%	2.2%	4.4%	4.5%
4 Keep content as concise and simple as possible	5.0%	4.2%	3.5%	4.5%	4.5%
5 Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it	4.4%	4.3%	3.8%	4.0%	4.1%
6 Focus first on customer tasks. Everything else is secondary. Business success will naturally follow.	5.3%	4.0%	2.5%	3.9%	4.1%
7 Establish authority to say no to new content and applications and to remove what is out-of-date or irrelevant	2.6%	3.7%	5.7%	4.3%	3.9%
8 Relentlessly focus on saving the customer time and effort in completing top tasks	4.0%	3.3%	4.8%	3.9%	3.8%
9 Let the content be led by customer tasks and let everything else (graphic design etc.) be led by the content	4.4%	2.3%	3.7%	3.4%	3.5%
10 Have customer satisfaction as the ultimate measure of success	3.1%	3.4%	3.2%	3.4%	3.2%
11 Regularly test and obtain feedback from customers	2.9%	3.4%	3.4%	3.3%	3.2%
12 Manage for the customer's world--whatever device, channel, website or app they want to use	2.3%	3.0%	2.2%	3.6%	3.1%
13 Make sure everything has an owner who takes responsibility for ongoing review and improvement	1.9%	2.6%	3.6%	3.6%	3.0%
14 Encourage collaboration between technology, design, content, usability	3.4%	2.9%	1.9%	2.8%	2.8%
15 Build a sustainable site; one you can adequately resource	2.7%	3.4%	2.4%	2.6%	2.8%
16 Have task completion as the ultimate measure of success	3.5%	3.1%	3.6%	2.1%	2.8%
17 Build a strong, centralized team with an independent capacity to make decisions	2.0%	1.9%	2.3%	2.6%	2.3%
18 Embrace built-to-change rather than a built-to-last philosophy	2.5%	3.2%	3.3%	1.7%	2.3%
19 Hire people who are passionate about serving the customer	2.3%	1.7%	2.7%	2.0%	2.0%
20 Create a consistent experience across platforms and channels	2.2%	1.4%	2.4%	2.0%	2.0%

Where are you located?

There is not much difference in online management principles as far as geography is concerned. We find the same basic principles in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, UK, and the USA. There are, however, a few interesting variances:

- “Manage for the customer’s world--whatever device, channel, website or app they want to use” and “Build a sustainable site; one you can adequately resource” are top principles in Norway but not elsewhere.
- “Hire people who are passionate about Web technology and content development” is a top principle in Belgium but not elsewhere.
- “Build a strong, centralized team with an independent capacity to make decisions” is an important principle in Denmark and the Netherlands but not elsewhere.

Tasks	Australia	Belgium	Canada	Denmark	Netherlands	Norway	United Kingdom	United States	Total
1 Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks	6.7%	7.8%	7.8%	8.3%	9.2%	9.4%	10.8%	8.5%	8.8%
2 Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions	3.5%	4.8%	5.9%	6.4%	5.4%	4.4%	4.6%	4.7%	4.8%
3 Identify your customers top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do	5.9%	4.8%	5.9%	8.6%	3.3%	2.6%	6.8%	4.5%	4.5%
4 Keep content as concise and simple as possible	6.7%	4.6%	3.4%	4.5%	5.4%	2.3%	5.2%	4.4%	4.5%
5 Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it	4.4%	3.5%	2.4%	1.7%	6.3%	3.8%	4.2%	4.0%	4.1%
6 Focus first on customer tasks. Everything else is secondary. Business success will naturally follow.	5.1%	4.9%	3.4%	3.6%	2.1%	4.9%	3.7%	4.0%	4.1%
7 Establish authority to say no to new content and applications and to remove what is out-of-date or irrelevant	3.6%	3.2%	3.1%	3.6%	4.8%	4.5%	4.2%	4.4%	3.9%
8 Relentlessly focus on saving the customer time and effort in completing top tasks	3.4%	7.0%	3.5%	2.4%	3.1%	2.3%	4.2%	4.4%	3.8%
9 Let the content be led by customer tasks and let everything else (graphic design etc.) be led by the content	4.6%	3.7%	3.0%	2.9%	1.5%	2.0%	4.8%	3.7%	3.5%
10 Have customer satisfaction as the ultimate measure of success	3.3%	4.3%	2.0%	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%	3.4%	4.0%	3.2%
11 Regularly test and obtain feedback from customers	2.0%	3.2%	1.7%	1.9%	5.0%	1.9%	4.0%	3.4%	3.2%
12 Manage for the customer's world--whatever device, channel, website or app they want to use	4.0%	1.3%	3.1%	1.0%	1.7%	5.6%	2.6%	3.3%	3.1%
13 Make sure everything has an owner who takes responsibility for ongoing review and improvement	2.9%	2.1%	1.4%	6.0%	1.5%	1.5%	3.5%	3.9%	3.0%
14 Encourage collaboration between technology, design, content, usability	2.6%	2.1%	2.6%	2.1%	2.9%	3.0%	1.9%	3.4%	2.8%
15 Build a sustainable site; one you can adequately resource	4.0%	1.3%	2.4%	1.7%	1.0%	4.9%	2.1%	2.9%	2.8%
16 Have task completion as the ultimate measure of success	2.4%	4.8%	3.7%	1.7%	0.4%	7.1%	3.3%	1.5%	2.8%
17 Build a strong, centralized team with an independent capacity to make decisions	3.1%	2.9%	1.5%	4.3%	5.4%	3.2%	1.4%	1.9%	2.3%
18 Embrace built-to-change rather than a built-to-last philosophy	2.3%	2.1%	2.4%	5.5%	1.0%	2.3%	1.2%	2.7%	2.3%
19 Hire people who are passionate about serving the customer	1.3%	5.2%	2.7%	1.2%	0.4%	0.9%	2.7%	2.2%	2.0%
20 Create a consistent experience across platforms and channels	0.9%	1.0%	2.1%	3.6%	2.3%	2.2%	1.3%	2.0%	2.0%

What do you mostly work on?

Whether you work on a public website, intranet, mobile web, there's very little difference in the online management principles you choose. The choices are very, very consistent.

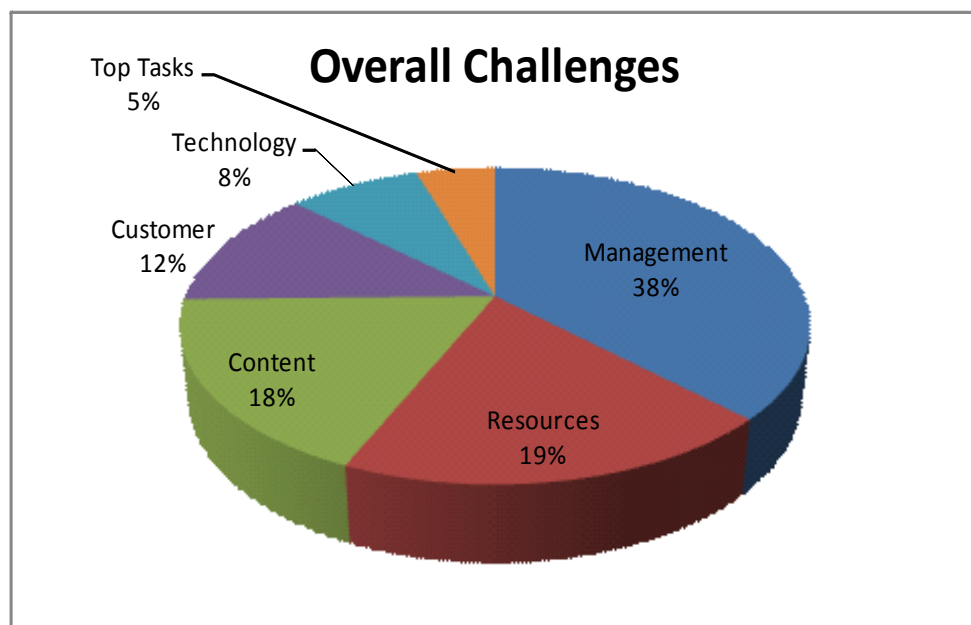
Tasks		Public website	Intranet	Mobile Web	Total
1	Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks	8.8%	8.6%	7.7%	8.8%
2	Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions	5.1%	5.3%	6.0%	4.8%
3	Identify your customers top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do	4.4%	4.7%	4.2%	4.5%
4	Keep content as concise and simple as possible	4.9%	4.9%	2.7%	4.5%
5	Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it	3.8%	4.3%	2.5%	4.1%
6	Focus first on customer tasks. Everything else is secondary. Business success will naturally follow.	3.9%	3.8%	4.5%	4.1%
7	Establish authority to say no to new content and applications and to remove what is out-of-date or irrelevant	4.0%	3.8%	3.6%	3.9%
8	Relentlessly focus on saving the customer time and effort in completing top tasks	4.2%	4.0%	3.8%	3.8%
9	Let the content be led by customer tasks and let everything else (graphic design etc.) be led by the content	3.8%	2.4%	3.8%	3.5%
10	Regularly test and obtain feedback from customers	3.3%	3.5%	3.4%	3.2%
11	Have customer satisfaction as the ultimate measure of success	3.3%	2.9%	2.0%	3.2%
12	Manage for the customer's world--whatever device, channel, website or app they want to use	3.0%	2.6%	3.9%	3.1%
13	Make sure everything has an owner who takes responsibility for ongoing review and improvement	3.0%	4.2%	2.8%	3.0%
14	Encourage collaboration between technology, design, content, usability	2.8%	2.1%	3.6%	2.8%
15	Build a sustainable site; one you can adequately resource	2.6%	2.5%	1.6%	2.8%
16	Have task completion as the ultimate measure of success	2.2%	1.9%	2.1%	2.8%
17	Build a strong, centralized team with an independent capacity to make decisions	2.3%	1.8%	2.7%	2.3%
18	Embrace built-to-change rather than a built-to-last philosophy	2.4%	2.7%	3.7%	2.3%
19	Hire people who are passionate about serving the customer	2.1%	1.7%	1.9%	2.0%
20	Create a consistent experience across platforms and channels	2.2%	2.4%	2.8%	2.0%

Challenges online professionals face

We asked people to write about their number one challenge when managing an online presence. We got almost 900 responses. Overwhelmingly, the issues were managerial, not technical:

- The core job of the online professional is to change how other people in the organization think and behave, rather than changing content, technology or graphics.
- There is a clear lack of professional governance of online operations in most organizations.
- Senior management are particularly disconnected. There is very little strategic thinking.
- The global recession is biting. There is a lack of resources.
- Content suffers from bloat and out-of-datedness.
- Organizational ego is a major problem.
- There is still a 'launch and leave' culture within most organizations. The online presence is managed as a project with a defined end date, rather than something that should be continuously improved.

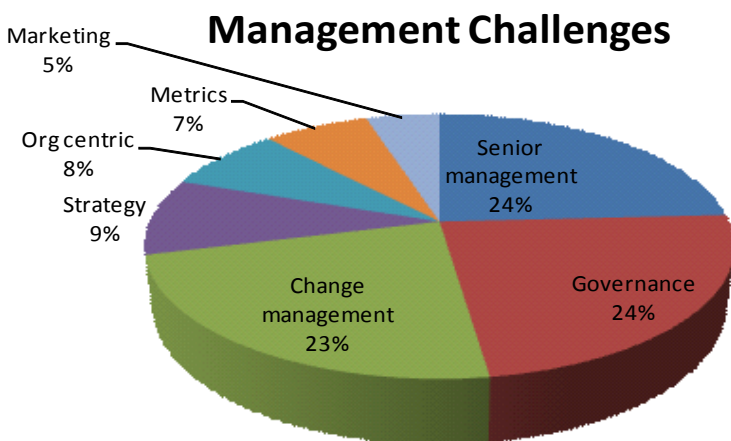
The following pie chart and table give a breakdown of the overall challenges. Management challenges dominate with 38%, or 331 out of the 886 statements.



Overall	
Management	331
Resources	170
Content	161
Customer	109
Technology	72
Top Tasks	43
Total	886

Management challenges

Senior management are not engaged and are more focused on the ego of the organization than on serving the customer, according to the responses. Governance is sorely lacking. Is anybody genuinely in charge of most online presences, or are they let drift? Changing how people think is a big challenge. Most organizations have yet to shift from a print culture to a web culture.



Management	
Senior management	80
Governance	78
Change management	77
Strategy	31
Org centric	26
Metrics	23
Marketing	16
	331

Here are some actual quotes from online professionals when it comes to senior management:

- "Convincing management to listen to the facts and figures and not what they want to hear."
- "Senior management haven't got a clue to make the necessary changes to deal with radically changed behavior from the customers. Old school, analog people trying to handle new problems with old tools. And they keep the web savvy out the decision making loop."
- "Myopic, siloed view of web presences across the organization, resulting in fractured customer experience. Funding by 'hippo' (highest paid opinion in room)."

Here are some quotes when it comes to governance:

- "Too many content contributors; not enough authority to stop them from posting bad content."
- "Lack of governance diffuses our efforts, forces us to fight the same battles over and over."
- "Many cooks in the kitchen."
- "No clear lines of responsibility for a big collection of websites."
- "Governance - too many chiefs with no accountability making content decisions, often in conflict with other stakeholders. She with the biggest pay packet or ego usually wins the day."

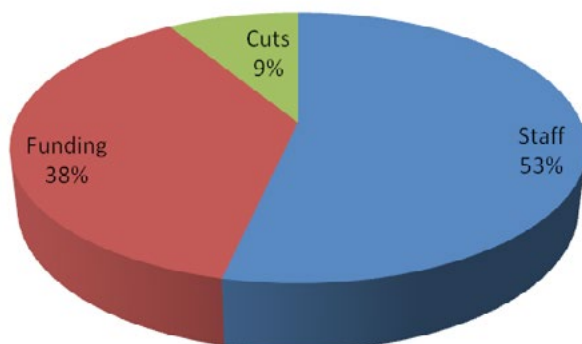
Here are some quotes in relation to change management:

- "Adapt and align organisations for better online presence / services while we are working in systems that derive from the industrial age (former century)."
- "Getting internal stakeholders to understand that print content cannot simply be published online to be useful and task oriented; it must be re-written, edited, condensed and links must be clear and concise."
- "Getting colleagues to understand that you need to be flexible when it comes to web projects. We need to take an iterative approach and constantly test and improve our website."

Resource challenges

Many online teams are struggling with a lack of resources. Considering the growing importance of the Web, regular cuts to budgets and resources pose a real challenge. We are being asked to do more with less.

Resource Challenges



Resources	
Staff	91
Funding	64
Cuts	15
	170

Quotes in relation to staff resourcing:

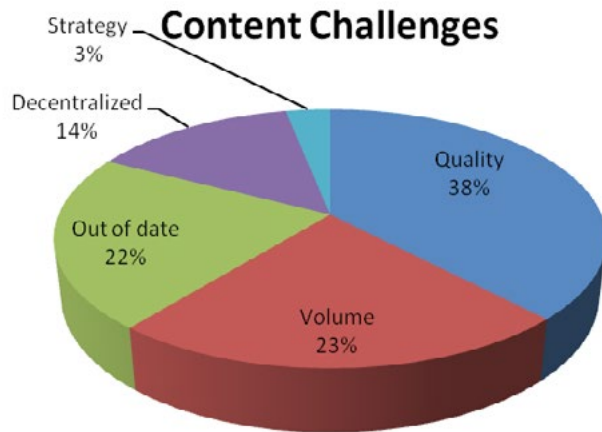
- "Juggling hundreds of demands despite many constraints, including time and size of team."
- "Having adequate and properly skilled resources."
- "Having the resources to revise the site for the user."
- "Keeping content current on a site with approximately 3,000 documents, with only two staff assigned to maintain it (among other duties)."
- "Lack of in-house resources - access to content experts, IT resources."

Quotes in relation to funding:

- "Lack of funding-departmental strong arming when they have no clue on our agency focus. They view themselves as a priority and gets and wants all the new toys. While we wither away."
- "Lack of resources to furnish the web site with up to date software and content; bureaucratic delays in adapting to mobile technology."
- "Making those who control budgets aware of the importance of funding improvements to the intranet. They are yet to realise the benefits that can be obtained from having an intranet that is used."

Content challenges

Content basics are still at the front of most people's concerns. Basic content quality is the most significant issue. Next most significant is too much content being published, followed by the lack of review and removal of out of date content. These issues have been around since the Web began and don't seem to be getting much better.



Content	
Quality	61
Volume	37
Out of date	35
Decentralized	23
Strategy	5
	161

Some quotes on content quality:

- "Keeping the website professional. Making it customer centered and not organisation centered. There is a lot of pushing content by colleagues. They want to 'inform' / educate the public regardless of the question if it is the topic our public is interested in."
- "Making sure the public facing content is for the public. We have internal departments that insist they need a public facing website when all they offer are services to our other departments."
- "Simplicity, customer centric content and functionalities."

Some quotes on out of date content:

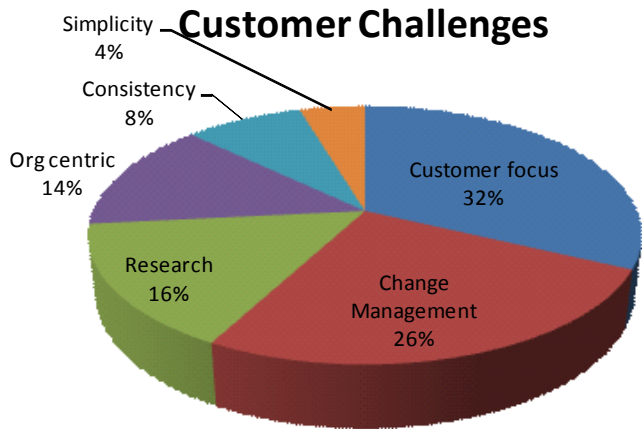
- "Duplicate pages, difficult navigation, system for ensuring content is up to date."
- "Keeping website information up to date and easily accessible to consumers, while maintaining uniformity of branding / consistent look throughout our many diverse pages."
- "Making sure all of the content on the website is up to date, has clear ownership and is presented in a logical structure."
- "Old content that no one wants to take responsibility for and the original content provider has moved on or retired."

Some quotes on content volume:

- "Not overloading the website with more and more information."
- "Reduce the amount of sprawling content, trying to make it simpler and more concise."
- "Too many people are busy putting up content without reflection, instead of asking themselves "why"."
- "Too much content (that cannot be discarded), making it difficult for us to organize and for customers to find. We have made good progress in this regard, but still a long way to go."

Customer-centric challenges

Organizational ego remains a major roadblock. There is strong pressure within the organization top focus on itself rather than the customer. Convincing the organization that a focus on the customer will deliver greater value for everyone is an ongoing challenge.



Customer	
Customer focus	35
Change Management	28
Research	17
Org centric	15
Consistency	9
Simplicity	5
	109

Quotes in relation to customer focus challenges:

- "Lack of business commitment to what we do and how important UX is to our success."
- "Intranet that serves the customer not the departments."
- "Keeping the focus on the public, facts and evidence."
- "Keeping up with consumer expectations. They expect a strong, valuable experience on the device they bought today."
- "Prioritising the Digital Needs for our customers vs what the company thinks the customer need is."

Quotes in relation to change management:

- "Convincing management that user testing is crucial to the success of the website."
- "Convincing the people who hold the purse strings that our website has to be about our customers, not about us."
- "Getting people to understand user journey and web usability."
- "To create awareness among the leadership about the benefits of a consistent and pleasant online experience for our customers and... to make that experience happen."

Background to survey

The survey ran from October 10 to December 6 2012. 1009 online professionals responded.

Profile of respondent

Which phrase best describes the nature of your work?

	Percent	Response
Other (please specify)*	7%	69
I consult with organizations on their online presence	17%	164
I work within an organization on our online presence	77%	760
Total	100%	993

What is your primary role?

	Percent	Response
Other (please specify)*	13%	130
Content creator, editor	29%	287
Customer service	2%	16
IT, developer	8%	75
Management	20%	200
Marketing, Sales, PR, Communications	14%	136
User experience, design	15%	146
Total	100%	990

What type of organization do you work for?

	Percent	Response
Private sector	35%	353
Public sector	49%	483
Non-profit	12%	121
Other*	4%	38
Total	100%	995

How many people work in your organization?

	Percent	Response
1 to 99	24%	234
100 to 499	15%	152
500 to 999	9%	93
Over 1,000	52%	513
Total	100%	992

What do you mostly work on?

	Percent	Response
Other (please specify)*	13%	117
Public website	85%	755
Intranet	37%	325
Mobile Web	20%	178
Total	154%	890

Where are you located?

There were votes from 22 countries. In 12 of these, more than 20 people responded to the survey.

	Percent	Response
Australia	7%	67
Austria	0%	3
Belgium	4%	42
Brazil	0%	3
Canada	7%	70
China	0%	1
Denmark	3%	28
Finland	0%	4
France	2%	23
Germany	1%	9
Greece	0%	1
India	0%	3
Ireland	2%	21
Italy	1%	9
Netherlands	3%	32
New Zealand	2%	21
Norway	11%	114
Spain	0%	3
Sweden	2%	21
Switzerland	1%	5
United Kingdom	13%	132
United States	37%	367
Other (Country not listed)	2%	19
Total	100%	998

Voting method

The question asking respondents to vote on their top principles used our top task voting method. Based on in-depth research, conducted over several years of working with various organizations, we have developed 46 online management principles. We then asked people to vote on them. The question was: "What do you think are the top five principles for successfully managing an organization's online presence? Each person was given a randomized list of the 46 principles. Of the 5 they chose they had to give a vote of 5 to their most important principle, 4 to their next most important, and so on.

List of online management principles

1. Act on customer feedback and behavior--don't simply collect and observe it
2. Be comprehensive and thorough, publishing all possible information that might be of help to the customer
3. Build a strong, centralized team with an independent capacity to make decisions
4. Build a sustainable site; one you can adequately resource
5. Consistently review task performance and adjust as needed
6. Constantly track trends and identify best practices
7. Continuously engage key stakeholders to create understanding and commitment
8. Create a consistent experience across platforms and channels
9. Decentralize management. Allow each department / unit to control their online presence
10. Don't flood your organization with analytic data--limit it to specific goals and objectives
11. Ease of use is the best way to enhance the image / brand
12. Embrace built-to-change rather than a built-to-last philosophy
13. Encourage collaboration between technology, design, content, usability
14. Ensure all possible customer tasks can be completed online
15. Ensure customers can quickly and easily complete their top tasks
16. Ensure that content on the Web is for action, not for 'reading' or 'information'
17. Establish an effective governance body that represents key stakeholders
18. Establish authority to say no to new content and applications and to remove what is out-of-date or irrelevant
19. Evaluate new ideas based on how they help customers complete tasks
20. Every customer task is important. Give all tasks equal priority.
21. Facilitate collaboration and sharing of ideas across silos
22. Fast and easy content management review and removal process
23. Focus first on customer tasks. Everything else is secondary. Business success will naturally follow
24. Fund the Web from operational rather than project budgets to facilitate continuous improvement
25. Give every customer a personalized experience
26. Have customer satisfaction as the ultimate measure of success
27. Have task completion as the ultimate measure of success
28. Hire people who are passionate about serving the customer
29. Hire people who are passionate about Web technology and content development

30. Identify your customers' top tasks based on what they do, not on what they say they do
31. Keep content as concise and simple as possible
32. Let the content be led by customer tasks and let everything else (graphic design etc.) be led by the content
33. Make decisions based on evidence and facts, not opinions
34. Make it part of everyone's job to interact with and observe customers
35. Make sure everything has an owner who takes responsibility for ongoing review and improvement
36. Make sure team and stakeholders develop the expertise to properly interpret data
37. Make the top tasks easy to do even where that means making the tiny tasks harder to do
38. Manage for the customer's world--whatever device, channel, website or app they want to use
39. Measure how easy it is for customers to perform their top tasks
40. Monitor customer behavior in real-time
41. Move from "let's fix the website" to "let's fix the top tasks"
42. Provide ongoing training to improve web team skills
43. Regularly explain how online strategy supports business / organization strategy
44. Regularly test and obtain feedback from customers
45. Relentlessly focus on saving the customer time and effort in completing top tasks
46. Small improvements are generally better than big redesigns

About Customer Carewords

Helping you to truly understand what your customers' top tasks are when they come to your website and how well these tasks are performing is what we do. By continuously improving the performance of your customers' top tasks, you will maximize the performance of your website.

We have been developing customer centric strategies for websites since 1994, identifying the top tasks of thousands of customers and employees for organizations such as Microsoft, Cisco, Tetra Pak, US Internal Revenue Service, NHS Choices, Rolls-Royce, BBC, Innovation Norway, etc. We have partners in the UK, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Canada and United States.

The Customer Carewords approach is built around the following ideas:

- Customers come to your public website or intranet to complete tasks. (Staff are the intranet's customers.)
- Customers have a small set of top tasks (the Long Neck). These tasks are vital to the success of your website and you must aim to make it easier and easier for your customers to complete these tasks quickly.
- Customers use a small set of words to describe their top tasks (carewords).
- The words your customers use to describe their tasks are often very different from the words your organization uses.
- Organizational words (jargon, marketing waffle) are one of the key reasons for task failure on the Web.

Customer Carewords is a set of research tools and techniques that help you identify on an ongoing basis:

- Your customers' top tasks (and their related words).
- How well your customers are able to complete their top tasks on your website (completion rates, completion times, disaster rates).
- What specific factors on your website are causing problems as your customers seek to complete their tasks (the navigation, the content, the search, etc.).

The company was founded by Gerry McGovern, who started his web career in 1994. He has published five books on creating customer centric websites. He has appeared on CNN, the BBC, MSNBC, and has spoken on the subject of customer centric web management in 35 countries.

www.customercarewords.com

info@customercarewords.com