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IN 929 - Field Methods and User Research
Final Assignment
Due 9.27.13

Concept

A design that tracks your daily exercise and reports it back to a fitness trainer. You have the option of signing up with a group of friends, so that you are all responsible for the number of days you project you will work out, for a stated amount of time, which will then go to the fitness trainer.

Research Goal

To study the motivation behind people using such a concept.

User Definition

In order to understand the “why” behind the usage of this concept, we must first understand key behaviors around exercising, goal setting, tracking, and participation in groups/teams. Such behaviors typically cut across the demographics and general characteristics that define market segments. So although a marketing segmentation might be used as a jumping off point for developing personas, it cannot be relied upon as a stand-in. By developing personas, the team will gain insight into the defining characteristics, motivations, barriers, and opportunities that will inform and inspire the design.

Two examples of personas for this concept are “Tracking Tracy” and “Social Sarah.” Both of these personas may be possible users of the fitness concept, but as we get to know and evolve the personas over time, our research may reveal whether one persona is a better fit for the concept than the other.

Tracking Tracy

Defining Quote: “I’m constantly setting goals for my health and fitness, tracking my performance, and striving for my personal best.”

Defining Characteristics

- Loves goal setting and tracking in her life; identifies with the quantified self movement and regularly tracks food, sleep habits, workouts

- Enjoys exercise activities where she can see measurable improvements (e.g. running, strength training)
- Competitive athlete

Motivations

- To be in peak physical condition inside and out
- To get stronger and improve her times as a runner
- To learn new training regimens and exercise techniques

Barriers

- Tracking tools often require manually inputting the data, which can be time consuming
- Analyzing the data can be overwhelming - not sure where to start
- Exercising by herself means that she's not learning from others about what works and doesn't work

Opportunities

- Automatic tracking of workout data would streamline her routine
- Joining as part of a "team" would appeal to her competitive nature; she could also help motivate others
- Receiving recommendations from a fitness trainer would help her improve her fitness goals while learning from the trainer's expertise

Social Sarah

Defining Quote: "I know exercising is good for me, but I don't enjoy working out on my own. I've become more consistent in my habits by looking to others for accountability and support."

Defining Characteristics

- Has trouble motivating herself to exercise from within
- Does not enjoy exercising by herself
- Is most consistent with exercising when she has social support to maintain her exercising habit (e.g. exercising with a friend, working out with a trainer)
- Has not found an activity that she absolutely loves

Motivations

- To exercise for her overall health
- To distract herself from the discomfort of exercising by socializing with others

- To avoid letting down others by keeping her commitments (e.g. making a training appointment so she's scheduled herself to exercise)

Barriers

- If she doesn't have a training appointment or a friend to exercise with, she's less likely to follow through
- She doesn't really like to workout

Opportunities

- Commitment to team members means she's more likely to follow through
- Working as part of team and with trainer could expose her to different types of exercise she may enjoy
- Tracking helps demonstrate her progress to herself, which could be another source of motivation over time

Recommended Research Techniques

This foundational research will both help in refining the personas and inform the design of the proposed concept. As this is the first research effort for the project, I recommend starting with exploratory research on a small group of individuals that represent both "Tracking Tracy" and "Social Sarah." To understand the key behaviors we have identified for the concept, we should ask open-ended questions to address not just the "what" but also the "why" and "how" of user behavior. Either focus groups or interviews would fit with these research needs.

In deciding between focus groups and interviews, it is important to consider whether group discussion or individual conversation would work better for the topics to be covered. Talking about topics like exercising can be difficult at times. Feelings of guilt may surface, and social pressures around exercising may also come into play (e.g. comparison, exaggeration), especially in a group setting. Finally, some people may feel hesitant to share their feelings about exercise in front of others. For example, Social Sarah may not feel comfortable sharing her true feelings about exercise and her lack of internal motivation in front of an expert exerciser like a Tracking Tracy. For this reason, I do not believe a focus group would be a productive environment for this research. In contrast, semi-structured in-depth interviews with a skilled facilitator will provide the comfortable, private setting for a candid conversation about current behaviors to take place. The interviews should be videotaped and transcribed for later analysis.

Because this topic can be emotional in nature, a collaging exercise would address the underlying feelings surrounding exercising in general as well as an individual's

motivations for exercising. I also recommend complementing the interviews with a brief survey at the beginning of the interview process that asks closed-ended questions.

Research Protocol

Interview Guide

Hi there. My name is Jessica, and I work for _____. My team and I are working on a new concept in the area of health and fitness, and we would like to learn more about how you feel about exercise and about your exercise habits.

I have just a few housekeeping items that I'd like to go over:

- Our session will last about an hour and a half.
- All information you share with me today will remain confidential, and I ask that you keep everything we discuss confidential as well.
- We'd like permission to videotape this session for note taking purposes only.
- My team is observing this session remotely, so they can learn from our conversation.
- Please be as open and honest as you feel comfortable.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Exercise

1. Collaging exercise: "Select images that reflect how you feel about exercising..."
 - a. Take me through why you selected those images and what they mean to you.
2. Tell me about the last time you exercised...
 - a. When did you decide to exercise [how far in advance]?
 - b. What made you decide to exercise?
 - c. What type of exercise did you do? Why?
 - d. Where did you exercise? Why?
 - e. How long did you exercise for?
3. Thinking generally, what motivates you to exercise? Why?
4. Do you ever have trouble motivating yourself to exercise? Why?
5. Do you schedule in specific days/times to workout or do you decide each day whether or not to workout? Why?
6. Do you educate yourself about exercising? Why?
 - a. If so, how do you learn new things about working out?
7. Have you ever worked with a trainer?
 - a. If yes, tell me about that experience...

- b. If no, why?
- 8. Do you typically exercise by yourself or with friends? Why?
- 9. Do you reward yourself when you exercise regularly? Why? If so, how?

Tracking & Goal Setting

- 1. Do you track things in your life [what you eat, workouts]? Why? How?
- 2. Do you set goals for things you want to accomplish in your life [lose weight, learn a new language] Why?
 - a. How do you hold yourself accountable?
 - b. Do you reward yourself when you reach a goal? How?

Social

- 1. Do you participate in any communities or teams of people striving towards a common goal [weight loss community, running group]? Why?
- 2. How comfortable are you in sharing your progress and accountability with others? Why do you feel this way?

Concept

As I mentioned briefly before, we are exploring ideas for a new fitness concept. I'd like you to read the following concept statement, and then we'll talk about it. [PROVIDE CONCEPT HANDOUT.]

- 1. How do you think this concept will work?
- 2. What features do you expect it to have? What benefits will it provide?
- 3. Do you envision yourself using it? Why? If so, how?
- 4. In order for this concept to be worth it for you, what one feature must it have?

Those are all the questions I have. Thanks so much for sharing your thoughts - I really appreciate your time and input.