Usablenet

SportsDirect USC
High-Performing Hybrid App

Background

Sports Direct is the UK's leading sports retailer and the owner of world famous sport, fashion and lifestyle brands. In 2013, Sports Direct partnered with Usablenet to expand their digital presence with a mobile optimised site. Sports Direct saw immediate value in their new mobile experience, which soon expanded to creating a seamless multi-channel approach. According to eCommerce Manager, Niall Sutherland, "since launch we have seen a steady increase in revenue coming through mobile devices, so we believe the investment is already paying off." Sports Direct customers are multi-channel shoppers and expect a highly usable mobile experience to support their online shopping habits. According to Niall, "customers want to access the same products and promotions quickly and easily, whether they are using the desktop site or on their phone while on the go."

In 2016, Sports Direct asked Usablenet to support the strategy and execution of an ecommerce app for one of their most popular fashion and lifestyle brands, USC. Sports Direct recognized the shift towards apps in retail with in-app customer spending reaching $116 for every $100 spent on desktop, and mobile app shoppers converting 3.7 times the rate of mobile web shoppers.

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> **Usability is an essential element for mobile. SportsDirect.com has thousands of products on offer, and we need to make sure that the customers' journey is optimized for task completion, while ensuring that the site meets our marketing and business goals."**
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> **– Niall Sutherland, e-Commerce Manager**

Challenge

First off, to ensure a seamless user experience across channels, the app needed to use the same 'My Account', 'Registration' and 'Checkout' pages from the mobile site. Additionally, Sports Direct had recently shifted to a responsive website, which makes incorporating mobile site elements more complex.

Solution

Usablenet designed and built a high-performing HTML5 hybrid ecommerce app for USC. It combines native app pages with SportsDirect.com's responsive mobile web pages. To incorporate SportsDirect.com's responsive mobile web pages (account, registration and checkout), Usablenet pulled from multiple diverse sources with varying levels of sophistication. Usablenet's UX team designed the native app pages to reflect the look and feel of SportsDirect.com, resulting in a seamless user experience regardless of the source for any individual screen.

Usablenet's experienced team of app developers created the native portion, which powers the core features and functionality that drive user engagement. These include:
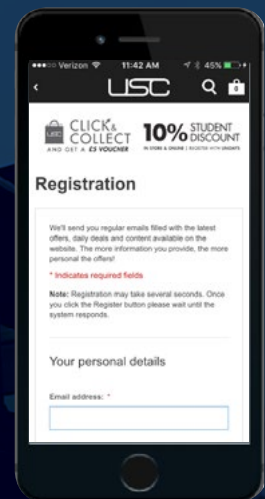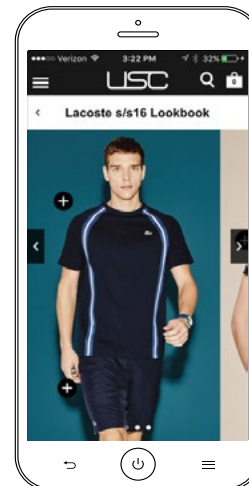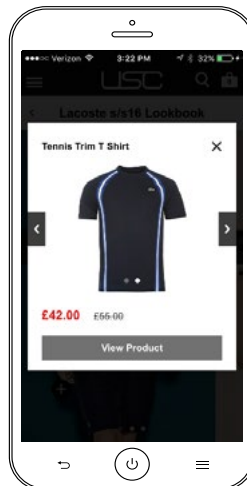
Native   *Mobile web*

LOOKBOOK FUNCTIONALITY:

Located on the homepage and within the menu, USC users can easily scroll through desired product categories using lookbooks. The lookbook functionality engages and inspires mobile shoppers, while making it quick and easy to view products.

The USC lookbooks allow users to quickly browse desired product categories in a more engaging fashion. Users simply click the product indicators next to products they're interested in for a quick view.

LOCATION-AWARE STORE LOCATOR:

The app leverages user location to automatically find the closest USC store locations. Alternatively, users have the option to input the zip code of their desired location. In making the mobile store locator highly usable, the USC app drives footfall.
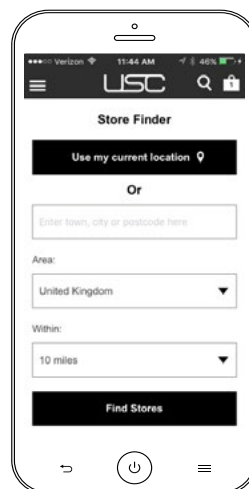
The 'Store Finder' detects the user's location to direct them to the closest USC stores. It also provides alternative search options (zip code lookup).
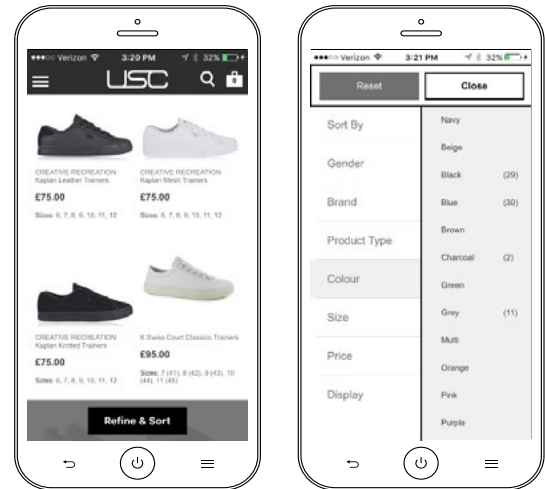
HIGHLY USABLE FILTERING:

A 'Refine & Sort' button is located in a sticky footer on each product list page. The filtering functionality allows users to effectively narrow down the product characteristics that suit their needs. Users are shown product availability within the filter options and are able to easily reset filters they've already selected.

INTUITIVE PRODUCT NAVIGATION:

Users can easily navigate through USC's entire product catalog. The homepage provides clear starting points for key journeys, the product list pages are highly visual while providing complete transparency of price and product availability, and the product pages are optimised to facilitate task completion.

The USC app's product navigation is completely native. The product list pages are visual and intuitive, with highly usable product filtering.

Using Usablenet's content publishing and management tool, U-Control, Sports Direct is able to dynamically update all the mobile content on the app homepage without developer support. Using the tool, Sports Direct effectively utilizes valuable homepage space with highly visual promotions and clear starting points for popular browsing journeys. U-Control allows Sports Direct to perform agile testing of page elements, such as testing different promotions and the impact of promoting social on the homepage.

U-Control gives brands full control and flexibility when planning, executing and maintaining integrated mobile marketing promotions.

Outcome

Since the launch in June 2016, the USC app has been very popular. With around 5,000 regular returning users, the app has maintained a conversion rate of over 10% each month and continues to generate strong mobile revenue.

Well-designed mobile commerce apps provide highly usable shopping experiences that customers enjoy. Many retail brands have shifted their mobile strategy to apps, because of the expectations of mobile shoppers.

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