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# UX Report: Luxury Travel Industry

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# CHALLENGE

**ABC Travel** is a leader in the world of luxury travel. As it moves towards competing in the digital landscape, understanding the competition and where the company stands is vital to success.

ABC Travel is looking at a full redesign of our Jamaica brand to become an e-commerce platform for travel built with innovation and guest experience in mind.

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# OBJECTIVES - Business Goals

## Modernize

- The website hasn't been updated in years, so bringing it up to modern design standards is vital.
- The website needs to reflect island life, and the 5 Star treatment we want guests to have.

## Innovate

- Understand what competitors are doing, and where we can do it better.
  - Find areas not being serviced, and present ideas to be roadmapped.
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# OBJECTIVES - User Goals

## Feel Like Insider

- Guests want to feel like they know the island, the events, and the local hot spots
- Want to be able to explore, events, and activities that will make their trip amazing.

## Ease of Use

- An easy to use website that offers information, deals, and availability without hassle.
  - Able to search and compare the villas they like the most.
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# Technical Consideration

## Platform

- Must be built on the current technical architecture with minor enhancements
- Propose improvements to the current platform to enable must have functions

## Integration

- Must still be able to integrate with current vendors and third-party platforms
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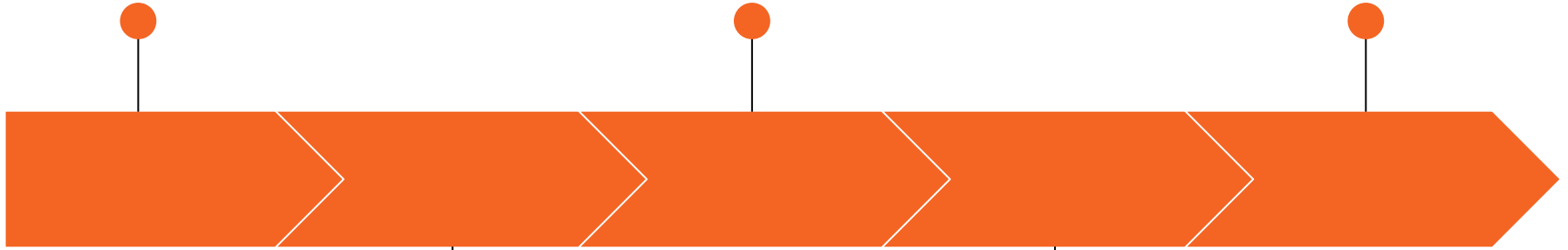
# THE PROCESS

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**Empathize:** Market Research, Competitor Analysis, Personas, Empathy Map, and Storyboard

**Ideate:** Information Architecture, Interaction Design, Branding, UI Design

**Test:** User Tests & A/B Testing



**Define:** Feature Roadmap, Question Formulation, & Goals.

**Visual:** Mock-Ups, Interactive Prototype, Affinity Maps & Journey Flows

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**RESEARCH**

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# RESEARCH

## ASSUMPTIONS

- The main user is in a high socioeconomic bracket with a lot of disposable income
  - Younger generation is more drawn to innovative technology, thus more likely to be interested in a fully online experience
  - The user is well-travelled, likes exploring, enjoys adventure holidays, is interested in island getaways, and personalized trips
  - Users will already have a preferred vendor they work with, and will need to show them advantages of switching to us.
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## METHODOLOGIES

1. **PRIMARY — *Customer Interviews:*** We spoke with 5 participants in depth, and over 300 via survey results from the target demographic. Use findings from secondary research steps to formulate the questions.
2. **SECONDARY — *Ethnographic*** research was done on site at four villas on the island that we offer to guests. I was able to step into the shoes of our guests, to better understand the type of holiday they are looking for.
3. **SECONDARY — *Competitive Analysis:*** research other adventure travel / pre-packaged experience companies and analyze structure of their websites, user journey and their methods for highlighting and categorizing different products on the website, identify successes and pain points in their online booking processes, define the target demographic they are gearing their ads towards.

# RESEARCH

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# ANALYSIS

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# MARKET ANALYSIS

## **Immersive and Adventure Travel**

Immersive travel gives travelers the experience to become someone else. People who choose this type of trip are typically looking to connect with friends, have a life-changing experience and make lasting memories. This audience segment has a large appetite for adventure and spontaneity.

## **All-Inclusive Travel and Activities**

Families with children under 15 choose all-inclusive experiences to experience activities and adventures in a safe place. They typically travel to relax and like to pre-book their activities and pay up-front, so there are no surprises.

## **In-Destination Travel**

Travel is one of the most popular pursuits after retirement. In-destination travel and activities would cater to an older segment of the population. Group travel and appropriate safe activities are attractive to this audience segment.

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# COMPETITOR ANALYSIS



## STRENGTHS

- Well-known brand, global presence
- Vast listing range, rates lower than hotels
- Masterful UX design both on web and mobile app
- Responsive to change in trends, uniquely positioned to market authentic cultural experiences
- The platform gives travelers the opportunity to meet people that would otherwise be impossible, undertake unique and authentic activities and hence gain a genuine insight into a different culture

## WEAKNESSES

- Safety concern: accommodations and experiences are provided by private hosts, not an organization so it's impossible to provide complete security
- Positive experiences are reliant on hosts and limited to what hosts can offer, impossible to control quality
- Flights and accommodations need to be booked separately
- Limited to bigger cities



## STRENGTHS

- Members can earn and use frequent flyer mile points through airline and credit card reward points along with Expedia rewards points
- Travelers can book flights, vacation packages, hotels, cars, cruises and activities in one place
- Excellent car rental customization and helpful car rental map
- Best value & highly ranked destinations are highlighted in "Collections" section
- Customer support at the top
- Expedia app

## WEAKNESSES

- Mediocre airfare pricing and lackluster hotel searches
- Excessive ads on site
- Negative reviews, especially concerning customer service experience



## STRENGTHS

- Established, trusted brand, especially by older population
- Excellent distinction between the types of travel experiences, clear requirements for travelers, frictionless navigation
- Full control over the quality of experiences, safety of travelers, customization opportunities
- Taps all other NatGeo Society resources (network of experts, researchers, books, maps, film and TV divisions)
- Meaningful opportunities to explore the planet — proceeds from all travel programs support the Society's education and scientific research programs
- Offer small-group trips built on meaningful encounters with people and places, interactions with knowledgeable local guides

## WEAKNESSES

- Most trips are very expensive and targeting elite segment
- Prices are not highlighted — planning and reserving the trip is not as simple



## STRENGTHS

- Visually appealing UI, easy navigation with strong use of iconography
- Heavy focus on the experience and exploring destinations online — cruise planner option
- Lots of detailed information about ships, itineraries, experiences, etc. — setting the right expectations
- Clear flow, from initial search to the end of booking process
- One of the best cruise lines for families, also many features aimed at active people
- Every aspect of the travel experience is pre-planned, great for those who travel to relax
- Great customer reviews

## WEAKNESSES

- Some pages are text heavy or have old UI
- Extremely controlled experience — limited shore times and entertainment options
- "Tour for the masses" that may not interest adventurous travelers who are looking to get off the beaten track

# PERSONA ANALYSIS

## Yearly Vacation Spend 2017

- Millennials (ages 18-24) \$1,373
- Generation X (ages 35-54) \$2,628
- Baby Boomers (ages 55+) \$1,865

## In-destination Activities

In-destination tourist services generally focus on tours and activities; however, other categories are much more significant regarding sales. **Shopping and food generated the most substantial sales globally**, at \$580 billion and \$565 billion respectively in 2013.

Shopping is expected to record the fastest growth in the next five years at 9%.

Other categories in in-destination tourist services include entertainment, excursions as well as tourist attractions, car rental, spas and other tourist activities.

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## Pre-Booking Activities

Travelers aged 18-34 were most likely to pre-book activities (26%), followed by those aged 35 – 54 (20%), with older travelers (55+) (12%) showing the most resistance to pre-booking.

- 81% participate in bookable in-destination activities
- 42% day trips, excursions, and sightseeing tours
- 30% museums, galleries, and cultural attractions
- 28% outdoor activities

50% of 18-34-year-olds booked a day trip, excursion or sightseeing tour during their last vacation

# PERSONA ANALYSIS

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# RESEARCH PHASE RESULTS

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# Insights Gained

## Destination Insights

1. 45% of our guests have a bucket list they want to check off
2. 34% want to relive childhood holiday destinations
3. When going to the island over 80% want help learning about unique on island adventures

## Experience Insights

1. 72% are traveling intergenerational
  2. The majority of our guests want a trip that will leave an impact they and their family will never forget
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# Insights Gained

## Booking Insights

1. 90% of guests value a streamlined online experience
  2. Food based travel is a growing interest among our guests
  3. 60% love the idea of AI powered search, that allows them a more personal vacation
  4. 80% want a better mobile experience
  5. Onsite searches for short-term travel planning have grown by 20% month over month
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# RESEARCH RESULTS

## INTERVIEW & SURVEY INSIGHTS

Once the key quotes from the interviews & survey were organized into an empathy map, I discovered top user insights and deciphered corresponding needs:

1. Users want to feel in control of their trip
2. Decisions are heavily affected by cost
3. Users prefer to travel with family and friends
4. Users' trip styles differ but they all want to make amazing memories

These insights also helped with creating a feature roadmap that is attached with this presentation.

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# INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

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# CARD SORT

ABC Travel offers packages to 280+ destinations all over the globe so it was valuable to explore how users intuitively organize and navigate the site content.

I conducted an open card sort using OptimalSort with **30 cards**.

**96 (80%) people** completed the study out of a total of 120 participants.

Participants created an average of **6 groups**.

- Lowest observed time: 5.83 min
- Highest observed time: 70.05 min
- **Median: 17.47 min**

Through observation and feedback, **I was able to understand how the participants structured information in their minds, which informs how I should then design the information architecture for the new website to be intuitive for the user.**

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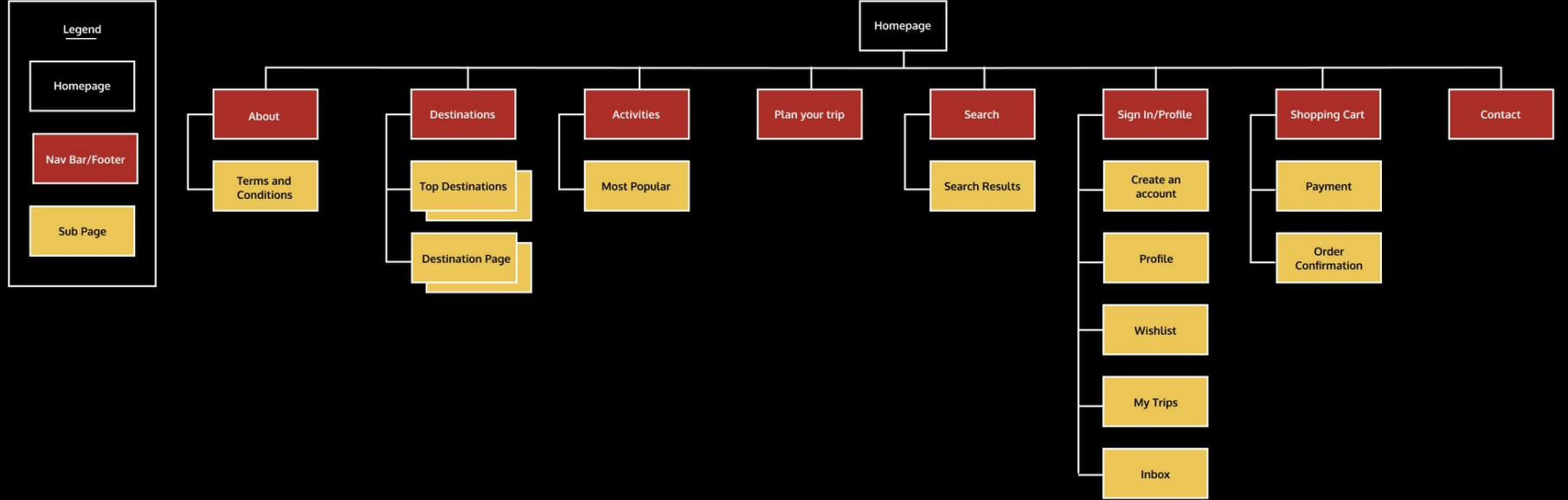
## KEY INSIGHTS

- There are various ways people categorize events / activities, and island location alone will not be enough for an intuitive content organization
- Most objective way is to categorize by broad geographical labels: “Asia”, “Europe”, “America”
- More subjective methods, such as by theme or collection, indicate potential value in allowing more personalized ways of organizing content

# CARD SORT INSIGHTS

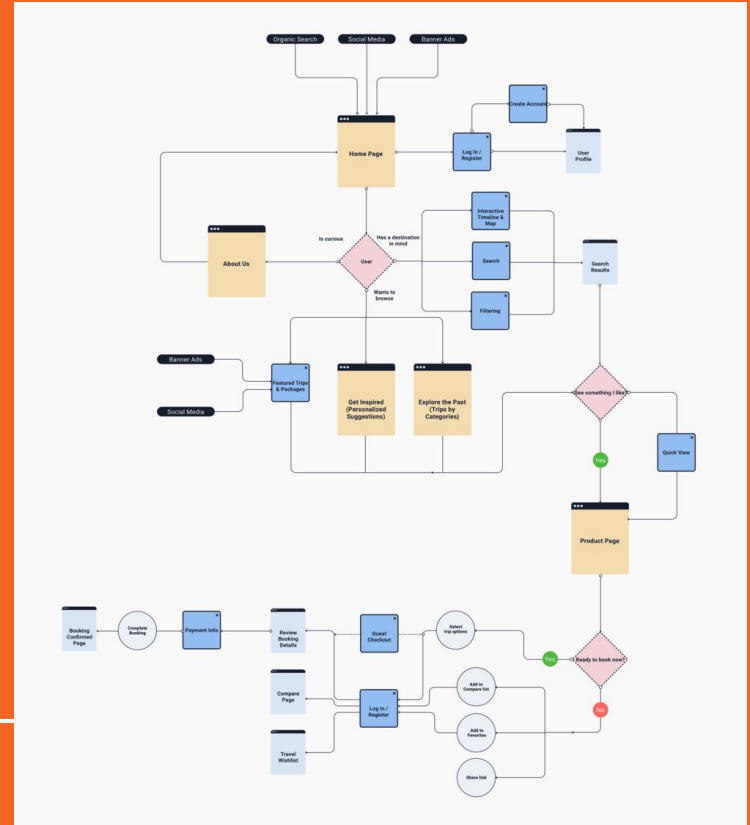
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# New Site Map



# TASK FLOW

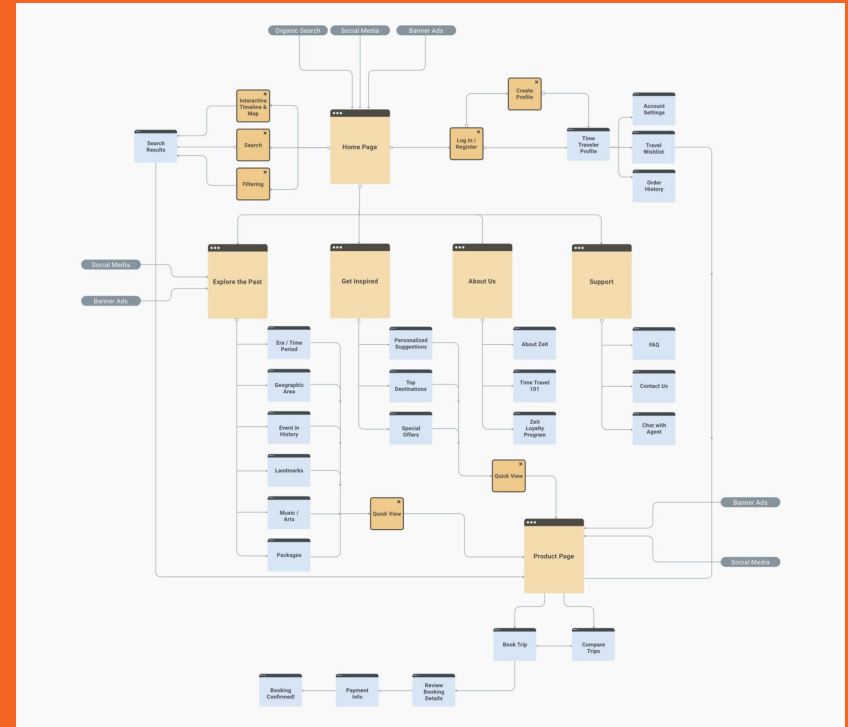
Since one of ABC's goals is for customers to be able to book trips efficiently, I constructed a task flow breaking down the necessary steps for a user to get from the landing page to the order confirmation page.





# USER FLOW

To further analyze the flow, I explored the possible paths that users could take while ordering products in a user flow diagram.



# NEXT STEPS

To conclude this study, I wanted to comment on a few of the things I feel are vital that the current platform can't handle but our users desire highly.

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## Search Bar Filters

- Due to the combination of both on and off-island experiences, the terminology and functionality of the search bar filters were confusing for some users. Looking at how to tweak and adjust the filters until the most intuitive combination is found would be a huge boost for us.

## Responsiveness

- Since this project was more desktop/laptop focused based on technology limits and the current older user base we discovered in research, we should look at a more in-depth mobile version to attract younger guests. Many of the younger segment expressed a desire to search mobile.

## Map Search

- Similar to the feature Airbnb has for searching using a map, I would love to develop that function for the site adapting to the experiences in which people are searching so they can see how much of the island will be seen in that package.

# NEXT STEPS

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