Design Brief: Message Us v2

Purpose

This document outlines the Self-service & Automation UX team's proposed approach for the redesign of Message Us, as first discussed by the team during end of Q1, 2019.

Overview

Message Us was first launched in Q4 of 2016, after a 6-month research and design effort. This first version of Message Us was designed and optimized for mobile, since no chat functionality existed on mShop then. The first vision defined and presented to leadership was focused on introducing a new way for Amazon customers to communicate with Amazon. It included concepts such as an automated chatbot that could answer and solve limited customer issues, touch-words to allow for seamless interaction between the customer and the bot, the use of MRI (*most relevant item*), asynchronous messaging (so customers can communicate with us on their time), and a way for customers to escalate to live help when the bot failed to satisfactorily resolve their issue.

The vision also introduced concepts like the ability for customers to take and edit pictures to share with the bot and CSAs, sentiment recognition (so the bot can escalate 'angry' customers), and a strong capability to understand free text. Some of these concepts were de-prioritized for v1, with a focus instead on the most contact creating use-cases, and on features that could be completed within the launch deadline. These features, along with some others (e.g. allowing customers to undo sent messages, or ingressing into MU from other touch-points) have still not been prioritized or scoped.

Since its launch, the Message Us team has focused primarily on improving the depth and breath of workflows that can be automated using the chatbot. The UX and interaction capabilities of Message US have improved incrementally - specifically where they help improve the quality of workflows (e.g. item picker, change shipping, intent picker, and photo on delivery), and only reusing the UI elements that already existed. Another area of focus for the team has been replicating the Message Us experience on desktop. Launched in October of 2018, the desktop experience maintained the same functionality as the mobile experience, with tweaks to the desktop channel selection page that would allow for an ingress to Message Us.

Now, Message Us faces a new set of challenges. Research done on both the desktop and mobile experiences highlight gaps in regards to customers' perception of the platforms, effort required, and its limited interactions. With a restricted UI library and interaction patterns, the chat platform is at risk of stagnating, and failing to engage customers. Iterating on the depth and breadth of workflows will achieve less than expected results, unless we improve upon the growth-limiting factors of engagement and delight. To proactively counter this problem, the UX team envisions a redefined Message Us platform that improves the UI, interaction patterns, and functionality of Message us in service of providing an engaging and delightful experience to customers; one that bridges gaps between perception and actuality, and empowers customers to self solve their issues with minimal effort.

Project Definition

What problems are we trying to solve

In order to deflect contacts away from human support and toward self-service and automated solutions, we must address the sources of friction in the current experience that fail to engage customers. These include:

- Bringing Message Us on-par with Amazon UX
- Miscalibrated expectations on how to interact with our bot
- Limited interactions that curtail workflow capability
- UI that under-engages and under-delights customers (Design debt)

What design questions define this effort?

The overall effort is driven by our Message Us v2 design question:

- **How might we make Message Us the customer's tool of choice for resolving problems?**

This question is broad, but can be broken down into more focused questions:

- How might we make Message Us more useful?
- How might we make Message Us more usable?
- How might Message Us solve problems with even less customer effort?

We will *not* be focusing on these questions as we want to first define the product experience before we solve for it's implications to other audiences:

- How might we make Message Us scalable across teams?
- How might we improve and optimize the associate experience for Message Us?

Phase 2

- How might we improve and optimize the associate experience for Message Us?
- How might MU be presented across various touchpoints, devices, and apps?
- …

Process

Timeline and Milestones

September 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Compile Exploration areas ⌄					
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
				Create Calendar ⌄		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Competitive benchmarking ⌄					
	Review calendar w/ UX team ⌄	**Scoping exercise** ⌄		**Secondary**		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Secondary ⌄						
	Review updated calendar and scope w/ UX team ⌄		**Share insights and do SWOT analysis** ⌄	**Define value prop** ⌄	**Nishal out**	
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
Nishal out ⌄				**Identify Opportunity Areas and define driving questions** ⌄		