# Bureau of Workers' Compensation

## Information Architecture Validation: Worker and Employer Tree Testing

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Ohio | Bureau of Workers' Compensation

Agenda

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# *Project Overview*

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) was beginning a website redesign and needed evidence to support changes to the site's information architecture and navigation.

I conducted worker and employer tree testing using Optimal Workshop to evaluate whether users could find key information in the existing/proposed navigation. The results provided quantitative evidence of major findability issues and helped support approval of my proposed navigation recommendations for the redesign.

This study helped establish the need for clearer labels, improved content organization, and navigation structures that better matched how workers and employers looked for information.

# *Research Objectives*


- Evaluate whether injured workers and employers could successfully locate information using the proposed website navigation.
- Identify navigation labels, categories, and content groupings that created confusion or findability issues.
- Measure task success across common workers' compensation tasks and information-seeking activities.
- Identify areas where users followed incorrect navigation paths or abandoned tasks.
- Gather quantitative evidence to support information architecture and navigation improvements for the website redesign.
- Provide recommendations to improve navigation, content organization, and overall website usability.

# *Research Approach*

- Conducted stakeholder interviews to understand business goals, navigation challenges, and content priorities.
- Conducted customer service representative (CSR) interviews to identify common support requests, navigation issues, and areas of user confusion.
- Developed tree testing tasks based on frequent user questions, support requests, and key website tasks.
- Conducted remote tree testing studies using Optimal Workshop with 44 injured workers and 44 employers.
- 35 workers completed all 8 tasks and 35 employers completed all 10 tasks.
- Measured task success, failure rates, skipped tasks, and navigation paths.
- Analyzed participant responses to identify confusing labels, content groupings, and information architecture issues.
- Used findings to support navigation and information architecture recommendations for the BWC website redesign.

# *Key Findings*

## Key Finding #1: Users Struggled to Locate Information Using the Proposed Navigation

- Workers failed 4 of 8 tasks and employers failed 7 of 10 tasks.
- Several critical tasks had success rates below 30%.
- Users frequently selected incorrect navigation paths or abandoned tasks.

## Key Finding #2: Navigation Labels Did Not Match User Expectations

- Users struggled to interpret navigation labels and categories.
- Important content was often placed in locations users did not expect.
- Terminology and organization created findability barriers for both workers and employers.

# *Key Findings*

## Key Finding #3: Critical Information Was Difficult to Find

- Workers had difficulty locating information about claims, appeals, managed care organizations (MCOs), and changing physicians.
- Employers struggled to locate information about payroll reporting, coverage requirements, self-insurance, injured worker procedures, and out-of-state employees.

## Key Finding #4: Navigation Issues Increased Reliance on Customer Support

- Research findings aligned with customer service feedback regarding common support requests.
- Users often relied on customer service representatives to help locate information and understand website content.
- Poor findability increased the effort required to complete common tasks.

*Key Findings*

**Key Finding #5: Tree Testing Provided Quantitative Evidence for Information Architecture Improvements**

- Task success rates identified areas where the proposed navigation did not align with user expectations.
- Findings helped prioritize navigation, labeling, and content organization improvements.
- Results provided evidence to support information architecture recommendations for the website redesign.

# *Quantitative Results*

## Study Participation

| Participant Group | Participants | Completed |
|---|---|---|
| Injured Workers | 44 | 35 |
| Employers | 44 | 35 |
| Total Responses | 88 | 70 |

### Worker Tree Test Results

- Workers failed **4 of 8 tasks (50%)**.
- Success rates ranged from **8% to 83%**.
- Lowest-performing tasks:
  - Assigned MCO: **8% success**
  - Change Physician: **9% success**
  - Appeal Claim Decision: **30% success**
  - Claims Process: **39% success**

# *Quantitative Results*

**Employer Tree Test Results**

- Employers failed **7 of 10 tasks (70%)**.
- Success rates ranged from **17% to 86%**.
- Lowest-performing tasks:
  - Reporting Payroll: **0% success**
  - Out-of-State Employees: **17% success**
  - Injured Worker Next Steps: **19% success**
  - Self-Insured Requirements: **25% success**
  - Need Coverage: **29% success**

# *Recommendations*

## Navigation & Information Architecture

- Reorganize content to better align with how workers and employers look for information.
- Revise navigation labels using terminology that is familiar and meaningful to users.
- Improve categorization and grouping of related content to reduce navigation errors.
- Prioritize frequently accessed content and tasks within the navigation structure.

## Findability Improvements

- Add signposts and quick links to help users locate common information more efficiently.
- Incorporate common search topics and "scent trails" to guide users to frequently requested content.
- Improve pathways to high-demand tasks and support information.

# *Recommendations*

## Content & Terminology

- Use plain language and reduce industry-specific terminology where possible.
- Provide definitions, examples, and supplemental guidance for specialized workers' compensation terms.
- Ensure navigation labels clearly communicate the content users will find.

## Validation & Continuous Improvement

- Conduct additional tree testing and usability testing to validate navigation changes.
- Continue gathering feedback from workers, employers, and customer service representatives.
- Use research findings to guide ongoing improvements to navigation, content organization, and overall website usability.

# *Impact*

- Identified significant information architecture and navigation issues affecting both workers and employers.
- Provided quantitative evidence demonstrating that users struggled to locate critical information using the proposed navigation structure.
- Findings helped secure stakeholder support for navigation and information architecture improvements as part of the website redesign.
- Research findings were used to guide development of revised navigation structures and content organization.
- Subsequent usability testing demonstrated substantial improvements in findability and navigation performance.
- Established a research-driven foundation for the broader BWC website redesign initiative.

# Contact

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