



Dedicated to representing the highest standards in Internet publishing

Online User Experience Study

June 2005

Conducted by:
Media Management Center
Northwestern University

Summary

- User engagement is the best way to increase site usage
 - more time spent
 - recommendations to friends
- Publishers, marketers and advertisers can increase engagement by building specific experiences into their sites

What is Engagement?

- It is the user's "experience"
 - An intellectual and emotional reaction
 - What happens within the user
 - How he / she interacts
- Specific "experiences" drive usage

The Study Addresses 3 Key Questions

Q1. What are the experiences people have when visiting websites?

Q2. How do these experiences impact site usage?

Q3. How can we use experiences to increase usage?

Q1: What are the Experiences?

- The study uncovered 22 distinct online experiences
- The study reveals:
 - What they are
 - How prevalent they are
 - Their impact on usage

Methodology: Qualitative Interviews

The study began with in-person interviews with Internet users



Methodology: Categories & Sites

Interviewees were screened for visitation to at least one of the following sites; the sites were selected to capture a broad range of online content:

National News:

CNN, MSNBC, NYT, USAToday, ABC, CBS

Local News:

Freep, AZCentral, Philly, Miami, KIROTV, nbc5i, chicagotribune, latimes

News Aggregator:

Google News, Yahoo News

Entertainment:

Comedycentral, mtv, vh1, entertainment weekly, espn, people

Special Interest:

Webmd, about, ivillage, foodnetwork, bhg, epicurious

Games:

Gamespot, UGO, IGN, Gamespy

Business:

WSJ, thestreet, forbes, cnnmoney, businessweek, marketwatch

What people said:

“It’s just instant gratification...It has become addictive.”



What people said:

“I don’t have to go out and buy a bunch of books. It covers everything.”



What people said:

“It allows me to relax... it has taken my mind off the day.”



What people said:

“I collect articles that I have found that make a particular point... I have quite a collection.”



What people said:

“It helps me become an information source for people at work.”

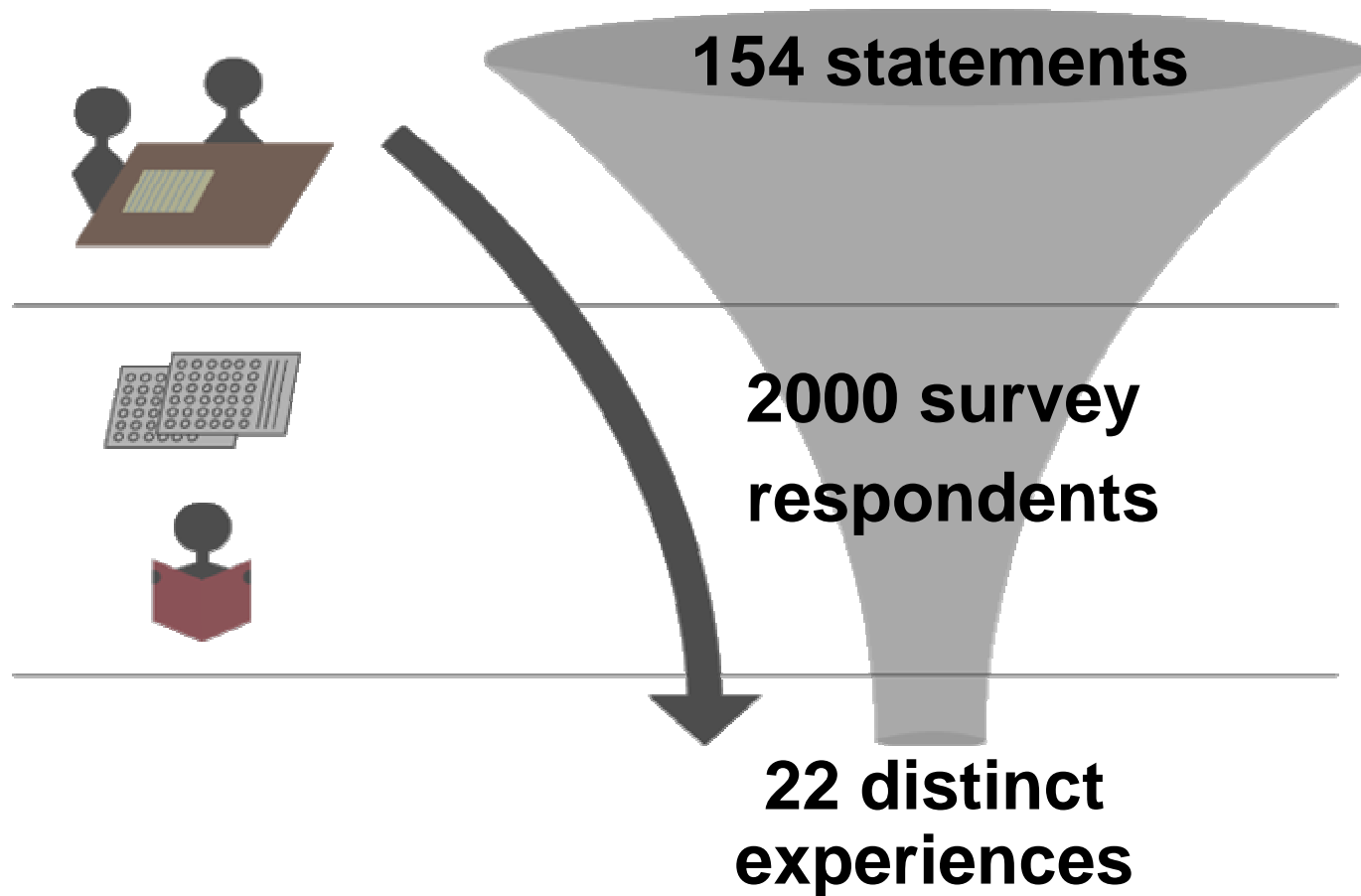


What people said:

“It makes me feel smart.”



Methodology: Survey and Analysis



Sample Experiences

- Touches me and expands my views
- Connects me with others
- Worth saving and sharing

Touches Me & Expands My Views

The following statements clustered together to comprise a coherent experience which was given the name, “Touches me and expands my views”:

- This site makes me think of things in new ways
- It inspires me in my own life
- This site stimulates my thinking about lots of different topics
- This site makes me a more interesting person
- Some stories on this site touch me deep down

Connects Me with Others

The following statements clustered together to comprise a coherent experience which was given the name, “Connects me with others”:

- I’m as interested in input from other users as I am in the regular content on this site
- Overall, the visitors to this site are pretty knowledgeable about the topics it covers
- I’d like to meet other people who regularly visit this site
- This site does a good job of getting its visitors to contribute or provide feedback

Worth Saving and Sharing

The following statements clustered together to comprise a coherent experience which was given the name, “Worth saving and sharing”:

- Often I save articles on this site to keep and go back to
- I like to send things I see on this site to other people
- I’ll often email articles to myself so I can keep them for future reference
- People will call or email to tell me to check out something on this site
- I usually like to discuss this site with someone else as I read through it

22 User Experiences

1. Entertains & absorbs me
2. Looks out for people like me
3. Regular part of my day
4. My personal timeout
5. A credible, safe place
6. Connects me with others
7. Touches me & expands my views
8. Makes me smarter
9. Turned on by ads
10. Easy to use
11. Helps and improves me
12. Worth saving & sharing
13. Tailored for me
14. Guides me to other media
15. Makes me feel I belong
16. A way to fill my time
17. Something to talk about
18. My guilty pleasure
19. Tries to persuade me
20. Too much
21. Worries me
22. Annoyed by the ads

Q2. How do experiences impact usage?

- SUM (Site Usage Measure) is our measure of how much a person uses a specific Web site
 - SUM measures:
 - Time Spent
 - » Total time on site in an average day
 - Frequency
 - » Average number of sessions per day

A five-step analytic process is used to correlate site usage with the 22 distinct experiences as is illustrated on the next set of slides:


Step 1. Measure usage for each respondent

High

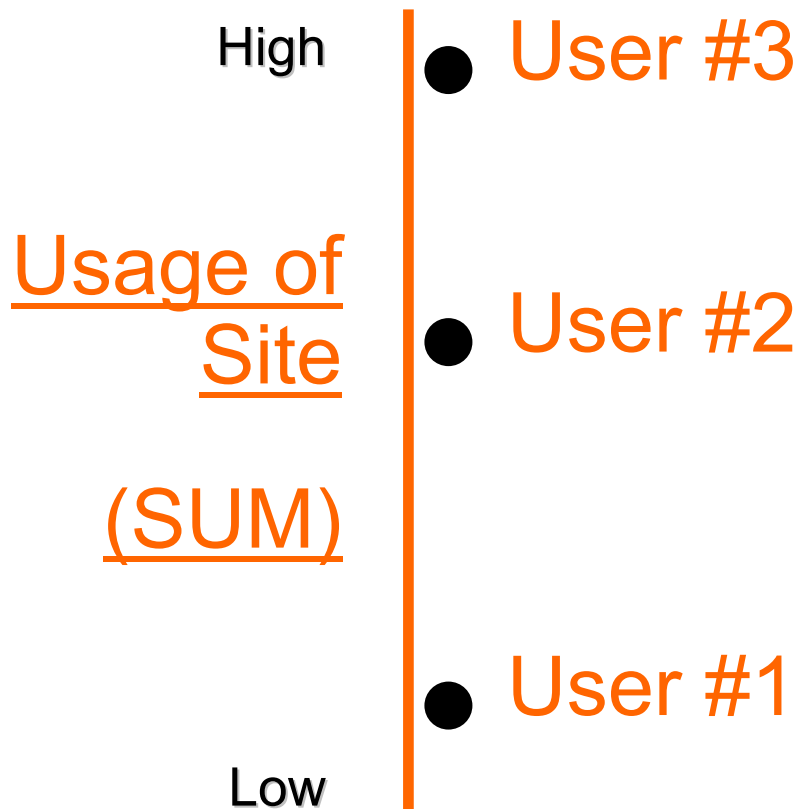
Usage of
Site

(SUM)

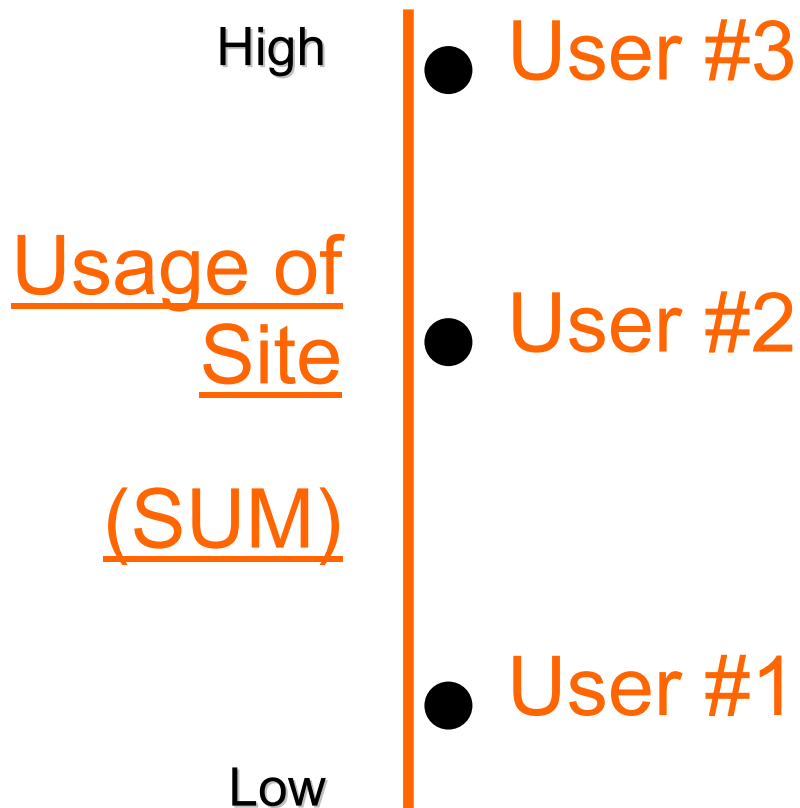
Low



Step 1. Measure usage for each respondent

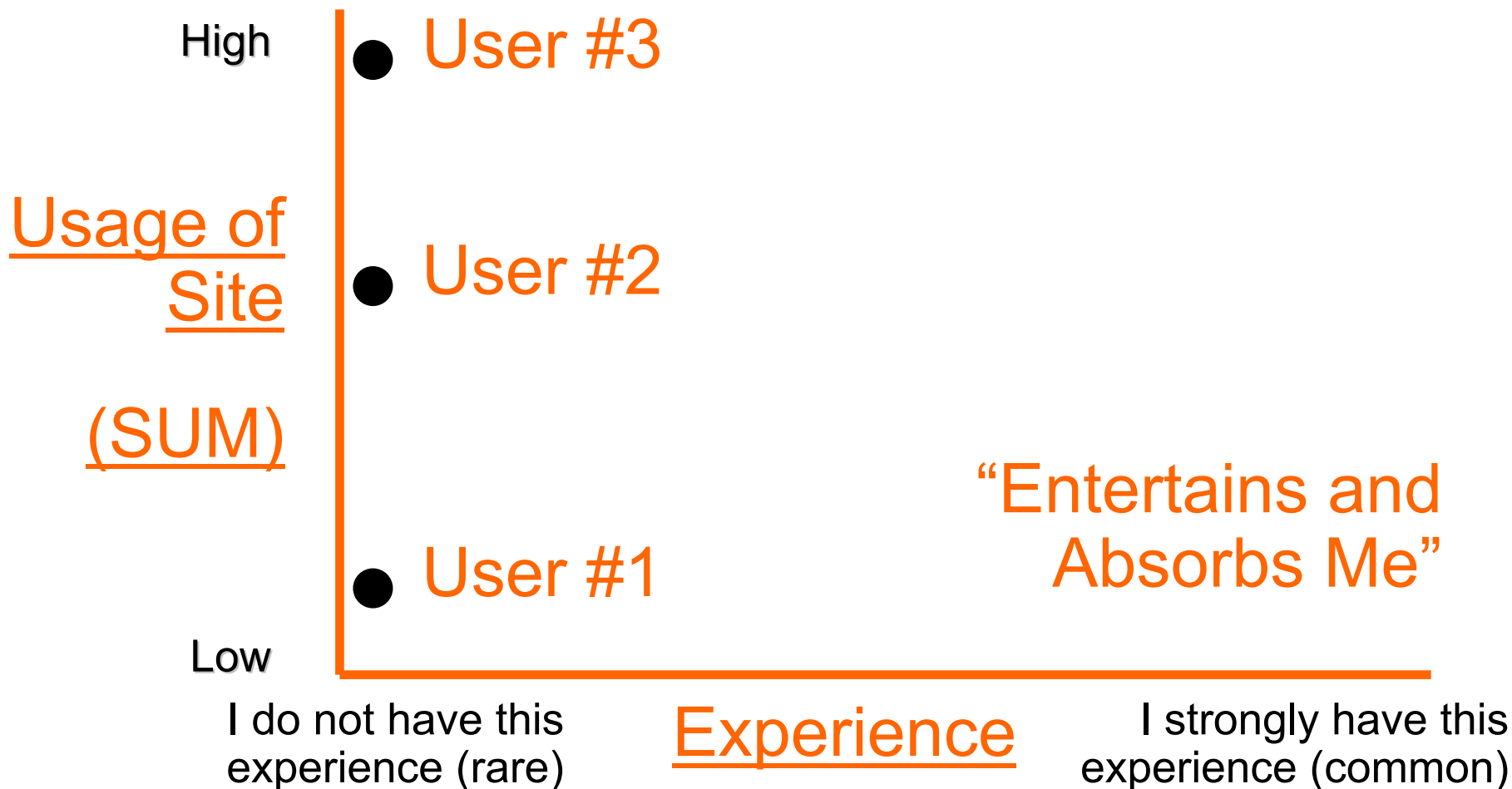


Step 2: Select an Experience to Study

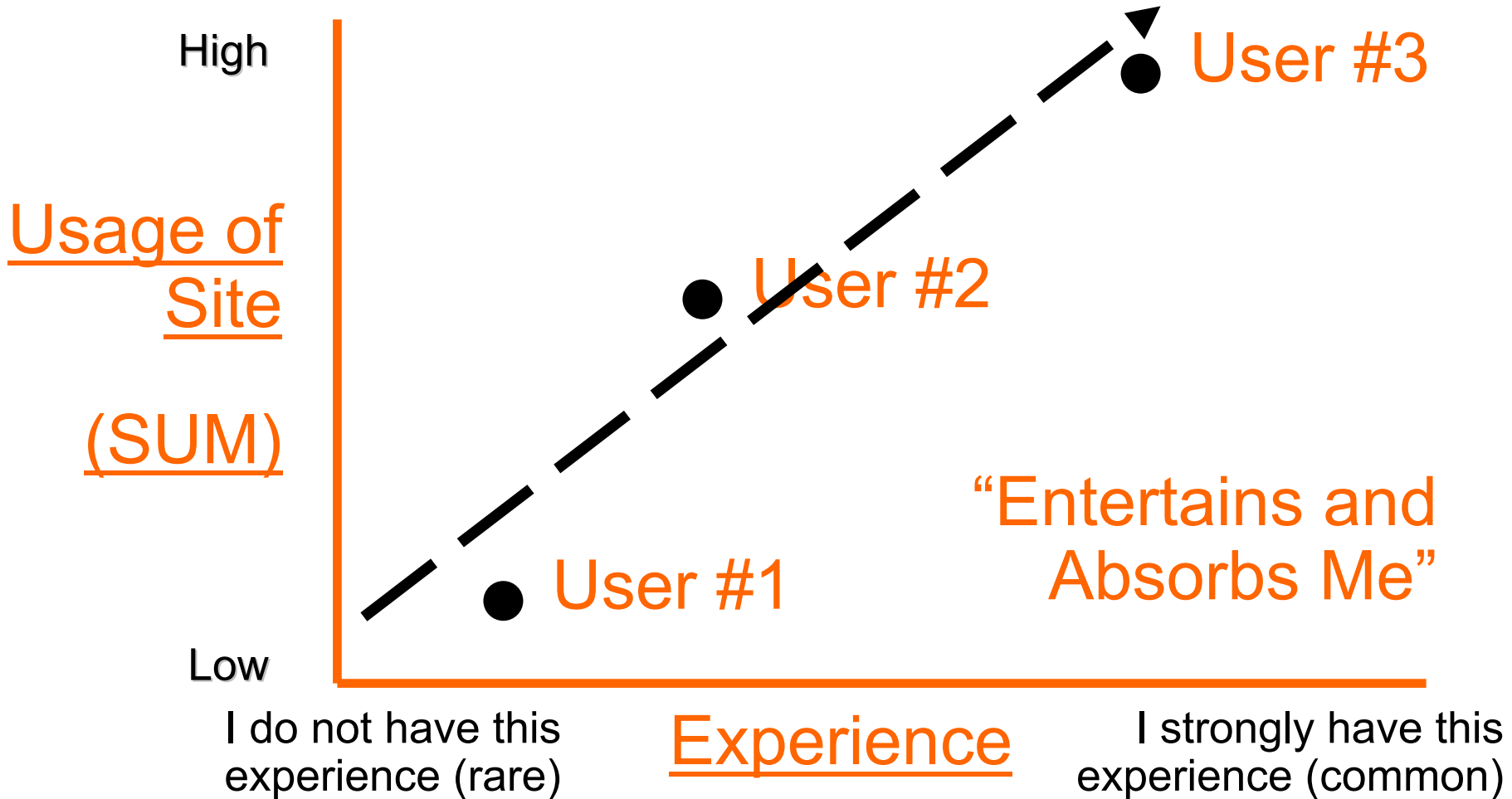


“Entertains and Absorbs Me”

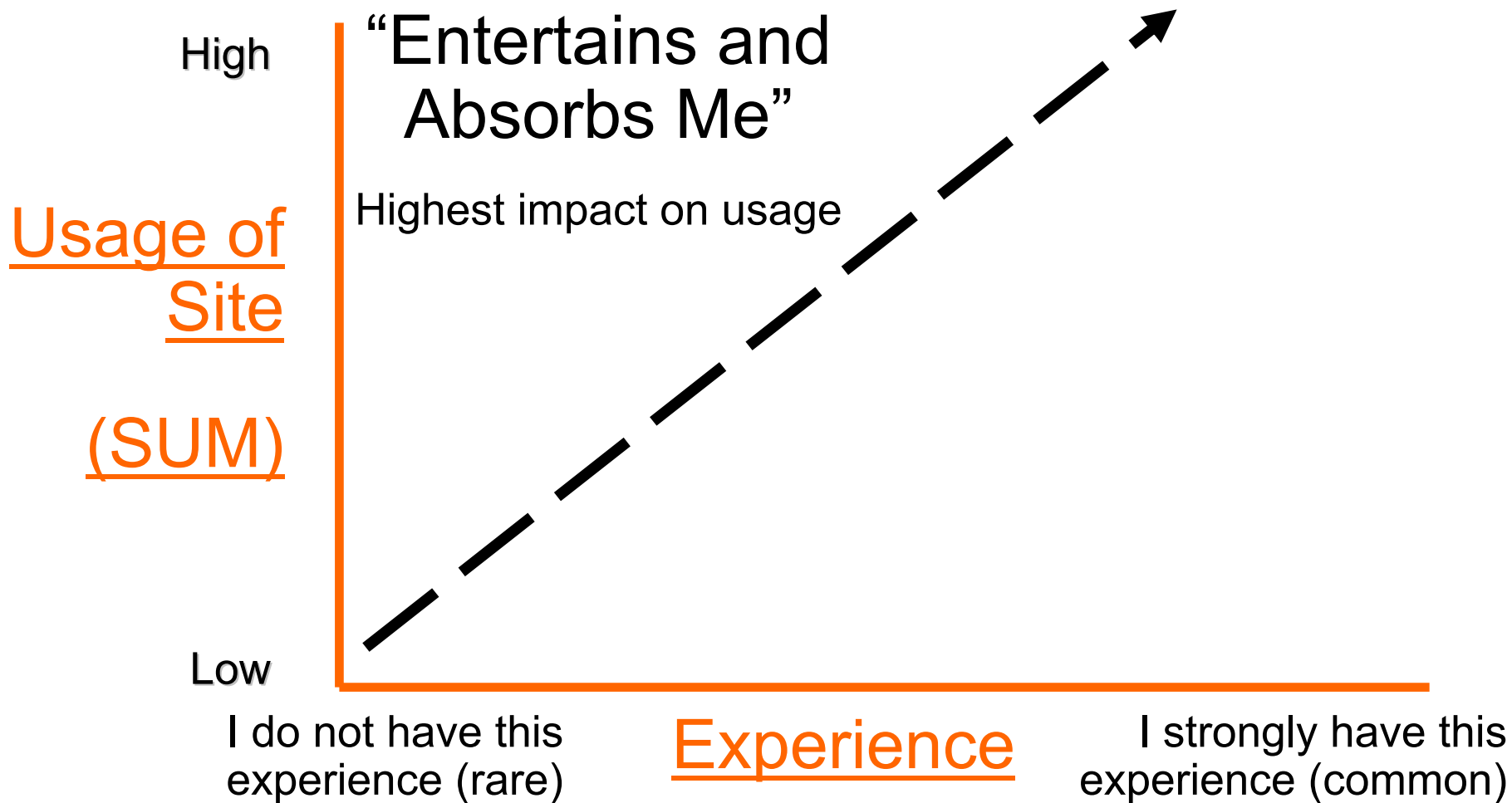
Step 3: Relate Respondents' Usage to Experience Rating



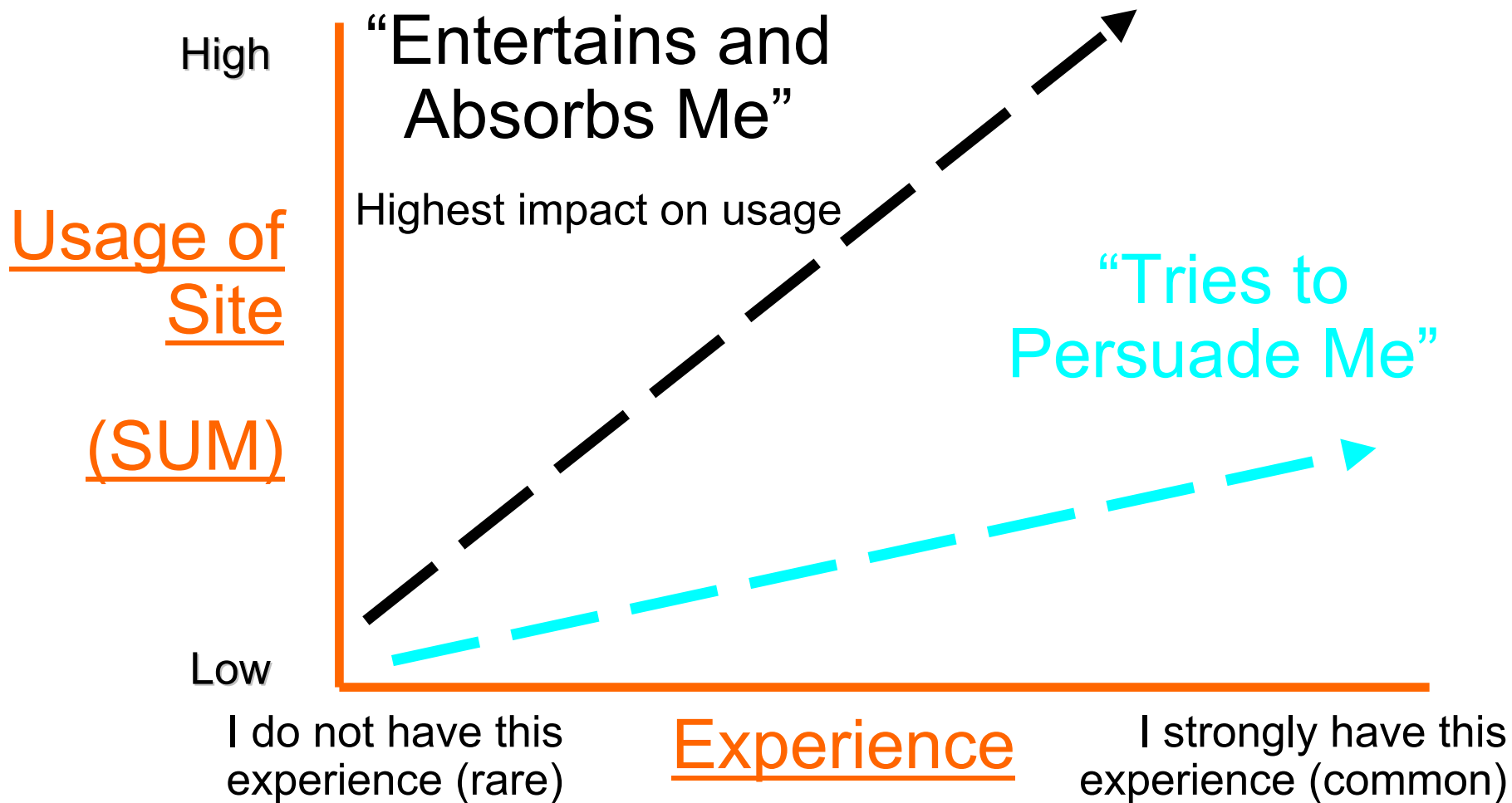
Step 4: Plot the Relationship



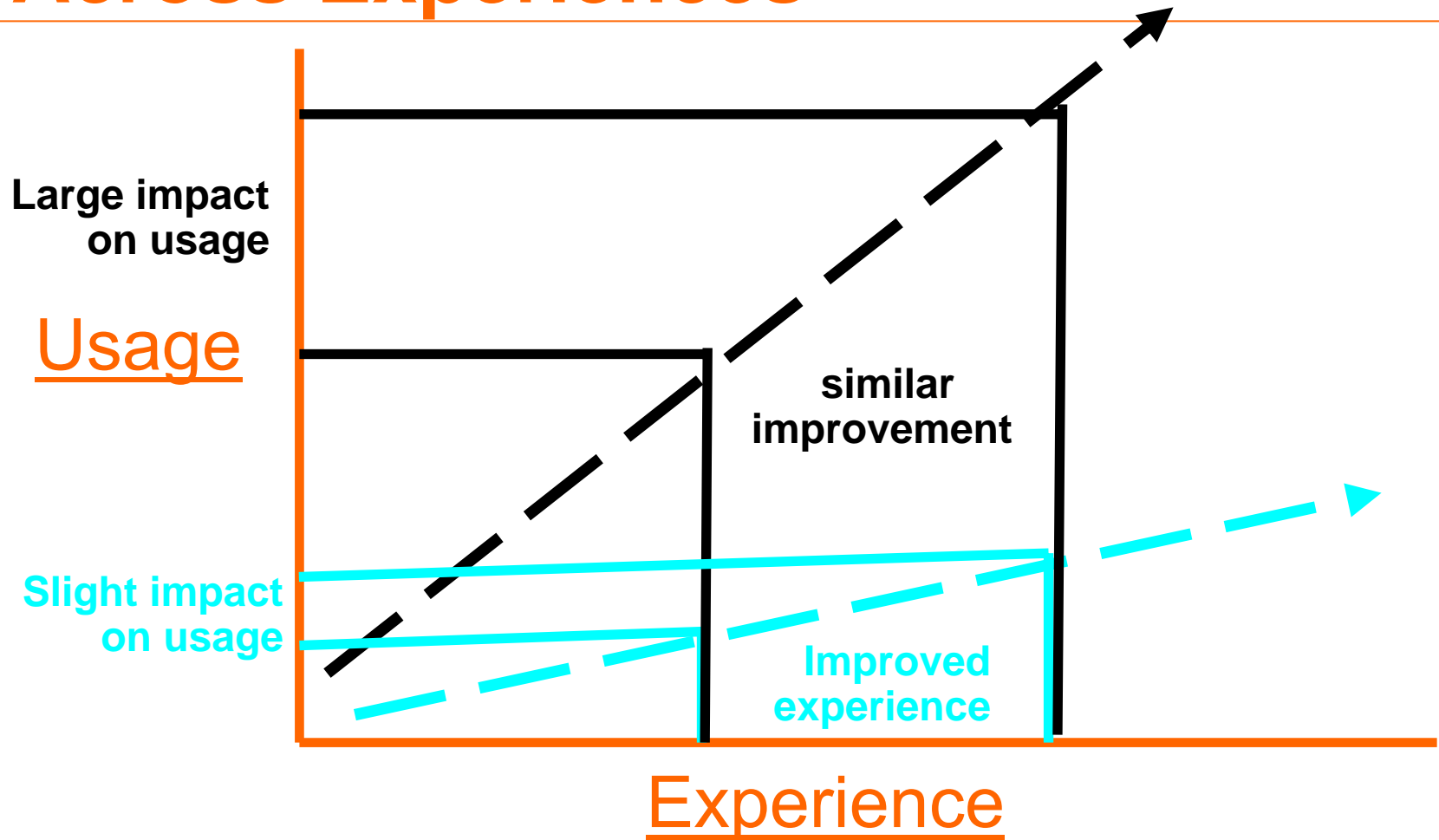
Step 5: Compare Relationships Across Experiences



Step 5: Compare Relationships Across Experiences



Step 5: Compare Relationships Across Experiences

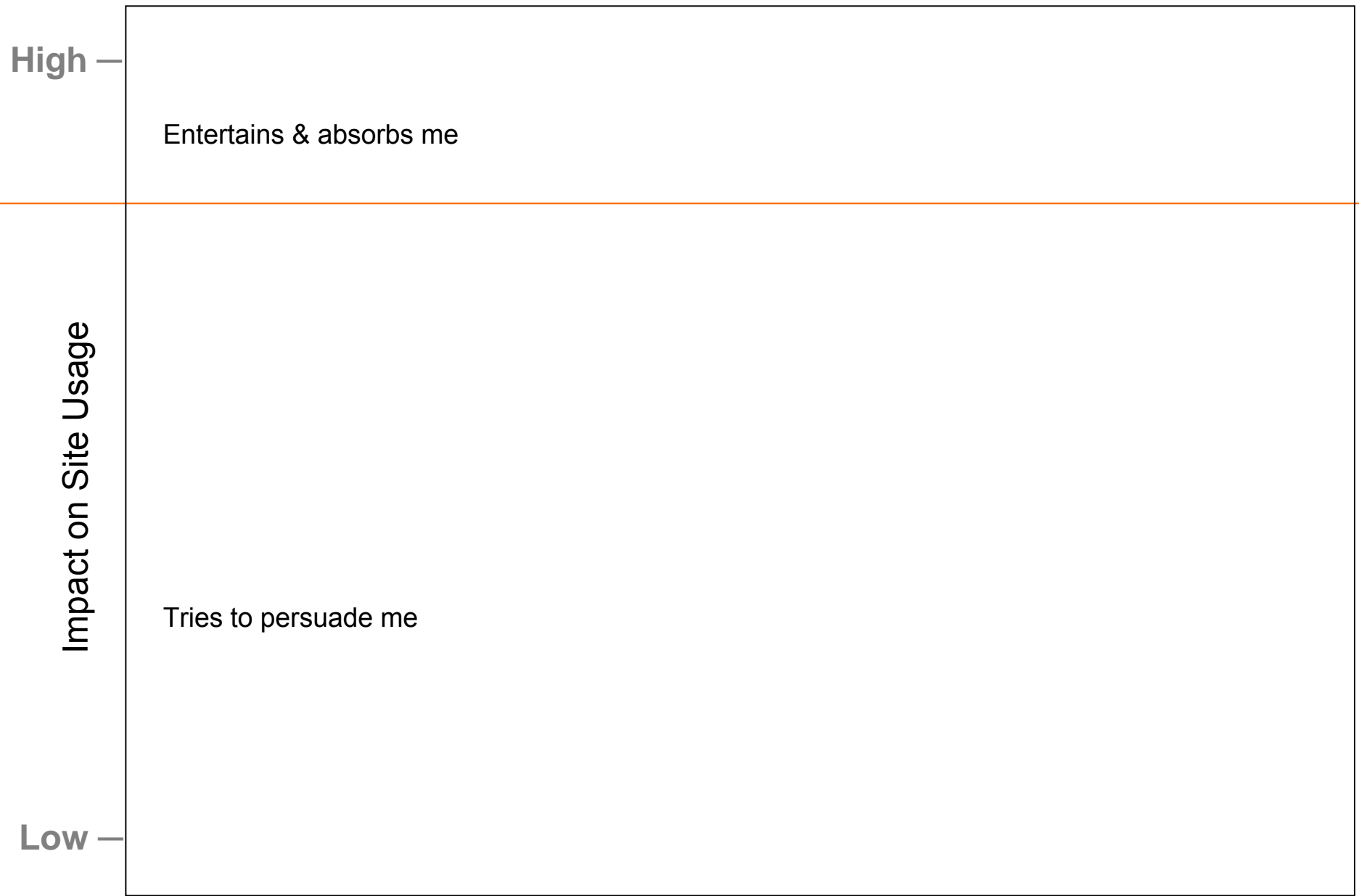


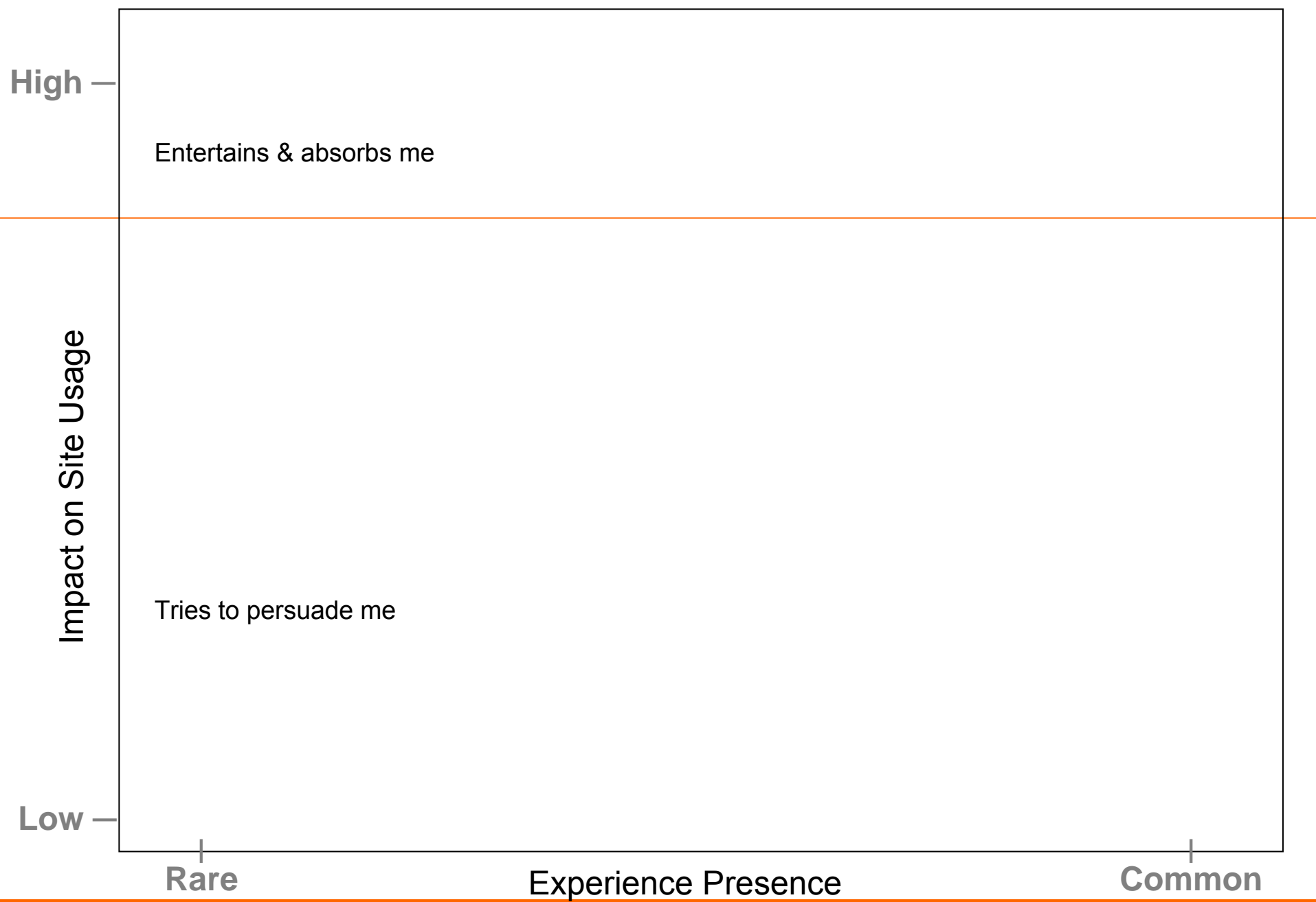
Top Usage Drivers

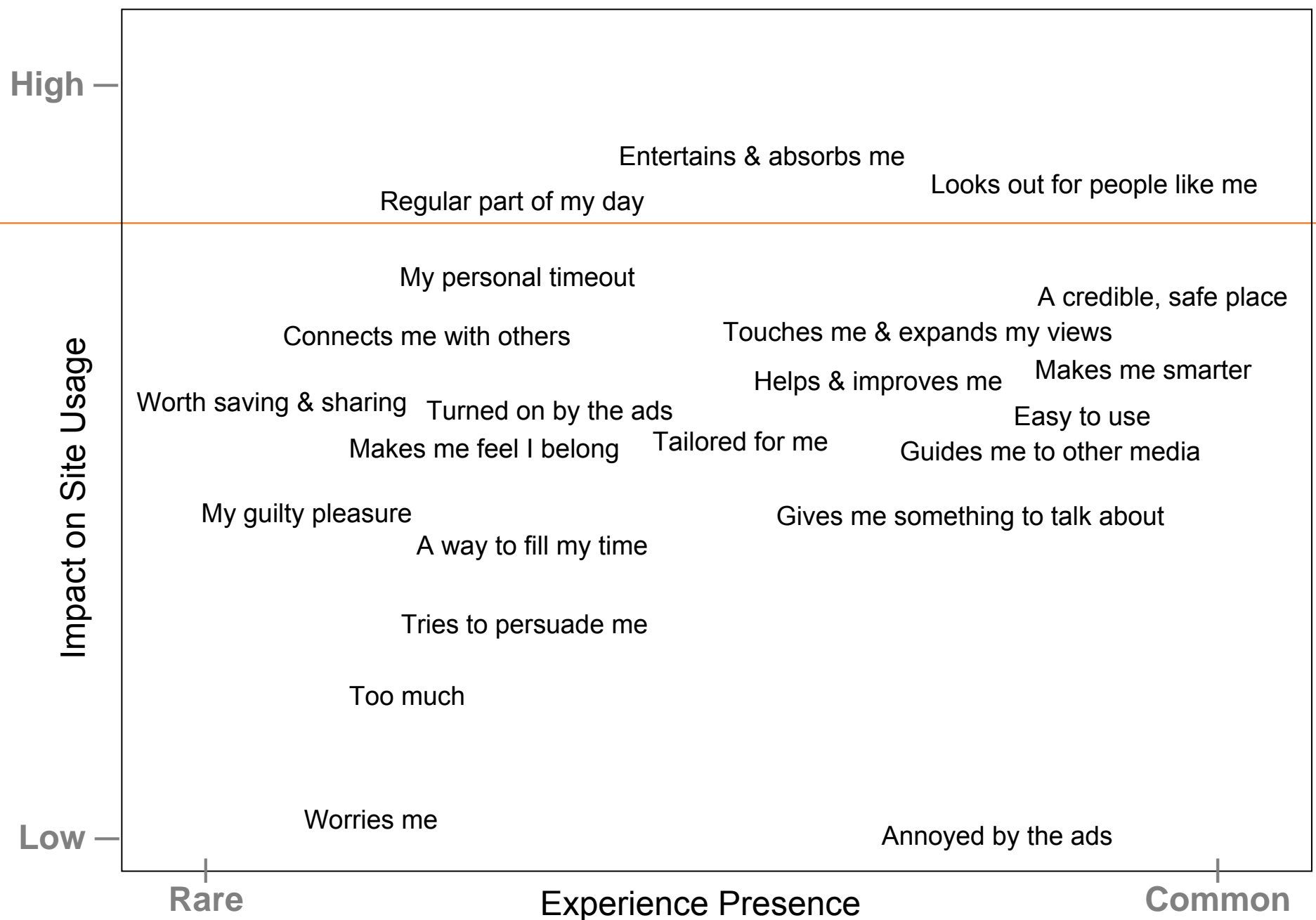
1. Entertains & absorbs me
2. Looks out for people like me
3. Regular part of my day
4. My personal timeout
5. A credible, safe place
6. Connects me with others
7. Touches me & expands my views
8. Makes me smarter
9. Turned on by ads
10. Easy to use
11. Helps and improves me
12. Worth saving and sharing

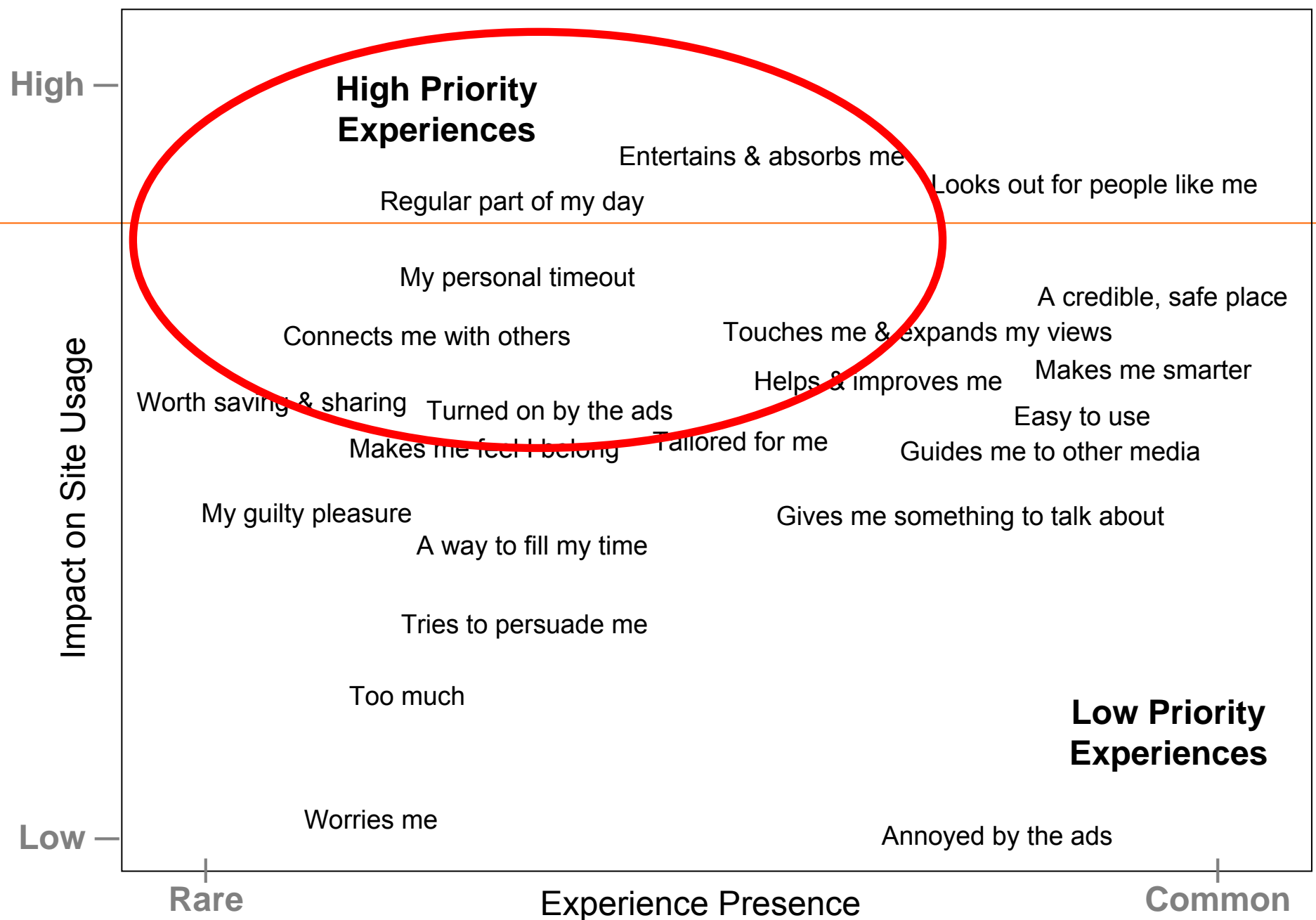
Q3. How can we use experiences to impact site usage?

1. Identify those experiences which “fit” your organization’s goals and your corporate culture
2. Focus on experiences which will have the highest impact on usage
3. Identify those that are least prevalent on your site





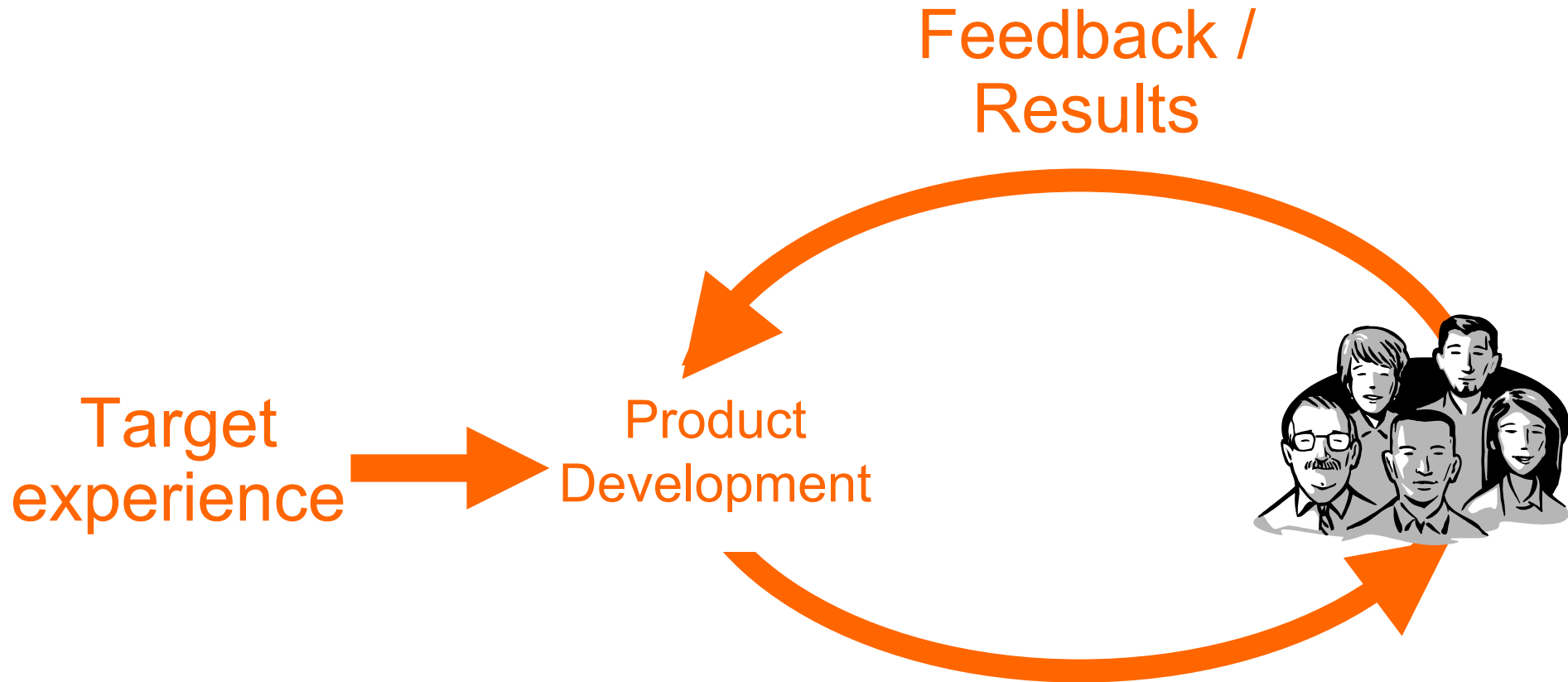




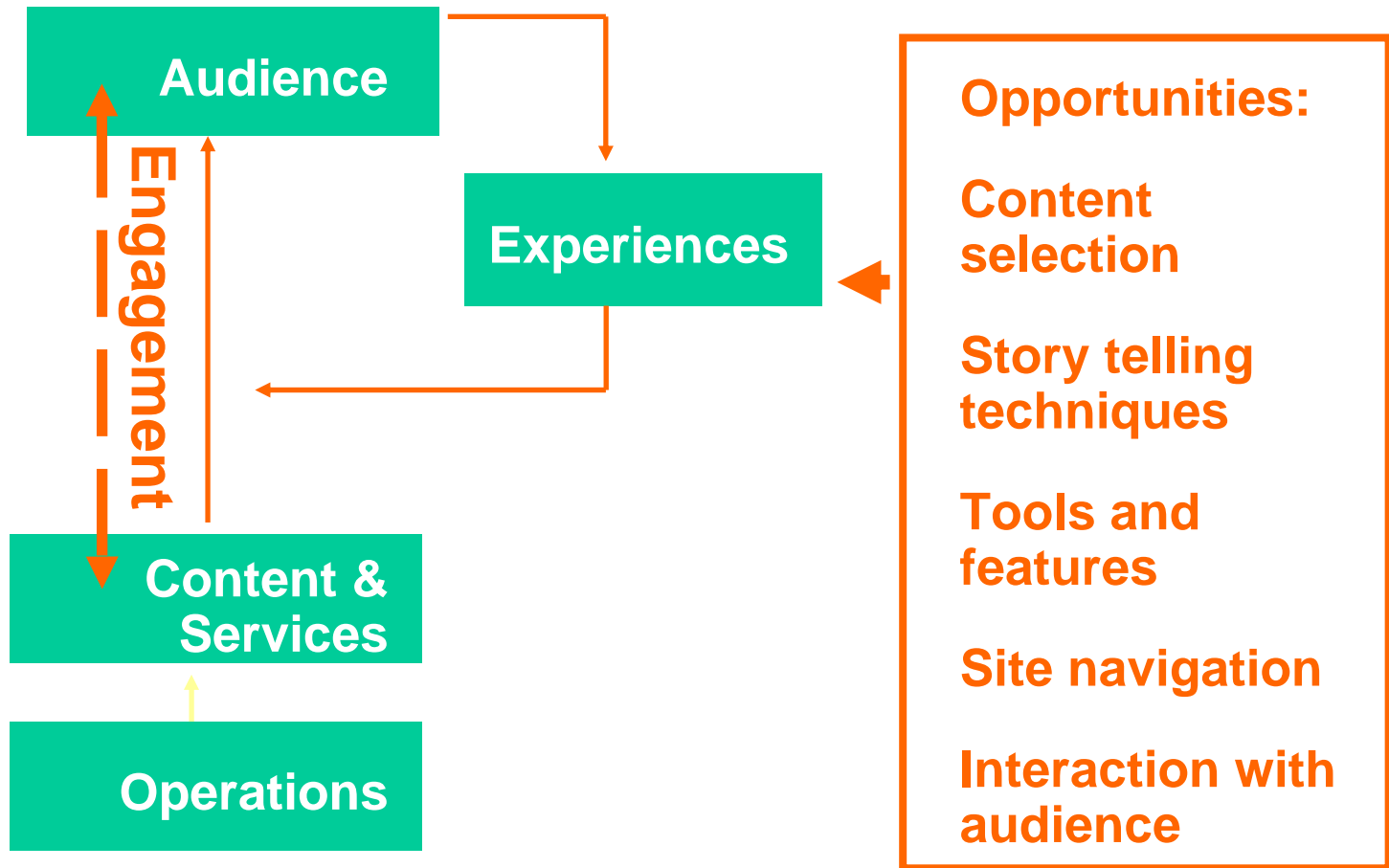
The Process

1. Target specific experiences
2. Develop content / features / functionality aimed at enhancing the target experiences
3. Get feedback / Measure results
4. Continue to refine by repeating steps 2 and 3

The Process



Opportunities



Related Studies

- Experience of other media types
- The Media Management Center has conducted the same study across newspapers and magazines

Findings from Related Studies

Identical Methodology used for Newspapers and Magazines



Cross-Media Comparisons

- Usage measures for each platform
 - SUM (Site usage measure) for online
 - RBS (Reader Behavior Score) for newspapers
 - RUM (Reader Usage Measure) for magazines

14 Common* Experiences Across Media

1. Entertains & absorbs me
2. Looks out for people like me
3. Regular part of my day
4. My personal timeout
5. A credible, safe place
6. Connects me with others
7. Touches me & expands my views
8. Makes me smarter
9. Turned on by ads
10. Easy to use
11. Worth saving & sharing
12. Tailored for me
13. Guides me to other media
14. Makes me feel I belong
15. A way to fill my time
16. Something to talk about
17. My guilty pleasure
18. Tries to persuade me
19. Too much
20. Worries me
21. Annoyed by the ads

*Note: Orange & underlined indicates common experiences across media

Experiences Unique to “Online”

- Entertains and absorbs me
- Connects me with others
- Tailored for me
- Guides me to other media
- A way to fill my time
- My guilty pleasure
- Tries to persuade me

Experiences Unique to “Newspaper”

- People I know
- Good service and delivery
- I connect with the writers
- Dining companion
- Awkward to handle
- Drowning in news

Experiences Unique to “Magazine”

- It grabs me visually
- Helps me keep track of celebrities
- Reinforces my faith
- Helps me look good; it’s sensual, even sexy
- Share with others in the household

Advertising Experiences

- Of the 14 common experiences to print and online, two are particularly noteworthy:
 - Annoyed by the ads
 - Turned on by the ads

Online User Experience: Annoyed by the Ads

The following statements clustered together to comprise a coherent experience which was given the name, “Annoyed by the ads”:

- I am annoyed because too many of the ads on this site have too much movement
- I don't like the number of popup ads on this site
- I don't really look at the ads on this site

Online User Experience: Turned on by the Ads

The following statements clustered together to comprise a coherent experience which was given the name, “Turned on by the ads”:

- I click on the ads from this site more often than most other sites I visit
- This site has ads about things I actually care about
- I like the ads just as much or more than the other things on this site
- This site makes me want to shop
- I get a lot of gift ideas from this site
- This site helps me plan what I’m going to do for entertainment

Online User Engagement Study: Summary of Findings

- Satisfying content is necessary, but not sufficient
- Website users engage through specific experiences when visiting your site
- Online User Experience Study*:
 - Provides a measurement of the relationship between experience & usage
- You can increase site usage by delivering specific experiences.
 - Applications for both content and ads

*For the full white paper including detailed Experiences, go to www.online-publishers.org

For More Information:

- Research questions:
 - Todd McCauley at the Media Management Center at tmccauley2000@kellogg.northwestern.edu
- General OPA information:
 - Pam Horan at pamhoran@online-publishers.org