My Macy's Portal Usability Survey

Data Analysis and Recommendations

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12/15/10

Introduction

Purpose

- The objective was to collect empirical data of My Macy's Portal patrons' impressions of the overall user experience.
- This would ensure that decisions regarding the functionality, features and appearance of the redesigned Portal would be based on scientific principles and conclusions that reflect real-world business needs and user preferences.

Execution

- Published on the Portal home page from November 8 to November 17, 2010.
- Available to most employees, except those using kiosk service accounts.
- Employed a $50 Macy's gift card incentive.
- Addressed issues of usage, presentation, content, navigation and integration.
- Used a customized SharePoint survey form with a combination of 30 five-point bipolar Likert scale radio button items and three free form text areas.
- Likert scale items asked users to rate their level of concurrence–expressed as **Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree or Strongly Agree**–with a given statement.

Introduction

Analysis

- Nick Zedlar created the survey with the kind assistance of EPT and EIS.
- He alone analyzed the collected data, and is solely responsible for computational integrity and the subjective conclusions presented in this document.

Notes

- Studies show inherent Likert scale biases (central tendency, acquiescence and social desirability). So, when expressed, "Strongly Disagree" or "Strongly Agree" are significant.
- Respondents were directed to choose "Neutral" if they didn't have an opinion, couldn't answer a particular question or if it wasn't relevant to them or their job.
- Letter grade and 100-point scale are derived from the SA+A+N for positively worded questions, and SD+D+N for negatively worded questions. These grades represent how well the Portal today is meeting the stated need or desire.

Introduction

Notes (cont.)

- For the free-form comments, respondents could write whatever and as much as they wanted; there was no practical character limit.
- The three opportunities were presented as free-form text boxes: "What do you like *most* about the Portal?," "What do you like *least* about the Portal?" and "General Feedback: Please provide any additional comments."
- 3 out of 5 commented on Like and Dislike; only 1 out of 4 left a general comment.
- Due to the wide variance of topics, it was difficult to classify them, but some significant trends emerged that supported the findings of the quantitative (Likert) portion of the questionnaire.

Users & Usage

Participating Macy's Areas
(Listed Alphabetically)
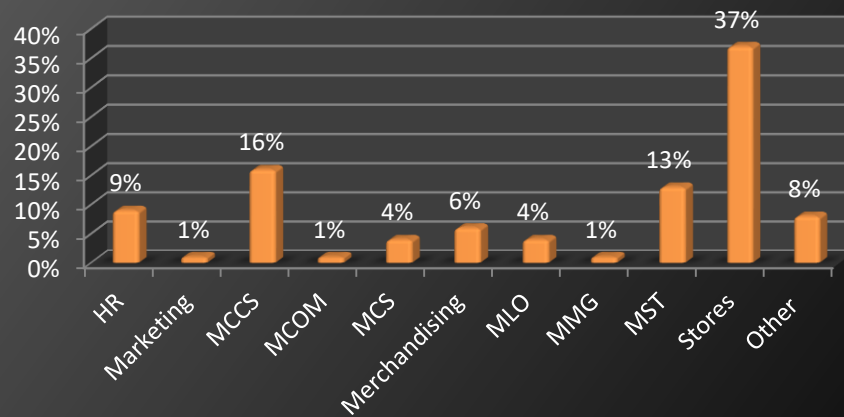
Abbreviations

|	
HR	Human Resources
MCCS	Macy's Credit and Customer Services
MCOM	Macys.com
MCS	Macy's Corporate Services
MLO	Macy's Logistics and Operations
MMG	Macy's Merchandising Group
MST	Macy's Systems and Technology
Other	Miscellaneous smaller business units

Overview

- Total of **1,687** responses.
- Averaged 281 a day.
- 7 out of 10 from Stores, MCCS, MST or HR; more than 1 out of 3 for Stores alone.
- The response rate exceeded projections.
- The cross-section of the user community was consistent with expectations.
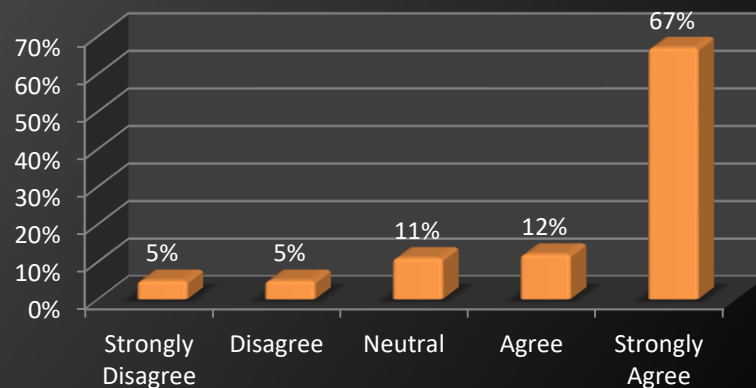
Users & Usage

I use the Portal at least three times a week.

87% AGREE

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
3%	3%	5%	12%	77%
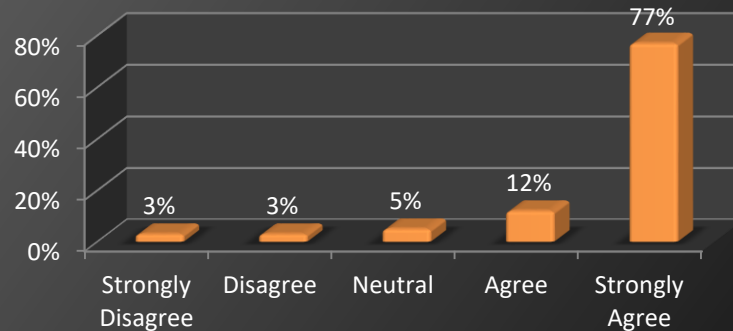
I need the Portal to do my job.

86% AGREE

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
5%	5%	11%	12%	67%

Data

- 9 out of 10 use the Portal ≥ 3 times a week.
- 9 out of 10 need the Portal to do their job.

Conclusion

- Most Portal patrons use the site often and for essential business reasons.

Quantitative

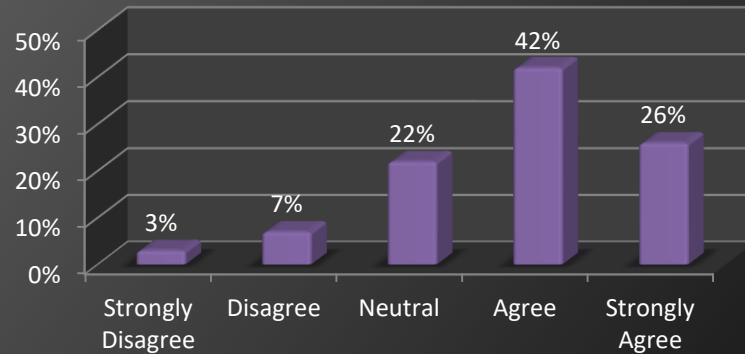This section reviews the Likert data as pertains to:

- Presentation (8 questions)
- Content (4 questions)
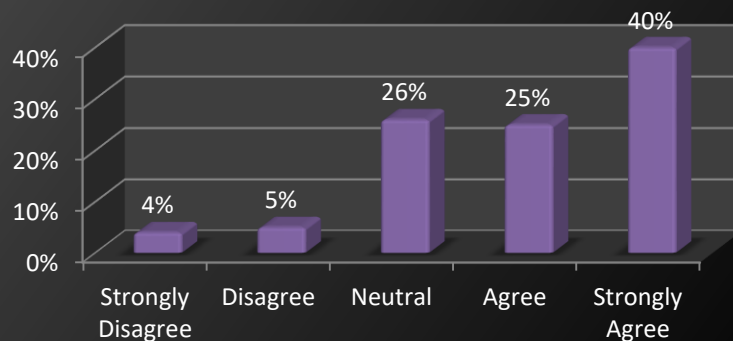- Navigation (10 questions)
- Integration (6 questions)

Presentation

Overall, the Portal home page is aesthetically pleasing.

73% AGREE

Data

- 7 out of 10 report positive impressions of the Portal's visual style.
- 8 out of 10 reacted negatively to animation that plays automatically.

Animations should play only *after* I click on them.
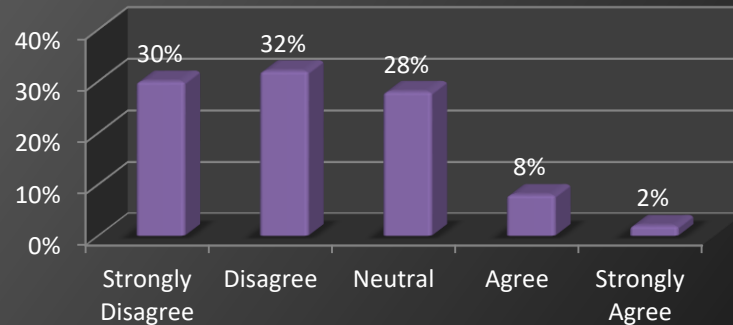
78% AGREE

Conclusions

- Users generally like the look and feel of the Portal.
- The majority (more than 3 out of 5) feel that Flash animation should start only when the user initiates manual playback.
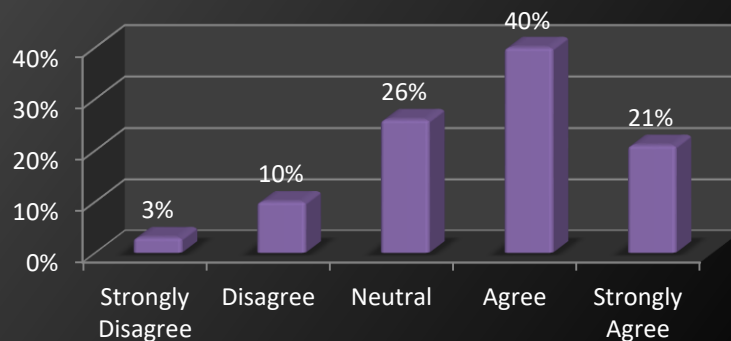
Presentation

The color scheme is hard on the eyes.

73%
DISAGREE

Response	%
Strongly Disagree	30%
Disagree	32%
Neutral	28%
Agree	8%
Strongly Agree	2%

The Portal looks modern and sophisticated.

87%
AGREE

Response	%
Strongly Disagree	3%
Disagree	10%
Neutral	26%
Agree	40%
Strongly Agree	21%

Data

- 3 out of 5 are amenable to the Portal's color palette (3 out of 10 are neutral about it).
- 7 of 10 consider the Portal to be slick and contemporary in appearance (3 out of 10 are neutral about it).
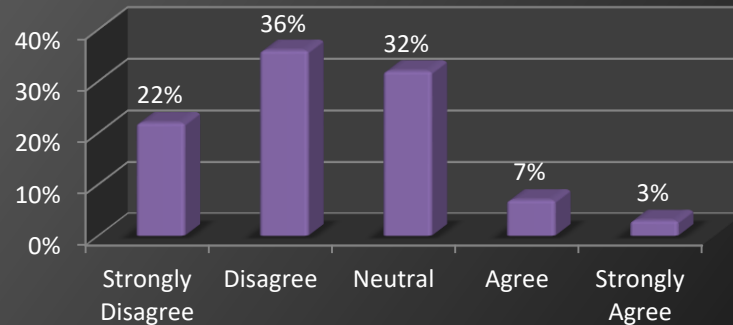
Conclusion

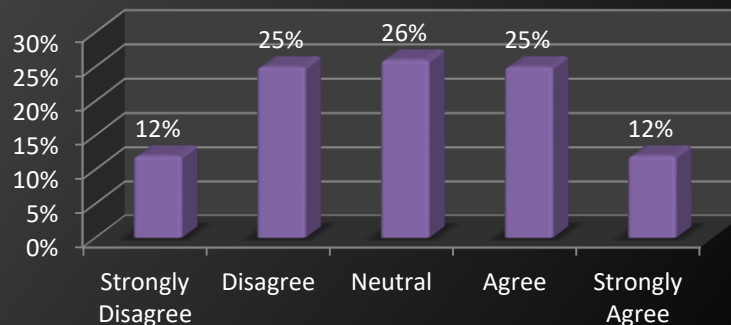- The look and feel, including color, divides users into two camps.

Presentation

Screens have too much wasted space.

73% DISAGREE

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
%	22%	36%	32%	7%	3%

I have to scroll too much to see all the information.

65% AGREE

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
%	12%	25%	26%	25%	12%

Data

- 9 out of 10 felt there is an appropriate—or at least inoffensive—amount of content on Portal pages.
- Barring the neutral quarter, positive and negative responses were split evenly—2 out of 5 users each—over the question of excessive scrolling.
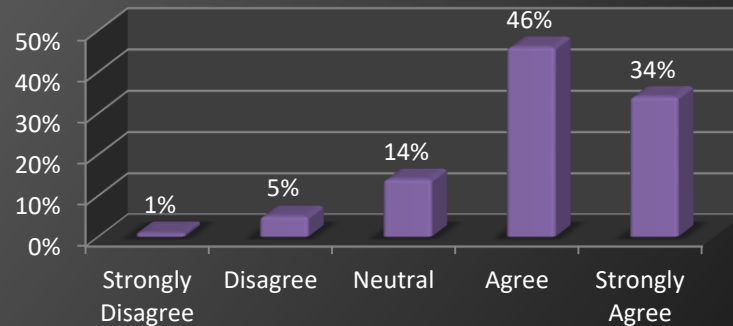
Conclusion

- There's room for improvement on placing critical information above the "fold" (the point at which users must scroll to see additional content).
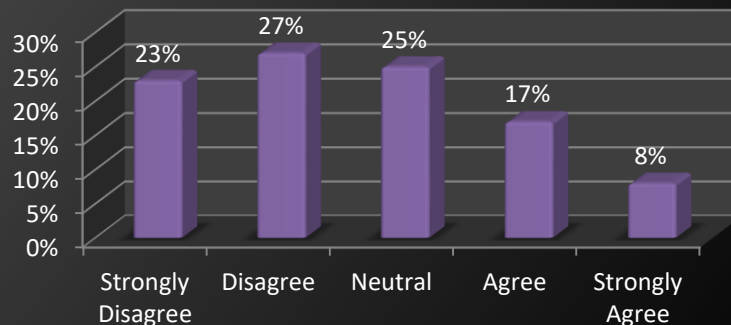
Presentation

The fonts on the Portal are clear and easy to read.

81% AGREE

Chart values: Strongly Disagree 1%, Disagree 5%, Neutral 14%, Agree 46%, Strongly Agree 34%

I can't always tell hyperlinks from regular text.

63% DISAGREE

Chart values: Strongly Disagree 23%, Disagree 27%, Neutral 25%, Agree 17%, Strongly Agree 8%

Data

- Statistically speaking, Portal text is perfectly legible to just about everyone.
- Half indicated that they can indeed distinguish regular text from hyperlinked text.
- However, a quarter cannot tell the difference and the remaining quarter were neutral on the subject.

Conclusion

- 1 out of 4 users who can't tell static text from hypertext is too high.

Presentation

73%
AGREE

Data

- Statistically speaking, Portal text is perfectly legible to just about everyone.
- Half indicated that they can indeed distinguish regular text from hyperlinked text.
- However, a quarter cannot tell the difference and the remaining quarter were neutral on the subject.
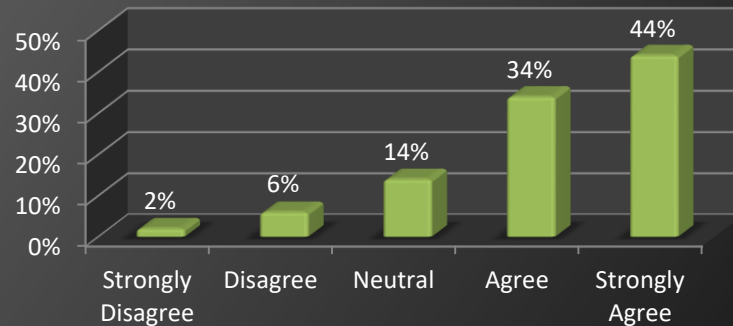
Conclusion

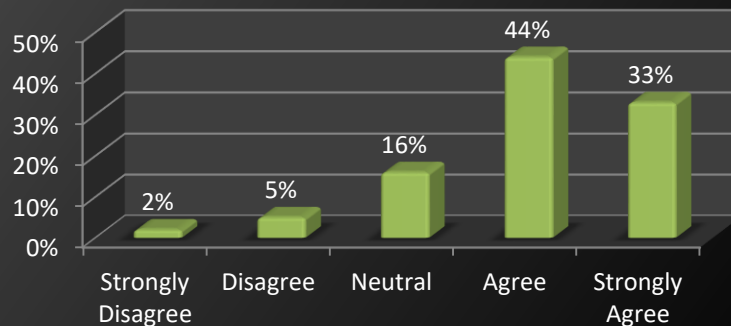- 1 out of 4 users who can't tell static text from hypertext is too high.

Content

The content of the Portal is relevant to my work.

82%
AGREE

```
50%                                              44%
40%                                   34%       [bar]
30%                                  [bar]
20%                         14%
10%              6%        [bar]
0%    2%        [bar]
     [bar]
   Strongly   Disagree   Neutral    Agree    Strongly
   Disagree                                   Agree
```

The writing style is clear and concise.

80%
AGREE

```
50%                                  44%
40%                                 [bar]      33%
30%                                          [bar]
20%                         16%
10%    2%        5%        [bar]
0%    [bar]    [bar]
   Strongly   Disagree   Neutral    Agree    Strongly
   Disagree                                   Agree
```

Data

- Almost 4 out of 5 felt that Portal content appropriately relates to their work and is written in a clear and concise manner.
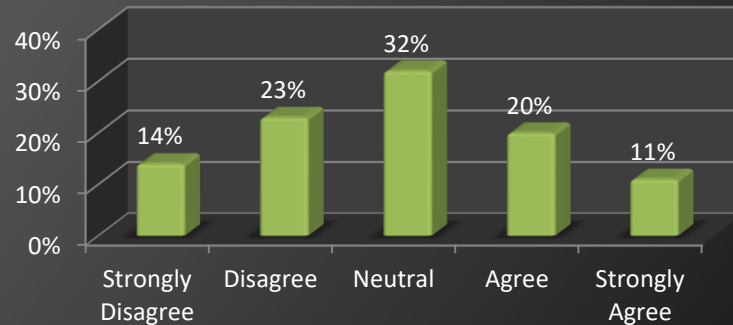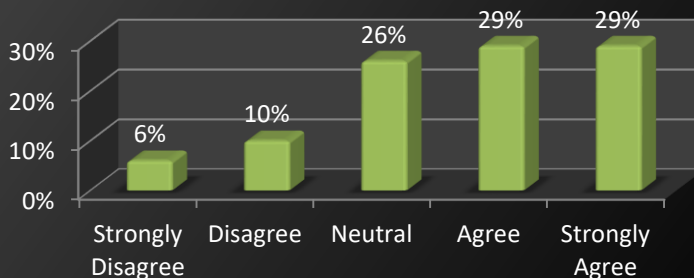
Conclusion

- No red flags here.

Content

There is too much content that's irrelevant to me and my job.

62%
DISAGREE

Chart:
- Strongly Disagree: 14%
- Disagree: 23%
- Neutral: 32%
- Agree: 20%
- Strongly Agree: 11%

I wish I could personalize the Portal to show only parts of interest to me.

73%
AGREE

Chart:
- Strongly Disagree: 6%
- Disagree: 10%
- Neutral: 26%
- Agree: 29%
- Strongly Agree: 29%

Data

- The data is nearly uniformly divided between positive, negative and neutral responses regarding content relevance.
- Nearly 3 out of 5 indicated an interest in personalizing content to their own needs.

Conclusion

- Respondents receive relevant content... but also way too much irrelevant content. Customization and personalization can increase relevance, which translates into higher productivity and user satisfaction.

Content

Data

- The data is nearly uniformly divided between positive, negative and neutral responses regarding content relevance.
- Nearly 3 out of 5 indicated an interest in personalizing content to their own needs.
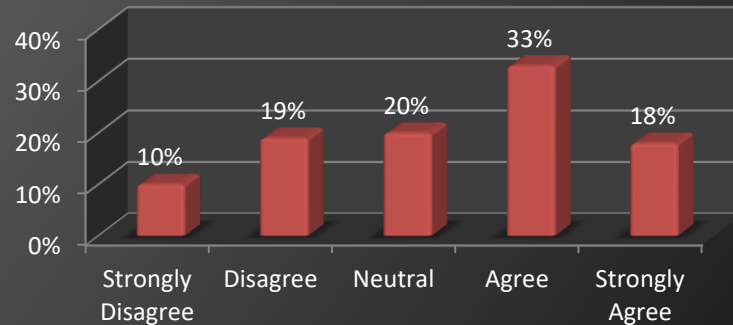
Conclusion

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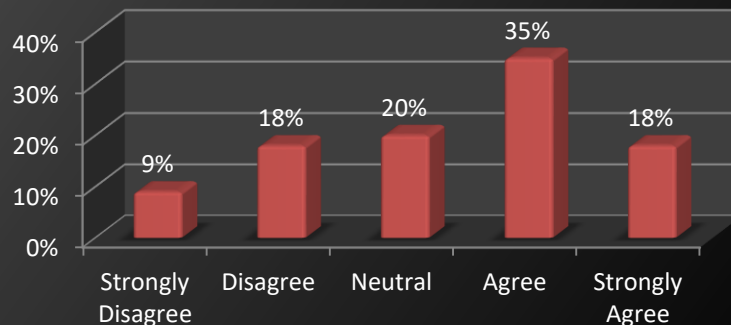
68%
AGREE

Navigation

The Portal's tabs make it easy for me to find what I'm looking for.

66%
AGREE

10%	19%	20%	33%	18%
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

The navigation is easy to learn and work with.

67%
AGREE

9%	18%	20%	35%	18%
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Data

- Responses to these two items were virtually identical.
- Half answered positively to the notion that the tabs and navigation are a good and intuitive way to find things.
- Over a quarter found the navigation difficult.
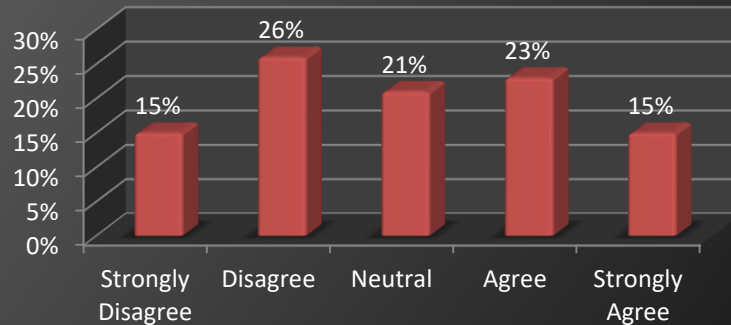- Nearly a third are unhappy with the tabs.

Conclusion

- Since the tabs are a main vector into the Portal, the structure and functionality must be improved.
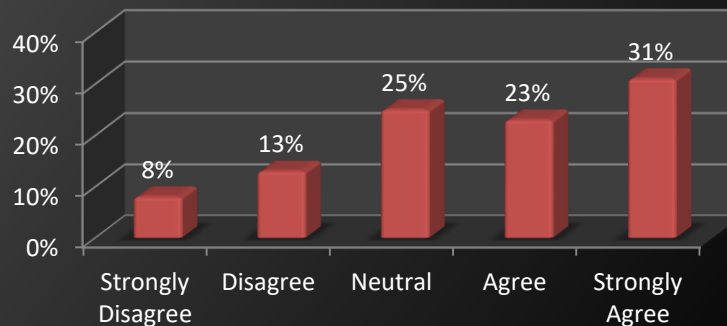
Navigation

The way the Portal is organized is confusing.

66% DISAGREE

Chart:
- Strongly Disagree: 15%
- Disagree: 26%
- Neutral: 21%
- Agree: 23%
- Strongly Agree: 15%

I rely on the My Links function to jump to particular content.

79% AGREE

Chart:
- Strongly Disagree: 8%
- Disagree: 13%
- Neutral: 25%
- Agree: 23%
- Strongly Agree: 31%

Data

- Positive and negative responses were split almost down the middle. 2 out of 5 found the Portal's information architecture (IA) to be confusing, whereas another 2 out of 5 did not.
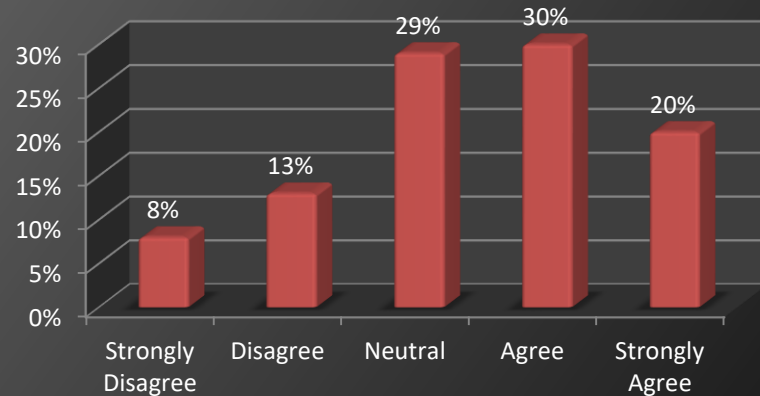- Over half routinely use My Links.

Conclusion

- Site IA and tab improvement go hand in hand. Poor implementation of both is hampering users.
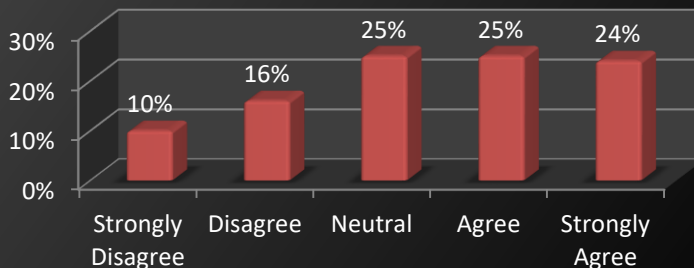
Navigation

I enjoy exploring the Portal.

79% AGREE

Bar chart:
- Strongly Disagree: 8%
- Disagree: 13%
- Neutral: 29%
- Agree: 30%
- Strongly Agree: 20%

I rely on browser bookmarks/favorites to jump to particular content.

74% AGREE

Bar chart:
- Strongly Disagree: 10%
- Disagree: 16%
- Neutral: 25%
- Agree: 25%
- Strongly Agree: 24%

Data

- Half said they enjoy perusing the Portal to some degree; nearly a third was neutral.
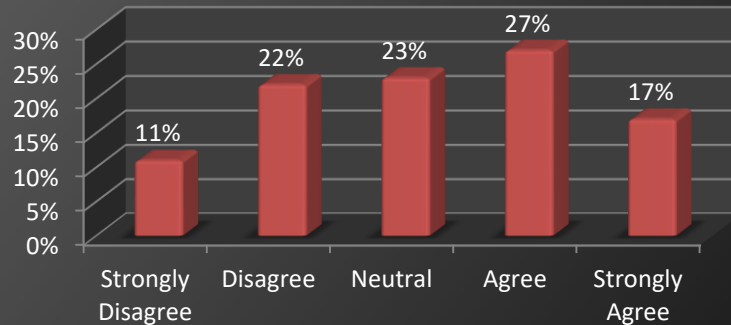- Half rely on browser bookmarks/favorites to get to specific content quickly; a quarter was neutral.

Conclusions

- The Portal is modestly inviting to the user. Fixing navigation and content will help.
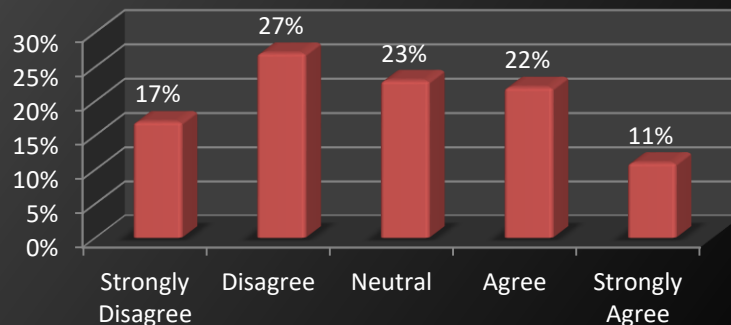- High bookmark use indicates navigation and IA are lacking.

Navigation

I have trouble finding what I'm looking for.

56% AGREE

Chart values: Strongly Disagree 11%, Disagree 22%, Neutral 23%, Agree 27%, Strongly Agree 17%

Data

- 2 out of 5 experience difficulty finding content; a third does not.
- 2 out of 5 use links and tabs more than Search; a third does not.

I use Search more than the tabs and links to find content.

56% DISAGREE

Chart values: Strongly Disagree 17%, Disagree 27%, Neutral 23%, Agree 22%, Strongly Agree 11%
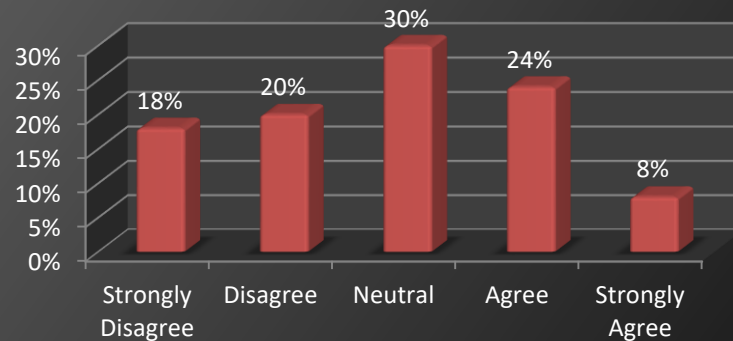
Conclusions

- Finding what one's looking for on Portal is fairly hit-and-miss. Improving IA, navigation and Search should be top priorities.
- Users use a variety of methods to find and/or navigate to content; this is not atypical.
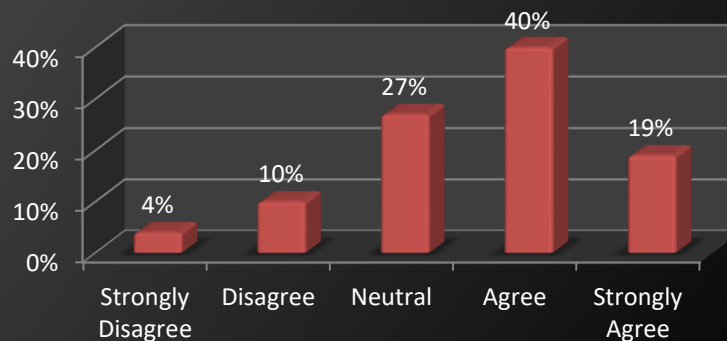
Navigation

The Search results are usually helpful to me.

68% DISAGREE

- Strongly Disagree: 18%
- Disagree: 20%
- Neutral: 30%
- Agree: 24%
- Strongly Agree: 8%

I use the links at the top and bottom of the page.

86% AGREE

- Strongly Disagree: 4%
- Disagree: 10%
- Neutral: 27%
- Agree: 40%
- Strongly Agree: 19%

Data

- Responses were roughly divided into thirds regarding Search efficacy.
- 3 out of 5 use links in the header and/or footer.

Conclusions

- The mixed response indicates a rather dubious reputation for Search. Fixing Search should be our No. 1 priority.
- Link use at various points on the page confirm previous vector findings. Typical usage.

Navigation

70%

AGREE

Data

- The data is nearly uniformly divided between positive, negative and neutral responses regarding content relevance.
- Nearly 3 out of 5 indicated an interest in personalizing content to their own needs.

Conclusion

- Respondents receive relevant content… but also way too much irrelevant content. Customization and personalization can increase relevance, which translates into higher productivity and user satisfaction.
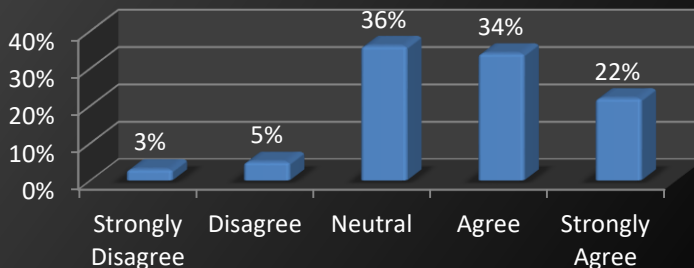
Integration

The Portal should be merged with In-Site functions.

71% AGREE

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
9%	9%	27%	28%	27%
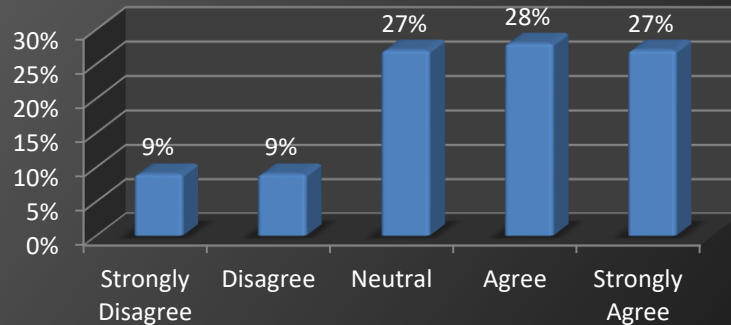
The Portal should offer an automated annual review process.

73% AGREE

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
3%	5%	36%	34%	22%

Data

- More than half felt that the Portal and In-site should be combined to some degree.
- 3 out of 5 thought an online yearly performance review would be a good idea.
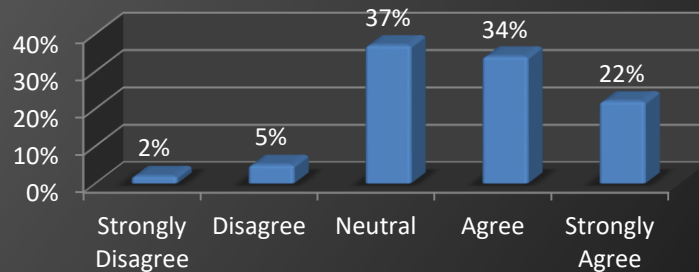
Conclusions

- The majority sees the value in more closely integrating Insite with the Portal.
- The majority thinks the annual review process should be automated like the LPR.
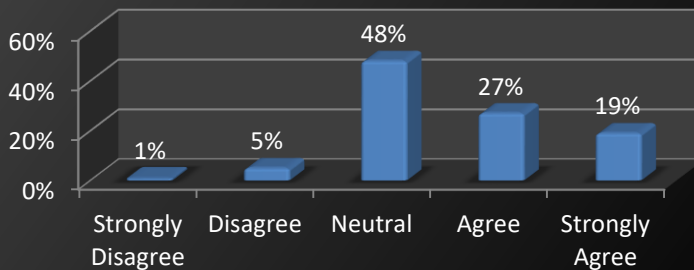
Integration

Portal-based document management would be (or already is) useful to my team.

74%
AGREE

Chart values: Strongly Disagree 2%, Disagree 5%, Neutral 37%, Agree 34%, Strongly Agree 22%

Portal-based workflows would be (or already are) useful to my team.

72%
AGREE

Chart values: Strongly Disagree 1%, Disagree 5%, Neutral 48%, Agree 27%, Strongly Agree 19%

Data

- 7 of 10 agreed they (would) benefit from Portal doc management; 2 out of 5 were neutral.
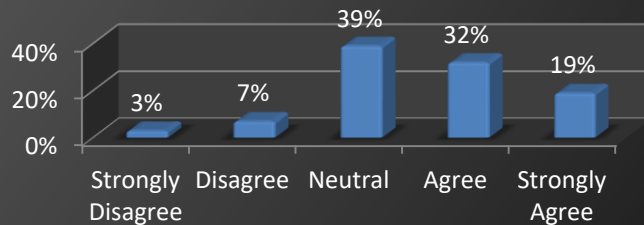
Conclusion

- The few negatives and the high Neutrals suggest many users don't know what these are or they're irrelevant to them. Those in the know are for it, so education is key.
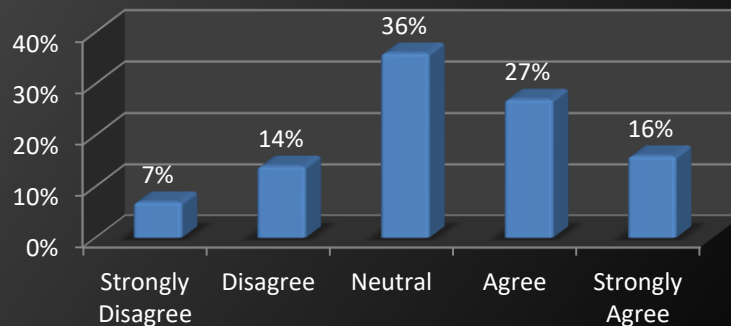
Integration

Adding my daily work applications as part of the Portal would make (or already makes) me more efficient.

> **71%**
> AGREE

Data

- Half said online apps (would) increase their productivity; 2 out of 5 were neutral.
- 7 out of 10 said they would use an idea forum or were neutral about the idea.

I would use a Portal forum for sharing and discussing ideas.

> **66%**
> AGREE

Conclusions

- The few negatives and the high Neutrals suggest many users don't know about Portal-based apps or they're irrelevant to them. Those in the know are for it, so education is key.
- Reception to the forum idea was lukewarm.

Integration

Data

- The data is nearly uniformly divided between positive, negative and neutral responses regarding content relevance.
- Nearly 3 out of 5 indicated an interest in personalizing content to their own needs.

Conclusion

- Respondents receive relevant content... but also way too much irrelevant content. Customization and personalization can increase relevance, which translates into higher productivity and user satisfaction.

70%
AGREE

Summary

Users & Usage – Agreement: N/A

- Most respondents were from Stores, MCCS and MST, but overall the group was diverse.
- Overwhelmingly, users use the Portal at least three times a week and require it for their jobs.

Presentation – Agreement: 73%

- The look of the Portal, including color choice and sophistication level, is well-received.
- Users do not like the self-playing Flash animation.
- Screens are not wasting space, but some users do have to scroll excessively.
- Fonts are readable, but users can't always distinguish hypertext links from regular text.

Content – Agreement: 68%

- Text is written clearly in general.
- Content germane to users' jobs is reaching them, but so is a lot of irrelevant information.
- Overwhelmingly, users want to pick and choose what types of content they see.

Summary

Navigation – Agreement: 68%

- Tabs and other navigation cues received rather lackluster endorsements.
- The Portal's content is organized in a way that confuses and frustrates many.
- Users have mixed results finding what their looking for, whether by Search or clicking around.
- In typical fashion, users employ a variety of ways to get around and find content, including mechanisms in both the header and the footer.

Integration – Agreement: 70%

- Overwhelmingly, users feel that Insite should be merged with the Portal.*
- Users see value in using Portal-based applications, document management and workflows, but not everyone needs them or understands what they are.

* Note: the fact that users want integration and it doesn't exist now really degrades this score; this figure will be discarded for the final grade tabulation.

Conclusions

Users & Usage

- The Portal is an indispensible tool. Users rely upon it to do their jobs.

Presentation

- In general, users have low expectations and little complaint about aesthetics. Any real thought put into enhancing the beauty of the site will have a real impact, because the bar is so low.
- Users want more control, particularly over memory- and bandwidth-hogging Flash animation. This is a problem for remotely connected machines and/or those with insufficient RAM.
- Screen layouts often sprawl and are overly busy, causing scrolling issues. More efficient layouts and intelligent content-delivery methods will largely solve this.
- An effort to make all hyperlink text styles consistent and appropriately colored throughout the site should be undertaken.

Content

- Users feel overwhelmed by the amount of irrelevant content they must wade through. They crave more control over what reaches them and how it's shown.

Conclusions

Navigation

- The information architecture reflected in the tab choices is fundamentally flawed. The hierarchy is nonsensical and unintuitive to many. It must be corrected.
- Search is abysmal. Users spend way to much time trying to find things. This needs to be **Top Priority** above all other redesign considerations.
- The heavy reliance on My Links indicates both a desire for personalization and likely avoidance of difficult navigation. Use of browser bookmarks/favorites in the 70 to 80 percent range is normal for the Web at large, but for the Portal the figure is perhaps too high.

Integration

- Merging Insite with the Portal makes sense from a user perspective. This scenario should be investigated further.
- Research shows that Portal-based applications, document management and workflows, as applicable, increase productivity and user satisfaction. The survey results seem to suggest that educating users about the benefits may be necessary.

To-Do List

Conclusions

In order of importance:

- Enhance the capabilities and relevance of Search results.
- Improve the information architecture and navigation.
- Provide the ability for users to customize content, navigation and features.
- Deliver personalized content that's relevant to users.
- Make more efficient use of space to minimize scrolling.
- Integrate In-Site functions with the My Macy's Portal.
- Eliminate all self-playing Flash animation.
- Add more applications, such as the annual review process, to the Portal.
- Educate users to share documents online.
- Teach users to develop online workflows to streamline processes within their groups.

70%

AGREE

Qualitative

This section reviews the free-form comments about what users like, dislike or feel in their own words about the current design of the Portal.

Likes

Data

- 40% of respondents did not add a Like comment (it was not required); of those who did…
- 35% like the variety, centrality, connectedness and/or relevance to job performance that the information on the Portal brings.
- 5% like the ease of use.
- 4% like the My Links feature and the organization of information or the navigation structure.
- 3% like reports.
- 2% like the customized or personalized nature of information-delivery; aesthetics and Search.
- 1% like document management, QuickLinks, Recently Added Documents feature, communication and collaboration tools, and the helpful and/or paperless nature of the Portal.

Conclusions

- Users like having one place to go to get Macy's general information and information specific to their job function. They are particularly happy if that information is personalized for them and they can customize it further.

Likes

Quotes

- "It is the source for company information, and once you find what you're looking for, it's useful (if it's been updated) ."
- "I like that it is a place to get information that is available to all. It is also a great place to learn about other parts of the company."
- "I like the fact that it should be a "one-stop" resource for most things as they relate to company info."
- "I like that you can *usually* find what you are looking for, but only after asking 10 people—all who respond with 'It's on the portal somewhere.' So the information is there and when you can find it, it is extremely useful. It is an everyday part of my job and I wouldn't be able to do my job without it."
- "Everything I need to do my job is found on the Portal or I can find a link from the Portal."
- "My Links is an extremely useful tool, I love it!"
- "I can usually find just about anything out there. It has a ton of useful stuff!"
- "I can usually find what I need to do my job. It does take a long time to recall pathways to documents or functions due to the vast nature of the Portal. Overall, it is a very effective tool."
- "I get exposed to content that is outside of my job function, which can be helpful to stay in tuned with the whole company. "

Dislikes

Data

- 40% of respondents did not add a Dislike comment (it was not required); of those who did...
- 29% dislike the organization of information and/or the navigation structure.
- 11% dislike Search and/or the irrelevant, redundant and/or excessiveness of content.
- 5% dislike content being changed or moved without notification or explanation, such that it is difficult to locate again... if ever.
- 3% dislike the slowness of the Portal.
- 2% dislike the lack of personalization and/or customization; and outdated content.
- 1% or less dislike Flash animation; blocked Internet sites required to do their job, such as vendor sites; color and aesthetics; document management implementation; the lack of training regarding Portal use; scrolling and multiple windows; and lack of integration with InSite.

Conclusions

- Many users expressed difficulty finding information, either by clicking through the navigation or via Search results, which they described as mostly irrelevant and useless. Content is often outdated. When it is changed or moved, users aren't informed and they have trouble finding it again or getting time-sensitive information when they need it. The site is sometimes slow and scrolling, multiple windows and other browser-related issues crop up.

Dislikes

Quotes

- "The search results NEVER bring up what I'm looking for!"
- "Information is too far apart. Too much information that is not relevant. Search function is not helpful. For example reports page does not have all the reports relevant for my job."
- "There's too much, it's busy, and I typically find myself hunting for the things that I need."
- "I find it challenging to navigate: either several steps to get to where I need to go or spend too much time trying to find information."
- "The Search feature doesn't help find anything related to the search. It often leads me to a dead end; in which I then browse the Portal, in turn wasting time."
- "Even though there is a lot of information there, it is not particularly easy to navigate. I feel most of the time if I keep looking, I will find what I need, but sometimes it can be time consuming and confusing."
- "Tab organization is counter intuitive... far too many steps to get to certain pages."
- "I need a tutorial to learn how to navigate. I know the Portal has lots of information I just don't know how to find it."
- "A lot of useless items to me."
- "Sometimes things or areas are moved to different areas without an indication that it has been moved."

Comments

Data and Conclusion

- 76% of respondents did not add a general comment (it was not required)
- Overall the same areas of concern expressed in the Likes and Dislikes emerged here.
- Data was sparse, but consistent with Likes and Dislikes.

Quotes

- "I believe that I am pretty comfortable with Portal, but I would like more assistance in navigating it properly."
- "Improve the Search tab so it finds more relevant information. I always seem to pull topics that are unrelated to my search subject."
- "I have a love-hate relationship with the Portal. It is great to find out information when I know where it is. It is almost impossible to find it when I don't know where it is and the search engine does not seem to rank hits based on value."
- "Would be great to customize the portal to only show information I need."
- "Having worked in many other companies, I believe that Macy's Portal is probably the worst designed corporate information gateway I have attempted to use."

Conclusions

Users & Usage

- 60% of respondents gave Like/Dislike comments and only 24% a general comment

Likes

- Users like the concept of a "one-stop shop" for Macy's information. They like knowing what is happening throughout the company, because it fosters a sense of connection. The Portal provides that, as well as the tools to do their jobs. Users like the customized and personalized content they receive.

Dislikes

- Users find themselves often wading through irrelevant and useless content, which is outdated, changed or moved. This is a function of unintuitive information architecture and the unreliability of Search. Users dislike the lack of control they have to tailor the delivery of information to their needs. Other issues revolve around design and infrastructure.

To-Do List

In order of importance (expressed by users):

- Improve the information architecture and navigation.
- Enhance the capabilities and relevance of Search results.
- Educate users to share documents online, especially on how to organize them and keep relevant users up to date on changes.
- Enhance My Links and similar ways for users to customize content, navigation and features.
- Improve reports based on user feedback.
- Deliver personalized content that's relevant to users.
- Address slowness issue by looking to speed up processes, streamline code, eliminate or minimize bandwidth- and memory-hogging animation and/or applications, etc.
- Make more efficient use of space to minimize scrolling.
- Integrate In-Site functions with the My Macy's Portal.
- Eliminate all self-playing Flash animation.