# IMPROVED MANUAL SAVES MONEY

The Background

A multinational healthcare company needed to revisit their user manual to make product information more accessible, searchable, and understandable.

The Challenge

The information contained within the manual was dense, complex, and difficult to search. The dense text was also difficult to translate, compounding the level of misunderstanding. The company had higher-than-average traffic to their online help and call center, costing them money.

The Request

"We want to reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction by improving our user manual." The project would focus on one product, comparing metrics for customer satisfaction and call center volume before and after the update.
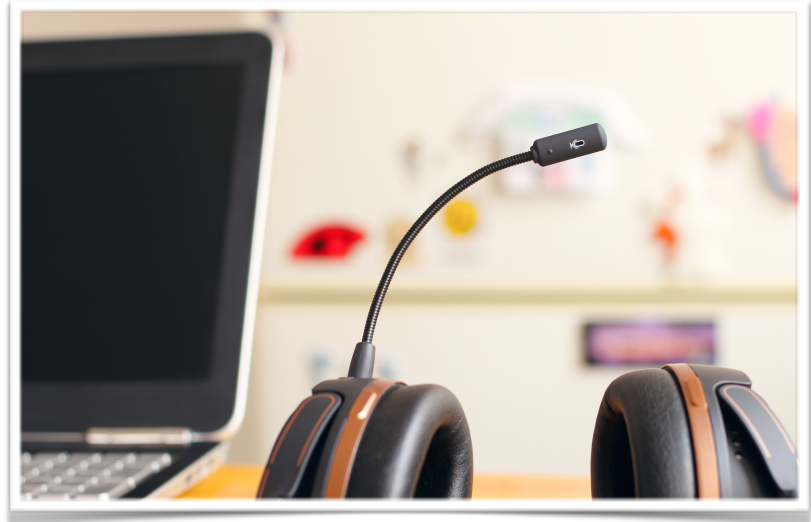
The First Step

The project began with research. The company provided several sources of background information that gave insight into the company's challenges. These included:

• Copies of all existing product documentation – three resources spanning more than 250 pages in total

• Metrics on customer satisfaction

• Metrics about the call center, including number of calls for this product, amount of time spent on each call, and the company's cost per call

Additional self-conducted research indicated unhappy customers posting in online forums, and several Google links to outdated yet still posted documentation, which further contributed to customer confusion.

What Changed?

- Documentation was written in plain, straightforward language to improve comprehension and reduce translation costs.

- The manual and related documentation was consolidated into a single document with cross-referenced links for related information.

- Effective content design improved comprehension, reduced misunderstandings, and limited the need for help from the call center.

- Outdated links to old documentation were removed to eliminate confusion.

The Company

Revenue: Nearly $1 billion

Employees: 750

Industry: Healthcare

Image courtesy Petr Machacek via Unsplash.

The Structure

While there was no budget for user research, I used the call center logs as a primary resource for identifying what worked for users and what didn't.

A search of user forums also revealed that customers did not refer to product features using the same technical terminology as the company did. Jargon was eliminated in favor of plain language.

An analysis of the text-heavy document revealed that content could be designed more clearly and concisely with the aid of imagery.

The Result

With the aid of more effective content design and plain language, the amount of text was reduced by 50%, dramatically reducing translation costs across nine languages.

In the first three months, call center volume for this product was reduced by 38%; the number of calls continued to decline as old manuals were gradually replaced with new documentation. Proactively cross-linking related content in the manual also reduced the number of follow-up calls.

Within 18 months, the company estimated savings of:

• More than $90,000 in translation costs across 9 languages

• Nearly $18,000 in annual call center cost reduction

In the 18-month period, customer satisfaction improved from 6.4/10 to 8.1/10. There had been no changes to the product itself during this time.