SKYWALK
INNOVATIONS

Closing the Gap Between Product Design and User Expectations

DIGITAL PLAYBOOK 2024

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Bridging Innovation & User Needs

Products are made to tackle complicated issues and enhance user experiences in today's fast-paced technology environment. Despite advancements in design and technology, many products do not meet user expectations, resulting in low adoption rates and dissatisfaction. The main issue is the gap between the end-user and the design and development process.

When teams do not actively engage users, they frequently create technically advanced products that do not meet actual needs. This document presents clear steps for engaging users during the design and development phases, providing strategies that connect these stages and promote successful product outcomes.

The Disconnect

- While many products demonstrate technical excellence, they often fail to meet user satisfaction. Developers and designers often prioritize functionality, usability, and aesthetics, but they may overlook the specific needs of the users.
- Insufficient User Involvement: Products frequently do not connect with users due to a lack of consultation during critical stages of design and development. This results in a product that does not meet users' needs or expectations.

Consequences

- Low adoption rates occur when products fail to meet user expectations, leading to decreased engagement and overall success.
- Higher Expenses: Redesigns, rework, and updates after launch to resolve user dissatisfaction can lead to increased costs.
- Brand Damage: Users who experience frustration due to inadequate experiences are more inclined to discontinue using products and provide negative feedback, which can negatively impact the brand's reputation.

Root Causes

1. Assumptions About User Needs

Many product teams assume they understand their users without verifying their assumptions. This often results in features that users don't want or need.

2. Limited Feedback Channels

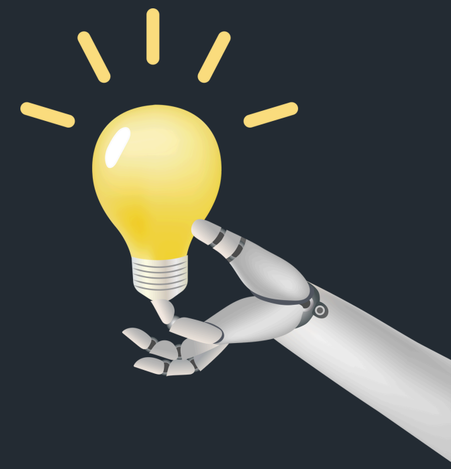
Feedback loops from users are frequently restricted to post-launch surveys or beta testing, limiting early-stage insights that could prevent misalignment.

3. Siloed Development Process

Product, design, and engineering teams often work in isolation from end-users, prioritizing internal goals over external needs.

4. Over-Focus on Technology

In an attempt to innovate, teams sometimes prioritize cutting-edge technology at the expense of usability and intuitive design.



Solution: A User-Centered Approach

Building products that users love requires a deep connection between design, development, and the end user. The following steps focuses on how you can use a user-centered approach to ensure your solutions not only meet but exceed user expectations. By starting with empathy, incorporating feedback, prototyping, and using Agile methods, you can deliver products that users truly value.

1-Start with Empathy:
Understanding Users from Day One

- User Personas and Empathy Mapping: Start by creating comprehensive user personas and empathy maps that reflect the varied needs of your target audience. Incorporate demographic information, behavioral patterns, objectives, and challenges. These personas should inform all design and development choices.

- Conduct User Interviews: Involve actual users from the beginning of the project to gain insights into their challenges, preferences, and expectations. Do not make assumptions; allow users to determine their own definition of success.

Action Steps

- Identify and categorize your target users.
- Perform interviews or surveys to identify their objectives and obstacles.
- Develop empathy maps that reflect user emotions, needs, and concerns.

2-Incorporate User Feedback Throughout the Development Lifecycle

- Engage users in ongoing testing and validation throughout the product lifecycle, from initial prototypes to final designs. Implement A/B testing, conduct usability tests, and gather user reviews to confirm assumptions and refine designs as needed.

- Feedback Loops: Establish continuous channels for user feedback, including focus groups, online surveys, and user forums. Collect and act on user input throughout the entire process, rather than waiting until after the launch.

Action Steps

- Implement a feedback system that enables immediate user input.
- Conduct usability tests following each significant product iteration.
- Regularly gather qualitative and quantitative feedback to guide decision-making.

3-Prototyping and Co-Creation with Users

- Prototype Frequently and Early: Create low-fidelity prototypes, such as wireframes, and encourage user interaction with these prototypes at an early stage. Collect insights and implement changes prior to proceeding with full-scale development.
- Co-Creation Sessions: Engage users directly in brainstorming activities. Request that they sketch, describe, or visualize their ideal solutions. This practical approach provides valuable insight into their expectations and ensures you are not designing in isolation.

Action Steps

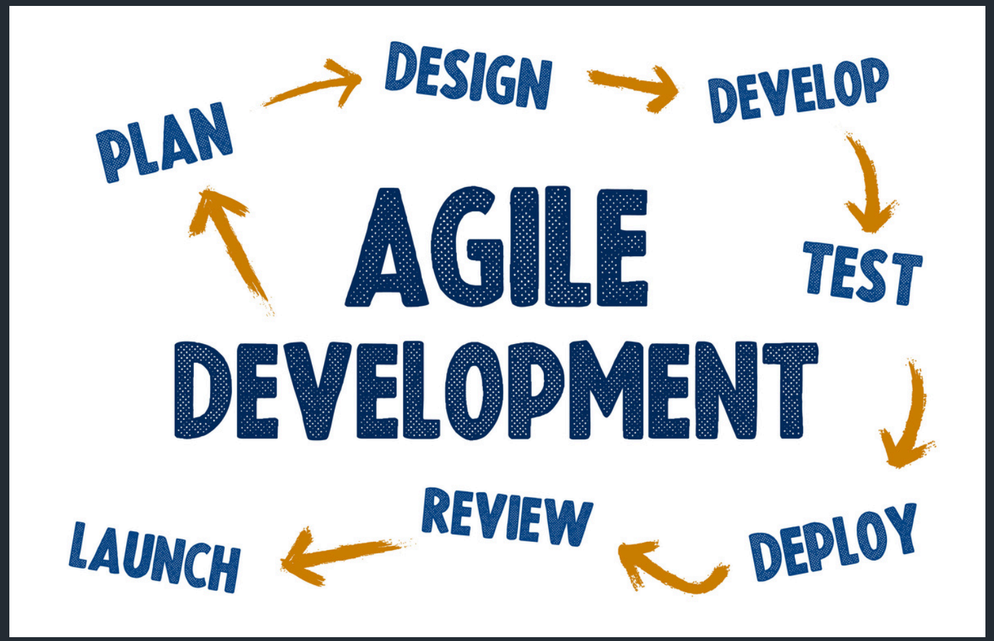
- Develop quick prototypes and request user feedback on them.
- Facilitate co-creation workshops that allow users to actively participate in the product design process.
- Make adjustments based on the direct input collected from these sessions

4-Agile Development with a User-Centric Focus

- Agile Methodology: Implement Agile development approaches that focus on flexibility and incremental advancement. In an Agile workflow, developers can promptly respond to user feedback and minimize extensive rework.
- User Stories: Structure development tasks as “user stories” that outline how a feature serves the user, guaranteeing that each sprint or development cycle provides measurable user value.

Action Steps

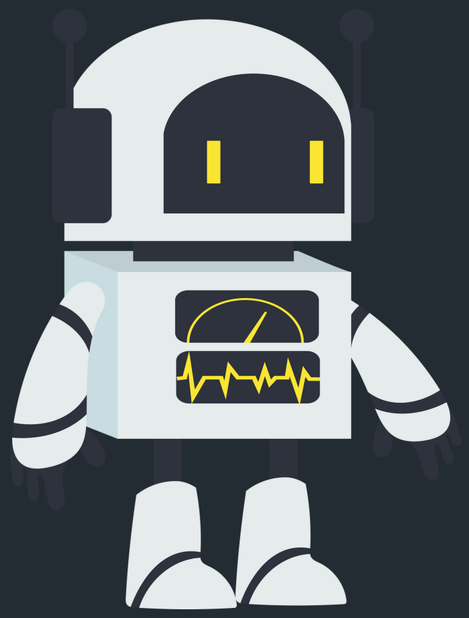
- Implement Agile methodologies to allow for flexibility and adaptability.
- During each sprint, focus on user stories that enhance the product's usability and user satisfaction.



Measuring Success: Key Metrics to Track

Measuring success through key metrics is essential for understanding how well your product is performing and meeting user needs. These metrics offer clear insights into satisfaction, engagement, and areas where improvement is necessary. Next we share are some critical metrics that will help guide your product development and ensure ongoing success.

Measuring Success: Key Metrics to Track



User Satisfaction Scores

Regularly measure how satisfied users are with the product and its key features. Use surveys like Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) and Net Promoter Score (NPS) to assess this.

Adoption and Retention Rates

Track how many users actively use your product over time. Low adoption or high churn signals a disconnect between your product and user needs.

Feedback Incorporation

Keep track of how many user-driven changes and features are implemented. The more you adapt based on feedback, the more aligned your product will be with user expectations.

Support Tickets & User Complaints

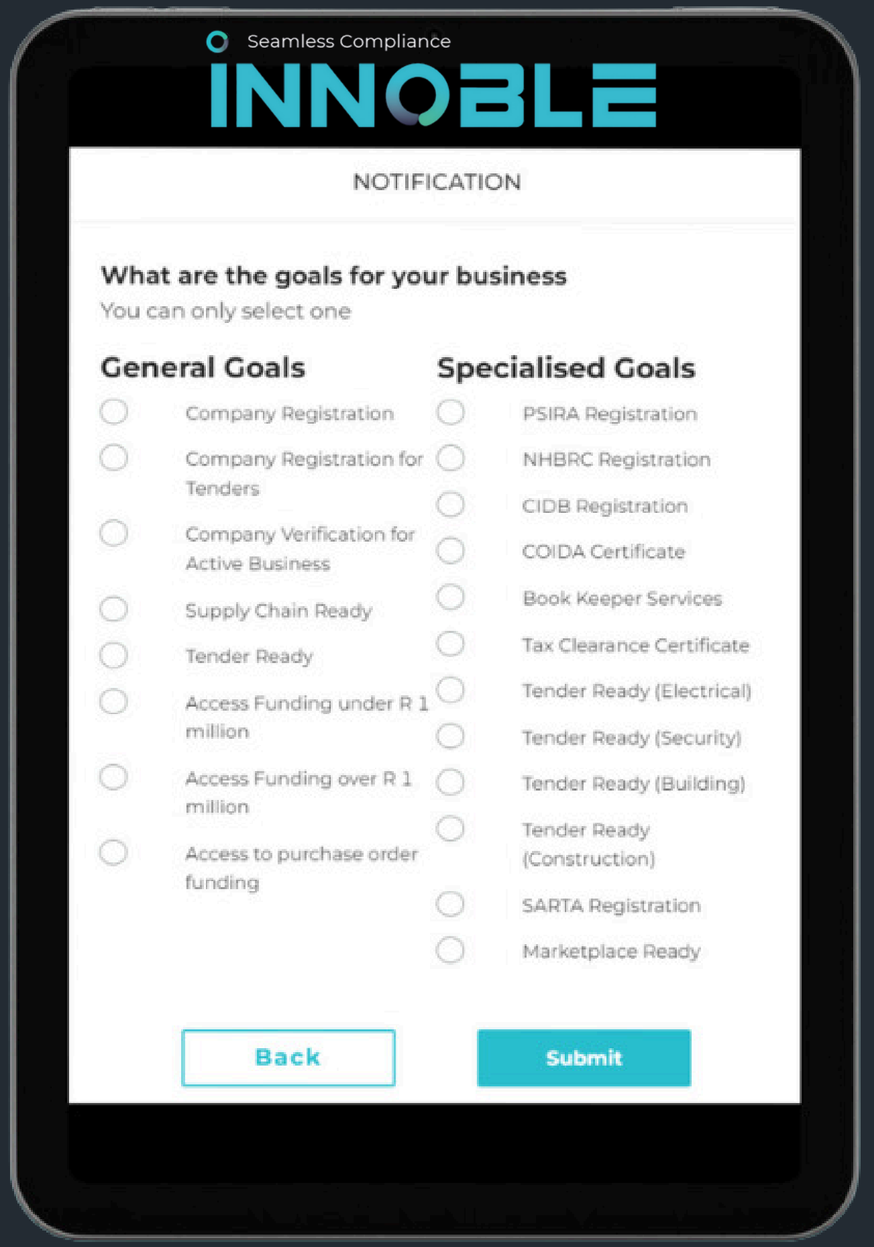
Monitor the volume and nature of user complaints. A high number of support tickets indicates that your product may not be intuitive or user-friendly.

Real-World Example:

Innoble Case Study

About

Innoble is a fintech-enabled supply chain platform that helps small and medium enterprises (SMEs) secure supply chain opportunities and access financial assistance. They aimed to streamline and digitize the intricate process of regulatory compliance, funding, and supply chain integration for SMEs.



#CustomerSuccess

Problem

Prior to utilizing Innoble, SMEs encountered considerable challenges in entering supply chains, such as insufficient knowledge of regulatory compliance, restricted financial resources, and obstacles in accessing opportunities. The challenges hindered their business growth, preventing many from meeting the requirements to bid for tenders or obtain funding.

Solution

Innoble created a digital platform that combines regulatory compliance checks, financial pre-vetting, and tender readiness for SMEs. Included features are as follows:

- Regulatory Compliance Checks: Automated verification of business documents and compliance status.
- Financial Tools: Collaborations with financial institutions to evaluate credit risk and pre-approve SMEs for funding.
- Supply Chain Readiness: Resources that assist SMEs in preparing the necessary documentation for tender applications.

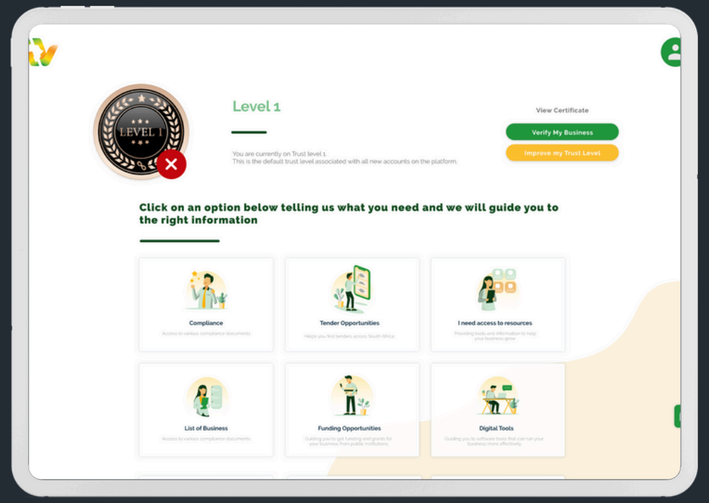
Skywalk Innovations enhanced the user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) to create a more intuitive and accessible platform. This comprised:

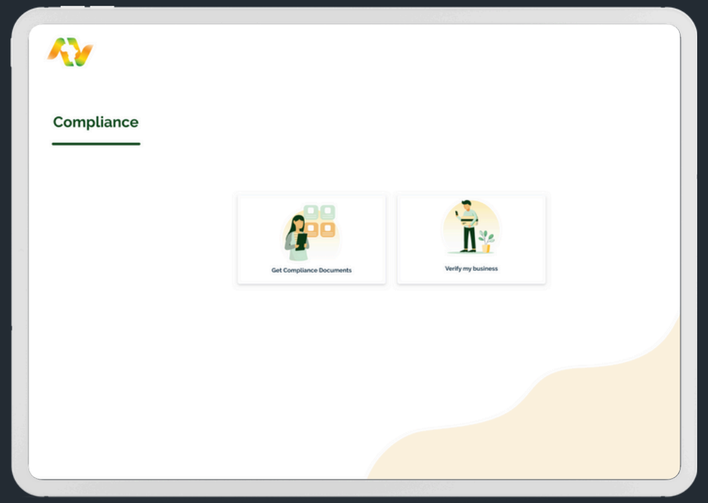
- Improving the onboarding process.
- Developing dashboards that deliver real-time compliance updates.
- Making user-driven enhancements informed by feedback from initial users.

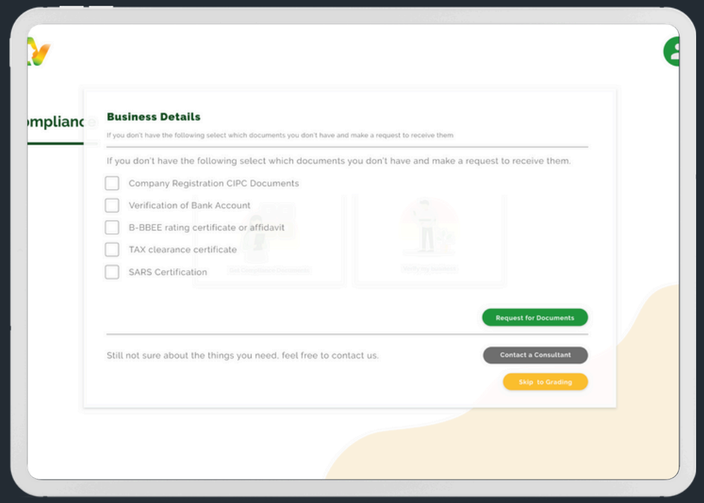
Outcome/ Metrics

- User Growth: The platform's user base grew to 2,500 registered SMEs, a significant increase from the initial 250.
- Funding Access: Innoble helped SMEs secure vital funding, including support for 12 businesses during COVID relief efforts.
- Improved User Satisfaction: A 60% improvement in user experience was noted after implementing the redesign, with users finding the platform easier to navigate and more aligned with their needs.
- Operational Efficiency: The implementation of tracking dashboards enhanced operational efficiency by 50%, allowing Innoble's team to monitor user progress, manage incomplete submissions, and assist SMEs in achieving compliance effectively. This efficient workflow enabled staff to handle more clients with reduced manual effort.

Before


Level 1
View Certificate
Verify My Business
Improve my Trust Level
You are currently on Trust level 1.
This is the default trust level associated with all new accounts on the platform.
Click on an option below telling us what you need and we will guide you to the right information
Compliance
Tender Opportunities
I need access to resources
List of Business
Funding Opportunities
Digital Tools


Compliance
Get Compliance Documents
Verify my business


Business Details
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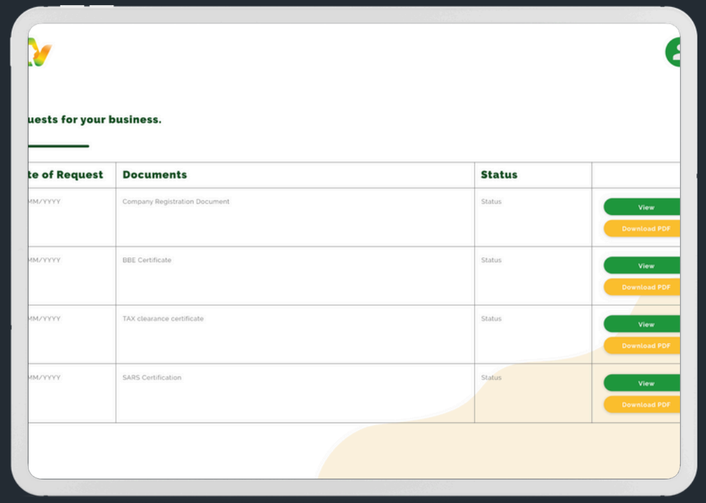
If you don't have the following select which documents you don't have and make a request to receive them.
Company Registration CIPC Documents
Verification of Bank Account
B-BBEE rating certificate or affidavit
TAX clearance certificate
SARS Certification
Request for Documents
Still not sure about the things you need, feel free to contact us.
Contact a Consultant
Skip to Grading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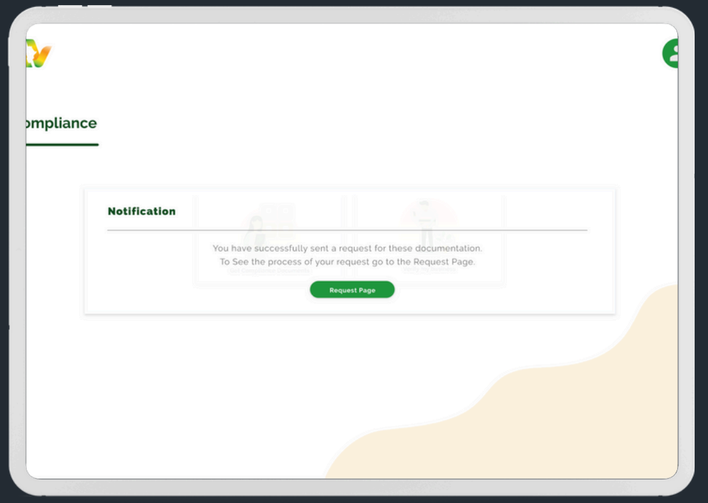
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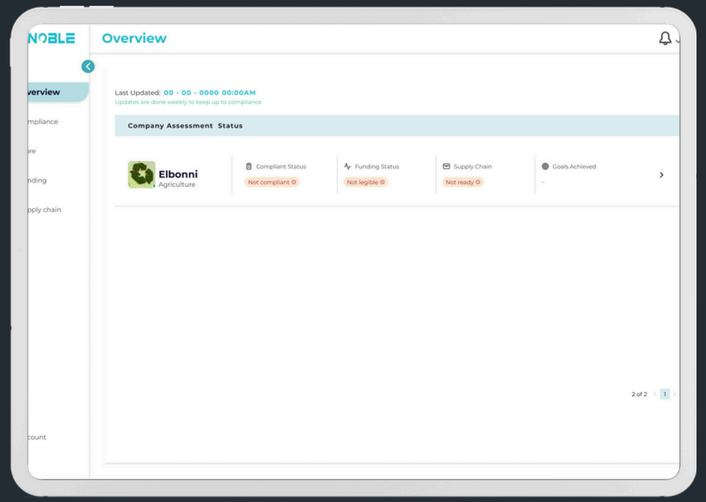
Notification
You have successfully sent a request for these documentation.
To See the process of your request go to the Request Page.
Request Page

After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Overview
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Updates are done weekly to keep up to compliance
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Agriculture
Compliant Status
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Funding Status
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Supply Chain
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Goals Achieved
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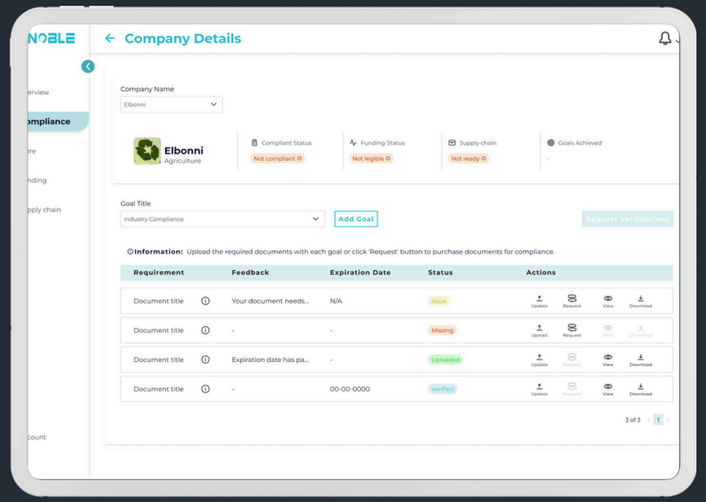
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Goals Achieved
Goal Title
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Request Verifications
Information: Upload the required documents with each goal or click 'Request' button to purchase documents for compliance.
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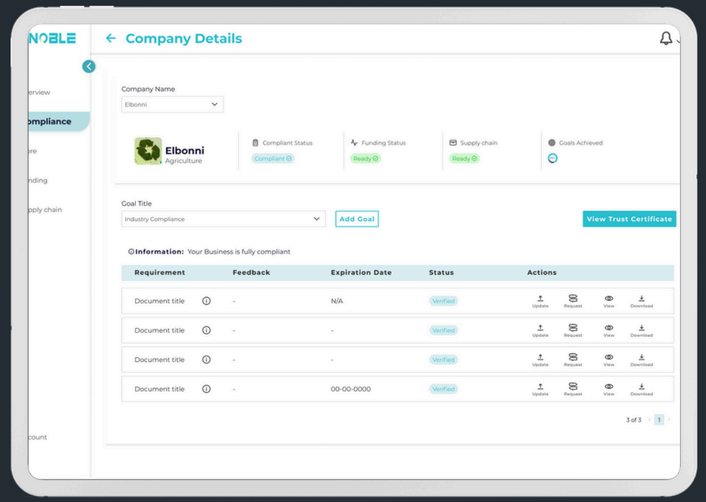
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Conclusion

Successful products are those that bridge the gap between technical excellence and user needs. As demonstrated, products often fail when users are not involved early and consistently in the design and development process. By adopting a user-centered approach—emphasizing empathy, feedback loops, prototyping, and Agile methodologies—teams can ensure that products evolve to meet real-world challenges.

Involving users throughout the process leads to a superior product and promotes lasting success and client retention.
Remember: user involvement isn't just about fixing problems—it's about building loyalty. A product that evolves with its users can become indispensable, turning customers into long-term advocates.

Get in touch with us:

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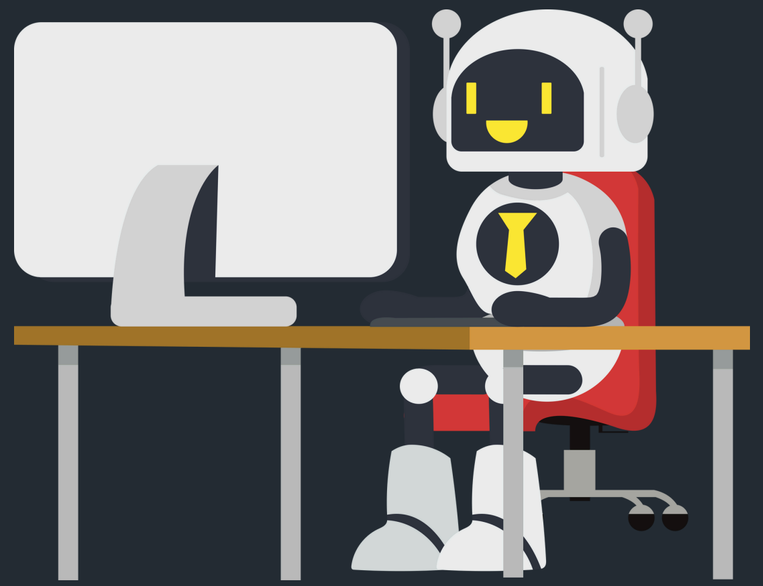
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