

# Take Gmail and make it better!

## Context

Gmail has been around more than a decade, and that's no joke. Google's free Webmail service has gone from a secretive project that required invites for access to a global behemoth that's used in homes and businesses around the world. But that doesn't mean that Gmail is done evolving. In this case study we would make Gmail better!

We are going to approach the problem by using CIRCLES framework; identifying the kind of users that use Gmail and pick a particular user segment then identify their user problems. Secondly, we would prioritise these problems and then move to solutions .

## CIRCLES Method

- ① Comprehend situation — What? Who? Why? How?
- 2? Identify customer — 22 Personas
- ② Report customer needs - as \_\_, I want \_\_ so that \_\_
- 1 2 3 Cut, through prioritization → ROI estimate?
- 1 2 3 List solutions
- Evaluate trade-offs - thoughtful, analytical, objective
- 💬 Summarize recommendation — What, recap, why vs. others

## Identify Customer

The user base of Gmail can be segmented into the given below parameters:

- On the basis of purpose: Professional, personal or marketing
- Usage (High, Medium, Low)
  - How many emails do they send per day?
  - How much time do they spend on Gmail?
  - How many emails do they receive per day?

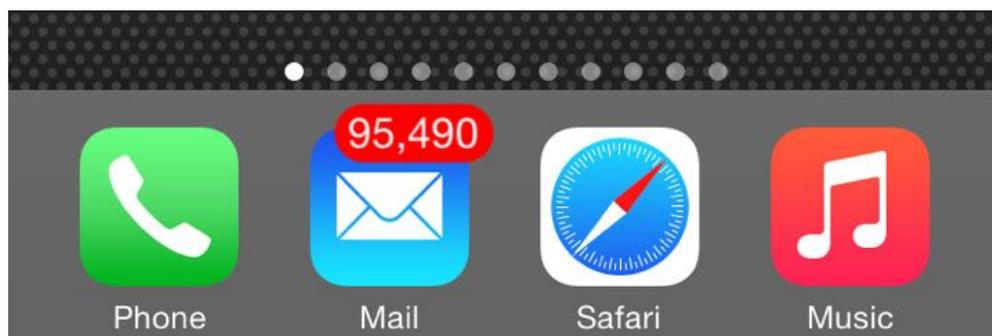
Targeting users who use Gmail for personal use with High to Medium usage on Gmail.

## How do they use Gmail?

- Getting social media notifications
- Sending emails to friends
- Contact customer support of companies
- Receive promotional emails
- Receive emails from companies ( Amazon, Uber, Zomato)

## Customer Problems

- **Too many unread emails(Problem 1):** Users tend to receive a lot of emails on their personal account which leads to building up a lot of unread emails. This problem mainly affects high frequency users.



Too many unread Emails 😞

- **Composing email takes time(Problem 2):** Although whatsapp and FB messenger are indirect competitors to GMAIL, in case of personal messaging Gmail takes a lot of steps and time to send a message.
- **Emails are not interactive(Problem 3):** A lot of people use whatsapp for forwarding jokes/pictures/videos and do simple short conversations. This dehumanizes the user experience and users use Gmail for more formal communications such as applying for jobs, sending a formal complaint, and requesting assistance. Whatsapp could evolve there and become a bigger threat.
- **Users miss to reply to an important email(Problem 4):** With a high number of emails per day. Users might miss on replying to an important email
- **Difficulty finding contacts on Gmail(Problem 5):** It is difficult to find an email address of the person on gmail.

## Prioritising problem

Prioritising problems using the following parameters:

- a) How big of a problem it is and how many users does it impact?
- b) The impact on customer satisfaction, if it is solved?

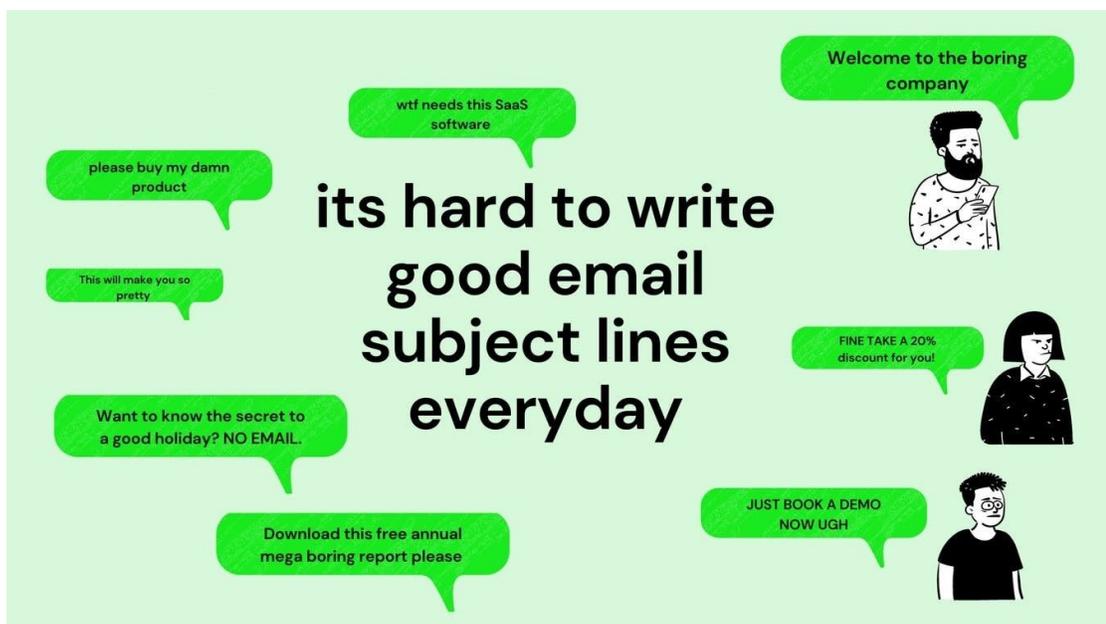
Problem	How many users does it impact?	The impact on customer satisfaction, if it is solved?	Total Score
Problem 1	4	5	4.5
Problem 2	8	8	8
Problem 3	8	7	7.5
Problem 4	5	4	4.5
Problem 5	7	6	6.5

From the above analysis the top problems to solve are emails are not interactive and it takes time to compose an email.

## Solutions

### A) Problem: Composing emails is time consuming

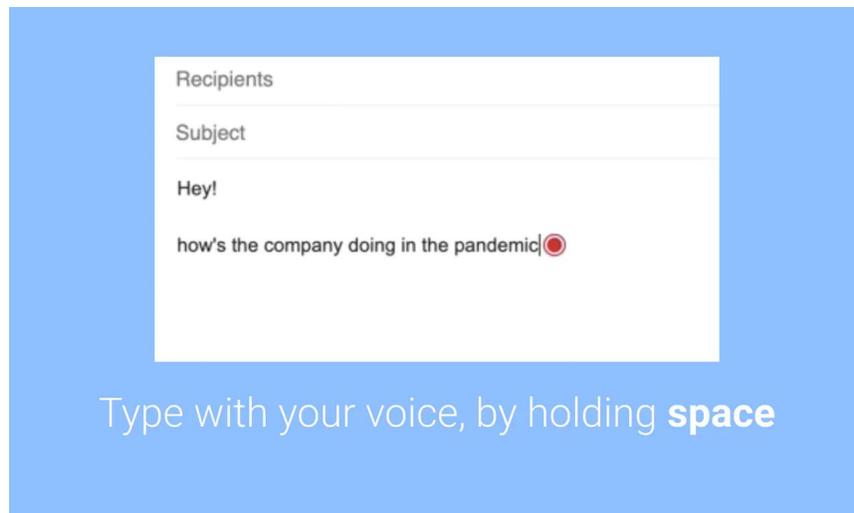
- Smart compose on subjects: Reducing the step to write the subject by using AI and auto generating a relevant subject line for the email. This would reduce the cognitive effort required to write an email and will make the action easier and quicker for the users.



Thinking a subject line can be difficult 

- Keyboard shortcuts recommendation: Using keyboard shortcuts is more efficient than mousing through menus, but many people don't take the time to learn and memorize them. Recommending shortcuts to users while they are composing emails so that they start using shortcuts more frequently. For example, when user is using the functionality to make the text bold, Gmail can send them a prompt or suggest that "Try Ctrl + B to do it quicker" or "Have you tried Ctrl + B?", etc.

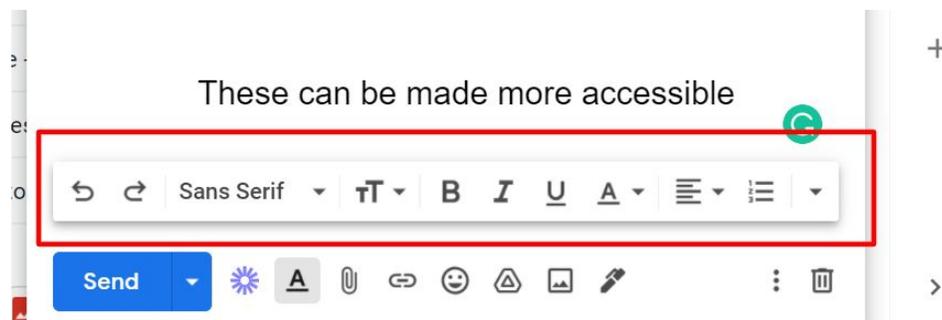
- Dictating emails: Users can write an email using speech. With the upsurge in users using voice over text and speaking being faster and easier than writing, giving the functionality to compose emails via voice will reduce the effort to compose an email. Users can just speak the message and Gmail would compose an email for them.



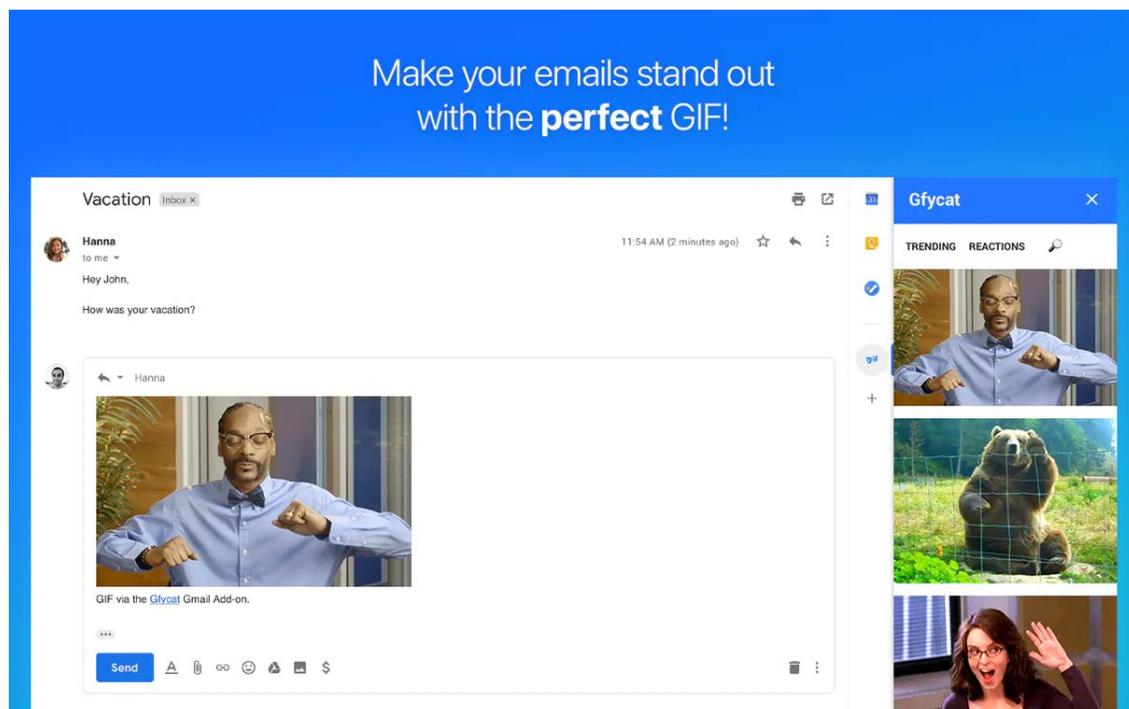
Type your emails with voice 🗣️

## B) Problem: Emails are not interactive

- Accessible email formatting tools: Having different font colours and images in an email makes them visually appealing. While writing an email the options to format or add media are available in the bottom this makes these functionalities less handy. Making these functionalities more accessible to users while writing an email can make users use these options more often



- **Rich Media:** Plain text makes the email less interactive and users don't feel delightful to use email to send an informal message to friends. Giving handy options to use GIFs and stickers in the emails can help users to make emails more friendly and interactive. With the advent of instant messaging users have the habit to use these media tools and adding these functionalities will increase Gmail's usability.



**Making emails more interactive with GIFs 😊**

- **Special Templates:** Users use emails to send an invitation for some party to friends and to send wishes on special occasions. Similar to google docs templates for writing a doc, launching interactive templates for most commonly purposes for writing an email. Providing engaging templates for writing emails will motivate users to use Gmail over other platforms.

## Prioritizing Solutions

Using RICE framework to prioritize solutions

Solution	Impact	Confidence	Effort	Score
Smart Composing Subject	6	80	5	96
Recommending keyboard shortcuts	7	70	6	81.7
Voice to text	6	60	6	60.0
Rich Media in email	7	75	6	87.5
Special email templates	5	60	7	42.9
Accessible email formatting tools	6	60	4	90

From the scoring above, including rich media in email, accessible email formatting tools and smart composing emails will be quick wins to reduce time for composing an email and make them more interactive. For users with high and medium frequency usage of emails writing email subject consumes time. Also, for personal usage users prefer to make the email to be less formal, including gifs and stories make an email more friendly and humanise the experience of writing and reading email.

## Impacted metrics

All the ideas mentioned above are going to impact the engagement and retention metrics. The time spent to send an email would decrease and users using gifs, stickers and formatting tools in their emails would increase.

## Summary

Gmail has a large user base for personal usage and has an indirect competition with instant messaging apps like Whatsapp and Facebook. To stay relevant and reduce the threat from instant messaging apps, Gmail should launch features to make sending an email faster and engaging.