How to Use "Thinking Aloud"

Chapter 3: Clients

Thinking aloud is a method used, primarily, in web design and usability engineering to get real-time, unfiltered feedback on things like web pages, online tools, apps, etc. However, it's not only for digital experiences. It could also be used to get feedback on advertisements, articles, videos, infographics, intake forms, questionnaires, or any other piece of content designed for interaction.

Here's how to run your own thinking-aloud test.

STEP 1
Recruit a representative sample of your clients, customers, or users.

STEP 2
Give them a representative task to perform (i.e., browse a website, read an advertisement, fill out a form, buy a product).

STEP 3
Record the session so you can watch it later.

STEP 4
Ask them to narrate their thoughts, moment by moment, completely unfiltered as they perform the task. Such as:

> Okay, I'm on the home page now, there's a red button, should I click it? Oh no, wait, this is the one I click, the link that says "Learn more..."

(This requires prompting, as people aren't used to verbalizing a monologue of their thoughts as they do things. You might even share a one-minute video of a previous thinking-aloud session so they get a sense for how it should work.)

STEP 5
Watch the videos and look for common themes.

As with the Jobs to Be Done method, it only takes a few interviews/ tests for common themes to appear. Tease them out for a deeper understanding of not only how your clients and prospects think, but for actionable revisions that can make your website (or whatever it is you're testing) more useful for your goals and your clients'.

These activities and worksheets are taken from the book **Change Maker:** Turn your passion for health and fitness into a powerful purpose and a wildly successful career by John Berardi, PhD.

Check it out at: www.changemakeracademy.com/book