

Five Reasons to Choose Benchmark

January 2009

Overview

Benchmark Research & Safety, Inc. is a multifaceted consulting firm that specializes in helping clients achieve their goals by providing innovative and cost-effective solutions that enhance safety, performance, and satisfaction.

We are one of the few multi-capability firms in the Northwest - headquartered in Moscow, Idaho with branch offices in Boise and Rigby, Idaho; Portland, Oregon; Spokane, Washington; and Grand Junction, Colorado. Our skills, experience and training allow us to provide solutions and value for a wide range of areas, including:

- user experience research, design, and evaluation (usage definition through requirements to verification and test);
- full-range user interface & full product usability and ergonomics evaluations, testing, and design;
- web application & portal design, development, and maintenance/support;
- program management; and
- litigation consultation for safety, labeling, and ease of use

What sets us apart from other consulting firms? We seamlessly bridge the gap between academia, business, and technology by integrating the latest research about people's capabilities and limitations to the solutions we provide clients. More specifically, there are five reasons why Benchmark is the right choice for your consulting needs.

1. The Way We Approach Solution Development

We quickly form a detailed understanding of:

- the solution space;
- factors that shape solutions;
- future applications of solutions; and
- the individual, social, and technical environment where solutions are implemented.

This understanding is used to design solutions ideal for the people who implement them and consistent with the technical and social capabilities of the target organization. We start every project by looking for the latest research and state-of-the-art practices in a particular domain. In doing so, we focus on applying current research about human capabilities and limitations to our work, so we can offer solutions that are more acceptable, cost-effective, and require less training and support.

2. The Diverse Background of Our Staff

We employ human factors practitioners, scientists, researchers, project managers, and software programmers to meet the needs of our diverse customer base. Our core skills include knowledge of user testing methods, cognitive psychology and human factors design principles; research techniques such as user modeling, design ethnography, interviewing, and participant-observation; and technical skills such as workstation design, prototyping and graphical user interface (GUI) development. Some of our key people include:

- **Curt C. Braun, Ph.D.** - Dr. Braun is the president, CEO, and founder of Benchmark Research & Safety, Inc. He has expertise at developing and implemented large scale research efforts for state and federal agencies, performing ergonomic assessments of business and industrial settings, and providing training on decision-making, team development, team processes, and human behavior.
- **Eric F. Shaver, Ph.D.** - Dr. Shaver is a senior consultant specializing in human factors & ergonomics, usability, safety, applied decision making, and research design & analysis. He has expertise in safety information development, product liability litigation support, and performing expert reviews and user testing for consumer technology.
- **Elise M. Lind, M.S.** - Ms. Lind is a senior human factors engineer that specializes in User-Centered Design -- discovering what users need and translating those needs into product-specific requirements and functions. She has expertise at using a variety of best-in-class techniques to study and understand users' needs, design a positive user experience, and validate it through testing for software and web applications.
- **Josh M. McDaniel, Ph.D.** - Dr. McDaniel is an ethnographer and science editor who specializes in technology development and adoption, as well as natural resource management. He has expertise using an array of qualitative and quantitative methods, including: ethnography, participant observation, structured and semi-structured interviewing, surveys/questionnaires, and stakeholder analysis.

3. Our Breadth of Work Experience

Benchmark's work spans six broad categories:

- Human Factors & Ergonomics
- Usability Testing, User-Centered Design, & User Experience Research
- Web Technology Development
- Product & Industrial Safety & Litigation Support
- Training & Education Program Administration

Specific examples include:

- Accident analysis and evaluation, hazard analysis and risk assessment, safety information development, and litigation support and expert testimony.
- Prototype designs, out-of-the-box experiences, heuristic evaluations, usability testing, product acceptance testing, competitive evaluations, and final design specifications.
- Ethnographic evaluations to understand the interactions of people and technology within their homes, work places, and communities to gain an understanding of the socio-cultural context in which they act.
- Developing and managing basic and applied research projects, including experiments and surveys, for laboratory and field settings on a variety of topics including usability, safety, and human performance factors (i.e., beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral responses).
- Administering and monitoring federal and state contracts, creating performance objectives using third-party requirements, and developing state-of the art solutions for data and knowledge management systems.

Benchmark also has international work experience, in places like China. We have met and worked with government officials, international trade organizations, manufacturers, and exporters on a variety of topics including usability, product safety, and data collections efforts.

4. We Understand the Importance of Cost-Effective Solutions

The strategic use of client's resources is our highest priority. We understand that precious resources put toward new initiatives must be judged to provide a positive return on investment (ROI). Moreover, decision makers must be assured that pursued endeavors will result in increased customer value and/or employee safety, productivity and satisfaction. That's why we make use of the innovative concepts, methods, and tools from the field of human factors and ergonomics to the solutions we provide.

5. Our Solutions Fulfill Current Needs and Anticipate the Future

No sooner has a solution been implemented then discussions begin about what it should do in the near and distant future. There are one-time "fixes" to present

problems, but more often circumstances dictate a flexible and scalable solution that meets current needs in light of future needs. Our detailed understanding of the problem space gives us the ability to create solutions today that are part of solutions tomorrow, not obsolete methods that are simply discarded.

Contact Us

Whether you are planning your next project or looking for assistance with an existing project, we can help. Benchmark's unique combination of perspectives contributes to a solution that you can apply with confidence. Contact us at **877-641-4468** or **info@benchmarkrs.com** to discover how our highly experienced staff can develop a personalized solution that best fits your needs.