Thinking “Out-of-the-Box” with Board Games
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What is OOBE?

One method that explores the initial impressions made during a user’s first interaction with a product has been termed the “out-of-box experience”, or OOBE (Gilbert, Sangwan, & Ian, 2005).

The OOBE technique typically measures first impressions of the following processes:

- **Packaging Investigation**: Sensory cues like the look and feel of a product’s packaging and components can set user expectations
- **Unboxing**: Opening a package, seeing what is first available, viewing how the contents are arranged, and removing contents
- **Setup/Configuration**: Gathering materials needed for using the product, assembling the product, and reviewing help documentation
- **Initial Use**: Interacting with the product’s features and capabilities, ability to access all of the product’s available functions

Importance of OOBE

- Fewer product returns and calls to customer helplines, increase in positive interactions with product
- 871% growth rate of YouTube’s unboxing genre since 2010
- Product usage & brand loyalty
- Increased sales and popularity
- Users are less sensitive to prices & competitive products

Method

**Participants**: 4 males, 2 females; Ages: 19 – 22
3 casual, 3 experienced players (based on frequency of board game play, types of games played, and self-reported experience level)

**Measures**
- Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- Points of Delight
- Points of Frustration
- Confidence
- Difficulty
- Adjectives (MPRC)

**Materials**

Published by Blue Orange Games, Photosynthesis is a strategy board game that allows 2-4 players to play as different species of trees that plant seeds and grow trees to compete for the sun’s energy.

**Procedure**
The above measures were taken during the following stages:
- **Unboxing**
- **Setup**
- **Initial Play**
- **Disassembly**

Results

Conclusions

- The OOBE technique can be used with board games to explore a game’s quality, clarity of rules and instructions, perceived complexity, ease of use, and overall impressions
- Experienced board game players find unboxing and playing games for the first time easier than casual players
- Casual players are less confident in their ability to grasp the mechanics of a new game during initial play

References