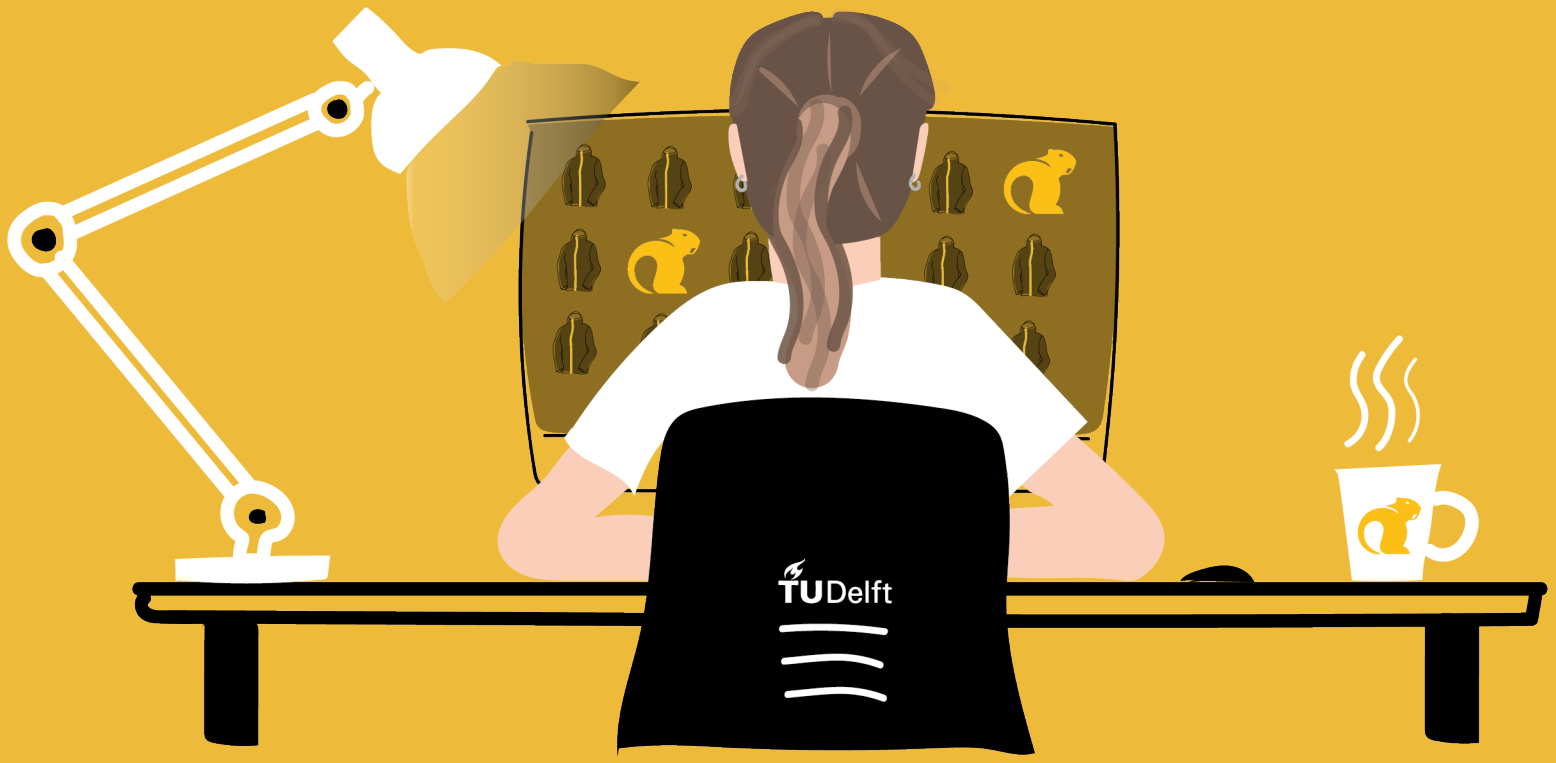
TOWARDS A MORE INFORMED ONLINE DECISION OF OUTDOOR JACKETS TO NOVICE USERS: ENSURING THE RIGHT PRODUCT IN ONLINE SEARCHES AT BEVER.NL



MASTER THESIS

MARIEKE RIETEMA

October 2022

MASTER THESIS

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October 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the help of many people I could not have completed this graduation project. First of all, I like to thank my academic supervisors: Gert Pasman and Ianus Keller. You helped me critically review my work with your expertise and guided me towards the next steps in my project. Your motivation and trust stimulated me to keep going on with the project.

Secondly, I want to thank Bever for providing me with this graduation opportunity. In particular, I like to thank the User Experience Team: Floor, Josien, Sanaa and Stef. You provided me with feedback on my work and you always gave me the opportunity to have a discussion about the topics I wanted to discuss.

Furthermore, I am thankful for all 46 participants (Bever users, Bever employees, family and friends) who participated in my user research, interviews, creative session and evaluation. You showed me clear understanding and insights in the context, design challenge and concept.

Finally, I would like to thank my lovely family, boyfriend and friends for your endless support during my project. Especially to my mom and my brother: thank you for giving feedback on my report!

I could not have done it without all of you!

Thank you all!

Marieke

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bever is an outdoor chain store located in the Netherlands. Besides the Bever stores, Bever.nl was introduced in 2011, continuously growing to an extensive webshop enabling users to shop and explore online. Going to the Bever stores results in experienced staff supporting (novice) users with finding the right equipment for their activity. However, online this process is different. A user is designated to a webstore with (written) information about products. Moreover, details to express product features and performance of products can be found on a product detail page (PDP). The goal of this research is to ensure the right product in online searches at Bever.nl. Thus, the main design challenge is: "How to explain product benefits of outdoor jackets to novice users in order for them to make a more informed decision?".

Discovered Insights
The novice Bever user can best be described as a user who needs much guidance in the selection process because of his low level of product knowledge and context about the activity. When a novice user is in need of a product for a specific activity he enters the web store with this specific activity and product group in mind. When little or no activity related content is shown, it is unclear to a user if a product matches his specific activity since the novice user has little or no prior knowledge or experience with the specific activity and the needed product. When a novice user is searching for his specific product, communication in familiar terminology is of great importance for making an informed and considered decision. Users need to understand the questions (filters), options and product differences in order to do so. Product features do not support the novice user in understanding a product. Therefore, product benefits are of great importance because they show the value a user will gain from a product. Subsequently this results in users understanding a product by understanding the values of the different features because they interpret what the product will mean for them.

Design Criteria
An interaction vision is created to improve the current online shopping experience of a novice user at Bever.nl. This vision focuses on the improvement of three feelings a user experiences when finding the perfect jacket: feeling in control, feeling confident and feeling surprised. This will support the user in a more goal-oriented search with control over the end result, while reading understandable and activity related information without feeling bored due to lots of non-visual long paragraphs of information. Besides the interaction vision several design requirements have been set up related to understandable explanation, activity information, visual presentation and faster exploration.

Concept
The final concept, Bever's Jassen Kompas, is a decision support that ensures the right product in online searches at Bever.nl. It focuses on the visual aspect of the activity of the user (within his specific context) by answering understandable activity and context related questions. Subsequently a selection of the three best and good choices are presented to the user in order to guide the decision making.

Recommendations
Further studies could evaluate the real case usage of the Bever's Jassen Kompas with a buying intention of users compared to fictional testing. The second recommendation would be to validate and discuss, together with experts, the questions asked in Bever's Jassen Kompas. At last, further development and testing of the usability, back-end and mobile design of the Bever's Jassen Kompas can be explored.

GLOSSARY

Bever
an outdoor store (with extensive webstore) founded by Fred van Olphen, with a total of forty shops all around the Netherlands (Bever, 2022).

Customer Service
the customer service department of Bever which gives online support to customers via chat, email, Facebook, Twitter and by phone.

Filter category
a category on the PLP presenting a property of the product, such as size or price. Subsequently, a filter category often contains several filter values (Moran, 2018).

Filter value
a specific value of a property of the product (e.g. Size: small), or a range of values (e.g. Price: less than €99,00) (Moran, 2018).

Industrial Design Engineering (IDE)
faculty of Industrial Design Engineering of the TU Delft

Product description
description on the PDP of the product and its features, benefits, functions and limits (Yieldify, 2020).

Product benefit
product benefits are intended benefits that manufacturers design into a product which can be perceived, appreciated and used by the customer (Lei 1995).

Product Content
the product content department of Bever which is responsible for providing the written information about the product on a PDP.

Product Detail Page (PDP)
a web page on an eCommerce website that provides information on a specific product (Yieldify, 2020).

Product feature
specific properties or elements of a product that distinguish it from similar products on the market and provide considerable value to consumers (Indeed, 2021).

Product Listing Page (PLP)
a web page on an eCommerce website that lists all products within a certain category or products that have been filtered (Yieldify, 2020).

Product pictures
high-quality pictures to give a user a good look on the product (Yieldify, 2020).

Product properties
overview table of the features of a product on the PDP.

Product title
the biggest and most easy-to-find title on the PDP (Yieldify, 2020).

Short web description
a brief description of a specific product underneath the product title on the PDP (Retta, 2020).

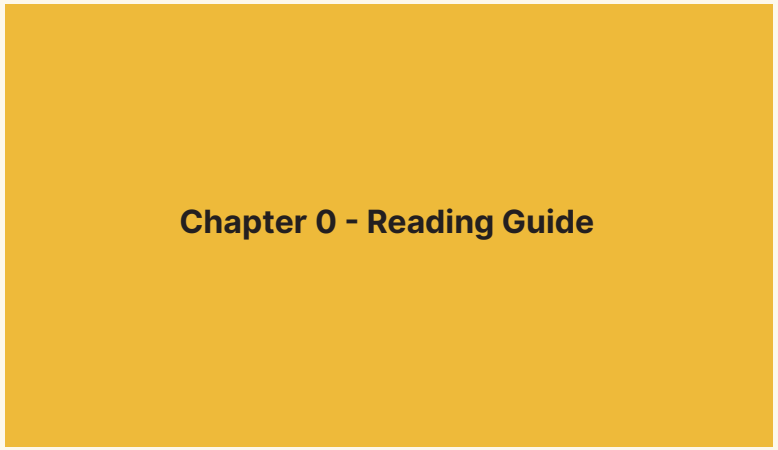
User Experience (UX)
the User Experience team of Bever (Yonderland) which is responsible for the feeling users experience when using the website.

Yonderland
a holding company consisting of six brands and one private label (A.S.Adventure, Bever, Cotswold Outdoor, Juttu, Runners Need, Snow + Rock and Ayacucho) (Yonderland, 2022).

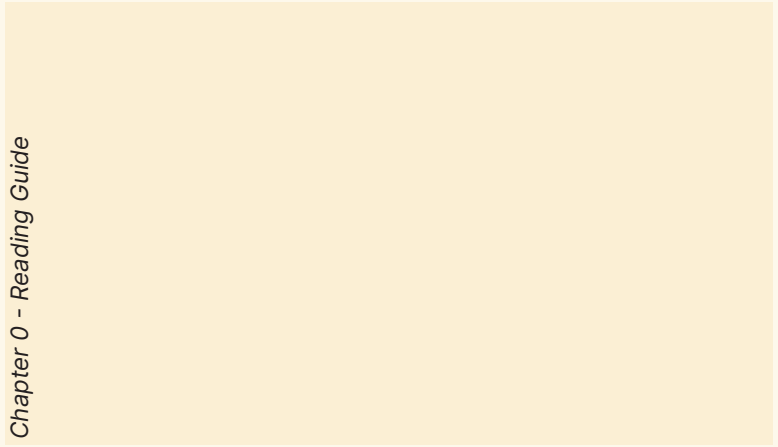
READING GUIDE

In case the word user or participant is written, both *he, she, him* and *her* are intended although only the words he and him will be written in this report.

Chapter introduction
Each chapter starts with a yellow colored page. This page portrays the introduction of a new chapter. On the left side of each page it can be seen to which chapter this page belongs.



Chapter introduction.



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CONTENT

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This master thesis is a design project on behalf of Bever, a subsidiary of Yonderland. This chapter introduces the graduation project and presents the problem statement, design goal and methodology.

Bever

This research project is executed at the headquarters of Bever, the Dutch subsidiary of Yonderland. Therefore Bever and its history will be briefly introduced.

The story of Bever starts in 1976, when nature photographer Fred van Olphen is in need of lightweight gear for his expedition trip (Bever, 2022). Since lightweight gear was especially hard to find, Fred came up with the idea of opening a shop: Bever Zwerfsport (Figure 1). The name Bever indicates (in Dutch) the animal beaver which for Fred represents an explorative animal on the hunt for (food and) a new home: wandering around the world (Bever, 2022).

Figure 1: Bever Zwerfsport logo 1979 (Bever, 2022).

The first Bever store was opened in 1977, distinctive towards other outdoor stores because of its assortment with a focus on lightweight gear (Bever, 2022). Soon, multiple Bever stores were opened. Nowadays, a total of forty Bever stores can be found all around the Netherlands. Besides the Bever stores, Bever.nl was introduced in 2011, continuously growing to an extensive webshop enabling users to shop and explore online.

Besides Bever's growth indicating the accomplishment, Bever being a success is repeatedly awarded. The 2013 Multichannel Award is the first of many to follow (Emerce, 2013). Bever wins the Cross Channel Award (2016), is ranked as the leading European omnichannel retailer (2018) and wins several Retailer of the Year and Webshop Awards (Bever, 2022). Most recently, within the outdoor domain, Bever is chosen as the Best Shopchain of the Netherlands (de Beste Winkelketen van Nederland).

Yonderland

Yonderland is Europe's largest premium outdoor retailer, running over 190 shops and seven eCommerce sites in six countries: Belgium, Luxembourg, France, United Kingdom, Ireland and The Netherlands (Yonderland, 2022) (Figure 2). Since Yonderland is active in multiple countries, it consists of different subsidiaries in each country. In Belgium, France and Luxembourg Yonderland is active under the names A.S. Adventure and Juttu. The subsidiaries Cotswold Outdoor, Snow + Rock and Runners Need can be seen in the United Kingdom and Ireland. At last, the Dutch subsidiary of Yonderland is Bever.

Figure 2: The location of Yonderland's subsidiaries.

Next to the brands of Yonderland, Yonderland also consists of a private label: 'Ayachuco'.

The holding Yonderland has been around since 2021. All subsidiary brands have a rich history and have gained over forty years of experience to enable everyone to spend more moments outside with the right attributes (e.g. jackets, backpacks, hiking shoes, etc.) (Yonderland, 2022).

The name Yonderland stands for: "A positive world in which we are constantly exploring and being open to wonder" (Neerman, 2021). According to Yonderland (2022) the outdoors is exciting, relaxing, inspiring and a place where memories are made.

For this research the focus is on brands with an assortment of products with technical product features in comparison to only fashion related items (with less product features, and less technical product features). The subsidiary brand Juttu is excluded from this research, since the core business of this company is fashion and therefore technical product features are not conventional within the product categories (Figure 3).

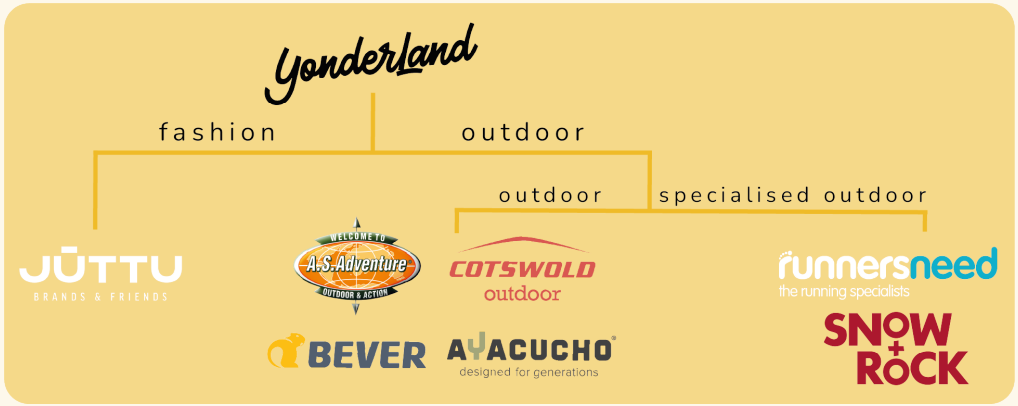


Figure 3: The brands of Yonderland.

Problem statement

A user of Bever can shop in two ways: by going to a store or by going to the webstore (Figure 4). Going to one of Bever's stores results in experienced staff supporting (novice) users with finding the right equipment for their activity. However, online this process is different. A user is designated to a website with (written) information about products. Moreover, details to express product features and performance of products can be found on a product detail page (PDP).

For a novice user this process is more complicated because the information is difficult to understand, overwhelming and not clear. This results in users being lost and in need of support. Thus, the goal of this research is to ensure the right product in online searches at Bever.nl. In this way users can obtain the right expertise and advice, both online and in stores.

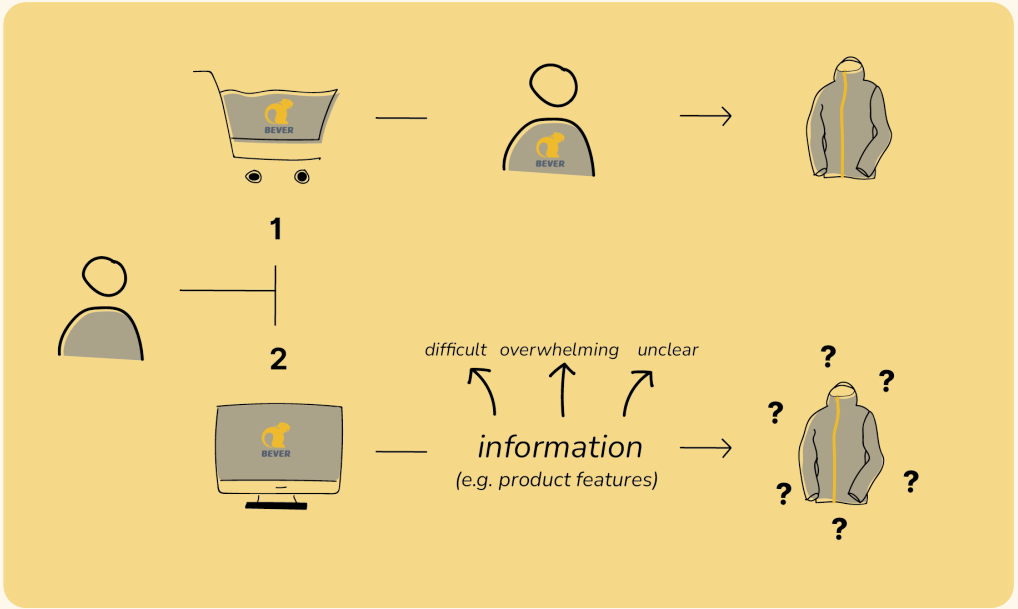


Figure 4: Shopping in two different ways at Bever.

Design goal

The goal of this research is to ensure the right product in online searches at Bever.nl. The main design challenge is:

How to explain product features to novice users?

Along the way the scope of the project moved into a more specific direction regarding the above mentioned question (Figure 5). First of all, in order to explain the value of a product to the novice user it is decided to shift the focus of product features to product benefits, since product benefits express what a product means to a novice user. Moreover, to scope the project into a more concrete scenario it is decided to focus on a specific product category. The product category 'outdoor jackets' is chosen because this is a high-traffic product category and a product category with many product features which make product choices complex for novice users. At last, the decision making process is included in the thesis goal to enable novice users to make a more informed decision when looking to buy a new product. Thus, the main revised design challenge is:

How to explain product benefits of outdoor jackets to novice users in order for them to make a more informed online decision?

This challenge requires an analysis which focuses on the current situation and the needs, emotions, thoughts and behavior of the novice user. This will be addressed in the following chapters, each with a more specific research question.

RQ1: What is a product feature?
1.1 Where does product feature data come from?
1.2 What is a product benefit?
1.3 How are product features explained at the moment in an interaction with online store employees?
1.4 How do (outdoor) eCommerce competitors deal with the explanation of product features?

RQ2: Who are novice users?
2.1 What are the needs of novice users?
2.2 In what way are novice users different from expert users regarding required product feature information?

RQ3: How does a novice user navigate?
3.1 How do novice users navigate on the PLP?
3.2 How do novice users navigate on the PDP?

RQ4: How does a novice user make choices?
4.1 Which filter categories and values support the novice user in choosing a product?
4.2 How does a novice user engage with product features?

RQ5: How does a novice user envision interacting with product features?
5.1 What emotions does a novice user currently experience?

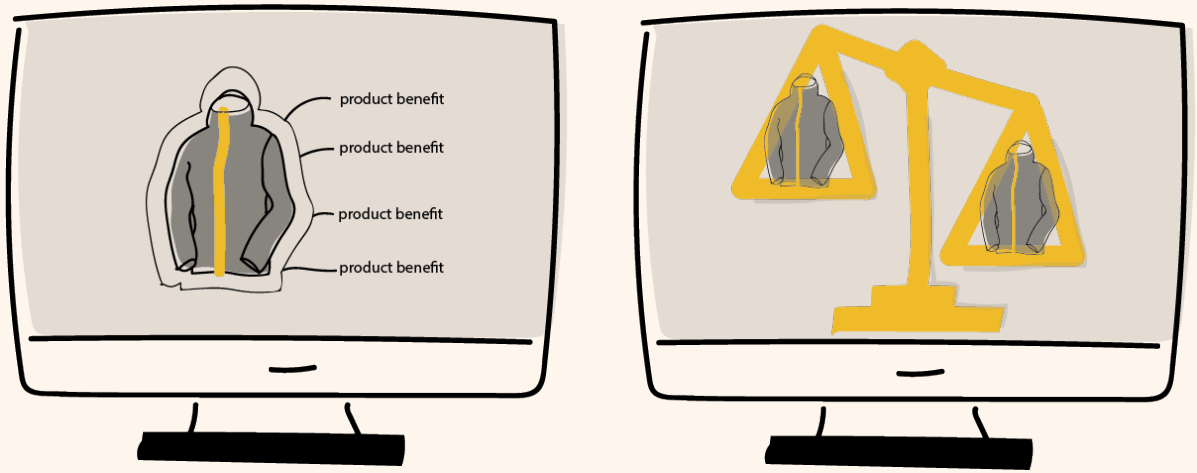


Figure 5: The design goal focussed on product benefits and a more informed decision.

Project approach

The design process of this research uses the double diamond model developed by the British Design Council (British Design Council, 2015). The first diamond represents the research phase which focuses on exploring and defining the problem space in order to be able to design the right thing (Crady, 2018). The second diamond represents the design phase which focuses on ideating and validating for the solution space in order to design the thing right (Crady, 2018). Both diamonds include two phases. The first diamond consists of the discover- and the define phase (Figure 6). The second diamond consists of the develop- and the deliver phase (Figure 6). Each diamond has a diverging part in which the breadth and depth are explored, followed by a converging part in which essential and concrete findings are listed for further process.

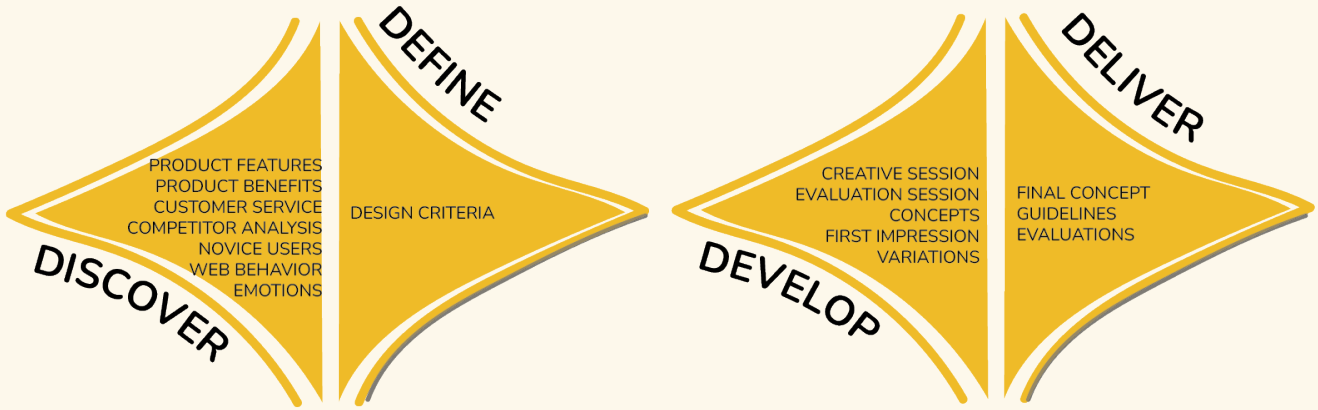


Figure 6: The double diamond project approach.

Conclusions Chapter 1

[1] Bever is an outdoor store (with extensive webstore) founded by Fred van Olphen, with a total of forty shops all around the Netherlands.

[2] Yonderland is a holding company consisting of six brands and one private label (A.S.Adventure, Bever, Cotswold Outdoor, Juttu, Runners Need, Snow + Rock and Ayacucho) (Yonderland, 2022).

[3] A user is designated to a website with (written) information (e.g. product features) about products which is difficult to understand, overwhelming and not clear for novice users.

[4] The goal of this thesis is to ensure the right product in online searches at Bever.nl. Thus, the main design challenge is: 'How to explain product benefits of outdoor jackets to novice users in order for them to make a more informed online decision?'.

[5] The design process of this research uses the double diamond model. The first diamond represents the research phase and the second diamond the design phase.

PART 1
EXPLORING THE CONTEXT

The first part consists of several steps working towards the design criteria for the design phase (Figure 7).

Desk research
Desk research is carried out to gain insights in product features, product benefits and competitors dealing with product features (and benefits).

Observation research
An observation is carried out by means of a (novice user) mystery guest to gain insights into the natural setting of the Customer Service.

Expert interviews
Expert interviews are conducted to gain an understanding in (novice) users, and how the employees of Product Content deal with product information.

User research
User research is done to study, observe and analyze online behavior of users and their experienced emotions during online shopping at Bever.nl.

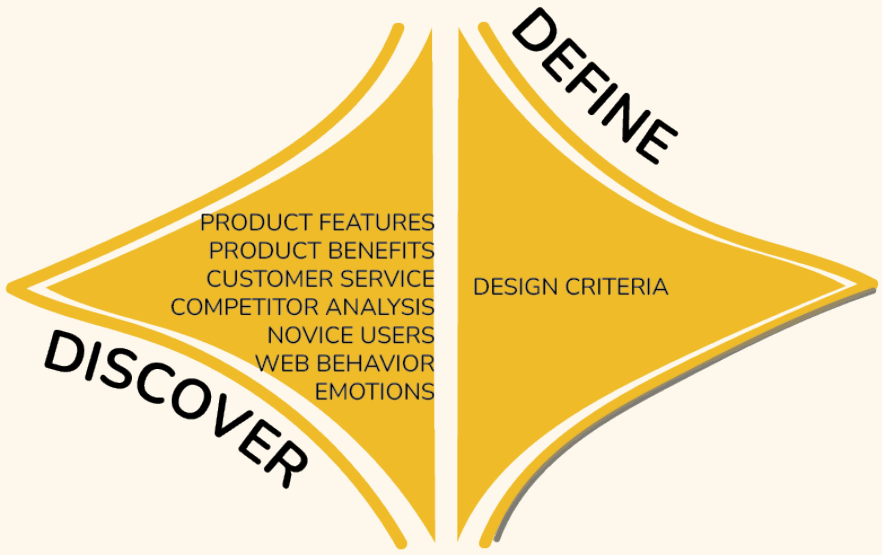


Figure 7: The first diamond of the double diamond approach.

CHAPTER 2 - PRODUCT FEATURES

PRODUCT FEATURES

This chapter provides an explanation of what a product feature (for Yonderland) entails and where the data of product features comes from. Since the following part of the project focuses on the explanation of product features to a novice user this chapter lays the foundation.

What is a product feature?

Product features are specific properties or elements of a product that distinguish it from similar products on the market and provide considerable value to consumers (Indeed, 2021). For example, a product feature of an outdoor jacket is weight expressed in grams. Another example of a product feature is breathability, expressed in grams per square meter per twenty-four hours (g/m2/24h). Thus, features specify a product's characteristics and capabilities (Figure 8). In this research a technical product feature is considered a product feature that is not used in everyday language. For example, water resistant is considered a technical product feature, but size is not.

Yonderland counts a total of 1070 different product features (on a total of 66298 products) (Appendix 1). Within these product features, five types of features exist: Boolean, List, Number, Set and Text (Table 1).

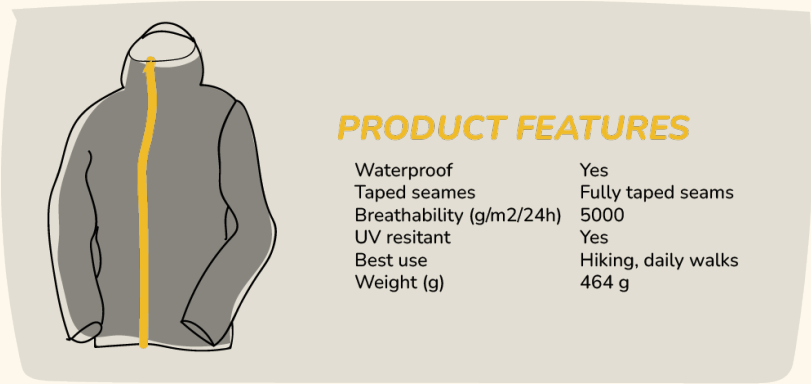


Figure 8: Examples of product features.

Feature type	Explanation	Example
Boolean	A boolean feature type means that the product does or does not have this feature.	Product feature 'Waterproof': a product is waterproof or simply is not.
List	A list feature type means that the product feature has different variants (to be chosen from the list).	Product feature 'Taped seams': a product can have fully taped or critically taped seams.
Number	A number feature type means that the product has a specific value (given in a specific unit).	Product feature 'breathability': a product can have a breathability of 500 g/m2/24h.
Set	A set feature type means that the feature is part of a selection (group) of which different features subsequently can be chosen. These different features are again boolean features.	Product feature 'Technical features': a product can be insulated, quickdry, UV resistant, water repellent.
Text	A text feature type means that the product can have a written explanation for a specific feature.	Product feature: 'Temperature range': a product can have a 13C° - 17C° temperature range for which it is best in use.

Table 1: Explanations and examples of product feature types. The information is obtained from an expert interview with a commercial developer of Bever.

Where does product feature data come from?

All 1070 product features are documented in a database. This is an extensive database and the information in this database arises via three different ways. It arises via the supplier (in two different ways) or via Product Content (Figure 9).

Information retrieved via the supplier: SRD

Bever has created the Supplier Request Document (SRD). An example can be found in Appendix 1. This document is created to enable suppliers to fill in the information about all (relevant) product features. In this document three types of features exist: must-haves (M), should-haves (S) and could-haves (C). Internally it has been decided what features have which corresponding level of importance (M/S/C). If one of Yonderland's brands have decided that a specific feature is a must-have for a product, this is then implemented for the other brands as well. In case a supplier normally does not fill in all requested information in the SRD, only must-have product features are asked for to still obtain the relevant features of a product.

Information retrieved via the supplier: Masterfile

A Masterfile is a database given by the supplier from which product features can be retrieved (by the Product Content department (explained below). This is mostly given by suppliers that have many buyers that do not want to fill in a different document for all different buyers (e.g. The North Face).

Information retrieved via the Product Content department

Product Content is concerned with all information regarding products. The Product Content department of Bever consists of one team lead, four content writers and two photographers. If a supplier does not fill in the SRD, or if no Masterfile is given, Product Content has to find the information themselves (for example by looking at the supplier's website).

Limitations when retrieving the data

Two limitations arise in the process of retrieving product features. First of all, a limitation arises if a supplier does not deliver the product feature information (SRD or Masterfile) and does not display it on its website. This results in a very time consuming and manual activity for the Product Content Department to find the right information. This activity can take up five to twenty-five minutes, depending on the product. In some cases information can be found on the product label, or it can be obtained from the product itself (e.g. the amount of pockets of a jacket). However, sometimes information can not be found and will therefore not be displayed on the website. This results in differences between products regarding available product feature information. To overcome this limitation currently all Yonderlands brands are (planning on) working together to combine one another's product information.

Furthermore, a second limitation arises within the obtained information from suppliers.
A difference in description and way of presentation of features can be seen resulting in inconsistency between products and their features. For example, supplier A presents breathability as 20 g, where supplier B presents breathability as 15.000 g / m2 / 24 hours (Figure 10).

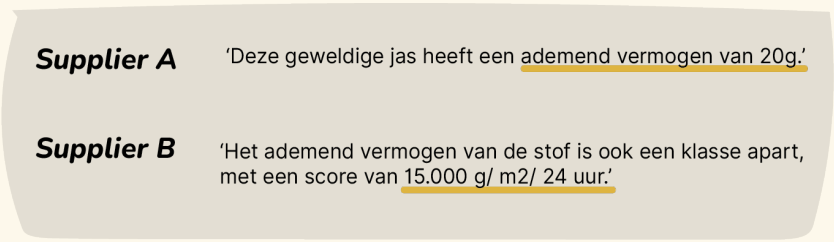


Figure 10: Differences between the presentation of product feature units.

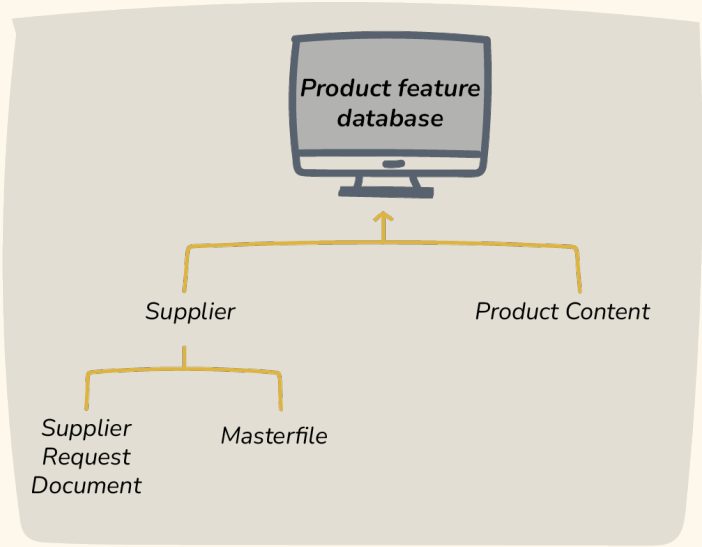


Figure 9: Different ways to obtain product feature information.

Conclusions Chapter 2

[1] Product features describe specific properties and elements of a product to distinguish it from other products and provide value to the user.

[2] In total there are 1070 product features of which five types exist: Boolean, List, Number, Set and Text.

[3] Product feature information arises via three ways: via the supplier (Supplier Request Document or Masterfile) or via Product Content (Figure 9).

[4] There is a difference in available product feature information due to a limitation when retrieving product feature information from suppliers.

[5] There is an inconsistency in product descriptions and presentations of product features at Bever.nl due to a limitation when retrieving product feature information from suppliers.

CHAPTER 3 - NOVICE USER

NOVICE USER

This chapter describes the characteristics of the user in general. Also, the difference in level of expertise users can have in the outdoor domain is explored by means of interviews with several Bever employees. Moreover, this chapter defines the novice user who is the focus of this research, and his corresponding needs.

The user of Bever

To start describing the characteristics of the user, data of different aspects of users were requested from the Customer Relationship Management -department (CRM). A remark should be made about the availability of data. Only data of Bever has been used because these were easy at hand.

Age and gender

At first, demographical data of users are retrieved. The demographic factors age and gender were considered relevant for users in order to get to 'know' the customer. However, data about age are limited because they only represent sixteen percent of its users. When examining these data, seven age groups can be found between eighteen to one hundred years old. The age of users within the three biggest age groups is between 35 and 64 years old, for both online and in store users (Figure 11). CRM estimates this group to be between 25 and 55 years old in reality.

Moreover, the data of gender has been studied (Figure 12). The availability of this data is almost complete, only three percent is unknown. The data shows that both male and female users shop online. There seems to be a significant difference between women shopping online or in the store. This distinction could not be explained by CRM.

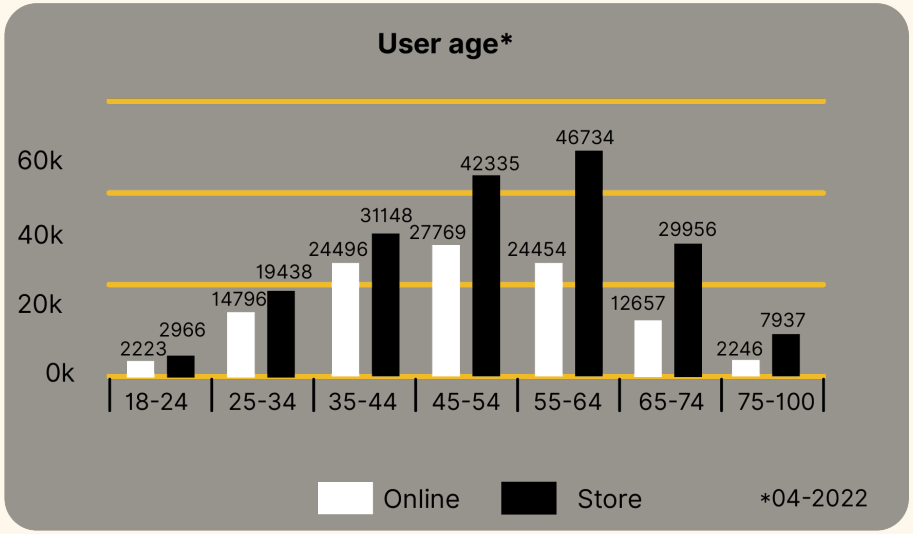


Figure 11: Age data of Bever users.

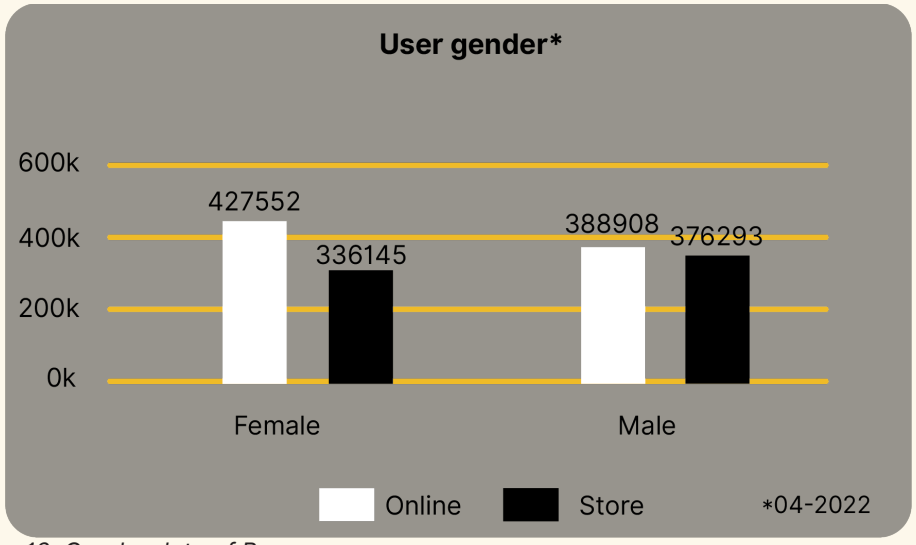


Figure 12: Gender data of Bever users.

Shopping behavior

Another characteristic of the user is shopping behavior. Bever users shop in four different ways: Click & Collect, Direct Sales, Store Order and Home Delivery (Figure 13). Bever users can decide to shop online or in store. In case of online shopping, products can be collected by the user instore (Click & Collect), or can be shipped to home (Direct Sales).

When shopping in store, products can be picked up in store (Store Order) or be shipped to home (Home Delivery). This research is primarily focussed on users who shop online, the yellow highlighted part of the axis (Figure 13).

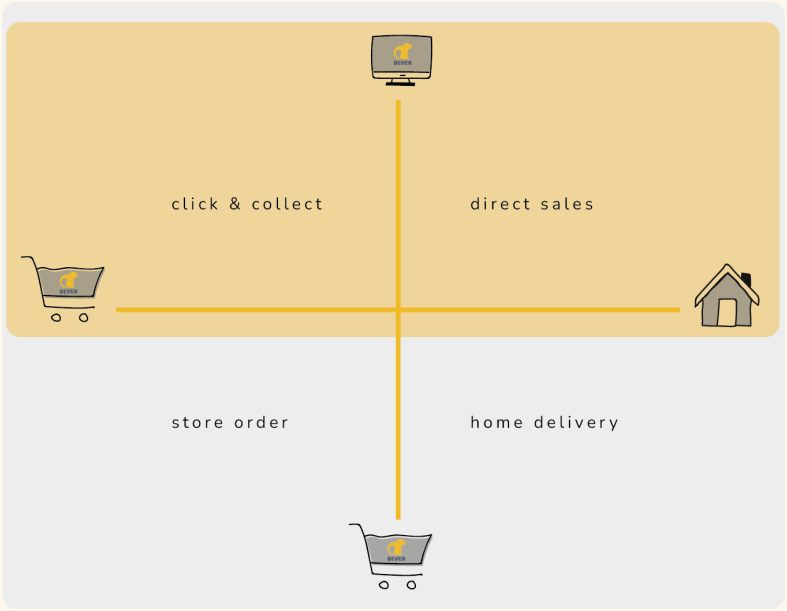


Figure 13: Shopping behavior of users.

Expert interviews

To dive deeper into the level of (product feature) expertise users have, eight semi-structured expert interviews were conducted with 'user experts': employees of Bever.

Research questions

The content of the interviews was focused on two main research questions. These research questions are: "What different types of Bever users are there regarding their expertise?" and "Is there a specific product group on which novice users need most support?". The full list of questions discussed during the interview can be found in Appendix 2. It was decided to start the interview in a broad way in order to later converge towards the novice user and support that the novice user needs.

Setup

Eight employees of Bever were selected to take part in the interviews. These employees can be divided into two different groups: employees who work for the user (e.g. UX-designer), and employees who work with the user (e.g. Customer Service). As can be seen in Figure 14, most interviews have been conducted with employees working online since the target group of this research is web customers and thus online focussed. Therefore it was also decided to exclude the top right quadrant, employees of the distribution center, from the interviews.

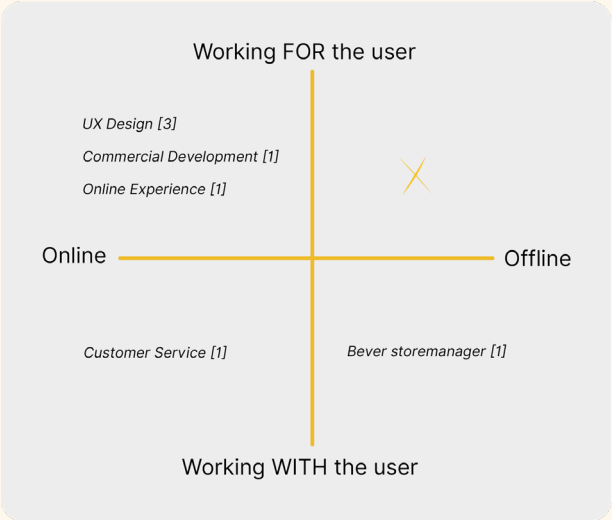


Figure 14: Eight expert interviews with Bever employees.

After the interviews were conducted, insights of each interview are written on digital post-its acting like statement cards (Appendix 2). These post-its were categorized on a horizontal axis with regards to a low to high level of expertise of a user (Figure 15).

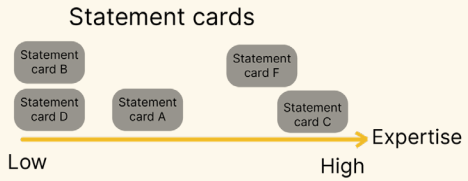


Figure 15: Statement cards being placed on the horizontal expertise axis.

Results

The insights from the interviews showed that three groups of users exist: novice, intermediate, and expert users. Furthermore, the interviews showed insights if there is a product group on which novice users need most support. The full overview of the insights gained during the interviews can be found in Appendix 2.

Novice user

A novice Bever user can best be described as a user who needs much guidance in the selection process because it is not clear where to start and what is needed (Figure 16). A novice user enters the conversation by mentioning the activity: "I will go hiking in the alps, which jacket do I need?". This results in Customer Service and shop employees asking many questions to create the context of the activity and what needs to be considered in order to present the product with the right features. However, technical product features will not be used in this conversation in order to prevent misunderstandings by the novice user. A novice user can interpret a technical feature in a wrong way which results in (untrue) assumptions.

For example, a user buys a waterproof (product feature) jacket for staying dry when cycling in the rain. This jacket is waterproof (product feature), but does not have fully taped seams which could result in the user getting wet (through the non taped seams) in a downpour.

Intermediate user

An intermediate Bever user can best be described as a user who has the ability to speak from previous experiences and therefore has some knowledge about products (Figure 17). This user already owns a product and wants to upgrade it to a higher performing product. Because of the experience with the activity this user speaks at a 'pre-feature' level. This user also knows which product features are important and should be focussed on. However, he does not know all the ins and outs of the specific features and its corresponding values. An intermediate Bever user enters the conversation by saying for example: "I will go hiking and am looking for a GoreTex jacket".

NOVICE USER

"I go hiking and am looking for a waterproof jacket"

Figure 16: A novice Bever user.

INTERMEDIATE USER

"I go hiking and am looking for a GoreTex jacket"

Figure 17: An intermediate Bever user.

Expert user

An expert Bever user can best be described as an outdoor fanatic who knows exactly which values for which features are required for his activity (Figure 18). An expert therefore speaks at a 'feature level'. Moreover, an expert understands how features strengthen and influence each other (for example, the influence of taped seams on a water column of a jacket). Also, an expert knows exactly what he wants, is very curious and reads many reviews about product features and specifications. At last, an expert can be defined as a real geek and one might say that even Bever could be too generic for this type of user (an expert might go to a specialized store for a specific item).

Figure 18: An expert Bever user.

Product groups with product features

The interviews showed that there is not one specific product group for which novice users need most support. However, product groups for which novice users need most support are product groups with (many) (technical) product features. When buying a fashion related item (e.g. a t-shirt) novice users are not in need of much support but when buying products like jackets, hiking shoes, tents, sleeping bags, backpacks etc., novice users are in need of much support.

Side results

Besides the insights gained about levels of expertise of users about products and context, several difficulties were mentioned that play an important role when shopping online: technical language, justification and the physical aspect of buying a product (Figure 19).

Technical language

The first insight is about speaking in technical language. When speaking about technical (electronic) devices users speak differently in terms of product features in comparison to speaking about wearables (e.g. shoes, clothing). For example, when speaking about a mobile phone a user can speak about product features like a long-lasting battery, a megapixel camera, storage space and so on. These product features all indicate aspects about technical performances and features of a product. When speaking about, for example, a jacket, it is more difficult for a novice user to express his thoughts and needs about a product regarding product features. This again indicates the blankness of novice users and the difficulty of their non-understanding of technical features.

Justification

Another difficulty which was mentioned, is that it can be hard for users (in general) to justify the difference in price between two products. It is difficult to discover and present what differentiates two products and whether corresponding features validate this difference in price.

Physical aspect

At last, both Customer Service and the Bever store mentioned that the physical part of a purchase is something very important for a user. Especially for some product categories in particular, like clothing and shoes, it is obviously important that the product should fit the user. This could even result in a user being reserved to buy online due to unmet expectations of the past about fit, look and feel (Zak, 2017).

Figure 19: Different difficulties mentioned by employees.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the difference in level of experience can be explained by two main factors: context and knowledge (Figure 20). Firstly, the difference can be explained by users who are able or unable to identify the context of the activity. Since a novice user is (relatively) new with the activity and or the product, he has little knowledge about what context factors are relevant to take into account regarding product features and choosing the right product.

Secondly, a difference between the level of experience can be seen by the existence or nonexistence of product (feature) knowledge. Considering that the novice user is (relatively) unfamiliar with the activity and has no prior knowledge about products and features he does not have sufficient clues on where to start and what to look out for.

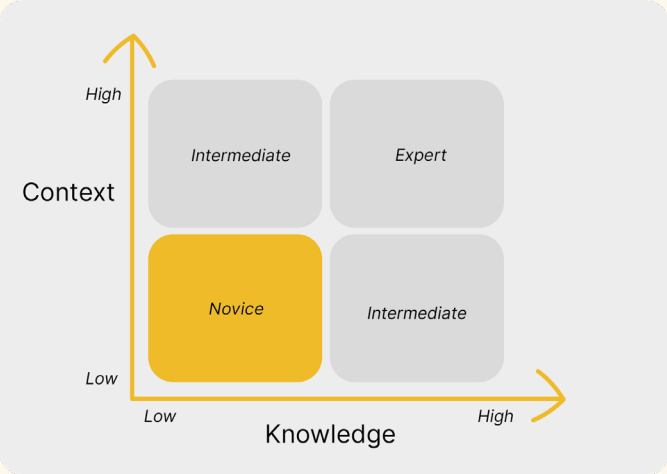


Figure 20: Context and knowledge differences between users.

Discussion

In this research interviews are conducted with employees of Bever working for or with users. The interviews were semi-structured interviews. It was decided to choose this approach to have room to adapt the order or question for the interviews since it was assumed every interviewee would mention different insights or answers, due to their different functions. This turned out to be a good approach.

Conclusions Chapter 3

[1] A webuser of Bever can be described with the following characteristics:

-25-55 years old
-male/female ratio +- 50/50
-online shopping via click & collect and direct sales

[2] During online shopping a novice user is in need of:

Guidance: Novice users need guidance regarding their unknown level of knowledge and their unknown level of context about the activity.

Support: Novice users need support regarding 'Where to start' and 'What to look for'.

Easy terms and language: Novice users need easy terms and language regarding their lack of product knowledge.

[3] Technical product features are being avoided in conversations with novice users. Novice users get a 'special treatment' by Customer Service and store employees. Technical product features are not mentioned to a novice user because this might lead to (untrue) expectations about the product since novice users do not speak at 'feature level'.

CHAPTER 4 - CUSTOMER SERVICE SUPPORTING THE NOVICE USER

CUSTOMER SERVICE SUPPORTING THE NOVICE USER

The previous chapter explored who the novice user is and what his needs are. This research project focuses on ensuring the right product to a novice user in online searches at Bever.nl. Customer Service uses the website when providing support to users. This chapter dives into what context of the adventure of a user needs to be determined in order for Customer Service to present the right product (or information) on the website to the user. With the word context the relevant aspects of the adventure of a user are meant.

The current situation

A user can shop at Bever's website in two different ways: with or without support by online store employees. When a user decides to use support, there are five different ways to do so (Figure 21). This chapter focuses on the two ways of a live interaction with the support of online store employees: via Customer Service (a phone call), and via the Chat function. It was decided to focus only on these ways of support because these interactive ways are considered most relevant for this research project. Also, they are most related to the concept directions in which the novice user 'immediately' wants to gain a selection of jackets (without waiting five days for a response to an email).

When a user interacts with an online store employee (Chat or Customer Service), the online store employee asks questions in order to get detailed information about the context of the activity of a user. This context is subsequently used in order to provide the user with the right product (or information) for the specific activity.

Figure 21: Different ways to get in touch with online store employees.

Research questions

Four research questions are studied about Customer Service: context, presentation, information and novice user.

Context: How is the context of the activity of the user questioned?
Presentation: How is the outcome (jacket, multiple jackets) presented?
Information: How is information regarding product features or products presented?
Novice user: How does the employee cope with a novice user?

Examples of questions related to these domains can be found in Appendix 3.

Setup

To explore the current situation with an online employee of Bever, three randomly chosen scenarios of a novice user in need of a jacket are used (Table 2). For scenario one and two the Chat function was used, and scenario three was used when contacting Customer Service (a phone call)(Table 2). It was chosen to do two scenarios for the Chat function since different employees were answering the Chat compared to the phone call with Customer Service. A situation with a mystery guest (my acting as a novice user) was done to ensure that the employee of Bever would interact with a novice user. This mystery guest was a novice user with no prior knowledge about features of jackets because it was crucial to evaluate the current situation for this scenario.

	Scenario		
A novice user in need of a jacket for:	**1** Hiking in Ireland in the end of August	**2** Hiking and cycling jacket for De Waddeneilanden in the beginning of September	**3** Hiking in Norway in the end of October
Way of interacting with the online store employee:	Chat	Chat	Customer Service

Table 2: Different scenarios with corresponding way of interacting with an online store employee.

Results

The research led to many insights regarding the above discussed questions. These insights will be discussed below. A detailed overview of the conversations with Customer Service and insights gained can be found in Appendix 3. Moreover, something remarkable about the interaction moments was the timespan before 'the outcome' was presented. The Chat function especially stood out and took respectively thirty and forty minutes for both scenarios. The phone call with Customer Service took twelve minutes. The long timespan of the Chat can be explained by the fact that the online store employees are chatting with multiple customers at the same time.

Context

Several questions were asked in order to determine the context of the activity for the chosen scenario. The questions asked can be categorized into three groups related to: activity, activity preferences and 'other preferences' (Figure 22). The order in which the questions were asked is from Activity to 'other' preferences, from left to right (Figure 22). It can be stated that at first the focus is on gaining information about the activity related to technical product features; stating the requirements of the outdoor jacket for the user. Secondly, the focus is on activity related feature preferences which could be seen as wishes for the user. At last, the focus has changed from activity related features and focuses to for example color and budget.

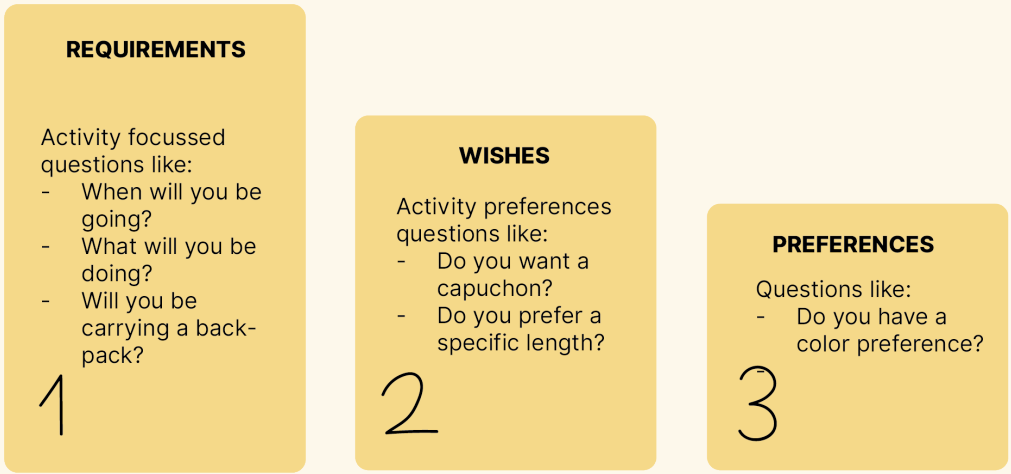


Figure 22: Asked questions by the online store employees about the context of the activity.

A difficulty was mentioned by an online store employee about the fact that many choices are personal preferences. For example, everyone experiences warmth and cold differently. As the employee quoted: "Someone uses a jacket with twenty degress and someone else prefers not to". However, the novice user has little prior knowledge about the activity or the product (Chapter 3) which could become a limitation when answering questions about preferences.

Presentation

The two Chat conversations were totally different in the way the employees presented what jacket to look for. In scenario 1 the employee mentioned that there was no need of buying a thick jacket (Table 3). This information was very general and without explanation of the word thick. In scenario two (Table 3) (the chat was conducted with another employee) the employee concluded it was the right choice to look for a waterproof jacket. Both of these ways of presentation are experienced in different ways by the mystery guest. In order to feel confident a convincing and trustworthy outcome is something the mystery guest needed. A novice user does not want to be lost, but needs to be convinced!

Furthermore, an insight was gained about the amount of products presented. With the Chat a website link was shared after the questions were asked. This website link consisted of many products (62+) in both scenarios. In this case the filters on the PLP still needed to be used in order to scale down the selection of products.

Information

In both Chat scenario's it was not mentioned what features the mystery guest needed to look for. Answering the questions asked by the employees led to receiving a PLP website link with filters being

Way of presentation	Possible experiences of the novice user
"If I would go I would not take a thick jacket"	Inaccurate General
"In your case I think a waterproof jacket will be the right choice"	Convincing Trustworthy Specific

Table 3: Different ways of presentation with possible experiences of the novice user.

prefilled showing a selection of products. When asking about the meaning of (technical) features a convincing and trustworthy answer was given. With Customer Service the interaction was different (instead of receiving a link the mystery guest was guided through the features on the PLP). Moreover, the fluency of the phone call interaction compared to the Chat made it easier for the mystery guest to ask questions about the features.

Novice user

The mystery guest found it very difficult to answer questions about preferences of unknown experiences or features without a given explanation. This happened multiple times in the interaction of scenario one and three. When the mystery guest asked about an explanation of the features it became doable to make choices.

Conclusion

With this research the earlier stated research questions are answered. First of all, the questions asked by Customer Service can be categorized in three sections: product feature requirements and wishes (related to the activity of the user) and 'other' preferences of the user. Furthermore, the way products (or features) are presented to the user differs from inaccurate and general to convincing, trustworthy and specific. Moreover, Customer Service Chat provides the user with a PLP-link with prefilled features. The Customer Service phone call guides the user through features on the PLP. At last, Customer Service does ask questions about (preferred) features which are difficult to answer for the novice user.

Discussion

This research studied employees of the Customer Service who were working at that specific moment of the day. The question is what effect this has on the generalizability of the results since this research was a snapshot. It is unknown for how long these employees have been working at Bever and how much experience they had in supporting users. For example, different employees might support users in another way or with other information.

Moreover, if, instead of a mystery guest, a novice user would have participated in this research the results perhaps would be different. The attention of a novice user would have been on finding a new product, and a novice user possibly would have been less focused answering the research questions. The focus of the mystery guest was to obtain information about the research questions. Therefore, the mystery guest was focussed on asking supplementary questions to the customer service. That is the reason why the researcher herself was the mystery guest.

Conclusions Chapter 4

[1] Customer Service uses a hierarchy in the questions asked to a user: from relevant product features to personal preferences of the user.

[2] When a final product selection is presented by Customer Service a user still needs to use the filters on the PLP.

[3] When a final product selection is presented by Customer Service, this list still exists of a big amount of products (+62).

[4] Preferences are very personal and could lead to difficulties when a novice user needs to answer questions about them.

[5] Answering questions about preferred features without mentioning the price of these features tells an incomplete story to a novice user.

[6] Presenting the selection of products in a convincing and trustworthy way is well received by novice users.

CHAPTER 5 - PRODUCT FEATURES IN CONTEXT OF AN ONLINE USER

PRODUCT FEATURES IN CONTEXT OF AN ONLINE USER

This part zooms in on product features within the context of a user. At first, product features at the website are empirically studied in this research. Moreover, the way the Product Content department deals with the wording and presentation of product features is explored. At last, product features in an interaction with a store employee are examined.

Product features at the website

On the websites of the brands of Yonderland, product features are shown at two different places. The first place a user is able to find product features is at the Product Listing Page (PLP), at the filter categories and filter values (Figure 23).

The PLP consists of a list of fifteen filter categories (in case of outdoor jackets). The first three filter categories are automatically 'unfolded' while the other categories need to be opened by the user in order to see the filter values (Figure 23). The filter categories that are automatically unfolded are: Jacket type (Jassen), Brand and Size. Also, at several filter categories a small information icon (i) can be seen (Figure 23).

When the button is pressed by the user more information will be shown about the filter values (Figure 23). It must be mentioned that not in all cases an explanation is shown about a filter value. For example, the filter category, Technical Features (Eigenschappen), does not show any explanation for all filter values, although an information (i) icon can be found for this filter category (Figure 23).

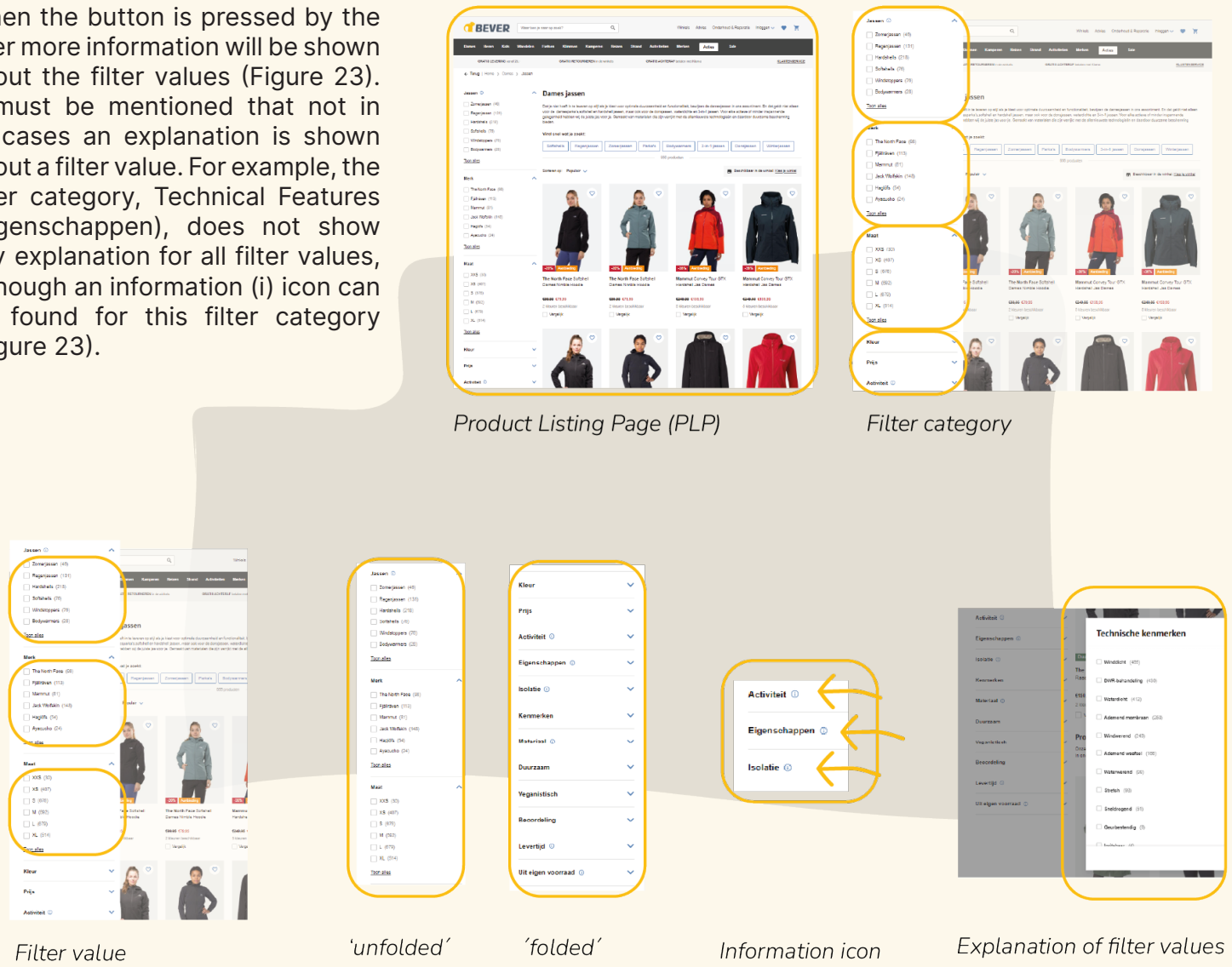
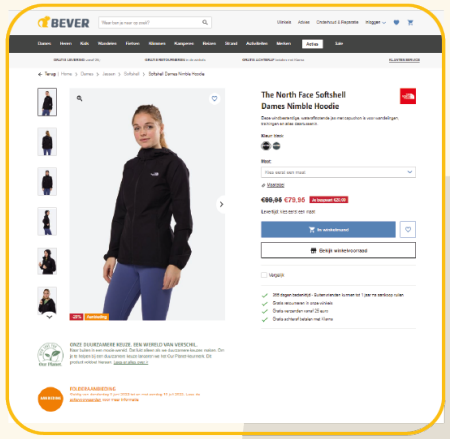


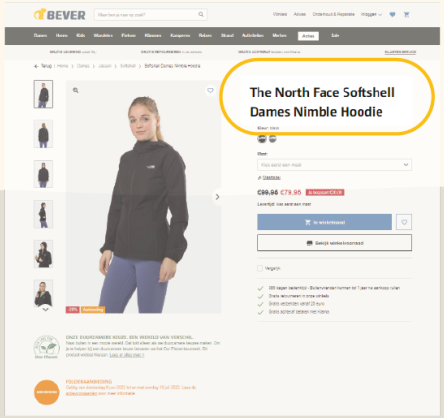
Figure 23: fITR: Product Listing Page, filter category, filter value, unfolded and folded filter categories, information icons and explanation of filter values.

After selecting a product on the PLP, a user is directed to a PDP (Figure 24). This is the second place where a user will see product features. The product features are displayed in the short web description, product description and product properties (Figure 24). However, it should be mentioned that it can differ which pages are shown during a website visit related to the user's way of navigation. This differs between entering the website via search-engine, advertisement, or going to the website itself.

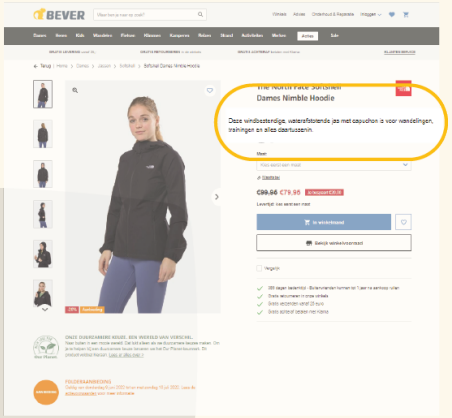
Both the product description and product properties consist of underlined words. In case a word (feature) is underlined, an explanation of a feature or value can be found if the user clicks on the underlined word (Figure 24). Compared to the product description, the product properties provide the user with a more detailed overview of product features. A remark should be made that in some cases an important and useful aspect of a product is not included in the product properties, but only mentioned in the product properties, but only mentioned in the product description because it is not considered a feature (e.g. for example the thickness of a fabric can only be found in the product description). Since it is not considered a feature it cannot be seen on the PLP as a filter value which means that a user cannot search for it there.



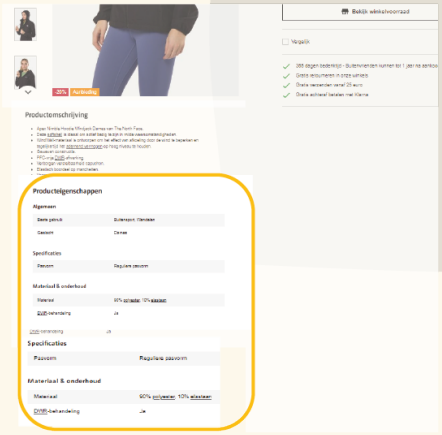
Product Detail Page (PDP)



Product title



Short web description



Product properties

Underlined words

Explanation of a feature

Figure 24: fITR: Product Detail Page, short web description, product description, product properties, underlined words and the explanation of a feature.

Product Content

The Product Content department is responsible for providing the written information about products on the PDP. This subchapter discusses the way this product information is presented and written.

Textual presentation of features

Both the short web description and product description textually present features of the product. The short web description consists of one sentence functioning as a summary or explanation of the product. The product description consists of multiple sentences. Currently, the product description consists of sentences structured in bullet points (Figure 25). In this way the user is able to read faster, compared to a (long) paragraph how it was previously structured. Another recent improvement made on the website is to start the bullet sentences with a bold accented subject (this improvement is applied on limited product categories) (Figure 25). This is done to enable users to find the right information easily because of the accented words that draw the users' attention. Also, within a product category the same structure is used for the product description which enables users to compare products easily.

Figure 25: Product description over time.

Easy to understand?

According to Product Content, all text on the website is written in easy to understand terms but the used language focuses on 'everyone', since 'Iedereen is een buitenmens' (everyone is an outdoor person). Also, the product description is meant to be written in the same way a user will be helped in the stores by employees. Questions like "What are you going to do?", "When are you planning to do this?" and "What are your expectations?" are answered in the product description to support the user in the right selection of a product. In this way both product features and other relevant aspects are shown to the user on the website. However, in some cases Product Content deals differently with product information. As mentioned above, it is preferred to show simple text on the PDP. Unfortunately, occasionally, information from a supplier is presented, resulting in text using difficult terms and not being easily understood (even by Product Content). For example, this description can be found for a hiking shoe: "Combining an ultra-light yet supportive footplate, midsole rocker geometry and SurfaceCTRL™ grip, our new VECTIV™ technology is designed to maximize energy wherever you explore" (Figure 26). Although Bever knows this sentence complicated and could be difficult to understand, it is still presented because this information could be useful for someone. Moreover, if a supplier presents it this way on their website, Bever wants to present it that way too although Bever is free to present it the way they prefer.

Figure 26: Website of Bever (top) and website of the supplier (The North Face) (bottom).

Bever being honest

Besides explaining the product, its features and corresponding information in the product description, Bever also focuses (recently started) on integrating two other aspects in the description: highlighting negative aspects of a product and presenting an alternative product. Negative aspects are considered important because Bever wants to be honest to the user and inform the user with this information before buying the product. Showing negative aspects of a product is something hardly done at supplier websites. However, it must be said that since the information is part of the product description, but not specifically stands out in the written text, it is not always clear to the user that a negative aspect is mentioned. Moreover, Bever focuses on presenting the user an alternative product. This is done in case the shown product might not be the right product for the activity of the user. For example, a waterproof shoe might not be the fit for the purpose of using it for a summer walk. This is due to the high temperatures in the summer causing sweaty feet. Therefore an alternative shoe that is not waterproof will be recommended in the product description.

Users don't read

At last, it was mentioned by Product Content that the product description is (mostly) not read by users. "Even if I write the perfect product description, I'm afraid people will not read it", states a colleague from Product Content. "Users do not feel like reading". Product Content describes the ultimate user as someone who wants to know all about a product and does not want to go to another website. An example showing that the product description is not being read can be found in the review section where users can give (positive and negative) feedback about the recently bought product. For example, a user mentioned in a review that a jacket was very thin and that he wasn't happy with the product because of this. However, this information was mentioned in the product description and the user could have known this before buying the product.

Conclusions Chapter 5

[1] Product Content uses easy to understand language and terms and all information is meant to be understood by everyone.

[2] In some situations complex information is deliberately chosen to be present on a PDP because Bever wants to present the same information as a supplier does.

[3] Bever wants to be honest towards users and therefore two other aspects can be found in a product description: a negative aspect and an alternative product.

[4] Product Content is aware that product descriptions are mostly not being read by users.

CHAPTER 6 - PRODUCT BENEFITS

PRODUCT BENEFITS

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Novice user), Customer Service and store employees focus on product benefits when presenting a product to novice users. This chapter explores product benefits, shows the difference between product features and product benefits and introduces the Consumer Benefit Ladder. The last is done to explore the decision making process and to study possible elements that might be necessary to let users emotionally connect to products online, in a comparable or varied way as currently possible in stores.

What is a product benefit?

Product features and product benefits can be seen as related but yet different terms. As previously discussed (Chapter 2), product features specify a product's characteristics and capabilities. Thus, product features show the user plain facts about what a product can do.

Product benefits are intended benefits that manufacturers design into a product which can be perceived, appreciated and used by the customer (Lei 1995). To understand product benefits it is necessary to understand that a product is more than just these plain facts, more than the product at its core (Rushton & Carson, 1985). Product benefits is the total offer made to the customer consisting of tangible and intangible elements (Rushton & Carson, 1985). For example, buying a jacket results in buying the tangible object the jacket. Furthermore it results in among other things buying the intangible element protection (to certain weather conditions) by means of for example waterproof material (product feature) and taped seams (product feature). Even the way people screen product information is related to the product benefits they are seeking in a product (Ratneshwar et al., 1997). Therefore, it is also the case that the main focus of marketing is not on features of a product, but on product benefits because it is believed that this is what attracts customers (Rushton & Carson, 1985). Another reason why product benefits are of great importance is because they are related to the value a user realizes from a product. Day (1990) (as cited in Lai, 1995) discussed the value equation which goes as follows:

$$\frac{\textit{customers perceived benefits}}{\textit{customers perceived costs}} = \textbf{perceived customer value}$$

The equation shows that the perceived benefit needs to be understood in order for a user to obtain the value of a product, since the cost of a product is in most scenarios assumed to be a fact. A limitation arises if a user cannot connect product features to product benefits. This could result in a user not understanding why to buy a particular product over another since the perceived value of both products is not identified. Also, according to most strategists, customer value creation is of fundamental importance for a company competing in the market (Lei 1995). As will be discussed in Chapter 8, user research showed insights on unclarity of product features on the current website of Bever. It can be concluded that, especially for novice users, in the case of technical product features, product benefits need to be explicitly mentioned in an understandable way in order to let users realize the value of a product.

Consumer Benefits Ladder

The assumption that people decide exclusively based on rational criteria gives too little credit to the possibility of decisions being influenced by unconscious thoughts and intuition (Maynard & Mertens, 1993, as cited in Burciu & Hapenciuc, 2010). According to Magids et al. (2015), companies know that emotions drive customer behavior.

So how are emotions linked to product features? Product features, benefits and emotions come together in the Consumer Benefit Ladder (Figure 27). The Consumer Benefits Ladder is a tool to uncover what value a product might offer to users (Moore, 2009). The idea of the ladder links to the concept of laddering in psychology. Laddering is a technique used to uncover the underlying reason of people's behavior, more than the obvious or socially acceptable reasons (Moore, 2009). The ladder metaphor is related to climbing steps on a ladder to get closer to the goal; in this case the uncovering of a product's value (Moore, 2009). The Consumer Benefit Ladder is correctly referred to as the Hierarchical Value Map (Moore, 2009).

The Hierarchical Value map displays linkages between product attributes, the consequences of usage and the subsequently important values (Leppard et al., 2004). Both the Ladder and the Value map are focussed on several stages and steps leading to reaching the same goal: uncovering value!

The ladder categorizes benefits into four different types: Product Availability, Product Features, Functional Benefits and Emotional Benefits (Figure 27).

Product Availability
This is the first rung of the ladder and focuses on making people understand what the product is and how they can get it (Bridges, 2021).

Product Features
The second rung of the ladder is concentrated on product features (as discussed in Chapter 2).

Functional Benefits
The third rung of the ladder focusses on product benefits (as discussed in Chapter 6).

Emotional Benefits
The last rung of the ladder is directed to a user's emotions rather than the product (Bridges, 2021). An example of emotional benefit that a user can feel is 'provides peace of mind' or 'gives you confidence' (Bridges, 2021).

As discussed before, a limitation arises if a user cannot connect product features to product benefits. This results in a user being unable to understand why to buy a particular product over another. This is an important element to improve online since it must be clear to a user what value a product will bring. Subsequently, if the third rung of the ladder is not being reached, a user is unable to identify emotional benefits while these play a crucial part in the decision making process. This highlights even more the crucial influence of product benefits being displayed.

Figure 27: Consumer Benefits Ladder.

Store versus web store

When studying two different scenarios of a user: visiting the store or the webstore (of Bever) a difference can be seen in the rungs of the ladder which the novice user reaches. In the store, a novice user gets introduced to product benefits (functional benefits) by means of a store employee. As discussed in Chapter 3, product features are avoided in this conversation but product benefits (functional benefits) are mentioned. This subsequently can lead to the third rung of the ladder, emotional benefits, being reached (Figure 28). Speaking about the third rung, there are two more aspects which contribute to emotional benefits in the store. The first is the fact that a user can interact with a product (touch, feel and try), which is assumed to make associations leading to emotional benefits regarding the product. The second aspect contributing to the decision making process is the creation of store atmospherics (Porat & Tractinsky, 2012).

In the webstore product features are displayed on the PLP and PDP. This results in a user being unable to identify product benefits which subsequently lead to emotional benefits (the third rung of the ladder). Moreover, a main concern related to online shopping is that consumers cannot feel, touch and try products (Porat & Tractinsky, 2012). This highlights the importance of compensating this lack of information online by for example providing context of use about the product (as will be discussed in Chapter 7).

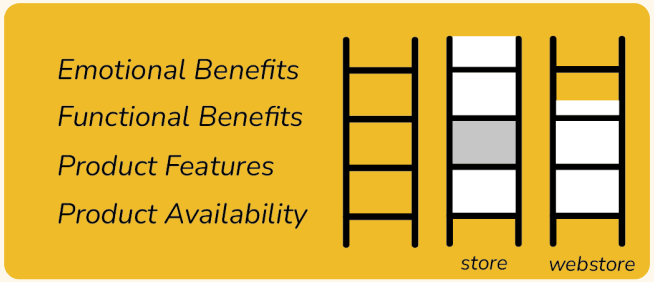


Figure 28: Consumer Benefits Ladder for store and webstore.

Conclusions Chapter 6

[1] Product benefits describe the value of a product to the user and answers the question: ‘What’s in it for me’?.

[2] Bever should focus on explaining product features with a product benefit otherwise a novice user does not understand product features.

[3] Emotional benefits regarding products are currently not reached when a novice user shops online.

[4] A majority of decisions are driven by emotions. This is crucial information for Bever to keep in mind.

CHAPTER 7 - COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

In this chapter eCommerce webshops are studied as inspiration and exploration for (ways of) dealing with product features. Both the outdoor domain, and the overall eCommerce have been examined regarding explanation and ways of handling information about product features.

Research questions

This study focussed on one main question: "How do other eCommerce webshops deal with product features?".

Within the this question five different aspects are looked at:

Explanation of product features
(e.g. Are features explained?, How are features explained (visually, written text)?, Is it clear that features are explained (clear usecue where the user needs to click)?
Language
(e.g. Are easy terms used?)
User
(e.g. Is the focus on the expert user or the novice user?, Is the context of the product and its use given (e.g. imagery of the product in action)?, Are (many) features shown?, Is (much) explanation given?
Expertise
(e.g. Is there a possibility to dive deeper into explanation and product features? (blogs)?, Is it clear where to find expertise on a website?, How is a user guided into a new product category?)
Other
(Is there anything remarkable?)

Setup

Fifteen (both national and international) outdoor competitors have been studied for the product category outdoor (rain-)jackets (see Appendix 4). At all the webshops, two pages have been examined: the PLP and the PDP (of a randomly chosen jacket).

Besides these outdoor competitors, other webshops have also been studied. Since the outdoors can also be seen as a hobby of a user, the following question arose: 'What are outdoor (rain-)jackets of other (non outdoor) companies?'. In order words: 'What is a high traffic product eCommerce webshops most likely pay attention to?'. Ten companies have been studied, active in different domains, from kitchen appliances to plants, and two cases of specialized outdoor (wetsuits and bikes). An overview of the fields of the companies can be found in Appendix 4.

To visualize possible differences of competitors regarding 'dealing with product features', the outcome is mapped on a scale from novice to expert (Figure 29). If a competitor is located in the novice bubble this means that explanation (and a value) of product features (in some way) is given, and therefore useful for both novice, intermediate and expert users. If a competitor is located in the expert bubble of the scale this means that values of product features are given rather than an explanation. If a competitor is located in the intermediate bubble, the information is useful for both intermediate and expert users.

Besides this horizontal scale, as a next step, two axes are created to indicate differences between the studied companies. The first axis is about (low to high) imagery of the explanation of product features. For example, product features being explained using imagery or using (long paragraphs of) text.

The second axis studied is focussed on the context of use of a product (low to high). The concept context of use is studied because this can also provide information to the user about a product (and its features). For example, showing context by means of a user interacting with a product versus a product picture of only the product (and no model wearing it). Furthermore, a downside of online shopping is that a user cannot touch and feel the product (Zak, 2017). According to Skrovan (2017), seeing, touching and feeling products ranks highest among reasons why users choose shopping in stores over online. Thus, there is room for improvement in eCommerce regarding ways of product display, product description and Customer Service interaction (Skrovan, 2017). Therefore it is decided to study how the competition deals with the context of a product.

Figure 29: Scale from novice to expert.

Results - outdoor domain webshops

The overview of the competitors is visualized in Figure 30. The position of Bever can be found in the Novice part which means that Bever serves both the novice, intermediate and expert users (Figure 30). This is because product features are explained on the Bever website. It can be seen that a majority of the studied competitors do not explain product features at all (Figure 30). In case of explanation of product features, this explanation can be found either on the PDP (Figure 31), or even on another webpage to where the user is redirected from the PDP (after clicking on a product feature). This might indicate the complexity of explanation of product features and the fact that much context is needed in order to explain a product feature.

Product feature explanation on the PLP was rarely found. However, a difference in the amount of product features (filter categories and values) was seen on the PLP, from a rather superficial product feature selection (e.g. color), to a more extensive product feature selection (e.g. insulation). Also, ways of simplification have been found on the PLP regarding product features. The simplification was executed either focussed on easy terms or ways of simplification using ratings (Figure 32). But again, no explanation was found about the meaning of the product feature (and the meaning of the filter values) on the PDP.

Figure 30: Competitors mapped out from novice to expert oriented.

Figure 32: Ways of simplification (Futurmshop, 2022).

Figure 31: Explanation of product features on the PDP (Ridestore, 2022).

Imagery
It can be seen that almost all companies explain product features written and non visually (Figure 33). In two cases product features were explained using imagery, in the other cases it was done by using (long paragraphs of) text (Appendix 4).

Context of use
Most companies provide little to no context about the product (Figure 33). In most cases product pictures are taken in a photo studio (with or without a model) instead of a real life context experience. In some cases, beside the model wearing the product, product details are shown and provide extra information about features. The position of Bever can be found in the middle of the axis. On the one hand Bever displays product pictures with a model wearing an outfit related to the context of use, or shows details of the product, and on the other hand Bever shows products with only product pictures providing very limited context (Figure 33).

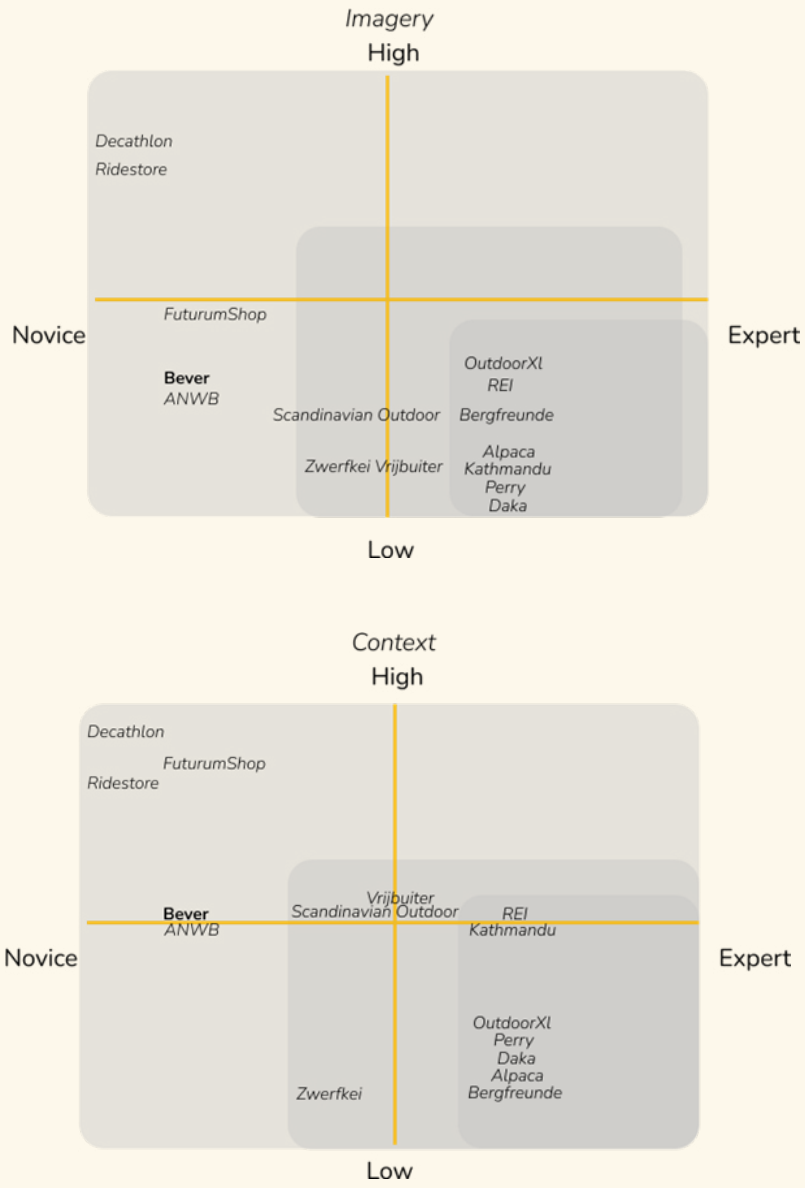


Figure 33: Competitors Imagery and Context axis.

Conclusion - outdoor domain webshops

To conclude, in general the focus on explanation of product features is limited. In case of explanation of product features, this is mostly done in a textual way within the studied eCommerce domain. Currently, Bever does focus on both the novice and the expert user, explaining product features, but in text only. Also, products are mostly statically displayed, with (a model wearing) a product.

Results - 'general' domain webshops

This time, when mapping out the companies a focus more towards aiming at both the novice and expert user can be found (Figure 34). Even so, instead of solely providing an explanation of product features, it was remarkable that enabling the user with support and guidance during the online process was seen. For example, a keuzehulp (Product Finder) was a rather implicit tool to be presented on the PLP (Figure 35).

Another aspect which contributed to more companies being in the novice 'bubble' was a difference in language and easy terms used. Some domains, for example gardening, use words that are very familiar which make it easier for a novice user to understand the product features since no jargon is used. For example: 'Will you be placing your plant in the shade or in the sun?". Also, the context of the gardening domain is familiar to many users (e.g. growing plant, green plant, green thumb, hangplant).

The focus of this study was on explanation of product features. Besides an explanation of a product feature, at Knives and Tools an explanation of the retrieval of the value of a product feature was explained: "De hardheid in Rockwell C van een mes is altijd naar opgave van de fabrikant. Wanneer een fabrikant een waarde van bijvoorbeeld 56-58HRC opgeeft noteren wij altijd de hoogste waarde, dus 58HRC." (Knives and Tools, 2022).

Furthermore, something seen at several websites was a brief summary of the product and its most important features. This could probably support the user in obtaining a quick view of the product and its use (Figure 36).

Figure 34: Competitors mapped out from novice to expert oriented.

Figure 35: Keuzehulp at the PLP (Intratuin, 2022).

Figure 36: Product summary (Tennisdirect, 2022).

Imagery
Almost all companies explain product features written and non visually, like Bever does (Figure 37)(Appendix 4). Moreover, at two webshops, visualization of filter categories at the PLP was seen supporting the user in the selection process (Figure 37).

Context of use
As visualized in Figure 37, all companies are distributed over the axis. Two companies in particular provide the user with a high context of use. One of them, SRFACE (a wetsuit brand), provides much information about context of use on the PDP (Appendix 4). Moreover, it supports the user in selecting the right thickness of a wetsuit for his context of use (Figure 37). Previously, the Keuzehulp (Product Finder) on the PLP was discussed. This tool shows the user several options about the right product after answering a few questions. In the scenario of SURFACE, a user selects a product and then needs to decide which thickness is the right one for his activity and this question is answered by SRFACE with its Keuzehulp.

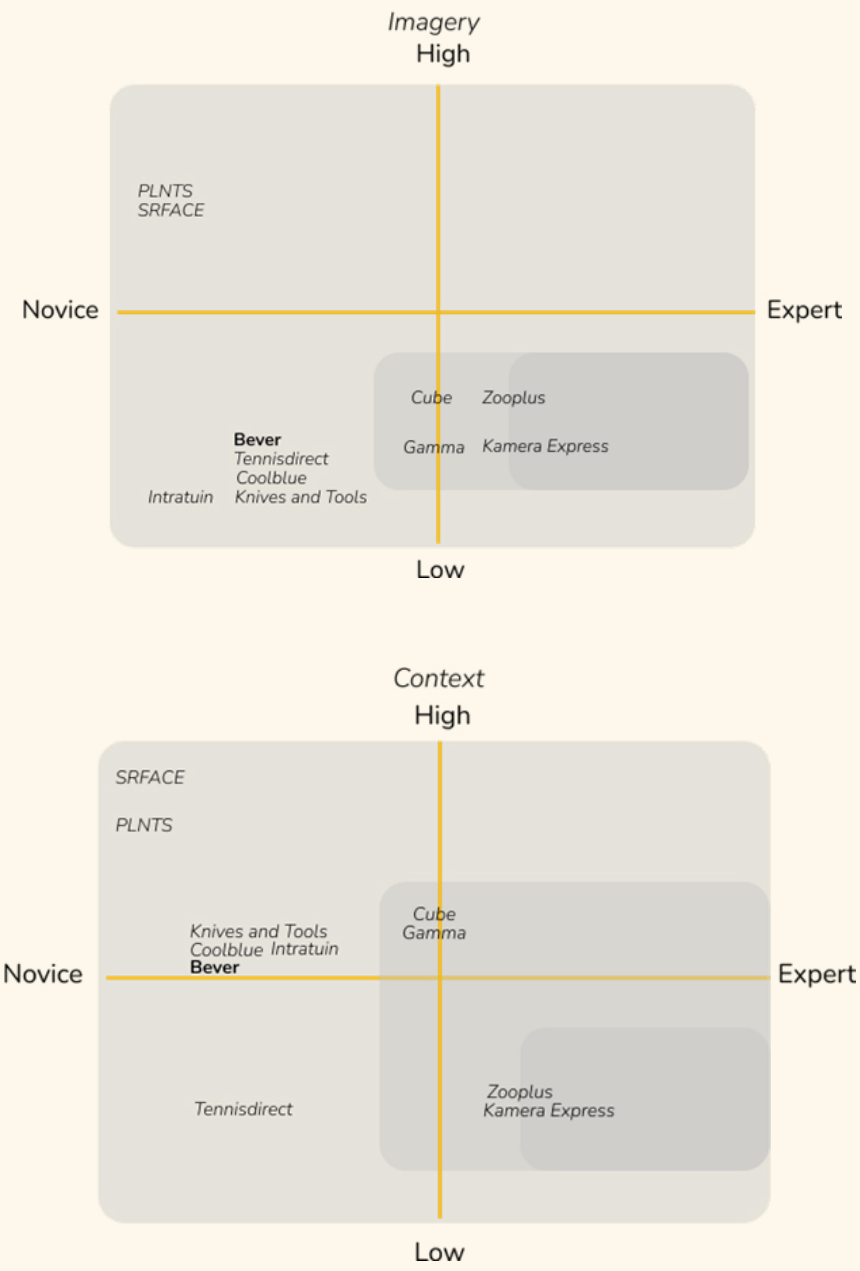


Figure 37: Competitors Imagery and Context axis.

Conclusion - 'general' domain webshops

To conclude, the focus on explanation of product features could be seen within the studied domain. Even examples of guidance were present at many websites, with a Keuzehulp providing the user with a selection of suitable products for his needs. Moreover, as discussed previously, in Chapter 5, Product Content considers honesty important and therefore describes an alternative and negative aspect of a product. Regarding product features values, an improvement could be made discussing the origin of the value.

Overall conclusion

An improvement can be made for Bever, moving upwards the vertical axis and explaining product features (and displaying product features and information) more visually (Figure 38). Moreover, Bever can improve its position regarding presenting information about the context of use towards the user (Figure 38).

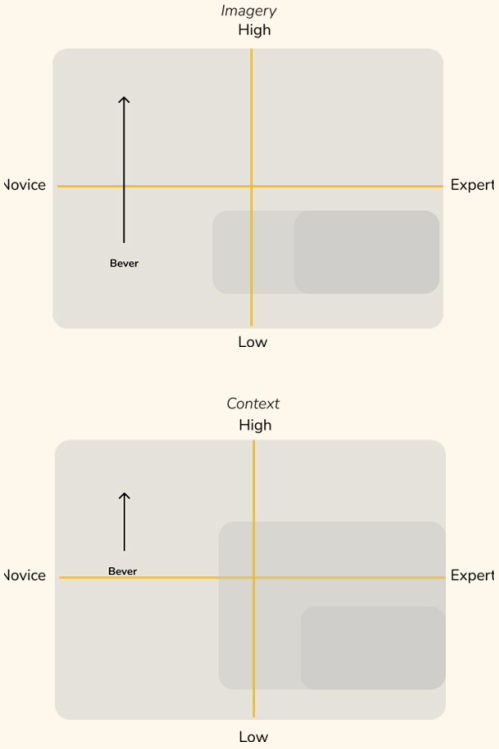


Figure 38: The new position of Bever on the Imagery and Context axis.

Discussion

The study of the competitors of *the outdoor domain* resulted in a slightly incomplete comparison. Several competitors are smaller companies and it is therefore assumed that there is less attention and focus for matters like (novice user) explanation, imagery and context of use. The competitors studied in *the general domain* were randomly chosen from different fields. For further research different competitors can be studied to possibly gain other insights for inspiration or comparison.

Conclusions Chapter 7

[1] Bever should present product features more visually.

[2] Bever should present more context of use on a PDP to provide the user with information about the product.

[3] In order to be honest to the user, Bever should explain how a value of a product feature is retrieved.

[4] Bever should explore ways of simplification in order to keep the language easy and understandable.

[5] Bever should explore ways of summarizing a product.

CHAPTER 8 - ONLINE BEHAVIOR OF USERS

ONLINE BEHAVIOR OF USERS

To gain global insights into web behavior of users, a user research is set up. This research focuses on two aspects: how a user makes choices and how a user navigates online.This research aims to validate several assumptions about novice users regarding choices, thoughts and (corresponding) navigation behavior when searching for a product.

Research questions

The user research focuses on four research questions. Two research questions focus on choices and corresponding behavior, and two research questions are concentrated on navigation (Figure 39). The research questions can be found in Figure 39 and the corresponding assumptions can be found in Appendix 5.

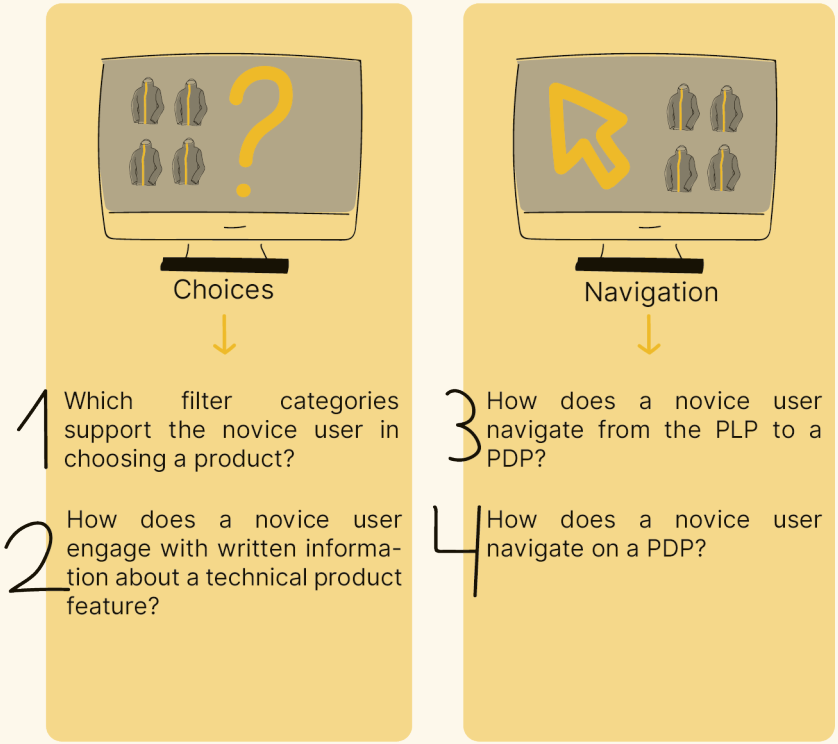


Figure 39: Research questions about choices and navigation of novice users.

Setup

To validate the research questions the participant is given a web-navigation task followed by an interview. The participant is given the task to find a new jacket for a chosen activity. To make the scenario most realistic the participant is asked what he does in his spare time or for which activity he might be in need of a new jacket. In case the participant is not able to come up with an activity on his own, he will be asked to find a new ski or snowboard jacket.

The task starts at the jacket PLP on Bever.nl. The task ends when the participant decides to put the preferred jacket in the shopping basket. The participant is asked to think-aloud (and do-aloud) during the task. The mentioned thoughts and actions of the participant will be questioned (e.g. “I see you doing ...., why do you do this?”). Also, the web-navigation will be recorded to be able to observe the actions later.

After the task is completed, the interview takes place. The interview is focused on three themes: filter categories, (engagement with) product feature explanation and navigation. All questions discussed in the interview can be found in Appendix 5.

Results

Six participants took part in the user research varying in gender and in age, from 21 years to 62 years old. All research questions will be discussed below and transcripts of the user research can be found in Appendix 5.

Research question 1: Which filter categories support the novice user in choosing a product?

There are two assumptions made about how users would make use of the filter categories: novice users would rather use superficial filter categories or users might have a focus on (one) technical product feature of a filter category (Appendix 5). The observations of the research showed that the most used selection criteria were the filter categories: Jacket type, Size and Price (6/6, 6/6, 5/6 participants) (Figure 40). It can therefore be concluded that a novice user starts the selection process by using the more superficial categories. If a user did use more categories the categories Activity and Color were used (3/6 participants)(Figure 40). If a user would use even more filter categories the filter category Features en Characteristics were used (1/6 participants)(Figure 40).

Research question 2: How does a novice user engage with written information about a technical product feature?

Several insights were obtained about the engagement of a novice user with technical product features. First of all, the observations of the user research showed that novice users read the product feature explanation. In fact, the lack of product feature explanation on the PLP was perceived as a great shortcoming during the selection process of the filter categories. This caused confusion for the users about the product features because no information was provided (Figure 41). This stands in contrast to the PDP page, where there was an explanation of too much text to read according to a user (Figure 41).

Moreover, insights were found about the content of the product feature explanation. This information was considered limited since it does not provide the user with an extensive and understandable explanation if the product is the right fit for the chosen activity (Figure 41). Also, the explanation does not provide the user with a reference scale when discussing values (Figure 41). Furthermore, novice users felt a bit lost, because it was unclear how to interpret the product feature explanation to specific information for their activity (Figure 41). To escape this feeling of being lost, several users tried different keywords in the search bar. Unfortunately this did not result in a relevant explanation, because the used search bar did not direct t users to a web page with an explanation of the typed features. Instead it showed the user products with the corresponding features types in the search bar.

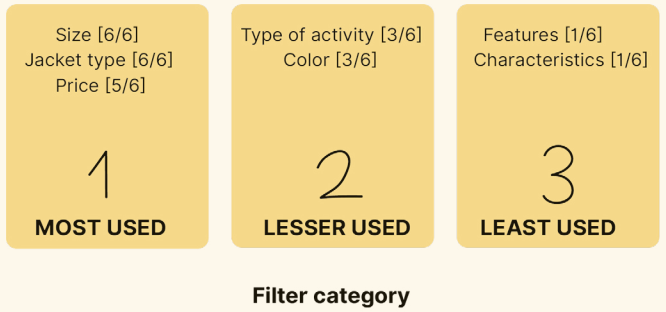


Figure 40: Most and least used filter categories.

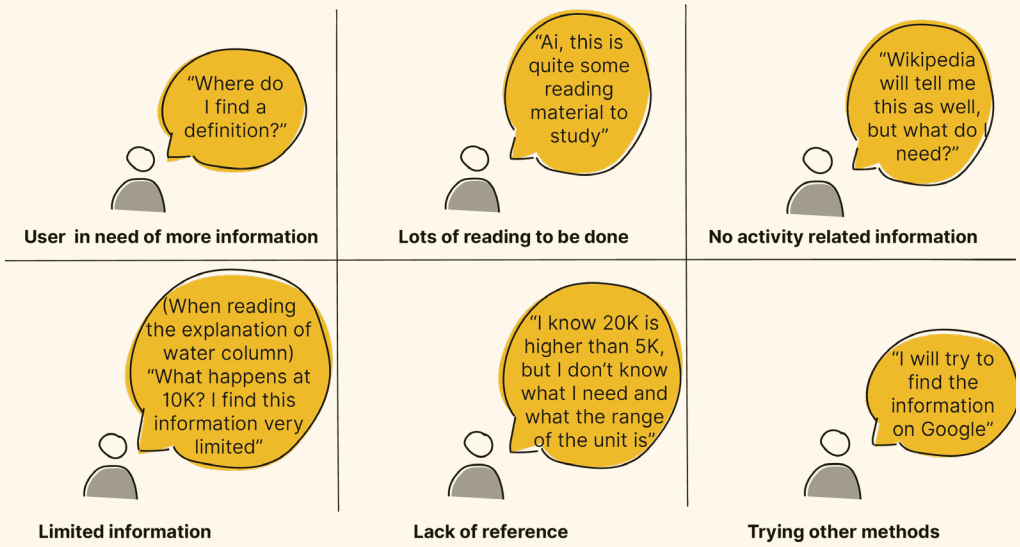


Figure 41: Engagement of a novice user with written information about product features.

Research question 3: How does a novice user navigate from the PLP to a PDP?

Several assumptions were made regarding the navigation behavior of users: ranging from a user making random product choices, to filter categories being used extensively when going from the PLP to a PDP (Appendix 5). The conducted research demonstrates that every user has his own way of navigating and thus differs a lot between users (Figure 42).

When the users were navigating across different PDP's, several types of users were seen. Again, it was seen that every user has his own way of online comparisons of products (Figure 43).

Moreover, two insights were obtained during the research. The first insight shows a limitation when using the filter categories. In some cases a product will not be shown after a specific filter value is selected although the product has the specific feature value. This happens due to product features being presented in the product description but not the product properties. This results in the user unconsciously filtering out products (if many filter categories are being used). The other insight shows the trust in Bever's product selection shown at the PLP. It was mentioned by a participant that all products shown at the PLP after selecting a jacket type, will be good products for the specific activity: "I trust Bever showing me only a good selection of jackets, so I can select on color.". This could possibly result in users making wrong product decisions.

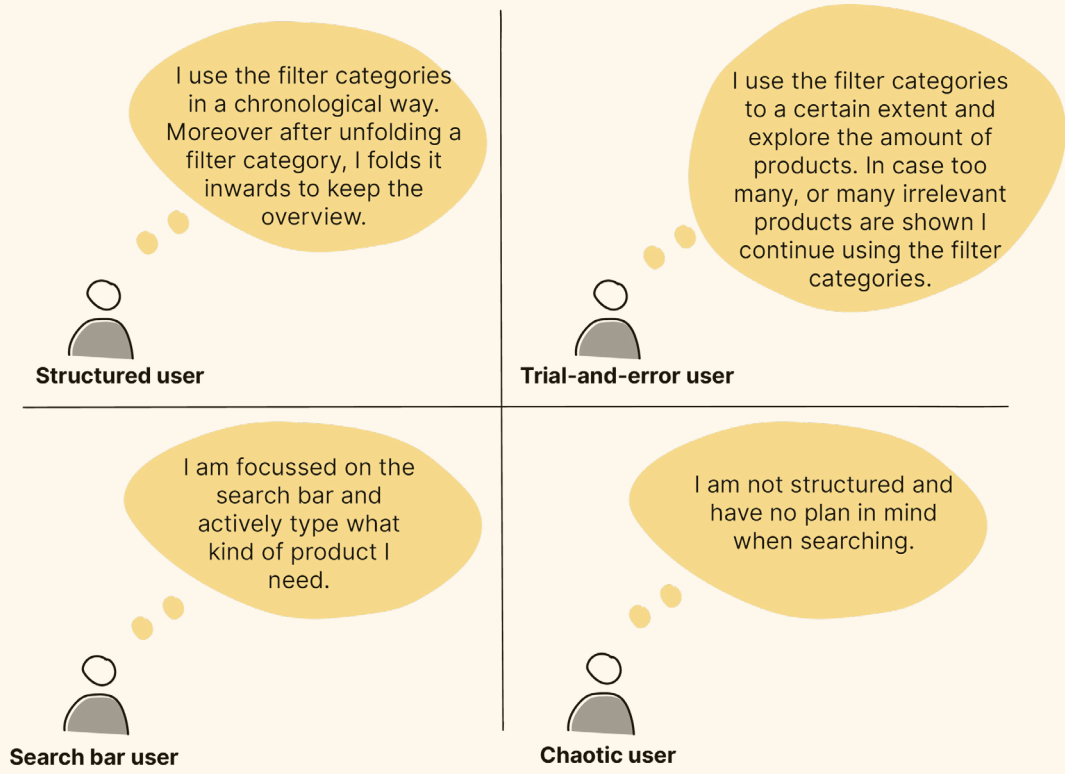


Figure 42: Different types of users regarding navigation.

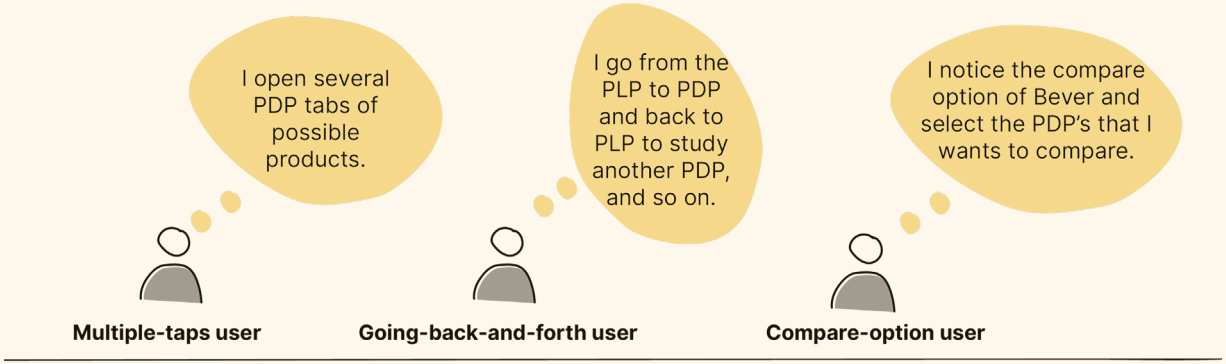


Figure 43: Different types of users regarding comparisons.

Research question 4: How does a novice user navigate on a PDP?

There are two assumptions made regarding the scenario of how a user would navigate on a PDP (Appendix 5). It was assumed that users would only glance at the product description and product properties, or that users would be more focussed on product pictures instead of the product description and product properties. The observations and the interviews showed that product pictures have a very crucial role in the decision making process. They provide much information about the product and a user is very focussed on them. As a user quoted: "This product does not have a model wearing the product so I don't know what it will look like compared to another jacket where a model is wearing the jacket". In case a product was presented without a model wearing the product, users did not consider this product useful because crucial information was missing. Moreover, users also did consider the product description and product properties. However, due to the inconsistency it was sometimes difficult for users to compare different products equally, due to different ways of presenting features and different amounts of product features.

Conclusion

This user research showed many insights into the online behavior of users. First of all, it can be concluded that novice users use the most superficial filter categories on a PLP (Jacket type, Price and Size). Secondly, a few limitations are found for the engagement of novice users with product features. Product features are not always explained on the PLP which leads to unclarity for novice users. In case of explanation of features this is limited and with a lack of reference (values). Moreover, it is unclear for users how to interpret the values of product features with regard to their activity and this process requires lots of reading. Thirdly, the participants showed different behavior with respect to online navigation and product comparisons. It can be concluded that every user has his own preferences for an online product search. At last, product pictures play an important role in the decision making process since they provide the user with information about a product. For example, when a product was not presented with a model wearing the product users did not consider this product useful because crucial information was missing.

Discussion

This research has explored the online behavior of novice users at Bever.nl. The participants in this research were not actually buying a new jacket themselves but took part in a fictional task. However, all participants have taken the task seriously when considering their new jacket which took them around sixteen to twenty-four minutes. Possibly, the participants were extra critical because they took part in a research. This resulted in many limitations that were found at Bever.nl that should be improved for novice users towards their journey to find their right jacket online.

Conclusions Chapter 8

[1] The most used filter categories are the superficial product features: Jacket type, Size and Price.

[2] Too little product feature explanation is presented on the PLP.

[3] The product feature explanation on the PDP is limited, not specific enough, does not provide the user with a range (in case of values) and consists of lots of text.

[4] Every user has his own way of navigating and his own way of comparing PDPs.

[5] Product pictures play an important role in the decision making process since they provide the user with information about a product.

CHAPTER 9 - EMOTIONS DURING A WEBSITE VISIT

EMOTIONS DURING A WEBSITE VISIT

This chapter explores the underlying emotions of a novice user during a website visit, by means of a user research. The goal of this research is to explore insights into how a novice user envisions interaction with product features (indirectly). These insights will be used to create an interaction vision for the design phase (Chapter 10).

Emotions during the online journey

The online journey of a user shopping at Bever can be divided into several phases, starting with a user's need all the way to the checkout when ordering a product online (Mangiaracina et al., 2009). To see and understand, within these phases, the actual experience from a user perspective, Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) is used (Marquez et al., 2015). CJM is a way to elicit emotional responses of users towards products, goods and services (Crosier & Handford, 2012). The emotions of a user during their journey will be plotted, resulting in 'high emotions' and 'low emotions' to pinpoint where change is needed (Crosier & Handford, 2012). Thus, in this user research mapping is used to provide a user-centric emotional view on the website (the service).

Research questions

The focus of this user research is on two phases of the online journey: the orienting phase and the choosing phase (Figure 44). Within these phases the interaction of users with product features is taken into account.

In these phases four research questions are studied, both for the PLP and the PDP:
What are a user's emotions when dealing with product features?
What are a user's emotions when dealing with product feature explanation?
What are a user's emotions when dealing with the presentation of product features?
What are a user's emotions when dealing with the decision making process?

This results in nine elements on the website, on both the PLP and PDP, where emotions of the user will be explored (Figure 45).

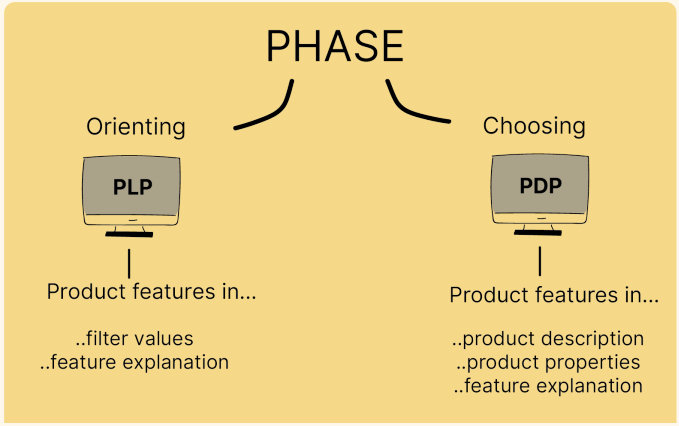


Figure 44: The orienting and choosing phase.

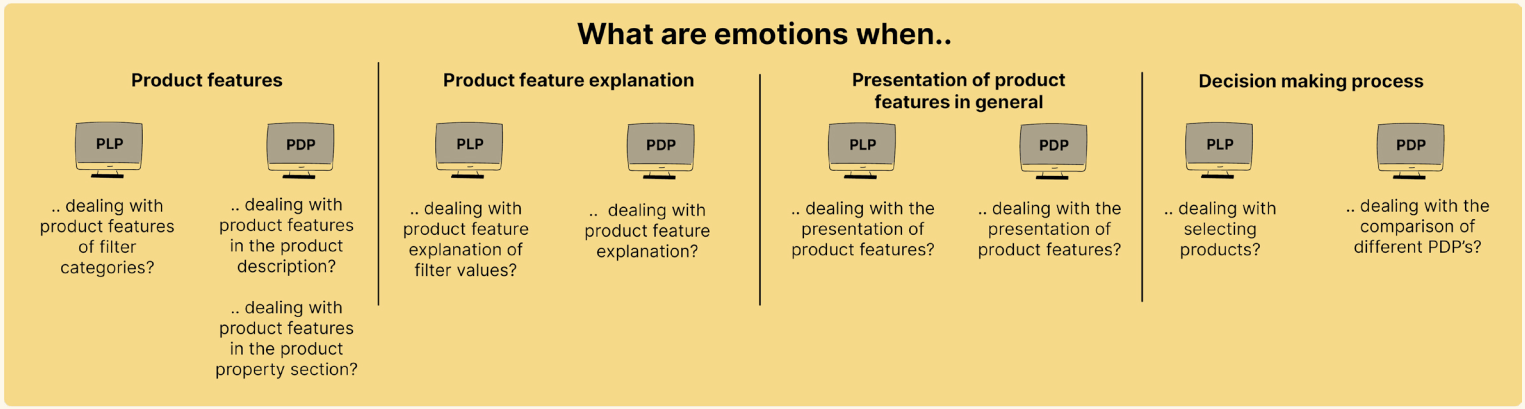


Figure 45: Nine elements where emotions will be explored.

The setup

The research consists of three parts: choosing a product, assigning emotions to the relevant steps of the online journey and assigning future emotions for the envisioned interaction with product features (Figure 46).

Figure 46: The three parts of this user research.

This cycle (choosing a jacket, assigning emotions, assigning future emotions) is conducted three times during the online journey of the user (Figure 47). This is done in order to keep close to the actual moment a user experiences emotions since many steps are involved (e.g. using filters, selecting a jacket, studying the PDP) while choosing a jacket.

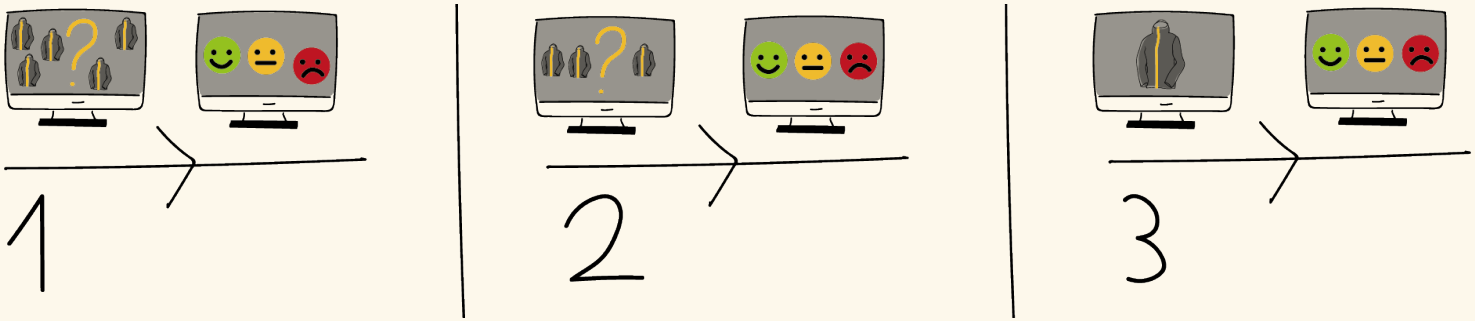


Figure 47: The three cycles of this user research.

Choosing a jacket

At first, a participant is given the task to find a new outdoor jacket for a chosen activity at Bever.nl (this is the same task as described in Chapter 8). The task ends when a participant decides to put his chosen product in the shopping basket (online).

Assigning emotions

This step focuses on the experienced emotions during the given task. In order to make participants express their emotions, two different tools are being used. At first, the participant is asked to assign a positive, neutral or negative smiley emotion (Figure 48). A detailed overview of this used document can be found in Appendix 6.

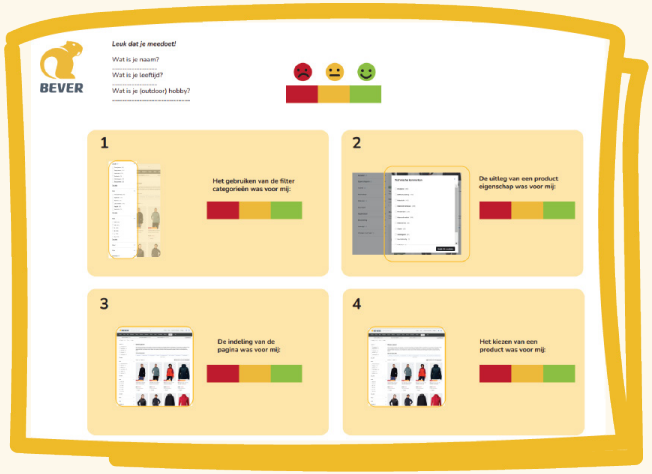


Figure 48: The sheets used in the user research to assign the emotions.

After this initial emotion is chosen, the participant is asked to select a PrEmo cartoon matching his emotion. This is a non-verbal tool to evaluate emotional impact in any situation (Desmet, 2019). These cartoon characters express different emotions by using face, body and voice (Desmet, 2019) (Figure 49). In total fourteen cartoons exist of which half are positive and the other half are negative. All fourteen emotions are presented to the participants. Besides the participants choosing a corresponding PrEmo emotion to their experienced emotion, an explanation is asked about the chosen PrEmo emotion.

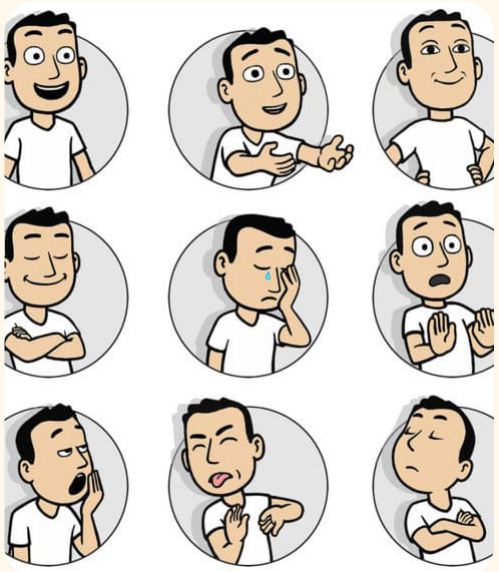


Figure 49: A selection of some PrEmo cartoon characters expressing several emotions (Desmet, 2019).

Assigning future emotions

The previous step, assigning a smiley- and PrEmo emotion, is focussed on expressing the previously experienced emotion of the participants. This third step focuses on the desired emotion of the user for a future situation. As discussed in Chapter 6, emotions play a major role in the decision making process. Therefore, a list of nine emotional values is composed in order to improve experienced emotions online (Figure 50). These emotions focus on memorable experiences for a user (KPMG, 2016), engagement and loyalty with a retail company (Capgemini, 2017) and important emotional core values of users (Davis, 2022)(Table 4). The participants are asked to select an emotion from the list (if possible) which would improve their current experienced emotion. Moreover, an explanation is asked about the chosen emotion.

Emotional value	Reference
Honesty	Loyalty emotions for the retail sector (Capgemini, 2017)
Joy	
Surprise	
Integrity	Goals to master a customer experience (KPMG, 2016)
Empathy	
Personalisation	
Control	Emotional happiness values (Davis, 2022)
Freedom	
Confidence	

Table 4: Nine emotional values used in the user research.

The execution

In order to include actual users of one of Yonderland's brands, this research is executed at the Bever store in Leidschendam (Figure 51). Users in the store were asked to participate in the research. It was randomly chosen to let a participant conduct the research on the desktop or on their own mobile phone.

Figure 51: The user research done in the Bever store.

Results

Twelve participants took part in the user research varying in gender and in age, from 22 years to 72 years old. All twelve participants were actual Bever users, however five users did not participate in the research in the store but were found separately from the store visit and did the research at home. Six participants conducted the task on a desktop and six participants on a mobile phone.
The emotions of the participants during their online journey will be discussed below and more detailed insights of the user research can be found in Appendix 6.

Assigned emotions

All (positive, neutral or negative) emotions experienced by the participants have been summed resulting in an emotion graph, representing the average of the emotions experienced by the participants (Figure 52). In a few scenarios a participant did not experience an emotion because this step of the journey did not happen. The number of emotions experienced for each step can be seen in Figure 52.

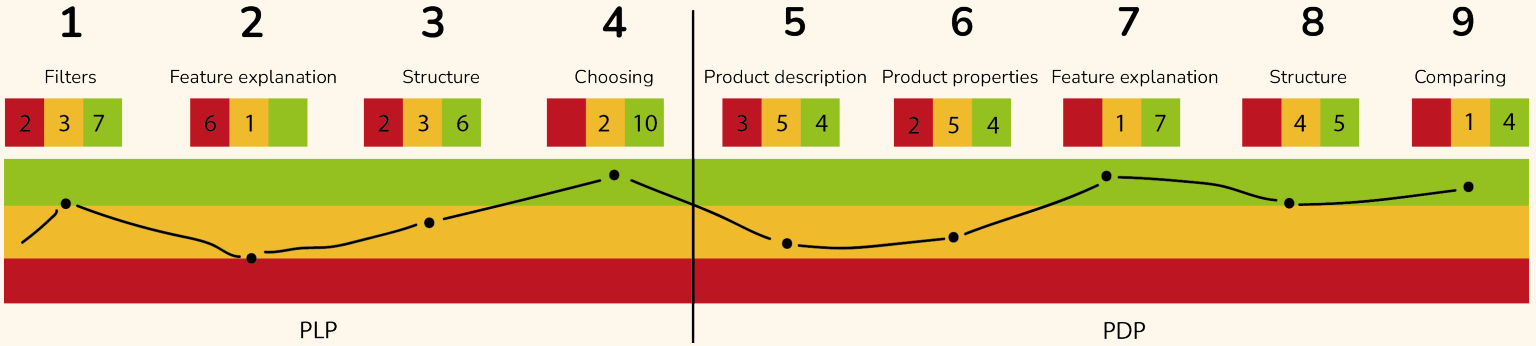


Figure 52: Emotion journey of the participants.

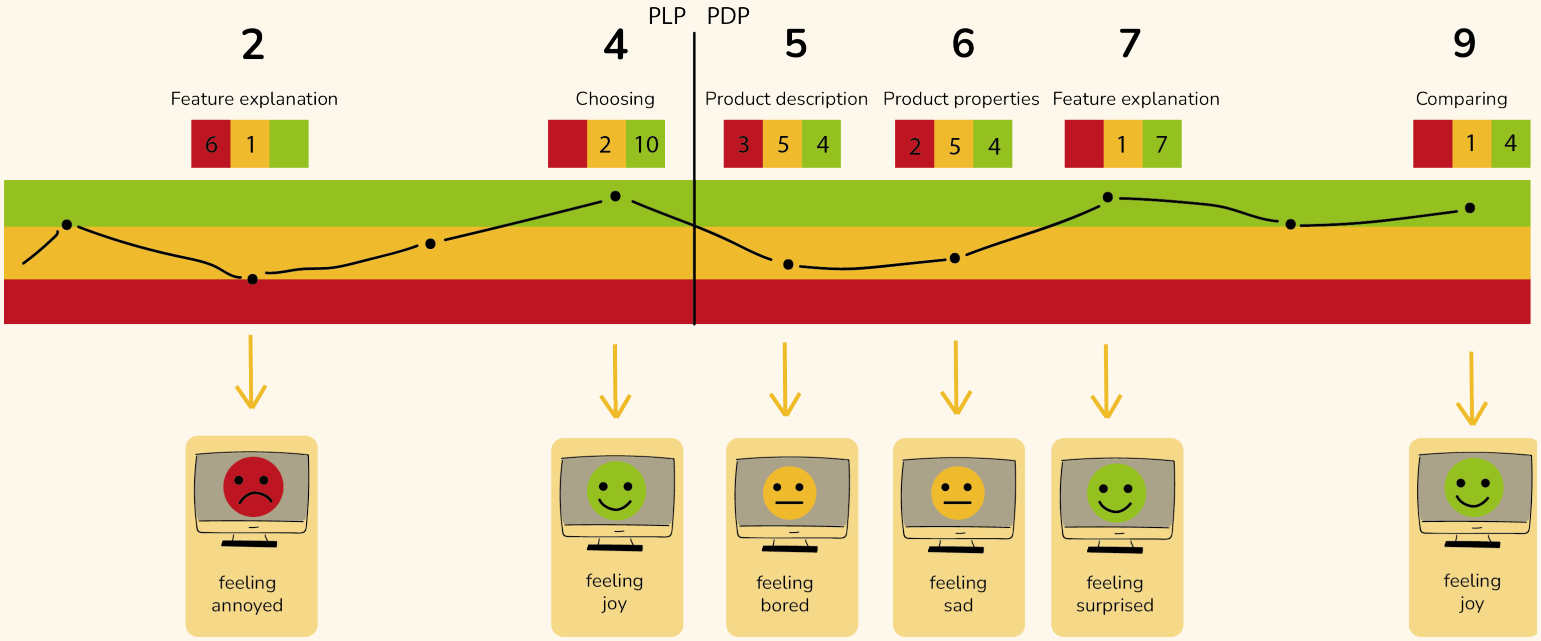


Figure 53: Emotion journey of the participants.

It can be seen that a clear difference between experienced emotions related to the steps of the journey is noticeable (Figure 52). The three lowest experienced emotions are feeling annoyed, feeling bored and feeling sad (Figure 53). This is due to unavailable feature explanation, the big amount of information and terminology used and the long list of unuseful information. The three highest experienced emotions are feeling joy and feeling surprised (Figure 53). This is due to the big offer of Bever products, the existence of explanations and the nice activity of comparing.

Assigned future emotions
Several insights about the desired emotion of the participant were gained when discussing the steps of the emotion journey and the list of possible emotional values (Appendix 6). The three most assigned future emotions are: control, confidence and surprise.

Control
The participants felt a lack of control due to several reasons. First of all, since it is not possible to search in a goal-oriented way for the right product. Also, when scaling down the product offer the participants felt little control over the input on the filter options.

Confidence
The participants felt a lack of confidence due to several reasons. The participants felt a lack of confidence since it was not clear what features to look for and it was unclear to understand product features explanations. Furthermore, the participants felt a lack of control over the product features explanation on the PLP since an explanation of a feature could not be found.

Surprise
The participants felt a lack of surprise due to several reasons. The participants desired for a feeling of surprise when choosing a jacket. Also, the participants felt a lack of surprise since functionalities of a jacket were not visualized but plain long paragraphs of text. At last, the participants desired for a feeling of surprise when reading the description.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that a clear difference between experienced emotions in the online journey exists. The *three lowest experienced emotions* are when a user interacts with a product feature explanation or when a user reads the product description or product properties. The users feel annoyed, bored and sad due to a missing explanation, big amounts of information and information that was not useful and of value to the users. The *three highest experienced emotions* are when a user chooses a product, reads the feature explanation on a PDP or when a user compares products. The users feel surprised, good and joyful due to the existence of explanations and because these steps were considered nice and to do easily.

At last, the three most assigned future emotions are: control, confidence and surprise. The users feel a lack of control to search goal-oriented, to find the right information and to find this information faster. The users feel a lack of confidence since much information is unclear, and it is not clear what to look for and if a product matches a specific activity. The users feel a lack of surprise since the process is not considered funny or joyful, and many aspects could be improved to be more surprising.

Discussion

This research was done both on desktop and on mobile. It turned out that the research on mobile was more accessible for the participants since this could easily be done during their shopping compared to doing the research on the desktop. However, observations lead to the conclusion that the research on desktop was done with more attention to product information (since the product description simply is presented with more focus on the PDP on a desktop). Moreover, the research on desktop took longer compared to the research on mobile phone (10-15 minutes compared to 4 -7 minutes).

Furthermore, the participants were asked to assign a PrEmo cartoon matching their experienced emotion. However, this did not go as expected. Instead of these cartoons supporting the participants in defining their experienced emotions, these emotions were considered too extreme and the participants were not able to use them in any way. Therefore, these were barely used by the participants to express their experienced emotions. Instead, the participants were either able to describe their experienced emotion themselves, or they found it hard to do so.

At last, a remark should be made about the reality of the scenario. The participants were shopping in the Bever store, or had been shopping at the Bever store before and were asked to find their new jacket. However, in a real scenario a user would look for a new jacket (and spend actual money for) which could consume more time in order to make the right choice. The focus of this user research was on the emotions regarding certain elements of the website and was not on the understanding of the information in combination with the corresponding emotion. For example, the participants experienced a high emotion with the feature explanation (step seven, Figure 53) because of the existence of this explanation. However, it is not examined whether the participants understood the explanation or were able to use it in order to make an informed decision.

Conclusions Chapter 9

[1] A user reaches clear high and low emotions when searching for a product on the current website. The three lowest emotions are experienced during an interaction with product feature explanations or when a user reads the product description or product properties. The three highest experienced emotions are experienced during choosing a product, reading the feature explanation on a PDP or when a user compares products.

[2] The three emotions which were most mentioned for improvement by the participants are: more control, more confidence and more surprise.

CHAPTER 10 - DESIGN CRITERIA

DESIGN CRITERIA

To start the next phase of this graduation project, the design phase, an interaction vision and design requirements are created in order to start designing.

Interaction vision

The insights from the user research of Chapter 9 (emotions during a website visit) are used to create an interaction vision resulting in inspiration and requirements for the design phase.

Three emotions were mentioned multiple times by the participants when discussing the envisioned interaction in order to improve the current experienced emotion. These emotions are: feeling confident, feeling surprised and feeling in control. All three emotions relate to pain points and feelings mentioned by the participants about the current journey (Figure 54). For example, users feel frustrated not to find a jacket in a more goal-oriented way since they cannot find specific activity related information, or find information in a faster and clearer way (Figure 54). Combining all three emotions leads to the following interaction vision in which the current negative feelings and pain points are turned into positive feelings and high experienced emotions: "Finding the perfect jacket while feeling most confident, surprised and in control of the online search process".

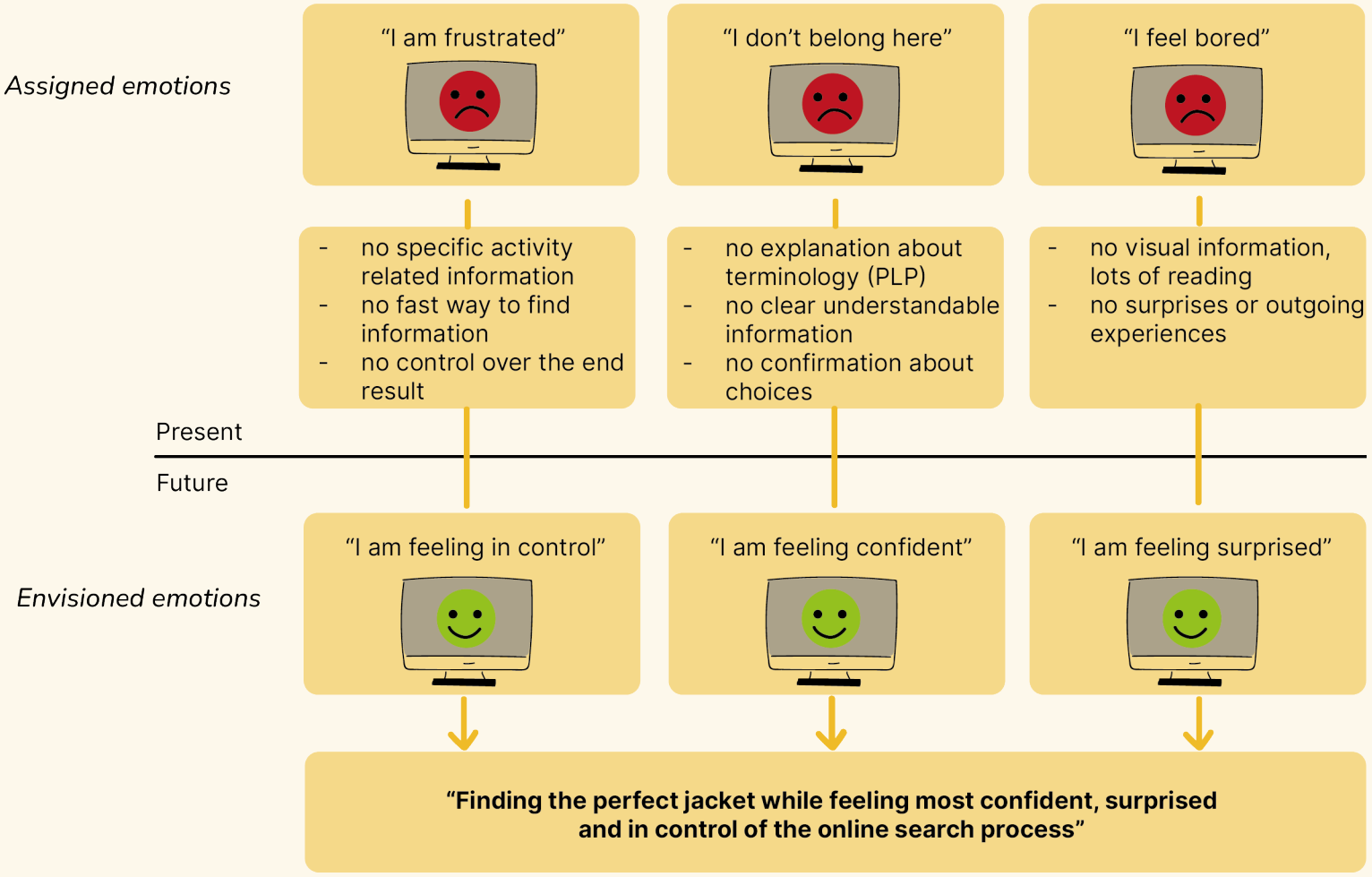


Figure 54: Explanation of the interaction vision with feelings and pain points.

Design requirements

The design requirements are categorized in five subjects: Presentation, Activity, Explanation, Navigation and Emotion (Figure 55). For a successful application of these design criteria, it has been studied in what way these criteria can be tested. An additional design criterion, can be found in Figure 55, which is not a necessity for the project but functioning as a design criteria 'wish'.

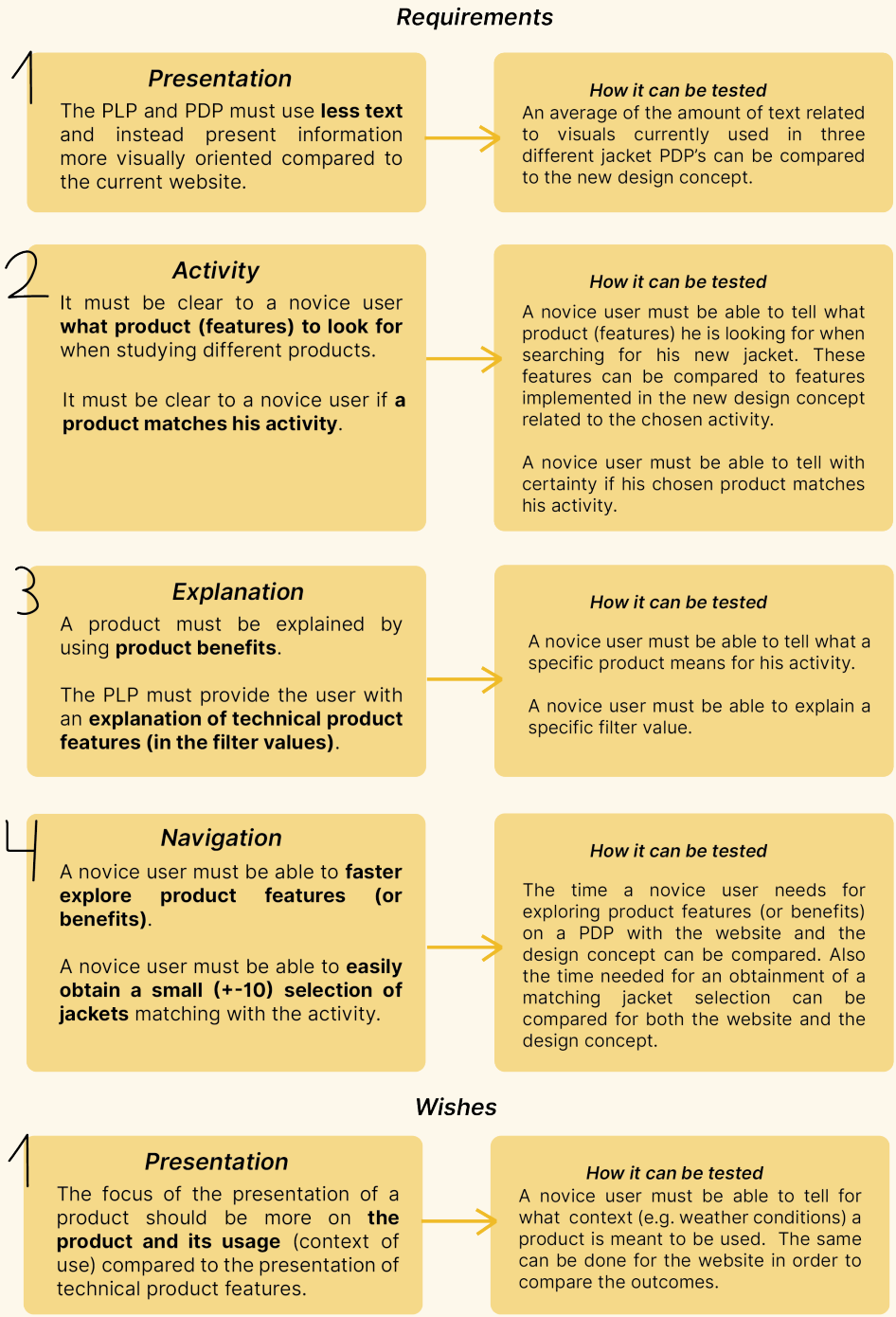


Figure 55: Requirements and wishes.

Conclusions Chapter 10

[1] The concept of the design phase will focus on the following interaction vision: "Finding the perfect jacket while feeling most confident, surprised and in control of the online search process".

[2] Several design requirements related to Presentation, Activity, Explanation and Navigation will be focussed on when designing the concept.

PART 2

FROM FEATURE FOCUSSED TO ACTIVITY FOCUSSED

This part consists of several steps working towards a final concept, guidelines and evaluation (Figure 56).

Creative session (and evaluation session)
A creative session with a student panel is carried out to gain inspiration for concept directions. These concept directions are evaluated in an evaluations session with the UX team of Bever.

Concept (iterations)
Concepts are designed in order to explore and improve and create iterations.

User evaluation
The concept is evaluated with users to gain insights about the first impression of the concept. The final concept (the concept after the iterations) is evaluated with users to validate the earlier stated design criteria and to gain insights for recommendations for further research.

Figure 56: The second diamond of the double diamond approach.

CHAPTER 11 - IDEATION

IDEATION

This chapter describes two sessions, a creative session with a student panel and an evaluation session with the Bever UX team (Figure 57). The creative session focuses on divergent thinking resulting in inspiration, insights and multiple ideas. The evaluation session focuses on convergent thinking in order to select the most promising ideas for implementation (Rittert & Mostert, 2018).

Creative session

A creative session was set up with a student panel consisting of four students. It was decided to form a diverse group of students in order to capture different perspectives. Within this group the main focus was on IDE students due to their common understanding of creativity. Three IDE master students (from the masters Strategic Product Design and Design for Interaction) and one Mechanical Engineering bachelor student took part in the session.

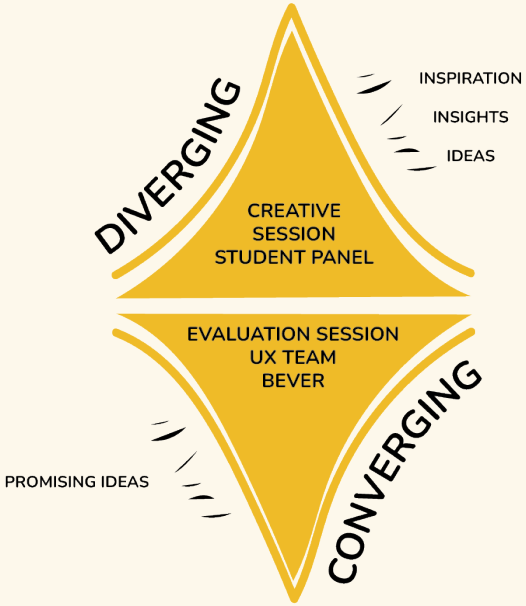


Figure 57: Divergent and convergent approach.

Setup

The creative session functions as an explorative brainstorm, showing potential design directions. Tasks related to different elements of the design criteria are captured in the session (Chapter 10). These are the design criteria: presentation, navigation and activity and emotion. Moreover, the creative session is used as a benchmark to evaluate three different design directions (which will be discussed in Chapter 11 - Concept directions).

The creative session used different creative facilitation methods as described by Heijne et al. (2019). The session consisted of six tasks, an icebreaker and an energizer (Appendix 7). An overview of the planning of the session can be found in Appendix 7. The session started with a general approach narrowing towards a more specific task (Figure 58). Narrowing from general to specific tasks is done in order to loosen up the participants and get them into a divergent mindset. Moreover, the beginning of the session focussed on individual thinking and the end was a group brainstorm (Figure 58). Ritter and Mostert (2018) suggest that generating ideas in a group after generating ideas individually has a strong beneficial effect on the originality, and thus the quality of the ideas generated.

Figure 58: The creative session.

Results

Many insights for inspiration were obtained during the creative session. Moreover, in the last task of the session, Hits and Dots, three concept directions were benchmarked together with the ideas of the students. These are concepts 1, 2 and 3 which will be discussed in the following subchapter. One of these concepts (Concept 1) scored according to the students as a WOW-idea. The outcome of all tasks can be found in Appendix 7.

Conclusion

The creative session led to many insights which will be used for the creation of multiple design concepts. These concepts will be discussed in the following subchapter.

Discussion

The session proceeded smoothly and according to the plan and the planning. Moreover, all exercises were understood by the students and were executed as expected. During the beginning of the session (Task 1 and Task 2, Appendix 7) the students were a bit modest and quiet but during the energizer the participants became more talkative and enthusiastic. This connected well with the tasks after the energizer, because these were more team-focused.

Concept directions

The insights gained from the creative session (Appendix 7) have been of inspirational use for the creation of the concept directions. In total eight concept directions will be discussed. Most of the concepts consist of a similar basis idea. This basis is focussed on the information with which the novice user enters the website: “I want a product for a specific activity” (Figure 59).

The way a novice user enters the website contains crucial information about his mindset which functions as the foundation for the concepts. The steps after this basis ensure that the right information is presented in order to support the user in selecting the right jacket. A more detailed overview of the concept directions can be found in Appendix 7.

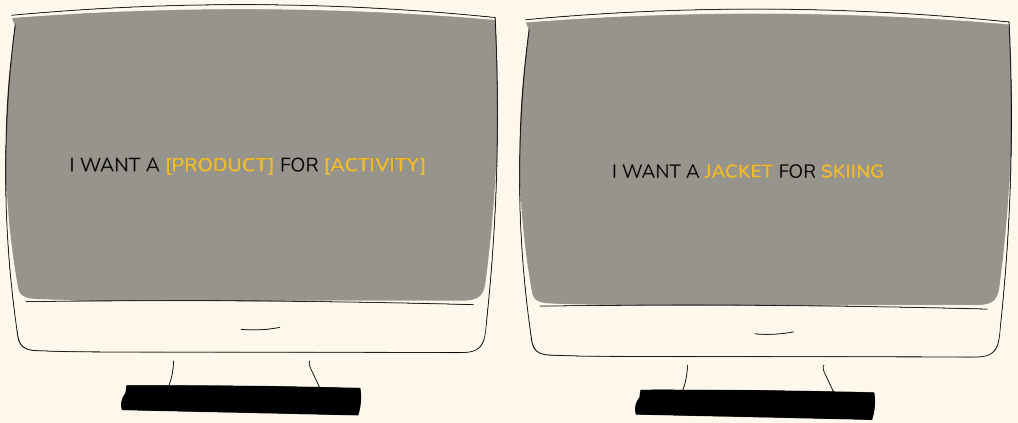


Figure 59: The foundation of the concept directions.

Direction #1 - The Design Tool

Explanation
With The Design Tool a user ‘creates’ his own jacket (Figure 60). Answering questions about preferences results in elements being added to the jacket. The last step of this direction presents jackets of the collection of Bever matching to the preferences of the user. In this way the focus is on requirements and wishes of the user, in an understandable and authorian way.

Focus
A user is navigated through questions which resemble important features of a jacket. Moreover, a user ends up with a relevant selection of jackets in order to provide ease with selecting. The focus of this concept is to provide the user with a *feeling of control* over both the navigation and the outcome.

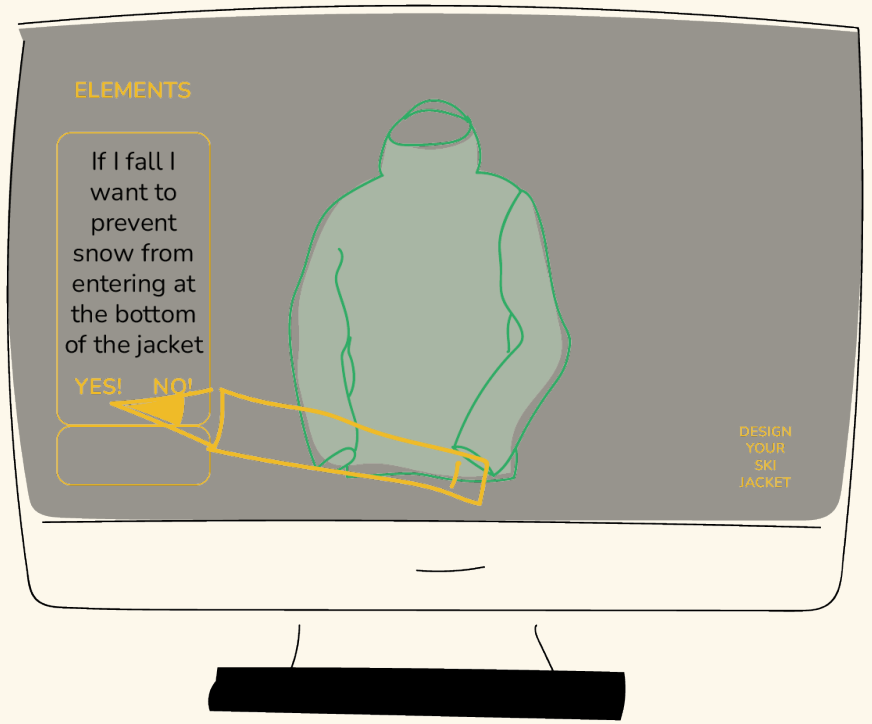


Figure 60: The Design Tool.

Direction #2 - The Shopping List

Explanation
The Shopping List is a clear list to provide the user with information about relevant features to look for, related to the needed product for the specific activity of the user (Figure 61).

Focus
A user gets a clear instruction of what features to look for for his specific activity. Moreover, when viewing a PDP, it becomes clear to the user which features the jacket consists of. It is then up to the user whether or not to buy the jacket. The focus of this concept is to provide the user with *feeling confident* since there will be no more guessing, unclarities or assumptions about the viewed jacket.

Figure 61: The Shopping List.

Direction #3 - The Ranking

Explanation
The Ranking focuses on creating a clear overview of the comparison of jackets (Figure 62). It visualizes the jacket collection based on input of the user (e.g. relevant features for the activity of the user).

Focus
A user will be supported with visually understanding the differences of features between jackets. Moreover, a user can give input about which features to compare the jackets with. The focus of this concept is to provide the user with a *feeling of control* over the output shown and the process of comparing.

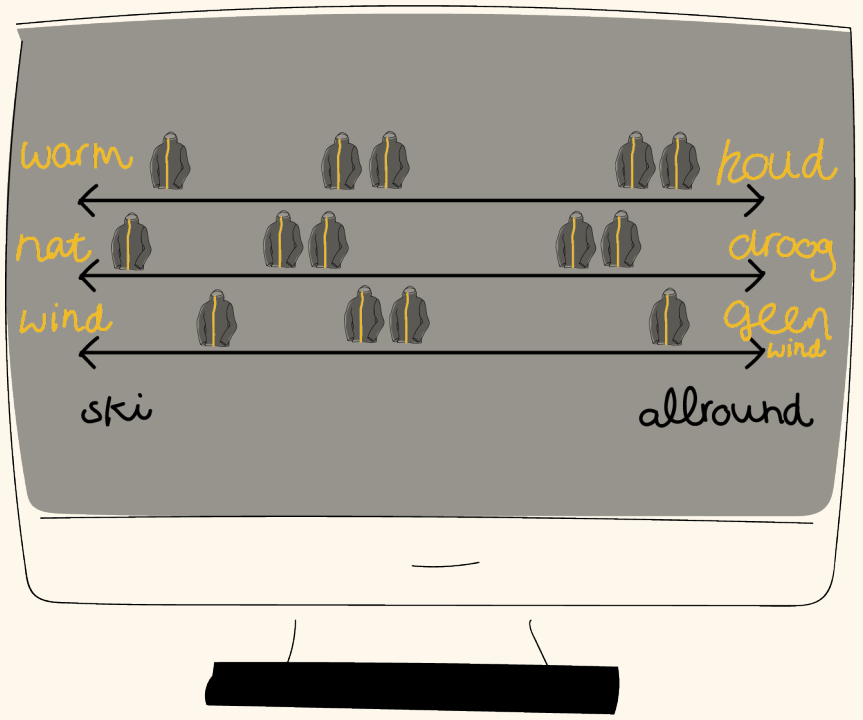


Figure 62: The Ranking.

Direction #4 - Bever's Matches

Explanation
With Bever's Matches a user gives input (what product, which activity, what preferences), and will subsequently swipe through a selection of matching products, and will search for the best match in this way (Figure 63). Moreover, the concept shows how well a jacket matches with the requirements given by the user.

Focus
This concept focuses on two aspects, which both provide the user with a *feeling of control*. At first, the user goes through the offer of jackets in an interactive way, where he has control over the input which results in a selection of jackets. Secondly, the user sees in a clear way on a PDP, in what way a specific jacket matches with the earlier mentioned input of preferences a user is looking for in a jacket.

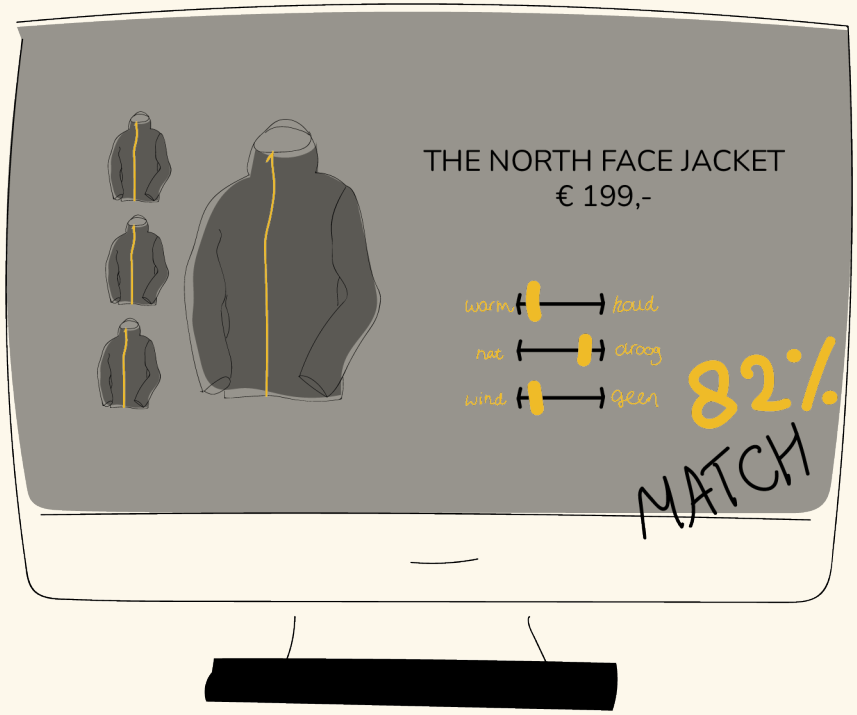


Figure 63: Bever's Matches.

Direction #5 - From Novice to Expert

Explanation
From Novice to Expert focusses on explanation of features of jackets (Figure 64). After the right information is requested from the user about the activity, Bever is able to give clear advice about what is important to focus on when looking for the product.

Focus
This concept focuses on supporting the novice user by providing the right and relevant information. In this way the user will be able to search for the right jacket by himself, since he knows what to look for and what is important to consider. The focus of this concept is to provide the user with the right knowledge to make him a (beginning) expert that will subsequently result in the user *feeling confident* about the search for jackets and determining if a jacket will match the preferences of the user.

Figure 64: From Novice to Expert.

Direction #6 - Labels and Symbols

Explanation
Labels and Symbols is focussed on showing users easily and faster for which activity or purpose a jacket is the best to use (Figure 65).

Focus
The focus of this concept is to provide the user with a *feeling in control* of his search. This concept will result in a goal-oriented way of filtering out jackets for other activities, and is visually oriented instead of textually regarding the information where the novice user is looking for.

Figure 65: Labels and Symbols.

Direction #7 - Going on a Journey

Explanation
Going on a Journey is focussed on taking the user along on a Bever journey towards the right product, by exploring his own journey to get the right input (Figure 66).

Focus
The focus of this concept is to provide the user with a *feeling of surprise*. The concept makes the user travel through the website towards the right jacket. At the same time the user travels quickly through his upcoming journey in order to provide the right information. It's almost like an unexpected game while shopping online.

Figure 66: Going on a Journey.

Direction #8 - The Location

Explanation
The Location is focussed on linking products to most commonly used locations (destinations)(Figure 67).

Focus
The focus of this concept is to provide the user with a *feeling of surprise*. The concept is focussed on the location of a user's trip, and therefore the main focus is on context. Moreover, it is like an online community with stories about locations and the jackets people used in these locations. Subsequently this will provide the user with *feeling confident* after reading and seeing a product being used at the same location of a user's own trip.

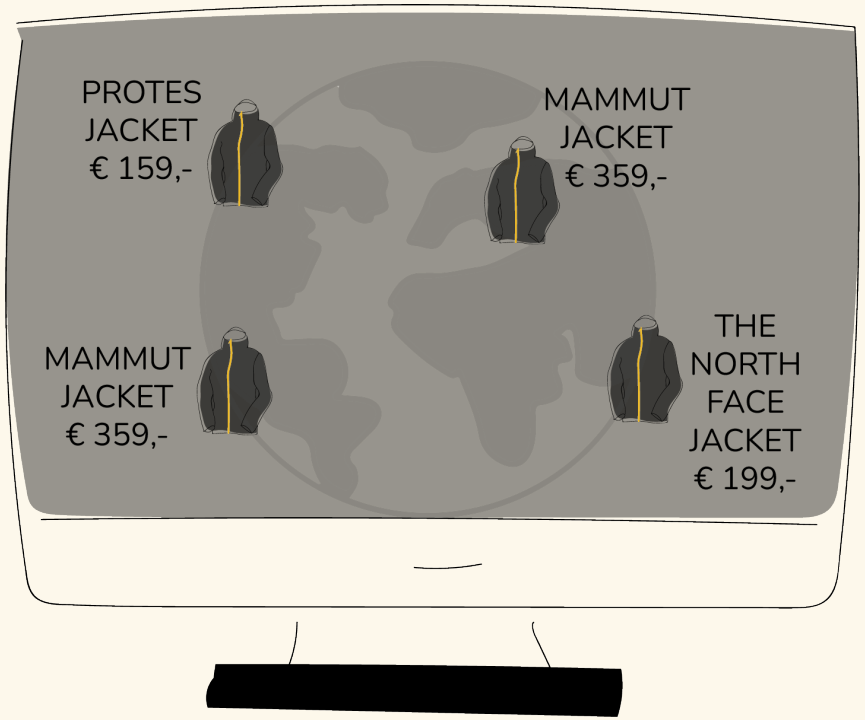


Figure 67: The Location.

Evaluation Session

An evaluation session took place with the Bever UX team, consisting of three UX designers. In this session the concept directions were discussed by means of an Idea Gallery: revisiting all directions one by one (Heijne et al., 2019). During this discussion the UX designers could provide feedback and share thoughts about the directions. Moreover, the directions could be related to the actual website and the context of Bever with the experience of the UX designers.

Results

The evaluation session led to two insights. First, all concept directions consist of the same three aspects: filtering, visualization and validation. Instead of one direction solely focussing on that direction, different ideas were integrated. Secondly, it was not yet clear how the exact information about the activity of the user could be requested. The feedback and thoughts of the UX designers per design direction can be found in Appendix 7.

Conclusions Chapter 11

[1] A creative session was conducted with a student panel to obtain insights for inspiration.

[2] Eight concept directions have been created.

[3] An evaluation session with the Bever UX team was conducted to get feedback on the eight concept directions.

CHAPTER 12 - CONCEPT

CONCEPT

The insights from the Ideation (Chapter 11) together with the Design Criteria (Chapter 10) have led to a first concept creation. This concept will be discussed below with regard to design decisions being made for the concept.

Overall core of the concept

The core of the concept is to support the novice user with finding the right jacket online. In order to find the right jacket online he needs to be taken along with his search. To make the user feel *more in control* of the PLP, the concept replaces the use of the current filter options on the PLP. This results in a more goal-oriented and faster way of filtering. Instead of asking the user what features and characteristics he is looking for, questions about the context of the activity of the user are asked. In this way the user feels *more confident* because there will be no more confusion about filter values but clear activity related content. As the final step of the concept a by Bever recommended selection of jackets is presented. This selection supports the user with *feeling confident* since no more guessing exists but a convincing selection is presented matching the requirements of features for the jacket related to the user's activity.

The concept

The concept consists of five elements, each element followed by the next. All elements will be discussed below.

Element #1: Bever helping out before the search for a jacket of the novice user has even started (Figure 68).

Before a novice user starts exploring the (for him unclear) filters, a replacement of a jacket tile is noticed. This tile is presented in the same way as a jacket, but without a jacket. In this way the concept is presented as one of three jackets at the top which is assumed to immediately attract the attention of the user. The Bever beaver icon with a speech bubble can be seen in the tile, presenting the best jacket of Bever. To indicate that the expertise of Bever will be used the Bever animal, from the Bever logo, is used. Moreover, the beaver is chosen because it is assumed that it represents a playful experience. The speech bubble indicates a conversation with Bever employees, who understand the difficulty of a search and want to help out.

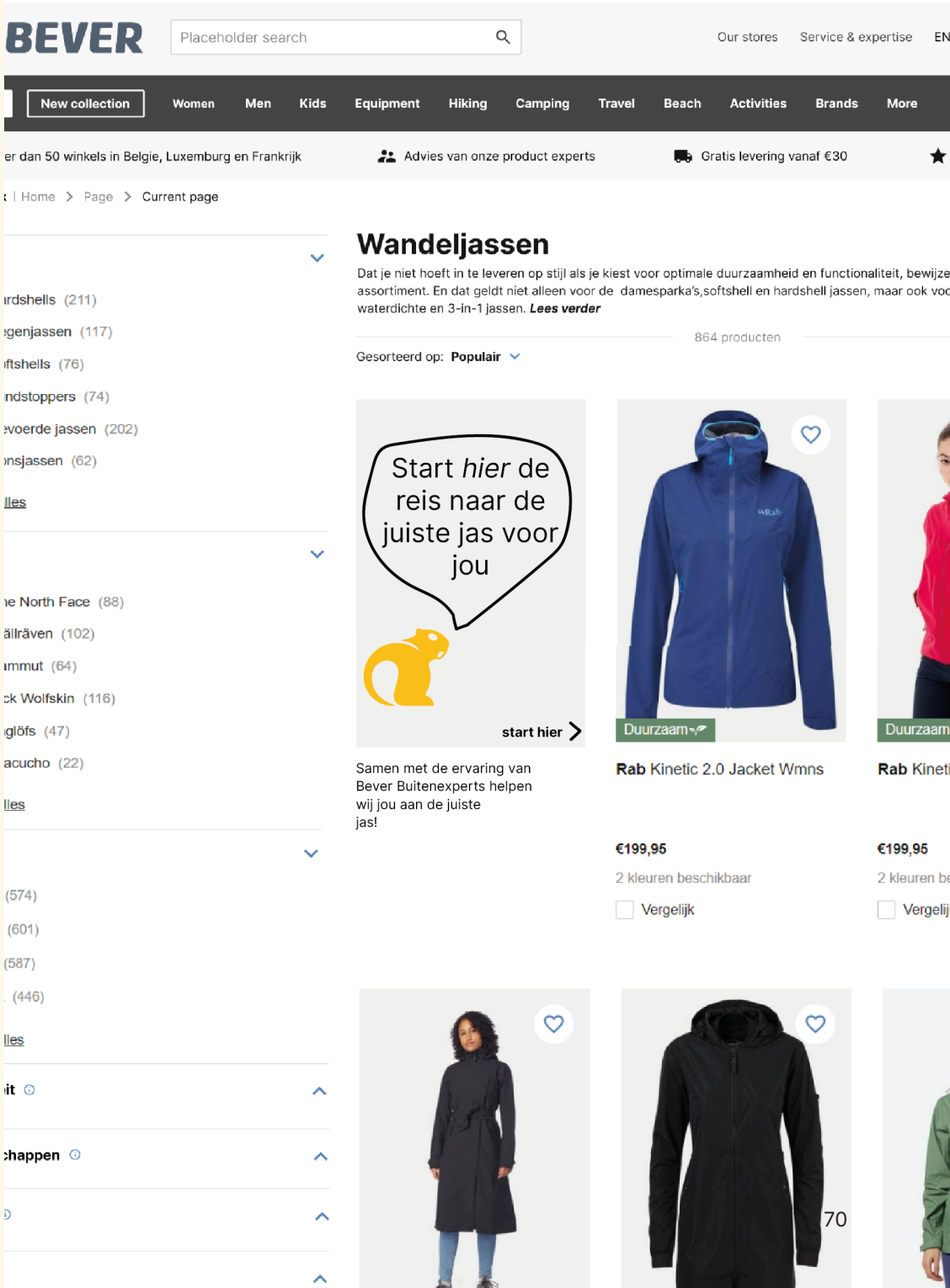
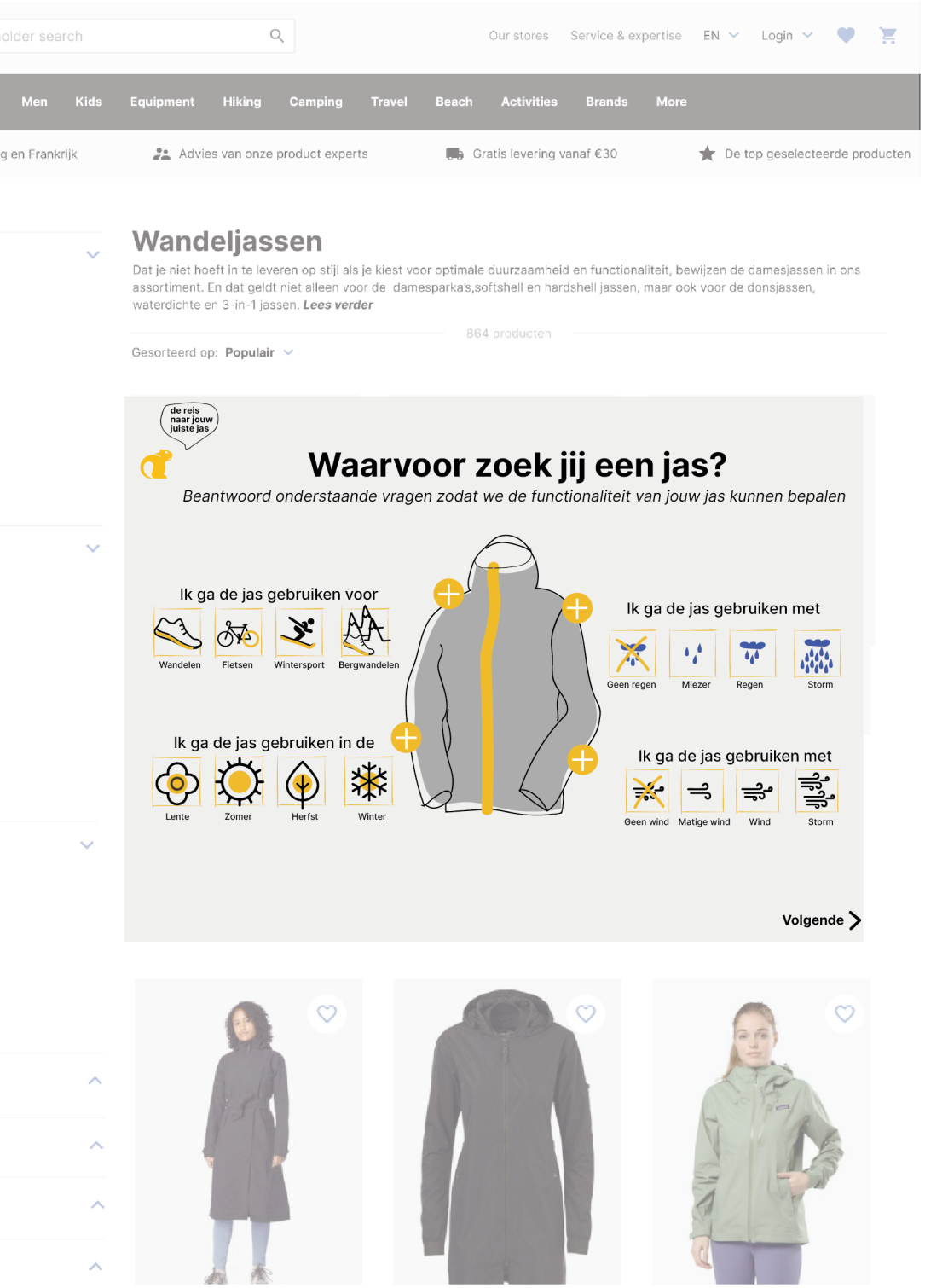


Figure 68: Element #1 of the concept



Element #2: Discovering what features the jacket needs in order to set the requirements for the right functionality of the jacket (Figure 69).

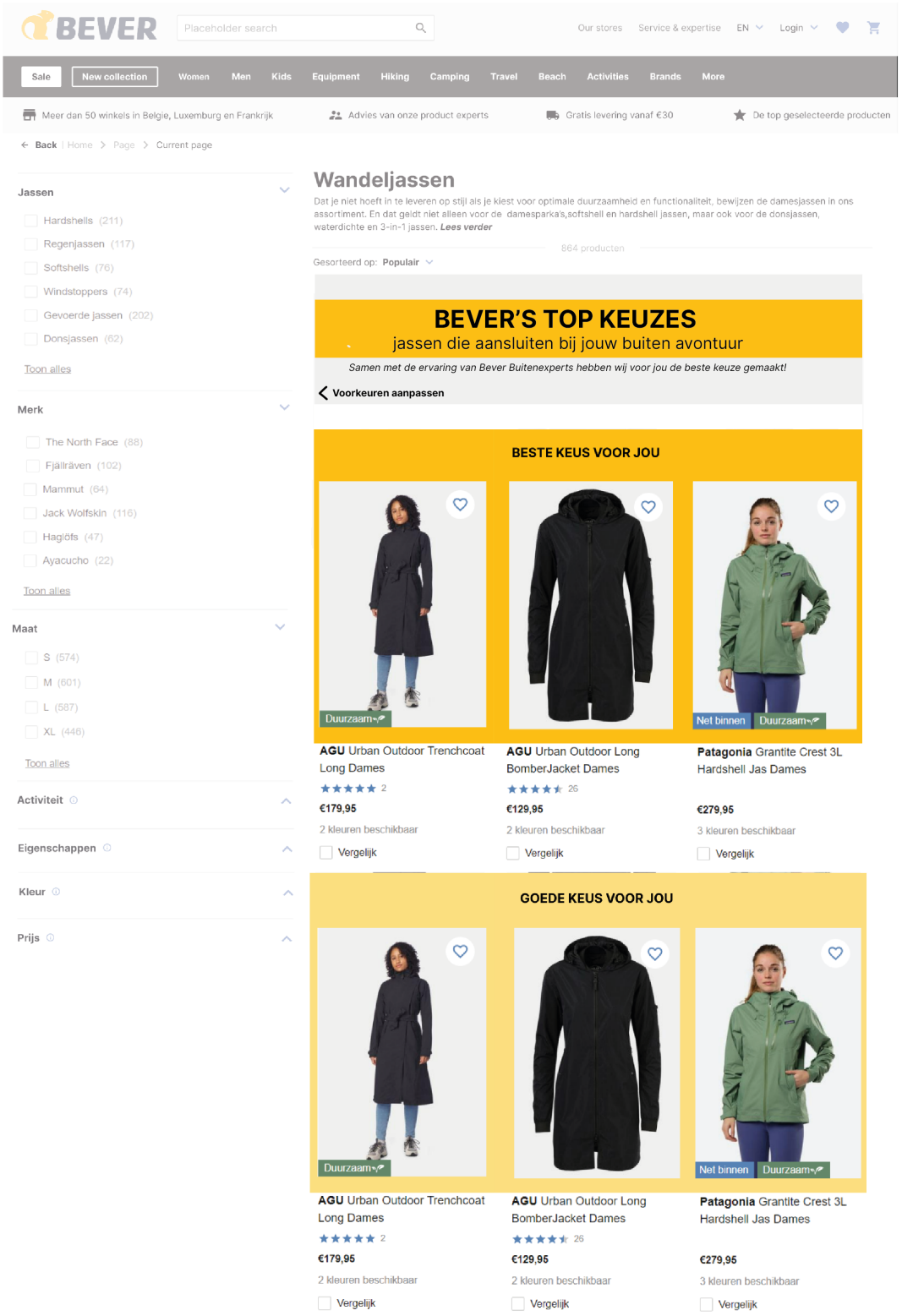
To set the right requirements for the jacket four questions need to be answered: the activity, the season of use and the weather conditions (the outcome of Chapter 11). These questions are formulated adapted to the level of expertise of the novice user. To visualize that these questions are related to the jacket, the jacket is presented in the middle. All four questions need to be answered by the user because these answers relate to the foundation of features of the jacket. All these questions asked in Element #2 represent must-have features that the jacket needs to have in order to match with the activity of the user.

Figure 69: Element #1 of the concept.

Element #3: Preferences of the user (Figure 70).

After the requirements are set in Element #2, the focus is on the preferences of the user. These preferences are about price, color, and specific activity related features. All questions present could-have features of a jacket (whereas the questions in Element #2 are of a greater importance for the activity and present must-have features). The activity related features are presented by explaining product benefits to ensure the understanding of the novice user. A user can answer these questions with yes/maybe/no. The questions about price and color can also be answered with 'no preference'. The question about price is interesting for a novice user since he does not have prior knowledge about the product. This question provides novice users with more control over their search because they will not end up with buying the most expensive jacket assuming this will be the best one for them, but now they will buy the best matching jacket related to their activity (and necessary features). In case a user wants to change the answers given to the questions in Element 2, a user can go back to this element. Once all questions are answered, the user can move forward to the next element of the concept. When doing so it is indicated that 'Bever's selection for you' will be presented.

Figure 70: Element #3 of the concept.



Element #4: The outcome (Figure 71).

A selection of six jackets is presented to the user. This selection is Bever's choice of jackets matching with the activity of the user. The amount of six jackets is chosen to present the user with three best choices, and three good choices. In this way the variation between jackets (different brands, colors, types) is presented while the overview is still manageable. It is chosen to present both best and good jackets to the user to give him as much control over the choice of a jacket. A best jacket is a jacket matching to most requirements of the user, a good jacket is a jacket that is still good but less good. For example, a best choice jacket can be a bit more expensive or can be another color that the chosen preferred ones. To put extra attention on the selection of jackets, the jackets are presented in blocks with a yellow background. These blocks are designed to present different pillars in terms of hierarchie, like pillars during the medal ceremony of a sports game. The 'best choice' is presented in the Bever color, while the 'good choice' is presented in the transparent version of the Bever color to indicate the difference.

Figure 71: Element #4 of the concept.

Element #5: Product benefits on the PDP (Figure 72).

This is the last step of the concept, the step where the user is viewing a PDP and the step where the user can add a jacket to his basket. At this last step, the user must feel most confident of his online journey and all information needs to be clear. Underneath the product picture it is stated that the product is the best match for you. This is done to convince the user about the fact that this product represents all requirements and wishes for the specific activity of the user. Also, product benefits are explained in a visual way, with an activity focus. This information can be found under 'about this jacket' presenting a summary of the most relevant features. These features can be found under the product pictures, in an already empty space on the PDP. These features cannot be hidden, but are visible at all times.

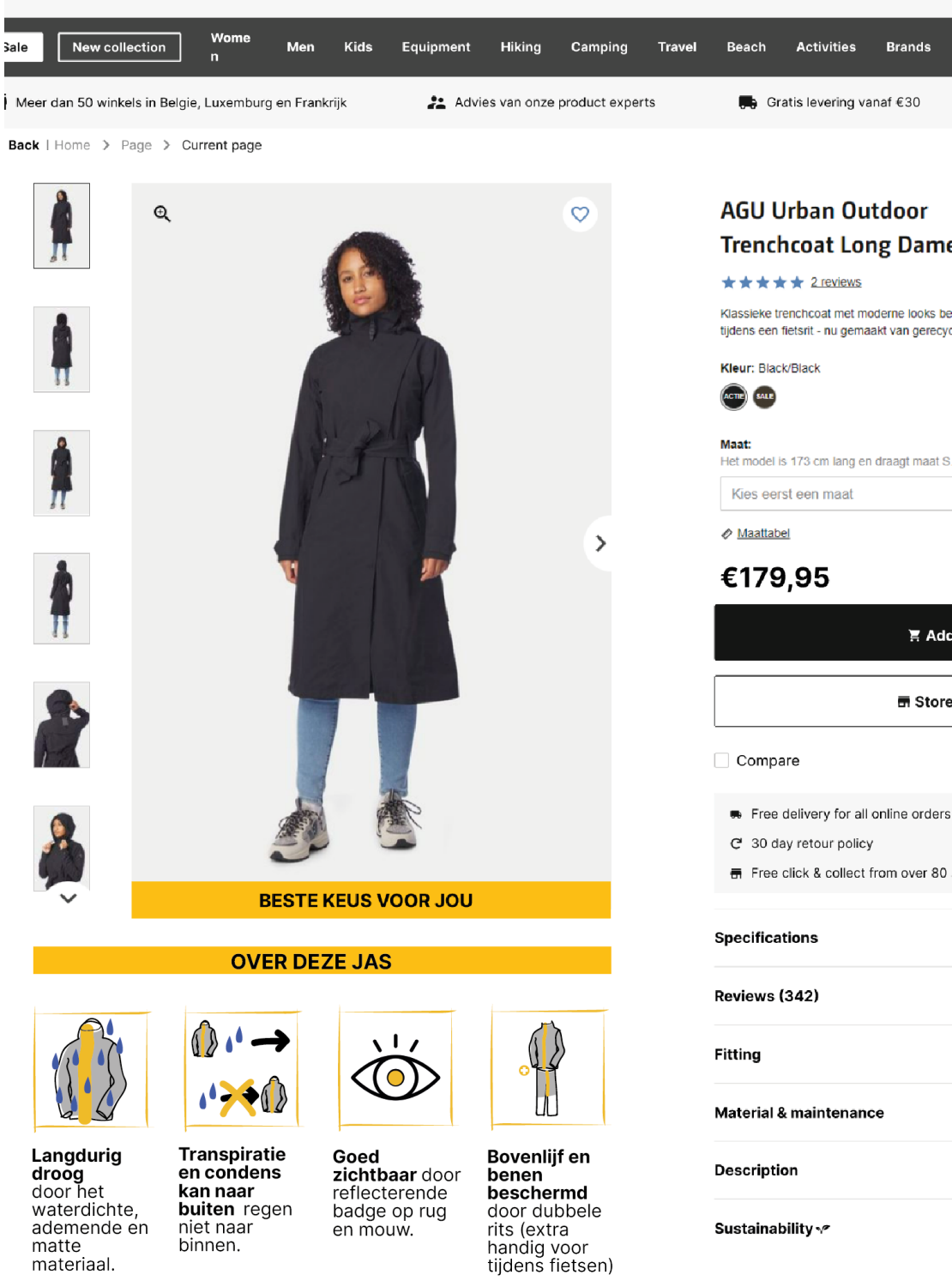


Figure 72: Element #5 of the concept.

CHAPTER 13 - FIRST IMPRESSION OF USERS ABOUT THE CONCEPT

FIRST IMPRESSION OF USERS ABOUT THE CONCEPT

To gain insights about the first impression of the concept a research was executed. Besides gaining insights about the first impression, the implementation of the interaction vision within the concept has been examined.

Research questions

During the evaluation of the concept several domains have been discussed. These domains concern general aspects of the concept and questions related to feeling confident, feeling in control and feeling surprised.

General aspects
What is your first impression of the concept?
Feeling confident
Do you think the presented jackets are indeed the right jackets for your adventure?
Feeling in control
How would you describe (in one word) how you reached the selection of the six chosen jackets?
Feeling surprised
Which feelings did the concept evoke?

All questions asked can be found in Appendix 8.

Setup

The research consists of two parts: showing the concept and evaluating the concept (Figure 73).

In order to include actual users, again this research is executed at the Bever store. Users in the store were asked to participate in the research. Also, employees working with the novice user took part in the research. The concept was printed and presented at a table in the store (Figure 74). Subsequently the concept was evaluated with the questions discussed above.

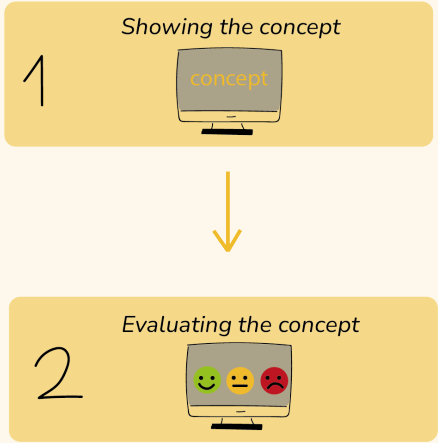


Figure 73: The setup of the first impression research.

Figure 74: The concept presented in the store.

Results

Eight novice users, two employees and one store manager took part in the research. An overview of all insights can be found in Appendix 8. The insights will be discussed for each of the domains.

General

All participants were enthusiastic about the concept. The participants used several positive words to describe the concept: clear, efficient, accessible, pleasant to use, organized, smart, and useful. Also, ten out of eleven participants mentioned this concept was something they would use in real life. The participants agreed on the concept leading to the right product selection. However, the participants mentioned several aspects that could be improved in the concept. First of all, the amount of activities currently shown in the concept could be extended. Also, including size and an allround weather condition in the concept would improve the selection.

Confident

The participants agreed on feeling confident with the use of this concept. They mentioned the outcome was trustworthy since the right questions were asked to retrieve information. However, something that could still lead to doubt mentioned by the participants is the size and the shape of a jacket.

Control

The participants agreed on feeling in control because the concept was found efficient and clear. The number of six shown jackets at the end was a good number, not too many and not too little jackets. The amount of detail was also considered to be the right amount. Also, the two store employees mentioned that it should definitely not be more detailed because then the novice user would drop out. One aspect leading to a decreasement of control which was mentioned by the participants, was too few preferences to be given as an input. For example, no preference about brand or length of the jacket could be given which was found to be a limitation by two participants. At last, after the selection of best choices is shown, information about the filters or outcome can be added in order to give control to the user for the next search at the Bever website.

Surprise

Several aspects of the concept were considered surprising by the participants. The first aspect is the question about budget. The participants indicated that the questions came as a pleasant but unexpected surprise since Bever is a commercial company. The second aspect mentioned was the amount of three best choices of products. This was considered a surprise for a webshop since webshops normally show a big amount of products to the user. The last aspect which was found surprising was the way the questions were formulated which matched well with the user's activity.

Conclusion

This research showed insights about the first impression of users about the concept. In general, the users were enthusiastic about the concept and mentioned the concept was what they would use in real life. Furthermore, the participants agreed on feeling confident when using the concept. Also, the participants felt in control over their search since it was found efficient and clear. At last, several aspects of the concept were considered surprising. However, they thought some aspects could be improved, for example the amount of activities and weather conditions needs to be extended. Also, the preferences could show more aspects and the user could be given information about the outcome to use for his next search.

Discussion

This research focussed on gaining insights about the first impression of users about the concept. It was chosen to discuss the concept on paper. The reason to do so is that the focus of this research was on evaluating the idea of the concept. However, this research could possibly have led to different results when the participants could have interacted with the concept online at the website (as the concept is meant to be used).

Conclusions Chapter 13

[1] The flow of the concept has been evaluated with Bever users and is considered good by the participants.

[2] The amount of activities mentioned in the concept is considered too general and too limited and needs to be extended.

[3] An allround weather condition needs to be included in the concept as a weather choice.

[4] Extra preferences in the concept need to be explored (for example, size and brand preference).

[5] The fit of a jacket is a complex aspect when shopping online and could lead to doubts about a jacket for the user.

[6] Besides the best and good choices presented at the end of the concept, information for a further exploration of jackets should be given to the user in order to let the user continue his search if he wants to.

CHAPTER 14 - FINAL CONCEPT

FINAL CONCEPT

In the previous two chapters the concept and the first impression of users was discussed (Chapter 12 and 13). This chapter focuses on variations exploring the experience of the concept and improvements of the previous insights gained. This results in the final concept. Moreover, new visual variations of this final concept are explored to gain insights for further development of the concept.

The experience of the concept

Two variations have been created focussed on the experience of the concept. It was decided to focus on the element experience since the search for a new product and decision making within this process can focus on the experience of a user in order to stimulate emotions in the online atmospherics of the website (Chapter 6). The experience of the concept focuses on two aspects. First of all, an experience related to the context of the activity or product is something a novice user can relate to (Chapter 3). Secondly an experience related to taking a user along in his search is assumed to connect the user to the outcome. The two concepts will be discussed below. More details of the concepts can be found in Appendix 9. These variations are created for a specific scenario: a user in need of a cycling jacket for the autumn. This specific user cycles in heavy rain and little wind.

Variation 1 - Outdoor experience

This variation has an activity and context focus. When a user answers questions, these answers are visualized: showing his specific activity and context (Figure 75). The image of the activity that the novice user has in his head is being presented in the decision support. This is assumed to make the user feel understood by Bever and in control of his search, since this representation of the context and activity shows exactly for what scenario he is looking for a new jacket. Also, to focus all attention on answering the questions of the concept, the filter categories on the left side on the PLP are 'folded' to not confuse the user with any features and text but to focus on all visual aspects of a user's search.

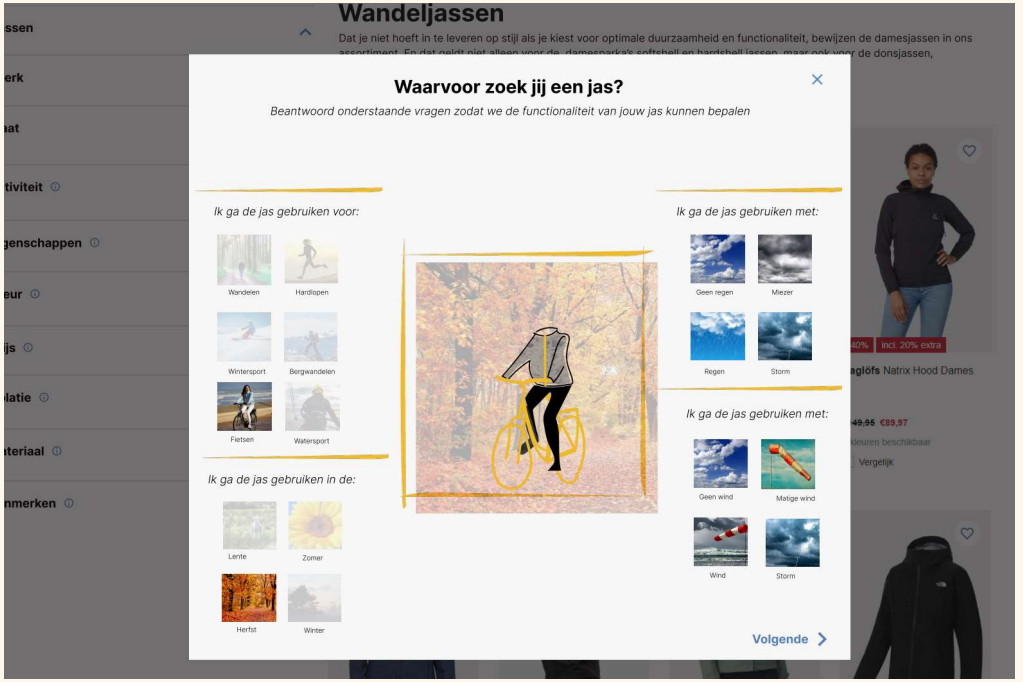


Figure 75: Variation 1 - Outdoor experience

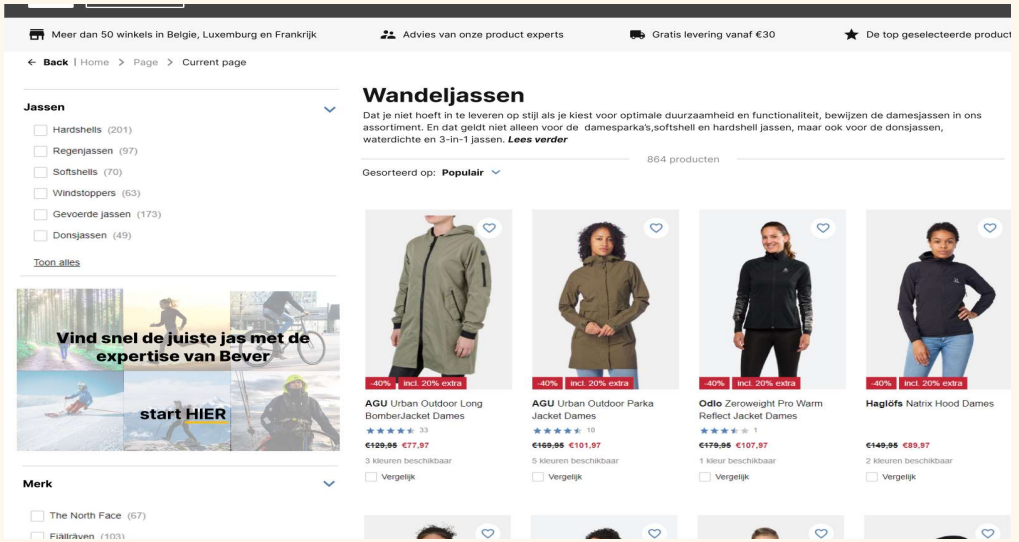


Figure 76: The location on the webpage

The decision support can be noticed by the user on the PLP underneath the first filter category (Jackets)(Figure 76). This location is chosen to provide the user with control, and it is assumed that this location will be spotted before the user starts using the filters. Pictures of different activities are used in the background to enhance the activity focus of the concept and also to match with the resemblance of the image that the user has in their head. Moreover, to highlight a feeling of control for the user when using the decision support the word fast ('vind snel de juiste jas') is used. Also, the word expertise is used ('met de expertise van Bever') to emphasize Bever's knowledge about activities and products, and to make the user feel that he is in the right hands for his search for a jacket.

Variation 2 - Building your jacket

This variation focuses on creating an experience about connecting the user with the product. When a user answers questions, the jacket shows more characteristics about the features related to the answers of the user: the jacket becomes more specific (Figure 77). In this way it is assumed that the user feels more connected towards the product, his product. Also it is assumed that the user feels more confident since the focus is all on the jacket and its features. Subsequently, it is assumed that the outcome of the best and good jackets is now more convincing because users were part of the process to create a right selection of matching jackets.

The concept can be noticed by the user on the PLP in the first jacket tile (Figure 78). This is done to present the decision support as the most important jacket of the offer of jackets. The big question mark resembles the difficulty of a search for the right jacket and is supposed to make the user feel understood (about the difficulty) and confident that Bever is going to help out.

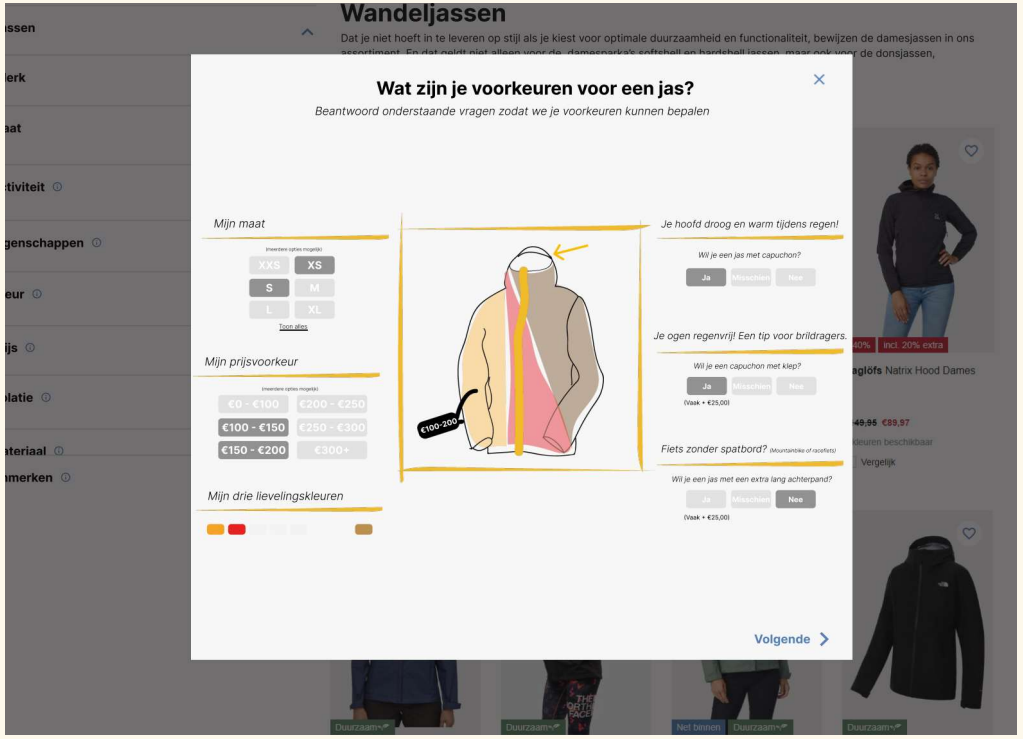


Figure 77: Variation 2 - Building your jacket

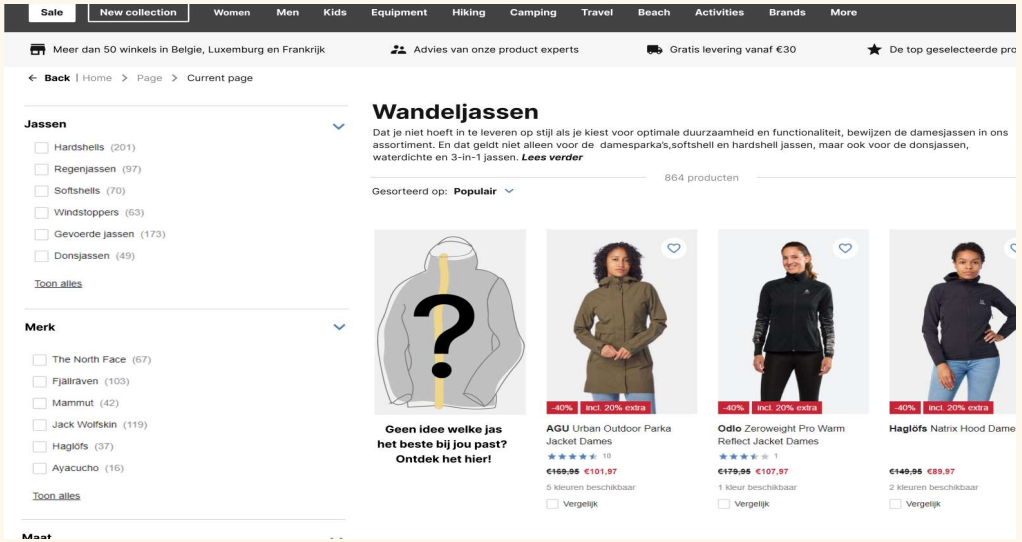


Figure 78: The location on the webpage

The final concept

The above discussed variations led to the final concept: Bever's Jassen Kompas (Bever's Jacket Compass) (Figure 79). Bever's Jassen Kompas navigates the novice user through the route towards the right jacket ("Bever's Jassen Kompas geeft richting op jouw weg naar de juiste jas"). Several aspects of the concept will be discussed in this subchapter. All steps of the concept can be found in Appendix 9. This final concept has the same foundation as the concept discussed in Chapter 12.

The first step of the concept is that a user needs to answer a question about what he needs his jacket for: his activity (Figure 81). The activities to choose from were in the previous concept (and on the current Bever website) too limited and now consist of six activities. Moreover, there is an option to choose an all round answer: a jacket functionable for multiple activities.

The focus point of the final concept is presented in the middle of the concept: the scenario of the specific activity of the user. All four questions related to the requirements of the jacket will be asked after one another keeping the concept organized and clear (Chapter 12 discussed these four questions).

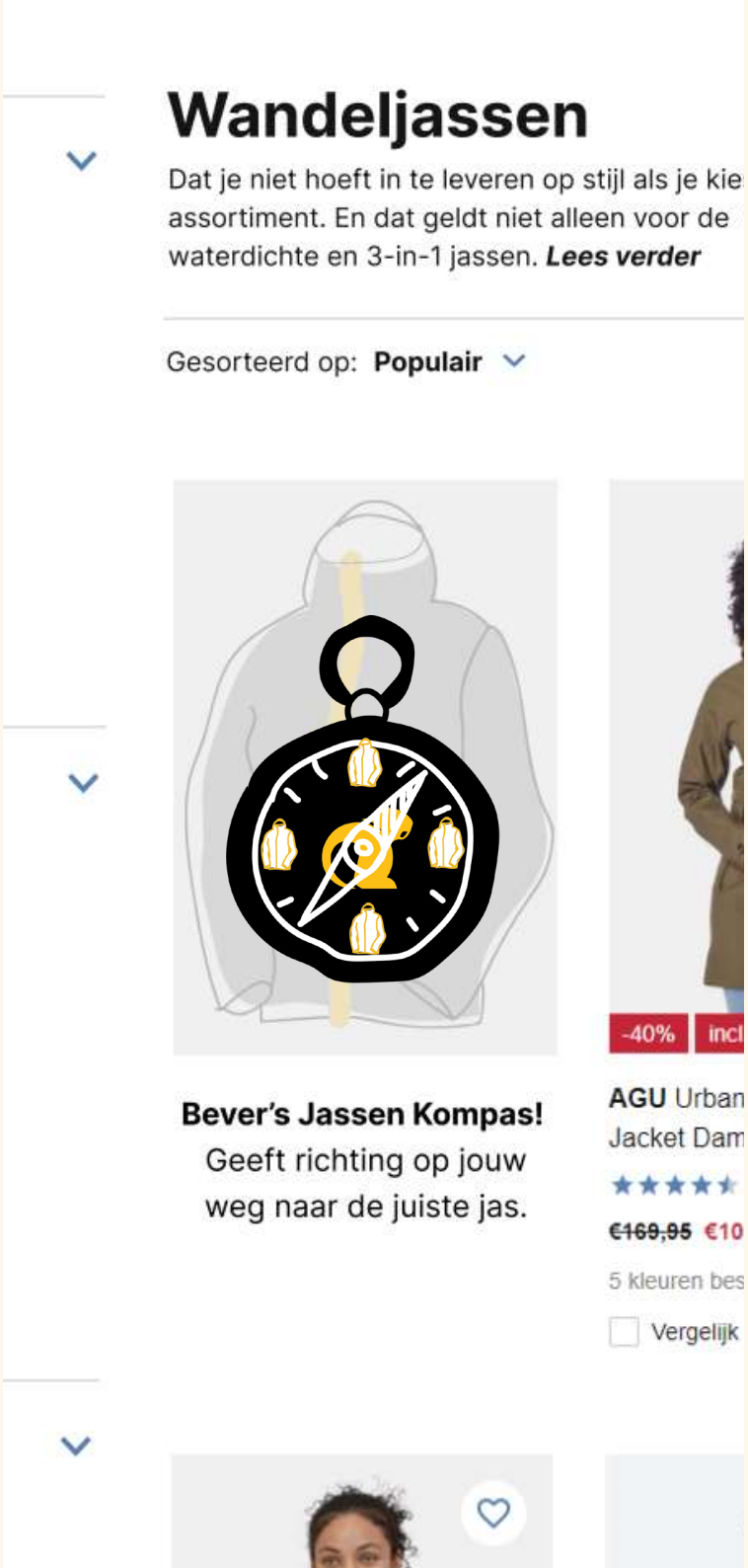


Figure 79: Bever's Jassen Kompas.

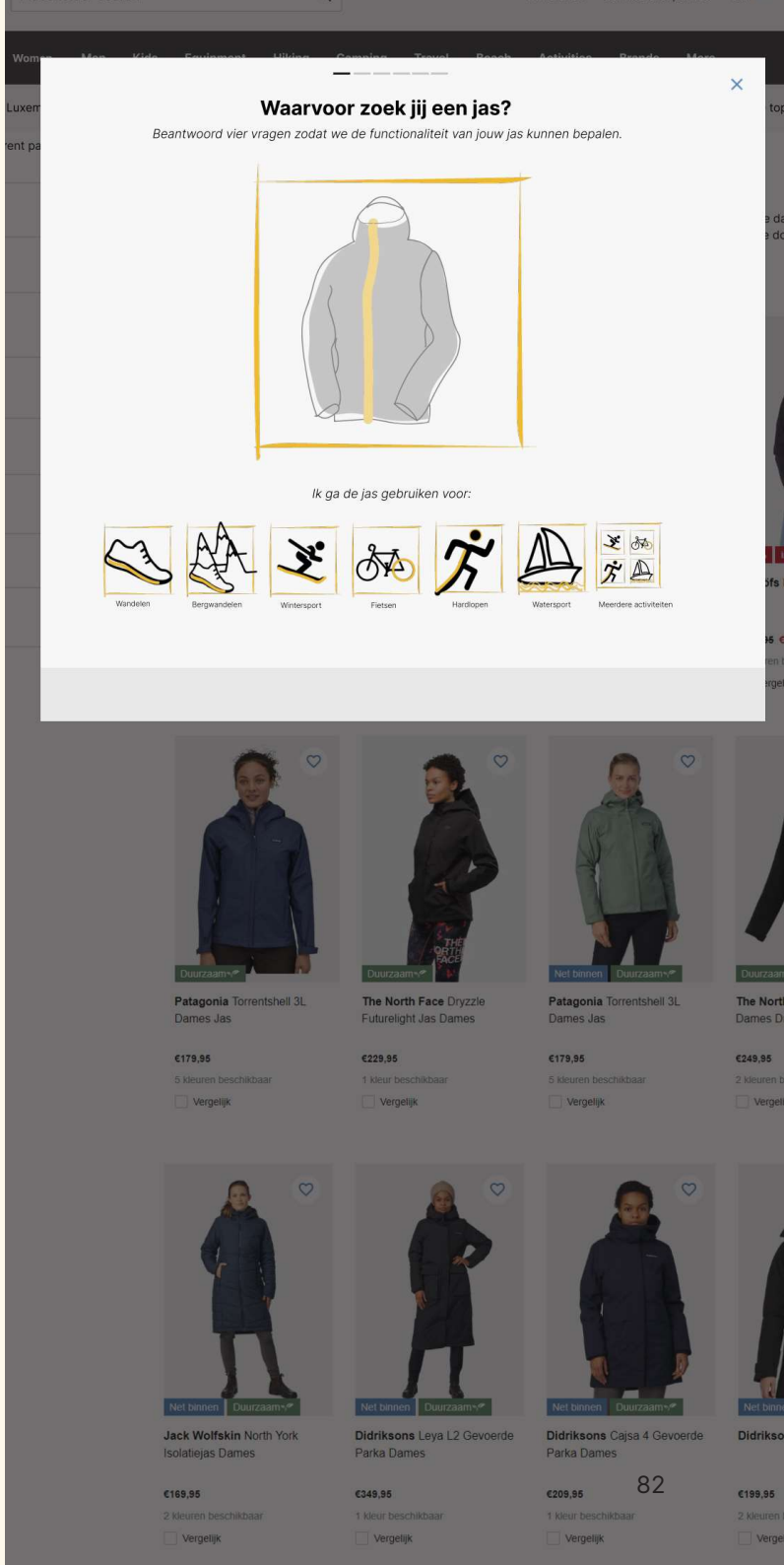


Figure 80: The first question of Bever's Jassen Kompas.

Besides the allround activity option in the first question of the concept, an allround season option can also be chosen (Figure 82). For example, a 3-in-1 jacket is a perfect match for an all round jacket.

Moreover, as can be seen in the bottom part of the concept, the amount of possible jackets is displayed (Figure 82). By answering more and more questions, the number of representative jackets decreases. Another aspect of the concept is that the user can go backwards (vorige), to change the earlier given answers. However, as can be seen, a user cannot move forward. This is due to the fact that the first four questions of the concept represent important requirements for the jacket in order to match with the right activity and context. However, the user can decide to quit Bever's Jassen Kompas and view the representative offer.

Furthermore, variation 1 focussed on the activity, whereas variation 2 focussed on the jacket. However, it is very difficult to visualize features of a jacket. For example, waterproof is difficult to visualize. In the final concept both variations are combined: presenting the activity of the user together with the changing elements of the jacket (in case they can be visualized).

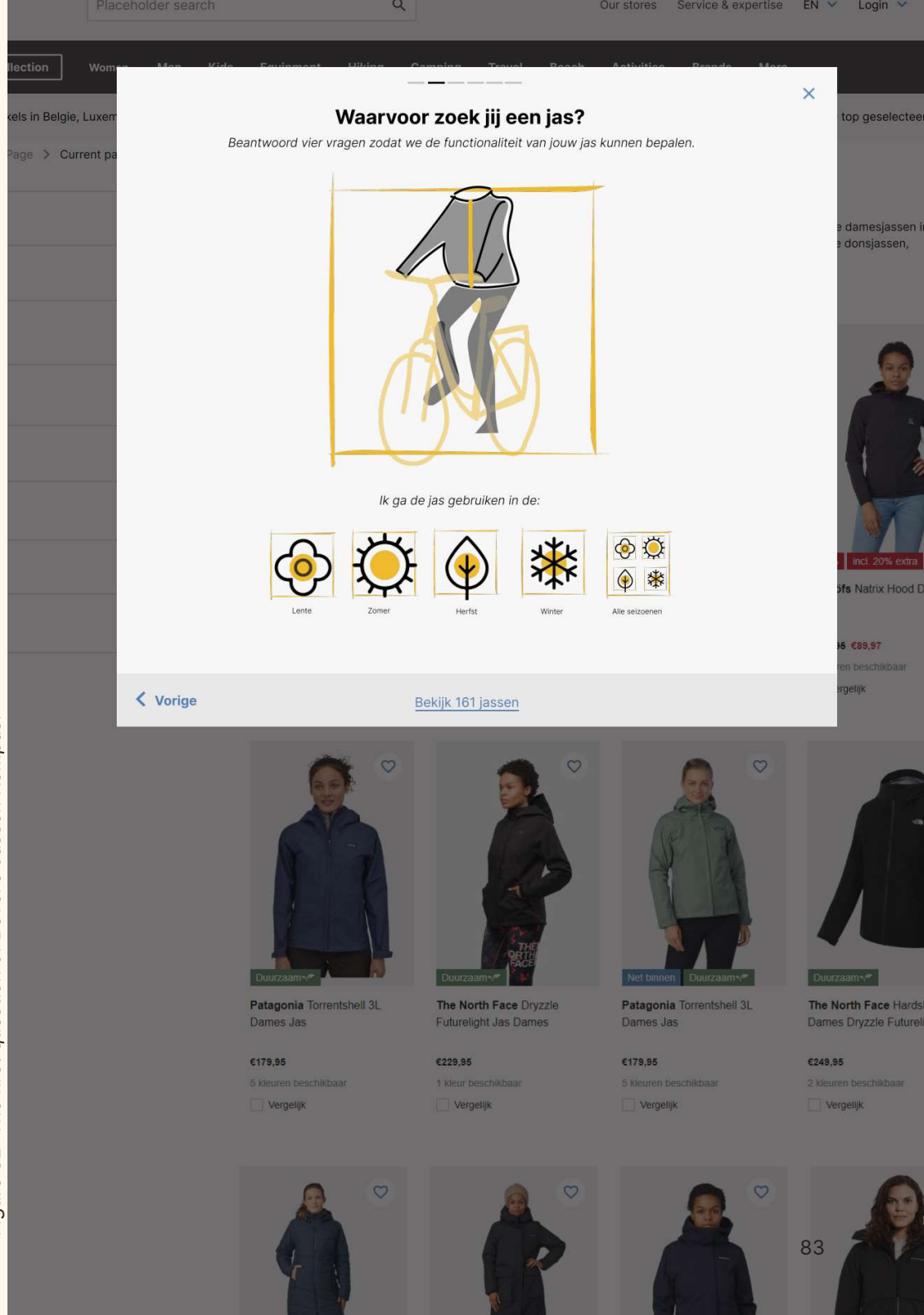


Figure 82: The first question of Bever's Jassen Kompas.

Two slides are presented in the concept discussing the preferences of the user.

The first slide (Figure 83) discusses activity preferences and the last slide discusses ‘other’ preferences (Figure 84). This hierarchy again states the difference of important features of the jacket. First, important technical features need to be determined before other features are discussed.

Also the way the questions are stated are assumed to make clear for the user that these questions discuss preferences. For example, a price preference is asked, but is not a fixed requirement or maximum budget that the jacket should have.

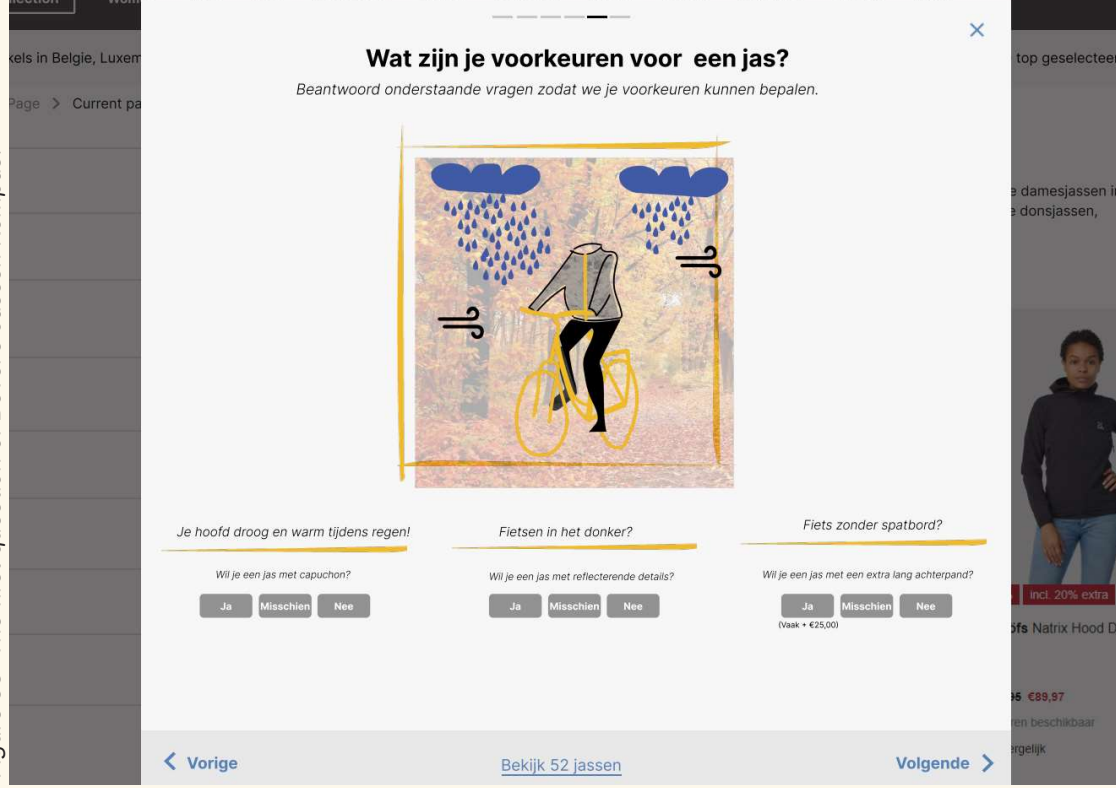


Figure 83: The first question of Bever’s Jassen Kompas.

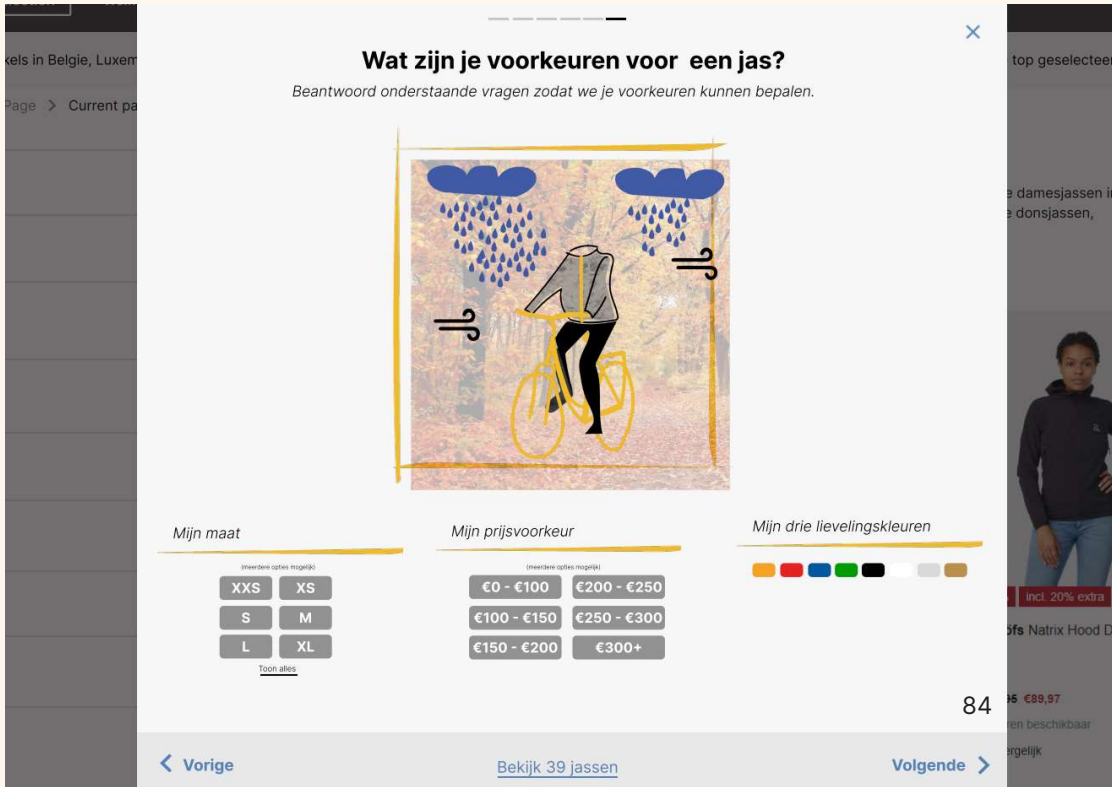


Figure 84: The first question of Bever’s Jassen Kompas.

The outcome of the earlier answered questions is the presentation of three best and three good jackets (Figure 85). The user has the option to continue his search with the option: ‘explore the whole offer made for you’ (Ontdek het gehele aanbod voor jou). Also, the current six jackets can be saved (favorieten opslaan) in order to prevent the user from answering all questions again so the user can easily view these jackets again.

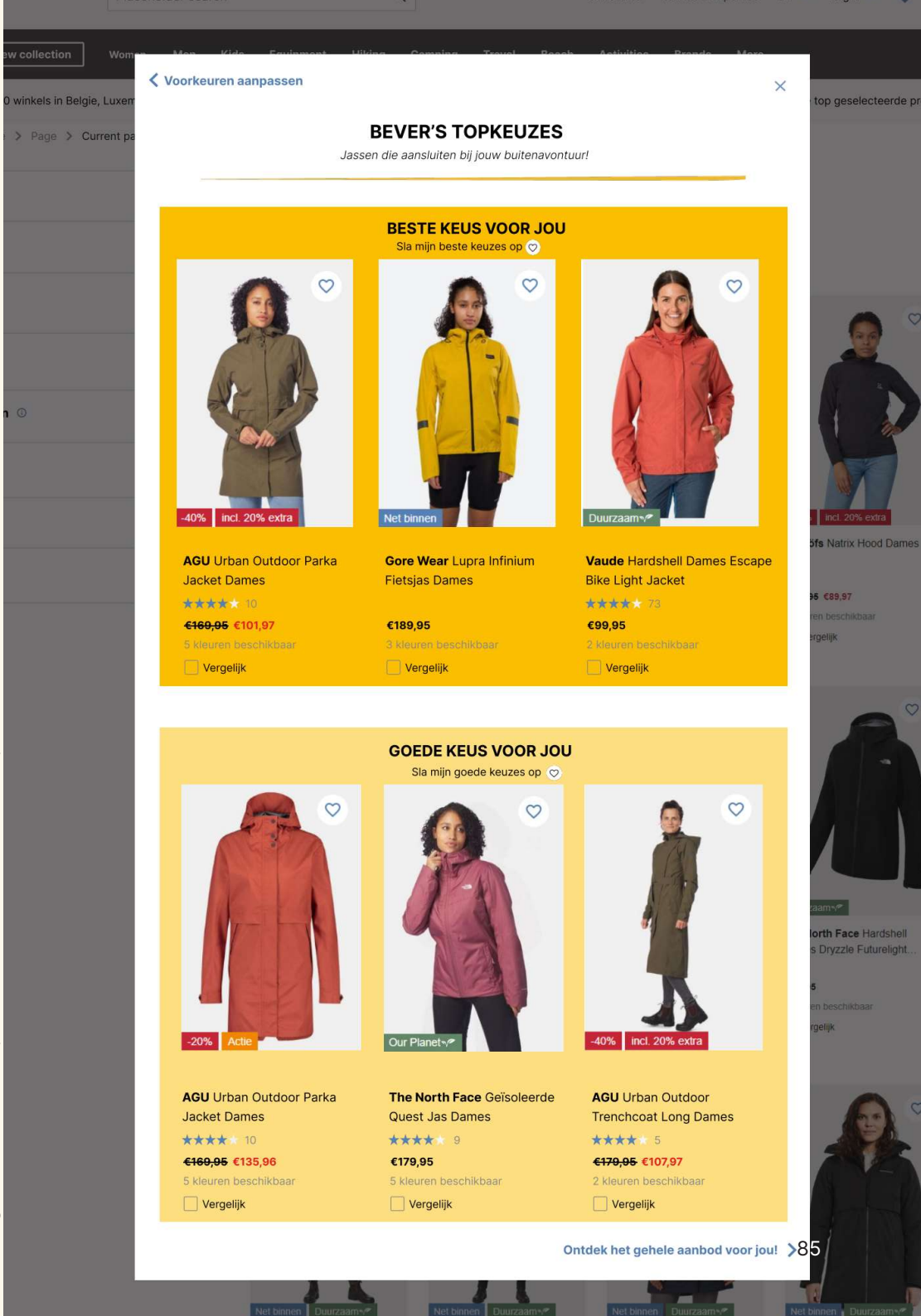


Figure 85: The first question of Bever's Jassen Kompas.

After the user is directed to the PLP, the filters are prefilled according to the answers of the user to the questions of the concept (Figure 86). Also, the labels ‘best choice’ and ‘good choice’ of the selection of six jackets can be seen. The user can view the prefilled filters in order to be able to extend his search with this relevant feature information since he will know what features to look for or are important for his activity. Furthermore, this option provides the user with more control over the use of the concept. Also in case of earlier quitting Bever’s Jassen Kompas to explore products (without reaching the preferences and best and good options) the user is directed to the prefilled PLP.

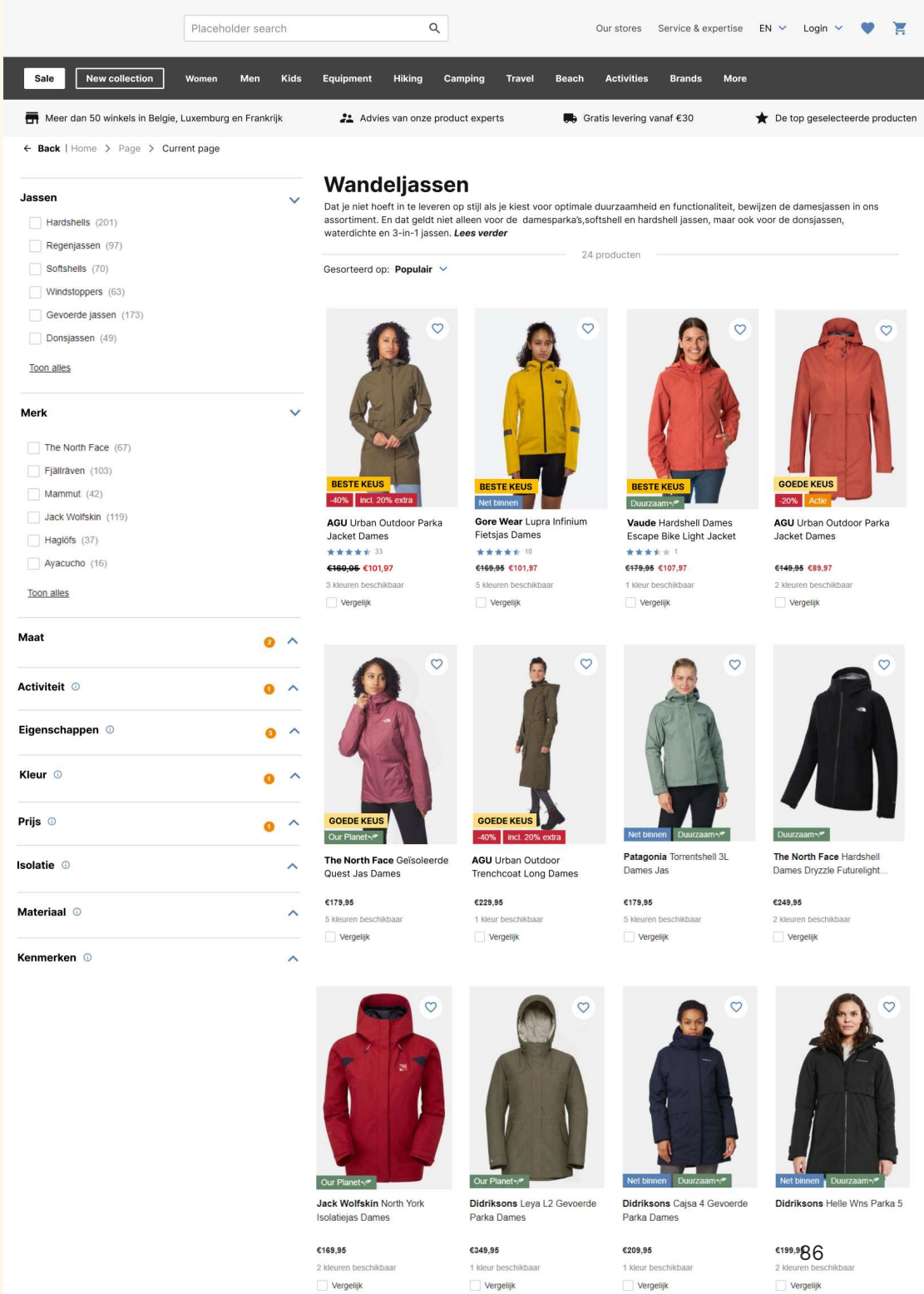


Figure 86: The first question of Bever’s Jassen Kompas.

Visual variations of the final concept

With regard to the final concept, subsequently different variations can be thought of regarding the realisticness of the experience. In which scenario of the concept would the user experience the best virtual creation of his adventure? In which scenario relates the user the best to his activity? Is this in an abstract scenario, photo studio setting, or realistic scenario (Figure 87)? The above mentioned questions will be evaluated in the evaluation research, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

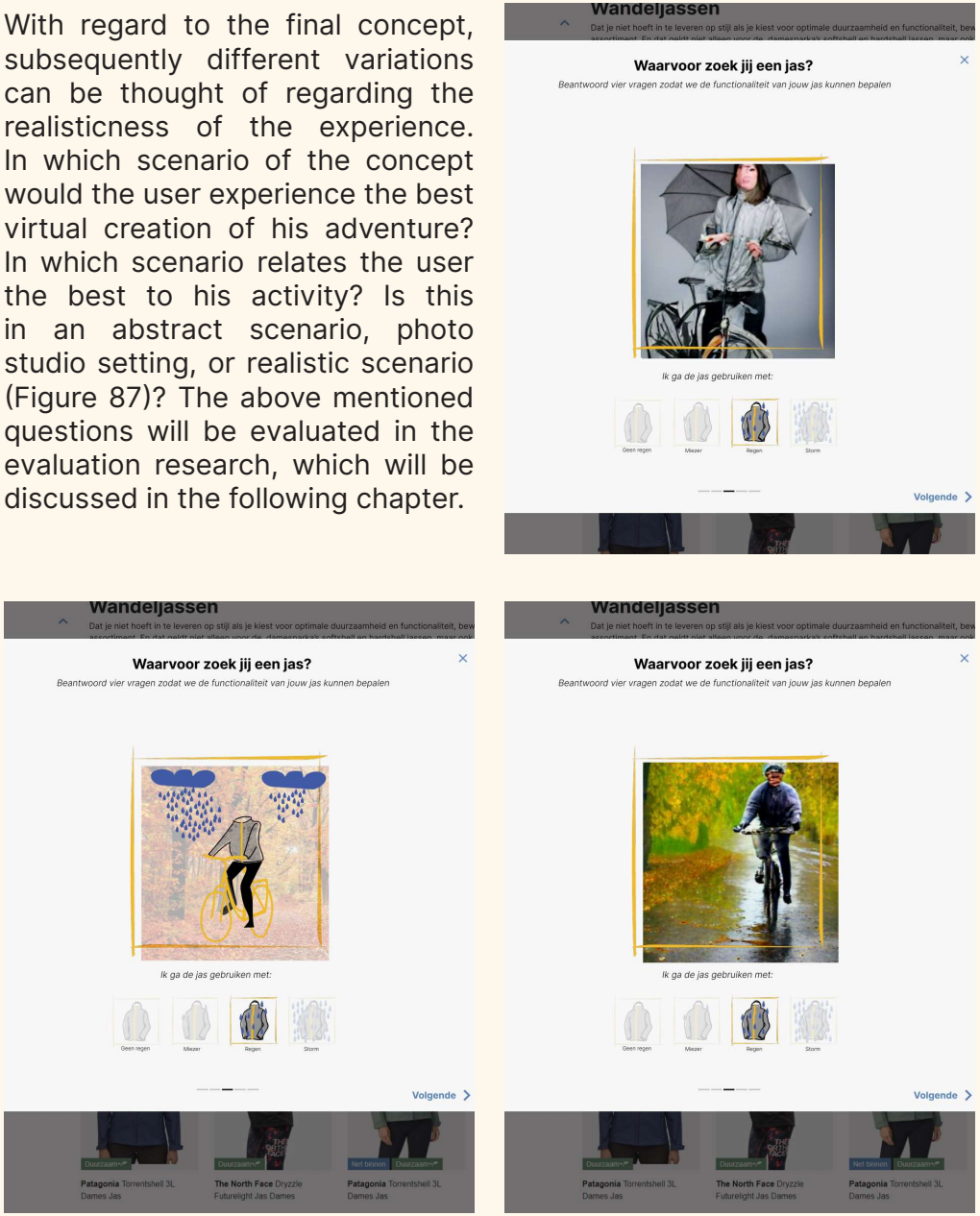


Figure 87: abstract, photo studio and realistic scenario.

These questions are also of crucial importance with regard to an implementation of the concept since many combinations of activity, seasons and weather can be thought of, making it complex or difficult for Bever to create all these images. The pictures used for the variations (photo studio and realistic scenario) are created (within seconds) with artificial intelligence by means of Dalle Mini. The input that was wished for was given and immediately nine pictures were generated to choose from. This can be used for all kinds of scenarios showing the potential for Bever that this could be a possibility in order to generate pictures. For example, it was wished to show a beaver wearing a gray jacket who was cycling in the rain in the autumn or a beaver in a photo studio cycling with an umbrella and Dalle Mini created the pictures of Figure 88.

Figure 88: generated pictures by artificial intelligence.

CHAPTER 15 - USER EVALUATION

USER EVALUATION

A user research is executed to evaluate the final concept. The user research consists of two parts: the evaluation of the final concept and the evaluation of visual variations of the final concept to gain insights for further development of the concept.

Research questions

The main research questions to be answered are: 'What do the participants think of the concept?' and 'How satisfied are the participants with using the concept?'. During the evaluation, the concept has been discussed by means of the System Usability Scale (SUS) (Appendix 10). This is a simple, ten-item scale which is generally used after a participant had the opportunity to use a concept (or system)(Brooke, 1996). This scale focuses on effectiveness (are the participants able to complete tasks while using the concept, and how is the quality of the output of those tasks perceived), efficiency (is it easy to perform the tasks with the concept) and satisfaction (the participants' subjective reactions to using the concept) (Brooke, 1996). With regard to the interaction vision, only a question about feeling confident is integrated in the SUS. Therefore two questions are added to the SUS to include the other two feelings of the interaction vision of this research (feeling in control and feeling surprised) (Appendix 10).

Besides these two main research questions, another research question has been studied in this evaluation: 'Which variation of the visualization of the concept do the participants prefer?. This is used to gain insights into the possibilities of different visual variations of the final concept for further development of the concept. All questions can be found in Appendix 10.

Setup

The research consists of three parts (Figure 89):

1. finding a jacket while using the concept (abstract variation).

2. evaluating the concept by means of the SUS and discussing the outcome of these questions.

3. evaluating the concept variations (abstract, photo studio or realistic).

Finding a jacket (part 1)
At first, a participant is given the task to find a new outdoor jacket. He needs to find a jacket for a predefined activity, weather conditions and preferences (Figure 90). The predefined activity is cycling and therefore the preference is given to participants who cycle in their free time.The task ends when a participant reaches the last page of the concept, the prefilled PLP, with the best, good and other products.

Evaluating the concept (part 2)
After the finding task was completed, the evaluation part took place. The user had to fill in the SUS scale, and afterwards a discussion about the questions took place.

Evaluating the variations (part 3)
After the task and SUS evaluation took place, the three visual concept variations have been discussed with the participant (Chapter 14) (Figure 91).

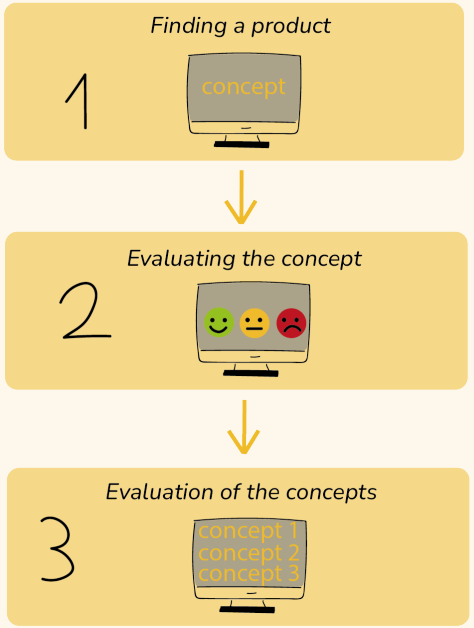


Figure 89: The setup of the evaluation research.

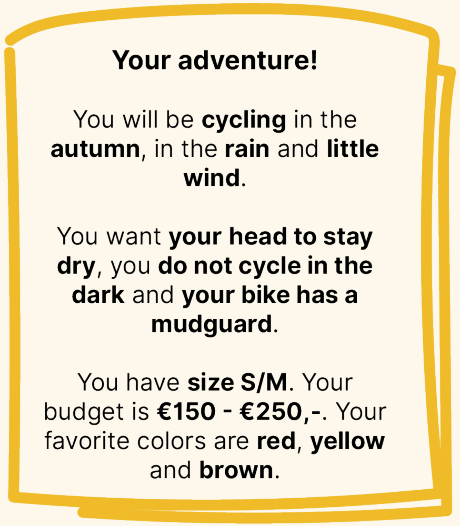
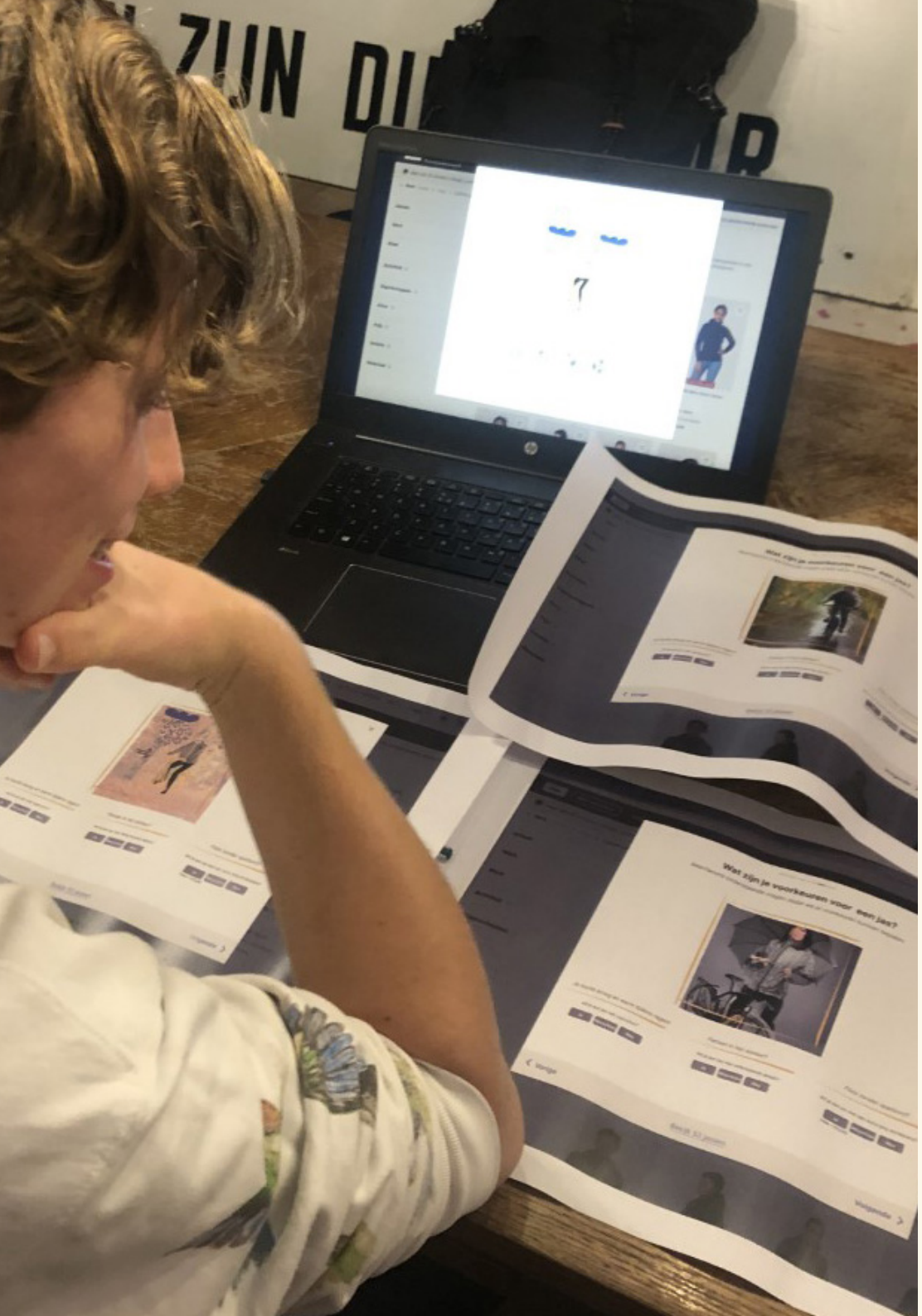


Figure 90: The predefined adventure of the user.



Results

Eight novice users took part in the research, varying in age and gender. Overall, the SUS was rated very positively towards the concept. The concept was rated extremely easy to use, not complex, quick to learn and so on. All insights about the SUS can be found in Appendix 10. Besides the usability being rated in the SUS, the three elements of the interaction vision and the variations were evaluated which will be discussed below. A total of forty points (eight participants times five of the SUS scale) could be obtained when ranking the SUS questions.

Confident

The question in the SUS was as follows: 'I felt confident using the system'. This question has been answered very positively and scored 35 out of 40 points. The participants mentioned to feel confident about the six presented jackets and the process, since answering the questions was found easy and the participants were guaranteed no mistakes were made. However, the feeling of confidence could be improved by Bever mentioning why the selection of jackets was chosen. Another aspect leading to a lower feeling of confidence, is the fact that the jacket still needs to prove that it was the right product for the specific activity of the user.

Control

The question in the SUS was as follows: 'I felt very much in control when using the system'. The participants scored this question very high and answered this question with 37 out of 40 points. The participants mentioned that they felt in control since their criteria were used in the system. Also, it was mentioned that there was no longer a need to search for a long time because this system would provide the user with the right jacket. An improvement mentioned was that the concept could have more skip options in order for users to have more control. At last, since the selection is done by Bever the participants mentioned this could lead to less control over the outcome.

Surprise

The question in the SUS was as follows: 'I found the system very surprising'. This question was answered the lowest of the three emotional values and scored a 29 out of 40 points. The system was found surprising by the participants because the questions were found very surprising, the outcome was surprising, no regular filters were used and the concept was found original. However, it was also mentioned that the usage of the concept was not surprising but obvious and everything in the concept seemed correct and normal.

Figure 91: A user evaluating the concept variations.

Variations

Several insights were gained about the visual variation preference of the users. First of all, it became clear that none of the participants preferred the photo studio visualization. This visualization was found to be editorial and fake. Also, it was mentioned that this visualization did not make much sense because a jacket is meant for the outside and not the inside, and that all focus would shift towards the elements (e.g. bike, umbrella) instead of the jacket. For both the abstract and realistic visualization the opinions varied. The participants found the abstract visualization very personal, relatable and clear to show the chosen elements with icons. However, it was also mentioned that the abstract visualization is not realistic and did not attract much attention. The realistic visualization was found to be most familiar and close to the activity of the user with all attention to the jacket. However, the participants mentioned that it would be a cliche Bever picture, and the context shown on the picture would never match 1:1 with the scenario of the user. Also, to portray some elements (e.g. wind) would be difficult. All insights mentioned about the variations can be found in appendix 10.

Conclusion

This research showed insights into the usability of the final concept, evaluated the emotional values from the interaction vision and gained the participants opinions about the visual variations of the concept.

Overall, the usability is experienced very positively. Also the emotional values from the interaction vision are experienced very positively. However, a few improvements could be made to the concept. With regard to a user feeling confident the reason why the selection of jackets is chosen could be mentioned in the concept. Also, an aspect that complicates a user feeling confident is that a jacket still needs to prove if it is the right jacket for the specific activity of the user. With regard to a user feeling in control the concept could contain more skip options when a user needs to answer questions. Another aspect that complicates a user feeling in control is the fact that Bever 'makes' the selection of jackets. At last, with regard to a user feeling more surprised, the concept should have been less obvious and less normal.

The opinions of the participants about the visual variations varied. However, the photo studio visualization was perceived in a very negative way. The abstract visualization and the realistic visualization both were found to have advantages and disadvantages. For example, the abstract visualization is clear in providing feedback to the user about earlier given input of the adventure. The disadvantage of the abstract visualization is that it is not realistic and does not attract much attention. The advantage of the realistic visualization is that it is very close to the real adventure of the user. The disadvantage of the realistic visualization is that it is a cliche Bever picture and the context of the picture would never match 1:1 with the activity of the user. Since the opinions about the abstract and realistic variation vary so much, further research should explore this deeper.

Discussion

The task that the participants needed to execute was for one specific scenario (the predefined adventure). The participants experienced it as a fun activity to use this adventure information because "it felt a bit like a grocery list" as one participant quoted. However, because of this predefined adventure it might have been a bit hard to identify with since it was not an actual scenario of the participants. Also, at that specific moment the participants were not in need of an actual cycling jacket. However, the answers to the usability questions are still relevant because the concept has been used by the participants. To conclude, the approach of giving the participants a task was considered good to evaluate the usability of the concept. However, for further research it is recommended to have the concept working for all scenarios in order to let the user experience the concept for his adventure.

Furthermore, the visual variations were displayed on paper. This validation only focussed on the middle picture of the concept and therefore the paper display was considered good for this evaluation (although normally the concept is meant to be interactive). The participants were able to share

insights about their opinion about the visualizations.

At last, this evaluation was conducted with eight participants. As this is a very small group of participants, no significant differences can be concluded. It is recommended for future research to evaluate the concept in a quantitative way.

Conclusions Chapter 15

[1] The usability of the final concept has been experienced very positively by the participants.

[2] The interaction vision (measured in the SUS) has also been experienced very positively. However, a few aspects could be improved with regards to feeling confident, feeling in control and feeling surprised.

[3] The preference for visual variations of the concept have been ranked differently by the participants. Firstly, the photo studio visualization is experienced as a no go, but the abstract and realistic visualization were both found to have advantages and disadvantages.

CHAPTER 16 - NOVICE USER GUIDELINES FOR BEVER

NOVICE USER GUIDELINES FOR BEVER

Besides the creation of a concept, five guidelines for communication and information towards a novice user have been drawn up. These guidelines are meant for every employee at Bever working with information and communication on the website (e.g. UX, Product Content, Commercial Development). Every guidelines is presented with an explanation, tips, and realtime examples of what should be improved.

Guideline #1: Focus on product benefits

The main focus of the presentation of a product should be on product benefits rather than on product features. This guidelines is related to Chapter 6.

Product benefits are of great importance because they show the value a user will gain from a product. Subsequently this results in users understanding a product by understanding the values of the different features because they interpret what the product will mean for them.

Tips:
- When writing about a product feature make sure the product benefit is the subject of the sentence rather than the product feature.
- Have in mind what value every product feature brings to the user and include this explanation in the product description.
- Do not hide the product benefits in lots of text but make sure they can be easily seen with a glance of the user.

Example of Product Benefits Guideline #1:

'Reflective badges on the back and brand logo on the sleeve' is a current sentence of a product description. Instead the focus should be on the product benefit: high visibility (Figure 92).

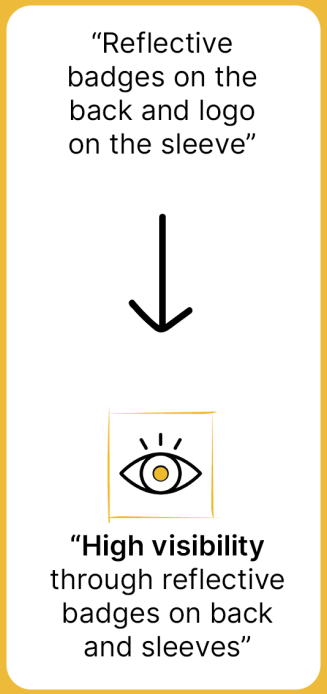


Figure 92: Product Benefits Guideline example.

Guideline #2: (water, water, water) What?

The language of the novice user should be spoken, not the one of the expert. Words, phrases and concepts similar to the user, rather than ('outdoor gear') terminology. This guideline is related to Chapter 3 and 8.

Communicating in familiar terminology is of great importance to a novice user when making informed and considered decisions. Users need to understand the questions, options and differences in order to do so.

Tips:
- Ensure users can understand terminology and information without having to look up the explanations or definitions.
- Do not assume an understanding of words or features similar to your own.
- User research will quickly uncover if a user understands or does not understand filters or features.

Example of (water, water, water) What? Guideline #2:

When 'everyday terminology' is spoken, users can quickly relate to and understand features and descriptions. 'Waterproof', 'Water resistant' and 'Water repellent' are three features specifying the difference in performance of a product regarding water blocking. When changing the question to familiar weather conditions a user can quickly relate to it (Figure 93).

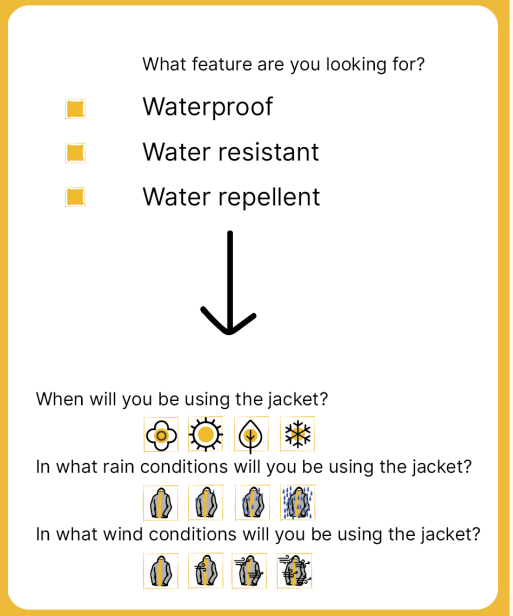


Figure 93: (water, water, water) What? Guideline example.

Guideline #3: Activity focus

Rather than focussing on the performance of products, the focus of the web store should be on activities and the context in which the products can be used. This guideline is related to Chapter 3 and 7.

A novice user in need of a product for a specific activity enters the web store with the specific activity and product in mind. When little or no activity related content is shown, it is unclear to a user if a product matches his specific activity since the novice user has little to no prior knowledge or experience with the specific activity and the needed product.

Tips:
- Visualize the activity or context of use. In this way the imagination of the user interacting with the product will grow.
- Communicate the necessary information regarding the possible product with the activity in mind.

Example of Activity focus Guideline #3:

When a user is in need of a tent, a 'Keuzehulp' exists which the user can use in order to find the best matching products. However, the focus of the questions can be more focussed on the activity and context in order to gain the right information about the adventure of the user (Figure 94).

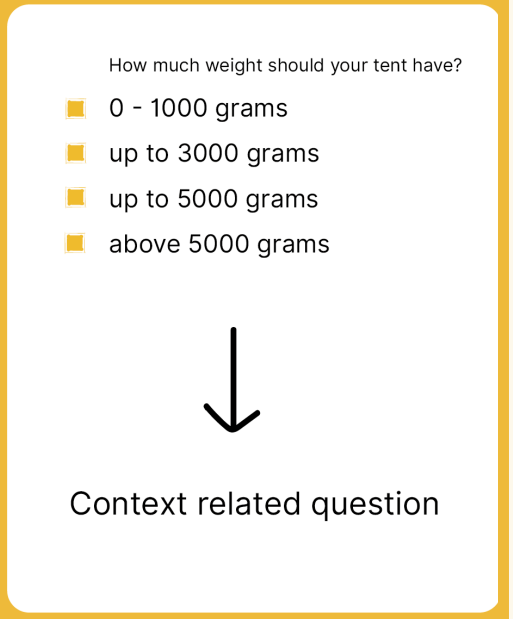


Figure 94: Activity focus Guideline example.

Guideline #4: Consistency

Products should be presented in the most equal and comparable way for the most informed decision of the user. This guideline is related to Chapter 2 and 8.

It is more difficult for a user to compare products when information is missing or hard to compare. This leads to confusion and it might even lead to not choosing the best matching product.

Tips:
- Present products (and their corresponding information) with the same standard or format.
- In case of unknown product information, a (Bever buiten) expert should come up with the information in a transparent way.

Example of Consistency Guideline #4:

When a user is comparing jackets, differences within the breathability units can be found. When deciding one format, all products can be presented in the same way leading to an equal comparison without confusion for the user (Figure 95).

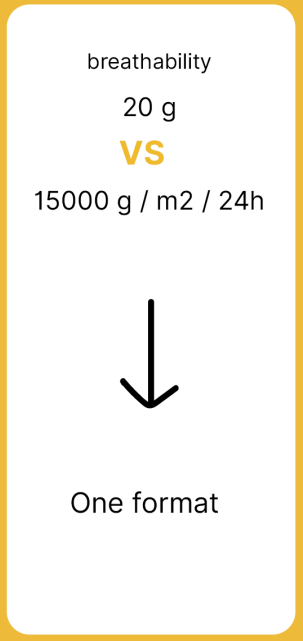


Figure 95: Consistency Guideline example.

Guideline #5: Guidance

The more products in offer, the more choices a user has to make, the more guidance a novice user needs. Users should not have to wonder about products and features and what options to choose. This guideline is related to Chapter 8 and 9.

A user can be overwhelmed by the amount of products, features and choices. Especially a novice user needs guidance and needs to be taken by the hand as much as possible.

Tips:
- Ensure explanations everywhere.
- In case terminology is used, make sure there is an understandable explanation (Heuristic #2).

Example of Guidance Guideline #5:

When a user is filtering out options on the PLP, different features can be seen without an explanation. When providing the user with an explanation, a user is guided towards using the filters now (Figure 96).

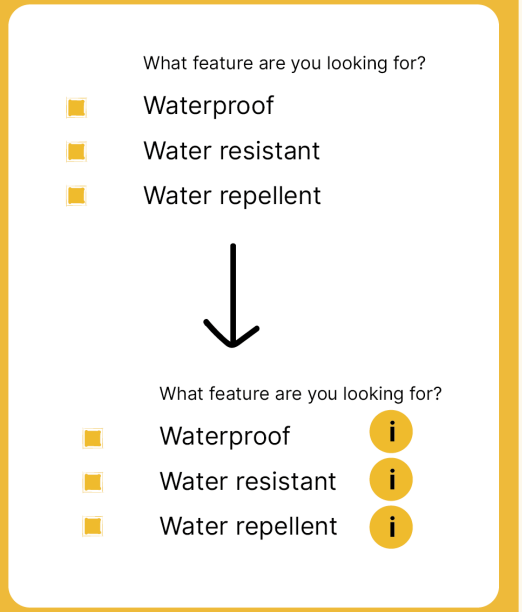


Figure 96: Guidance Guideline example.

PART 3

PROJECT EVALUATION

PROJECT EVALUATION

This chapter presents the conclusions of this project by summarizing the research outcomes. Furthermore, recommendations for further research are discussed. Thirdly, a personal reflection is given to evaluate the whole project.

Project outcomes

The design goal of this research was to ensure the right product in online searches at Bever.nl. This has been researched by the design challenge: 'How to explain product benefits of outdoor jackets to novice users in order for them to make a more informed online decision?'.

The following aspects define the focus of the project outcome:

Activity
A novice user must know how to look for the right product and if a product matches his activity. Therefore the website should have an activity focus.

Explanation
A product must be explained by means of product benefits in order to be understandable for a novice user to ensure a feeling of confidence about the search.

Presentation
A visually oriented presentation of information is needed to ensure a less boring and more surprising experience.

Navigation
A faster exploration of the right product and product information by means of a more goal-oriented search to ensure the user a feeling of control.

The above aspects merge into the final design: Bever's Jassen Kompas. This is a decision support that ensures the right product for a novice user in online searches at Bever.nl. It focuses on the visual aspect of the activity of the user (within his specific context) by answering understandable activity and context related questions. Subsequently a selection of the three best and good product choices are presented to the user in order to guide the final decision making.

Besides the creation of a concept, five guidelines for communication and information towards a novice user have been drawn up. Since the final design does not propose a solution which is ready to implement, these guidelines should be used immediately and are meant for every employee at Bever working with information and communication on the website (UX, Online Experience, Product Content, Commercial Development).

Recommendations for further research

This project has explored novice users in their journey to find the right jacket for a specific activity. However, since the limited time span of this project (one hundred working days available) and improvements that can be made to any design project in general, several recommendations for further research are drawn up.

The first recommendation would be to test this concept with actual novice users that have an intention to buy. For this graduation project users shopping in the Bever store or friends and family have taken part in the user research but these participants were not in a real need of buying a jacket at that time. Also, users spending actual money could potentially lead to more and deeper insights about the usage of the concept.

The second recommendation for further development of the concept would be to validate and discuss, together with experts, the questions asked in Bever's Jassen Kompas. The questions used in the concept are the same questions Customer Service asks via chat and by phone. It was decided to use these same questions since the Bever store employees educators did not have a specific script for how the context of the activity of the user can be determined by the employees.

Another recommendation is about two elements that were not taken into account simply because these were not part of the scope of the project. The first element is a mobile design. Currently, the design was created for desktop and no attention was paid to a mobile design. It was chosen to do so since the main focus was on creating a concept guiding a user through his journey towards the right jacket. For further development the concept obviously needs to be designed for mobile, to be accessible for every Bever user. The second element that needs to be improved is the usability of the concept. Again, this was not a focus point but needs attention with further development of the concept.

At last, a fourth recommendation would be to research the back-end development of the concept. This

has not been studied in this project, but needs to be researched to ensure that the user will see the right selection of jackets for his adventure as an outcome. Also, the algorithm in order to show the best matching jacket, or the selection of jackets needs to be researched.

Personal reflection

This personal reflection describes experiences during this graduation project and discusses improvements for my future projects.

First of all, it became clear that I value the first part of a design project, the research phase (or first diamond) most. I really liked doing the research very much. During this part of the project I stumbled upon many (for me) new and relevant aspects related to my design challenge. This motivated me to keep exploring and defining everything related to the context of my challenge. My shortcoming in this project was that I found it hard to proceed to the next phase while I had not explored some aspects yet. For example, when I was in the design phase (the develop phase) I took on this extra need to discover in order to start designing my concepts because I felt the strong urge to explore how the context of an adventure is retrieved by Customer Service. An improvement for my future projects is to stop looking for new information after the first diamond is completed and to only focus on the phase where I am at in order to be able to move on with the project.

A second learning point from this graduation project is that communication about expectations is very important. This project had a kick-off meeting to discuss expectations with all supervisors involved. However, during this project the company supervisor changed which resulted in some unmet expectations about my project for the company at the end. For future projects I would prioritize discussing expectations of everyone involved to prevent disappointments or unmet expectations.

Furthermore, I learned that it's important to have more self confidence about my work. In the beginning of the project everything was new to me and I was figuring out my approach and the project itself. Along the way I gained more insights and improvements that could be made to the Bever website which resulted in Bever's Jassen Kompas and guidelines. I learned that when presenting a concept questions will be asked and I should answer these questions with more confidence because I am the expert about the work I am doing and therefore have the most clear vision about the concept. For future projects I will take more ownership about the choices I have made because these choices are based on insights from my research.

Overall, I can say that I am proud of how the project went. I conducted a whole research project on my own (with all the help of all supervisors), without a clear example for this specific topic. I am pleased and happy with the end result and feel confident and am ready to start with my career!

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APPENDIX