Design for **equal advertising opportunities** in an **e-commerce marketplace.**

By Thijs van de Water

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Colophon

Master thesis

Design for equal advertising opportunities

in an e-commerce marketplace.

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SELTO

TU Delft

Delft
University of
Technology

Summary

This thesis investigates strategies to create more equal advertising opportunities for small sellers, referred to as Performance Players, on Selto, a major e-commerce marketplace. Currently, larger advertisers dominate the platform by leveraging their access to advanced advertising expertise and agency support, while smaller sellers face barriers such as limited financial resources, insufficient knowledge of advertising strategies, and an overwhelming campaign management process. These challenges significantly limit their ability to optimize Sponsored Products campaigns, reducing their visibility and sales potential.

Challenges and Objectives
Performance Players often rely solely on Selto's automated advertising tools to manage their campaigns, which lack the customization and strategic depth used by larger sellers or agency-managed campaigns. These small sellers face a significant disadvantage as they lack the expertise to compete effectively in a marketplace where the ability to optimize Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising is critical. The aim of this research is to design solutions that enable small sellers to enhance their advertising performance.

Methodology
 The research follows a Design Thinking approach, encompassing five phases: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. This process involved qualitative interviews with small sellers and agencies, a competitor analysis, and iterative prototyping. Key findings revealed that small sellers trust Selto more than external agencies and value intuitive, easy-to-use tools over complex systems. Insights from the research shaped the development of solutions that prioritize simplicity, usability, and affordability while aligning with Selto's business goals of increasing seller growth and platform diversity.
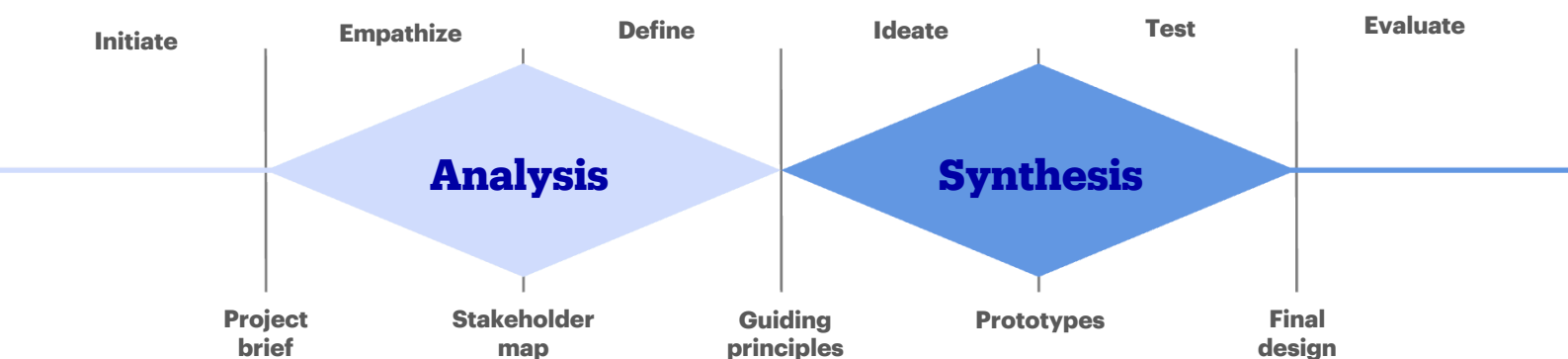
Figure 0.2: Design process visual (Authors own work)

Impact and Implications
The research demonstrates that empowering small sellers with accessible tools and tailored support not only drives seller growth but also enhances Selto's overall competitiveness. By leveling the playing field, Selto benefits from increased product diversity, improved seller satisfaction, and greater marketplace activity. These solutions ensure that advertising spend is more effective, fostering a more inclusive and balanced marketplace.

Proposed Solution: The Recommendation Concept

The centerpiece of this project is the recommendation concept, a system designed to help small sellers optimize their Sponsored Products campaigns. This feature provides useful insights and suggestions directly in their dashboard, helping them adjust budgets, refine targeting, or update keywords. With clear, straightforward guidance, sellers feel empowered to take control of their advertising and achieve better results. Say goodbye to guesswork and hello to actionable, data-driven recommendations!

During concept detail interviews, sellers shared which information matters most and what grabs their attention. Below, the dashboard highlights the recommendation section. The following pages detail each component and provide an overview of the types of recommendations.
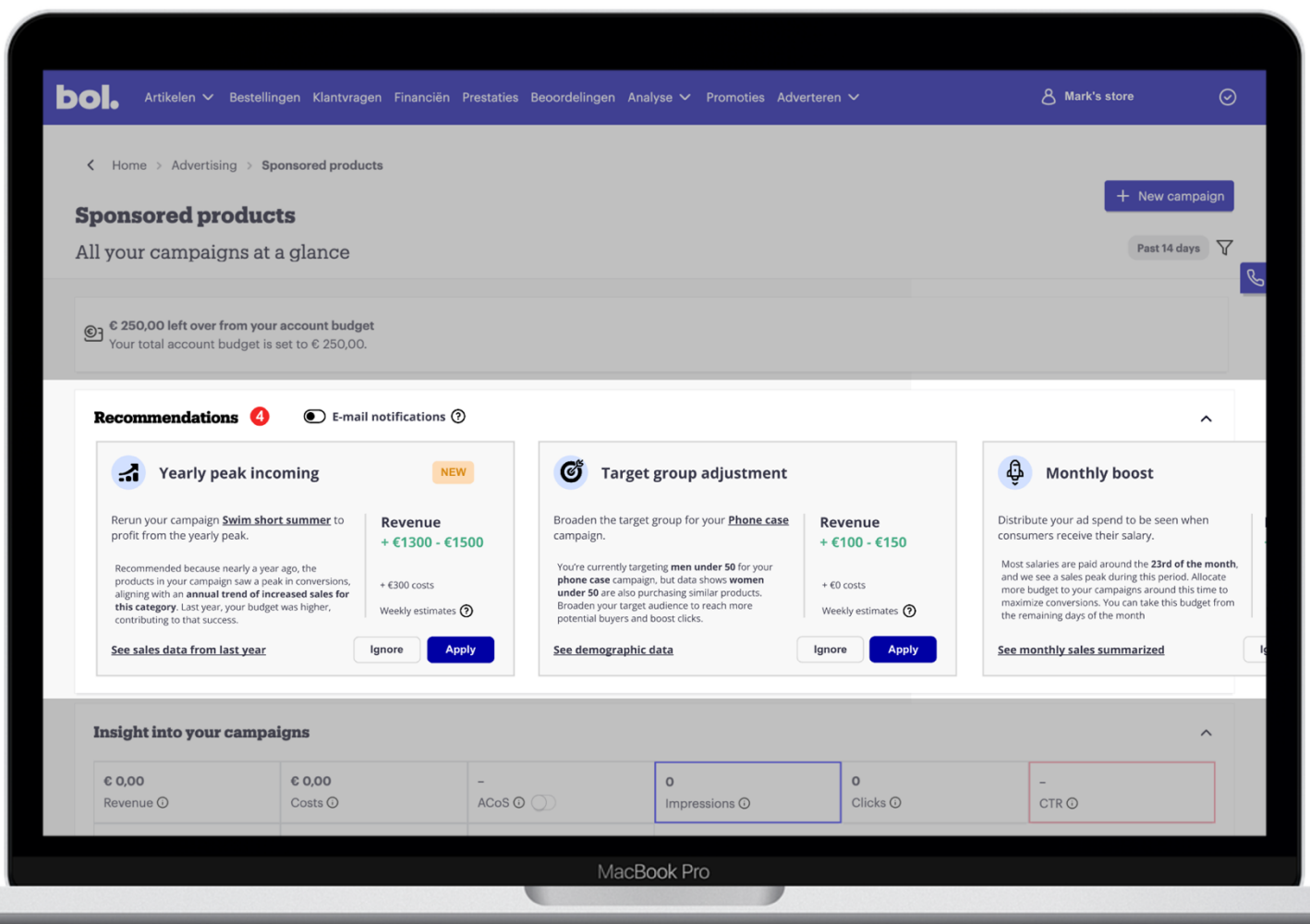
Figure 0.3: Prototype concept: Recommendations (author's own work)

Conclusion

This thesis highlights the critical role of user-centered design in addressing the unique challenges faced by small sellers in e-commerce marketplaces. By equipping Performance Players with the tools and knowledge to optimize their Sponsored Products campaigns, Selto creates a scalable, accessible ecosystem that promotes seller growth and platform diversity. These findings provide a framework for fostering equity and inclusivity in digital advertising, balancing the needs of small sellers with the scalability of the platform.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of a challenging and rewarding journey, and a great deal of help was obtained from numerous people along the way. I would like to seize this opportunity to thank everyone who assisted in any way towards my successful completion of this work.

Let me show my gratitude foremost to my graduation committee: first, Dr. M.E.H. Creusen, secondly F.P.A.M. Taminiau MSc., and finally D. Weijers for their comments, motivations, and guidance through the project. Their rich experience and productive criticism have significantly shaped this thesis.

I am very grateful that Selto trusted me with the opportunity to work on such a valuable project. The access to resources, stakeholders, and the supportive collaboration with the design team have been priceless. Special thanks go to Daan and the other team members for your input during brainstorming sessions and your enthusiasm in empowering small sellers.

I am also greatly indebted to the small sellers and agencies that contributed to interviews, sharing critical insights which grounded the basis of this study. Your willingness to share your experiences was integral to understanding the challenges at hand and some opportunities in Sponsored Products advertising.

Let me also express my appreciation for my peers at the Delft University of Technology: their good comradeship and collaboration made it worth living through.

I thank you all for the encouragements, inspiration, and belief in this project.

Glossary

ACoS (Advertising Cost of Sale)
ACoS is a metric used in paid advertising campaigns to measure the ratio of ad spend to the revenue generated from the ad. It is calculated by dividing the total ad spend by the total sales attributed to the ad, then multiplying by 100 to get a percentage. A lower ACoS indicates a more efficient ad campaign, as the cost to generate sales is reduced.

Advertisers
Sellers that create and run advertisements to promote their products on Selto. They use tools like Sponsored Products campaigns to reach potential customers on the platform.

Automation
Tools or software provided by Selto that enable sellers to automate aspects of their ad campaigns, such as targeting and bidding, to simplify the management process.

Advertising Budget
The allocated financial resources that sellers dedicate to running their Sponsored Products campaigns on Selto, often managed manually or through agencies.

Advertising ROI (Return on Investment)
A metric used by sellers and agencies to measure the effectiveness of advertising campaigns, calculated as the profit gained relative to the cost of advertising.

Agencies
Ad Agencies are made up of marketers who offer creative and strategic services to clients who wish to advertise their products or services. In this project, the agencies help some sellers manage campaigns.

API (Application Programming Interface)
An API is a set of rules and protocols that allow different software applications to communicate with each other. APIs are essential for enabling integration between different systems, such as connecting an e-commerce platform to marketing tools for automated campaign management.

Campaign
A planned series of advertisements run by advertisers to promote products over a specific period. Campaigns on Selto can be automated or managed manually to target specific customer groups.

Category Leaders
The largest sellers in their categories on Selto, focusing on advertising to maintain dominance, enhance brand visibility, and achieve long-term growth.

Freelancer
Services offered by independent professionals to assist small sellers with their advertising needs at lower costs compared to traditional agencies.

Mid-Market Sellers
Sellers associated with notable but not dominant brands, who see advertising as an investment for brand growth and often utilize multiple advertising channels.

MVP (Minimum Viable Product)
An MVP is the most basic version of a product that is still capable of meeting the core needs of its users. The goal is

to validate assumptions and gather user insights before fully developing the final product.

Partner Platform
This is the website where sellers on Selto can find all information and tips about selling on the Selto marketplace.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising
A digital advertising model where advertisers pay a fee each time their ad is clicked. In this model, advertisers bid for ad placement in a platform's search results or product listings, targeting relevant customers who are searching for specific products or categories.

Performance Players
Small-scale sellers on Selto who are not tied to major brands and operate with limited budgets, primarily using basic tools provided by Selto to manage advertising campaigns.

ROS (Return on Sales)
ROS is a profitability metric that calculates how much profit a company earns for each unit of sales. It is expressed as a percentage and is calculated by dividing the net profit by total sales revenue.

Selto
A fictional name representing a major e-commerce marketplace in the Netherlands, which has chosen to remain anonymous.

Sponsored Products
A tool that lets sellers promote products directly on Selto's platform, appearing in relevant search results or product pages.

Targeting
The method of directing advertisements toward specific consumer groups based on criteria such as keywords, product categories, or shopper behavior on Selto.

Reading guide

This thesis is divided into four main sections**: Initiate, Analyze, Synthesize, and Evaluate**. Each section represents a critical phase in the design process, guiding the reader through the journey from problem identification to actionable solutions. Below is a detailed overview to help navigate the content:

Initiate
This foundational section establishes the project's objectives, scope, and research questions. It frames the challenge faced by small sellers on Selto and outlines why the issue of unequal advertising opportunities matters. The approach used to investigate this challenge is also introduced, providing readers with a roadmap of the methodologies employed.

Analyze
The analysis section dives into understanding the current ecosystem of small sellers, agencies, and Selto as a platform. This includes stakeholder perspectives, challenges faced by small advertisers, and the competitive landscape of Sponsored Products. Key insights are derived from interviews, competitor analysis, and desk research, offering a comprehensive picture of the issues at hand.

Synthesize
Building on the insights gathered in the analysis phase, this section explores potential solutions. It captures the ideation process, from brainstorming sessions to the development and testing of concepts. The emphasis is on bridging the gap between small sellers and advertising expertise, using clear guiding principles to shape the solutions.

Evaluate
The final section presents the selected design solution, supported by user feedback and feasibility assessments. It includes a detailed implementation roadmap, exploring how the proposed solution can be integrated into Selto's ecosystem. Reflections on the project's impact and potential long-term outcomes conclude the report.

Who Should Read This Report?

General Readers: Begin with the Introduction and Conclusion to gain a high-level understanding of the project and its outcomes.

Design Practitioners: The Analyze and Synthesize sections provide rich insights into user behavior, stakeholder needs, and the design process.

Selto Stakeholders or E-commerce Professionals: The Evaluate section details the final solution and implementation strategies, offering actionable recommendations to enhance the platform.

This report is designed to flow logically, from understanding the problem to proposing and validating solutions. Readers are encouraged to explore sections relevant to their focus areas but will benefit most from engaging with the report as a whole.

Section 1:
Initiate

Figure 0.4: Photograph (Selto, 2024)

1.

Introduction

This chapter introduces the core topic of this thesis project and outlines the research questions that guide the study. Additionally, it presents the defined scope of the project to clarify the areas of focus. Finally, the chapter explains the overall structure of the report, which is organized around the Design Thinking methodology, providing a clear framework for the research and design process.

Design Brief

Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising is an important component of online marketing strategies because it allows businesses to reach customers based on their search activity (Khushboo, 2024). Within PPC, "Sponsored Products" enable businesses to directly promote their products on e-commerce platforms such as Selto. A new Sponsored Products environment was launched recently, providing sellers with more opportunities to target consumers searching in specific categories. (Partner platform Selto, n.d.) While this update improves targeting options, many advertisers, particularly small businesses, may find managing these campaigns difficult.

Sellers can now target their advertisements at highly specific consumer groups, but managing these campaigns necessitates a thorough understanding of how to optimize placement. For small businesses without dedicated marketing teams or resources, manually managing these campaigns can be overwhelming and time-consuming, resulting in missed opportunities and inefficient spending.

To navigate these challenges, businesses are presented with two primary solutions. The first option is to set up an automated campaign, where the platform's algorithm selects the most relevant product placements based on consumer behavior. This approach simplifies the process and is ideal for advertisers who are unfamiliar with PPC advertising or lack the time to manage campaigns manually. However, automated campaigns may not provide the same level of control and fine-tuning that more experienced advertisers seek.

The second option is to hire an agency to manage the campaigns manually. This approach is particularly attractive to larger companies with a wider range of products, as agencies can analyze each product individually and determine the most logical and effective placement for advertisements. By outsourcing to specialized agencies, businesses can ensure that their campaigns are being optimized by experts with industry knowledge, resulting in better overall performance.

There are several key advantages to outsourcing tasks such as PPC campaign management:

Focus on Core Activities
Outsourcing campaign management allows businesses to focus on their core competencies while leaving the complexities of PPC advertising to experts. (Fan et al., 2006) (Lacity & Willcocks, 2000)

Cost Reduction
For many businesses, outsourcing is more cost-effective than maintaining an in-house team to manage advertising campaigns. (Liao & Reátegui, 2002) (Lacity & Willcocks, 2000)

Access to Expertise
Agencies bring specialized knowledge in PPC management, often leading to more effective campaigns. They can optimize for better return on investment (ROI) and stay updated on industry changes, such as Selto's new Sponsored Products environment. (McIvor, 2005) (Axelrod, 2004)

Enhanced Performance
Agencies, due to their size and focus, can often deliver better performance than internal teams. Their expertise

allows them to optimize campaigns in ways that would be challenging for a business lacking in-house specialists. (Allen et al., 2003)

Increased Flexibility
Outsourcing gives businesses the ability to scale their advertising efforts up or down without committing to full-time internal resources. (Tayauova, 2012)

While outsourcing can be beneficial, it may not always be feasible for smaller businesses, which often struggle to find the budget to hire an agency. Agencies typically charge a monthly fee for managing campaigns, which can be too costly for smaller advertisers. However, for those able to afford it, outsourcing can significantly enhance their online presence by ensuring campaigns are handled strategically and effectively. (Agburu, 2017)

Selto plays a significant role in promoting agencies that manage Sponsored Products campaigns. The platform provides a list of agencies,

complete with reviews, to help businesses choose the right agency for their needs. However, Selto does not offer a direct service to match businesses with agencies, leaving companies to evaluate the options on their own. Why Selto should help small sellers is explained in chapter 3: Context.

Therefore, the aim of this master thesis is to design for equal advertising opportunities on the Selto marketplace. To achieve this, it is essential to understand the context of advertising on Selto and the relationship between agencies and sellers. The intended outcome of this project is a design proposal that enables small sellers to access advertising guidance in an easy and cost-effective way. When successful, Selto should be able to implement the solution in their new Sponsored Products environment.

The project brief, as approved by the IDE Board of Examiners, can be found in Appendix 1.

Project scope and research questions

The focus of this project is to design more equal advertising opportunities for sellers on Selto's e-commerce marketplace, specifically by enhancing access to help with Sponsored Products for small sellers.

Currently, larger sellers with more resources tend to dominate advertising, as they can afford agencies to manage manual campaigns and optimize ad placements. In contrast, smaller sellers often struggle to compete due to limited budgets and expertise, even though they could benefit significantly from more visibility on the platform. This could be a problem when it comes to the diversity of the platform.

Creating a more equal playing field in advertising could be valuable both for small sellers, agencies and for Selto itself. If more small sellers can effectively advertise their products, the overall competitiveness of the platform would increase, leading to a more diverse range of products being promoted to consumers. For agencies, an entire new client base will be unlocked. Additionally, empowering small sellers with better advertising tools can foster long-term growth for these businesses, which may become larger and more profitable clients for Selto in the future.

For many small businesses, the complexity of Sponsored Products management can be overwhelming. Selto tries helping the small businesses by providing automated campaigns. However, automated systems may not always offer the control and specificity that a more strategic manual campaign, managed by an expert, could provide. Large companies often outsource this task to agencies, which offer tailored strategies for product placements based on data and market analysis. Although this is highly effective, the cost of outsourcing is often too expensive for smaller sellers.

While this project primarily focuses on smaller advertisers, the proposed solutions may also be applicable to medium-sized sellers and even larger companies. However, to maintain a manageable and specific scope, the research and design will center on small sellers, who face the most significant challenges in accessing help and managing Sponsored Products on the platform.

The research for this project will focus on how digital solutions can level the playing field for smaller advertisers. Finally, the research will lead to specific design solutions that help small sellers connect to agencies more effectively and competitively, ensuring they have more equal opportunities to succeed in Selto's marketplace.

The narrow scope of this project is focused on designing more equal advertising opportunities for small sellers on the Selto marketplace. Investigated is how digital solutions can help make it more affordable for sellers to get help from an agency and how it can be profitable for an agency to take smaller clients ('the process'). Multiple solutions that help connect agencies and small sellers will be designed and tested. Finally, one design will be chosen, and an implementation plan will be made. ('the outcome').

Main research questions:

RQ1: How can digital solutions help make it more affordable for **sellers** to get help from an agency?

RQ2: How can new stakeholder proposals make it more attractive for **agencies** to take smaller clients?

RQ3: What should **Selto** offer as solutions to small **sellers** and **agencies** to help them connect?
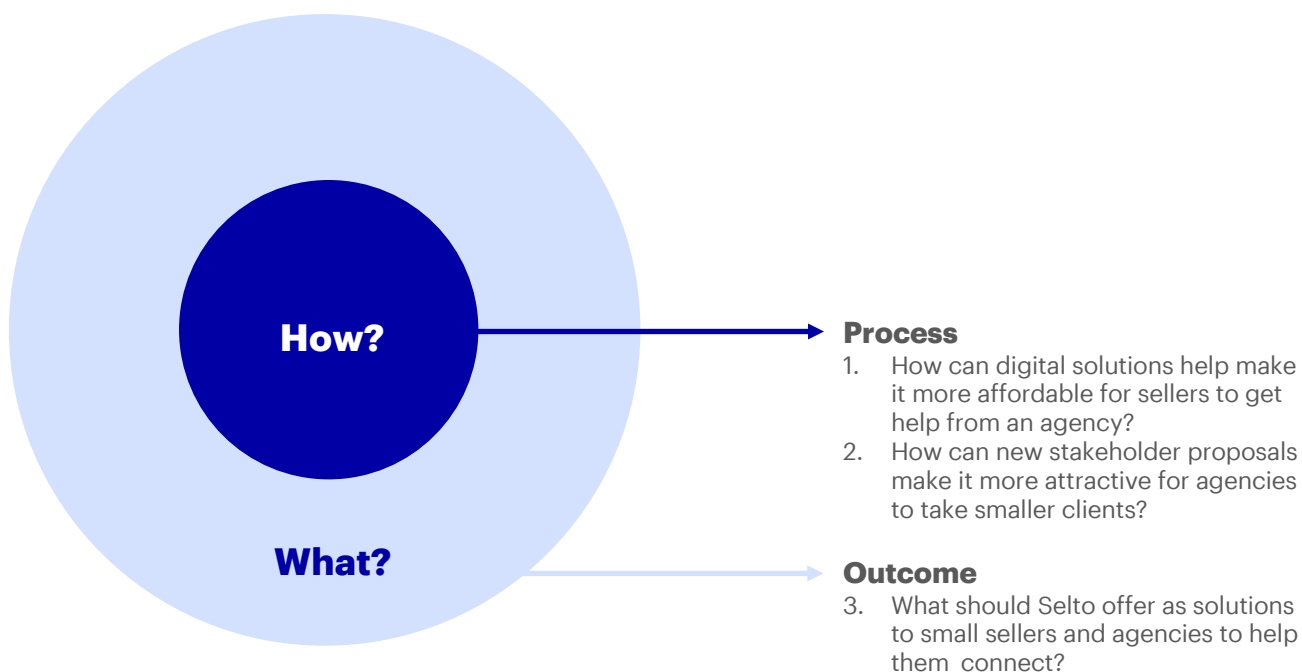

How?

What?

Process
1. How can digital solutions help make it more affordable for sellers to get help from an agency?
2. How can new stakeholder proposals make it more attractive for agencies to take smaller clients?

Outcome
3. What should Selto offer as solutions to small sellers and agencies to help them connect?

Figure 1.1: How/What visual (Authors own work)

2.● Approach

This chapter outlines the approach taken in the project, detailing how various design methodologies are integrated throughout the process. Specifically, it explains the application of methods like Design Thinking, which guides the project's structure, ensuring a user-centered and iterative process aimed at developing practical solutions for the challenges identified.

Design approach

Throughout the course of this 20-week project, a combination of design and research methodologies will be employed to achieve the desired outcome: a solution for small businesses to access advertising guidance within Selto's new Sponsored Products environment.

The project will follow the Design Thinking framework. For this specific project, the following five phases have been identified: **empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test**. Each of these phases will guide the process from understanding the needs of agencies and Selto's small sellers, through the development of user-centered solutions, to the implementation of the final proposal.

Throughout the process, methodologies from established design tools and frameworks will be applied. These include approaches from the Delft Design Guide (Boeijen and Daalhuizen, 2013) and the Convivial Toolbox (Sanders and Stappers, 2012). These methodologies will be adapted or combined as needed to ensure a thorough and flexible design process that delivers to the unique requirements of agencies, Selto and its smaller advertisers.

By following this structured approach, the project aims to deliver a well-researched and practical solution that can be easily integrated into Selto's Sponsored Products environment, offering small sellers more equal access to advertising opportunities.

Design elements

Stakeholder-centered Focus

This project for Selto follows a Stakeholder-centered design approach, with the primary goal of addressing the needs of small advertisers and agencies. By deeply understanding the challenges these stakeholders face, the project will ensure that insights are translated into actionable and relevant solutions that meet their needs.

Prototyping and Iteration

Prototyping plays a central role in this design process. Both rapid and high-fidelity prototypes will be developed to test ideas early and gather valuable feedback from stakeholders. This iterative process allows for refinement of the design, ensuring that the final product evolves in response to real-world input and testing.

Creative Thinking

Creative thinking methods will be used throughout the project to approach the problem from multiple perspectives. This encourages innovative ideas and solutions, guiding the process of developing, testing, and validating concepts. These techniques will ensure flexibility and open-mindedness during the design phase.

Alignment with Selto

Ultimately, the goal is to deliver a solution that not only benefits small advertisers but also fits seamlessly within Selto's existing ecosystem. By focusing on practical and scalable solutions, the project ensures that the design will be valuable both for users and for Selto's strategic goals like increasing advertising revenue and increasing customer satisfaction.

Design Thinking

Throughout this project, elements of the design thinking methodology will be utilized to guide the development of solutions. Design Thinking is a widely recognized framework for fostering innovation, originally developed for product design but now applied across a variety of industries, including corporate environments (Kolko, 2015). The process typically follows five key phases: **empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test**. However, one of the strengths of Design Thinking is its iterative nature, often visualized as an infinite loop. This emphasizes that the process is not strictly linear: sometimes early testing or prototyping can redefine or clarify the problem. (Plattner et al., 2013)

A key part of design thinking is its focus on users. It's important to interact directly with the users at every step, making sure the solutions are based on their needs, challenges, and goals. This approach works well in complex projects because it allows for regular feedback and adjustments to improve ideas and solutions.

In this project for Selto, Design Thinking will guide the process through five stages, with room for many small changes along the way. As I test and improve prototypes with users, I will make sure the final solution meets the specific needs of small businesses on the platform. This ongoing, user-focused process will help create a solution that is both useful and effective in connecting small advertisers with agencies.
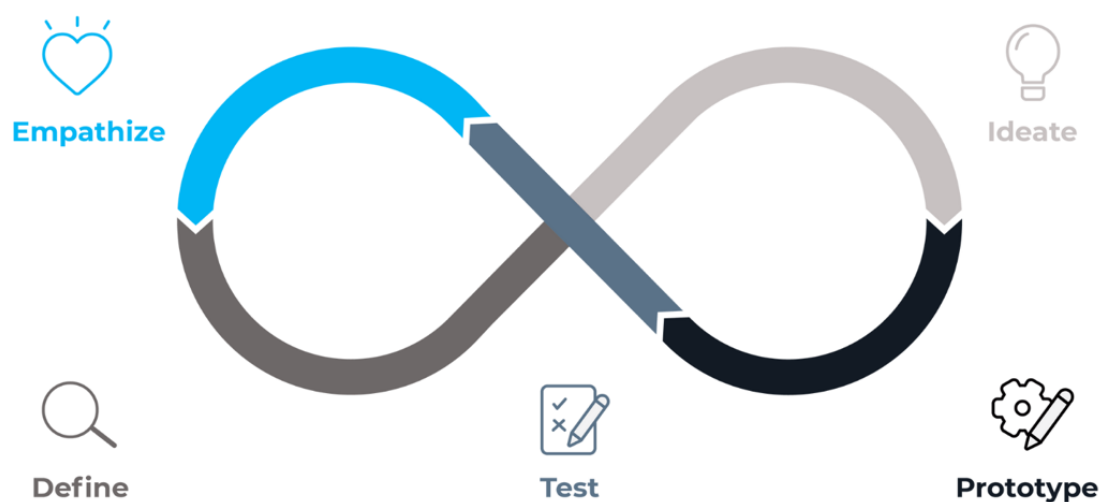

Figure 2.1: Design thinking process (MAQE, 2022)

Design process

This report is structured into four key sections: initiate, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate. The section titles align with the design thinking phases that guide the project, ensuring consistency and clarity throughout the document. For sections 2, 3, and 4, each will conclude with a summary of the key findings, making the report easier to navigate and understand. Below is an overview of each section:

During this design project for Selto, I apply elements of the Design Thinking methodology to guide the process: **empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test**. These elements are placed alongside the double diamond, allowing for divergent and convergent thinking (Design Council, n.d.). This approach ensures that the design process is iterative, stakeholder-focused, and aligned with Selto's broader ecosystem. The following chapters give the report structure. Here you can read a short overview including deliverables per chapter.

Figure 2.2: Design process visual (Authors own work)
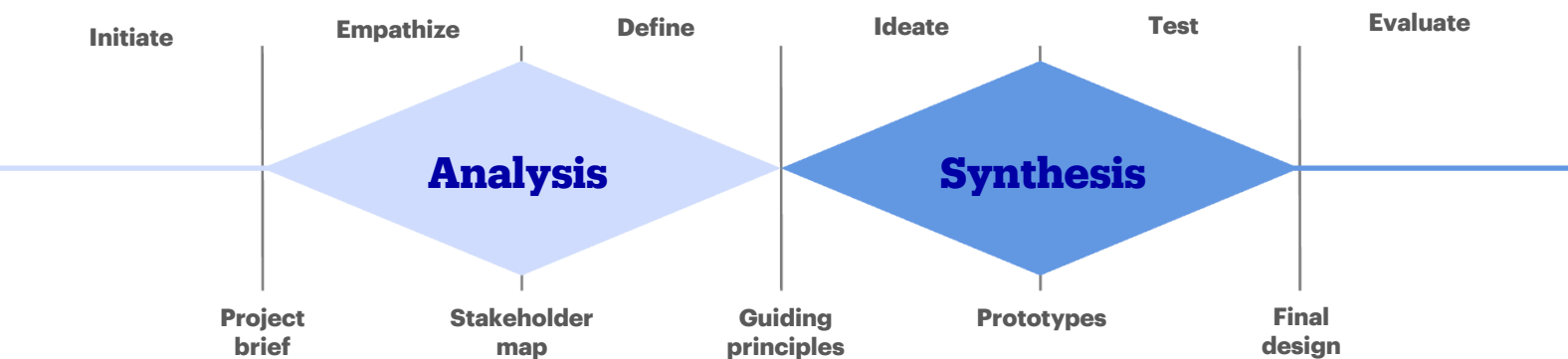
1: Initiate
The first part of the report introduces the project's objectives, research questions, and the overall approach. This section provides the foundational context for the project, explaining why and how I am addressing the challenge of improving access for small sellers to agencies in Selto's Sponsored Products environment. This chapter includes the following deliverable:

- **Project brief** A concise document outlining project objectives, scope, deliverables, stakeholders, timeline, and key requirements.

2: Analysis
In this section, I delve into understanding the needs and challenges faced by small businesses when it comes to managing their Sponsored Products campaigns. Through qualitative research and literature review, I empathize with stakeholders, including small advertisers, agencies, and Selto itself. The research conducted helps to frame the problem and leads to the formulation of a clear design statement. This phase concludes with the completion of the empathize and define stages. This chapter includes the following deliverable:

- **Stakeholder map** Each stakeholder with their context visualized.

3: Synthesis

Here, the gathered insights from the analysis phase are translated into actionable ideas, concepts, and early prototypes. Based on the design statement and research findings, various solutions are generated and refined. The prototyping phase allows me to test these ideas with Selto sellers and internal teams, incorporating feedback to continuously improve the designs. Multiple prototypes are developed and tested, eventually leading to a final concept that meets the project's goals. This chapter includes the following deliverables:

- **Guiding principles** These principles are grounded in both user needs and Selto's business objectives and serve as criteria for decision-making during the next phases.
- **Prototypes** Low-fidelity prototypes to test the concepts with.

4: Evaluate

The final section involves testing and validating the chosen design with end-users and internal stakeholders at Selto. This phase helps to assess the impact of the proposed solution and ensures that it aligns with the needs of the users while being feasible for implementation by Selto. The evaluation process provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the design and its potential for adoption within Selto's Sponsored Products environment. This chapter includes the following deliverable:

- **Final design** A chosen concept with high-fidelity prototypes and an implementation plan.
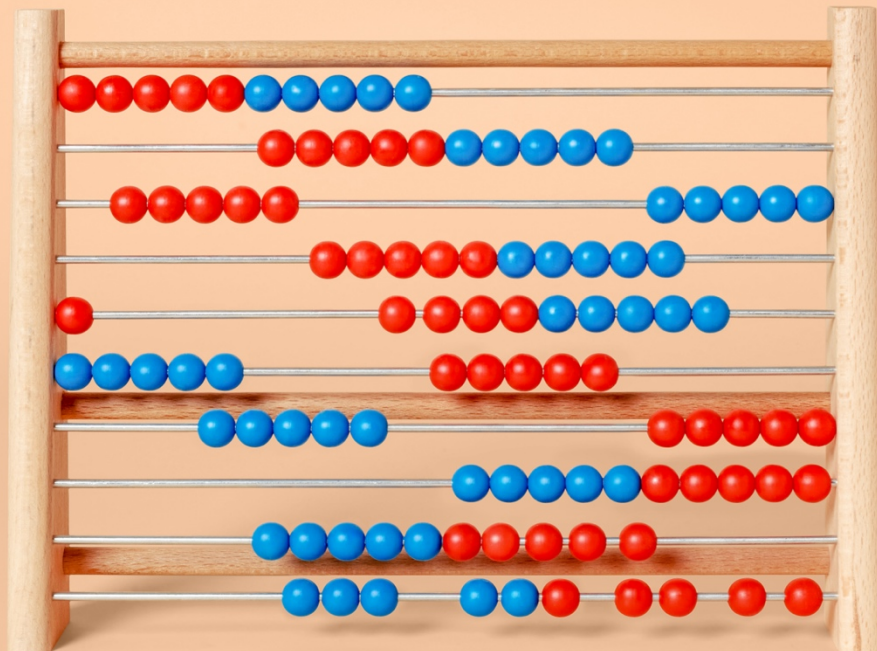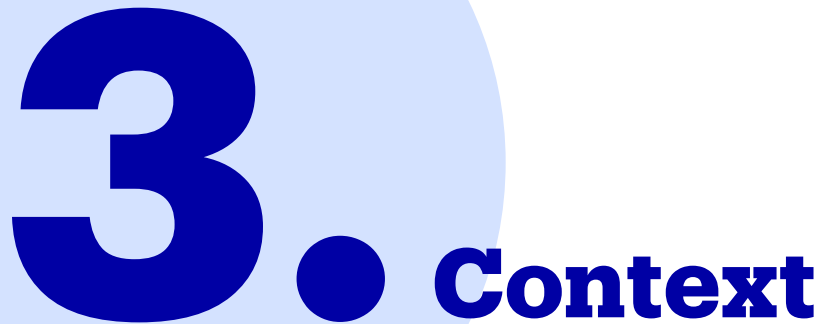
Section 2:
Analysis

Figure 2.3: Photograph (Selto, 2024)

SECTION 2 | ANALYSIS

3. Context

This chapter provides an overview of the project context from the perspectives of Selto, agencies and sellers. The details of Selto and Sponsored Products will be presented as well as the current situation when it comes to the relationship between all stakeholders.

Company

Selto is a very large and well-established online marketplace, not just in the Netherlands but also in Belgium. Selto expanded the product range into millions of goods within various product categories including, but not limited to, electronics, clothing, home goods, toys, and even food. Selto is both an e-retailer and an online marketplace where third-party sellers can also sell their products. With a mission to be the customers' most loved platform by innovatively driving convenience and sustainability in shopping, Selto seeks to connect all the users it serves: shoppers, sellers, and advertisers. Selto generates income through three departments:

Advertising via Selto (AvS) Where they allow sellers to put their product on top of the page. When a customer clicks on this product, a small fee will be paid to Selto.

E-commerce via Selto (EvS) Where they earn income both with selling their own products and asking for a commission when one of their sellers sells a product.

Logistics via Selto (LSvS) Where they help their sellers with the packing and shipping of their products so the product can be delivered as soon as possible.

Sponsored Products

The most popular form of Advertising via Selto is "Sponsored Products", a tool to help sellers increase their visibility and sales. Here's a more detailed look at how it works:

Sponsored Products campaigns
The Sponsored Products campaign involves products being pushed to the top of the page by a seller. These ads come up when potential customers actively search for items related to these products, which increases the likelihood of being interested in a particular product. The setup of these campaigns can either be automatic or manual, depending on the preference of the seller.

Pay-Per-Click
Only when the user clicks on the ad, the seller is charged. The same system that places Google ads at the top of the search page. The sellers can set their daily budgets and adjust how much they are willing to bid for each click.

Targeting
Selto's algorithm uses keyword targeting, which means search terms that shoppers use; it is also able to target by product categories and on similar product's pages. Targeting your ads ensures they reach the most relevant audience. For example, in case anyone searches for a headphone, advertised headphones will appear on top.

Bidding and Competition
Sponsored Products also rely on ad placement influenced by a bidding mechanism. The higher the bids or relevance, the higher the likelihood of better ad placement. Bidders see the average bid of ads in a category.

Managing and Optimizing Campaign
Selto gives the performance of their campaigns to the seller through data and insights that include metrics like the number of clicks, impressions, and conversions. This data is updated after each day ends.

Figure 3.1: screenshot of Sponsored Products campaign setup (Selto, 2024)
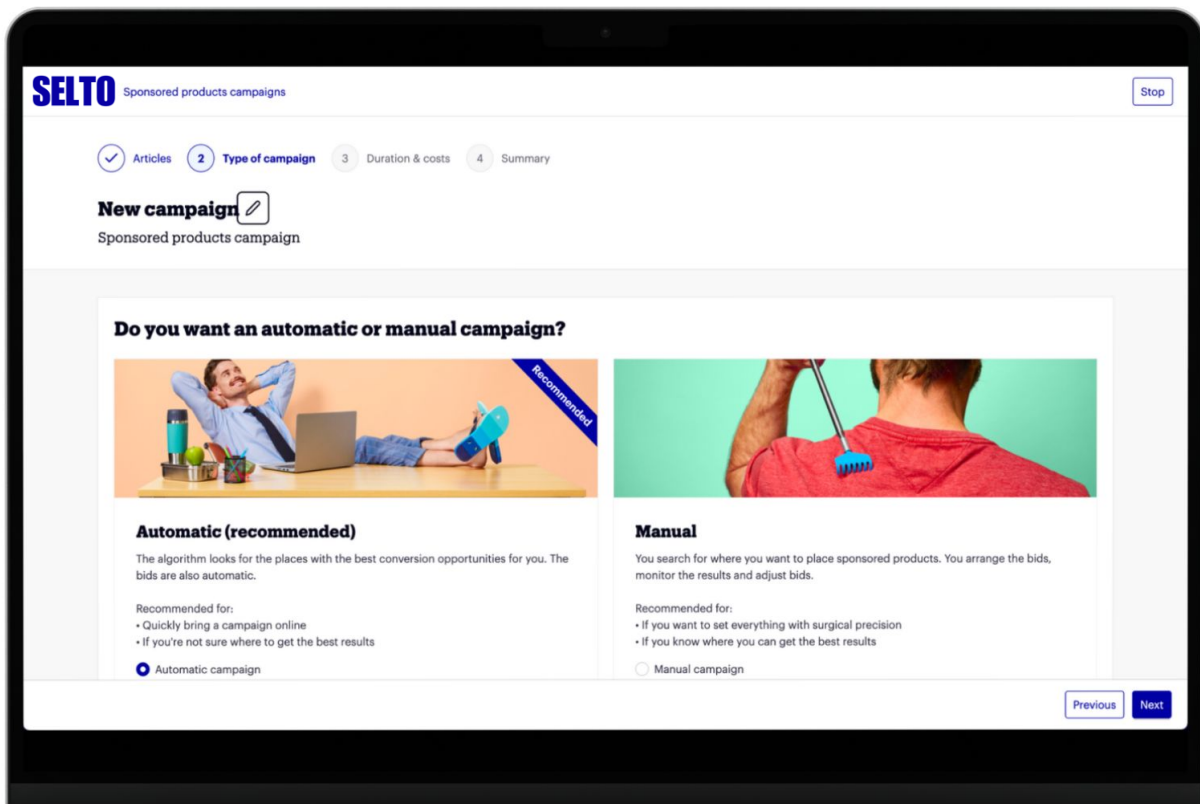
Company's perspective

Why focus on Advertising via Selto?
It is most strategic to focus the project on Advertising via Selto because, in this way, small advertisers would be given more equal opportunities. Advertisements have a direct link to sales and visibility; thus, it is an important tool for small sellers competing with larger businesses. With improved access to advertising tools, the project will empower these sellers to grow their businesses even with limited budgets.

Moreover, advertising is one of Selto's key revenue sources, and increasing the effectiveness of small sellers' use of this service will improve both ad revenue and their sales. Unlike logistics or e-commerce changes, improvements to advertising can be scaled very efficiently, and they're far easier to implement across a wide variety of sellers.

Most importantly, with advertising, the seller retains control over the visibility of their product. This project can focus on making this process more accessible and creating the right environment for small advertisers to compete fairly with bigger competitors. This approach will serve the needs of small sellers and correspond to Selto's business goals, making advertising the most relevant area of impact for the project.

What does Selto already do?
Selto already provides several resources to help advertisers optimize their Sponsored Products campaigns. Selto knows helping their advertisers will increase ad spend and overall happiness with the platform. On the right you can find a list of all the things Selto already offers to help advertisers.

Learning Resources
Learning is completely voluntary and while it does get promoted in e-mails, some sellers don't do it or can't find it. Learning resources are available for everyone on the partner platform.

- E-Learnings: Quick (15-20 min) introductory and advanced courses on Sponsored Products, covering setup basics and ongoing campaign optimization.
- Informative videos and blogs: The partner platform offers a range of videos and blogs covering all aspects of Sponsored Products.
- Webinars with Q&A: Regular webinars offer practical advice on common issues and include live Q&A sessions with Selto's advertising experts.

Practical Tools
- ACoS Calculator: A tool to help advertisers set and reach their target ACoS (Advertising Cost of Sale), crucial for effective budgeting and automatic campaigns.
- Advertising API: For larger assortments, the API allows for improved campaign management through automation and integration with other platforms.

Support
- The partner service is available to call for free every day for questions about Sponsored Products.
- Agency List: A curated list of 42 agencies that manage Sponsored Products campaigns for sellers.
- Selection Assistance: Selto offers a form-based service to help advertisers select an agency that best meets their business needs.

Seller's perspective

There are three categories of sellers identified by a designer at Selto. Small sellers (performance players) represent a crucial yet underserved segment within Selto's ecosystem.

Performance Players
Sellers who are not associated with a major brand and do not generate significant revenue from any single brand. They view advertising primarily as a cost and focus on keeping expenses low, relying heavily on Selto's Sponsored Products interface for campaign management.

Mid-Market Sellers
Sellers associated with notable brands but not the largest in their category. They see advertising as both a cost and an opportunity to grow their brand, often using multiple advertising channels and planning budgets for longer periods.

Category Leaders
The largest sellers in their category, associated with well-known brands. They view advertising as a way to grow their brand, defend their position, and maintain dominance. Their strategies are well-planned and allocated to various advertising channels.

Why Focus on Performance Players Spending Less Than €50,000 per Year on Advertising?

They Lack Affordable Access to Expertise
Performance players typically avoid hiring marketing agencies due to cost concerns, as these expenses significantly impact their already tight margins. However, they still need guidance to optimize their campaigns effectively. By enabling them to access agency-level expertise without the associated costs, Selto can fill a gap in the market, empowering these sellers to succeed.

They Rely on the Sponsored Products Interface
Unlike mid-market and category leaders, performance players primarily use Selto's Sponsored Products interface for their advertising needs. Since Selto has direct control over this interface, it offers a unique opportunity to implement solutions tailored to this group, such as intuitive tools, built-in guidance, and actionable insights.

They Receive Limited Support Today
Sellers spending over €50,000 on advertising annually already receive more personalized help from Selto, leaving smaller advertisers with fewer resources and less tailored support. Focusing on these smaller sellers levels the playing field, ensuring that success isn't only accessible to larger players.

Their Success Benefits Selto
Helping small sellers succeed directly benefits Selto by increasing ad spend, fostering higher marketplace activity, and ultimately driving more revenue. When performance players grow their businesses, their investment in Sponsored Products will increase, creating a mutually beneficial cycle that strengthens Selto's ecosystem.

Agency's perspective

Marketing agencies are companies that help retailers with advertising. Some agencies manage the full marketing of a company across various platforms like Google, Facebook and Selto. Other agencies are specifically focused on marketplaces like Selto and Amazon. Selto encourages sellers to hire an agency to optimize anything related to selling on Selto. On the partner platform Selto tells sellers: "...whether you need help with getting your product information online, advertising, automation, logistics, or developing a strategy."

Selto provides sellers with a list of agencies that provide these services along with reviews and information about the agency. Agencies are given a bronze, silver, gold or ambassador badge based on their range, client portfolio, and the diversity of their services (Partner platform Selto, n.d.). Sellers can choose from the list or request a recommendation from Selto for which agency fits their needs best. Selto earns nothing from connecting agency and seller directly. However, it is beneficial for Selto if sellers hire an agency as it lowers the pressure on Selto's support team. Also, optimized product pages and advertisements are overall better for the marketplace.

Agencies typically focus on larger sellers due to the higher budgets and returns they bring. Small sellers, on the other hand, often have limited budgets, which makes them less appealing clients for agencies that are looking to maximize profit from managing advertising campaigns. According to Selto's partner platform agencies typically ask between €100 and €150 per hour. Agencies may not see the value in dedicating resources to clients who cannot afford significant ad spending, which limits their ability to optimize campaigns effectively.

However, this focus on larger sellers is shortsighted. Currently, only **(7.A Appendix 7)** of active advertisers on Selto use an agency and small sellers represent the majority of the platform's sellers. This presents a huge opportunity for agencies to expand their client base by tailoring their services to meet the needs of these smaller advertisers. By offering more affordable, scalable solutions for small sellers, agencies can not only help small sellers optimize their limited budgets more effectively but also stabilize their own income by gaining a broader and more varied customer base.

Figure 3.2: screenshot of Selto's overview of agencies (Selto, 2024)
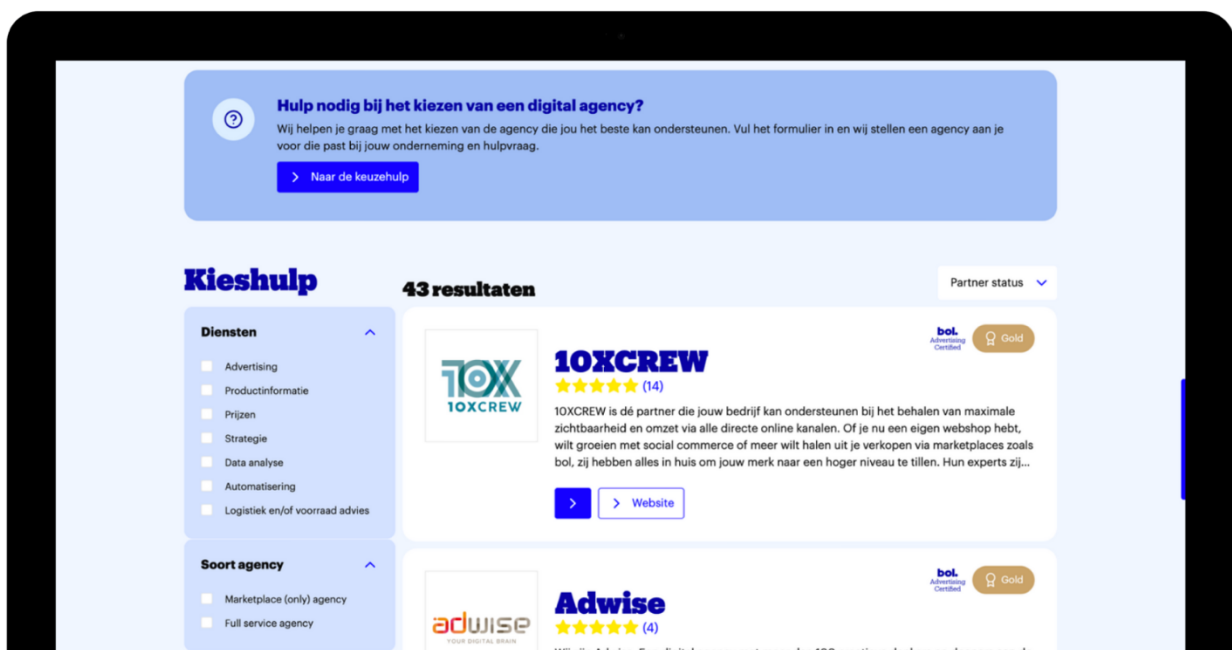
Stakeholder map

Selto

Selto is a primary stakeholder because it has the biggest influence on the project, and increasing small advertiser success boosts its ad revenue, improves seller retention, and strengthens its competitiveness.

Small sellers

Sellers on Selto are primary stakeholders because the project directly influences their success, helping them gain visibility, compete with larger sellers, and grow their sales through improved advertising opportunities.

Government

As a dominant marketplace, Selto must adhere to regulations that prevent it from using its market power unfairly. This means being cautious when offering different treatment to certain sellers. (Bueters, 2024)
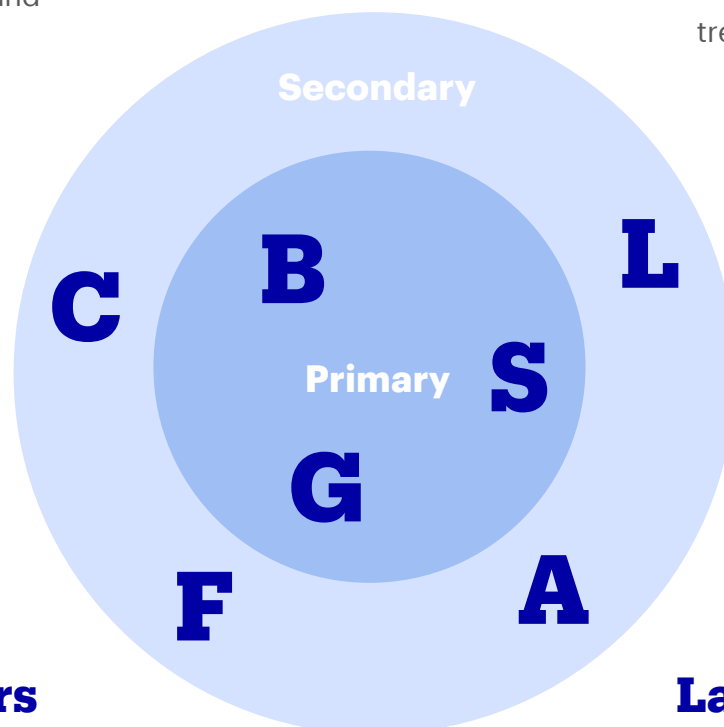
Figure 3.4: Stakeholder map (Author's own work)

Secondary

C B L S Primary G F A

Consumers

Consumers on Selto are secondary stakeholders because they are indirectly impacted. Improved advertising increases product diversity and relevance, enhancing their shopping experience, though the project primarily focuses on empowering sellers, not customers directly.

Agencies

Big Agencies are secondary stakeholders because it is beneficial for them to retain their larger clients, but this is not a must for the outcome.

Freelancers

Freelancers or small agencies are secondary stakeholders because they benefit if more sellers can afford their services which is an indirect impact of this project.

Large Sellers

Large sellers on Selto are secondary stakeholders because they already have the resources, expertise, and budgets to run successful campaigns, whereas the project focuses on empowering underserved small sellers to access advertising support and achieve equitable growth opportunities.

Literature on outsourcing

The numbers used in this chapter are confidential and can be found in **Appendix 7** by supervisors. Advertisers who work with an agency spend an average of **(7.B)** per week on Sponsored Products, compared to **(7.C)** spent by advertisers without agency support. Even though they spend more, agency-supported advertisers achieve much higher returns (**(7.D)** vs **(7.E)**) per week). While this does not prove that agencies are the reason for a higher revenue, it does show that spending more on advertising is seen back in the revenue.

Among the largest advertisers (the top **(7.F)**) who spend more than **€100,000** annually on ads, **(7.G)** use an agency, whereas only **(7.H)** of the smallest of the advertisers (the bottom **(7.I)**) do. Scientific research shows the reason behind these numbers. Figure 3.5 is taken from a study about outsourcing advertising management for Google

and Facebook. This study examined the effects of agency help on the return on sales (profit margin), finding that outsourcing to agencies pays off with higher advertising spending, but lower budgets are better managed in house (Porto & De Abreu, 2018). Google and Facebook have a similar advertising model as Selto has with PPC (Pay-per-click) bidding models and the option to select keywords, bids and target audiences. That's why I think this model is applicable to Selto's advertisers as well.
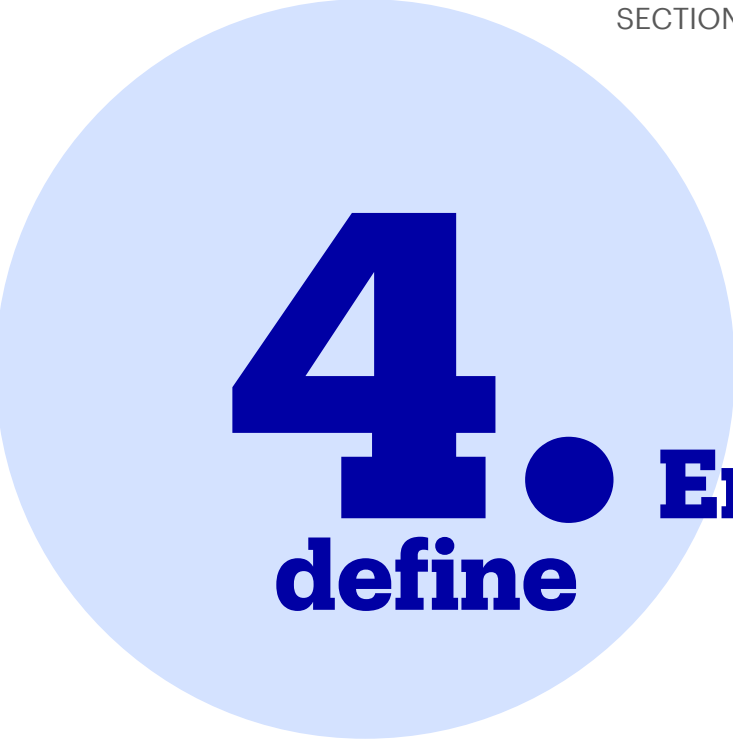
When small sellers manage their advertising without support, increasing budgets often leads to a lower return on sales (ROS). In contrast, outsourcing helps maintain stable returns, enabling sellers to grow while increasing Selto's revenue from advertising and sales commissions. Helping small sellers access agency support Selto benefits both the sellers it's profits, creating a win-win scenario.
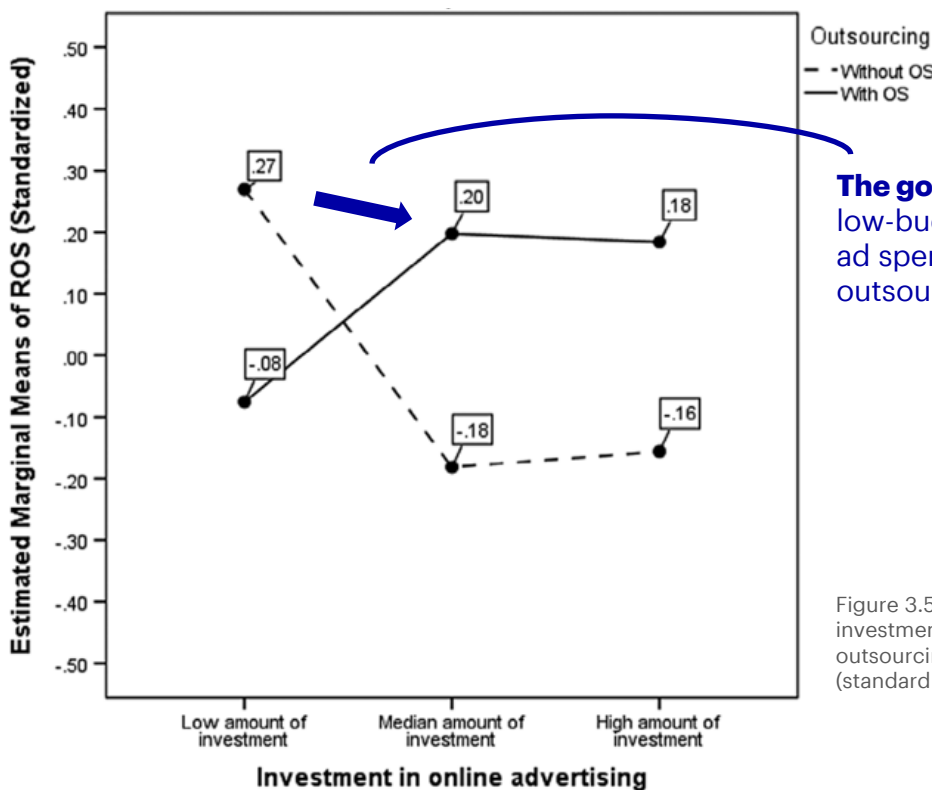
The goal of the project: Help low-budget sellers increase ad spend, sales, and profit by outsourcing ad management.

Figure 3.5: Interactive effect of investment in online advertising and outsourcing on return on sales (standardized). (Porto & De Abreu, 2018)

4.●

define

Empathize &

This chapter explores the needs, preferences, and motivations of sellers and agencies, focusing on the characteristics of the target audience. It outlines the research methods used, presents insight clusters from interviews, and transitions to crafting a compelling design statement as the foundation for the project's synthesis phase.

Research methods

For this project, an extensive empathizing phase will be carried out to gain a thorough understanding of the needs, preferences, and challenges encountered by smaller advertisers on Selto. This phase will employ a variety of research methods aimed at gaining insights into how these advertisers operate and where they may require assistance.

So far, it is understood that large advertisers on Selto are more likely to use marketing agencies to manage their Sponsored Products campaigns, resulting in larger advertising budgets and higher sales. The assumption underlying this study is that making agency support more accessible to smaller advertisers will help them optimize their campaigns and increase their competitiveness on the platform. Smaller advertisers may benefit from having access to the expertise they need to improve their advertising efforts, resulting in higher sales and more consistent advertisement spending.

This research is based on assumptions:
- Small advertisers are currently struggling to find affordable and effective Sponsored Products assistance.
- Agencies are mainly focused on big companies and are not interested in smaller sellers.

Research Goal
The goal of this research is to address the research questions presented on page 17 and to develop a clear design direction. This process aims to identify the most promising strategies for helping smaller advertisers on Selto access marketing agency support, which can enhance their advertising effectiveness and overall competitiveness on the platform.

Desk research
A thorough scientific literature study was done to understand the theory behind outsourcing services, with a focus on advertising. This scientific research is incorporated in the previous chapters (Design brief (p14) and literature on outsourcing (p32)). Additionally, desk research is executed to understand the broader context of advertising on a marketplace and the types of help those marketplaces offer to their advertisers for optimalisation. Competitors as well as companies with a similar structure are examined to understand different strategies. Findings are presented further in this chapter.

Interviews
10 in-dept interviews of 30 to 45 minutes are done with agencies and sellers who use Sponsored Products and are relatively small when it comes to advertising budgets. The interview questions can be found in the appendix 2 and 3. The results of the interviews are transcribed, tagged and clustered to find popular themes.

Competitor analysis

In this dynamic space of e-commerce, platforms are always striving to help their sellers improve the performance of their ads. As I work on new ways to give sellers more access to professional advertising insights, it's important to research how other companies—both in and out of the e-commerce space—are innovating to help their users in this area. Many platforms have bridged the gap between expertise and accessibility, offering direct access to professional guidance as well as creative, out-of-the-box solutions for knowledge sharing.

This competitor analysis addresses the ways other leading platforms are empowering their users to tap into expert knowledge, especially in the fields of marketing and advertising. The piece will go on to detail through various examples, from automated systems that enable users to mimic expert strategies to marketplaces that sell ready-made resources from specialists, what this means for the competitive landscape. Latching onto these efforts will allow me to think of innovative ways of giving sellers on Selto access to professional advertising knowledge, particularly for those on a smaller budget or with little advertising experience.

The 12 services described below help companies connect their users to expertise in many ways. This competitor map positions companies between acting as connectors or experts and offering personalized or automated services. On the following pages, each of these services will be briefly described along with a possible similar service for Selto.
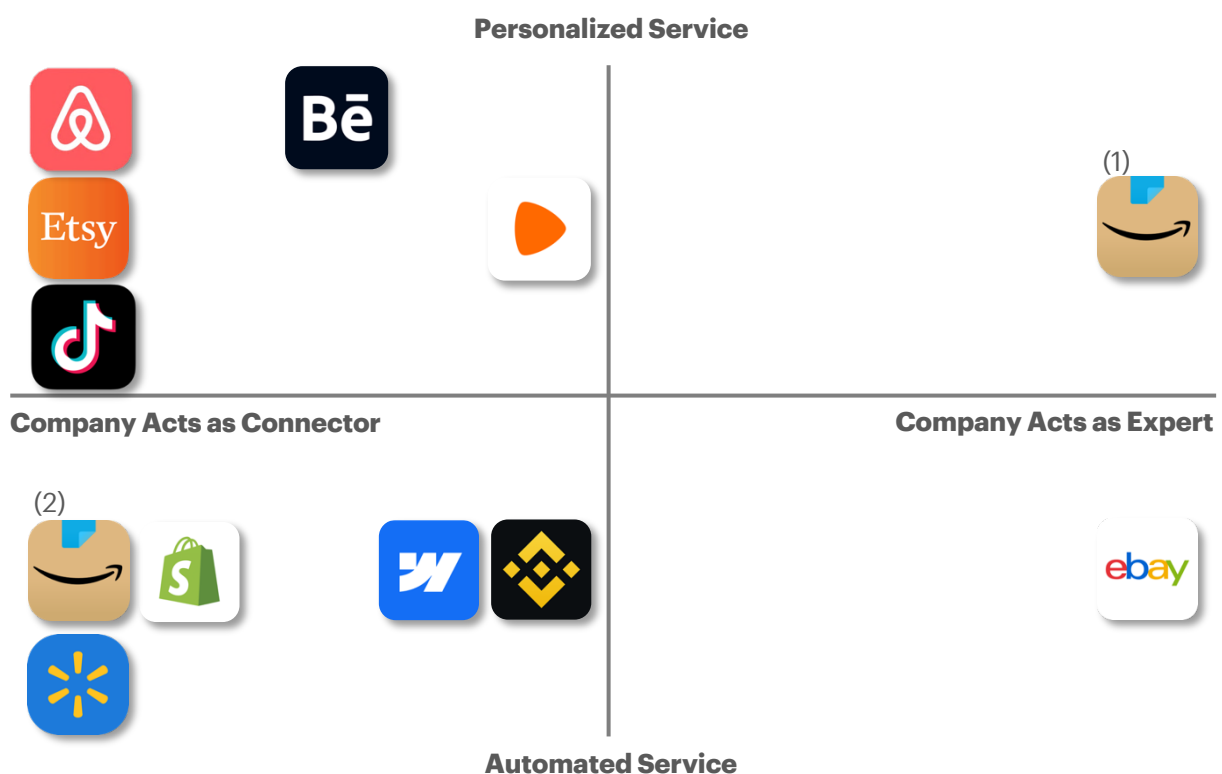

Figure 4.1: Competitor map (Authors own work)

Services that provide the tools for users to help each other

Etsy Community

The Etsy Community is a space where sellers can ask questions, share experiences, and get advice from peers, fostering a collaborative environment to help sellers grow their businesses and navigate Etsy successfully. (*Welcome to the Etsy Community*, n.d.)

Selto could create a seller forum for sharing tips on Sponsored Products and asking questions.

Airbnb Superhost buddy

The Airbnb Superhost Buddies service connects new hosts with experienced Superhosts for one-to-one guidance. (*Host Your Home on Airbnb*, n.d.)

Selto could create a similar mentor program, connecting experienced advertisers with new ones to offer guidance on Sponsored Products.

Marketplaces that act as teacher without the help of external experts

(1)

Amazon Advertiser Accelerator Program

The Amazon Advertiser Accelerator Program is a 90-day program that helps brands develop and launch a full-funnel advertising strategy across all Sponsored Ads. (*Growing Greens: Amazon Ads Helps Boost Bloom Nutrition's Brand Growth*, 2024)

Selto could create a similar program to guide sellers in creating and optimizing Sponsored Products campaigns.

eBay Advertising Academy

The eBay Advertising Academy offers step-by-step guides, tutorials, and live Q&A sessions to help sellers enhance their skills, grow their businesses and improve their performance. (Lauharper, 2024)

Selto could create an educational platform with tutorials and live sessions focused on using Sponsored Products and optimizing sales strategies.

Companies that offer tools for collaboration to make growth more accessible

Zalando
Co-branded
campaigns

The Zalando Co-branded Campaigns service allows small sellers to collaborate with each other on co-branded campaigns. These collaborations help startups reach new audiences through Zalando's platform. (*FasterCapital*, n.d.)

Selto could introduce a similar program, partnering with sellers for co-branded campaigns, focused on Sponsored Products and splitting costs.

TikTok
Duets

The TikTok Duet feature allows users to create side-by-side videos with existing content, encouraging creative collaboration by building on someone else's work. (*Duets | TikTok Help Center*, n.d.)

Selto could implement a similar "campaign duet" concept, allowing sellers to collaborate with expert advertisers on ad campaigns, boosting campaign effectiveness.

Marketplaces that that help users through partnerships

Behance
Portfolio
Review

The Behance Portfolio Review organizes global events where designers receive expert feedback on their portfolios. These sessions help designers improve their work and grow in their careers through constructive critique. (*Behance*, n.d.)

Selto could create similar virtual "ad review" sessions, where advertising experts evaluate sellers' campaigns and provide advice for improvement.

Walmart
Connect

The Walmart Connect program provides sellers with a network of partners to optimize marketing campaigns and boost sales through data-driven tools. Sellers gain access to API partners, enabling them to scale and enhance their advertising. (*Walmart Connect*, n.d.)

Selto could create a similar partnership program, offering tools and support to help sellers optimize

Marketplaces that help connect users and experts

Shopify
Expert
Marketplace

The Shopify Experts Marketplace connects sellers with experts who offer services such as store setup, marketing, and design. These experts help sellers enhance their stores by offering support directly through the platform. (*Shopify Partners Directory*, n.d.)

Selto could create a similar marketplace, connecting sellers with experts who offer guidance on Sponsored Products through Selto.

(2)

Amazon
Service
Provider
Network

The Amazon Service Provider Network is a marketplace where sellers connect with expert. Sellers can view fees and screenshots of data from clients these providers already manage, ensuring transparency. (*Service Provider Network*, n.d.)

Selto could create a similar marketplace, allowing sellers to find agencies for Sponsored Products by showing more information.

Services that let users directly profit from expert work

Webflow
Website
templates

The Webflow Templates marketplace allows expert website builders to sell pre-made website templates. This service helps users who don't want to build a site from scratch, to launch their website quickly and easily. (*Marketplace | Webflow*, n.d.)

Selto could offer a similar service where experts create ready-to-use Sponsored Products campaign templates for advertisers to quickly implement and customize.

Binance
Copytrading

The **Binance Copytrading** feature allows users to automatically replicate the trades of expert traders. This service helps beginners or those with less experience follow expert strategies without contact. (*Copy Trading*, n.d.)

Selto could implement a similar system, allowing sellers to copy successful Sponsored Products campaigns from experts for better advertising results.

Interview results

Participants for the interviews were selected by Selto but criteria were set by me. Sellers that are using sponsored products and spent less than €50.000 on advertising last year. I chose this number because sellers that spend more on advertising already get more personal help from Selto. For the agencies the only criterium is that they are in the list Selto provides. The tables on the right give an overview of the participants.

During the interviews many insights were gathered. These insights were later organized in clusters and subclusters. The clusters were made by keeping the motivation of both sellers and agencies in mind. Each of the subclusters will be described shortly later in this chapter. Below an example of the clustering method is shown. A full overview of the insights gathered can be found in Appendix 4.

*Ads knowledge is a personal estimation based on interview answers**

Sellers	Product category	*Ads knowledge	Ads spend (p/m)
Seller 1	Self-care	3/5	€300
Seller 2	Jewelry	1/5	€200
Seller 3	Urns	1/5	€150
Seller 4	Baby toys	4/5	€500
Seller 5	Batteries	3/5	€800

Table 4.2: List of interviewed sellers

Agencies	Local/ international	Employee count
Agency 1	International	100.000+
Agency 2	Local	43
Agency 3	International	5000
Agency 4	International	15.000
Agency 5	Local	100

Table 4.3: List of interviewed agencies

Quote	Insight	Subcluster	Cluster
"Sometimes the client expects too much so we can't come to an agreement." – Agency 2	Sellers have too high expectations from an agency sometimes.	Clear expectations are critical for successful partnerships.	4. Ensuring Effective Collaboration Between Sellers and Agencies.
"They think the campaign has to be adjusted every day, but that is not always effective" – Agency 1	Some sellers come to agencies with a wrong idea on how to manage campaigns best.		
"It's hard to give advice without background information" – Agency 3	To help a seller, agencies need to first have conversations with that company about strategy.		
"It's okay if an agency checks my campaign but using Selto's quality standards. So, Selto is the one responsible." – Seller 1	Seller thinks agencies should manage campaigns according to the standards of Selto if they want to be trusted by sellers.	Trust is built through transparency and clear communication.	
"When we have 2 clients in the same category, the transparency is a bit hard." – Agency 1	Transparency is important if you have competing sellers in an agency portfolio.		

Table 4.4: Example clustering process (Authors own work)

Interview clusters

1. Scaling and Business Growth for Sellers

Sellers turn to agencies to increase revenue and grow their reach.
Sellers on Selto try to increase their revenue and broaden their market reach. Some turn to the agencies to optimize their Sponsored Products and create a strategy that will increase visibility and drive sales higher. For some sellers, these collaborations are instrumental in maximizing their advertising budget and fostering growth.

Agencies bridge the gaps of knowledge and resources for sellers.
Some sellers either do not have the time or the expertise to manage their Sponsored Products campaigns. Either they don't have in-house marketing teams or simply don't know enough about how to run these types of campaigns. That is why they turn to agencies, which can fill these gaps. Agencies offer everything from campaign management to branding, helping sellers who can't handle it themselves.
Agency 3: *"The primary reasons sellers seek our assistance are a lack of time or knowledge."*

Sellers realize that advertising is an investment for the long term.
Most sellers realize that advertising success doesn't happen overnight. They know that working with an agency means committing to long-term strategies that will deliver results over time.

2. Cost Considerations and Affordability Challenges of sellers

Sellers are looking for cheap solutions to fit their meager budgets.
Small sellers on Selto normally have tight budgets. They fear the high costs of hiring agencies to run their Sponsored Products campaigns. Many of them think that they already pay a lot to Selto in commission fees and can't afford any more.
Seller 2: "*I think I already have to pay a lot of commission to Selto; I can't afford to pay more.*"

Small Sellers are unwilling to invest without assurance of returns.
The small sellers become cautious about spending money with agencies, as they would like to ensure that they get value for money. Some of them had a bad experience previously with agencies where results were not forthcoming. That makes them skeptical to invest again, unless they believe the agency can really help their Sponsored Products performance. They need evidence that the returns will be worth what they spend.

3. Agencies' Focus on Profitability and Selective Engagement

Agencies want to work with large budget sellers to make revenue on a long-term basis.
Agencies that are assisting sellers on Selto focus on making money. They prefer to work for bigger brands since they could implement better strategies and tools. Such clients will get some extra help and tools to secure the success of their Sponsored Products campaigns.
Agency 4: "*We pitch our services and strategy to big brands and when we sign them, they are our top priority.*"

Agencies need to stay cost-efficient when working with smaller sellers.
Agencies that assist smaller sellers on Selto specifically have to be pretty efficient. They are usually money-first; when working with smaller sellers, they can lean against leverage on monetary issues and regard to the time and effort applied to serve the smaller sellers. The agency must either raise their costs or limit their support when dealing with the sellers with limited budgets.

Agencies use their expertise to maximize performance for larger clients.
Agencies, which work with bigger sellers on Selto, are specialized in using their special tools and market knowledge. These sellers could have better strategies, data analyses, and customization that a small seller wouldn't be able to afford. Agencies are proud to use their historical data and precise insights from the platform to help run sponsored ads for large clients successfully.

4. Ensuring Effective Collaboration Between Sellers and Agencies

Clear expectations lead to effective collaborations.
For small sellers on Selto, defining clear expectations from the outset is critical for maintaining a positive relationship with the agencies. Misunderstandings occur when salespeople expect quick results or believe they require frequent marketing modifications. Agencies must ensure that sellers understand what they are getting into, and success requires time. This will prevent both sides from becoming irritated with one another.
Agency 1: "*It's important to discuss goals and strategies before accepting a client to manage expectations.*"

Transparency and straightforward communication promote trust.
Transparency fosters trust among small sellers and agencies on Selto. Agencies must be upfront about how they handle campaigns, particularly when managing many sellers in the same category. Both parties need to communicate clearly to avoid conflicts of interest and ensure that sellers feel confident their agency is working in their best interest.
Seller 3: *"I wouldn't like to work together with one of my competitors."*

5. Supporting Small Sellers: Collaboration and Scaling Solutions

New sellers need extra guidance and support.
New and small sellers on Selto often need extra help when they first start with Sponsored Products. They don't always know where to begin or which services to choose, so they look to Selto or agencies for more information.

Selto can play a bigger role in helping sellers succeed.
Both agencies and small sellers see an opportunity for Selto to do more to help sellers succeed with Sponsored Products. Selto could provide more training, tools, and resources to help sellers make the most of their advertising. Agencies also believe that Selto could work with them to help sellers grow, which would benefit everyone involved.
Agency 5: *"I can see it working if Selto covers a part of our hourly fee."*

Freelancers offer affordable alternatives for small sellers.
Small sellers who cannot afford full-service agencies on Selto might choose freelancers and smaller agencies. These choices provide sellers with adequate help for managing their Sponsored Products without incurring the significant expenses associated with a large agency. This allows small sellers to boost their marketing without investing a lot of money.
Agency 3: *"Big agencies are very focused on big clients, maybe freelancers can offer better prices for small sellers."*

6. Self-Sufficiency and Learning for Sellers

Many sellers prefer to manage their campaigns themselves.
Many small sellers prefer to manage their Sponsored Products campaigns themselves. They use Selto's automatic campaigns to keep things simple and low-cost. These sellers like having control over their campaigns but might still benefit from more training to help them get better results without relying on agencies.

Selto must balance simple tools with customizable strategies.
Small sellers often prefer easy-to-use, automated tools for managing Sponsored Products on Selto. On the other hand, agencies want the flexibility to customize campaigns to get the best results. Balancing these needs can be tricky, but it's important for Selto to find ways to simplify the process while still offering the customization that makes campaigns successful.

Sellers are open to learning how to manage their campaigns better.
Some sellers on Selto want to learn how to manage their campaigns better. They are open to training and e-learning opportunities that would help them improve their advertising skills. Even though they don't want to hire an agency, they understand the value of learning to manage Sponsored Products effectively and would welcome more resources from Selto to help them do so.
Seller 1: *"I would love to have a video about optimization so I can learn more about what everything means."*

First-generation ideas

Ideas

1. **A tool for automatically linking** agencies to partners' ad campaigns, where agencies receive a commission each time a sale is made from an ad they manage.

2. **"Growth Incentive":** agencies help sellers grow at low or no cost, and as sales increase, the commission also increases.

3. **Hire an agency together** with a seller offering a similar product. The agency manages it as a single campaign.

4. Create **campaign templates** for product categories that agencies can rent or sell to partners.

5. **One-time campaign review** for a small fee.

Interview feedback

- Agency 1: "It's important to discuss goals and strategies before accepting a client to manage expectations."
- Seller 2: "I think I already have to pay a lot of commission to Selto; I can't afford to pay more."

- Agency 3: "It has to stay profitable for us, we can't give out free hours."
- Agency 5: "I can see it working if Selto covers a part of our hourly fee."

- Agency 2: "This would only work if there was one seller responsible for communication."
- Seller 3: "I wouldn't like to work together with one of my competitors."

- Agency 2: "Campaigns have to be constantly optimized, can't be sold like a template."
- Seller 1: "I would like this more from Selto, so I know it is good quality."

- Agency 5: "Sellers already can ask an employee from Selto to look over their campaign and give tips."
- Agency 2: "Spending a separate hour on one seller is not effective for optimization."

During the initial desk research on the topic, several ideas emerged even before conducting the interviews. These ideas were then shared with partners and agencies at the end of each interview to understand which solutions they found appealing or less promising.

Seller 2 explains they cannot afford to pay any more fees. This gives direction to the fact that the support they need should **not costs more money**.

Seller 1 states that they trust Selto more than 3rd party agencies. This shows that **Selto itself can best guide small sellers** to growth.

Insights

From the interview clusters the following insights were selected to have the most impact on the rest of the project. The insights are a combination of direct information from the clusters and new understandings that come from comparing the research to the expectations at the start of the project. The insights are written in a provocative way to inspire the conclusion and ideation.

Selto's Role and Trust with Sellers
- Sellers trust Selto more than agencies because they know Selto's goals align with theirs: sell more products.
- Selto's status as a trusted platform can be amplified by providing small sellers with personalized insights and actionable performance feedback.

Challenges with Agencies and Small Sellers
- Agencies and small sellers are fundamentally mismatched and unlikely to ever be a perfect fit.
- Agencies are satisfied with their current clients and have no desire to partner with small sellers.
- Agencies focus on clients with bigger budgets, locking out small sellers from accessing the expert resources they need.
- Transparent communication from agencies is non-negotiable for building trust, especially when handling multiple sellers in the same category.

Small Seller Needs and Behavior
- Small sellers prefer to keep control and avoid outsourcing their advertising: Selto's automatic campaign feature already meets a lot of their needs. They just need help optimizing to compete with brands that are ran by experts.
- Small sellers value simplicity and straightforward tools over complex features that only serve to confuse.
- Small sellers are cautious with their budgets and demand clear proof of return on investment before investing in external advertising services.

Opportunities for Support and Growth
- Growth for both sellers and Selto is inevitable, yet Selto's focus on large sellers undermines this mutual benefit.
- During the interviews some sellers explained that Selto's educational resources fall short to their needs sometimes, either they are not found or not engaging enough. They must be changed to help sellers manage campaigns with confidence.
- Better advertising campaigns will lead to more money for both the small seller and Selto.

Reflection Section 2

Looking at how other platforms support their users in accessing expertise in advertising, the approaches vary: from reliance on automation, to partnerships, to creating tools that will bridge the gap between expertise and accessibility. What's interesting is how much of the analysis focused on external solutions that are mainly agencies or third-party partners. But is that the right fit for small sellers on Selto?

Reevaluating the Role of Agencies
The one thing that has bothered me is positioning agencies as the solution for small sellers. I personally do not think they always are. Many small sellers cannot afford to work with agencies, and, quite frankly, some of them are not even looking to outsource. Many of these sellers quite happily use Selto's automated campaigns and manage things themselves. Forcing a partnership with agencies might not be necessary or effective. Instead, I believe there's an opportunity to provide sellers with the tools and knowledge to handle their campaigns on their own, with better support from Selto.

Building on Trust
What is very clear is the level of trust that sellers place in Selto compared to agencies. They know Selto's interests lie in selling more products, not just collecting a fee for their services. If Selto provided enhanced tools, training, or even some level of managed services, I think it would go a long way in helping smaller sellers grow without having to lean on agencies.

Shared Goals of Growth
In the middle of it all, Selto and its sellers are both after the same: growth. Sellers want to grow their businesses, and Selto benefits directly from that growth. Whether it's with agencies or improved tools so that sellers can manage things themselves, it's about finding that balance.

Research questions (p17) answered

*RQ1: How can digital solutions help make it more affordable for **sellers** to get help from an agency?*

Digital solutions can make it more affordable by reducing reliance on agencies and empowering sellers with tools from Selto. Sellers trust Selto more than agencies, and enhanced tools or training from Selto would help small sellers manage campaigns independently, supporting growth and affordability.

*RQ2: How can new stakeholder proposals make it more attractive for **agencies** to take smaller clients?*

New proposals could make smaller clients more attractive to agencies by offering incentives like subsidized services, shared tools to reduce workload, or performance-based bonuses for driving seller growth, fostering trust and mutual benefit.

Design statement

"Selto helps sellers grow with accessible advertising tools, making the advertising process simple and effective for smaller sellers."

Why achieve growth?

The growth of a seller on Selto is beneficial for both Selto and the seller. For Selto, helping small sellers grow their businesses would directly increase advertising revenue and more commission from sales. For the seller, more sales means more revenue. The challenge is to make the profit grow with the revenue. When sellers are bigger it will become more interesting for agencies to help them grow even more.

Why a simple process?

The process should be simple because simplifying complex tasks like advertising allows sellers to focus on growing their business rather than struggling with technicalities. For smaller sellers or those new to advertising, a simple process reduces the barrier to entry, making it more accessible and effective. It ensures that sellers of all sizes can easily use the tools and guidance provided, leading to more successful outcomes and growth.

Why for small sellers?

When processes are simple, sellers can quickly implement strategies without needing extensive expertise or support, which is especially important for smaller businesses with limited resources. This accessibility empowers more sellers to participate, reduces mistakes, and accelerates growth, making the platform more appealing and effective for a broader range of users.

Section 3:
Synthesis

Figure 4.6: Photograph (Selto, 2024)

SECTION 3 | SYNTHESIS

5.

Ideate

Now that the design statement has been defined, it's
time to begin the ideation phase. This chapter will
explore the ideation techniques employed and share
valuable insights from experts at Selto.

Ideation approach

After gaining a deep understanding of the challenges faced by small sellers on Selto and redirecting the focus on this project, it's time to shift focus to ideation for potential solutions. The ideation will focus on new ways to empower small sellers instead of outsourcing to agencies. This ideation is done in the following approach.

First-generation ideas
During the initial desk research on the topic, several ideas emerged even before conducting the interviews (p43). These ideas were then shared with partners and agencies at the end of each interview to understand which solutions they found appealing or less promising. The ideation in this chapter will focus on helping small sellers with Sponsored Products in other ways.

Brainstorming
To create concepts that support small sellers in accessing expert advertising knowledge and resources, two distinct brainstorming sessions were conducted. The first session involved Selto's design team, while the second was a collaboration with a fellow Strategic Product Design student. The outcome of these sessions will provide valuable insights that can be used to guide further individual ideation and concept development.

Guiding principles
By looking at the insights of the previous chapter, a set of Guiding Principles was set. These principles help me make decisions about direction and concept selection.

For the brainstorm sessions, three key directions were identified for brainstorming. The directions were chosen together with a designer at Selto by looking at the problems the interviewed sellers mentioned and looking at how other companies empower their sellers.

1. **Improving Content Visibility and Accessibility**
   There are advertisers with limited knowledge of advertising, who could greatly benefit from the wealth of content available on the partner platform. However, this content is not currently always found. How can Selto make this content more visible and discoverable?

2. **Simplifying the Sponsored products Dashboard**
   Advertisers with little experience are presented with the same detailed dashboard as experts, featuring complex metrics, numbers, and percentages. How can Selto simplify the navigation of this dashboard for beginners without making them feel like Selto are keeping information from them?

3. **Facilitating Collaboration Among Small Sellers**
   Some first-generation ideas can inform the next, like focusing on collaboration among small sellers to reduce advertising costs. While "Hiring an agency together" was unattractive to Seller 3, Selto can explore ways to help sellers pool resources for campaigns, similar to Zalando's co-branded campaigns, to enable positive collaborations.

Design assumptions

These assumptions are based on research, seller feedback, and ideas gained from other platforms that help small sellers. They show what I believe to be the most crucial criteria in developing solutions for Selto's small sellers. These assumptions are not set in stone but rather a starting point for the design process; they will influence the path of the ideas.

Small sellers like intuitive tools that are easy to understand and that require minimum effort to use, thus enabling them to focus on their core business activities.

Sellers like independence; they want tools that would empower them to manage campaigns without constant external help or advanced technical knowledge.

Sellers trust Selto: Due to shared interests in success, sellers feel Selto is a partner and therefore more trustworthy and understanding of their needs than third-party solutions.

Small sellers are not technically savvy: Solutions should be designed with the assumption that small sellers may not be familiar with advanced advertising terminology or technical processes.

Cost-effectiveness is the focus of small sellers: Budget-conscious sellers will want tools that help them maximize their return on investment without spending time or money on overly complex strategies.

Transparency in Costs and Performance: Small sellers want to understand how much they are spending on advertising and what kind of results they are getting, without hidden fees or confusing metrics.

Brainstorming..

To generate ideas for helping small sellers gain access to expert advertising knowledge and resources, two distinct brainstorming sessions were held. The first session brought together Selto's design team, and the second was conducted with a fellow Strategic Product Design student. Three directions were identified as focus points for discussion in these sessions:

1. Improving Content Visibility and Accessibility
2. Simplifying the Sponsored Products Dashboard
3. Facilitating Collaboration Among Small Sellers

Descriptions of these directions can be found in the ideation approach. (p50)

Some elements of the **First-generation ideas** can be taken to the next generation of ideation. For example, idea 3: Hire an agency together, was not found attractive by Seller 3 as they would not want to work together with their competitor. Brainstorm direction 3: Facilitating collaboration among small sellers, will focus on concepts that allow small sellers to collaborate with only positive outcomes.

..with Selto designers

Setup
The first brainstorm was held with 3 designers that work at Selto in the team of Advertising via Selto. These designers already know the ins and outs of the Sponsored Products environment and may already have some ideas on how to help the smaller advertisers.

The method that was used for this brainstorm session is **Crazy Eight** (Stevenson, 2021). For each of the three directions mentioned before, the participants of the brainstorm get 8 minutes to come up with 8 ideas. This brainstorm method allows for quick generation of many ideas.

After the 8 minutes are over, the participants come together and explain their ideas. Ideas that are similar are placed together. During this phase discussions can take place to come up with even more ideas. The brainstorm took 1 hour in total. The top 3 ideas per direction are put on the next page.

Figure 5.1: Brainstorm with Selto designers

1. Improving Content Visibility and Accessibility

Show **the information of the Partner Platform** in Sponsored Products at places people might have questions.

Personal e-mails with tips based on actions you previously did in Sponsored Products.

Better onboarding training including tests to evaluate the level in which they understand.

2. Simplifying the Sponsored Products Dashboard

A more **visual understanding of the data**. Graphs, plots and comparisons with other sellers to know how well you're doing.
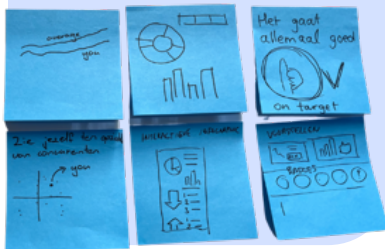
Personal clickable tips that allow you to optimize with just one click without having to look at the data.

Gamification of optimization including games of including/excluding keywords.
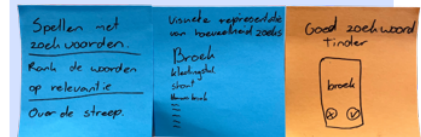
3. Facilitating Collaboration Among Small Sellers

Allowing small sellers to **advertise together** to split advertising costs and increase visibility.
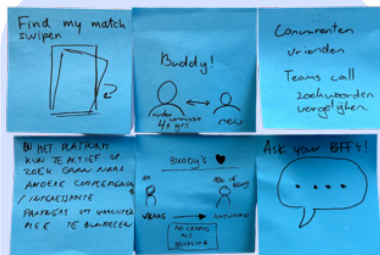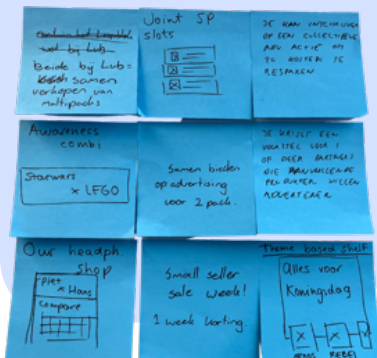
Help advertisers to **connect to each other** to help with Sponsored Products.

Allow small sellers to **profit from bigger brands** by selling spaces next to their advertisements.
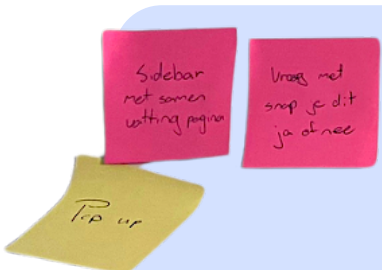
..with a fellow student

Setup
The second brainstorm was held with one fellow Strategic Product Design student. He is familiar with my project and was excited to brainstorm with me. I showed him the dashboard of sponsored products first to get an understanding of the problem.

The method that was used for this brainstorm session was **Mind Mapping** (Van Boeijen et al., 2014). I started with explaining the direction and we came up with solutions. After I felt like we hit a wall, I showed him the ideas of the first brainstorm. Hearing these ideas, often new ideas or iterations still came. The brainstorm lasted for about an hour and the best ideas are put below.

1) Improving Content Visibility and Accessibility

A sidebar with information of the Partner Platform. Small check integrated asking if you understand.
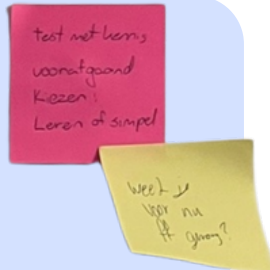
A chatbot that knows all the information from the Partner Platform. Possible powered by AI.

2) Simplifying the Sponsored Products Dashboard

Design multiple **levels of interfaces**, from simple to detailed and let advertiser switch between them.
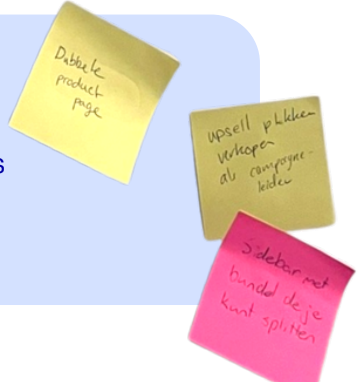
Providing a choice: Simple interface or e-learning to understand the detailed interface.

3) Facilitating Collaboration Among Small Sellers

Designing benefits that are not infinitely scalable, so it **benefits only small sellers** who think it's worth it.

Promote buying in **bundles** to increase upselling to boost the sales of smaller brands when somebody buys a product from a big brand.

Guiding principles

As I begin the concept selection phase of the project, it is critical that my ideas are based on a set of clear, actionable principles. These guiding principles will help guarantee that the solutions I offer are not only consistent with the overarching goal of assisting small sellers on Selto, but also address the specific hurdles and opportunities uncovered throughout my research. They will advise us in retaining the main thing, the important thing: a fair bargain for small sellers and Selto as a valuable ally on their journey.

1. Empower Small Sellers Directly
Create solutions that help small sellers manage their own campaigns with the right tools and knowledge. The goal is for to benefit small sellers and help them achieve growth.

2. Build Confidence and Independence
Focus on approaches that help small sellers make informed and independent decisions. Emphasize building their ability to evaluate options and choose the right strategies without relying entirely on external assistance.

3. Leverage Trust in Selto
Build on the trust small sellers have in Selto by offering more direct platform-based support. Since sellers trust Selto's shared interest in selling products, Selto's involvement can strengthen relationships and deliver better results.

4. Foster Equal Opportunities for Growth
Ensure your solution gives small sellers the same opportunities to grow as larger sellers. The current imbalance in resources needs to be addressed so smaller sellers can compete effectively and grow without giving additional benefits to large sellers as well.

5. Benefit All Types of Small Sellers
Some sellers want to learn the data and details of Sponsored Products campaigns to make better decisions, while others don't care that much about the data and details and just want help.

6. Provide Relevant Guidance
By delivering guidance precisely when it's needed, you can help small sellers navigate challenges effectively and build knowledge over time, without overwhelming them with information upfront.

7. Simplify the User Experience
Simplify the advertising process to make it approachable for all small sellers. By reducing complexity, create a user experience that minimizes friction and encourages active participation in managing campaigns.

8. Offer Scalable and Flexible Solutions
Create solutions that align with small sellers' evolving advertising goals over time. Focus on fostering lasting progress by addressing both immediate needs and future aspirations, ensuring sustained growth on their unique terms.

Choice of direction

After brainstorming, it's time to choose the best direction for supporting small sellers on Selto's platform. Each of the three directions has its own strengths and potential impact. To make an informed choice, I'll use a **Harris Profile** (Van Boeijen et al., 2014), which will let me evaluate each option against the Guiding Principles. By comparing each option against these principles, I hope to land on a direction that will bring the most value to small sellers.

Table 5.2: Harris Profile (Author's own work)

	1. Improving Content Visibility and Accessibility				2. Simplifying the Sponsored Products Dashboard				3. Facilitating Collaboration Among Small Sellers			
	- -	-	+	+ +	- -	-	+	+ +	- -	-	+	+ +
1			+				+				+	+ +
2		-					+			-		
3			+					+ +			+	
4		-					+			-		
5		-				-					+	
6			+				+			-		
7			+				+	+ +	- -	-		
8		-					+			-		

From the Harris Profile, direction 2, Simplifying the Sponsored Products Dashboard, came out as most compatible with the Guiding Principles. Only one principle, Benefit All Types of Small Sellers, was rated negative. This is because sellers who want to learn the details of advertising might not be fully served by a simpler dashboard. It's important to keep this in mind when designing and choosing concepts. A personal preference for direction 2 aligns with the outcome of the Harris Profile. The preference is based on an interest in easy to implement designs (better than direction 3) and the level of visual design concepts (better than direction 1). It also aligns with the feedback on the First-generation ideas (p43) as it will probably be free of charge and will be a service by Selto (trust in Selto). This way the data of Selto can act as the agency and help sellers grow in a way that they trust.

Sponsored Products dashboard

Below you can see the dashboard of sponsored products as it is right now. As seen in the interviews at the start of the project sellers have issues navigating their campaigns and the data. The platform's complexity makes it difficult for small sellers, especially those without marketing expertise, to navigate and optimize their campaigns effectively. Many sellers also struggle to interpret performance data, leaving them unsure how to make data-driven decisions. Additionally, there is an element of mystery in how the campaigns data are utilized by the platform, making the system hard to trust. The amount of data on the dashboard complicates the process even more by scrambling the ability of sellers to focus their eyes on the most important ones for optimization.

Figure 5.3: Current sponsored products dashboard (Selto, 2024)
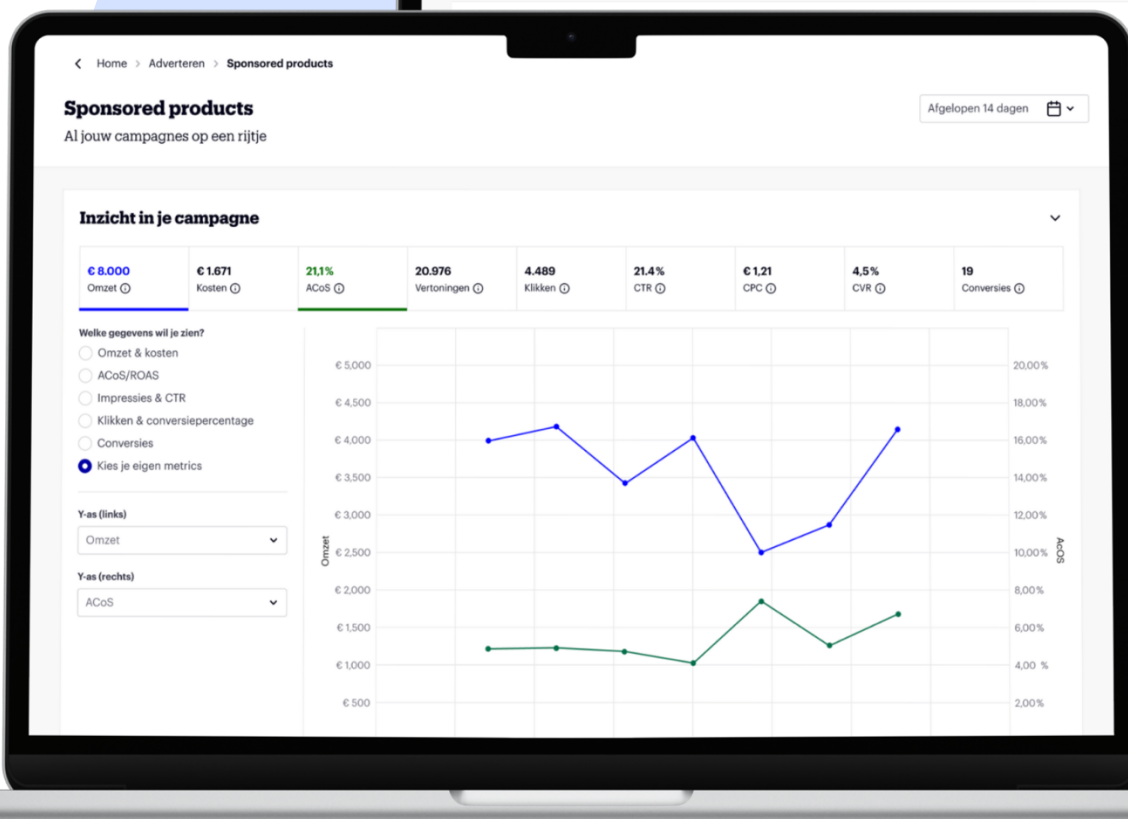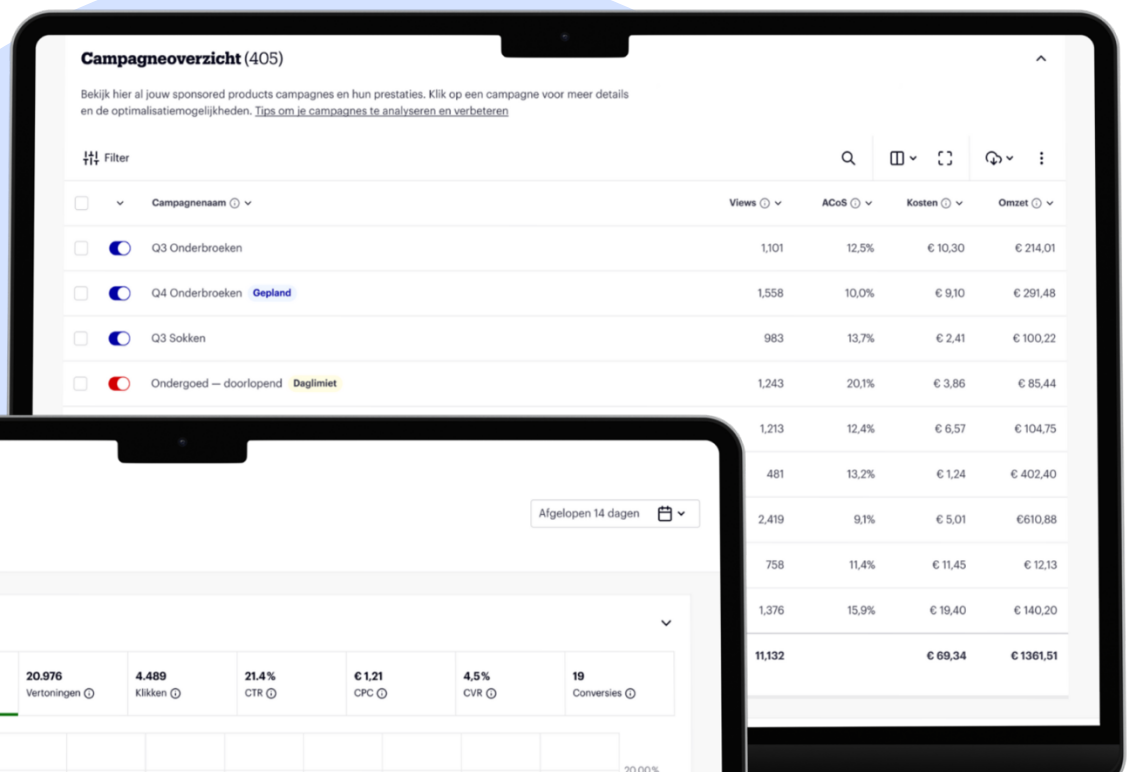
Dashboard inspiration

In this analysis I highlight some dashboards from other online services that look inspiring to help users understand data or achieve goals.

Wix Insights
Wix Insights is part of Wix Analytics, a tool for website owners. It gives them a simple view of how their site is doing. It summarizes important numbers: traffic, sales, and user behavior. Making it easy for users to see how their website is performing without advanced technical skills.

Wix Insights, where complex data is translated into actionable recommendations to help users make decisions, save time, and show how well they are doing with their goals and how to improve their websites easily.

In the case of Wix, my expectation is that the tool makes users happier and makes them keep coming back by giving useful and clear information. It also helps Wix sell more premium features, ensuring that users stay active and perform well on the platform.

Figure 5.4: Wix Insights (*WiX Analytics: Understanding the Insights Page | Help Center | Wix.com*, n.d.)

Salesforce summary of sales
Thes is a concept dashboard for an
online store found on a blog about
good dashboards. In this prototype of a
dashboard shows data in multiple
interesting ways. But the most eye-
catching feature is the blue box in the
top left. It tells the seller specifically
using text, numbers and visuals how it's
going with his stores. Using the data
that's already available it catches the
attention of the user.

My thoughts: This feature would not
only enhance the user experience but
also increases the likelihood of sellers
interacting with the platform regularly.
For the platform, it leads to improved
user satisfaction and retention, while for
the seller, it fosters better decision-
making and more effective store
management.
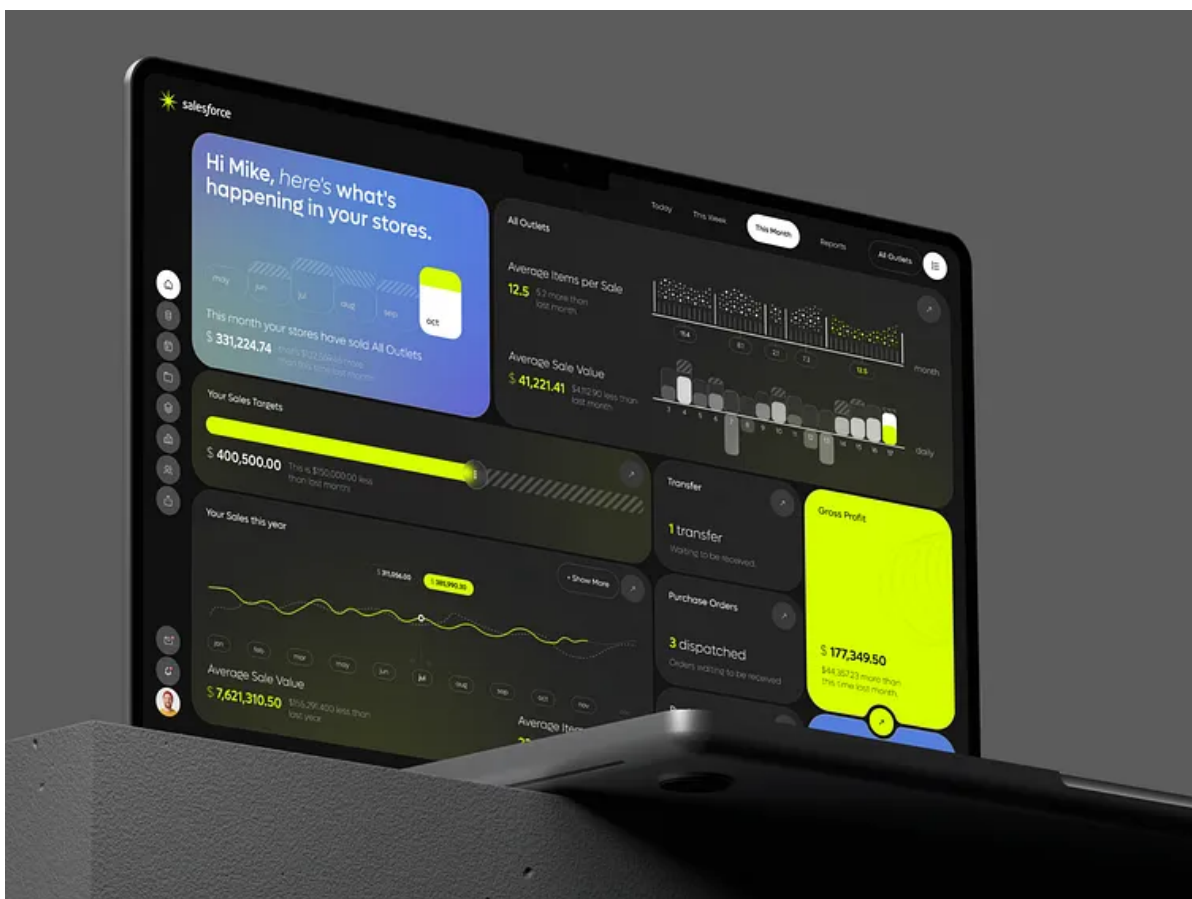
Figure 5.5: Salesforce CRM — Sales Analytics Platform by Jack R. for RonDesignLab (Muzli, 2024)

Ricochet360 indicating graphs
The interface features a clear visual hierarchy, organizing data in a way that allows users to quickly grasp key information. Diverse charts are used to present complex data in an accessible format, making it easier for users to interpret and analyze performance metrics at a glance.

Additionally, small red and green graphs are incorporated to give immediate feedback on whether specific metrics are improving or declining. The red graph highlights areas needing attention, while the green graph signals positive performance. This visual cue helps users quickly assess their campaigns' health.

Strategic use of color and intuitive icons further guide the user's attention, ensuring key elements stand out. This thoughtful design approach enhances usability by making the interface intuitive, reducing the time it takes for users to navigate and understand their data. As a result, onboarding time is minimized, and users can take immediate action based on the insights presented.
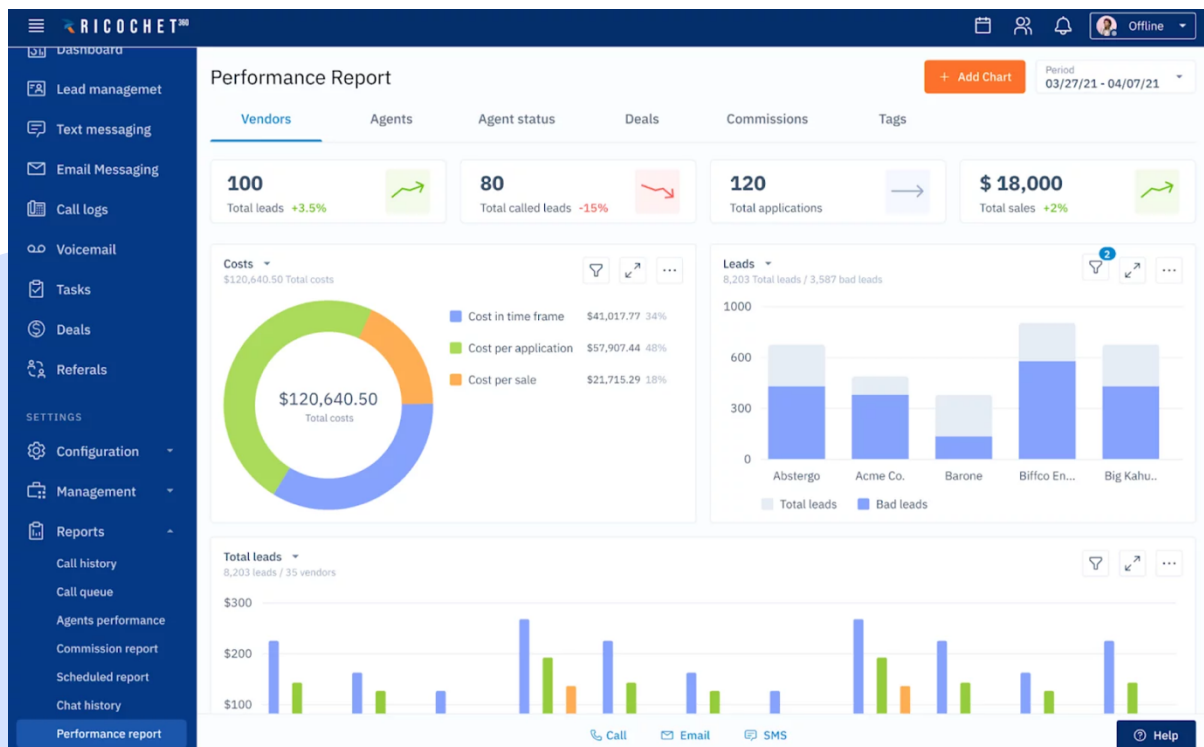
Figure 5.6: Ricochet360 dashboard (*16 Best Dashboard Design Examples: Ways to Visualize Complex Data*, 2024)

Prototype Finance Management Dashboard

This dashboard is designed for action and engagement. It features clickable buttons throughout, including a chatbot for quick questions, a task button (top left) to manage priorities, and a feedback option (bottom right) to rate progress. Each insight can also be viewed in multiple formats, offering flexibility based on user preferences. This interactive and customizable approach ensures users can easily navigate, act on, and adapt the dashboard to their specific needs, making financial management intuitive and efficient.
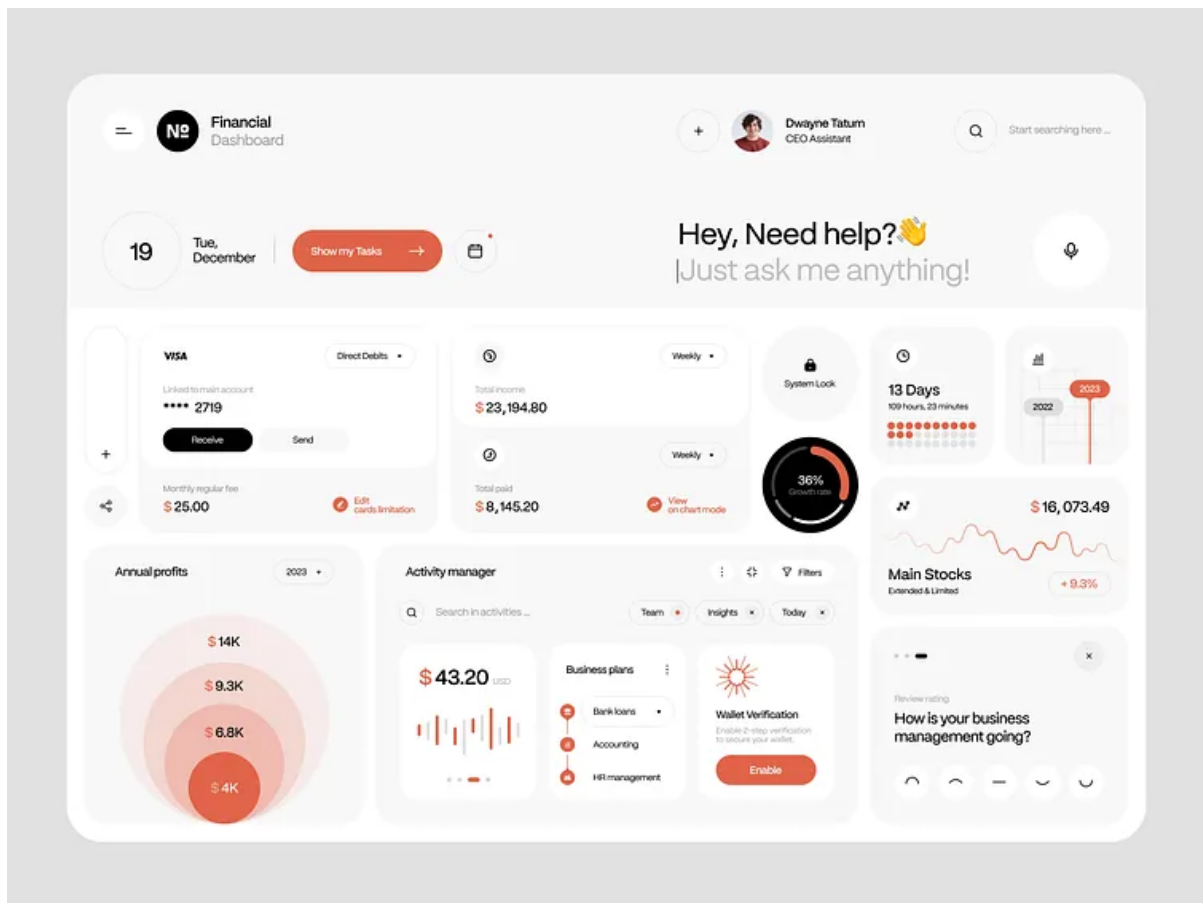
Figure 5.7: Finance Management Dashboard by Bogdan Falin for QClay (Muzli, 2024)

Amazon Campaign Recommendations
These campaign recommendations bring numerous benefits to making seller's sponsored ads better. They help improve campaign performance by providing useful ideas on where to make changes, such as adjusting bids or changing targeting strategies. These save time since they are easy to apply with just one click, allowing fast improvement without the need to effect changes manually.

Findable in a notification feed within the campaign manager, all recommendations are easily accessible and can be reviewed across multiple campaigns at once. Overall, the benefits enhance efficiency and save time while driving better results for ads. Amazon is the biggest direct competitor of Selto so looking at their solutions for helping sellers is very informative.
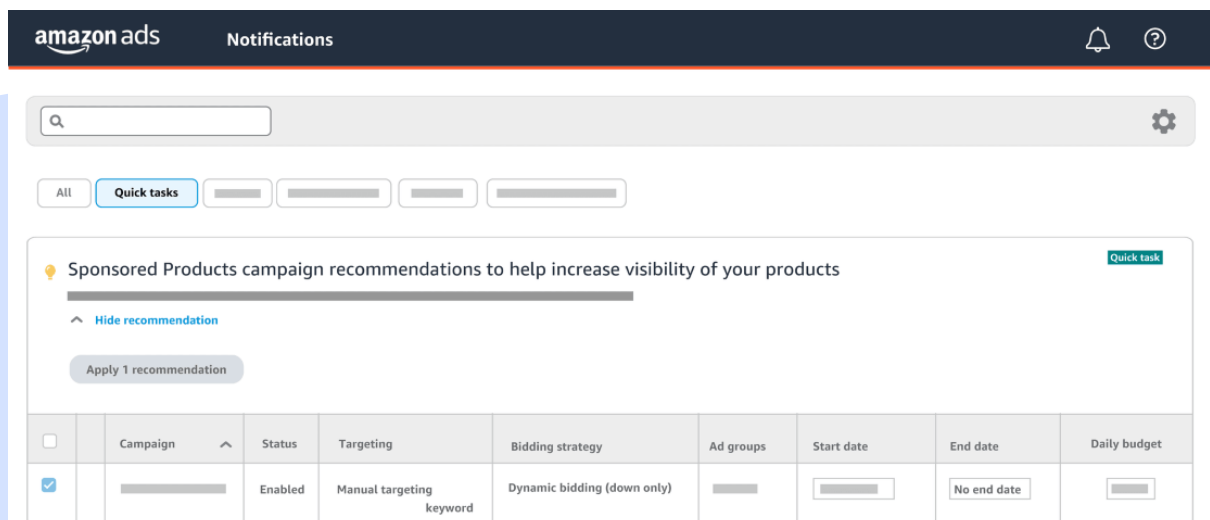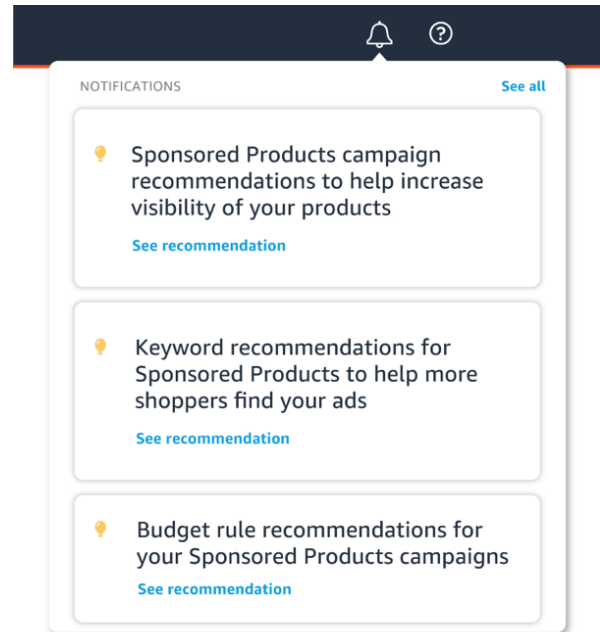
Figure 5.8: Amazon Campaign Recommendations (Best Practices for Campaign Recommendations, 2024)

Amazon campaign with presets
Sponsored Products enables advertisers to easily launch a campaign with pre-sets from within the console itself. That would include several preset settings, which include a daily budget, bidding strategy, targeting options, and respective bids for those options. Advertisers are presented with a list of their eligible products with the best sales opportunities, pre-filled campaign settings of each proposed campaign.

This is a key feature that enables advertisers to put up targeted campaigns quickly at the best settings for a particular product. The advertiser could use these presets out of the box or adjust and learn how to create effective campaigns themselves for future use. While this is not a feature that helps with the optimization of the campaigns it does help sellers with a low amount of advertising knowledge set up good campaigns.
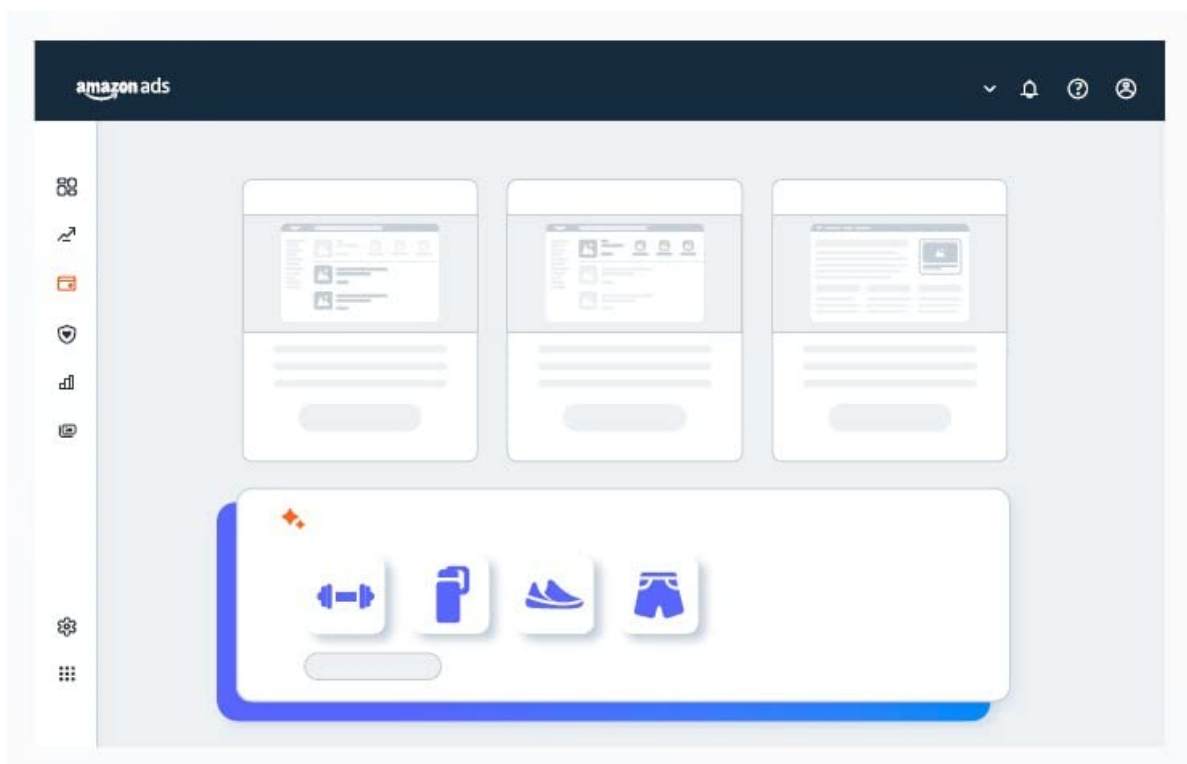
Figure 5.9: Preset Campaign (*Sponsored Products Launches Campaigns with Preset Campaign Settings*, 2024)

Google Ads Recommendations

Google Ads' Recommendations section provides customized suggestions to improve campaign performance. It offers advice on optimizing bidding, keywords, ads, and introduces relevant features. The Recommendations page analyzes account history, settings, and trends to generate actionable insights.

This feature enables quick campaign improvements without the need for extensive research. It uses historical data to estimate potential performance and helps maintain freshness by recommending updates to keywords and bids, ensuring campaigns stay optimized.

It includes a measure called *Your optimization score* which increases if sellers apply more recommendations. This could be seen as a form of gamification as the score is not directly connected to a metric of the campaign but more on the activity of the seller.

Figure 5.10: Google Ads Recommendations (Jensen, 2022)

Program of requirements

The Program of Requirements and Wishes (PoR) is a list describing the conditions to be met by any solution for it to address the needs of small sellers. It represents a base in the process of creating Concepts that are relevant, workable, and aligned with the overreaching goal of helping small sellers be successful in running their Sponsored Products campaigns.

The PoR is divided into requirements and wishes (Kraan, 2024):
- Requirements: The essential features or characteristics a solution should have for it to be effective; anything less, the solution fails to serve the purpose.
- Wishes: Desirable features which enrich the solution but are not critical for its functionality.

Requirements
1) The solution must be accessible and easy for small sellers with limited technical expertise.
2) Complex processes must be simplified to encourage adoption and active use.
3) Sellers must be able to clearly understand the costs and performance of their advertising campaigns.
4) Information about spending, results, and fees must be presented in a clear and straightforward manner.
5) The solution must address current inequalities between sellers and provide small sellers with opportunities to compete effectively with larger sellers.
6) Tools and resources must be equally accessible to all sellers, regardless of budget size.
7) The solution must accommodate the diverse needs of small sellers, from those who want to actively manage campaigns to those who prefer minimal involvement.
8) The solution must be integrated seamlessly into the existing Selto dashboard or ecosystem to ensure a smooth user experience.
9) The system must provide real-time data or near-real-time updates on campaign performance.
10) The solution must be compliant with data privacy and protection regulations

Wishes
1) The solution could provide gamified features to motivate small sellers to optimize their campaigns regularly.
2) The solution could strengthen sellers' trust in Selto by offering reliable, unbiased support that aligns with their shared goal: growth.
3) The solution could provide tools or support that enable sellers to manage their campaigns independently.

10 Concepts

After the two brainstorm sessions, I now have a better idea of possible concepts to help small sellers manage their campaigns more effectively. The direction I chose to focus on is **"Simplifying the Advertising Dashboard."** This choice doesn't mean I should ignore ideas from the other directions. Especially from the direction "Improving Content Visibility and Accessibility," there are elements that can be applied to the Sponsored Products dashboard to make it even better.

The 10 concepts were created by building on the brainstorm sessions and competitor analysis. Some concepts originate from the same ideas. For example: the concepts "Dashboard make-over" and "Data visual options" come from the brainstorm idea "A more visual understanding of the data". Other concepts are derived from how other companies make their dashboard better readable like "Textual summary of campaigns" and "Recommendations".

On the following pages, you'll find 10 concepts that I believe are promising. To bring these concepts to life, I've created prototypes possible concepts to better communicate my vision. These prototypes will also help me test the concepts with Selto designers and small sellers, allowing me to gather valuable feedback to refine and improve them further.

Figure 5.11:
10 Concepts to help small advertisers with managing their sponsored products campaigns.
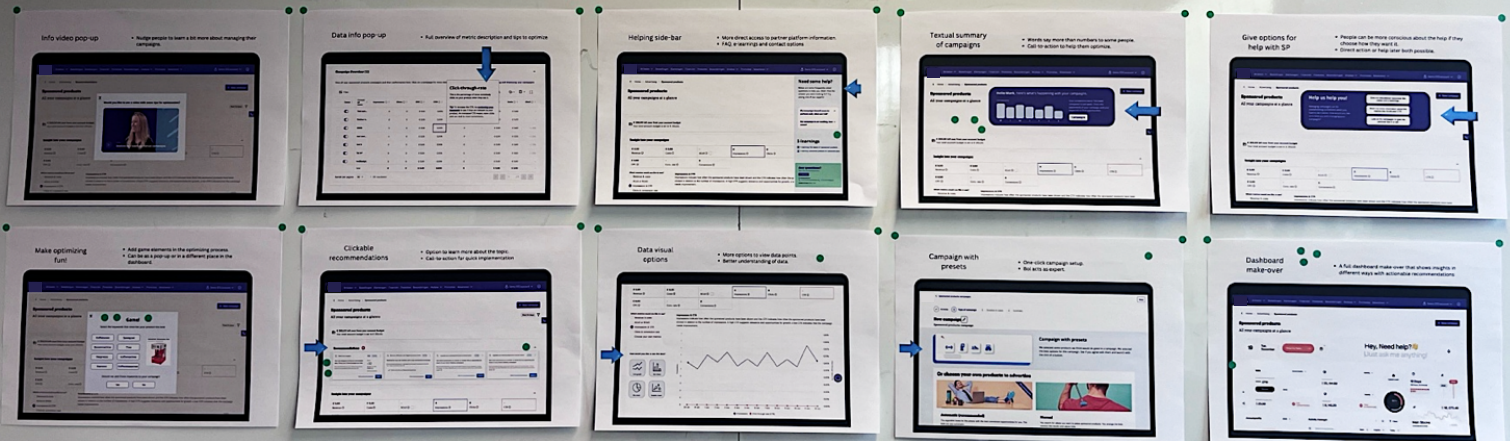
Make optimizing fun!

- Add game elements in the optimizing process.
- Can be as a pop-up or in a different place in the dashboard.
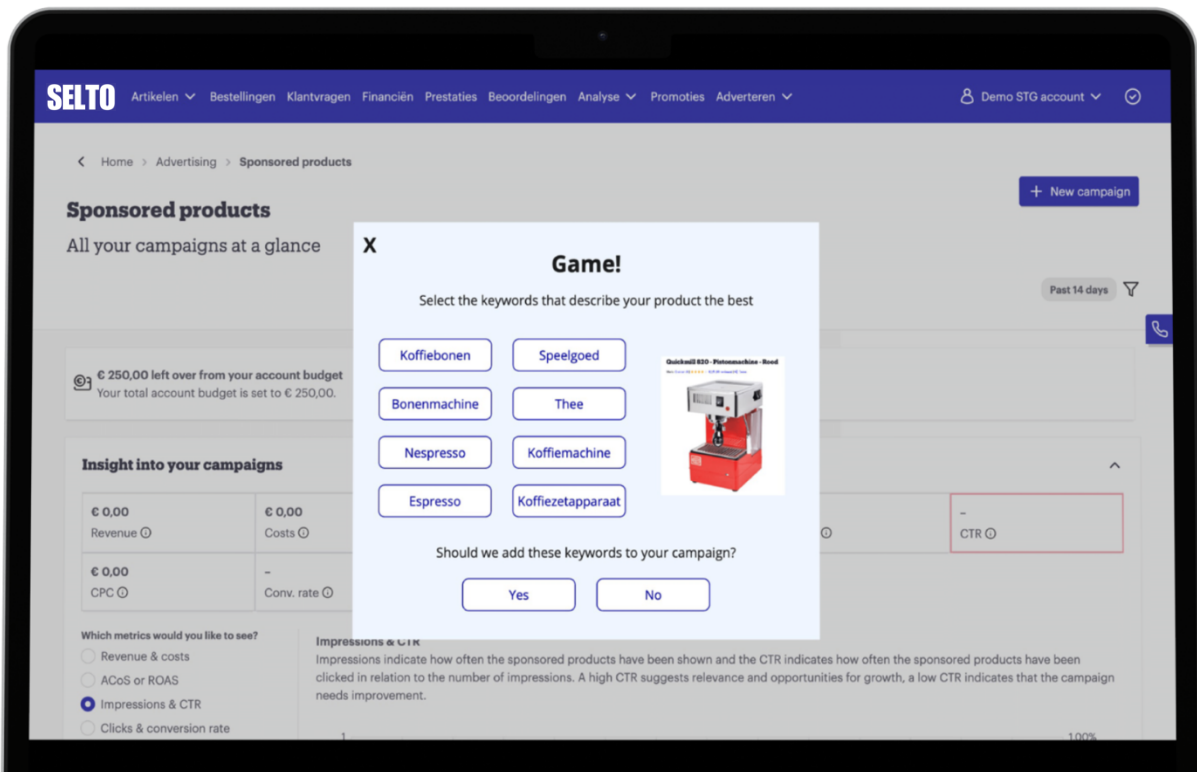

Figure 5.12: Concept prototype (Author's own work)

Give options for help with SP

- People can be more conscious about the help if they choose how they want it.
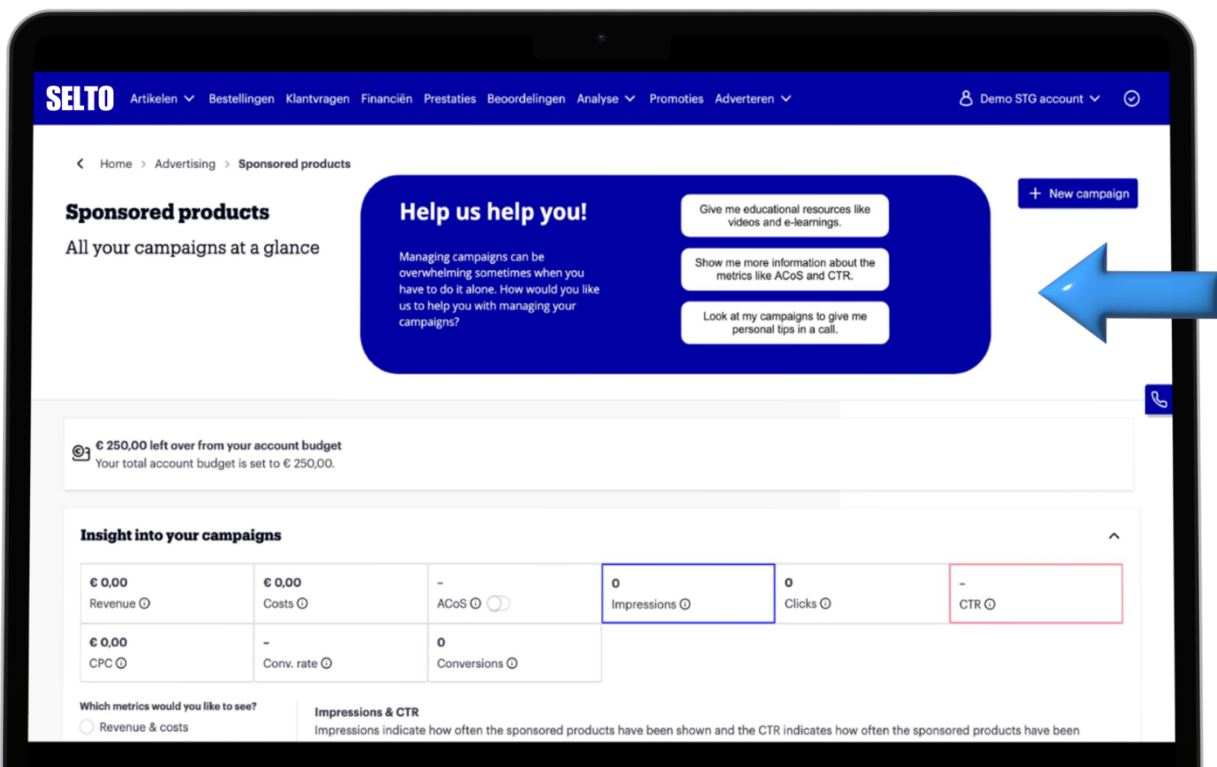- Direct action or help later both possible.

Figure 5.13: Concept prototype (Author's own work)

Textual summary of campaigns

- Words say more than numbers to some people.
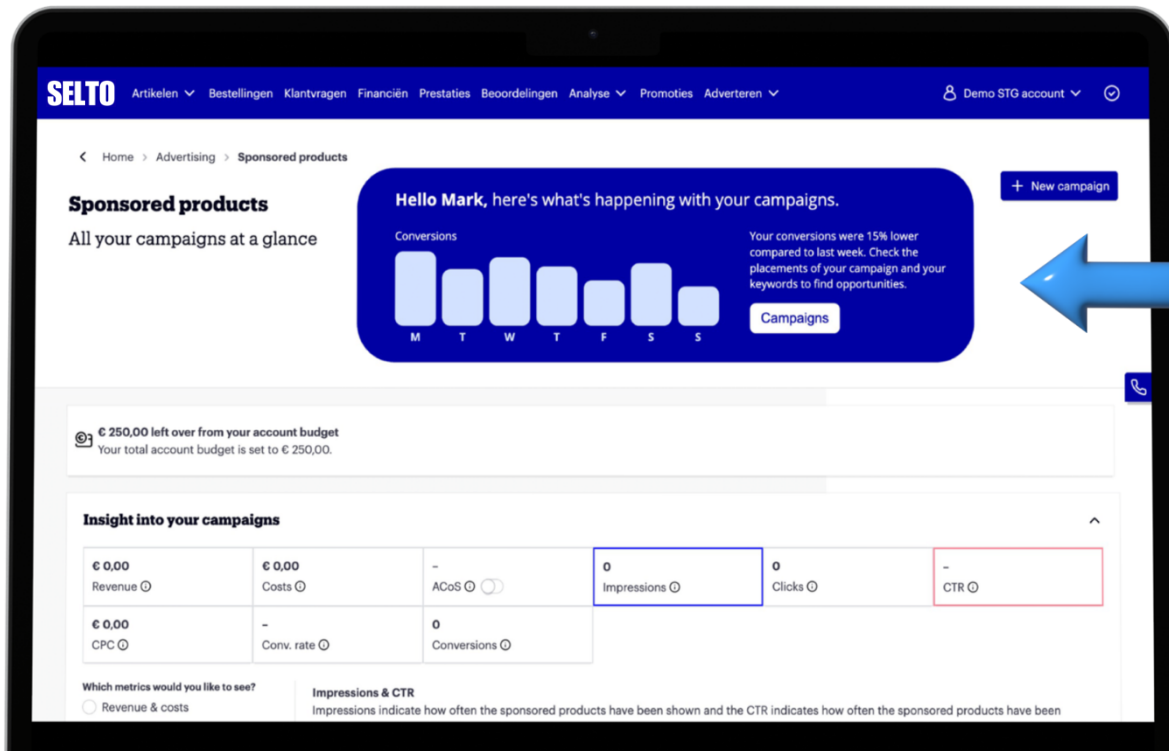- Call-to-action to help them optimize.

Figure 5.14: Concept prototype (Author's own work)

Helping side-bar

- More direct access to partner platform information.
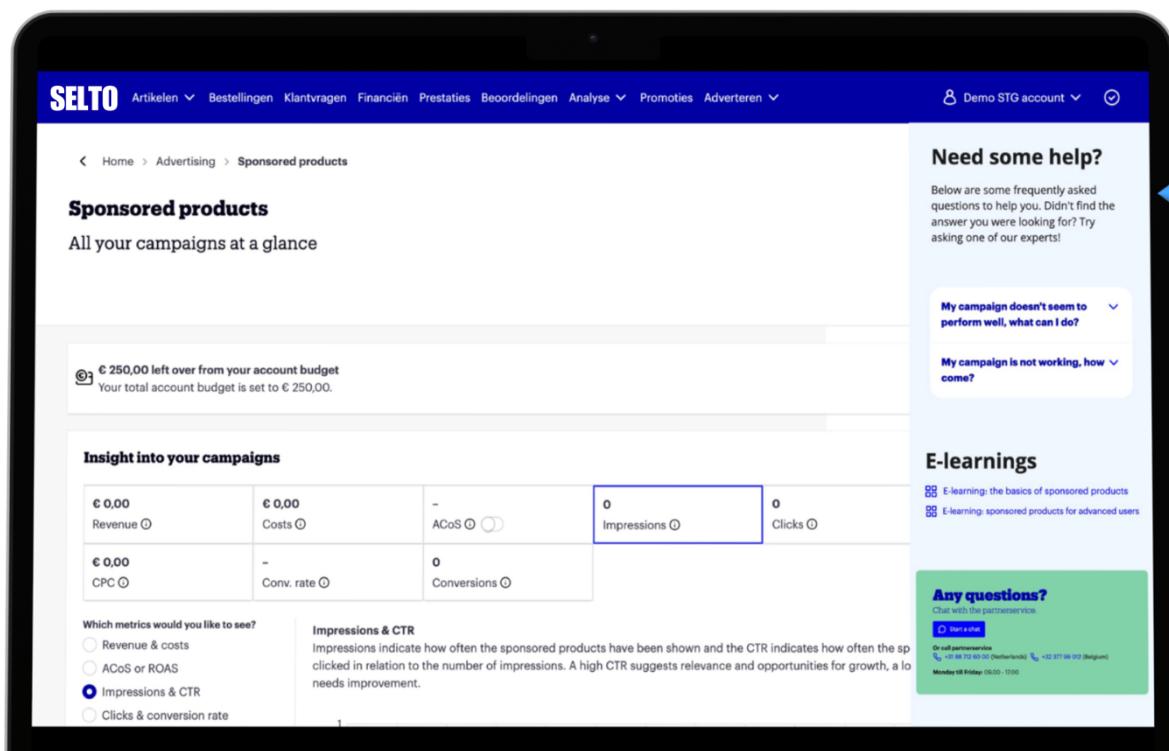- FAQ, e-learnings and contact options

Figure 5.15: Concept prototype (Author's own work)

Data info pop-up

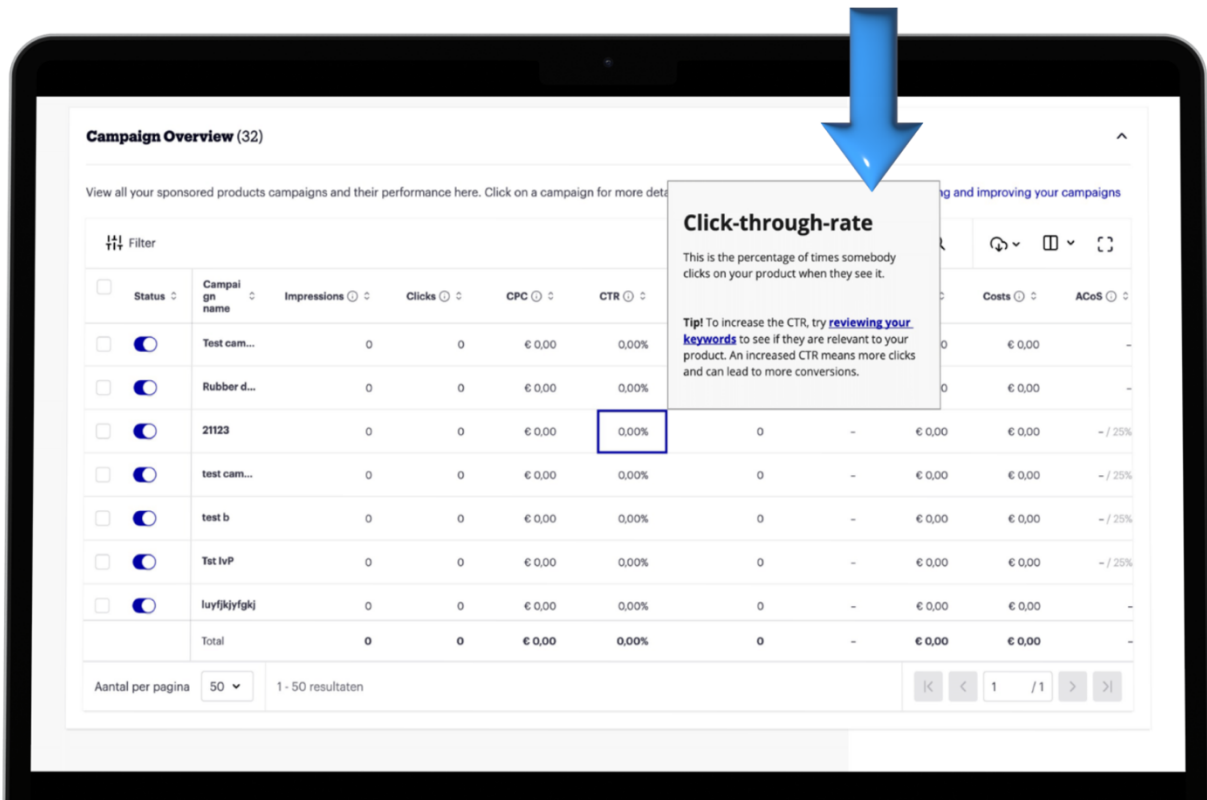- Full overview of metric description and tips to optimize.

Figure 5.16: Concept prototype (Author's own work)

Info video pop-up

- Nudge people to learn a bit more about managing their campaigns.
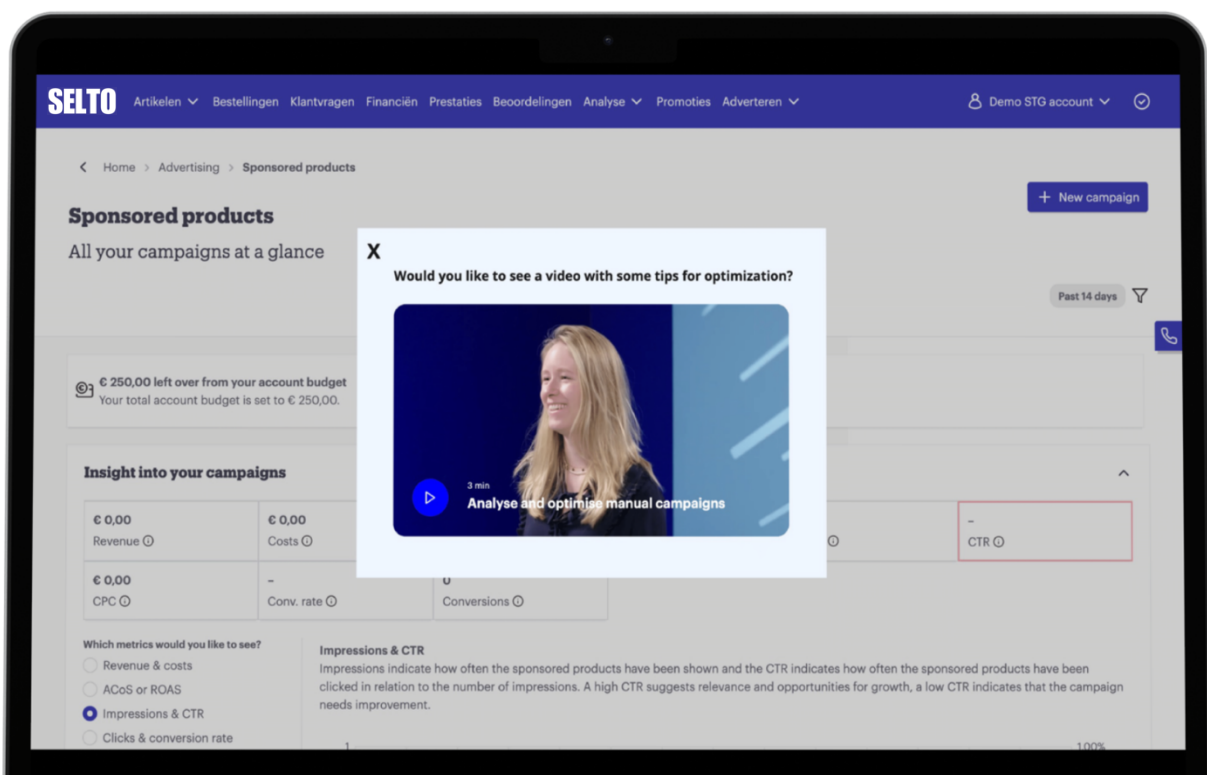

Figure 5.17: Concept prototype (Author's own work)

Dashboard make-over

- A full dashboard make-over that shows insights in different ways with actionable recommendations
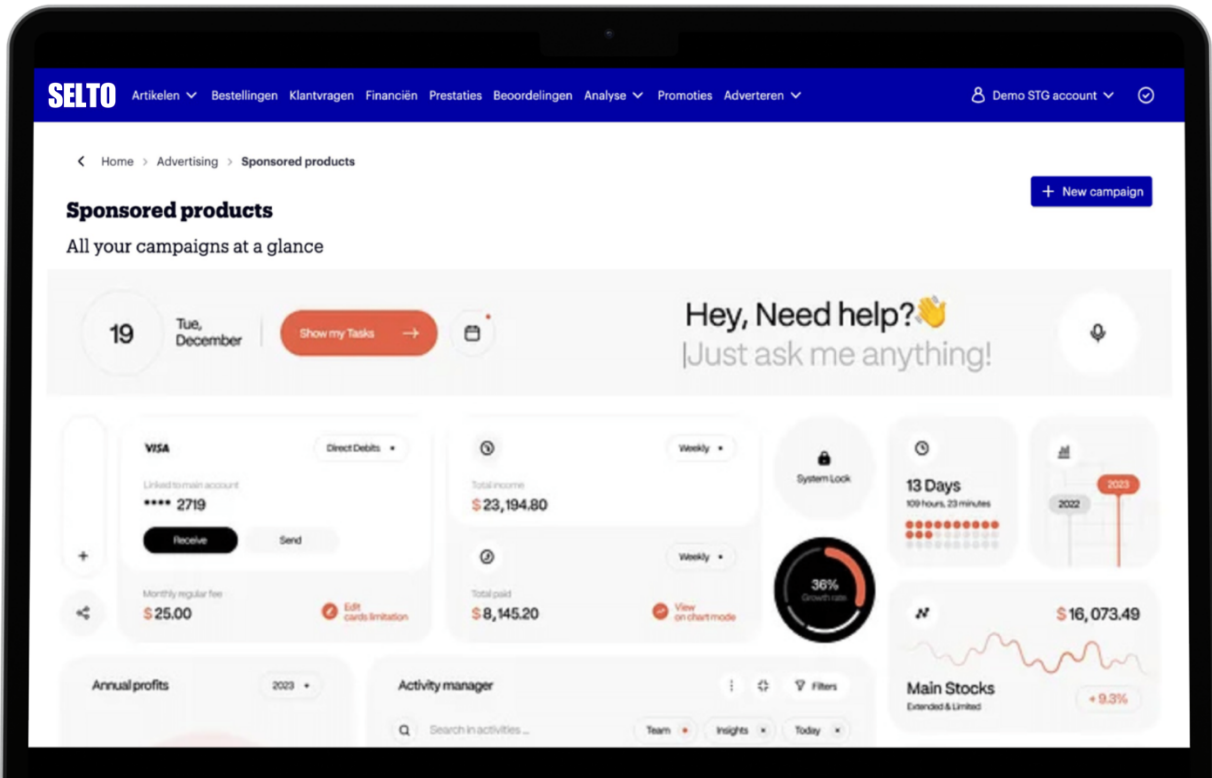

Figure 5.18: Concept prototype (Author's own work)

Campaign with presets

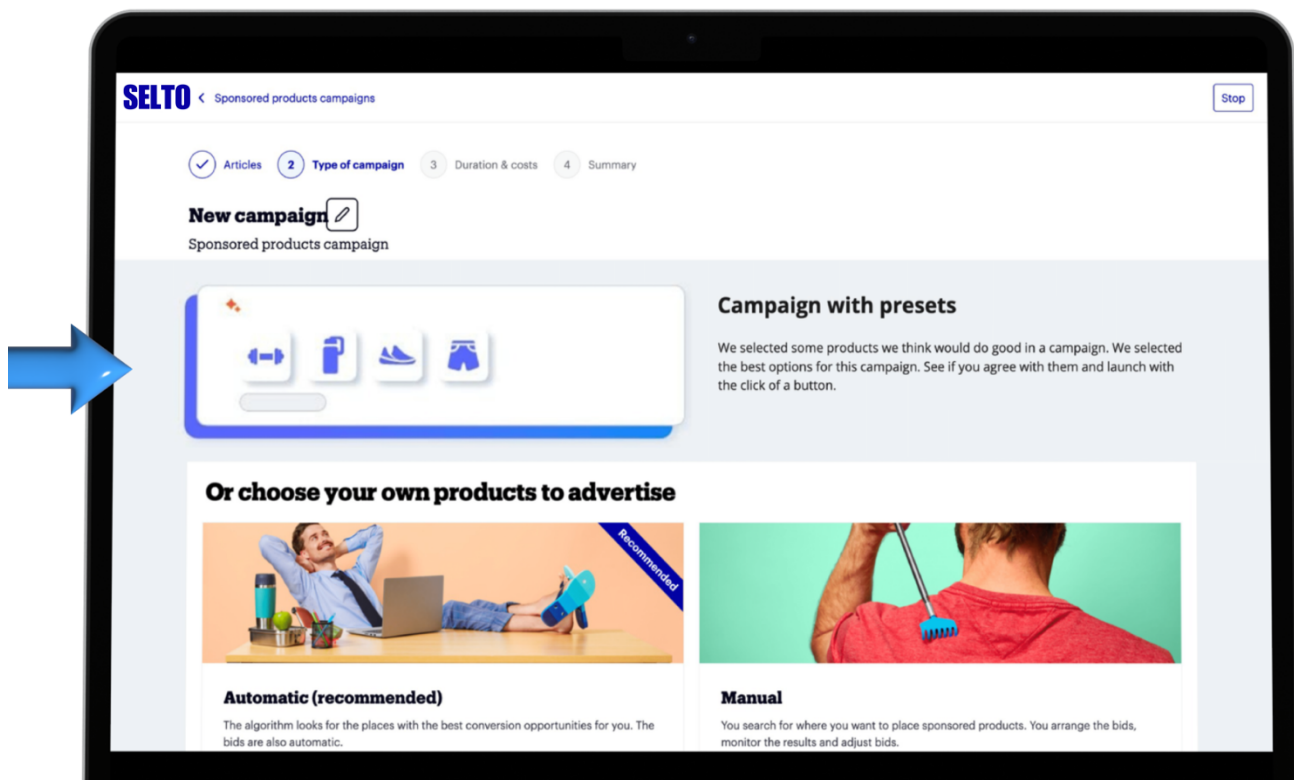- One-click campaign setup.
- Bol acts as expert.

Figure 5.19: Concept prototype (Author's own work)

Data visual options

- More options to view data points.
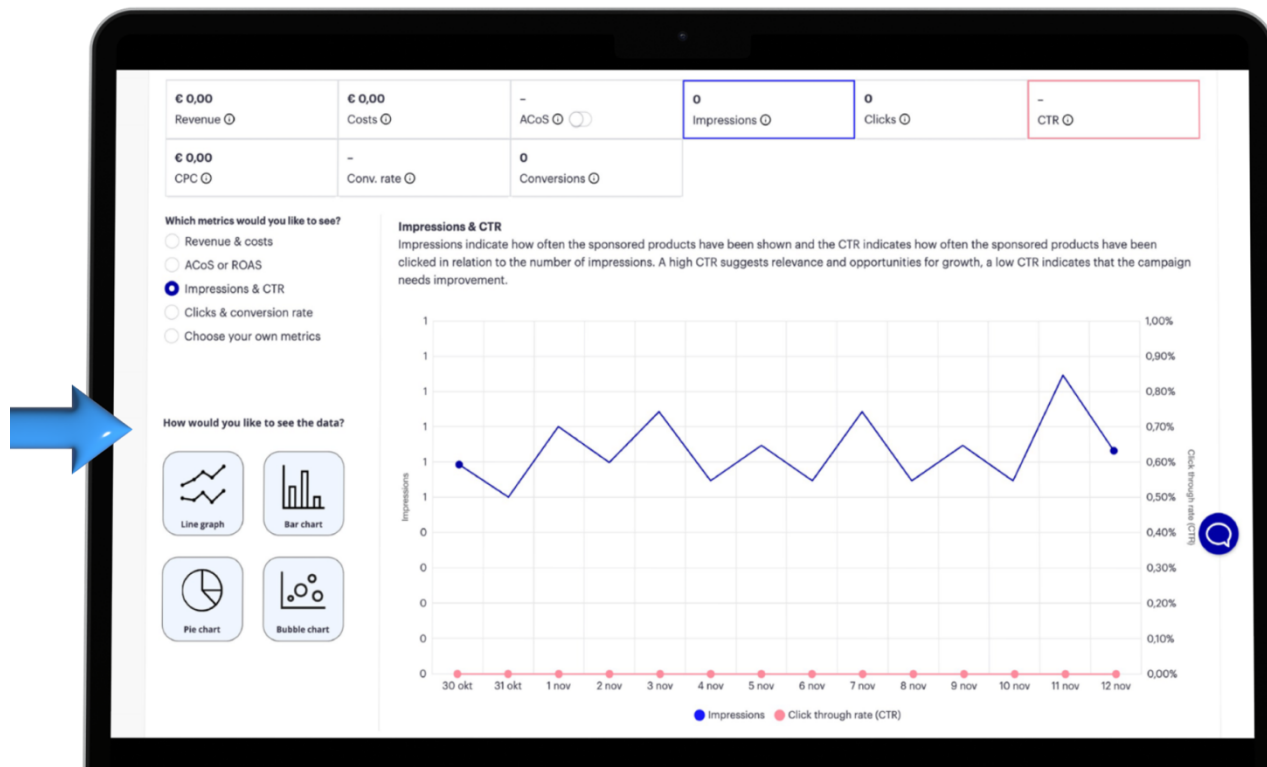- Better understanding of data.

Figure 5.20: Concept prototype (Author's own work)

Clickable recommendations

- Option to learn more about the topic.
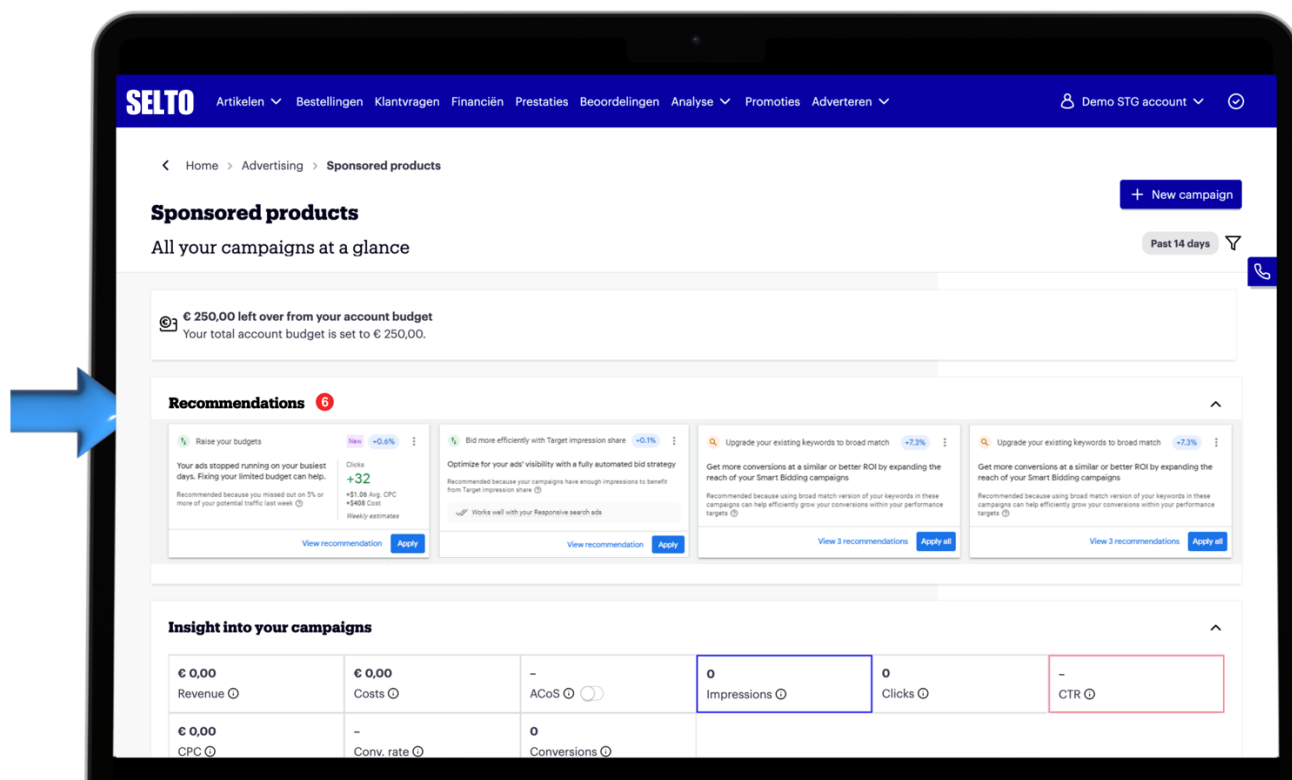- Call-to-action for quick implementation

Figure 5.21: Concept prototype (Author's own work)

SECTION 3 | SYNTHESIS

6.

Test

After the ideation sessions, choosing a direction, and creating 10 prototypes, it's time to test them. The prototypes were first shown to the designers of Sponsored Products at Selto. Together, we selected the three most promising concepts. After this, I sent out a questionnaire to many small sellers to gather their feedback and understand how well the concepts meet their needs.

Concept selection

The 10 concepts I prototyped on page 67-71 were printed and taken to the office of Selto. There, I hung them on the wall for the designers to see. Each of them was given 4 stickers to vote their favorite or most promising concepts. I did not explain the ideas so they could let their imagination run free with the possibilities of the concepts.

After the voting each of the designers explained how they understood the concept and explained why they voted on concepts and why other concepts where not as promising. The designers had the chance to explain one by one. Other could however jump in if they had something to add or interpreted a concept different than their colleague.

Some of the concepts were tried to implement before but, as it goes in a corporate environment, did not make it

through to implementation. For example, the concept "Data visual options" was tested but did not have enough evidence of benefits to be implemented. Campaign with presets is a concept that was found promising but is a concept they are currently working on already. This is how the votes were cast:

3 Make optimizing fun
0 Give options for help with SP
3 Textual summary of campaigns
1 Helping side bar
1 Data info pop-up
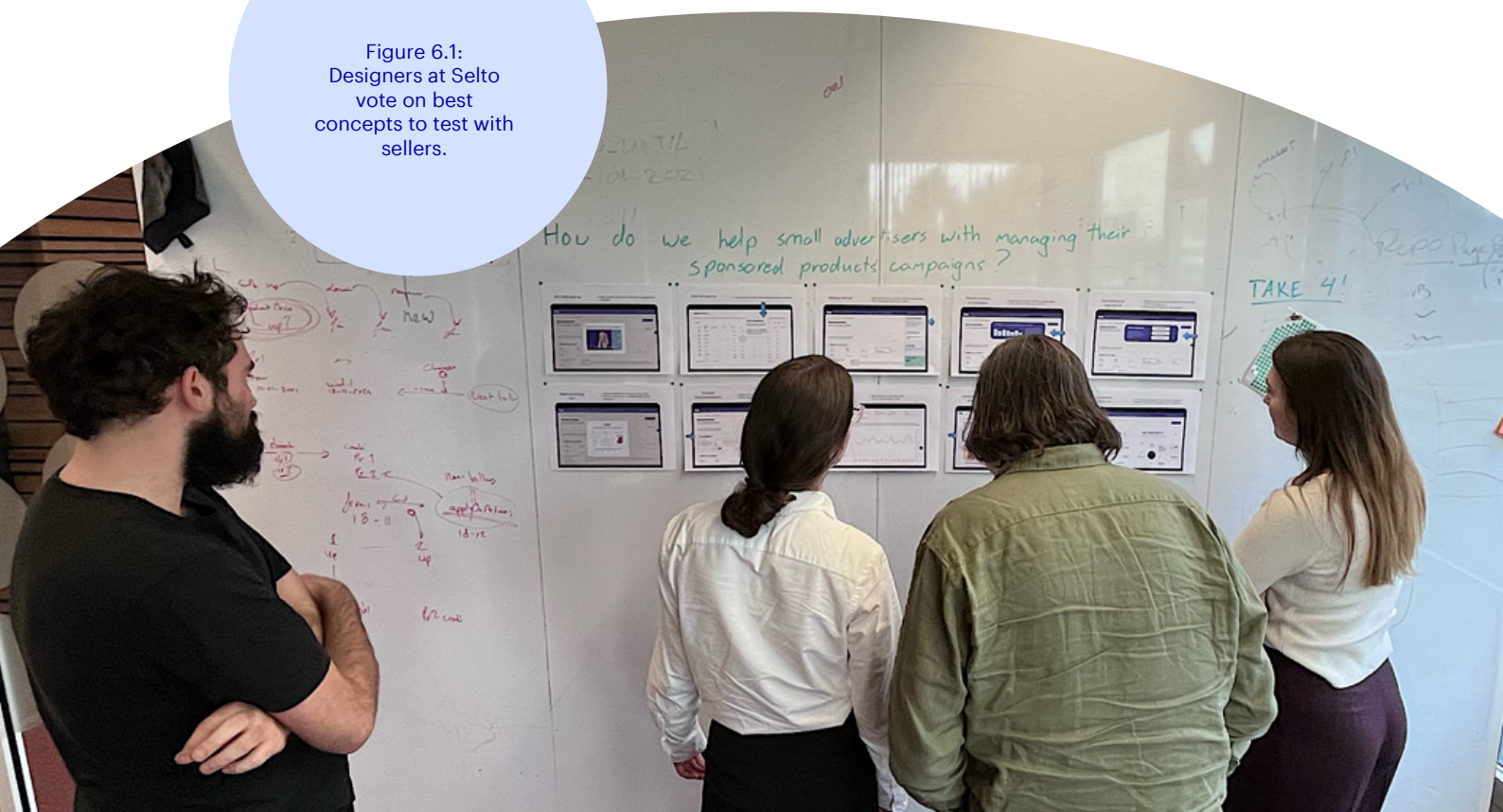0 Info video pop-up
2 Dashboard make-over
0 Campaign with presets
2 Data visual options
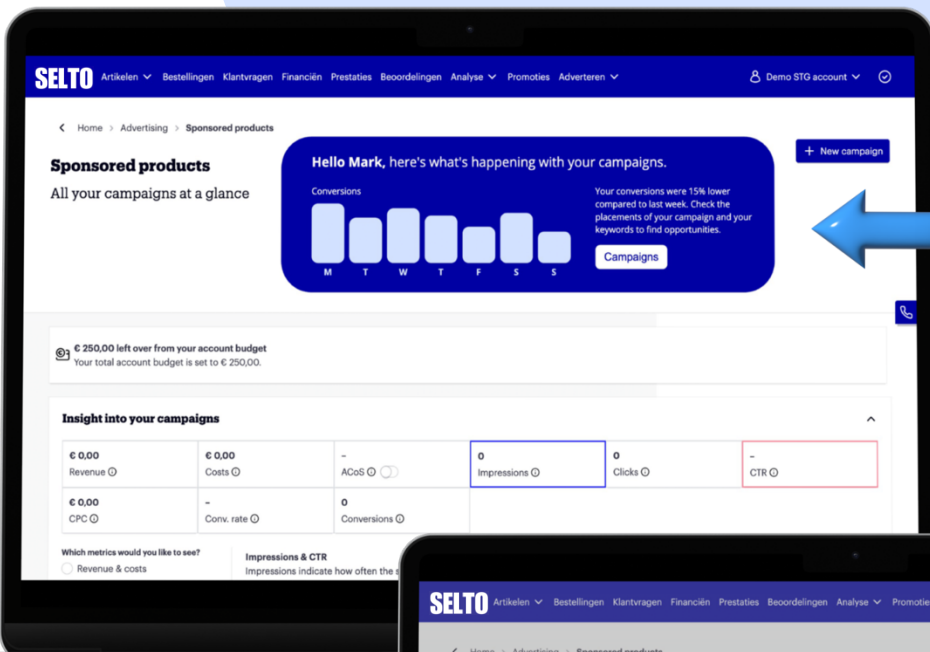**4 Clickable recommendations**

The three most voted concepts are on the next page and where also among the concepts that I found most promising so those will be the ones that I will test with sellers.

Figure 6.1: Designers at Selto vote on best concepts to test with sellers.

Top 3 concepts

Data Summaries in Text
Numbers can be overwhelming. Clear text updates provide key insights into your campaigns each time you open the dashboard, with options to take immediate action.

Make Optimizing Fun
Spend a few seconds to help improve your campaigns effortlessly. Quick tasks or games on keywords, budgets, or audiences make optimization easy and engaging.
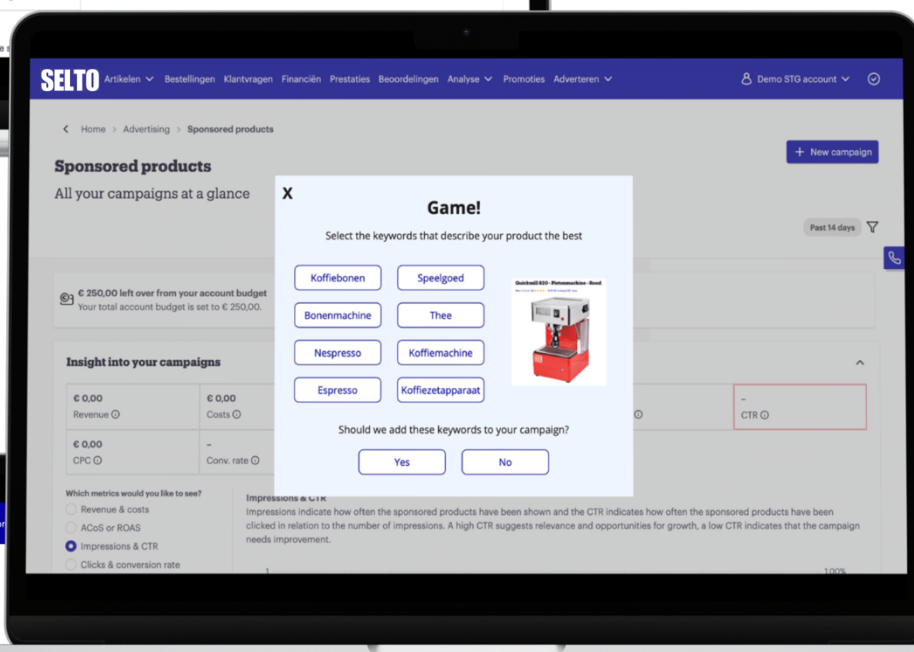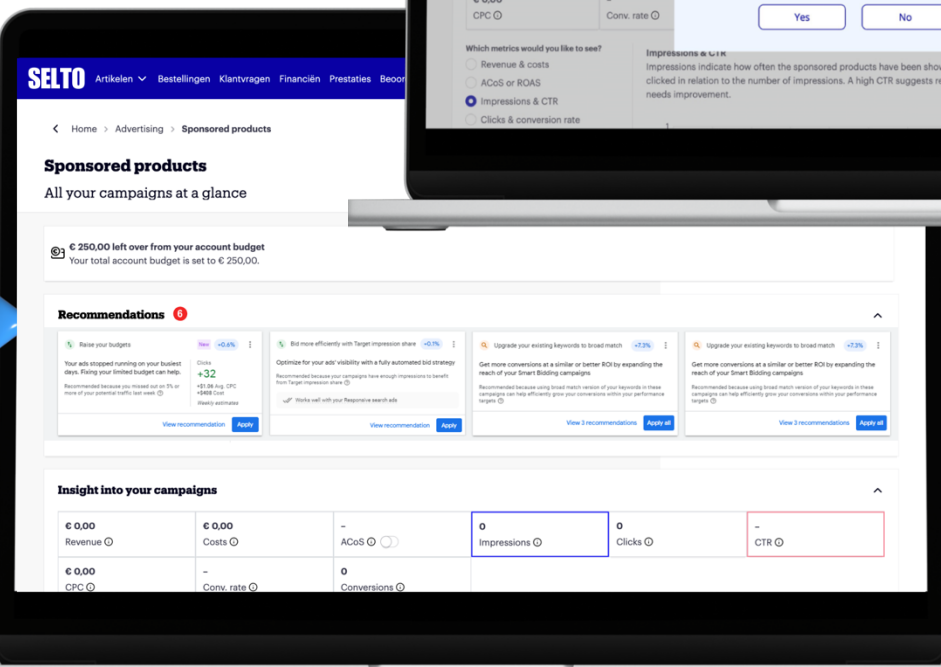
Recommendations
The dashboard analyzes your campaigns and suggests changes, showing their impact. You can learn more or apply them instantly with one click.

Questionnaire

To select the most effective concept among the three options, I plan to gather feedback from small sellers about which one they find most helpful and their reasons for choosing it. To simplify the process and collect a larger number of responses efficiently, I have decided to use a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be made with Qualtrics. This is a research tool that allows pages of the questionnaire to be shuffled for each respondent. This is important so the order of the concepts doesn't influence the outcome of the questionnaire. The next page shows an overview of how participants were selected and contacted.

The questionnaire started off with the following message:

Dear seller on Selto,

Thank you for taking **5 to 10 minutes** of your time to share your opinion on potential new features for Sponsored Products! We've noticed that some partners could use a bit more support in optimizing their campaigns. In this survey, you'll provide your thoughts on **three different concepts**, which will help me determine which one is the most effective and why. These concepts represent directions within which concrete solutions will be developed. The questions for each concept are the same.

My name is Thijs, and I am a graduate student at TU Delft in the Strategic Product Design master's program. Selto has given me the opportunity to design new concepts for my graduation project to better support partners like you with Sponsored Products.

After the introduction, each of the concepts was shown in a random order with each the same questions:

1) How clear is this concept to you?
2) How useful is this concept for your business?
3) Does this concept help solve your advertising challenges?
4) Does this concept help you gain more control over your ads?
5) How likely are you to try this concept?
6) What would you improve or adjust about this concept to make it better suited to your business?

The first five questions are followed by Itemized rating scales (e.g. 1 (Very difficult) to 5 (Very easy)). The last question is open to gather qualitative feedback on the concept.

The final page of the questionnaire is there to compare the three concepts. Respondents are asked to rank the three concepts on the following questions:

1) Which concept do you think is the easiest to use?
2) Which concept provides the best support for your advertising campaigns?
3) Which concept would you use first?

The questionnaire ends with an open field for any additional comments.

Facebook groups

The questionnaire was distributed to sellers via Facebook groups of sellers on Selto with the following message:

Hi sellers on Selto!
For my graduation project at TU Delft, I am working at Selto on new features that can help sellers with Sponsored Products campaigns. I have worked out 3 new features with some questions attached. If you have ever used Sponsored Products, it will really help me if you take 5 minutes to assess these concepts, and who knows, you might see them soon in the dashboard!

Figure 6.5: Screenshot of Facebook invitation in Dutch

Thijs van de Water
Gisteren om 04:55 · 😕

•••

Hi verkopers op **SELTO**
Ik ben voor mijn afstudeerproject van TU Delft bij **SELTO** bezig met nieuwe functies die verkopers kunnen helpen met Sponsored Products campagnes. Ik heb 3 nieuwe funcies uitgewerkt met wat vragen erbij. Mocht je wel eens gebruik maken van Sponsored Products zou het me erg helpen als je even 5 minuutjes neemt om deze concepten te beoordelen en wie weet zie je ze binnenkort wel terug in het dashboard!
De vragenlijst:

TUDELFT.FRA1.QUALTRICS.COM
tudelft.fra1.qualtrics.com

ⓘ

E-mail

The questionnaire was also sent to Sellers with less than €50.000 ad spend per month on e-mail addresses that are registered at Selto. The e-mail message had the following message:

Hello, would you be willing to spend 5 minutes of your time evaluating potential new features for Sponsored Products as part of my graduation research? My name is Thijs van de Water, and for my thesis at TU Delft, I am researching, together with Selto, ways to better support selling partners in managing Sponsored Products campaigns.

Figure 6.6: Screenshot of email invitation in Dutch

SELTO

Afstudeeronderzoek Sponsored Products — korte vragenlijst

Hallo,

Zou je voor mijn afstudeeronderzoek 5 minuten van je tijd willen besteden aan het beoordelen van potentiële nieuwe functies van Sponsored Products?

Mijn naam is Thijs van de Water, en voor mijn scriptie aan de TU Delft onderzoek ik samen met **SELTO** manieren waarop verkooppartners beter ondersteund kunnen worden in het beheren van Sponsored Products-campagnes.

Naar de enquête

Results

The questionnaire collected 25 responses from sellers on Selto. The participants for the research are a combination of sellers with less than €50.000 ad spending per year contacted via email and sellers that are part of Facebook groups of sellers on Selto. In this result section I will show the answers for each question to compare the 3 concepts. In the first section you can see the question that was asked for each concept and the answers that were given. The answers per concept of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 5.

1) How clear is this concept to you?

Recommendations
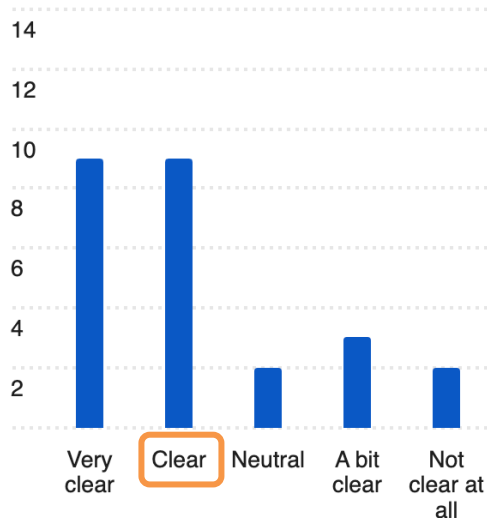
Make optimizing fun
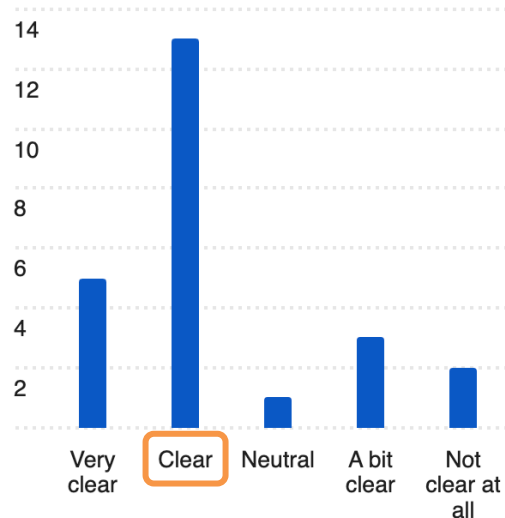
Data summaries in text
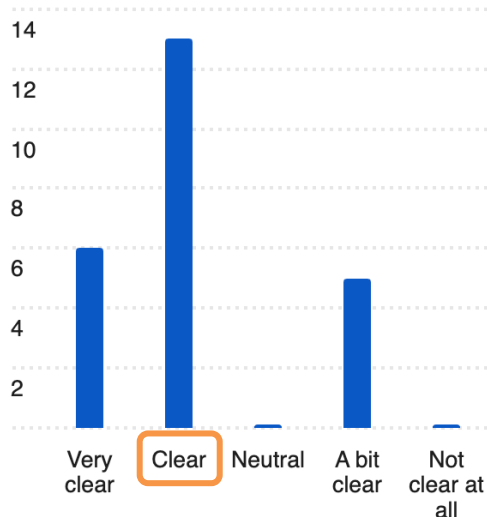
From these data you can see that **Recommendations** is the concept that was found *very clear* by most people (**36%** compared to **21%** and **25%**). On the other hand, it had the least number of votes in the answer *clear*. This makes the total of *very clear* and *clear* the lowest of the three concepts. This suggests that while some users found it *very clear*, its overall clarity was less consistent compared to the other concepts.

= Median

Figure 6.7: Bar Graphs of the answers to question 1

2) How useful is this concept for your business?

Recommendations
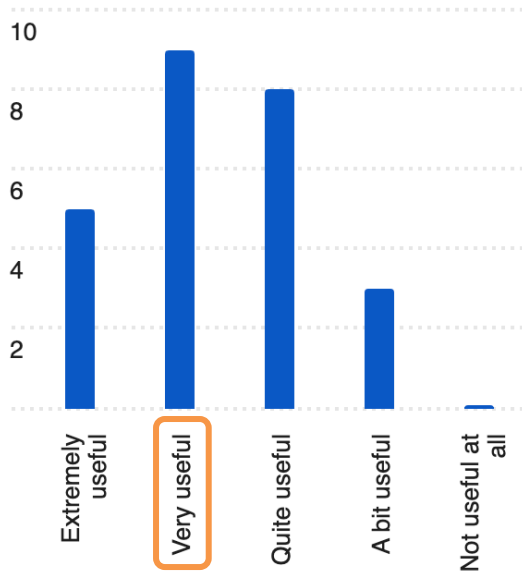
Make optimizing fun
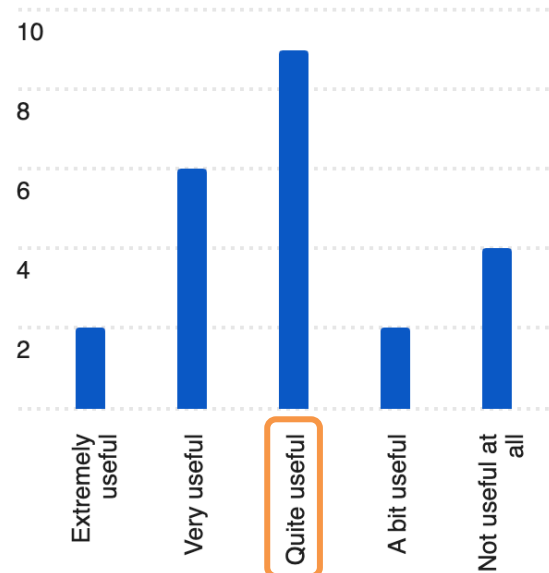
Data summaries in text
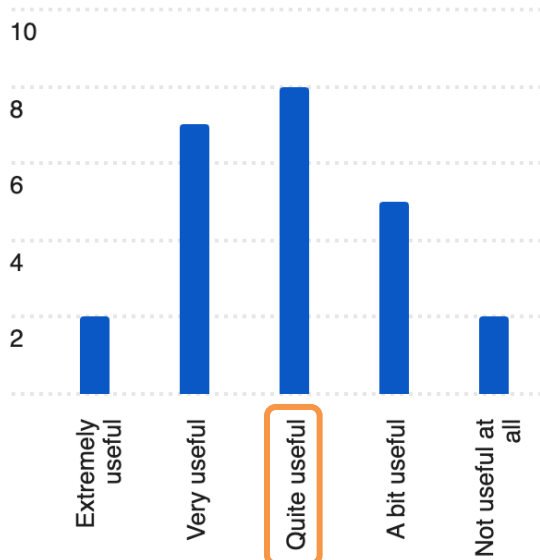
In the answers to this question, you can see a big difference in the result of **Recommendations** compared to the other concepts. Almost **90%** of the sellers found that concept *quite useful* or better. More than **50%** voted **Recommendations** to be *very useful* or *extremely useful*. The other concepts were voted relatively less useful.

= Median

Figure 6.8: Bar Graphs of the answers to question 2

3) Does this concept help solve your advertising challenges?

Recommendations

Make optimizing fun

Data summaries in text

Figure 6.9: Bar Graphs of the answers to question 3
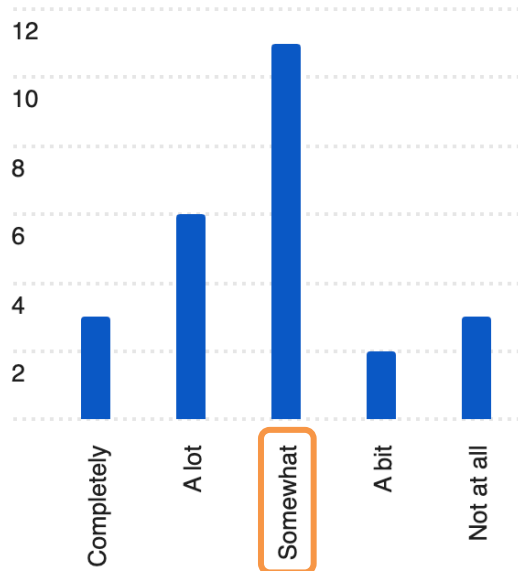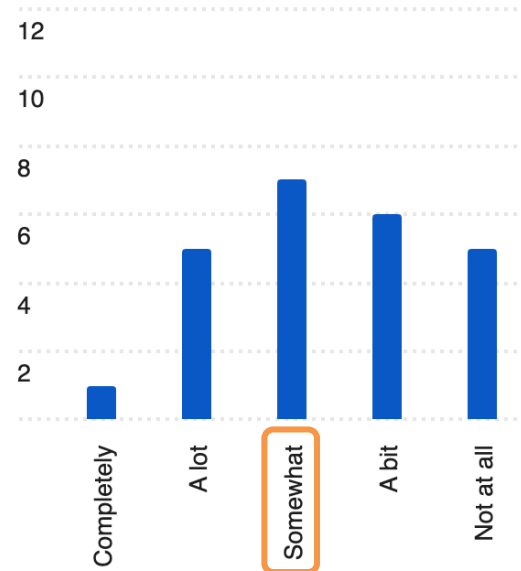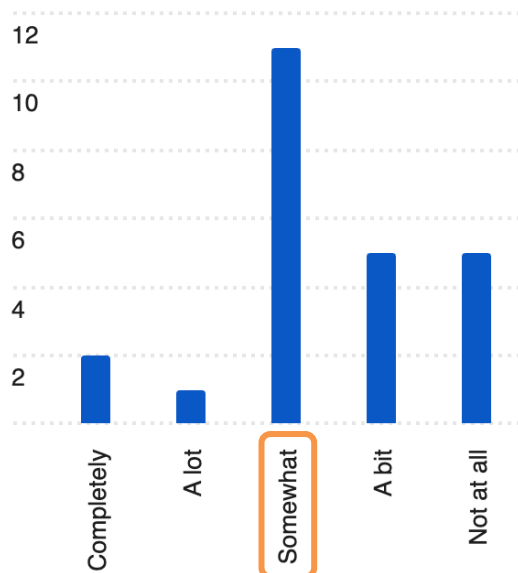
The numbers show that **Recommendations** does the best job at tackling advertising challenges. **80%** of sellers said it at least *somewhat* helps them out, compared to **54%** and **58%** for the other concepts. Plus, **36%** felt it solves their challenges *a lot* or *completely*, which is higher than the **25%** and **12%** the others got. It's clear that **Recommendations** really stands out.

☐ = Median

4) Does this concept help you gain more control over your ads?

Recommendations

Make optimizing fun

Data summaries in text

Figure 6.10: Bar Graphs of the answers to question 4
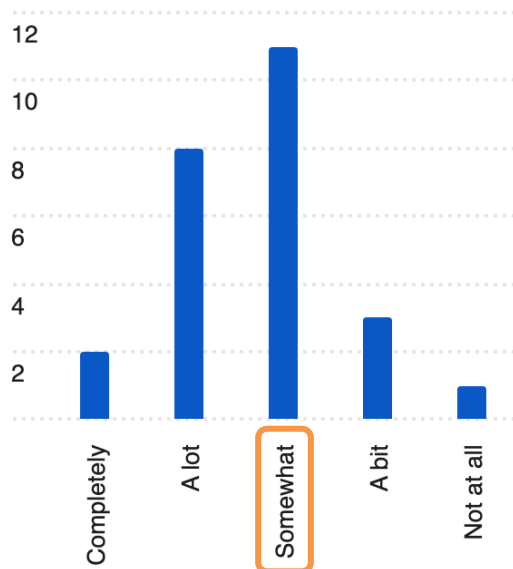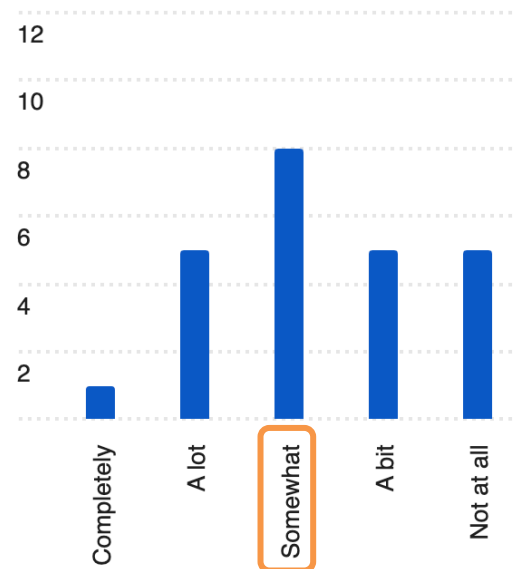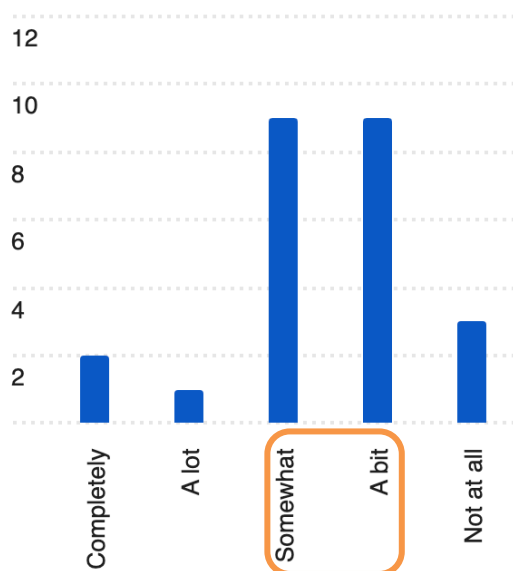
The results confirm that **Recommendations** stands out as the most effective concept for helping sellers gain more control over their ads. **84%** of sellers said it supported control at least *somewhat*, compared to **58%** and **50%** for the other concepts. Additionally, **40%** said it helped them *a lot* or *completely*, outperforming the others at **25%** and **12%**. This reinforces **Recommendations** as the strongest option for empowering sellers to manage their ads effectively.

⬜ = Median

5) How likely are you to try this concept?

Recommendations
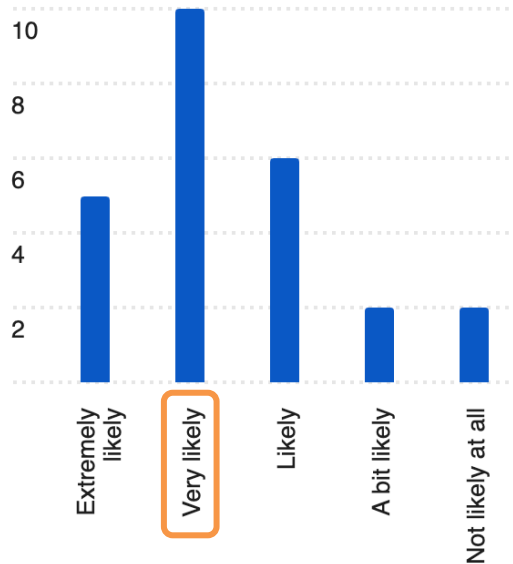
Make optimizing fun
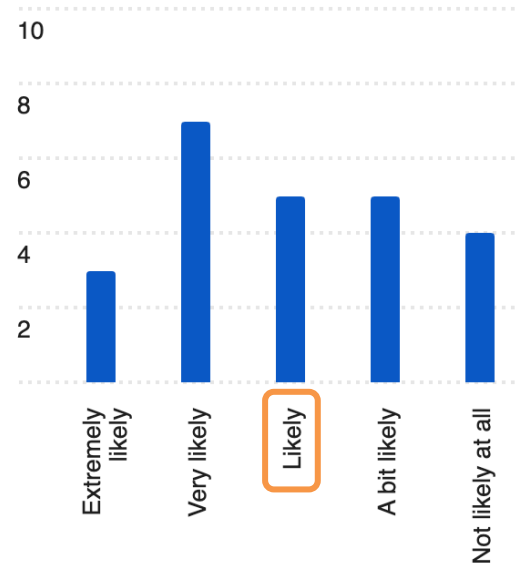
Data summaries in text
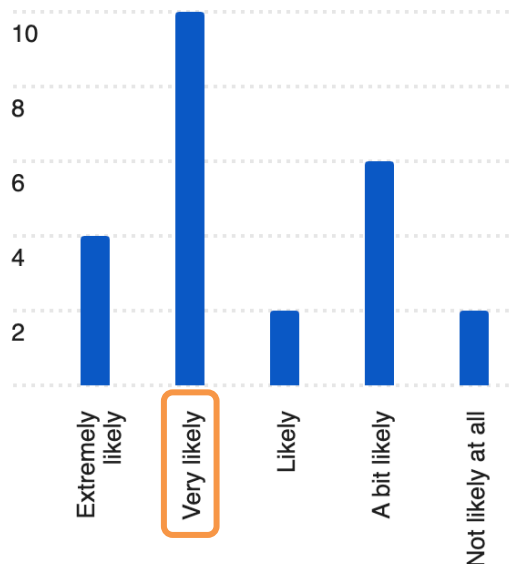
Figure 6.11: Bar Graphs of the answers to question 5

This final measure is crucial for understanding how likely sellers are to adopt the concepts. Once again, **Recommendations** stands out, with **84%** of sellers indicating they would likely try it or more, compared to **63%** and **67%** for the other concepts. Interestingly, **Data Summaries in Text** also performed well, with **59%** of sellers finding it *very likely* or *extremely likely* to be try, almost matching **Recommendations** at **60%**. This highlights **Recommendations** as the most promising option overall, with **Data Summaries in Text** also showing strong potential for adoption.

☐ = Median

Comparison

In this section of the questionnaire the sellers were asked to rank the concepts from 1 (best) to 3 (worst). It's clear that in all questions the concept **Recommendations** was best on average. **Data Summary in Text** scored the lowest overall, despite being rated as likely to try on the previous page.

1. Which concept do you think is the easiest to use?
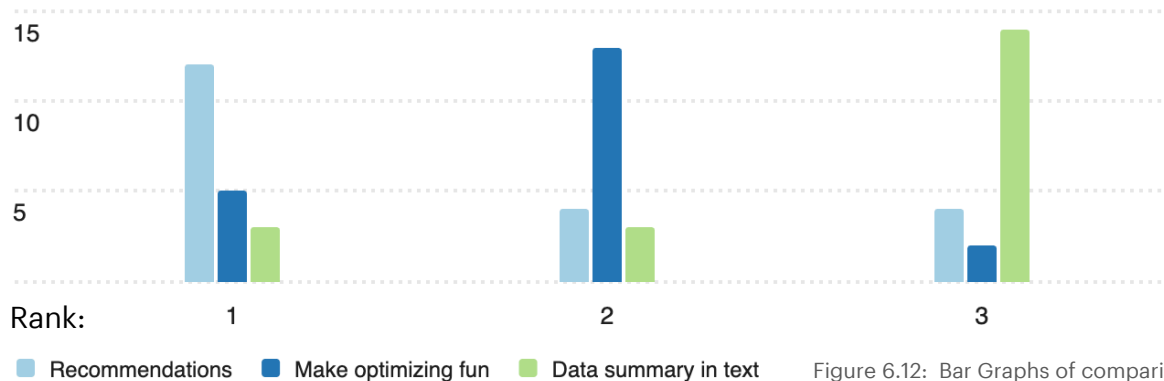
Figure 6.12: Bar Graphs of comparison 1

2. Which concept provides the best support for your advertising campaigns?

Figure 6.13: Bar Graphs of comparison 2

3. Which concept would you use first?

Figure 6.14: Bar Graphs of comparison 3
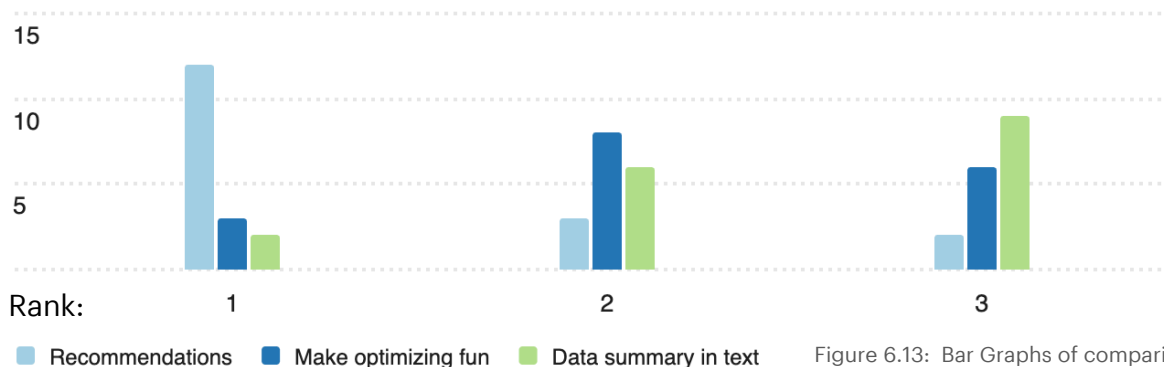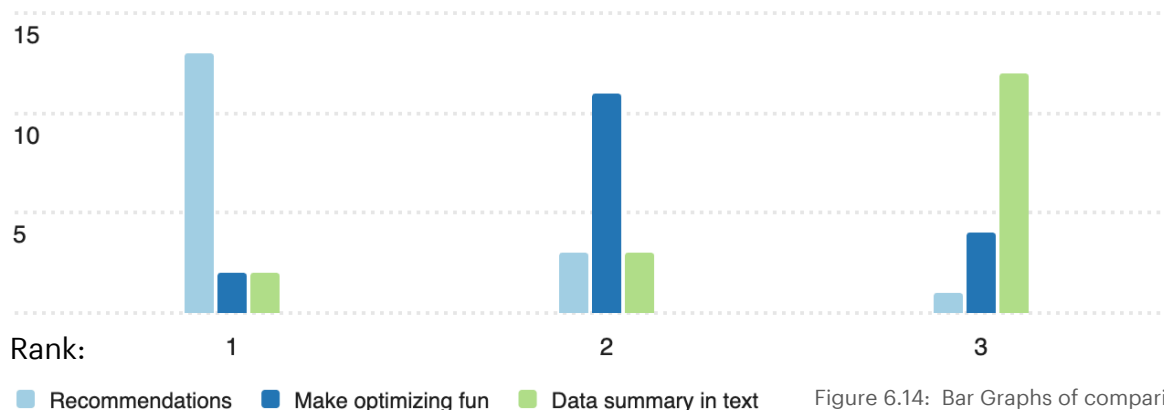
Feedback

The questionnaire included open-ended fields where sellers could suggest changes or additions to the concepts. This allowed them to share specific feedback, offering valuable insights into potential improvements or new features that could better meet their needs. This qualitative data can help me refine concepts to align more closely with sellers' expectations. I included all useful feedback in English below. The complete literal answers can be found in appendix 5.

Data summary in text

- Needs more details
- It doesn't indicate which campaigns are performing well and which are underperforming.
- I find it much better than the current page; with this layout, I can quickly see everything in one glance.
- Suggest adding tips for improving the metrics. Also, adjust the date range to something more realistic (e.g., the past 14 days) to prevent making frequent adjustments based on normal fluctuations.
- The text in the concept doesn't add much for me, as I can derive the same information from the insights. It would be more valuable if it highlighted that your conversions have dropped more than those of your competitors within the same product categories. This would provide more context, as a drop in performance doesn't necessarily signify a problem and could be due to seasonal factors. Without this additional clarification, offering just the insights would be sufficient.
- The pop-up is too vague—it essentially just says "Check your campaigns." If you're actively managing sponsored ads, you're already reviewing your results daily or more often.
- I would first need to research the concept of conversions before diving into optimization.

Conclusion: The concept is a step forward with its clear layout, but it needs improvements to be truly useful. It lacks clarity on campaign performance and actionable suggestions for improving metrics. Adding comparative insights, like performance against competitors, would provide valuable context. The date range should be realistic (e.g., last 14 days) to avoid overreacting to fluctuations. Current insights are too general, and unclear metrics like conversions create barriers for less-experienced users. Overall, it needs more actionable and contextual insights to help users optimize campaigns effectively.

Make optimizing fun

- Be cautious with suggested words—they might make you too reliant and less likely to search for strong alternatives on your own.
- The word *game* would normally make me dismiss this immediately. Running a business isn't a game. I assume this selection screen is the first step, and additional screens will follow where choices get more detailed, eventually leading to the *perfect* description for my article. My current rating is low/uncertain because I don't know if my assumption is correct.
- Preferably not as a pop-up.
- The concept text adds little value for me since I don't need games to optimize my campaigns. In fact,

"game" seems like an unfortunate choice of words because it doesn't really look like a game. That said, providing guidance through buttons and visuals, as shown in this example, could be helpful for setting up a campaign.

- Good idea to allow the partner to add their own keywords.
- Gamified approaches are fun, but I would prefer data-driven suggestions combined with potential volume insights.
- This concept might work well for someone selling many products, but I only sell one type of product.

Conclusion: While the concept has potential, the choice of wording, particularly the term game, feels misleading and detracts from the professional tone expected for campaign optimization. The idea of providing guidance through interactive elements like buttons and visuals is promising but should focus more on data-driven insights and practical value. Customization options, such as allowing partners to add their own keywords, are appreciated. However, the concept may need further refinement to cater to sellers with smaller or more niche product ranges, ensuring it delivers relevant and actionable support across diverse use cases.

Recommendations

Since this concept received the most positive response in the questionnaire, I discussed the feedback with a Selto designer to explore its potential and feasibility.

- "Show the additional costs or revenue from the adjustment."
Selto designer: This is called "forecasting" and can be done using historical data, but it heavily depends on what other advertisers are doing. It

would be more useful to provide a range of how much your sales might increase for example.

- "Are my sales better this Christmas compared to last? And how much did the extra money I invested in campaigns this Christmas positively impact my sales? That's what I want to know."
Selto designer: Sellers can already compare their sales and costs to previous periods on their own. Automating this analysis can be easily combined with tips and recommendations.

- "Most salaries are paid around the 28th of the month. Do I see that reflected in my sales? Should I invest more in ads then?"
Selto designer: Most payments happen on the 25th. People also browse ahead of payday, so increasing ad spend during this time makes sense. Recommendations based on historical data could address this.

- "In July, it's summer vacation. Are there a lot of buyers for swimsuits then, or should I advertise earlier? Or is it more about Black Friday deals?"
Selto designer: There's a search trends page for sellers that shows whether swimsuits are being searched for more at certain times. This could be turned into a recommendation for sellers in relevant categories.

- "It would be more interesting if you mentioned that my conversions dropped more than those of competitors in the same product categories."
Selto designer: This is called benchmarking: how you perform compared to competitors. It's tricky with just two competitors because of privacy concerns, but otherwise, it's doable.

Questionnaire conclusion

The results illustrate that the concept **Recommendations** is the best and most promising concept on numerous measures. Although its clarity was less consistent than the other concepts, it was aa useful, impactful, and supportive concept for this group of sellers in battling the challenges of advertising.

Of these, the concept **Recommendation** was especially important in offering a sense of control and power to sellers to manage ads effectively, receiving high rates on helping the seller manage campaigns better and addressing advertising-related challenges. Its likelihood to be adopted also was extremely high, thereby reinforcing its feasibility and real-world applicability. While the adoption potentiality of **Data Summaries in Text** was present, ranking low on the overall usefulness shows that the feedback should be taken account with the winning concept as well.

Further improvements

The feedback shows that people want clear and useful recommendations based on data. The Selto designer said that many of the requested features, such as forecasting, benchmarking, and analyzing seasonal trends, can be done but depend on the data available and privacy issues.

Sellers really want to know how the recommendations affect their sales, look at performance over time, and get quick tips based on consumer behavior trends, like paydays or seasonal demand. Automating these insights and connecting them with current tools, like search trends and sales comparisons, could make the seller experience much better.

Adopt feedback from other concepts
The concept Recommendations can also adopt feedback from the other concepts. To make it even better, the language should be more professional and clearer. Avoid using casual terms like game from the Make optimizing fun concept, which may confuse sellers. As recommended for the Data summary in text concept, the recommendations will be more actionable, concrete steps based on historical data and trends. This will make the tool easier to navigate, especially for inexperienced sellers, by explaining metrics and showing realistic date ranges.

Concept detail interviews

Ads knowledge is a personal estimation based on interview answers*

Sellers	# of different products	*Ads knowledge	Ads spend (p/m)
Seller 1	5-10	3/5	€500
Seller 2	20-30	4/5	€150
Seller 3	5	1/5	€150
Seller 4	70-80	4/5	€250
Seller 5	50-60	2/5	€200
Seller 6	1	2/5	€1000
Seller 7	20-30	3/5	€300

Table 6.15: List of interviewed sellers

I performed 7 final feedback interviews to test the assumptions of the Recommendations concept and gather feedback to ensure that this concept would meet the needs of Selto sellers. The interviews are important in understanding whether the concept addresses the challenges faced by sellers and if it meets their preferences. In speaking directly with the sellers, I was able to validate if the Recommendations concept is found useful, trustworthy, and presented in a format that fits their needs with info that they want to see.

Sellers were invited via e-mail for a 30-minute call to discuss specific challenges of the Dashboard and preferences for getting recommendations. The interview started off with general questions about pain points and gradually transitioned to more specific questions about which recommendations they would like and in what form. I did write an interview script of which the questions are written below. However, I only used this as a broad guide while, in reality, the interviews were more flowing conversations.

Main interview questions

Need for Recommendations
"What are your biggest challenges in managing campaigns?"
"What kind of help from Selto would benefit you the most?"

First Impression of Concept: Recommendations
"What do you think of the idea of Selto providing campaign recommendations?"
"What seems useful about this concept? And what doesn't?"

Receiving Recommendations
"How would you prefer to receive recommendations? For example, via email or within the dashboard?"
"How much detail would you like to see in a recommendation?"

Follow-Up and Trust
"How likely are you to follow Selto's recommendations? Why or why not?"
"How much trust do you have in Selto as a platform for advice?"

Important Information
"What information would you want to see first in a recommendation?"
"What should never be missing?"

Interview results

The feedback collected from recent Concept detail interviews provides valuable insights into the needs and preferences of sellers using Selto's advertising tools. These insights shed light on how sellers interact with the platform, their expectations for campaign management, and how they perceive the utility of recommendations and data-driven insights.

These insights will inform the final design of the recommendations feature, ensuring that it meets the diverse needs of small sellers while enhancing their ability to effectively manage and optimize their campaigns.

Trust in concept: Recommendations
- Positive attitude towards Recommendations: Most sellers find the idea of recommendations helpful and trustworthy, as Selto's success aligns with theirs.
    - *"I trust Selto because we both want to sell more."* – *Seller 3*
    - *"Selto has the most data, so I trust their insights."* – *Seller 4*
- Recommendations are appreciated when based on solid data; sellers want transparency on the data sources and calculations.
- Some sellers are cautious about predictions, fearing disappointment if results don't meet expectations.

Usability and Presentation
- While sellers appreciate simplicity, they also want the option to dive deeper into the data if needed.
    - *"I want to see the full details, but only if I choose to."* – *Seller 7*
- A flexible dashboard is preferred, allowing recommendations to be tested, dismissed, or applied in one click.
- Smaller text or overly detailed recommendations are harder to comprehend for some sellers.

Preferred Communication Channels
- Some sellers want notifications via email to keep a record.
- Others dislike email and prefer insights directly in the dashboard.
- There's a demand for customization, such as turning on/off email notifications.

Campaign Strategy and Insights
- Sellers want specific targeting, such as competitive rankings or trending keywords.
- They want recommendations for budget allocation based on visibility or return potential.
- Sellers want recommendations to help identify underperforming keywords or products.
- Information about demographics and devices (e.g., age groups, mobile/desktop) is valuable for better targeting.
- Sellers want to know when users shop most (e.g., after 4 PM) to optimize their campaigns.
- Highlighting which products are trending or potentially profitable for advertising.

Data Transparency and Metrics
- Sellers value data-driven insights but want more transparency about how metrics like ACoS and bidding work.
    - *"I'd like to know how ACoS is calculated and how bidding actually works."* – *Seller 3*

- Predictions are appreciated but must include explanations (e.g., "based on previous trends").
- Hard metrics like potential revenue and ROI estimates are prioritized over abstract insights.
- Sellers want actionable insights that are easy to understand and implement, preferring clear explanations of metrics like ACoS and conversions.
    - *"The only metric I care about is profit, what will this cost, and what will it bring in?"* – *Seller 1*

Conclusion

While sellers enjoy the idea of personalized recommendations, they would like to know more about how these insights are made and used. They want easy-to-understand data that they can use right away in their advertising strategies. Some sellers prefer updates via email, while others want insights directly in the dashboard. The key, of course, is simplicity, control, and an absolute feel for the numbers involved that tell how good the campaign will be.

The feedback exposes areas needing improvement in the present to usability and access. That means needing more clarifications on important measures related to bidding strategies and how changes to campaigns will result. The feedback also suggests kinds of recommendations that would help sellers target their campaigns with precision, change anything based on real-time data, and have an overview of the campaign performance compared to the competition.

Reflection section 3

The synthesis phase focused on creating a solution that prioritizes empowering small sellers through Selto's own resources, rather than involving agencies. This decision stemmed from the understanding that agencies are not always the right fit for small sellers, either due to cost constraints or a preference for managing their own campaigns.

Empowering Sellers Directly

The shift in focus away from cooperation with agencies has emphasized the need to come up with solutions that make small sellers self-sustainable. This approach placed top on the agenda the creation of simple, user-friendly self-service tools to ensure everything offered by Selto is easily usable, even for users without extensive advertising experience. This directly answers the concerns of small sellers who may not have the ability or interest in outsourcing advertising but still need help to succeed in the highly competitive markets.

Building on Trust

Trust became one of the integral pillars of the synthesis process. Small sellers trusted Selto more than third-party agencies primarily because Selto's success was highly connected to their own success. This trust motivated them to focus on Selto-driven solutions, therefore increasing credibility and perceived value in tools and resources.

Testing and Engagement Insights

Seller feedback was critical in both the selection and validation of the concepts. In the process of concept selection, I had 25 sellers' opinions and then I spoke to 7 for Concept detail, learning so much about the feasibility and usability of my ideas. One big lesson learned was the importance of communication form. I found telephone calls and questionnaires to be much better than using Microsoft Teams alone, as this made the respondents more willing to participate as they don't have to be behind a computer at the time. This was an important finding since in the initial round of interviews, conducted during the analysis phase, many of the sellers seemed not interested when it came to giving their opinions.

Reflections on Decision-Making

During the synthesis phase, I also realized how important it is to incorporate personal preferences into decision-making processes. While user feedback influenced many aspects of the project, balancing it with my perspective ensured that the final solution was cohesive and well-reasoned. This balance enabled me to develop a solution that not only meets the needs of the users but also aligns with my understanding of the project's overall goals.

Research question (p17) answered

RQ3: What should **Selto** offer as solutions to small **sellers** and **agencies** to help them connect?

Selto should focus on empowering small sellers directly by providing accessible, intuitive, and trustworthy tools, rather than connecting them with agencies. These solutions should prioritize seller independence, enabling them to manage and optimize campaigns effectively on their own.

Section 4:
Evaluate

Figure 6.16: Photograph (Selto, 2024)

7. ● Final design

After testing the prototypes and gathering feedback, the final design phase began. Based on insights from the testing, I refined the most promising concept. This chapter will explain the finalized design of the recommendations feature, highlighting its key elements and how they address user needs.

Final concept: Recommendations

The final design of this graduation project: **Recommendations**. I'm happy to introduce the Recommendations feature for Selto's Sponsored Products. It will go a long way in helping small sellers easily improve their campaigns. They will get useful insights in their dashboard, along with suggestions based on how their campaign is doing. It allows them to adjust budgets, refine targeting, or change keywords. It helps sellers make better choices without making it too complicated. With clear, easy-to-understand guidance, they will feel empowered to take control of their advertising efforts and achieve better

results, on their own terms. Say goodbye to guesswork and hello to actionable, data-driven recommendations that move sponsored products campaigns forward.

During the Concept detail interviews, the sellers explained what information is important and what words would get their attention. Below, you can find the recommendation section highlighted on the dashboard. On the next pages I will go into every component in detail. After that an overview of the kinds of recommendations can be found.

Figure 7.1: Prototype concept: Recommendations (author's own work)
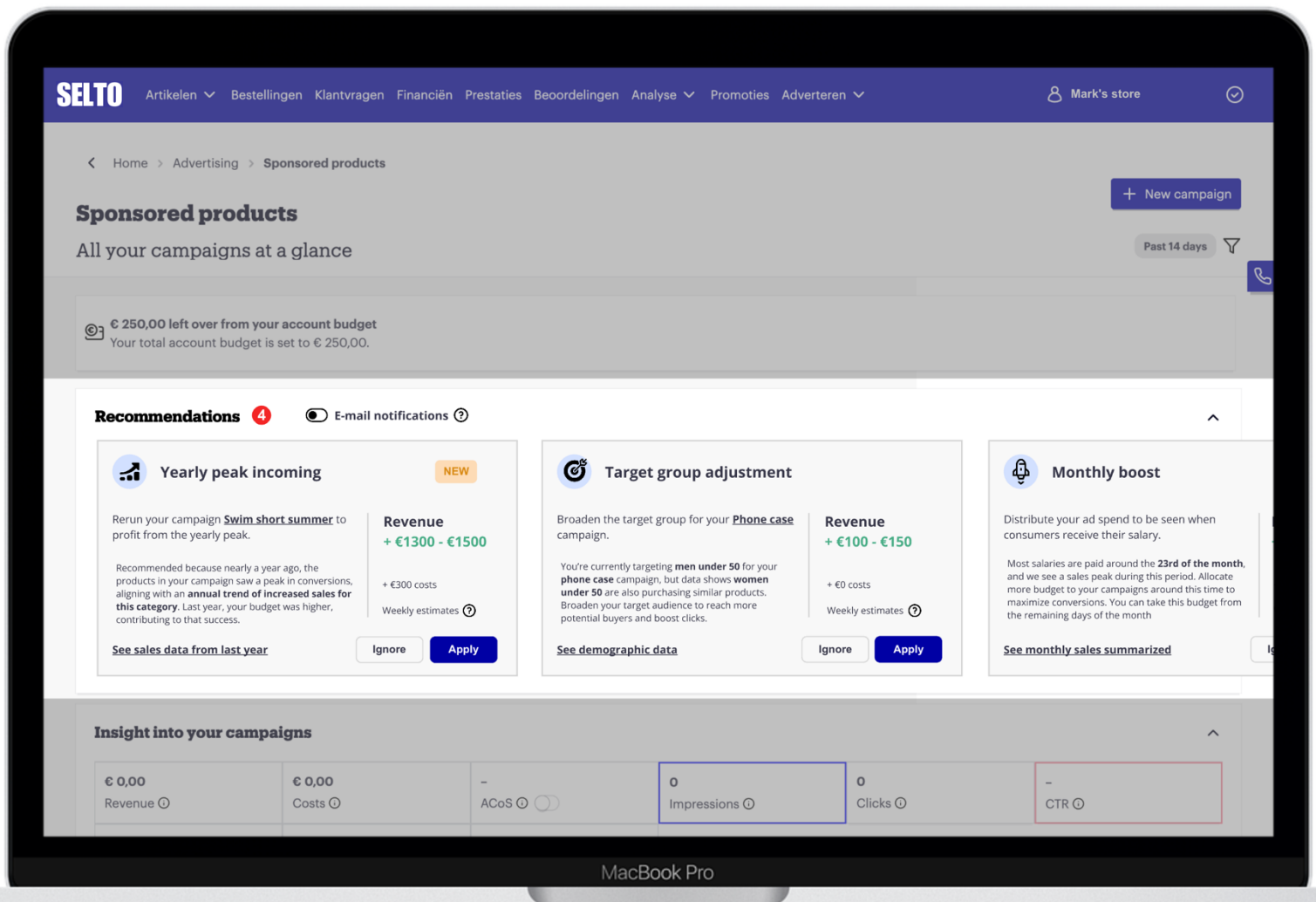
Interface components

1

This red number shows the number of recommendations that are available for the seller. "If you want to draw attention, use red. It is often where the eye looks first." (Cerrato, 2012) As there are no other red accents on this page, it's likely the recommendations will attract the attention.

2

Some sellers prefer receiving their recommendations via e-mail, as they don't check the dashboard often, while others prefer only an overview in the dashboard. With this toggle, sellers can choose. Hovering over the question mark will show how often they'll receive these emails.

3

This arrow is used in every section of the dashboard and allows sellers to collapse the section. This is helpful to keep the dashboard organized. If the tab is collapsed, they will only see the word recommendations and the number that is available.

Figure 7.2: Interface components (author's own work)
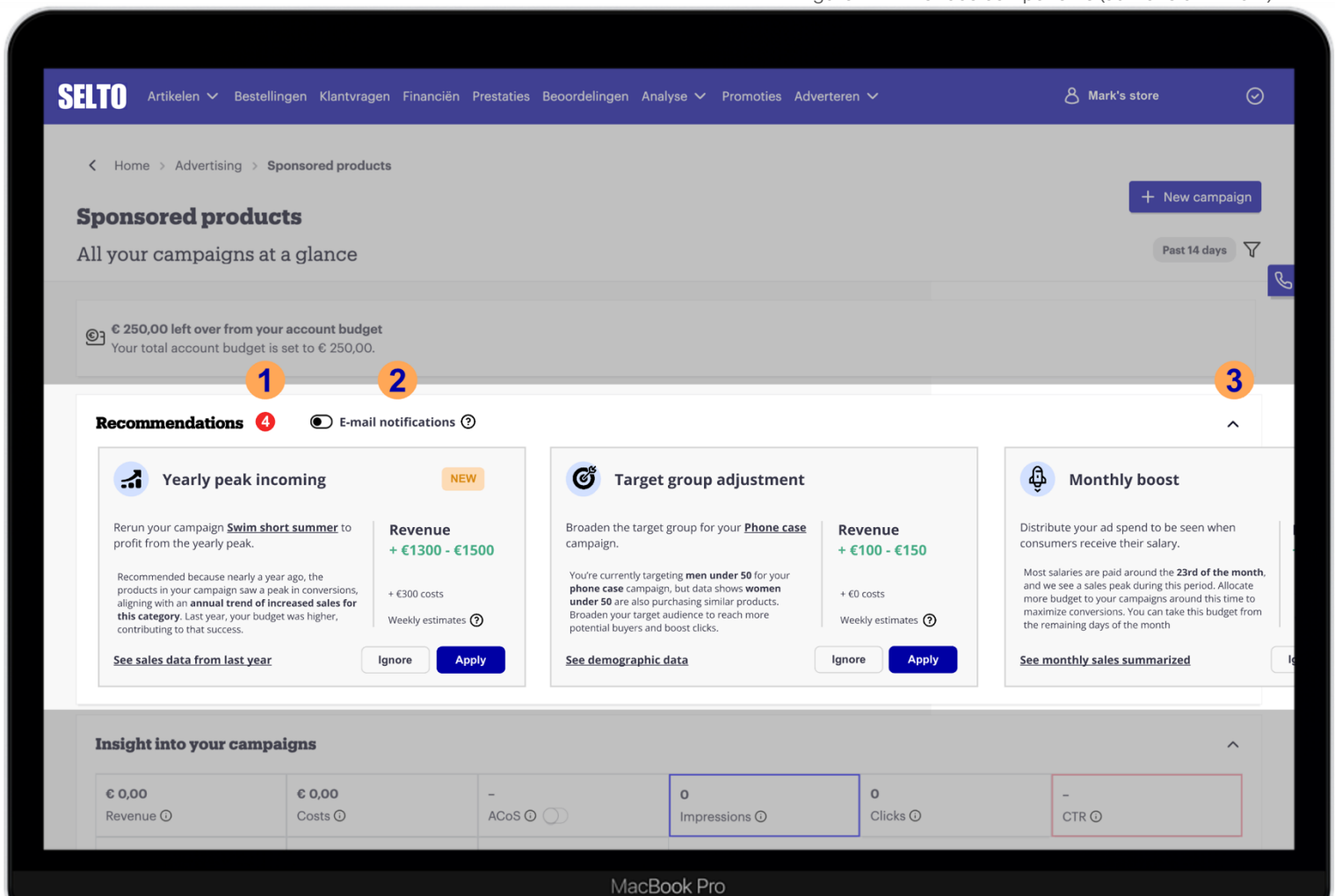
3-30-300 rule: This rule states you have 3 seconds to grab attention and 30 seconds to convey the message clearly. The 300 seconds are for details. (Ingenium Ltd., 2018)

4 The biggest text is very short to attract attention. It doesn't say what they must do but rather what the overall theme of the recommendation is. It is 3 of the 3-30-300 second rule.

5 The next thing the sellers read is the action that must be taken and what they'll get out of it. They can click on the campaign to see which one it is about exactly.

6 Below that is the reason for the recommendation. In text it explains why they should take action and why the computer gave the recommendation. 5 and 6 together are the 30 of the 3-30-300 rule.

7 For sellers that understand the data or are curious to learn, there is the option to look at the data this recommendation was based on. This is the 300 of the 3-30-300 rule and is optional.

8 A key theme from the Concept detail interviews was sellers wanting an estimate of the potential revenue versus the costs for that recommendation, even if that isn't completely accurate.

9 Lastly, the options for applying or ignoring the recommendation. Applying can be done quick and easy with just a few clicks. If the seller chooses to ignore, that recommendation will not be shown again.

Yearly peak incoming **4**

Rerun your campaign **Swim short summer** to profit from the yearly peak. **5**

Recommended because nearly a year ago, the products in your campaign saw a peak in conversions, aligning with an **annual trend of increased sales for this category**. Last year, your budget was higher, contributing to that success. **6**

See sales data from last year **7**

Revenue
+ €1300 - €1500

8

+ €300 costs

Weekly estimates (?)

Ignore   Apply

9

Figure 7.3: Example of a recommendation (author's own work)

Kinds of recommendations

During the Concept detail interviews, sellers expressed what kind of recommendations they would like to see. I analyzed the kind of recommendations that were mentioned and listed them below together with an example that could be showed to the sellers.

Yearly Peak Seasons

Target Group Adjustment

Monthly Boost

Monthly boost

Distribute your ad spend to be seen when consumers receive their salary.

Most salaries are paid around the **23rd of the month**, and we see a sales peak during this period. Allocate more budget to your campaigns around this time to maximize conversions. You can take this budget from the remaining days of the month

Revenue
+ €280 - €300

+ €0 costs

Weekly estimates ?

See monthly sales summarized

Ignore   **Apply**

Keyword Change

Keyword adjustment

Pause a bad performing keyword from your campaign **Glasses**.

Your campaign **Glasses** includes a keyword **Sunglasses** that has an ACoS of over 60%. Pause this keyword to see your campaign perform better.

Revenue
+ €280 - €300

+ €0 costs

Weekly estimates ?

See ACoS per keyword

Ignore   **Apply**

Campaign Timing Optimization

Campaign Timing

Boost your campaign **Toys** during the Black Friday period to increase visibility.

Data shows that your **Toys** campaign performs very good during **Black Friday**. Schedule your ads to increase visibility during these weeks for better results.

Revenue
+ €500 - €600

+ €200 costs

Weekly estimates ⑦

See sales data from last year

Ignore   **Apply**

Competitive Bid Strategy

Beat your competitors

Increase your bid for the campaign **swim wear** to stay competitive.

Your competitors are currently bidding more aggressively on the keyword **zwembroeken**. To stay competitive, consider raising your bid for this keyword by **15%** to ensure your ad appears higher in search results.

Revenue
+ €150 - €200

+ €50 costs

Weekly estimates ⑦

See average bid graph

Ignore   **Apply**

Budget Reallocation

Budget Reallocation

Increase your budget for the campaign **fitness trackers** to increase conversions.

Your campaign for **fitness trackers** is performing well with a lower budget but could see even more success with a **15%** budget increase. Allocate more funds to this campaign to maximize impressions and conversions.

Revenue
+ €80 - €120

+ €20 costs
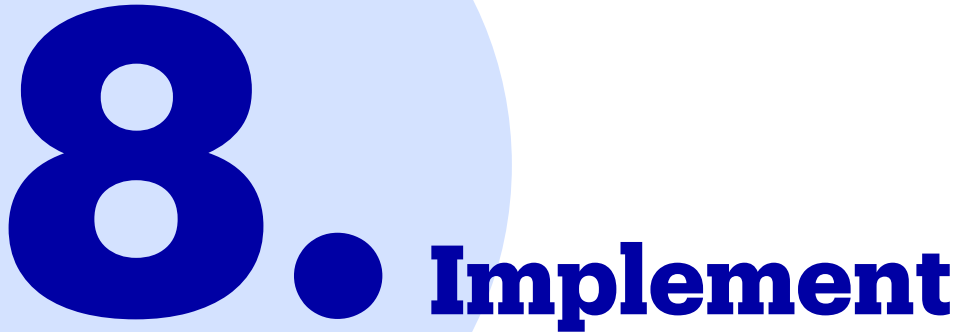
Weekly estimates ?

See search trends

Ignore   Apply

8. Implement

After finalizing the design, an implementation strategy was created, including a roadmap and key steps for execution. This plan covers the necessary actions, ensuring a smooth rollout of the recommendations feature.

Implementation Approach and Roadmap

	EARLY DEVELOPMENT STAGES (MONTHS 1–3)	MIDDLE DEVELOPMENT STAGES (MONTHS 4–8)	HARD LAUNCH AND ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT (MONTHS 9–12)	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (MONTHS 13–18)
KEY MILESTONES	• MVP Launch	• Soft Launch with Beta Version	• Hard Launch • Full Deployment	• Continuous Improvement Cycle
TOOL FEATURES	• Minimum Viable Product (MVP)	• Background Information and Context • Predictive Insights	• Personalized Recommendations • Automation Features • Real-Time Feedback Loop • Performance Updates for Past Actions	• Advanced Features (e.g., Competitor Benchmarks) • Ongoing Enhancements (e.g., Educational Content)
SELLER FOCUS	• Simplicity and Ease of Use • Education and Guidance	• Trust and Empowerment • Educational Support	• Trust and Empowerment • Strategic Decision Support	• Education and Guidance • Trust and Empowerment • Strategic Decision Support
SELTO FOCUS	• Testing and Feedback	• User Engagement and Platform Loyalty • Testing and feedback	• User Engagement and Platform Loyalty • Revenue and Ad Spend Growth	• Continuous Improvement and Updates • User Engagement and Platform Loyalty • Revenue and Ad Spend Growth

Figure 8.1: Implementation roadmap (Author's own work)

In developing the implementation plan for the new "Recommendations" concept, consultations were held with a designer at Selto, who frequently oversees the implementation of new features. These discussions provided insights into the technical requirements, resource needs, and distribution of work necessary for the smooth execution of this feature. The implementation will follow an agile, step-by-step approach to ensure the recommendations tool supports both sellers and Selto at every stage. Agile project management focuses on delivering work in manageable phases called sprints, enabling quick delivery of value and incremental improvement based on user feedback. This ensures that each phase builds on the previous one, aligning with Selto's goals and sellers' evolving needs (TU Delft OpenCourseWare, 2017). On top you can find a visual overview of each phase. The phases are described in detail below.

Early Development Stages (Months 1–3)

Minimum Viable Product (MVP)
The initial phase focuses on developing a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to test the concept. The tool will provide simple recommendations, such as "Raise your daily budget" or "Add these keywords," generated by a basic analytics system or even manually by Selto experts. Initial testing with a small group of sellers will gather feedback on usability and effectiveness, while

internal consultations will ensure smooth integration with Selto's existing systems.

- Why this matters for sellers: Many small sellers are new to advertising tools. Simple and clear instructions help them start improving their campaigns with minimal effort, building confidence without a steep learning curve.
- Why this matters for Selto: A simple MVP allows Selto to quickly test the tool in a real-world setting and identify areas for improvement before investing in advanced technology.

Middle Development Stages (Months 4–8)

Building in Background Information and Context

As sellers become familiar with the tool, the next step is to provide more context for its suggestions. For example, instead of simply stating "Add more keywords," the tool could explain: "These keywords perform well in your niche and could increase your visibility by 30%."

- Why this matters for sellers: Sellers want to understand the reasoning behind the recommendations. Providing background information builds trust and empowers sellers to make informed decisions.
- Why this matters for Selto: Adding context differentiates Selto's tool from generic third-party solutions, fostering loyalty and increasing reliance on the platform.

Soft Launch with Beta Version

During this phase, a beta version of the tool will be made available for a soft launch. Sellers will have the option to participate voluntarily, allowing Selto to gather more diverse feedback and

insights. This will help refine the tool before a full rollout.

- Why this matters for sellers: Voluntary participation ensures that only interested sellers test the tool, leading to more engaged feedback and a better user experience.
- Why this matters for Selto: A soft launch provides a low-risk environment to identify and address potential issues, ensuring a smoother transition to broader implementation.

Introducing Predictive Insights

The tool will be enhanced with predictive analytics to offer sellers clearer projections of the potential outcomes of their actions. For example: "Adding €10 to your daily budget could increase clicks by 20% and sales by 15%." These insights will be based on historical data and market trends.

- Why this matters for sellers: Small sellers with limited budgets can use accurate forecasts to make strategic decisions.
- Why this matters for Selto: Tangible benefits from following recommendations encourage sellers to trust and continue using the tool, driving higher ad spend and revenue.

Hard Launch and Advanced Development (Months 9–12)

Full Deployment of the Recommendations Tool

The hard launch marks the full deployment of the Recommendations tool to the entire seller base. At this stage, the tool will include personalized recommendations tailored to each seller's goals and behaviors.

Automation features will be introduced, allowing sellers to streamline routine tasks and focus on strategic decisions.

- Why this matters for sellers: A fully personalized and automated tool helps sellers optimize their campaigns more efficiently, regardless of their level of expertise.
- Why this matters for Selto: A successful hard launch positions Selto as a leader in supporting sellers with innovative solutions, driving platform loyalty and increased ad spend.

Real-Time Feedback Loop

A real-time feedback system will be introduced to adapt the tool based on sellers' actions. Simple questions like "Was this helpful?" (Yes/No) will be used to collect reasons for success or failure, allowing the tool to improve over time.

- Why this matters for sellers: Incorporating feedback makes sellers feel heard and valued, strengthening their connection to Selto's platform.
- Why this matters for Selto: A feedback loop ensures the tool's continuous improvement and relevance.

Performance Updates for Past Actions

The tool will display the results of sellers' actions, such as: "Your clicks increased by 15%, and sales rose by 10% after raising your budget." A simple message will present the impact of recommendations on overall performance.

- Why this matters for sellers: Seeing real results builds trust in the tool and Selto's advice.
- Why this matters for Selto: Positive outcomes encourage further ad spending, benefiting Selto.

Continuous Improvement (Months 13–18)

Advanced Features and Scalability

The final phase involves introducing advanced features like seasonal pattern analysis, competitor benchmarks, and multivariate predictions. The tool will unlock options automatically based on a seller's experience and campaign history.

- Why this matters for sellers: Advanced sellers gain access to sophisticated tools, while beginners can rely on simpler options. This ensures that sellers at every skill level find value in the platform.
- Why this matters for Selto: Catering to sellers at different growth stages enhances the platform's reputation as a supportive ecosystem for sellers.

Ongoing Enhancements

Post-launch, the focus will shift to continuous improvement. Educational content, such as tutorials and guides, will help sellers maximize the tool's value. A new "Inspiration" module will showcase successful campaigns and strategies to motivate sellers. Regular updates to the recommendation system will ensure its relevance in changing market conditions. Detailed ongoing enhancements van be found on the next page.

Conclusion

This phased approach ensures increasing value for both sellers and Selto at every stage. Selto builds trust, fosters engagement, and drives revenue, while sellers benefit from a tool that is user-friendly, clear, and impactful. By following this plan, the recommendations tool becomes a win-win solution for both sellers and Selto.

Ongoing enhancements

The recommendations tool is already becoming very important for sellers on Selto, but there are many ways to improve it. As the sellers get to know the tool better and their needs change, Selto can look for ways to keep it new, useful, and full of features that really help.

It's not about adding fancy features; it's about making the tool smarter, easier to use, and more helpful for sellers at every step. Following are a few exciting ideas Selto can delve into in order to keep the tool at the forefront.

Advanced Personalization
Research how machine learning can further personalize recommendations based on sellers' specific niches, past performance, and buyer behavior. This could include tailored insights for seasonal trends, product category performance, or localized market conditions.

Integration with Third-Party Tools
Explore the potential of integrating the tool with popular external platforms like Google Trends or Amazon. These integrations could provide sellers with a more comprehensive view of their performance and streamline campaign management across multiple channels.

A/B Testing Capabilities
Develop features that allow sellers to test different campaign strategies and receive actionable insights. A/B testing within the tool could help sellers experiment with ad budgets, creatives, or keywords to optimize performance further.

Training and Educational Resources
Investigate the impact of embedding interactive tutorials, webinars, or a knowledge hub directly within the tool. Providing accessible educational content could help less experienced sellers gain confidence in their advertising strategies.

Predictive Analytics for Long-Term Planning
Expand the predictive capabilities of the tool to forecast long-term outcomes, such as revenue projections or market share growth. These insights could empower sellers to make more strategic investments in advertising.

Community Features for Collaboration
Consider developing features that enable sellers to share insights, collaborate on advertising strategies, or even pool budgets for joint campaigns. Such community-driven solutions could benefit smaller sellers and foster loyalty to Selto's platform.

Impact on Sustainability
Investigate ways to align the tool with sustainable advertising practices. This could include features to measure the environmental impact of campaigns or promote eco-friendly products.

By focusing on these areas, Selto can continue to innovate and support sellers, ensuring the recommendations tool stays competitive, effective, and aligned with both sellers' and the platform's evolving needs.

Implications

This section explores the implications of the design solution, focusing on the potential impacts for various stakeholders, as outlined in the **stakeholder map on page 31**. Understanding these implications is crucial for assessing how the proposed solution can drive meaningful outcomes for small sellers on Selto. By considering both direct and indirect effects on stakeholders such as sellers, Selto itself, and other involved parties, this examination provides a comprehensive view of how the solution can influence the broader ecosystem.

The recommendations concept focuses on empowering small sellers on Selto to independently and effectively manage their advertising campaigns, thereby creating a more inclusive and competitive marketplace. This section discusses the expected outcomes of these recommendations for each stakeholder, categorized as either primary or secondary.

Primary Stakeholders

Selto
This Recommendations concept can be greatly beneficial for Selto. By letting small sellers better contribute and participate in Sponsored Products campaigns, Selto as a whole will make more money through advertising and sales. Better seller retention equates to a healthier, more diverse base of sellers, adding to the platform's reputation as a marketplace that supports businesses of all sizes. Selto further cements its competitive advantage by building trust among its selling community with user-friendly tools and personalized guidance.

Small Sellers
The recommendations concept will benefit the small sellers the most. With simplified tools and actionable insights, they can independently optimize their advertising campaigns without deep expertise or external support. This will reduce their reliance on outsourcing, lower operational costs, and make them more competitive against larger sellers. In the long run, this will give small sellers better visibility, increased sales, and sustainable business growth, balancing out the landscape of the marketplace.

Government
As a dominant marketplace, Selto has to comply with regulations that ensure a level playing field and equal opportunity for all sellers. Selto reacts to concerns about concentration in market power by making tools more accessible and increasing transparency in advertising practices. The recommendations also meet the expectations of regulators and further create a more level playing field for small sellers, reducing the risk of regulatory intervention.

Secondary Stakeholders

Consumers
Although the Recommendations concept does not focus on consumers directly, they also reap the benefits indirectly. Growing and successful small sellers result in a more diverse marketplace with a wider range of products and competitive pricing, enhancing the shopping experience. In turn, this leads to greater consumer satisfaction and loyalty towards Selto.

Agencies
Large agencies are likely to retain their big clients, those with the resources and budgets to require more complex campaign strategies. These clients value the expertise, scalability, and advanced services that agencies provide, which cannot be fully replaced by Selto's simplified tools. Agencies can also explore opportunities to offer premium, high-value services that complement Selto's offerings, positioning themselves as essential partners for ambitious sellers.

Freelancers
Freelancers and smaller agencies can benefit significantly from the growing pool of small sellers empowered by Selto's tools. As these small sellers achieve success, they may look to outsource specific aspects of their advertising.

Large Sellers
In return, large sellers may face tougher competition when small sellers get more capable and competitive. All this may keep pushing large vendors to further innovation and refinement of their advertising methods. Although recommendations primarily serve the interests of small sellers, the growing advertising ecosystem should give all its participants new opportunities.

Conclusion

This project investigated how small sellers on Selto can better use advertising tools, in particular, Sponsored Products, to grow their businesses. The study has shown that smaller sellers often have difficulties with complicated advertising systems, getting expert help, and being in competition with bigger sellers having more resources or good relations with marketing agencies. These findings helped to create and evaluate solutions that try to support small sellers and provide fair chances for growth.

Based on research and testing of ideas, the final solution provides tools that are easy to use, focusing on simplicity, clear help, and personalized suggestions. The solution incorporates simple recommendations to encourage engagement and assist small sellers in running their campaigns independently. Moreover, the design leverages Selto's trusted platform to provide helpful recommendations, supporting the success of the sellers.

The solution has shown promise in solving the challenges. Its long-term effect depends on the number of users, the frequency of use, and whether it brings improved outcomes in campaigns. Future research could investigate how these tools function for a variety of sellers and identify ways to offer more support without requiring an inordinate amount of Selto resources.

This project shows the importance of inclusivity in digital marketplaces. It demonstrates that helping smaller sellers benefits their businesses and contributes toward a more diverse and competitive market. With these problems out of the way, Selto would be able to become a marketplace supporting growth for all types of sellers, whatever their size and resources.

Limitations

1. Scope Limitations
This project mainly looked at small sellers using Selto's Sponsored Products. While the findings and design concepts may be generalizable to larger situations, the usage situation research excluded information from the following groups:
- Large and Medium Sellers ETA: Information from the above groups was left out, since the focus was maintained on the small sellers.
- Non-Sellers: It would not be considered how consumer views or another key interest group, such as logistics providers, might influence the outcome of the ad, for example.

2. Sampling Bias
The samples used in the research were few in number:
- Interview Participants: In this case, the interview only involved 5 sellers and 5 agencies. Such a small group cannot be ample to reveal various views and problems facing all key interest people/groups.

3. Data Collection Challenges
Some challenges made the data less deep and reliable:
- Self-Reported Data: Many insights came from interviews, which depend on what participants said and might include their biases.
- Limited Access to Metrics: Privacy rules stopped us from getting detailed performance numbers for advertising campaigns, which could have improved the analysis with more facts.
- Competitor Analysis: Although I looked into competitor strategies, the available public data limited how deeply I could analyze them.

4. Implementation Constraints
The solutions suggested were concepts and were not tested extensively in practical scenarios:
- Prototype Validation: Although prototypes were tested with 25 sellers for selecting the top idea and 7 sellers for concept detailing, testing with additional sellers may provide more insight.
- Feasibility Assessment: I did not receive a lot of feedback from Selto's internal stakeholders, so I cannot be certain that some of the Recommendations are feasible to implement.

5. Time Constraints
The length of the project, 20 weeks, permitted only so much investigation and change:
- Iterative Refinement: While changes were made, more rounds of testing with users and design improvements could have further polished the final solution.
- Evolving Market Conditions: The highly dynamic world of the web related to shopping and advertising means that portions of our findings and advice for Selto may quickly lose relevance.

6. Generalizability
The findings and solutions have been designed for the platform and environment of Selto only. Therefore:
- Platform-Specific Insights: Solutions might not function appropriately with other e-commerce platforms owing to different setups or users.
- Niche Focus: Sponsoring mainly Sponsored Products could make the outcome less useful for platforms related to other kinds of commercial ads.

Process reflection

	INITIATE	ANALYZE	SYNTHESIZE	EVALUATE
KEY MILESTONES	• Defined project objectives, scope, and research questions. • Delivered the project brief, outlining goals and challenges.	• Conducted stakeholder interviews and a literature review. • Created a stakeholder map to visualize relationships and challenges. • Identified seller pain points, including distrust of agencies and cost constraints.	• Developed guiding principles focusing on trust, accessibility, and empowerment. • Created and tested 10 low-fidelity prototypes with 25 sellers, leading to iterative improvements. • Gathered detailed feedback from 7 sellers to refine concept further.	• Finalized the design: a user-friendly, accessible solution tailored for small sellers. • Created an implementation plan detailing how Selto could integrate the design into its ecosystem. • Conducted a project evaluation to assess how well the solution addressed the original objectives and user needs.
INSIGHTS / CONCLUSIONS	• **Initial Focus Misstep:** The project started with a narrow focus on agencies as a solution for small sellers, which proved to be misaligned later. • Broadening the scope earlier could have saved time and provided a more inclusive perspective from the start.	• **Trust Insight:** Sellers trust Selto more than third-party agencies because Selto's success is tied to theirs. • **Agency Mismatch:** Many small sellers prefer independence over outsourcing to agencies, which they see as costly or unnecessary. • Slow recruitment of interview candidates highlighted the need for better strategies, such as using phone calls and questionnaires instead of relying solely on Microsoft Teams.	• **Shift in Focus:** The project moved away from agencies, emphasizing Selto-driven solutions and self-sustainability for small sellers. • **Guiding Principles:** These became central to ensuring solutions aligned with both user needs and Selto's objectives.	• **Project Feasibility:** The implementation plan confirmed that the solution was practical and well-aligned with Selto's infrastructure and goals. • **Process Reflection:** Inefficiencies in recruitment and early focus on agency-based solutions could have been avoided with broader initial research and better methods of engaging participants

Figure 9.1: Process overview (Author's own work)

Above you can find an overview of each phase of the project with each it's key milestones and insights/conclusions. Looking back at the project, designing a solution to empower small sellers on Selto has been a great learning experience, though not without its challenges. While the result is a user-centered approach with a focus on trust and accessibility, there were quite a few moments in the process that could have been more efficient and better structured.

Starting Narrow: Missteps in Early Focus
Much of the early focus in the project dealt with how agencies can aid small sellers. A limited view within this thought held that hiring agencies was the best way to connect expert help with what small sellers need. However, as the research firmed up, it became obviously clear that this idea did not mesh with the experience of many small sellers. Most small sellers cannot afford

the services of an agency and would prefer to conduct their advertising in-house.

In retrospect, I should have considered more solutions from the outset. The consideration of different options, be it automation, self-service tools, or better support of the platform, would have helped me understand the problem better. In my view, concentrating too much on one area initially wasted time and energy on a path that proved to be less useful.

Recruiting Challenges and Research Inefficiencies

Another major problem was the slow recruitment of people for interviews at the start of the project. It was harder than expected to get sellers and agencies on board, partly because I used Microsoft Teams for interviews. It wasn't until the later rounds of checking that I learned sellers were actually more willing to answer questionnaires and phone calls, which made it easier for them to give feedback.

Had I realized this preference earlier, the whole research process would have been much easier; I would have been in a position to involve many more participants within a much shorter time, and data collection would have gone well. This was a missed opportunity to improve the research stage and gather information more effectively.

Lessons from Testing and Engagement

Despite these early missteps, the later stages of testing and engagement were highly productive. Seller feedback during the concept selection and concept detailing phases provided crucial insights into feasibility and usability. By involving 25 sellers in concept selection and 7 in detailed discussions, I was able to refine the solution based on real user needs.

Decision Making Thoughts

Another area in which I grew was in balancing what the users said against my own views. I really did want to put users' needs first, but sometimes I used my knowledge of the project goals to make a decision. In the case of changing the focus from agencies to Selto-driven solutions, that was both a user-inspired decision and my careful look at the path the project was taking.

Key Takeaways

- **Start Broad, Narrow Later:** Starting with a wider look at possible solutions would have stopped the early focus on agencies, making better use of time and resources.
- **Optimize Recruitment Strategies:** It would have made the research process quicker to find out sooner that sellers like questionnaires and phone calls instead of Teams.
- **Emphasize Iteration:** More frequent testing cycles would have allowed for continuous improvement throughout the design process, rather than heavily relying on feedback during the final stages.

Conclusion

With these challenges, the project finally provided a solution that focuses on independence, trust, and access for small sellers. The solution, by moving away from depending on agencies and using Selto-driven resources, meets the special needs of small sellers, helping them grow in a tough marketplace.

Personal reflection

This project has provided an opportunity to align my personal motivations and ambitions with practical design work that addresses real-world challenges for small businesses. In the project brief I wrote before starting the project (Appendix 1) I stated some learning ambitions and competencies I expected to improve during the project.

While many of my competencies have developed as planned, the project has also highlighted areas for further growth. These insights have made the journey both challenging and rewarding, providing a solid foundation for continued professional development.

Below, I outlined each of the key points related to my project motivation, competencies, and learning ambitions. For each, I reflected on my accomplishments as well as the potential gaps that remain for further development.

Competencies I wanted to develop:

Advanced UX/UI Design: Enhance my skills in designing intuitive and effective user interfaces.

- Accomplished: I've designed solutions that prioritize usability for non-expert sellers, integrating principles of simplicity and accessibility. Testing my concepts with sellers shows my ability to iterate based on feedback.
- Potential Gap: I could further refine my skills by exploring advanced UI design techniques or tools, such as motion design or more advanced features in Figma.

Market Research: Deepen my understanding of market analysis techniques.

- Accomplished: My interviews with sellers and validation of concepts demonstrate my progress in qualitative market research. I've also shown an awareness of Selto's market dynamics.
- Potential Gap: Expanding into quantitative research, like analyzing advertising performance data or user behavior metrics, could have deepened my insights into the market.

Stakeholder Management: Improve my ability to engage with and balance different stakeholder needs.

- Accomplished: I effectively engaged with sellers, agencies, and Selto stakeholders. These interactions allowed me to consider diverse perspectives and adjust my approach to address different priorities.
- Potential Gap: I could further refine my skills in balancing conflicting needs between stakeholders.

Prototyping and Testing: Refine my abilities in creating and iterating prototypes.

- Accomplished: I've created and tested prototypes with real users, showcasing my competency in iterative design.
- Potential Gap: Experimenting with higher-fidelity prototypes or interactive prototypes with animations could have further refined this skill.

Implementation Strategy: Gain experience in developing feasible implementation plans for digital solutions.

- Accomplished: I've actively considered how my solution could integrate with Selto's existing tools and ecosystem. Feedback from Selto stakeholders provided valuable insights into technical and business constraints, ensuring my approach was grounded in feasibility.
- Potential Gap: While I've incorporated Selto's feedback, further collaboration to refine the implementation plan and ensure alignment with their long-term strategies could enhance my solution's practicality.

Personal Learning Ambitions:

In-depth Knowledge of Digital Marketing: Acquire insights into advanced marketing strategies.

- Accomplished: Through research and direct engagement with sellers, I've gained practical insights into how small businesses approach digital advertising.
- Potential Gap: Diving deeper into advanced campaign strategies or tools used by agencies could have broadened my understanding further.

Experimentation with New Tools: Explore and experiment with cutting-edge design and prototyping tools.

- Accomplished: I've used prototyping and testing tools effectively, like Figma and Qualtrics.
- Potential Gap: Proactively exploring new software or techniques could

have enriched my learning experience.

Project Management: Strengthen my project management skills.

- Accomplished: Managing interviews, testing sessions, and iterations has helped me develop project management skills. Balancing academic requirements with real-world constraints further showcases this ability.
- Potential Gap: Incorporating structured project planning (e.g., using Agile or Scrum frameworks) might have enhanced my ability to manage timelines and deliverables more effectively.

Collaborative Design: Foster collaboration skills by working closely with various stakeholders.

- Accomplished: I've engaged with sellers, agencies, designers at Selto, and peers throughout the project. This collaboration provided me with diverse perspectives, shaping the design and refining my approach based on real-world insights.
- Potential Gap: While I've worked with various stakeholders, more intensive co-design opportunities or deeper collaboration with external experts could have further enriched the process.

In conclusion, this project has helped me align my motivations with my work and develop key skills in UX/UI design, prototyping, and user-centered research. While I've made solid progress, there are still opportunities to refine my technical expertise, broaden stakeholder engagement, and incorporate more data-driven insights. These areas will guide my future growth and improve my approach in upcoming projects.

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