Agnes Kiss | Portfolio

Hello,
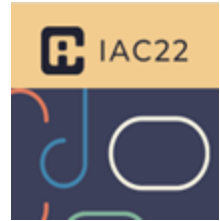
My name is Agnes Kiss

I am an experienced ==mixed-methods UX researcher==. I have been honing my craft for more than a decade, working in several sectors e.g., fintech, retail, social media, internal tools, programming, and education.

Professional Footprint

UNIVERSITY OF St.Thomas

US bank

BEST BUY

AnswerLab

US DIGITAL RESPONSE

Microsoft

pwc

Google

McKESSON

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Volunteering

- Organized cohorts and program for mentoring novice UXers as the educational coordinator for UXPA–MN
- Consulted on accessibility for the 2022 Information Architecture Conference
- Mentoring UX and Product people through ADPlist and UXPA

In the next slides, I want to share a few case studies.

1. Game Purchasing – survey analysis
2. Enterprise Analytics platform – contextual inquiry, IDI
3. Meme Creator app – diary study
4. Online Grocery Ordering – survey and remote interviews
5. Homepage Redesign – concept- and usability testing

Case studies

Board Game Purchasing Survey Study

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Case study #1

Survey study to understand board game shoppers

- Started as a personal project based on an observational study in early 2025 in a board game store in Roseville, MN.
- Goal:
  - design and develop an app to aid game shoppers finding the right game

Research Focus: Understand board game shoppers' behaviors and needs
- Where they make game purchases
- How they choose which game to buy
- What tools they use to guide their decision making
- Segment board game shoppers based on the above factors

The business/user problem: board games are a risky investment

User Problem: Board games = Risky Investment

→

Business Problem: Uncertainty = Lost Sales for Local Stores

High cost – games can be expensive, often costing between $50-100.

Hesitant Buyers – Shoppers delay decisions due to lack of confidence

Uncertain value – in-store product info is minimal, hard to tell if the game will be fun/worth the money

Online Research – customers leave stores empty-handed to search for online reviews, videos and community opinions

Low confidence at purchase: buyers can't judge replay value, difficulty, or how well it fits the group

Online Purchases: During research, they often find better prices and buy from online retailers

Methods

01 Secondary Research, Competitive Analysis
- Visited several game stores in person to observe shoppers
- Reviewed apps and alternatives (Boardgamegeek, Collino)

02 Survey Analysis – the current study
- Validated hypothesis about current pain points
- Explored primary information needs for purchasing decision making

03 RITE Concept testing
- Using MVP wireframes, concept testing to expand on understanding users needs
- Testing interaction flow

04 Formative concept and usability testing

More on the survey

- <u>Participants</u>: 52 players recruited
  - Through board gamer pages on Facebook and other snowball techniques – non-probability sampling, biased toward those on social media (funding constraint)
  - Snowball sampling

- Data analysis and visualization:
  - Python

- Platform used:
  - Surveysparrow

Proto Personas: the sophisticated social gamer vs. the casual game player

BGG users – the game nerd

1. Boardgamegeek.com member
2. Game playing is a crucial part of their social life and their identity
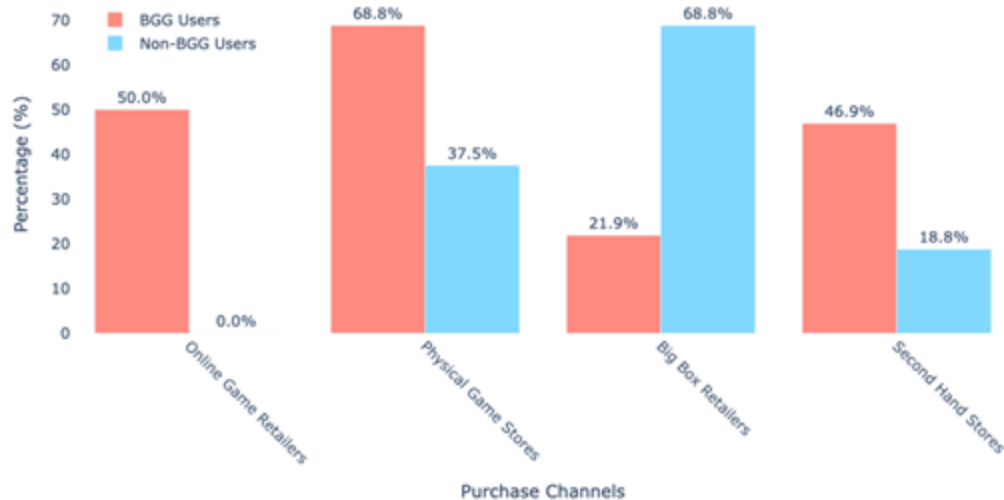

Non–BGG users – casual gamer

1. Game playing is not central to their identity
2. Their games are simpler, more casual

BGG users favor specialty stores

Purchase Channel Preferences: BGG Users vs Non-BGG Users

- ◉ BGG users shop at online and brick-and-mortar specialty stores for their game needs

- ◉ Driver: many of the games they play are not carried in big box stores.

BGG users rely on more information sources and research their games more thoroughly

Information Sources Usage by User Type
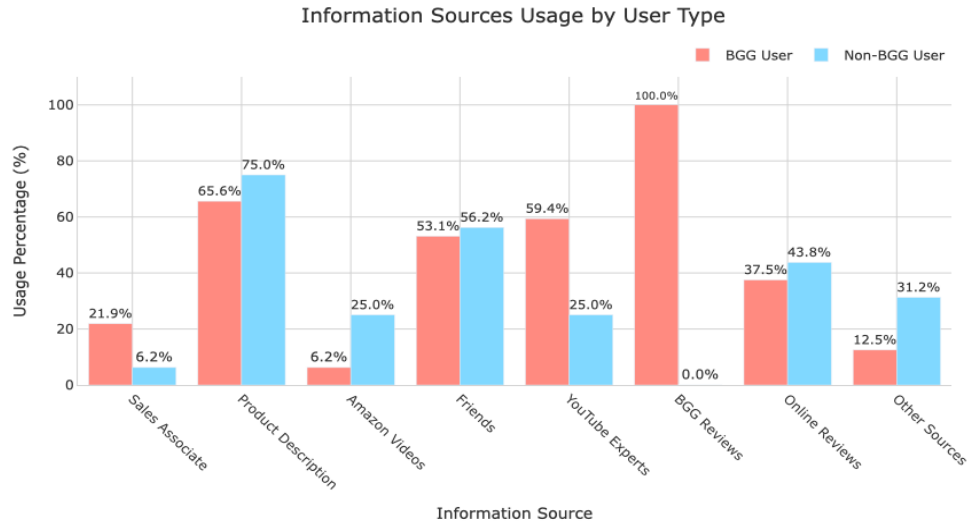
- 54.1% of BGG users consult 4+ sources, compared to 18.8% of non-BGG users

- Non-BGG users rely on simpler, more accessible sources like friends and basic product info

- BGG users seek expert opinions such as game expert videos while non-BGG users trust peer recommendations

- **The "information gap" suggests BGG users are more invested in making informed game purchases**

Neither personas are satisfied with info on packaging, but have different information priorities

Game Information Priorities: BGG Users vs Non-BGG Users

- BGG users are more concerned with game mechanics and time to play, wheres casual gamers rely on photos, and age recommendations.

- No statistically significant difference satisfaction score with information available in store (3.2 on a 1–5 scale)

So what?

- ◉ Further Research considerations:
  - ○ Stratified samples need to include both segments
  - ○ With appropriate funding, aim for more representative sampling

- ◉ Product decisions:
  - ○ Target audience with two segments with somewhat different needs – iterative testing with <u>progressive disclosure of game properties</u> (e.g., detailed list of game mechanics)

2 Enterprise Analytics Platform

Case study #2

My work for a company with very low/absent UX maturity

- I worked as the lead researcher of a team of UX consultants (consisting of a lead designer, two offshore designers and me)
- Challenge:
  - The client company's analytics product team and marketing team had **not** worked with UX before, so initially, they did not understand the value proposition of UX and our process
  - The client teams assumed that they understood their customers, which turned out to be not quite the case
- Mission:
  - Evangelize and prove the value of UX research/design first with lower hanging fruits so that we build trust, and gain access to both data and customers

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Business problem → Research Agenda

User Count in Legacy and New Platforms

Business Problem

Customers have access to two platforms (Legacy and Enterprise) for the same function, causing considerable added maintenance costs for the client.

The goal is to sunset the legacy platform, however, as the blue usage data on the graph shows, customers prefer using the the more straightforward (though less capable) legacy platform over the new enterprise platform.
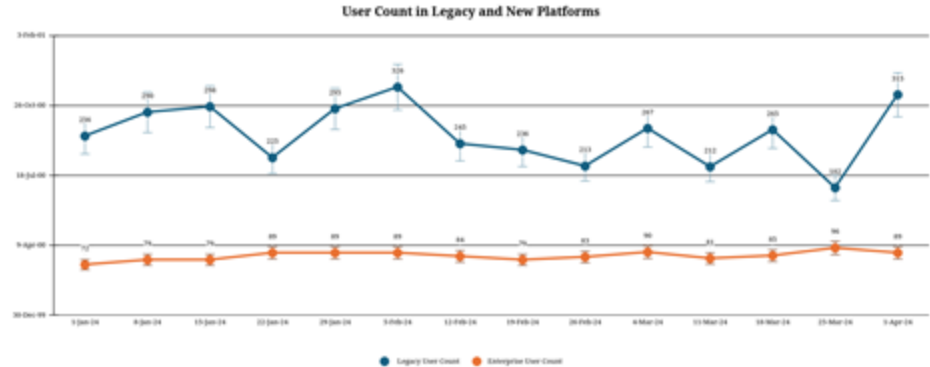
Research Agenda

- ◎ Uncover reasons for users' preference for the legacy platform.
- ◎ Identify user needs, behaviors, workflows, and pain points at different stages of accessing and using reporting and analytics

Methods

01	**In-depth Interviews**	• Both with internal and external (client) users of the data analytics platform • External users recommended by by Account Executives • Goal: Understand JTBD, system flow, context
02	**Contextual Inquiries**	• Conducted via video calls • Goal: understand JTBD, user flows and potential pain points
03	**Log analysis**	• Helpline call log • Search terms in the Knowledge Center • Goal: identify pain points
04	**Formative concept and usability testing**	• Determine the usability of stopgap solutions for the current offering • Evaluate the ease-of-use for new concepts (beyond the new "out-of-the-box" solution • Goal: incremental usability improvement for the enterprise platform

Insights

A well-defined set of users can fully utilize the more powerful enterprise platform. This specific set of users has

- Had a lot of experienced with tools like Tableau OR
- Received extensive training and white-glove treatment from the product team.
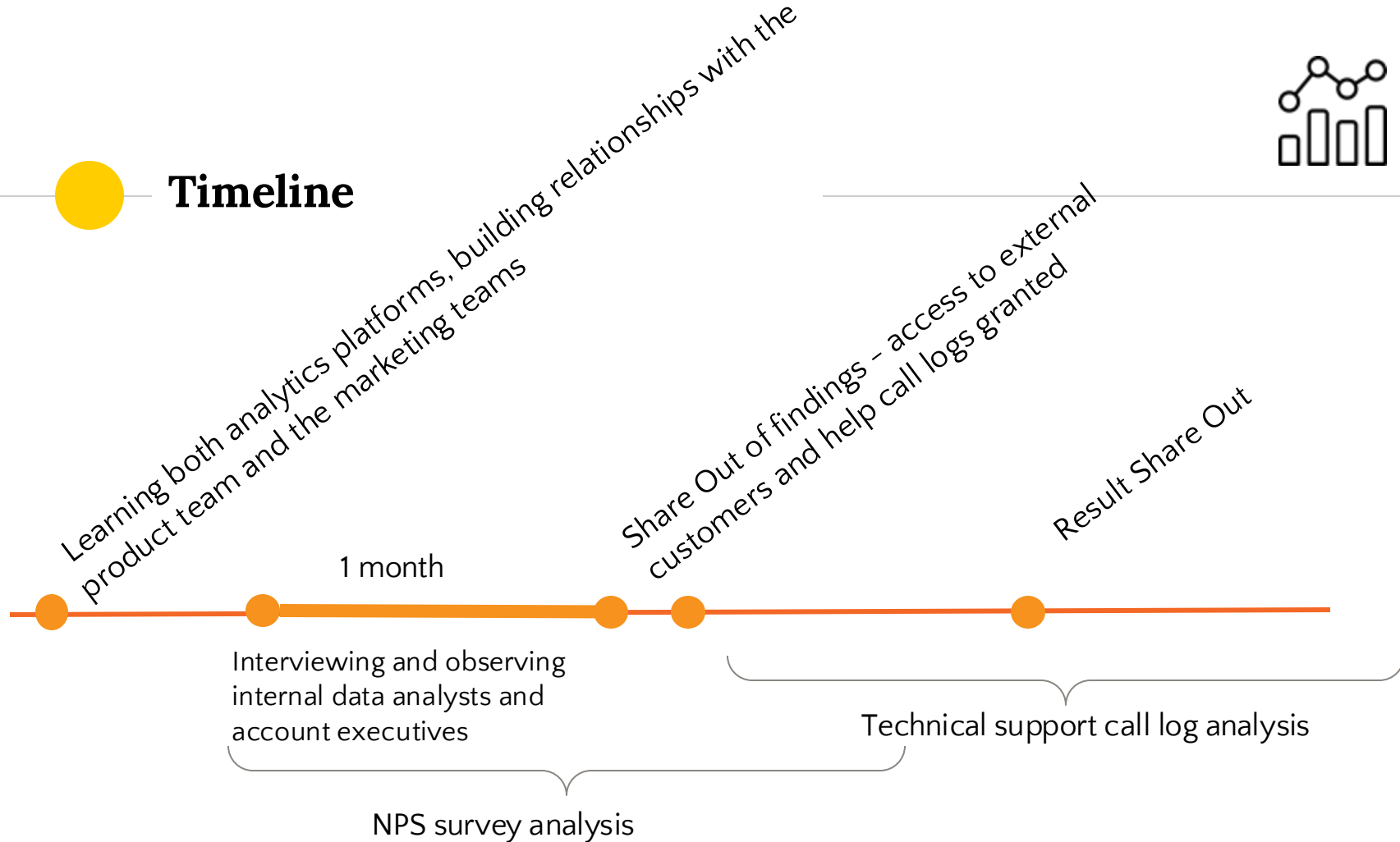
The **majority of users** however, will not receive personalized training, nor will they need the power and the complexity of the new platform.

They are **not served well** by the enterprise platform and opt to choose the legacy platform.

Timeline

Learning both analytics platforms, building relationships with the product team and the marketing teams

Share Out of findings – access to external customers and help call logs granted

Result Share Out

1 month

Interviewing and observing internal data analysts and account executives

NPS survey analysis

Technical support call log analysis

Impact

- UX design and research have got buy-in from both the product and the marketing teams - as a result, we could make the platform more user-friendly within the constraints.
- The main learning (non-supported users face significant IA and usability challenges) compelled the product team t**o redesign the Knowledge Center** in a beginner-friendly and accessible way.

3 **M**eme **C**reator **A**pp

The product

A team of idea incubators at an international social media company wanted to assess the need and feasibility of including a new **meme generating mobile app** to their portfolio.

Study focused on user need validation, and usability assessment.

I acted as a solo researcher assigned to conduct strategic and tactical research.

Challenge: minimal communication with the client team

Diary Study as the fitting method for the research goals

Strategic Goals
- Validate the team's understanding of what **meme creators need and want**
- Understand how meme creators **perceive the value** of the newly proposed app (its technical capabilities and features) in comparison to other tools

Tactical Goals:
- Evaluate how discoverable editing features are
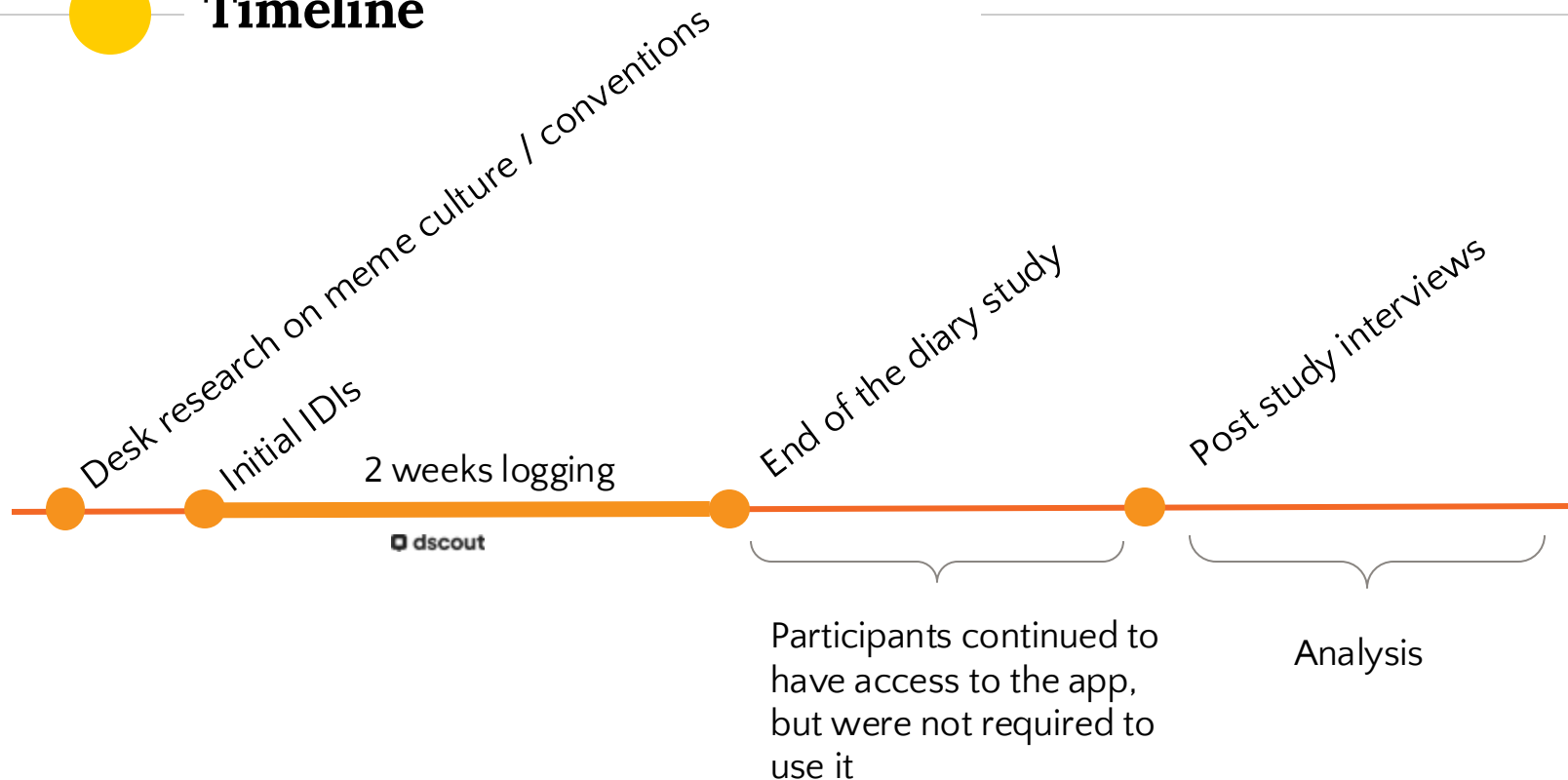- Assess usability issues

Research method needed to allow
- Enough **time** for the participants to both **discover and experiment** with the tool's capabilities
- **Freedom to create** the kind of memes that participants were motivated to create
- Experience **delight and frustration**

Dscout diary study

Timeline

Desk research on meme culture / conventions

Initial IDIs

2 weeks logging

dscout

End of the diary study

Post study interviews

Participants continued to have access to the app, but were not required to use it

Analysis

Research setup for 20 participants

Prestudy brief

- 60 min conversation, to establish connection and trust with the participants.
- **Goal:** Learn about their goals, processes, tools and habits as they engage in generating memes

Diary Study - 2 weeks

- 9 diary entries spread over two weeks
- **Goal**: Evaluate discoverability and learnability of features

Prompts encouraged meme creators to explore the app and discover its capabilities

Post study IDI

- 60 min IDI
- **Goal:** Learn about participants' perception of how this app competes with other tools

Insights

Meme generators evaluate the app based on how **up-to-date and easy to use**

- The library of images
- The editing tools

The library of images

- Meme creators want the library of images to be **continuously updated** to reflect the evolution of memes.
- Similarly to a well-organized library, images should be **easily located**. Participants want to be able to tag and organize their images into folders.

Editing tools

- With no clear waymarkers, many users failed to discover a set of secondary features. Contextual help, tutorial, or clear signage is necessary for a delightful experience.

Reflection

- Ramping up my understanding of meme creation and meme communities was crucial to conduct this research
- With no meaningful contact to the design team, my research may not have had the desired impact.
  - I learned to be more pro-active and persistent in creating spaces for communication.

You need to understand your users

or are you just making an app for yourself?

meme-generator.com

4 Online Grocery Shopping

Case study #4

My work as a solo researcher on the team

- Solo UX researcher in the Online Grocery (OG) Order team at a major US retail company, contracting for 6 months
- Highly collaborative team that engaged in all phases of the research, even though we never interacted in person.
- Challenge: The team was part of a larger UX organization with a lot of legal and logistical constraints

STAY HOME
WE DELIVER

Get the app.

Business problem and research goals

Background

Analytics showed a **high attrition rate among delivery customers** (lower among pickup customers) The team wanted to understand the causes and explore solutions.

Previous research focused on **"busy mom" as the dominant persona,** which did not explain the difference in attrition rates.

Research goals:

- ◉ Pinpoint **motivating factors** to use online grocery shopping
- ◉ Explore how they are **different** for the two customer segments (pickup and delivery)
- ◉ Identify **pain points** in the user journey, pain points that compel customers to stop using the service.

Methods

Desk Research

- Competitive landscape analysis
- Trade journal articles on online grocery order services

Unmoderated interviews

- allowed me to build **panels of verified current and past online grocery customer.**
- Helped me gain a basic understanding of the customer journey. (n=100)

Survey

- Large scale survey sent to a **stratified random sample** of novice / established delivery / pickup customers (from the customer database).
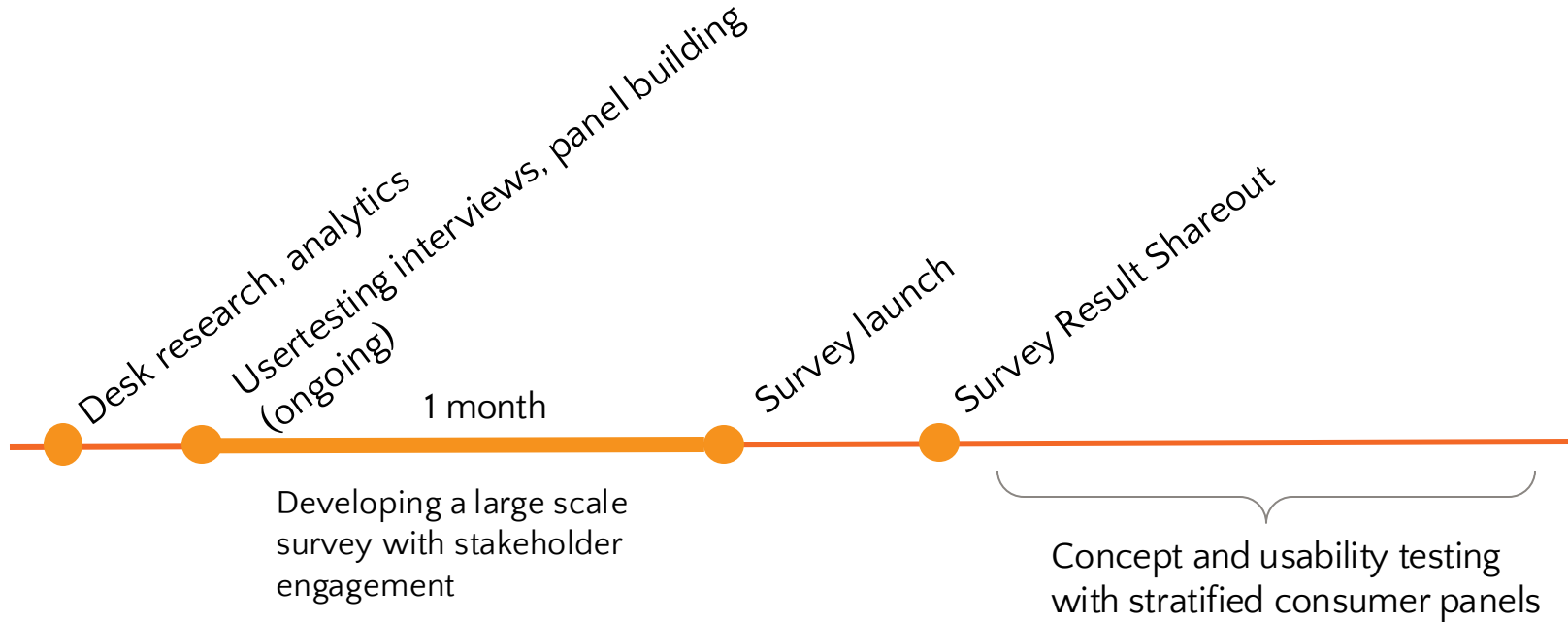
IDIs and iterative concept testing

- The customer panel enabled me to run moderated concept and usability tests

Ran Parallel

Timeline

Desk research, analytics

Usertesting interviews, panel building (ongoing)

1 month

Survey launch

Survey Result Shareout

Developing a large scale survey with stakeholder engagement

Concept and usability testing with stratified consumer panels

Insights

- Twice as many delivery customers had some kind of **personal limitation** as pickup customers. The personal limitation category included:
  - Physical disability
  - Neurodiversity issues
  - Lack of transportation

  Items unavailable at the time of picking often get **substituted with items that do not meet customers' needs**

- **Business component**: delivery customers were not able to reject bad **substitutions**, and their only recourse was in-person visit to the store to return unwanted items.

Impact

◉ The design team developed greater **empathy** for the customers they were designing for.

◉ Identifying the main pain points (unacceptable substitutions) lead to **further research and ideation** of solutions,

   ○ Customer profile creation within the app (e.g. adding info such as gluten sensitivity)

   ○ Close to real-time communication between delivery customers and pickers
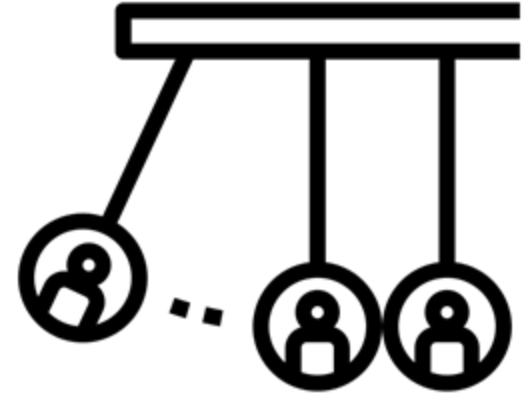
Reflections

- Navigating the stakeholder landscape and building interpersonal relationships within a large organization can significantly impact the speed of a research projects
- Building trusting relationships within the design team makes for the most impactful research.
- It is important to balance the rigor of the research with the needs of the product team - daily communication can make a big difference.

Rethinking the Internal Homepage

Case study #5

The product: Internal Homepage

- During the lockdown, the **internal homepage** originally served as a **bulletin board,** where anyone could post about community oriented programs e.g., yoga sessions, training opportunities, tutorials.

- In an effort **to reduce employees' reliance on email,** the product team suggested dedicating a portion of the board to news coming from **leaders.**

- Some strategic and tactical research questions needed to be answered, leading to several research projects unfolding for over a year.

Leadership news
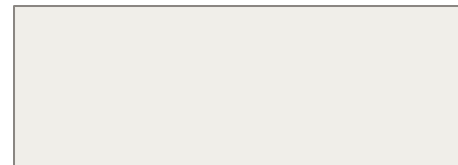
Community News Board
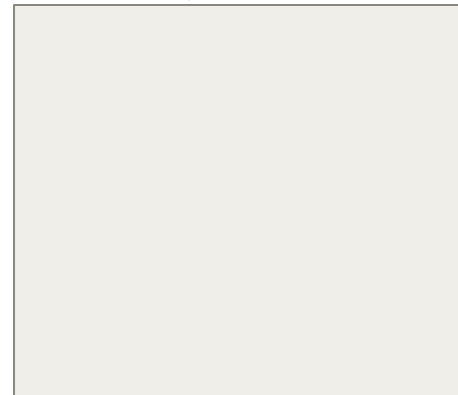
Research Goals

Strategic Goals

- Explore how employees currently consume and keep track of org-level news using various platforms
- Understand how people manage and organize their inbox

- Understand the need for a platform for internal news from leadership
- Gauge how people respond to a section devoted to official news

Tactical Goals

(related to iterations of the same page)

- Learn about the discoverability of the recently added news section
- Explore how employees interpret various title ideas (with attention to non-native speakers)
- Gauge employees' reaction to horizontal scrolling

My role in this project

- I worked as a **solo rapid researcher** on this project, but I closely collaborated with my UXR Mgr, the UX designer and the UXD lead.
- As the main UXR for the project, I developed the research plan, the discussion guide, the screener the analysis plan, and conducted the interviews.
- After discussions with the product team (stakeholders), I analysed and synthesized the results and shared them with the larger team.
- To increase the validity of the study, participants were recruited from several overseas offices as well as US offices of the company.

Product owner

UXD Lead   UXR Mgr

UX
Designer   UX Researcher

Methods

Sessions

60-minute **remote semi-structured interviews** with 13 employees from

- General questions on how they stay informed
- Dive-in into how they store / /organize the official information
- Their current usage of the homepage
- Think aloud based on mockups

Sampling

Stratified random sample based on

- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Tenure
- ❖ Location

already consumed item	Clicking into a card	left side bar	links	prototype
he would like to dismiss items that are no longer of interest to him, a.bc he has already as email, 2. the short text was enough info, 3. clicked into 4. not relevant to him	he did not expect to be taken to group emails.	source is heat he is looking for (e.g., the daily insider, local news channel, Sundar)	he does not like it that links take him to a different format (e.g., email, or group)	he loves tags - they are cheap, and ephemeral. Categories are just like he set up his filters	wishes search especa search advance feture
greyed out text is terrible for accessibility	the label "Link" is too general, does not have enough information scent it should show an icon of emal or group	for scaleability, he is assuming opting in/out of topics	jarring that some lnews cards take him to a different tab, but no-link news cards open in the same tab		combine categori tags
he is expecting some of the functionality of feedly, where you can dismiss, save for later, or archive items	he wishes to be able to share specific news items (a share button for each)	reporting chain would be another great category		reporting chain would be another great category	
she would prefer to be	she did not	based on the			additio

Analysis

Thematic analysis - due to the limited choice of tools, I used spreadsheet and annotated video clips

Clips

Title

- difficult to read, text heavy, too many tiles
- Too busy and text heavy - googler news
  It's pretty busy. It have like five cards here. If that is a photo I don't fe...
- takes mental effort to figure out how the news are sort...
- Emails showing up here
  Nikky
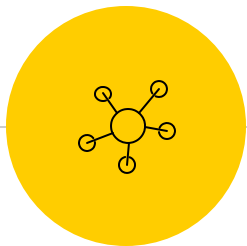- visibility - more about relevance than ocnfidentiality. Th...

Impact

The findings lead to both direct changes visible on the reader side and more strategic research on the publisher side

- Restructuring the page to allow for easy scanning and discovering various types of news

- Rethinking of naming conventions that resonated with an international audience (bulletin was only familiar to US based employees)

- ◎ Strategic research on **leaders' and comm professionals' needs** for communication tools and platforms

- ◎ Tactical research on the reiteration of the publisher tool for the current homepage

Thank you!

Any **questions** ?

You can find me at

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