UX RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

By

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Project 1

Our objective was to conduct market research to assess the feasibility of a coffee shop on a college campus expanding its offerings to include alcohol and extending operating hours until midnight. Our approach was to create a comprehensive research plan and conduct a thorough comparison of similar stores that would result in accurate actionable insights.

Project 2

We were tasked with analyzing why visitors to an online shopping site add items to their carts but don't complete their purchases by simulating user interviews and creating personas to identify and address user experience issues. Our focus was to create detailed personas that would give insights into the customer journey, pain points, and solutions.

Project 3

The goal of this project was to investigate the causes of declining memberships at a makeup company by designing surveys and A/B tests to differentiate between internal factors and external influences. We researched various other companies within this market space to develop a full survey and A/B test that would be reflective of possible drivers for decreased memberships in this target market.

Mini-Project 1: Product Diversification

To: Owners, *Grounds for Discussion*
From: Usabili-Team, Market Research Analysts
Subject: Proposal for Market Research on Expanding to Alcohol Sales and Extended Hours

Introduction

Grounds for Discussion is a popular coffee shop near the University of Cincinnati looking to assess the viability of expanding its offerings to include alcoholic beverages and extending its hours of operation from 6am-3pm to 6am until midnight. This proposal outlines the market research plan to evaluate this potential business expansion.

Methodology

Surveys and Questionnaires

Conduct surveys targeting college students and staff to gauge interest in alcohol sales and extended hours.

Competitive Analysis

Research local businesses offering similar services to understand market saturation and pricing strategies.

Aims & Objectives

Determine Market Size

- Project revenue based on estimated customer inflow and average spend per customer.
- Use demographic data of the college campus and surrounding areas to estimate the target market size.
- Analyze foot traffic data during potential extended hours to estimate customer inflow.

Determine Market Demand

- Analyze survey data to determine the percentage of potential customers interested in purchasing alcohol and visiting the shop during extended hours.
- Assess patterns in customer feedback for preferences in types of alcohol and service expectations.

Determine Market Saturation

- Identify direct competitors within a specified radius.
- Research local businesses offering similar services to understand market saturation and pricing strategies.
- Assess their business hours, product offerings, and pricing to understand our competitive position.

Conclusion

This research plan will provide valuable insight into the market size, demand, and saturation for alcohol sales and extended hours for the vicinity of *Grounds for Discussion*. This will enable informed decision-making into the viability of the proposed business expansions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
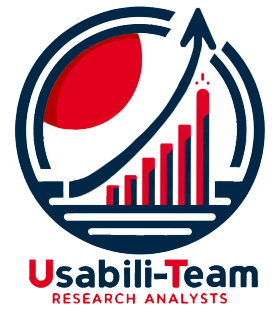
PROBLEM: *Grounds for Discussion* is a popular off-campus coffee shop serving coffee and gourmet pastries. They are looking to expand the business by 1) increasing their hours of service and 2) selling alcoholic beverages.

OBJECTIVES: The research aims to determine the feasibility, demand, and growth potential of serving alcoholic beverages along with their current offerings and extending their hours of operation until mid-night.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The market research involved surveys and questionnaires, competitive analysis, as well as utilizing externally-sourced data and industry benchmarks.

VALUE ADDED: Selling alcohol and extending hours could increase revenue, tap into a new customer base, and establish the business as a local late-night social hub. From sales of coffee and pastries, just expanding operating hours until mid-night could increase the profit margin by around 50%. Based on industry standards, selling alcohol in addition to coffee could increase the profit margin by around 60% when compared to selling only coffee. Financial projections show the possibility to turn a profit two months after covering the initial investment costs ($8,000 initial, monthly revenue of $11,800 and costs of $7,000, thereafter), with a substantial net profit over two years ($107,200).

COMPETITION: Competitors include local coffee shops, bars and pubs, as well as large national brands. Direct competitors are The Fix Coffeehouse and Bar (7:00am-7:00pm), The Upside Brew (7:00am-10:00pm), and Highland Coffee (5:00pm-2:30am). All three are 1) strong local brands, 2) also serve alcoholic beverages (beer and cocktails), 3) have longer operating hours, and 4) are geared towards students and locals. *Grounds for Discussion* competitive advantages are convenience (closer to campus and away from three direct competitors) and established brand loyalty from existing customer base.

TARGET MARKET: The target market includes University of Cincinnati students, young professionals and local residents of the Corryville neighborhood. Data shows a potential market size of around 13,000 consumers, including around 1,600 from a previously unreachable segment. We find that 51% of our current coffee customers would drink coffee after 3pm, and 55% of our current coffee drinkers also drink alcohol. 43% of them showed interest in coming to the coffee shop for alcohol. Analysis from our competitors shows 30% of their customers come in the evening on weekdays and 70% on weekends. Weekends also see an increase in customers' interest in alcohol (around 60% to 80%).

	OPPORTUNITIES		RISKS
Alcoholic Beverages	**Extended Hours**	**Alcoholic Beverages**	**Extended Hours**
Higher profits	Higher profits	Hiring and staff training	Hiring and staff training
Increased Sales	Increased Sales	Increased inventory	Increased inventory
Expanding customer base	Expanding customer base	Higher operating costs	Security concerns
Marketing opportunities	Night-life integration	Stringent laws and regulations	Neighborhood disruption
Long product shelf life	Late-night events	Higher liabilities	Quality Maintenance
Diversified source of revenue	Low investment	Alienating customer base	Staff overwork

CONCLUSION

Based on our findings, <u>it is recommended that *Grounds for Discussion* pursue the strategic expansion of its operations to include the sale of alcoholic beverages and extend its hours of operation until midnight</u>. This is a promising avenue for growth with high anticipated profit margins. There is demand from existing customers, as well as opportunity to reach a previously unreached market of consumers of alcohol who do not drink coffee. Competition in the market shows a demand for dual offering coffee shops with late-night hours, with the prospect of penetrating a market that is not yet saturated. Between its existing strengths, competitive advantages, and distinctive identity, *Grounds for Discussion* is well positioned to effectively tap into a lucrative market.

UX Research

Mini-Project 2: Website Conversion

To: Owners, *Suit Yourself Online Store*
From: Usabili-Team, Market Research Analysts
Subject: Market Research on Cart Conversions

The essence of *Suit Yourself* lies in its commitment to marrying the art of traditional tailoring with the convenience and accessibility of online retail. Custom tailoring is a nuanced process that demands precision, personalization, and a deep understanding of customer needs and preferences. This report assesses how *Suit Yourself* navigates these challenges, offering insights into the website's design, functionality, and overall user engagement.

Our analysis is grounded in comprehensive user feedback - from the initial engagement to the final purchase. We aim to provide a holistic view of the user journey, identifying strengths, uncovering areas for improvement, and suggesting enhancements that could elevate the overall customer experience. This report is a step towards understanding how well *Suit Yourself* is meeting its goals and where it can adapt and evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of its discerning clientele.

Sampling and Interview Plan

The method for interviews utilized a combination of focus group and user interview. For demographic information, quantifiable questions (e.g., from 0 to 10, 0 being not likely at all, how likely are you going to recommend *Suit Yourself* to a friend?), and multiple-choice questions (which of the following areas can *Suit Yourself* work further on). The 50 interviewees were divided into 5 groups for the sake of efficiency. More detailed and personal questions, such as the specific contexts for their browsing of the website, as well as follow-up questions were carried out through individual interviews of each participant.

The team used stratified sampling according to age groups to select the interviewees. From the data collected on the website, about two thirds of the customers are in the 25-40 age range; almost one third of the customers are over 40. For the latter category, most of the customers that fall in this category are on the younger side (under 50). The percentage of customers under 25 is negligible. During a three-day period, all the customers who logged in with their *Suit Yourself* account were assigned with an ID number and classified into four categories: below 25, between 25 and 40, between 40 and 45, and over 45. The team used a random number generator to select 33 customers between 25 and 40, 15 customers between 40 and 45, and 2 customers over 45 to conduct the interview.

Personas
(Full profiles available under Supplementary Materials)

According to the user data collected from the website, two thirds of the customers are male, and one third female. About two thirds of the customers are in the 25-40 age range; almost one third of the customers are over 40. For the latter category, most of the customers that fall in this category are on the younger side (under 50). The percentage of customers under 25 is negligible. The three personas comprehensively represent the age groups and gender distribution of the current customers of this website.

The three motivations of these personas, professional success, self-expression, and comfort, also correspond to the three major customer motivations that we found during the interview phase. Additionally, the three main pain points (customization, measurement, risk perception) appeared most frequent in the results of the interviews. These personas are crafted to collectively encompass a broad spectrum of Studio Suits' potential customer base, while also highlighting specific needs and preferences that the brand can address through targeted marketing and product customization.

Persona 1: Corporate Climber Carl

This persona represents the ambitious professionals, a significant segment for a custom suit company. People in this demographic are typically looking for high-quality, stylish suits that convey a sense of professionalism and sophistication. Carl's emphasis on appearance in professional settings aligns well with the premium, tailored products of Studio Suits. He also highlights the needs of customers who find off-the-rack suits inadequate, focusing on the custom-tailoring aspect of the brand.

> **Appearance:** Carl is a tall, well-built man in his early 30s with a clean-shaven, sharp look. He has neatly combed dark hair and a confident, assertive gaze. His posture is upright, exuding an air of self-assuredness.

> **Style:** He dresses in impeccably tailored suits, favoring dark, solid colors like navy or charcoal. Carl's accessories are minimalist but of high quality – a sleek watch, polished dress shoes, and occasionally a slim tie.

Persona 2: Creative Connoisseur Claire

Claire is designed to represent the artistic, fashion-forward individuals who are often overlooked in traditional suit marketing. This segment values originality and self-expression, aligning with Studio Suits' ability to offer unique, customized designs. Her focus on sustainability and originality brings attention to any eco-friendly and bespoke elements the brand might offer, tapping into a growing market of consumers who prioritize these factors in their clothing choices.

> **Appearance:** Claire is a woman in her late 20s with an artistic flair. She has shoulder-length, wavy auburn hair that she often wears in a casual updo. Her expressive eyes are complemented by bold glasses, and she has a warm, inviting smile.

> **Style:** Her fashion is eclectic and trendsetting, often mixing classic pieces with bold, modern elements. She might pair a well-fitted blazer with a unique brooch or a statement necklace. Her color choices are more adventurous, incorporating vibrant tones or patterns.

Persona 3: Dapper Dad Dan

Dan caters to a more mature demographic that values quality, comfort, and practicality. This segment might not be as fashion-forward as the others but still requires suits for various occasions, from work to social events. By focusing on comfort and versatility, this persona helps Studio Suits highlight its products' functionality and durability, appealing to those who view clothing as a long-term investment.

SUIT YOURSELF REPORT

Appearance: Dan is in his mid-40s with a friendly, approachable demeanor. He has a medium build and a gentle, reassuring smile. His hair is beginning to gray at the temples, adding to his distinguished look.

Style: Dan's clothing choices lean towards practicality and comfort while still looking put-together. His suits are well-fitted but not overly tight, in more traditional colors like navy or gray. He prefers simple, functional accessories like a classic leather belt and a practical watch.

Findings

From the result of the survey, there are several pain points of the customer journey that can be identified. Specific to the context and products of *Suit Yourself*, common sentiments include customization complexity, measurement challenges, perceived risks, visual representation, and long delivery times. Some more general pain points expressed in the interviews by some participants include unexpected costs, complex checkout process, lack of payment options, Security concerns, website performance issues, and lack of sufficient information.

Measurement Challenges: The requirement to take precise measurements at home might be intimidating or seem too complex for some customers.

Customization Complexity: Given the nature of custom-tailored garments, customers may find the customization process daunting or unclear, especially if they are unfamiliar with tailoring specifics.

Perceived Risk: Purchasing custom-tailored items online can carry a perceived risk, as customers might worry about the fit and look of the final product.

Visual Representation: The lack of a visual preview system for customized products can make it hard for customers to visualize the final product.

Long Delivery Times: Custom tailoring usually requires more time than off-the-shelf purchases, which might deter customers needing items quickly.

Strategies and Solutions
(Full storyboards available under Supplementary Materials)
https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVKd1GDq0=/

Scenario 1: Carl

Background: Carl is an ambitious professional, who represents a significant segment for a custom suit company. He is looking for high-quality, stylish suits that convey a sense of professionalism and sophistication.

Pain Point: The requirement to take precise measurements at home might be intimidating or seem too complex for some customers.

Solution: Explore technologies for a virtual measurement tool, allowing customers to get accurate measurements through their smartphone or webcam.

SUIT YOURSELF **REPORT**

Scenario 2: Claire

Background: Claire is a twenty-eight-year-old art director, who works toward self-expression and is passionate about visual arts. She is looking for a suit for her partner for a friend's wedding. Her partner also values comfort in a suit.

Pain Point: Given the nature of custom-tailored garments, customers may find the customization process daunting or unclear and unable to differentiate styles with subtle differences, especially if they are unfamiliar with tailoring specifics and the conventional styles of suits.

Solution: Provide more diverse representations of different body types from different angles and more information on the unique features of the different styles and how to customize them.

Scenario 3: Dan

Background: Dan wants to purchase suits for various occasions, from work to social events. He values quality, comfort, and practicality.

Pain Point: Purchasing custom-tailored items online can carry a perceived risk, as customers might worry about the fit and look of the final product.

Solution: Showcase customer reviews with photos of the final products to build trust and set realistic expectations.
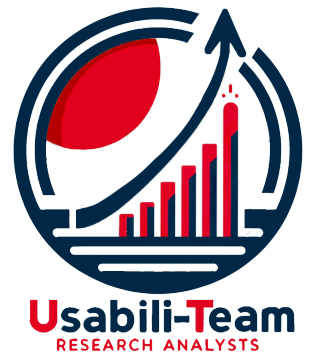
UX Research

Mini-Project 3: Voice of the Customer Analysis

To: Owners, Kiss and Makeup
From: Usabili-Team, Market Research Analysts
Subject: Proposal for Survey Study on Reduced Membership Subscriptions

Introduction
Kiss and Makeup is a subscription-based online beauty company that offers luxury-quality makeup, skincare, and beauty products at members-only prices. Kiss and Makeup offers one tier of paid membership ($4.95a month, $59 billed annually). Over the last three business quarters, memberships have steadily decreased. This proposal outlines a survey study to determine the influence of internal or external factors in contributing to this reduction.

Objectives
Initial data shows that the loss in membership is due to fewer new customers signing up to become new members. The survey aims to understand the factors that would motivate customers to sign up for the online membership program and what benefits they expect from it.

Methodology
- Target audience: customers who have made a purchase/purchases in the past but are not currently members, as well as potential new customers.
- Sample: We will use stratified sampling to ensure that the sample includes a proportionate representation from each group: previous customers who are not members, previous members who canceled, and potential customers who never purchased.
- Sample size: Based on our budget and desired level of confidence, we decide to survey 500 people from our target audience. This number allows us to achieve a balance between cost-effectiveness and statistical reliability.
- Data Collection Method: We will use an online survey platform to distribute the survey to the selected participants. To increase the response rate, participants will be offered an incentive, such as a discount code for their next purchase or an entry into a prize draw.
- Design: participants will be required to visit our online store and engage with it as you would under normal circumstances. Afterwords, they will be presented with a battery of questions to measure previous experience, internal factors, external factors, membership evaluation, and demographic information.

Analysis
- Calculate the frequency and percentage distribution of responses for each question, particularly those related to internal and external factors.
- Explore relationships between different survey questions, such as the correlation between satisfaction with membership benefits (internal factor) and economic considerations (external factor).
- Compute mean, median, and mode for numerical responses and ratings.

Market Comparison
- Multiple Companies Offering Subscription Service for Makeup Products: Birchbox, Ipsy, FabFitFun, and Sephora Play are indeed subscription services that offer beauty and makeup products.
- Other services have the option to choose from a selection of products or product categories depending on the subscription plan. Some subscription services offer customization options where subscribers can personalize their box by selecting preferences or providing feedback.
- Subscribers do not have to pay an additional product price in addition to the subscription fee. However, there may be exceptions or additional charges for certain premium products or special promotions.
- Subscribers may have felt that the products do not meet their expectations.

Estimated Costs
Approximately $5,000 to $7,000, covering expenses for the online survey platform, incentives for participants, and data analysis. This budget supports our goal of surveying 500 participants, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of factors affecting membership decline while maintaining statistical reliability and cost-effectiveness.

Conclusion
The survey conducted by Kiss and Makeup aims to address the declining membership rates by understanding both internal and external influences on consumer decisions and expectations. By analyzing how these factors correlate with the decline in new sign-ups, and comparing these insights against competitors' offerings, Kiss and Makeup intends to adapt and enhance its membership value proposition to better meet customer needs and preferences.

To: Owners, Kiss and Makeup
From: Usabili-Team, Market Research Analysts
Subject: Proposal for A/B Test on Reduced Membership Subscriptions

Background
Kiss and Makeup is a subscription-based online beauty company that offers luxury-quality makeup, skincare, and beauty products at members-only prices. Over the last three business quarters, memberships have steadily decreased. An initial survey shows that a combination of change in consumer preferences and market competition are contributing factors. There's a growing emphasis on sustainability and eco-consciousness within the makeup market.

Introduction
Many brands are adopting sustainable packaging, cruelty-free practices, and reducing their carbon footprint to meet the demands of environmentally conscious consumers - among them is Kiss and Makeup. However, customers are unaware of our offerings in this area. Current membership perks include free shipping for orders over $50, member-only insider products, exclusive member perks, and cancel any time. We propose offering additional perks centered on natural and organic products.

Objectives
Test how different perks affect membership rates. Specifically, examine whether one of the unique perks of discounts, samples, access, or rewards will result in higher signup rate.

Methodology
- We will implement an A/B test on the store website, where customers will be randomly assigned to see one of these four variants once they visit the home page.
- The main success metric will be signup rate, which is a calculation of how many of the individuals assigned to a specific condition end up signing up to become a member. The four conditions are as follows:
  - Variant A: Higher discounts on natural products.
  - Variant B: Free samples of natural products.
  - Variant C: Access to new and exclusive natural products.
  - Variant D: Loyalty rewards for buying natural products.
- Customers will be tracked using their IP address. Web analytic tools will be used to track how users interact with each variant. Special care will be taken to make sure that each version is identical in layout, design, and content, except for the specific membership perk being offered. The traffic will be split equally among each condition, and the test will stop once enough data has been collected to perform a statistically significant analysis.

Analysis
A logistic regression model will be used to estimate the probability of a user signing up based on the different perks they were exposed to.

Aims & Insights
- We believe that free samples of natural products (Variant B) will outperform the other variant offers. However, we also believe that this perk will be the most costly to implement since we might incur additional cost of producing more samples for members.
- A test of the perks now will reveal which approach to new perks leads to the highest number of new sign-ups, which can be scaled across our target market to maximize the impact on new sign-ups.
- May reveal which cost-sensitive perks will perform better in times of economic downturn. Strategic implementation of cost-sensitive perks could improve the appeal and value of the membership.
- Insights can also be revealed about the process of pivoting our focus to new products to adapt to emerging trends.

Estimated Costs
Approximately $8,300 to $17,900, covering web development, sample production, software tools, and data analysis. This investment will enable the company to identify the most effective membership perk, guiding strategic decisions to enhance membership appeal and address the declining sign-up rates effectively.

Conclusion
The proposed A/B test by Kiss and Makeup aims to determine the most effective membership perk—whether higher discounts, free samples, exclusive access, or loyalty rewards on natural products—to boost sign-up rates and address the decline in memberships. This budget ensures comprehensive testing of membership perks to identify the most effective strategy for boosting sign-up rates and addressing membership declines. Insights from the test will guide strategic decisions on implementing cost-effective perks that align with current market trends and consumer preferences towards sustainability and eco-consciousness.