



Enhancing Customer Experiences by Implementing an Interaction Designer Tool to Company Website and B2C E-commerce Platform

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Bachelor's Thesis

2021

Bachelor of Business Administration

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Degree Bachelor of Business Administration
Thesis title Enhancing Customer Experiences by Implementing an Interaction Designer Tool to Company Website and B2C E-commerce Platform
Number of pages and appendix pages 43 + 9
<p>This product-based thesis was conducted for a commissioning company, Suomen Niittysiemen Oy, the current market leader for producing and selling wildflower seeds in Finland, with customers in Estonia and Sweden. The company aims to establish a local presence in Sweden in 2021, followed by other Nordic countries.</p> <p>The need for this thesis originated from the commissioning company's increased focus on providing exceptional experiences through digital services, simultaneously increasing customer loyalty and brand awareness. This thesis aimed to discover whether customer experiences could be enhanced by implementing an interaction designer tool to the company website and B2C e-commerce platform.</p> <p>This project consisted of several main tasks, including the preparation of the theoretical framework, the design of a customer journey map and user journey map, the creation of multiple interactions and the launch of interaction designer tools. Additionally, an online survey was conducted to receive tentative feedback; the survey results were analyzed and presented with development needs, concluded with recommendations for the commissioning company, reflection of learning and project management evaluation.</p> <p>The demarcation of the scope for this thesis was challenging as the key concepts were so extensive. Service design was related to all theories, and customer experience was presented as the second-largest concept. Furthermore, the theory of customer experience was found to include user experience, customer journey mapping, and interaction design. The focus of this thesis was from the customer perspective.</p> <p>An introductory online survey was conducted through the Survey Monkey tool; the survey respondents were random visitors who utilized the button-based chatbots for more than fifteen seconds during the predetermined timeframe. The survey results provided valuable insights, initial customer and user experiences of the new tool and helpful suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>The key outcomes indicated that customer experiences could be enhanced using implementation designer tools. The online survey results provided valid details of the ultimate necessity, usability, and quality.</p> <p>Recommendations included further customer surveys, live chat implementation, a step-by-step guide, more options to the button-based chatbot, utilizing key performance indicators, and further development of journey maps should be considered.</p>
Keywords Service Design, Interaction Design, Customer Experience, User Experience, Customer Journey Map

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1 Introduction

This is a bachelor's thesis for the Degree Programme of International Business in the major specialization of Marketing at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences.

As the world is constantly in a state of change, also businesses need to adapt and develop (Salehu 2020). Creating powerful customer experiences and focusing on usability in online platforms is more and more critical. For companies to maintain a leading position in their markets, they must evolve, not only by implementing modern tools and applications, preferably by changing their focus to providing exceptional customer experiences.

The first chapter of this report presents the importance and relevance of this thesis to the commissioning company, followed by a company introduction, continued with a clarification of this thesis' objective, tasks, and scope. At the end of chapter one, a short dictionary introduces the critical concepts chosen as most relevant for this report.

1.1 Background

In the digital business era, especially on e-commerce and online platforms, the importance of creating memorable customer experiences is emphasized. Simply put, customer experience is something that is either at the core of a company or not at all (Morgan 2015). People become increasingly demanding and knowledgeable, setting the standard level for customer expectations even higher.

Suomen Niittysiemen Oy recognized the need for excellence in customer experiences, which provided the acute need for this thesis. The chosen interaction designer tool provider was GIOSG, a Finnish start-up from Helsinki with a wide range of known brands as customers, such as DNA, Danske Bank, Neste, and Finnair.

The interaction designer tools' primary purpose for the commissioning company website and B2C e-commerce platform was to help customers find the correct information and products. The interaction designer tools aimed to create better customer experiences by providing interactive service and guidance to customers. For the commissioning company to maintain and strengthen its position as the market leader in Finland and successfully establish business operations in the Swedish and Nordic markets, providing exceptional customer experiences remains a crucial factor.

Customer journey mapping is a vital component of the customer experience process (Richardson 2010). This thesis incorporated two basic customer journey maps and their

integration into the GIOSG interaction designer tools, ultimately to published button-based chatbots.

An article published by McKinsey suggests that the future of customer care and customer experiences is in technological solutions such as robotics and artificial intelligence. These solutions will act as the porters of online platforms, helping customers and visitors find what they want and need. (Berg & Raabe 2018.)

This product-based thesis specified the connection between the interaction designer tools and customer experience through the customer and user journey maps, one product-based for the B2C e-commerce platform customers and the other an information-based for the company website users.

This report aimed to provide timely and relevant information for businesses and professionals regarding enhancing customer experiences through interaction designer tools. The outcome of this thesis included two functioning interaction designer tools, valuable information on the current customer experience levels in the B2C e-commerce platform, and the company website with extensive recommendations for future actions.

The objective of this thesis was to contribute valuable information for the company's Nordic expansion project, serving as the primary source of data on the usability and necessity of interaction designer tools without excluding other interested parties and professionals.

1.2 Commissioning Company

Suomen Niittysiemen Oy was founded in 2001 and acquired by the current owners in 2018. The company headquarters are currently in Kokkola, Finland, and the company produces and sells wildflower seeds. The company operates in Finland and sells products to customers in Estonia and Sweden. The company aims to establish a local presence in Sweden in 2021. They have a staff of five full-time employees and ten seasonal employees.

The company increased its sales turnover in 2019 from 130 000€ to 199 500€ and in 2020 to over 400 000€ (Asiakastieto 2020). According to the CEO of Suomen Niittysiemen Oy, around 40% of the turnover comes from B2C e-commerce customers and the remaining 60% from B2B customers. The company strives to increase the sales from B2C customers to 250 000€ in 2021 and forecast a rise to 300 000€ in 2022. (Schauman 13 April 2021.)

The company had undergone various changes during the past two years, such as the redesign of its brand, a new e-commerce platform for B2C customers was published in 2019, and an e-commerce platform for B2B customers was published in January 2021. Suomen Niittysiemen Oy has made significant investments in modernizing its business operations and expect to receive valuable information regarding the use of interaction designer tools as a method for enhancing customer experiences. At the core of their new company identity and operations are their current and potential customers.

The need for this thesis came from the direct result of the commissioning company's internal decision to put more effort into digitalization and focus on creating excellent customer experiences, simultaneously increasing brand awareness, customer loyalty, and building customer relationships.

1.3 Objective and Scope

The thesis objective was to implement interaction designer tools, enhancing customer experiences on the company website and B2C e-commerce platform. The objective is divided into tasks as follows:

Task 1. Prepare the theoretical framework

Task 2. Design the two variations of customer journey maps

Task 3. Create interactions and launch the interaction designer tools

Task 4. Conduct survey to receive tentative feedback, present survey results and development needs

Task 5. Conclusions and suggestions. Evaluation of project management and reflection on learning

Table 1 below presented the tasks, theoretical framework components, project management methods, and outcomes for each task.

Table 1. Knowledge base

Task	Theoretical Framework	Project Management Methods	Outcomes
Task 1. Prepare the theoretical framework, bridge between relevant theories	Service design Customer experience Interaction design User experience Customer journey map	Literature review	Theoretical framework, proving the strong connection and possibilities between theories
Task 2. Design two variations of customer journey maps	Customer journey mapping Interaction design User experience	Mapping Literature review	Two different customer journey maps
Task 3. Implement the interaction designer tools	Interaction design, Customer journey maps, Service design	Service design Interaction design implementation	Successful implementation of the interaction designer tools
Task 4. Conduct survey to receive tentative feedback, present survey results and development needs	Online surveys	Online surveys Data-analysis	First customer experiences and feedback, analyzed results from quantitative research surveys
Task 5. Conclusions and suggestions. Evaluation of project management and reflection on learning	Project management Self-assessment	Literature review Primary research	Thesis outcomes, project management methods, and self-assessment

Table 1 listed various relevant tasks through which this thesis strived to enhance customer experiences by implementing interaction designer tools to the company website and B2C e-commerce platform.

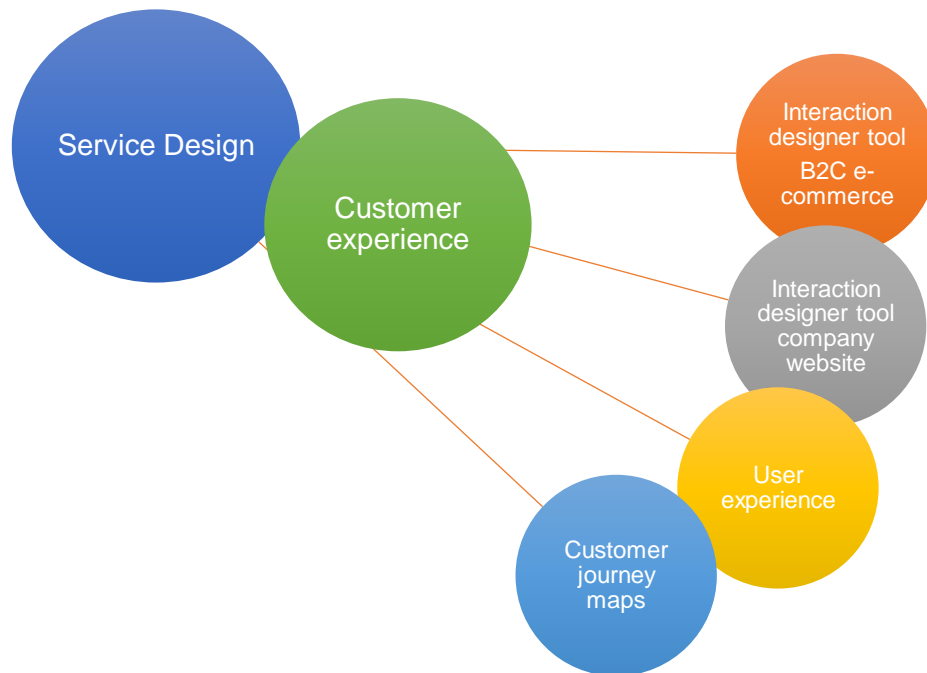


Figure 1. The main elements of the scope

Figure 1 showed that this thesis consisted of several key concepts, and as the base for this, Service Design was related to all theories presented in the Venn diagram. Customer experience was introduced as the second-largest concept since the objective was to enhance customer experiences by implementing interaction designer tools. Customer experiences include user experiences, customer journey maps, and interaction design (Gibbons 2017).

This thesis did not include service blueprints because the objective was solely focused on the customer's point of view. Explanation of why service blueprints were excluded is because they focus on the employees' or organizations' perspective instead of the customer's point of view (Gibbons 2017). According to Laura Patterson, touchpoints are all interactions that might change the way the customer feels about your brand, product, or business (Patterson, 2018a). Therefore, this thesis referred to the term interaction to describe customer or user touchpoints. This report focused on the specific online platforms of the commissioning company, and no other sources or places for customers to be influenced or directed were included.

Two customer journey maps, one information based on the company website, and a product based on the B2C e-commerce platform were designed and implemented into the interaction designer tool, GIOSG. Additionally, a customer experience-related survey was done through embedded links within the interaction designer tools to receive immediate feedback from initial customer experiences of the interaction designer tools.

1.4 Benefits

The commissioning company would benefit from this report by gaining insights into enhancing customer experiences through interaction designer tools. The employees and internal organizations' benefits consist of implementing interaction designer tools and the knowledge acquired through the survey. This thesis can serve all international marketing students, employees, and those interested in implementing an interaction designer tool, designing customer journey maps, work with online platforms, and customer experience. Stakeholders and different companies may use the conclusions and survey results to determine if the implementation of an interaction designer tool would be helpful for them and potentially enhance customer experiences.

The meaning of customer experience, helpfulness, and usability of the interaction tool are relevant for the organization and business operations. The importance of customer experience is rapidly rising (Morgan 2015).

This thesis strived to provide both general and in-depth knowledge on the implementation of interaction designer tools and customer journey maps while explaining the relevance of service design, customer, and user experience. In addition, the aim was to gather reliable information and provide the commissioning company with outcomes that were relevant for enhancing customer experiences with the help of interaction designer tools.

1.5 Key Concepts

Service design was defined as the overall customer life cycle design and experience. Service design includes seeing the whole customer lifecycle process, the entire system, and the broad scope of the organization (Design Lab 2018).

Customer Experience could be explained as the biased acknowledgement a customer has on direct or indirect contact with a brand or company. Direct contact consists of purchases, item usage, services rendered, and most often proposed by the customer. Indirect contact consists mainly of spontaneous confrontation of a product or service by the company, such as a reference, advertisement, article, review, or similar (Meyer & Schwager 2007).

User Experience or UX can be defined as an experience for a user during or after interacting with an item in a specific space or context (Araz 2018).

Customer Journey Maps were defined by Megan Grocki from UX Mastery as the visual interpretation from an individual's perspective on their relationship with an organization,

service, product, or brand. A Customer Journey Map is essentially a path an individual embarks on when interacting with an item (Grocki 2014).

Interaction Design could be defined as interactive products or services where the designer's focus reaches further than the item to the specific method users interacts with; additionally, interaction design is considered a part of user experience design (IDF 2020b).

1.5.1 Theoretical framework

The first two chapters of this thesis included the theoretical framework and introduced the reader to the concepts of this thesis. The chosen method for data collection was a literature review by sourcing existing articles, reports, and other relevant quality materials (Snyder 2019). The theoretical framework was done to prove the solid and relevant connection between the chosen theories and the implementation of interaction designer tools. The theoretical framework consisted of Service Design, Customer Experience, Interaction Design, User Experience, and Customer Journey Mapping.

1.5.2 Implementing Interaction Design Tools by Utilizing Journey Maps

The third stage consisted of implementing the interaction designer tools through customer journey maps, a product-based journey map for the B2C e-commerce platform, and an information-based journey map of the company website.

The customer journey maps were designed with the help of reviewing and researching existing customer journey maps and examples. Relevant current customer journey maps were analyzed and used as inspiration and references. Both customer journeys were designed and reviewed before added to the GIOSG interaction designer tool. During this stage, the GIOSG tool was presented while the data from customer journey maps were combined into the interaction designer tools.

1.5.3 Enhancing the Customer Experience

A survey was conducted on the B2C e-commerce platform and company website to receive tentative feedback from customers during the fifth chapter. The survey was conducted through a web-based survey made with the Survey Monkey tool and implemented through an embedded link on both sites. The respondents were random customers or website visitors who interacted with the interaction designer tools during the specific predetermined timeframe.

The surveys were merely a primary source of customer feedback during the interaction designer tools launch. Further recommendations regarding research, KPI's and other

relevant metrics were communicated based on the customer feedback and overall thesis conclusion.

1.5.4 Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter of this thesis comprised of the critical outcomes, recommendations for the commissioning company, then determined the level of success of project management, and finally presented the reflections and self-evaluation.

2 Service Design and User Experience for Excellent Customer Experiences

Every individual has a unique experience while interacting with a service or a product. The overall experience is designed; while meeting customer expectations, differentiates one company from the other (IDF 2020b).

Throughout the present and following chapter, relevant theories were described and justified; furthermore, a theoretical framework consisting of the most critical and relevant topics was formed. These topics included service design, customer experience, user experience, customer journey and interaction design. As the scope of this Bachelor level thesis was limited, the subjects were researched and defined at the appropriate level (Haaga-Helia 2019). The relationship between each topic, relevance to the theoretical framework, and thesis topic (Enhancing Customer Experiences by Implementing an Interaction Designer Tool to Company Website and B2C E-commerce Platform) were explained. The third chapter was concluded with a recapitulation of the relevant theories, forming the theoretical framework.

2.1 Service Design

Beginning the theoretical examination from the outside in, service design could be described as the outer surface for all channels involved in understanding customer journeys and customer experiences (Wilshire 2018).

According to (Stickdorn, Hormess, Lawrence and Schneider 2019), service design is a collaborative, pragmatic approach to innovation and improvement that applies to physical and digital products as well as intangible services. In addition, customer experience consultant Paul Boag (2020) wrote in his article, “while user experience design focuses on the customer-facing experience, service design starts with the behind-the-scenes processes.”

Sarah Gibbons (2017) and Reason, Løvelie and Flu (2016, 38) described the front-stage elements of service design as those visible to the customers and the back-stage elements as internal yet crucial for excellent customer experiences.

Looking at behind-the-scenes processes, the scope of Laservice design concerning customer experiences, user experiences, customer journeys and interactions became clear. While each previously mentioned topic includes the individual customers' experiences, service design has a broader viewpoint than customer experience “CX” or user experience “UX” (Wilshire 2018). Service design aims to build a collaborative environment for the best possible customer experience, which is done through identifying

customer needs, goals, possible pains, challenges, and most importantly, customer or user journeys (Wilshere 2018).

Gibbons (2017) described modern service not only as a product and a service, instead as a hybrid consisting of both product and service. These hybrid services, also known as product-service systems or PSS (Tukker 2015), were mostly seen from the customer perspective as the front-stage process. Namely, one could consider streaming services such as Netflix or Spotify as hybrid services or PSS, since it was possible to stream and enjoy their products (series, films, music) without owning them.

Stickdorn & al. (2019) highlighted the significance of experiences customers expect to receive from their interactions with service providers and companies.

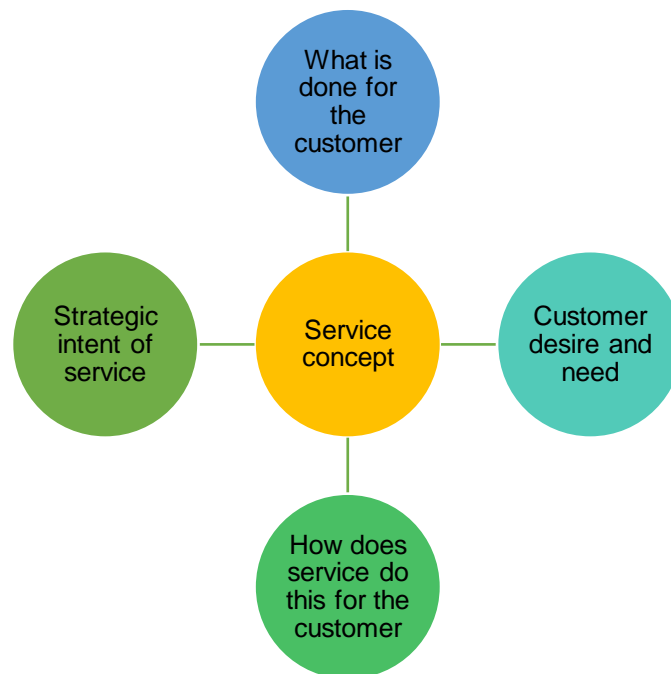


Figure 3. The service concept (adapted from Goldstein & al. 2002, 124)

Figure 3 illustrated customer's needs and desires, service organizations strategic intention, the benefits customers receive or "what," and a description of how the service should be delivered or "how." Service design is the overall process that comprises customer experience, user experience, customer journey and interaction design. The service concept offered a comprehensive viewpoint for service design from both customers' and organizations' views. For the interaction designer tools to be designed and implemented, understanding of service design practicalities, context, and customer or outside-in perspective was imperative.

2.2 Customer Experience

Harvard Business Review published an article by Adam Richardson (2010), where he described Customer Experience or CX as the complete experience an individual has of a service, product, company, or brand over time. According to Richardson (2010), customer experience comprised various layers, touchpoints or interactions, customer journeys, and ecosystems which referred to the overall digital or physical environment where the customers perform.

As stated by Peppers and Rogers (2016, 31), “No company can succeed without customers. If you don’t have customers, you don’t have a business. You have a hobby”. Furthermore, Peppers and Rogers concluded that customer experience consisted of reoccurring events or interactions that a person had over time with a product or service across multiple channels (Peppers & Rogers 2017, 22).

Don Norman and Jakob Nielsen (2011) from the Nielsen Norman Group argued that user experiences comprised every user or customer interaction with the company or its products. Whereas Kim Salazar (2019) provided an alternate, up-to-date description of user experience “UX” and customer experience “CX.” Salazar (2019) presented three levels of an individual’s experiences with a company: interaction level, journey-level, and relationship level. On the interaction level, UX interactions were designed for digital and physical channels such as downloading a book from an online provider or buying a soda from a vending machine. The journey-level included the customer journey, which generally consisted of more than one interaction and smooth cross-channel movement such as moving across digital platforms. The customer’s complete lifecycle experience was presented and described as the customer experience instead of user experience on the relationship level. Salazar (2019) emphasized the irrelevance of which term CX or UX one chooses to use, provided their respective extent is acknowledged and implemented in all company processes, thus communicated throughout the organization.

As service design was referred to as the outer surface of our theoretical scope in chapter 2, customer experience could be described as the next layer from the customers’ outside-in perspective, which was considered most important concerning our objective (Merholz 2009). According to Merholzs’ article for Harvard Business Review, organizations should strive to understand the building blocks of excellent customer experiences. Regarding the outside-in perspective, Merholz suggested organizations begin their journey towards offering quality customer experiences by streamlining their internal communication and customer identification, creating a customer-centric mentality, see figure 4 (Merholz 2009).

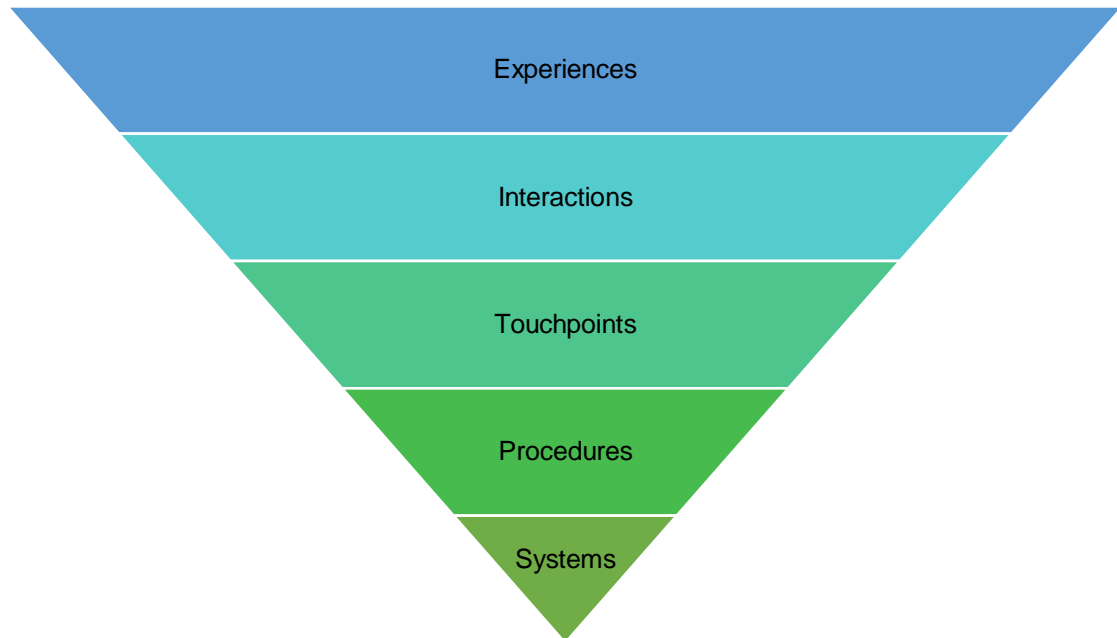


Figure 4. Outside-in communication mentality in a customer-centric organization (adapted from Merholz 2009)

Another reason behind customer-centric outside-in thinking originated from the conclusion of customer experience being the relationship level in a user's experience, thus closer to the outer surface than user experience (Salazar 2019).

Blake Morgan (2020), in her article for Forbes magazine, discussed the metrics and statistics already showing a drastic change in online behaviour. According to the report and data from (Bazaarvoice 2020) globally, 49% of consumers shop online more than before the pandemic. Though this information was from 2020, the trend did not seem to be slowing down. According to the commissioning company, Suomen Niittysiemen Oy's CEO disclosed how their online sales had increased significantly during COVID-19 (March 2020 - March 2021). Another research made in 2020 by Shirute demonstrated the increase of Finnish companies' willingness to enhance customer experiences from 63 respondents; 97% of organizations aiming to provide excellent customer experiences in their respective industries. (Shirute 2020.)

As stated in an article for Harvard Business Review (Chris Meyer & Andre Schwager 2007), "Customer experience is the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company." In this thesis, the focus remained on direct contact due to the scope being limited to the interaction designer tools on Suomen Niittysiemen Oy's e-commerce platform and company website, thus in line with the definition of direct contact. Meyer and Schwager (2007) described direct contact as "Direct contact generally occurs in the course of purchase, use, and service and is usually initiated by the customer." Direct contact was also a definition of a positive customer

experience on the journey level within the three journey levels, presented by Salazar (2019) in her article for Forbes magazine.

Additionally, Gilles Muys (2020) introduced two tools called guided selling and guided configuration for enhancing customer experiences, which were taken into account when designing the interaction bots for Suomen Niittysiemen Oy's e-commerce platform and company website. The tools' objectives were to support value creation to customers by increasing customer experiences through sales events assistance such as product selection and configuration, smooth self-service processes, and transparency in pricing (Muys 2020).

2.3 User Experience

“User experience or (UX) is the experience of the person, using the object, product or technology; the totality of a person's interactions with a product, system or service.” (Rosenzweig 2015, 335)

As the term user experience implies, the user or person is at the foundation of this strategy. All physical, mechanical activities or interactions an individual has with an existing product, service, or technology can be considered a user experience (Rosenzweig 2015, 8). In addition, according to Norman & Nielsen (s.a.), great user experiences stem from identifying your customers' needs and wants, providing them with smooth and positive cross-channel experiences, exceeding their expectations, and creating lasting impressions.

Christan Kraft (2012) emphasized the importance of a users' feelings and expectations regarding the overall user experiences. According to Kraft, user experiences could easily be affected if their initial expectations were low; therefore, a company could exceed the expectations by delivering memorable user experiences and positively influencing feelings. Furthermore, if a users' initial expectations were high, the company would have to work diligently to provide high-level user experiences and create positive emotions during the user experience.

Consequently, during the global COVID-19 pandemic, the emphasis was on making the right strategical choices to create exceptional customer solutions (Salehu 2020).

Peter Morville (2004) presented a framework for user experiences, which consisted of seven sections that were all relevant in the design and functionality of UX, despite the fact it was created a while ago.

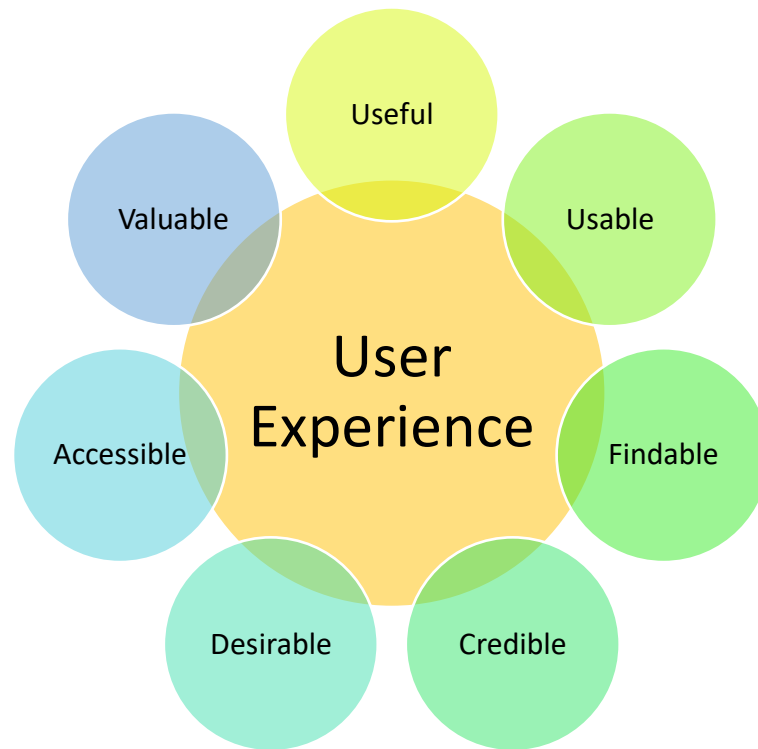


Figure 5. The User Experience (adapted from Morville 2004)

Figure 5 represented the seven sections of user experience design, consisting of the following attributes: useful, desirable, usable, findable, accessible, credible, and valuable (Morville 2004). Within each user experience, at least one of these attributes could be found, most commonly several at a time. Useful suggested to the product or service, filling a need, while usable referred to the end-product or service being well designed, simple, and easy to use. Findable was about the necessary information, product, or service being found with minimal effort; moreover, credibility was related to the company's products and services being considered reliable. Desirable meant designing the product's visual execution or service to be appealing and straightforward. Additionally, accessible referred to the user experiences being available to everyone despite possible disabilities or impairments. Finally, valuable implied what the customer or user considered the product or service brought them, thus adding value.

During tasks 2 and 3 of this thesis process, designing customer journey maps and implementing interaction designer tools, the abovesaid attributes were considered.

3 Customer Journey Mapping, the Companion of Interaction Design

This chapter strives to introduce and describe interaction design and customer journey maps, including their relationship, bridging them to the previously mentioned theories. To conclude this chapter, the final theoretical framework to support this thesis was illustrated and explained.

Conveniently stated by Jim Tincher (2013), “Your customer experience is a journey. But too often, we manage it like a series of touchpoints, without looking at how these touchpoints fit together”. Due to this expression, customer journeys could be considered a vital part of the customer experience, consisting of many touchpoints.

3.1 Interaction Design

As stated by Laura Patterson (2018), all recurrent interactions a person has that have a possible impact on their perception of your company are considered touchpoints; thus, touchpoints were referred to as interactions throughout this thesis.

Jonas Löwgren and Erik Stolterman (2004, 129) discussed digital artifacts as the end-products of interaction design, including various attributes, such as the users’ incentives, emotional and social interactions with a product or service. While designing any digital artifact, such as an interaction designer or helper tool, it is imperative to consider similar and competitive artifacts and their characteristics (Löwgren & Stolterman 2004, 166).

In addition, Patterson (2018) presented a six-step process to organize each journey and interaction (touchpoint) from the customers’ perspective. The steps consisted investigative, interaction, education, evaluation, selection, and advocacy, relevant to the general design of customer journey maps. As the aim was to implement an interaction designer tool specifically to serve the needs of Suomen Niittysiemen Oy’s customers and potential customers, a few changes were made to support the structure and design of the interactions and journey maps.

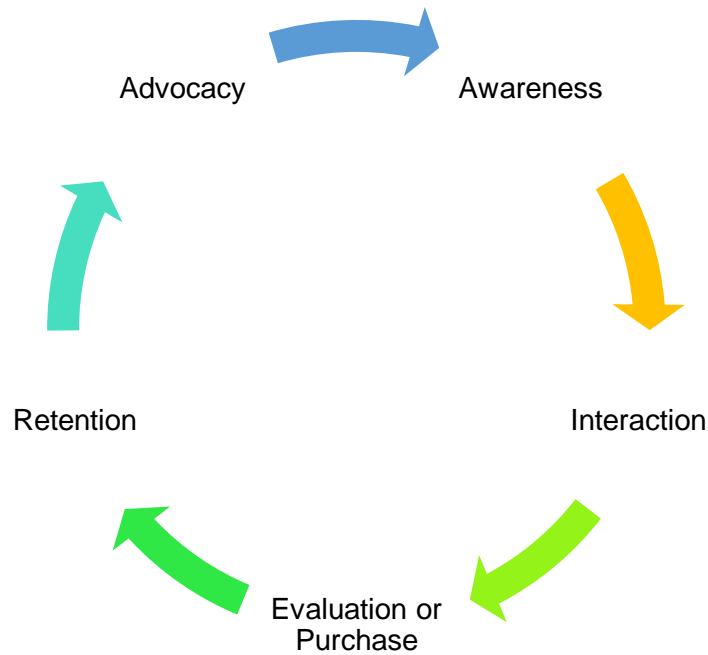


Figure 6. Five stages of a customer or user journey map (adapted from Patterson 2018)

Figure 6 illustrated an adaptation of Patterson’s (2018) six steps, modified to serve the fundamental requirements of the journey maps relevant to this thesis’ interaction designer tools. The stages were divided into two principal categories; first, the stages pertinent to the customer journey map (e-commerce platform) included the following fundamental stages: awareness, interaction, purchase, retention, and advocacy. Furthermore, the user journey maps’ (website visitors) stages consisted of awareness, interaction, evaluation, retention, advocacy. These interactions were implemented into customer journey maps in chapter 4.

3.2 Customer Journey Maps

Sarah Gibbons (2018) stated, that “A Journey map is a visualization of the process that a person goes through to accomplish a goal.” To support that definition, Adam Richardson (2010) described customer journey maps as drawings that demonstrate all possible experiences and touchpoints a person has with a company’s products or services. Additionally, Richardson (2010) highlighted that customer journeys and customer experiences commonly consist of multiple interactions or touchpoints. As Gibbons (2018) mentioned before, Reason & al. (2016, 10) confirmed the importance of visualization through maps and drawings, understanding customer expectations and experiences.

Andreas Komninou (2020) described customer journeys as narratives featuring customers and products or companies, through which it is possible to assess the level of customer engagement. To support this, Komninou (2020) argued; further that customer engagement

is an evaluation of how emotionally committed customers are with a company or product; thus, the level of commitment can be measured through customer journeys.

Moreover, Tim Tinchler (2020) suggested elements to consider while designing a customer journey map; the most relevant for this thesis included identifying customer personas, vital customer interactions, emotions, and maintaining a customer-centric viewpoint through the customer journey mapping process.

Megan Grocki (2014), an experience strategy director, drew attention to various key elements in a Customer Journey Map. Beginning with the identification of potential users or customers' personas, expectations, pains, and needs, then choosing a timeline for the customer life cycle, followed by positive and negative emotions, all interactions, and finally, the specific channel customers are interacting. To conclude, Grocki (2014) suggested that by adding a positive interaction specifically into a stage of the customer journey map known to cause customer pains, it is possible to change that pain into a positive experience.

3.3 Recapitulation of Relevant Theories

This subchapter aimed to recapitulate the preceding two chapters and their subchapters, where all relevant theories were researched and defined. The relationship of each subject was presented below, thus forming the final theoretical framework for this thesis.



Figure 7. Representing the relevant theoretical connections and relationships

Figure 7 illustrated the relevant theories and their position concerning each other, providing support to the structure of the theoretical framework. The focus of this thesis was on the outside-in or the customer perspective as discussed in chapter 2; thus, service design was illustrated on the outermost surface of figure 7, combining all relevant theories. According to an article from the Interaction Design Foundation, often while working with service design, customer experience and user experience design are included in the process. (Interaction Design Foundation 2021.) To support the framework structure further, service design is said to have a more comprehensive viewpoint than user experience or customer experience, and its' aim is to construct harmonious circumstances for great customer experiences and customer journeys (Wilshire 2018).

To contribute, Kim Salazar (2019) placed customer experiences at the relationship level of a user's experience; according to her, there were three levels a person could experience with a company. Consisting of the relationship level, referring to the customer's entire lifecycle and overall customer experience, was considered the next layer after service design. Next, the journey-level included customer or user journeys and was often considered the general focus level of user experience designers. Therefore, user experience was positioned after customer experience and customer journey map closer to the illustrations' core. Finally, to conclude was the interaction level, which consisted of all the interactions, such as the choices a customer makes to purchase from an online store or the steps a user follows to perform a specific task in a digital environment.

Reinforcing the theoretical framework, Peppers and Rogers suggested that customer experience consists of reoccurring interactions that a person has over time with a product or service across multiple channels (Peppers & Rogers 2017, 22). Additionally, Rosenzweig (2015, 335) described a user experience as every interaction a person has with a product, service, or system. A valuable source of attributes was Morvilles' seven elements (2004) which were considered while designing customer or user journey maps and implementing interaction designer tools.

Finally, as Richardson (2010) described, customer journey maps are illustrations that demonstrate possible experiences and interactions or touchpoints a person has with a company's products or services. In conclusion, Gibbons (2018) and Reason & al. (2016, 10) validated the importance of visualization through maps or illustrations while understanding customer expectations and individual experiences.

4 Implementing Interaction Design Tools by Utilizing Journey Maps

A Finnish start-up company, Giosg, provided the chosen interaction designer tool. According to their website, their interaction tool does not require coding skills and is easy to use. Additionally, the tool could be customized to improve customer experiences, optimize marketing campaigns, create quality leads, be integrated with CRM software, and even include a live chat element. (Giosg 2021a). According to the commissioning company, this tool was chosen because of excellent customer success stories, easy to use interface, and a suitable subscription price. Some impressive customer success stories included the Staples e-commerce store, which utilized the giosg interaction designer tool and assisted their customers in navigating effortlessly, thus enhancing their customer experiences and decreasing the number of customer complaints. (Giosg 2021b).

Another customer success story that motivated choosing Giosg was that of DNA, a Finnish telecommunication service provider. According to their success story published on Giosg website, 96,3% of DNAs' customers had a positive experience with the giosg tool; on top of this, even their employee satisfaction has increased due to the implementation of the Giosg service. (Giosg 2021c.)

This chapter was dedicated to designing two journey maps, incorporating them into the Giosg interaction designer tools, and implementing the designer tools to the e-commerce platform and company website.

4.1 Customer Journey Maps

Sarah Gibbons (2018) characterized user journey mapping and customer journey mapping equivalently to describe the individual's journey, both of which are commonly utilized. A distinction between the two journey maps was made. The e-commerce platform (product-based) map was referred to as the customer journey map. The company website (information-based) map was consequently specified as the user journey map.

This differentiation was reasonable, as the visitors of the e-commerce platform were primarily assumed to be potential buyers; thus, illustrating them on the customer journey map was justifiable. Considering the visitors on the company website as principal users, searching for information was well-founded and subsequently converted into customers. Thereby, company website visitors were portrayed on the user journey map.

The customer and user journey maps were illustrated, with differences in their attributes, including the specific interactions. The interactions to the customer journey map (e-commerce platform) included the following stages: awareness, interaction, purchase,

retention, and advocacy. For the user journey map (website visitors), the next steps were included: awareness, interaction, evaluation, retention, advocacy.

Both journey maps were created based on the average customer or user experience, disclosed by the commissioning company. The journey maps aimed to bring value to the most common scenarios and functions in accordance with the interaction designer tool. The complete journey maps could be found in Appendix 3 in their entirety. In subchapters 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, the journeys were presented through simplified figures and described verbally; furthermore, both journey maps included core company activities from a customer-centric viewpoint.

4.1.1 B2C E-commerce platform

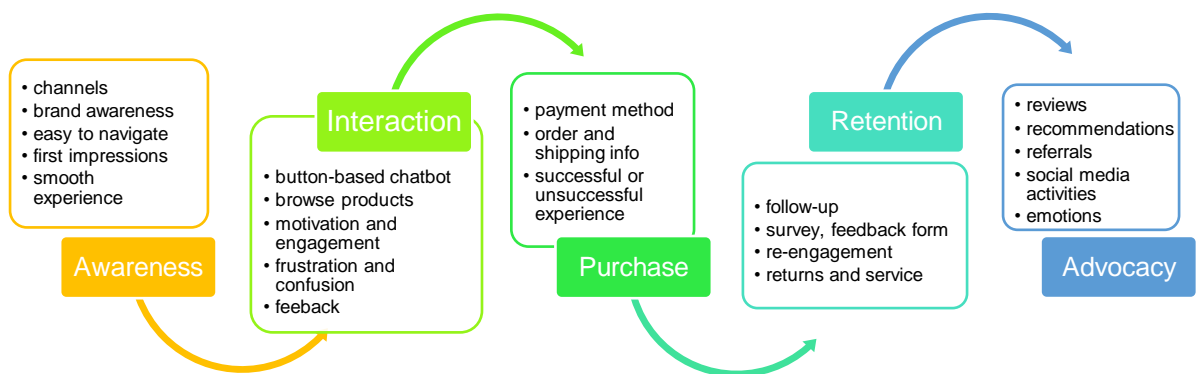


Figure 8. Simplified customer journey map for the e-commerce platform.

The journey map illustrated in figure 8 described the potential B2C customer interactions and stages along with their experience with the commissioning company's e-commerce platform. This figure was a simplified version of the customer journey map, which could be found in appendix 3.1.

Adapted originally from Patterson (2018), the first stage represented customer awareness. The awareness stage consisted of the channel's customers interact with the company, such as social media (Facebook or Instagram), direct search, TV, digital platforms, advertisements, email lists, or referrals, to mention a few. This stage was considered one of the key points when building a customer relationship since that was when first impressions were made, and the level of interest was measured. Commonly between the awareness stage and interaction stage, it became clear whether a customer possessed pre-existing knowledge or an opinion about the company or brand, called brand awareness. This could be positive or negative, depending much on the individual and their

emotions and impressions. If the potential customer decided to engage further with the company, they would enter the e-commerce platform and the interaction stage. Moreover, in this customer journey map, the critical activities of the company were included to express their balanced relationship from a customer-centric perspective.

During the interaction stage, a customer could browse product and category pages and utilize the interaction designer tool or as described in chapter 4.2, the button-based chatbot. This stage consisted of multiple interactions as a customer could move around the e-commerce platform, use the search bar, add products to the shopping cart, browse all products and categories. An array of emotions and challenges could emerge during a customer experience; thus, it is critical to be prepared for a customer to feel frustrated and contact the company. Often by the end of the interaction stage, each customer had done a review or comparison of the products to determine whether they are prepared to purchase. Additionally, the interaction designer tool or button-based chatbot provided the customer with the option to move across different channels to the company website and back. Such cross-channel movement was referred to as an omnichannel experience, which is common in modern digital services (Satell 2013). Through the interaction designer tool, omnichannel activities were enabled. Due to the scope of this report, omnichannel was not examined further.

Next was the purchase stage, where a customer ordinarily had gathered the desired products in a shopping cart and was about to make a purchase. To conclude a purchase, the preferred payment method was chosen, required shipping information filled, and an order confirmation was received. The purchase stage included all payment, shipping, and delivery-related elements. This stage was often the cause of most customer contacts as it involved personal information, money, and a third party as the payment service provider. According to the commissioning company, payments were a common topic of customer contacts and feedback, especially if the issue was in the payment service provider's system. It would be essential to strive for a smooth and effortless customer experience in the purchase stage, as the subject area is sensitive.

The fourth stage was retention which was a crucial stage for any successful business. It included all the actions that occurred after a customer had made their first purchase, thus converting from a prospect into a customer. In an article for Shopify, one of the leading e-commerce platform providers, Alex McEachern (2020) declared that it is considered a well-known fact how much more cost-effective it is to re-engage an existing customer than to attract a new one. This statement supported the retention stage illustrated in the customer journey map. The key attributes included contacting a customer through follow-up emails, newsletters, surveys, and feedback forms, personalized offers, without overlooking the return process, customer service, and any additional value to a customer.

The final stage was advocacy; thus, the aim was to convert a customer into an advocate, which could be challenging. The features that affected advocacy included referrals, which is a customer sharing a positive experience with a company to a friend or acquaintance. Additionally, a product recommendation, customer review, survey, feedback, and positive interactions with the company's social media forums. It is necessary for a customer to feel appreciated by the company to become good advocates. A customer who is willing to share their experience is precious; furthermore, by re-engaging and reactivating a customer to become a return customer, it is possible to build long-term customer relationships.

4.1.2 Company Website

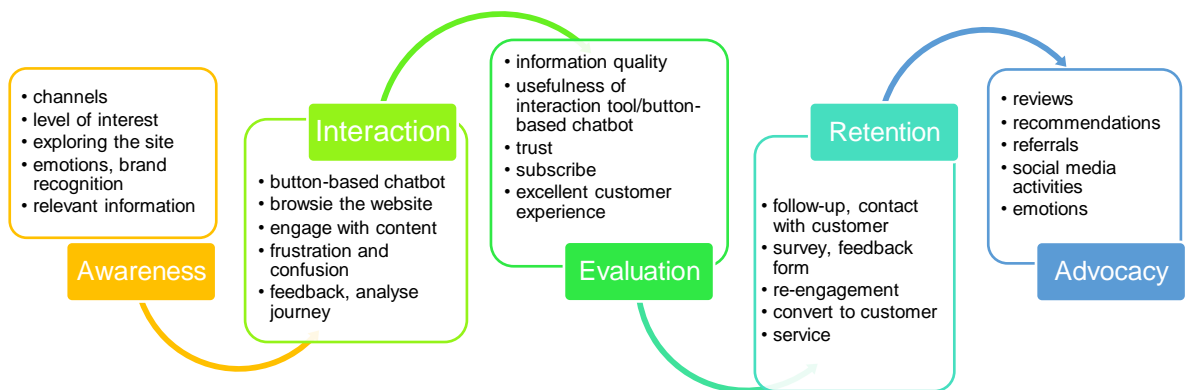


Figure 9. Simplified user journey map for the company website from a user-centric viewpoint.

The second journey map for the interaction designer tool was for the company website users. Compared to the e-commerce customer journey map, there were a few differences and focus points, as the user journey did not include a purchase experience or product search. Commonly a user on the company website is looking for information and guidance, as the result of which at the awareness stage, a key element is to provide suitable options and avoid exhausting a customer with too much information. The awareness stage consisted of the same channels as the customer journey; thus, a user experiences their first interactions with the company and can enter the company website. During this stage, a user could be convinced to keep engaging with the website by providing straightforward answers to their questions and support.

Followed by the interaction stage, where the user could browse through the website, identify relevant information, utilize the interaction tool or button-based chatbot, search for

specific themes and guides. During this stage, a user could go through various emotions, including motivation to keep exploring, frustration if answers are not found, or a technical issue arises, and an increased level of interest if the content is captivating enough. At this stage, there is an opportunity to ask for user feedback, analyze user behavior, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments to offer excellent user experiences.

The evaluation stage consisted of a user determining the eventual quality, timeliness, trustworthiness of the company, and their content. At this stage, users often decided whether they continued their experience or considered another service provider. To convince a customer to continue their session on the company website, the interaction tool or button-based chatbot could prove a valuable addition, with continuous support and available options, including the customer contact form.

The retention stage consisted mainly of the same elements as in the customer journey map, excluding the purchase, shipping, and return related referrals and reviews, which were replaced by referrals and reviews related to the user experience, content, and service quality. A critical element at this stage was the opportunity to convert users into customers by re-engaging and following up through newsletters, emails, offers, targeted ads, surveys, and feedback forms, not forgetting the importance of a return website user.

In the final advocacy stage, a user could become a powerful advocate if their experience with the company had been successful. They would feel appreciated; their opinions and feedback are valued. This stage could be compared to the advocacy stage in the customer journey map, excluding matters related to the purchase transactions. This stage included user reviews, word-of-mouth referrals, and recommendations on digital platforms, to name a few.

4.2 Implementing the Interaction Designer Tools

According to the service provider, Giosg, after the interactions have been implemented and the journey maps integrated into the interaction designer tool, the final published end-product can be referred to as a button-based chatbot. (Giosg 2021d.) According to the information received from the commissioning company (Schauman 13 April 2021), the primary interaction designer tools were created to include the most common interactions and actions of the website users and e-commerce platform customers, bearing in mind their challenges.

Due to the factors limiting the scope of this work, the primary e-commerce platform interactions focused on enhancing customer experiences by assisting a customer to discover the correct products, necessary information, and the ability to contact the commissioning company. For the company website, the focus of the primary interactions

was on providing an excellent experience for the user, furthermore, to increase engagement, supply users with valuable information and enable simple means to contact the commissioning company.

Based on their agreement, Suomen Niittysiemen Oy could design and publish interactions with the Giosg interaction designer tool. With their current subscription, Suomen Niittysiemen Oy could have up to five different published interactions simultaneously across various channels. A single interaction could be published on multiple channels; for instance, a pop-up ad or newsletter subscription being on the e-commerce platform and the company website, would be considered one interaction according to the subscription agreement. First impressions of the Giosg interface were highly encouraging.

The back office for the Giosg interaction designer tool was relatively effortless to navigate and provided an assortment of useful templates for the most common designs. The design and user interface were straightforward; additionally, there was a live chat function that enabled direct contact with the service provider during regular business hours. Furthermore, the back office provided an array of guides, examples, and instructions, which delivered enough information for the interaction designer tools development process.

The theme, including colors and fonts, was chosen to begin work with the interaction tool, followed by importing a gardener figure, provided by Suomen Niittysiemen Oy. This figure had been designed explicitly for the commissioning company by a graphic designer. This gardener figure would act as a “persona” or guide on both digital platforms.

Next, the customer journey map and information of the most common customer actions, interactions, and challenges were combined to form the first series of interactions on the e-commerce platform. This combination was done by carefully assessing the information received from the commissioning company, relevant theories, customer journey maps, and information available through the Giosg back office. As illustrated below, in figure 10, each interaction element was named, the relevant text was added, then placed carefully on the destination page, styled and animated. Finally, each of the elements was assigned one or more actions depending on the purpose. These actions were essentially the rules which each element followed when being clicked by a user or customer. Each frame or series of features, consisting of one to four options, had a return button that enabled the customer or user to move back to the previous frame, all the way to the first suggestions.

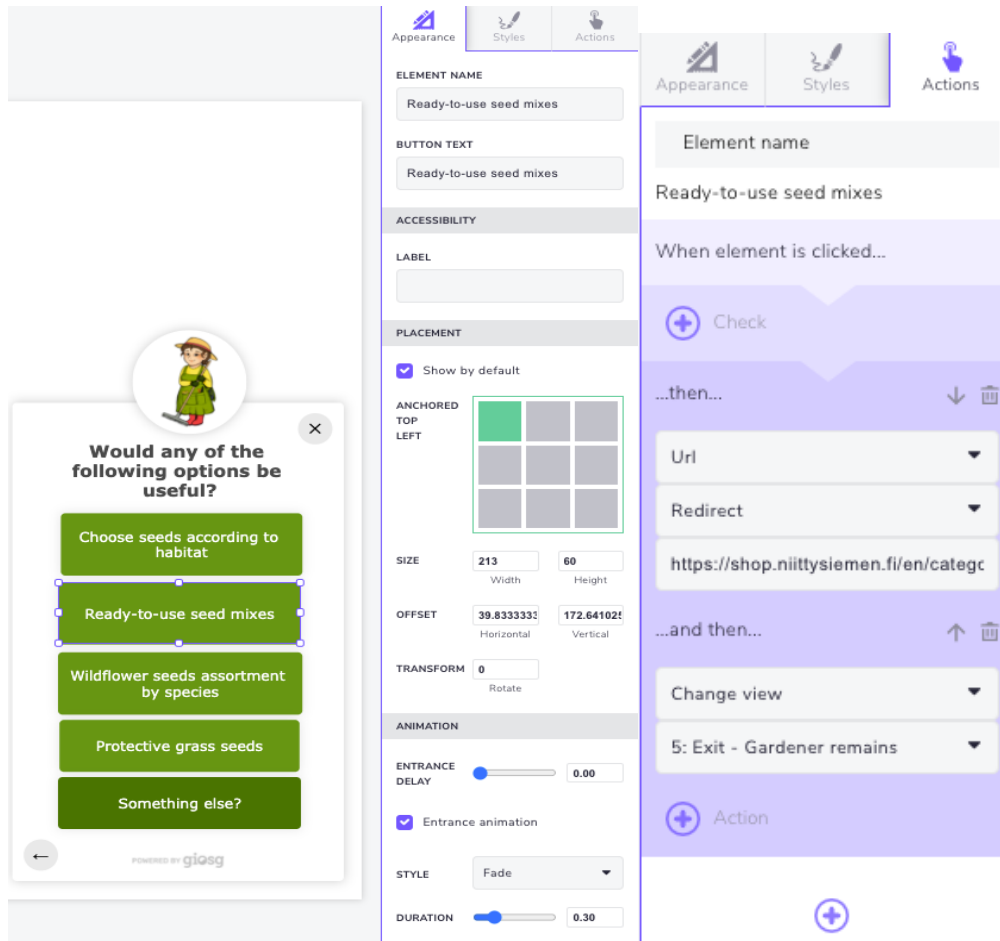


Figure 10. Inside the interaction element

Figure 10 illustrated the appearance and actions within each interaction, while the styles section was not included as the options included primary font type, size, and color options. As displayed in the figure above, each implemented interaction in the e-commerce platform and company website consisted of similarly constructed attributes and elements. Creating the interactions was surprisingly straightforward once the structure and potential became apparent.

The final, published interaction tools or button-based chatbots could be found under Appendix 4, beginning with the e-commerce platform interactions, followed by the company website interactions. The interactions were presented as they are seen by a user or a customer. Additionally, considering the interaction designer tools and the commissioning company's limited knowledge on their functionality, a basic-level online survey was done to obtain feedback from the novice customers and users.

5 Enhancing the Customer Experience

During this chapter, the online survey questions were introduced briefly while having an emphasis on the basic level of the survey. Respondents were presented, the method of survey response collection method was explained, and the chosen timeframe for conducting the survey was mentioned. No other theoretical reasoning or techniques were implied since the simple survey aimed to provide tentative feedback and experiences from visitors during the first pilot period.

A single survey was made to meet the requirements of both digital environments. The surveys' goal was to provide the commissioning company with feedback and improvement suggestions from first experiences with the Giosg powered tools and reveal the possibilities provided by the interaction design tool to customer experience enhancement. User experiences were considered necessary, yet as Suomen Niittysiemen Oy is a profitable business, the aim was to convert users into customers; hence, this thesis emphasis on customer experience enhancement.

The survey response collection was conducted through the Survey Monkey online survey tool on account of the user-friendliness of the tool and the commissioning company's familiarity with it. The schedule for the survey was determined in consultation with the commissioning company to be from March 25th to April 22nd, 2021. The survey response timeline was somewhat prolonged from the original idea of two weeks due to the seasonal nature of the wildflower seed industry.

The eight survey questions were formed to reflect the core functionalities of the interaction tools or button-based chatbots. According to an article by Survey Monkey (2021), to successfully create a survey, most of the questions should be closed-ended as open-ended questions are known to be more time-consuming to answer. Additionally, the article suggested offering enough answer options, avoiding repetitive questions, leaving answering as an option instead of mandatory, and trying to answer the questions before publishing the survey. The survey included the NPS or Net-Promoter-Score and an open-ended feedback question for improvement suggestions. NPS is a well-known measurement for customer experience levels. It can be used to forecast how likely a user or customer is to recommend a product, service, or company to others (Survey Monkey 2021).

The survey respondents were random customers and users who utilized the interaction tool for more than 15 seconds during the selected timeframe. Following that, the survey was introduced to the visitor as a small pop-up window through which the respondents were redirected to the online survey.

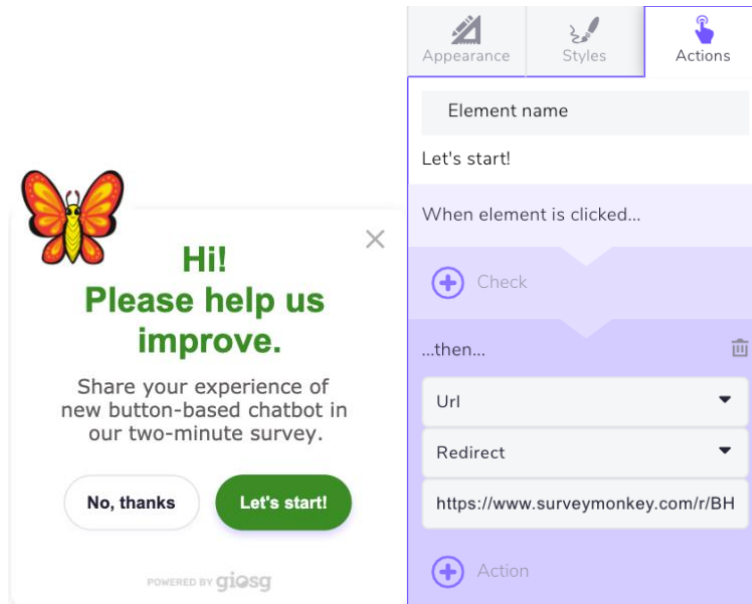


Figure 11. Survey pop-up window

Figure 11 illustrated the interactions within the pop-up window, from which the respondents either chose to answer the two-minute survey and clicked the “Let’s start!” button, thus redirecting them to the online survey or selected the “No, thanks” button to close the pop-up window and restore the prior view.

The response goal was set to a minimum of 12 responses regarding both; the e-commerce platform and company website button-based chatbots; fortunately, 31 survey responses were gathered. The question-specific answer rates were presented in the following subchapters, along with a simple analysis of the results. The online survey results are illustrated as pie charts, based on the data received from the Survey Monkey tool. Exceptionally, the individual answers to the open-ended question could be found under Appendix 5, although referred to in subchapter 5.5 to extract improvement suggestions from the given feedback.

5.1 First Reaction, Quality and Necessity

In the first subchapter, the first three questions were illustrated, the results were presented and analyzed shortly.

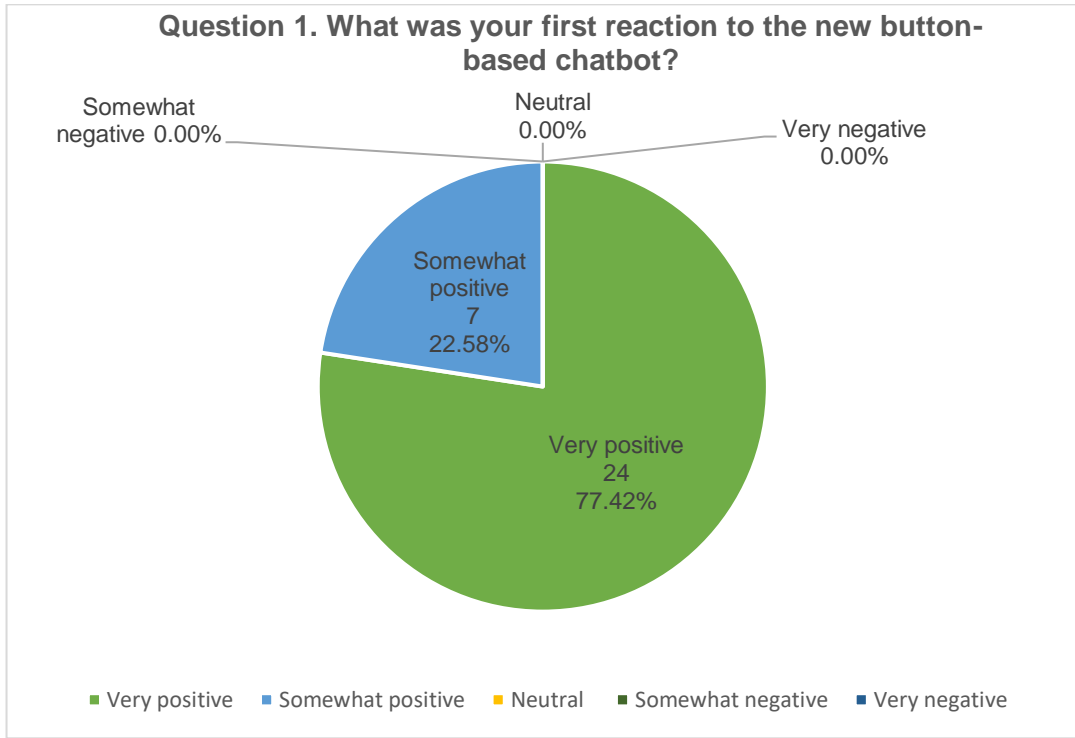


Figure 12. Question 1, what was your first reaction to the new button-based chatbot?

As figure 12 illustrated, all thirty-one respondents answered the first question, which referred to the respondents' first impression of the new tool. Seven respondents considered the button-based chatbot as somewhat positive as the clear majority, with twenty-four respondents considered the chatbot as very positive, the highest possible rating. These results indicated a positive first impression from all respondents, as no neutral or negative responses were recorded.

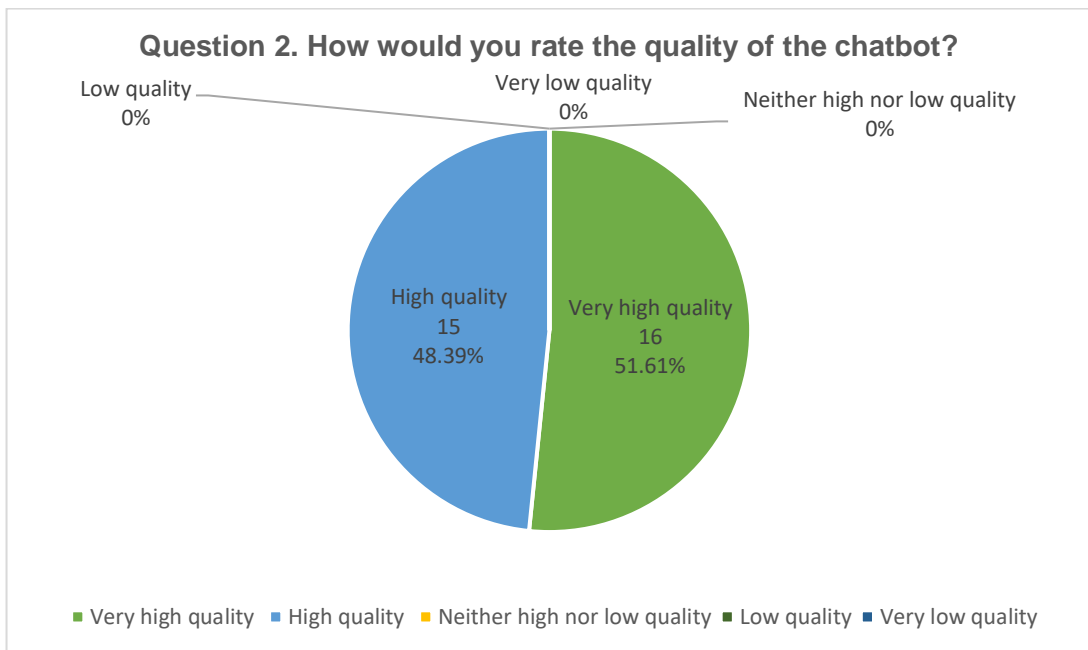


Figure 13. Question 2, how would you rate the quality of the chatbot?

Illustrated in figure 13, the second question referred to the respondents' view of the quality of the chatbot. The results were encouraging, as over 50% of the thirty-one respondents chose the highest possible rating, conceived the chatbot of very high quality. The remaining 48,39% rated the chatbot as high quality. This result was positive, yet there were attributes that could be enhanced to receive a higher evaluation. Hopefully, these attributes were communicated in the final open-ended feedback question.

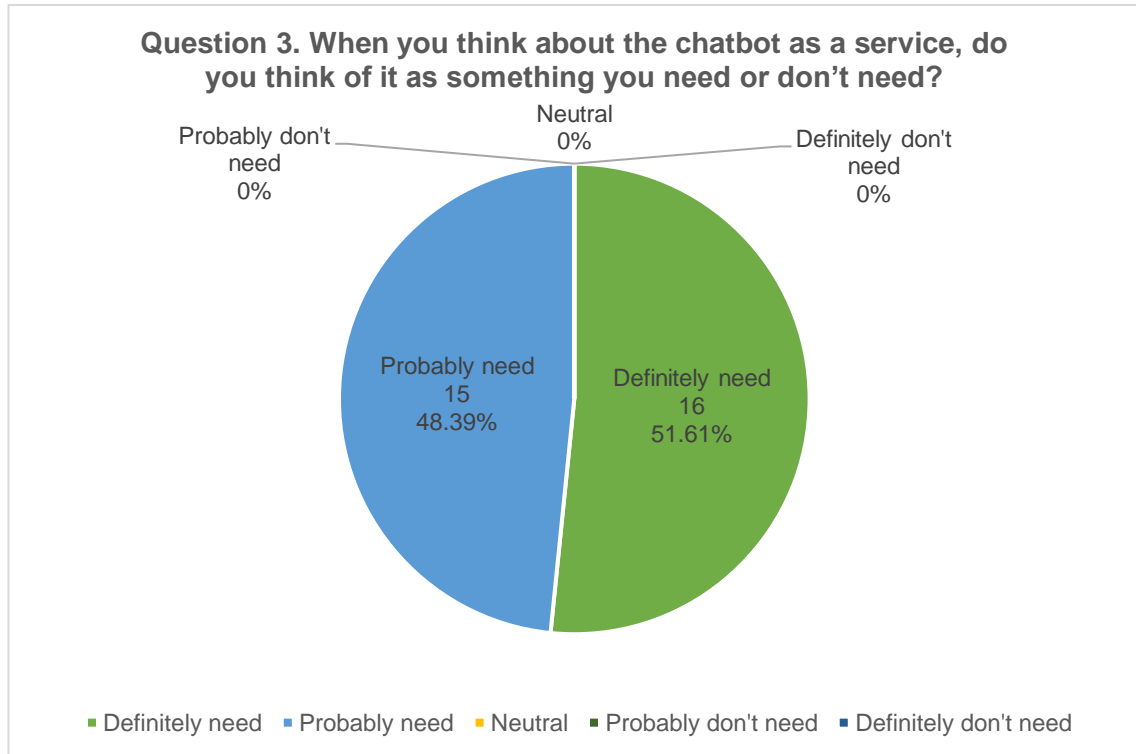


Figure 14. Question 3, when you think about the chatbot as a service, do you think of it as something you need or don't need?

The third question, illustrated in figure 14, described the fundamental need for the chatbot, disclosing the necessity for the commissioning company to continue utilizing the Giosg tool. According to thirty-one responses, the tool was needed; similarly, in this question as to the previous, the highest answer option received 51,61%, and the second-highest rating received 48,39% of the responses. The answer rates indicated room for improvement regardless of the optimistic results.

5.2 Device and Usability

This subchapter presented the fourth and fifth questions and answers, including fundamental analysis of the responses.

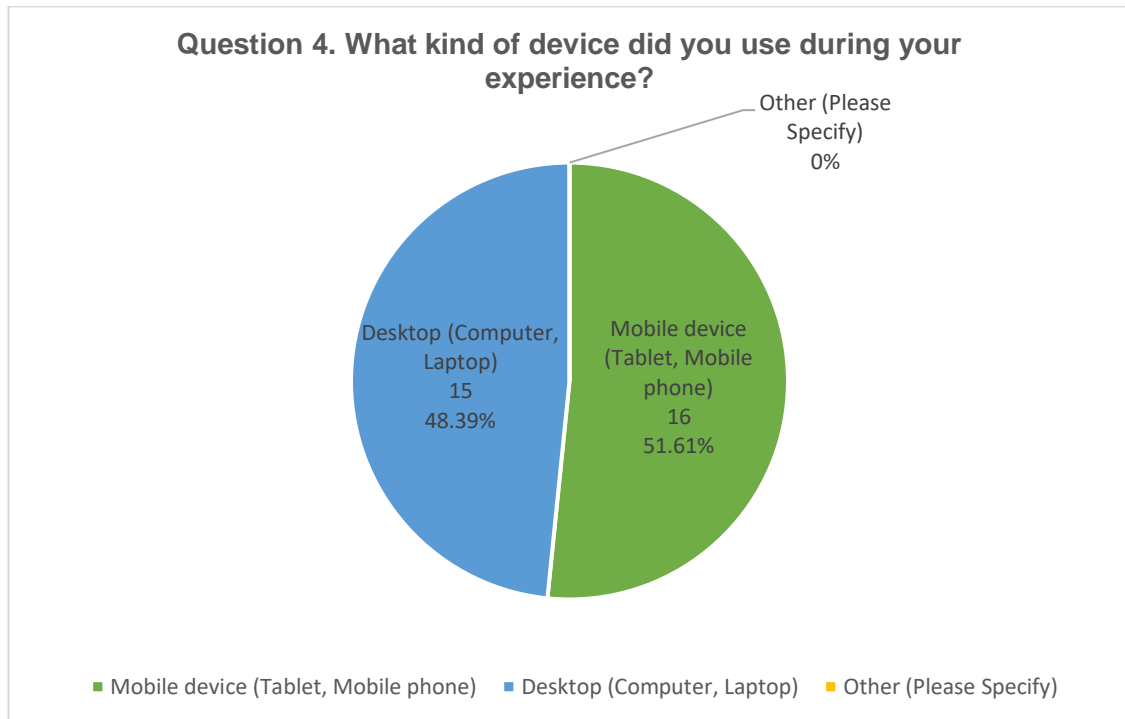


Figure 15. Question 4, What kind of device did you use during your experience?

Figure 15 presented a relevant question regarding the future of interaction design for the commissioning company. As the Giosg interface provided an array of optimization options, the device and digital environment chosen by the user or customer became more relevant. According to the results, nearly half of the respondents used a desktop computer or laptop, and a little over 51% used a mobile device such as a tablet or mobile phone. Whether the future is more mobile device orientated or not, currently, there is no apparent reason to optimize desktop or mobile device interactions specifically.

The following question presented below in figure 16 was focused on the usability of the button-based chatbot, which provided critical feedback on the customer journeys, interactions, and overall experience with the button-based chatbots. According to the answers, 38,71% of the respondents found what they were looking for extremely easily, whereas the choice of 58,06% was that they found what they were looking for very easily. One response, covering 3,23% of the overall answer rate, stated that they found what they were looking for somewhat easily.

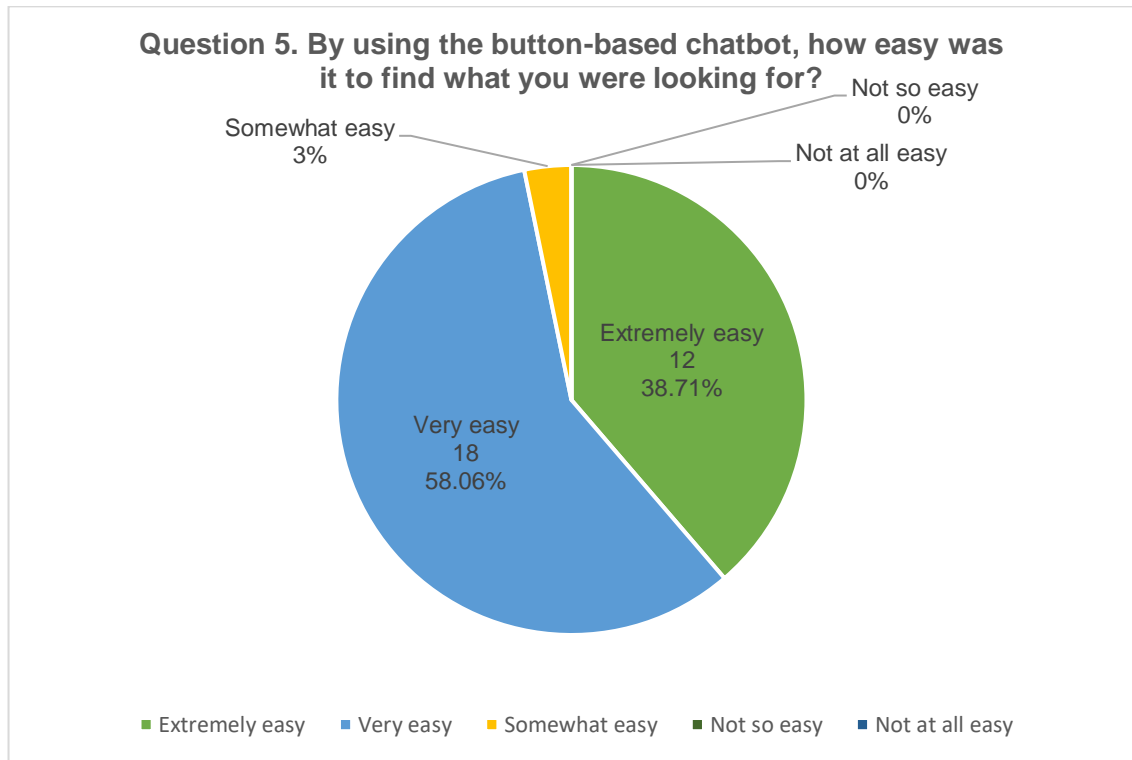


Figure 16. Question 5, by using the button-based chatbot, how easy was it to find what you were looking for?

To conclude the analysis regarding question five, illustrated in figure 16, there were elements and attributes in the functionality, design and overall experience with the button-based chatbot that had to be considered high-priority feedback regarding the interaction designs, journey maps, and experience. Further recommendations and suggestions are presented in chapter 6.

5.3 NPS score

The sixth question was related to the Net-Promoter-Score or NPS, which according to Survey Monkey (2021), could be used to measure, on a scale of zero to ten, how likely a user or customer would recommend a service, product, or company to someone. A general classification was made between the scores, where the score between 0-6 was considered detractors, 7-8 as passives, and 9-10 as promoters, which were included in figure 17 below. According to their website, Survey Monkey (2021) disclosed that the NPS score of a company could vary between -100 and +100, furthermore presented a breakdown of the mathematical calculation for an NPS score. However, for this survey, the Survey Monkey tool automatically made the calculation.

	ANSWERS
DETRACTORS (SCORE 0-6)	0
PASSIVES (SCORE 7-8)	10
PROMOTERS (SCORE 9-10)	21
NET PROMOTER SCORE (NPS SCALE FROM -100 TO +100)	+68

Figure 17. Question 6, how likely is it that you would recommend our new chatbot to a friend or colleague?

In an article by Jon Gitlin, based on Survey Monkey's (Gitlin 2021), global benchmark data, including over 150 000 businesses globally, had an NPS score of +32. The survey result of + 68 could be considered as a very positive indicator. Ten of the respondents gave a passive number, and twenty-one were already promoters. As this was an initial survey and the number of respondents was not high, it would be helpful to redo the NPS query in the future.

5.4 E-commerce Platform or Website visitor

The next question involved the digital environment from which the respondent originated.

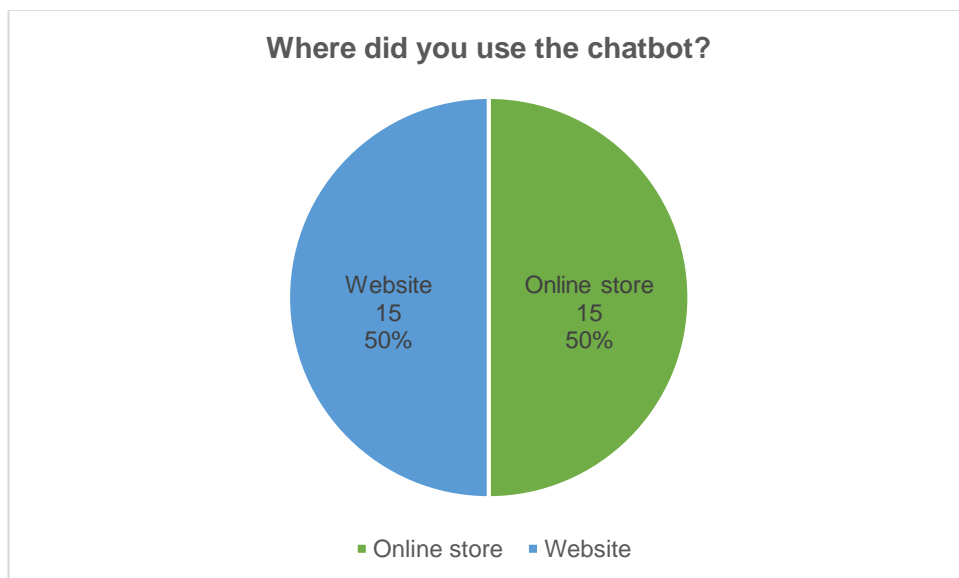


Figure 18. Question 7, where did you use the chatbot?

As previously mentioned in chapter 5, the goal was to gather a minimum of 12 responses from each channel; those expectations were exceeded as the final number of respondents was 31. Concerning this specific question, one respondent had skipped this question, providing an even 50/50 result. The result was evident, as 15 respondents based their

answers on experiences from the chatbot on the e-commerce platform and the remaining 15 based their answers on experiences with the chatbot on the company website.

5.5 Open Feedback and Suggestions for Improvement

The final open-ended question of the online survey was: “In your own words, what are the things you would like us to improve in the chatbot?” From the 31 respondents, 28 answered, which was expected as open-ended questions often receive lower response rates (Survey Monkey 2021). All the answers were inspected, and their contents were assessed. To begin with, there were multiple answers with positive feedback of the interaction elements, how the chatbot was easy to use and navigate, such as choosing the seed mix based on habitat, the overall excellent design, and a few praises on the gardener figure.

All the individual answers could be found in attachment 5; this subchapter merely presented the combination of the most relevant answers, with suggestions for improvement. From the answers, including relevant feedback, four suggestions were made. The first suggestion consisted of six individual responses: the chatbot offering more product information and more options for the user or customer. Additionally, an excellent feature was suggested to include an opportunity to determine the suitable seed varieties and mixtures according to a geographical location.

The second suggestion was mentioned three times by the respondents, to add a live chat feature for visitors to contact the company directly. Furthermore, an excellent piece of advice was to add the estimated response time to the contact form, thus conveying how fast they can expect an answer from the company.

Finally, this suggestion was made by two different individuals and was known to be possible to create through the Giosg interface. Both respondents requested a step-by-step guide with pictures or video showing the actual sowing of seeds. This idea would most likely add a considerable value to the customer and user experience.

6 Discussion

The final chapter comprised the thesis outcomes, recommendations, and suggestions to the commissioning company regarding future action. Additionally, project management methods and reflections of the thesis process were presented, including a self-evaluation.

6.1 Key outcomes

The outcomes of this thesis included the objective, enhancing customer experiences by implementing an interaction designer tool to the company website and e-commerce platform. Furthermore, various tasks were successfully carried out, including preparing a theoretical framework, incorporating all relevant theories into a functional and supportive structure for the entire process. The theoretical framework was constructed of five main concepts: service design, customer experience, user experience, customer journey maps and interaction design. The framework performed well in practical application and provided support to the implementation.

Additionally, two journey maps were designed, a customer journey map (e-commerce platform) and a user journey map (company website), which fulfilled their purpose when combined with the interaction elements created in the Giosg back-office tool.

The interaction elements were more time-consuming to create than initially expected, however, were completed on time for the implementation of the interaction designer tools and published the button-based chatbots. The launch of the final products was as planned, and the chatbots were live on the digital platforms on March 7th 2021. During the first two weeks, minor adjustments and modifications were made to streamline the journeys and overall experiences.

For the commissioning company to receive feedback and initial customer and user responses regarding the Giosg interaction designer tools new button-based chatbots; a basic online survey was designed and conducted through the Survey Monkey tool and chatbots. The online survey was considered a supplementary part and a source for initial experiences and feedback. The survey was successful, gathering 31 responses and exceeding expectations by delivering high-quality suggestions for improvement, not to underestimate the positive feedback received from customers and users.

This thesis's main objective and goal were considered to have been a success, as the implementation process of the interaction tools was smooth, and the online survey results indicated highly positive customer and user experiences.

6.2 Recommendations and Suggestions for the Future

As this thesis was based on the acute need by the commissioning company with an emphasis on the customer-centric perspective, a recommendation for Suomen Niittysiemen Oy would be to reflect on the theoretical findings, designs, functionalities, and interactions of this report from a company-centric viewpoint and again through a customer-centric view. This kind of mirroring and change of perspectives commonly comes with an array of fresh ideas, mainly as every person experience and interprets in their way.

Based on the successful result of this thesis objective and goal, the commissioning company would benefit from considering the improvement suggestions based on the online survey results. The suggestions included the chatbot offering more product information and options, geographical locations being added into the options to determine the suitable seed varieties and mixtures. Additionally, implementing a live chat feature or messenger to communicate with customers faster, and in the meanwhile adding an estimated response time to the contact form. Finally, create a step-by-step guide with pictures or videos demonstrating the actual sowing of seeds. Based on the level of workload these suggestions include, they could be considered moderately or easily implementable. The responses from the online survey were distributed evenly on both digital platforms and could be regarded as applicable to both channels.

Further recommendations for Suomen Niittysiemen Oy included designing the button-based chatbots further and creating more customer and user journey maps to understand all website visitors and e-commerce prospects profoundly. A method used widely with customer journey mapping was workshopping; this action is a team effort and requires some preparation.

Some commonly used methods to gather more customer and user feedback consist of customer feedback forms, surveys, and interviews, especially before the launch to more Nordic markets; it would be beneficial for the company to structure multiple surveys and feedback query to receive more timely reflections and feedback from the customers and users. Furthermore, applying the NPS score or similar one-window pop-up question through the Giosg interface could prove helpful in long-term tracking.

An awe-inspiring article emerged during the literature research, consisting of a list with twenty customer experience metrics. A vital suggestion for Suomen Niittysiemen Oy would be to consider measuring, following and analyzing the following KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) and metrics: Customer Retention, which measures the number of customers returning, CES (Customer Effort Score), which indicates the amount of effort a customer has to make during their interaction with a company, Churn rate, which refers to

the number of customers who have not continued their interaction or purchase during a specific timeframe. Finally, the Cart abandonment rate refers to the e-commerce platform visitors who have added products to their cart but not finished the purchase. Naturally, plenty more relevant metrics exist; these metrics were merely suggestions. (Morgan 2019.)

To conclude the recommendations and suggestions, as Wilshere (2018) indicated in his article for Designlab, the best possible customer experience is done through identifying customer needs, goals, possible pains, challenges, and most importantly, customer or user journeys.

6.3 Evaluation

The result of this thesis was the acceptance and acknowledgement of the commissioning company. The final products were successfully implemented, are currently active and functional; furthermore, the success of this work was proven through the online survey results.

From the commissioning company viewpoint, the most relevant stages of the process were delivered on time, including improvements and modifications to the customer journey maps, interaction designer tool and button-based chatbots. From the project manager's perspective, the schedule presented some issues, especially the coordination of daily work routines and the advancement of the thesis. Furthermore, the external challenges brought by COVID-19 and the constantly changing restrictions and health concerns affected the project manager's ability to follow the original schedule presented in the Gantt chart, as found in attachment 2. Fortunately, soon after the schedule challenged had emerged, the project manager was able to formulate a new schedule and agree upon the delivery and completion with the thesis advisor and commissioning company.

Upon accepting and acknowledging this report, the commissioning company CEO concluded the quality and usefulness of the end products and theoretical findings at an excellent, professional level.

6.4 Reflection on Learning

To begin with, the level of support and constant communication from the commissioning company was exceptional throughout the process. As the commissioning company was simultaneously the employer of the project manager, the direct impact of the usefulness and necessity of the end-product was emphasized. Most importantly, the commissioning company was satisfied with the results and findings of the thesis.

The most challenging part of the process was incorporating the thesis process into the work calendar. There were times when motivation was scarce, but thankfully, especially during busy times, when the thesis work seemed to be at a standstill, the support received from the commissioning company was indispensable. There was always a moment to discuss the project status, emotions, and frustrations, often concluded with newfound solutions and energy.

Most of the challenges with time management and motivation included demarcating the thesis scope as many vital concepts could have been researched further. Additionally, it should be noted, that the concurrent COVID-19 situation did not ease the project manager's stress levels during this project.

During the project, plenty new details and ways of working were learned. Especially for future projects, it would be essential to leave flexibility in the schedule, pay attention to external influences, remember to take a step back, and look at the project's content, purpose, and goal more often. This project was one of the most important to date, and its importance concerning the project manager's work in marketing and product development is of the utmost importance. This report could be of service to anyone interested in developing excellent customer experiences, specifically in the digital environment.

The most memorable moments in the thesis process were researching relevant literature and absorbing new information, the journey mapping phase, and creating the interactions. This process helped the project manager find a new, more evolved self, as relentlessness was strongly present during the final weeks of the writing process. Overall, the project was successful, and the self-confidence of the project manager undoubtedly increased during the process. By completing this thesis, all the new doctrine could positively impact future academic and professional endeavours.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Thesis timeline as a Gantt chart, preliminary

TASK NAME	START DATE	DUE DATE	DURATION DAYS	DESCRIPTION	MILESTONE	
Task 1	3.1.2020	14.1.2020	11	Read relevant literature and prepare the theoretical framework	Phase 1	
Subtask 1.1	15.1.2020	23.1.2020	8	Finalize theoretical framework chapter and figures	Phase 1	
Subtask 1.2	23.1.2020	31.1.2020	8	Link between the Interaction Designer tool and Customer Experience	Phase 1	Thesis advising 1
Subtask 1.3	1.2.2020	7.2.2020	6	SWOT & SMART chart	Phase 1	
Subtask 1.4	7.2.2020	9.2.2020	2	Review Phase 1	Phase 1	
Task 2	10.2.2020	17.2.2020	7	Design two different customer journey maps, one information based, the other product based	Phase 2	Thesis advising 2
Subtask 2.2	17.2.2020	22.2.2020	5	Customer Journey map theory and application	Phase 2	Methods workshop 1
Subtask 2.3	23.2.2020	25.2.2020	2	B2C customer journey implementation	Phase 2	
Subtask 2.4	26.2.2020	28.2.2020	2	Company website customer journey implementation	Phase 2	
Subtask 2.5	28.2.2020	3.3.2020	4	Review Phase 2, test interaction designer tool usability and analytics	Phase 2	Thesis advising 2
Task 3	4.3.2020	7.3.2020	3	Launch the interaction designer tool, pilot the service	Phase 3	Methods workshop 2
Subtask 3.1	7.3.2020	11.3.2020	4	Product details "breakdown" structure	Phase 3	
Subtask 3.2	11.3.2020	19.3.2020	8	Analysing customer journeys and making necessary modifications, justifying	Phase 3	
Subtask 3.3	19.3.2020	24.3.2020	5	Usability and review of phase 3	Phase 3	
Task 4	25.3.2020	31.3.2020	6	Read relevant literature and design two quantitative surveys for B2C e-commerce customers and company website visitors	Phase 4	
Subtask 4.1	1.4.2020	14.4.2020	13	Conduct the customer surveys, gather data from KPIs, website and e-commerce analytics	Phase 4	
Subtask 4.2	5.4.2020	10.4.2020	5	Gather and organize survey results	Phase 4	Thesis advising 3
Task 5	10.4.2020	13.4.2020	3	Measure customer experiences	Phase 5	
Subtask 5.1	13.3.2020	16.4.2020	2	Analyse survey results	Phase 5	
Subtask 5.2	16.4.2020	18.4.2020	2	Customer Experience metrics, success, conclusions from results	Phase 5	
Subtask 5.3	17.4.2020	19.4.2020	6	Establish development needs based on customer opinions and behaviour	Phase 5	
Task 6	19.4.2020	27.4.2020	8	Evaluate project management and project outcomes	Phase 6	
Subtask 6.1	27.4.2020	30.4.2020	3	Self-assessment	Phase 6	

Appendix 2. Project Management Methods and Thesis Structure

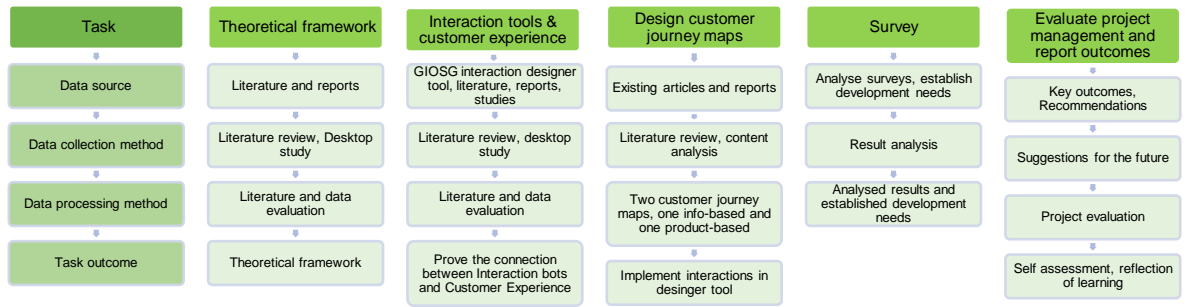


Figure 19. Project management methods

This figure presents the specific stages of each task and chosen data collection method.

Appendix 3. Customer Journey Map and User Journey Map

The table 3 below illustrates the customer journey map, including the main interactions on the e-commerce platform.



E-commerce Platform Customer Journey Map Primary illustration model

This table illustrates the probable customer journey map for the e-commerce platform. This map includes both customer and company activities, from a customer-centric viewpoint.

	AWARENESS	INTERACTION	PURCHASE	RETENTION	ADVOCACY
ACTIONS	Channels, a customer can enter through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV, radio or newspaper • Direct • Social media • Advertisement • Referral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browse and compare products • Use the interaction tool • Browse categories and active promotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose payment method • Fill information to shipping details • Registration or subscription 	Contact customers with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email newsletter and offers • Provide additional value • Customer surveys and feedback forms • Returns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product recommendations • Reviews and shares on social media • Fill customer survey or feedback form • Use discount code from newsletter
INTERACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search engine • Ads • Blog • Banner • Direct search • Email list • Social media pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landing page • Choose a language • Interaction tool • E-commerce website • Search bar • Product page • Category page • Shopping cart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment page • Card acceptance • Thank you page • Subscribe to newsletter • Order confirmation • Shipping information • Delivery notice • Receive order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landing page • Survey • Feedback form • Terms & Conditions • Return information • Pack product • Return confirmation • Receive refund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer reviews and referral pages • Social media • Landing page • Shopping cart • Feedback form • Survey
EMOTIONS & CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of search results • Level of interest to examine the product selection • Brand awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation to explore • Frustration and confusion • High-level interest and engagement • Neutral attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritation, confusion (ex. issue with the checkout page) • Delight and joy • Successful or unsuccessful experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissatisfaction (no follow-up after product delivery) • Satisfaction due to quality experience and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel appreciated • High-level, positive experience • Dissatisfaction (ex. no follow-up after delivery notice)
OPPORTUNITIES & SOLUTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with the customer through the interaction tool, to provide a smooth experience, avoid customer departure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustments based on analytics and customer feedback. • Identify challenges, create value to customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fix the checkout options, so that the payment experience works harmoniously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain customers • Re-engagement • Get feedback, modify customer journeys and interactions accordingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and gather feedback • Reach out to customers through targeted sendouts

Table 3. E-commerce Platform Customer Journey Map, primary illustration model

The table 4 below illustrates the user journey map, including the main interactions on the company website.



Company Website User Journey Map
Primary illustration model

This table illustrates the probable user journey map for the company website. This map includes both user and company activities, from a user-centric viewpoint.

	AWARENESS	INTERACTION	EVALUATION	RETENTION	ADVOCACY
ACTIONS	Channels, a user can enter through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV, radio or newspaper • Direct • Social media • Advertisement • Referral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browse through information • Find what is most relevant • Use the interaction tool (button-based chatbot) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine quality of information • Usefulness • Timeliness • Registration or subscription 	Contact subscribed users: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email newsletter and e-commerce offers • Relevant information to add value • Surveys and feedback forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website recommendations • Reviews and shares on social media • Fill survey or feedback form • Use discount code from newsletter
INTERACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search engine • Ads • Blog • Banner • Direct search • Email list • Social media pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landing page • Interaction tool/button-based bot • Sowing instructions • Search bar • Habitats • Seed varieties • Blog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog posts • Usefulness of the interaction tool/button-based chatbot • Browse across site • Subscribe to newsletter • Contact form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landing page • Survey & feedback form • E-commerce • Information • Social Media • Ads and email • Browsing on site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User reviews and referral pages • Social media • Landing page • Feedback form • Survey • Return to site or e-commerce
EMOTIONS & CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of search results • Level of interest to explore • Brand recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation to explore • Frustration and confusion • High-level interest and engagement • Neutral attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information overload, confusion • Joy, trustworthy source of information • Happiness, sadness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissatisfaction (no follow-up after visit delivery or too much contact) • Satisfaction due to quality experience and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel appreciated • High-level, positive experience • Dissatisfaction (ex. no engagement with user)
OPPORTUNITIES & SOLUTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer relevant information and assistance • easy first experience • avoid exhausting the user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User feedback, follow analytics, what is engaging? • Identify challenges and evaluate the user journey & interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to provide an excellent user experience • Analyse user behaviour and react to findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert to customers • Re-engagement • Get feedback, modify user journeys and interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and gather feedback • Reach out through targeted sendouts and reminders

Table 4. Company Website User Journey Map, primary illustration model

Appendix 4. Implementing interactions

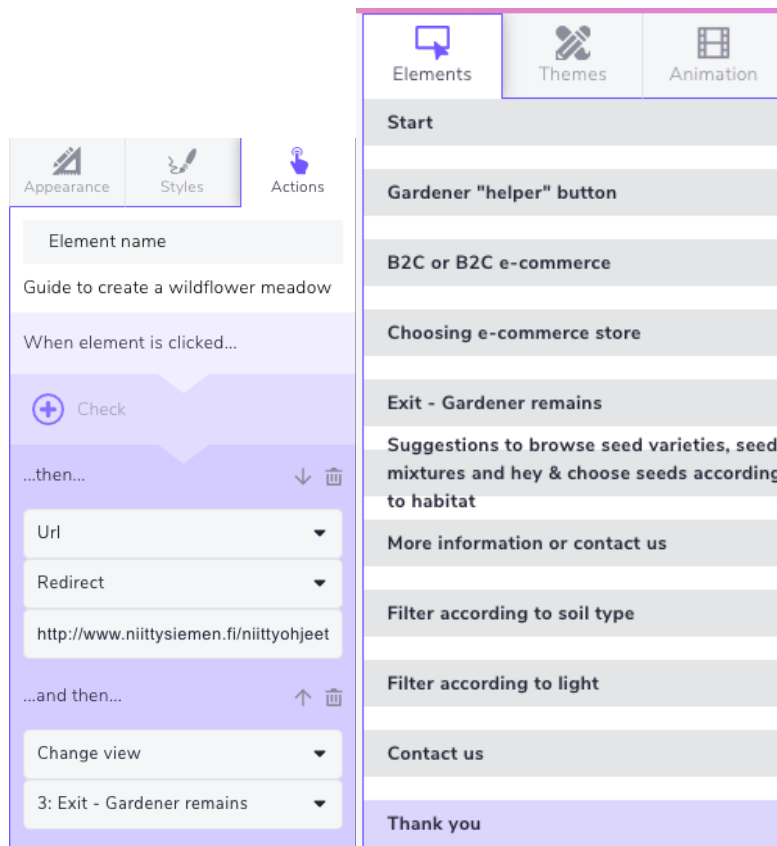


Figure 20. Inside an interaction, design element appearance and actions

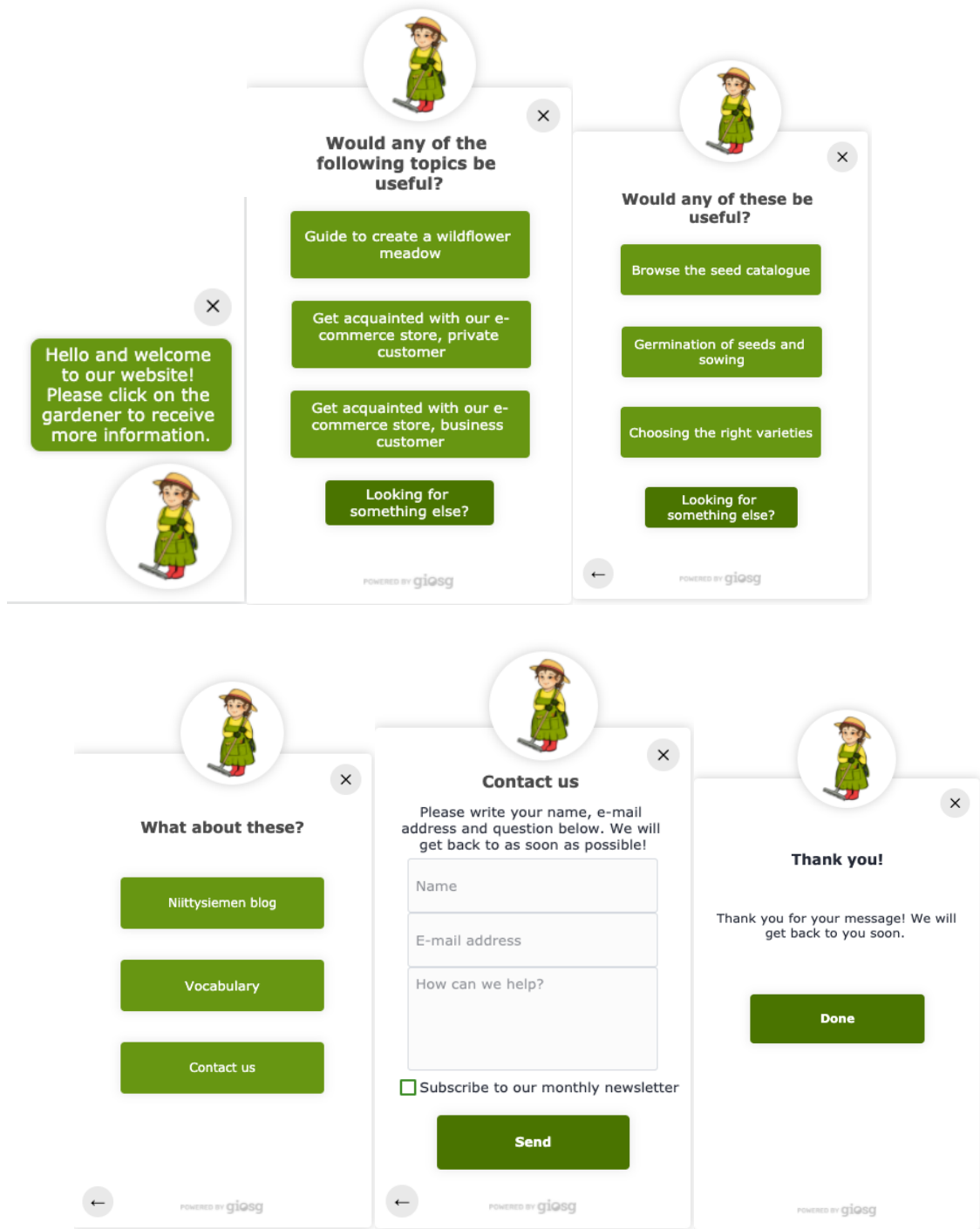


Figure 21. User Journey interaction elements (button-based chatbot) on the company website

In figures 21 and 22, each element consists of its unique design, attributes and most importantly, actions, meaning what happens after an element is clicked on.

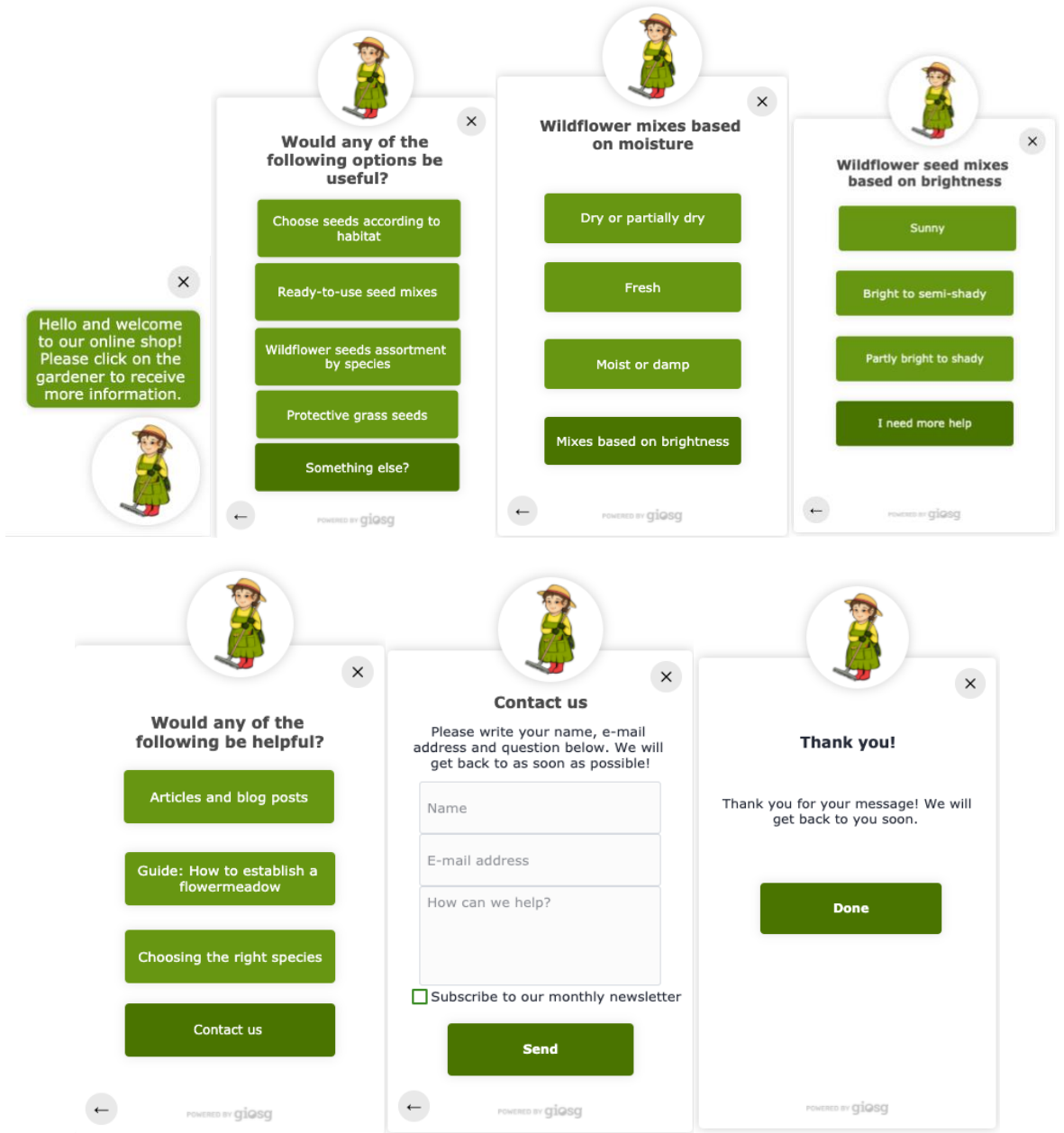


Figure 22. Customer journey interaction elements (button-based chatbot) on e-commerce platform

Appendix 5. Online Survey

Question 8. In your own words, what are the things you would like us to improve in the chatbot?

Answered: 28 Skipped:3

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The chat bot was nicely designed, no improvements come to mind.	4/22/2021 10:37
2	I really liked it, but I was thinking if you could add some more features, like more detailed options and info on the products?	4/22/2021 10:32
3	Nothing major to improve.	4/22/2021 10:19
4	I would make it more interactive, maybe ask some geographical questions to determine the area where you're planning to sow the seeds?	4/22/2021 19:50
5	I don't have any ideas for improvement at this time.	4/21/2021 19:37
6	The chat tool was really nice and easy to use. You could think about adding a livechat or similar, so that customers can contact you faster?	4/21/2021 19:28
7	Don't know?	4/21/2021 15:43
8	Found what I was looking for, but maybe make it ask more detailed questions?	4/21/2021 15:41
9	It was very easy to use, I can't think of any improvements. :)	4/21/2021 15:40
10	Can you add a live chat feature to the tool or messenger?	4/21/2021 8:15
11	It was good and I found a lot of helpful information.	4/21/2021 7:47
12	The bot worked well, nothing comes to mind at the moment.	4/21/2021 7:46
13	What a great idea to have a "helper" gardener on the site, I liked the part especially where you could choose the seed mix according to different habitats.	4/21/2021 7:28
14	It was very useful and easy to use!	4/20/2021 21:13
15	Nothing to add.	4/20/2021 16:49
16	Could you add a step by step guide that shows how to sow wildflower seeds?	4/20/2021 16:48
17	I liked the design and it was easy to navigate. Found good information.	4/20/2021 13:56
18	I enjoyed the little gardener bot, found what I was looking for after a few clicks, nice!	4/20/2021 13:54
19	I liked it, but could there be some videos or pictures included? About sowing the seeds?	4/17/2021 17:17
20	I liked the little gardener helper, it was really nicely designed and easy to use. Found everything fast!	4/8/2021 17:59
21	I liked the helper bot a lot, the design and navigation were great!	4/6/2021 16:31

22	It could have more search options	4/4/2021 12:23
23	Nothing to add	4/3/2021 13:09
24	I liked the website a lot, the information was easily accessible and the design was fun!	3/31/2021 18:07
25	I found information quite fast, but I was hoping for some more options on the different choices	3/31/2021 9:05
26	The bot was nice and easy to use, but in the contact form maybe let us know how fast you usually reply since there is no live chat option?	3/31/2021 9:01
27	There could be more options or information on the products.	3/30/2021 9:51
28	Perhaps add more features to find specific information?	3/25/2021 6:29
