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Creating a multi-channel marketing platform

[CMD Graduation portfolio]

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CMD Graduation Portfolio

Creating a multi-channel marketing platform

Bachelor thesis report | Communication and Multimedia Design

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Problem statement

As a media content company, it is important for Syntraks Media to keep offering distinctive services compared to other suppliers. However, due to digitalization the company's main services need to undergo a change in order to keep delivering relevant services. Additionally, clients of Syntraks Media report being impacted by the digitalization due to the broader number of channels and the higher frequency of media outings that is needed for digital channels like social media. This especially impacts SMEs with limited resources.

Methods

In order to solve this problem, a combination of desk- and field research has been conducted, among which an interview with an expert, a needs survey and multiple interviews and testing sessions with the target audience. Research showed that the most important marketing challenges of the target audience are time and efficiency, a lack of overview of different channels, lack of knowledge and collaboration.

Proposed solution

The proposed solution is a marketing communication platform, with a function to cross-post to multiple channels at one, including social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube), narrowcasting and blog posts for WordPress.

Value

This platform is expected to be a possible solution for the target audience's problems due to the following solutions:

Time

In order to solve the issue with a lack of time and efficiency, the prototype allows for users to post outings to multiple channels simultaneously, which could save them a significant number of hours. Additionally, the tool would allow them to schedule posts in advance, so that it would not be needed to spend time on marketing on off-days for example.

Knowledge

To solve the issue with marketing knowledge, a tooltip has been added to the prototype which informs the user of the ideal post and video length for every channel.

A lack of overview

The overview issue is possibly solved with the dashboard in the prototype and the calendar. The biggest problem was that small organisations use many channels and lose the overview due to this. With the platform, the users can view all of their channels and posts in one place.

Collaboration

In order to solve the communication issues, a planning has been added to the prototype which can also be viewed on the dashboard. In the future, multiple employees would be able to create an account on the platform and to view the planning, which improves collaboration and reduces any miscommunication within a team. Additionally, users can create drafts which could be shared among teams for feedback.

Next steps

The second iteration of this platform has been finished and tested. With the feedback, a third iteration of the product will be created within the following weeks.

PREFACE

During this thesis a marketing platform was created with the objective to solve multiple problems for smaller companies with limited resources.

As a Game Design student, marketing is not originally my area of expertise. Even so, working with the target audience in order to pinpoint their challenges and needs and designing this prototype, has been a very enjoyable journey to make.

I want to thank Corné Kox, for helping me to make sense of this very extensive subject called Marketing as the marketing expert. I want to thank Adinda van Oosten of the Hanze University of Applied Sciences and Siebolt Lettinga from Syntraks Media, for their professional guidance and insights during this project. Additionally, I want to thank my partner Raymond Masée and my critical friend during this process and friend outside of this process, Robin Potze, for their support.

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1. INTRODUCTION

After decades of digitalization, the digital world is present all around us. Smartphones and social media do not only play an important role in our personal lives, but in our professional lives as well.

An important aspect of business that has been heavily influenced by digitalization, is Marketing. On the one hand, digitalization brings about many positive consequences, like overcoming geographical limits and reaching more customers with little effort. However, this new environment entails many challenges for companies as well. Firstly, the challenge of navigating a wide range of digital channels, which are changing continually. And secondly, the high speed at which online information becomes outdated and irrelevant. Which leads to online platforms requiring new content and updates at a high frequency. (Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020)

While these are important challenges for any company, the impact is far greater on small- and medium-sized companies due to a lack of resources and a lack of time to experiment. (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015)

It is due to these circumstances that the client of this project started looking into developing a marketing platform. The goal of this project is to design a Marketing Hub in which the marketing workflow is partially automated, to make marketing more attainable and less costly for small companies.

The client of this project is Syntraks Media, a media production company that creates creative media expressions, including corporate videos, commercials, narrowcasting and websites. Additionally, this service is an opportunity for Syntraks Media to keep offering relevant and future-proof services to their clients.

The following **research question** was created: “How can a Marketing Hub be developed for Syntraks Media and her stakeholders, in order to optimize the marketing workflow, while keeping their current services and needs in mind?” The resulting key concepts are *Workflow Management*, *Multichannel Marketing*, *User Experience Design* and *Prototyping Tools*.

In the following chapter, chapter 2, a more extensive description of the client and stakeholders will be discussed. This will be followed by chapter 3, with a description of the assignment: the problem definition, the design challenge, key concepts and research questions. The prototype and its iterations will be discussed in chapter 4. Chapter 5 covers the accountability and a short description of the research results and chapter 6 discusses the references. The evidence per phase and other supporting documents, are described in chapter 7 and the appendices in chapter 8.

2. THE CLIENT AND STAKEHOLDERS

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE CLIENT

Syntraks Media is a media production company that creates creative media expressions, including corporate videos, commercials, narrowcasting and websites. Syntraks Media also develops software for broadcasting and narrowcasting tools and the implementation and management of these tools.

2.2. MISSION, VISION AND GOAL

Syntraks Media's vision is that implementing a marketing communication strategy should be accessible for any company, with any budget.

Syntraks Media's mission is to make marketing communication more accessible and less time-consuming for companies with limited resources.

Syntraks Media's goal is to create a digital platform which is easy to use, with which their customers can easily create, plan and manage their media outings.

2.3. STAKEHOLDERS AND TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience consists small and young businesses located in the Netherlands, who use a combination of channels to profile themselves through media. Another characteristic is that the target audience does not have access to a fulltime, in-house marketer, meaning that they are more likely to require external support to help them with their marketing efforts. These companies often have limited time, money, knowledge and manpower to manage all of their marketing outings efficiently (Lettinga, 2022).

Selection based on company size and revenue

The selection of the target audience is further narrowed down according to size and revenue, based on when companies start hiring an in-house marketer. Research shows that companies are likely to hire a marketer when they achieve an annual revenue between \$5 and \$10 million (Authentic Brand, n.d.), which means that this project is specifically focused on small businesses with less than 50 employees and with an annual revenue of less than \$10 million (Verhoeven, Span, & Prince, 2015).

This group can be further divided into:

- One-man businesses: 1 employee
- Microbusinesses: less than 10 employees and an annual revenue of less than \$2million
- Small businesses: 10-50 employees and an annual revenue of \$2 - \$10 million

(Verhoeven, Span, & Prince, 2015)

Examples are retail businesses, which use a combination of different marketing channels like social media, digital-out-of-home media, websites, press-work and tv outings. Other examples are industries like entertainment and service. These companies can both be targeted towards consumers as well as to other businesses.

Selection based on company age

The target audience can also be narrowed down based on the age of the company. Regarding company age, the project is focused on starting and young companies. Starting companies are defined

as companies that have existed between 0 - 3,5 years. Young companies are defined as companies that have existed for less than 5 years. (Verhoeven, Span, & Prince, 2015) Young companies are of interest to this project, because these companies are characterised as being innovative, increasing the chance of being interested in a marketing platform. Additionally, starting companies are usually smaller and have fewer resources, increasing the chance that they require support with their marketing strategy.

Challenges

Within their channel selection, small companies especially struggle with the adoption of social media for their marketing strategy. The largest barrier consists of a lack of resources: specifically knowledge and time. Another important barrier is the perceived usefulness of social media as a marketing method. Small businesses are often not familiar with the benefits of social media for their marketing goals and due to their limited resources there is little room for experimentation. (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015)

3. THE ASSIGNMENT

The client of this project wants to expand their services with an online marketing platform. The goal is to offer their stakeholders a way to manage various marketing channels in the same platform. Furthermore, the client wants to adapt to the trend of digitalization, by offering a platform that includes creating content on social media and WordPress, while also integrating their current channels, like narrowcasting.

3.1. PROJECT FRAMEWORK

During this project, the design phases will be followed in the order:

1. Explore and Comprehend
2. Conceptualisation
3. Prototyping
4. Evaluation

The design cycle started with *Explore and Comprehend*, since this was the first time such a platform was designed in commission of Syntraks Media and there was no existing platform to be improved on. During this phase, preliminary research was done by interviewing the client and conducting a literature study, resulting in the problem statement.

After the preliminary research, extensive literature study and desk research was done into Marketing specifically and into the other key concepts, resulting in explore and comprehend as the most extensive phase of the project. A Marketing Expert was consulted to support the info found during the desk research, in order to gain more insight, determine the type of platform and if such a platform had been created before. Lastly, the client was interviewed again and a survey was conducted among the target audience. Both methods were used to pinpoint needs and wishes from the client and the target audience, resulting in design requirements and a persona.

During *Conceptualisation*, all of the information of the previous phase was bundled and ideated upon, with the SCAMPER method, resulting in various ideas for a marketing platform. Due to the complexity of the platform, a User Flow Chart was created to provide clarity. This flow chart was discussed with the client and the company's programmer, to determine restrictions and to further pinpoint requirements. This led to the *Minimal Viable Product (MVP)* expected at the end of this project. Due to the complex nature of the marketing platform, the 'card sorting' method was applied with the target audience, asking them to organise and name the information structure within the prototype, to determine the correct information hierarchy. Afterwards, sketches, wireframes and a concept were created. Based on this, a style guide was set up. Lastly, this concept was discussed with the target audience during an interview, leading to an improved persona and additional requirements.

During the *Prototyping* phase, a design pattern search was conducted for existing design patterns and the first prototype was created with Figma, using the Wizard of Oz method to simulate minimum functionality like clicking buttons and changing pages. Further iterations were made with Axure RP. Axure RP was chosen based on the desk research, the wide range of functionalities it contains and prior experience with this tool.

During the *Evaluating* phase, the prototype was evaluated and improved by organising usability tests with the target audience. These test sessions included the testing of 3 scenarios and an interview and a TAM (Technology Acceptance Method) survey afterwards. With this model can be predicted if the participants are really planning on adopting this technology in the future.

3.1.1. Scope

This project focuses on the first steps in the process of creating this platform: exploration, ideation, concepting and prototyping. The prototype is not expected to have functions which require extensive coding work, like saving login data, creating or using the templates for distribution and distributing the materials. This project focuses on what the target audience and the client need from the platform, what design is appealing and suited to support their wishes and to create an interactive prototype which provides a solid user experience. Technical integrations of services like WordPress will not be researched. Further development will take place after this project.

3.2. PROBLEM DEFINITION AND OBJECTIVE OF THE DESIGN ISSUE

As a media content company, it is important for Syntraks Media to keep offering distinctive services compared to other suppliers. However, due to digitalization the public focus is shifting from 'offline' media like radio, tv and narrowcasting, to 'online' media like social media and websites. Since the company is currently mainly focused on producing video communications, commercials and providing narrowcasting services, a change has to be made in order to keep delivering relevant services.

Additionally, clients of Syntraks Media also report being impacted by the digitalization due to the broader number of channels and the higher frequency of media outings that is needed for digital channels like social media. This particularly affects smaller companies (SMEs), who have a smaller budget, knowledge and manpower.

The objective of the design issue is to increase the relevance of the services of Syntraks Media and how future proof they are, and to increase the company's revenue. Additionally, the objective is to offer the clients of Syntraks Media a platform with their usual marketing services, in order to increase customer loyalty.

3.3. DESIGN CHALLENGE

The design challenge is to translate (a part of) the marketing workflow of small companies into an online platform that includes multiple marketing communication channels, while keeping the platform relatively simple.

The following **research question** was created according to this challenge:

"How can a Marketing Hub be developed for Syntraks Media and her stakeholders, in order to optimize the marketing workflow, while keeping their current services and needs in mind?"

3.4. KEY CONCEPTS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question was dissected in order to determine the key concepts. The key concepts are as follows:

1. **Workflow Management**
2. **Multichannel Marketing**
3. **User Experience Design**
4. **Prototyping Tools**

These key concepts led to the following sub questions:

Key concepts	Sub-Questions (SQ)
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<p>1. Workflow Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How is workflow management applied within marketing tools? b. What are important marketing workflow bottlenecks for the target audience? c. What aspects of the marketing workflow can be improved with a platform?
<p>2. Multichannel Marketing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Which marketing channels are requisite for the target audience? b. What are the strengths, weaknesses, constraints and ideal message lengths for these channels? c. How can the necessary marketing channels for the target audience be combined in a platform?
<p>3. User Experience Design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Which UX design laws are applicable to this project? b. Which qualitative design requirements are needed?
<p>4. Prototyping Tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Which tools are popular choices for web design? b. What are the minimum features required for this project? c. Which prototyping tool is most suited for this project?

Table 1 - key concepts and sub questions

4. THE PROTOTYPE

The result of the project is a concept prototype, temporarily named 'MediaHub', which is discussed during this chapter.

4.1. CONCEPT PROTOTYPE

The prototype is a Marketing management platform, with the main goal being cross-posting to different channels at once.

4.2. SUBSTANTIATION OF THE PROTOTYPE

4.2.1. Idea generation to first iteration

For idea generation, SCAMPER was used as a method in order to create 5 ideas. This first concepting phase was based on the requirements of the client and the target audience.

The fifth idea was chosen: a tool with personalized cross-posting to multiple channels, including social media, narrowcasting and blog posts.

A first concept was created, consisting of the following pages: a landing page, sign in page, dashboard and new post modal.

This idea was fully visualized in a User Flow Chart to explore all possible functions and determine a Minimal Viable Product needed as the end goal. After discussing the flow chart with the client, the MVP was determined as the pages: Dashboard, Outings/Campaigns, Channels and Materials. The landing page and sign in page were not needed anymore.

Additionally, the New Post modal was too complex, with many layers of navigation tabs so that input could be written for every channel at the same time. In order to improve on this, the decision was made to create profiles with a selection of certain channels, which included certain input fields.

After deciding on the idea and the MVP, competition and best practices were researched and the prototype was continued in Figma with limited functionality. The concept can be viewed in [chapter 7.2.7](#).

4.2.2. First iteration

After selecting the correct design patterns and reviewing the concept made before in Figma, a style guide was set up in order to ensure a coherent style for the platform ([Appendix X](#)). Afterwards, the first prototype was created in Figma with a Dashboard and the pages: Calendar, Drafts, Materials and Feed. The full notes can be read in [chapter 7.3.3.4](#).

The first iteration was discussed with the client.

4.2.3. Second iteration

The second prototype iteration was made in Axure RP. The full notes on this iteration can be found in [chapter 7.3.3.3](#).

In the second iteration, the New Post page was altered with the client's feedback and the qualitative requirements. Profiles were added in order to provide the users with a quick way of only showing the required input fields.

After creating the first iteration in Figma, the second iteration was created in Axure RP.

For the prototype, the application of the UX laws were included ([chapter 7.3.3.2.](#)) and possible solutions for the most important challenges of the target audience ([chapter 7.3.3.3.](#)). These possible solutions for the most important marketing challenges of the target audience (time, knowledge and collaboration) are:

- Time: the option to post in different channels simultaneously and to plan posts ahead.
- Knowledge: a tooltip was added to the platform, with information on the ideal post and video lengths.
- Overview: the platform shows all channels in one place.
- Collaboration: the platform includes a planning which a whole team would be able to view.

The full notes can be read in [chapter 7.3.3.4.](#)

4.2.4. Third iteration to be performed

The third iteration will be applied with the feedback of the usability tests and interviews with the target audience.

The full feedback from the usability tests and interviews can be viewed in [chapter 7.4.](#)

The improvements in the following weeks, according to the feedback, cover small fixes and larger implementations. The most important are:

- Adding a responsive variation for a mobile phone
- Allowing for images and videos to be added
- Allow the prototype to count the characters in text fields
- Add feedback after clicking buttons, like the 'post now' button
- Move the channel selection to a better position, at the top of the 'new post' modal
- Changing the navigation order, according to the results of the card sorting method

5. ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

5.1. PHASE 1 – EXPLORE AND COMPREHEND

5.1.1. Set-up

The project was started with **an interview with the client** about the problem statement, target audience, and assignment. This led to the key concepts, which were investigated with an **explorative literature study**, to gain broad knowledge on the subjects and to refine the problem statement.

After the preliminary research, **additional discussions were held with the client** to obtain the **client's requirements** and to make sure everything was understood correctly.

In order to gain more in-depth knowledge on Marketing as a subject and to monitor if the project was going in the right direction, a marketing expert was consulted during an **expert interview**. The expert consulted was Corné Kox, a teacher at the Hanze University and an expert on User Experience Design and Digital Marketing. The expert interview was conducted as a partially structured interview, with 6 questions established beforehand. The advice that followed this interview was to conduct a short needs research among the target audience, in order to find out what they would need from the platform.

Following the expert's advice, a needs research was done with a **survey among the target audience**, in order to pinpoint needs and wishes. This survey was distributed among communities of entrepreneurs and small business owners, mainly on LinkedIn. LinkedIn was chosen because it is well-known for professional use. A few control questions were added to the survey in order to ensure that the participants would fit the target audience. This survey resulted in **design requirements** and a **persona**.

Lastly, **desk research** was conducted to answer the research questions on the key concepts: Workflow Management, Multichannel Marketing, User Experience Design and Prototyping Tools.

5.1.2. Results

Client interview

The main requirements for Syntraks Media were for the application to be easy to use. Additionally, it should be low cost and with broad functionalities. The full interview can be read in [Appendix XII](#), interview 1.

Expert Interview

Out of the **Expert Interview** followed that the concept is new, there are no other companies which combine online as well as offline channels within one tool. Furthermore, social media is an interesting channel to be added for the target audience, but not if social media channels were the sole channels that are available in the tool. There are already many tools available who offer social media cross posting. Lastly, narrowcasting could be a USP if the client would decide to offer this platform with their current services of installing narrowcasting screens. The expert advised to conduct a short needs research among the target audience, to pinpoint what they need from this platform and to then create a Minimal Viable Product. (Kox, 2022)

The comprehensive results are found in [chapter 7.1.4.](#) and the summary can be found in [Appendix II.](#)

Survey

Important results of the survey are:

- Time is the most important marketing bottleneck (**research sub-question 1b**)
- Websites, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and E-mail are the most important channels
- The most important reasons for these channels are *ease of use, the target audience uses these channels, low costs and easily combinable*
- Only few participants use automated services, the most common reasons against these services are that they are not personalized enough, are costly and that there is not enough content. If these services are used, they are mostly used for e-mail marketing, (weekly newsletters) in order to save time.
- The most important functions and characteristics that the participants need in the prototype are a post planning function, ease of use and that it presents a clear and organised overview of the content and the planning.
- 50% of the participants are interested in the prototype, although the price is often decisive

The full survey results and analysis are found in [chapter 7.1.5](#). The survey materials and questions are found in [Appendix III](#).

Desk Research

The most important results are described in this chapter. The full desk research can be found in [chapter 7.1.3](#).

Workflow management

1a: How is Workflow Management applied within marketing tools?

Workflow management is the practise of identifying workflows and optimizing them to reduce errors and improve the outcome. The key is to detect repetitive tasks which do not require an employee to check them and to automate as much of the workflow as possible. (Salemme, 2022)

In marketing, workflow management is applied as Marketing Automation in different ways. Gary Schwake defines the core functions of marketing automation systems as the following 7 functions:

1. E-mail campaigns
2. Nurturing journeys
3. Landing pages & forms
4. Scoring leads
5. Managing leads
6. Managing social media
7. Integrations: website, CRM et cetera (Schwake, 2020)

Managing social media and websites are the most important functions to this project. The tools that were recommended as the most-used tools per function, will be used for benchmark creation. For social media management these are Hootsuite, Buffer, Sprout, Postoplan and Recurpost. (Schwake, 2020) For Website/Blog management, WordPress will be looked into as the most popular content management tool worldwide (Osman, 2022). For specifically Dashboards in marketing automation tools will be looked into Hootsuite, LinkedIn Business and Sprout Social. (Worthington, 2022)

1b: What are important marketing workflow bottlenecks for the target audience?

Within their channel selection, small companies especially struggle with the adoption of social media for their marketing strategy. The largest barrier consists of a lack of resources: specifically knowledge and time. Another important barrier is the perceived usefulness of social media as a marketing method. Small businesses are often not familiar with the benefits of social media for their marketing goals and due to their limited resources there is little room for experimentation. (Taiminen & Karjaluo, 2015)

1c: What aspects of the marketing workflow can be improved with the prototype?

Workflow management is used to improve tasks that are repetitive and do not need a human touch. (Salemme, 2022) Within the platform, these tasks include cross-posting to different platforms, planning posts and orders for a later moment and analysing posts and activity of the past and future.

Multichannel Marketing

This project is specifically focused on marketing communication channels, opposed to marketing sales channels.

Marketing channels can be divided into digital communication channels and non-digital communication channels. Digital marketing is described as using digital technologies in order to achieve an organization's marketing goals, which can be subdivided into Online and Offline channels. Online channels include, among others, websites, e-mail marketing, social media, blogs and internet advertising. Offline channels include television, radio, digital billboards and SMS and MMS. (Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020)

2a: Which marketing channels are requisite for the target audience?

Research by Coosto in 2021 showed that B2C (business to consumer) Businesses most often use Social Media platforms (82%), their organization's website/blog (79%) and e-mail (76%) for marketing communication. (Handley, et al., 2021)

Social Media

Research by the CBS (Centraal Bureau Statistiek) shows that of the social media channels, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are most used by companies. Companies post most frequently on Twitter, which is explained by the fact that profiles on Facebook and Twitter are often more focused on people instead of companies. (Ortega & Heerschap, 2019)

Additional research of 2021 by Newcom, shows that Dutch Business to Consumer businesses most frequently use Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and LinkedIn. The companies report the best content marketing results from Facebook (59% of the companies) and Instagram (21% of the companies). (Handley, et al., 2021)

2b: What are the strengths, weaknesses, constraints and ideal message lengths for these channels?

The research showed that digital channels have many strengths, among which a high interactivity with customers, the ability to reach more customers more easily and unbothered by geographical limits. Furthermore, digital channels are quick, low cost and relatively high efficiency. (Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020)

The weaknesses or disadvantages of these channels are that it is harder to build a relationship with a customer that cannot be seen, the online activities and relationships are more sensitive to being viewed negatively or as unprofessional. Additionally, there are few guidelines on which channels to use and due to the ever-changing nature of digital channels, it is hard for companies to stay up-to-date and to use the appropriate tools. (Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020)

The research shows that the constraints of these channels mainly concern restrictions to the maximum of characters and the length of videos. The full list of restrictions and ideal lengths of a message or video per channel, can be read in chapter 7.2.4.2.

2c: How can the necessary marketing channels for the target audience be combined in a platform?

In order to answer this question, research was done on the most-common tools for social media management, since these tools already manage multiple channels which different needs simultaneously, which is the goal for the end product as well.

The biggest design challenge was to keep restrictions per channel in mind and being able to personalize a message within the tool. For these solutions was looked at Hootsuite, solving this with navigation tabs and a character count per channel. (Hootsuite, n.d.) Another issue of combining channels with differing input fields, was solved by adding profiles to the prototype.

User Experience Design

3a: Which UX design laws are applicable to this project?

User experience design is the design of the user experience, which is how the user interacts with the product. The user experience usually is valued through the criteria *value* (does it give the user value?), *function* (does the product work?), *usability* (is the product easy to use?), *general impression* (is the product pleasant to use?). Additional important notes on user experience, is that it is about what the users both think and feel, additionally the user experience also depends on the context in which the product is used and lastly, the user experience may change over time (for example when a user gets used to a product and thus it becomes easier to use). (Babich, 2020)

3a: Which UX design laws are applicable to this project?

For UX Design theories, the Laws of UX website has been consulted. This is a website that dissects complex heuristics into relevant rules for user experience design. There are 21 UX laws, which are divided among the following 4 subjects: Heuristic, Principle, Gestalt and Cognitive bias. (Yablonski, 2022)

The laws that are applicable to the prototype are the following:

Heuristic

- Hick's Law
- Jakob's Law

Principle

- Doherty threshold
- Tesler's Law

Gestalt

- Law of Common Region
- Law of Proximity
- Law of Uniform Connectedness
- Law of Similarity

(Yablonski, 2022)

The full results can be viewed in [chapter 7.1.3.3](#).

3b: Which qualitative design requirements are needed?

The design theory used for this project, is the set of design guidelines set up by the Nielsen Norman group. The Nielsen Norman group is a consulting firm, known for its UX research, that provides organizations world-wide with reliable guidance on user experience (Nielsen Norman Group, n.d.). The full results can be viewed in [chapter 7.1.3.3](#).

Prototyping Tools

The desk research into prototyping tools led to a list of 16 popular tools for web design prototyping. These tools were rated according to 4 requirements: Compatibility with the Windows system, the function to export the code, conditional logic and global variables. Out of the list, 2 tools fulfilled these requirements: Axure RP and UXPin. Axure RP was chosen as the final prototyping tool.

Design Requirements

The results of phase 1 are the design requirements. The requirements have been processed according to the MoSCoW method and specifically the “Must” requirements are listed here, which are the requirements that are necessary for the prototype. The full list of requirements can be found in [chapter 7.1.7](#).

Out of the interviews with the client, a number of requirements could be formulated. These are as follows:

Client requirements			
Requirement		MoSCoW	Source
1.	The product should consist of an online platform, on which the target audience can manage their own needs.	Must	Client interview
2.	The platform should include narrowcasting services.	Must	
3.	The platform should be easy to use and intuitive.	Must	
4.	The platform should include a dashboard.	Must	
5.	The main goal of the platform, placing a post, can be completed within 2 clicks.	Must	

The other requirements consist of Qualitative Requirements for the prototype, Functional Requirements based on the needs of the users, and Business Requirements based on the goals and needs of the client.

Design Requirements			
Requirement type/Part of the prototype		MoSCoW	Source
Qualitative			
Prototype in general			
1.	The website provides a clear distinction between links by starting a link with the most important keyword and not repeating this keyword between links.	Must	Nielsen Norman Group (Nielsen, Top 10 Guidelines for Homepage Usability, 2002)
2.	The website provides the user with guidance on every page, during navigation.	Must	
3.	The website provides the user with feedback, following an action or input.	Must	
4.	The website provides the user with an error message, following an incorrect action or an error.	Must	
Dashboard			
5.	The dashboard provides the user with primarily	Must	Nielsen Norman Group

	visual data, instead of text, in order for the user being able to process this more easily.		(Nielsen, 113 Design Guidelines for Homepage Usability, 2001)
6.	The dashboard provides the user with a description of the visual data, if this is not clear from the data alone.	Must	
New post			
7.	The page provides the user with information on how many words have been typed in the message.	Must	Desk research: Multichannel
8.	The page provides the user with feedback on how many characters are left to write for every channel.	Must	Best practices
9.	The page provides the user with 'new post profiles', in order to limit the input fields to the ones that the user needs at that moment.	Must	Client interview
10.	The page provides the user with post templates for WordPress posts and Narrowcasting posts, with information on how the content will be aligned.	Must	Client interview
11.	The page provides the user with a choice to export a Narrowcasting post to a certain playlist.	Must	Client interview
Navigation			
12.	The website provides a navigation area in a place on the website that is highly noticeable for the users, directly connected to the main body of the page.	Must	Nielsen Norman Group (Nielsen, 113 Design Guidelines for Homepage Usability, 2001)
13.	The website provides a navigation area which shows similar items as grouped close to each other (group similar items).	Must	
14.	The navigation area of the website provides the users with easily recognizable links or icons.	Must	
15.	The navigation provides emphasis on the starting points of the main (1-4) user tasks that users undertake when they visit the site.	Must	
Functional			
1.	As a user I want to be able to create a new post from every main page within the tool.	Must	Best practices
2.	As a user I want to be able to view live and expired posts in the tool.	Must	
3.	As a user I want to be able to save the progress on a post as a draft.	Must	
4.	As a user I want to be able to make a selection of the social media channels to post to.	Must	
5.	As a user I want to be able to add Media to my posts.	Must	
6.	As a user I want to be able to create a post for Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and for a website.	Must	Needs survey (chapter 7.1.5.) Interview target audience (chapter 7.2.7.)
Business			

1.	The client wants to offer relevant services to their customers by means of a digital media hub.	Must	Client interview
2.	Syntraks Media wants to increase customer loyalty, by means of a digital media hub.	Must	

Table 2 - Design Requirements

5.2. PHASE 2 – CONCEPTUALISATION

5.2.1. Set-up

After obtaining the design requirements and knowledge of the key concepts during the previous phase, this information was bundled and ideated upon with the **SCAMPER method**. This resulted in multiple ideas for a marketing platform, which were discussed with the client and of which one was chosen.

Because of the complexity of the prototype, an extensive **User Flow Chart** was created to explore and present all possible functions. This flow chart and the requirements of the first phase were discussed with the client to determine the scope for this concept, resulting in the **Minimal Viable Product (MVP)** as the goal for this project. Additionally, the User Flow Chart was discussed in an **interview with the Web Developer of Syntraks Media**, to determine if there were any technical restrictions to keep in mind for the development of this platform after this project.

After determining the MVP, the **'card sorting'** method was applied among the target audience, which is a method during which the target audience is asked to organise and name the information structure within the prototype. The goal of this method is to determine the **correct information hierarchy**. This was applied to the navigation of the prototype and the information on the dashboard.

After the hierarchy was determined, **sketches** were created on a digital tablet and **HiFi wireframes were created within Figma**. A style guide was created according to the wireframes.

Lastly, this concept was discussed during an **interview with the target audience**, leading to a refinement of the **persona** and the **requirements**.

5.2.2. Results

SCAMPER

The scamper method was chosen due to the complexity of the requirements of the client, since this method allows for multiple ways to view a problem or functionalities. The following ideas were created with the scamper method, after applying divergent and convergent thinking:

- Idea 1: A collaboration-focused tool
- Idea 2: Tool with a focus on narrowcasting and printed work
- Idea 3: A tool that is focused solely on social media
- Idea 4: A platform focused on pure cross-posting, with multiple channels
- Idea 5: A tool with personalized cross-posting to multiple channels, without printing

After discussing the ideas with the client and applying knowledge from desk research, the expert- and the developer's interview, idea 5 was chosen.

Flow chart and Minimal Viable Product

The Minimal Viable Product and the Complete User Flow Chart can be found in [Appendix I](#), the full discussion can be found in [chapter 7.2.2](#). The MVP has been determined as the pages: Dashboard, Outings/Campaigns, Channels and Materials.

Interview Web Developer Sytraks Media

This interview was planned for the beginning of the project, but was unfortunately delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. The subjects of the questions are Implementation, Functions and Other questions.

The results of the interview were that it is important for the developer's work that elements and text styles are reused and consistent. Additionally, it is important that the website adapts to different devices and screen sizes.

Card sorting

Card sorting was used to revisit the navigation structure on the platform, which was conducted among 5 participants from the target audience. The results indicated the most intuitive navigation structure for the target audience.

Interview Target Audience

The goal of this interview was to obtain more specific data about the target audience and about requirements. The questions and answers can be viewed in [Appendix V](#).

The most important results were that the challenges of the needs survey were confirmed and collaboration was added as an extra challenge. Apart from this, extra requirements were gathered from this interview and the persona could be expanded on.

Concept in Figma

A first concept was set up in Figma, with minimal functionality, based on research of competitive companies. The full concept can be viewed in [chapter 7.2.7](#).

5.3. PHASE 3 - PROTOTYPING

5.3.1. Set-up

After creating the wireframes and the style guide during the previous phase, a **design pattern search** was conducted to search for existing design patterns that could be reused. With this information the **first prototype** was created with Figma, using the **Wizard of Oz method** to simulate minimum functionality like clicking buttons and changing pages.

After this first version, the **second version of the prototype** was created in the prototyping tool Axure RP. Axure RP was chosen based on the desk research, the wide range of functionalities it contains and prior experience with this tool.

5.3.2. Results

Design Pattern Search

The most important design patterns are the drop-down menu, the modal, navigation tabs, thumbnails and live previews. These design patterns have been reused by conducting a design pattern search and searching for the correct way to design these elements. The full description can be viewed in [chapter 7.3.1](#).

Wizard of Oz

The Wizard of Oz method: acting out the systems functionalities that are not complete yet, has been applied for various pages of the prototype in order to give the users a full experience. Examples are the live preview of channels, the posting functions and uploading images to the platform. The full notes can be read in the [chapter 7.3.2.](#)

Prototype Figma

After selecting the correct design patterns and reviewing the concept made before in Figma, a style guide was set up in order to ensure a coherent style for the platform ([Appendix X](#)). Afterwards, the first prototype was created in Figma with a Dashboard and the pages: Calendar, Drafts, Materials and Feed. The full notes can be read in [chapter 7.3.3.4.](#)

Prototype Axure RP

After creating the first iteration in Figma, the second iteration was created in Axure RP.

For the prototype, the application of the UX laws were included ([chapter 7.3.3.2.](#)) and possible solutions for the most important challenges of the target audience ([chapter 7.3.3.3.](#)). These possible solutions for the most important marketing challenges of the target audience (time, knowledge and collaboration) are:

- Time: the option to post in different channels simultaneously and to plan posts ahead.
- Knowledge: a tooltip was added to the platform, with information on the ideal post and video lengths.
- Overview: the platform shows all channels in one place.
- Collaboration: the platform includes a planning which a whole team would be able to view.

The full notes can be read in [chapter 7.3.3.4.](#)

5.4. PHASE 4 - EVALUATION

5.4.1. Set-up

After creating the second prototype with Axure RP, the prototype was **tested with the target audience**. This was done with **usability test sessions** with 3 participants that are part of the target audience. Usability testing was done with 3 scenarios/tasks, to see how easily the target audience can use the platform with just little prior knowledge. The main goal of these tests was to determine if the prototype fulfilled the requirements and if using the prototype would be an easy and intuitive process. The sessions also included **a structured interview with the target audience** in order to find out what their opinion was of the prototype and why. Lastly, a **TAM survey** (Technology Acceptance Method) was conducted among the target audience after testing, with which can be predicted if the participants are really planning on adopting this technology in the future.

5.4.2. Results

During the evaluation phase the prototype was tested with 3 participants of the target audience, who were carefully selected based on their marketing activities, company size and their involvement and knowledge of their company's marketing activities.

Usability testing

The testing was done within the second iteration of the prototype, in Axure RP.

One of the main issues that stood out during the usability tests, was that the participants had trouble finding the channel selection and seeing which channels were selected.

These results were documented for the third iteration of the prototype, [chapter 4.2.4](#).

The test plan is found in [Appendix XI](#). Full results can be read in [chapter 7.4](#).

Interview

The most important results are as follows:

- The channel selection should stand out more and should be put in the top bar
- The tooltip on ideal post lengths is a nice addition which helps users with any knowledge issues
- Add the possibility for adding videos to Materials
- Remove the frame around previews of the channels
- Edit channel selection for NC and blog, remove social media channels there
- Channel selection does not include all channels yet, like LinkedIn and YouTube
- The character counter does not work yet

These results were documented for the third iteration of the prototype, [chapter 4.2.4](#).

Interview took place during the same session as usability testing, questions can be viewed in [Appendix XI](#), the test plan. Full results can be read in [chapter 7.4.2](#).

Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model is a model that measures the attitude towards a technology and which factors contribute to this attitude. (User Sense, n.d.)

The TAM survey can be found in [Appendix VI](#). Full results can be read in [chapter 7.4.2](#).

Unfortunately, due to a lack of time, there were too few results to create a statistically valuable conclusion with quantitative data from this test. However, it could be beneficial for the client to repeat this test in the future.

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7. EVIDENCE PER PHASE

7.1. EXPLORE AND COMPREHEND

7.1.1. Preliminary research

Interview with the client: briefing

The first interview of the client was to determine the context, goals for the assignment, background information of the client and the relevance of this project. The full briefing can be read in [Appendix XII](#).

7.1.2. Interview client

This interview took place on the 10th of January in Groningen. The main goal of the interview was to explore the main information and to make sure everything was understood correctly. Important subjects were the intended target audience, required channels and other requirements for Syntraks Media.

The most important outcomes of this interview were that regarding channels, the focus should be on social media, narrowcasting and websites (WordPress) at first. Printing press could be added in later versions.

The main requirements for Syntraks Media were for the application to be lean and mean, meaning that it is easy to use. Additionally, it should be low cost and with broad functionalities, if possible.

The full interview can be read in [Appendix XII](#), interview 1.

7.1.3. Desk research

7.1.3.1. Workflow Management

A set of tasks that lead to a specific outcome is called a workflow. Workflow management is the practise of identifying workflows and optimizing them to reduce errors and improve the outcome. The key is to detect repetitive tasks which do not require a human touch and to automate as much of the workflow as possible. (Salemme, 2022)

1a: How is Workflow Management applied within marketing tools?

In marketing, workflow management can be applied as Marketing Automation. Marketing automation is defined as using technology to improve marketing workflows and make them more effective. Preferably using a single platform in which every aspect of marketing can be managed. (Salesforce, n.d.) For this subject, research was done on which marketing tools or providers are suited as *best practices* for the target audience.

All-in-one Industry leaders

The industry leaders of marketing automation offer this service: an all-in-one service for all marketing activities like automation, CRM, lead management, et cetera. These industry leaders are HubSpot, Adobe Experience Cloud and Oracle Marketing Cloud. Together they account for at least 49,8% of the market for marketing automation solutions in the United States. (Guttman, 2021) Using such a system provides companies with important benefits:

- Saving costs
- Improved business operations
- Decrease of errors

- Improved customer service
(De Ondernemer, 2020)

However, even though small business could greatly benefit from the advantages the extensive, and therefore often complex, nature of these all-in-one industry leaders is why they are not suited for many small businesses. Research shows that 72% of medium- and large-sized companies, with 50-250 employees, use a CRM system. For small companies with 10-49 employees however, this percentage drops to 50%. For the group of micro companies with 2-9 employees, this percentage is as low as 25%. Their most common reasons for not using such a system, are:

- There is little automation, too many manual steps are needed
- They are complicated, not user-friendly
- Scalability
- They are too expensive

(De Ondernemer, 2020)

Marketing automation categories

In order to pinpoint the most suitable services and companies for the target audience, so that the *best practices* can be obtained, marketing automation systems have to be sub-divided further. Gary Schwake defines the core functions of marketing automation systems as the following 7 functions:

1. E-mail campaigns
2. Nurturing journeys
3. Landing pages & forms
4. Scoring leads
5. Managing leads
6. Managing social media
7. Integrations: website, CRM et cetera

(Schwake, 2020)

Of these categories, *managing social media* is found to be the most important category, supported with research from chapter 8.2.4.2. This research showed that the most used channels among the target audience are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and the company's own website. The article by Gary Schwake mentions the following common-used marketing tools for social media management: Hootsuite, Buffer, Sprout, Postoplan and Recurpost. (Schwake, 2020)

The research by Schwake does not specifically mention Website/Blog management or the availability of a Dashboard, which are other important needs for this platform.

For Website/Blog management, WordPress will be looked into as the most popular content management tool worldwide. (Osman, 2022) For specifically Dashboards in marketing automation tools will be looked into Hootsuite, LinkedIn Business and Sprout Social. (Worthington, 2022)

1b: What are the most important marketing workflow bottlenecks for the target audience?

Within their channel selection, small companies especially struggle with the adoption of social media for their marketing strategy. The largest barrier consists of a lack of resources: specifically knowledge and time. Another important barrier is the perceived usefulness of social media as a marketing method. Small businesses are often not familiar with the benefits of social media for their marketing goals and due to their limited resources there is little room for experimentation. (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015)

1c: What aspects of the marketing workflow can be improved with a platform?

Looking at competition and the marketing automation aspects of question 1a, the aspects that can be improved for this specific platform are the management of posts. This includes:

- posting on one or multiple channels
- scheduling posts ahead
- collaborating with others by managing posts in the same platform
- creating posts to save as a draft and to finish at a later moment
- saving marketing materials online so that they can be used later of by colleagues without needing to use another platform to do so

These are all tasks that can be managed by a system, which can make simplify the marketing workflow by adding extra functionalities within the system that cost more time to be managed by people alone or with which people are more prone to make errors. Like scheduling a post manually, for a later time, or collaborating with colleagues without such a platform.

7.1.3.2. Multichannel Marketing

Multichannel marketing is the practice of using multiple channels, both direct and indirect, to reach customers. This can include social media, websites, a store, and direct mail. (NGDATA, 2022) This project is specifically focused on marketing communication channels, opposed to marketing sales channels.

Marketing channels can be divided into digital communication channels and non-digital communication channels. Digital marketing is described as using digital technologies, in order to achieve an organization’s marketing goals. (Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020)

The channels can be further subdivided into Online and Offline channels. Online channels include, among others, websites, e-mail marketing, social media, blogs and internet advertising. Offline channels include television, radio, digital billboards and SMS and MMS. (Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020)

2a: Which marketing channels are requisite for the target audience?

Research by Coosto in 2021 showed that B2C (business to consumer) Businesses most often use Social Media platforms (82%), their organization’s website/blog (79%) and e-mail (76%) for marketing communication. (Handley, et al., 2021)

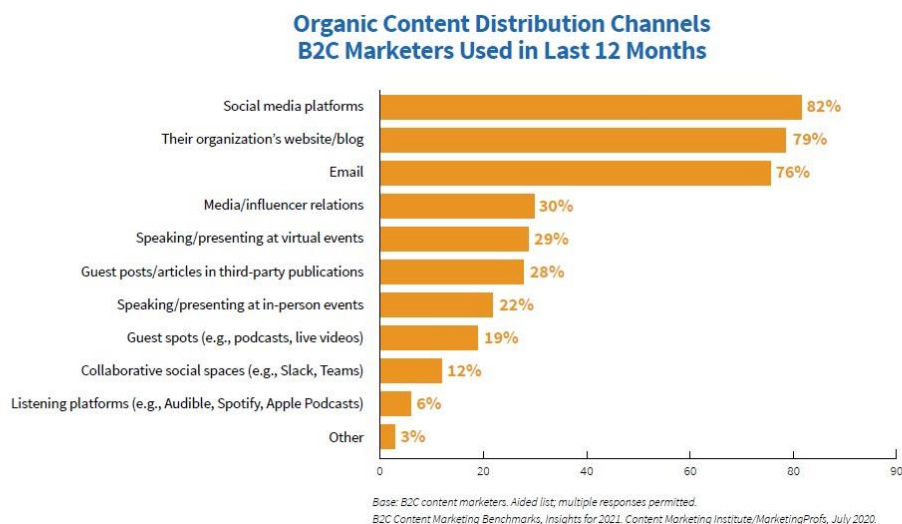


Figure 1 - Content Distribution Channels used by B2C Marketers in 2021 (Handley, et al., 2021)

Social media channels

The choice for social media channels is based on the most used social media platforms by the target audience: Dutch businesses. Research by the CBS (Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics) in 2017, shows that the social media platform that are most often used by companies are Twitter, Facebook and

LinkedIn. These platforms are often used in varying combinations: all of them, Twitter/Facebook or Facebook/LinkedIn. The research shows that companies post most frequently on Twitter, out of these platforms. This can be explained by the fact that platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn are often more focused on people instead of companies. (Ortega & Heerschap, 2019)

Additionally, a more recent research report was consulted, created by Newcom in 2021. Newcom is a research bureau that publishes the annual National Social Media Research. This research includes data from 233 respondents, both national and international. Of these respondents 21% came from micro companies (<10 employees), 31% from small companies (10-99 employees), 26% from medium companies (100-999 employees) and 22% from large companies (1,000+ employees).

The research showed that the platforms that are used most often by Dutch B2C businesses, are Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter and LinkedIn, visualised in figure ... below. Out of these platforms, the companies reported the best content marketing results from Facebook (59% of companies) and Instagram (21% of companies). (Handley, et al., 2021)

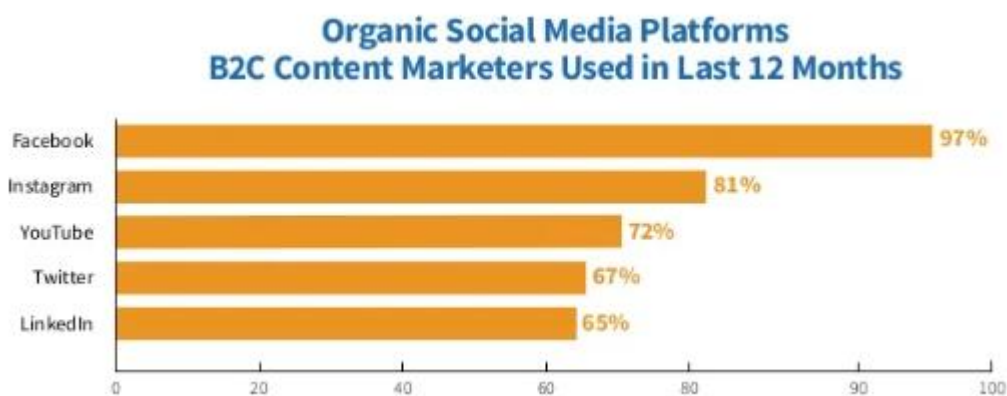


Figure 21- Social Media Platforms B2C Marketers used in 2021 (Handley, et al., 2021)

The research also measured the growth of the use of these platform in the past year, which can be used to predict the growth in the coming years. Most of these platforms stayed around the same percentage, except for Instagram and YouTube. Instagram use increased by 7%: from 74% to 81%. YouTube use increased by 10%: from 62% to 72%. (Handley, et al., 2021)

B2C companies reported a wide variety of goals they have achieved with content marketing, of which the most reported goals are:

- Creating brand awareness (81%)
- Building credibility/trust (76%)
- Educating audience(s) (71%)
- Increasing loyalty with existing clients/customers (70%) (Handley, et al., 2021)

The top two actions that contributed the most to this success, reportedly were the value that the content of the company provided (77%) and changes that were made to their website (59%). (Handley, et al., 2021)

2b: What are the strengths, weaknesses, constraints and ideal message lengths for these channels?

Research question 2a and the survey ([chapter 7.1.5.](#)) among the target audience showed that the most-used channels of the target audience are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and the company's own website. These channels, together with Narrowcasting as a requirement of the client, will be the focus of further desk research in this chapter.

All of the requisite channels belong to the category of *Digital Marketing Channels*. The research of Veleva and Tsvetanova describes the advantages and disadvantages of digital marketing channels in general. The advantages and disadvantages that are of importance to this project are as follows:

Strengths

- The interactivity with customers is high.
- The channels help overcome geographical limits.
- The channels provide companies with a means to quickly answer user's needs.
- The channels are easily reachable by customers, creating convenience.
- The channels allow the company to reach more customers through social networks.
- Digital channels can increase the traffic to the company's website.
- Digital channels are well-suited for young-, small- and medium-sized companies, due to the low cost and the relatively high efficiency.
- Digital channels require little investments.

(Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020)

Weaknesses

- The company's information is available on the web, allowing for it to be a target for companies with a malicious intent. Like copying their name of services.
- It is harder for companies to build a relationship with a customer with whom they do not have direct contact, a customer that can be seen or heard in person.
- If outings through digital channels are not designed professionally or targeted at the correct audience, it can lead to the target audience viewing the company as unprofessional.
- The company creates an online reputation which is sensitive to negative, online feedback which can be viewed by anyone
- These channels are not suited for every company, due to not all target audiences being available online.
- These channels depend on technology, which makes it susceptible for technical errors.
- Digital channels are always changing, making it hard for companies to stay up-to-date and to use the appropriate tools for their target audience. Additionally, it is tempting for companies to focus on technical solutions like the technical appearance of advertisements, neglecting the content of the message. This leads to loss of credibility and unstable results.

(Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020)

Constraints and ideal message lengths per channel

Social media

The channels that are part of the research into social media are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.

The general rules for ideal use of hashtags on social media are the following:

- Hashtags consist of one word without spaces
- Hashtags use no punctuation
- Hashtags are placed within or after the message

(Kolowich Cox, 2019)

Furthermore, Lindsay Kolowich Cox, an editor at HubSpot, advises to use existing, trending hashtags in order to benefit from their popularity. (Kolowich Cox, 2019)

Facebook

On Facebook, the most important aspects consist of the posts than can be placed, to which images and videos can be added. The maximum character-length of a post, is set at 63,206. However, HubSpot discovered the ideal post length to be 40 characters long. Videos can be a maximum of 120 minutes, but the ideal length is 2 minutes. (Kolowich Cox, 2019)

Twitter

Twitter is comparable to Facebook, with status posts as the most important aspect, which can be supported with images, videos and hashtags. The maximum length of a tweet, however, is much shorter: 280 characters. The ideal length of a tweet is 120-130 characters. Videos are restricted as well, the maximum length is 2:20 minutes. For hashtags is advised to add no more than two. (Kolowich Cox, 2019)

LinkedIn

For LinkedIn, companies have the option to post status updates or they can public articles, through LinkedIn publishing. The maximum length for a status update is different for personal and company posts. For personal posts is it 1,300 characters. For company posts the maximum length is 700 characters. (Zote, 2021)

The ideal length is about 140 characters or 25 words or less. This has to do with the message being cut short after 140 characters, at which point the post shows a “see more” button to access the rest of the post. (Shleyner, 2018)

For LinkedIn publishing, a headline of maximum of 100 characters is set for the headline and a maximum for 40,000 characters for the post body. (Kolowich Cox, 2019) An ideal post was measured at a title of 40-49 characters and a post body of 1900 – 2000 words. (Shleyner, 2018)

Regarding videos, the maximum length is 10 minutes, but under 30 seconds is ideal (Shleyner, 2018).

YouTube

YouTube is a channel that is focused on videos, to which titles and descriptions are added. The maximum length of a YouTube title is 100 characters and for a description is 5,000 characters (Zote, 2021). Eddie Shleyner from Hootsuite discusses an ideal length of 2:54 minutes for YouTube videos. The ideal title length is 70 characters and the ideal description length consists of 157 characters. (Shleyner, 2018)

Instagram

Instagram is a channel that is focused on visual information: images or videos with a caption and hashtags. For the captions, the maximum length is set at 2,200 characters. However, due to the caption getting cut off after the first 3 lines, under 125 characters is ideal. (Kolowich Cox, 2019)

Instagram allows up to 30 hashtags (Kolowich Cox, 2019), but the most-used amount is between 1 and 3 (Newberry, 2021).

Other channels

Narrowcasting

For narrowcasting, Syntraks Media has developed their own system to add the parts of the message, like a title, sub title, text body, image and other aspects. As extra parts can be added if needed, for the sake of clarity, this prototype will be limited to a title, sub title, text body, media and overlays. Overlays are extra visual elements, like an RSS feed at the bottom of the screen or a clock in the top of the screen.

There are no constraints set in this system, regarding character limits for text et cetera.

Blog posts

Blogs are articles which are presented on a company's website. According to HubSpot's research done by Sophia Bernazzani, blog posts ideally consist of a title, introduction, featured image, sub-headers and a text body. (Bernazzani, 2022) There is no minimum required length set for blog posts, but according to HubSpot, this should at least be 300 words. (Beltis, 2021)

The ideal lengths of the title was discovered as 60 characters long. The ideal length of the full blog, including all of the blogs features, is determined to be 2100 words. This leads to approximately 7 minutes of reading, which is ideal. (Bernazzani, 2022)

Additionally, a meta description can be added to blog posts, which is a description that is viewed in search engines. The ideal length of a meta description is under 155 characters. (Bernazzani, 2022)

For the ideal length of a blog post per subject, HubSpot has conducted a research among 50 of the most-read blog posts. The ideal post length per subject is:

- 2,100 – 2,400 for SEO (Search Engine Optimization), allowing the post to be ranked higher within search engines.
- 2,500 for lead generation, which are posts that create leads or new customers.
- 4,000 for pillar pages, which are blog posts that serve as guides.
- 2,300-2,600 for listicles, blog posts that discuss a list of examples.
- 1,700 – 2,100 for “how-to” blog posts, which explain how to do something.
- 1,300 – 1,700 for “what is” blog posts, which answer questions.

(Beltis, 2021)

2c: How can necessary channels be combined in a platform?

In order to answer this question, research into competition has been used. Especially the most-common tools for social media management, found in during sub question 2a. As mentioned before in question 2a, the biggest leaders in the market are all-in-one tools which are not suited for the target audience, due to their complexity and price. The talk with the expert showed that there are no tools that offer the exact same services as the prototype for this project would offer (Kox, 2022), which is why a close alternative has been looked at, in terms of competition.

The article by Gary Schwake mentions the following common-used marketing tools for social media management: Hootsuite, Buffer, Sprout, Postoplan and Recurpost. (Schwake, 2020) Social media tools were chosen because these tools already manage multiple channels which different needs simultaneously, which is the goal for the end product as well. For Website/Blog management, WordPress will be looked into as the most popular content management tool worldwide. (Osman, 2022)

The biggest design challenge for combining different channels into one tool, is keeping the restrictions per channel in mind while not unnecessarily complicating the tool. These restrictions mainly concern character limitations per channel.

Additionally, it is important for the user to be able to personalize a message per channel, since the target audience differs per channel. Cross-posting the exact same message to channels is also found to have significant disadvantages, as earlier desk research (sub question 2b) showed that incorrect targeting on digital channels is very likely to cause the target audience to view a company as unprofessional and damage the reputation. (Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020)

A solution for these problems can be found in the design of the competition. One example is Hootsuite, which uses navigation tabs for the main message, so that the message can be edited per channel. Hootsuite also keeps the restrictions per channel in mind, by showing a character counter and the limit per channel. (Hootsuite, n.d.)

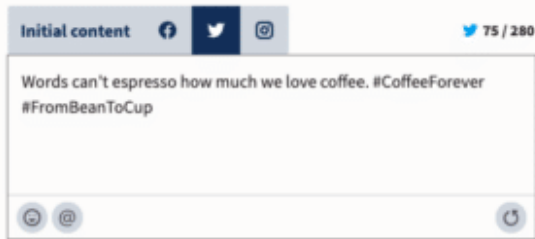


Figure 3: Creating a new message in Hootsuite (Hootsuite, n.d.)

Another design challenge for combining multiple channels, especially with narrowcasting and blog posts, are the differences in input fields. As shown in the research for sub question 2b, narrowcasting channels and blog post use a title, sub title and other input fields that social media do not need. Since there are no comparable platforms in this regard, this aspect was discussed with the client and it was decided that profiles would be added to the prototype. With the profiles, a certain selection of channels can be made with the correct selection of input fields.

7.1.3.3. User Experience Design

User experience design is the design of the user experience, which is how the user interacts with the product. The user experience usually is valued through the criteria *value* (does it give the user value?), *function* (does the product work?), *usability* (is the product easy to use?), *general impression* (is the product pleasant to use?). Additional important notes on user experience, is that it is about what the users both think and feel, additionally the user experience also depends on the context in which the product is used and lastly, the user experience may change over time (for example when a user gets used to a product and thus it becomes easier to use). (Babich, 2020)

3a: Which UX design laws are applicable to this project?

For UX Design theories, the Laws of UX website has been consulted. This is a website that dissects complex heuristics into relevant rules for user experience design. (Yablonski, 2022)

There are 21 UX laws, which are divided among the following 4 subjects: Heuristic, Principle, Gestalt and Cognitive bias.

- Heuristic
- Principle
- Gestalt
- Cognitive bias

(Yablonski, 2022)

The laws were scanned on characteristics that are relevant within the prototype. The laws that are applicable are the following:

Heuristic

- Hick's Law: Hick's law describes that it takes users more time to make a decision if there is a larger number of choices or if the choices are more complex. (Yablonski, 2022)

This law is applicable, because there is a large number of decisions to be made when posting for various channels at once, like scheduling, which can be complex as well.

- Jakob's Law: Jakob's law describes that the site should be similar to other sites or best practices, because the user is already used to other sites. This will help the user to be able to recognize how the site works faster. (Yablonski, 2022)

This law applies because the platform is a partially new concept and in order for users to be able to use the platform without too much effort, it is important for the platform to be intuitive and recognizable.

Principle

- Doherty threshold: This law describes that the highest productivity is reached when the system and the user are interacting at a pace of 400ms or less. (Yablonski, 2022)

This law is applicable because animations can be added to the prototype, using certain speeds. This law can be applied by limiting the length of animations and assuring the system works without delays.

- Tesler's Law: Tesler's law is a law that describes that all systems have a minimum complexity which cannot be lightened. It is important to reach that threshold, but not to simplify the system so much that the simplicity itself will become a problem. (Yablonski, 2022)

This law is applicable, because as stated before at Hick's law, it is a complex system with a variety of choices. These choices can be eliminated to simplify the prototype, but this will limit the user if taken too far.

Gestalt

- Law of Common Region: This law describes that elements of a product are perceived as being in groups, if they are surrounded by a clear boundary. (Yablonski, 2022)
- Law of Proximity: This law describes that elements are perceived in groups if they are close to each other. (Yablonski, 2022)
- Law of Uniform Connectedness: This law describes that elements that are connected by something visual, like a line, are perceived as grouped or related. (Yablonski, 2022)
- Law of Similarity: This law describes that elements that share visual similarities, are perceived as grouped or related. (Yablonski, 2022)

These four laws of Gestalt are all applicable, because grouped objects are often used within the prototype.

How these laws are applied in the prototype, is described in [chapter 7.3.3](#).

3b: Which qualitative design requirements are needed?

The design theory used for this project, is the set of design guidelines set up by the Nielsen Norman group. The Nielsen Norman group is a consulting firm, known for its UX research, that provides organizations world-wide with reliable guidance on user experience (Nielsen Norman Group, n.d.).

The most important guidelines for the prototype are the following:

General requirements for the full website

- The website provides a search box in a box shape, which makes it easy to be recognized, of at least 27 characters wide in order to fit multiple words
- The website provides a clear distinction between links by starting a link with the most important keyword and not repeating this keyword between links
- The website provides scalable content, adapting to the user's screen size or mobile phone
- The website provides the user with guidance on every page, during navigation
- The website provides the user with feedback, following an action or input
- The website provides the user with an error message, following an incorrect action or an error
- The website offers the most critical information on the website within the first view for the user at the top, at the most used window size (1024 x 768) (nr 66 in NNG list)

- The website provides the user with a scalable site, that adapts to different sizes and resolutions of screens

(Nielsen, 113 Design Guidelines for Homepage Usability, 2001)

Dashboard

The website of the Nielsen Norman Group describes guidelines for various parts of the website. The Nielsen Norman Group has dedicated an article to the design of website dashboards. They describe the term 'dashboard' as a metaphor, linked to the dashboards found in cars. They describe the most important feature of these dashboards as being that it shows essential information which the driver can absorb at a glance, without needing further thought. (Laubheimer, 2017)

- The dashboard provides the user with primarily visual data, instead of text, in order for the user being able to process this more easily
- The dashboard provides the user with a description of the visual data, if this is not clear from the data alone
- The dashboard should provide the user with a visual hierarchy in which the user can recognize the most important information first, due to position, size or contrast
- The dashboard shows the date and time for information that is time-sensitive
- The dashboard shows a clear indication when information was updated at a certain time, for example: "Last updated, date, time"

(Laubheimer, 2017)

Navigation

- The website provides a navigation area in a place on the website that is highly noticeable for the users, directly connected to the main body of the page
- The website provides a navigation area which shows similar items as grouped close to each other (group similar items)
- The navigation area of the website provides the users with easily recognizable links or icons
- The navigation provides emphasis on the starting points of the main (1-4) user tasks that users undertake when they visit the site

(Nielsen, 113 Design Guidelines for Homepage Usability, 2001)

These guidelines have been processed further within the requirements, which can be found in [chapter 7.1.7.](#)

7.1.3.4. Prototyping Tools

Prototyping is an experimental process during which ideas are processed into prototypes, which can be made from paper or made digitally. (Interaction Design Foundation, 2021) Prototyping tools are the tools used to create prototypes, which can be digital programs, websites or other platforms with which a user can create a prototype, for example for an app or a website.

4a: Which prototyping tools are popular choices for web design?

In order to determine the most-suited prototyping tool for this project, the existing and most widely used prototyping tools have been determined. This has been done by conducting desk research into commercial Google sources, due to the ever-changing nature of the tech world and the public use of prototyping tools. The following list of tools was obtained:

Tool	Website Just Creative (Cass, 2022)	Webflow (Cardello, 2021)	Webdesign (Lagno, 2021)	Webdesign inspiration (Webdesign Inspiration, 2021)	InApps (Inapps, 2022)	Digital Information World (Web desk, 2021)	Total number of mentions
1. Adobe XD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6
2. Figma	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6

3. InVision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4
4. Axure RP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		3
5. Marvel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		3
6. Framer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		3
7. Origami Studio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		3
8. Sketch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3
9. Webflow	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			3
10. UXPin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			3
11. Balsamiq		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3
12. Proto.io		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		2
13. JustInMind	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					2
14. FluidUI		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					1
15. Principle		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					1
16. Flinto						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1

Table 3 – Tools and number of mentions

The number of mentions of each tool was written down in order to be able to measure popularity and how widely these tools are used and recommended in the industry.

4b: What are the minimum features required for this project and which tools meet these requirements?

A few checks were done on features and characteristics of the tools, which are invaluable for this project. These concern compatibility with windows, the option to export code, conditional logic and the feature of global variables.

Compatibility with windows

Firstly, the tool needs to be compatible with the Windows operating system, which is the operating system that will be used during this thesis. Sketch, Flinto, Origami Studio, Principle & Supernova are not compatible with Windows and are removed.

Exporting code

Secondly, technical implementation is important. This project will focus on prototyping only, but after prototyping it is important for Syntraks Media that the prototype can be converted to code, including HTML, CSS and JavaScript. This includes the website layout, but also the interactivity that was built inside the tool. If the tool offers this feature, this will allow the programmer of Syntraks Media to quickly implement the prototype as a fully functional, online platform. Balsamiq (Alasdair, 2019), Proto.io (Proto.io, n.d.) and FluidUI (Fluid, n.d.) do not support this and have been removed.

Conditional logic

Lastly, the tool should offer the option to use conditional logic. With conditional logic, rules can be set within the prototype that only react when all of the conditions are met. These are rules containing if/then statements, which makes a prototype highly interactive. (Akhtar, 2018) The ideal situation would be a prototyping tool with conditional logic without code needed to implement this option, due to coding being time-consuming.

Tool	Support for conditional logic	Source
1. Adobe XD	Not supported	(Ayhan, 2014)
2. Figma	Not supported	(Jaco, 2021)
3. InVision	Only through code	(Invision Community, n.d.)

4. Axure RP	Supported	(Axure RP, n.d.)
5. Marvel	Not supported	(Coyle, n.d.)
6. Framer	Only through code	(Robinson, 2019)
7. UXPin	Supported	(Akhtar, 2018)
8. JustInMind	Supported	(Justinmind, n.d.)

Table 4: tools

Global variables

The use of 'global variables' indicates that data input by the user and other variables are 'saved' globally in the prototype, during the active session. This allows for prototype to offer a user experience that is as complete as possible, due to the prototype passing information between pages (Axure RP, n.d.).

Both Axure RP and UXPin (UXPin, n.d.) have the possibility for global variables. JustInMind does not include this feature and was removed from the list.

The tools that fulfil the basic requirements for this project are Axure RP and UXPin.

4c: Which prototyping tool is most suited for this project?

Due to the tools including the same features all-round, the final choice was made by testing both prototyping tools. After both prototyping tools had been tested, Axure RP was chosen as the final tool for this project due to personal, prior experience with this tool.

7.1.4. Expert Interview

Due to the large amount of marketing information available online, an expert was consulted for specific information. The goal of this interview was to obtain more information on the type of platform, the target audience, on competition, the Minimal Viable Product and on what could be the Unique Selling Point of this platform. Due to this interview still being a part of the preliminary phase, the interview was partly structured, with a few questions and topics beforehand.

The expert consulted is Corné Kox, a lecturer from the Hanze University, who is experienced in the field of user experience design and digital marketing. The expert interview was conducted as a partially structured interview due to the exploratory nature of the interview, with 6 questions established beforehand. The subjects of these questions are *Marketing Concepts*, *Functionality* and *Competition*. The questions and answers of the Expert Interview are viewed in [Appendix II](#).

The concept presented during this expert interview, was of a marketing platform with multiple channels integrated: social media, narrow casting, a web blog and printing press. The expert interview showed that the concept is very unique, the expert was not familiar with an existing platform like this. One of the other variations that came of ideation was also presented, a simple platform with only social media channels to post on. This variation was not deemed viable by the expert, as this concept has already been developed by many companies and the existing solutions offer much more than just the possibility to post on multiple channels, like statistics and deep analysis of the efficiency of the posts. Another outcome of the interview was that narrowcasting could possibly be a Unique Selling Point and it is easily integrated with the client's current services, as they already offer narrowcasting screens and services. (Kox, 2022)

On moving forward, the expert advised to set up a short needs research among the target audience, to pinpoint their needs and wishes. With the information of this research, create a Minimal Viable Product. (Kox, 2022)

7.1.5. Needs Survey: Target Audience

Following the expert's advice, a needs research was done with a **survey among the target audience**.

Goal and subjects

The survey is focused mainly on qualitative answers. For example, which marketing channels are in use, what the marketing challenges are, how content the target audience is with their marketing efforts and what they would need from a marketing platform. These questions were designed to for the goal of gaining insight on the target audience's thoughts, challenge and needs in regards to marketing and a platform as a possible solution.

The survey is divided into multiple subjects: background information, marketing in general, marketing channels, automation and the platform. These subjects include questions about the background of the company (number of employees, industry), on how many hours are spend on marketing and how content they are, which marketing channels are used and why, if any automation tools are used and if the target audience would be interested in the platform.

Distribution

This survey was distributed among communities of entrepreneurs and small business owners, mainly on LinkedIn. LinkedIn was chosen because it is well-known for professional use. A control question was added to the survey in order to ensure that the participants would fit the target audience, regarding the size of the company. Participations that did not fit the control question – companies that have more than 50 employees – were not counted in the results.

Survey materials

The survey materials can be found in [Appendix III](#). The materials consist of the accompanying message (for e-mail and Linked-in), the introduction, and the survey. The materials are available in both English and Dutch, since the target audience is Dutch.

For the Linked-in post, the description was made shorter and the call to action (the link in the post) was earlier in the post. This was done in order to make sure that people have the opportunity to open the survey before getting discouraged or being turned away by the text and description. Furthermore, Linked-In posts only show the first few lines if the post is too long to be shown fully at once. This is why was made sure that the first 2 lines summarized the subject, the target audience, the action that was needed (to answer a few questions) and the amount of time this would take.

The post also did not contain any salutation or valediction, because this is not usual for LinkedIn posts and because the name of the person who posts the message is already visible at the top of the post.

Results

The survey was filled in by 21 participants, consisting of one-man companies (52,4%), micro companies with 2-5 employees (33,3%) and small companies with up to 10 employees (14,3%). Most of these companies are part of the industries: ICT and Media (33,3%), Culture Sports and Recreation (19%), Business Services (19%) and Other Industries (14,3%).

The most important results of this survey are the channels that are used and their reasons, the most important challenges, their opinion towards automation and their needs and expectations of a marketing platform.

Challenge

Time proved to be the most important marketing challenge to the participants, which was chosen 17 times. This is followed by knowledge (14 times) and Budget (13 times).

Out of the 21 participants, 6 were discontent about their number of hours spend on marketing, 8 were neutral and 7 were content about this number.

Channels

The channels that are most often used by this target audience, are Websites, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and E-mail. Other channels which were chosen less often are Youtube, Blogs, and printed works like posters and brochures/flyers. The target audience also added a few channels of their own: Pinterest, Podcasts and Webinars.

The most common reasons for these channels are that they are easy to use, that the target audience uses these channels, they are low cost and easily combinable. A few participants (5) also indicated that they have little knowledge to base their channel choice on, indicating the importance of the lack of knowledge as a challenge.

Automation

Only few participants use automated services, the most common reasons to not use these services are that they are not personalized enough, are costly and that there is not enough content. In the cases that these services are used, they are mostly used for e-mail marketing, (weekly newsletters) in order to save time.

The platform

The preferred device for using the platform on is a desktop or laptop (61,9%) or a phone (28,6%) The most important functions and characteristics that the participants need in the prototype are a post planning function, ease of use and that it presents a clear and organised overview of the content and the planning.

The price is decisive for the participants. If the price is right, at least 50% is interested in the prototype. The price indications given ranged from €5,- to €50,- per month. The largest part of the answers were between a price of €10,- to €20,-.

7.1.6. Justification of desk research sources

Desk research has the advantage that it is an easily accessible method with which many expert's documents can be collected quickly. However, the disadvantage is that the information can be subjective or incorrect. To avoid this, the sources that have been collected through literature research have been checked for author, date and the number a document has been cited. The author should be independent from a company which the research could be about and the date of the source is not allowed to be older than 10 years, in order to be used in the research. The article should at least be cited a few times and the amount of cites should be higher when the article has been published a longer time ago. This check established that it was a recent, high regarded source. (University of Groningen, 2017) The main search engine that was used, was Google. Both the commercial Google search engine and Google Scholar were used, for different purposes. Google scholar was used to find scientific articles. The commercial Google search engine was used to find qualitative data, like public opinions and popular tools or to find data which becomes outdated very quickly, like the best tools to use for UX design. To ensure good results, only the first 2 pages of search results were used. It was assumed that the most valuable and correct information is presented in these first pages. Apart from Google, the online Hanze Library source was searched for scientific articles.

7.1.7. Design requirements

Out of the interviews with the client, a number of requirements could be formulated. These are as follows, shown in table 5 and 6. The sources of the requirements are as follows:

- Client interviews: [Appendix XII](#).
- Guidelines from the Nielsen Norman Group: [chapter 7.3.3.3](#).
- Interview with the web developer of Syntraks Media: [chapter 7.2.4](#).
- Desk research: multichannel marketing: [chapter 7.1.3.2](#).
- Best practices: [chapter 7.1.3.2](#).
- Survey among the target audience: [chapter 7.1.5](#).
- Interview with the target audience: [chapter 7.2.8](#).

Client requirements			
Requirement		MoSCoW	Source
1.	The product should consist of an online platform, on which the target audience can manage their own needs.	Must	Client interview
2.	The platform should include narrowcasting services.	Must	
3.	The platform should be easy to use and intuitive.	Must	
4.	The platform should include a dashboard.	Must	
5.	The main goal of the platform, placing a post, can be completed within 2 clicks.	Must	

Table 5 - Client requirements

The design theory used for this project, is the set of design guidelines set up by the Nielsen Norman group. The Nielsen Norman group is a consulting firm, known for its UX research, that provides organisations world-wide with reliable guidance on user experience (Nielsen Norman Group, n.d.). These design guidelines are the basis for the Qualitative requirements. Because of the complexity and the multiple pages of the product, the Qualitative requirements are sub-divided in requirements for the whole prototype and per product page: dashboard, new post page, navigation.

The Functional requirements are based on best practices and interviews with the target audience and the client. Lastly, the Business requirements are based on interview with the client.

Design Requirements			
Part of the prototype		MoSCoW	Source
Qualitative			
Prototype in general			
1.	The website provides a search box in a box shape, which makes it easy to be recognized, of at least 27 characters wide in order to fit multiple words.	Should	Nielsen Norman Group (Nielsen, Top 10 Guidelines for Homepage Usability, 2002)
2.	The website provides a clear distinction between links by starting a link with the most important keyword and not repeating this keyword between links.	Must	
3.	The website provides scalable content, adapting to the user's screen size or mobile phone.	Should	Nielsen Norman Group (Nielsen, Top 10 Guidelines for Homepage Usability,

			2002) Interview with the web developer of Syntraks Media
4.	The website provides the user with guidance on every page, during navigation.	Must	Nielsen Norman Group (Nielsen, Top 10 Guidelines for Homepage Usability, 2002)
5.	The website provides the user with feedback, following an action or input.	Must	
6.	The website provides the user with an error message, following an incorrect action or an error.	Must	
7.	The website offers the most critical information on the website within the first view for the user at the top, at the most used window size (1024 x 768) (nr 66 in NNG list).	Should	
Dashboard			
8.	The dashboard provides the user with primarily visual data, instead of text, in order for the user being able to process this more easily.	Must	Nielsen Norman Group (Nielsen, 113 Design Guidelines for Homepage Usability, 2001)
9.	The dashboard provides the user with a description of the visual data, if this is not clear from the data alone.	Must	
10.	The dashboard should provide the user with a visual hierarchy in which the user can recognize the most important information first, due to position, size or contrast.	Should	
11.	The dashboard shows the date and time for information that is time-sensitive.	Should	
12.	The dashboard shows a clear indication when information was updated at a certain time, for example: "Last updated, date, time".	Should	
New post			
13.	The page provides the user with information on how many words have been typed in the message.	Must	Desk research: Multichannel Marketing
14.	The page provides the user with feedback on how many characters are left to write for every channel.	Must	Best practices
15.	The page provides the user with 'new post profiles', in order to limit the channels and input fields to the ones that the user needs at that moment.	Must	Client interview
16.	The page provides the user with post templates for WordPress posts and Narrowcasting posts, with information on how the content will be aligned.	Must	Client interview
17.	The page provides the user with a choice to export a Narrowcasting post to a certain playlist.	Must	Client interview
18.	The page warns the user when an image is not at the right size for the specific platform.	Should	Interview Royal Dutch Frisian-handball Association
Navigation			

19.	The website provides a navigation area in a place on the website that is highly noticeable for the users, directly connected to the main body of the page.	Must	Nielsen Norman Group (Nielsen, 113 Design Guidelines for Homepage Usability, 2001)
20.	The website provides a navigation area which shows similar items as grouped close to each other (group similar items).	Must	
21.	The navigation area of the website provides the users with easily recognizable links or icons.	Must	
22.	The navigation provides emphasis on the starting points of the main (1-4) user tasks that users undertake when they visit the site.	Must	
Functional			
1.	As a user I want to be able to create a new post from every main page within the tool.	Must	Best practices
2.	As a user I want to be able to view live and expired posts in the tool.	Must	
3.	As a user I want to be able to view a graph with recent activity in the tool.	Could	
4.	As a user I want to be able to save the progress on a post as a draft.	Must	
5.	As a user I want to be able to export the text from one post profile to another profile.	Should	
6.	As a user I want to be able to make a selection of the social media channels to post to.	Must	
7.	As a user I want to be able to add Media to my posts.	Must	
8.	As a user I want to be able to upload, save and view marketing materials to the tool.	Could	
9.	As a user I want to be able to input and edit my own information in the tool: photo, name, role.	Could	
10.	As a user I want to be able to create a post for Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and for a website.	Must	Needs survey Interview Royal Dutch Frisian-handball Association
11.	As a user I want to be able to add multiple social media accounts of the same channel to the prototype.	Should	Best practices Interview Royal Dutch Frisian-handball Association
12.	As an owner/manager I want to be able to add employees to the tool and assign roles.	Could	Client interview
13.	As an owner/manager I want to be able to change the company's settings and info in the tool.	Could	Client interview
14.	As an owner/manager I want to be able to link my own services to the tool.	Could	Client interview
Business			
1.	The client wants to offer relevant services to their customers by means of a digital media hub.	Must	Client interview

2.	Syntraks Media wants to increase customer loyalty, by means of a digital media hub.	Must	
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Table 6 - Qualitative, Functional and Business requirements

7.2. CONCEPTUALISATION

7.2.1. Ideation with the SCAMPER method

In order to come up with good ideas for the prototype, the initial client requirements were reviewed and the method SCAMPER was applied. The initial client requirements are:

1: The product should consist of an online platform, on which the target audience can manage their own needs.
2: The platform should include narrowcasting services.
3: The platform should be easy to use and intuitive.
4: The platform should include a dashboard.
5: The main goal of the platform, placing a post in multiple channels, can be completed within 2 clicks.

Table 7: client requirements

According to these requirements, the prototype was pushed in the direction of a marketing platform with a dashboard, with which can be posted to several channels at once.

SCAMPER

The SCAMPER method was chosen due to the complexity of the product, which requires multiple points of view. The scamper method is a method with which functions and features of an existing- or future product, are Substituted, Combined, Adapted, Modified, put to other Purposes or Eliminated. (HAN University of Applied Sciences, n.d.)

Since this product did not exist yet, the scamper method was applied to competitors in the marketing automation field. These are among the all-in-one tools like HubSpot, social media platforms like HootSuite, collaboration tools like Trello, narrow casting services and template design tools. These tools were found during desk research for chapters [Workflow Management 7.1.3.1](#) and [Multichannel Marketing 7.1.3.2](#).

Step 1: DIVERGE

During this process, the way of thinking was switched between diverging and converging multiple times. Firstly, divergent ideation was applied to the marketing platform, ideating about a new way to think about the product and functions that could be added. Especially the scamper aspects Adapt, Modify and Purpose were useful for diverging. The base idea for this step was that collaboration is important within the prototype. Employees of a company should be able to see if marketing outings have been posted, should be able to get feedback and they should be able to contact Syntraks Media for questions and changes. This led to the following points:

Adapt: what can be added?

- A ticket system, so that customers can make tickets for Syntraks Media if they need support.
- A chat-system, so that customers can talk to Syntraks Media and to their colleagues, for feedback.
- A collaboration-system, with tasks that can be given a status like to-do, in progress and done.
- Draft outings, which can be saved to that colleagues can give feedback.

Modify

The product could be developed for another platform, like for mobile or for a tablet. This fits with social media.

Purpose

The product could be part of another industry, due to the collaboration idea. It could be a marketing collaboration tool or a support tool for Syntraks Media.

Idea 1: A collaboration-focused tool

The first idea was of a tool that is focused on collaboration, to-do lists and chat- and ticket systems so that employees can stay in contact with each other and with Syntraks Media. This idea was focused on solving the challenge of collaboration for the target audience. This tool could be used on a different device than was initially the idea: a tablet or phone, instead of on a desktop.

Step 2: CONVERGE

After the first step of diverging, it was needed to take a step back to the initial requirements of the client, including narrowcasting and being able to post to multiple channels. The most important aspects of scamper were Substitute and Eliminate.

Substitute

Narrowcasting could be substituted with social media services, which are very popular. Narrowcasting services are more niche and limited to target audience with a physical location.

Eliminate

Collaboration functions, CRM services and analytics could be eliminated in order to keep the product simple, as requested within the requirements.

Idea 2: Tool with a focus on narrowcasting and printed work

The second idea was a smaller tool, focused on the posting of a message on multiple channels. This tool would only include narrowcasting and printing, because narrowcasting is important to the client due to their current services and companies with narrowcasting usually have physical stores, so printed materials are often used as well.

Idea 3: A tool that is focused solely on social media

The third idea was a more strongly converged idea, with a focus on only social media channels. The reason for this is that social media channels and their requirements are very alike and are easily combined, compared to other channels.

Step 3: DIVERGE

After thinking of these more 'compact' ideas with fewer functionality, divergent thinking was applied again. For this step, the Combine aspect of scamper was important, to combine some of the features of the previous ideas.

Combine

Combining the channels narrowcasting, social media, blog posts and printed work.

Idea 4: A platform focused on pure cross-posting, with multiple channels

The fourth idea was to create a platform with multiple channels: social media, narrowcasting, WordPress and printed work. This tool would be only focused on cross-posting, which means that the same exact message would be sent to the multiple channels.

Idea 5: A tool with personalized cross-posting to multiple channels

For the fifth idea, the fourth idea was diverged on a little more. Instead of limiting the tool to purely cross-posting with the exact same message, the tool would allow the users the choice to personalize their message before sending it to multiple channels.

Judging the ideas

These ideas were judged with the client and with the results from earlier research, to choose the idea that was most-suited.

Idea 1: A collaboration-focused tool

The first idea was discussed with the client, but was deemed to complex for what they were looking for. Additionally, the interview with the web developer showed that the ticket system could not be

integrated into a new platform and they do not have the possibility to switch ticket systems. (Roeleveld, 2022)

Idea 2: Tool with a focus on narrowcasting and printed work

The expert confirmed that adding narrowcasting to the tool could be an important unique selling point, due to the narrowcasting services the client is already providing. The client already has access to the customers that would possibly use this service. (Kox, 2022) However, printing is very complex to add to such a platform. Additionally, the client expressed wanting to add social media and web site as well, as these are popular channels and it would allow them to expand their services outside of their current customer base.

Idea 3: A tool that is focused solely on social media

This idea was discussed with the client and the expert, however the expert ([chapter 7.1.4.](#)) concluded that this platform would be too limited to provide real value to the market. There are already many platforms that offer social media posting functions for a low cost, but with analytics involved. This platform would not be able to compete. (Kox, 2022)

Idea 4: A platform focused on pure cross-posting, with multiple channels

This idea was not chosen after obtaining the results from the needs survey ([chapter 7.1.5.](#)). This survey showed that the target audience values personalization in their messages and cross-posting the same message would not bring value.

Idea 5: A tool with personalized cross-posting to multiple channels, without printing

The final idea was a marketing platform with posting to social media, narrowcasting and a WordPress blog. The idea that was chosen was the fifth idea, because it included all the important functions that the client was looking for, like the amount and types of channels, personalization and the ability to post to multiple channels. Printing was removed for the first version, due to its complexity. This idea was processed within a User Flow Chart, which is discussed in the following chapter.

7.2.2. The User Flow Chart and the Minimal Viable Product

The Minimal Viable Product and the Complete User Flow Chart can be found in [Appendix I.](#) Within this flow chart, the most important pages for the marketing platform have been visualized: the Dashboard, Outings, Materials et cetera. Furthermore, the most important subjects and functions the users can use on every page have been added. The User flow Chart is a visualisation of the journey a user would be able to take through the prototype, which starts at the landing page (in the top right), after which the user can login or register and then accesses the Dashboard. At the Dashboard, the user can go to one of these main pages to see outings, channels or other marketing aspects.

After discussing this flow chart with the client, the Minimal Viable Product has been determined as the pages: Dashboard, Outings/Campaigns, Channels and Materials. These pages were further developed in the prototype. Other pages, like the landing page, company page and the login screen, were determined not to be part of this project.

7.2.3. Interview client

The interview during which the User Flow Chart was discussed, like discussed in chapter 7.2.2., took place on the 11th of April in Groningen. The full summary of the interview can be read in [Appendix XII.](#)

The main goal of this interview was determining the MVP by using the User Flow Chart as a walk-through of the most extensive version of the prototype.

7.2.4. Interview Web Developer Syntaks Media

The web developer of Syntaks Media was interviewed to learn more about technical restrictions, the programmer's needs for the prototyping tool and development-specific requirements for the end

product. The goal was to gain insight of the developer's needs and to take those into account during the project. The interview questions are found in [Appendix VII](#).

The subjects of the questions are Implementation, Functions and Other questions. This interview was planned for the beginning of the project, but was delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. The following are the most important results of the interview, arranged per subject of the answers.

Prototyping tools

It is unknown to the developer if the prototyping tool will produce usable HTML, CSS and JavaScript, since the results can vary greatly among prototyping tools. This does not change the fact that such a tool can give a good view of the elements, animations and their coherence, making it very useful. (Roeleveld, 2022)

Developer needs

It is important to reuse the same elements and the same CSS styles, to simplify the implementation of the end product. The advice is to create a style guide and to be consistent. For the developer to be able to work independently, it is important that the style guide and the design itself are available to the developer. (Roeleveld, 2022)

Constraints and requirements

There are no specific constraints to take into account. However, it is important for the prototype to be usable on multiple systems, like laptops and phones, and different screen sizes. In order for the prototype to be accessible to a broad range of people, it is advised to read online guidelines, like the Mozilla guidelines, for rules on stimulus processing (do not use too many bouncing or blinking elements, unless it can be turned off) and motor problems (do not use very small buttons or moving targets). An example is ARIA. (Roeleveld, 2022) ARIA stands for Accessible Rich Internet Applications and it described by Mozilla as: "a set of [roles](#) and [attributes](#) that define ways to make web content and web applications (especially those developed with JavaScript) more accessible to people with disabilities." (MDN Contributors, 2022)

Testing

It is important to test the prototype with older devices, to make sure that it is compatible. (Roeleveld, 2022)

7.2.5. Card sorting

Card sorting was applied to the main subjects of the prototype, which would be a part of the navigation bar. The navigation bar consisted of the following 'cards': Dashboard, Calendar, Drafts, Materials and Feed. These were presented to the target audience, during the interviews and sorted by the participants in an intuitive way. The results are presented in Appendix IX.

The positions for Dashboard and Materials were unanimous, Dashboard was placed in the first position during every test. Materials was placed on the last position during every test. Feed was chosen for the second position, by 60% of the participants. Calendar was split between the second and third position, with 40% and 40%, but was placed on the third position due to Feed being placed on the second. Drafts was placed on the fourth position by 60% of the participants.

Out of the card sorting method followed that the most intuitive order for the target audience consisted of the order: Dashboard, Feed, Calendar, Drafts and Materials.

7.2.6. Interview target audience: Royal Dutch Frisian Handball Association

Interviewer: Imme van der Made

Interviewee: Hendrik & Rianne, KNKB at Franeker

Date: 18-05-22

Location: Franeker, KNKB, Royal Dutch Frisian-Handball Association

The goal of this interview was to obtain more specific data about the target audience and about requirements, to support the data from the needs survey. The questions and answers can be viewed in [Appendix V](#). This information has also been used to expand the persona, which can be viewed in [Appendix VIII](#).

The most important results were as follows:

Marketing challenges

Time, money, a lack of overview of the different channels and their outings and what colleagues have done. Additionally, there is no grip on if tasks have been done, the workflow is not optimal and posts cannot be scheduled ahead.

Concrete actions for prototype

- Add LinkedIn as a channel

Requirements

- Being able to change the message per channel, since they use every channel for a specific purpose
- A planning that can be viewed by multiple employees
- Planned messages can be edited or cancelled
- Show multiple messages that were send at once as a group or campaign
- Add a week-overview on the Dashboard
- Being able to use the platform on a phone, with the planning at the centre of it

7.2.7. Concept development

For concepting was looked at competition as an example for the design direction. The competition to be looked at, was determined by what the most important aspects of the platform. These aspects are that the platform needs to post to multiple channels at once, it has a dashboard and there is social media management needed. Because of these aspects, the most-used social media tools were used as examples, because they include multiple channels, social media channels and all include a dashboard. These are Hootsuite, LinkedIn Business and Sprout Social (Worthington, 2022)(determined in [chapter 7.1.3.1](#)).

Dashboards

In order to come up with inspiration for a good Dashboard design, HootSuite, LinkedIn Business and Sprout were looked at.

The Hootsuite dashboard looks as displayed in figure 4. The website shows a dashboard with mainly visual options, grouped within cards and with a few important data showed on the dashboard. (Hootsuite, n.d.)

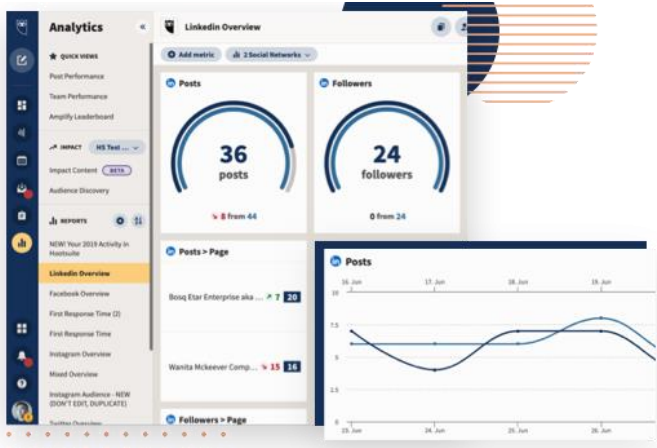


Figure 4: The dashboard of Hootsuite

The LinkedIn Business dashboard is displayed in figure 5. This dashboard offers a lot more information than Hootsuite. The most important data is depicted with a large font or figure and with a signal colour (light blue) and data is grouped together in 'cards'. (Octoboard, n.d.)

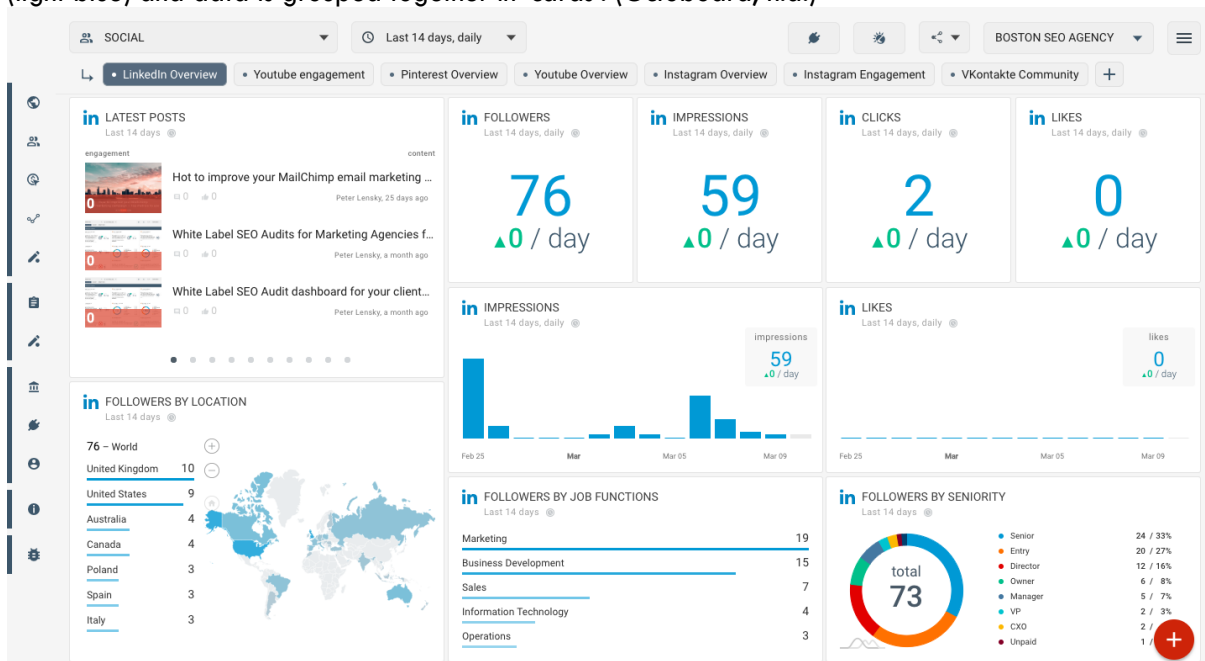


Figure 5: the dashboard of LinkedIn Business

Lastly, Sprout Social was looked at, shown in figure 6. What stands out for Sprout Social, is the use of more signal colours all over the page. There is less data shown on the page than for LinkedIn Business, but it is grouped together instead of all shown apart like for Hootsuite. (Sprout Social, n.d.)

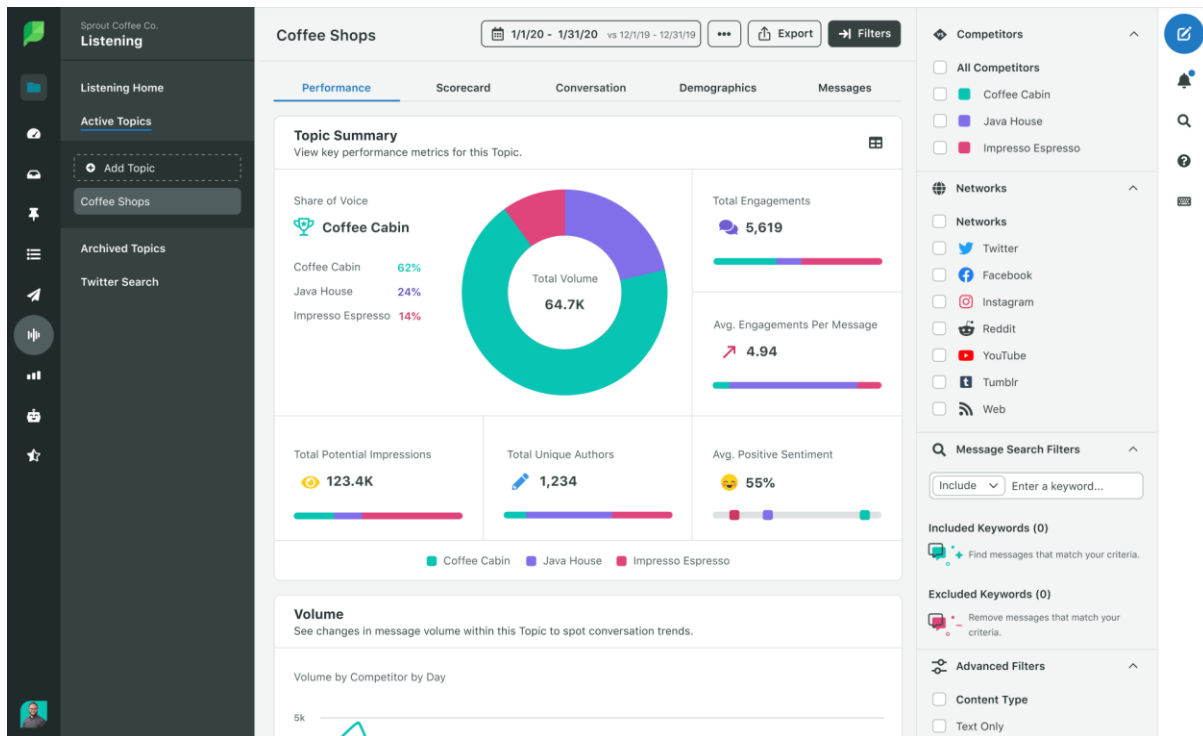


Figure 6: the dashboard of Sprout social

Social Media Management

General

Most of the sources for the previous subject can be reused for social media management, as these are all social media management platforms.

The things that stand out in the screenshots of these tools are the following:

- The websites use a side bar for main navigation, with icons
- There is often a smaller top-bar navigation
- The side-bar and top-bar have colours that make them stand out from the other elements on the page
- The logo of the company is displayed in the top-right of the tool
- Icons are used often

New post page

For the page for creating new posts, the examples showed that it is good practise to allow users to be able to create a different post per channel. The original message could be written down and then the message could be personalized per channel. Additionally, the tool lets the user choose social media accounts and counts words for every channel, due to differences in restrictions per channel. They also allow for users to add hashtags and media.

Lastly, the tools have in common that they showed a preview on the right side, so that the users can view what the message will look like on the certain channel.

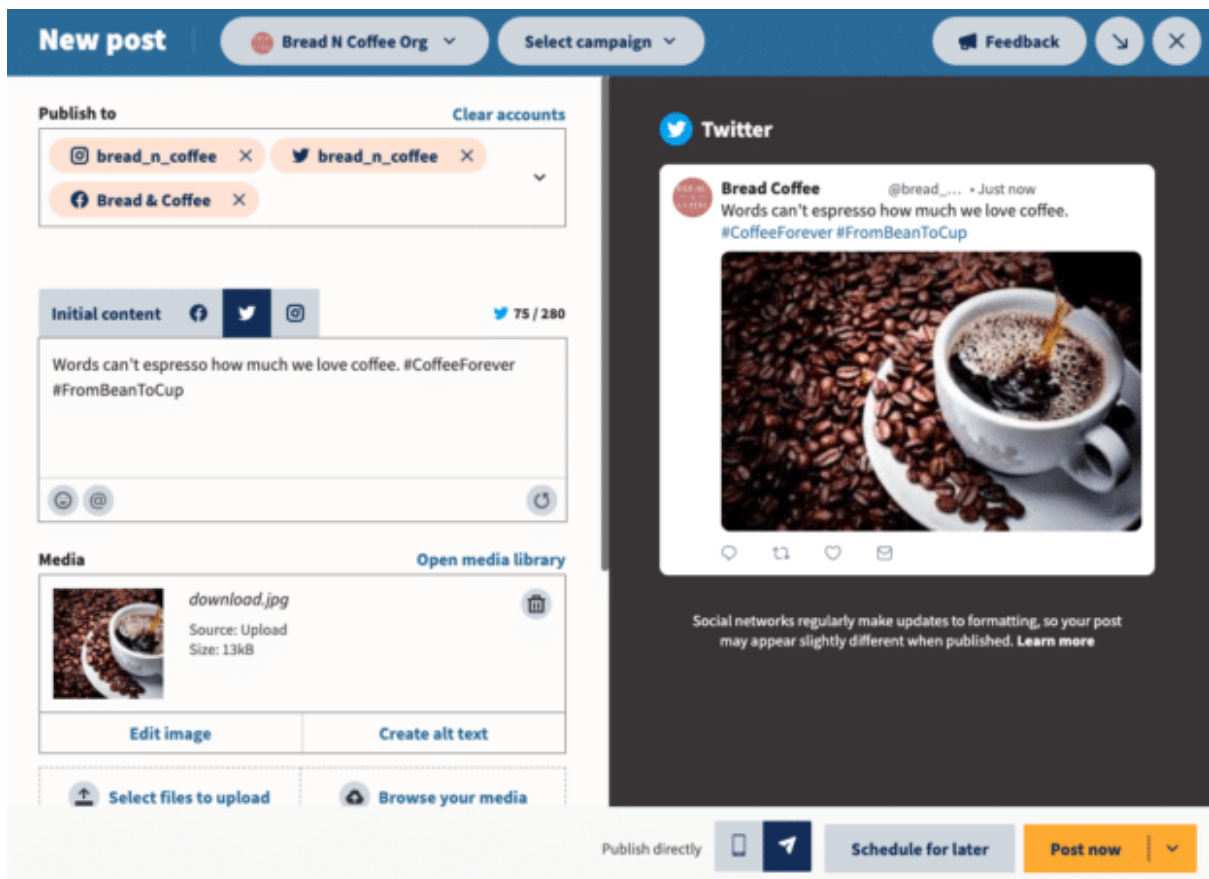


Figure 7: the New Post page within Hootsuite (Hootsuite, n.d.)

Planning

Another thing the tools all have, is the option to view a planning as can be seen below in the screenshot of Hootsuite in figure 8.

The planning is shown in a calendar form, with a weekly or monthly view. The posts, the content and the channels are displayed in this view.

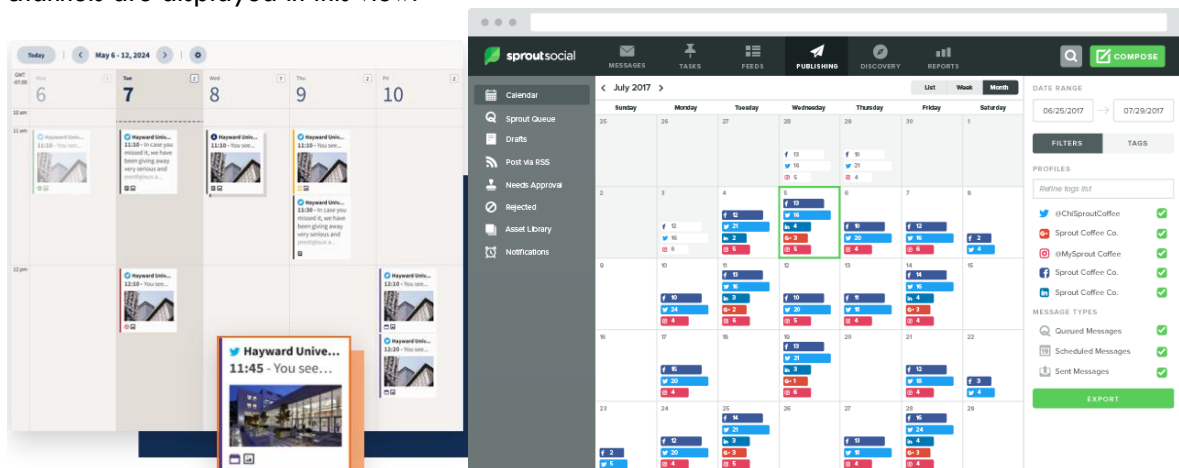


Figure 8: The planning page within Hootsuite (Hootsuite, n.d.) Figure...: the planning page within Sprout social(Sprout Social, n.d.)

Streams

Lastly, the platforms all show a feed or stream, in which the user can view posts, likes and followers.

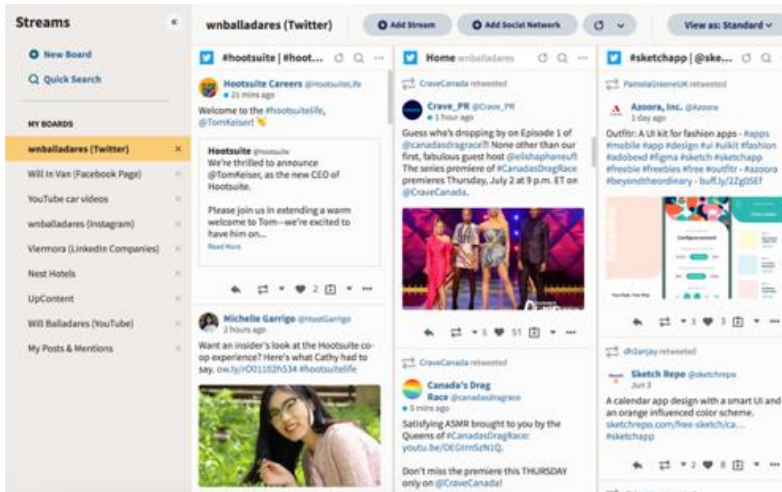


Figure 9: The streams page in Hootsuite (Hootsuite, n.d.)

Concept

The first concept was created in Figma. This chapter discusses the first concept and the changes that were made.

The concept consisted of the following pages: a landing page, sign in page, dashboard and new post modal. The landing page and sign in page were included at first, but was determined as not needed after determining the minimal viable product.

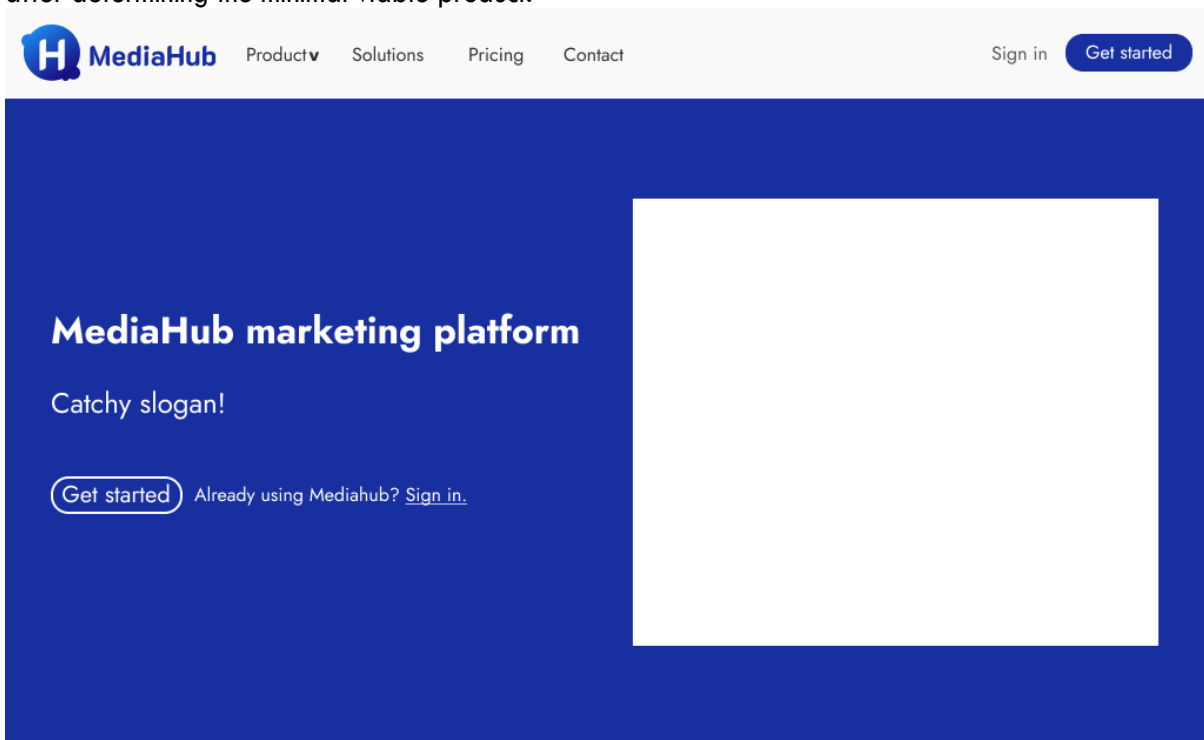


Figure 10: The Landing page 1



Figure 11: Signing up

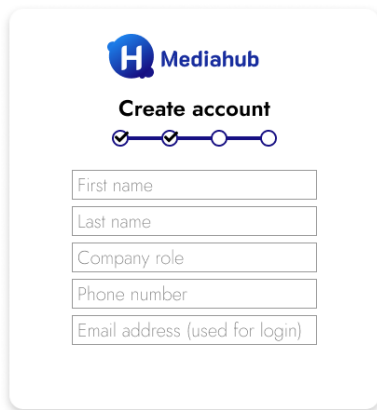


Figure 12: Signing up

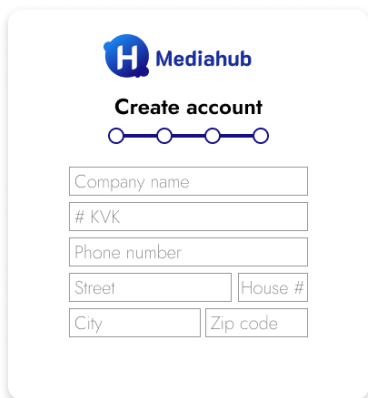


Figure 13: Signing up

H Mediahub

Create account

○ — ○ — ○ — ○

First name

Last name

Company role

Phone number

Email address (used for login)

Figure 14: Signing up

H Mediahub

Create account

✓ — ✓ — ✓ — ○

First name

Last name

Company role

Phone number

Email address (used for login)

Figure 15: Signing up

The dashboard was meant to display information at a first glance for the users, the outings page would display the recent and future outings that were (to be) posted, the channels page would describe all of the channels and the posts per channel and lastly, the materials page would describe all of the materials that were uploaded to the platform.

The concept primarily uses a side-bar for navigation and secondarily the top-bar as well, for a photo of the user and the option to create a new post.

The first and second version can be seen in the figure below. The sidebar with high hue in the first photo, overwhelms the rest of the page. It is too present.

In the second version, the sidebar is lighter and the page seems more balanced. However, the page lacks strong lines. The contrast seems too weak. Additionally, the logo and the 'new post' button attract the user's view, but they are very far away from each other and the centre of the page. This does not comply with the design requirements, which state that the most important parts of the website should be displayed from left to right, according to the direction in which Dutch people view and read a page.

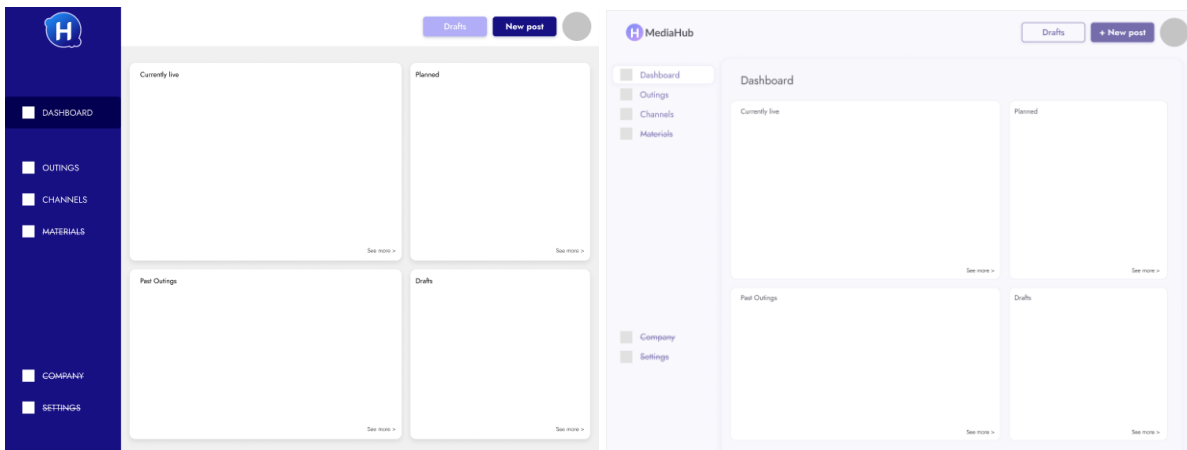


Figure 16: the first and second concept vesion

The third version is seen below. The “New post” button is moved to a more central point, so that the user sees it more quickly and there is less strain on the eyes/brain, because the attention does not have to be divided anymore between two separate parts of the screen. However, in the third version the upper bar is not very clear and it is unclear what this platform would look like within a webpage.

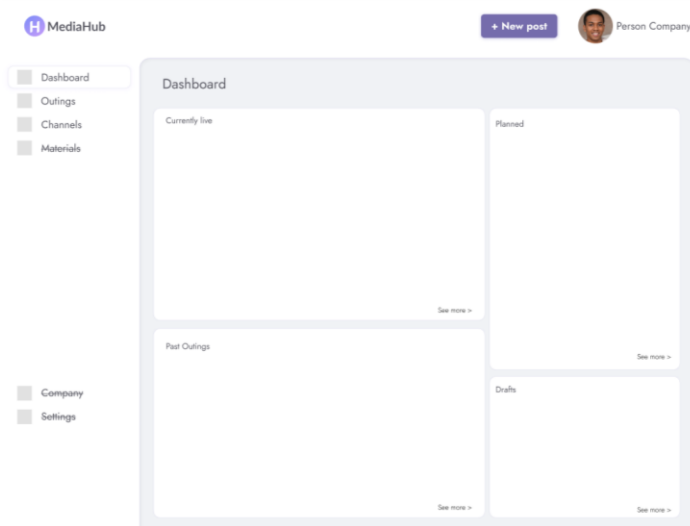


Figure 17: the third concept version

For the 4th version, the upper navigation bar is remade to be clearer, with a slight shadow added underneath, and the left-side navigation bar options are brought closer together so that they appear more grouped.

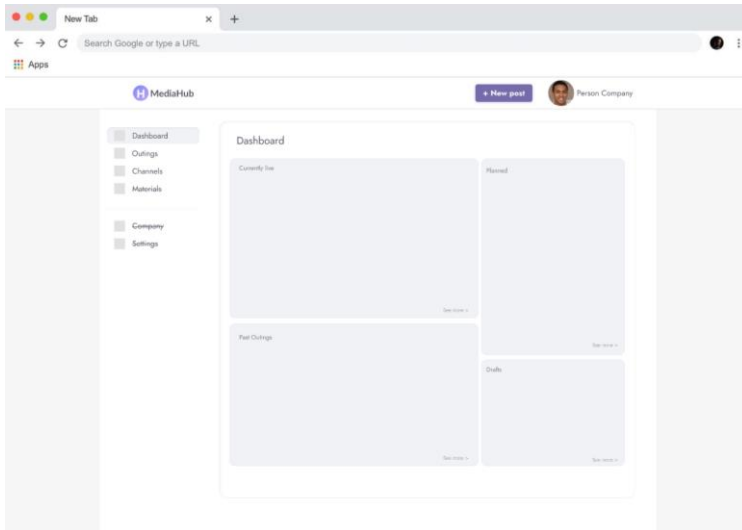


Figure 18: the fourth concept version

Apart from the Dashboard page, the following New Post modal was included in this first concept. However, this version included many layers with several navigation tabs within each other in order to include all of the channels at any time. This made the modal too complex.

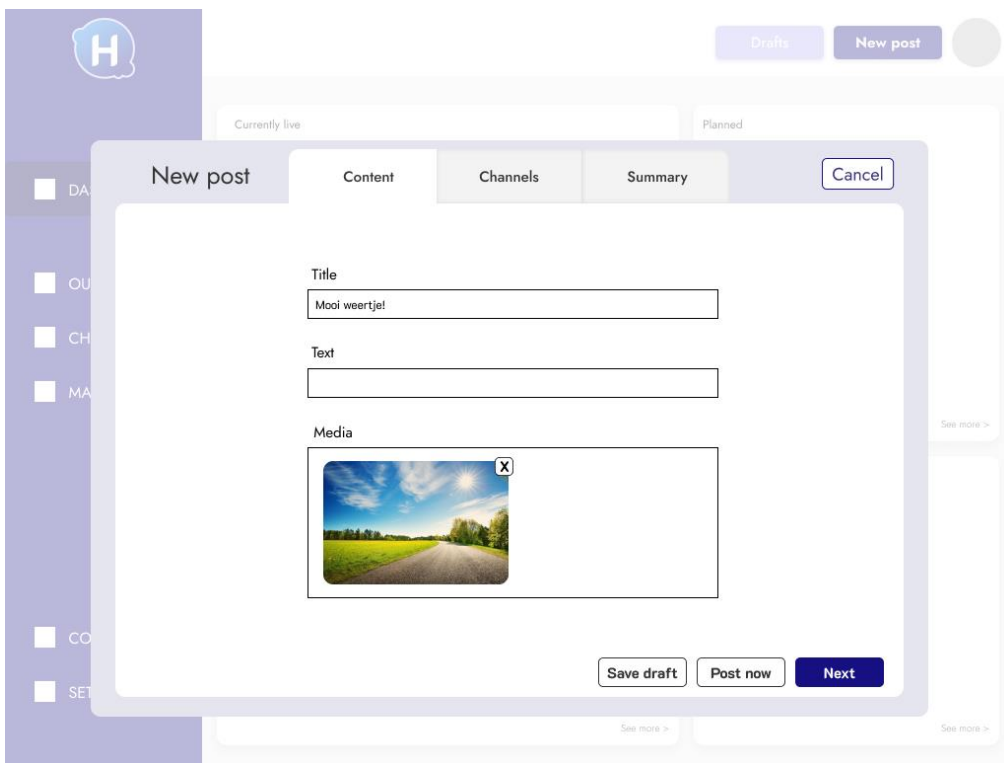


Figure 19: The New Post modal1

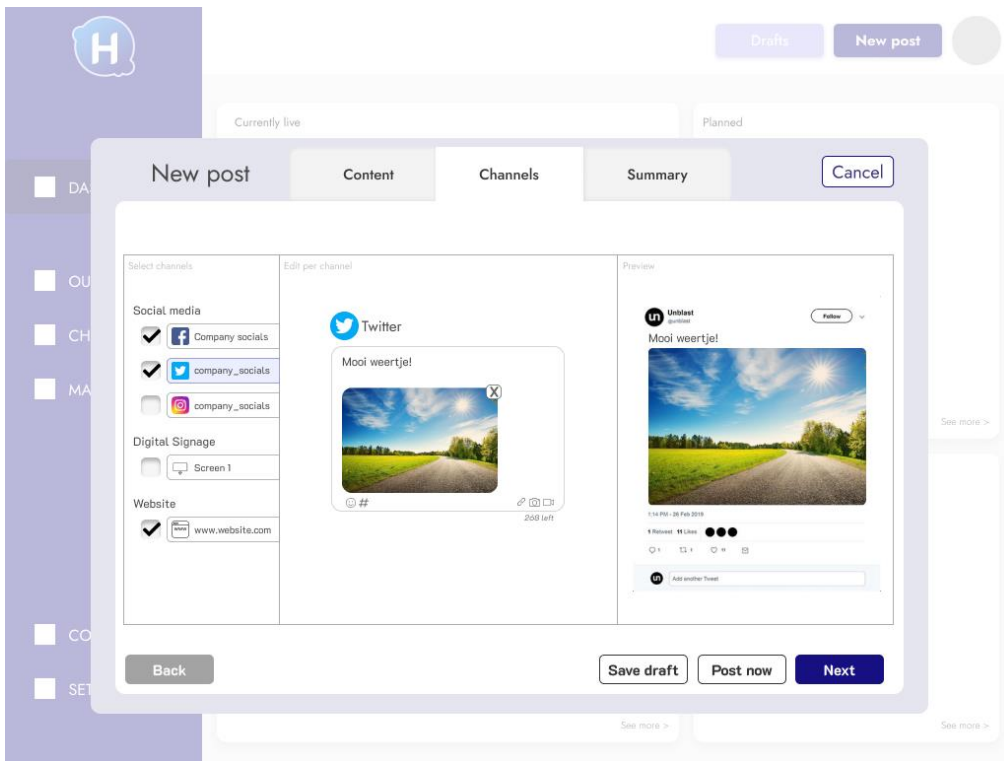


Figure 20: The New Post modal2

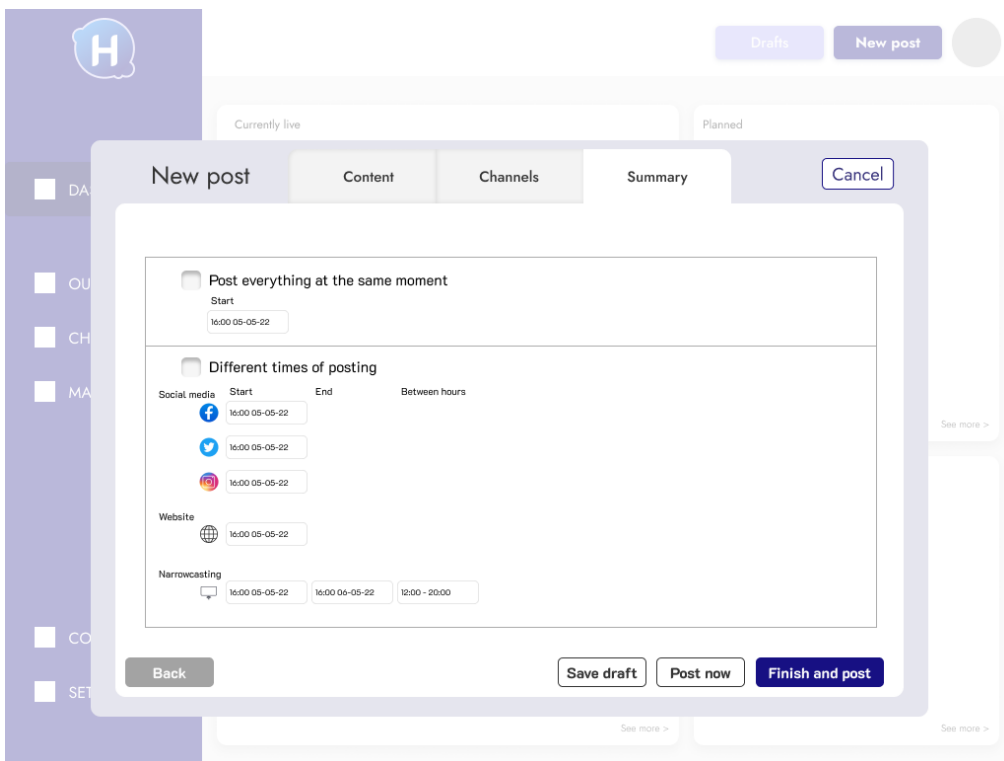


Figure 21: The New Post modal3

7.3. PROTOTYPING

7.3.1. Design Pattern Search

For the Design Pattern Search, examples of the competition of the concepting phase were used as well as a website recommended by the CMD methods pack: *UI Patterns*. This website provides a wide range of design patterns. (UI patterns, n.d.)

The most important design patterns are the drop-down menu, the modal, navigation tabs, thumbnails and live previews.

Drop-down menu

The drop-down menu is used for certain choices in the platform, which need to be accessed quickly. (UI patterns, n.d.) Examples for use in the platform are the profile choice and choice for templates and playlists when the user creates a New Post.

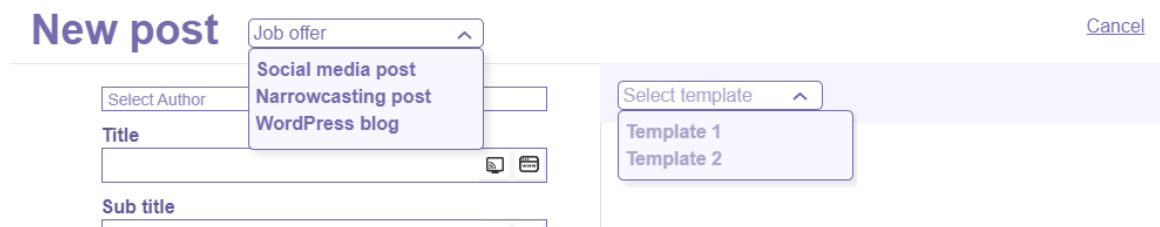


Figure 22: the use of drop-down menus in the prototype

Modal

Modals are used when the user has started an action that needs to be finished or cancelled before returning to the original page. (UI patterns, n.d.) This has been applied in the prototype in various places, for example for the new post page and for changing the added media in the prototype. These are actions during which conscious choices need to be made by the user.

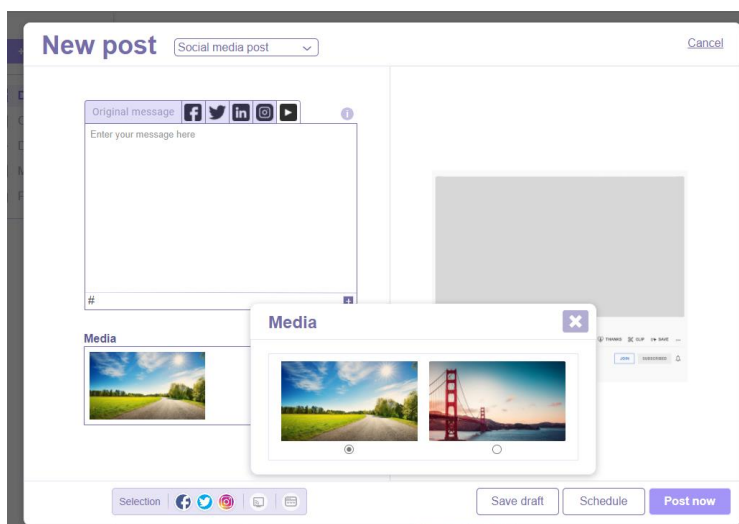


Figure 23: the use of modals in the prototype, applied to the new post screen and the media screen

Navigation tabs

Navigation tabs are used when the content needs to be separated into different sections of which the user needs a clear view on the current location. (UI patterns, n.d.) This was applied within the prototype

for the personalization of the message for various channels, during which it is important that the user knows which channel is personalized at any moment. This is one of the best practices of the platforms of the previous sub chapter: concepting. The application can be viewed in the figure below.

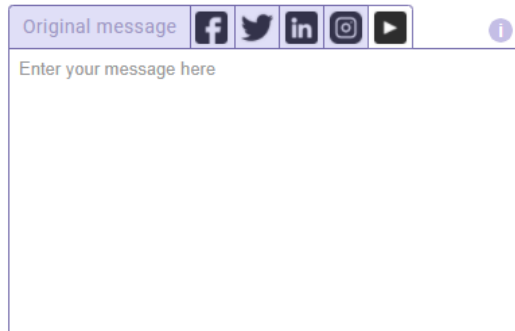


Figure 24: the use of navigation tabs in the prototype

Thumbnails

Thumbnails are a way to view multiple images at once without forcing the user to download the images. (UI patterns, n.d.) This is applied on every page within the prototype, for all of the images that have been uploaded before. This is especially important on the Materials page, as shown below, where the users can view all of the images.

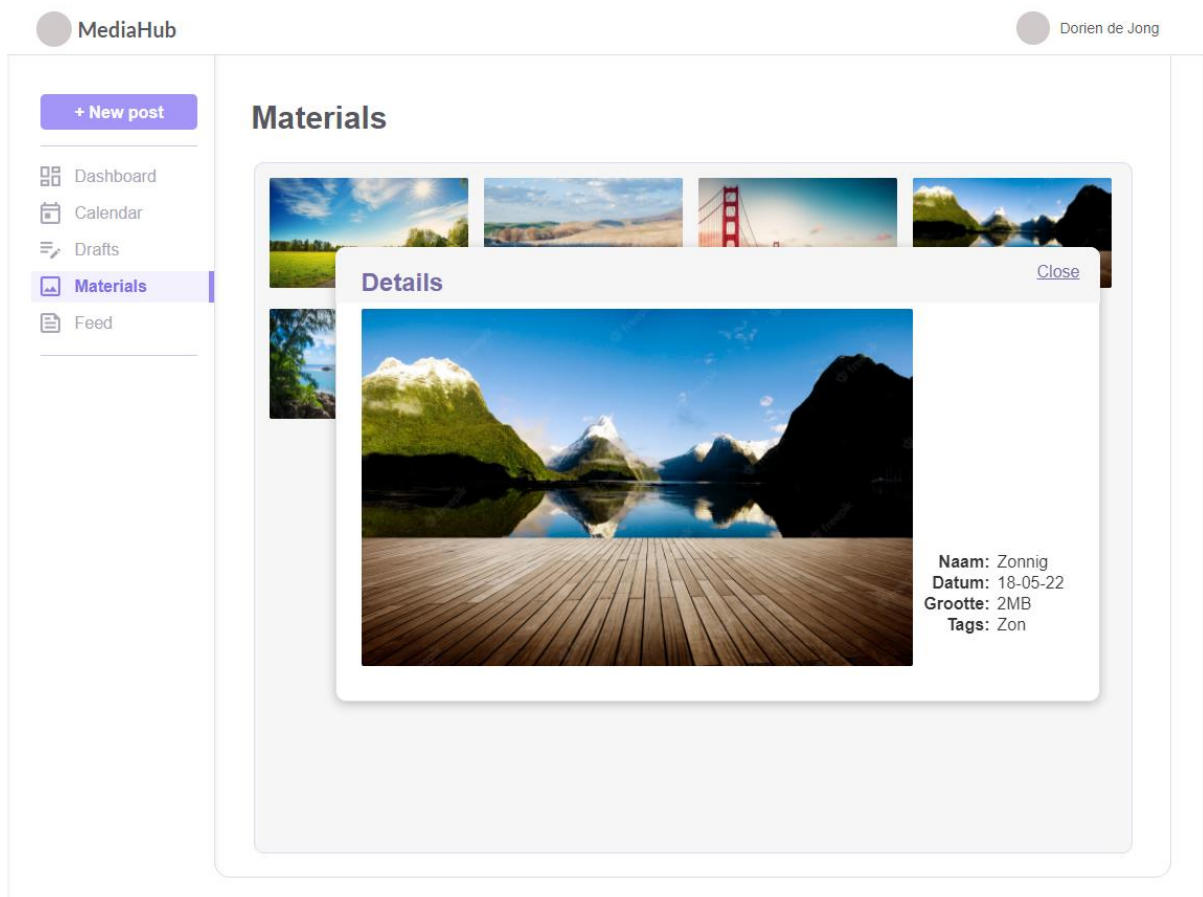


Figure 25: the materials page with thumbnails

Live previews

Live previews are a way for the user to immediately check the consequences of changes in the input fields. (UI patterns, n.d.) Since it is very important what a post looks like once it has been published, a live preview page has been added to the new post page for every channel.



Figure 26: the live preview for narrowcasting- and social media posts, shown on the right side

7.3.2. Wizard of Oz

The Wizard of Oz method: acting out the systems functionalities that are not complete yet, has been applied for various pages of the prototype. This has been done in order to guarantee a full user experience, even though this is not an actual working platform, but a prototype.

An example is the live preview of the previous sub chapter, [7.3.1: live previews](#). The previews do not show the actual social media platform and a post on this platform, but the preview shows an image background with the text in another text field on it.

Another example is the posting function of the platform. Since this platform is a prototype, nor the posting function, neither the scheduling function, will actually work and post to social media platforms. However, the platform will show the post on the dashboard, the calendar and the feed as if the post was posted on social media.

A last example is how the user can upload images and input variables during a session. It seems like the platform will save these choices online, but the choices will only be saved for one online session, because it is not a platform that is fully online, with a functioning server behind it.

7.3.3. Prototype

7.3.3.1. Style Guide

Choices were made for the typography, colours, buttons, icons, and components. These choices are summarized visually in the Style guide, which can be viewed in [Appendix X](#).

For the choice for typography, the book *Prioritizing Web Usability* was consulted, by Jakob Nielsen and Hoa Loranger. This book names the most common fonts and their font families like *Arial*, *Comic Sans MS*, and *Times New Roman*, and advises to use one of these fonts for web design. The reason for this advice is that these fonts are most often preinstalled within browsers, which means that the browsers will have no issues to show the prototype with the correct font. Of these most common fonts, *Arial* was chosen as the font to be used within the prototype. This choice was made for the reason that *Arial* is a font that belongs to the Sans serif family, which is more suited for being viewed on a digital screen. Additionally, *Arial* is described as a modern font which is easy to read and attractive to people of all ages. (Nielsen & Loranger, *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006)

For the font colours, few colours were used: purple and 3 different shades of grey to emphasize the importance of a certain piece of text, with lighter grey for less important text that needed to stand out less. This is according to advice of the book written by Nielsen and Loranger as well, in which they advise to limit the number of font colours and styles and to use them consistently. Their advice is to not use more than 4 different colours and 3 typefaces. (Nielsen & Loranger, *Prioritizing Web Usability*, 2006)

The colours chosen for the prototype consist of black, white and various shades of purple. Purple has been chosen as the signal colour, as it is a colour that inspires feelings of luxury, and of trust and reliability as well. This is similar to the characteristics of the colour blue. Additionally, purple is a colour that brings out inspiration and mystery, encouraging people to try new things. (Adobe, n.d.) These characteristics fit well with the concept since this type of platform is often a new experience for the target audience. Feelings of trust, reliability and inspiration will help this prototype in becoming accepted as a good solution to their problems.

The icons used in the prototype are chosen from Google Icons, because these icons are free to be used by anyone and there is a wide range of icons available for every purpose.

For buttons, a primary and secondary button was designed and a link button was added, to use for links. These can be viewed in the style guide.

7.3.3.2. Application of UX laws

The broader explanation and the references for every law can be found in chapter [7.1.3.3.](#)

Hick's Law: users take more time to make a decision, with a larger number of choices or complexity

Hick's law was kept in mind partially as a counterweight for Tesler's law, which states that all systems have a minimum complexity.

These laws have been applied by not choosing to leave out certain functions (accept a certain complexity), like scheduling posts for later, but to add those functions in a separate page accessed by the *scheduling* button (do not offer too many choices), so that the platform is not overly simplified and at the same time the user is not overwhelmed by choices.

Another example is the option for users to personalize the message per channel. This is an option which was required in order to fulfil the requirements of the target audience and should not be removed in order to simplify the platform. However, it should also not be presented in a way that offers too many options to the user, which causes the user to need more time to complete a task.

Jakob's Law: the site should be similar to other sites, so that it is recognizable

This law has been discussed in the chapter [concepting](#), as parts of well-known social media sites were used in order to make the design of the website recognizable. These are, among others, the navigation side-bar, the top-bar and the possibility to personalize messages per channel and to add hashtags and media.

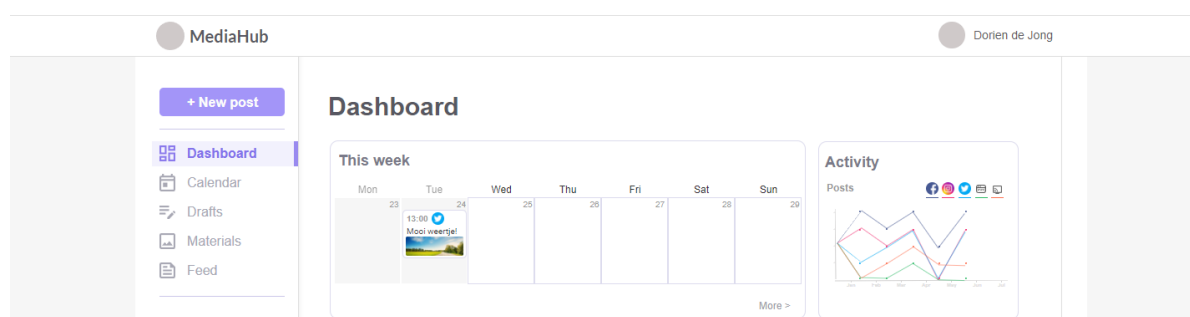


Figure 27: examples of Jakob's law are the side-bar and the top-bar

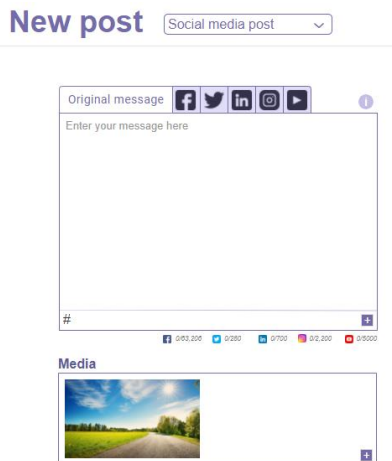


Figure 28: examples of Jakob's law are the ability to personalize messages and add hashtags and media

Doherty threshold: the highest productivity is when user and system operate at 400ms

This law has been applied to the prototype by not using any animations that take longer than 400ms, to avoid any delays. Furthermore, during testing no delays were found.

The last four laws can be grouped together:

- **Law of Common Region:** elements surrounded by a boundary are perceived as in a group
- **Law of Proximity:** elements close to each other are perceived as in a group
- **Law of Uniform Connectedness:** elements connected by something visual, like a line, are perceived as in a group
- **Law of Similarity:** visually similar elements are perceived as in a group

These laws are similar in that they all describe which characteristics help the user to perceive elements as in a group. An example of these laws in action in the prototype can be viewed in figure ...

Examples on this page are the navigation tabs for the main message, with the dark-blue social media icons, and the selection of channels at the bottom of the page.

The social media channels above the main text field are placed close together, have the same colour and background and are placed within a group of navigation tabs.

This was also applied to the channel selection at the bottom of the page, which are also placed close together, have the same, round shape and are placed within the same boundary. The social media channel icons are divided from the narrowcasting and blog icons with a small stripe, within the same element.

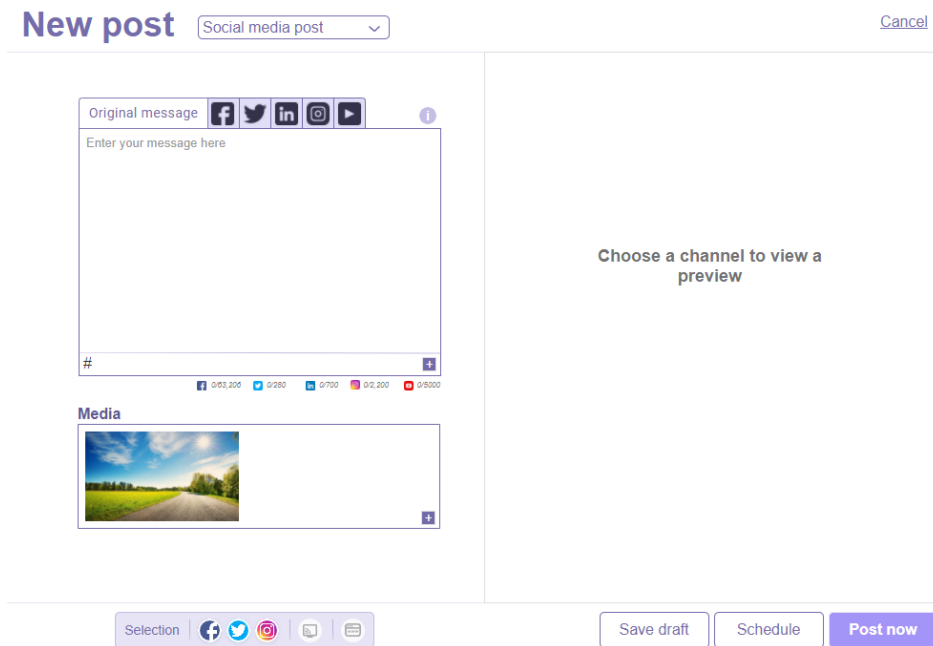


Figure 29: examples of helping the user perceive elements within a group

7.3.3.3. Resolving the most important marketing challenges

During this project, various challenges of the target audience have been researched through desk research, a needs survey and interviews among the target audience. The results were that time, knowledge, overview and communication are important challenges regarding marketing.

Ways to resolve these challenges have been implemented in the prototype in the following ways. In order to solve the issue with a lack of time and efficiency, the prototype allows for users to post outings to multiple channels simultaneously, which could save them a significant number of hours. Additionally, the tool would allow them to schedule posts in advance, so that it would not be needed to spend time on marketing on off-days for example.

The ability to create drafts also allows for the target audience to write a post at one moment and finish it quickly at a later moment. (Royal Dutch Frisian-Handball Association, 2022)

To solve the issue with marketing knowledge, a tooltip has been added to the prototype which informs the user of the ideal post and video length for every channel.

The overview issue is possibly solved with the dashboard in the prototype and the calendar. The biggest problem was that small organisations use many channels and lose the overview due to this. With the platform, the users can view all of their channels and posts in one place.

In order to solve the communication issues, a planning has been added to the prototype and which can also be viewed on the dashboard. In the future, multiple employees would be able to create an account on the platform and to view the planning, which improves collaboration and reduces any miscommunication within a team. Additionally, users can create drafts which could be shared among teams for feedback.

These possible solutions have been implemented in the prototype.

7.3.3.4. The prototype

First iteration in Figma

The main page of the prototype consists of a dashboard, shown in Figure 30. On this dashboard the user can view the company's marketing activities, the planned, past and currently live posts.

The navigation bar on the left side of the page leads to the other main screens: the Calendar, Drafts, Materials, Feed, Company and Settings.

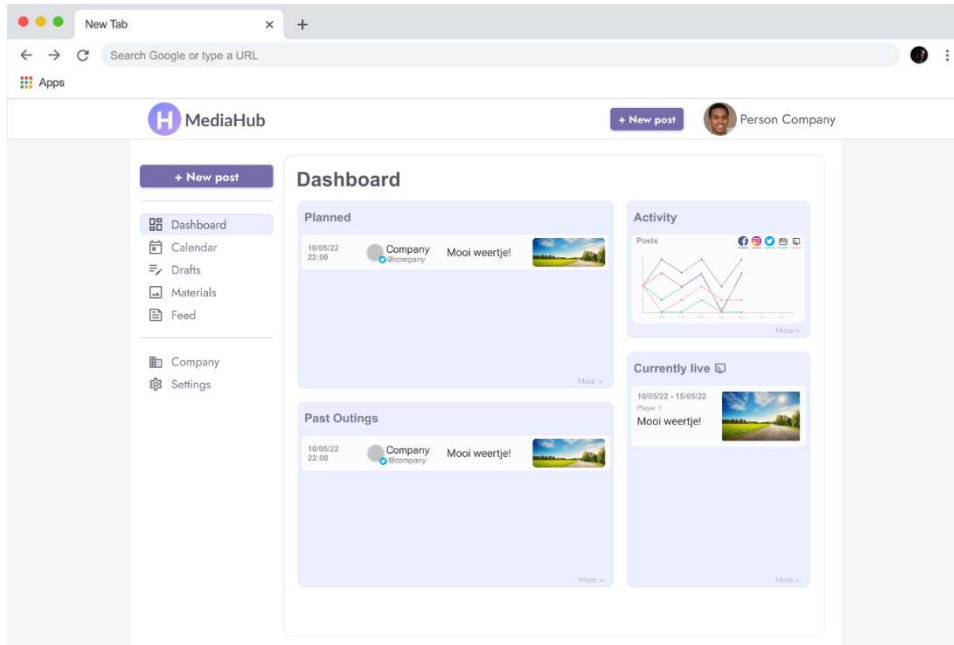


Figure 30 - Dashboard of MediaHub

The '+ New Post' button leads the user to the creation screen for new posts, seen in Figure 31. At the top of this screen a post profile can be chosen, for example "Quick social media post", "Narrowcasting post" or "WordPress post". This choice affects the text input boxes that are available.

For the social media post, the user can fill in the message, hashtags and media and view a preview on the right side of the screen. After filling in the original message, the message can be edited per channel (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) and be checked on the maximum word count per channel. A selection of the social media channels to which the message will be exported, is made at the bottom of the screen.

Figure 32 shows the Narrowcasting profile for a new post. This profile includes a title, subtitle and overlays, which are unique for narrowcasting. Additionally, the playlist can be chosen in which the content should appear and the template for the content, which concerns the position of the image and the text.

The profile for a WordPress post is shown in Figure 33. The extra input on this page includes the author, a category, title, sub title, summary, text body and media. Additionally, a template can be chosen for the WordPress post as well.

Finally, the user can choose to save the message as a draft, schedule the message for a later moment or to post it right away.

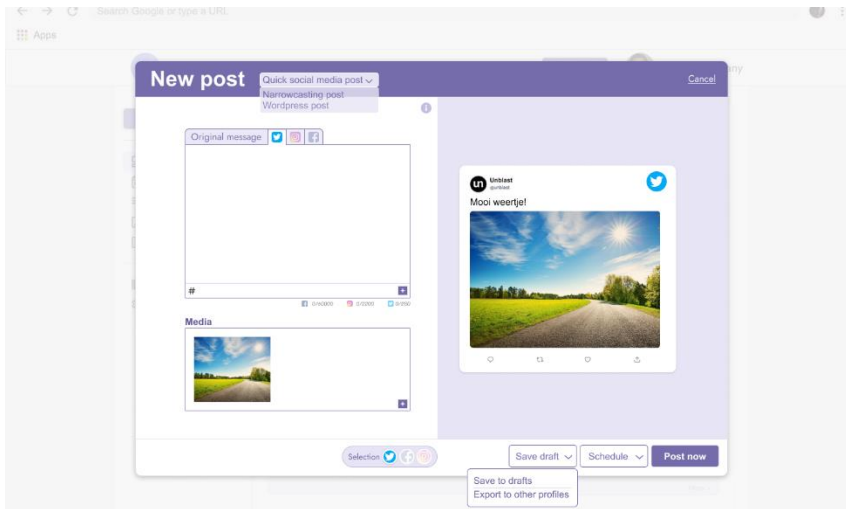


Figure 31 - New post: Quick social media post

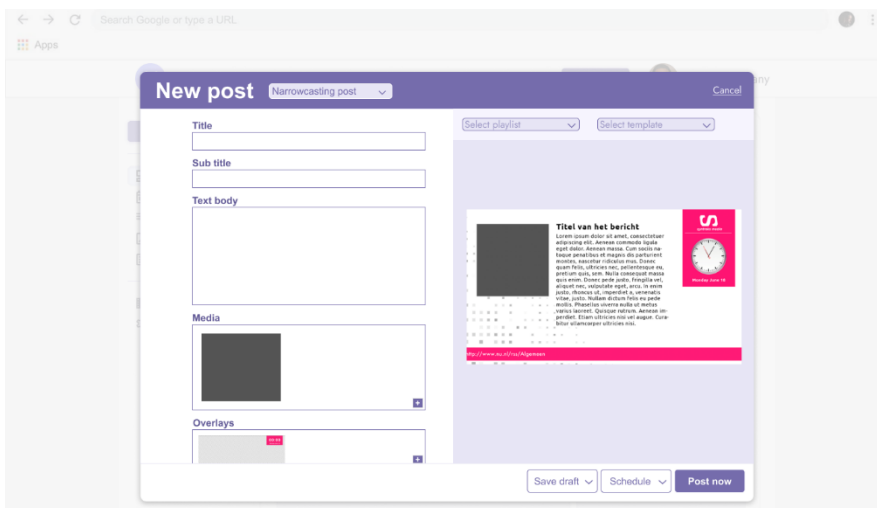


Figure 22 - New post: Narrowcasting post

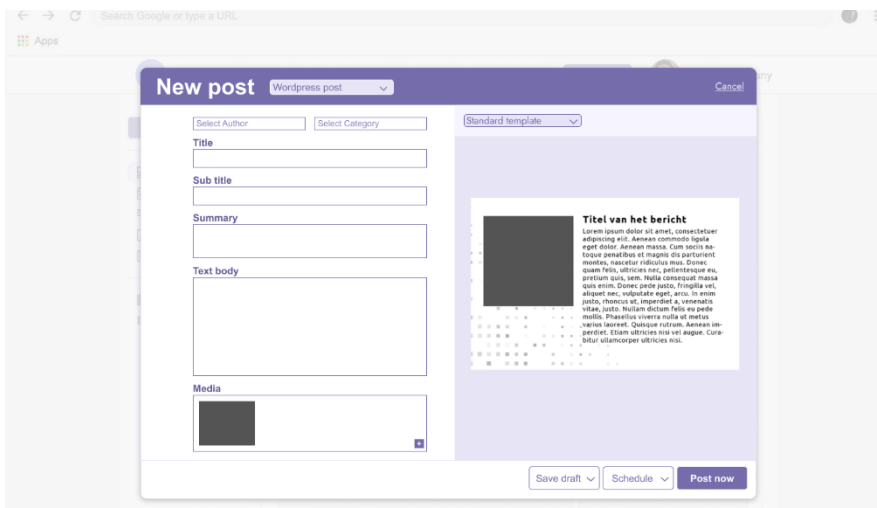


Figure 33 - New post: WordPress post

Apart from the Dashboard, the Media Hub contains a Calendar page. Users are able to view when posts are planned during the upcoming and past months. Posts can be clicked for more details.

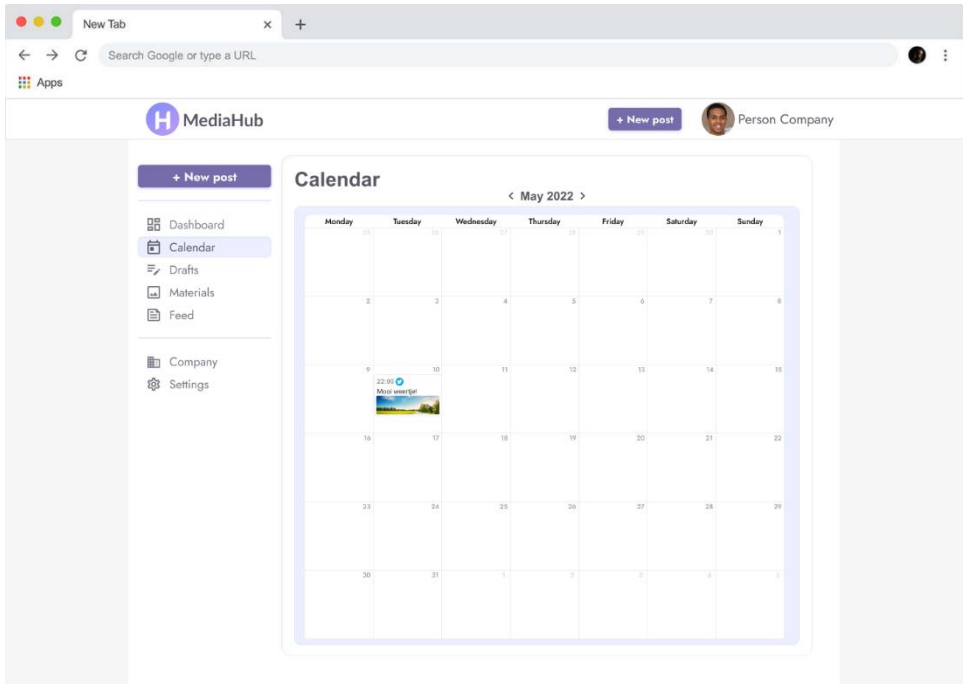


Figure 34 – MediaHub Calendar screen

The third main screen is the Drafts page. Users can view posts that have been saved to drafts on this page. The posts can be edited, deleted and scheduled or posted right away. They can also be filtered based on the channel, and searched based on the content.

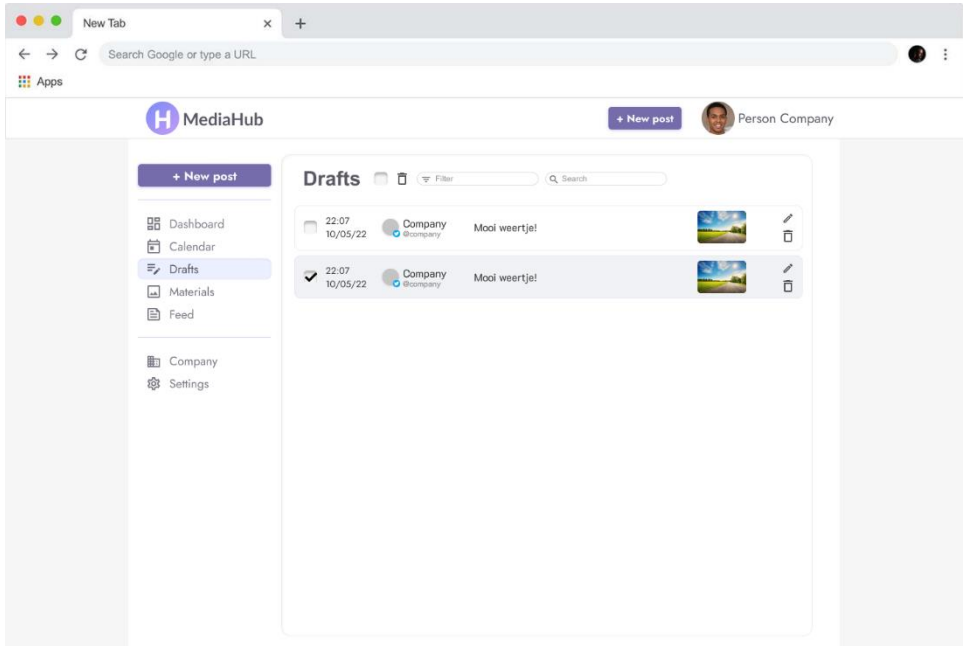


Figure 35 - MediaHub Drafts screen

The Materials page is currently a work in progress. This page will show all of the materials and the user will be able to filter and sort the materials, based on user-created tags and the date the materials were added.

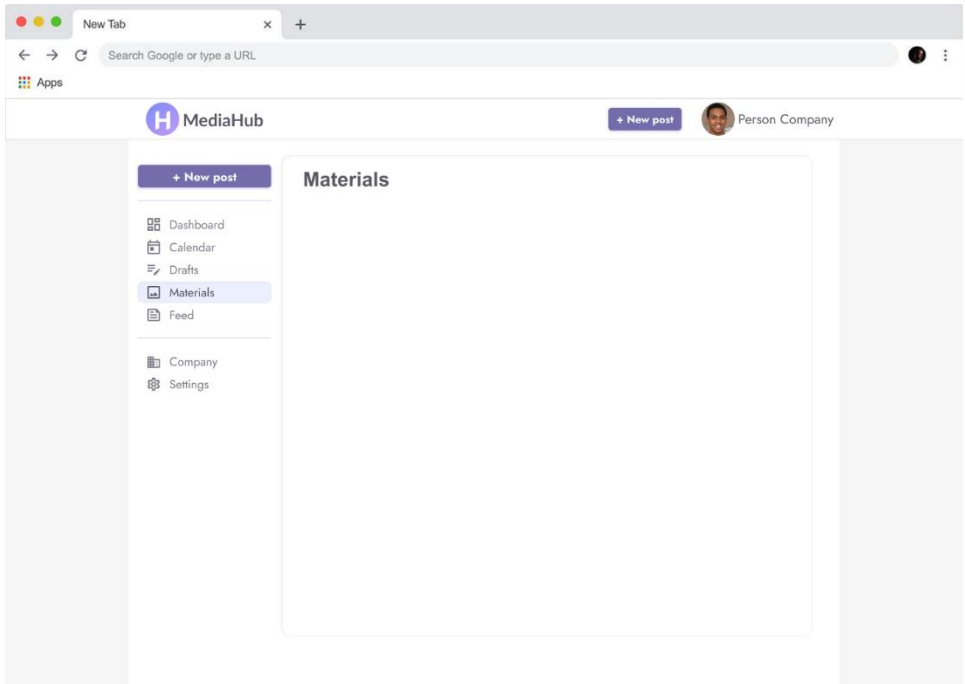


Figure 36 - MediaHub Materials screen

Lastly, the Feed page shows the user an overview of which posts are currently live (narrowcasting), planned and which posts were planned in the past. The benefit of this screen is that if posts are rarely created, the user can use this list view to quickly see upcoming and past posts, without having to click through the Calendar.

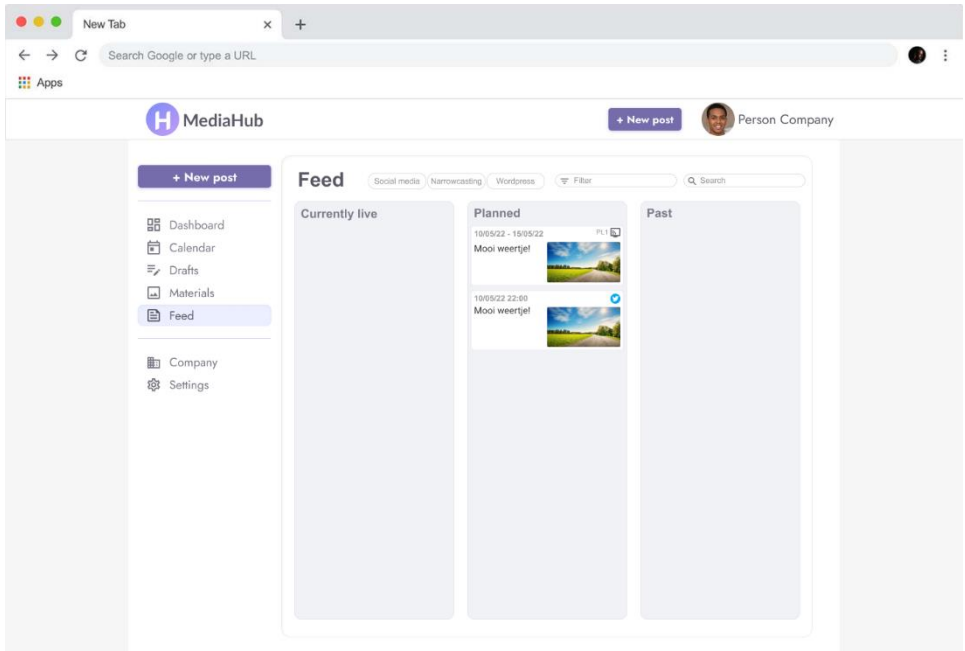


Figure 37 - MediaHub Feed screen

The Company and Settings pages are planned for future releases, but the headings are already included in the prototype for the consistency of the future platform.

Second iteration in Axure RP

The full collection of screenshots of the prototype can be viewed in [Appendix XIV](#).

The prototype version up-to-date (second iteration) contains the following main pages which will be discussed in this chapter:

- Dashboard
- Calendar
- Drafts
- Materials
- Feed

Apart from this, the prototype contains a modal for a new post, which will be discussed with the dashboard, and several smaller modals for viewing the details of items, like the details of a photo, which can be viewed in the appendix.

Dashboard

The first page a user sees is the Dashboard, the main page of the prototype. On this page, the user can view the most important information of the prototype sorted in 'cards', like the planning for this week, statistics on the activity, planned and life posts and drafts. At the bottom of these cards, a 'more' button is added, which leads to the page corresponding with the data on one of the other main pages.

The left side of all main pages shows the navigation-bar, which the user can use to go to another page and the new-post button, to create a new post. The new-post button is designed with the bright signal colour, so it stands out from the design and the user can easily locate it.

The main pages also contain a top-bar, with secondary navigation, like the profile of a user and the logo of the website. The user profile is not in use yet and the button is not active, but it has been added for future purposes and for the completion of the visual design.

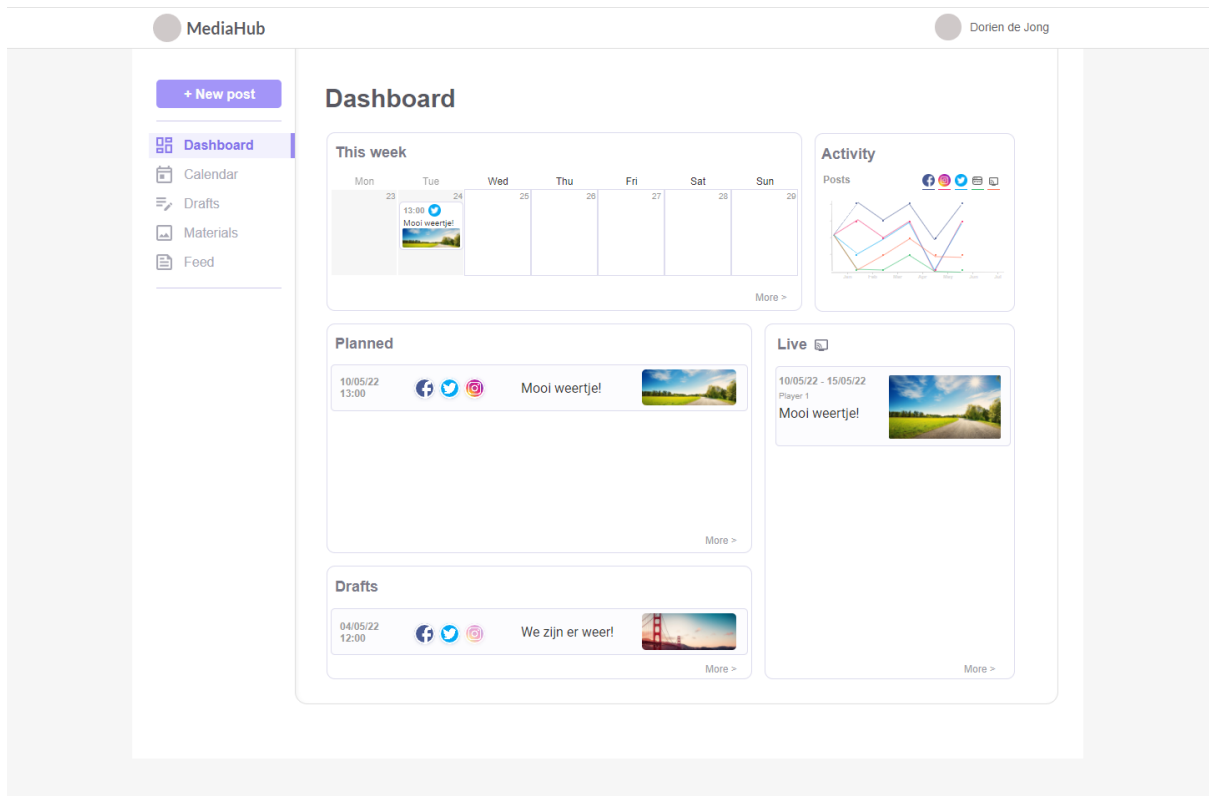


Figure 38: the Dashboard of the prototype

New post modal

The new post modal is opened when the new-post button is clicked. Within this model a profile can be chosen in the top-bar, which the user could ideally (in the end product) create for themselves. The profile examples in this version of the prototype are a profile for social media posts, narrowcasting posts, blog posts and job offers. These profiles contain a certain set of channels. The purpose of these profiles is that the user can eventually add the profiles with the specific channels that the company uses the most for a certain activity, so that these activities can be completed with very little thought needed. This option was added to fulfil requirement 15, in [chapter 7.1.7](#).

Apart from the profiles, the new post screen contains a few input field, which change per profile and channel selected. For social media, there is a main text body field, in which an original message can be written and which can then be personalized per channel, according to different target audiences per channel. The screen also allows for hashtags and media input, which are not fully functional yet, but will be added for the final prototype.

On the right side of the screen, a preview is shown of the channel that is selected with the buttons above the main text input.

On the bottom of the modal, the selection of channels can be changed and channels can be selected or unselected.

With the buttons on the right-, bottom-side of the modal, the user can choose to save as a draft (the post will be added to the Drafts page), schedule the posts or to post it immediately.

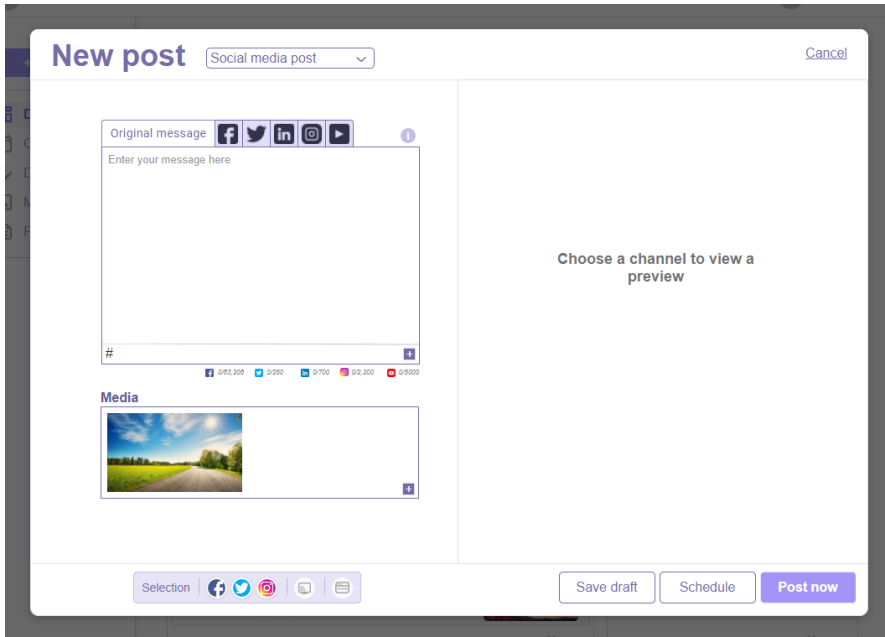


Figure 39: the new post modal

There are differences in the modal per profile. The Job offer profile can be seen below, which includes more input fields, like title and sub title (for narrowcasting and a web blog) and which offers an extra option for a template. The template changes the position and size of the text and image for narrowcasting and blog posts. The template does not influence social media posts, since these cannot be changed in such a way.

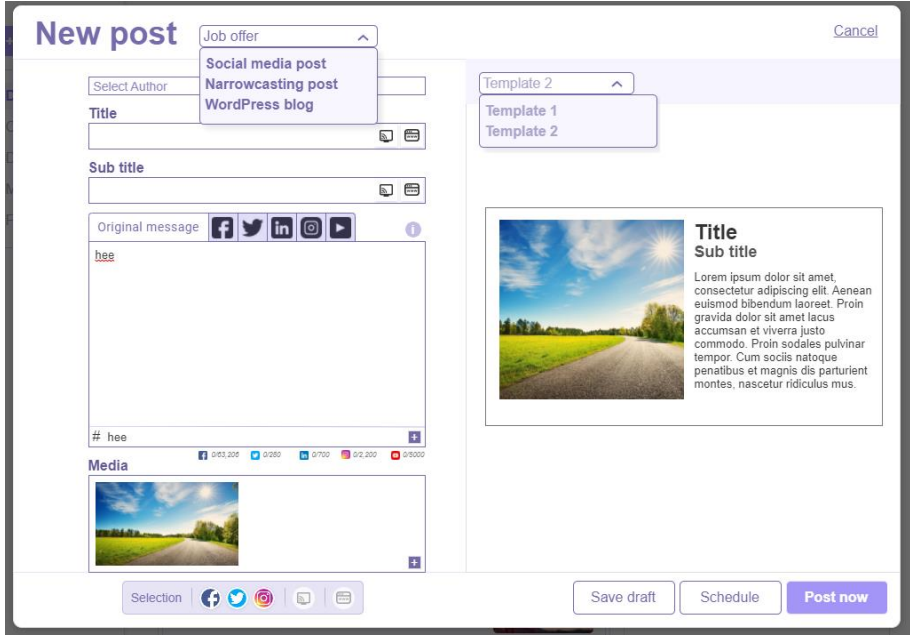


Figure 40: the new post modal 2

The narrowcasting profile has additional options: to add overlays. Overlays are visual elements especially made for narrowcasting, like a clock in the top of the screen. The narrowcasting profile also has an option to choose the playlist on which the narrowcasting post will appear.

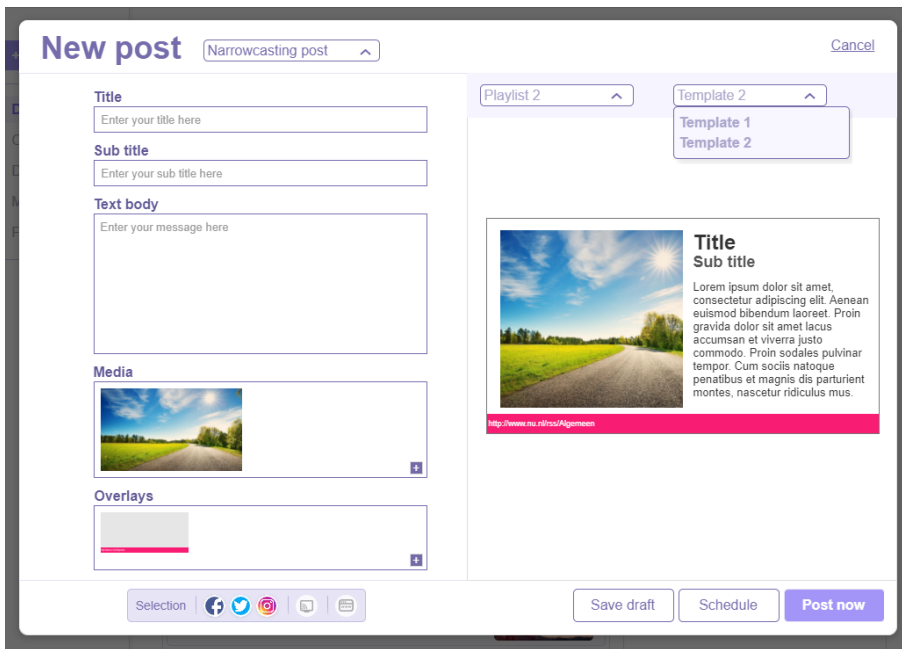


Figure 41: the new post modal 3

Calendar

The Calendar page shows the posts in the past, present and the future in a monthly display. The user can use the arrows next to 'may 2022' to switch the view to a new or previous month.

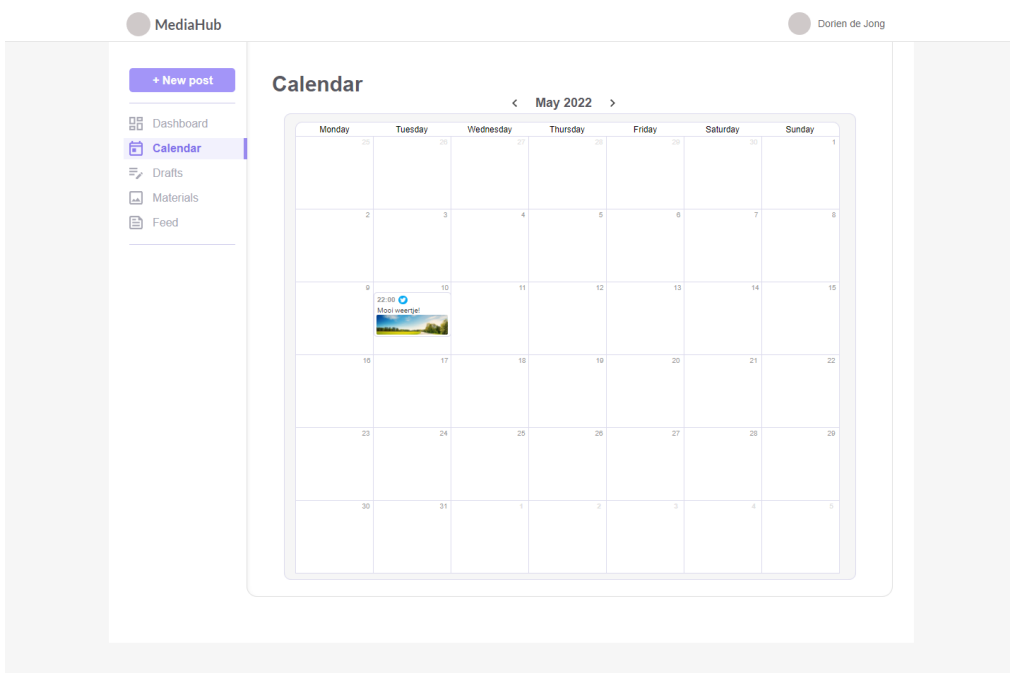


Figure 42: the Calendar of the prototype

Drafts

The Drafts page is where drafts are saved. The drafts display a timestamp with date and time on which they were made and the channel selection for which they were made. There are buttons to edit or delete the drafts, one at a time or multiple. Lastly, there are options to filter or search the drafts, when there are many drafts on this page.

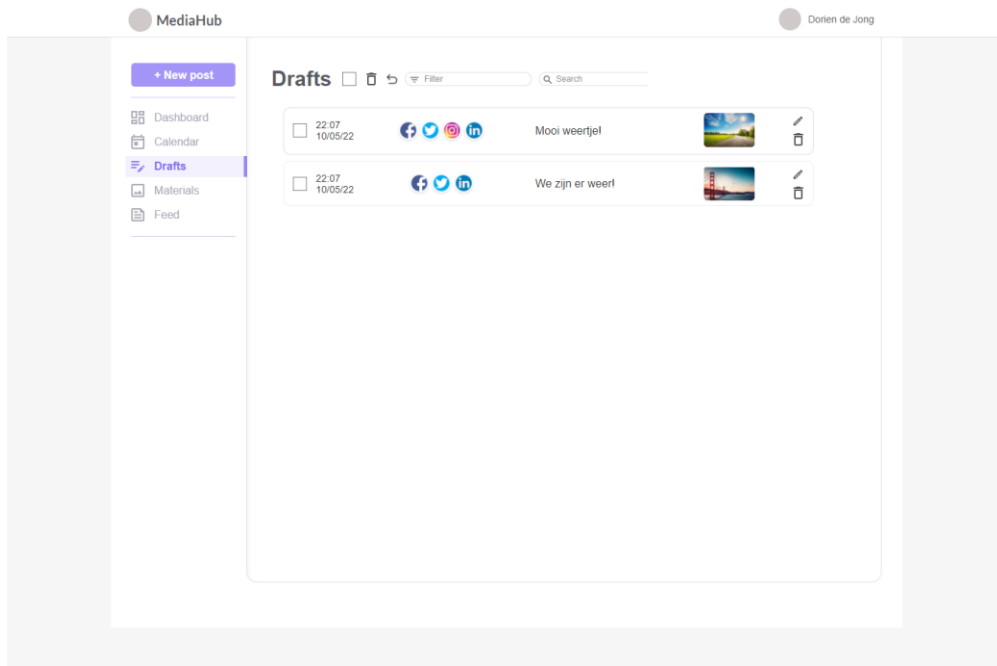


Figure 43: the Drafts page of the prototype

Materials

The Material page is where the user can find all of their materials that have been uploaded to the platform. The photos can be clicked for more details, like the size, title, date and tags that have been added. In the final version, the user will be able to add new materials to the materials page.

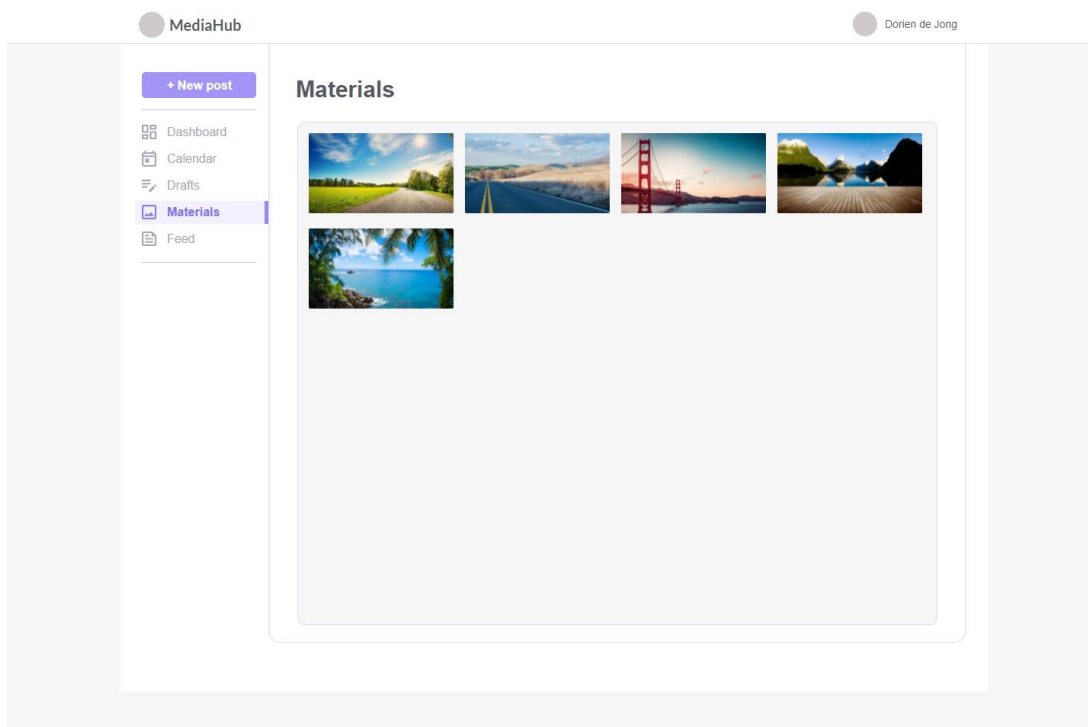


Figure 44: the Materials page of the prototype

Feed

The Feed page shows the live, planned and past posts in a different layout than the Calendar page. This layout is more accessible if users want to have a quick overview of specifically one of these types

of posts, instead of a monthly overview. In the final version, the posts can be clicked to view details or edit a post that is planned and the posts can be searched and filtered.

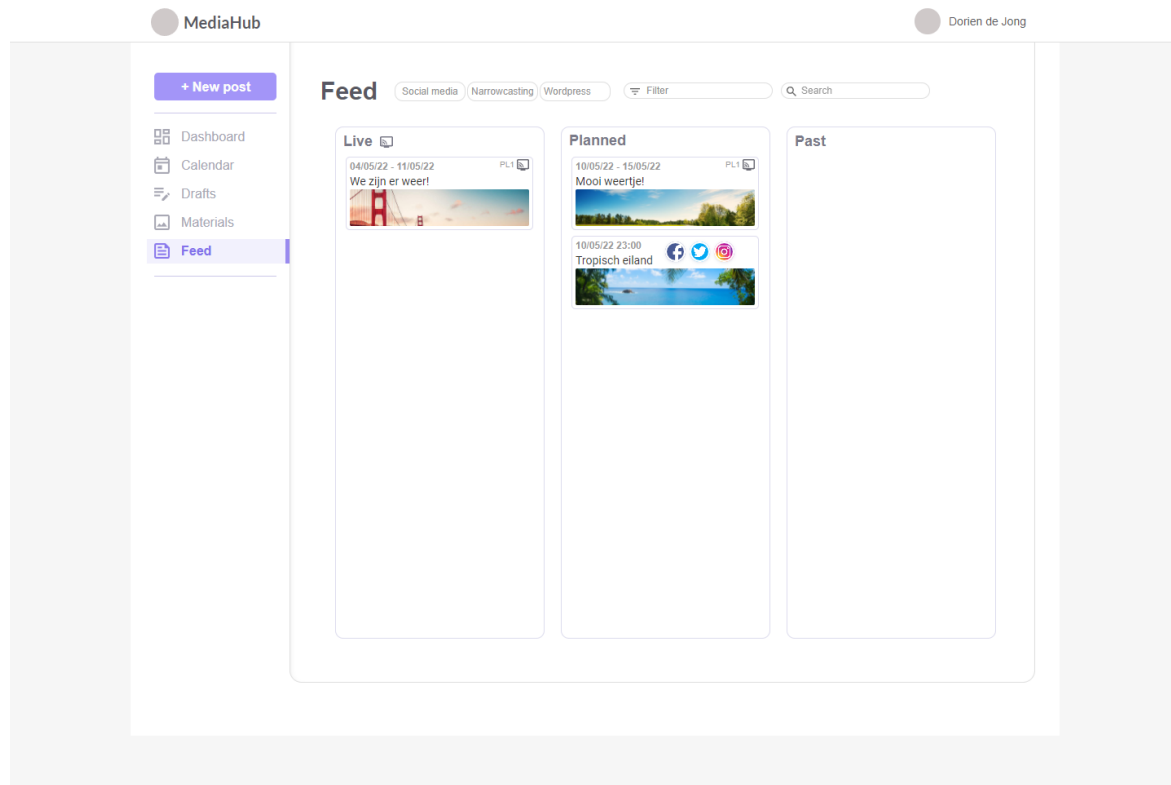


Figure 45: the Feed page of the prototype

7.4. EVALUATION

During the evaluation phase the prototype was tested with 3 participants of the target audience, who were carefully selected based on their marketing activities (no in-house marketer and use multiple channels, at least 3) and company size (less than 50 employees). Lastly, the participants were at least involved with and familiar with their company's marketing activities, so that they had experience with the challenges and the needs of their company and could answer the questions accordingly.

The testing was done with the second iteration of the prototype, in Axure RP.

7.4.1. Usability testing

Usability testing was set up according to the test plan guidelines of the Nielsen Norman group. A few scenarios were set up with the earlier data from the survey and target audience interviews. The full test plan can be found in [Appendix XI](#). The scenarios are as follows:

Scenario 1: Create a post for social media, including the channels Twitter and Instagram.

Scenario 2: Create a new post for a WordPress blog, with template 2.

Scenario 3: Use the prototype to view which posts are planned for the month June.

One of the main issues that stood out during the usability tests, was that the participants had trouble finding the channel selection and seeing which channels were selected. The position of the channel selection should be changed to a position in the top of the screen, due to its importance. Additionally, it should be made clearer when a channel is selected and when it is not selected.

Apart from this issue, the prototype was deemed intuitive and easy to use.

The full test plan and results can be viewed in [Appendix XI](#).

7.4.2. Interview

Apart from the usability testing, an interview was conducted after the tests in order to obtain more information on the participants' opinions on specific subjects.

The most important results are as follows:

- Put channel selection on top. It is hard to find right now and to see which channels are selected
- The tooltip with extra information on what post lengths, per channel, are ideal is a very nice addition. This solves the knowledge issue
- Split materials into images and videos, to include YouTube content
- Remove the frame around previews
- Edit channel selection for NC and blog, remove social media channels there
- Channel selection does not include all channels yet, like LinkedIn and YouTube
- The character counter does not work yet

These results have been written down for the last iteration of the prototype.

The full test plan and results can be viewed in [Appendix XI](#).

7.4.3. Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model is described by *User Sense* as a model which indicated the factors that are of influence on people's intention to actually start, or keep, using a product. (*User Sense*, n.d.)

The TAM model is divided into the Perceived Usefulness of the technology as viewed by the user, and the Perceived Ease of Use of the technology as viewed by the user. The model states that these two factors have the most influence on if a user will adopt a new product.

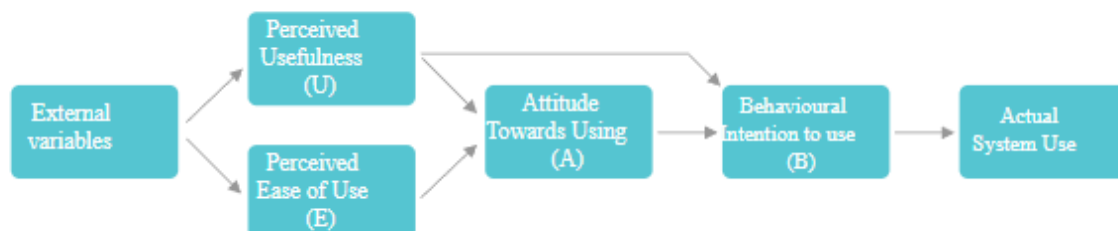


Figure 46: The Technology acceptance model (*User Sense*, n.d.)

In order to measure these aspects, 12 questions are asked the user. These questions can be viewed in [Appendix VI](#).

The TAM questions have been answered by the participants of the 3 test sessions with the prototype. The results of the 3 sessions have been grouped together, since these are quantitative results which have more meaning if there are more answers. Unfortunately there was too little time to conduct more TAM surveys among the target audience for results that would be statistically more reliable.

The results showed that the participants rated almost every aspect of the prototype positively, they all rated 6 or 7 points on the scale of how useful and easy to use the product would be. Only 1 participant rated a 5 in the first question, "By using this product at work, I would be able to execute my tasks faster".

To get a statistically valuable result, it would be advised for the client to conduct this test again at a later time, with more participants in order to get reliable results.

The full test plan and results can be viewed in [Appendix XI](#).

8. APPENDICES

APPENDIX I – USER FLOW CHART

8.1.1. Minimal Viable Product

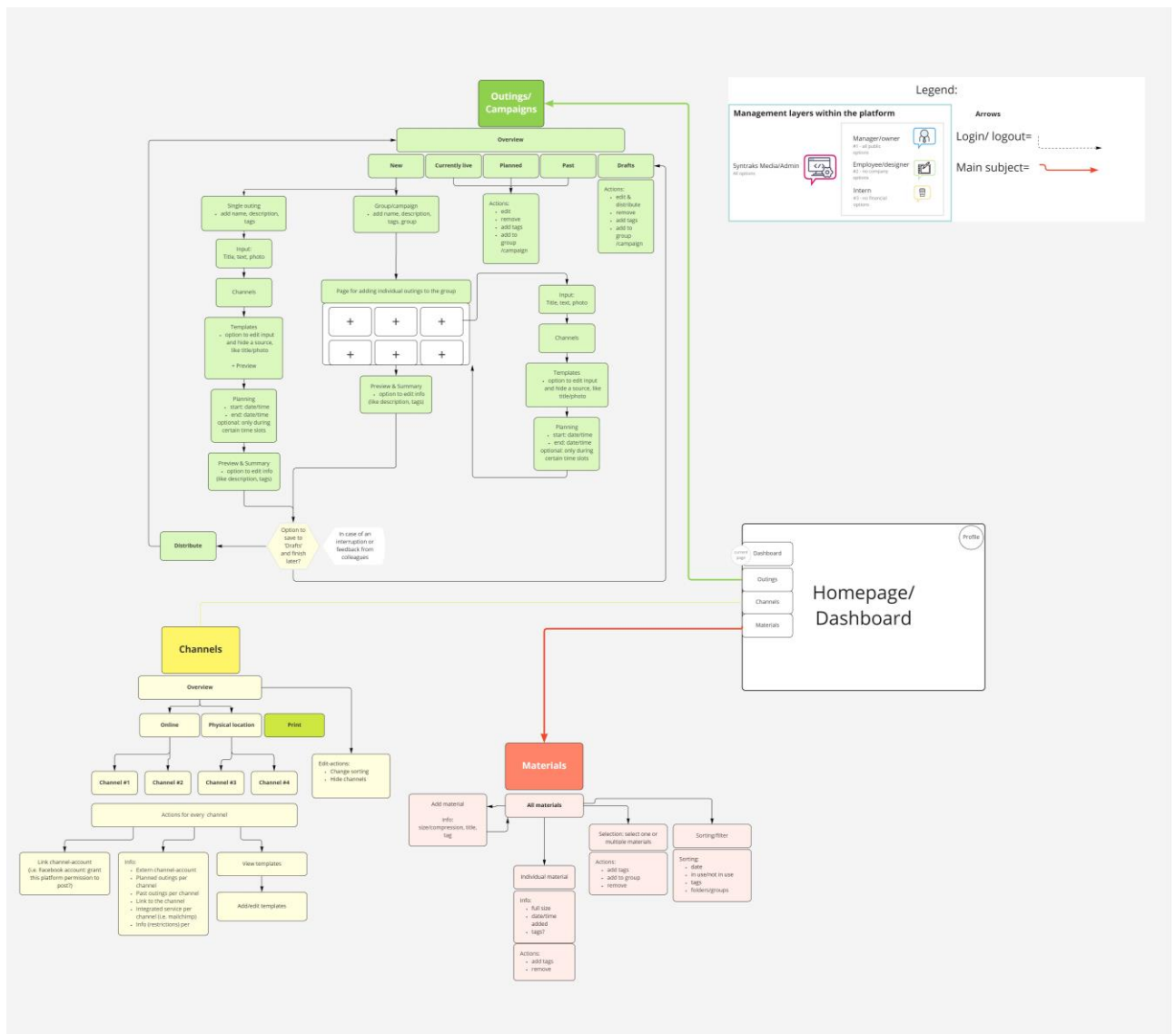


Figure 47: MVP

8.1.2. Complete User Flow Chart

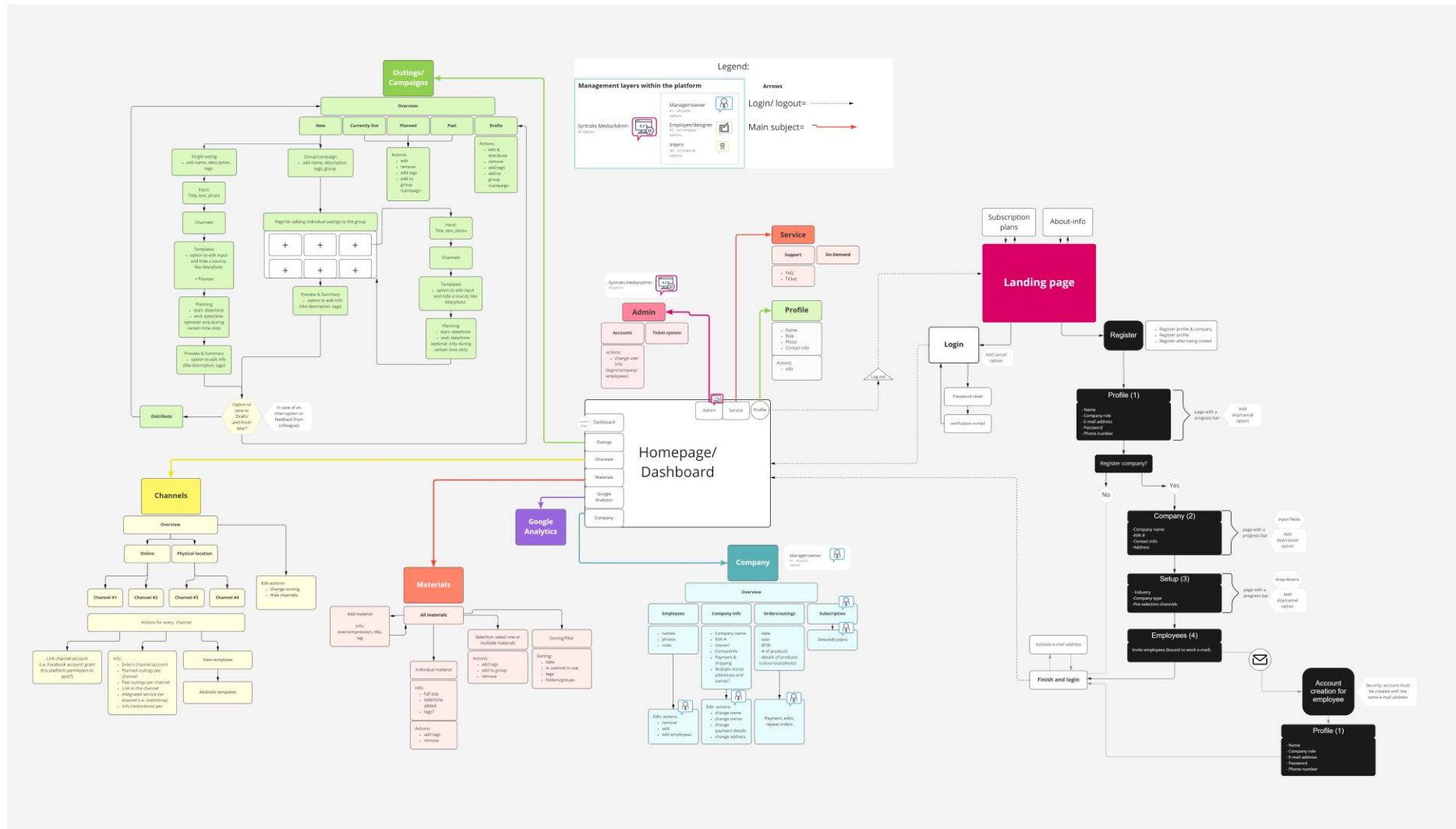


Figure: 48: complete user flow chart

In two parts:

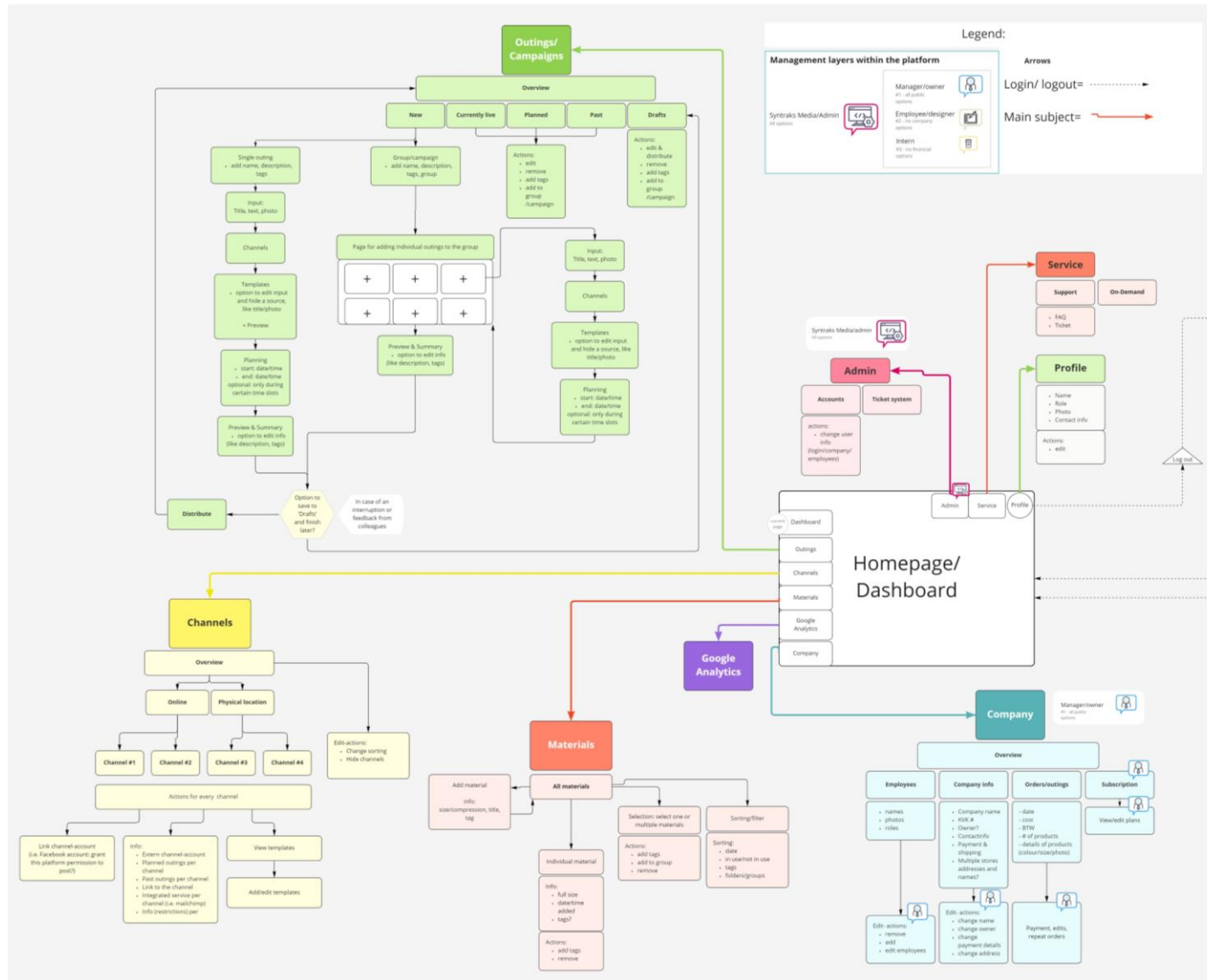
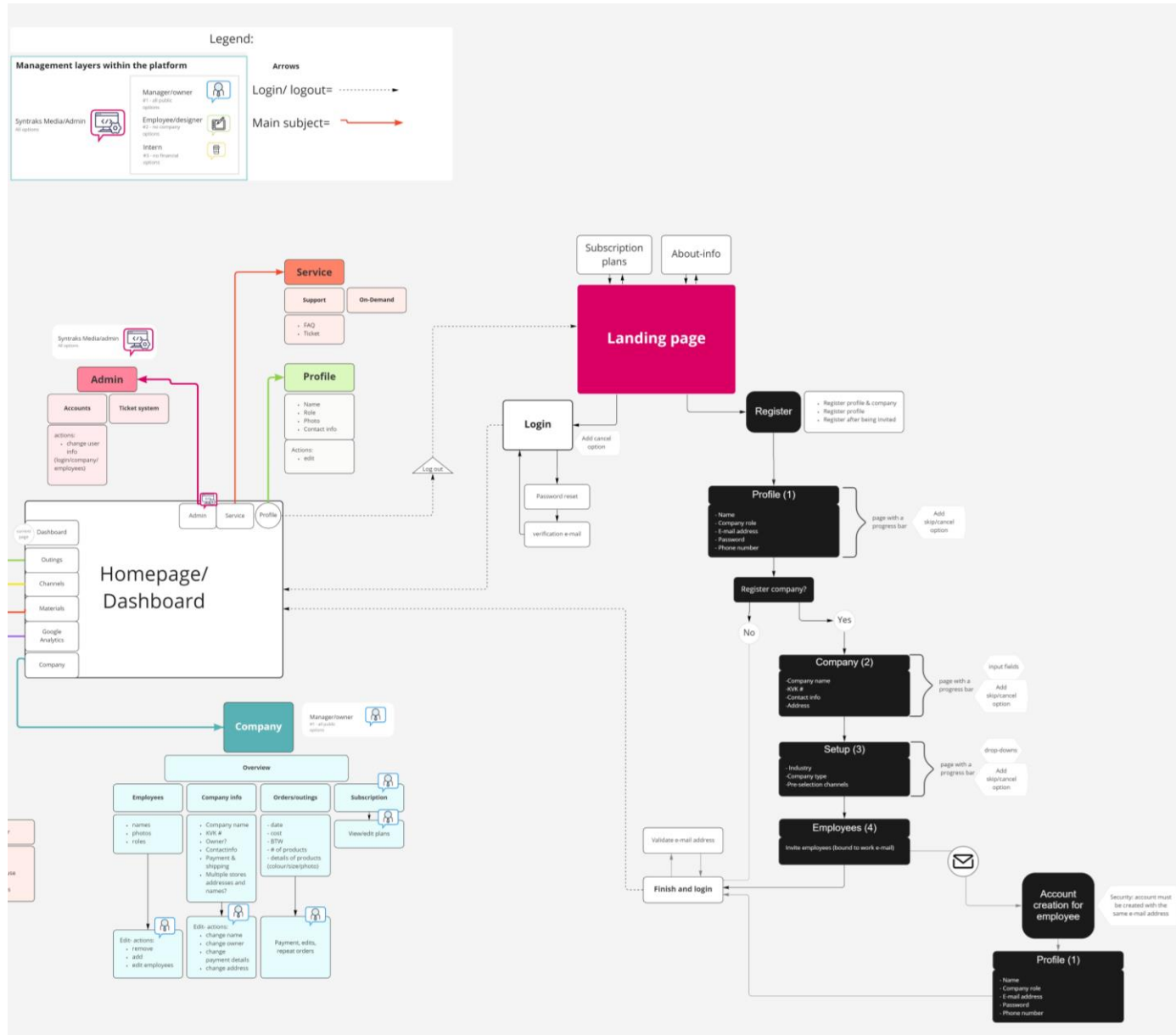


Figure: 49: part 1

Figure: 50: part 2



APPENDIX II – EXPERT INTERVIEW

Interviewee: Corné Cox
Title: Expert User Experience Design and Digital Marketing
Interviewer: Imme van der Made
Date: 26th of April, 2022
Location: Hanze University of Applied Sciences

8.2.1. Questions

Introduction

The explanation for question 1: Research into marketing concepts showed that the platform is a “Multi-channel Marketing Hub”. The client wishes for a platform which includes multiple channels, online and offline, which led to “multi-channel”. The platform does not specifically provide advertisement, but is more focused on spreading media outings and branding, which led to “Marketing”. Lastly, it is a place where customers login and can communicate with admins of the platform, which led to “Hub”. However, it is very hard to find competitive companies with this combination of words.

Marketing concepts

1. This leads to my question: Is this term for the platform correct or are you familiar with a more common term for this type of platform?
2. The goal of the client is to offer a unique service, by combining online and offline marketing channels in a marketing platform. The research shows that this idea is quite unique. The combination of online/offline appears to be very rare and including narrowcasting in this combination increases its rarity. What is your professional opinion of this idea?

Functionality

3. Is it valuable to add a social media posting service, in your opinion, if the functionality is limited to posting? There is no need for creating the perfect reach based on the target audience, that is not achievable in terms of resources. However, all competitive companies do offer a more complex package, with analytics and complex functionality. This led to the question: “Will the function be used by the target audience if it is implemented? The target audience consists of small companies with a commencing interest in multi-channel marketing and profiling on social media.

Competition

4. Are you familiar with companies that offer similar services or platforms? The big names (HubSpot, Salesforce) mostly offer only online channels and no offline channels, like printing posters. The few companies that offer online and offline services, like Retail Media Hub and TP Media, do not appear to offer self-service or narrowcasting.
 5. Do you think narrowcasting could be a USP in this total package?
 6. Would the social media functions of this platform be enough to be able to compete with other dedicated Social Media platforms?
-

8.2.2. Answers

The explanation for question 1: Research into marketing concepts showed that the platform is a “Multi-channel Marketing Hub”. The client wishes for a platform which includes multiple channels, online and offline, which led to “multi-channel”. The platform does not specifically provide advertisement, but is more focused on spreading media outings and branding, which led to “Marketing”. Lastly, it is a place where customers login and can communicate with admins of the platform, which led to “Hub”. However, it is very hard to find competitive companies with this combination of words.

Marketing concepts

1. This leads to my question: Is this term for the platform correct or are you familiar with a more common term for this type of platform?

Answer 1: Yes, these terms are theoretically correct.

2. The goal of the client is to offer a unique service, by combining online and offline marketing channels in a marketing platform. The research shows that this idea is quite unique. The combination of online/offline appears to be very rare and including narrowcasting in this combination increases its rarity. What is your professional opinion of this idea?

Answer 2: It is complex. It may seem simple, but printing can already become quite complex. Printing can be done one-sided for example, but also two-sides and there are also trilogy structures to keep in mind.

Functionality

3. Is it valuable to add a social media posting service, in your opinion, if the functionality is limited to posting. There is no need for creating the perfect reach based on the target audience, that is not achievable in terms of resources. However, all competitive companies do offer a more complex package, with analytics and complex functionality. This led to the question: “Will the function be used by the target audience if it is implemented? The target audience consists of small companies with a commencing interest in multi-channel marketing and profiling on social media.

Answer 3: Yes, but MKB is mainly interested in the advertisement side of posting, opposed to creating normal posts on social media. Facebook Ads, LinkedIn Business and such. And that is a very different Business entrance of social media. It is probably very hard, if not impossible, to integrate in such a platform. Another thing that is very important to MKB, is the analytics side. KPI is very important, that is what companies pay for. I see that Google Analytics are included in the user flow chart, but how would this be implemented? Only the Google data and which data? It is a lot more complex than one would think at first.

Competition

4. Are you familiar with companies that offer similar services or platforms? The big names (HubSpot, Salesforce) mostly offer only online channels and no offline channels, like printing posters. The few companies that offer online and offline services, like Retail Media Hub and TP Media, do not appear to offer self-service or narrowcasting.

Answer 2: No, I am not familiar with any similar systems or companies. HubSpot and Salesforce are big names in the industry, but they are very different. They offer a lot more: a complete CRM. And they cost a fortune.

5. Do you think narrowcasting could be a USP in this total package?

Answer 5: It could be a USP if the package is offered to existing or new customers. For example, if narrow casting screens are installed at a new customer and are delivered as a complete package including this software. It could be a total package.

However, narrowcasting by itself is a small part of marketing and it is not very important to advertisement. Is it often used for employees for example.

There are 2 ways of doing the research and creating the prototype:

- 1) First conduct a Needs Assessment, in which the needs of the target audience are researched through interviews. This should be a small research, because this is not the focus of the current project and a needs assessment is not CMD research. This can be done as follows: interview 5 customers of Syntraks Media, to see which 'building blocks' are actually necessary, so that you can avoid building a complex prototype of which half the functions are not needed in the end.
What does the target audience use? How complex is it? Could this prototype fulfil this need?
- 2) The second way of doing this research is by first creating a prototype and then interviewing the target audience to see if it fits and what should be changed. However, the current prototype is likely too complex for this way of prototyping.

A platform like this would be more of a management platform than a marketing platform. It focuses on user flows and how they can be simplified and automated.

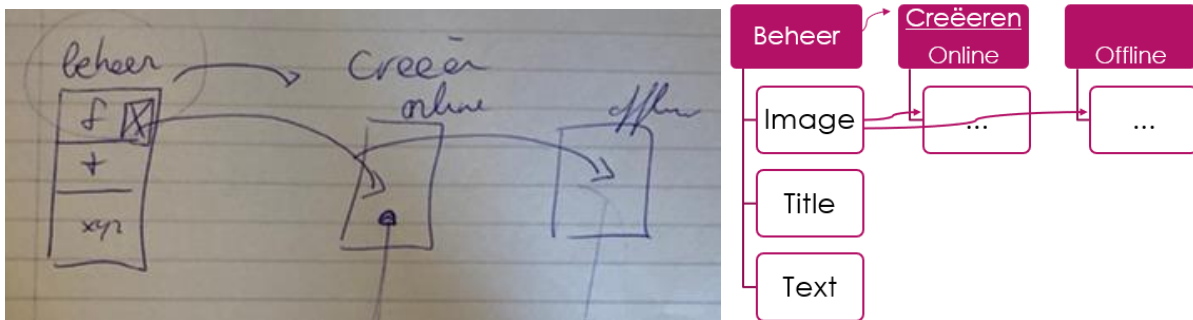


Figure 51 - Figure drawn by the Expert and the recreation in Word, for visual clarity

It is very important to define the Minimal Viable Product (MVP) according to the MoSCoW guidelines. For example: you want a user to be able to go to materials and start a post from there, not just from Outings. If the user has to go back to Outings and find the material all over again, it takes the user out of the flow. You have to determine the very basic, minimum, user tasks and build the prototype around it.

6. Would the social media functions of this platform be enough to be able to compete with other dedicated Social Media platforms?

Answer 6: That is not likely. There are many platforms that focus solely on social media out there and even online tools that are free. It is important for a platform to unburden its users in order to give value.

APPENDIX III – NEEDS SURVEY: TARGET AUDIENCE

In this appendix the survey materials are described, consisting of the accompanying message (for e-mail and Linked-in), the introduction, and the survey. The materials are available in both English and Dutch, since the target audience is Dutch.

The survey questions that are shown in the survey without answers concern open questions which the target audience could fill in with their own answers.

8.3.2. ENGLISH

Accompanying message

E-mail

Dear Sir/Madam,

For my thesis with a marketing platform the as end-goal, I am looking for entrepreneurs who find that they have too little time for managing the marketing aspects of their company.

As a solution for this, an Online Marketing Hub is being developed. With this Hub, a message can be placed in multiple channels at the touch of a button. For example, in social media/websites/narrowcasting/printing. The goal is to make marketing more accessible and less time consuming.

The most important part of the research is how you, as an entrepreneur, experience marketing. For this reason, I am eager to learn how your business managed marketing what the most substantial bottlenecks are. The questions take 4-5 minutes and the answers are processed anonymously.

In case you are curious about the end-results or interested in participating in further research, an e-mail address can be added at the end of the survey.

Click here to start the survey: <https://forms.gle/JkY6uCHVog4re1L96>

Thank you in advance for participating in this survey.

Kind Regards,

Imme van der Made

Student Communication and Multimedia Design at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen

LinkedIn

For my thesis on a marketing platform, I am looking for entrepreneurs who experience that they have little time for their marketing strategy. With a few questions (4-5 minutes) I hope to obtain more insight into:

- Which marketing channels are in use
- What the bottlenecks are
- If a platform could improve this

The answers are processed anonymously. Open the following link for the questions:

<https://forms.gle/JkY6uCHVog4re1L96>

As a possible solution I am designing an Online Marketing Hub. With this Hub a message is posted on multiple channels, with a single action. For example, on social media/printing/websites/narrowcasting. The goal is to make marketing more accessible and less time-consuming.

Are you curious about the results, or interested in taking part in further research? An e-mail address can be filled in at the end of the survey.

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this survey! For my thesis with a marketing platform the as end-goal, I am looking for entrepreneurs who find that they have too little time for managing the marketing aspects of their company.

As a solution for this, an Online Marketing Hub is being developed. With this Hub, a message can be placed in multiple channels at the touch of a button. For example, in social media/websites/narrowcasting/printing. The goal is to make marketing more accessible and less time consuming.

The most important part of the research is how you, as an entrepreneur, experience marketing. For this reason, I am eager to learn how your business managed marketing what the most substantial bottlenecks are. The questions take 4-5 minutes and the answers are processed anonymously.

In case you are curious about the end-results or interested in participating in further research, an e-mail address can be added at the end of the survey.

Questions that are marked with a star (*), are requisite.

Survey

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1: In which industry does your company operate?

1. Business services
2. Construction
3. Retail
4. Health
5. Wholesale
6. ICT and Media
7. Culture, sport and recreation
8. Hospitality
9. Logistics
10. Industry
11. Agriculture and horticulture
12. Financial institutions
13. Energy, water and environment
14. Other

2: How many people work at your company?

- () 1 person
- () 2 – 5 persons

- () 5 – 10 persons
- () 10 – 50 persons
- () > 50 persons

3: Does the company include a physical location that visitors can visit? (like a shop)

- () Yes
- () No

MARKETING

4: How much time is spent on marketing communication per week, on average?

- () < 1 hour
- () 1 - 5 hours
- () 5 - 10 hours
- () > 10 hours

5: How satisfied are you with the number of hours that is spent on marketing?

Scale 1 - 7

- (1) Dissatisfied
- (7) Satisfied

6: What are the most important marketing bottlenecks for your business? Multiple options can be chosen.

- [] Time
- [] Budget
- [] Marketing knowledge
- [] Other:

MARKETING CHANNELS

7: Which marketing communication channels are in use for promoting the business/services? Multiple options can be chosen.

- [] None
- [] Facebook
- [] Twitter
- [] YouTube
- [] Instagram
- [] LinkedIn
- [] TikTok
- [] Snapchat
- [] E-mail
- [] Website
- [] Blog
- [] Billboards
- [] Posters
- [] Digital Signage

- [] Tv/radio
- [] Brochures /flyers
- [] Events
- [] Magazines

8: Why was this (combination of) channels chosen?

AUTOMATION

There is a wide range of automated services available, for repetitive tasks such as scheduling emails, social media posts and others. The goal of these services is to free up time for other tasks that cannot be automated.

9: Are any automated services used at your company? Why is this the case (and which service), or why not?

THE PLATFORM

The goal of this project is to design a marketing communication platform. With this platform, an employee can distribute a marketing outing to multiple channels simultaneously, with a single action.

10: If you were a user of this platform, on which type of device would you mainly be using this platform?

- () Mobile phone
- () Computer/laptop
- () Tablet
- () Other:

11: What would be essential in this platform, in your opinion?

12: Would this platform be of interest for your company? Why/why not?

13: Would you be interested in this platform as a paid service, and for which amount?

END OF THE SURVEY

This is the end of the survey. Questions and comments can be written down in the tekst box below. It is also possible to leave an email address if you are interested in participating in further research or the results of this survey.

8.3.1. Dutch

Begeleidend bericht

E-mail

Beste meneer/mevrouw,

Voor mijn afstudeeronderzoek naar een marketingplatform ben ik op zoek naar ondernemers die ervaren dat ze weinig tijd hebben voor het managen van marketing.

Als oplossing hiervoor wordt gewerkt aan een Online Marketing Hub. Daarmee kan een bericht met één druk op de knop in meerdere kanalen worden geplaatst, zoals social media/websites/narrowcasting/drukwerk. Het doel is om marketing toegankelijker en minder tijdrovend te maken.

Hoe u hier als ondernemer over denkt is het belangrijkste. Daarom hoor ik graag hoe marketing bij u wordt ingezet en wat de grootste knelpunten zijn. De vragen nemen 4-5 minuten in beslag en de antwoorden worden anoniem verwerkt.

Bent u benieuwd naar de resultaten, of zou u graag meewerken aan verder onderzoek? Aan het einde kan een e-mailadres worden achtergelaten met een toelichting.

Klik hier om de survey te starten: <https://forms.gle/JkY6uCHVog4re1L96>
Alvast bedankt voor uw deelname!

Met vriendelijke groet,

Imme van der Made
Student Communicatie en Multimedia Design aan de Hanze Hogeschool in Groningen

LinkedIn

Voor mijn afstudeeronderzoek naar een marketingplatform ben ik op zoek naar ondernemers die ervaren dat ze weinig tijd hebben voor marketing. Met een aantal vragen (4-5 min) hoop ik meer inzicht te krijgen in:

- Welke marketingkanalen (m.b.t. marketingcommunicatie) gebruikt worden
- Wat de knelpunten zijn
- Of een platform dit kan verbeteren.

De antwoorden worden anoniem verwerkt. Open de volgende link voor de vragen:
<https://forms.gle/JkY6uCHVog4re1L96>

Als mogelijke oplossing werk ik aan een Online Marketing Hub. Met de Hub wordt een bericht met een druk op de knop naar meerdere kanalen verzonden, zoals social media/websites/narrowcasting/drukwerk. Het doel is om marketing toegankelijker en minder tijdrovend te maken.

Benieuwd naar de resultaten, of geïnteresseerd in deelname aan verder onderzoek? Aan het einde van de vragen kan een e-mailadres worden achtergelaten.

Introductie

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname! Voor mijn afstudeeronderzoek ben ik op zoek naar ondernemers die ervaren dat ze weinig tijd hebben voor marketing. Als oplossing wordt een platform ontworpen om marketing toegankelijker en minder tijdrovend te maken.

Ik hoor graag hoe marketing bij u wordt ingezet, wat de knelpunten zijn en hoe u denkt over tools die marketingtaken uit handen nemen. De vragen nemen 4-5 minuten in beslag en worden anoniem verwerkt.

Bent u benieuwd naar de resultaten, of geïnteresseerd in verder onderzoek? Aan het einde kan een e-mailadres worden achtergelaten met een toelichting.

Vragen die zijn gemarkeerd met een sterretje (*), zijn vereist.

ACHTERGRONDINFORMATIE

1: In welke industrie is uw onderneming werkzaam?

1. Zakelijke diensten
2. Bouw
3. Detailhandel
4. Gezondheid
5. Groothandel
6. ICT en Media
7. Cultuur, sport en recreatie
8. Horeca
9. Logistiek
10. Industrie
11. Land- en tuinbouw
12. Financiële instellingen
13. Energie, water en milieu
14. Overige

2: Hoeveel personen zijn werkzaam bij uw onderneming?

- () 1 persoon
- () 2 – 5 personen
- () 5 – 10 personen
- () 10 – 50 personen
- () > 50 personen

3: Is er een fysieke locatie waar bezoekers langs kunnen komen? (zoals een winkel)

- () Ja
- () Nee

MARKETING

4: Hoeveel tijd wordt gemiddeld besteed aan marketing communicatie per week?

- () < 1 uur
- () 1 - 5 uur
- () 5 - 10 uur
- () > 10 uur

5: Hoe tevreden bent u over het aantal uren die aan marketing worden besteed?

Schaal 1 t/m 7

- (1) Ontevreden
- (7) Tevreden

6: Wat zijn de grootste marketing knelpunten voor uw onderneming? Er zijn meerdere opties mogelijk.

- [] Tijd
- [] Budget

- [] Marketingkennis
- [] Anders:

MARKETING KANALEN

7: Welke marketingcommunicatie kanalen zijn in gebruik voor het promoten van de onderneming/diensten? Er zijn meerdere opties mogelijk.

- [] Geen enkele
- [] Facebook
- [] Twitter
- [] Youtube
- [] Instagram
- [] LinkedIn
- [] TikTok
- [] Snapchat
- [] E-mail
- [] Website
- [] Blog
- [] Billboards
- [] Posters
- [] Digital Signage (digitale schermen)
- [] Tv/radio
- [] Brochures /flyers
- [] Beurzen/evenementen
- [] Tijdschriften/vakbladen

8: Waarom is voor deze (combinatie aan) kanalen gekozen?

AUTOMATISERING

Er is een groot aanbod aan geautomatiseerde diensten, zoals het inplannen van mails, social media posts en overige. Deze diensten nemen taken uit handen, zodat deze tijd aan andere zaken besteed kan worden.

9: Wordt er gebruikt gemaakt van een geautomatiseerde dienst bij uw onderneming? Waarom wel (en zo ja, welke dienst) of waarom juist niet?

HET PLATFORM

Het doel van dit project is het ontwerpen van een marketingcommunicatie platform. Hiermee kan een medewerker met één actie een bericht plaatsen op meerdere kanalen.

10: Op welk type apparaat zou u dit platform voornamelijk gebruiken als u een gebruiker zou zijn?

- () Mobiele telefoon
- () Computer/laptop
- () Tablet
- () Anders:

11: Wat zou voor u onmisbaar zijn in dit platform?

12: Zou dit platform interessant zijn voor uw bedrijf? Waarom wel/niet?

13: Zou u interesse hebben in dit platform als betaalde service? Zoja, voor welk bedrag zou dit zijn?

EINDE VAN DE SURVEY

Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst. In het onderstaande vak is ruimte voor vragen en opmerkingen. Er kan ook een e-mailadres en een toelichting worden ingevuld bij interesse naar verder onderzoek of naar de uitkomst van deze vragenlijst.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1: In which industry does your company operate?

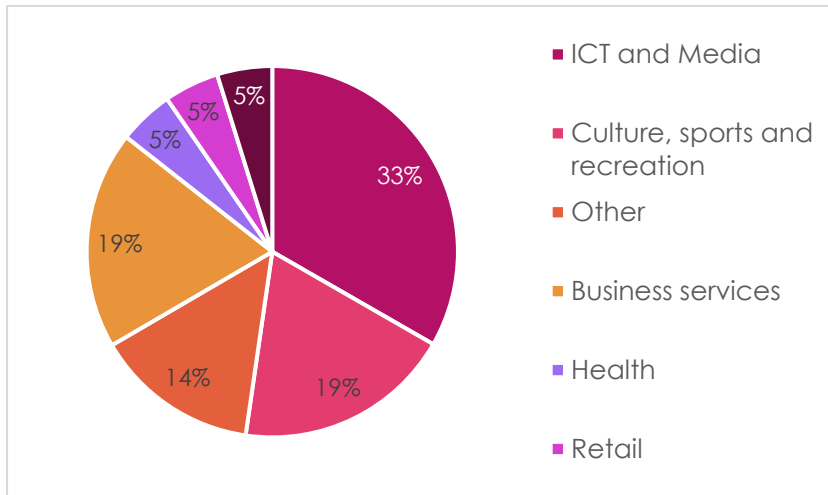


Figure 52: results question 1

2: How many people are employed at your company?

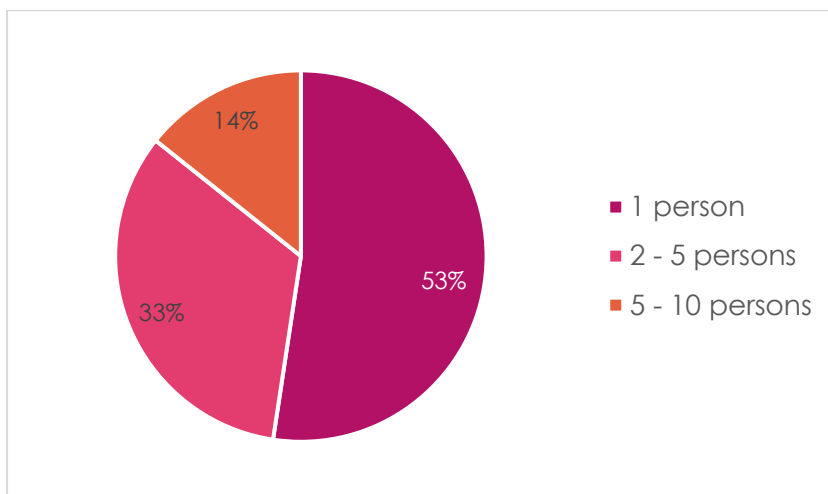


Figure 53: results question 2

3: Does the company include a physical location that visitors can visit?

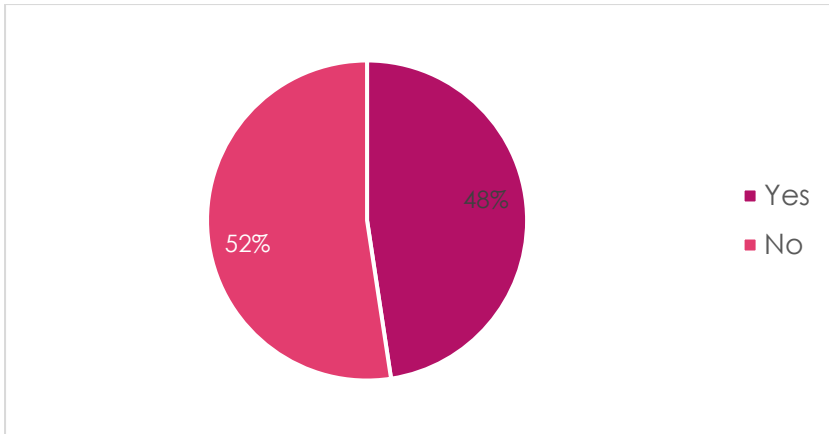


Figure 54: results question 3

MARKETING IN GENERAL

4: How much time is spent on marketing communication per week, on average?

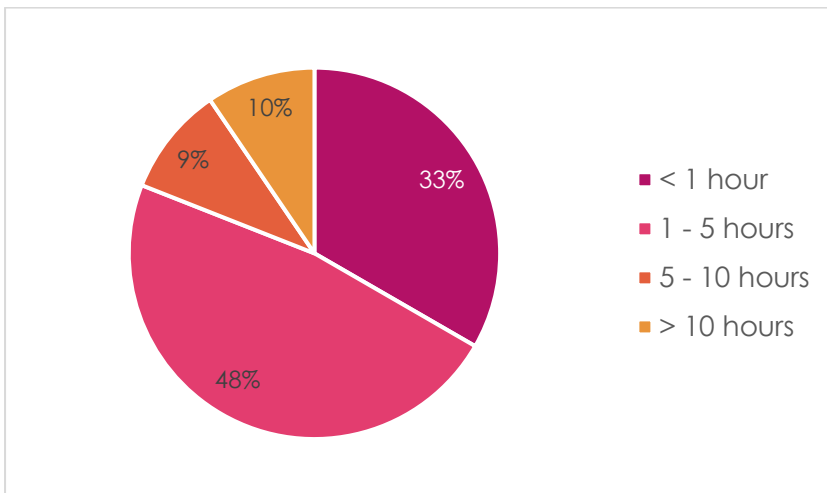


Figure 55: results question 4

5: How satisfied are you with the number of hours that is spent on marketing?

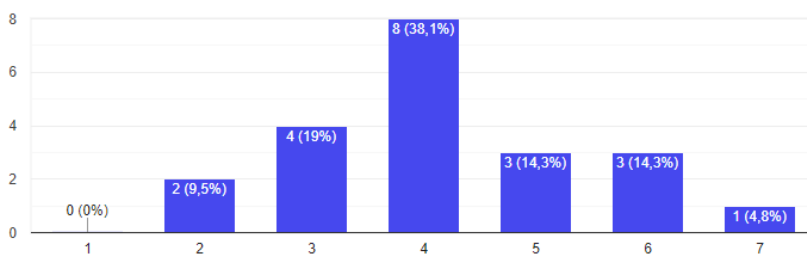


Figure 56: results question 5

6: What are the most important marketing bottlenecks for your business?
Multiple options can be chosen.

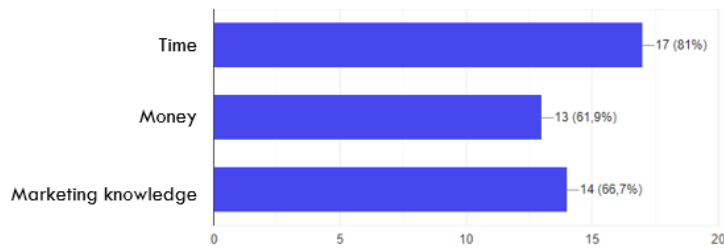


Figure 57: results question 6

MARKETING CHANNELS

7: Which marketing communication channels are in use for promoting the business/services? Multiple options can be chosen.

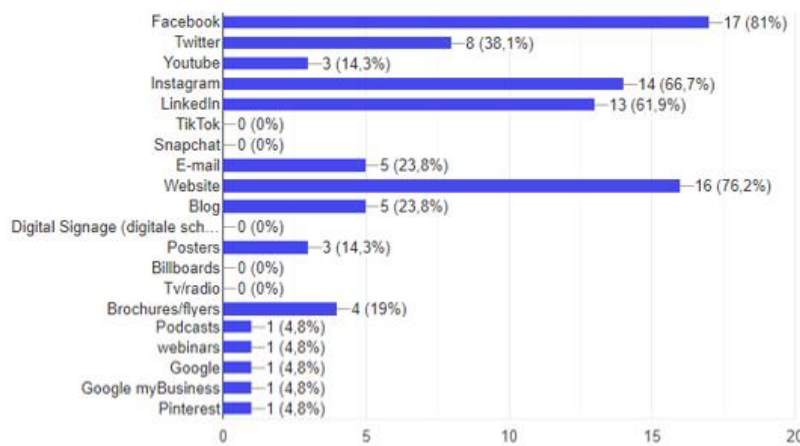


Figure 58: results question 7

8: Why was this (combination of) channels chosen?

- Because I think many customers can be found here
- Because of the target audience
- Someone started the business with these channels and it has been this way ever since
- It was not a conscious, strategic choice, it happened
- Because our target audience uses these channels
- It is practical
- I am still testing and searching
- A lack of money/time
- Easy to maintain and to reach a broad audience. Flyers/folders because we want to attract local customers
- Not enough content for social media, we do not need more than this
- These are the most important channels in my opinion and I cannot maintain all channels because I am alone. Additionally, Facebook and Instagram are easily maintained together, due to Creator Studio from Meta (with which you can place a post on both platforms)
- Based on my proposition and where my ideal customer is located
- Cheap and manageable together

- I have little marketing knowledge, these channels were recommended to me. Only few customers use e-mail for business
- Easy
- Easy to use
- Practical and easy in combination
- Low costs
- Easy and relatively low-cost
- A good way to reach a broad audience

AUTOMATION

9: Are any automated services used at your company? Why is this the case (and which service), or why not?

- No
- No, I like to do it all by myself
- No, there is too little unique content to do it automatically
- No, I am strongly opposed to these services
- No, because of the costs
- Mailchimp and Mailpoet for e-mailmarketing
- Yes, for weekly newsletters. Because it is easy to automate and we save a lot of time
- No, I want to keep it personal
- No, the costs are too high
- No, not enough content
- No, I have never thought about this (yet)
- Meta Business Suite, easy to use and I can post on Facebook and Instagram simultaneously and I can plan posts beforehand
- We try it because it saves time, which means it saves money
- Yes, I have automated accountancy
- No
- No, it costs money and I prefer to do it myself
- No, it costs too much
- Yes, for automating mails, it saves a lot of time

THE PLATFORM

10: If you were a user of this platform, on which type of device would you mainly be using this platform?

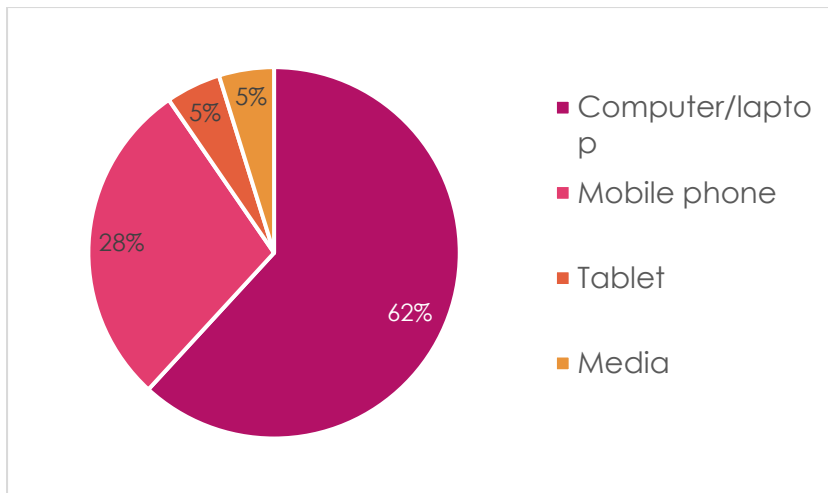


Figure 59: results question 10

11: What would be essential in this platform, in your opinion?

- The possibility to plan everything at different moment
- Video and images
- That it is personal
- That the post has a broad reach, on Facebook as well
- A clear content calendar with the placed and to-be-placed posts and an overview of results per post
- -
- Clarity, simple to use
- Few costs, quickly and easy to use
- A planning function
- I don't know
- A clear agenda with the planning
- A visual overview with the planned content and the logo of the platforms where the content is planned
- A clear overview
- Reaching my target audience
- A functions to plan posts easily beforehand
- A good overview
- To be able to plan beforehand and view posts after being placed
- An overview
- To be able to place posts on different moments
- To be able to personalize the post
- A good overview, in order to be able to collaborate with others

12: Would this platform be of interest for your company? Why/why not?

- Yes
- No, I use Facebook Business Manager
- Partially, I sometimes create content for LinkedIn and other times for Instagram. Blogs on LinkedIn and more visual stories on Instagram, so content depends on the platform
- -
- That would depend on the costs and how easy to use the platform is
- Yes, because we maintain many channels with few people and this costs a lot of time
- Yes, if we had more information

- Perhaps
- Depend on the costs
- No, this service is too extensive for us, because we only advertise on a few socials. Instagram and Facebook are already integrated in such a way that we can put one message on both channels automatically
- Not necessarily, we do not necessarily need more marketing. Perhaps at a later stage, when the company has grown
- Yes, because I am self-employed and this could save a lot of time
- Yes
- Absolutely! It saves a lot of time, money, knowledge investment and stress to be able to put the same message in different channels at once
- It is interesting. The costs are decisive
- Yes, I am especially interested in having a function with which posts can be planned within 1 tool
- Depends on the costs
- Yes, if posts can be planned, that saves time
- No
- Yes, depends on the functions

13: Would you be interested in this platform as a paid service, and for which amount?

- Depends on the functionalities
- Depends on the proposal
- I first want to talk about the possibilities
- Depends on the costs
- Yes, but not more than €5, - per month
- Yes, between €10, - and €20, -
- Yes, for €10, - per month
- Yes, for €10, - or €20, - per month
- Depends on the costs
- For a maximum of €20, - per month
- No
- No
- No
- Around €10, -
- Around €15, - depending on the functions
- I could try it for a small cost, between €8, - and €15, -
- There is no money for at this moment, but it could save a lot of time. So then I would be willing to put in €50, - per month
- Not at this time. The platform needs to prove its worth first
- I do not know
- A maximum of €30, - per month
- A maximum of €50, - per month

APPENDIX V – INTERVIEW: ROYAL DUTCH FRISIAN HANDBALL ASSOCIATION

Interviewer: Imme van der Made

Interviewee: Hendrik & Rianne, KNKB at Franeker

Date: 18-05-22

Location: Franeker, KNKB, Royal Dutch Frisian-Handball Association

Background information

- **What is your role in this company?**

Hendrik: I work in Communications

Rianne: I work in Commerce

We manage the marketing channels together.

Marketing

- Which marketing channels are in use?

The website, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and printing, meaning posters and flyers. TikTok could be added in the future.

- How frequently are new outings placed?

Every day and often multiple times on a day. Especially on the Saturdays, which are competitions days.

- What are your challenges, concerning marketing?

Time, money and workflow management. There is no good overview of what has been placed on the marketing channels, especially since there are so many in use. We have 5 employees with access to the channels and we see each other rarely. Wednesday is the only day we are all at work, so miscommunications happen easily. There is no grip on if posts have already been placed and posts cannot be planned ahead. Saturday is a day on which we need to post often, due to competitions and the interim score, but this is a day off for all of us and this costs extra time.

- Devices: With which devices do you create social media posts?
 - And narrowcasting posts or blog posts?

Social Media posts are created on a phone and website posts are created on a laptop. For example, a short message is placed on Facebook with a link to the website, which shows the full message.

- Have you thought about using a tool to automate marketing before?

Yes, but the tool was too expensive.

- Do you use multiple account per social media platform?

Only for Facebook. We have 3 Facebook accounts for different purposes.

The prototype

- Cross-posting: If the platform could only send the same message to different channels, would that be sufficient?

No, we use the different channels for different purposes and we always change the message at least slightly per channel. For example: Twitter is mostly used for interim score updates, YouTube is used solely for videos.

- Could this platform help to make the workflow easier or faster?

Yes, it would save a lot of time to be able to post on multiple channels at the same time. If we could see what other employees do on the channels as well, this would save us about 6-10 hours per week of collaboration and calling after other people to see if placements were done.

- Which info would you want to see on the dashboard?

The planning per week or per month and perhaps how many people have reacted on a post.

- Is there anything that is still missing in the current prototype?

Yes, LinkedIn. And it would be nice if the dashboard showed an overview of the channels a post is placed into, like drawn below.

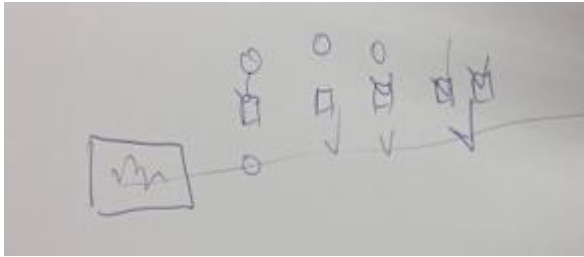


Figure 603 - Hand-drawn example of the dashboard by Hendrik

APPENDIX VI – TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL SURVEY

The questions are all answered with a Likert scale, with 7 points, ranging from “I do not agree” to “I fully agree”.

Measuring Perceived Usefulness

1. By using this product at work, I would be able to execute my tasks faster.
2. Using this product would improve my performance at work.
3. Using this product would improve my productivity.
4. Using this product would use my efficiency at work.
5. This product would enable me to fulfil my job with more ease.
6. I think this product would be useful at my job.

Measuring Ease of Use

1. I would be able to easily learn to handle this product.
2. I would find it easy to make the product do what I want.
3. My interactions with this product would go smoothly.
4. I would find this product flexible to work with
5. It would be easy for me to become skilful with this product.
6. I would find this product easy to use.

APPENDIX VII – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PROGRAMMER

Interviewee: Max Roeleveld
Interviewer: Imme van der Made
Date: 20th of May, 2022
Location: Groningen

8.7.1. Questions

Implementation

Introduction

The tool I have chosen to build the prototype in, is Axure RP. This is an all-round prototyping tool with a variety of functions. The choice is based on 5 basic requirements for the project:

- a. Windows compatibility
 - b. Price: Axure RP offers a trial period of a year, for students
 - c. Conditional logic (if/then)
 - d. Export options: the design can be exported to HTML, CSS, Javascript and image files.
 - e. Global variables: the user's data/input is saved during a session and communicated between pages, so that it can be used within the prototype.
-
1. Are these functions sufficient to convert the prototype to a functional website?
 2. Are there other ways for me to take your work in account, during the creation of the prototype? Which are these?
 3. Are there any constraints that I need to keep in mind? For example storage or visual constraints?
 - a. How can I take these into account?

Functions

4. Which functions are necessary in the prototype or the final build, in your opinion?
5. Are there any features that stand out in the user flow chart? For example features that could cause issues or are difficult to implement?
6. Are there any features or requirements that are missing in your opinion?

Others: Ticket system

7. Was the current ticket system built by Syntraks Media?
8. Is there a need for employees of Syntraks Media, as users, for an integration of tickets or the ticket system in the prototype?

8.7.2. Answers

Implementation

1. Are these functions sufficient to convert the prototype to a functional website?

In most cases, the output of these types of tools is not usable unless you build your entire application in the tool. I have no experience with Axure so I can't say for sure if that will be the case here. This means that the final output would still be manual work. It is not apparent to me from the Axure RP site what the difference is between this tool and Figma or Penpot.

This does not change the fact that such a tool can give a good view of the elements, animations and their coherence.

2. Are there other ways for me to take your work in account, during the creation of the prototype? Which are these?

Create a set of recurring elements as early as possible and use them in a consistent way. So "a button that performs an action is always blue and has a text size of at least so and so much", for example. If the prototype tool can make use of recurring elements, you also make it easier on yourself.

3. Are there any constraints that I need to keep in mind? For example storage or visual constraints?
 - a. How can I take these into account?

Storage and data not directly, although you will have to take into account that if data has to be retrieved from external sources, this can cause a delay or that something can go wrong and that this must also be implemented neatly and visually.

What you have to take into account is that an application must be usable on various devices, not only in terms of screen size, but also in terms of platform and speed. So don't just test on a desktop and modern iPhone, but also see what happens on an older device or a tablet. Visual and other limitations are definitely something to take into account, and there are also standards and guidelines for this, for example ARIA (see <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/Accessibility/ARIA>). Not only visual limitations, but also stimulus processing (so not too much bouncing or blinking, unless it can be turned off) and motor problems (so do not use very small buttons or moving targets).

This also exposes a limitation/side effect of prototyping tools; often, when exporting to HTML, all kinds of custom elements (such as buttons, pull-downs and text fields) are "invented" that already exist in a browser, just to make them easier or better to color. The accessibility of such elements is often reduced compared to that of the elements that the browser already has on board.

Functions

4. Which functions are necessary in the prototype or the final build, in your opinion?

Especially the possibility to easily inspect elements in the design itself. This requires that the design must also be open to a developer and therefore not hidden behind a paid account, and that any software is also available under Linux, for example.

A lot can be overcome by writing a complete style guide, but there will always be some exceptions and edge cases, and then it's easy to quickly view a color or size without having to bother the designer.

I don't expect a 100% usable final build (see my answer to the first question), but ideally that output is semantic HTML with as few tricks as possible to append styles to, and a logical layout into styles (using recurring CSS classes).

5. Are there any features that stand out in the user flow chart? For example features that could cause issues or are difficult to implement?

I have not made an extensive study of the package. Based on previous experience with similar packages, I think it is especially important that everyone (developer and designer) realize the best way to work with these types of packages (so not every button is remade individually as a rectangle, but by creating a recurring element) and also realize that there will always be differences between the ideal world of the prototype tool and its actual use in a variety of browsers on different platforms and devices.

6. Are there any features or requirements that are missing in your opinion?

I can't say anything meaningful about that.

Others: ticket system

7. Was the current ticket system built by Syntraks Media?

No, this is an off-the-shelf system. Personally, I think that better systems are available now, but with all the history built up in such a system, switching is almost impossible.

8. Is there a need for employees of Syntraks Media, as users, for an integration of tickets or the ticket system in the prototype?

I don't think I'm the best person to answer that question; that depends on the scope of the platform and whether support should be an integral part of it (as in "present in the interface").

Fenna



Title: Communication manager

Company: Sports association

Age: 30

Working hours: 24 hours p/w

Channels in use: Website, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn

Fenna is a communication manager at a sports association. She has a contract for 24 hours/week, but often works longer hours due to an ineffective marketing workflow.

Challenges

- Limited resources: time and money.
- Communication: There is one day during the week on which everyone is in the office at the same time. Employees are hard to reach on other days. This leads to miscommunications.
- Post times: Posts are needed on her days off. Specifically on the Saturdays, with competitions.
- Multiple channels: With six channels it is hard for employees to have a good overview.

Needs

- A low-cost platform.
- Team-wide visibility of the posts and the planning.
- A dashboard, on which she can view all channels and posts, without switching to another website.
- The possibility to plan posts ahead.

Figure 61: persona

APPENDIX IX – RESULTS CARD SORTING

Below are the cards for the card sorting method.

Cards
Dashboard
Calendar
Drafts
Materials
Feed

Table 8: cards for card sorting

Participants Position	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
1	Dashboard	Dashboard	Dashboard	Dashboard	Dashboard
2	Feed	Feed	Calendar	Feed	Calendar
3	Calendar	Calendar	Feed	Drafts	Drafts
4	Drafts	Drafts	Drafts	Calendar	Feed
5	Materials	Materials	Materials	Materials	Materials

Participants Position	Dashboard	Calendar	Drafts	Materials	Feed
1	100%				
2		40%			60%
3		40%	40%		20%
4		20%	60%		20%
5				100%	

Table 9: results of card sorting

APPENDIX X - PROTOTYPE STYLE GUIDE

Colours and Fonts

Colours



Typography

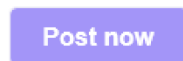
Abc

Arial

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn
Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 , . ! ? & / \ | < >

Buttons

Primary



Secondary



Icon



Link primary

[Cancel](#)

Link secondary

[More >](#)

Icons

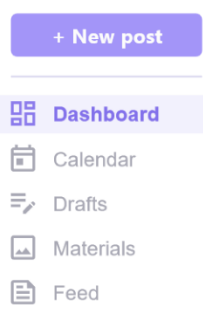


Components

Channels



Navigation



New message

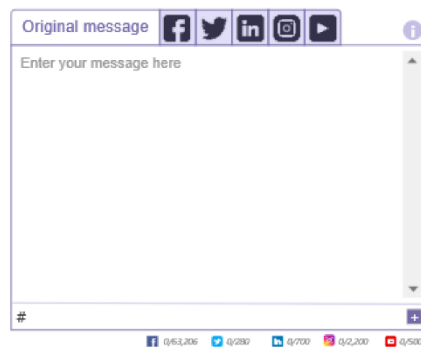


Figure 62: style guide

APPENDIX XI –USABILITY TESTING TEST PLAN AND RESULTS

8.12.1. Test plan

1. The Product

The product that is being tested is the second iteration of the prototype, 'MediaHub'. It is a marketing platform prototype, in which posts can be created for multiple channels at once (for social media, narrowcasting, WordPress). The platform includes the option to check the posts on a calendar, a feed and to add posts to drafts.

2. Study goals

The goal of this study is to research if the prototype can be used intuitively and without (or with very little) explanation beforehand. By presenting the participants with various scenarios, the prototype is tested for clarity, to see if the components of the prototype (like buttons, drop down menus) and their functions can be recognized with ease.

3. Logistics: time, dates, location, and format of study

The test plan will take place in separate tests, between the 16th and the 27th of May, 2022. The tests will take place in the Hanze University building: van Doornveste, Zernikeplein 11 in Groningen. This test is estimated to take between 15 to 30 minutes.

4. Participant profiles

The participants of this study are employees from small-sized, Dutch companies with no full-time in-house marketer. These are companies with less than 50 employees and who earn less than 10 million euros in revenue, annually. Another characteristic is that these companies use multiple marketing channels, but have limited resources available (money, knowledge, time) to manage these channels effectively. The participants have at least a basic knowledge of the marketing methods of their company, like what channels are used at the company.

5. Tasks

The scenarios used in this test are main activities for the platform if it would be live and are as follows:

Scenario 1: Create a post for social media, including the channels Twitter and Instagram.

Scenario 2: Create a new post for a WordPress blog, with template 2.

Scenario 3: Use the prototype to view which posts are planned for the month June.

6. Metrics, questionnaires

In addition to the scenarios, the following questions were asked after testing in order to estimate the product reactions of the target audience:

1. What are the features you would mostly use this product for? Is the platform suitable for that at the moment?
2. What do you find most attractive about this product?
3. Was there anything surprising or where the product did not perform as expected?
4. What task seems easy to you with this product? Why does this seem easy to you?
5. Is there a task that seems difficult for you to complete? Which and why?
6. Is there anything missing in this product? Or did you expect to see something that wasn't there?
7. Was there anything surprising or unexpected about this product?

Additionally, a TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) survey was conducted among the participants, which estimates if participants are likely to keep using this technology in the future.

The TAM survey measures the perceived usefulness and ease of use of a prototype or technology. The questions can be viewed below.

Measuring Perceived Usefulness

1. By using this product at work, I would be able to execute my tasks faster.
2. Using this product would improve my performance at work.
3. Using this product would improve my productivity.
4. Using this product would use my efficiency at work.
5. This product would enable me to fulfil my job with more ease.
6. I think this product would be useful at my job.

Measuring Ease of Use

1. I would be able to easily learn to handle this product.
2. I would find it easy to make the product do what I want.
3. My interactions with this product would go smoothly.
4. I would find this product flexible to work with
5. It would be easy for me to become skilful with this product.
6. I would find this product easy to use.

7. Description of the system

The usability test will be done on a laptop, within Axure RP as the prototyping tool. A mouse will be used, regarding external tools.

8.12.2. Results

Test session 1

Scenarios

A point of improvement during the scenarios, was that the channel selection was not very clear. The channel selection should be put in a new position in the new post modal. Apart from this, there were no issues with the tasks. The participants views the prototype as intuitive and easy to use.

Interview questions

1. What are the features you would mostly use this product for? Is the platform suitable for that at the moment?

Especially the planning (although not everything can be planned on the socials) and the insight into what is on the schedule. In addition, it is important to us that there is uniformity in reporting and that the right messages are sent to the right channels.

2. What do you find most attractive about this product?

The clarity in the planning and the automatic formatting of photos and messages for the different channels. The speed of placing outings as well.

3. Was there anything surprising or where the product did not perform as expected?

The surprise of the last addition with information. This way it is clear how the messages should be placed. That way it is clear to everyone.

4. What task seems easy to you with this product? Why does this seem easy to you?

The fast placements without having to start up and log in to the different channels every time.

5. Is there a task that seems difficult for you to complete? Which and why?

Especially the quick short messages are difficult to schedule.

6. Is there anything missing in this product? Or did you expect to see something that wasn't there?

I would like an option to add fixed hashtags. Currently, employees come up with hashtags that I think don't come across as professional.

7. Was there anything surprising or unexpected about this product?

See question 3. A nice addition, Imme!

Test session 2

Scenarios

One of the things that stood out during the scenarios, was that the user had issues to find the channel selection. The channel selection should be placed into a better spot on the modal, preferably at the top of the modal.

Interview questions

1. What are the features you would mostly use this product for? Is the platform suitable for that at the moment?

I would mostly use the platform to save my data in a centralized place. While the platform is suitable to save my images, I can't save my texts and other information yet. I understand these can be stored in drafts, but maybe it would be nice to have a centralized place to store standard messages too.

On top of that, it's nice to be able to keep track of what is currently live, planned and maybe cancelled, with results on how they are doing. I can see that stuff is active and planned, but I can't see the performance at a first glance without going into detailed overviews. I know I can't expect too much, but it would be amazing if there was this crazy system that could predict success rates for me based on past analytics.

2. What do you find most attractive about this product?

I think the most attractive part of the product is the rounded corners in the sort of cards. They look like they have a lot of potential, but it feels a bit cheap with just thin lines and light colours. Maybe gradients would be cool, or a more premium feeling.

3. Was there anything surprising or where the product did not perform as expected?

I was surprised to see there are nice filter options here and there, those are very convenient for large projects. Also, making a new post is very clear and streamlined. I struggled a bit with understanding what the social media icons are for above the message, I would prefer if this was also in the right column, but that's okay, I figured it out after a while.

4. What task seems easy to you with this product? Why does this seem easy to you?

A task that was easy to complete was definitely using the prototype to view which posts are planned. This feels very natural and easy to do.

5. Is there a task that seems difficult for you to complete? Which and why?

Creating a post is rather difficult of a task, instead. Finding out where my selection is took me a try or three, since it is located out of the window and close to the other buttons down below it. I first thought this was done in what I now understand is the preview buttons, which again, should be on the right. Maybe add something in here that makes you scroll to a separate section? Or maybe another screen to decide where to post? Or put it on the left side or something, so I can select which platform to edit the post for. Either way, be sure to fix this interaction and get the order in which things are important right.

6. Is there anything missing in this product? Or did you expect to see something that wasn't there? It would be nice if the channel selection was in the right place, like mentioned in the previous answer.

7. Was there anything surprising or unexpected about this product?

There were no surprises.

Test session 3

Scenarios

Points of improvement during the scenario tasks:

- If possible, remove the frame around the previews. The previews themselves already have frames.
- If possible, add name, logo and followers to the preview screen.
- Remove the channel selection at the bottom, for narrowcasting and WordPress posts.
- Since both images and videos can be added, it is an idea to divide the materials section into images and videos?

Interview questions

1. What are the features you would mostly use this product for? Is the platform suitable for that at the moment?

Especially social media posts. As far as it seems, the platform is certainly suitable for that! You can see that the platform is designed around that. These are also relatively easy straight forward messages where you don't have to think about where the image will come from, how the text is folded around it, etc. which might be necessary in a blog post.

2. What do you find most attractive about this product?

It looks attractive and simple/easy, and ensures uniform distribution across multiple channels without having to manage each individual channel yourself.

3. Was there anything surprising or where the product did not perform as expected?

"See the points of improvement which were added during the scenarios."

4. What task seems easy to you with this product? Why does this seem easy to you?

See question 1.

5. Is there a task that seems difficult for you to complete? Which and why?

Narrowcasting seems difficult to me because you often have several slides at the same time, but that is more of a technical limitation, so I don't see anything that seems difficult to me.

6. Is there anything missing in this product? Or did you expect to see something that wasn't there?

As mentioned in my previous post, managing your social channels. Adding channels so you can use them for posting, but also manage them. Think of adjusting the biography, profile picture, name perhaps.

7. Was there anything surprising or unexpected about this product?

For a prototype it is already quite complete. Tips and tricks for posting social media messages. Nice interactive example of the message to be posted.

TAM results of all sessions

The Technology Acceptance Model lets the participants rate the questions on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 meaning 'I fully disagree' and 7 meaning 'I fully agree'.

1. By using this product at work, I would be able to execute my tasks faster.

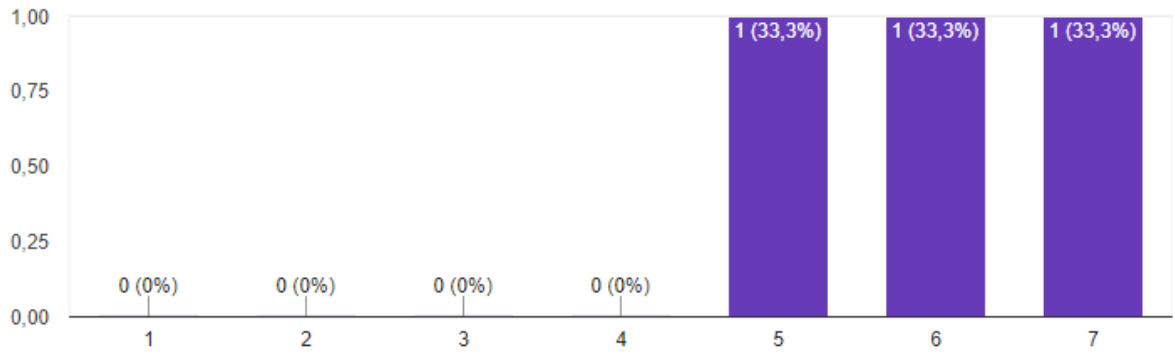


Figure 63: results question 1

2. Using this product would improve my performance at work.

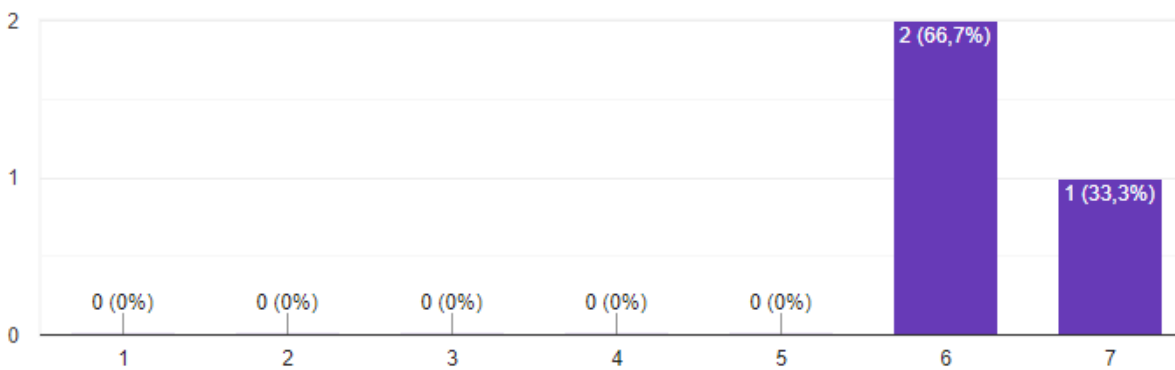


Figure 64: results question 2

3. Using this product would improve my productivity.

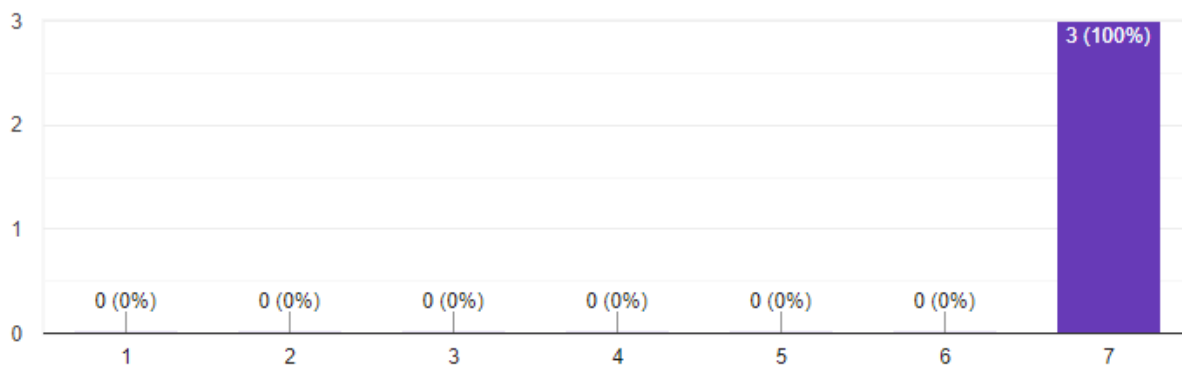


Figure 65: results question 3

4. Using this product would use my efficiency at work.

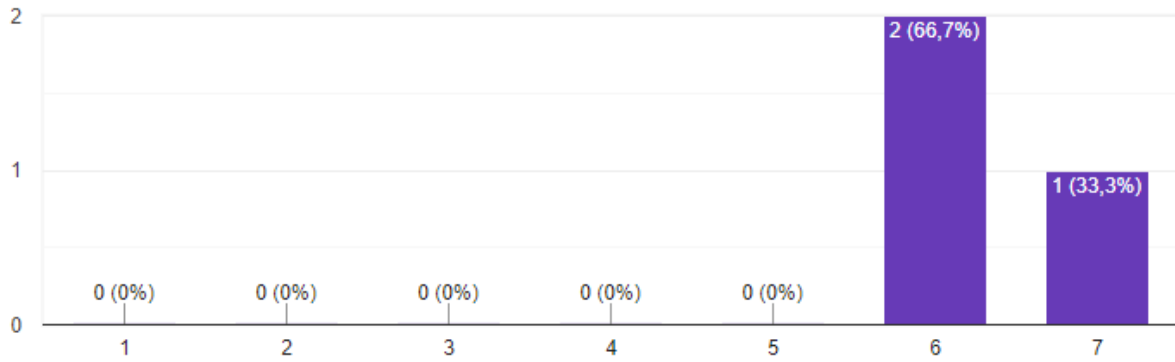


Figure 66: results question 4

5. This product would enable me to fulfil my job with more ease.

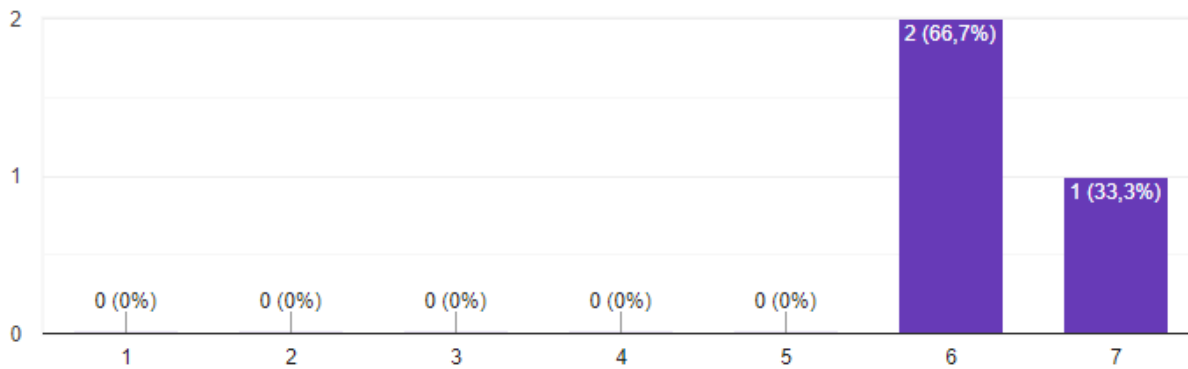


Figure 67: results question 5

6. I think this product would be useful at my job.

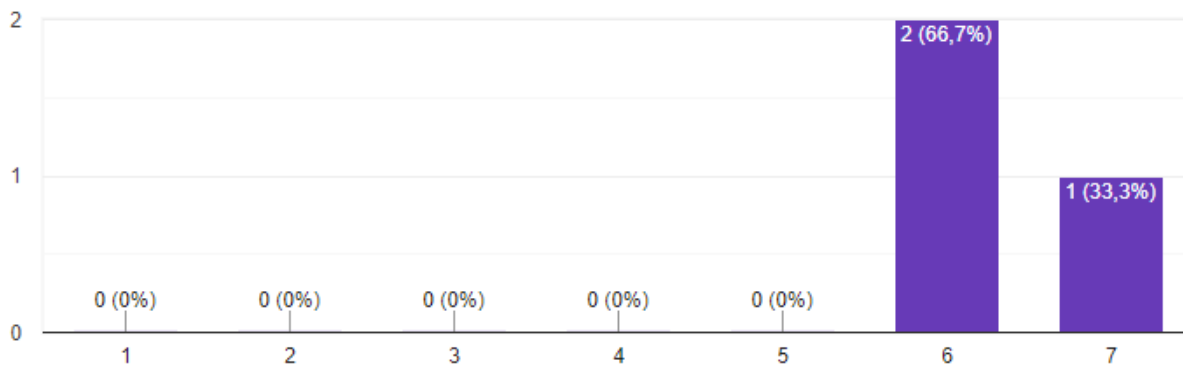


Figure 68: results question 6

Measuring Ease of Use

1. I would be able to easily learn to handle this product.

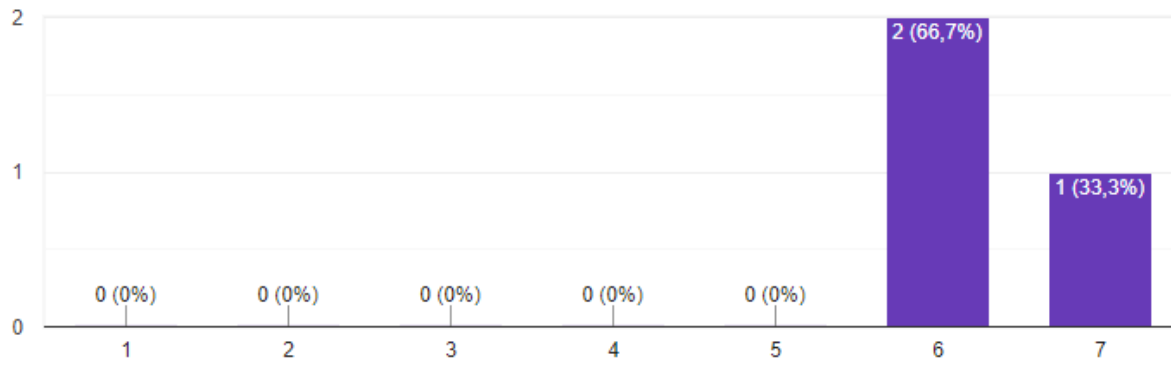


Figure 69: results question 1

2. I would find it easy to make the product do what I want.

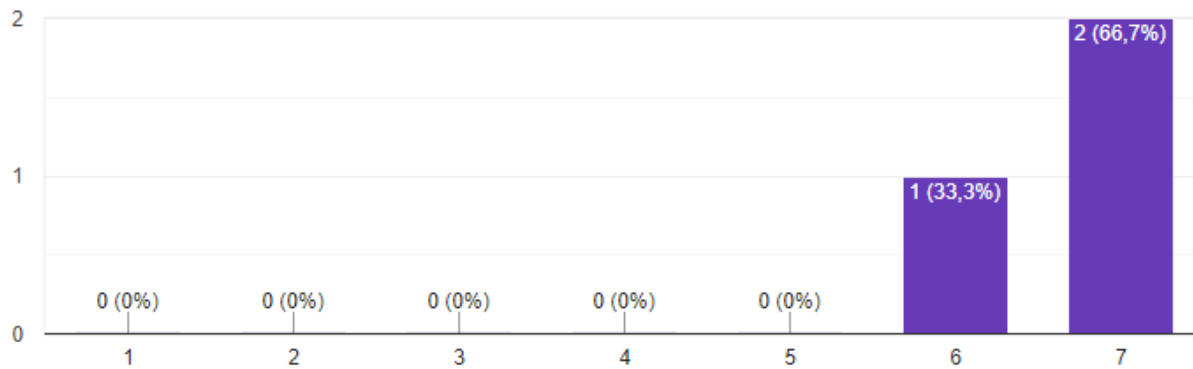


Figure 70: results question 2

3. My interactions with this product would go smoothly.

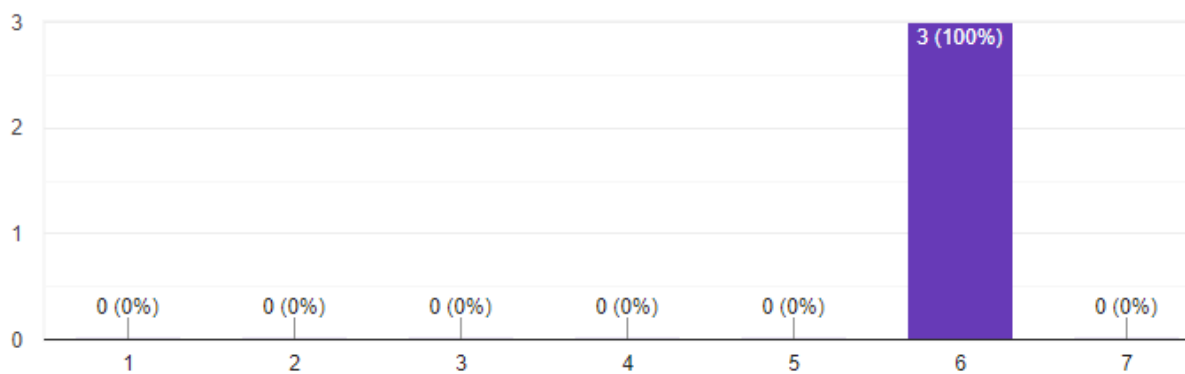


Figure 71: results question 3

4. I would find this product flexible to work with

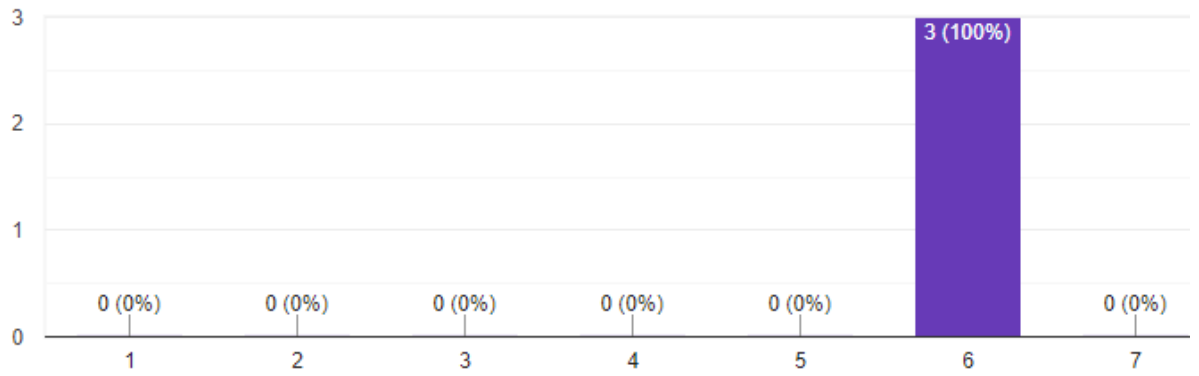


Figure 72: results question 4

5. It would be easy for me to become skilful with this product.

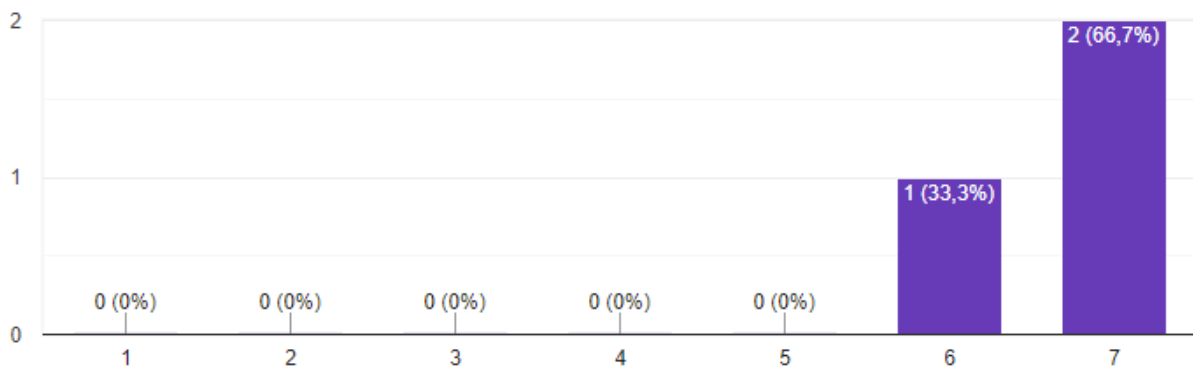


Figure 73: results question 5

6. I would find this product easy to use.

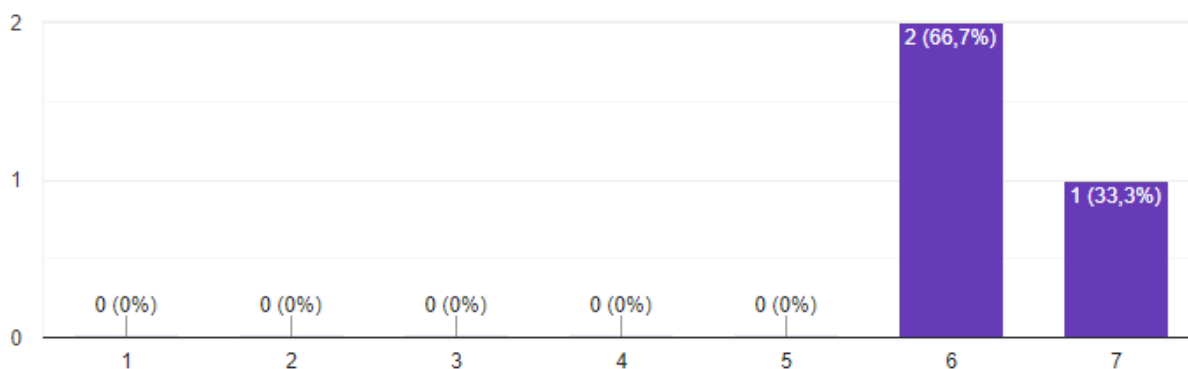


Figure 74: results question 6

APPENDIX XII - CLIENT COMMUNICATION

This appendix discusses a summary per interview with the client.

8.13.1. Briefing

Interviewee: Siebolt Lettinga
Interviewer: Imme van der Made
Date: 28th of November, 2021
Location: Groningen

Context

We often receive signals from our clientele that there is a need for an integrated approach and solution for marketing communications for online and offline channels. Where previously the need for offline marketing such as advertising via radio and TV commercials was great, this is now on the decline and budgets are increasingly shifting to online. This online marketing, with more (smaller) messages and with a higher frequency than is the case with offline marketing, requires a cost-efficient approach so that multiple expressions can be done within the same budget. Because an SME or small foundation/organization does not have the time, knowledge, resources or personnel to perform this independently and efficiently, an innovative approach is required.

That is why we want to develop a platform where customers can easily and efficiently distribute all their media for marketing and news and this is converted to the right format for each channel (social media, website, narrowcasting, printed matter, etc.) with their own house style, through templates. In this way they can place a message on all these different channels professionally and efficiently with 1 action, automatically provided with their own house style, and they do not have to manage all these different channels separately and there is a complete overview. We would like to distinguish ourselves in the market of providers of multimedia design by being innovative. We see in offering this marketing hub in combination with our multimedia services the solution to continue to deliver our added and distinctive value to our customers.

Developing an online marketing platform for media and news items

The corporate identity/templates for marketing & communication of a company are linked to various media (social media, website, narrowcasting, printed matter, etc.) The content is the same, every expression is different.

Links to social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn),

Link with printing companies, automatic conversion of plain text to e.g. flyers, desk print, etc.

Link with newsletter software (MailChimp etc.)

Link with WordPress and other website software

Dynamic content creation for different media where 1 message is automatically made suitable for each format for the channel that is used. Different types of messages (offers, news item, vacancy, etc.) both customized for the customer and based on corporate identity templates. A total package for marketing with all functionality that allows small companies/organizations to efficiently and effectively increase their reach and use their marketing budget. Feedback campaigns through a link with Google Analytics.

A description of the business activities that the company carries out

Syntraks Media is a media production company that produces and provides creative media expressions in a no-nonsense manner. This relates to the realization of a corporate film, commercial, narrowcasting solution or website. We also develop software for broadcast and narrowcasting applications (software development) and implement and manage this.

The value of the project for Syntraks Media

The influence of digitization on Syntraks Media is large, where in the past mainly use was made of offline media, this mainly takes place online. As a media content company, we have to lead the way in this and remain distinctive compared to other suppliers, and this platform plays a major role in this. It ensures that Syntraks Media can maintain its employment and increase its turnover as a result and is therefore vital to the survival of this company. We expect this project to generate approximately

45,000 euros in additional revenue in the first year after completion and growing to 100,000 per year. In addition, this project will allow us to gain knowledge and know-how that we can use in future projects.

8.13.2. Interview 1: Exploration

Interviewee: Siebolt Lettinga

Interviewer: Imme van der Made

Date: 10th of January, 2022

Location: Groningen

1. In the message you mentioned SMEs and small foundations/organizations, are they actually companies from specific sectors that are mainly interested in such a platform, regardless of the size of the company? Or did you have specific fields in mind yourself?

Answer

The target group is quite broad and concerns companies that like to profile themselves and the media. This will largely be the retail sector that makes expressions via social, media, dooh, website, printed matter and TV. But also branches such as entertainment, services, etc. It can be both business to consumer and business to business. The size of the organization can probably be defined, because we want to offer an affordable, relatively simple but effective solution for companies that often do not employ designer(s) and (social) media professionals. We offer a solution with this tool and related services.

2. In addition, an entrance will also be needed for Syntraks Media itself, in the platform. What functions would Syntraks need there?

Answer

Besides the fact that we could also use this tool as a customer, we obviously need a management environment with which we can create customers, including login details, multiple users per customer and determine which functions they can use.

3. I was also thinking about the links with companies. With printing companies for example. Do you have in mind that customers enter company information in advance (name/location/communication or email of the printing company), or it can be set up in such a way that the customer can choose from various nearby printing companies in the platform and that printing companies can advertise?

Answer

Initially we will probably integrate with 1 customer / platform, but this idea certainly is an option.

4. Which channels are required for Syntraks Media?

Answer

The first focus should be on social media, narrowcasting and websites (WordPress) at first. Printing press could be added in later versions. The full range of channels is too much for now.

5. Are there any other requirements for the prototype in general?

Answer

The application should be lean and mean, meaning that it is easy to use. We strive for it to be low cost and with broad functionalities, if that is possible. The customer should also have the ability to choose different templates for messages within the prototype, so the arrangement of the text, images and titles for narrowcasting and blog posts.

8.13.3. Interview 2: Updated on Requirements

Interviewee: Siebolt Lettinga

Interviewer: Imme van der Made

Date: 11th of April, 2022

Location: Groningen

1. Would you want the customer to be able to login and create an account by themselves?

Answer

Preferred is for us to have an appointment with the customer in which we set everything up, instead of customers signing up by themselves.

2. Does the current prototype require a landing page?

Answer

No, the landing page is not important right now. It is nice to have, but it can easily be added later.

3. Which parts of the User Flow Chart are part of the Minimal Viable Product in your opinion?

Answer

The most important pages are the Dashboard, Outings and Channels. Materials can be added as well.

APPENDIX XIII - THE PROTOTYPE PAGES

8.14.1. First iteration

8.14.2. Second iteration

Dashboard

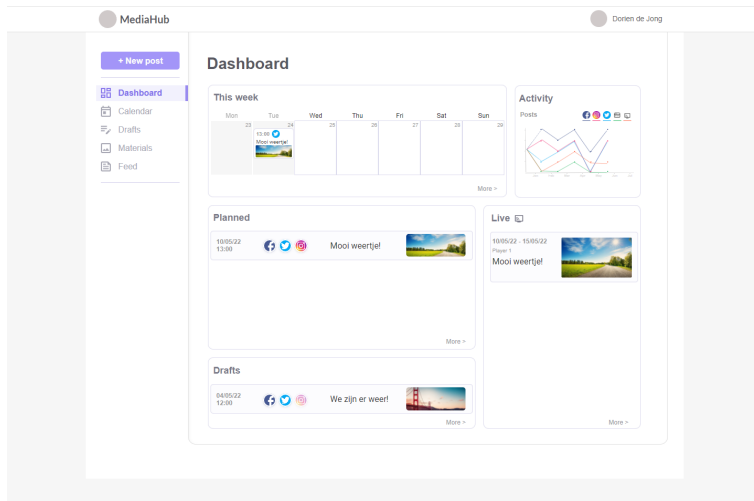


Figure 75: the Dashboard page

Calendar

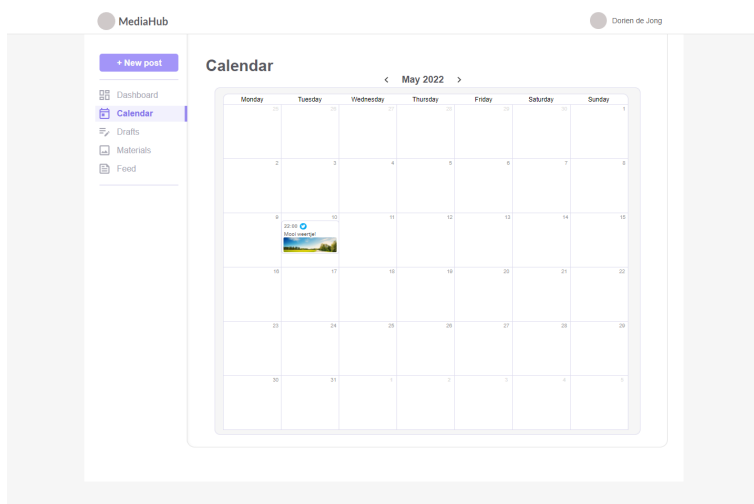


Figure 76: the Calendar page

Drafts

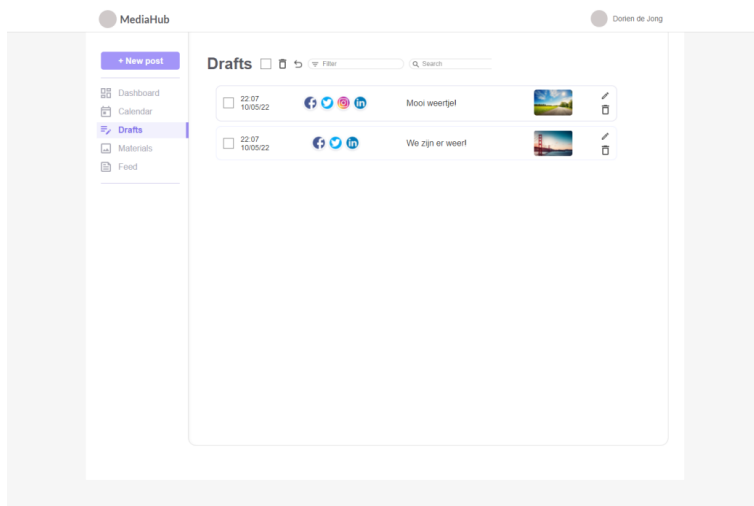


Figure 77: the Drafts page

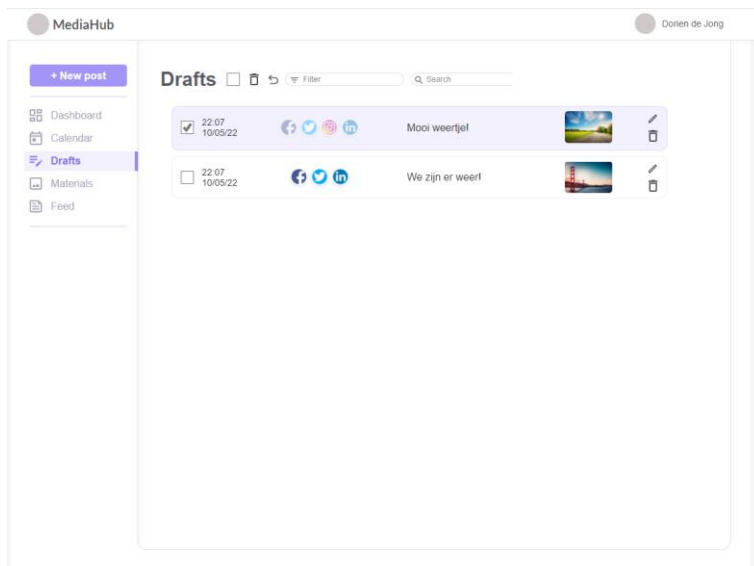


Figure 78: the Drafts page, with a draft selected

Materials

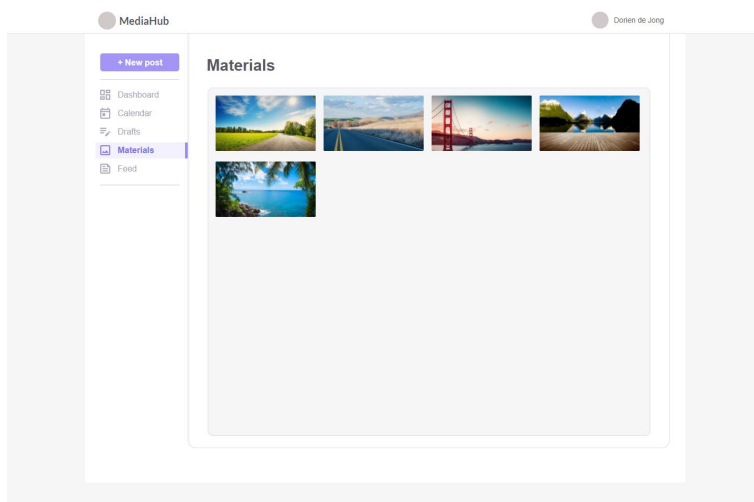


Figure 79: the Materials page

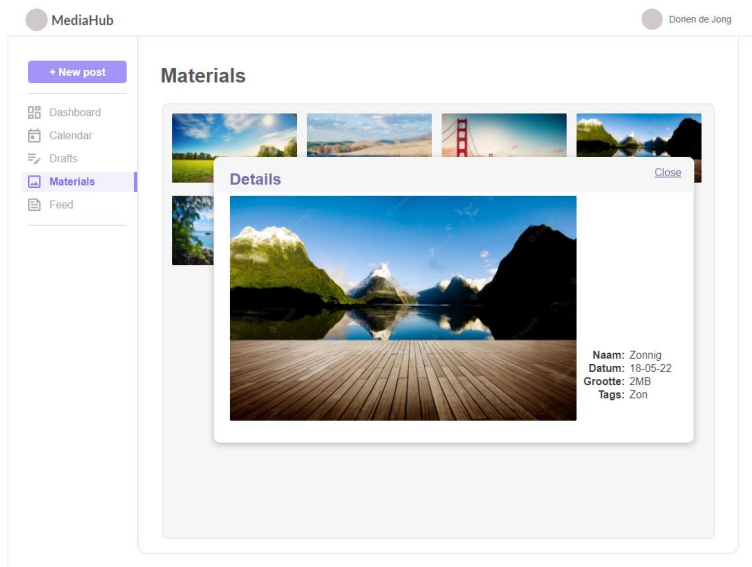


Figure 80: the Materials page, with a material opened

Feed

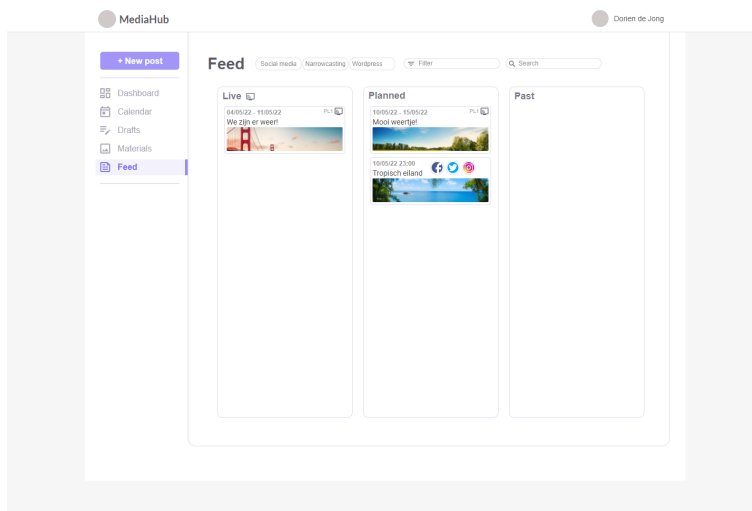


Figure 81: the Feed page

New post modal

Social media

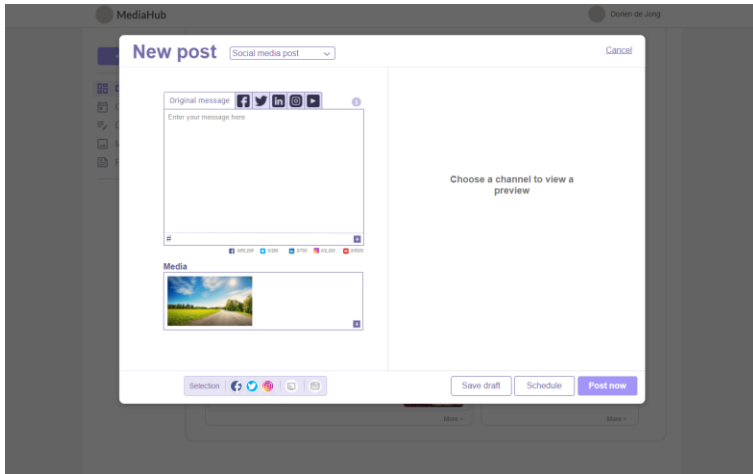


Figure 82: Creating a new social media post

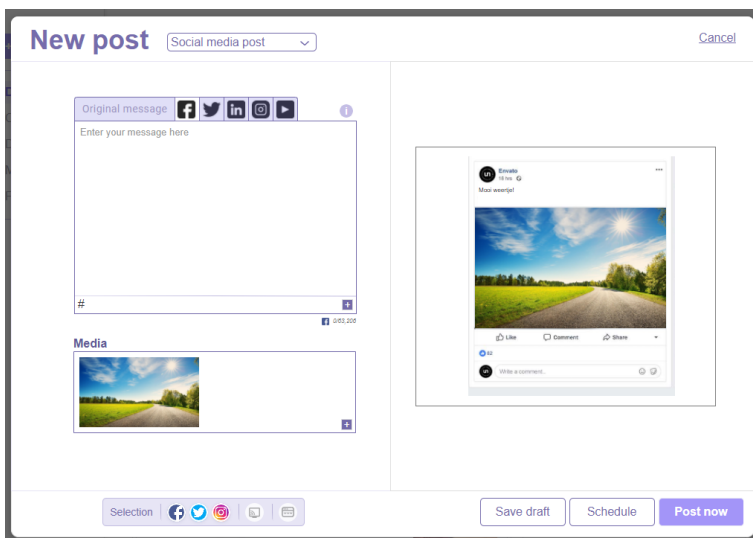


Figure 83: Creating and previewing a Facebook post

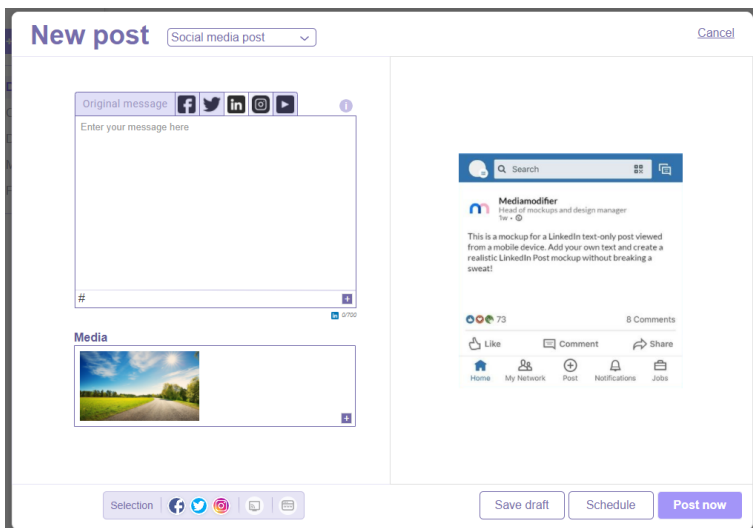


Figure 84: Creating and previewing a LinkedIn post

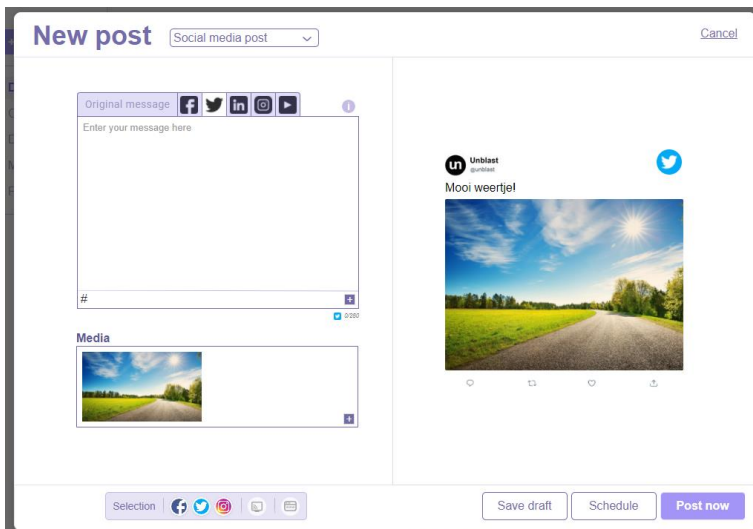


Figure 85: Creating and previewing a Twitter post

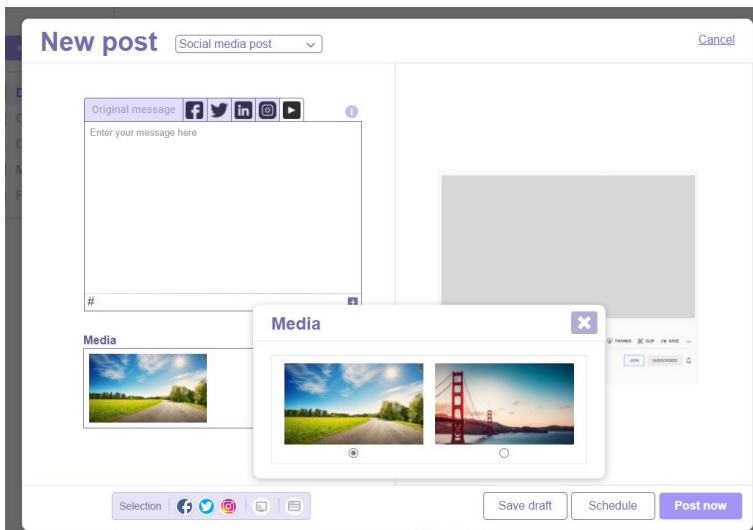


Figure 86: selecting media for a social media post

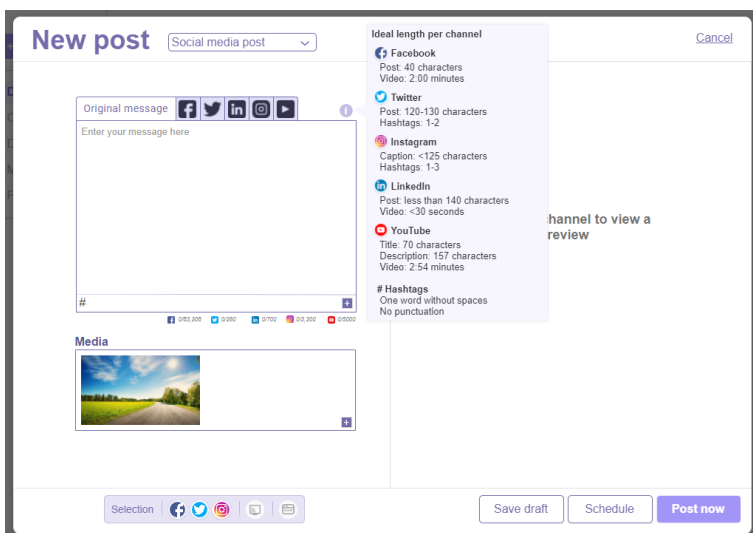


Figure 87: the New Post tooltip

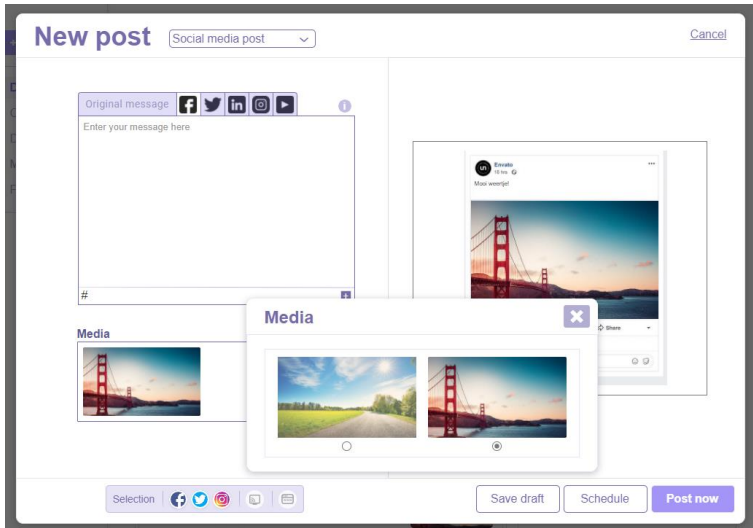


Figure 88: Adding Media to a new post

WordPress

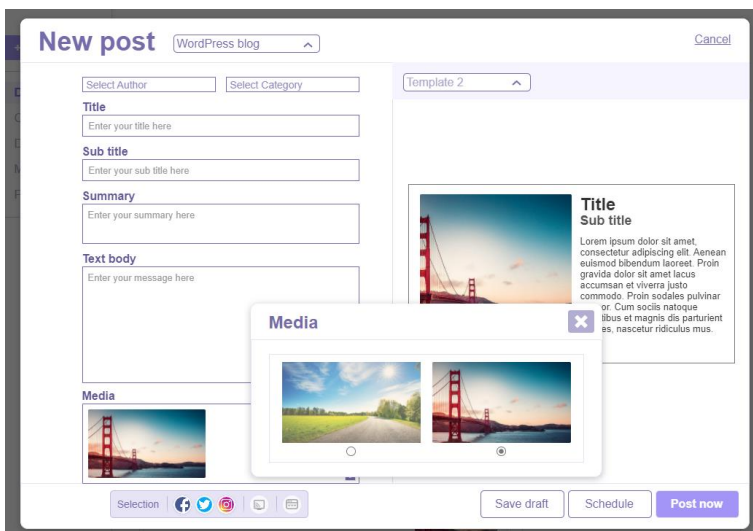


Figure 89: adding media to a new post

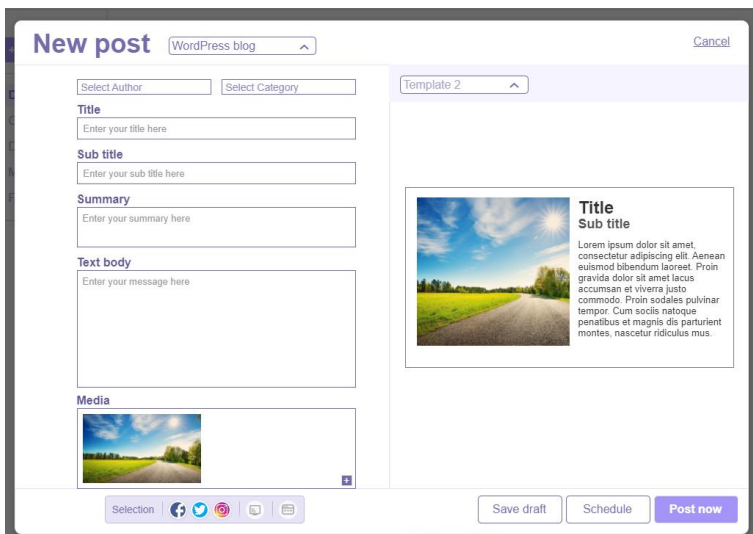


Figure 90: creating a new post for a WordPress blog

Narrowcasting

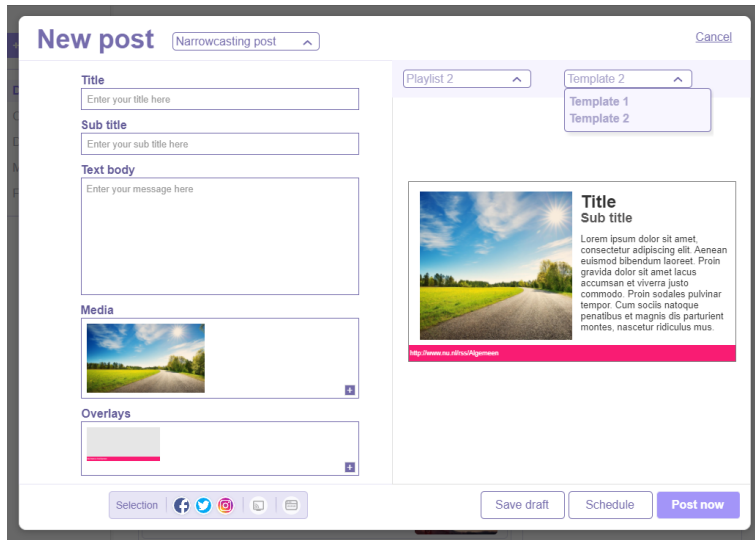


Figure 91: Creating a new post for a narrowcasting post

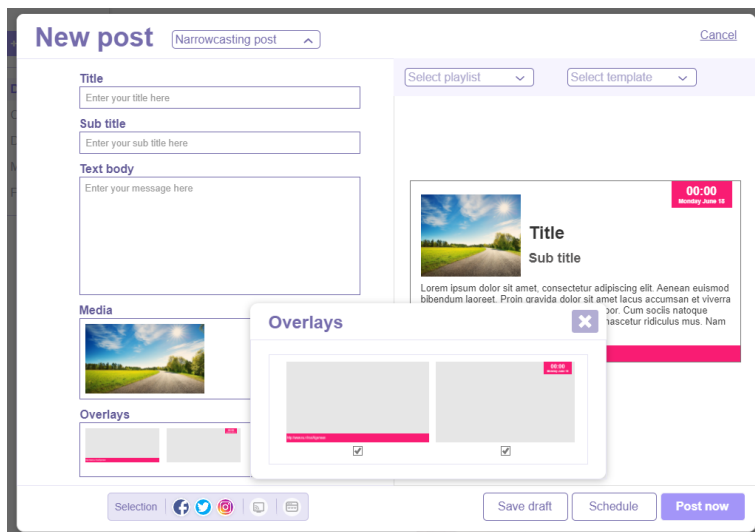


Figure 92: Selecting overlays for a narrowcasting post

Job offer

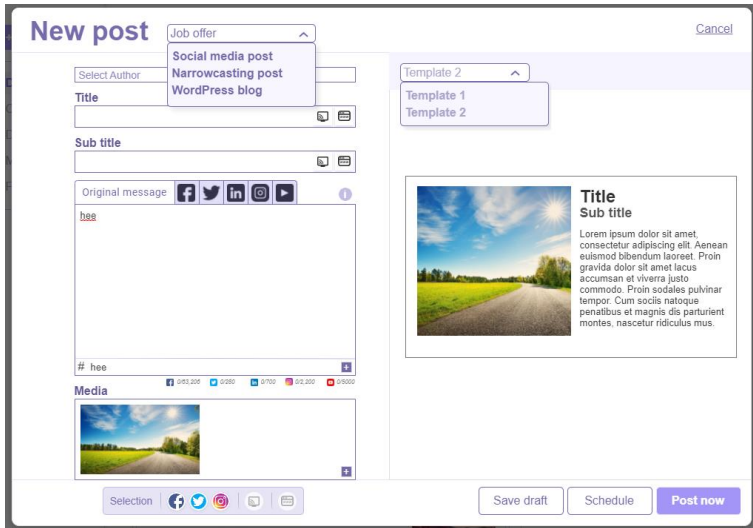


Figure 93: the drop-down menus on the new post modal

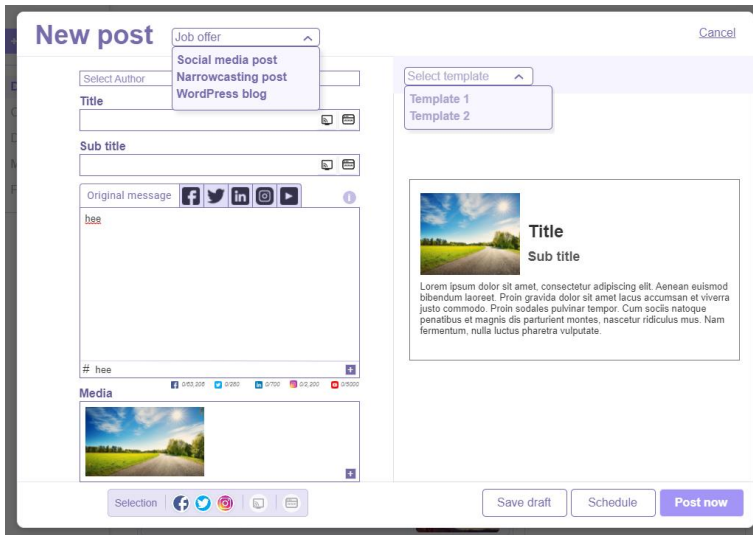


Figure 94: the drop-down menus with a different template