

CAITLIN WYNNE

Case studies

Preferred substitutions

Coles Group

Multiple items

Coles Group

Leadership & Feedback

Coles Group


Preferred substitutions

This large scale project focused on improving online product substitutions at Coles to enhance customer experience and streamline team member workflows. The discovery phase addressed customer pain points, ideal experiences, and backstage process optimisation across web and app channels.

By addressing a \$20M annual margin impact and associated costs from substitutions, the project aimed to improve customer satisfaction, reduced the cost impact and improve operational inefficiencies for long-term business value.

<

Substitution preference



Cadbury Dairy Milk Chocolate
Block | 360g


↔

If out-of-stock, substitute with:

Best match

We'll choose a similar item for you.


☒



Bought before

Cadbury Dairy Milk Top
Deck Block | 360g


☐



Cadbury Caramilk Large
Chocolate

Block | 315g

☐



Cadbury Dairy Milk
Raspberry Black Forest
Block Chocolate | 330g

☐

COLLABORATION

Cross functional team

DESIGN

Caitlin Wynne

PM

Natalie Hamilton

BA

Caroline Hoyle

DEV LEAD

Luke Anderson

RESEARCH

Marissa Gough

CONTENT DESIGN

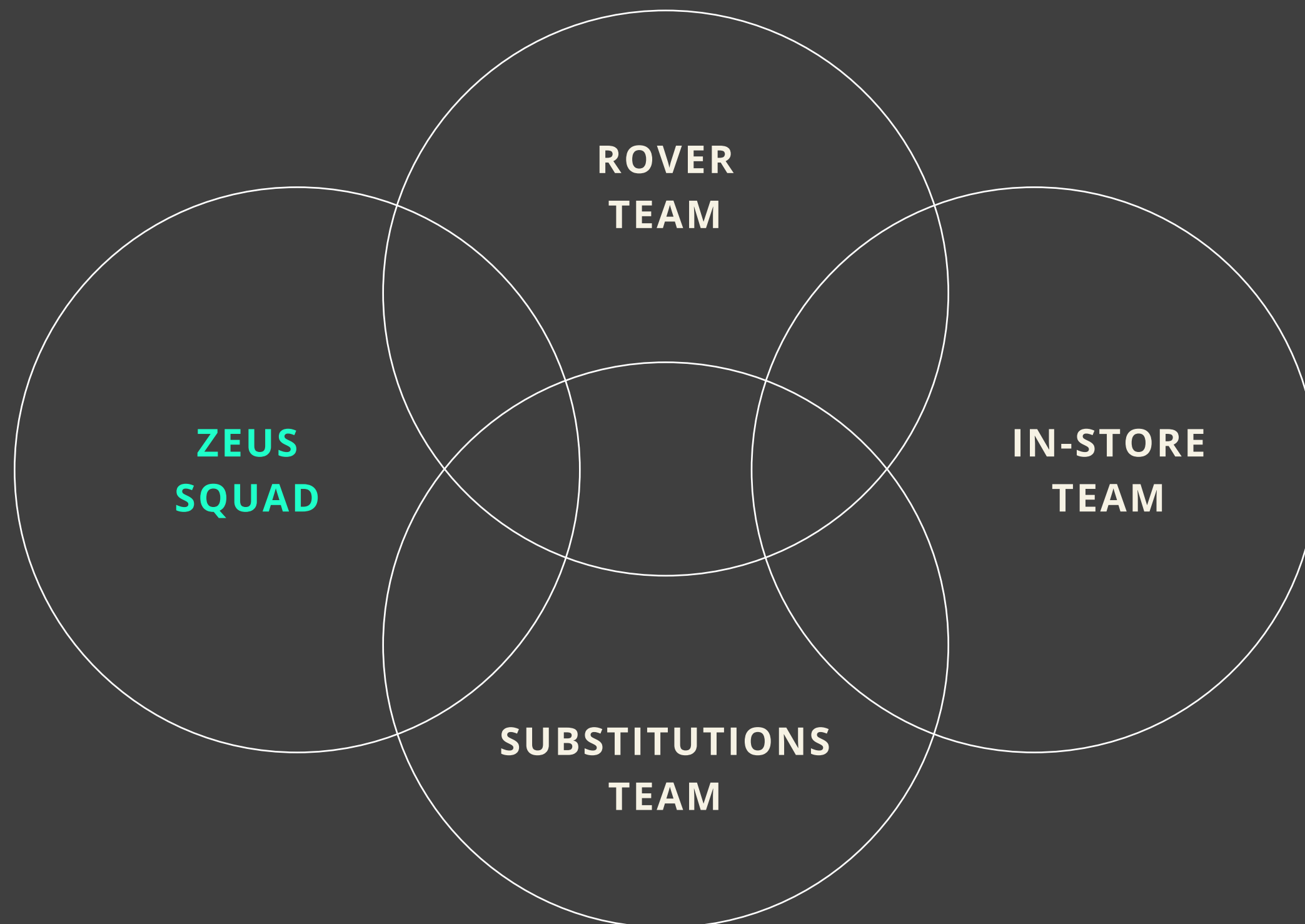
Jason Toon

ACCESSIBILITY

Laura Moller

COLLABORATION

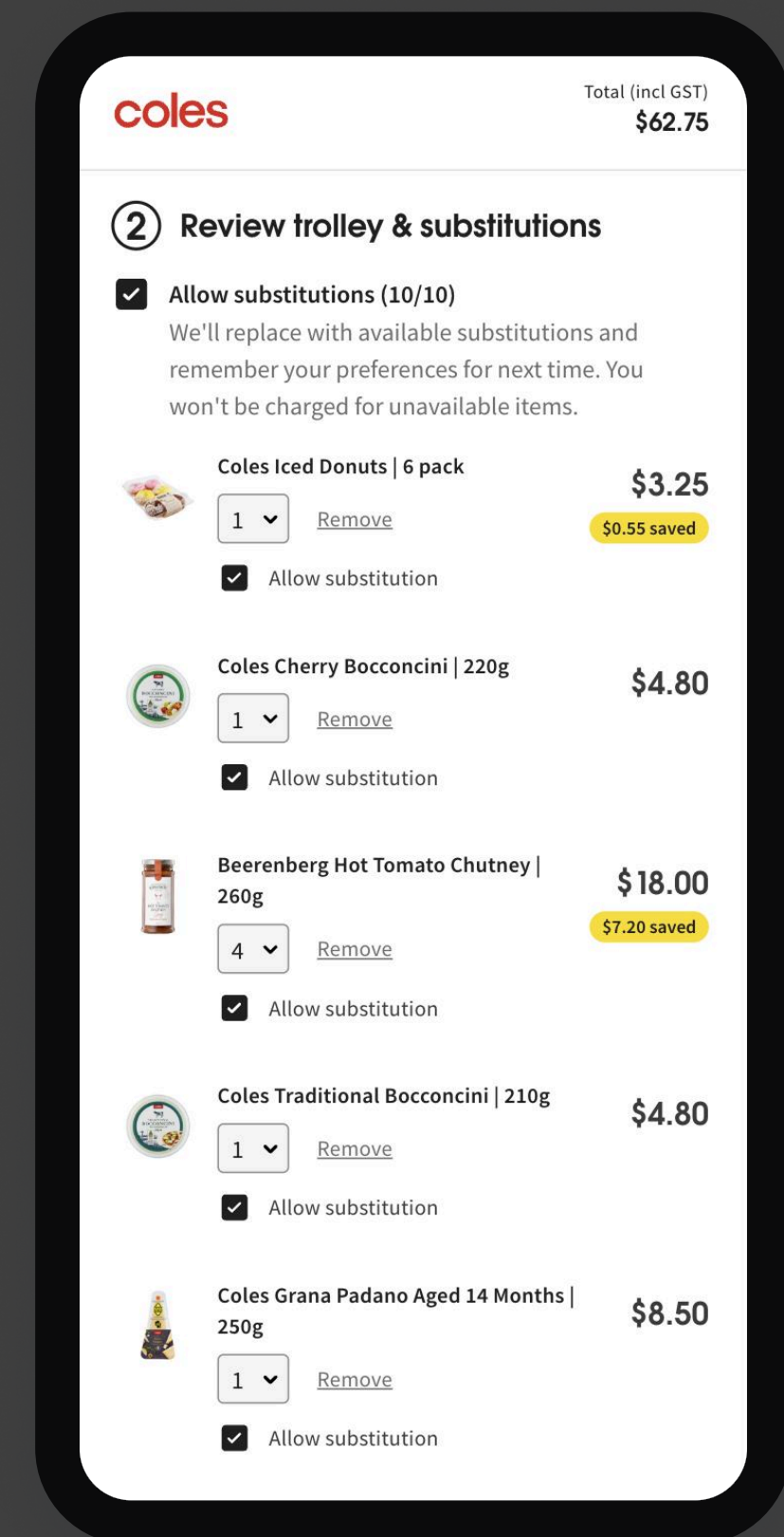
Stakeholders



THE PROBLEM

Customer aren't getting the items they want

- Customers crave control over the substitutes they receive.
- Customers trust in Coles but the substitutions process breaks this trust after receiving poor substitutes.
- Current experience lacks understanding of unique context of products in a customers order.
- Online customers are at a disadvantage compared to in-store customers.



The old experience

THE PROBLEM

Why is this problem important?

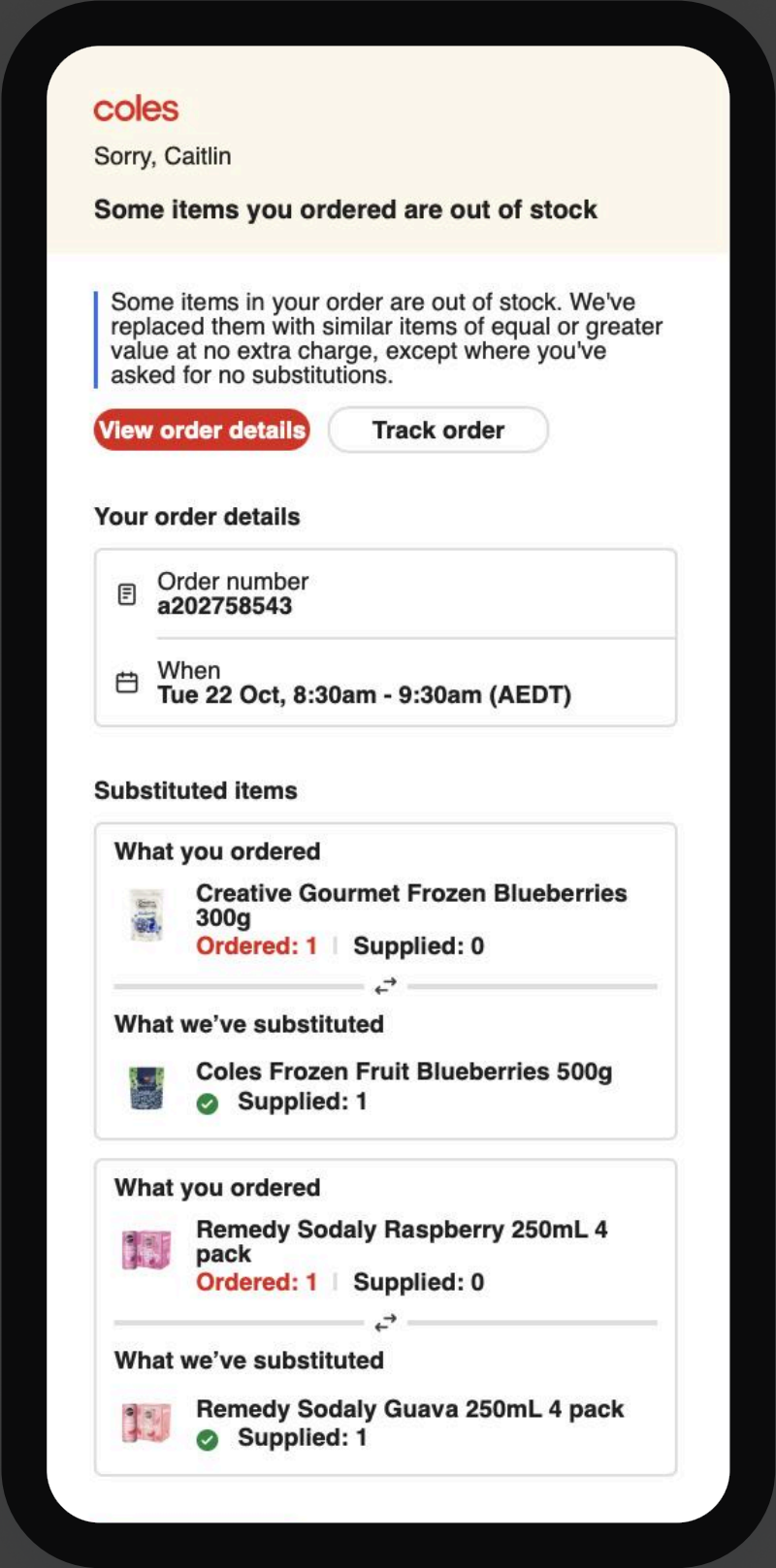
Each year it’s estimated there is approx. \$20m in margin impact from substitutions. With the addition to credits, refunds and Customer Care costs associated with managing unhappy customers.

Cost impact

\$20m

Customer Care calls

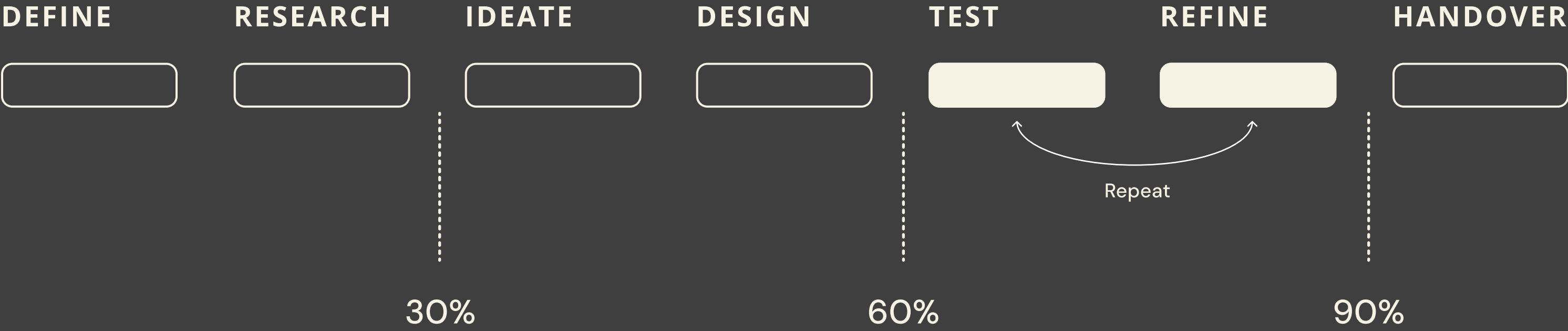
1.2k p/w



The old experience

MY ROLE

Design process



DEFINE

What does success look like?

Reduce customer care calls

A reduction in weekly complaints to customer care about poor substitutes and reduce the complaints in Medallia feedback.

Reduction in refunds

A reduction in the amount of refunds given due to poor substitutes.

Reduction in the margin loss

See the estimated \$20m a year loss reduced.

Customer opt-in rate of subs

Increase in overall opt-in rate.

Upwards trend in the number of items with a preferred sub selected

See a growing number of items per order with specific substitutes selected.

RESEARCH

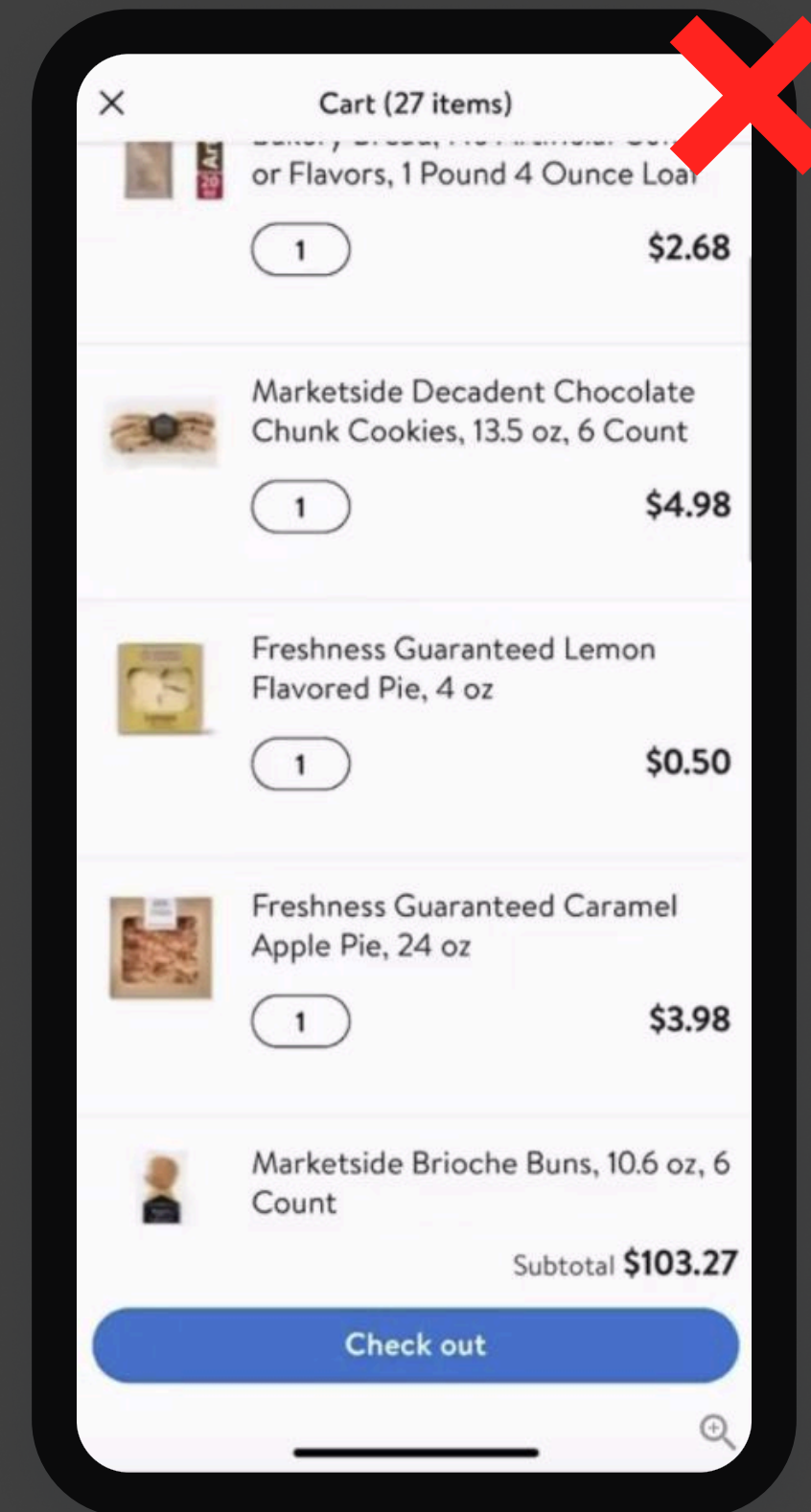
Industry best practice

Before ideation we researched industry best practice and conducted a competitor analysis to review what was already in market.

Clearly present grocery substitutions in trolley

Allow customers to select a substitute of their choice from highly relevant suggestions

Always allow users to set global grocery substitute preferences



"I don't know that they do substitutions, do they? It looks like no."

Source: baymard.com

RESEARCH

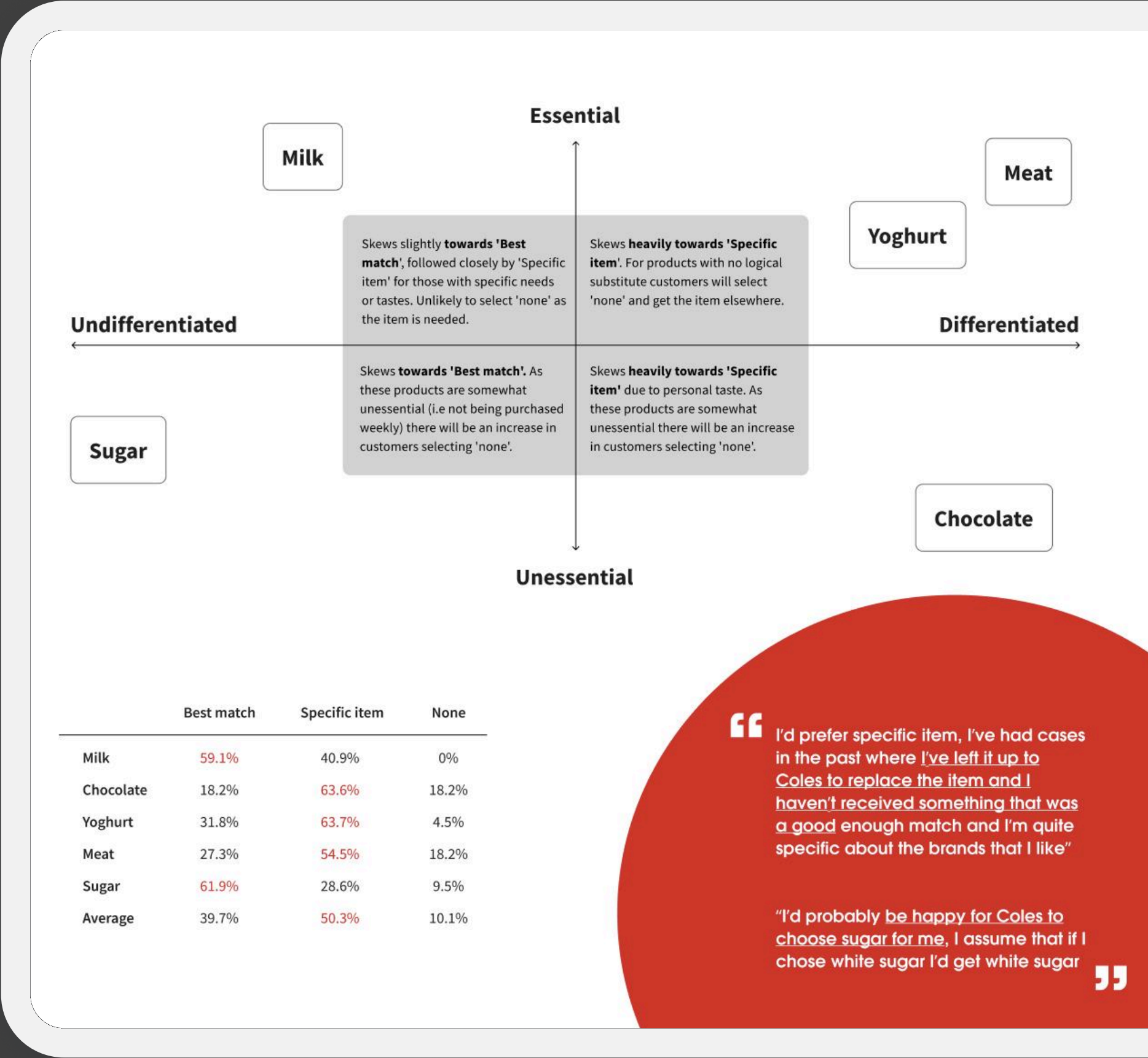
Customer research

We needed to find out how viable this feature was and what customers expectations were.

Participants indicated they would choose a specific item for 4 out of the 6 items tested

Participants suggested their selection might change depending on what they are cooking

Participants more frequently used substitution suggestions. Noting they had saved them time and effort in needing to track down an acceptable substitute



IDEATE

Workshop

Bringing together key stakeholders and the cross functional team, we ran an ideation workshop. The purpose of the session:

- **Information gathering**
- **Knowns and unknowns**
- **Discuss current findings, insights and in-flight work with stakeholders**
- **Putting ideas on the table**



1. Duplicate each-post it from the left to this board and map it based on the level of certainty.
2. If you move your post it to 'we have evidence' please provide links to any data you may have



CONSTRAINTS

What were we up against?

Customer needs

Business needs

Constraints

Charging customers

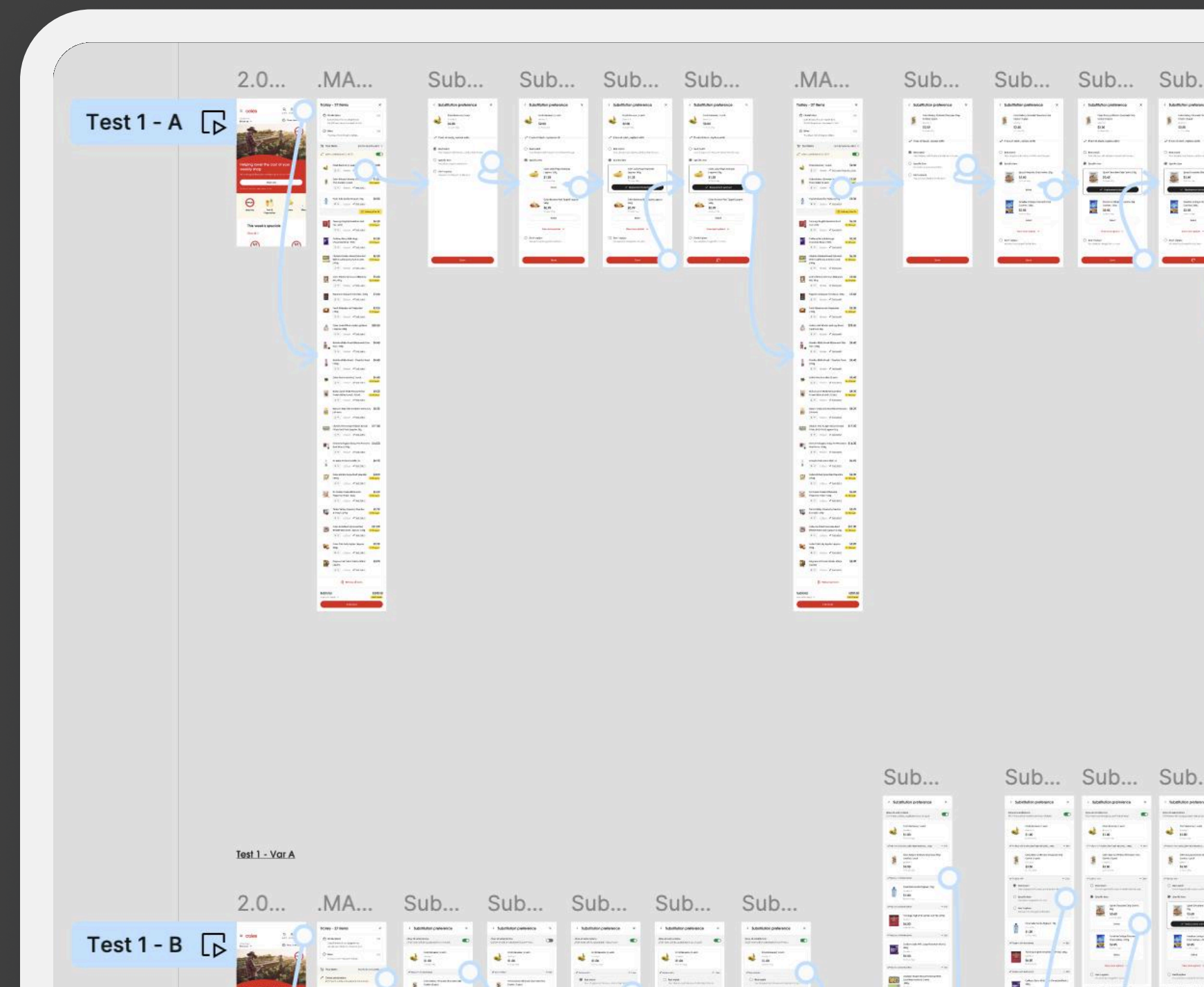
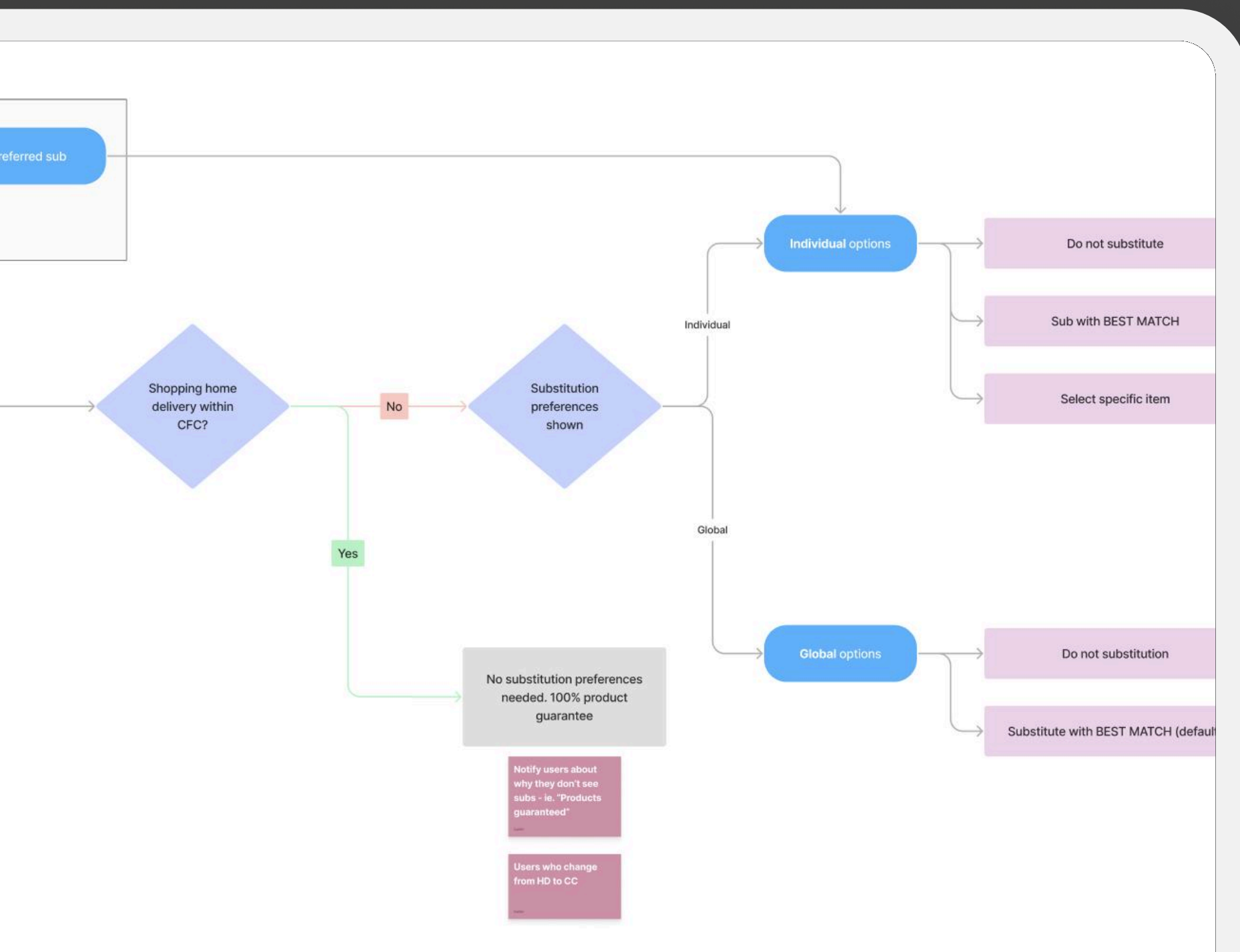
During our industry research phases, we noticed a trend towards charging customers for their substitute selection. However, tech capabilities meant this was difficult. Coles charges a customer at checkout, and processing a second charge or refund was going to be a messy customer experience and cost the business.

Team member constraints

Team members in-store are on tight timelines to pick an order. Allowing customers to choose any product as a substitute would risk increasing this "pick" time, as some substitutes could be at the other end of the store and different areas.

DESIGN & TEST

Journey maps, wireframes, feedback, prototypes, user testing, refining



SOLUTION

Where did we end up?

Moved from checkout to trolley

Previously substitution preferences were in checkout, which adds complexity to the process.

List of recommendations

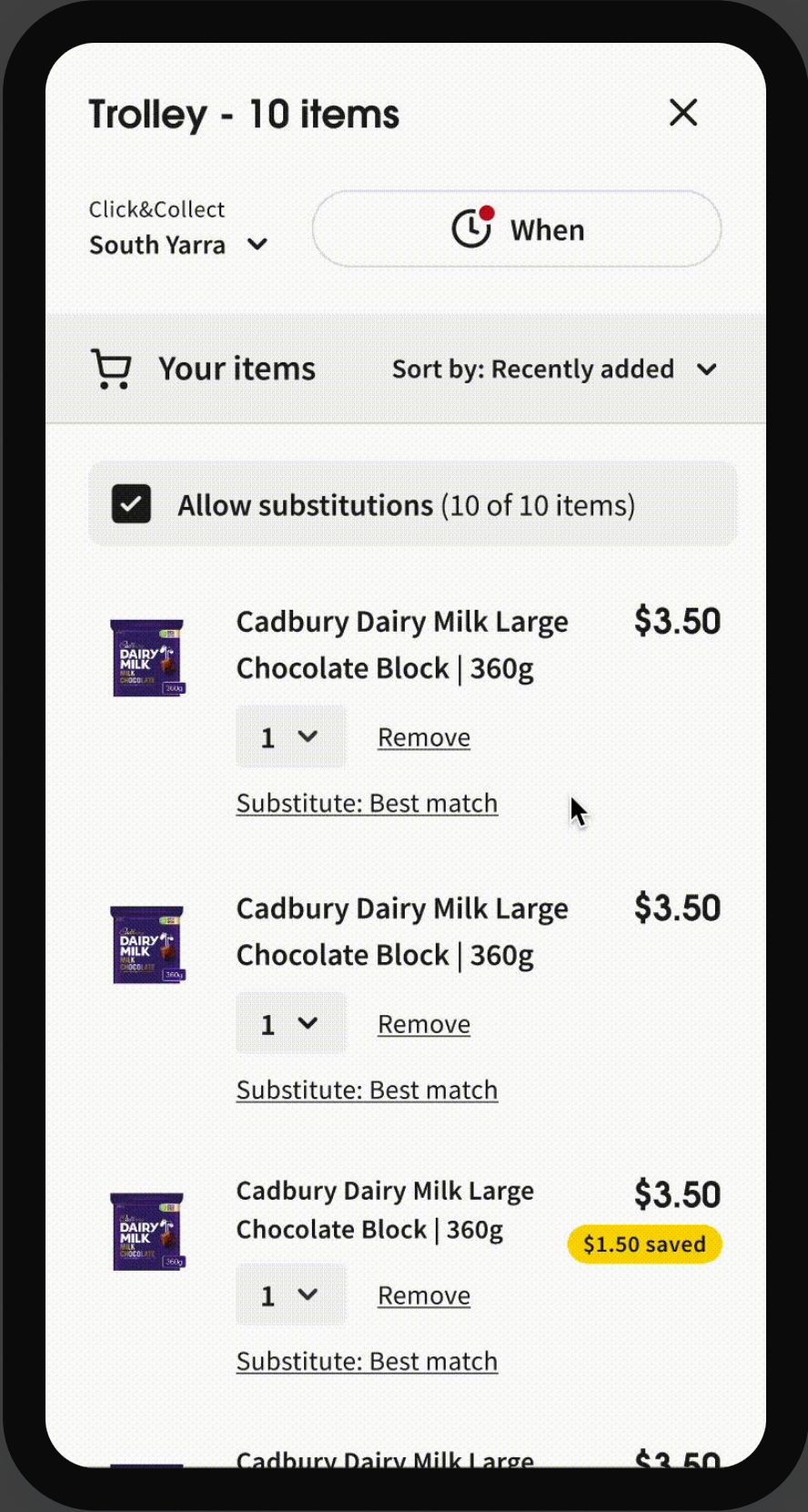
Recommendations come from a model designed specifically for substitutions. This model is constantly being improved and will eventually have a feedback loop which will personalise the recommendations.

Coles price match

The customer doesn't have to pay the difference if the substitute is cost more.

Preferences are saved

Once a selection is made, it is remembered forever.



RESULTS

Have we moved the needle?

Preferred substitutions has now been launched to 25% of customers and here's what we are seeing...

↑ Upwards trend in adoption

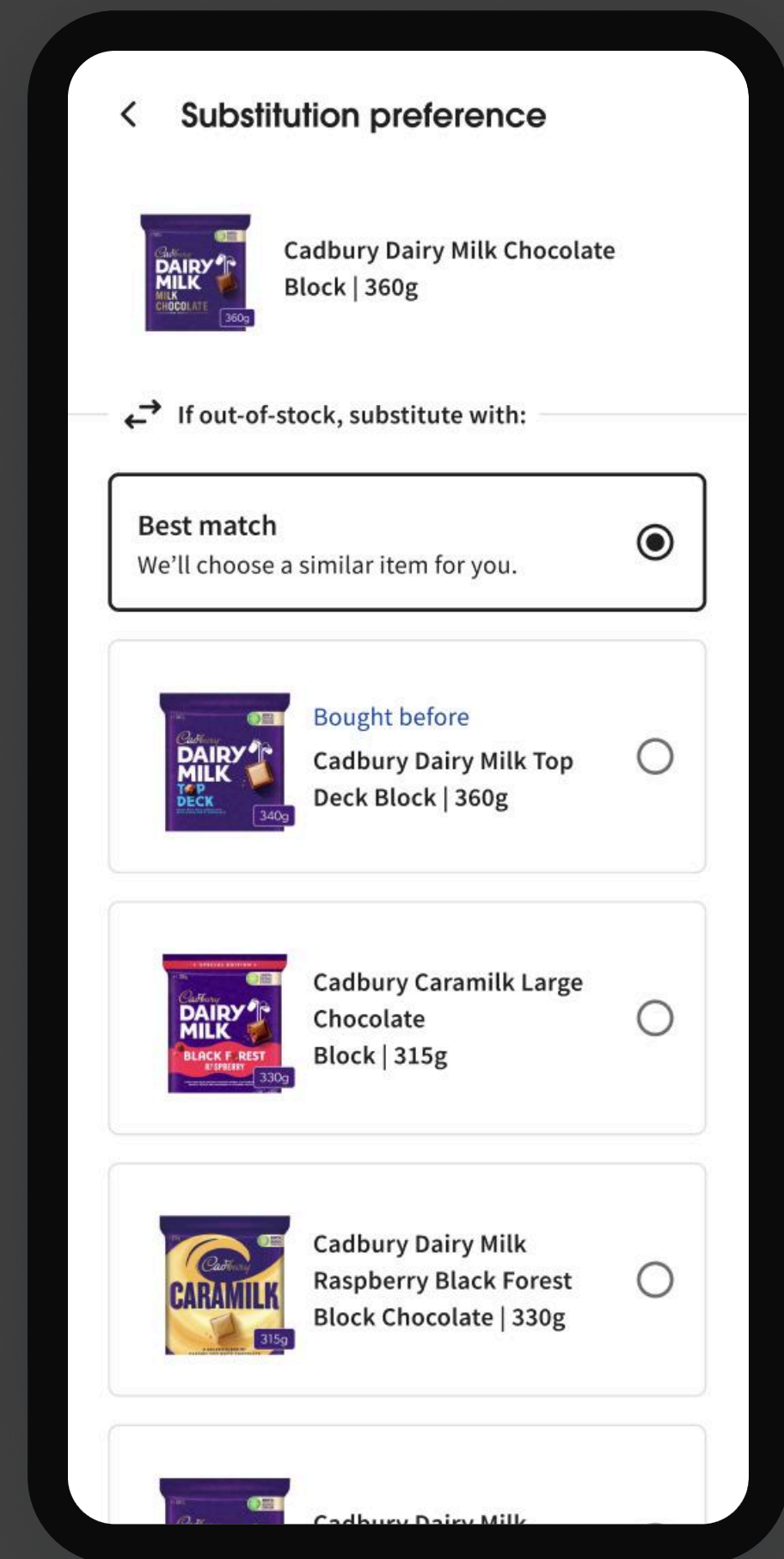
Within the 25% of customers, we are seeing a positive uptake and usage of the new feature.

↓ Reduced customer feedback

We are already seeing a drop in the number of calls and written feedback around poor substitutes.

↓ Reduced refunds

Less refunds are poor substitutes



TAKEAWAYS

Key insights and learnings

Storytelling

Storytelling was a pivotal part of bringing key stakeholders along the journey and getting big decisions across the line. This makes for a smoother design process and a better overall outcome.

Test and re-test

Test, test and re-testing was a vital part of this design process. Sometimes having the time for this is difficult when you are up against timelines, money and business pressures.

Data

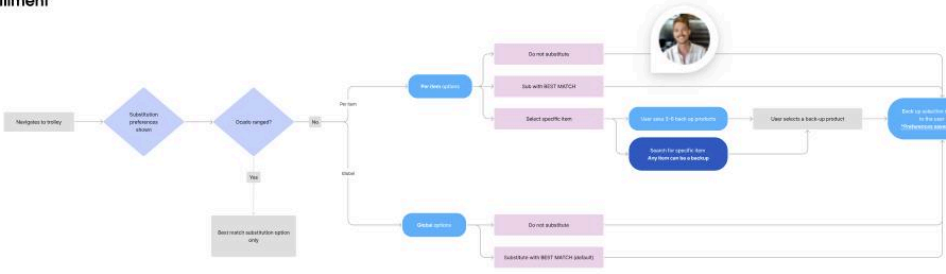
Having the data to back-up decisions on such a large scale is essential. The business needs to understand why and what the expected ROI will be.

User flows

- Fiction points
- Important CX points

Option 1
PaC + Charging customers a second payment at fulfillment

When the substitute is more expensive, charge the customer a second time once order is picked.



Option 2
PaC + Charging customers + Customer pays for subs upfront

When the substitute is more expensive, the customer pays for the cost of their preferred substitute at checkout.
If they don't receive a substitute, they get a refund.

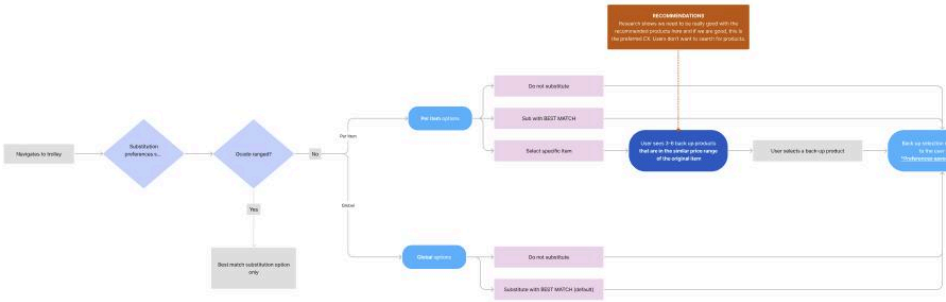


Option 3
We don't charge customers for preferred subs

Coles provides a list of items the customer can select from.

We restrict the price difference to make sure its minimal so that Coles doesn't have to cover extreme costs.

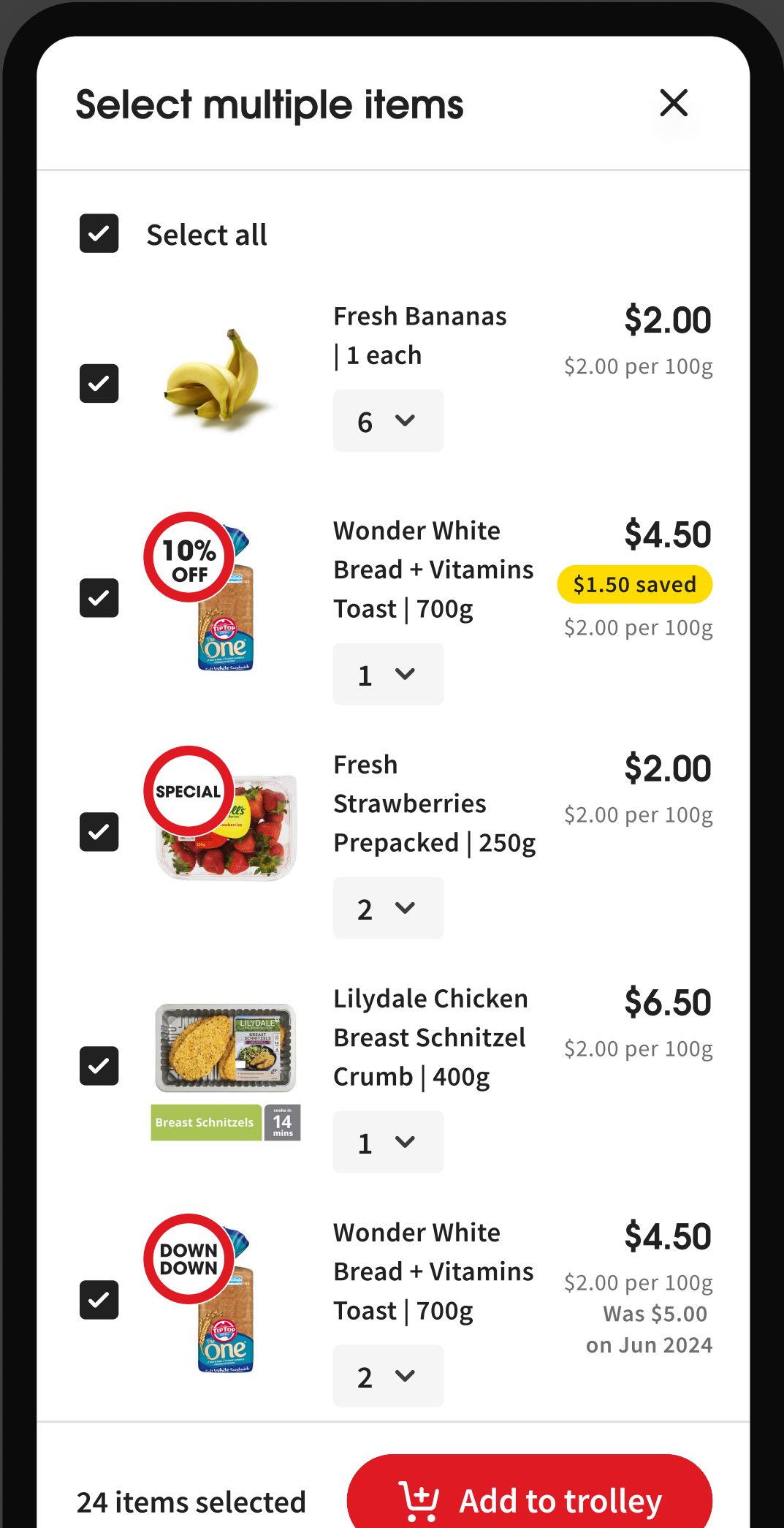
PaC or PaF n/a



Multiple items

This project focused on improving the "Bought Before" experience for Coles customers by addressing inefficiencies and simplifying the process of adding frequently purchased items to their trolley.

The goal was to increase customer satisfaction by streamlining the shopping experience, giving customers more time to discover and explore other products. The initiative also aimed to support Coles' business objectives by increasing Units Per Order (UPO), Add to Trolley (ATT) rates, and conversion rates.



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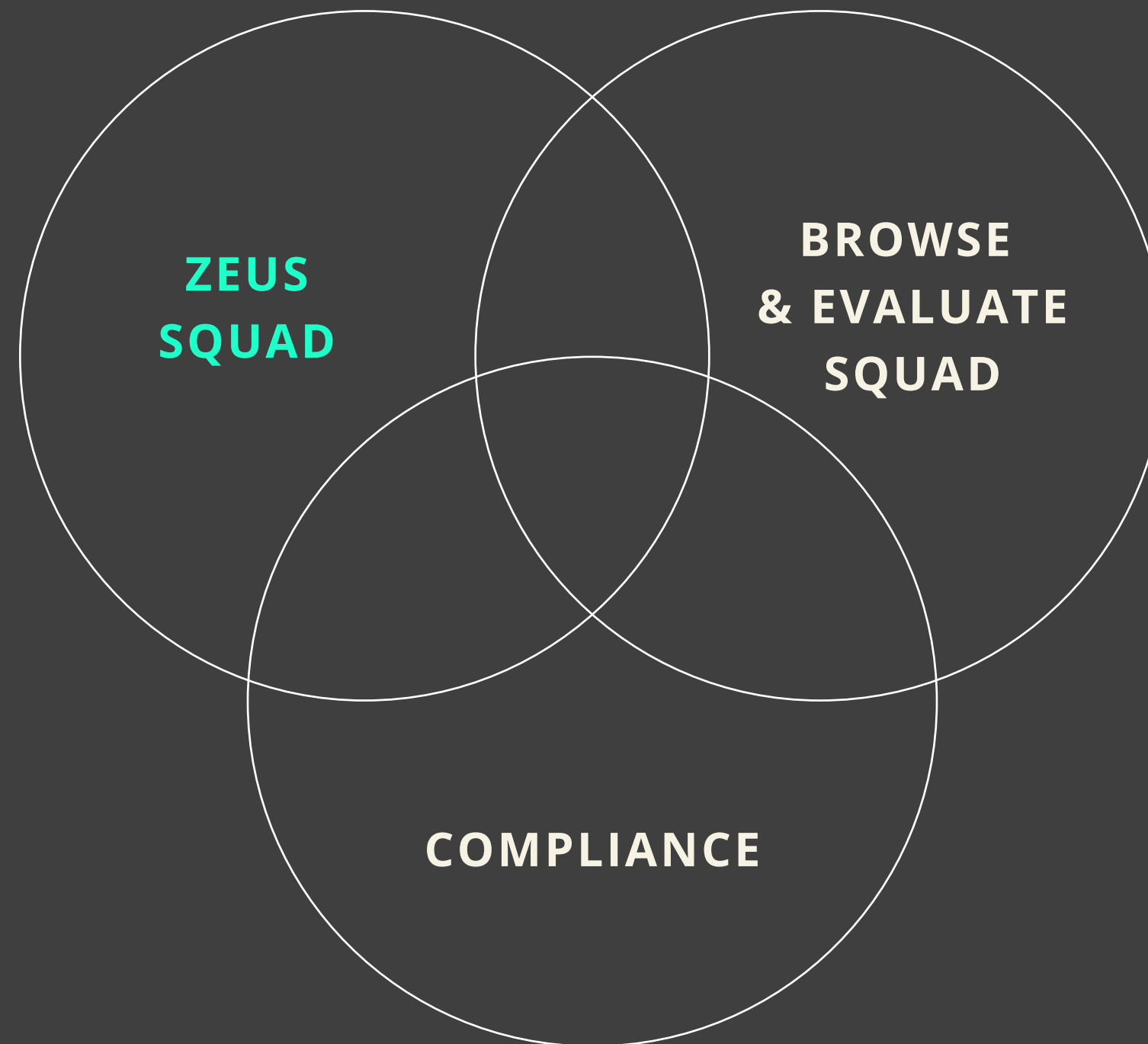
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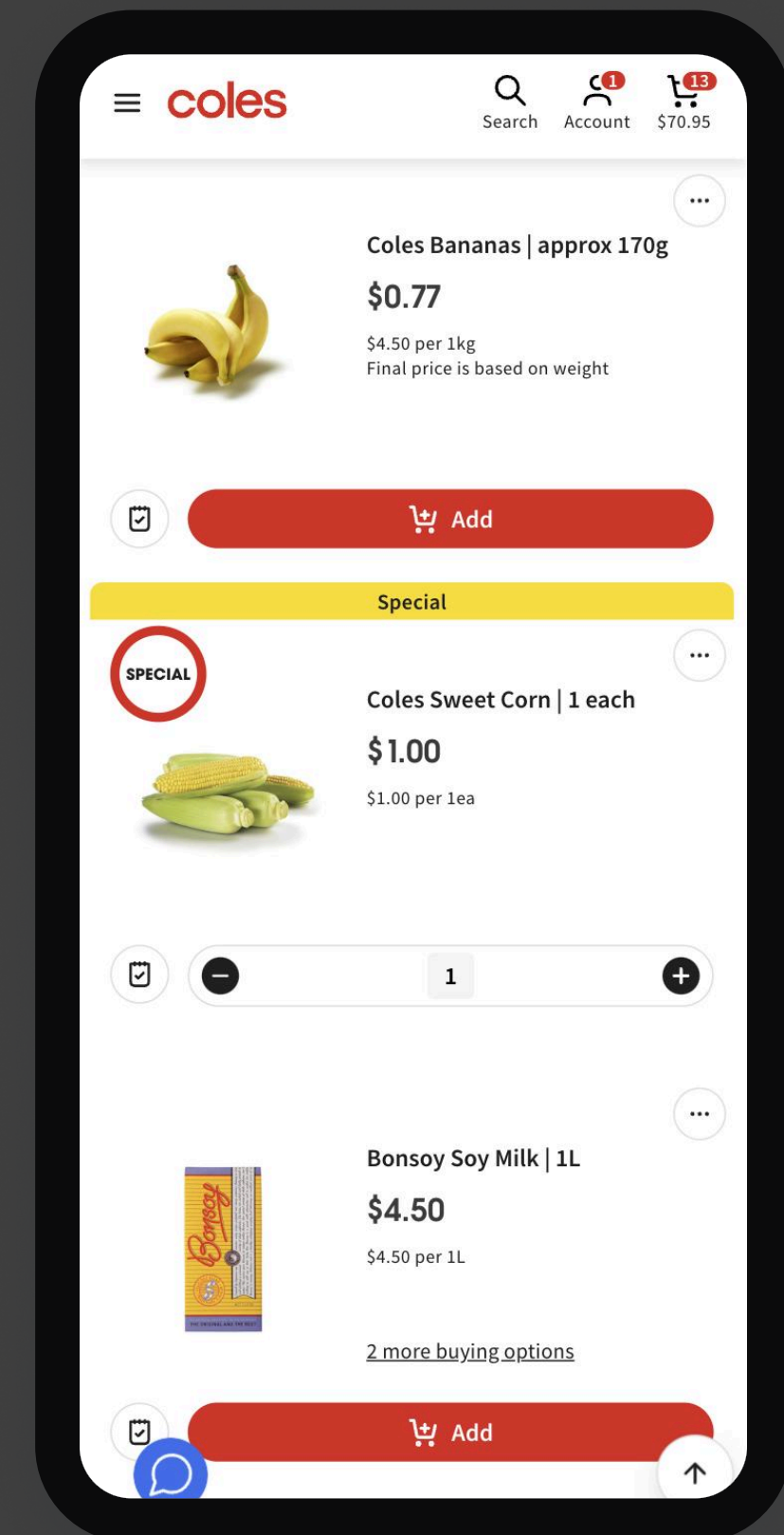
Stakeholders



THE PROBLEM

Bought before is overwhelming

- Customer feedback suggests the Bought Before experience is overwhelming and inefficient with too many products to look through
- Customers are asking for easier ways to add their regular items to trolley
- Approx. 64% of orders have 10 or more products that are identical in every order



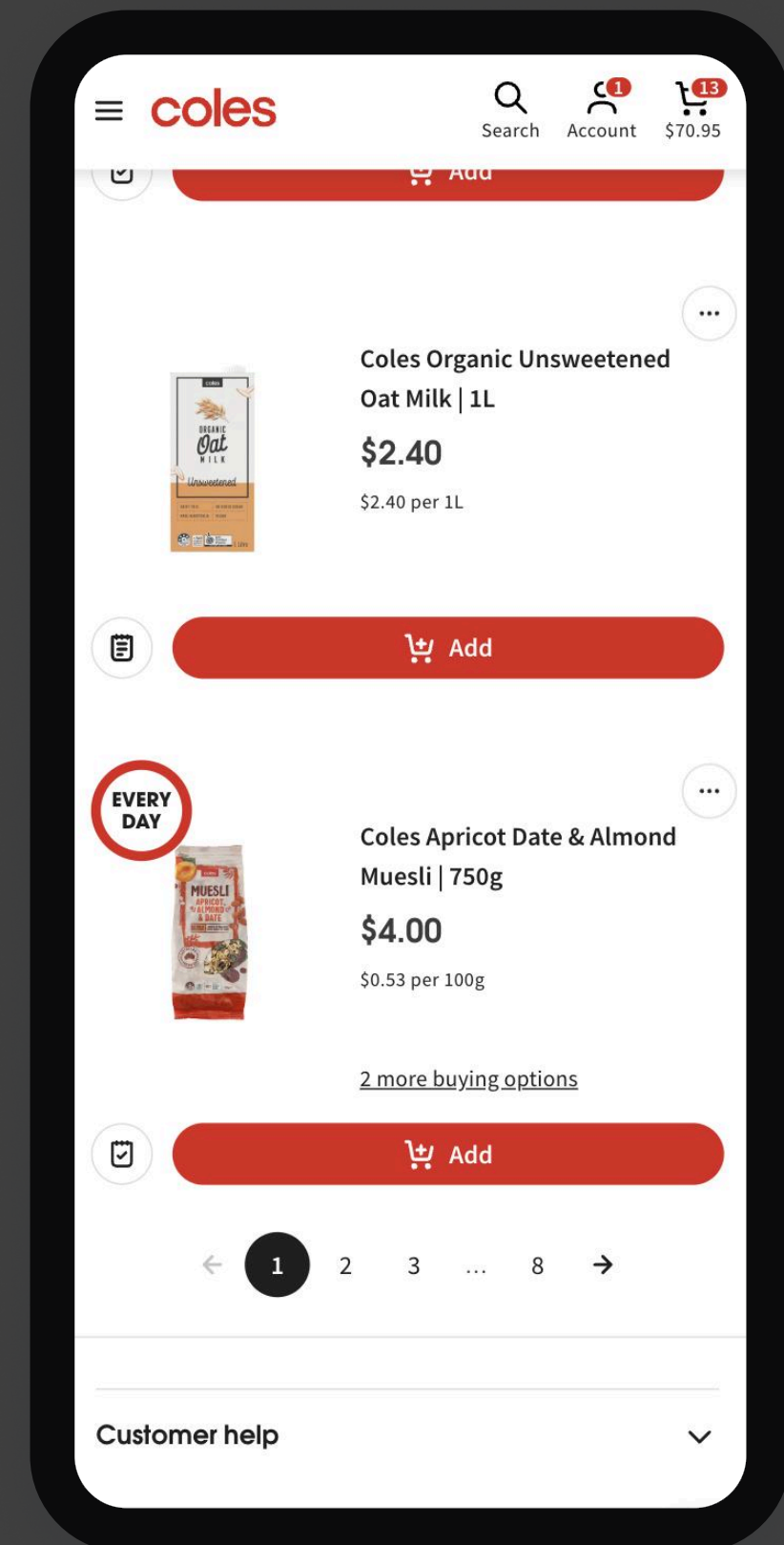
Bought before page

THE PROBLEM

Why is this problem important?

Everyday, 40% of Coles' add to trolley items come from the Bought Before page. However, many of these customers drop off before checking out.

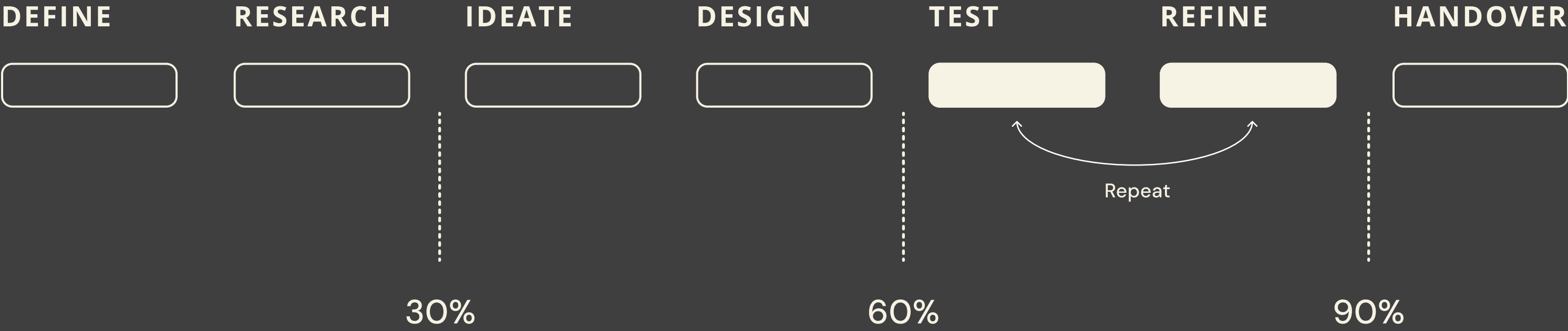
Our hypothesis is that time and effort play a big role in why customers aren't converting.



Bought before
page numbers

MY ROLE

Design process



DEFINE

What does success look like?

Increase UPO

We hope to see an Increase Units Per Order, by streamlining Bought Before and allowing more time for browsing.

Improve conversion rate

We hope to see an increase in conversion, as customers find adding to trolley easier and quicker.

Increase ATT

Increase the number of items added to trolley. We hope the easier it is to add items to trolley, the more a customer will add.

Customer feedback

Positive customer feedback within Medallia

RESEARCH

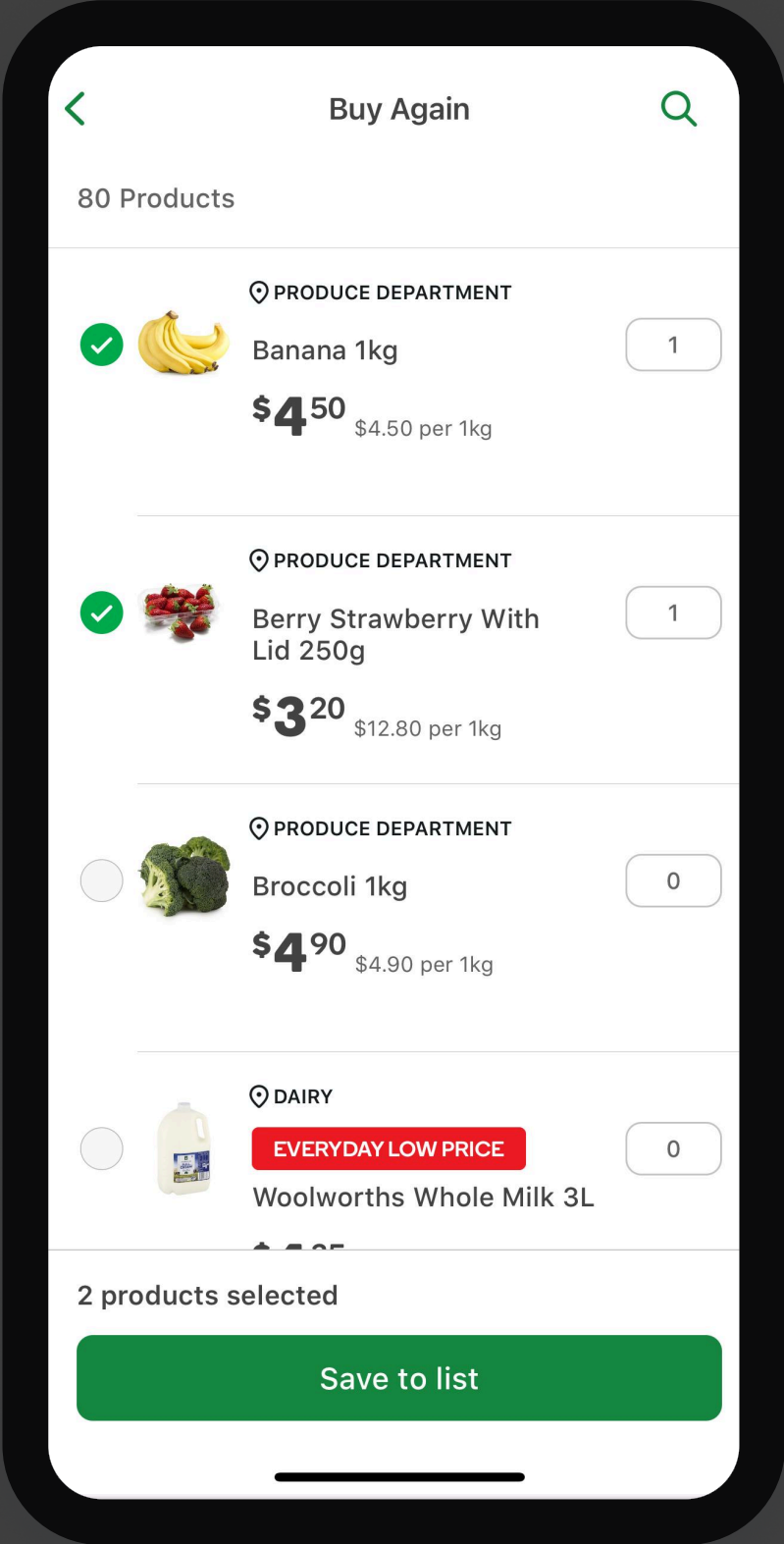
Industry best practice

Before ideation we researched industry best practice and reviewed what quick add to trolley experiences already existed.

Bulk add vs Add single items

List format/layout

Simplified product tiles



Woolworths in app
"Buy again" list

CONSTRAINTS

What were we up against?

Customer needs

Timelines

Costs

2 sprints

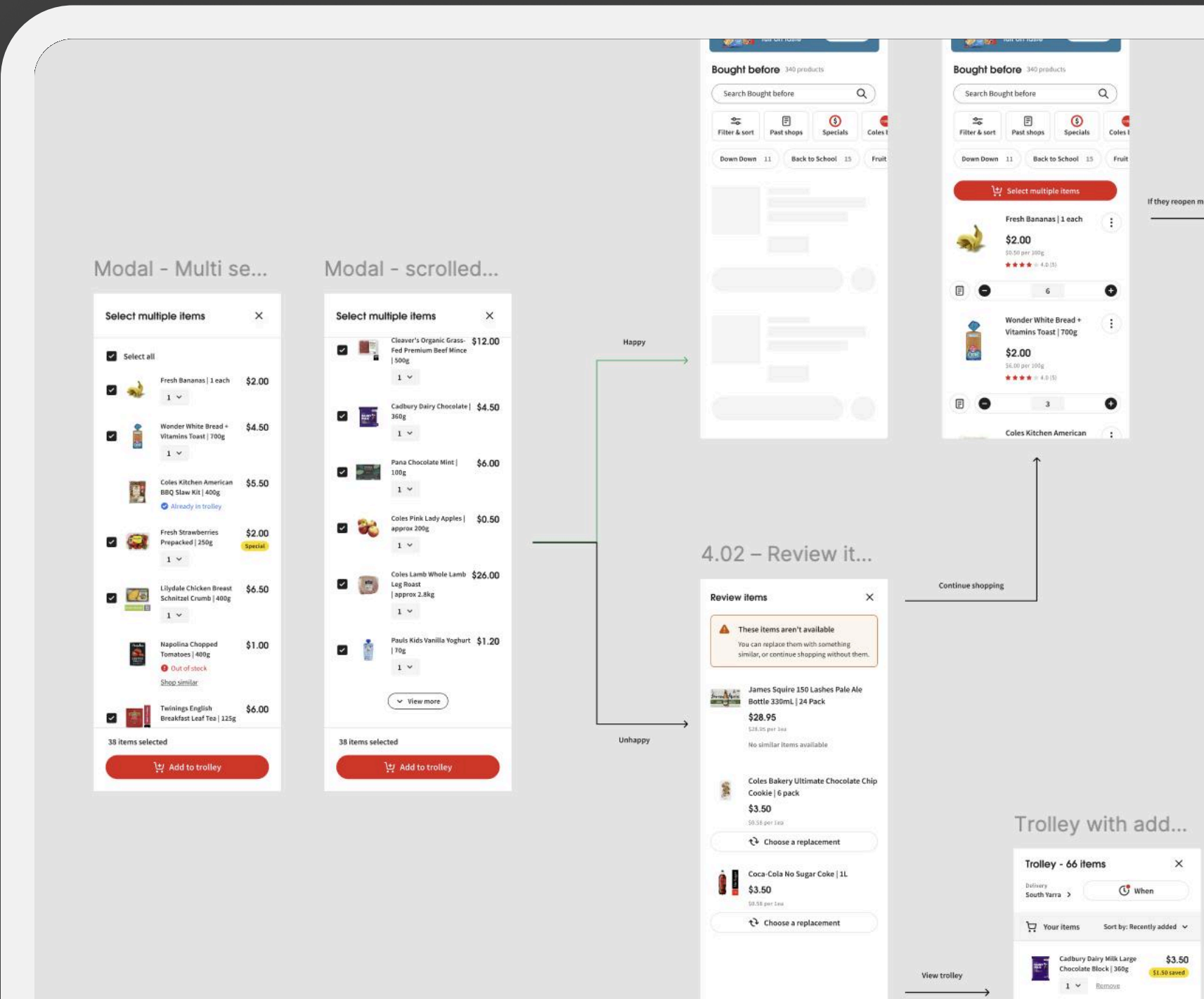
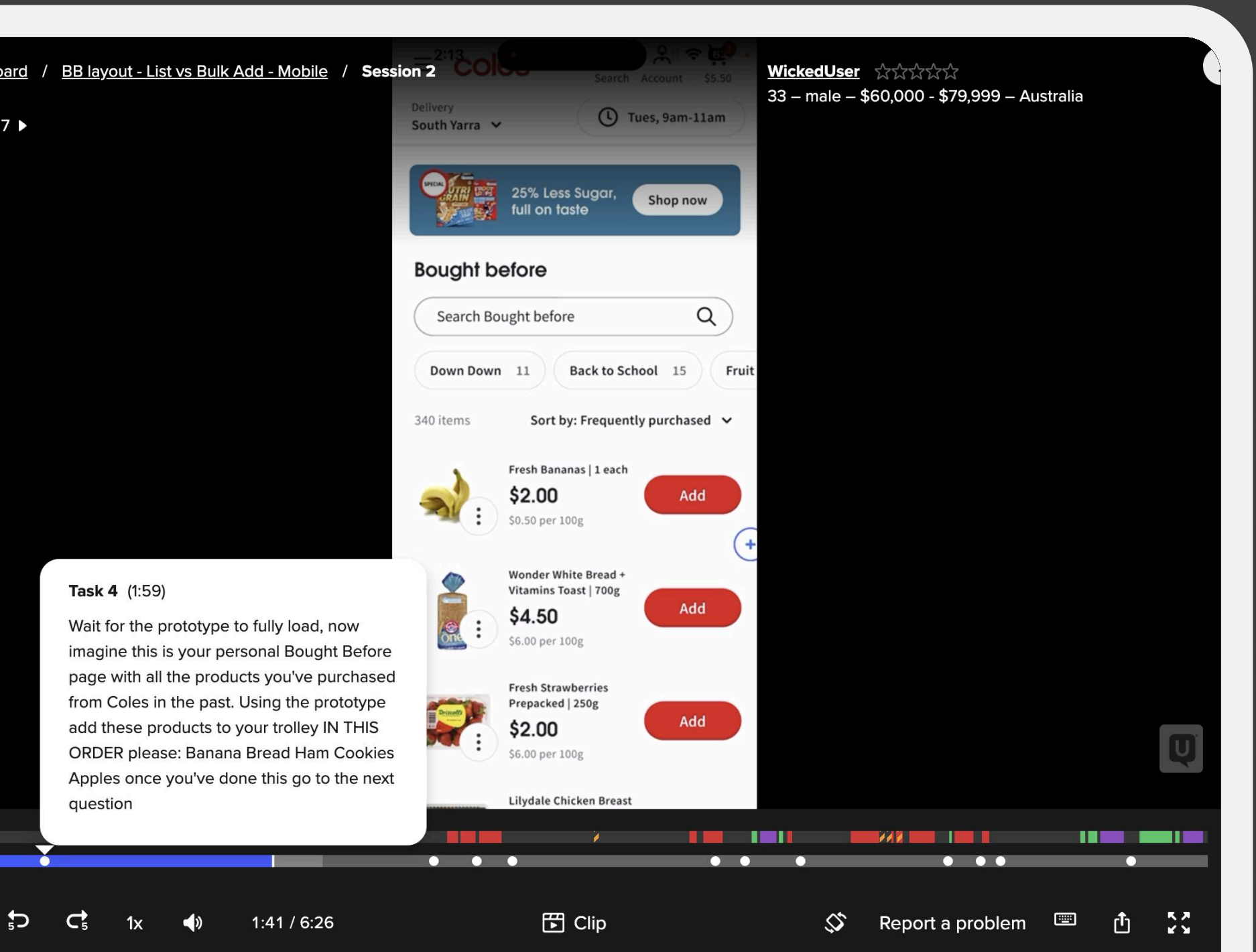
We didn't have a lot of discovery time for this project, but the business wanted to move the needle. So we had to be smart about where to spend our time and what we needed to succeed.

MVP

We didn't have a lot of development time, so the solution needed to be kept within our cross-functional team and something we could achieve without bring in other parts of the business. **Small change, big impact.**

IDEATE, DESIGN & TEST

Journey maps, wireframes, feedback, prototypes, user testing, refining



SOLUTION

Where did we end up?

Core Bought Before remained

Due to build time and costs, we didn't change the core BB page.

Multiple items button

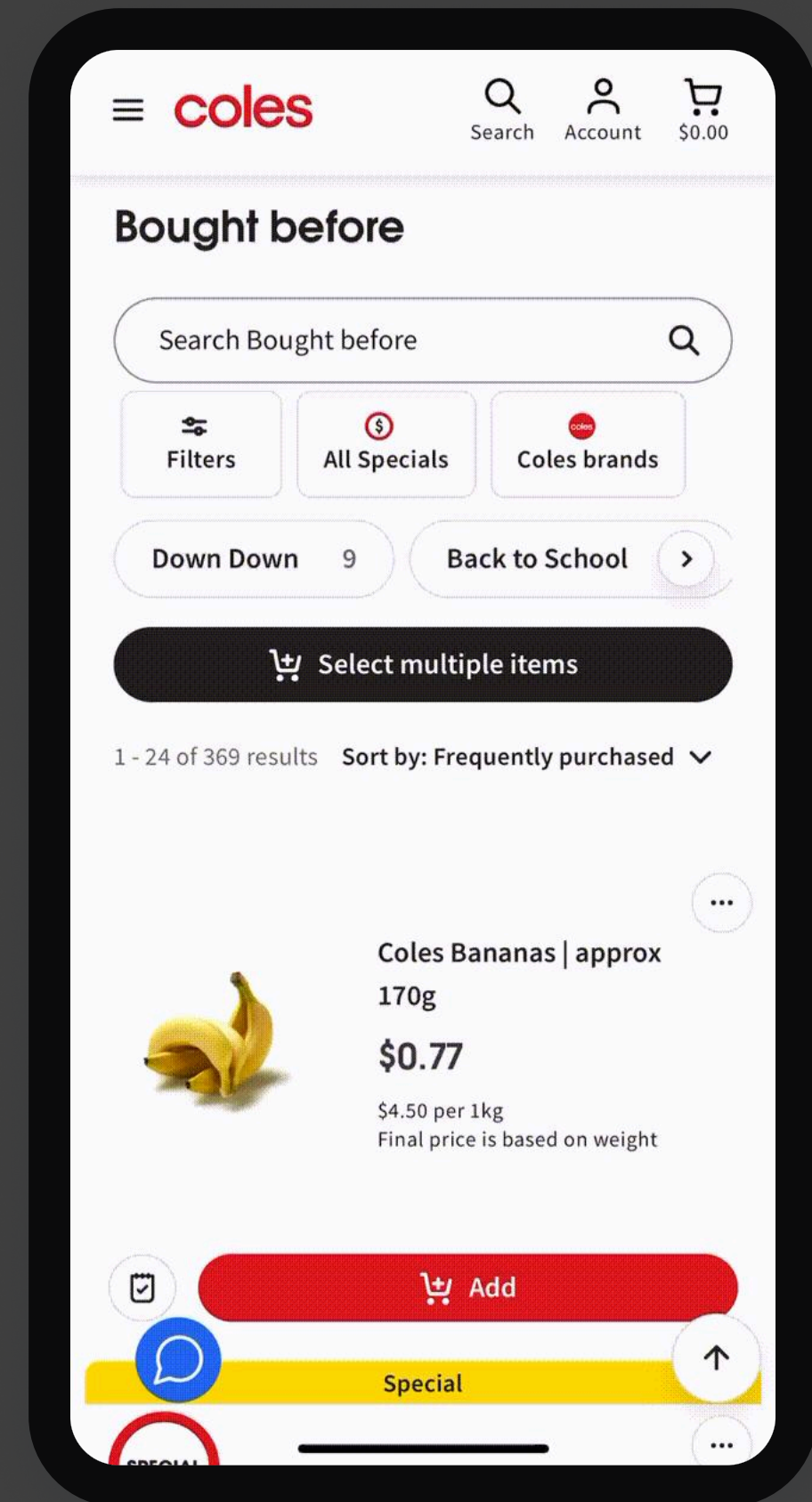
We added a multiple items button to the Bought Before page.

Discoverability

This was an issue and we knew not all customers would notice the button, so we introduced a "New feature" tooltip.

Bulk add

Within the modal, customers can select items using a checkbox. They then bulk add all items to trolley. The product tiles in this modal are also minimised, as customer know what items they regularly buy.



RESULTS

Have we moved the needle?

Conversion rate

- when using multiple items

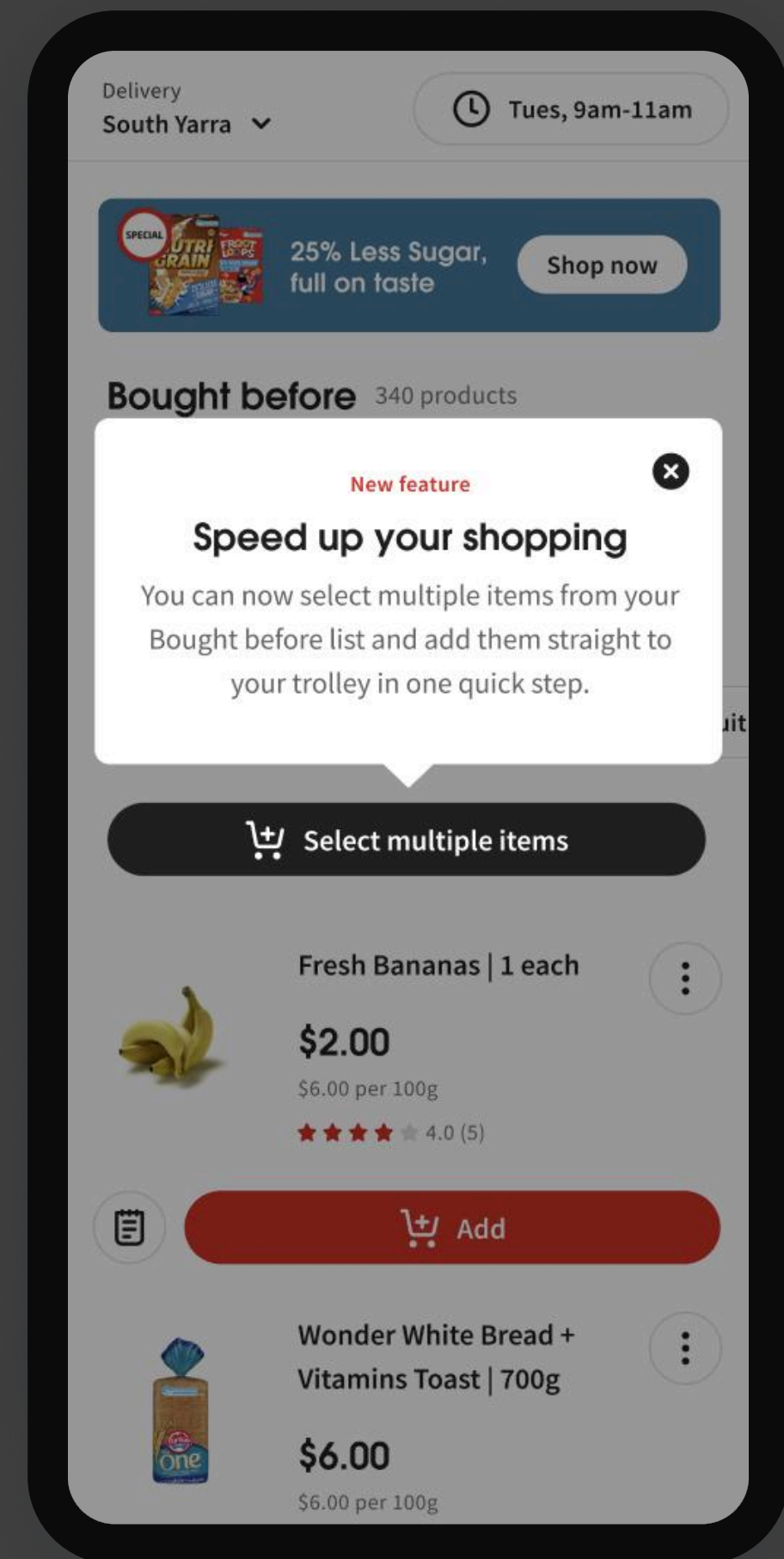
88% vs 59%

Add to trolley

↑ 4 units

Unit per order

↑ 2 units



TAKEAWAYS

Key insights and learnings

Small changes, big impact

As we had a strict MVP to work within for this project, it meant that we didn't necessary end up with the solution we would have other done. However, the solution has had a big impact on customers and the business.

Discoverability

Ideally, a new feature is seamless and doesn't need a helping hand for discoverability. However, due to the budget of this project we created a new component to help with feature discovery, which is now being used as a core part of our design system.

Reason for choosing Coles
Regular shop. I'm loving the new multiple-item selector in the Bought Before section.

Improve Experience Comment
I love being able to do multiple buys on the bought before.

Improve Experience Comment
The app's great - so easy. Especially selecting multiple items bought before

COLES DIGITAL CONFERENCE — MAY 2025

“She’s also setting the bar high — leading by example, delivering quality, and showing up for others through mentoring and coaching.”



Caitlin Wynne
Digital Product

Caitlin's been a long-time champion for great customer experiences—sweating the details, keeping teams aligned, and not shying away from challenging conversations.

Most recently Caitlin hero'd the Create and Courage values in their truest form whilst working on the Flash Sales 1.0 initiative. Not only did Caitlin pull everyone together to align on how the feature worked, she provided a strong point of view where the customer experience could be improved, told a compelling story backed with evidence and got the right outcome for Coles and Customers.

She's also setting the bar high—leading by example, delivering quality, and showing up for others through mentoring and coaching.



colesgroup

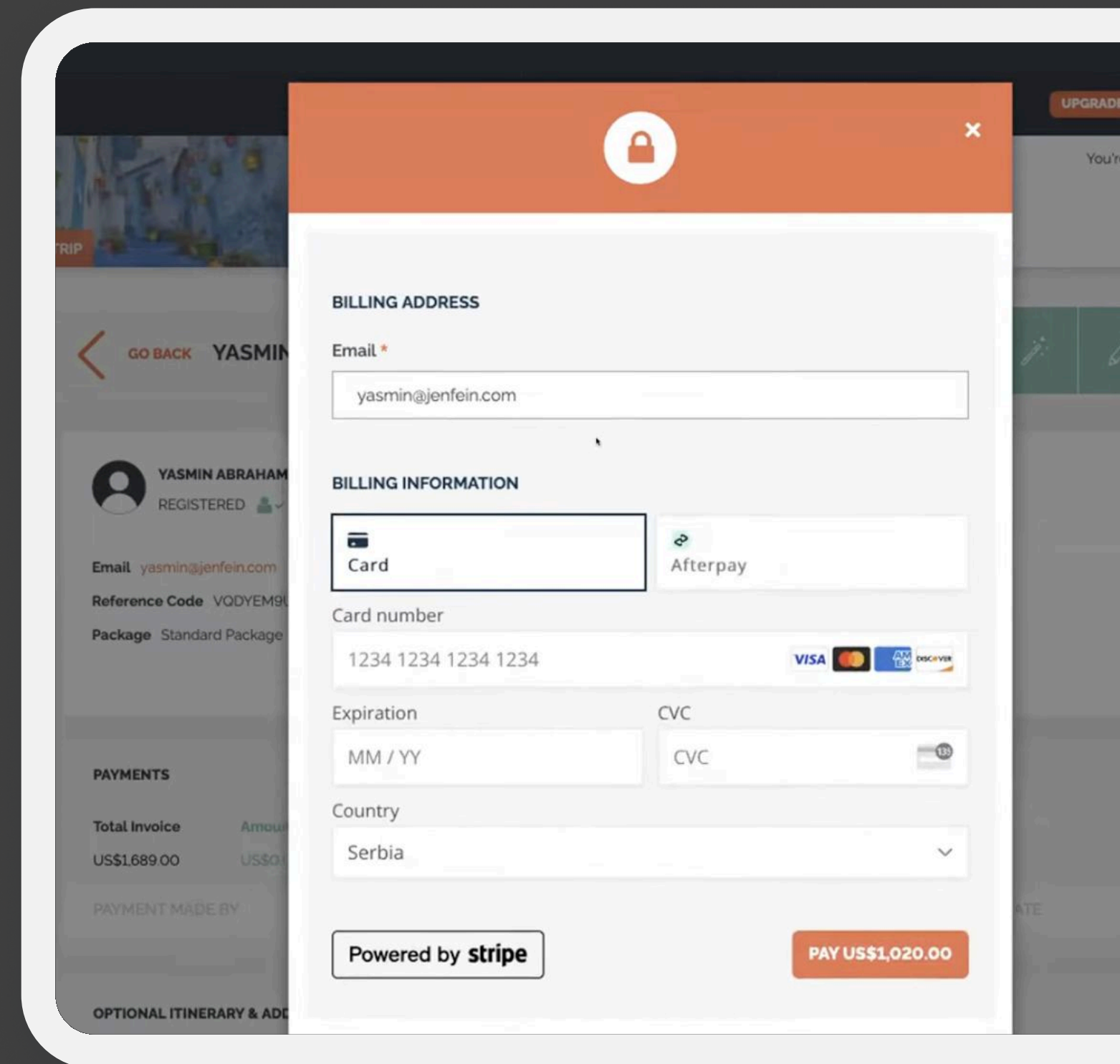
Thank you

YOULI

Payments + Stripe

This project focused on enhancing Youli, a travel management SaaS platform for small businesses offering group travel. Key features included payment integration, enabling trip planners to collect payments seamlessly and sync invoices with Xero, alongside responsive, customisable booking websites and itinerary management tools.

The enhancements streamlined payment processes, improved financial management for planners, and elevated the platform's value proposition, resulting in greater efficiency, accessibility, and scalability for users.



COLLABORATION

The team

DESIGN

Caitlin Wynne

CO-FOUNDER

Jennifer Fein

LEAD SOFTWARE ENGINEER

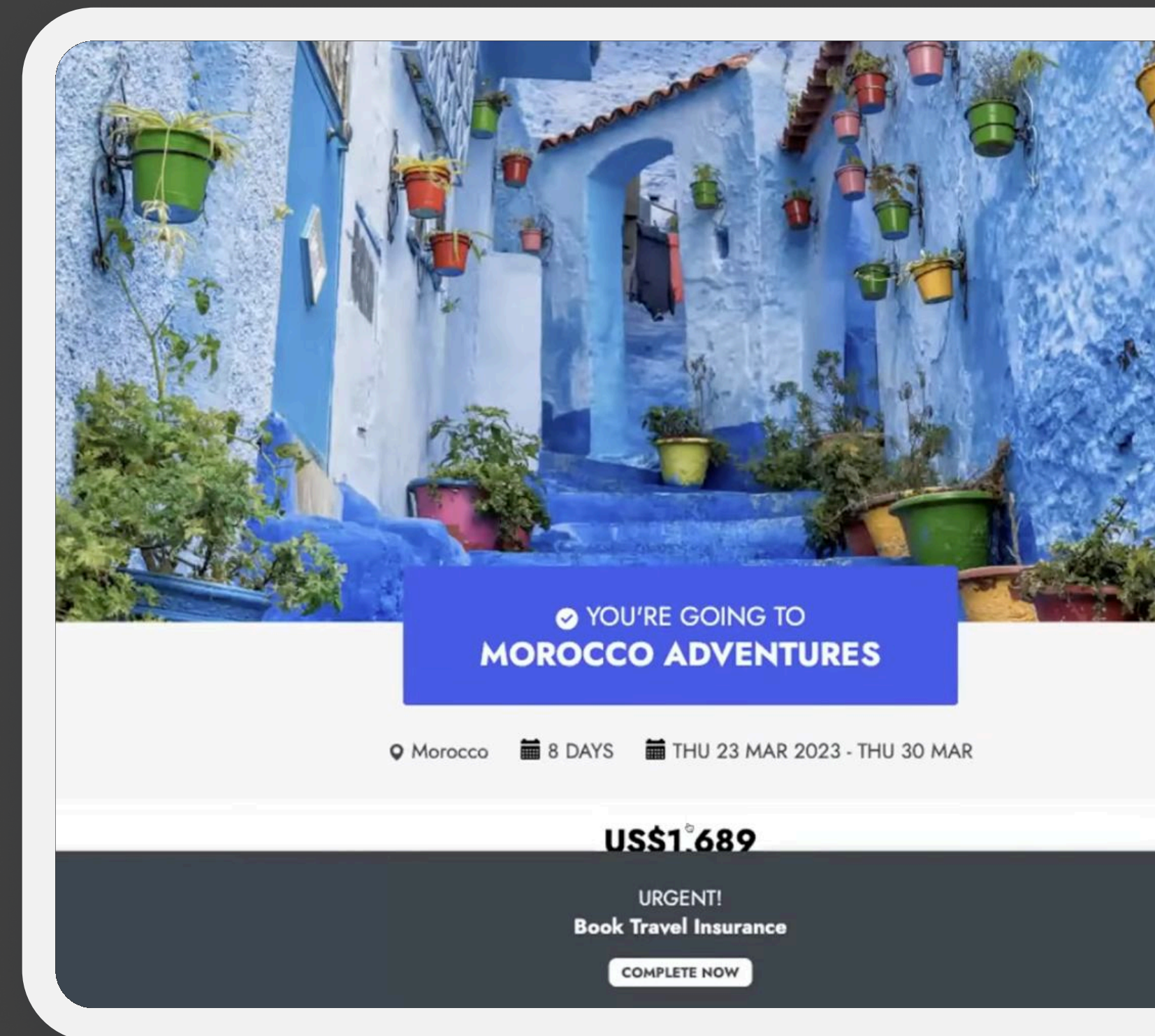
Bron Thulke

THE PROBLEM

Trip planners and travellers want more flexibility with payments

HYPOTHESIS

- Providing integration with Stripe will open up more opportunities for trip planners to collect funds and manage their money more easily
- Also allowing more options for travellers, making the process of booking a trip easier
- Provide Xero integration, allowing easy payment management and book keeping for trip planners



DEFINE

What does success look like?

Uptake in Stripe intergration

An upwards trend in trip planners connecting Stripe accounts to their Youli account.

Increase in trip bookings

Customer uptake and payments via Stipe payment options.

Positive feedback

Seamless Stripe integration and feedback from clients.

RESEARCH

Industry best practice

Before starting the design phase, we looked at the industry best practice and how the Stripe integration experience is across the board.

Allow trip planners to pass on the surcharge to customers within Youli UI

Clear information about fees and charges

Help articles easily available



COSTS

All costs shown in AUD.

Traveler	Cost
Melinda Forester	A\$2,300.00
PRE-PAY TOTAL	A\$2,300.00

DEPOSIT ▼

PAYMENT DUE BY 5 MAR 2020**A\$230.00**

☐ Credit Card (+2% surcharge)  

☐ Direct Bank Transfer

AMOUNT TO BE PAID**A\$230.00**

CONSTRAINTS

What were we up against?

Technical capabilities

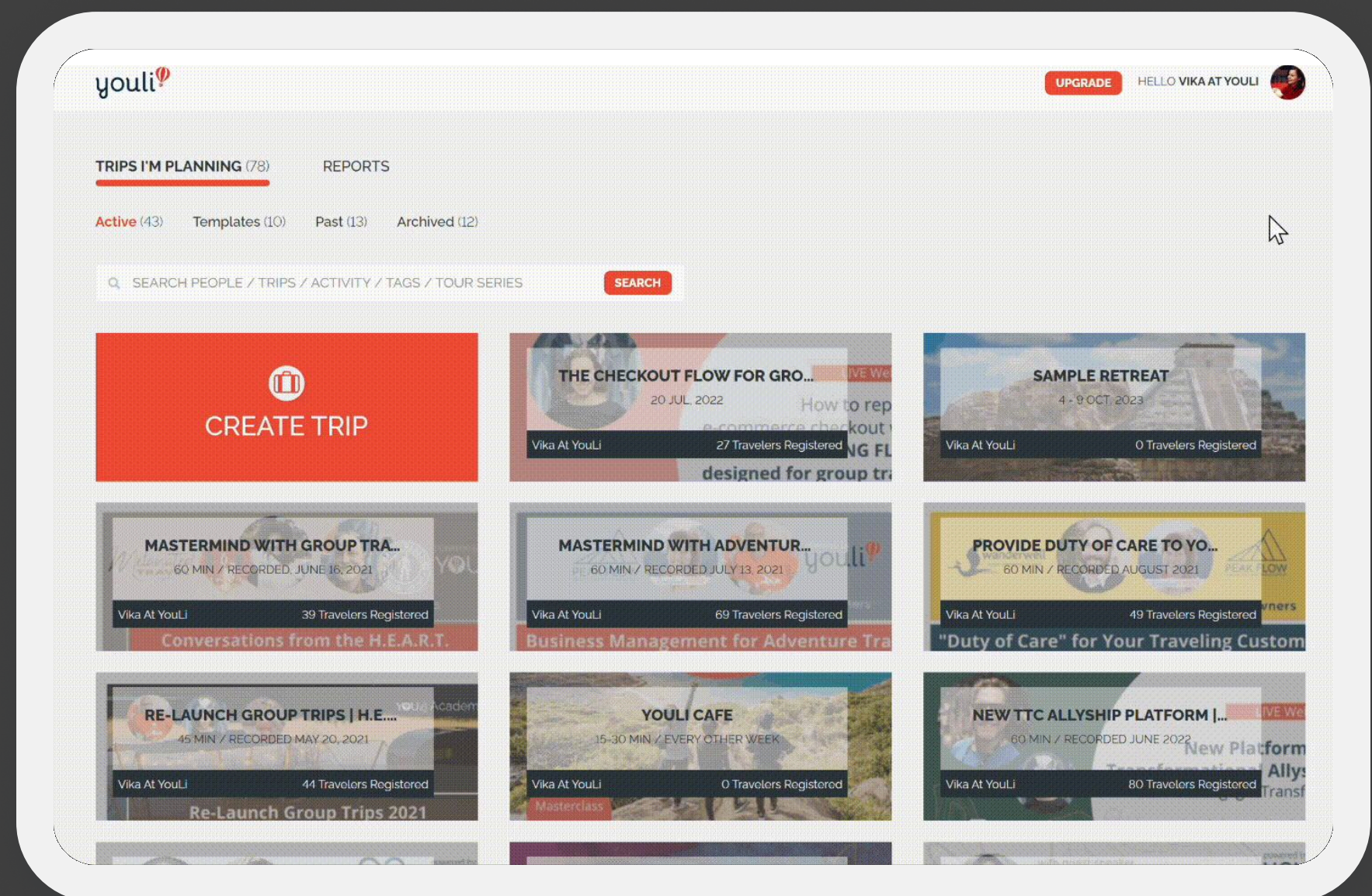
As Stripe integration was a new feature, we worked towards an MVP which meant we needed to find a balance between technical capabilities and the user experience.

Ideally, the user experience would be seamless and as close to a one click button to link your Stripe account within Youli as possible. However, technically there is a lot of work involved and the trip planners have a few extra steps they may need to do within their Stripe account to make the integrate work.

SOLUTION

Where did we end up?

- Planners can integrate a new or existing Stripe account via their Youli account dashboard
- Planners can turn Stripe on/off within each specific Trip dashboard
- Passing on the surcharge % is available within each Trip dashboard
- Links to help articles are easily accessible
- A quick link to their Stripe account is available within each Trip dashboard



RESULTS

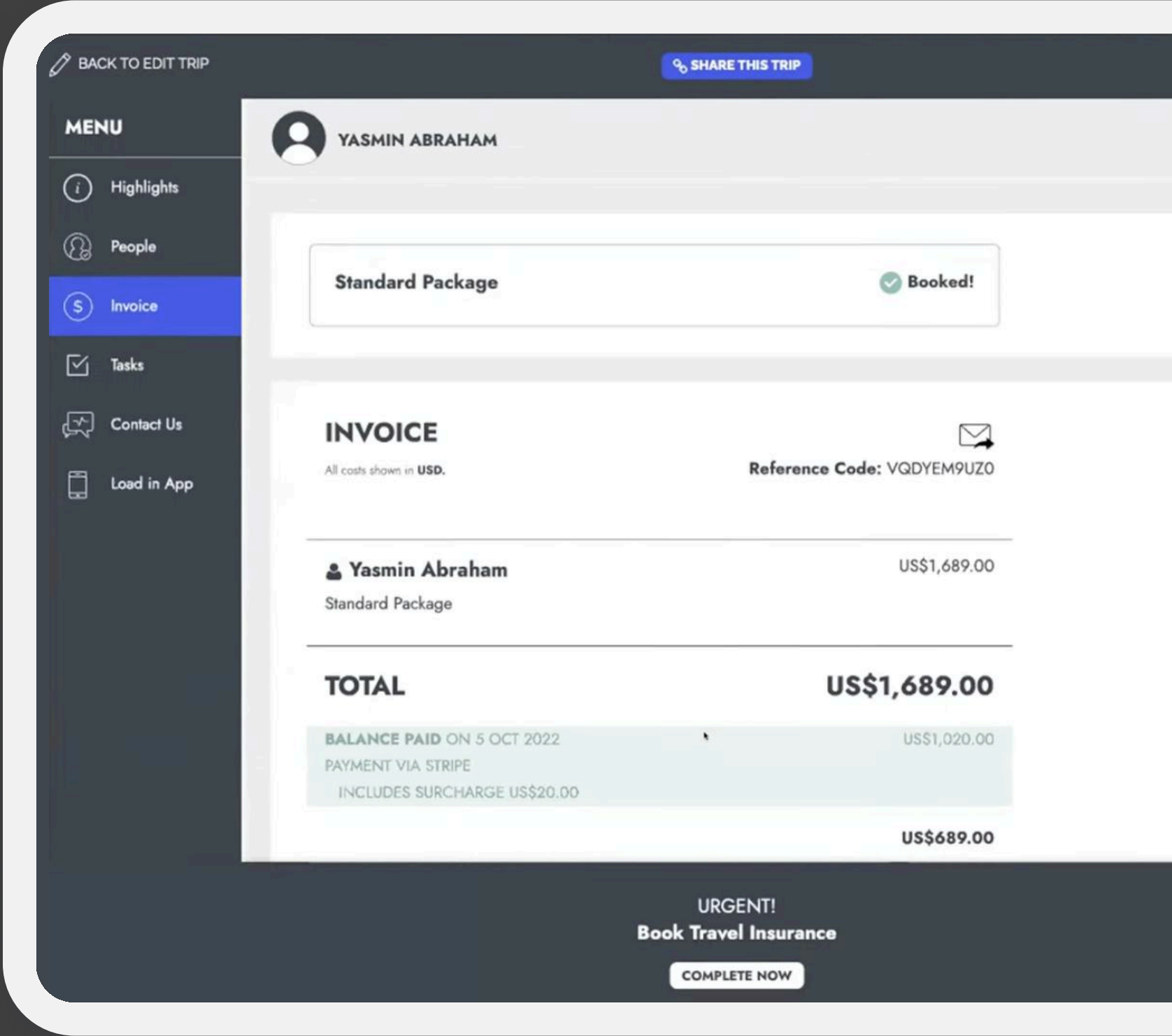
Did we move the needle?

Upwards trend of trip planners integrating with Stripe

More planners are integrating Stripe as payment options.

Increase in trips being booked

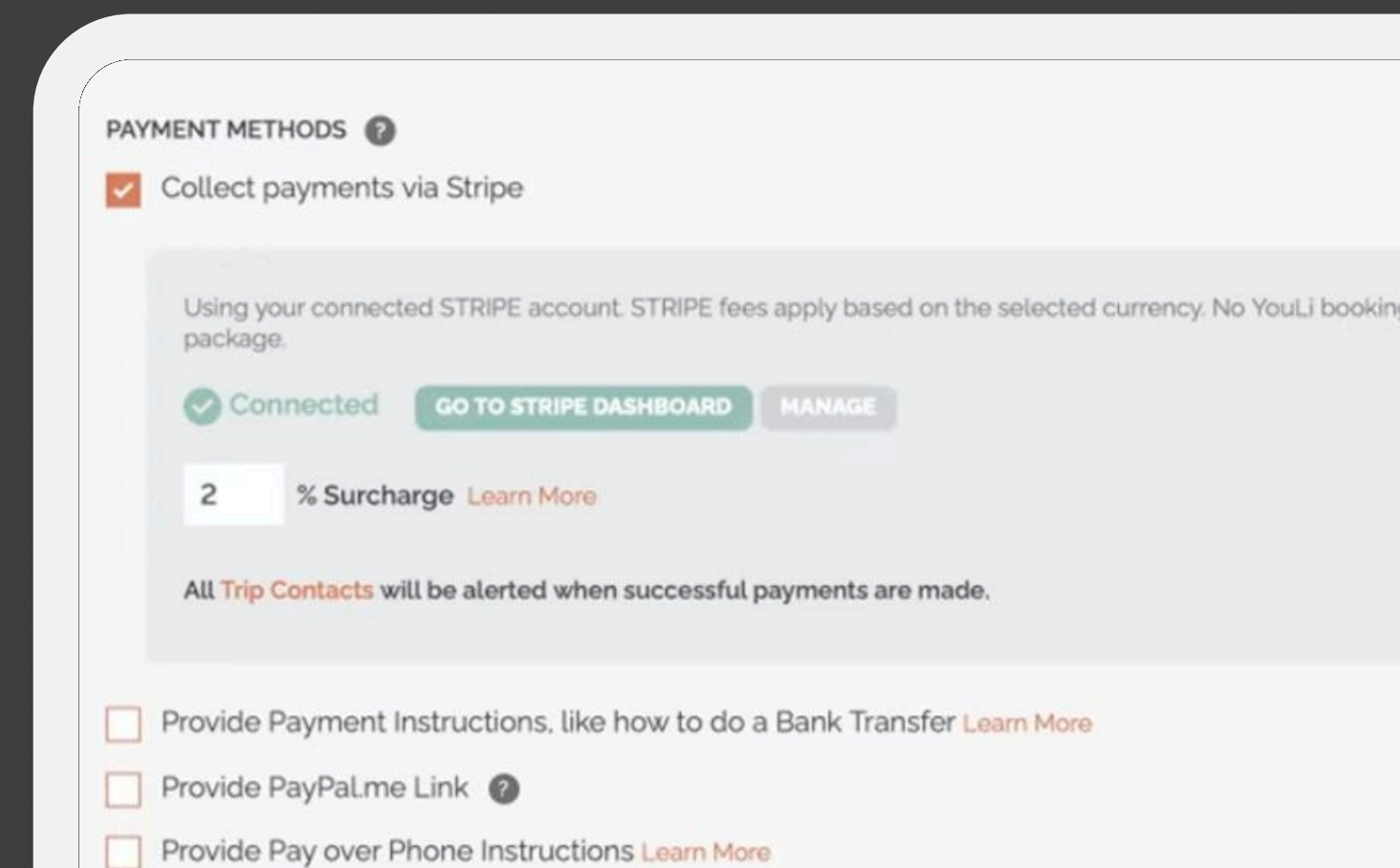
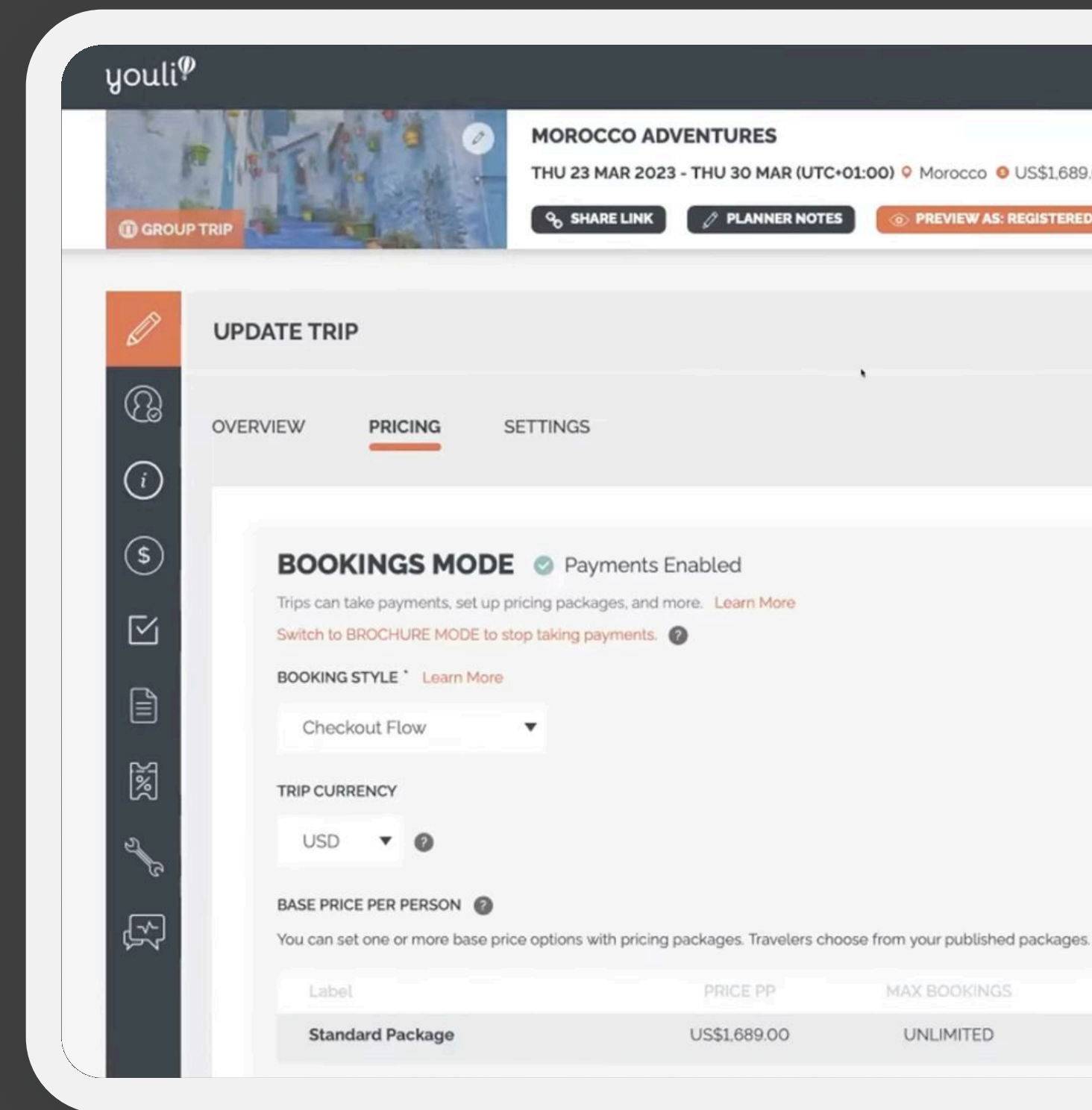
Planners who have integrated with Stripe are finding more trips are being booked.



TAKEAWAYS

Key insights and learnings

- Stripe integration can be complex for the user (Trip planner), so being aware of the complexity to support the user is vital
- Simplify and integrate as much of the process as possible
- Using clear language and clean UI is really necessary for complex payment solutions
- Readily accessible support and help



Unavailable items

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