

Sam's Club Pet Innovation

Exploring Team Creativity

My Roles

~Team Project Monitoring Lead ([link to team charter](#)) ~

~Research, User Experience, Project Management~

~March 21st-May 4th, 6 Weeks, Spring 2022~



Situation

My team and I were challenged with coming up with the Sam's Club Pet Department's "Next Big Idea."

My team, Team Harmony, chose seven of my twenty

ideas ([link to twenty ideas](#)) to analyze within my team to submit to

Jonathan Saffian ([link to LinkedIn](#)), Sam's Club's Senior Director of

Innovation, and then present the finalized idea, that included 3 of my ideas (1st, 2nd, 4th listed), to Sam's Club executives.

Tasks

- **Team Monitoring Lead** - Strategically assigned tasks based on each team member's unique strengths ([link to team charter](#)).
- **Developed and led team brainstorming sessions** ([link to mural](#)).
- **Led 2 journey mapping exercises over two hours** ([link to mural](#)).
- **Collected customer feedback** through a Qualtrics survey ([link to survey](#)) with **26 respondents** and **15 in-person interviews** with Sam's Club Members ([link to responses](#)).

- Performed 3 in-person observations of wine sections for various stores (Sam's Club, PetSmart, & Kroger) to note customer behavior ([link to observations](#)).
- Identified and validated 3 innovation categories (Subscription Boxes/Trials, Customer Experience, and Gamification) with our stakeholder, Jonathan Saffian ([link to mural](#)).
- Led 3 one-hour Ideation Sessions with my team over 2 weeks over opportunities.
- Created 48 How Might We statements to address pain points in the customer journey ([link to mural](#)).
- Asked the 5 Whys to find the root cause of the problems to identify pain points for 3 different personas.

Actions

- Used Journey Map to evaluate pain points ([link to mural](#)).
- Organized and directed four Stakeholder meetings with Jonathan that were conducted to gather feedback.
- Conducted weekly hour-long ideation sessions.
- Headed the final presentation ([link to presentation](#)) of our solution to Sam's Club team.
- Facilitated 7 team ideation sessions that included:
 - 3 Journey Maps ([link to mural](#))
 - 6 Cluster Boards ([link to mural](#))
 - 3 Feasibility Charts ([link to mural](#))
 - 1 Affinity Map With 14 idea categories ([link to mural](#))
- Presented & discussed creative innovative ideas over 3 meetings with Jonathan Saffian.
- Presented Finalized Idea ([link to presentation](#)) to Sam's Club executives & received final feedback.

Results/Feedback

- Worked with the Innovation Director on:
 - Ideating 48 ideas with 3 of those voted highly by the team and Jonathan Saffian.

- **Discovering new pivots** in ideas related to pain points in the Subscription Boxes/Trials, Customer Experience, and Gamification insights ([link to mural](#)).
- **Evolving ideas** via partnerships with pet-related businesses, pet focus groups ([link to pet research](#)), research-based personas ([link to mural](#)), and further developed ideations.
- **Presenting our final idea** to Sam's Club team ([link to presentation](#)).

Ideas

1. Have a Personalized Members Mark Pet Subscription Package option where pet products are delivered monthly to pet owners at a discounted bulk price.

Pain Point: Many pet owners are busy and don't have the luxury of time to shop for their pet products.

Conducting interviews and surveys, I found that consumers who shop for their pets spend a lot of time trying to find the right products and get them in time.

Here is a quote from one of the interviews conducted:

"I am very picky with my dogs' products. It takes forever to shop and get everything she needs. With work, I am so busy to shop in person."

- Michelle, 40-year-old female, 4/6/2022, Online Interview

Insights: More pet consumers are starting to shop online and for bundles.

Online research into studies on pet shopping behaviors revealed that 80% of pet owners use pet subscription services for their pets ([Source](#)).

Additionally, there is a significant increase in interest in pet-related auto-replenishment services (from 63% to 79% in 2020) ([Source](#)).

Looking into Bark Box ([Source](#)) and Chewy's Autoship ([Source](#)) pet subscription functions, offering subscription services for pet products is appealing to consumers.

- Bark Box has maintained a 70% year-over-year revenue growth rate while also maintaining a 95% shopper retention rate ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- Chewy's Autoship function accounts for 70% of their net sales ([Source](#)).

Another customer interview that I collected stated,

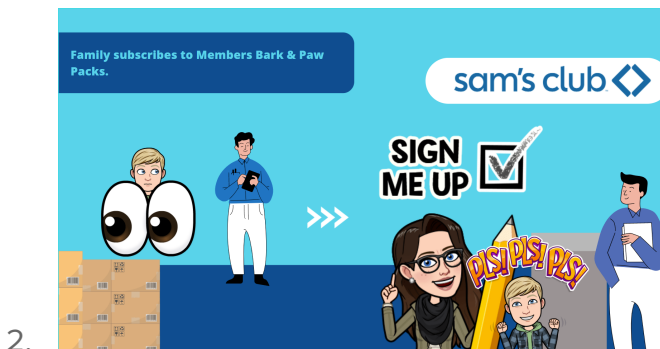
"I prefer to buy online because it's convenient and easier. Also, there are more deals."

-Ingrid L., 20-year-old female, 4/5/2022, In-Store Interview

Solution: Offer an exclusive Sam's Club Membership Package that includes a personalized and discounted option for pet product subscriptions.

This would provide pet owners with a seamless and personal way to provide for their pets.

Storyboard:



3.



Who, What, Wow:

If Sam's Club were to implement personalized subscription boxes that provide flexibility and simplicity for customers and their pet needs, there would be a potential expansion in their market share of pet owners since 80% use subscription services ([Source](#)).

Result: When reviewing our ideas with Jonathan, he resonated with the subscription idea. However, he challenged us "Why should Sam's Club be the company to do this?" Thus, later, my team incorporated a family fun activity aspect to it. This became the basis of our finalized idea.

Below are a few comments on the idea comprised by my team based on Jonathan's feedback:

- *Yellow Hat (Positive commentary)*
 - Idea lessens the burden on pet owners.
- *Black Hat (Critical commentary)*
 - How do we make this something that reflects Sam's brand image?
- *Green Hat (Revision commentary)*
 - What if this concept incorporated an activity or something involving family?

2. Implement a Personalized Pet Survey that integrates with a Pet Profile in the Sam's Club App.

Pain Point: Customers feel frustrated at the lack of personalization when it comes to pet shopping.

Through online research, I found that about 71% of shoppers get frustrated at shopping experiences that are not personalized to them and their needs ([Source](#)).

Insights: Fun & personalized surveys and profiles are becoming more valuable with engaging features.

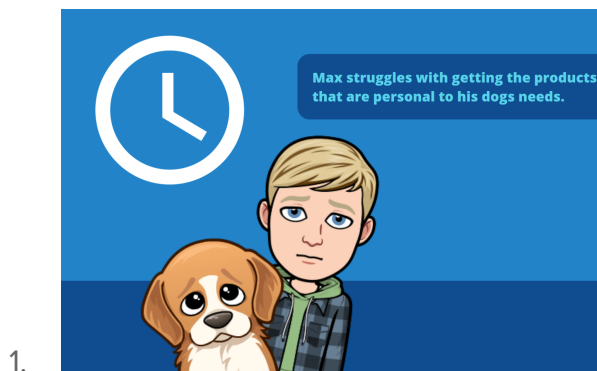
According to online research, surveying involving gamification and visually appealing rewarding features increase user satisfaction and engagement ([Source](#)).

A perfect example of this survey type can be the Spotify Pet Playlist Survey ([Source](#)). Another example can be the Il Makiage Foundation Match Survey ([Source](#)).

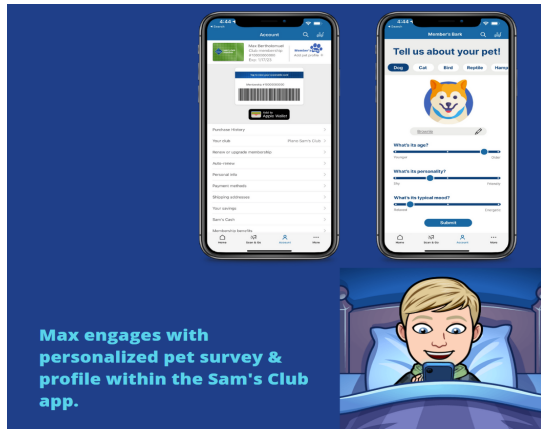
Solution: Create a fun & enagaging Personalized Pet Survey in the Sam's Club App that is linked to a Pet Profile.

Sam's Club could utilize this data on each member as an asset to create new products based on the members needs.

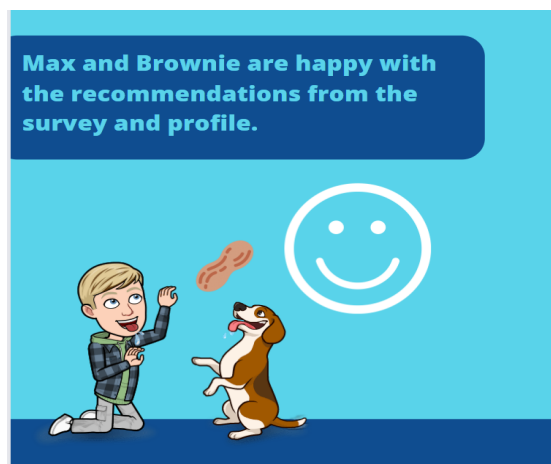
Storyboard:



2.



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Who, What, Wow:

If Sam's Club were to introduce a fun & interactive survey involving personalization to a profile for pet owners, about 25% of pet owners would engage with it ([Source](#)).

Result: When reviewing our ideas with Jonathan, he explained that this is a great idea for enhancing the member experience. We later involved this idea within our final idea presented to Sam's Club.

Below are a few comments on the idea comprised by my team based on Jonathan's feedback:

- *Yellow Hat (Positive commentary)*
 - The idea creates an enjoyable pet shopping experience.
 - Makes pet-shopping easier.
- *Black Hat (Critical commentary)*
 - Needs more value-added for Sam's Club.
- *Green Hat (Revision commentary)*
 - What if this concept is combined with the activity box idea?

3. Offer a free “Sam’s Pet Pouch” or a Reusable Pet Food Travel Size Container that members can bring to Sam’s Club to fill with their personalized meals.

Pain Point: Pet owners struggle finding quality packaging for pet products; their pets tear it up.

According to an online article, a pet owner that found a quality packaging for cat-food stated,

“Packaging is excellent; despite his best efforts one of our cats has been unable to chew through to get into the packet! ([Source](#))”

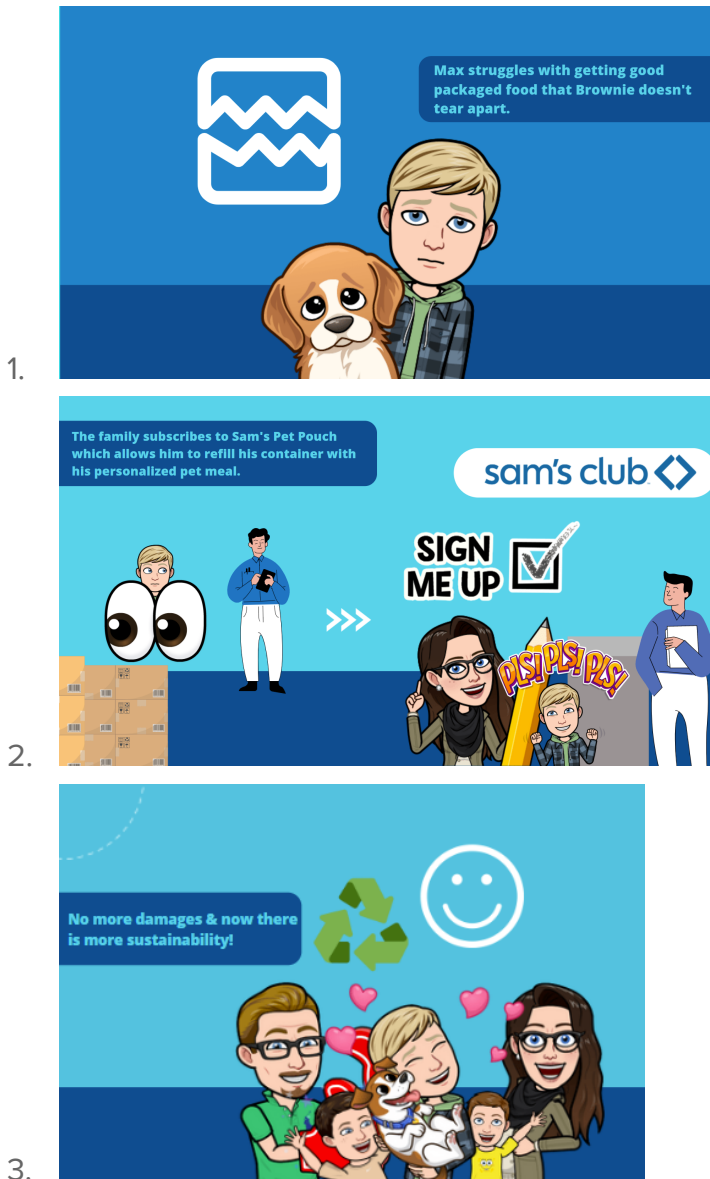
Insights: Pet-owners desire reusable packages and sustainable products.

According to Ivan Tyur, a segment marketer in pet care, pet owners highly prefer packaging that minimizes odor and that is reusable. This easiness of opening & closing the package while also being able to reuse the packaging is important to pet consumers ([Source](#)).

Furthermore, about 51% of pet-owners said they will pay more if the pet product is ethically sourced and environmentally friendly ([Source](#)).

Solution: Provide members a free "Sam's Pet Pouch" or a Reusable & Sustainable Pet Food Travel Size Container to fill with their tailored meals at Sam's Club.

If Sam's Club were to acknowledge the consumer desire for sustainability and reuse, there could be a new opportunity space for Sam's Club that is lightly explored by their competitors.



Who, What, Wow:

If Sam's Club were to offer more reusable and sustainable packaging, 51% of consumers would be more willing to buy ([Source](#)).

Result: When reviewing our ideas with Jonathan, he explained that this is a great idea for sustainability. However, he explained how this would have less of an impact on members when comparing it to my other ideas.

Below are a few comments on the idea comprised by my team based on Jonathan's feedback:

- *Yellow Hat (Positive commentary)*
 - The idea promotes sustainability.
 - Helps consumers reuse.
 - *Black Hat (Critical commentary)*
 - This idea alone would add little value.
 - *Green Hat (Revision commentary)*
 - What if this concept is integrated within other ideas, like idea #4 and #5?
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4. Have an online “Food From Scratch” page within the Sam's Club App that includes DIY Pet Recipes & the option for further personalized meals provided by Sam's Club.

Pain Point: **Consumers struggle to find healthy food for their pets.**

According to the findings, pet owners confront various problems in identifying the optimum nutrition for their animals ([Source](#)).

Insights: **There is an increasing trend of pet-owners starting to care for their pet's food as their own.**

From online research, I found that, when compared to themselves, most pet owners stated that buying nutritious food for their pets is equally important (53.1%) or more important (43.6%) ([Source](#)).

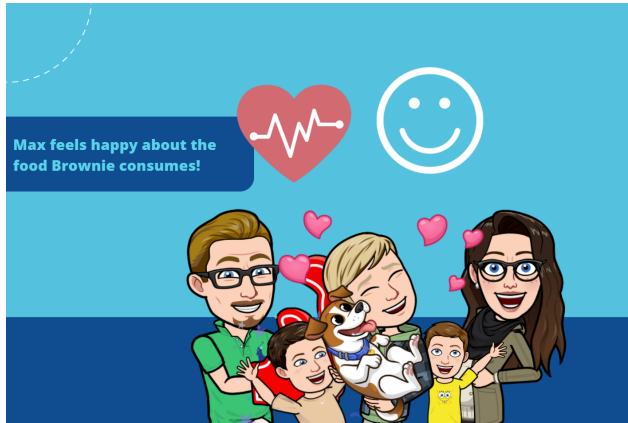
Solution: Within the Sam's Club App, have an online "Food From Scratch" tab with DIY Pet Recipes and the opportunity for more tailored meals provided by Sam's Club.

This solution would be digitalized and personalized with Sam's Club profile and Sam's Pet Pouch.

Storyboard:



3.



Who, What, Wow:

If Sam's Club were to implement an option for members to build their meals online from scratch with the help of the kitchen, about 53.1% of pet owners will be interested in it ([Source](#)).

Result: When reviewing our ideas with Jonathan, he explained that this is a great idea for enhancing the member experience and responding to pet owner needs. We later involved this idea within our final idea presented to Sam's Club.

Below are a few comments on the idea comprised by my team based on Jonathan's feedback:

- *Yellow Hat (Positive commentary)*
 - The idea provides comfort to members.
 - Promotes healthy food.
 - Creates a personalized experience space
- *Black Hat (Critical commentary)*
 - Difficult to build.
- *Green Hat (Revision commentary)*
 - What if this concept is integrated with Tastry ([Source](#)) (a human wine machine learning system) and with other ideas?

5. Have “The Pet Kitchen ” or a “Build Your Own Pet Food ” system within the Sam’s Club App where members can completely personalize their pet meals by each ingredient, virtually or in-person, & have it delivered or for pick up.

Pain Point: **Consumers struggle to find healthy food for their pets.**

This is the same point from above. According to the findings, pet owners confront various problems in identifying the optimum nutrition for their animals ([Source](#)).

Insights: **There is an increasing trend of pet-owners trying to make their own pet food with recipes online.**

Because pet owners care about their pet’s health, it makes sense that pet-consumers are increasingly talking about DIY pet food. However, many health-conscious pet owners may begin by preparing food at home, then switch to store-bought brands due to fatigue or the realization that creating healthy pet food is more than they can handle ([Source](#)).

Pet-consumers are becoming interested in pet recipes. On Amazon.com, the cookbook “Real Food for Dogs” moved into the list of top 200 best-sellers in one week ([Source](#)).

Here is a quote from one of the interviews conducted:

“I don’t shop for dog food at Sam’s Club, I make my own because many brands are unhealthy.”

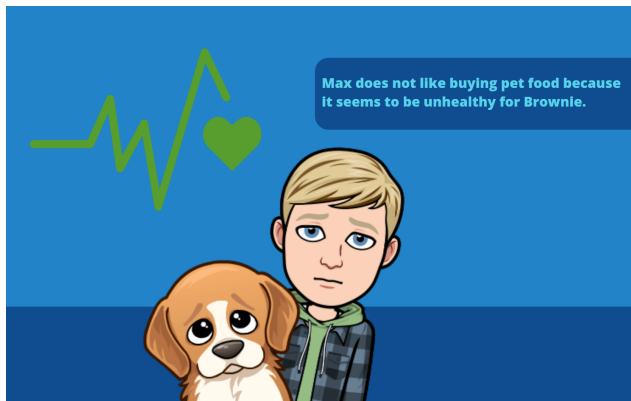
-Suni., 24-year-old female, 4/6/2022, Online Interview

Solution: **Within the Sam's Club App, offer a "Pet Kitchen" or "Build Your Own Pet Food" system where members can, virtually or in-person, customize their pet meals by each ingredient and have it delivered or picked up.**

This would be a brand new system of a kitchen just for pets.

Storyboard:

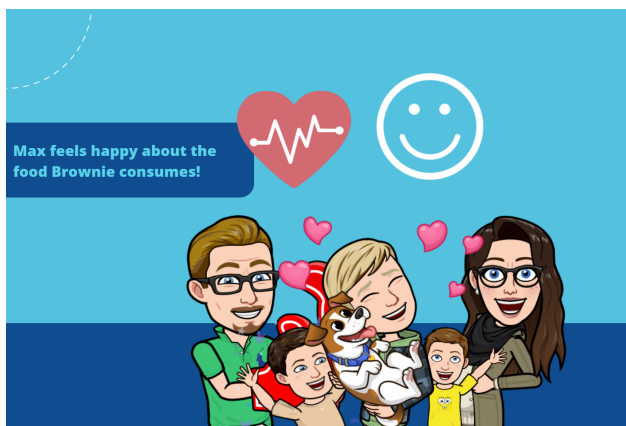
1.



2.



3.



Who, What, Wow:

If Sam's Club implements a Pet Kitchen where members can personalize their pet's meals by ingredients, about 53.1% of pet consumers would be interested ([Source](#)).

Result: When reviewing our ideas with Jonathan, he explained that this is a great idea for a more personalized experience of Sam's Club for pet owners. However, he explained how the costs might be too high when considering space in the store for a new "Pet Kitchen".

Below are a few comments on the idea comprised by my team based on Jonathan's feedback:

- *Yellow Hat (Positive commentary)*
 - The idea creates a personalized space in the pet shopping experience.
 - Helps conscious pet-owners with peace & ease.
- *Black Hat (Critical commentary)*
 - Difficult to implement and standardize.
 - Costly.
- *Green Hat (Revision commentary)*
 - What if this concept is solely virtual?
 - What if this concept involves a subscription?

6. Place a free-use "Pet Photo Booth" outside of Sam's Club locations for members that own pets.

Pain Point: **Sam's Club is not a place people normally buy their pet products from.**

This is a pain point for Sam's Club.

From the Qualtrics survey we conducted, none of the respondents said they shopped for any pet products at Sam's Club. Even within the store interviews, none of the respondents buy pet-related products from Sam's Club. Sam's Club is missing an opportunity as pet shopping is significantly increasing.

The U.S. pet industry continued its strong advance in 2021, surging 14% overall to \$123 billion ([Source](#)).

Insights: **Pet consumers are increasingly treating their pets as their family.**

82% of millennials think of getting a dog as part of starting a family, per Zulily ([Source](#)).

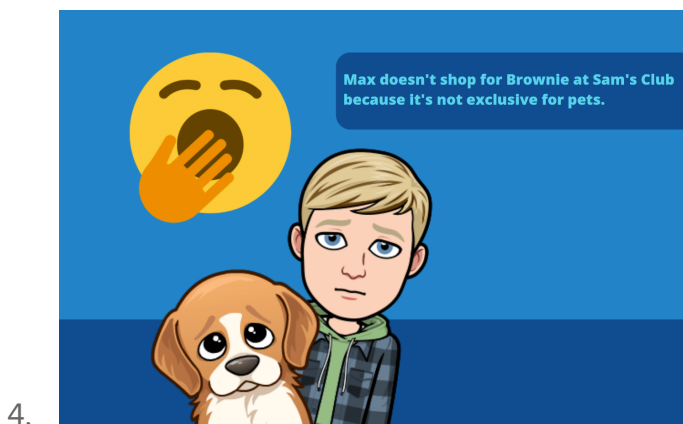
92% of millennial pet owners buy their pets gifts and over half of them do so every single month ([Source](#)).

“Millennials are looking for products that incorporate their pets into their daily routines, from dog umbrellas to accessories that make the perfect pet selfie, to a yoga mat for your cat.” -Kerry Gibson-Morris, vice president of merchandise at Zulily ([Source](#)).

Solution: **For members who own pets, set up a free-to-use "Pet Photo Booth" outside of Sam's Club locations.**

This could involve the social aspect of pets and family while also promoting pet products that have the potential to build sales.

Storyboard:



5.



6.



Who, What, Wow:

If Sam's Club were to implement a photo booth for pets and their families, there will be a new opportunity space to connect with the pet consumer ([Source](#)).

Result: When reviewing our ideas with Jonathan, he explained that experiences are important to Sam's Club. However, he also explained Sam's Club is not a place to welcome a bunch of pets inside.

Below are a few comments on the idea comprised by my team based on Jonathan's feedback:

- *Yellow Hat (Positive commentary)*
 - The idea helps create an exclusive experience.
 - Promotes the family-like view of pets.
- *Black Hat (Critical commentary)*

- Pets are not so welcome within Sam's Club.
 - *Green Hat (Revision commentary)*
 - What if this concept were outside of Sam's Club?
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7. Implement a “Sam’s Club Furry Friend Blog” or a Pet Blogging Platform within the Sam’s Club App for members that own pets.

Pain Point: **Early pet-owners are often confused on how to provide for their pets.**

Many respondents explained how they struggled with understanding how to care for their pets, as it is a huge responsibility. Many pet owners

One interviewee stated

“When I first was owning a pet, it was insanely difficult to find the help i needed to learn. It took so much time & it felt like a burden.”

-Suni., 24-year-old female, 4/6/2022, Online Interview

Insights: **The internet is a source of resources for new pet-owners trying to learn responsibilities.**

According to the surveys and interviews conducted, for many, the internet is a source of advice when owning a pet. Many explained that it is an easy and accessible way to get guidance on caring for their pet.

Solution: **For members who own pets, create a "Sam's Club Furry Friend Blog" or a Pet Blogging Platform within the Sam's Club App.**

This could involve a social media like system.

Storyboard:

7.

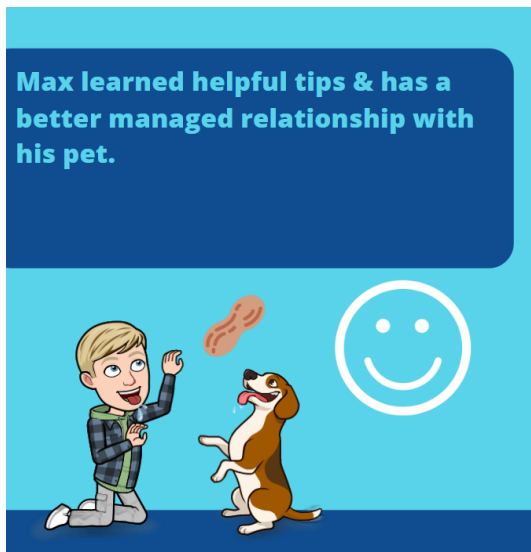


8.

Max engages the online Furry Friend Blog tab in the Sam's Club app to find better tips on caring for his pet.



9.



Who, What, Wow:

If Sam's Club were to implement a pet blog that coached newer pet owners on responsibilities, there will be a new opportunity space in education.

Result: When discussing this with Johnathan, he questioned that, while he liked the concept, why wouldn't people just search the internet instead? Additionally he challenged us to consider why Sam's Club would be the company to do any idea we propose.

Below are a few comments on the idea comprised by my team based on Jonathan's feedback:

- *Yellow Hat (Positive commentary)*
 - Easy access for members.
 - Educates pet-owners.
 - *Black Hat (Critical commentary)*
 - Too similar to the internet.
 - *Green Hat (Revision commentary)*
 - What if this concept was gamified in coaching new pet owners within the Sam's Club app?
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The Future

- My team presented the finalized idea ([link to presentation](#)) with our innovation, Paw Packs and Members Bark, that we agreed had potential for revolutionizing the pet experience for members. We discussed them with Jonathan and the idea is planned to be explored in the Sam's Club Innovation Lab. I enjoyed working vigorously with Jonathan and Sam's Club with my team (image below links to our final presentation).





Meet The Team!



Shyla Oommen



Simonne Cudmore



Brandon Williams



Lucas Schmenk

Always Remember...

**Theres More to
Discover!**

-TEAM HARMONY

Additional Project Information/Links

- ❖ [Final Presentation- Members Bark & Paw Packs](#)
- ❖ [Team Mural Board Workshop](#)
- ❖ [Team Pet Research & Observations](#)
- ❖ [Interview Questions & Responses](#)
- ❖ [Team Charter](#)
- ❖ [Qualtrics Pet Survey](#)
- ❖ [20 Individual Idea Text Descriptions](#)