

Developing a service innovation to extend client's competitive advantage

# RECOMMEND MY RIDE GILSON

## **ORGANIZATION**

Carnegie Mellon  
Human-Computer Interaction  
Institute & Gilson Snow

## **COURSE**

Service Design

## **TIMELINE**

Mar-May 2020



# A David & Goliath Story

Gilson Snow is an ecommerce **direct-to-consumer** ski & ride company creating made-to-order decks and skis. By bypassing distributors, Gilson has created a close-knit, passionate community.

# Design Challenge

How might we augment Gilson's existing product-service system, enabling this rural Pennsylvania snowboard company to offer its customers a **superior experience**?



# Design Process



1 Discover

2 Ideate

3 Prototype

4 Validate

# Discover

## RESEARCH GOALS



- How riders shop for snowboards: their process, wishes, and pain points
- How riders engage with mountain culture in-season and throughout the year

## METHODS



- Directed storytelling
- Think-aloud protocol

## POPULATION

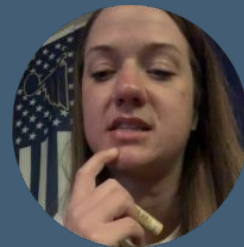


- 5 snowboarders, 2-22 years experience

DISCOVER

# Insights

While shopping for boards, riders cited pain points around finding the right board for their needs, sifting through information, and demystifying esoteric jargon. Riders talked about the emotional weight of the decision and what it meant to their identity, indicating that brands could add value here.



**“There’s a ton of information out there, but not the RIGHT information”**



**“I want something that’s fit to me specifically.”**

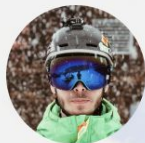


**“Every brand has its own tech”**

# DISCOVER Personas

Clustering research findings informed two personas: a beginner shopping for his first board, and an intermediate rider shopping for her first park board.

## Proud Owner



### PROFILE

- Beginner rider (<3 years)
- Rented boards prior, may have rented season demos
- Looking to purchase first board of his own

### GOALS

- Wants an all-mountain board as versatile as possible for a variety of conditions (powder, ice, slush)
- Wants the board to serve him for many years as he grows and improves his skills

### USER NEEDS

- After renting boards and deciding to make the investment in their own, they are looking for an aesthetic that represents them
- Want a board appropriate to their level that will give them the most control
- Need someone to walk them through the process of choosing a board/finding the right size

### PAIN POINTS

- overwhelmed by terminology, technology, and useless information
- overwhelmed by the set up process

### VALUES

- **Willingness to spend:**
- more price-sensitive
- wants good value

### Talk to me at my level

### UNMET NEEDS

- brand celebrating their first board purchase alongside them
- no directions for the set up process
- no knowledge on maintenance of board

“There’s a ton of information out there, but not the RIGHT information”

GILSON

## Aspiring Shredder



### PROFILE

- Intermediate rider (>3 years)
- Currently owns an all-mountain board
- Rides with more advanced friends
- Looking to purchase more advanced, flexible freestyle board

### GOALS

- Wants a board that suits her more adventurous riding style (trees, extreme terrain, moguls)
- Aspires to do jumps and tricks

### USER NEEDS

- Find a board with more flex and agility
- Handle advanced terrain with speed and control
- Keep up with friends on the mountain

### PAIN POINTS

- Only has experience with all-mountain boards
- Each company has their own technology - what does it really mean?
- Difficult to tell how flexible a board is online

### VALUES

- **Willingness to spend:**
- Less price sensitive
- Willing to make investment

### Make me smarter

### UNMET NEEDS

- Demystify the jargon
- Board specifics, ie: pros and cons of directional boards, tail shapes, true twin vs. asymmetrical, and the importance of flex
- How to adapt riding technique to new challenges

“Now that I’m getting better and doing jumps and going into trees, I want [a board] that’s easier to turn”

GILSON

## NEEDS & VALUES



- Make me smarter
- Talk to me at my level
- Prep & gear know-how
- How do I level up?



# Ideate

With a map of Gilson's assets & the needs of my personas in hand, I developed 11 ideas across 4 dimensions of the customer experience.

## SHOPPING



- Commemorate upgrades
- Onboarding quiz
- Board design contest

## ON-MOUNTAIN



- On-mountain tuning
- Training new park riders
- Gilson mountain shuttles

## OFF-SEASON



- Gilson media
- Customer education

## COMMUNITY



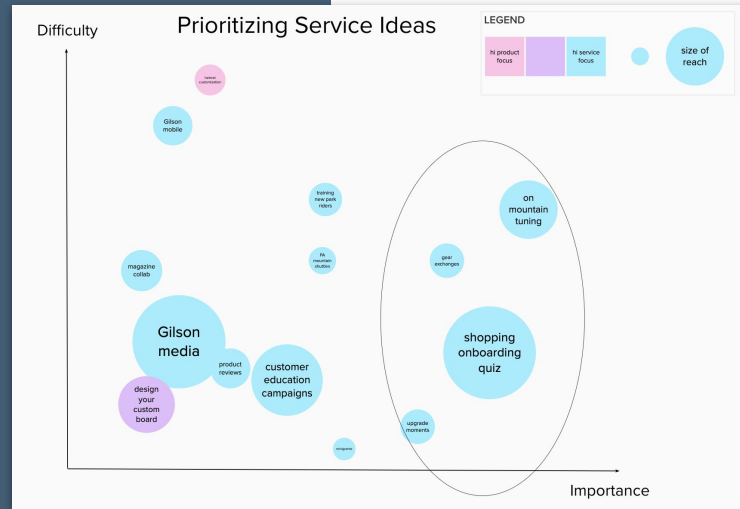
- Minigrants
- Custom helmet art
- Gear exchanges



IDEATE

# Prioritization Criteria

- ✓ Difficulty to implement
- ✓ Importance to Gilson
- ✓ Audience reach
- ✓ Product vs. service focus
- ✓ Scalability
- ✓ Value across stakeholders



## Client Validation

- ✗ On-mountain tuning would interfere with resort offerings
- ✗ Board shipping costs make gear exchanges prohibitively expensive

A woman with long, dark, wavy hair is shown from the chest up, looking down and to the right with a thoughtful expression. She is holding a white credit card in her right hand. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a living room or office. The overall image has a dark, muted color palette.

IDEATE

## How might we

offer customers a superior shopping experience,  
increasing brand trust & likelihood to purchase?

“

*I imagine that we lose customers who aren't sure which board would be best for them, and do not feel comfortable reaching out to us to ask.*

- Gilson



PROTOTYPE

# Design Decisions

## MUST DO FOR USER

- ✓ Narrow the right board options
- ✓ Celebrate a big purchase

## MUST ELIMINATE FOR USER

- ✗ Check multiple sites for info
- ✗ Technical jargon

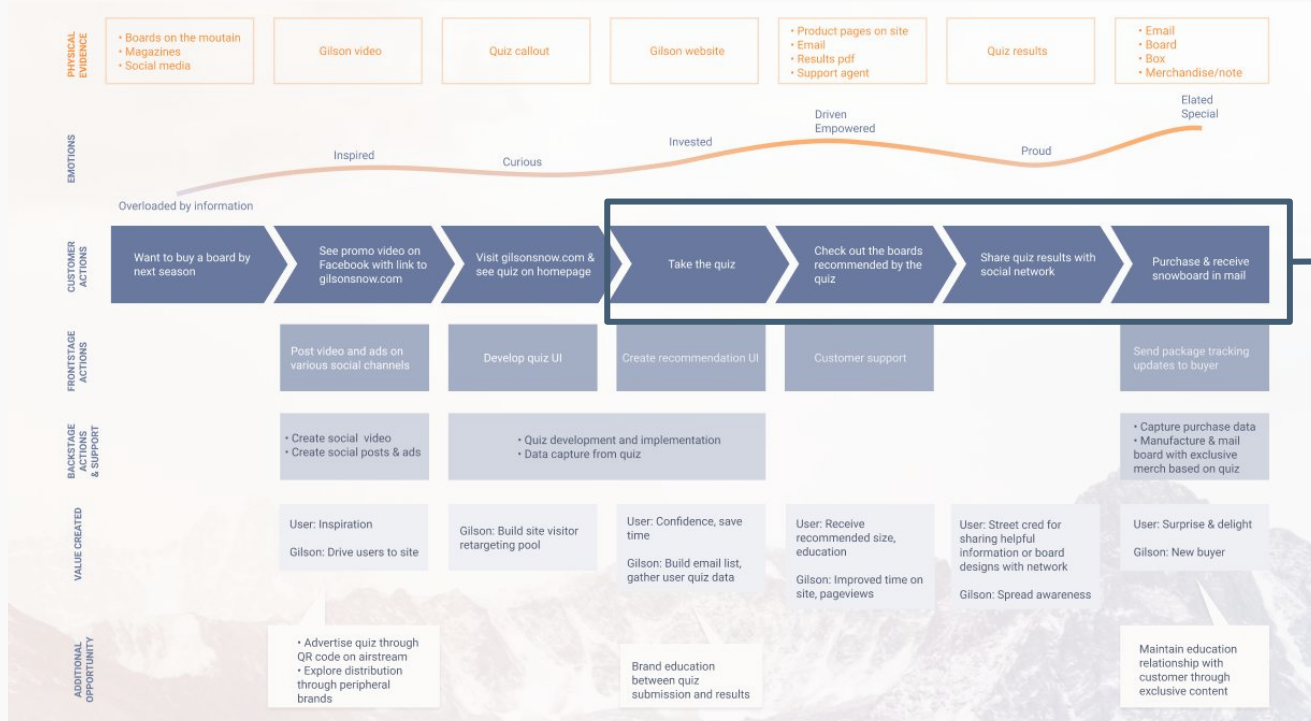
PROTOTYPE

# Concept Video



PROTOTYPE

# Service Blueprint



1. Take quiz

2. On-site product recos

3. Educational email

4. Share on social

5. Personalized unboxing

VALIDATE

# Client Feedback

## SMOOTH SAILING



- Quiz could be **piloted easily** and scaled based on traction and results
- Service would help them penetrate **new markets**, like new riders
- Quiz to recommend **multiple boards**, as there is no one “perfect board” for a rider

## KEEP AN EYE OUT



- How might we gamify the quiz to make it more **engaging**?
- What are other benefits of **data generated** from quiz?

*Retargeting, custom email streams for quiz takers who did not purchase*

## GREATEST CONCERN



- How to **drive riders** to the quiz, given that competitors have created similar tools

*Integrate links into viral social videos; create QR code on airstream trailer for tour*

VALIDATE

# Value Creation

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- + Site visits & brand exposure
- + Improved conversion rate
- + New customer base
- + Understand needs of boarders who do not purchase
- + Create delight & loyalty

## RIDERS



- + Curated shopping experience
- + Education woven into shopping process
- + Sense of belonging through personalized outreach
- + Celebrate purchase with surprise