



Portfolio Review

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CF Immersion 1.11

Developing a concept for an ***Expert App*** focussing on ***Animal Psychology*** and ***Behaviour***:

A. P. E.

The Animal Psychology Expert

Potential Problems

- The user does not know, which of the Experts to ask
- The user may be intimidated to talk to an expert via video chat
- The user might wonder about the validation/qualification of the Experts
- No Expert available for the users specific question
- Unsatisfying/Slow response time when waiting for Expert's answer
- Users may not be satisfied with the answer or the answer may be unclear
- Users might have trouble to explain their specific problem to the expert

Problem Statement

Our pet owners need a way to receive **quick** and **professional advice** from **qualified experts** on **animal behaviour** because they want to know how to **solve** the **behavioural problems** of their animal **adequately** and **timely**.

We will know this to be true when we see that the number of users and experts in the app is raising and the app receives positive feedback.



Potential Solutions

- The app provides suggestions of Experts based on the species or behavioural problem the user can select from the menu. In addition, each Expert will have a profile introducing him/herself, their expertise, and ratings in previous consultations.
- The user can choose to talk to the Expert via text messaging instead of video.
- The validation process and advise history of the Experts is made transparent. In addition, the users can review and rate the experts according to their personal experiences.
- Experts will receive small incentives for joining the application and answering questions.
- Expected response times will be made transparent for the users. In addition, if responses take too long, users will receive refunds or credits.
- Users will be allowed to ask follow-up questions for free.
- Users can upload small video clips of their animals showing the undesired behaviour/behavioural problem.

Solution Statement

Our app needs to provide users with **easy** and **timely** access to **qualified experts** on animal behaviour with **traceable experience** on different animal species and behavioural problems. We will achieve this by providing a **transparent, community-based** platform, where users can **review** the Experts former questions and answers, see their **ratings**, ask **own questions** (including **videos** of their animals), and receive timely advise. Experts will receive **benefits** for joining (e.g. can connect with colleagues) and answering questions.



PetCoach



Overview

PetCoach (<https://www.petcoach.co/>) is a company owned by Petco, a pet retail giant in the US. PetCoach offers online (on their website and as mobile app) veterinary advice from experts, via personal conversations and a forum with hundreds of articles on pet health. Recently, they also opened a PetCoach store in California, including an animal hospital, grooming services as well as dog training and dog day care.

Overall Strategy

PetCoach, as part of Petco, is growing into a giant company offering, at first, online advice and information, to now actual stores including animal hospitals and care facilities, seemingly covering everything on the health care of pets. A google search of “PetCoach” shows pages over pages of relevant results, first featuring their webpage and mobile app (available in Google Play and iTunes), then their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn accounts. The opening of their pet stores last year then resulted in a lot of media coverage filling pages of google results. Thus, PetCoach invests a lot in active marketing via their website, app and social media and is well represented in press and blog articles.

A screenshot of the PetCoach mobile app interface. At the top, the status bar shows 'Kein Netz', signal strength, time '09:04', and battery level. The app header is dark blue with a menu icon, a back arrow, and the text 'ASK AN EXPERT'. Below the header is a large image of a woman in a white lab coat holding a small dog. Under the image, the text 'What is your question?' is followed by a character count '500'. Below this is a large text input field with the placeholder 'Type your question here'. Underneath the input field is a button labeled 'Attach up to three photos' with a dropdown arrow. Below that is another button labeled 'Pick the most relevant category' with a dropdown arrow. At the bottom of the form is a large teal button labeled 'CONTINUE'. Below the 'CONTINUE' button, there is a warning message: 'Please visit your nearest emergency clinic right away if your pet is experiencing any of these symptoms'. At the very bottom, there is a section titled 'TIPS FOR A FASTER, BETTER ANSWER' with a list of four bullet points: 'Use intelligible language and punctuation', 'Make sure your question is clear', 'You will be able to provide basic info about your pet in the next step', and 'Don't include contact information within the question'.

PetCoach



Market Advantage

When PetCoach was bought by Petco in 2017 it was just an app that presented people with a cheap way of getting their pressing pet questions answered quickly by experts. Although they still heavily invest in their online advice services, the opening of their pet stores really stands out considering their competitors. With their huge customer base, hundreds of veterinarians and experts, they are definitely the biggest, best known and fastest growing pet service provider on the market right now.

Marketing Profile

PetCoach was founded by two young Spanish entrepreneurs, David Martin and Alvaro Jimenez, with an idea about building an online expert advice platform. The app was launched in April 2014. In 2015, they added a veterinarian, who was responsible for developing medical standards and building the expert team. In July of 2016, the company was acquired by a group of investors headed by Brock Weatherup. In 2017 PetCoach was bought by the pet retail giant Petco.

Next to their app, which is available for **iOS** (rating 4.7) and **android** (rating 4.7), they feature a **website** with chat function, have accounts in all big social media platforms (i.e. **Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram**), and since last year open actual **stores** on pet services. Furthermore, they work together with Amazon to get connected to **Alexa**.

PetCoach's latest funding round was a Seed for \$2M on Nov 2016. As of March 2019, PetCoach has 176.7K fans on Facebook and 2.6K followers on Twitter.





SWOT	
STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large user & fanbase• Massive marketing (own website, social media, advertisements)• ‘real-life’ stores• Hundreds of verified veterinarians & experts• Large forum with expert articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve UX, and develop a better designed app, focusing on animal behaviour instead of health problems• Include more information/advice on exotic animals
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advertise ‘free’ services, but lots of features cost money• Very broad profile claiming to offer anything on pet care, for any pet, might overwhelm users• Room for improvement in UX design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The opening of the stores might draw attention away from the online services• Competitors such as JustAnswer, Barkibu and VetLIVE• Real, i.e. not online, veterinarians to ask

PetCoach



Usability

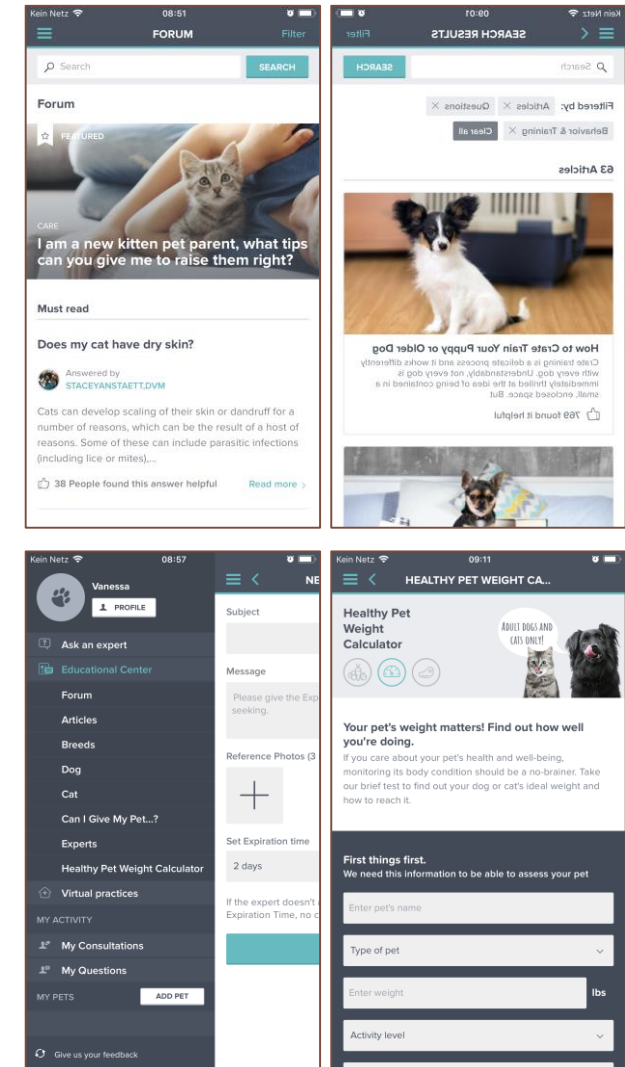
After signing in/opening the app, the user sees the Forum page of the application. The experts are not immediately visible and it takes some clicks until the user is able to type in a question to an expert. There are some Usability issues, e.g. the Filter function seems to have a bug, but in general the app is quick and relatively easy to understand after a little bit of interaction.

Layout

In general the different pages of the app look clear, informative and appealing. Mostly large pictures are accompanied by some text with different color, size, and typography, helping to understand the context. Pages, where users need to enter information, are mostly easy to understand and well-arranged.

Navigation Structure

The navigation structure could be more intuitive. There is no navigation bar at the bottom, but a menu at the top left. This menu is a little confusing, as some topics are put together, which seemingly do not belong to the same category, e.g. sorting 'Experts' under 'Educational Center'. Furthermore, there are features, which are not really necessary, like the 'Pet Weight Calculator'.





Compatibility

Available for iPhone, iPad, iPod touch, and Android. Similar website with chat function available

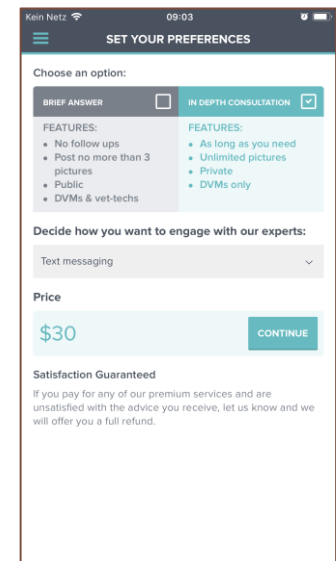
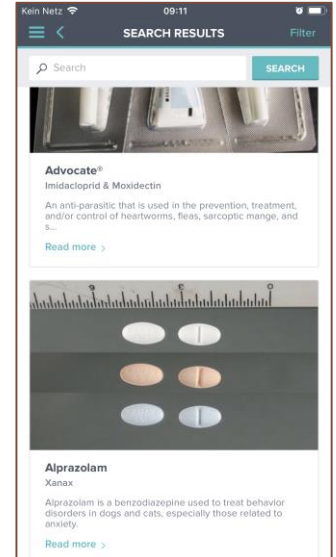
Differentiation

PetCoach is becoming the main player in online pet health advice and now also focusses on actual pet service stores. They have a huge user and also fanbase with over a hundred of veterinarians and experts to help pet owners quickly 24/7. However, the getting bigger and bigger attitude of the company, also advertising medical products in their applications, might overwhelm users and maybe even put off users, which are sceptic towards profit seeking companies. Focusing more on the user, and the community and not so much on advertising the product, might be one area where we will be able to stand out.

Furthermore, PetCoach answer questions and provides information on a very, very large variety of topics, making it sometimes difficult to orient oneself. We could differentiate by focusing only on animal behaviour problems, and not trying to incorporate any- and everything.

Call for Action

The user has to log in/sign up to use the application, however on the website, you can ask an expert right away. Furthermore, you are prompted several times to fill in the details of your pet, before asking a question in the app. And when asking a question, you first have to decide which options, i.e. the free, but only limited, or the premium version you would like to choose. It is not entirely clear when charges will apply though, i.e. what happens when you click 'submit' the question.



Executive Summary

Target Audience

Our target users are **pet owners** and **animal lovers**, who would either like to know more about the **behaviour and psychological wellbeing** of their own **pets** or **animals** in general, or would like to get **professional advice** on behavioural problems of their beloved furfriend (e.g. the dog does not stop barking at strangers). Age range of the users is between **18 and 40** as anyone older than this might not seek online advice but rather consult real-life professionals or watch TV shows for information (e.g. the dog whisperer).

Competition

Apps such as **PetCoach** or **Kuddly** offer some advice and information on animal behaviour and behavioural problems. However, they mainly **focus on veterinary procedures** and health problems and mostly rely on vets to answer questions. Our focus on animal psychology, i.e. mental wellbeing, and behavioural experts, will set us apart from those competitors.

Risk/Opportunity

Communicating and explaining behavioural problems might not be that easy for pet owners. Therefore, we will offer the option to **upload video footage** of their animals showing the respective behaviours. Similarly, explaining training or enrichment procedures and methods might be difficult, therefore, **tutorial videos** will be incorporated in the app. Another risk might be to get enough experts onboard to guarantee timely and professional advice, which should be solved by **offering adequate incentives**.

Conclusion

Our app will offer unique, easy to understand and implement information and guidance on animal psychology, which is not covered by competitor products. With marketing tailored to pet owners and animal lovers seeking advice and improvement of their animals' mental wellbeing and behaviour, we will ensure to get our app known to users and ahead of the big competitors.



S.M.A.R.T. Business Objectives

- Create a **competitive application** that offers pet owners timely and professional advice on animal behaviour.
Measured by: Initial user tests. *Deliverable by:* 1-2 months from start date.
- Gain **100+ experts** within the first three month of launch.
Measured by: Expert Signup within first 90 days. *Delivered by:* 90 days after product release.
- **100+ satisfactorily answered questions** on animal behaviour within first 2 month of release
Measured by: Question-Answer count and rating after 60 days.
Delivered by: 60 days after product release.



SCOPE

- **The Application:** The product itself including all designs, navigations and engineering.
- **20+ Experts and 50+ forum articles at time of release:** We need some basic information on animal behaviour and experts ready to answer questions before product release.
- **Marketing:** Our strategy for acquiring users and experts over the first 3 month of release, e.g. target specific online marketing.
- **Website:** Besides the native app, we will offer a website explaining the application, expert qualifications, and with additional information/ tutorials on animal behaviour and training.
- **Social Media:** We will create accounts in all main social media platforms, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, to spread word about our product, attract new users as well as experts, and gain a potential fan base.



Functional Requirements

The main features of our app will be:

- **Onboarding/Sign** up flow
- **Forum** with articles and tutorials
- **Chat** feature to talk to experts, including possible **video** uploads
 - Basic **Payment** flow to pay for advice
- **Search function** to find relevant information
- **My Account** function for users, including 'My Pets' information pages, question history, etc.
- **Browse Expert** accounts, to get information on Experts expertise, ratings and previous consultations, and pose questions
- **Rating** option to rate quality of Expert answers
- **Filter** function to narrow down information to specific animal species or topics
- **App Info/settings** (Contact us, Help, FAQ, AGB, etc.)



Delivery Schedule

WEEK 1-2	User Interviews, User Stories, Personas, Flow Charts
WEEK 3-4	Low-Fidelity Sketching, Basic Application Framework
WEEK 5-6	High-Fidelity Prototype, Initial User Testing
WEEK 7	Begin coding Website, contact potential experts, create forum articles
WEEK 8	User Tests, Complete App/Website, First Social Media Content
WEEK 9	Applications Launch, Website Launch, Social Media Launch
WEEK 10-12	Analyze User Reviews, Conduct User Interviews, Update product



User Stories



*A. P. E.
The Animal Psychology Expert*

Onboarding/Sign up flow

As a pet owner, I want the sign up to be easy and fast, as I would like to get timely advice on my animal questions and don't want to spend much time on understanding the tech.

Forum with articles and tutorials

As an animal lover, I want to have access to interesting articles and tutorials on animal behaviour, as I would like to know how to enrich my pet appropriately, without having to ask an expert myself.

Chat feature to talk to experts, including possible video uploads

As owner of a dog showing odd symptoms when with strangers, I would like to show the behaviour to the expert to be able to get accurate advice on how I can help my dog.



User Stories

A. P. E. The Animal Psychology Expert

Basic Payment flow to pay for advice

When taking expert advice, I would like to know exactly how much I have to pay and how paying is secured, explained in an easy way, so I do feel confident that I understood everything correctly.

Search function to find relevant information

As a new cat owner, I would like to search for relevant information on cat behaviour to get to know how I can best guarantee a good companionship.

My Account function for users, including 'My Pets' information

As a pet owner and user of the app, I want to be able to easily access and modify my and my pets personal information, and previous questions, to check back and reread the experts advice.

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The Animal Psychology Expert

Browse Expert accounts

As a new user of the app, I want to see who the Experts are, what their expertise is (in and outside of the app) and how other users rated their advice, to be able to decide whom to ask for advice myself.

Rating option to rate quality of Expert answers

As someone having received advice from one of the experts, I want to be able to rate the quality of their answers to share my personal satisfaction, and help other animal friends to decide who is a good expert.

Filter function to narrow down information

As someone only interested in reptiles, I want to narrow down the available info to my specific needs, so I can easily find relevant information.

App Info/settings (Contact us, Help, FAQ, AGB, etc.)

As a user having a problem with the app, I would like to find easy access to further information and contact details, so I can get help to solve my problem and continue to use the app satisfactorily.

User Stories