Final assignment: Design Sprint Project

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Background:

Strava is an Internet service that uses Global Positioning System (GPS) data to track and measure users' physical exercise and activities. It also incorporates social media features that allow users to share and post their achievements, like posts of other users (give kudos), and comment on others' activities. Strava records performance metrics like speed, heart rate, route summary, time, and elevation. User activity can be recorded using the mobile app, the Strava website, or other third-party devices. Strava encourages users to form groups, clubs and build and organize communities.

Initially, it was popular with cyclists and runners, but over the past 5 years, Strava has gained immense popularity. Now, Strava has more than 100 million users in over 195 countries, and over 3 billion activities have been uploaded[1]. It uses a freemium model, meaning some features are only available in the platform's paid subscription plans. For example, Strava has a Beacon feature that allows users to share their real-time location in all versions. On the other hand, tools to customize routes are available only in the paid version.

Strava Mission and Vision:

Strava was founded by two former college athletes looking to recreate the camaraderie and community felt among teammates. The app's mission focuses on connecting the largest community of athletes in the world by the sports they love. Strava advertises its vision to focus on "Record. Sweat. Share. Kudos," and sayings like "Every effort counts on Strava," and "If you're out there going for it, you're one of us."[2] Emphasis on community, camaraderie, and kudos for all activities underpin Strava's intentions for connecting athletes through its platform. Our design sprint paid special attention to align with themes from Strava's mission and vision by focusing on motivating connections between users.

Approach:

We utilized Jake Knapp's 5-day design sprint methodology to identify areas for improvement and develop features for Strava.

On day 1 or "Monday", we defined key questions as "How Might We's" (HMW) on a jam board and classified our HMWs into 3 themes as shown in Exhibit 1. Based on this map, we decided on a long-term goal of increasing the number of posts. We chose existing casual users as our target segment as they represent the best opportunity for driving new forms of engagement and achieving our long-term goal. We also made a simple map of Strava to understand the customer journey so we could identify the right places to improve users' willingness to post.

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[1] https://www.strava.com/yis-community-2022
[2] https://www.strava.com/about

On Day 2, "Tuesday", we began the discussion by coming up with a list of solutions to our problem. We then proceeded to design sketches and followed the crazy 8 process, wherein each member drew up 8 quick sketches of our proposed solutions (Exhibit 2). We also talked about recruiting interviewees for "Friday." We concluded day 2 with a stack of potential solutions.

On Day 3, "Wednesday," it was time to converge on a solution so we could build a prototype. We displayed all our sketches from day 2 (like those in an art museum) and did a speed critique of all the solutions. We then conducted a straw poll, where each of us got three votes, to decide the solution that we would prototype (Exhibit 2). We did not need to use the supervote from our Decider as we had a clear consensus from the straw poll. We then created a storyboard of our winning solution and talked through all the details we would include in the prototype (Exhibit 3).

On Day 4, "Thursday," we brought our storyboard to life with a realistic prototype built in Figma (Exhibit 4). We insisted on making it high-fidelity so that our users would see it as a real feature. We walked through using it ourselves, and made further adjustments based on our team's feedback. However, we were mindful not to spend too much time on minute details irrelevant to the feature we were trying to test.

On Day 5, "Friday", we talked to several members of our target audience to test our prototype and receive feedback on improvements. We interviewed a total of nine potential users with the objective of understanding workout and Strava usage behavior, observing how they navigate the prototype, and collating any feedback they may have. We collected both qualitative and quantitative feedback data. Qualitative feedback focused on users impressions of the added camera feature, it's usability, and the resulting activity post in the feed. Quantitative feedback focused on ratings of likelihood across three behaviors: 1. Likelihood of using the camera feature during their activity tracking, 2. Likelihood of increasing posts to their feed if using the camera feature, and 3. Likelihood of increasing kudos to other users if their posts included more photos and videos.

Included here is a link to individual interview notes and recorded sessions:
Strava UX Interview Notes & Videos

Analysis:

We began our sprint with the objective of boosting the volume of posts on Strava. Upon conducting secondary research into the platform's user base, we identified a significant gap between the total number of users and the frequency of weekly posts being published. Based on this finding, we formulated a hypothesis that the impersonal quality of the posts could be a key factor limiting engagement. We thought about what engages users on other social platforms: images and video. We also noticed that 52% of all activities posted were trail activities, which presents a great opportunity to enhance posts with photos and videos. Thus, we devised a solution that empowers users to capture and incorporate visual content, such as

photos and videos, as they engage in physical activity, thereby elevating the quality and personalization of their posts. We also hypothesized that even if a user did not use the feature, it would still add value to their experience to view other user's media in their feed. Our targeted audience for this initiative comprised existing casual users, who we defined as someone using a free version of Strava and who may be more focused on self-motivation and consistency as opposed to statistics and competing. We identified this segment as our prime target for our objective of enhancing experience and boosting posts.

In addition, we also analyzed Strava to understand its business model, user demographics, and compare features offered in the free versus premium versions.

1) Business model analysis

Strava surpassed 50 million users in February 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. The shutting down of gyms triggered many people to download the app to help track their fitness, resulting in a growth from 1 million to 2 million additional users per month.

Strava makes most of its money through the following:

a) **Subscription fees:** Strava charges users $7.99 per month or $59.99 per year, for which users can avail access to premium features like monthly statistics for all activities and comparing them with previous periods, access to exclusive deals from brands and retailers, setting customized goals and access to group challenges. Strava is among the few social networks able to monetize users via subscriptions and not be dependent on ad revenue.
b) **Sponsored events:** Strava partners with other companies (eg: Oakley, Lululemon, Reebok, etc) to create events and set challenges for users to participate and win prizes. These partners pay Strava in order to organize that event and promote it through Strava.
c) **Selling Aggregated Data:** Strava has provided and licensed data to urban planners, municipalities etc which can be used for planning purposes (eg: where to build lanes for biking, running etc).

2) Product analysis

We explored the differences between the free and premium versions to understand what features to focus on to affect the most amount of users. A full list of side-by-side features can be seen in Exhibit 5.

Key Free Features:

- Activity recording
- Social Network
- Beacons on phone

Key Premium Features:

- Access to information about the nature of the route surface.
- Searching for locations (actual addresses) to add waypoints to routes. In the free version, users could only create waypoints using postcodes.

- Automated route builders for users to set their own starting and ending points (based on activity, distance, elevation etc).
- User access to training journals and compare their monthly activities to previous months.
- Recording time between start and finish on predefined segments (routes between two points) and comparing it to other Strava athletes.
- Customizing goals based on segments, power, distance, duration, etc.
- Warnings when activities may become too intense, which can avoid overexertion and injury.

3) Customer segmentation

As of December 2022, about 64.5% of Strava users were male and and 35.5% were female. The largest age group of Strava users were in the 25-34 year old bracket and 52% of the 7+ billion activities recorded were trail-based activities.

We defined casual users as those who may be less focused on activity stats and more focused on overall fitness motivation, and are using the free version of the app. We decided to target the existing casual user group to increase user engagement and number of posts.

The business objective of “Strava Moments” is to transform users who engage with the platform in its free version into premium subscribers. By incorporating a novel attribute, namely the ability to include pictures and videos, we have elevated the overall visual aesthetics of the posts. Such an enhancement is likely to facilitate increased user engagement, consequently fostering brand loyalty, and ultimately, a higher volume of premium subscriptions.

Prototype:

The feature being prototyped is an in-app camera added to the activity tracking screen. We titled our feature “Strava Moments” to reflect the memorable moments captured while using Strava to record an activity. The prototype was built in Figma and can be explored in Exhibit 4 and at the ***link here***. Screen captures from the Strava app were used to mimic the current design and journey.

The focus of the feature prototype begins once the user is recording their activity. We added a camera button to the activity recording page, where a user can capture a picture or video with either the front or rear facing camera. The prototype simulates taking photos, but we did not build out simulating video - rather we explained to users to imagine this would also be a capability. Photos taken automatically become geo-tagged to the point on their route where they were captured, which users can see through the map view, also available while still tracking their activity. When the user is ready to end their activity, they navigate to the current Strava screen to enter details, wherein we include the ability to select the photos (and imagined videos) taken in-app. The selected photos as well as the activity route with pinned image thumbnails become part of the user’s post to their feed. The final post will not only include a carousel of the activity map and the pictures, but the pictures will also be pinned on the map to show exactly where the “moment” was captured.

Sprint Insights:

We gained much of our sprint insights from the user feedback received from our testers. First, we observed the general usability of the feature. Almost all of the testers were able to easily navigate the feature, capture “Strava Moments”, and post without any issue. Feedback was overall positive with minor tweaks of usability.

Second, we asked them 3 questions to assess the potential adaptability and impact of this feature on Strava activity:

- On a scale of 1 to 4, how likely are you to use this feature in your workout?
- On a scale of 1 to 4, how likely are you to post more often if you could use a feature like this?
- On a scale of 1 to 4, how likely are you to engage with other user’s posts if they included more images and video?

We used a scale of 1-4 to ensure the tester would not be tempted to choose the middle option.

The results of these interviews were overall quite positive. Two thirds of testers were likely to adopt this feature, especially if they were recording activities that encouraged exploration (e.g. hiking or running in a new neighborhood). Those who were unlikely were generally runners who only exercised on the same route or those who generally did not enjoy posting on social media at all. The second question indicated that testers were generally likely to post more, but that the behavior change might require social influencing. Most importantly, all of the testers agreed that the addition of media would encourage increased engagement between users. This data is encouraging because it shows that we are targeting the angle for increased engagement. As more users begin to enjoy the benefits of feed enhancement, they may be more likely to use the feature.

Some risks considerations to take into account would include (i) Safety concerns of using the device for capturing images while in motion (during biking/running) and (ii) there is already an option to add pictures from your gallery to a post.

Given the positive feedback, we believe our development of “Strava Moments” was **a flawed success** with **opportunities for improvement** as:
– Introduction of this feature would encourage increased engagement between users (~90% of the testers) and increased posting from users (~60% of the testers)
– While runners who exercise on the same route or those not active on social media are unlikely to use this feature (~40% of the testers)

Measuring Success/Next steps:

Coming out of the sprint, our team is motivated by the positive feedback from our testers. However, improvement will require continued iteration. As a next step, we plan to prioritize the “Adoption” and “Task Success” of the HEART framework (Exhibit 9).

When focusing on task success, we are looking to implement features that would minimize the number of user errors while using the feature. One example would be enabling auto selection of the photos captured. Many testers did not realize that their photos weren’t selected when posting their activity. Another suggestion would be to add additional ways to capture photos with sweaty hands (e.g. using the volume button).

When focusing on adoption, we are looking to implement features that would impact the percentage of users who try “Strava Moments” at least once. One would be adding the ability to cross-post on social media. This is critical to feature adoption as more users will be inclined to use this feature if the moments are easily shareable. This could also advertise the feature on other platforms. Second would be to enhance the linking of “moments” between users. Adding photo geolocation to maps should already make the maps more engaging, but having the ability to have that feature drive connectivity between users who have experienced similar moments would increase engagement even more and encourage usage of features.

Reflections on How You’d Improve Your Next Sprint:

Below are our reflections from which we consider will make the process of sprinting more effective and efficient:

- **Dividing teammates into specialized roles**: Specializing in particular areas can help team members learn the skills and perspectives in their respective domains, leading to more efficient work processes. Since we didn’t assign roles, we ended up spending more time looking at things in similar ways rather than having someone make the executive decision.
- **Avoid introducing bias in user interviews**: During interviews, we need to remain neutral and avoid giving any indication of our personal involvement in the design process or show excitement about the feature we just developed. It's also important to ask open-ended questions and avoid leading questions that may influence the user's responses.
- **Improving the feedback loop**: Since we did not assign roles within the team, facilitating inclusion of feedback from everyone could have been better. Although every teammate contributed strongly on different parts of the process, additional perspectives on all key items could have led to even better outcomes.
- **Leaving buffer time**: It's always a good idea to account for unexpected delays and issues that may arise during a sprint. Having some buffer time ensures that we have enough time to think and discuss whether the potential features we’re thinking might or might not work, rather than rushing to the most seemingly or obviously workable solution.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1: How Might We (HMW) Questions

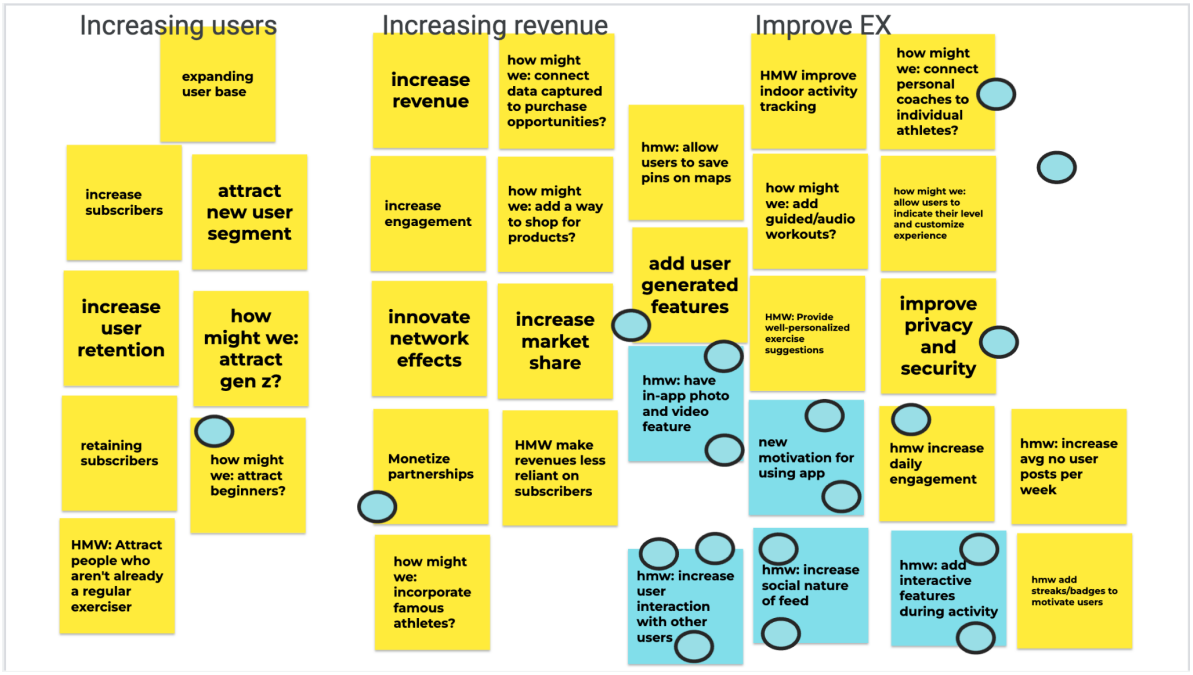


Exhibit 2: Crazy 8s and heatmap

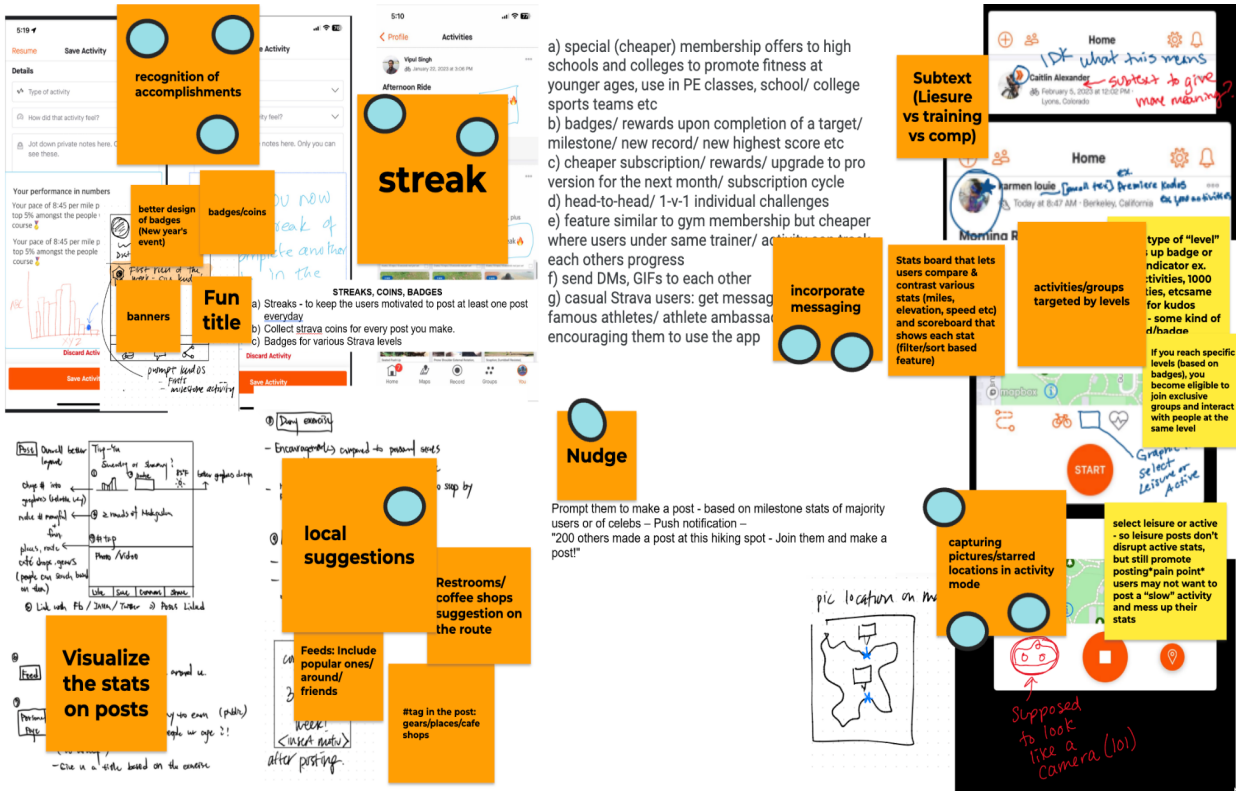


Exhibit 3: Storyboard

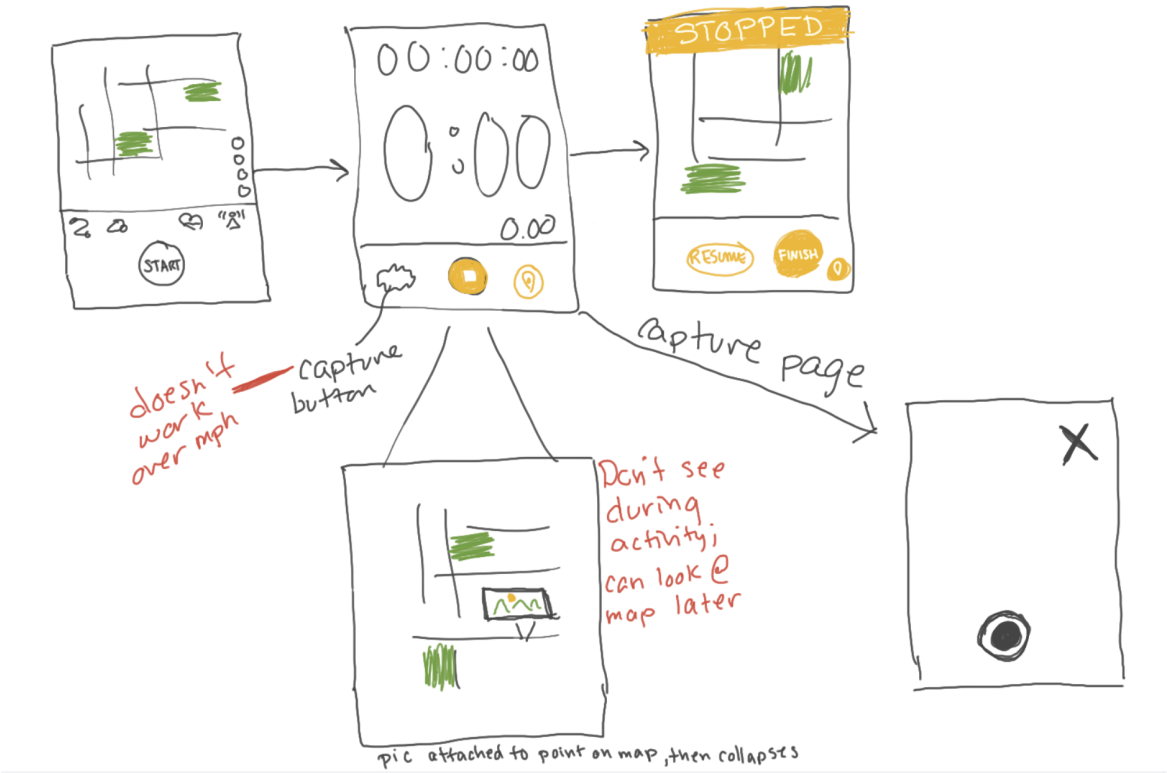


Exhibit 4: Prototype

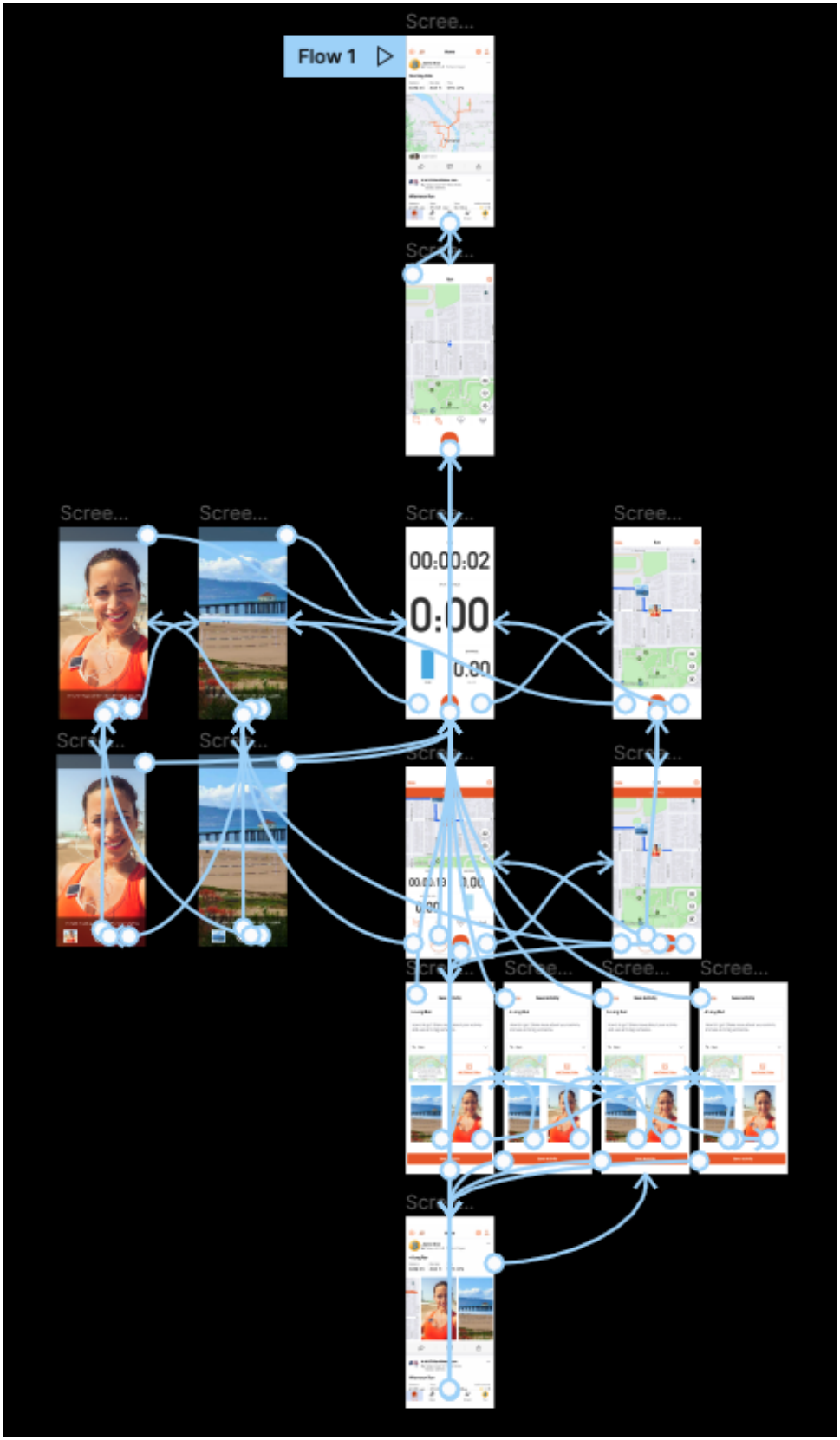
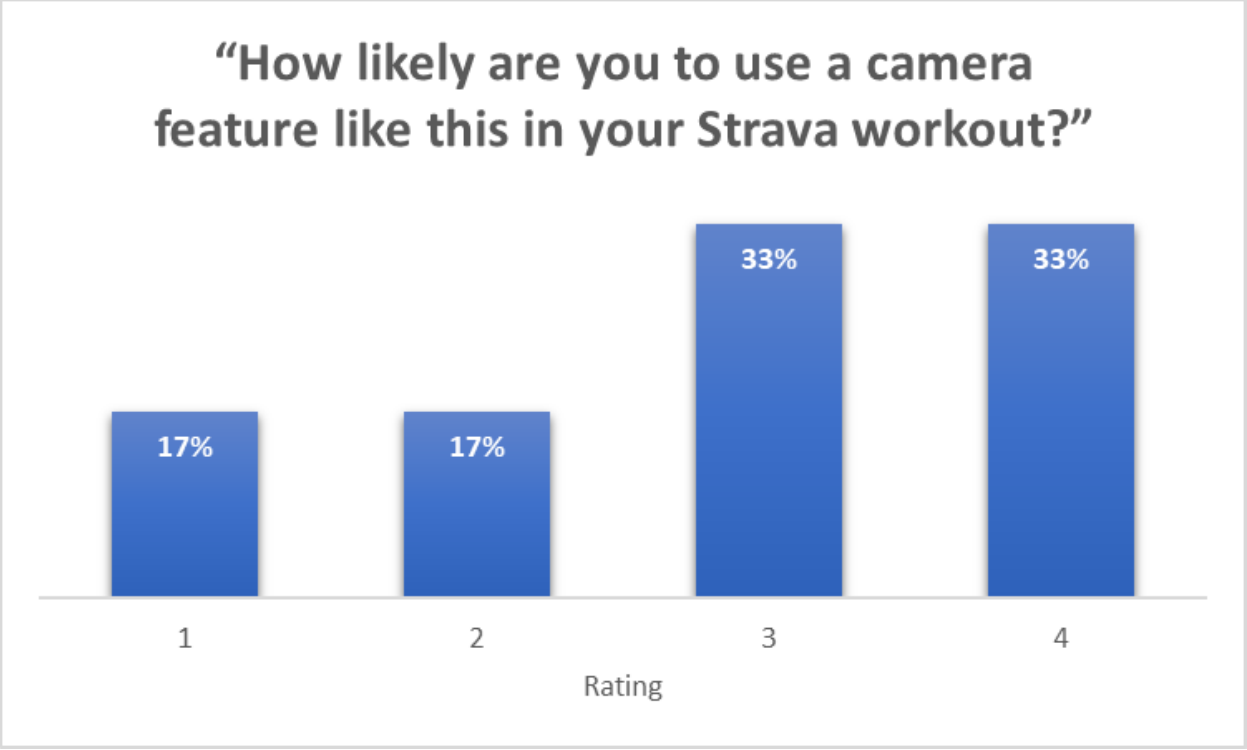


Exhibit 5: Strava feature list

Features	Free	Subscription
Activity Recording	✓	✓
Device Support	✓	✓
Social Network	✓	✓
Beacon on Phones	✓	✓
Beacon on Devices		✓
Route Planning		✓
Segment Competition		✓
Training Dashboard		✓
HR & Power Analysis		✓
Advanced Metrics		✓
Goal Setting		✓
Training Log		✓
Compare Efforts		✓
Personal Heatmaps		✓
Partner Perks		✓

Exhibit 6:



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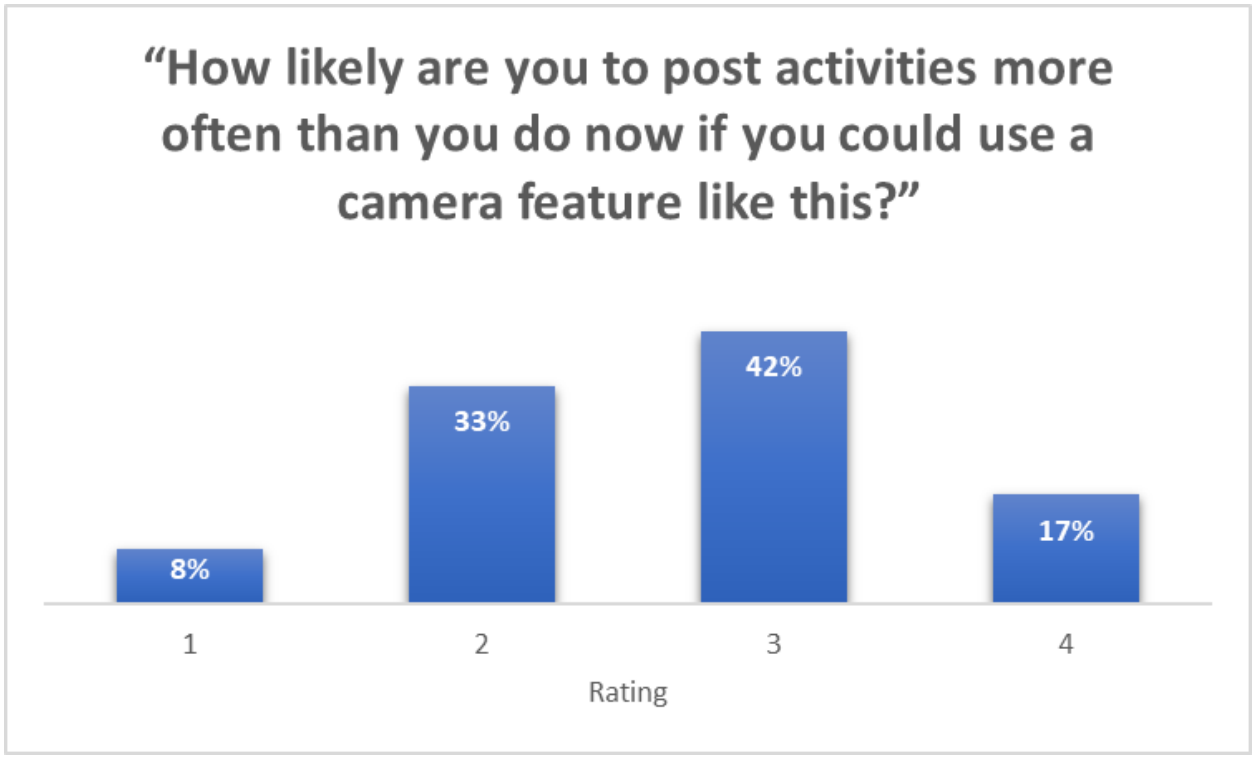

Exhibit 8:

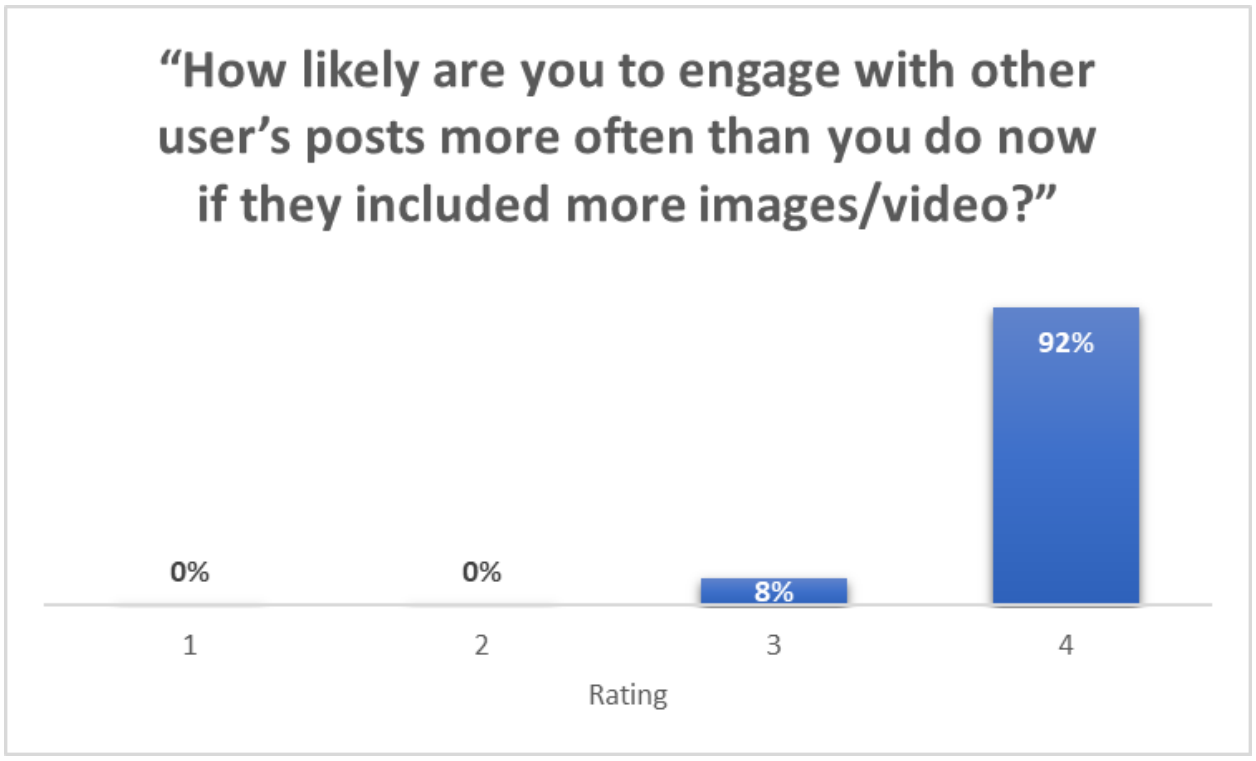

Exhibit 9: HEART Framework

	Goals	**Signal**	**Metrics**
Happiness	Users enjoy using “Strava Moments”	App store reviews and ratings	Average app rating mentioning “Strava Moments”
Engagement	Users are interacting more with users posting with “Strava Moments”	Number of kudos or comments per post with “Strava Moments”	% of of posts with photos, % increase in kudos given
Adoption	Utilizing “Strava Moments” in posts	Number of posts with “Strava Moments”	% of users who try “Strava Moments” at least once
Retention	Frequency of posts with “Strava Moments”	Repeated usage	% of weekly users vs total strava users, % increase of “Strava Moments” posts per user
Task Success	Users can easily post “Strava Moments”	Utilization of the camera feature	% of users who post ”Strava Moments” upload photos, # of errors encountered while using the feature