

# Better Together

## An online platform to improve the cooperation between different stakeholders

*Laura van der Werf | Industrial Design Engineering | University of Twente | Netherlands*

In the past few years, sustainability has become an increasingly important topic, both in industry and legislation, as well as in general public opinion. This involves multifaceted and complex aspects, which are managed by design and development teams. In these teams, different stakeholders work together in a multidisciplinary way.

To secure this for future processes, Packalicious, a learning community for students and teachers, has come up with an idea to educate the 'designers of the future'. This will be done by improving the cooperation between all the stakeholder working on a project. To let these stakeholders work together, communication is very important. This can be done in various ways, for example, through an online platform.

That is why the aim of this Bachelor Assignment is to develop an online platform that ensures that these stakeholders from different disciplines can not only make contact with each other but also work together on projects within the same platform.

The following research question is formulated for this project: 'How can we improve the cooperation between different stakeholder in a project by using a platform?'

To answer this research question, first a research into existing applications and platforms is done. Nowadays, many people use online platforms, but not all of these platforms want to achieve the same thing for their users. A real categorization of these platforms did not exist yet. That is why, within this Bachelor Assignment, four categories were made for the different platforms: a discussion platform, a knowledge platform, a social platform, and a business platform. Looking at the goals of these different platforms, the choice is made to only focus on the social, discussion and knowledge platform for the new platform that would be designed.

After that, a stakeholder analysis had been done. Packalicious has been working on this project for a longer time and has therefore already mapped out the various stakeholders for this. Packalicious also already had some online questionnaires with four of these stakeholders. The results of this questionnaire have been reviewed to find the wishes and possible problems according to these stakeholders.

Then the design of the platform, Better Together, started. Using the results of the research, it was found that the platform should have a function to ask questions which can be answered by all users, but there should also be a possibility to go a bit deeper and use the platform to actually work together with other users on projects. With this information, five main functions of the platform are found: signing in/up, posting a message, your account, home screen, and community.

Also, it is found that the use of the platform could be divided into three layers of use: skin-deep use (only using the basics of the platform), general use (step deeper, also having contact with other users), and in-depth use (starting to work together with other users of the platform, by using the community function).

Going back to the research question: 'How can we improve the cooperation between different stakeholder in a project by using a platform?' can be answered by looking at the Better Together platform. Better Together is a combination of a social, discussion and knowledge platform, which will create the different layers of use within the platform.

All stakeholders can use this platform and begin with the basic use of the platform, ask questions and respond to other people's questions. Also, they can go a layer deeper, getting in contact with other users of the platform. The last and deepest layer focuses on the cooperation between all of these stakeholders within the community function of the platform. People can work together on a project by using this platform.

It can thus be stated, that within this newly designed platform, it is possible to improve the cooperation between different stakeholders.