

GENERATION SQUEEZE

IDENTIFYING MEMBER PRIORITIES

WHO

Generation Squeeze, a Canada-wide group advocating for the interests of Millennials

GOALS

Identify an optimal package of member benefits, among 36 potential initiatives

HOW

Shortlisting initiatives based on the overlap between member approval and a given 'budget' of staff-time

OUTCOME

An actionable shortlist containing an optimal set of benefits and advocacy initiatives

Following its mandate to advocate for the interests of millennials, GenSqueeze needed to shortlist between 36 initiatives popular among its members. The organization needed a platform that would allow not only to vote on what was important to them, but also to add comments and build on other people's thoughts. The process needed to be transparent and guarantee that constituents felt truly heard.

BACKGROUND

Generation Squeeze is a Canadian advocacy organization supported by the Vancity Community Foundation, with a mandate to advance the interests of Millennials.

The Millennial generation is on a tight budget: housing prices have skyrocketed, career opportunities are increasingly competitive, healthy food is hard to find. In pursuit of its mandate, GenSqueeze needed to distill and then shortlist from among 36 initiatives popular amongst its constituents. These included such items as life insurance, car shares, child care, and health assistance.

PROCESS

Following several focus groups where initial possibilities were identified, GenSqueeze used Ethelo to extend the conversation to its 25,000 members. During a two-week period, the platform was open to public voting, allowing more than 400 participants to have their say and propose additional suggestions. In this case, the response rate to invitations was 30%.

RESULTS

With limited staff and resources, GenSqueeze needed to move beyond “nice-to-haves” to pragmatic offerings with maximum member impact. For this purpose, each of the 36 potential initiatives was assigned a certain amount of “effort units” based on the amount of human and capital resources required to bring it into action. GenSqueeze staff determined that they had a maximum organizational capacity of 30 “effort units” to expend on realizing any package of initiatives.

Ethelo’s algorithm was deployed to find the overlap between what members wanted, how much they wanted it, and what was actually feasible given GenSqueeze’s limited staff-time and budget. Once each option was assigned a level of staff effort, Ethelo applied the overarching “effort unit” constraint to shortlist the billions of theoretically possible benefit packages down to 126,000 practically actionable packages. These packages Ethelo then ordered from highest to lowest member popularity.

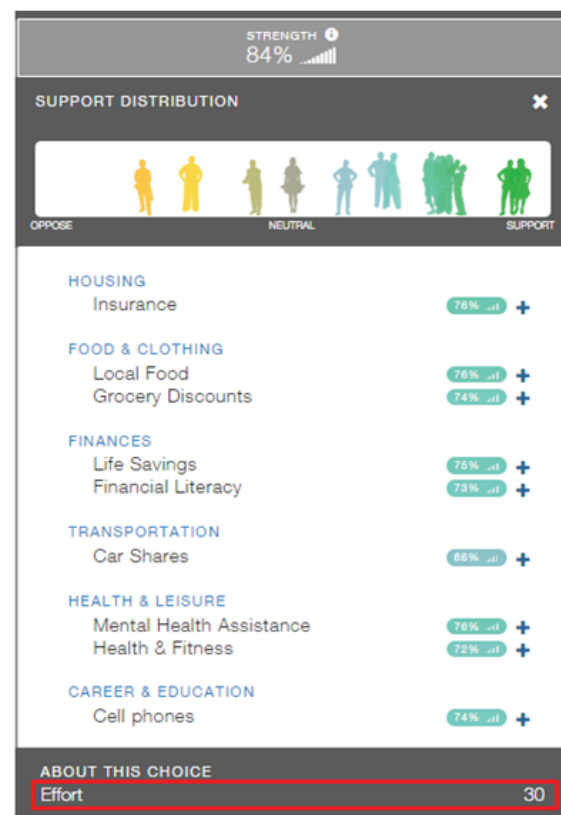


Figure 1. Results panel, shortlisting a feasible combination of the most popular initiatives. The red box highlights that sum of “effort units” associated with this scenario.

CLIENT PERCEPTION

ERIN ROBERTSON FROM GENSQUEEZE DESCRIBES HER EXPERIENCE WITH ETHELO BY ANSWERING THREE QUESTIONS:

What concrete, distinctive features did you appreciate about Ethelo – and why?

“ Our group, Generation Squeeze, is a national lobby group for folks in their 40s and younger, and we operate with very few resources. This means it's difficult for us to find the opportunities to dialogue about the important issues facing our constituents. Ethelo's platform allowed our folks to not only vote on what was important to them, but also to add comments and build on other people's thoughts. The transparency was appreciated and our constituents really felt heard. ”

What can be improved?

“ Overall my experience was very pleasant and I found the tool relatively easy to use, once I got a hang of it (with thanks to the good folks at Ethelo). I wish there was a way to share the demographic info in aggregate on the survey, so again we can be transparent and show our members who we are. It would also have been good to cut the data by demographics, so we could look at what package would work for our largest demographic cohort ”

*Note: both of these features were subsequently incorporated into Ethelo. ”

How specifically has the GenSqueeze consultation benefited from using Ethelo?

“ Ethelo allowed to us to understand what the priorities were for our constituents, which is useful given the above comment about resource constraints! ”