Singapore
Productivity
Centre

Transform. Innovate. Future-Ready.

Singapore Productivity Centre **Business Improvement Series**

DESIGN THINKING FOR IMPROVED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

FarEastFlora.com

About

For 55 years, Far East Flora has distinguished itself as the largest homegrown nursery, a brand name synonymous with quality horticulture and personalised customer service. The company's burgeoning operations include wholesale services, five retail outlets in Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, an online shop, interior plant-scaping services and boutique landscape concepts, as well as food & beverage businesses.

To bring convenience to its customers, FarEastFlora.com (FEF. com) was established in 1999 as an e-commerce company, with retail iterations at Thomson Road and City Square Mall. Drawing synergies from the parent company's subsidiaries, notably in the robust supply chain for floral and plant material, FEF.com has since anchored itself as a local e-commerce pioneer and the authority on all things floral, offering a wide range of over 1,000 all-occasion flower bouquets, floral arrangements, plants, gifts and hampers for both local and overseas customers.

FarEastFlora.com®
Make Someone Smile Today

Interview

With Mr Ryan Chioh,
Managing Director FarEastFlora.com Pte Ltd

1. What challenges did the team faced that sparked your desire to embark on this project?
One of the company's key focus was on enhancing the online experience, to ensure that its online user experience and customer service remains cutting edge and intuitive. The team was unable to gain visibility into the customer's online journey, and measure satisfaction levels thus drove the desire to embark on this project. The team saw the need to constantly innovate and to maintain its position as the leading floral provider.

2. How have you and the team benefited from the tools and methodology learnt in this project?
The team behind FEF.com have gained invaluable skills to consistently improve the customer online journey using UI and UX evaluation methodologies. A constant review process is then supported with a design thinking framework which allow actionable planning for longer-term operation and business growth. There have been many improvements in the UI design of the website which eased the whole customer online journey and increased online sales.

3. What was the greatest impact for FarEastFlora.com after the project?
The best practices learnt has been incorporated in the organisation workplan. Organisation structure is now well-entrenched; employees are well-trained and are more aware of the importance of design thinking. The organisation now takes initiative for continuous improvements, and have cultivated a keen eye for details. The management are also well-aware that they must continue to give much emphasis to sustain value excellence in the years ahead.

4. Any advice or suggestions for fellow retailers who wish to embark on similar projects?
The retail space is always evolving with new trends, ever-changing communication platform and fast-moving technological upgrades. It is a challenge for all businesses to be ahead of the industry, hence it is essential for the companies to inculcate best practices to stabilize the organization foundation and build on for greater improvement. Embarking on such projects, companies will be able to gain clearer insights with the methodology in place, find new opportunities or improvements to the business. With the right mindset of continuous improvement, committed leadership and support from the team are key to the success of projects.
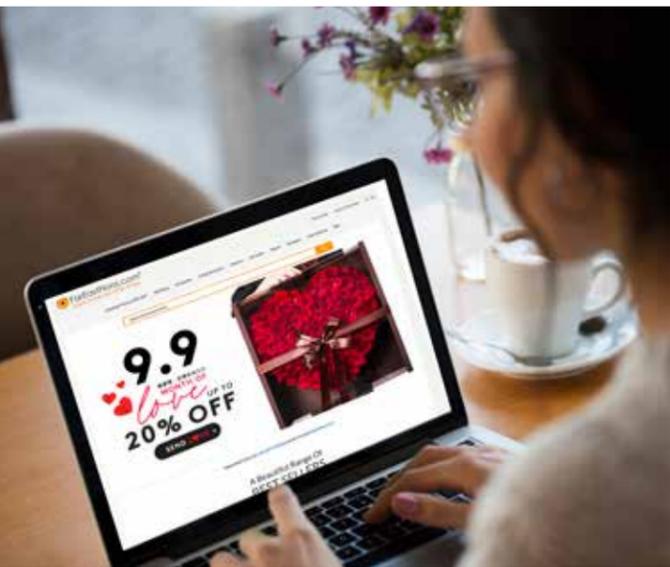
Project overview

In today's demanding business environment, it is increasingly important for companies to innovate and keep pace with changing consumer preferences. There are numerous examples of companies that have failed to innovate and meet the needs of their customers. Toys 'R' Us failed to reinvent itself and BlackBerry failed to respond to consumer demand for easy-to-use touchscreen displays, leading to its demise. As the pandemic leads to permanent changes in sectors and continues to cloud the economic outlook, SMEs need to be creative and innovative, from expanding distribution channels to developing new products, to emerge stronger. It is crucial for SMEs to invest in innovation for the long term.

With the influx of online competitors and increasingly savvy customers, FEF.com's key focus for 2019 is to ensure an intuitive and robust online user experience and customer service. Its biggest challenge is in gaining visibility into the customer's online journey and measuring satisfaction levels accordingly. With a grasp on crucial elements such as online customer personas and digital touchpoints, FEF.com can be better positioned as an e-commerce leader amongst its contemporaries.

Through this project, FEF.com and the Singapore Productivity Centre (SGPC) Team aim to:

1	Elevate FEF.com's value through design thinking methodology to better understand end users' needs, identify problems and test prototype solutions;
2	Gain knowledge through consultancy expertise to use design thinking methodology and tools such as customer persona and customer journey mapping, heuristic evaluation and user experience testing for future challenges;
3	Improve FEF.com's online customer experience by identifying gaps to integrate people's needs, technology capabilities and business success requirements - and construct ideas that are both emotionally meaningful and functional;
4	Allow FEF.com to remain competitive.
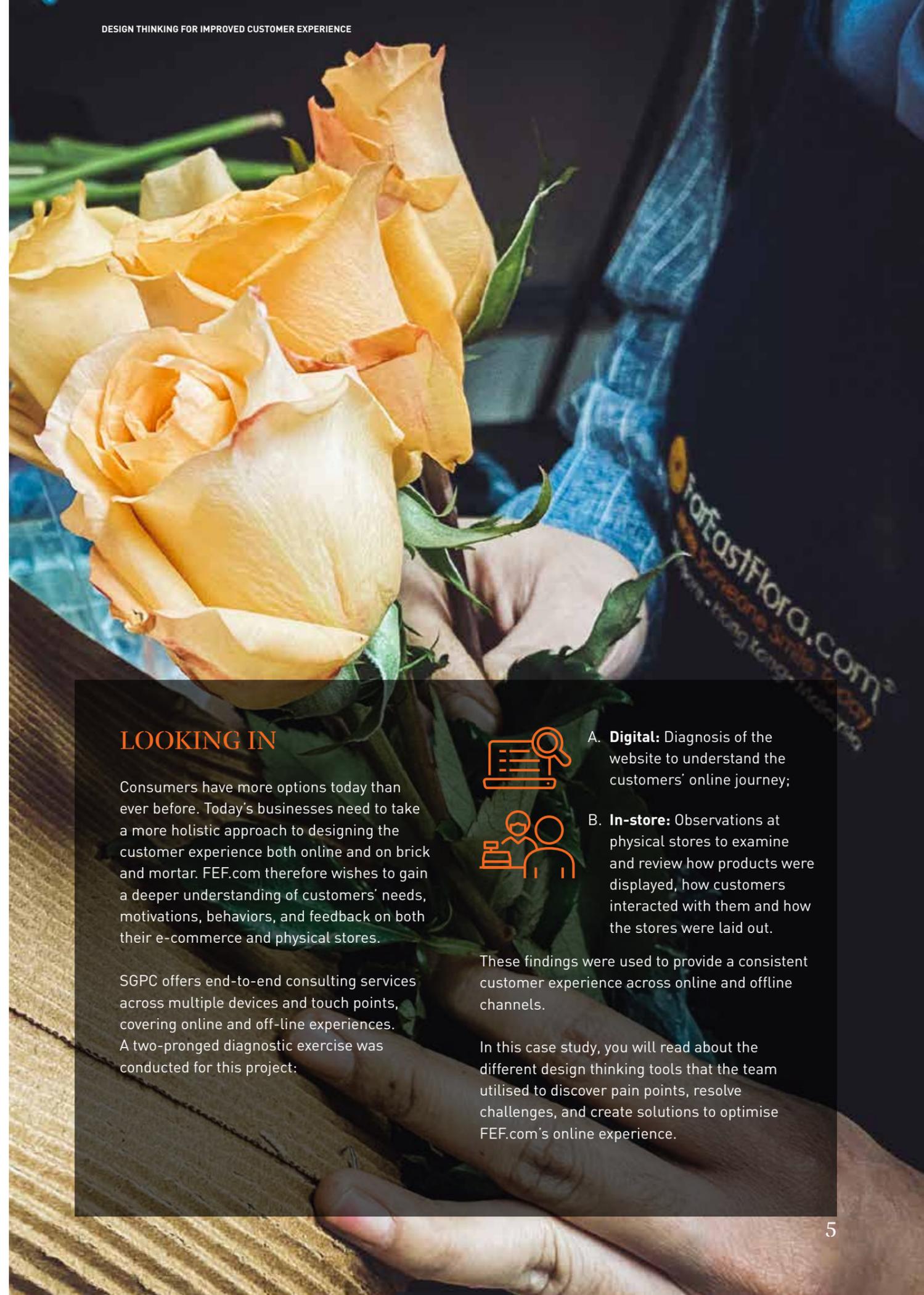
LOOKING IN

Consumers have more options today than ever before. Today's businesses need to take a more holistic approach to designing the customer experience both online and on brick and mortar. FEF.com therefore wishes to gain a deeper understanding of customers' needs, motivations, behaviors, and feedback on both their e-commerce and physical stores.

SGPC offers end-to-end consulting services across multiple devices and touch points, covering online and off-line experiences. A two-pronged diagnostic exercise was conducted for this project:

A. **Digital:** Diagnosis of the website to understand the customers' online journey;

B. **In-store:** Observations at physical stores to examine and review how products were displayed, how customers interacted with them and how the stores were laid out.

These findings were used to provide a consistent customer experience across online and offline channels.

In this case study, you will read about the different design thinking tools that the team utilised to discover pain points, resolve challenges, and create solutions to optimise FEF.com's online experience.

Customer profiling

Using SGPC's service design methodology, FEF.com kickstarted their research by identifying target customer profiles. This helps to create portraits of customers based on factual information that which will help FEF.com visualize and make informed service design decisions.

Customers were also further segmented based on different variables, namely demographic, socio-economic and behavioural. The intent is to help understand the different types of customers and tailor services to their needs, placing customers at the heart of experience.

The information is then taken into consideration when creating the different customer personas for charting of the customer journey map after they test both the old and improved website interfaces.

Four Customer Profiles

New Customer
Not used/purchased from FEF.com before

Lapsed Customer
Not used FEF.com in 6 months and purchased from another website

Loyal Customer
Purchased from FEF.com in the last 3 months and at least 3 times in the last year

Corporate Customer
Purchased from FEF.com in the last 3 months or purchased at least 6 products in the last year

The customer journey map of the Corporate Customer and Loyal Customer were charted to identify customers' goals, touchpoints and opportunities to improve the website interface. An example of the Corporate Customer's customer journey map is shown on the next page. An example of the Corporate Customer's customer journey map is shown on the next page.

CORPORATE CUSTOMER
EFFICIENT EMILY

SCENARIO
Efficient Emily was tasked by her management to source for gifts for their clients.

IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE WEBSITE INTERFACE

	OPPORTUNITY 1	OPPORTUNITY 2	OPPORTUNITY 3	OPPORTUNITY 4
ACTIONS	**SEARCH**	**CUSTOMISE ORDERS**	**PAYMENT**	**CONFIRMATION & TRACKING**
CUSTOMER'S GOALS	Shortlist websites and find a company with wide varity of options and prompt delivery	Request to switch to a particular flower type Include gift message in Chinese	Bill the company directly instead of paying with personal card	Orders should arrive safely and promptly without tracking
TOUCHPOINTS	• Search Engines • Newsletters • Ratings and reviews	• Website • Customer service • Emails	• Website • Customer service • Payment platforms	• Website • Emails
OPPORTUNITIES	Consider providing value-added services for the corporate clients such as event reminders, database management, and bespoke gifting workflows	Develop a standard workflow for customisation to facilitate request submission and completion	Provide option to bill ordering company directly through corporate account	Keep order tracking system updated

Customer interviews

Four in-depth interviews were conducted with pre-selected customers and two internal stakeholders to identify the pain points in the website navigation, product offerings and the delivery process. To validate the interview feedback, an observation study was also conducted thereafter to assess the product displays, staff interactions with customers and the spatial layout of the physical stores.

KEY FINDINGS:

i. Customers who have recommended FEF.com to others felt it opportune to be rewarded for their frequent purchases and referrals;

ii. For more congruence in style and branding, the website could replicate the industrial and artisanal feel that the physical stores are accentuated with.

Heuristic evaluation of original site design*

The customers' journey was first used to pinpoint the key screens to focus on: Home Screen, Browsing Screen, Product Screen, Shopping Cart Screen and Checkout Screen. These screens were then subjected to heuristic evaluation, using evaluators from the four customer types and the scores averaged. The ideal score is above 4 with a green indicator.

*What is heuristic evaluation?

Heuristic evaluation is a usability inspection method for computer software to identify usability problems in the user interface (UI) design. Evaluators are used to examine the interface and judge its compliance with 10 usability principles (the "heuristics"). Please refer to Annex A for more information on the principles.

QUANTITATIVE DATA:

PREVIOUS UI DESIGN

AVERAGE SCORE:
3.4/5

3.2
Match between system and the real world

3.7
Error prevention

4.0
Flexibility and efficiency of use

SCORE: 3 - <4
Notable degree of cognitive load for user but task can generally be accomplished with some effort

SCORE: 4 - 5
Accomplished easily by the user due to low cognitive load

Other indicators tracked:
- Visibility of system status
- User control and freedom
- Consistency and standards
- Recognition rather than recall
- Aesthetic and minimalist design
- Help users recognise, diagnose and recover from errors
- Help and documentation

Some Recommendations

After evaluation, a list of recommendations for website implementation were developed, illustrated by the two examples below:
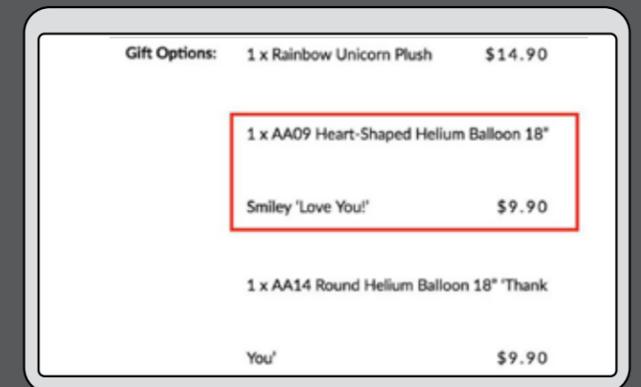
SHORT-TERM

Shopping Cart Screen

Consistency and Standard:
Apply a consistent and concise visual style to display the items and prices.

Text display truncated to the next row made it difficult to review the shopping cart efficiently.

Gift Options:	1 x Rainbow Unicorn Plush	$14.90
	1 x AA09 Heart-Shaped Helium Balloon 18"	
	Smiley 'Love You!'	$9.90
	1 x AA14 Round Helium Balloon 18" 'Thank	
	You'	$9.90

LONG-TERM

Checkout Screen

Better visual display:
Apply a systematic and chronological display so users will intuitively understand the next steps and necessary actions required.
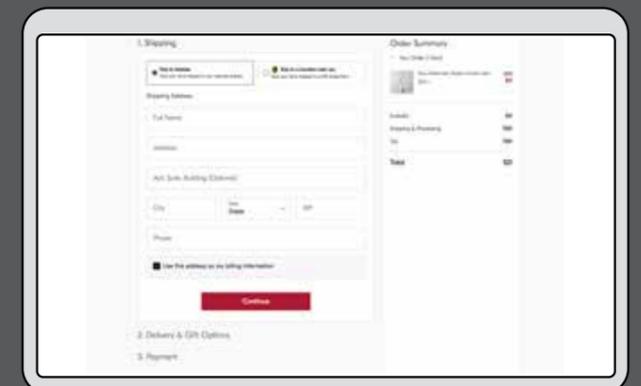
User experience testing

A user experience (UX) testing was conducted with four different customer profile types to understand user interaction. It focused on three key areas: navigation, customisation of orders and checkout. Employing a 5-point rating scale, the following data was analysed:

1. **Ease of Completing Tasks**
2. **Time Taken to Complete Tasks**
3. **Error Rate**
4. **Task Success Rate**

Results of the analysis yielded the following recommendations for FEF.com:

Recommendations:

Task: Customising gift

- Allow users to remove a gift from the bouquet.
- If the chatbot is taking too long to respond, prompt users to leave their contact information and ensure a customer service officer returns their messages.

Task: Check out products

- After selecting 'Checkout with multiple addresses', users should be able to view their selected products and the corresponding addresses.
- 'Check out with multiple addresses' should be renamed to 'Check out' to avoid confusion.

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Other Recommendations:

- Partner with larger e-commerce sites such as Lazada or Shopee.
- Expand social media presence to reach and engage more customers.
- Offer a wider variety of products for unique and exotic leaves and flowers to appeal to a wider audience.

Improvements:

With the data and recommendations considered, FEF.com was revamped to address the flaws and pain points. Changes were applied to the five key screens. Example:

SHORT-TERM

Consistency and Standards:
Apply consistent and concise visual style to differentiate items and prices so users can understand the information easily.

Action Plan:
Redesign the shopping cart to present the items and information in a systematic and visually consistent layout.

New Design
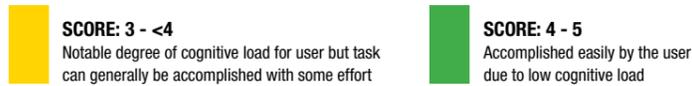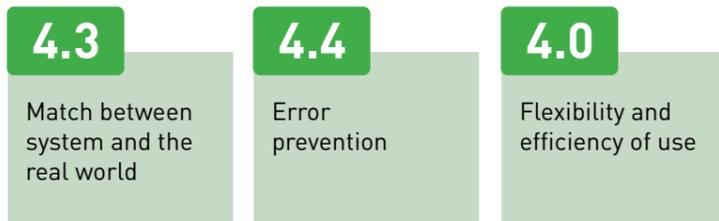

Changes Implemented:
Shopping Cart Screen

Corresponding images of add-on items/gift options are now displayed for easier reference.

A border with description and pricing is added to highlight the 'Add-ons'.

A grey separation line between products is included to differentiate product bundles.

Heuristic evaluation and UX testing for new UI design

With an enhanced website that featured a more intuitive design and easily executed online shopping tasks, reports now show that users experience greater satisfaction.

QUANTITATIVE DATA:

NEW UI DESIGN

AVERAGE SCORE:
4.2/5

4.3
Match between system and the real world

4.4
Error prevention

4.0
Flexibility and efficiency of use

SCORE: 3 - <4
Notable degree of cognitive load for user but task can generally be accomplished with some effort

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Impact of project

Using the service design methodology, the project had yielded the following outcome.

Data was extracted from Google Analytics to track the online website visitorship and user patterns results after implementation. The new website interface and its improved navigation provided users with a seamless online shopping journey. The better shopping experience reduced the bounce rate (purchase abandonment).

With the new UI design, FEF.com

received **30%** more users,

acquired **27%** more new unique users

and achieved **20%** more conversion from browsing to transaction

Conclusion

To ensure the continuity and confidence-in-best-practices-implementation, the FEF.com team underwent a "train-the-trainer" concept workshop once the website enhancement project was completed. The workshop focused on Design Thinking basic principles and application tools which FEF could apply for their internal projects. Working with SGPC's consultant, the team distilled information and developed solutions together. This process helped FEF gain invaluable skills in UI and UX evaluation methodologies that enabled them to identify key qualities for a user-centric website. With the incorporation of these best practices, FEF is primed to continuously optimise their physical business and enhance their e-commerce presence.

With SGPC's expertise, the team gained invaluable skills in UI and UX evaluation methodologies that enabled them to identify key qualities for a user-centric website.

ANNEX A

USABILITY PRINCIPLES

Visibility of system status

Users should always be informed of system operations with easy to understand and highly visible status displayed on the screen within a reasonable amount of time.

Match between system and the real world

Designers should endeavour to mirror the language and concepts users would find in the real world based on who their target users are.

User control and freedom

Offer users a digital space where backward steps are possible, including undoing and redoing previous actions.

Consistency and standards

Designers should ensure that both the graphic elements and terminology are maintained across similar platforms.

Error prevention

Design systems so that potential errors are kept to a minimum.

Recognition rather than recall

Minimize cognitive load by maintaining task-relevant information within the display while users explore the interface.

Flexibility and efficiency of use

Users should be able to customize or tailor the interface to suit their needs so that frequent actions can be achieved through more convenient means.

Aesthetic and minimalist design

Keep clutter to a minimum.

Help users recognize, diagnose and recover from errors

Designers should assume users are unable to understand technical terminology.

Help and documentation

Ideally, we want users to navigate the system without having to resort to documentation. When users require help, ensure it is easily located, specific to the task at hand and worded in a way that will guide them through the necessary steps towards a solution to the issue they are facing.

How Singapore Productivity Centre (SGPC) can help

The collaboration with FarEastFlora.com exemplifies the remarkable results of expertise consultancy from SGPC in identifying and making small but smart and significant changes to improve and align the brand with the business strategy.

Companies can tap on our comprehensive range of solutions targeted at boosting productivity and building capabilities. We offer various assistance schemes that cover areas such as service design, digital transformation, workflow redesign, job redesign, automation, central kitchen implementation and shared services.

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The Singapore Productivity Centre (SGPC) is a one-stop competency and resource centre supported by Enterprise Singapore (formerly SPRING Singapore) and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Singapore Productivity Association (SGPA).

With a focus on the retail, food services and hotel sectors, SGPC's vision is to be the go-to experts for enterprise excellence, playing leading roles to guide small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in creating a roadmap for growth.

SGPC provides a comprehensive range of services and programmes including in-depth productivity consultancy, workshops, study missions, benchmarking for best practices and industry insights. Through its expertise and services, SGPC helps enterprises to be future-ready in and beyond Singapore by creating value through innovation, productivity improvement and capability building.

For more information
visit www.sgpc.sg

Enterprise Singapore is the government agency championing enterprise development. The agency works with committed companies to build capabilities, innovate and internationalise.

It also supports the growth of Singapore as a hub for global trading and startups, and builds trust in Singapore's products and services through quality and standards.

For more information
visit www.enterprisesg.gov.sg

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