

**CASE STUDY:  
DIGITAL ADVICE  
+ PRODUCT GUIDES WITH**



**VAUDE**

*The Spirit of Mountain Sports*

**o'excentos**

**from VAUDE**  
Manfred Meindl, Head of International Marketing and Digital Services

**and excentos**  
Ole Tangermann (CEO)

**2019**

# About VAUDE

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VAUDE is a leading German producer and seller of outdoor clothing and mountain sports equipment. Their position as **market leader** can be attributed to their extensive experience, continuous product development, expertise in sustainable materials and close alliance with people who are passionate about outdoors.

The majority of VAUDE's customers are **outdoor enthusiasts** and **like to be reassured when it comes to buying the best equipment**; whether that be for everyday use, sporting activities or extreme expeditions. In any case, VAUDE offers a **large product profile** with a considerable range of advisory methods to hand.

VAUDE maintains close contact with specialist retailers, in order to **deliver the best advice** about their products.

So, how can this product expertise be transferred online? How can **every shopper easily make a buying decision** with such a large product assortment to choose from?

In addition to improving product advice online, VAUDE also wanted to **find out more about their target group**. By finding out the needs of their customers, they could improve their marketing approach and in turn **increase their sales**.





- Established in 1974
- Over 1500 retailers in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Canada alone
- VAUDE sells products in more than 50 countries
- Product-Portfolio:  
Outdoor equipment like tents, backpacks, sleeping bags and much more

 **INTERSPORT**



***schuster***   
1913

**amazon.de**<sup>®</sup>

**SportScheck**

**OCHSNER  
SPORT**

**Globetrotter**   
<< NEUE HORIZONTE >>

 **BERG  
FREUNDE.DE**



FORGET PRINT MEDIA  
FOCUS ON DIGITAL SOLUTIONS



SERVICES TO SUPPORT CONSUMERS  
WITH THEIR PURCHASES

# Mission

What did VAUDE expect from excentos Guided Selling?

01

Online advice which is as good as their in-store sales assistant

02

Ability to adapt to their different target groups

03

Ability to recommend suitable accessories

04

Increase in conversion and shopping cart value, reduction in returns

# VAUDE's GOALS

Why did VAUDE choose to digitalize their sales?

“We want to offer online advice which is as good as with our experienced in-store sales assistants”

» Ann-Kathrin von Flotow, VAUDE



## Effective search & advice despite complex products.

“We have a large and complex product assortment. It is therefore important that we can offer our customers advice which our website was previously unable to provide.”

»

Manfred Meindl, VAUDE



## VAUDE stands for competence. Even online.

VAUDE aims to provide customers with a professional customer service which can respond to their needs across every sales channel.



## VAUDE is a leading brand. Even digitally.

Digital tools ensure high-quality advice across all channels.



## Effective sales tool with low maintenance.

The tool will be constructed upon data contained within your data feed and new products will also be automatically added.

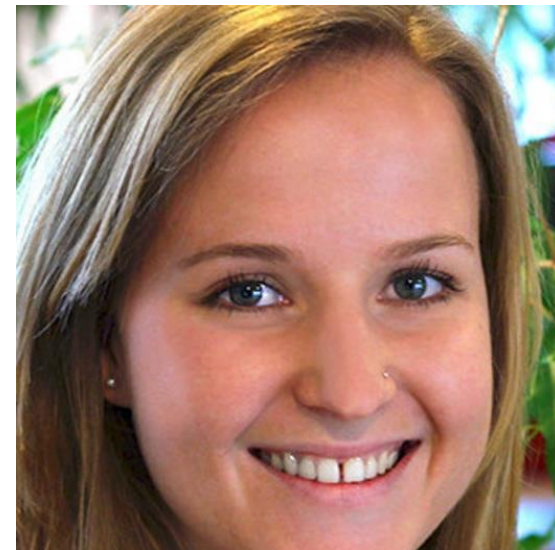
# Online product experts ensure your project is a successful one



**Manfred Meindl (VAUDE)**

**Head of International Marketing & Digital Services**

Strategy, marketing conceptualization and user experience.



**Ann-Kathrin von Flotow (VAUDE)**

**Online Marketing**

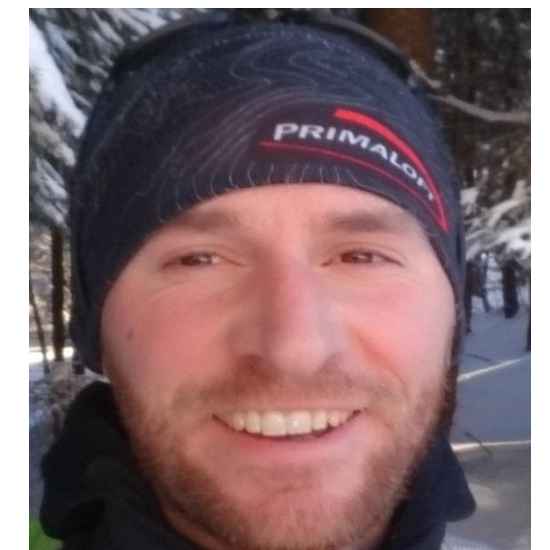
Conceptualization, integration, optimization, recommendation behavior



**Michael Smolka (excentos)**

**Project Manager**

Support, onboarding and implementation



**Frank Nilbock (VAUDE)**

**Product Manager of Tents**

Vendor expertise, tent features and dependencies

VAUDE provided excentos a workshop on the sales of outdoor products and VAUDE's product assortment.

excentos illustrated the advice process in the Guided Selling platform, optimizing the recommendation behavior so that the Product Guide could provide users with as much advice as a specialist sales rep.



“Why excentos? It was simply the perfect match! There is no way we could have developed such a complex function ourselves.”

» Manfred Meindl, VAUDE



# Procedure

The main question was whether it would be possible to transfer VAUDE's product knowledge online



## CONCEPT

The advisor concept takes into account all the topics, thoughts, questions and answers which would be involved in a realistic buying decision. A direct test in the workbench guarantees an effective concept.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the Guided Selling platform. Although the requirements of the tent advisor seem very individual at first glance, excentos software was able to configure everything 'out of the box'.

## INTEGRATION

The advisor was integrated into the VAUDE website with just one line of code. Data exports were automatically updated every evening.

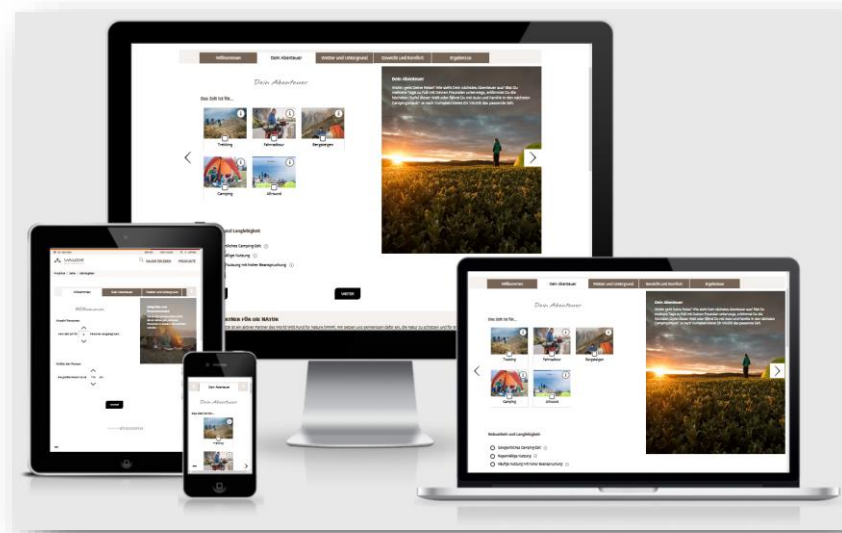
## ONGOING OPTIMIZATION

The advice process and recommendation behavior were checked and optimized by online experts and product managers. AI-based procedures were used to continuously optimize the quality of the product recommendations.

# Evolution of the Project

VAUDE continues to expand their digital advice services through excentos, ensuring the best customer service and high-quality product expertise across all their channels.

2017



## Online Advisor

To begin with, the tent advisor was conceptualized online and optimized for use on all devices. During a 3 month trial, the advisor was put to the test by product managers and sales experts.

01.2018



## Instore Advice & Support

The advisors were also deployed into VAUDE stores, in order to competently present the assortment and provide support to sales staff.

12.2018



## Chatbot

The advisor intelligence was made into a chatbot on their website and Facebook Messenger - directly linked with the Product Advisor.

2019



## Voice

The advice was made available through voice – the most natural and simple way to make a purchasing decision.

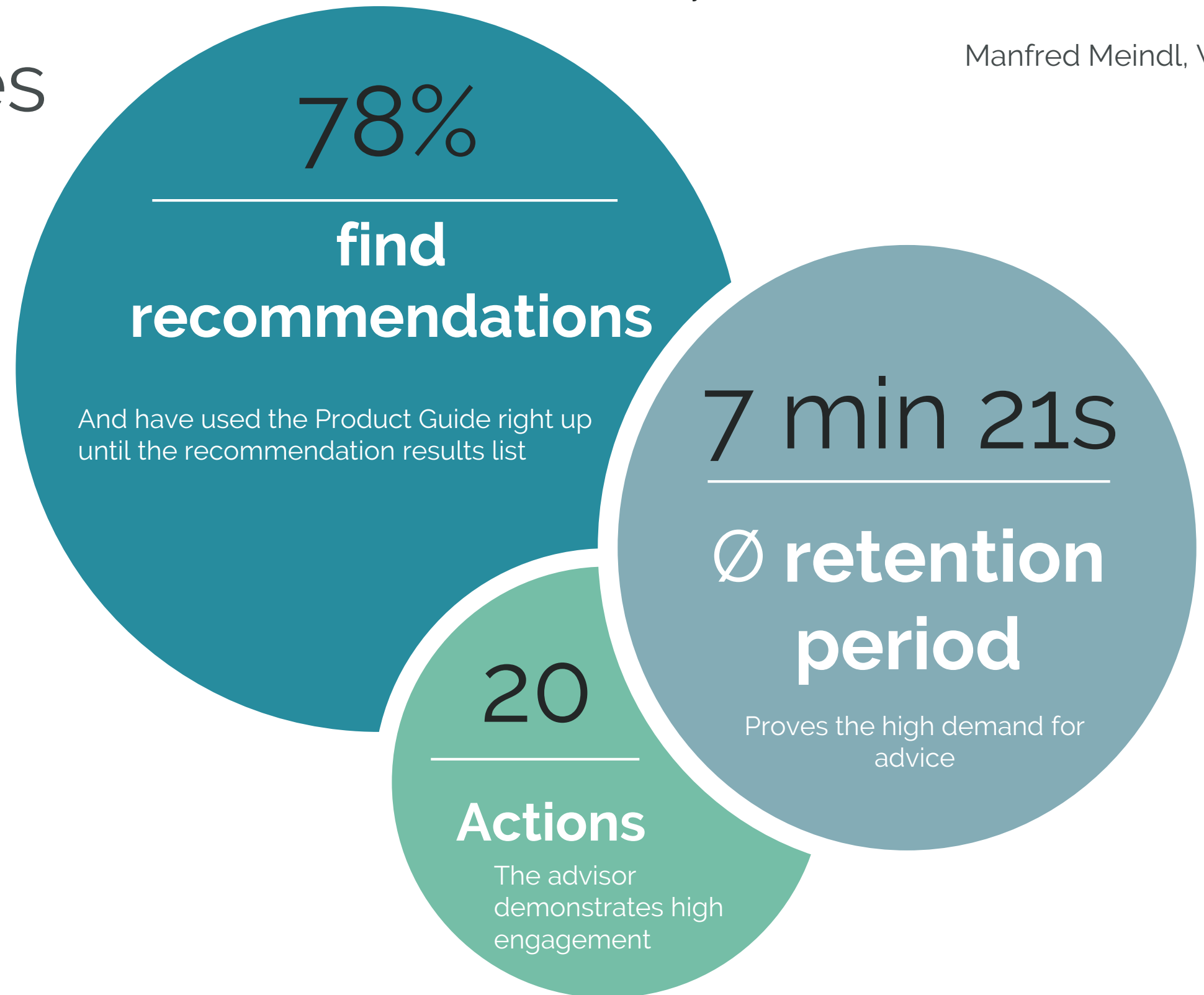
» "Digital consulting with excentos is now an essential part of our marketing, and we are very satisfied with the results."

Manfred Meindl, VAUDE

# Measurable Successes

Which key figures and conversion values did the Product Advisor achieve?

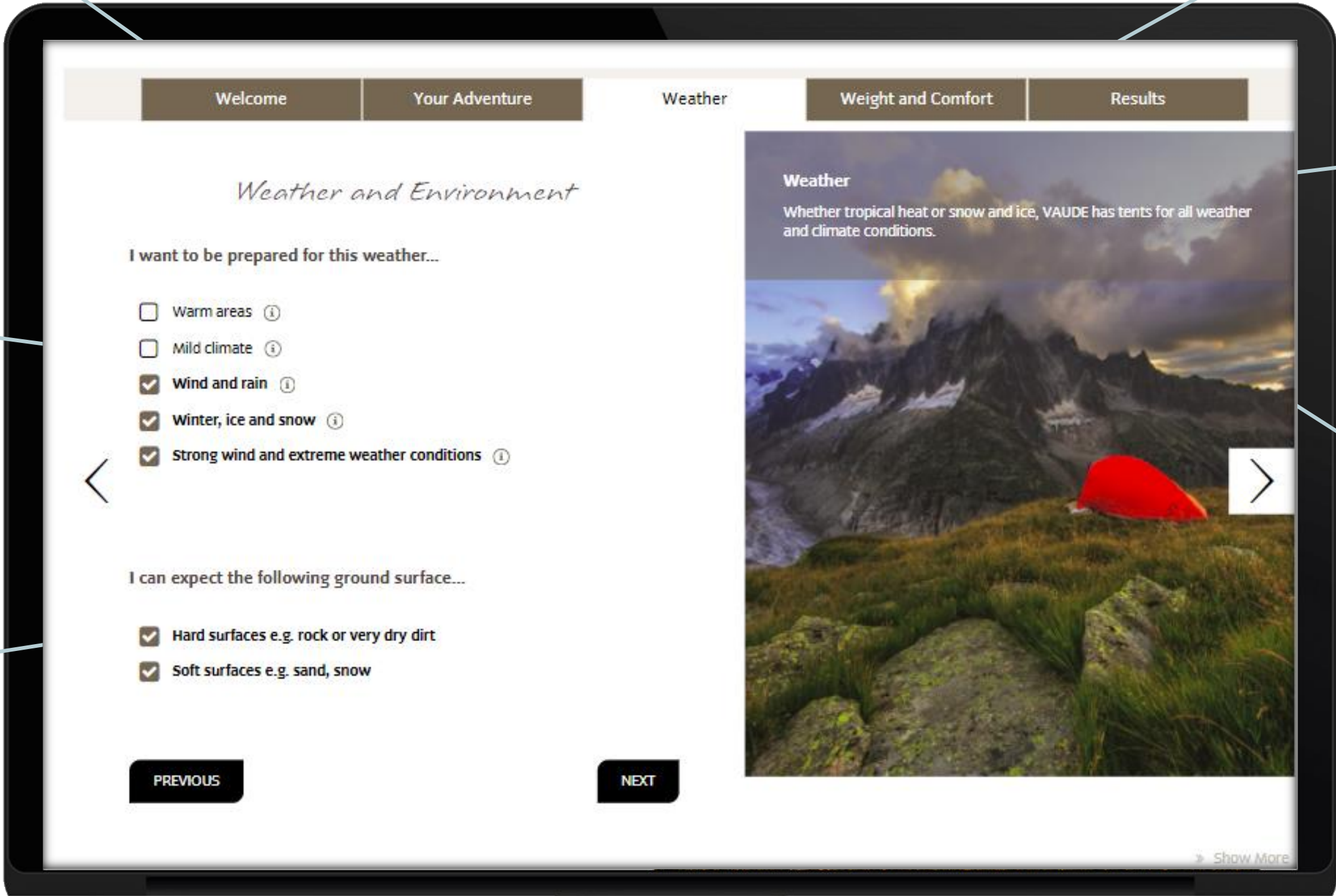
- **78% find recommendations**  
and completed the adviser process, receiving personalized product recommendations which were perfectly tailored to their needs
- **Extremely high retention rate of over 7 minutes**  
and received high exposure to the brand, learned a lot about the features and got to know the product range better
- **High engagement/interaction with 20 actions**  
show a very high interest in features. At the same time, excentos collects consumer insights.



# Tent Advisor in Detail

Clear navigation

Needs-oriented advice



The user can select multiple options

There are also questions which the customer may not have considered

Emotive text and image content makes the product come alive and simplifies the buying decision for the customer

Feature marketing ensures upselling

More info on the advisor

# Distinctive branding

Expert level advice ensures high-quality and stimulating brand communication at the point of decision.

Are other features important to you?

- Plenty of space in the inner tent
- Two entrances
- Comfortable standing room
- Very fast setup

## PRODUCT EXPERTISE

offered at every step of the product selection but without overburdening the user. For example, an 'expert mode' which advises on more intricate details such as material and design type can be activated by customers seeking more detailed advice.



## BRAND VALUES

explained in a way which is easy to understand and integrate into the right places within the Product Advisor. The customer playfully perceives the brand messages and integrates them into the buying decision.

Struktionsarten

Geodät  
Kuppel  
Tunnel  
MARK

**Geodätkonstruktion**  
Extrem stabile Zeltkonstruktion die auch Schneetreiben und hohen Windgeschwindigkeiten gewachsen ist. Die Gestängebögen kreuzen sich mindestens drei mal und bilden so kleine, äußerst stabile Kraftdreiecke.

Dynamic and playful content ensures personalized advice and brand communication

## SUPPORT IN SALES

Not every sales rep. can be familiar with the whole product range, nor all the product details. The digital advisor offers **support** which guarantees a **high-quality service**. Valuable features, such as product comparison, provide even more clarity in the advice and decision buying process.

## MULTIMEDIA + UPSELLING

Many product features are best explained through images and graphics. This way, every product is presented properly and the **willingness for a customer to pay increases** through consistent **upselling**. Even if a tent is not set up for example, important details about the tent's construction can still be illustrated well.

## INCREASED PRODUCT RANGE

Most stores will not have the full product range available. Digital Advice tools help to clearly present products which are unavailable. **Multi-channel features** also bring the customer to the store for purchase.



“Not every tent can be built in every shop and not every sales rep. knows every product. Digital advice is ideal for providing a good explanation of a product and visuals which compliment the store’s product range.”

» Manfred Meindl, VAUDE

# Digital Advice Instore

VAUDE supports **17 of its stores with digital advice** and improved product presentation.

The advisors ensure that every sales rep. (even trainees) can choose the correct procedure and offer **competent advice** which covers all aspects (**even at peak times**).

The **quality-assured recommendation behavior** guarantees that the products which have the right arguments are always recommended and should result in a sale.

Product Advisor  
helps as a  
**Chatbot**  
in a personalized  
conversation



The same process as Online Advisors but slightly more simplified

Casual language suitable for everyone

Direct integration into your website or via Facebook, Amazon Alexa or Google Home...

24/7: personal advice 24 hours around the clock

User can make any free-text input

# Video Demo: Voice Based Digital Assistants

Wie die Voice-basierten Shopping Assistants von excentos funktionieren, erklärt dieses Video



Der Shopping Assistant macht eine Zusammenfassung aller Anforderungen,



- Link to the video: [www.excentos.com/shopping-assistant](http://www.excentos.com/shopping-assistant)
- Voice-Demo begins at 00:35



Learn more about your customers

The Product Advisor collects valuable data about customers and their buying behaviors

Consumer insights are used to optimize referral behavior and product portfolios

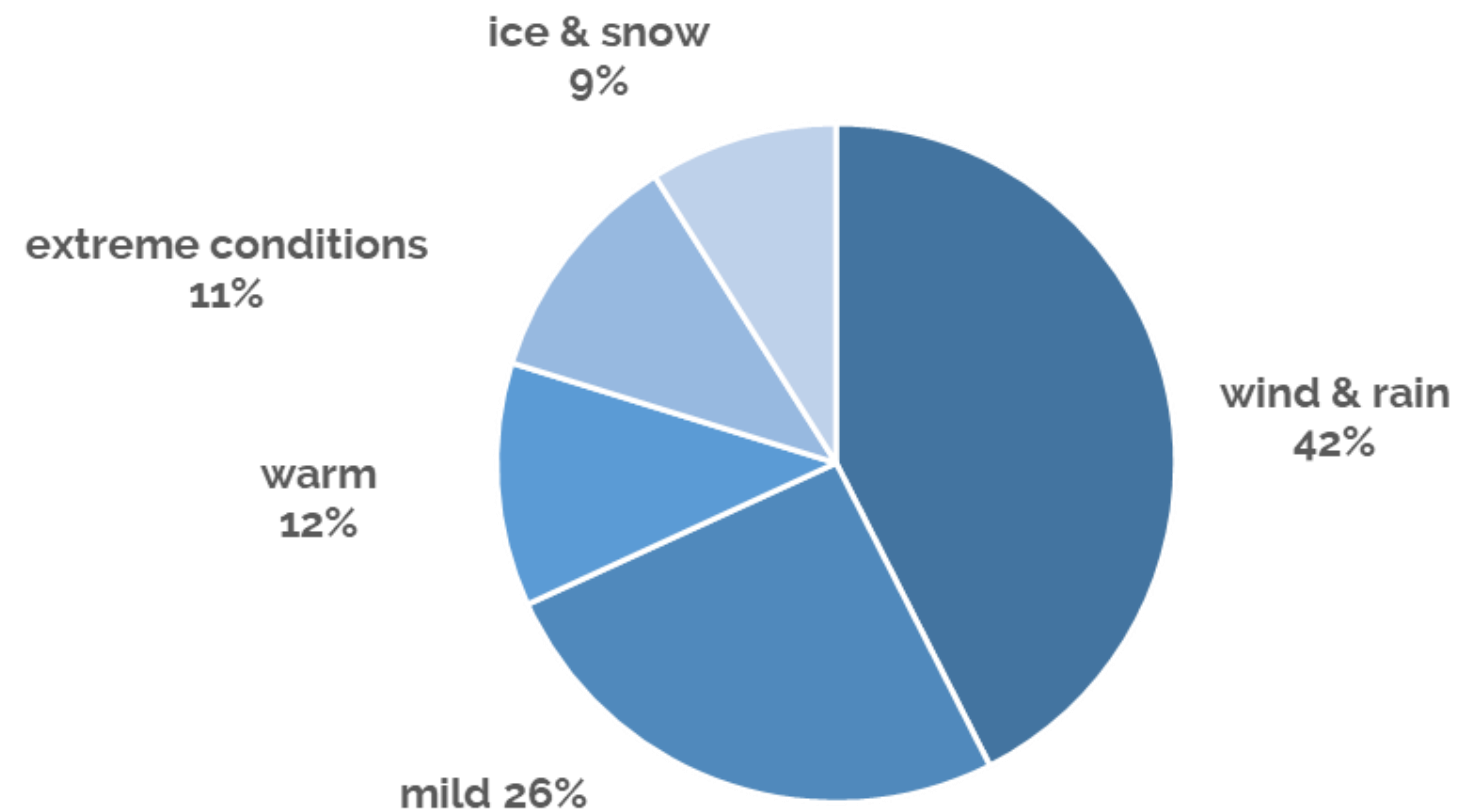


“As a brand, it’s really important for us to know more about our customers.”

» Manfred Meindl, VAUDE

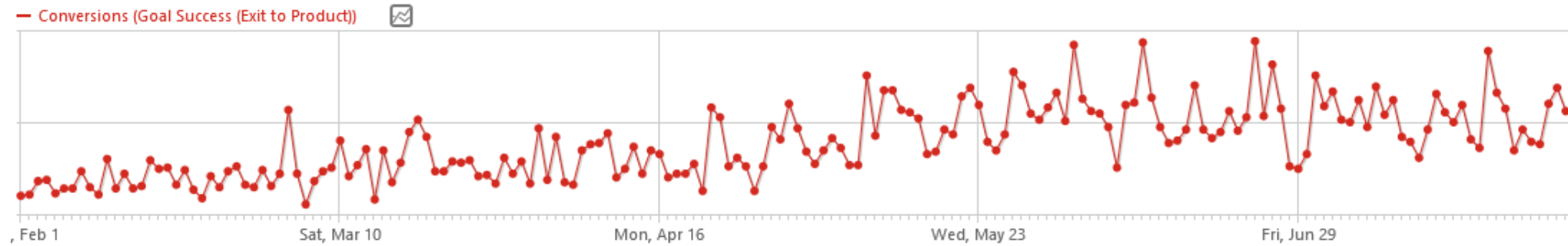
# Valuable Consumer Insights


Selected Answers for  
"In which weather will you use the tent?"





User data from excentos analytics over a 6 month period

# Success data details



 **7 min 21s** average visit duration

 **15%** visits have bounced (left the website after one page)

 **20.7** actions per visit

 **78.7%** conversion rate

User data from excentos analytics over a 6 month period

## INCREASED CONVERSION

through continuous optimization of the advice process, the content and recommendation behavior. For this purpose, AI-based methods and excentos web analytics tools are used.

## HIGH ENGAGEMENT

customers engage with the advisor for over 7 minutes proving the need and interest for product advice.

## STRONG RESULTS

each product recommendation is justified individually and leads to a high conversion rate.

The Workbench [www.excentos.com/workbench](http://www.excentos.com/workbench) is excentos' self-service platform where every shop and website operator can configure Product Guides both quickly and easily.

**Baue Deinen ersten Produktberater in wenigen Minuten**

Wie das geht, erklärt Dir dieses Video in 45 Sekunden

**excentos** PRODUKT HOW IT WORKS REFERENZEN ÜBER UNS GET STARTED

baue Deinen ersten Product Guide mit excentos

excentos Workbench

Build your Product Guides in only 5 steps and offer your customers the advice they need.

[START AN ONLINE FREE TRIAL](#)



**45-second video: Building a Product Guide yourself**

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