

*Insights Report*

# YOUNG PROFESSIONALS' NEEDS AND PURCHASE BEHAVIOURS RELATED TO FURNITURE

Mariko Takeuchi at Margin Innovation  
for Gatsby Africa, March 31, 2022



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# ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

HCD Human-Centred Design  
KCFP Kenya Commercial Forestry Programme  
YP Young Professional

## LIFE GOALS:

SECURE WELL-PAYING JOB  
TO ADVENTURE  
BE HELPFUL TO OTHERS/SOCIETY  
TO SUPPORT LESS FORTUNATE  
HAVE A FAMILY OF THEIR OWN  
TO BE INDEPENDENT TO GET ALL I WANT WITHOUT RELY ON OTHERS  
SUPPORT YOUR FAMILY WHO RAISED YOU  
TO HAVE OWN BUSINESS (TO GIVE JOBS)

## LEISURE & FUN:

TRAVEL (VACATION)  
WATCH/READ EDUCATIVE MOVIES  
PLAY/TRY NEW SPORTS  
RELAXING AT HOME  
LISTEN TO MUSIC  
HANG OUT W/ ELDER RELATIVES  
PARTY W/ FRIENDS @ CLUBS  
TEAM BUILDING GAMES WITH FRIENDS (HIKING)

## TOPICS OF INTEREST:

RELATION SHIPS  
POLITICS  
FAMILY MATTERS (MARRIAGE CHALLENGES)  
EDUCATION SYSTEM  
FASHION  
SPORTS  
BUSINESS IDEAS  
TECHNOLOGY (eg. LATEST PHONE)

## INFLUENCES & MEDIA:

SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE  
MOVIES (SOAPS) THREE SIDES OF ANNA  
POLITICIANS  
FAMILY BACKGROUND (UPBRINGING)  
CEOs OF BIG COMP'S  
RIHANNA DIAMOND (CELEBRITIES)  
PARENTS -> FORCE YOU TO DO THINGS.  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
PEERS IN GROUPS -> SHARE IDEAS

## PLACES THEY FREQUENT:

EVENTS: (EXAMPLE TO IDEAS) E.P. WEDDINGS  
CAREER EVENTS (UNIVERSITIES/CLUBS)  
VACATIONS RESORTS HOTELS  
LIVE SPORTS STADIUM, ANY FIELD  
CLUBS  
MALLS - MOUNTAIN MALL - DUTY MALL  
SUPERMARKETS QUICK MART - NAIVAS  
ONLINE PLATFORMS JUMIA - KILIMON

## GENERAL PURCHASES:

♂  
ELECTRONICS  
- PH  
- TV  
- LAPTOP  
SHOES & CLOTHES - LATEST FASHION  
TO SUPPORT FAMILY ✓  
VACATION  
COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY  
GO OUT WITH FRIENDS (RESTAURANT, GARDEN)  
CLUBS  
♀  
TRENDY PHONES  
MAKEUP  
SKIN CARE

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was made possible through funding provided by Gatsby Africa, and the strategic vision of the Kenya Commercial Forestry Programme (KCFP). The project was designed, coordinated, and executed thanks to the tremendous guidance and support of Nick Embden and Anthony Ngugi.

On behalf of the project team, the author would like to express deep gratitude to all of our respondents, who generously shared their time and candid thoughts to inform this research.

Thank you all for your contributions.





# THE PROJECT BRIEF



# BACKGROUND



**THE BIG PICTURE:** KCFP aims to demonstrate that farm forestry growers cultivating eucalyptus can enter into higher value processing and higher value markets and thereby benefit from higher offtake prices. The team aims to catalyze secondary processors and end-markets within the furniture value-chain. As a first step, a consortium of secondary processing partners has agreed to collaborate with KCFP to explore innovative end-product designs, while uncovering production (dis)advantages of working with higher-grade eucalyptus.

**A HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN (HCD) APPROACH:** KCFP sees an opportunity to apply an HCD approach to strategically define their next steps. There is a need to glean deeper insight into consumers

and buyers of furniture, including what drives their purchase behaviours, how to effectively segment them, and how to design/target innovations that generate maximum economic value from each segment.

## **GOING BEYOND RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATING MARKET**

**OPPORTUNITY:** The outputs of this scope of work will serve as a critical input to a business case analysis. Due to the transformational nature of this intervention, there is a lack of useful data on the economic potential of Eucalyptus lumber and products. As much as possible, this work should move beyond simple research, and seek to tangibly demonstrate strong potential demand-pull and a compelling market opportunity, so as to serve as credible input into a business case for pursuing this transformation pathway.

# OVERARCHING PROJECT GOAL



Prove that there is a compelling potential market-opportunity for higher-value eucalyptus furniture products, and define specific strategies to catalyze and capitalize on this demand.

# SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES



For the target market of Young Professionals (YPs):

1. Define their psychographic profile (attitudes, opinions, lifestyle, etc.).
2. Uncover their mindsets, needs, motivations, and influences that could affect their demand for (eucalyptus) furniture products.
3. Uncover the challenges and barriers that might limit their demand for (eucalyptus) furniture products including, if appropriate, the topic of sustainability.
4. Understand which attributes of a potential (eucalyptus) furniture offering are more vs. less important.
5. Illuminate their purchase journey, including other critical actors and their roles within the journey.



# MILESTONES

WEEKS 1-2

## Project Kick-off

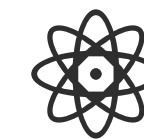
Refine aims & scope  
Kick-off meeting



WEEKS 10-12

## Research Design

Design the research strategy  
Plan field logistics  
Develop research guidelines  
Build stimuli & templates for research



WEEKS 3-10

## Initial Market Segmentation

Conduct desk study  
Interview experts & stakeholders  
Run stakeholder workshop  
Analyse & synthesize data  
Draft market segmentation  
Select 3-4 high priority segments



WEEKS 13-15

## Field Research

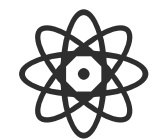
Execute user-research  
Analyse data  
Iteratively adjust approach



WEEKS 16-20

## Synthesis & Findings

- Synthesize data
- Extrapolate user insights
- Develop conceptual frameworks
- Draft design guidelines
- Compile presentation of findings



WEEKS 21-23

## Design Sprint Workshop

- Research inspirational content
- Design workshop
- Facilitate workshop
- Synthesize takeaways & next steps
- Select 2 segments for Phase 2

NEXT: WEEKS 24-41

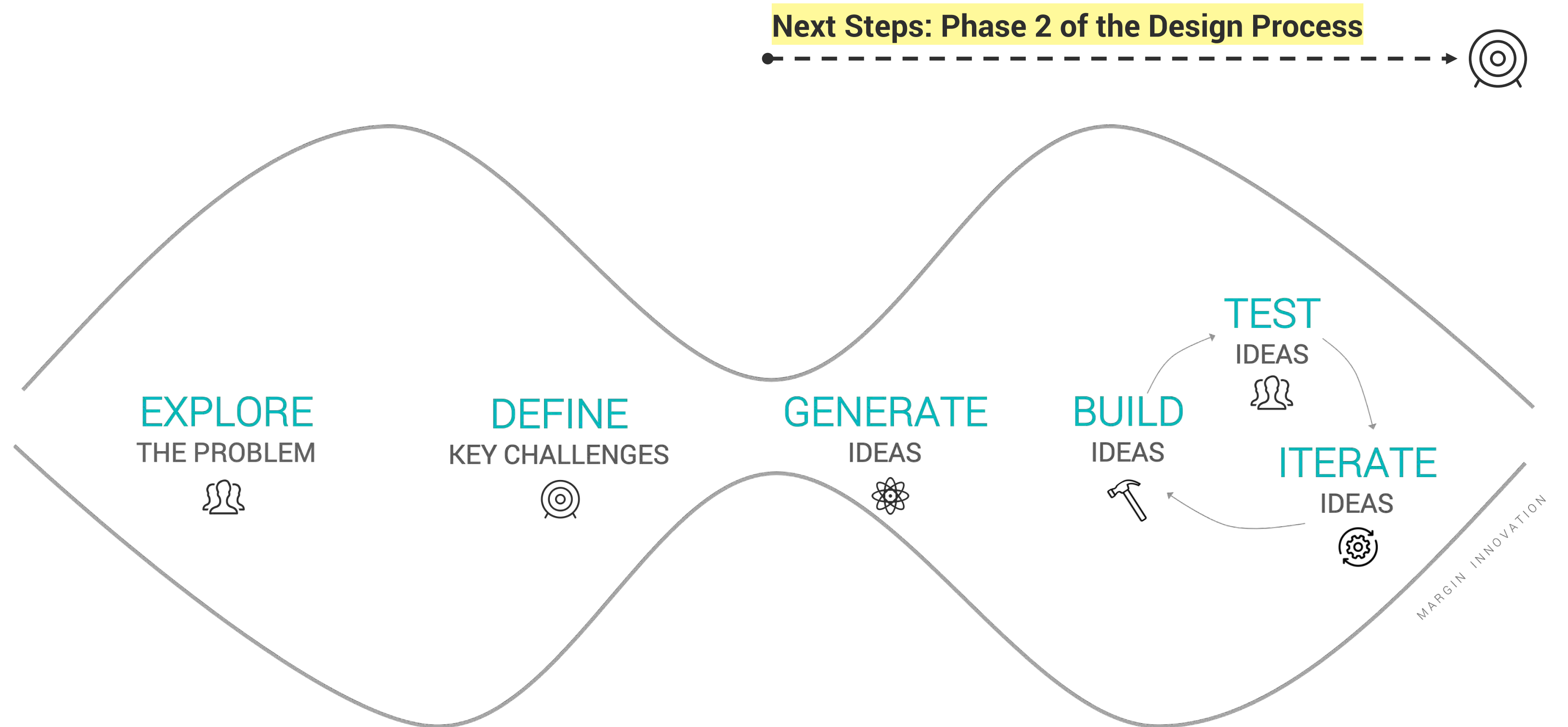
## Phase 2: Test & Validate Insights

- Ideate & prototype concepts
- User-test concepts
- Refine ideas into mid-resolution prototypes
- User-test prototypes
- Synthesize findings, iterate concepts
- Present findings



# STAGES OF HCD

While HCD does not involve a series of exactly repeatable steps, the following stages are fairly universal. They are outlined in a logical fashion here. In reality, the flow of a project is often messier than in theory because emergent findings can lead a team to go back or to adjust plans.



LIFE GOALS:

'BE SUCCESSFUL"  
MORE MONEY  
AFFORD WHAT WANT  
\$

LEISURE & FUN:

TRAVELING A LOT  
GOING OUT EAT/DRINK  
RELAX MOVIE  
FRIENDS / FAM  
CLUBS  
FUNCTIONS

TOPICS OF INTEREST:

CAREER PROGRESSION  
FASHION  
ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY  
GOSSIP  
FINANCES (GROW WEALTH)  
LIFE HAS BECOME MORE EXPENSIVE

INFLUENCES & MEDIA:

TWITTER  
IG  
TIKTOK.  
NETFLIX SHOWMAX  
CABLE TV  
SOCIAL CIRCLES (CLOSE)

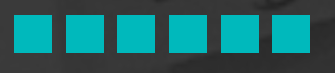
PLACES THEY FREQUENT:

CLUBS (PM-11)  
SUNDAY BRUNCH  
CONCERTS  
CO-WORK SPACES

GENERAL PURCHASES:

EASY 2 MAKE MEALS  
SNACKS,  
ONLINE STORES (IG)

# RESEARCH APPROACH





# HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN

Human-Centered Design (also known as HCD) is a long-standing innovation methodology with roots in innovation-focused companies such as Unilever and Coca-Cola. In recent years, HCD has gained credence in the development sector, due to its ability to increase the likelihood of adoption, sustainability, and scalability of solutions.

HCD uses a range of ethnographic tools and techniques to deeply empathize with not only end-users but all human stakeholders within the system that is being explored. HCD blends this ethnographic lens with design methods, as well as the fields of psychology, business, marketing, and service design.

The aim of research in HCD is to uncover the unspoken motivations and challenges of the actors within a system. By identifying and prioritizing the most critical needs of each actor, it is possible to design products and services that have a higher chance of being adopted and sustained over time.

# RESEARCH APPROACH & TECHNIQUES



ONLINE & MEDIA RESEARCH



EXPERT INTERVIEWS



IN-DEPTH USER INTERVIEWS



PARTICIPATORY EXERCISES



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

# RESEARCH TARGET

.....

The target audience for this research was Nairobi-based young professionals (YPs). We met with a total of 15 YPs who hold a university degree, are employed in their first 'real, career-job', and live independently of their parents/guardians. We also interviewed 4 key decision-makers from 4 different furniture companies that sell to the YP market.

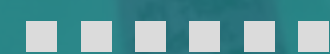
The field research took place over nine days, and comprised a blend of in-depth interviews, small group discussions, and participatory exercises.







# WHAT IS USER INSIGHT?

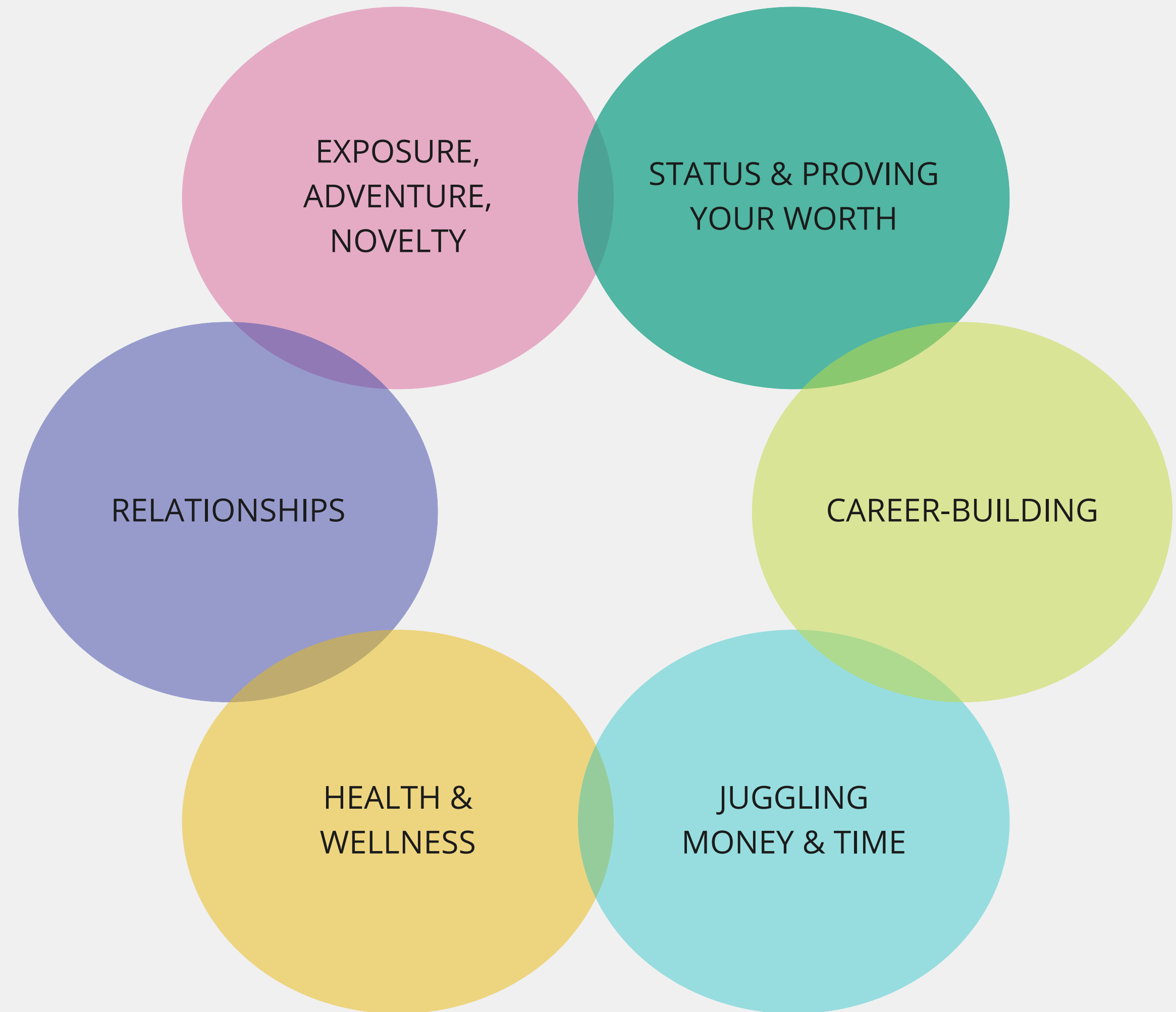


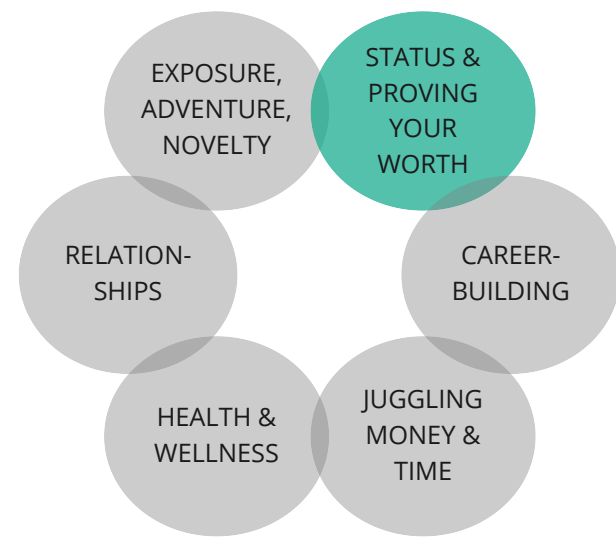
Explaining the 'why' behind users' behaviours.

*Insights* shed light on the mindsets, values, and needs of users that influence their behaviours. They offer 'the why' behind users' actions—these are motivations that users do not explicitly express, but which we infer in research. When we ask users, 'why': *Why did you do that? Why does it matter? Why do you believe that?* — their answers offer clues as to why they behave the way that they do.

The following Insights are written from the perspectives of users. Because whether right or wrong, what users believe *is* their reality— it is what guides their actions.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS:  
VALUES, ASPIRATIONS,  
ATTITUDES, & INTERESTS





# YPS ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH PROVING THEIR WORTH AND ATTAINING A SEMBLANCE OF STATUS.

## RECOGNITION FOR SUCCESS

## ELITE STATUS

## LEGACY OF SOCIAL IMPACT

## MEETING EXPECTATIONS

NEEDS

Aspire to achieve 'success' as leaders in business, politics, and/or the community, and to be recognized for their achievements.

Desire to join the 'elites' of society, and to access the exclusive status symbols that come with that lifestyle.

Concerned with their 'legacy' of social impact, with an emphasis on serving others in the community who have less.

Feel pressure to meet competing expectations around career, finances, relationships, and more. Burdened by a sense of inadequacy and 'imposter syndrome'.

QUOTES

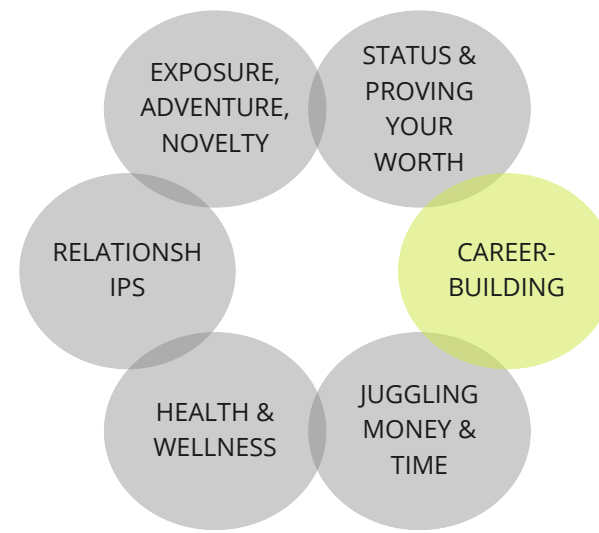
*"We (YPs) want to be young leaders.... and want recognition for our achievements."*

*"We (YPs) want to join the Kenyan political and economic elite... I want a Black credit card."*

*"I'd love to be impactful-- to leave a legacy behind... support the less fortunate to help them achieve their goals."*

*"There are expectations from so many people and places, like sending money to family, job performance, etc. And there's imposter syndrome; I'm not doing enough compared to others."*





## YPS ARE HYPER-FOCUSED ON BUILDING THEIR (BUDDING) CAREERS.

### CAREER-FIRST

NEEDS

Recently embarked on their careers, and are hyper focused on doing whatever it takes to progress towards lofty career-goals.

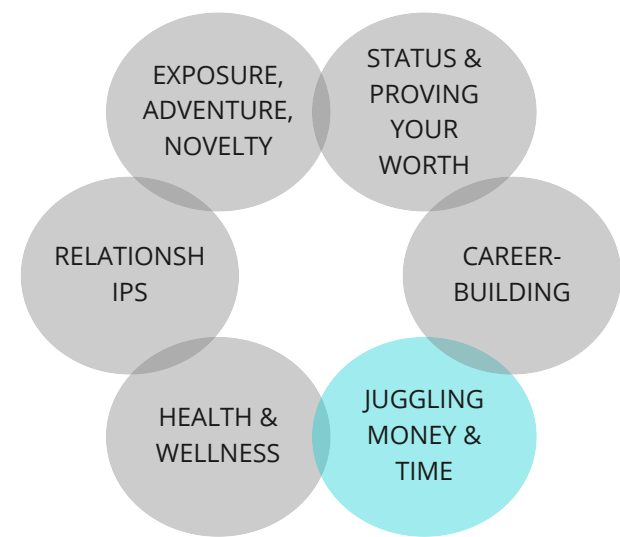
QUOTES

*"I want to be a career woman. I want career progression and career stability."*

### GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Constantly seeking opportunities to develop their job-skills, networks, and academic credentials towards establishing themselves.

*"We (YPs) look for opportunities for ongoing skills-development and learning... I want to advance my education, or take another course."*



# YPS STRUGGLE TO JUGGLE THEIR MOST FINITE RESOURCES OF MONEY AND TIME.

## FINANCIAL SECURITY (despite inflation)

Strive to achieve financial security, but feel handicapped due to earning low salaries in an economy with rapidly inflating prices.

*I want to make money, have some investments, buy land... But we (YPs) are unable to keep up with (inflation in) the economy... Everything costs so much and it keeps rising.*

## AFFORD WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Yearn to afford both material and experiential indulgences (e.g. designer clothes and travel) without needing to plan in advance or make compromises.

*"(YPs) want to feel we can afford what we want, when we want... you can go to a nice restaurant and order whatever food, or go to Italy for a visit.*

## ON MY TERMS

Want to earn an income, but on their own terms, particularly with respect to how they spend their time and what they spend it doing.

*"We don't just work for money. We want to do what we love... I love the flexibility of working from home... I want to have my own business."*

## JUGGLING TIME

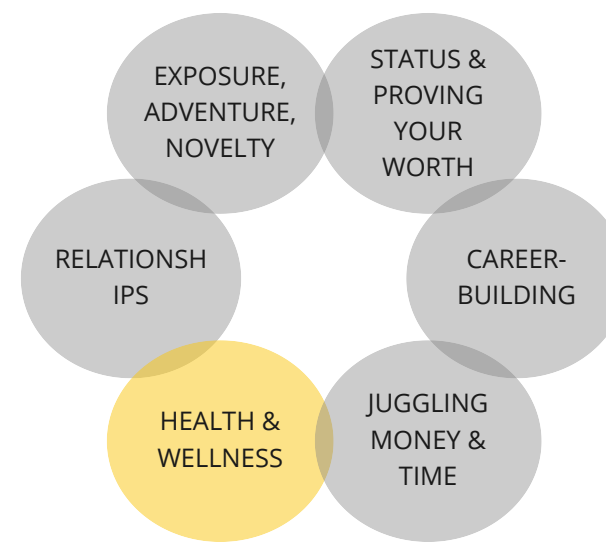
Feel stretched thin whilst juggling multiple, competing obligations including a career, money-making side hustles, family (financial) support, among other personal needs.

*"Work isn't enough so I have side hustles. Between work, study, socializing, family obligations, you don't have time to do anything well."*



NEEDS

QUOTES



# YPS PRIORITIZE THEIR HEALTH, FITNESS, AND WELLNESS.

## PHYSICAL FITNESS & NUTRITION

## MENTAL & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

## CONNECTION TO NATURE

NEEDS

Prioritize and invest in physical fitness and nutrition, with the goal of achieving their ideal body shape.

Tend to pay attention to and prioritize their own mental health and emotional wellbeing.

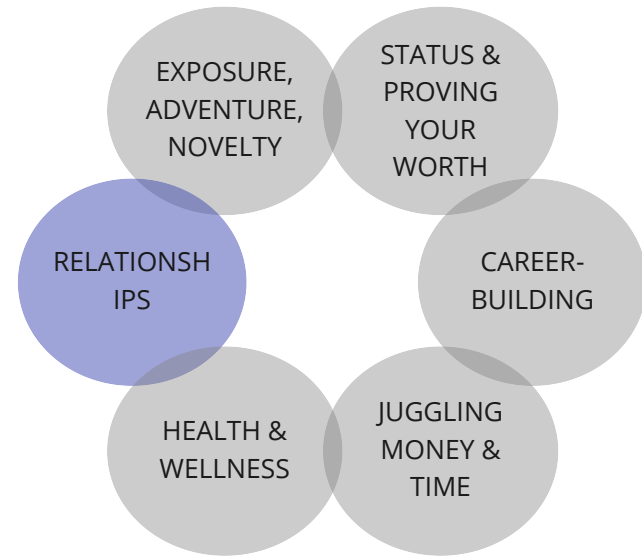
Deeply value nature, vegetation, and green environments, as an escape from the hyper-urban context of Nairobi.

QUOTES

*"We (YPS) run to keep in shape. We're watching our bodies. Many people are in road cycling clubs or have gym memberships."*

*"I like to go on meditation retreats... Mental health is an issue; people face stress, depression, loneliness from COVID, or FOMO from social media."*

*"We love outdoor activities, like hiking in the forest...Nairobi is so fast-paced. I can relax and decompress in nature..."*



# YPS VALUE RELATIONSHIPS, ESPECIALLY WITH FRIENDS. THEY ARE SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND INFLUENCE.

## FRIENDS FIRST

Tend to rely very heavily on friends for advice, information, support, and leisure partners.

*"I spend my free time hanging with friends. A goal in my life is to be socially happy-- going out, having fun, making new friends, trying new things together..."*

## HEALTHY ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Searching for, and in the process of defining their ideal romantic relationship.

*"One of my goals is to have meaningful romantic relationships. Amongst friends we talk about relationships-- like what to look for, red flags, and dos and don'ts."*

## FAMILY "BLACK TAX"

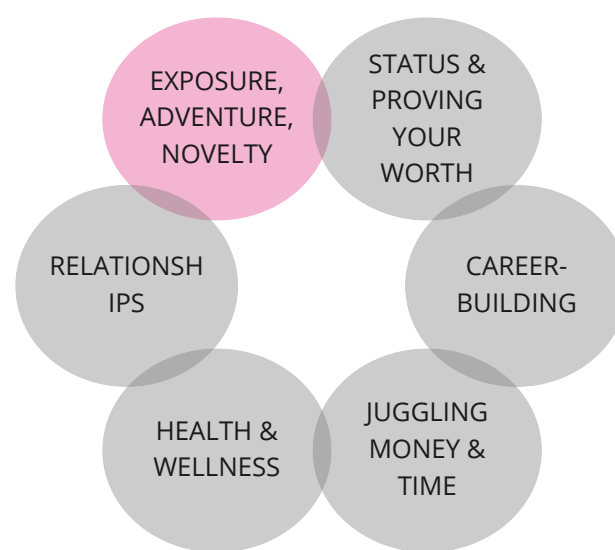
Bear the heavy burden of responsibility for supporting the family financially, and feel guilty when there isn't enough money to send.

*"Sometimes you don't have enough money to help your family that helped you get where you are... You must send money to support them, otherwise you feel guilt."*

NEEDS

QUOTES





YPS CRAVE EXPERIENCES, SUCH AS TRAVEL, THAT DELIVER A SENSE OF NOVELTY AND/OR ADVENTURE.

### EXPOSURE & NOVELTY

### TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

NEEDS

Crave and seek out opportunities to gain exposure to novel ideas, experiences, or perspectives.

Dream of a cultured lifestyle that includes a lot of travel to international destinations.

QUOTES

*"I want to explore and get exposure to novel things... You only know what you know, until you experience something else..."*

*"I want to be able to afford to travel... to adventure and explore many parts of the world... like the Maldives."*



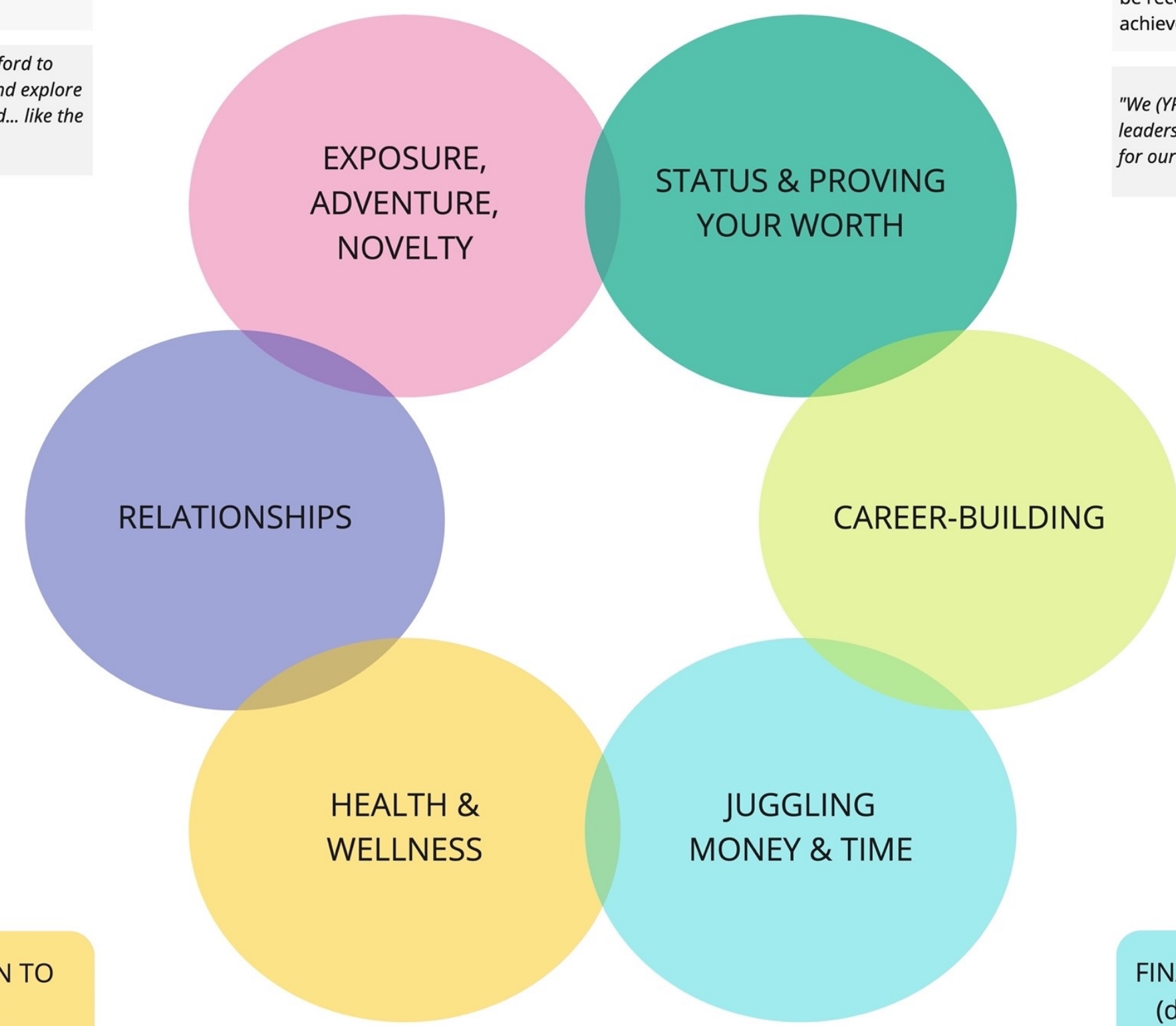
# PSYCHOGRAPHICS: VALUES, ASPIRATIONS, ATTITUDES, & INTERESTS

EXPOSURE & NOVELTY	TRAVEL & ADVENTURE
Crave and seek out opportunities to gain exposure to novel ideas, experiences, or perspectives.	Dream of a cultured lifestyle that includes a lot of travel to international destinations.
<i>"I want to explore and get exposure to novel things... You only know what you know, until you experience something else..."</i>	<i>"I want to be able to afford to travel... to adventure and explore many parts of the world... like the Maldives."</i>

RECOGNITION FOR SUCCESS	ELITE STATUS	LEGACY OF SOCIAL IMPACT	MEETING EXPECTATIONS
Aspire to achieve 'success' as leaders in business, politics, and/or the community, and to be recognized for their achievements.	Desire to join the 'elites' of society, and to access the exclusive status symbols that come with that lifestyle.	Concerned with their 'legacy' of social impact, with an emphasis on serving others in the community who have less.	Feel pressure to meet competing expectations around career, finances, relationships, and more. Burdened by a sense of inadequacy and 'imposter syndrome'.
<i>"We (YPs) want to be young leaders.... and want recognition for our achievements."</i>	<i>"We (YPs) want to join the Kenyan political and economic elite... I want a Black credit card."</i>	<i>"I'd love to be impactful-- to leave a legacy behind... support the less fortunate to help them achieve their goals."</i>	<i>"There are expectations from so many people and places, like sending money to family, job performance, etc. And there's imposter syndrome; I'm not doing enough compared to others."</i>

FRIENDS FIRST	HEALTHY ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS	FAMILY "BLACK TAX"
Tend to rely very heavily on friends for advice, information, support, and leisure partners.	Searching for, and in the process of defining their ideal romantic relationship.	Bear the heavy burden of responsibility for supporting the family financially, and feel guilty when there isn't enough money to send.
<i>"I spend my free time hanging with friends. A goal in my life is to be socially happy-- going out, having fun, making new friends, trying new things together..."</i>	<i>"One of my goals is to have meaningful romantic relationships. Amongst friends we talk about relationships-- like what to look for, red flags, and dos and don'ts."</i>	<i>"Sometimes you don't have enough money to help your family that helped you get where you are... You must send money to support them, otherwise you feel guilt."</i>

CAREER-FIRST	GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES
Recently embarked on their careers, and are hyper focused on doing whatever it takes to progress towards lofty career-goals.	Constantly seeking opportunities to develop their job-skills, networks, and academic credentials towards establishing themselves.
<i>"I want to be a career woman. I want career progression and career stability."</i>	<i>"We (YPs) look for opportunities for ongoing skills-development and learning... I want to advance my education, or take another course."</i>



FINANCIAL SECURITY (despite inflation)	AFFORD WITHOUT COMPROMISE	ON MY TERMS	JUGGLING TIME
Strive to achieve financial security, but feel handicapped due to earning low salaries in an economy with rapidly inflating prices.	Yearn to afford both material and experiential indulgences (e.g. designer clothes and travel) without needing to plan in advance or make compromises.	Want to earn an income, but on their own terms, particularly with respect to how they spend their time and what they spend it doing.	Feel stretched thin whilst juggling multiple, competing obligations including a career, money-making side hustles, family (financial) support, among other personal needs.
<i>I want to make money, have some investments, buy land... But we (YPs) are unable to keep up with (inflation in) the economy... Everything costs so much and it keeps rising.</i>	<i>"(YPs) want to feel we can afford what we want, when we want... I you can go to a nice restaurant and order whatever food, or go to Italy for a visit.</i>	<i>"We don't just work for money. We want to do what we love... I love the flexibility of working from home... I want to have my own business."</i>	<i>"Work isn't enough so I have side hustles. Between work, study, socializing, family obligations, you don't have time to do anything well."</i>

PHYSICAL FITNESS & NUTRITION	MENTAL & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	CONNECTION TO NATURE
Prioritize and invest in physical fitness and nutrition, with the goal of achieving their ideal body shape.	Tend to pay attention to and prioritize their own mental health and emotional wellbeing.	Deeply value nature, vegetation, and green environments, as an escape from the hyper-urban context of Nairobi.
<i>"We (YPs) run to keep in shape. We're watching our bodies. Many people are in road cycling clubs or have gym memberships."</i>	<i>"I like to go on meditation retreats... Mental health is an issue; people face stress, depression, loneliness from COVID, or FOMO from social media."</i>	<i>"We love outdoor activities, like hiking in the forest...Nairobi is so fast-paced. I can relax and decompress in nature..."</i>

# ASPIRATIONAL LIFESTYLE



World traveler



Recognized business leader



Home owner



Social impact leader



My own family



Career success



Gather for meals



Fit and healthy



Diversified portfolio



Business owner / Work on my terms



(Luxury) Car

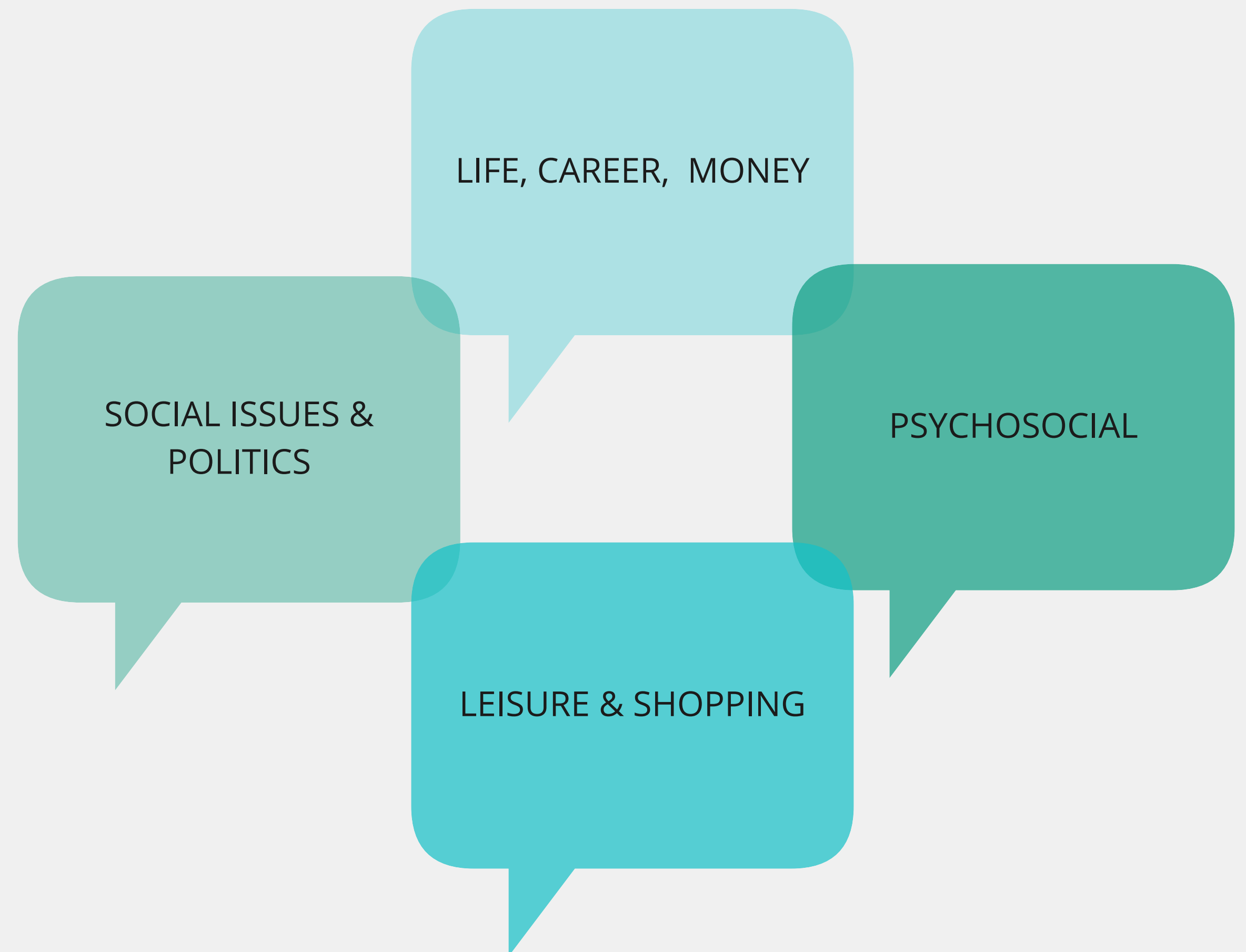


Connected to nature

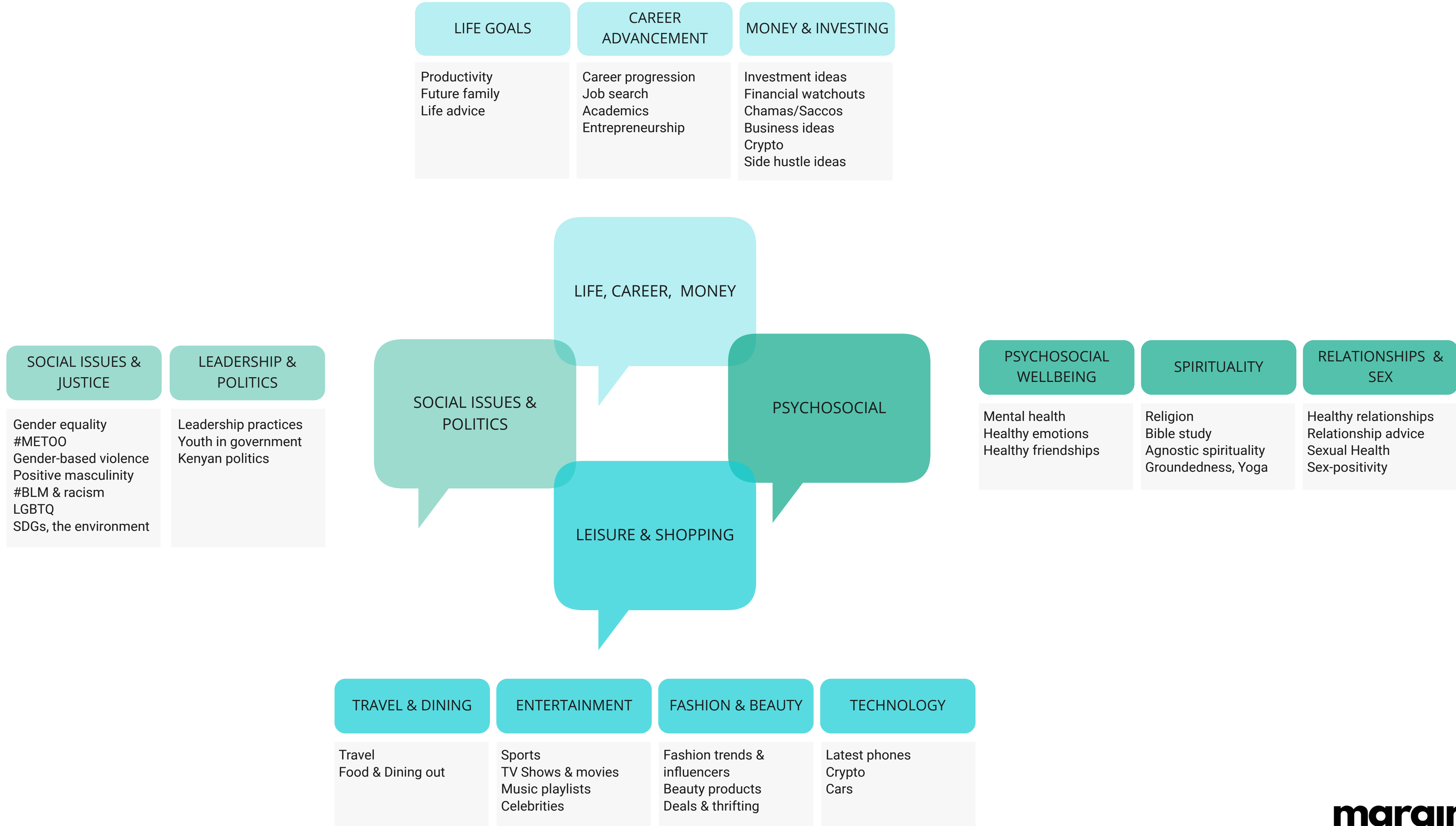
## ASPIRATIONAL BRANDS



TOPICS THAT YPs  
TALK ABOUT, READ ABOUT,  
AND CARE ABOUT



# TOPICS THAT YPs TALK ABOUT, READ ABOUT, AND CARE ABOUT



## AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SUSTAINABILITY?

YPS HAVE A STRONG SOCIAL-JUSTICE ORIENTATION AND A DESIRE TO BE SEEN AS AN 'IMPACT-LEADER'.



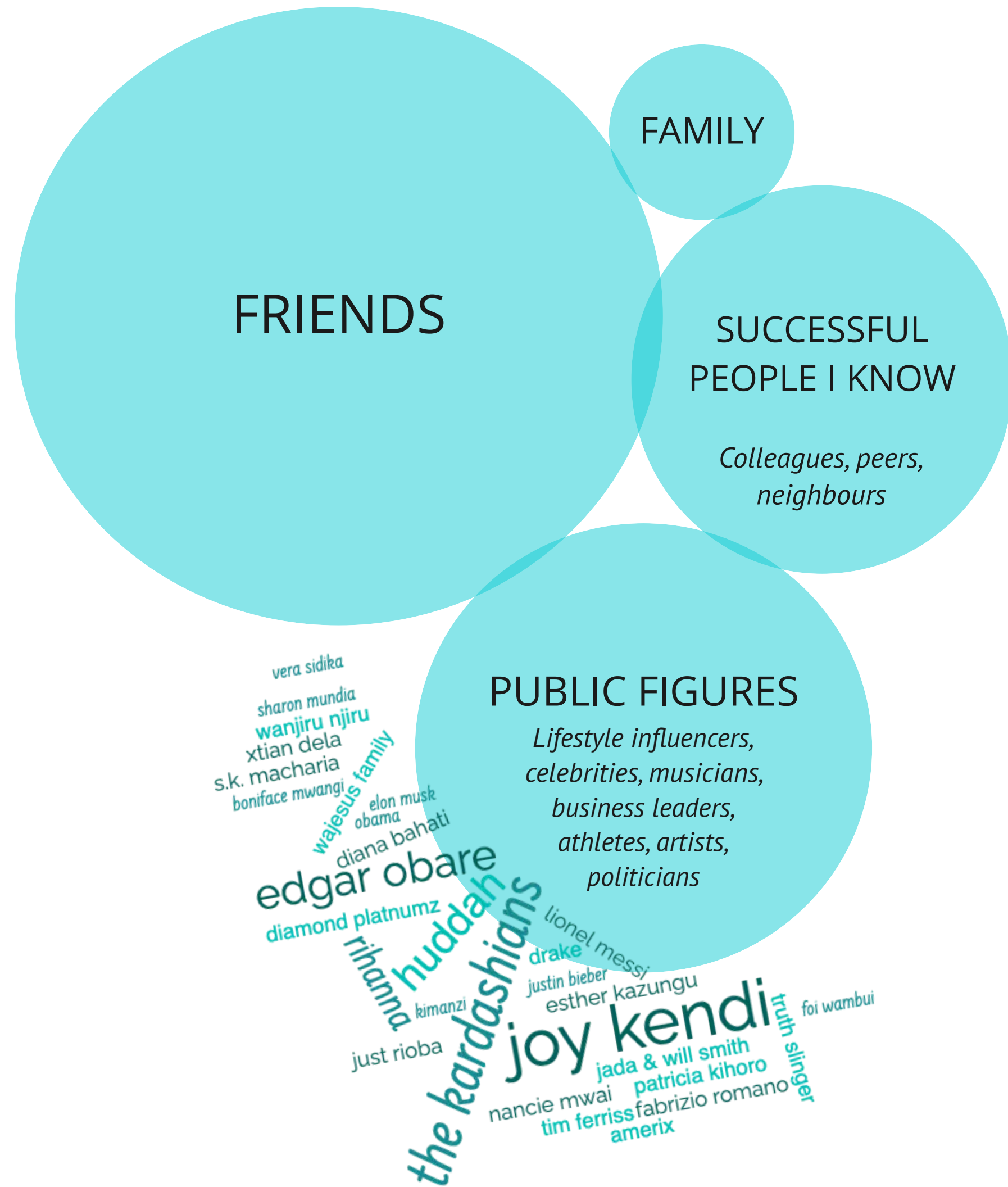
Young Professionals care about societal issues, particularly as it relates to social justice, including racism, gender, and sexuality. They want to be seen as leading positive social change in their communities, and make some efforts to stay current with the latest themes in the dialogue around social impact. The importance of environmental sustainability was only lightly touched on (by several respondents). However, YPs' social-impact orientation suggests there may be an opportunity to nudge YPs towards adopting sustainability as a priority cause.



# INFLUENCES



INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE:  
FRIENDS' OPINIONS MATTER MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.



Friends' opinions matter deeply to YPs; they seek advice, input, inspiration, and support from friends when making decisions. YPs' preferences for products, lifestyles, and aesthetics, are also heavily shaped by their friends and peer-group, including for furniture. YPs care about how they are perceived by their friends, and aim to present themselves in a positive light—this includes their living space.

YPs are also influenced by public figures and influencers, as well as acquaintances who they deem 'successful'. Family may have some influence, but to a much lesser degree.

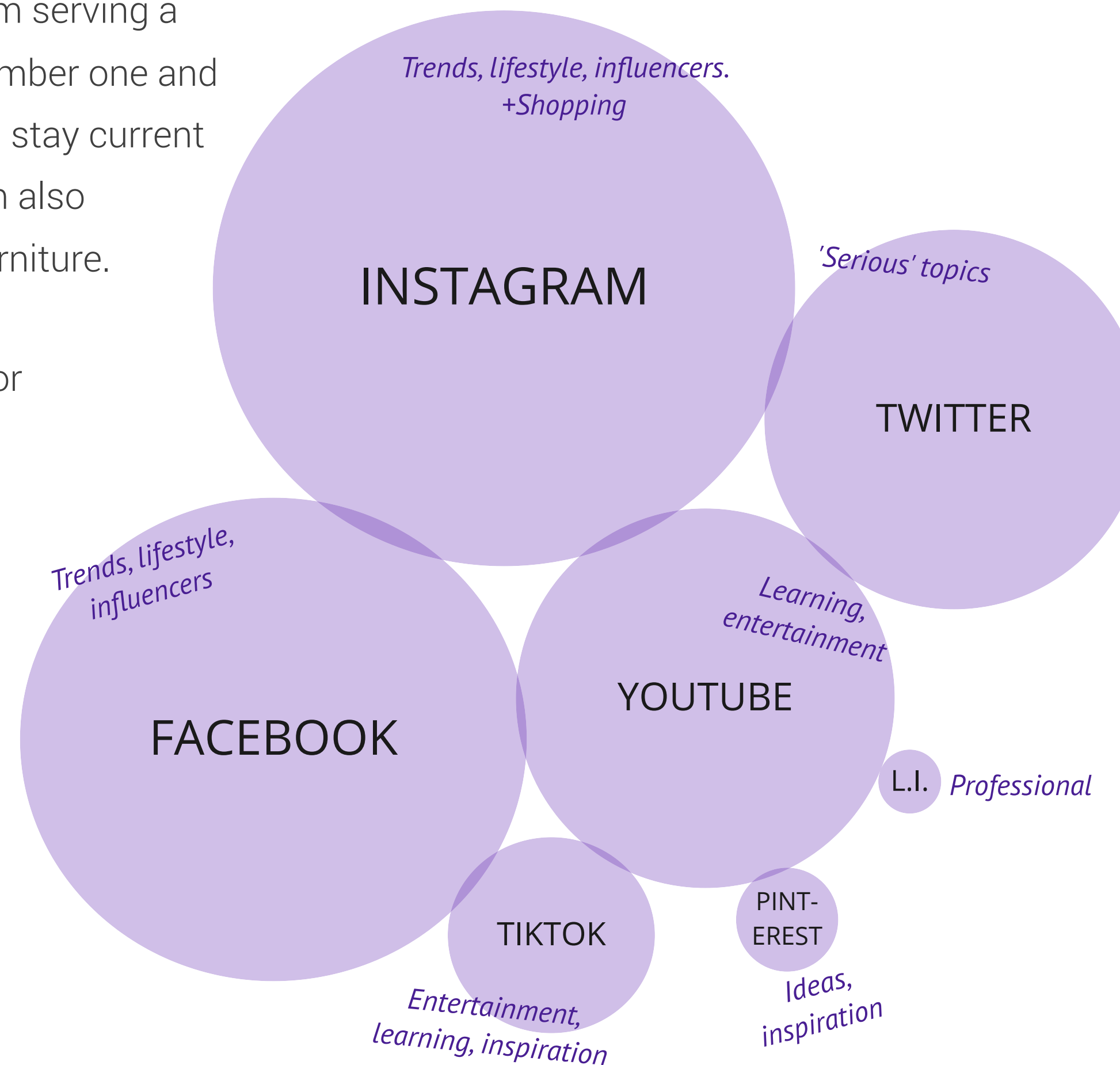


# INFLUENTIAL MEDIA: SOCIAL MEDIA INSPIRES AND INFORMS PREFERENCES, AND ENABLES PURCHASES.

YPs use a variety of social media, with each medium serving a different function. Instagram and Facebook, the number one and two most used platforms respectively, allow YPs to stay current on lifestyle trends and social influencers. Instagram also represents a key shopping channel, including for furniture.

Other widely used social media include YouTube (for learning purposes) and Twitter (for staying current on 'serious topics'). YouTube is uniquely positioned to fulfill YPs' needs for learning; it is the go-to resource on *how to* do any number of things, including how to design or build furniture.

Tik Tok (for entertainment purposes), Pinterest (for ideas and inspiration), and LinkedIn (for professional use) are also used by YPs, albeit less heavily than other media.

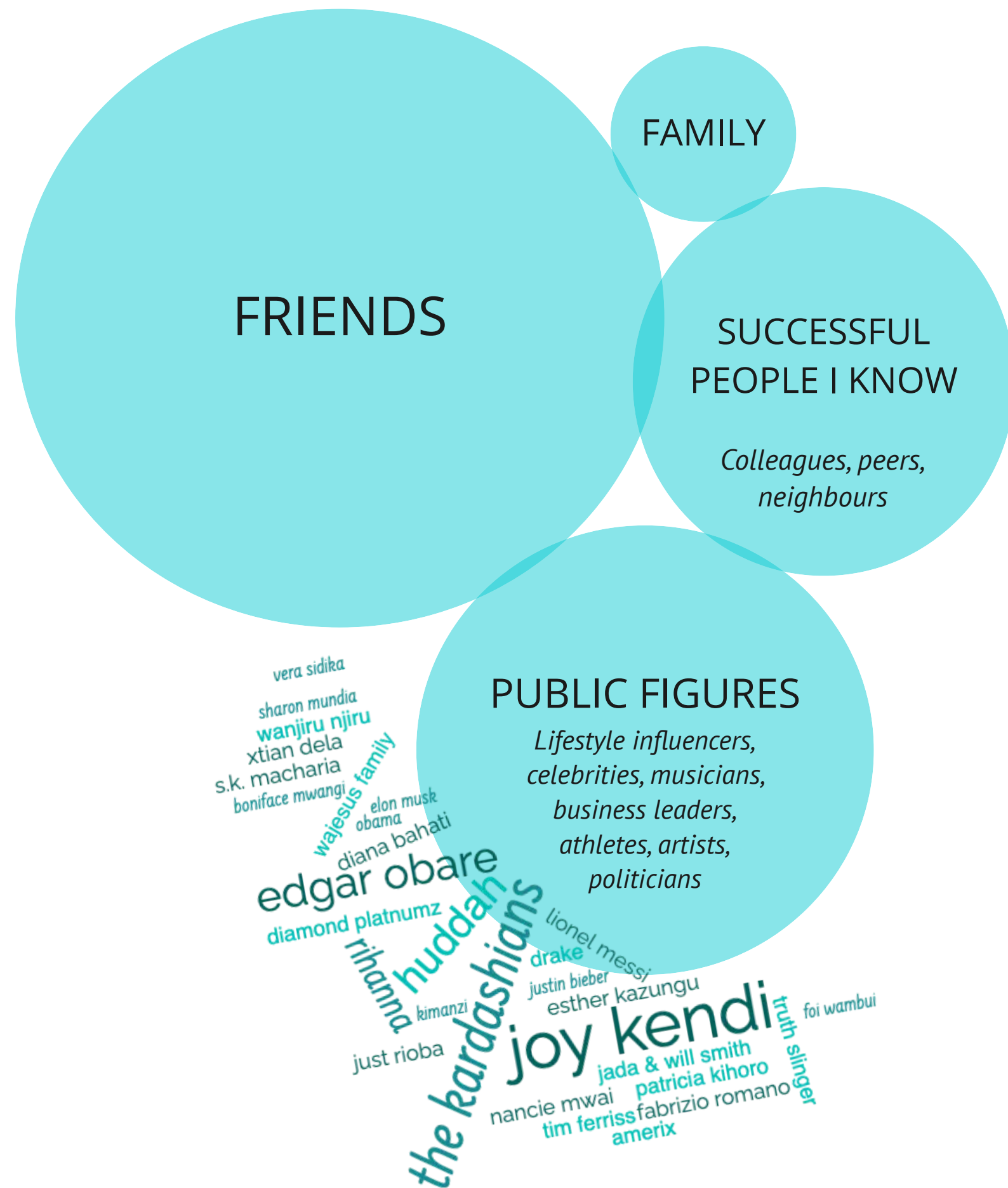




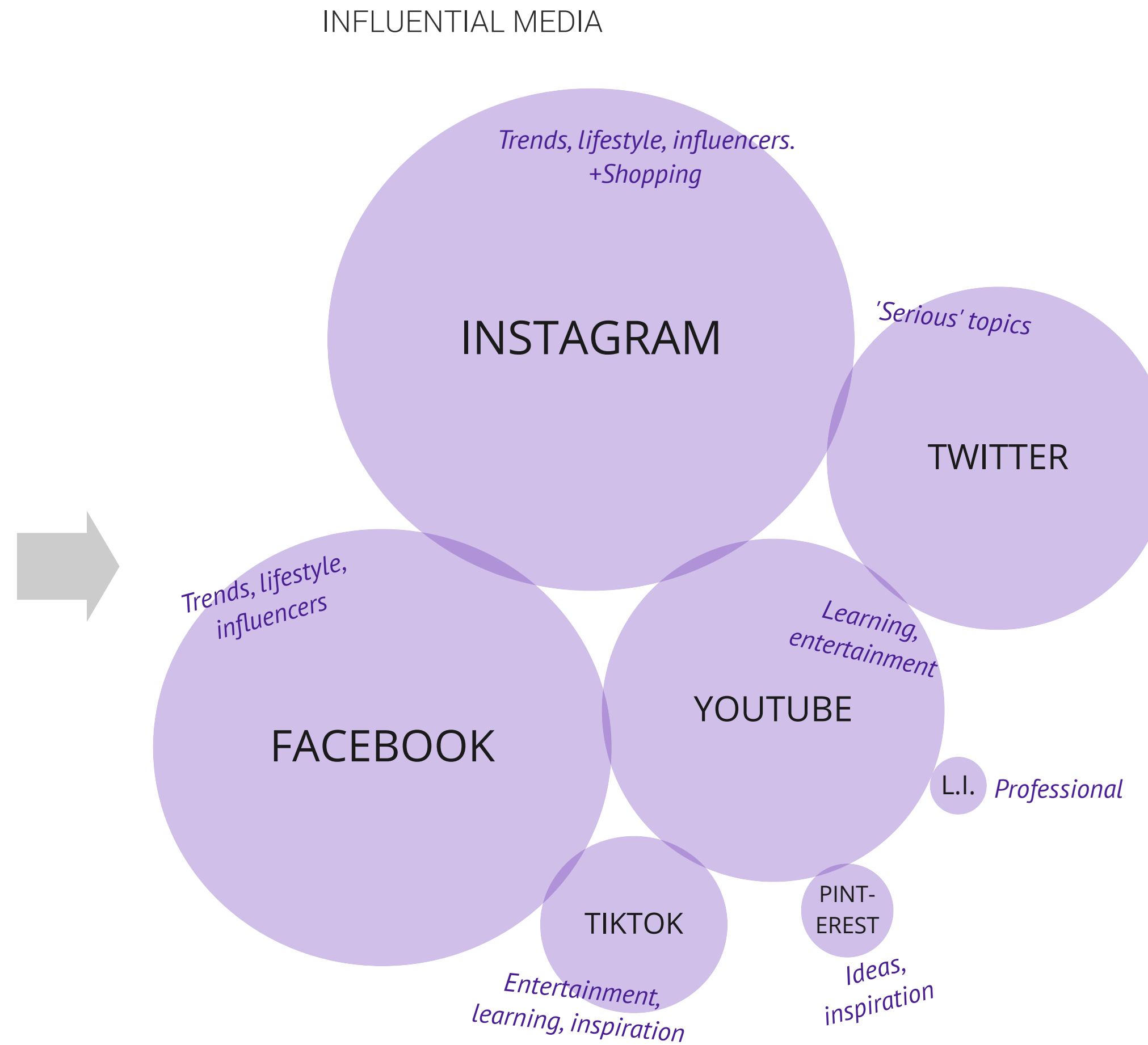
# INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE ARE AMPLIFIED AND ENABLED BY SOCIAL MEDIA.

YPs use social media to follow and share ideas, information, and opinions within their social networks.

INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE



INFLUENTIAL MEDIA



# FURNITURE USE-CASES AND PRIORITIES

SLEEP / SIT

HOST (IMPRESS)  
VISITORS

EAT & WORK

ARRANGE /  
STORE /  
ORGANIZE

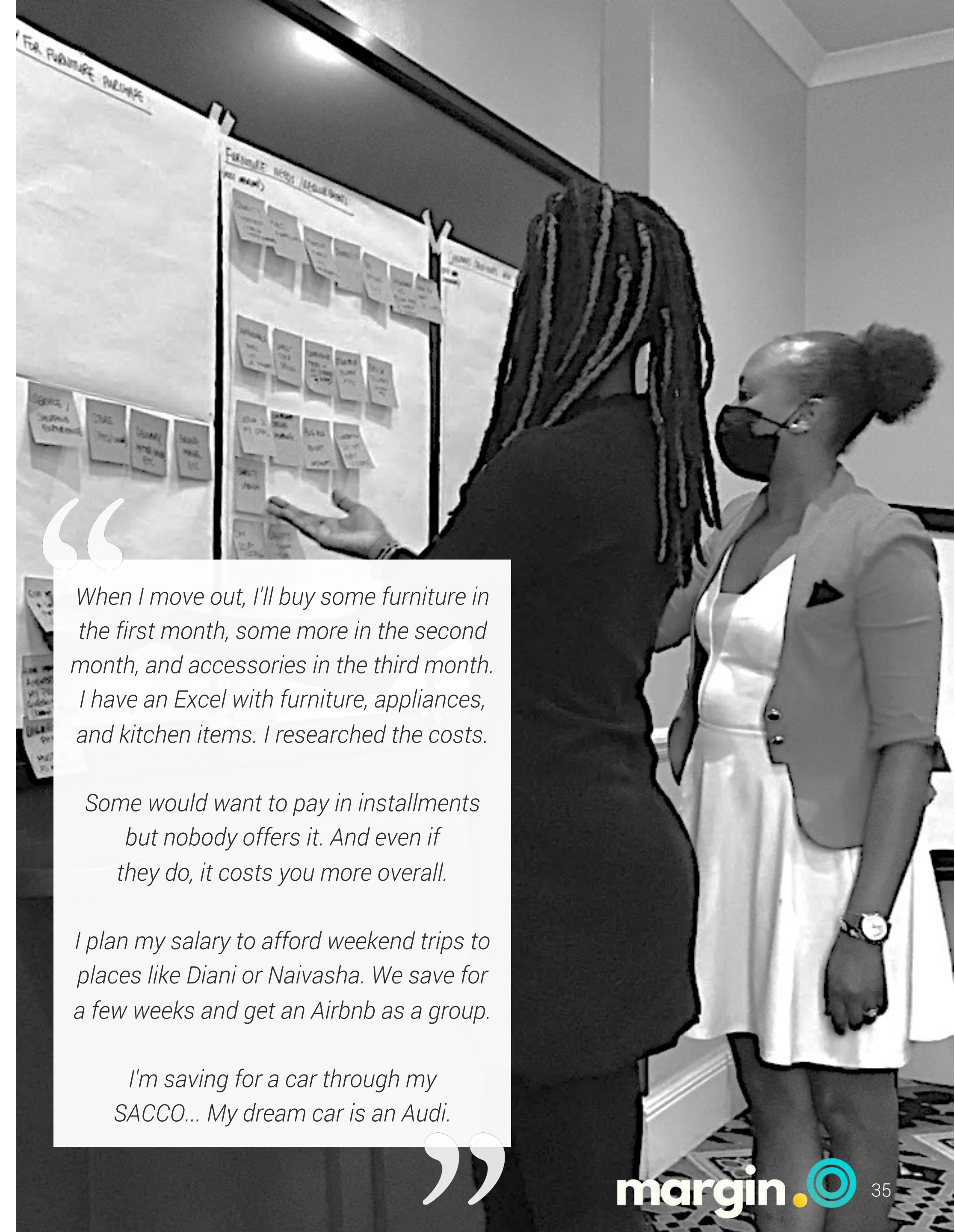
SAFEKEEPING

## PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR

# AFFORDING THE DREAM REQUIRES PLANNING AND STAGING PURCHASES.

YPs have big dreams and small budgets. They aspire to own and experience nice things, and are skilled at planning and prioritizing to afford larger-ticket purchases.

In other facets of their lives, especially in tech, YPs are accustomed to affording purchases through bite-sized payments, such as with subscription services (e.g. Netflix, Showbox, Spotify), or payment plans on apps like Aspira. But they explain that for furniture purchases, installment plans are either unavailable or uneconomical. This means that YPs typically purchase furniture in stages, one piece at a time as their savings/cash allows.



“

*When I move out, I'll buy some furniture in the first month, some more in the second month, and accessories in the third month. I have an Excel with furniture, appliances, and kitchen items. I researched the costs.*

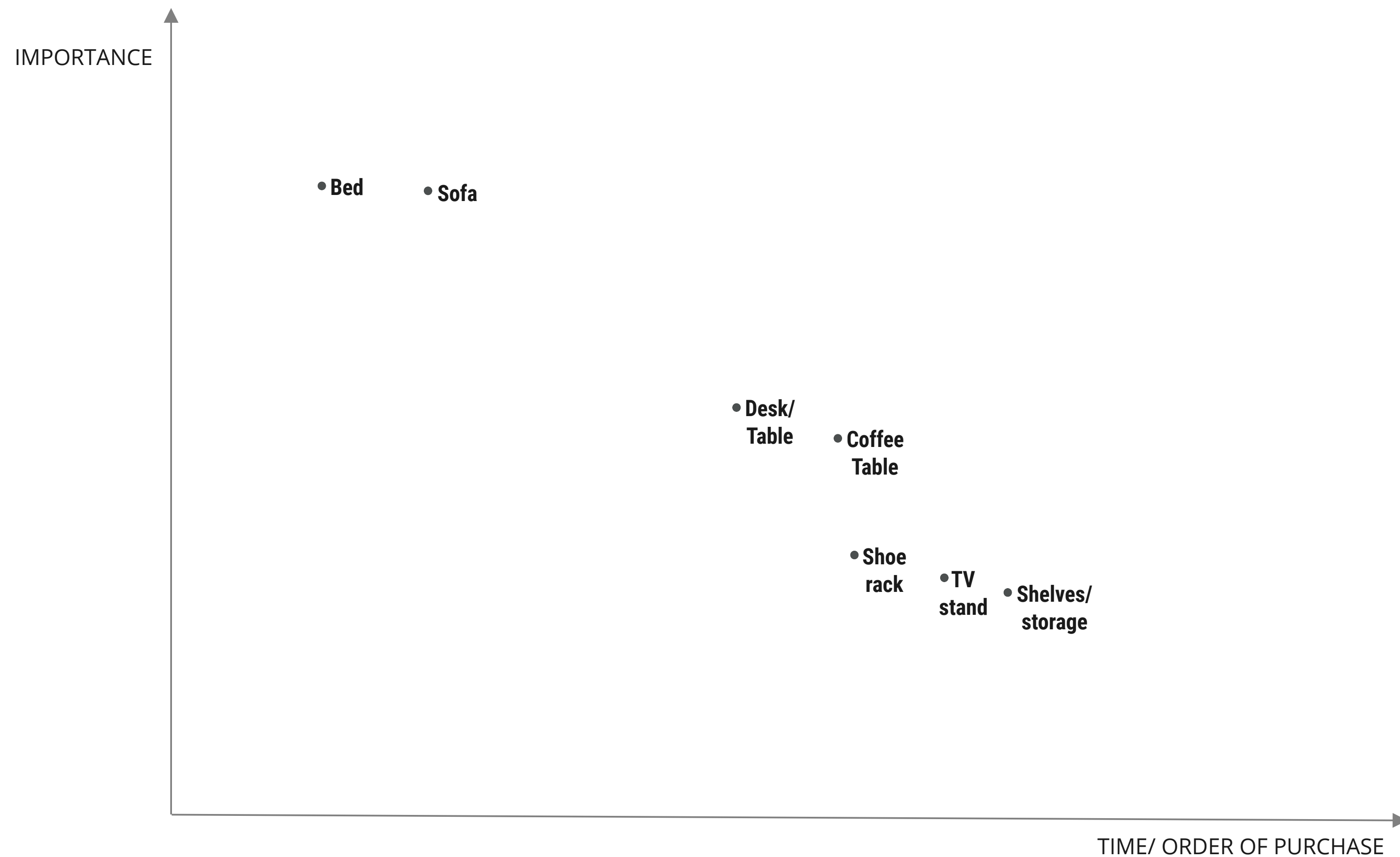
*Some would want to pay in installments but nobody offers it. And even if they do, it costs you more overall.*

*I plan my salary to afford weekend trips to places like Diani or Naivasha. We save for a few weeks and get an Airbnb as a group.*

*I'm saving for a car through my SACCO... My dream car is an Audi.*

”

# IMPORTANCE & PRIORITY OF FURNITURE TYPES



When I moved here, first I bought a bed, then a sofa, then a fridge. Next I'll buy a study desk and a chair.

Way low on the list would be a TV stand for when friends come over, or maybe I'd get a coffee table instead... After that would be shoe rack.

# SLEEPING AND SITTING ARE CORE FUNCTIONAL NEEDS.

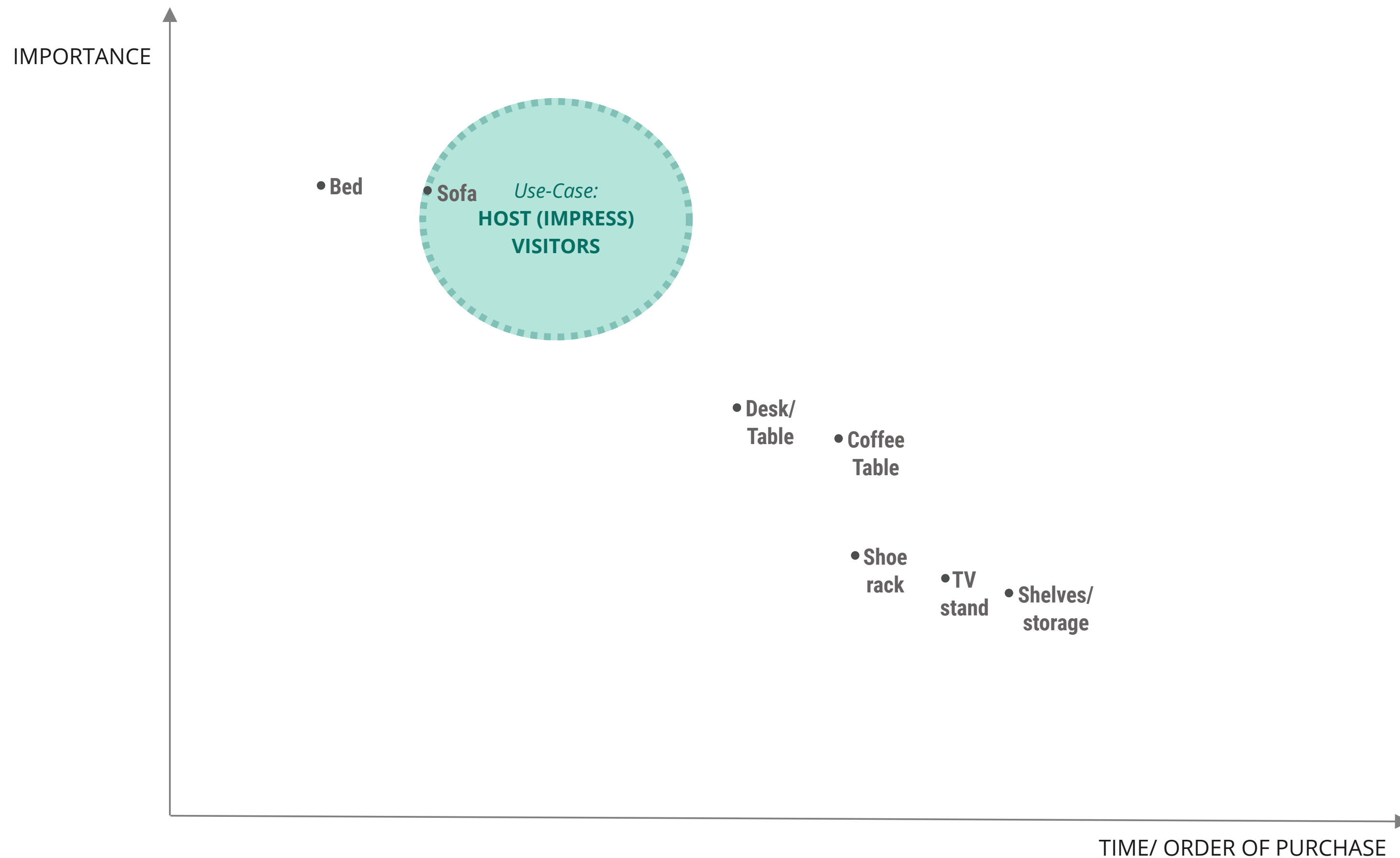
These are core functional needs, and they dictate the order in which YPs purchase furniture. A bed is usually the first purchase, and comprises a bed of 'durable enough' quality, and suits small-spaces (e.g. 4x6).



“  
The furniture I have right now... a bed and a sofa.  
I have a couch, a bed, and a study table. That all.  
The most important furniture is a bed, then a table.”

# FURNITURE MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO HOST (AND IMPRESS) GUESTS.

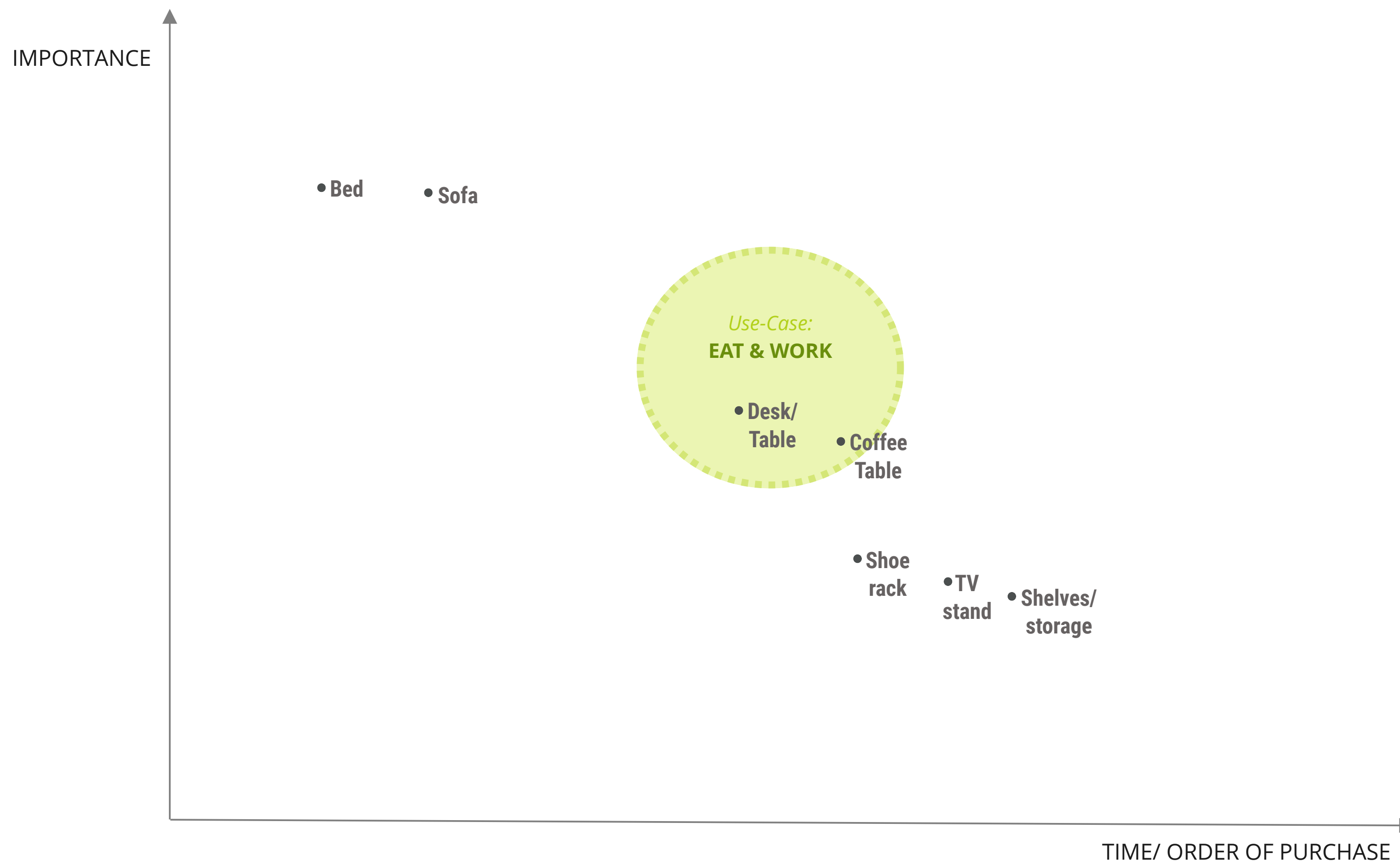
A sofa is a key piece of furniture for this reason. YPs take pride in being able to entertain groups of friends; this means having enough seating to gather comfortably. A sofa's design will be influenced by what YPs believe their guests will value/think.



“  
*I like an L-shaped sofa...  
If you have people over,  
it fits more people without  
multiple sofas. And visitors  
can sleep on it.*  
  
*I bought the couch for when  
my friends visit. It's a 3-  
seater... otherwise they  
would need to sit on the bed!*  
”

# IT'S NOT IDEAL TO WORK ON THE SOFA, SO PROPER FURNITURE IS EVENTUALLY NECESSARY.

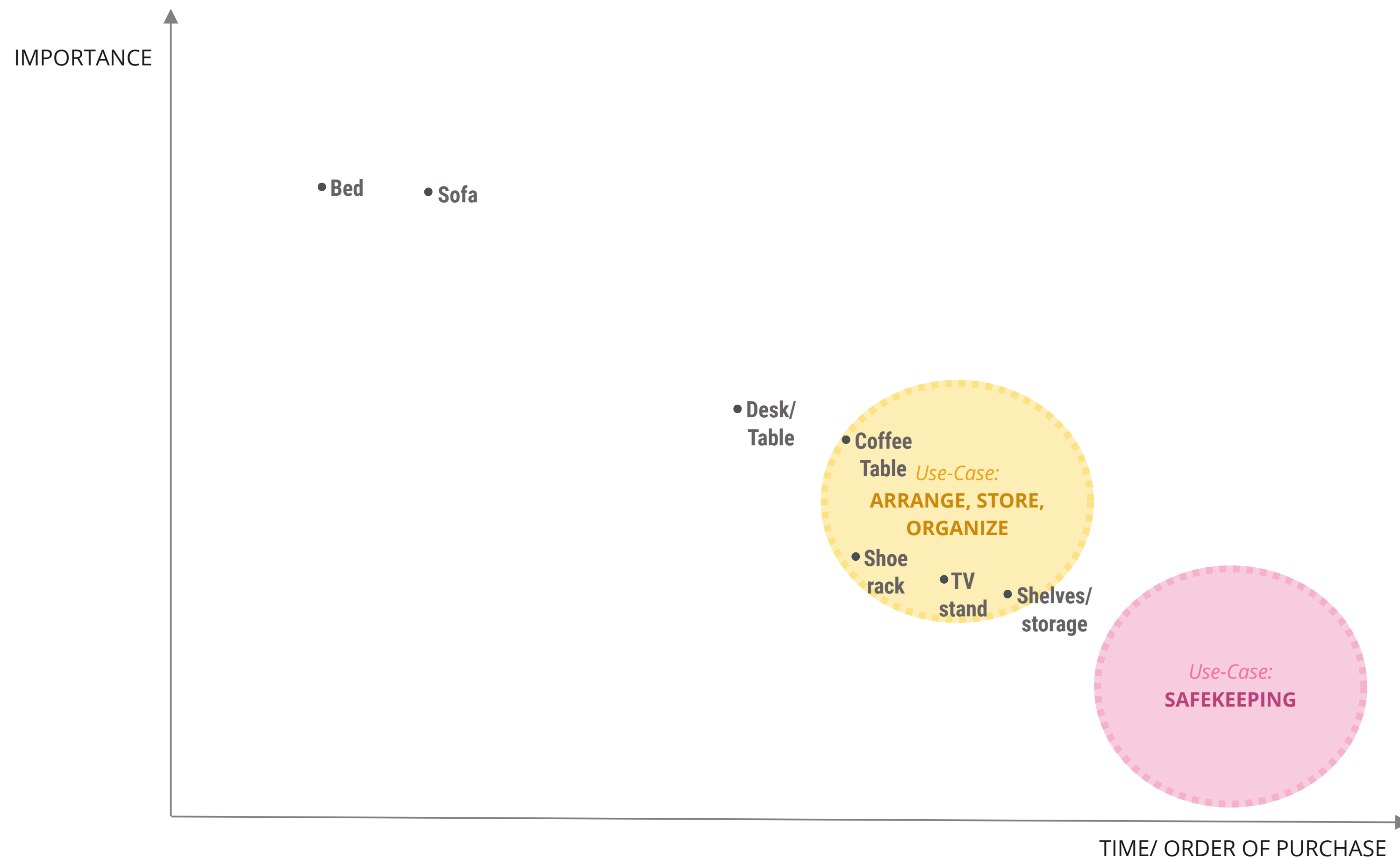
Some YPs work from home on a part-time or full-time basis, and many operate side-hustles. YPs purchase furniture incrementally. Early on in this journey, they make do with what furniture they have (e.g. the sofa) to work and to dine—but this is an unideal interim solution. After YPs' needs for sleeping, sitting, and hosting are met, their next priority purchase is furniture for working and dining.



“My next big purchase (I already have a bed and sofa) will be a study table and a seat, because I work from home.”

# STORAGE/ORGANIZATION AND SAFE-KEEPING ARE BOTH IMPORTANT NEEDS... BUT NOT ENOUGH TO PAY FOR AS STANDALONE BENEFITS.

YPs value furniture that can store, organize, and arrange their personal effects. They also seek safe storage for valuables, especially electronics. Given limited resources, YPs would prefer that their higher priority furniture (sofas, beds, desk/tables) simultaneously serve these needs, rather than purchase purpose-built items.



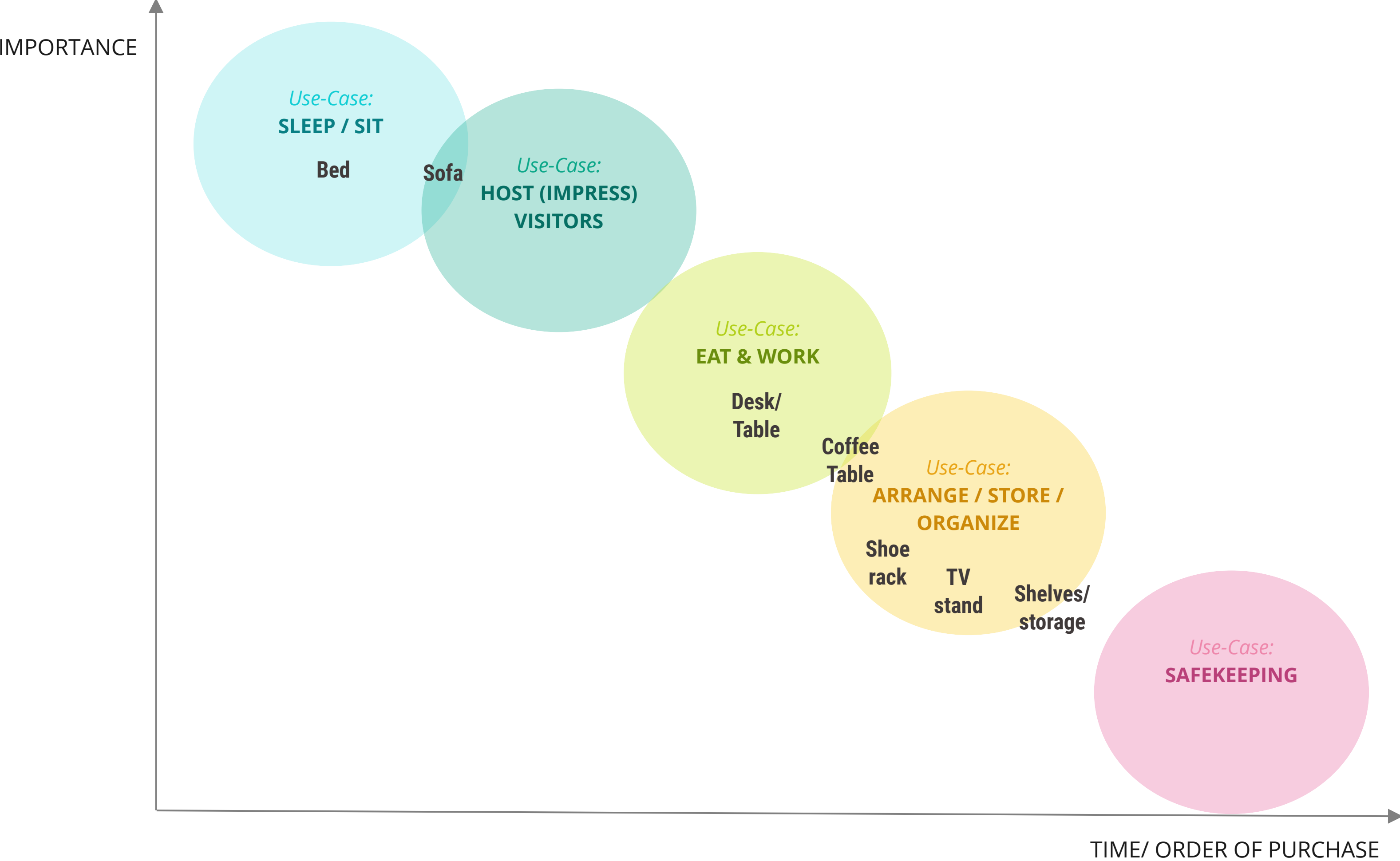
*I like Moko's sliding coffee table. You can keep stuff inside, and the top slides to hide them away.*

*I like this coffee table with a lockable drawer. If guests come over... you don't want things to go missing...*

*I want a lockable drawer or shelf for my phone, laptop, and charger... It's organized; I'll know where they are.*



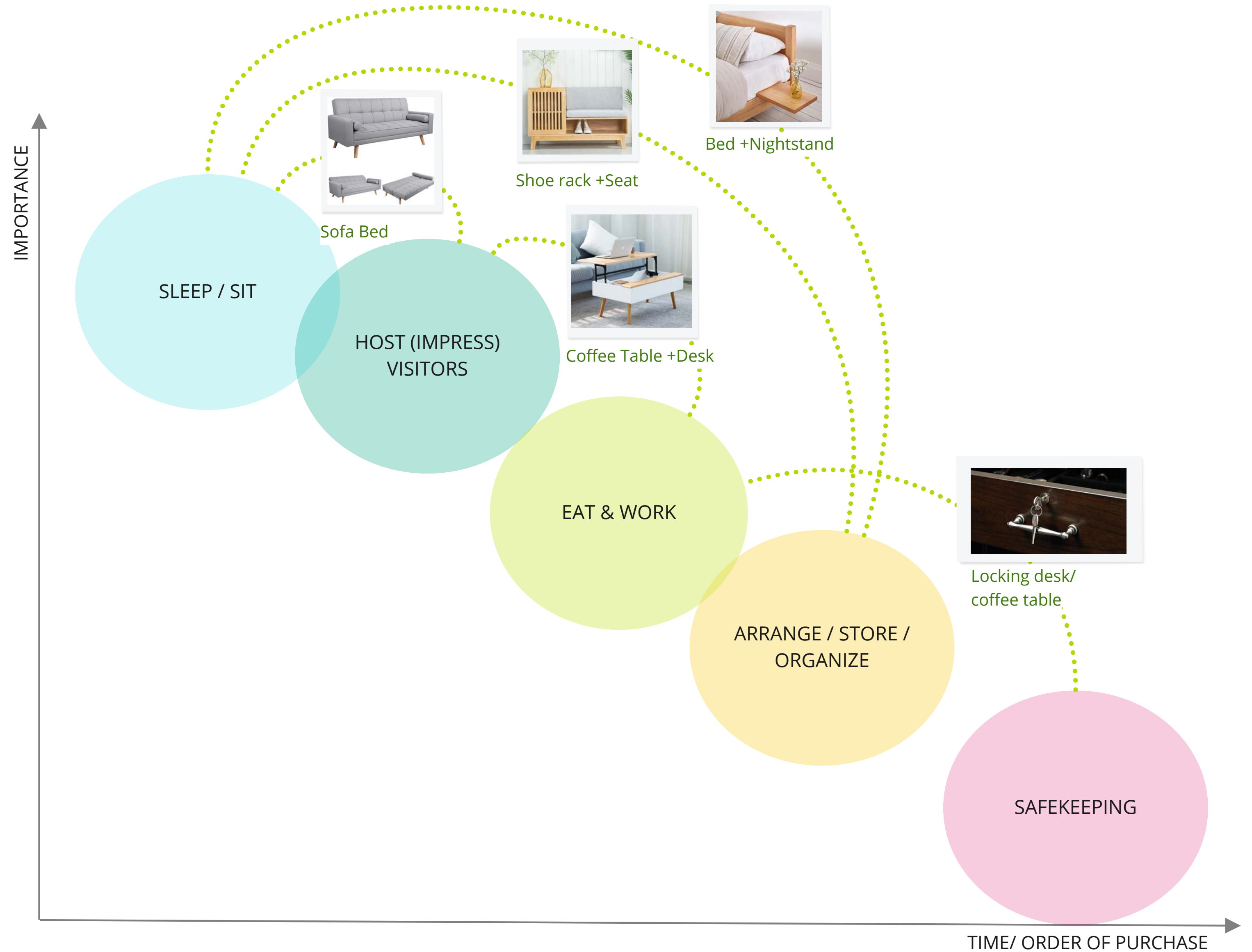
# SUMMARY: FURNITURE USE-CASES & PRIORITIES



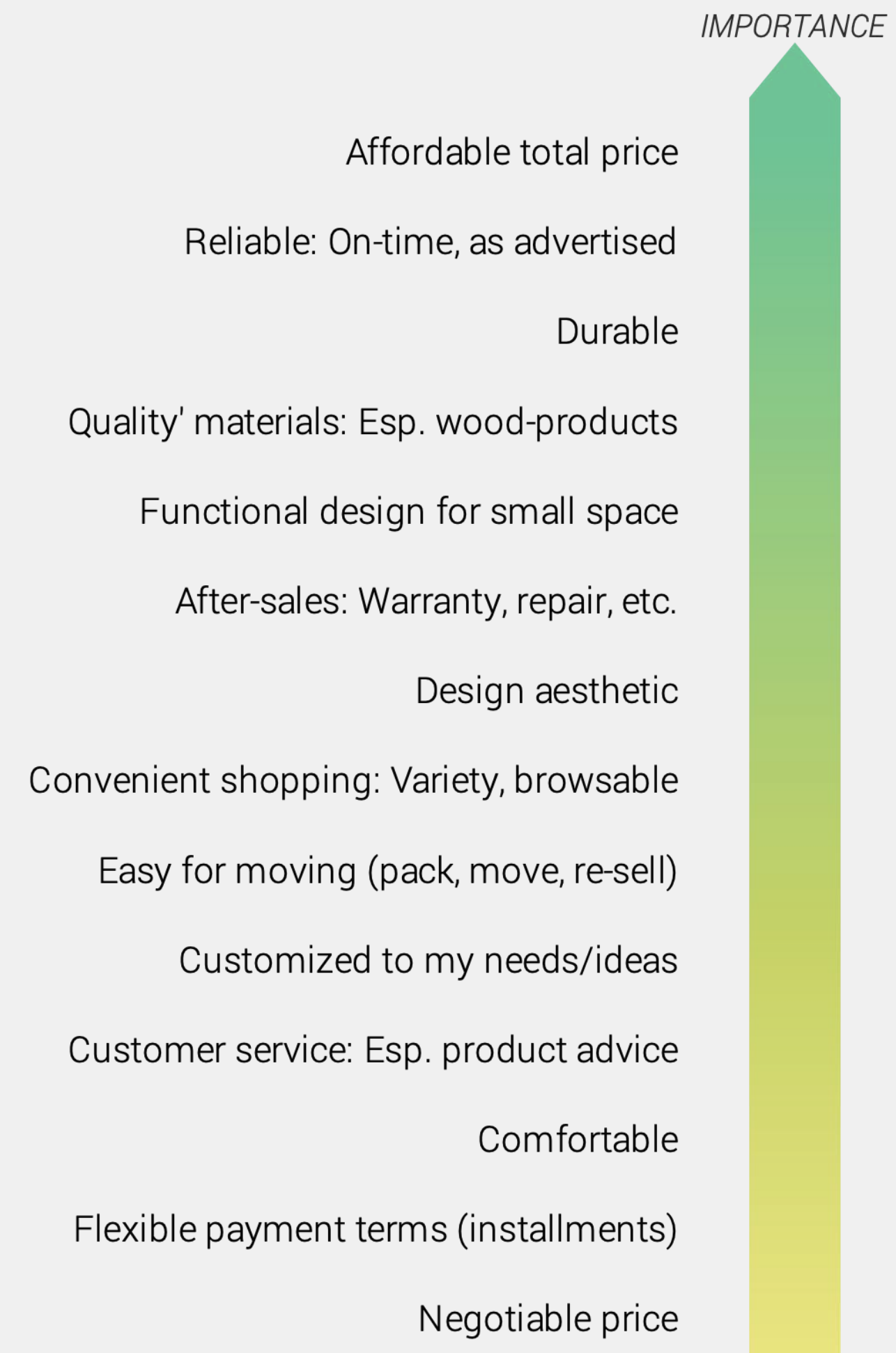
**OPPORTUNITY:**  
**THE IDEAL FURNITURE WOULD SERVE MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS.**

YPs currently shop for multiple furniture pieces to meet different use-cases, yet they are severely constrained by their small budgets and small living spaces. They would prefer to buy fewer, 'better' items, and will consider spending more for each item if they fulfil multiple functions.

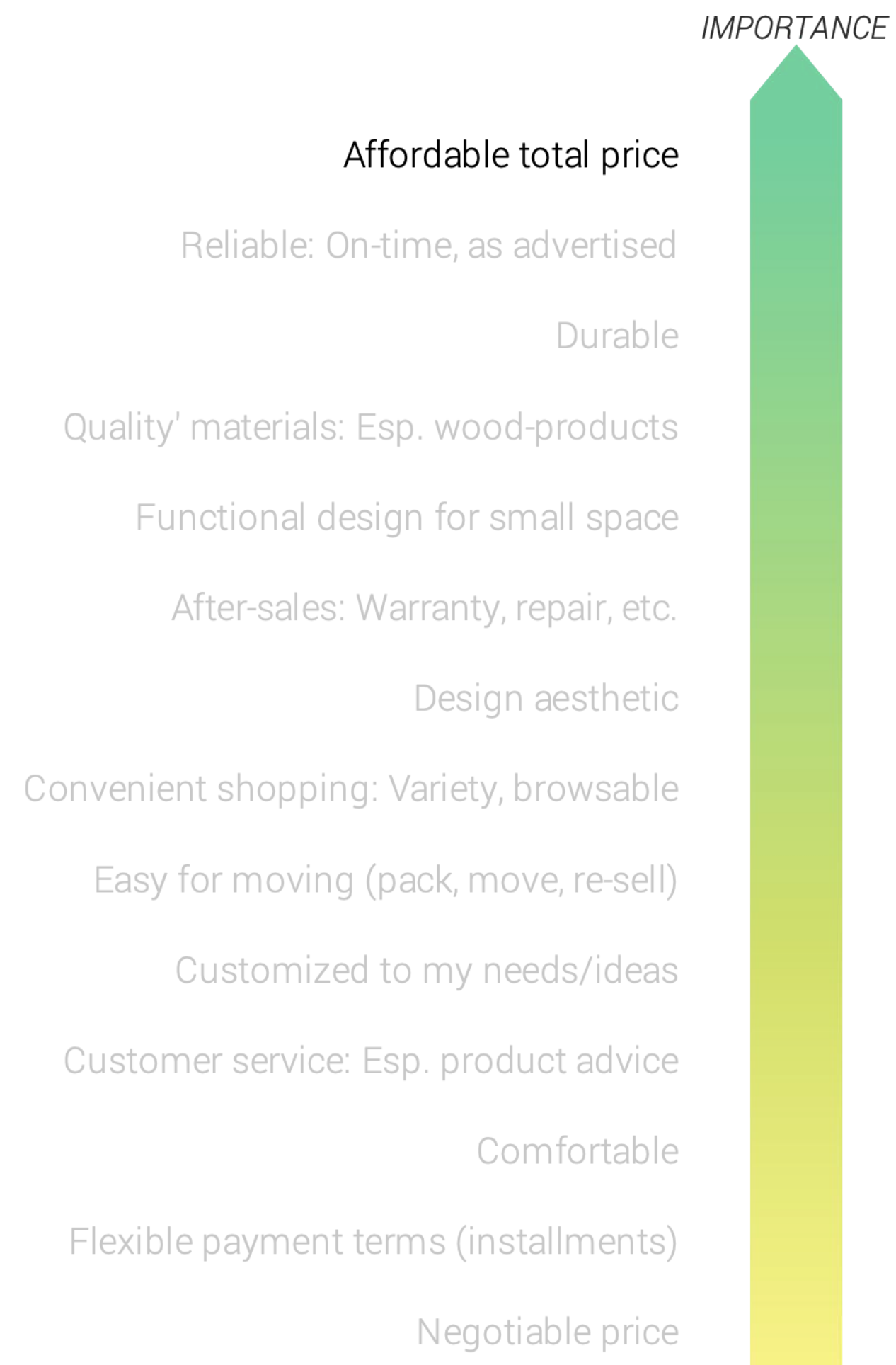
“  
*This bed can be made into a seat... like a pullout sofa. For hosting, it would be good.*  
*I like this shoe rack... it has a padded seat you can sit on.*  
*I have a portable table you can put on your lap, I can use the sofa to work.*  
*If I had a lockable coffee table, I wouldn't need another lockable storage.*  
 ”



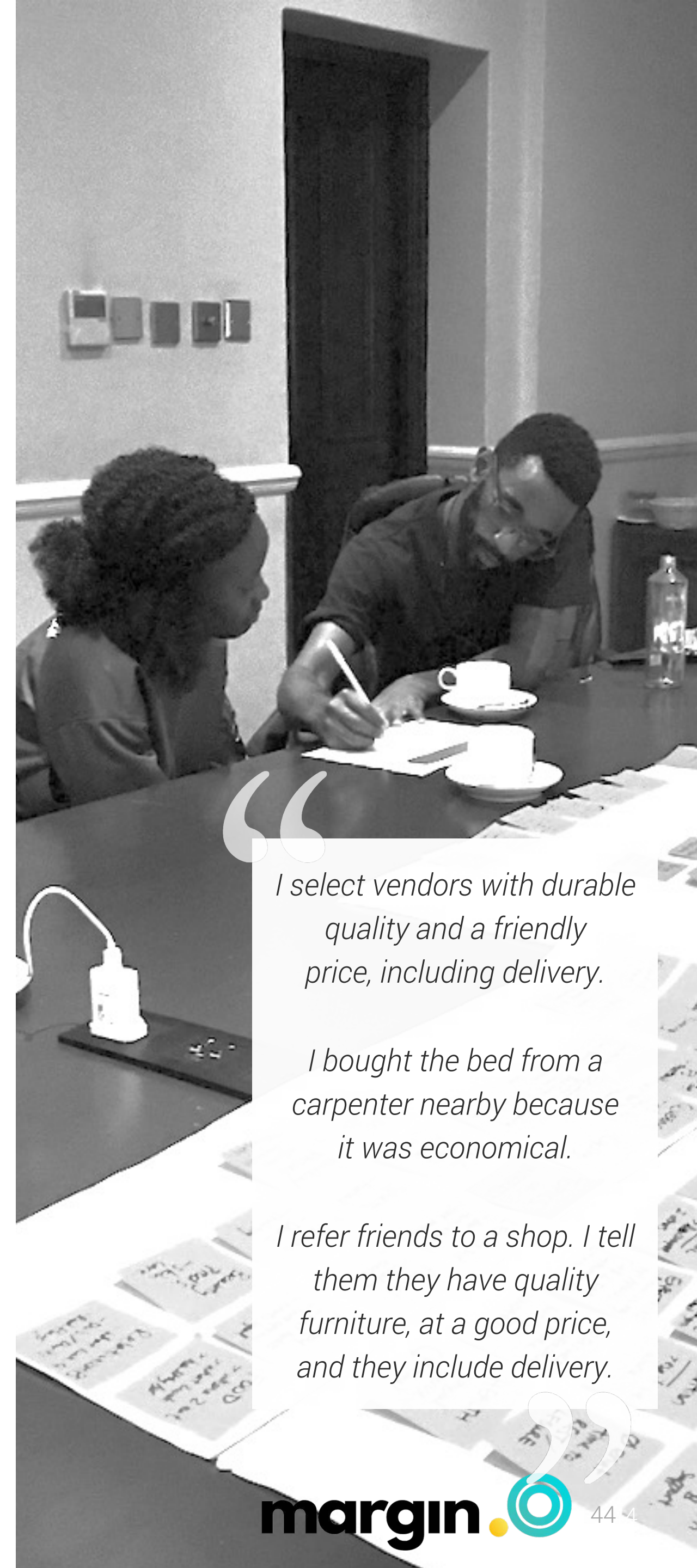
# PURCHASE ATTRIBUTES IN ORDER OF PRIORITY



# THE FIRST THING TO CONSIDER IS THE *TOTAL* PRICE, INCLUDING ANCILLARIES—ESPECIALLY DELIVERY.



As YPs must stretch their money across many priorities, their starting point for considering any product or vendor is the total cost of owning the furniture. Transport or delivery represents a large proportion of costs for many purchases, so this is of particular concern. Because of their price-sensitivity, YPs value upfront and transparent purchase-information.

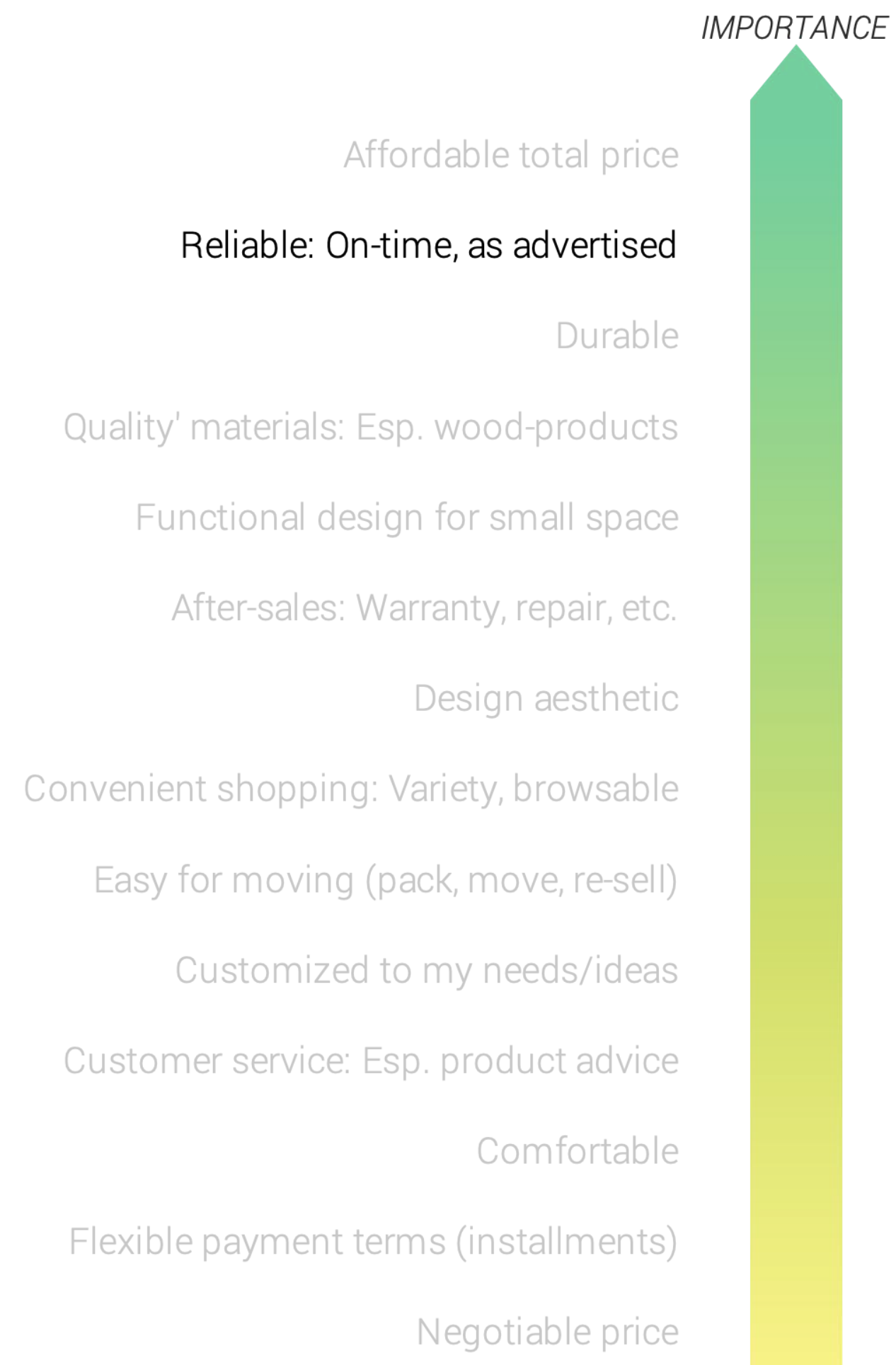


*I select vendors with durable quality and a friendly price, including delivery.*

*I bought the bed from a carpenter nearby because it was economical.*

*I refer friends to a shop. I tell them they have quality furniture, at a good price, and they include delivery.*

# THERE'S A BIG RISK THAT WHAT WAS PROMISED WON'T BE DELIVERED IN FULL, OR ON TIME.



Most YPs purchase furniture from lower-cost vendors such as Jua Kali shops and showrooms. Lower-cost vendors are notoriously unreliable; YPs feel tremendous anxiety about all the ways in which a vendor might not deliver what was promised, including on design, quality, materials, and timely delivery. YPs vet potential vendors by looking at indicators of their reliability, including: the professionalism of their storefront, their brand/reputation, samples of their prior work, and personal referrals.

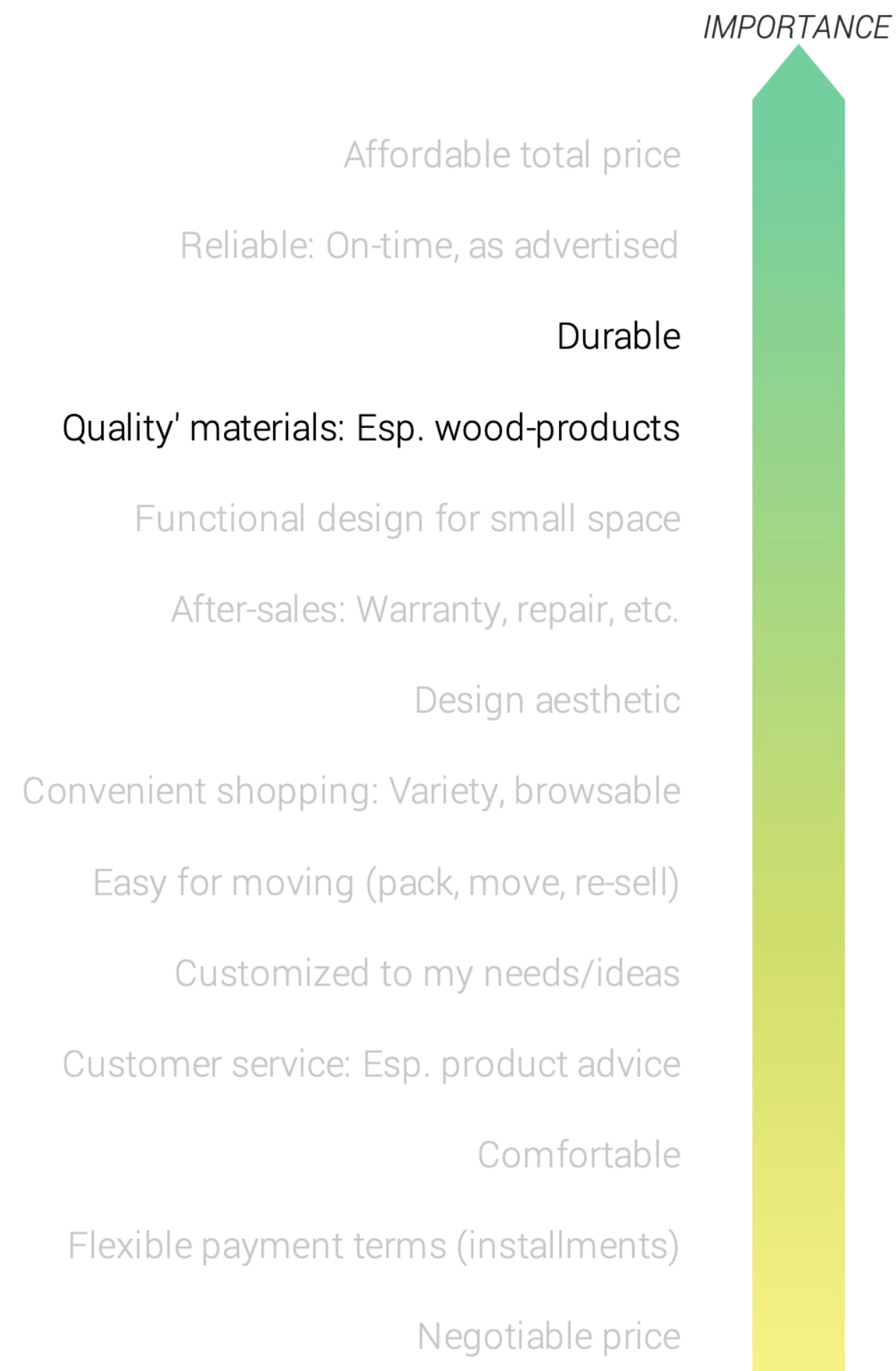
*“ I get frustrated...things don't come back at 100%... You need to push the carpenter and go back and forth..*

*A showroom saves time; you just walk in and buy. With Jua Kali it can take months...*

*Moko has good quality and honest communication.*

*If you visit a (new) carpenter, you want samples of their work. Or if you already know a shop, you go back there.*”

QUALITY MATTERS. A 'QUALITY' PRODUCT IS DURABLE, AND MADE FROM 'QUALITY' MATERIALS SUCH AS WOOD PRODUCTS.



FURNITURE: NEEDS / REQUIREMENTS:

MOST IMPORTANT >

BUDGET/AFFORDABILITY

KNOW YOU'RE GETTING ABSOLUTE BEST PRICE.

KNOW PAYMENT TERMS UPFRONT

STOP THAT'S TESTED/TRIED/REC'D BY FRIENDS.

DON'T MARKET A PRODUCT YOU DON'T HAVE

DELIVERY & INSTALLATION.

TRACKABLE DELIVERY

TIMELY. → MEET EXPECTED PROMISE TIME FRAME

DESIGN. → Look, shape, size

DURABLE (LAST).

MOVING W/ IT → EASY → DURABILITY

CONFOR

DESIGN AESTHETIC COORDINATION 2 ROOM.

Looks pretty

FITS WELL / SHAPE OF

LIMITED SPACE-APPROPRIATE

Realize my (almost unrealistic) N.e. cus

WARRANTY → % cost of repair/m/fixing.

RE-SELLABLE (option to swap out in few yrs)

CHILD PROOFING.

TRANSPARENCY OF AESTHETIC INTO FUTURE LIFE/SPACE

TYPE - es

MULTI-FUNCTIONALITY.

Sustainability (↓ WOOD USE)

I select a shop with durable products and a good price.

They sell furniture at the supermarket. But it's not good quality. It won't last.

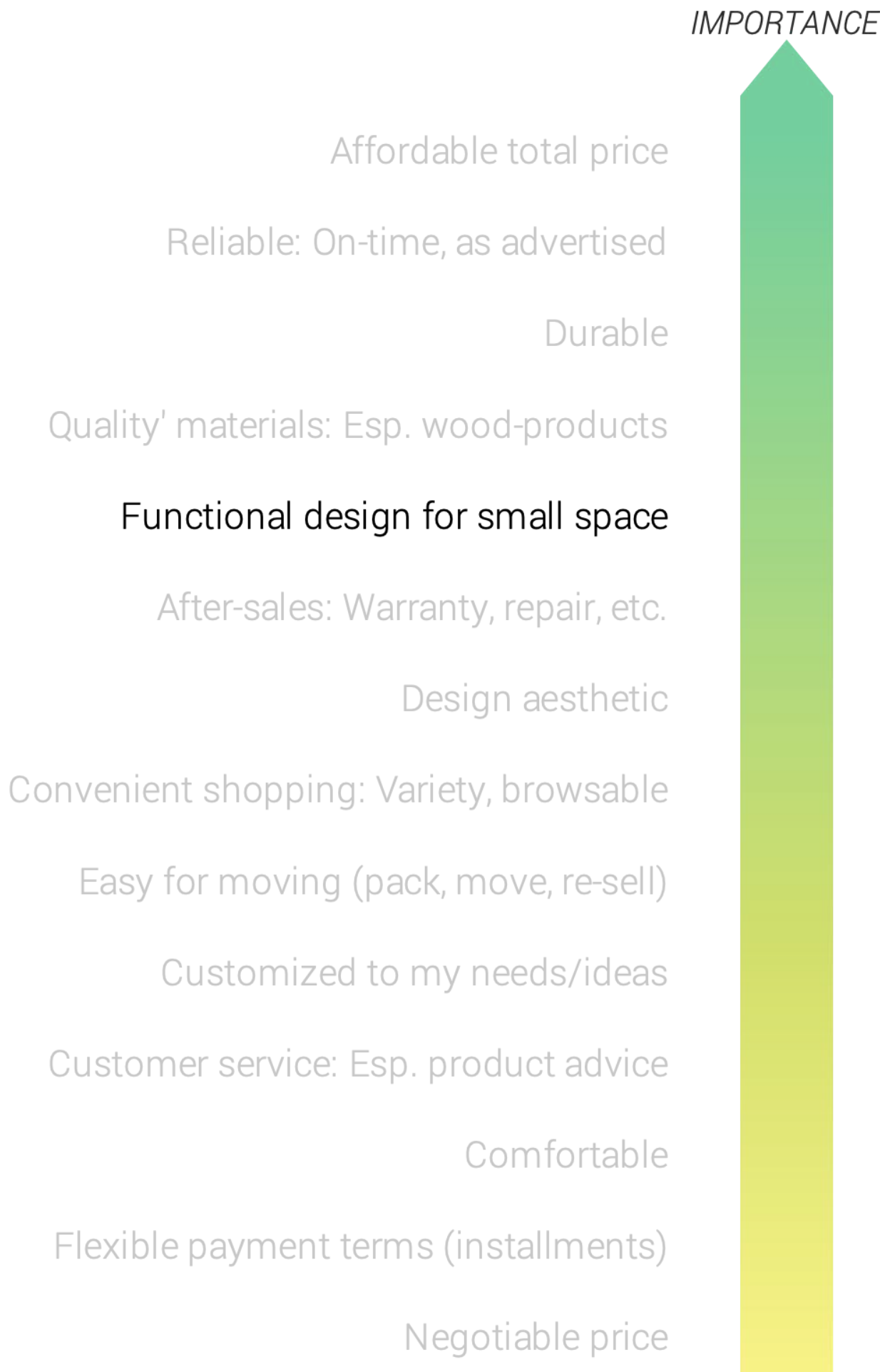
I like the showroom; they source the best quality from all the shops.

The bed is very good quality; it's made of good materials.

margin.

46

# CURRENT FURNITURE OFFERINGS DON'T MAKE THE MOST OF SMALL LIVING SPACES.



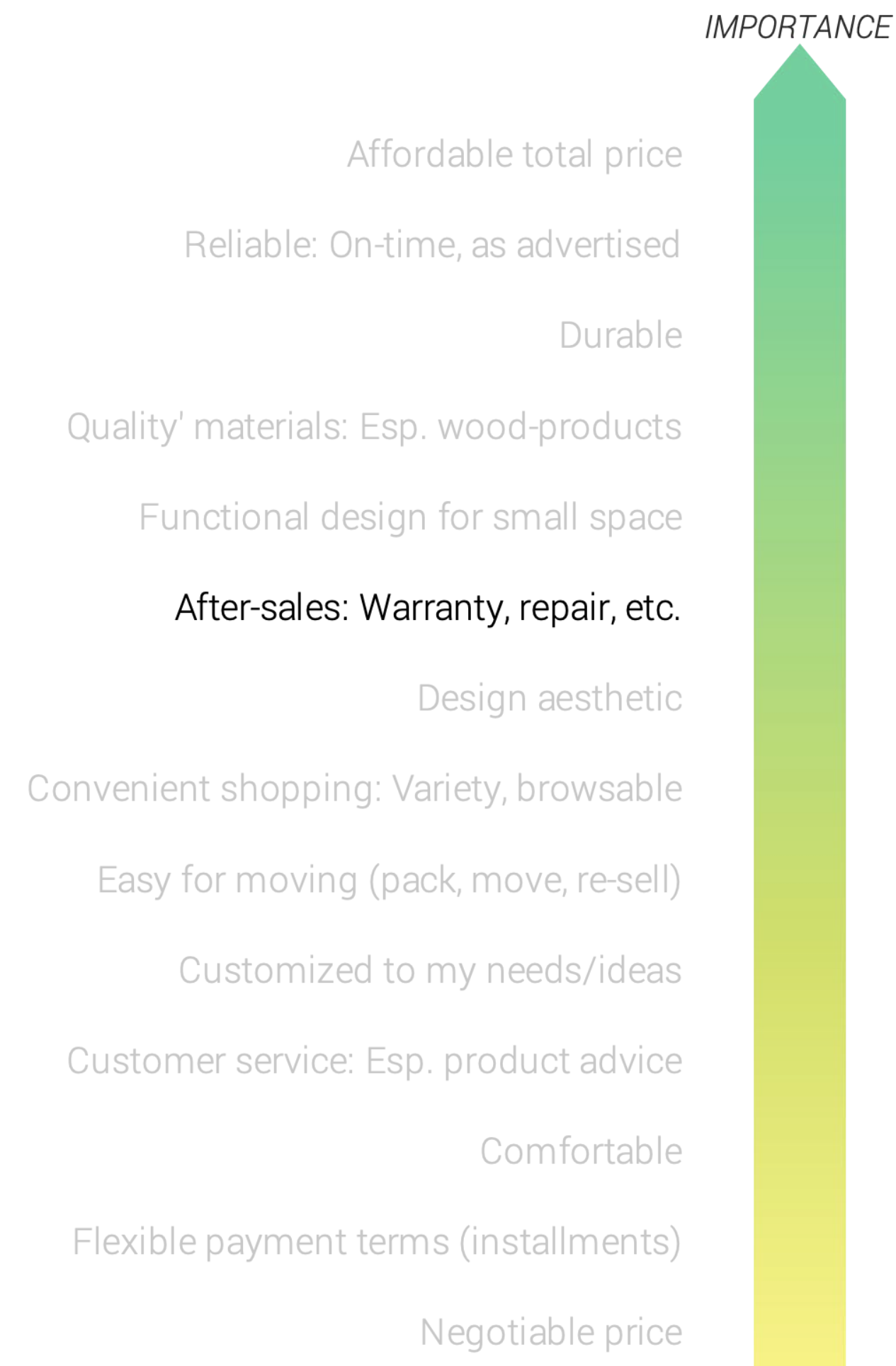
“  
*We want a design that works with the space without congesting it.*

*We live in small rooms. Everyone wants something that's isn't bulky, but doesn't feel small. It should FEEL big and fit well in the space.*

*There's some furniture that fit in bedsitters, but there isn't much variety. Everyone has the same thing.*

”

IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT THE INVESTMENT IS PROTECTED FROM EXTRA COSTS IF PROBLEMS ARISE DOWN THE ROAD.

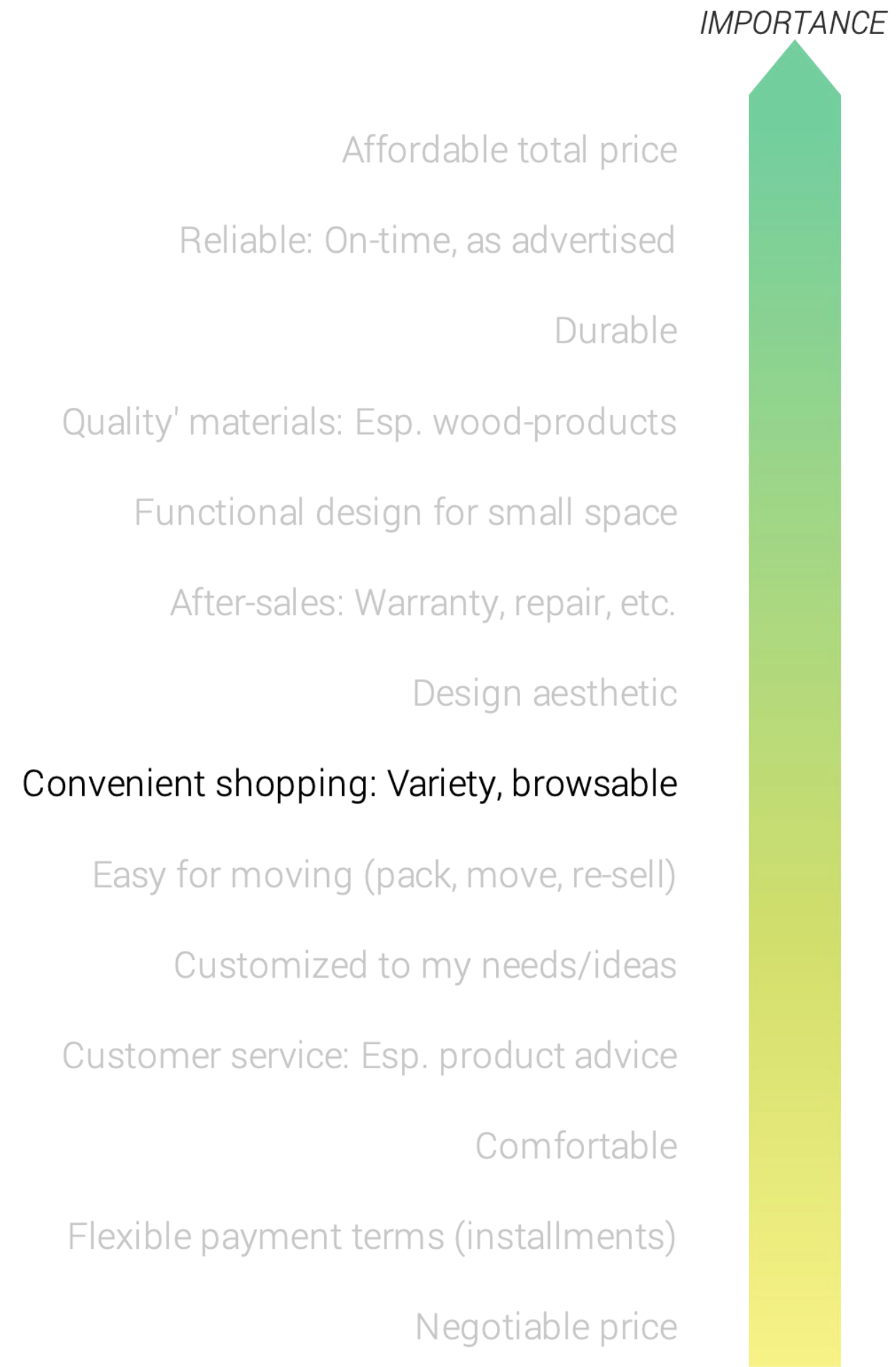


*I bought from a Showroom because of the guarantee, the after sales, and delivery services. They give a warranty and fix it if there's a problem. With Jua Kali you never know. The aftersales was worth paying extra incase things go wrong.*

*My Moko mattress comes with a 10-year warranty!*



THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE—  
FROM START TO FINISH—  
SHOULD BE EASY, CONVENIENT,  
AND ON-DEMAND.



“  
*I bought it there; they have a big variety. Shops should have all the products, like a one-stop-shop.*

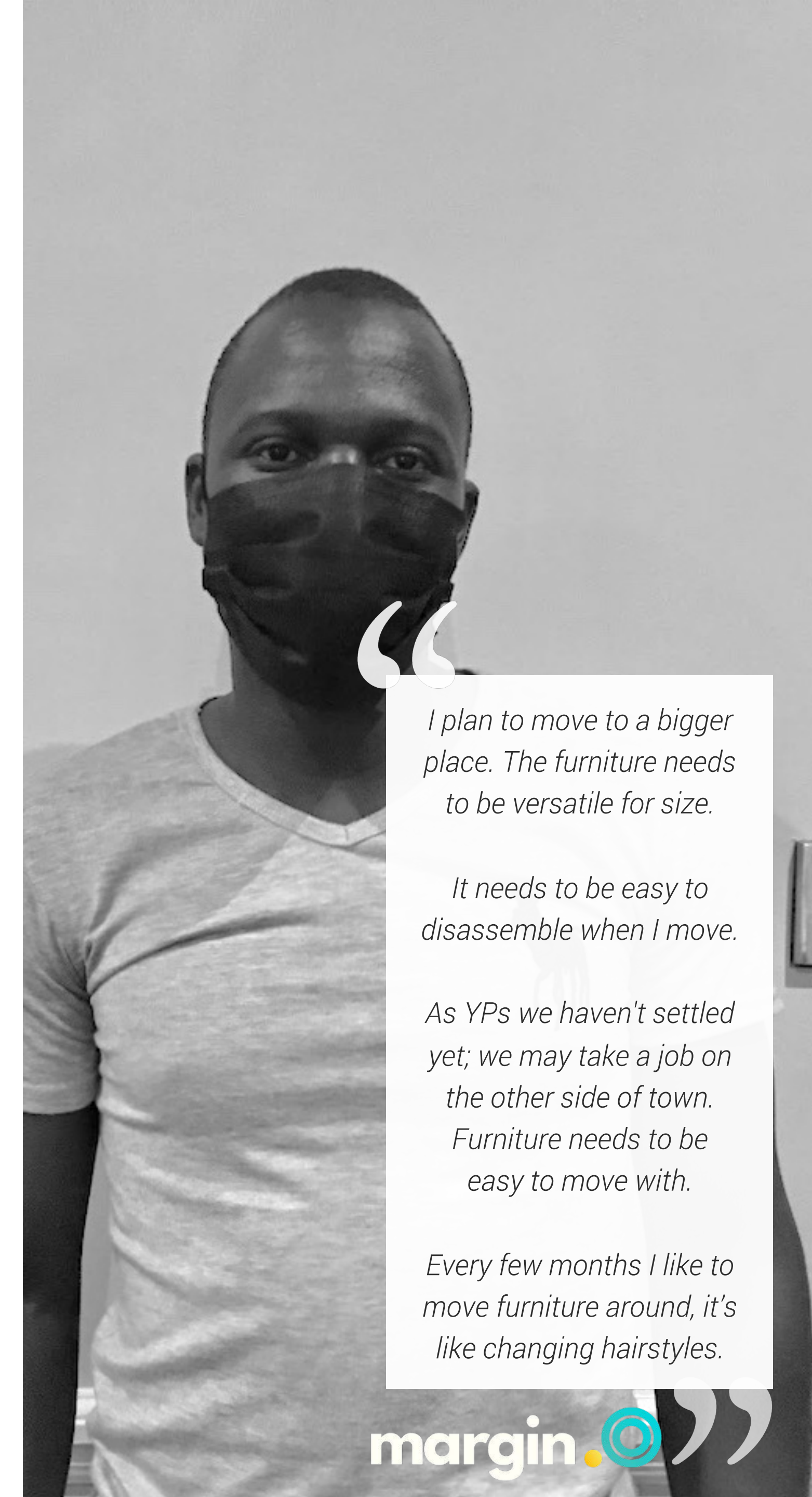
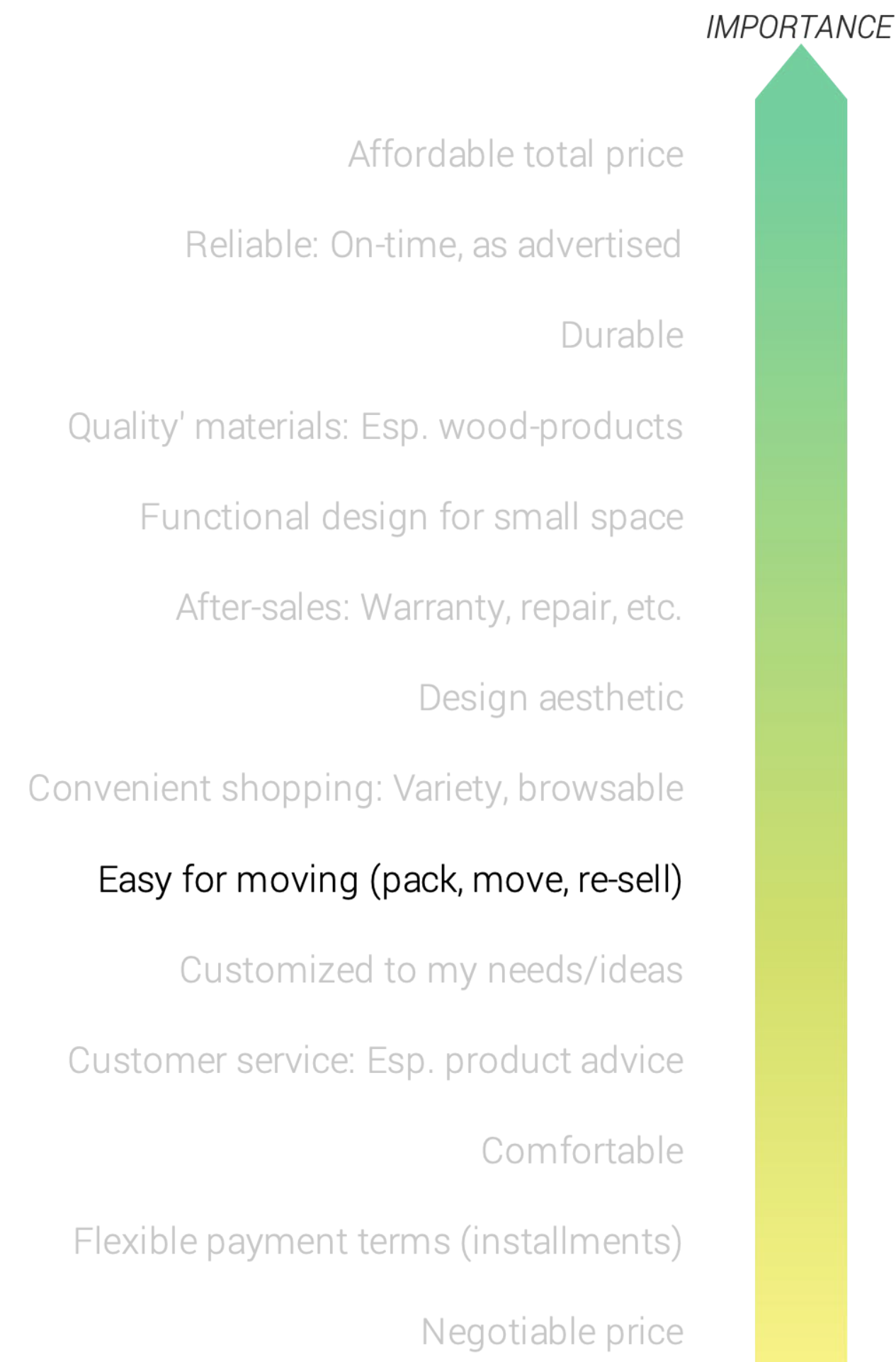
*Moko is easy to access on Instagram and online.*

*Shopping should be easy, comfortable, and efficient.*

*Convenience is important. Like online shopping, and delivery that fits my schedule.*

”

YPS FREQUENTLY MOVE HOUSE,  
AND ALSO REGULARLY MOVE  
FURNITURE AROUND TO  
RE-STYLE THEIR LIVING SPACES.



“  
*I plan to move to a bigger place. The furniture needs to be versatile for size.*

*It needs to be easy to disassemble when I move.*

*As YPs we haven't settled yet; we may take a job on the other side of town. Furniture needs to be easy to move with.*

*Every few months I like to move furniture around, it's like changing hairstyles.*

# PURCHASE ATTRIBUTES IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

*Notable, but somewhat lower priority attributes:*



*"I want a design that matches my idea and a colour that's my unique choice. And it should be customized to fit my space."*

*"Good service is: professional, customized, and personable service agents. They should know their product inside and out, and suggest things for me."*

*"Comfort is important, for example for a sofa. And especially for the work area—like for your chair and table."*

*"Some of us want to pay in installments but nobody offers it. Even if they do, it costs more overall, which we don't want. For electronics, you can pay pole-pole, with apps like Aspira."*

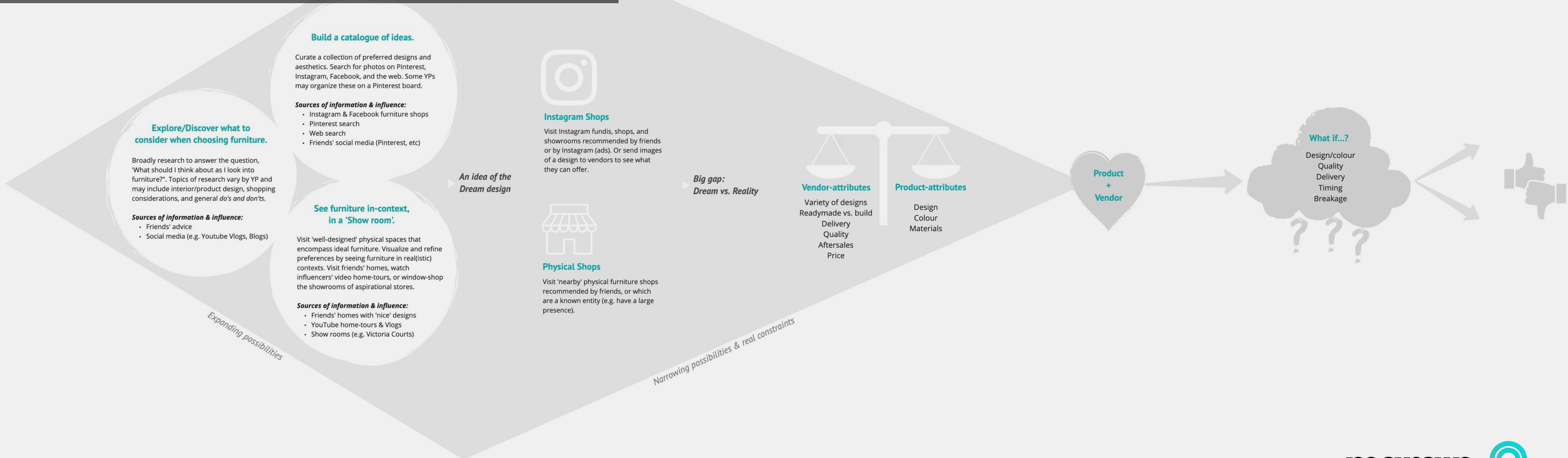
*"You want room to bargain, just a bit... like a small freebie at the end, maybe the transport fee. But bargaining is only necessary if it's above your budget."*

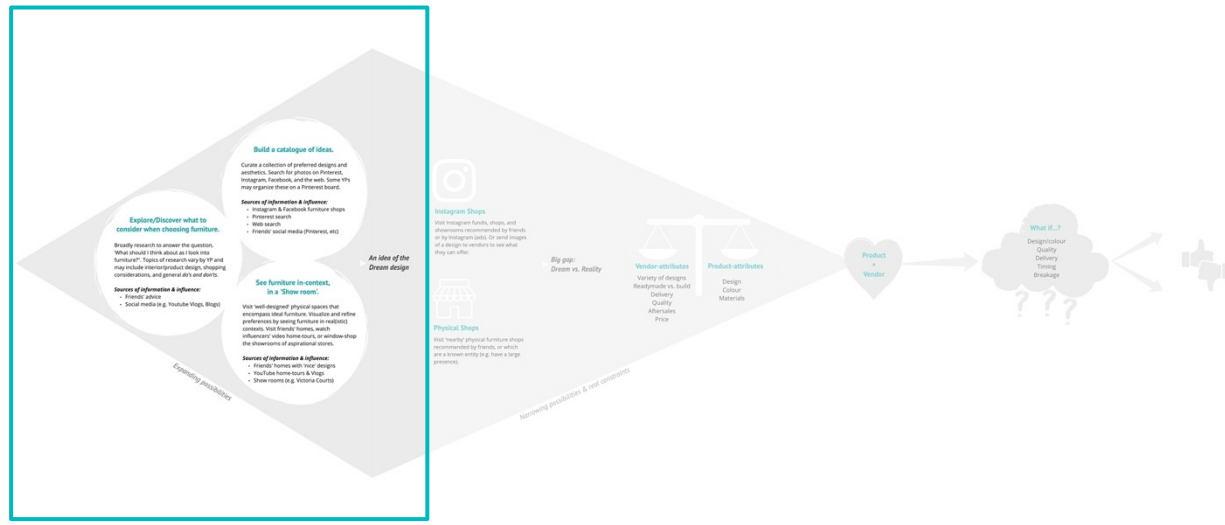
# PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES -VS- SHOP ATTRIBUTES

What YPs value is not limited to *product* attributes. When shopping for furniture, YPs prioritize many attributes related to the *vendor/shop*, including the shopping experience and services that they provide.



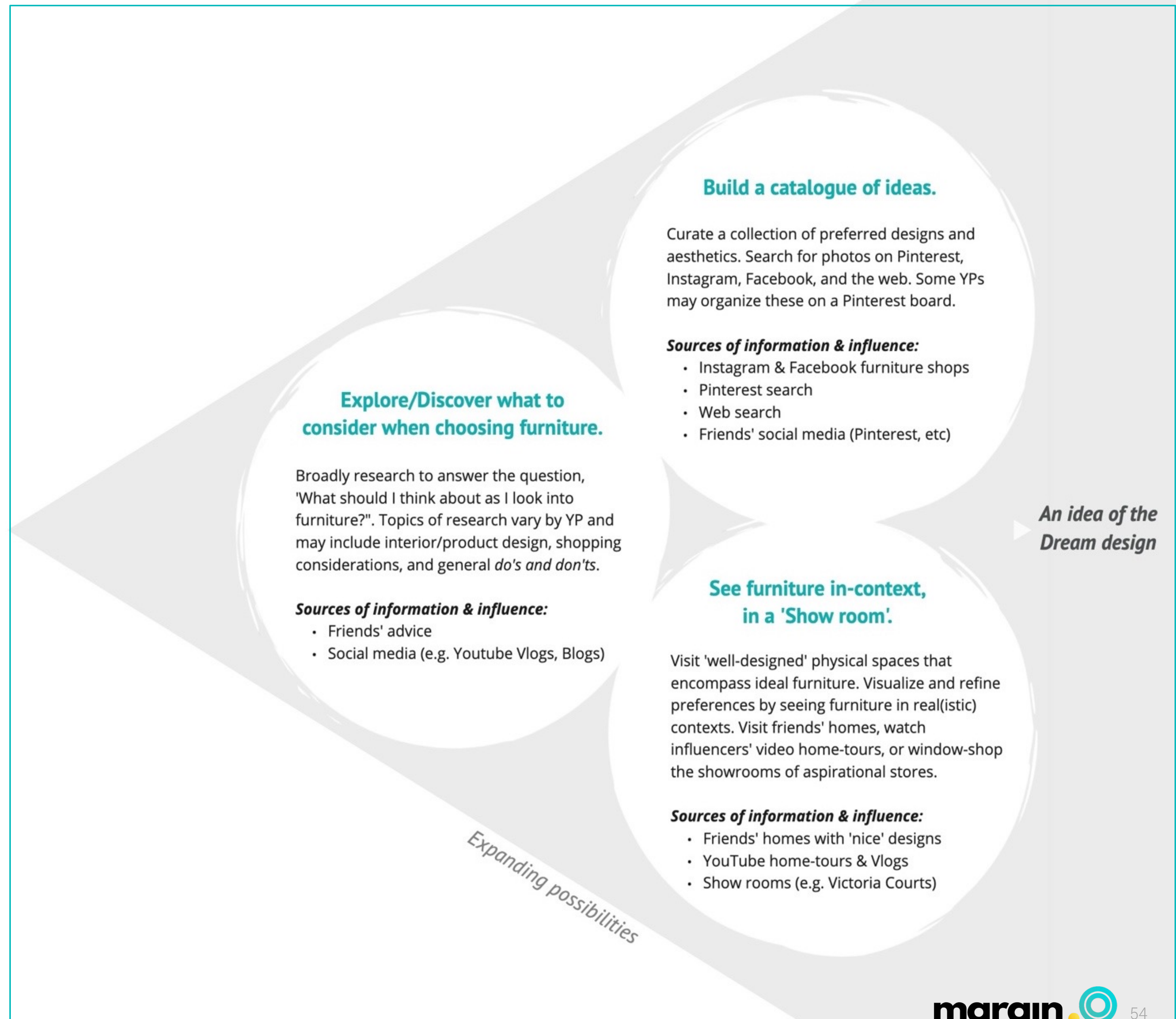
# PURCHASE JOURNEY

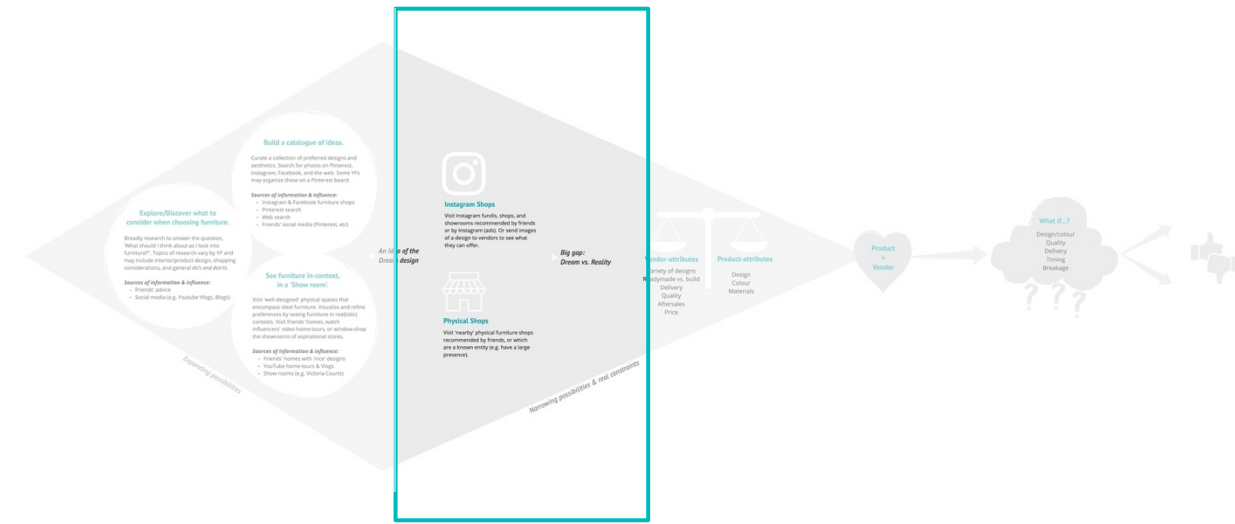




# 1. EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES.

YPs have three distinct goals at this step, which manifest in three different behaviours (see diagram). These behaviours tend to happen simultaneously, and enable YPs to conceptualize a general idea of their “Dream” design.





## 2. EXECUTE DETAILED RESEARCH: UNCOVER A GAP BETWEEN THE 'DREAM' AND REALITY.

YPs shift modes from dreaming to executing; their goal is to determine how they can manifest their ideal designs in a viable way. They window-shop at both Instagram and physical shops to gather information on prices, product offerings, apparent quality, delivery, etc. This process usually uncovers a painfully large gap between the user's ideal design and what they can actually afford.



### Instagram Shops

Visit Instagram fundis, shops, and showrooms recommended by friends or by Instagram (ads). Or send images of a design to vendors to see what they can offer.

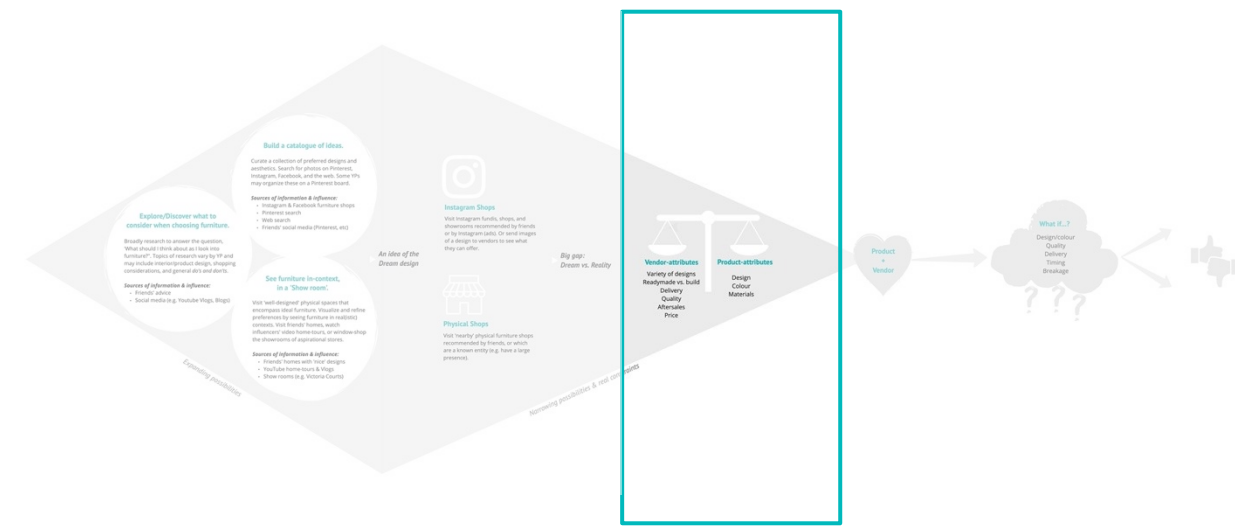
▶ **Big gap:  
Dream vs. Reality**



### Physical Shops

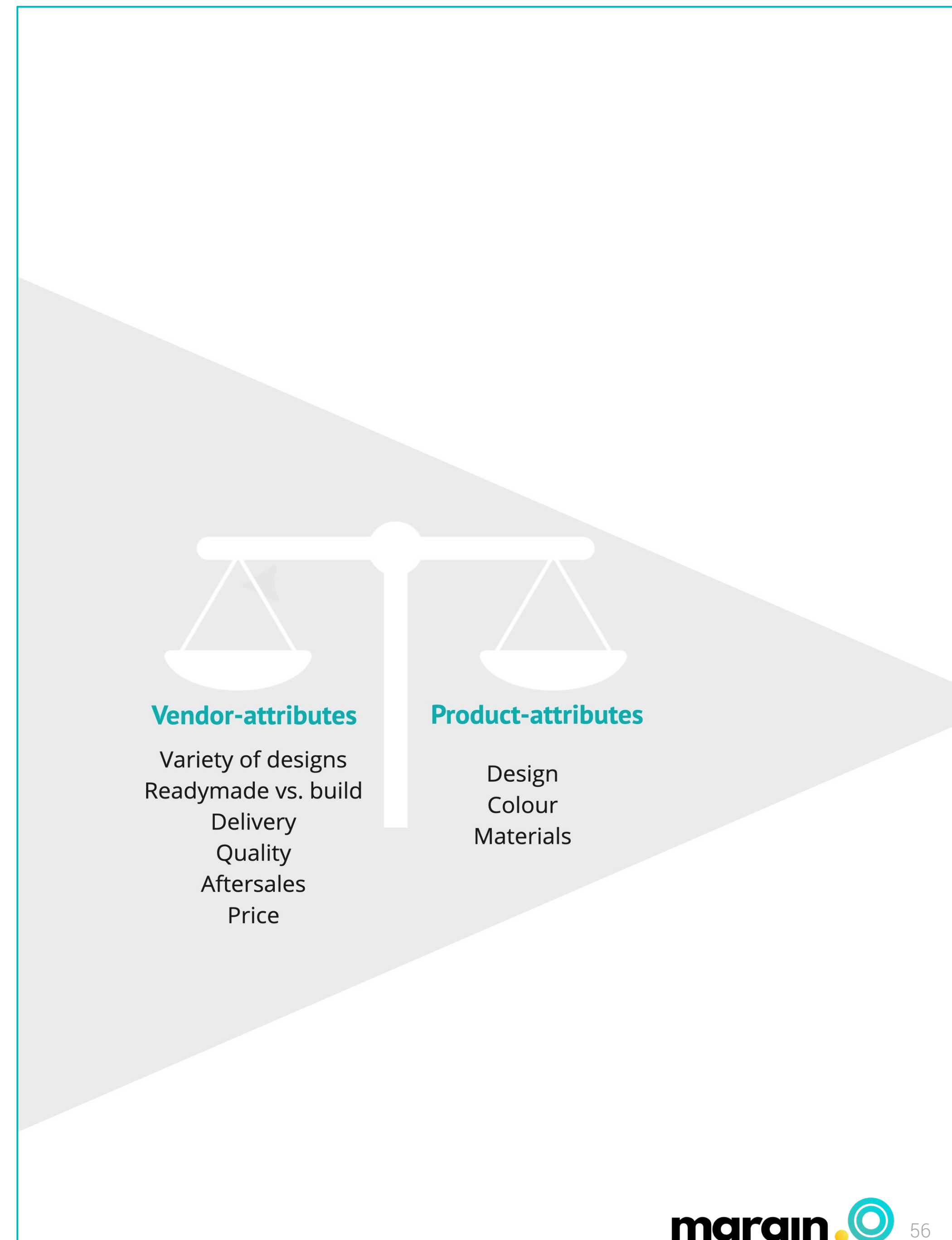
Visit 'nearby' physical furniture shops recommended by friends, or that are a known entity (e.g. have a large presence).

Narrowing possibilities & real constraints

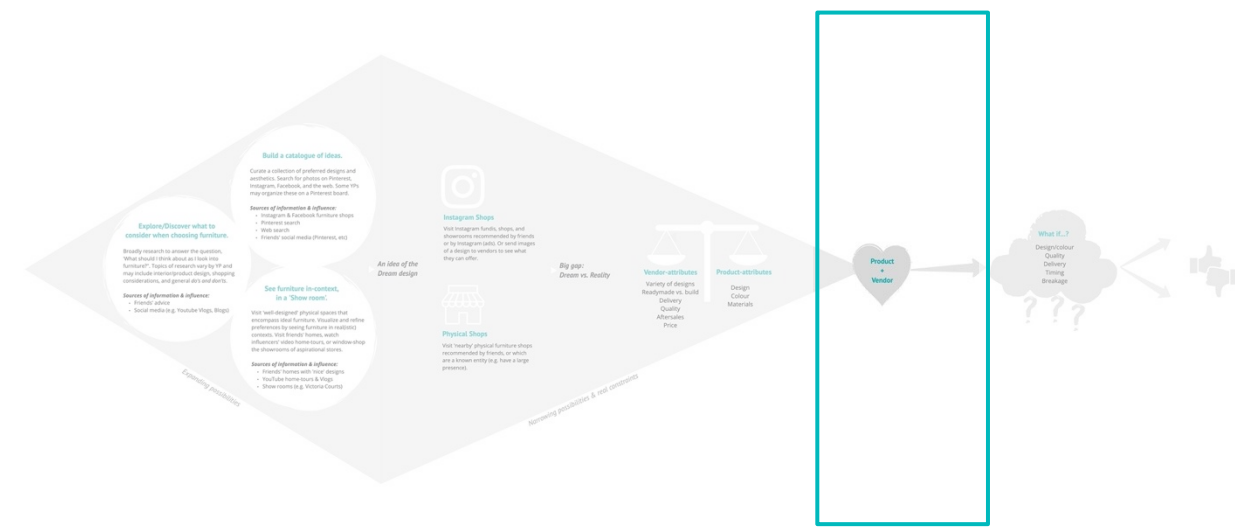


### 3. GRAPPLE WITH TRADEOFFS.

YPs review the information they've gathered in order to decide which product-attributes, as well as vendor-attributes they value most and can afford. This process is painful because of the compromises they feel forced to make. At this stage, YPs rely heavily on customer reviews (e.g. Instagram store pages) to guide their decision, as well as on friends' opinions to a lesser degree.

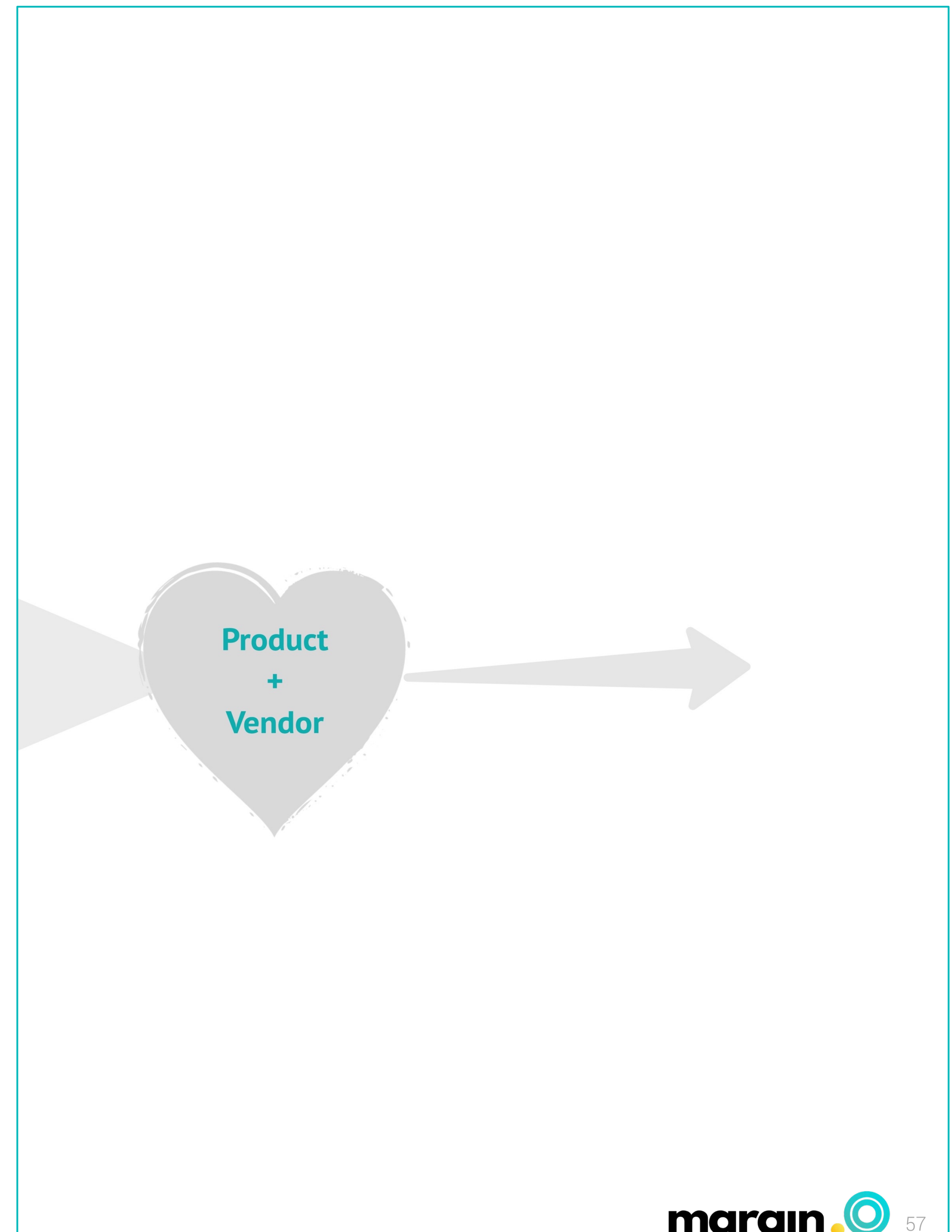


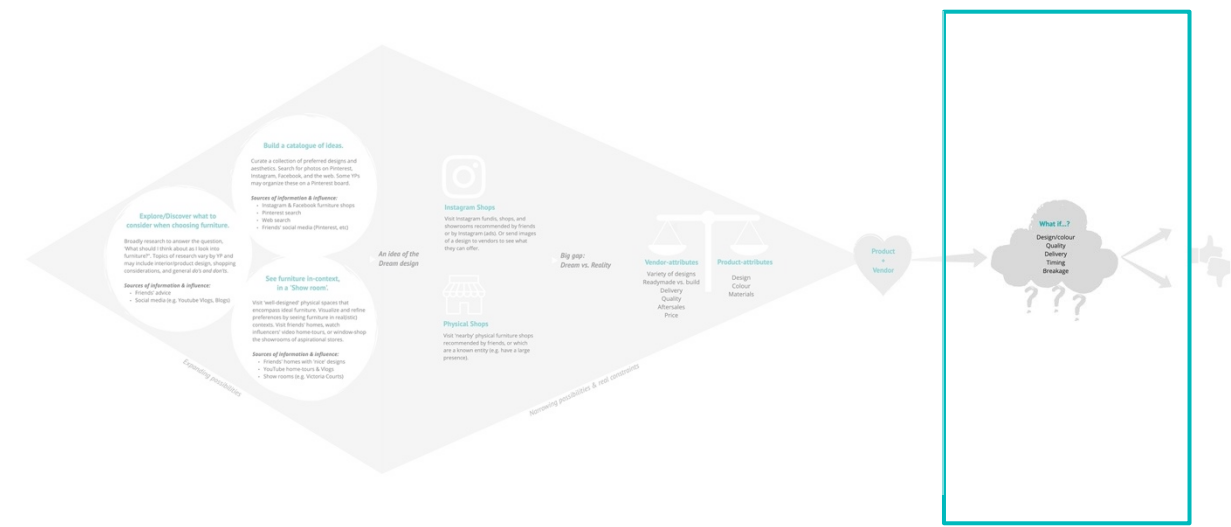




## 4. DECIDE! MOVE FORWARD!

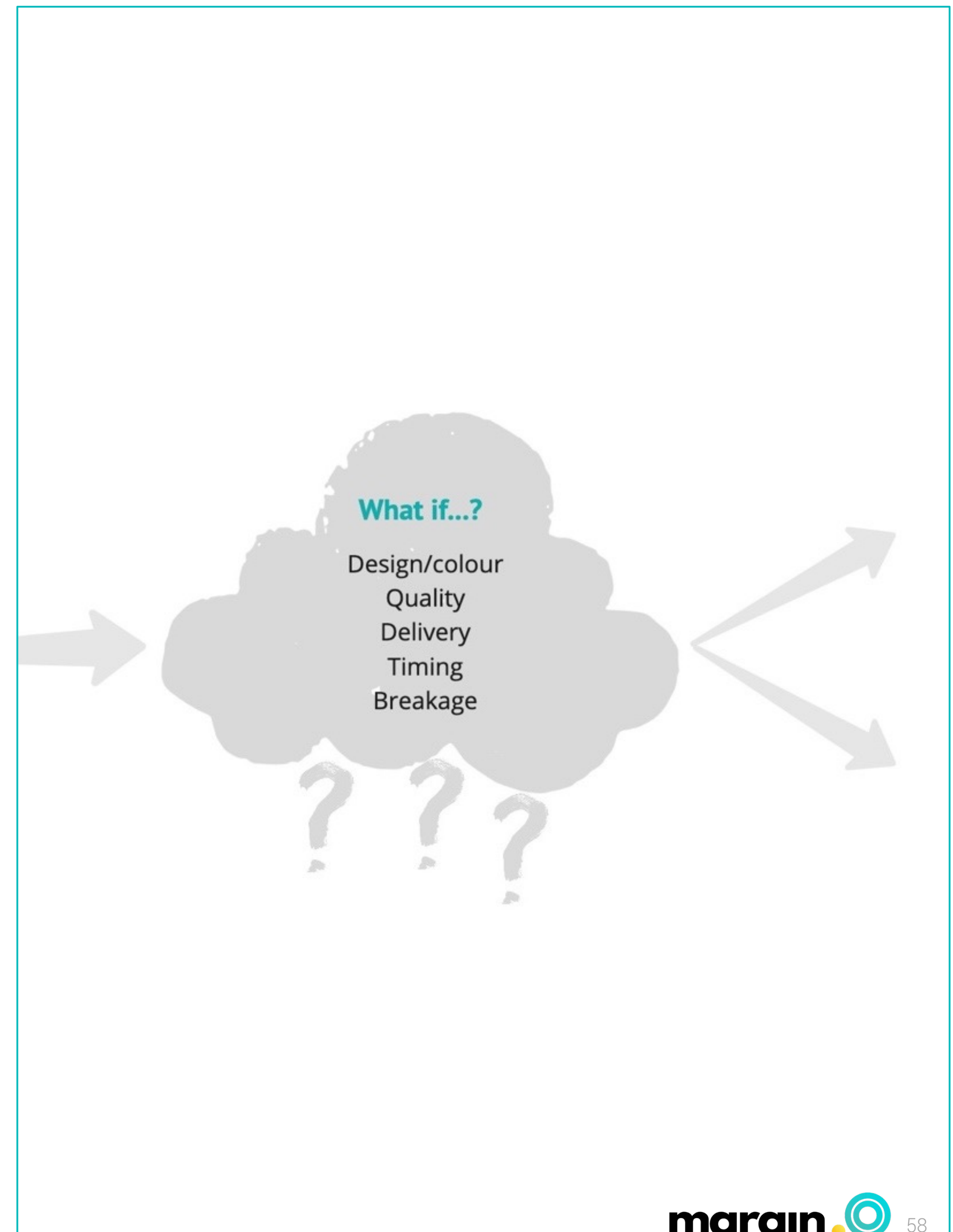
YPs come to terms with the trade-offs and decide on a product and a vendor. For this final decision, they typically visit the physical shop in person, sometimes accompanied by a friend. YPs feel a strong sense of accomplishment in achieving a decision, and are elated to be moving forward towards their goal.

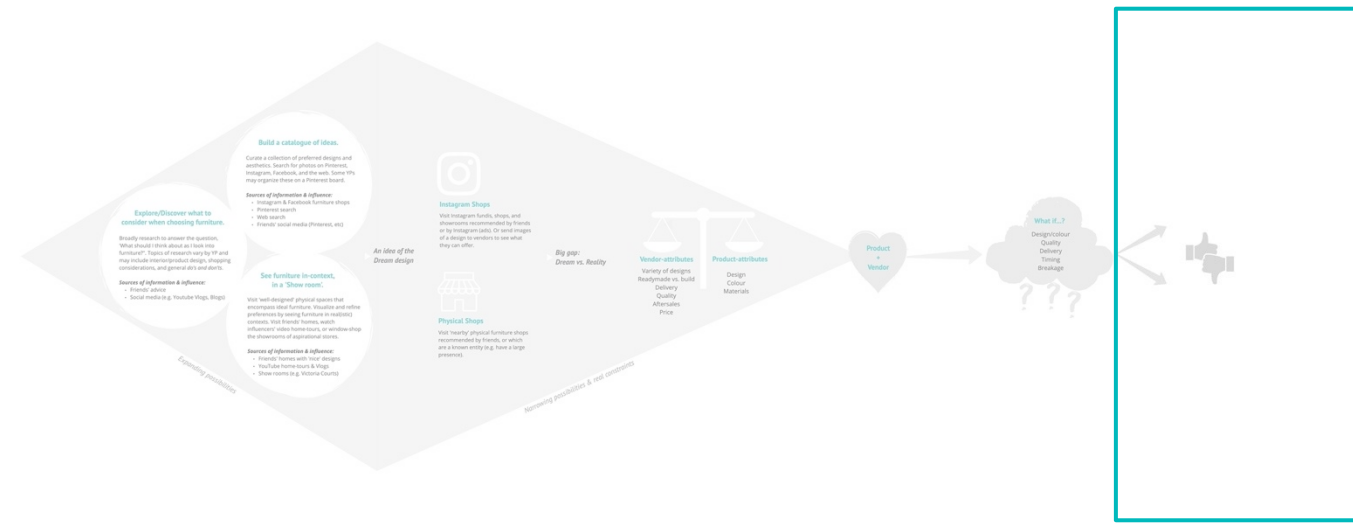




## 5. FINISH LINE ANXIETY

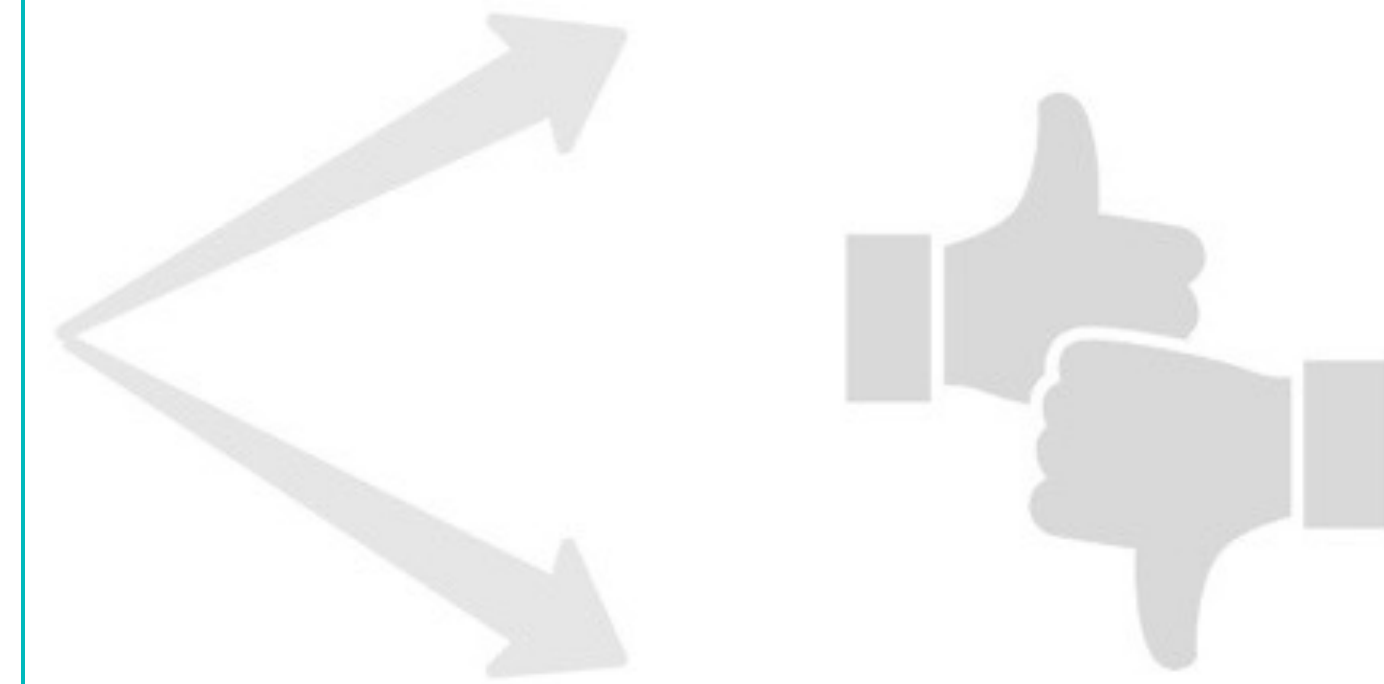
YPs negotiate the final details of their purchase, such as price, delivery, and complimentary add-ons, and usually make a partial payment. This process concretizes the 'idea' of the purchase into a very real, tangible financial cost, amplifying YPs' anxiety about all the ways in which the product or vendor might not meet their expectations (e.g. design, quality, delivery, timing, breakage).





## 6. DELIVERY: JOY OR PAIN

The outcome of the purchase-journey will be one of joy or of deep frustration, depending on whether the product is delivered within the realm of expectation, and within the promised time-frame.



# PURCHASE JOURNEY

## EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES

YPs have three distinct goals at this step, which manifest in three different behaviours (see diagram). These behaviours tend to happen simultaneously, and enable YPs to conceptualize a general idea of their "Dream" design.

## EXECUTE DETAILED RESEARCH. UNCOVER A GAP BETWEEN DREAM AND REALITY

YPs shift modes from *dreaming* to *executing*; their goal is to determine how they can manifest their ideal designs in a viable way. They window-shop at both Instagram and physical shops to gather information on prices, product offerings, quality, delivery, etc. This process usually uncovers a large gap between what YPs want, and what they can actually afford.

## GRAPPLE WITH TRADEOFFS

YPs review the information they've gathered in order to decide which product-attributes, as well as vendor-attributes they value most and can afford. This process is painful because of the compromises required. At this stage, YPs rely heavily on customer reviews (e.g. Instagram store pages) to guide their decision, as well as on friends' opinions to a lesser degree.

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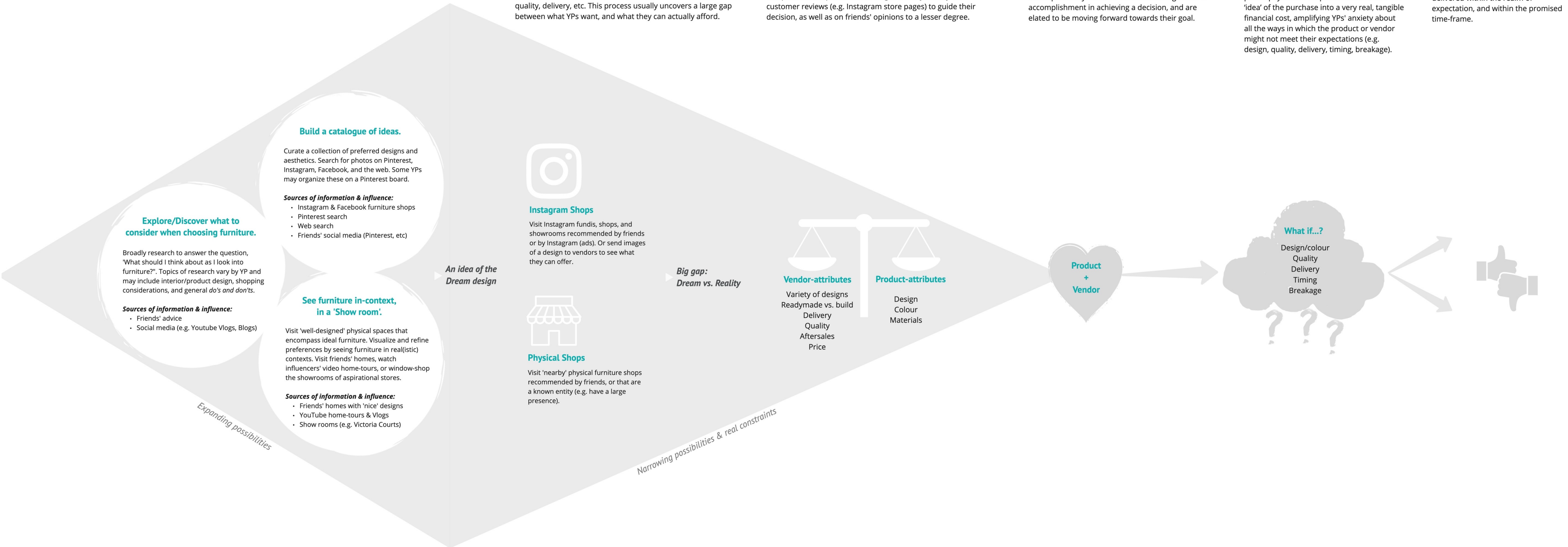
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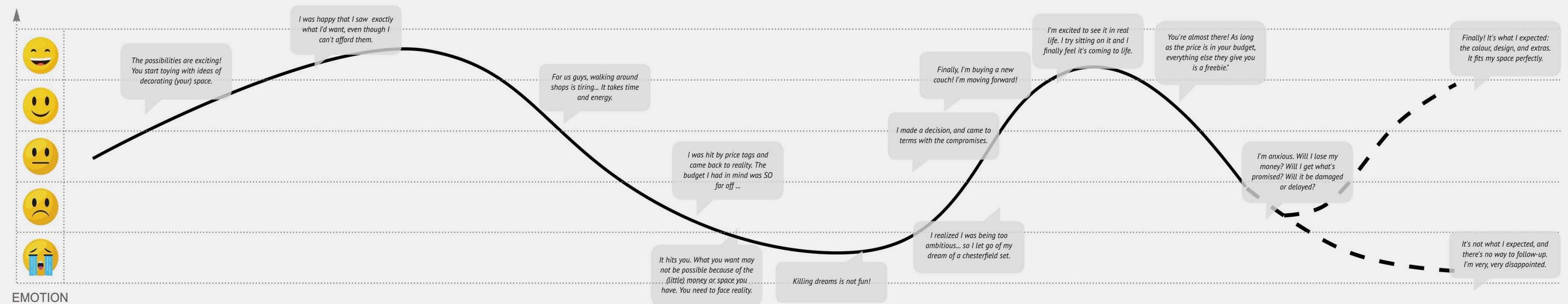
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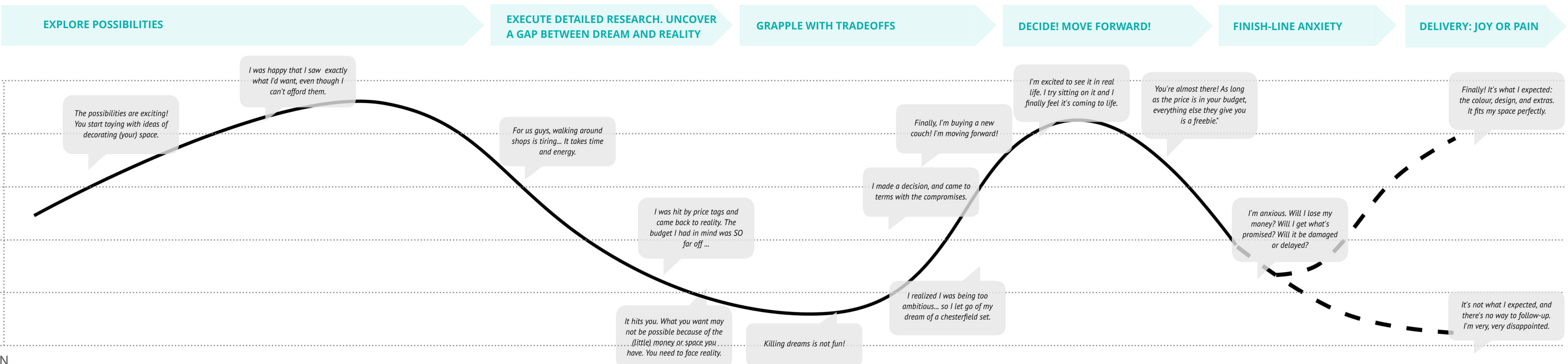
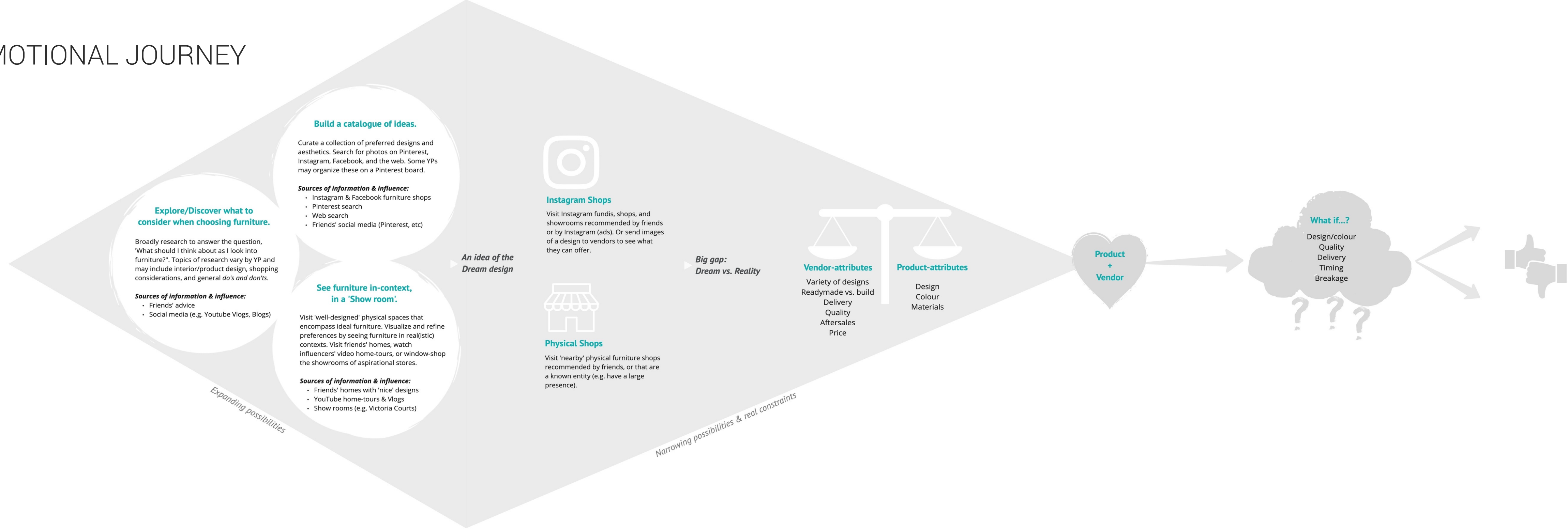


# EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

At the start of the purchase journey, emotions run high as YPs boundlessly explore possibilities for their designs. Reality soon sets in as they research the feasibility of their ideas, and they come to realize the gap between their ideas and their budgets. YPs are especially tormented by the need to make trade-offs, but feel a sense of relief and optimistic momentum once they arrive at a decision. Anxiety sets in as they finalize their purchase and imagine all of the problems that could ensue. The journey ends in either a sense of joy or frustration, depending on the (un)successful delivery of the furniture.



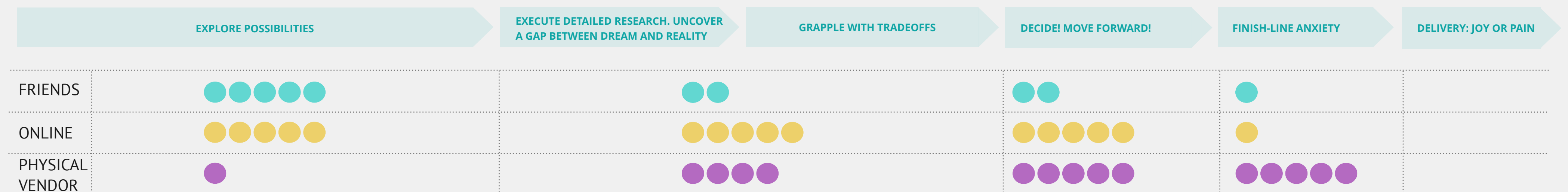
# EMOTIONAL JOURNEY



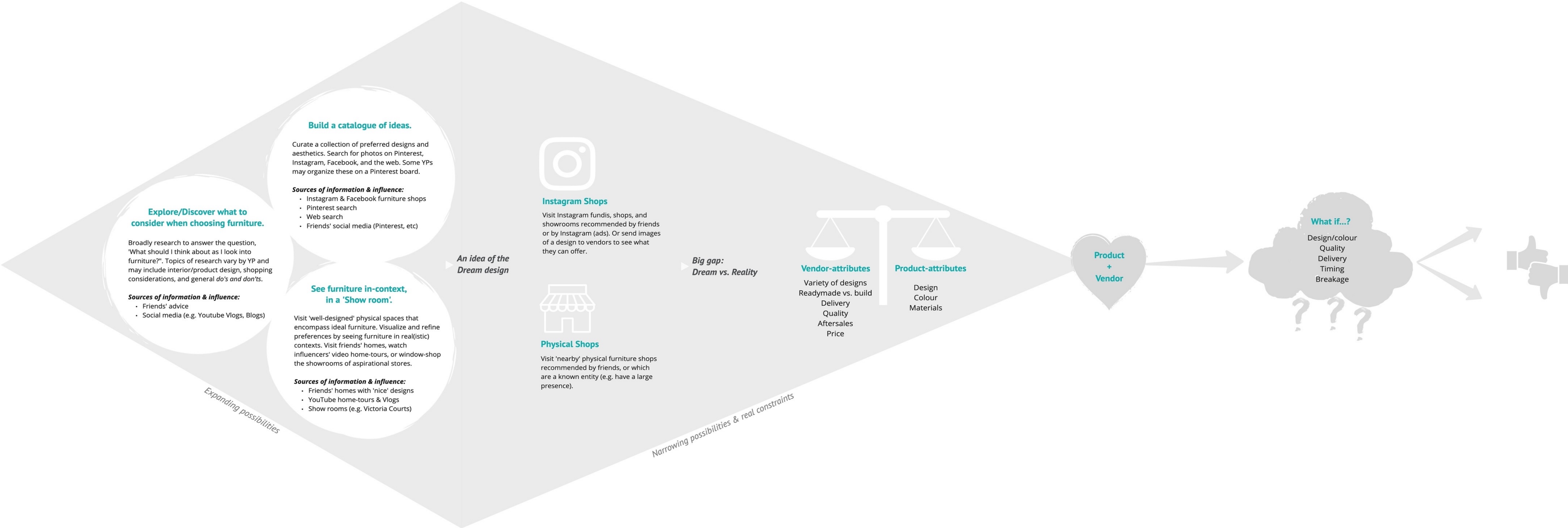
# PURCHASE JOURNEY: MAIN INFLUENCES

Friends and online media heavily influence YPs' purchase journey. In the early, exploratory stage, friends play a pivotal role in shaping YPs' aspirations and ideas for furniture. Throughout the journey until a decision is made, online media provides both inspiration as well as critical information for vetting and narrowing the final selection.

Physical storefronts have little influence in the exploratory stage of the journey, and become relevant only once YPs have a general idea of their 'dream' design.



# PURCHASE JOURNEY: MAIN INFLUENCES



FRIENDS	●●●●●	●●	●●	●	
ONLINE	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●	
PHYSICAL VENDOR	●	●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	



# DESIGN GUIDELINES



Strategic guidelines for generating unified ideas and interventions

Design Guidelines synthesize all of the disparate insights into a list of strategic priorities; these give us clear direction for generating actionable ideas and strategies. Design Guidelines reflect the *priority needs* of our users; this means that all future interventions should be unified in their efforts to address and speak to these needs.

# DESIGN GUIDELINES

ARE

- A synthesized list of users' priority needs
- Written from the user's perspective
- A goal to be addressed through new ideas

ARE NOT

- Your organization's goal
- A solution



# DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN OF THE PRODUCT & SERVICE:

## DESIGN A SOLUTION THAT ALLOWS YPs TO...

Easily transition between living, working, and hosting at home, without compromise.

Squeeze multiple functions into their small space, without it feeling small.

Offer a comfortable and impressive experience for (groups of) guests.

Keep things stored, organized, and safe, without buying purpose-built storage/shelving.

Easily move around, and move with their furniture.

Regularly bring novelty into their living space.

Feel a sense of light, airy, spaciousness in their home.

Feel more connected to nature in their home.

Know their purchase is safeguarded against damage for many years.

Afford their dream living space in increments.\*

Feel a sense of status—of *having arrived*—through their purchases.\*

\* Repeated in Design Guidelines for the Shopping Experience.



# DESIGN GUIDELINES

## DESIGN OF THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

### DESIGN A SOLUTION THAT ALLOWS YPs TO...

Conveniently browse and gather information on available products.

Know that their chosen design has the approval of their friends.

Know the total cost of an item, upfront, including delivery and extras.

Straightforwardly and painlessly make their final purchase choice.

Have confidence that they will receive exactly what they expect.

Trust that their order will be delivered on time, and without issues.

Afford their dream living space in increments.\*

Feel a sense of status—of *having arrived*—through their purchases.\*

\* Repeated in Design Guidelines for the Product & Service



## A FEW EXTRA 'NICE-TO-HAVES'

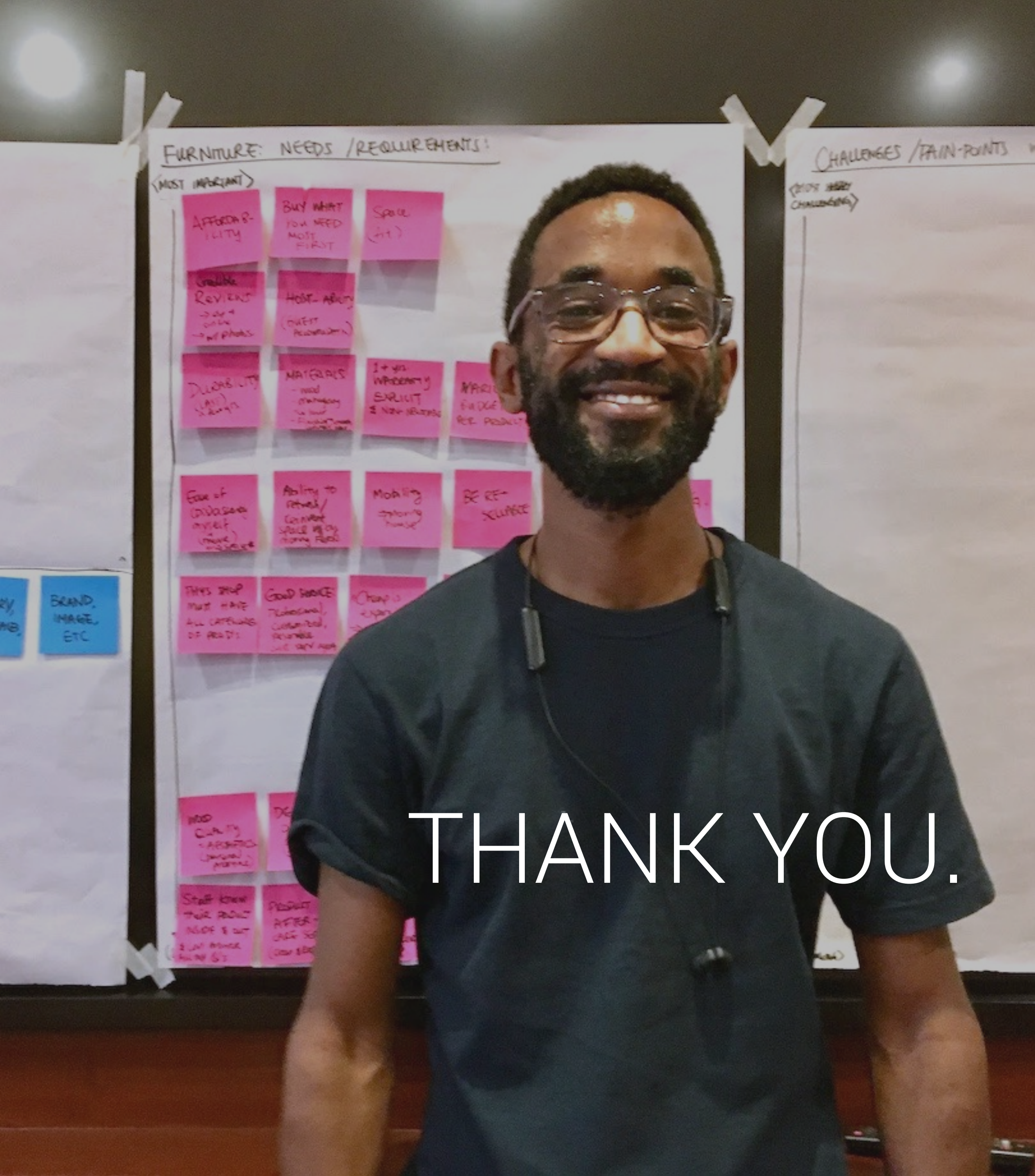
*NICE-TO-HAVES FOR THE DESIGN OF THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE*

DESIGN A SOLUTION THAT ALLOWS YPs TO...

Indulge in exploring design possibilities without resulting in budget-driven tradeoffs later on.

Bring their furniture ideas to life in a 'show-room'.

Easily catalogue their favourite designs/ideas.



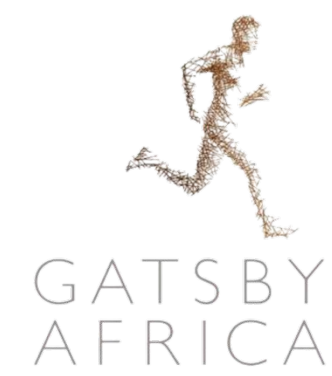
THANK YOU.

PROJECT TEAM:

DESIGN STRATEGIST  
Mariko Takeuchi (Margin Innovation)

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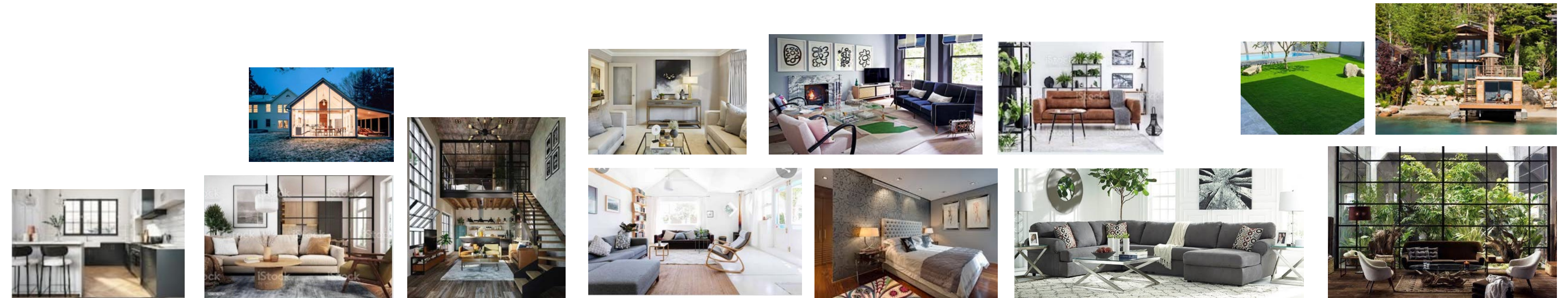
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APPENDIX



# HOW YPs IMAGINE THEIR IDEAL LIVING SPACE TO BE...

We asked our YP respondents to find images online that represent their aspirational living space. These are the key themes that were uncovered (in purple), quotes from respondents (in yellow), as well as images they selected.



SPACE / SPACIOUS-NESS	MINIMALIST / SIMPLICITY	LIGHT (ING)	LOFT	'LIGHTNESS' of COLOUR	COORDINATION	WOOD AESTHETICS	SOFA: # SEATS	SOFA: LOOKS COMFORTABLE	UNIQUENESS	GREEN/ NATURE
FEELS SPACIOUS	Simple elegance. Not overcomplicated furniture. Narrower frames.	Natural light - from windows	I love love love lofts. you can see everything inside.	I love muted colour palettes. Not screaming.	Colours depend on the room-type, Darker for bedrooms, lighter for living areas.	This dark (wood) colour looks premium	I want a grey 3-seater sofa.	I like this sofa because it looks comfortable.	Unique, uncommon designs are classy	I want my own patch of green, so I can be close to nature.
Feels like airy space	You have only what you need. Not gawdy. Not busy, busy.	Enough lighting	A loft is my vision for my first house.	Colours are NOT bright (not red, yellow)	Colours that are easy to coordinate are: Gray, Blue, White, Black, Brown	Chocolate is "premium"	Ideally you have 2 to 3 sofas in the sitting room	These sofa seats look comfortable!		I like this space with lots of plants
Furniture not take lots of space	I want this bed - it's minimalistic.	Lighting is enough - natural light comes in	I want a home where I can spend a lot of work and personal life. A loft!	Gray walls	The wardrobe and floors should match.	Oak would be nice but it would be too expensive.	You must always have some extra (sofa) seating			This house is ideal. It has a lake view.
Sofa and dining in same place (open concept)	Rustic feel. Unfinished feel.		A loft is a simple space; you can manoeuvre in every direction.	Cool colours for the wall.	The curtains should coordinate with the walls, sofa, and floor	I like this light, rustic (wood) colour. I have a table like this.				I like these (apartment) buildings with lots of green.
Not congested, walk through easily	Simple but classy.			Dark / navy blue fabrics	The wall paper should match with the sofa					
				I really like light colours like white and grey. I want a bright space - the way the sun bounces off of them.	After I pick my statement piece, I need to pick items that go with it.					

\* Images sourced by respondents on Pinterest



# PLACES THAT YPs FREQUENT

We asked our YP respondents to list the places and venues where they spend their time. These are the most frequently mentioned categories of places (in purple), with some illustrative responses from respondents (in yellow).

HOME	OFFICE	RELIGIOUS VENUE	SHOPPING	RESTAURANTS	CLUBS/ BARS	ENTERTAINMT	SPECIAL EVENTS	BEACH	PARKS
Leisure time at home, in my room.	Work at office	Churches, mosques, temples	Malls - Mountain Mall - DUda Mall	Restaurants	Clubs	Cinema - love movies	Career Events (at universities)	Watamu, Diani, Lamu	Nat'l park
House hangouts with friends			Supermarkets - Quick mart Naivas		Chill spaces (with alcohol) and dancing	Arcade	Events, especially weddings.	Vacation Resorts, Hotels	Nature - conservancy
						Concerts	Conferences: - Relationship - Church - Workshop - Hotels / halls		Picnics & biking at Karura forest, etc.
						Live sports: Stadium, any field			Get out of the city!

# KEY ATTRIBUTES OF YPs' FAVOURITE PLACES

We asked our YP respondents to tell us about their favourite places to spend their time. These are the some of the commonly mentioned attributes of "a favourite place" (in purple), with some illustrative responses from respondents (in yellow).



# PLACES WITH A “NICE AESTHETIC”

We asked our YP respondents to list places and spaces that they felt had a “nice aesthetic”. Here are some of the places they mentioned.

The Collective



Tapas



Ibis (staycation)



Beach / Coast



Nairobi Social House



Inti



Nairobi Street Kitchen



Ché Café



Urban burger



Karura forest



Jenga LEO (coworking)



Kofisi (co-work)



Java House Upper Hill