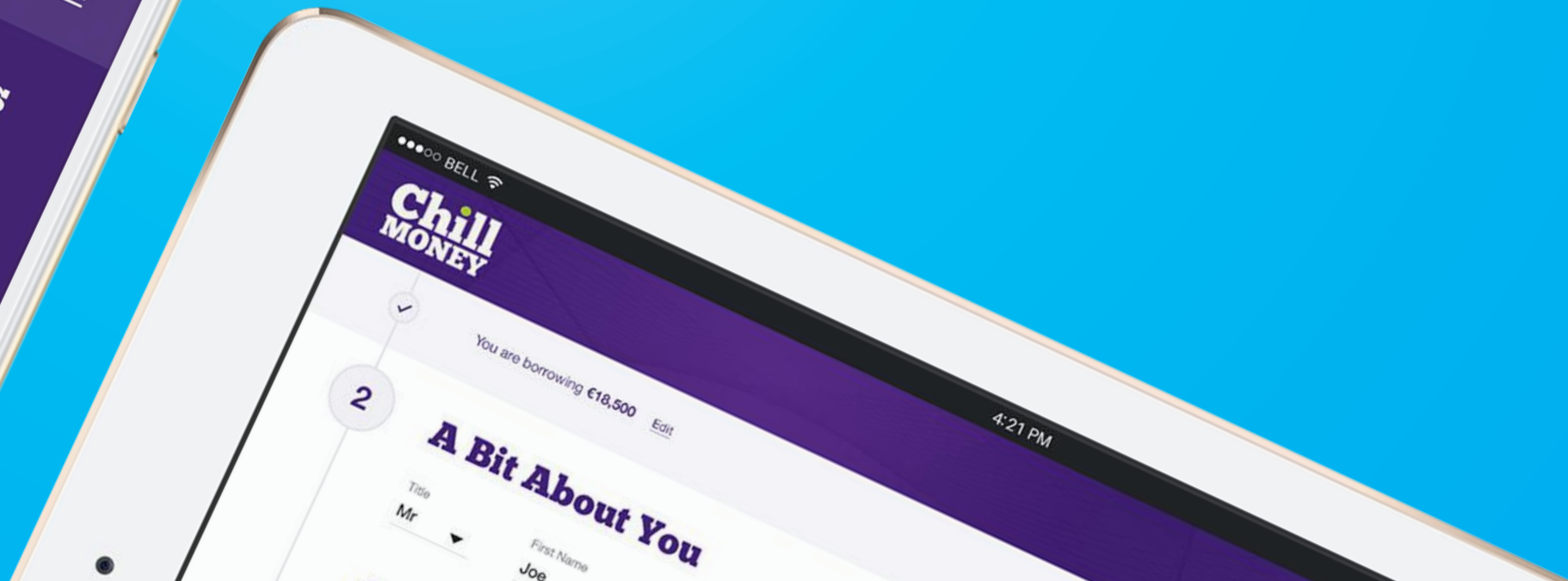


Case Study

Chill Money

UX & UI Design



Context

Disrupting the Market

As the digital banking movement was beginning to grow legs in the UK and mainland Europe, Chill Insurance was finalising a deal to shake up the personal finance market in Ireland. As digital marketing manager, I had been involved in putting together a business case to disrupt a stagnant market which had long been dominated by the big three Irish banks.

In the summer of 2016, Chill partnered with a personal finance company that had big plans for expansion but lacked experience in new business acquisition. The partnership would leverage the Chill brand and expertise in online lead generation to move into a new vertical and bring the personal finance market in Ireland into the digital era.

I was responsible for designing the online experience that would bring Chill Money to life.

The Brief

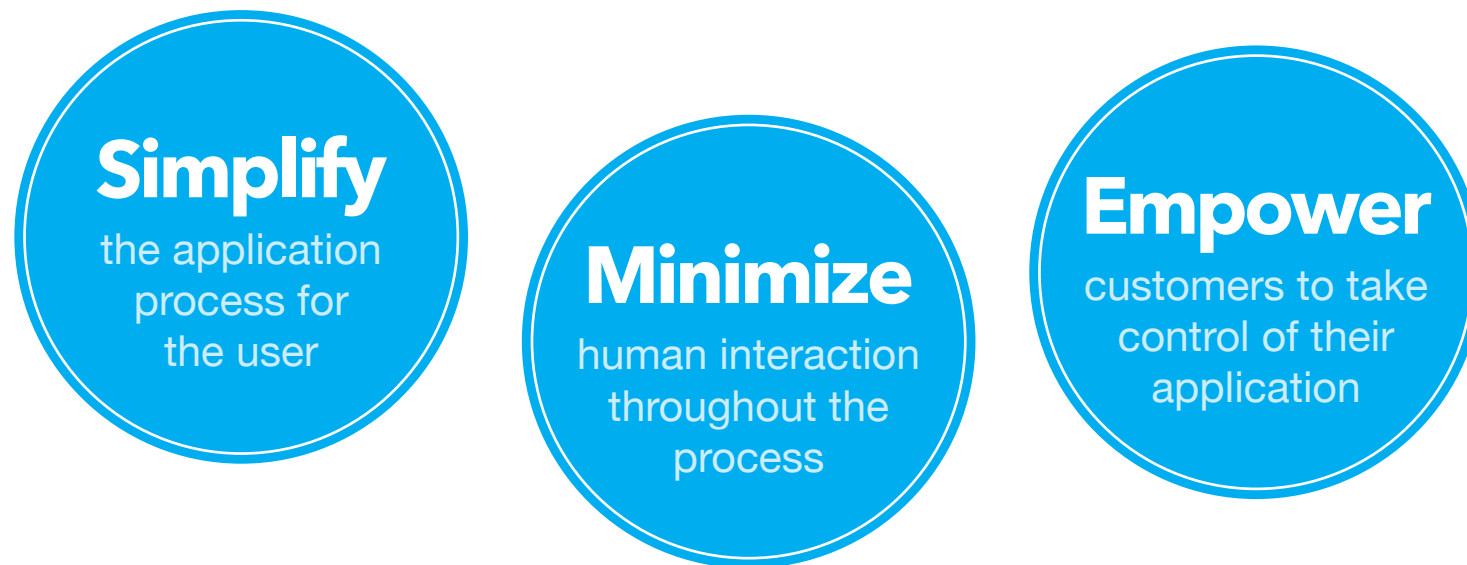
Nothing Like a Bank

The brief was offer Chill Money customers what the Irish banks were not - a simple and seamless online loan application experience that left them feeling excited and empowered. The mission statement was to be **nothing like a bank**.

I was tasked with designing the end-to-end customer journey - from the website landing pages, to data capture and identity verification to each and every customer communication.

The focus was on **simplicity** - streamlining an application process that is traditionally perceived as lengthy, frustrating and often intimidating.

The goal was to strip back the layers of jargon and bureaucracy to reveal a **straightforward, intuitive** and **accessible** experience that would empower users to take control. To get the loan they want, on their terms, in their own time.



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Understand

Getting to Grips

I worked with the customer experience team to get to grips with the typical customer journey from start to finish, as well as the back office processes and procedures involved.

As I was involved in putting together the business case for Chill Money, I was well versed with the domestic competition but began to examine some of the digital ‘challenger’ banks that were redefining the banking industry in the UK and Europe.

I also conducted a number of focus groups with a variety of age ranges and demographics to get a clearer picture of the opportunities and threats facing the new venture.

Defining the Problems

I conducted a series of focus groups to learn what problems customers had experienced when applying for a loan - online or offline - with other providers.

Many cited feeling intimidated by the thought of sitting face-to-face with a bank clerk and some found the prospect of being declined off-putting.

Others highlighted flaws and frustrations with the application and identity verification process, as well as a general mistrust of the banking industry.

“...feel uneasy applying in-person in case I don’t get approved...”

“...my credit score will be affected if I am declined.”

“...don’t have a scanner to send them a copy of my passport.”

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Behind the Scenes

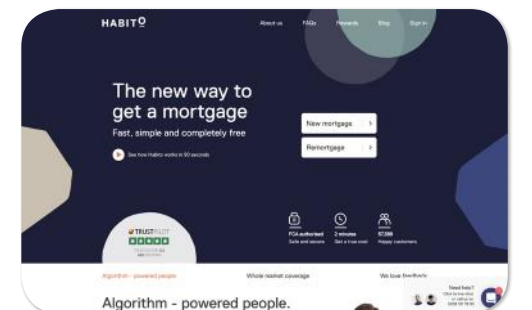
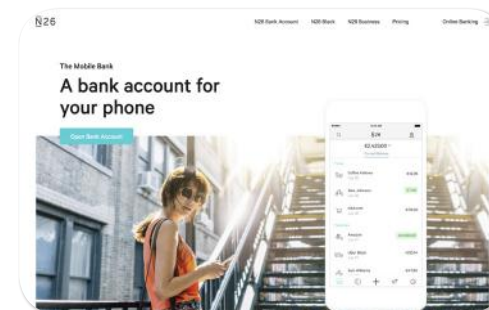
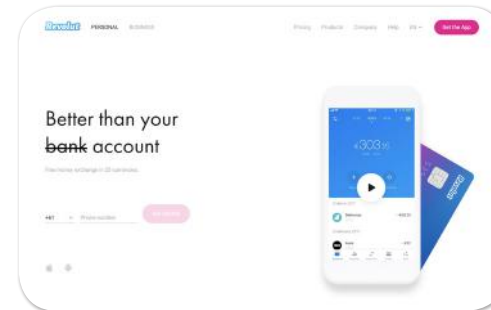
I spent some time on-site in the finance company to interview staff and get an understanding of how the loan application process worked behind the scenes.

A significant pain-point highlighted by staff was identity verification. Applicants were required to submit three documents by email or post, in order to confirm their identity - however as many as 40% of applications were discarded because the correct documents were never received.



Challenger Banks

Across Europe, so-called Challenger Banks were having success with online-only digital banking offerings. One clear consistency among all of these innovative companies was a clean and simple user interface, and a focus on mobile.



Explore

Designing a Solution

Once I was clear on the challenges and problems that needed to be solved, I organised some ideation and brainstorming sessions involving representatives from the Customer Experience, Digital Marketing and Development teams.

I then worked on sketching and wireframing a variety of solutions for discussion and stakeholder review. When I had a clear direction, I worked with the development team to produce functional prototypes in order to test usability with some end users.

Chill Money Hub

The feedback from focus groups as well as issues raised in staff interviews made it clear that a new approach was required to facilitate the identity verification process.

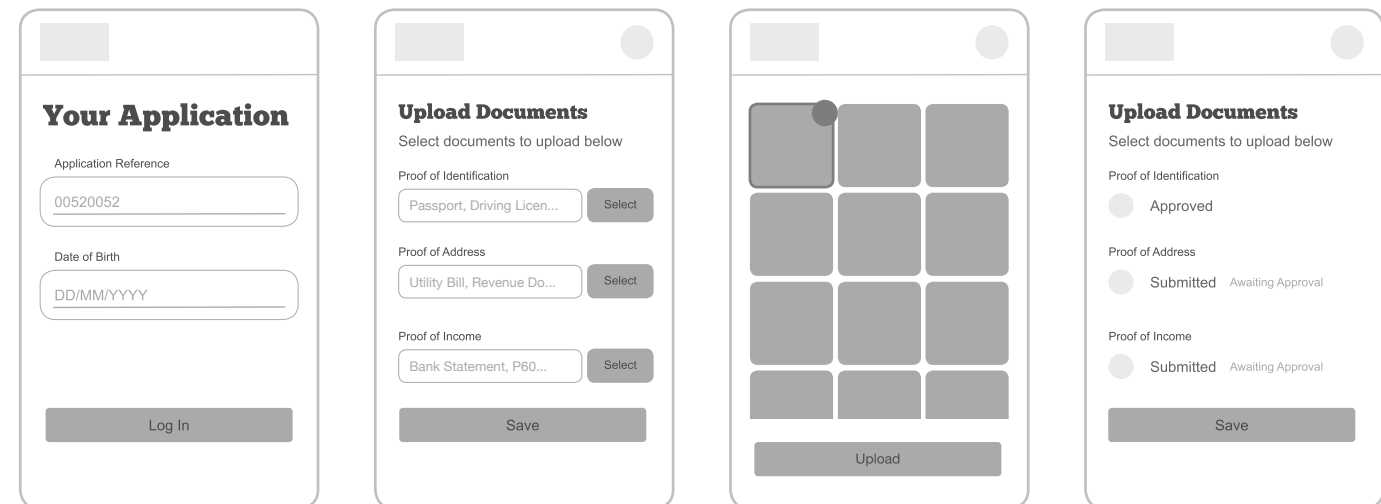
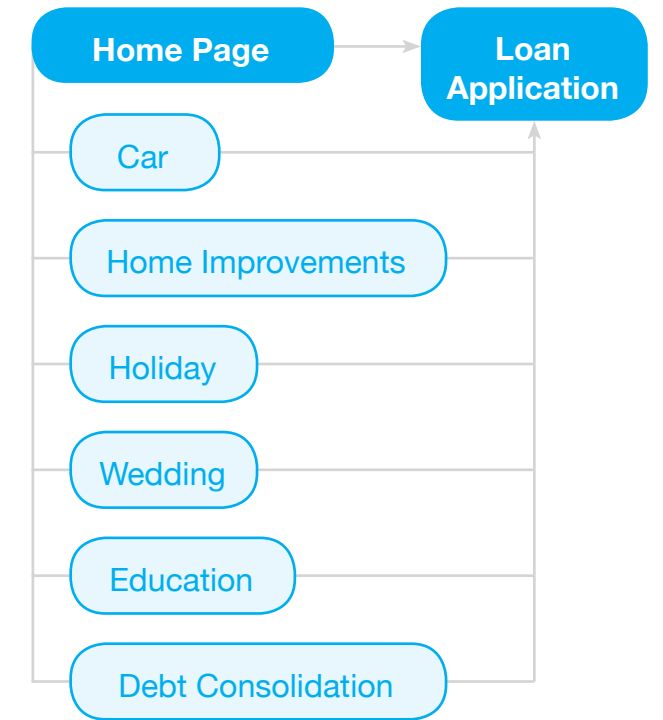
As the primary focus was keeping applicants online, I wireframed a simple 'Document Hub' where applicants could upload a photo of the required documents directly from their mobile device or computer.

This would later become where the user would agree to the terms of the loan and electronically sign the loan consent form - thereby completing the end-to-end journey entirely online.

Information Architecture

I used focus group insights as well as Google search trends to build user personas/scenarios around the most popular loan purposes.

This allowed me to consider the goals, behaviours and context of the users in each case. I included a specific landing page for six scenarios as well as a needs-based navigation bar on the homepage.



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Generating Buy-In

Many focus group members referenced concerns about being declined, as well as the effect on their credit rating when applying for a loan online.

To encourage users to engage with the application process, I introduced four short steps after which a quick calculation would estimate their ability to repay the loan - without checking any credit history info.

As long as the request met a basic minimum set of requirements, a positive message was returned to encourage the user to continue the application.

Personal Loans Made Simple
How much would you like to borrow?
€ **12,000**
LOAN TERM: 5 YEARS MONTHLY REPAYMENT: € 325
GET A LOAN

What you earn.

Fill us in on your monthly income

BACK CONTINUE



What you spend.

Fill us in on your monthly expenses

BACK CONTINUE



A bit about you.

Just a couple of personal details

BACK LET'S GO



Setting the Tone

This initial interaction between the user and application was crucial to set the tone for the entire experience and as such, went through numerous iterations of prototyping and usability testing.

The most significant change made during this phase was to include the monthly repayment value on the opening screen - people's mistrust of the banking industry meant that they placed significant value in this type of transparency.

Pre-Approved!
CONTINUE

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Landing Pages

The landing pages were built using WordPress with the initial four steps of the application form – as outlined in the previous section – embedded above the fold.

These pages were then tested rigorously for usability - from messaging, to page load speed, device types and much more, in order to optimise conversion rates.

Illustration

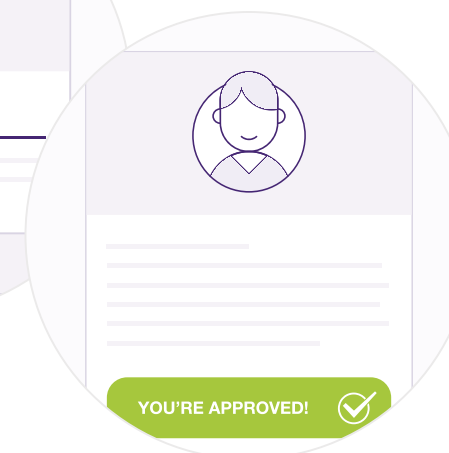
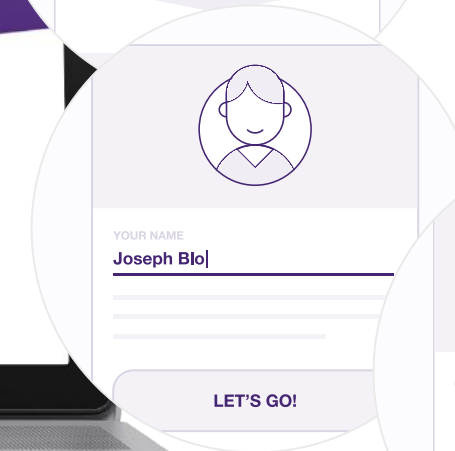
Much of the promotional imagery is illustrated to signify the simplicity of the offering. This also enabled me to use a neutral colour palette and really emphasise the green CTA buttons.



Below the main input area on the homepage, the application process is explained in three simple steps.

1. Choose your loan amount
2. Apply online in minutes
3. We'll do the rest

Animated illustrations beside each step mimic the behaviour of the UI to show how easy it is to use.



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The Application

The wireframes I produced in the previous phase became increasingly high fidelity as the process went on, so just the finishing touches were required on the UI before the first builds began to take place.

Working with an Agile development team, I kept my design sprints two weeks ahead of their development sprints in order to maintain the momentum.

Interaction Design

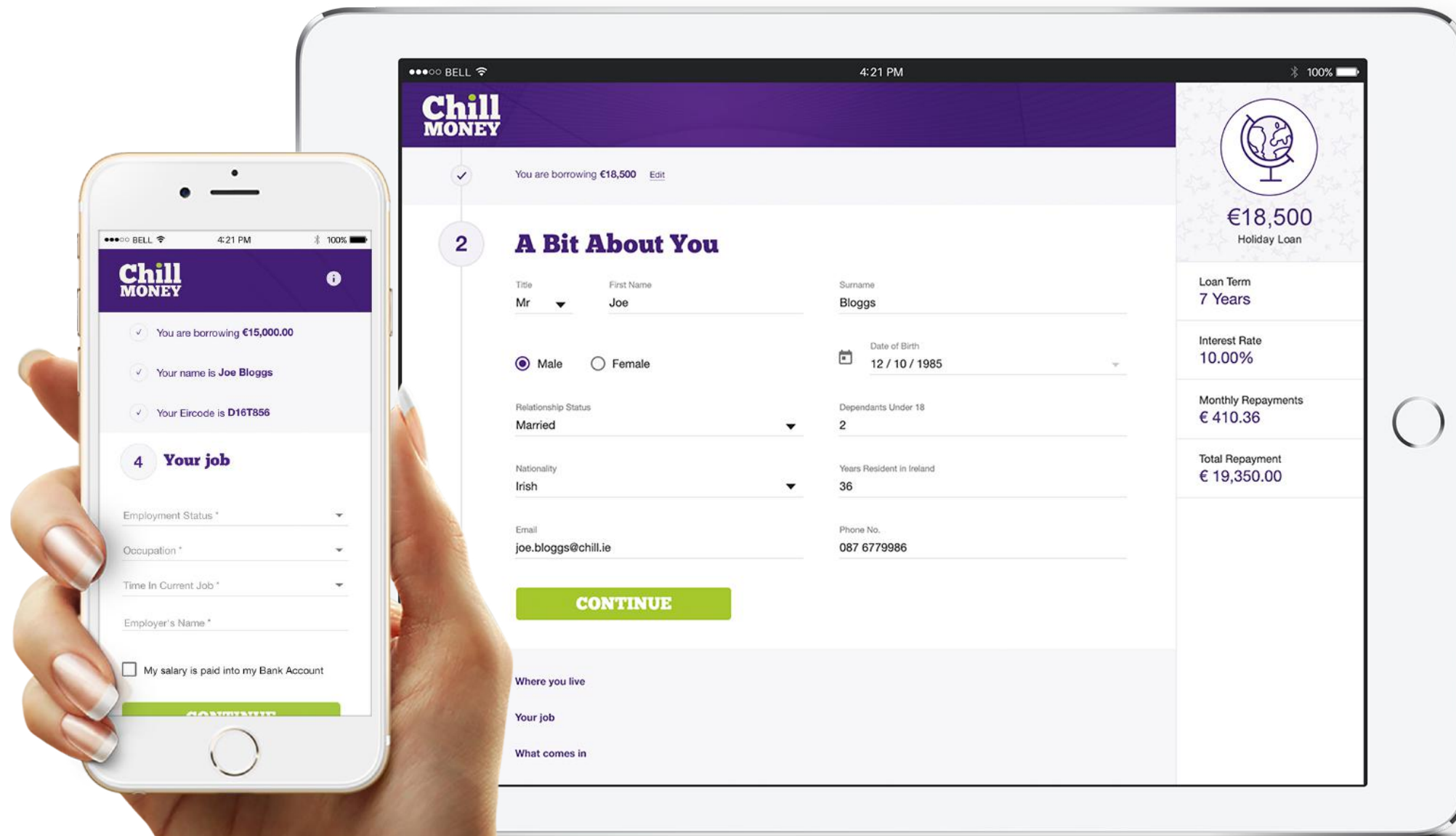
In order to ensure a responsive and consistent interaction experience across desktop, tablet and mobile, the application was built using Google's mobile-friendly Angular Material framework.

The layout of the application form made use of white space and neutral colours to create a clean, spacious interface with bolder colours drawing the eye to input fields and CTA buttons.

To keep users focused on the task in hand, I split the question set into five easily-digestible groups with friendly, conversational labels such as 'A bit about you'.

On tablet and desktop, a sidebar was fixed on the right of the screen displaying the main details that focus groups had identified as reasons for mistrusting other loan providers.

Transparency around interest rates, monthly repayments and total repayment cost was highly valued by a majority of focus group participants.



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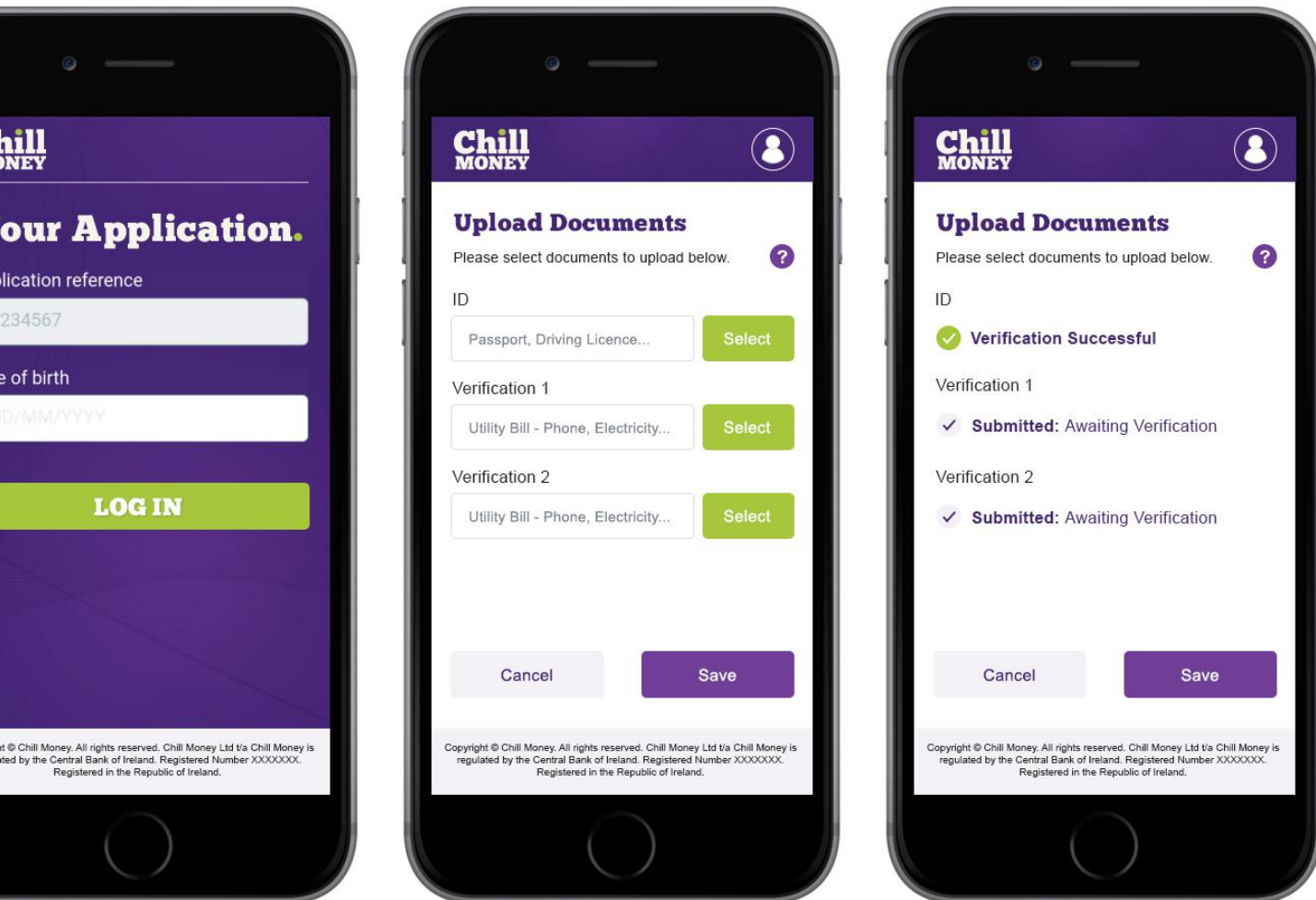
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Chill Money Hub

The Chill Money Hub was designed to alleviate the problems surrounding identity verification - a major stumbling block from the user perspective as well as the most costly inefficiency in the back office.

It was designed and tested with mobile usability at the forefront, as it allowed the user to take a photo of their document with their phone and upload the file directly to the Chill Money Hub for verification.



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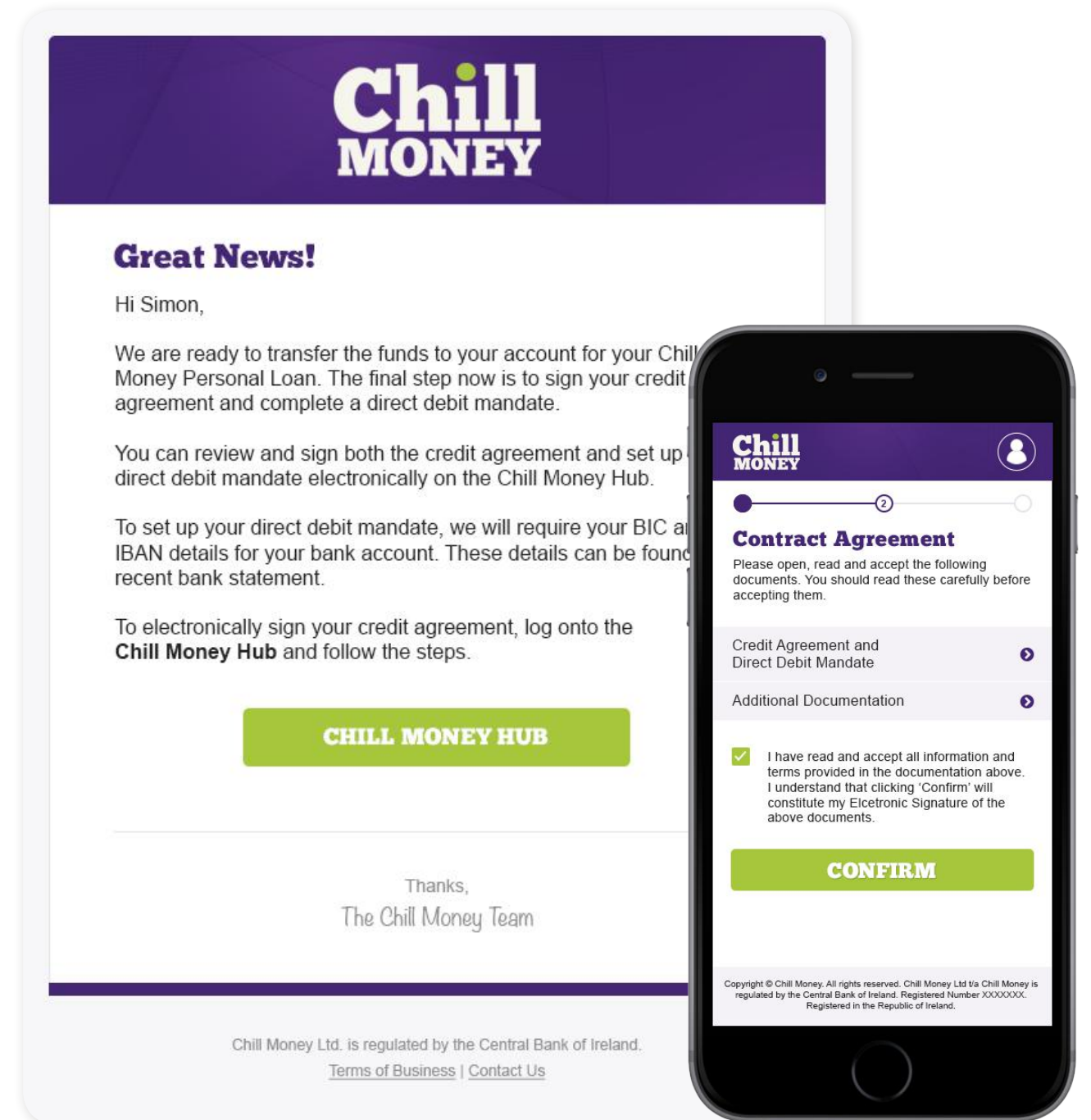
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Once their documents have been uploaded and verified, the user receives an email inviting them to log in once more to electronically sign the loan agreement and complete the process.



Results

What was achieved

Chill Money was launched at the beginning of February 2017 and with minimal marketing spend, reached a significant milestone after just **3 weeks** when over **€1m** in loans was drawn down by Chill Money customers.

Within 8 weeks, the website had generated 40,000 unique visitors and over 10,000 applications.

What was most pleasing to see was that **98% completed the application online** with no assistance from sales staff, while the number of applications lost as a result of no supporting documentation fell from 40% to less than 15%.

On the back of this success, plans to launch a credit card product were brought forward and launched in June 2017.

98%
of users completed application online

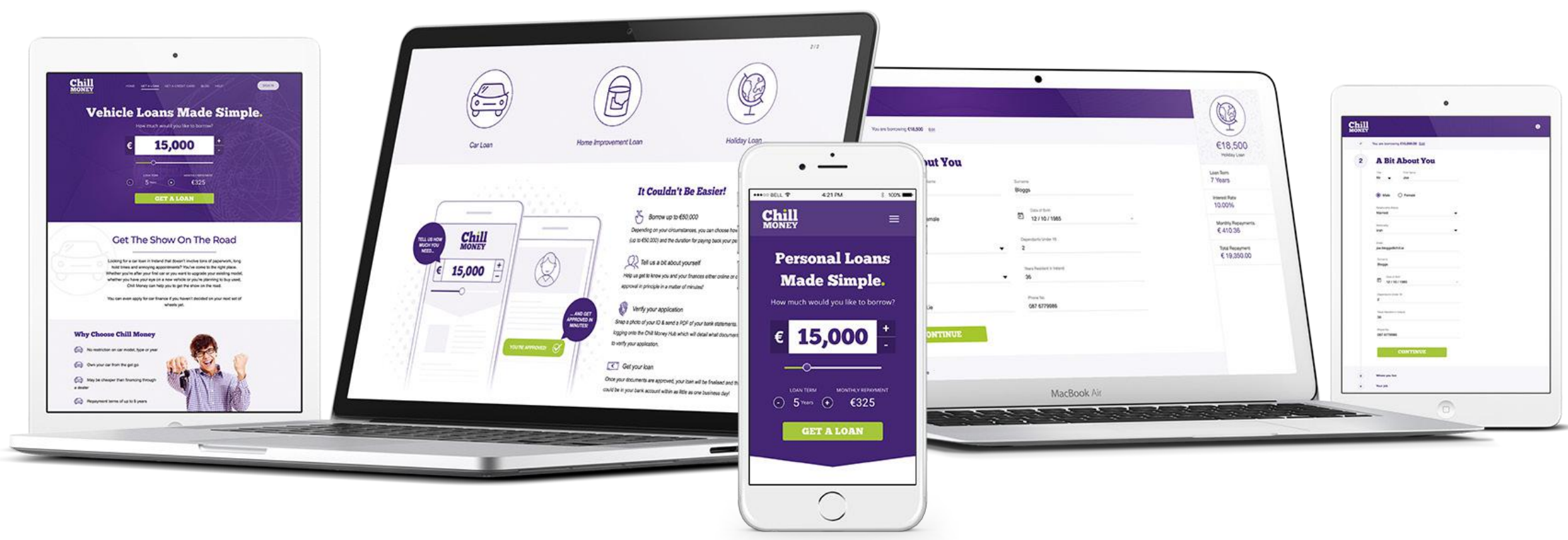
€1m
loans drawn down in first 3 weeks

Over **60%**
reduction in failed identity verification

Award Winning

In October 2017, Chill Money picked up the award for 'Best Financial Services Website' at the Digital Impact Awards 2017.

Best Financial Services Website
Digital Impact Awards 2017



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