Recipe Revolution

Uptake and revolution

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Obstacle removal

Magic-ifying known recipes

Validating visuals

An already created recipe app

A mobile app is improving a life with health ingredient boundaries. The work is societally important and so was the launch.

I stepped into this project for an app that was already created. My role was to improve the UI.
Other flows did not have so many hurdles to finding a user-contributed recipe. I made a point to rid of unnecessary obstacles soon.

There was an issue I did not expect. Legalese peppered the app. over seasoned it for sure. Are legal cookie warnings something to shy away from? What if the scope of agreements to the user impedes my work to make it simpler for the user. Those work together.

How can my work lead to a well-rounded and informed user as the goal?

Project Challenge

Will uninstalls decrease?

Tasked with a portion of the initial research, one of the first things I did was get a user flow drawn. For a recipe creation app, user's needed their priorities addressed immediately.

In front of me, I had summaries of Apple store analytics metrics provided. A quick analysis, and I was able to spot abrupt uninstalls. It was clear to me that the flow needed further addressing.

At multiple points, the previous design decisions seemed to focus on legal protections and warnings, obscuring a critical learning phase of the app.

I wanted to know more about how it got to this point.

Background

This app, created by two doctors, did the work of crunching recipe numbers to get you a *gluten-free* result.

There are hurdles to recipe making, but those obstacles persist physically when the app is installed. Our user's hands are full doing the cooking, literally. I say this is not

the best time to do much more. This requires the user to do the bulk of the learning at this crucial time.

The fact that there are two doctors behind the project speak to the authentic nature of putting the health of others first. That was a given. What was not a give is a requirement that flew under the radar. It was clear a business need that there had to be user-contributed meal pictures.

Again, the user had a lot of work to do immediately after installing.

Add to that, confirming checkbox legal agreements to put resistance to divided excitement.

After all, while taking part in the design of the questionnaire, I learned from users I interviewed, that most actually wanted this recipe app to work better for them.

Fast learners win prizes

Ok. Our initial issue was that the user had to learn a lot just to get started. In following this frustration, I diagrammed. My diagrams of the flow gave me direction on what I might tackle next; to see what is connected.

If the user can learn quickly, that is great. How do I quantify learning time? To improve all things app-related, I would like to take away some of the time it takes for the user to learn the app. Down the line, does it give us positive vibes to focus on the upload meal as a feature? After all, I take it as an implicit requirement of the business.

Roles and Goals

In a very imaginative but focused way, I created a representation of our users. I scheduled time to make a persona. This ended up turning into two personas.

There are some distinctions to the personas that pointed to a user in a different category from the work we did on the thematic board. This is why we came up with a second user representation.

I need to identify my target. This will help me mentally paint the user. The user is now in my head. It would not live in there forever, though. To offload those thoughts, I contribute to the playfulness of the pencil sketches. I need room to draw loosely, therefore thinking freely. My goal is to know what I needed to leave out, as opposed to coral group ideas.

I set up a mental test of the number of clicks needed to input a recipe down to some very small number. Some of the design stuff was indeed a distraction, according to the testing.

As an interviewer for a second interview, I took side notes on questions answered by the app co-founder. The stakeholder wants to implement an "onboarding" feature. That onboarding feature stayed to this day.

One Strategy

I kept in mind what amount of time it takes to learn the app and what can be put into an onboarding system. The process of going through onboarding will cost time for the user. I still had a list from the top of the project. I contributed unfiltered thoughts on the project this way.

I had planned interview research within a short time. I incorporated this into the question guide in preparation for conducting a set of user interviews.

Implicit image upload was not a thing. At this time, "onboarding" was. I brought follow-up questions to the creator on the specifics of the onboarding requirements. The questions were prepared beforehand.

Following up on better and faster app usage, the time it takes to learn an app requires motivation *and* time.
What are the design decisions I can make to clarify to the new user that this will be a clear, snowballing, fun process?

It has to work better and faster while we assert this through user testing. The user went through the app at certain obstacles. They were not obstacles anymore. The user's excitement diminished after downloading from the iOS Store, our user feedback told me.

My notes from that interview also included that users with gluten allergies wanted to apply a known common recipe to get back a set of ingredients that could not contain specific items The users needed to get a fast solution given by the likely circumstances.

There was something very stylistically similar about the picture of meals added in the app. The app was seeded with pictures of meals created under similar visual depth and lighting conditions. We interviewed the stakeholder briefly. Yes, the stakeholder did do some uploads. Here was our implicit requirement. There was a measure of certainty that this needed to happen, so much so that an attempt to get the ball rolling was made in that respect.

When I first downloaded the app, I had burning questions and wanted to take a look. I just wanted to gain a bit of faux-user insight. So, I became a user briefly and downloaded the app.

I noticed a subtle separation in the pattern within the recipe calculator. Was the source of these pictures known to one of the co-founders? In taking a look and breaking up the answers, the interviews also showed me the downloaded information-overload was in also in pieces.

Sketches

I was versatile in drawing essentially the digital equivalent of moving parts on a pocket-sized portrait rectangle. What was the core issue I was there to solve? I needed to unearth it. It is always a combination of factors that lead to an undesired outcome rather than a holy-grail answer?

Until now, I worked my time management muscles and policed my own time per task. I time slot per question answered. I want to have in mind a better picture of what my contribution will be. I tried to define the boundaries of what I was doing. I segmented my time explicitly. I still do that today, even.

In my approach to boxing my time, my attention to the task was greater, and the work improved. In meetings, I did this for myself behind the scenes by preparing estimates of the amount of time I would take up to put an idea forward.

Conclusion

In other areas of life, It is always a combination of factors that lead to an undesired state. Working with the stakeholder to house the idea of an onboarding ramp on to their project, I stuck to their requirements. I did not yet have an appropriate gauging of project priorities and what could be chalked up to and indefinate pursuit of side problem.

Summary

Don't get in the way of learning. Know what to leave out.

See for yourself

- [prototype](https://xd.adobe.com/view/038ea04b-be9b-42a8-8b5a-e1c9f1537b96-56dd/?fullscreen)