

## **Regina Food Bank Booking Services**

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Course:

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## **1. Business Need and Opportunity**

The operators at the Regina Food Bank (RFB) are currently struggling with a high call volume and are concerned on how the information from individuals can be retrieved without the rise of duplicates. Since these operators are not robots, we must consider high stress levels and other factors which will inhibit their ability to take calls. Although the RFB has “Link2Feed” to maintain the call volume (call queues), this project would provide a more efficient and organised method to manage individuals’ information. In addition, individuals’ will be able to give preference for their hamper. Our application will have the ability to allow 24/7 booking within the designated operation hours. Also, this project is to provide operators ease of entry by receiving individuals' filled-out details thus the only thing left to do is getting the hamper ready and awaiting delivery/pick-up.

## **2. Reflection on Project Planning**

### **2.1. Northstar and Carryover Customers**

We consider the NorthStar customers to be the chronic users of the RFB. The carryover customers would be the operators, episodic users, and any foundations working with the RFB. This is because the chronic users are the regular individuals who call to make an appointment for a hamper; thus, they will require constant appointments being made. With a more efficient process in place, the operators will have an easier time organising individual's information preferences, thus eradicating excess time wasted on call, and reducing stress levels.

### **2.2. Project Assumptions**

1. We have to use WordPress.
2. We do not have to deliver a fully functional product (site will not be involved internally -- server side).
3. We must deliver a complete design and a flexible WordPress site.
4. Our completed design must be an MVP (Minimum Viable Product) entailing a usable WordPress site which provides value but can be expanded on in the future.

### **2.3. Project Constraints**

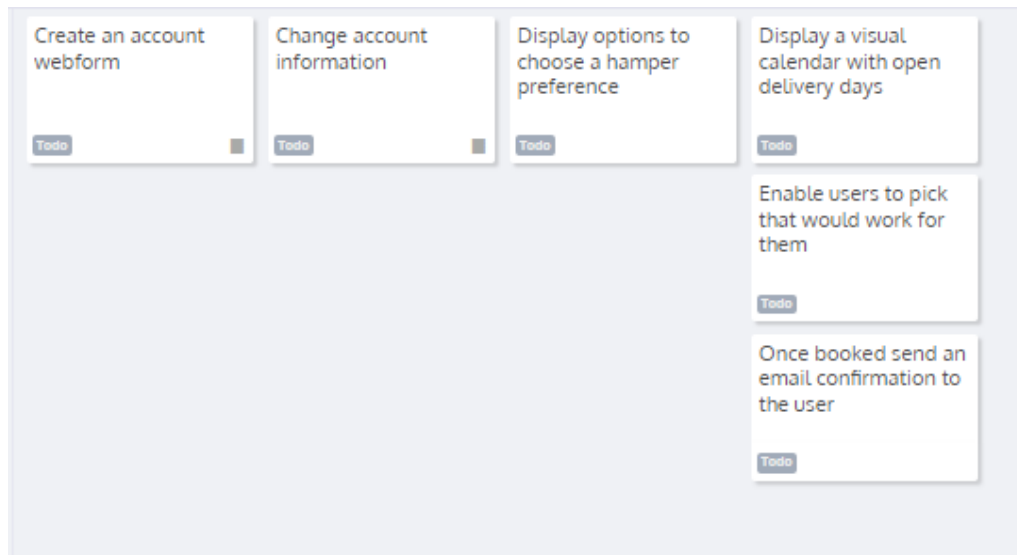
1. Communication with clients (the RFB) with the assumption of ~10 mins per activity week.
2. The only tech stack we can use is WordPress, which is quite restrictive.
3. Since there is no budget (we should not pay for a plugin), we are limited to the plugin we can use to better our site. Thus, the free plugins we can use might not ensure a good quality for the site. Plugins do not have much leeway with appearance.
4. WordPress site needs to remain simple and light.
5. Not much client technical knowledge to go off on.

### **2.4. Key Findings from Affinity Diagramming and Empathy Mapping**

Empathy mapping and Affinity diagramming laid the foundation for our group to focus on what our northstar customer needs. Regarding our empathy map, we formulated that our customers felt scared that hampers might run out if they did not show up early, felt embarrassed to be taking food from the food bank due to food insecurity, and they had a negative mental well-being in congruence with their food insecurities. The empathy mapping diagram has been a guideline on qualitative data which we utilised in our design; it brought about emotional cognizance which allowed us to step into the shoes of our northstar customers and provide a viable solution which would be able to solve if not all then at least some of the aspects listed. Although our affinity diagram is more on the technical spectrum where UI/UX concepts and data management concepts were addressed, the affinity diagramming still proved to be tangible as it provided us with a more concrete conceptual design frame of how our user stories played out. However, as our project progressed we came to a realization that not every attribute listed on our affinity diagram would be implemented.

## 2.5. Evolution of Minimum Viable Product

Although we started with a concrete MVP, our user story mapping (USM) was rather lacking. We unfortunately misunderstood the concept of USM as we failed to think of what a chronic user of the foodbank goes through in order to get a hamper. However, with Tim's professional guidance, we got a better idea of how to structure our USM and use it to the fullest potential thus maximizing our MVP design. For the most part, our MVP stayed consistent as we understood that this application is built for the regular attendee of the Regina Food Bank (RFB).



The above image illustrates our MVP for a potential user of our application. It is tied in with a chronic user with vegetarian needs. Unfortunately, as we explored features within WordPress we realised the restriction at which we were placed, this resulted in only approximately 80% of our MVP being implemented.

## 2.6. Prototyping Activity Finds

Our focus in light of prototyping was to have a design which is lightweight and withholds a simple layout that helps the user accomplish their needs in a delightful and desirable interface. To achieve that we integrated 4 design concepts to our application:

Constraints: we limited the number of options or buttons on a page at a given time. The pages would only have links or buttons directly relating to the immediate information on the page or leading to the booking page.

Effectiveness vs. Efficiency: we made a lot of data inputs optional, and reduced the size of our application to only three pages. Although this lessened the effectiveness of the site, such as limited information gathering, it created more opportunities to increase efficiency due to the ease of ordering a hamper.

Thresholds and ceilings: creating a design with at most 3 pages resulted in having a very simple and easy to learn interface. Being able to order food and a hamper in the future via the booking calendar compelled our design to have a low threshold and high ceiling.

Understandability: common software terminology such as about, order & account info, and booking services took part in allowing a user to get used to our site quickly.

### **3. Reflection on Project Results**

#### **3.1 Feelings towards the project (good/bad, likes/dislikes)**

Through the process of creating our MVP we really loved exploring ways in which UI/UX design concepts are integrated into building a desirable application. From the skeleton ideas of Lo-Fi to the interactivity of Hi-Fi we very much loved to see how a design could be elaborated on starting from just an idea. In terms of tools, AdobeXD was a new experience for us and although it took getting used to, we got accustomed to it and created wonderful design structures which aided us in looking at design from a creative and more customer integrated perspective. On the other hand, what we disliked, and although out of our control, was the limited time we had to thoroughly discuss with John about several potential strains which could be of detriment to the entire project. We felt 10 mins/session was rather short to fully understand the customer we intended to build the application for. In addition, we also disliked the constraints of staying within WordPress as the only technology tool used to handle this proposed problem. Sacrifices had to be made in order to fulfil the criteria of our MVP. Although it was not our initial plan to have our application bottlenecked with the constraints of sticking to free plugins, we had to improvise and try as much as we could to provide a viable, however, unpolished solution to solve the issue the Regina Food Bank is currently facing. Overall the project process went quite smoothly and we were able to produce somewhat of a solution in the end.

#### **3.2 Translating Prototypes**

Our translations from basic ideas, to Lo-Fi, to Hi-Fi, to WordPress were moderately smooth. The basic idea was that we were able to get all the functionality we wanted into the Lo-Fi designs (or at least theoretically since much was not modelled.) This included account management, booking, signup, login, and the most important aspect being lightweight. We experimented with a few visual designs but decided to remain with the simple few colour designs to accomplish the goal of keeping our solution very light-weight. The transition from Lo-Fi to Hi-Fi was smooth due to all 3 of our Lo-Fi designs sharing the main characteristics of account management, booking, signup, login - the only difference was we added a hamper selection tool that was able to show the descriptions of each hamper's contents. This was achieved due to Adobe XD's high customizability and flexibility. Our final transition, from Hi-Fi to WordPress encountered a few obstacles, we were unable to incorporate many of our Hi-Fi proposed locking functions such as a maximum amount of bookings, and the exact visual booking system we prototyped - having to go from wanting it done on a schedule to choosing a designated number time slot i.e less flexible and dynamic. Visually it remained similar, just making some adjustments to the WordPress UI and logo to better align with the Astra theme we chose. The lack of function incorporation was due to us wanting to keep the software light by using as few functions as possible, opting for more encompassing less flexible functions to accomplish that goal. We decided to go with Salon Booking for our account management and booking solution. All in all, our translations up to the final step were extremely smooth - the final step giving some grief due to WordPress being a website building application when the best solution would have been more app or software based.

### **3.3 Lecture Help**

Regarding the lectures we had along with the creation of our application, we were able to integrate most concepts taught. For example, through the fast feedback cycle we were able to create a pathway which led us to a smoother project build. First, by setting our target customer, we were able to lay the foundation for the purpose of our application. Second, when we had meetings with John (CEO of the RFB) where we integrated the observer stage of the cycle to get a feel of who we are trying to help. Third, we framed out ideas and brought about the empathy and affinity diagrams to really dive into our customers shoes so we can think of a more viable solution for their needs. Fourth, we brainstormed different ideas with respect to the layout of our application and how we can make it useful, usable and delightful. Thus, each member created Lo-Fi sketches which provided us with a brief overview of how our application could look like. Finally, after bringing our ideas we proceed to build a potentially viable product which should solve our customers needs. Although the cycle is meant to be iterated, given the time span of the semester we were only able to perform one iteration, however, through the lecture teachings we understand the process of the fast feedback cycle and hope to integrate it in our future work.

### **3.4 What to do Same or Differently in Future Projects**

Given the circumstances of this project we would most definitely use the same methods of process like the fast feedback cycle and the incorporation of design concepts to direct our path to creating a useful, usable and delightful application for our customers. However, what we might do differently is to allocate time to understand our group members and get a sense of what we are and are not good at. This promotes a level of teamwork where each allocated work section of the project is directed towards members pertaining to their strengths. In addition, although we never had the issue of submitting our milestone at the respected project checkpoint late. We believe that integrating some sort of outline for our weekly scrum meeting might help us focus as a group and keep to time constraints and deadlines. For example, we spent roughly 5 hours every Sunday for our scrum. We would have loved to cut that down to 2 or 3 while also producing the same level of efficient result.

### **3.5 Opportunities for Future Work**

Although our design did not properly fit the criteria of a fully integrated application due to the limited time we had, we believe our current project can be built on and turned into a first solution to a new problem introduced by John. Properly understanding WordPress is definitely the path we needed to take in order to present a fully integrated application. Features we proposed as future MVPs including: external authentication login (Google, Facebook, etc.), having users be able to set recurring appointments for up to 3 months in a year, and cancellation updates via user's email could well be the next stage in amping up the structure of our application. However, in order to take our design to the next step with these features, one would need extended commitment; majorly that is stirring towards better integrated technologies.

## 4. WordPress

### 4.1 Theme

The Theme we used was Astra, which was mainly responsible for the styling and typography, as we needed the application to have somewhat a correlation to RFB; depicting it as an extension of the site. We did not incorporate a starter template as we were able to find a plugin called Salon Booking System which encased all our design concepts in one.

### 4.2 Plugin

#### **Salon Booking System**

**User Rating:** 4.4

**Last Updated:** 2 Weeks Ago (As of: March 28 / 2022)

**Active Installations:** 8,000+

**Use:** The plugin is used for account management and as a booking system, it facilitates client-side and admin-side interfaces and management.

**Pages on:** “Login”, “Orders & Account Info”, “Thank you for booking”, Comments: The plugin seems to lack UI customizability for colour changing and small text changes. It is the best alternative for the requirements of this project, especially in the free category. It allows for management of accounts, scheduling by time chunk, and even allows for the administrator to accept or reject requests.

#### **Ultimate FAQ**

**User Rating:** 4.5

**Last Updated:** 4 Weeks Ago (As of: March 31 / 2022)

**Active Installations:** 40,000+

**Use:** The plugin is used to create FAQs accordions which aids a user in times of need when exploring a new site.

**Pages on:** “FAQs” Comments: The plugin rather lacks the flexibility of icon altering to better please the human eye without the use of a paid premium account. However, it is the best and smoothest solution for now in terms of our users finding delight in getting their most frequently asked questions answered.