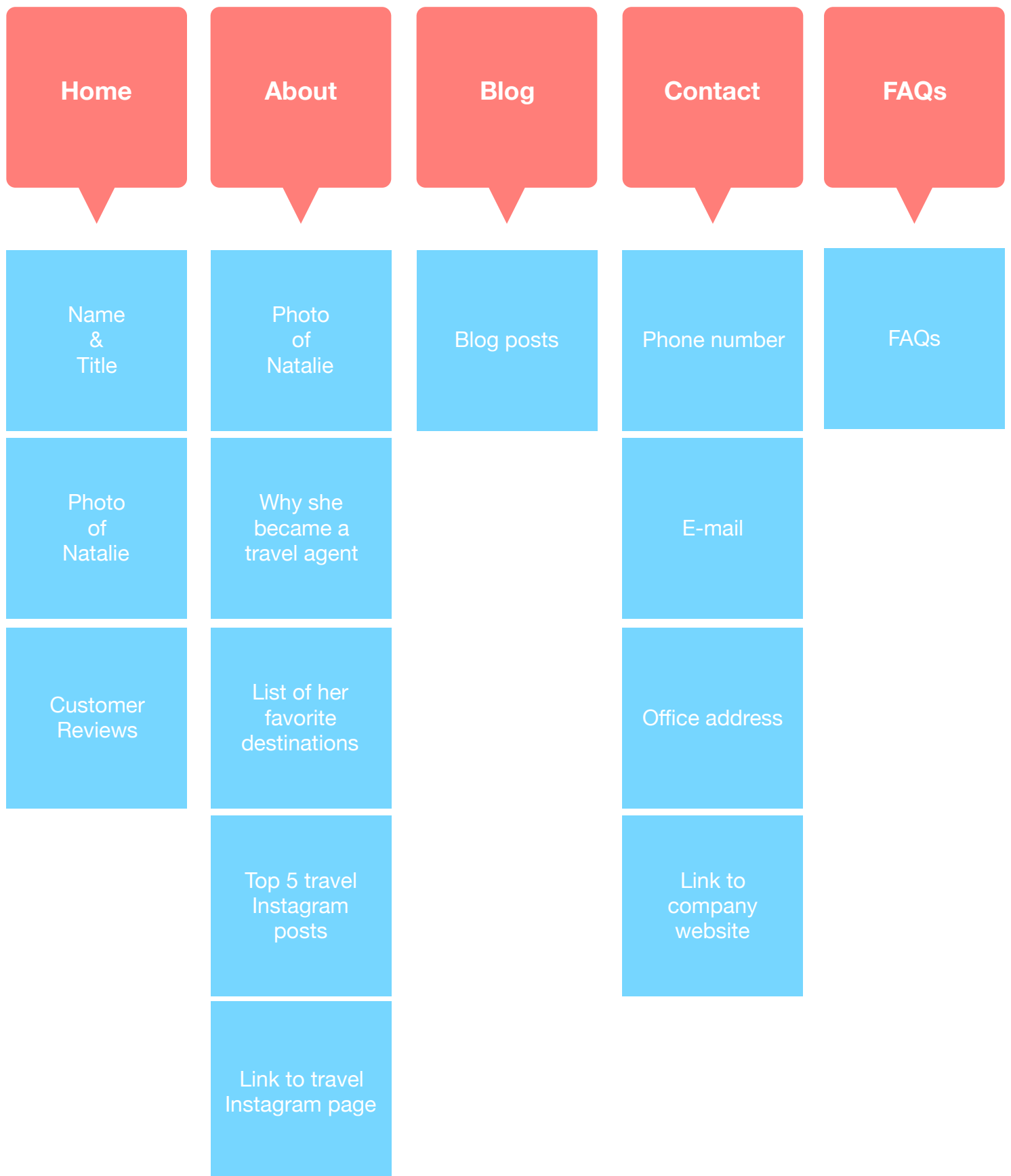


Information Architecture



Summary

To create the information architecture for my client's site I began by going over my client needs assessment. As I read through the assessment, I kept a stack of index cards next to me and wrote down key components of the website on each card. Once I felt like I had a card for each key component that my client had asked for, I began to sort the cards into piles based on likeness. This process was actually more difficult than I expected it to be. It was hard to organize the cards into categories because there were many cards that I felt could go in multiple different categories, or that did not fit into any. I also found myself trying to jump ahead and thinking of the category titles first before sorting the cards. However, I was finally able to sort the cards into categories that I liked and then assigned titles to each one.

After documenting my sort, I shuffled the cards up and brought them with me to my boyfriend's parents' house when we went over for dinner. I had my boyfriend's mom, Jennifer, try the sort. I chose her because I felt that she represented a typical user who had no previous knowledge of the project. I gave her the shuffled stack of cards and kept my category cards hidden. I told her to simply categorize the cards based on likeness, or how she felt they could be separated into different pages on a website. I also gave her blank cards and asked her to write names for her categories once she was finished sorting.

With the exception of my adding a "Home" page, Jennifer's sort turned out to be very similar to my own. After she finished, I showed her the picture of my sort and we compared them. We discussed our reasoning for each sort and I explained how I envisioned each aspect appearing on the different pages. Once we discussed, Jennifer said that she could understand my layout just as well. She also helped me to see that there are some aspects that ought to appear on

multiple pages, such as a photo of Natalie, which is why it appears twice on the final information architecture.

With the exception of duplicating the photo of Natalie, I ended up going with my own card sort for the final information architecture. I felt that it was similar enough to Jennifer's that it will make sense to the users. Also, I think it will flow nicely with how I envision the layout of the actual site. Even though the two sorts ended up being fairly similar, I still learned the value of doing a card sort in the information architecture step of the design process. It was reassuring to get an outside opinion on the navigation of the site, especially one from someone who represents a typical user. It also brought to light some things that possibly needed just a bit more clarification. For instance, Jennifer asked me if "reviews" meant reviews from customers of Natalie or reviews from Natalie of trips she has been on. I had intended it to be the former, and the latter had not even crossed my mind. Overall, taking the time to do these sorts was really beneficial and helpful in planning out the organization of the site. I am excited to get Natalie's input on it and to get on with the rest of the design process!