



A User Experience Study of HomeAway's User Interface
University of Texas at Austin School of Information

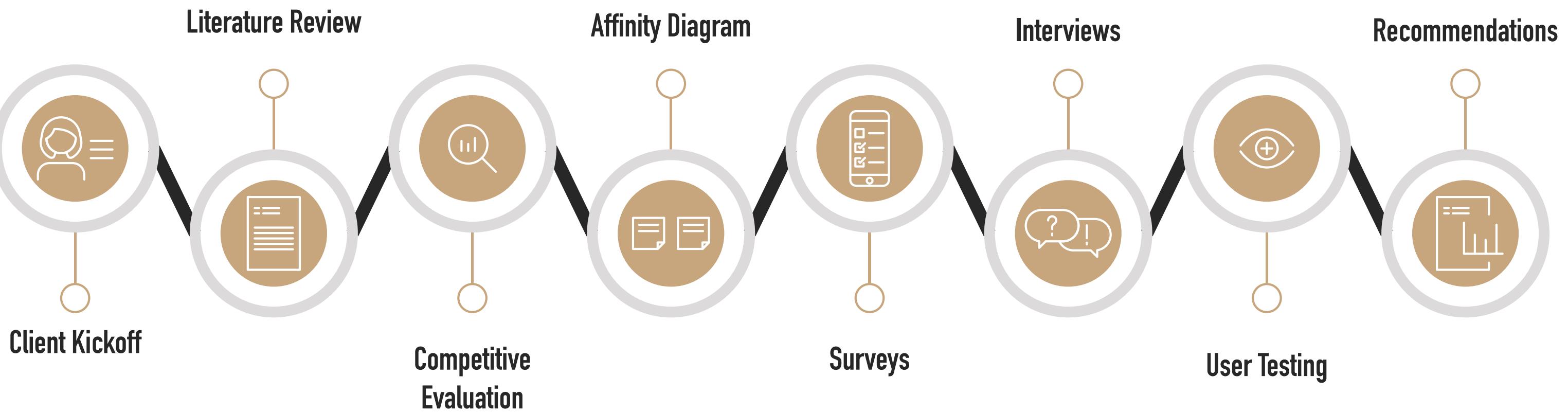
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Trust in a P2P Marketplace

Project Process

Overview

Below are the main sections incorporated in this study. Most overlapped to some extent due to the inter-connectivity of a mixed-method approach, but all contributed different perspectives and insights.



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Communication of context, key objectives, and desirable outcomes for this research study.

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The survey provided data for comparing 3 sharing markets side-by-side; home-sharing, ride-sharing, and the P2P resale market. It also supplied other insights from which we formed our interview questions in order to unpack the extracted trends further.

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Generative and evaluative research through direct communication with people who have experience and/or interest in the sharing economy. This included further exploration of the survey findings as well as a general analysis of travel habits in order to decompose any points of anxiety or feeling of heightened risk.

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Client Kickoff

Communication of context, key objectives, and desireable outcomes for this research study.

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Project Context

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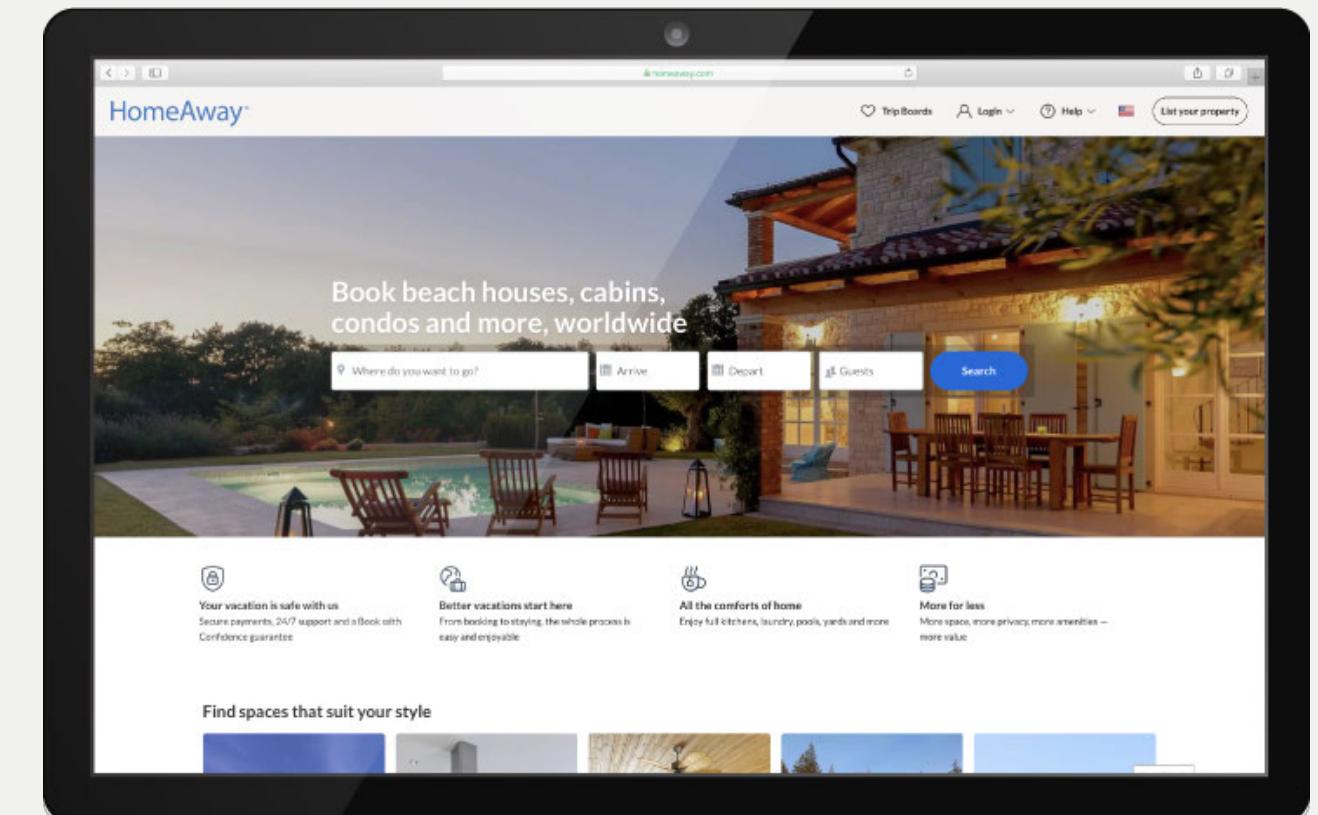
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On February 4th, 2019, our group met with Angela and Sarah from HomeAway to discuss a project proposal around trust within a peer to peer (P2P) marketplace and more specifically, within the short term rental climate. During this time they effectively communicated the context, key objectives, and desirable outcomes for the proposed research but provided room for us to select our approach, target perspective, and focus.





Definition of Trust

As described in the client kickoff, trust is the “willingness to rely on another in the face of risk.”

Based on the aforementioned and our findings, we leveraged defining trust as a human factor and not an easy yes/no proposition. When we’re online, we humans have complex psychological reactions to the interfaces they encounter, and those reactions dictate how they feel about the products, experiences, and entities with which they interact.

Elements of Trust

Risk

Risk must be present or the concept of trust is not relevant.

Expectation

Trust contains an expectation of someone’s ability, reliability, and benevolence.

Other Components

Trust also denotes the presence of cognitive effort and emotional processing.

Project Approach

Focus

This research study focused on **stimulating trust through the user interface** from the traveler's perspective. Zeroing in on the interface itself provided opportunity for us to supply direct actionables along with top-level findings and we approached the research from a traveler perspective due to the following logic:

- There is **more transparency** and **availability of consumer flows** across various of peer to peer (P2P) products.
- There is a **larger participant sample** for testing and interviews.
- There are ample user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) elements to compare against the extensively explored, and iterated on, ecommerce experience. This contributed a trove of in-depth existing research from different disciplines.
- From informal preliminary conversations, we gained the insight that HomeAway is more appealing to potential and current hosts than the consumer market. Implying that **the larger area for improvement lies within the consumer facing interactions** and services. The host grievances that did surface were about elements also included in the consumer flow, eg. the profile and or rating of the other participating party. Please refer to the quotes on the right for specific examples.

Considerations

Through incorporating the aforementioned, we were able to extract some industry best-practices, employ methods of measurement, and explore qualitative context/sentiment. While eye-tracking can be very helpful, it can also produce empty or misleading, data points. We would be unable to accurately classify data without properly understanding the user's situational framing. Through participant feedback we don't just find out what drew her/his/their eye but also why and why she/he/they then chose to proceed with the following action.

Conclusion

Our research establishes **trust as a human factor**; therefore, to study it properly within a P2P marketplace, we needed to include **psychological, sociological, and human-computer interaction perspectives**. As a result, our project employed a **mixed-method approach** most closely relating to contextual inquiry.

"I really like hosting with HomeAway! They actually just added something called Boost where you earn points that can be used into improve your search ranking for dates you select. It's pretty helpful."

Participant ID SP19-12
Male, Age 35-44

"Overall, HA has been very helpful as the owner. It is hard to filter travelers as there isn't a rating system on them, only a history on the times they have booked/stayed. I only have had one group that cleaned up after themselves."

Participant ID SP19-13
Male, Age 45-54



Affinity Diagram

Immediately after the client kickoff, our team started consuming corresponding literature and evaluating direct and indirect competitors that could provide a plethora of perspectives. Midway through those efforts, we gathered for an affinity diagram exercise. Here we listed brainstormed all thoughts, ideas, potential novel elements within known atmospheres, questions to investigate further, and fundamental components or project elements we felt were necessary to include. From there we organized and re-organized which **led to the extraction of 4 over-arching trends.**

Initial Organizational Categories

Project Components	User Interface (UI) Components	User Experience (UX) Components	UI/UX Hybrids
Human Behaviors	Profile of the Host	Profile of the Listing	Profile of the Traveler
Measuring	Brand Specific	Payment	Privacy & Security

Project Components

What will inform our end model?	What are the UI flows we are going to test on?	Should we de-brand testing material?
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Measuring

How will we measure trust?	What GSR levels are normal and how can we validate those baselines?	How would GSR measures correlate to trust?	How do we utilize eye-tracking software to measure trust?
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HomeAway Specific

Can hosts require travelers to leave reviews?	Does HomeAway find another rental property if something goes wrong upon arrival?	What does HomeAway do to verify the information on their platform?	Cancellation policies? Determined by the host or by HomeAway?	Should HomeAway provide a rewards system?
Tone of voice on site	Require headshots of travelers and hosts, not just images?	Host level badge vernacular may be too obscure; "Premier Partner"	Rewards program?	Customer service procedures

Payment

Does HomeAway or the host handle any issues with payment?	What payment processors are offered? How modern (amazon pay)?	Secure payment processor?	Deposit policy?	When is the traveler charged?
Can the traveler save their payment information?				

Privacy & Security

Insurance policy for travelers?	Insurance policy for hosts?	What does HomeAway do with our data?	How do different locations of properties change safety concerns?
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UI Components

Photo captions?	Are icons or pictures better for the amenities listings?	Brand associations?	Have a rental request status displayed	Visible reporting policy?
How are human relationship factors incorporated in the UI?	What makes a photo seem authentic?	How actively is a listing reserved?		

UI/UX Hybrids

Their user guarantee is hard to digest	Should the unavailable filter features grey out or disappear?	Show firm response time options	Why is the review posted date missing from HomeAway's mobile site?	What else is present on HomeAway's desktop site and not on mobile?
What would be the best way to implement a "word of mouth" aspect in HomeAway's UI?	How important are star ratings per review?	What filters are important to you?	Price on the tags shown on the map	Establishing the difference between a listing profile and a host profile

UX/Services

Add functionality to "favorite" a listing	Is the host told that the more info they put the better the engagement?	Ability to report the traveler	Are users allowed to attach pictures to reviews?	Zoom functionality on photos?
Add functionality to "favorite" a host	Is it easy to find the insurance policy?	Add a comparison tool to make the differences between listings visible on the results page.	Have filters that adapt to the location or the listing the user is looking at.	Does HomeAway leverage push notifications for when your rental request status has changed?

Human Behaviors

Is the "create a listing" flow too daunting causing them to speed through the process?	Standardize the arrival logistics flow. Don't rely on the host to make sure instructions are thorough	Is the host able to filter the travelers that their listing appears to based on parameters in the traveler's profile?	What makes me trust you?	Do people have strategies when digesting reviews?
On average, how many reviews do people read?	How is trust incorporated in decision making?	Search term analysis? What do customers search for?	Do people book other travel accommodations on the same platform as their rental property?	

Profile of the Host

Can the host reset their rating?	How many levels are there in the "Premier Partner" system?	What are the top 3 things travelers want to know about the host?	What about the host do I need to trust in order to feel secure in renting with them?	Does the host have a rating separate from the listing?
Ability to report host	Multiple pictures of host?	Explanations of what goes into deeming a host a "Premiere Partner" is unclear		

Profile of the Listing

FAQs provided on a property basis. Eg. Topics that others may not know to ask about	Show how many times a property has been rented over how long.	Content hierarchy on listing page (what content do users value most?)	How many reviews does HomeAway show upon the first page?	Photography tips for hosts, eg. lighting, time of day, no fish-eye, etc.
What part of a listing page do people trust the most?	What makes a review trustworthy?	Response rate of host listed?	Will adding people to the pictures increase trust?	Offer the host a description of neighborhood + nearby amenities to include in property descriptions

Profile of the Traveler

Is there a badge system for travelers? Like Premier Traveler?	Should I be able to add referrals from friends on the platform whom have reached a certain level?	As a user, am I able to follow other travelers and see where they went/their reviews if they make it public?	Should their be similar requirements for a travelers profile as the hosts?
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Project Components

What will inform our end model?
What are the UI flows we are going to test on?
Should we de-brand testing material?

Measuring

How will we measure trust?
What GSR levels are normal and how can we validate those baselines?
How would GSR measures correlate to trust?
How do we utilize eye-tracking software to measure trust?

HomeAway Specific

Can hosts require travelers to leave reviews?
Does HomeAway find another rental property if something goes wrong upon arrival?
What does HomeAway do to verify the information on their platform?
Cancellation policies? Determined by the host or by HomeAway?
Should HomeAway provide a rewards system?

Tone of voice on site
Require headshots of travelers and hosts, not just images?
Host level badge vernacular may be too obscure; "Premier Partner"
Rewards program?
Customer service procedures

Payment

Does HomeAway or the host handle any issues with payment?
What payment processors are offered?
Secure payment processor?
Deposit policy?
When is the traveler charged?

Can the traveler save their payment information?

Privacy & Security

Insurance policy for travelers?
Insurance policy for hosts?
What does HomeAway do with our data?
How do different locations of properties change safety concerns?

UI Components

Photo captions?
Are icons or pictures better for the amenities listings?
Brand associations?
Have a rental request status displayed
Visible reporting policy?
Can the host reset their rating?
How many levels are there in the "Premier Partner" system?
What are the top 3 things travelers want to know about the host?
What about the host do I need to trust in order to feel secure in renting with them?
Does the host have a rating separate from the listing?

How are human relationship factors incorporated in the UI?
What makes a photo seem authentic?
How actively is a listing reserved?
Ability to report host
Multiple pictures of host?
Explanations of what goes into deeming a host a "Premiere Partner" is unclear

UI/UX Hybrids

Their user guarantee is hard to digest
Should the unavailable feature filters grey out or disappear?
Show firm response time options
Why is the review posted date missing from HomeAway's mobile site?
What else is present on HomeAway's desktop site and not on mobile?
What flow does a host go through when creating a listing?
Show how many times a property has been rented over how long.
FAQs provided on a property basis. Eg. Topics that others may not know to ask about
Content hierarchy on listing page (what content do users value most?)
How many reviews does HomeAway show upon the first page?
Photography tips for hosts, eg. lighting, time of day, no fish-eye, etc.

Should the unavailable feature filters grey out or disappear?
What would be the best way to implement a "word of mouth" aspect in HomeAway's UI?
How important are star ratings per review?
What filters are important to you?
Price on the tags shown on the map
Establishing the difference between a listing profile and a host profile
What human access points are there currently to access one another?
What makes a review trustworthy?
What part of a listing page do people trust the most?
Response rate of host listed?
Will adding people to the pictures increase trust?
Offer the host a description of neighborhood + nearby amenities to include in property descriptions

Should HomeAway provide a rewards system?
Customer service procedures

UX/Services

Add functionality to "favorite" a listing
Is the host told that the more info they put the better the engagement?
Ability to report the traveler
Are users allowed to attach pictures to reviews?
Zoom functionality on photos?
Ability to report listing
Should there be requirements for a minimum of photos, quantity and content wise?
Videos of property?
Tone of voice suggestions for hosts when creating a listing
Create requirements for property description to guide the host and allow the user to digest quicker

Is there a badge system for travelers? Like Premier Traveler?
Should I be able to add referrals from friends on the platform whom have reached a certain level?
As a user, am I able to follow other travelers and see where they went/their reviews if they make it public?
Should their be similar requirements for a travelers profile as the hosts?

Add functionality to "favorite" a host
Is it easy to find the insurance policy?
Add a comparison tool to make the differences between listings visible on the results page.
Have filters that adapt to the location or the listing the user is looking at.
Does HomeAway leverage push notifications for when your rental request status has changed?

Filters specific for traveling with children and/or accessibility issues?
How important are filters in this environment? Do they help trust?

Human Behaviors

Is the "create a listing" flow too daunting causing them to speed through the process?
Standardize the arrival logistics flow. Don't rely on the host to make sure instructions are thorough
Is the host able to filter the travelers that their listing appears to based on parameters in the traveler's profile?
What makes me trust you?
Do people have strategies when digesting reviews?

On average, how many reviews do people read?
How is trust incorporated in decision making?
Search term analysis? What do customers search for?
Do people book other travel accommodations on the same platform as their rental property?

Profile of the Host

Profile of the Listing

Profile of the Traveler

Key Themes

General

General questions or things to investigate

Control

Elements that create a sense of control

Authenticity

Elements that help validate shared information or the brand's legitimacy

Transparency

Components that affect clarity and alleviate the cognitive load or anxieties

Word of Mouth

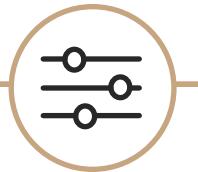
Components where a peer is communicating to the user about something they do not have stake in



4 Key Themes

Further into the affinity diagram exercise, four themes kept arising surrounding the topic of trust; **control, authenticity, transparency, and word of mouth**. Due to our searching for elements to research that have been claimed stimulate trust within an exchange marketplace, by literature or peers discussing trust in pure human interactions, it became clear that we should utilize these themes as four pillar perspectives from which to approach each research method we employed.

Control



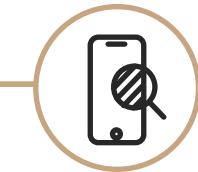
When people believe they control elements within a process, they are more likely to perceive the process and outcome as trustworthy and beneficial to them.

Authenticity



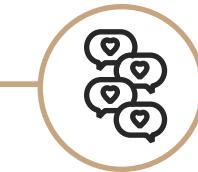
Communicating that the information displayed is a fair and accurate depiction of the real thing, and has not been altered in order to mislead or trick people, is critical to engendering trust in people.

Transparency



People feel reassured that their trust is well-placed when they are provided clear and verified details about the claims of others. They then leverage those verified details to make informed decisions about commitments like purchasing.

Word of Mouth



The Nielsen Global Trust In Advertising Survey states that 92% of people trust a recommendation that is provided by their peer. It could be argued that the effectiveness of word of mouth is a main reason why "social influencer" is a legitimate job title now.



Literature Review

Review of past academic and industry literature in order to better understand the concept of trust both independently and with respect to the P2P market.

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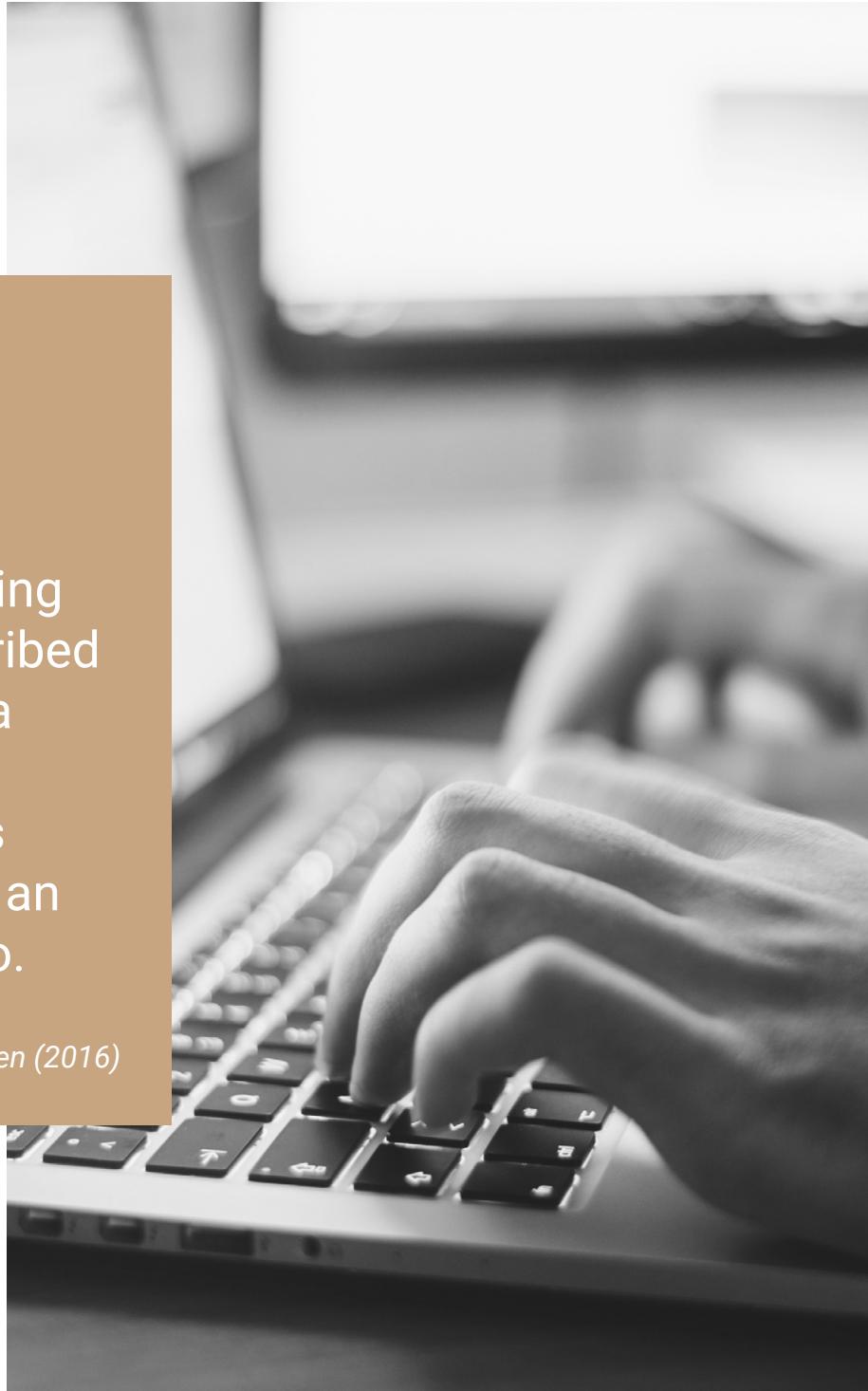
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Sharing Economy

Sharing Economy

The sharing economy encompasses discovering and distributing a described asset, communicating a price, a **transactional exchange among peers** (individuals), and using an online platform to do so.

Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016)

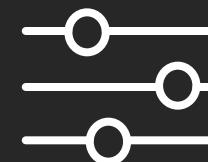


Characteristics of the Sharing Economy

- **Relationship-oriented**
- **Physical presence required**

Both the sharing peer (service provider) and the recipient peer (user/consumer) confront **security risks** from uncertainty due to a physical transaction.
- **Attention to the social nature of peers**

When there are two peers involved in communication, there is a social aspect present. Due to how people develop trust with each other through social interactions, if parties recognize social similarities among each other that can potentially **diminish concerns about transactional risks**.
- **Dual role of seller; owing and providing the product and service**



Trust & Control

Explanation

When people are involved in a process, they are more likely to perceive the outcome as trustworthy and beneficial to them. There is a sense of detailed comprehension and ownership that comes with being involved in the creation of something that stimulates trust.



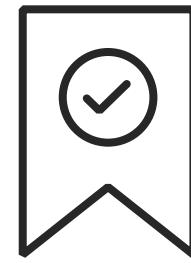
Literature

"There was a success rate of 80% when people used the navigation scheme structured according to most users' mental model. There was a success rate of 9% when people used the navigation scheme structured according to the company's internal thinking"

Philips, Miklos (2019). "The True ROI of UX: B2B Redesign Case Studies." Toptal Engineering

"The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer reveals that trust has changed profoundly in the past year—people have shifted their trust to the relationships within their control."

2019 Edelman Trust Barometer. (n.d.). Retrieved February 10, 2019, from <https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer>



Trust & Authenticity



Explanation

To the right is a current example of how people are developing more methods of authentication in order to lessen the potential risk. The thought is that this confirmation will allow the rider to know they are getting into the correct car. They can therefore trust that they are more likely to get to their destination safely.

Literature

The University of South Carolina recently partnered with Uber to initiate a "What's My Name" campaign in which a person will ask the suspected Uber driver who they are meant to pick up as a means to authenticate that they are the correct, background checked, certified Uber driver.

Sexton, M. (2019, April 18). 'What's my name?' Retrieved April 20, 2019, from https://www.sc.edu/uofsc/posts/2019/04/campus_safety_uber.php#.XM4de5NKjyg

"Verified identity helps peel back the first layer of trust between strangers, which is crucial for the success of the sharing economy."

Council, Young Entrepreneur. "The Future Of The Sharing Economy Depends On Trust." Forbes. Accessed February 23, 2019. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyc/2015/02/10/the-future-of-the-sharing-economy-depends-on-trust/>.

"Sharing economy sites offer additional information through the pervasive use of personal photos of the sellers as a means of identity verification (Liu, 2012) and in order to emphasize the sense of personal, sociable, human contact."

Botsman, R., & Rogers, R. (2011). *What's mine is yours: how collaborative consumption is changing the way we live* (Vol. 5). London: Collins.



Trust & Transparency



Explanation

Clear communication is a well-practiced method of stimulating trust. A lot of regulatory agencies have been founded off of this notion. For example, we trust food labels because of the Food and Drug Administration implementing rules around clarity and content and we also trust doctors because they are obligated to tell us what is going on and how you should proceed.

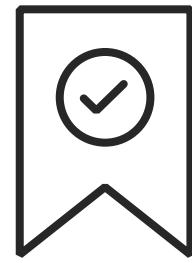
Literature

"Trust requires context. It makes no sense that say that "Joe is trustworthy" without specifying "to do what?" I may trust my dog with my life – but not with my ham sandwich."

"Trust and the Sharing Economy: A New Business Model."
Trusted Advisor. Accessed February 23, 2019. <https://trustedadvisor.com/trust-and-the-sharing-economy-a-new-business-model>.

"Since trading with strangers in P2P marketplaces involves asymmetric information and economic risks, these businesses have developed reputation mechanisms to encourage trust among traders"

Resnick, P., & Zeckhauser, R. (2002). *Trust among strangers in Internet transactions: Empirical analysis of eBay's reputation system*. In *The Economics of the Internet and E-commerce* (pp. 127-157). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.



Trust & Word of Mouth

Explanation

Word of mouth has been, and most likely will remain, one of the most effective marketing tools. Knowing that, it makes sense that we would leverage that interaction and simulate it within a P2P market.

Literature

“According to The Social Media Revolution, user-generated social posts account for 25 percent of search results for the world’s top 20 brands. In other words, social influencer marketing is great for SEO. Nothing ups your rank like conversations about your brand, and nothing starts conversations about your brand like an influencer at the helm.”

Award-Winning Digital Marketing Agency in Charlotte, NC. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://union.co/articles/influencer-marketing-its-word-of-mouth-2-0>



“The response for a large part of today's consumers is an increasing resistance to traditional advertising, and the use of Word-of-Mouth as a more personal and trustful source for products and services related information.”

Alexandru, Bajenaru. (2010). *The Art and Science of Word of Mouth and Electronic Word of Mouth*. ANNALS OF THE ORADEA UNIVERSITY. Fascicle of Management and Technological Engineering.. XIX (IX), 2010/1. 10.15660/AUOFMTE. 2010-1.1803.



Competitive Evaluation

Heuristic evaluations as well as an indexing of user interface, user experience, and customer relation elements present in competitor products.

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Strategy Summary

Assessing direct and indirect competitors' products involved performing heuristic evaluations of both HomeAway and competitor websites/applications, as well as documenting many facets of the user interface, user experience, and customer relations elements present in competitor products. Our competitive evaluation helped provide a baseline of must-haves in relation to user expectations due to their presence within competing products. We also used it to uncover areas of active innovation and "reverse-analyze" those innovative components, features, and processes to understand the problem they exist to solve. For example, the pet attending app Rover shows how many returning customers a potential pet sitter/walker has in order to evoke a sense of validation and word of mouth that they have proven reliable enough in the past that people returned to them for further service.



Etsy



craigslist



POSHMARK

	Airbnb	FlipKey	Clickstay	Facebook Marketplace	Etsy	Poshmark	Craigslist	Rover
Elements of Control								
Global Site Search	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Recent Searches	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—
Filters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ability to Rate the Provider (Only with Purchase)	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓	—	✓
Saving/Favoriting Functionality	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ability to Report a Provider	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓
Ability to Report a Listing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Hide Listing Functionality	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—
Elements of Authenticity								
Google Login	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—
Facebook Login	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓
Apple Pay	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—
Venmo	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—
PayPal	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—
Amazon Pay	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—
Other Secure Payment Processor	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Associated Brands Displayed	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—
Provider Badge System Through the Platform	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓
Provider Profile Offered	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓
Pictures of Provider	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Multiple Pictures of Provider	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	✓
Other Products Offered by Provider Displayed	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Provider Rating Displayed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓
Provider's Location Listed	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Video of Product Functionality	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other UI Steps to Attempt and Validate Product and/or Provider	Handwriting font for provider name	"Certificate of Excellence" with explanation of what that means	✓	—	✓	"Posh Authenticate" for items over \$500	—	—

	Airbnb	FlipKey	Clickstay	Facebook Marketplace	Etsy	Poshmark	Craigslist	Rover
Elements of Transparency								
Order Status Tracking	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Security Messaging Around the Purchase Displayed	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Non-Essential Details About the Provider Provided	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓
Verification Methods Clearly Displayed	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Rating Methods Clearly Articulated	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓
Rating the Consumer Functionality	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—
Multiple Product Photos	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Photo Zoom Functionality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rating for Product (Not Provider)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Listing Price Displayed on Home Page	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Product's Post Date Displayed	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	—
Review Post Date Displayed	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Word of Mouth Elements								
Interesting Word of Mouth UI	Occupancy rate	"Booked twice in the last 2 days"	Rating and associated word pinned to hero image	Fundamental to service	Variety of badges like "many others also have item in their baskets"	Shows how many others also have item in their cart	Yes, but not based on people you know	A "Repeat Customers" tag with quantity
Trending Searches	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—
Reviews	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	As "comments"	—	✓
Aggregate Star Rating for Provider	Badges are based on review sentiment but no rating shown	✓	✓	—	✓	"Love Notes", show 5-star post purchase reviews	—	✓
Aggregate Star Rating for Product		✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	✓
Star Rating Displayed for Each Review	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—
Quantity of Reviews Displayed	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Mutual Friends with Provider UI Element	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—
Time Between Buying and Receiving Options (Example: Instant Booking)	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Average Response Time Displayed	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓

	Airbnb	FlipKey	Clickstay	Facebook Marketplace	Etsy	Poshmark	Craigslist	Rover
	P2P UI & UX							
Number of Filter Columns	2	2	4	1	1	1	1	1
Number of Filter Options Displayed On First Screen	11	20	33	13	18	34	24	13
Total Number of Filter Options (Without choosing "View More")	38	23	35 - Grey out non-applicables	17	28	47 - Includes "brands list"	24	23
Suggested Searches	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—
Listing Display - Infinity Scroll	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Listing Display - Carousel	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	—
Push Notifications	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓
In-App/Site Messaging	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓
Pre-Populated Messaging	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓
Post-Purchase Provider Contact	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amenities or Features UI	Cut-out pictures	Icons	Icons	Written	Written	Tags	Written	Written
Related Offers Displayed (Cars, Flights, Experiences, Etc.)	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other Ads On Page	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—
Required Create An Account	✓	✓	✓	✓	Not vital, guest checkout	✓	✓	✓

Industry Best Practices

Background

Utilizing the MoSCoW method and the information retrieved from the competitive evaluation, we have comprised the general industry trends. We realize that HomeAway houses some of these already so we tried to focus on improveable areas.

MoSCoW was developed by Dai Clegg of Oracle UK in 1994 and has been made popular by exponents of the Dynamic Systems Development Method (DSDM).

The DSDM Agile Project Framework (2014 Onwards). (2017, June 15). Retrieved February 13, 2019, from <https://www.agilebusiness.org/content/moscow-prioritisation>

Must

- Tooltip explanations of icons and labels
- Global site search
- Ability to report a listing
- Flush out provider profile with more required fields than language and an organic bio. (*HomeAway specific*)
- List verified provider details and how they were verified.
- Booking status tracking
- Provide more parameter context to the Premier Partner badge description and also communicate whether there are levels above or below to the travelers. (*HomeAway specific*)
- Show the quantity of reviews.

Should

- Ability to report a provider
- Display when the listing was originally posted to the platform.
- Display review post dates and month and year that the reviewer stayed at the location. (*Currently this is inconsistent between HomeAway's desktop site versus on mobile*)
- Show provider information higher up on the listing page.
- Should include a link to the reviews and the quantity of reviews in the provider profile.



Could

- Allow provider to upload multiple pictures of themselves to further validate their authenticity.
- If a provider is new and therefore does not have any reviews, provide a new tag so that users don't review no reviews negatively.
- Ability to hide a listing and not view it again in the future.
- Ability to hide a host and not view her/his/their properties in the future.
- Show both the reviews from travelers on the provider's profile page but also the reviews from other providers when this provider was a traveler and stayed somewhere.
- Provide more time options for travelers and providers around pre-determined booking times. Instant booking is nice but it may be a deterrent for providers. Therefore more may participate in a 1-2 day turn around.

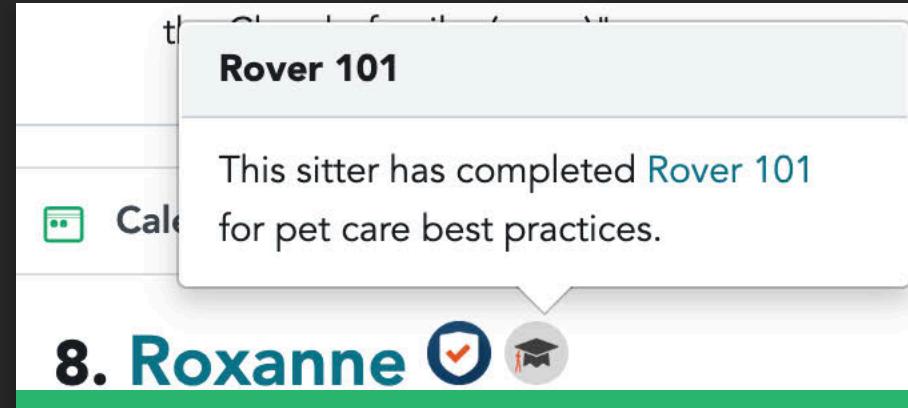
Would

- Create functionality around reviewers being able to also attach photos to their reviews. Understanding some legal or liability issues, we would suggest either a location specific hashtag in which they could submit a photo on social media in order to possibly be chosen for a social feed on a listing page, or, UX where she/he/they could just submit a photo for attachment and implement an approval process.
- Explore using cut out photos for amenity communications versus icons.

**More study should be done here but a lot of our research around authenticity dictates that, when appropriate, photography communicates more effectively and stimulates trust.*

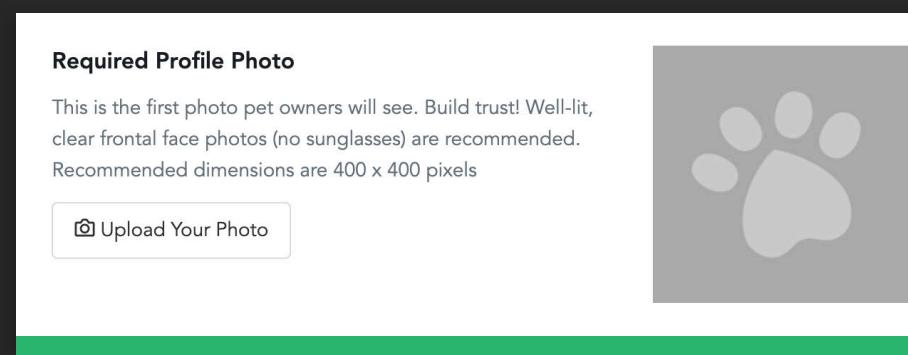
MUST

Competitor UX/UI Examples



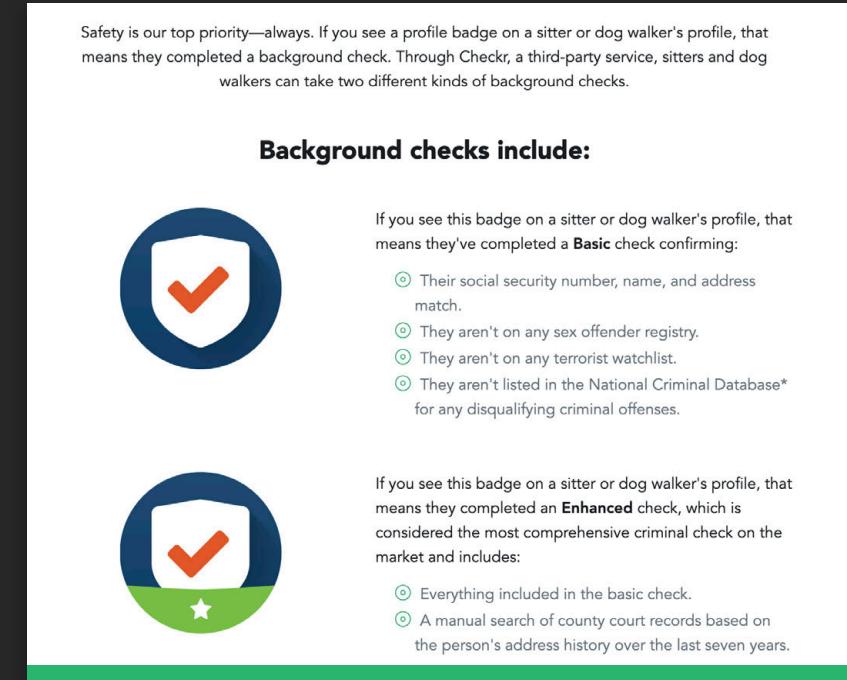
Screenshot from Rover.com.

ABOVE: This is an example of a more specific tooltip/badge description that also allows the user to unpack the explanation further, if they choose to, with an actionable link.



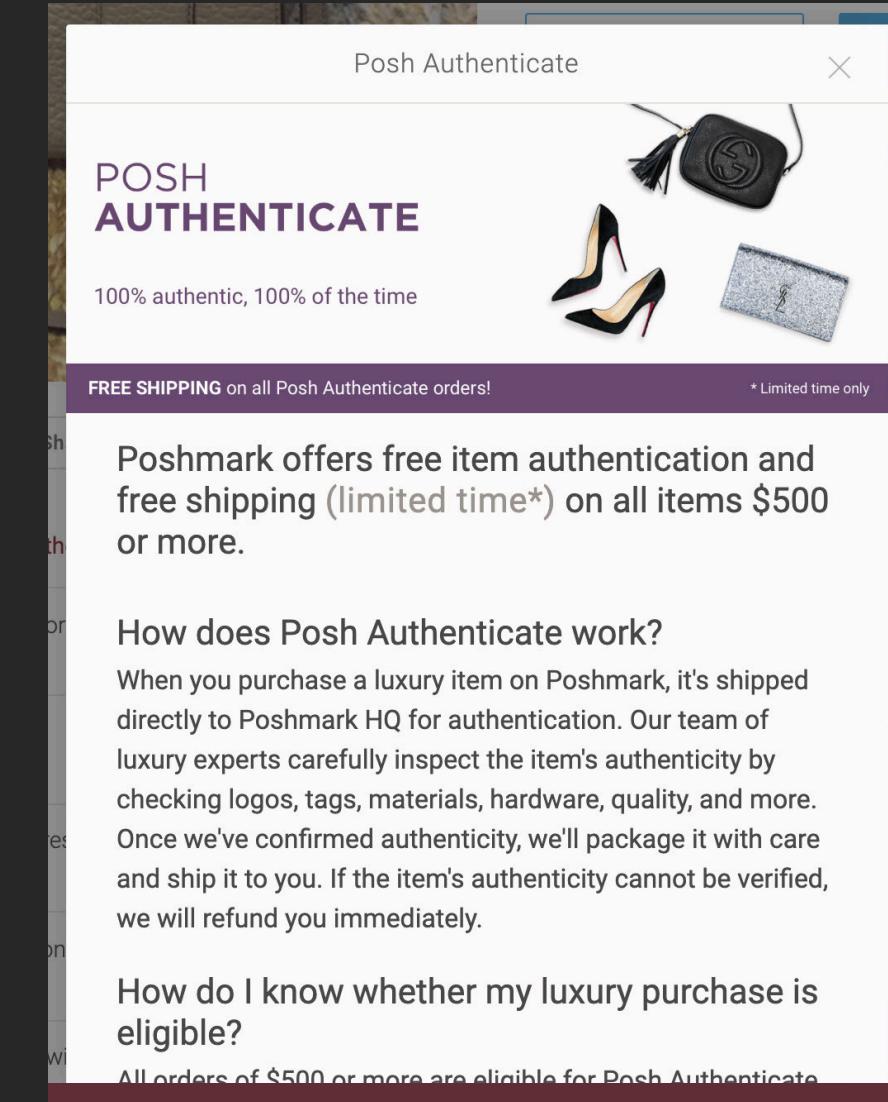
Screenshot from Rover.com.

ABOVE: Rover has required fields for profiles of both providers and consumers before they can fully participate in a transaction on the platform. They also offer photography tips and specific dimensions setting the user up for success.



Screenshot from Rover.com.

ABOVE: An example of detailed information around how a supplier is validated as well as explanation of the icon/badge system.



Screenshot from Poshmark.com.

ABOVE: A great example of a brand striding towards clear authentication in order to ease the user's anxieties as well as to do their due diligence. Poshmark also is sure to provide detailed and formatted explanations for all policies near relevant UI.

SHOULD

Competitor UX/UI Examples

Holiday home rental in Kingston upon Thames, London

United Kingdom > England > London > Kingston upon Thames > Coombe Vale #263819

HOUSE SLEEPS 6 4 BEDS 1 BATH INTERNET PARKING GARDEN WASHING MACHINE

This 4 bedroom house is located in Coombe Vale and sleeps 6 people. It has WiFi, a garden and parking nearby.

Booking cost: £225 ★★★★★ (5)

View on map Instant booking View details and book

Screenshot from Clickstay.com.

Introducing Airbnb Plus

A selection of homes verified for quality and design

PLUS VERIFIED · GREATER LONDON
Immaculate Architect's Townhouse with Terrace
\$11 per night ★★★★★ 6

PLUS VERIFIED · SAN DIEGO
Relaxing California Style Central Guest Home
\$86 per night ★★★★★ 234

Show all (2000+) >

Screenshot from Airbnb.com.

ABOVE: Clickstay provides a grid of amenities on their listing results page. This makes comparing each listing against each other easier for the user. They also spell out most icons, e.g., instant booking icon, all amenity icons, and view on map icon.

LEFT: Airbnb just rolled out a new section of their platform called "Airbnb Plus" where properties can be verified through Airbnb. This not only makes the user perceive those listings as more trustworthy but also provides Airbnb insight and comfort about the content they are presenting to users.

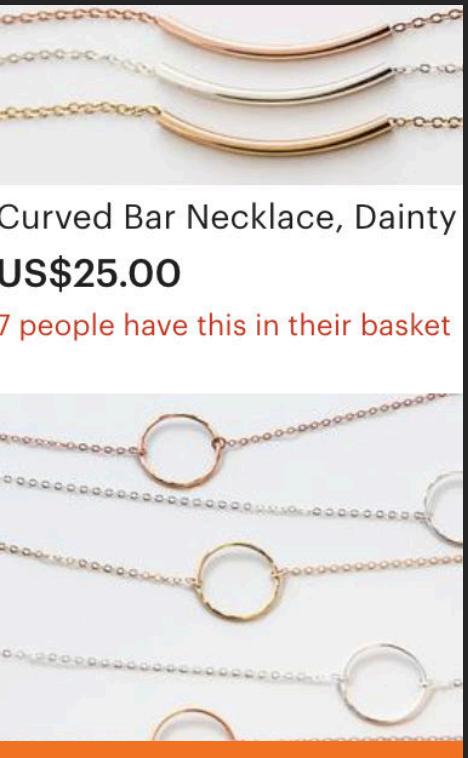
Request Custom Order

Contact shop owner

26856 Sales

5555 Admirers

Report this shop to Etsy



Screenshot from Etsy.com.

ABOVE: This screenshot is exemplary in a few ways:
The ability to report the supplier and not just the listing.

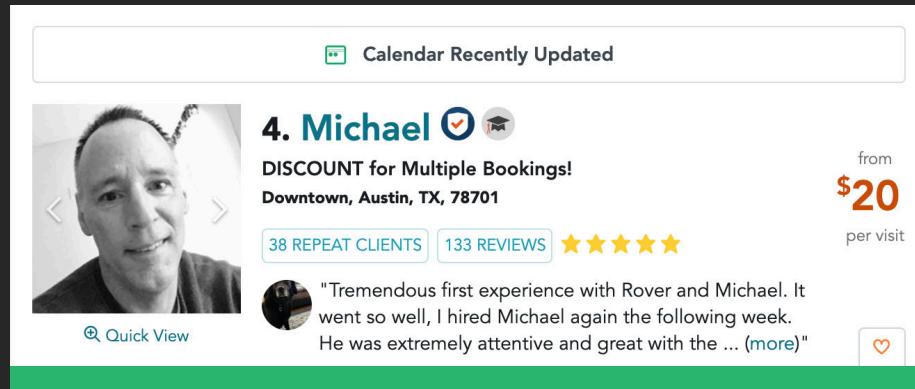
Inclusion of supplier "Sales" and "Admirers", or followers of the supplier, in order to simulate word of mouth (social proof) with actionable data versus the uncontrolled actual word of mouth.

A measureable and impactful word of mouth element of "7 people have this in their basket" under a product.

Due to this referring to real time statistics, it would be interesting to research the psychological difference between this tactic and a past occurrence tactic. E.g., it could be the difference between how you perceive someone as she/he/they are receiving an award versus how you perceive her/him/them when you are told she/he/they were presented an award a year ago.

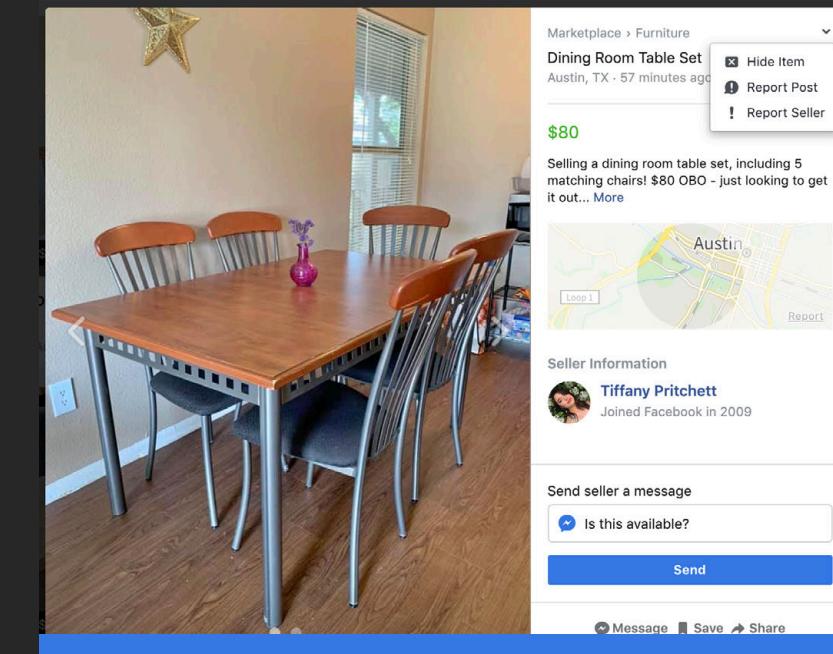
COULD

Competitor UX/UI Examples



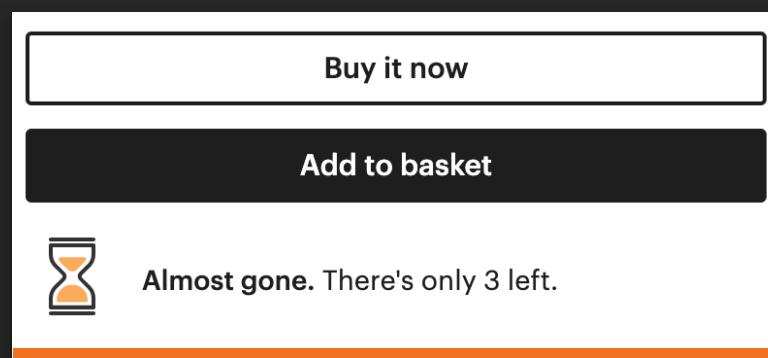
Screenshot from Rover.com.

LEFT: Rover provides the functionality to favorite suppliers (heart icon). Allowing easier access to past providers as well as social proof opportunity for the provider (repeat customers). At a top level they also provide actionable links to reviews, profile pictures, calendar, etc.



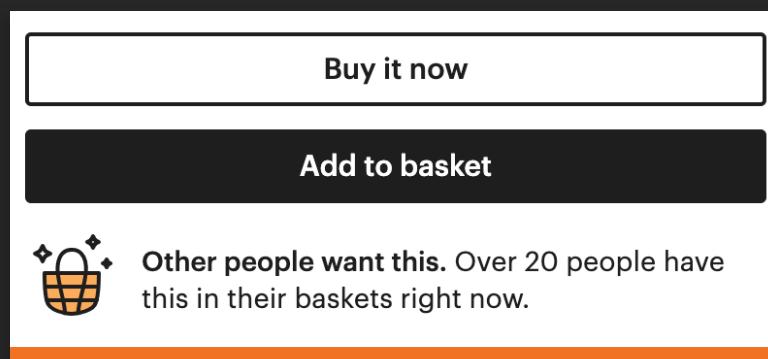
Screenshot from Facebook Marketplace.

ABOVE: In the top right, you can see that Facebook Marketplace offers the ability to hide the listing post, as well as report the post and/or seller (provider). This supplies the user with control over what she/he/they see and associated actionables all in one location.

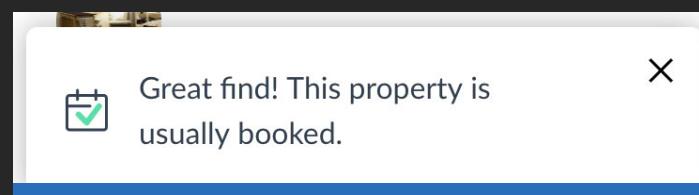


LEFT: Here are just a couple of the word of mouth elements Etsy applies. These provide urgency, a sense of scarcity, social proof, and more, in close proximity to the "Buy it now" CTA.

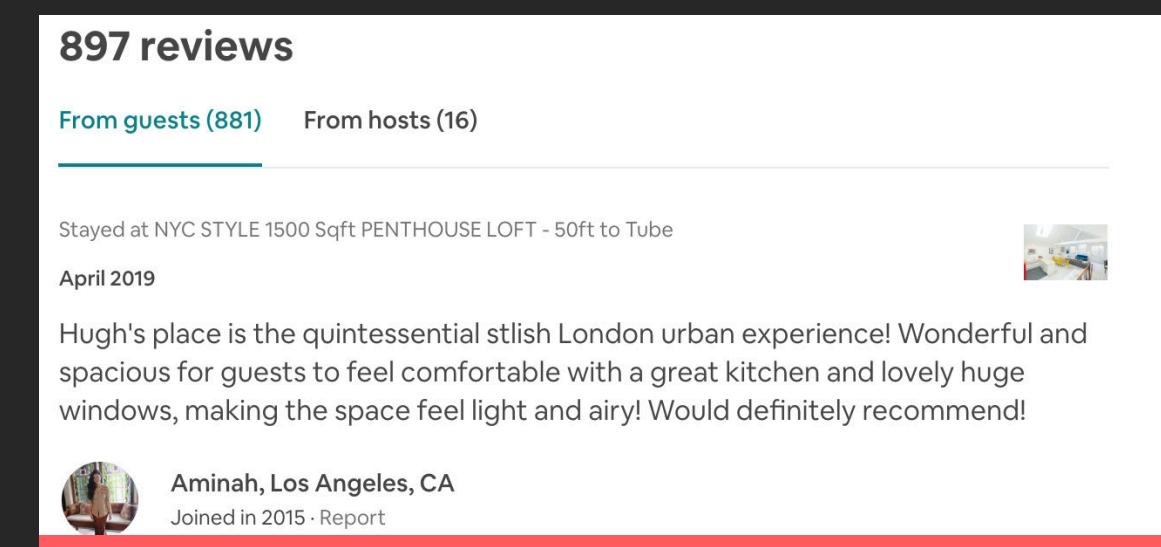
Note, in our study we did see a couple of these techniques on the HomeAway website, however, the copy was usually very vague (see below screenshot) and less effective.



Screenshots from Etsy.com.



Screenshots from HomeAway.com.

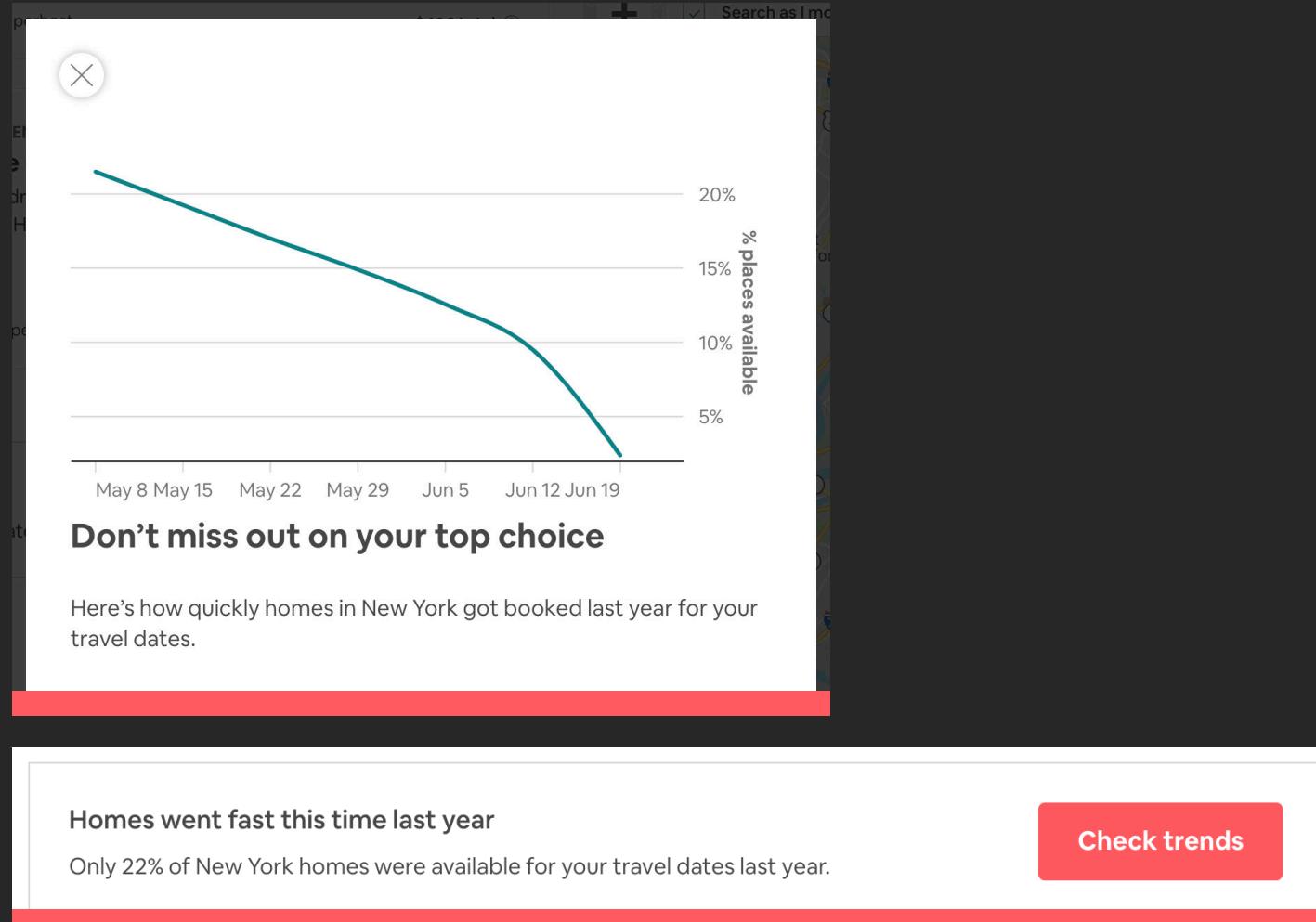


Screenshot from Airbnb.com.

ABOVE: During the evaluation, we noticed Airbnb also employed the above functionality of showing all reviews related to the provider, both as a provider and as a traveler/consumer providing a more rounded image of the provider from different perspectives.

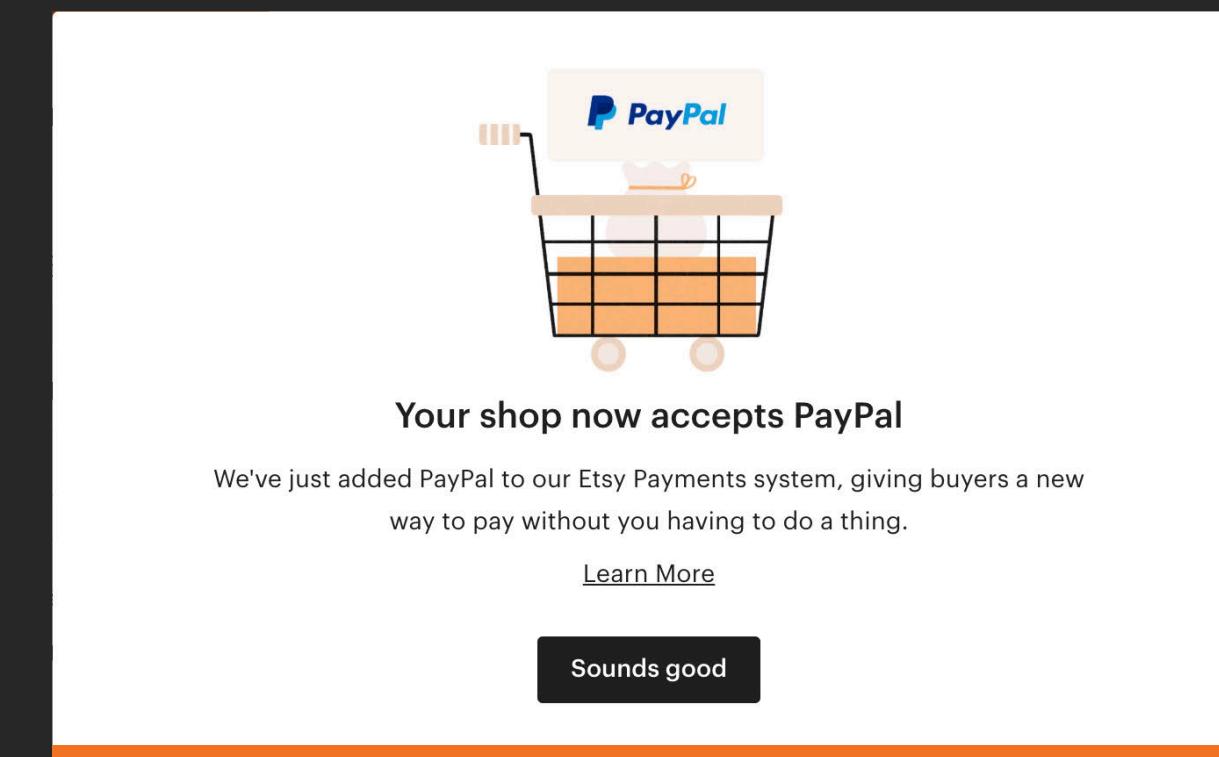
WOULD

Competitor UX/UI Examples

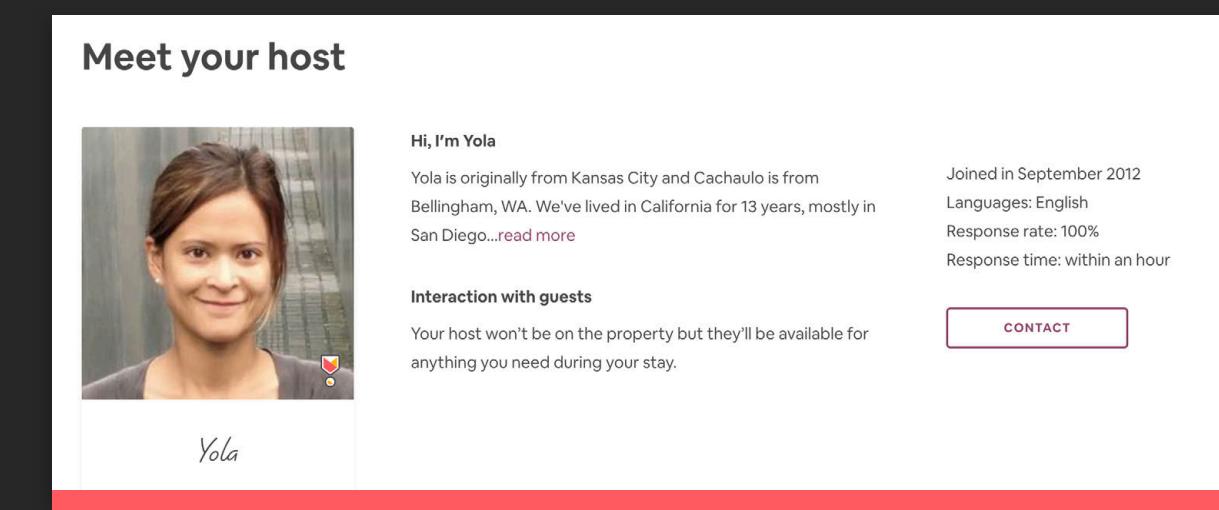


ABOVE: Airbnb offers a “check trends” CTA at the bottom of their listing results page. This is most likely because by the time the user sees this, they have scrolled through an entire listing results page and Airbnb hopes that sharing these statistics (transparency) they can also create a sense of scarcity, one of 6 key persuasion principles according to “Influence” by Robert Cialdini.

Cialdini, R. B. (1993). *Influence: Science and practice*. New York: HarperCollinsCollegePublishers.



ABOVE: This is an example of creating validity through brand association (PayPal) as well as increasing usability for users. It also shows clear and personable tone of voice along with providing a link to unpack the information further if desired.

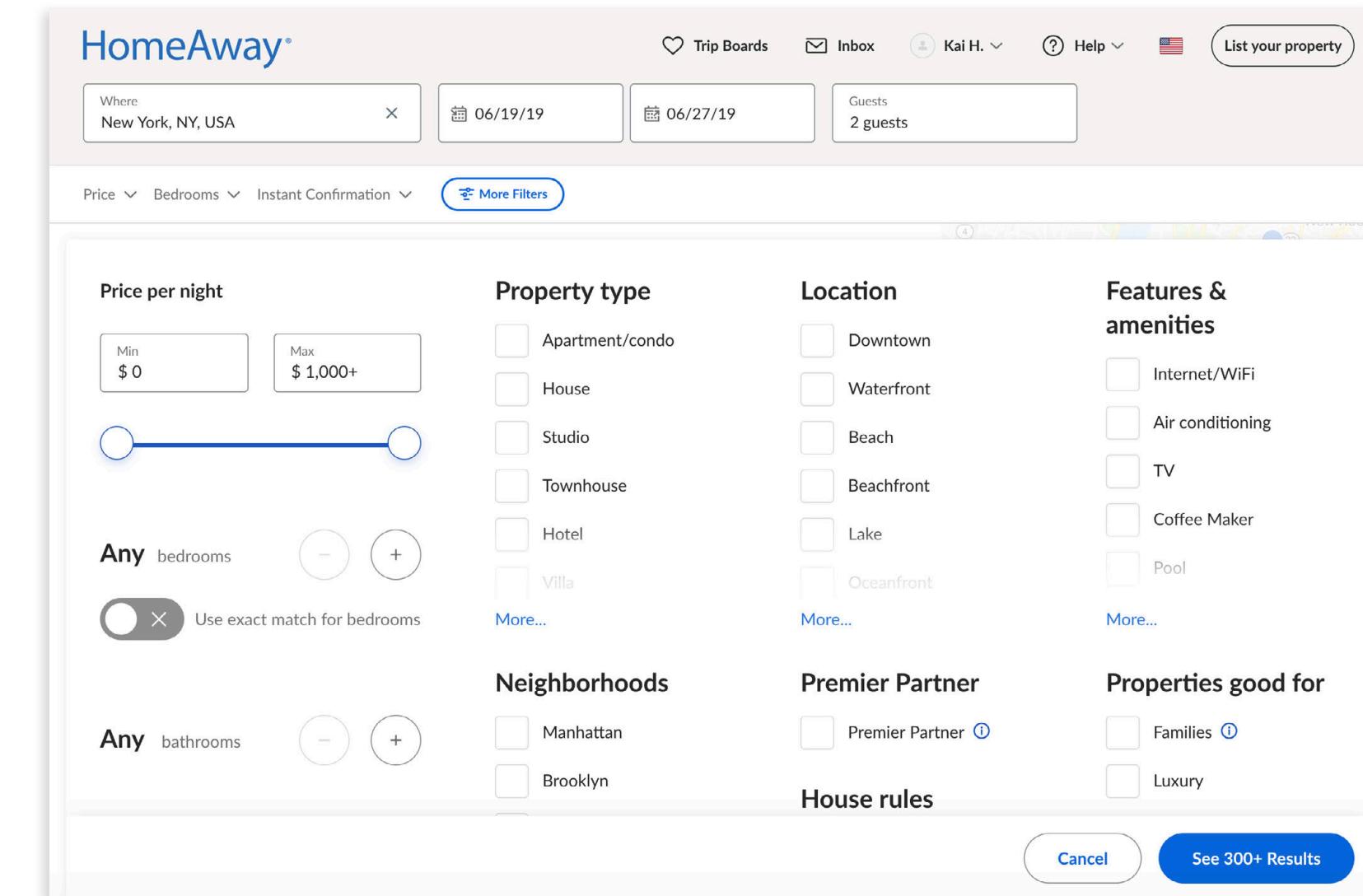


ABOVE: An interesting technique of Airbnb's specifically was the use of a handwritten font for the provider's name and a conversational header above the provider's bio seemingly to simulate a social interaction rather than a transactional one.

Filtering & Choice-Set Complexity

In a research study on “choice overload” performed by Ulf Bockenholt, a professor of marketing at the Kellogg School, Northwestern University, four factors were established in order to predict choice overload. The one that most accurately applies to our recommendation concerning the HomeAway filters UI, is **choice-set complexity** - “How are the options organized, is there a dominant option, and what information is provided about each option?”. Upon opening the HomeAway filters dropdown on a 15” laptop, the user is presented with **49 interactive options**. According to the competitive analysis of nine other P2P products, the average total interactive options offered in the filter container upon opening is 21. That means **HomeAway presents the user with more than double the amount of industry standard options at once**. In relation to choice-set complexity, there is room for improvement here. There are **4 columns, 7 different types of interactive UI, 6+ levels to the typography hierarchy**, and 9 seemingly top level headers of the sections, at first glance. on a laptop screen. That is a significant amount of information to process compared to the average industry approaches and therefore a potential friction point for users. We have compiled a list of solutions to alleviate this possible cognitive overload on the following page.

When Are Consumers Most Likely to Feel Overwhelmed by Their Options? (2018, November 26). Retrieved from <https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/what-predicts-consumer-choice-overload>



Screenshot of the HomeAway filters dropdown on a laptop for reference.

Filter UX/UI Actionables

- Limit the typographical hierarchy to 3-4 levels. Section header, option, smaller descriptor if needed, and the show more link if there are more than 4 options per section.
- Make the top 4 options shown per section the most frequently chosen from that section.
- Limit the dropdown to two columns and make it scrollable. Make each section (header and container) span across but have the options listed in two column format.

This way if the user chooses to view more, it is likely that she/he/they will see more or all of the options at once without having to scroll, better positioned to make a decision when her/his/their mind is focused on making that category choice.
- Rid of the “X” on the off toggle. An “X” is still very much associated with a close icon. Aside from that, it is unnecessary for the UI to communicate effectively and is just another thing for the user to interpret.
- Lastly, order the sections according with those most frequently interacted with. This could even be tailored to the user to arrange in the order of what she/he/they frequently interact with.



We believe these changes will significantly help the usability of this feature. Please see the third page of the competitive evaluation and the literary foundation referencing choice-set complexity for more context.

Control



Actionable Takeaways



Add zoom functionality to listing photos.

Transparency



Encourage providers to review consumers and include any reviews about providers as consumers, on their provider profile.

Authenticity

Transparency

Word of Mouth



Ensure that any explanation, tooltip or non, is clear and contains a link to further information on the topic if appropriate.

Transparency



Re-word current word of mouth UI copy as well as create a larger system that could be used if a property and/or host meets the established requirements.

Word of Mouth

Transparency



Consider a rewards program for consumers and providers.

Word of Mouth



Add more required fields for the provider profile and communicate to providers that this could increase conversion due to stimulating consumer trust.

Transparency



Develop a verification process and clearly communicate what was validated about the provider and/or consumer to the corresponding party.

Authenticity

Transparency



Make sure that all internally generated terms/policies/labels should have either a hover (or actionable) explanation or a CTA leading the user to a deeper explanation.

Transparency



Evaluate the effectiveness of all icons and provider/consumer badge ranking names (Premier Partner) and provide an index with definitions on the website/application.





Survey Results

The survey provided data for comparing 3 sharing markets side-by-side: home-sharing, ride-sharing, and the P2P resale market. It also supplied other insights from which we formed our interview questions in order to unpack the extracted trends further.

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Strategy Summary

We created the survey with Qualtrics and advertised it via student listservs, social media (Linkedin, Facebook, Twitter), and word of mouth. We designed the survey in a way that screened for only those respondents who had participated in one or more of three types of P2P marketplace: ride-sharing, online selling, or home sharing.

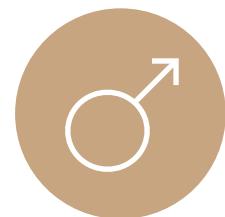


Respondents Summary

Gender Array



70% Female



25% Male

133/**148** Total Viable Respondents

P2P Market Usage

92% Ride-Sharing

90% Online Selling

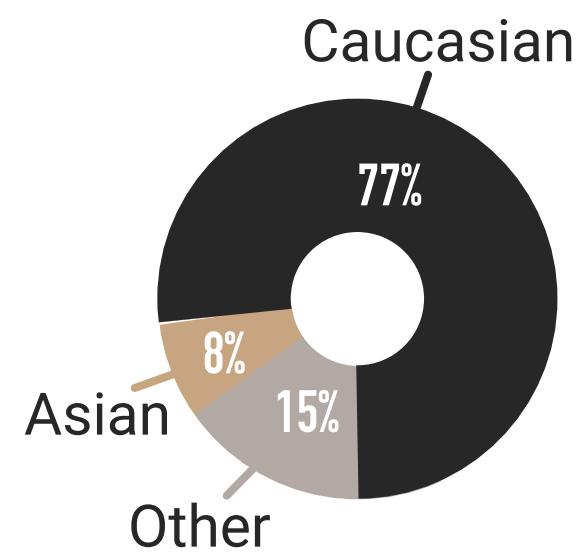
79% Home-Sharing



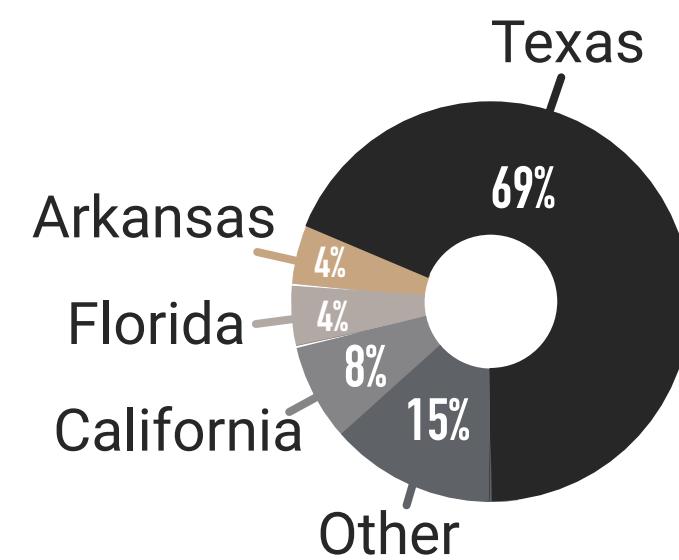
Respondents

Among all respondents, over 31% reported an annual income over \$80,000 while 24% reported income of less than \$19,999. And 42% hold a graduate degree while 20% have some graduate school. 30% hold a bachelor's degree. We believe the survey results offer insights for further investigation, but admit the homogeneity of demographics suggests a limitation on their broad validity.

Respondent Ethnicity



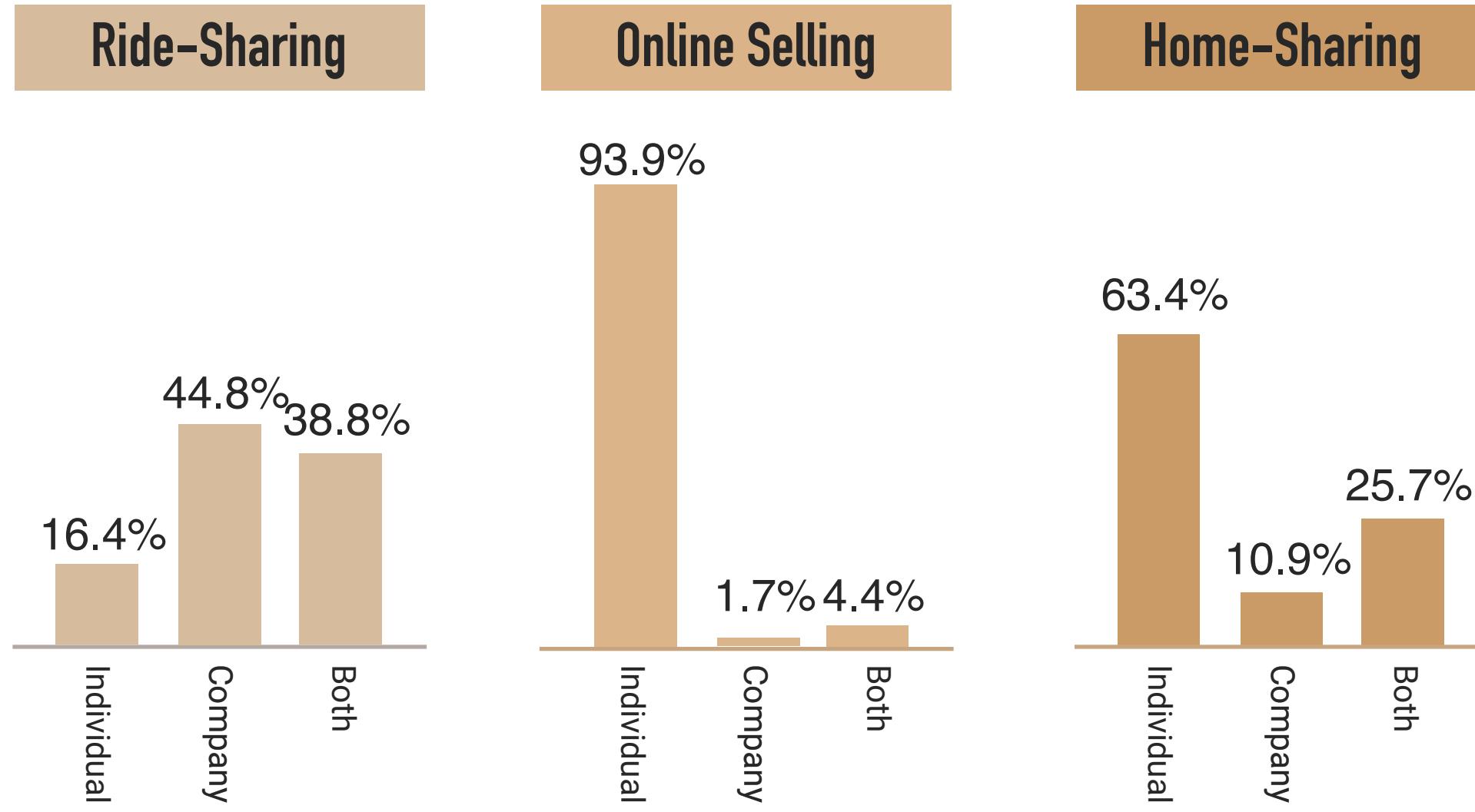
Respondent Geography



Market Comparison

Q:

Throughout the process, did you believe you were purchasing from an individual or a company?

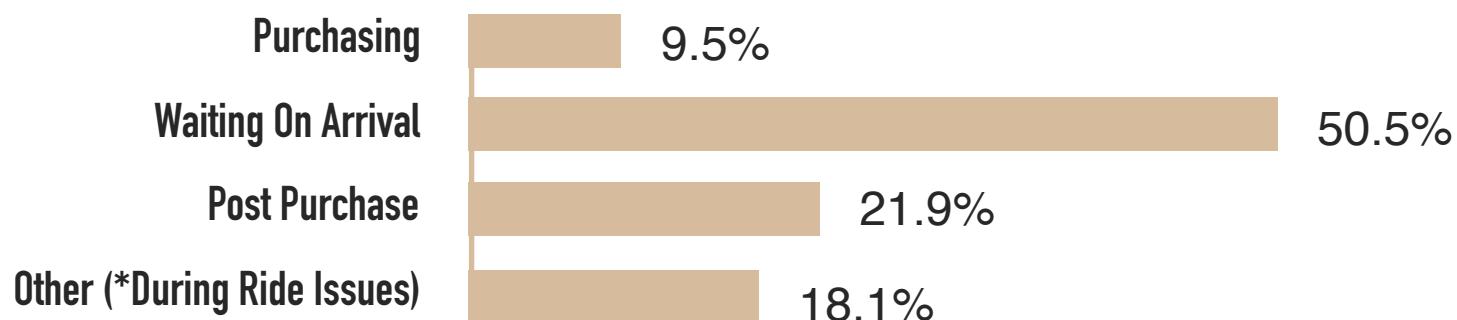


Key Takeaways

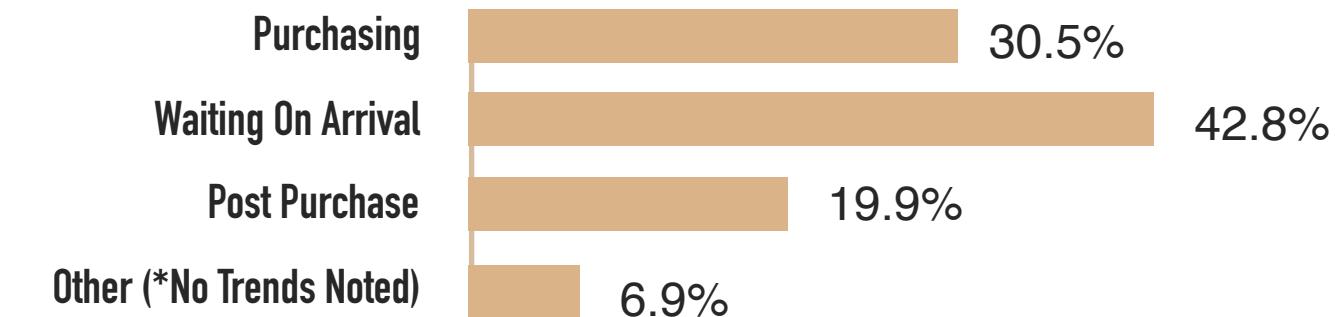
These comparisons are worth further investigation in regards to the roles that brand and peer-to-peer relationships play in P2P transactions.

Anxiety Phases

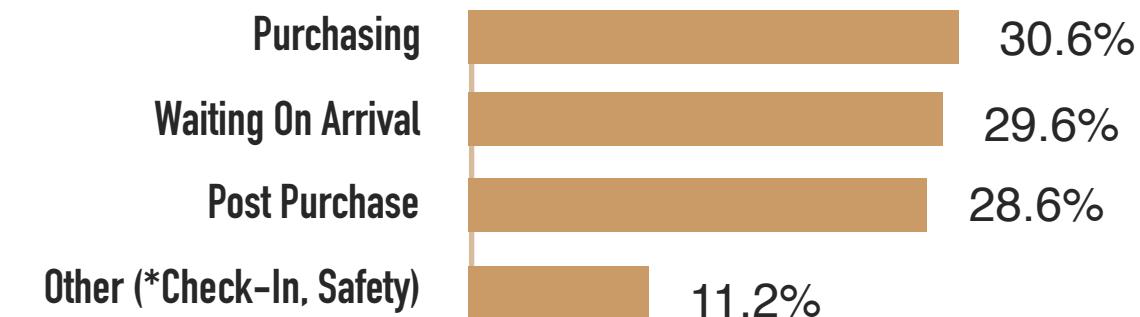
Ride-Sharing



Online selling



Home-Sharing



Q:

Thinking about the whole process, please indicate if you felt worried at any of the points in the process.

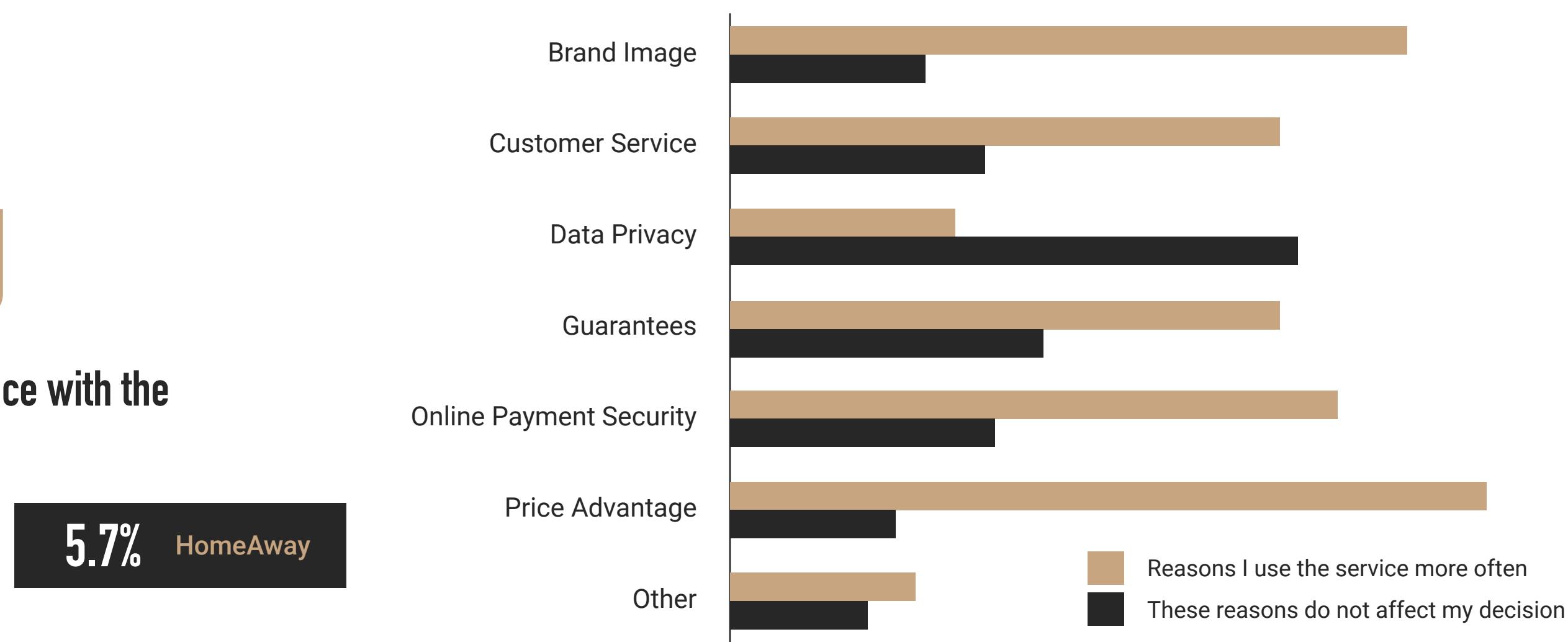


Key Takeaways

Compared to the ride-sharing and online selling markets, which both have key worrisome phases, the home-sharing market showed an even distribution (approximately 30%) of anxiety across all phases of the home-sharing experience.

Home Sharing

Respondents' Experience with the Home-Sharing Market



Key Takeaways

We asked participants to identify and rank a list of pre-defined reasons why, and price advantage was identified as the top reason why while brand image was second.

In the same exercise, participants selected and ranked reasons that did not affect their decision to use a service most often. The numbers were significantly lower overall, but data privacy was identified as the least important reason for choosing a platform.

Home Sharing

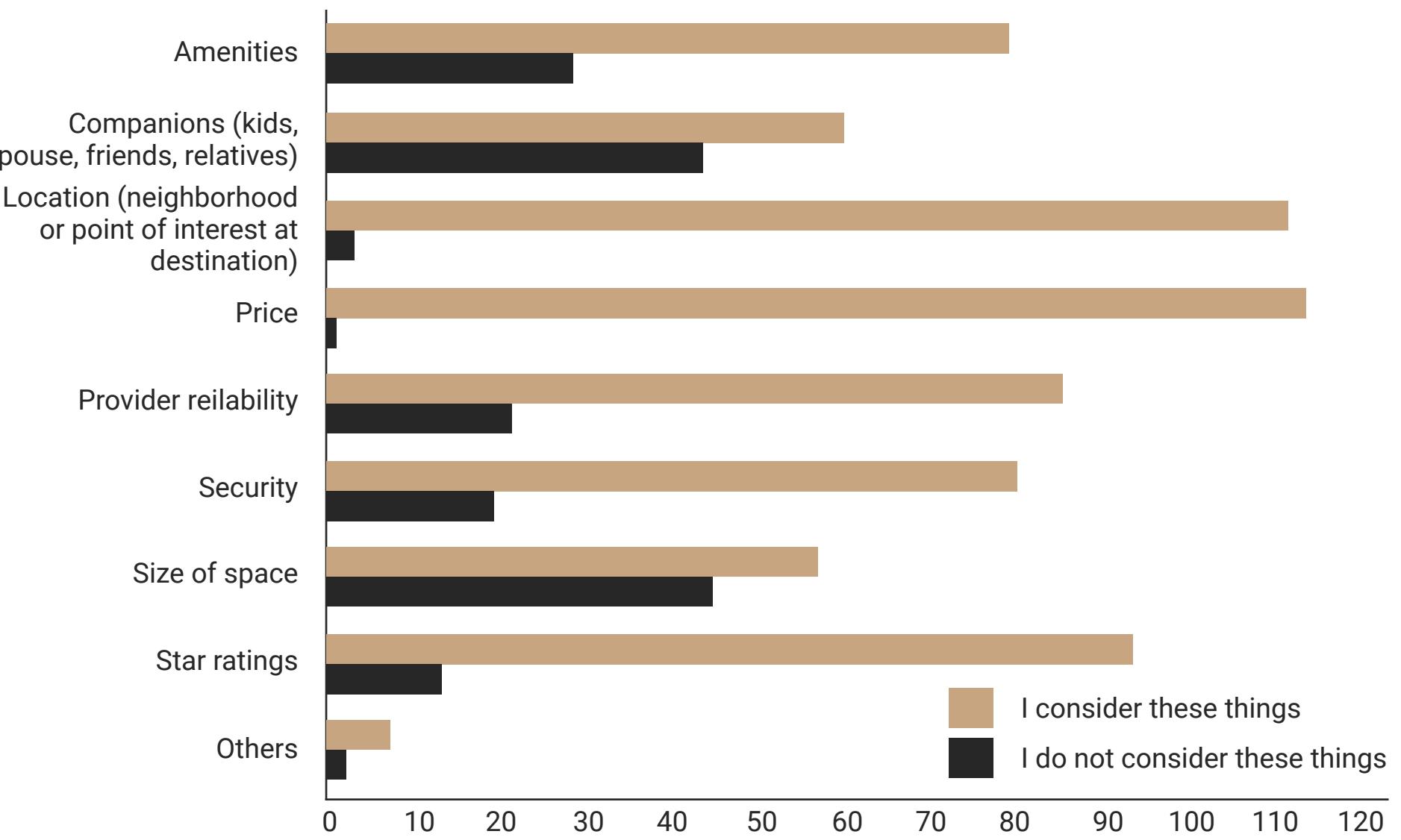
Factors Considered When Searching

Participants ranked a pre-defined list of factors that affect their choices when they perform searches for a place to stay:

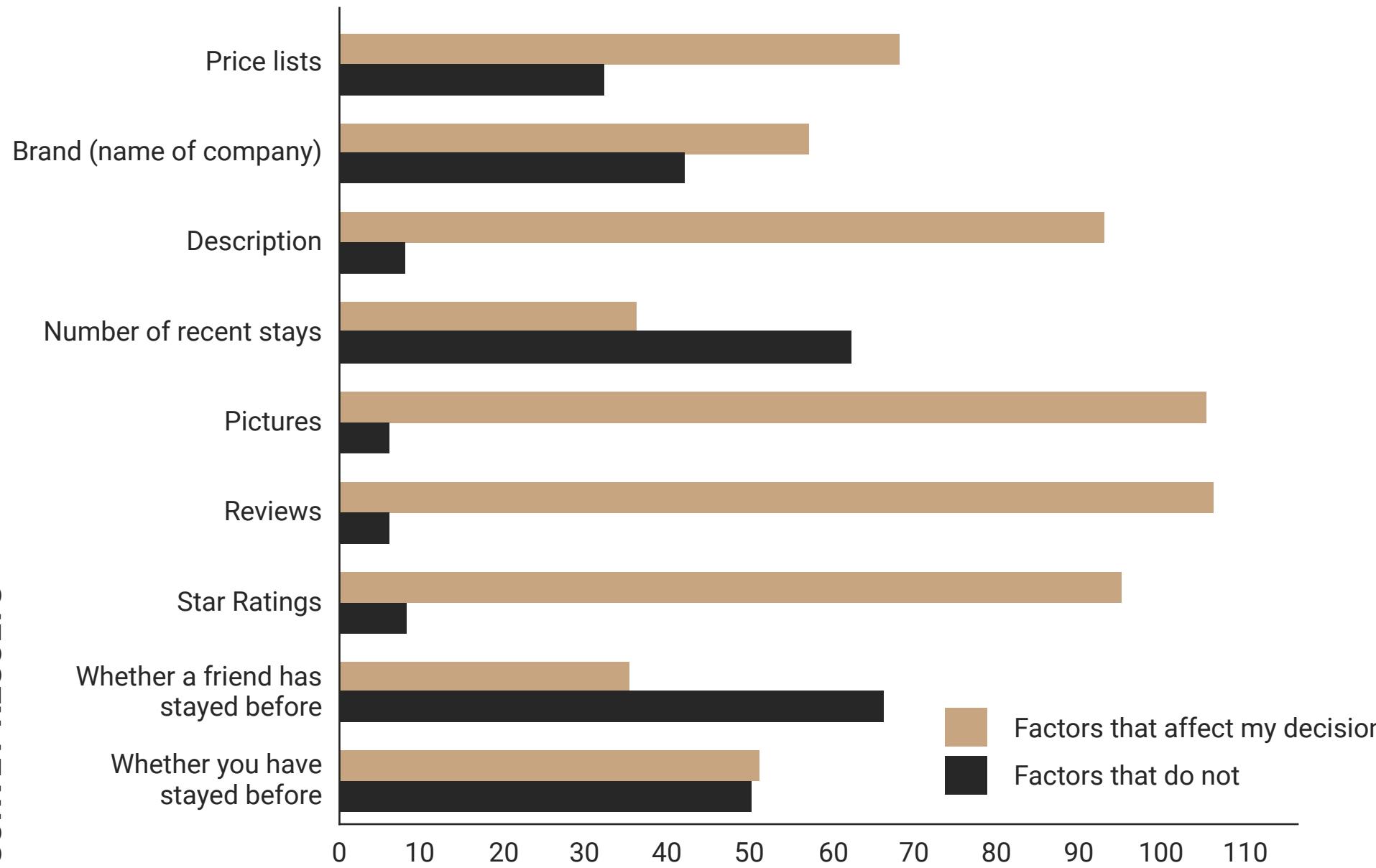
- Location and price ranked strongly at the top, and very few indicated that they did not consider these a factor.
- Star ratings, provider reliability, amenities, and security followed, respectively.



Participants had the option of adding their own factors. The following lists several: dog policies, reviews, knowledge of the individual provider, breakfast, photos, and proximity to transit.



Factors That Affect Decision



Key Takeaway

Participants were asked to perform the same sorting task in relation to factors that affect their decision when they view specific listings.

Pictures and reviews share the top spot in factors that affect decision while description and star ratings come in a close second.



Trust

Definition

We asked participants to list words, sentiments, and feelings that come to mind when they hear the word “trust.” Reliability, as well as other derivations of “rely,” topped the list, though several other words are prevalent:

32 Reliability	23 Security
22 Safety	15 Reliable
13 Honesty	12 Comfort
9 Confidence	8 Loyalty

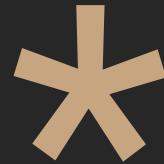


commitment
customer
friendship
consistent
feeling
dependable
privacy
assurance
promise
truthful
love
confidence
reliance
build
truth
honesty
good
comfort
safety
relax
integrity
reliability
full
risk
respect
security
fair
reputation
reliable
safe
assurance
loyalty
positive
support
follow
guarantee
honor
peace
control
relationship
responsibility
certainty
transparency
consistency
disclosure
acceptance

Actionable Takeaways



Further investigate the human factors involved in ride-sharing and online selling, that are not present in home-sharing, in order to define the areas of friction those two markets have reduced.



According to the comparison depicted in the Anxiety Phases chart, it is evident that ride-sharing and online selling have narrowed the level of worry and for the most part isolated them to certain phases.



Focus on helping users find listings near local attractions/landmarks/addresses by including a list of such and their proximity to the listing location. This should show on the listing page but could also be filterable controls.

Due to price always being a factor in any purchase decision, we suggest focusing on the next highest areas of interest such as location.

Control



Look to P2P online selling platforms, like Etsy and Poshmark, for verification and policy UI techniques considering people also view those as a transaction between themselves and the displayed individual, alike a home-sharing host.

Authenticity

Transparency



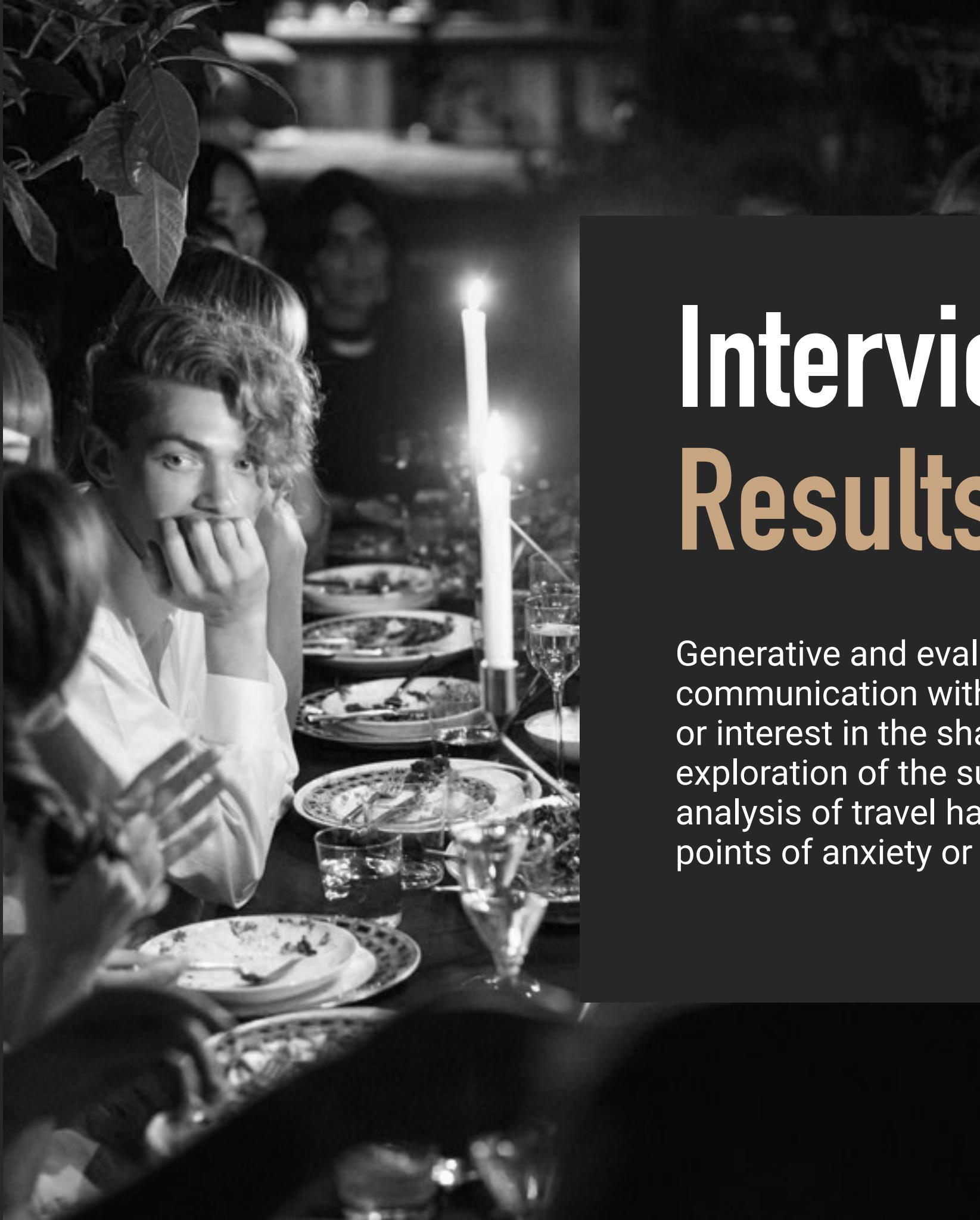
Set a baseline standard for photography but also require at least 5 photos and representation of at least 3 rooms/areas (bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, common areas).

Our data shows that pictures and reviews are the most influential components when respondents were deciding.

Authenticity

Transparency





Interview Results

Generative and evaluative research through direct communication with people who have experience and/or interest in the sharing economy. This included further exploration of the survey findings as well as a general analysis of travel habits in order to decompose any points of anxiety or feeling of heightened risk.

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User Interview

Strategy

Interview questions were derived partially from previous studies identified in the literature and from trends we extracted from the survey data. During interviews, we dug deeper into **travel behaviors** in order to decompose the process and **identify points of insecurity**, as well as underlying influences during the process of booking a place to stay. Furthermore, we explored **attitudes and experiences with different P2P marketplaces** in order to uncover possible practiced solutions and/or more factors that could stimulate trust. These interviews also provided insight and direction for our user testing portion of the study.

Question Creation

The interview questions were structured in three segments. First, we sought to gather a **basic cultural background** understanding of participants. Second, we tried to gain a deeper understanding of their **traveling experiences**, which we separated into **business and pleasure**. We formed our questions to uncover decision-making behavior pre- and post-purchase, as well as during the stay. Further, we sought **patterns related to our four thematic pillars** and more generally to people's view of HomeAway and HomeAway's prime competitor (according to our survey), Airbnb. Third, we wanted to know more about experience with other P2P marketplaces to form a more **comprehensive understanding of trust in this environment**.



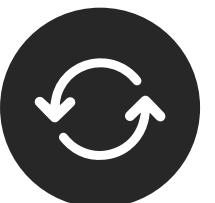
Interview Participants

Screening

We aimed to have a deeper understanding of how people perceive the home-sharing P2P market and their experiences with it. The primary two criteria were:



Travels at least once per year



Have used a P2P product previously

Recruiting

We recruited from survey participants who expressed interest in participating in further study and volunteers from our personal networks. We sought people who either had a lot of experience in P2P home-sharing or who had more experience with other P2P products.

Gender Array



5 Female



4 Male

9

Total Participants

Age Ranges

1	18–24	years old
5	25–34	years old
2	35–44	years old
1	45–54	years old

Travel Frequency

2	Rare	traveler
4	Average	traveler
1	Consistent	traveler
2	Frequent	traveler

Finding 01

People consider brand and price advantage as the most important factors when choosing a home-sharing P2P marketplace. They tend to use big brands they have heard of or used before due to past experiences solidifying a sense of reliability and ease of use.

We often optimize credit cards points to choose a hotel to stay at, cause that offers us special offers and accumulate more points.

Participant ID SP19-05
Female, Age 18-24

We only did Airbnb because we have used it before.

Participant ID SP19-08
Male, Age 25-34

I don't feel like you ever have 100% sure online, but on most websites you can read reviews and that's the information you can trust.

Participant ID SP19 - 01
Male, Age 35-34

Usually the 1 star ones are where the juice is. I don't care if someone thinks this hotel is "great" because their definition of "great" is probably different than mine, but if "bad water pressure" is bad enough to comment on for anyone, then it is probably somewhere I don't want to stay.

Participant ID SP19 - 07
Male, Age 35-44

Finding 02

Star ratings and provider reliability play key roles when searching accommodations, coming in just behind location and price. Users often determine reliability by reading others' reviews (7 out of 9 respondents placed reviews as priority).

Finding 03

The reason why users care more about individuals rather than company/brand is likely that they have **direct, personal interaction with the individuals.**

¶ The individual is what makes me worried on Airbnb because anybody can post anything.

Participant ID SP19 - 01
Male, Age 35-34

¶ I want the place to be clean or close to where I want to be, but if I don't feel I can trust the person [host], I'm not going to stay there.

Participant ID SP19 - 08
Male, Age 25-34

¶ Reviews are kind of support material for me to make sure that it's right (what is shown on the photos).

Participant ID SP19 - 04
Female, Age 25-34

¶ I like reviews with photos because it's actual photos by the guests that had the experience.

Participant ID SP19 - 04
Female, Age 25-34

Finding 04

We found that **pictures, reviews, descriptions, and star rating are the most important factors** when viewing the place to stay, since these could validate the authenticity of the product

Finding 05

People worry about whether there is someone to rely on if they run into problems during a stay.

Hotels will bend over backwards to fix something and make you happy. With Airbnb, it's kind of up to the host to work out problems.

Participant ID SP19 - 09
Female, Age 24–34

I like knowing where the manager lives so I know whether the manager can come here to deal with the problem, and that's an important thing.

Participant ID SP19 - 04
Female, Age 25–34

Finding 06

Users are motivated to leave reviews after a stay because they don't want to be rejected from future booking arrangements by owners who view reviews as part of the traveler's reputation. Reviews seem to be a form of reputational currency for P2P economy.

For Airbnb, I will [leave a review] because it reflects on our profile—since hosts and renters both review each other. So if we look for a place in the future, we don't get denied.

Participant ID SP19 - 08
Male, Age 25–34

I don't want the host to give me bad reviews that maybe other hosts will see that and then not want to host me during the next stay.

Participant ID SP19 - 04
Female, Age 25–34

Actionable Takeaways



Consider leveraging existing brand power of Expedia to make HomeAway more recognizable and memorable when people are planning trips.

Authenticity



Improve host profiles by requiring more information and guiding partners on crafting authentic, trustworthy profile content.

Transparency

Authenticity



Build on traveler's perceptions that leaving reviews is important to building their own reputation for future stays and provide guidance and incentives to create thoughtful, persuasive reviews.

Word of Mouth

Authenticity



Provide guidance to partners on taking effective pictures of the spaces.

Transparency

Authenticity





User Testing

Moderated user testing incorporating eye-tracking software and interview methods in order to test hypotheses built by the results of the previous research methods.

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Strategy Summary

Utilizing the results from the previous phases, **we designed modified versions of the HomeAway traveler flow** for user testing material. We used equipment in the School of Information's Information Experience (IX) Lab (Tobii Pro eye-tracking platform and iMotions biometric research software) to conduct moderated user testing and interviews. As noted previously, we employed volunteers from our peer groups as participants.

Other strategic decisions included **selecting a desktop view for testing material and mocking up HomeAway's live UI** in order to simulate real life testing as close as we could. It was important for us to **create a system of testing that the HomeAway team could build off of** in the future. We chose a desktop view due to the limitations of the iMotions software. We were limited to testing users on a desktop and **didn't want to push the testing further away from a natural settings by displaying a mobile screen on a desktop**. We also informally asked peers and participants on what device would they book a property and an significant majority said they would on a desktop.

Overview Amenities Reviews Map Rates & Availability

 Terri L. Published Dec 3, 2018

Perfect spot to stay!
5/5 ★★★★★ Stayed Dec 2018
Awesome place! So close to everything including the subway.

 Kristie C. Published Nov 15, 2018

Nice apartment
4/5 ★★★★★ Stayed Oct 2018
The location is great, 10 min drive to port authority.
The apartment is clean and has good vibes.
We liked the apartment aesthetics.
The apartment is well equipped
There was a bit of an issue with actually getting into the apartment when we arrived so that is why I put only 4 stars.

Published Oct 21, 2018

Union City
3/5 ★★★★★ Stayed Oct 2018
The apartment in Union City was OK. It definitely could use some updating, and while I can't say that it was dirty there were some areas that could have used a good cleaning.
The buses to NYC were very convenient and we never waited more than 5 minutes for a bus. The 15-20 time into the city was accurate EXCEPT during rush hour (it took almost an hour on a Friday morning.) But the location of the stop at both ends was perfect. Parking was definitely a problem - we were there 4 days and were not able to find parking on the same street until the last day. There were spots within the 4 block radius that the pass allowed except on street cleaning days (Tues & Fri).
The bedding and towels were clean and the kitchen was moderately stocked. The cable TV in the living room was not working and the few channels we could get kept breaking up - we were told there would be a new box the day after we arrived but it still wasn't there when we left.
And it was very noisy - probably would have been ok if we had needed the air conditioner but didn't so there was nothing to drown out the street noise.
I probably would not stay again but as I said - it did serve the purpose

 Tim R. Published Sep 20, 2018

Awesome location
5/5 ★★★★★ Stayed Sep 2018
Awesome time and convient to every thing!!

 Michael B. Published Sep 4, 2018

A little small
4/5 ★★★★★ Stayed Aug 2018
This was a nice, clean property. It was a little tight in the living room when both couches were pulled out into a bed.

 Noah S. Published May 7, 2018

Great stay
5/5 ★★★★★ Stayed May 2018
Owner greeted me when we arrived, gave information about buses and sites. One 10 ride and we were in Times Square! Apartment was perfect had everything you needed. Very nice experience. We enjoyed it thanks to the Garcias!

Jennifer K. Published Apr 16, 2018

As described
4/5 ★★★★★ Stayed Apr 2018

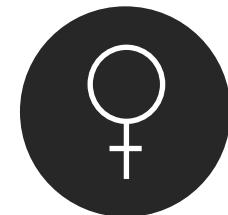
\$131 per night
★★★★★ 12 Reviews
Excellent 4.6/5
Your dates are available
Check In Jun 19 Check Out Jun 24 Guests 2 guests
Total \$1.198.17
Include taxes and fees View details Book Now
Free Cancellation until 5/20/2019
Matt C. Ask Manager a Question
For booking assistance, call HomeAway at 888-640-7927 Property # 8519024



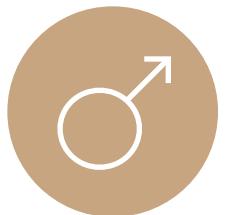
Participant Summary

Due to the previously described resource restrictions we recruited friends, family, coworkers, etc., for participation in the user testing. However, we did discuss that if we had the funds we would want to expand the participants and make sure the following were represented; families, various ethnicities, a wider range of age, a wide range of incomes, and a range of professions in order to acquire perspectives from different starting points. Members of our group pointed out differences in cultural views regarding privacy, renting, and even vacations in general which could serve as an interesting study itself depending on where HomeAway wants to expand.

Gender Array



4 Female



2 Male

6

Total Participants

Participant Age Ranges

1 18-24 years old

3 25-34 years old

1 35-44 years old

1 45-54 years old

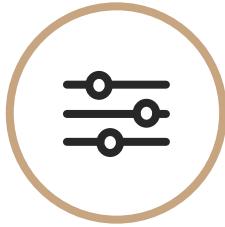
2 Rare traveler

3 Average traveler

0 Consistent traveler

1 Frequent traveler

Task 1



"It's a timesaver and it helps me avoid seeing something I want but it being too expensive. It also helps me not overlook things that are vital to me now like a private bathroom or WIFI."

Participant ID SP19-02
Female, Age 45–54

Hypothesis 1

Applying filters within the UI offers a sense of control and therefore the user is more trusting of a listing when they employed filters to find it.

Logic

The logic being that if the user feels a sense of control and contribution, she/he/they will feel a sense of ownership and in-turn trust that the returned results address her/his/their concerns and are closer to what she/he/they want.

Testing Method

Before we prompted the participant to initiate Task 1, we set the scene by asking them if they had been to New York City before. If they had, we told them to imagine they were going back and asked them who they would take with them. If that had not, we told them to imagine that they were going and asked them who they would take. Our intent was to establish a frame of mind in hopes that the reactions and results would be more natural if they had a real-life anecdote in mind.

Task 1

In order to test whether participants organically use filters, which ones they use, and what emotions (if any) are evoked during their usage, we had the test bring them to the HomeAway site and simply instructed the participant to find a rental for her/him/them and whomever they previously said they wanted to bring along.

We then tracked if they used filters in order to search, how many they used, which ones, and the eye-tracking software tracked the sequential progression of where they looked so we could later extract how soon, upon the page loading, the participant utilized the filters.

When they selected a listing, we proceeded to the questioning portion where we noted that they used a few filters and asked questions about why and how doing so made them feel.

The screenshot shows the HomeAway search interface with the following details:

- Search Parameters:** Where: New York, NY, USA; Dates: 06/19/19 - 06/27/19; Guests: 2 guests.
- Filters:**
 - Price per night:** Min \$0, Max \$1,000+, Sliders for price range.
 - Property type:** Options include Apartment/condo, House, Studio, Townhouse, Hotel, Villa.
 - Location:** Options include Downtown, Waterfront, Beach, Beachfront, Lake, Oceanfront.
 - Any bedrooms:** Sliders for number of bedrooms.
 - Use exact match for bedrooms:** A toggle switch is turned on.
 - Any bathrooms:** Sliders for number of bathrooms.
 - Features & amenities:** Options include Internet/WiFi, Air conditioning.
 - Neighborhoods:** Options include Manhattan, Brooklyn.
- Buttons:** Cancel, See 300+ Results.

Screenshot of HomeAway.com with filters expanded.

"There are a lot of filter choices, but not all of them apply to the city. It could be better to have more specific selections to New York"

Participant ID SP19-05
Female, Age 18–24

"Proximity to transit important in NY. Could be nice to show on their map."

Participant ID SP19-06
Male, Age 35–44

Task 1

Results

Participant	Number of Filters Used	Time Until Filters Were Opened	Top 3	Top 3	Top 3
SP19-01	0	-	-	-	-
SP19-02	6	3 min, 41 seconds	Price	Location	Bathrooms
SP19-03	3	39 seconds	Bedrooms	Price	Locations
SP19-04	12	8 seconds	Price	Reviews	Amenities
SP19-05	1	15 seconds	Location	-	-
SP19-06	4	7 seconds	Price	Location	Instant Confirmation

Highlighted cells show the highest quantity of filters used, the least amount time before opening, and the most-used filter.

5/6

Of the participants used the filters

Price
& Location

Most frequently used filters (both 4/5)

58 seconds

Average time passed before opening the filters

"Where are the filters? I feel like I'm wasting my time."



Participant ID SP19-02
Female, Age 45–54

Summary

Of the **6 participants, 5 used filters**. Of those 5, the **average time before opening the filters was still under a minute**. Even with participant SP19-02, wasn't able to find them at first, after scrolling, and deliberately asked where they were.

Conclusion

Hypothesis 1 is accepted. Users communicated a sense of efficiency and security in knowing that the listings they viewed after leveraging the filters had a baseline of the parameters they set. Although they also voiced some issues with the current HomeAway filter UI.

Task 2

Hypothesis 2

Showing more information about hosts—for example, any information HomeAway has specifically verified about them, their rating history, and their HomeAway host level

(Premiere Partner)—will make a listing appear more trustworthy to a user.



Testing Method

For this task, the participants were shown **3 hosts** and asked simply which one they would choose to rent from. The testing material was **built off of HomeAway's current listing details page** host section and the parameters of the listing, such as price and amenities, all remained the same. The only UI elements we changed were around what information was presented related to

the host. Specifically, 3 main components; we added a **host reviews call-to-action (CTA)** on Host 3, and a **"Verified Information" section** for Host 2. All hosts were labeled as "Premier Partners" and participants were asked what details, if any, they would still like to know about each host after they chose one.

This screenshot shows the initial version of the listing details page. It includes a 'Property Manager' section for Louis H., who is a 'Premier Partner'. Below this is a summary box showing a price of \$131 per night, 12 reviews, and a rating of Excellent 4.7/5. A note says 'Your dates are available'. Check-in date is Jun 19 and check-out is Jun 24. Guests are set to 2. A 'Book Now' button is present. The 'Amenities' section lists Internet, TV, Satellite or Cable, and Children Welcome. The 'Bathrooms' section indicates 1 Bathroom, 1 Half Bath. The 'Location Type' section shows Downtown.

This screenshot shows the second version of the listing details page for host Matt C. The layout is identical to the first version, but it includes a 'Verified Information' section below the host profile. This section displays 12 reviews, email addresses (Email Address, Work Email), government ID, and phone number.

This screenshot shows the third version of the listing details page for host Ruth G. It follows the same structure as the others but adds a 'Reviews' CTA button below the host profile. The 'Verified Information' section is also present here.

This screenshot shows a middle version of the listing details page for host Ruth G. It includes the 'Reviews' CTA button and the 'Verified Information' section, similar to the third version but with some visual changes.

This screenshot shows the competitor Airbnb listing details page for host Ruth G. It has a different design, featuring a large 'Book Now' button at the top and a 'Reviews' section with a star rating and count.

Task 2 Results



Participants Choices

0	4	2
Host 1	Host 2	Host 3
<i>HomeAway</i>	<i>Airbnb</i>	<i>Mixture</i>

Participant Sp19-05 noted the below concerning seeing the information of where the host is located:

"So that I can know whether the manager will come here to deal with a problem, and that's an important thing."

Participant ID SP19-04
Female, Age 25-34

*As you can see from the heatmap, the following areas garnered the most engagement (in order):

Verified Information

Host Name / Member Since 2015

Host Location

Host Reviews

The only UI listed above that is currently on HomeAway.com is the "Host Name / Member Since".

Summary

Of the 6 participants none chose the host option based off of the current HomeAway UI. Instead, 4 chose Host 2 based off of what information Airbnb supplies and 2 chose Host 3 (based off of a mixture of HomeAway and Airbnb. On top of who they chose, 4 participants commented in a positive manner about the "Verified Information" section and 3 did so about the presence and/or amount of reviews of the host.

Conclusion

Hypothesis 2 is accepted. Users consistently chose the host with the most information displayed. Participants also went out of their way to comment on their own methods they employ to draw conclusions about potential hosts in order to make sure they are renting from a reliable host. Participant Sp19-02 noted that the site "providing more information is always best".

Aggregate heatmap from the eye-tracking software, iMotions. From left to right; Host 1, Host 2, and Host 3.

"Matt has been verified, it seems more trustworthy"

Participant ID SP19-03
Female, Age 25-34

"I like the verified information, I feel like that I can trust this (owner), you can even see phone number here."

Participant ID SP19-05
Female, Age 18-24

Task 3



"I don't think having people in the pictures is a good idea. That woman doesn't look like someone I'd be friends with so I don't really care to think about her in this place. Having like a social section though of people who have stayed there and loved it might be cool... just not up here when I deciding about the property."

Participant ID SP19-02
Female, Age 45–54

"I'm a details person, so I would like to see everything – the kitchen, bedroom, bathroom."

Participant ID SP19-06
Female, Age 35–44

Hypothesis 3

People will trust the authenticity of a listing more if they see real people enjoying the space in the listing photos.

Logic

The logic being this hypothesis is based conversations surrounding authenticity. One of the points discussed was that a photo of a property may be harder to fake or over-edit if a person was also in the frame.

Testing Method

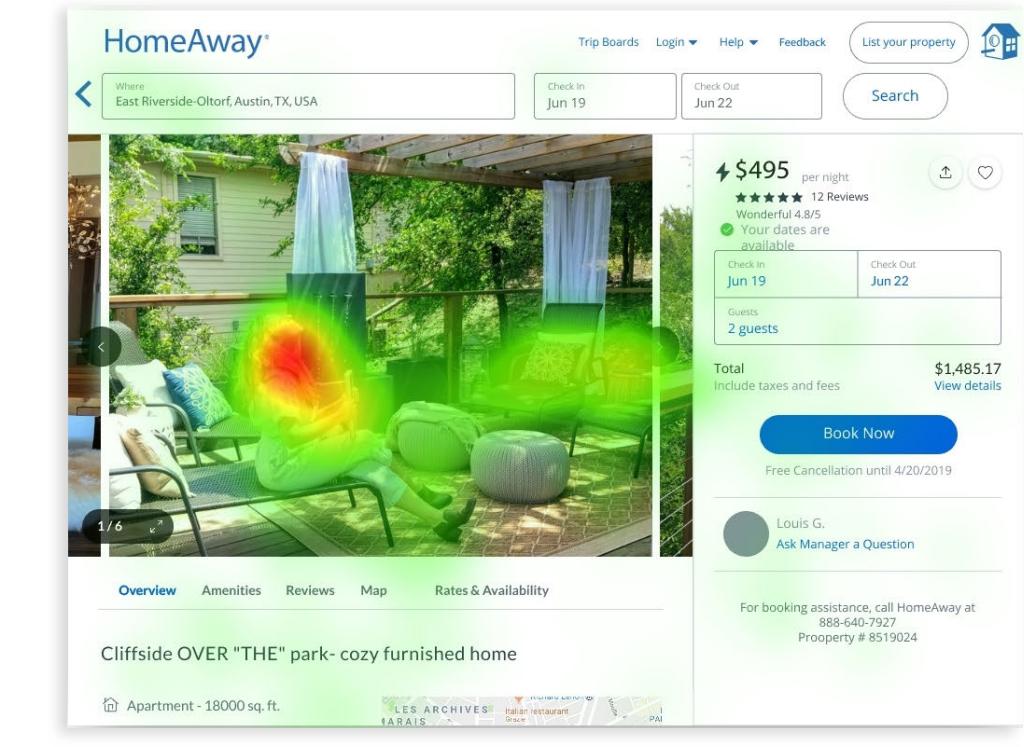
For this task the participant was shown a results page with 4 listings. Each listing card was actionable and the participant could click further to see the listing's details.

They were then instructed to **choose which property they would prefer to stay at**. There were **2 listings with photos** of the property that also **included people** and 2 that did not. Aside from the difference in pictures, the only other difference was two levels of pricing; 2 listings had one price, 2 others had another price, and in each of those sets, one was a listing with people in their photos and one was not. The intent behind showing 2 levels of pricing was to make what we were testing a little less evident.

Summary

As displayed in the heatmap above and to the right, the eye-tracking results did show that participants focused on people within the pictures. However, due to the qualitative feedback we discovered that this wasn't a positive engagement.

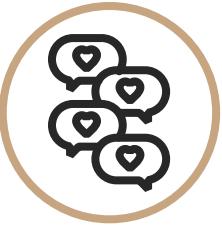
While testing this hypothesis we also discovered a common trend of 4/6 participants articulated that they wanted to see pictures of bathrooms, bedrooms, and kitchens not just glamorous living room shots.



Conclusion

Hypothesis 3 is rejected. People did not respond well to seeing people within the space in the listing photos. Instead it was suggested by a participant to incorporate a social section where they could see past travelers' experiences but separate from the listing identity itself. The reasoning was that the participant didn't relate to the person pictured and didn't think the woman pictured was aspirational either. This put the participant off.

Task 4



Hypothesis 4

Review length influences which reviews are read. Too short and the review is perceived as holding less value to the user; too long and the user perceives it as a rant. Medium length reviews (7–12 sentences) will be read most.

Testing Method

For the test material for Task 4, we scraped real reviews from the live HomeAway site. We then varied certain UI elements in order to test the above two hypotheses. Reviews of various lengths and ratings were selected, we renamed the authors in hopes of them being racially ambiguous (and to that extent we also included a variety of races in the author pictures), we also removed the pictures and names from some reviews. This was due to us noticing that names must not be required in the current HomeAway process due to their occasional absence on the HomeAway live site.

The participants were first asked what they thought about reviews in general. We wanted to get a baseline pulse prior to showing them any testing material in case there was an evident divide among our participants regarding their stance on reviews.

Following their answer, we presented 12 reviews in the current HomeAway architecture and asked them to choose the three they deemed the most valuable, specifically not defining “valuable”. After they did so we followed up with questions regarding their choices and any strategies they may use when choosing which reviews to read, value, and/or trust.

Hypothesis 5

People have internalized systems for how they read reviews, e.g., some people will read bad ones either first or only and will gauge whether the negative issue would apply to them.

Overview Amenities Reviews Map Rates & Availability

Terri L. Published Dec 3, 2018
Perfect spot to stay!
5/5 ★★★★★ Stayed Dec 2018
Awesome place! So close to everything including the subway.

Kristie C. Published Nov 15, 2018
Nice apartment
4/5 ★★★★ Stayed Oct 2018
The location is great, 10 min drive to port authority.
The apartment is clean and has good vibes.
We liked the apartment aesthetics.
The apartment is well equipped
There was a bit of an issue with actually getting into the apartment when we arrived so that is why I put only 4 stars.

Union City Published Oct 21, 2018
3/5 ★★★★ Stayed Oct 2018
The apartment in Union City was OK. It definitely could use some updating, and while I can't say that it was dirty there were some areas that could have used a good cleaning.
The buses to NYC were very convenient and we never waited more than 5 minutes for a bus. The 15-20 time into the city was accurate EXCEPT during rush hour (it took almost an hour on a Friday morning.) But the location of the stop at both ends was perfect. Parking was definitely a problem - we were there 4 days and were not able to find parking on the same street until the last day. There were spots within the 4 block radius that the pass allowed except on street cleaning days (Tues & Fri).
The bedding and towels were clean and the kitchen was moderately stocked. The cable TV in the living room was not working and the few channels we could get kept breaking up - we were told there would be a new box the day after we arrived but it still wasn't there when we left.
And it was very noisy - probably would have been ok if we had needed the air conditioner but didn't so there was nothing to drown out the street noise.
I probably would not stay again but as I said - it did serve the purpose

Tim R. Published Sep 20, 2018
Awesome location
5/5 ★★★★★ Stayed Sep 2018
Awesome time and convient to every thing!!

Michael P.

\$131 per night
★★★★ 12 Reviews
Excellent 4.6/5
Your dates are available
Check In Jun 19 Check Out Jun 24
Guests 2 guests
Total \$1,198.17 View details
Book Now
Free Cancellation until 5/20/2019
Matt C. Ask Manager a Question
For booking assistance, call HomeAway at 888-640-7927 Property # 8519024

Task 4

Results

Reviews shown to participants.

Reviews Selected by Participants as Most Useful (and their sentence lengths)

100%

Of the participants disliked short non-specific reviews.

2, 6, & 11

Most frequently chosen reviews

4/6

Participants chose the lowest rated review as helpful (#6, 3 stars).

Participant

SP19-01

SP19-02

SP19-03

SP19-04

SP19-05

SP19-06

	Review 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
SP19-01	6	8	2	2	5	11	5	2	16	1	7	4
SP19-02	6	8	2	2	5	11	5	2	16	1	7	4
SP19-03	6	8	2	2	5	11	5	2	16	1	7	4
SP19-04	6	8	2	2	5	11	5	2	16	1	7	4
SP19-05	6	8	2	2	5	11	5	2	16	1	7	4
SP19-06	6	8	2	2	5	11	5	2	16	1	7	4

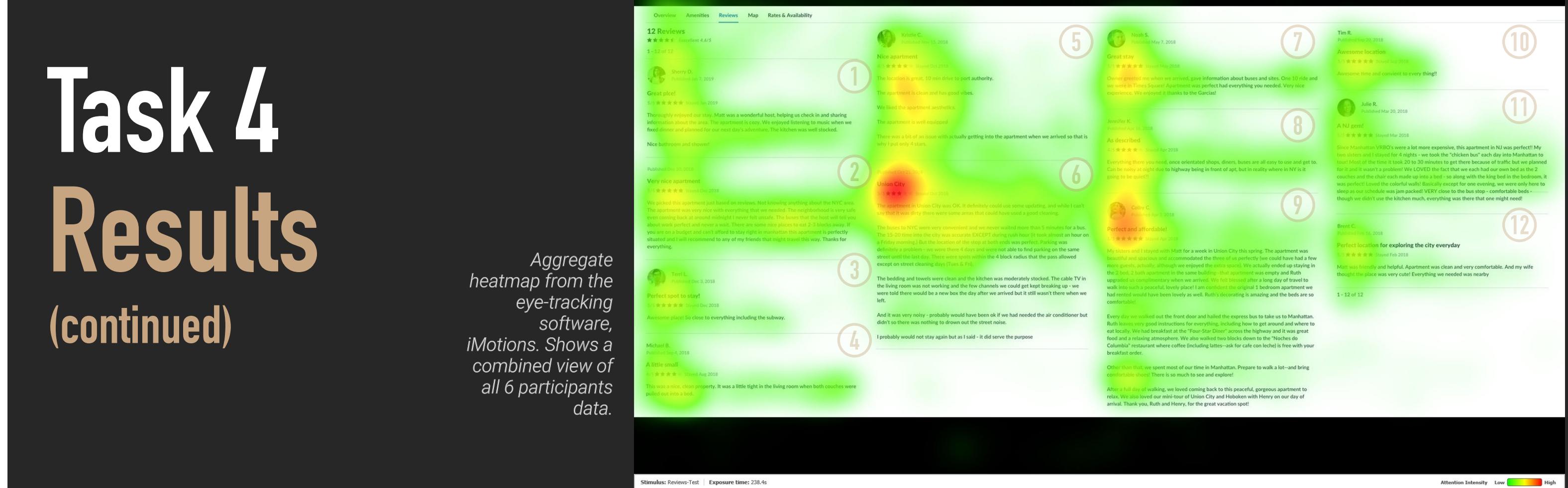
Sentence Length

Highlighted cells show the reviews chosen by the participants. The text in the cell shows the number of sentences in the review.

Task 4

Results (continued)

Aggregate heatmap from the eye-tracking software, iMotions. Shows a combined view of all 6 participants data.



*The general population has different interpretations of 'nice' and 'good' than I do, or so I noticed after one of my trips to Europe. So I only trust the bad reviews and for good recommendations I crowd source."

Interview only Participant ID SP19 - 07
Male, Age 35-44

"I know from giving them that if they're short then they are probably not thrilled and just trying to be nice because the host asked for a review or something. That's what I see when I read 'great location' and that's it."

Participant ID SP19-02
Female, Age 45-54

"I chose him because he talks about the experience about the house itself. Some other people's long reviews about how great their trip experience are not that helpful and I'm not interested in that."

Participant ID SP19 - 05
Female, Age 18-24

"I'll think if it's too extreme, like too good or too bad, there may be some problems with it."

Participant ID SP19 - 01
Male, Age 35-34

Conclusion for Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 is accepted. The top selections were of reviews that were **7, 8, and 11, sentences in length**. There were also comments about how the more polar the sentiment the less likely they were to relate to the author of the review or perceive the review content as valid and valuable.

Conclusion for Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 is accepted. The one review with the **lowest number of stars** had the **most engagement** on the heatmap even though it was one of the longest reviews. This implies strategy in the participants' approach to reading reviews. In tandem to that, multiple participants voiced that they had strategies for flitting through reviews.

Actionable Takeaways



Look for opportunities to curtail filters per major destination locations, e.g., in New York City being close to the subway was consistently discussed so maybe you create a subway proximity filter.

In our competitive evaluation, we discovered that Clickstay had an "Outside" descriptor section on the listing page that divulged the proximity to the nearest restaurant, museum, transportation, shop, etc., to provide a full picture of the type of stay you could have there.

Control

Transparency



Add a sort filter to make the strategy people use ,of looking at the lower rating reviews first, easier or remove the stars from each review and simply provide the aggregate rating encouraging people to skim for the details they find pertinent.

The former increases usability for current behavior and the second could be more strategic from a business standpoint. However, our primary suggestion is the former.

Control

Transparency



Make the provider profile picture (below "Book Now" CTA) clickable so the user can unpack information about the provider easier.



Throughout our testing, we recorded participants intuitively trying to click the picture and not understanding why it didn't do anything. This is most likely due to that functionality being present in competitor products as well as social platforms.

Control

Transparency



Implement an automated guide to prompt and/or possibly utilize anchoring in order to help the reviewer put forth a more detailed assessment with less cognitive effort.

Word of Mouth



Add the functionality for consumers to follow other consumers.

As noted in our findings, more than one participant articulated trusting or not trusting another persons opinion based off of the other person having similar or differing perspectives. It is logical then that if a user finds another consumer who they deem has similar views/priorities to hers/his/theirs, they will trust their assessments of other locations and experiences more, as they would a friends.

Word of Mouth



Further Steps



If we had more time to study this further, we discussed isolating specific social interactions involving trust (e.g., relying on someone to make something for you in time for you to give it to a loved one) and establishing tests for the following interaction parameters:



In-person

Online within direct correspondance (email)

Online within a transactional interface



We also wanted to test the difference among cultures specifically in regards to the home-sharing market. Two of our group members voiced that their native culture is inherently more skeptical of this marketplace and we would like to know how we could alleviate that.



There should be more research done around whether it is better (situationally or always) to remove star ratings from the individual reviews and only present the aggregated star summary at the top.

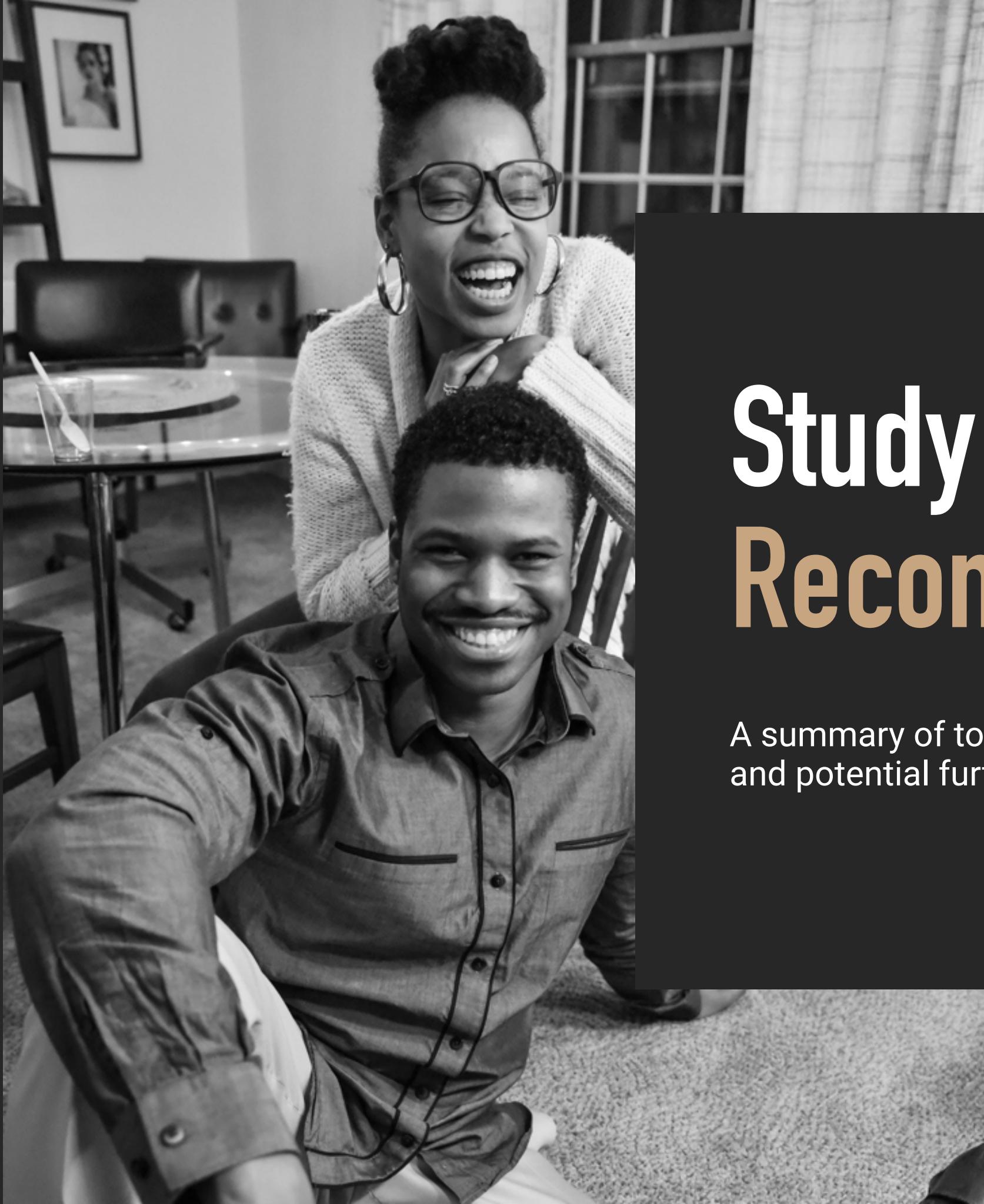


There is also a variance of opinion concerning how high in the hierarchy the provider profile should be (specific to home-sharing listing pages). There was however, some consistencies among participants in their desire to see more information sooner due to their provider choice being a crucial aspect of who deciding what listing to book.



We would suggest testing provider related filters as well. Tracking interactions and collecting qualitative feedback may reveal that these are useful, providing differentiation opportunity between HomeAway and competitors.





Study Recommendations

A summary of top findings, specific actionables, and potential further research suggestions.

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Recommendation Strategy

For our recommendations we extracted 5 top-level areas of focus, which we then elaborated on with specific actionables. These are areas that persistently surfaced throughout our study and across various methods. The following recommendations are presented in ascending priority. We have also provided you with a stellar summer intern, Chad. Please feel free to reach out to him for further explanations and any grammatical questions.



01

Recommendation

Require more information from providers (partners) to display on the host profile.

In every section of our study; literature review, competitive evaluation, survey, interviews, and user testing, knowing more and/or specific details about the host was brought up as a key aspect in consumer trust. For example, in our user testing, **4/6 participants** said they would rent from **the host who had the most information present**.

- Add more required fields for the provider profile and communicate to providers that this could increase conversion due to stimulating consumer trust.
- Develop a verification process and clearly communicate not only what was validated about the provider and/or consumer to the corresponding party, but also how it was verified.
- Make the provider profile picture (below “Book Now” CTA) clickable so the user can unpack information about the provider easier.

Throughout our testing, we recorded participants intuitively trying to click the picture and not understanding why it didn't do anything. This is most likely due to that functionality being present in competitor products as well as social platforms.



02

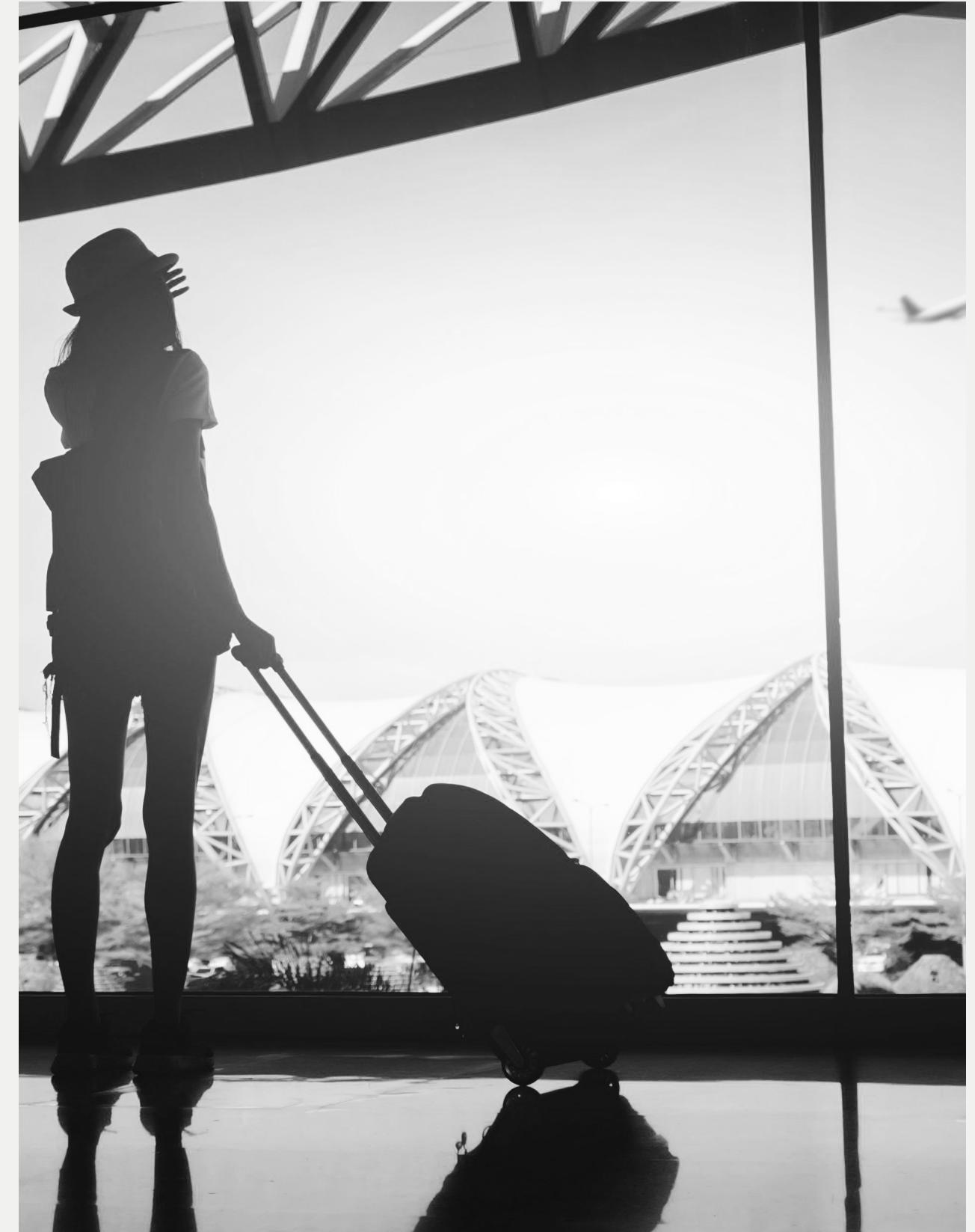
Recommendation

Employ more elements in the consumer (traveler) UI flow that emulate word of mouth.

Specifically in the competitive analysis we saw a trend of innovative UI techniques intended to resemble word of mouth, e.g., “**This product is in 43 other carts,**” or “**This location has been reserved 4 times in the last 3 hours.**” A factor to our recommendation would be finding appealing methods per level of actual data (Etsy does an effective job of this). For example, if a property has only been reserved once in the last month, communicate a more appealing metric instead.

- Improve the system of word of mouth elements and UI that could be utilized if a property and/or host meets the established requirements.
- Add functionality to “favorite” a host.

The pet-tending app Rover displayed a “Return Customers” quantity to illustrate that past customers had positive interactions strong enough to evoke another transaction.



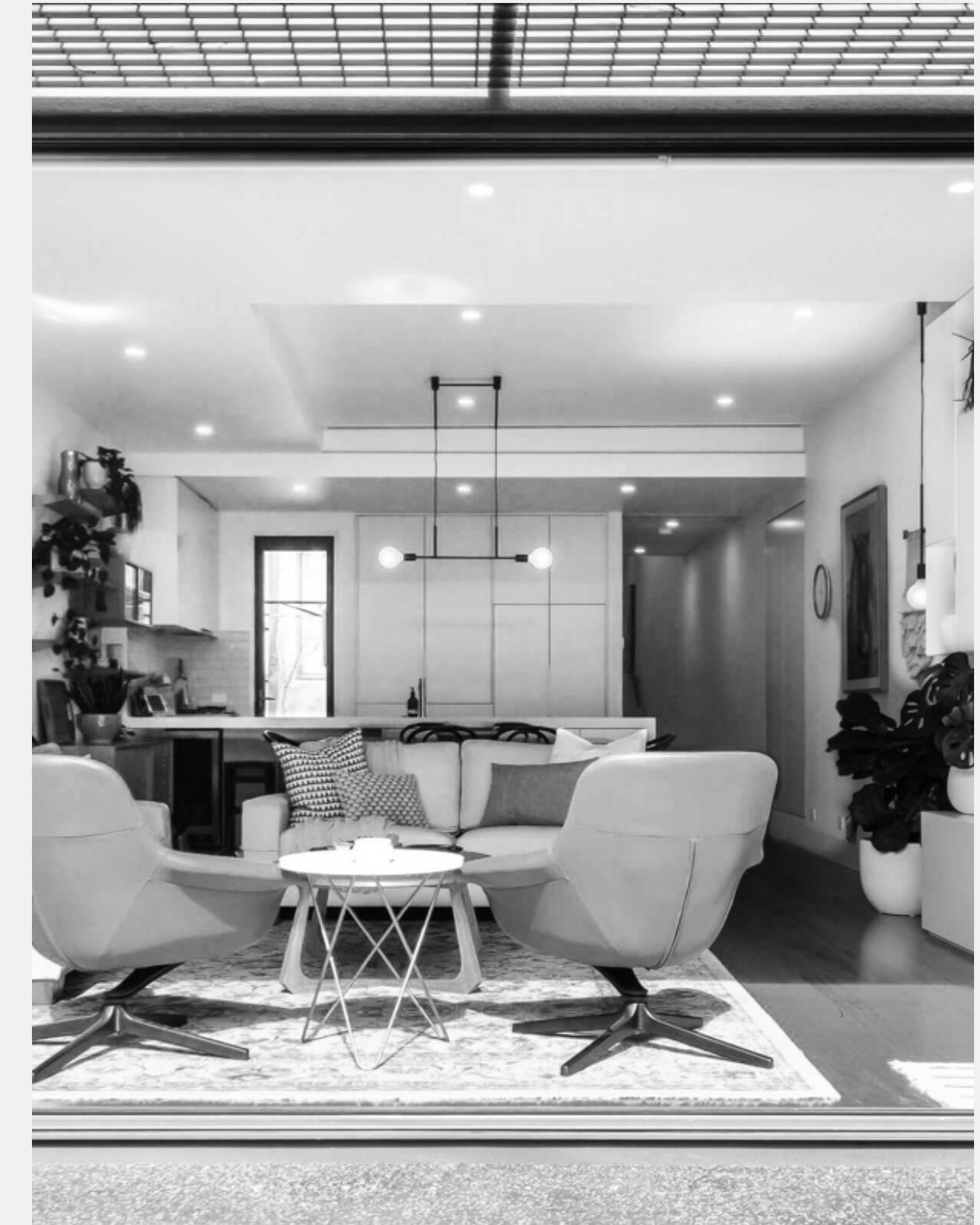
03

Recommendation

Encourage consumers (travelers) to leave more informative reviews specifically about the host and/or property.

The desire for detailed and focused accounts from reviewers trended again across research methods.

- **91%** of survey respondents rated **reviews as one of the top two decision-making factors** (equal to pictures).
 - From the user interviews, one of the participants articulated, “I chose him because he talks about the experience of the **house itself**. Some other people’s long reviews about how great their trip experience are not that helpful and I’m not interested in that.” –Participant SP19-05
 - During user testing, **4/6 participants** chose to book with the host whose profile contained the most information.
-
- Use machine learning to decipher the sentiment and details contained within written reviews (alike the current Yelp review filter) and then pin the most effective/useful reviews to the top.
 - Implement an automated guide to prompt and/or possibly utilize anchoring in order to help the reviewer put forth a more detailed assessment with less cognitive effort.



04

Recommendation

Make guarantees and policies clearer and more obvious to convey a sense of transparency.

Currently, HomeAway's policies, verifying tactics, provider badge vernacular definitions, and general explanatory content are **not easily accessible from a usability standpoint**. At the same time, according to our survey results, 60% of respondents listed guarantees as a reason they use Airbnb most often for home-sharing rentals.

- Make sure that all internally generated terms/policies/labels should have either a hover (or actionable) explanation or a CTA leading the user to a deeper explanation. Some of this is
- Evaluate the effectiveness of all icons and provider/consumer badge ranking names (Premier Partner) and provide an index with definitions on the website/application.



05

Recommendation

Systematize and standardize the consumer flows (for example, the arrival flow) in order to “de-risk” the experience.

In our survey, compared to the ride-sharing and online selling markets, which both have key worrisome phases, the home-sharing market showed an **even distribution** (approximately 30%) **of anxiety across all phases** of the home-sharing experience.

- Require the providers to address key stages of the arrival flow (when to arrive, where to arrive, parking, how they will get in, what to do if they can't get in, etc.) to ensure aspects don't get overlooked causing friction and possible negative experiences that could reflect poorly on the brand. This will also provide consistency across the platform making the information more easily digestible for the consumer.
- Establishing standardized, scheduled emails for correspondence between the peers in order to alleviate potential uncertainty that can come with silence.

“That's why I didn't want to risk using Airbnb with my whole family. Hotels will bend over backwards to fix something and make you happy. With Airbnb, it's kind of up to the host to work out problems.”

Participant ID SP19 - 09
Female, Age 25-34



Collected Actionables

Here we have collected the more specific actionables derived from the competitive evaluation, survey, user interviews, and user testing. Some of them are easily interchangeable priority-wise but we tried to order them in ascending priority for your convenience.



Actionable Takeaways



Look for opportunities to curtail filters per major destination locations, e.g., in New York City being close to the subway was consistently discussed so maybe you create a subway proximity filter.

In our competitive evaluation, we discovered that Clickstay had an "Outside" descriptor section on the listing page that divulged the proximity to the nearest restaurant, museum, transportation, shop, etc., to provide a full picture of the type of stay you could have there.

Control

Transparency



Add a sort filter to make the strategy people use ,of looking at the lower rating reviews first, easier or remove the stars from each review and simply provide the aggregate rating encouraging people to skim for the details they find pertinent.

The former increases usability for current behavior and the second could be more strategic from a business standpoint. However, our primary suggestion is the former.

Control

Transparency



Make the provider profile picture (below "Book Now" CTA) clickable so the user can unpack information about the provider easier.



Throughout our testing, we recorded participants intuitively trying to click the picture and not understanding why it didn't do anything. This is most likely due to that functionality being present in competitor products as well as social platforms.

Control

Transparency



Implement an automated guide to prompt and/or possibly utilize anchoring in order to help the reviewer put forth a more detailed assessment with less cognitive effort.

Word of Mouth



Add the functionality for consumers to follow other consumers.

As noted in our findings, more than one participant articulated trusting or not trusting another persons opinion based off of the other person having similar or differing perspectives. It is logical then that if a user finds another consumer who they deem has similar views/priorities to hers/his/theirs, they will trust their assessments of other locations and experiences more, as they would a friends.

Word of Mouth



Actionable Takeaways



Add zoom functionality to listing photos.

Transparency



Encourage providers to review consumers and include any reviews about providers as consumers, on their provider profile.

Authenticity

Transparency

Word of Mouth



Ensure that any explanation, tooltip or non, is clear and contains a link to further information on the topic if appropriate.

Transparency



Re-word current word of mouth UI copy as well as create a larger system that could be used if a property and/or host meets the established requirements.

Word of Mouth

Transparency

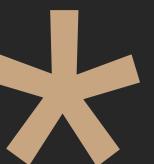


Consider a rewards program for consumers and providers.

Word of Mouth



Add more required fields for the provider profile and communicate to providers that this could increase conversion due to stimulating consumer trust.



Transparency



Develop a verification process and clearly communicate what was validated about the provider and/or consumer to the corresponding party.

Authenticity

Transparency



Make sure that all internally generated terms/policies/labels should have either a hover (or actionable) explanation or a CTA leading the user to a deeper explanation.

Transparency



Evaluate the effectiveness of all icons and provider/consumer badge ranking names (Premier Partner) and provide an index with definitions on the website/application.



Actionable Takeaways



Further investigate the human factors involved in ride-sharing and online selling, that are not present in home-sharing, in order to define the areas of friction those two markets have reduced.



According to the comparison depicted in the Anxiety Phases chart, it is evident that ride-sharing and online selling have narrowed the level of worry and for the most part isolated them to certain phases.



Focus on helping users find listings near local attractions/landmarks/addresses by including a list of such and their proximity to the listing location. This should show on the listing page but could also be filterable controls.

Due to price always being a factor in any purchase decision, we suggest focusing on the next highest areas of interest such as location.

Control



Look to P2P online selling platforms, like Etsy and Poshmark, for verification and policy UI techniques considering people also view those as a transaction between themselves and the displayed individual, alike a home-sharing host.

Authenticity

Transparency



Set a baseline standard for photography but also require at least 5 photos and representation of at least 3 rooms/areas (bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, common areas).

Our data shows that pictures and reviews are the most influential components when respondents were deciding.

Authenticity

Transparency



Actionable Takeaways



Consider leveraging existing brand power of Expedia to make HomeAway more recognizable and memorable when people are planning trips.

Authenticity



Build on traveler's perceptions that leaving reviews is important to building their own reputation for future stays and provide guidance and incentives to create thoughtful, persuasive reviews.

Word of Mouth

Authenticity



Improve host profiles by requiring more information and guiding partners on crafting authentic, trustworthy profile content.

Transparency

Authenticity



Provide guidance to partners on taking effective pictures of the spaces.

Transparency

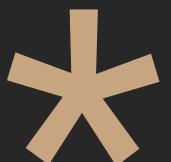
Authenticity



Filter UX/UI Actionables

- Limit the typographical hierarchy to 3-4 levels. Section header, option, smaller descriptor if needed, and the show more link if there are more than 4 options per section.
- Make the top 4 options shown per section the most frequently chosen from that section.
- Limit the dropdown to two columns and make it scrollable. Make each section (header and container) span across but have the options listed in two column format.

This way if the user chooses to view more, it is likely that she/he/they will see more or all of the options at once without having to scroll, better positioned to make a decision when her/his/their mind is focused on making that category choice.
- Rid of the “X” on the off toggle. An “X” is still very much associated with a close icon. Aside from that, it is unnecessary for the UI to communicate effectively and is just another thing for the user to interpret.
- Lastly, order the sections according with those most frequently interacted with. This could even be tailored to the user to arrange in the order of what she/he/they frequently interact with.



We believe these changes will significantly help the usability of this feature. Please see the third page of the competitive evaluation and the literary foundation referencing choice-set complexity for more context.

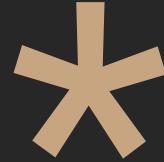
Control



Further Steps



If we had more time to study this further, we discussed isolating specific social interactions involving trust (e.g., relying on someone to make something for you in time for you to give it to a loved one) and establishing tests for the following interaction parameters:



In-person

Online within direct correspondance (email)

Online within a transactional interface



We also wanted to test the difference among cultures specifically in regards to the home-sharing market. Two of our group members voiced that their native culture is inherently more skeptical of this marketplace and we would like to know how we could alleviate that.



There should be more research done around whether it is better (situationally or always) to remove star ratings from the individual reviews and only present the aggregated star summary at the top.



There is also a variance of opinion concerning how high in the hierarchy the provider profile should be (specific to home-sharing listing pages). There was however, some consistencies among participants in their desire to see more information sooner due to their provider choice being a crucial aspect of who deciding what listing to book.



We would suggest testing provider related filters as well. Tracking interactions and collecting qualitative feedback may reveal that these are useful, providing differentiation opportunity between HomeAway and competitors.



Thank You

Please feel free to contact us with any further questions.

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