Step 14: Heuristic Evaluation and Fixes

WorkMate Design Brief (Provided to Evaluators):

Product Description:

WorkMate is an AI-driven emotional support and HR assistance tool designed to help employees navigate workplace stress and conflicts. Integrated seamlessly into communication platforms like Slack and Teams, WorkMate offers employees a discreet, judgment-free space to request emotional support and document workplace issues. Powered by conversational AI and sentiment analysis, it provides personalized, real-time advice and generates structured HR reports to facilitate smoother interactions with human resources. By fostering a supportive work environment, WorkMate aims to enhance employee well-being and contribute to a healthier, more productive workplace culture.

Target Users:

WorkMate is targeted at corporate professionals, especially young employees, remote workers, and those in high-pressure industries who may struggle with stress, interpersonal conflicts, or navigating HR processes. It is particularly beneficial for employees who are hesitant to directly communicate with HR or prefer a private, non-judgmental space to manage workplace challenges.

Key Tasks:

1. Go through Workplace Resources and Reserve them: Users interact with WorkMate to seek current Events and Resources provided by their workplace and reserve a session based on their schedule.

2. Documenting Workplace Concerns: Users can report workplace issues such as conflicts, stressors, or other challenges, and generate structured HR reports.

3. Accessing their Planner: Users can have WorkMate look at your workload based on your upcoming tasks, deadlines, meetings etc., and update your planner by making sure you have adequate time for breaks and do not feel overwhelmed with stress at the workplace.

Evaluation and Feedback Report for WorkMate (by Evaluators):

    a. USABILITY PROBLEMS

1. Confusing Navigation for Planner

- The interface for accessing the "Planner" section lacks clear labels or a call-to-action button.

- Violated Heuristic: *Recognition rather than recall* – users must remember that the planner exists rather than being clearly prompted.
- Severity Score: 2 – Moderate issue that affects a key user task.

2. Overwhelming Report Form

- The "Document Workplace Concerns" feature displays a long, unsegmented form, which can be cognitively overwhelming.

- Violated Heuristic: *Aesthetic and minimalist design* – too much information without visual grouping.
- Severity Score: 2 – Moderate issue that affects flow.

3. Lack of Error Prevention in Form Inputs

- Description: There are no tooltips or format checks for form entries (e.g., email, date)

2nd panel featuring chat with WorkMate for quick conversation
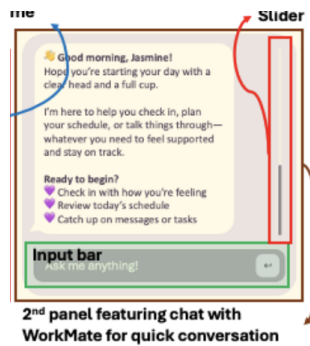
- Violated Heuristic: *Error prevention* – users might input incorrect data unknowingly.
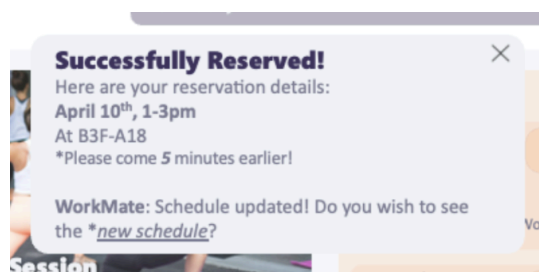- Severity Score: 1

4. Ambiguity in Resource Categories

- Description: The category under "Resources" called "See Resources seems redundant
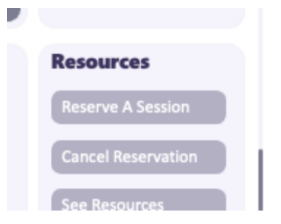
- Violated Heuristic: *Match between system and the real world* – unclear terminology.
- Severity Score: 3 – Causes major confusion in a key task.

5. Missing Undo Option

- Description: Once a planner update or form is submitted, there's no visible way to undo or go back.

- Violated Heuristic: *User control and freedom* – users can't easily recover from unintended actions.
- Severity Score: 3 – Important for user trust.

6. Confusing multiple input bars

- The interface displays two input bars in close proximity. Their similar design and placement can confuse users about which bar performs which function.
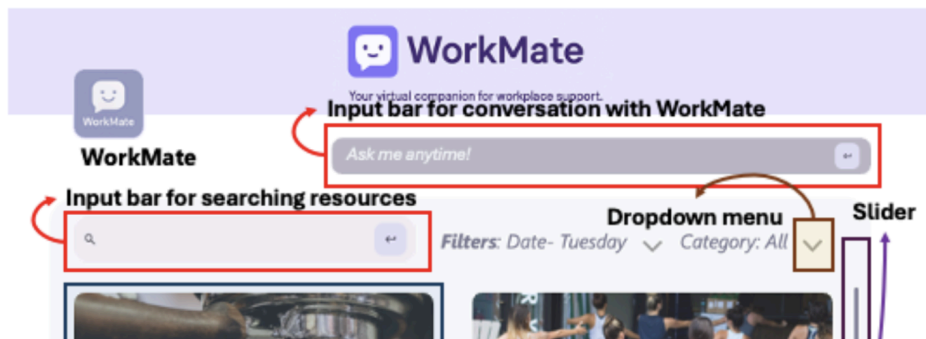

- Violated Heuristic: Recognition rather than recall – Users must mentally distinguish between the two similar input fields rather than the system clearly indicating their distinct purposes. Additionally, it violates Consistency and standards because both bars appear visually identical but serve completely different functions.
- Severity Score: 3 – This is a major usability concern because it can lead to misdirected input, user frustration, and delay in task completion.
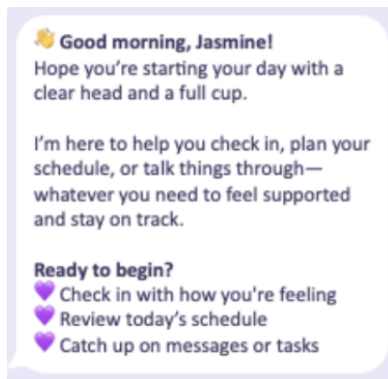
    b. GOOD USABILITY

1. Slack/Teams Integration

- The integration with familiar platforms like Slack and Teams reduces learning time.
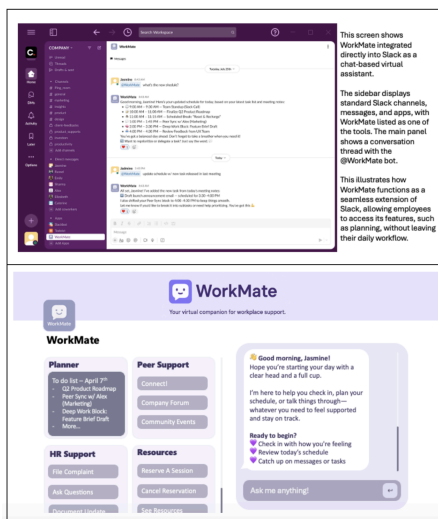
- Upheld Heuristic: *Flexibility and efficiency of use* – allows users to work within tools they already use.

2. Tone of Conversation

- The conversational AI uses warm and human like language to build trust.

👋 **Good morning, Jasmine!**
Hope you're starting your day with a clear head and a full cup.

I'm here to help you check in, plan your schedule, or talk things through— whatever you need to feel supported and stay on track.

Ready to begin?
💜 Check in with how you're feeling
💜 Review today's schedule
💜 Catch up on messages or tasks

- Upheld Heuristic: *Match between system and real world* – promotes comfort and relatability.

3. Personalized Planner Suggestions

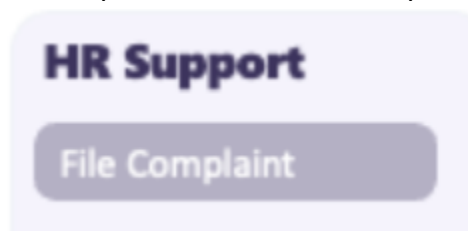- The tool offers break reminders and task reorganization based on stress levels.

Remaining seats: 7
*Do not recommend by WorkMate ⓘ
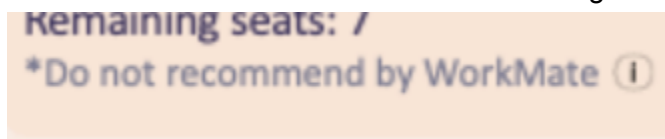
- Upheld Heuristic: *Help and documentation* – shows supportive, contextual suggestions.

4. Clear CTA for Reporting Issues

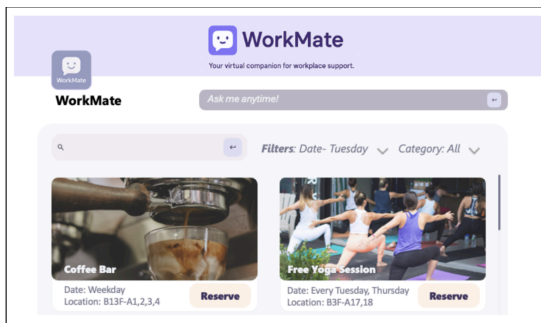- The "Report an Issue" button is prominent and clearly labeled.

HR Support

File Complaint

- Upheld Heuristic: *Visibility of system status* – gives users confidence in the workflow.

5. Minimalist Layout on Dashboard

- The dashboard is clean with clear sections, which helps reduce visual clutter.

- Upheld Heuristic: *Aesthetic and minimalist design* – less distraction, easier navigation.

6. Visual Calendar for Planner Management

- The calendar interface used in the planner view allows users to visualize their tasks, meetings, and break periods in a structured and easily digestible format. It helps users understand workload distribution and supports stress management by making it easy to schedule breaks.
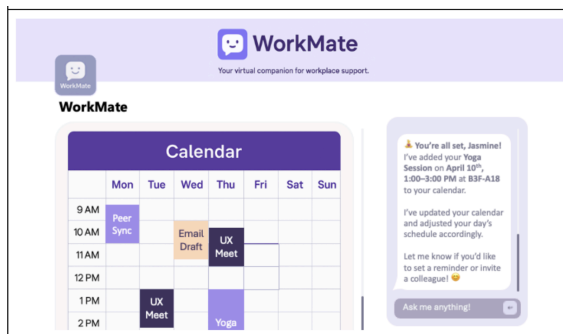
- Upheld Heuristic: *Visibility of system status* since users can immediately see when they're overloaded or have gaps in their schedule.

Fixes for WorkMate (Based on Eval Report Provided):

1. Confusing Navigation for Planner

- Issue: The interface for accessing the "Planner" lacks clear labels or a call-to-action button, making it hard for users to find and use the planner.
- Fix: Add a clearly labeled "Go to Calendar" button at the top of the "Planner" section on the Dashboard. We can also add tooltips or a hover-over effect to provide more guidance for users unfamiliar with the features of the product for all buttons. Also, we will ensure the button is easy to locate visually by contrasting with surrounding elements.

2. Overwhelming Report Form

- Issue: The "Document Workplace Concerns" feature is presented as a long, unsegmented form, which may overwhelm users.
- Fix: There is no "Document Workplace Concern" option on the prototype or any feature regarding filling a form. There may be ambiguity on how to document workplace concerns with the chatbot and a button (with the signature "?" help logo) which links to a helpful user guide will be included at the top of the web app in every screen/state.

3. Lack of Error Prevention in Chat Inputs

- Issue: There are no tooltips or format checks for form entries like email and date fields, potentially leading to user errors.
- Fix: There are no forms which are required to be filled while using WorkMate and the only action of entering information into WorkMate is via the chatbot. Information like emails, dates and other basic data is to be integrated via the workplace login system which will be integrated with the web app. User errors entered in the chatbot are to be recognized using advanced Natural Language Processing. To make sure such errors are prevented we will add an option for making sure the chatbot alerts users on any errors it sees.

4. Ambiguity in Resource Categories

- Issue: The category under "Resources" called "See Resources" is redundant and unclear.
- Fix: We will rename the category to something more specific, like "Available Resources" or "See All Resources," to better reflect its purpose. With the change in the category name here also adding tooltips/hover-over effect would be useful in providing more descriptive language that directly informs the user about the different features of the tool.

5. Missing Undo Option

- Issue: Once a planner update or event reservation is made, there is no visible way to undo, go back, reschedule or cancel it.
- Fix: Add a "Cancel" button and also an "Update Reservation" after booking is complete. Add in a confirmation step (A pop up confirming the details) before reservation is confirmed.. Also, include a visible "Back" option so users can easily correct mistakes before finalizing updates or submissions.

6. Confusing Multiple Input Bars

- Issue: The interface shows two input bars in close proximity with similar designs, which may confuse users about their purpose.
- Fix: Differentiate the input bars visually by using distinct colors or labels. Make the Chatbot input bar smaller and further away from the Search Bar towards the left hand side. Make search more obvious and make sure there is enough gap between both to avoid overlap. Redo the layout of this particular screen if the changes still do not resolve heuristic violations to better accommodate the features and help users avoid errors.

Prioritization of Fixes:

- Critical Fixes (Updated Severity Score 3 and 4):

  - Confusing Multiple Input Bars: This is a major usability concern and needs immediate attention as it can cause frustration and errors.
  - Missing Undo Option: This could lead to significant user frustration if users feel they cannot recover from mistakes. And causes issues in the user flow of reserving a workplace resource.

- Moderate Fixes (Updated Severity Score 2):

  - Confusing Navigation for Planner: Improving navigation and visibility on the Dashboard is important for ensuring users can efficiently access and use the planner and calendar.
  - Overwhelming Report Form (Adding help guide): Although there are no forms for reporting, adding a link to the help guide or user guide for the tool is very important.

- Low Fixes (Updated Severity Score 1):

  - Lack of Error Prevention in Form Inputs (Chatbot input alert): Though not critical or related to product, addressing a possible similar scenario with the chatbot and working on the algorithm to ensure chatbot has this feature included will improve the overall experience and reduce user frustration from potential errors.
  - Ambiguity in Resource Categories: This can cause confusion, and simplifying the category name will improve clarity and make the Dashboard more efficient to use and navigate.