CHAT APP DESIGN

Hero Shot

▌PHOTO CONSISTENCY

A hugely important aspect when choosing photos for the hero shot is for them to be very similar in style.
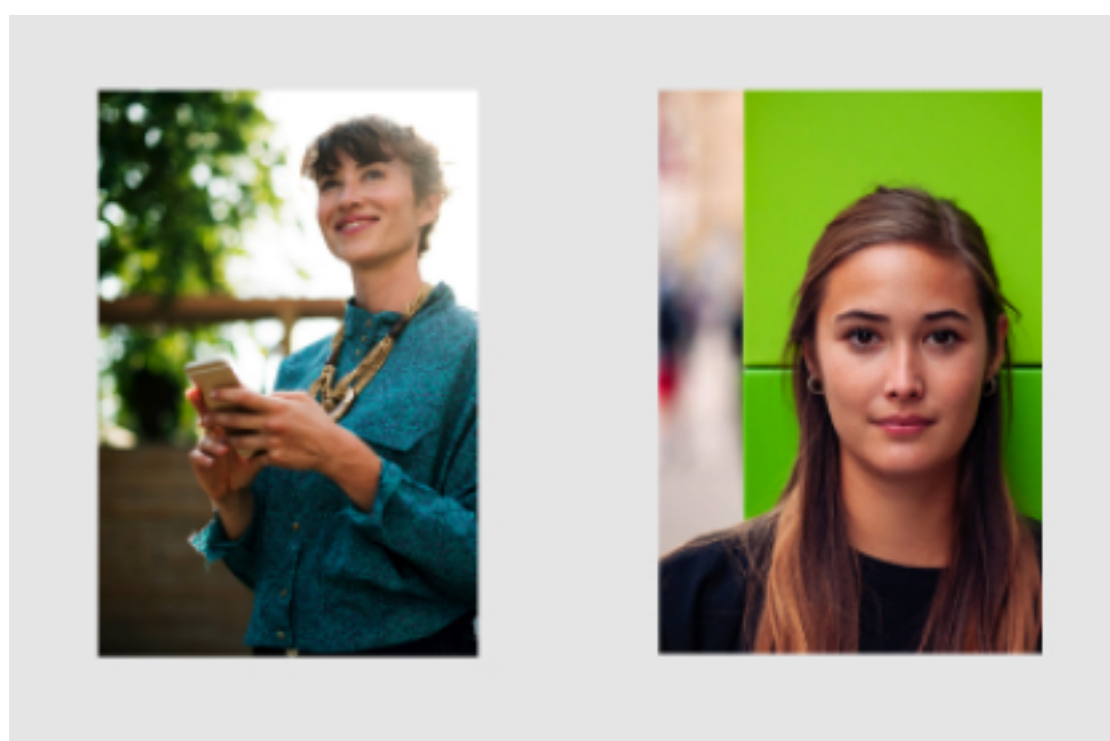
This version is a bad match. The girl on the green background is looking into the camera, facing straight and she's zoomed in closer, making here face bigger.

These two are similar in style. They are not facing the camera or looking at it, and they are proportional to each other. Meaning, the photos were taken from a similar distance.

When you place your dots behind the image, **don't overlap** them with the image. That creates unnecessary tension.

Also, use **consistent spacing**. For example, if dots are 10 pixels from each other, then distance dots from the image by 10 pixels as well, on both sides.

On this version, dots are well-spaced from the left edge of the photo but the gap from the top edge is smaller. This is inconsistent spacing.

Here we have consistent spacing. The gap between the dots is the same as the distance from the photo, **on both edges**.

Figma Resources

Don't forget to utilize all the free and paid resources available to you, like free website mockups, templates, UI kits, icons, illustrations, etc.

Make these assets part of your design arsenal. They will help you create more interesting designs.

The best place to find Figma resources and free assets is **Figma Community**. There's a tab for it right in your Figma dashboard.

I've included the link to the Community here and more places for Figma assets: **www.vakoshvili.com/resources#figma**

Shadows

Shadows are under effects. Click Plus icon to add a new effect. The first thing is usually a shadow.

Click the sun icon to edit the shadow properties. Here you will need to edit three values:

1. Blur

This changes how sharp or blurry the shadow is. You want it quite blurry. The value depends on the size of the object, opacity of the shadow and other factors.

2. Y-offset

The vertical offset of the shadow. Higher the value lower the shadow will fall. When set to 0, the shadow will fall evenly on the top and the bottom.
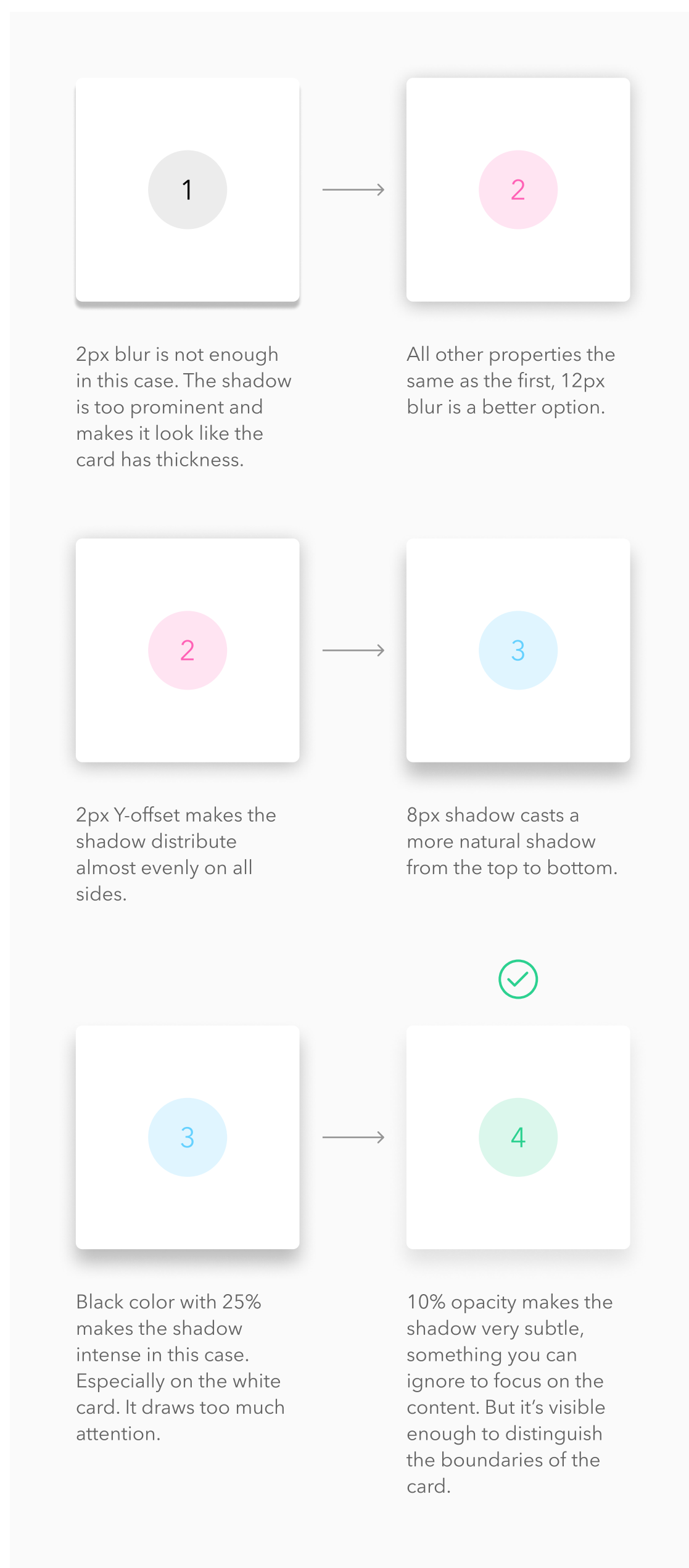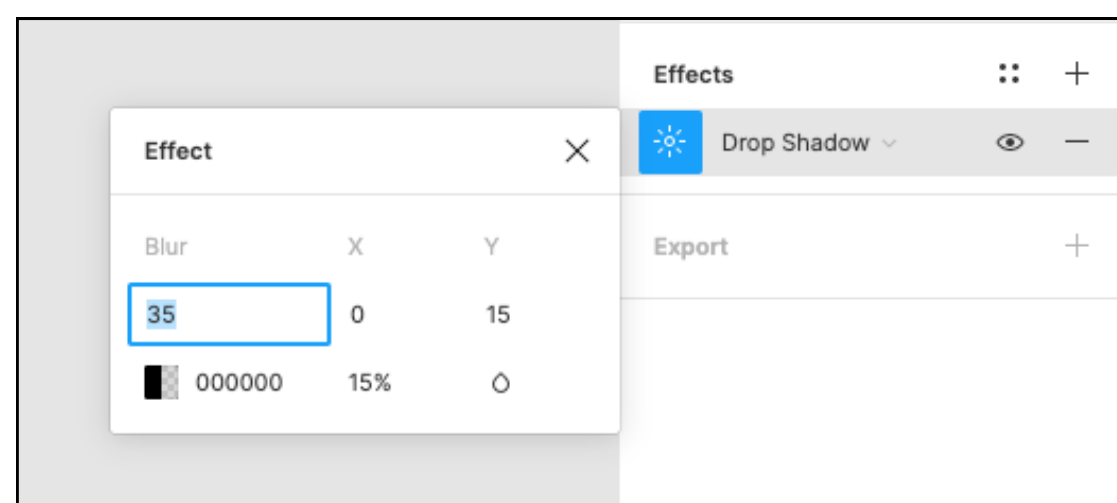The vertical offset for the shadow is good. It makes it look more natural because, in the real world light source is above us, in the form of the sun and light bulbs on the ceiling. This casts shadows downwards with a vertical offset.

3. Shadow Color & Opacity

In most cases, black is the best choice for the shadow. Sometimes you could sneak a little color hue in it but be careful with this. It can come out like a neon underglow from Fast & Furious cars.

The opacity of the shadow will depend on the background and on the object itself. Darker objects need higher opacity value and lighter ones, especially white, need a very light shadow.

There's no rule of thumb or any simple formula for calculating this. You will have to train your eye. Just like colors, in the beginning, it's best to borrow shadows from other designs. And soon enough you will develop your eye for shadows.

2px blur is not enough in this case. The shadow is too prominent and makes it look like the card has thickness.

All other properties the same as the first, 12px blur is a better option.

2px Y-offset makes the shadow distribute almost evenly on all sides.

8px shadow casts a more natural shadow from the top to bottom.

Black color with 25% makes the shadow intense in this case. Especially on the white card. It draws too much attention.

10% opacity makes the shadow very subtle, something you can ignore to focus on the content. But it's visible enough to distinguish the boundaries of the card.

Icons & Illustrations

Icons and illustrations can add some flair to your designs and make them more interesting.

The internet is filled with free and paid icons. One of the largest selections you can find on **www.flaticon.com**

Also, in the Figma and Sketch resource sites.

Most icons come in SVG format. In this format, you can make modifications to the icon in Figma. You can change colors, you can remove or add some parts, or change thickness using stroke settings.

ICON TIP

Here's an easy trick that will add a nice touch to your designs:

Take icons that are made of at least two shapes. An icon with a single continuous shape won't work.

And instead of giving it one uniform color, combine colors from the project. Like in the example on the right.

This creates a more refined look and connects these colors to the project.

Before

After