HobBe: 201_U_09

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HobBe: Team-Building in Entrepreneurial Communities

Background & Problem Space

The entrepreneurial community is burgeoning across colleges and academic institutions,

where students with diverse talents are increasingly coming together to build the technologies of

the future. As founder culture grows, there is a need for enterprising, idea-minded students to

find talented peers with diverse skill sets to help them turn their ideas into reality. But, they

cannot do so well because the current process for recruiting team members doesn't paint the full

picture of how qualified candidates are, or how well they'd actually work together in a team.

Our goal in this project was to identify and design a solution for entrepreneurial students

to discover and connect to potential team members through events of common interest. This

project is an endeavor to build community and teamwork between founders of great ideas and

the talent needed to help them build those ideas out.

This project was inspired by the CHI 2019 theme of "Weaving the Social Fabric"— over

the course of our research, we became increasingly cognizant of a gap between student founders

on campus and peers of diverse disciplines, talents, and backgrounds. We saw an opportunity for

connecting these communities through entrepreneurship and team-building, and our design

solution focuses on bringing these students together to work on a common goal. In many ways,

our design serves not only a practical use by connecting founders who need team members and

team members who need opportunities, but in doing so, we seek to bring different

sub-communities of students together in a common passion for entrepreneurship.

Design Process

In order to come up the design, we iterated through an end-to-end step process in order to

flesh out our design concept. The first step in the design process was contextual interviews. We interviewed 4 college age students who were founders of startups to understand why and how they recruit team members. Given the scope of this project, we focused our design solution on just founders, rather than trying to design experiences for both founders and people looking to join a venture. We asked these participants to answer the questions as honestly and accurately as possible. We recorded notes during the interview of what the participants were saying. After the interviews, we analyzed the notes and turned them into activity notes. This is where we used answers from our interviews to build on our understanding of what the participants needed, and how we could improve their current process for recruitment.

Through the contextual interviews, we found that founders preferred offline means of meeting team members. We also found that the most important criteria for team members is team chemistry. Another important criterion we found important to founders was whether or not the hires were qualified for the position. We then used these notes from the interviews to create a persona, someone who would be targeted to using the application. Our persona was Max, who is a 20-year-old college entrepreneur. His long term goal is to create a successful company, however, his short term goal is to find team members to help him build out his idea. He is currently a business student trying to meet designers and developers.

The next step in this process was to come up with 80 different ways we could possibly solve the problem of recruiting people of different backgrounds. We narrowed it down to five different solutions, and decided to design an app to meet potential team members at events of shared interests.

Based on data from contextual interviews we then drew UI sketches to focus on

important findings, such as colocation of possible team members and team chemistry. This helped shape our idea generation. The UI sketches contained different screens of the application, and how they may look, however, they did not contain any interactivity at that time.
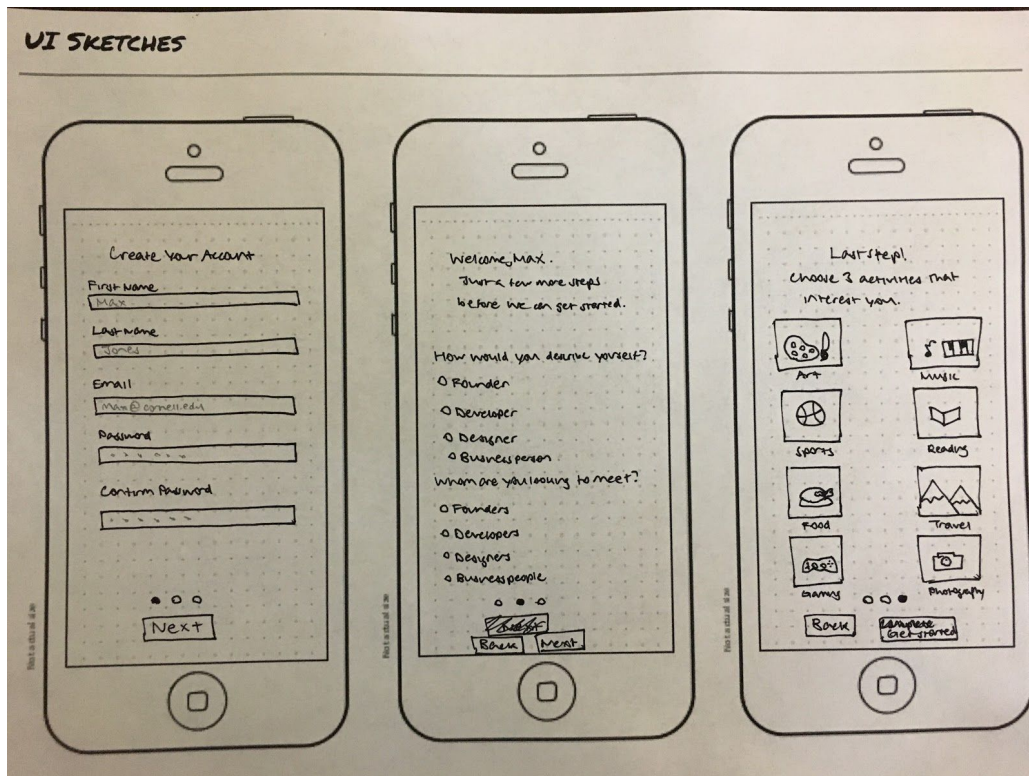

Mapping out the flow of our design solution through UI sketches.

The next step was to create a paper prototype that was used to visualize and analyze element placement and size. We even created a movie that visualized the interactivity from screen to screen. We then tested the paper prototype on 3 different people. This lead to changes in our later low-fidelity prototype. We found that the participants in the latest test wanted there to be feedback screens, due to them not being sure when a task was done or completed. We also added more animations to the low fidelity prototype and made further UI changes.
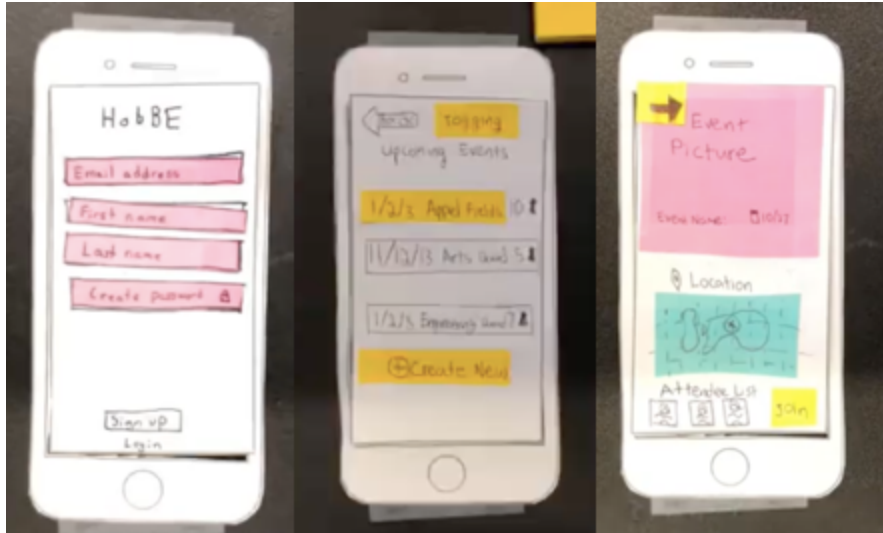
Paper prototype to show the basic interaction of our prototype, tested with users to see if it would serve a need.

Next was the creation of the low-fidelity balsamiq prototype. All screens were designed in Balsamiq. This is where we refined our design through a heuristic evaluation.
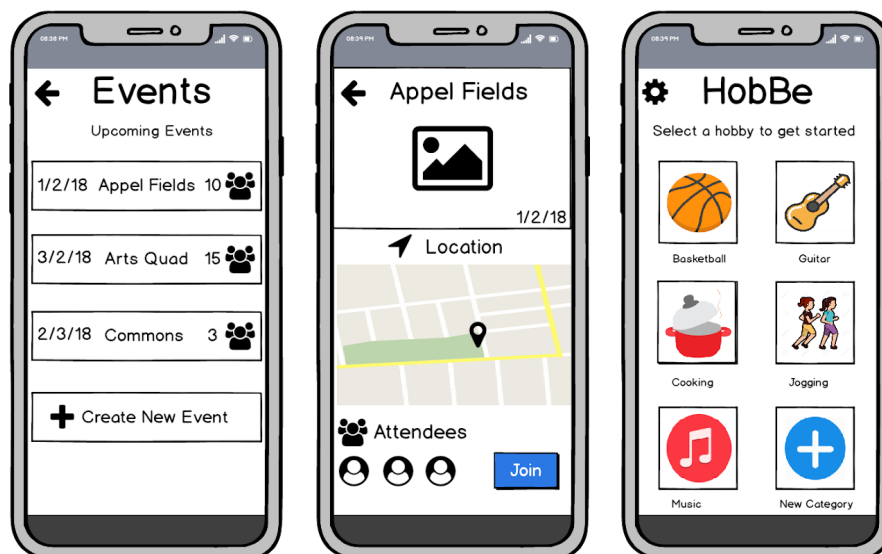
Low-fidelity prototype of our design in Balsamiq.

Our heuristic evaluation was based off of Nielsen heuristics. Once we went through the design and found all of our violations, we then created another prototype. This new prototype

was a high fidelity prototype, very similar to our final application design.
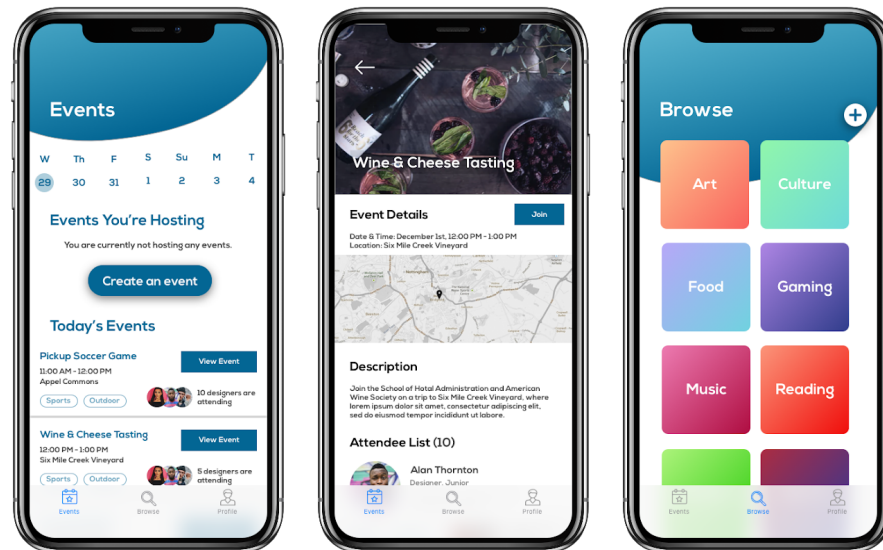
High-fidelity exploration of our design concept, which went through 4 rounds of user testing.

The final step in our whole design process was the final interview session where we had participants test our invision design. We highlighted the instances where a participant had trouble carrying out a certain task. We compiled a list of these evaluation findings and listed the changes to make to the design. We then finalized the design through invision and created a movie showing our new design as compared to the old one.

Severity level

Cosmetic

Minor

Major

Critical

Setting Up Account

Tap target is a bit small, so when the participant tried to enter who he was, it didn't register the first time

By the third menu seemed to be getting annoyed

Browsing Events

Confused about the difference in naming between Home and Events

"Discover" meaning straying from "industry standards".

Participant tried searching for art on the homescreen and couldn't find it

Was not sure if the homescreen was the same as the events page

Manage Guest List

False indicators that they could delete a member, tried swiping left

Mapping between the edit button and editing the attendee list is unclear

Once an event has been created, there is no way to navigate back to that event's page

View Resume

Participant at first looked unsure how to view the resume

Resume link is too small; User pauses for the first time of this task here.

Need to make more obvious, user found it difficult to find resume on the profile page

Create Event

Plus button as an entry point didn't immediately convey creating an event

Not sure to click on the plus button to add an event, needs to be more clear

Doesn't think that add event button is properly placed to show that it makes a new event for any day, not just the day highlighted

Realtime Board

Ranking the severity of our primary tasks for the user.

Design Process & Insights

When we first settled on this problem space, we wanted to better understand how founders currently recruit people to join their teams. Thus, we conducted several contextual interviews with representatives from our target audience. In these interviews, we explored current recruitment tactics, pain points, and startups' limitations. The data from these interviews fueled our activity notes and affinity diagram, where we discovered five insights into our target audience. First, founders prefer offline recruiting (face-to-face interactions, meetups, etc.) to online recruiting (video chats, phone calls, emails, etc.). Second, founders consider team chemistry and fit to be the most important elements when hiring. Third, different teams using our platform may have different ideal team dynamics, ranging from casual to professional. Fourth, teams may use this tool in the very beginning of their journey or later on in order to expand. Fifth, and finally, we discovered that teams are more productive and easier to manage when colocated. The insights that we gleaned at this stage were particularly important because they shaped the features that the design would need to support. This ultimately shaped the initial

design decisions to include a resume uploader/viewer, to onboard users in order to gather preferences, and to only display events in proximity to users. The challenge in this stage was to accurately group all of the data that we collected. The construction of the affinity diagram definitely helped us to visualize all of the information and overcome this challenge, but it was sometimes quite difficult to discern whether an activity note should belong in one grouping or another.

Now that we had a better idea of what problems our users were facing, we moved onto solution idea generation. During this stage, we researched a variety of existing services and then each generated twenty design ideas. Here, we gained the insight that nearly all existing solutions either do not or barely address the five discoveries gleaned in the contextual interview phase. This insight shaped our design by guiding us in creating a unique solution. The challenge here was to create a design that not only improved upon all of the competing services, but also avoided bloat. We overcame this challenge by simplifying or grouping some functionalities, such as the event editing screen or the resume viewer on the attendee profile.

Next, we created low fidelity (paper) and mid fidelity (Balsamiq) prototypes. In testing both of these prototypes and running a heuristic evaluation, we gained insights into element placement, element size, general usability, and how well our prototypes helped the target use achieve his or her tasks. For example, in this stage we learned that our users wanted to complete their profiles during the sign up process. Thus, one challenge that we faced in this stage was making our onboarding process feel welcoming and quick, so as not to discourage the user from using our application. We ultimately overcame this challenge by compartmentalizing the questions into three simple, yet distinct screens. We also increased the size of the tap targets to

make selection less forceful and gave the user a constant visualization of their progress through the onboarding process.

Finally, we used Sketch and InVision to create a high fidelity prototype. Once we had our initial prototype running, we conducted four user tests. These user tests revealed more of what we found in running the heuristic evaluation on the mid fidelity prototype, but in much greater detail. Users critiqued element placement, positioning, and organization and we implemented all of their suggestions, often combining multiple suggestions from multiple user tests to overhaul interaction flows.

One especially important insight gleaned during this stage was that users wanted the event creation process to be up front and easily accessible. Thus, we redesigned and repositioned the event creation button to display more prominently. Another very important insight was that users wanted to quickly find and manage the events they created. Thus, we reorganized the events screen to include a section for a user's events. We didn't run into too many challenges here other than finding ways to integrate user suggestions while not degrading the existing user experience. Often, user requests are easy to verbalize, but difficult to implement. We overcame this by thinking about what the user was *really* asking for and making the solution as simple as possible, so as to not drastically change the user interface. Other than that, many of the changes here were "finishing touches" on our project.