

LineUp

Project Overview

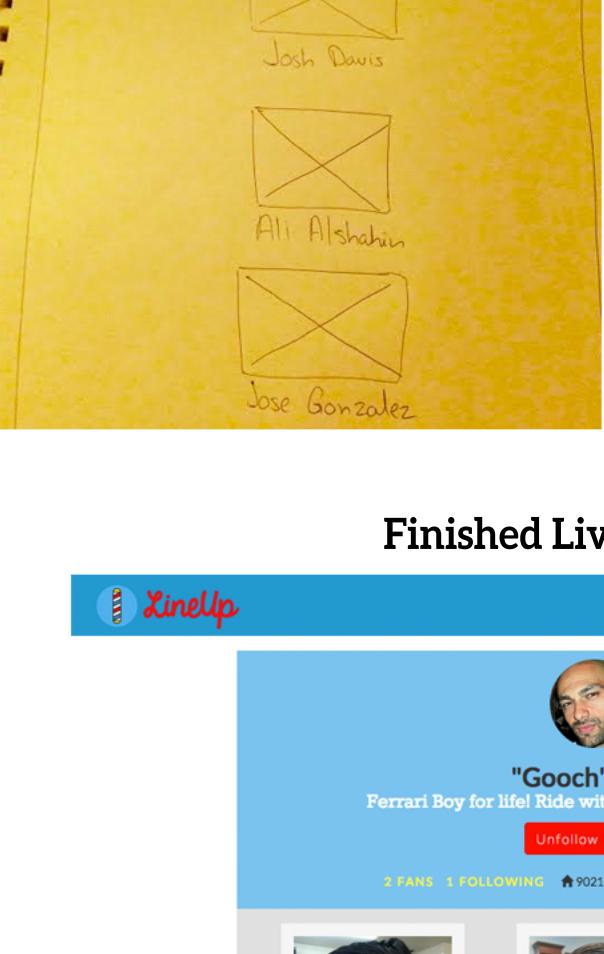
During college I gave haircuts to family and friends to earn extra money. Usually friends called me to cut their hair at their homes after they got out of work or when they wanted to save the \$20-\$25 they would regularly spend at barbershops. Each month I earned between \$100-\$150 of extra money doing work that I loved. The idea for LineUp came after seeing the difficulty my clients had trying to find a barber they trusted, while also realizing that the barbers who taught me the craft were losing their businesses due to overhead costs and a lack of finding new customers. LineUp is currently a web app I built in Rails that allows users to find barbers by zipcode. The wireframes you'll see below depict the process I went through in order to make the app a reality. You'll also be able to see some screenshots of the final design, but I'm always reiterating.

Recognized Opportunities

I realized a few opportunities with developing an app to find barbers. Booth rental fees can range between \$400- \$700 per month. New barbers may also face difficulty gaining new clients by with coworkers. Migrated to a new city? Good luck experimenting with barbershops until you find the right one. Although my original objective was to make an Uber for barbers, I narrowed my scope down to creating a platform where hair stylists could showcase their work and customers could find them by zipcode. Nowadays there's an Uber for everything so I wanted to create an app that was simple, yet innovative enough to help people. I also originally wanted to create a Yelp like system with rating barbers, but realized that great haircuts are subjective.

My Role

UI and UX Design - Front End Development - Back End Development

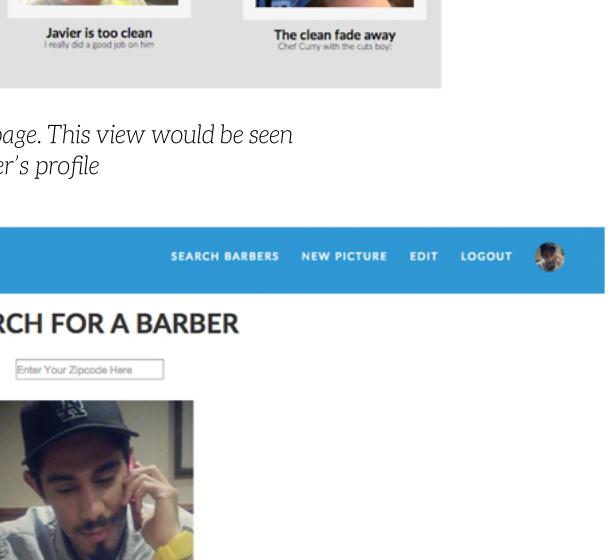


This was the original wireframe for the barber's profile page. My design inspiration came from Pinterest. You'd have a profile picture, description, price range and portfolio section where a barber could showcase his work.

The problem:

I didn't think this was the most efficient design that would integrate with mobile devices. The distribution of pictures would be confusing since I wanted each picture to take 80 - 100% of the screen width on smaller devices.

I also didn't think it was feasible for me to code an elegant uneven distribution of uploaded user pictures in rails with my given front-end skills at the time.



The solution:

I realized that the point of me doing this project was not to build something with a complex design. Learning the backend side of Rails was hard enough for me!

I knew that creating an even distribution of pictures was possible with my skill set. Especially while using Twitter Bootstrap. I decided to emulate Dribble's user profile layout.

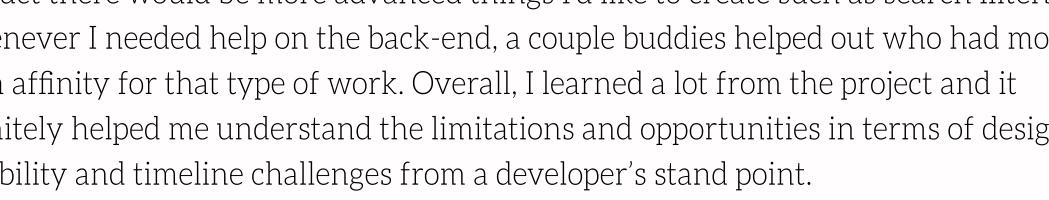
You have a profile picture at the top, the user's information below and a follow button directly above the info. There would also need to be some type of pagination at the bottom of the page in case a barber had multiple pages in his portfolio.

The most important feature of the app was to be able to search for barbers by zipcode or name. How this would work? I had no idea when I began the project...

Would the page be blank without barbers until you typed your zipcode in the search bar? Or would the page be populated with registered barbers as a listing where you'd have to search through multiple pages of barbers?

I decided to keep it simple. Have a populated page, if a person types in a zipcode, only barbers registered in that particular zipcode would appear. I figured I could do this using an Ajax request. Not the most elegant design, but UNTIL THIS APP GETS ENOUGH USERS, ITS STAYING THIS WAY. I was learning Rails baby!!!

Finished Live Product



This is the upper portion of a barber's profile page. This view would be seen if a customer or barber were looking at a barber's profile



This is the search page populated with a couple registered barbers on the site. If 90210 were typed in the search bar, only Gooch would appear!!!

Design Challenges

There were many challenges I faced with this project day after day. One of the bigger issues was to create the back end logic for the app's social abilities. Having two different types of users - Barbers & Customers attributed to having to create complex logic for each of the pages a user can view. Understanding my limitations in terms of more advanced front-end design or complex back-end logic allowed me to create something that worked, but that I could also be proud of. If the app were to be managed as a product there would be more advanced things I'd like to create such as search filters. Whenever I needed help on the back-end, a couple buddies helped out who had more of an affinity for that type of work. Overall, I learned a lot from the project and it definitely helped me understand the limitations and opportunities in terms of design feasibility and timeline challenges from a developer's stand point.