# At a Glance

* Role: UX Designer
* Product: App for iOS & Android
* Client: Barkly
* Deliverables: Updated user flows for dog owners and walkers; wireframes for redesigned app
* Duration: September 2016 - present

# Overview

Barkly is a service that allows customers to arrange on-demand or pre-scheduled walks for their dogs. In order to provide convenient and consistent care for its customers and their dogs, Barkly hires only the best walkers and provides them with extensive training and background checks to ensure quality.

Barkly manages its business from both the customer side and the walker side through an app for iOS and Android. I worked closely with Barkly’s CTO to redesign user flows for both customer and walker apps, and to wireframe concepts for a new UI.

# Challenges

Barkly is a trustworthy service with a dedicated user base and high rate of repeat usage. Now that its services are expanding to new cities, however, the company is redesigning the app to more widely appeal to first-time users and more clearly communicate the trustworthiness of its services.

Additionally, making the walker app easier to use means that Barkly’s walkers can walk dogs and submit reports to customers with fewer hurdles. A facelift for the app also means that new walker onboarding will be easier in their expanding markets.

# Approach

Barkly’s app needs to be used both by its customers—people booking walks for their dogs—as well as its walkers. The product’s extensive feature list allows for easy booking and walking, but the sheer amount of information needed on both sides can make the app intimidating for both sets of users. I therefore spent a lot of time getting to know Barkly’s customers, walkers, and goals for the service, including the feature priorities for all involved parties.

## Customer Research

On the customer side, I spoke to a number of dog owners to understand what would be needed to convince them to utilize an app-based walking service. I don’t own a dog myself but understand that many people consider their pets to be a part of their family; therefore, understanding what would make a pet owner comfortable enough to trust a walker is an important first step to attracting users.

Barkly had collected feedback from many of its regular users, who expressed that certain actions within the app were not intuitive and that the amount of information needed for the process to run smoothly could be daunting at the start. I also spoke to dog owners who had not before used the app. From this, I learned what other apps they were using (if any) and what they liked about them, what features were necessary for them to consider using the app, and their first impressions of the product. To this end, I also researched major competitors to examine their design and key features.

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It was important to me to speak to dog owners who both have and have not used the app before. App users were able to tell me what about the product added to or detracted from its goal of building user trust as well as what features they needed or wanted to see. This set of users was overall happy with the Barkly experience, but expressed that certain features were not intuitive and that the information collection process could be simpler. Pet owners who hadn’t used the app were able to tell me what services they were using, the features they needed to consider the app, and whether or not the app was reaching its goals of

I spent a lot of time getting to know Barkly’s customers, walkers, and goals for the service. On the customer side, I first became acquainted with the current app. I explored the flow, the features, and the company’s goal for the product’s next iteration.

The GIF Maker really has two audiences—the brands (Offerpop’s customers) and the consumers—and designing a working product meant designing a product for both of these different user segments.

To cater to the brands’ needs, I first researched the existing market. I looked into marketing campaigns to determine not only the different ways in which brands seek user-generated content, but also what information brands tend to collect through these campaigns and how that information is collected. I realized that the campaigns are as much about collecting user-generated content as they are about collecting user information, like emails and social media handles. Viewing these campaigns also helped me determine what elements of the GIF Maker would need to be customizable so that a brand could truly take advantage of it. Finally, I determined that the GIF Maker had to be an internet-based experience to be more easily customized and deployed by the brands.

For the customer side, I used existing GIF makers for both web and native mobile apps and drew on this research to compile a list of necessary features for my campaign. Due to time constraints, I mocked up a few different versions of the GIF Maker on paper and used the final two to perform my user testing. During these testing rounds, I presented each user with stills of the two drawn apps and had them walk through the flow, narrating the journey and asking questions along the way. At the end, I asked the users which design they preferred overall. Below are two sketches of the product showcasing two different ways to add and arrange images.

[SKETCHES FOR FINAL AND SEMI-FINAL GIF MAKERS]

Overwhelmingly, users were more comfortable with the layout that is reminiscent of Instagram—an application that the brands’ consumers are likely familiar with—and so this is the model I continued building.

I first organized the product’s information architecture, keeping in mind the needs of both the consumer—creating a product that is worthy of sharing on social media—and the brands—collecting user data and user-generated content.

[APP FLOW IMAGE]

From here, I was able to easily flesh out the remaining app pages on pen and paper. A sampling of these sketches is below.

[The main image is where the user’s GIF would show up during its construction. I’ve purposely disabled auto-play on the image to be considerate of consumers’ data usage. To add an image, the user clicks the plus button on the upper right-hand corner of the image view screen below the GIF Maker. Once images have been added, the user can long-tap the images to rearrange them and to call up delete buttons for each image.]

[SKETCH IMAGES FOR OTHER PAGES]

Offerpop asked for only a high-fidelity mockup of the main GIF Maker home screen, which you can see below. The image on the left is when viewed from the top of the page, and the image on the right is the view when scrolled down to the bottom of the page. For the demonstration, I included the Zappos branding to illustrate how the mockup would look when active during a campaign.

[GIF MAKER FINAL VIEWS]

I also created a mockup for how a campaign may look on a brand’s website. Below is the layout for the brand’s collected and moderated user-generated content. I decided to also disable GIF auto play on this page, again to keep consumers’ data usage in mind. The “Make a GIF” button is the call to action that will open the GIF Maker.

# Results