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Dr. Adam Steele, DePaul University

# Response to RFP for Mobile Application Ideation and Design

By UXcellence



**UXcellence**

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## Introduction

Thank you for considering UXcellence for the development of your application. We pride ourselves on delivering quality designs for all application types and are eager to provide the same for you.

### Why Us?

UXcellence is a premier Design and Development team dedicated to helping you ship high quality applications and services. Our team consists of highly trained and accomplished UX researchers, designers, and engineers who are both data-driven and customer-focused. This means that from product ideation to final prototype completion we use data collected from intense user research and feedback to generate a final product that you will love because it is what your customers love. Our proven design process has been tested and refined to guarantee optimum results that has been trusted for over 12 years by a number of technology companies such as yourselves. Our clients choose us because we are empathetic to their needs, we are efficient in our process, and we are effective with our results. By choosing UXcellence, you can expect excellence.

In this report, we will outline our plan for designing both the user experience and interface of your application. We will begin by summarizing the project details, highlighting the major features and requirements. Next, we will provide an overview of our process with a timeline of project milestones. We will also discuss the tools we will use and how we intend to keep you informed of our progress throughout the process. We will conclude with a summary of the above.

## Project Brief

Based on your call we understand that you are interested in tapping into the pet care market. We see this as a great opportunity as the pet care market is expected to reach over \$350billion by 2027 (Roddy, 2022). As you'll see later in our process overview, we worked through our rigorous ideation process in order to formulate a fun and creative idea that is sure to propel you into the market.

An article by Nicole Cosgrove of Hepper reports that according to Psychology Today, dog walks are "rarely straightforward" and will include encounters with other people and dogs (2022). While this can be exciting for friendly dogs who enjoy making new friends, not all dogs look forward to these encounters. Strange dogs can make them fearful and

aggressive, especially while they are leashed and feel restricted to protect themselves or their owner. In turn, this can make Fido's daily walk a stressful and daunting part of his owner's day. While training can curb some of this behavior, it can cost a significant amount of time and often money. Plus, it can still be helpful to avoid other dogs altogether while Fido learns to build up his "new dog tolerance".

Thus, we propose to you a dog walking aid application called Neighborhood Woof. It is a crowdsourcing application whose key features include:

- A multi-channel application made available in full on mobile phones and in part on smart watches with the ability to expand to other channels in the future
- A walking route creator and navigation system with live updates regarding current dogs out on a walk within a certain radius
- Dog profiles to set pertinent details such as breed, temperament, sex, age, whether it has been spayed/neutered, etc
- Alerts when other dogs are within a certain radius from you (e.g. 1-2 blocks away).
- Alerts when specific dogs that your dog has known issues or are friends with is about to begin their walk on or near your usual route

With the features outlined above, Neighborhood Woof will help owners be more prepared by giving them the information to better plan before, be aware during, and reflect after their regular walks.

This application has much room for expansion – and monetization – as well. Though they are out of the scope of this project some later features may include

- Alerts when local dog parks have high foot traffic so users know the best time to bring their dog to play
- Walk reminders and suggestions to remind users to walk their dog at certain times of day and suggest the best time to walk based on local activity
- Walk logs to log your daily walk metrics (time, distance, etc)
- Missing dog bulletin

These features can be added later once the proof of concept is approved as "pro" features. Users can pay for a subscription in order to gain access to these or any other features that are added down the line.

## Process Overview

### Five Stages of Design

Our design process is based on Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design's proven five step stages of design thinking (Dam, 2022):

1. Empathize
2. Define
3. Ideate
4. Prototype
5. Test

Below is a detailed description of each stage and how we apply our methods to them.

#### **Empathize**

Because we are so confident in our results, our process begins before we are hired with research. Our user researchers spend time in both the lab and the field observing, interviewing, and analyzing people to learn they think, how that corresponds to their actions and uncover the gaps inbetween.

This step is paramount to our design process. Without it, we're only designing applications for ourselves rather than for our users. It is essential that our own assumptions and biases of what the user wants are put to the side and that we engage them directly (Dam, 2022).

#### **Define**

With this data, we begin to clearly define the user's needs and requirements. To aid us in the process we develop user personas and scenarios to help us fully get into the minds of our ideal user. This archetype is determined by our research analysis and the target audience for the application. It will include information such as their name, age, sex, career, income, personality, preferred devices and more as the information is relevant to the project.

Once we've determined our user, we conceive a scenario that motivates their need for our application. This scenario establishes the context in which the application would be used including what the user might be doing, the device they may have in their possession, the emotions they may be experiencing and so on (Babich, 2019).

#### **Ideate**

In this phase, we let our creativity and problem-solving abilities shine by brainstorming potential solutions to the issues defined in the previous phase. The goal is not to force an idea on to requirements but to allow the requirements to inspire an idea. The personas help us view the problems from different perspectives and attack it from various angles. We use a number of brainstorming techniques including design charrettes, mood board creation,

and even coming up with the worst possible idea which though comical helps break and tension and awkwardness to get things flowing.

Overtime, we refine our ideas enough to develop a storyboard with our user persona. This narrative consists of sketched scenes of the user interacting with our solution starting just before the interaction point to just after. Constantly having the user in mind, this storyboard allows us to fit the proposed solution into their world and see how it would work (or not) from their point of view.

We also take time at this stage to identify the information architecture of the solution. We answer questions such as *what terms and concepts will we use, how will they be organized, how will the user navigate through the system*, using techniques such as card sorting and tree jack testing with our users. These questions are important to answer before prototyping as they will inform how certain pages are designed.

## Prototype

Prototyping is at the core of what we do, and we consider it to be the second most important part of our design process behind empathizing. It is one of the main ways in which we communicate with both our clients and our users. They provide a physical representation of the story we are trying to tell. When made accessible to everyone and of the appropriate fidelity, they also foster the right level of communication among audiences befitting of the current stage in the process (Erickson 13-14).

Throughout the process, we will offer three different stages of prototypes: low fidelity (lo-fi), medium fidelity (mid-fi) and high fidelity (hi-fi). The fidelity of the prototype is determined by how far along in the process we are, starting with lo-fi and working up to hi-fi. We do this to ensure that we have the necessary amount of buy-in by both you the client and the users before investing too many resources on a higher detailed prototype that may be failure. With this approach we can fail fast and iterate often before moving forward to the next phase.

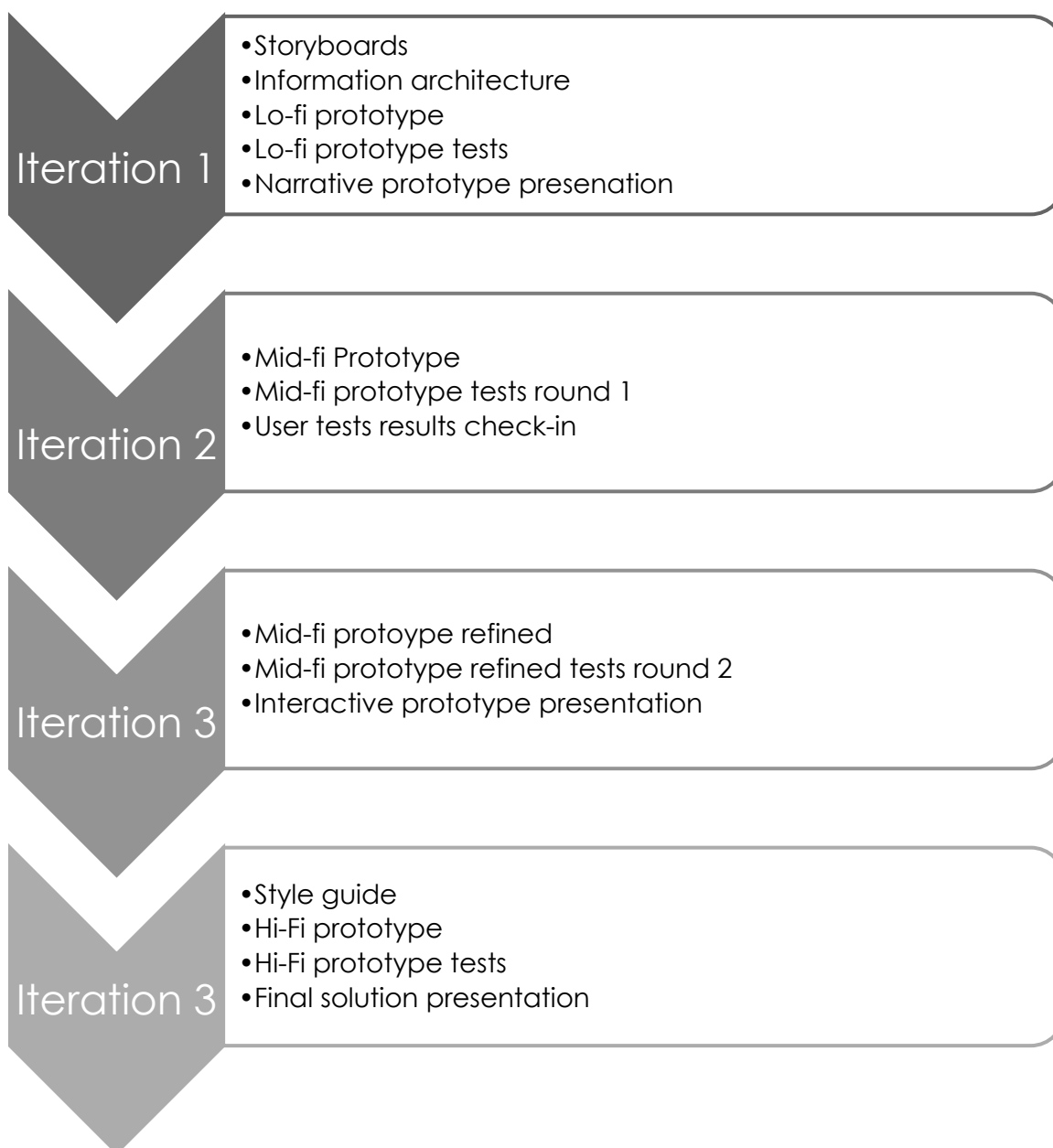
## Test

Finally, we finish our process with testing. At this stage we present our prototypes to the user and have them perform predefined tasks. We observe their interactions and ask questions similar to the empathy stage, to understand where our solution is succeeding and where there is room for improvement.

When we have our results, we present them to you and with approval we start the process over again increasing in detail refinement, and level of fidelity until finishing with a high-fidelity prototype that is ready for development. Our goal is twofold: (1) To create a prototype with enough detail that any software engineering team has all that they need for immediate implementation. (2) To develop a story around the prototype that effectively communicates not just the problem and proposed solution, but the impact the problem has on the user's lives and the greater impact the solution can have in turn. By achieving both goals we will be sure to leave a lasting impression on anyone who is invested or interacts with our experiences.

## Proposed Timeline

Below you will find our proposed timeline for each iteration and expected deliverables. For optimum results, we typically recommend that each iteration lasts at least two weeks, but we are willing to work within your schedule.



## Tools & Methods

At UXcellence we use tools and services that are industry standard for every part of our process. Every designer has their preferences, but the following is a list of tools that we frequently use for our projects. If you don't see your preferred method or tool in the list please reach out to us and we'll be happy to discuss adding them to our toolkit.

Phase	Tools/Methods
<b>Research</b>	Survey monkey Google Forms Microsoft Forms Optimal.com Miro.com Uxmetrics.com Video recording Pen and notetaking
<b>Brainstorming/Ideation</b>	Pen and paper Miro.com Visio Lucidspark
<b>Prototyping</b>	Axure Figma Sketches (pen and paper) Balsamiq Illustrator
<b>Communication/Presentation/Documentation</b>	Microsoft Office Suite Google Suite



## Summary

Once again thank you for considering UXcellence for the design of your mobile application. We hope that you accept our idea of Neighborhood Woof as the mobile and smart watch application to make your debut into the digital pet market. Our five-stage design process and industry tools and methods as outlined above are sure to bring your vision to life and provide your users with the premier experience they deserve. As previously stated with UXcellence, you can expect excellence and we look forward to working with you.

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