

Hilton Hackathon

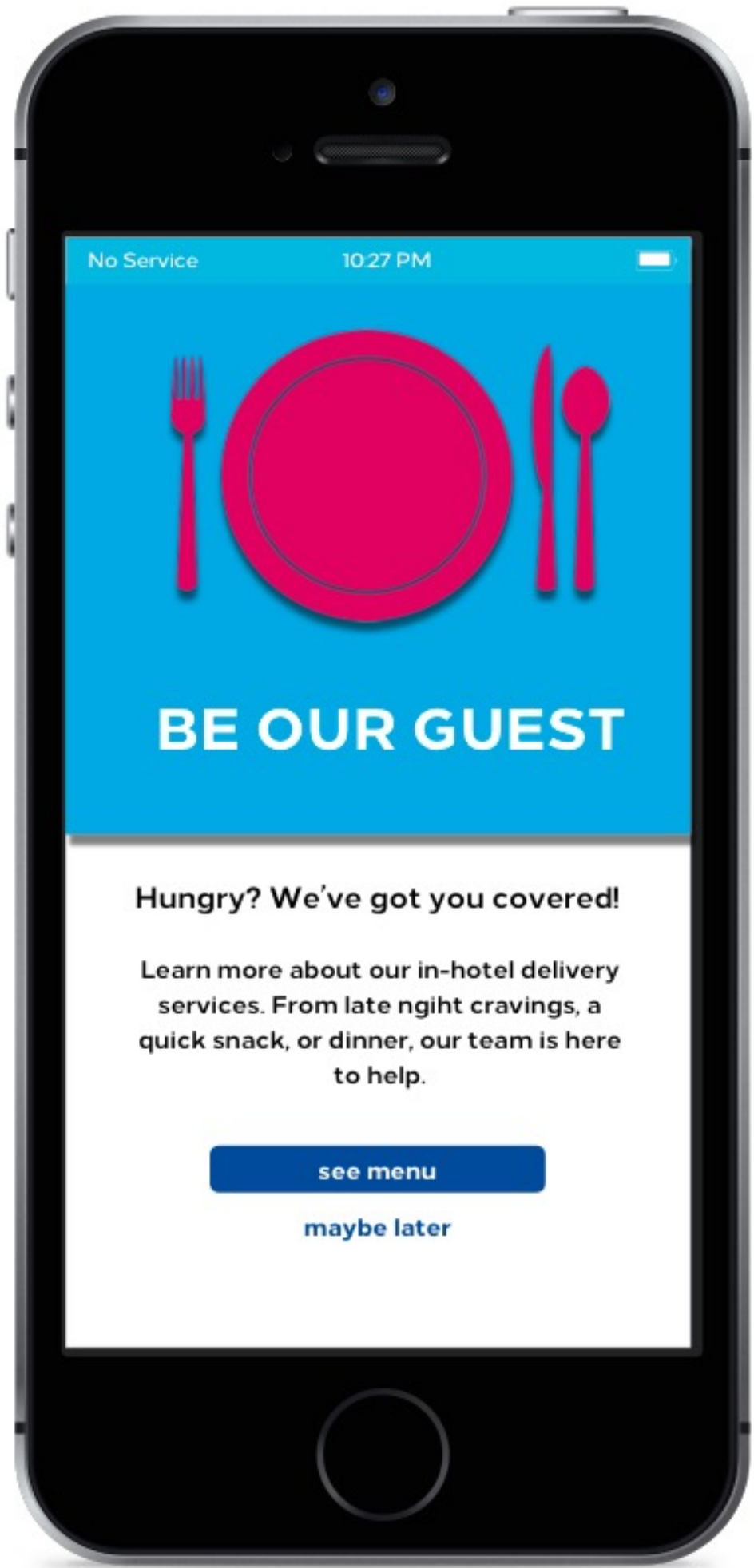
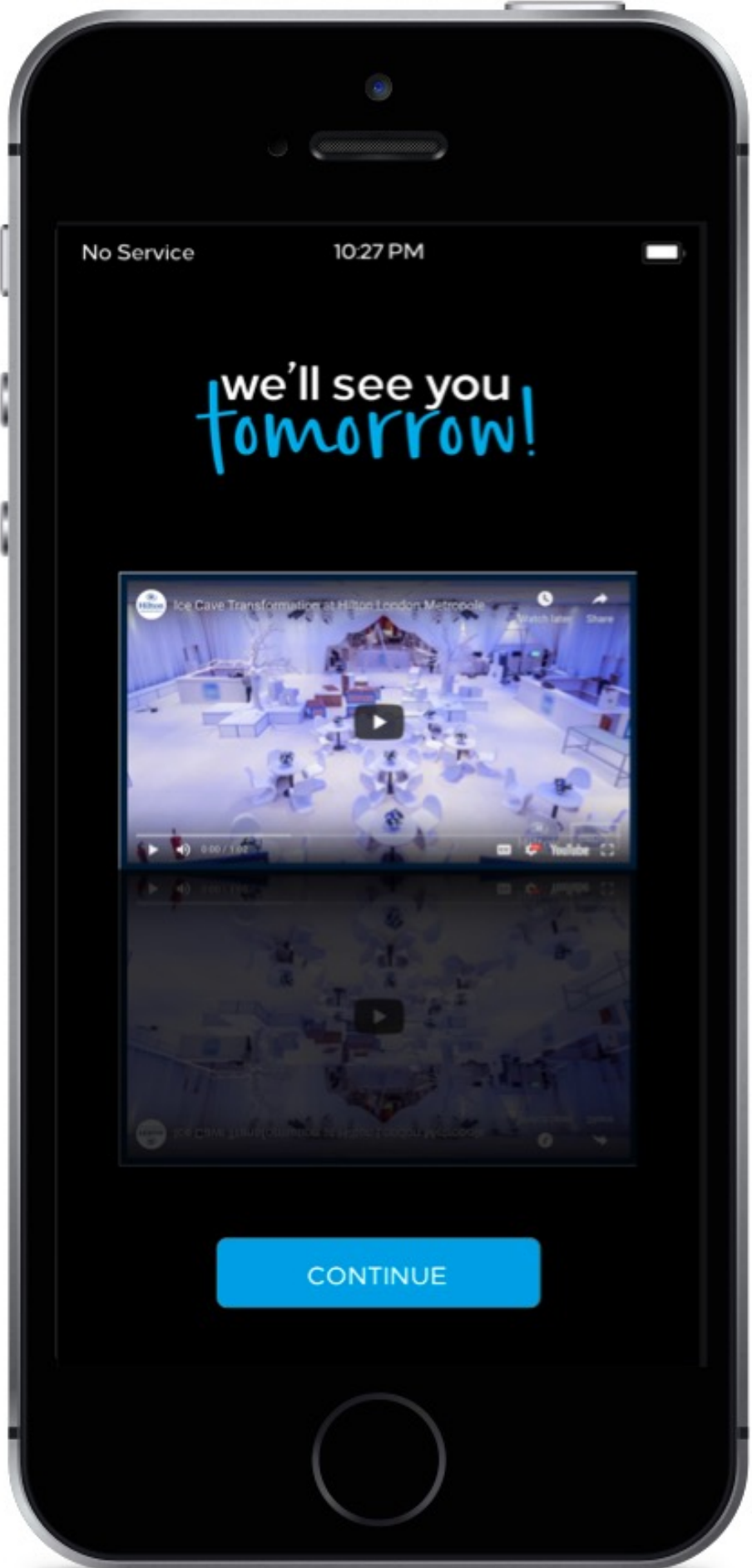
Role: UX Designer & Strategist
Tools: Sketch, User personas, Prototyping, Pitching to stakeholders, Adobe Analytics
Project Overview: Hilton has many different types of guests that travel to their hotels, each with unique needs. Using existing data collected by Hilton, identify gaps in the guest experience with the Hilton app and explore possible solutions to those gaps.

Solution Overview

Hilton's current application has a number of features that help guests during their experience booking and organizing their stays at a Hilton. Our solutions are all small changes to the existing application: a welcome video, a room-status checker (i.e. is my room ready

Welcome Video

It's inexpensive, easy to implement and simple. It helps provide a friendly welcome and quick tour for users using the digital check-in.

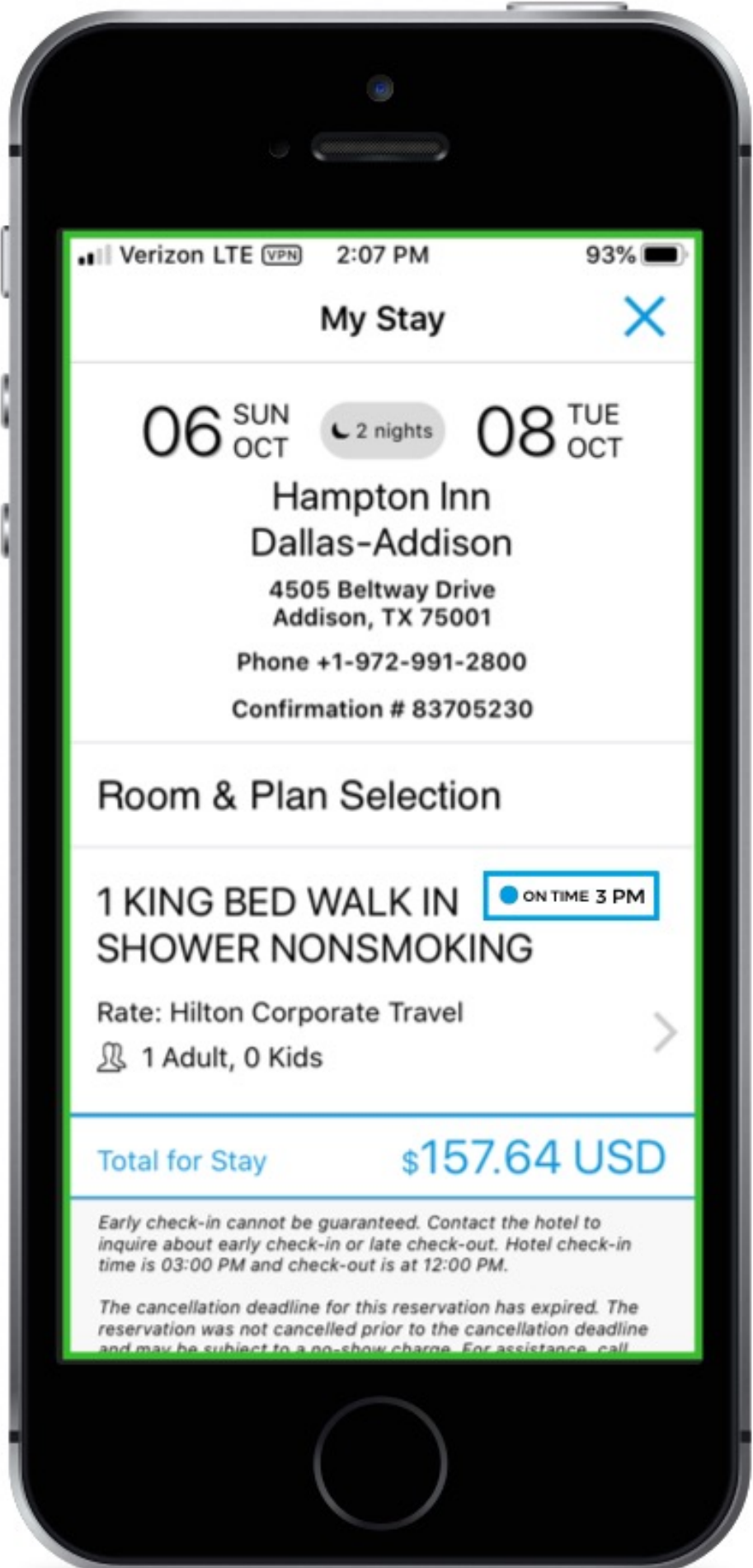


On-App Room Service

It's available in hotels, but some people think it's more expensive than alternatives like DoorDash (it's not). Adding it on-app provides convenience and ability to order before arrival.

Room Status Checker

Users won't need to call the hotel or wait in the lobby if their room isn't ready on time. They'll also know if their room is ready for early-check-in.



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Process



Background Research

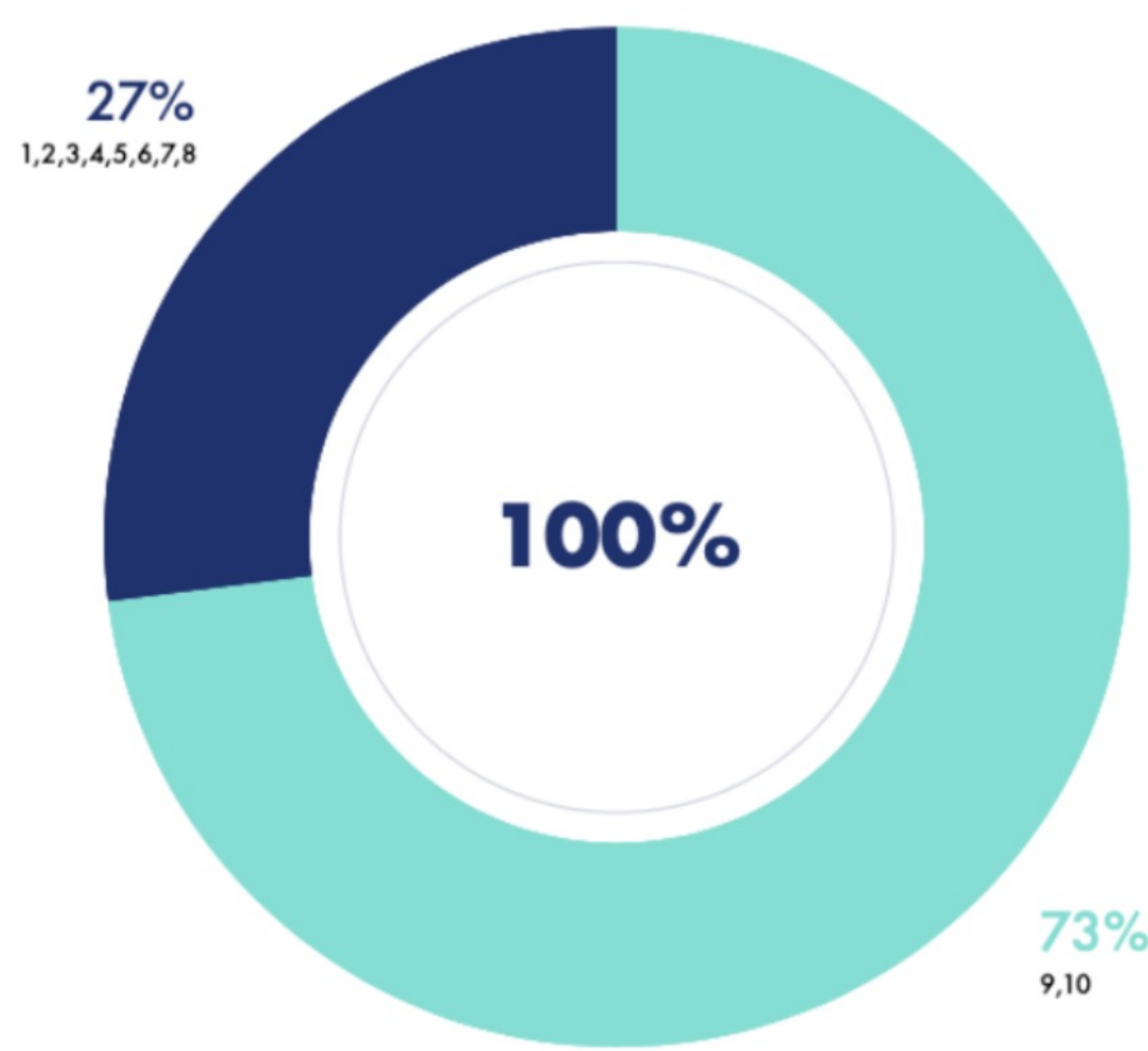
Gathering Data

To start, our team did some background research on hotel revenue growth area, as well as compiling existing Hilton surveys. Hilton's data team has files and files of different information relating to customer experience; we used their adobe analytics/workbench to explore some areas for growth:

In-room dining: DoorDash sales increased by 900% to hotel guests specifically in 4 years (Conde Nast Traveler), but only 12% of Hilton guests reported using in-room dining.

Room cleanliness & efficiency of arrival process: both rated less than an 8/10.

Guest Satisfaction Ratings



User Research

We needed to talk to actual people:

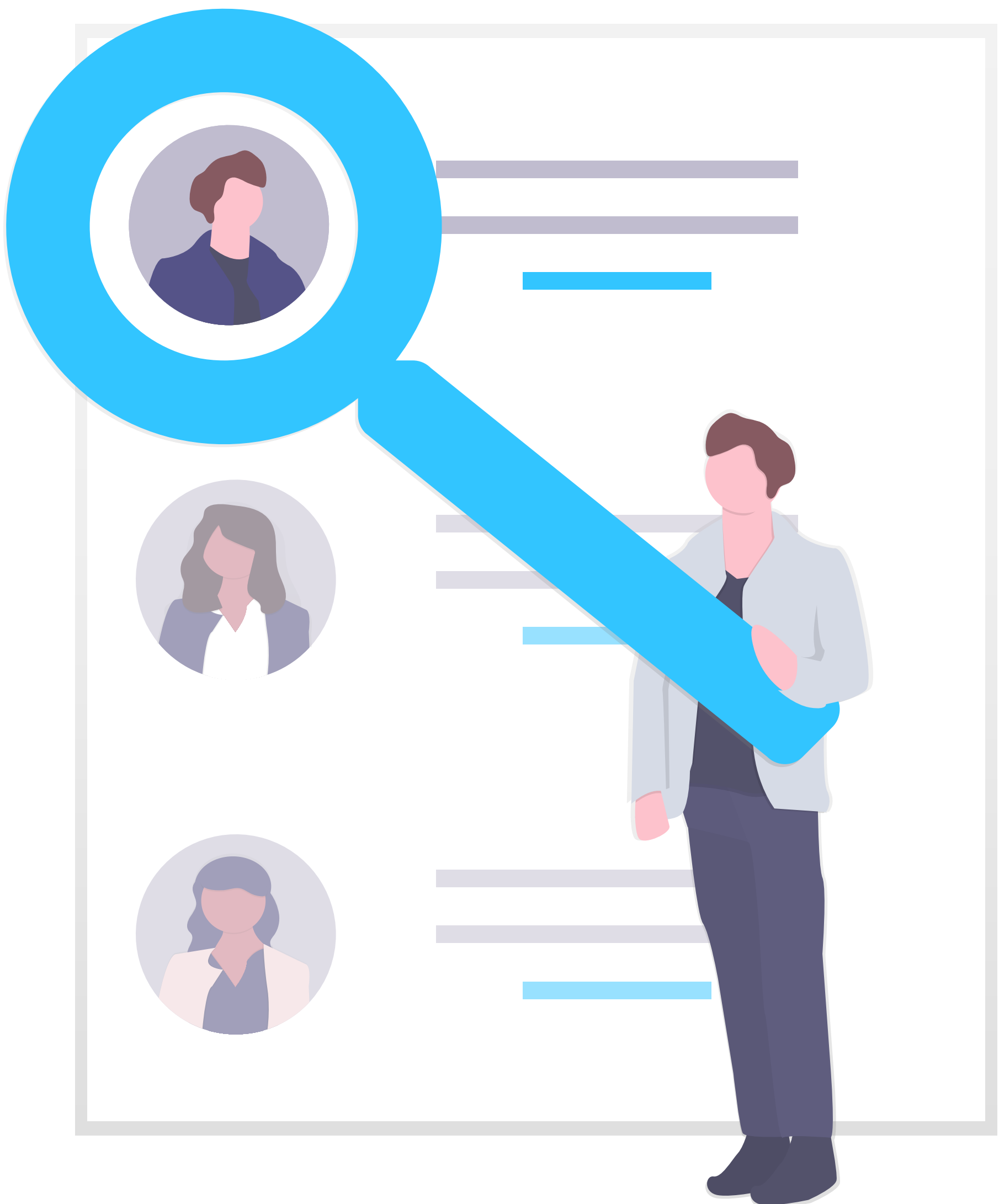
The project was designed to be data-driven; however, we were lacking actual user voices. I suggested that multiple choice surveys lacked personal stories. My team agreed, and with a short time-frame, our team had to improvise. We interviewed travelers we knew who we could reach in a short timeframe.

Our interviewees included the following:

Friends, family, neighbors, peers, and coworkers - anyone we could contact in a couple of hours.

Our stakeholders work with Hilton and hold a bias, but still experience the same issues in travel.

Hilton hotel guest online testimonies.



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Interviews

We asked our interviewees what kinds of travel experiences they had with Hilton, what their best travel experiences were, and their worst. We discussed stresses in work travel, family travel, and solo travel, and we asked people to explain their travel routine. A good number of the interviews were conducted via phone.

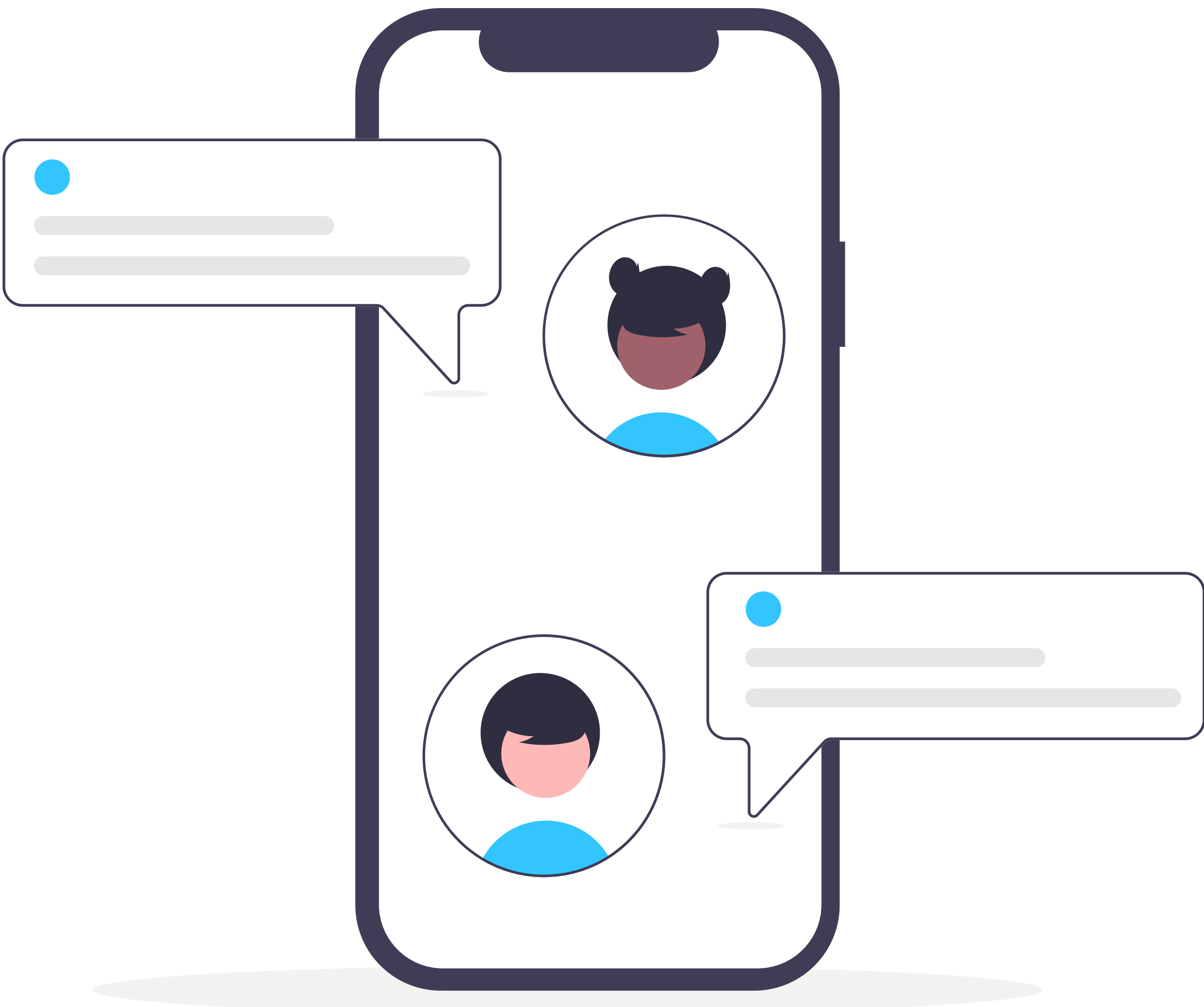
Findings:

Digital check-in can be nice, but guests miss a personal touch from staff.

Travel is stressful for most people.

Some people like using Uber Eats or DoorDash-like services on busy trips.


Early check-in is preferred, but people don't like arriving and finding they can't check in.



Persona

I used our interviews to design our persona while the rest of our team worked on data points for our presentation. Because of the short timeframe (1.5 days), our team focused solely on the persona below.

USER PERSONA



Jane Doe

36, Business Woman

PASSIONATE

INDEPENDENT

PUNCTUAL

WITTY

I love flying, but I hate the logistics. My business trips are usually busy, so when something is unexpected, it can get stressful

ABOUT

Jane flies at least once a month. She's been a Hilton Honors member for 7 years, and she depends on the consistency of the hotels. Jane loves traveling, but she likes things to be planned and organized. If something unexpected happens, Jane gets stressed and tired. She notices her meetings don't go as well when this happens.

Since she's been promoted, Jane's assistant, Joe, has been booking her stays at Hilton for her. Jane just checks in on-app. She likes the ease of automated check-in, but misses the personal touch she had before on-phone check-in.

GOALS

To be promoted next Fall, and to be choosen for her firm's next high-stakes meeting

To have more efficient travel, so she has more time to prepare for meetings and explore the cities she visits

FRUSTRATIONS

Feel less stressed at work and home. Traveling has been taking a big toll on Jane lately, with her daughter just entering 5th grade

She misses the personal touch at hotels that she used to have, so traveling can feel lonely sometimes

FAQs about our persona:

Why one persona?

Because there wasn't much time to develop more. We made an executive decision that it's better to do one thing well than scramble to cover all bases. If we had more time, we'd have loved to give her a few persona friends.

Why this particular persona?

Many of the Hilton Honors app users are business travelers (and about 80% of travel is business travel).

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Design Iteration

First Ideas

We realized that our solution needed to be...

- ✓ easy-to-implement
- ✓ has highest user impact
- ✓ lowest possible company cost
- ✓ Addresses all steps of a guest's experience (apartment to hotel, back to apartment).

Using our persona and interviews, we considered adding some of following additions to the existing application:

Ability to check in 24 hrs, an automatized check-in process that affords guests a less stressful check-in process, a welcome video to give guests a personal touch to their stay, room upgrade lists, room service on-app, and having staggered check-in times.

Better Ideas

We talked to stakeholders who work with Hilton. We discussed different user stories and possible solutions.

Our team decided to focus on the following:

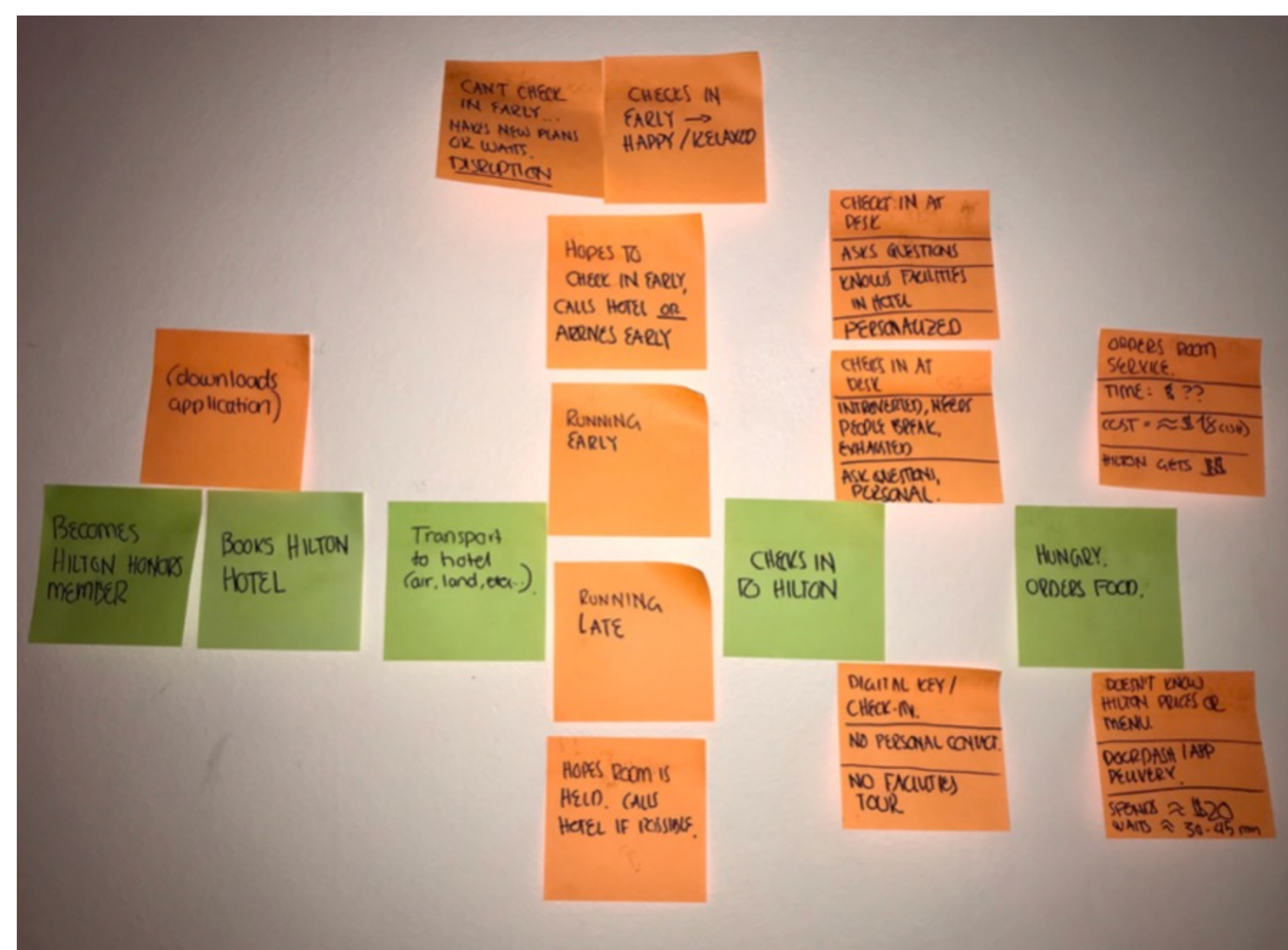
1. Welcome Video
2. Room-Status Checker (users won't need to call the hotel or wait in the lobby if their room isn't ready on time. They'll also know if their room is ready for early-check-in).
3. On-App Room Service



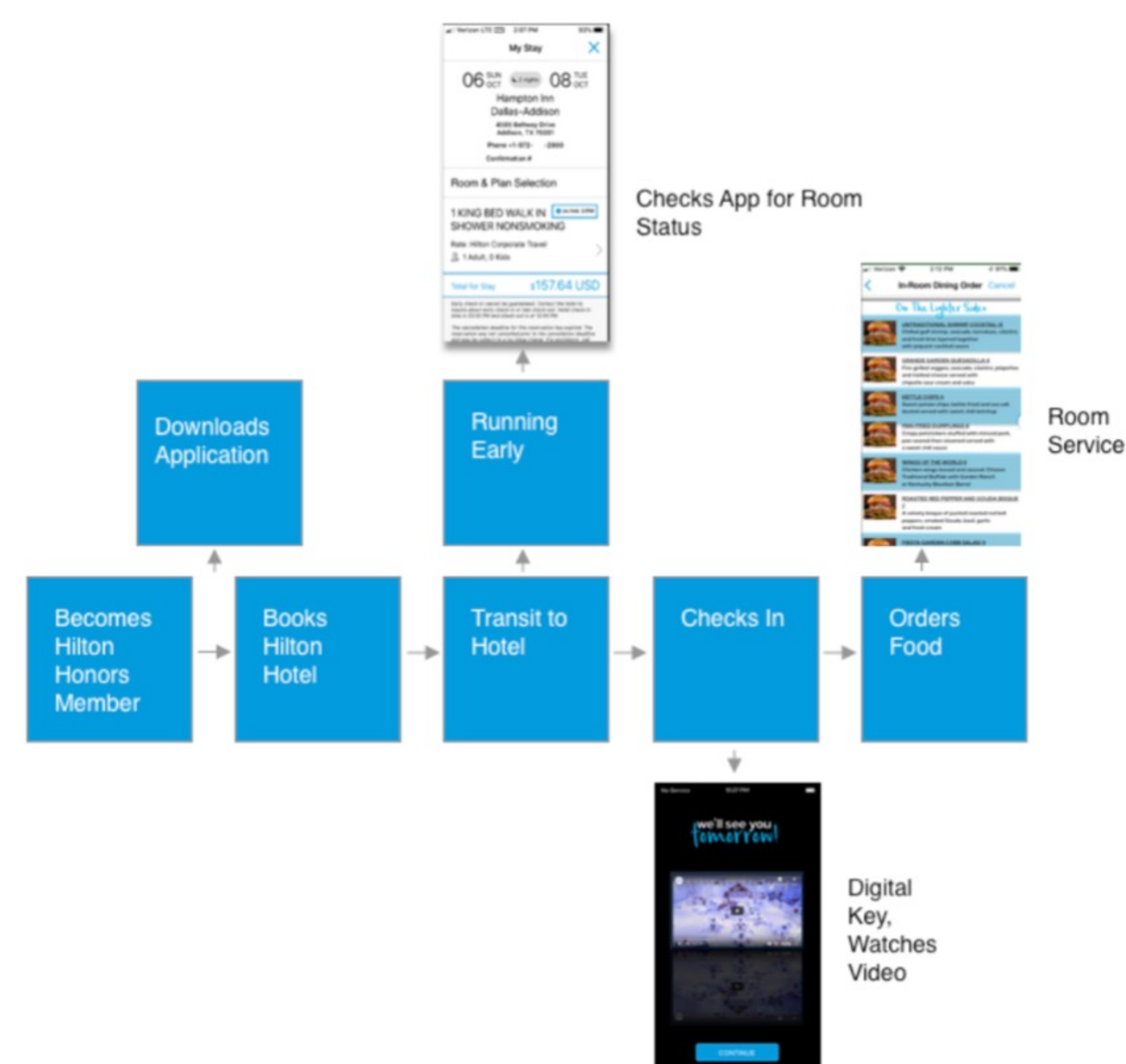
User Journey (kind of)

I created a quick semi user journey with the app before our additions , and one with the experience for users after. Users now have the option to view their room's updated check-in time, a site-specific welcome video, and to order room service on-app.

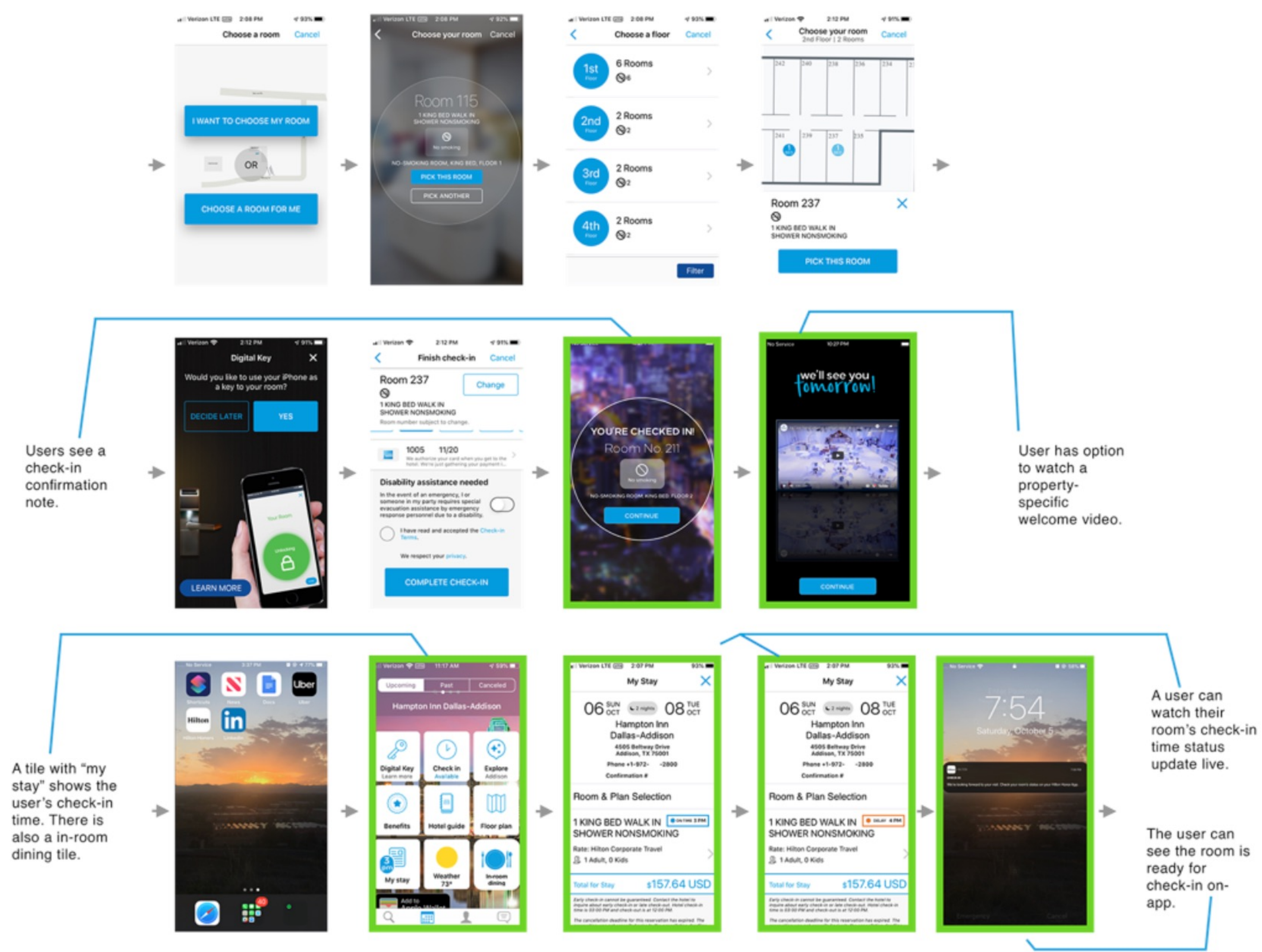
Before solutions are implemented



After solutions are implemented



The ideal path that a user would take (with our new features, highlighted with neon green) can be seen below:



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Reflection

What I'd do differently

From a UX perspective, I was struggling with the fact that the only user perspectives I had to work with existed on spreadsheets and online review sites.

If we had more time, I would have liked to set up needs-finding and solutions interviews to test and refine our solutions. I know we cut some corners on the process (especially given the time constraints and working alone on the UX), so I'd like a chance to redesign the project with a more thoughtful approach.

What went well

We had a lot of "big ideas," but soon realized small, easy-to-implement changes could have the largest impact on users and also be bottom-line-friendly. We did a good job of constantly reframing the problem based on new knowledge. We identified problems and used our solutions to solve those problems/gaps.

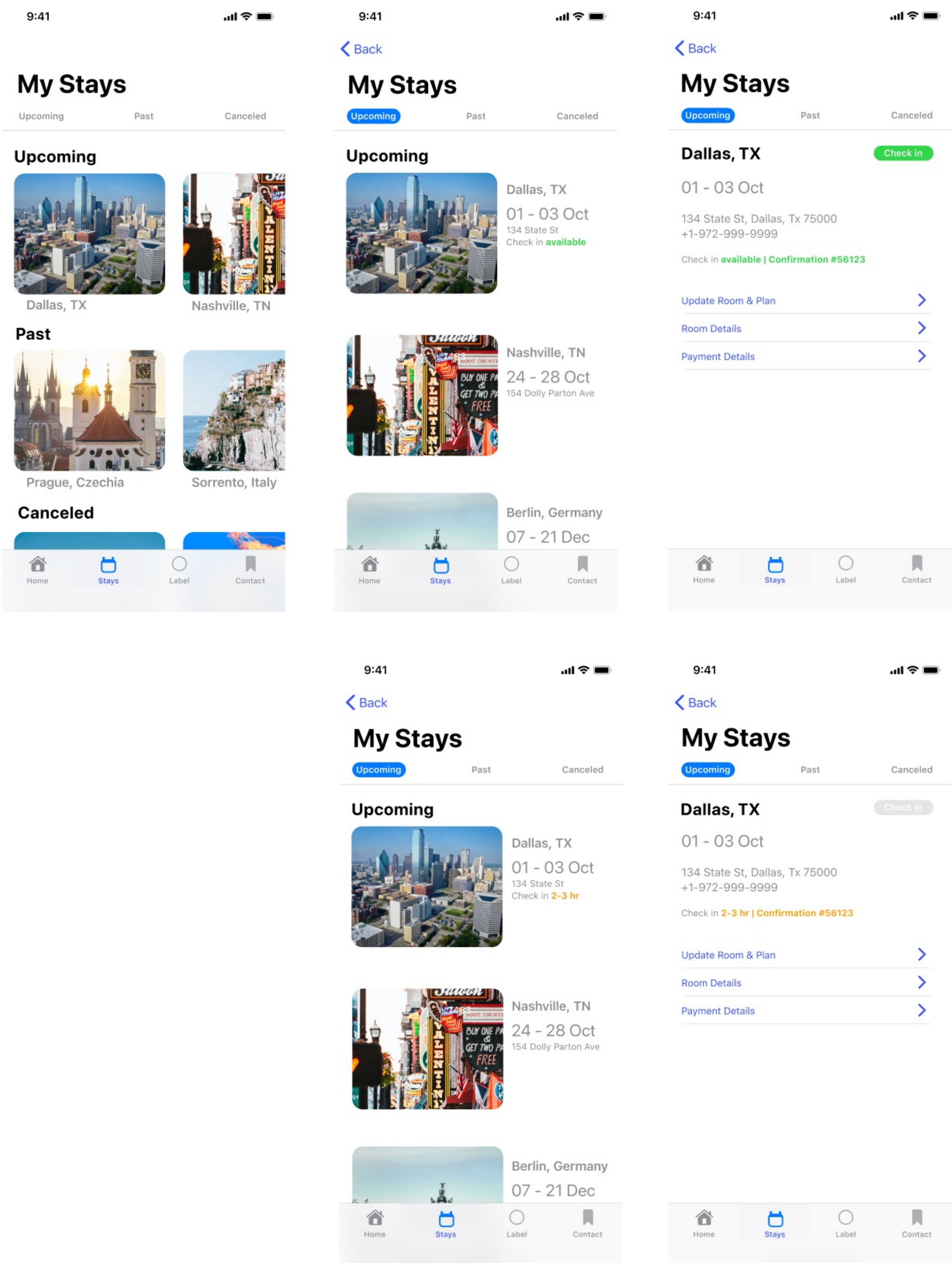
Our team did a great job communicating our ideas to stakeholders too - we ended up winning the hackathon!

I was proud of myself for sticking up for UX and trusting myself (and glad our team supported my decisions).



What I'm doing now...

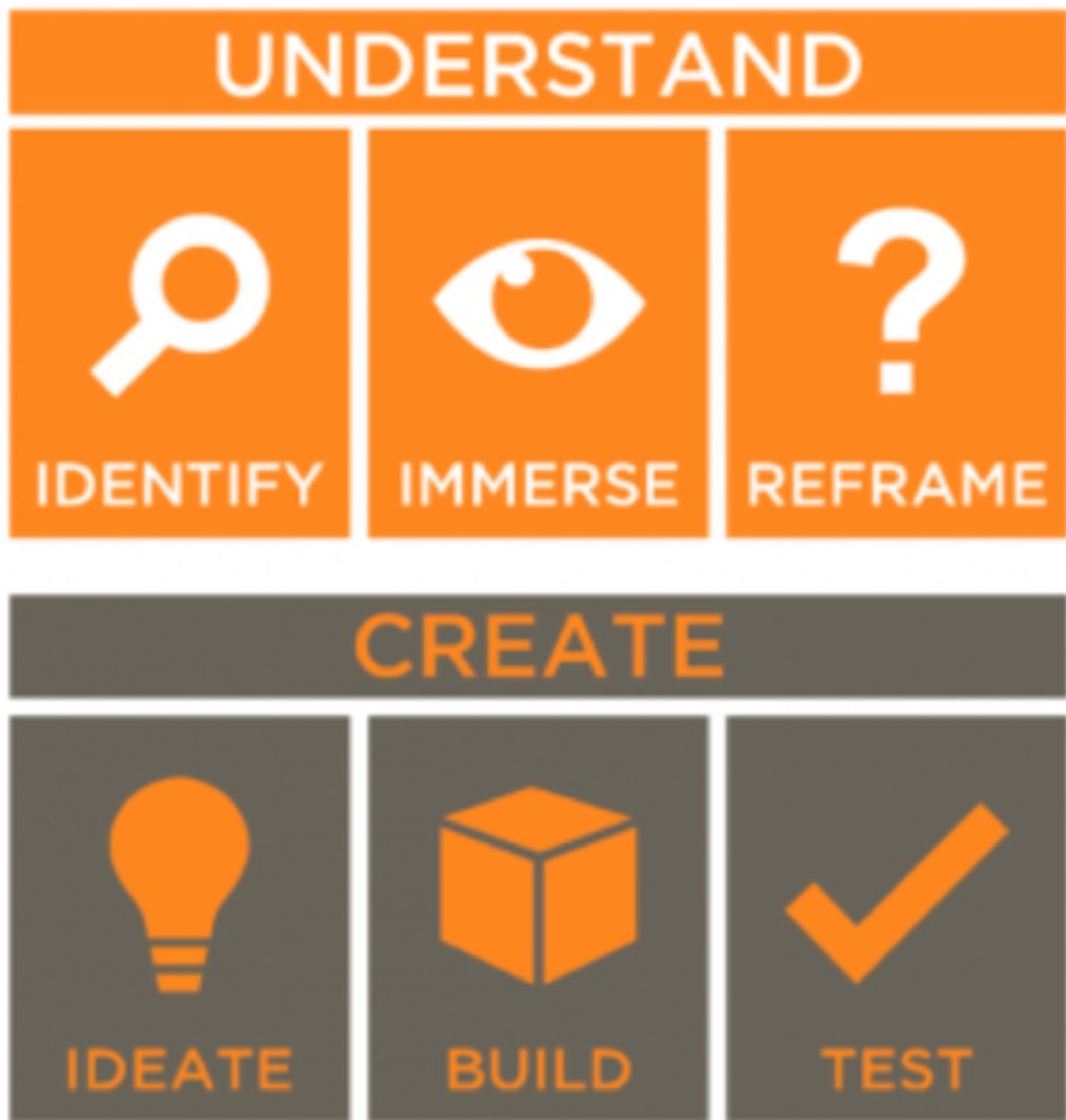
I'm working on redesigning the screens from the project. I wasn't entirely happy with the look of the application and wanted to try my hand at some visual design (applying usability principles I'm learning this year in my classes).



Design for America

Role: UX Researcher & Designer
Tools: Quantitative and Qualitative research methods, card sorting, preliminary research, prototyping, wire-framing, user journeys, persona-building
Project Overview: research the issue of food insecurity on Michigan State University’s campus, develop solutions to the problem and then present our findings and final prototype to other teams pursuing the same challenge.

Process

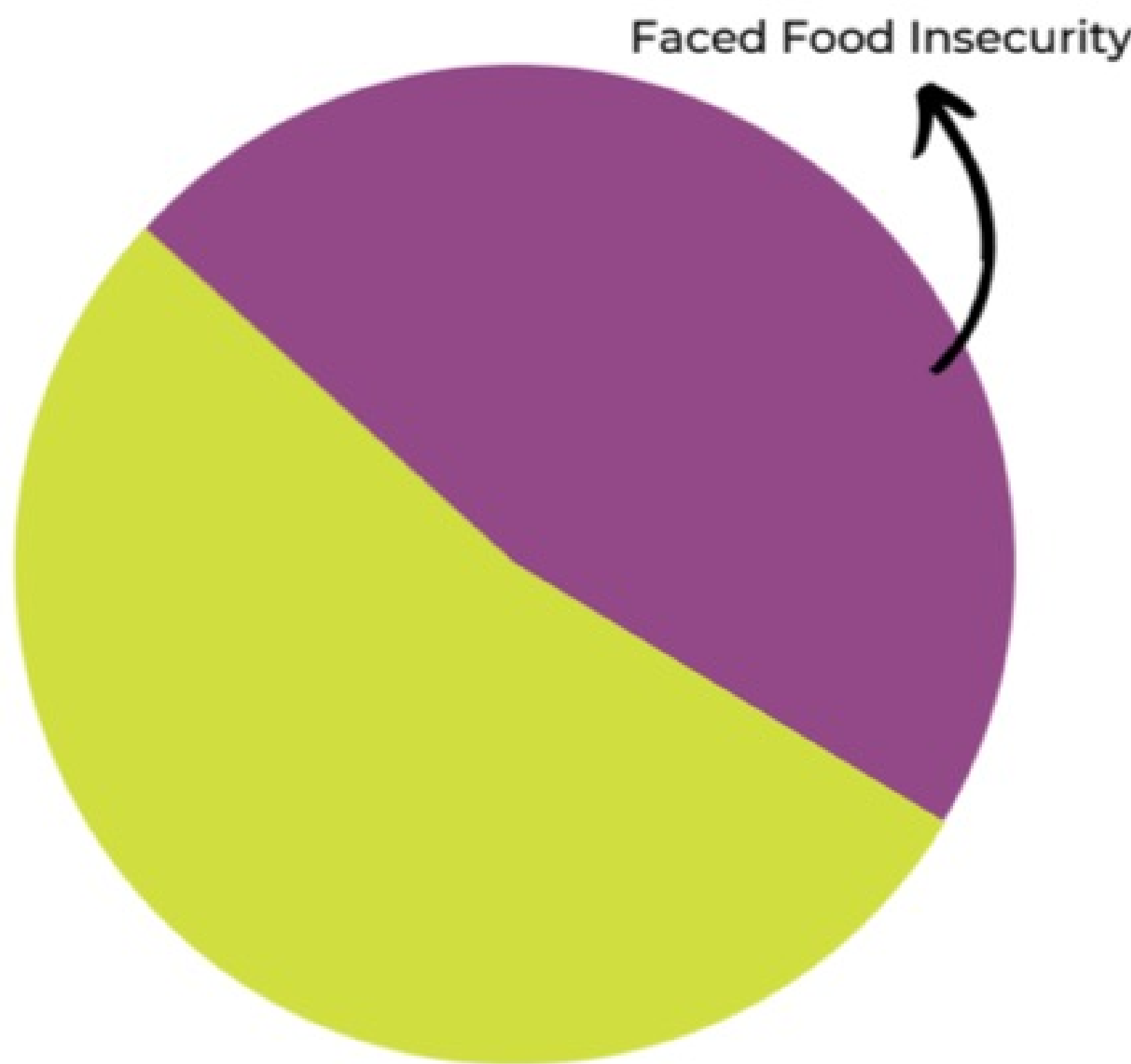


Background Research

The team previously studying food insecurity presented us with their findings, which acted as a foundation for our team's project. Our team connected with local food banks and campus partners, and compiled information from national surveys and reports on national food insecurity.

FOOD INSECURITY STATS

48% of respondents to a survey by the College and University Food Bank Alliance reported being food insecure in the past 30 days.



Design for America

User Interviews

We attended one of the weeknight MSU food banks. Here, we found many people willing to share their experiences with food at college.

Many students at the food bank were open about their relationship to food. Some openly identified as food insecure, and others didn't identify as food insecure.

Findings

From the interviews and surveys collected, we defined three problem areas:

- 1) Stigma
- 2) Logistics/Access
- 3) Access to Resources

“I didn’t face food insecurity until I got here.”

“I would say more so... food-uncomfortable... at times.”

“As if I could afford cereal.”

“We’ve been trying to rebrand ourselves because we want to combat the stigma of coming to the Food Bank”

Key Insight #1: Stigma

- Evidence showing a stigma surrounding food insecurity which is not always acknowledged
- help the users to utilize the food bank better if we find a way to reduce it.
- Cultural differences: In Germany it is easier to access food than in the US, Egypt has a less stigmatized attitude toward charity
- Social Security vs. SNAP
- Word of mouth
- Do I deserve to go to the food bank?
- Releasing the stigma would help more community members feel better about accessing resources

Key Insight #2: Logistics

- Planning ahead for meals and physically getting to food difficult for some
- Cars are incredibly valuable to people and tend to make food situations much easier
- Cooking skills valuable for stretching inexpensive foods
- Helping people organize meals would make their lives easier and help them get to a more stable situation.

Key Insight #3: Resources

- The MSU food bank is opened every Wednesday
- We could provide a better way to communicate to participants of other resources
- Having enough money to pay for food
- Knowledge about resources can lessen the impact of lower wages or financial aid, any increase of funds can be useful
- The MSU couple interviewed were able to better organize meal plans weeks in advance because of other resources they knew about
- First things to go when saving usually fun activities, then food

Pain Points

Pain Points (attributed quotes & observations)

- “Even if a person's logistics are as perfect as they can be, the problem of having enough money to pay for the food can still be a problem”--MSU Couple
- Most learned about the Food Bank through word of mouth
- The stigma towards food insecurity discourages people from coming to the food bank
- Mentioning the food bank can bring anger, making it harder to communicate by word of mouth

Design for America

Personas

Using our interviews and key findings, we crafted three personas:

MEET KEVIN

- Senior, undergraduate student
- Has been living off campus for 3 years
- Has trouble overcoming the stigma of going to a food bank

"I would say more so food uncomfortable...sometimes."



MEET SARAH

- Sophomore, undergraduate student
- Living off campus for the first time
- Finds it difficult to navigate the resources about living off campus

*"The resources aren't made super clear...
Most of the resources I know are word of mouth."*



MEET ANTONIO

- International student
- The cost of food is a barrier
- Has trouble navigating the bus system to get to the grocery store

"When the food budget is high, I can get two bell peppers."



Design for America

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