



UX Case Study

Time Request Off Application

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About: PetSmart, the company I want to work for

PetSmart is a retail chain specializing in pet products and services. They have numerous locations across the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. PetSmart caters to the diverse needs of pet owners. The company offers a wide range of products, including pet food, toys, bedding, grooming supplies, and accessories for various animals, such as dogs, cats, birds, fish, reptiles, and small mammals.

PetSmart is a well-known and reputable company in the pet industry, and it offers a great working environment for individuals interested in a career focused on pets.

Challenges: The outdated paper form

During my employment at PetSmart, I noticed that the traditional method of using paper forms to request time off and modify work availability was still in practice. This manual process proves to be time-consuming, especially when requesting multiple days off. However, there is an opportunity to promote environmental conservation by transitioning to digital alternatives. One potential solution is to develop an application that allows employees to conveniently submit their time off requests electronically, thereby reducing our reliance on paper forms.

Problems faced by employees at PetSmart

Accessibility: Accessing paper forms may present challenges for individuals with various circumstances. For instance, the paper forms are in the break room at my local PetSmart store, specifically the #1121 branch. This is quite a far walk from the entrance door. Consequently, this poses a problem for individuals with mobility limitations, those residing at a distance, or individuals with busy schedules.

Potential for Errors and Inaccuracies: The employer responsible for reviewing the paper form may struggle to decipher your handwriting, and the limited space provided may not accommodate your reason for requesting time off. Also, if the information on the paper is not submitted accurately, it could cause delays in the request process.

Tracking and Record-Keeping: Managing and tracking paper forms can pose difficulties regarding efficiency. As an employee, I lack visibility into the approval status of my submitted request and must rely on checking the schedule board or consulting my supervisor to determine if I am granted time off. Additionally, there was an instance when I handed my paper form to my manager for a requested time off but later discovered that my request was not honored.

Solution: Create a Time Request Application

In conclusion, while paper request forms have been a traditional method for submitting various requests at PetSmart, they come with several challenges. Transitioning to digital alternatives such as online forms or dedicated applications can address many drawbacks, offering increased accessibility, efficiency, accuracy, and streamlined record-keeping.

Responsibilities: UX Journey

UX Goals: Develop and design an application that enables PetSmart employees to access essential features effortlessly. This application should provide employees with a comprehensive view of their time request approvals, display the accumulated hours for various types of leave, and offer a convenient calendar view to manage their schedules effectively.

Roles:

UX Researcher & Designer - Kimberley Johnson

- Acknowledging the difficulties associated with manual paper-based leave request forms to develop a cutting-edge application designed exclusively for PetSmart employees.
- Creating a user-friendly platform that empowers individuals to submit their time-off requests effortlessly.
- By transitioning from a paper-based system to a modern digital solution, the primary objective is to streamline the leave request process, resulting in improved efficiency when managing employee schedules.

Tools:

- Figma
- Pencil & Paper

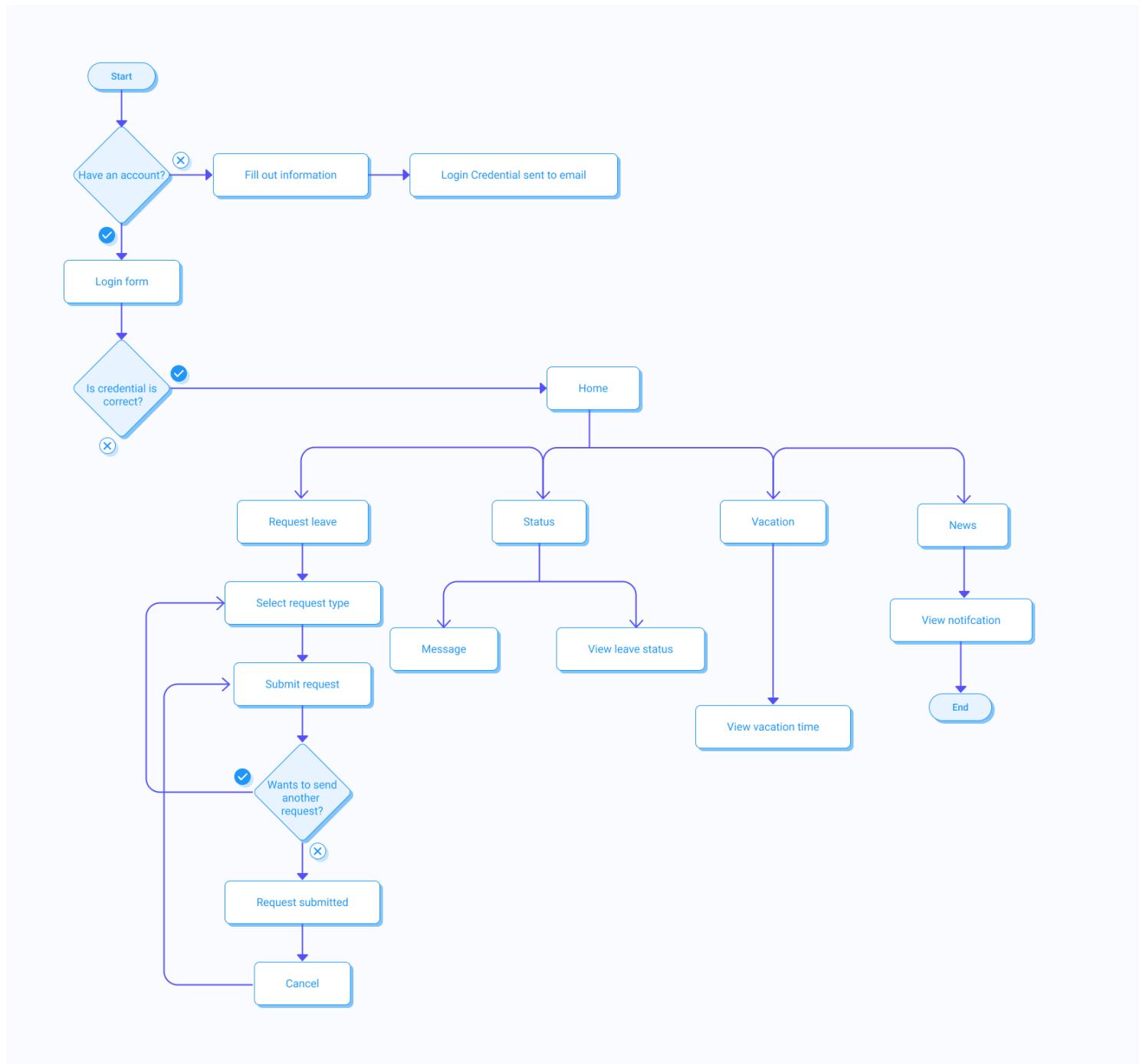
UX Research: PetSmart Interview Questions

1. What features would you like to see in a request off app that you can take leave or vacation from your employer?
2. Tell me your experience filling out a paper form that you were trying to take vacation or leave.
3. How often do you request off from your employer?
4. Would you prefer to see notifications about your approved time off on an electronic application like our Central Park app or wait to see when your schedule is on the board? Tell us why.
5. At times, PetSmart Retail has blackout dates not to request vacation. Tell me your thoughts about having this policy in order and how we can improve getting employees requesting off around this.
6. How often do you use your mobile device to use applications?
7. What are the advantages of using an electronic application to request leave?
8. What are the disadvantages of using an electronic application to request leave?
9. What information do employees need to provide when making a time request?
10. How far in advance do employees typically make time requests?

User Flow: The Steps of Creating the App.

1. On the loading screen, the user will be presented with a login screen asking them to sign in with their employee ID and password that the hiring manager created when they first got hired. If the user doesn't have an employee ID or password, they must create a new account and register. Once the user registers with their name, password, birthday, and social security #, they will be able to create an account, and an email will be sent out with details of their employee ID to login
2. If the user does have an account, they will be taken to the login screen. The user will enter their employee ID and password.
3. Once the user logs into the PetSmart Time Off Application, the user will see notifications about time request policies and other notifications. The user will also see a navigation menu on the bottom that will list from left to right (**Request, Status, Vacation, and News**).
4. The "Request" button empowers the user to submit a time-off request. Upon clicking it, they will access a monthly calendar alongside a "Request Type" button. A drop-down menu will appear upon selecting this button, enabling them to specify the type of leave, such as PTO, sick leave, unpaid leave, and more.
5. The "Status" button will display the user's leave status as either approved, pending, or denied. Users can choose the message button to contact their supervisor or human resources to inquire about their leave.
6. The "Vacation" button will show the user's accumulated hours for different types of leave
7. The news button will show notifications about the PetSmart company and if the user's leave has been approved.

User Flow: Flowchart Diagram



Persona A: Dylan, Pet Care Associate at PetSmart

Name: Dylan Baston

Occupation: Pet Care Associate at PetSmart

Demographic: 28 years old, lives in Houston, Texas. Single male with a pet dog and breaded dragon. He enjoys working in retail and traveling outside limits.

"I wish there was an application to check the vacation time I accumulated over the years."

Goals: To have an application that he can constantly check his accrued time off

Dylan's Story:

Dylan, who has dedicated three years to his employment at PetSmart, has accrued a substantial amount of paid time off, which conveniently carries over into the following year. Juggling both full-time work and school, Dylan finds himself overwhelmed and is eager to take a break from his demanding routine. He has set his sights on a much-deserved vacation in November. His destination is the beautiful city of Austin, Texas, where he plans to embark on a three-week camping adventure.

What Dylan Needs:

Dylan requires an online application that offers accessibility across his phone and computer. This application would serve as a centralized platform for Dylan to monitor his approval status for requested time off, determine the available hours he can utilize for his breaks, and keep track of the

accumulated hours throughout his employment tenure.

What challenges Dylan:

Dylan's penmanship may not be his strongest suit, and he often becomes restless when filling out paper forms. Furthermore, he is unsure how many hours he has accrued throughout his three-year tenure at PetSmart and must seek clarification from the management team.



Persona B - Dollie, Store Leader at PetSmart

Name: Dollie Root

Occupation: Store Leader at PetSmart

Demographic: 34 years old, lives in League City, Texas. Married with 2 kids, has 2 pets: a cat and a bird.

“There has to be a better way to expedite the process of submitted time off requests”

Goals: To have an online application that will streamline vacation leave

Dollie’s Story: With over 10 years of experience at PetSmart, Dollie has been instrumental in leading one of the highest-rated sales stores in Pearland, Texas. However, she often feels overwhelmed due to the manual paperwork involved in her company's outdated vacation request system, which hinders her ability to focus on other tasks. Dollie is seeking improved methods to help her be more organized.

What Dollie Needs:

Dollie requires an online system that allows her to conveniently review employee requests for time off across her devices. With this system, she can swiftly approve vacation time without inputting manual forms in their outdated system.

What challenges Dollie:

Dollie has encountered instances where employees submit their request-off forms in various locations within the office, leading to misplacement and the need for them to fill out paper forms again. Additionally, she faces challenges in promptly responding to employees seeking approval for their time off, as her other responsibilities often impede her ability to address their inquiries promptly.



Prototypes: High-Fidelity Mockups - Sign-In Process

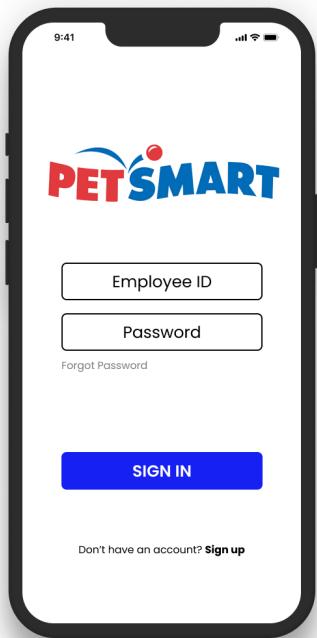


Figure A-1

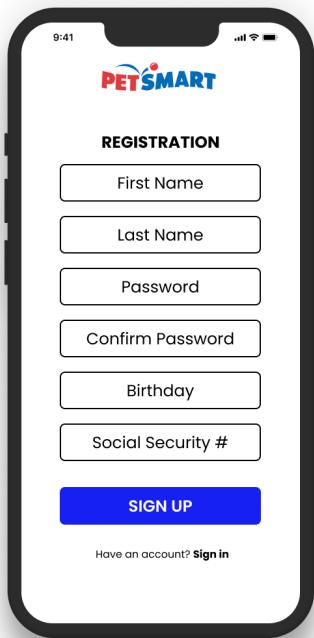


Figure A-2

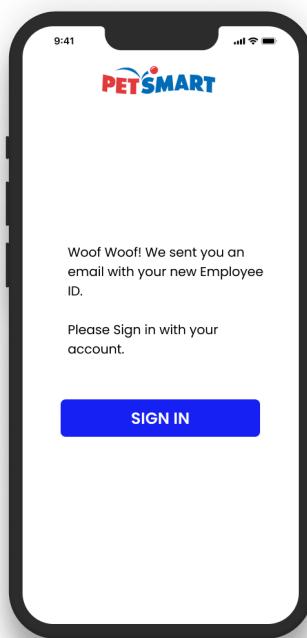


Figure A-3

(Figure A-1) When first employed, PetSmart assigns you an employee ID. In another software called Otka, the employee can create a password to sign in.

(Figure A-2) Since the Time Request Application is used on mobile and desktop devices, employees can register their accounts by filling out their first and last name, password, birthday, and social security.

(Figure A-3) Once the employee inputs their data, they will receive a notification alerting the employee that their Employee ID and temporary password will be sent to their PetSmart email. The employee can select the sign-in button to log into the application and sign in with their credentials.

View Interactive Prototype: [Select Here](#)

Prototypes: High-Fidelity Mockups - News & Requesting Type Off

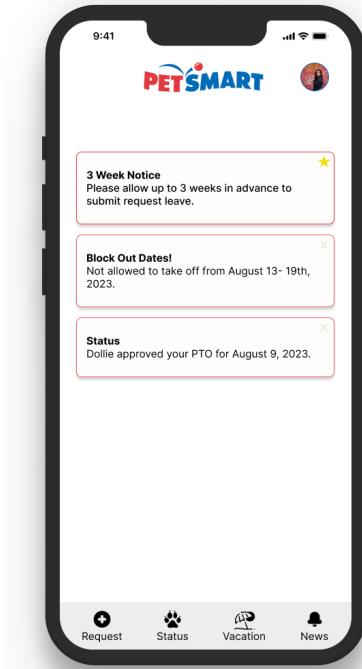


Figure B-4

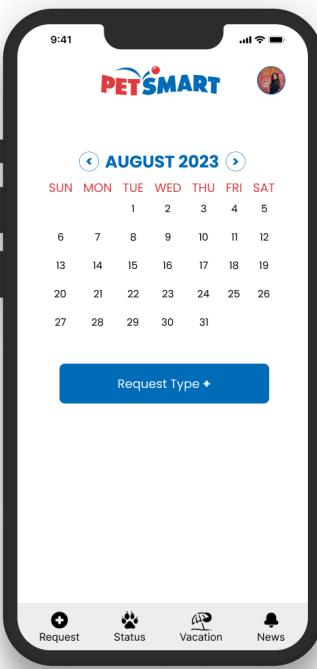


Figure B-5

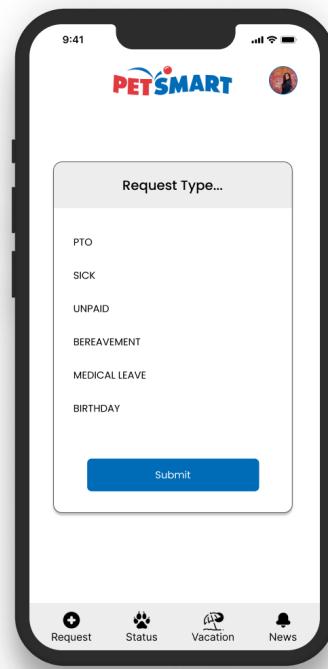


Figure B-6

(Figures B-4, B-5, and B-6) The employee will see a bottom navigation where they can select request to request their leave, check their leave status, view the vacation time they accumulated, and check their news notifications.

(Figure B-4) After the employee signs in to their account, they will be taken to the news screen. The employee will receive notifications of company updates and see if their leave status is approved or denied.

(Figure B-5) When the employee selects the request button from the navigation, they will see a monthly calendar view and a request type button. They can select what type of leave they want to take.

(Figure B-6) After selecting the request type button, the employee will see options for the type of leave they can select from. Once they choose an option, they will select the submit button.

View Interactive Prototype: [Select Here](#)

Prototypes: High-Fidelity Mockups - Selecting Dates and Time, and Request Submitted

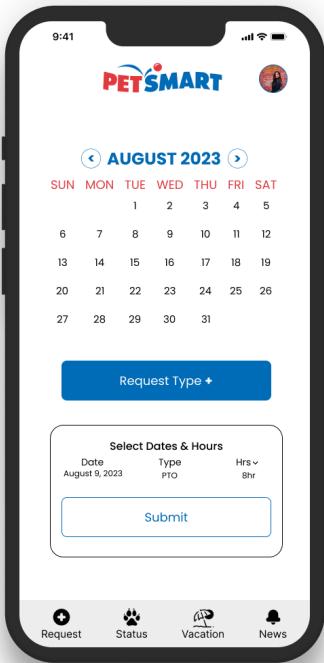


Figure C-7

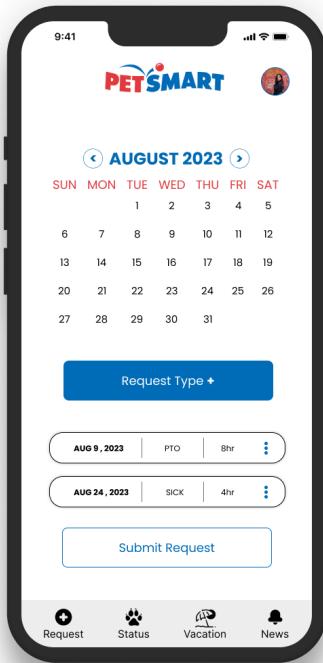


Figure C-8

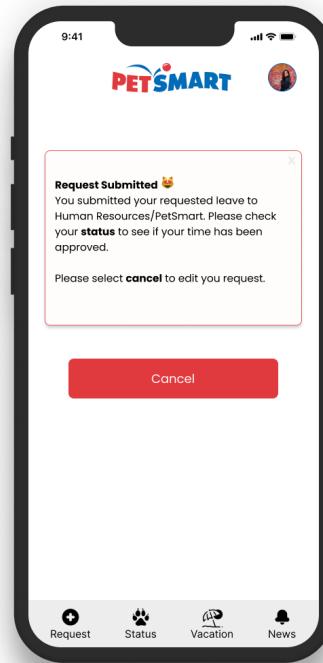


Figure C-9

Figure C-7 The employee will be able to select a date from the calendar that corresponds with the request type choice they selected. In this example, the employee selected August 9th and Paid Time Off. The employee can adjust the number of hours in the drop-down menu. In this example, the employee selected 8 hours. Once they are done, they will select the submit button.

Figure C-8 The employee will see a view of their requested leaves and can select the request type button to choose another leave. Once the employee is done, they will select the submit request button.

Figure C-9 The employee will be notified that their request has been submitted to Human Resources/PetSmart. They can select cancel if they want to edit their requested leave.

View Interactive Prototype: [Select Here](#)

Prototypes: High-Fidelity Mockups - Cancel Request and Status

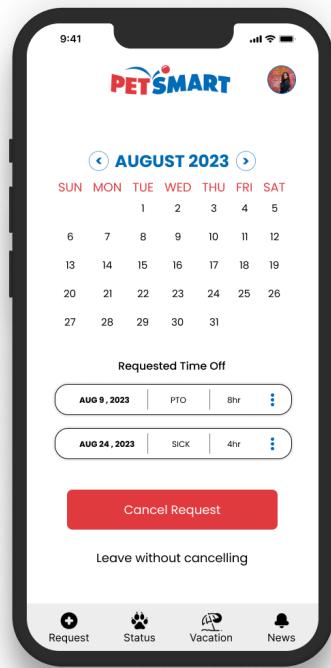


Figure D-10

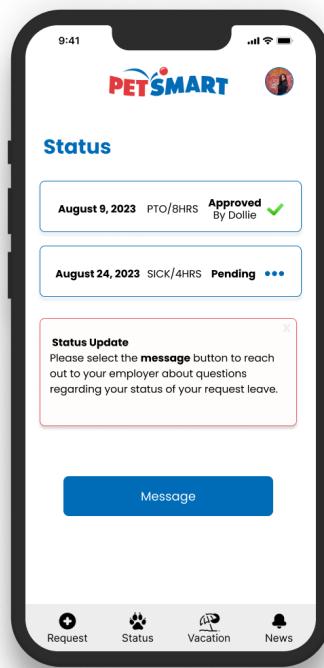


Figure D-11

(Figure D-10) If the employee selects the cancel button from **(Figure C-9)**, they will be able to see the selected dates, type of off, and hours they made and be able to cancel the request. Once they click the cancel request button, the employee will be returned to **(Figure C-8)**. Employees can select the vertical blue 3 dots to edit or delete their requested time off, and they can resubmit their request. The employee can also select the text "Leave without Cancelling", which will take them to the News section.

(Figure D-11) Once the user reads the notification from **(Figure C-9)** that their request for leave has been submitted, they can check their leave status by selecting the status button. In the examples, the employee requested August 9th as PTO, which their Store Leader, Dollie approved. However, their leave for August 24th is still pending. On the bottom, they will see a status update with a message button below to contact Human Resources/PetSmart to inquire about their time off.

View Interactive Prototype: [Select Here](#)

Prototypes: High-Fidelity Mockups - Cancel Request and Status

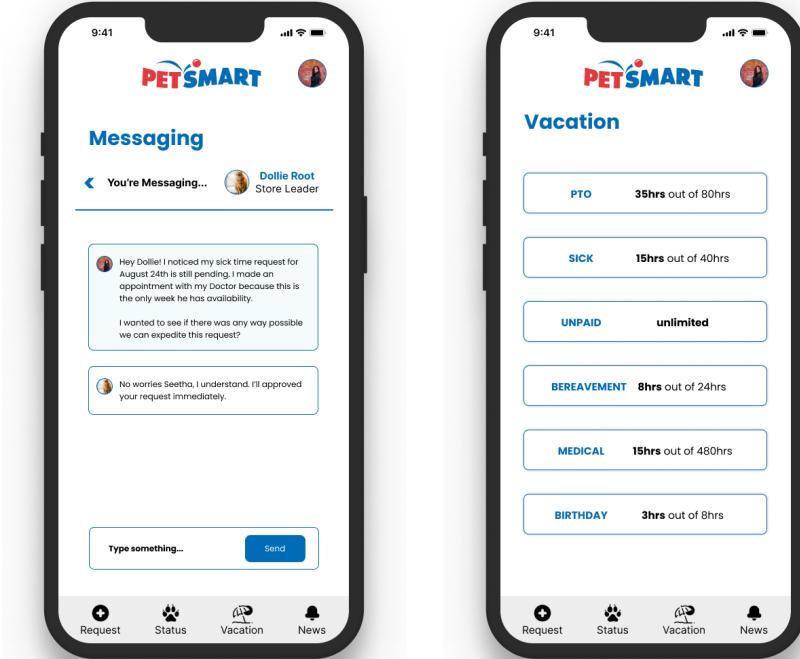


Figure E-12

Figure E-13

(Figure E-12) When the employee selects the message button from **(Figure D-11)**, they can select their point of contact to message them about their time off or other questions. In this example, Seetha, the employee, is messaging her Store Leader, Dollie, about an urgent matter regarding her pending sick leave on August 24th.

(Figure E-13) When the user selects the vacation button, they will see an overview of the hours accumulated for different types of leave.

View Interactive Prototype: [Select Here](#)

Outcomes & Lessons

I enjoyed the design process and investigating the challenges of utilizing traditional paper forms and developing an intuitive application. Throughout this journey, I gained valuable insights into the significance of designing user interfaces for the time request application that can be easily translatable into code by future developers.



This project was devoted to the cherished memory of my beloved Smokey.