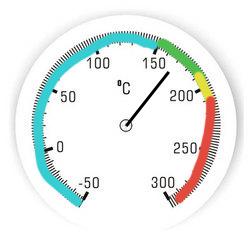
DESORA app review—Smokestar Pro

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This review aims to focus on the **user flow and experience** of the app and less on the design. However, being a design-oriented person myself, I will naturally offer my design perspective, but will definitely try to focus more the on the flow of the app. As mentioned, we are hiring a designer to work on the aesthetics of the app (ie the graphics, animations, etc). I also think critiquing the visual elements of the app, such as the size of boxes or colors of a button or even the wording of error messages, may be premature at the moment (which is why I’ll limit my opinion on these things).

1. Onboarding: I like that we have a single screen with just the DESORA logo on it before we enter the app.
   1. **Login/ Sign up**: Immediately, I find the design of this page inconsistent with the DESORA brand as a whole. The buttons at the bottom are poorly designed, since rectangles often mean that you can slide your finger across them. There should be more interaction in the center of the page.
   2. I think the rest of the pages in the onboarding look fine and are logically sound.
2. Home: Immediately when I look at the home screen, I think it looks elementary because the different menu options aren’t arranged logically. However, one example of an app that has the quad of menu options is the Apple Health app on the iPhone (although I find that one no good either). I have several thoughts on this:
   1. **When will the user be opening the app?** If he or she is only opening it when they are ready to smoke and the SmokeStar prosthetic is turned on, then I think the app should have an **automatic connecting page** preceding interaction with the app. “Connecting to your SmokeStar Pro…” with a loading animation for instance. However, what about for first time users who are just interested in browsing the app after they’ve downloaded the app from the App Store? Or what about people just standing in line at the grocery looking for something to do?
   2. Other important questions to ask in **framing the user experience:**
      1. **How is the prosthetic being integrated into the process of smoking**? It seems to me that the app can be used the moment the user brings home the meat from the supermarket or takes a stack of the ribs out from the fridge. With the recipes, you are instructing the user how to make and apply spice rubs, sauces etc.. that could take an hour of preparation before he/she is actually ready to put the meat on the smoker**. Logically, he/she would not be turning on the SmokeStar Pro before the meat is ready to be cooked.** Additionally, what if the user wants to browse the recipes before he/she has bought the meat?
      2. I think **hardware-software integration is incredibly tricky to pull off successfully.** I haven’t had much time to research successful examples of **hardware + mobile app devices,** but off the top of my head I can think of the Tile app, Square (mobile payments). I think a lot of this comes down how you envision the coupling of the app and the hardware. For instance, one example is the relationship between a remove (ie the app) and TV (ie the hardware)—the TV is entirely controlled by the remote. I think this is the most ideal relationship, since you can just sit on a couch and control your TV from 12 feet away (and anyone who’s had a broken TV remote knows the hassle of having to control your TV by pressing the buttons on the side of the screen.) However, given that the user has to refuel the BBQ several times in the smoking process, a TV-remote relationship isn’t possible.
         1. <https://www.automatic.com/>: smart car addon
         2. <http://www.businessinsider.com/five-gadgets-that-will-transform-your-car-dumb-car-into-a-smart-car-2015-7/#zubie-key-will-track-vital-information-about-your-car-3> : <- I found this link very useful for finding examples of the type of images and language and marketing we should be using for advertising and packaging our product. Really recommend that you check it out
      3. **How often will the user be led through the step-by-step process of starting the smoker?** This step-by-step walkthrough is useful for first-time smokers, but may become redundant after a handful of smokes. Furthermore, first-time users will want to be able to **read ahead** in the instructions so is a checklist format the best? I know that I would definitely want to read all the instruction first
      4. Many companies have tried to do recipe apps that lead the user through a **step-by-step process of cooking**, but I don’t think they have been that successful yet. Why is that the case?
      5. **During the smoke, what functionality do you want the app to have?** I know we discussed this last time briefly, but answering this question may help you design your home page and navigation bar. You can look at **Uber’s app** for inspiration. During your ride, you can’t request a new ride because I don’t think that button is available (I haven’t tested this out actually so correct me if I’m wrong!). In the course of your ride, the main screen is the GPS/map/current location, and I believe you can navigate to other pages such as settings or your own profile using the side bar. Maybe DESORA’s app should model this example—however, smokes take hours while car rides take minutes, so we’ll need to think this through.
3. Cook
   1. **Quick Cook: I find the name of this feature confusing.** This may be just because “quick cook” is a name of a feature on my rice cooker at home, that allows you to cook rice in half the time. But nonetheless, I think the word “quick” could be misleading for users. Other suggestions include: “Begin Cook” or “Begin Cooking” or “Start Cook” or “Start Cooking”
      1. Quick Cook Entry: as discussed earlier, **splitting the data entry into several screens is better**, with the last two questions having suggested answers
      2. Fuel/ Light/ Place probes: Something rubs me the wrong way about this set of instructions. You may have to test this out—but I feel like people are going to swipe through all the instructions first and then start working on the smoker. I
      3. Error messages: I prefer a banner more than a popup, as I think it looks more sleek and professional.
      4. Recipe Flow**: I don’t think the recipe/cookbook feature should be included in the app**. Less is more, and I think this added element of functionality, though it may be “cool,” offers little value. I can elaborate on this more, but overall, I feel like people would turn to the internet first or a cookbook for ideas on spice rubs and marinades, rather than a smart BBQ prosthetic app.
4. Monitor: **It would be ideal if you could fit all the stats of the meat and smoker in one screen without having to scroll down or toggle.**
   1. Graphs
      1. **The upper graph**, on the other hand, strikes me as being (too) scientific and data-driven. This is just my opinion, but it makes more sense a “behind the scenes” graph. **The thing about a line** **graph is that it only offers its true value after all the data is finished collected, which is why I don’t think it ideal for displaying real-time temperature updates.**
      2. **The lower graph** reminds me of a speed odometer. It is too vague—what do the numbers mean, the colors?
      3. **My suggestion:**  For the meat temperature, I think **a thermometer graphic** makes sense. From my understanding (correct me if I’m wrong), once the meat reaches a certain temperature, it is finished cooking immediately. Thus, a thermometer graphic makes sense because once you reach the top of it (ie 100%), your meat is done. For the ambient temperature, **a temperature dial** makes sense. The temperature will be fluctuating throughout the course of the smoke and it is possible for the temperature of the smoke to get too hot. Here’s a quick rendering of one if the target temperature was range between 150-200 degrees.



1. **History:** I like the fact that you can view, name, and rate your past cooks. **I think this feature is useful for helping people improve as home cooks and allows users to take a more methodical approach to their cooking**.
   1. **Rankings: Overall, I am not a fan of this feature of the app.** Desora first and foremost is a smart home/kitchen device company and not a community network. Gamification is cool, but it doesn’t fit here. I feel like you’re trying to do too much. We should focus first on building a really good prosthetic and then if that’s successful, building a network among BBQ enthusiasts. **I really caution against trying to include so many different features in the initial version app: the recipe bank, rankings, history, public user profiles, etc**. To give an example, LinkedIn for instance started out just as a website to upload your resume and see other’s resume. Then after it got big and successful, it became a career marketplace, blog, etc. I think you should focus on perfecting a single feature first and then branching out.
   2. **Smoke Details**: I like the “Give your BBQ a Title!” and that you can rate your BBQ. I am less enthusiastic about the social sharing of your cook. I personally don’t know people who share things using other mobile apps. However, we can just leave that feature in there in the initial release of the app and depending on how users engage with it, we can either remove it in an updated version or pub it even more.