Case study - Atmosf'hairs

1. Empathize: Understanding the Users

Understanding the Hairdresser's Needs

The project for *Atmosf'hairs* began when the salon owner expressed frustration with their existing website, which was outdated and difficult to manage. The site was built on a CMS that did not allow the hairdresser to easily update prices, change photos, or modify service information without technical help. This led to delays in updating important details, which negatively affected the salon's online presence and, ultimately, client satisfaction.

Key Business Goals

Through initial conversations with the hairdresser, the following goals for the new website were identified:

- Admin Autonomy: The hairdresser wanted to independently update prices, photos, and service descriptions through an easy-to-use admin panel.
- Modern Aesthetic: The old website no longer represented the modern and trendy image of the salon. The
 new site needed to be visually appealing to match the salon's style.
- Improved Client Experience: The website had to provide a smooth, intuitive experience for clients, allowing them to easily browse services, view photos of hairstyles, and book appointments.

User Research: Understanding Salon Clients

To design a client-centered experience, I needed to understand the behaviors, needs, and frustrations of the salon's customers. I conducted user interviews and surveys with a range of *Atmosf'hairs* clients to gather qualitative and quantitative insights. These insights were critical in shaping the website's features and user interface.

Research Method

Interviews: I conducted semi-structured interviews with 6 regular clients of the salon. The goal was to
uncover how they interacted with the previous website and what they expected from a new one.

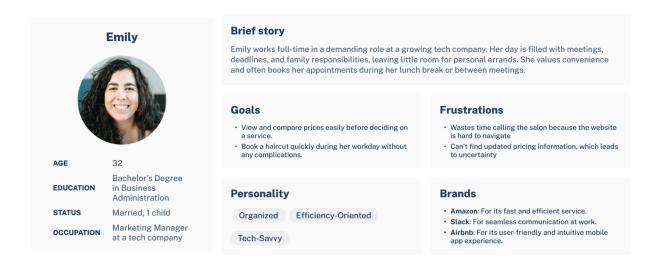
Key Insights from Clients

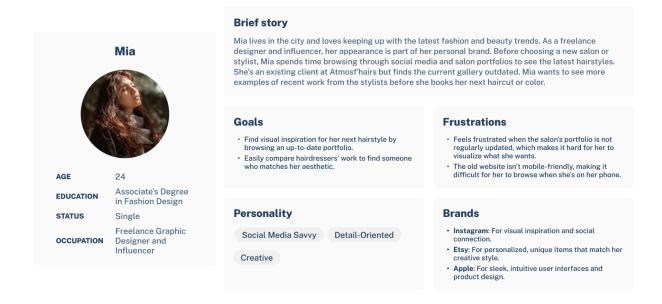
From these research activities, several key findings emerged:

- Desire for Easy Online Booking: Most clients expressed frustration with the previous website's booking system. They often found it easier to call the salon directly, as the online booking tool was hard to navigate, especially on mobile devices.
- Importance of Updated Pricing: Clients expressed uncertainty when booking due to outdated pricing on the previous site. Many stated that they preferred salons where prices were transparent and up-to-date before committing to an appointment.
- Visual Inspiration and Portfolios: Clients mentioned that they often browsed through hairstyle galleries
 or portfolios before choosing a stylist. Having a regularly updated gallery with professional photos was a key
 factor in their decision-making process.
- Mobile Access: 4 of clients reported accessing salon websites primarily through their mobile devices. This
 highlighted the need for a mobile-optimized design, particularly for booking appointments and viewing
 service details.

Personas Developed from Research

Based on the insights gathered from client interviews and surveys, I developed two personas to represent the primary user groups for the *Atmosf'hairs* website:





Empathy Map

To better understand the mindset and experience of these users, I created an **Empathy Map** that synthesizes the key findings:



Conclusion

The empathy phase of the design process revealed the dual needs of the hairdresser's desire for easy content management, and the clients' need for a seamless, modern online experience. These insights laid the foundation for the design and functionality decisions in the next stages of the project.

2. Define: Identifying Core Problems and Opportunities

After conducting thorough research and empathizing with the users, the **Define** phase involved synthesizing all insights into a clear problem statement and identifying the key opportunities to improve the **Atmosf'hairs** website.

Problem Statement

The *Atmosf hairs* website does not reflect the salon's modern, stylish brand. Key user frustrations include difficulty finding up-to-date information, lack of mobile optimization, and an outdated portfolio. Users need a visually appealing, easy-to-navigate site with clear pricing and service details to confidently engage with the salon.

Key Insights

Based on user interviews, empathy mapping, I uncovered several important user pain points:

- Outdated design: The website's aesthetic no longer reflects the current trends and styles offered by the salon.
- Difficulty finding information: Users found it challenging to locate important information like prices and service details quickly, especially on mobile.
- Lack of up-to-date content: The portfolio and service details were outdated, leading to hesitation and uncertainty when considering the salon for new hairstyles.

User journey map

To better understand the user experience and identify pain points at each stage of the interaction with the **Atmosf'hairs** website, I created a **User Journey Map**. This map visualizes the user's actions, goals, feelings, pain points, and opportunities for improvement at each stage of their journey.



Key Pain Points Identified in the User Journey Map:

Awareness: Users encounter an outdated website that doesn't reflect the salon's modern brand. They have trouble finding the information they need quickly, particularly on mobile.

Consideration: Users are frustrated by the unclear pricing and outdated portfolio, which causes hesitation when deciding if the salon is the right fit for them.

Acquisition: Once users decide to reach out to the salon, they struggle with unclear contact details and a lack of calls-to-action, creating a barrier to booking an appointment.

Service: While users are generally happy with their salon experience, the website misses opportunities to gather feedback and engage with clients post-service.

Loyalty: The website lacks consistent social media engagement and loyalty-building tools like promotions or rewards, limiting long-term customer retention.

Opportunities for Improvement

From the research and user journey map, several opportunities emerged:

- Modernize the website design to reflect the salon's trendy, contemporary brand.
- Update service information and ensure pricing and portfolio are easy to find and up to date.
- Optimize for mobile devices to improve the browsing experience.
- Improve the contact process with clear, visible calls-to-action and easily accessible contact information.
- Enhance post-service engagement by gathering user feedback and encouraging reviews or social media interaction.
- Build a loyal customer base by integrating loyalty programs, social media engagement, and promotions.

3. Ideate: Generating Creative Solutions

Brainstorming Session

The ideation process began with an open brainstorming session. The goal was to think broadly and come up with as many ideas as possible without judging or filtering them. We focused on both user needs and business goals, using insights from the user research, empathy mapping, and journey mapping.

Here are some key ideas that emerged from the brainstorming session:

- Simplified Navigation: Streamline the user journey by creating a minimalist navigation bar with clear labels (e.g., Services, Pricing, Gallery, Contact). This makes it easy for users to find what they need quickly.
- 2. **Dynamic Portfolio**: Regularly update the gallery with high-quality photos of the latest hairstyles, showcasing the salon's expertise and keeping content fresh.
- 3. **Mobile-First Design**: Prioritize mobile responsiveness by designing a layout that adapts seamlessly across devices, ensuring users have a smooth experience on smartphones.
- 4. **Customizable Admin Panel**: Design an intuitive admin page that allows the salon owner to easily update service prices, photos, and special offers without needing technical expertise.

- Call-to-Action Buttons: Add prominent call-to-action (CTA) buttons, such as "Call Now" or "Visit Us," placed strategically on each page to guide users toward booking an appointment.
- 6. **Service Description Cards**: Break down services into easy-to-read cards with short descriptions, prices, and optional add-ons to simplify decision-making for users.
- Customer Testimonials Section: Add a testimonials section featuring client reviews to build trust and confidence among potential clients.
- 8. **Social Media Integration**: Integrate social media feeds directly on the homepage to highlight the salon's activity and engage users with styling tips and promotions.
- Feedback Mechanism: Include a simple post-service feedback form that prompts users to leave reviews or share their experience, either through the website or via social media.

Narrowing Down Ideas

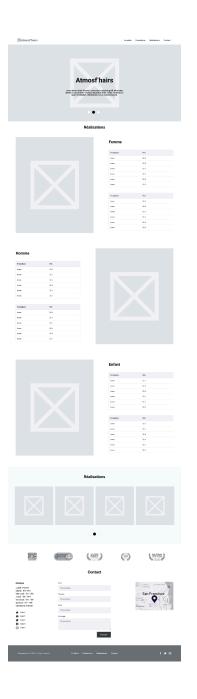
After generating a wide range of ideas, the next step was to narrow down the concepts based on feasibility, user impact, and alignment with the salon's brand and goals. The focus shifted toward ideas that addressed the most critical pain points identified in the user journey, such as outdated design, unclear information, and a lack of engagement tools.

We selected the following top ideas:

- Modern Visual Redesign: A sleek, modern design that reflects the salon's trendy and stylish brand, using neutral color schemes and large, appealing images of hairstyles.
- 2. **Mobile Optimization**: A fully responsive design that ensures optimal functionality and visual appeal across devices, particularly focusing on smartphones.
- Easy Admin Panel: A customizable admin page that allows the hairdresser to update content like prices, photos, and promotions easily without technical help.
- 4. **Enhanced Navigation**: A simplified navigation structure with clear service descriptions and calls-to-action, helping users quickly find what they need and encouraging them to book appointments.
- Customer Engagement Tools: Social media integration and post-service feedback forms to boost engagement, increase loyalty, and encourage repeat visits.

Wireframe and Sketching

At this stage, I created low-fidelity wireframes and sketches to visualize how these ideas could come to life. This step helped communicate the design concepts and allowed for quick iteration and feedback from the hairdresser and potential users.





4. Prototype: Bringing Ideas to Life

In the **Prototype** phase, I transformed the ideas into a fully functional, single-page website prototype for *Atmosph'airs*, consisting of four key sections: **Le Salon**, **Prestations**, **Réalisations**, and **Contact**. The goal was to create a streamlined, user-friendly experience where users could quickly access relevant information about the salon, explore services, view the portfolio, and connect with the salon through an intuitive design.

Wireframes to High-Fidelity Designs

I began by converting the low-fidelity wireframes into high-fidelity mockups, focusing on a clean, modern design that aligned with the brand's chic image. Each section of the single-page site was structured for ease of navigation and visual appeal.











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5. Test: Validating the Design

Testing Process:

I conducted moderated usability tests with five users, including both new and returning clients of the salon. The tests were designed to evaluate key user flows, particularly around navigating the services, browsing the portfolio, and contacting the salon.

Key Tasks Tested:

- Finding Information About the Salon: Users were asked to explore the "Le Salon" section to understand the brand story and values.
- Browsing Services: Users were tasked with exploring the "Prestations" section, focusing on finding service descriptions and prices.
- 3. **Portfolio Interaction**: Users tested the dynamic gallery in the "Réalisations" section, checking how smoothly they could view images.
- Contacting the Salon: The goal here was to ensure that users could easily find contact details and interact
 with the call button and contact form.

Usability Test Results

- **Ease of Navigation**: All users found the navigation between sections smooth and intuitive, especially enjoying the scrolling transitions. The menu was clear, and sections were easily identifiable.
- Mobile Experience: Users praised the mobile responsiveness of the site, noting that it was easy to use on their phones with clear buttons and readable text.
- Dynamic Gallery: The portfolio section was well-received, though some users suggested the ability to add
 captions or brief descriptions under the images for context.
- Contact Section: The clickable call-to-action button in the "Contact" section worked effectively, but a
 couple of users mentioned that adding a WhatsApp link might enhance communication for some clients.

Possible Iterations

Based on the feedback gathered from usability testing, a few possible iterations were identified for future improvement:

- Add Captions to Portfolio Images: While users enjoyed the visual gallery, some expressed interest in having brief descriptions under each image (e.g., style type or service performed) to provide more context.
- Enhanced Contact Options: Although the call button was effective, a potential enhancement would be integrating WhatsApp or another direct messaging service, making it easier for users who prefer text-based communication.
- 3. **More Prominent Booking Links**: Some users suggested making the "Call Now" buttons more visually prominent across all sections, especially in the *Prestations* section, to encourage quicker decision-making.
- Sticky Navigation Bar: A sticky navigation bar that remains visible as users scroll down the page was suggested to improve accessibility, especially for mobile users who need to jump between sections more quickly.

These iterations, while not critical, would further refine the user experience and could be introduced in a future update.

6. What I Learned: Conclusion

The design and development of the *Atmosf'hairs* website provided several key takeaways:

- User-Centered Design is Crucial: Focusing on the needs and behaviors of the salon's clients helped
 ensure the website was easy to use and relevant to their goals. The empathy and journey maps were
 instrumental in identifying the most important features for the site, like simplified navigation, clear service
 listings, and an appealing portfolio.
- Mobile-First Design is Essential: Since many users access the site from their phones, designing for
 mobile from the start ensured a seamless experience across all devices. This was a crucial factor in both
 design and usability testing.

- 3. Prototyping and Testing Lead to Valuable Insights: Building an interactive prototype allowed for early feedback from users, revealing opportunities for refinement that hadn't been initially considered. For instance, the suggestion to add captions to portfolio images highlighted the need for contextual information to enhance the user experience.
- 4. **Continuous Iteration Improves Usability**: Although the initial design met most of the goals, continuous feedback from users opened up new avenues for improvement, such as integrating additional communication options and refining the visual hierarchy of call-to-action buttons.

Overall, this project was a successful exercise in using the design thinking process to create a solution that aligned with both business goals and user needs. By empathizing with users, defining clear pain points, ideating creative solutions, prototyping efficiently, and testing thoroughly, the *Atmosf'hairs* website was transformed into a modern, user-friendly digital presence for the salon.