

Project Overview

Selected Project Prompt: "Design an ordering app for a sandwich shop"

For the past few months, I have daydreamed about the alternate life where I own a small sandwich shop experimenting with assorted flavors and ingredients. Experimenting with different flavor combinations and layering has always been a fun activity for me. When I play it out *just* right, I can make a *pretty* mean sandwich. Mean Sammies is the hypothetical take-out sandwich shop I have in Fort Myers, Florida where I live out this alternative life. As I continue to develop on this concept, I hope to apply some of my graphic design skills to the menu items that I am crafting alongside designing an ordering app for Mean Sammies.

The main products and features that Mean Sammies offers to its customers is customizable sandwiches sensitive to different dietary preferences, restrictions, or allergies. Mean Sammies has multiple options that are gluten free, vegan, vegetarian, and include a variety of customization options. Mean Sammies wants to challenge the conventional sandwich ordering process - to really push the buns. It's intended to be an easy way to get a fresh, healthy, specialty sandwich your way on the go. Ideally, Mean Sammies would expand to have additional options to allow for easy group order management. This menu ordering processes will also allow for customers to submit their Mean Sammy orders to be featured on the menu.

Research Goals

I want to understand what the most satisfying part is of making a mobile food order.

Is it getting notifications on food preparation updates? Is it placing the actual order? Is it gaining membership rewards? Is it how easy the process is to customize your order?

I want to understand the level of customization that a user wants for their order.

Is it more comfortable to select toppings from a list or table, see them graphically, or to have customizable preset options?

I want to identify what makes a user feel frustrated when using mobile order devices

Lack of rewards membership? Customizations difficult for people with allergies or dietary preferences? Shopping cart randomly emptying? Payment issues? Too many steps to reach checkout?

I want to understand what are the typical conditions in which they would be ordering from my sandwich shop.

Are users making their order while out on errands to pick up on the way home?

How are users currently creating group orders for friends, family, or coworkers?

Are users making the order while driving? Should there be a speech-entry option if the user's mobile device is in driving mode? Should we explore a simplified navigation that's for driving mode?

I want to understand what a user needs or desires when making an order.

I want to understand what would make the user feel happier and more comfortable.

Are there any special or additional features that the user would like to see?

Target Audience

- *Users are hungry and wanting a quick, quality, and quirky sandwich on the go*
- *Users may be younger, trendy college students with specific dietary preferences that creates a need for customizable orders with a wider menu.*
- *Users can be busy, working parents picking up the children from practice and swinging by to pick up sandwiches on the way home.*
- *Users are the same working parents picking up lunch during the workday.*

Interview Questions

1. *Can you please describe the usual setting you are in and how you feel when you are making mobile sandwich orders?*
2. *Can you describe some of the frustrations you've had in the past with ordering customized food from a mobile device?*
3. *Can you think of any features that would enable you to use this app more, such as a rewards program, calorie information, or mobile-only offers?*
4. *What are the difficulties you face when trying to order food with allergies or specific dietary preferences and how does it make you feel?*
5. *Can you describe your experience with a mobile food order app that made you feel happy or satisfied?*
6. *Can you describe your experience and preferences when organizing a group mobile order?*

Empathy Exercise

The following four course-provided fictional user bios were selected for “interview” because they represent the ideal users of my app as identified above. The goal of this empathy exercise was to think through the opinions, experiences, and pain points of each user by really digging deep into how these people would answer my questions.

Zareen

Age: 22

Education: 4th year university student

Hometown: Bruges, Belgium

Family: 2 sisters

Occupation: Project management intern for a large international firm

Zareen is about to complete a B.A. in Business Administration and hopes an internship will launch her career in project management. Even though Zareen most enjoys the time spent working with her mentor on a campaign, she also enjoys doing other tasks like getting coffee and food for the office. She feels these tasks are a good opportunity to network and to demonstrate being a team player with keen attention to detail.

Zareen would like to demonstrate her commitment on the job, complete everyday tasks efficiently, and eventually be trusted with increased responsibilities in the office.

1. *Can you please describe the usual setting you are in and how you feel when you are making mobile sandwich orders?*

Often making a group order for the office to the sandwich shop that’s around the corner, or I’m picking up something for myself and my sisters. It’s usually something I’m confident doing that makes me feel good because getting lunch for the team is an easy task to get right and gain trust with the team as an intern. Especially considering our group includes people with different allergies and dietary restrictions. I also often end up angry because the timing of the pick-up is not accurate enough. Otherwise, I’m often ordering outside of work when I’m on the go and picking up a sandwich on the way home from errands.

2. *Can you describe some of the frustrations you've had in the past with ordering customized food from a mobile device?*

Most apps aren't very group-order friendly when it comes to custom sandwiches. That includes receiving the actual food and not knowing which sandwich is which or sometimes they're numbered by the menu item. I mean, there's just got to be an easier way to make this a little smoother. With everyone having different preferences, I feel like I often have difficulty making sure I have all the customizations right and I end up somehow making expensive sandwiches by using the wrong approach to customization.

3. *Can you think of any features that would enable you to use this app more, such as a rewards program, calorie information, or mobile-only offers?*

Maybe a way to save favorites for different people, a more cost-effective method of doing this, or an easy way to send someone a request to add their custom order to my cart. For individual group ordering there could be individual payment options and splitting payment options?

4. *What are the difficulties you face when trying to order food with allergies or specific dietary preferences and how does it make you feel?*

It's always a written-in comment or sometimes I have to avoid a store or something because I'm discouraged by how difficult it is to make sure it's clear certain allergy and dietary restrictions in the order are important - not all restaurants pay attention to that.

5. *Can you describe your experience with a mobile food order app that made you feel happy or satisfied?*

Nothing takes the cake for the whole point, but a one particularly nice feature I can think of is with Jason's Deli's website (I never tried to mobile order on the app it seems too daunting). The group order method on Jason's Deli website allows you to email people a link to your cart to add food to, that way my only responsibility is making sure we pay and receive the food.

6. *Can you describe your experience and preferences when organizing a group mobile order?*

I typically have to bug people about sitting at their computer and checking their email to fill a lunch order or have a challenging time putting together everyone's individual customized order, or just do a group order that includes a few dietary and allergy restriction alternatives without group preferences (like a lunch tray from Jason's Deli with some veggie wraps).

Leah

Age: 42

Education: Doctor of Medicine (MD)

Hometown: Newport, Rhode Island

Family: Single, lives alone

Occupation: Doctor

Leah is a doctor with a busy and demanding schedule. She works unpredictable shifts in a mid-size hospital, and swims for a local semi-professional team. Leah has a visual impairment for which she uses screen reader technologies. This technology makes using apps and websites much more convenient for Leah, but not all apps and websites are optimized for screen reader usage.

Leah cares a lot about being available to her patients and is often taking appointments at the last minute. She would like to be able to spend as much of her non-work time as possible on her hobbies and personal life. Leah would like for there to be an easier and efficient way to order food, groceries, and personal care items to pick up on-the-go.

1. *Can you please describe the usual setting you are in and how you feel when you are making mobile sandwich orders?*

Usually rushed and trying to make a quick call to place an order while I'm out and on-the-go. I rarely use the apps because the screen readers aren't very helpful with customized orders.

2. *Can you describe some of the frustrations you've had in the past with ordering customized food from a mobile device?*

I usually get frustrated and give up or just call in to the restaurant because I end up accidentally selecting too many or the wrong items and cannot get the screen reader to tell me the order I'm editing.

3. *Can you think of any features that would enable you to use this app more, such as a rewards program, calorie information, or mobile-only offers?*

It would be really great if there was some way for the app to take my order as a voice order and AI could understand the customizations, I want instead of trying to maneuver through a menu. I mean this for my on-the-go reliable places or where I would have a favorite order that I can often reorder.

4. *What are the difficulties you face when trying to order food with allergies or specific dietary preferences and how does it make you feel?*

I don't eat dairy, so making sure my order doesn't have any dairy products (including butter) is often difficult for me to input on a mobile order using the screen reader.

5. *Can you describe your experience with a mobile food order app that made you feel happy or satisfied?*

Jimmy Johns allows me to save a favorite order that I can reorder directly through Siri on my iPhone (just cuts out so many frustrating steps for me when I know what I want).

6. *Can you describe your experience and preferences when organizing a group mobile order?*

I always call in for group orders or hand that task to someone else!

Joseph

Age: 20

Education: Enrolled in online college classes

Hometown: Nairobi, Kenya

Family: Lives with their mother, father and one younger sibling

Occupation: Full time student

Joseph is a recent immigrant to the United States who is enrolled in online college classes and is also taking classes at a night school for learning English. He can read English well, but sometimes encounters difficulties at restaurants or while out running errands, where shopkeepers tend to speak very quickly, and limited translation options are available. Joseph is passionate about sports and the outdoors and wants to explore what his neighborhood has to offer.

Joseph's priority is balancing his studies with fun, while also having time to look after his younger sibling when his parents are at work.

1. *Can you please describe the usual setting you are in and how you feel when you are making mobile sandwich orders?*

I usually place orders for me and my brothers when my parents are out at work. I also like to pick up a sandwich before heading out to explore my new city. I prefer using mobile orders because it's easier for me due to my English.

2. *Can you describe some of the frustrations you've had in the past with ordering customized food from a mobile device?*

I just think the apps are hard for non-native English speakers. For example, when ordering at a restaurant some restaurants will have pictures of the food to get a better idea of what you are ordering. For me and my family it was hard at first so having more imagery would be helpful for a mobile app - I think is helpful for all languages.

3. *Can you think of any features that would enable you to use this app more, such as a rewards program, calorie information, or mobile-only offers?*

I would love a rewards/favorites program or mobile-only offers as it's already my preferred method.

4. *What are the difficulties you face when trying to order food with allergies or specific dietary preferences and how does it make you feel?*

When I was first learning English it was difficult to know the contents of different meals and often customizing an order requires checking things to add, sometimes it checking things to remove, sometimes it's writing in the entry, but almost always either way I would be confused and my order would often end up wrong if I tried to customize anything. Now it's been better since my English has improved.

5. *Can you describe your experience with a mobile food order app that made you feel happy or satisfied?*

Any app that has a good rewards program and lists every ingredient in their food item is a win for me.

6. *Can you describe your experience and preferences when organizing a group mobile order?*

I'm often just ordering food for my brothers and I, not large groups so I try to keep everyone's preferences in mind. It would be cool to be able to filter menus by dietary restrictions though.

Reena**Age:** 37**Education:****Hometown:** Lakewood, Colorado**Family:** Lives mostly alone, has a teenage daughter**Occupation:** Paramedic

Reena is a paramedic who lives in Lakewood, Colorado. She lives alone but shares custody of her daughter with her ex-partner. Reena works both day and night shifts, and her schedule changes week to week. She is a rock climber who goes to the climbing gym a few mornings a week and drives her daughter to soccer practice any nights she's not working. Reena has dyslexia, which makes it difficult to read text quickly and process information in fast-paced settings. Reena is health-conscious as well as budget-conscious.

1. *Can you please describe the usual setting you are in and how you feel when you are making mobile sandwich orders?*

Usually relaxed as I'm planning to sit and dedicate time to making the order since I cannot move through the screen quickly due to my dyslexia. I'm often making my order before leaving the gym or during my daughter's soccer practice to pick up on our way home.

2. *Can you describe some of the frustrations you've had in the past with ordering customized food from a mobile device?*

It's just frustrating when I try to read and make orders in person, so I rather make a mobile order sometimes at the restaurant itself to avoid being on the spot with reading a menu and customizing anything.

3. *Can you think of any features that would enable you to use this app more, such as a rewards program, calorie information, or mobile-only offers?*

Calorie information that would be live updated with each of my customization. Having a way to maybe make customizations easier than entry forms? I also would rather not do any customizations since its often costly. I would also rather see photos of my food than descriptions of it.

4. *What are the difficulties you face when trying to order food with allergies or specific dietary preferences and how does it make you feel?*

This isn't really an issue for me, I just have an issue with knowing the calories of my order and have to manually add up individual parts of an order or try to find an answer elsewhere online.

5. *Can you describe your experience with a mobile food order app that made you feel happy or satisfied?*

Chick-fil-a updates the calories on their order with your customizations and all customizations have photos so I can speed through my edits easily since I don't have to read anything.

6. *Can you describe your experience and preferences when organizing a group mobile order?*

I don't usually do that; it's mainly just picking up for my daughter and I at the most.

General Findings

- Users want an easy way to save and order their go-to customized favorites
- Users want affordable customization to menu items
- Users want more graphics of menu items
- Users want more efficient ways to create customized group orders
- Users want other methods of customizing their order other than write-in boxes
- Users want calorie information

Possible Solutions

- Allow for users view menu without creating account
- Members can save customized sandwiches with different "favorites" names. These can be linked to Siri to allow for quick ordering.
- Allowing a straightforward way to edit a user's favorite item for an order
- Make sure all text is screen reader compatible
- Include a box that indicates specific dietary or allergy restrictions to alert staff
- Include visuals or photos in app for different menu items
- Review with staff cost ideas to allow for customizations at a low price
- Allow for "favorite name" to be written/printed onto sandwich order for group orders
- Accurate tracking to allow for transparent communication
- Add floating counter for caloric information (toggle on/off)
- Explore game-swiping approach to customization interface