

HireReel

Let your skills shine through video endorsements!



BETTY W.

MAXIM I.

CRISTOBAL G.

DAVID Z.

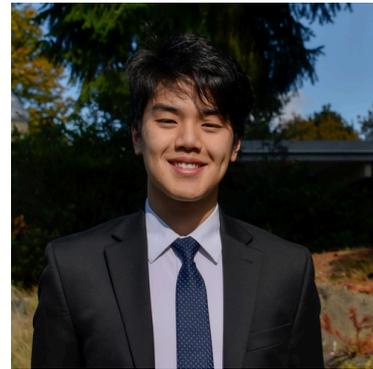
VALUE PROPOSITION

Let your skills shine through video endoresments!

OUR TEAM



MAXIM IVANOV
APP DEVELOPER



DAVID ZHOU
PRODUCT MANAGER



CRISTOBAL GARCIA
APP DEVELOPER



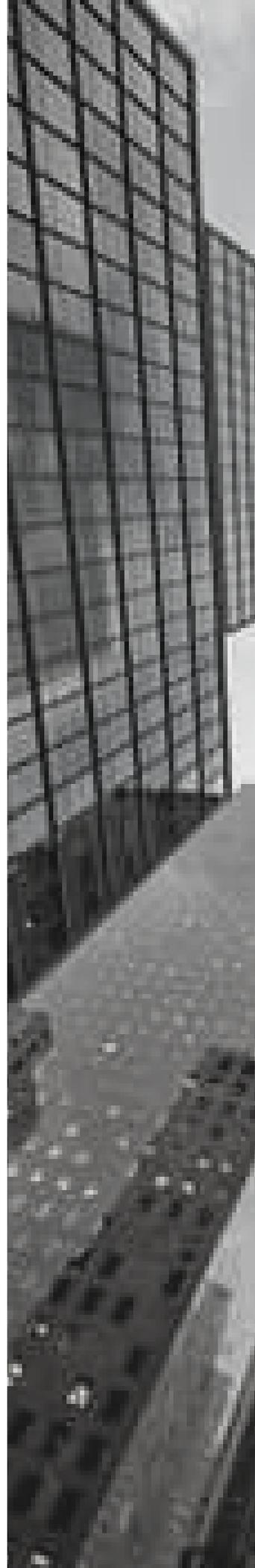
BETTY WU
WEB DEVELOPER

THE PROBLEM

It's difficult for early career applicants to highlight their professional qualifications.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

A platform for **video endorsements** from peers, former coworkers, or whoever, highlighting skills and capabilities of potential candidates.



NEEDFINDING

Exploring broadly our domain in career development, we conducted a variety of interviews from various individuals to gather basic information that could eventually help us narrow our domain to a specific problem to tackle. Throughout the entire interviewing process, we found our 5 interviewees mainly through **personal** and **mutual connections**. They graciously agreed to be interviewed **without compensation**. And, we had a **mix** of interviews in-person and on Zoom. For our beginning interviews, we met with...



KAREN

Who has worked in recruiting for the past 20 years.

Her main points included:

- Expectations from candidates are increasing
- Recruiter tools are lackluster. LinkedIn is just how “you show up”
- Finding the right work culture fit is overlooked

ANDREA

An engineer with over 10 years of professional experience currently seeking new opportunities in the area. Her main points included:

- There is too much information on LinkedIn and social media; hard to differentiate what is important
- Close connections significantly expedite the job search process
- Cultural fit only becomes clearer in later, more in-depth rounds of interviews





ALEX

A computer science student with intern experience within the startup scene. His main points included:

- The hiring process for startups is extremely unrefined and unstructured
- Twitter has been found to be the most useful networking and job-finding platform for him
- Seasonal interns are in large need of support given their timings

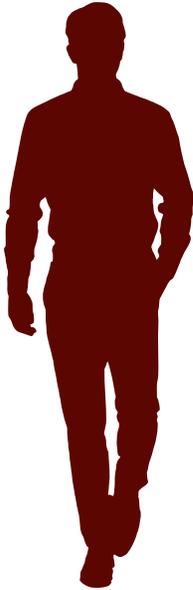
From these interviews, our team decided to change our domain from a general exploration of recruiting, job-finding, and hiring, to “early-career development”. People we then sought to interview would be new-grads and college students. This narrower domain felt more relevant and interesting to our team. To gain further information we interviewed...

BROOKE

A new-grad fashion designer working for a luxury fashion brand out of Milan, Italy. Her main points included:

- The creative industry, more so than other industries, is very networking based
- Creative industry focuses mainly on portfolio, but also a strong emphasis on soft skills and cordiality
- Can receive attention for skill or portfolio showcases





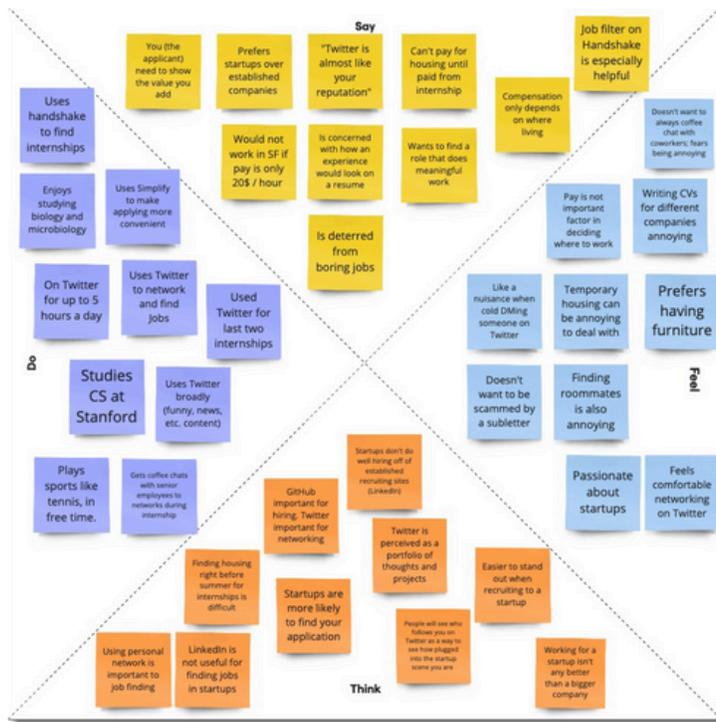
MATT

A senior computer science student with extensive machine learning experience. His main points included:

- Interview process difficult for highly specialized individuals
- Would prefer recruiters be replaced by technical professionals
- Disparities exist in recruiter postings

SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS

To synthesize and analyze our findings, we organized our interview notes into empathy maps using Miro.



Our empathy map for Alex. Each quadrant represents categories that break down his thoughts to core emotions, which can help elucidate hidden and unobvious needs. We made empathy maps to explore needs for all our interviewees.

A when analyzing our empathy maps, we found many themes of anxiety and difficulty searching for new jobs. Lots of interviewees expressed initial difficulties with finding a job early in their career, and dissatisfaction with the recruiting process, including tools to supposedly “aid” candidates in finding jobs. Many disparities in recruiter knowledge, hiring platforms, and difficulty standing out are all shared experiences we found our interviewees to have. To further understand our interviewees, we broke each one of our empathy maps and interview notes into POVs.

POVS

We framed our findings into POVs, allowing our team to consider the tensions and emotions behind some of interviewees problems. The interviewees we wrote POVs for are Alex, Brooke, and Matt. We then wrote several HMWs to begin pondering problems to potentially address.

ALEX

We met “Alex”, a junior studying CS and is very passionate about tech startups, and an extreme Twitter user.

We were surprised to realize that Alex loves to use Twitter to find jobs, and that Twitter acts as his professional portfolio.

We wonder if this means that he cares deeply about his online persona for job finding for startups.

It would be game-changing to get candidates excited about building a personal brand to get more attention.

HMWs for Alex: How might we...

Better connect startups and candidates to recruiters on a personal level?

recommend opportunities based on candidates' preference?

increase the online presence of startups?

BROOKE

We met "Brooke", a designer at Loro Piana who graduated from Parsons School of Design with a degree in Fashion Design.

We were surprised to hear that she felt passionate grinding a design contest where she showed off a thesis in a runway show, earning her an internship after she won.

We wonder if this means that competitions are more fun and effective than typical recruiting methods.

It would be game changing if there were more fun and engaging competitions or challenges for finding opportunities.

HMWs for Brooke: How might we...

help designers better showcase their work to recruiters?

create a platform that connects recruiters to creative workers?

help candidates find jobs through non-traditional ways?

MATT

We met "Matt" who is a Senior at Berkeley studying computer science who wants to go into a Machine Learning career in Autonomous Driving.

We were surprised to notice his immense frustration with non-technical recruiters who do not understand his complex research experience.

We wonder if this means that miscommunication with recruiters loses him job opportunities as he cannot highlight his technical experience.

It would be game changing to easily communicate his specialized experience so recruiters better understand him as an applicant.

HMWs for Matt: How might we...

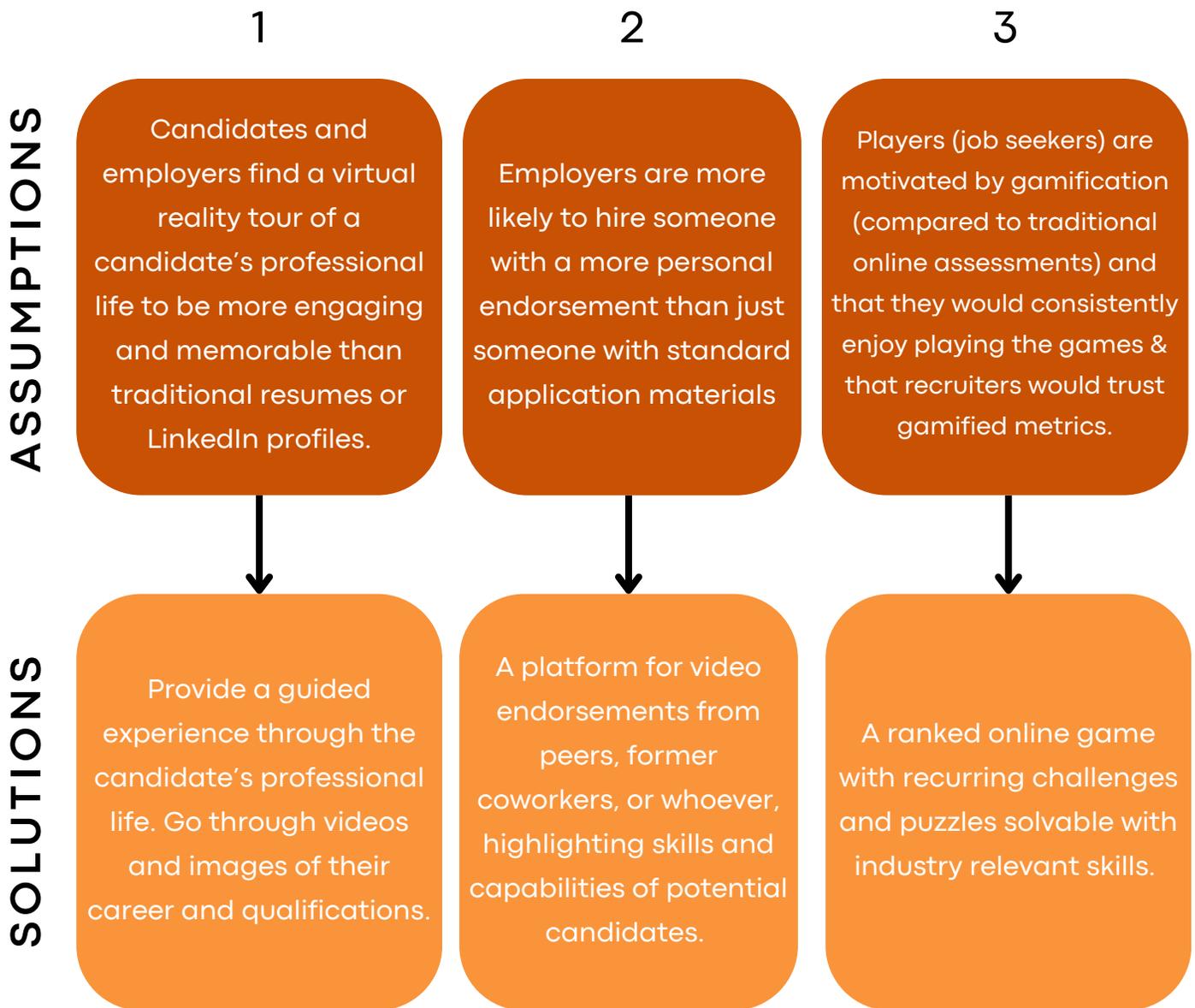
prepare applicants to better market their accomplishments to recruiters/hiring companies?

use artifacts created by the applicant to highlight their skills?

have technical engineers take over parts of the recruiter role?

TOP 3 SOLUTIONS

After compiling many HMWs, we derived three top assumptions and solutions to proceed in our design process.



To test these solutions, we carefully crafted 3 experience prototypes to ensure key underlying assumptions that the solutions were based off of were true.

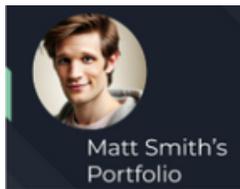
EXPERIENCE PROTOTYPES

1. Visual Career Portfolio

Who did we test on: Recruiters or resume reviewers

What did we do: Guide them through “visual” career of a candidate

Observations we looked for: Whether the visual career was more engaging and induced the recruiter to increase the chances they hire the candidate.



Successes

- Participant: does make the candidate look “awesome”
- Was thoroughly engaging



Shortcomings

- Doesn't highlight skills well enough
- Could benefit from real / more realistic pictures

Implications



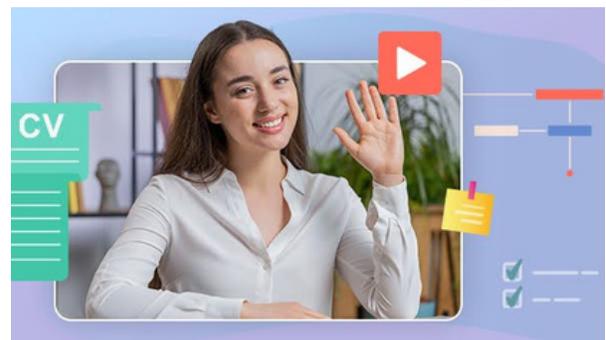
- Participant: Idea “has potential”, just needs to highlight skills
- Descriptions of skills still necessary for determining qualifications

2. Video Endorsement Versus Paper Resume

Who did we test on: 3 Participants from varying backgrounds

What did we do: Have them compare between standard resume and video endorsement supported resume

Observations we looked for: Compare the rankings for “likeliness” to hire between two options



Successes

- Hireability increases after experience (2-3 point increase)
- Discovered former boss endorsement most impactful



Shortcomings

- Strong endorsements have less impact when candidates do not have necessary skills
- Could have compared to other endorsement systems



Implications

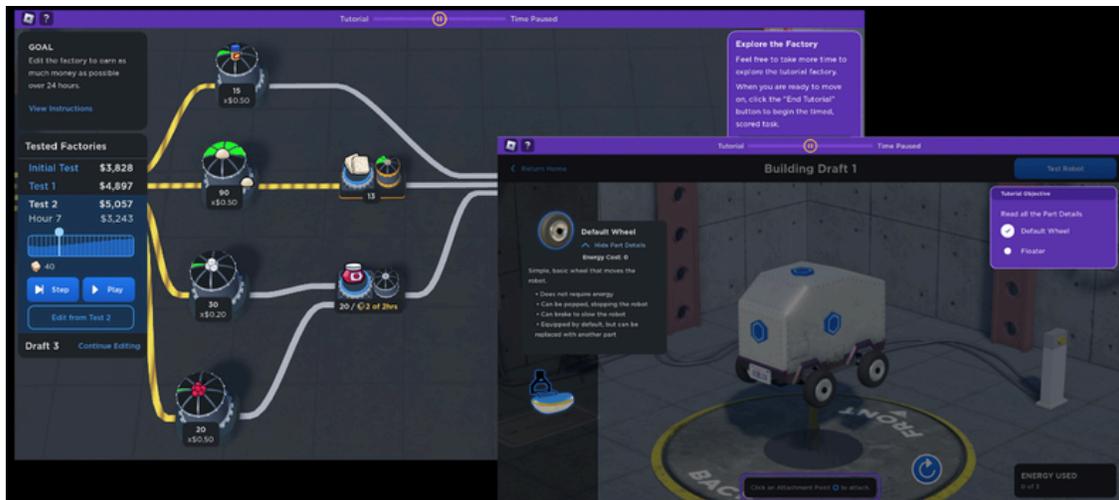
- Could be impactful in soft-skill focused industries
- Explore different types of endorsements

3. Online Skills Game Assessment

Who did we test on: Recruiters and potential candidate

What did we do: Provide online skill games versus traditional online assessments

Observations we looked for: Gather feedback on skill testing preferences



A snapshot of the game we provided participants to play



Successes

- Participant could showcase skills through games
- Reported increased engagement, reduced stress



Shortcomings

- Recruiters still need more technical assessments
- Game not most interesting to participant
- Games in tech not as novel



Implications

- Recruiters still necessitate technical skill training interviews
- Explore impact of game in other industries other than tech

DESIGN EVOLUTION

FINAL SOLUTION

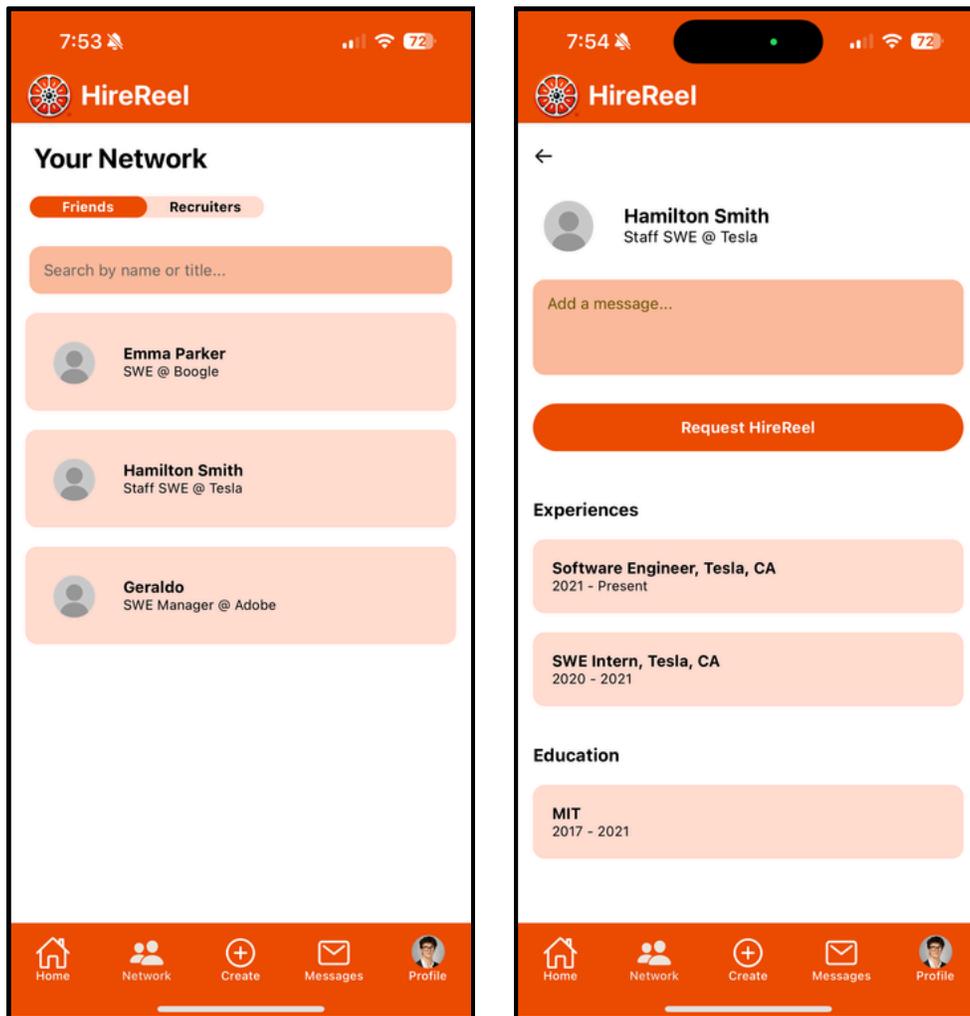
Our final solution connected a through-line between one of our interviewees, Matt, and the interests of our team. As our member's were also near-grad student's recruiting, we decided to address Matt's issue of difficulty communicating skills to recruiters. Based on the successes of our second experience prototype that contrasted video and regular resumes, we decided to proceed with exploring a solution related to video resumes. After thorough brainstorming, we decided our final solution would be a video endorsement platform that enabled potential job candidates to best showcase their skills through endorsements created by former employers. Like a letter of recommendation, or a skill endorsement on LinkedIn, but more interactive and substantial as we've seen from our experience prototype results.

TASKS

From just the initial idea of "video endorsements", our team began to ideate other services our platform could have. These services were then implemented into various levels of tasks, with each level catering to differently involved users (simple, moderate, and complex). These tasks would come together to form "HireReel".

1. Simple: Request a HireReel.

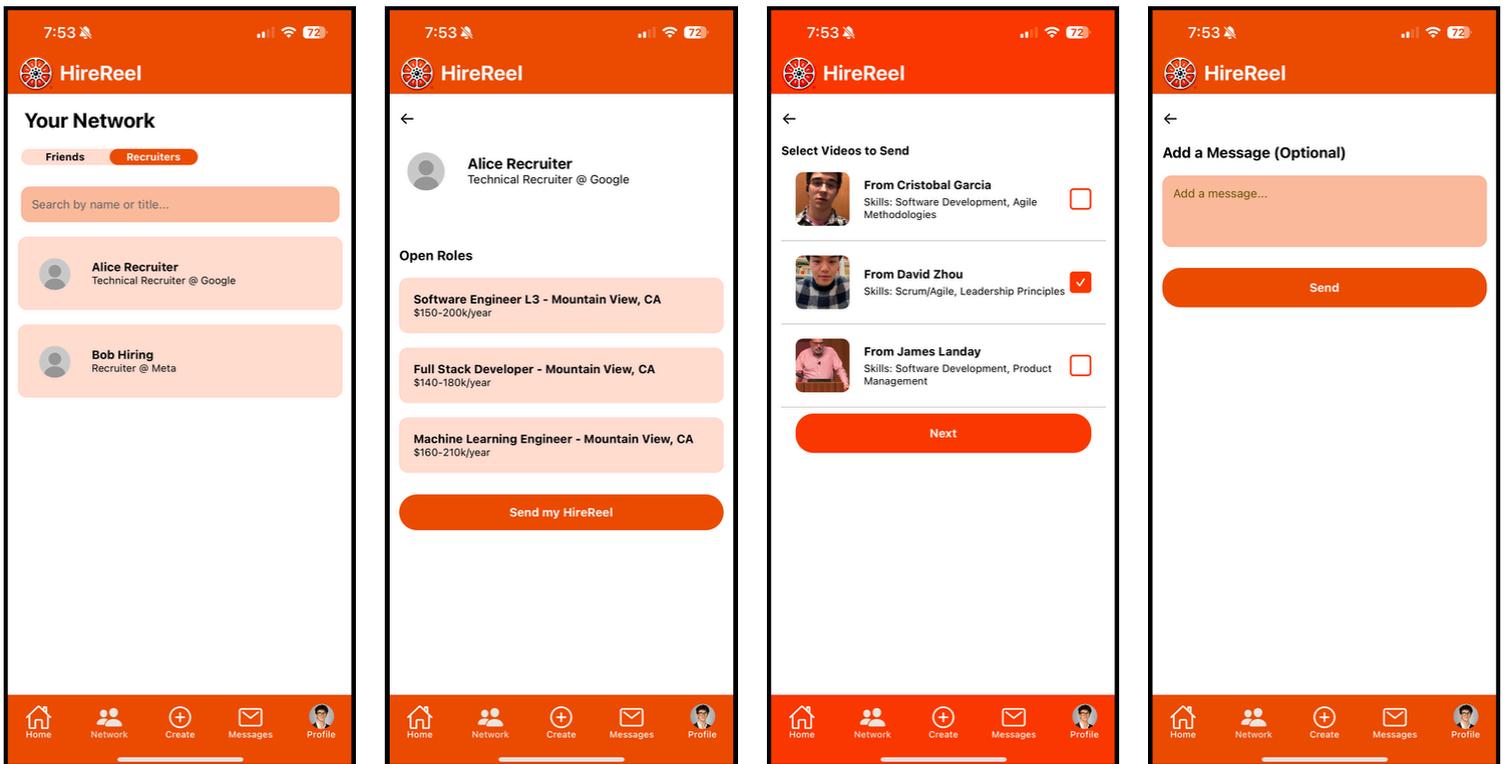
This task is one of the core functions of HireReel. A HireReel user would be able to access their professional network, select a former employer, and request a video endorsement wherein their employer speaks on the skills and capabilities of the candidate. A potential user can filter and search through their network, write a message requesting a HireReel, and the recipient would then receive it. This is one of the critical functions that enable users to collect HireReels they can then send to recruiters to get noticed.



Users can access their network from the navigation bar, select a former employer or peer, and send them a message requesting a HireReel the user can use to send to recruiters.

2. Moderate: Send a HireReel to a Recruiter.

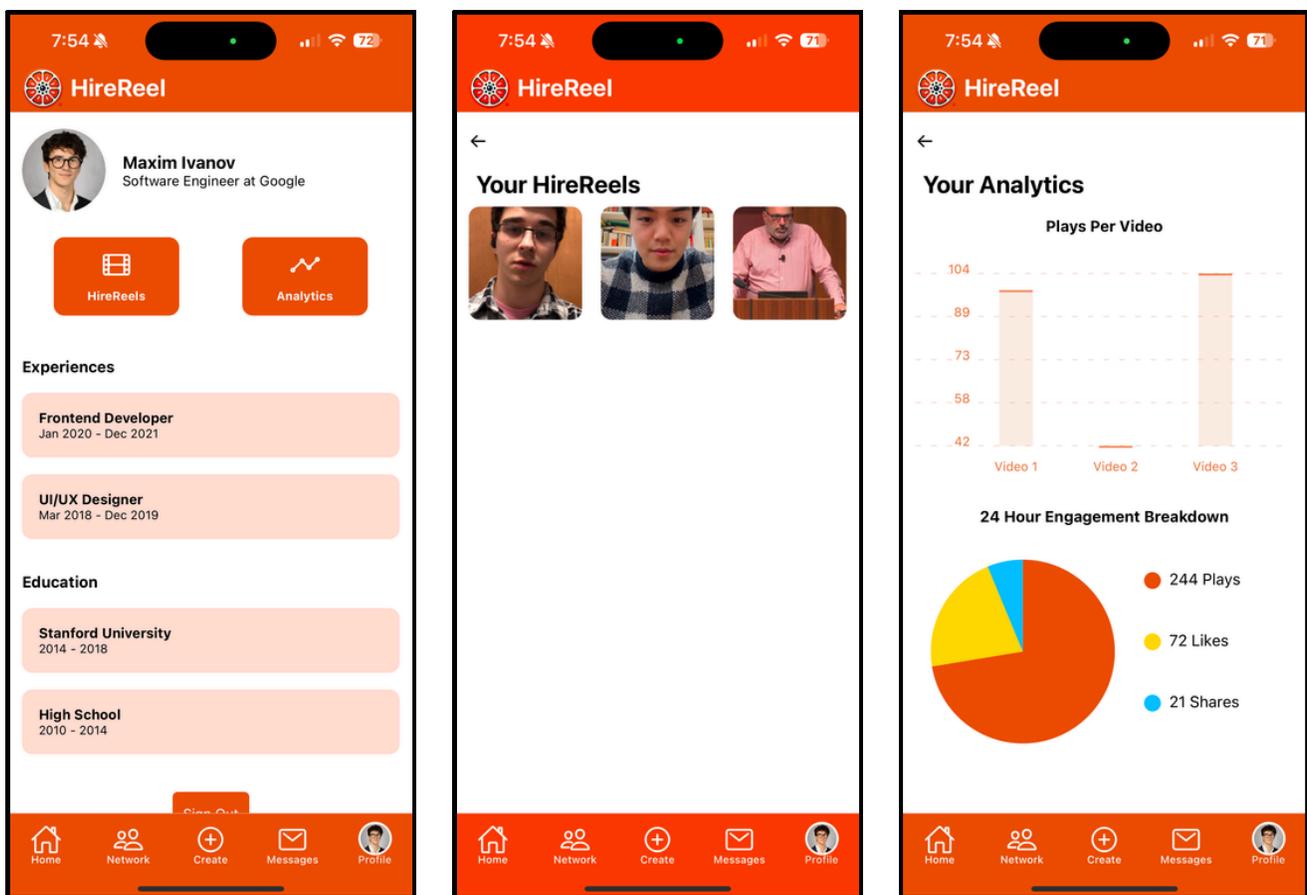
For users that have acquired HireReels, they can then select and send them to recruiters. A list of recruiters on the platform will be available to be searched and found. The goal of sending a HireReel to a recruiter should be for a candidate to demonstrate a greater level of engagement with the recruiter and their company, in addition to the recruiter being able to see a candidates qualifications through the visual format. Recruiters would note the increased engagement of the candidate, increasing the likelihood they hire the user.



Users can access a network of hiring recruiters, select a role, and send one of the HireReels they've received to the recruiter with an optional message.

3. Complex: View Analytics

For users that want to gain valuable, and advanced insights on the performance of their HireReels, viewing analytics from the bottom navigation bar can enable users to see the aggregate and advanced data. Gathering data on a user's performance on HireReel can help the user gauge their performance and influence on the platform, allowing the user to understand the reach of their profile and what kind of engagement they are receiving from recruiters and the broader community. This feature is particularly useful for advanced users who want more granular information regarding their presence on the platform.



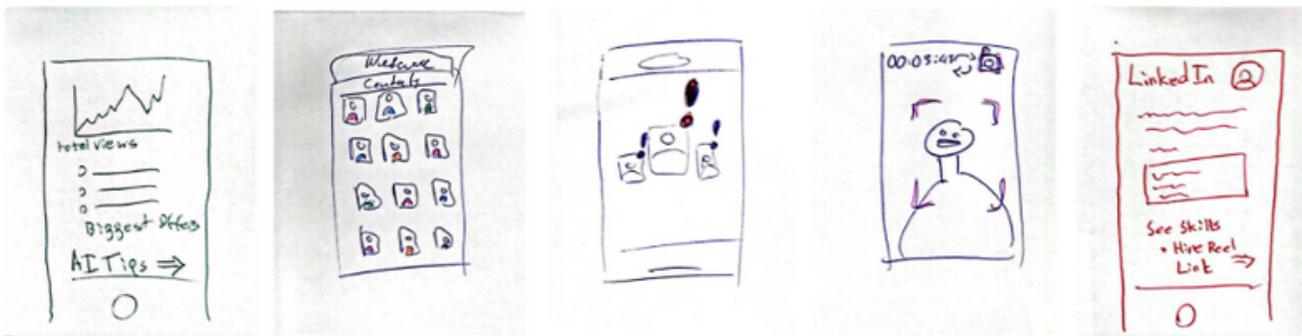
From the navigation bar, users can access their profile where they can press into analytics. They are then prompted to select a HireReel to view analytics for.

DESIGN EVOLUTION CONTINUED

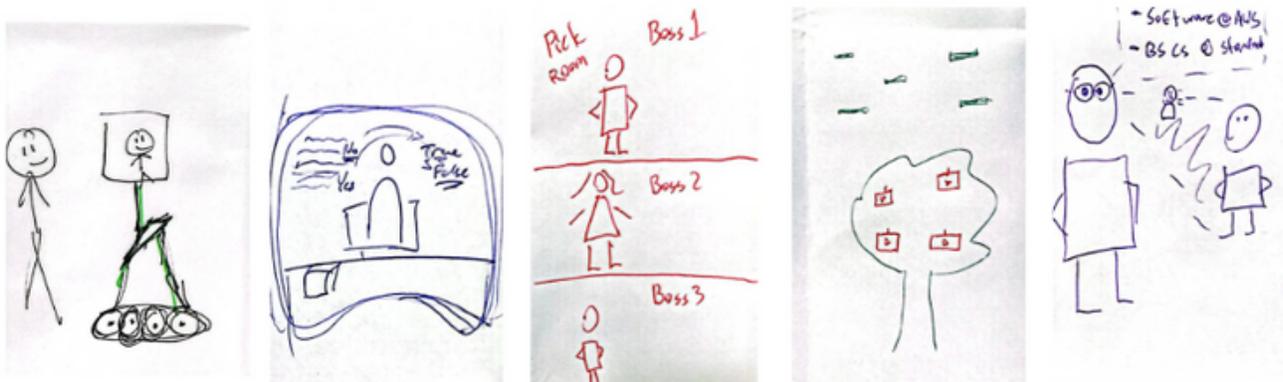
Initial Sketches

For more effective brainstorming, we first drew sketches of potential ideas ranging from wearables to AR to mobile app sketches. After compiling a high quantity of ideas, our team narrowed our area of interest to either a VR or a mobile app solution due to our team's previous experience in app development, and a general interest in creating an accessible solution that can be downloaded on any smartphone.

Sketches (Mobile App)



Sketches (VR)



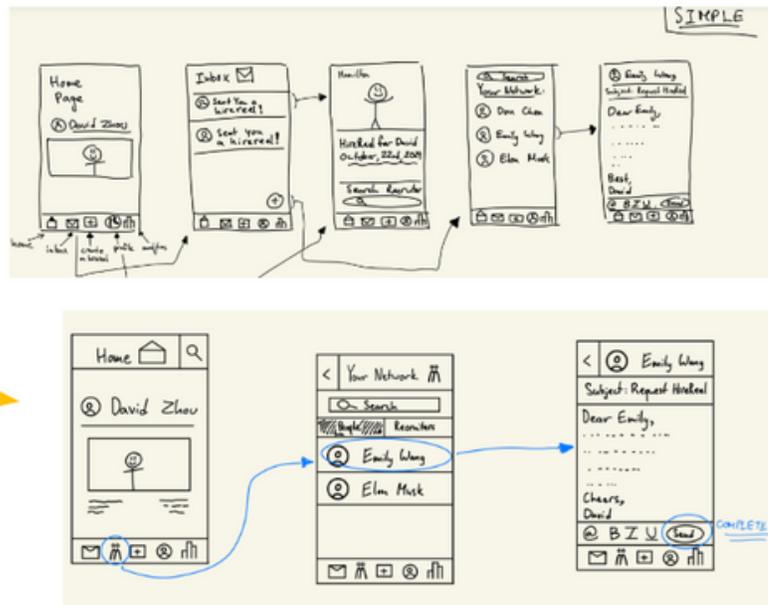
Low-Fi Prototypes

After sketching and brainstorming potential solutions, arriving upon the idea of a video endorsement platform, and selecting our tasks, our team then began creating low-fi paper prototypes of a potential HireReel UI, an app traversable by a navigation bar at the bottom of the screen. First creating and testing the prototype on paper enabled our team to inexpensively and quickly iterate through various UI design ideas.

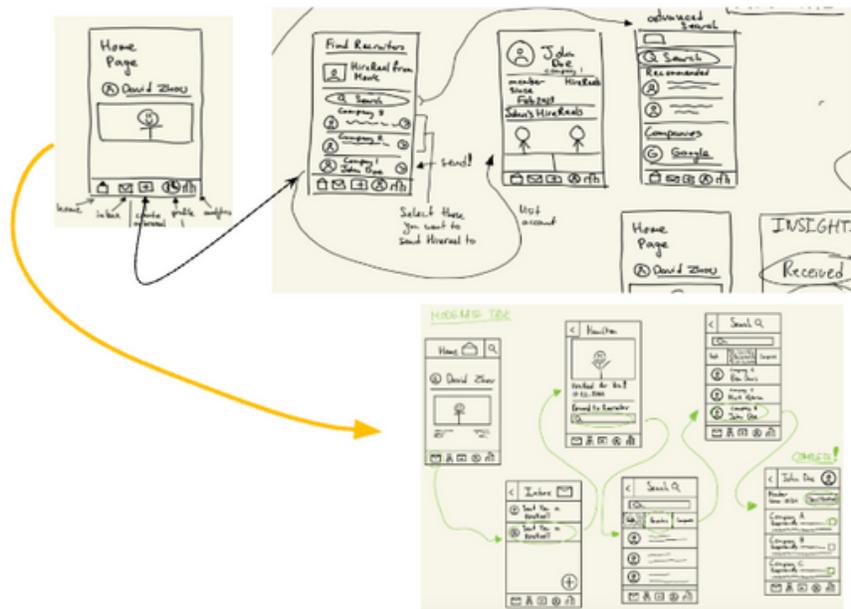
Having low-fi prototypes on paper also made it simpler to test usability with random outside participants. To initially test our ideas, our team went to Tresidder and approached several non-Stanford students to test our low-fi prototypes to gauge their thoughts on the then state of the UI. Participants were given a brief introduction about our idea and told to perform tasks without explicit instructions of how to complete them, all the while speaking aloud on their thought process. After a participant would complete a task, we would then ask for general feedback. In our team, one member was the facilitator, describing tasks and explaining the experiment, one member was taking notes and gathering metrics on our usability goals, and two members were “computers” switching out the paper screens as if the participant was truly interacting with a real app. During the testing, our note-taker would gather usability metrics such as number of mis-clicks and total time to accomplish task as a way of measuring our alignment with the following usability goals.

1. Minimizing the number of “mis-clicks” while trying to accomplish the tasks
2. Minimize time taken to complete each task.
3. Minimize rating of app's overall navigation ease on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being very easy and 10 being very difficult).

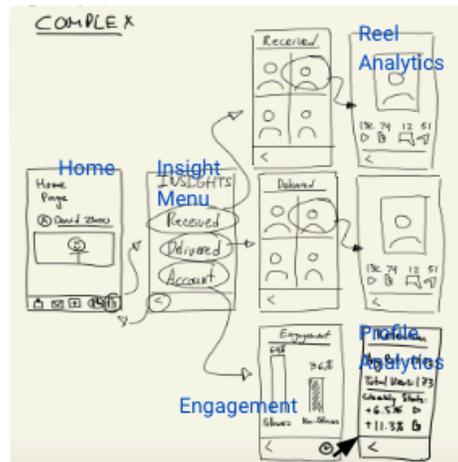
After testing our low-fi prototype with four participants, we gathered our notes and made changes to our UI before creating a Medium-fi prototype.



Simple Task: Initially, the UI for our simple task had a “messages” tab in our navigation bar to reach out to people in the user’s network to request a HireReel. Testing revealed that the envelope icon and messaging feature did not directly illicit the user to request a HireReel. Because this tasks also ended up taking the longest to complete, we decided to reduce the number of screens to hopefully streamline the task flow, and make it easier for users to request a HireReel.



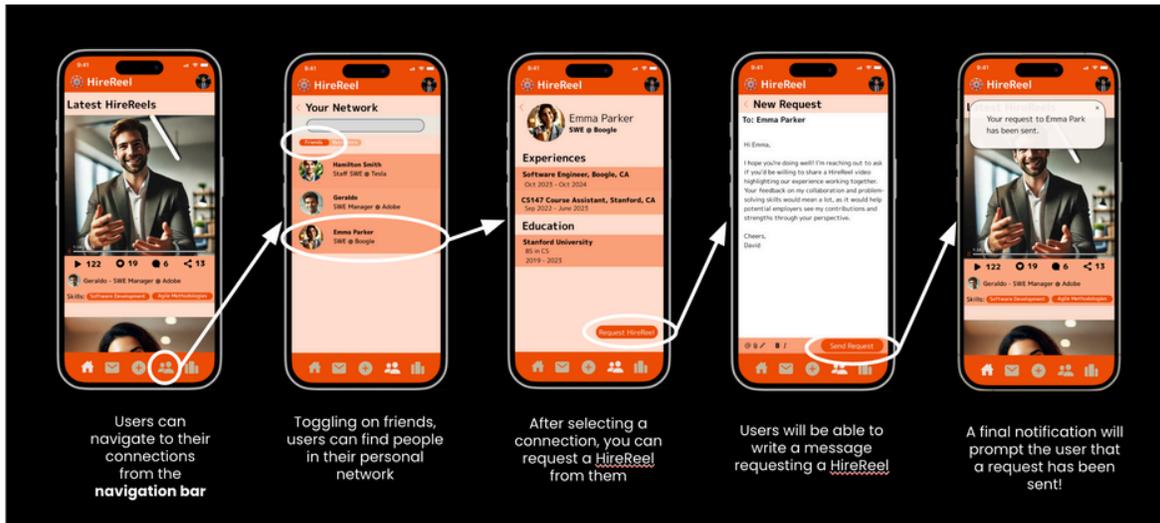
Moderate Task: Testing revealed that this task was the most unintuitive, as it was not explicitly clear where users could find recruiters to send their HireReels to. To address this, we attempted to make a clearer, more robust flow that guided the user through the HireReel sending process.



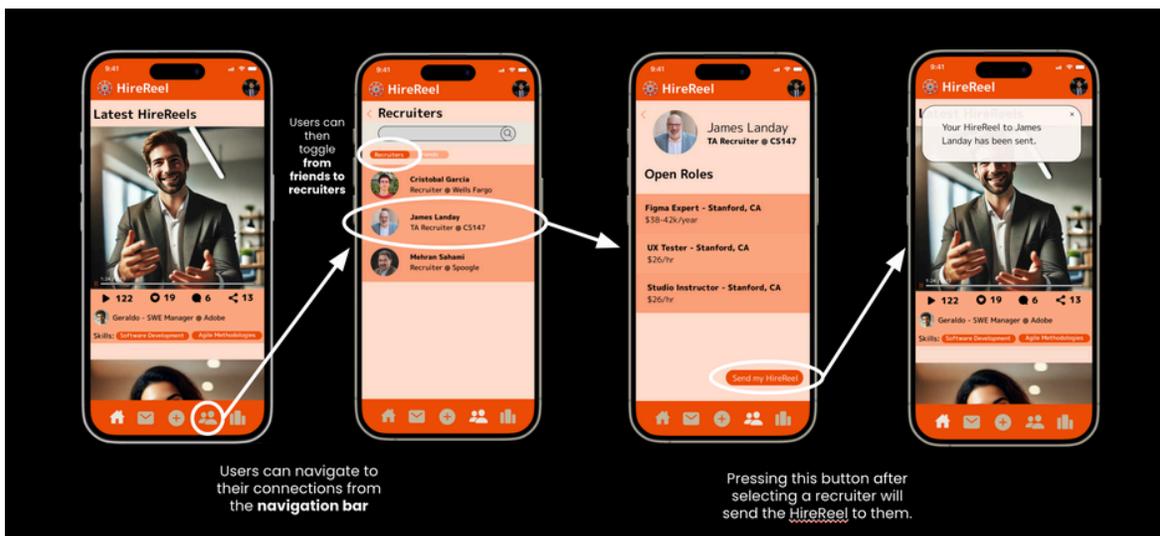
Complex Task: The complex task ended up being the most intuitive for testers. Some feedback we did receive though, was that certain icons were unclear or poorly drawn, so we decided to change some of them.

Medium-Fi Prototypes

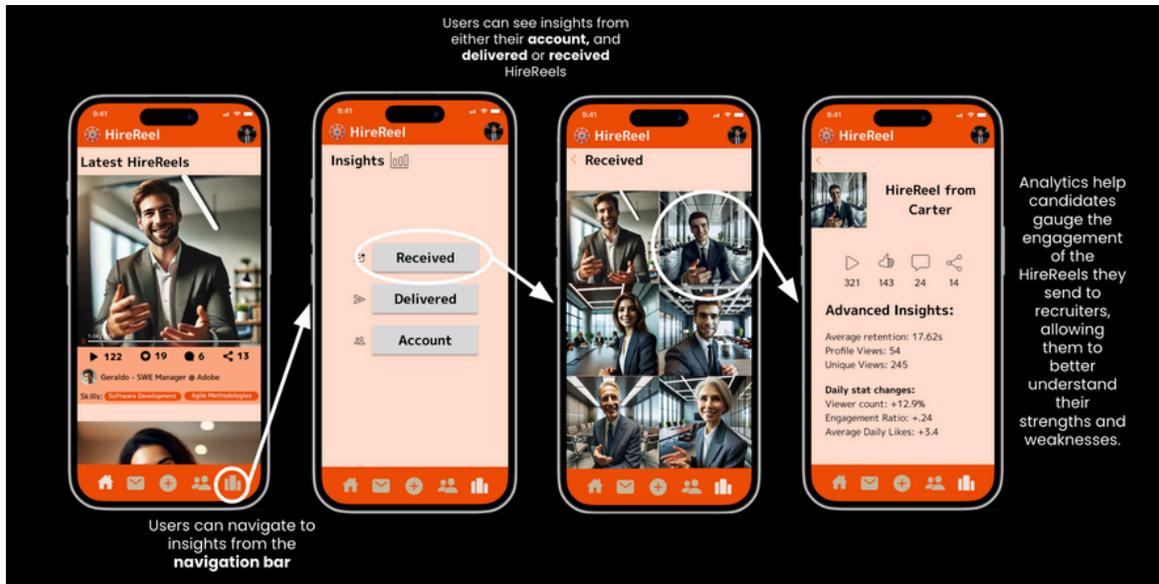
Following our our low-fi prototype, we used Figma to create the UI and wireframes for our medium-fi prototype. We would incorporate, with more detail, the lessons we gleaned from our low-fi usability testing into our medium-fi prototype.



Simple Task: We eventually baked requesting HireReel into the network tab of our navigation bar. This is enables users to simply find the person they wish to get a HireReel from, and ask UX Tester for a HireReel.

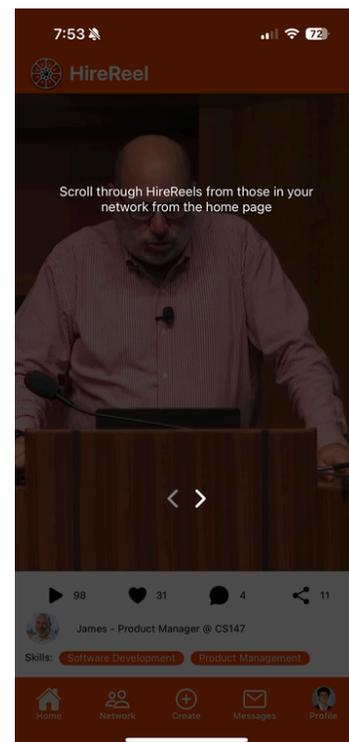


Moderate Task: To address the most problematic task from usability testing, we decided to simplify the process of sending a HireReel by putting recruiters alongside a user's network. So, any outreach related tasks can be performed from the same starting screen. Users simply need to toggle between their network and recruiters.



Complex Task: As this task was the least problematic, creating our medium-fi prototype mainly involved using more informative icons (such as the bar graph icon for analytics in the navigation bar).

To further refine and evaluate our medium-fi prototype before creating our high-fi prototype, our medium-fi prototype underwent a **heuristic evaluation** with our fellow studio members. In summary, our prototype received a total of 36 heuristic violations, with 22 rated to be either aesthetic or minor, 12 to found to be major, and 2 rated to be severe. The heuristic evaluation revealed the main issue with our prototype to be with defining the platform's purpose and function. Many of the users who tested our medium-fi prototype noted that our app would be more intuitive by proactively defining exactly what a "HireReel" and its purpose is. Because the idea is relatively novel, and the function of a HireReel requires explanation, more signposting and onboarding would be useful for users to better understand the function of the overall app, and therefore intuit its smaller tasks.



In the final design, our app walks users through an onboarding process such that first-time users understand locations and purposes of certain functions .

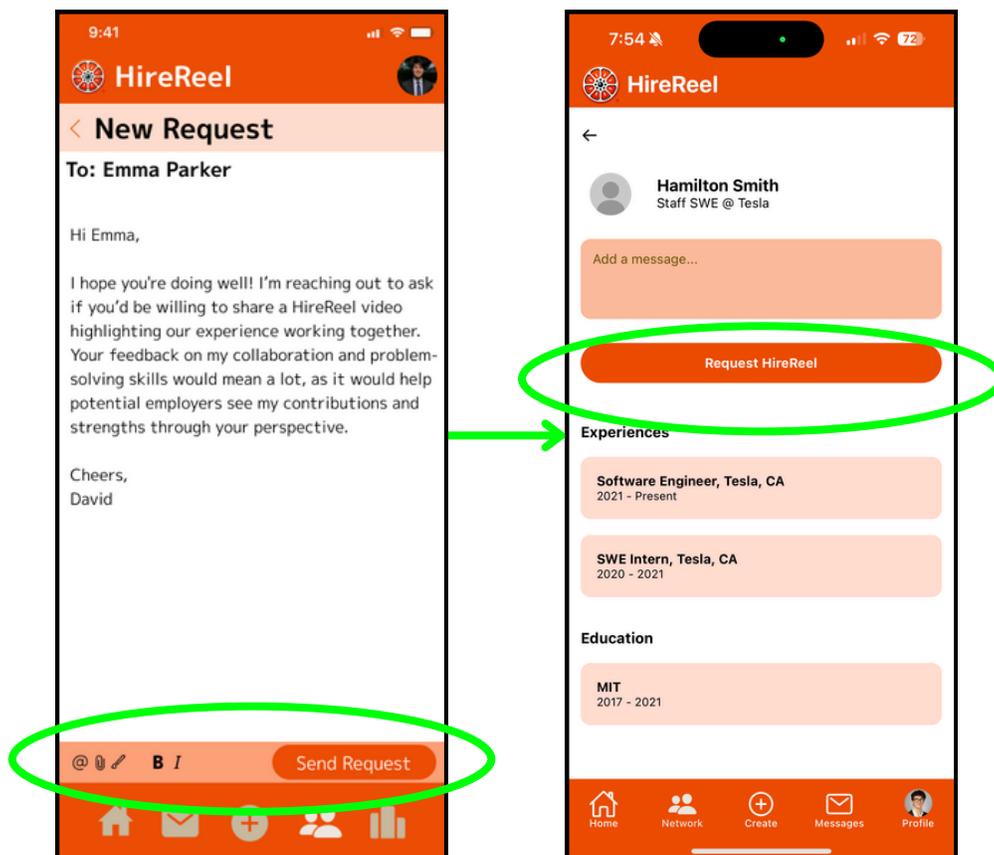
3-4 Rated Heuristic Violations

For our heuristic violations, violations rated at a 1 or 2 were easily addressed with either aesthetic or simple functional changes, but violations rated a 3 or 4 were more intentionally addressed in our final design. Below, fixes are organized by task, and each heuristic violation is described by this format: [Task] / [Heuristic Evaluation Problem #] / [Type] / [Severity].

Simple Task (Request HireReel)

Problem #4 / H4 / Severity: 3

- Problem: Icons next to "Send HireReel" button are too small, and are difficult to discern even for people without visual impairment.
- Fix: We removed the icons altogether from the "Send HireReel" button. In the final design, there is just an option to send a message in plain text which increases clarity.



Send HireReel button changed to be easier to understand.

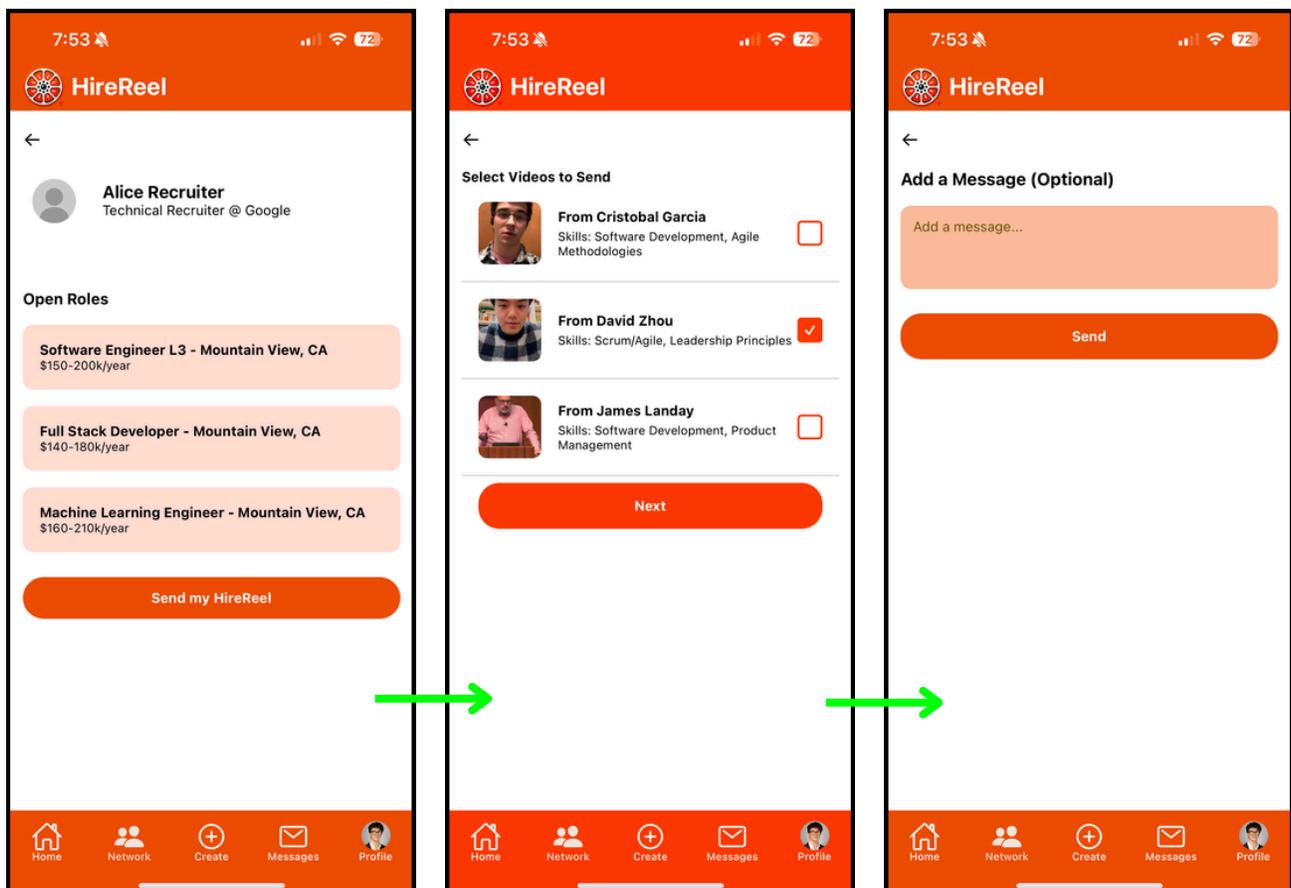
Moderate Task (Send HireReel)

Problem #6 / H5 / Severity: 3

- Problem: The "Send HireReel" button immediately sends the HireReel, which may be performed on accident.
- Fix: By segmenting the sending process into first selecting a HireReel, then selecting a recruiter, and then creating a message into different screens, users can more intentionally evade accidentally sending a HireReel. This feature can be improved with a prompt asking for the user's certainty before sending.

Problem #9 / H6 / Severity: 3

- Problem: Users are unable to view a summary of what they are about to send on the screen where they send their HireReel.
- Fix: Similarly to Problem 6, users are more conscious of the sending process through the separated screens. However, this feature could still be further improved with a small draft summary from the "Send HireReel" screen.



Final Prototype flow for sending a HireReel to a recruiter

Complex Task (View Analytics)

Problem #11 / H2 / Severity: 4

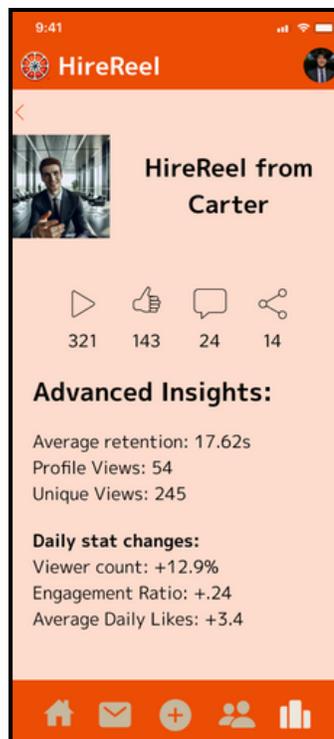
- Problem: Advanced insights do not represent necessary or useful information; insights do not make sense.
- Fix: Removed excess insights keeping only necessary insights that enable users to better understand engagement with their account and content.

Problem #12 / H11 / Severity: 3

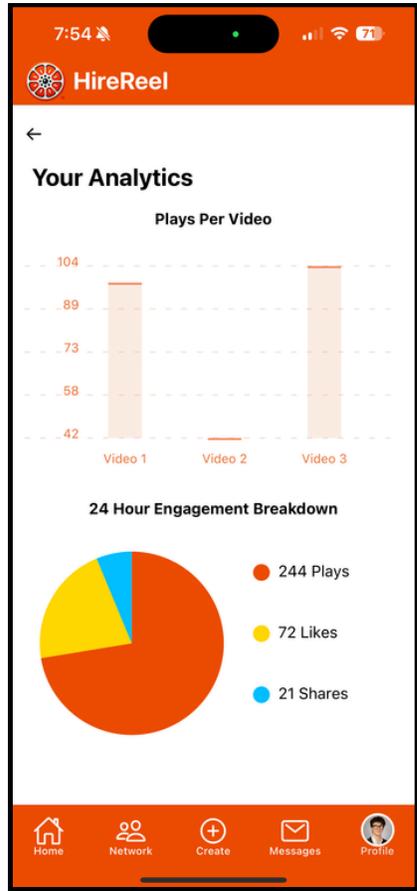
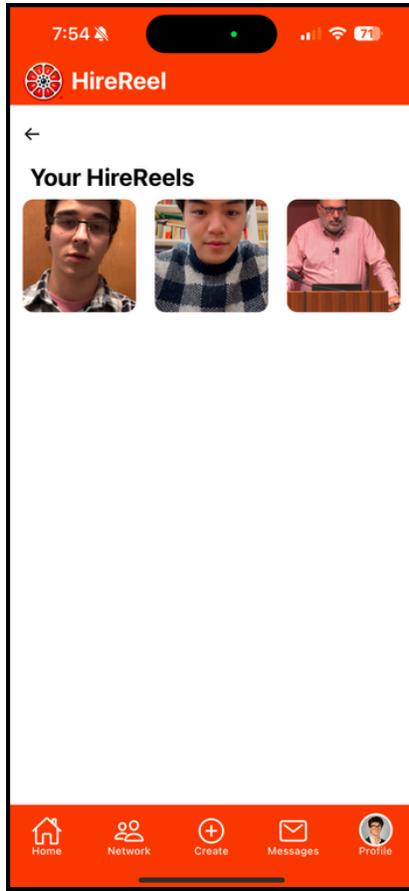
- Problem: Received HireReel analytics only contain pictures of HireReels, which could be difficult for visually impaired users to discern between HireReels.
- Fix: We decided not to fix this because more information on HireReels can be found upon clicking the picture. This maintains the clarity and simpleness of the UI when looking for a HireReel to view analytics for.

Problem #14 / H6 / Severity: 3

- Problem: Users are unsure what “Received, Sent, and Account” refer to.
- Fix: We’ve consolidated analytics into the profile of the user, meaning they can see analytics alongside their profile instead of having a designated analytics tab. This way all insights are combined and there is no need to differentiate between the categories.



Medium-fi analytics page contains unclear and unnecessary information.



Final analytics task flow. Analytics are only about the HireReels that you have. This reduces confusion about what descriptive data relates to.

All Tasks

Problem #15 / H4 / Severity: 4

- Problem: Use of the word "HireReel" is confusing. Especially when discerning whether a HireReel is intended for a friend or recruiter.
- Fix: We narrowed the purpose of a HireReel to be solely for recruiting purposes. In the final design, HireReels can only be sent to recruiters.

Problem #18 & #20 / H11 / Severity: 3

- Problem: Contrast of colors on the app are generally very low (#18), making it difficult for color-blind users to use the app. An example is the icons on the navigation bar (#20)
- Fix: Colors on the final design have higher contrast, helping user's discern between different visuals on the app.

Problem #22 / H11 / Severity: 3

- Problem: Information contained within HireReels should be accessible beyond a video format.
- Fix: In the final prototype, users have the option to create AI-generated subtitles.

Extra Violations

Problem #26 & #31 / H3 / Severity: 3

- Problem: Denying to import contacts during onboarding prevents the user from moving to the app and brings user back to the login page.
- Fix: Importing contacts is now fully optional, and users can choose to skip this option.

Problem #30 / H5 / Severity: 3

- Problem: Once a user presses "Sign Up", they cannot go back to login.
- Fix: Users can now return to the login page if they accidentally press "Sign Up".

Problem #36 / H2 / Severity: 3

- Problem: Users are unsure how to interact with a HireReel they have received.
- Fix: HireReels are viewable in video format in the final hi-fi prototype.

Values in Design

In the development of HireReel, we focused on three core values that guided our design decisions: authenticity and trust, empowerment and clarity, and inclusivity and accessibility. These values informed not only the platform's overall look and feel but also the specific functionality and interactions within the app. By keeping these principles at the forefront of our design process, we aimed to ensure that every step respected and advanced the interests of both candidates and endorsers.

Authenticity and Trust

One of the key motivations behind HireReel was to create a verifiable platform where professional endorsements felt genuine, credible, and meaningful. Unlike traditional text-based recommendations that can sometimes appear formulaic or insincere, video endorsements capture tone, body language, and enthusiasm, making them feel more trustworthy.

To foster authenticity, our interface highlights the role of the endorser as a real individual rather than a generic source. We've prioritized design elements that reinforce personal connection:

- Each HireReel is accompanied by a clear visual cue of the endorser's identity—such as their name, photo, and relevant job title—ensuring that users immediately understand who is vouching for the candidate.
- **Authentic Video Format:** The interaction design for recording and viewing videos emphasizes casual professionalism (e.g., simple backgrounds, straightforward recording prompts), ensuring the content focuses on the candidate's real qualities rather than overproduced visuals.

Empowerment and Clarity

We wanted HireReel to put candidates in the driver's seat, giving them a clear path to bolster their professional profiles. By simplifying the process of requesting, sharing, and tracking these endorsements, the platform serves as a powerful tool that helps candidates stand out in a competitive job market. To embody empowerment and clarity, we integrated:

- Requesting a HireReel is structured into simple steps reducing uncertainty and helping candidates feel confident rather than intimidated.
- Data-Driven Insights: The statistics panel is easy to navigate and visually clear, showing candidates how often their HireReels are viewed. By providing interpretable metrics rather than dense analytics, we help candidates make strategic decisions—like requesting additional endorsements or sharing their HireReel more widely—without feeling overwhelmed.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

We designed HireReel to be inclusive and accessible so that professionals from all backgrounds, technical skill levels, and abilities can benefit. This includes considering visual accessibility, ensuring comfortable viewing of video content, and removing unnecessary technical barriers. To achieve inclusivity and accessibility, we implemented:

- High-contrast color choices, adjustable text size, and clear iconography make the app usable for individuals with varying visual or cognitive abilities.
- Since HireReels rely heavily on video, we ensured that captions and transcripts can be easily added or requested. This feature helps those who are hard of hearing or prefer reading text-based endorsements.
- From the earliest paper prototypes to the React Native build, we tested multiple form factors and screen sizes. Ensuring HireReel works smoothly across phones and tablets broadens its reach to candidates and endorsers everywhere.

By weaving these values into the core design features of HireReel, we have aimed to build a platform that not only advances candidates' careers but does so in a manner that is honest, user-centric, and welcoming to all.

Value Tensions

Visibility vs Confidentiality

We aimed to help candidates stand out by sharing endorsements widely, but doing so risked overexposing endorsers' personal information. In our current prototype, candidates can selectively send HireReels to specific recruiters, but more granular privacy settings may be needed so endorsers can maintain control over who views their testimony.

Authenticity vs Candidate Control

While genuine, candid endorsements give recruiters a more accurate picture of a candidate's strengths, candidates might want to curate or omit certain HireReels. We balanced this tension by allowing candidates to decide which endorsements to share, but strictly filtering content might inadvertently undermine the authenticity we sought to foster.

Ease of Use vs Verification

We minimized steps when requesting and recording HireReels to encourage participation, potentially reducing assurance of endorser credibility. Introducing verification features or strict identity checks could increase trust, but would add friction, deterring quick and seamless engagement.

Data Insights vs Privacy

Detailed analytics on endorsement views and recruiter interactions help candidates refine their strategies, yet too much transparency could breach endorsers' or recruiters' privacy. Our current approach provides aggregate metrics rather than revealing sensitive viewer data. Future iterations may explore more nuanced privacy controls to maintain trust.

FINAL PROTOTYPE IMPLEMENTATION

For our final prototype, we developed a functioning product that can be used in both iOS and Android, as well as Web Browser platforms. The following section outlines the tools used and other details for the final implementation of the project.

Tools Used

For the final mobile app, our team used:

- React Native, with Expo Go
 - For coding in features and engaging with the product from a real smartphone mobile device
- Expo-Videos
 - For video playback capabilities on the platform
- Iconicon
 - For icons used in the final design

For backend, our team used:

- Supabase:
 - For authentication and database
- Twilio SendGrid
 - For email account authentication
- AWS Route 53
 - Email DNS hosting
- AWS S3
 - Video Hosting

Wizard of Oz Items

While our high-fidelity prototype demonstrates the core functionality and workflows of HireReel, some features have been implemented using Wizard of Oz techniques. These approaches simulate the functionality of certain features to present a finished and cohesive product, even though the underlying systems are not yet fully developed. On the next page, we detail why the following components are Wizard of Oz in the current implementation:

1. Sample Account with No Database Content

The sample account included in the app does not pull data dynamically from a backend database. Instead, all content—such as user profiles, endorser lists, and recruiter interactions—is hard-coded for demonstration purposes. This means that while the interface simulates functionality such as browsing endorsers or accessing past HireReels, these interactions are predefined and static. In a real implementation, these elements would rely on a backend system to fetch user-specific data dynamically, allowing personalized content for each account.

2. No Stateful Database

Since there is no stateful backend database, the app cannot store or retrieve data persistently. For example, when a user sends a HireReel or updates their profile, these actions appear to work during the session but do not persist beyond it. Upon restarting the app, all actions reset to their initial hard-coded state. A stateful database would enable features such as tracking the status of HireReel requests, saving video endorsements, and maintaining user interactions over time, which are currently only simulated.

3. Video Metrics

The analytics dashboard in the current prototype displays video performance metrics such as views, shares, and recruiter interactions. However, these metrics are not dynamically calculated. Instead, they are static, hardcoded numbers designed to illustrate the intended functionality. A full implementation would require backend integration to track real-time interactions with each HireReel, collect data on recruiter views, and compute these metrics accurately.

4. Machine Learning Subtitle Generation

While the app includes a feature to display subtitles on HireReel videos, these subtitles are not generated dynamically. In the prototype, placeholder subtitles are shown to simulate the experience of accessibility features. In a functional version, a machine learning (ML) model would analyze the video's audio content, transcribe speech into text, and provide subtitles in real time. Additionally, this system would require robust error handling to ensure accurate transcription and support for multiple languages, which are currently outside the scope of the prototype.

Why These Wizard of Oz Techniques Were Used

These techniques allowed us to present a polished prototype while focusing on the core design and usability of the app. By simulating these functionalities, we could prioritize the user experience and test the viability of the app's concept without the extensive development resources required for full backend and ML implementation. This approach ensures we gather meaningful feedback from users and stakeholders before investing heavily in complex infrastructure and algorithms. Moving forward, addressing these Wizard of Oz components will involve:

- Building a scalable backend database for persistent state management.
- Integrating analytics tracking for real-time video metrics.
- Developing or integrating ML-based subtitle generation tools for accessibility.

These enhancements will turn the simulated features into fully operational systems, completing the app's functionality and delivering on its full potential.

Hard Coded Items

To demonstrate the functionality of HireReel during its development phase, several components were implemented using hard-coded elements. These static features simulate the intended user experience without requiring full backend integration. Below, we explain why each of these elements is hard-coded and the implications for the final implementation.

1. **Sample User Profiles:** Preloaded User Names and Job Titles

The prototype includes preloaded user profiles with sample names, photos, and job titles for demonstration purposes. These profiles are not dynamically generated or tied to a database. Instead, they serve to illustrate how a user might interact with endorsers and recruiters within the app. A fully implemented version would pull profile data from a backend system, allowing users to view real profiles of their endorsers and personalize their experience. Hardcoding these profiles allows us to showcase workflows like requesting a HireReel or viewing recruiter feedback without requiring real user data.

2. Placeholder Videos to Simulate Uploaded HireReels

The prototype uses placeholder videos in place of actual user-uploaded content. These videos mimic what a real HireReel might look like, providing a visual representation of the feature. However, they are not dynamically uploaded or stored. Users cannot upload or share their own video endorsements in the current prototype, and all displayed videos are preloaded into the app. A fully functional system would involve video recording, upload, storage on a cloud service, and secure access mechanisms. By hardcoding videos, we ensure that the core interface and functionality can be demonstrated without relying on complex video hosting and processing systems.

3. Fixed Metrics: Hardcoded Likes, Views, and Shares

The analytics feature displays metrics such as the number of likes, views, and shares for each HireReel. These metrics are not generated dynamically or tied to real interactions with the content. Instead, they are static values designed to illustrate how users could assess the performance of their endorsements. In the final implementation, these metrics would be calculated based on real-time data collected from user interactions with each HireReel. By hardcoding these numbers, we provide a conceptual preview of the feature without requiring a backend infrastructure to track and process engagement data.

Why These Elements Were Hard-Coded

Hard-coding these components allowed us to present a polished prototype with minimal development time while focusing on refining the design and usability of the app. This approach ensured that the workflows for key features could be demonstrated clearly during usability testing and stakeholder presentations, even without backend integration or advanced functionality.

REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

Key Learnings of Design Thinking Process

One of the most impactful lessons came from our needfinding interviews, where we continuously uncovered unexpected insights into job candidates' challenges. Something we thought was particularly helpful was going into interviews without seeking out specific responses. Especially as our team is in the same demographic as the users of our domain, it was easy for our experiences and biases to contort and lead interviews such that they did not reveal novel or interesting information. Following a process where we asked interviewees for their experiences, and for them to build upon their emotions, elicited many surprising and insightful points, which we then later built into our ideas.

We also found that consistently iterating on HireReel from its lo-fi sketches to the high-fidelity prototype was a key part to its overall usability and success. While some core functionalities remained constant, such as the ability to request and share HireReels, other features evolved significantly. For instance, our analytics page underwent multiple rounds of revisions to ensure users could interpret performance metrics clearly. Feedback from studio sessions, classmates, and our TA helped us identify usability gaps and refine workflows, leading to a polished final prototype. Rarely did a feature or function work perfectly on the first iteration, so having time to constantly build and iterate, especially in low stake and cost, low-fi prototypes, was extremely useful to having a solid and functional final prototype.

Another key takeaway was the value of teamwork and diverse skill sets. Our team included members with varying expertise and interest in user experience, programming, enabling us to tackle challenges efficiently as we built upon each other. Open communication ensured that team members could step in and support one another when needed, fostering a collaborative and adaptive working environment that was extremely conducive to both effecting and fun learning!

Key Learnings About Studio Theme

Our studio theme of job accessibility and development encouraged us to explore how technology can bridge gaps in the hiring process and empower job seekers from diverse backgrounds.

We learned that accessibility in the job market isn't just about providing tools but ensuring those tools are equitable and inclusive. This perspective influenced many design choices for HireReel, such as adding captions for video endorsements and ensuring compatibility with screen readers, making the platform usable for individuals with varying abilities.

A key insight from the studio was the importance of amplifying underrepresented voices. This led us to design HireReel as a platform that highlights candidates' authentic skills and experiences through endorsements that feel personal and relatable, rather than relying solely on traditional resumes.

We also grappled with the tension between simplicity and functionality. Early in the design process, we aimed to incorporate advanced features like detailed analytics. However, feedback from studio sessions helped us realize that overly complex systems could alienate users, particularly those less familiar with professional tools. By prioritizing clarity and ease of use, we aligned HireReel with the theme's focus on accessibility.

Overall, the studio theme challenged us to think critically about how HireReel could lower barriers to employment and help job seekers connect with recruiters in a way that is meaningful, empowering, and equitable.

Key Learnings about HireReel

We learned that the success of HireReel relies on its ability to blend professional authenticity with ease of use. While the concept of video endorsements is innovative, we needed to ensure the app felt approachable for users who might be unfamiliar with recording or sharing video content. We also had to face a unique challenge of filling this niche, and had to derive inspiration for UI design from multiple models instead of building off existing apps that have a similar function. This influenced design choices such as intuitive navigation, clear prompts, and optional features like AI-generated captions.

Finally, HireReel reinforced the importance of iterative design. Each stage of development—from paper sketches to Figma prototypes and React Native implementation—revealed new insights that improved the app's usability and effectiveness. We also found that we also adhered too much to initial designs in the prototyping process, and felt reluctant to create wholly different solutions or designs for the sake of keeping old designs. Have built in opportunities throughout the class, though, enabled our team to experiment often with how HireReel could effectively tackle the novel idea of video endorsements through mobile app design. Constant iteration ensured that HireReel aligned closely with the needs of both job candidates and recruiters.

Next Steps

If we had more time to develop HireReel, we would focus on enhancing its functionality, scalability, and user experience to fully realize its potential as a platform for job accessibility and development.

1. **Backend Integration:** A key priority would be integrating a robust backend system to support dynamic features such as user account management, real-time data storage, and secure video hosting. This would allow actions like sending HireReels, tracking recruiter interactions, and saving analytics metrics to persist across sessions, providing a seamless and consistent user experience.
2. **Advanced Accessibility Features:** We would expand accessibility by implementing AI-driven subtitle generation, transcription services, and multi-language support for HireReels. These features would make the platform more inclusive for users with varying needs, such as those who are hearing impaired or speak languages other than English.
3. **Improved User Onboarding:** Developing an intuitive onboarding process with interactive tutorials and tooltips would help first-time users understand the platform's capabilities quickly. This could include guided workflows for requesting, sending, and analyzing HireReels, ensuring a smooth learning curve.
4. **Personalization Features:** Adding personalized recommendations based on user behavior, such as suggesting endorsers to request HireReels from or identifying potential areas of skill emphasis, would make the platform more tailored to individual needs.
5. **Recruiter and Endorser Focused Features:** To enhance its value to recruiters, we would introduce recruiter dashboards with tools for organizing received HireReels, filtering candidates by skills or roles, and providing feedback directly through the platform.

By focusing on these areas, we would not only strengthen HireReel's functionality but also ensure it becomes a comprehensive and impactful tool for job seekers and recruiters alike. These steps would help us realize HireReel's mission of improving job accessibility and empowering candidates to showcase their authentic skills in a competitive job market.