

SHYFT

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// Design is as much a matter of finding problems as it is solving them. //

BRYAN LAWSON

INTRODUCTION

Knowing that I would be working on this project throughout the entire semester, I wanted to make it something that had a both meaning and importance for myself and for a large group of people in society.

This book details the design process of my BFA Digital Design thesis experience from the beginning to the end. It will highlight the major milestones of the project and detail my research for creating a better user experience when dealing with day-to-day work schedules.

Thesis Question

How can user interface and experience design more effectively bridge the gap between management and employees when it comes to managing time more efficiently and productively?

Project Plan

My plan had to start with research. I had to be positive that basing my solution around user experience in the form of a mobile app was the proper course to take. I dedicated the majority of my time to researching what employees value most when it comes to scheduling, and what apps they prefer to use based on "friendly" interface elements.

The idea was always to promote function over form while still maintaining the good design practices taught throughout my time at CU.

Mentor & SME

I was extremely fortunate to have one of the finest UX architects in Denver as my Subject Matter Expert; Jessica Sherlock from Effective UI. She came recommended to me from a former graduate of the Digital Design program and now a UX specialist himself, Ryan Gaddis.

Jessica met with me on a weekly basis to assist in my research and wireframing to make SHYFT the best app it could be. My work with her culminated with a session at Effective UI working with both her and Ryan to breakdown the features of the app to find the most important areas to focus on for the optimal user experience.



Jessica Sherlock

Lead Experience Architect
Effective UI



Ryan Gaddis

User Experience Designer
Effective UI

RESEARCH

My research for the project technically started around twelve years ago when I started my first retail job. In my 8 years as a retail employee and manager, I found the scheduling systems at several different companies to be extremely inefficient. This was mostly due to the fact that every single one was still based around either a hand written template or a printed spreadsheet.

Creating schedules was, and still is a hassle to most managers who have to manually collect availability, figure out how many hours they have to use, and then write out the employee schedules every week. For employees, they struggle with availability, time-off requests, and shift swapping without a reliable way to communicate amongst each other.

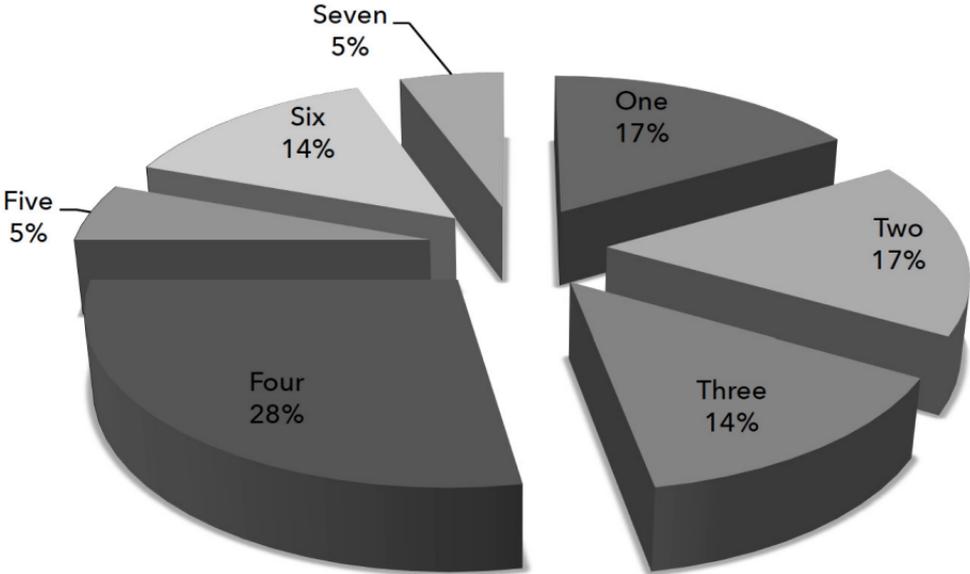
Yan Davidson	Supervisor	Day	7:00a - 3:00p
Lisa Cavigli	Supervisor	Day	7:00a - 3:00p
Melissa Turner	Supervisor	Day	7:00a - 3:00p
Robert Johnson	Actl Resp	Day	7:00a - 3:00p
Benny Thompson	Actl Resp	Day	7:00a - 3:00p
Angela Caneig	Actl Resp	Day	7:00a - 3:00p
Chris Lampert	Actl Resp	Day	7:00a - 3:00p
Cindy Lewis	Actl Resp	Day	7:00a - 3:00p
David Whol	Actl Resp	Day	7:00a - 3:00p
Debbie McMillire	Actl Resp	Day	7:00a - 3:00p
Johanna Lavee	Actl Resp	Day	7:00a - 3:00p

Non-Traditional Work

In my research, I found that more and more employees are not working the traditional 9-to-5 jobs like they used to. Instead, they are working around a constantly changing availability in their personal lives, and constantly changing hours at work. This often times leads to confusion between employees and management on when exactly they are supposed to be on the clock.

In my research, I asked employees how happy they are with their current scheduling systems. I found that on a scale from 1 to 7, seven being completely satisfied and one being completely dissatisfied, 75% of those surveyed rank their satisfaction with their current system to be a 4 or lower.

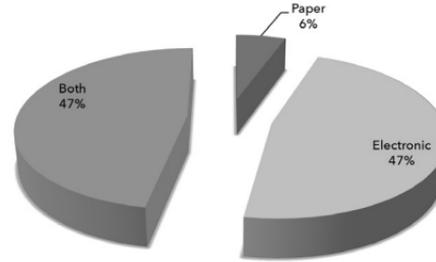
Are you happy with your current scheduling system?



7 = Extremely Satisfied
1 = Extremely Dissatisfied

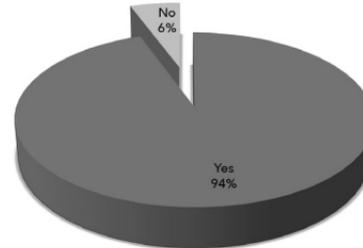
What is the preferred way to receive your schedule?

- Paper
- Electronic
- Both



Would you use a mobile app for scheduling?

- Yes
- No



My original idea about scheduling being ineffective for the average worker was confirmed. I began to probe further asking the employee's what methods they do prefer when scheduling not just work, but their everyday life activities. The overwhelming majority responded that mobile applications and phone calendars were the ideal options.

I then asked if they would like to receive their work schedules in a similar manner, and if there were an app available for scheduling through their employer, if they would actively use it. 94% of those employee's loved the concept and said yes. I finished my research with them by finding out what functions would be most important to them.

User Interface & Experience

With my research about what employees wanted out of a mobile app done, I began to research existing apps that performed a similar function to mine along with design techniques that were employed in other successful and non-successful apps and what changed in the interface design between each that would alter the overall user experience.

When asked which mobile OS was the preferred one between Apple iOS 6, Apple iOS 7, Android, Windows and Blackberry, the clear winner was Apple iOS 7. The main reason given for why they preferred iOS 7 was the appearance and functionality. It was clean, simple, and overall easy to learn and operate.



PERSONA

Now that I had the employee feedback as well as a design idea based around a more minimal, simple style, I began to develop a persona for the average daily user with the help of my SME, Jessica Sherlock at Effective UI. Ryan Gaddis also joined us to help unify the ideas that I had gotten in my research to a more focused end goal.

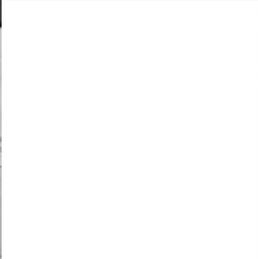
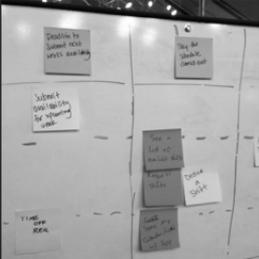
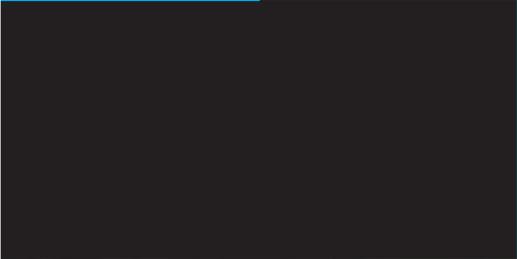
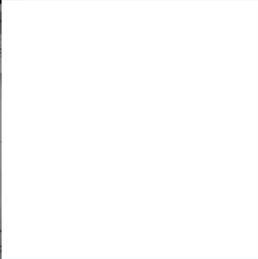
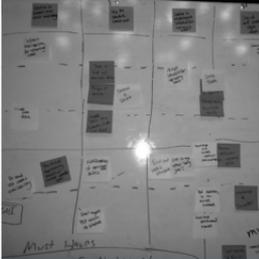
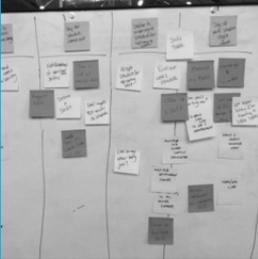
We did several post-it note exercises that started with writing down everything from my research that the employees thought would be useful in my app. We ended up with several dozen, which we then shifted around into several categories and hierarchies until we had narrowed the core elements down to a few main features that are considered to be the backbone of my app.



Goals

- Increase Efficiency
- Improve Communication

3/17 - Script/Final W/P's started
 3/18 - Rough photo 30% (30% done) / 30% done
 3/31 - Initial testing + book
 4/7 - Revisions + Book
 4/14 - Final Photo + Final Book
 4/16 - Finalizing due / Book printing



WIREFRAMES

With the persona established and the key elements of the app identified, I was able to move into wireframing the initial layout of the core screens. I knew that the app had to remain simple, that was one of the most important things to nearly all of the employees surveyed.

I looked at similar apps including *When I Work*, the most popular scheduling app currently on the market. The major complaint with it is that to even view your schedule or trade a shift it takes multiple swipes and button taps. I knew I wanted mine to be easy, you should be able to see the most important things right when you open the app, and you should be able to perform the most important functions right from the main screen.

Organization

I wanted to base the entire app off of three core functions that Jessica, Ryan and myself had identified as the key components to a successful scheduling app. They are:

Weekly Availability Submission

Daily and Weekly Schedule Tracking

Shift Trading and Time-Off Requests

Mock-Ups

When entering the mock-ups, I wanted to focus on keeping every action simple. The employees biggest complains about *When I Work* was that it took too long to do anything, and when time matters, you want that action to be instant and easy. I focused on a base home screen, one that was simple and clean but provided the most important information instantly to the user; the date and time of their next shift.

I left the screen open to allow for instant one tap functionality to bring up the most basic important options for the next shift such as trading, requesting off, or messaging a manager for more information.

PROTOTYPE

With the completion of my wireframe mock-ups, I moved into prototyping. I went instantly into Illustrator and began to design the app as I laid it out on a grid I had created based on the wireframe elements. The style choices I chose were not coincidence; I wanted everything about this app to be researched and to have a purpose. The color blue is statistically the most popular amongst both sexes and has been proven to be “soothing” to the viewer.

The font choices of Quicksand and Avenir Next were chosen to mimic but not copy that of Apple’s iOS 7, which again was chosen as the favorite mobile OS due to its style according to the majority of employees surveyed. My view on this was why should I change something that the user is used to and already enjoys?

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Marvel App

For the actual functionality, which has been the key focus since the beginning, I felt the best program to prototype the app with was Marvel App. The reasoning behind opting for Marvel App over more “in depth” programs such as Axure is that with Marvel App I was able to simply share a link with any employee who wanted to test it and they could instantly access it and give me feedback. Marvel App also provided the functional transitions between screens that play a major roll in the user experience. I also liked that the prototype could be instantly updated and the update would go live to anyone who had tested it instantly to see on the spot changes.



MATERIALS

Along with completing my prototype for SHYFT, I, along with the rest of my graduating class, embarked on self-branding to promote not only my thesis, but also all of my work thus far. I created everything including a logo, business card, letterhead and website to showcase my ever evolving but very minimalist design style and skillset.



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DESIGN

Adapt the graphic language of the client's corporate identity
+ Typography
+ Branding
+ Logo

ABILITIES

Adapted to new creative software
+ Strategic branding
+ Client relations
+ Client presentations

SKILLS

Adobe CS2 & CC
+ Dreamweaver
+ Photoshop CS2
+ Microsoft Office
+ Microsoft Access

EDUCATION

BFA, Digital Design
University of Colorado

EXPERIENCE

Graphic Designer
Urban Stone Brewery
+ Assistant
+ Assisted with site
+ graphics and development
+ layout and design
+ Project design
+ Marketing plans
+ Web site development
+ Performance

Freelance Designer

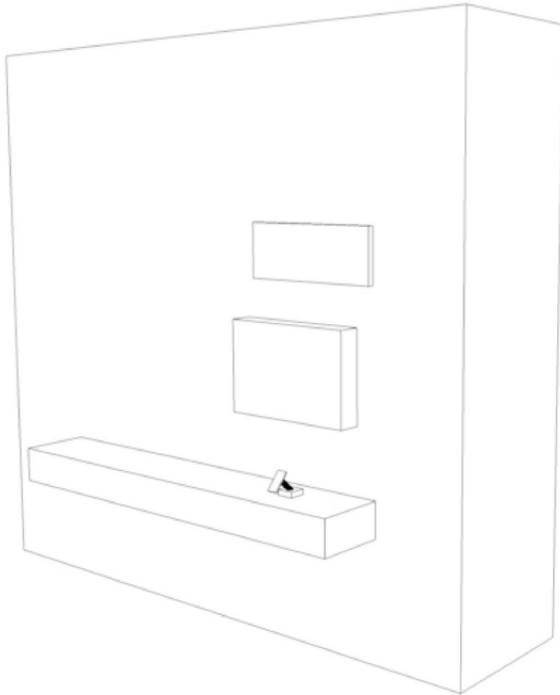
Created layout and branding for
+ local business
+ prior to the
+ clients' needs



DISPLAY

For the final thesis display I decided to stick with my minimal yet functional design style. I thought it best that an interactive piece should actually be interactive, so users can actually demo the SHYFT prototype for themselves. I did not want it to stop there however, and felt that adding a TV for better viewing and demoing would provide the most functional way of demonstrating the app to not just my professors and peers, but to anyone who visits the display.

I also felt that adding simple signage was a must, but did not want it to overpower the app. A simple, functional sign for a simple, functional app.



32in Sony Flat Screen TV

32in TV Wall Mount

iPhone Security Mount

iPhone 5

Apple TV

12in x 36in Title Sign

Extension Cable

Power Strip

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DESIGN

Animation
Branding
Graphics
Interface
Logos
Motion
Typography
User Experience
Web/HTML

ABILITIES

Analytical Thinker
Creative Designer
Problem Solver
Strategic Organizer
Strategic Planner
Time Management
Management Experience

SKILLS

Adobe CS6 & CC
Axure
Cinema 4D
Macintosh OS
Final Cut Pro
Windows OS
WordPress
Xcode

EDUCATION

BFA Digital Design
University of Colorado

EXPERIENCE

Graphic Designer
Oskar Blues Brewery
08/2013-Present

- " Assisted with site design and management
- " Graphics, logos, apparel and advertisements created daily
- " Product design including cans
- " Numerous commendations for exceptional performance

Freelance Designer
03/2010-Present

- " Created logos and graphics specific to branding needs
- " Group experience and collaborative efforts based on the clients' needs

Special Thanks



I would just like to add my deepest gratitude to Jessica Sherlock. She went above and beyond anything I could have asked for in an SME and mentor. Her guidance got me through some of the most difficult aspects of this project. She is truly one of the most creative, amazing people that I have ever had the pleasure of working with.

Thank you.

