Nicholas Miller
lead designer

VT ADVANTEC®

Lead Designer

Team:
1 Lead Designer / Web Developer
1 Graphic Designer
1 Developers
1 Project Director
4 Marketing Specialists

PROJECT

Brand Creation / Ecommerce Website / Brand Site / Product and Packaging

A super dynamic team of thinkers and scientists with a lifetime in the professional tennis industry came together to develop an industry changing product. I was lucky enough to be chosen as the lead designer. The project was to create a highly energetic "slick" brand, website, ecommerce site, and product packaging. Based out of Chicago, VT Advantec has sold tens of thousands of units and garnered thousands of 5 Star reviews worldwide.

PROCESS

User Centered Design Process

Over the course of two and a half years we implemented a framework of research and end-user testing that lead to designs that were ready for their target market. With the help of scientists, engineers and a bunch of marketers we launched the product to rave reviews. The user centered framework easily applied to all the different teammembers throughout the entire development process and kept each person on task. It was incredible to be a part of this.

1 Understand

The product came to me near the end of it's development cycle. This was a crucial moment for the team to intervene and help guide where the product needed to go. By testing, surveying, and speaking directly with users and alpha testers, we discovered even more applications for tennis players than had been imagined originally. In addition we worked to understand the end-user's drive and pain points to improving their skills.

2 Specify

Specifying the project scope and needs came next. Through iterations and careful planning we matched a suite of marketing and design solutions to begin solving the end-users problems (lot's of talk about racket vibration) and how to correlate these problems with our solution.

3 Solve / Build

The build process was pretty straight forward after the extensive research and testing provided in previous steps. The product was also complete and ready to hit store shelves.

We took a direct ecommerce approach with a vibrant and intense brand design, while always focusing everything back to the end-user needs and desires.

Then we started building!

4 Test

With a physical product testing was always happening. Same had to be said about ecommerce and brand design.

Valuable feedback is gathered from the end-users when they have the product in-hand. Testing the website functionality and decreasing the click count was always the direct approach, but we had to "sell" the science first. An interwoven method was developed after several iterations and testing sequences.

TECHNOLOGY

Illustrator / Photoshop / Adobe XD / Shopify / PageStudio / After Effects / CSS / Liquid

WEBSITE

MORE VICTORIES

VT SMART LAYER

SHOCK DAMPENING & RE-DISTRIBUTION

SMART LAYER TECHNOLOGY

VIBRATION ABSORPTION

VICTORY COMES FROM CONTROL

VT STRIPS
★★★★★ 27 reviews
$24.99

VT SMART LAYER

LET THEM BRING THIER BEST GAME

VT ADVANTEC®

Nicholas Miller
lead designer

PORTFOLIO 2021
PROJECT 002

Lead Designer
Consultant

Team:
1 Lead Designer / Web Developer
1 Graphic Designer
2-5 Developers
1 Project Director

Petzer / Host a Pet.com

PROJECT

Mobile Web Application / Ecommerce Website
Originally Host-A-Pet, a feature rich community driven platform for person to person pet services (Think Airbnb for pets PLUS). The Host-A-Pet company later diversified and expanded into a more robust "one-stop-shop" for all your pet needs under an automated subscription model - enter Petzer. Currently these two successful projects are dominating the market in Mexico and expanding everyday. After the decision was made to fully expand into a subscription model (pandemic driven) we started the re-design of the brand! (Project featured in Forbes Mexico)

PROCESS

User Centered Design Process / Design Thinking / Design Sprints
Petzer and Host-A-Pet have both been revolving around these three highly effective frameworks. Driven specifically by end-users feedback, testing, and information gathered by end-user habits. Feature requests are often requested by end-users as this is a new and untapped market/industry in the Mexico market.

1 Empathize
The primary need of the Petzer brand is to understand and place ourselves into the shoes of our end-users. Understanding the needs of a 3rd world country, that is rapidly expanding into the technological and mobile era, thanks in part to the advancement and decrease in cost of mobile usage. Additionally the focus on the needs of a pet owner in a new and challenging pandemic atmosphere lead us to design a subscription delivery/ in-home model.

2 Problem Definition
The big problem, where pandemic is concerned was that the original model proved unnecessary in current world situations, but the needs of pets did not go away. They still needed all the care, vet visits, food, and supplies that became unattainable during a global pandemic.

Ultimately we did not throw out the old concept either, as it's technology and future potential was still viable. Plus they drive the database.

3 Ideate
The team developed many solutions and ideas to the problem. We broke down the needs of every type of pet and focused on how to serve them at their home, without contact, and following all safety protocols while utilizing technology. The primary driver for this solution was veterinarians.

The veterinarian market went largely tech free. By developing a database of care providers willing to adhere to pandemic protocols, we were able to create a new market just for them.

4 Prototype
Prototyping was fast and furious, as we were up against the clock. People and pets needed the service ASAP. This actually was a life and death scenario for pets. Stakeholders and project leaders leaned heavily on experience and direct user testing to help us push the prototype into production a little under-cooked. The need forced this process more than anyone wanted, but more so, we wanted to help end-users maintain the health and happiness of their pets.

5 Test & Repeat
Testing is currently live... the end-users are currently utilizing the web platform model. This is not ideal, but certainly it is effective. The current build for Petzer is in Alpha/Beta, so testing is actively improving the platform every day. While developing the app, we utilized the web platform to build and test our end user needs. Once the application launch occurs in May 2021 a plan to revisit and better align the needs with the platform is anticipated.

TECHNOLOGY
Adobe XD / Illustrator / Shopify / CSS / After Effects / Premier Pro / Photoshop

[WEBSITE]   [APPLICATION]
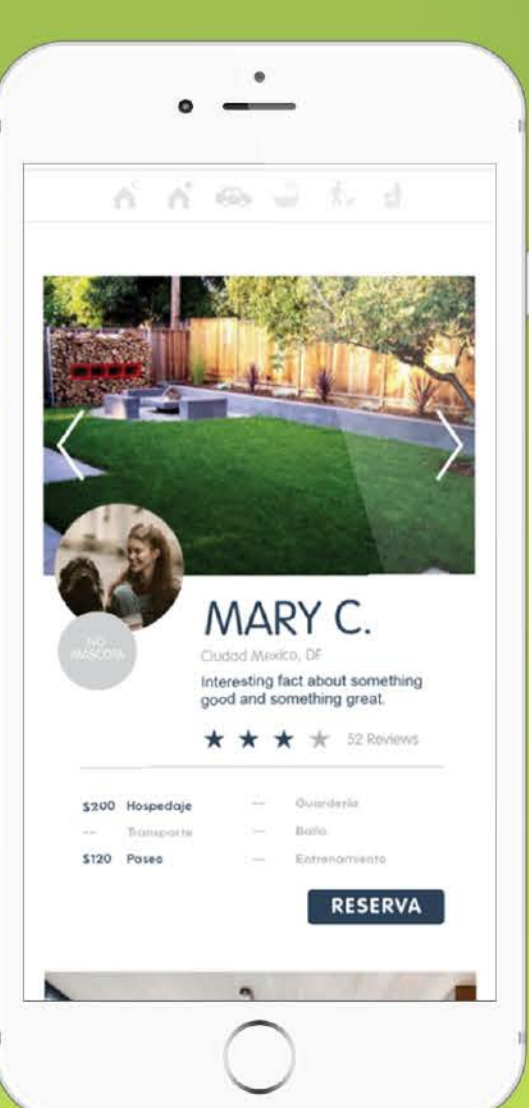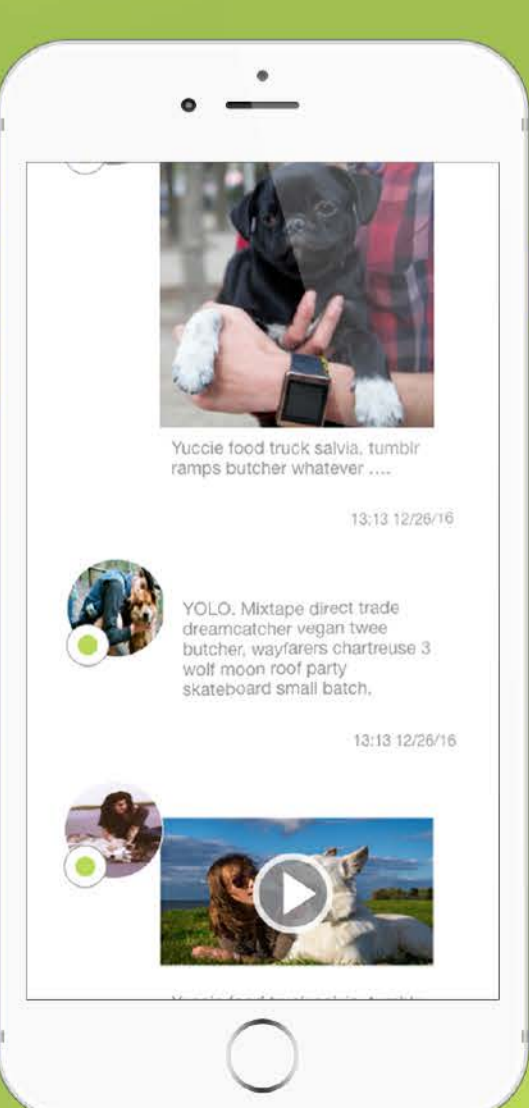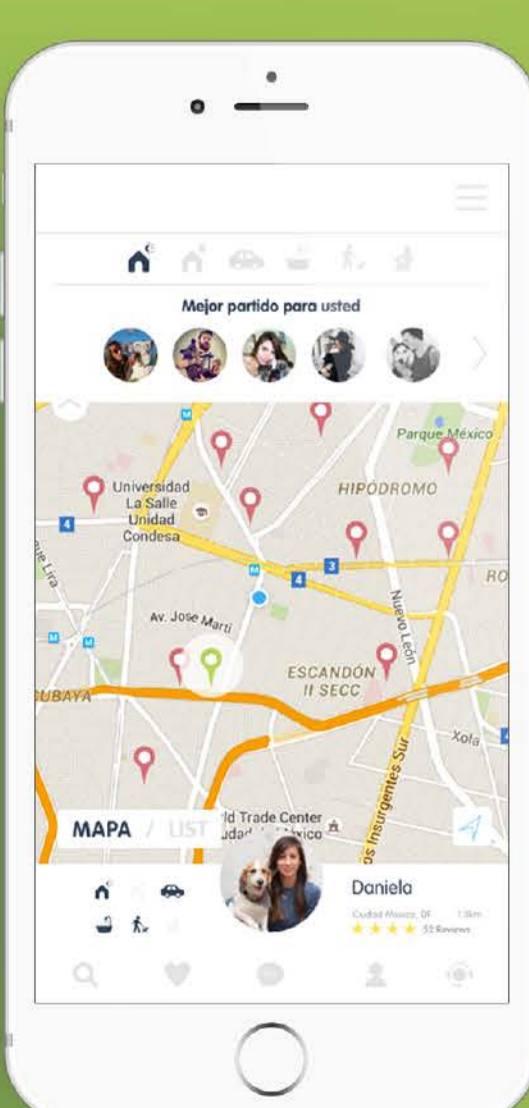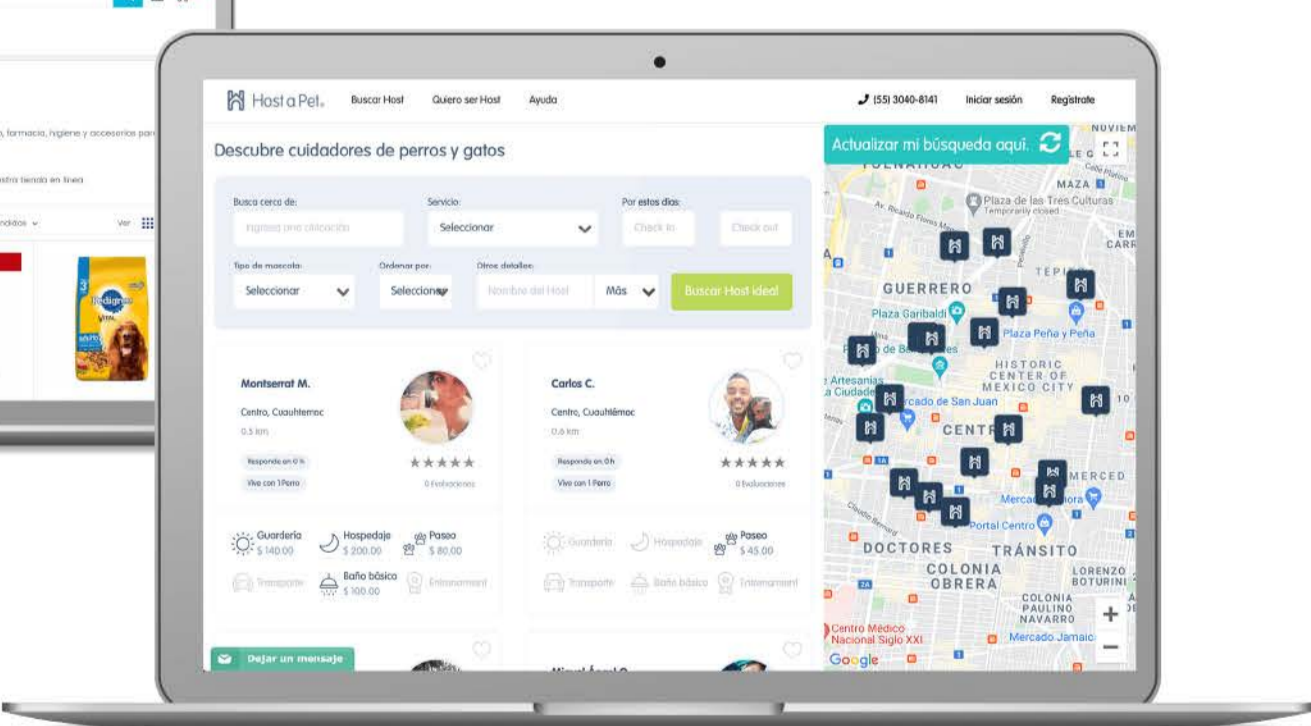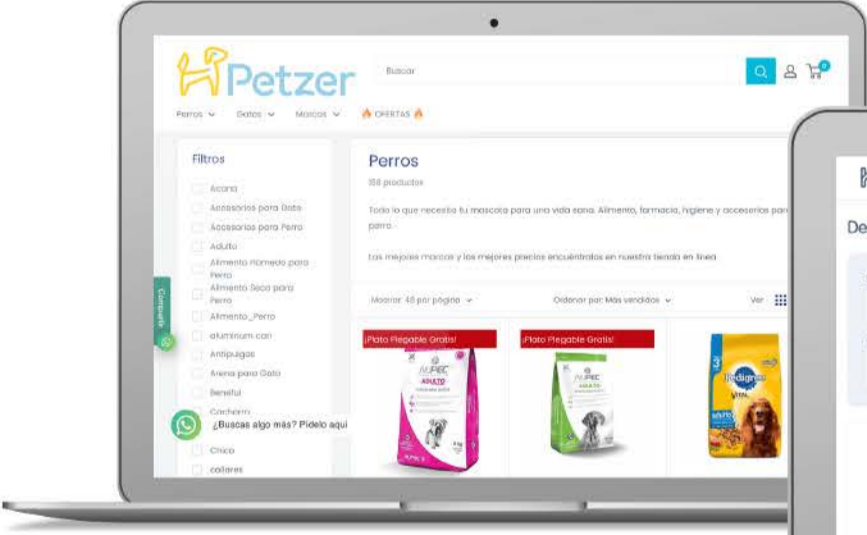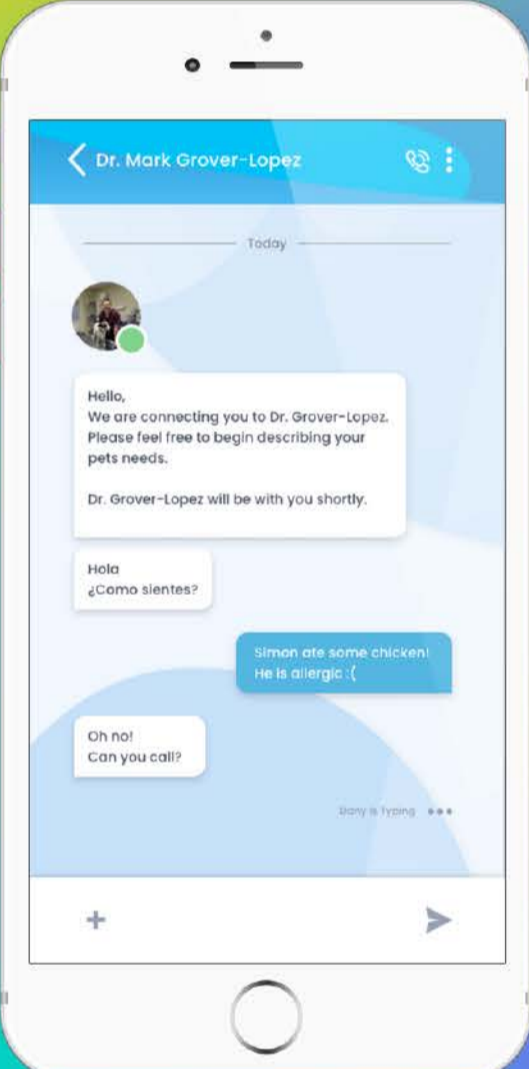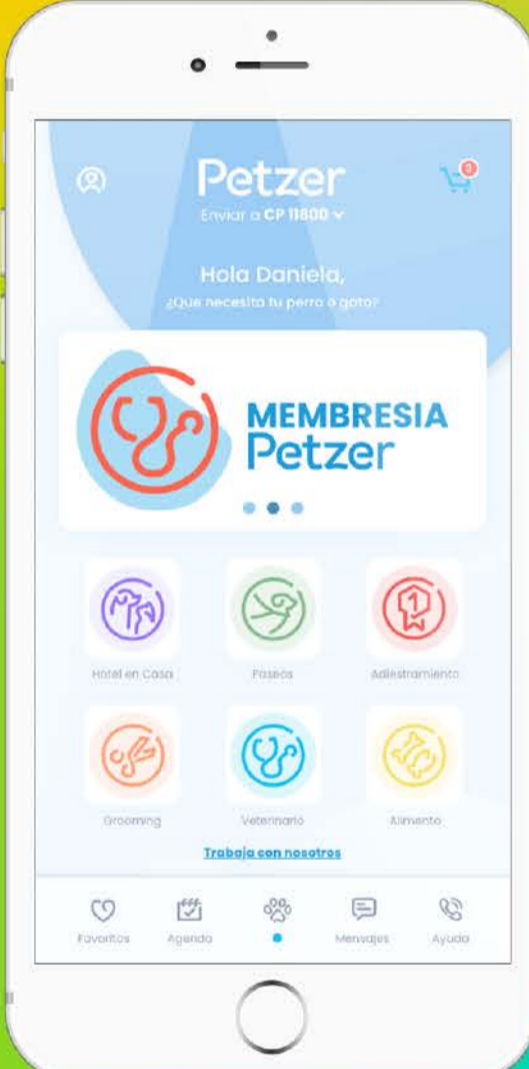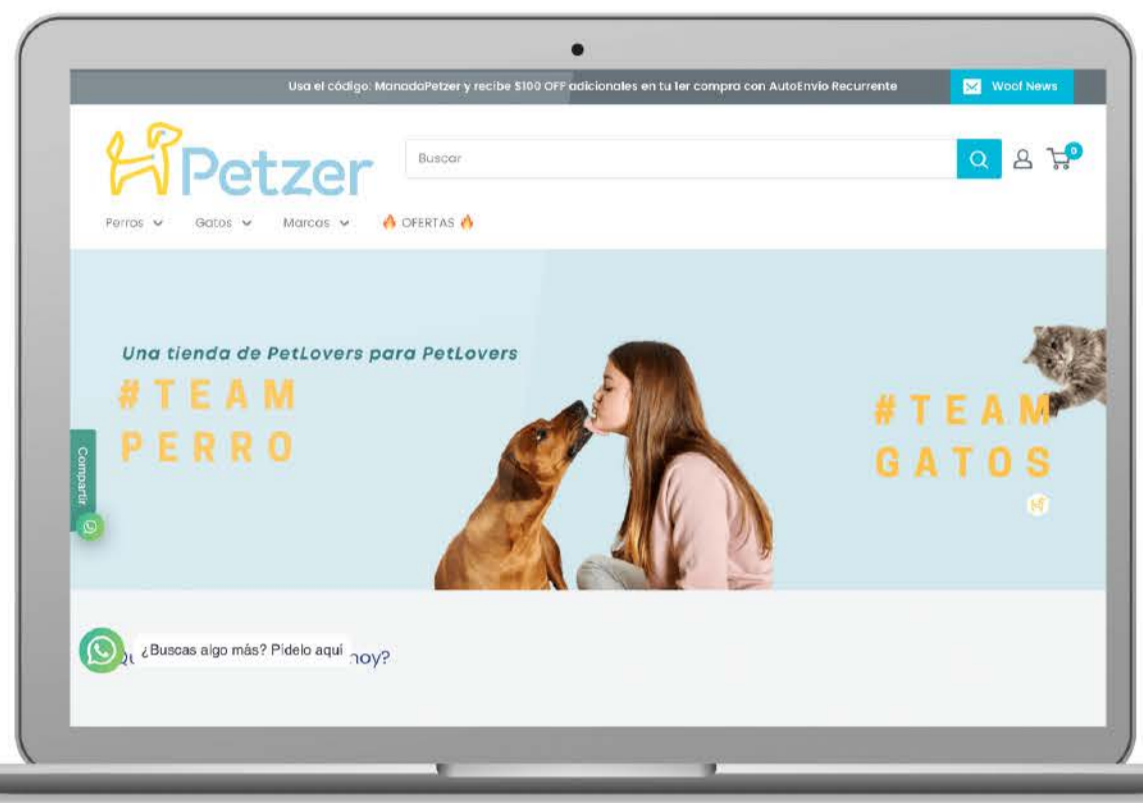
Lead Designer
Consultant

Team:
1 Lead Designer / Web Developer
2 Developers
1 Project Director

M24 STUDIO

PROJECT

Brand & Web Design

M24 is a multifaceted real estate boutique serving Mexico City. The project consisted of creating a strong brand that resonates with the hip urban landscape yet carries a vintage vibe in implementation. Basing the colors, textures and elements wholly off of the physical interior design space and architecture of the offices. This allowed for the brand and business to easily and fluidly co-exist seamlessly. As if it was always the brand.

PROCESS

Inclusive Design Process

A self made process that I have crafted over the 12+ years working directly with clients and teams. This process was designed to ensure brand design is a mutually created effort. By mutually creating a project together both parties take ownership and build confidence. Building confidence is key to delivering a quality project that launches within deadline while injecting confidence and excitement for launch.

1 Discovery

Discovery is key to developing a classic and perfect brand. This discussion is the first real conversation to determine what the client is looking for. To remove doubt this step includes the client by active listening, observing, and asking pertinent questions on the key features and elements of this future brand. Additionally in discovery I provide a concrete explanation of the approach and begin the inclusive design process.

2 Target & Ability

Understanding the people you are going to speak to with a brand is so important, as brands speak directly to users, end-users and non-users.

Ability covers the clients needs realistically and ensures that their wants do not exceed expectations, even if the final product delivers beyond these excpectations.

3 Ideate Opportunity

The ideation process is a lot of free sketching. This is done on giant white boards and often it is directly with key members of the business. The purpose of the sketching is to exercise all ideas and find true correlation between elements of context. This correlation is what ties things together and creates a whole/holistic brand identity.

I quickly follow up directly with the client, providing near complete versions of logo concepts. Approx: 5-7 with context.

[below is an example of just 1 of the options]

4 Revision

The revision process is the most collaborative at times, as we are now building a brand together. The client sees the work. Typically people like certain things, and some things they do not. This step provides them with a chance to "shop" design based upon their discovery and target phases, with a guided pick and play method that is enjoyed by my clients.

This phase can take several iterations.

5 Launch

By the time we get here, you feel good, I feel great and emotions are positive. We successfully worked together through several options, ideas, fonts, colors, images, inspirations... everything.

The understanding of what it takes to build a brand is mutual and everyone is fully confident in the success of their design.

TECHNOLOGY
Illustrator / Squarespace / CSS / Photoshop

COLOR

[base colors]

	RGB	23 43 68
	HEX/HTML	172B44
	CMYK	94 79 47 48

	RGB	239 239 239
	HEX/HTML	EFEFEF
	CMYK	00 00 00 06

[highlights // accents]

	RGB	35 31 32
	HEX/HTML	231F20
	CMYK	00 00 00 100

	RGB	197 155 51
	HEX/HTML	C59B33
	CMYK	23 37 96 02

M24 STUDIO

TEXTURE & PATTERNS
Textures and patterns to enhance the brand and aesthetic. Adding in layers of design elements and providing a less sterile interpretation.

CORE TYPOGRAPHY: Used for primary display, such as advertisements and images with text.

Century Gothic:	Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex.	1234567890	Sub Title (Print/Display)
Century Gothic:	Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex.	1234567890	Body Copy (Print/Display)
Century Gothic:	Glib jocks quiz nymph to vex dwarf.	1234567890	Title

WEB TYPOGRAPHY: Web Safe Font selections for integration into websites.

Muli:	Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex.	1234567890	Sub Title (Print/Display)
Muli:	Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex.	1234567890	Body Copy (Print/Display)
Muli:	Glib jocks quiz nymph to vex dwarf.	1234567890	Title

SPALTED WOOD

RAMÓN
Brosimum alicastrum
Familia: Moraceae

USOS
Carpintería y ebanistería, mangos de herramientas, marcos de puertas y ventanas, molduras, artesanías y torneados/Mangos de herramientas, embalajes, muebles, construcción, lauderia, duela, parquet, lambrín, chapa.

TRABAJABILIDAD
Madera pesada algo difícil de trabajar manualmente y en operaciones de maquinaria. Debido a su dureza, y siendo abrasiva, requiere herramientas de filo reforzado para obtener superficies y cantos de alta calidad. Ofrece un excelente acabado y alto pulimento. Fácil de laquear y pegar. Para clavos y tornillos requiere un taladrado previo.

CONTEXTUAL DESIGN

Nicholas Miller
lead designer

Lead Designer
Consultant

Team:
1 Lead Designer / Web Developer
2-3 Interns
1 Copywriter

COMMUNITY POWERED WORKSHOP / CENTRAL WILLIAMSON CREEK Greenway

PROJECT

Interactive Design / Brand Design / Web Design / Print Design

Founded in 2006, the Austin Community Design and Development Center (ACDDC), a non-profit, aims to improve the quality of life of low- and moderate-income people by identifying and solving social, economic, and environmental problems as they relate to housing, was in need of a 2019/20 brand identity refresh. They thankfully came to me for help. Together we created materials, events, and an equity driven design to serve the local Austin community.

PROCESS

Design Thinking / Interactive Design

Interactivity was the first word I heard from ACDDC when they asked me to help them with the evolution of their brand. Utilizing the Design Thinking framework made the most sense, and the team had previous experience working in this model. Their community is strong, educated and totally on board with helping out, so the ability to gather surveys and test reviews was abundant and super helpful.

1 Understand

When we started our conversations about the re-brand we quickly discovered they had more needs than they initially realized. First off... they did not have a name, but we agreed they had to change from ACDDC.

This was followed by lengthy discussions and interviews with all team and board members to discover the essence of what the organization is to the community.

2 Specify

After discovering the name "Community Powered Workshop" we felt like the shackles had been broken free and we were ready to start the work. The primary focus was remained interactivity. Interactivity allows for the education of everyone in the community to gain important information quickly and in a fun way.

Now we worked together to specify the core needs of the organization: full brand, assets, websites, interactive activities, and even animating their annual event, which would take place remotely.

3 Solve / Build

The solution to interactivity was to try everything all at once on launch. We developed a system for collecting audio/video stories from the community, interactive maps for reviews of trails and details, and developed printed content that always had a interactive element to it... such as folding up into a little house.

The build process of the brand underway, we utilized the inclusive design process, while simultaneously we began building the website.
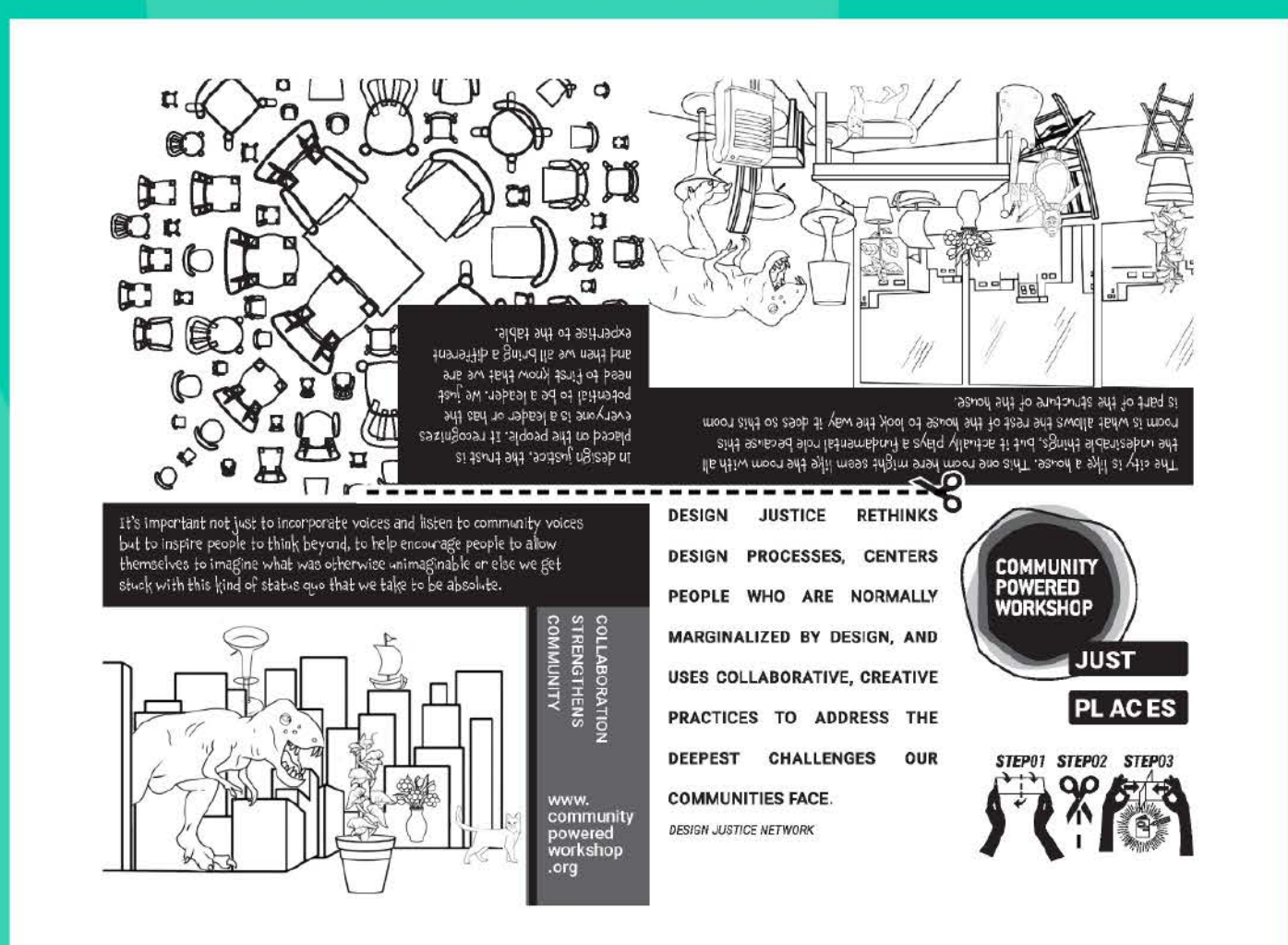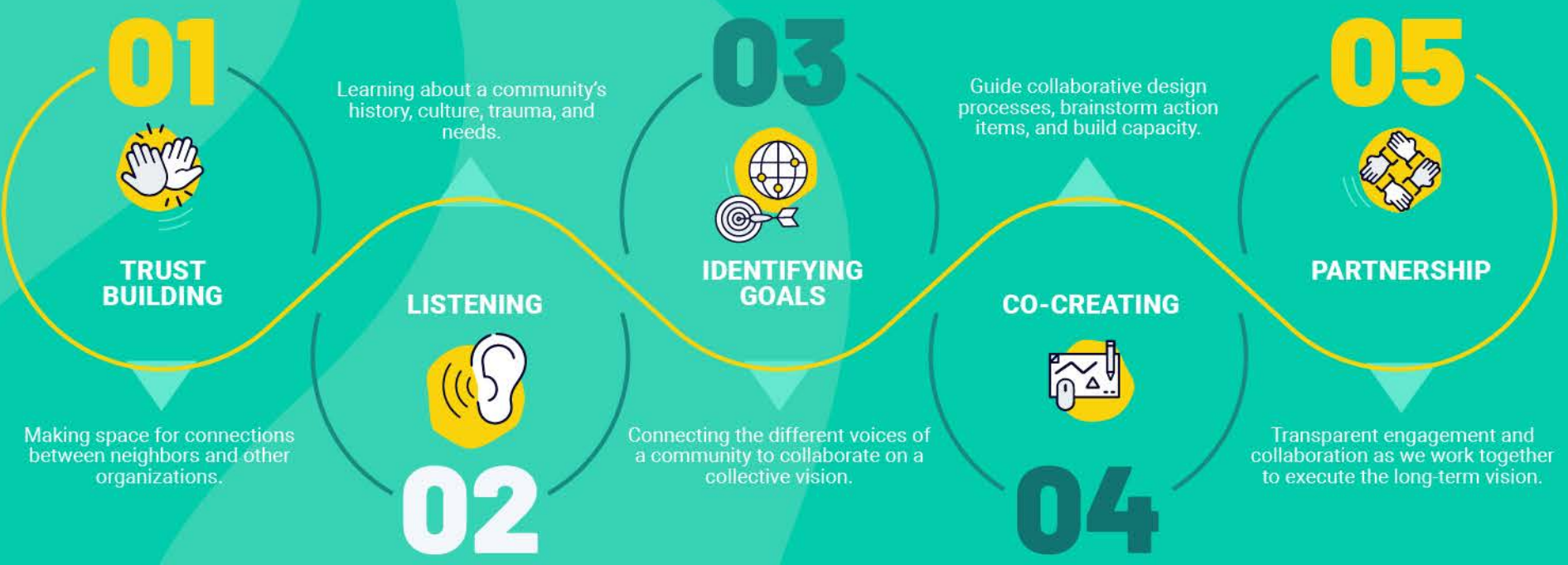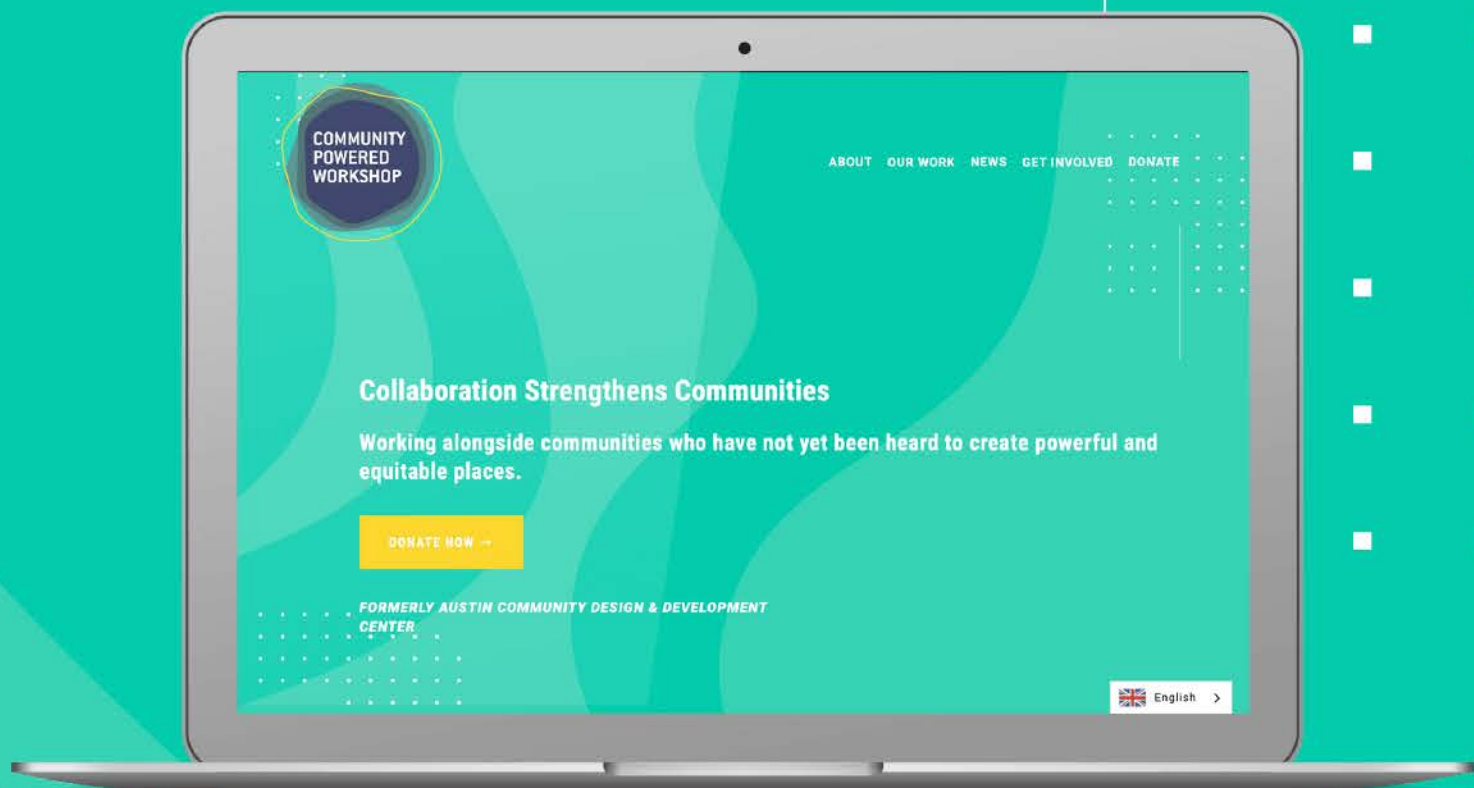
4 Test

Iterations were key to everything that came before this step. As we A/B tested and surveyed their community on a weekly basis. I felt as if we were building this new brand with 1000 people!

After testing we could either go back to previous steps or launch with minor changes.

TECHNOLOGY

Illustrator / Squarespace / CSS / In Design / Photoshop / After Effects / Premier Pro

WEBSITE

Collaboration Strengthens Communities

Working alongside communities who have not yet been heard to create powerful and equitable places.

DONATE NOW →

FORMERLY AUSTIN COMMUNITY DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT CENTER

01 TRUST BUILDING
Making space for connections between neighbors and other organizations.

02 LISTENING
Connecting the different voices of a community to collaborate on a collective vision.

03 IDENTIFYING GOALS
Learning about a community's history, culture, trauma, and needs.

04 CO-CREATING
Guide collaborative design processes, brainstorm action items, and build capacity.

05 PARTNERSHIP
Transparent engagement and collaboration as we work together to execute the long-term vision.

FOLDABLE ZINE

DESIGN JUSTICE RETHINKS DESIGN PROCESSES, CENTERS PEOPLE WHO ARE NORMALLY MARGINALIZED BY DESIGN, AND USES COLLABORATIVE, CREATIVE PRACTICES TO ADDRESS THE DEEPEST CHALLENGES OUR COMMUNITIES FACE.
DESIGN JUSTICE NETWORK

Nicholas Miller
lead designer

Lead Designer
Consultant

Team:
1 Lead Designer / Web Developer

The Roosevelt Room / THE ELEANOR / ROADHAUS MOBILE COCKTAILS

PROJECT

Brand Design / Web Design / Ecommerce Website / Print Design / Signage

Award winning mixologists in Austin, Texas lead a suite of cocktail themed bars and mobile services in the local area. As the lead designer with the team since 2016 I have ushered the brands through several iterations, evolutions and expansions, as well as a pandemic inspired re-design to accommodate the changing needs of clients. They are a fun and super detail orientated team that focuses on the best results, because they are the *best* at what they do.
(Project featured in GQ)

PROCESS

Design Thinking / Inclusive Design Process

I developed a inclusive design process combined with the design thinking framework to help drive the needs for this multi-brand powerhouse. Much of the work is quick to launch and test in the hands of the end-user. A nimble framework with quick results is required to keep up with the always changing demands.

1 Understand

Every project begins with a lengthy discussion between key members, stakeholders, myself, and direct expertise employees. The initial meetings are intended to develop a better understanding of all pain points and needs, directly leading into the next step.

2 Specify

We then specify the abilities (technological and employee type). We then discuss the many varying options in this step. Allowing each member to express their opinions and findings from either research or personal experience.

A specific problem we ran into recently was the pandemic. Since all bars and restaurants had to be closed, we had to re-think cocktail services.

3 Solve / Build

Understanding and specifying lead directly into a series of solutions for the team to begin implementing. As stated previously, this process moves at a brisk pace. Time to launch is key, and thankfully the establishments have a Ibuilt in user testing base.

The solution to our Pandemic problem... we started making Cocktails To-Go. A full Ecommerce solution was built in one month.

The build and design falls directly on my shoulders while working with the team... so I began building.

4 Test

Testing is constant and always yielding powerful insights to the brands. The loyal yet honest client base are always amazing to work with and share key insights to how we can keep improving the brands. They are also super forgiving, this is key when working at such a fast paced launch schedule.

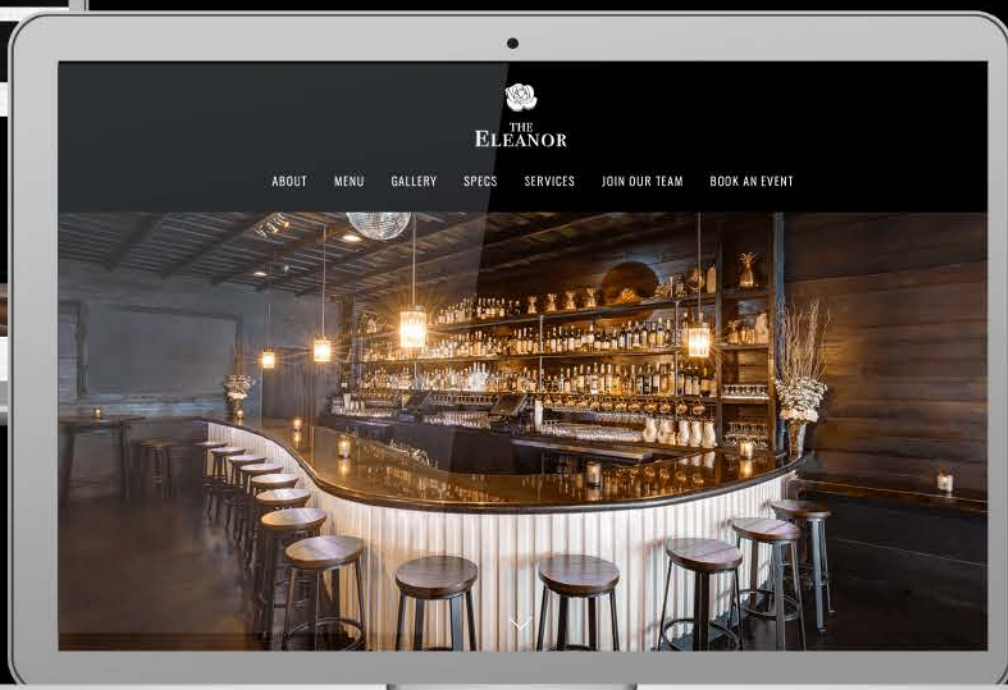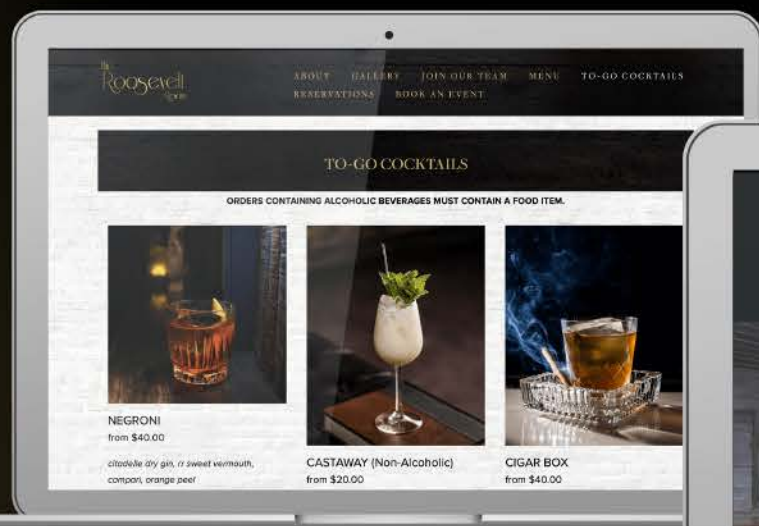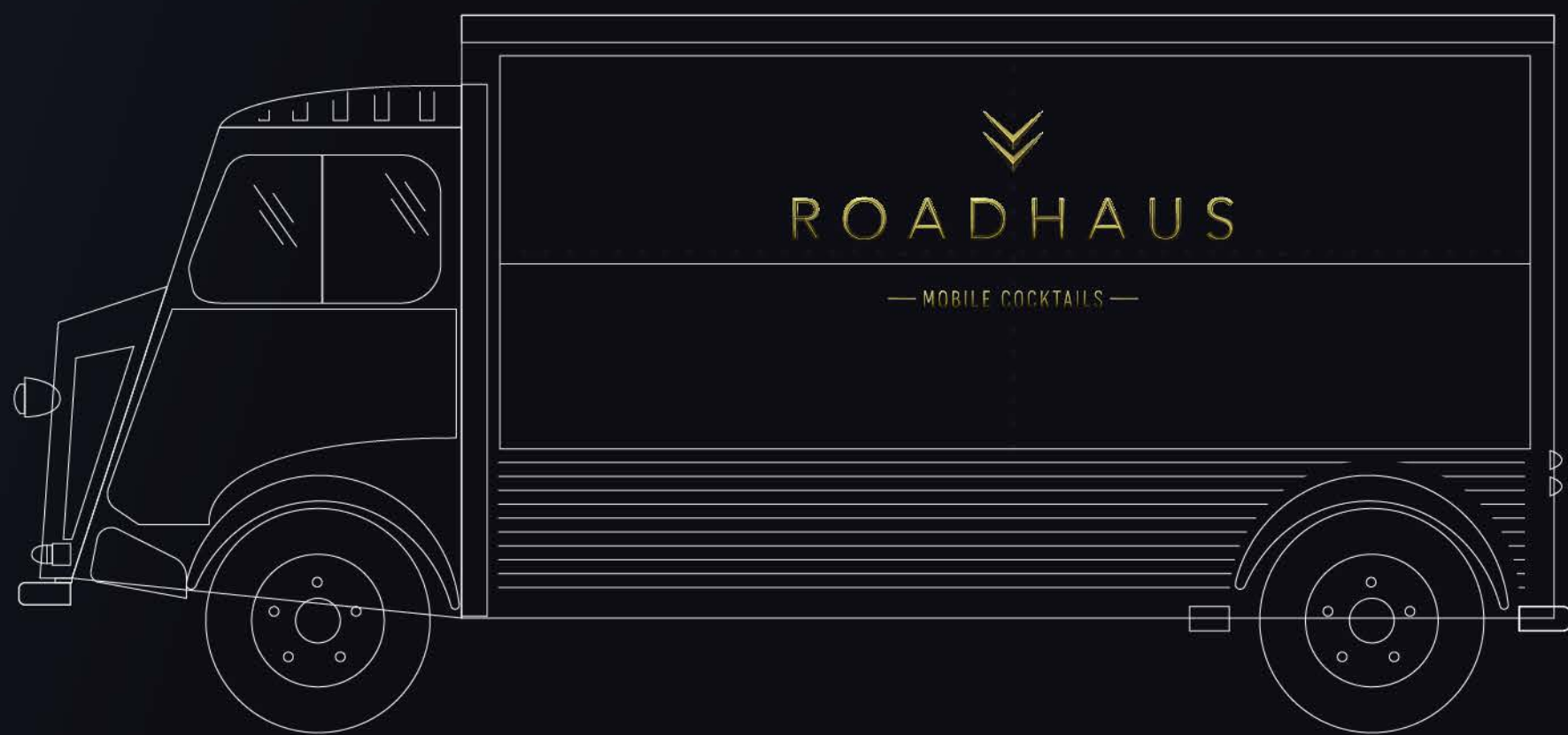## TECHNOLOGY

Illustrator / Squarespace / CSS / In Design / Photoshop

WEBSITE 1   WEBSITE 2

EXAMPLE OF CONTEXTUAL DESIGN FOR ROADHAUS

ROADHAUS
MOBILE COCKTAILS

Nicholas Miller
lead designer

Qount / indy

Co-Lead Designer

Team:
2 Lead Designers / Web Developers
4 Developers
1 Project Director

PROJECT

SAAS Web Application / Mobile Application / Brand Creation / Website

The Qount project was a massive undertaking that encompassed nearly 4 years of work. The client approached looking to revitalize and develop a recently purchased company. This company focused on cloud-based solutions for B2B and B2C financial systems. In order to be successful we had to develop the entire entity of Qount, from the ground up. Built with accountants primarily in mind, the design relies heavily on the needs of high demand accounting teams.

PROCESS

5 Elements Framework

The five elements framework was especially helpful in this project. Placing each element into the cyclical framework allowed for us to move each pillar of the projects efficiently and effectively to continually produce a high end product for the users. At the end of each stage we would revisit key framework items to determine success and develop additional features for end user requests and needs.

1 Strategy
Our first goal was to determine the needs and objectives of the Qount brand. The team worked together to define the current situation of the platform and start to define possible solutions. We were fortunate to have an abundance of research from past users and stakeholders to guide us on this step.

2 Scope
The team brainstormed many solutions to the multi channels in separate discussions with key members. I was fortunate enough to be a key member on each project: new brand, website refresh, SAAS online application, and mobile applications. Here we developed all the required elements and features needed to meet our opportune solutions for end-user success.

3 Structure
Developing the structure took a lot of organization as there were so many moving parts that all needed to interact with each other and cross-share data. The team organized this through flow charts and lengthy discussion, as the organization of everything was paramount to success.

4 Skeleton
Here our team focused on where to squeeze in the over 100 features. We spent several weeks developing the wire frames and the written content. Flow of the end-user was key in this step, as well as the ability to switch back and forth seamlessly between channels. Though a tad early in the process we did start paper-prototype testing with real end-users, revisiting structure and features.

5 Surface
The goal here was to utilize Google frameworks in UI/UX while maintaining a clean yet vibrant and inviting experience. We wanted to make finances friendly, not intimidating, so through testing and research we designed an amazing product that achieved that goal. Once this step was nearly complete we used live high fidelity prototyping to complete additional end-user testing to dial everything in for feature scheduled launches.

TECHNOLOGY

Adobe XD / Photoshop / Illustrator / Squarespace / CSS / Java Script / Keynote

APPLICATION   **WEBSITE**