

Design Analysis & Case Study

MyMentor® App

Concept & Idea developed and created by: Mark Hughes, CXO Mark Hughes Creative

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Introduction

To become more holistically minded about how design & software development really works, and to fill any gaps in my knowledge about the entire design process from end to end, I spent 50+ hours documenting, iterating and refining my own design process, building a mobile app as if I were going to start my own company and pitch it to some venture capitalists to be funded.

I set out to pick a problem that I'm interested in and that I've not seen many companies tackle. I also chose Microsoft's Metro design language as my design system, so I would have a familiar design paradigm to follow and thereby provide my end users with a conventional, widely understood mental model of how the app works.

Having a pretty good amount of experience mentoring and teaching others, I chose to create an app to help bring prospective mentors & mentees together. Mentoring is a great way to share knowledge and help someone be successful in their personal or professional life, but many potential mentors are usually just too busy to commit to a regular cadence of meetings, or they simply have a hard time connecting with people looking to be mentored.

In this document, I outline my entire process on exactly how I got there.

There's a lot here, so feel free to jump around using the Table of Contents links above!



My Design Process

Every project is different. A design process is not a strict process; it is a fluid methodology to discover, define and iterate on whichever problem is at hand, to come to a solution that benefits all parties involved.

Before I jump into designing solutions, my personal process is usually as follows...

1



Discover

- Align with product, tech & other stakeholders to define the desired outcomes.
- Evaluate the current state based on customer feedback, analytics, & competitive analysis.
- Synthesize my findings with desired business outcomes & customer feedback to begin concepts.

2



Design

- Use my previous findings to <u>inform</u> my new design explorations.
- Examine the existing design patterns I'm able to leverage, or create new ones to meet business & customer needs.
- Iterate on designs using feedback from customers or other stakeholders.

3



Deliver

- Adapt the final design to other essential form factors, use-cases & error scenarios.
- Continue a regular <u>cadence of meetings</u> with tech & product to help them write stories to groom for development.
- Produce final deliverables consisting of use-case flows, design specifications, prototypes, assets & any other useful supplemental documentation.



Defining a problem

After choosing a problem I want to focus on, I then distill the problem into a single statement which helps me to clarify the need...

"LEARNERS NEED A WAY TO CONNECT, SCHEDULE & MAINTAIN A RELATIONSHIP BUILT AROUND SIMILAR GOALS, INTERESTS AND CAREER TRAJECTORIES TO GROW."

Issues to solve (why is this a problem?):

Finding ways to meet, discuss & learn together on a regular basis is difficult

Scheduling time & agenda setting is a barrier – too heavy a commitment is troubling for both parties

Compatibility on a personal level is hard to determine up-front

Ways we may solve the issues:

Match personality characteristics against each other, such as interests and hobbies, skills, as well as location, availability, goals and career experience

Introduce a system to allow communication, agenda setting and time coordination between parties

Ensure mutual respect between parties regarding time commitment, agenda setting & topics for discussion



I'm very sorry if you can't read my terrible handwriting...these notes were just for me, anyways :]

Based on what I (and others I talked to) already know about mentoring, I can get started with some assumptions, to be validated or invalidated later. Starting with my own or other people's assumptions is simply a jumping point to begin, to escape from the proverbial "blank white page". You have to start somewhere; in this case, I need to understand what my restrictions for this will be to judge how much I'm going to build.

- People already actively using this app
- "Mentee" use-case perspective
- U.S. users only, currently (no localization yet)
- Onboarding for users, to allow our matching algorithm to work well
- Matching based on goals, interests, skills, career, experience, location and availability
- A review system, similar to yelp / uber / lyft (but no star ratings!)
- Initiate contact within the app, via G-Hangouts / Calendar
- No payment involved Free app

Pull in Linkel In profiles for M



Competitive Analysis & Research

Other Apps w/ similar foodbouldy

- Velp: Refines, reviews, location,
reservations (scheduling), was patile,
categorization at curring (opics)

- tinder: Receiving attempt based on
patile key-worlds, location,
age

- (hot available for morthed wass

only for morthed years)

- Very addictive + simple, but
perhaps too shellow to be used
as on example alone.

- Uter: Rating + Review system w/tags

with and very easy to use star
rating system w/ optional
commentary.

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Other apps with similar functionality and a good experience that come to mind... Yelp, Tinder, Google Play, Uber & Lyft and Shapr.

Why Yelp & Google Play?

Both Yelp & Google Play are <u>organized in meaningful ways by categories & subcategories</u>, and my initial intent to categorize industries, jobs & skills played into this. Yelp also played a part in helping to understand how compatibility and sorting would work within my app, regarding distances (location of Learners), cuisines (careers / skills) and rating (compatibility).

Why Tinder, Shapr, Uber & Lyft?

All these apps have a matching algorithm <u>based on the context of a users needs</u>. My initial intent was to also use a star rating system, but decided against it as a humanitarian choice. This app isn't to make money, it's to foster a relationship of learning. Shapr, especially, is a direct competitor to this app, while the others are good reference for how specific components may behave.

Considerations drawn from research:

- Mentor / mentee ("Learner") relationships must be mutual in regards to respect, humility and needs; Bi-directional.
- Connecting first on a very personal, human level is paramount for new Learner relationships.
- Planning & agenda setting is very important get specific about what needs discussion.
 Conversations should never be too general with questions (e.g. "Can you help me with my career?" and "Will you Mentor me?")
- Addressing what the distinct problems or challenges to be discussed are is very important before meeting.
- Too heavy a commitment on either side may discourage Learners. Set loose guidelines regarding scheduling.

For further reading and reference of the research I did, please see the following links: We studied 100 Mentor-Mentee Matches – Here's what makes mentorship work

7 Best Practices for Matching Mentors & Mentees

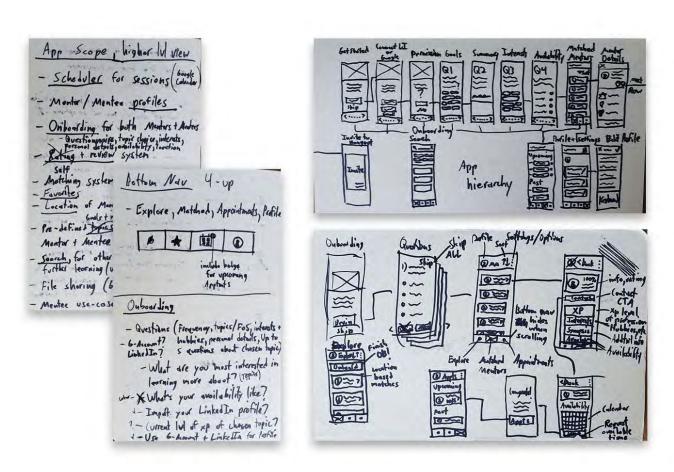
4 Steps to Matching the Right Mentors and Mentees



App Scope & Information Architecture

Based on the problems discovered, the items I determined were needed and feasible for this app were...

- Onboarding for all Learners; Gathering data around goals, interests, skills, availability, and more
- Matching system / Compatibility rating percentages
- A <u>Scheduling & Chat</u> function for initiating contact and arranging sessions (via Google Hangouts & Calendar)
- Learner <u>Profiles</u>, which can be edited
- <u>Favorites</u>, for later viewing or future contact of Learners
- <u>Search</u>, for finding Learners other than the ones in your personal bubble / algorithm



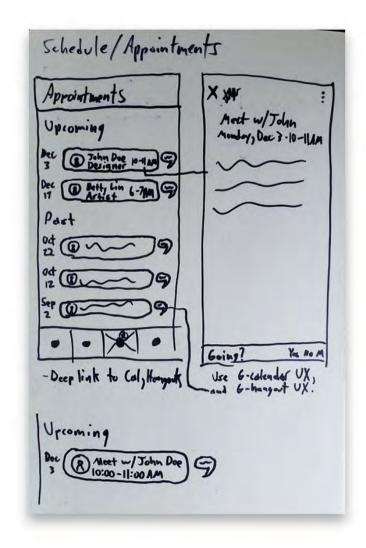
This is what it looks like for me, going through the rough stages in trying to make sense of how I'm going to build an app.



I opted for Google Calendar and Google Hangout as the primary means of getting in touch with Learners, given how conventional these apps are nowadays. To follow behind that, since I'm a fan of Material Design, I wanted to try my hand at designing for Android OS smartphones.

This provides the app the ability to deep-link directly into those apps to begin correspondence between the two parties. It also allows the app to pass, along with the invites, the information about each party member, pre-filled (such as availability, goals, interests, link to profile within the app, etc), upon which either party member can carry forward the conversation (or not).

After an invite is sent via Hangout or Calendar, a push notification & email would be sent to the users upon delivery. Acceptance would create a calendar event or invite both parties to a group Hangout. The app will also automatically list the accepted invite on the "Schedule" screen, with a list of upcoming and past meet-ups with other Learners.





Profiles, Settings & Favorites

Assuming the happy path for users (having already signed in with either their Google or LinkedIn accounts), we are able to pre-populate many aspects of the app for the users' convenience. Getting users to a great match with another user is the paramount priority; thus we push the onboarding to be completed. However, users still have the option to sign in via Email and enter all these details in manually later, via the "Profile" screen.

The Profile screen contains the same tags regarding interests, skills, goals & other details as associated with the onboarding screens, as well as the ability for users to view favorite profiles.

Another strong consideration here is special needs regarding accessibility. Allowing users to be specific about their needs before meeting up with other Learners is important so that accommodations can be met beforehand.



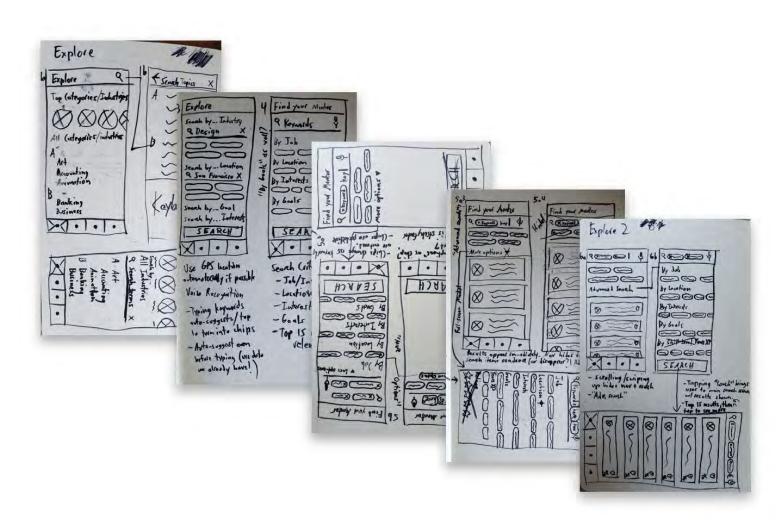


While the algorithm may be counted on for great matches, it's important to provide users <u>a way</u> to search outside their comfort zone.

In the case that a user wants to learn something brand new, affording that possibility becomes important and is supported via the "Search" and "Advanced Search" screens. The ability to search by particular details such as job, goals, skills, interests, location, years experience and more are supported.

To keep the user from being overloaded by choices, simplifying the search process is important — predicting search terms and criteria and showing only the most relevant results will suffice.

Showing a list of the top 15 results, surfacing relevancy and preventing an infinite scroll keeps things simple.

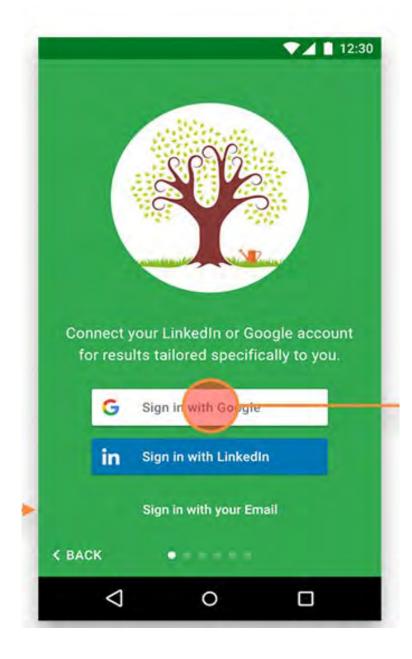




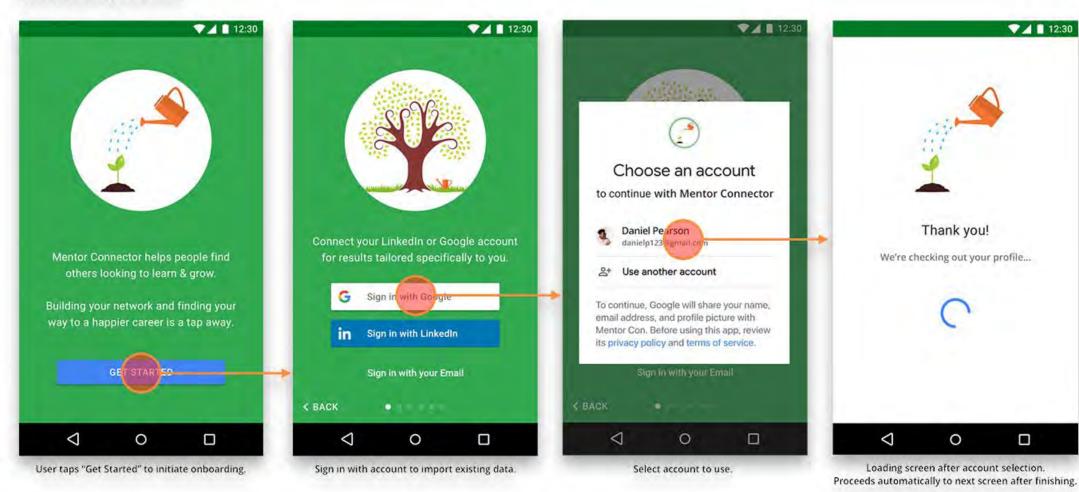
Creating the hi-fi screens & prototype allows me to illustrate my reasoning for some design choices, as well as point out gaps that are otherwise not discovered during the lo-fi OR hi-fi designing stages.

During prototyping, one may begin to see the gaps remaining in a design from the perspective of a user; The micro-interactions between point A and point B become much more obvious, and anything lacking makes itself apparent.

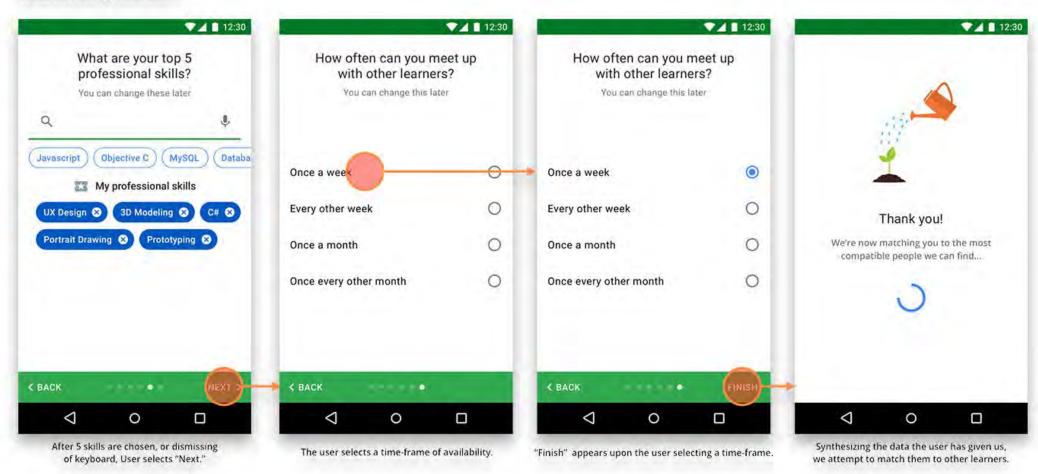
For this prototype, I focused on only the happy path of a Mentee signing up, getting onboarded to the app, matching to a mentor and starting communications. They begin by signing on with their Google account, followed by some more questions to get the matching process started.



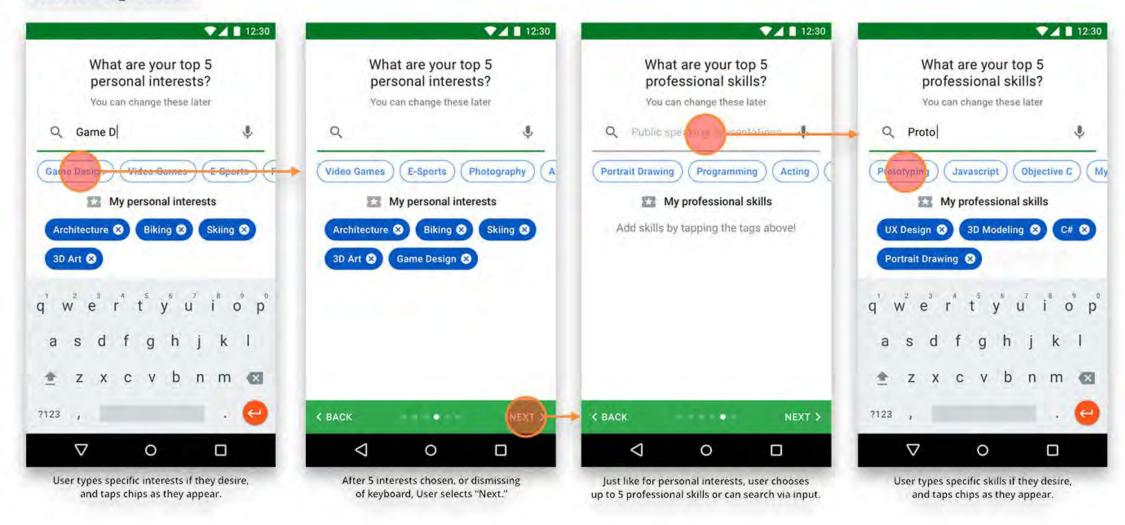






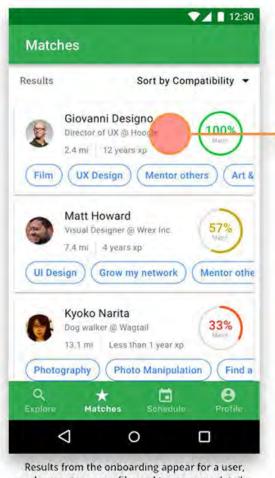


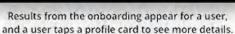


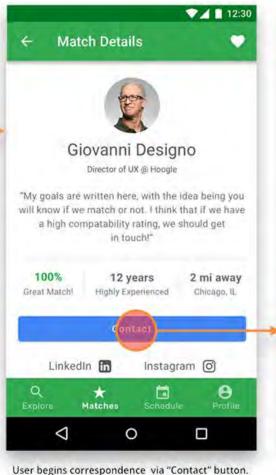




Matches section

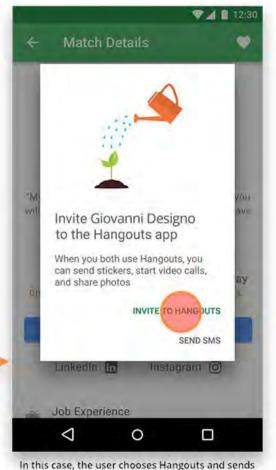






12:30 Match Details Giovanni Designo Director of UX @ Hoogle "My goals are written here, with the idea being you will know if we match or not. I think that if we have a high compatability rating, we should get in touch!" 100% 12 years 2 mi away Great Match Highly Experienced Chicago, IL Start a conversation via Hangout Send your availability via Calendar V 0 User taps "...via Hangout" or "...via Calendar"

to send the match an invite with their information.



an invite directly from within the app, to the match.



Further Considerations And Afterthoughts

After finishing my hi-fidelity mocks and prototype, I started to consider other ways in which the app would retain engagement between Learners. A few different ways this could occur is via push notifications of new matches (we could check periodically). I also wished to take the app further and incorporate a strong implementation with Google Meet. Having the ability to assess and choose a date / time to meet with another Learner, then do it right there from the app via a deep link to the session for remote opportunities seems like it'd benefit both parties, who typically will be too busy to commute.

Another strong consideration would be to add the <u>ability to attach a templated file to a calendar invite via Google Drive</u>. The file attached would be a template filled out by the Learners, containing 1 topic & 5 questions associated to it. The main purpose of this is for both Learners to agree on the topic of conversation, to ensure an agenda is followed and no time is wasted & to assess how serious each side of the party is about meeting.

The biggest challenge for me during this exercise was undoubtedly <u>keeping myself under certain restrictions</u> and not going so far as to not finish! Also, working as a solo designer was incredibly difficult. In almost no circumstance would I ever allow myself to design alone, but I maintained integrity by constantly putting myself into other's shoes by having conversations with people who have been mentored and who are mentors.

There are screens & experiences I created but did not show via the prototype to supplement the experience; please see the Appendices gallery to view them.



Appendices



Initial Assumptions -"Mentoes" + "Menters" cloudy using the day + Use similar interest, location, * Include undergy poths around improper undeles * Include undergy poths around improper undeles * Rating statem cinilor to timber? * Outpoolding for Members + Members The Degree goes the use app? [book per?] * Special badges for notewathy Menters (and Menters?) Mayber on list sceen - Review system (like Yelp?)
- Nostor rating! Lyft? Who?!

Matching based on similar hobbits/ interest 7 Mentors wast list their credentials/xp * Porney system good @ coience, bad @ Moth School sessions vio bough Colonder, incide the app - Pull in Linkellin profiles for Mentors (+ Mentors

Other Apps w/ similar foodsoulty - Velp: Rotings, reviews, location, reservations (scheduling), user patile, coleg dizathon of comines (topics) Garge Play: 16 (ategorites (for sound) hobbits! - Tinder: Percentine atings bored on profile key-words, location, (hot available for unptohod west (only for matched press) - Very addictive + simple, but perhaps too shellow to be used ds on exemple olone. - Wher: Ruting + Review system w/tags and very easy to use star roting system w/ optional commentary.

Questions for Monders

- In regalds to choosing the right Mentee...

1) Can I actually be helpful to this Mentee? (notionable admic)

2) Is this Mantee hourt w/themselver about the issues they're having?

3) Are they perpeted to be Mentored?

(Ask good evertions, specific topics in mind, actually have the time to be membered.

4) Is the Menter sommene going into the same /similar field as me?

- Provide short questionnaire to Mentus of Mentues?

- send montres the mentor questions?

- Frame questions as thoughts to consider before gettleg too serious.

Other Considerations

* Stor roting system may lead to negativity it - Member / Mentee relationship most be motival in tegrals to respect, humility + needs. Bi-Liladianal.

Lomating 1st on a very personal, homan lovel is paramount for new Menter / Menter relationships. (Hobbies, interest)

Planning + ayenda setting is very important - get specific about what needs discussion. Should never be too general w/questions (e.y. "I need help v/my career.")
- What are the distinct unblens or

what are the distinct publicus or challenges to be addressed?



- Too heavy of a commitment on either site may discourage Menters / Menters. - Set loose quicklines regarding scholding "Chatting" digitally may not be optimal. It - The word "Meader" carries way. connotations; #1 reason why Montar become dissuaded from becoming a Menter. implies a "time-ruck" "more work" "long-term commitment," implies a clase relationship to someone you don't really know. - "Will you Member me ?" not an attractive question. * bougle tous of Oth's from Menters - Allows Monters to comment, ask 75, Les forms on 1 topic to address, 3-5 Questions to bring clarity to the topic. help determine an agenda, poss files

App Scope, higher ly view - Scheduler for sessions Colondor - Monter / Mentee profiles - On boarding for both Menters + Andres - Retries + review system - Anothing system / Compotability rating 96 Favorites Location of Menter/Mentee (via bough Map) - Pre-defined to be chosen by both Mentar + Mentee Sworth, for other topics/cotegories, further learning (use Occupation consequential) File shoring (boogle Docs) - Mentee use-case only

+ feature le details Search: "Explore" if no into and Topic/Occupation 7 Menter/Anter location/availability > Match % 12) lopic/Occupation 7 location 7 Menta Streetes % rating motel > availabity (request or pre-determined) Profile: patarional bota it amilable - Inherit from Linked In, otherwise fill manually (Profession, years xp peoplise) - Sections to specify hobbies/interests,
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- View Favs.
- Set location (Auto or manual) + dishace
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- 3 to 5 questions regarding topic that Mentees want to - Move to bottom Novil - If multiple topics, 3-5 questions for each topic (abservable by honor) - Empty state rentains actionales to fill pedile - Recs from Linked Iris Matched Members

Matching #if no info, encourage autoriche
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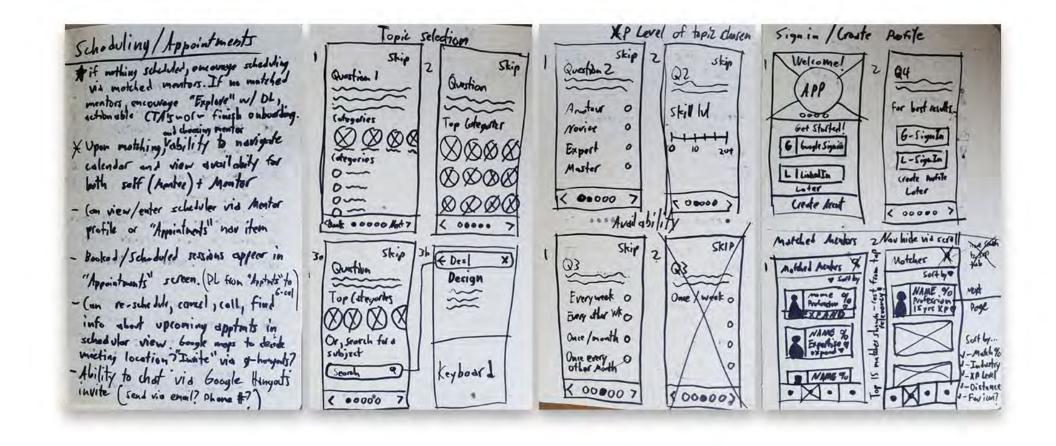


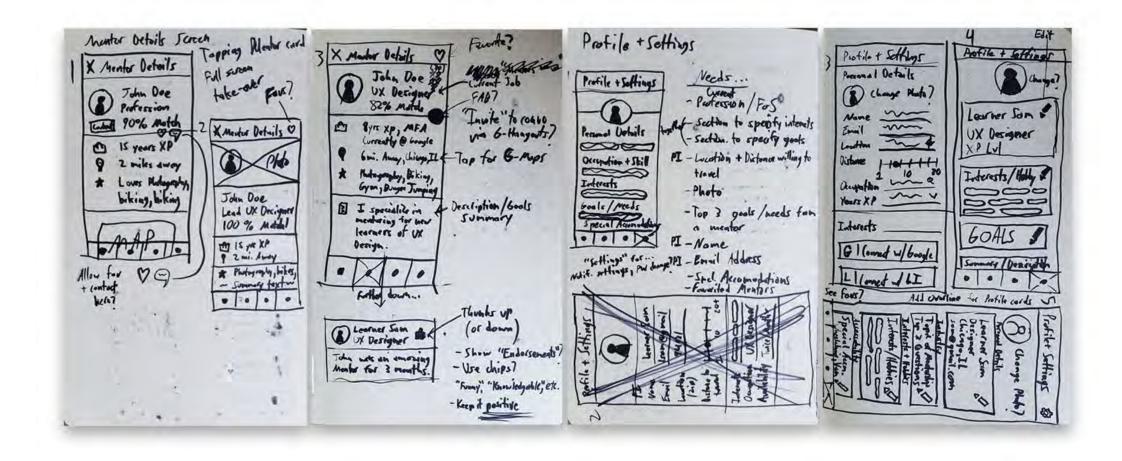
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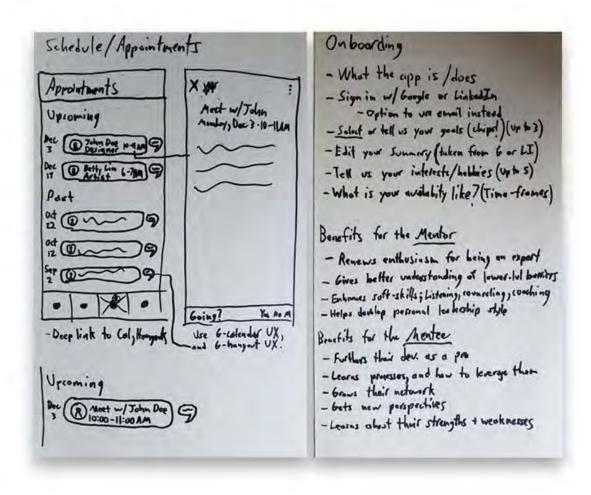


- Explore, Matched, Appointments, Profile include balge for upcoming Ouboutling - Questions (Frequency, topics/Fos, intensts + - 6-Account? hobbies, presonal datails, Up to Linkel In? s questions about chosen topic) - What are you most interested in learning more about 7 (Topis) un- * What's your avoilability like? 1 - Impat your Linked In profile? 1 - (urrent IV) of xp of chosen topic? I - Use 6- Account + Linkella for look's

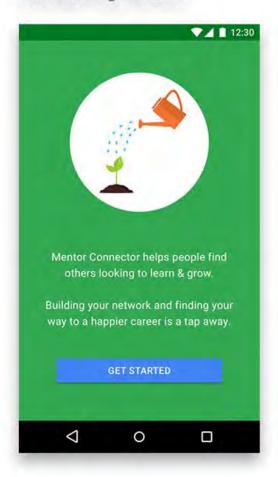


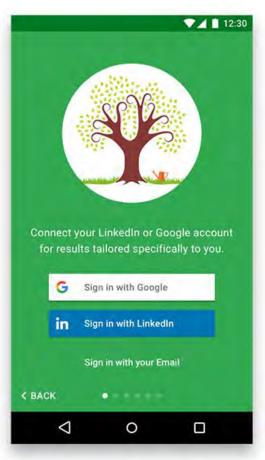


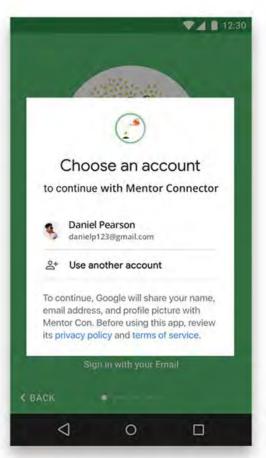


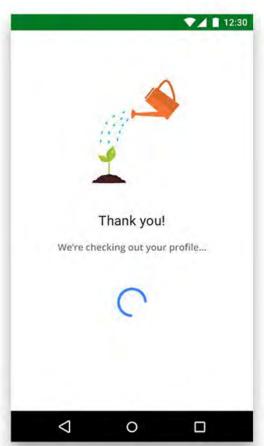




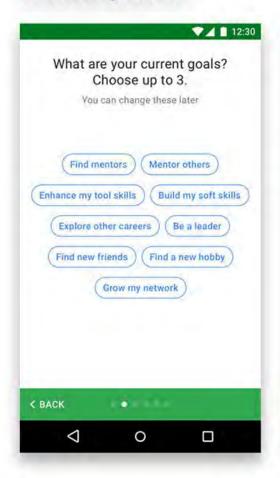


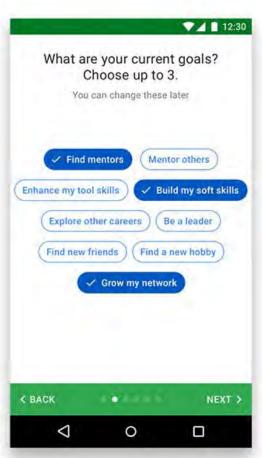


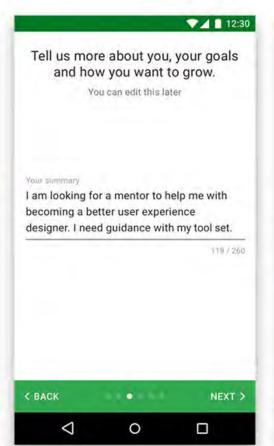


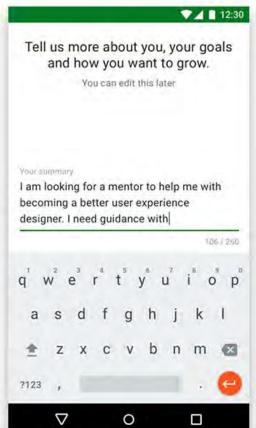




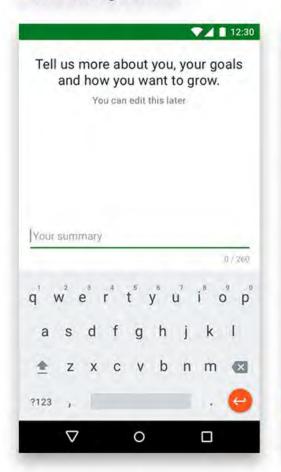


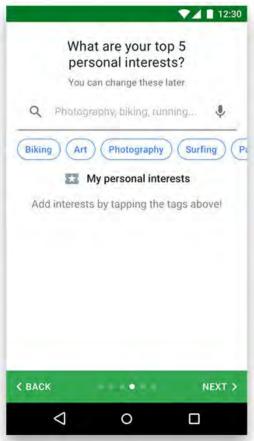


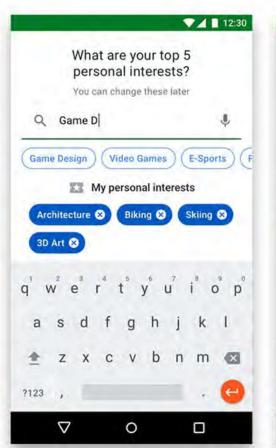


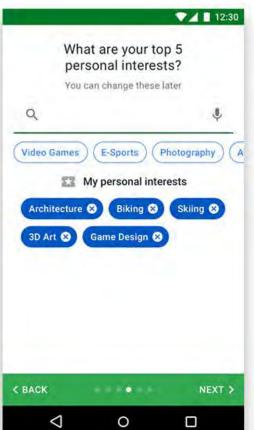




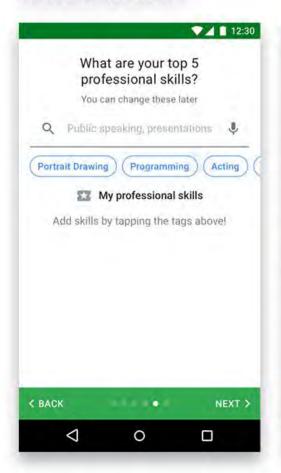


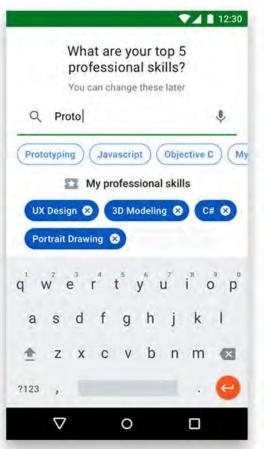


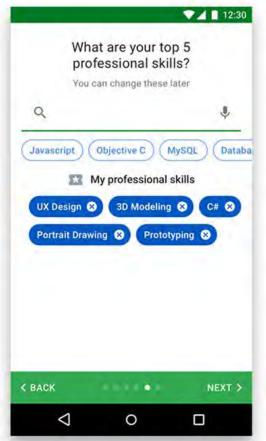


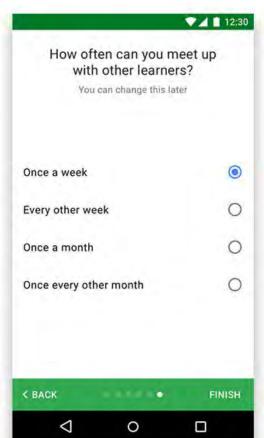




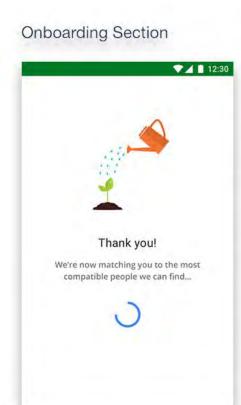








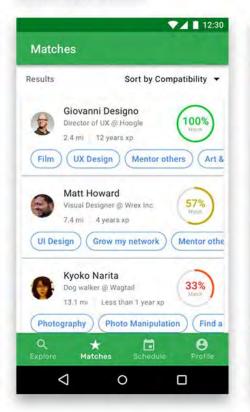


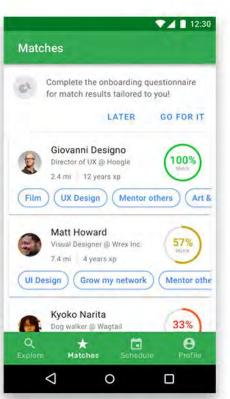


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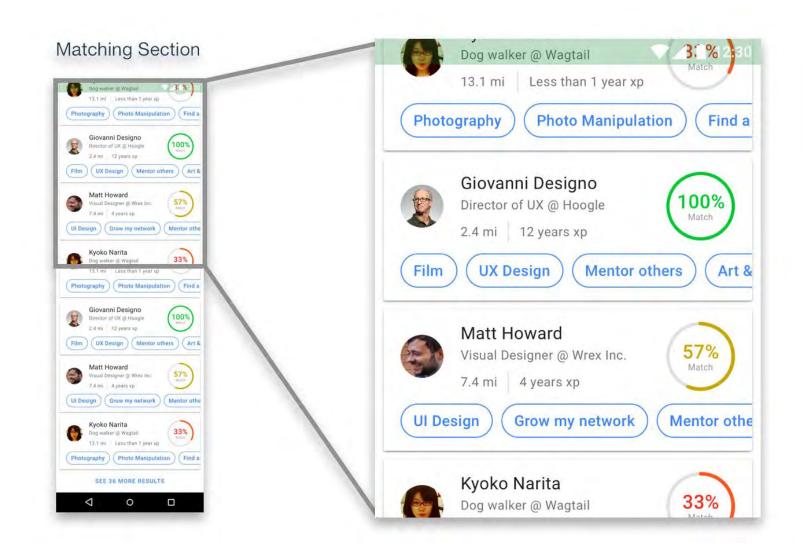
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Matching Section

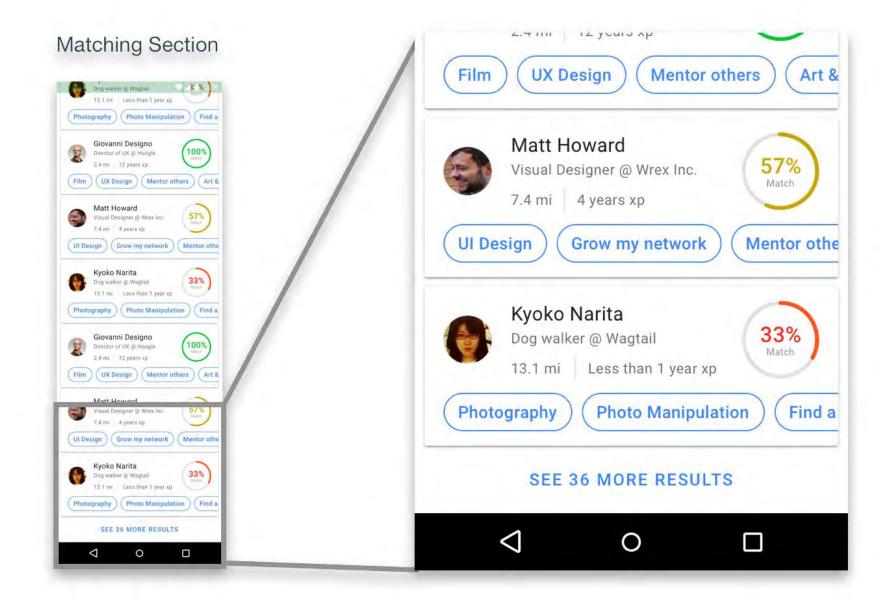




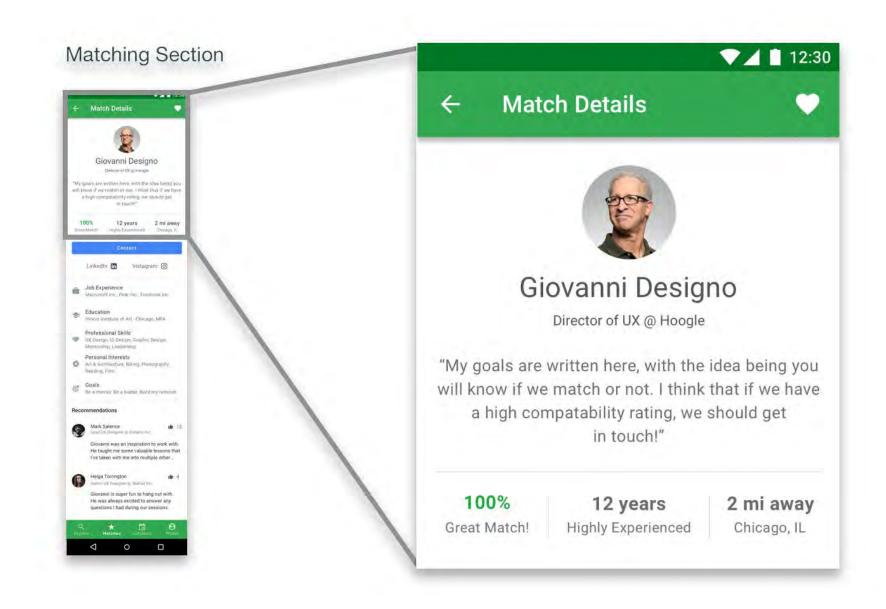




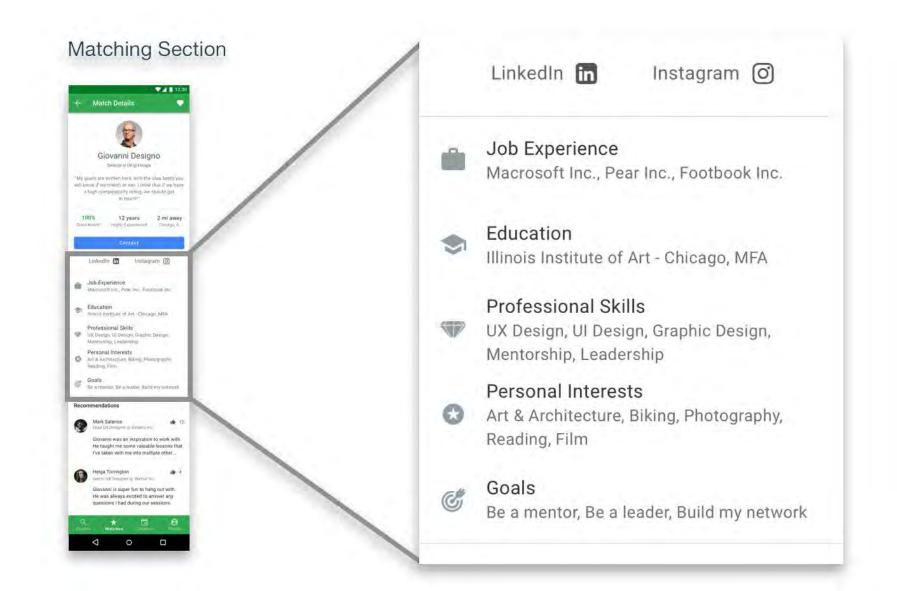




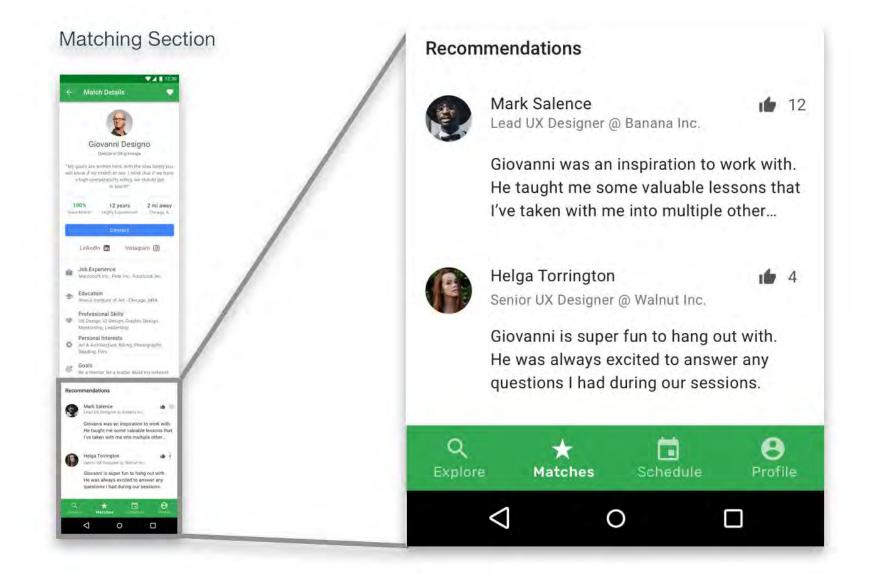






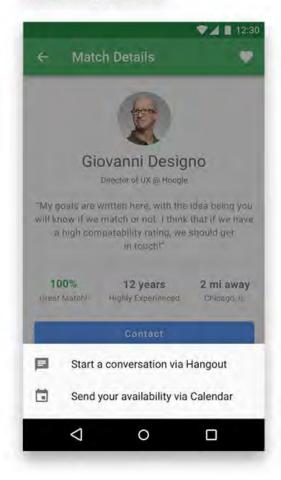








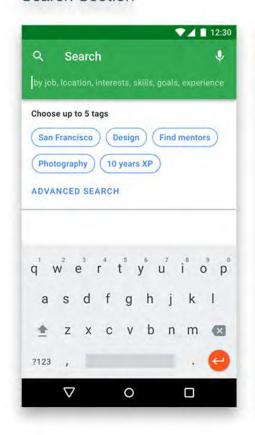
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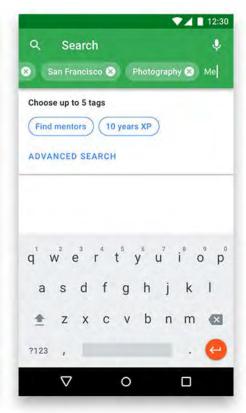


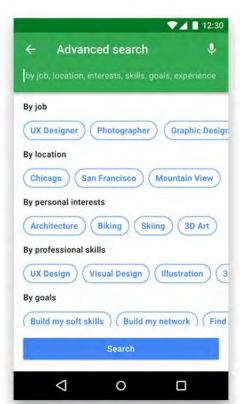




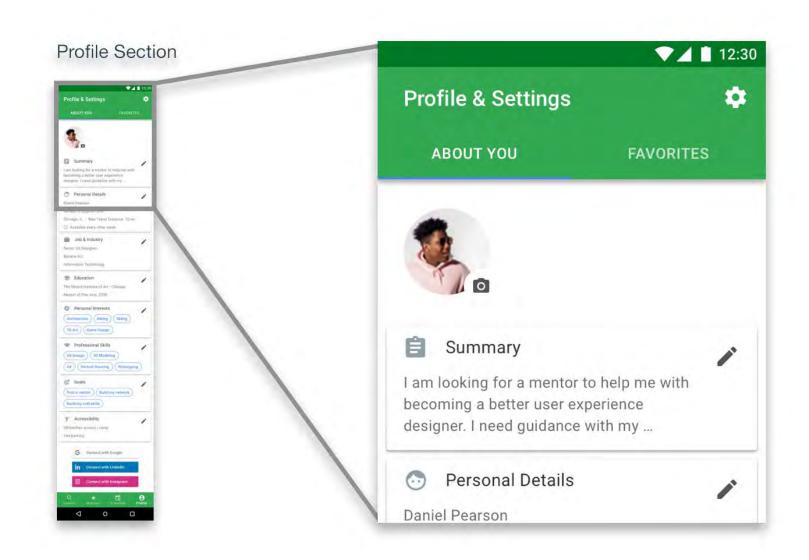
Search Section



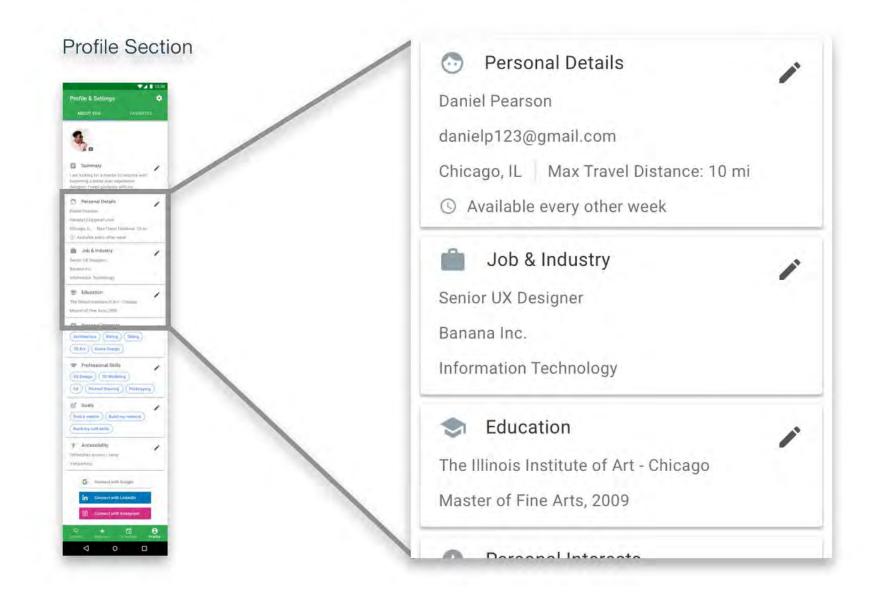




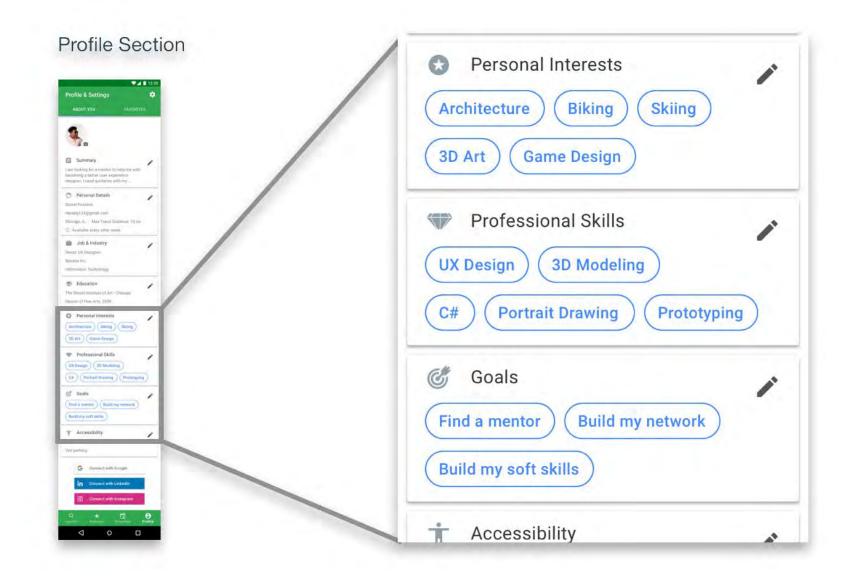




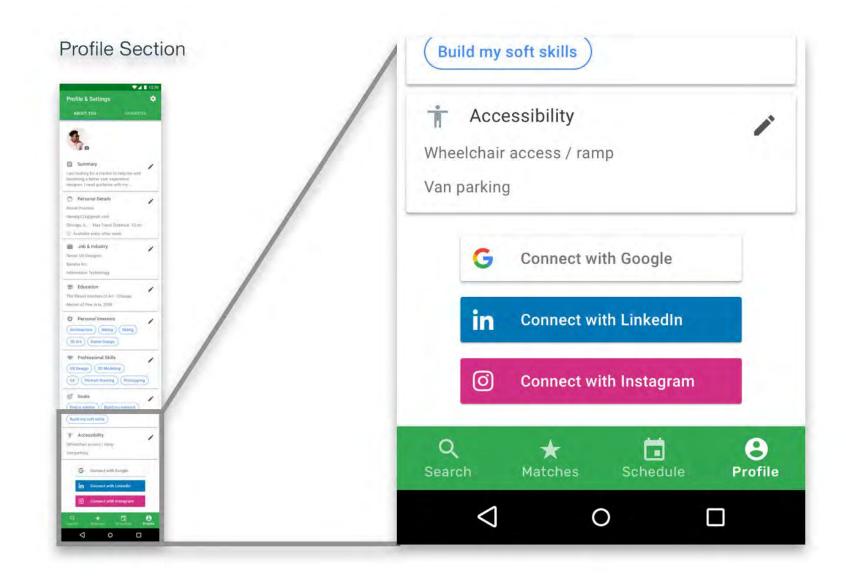










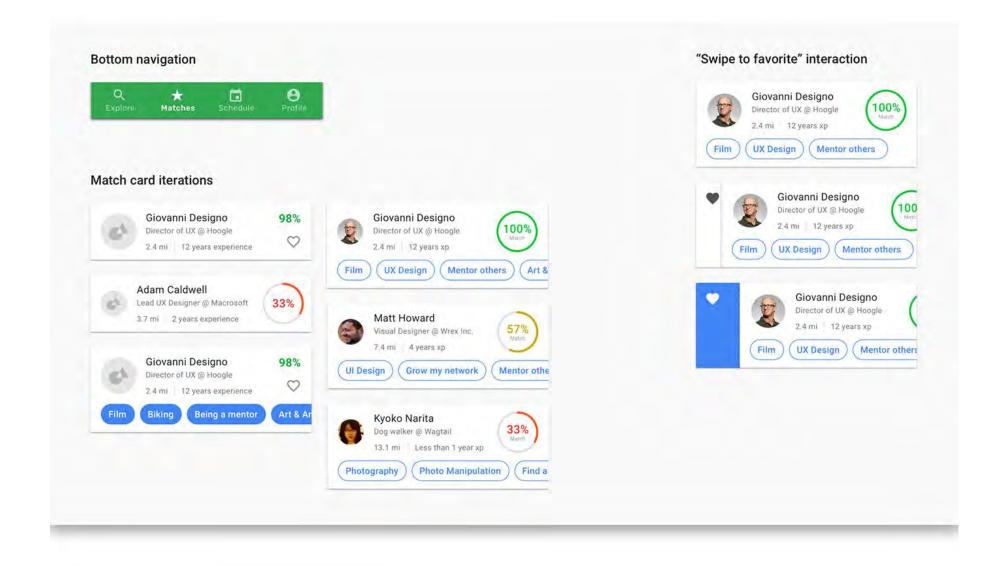




Profile Section

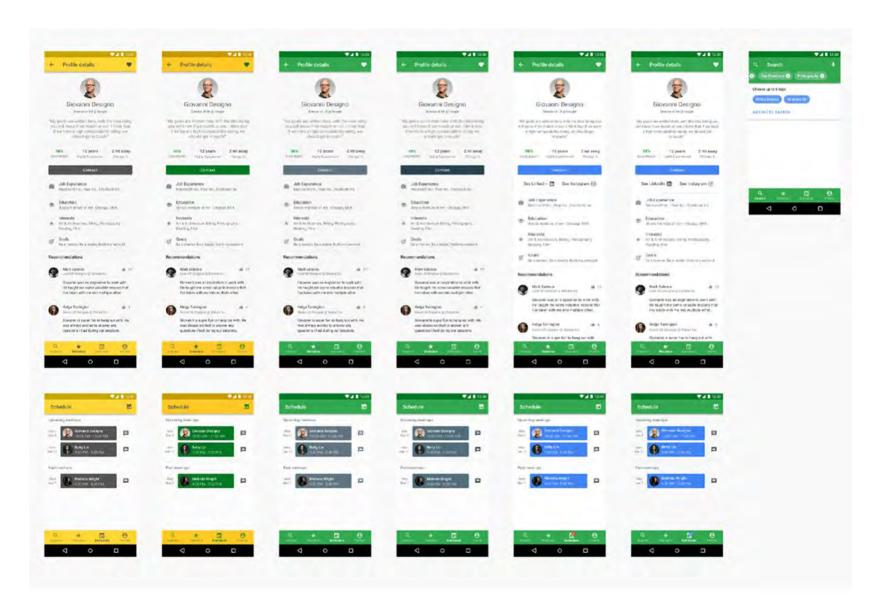






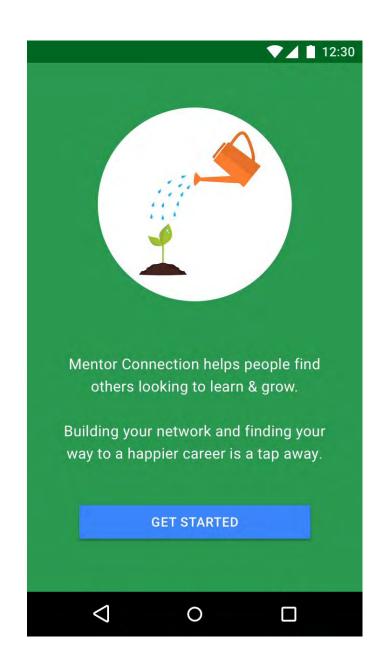


Appendix 3 | Color Tests





Appendix 4 | Prototype





In closing

If you've read this far, I truly appreciate it.

I hope it gave you a clear sense of how I do what I do and why I do it well.

Mark Hughes



Tack

どうもありがとう

Merci

谢谢

Спасибо

Gracias

Grazie