

Shawn Kenney

M|I|C/A

Shake Shack Kiosk Team Project

Research Strategy Design Leadership

Introduction

As part of our Masters of Professional Studies in User Experience program at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), we were assigned a 5-week group prototyping assignment with team members (4) filling one of three project roles: UX designer (2), product manager, and a product tester.

Teams were to create and test three iterations of their prototypes, identifying and incorporating revisions each round. Prototypes were to focus on two flows from an existing experience of their choosing: a search flow, and a checkout flow. The team landed on the Shake Shack in-store kiosk experience as the focus for the assignment.

The original project designs were created in Sketch, and prototypes were created in InVision. Due to the discontinuation of InVision I have recreated and made the prototype available in Figma.

This project was conducted exclusively as part of the curriculum, and had no participation from Shake Shack. Brand identity, existing product designs, product images and icons are the property of Shake Shack and were not created by the team as part of this project.

Additional Team Members

Amanda Harty [in](#)

[Daniel Smith](#) [in](#)

[Sonkarlay Vaye](#) [in](#)



Process

Any project where you have an excuse to order crinkle cut fries is a great project. To get started we needed to build a model of the existing kiosk experience. Team members that lived in proximity to a Shake Shack went to their local location, spent some time ordering from the menu and took spy shots of the various screens. This allowed us to build a wireframe model in sketch we could use to as a starting point for our designs and to conduct a heuristic review.

Once we had identified any opportunities from the heuristic review our two designated designers each put together an initial revised concept. When ready, these were presented back to the team for discussion. Opportunities for alignment were identified and from there a testable prototype was created in InVision.

Drinks Screen 1



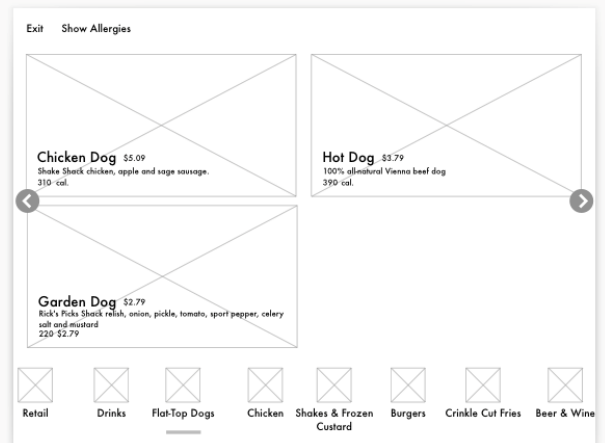
Drinks Screen 2



Flat Top Dogs 1



Flat Top Dogs 2



Iteration One

Our initial revisions focused on the item selection process once a user entered a product category. Shake Shack took a "hero" approach with four large product photos displayed at a time. From here, the user would need to page through if the system had more than four items for the category. Once the user found an item they were interested in, they would select it to "drill down" into the details, where they could customize and add it to their cart.

Our designs took a list-detail approach, presenting a list of menu items along the left and a detail view to the right. The intention was to reduce the amount of scrolling needed to browse the menu and eliminate the need to "drill in/drill out" of menu items to see their details. In this model, a menu item would always be selected by default.

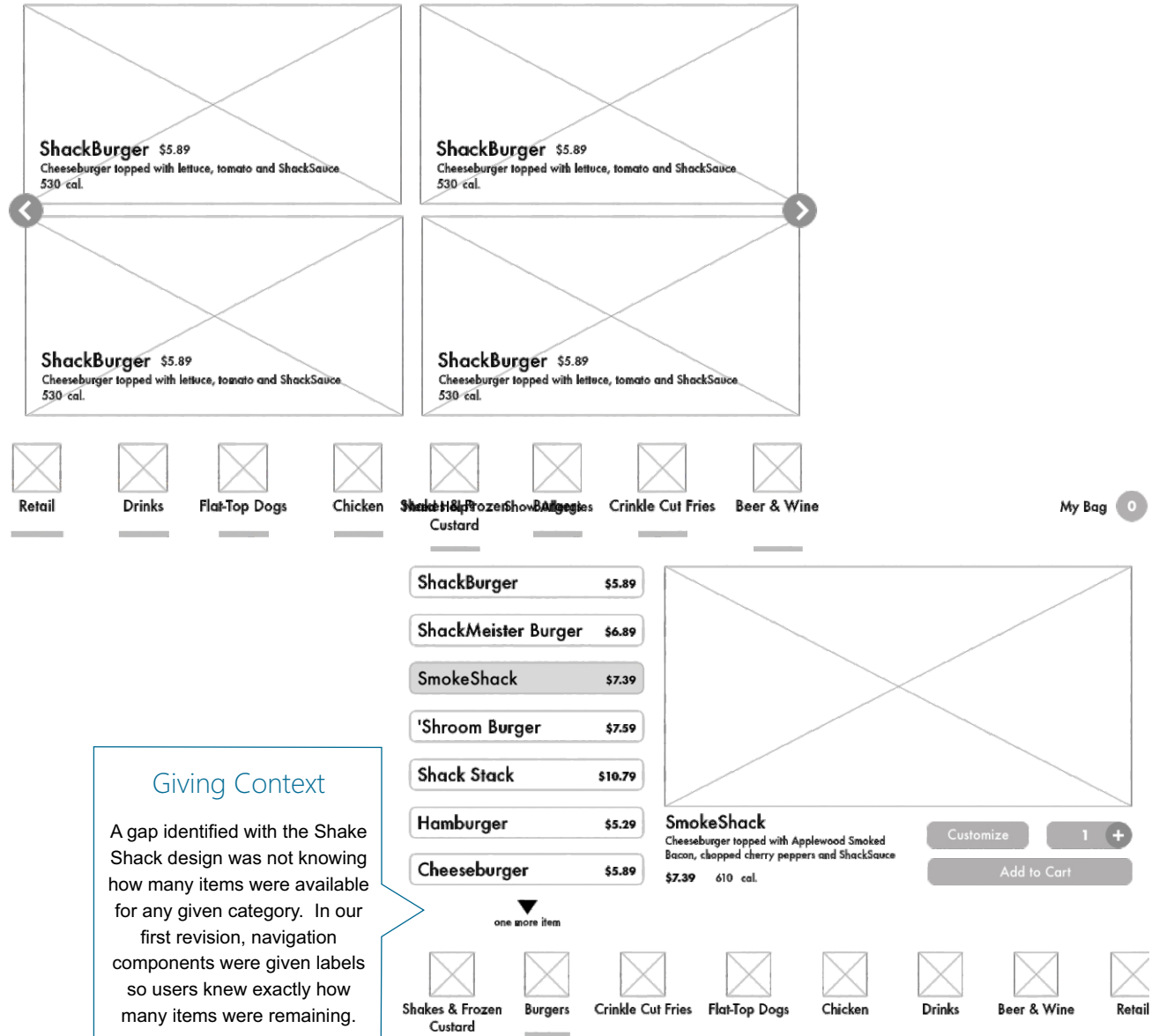
Our testing process had users perform the same task in our recreation of the Shake Shack designs and our revised designs. Key observations with Shake Shack's design were issues navigating products and needing an "Exit" button to back out of a product category to browse elsewhere.

Feedback was positive for this first design iteration.

Testers quickly understood how to enter a product category, customize items, and add them to their cart. Being able to see the full list of category items was also well received, allowing users to have a better browsing experience when considering what they wanted to order.

Additional feedback was given on the order of categories. While we prioritized the "Shakes" of Shake Shack, testers felt that Burgers, Chicken, and Flat-Top Dogs should come first.

Exit Show Allergies



Iteration Two



Our second iteration addressed the feedback regarding the order of product categories placed along the bottom of the screen, with Burgers & Chicken, Flat-Top Dogs, and Crinkle Cut Fries moved ahead of drinks. We also introduced new icons in the upper right to show where you were in the ordering process.

Shake Shack's brand identity was also introduced at this point, partly to address team discussions related to the role their existing product images should play in the updated design, which some members felt were now lost. The team landed on a product photo background behind the product name in an attempt to find a balance between the "hero" image approach and our approach.

Feedback during this round of testing focused exclusively on our revised prototype. The wizard was received favorably, but legibility issues were raised with the menu options. Feedback on the value of having more recognizable product photos indicated that while this was nice, most options are self-evident, and if users really wanted to know more, they would need to read the description anyway. Moving forward, the team felt comfortable treating these images primarily as design elements.

Need Help? Show Allergies

 **Add Items**
 View Bag
  Checkout
  Text
  Receipt

-  \$5.89
-  \$6.89
-  \$7.39
-  \$7.59
-  \$10.79
-  \$5.29
-  \$5.89
-  \$5.89


 one more item



ShackBurger

Cheeseburger topped with lettuce, tomato and ShackSauce

Customize

1 +

Add to Cart

Giving Priority
 The challenge for the team was to identify not just that photos are important, but when they are the most effective as well.


 Burgers & Chicken


 Flat-Top Dogs


 Crinkle Cut Fries


 Drinks


 Beer & Wine


 Shakes & Frozen Custard


 Retail

Final Design

Our final design increased the contrast between the background and menu item name, while leaving the overall design the same. The final version also included a full checkout flow including a cart, and upsell opportunities presented as menu items were selected.

Need Help? Show Allergies

 [Add Items](#)
 [View Bag](#)
 [Checkout](#)
 [Text](#)
 [Receipt](#)

- ShackBurger  \$5.89
- ShackMeister Burger  \$6.89
- SmokeShack  \$7.39
- 'Shroom Burger  \$7.59
- Shack Stack  \$10.79
- Hamburger  \$5.29
- Cheeseburger  \$5.89
- Grilled Cheese  \$5.89






SmokeShack
 Cheeseburger topped with Applewood Smoked Bacon, chopped cherry peppers and ShackSauce
\$7.39 610 cal.

[Customize](#)
1
+

Add to Cart


 one more item

- 
[Burgers & Chicken](#)
- 
[Flat-Top Dogs](#)
- 
[Crinkle Cut Fries](#)
- 
[Drinks](#)
- 
[Beer & Wine](#)
- 
[Shakes & Frozen Custard](#)
- 
[Retail](#)

Four Years Later

Shake Shack was one of the few places my wife and I could walk to and pick up a meal from coming out of the COVID lockdown. Ordering crinkle-cut fries, a couple of iced teas, and enjoying them along the National Mall has since become a fond memory of ours, and we continue to enjoy our visits today.

As of summer 2024, not much appears to have changed with the overall design of the Shake Shack kiosk. Their product pages still rely on “hero” graphics, but they’ve reduced their size to allow six items to display instead of four.

The navigation also behaves the same, forcing users to page through results without knowing how many more results are present. The order of menu categories along the bottom still feels arbitrary, but this mostly appears to be a function of forced eye movement on their home screen layout.

The home screen hero image is followed by basic instructions on how to begin ordering, which flow into an arrow pointing to the burger category, which itself is positioned in the center of the product category icons.

While this approach may work on the home screen, it still feels less than optimal once you drill down to a category page. Furthermore, there really isn’t enough happening on this screen to warrant an explanation of how to get started. The overall design of the kiosk wasn’t bad then, and still isn’t bad, but this use of helper text on the home screen brings to mind a classic UX saying:

“A user interface is like a joke. If you have to explain it, it’s not that good.”

- Martin LeBlanc

