

Moonstorm: Custom Band Merch

Kelsey Thomas

Project overview



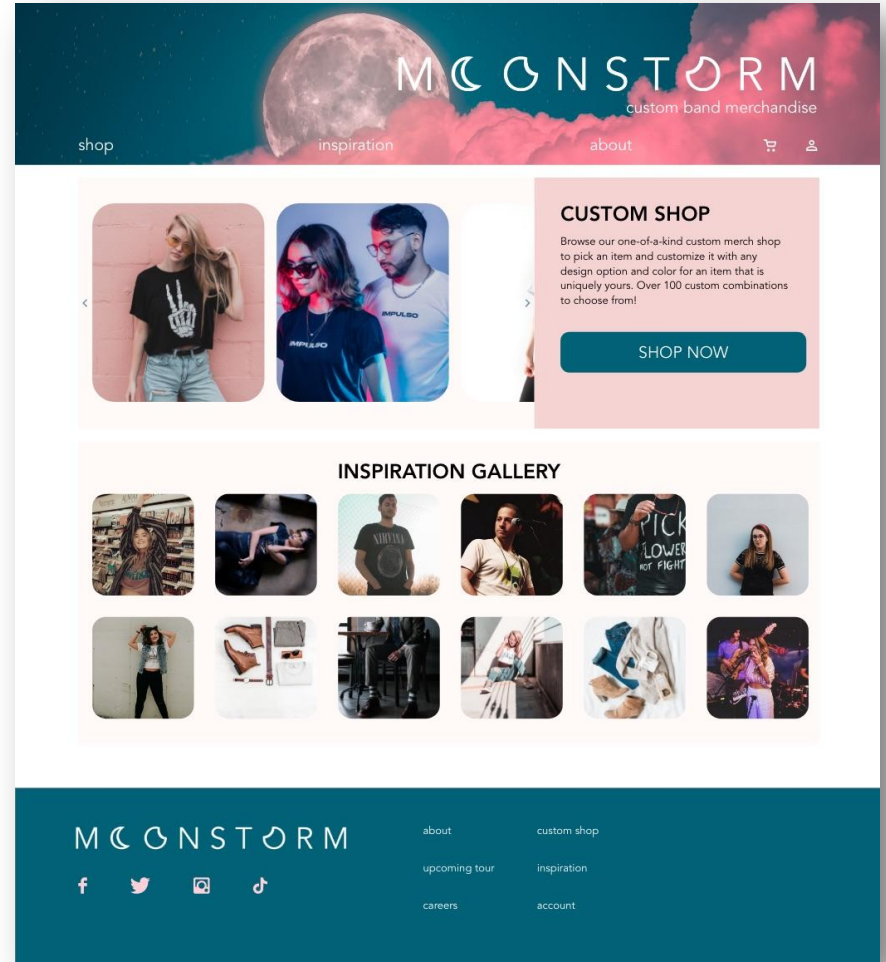
The product:

A band merchandise customization site that allows users to purchase customized merch to show off their favorite band in a way that is truly unique to them.



Project duration:

May – August 2022



Project overview



The problem:

Band merchandise is often limited to a few distinct styles and options that may not fit all fans' wardrobe or style.



The goal:

Build a customization site that allows fans to personalize their merch to fit their own unique style and needs.

Project overview



My role:

Lead UX designer and researcher



Responsibilities:

User Research

Wireframing

Mock-Ups

Logo Design

Usability Testing

Analysis

User research: summary



I conducted informal user interviews held in a more conversational style. I wanted to get a sense for how individuals felt about, supported, and interacted with their favorite bands. I found a common theme among young and middle age adults - many are working professionals who still have that same sense of passion for music and bands as they did in their youth, but they have no way to translate wearing their favorite old band T-Shirt into a professional office environment. Giving these individuals the ability to customize band merchandise into styles and types that fit their current lifestyle would give them the flexibility to carry this same youthful passion and love for music and bands into their adult years.

User research: pain points

1

Can't wear old band
T-Shirts to work

Many young professionals still love bands and music, but have had to ditch their old band apparel for work attire

2

Anything customized is
often expensive

Buying anything custom is seen as a luxury and very expensive – affordable custom options are few and far between

3

No longer buys band
merch at live shows

Due to COVID, attendance at live concerts is much lower – and even those in attendance aren't buying as much merchandise as it no longer fits their wardrobe needs

4

Favorite options may not
always fit

It's difficult to find quality one-design-fits-all merchandise that actually fits – often the preferred design or style is sold out or not available in someone's size

Persona: Eloise Everington

Problem statement:

Eloise is a young working professional musical lover who needs to have more options to personally customize band merchandise options because she wants to continue showing off and supporting her favorite bands in a subtle way, even at work.



Eloise Everington

Age: 26

Education: Bachelor's Degree

Hometown: Denver, CO

Family: Married, no children

Occupation: Financial Planner

"I love to show off my favorite bands with merchandise, but as a working professional, I don't have a lot of options to do this every day with pre-made T-Shirt type styles that aren't appropriate for the workplace."

Goals

- Support favorite bands
- Purchase band merchandise that shows off the band and own personal style
- Find uniquely tailored gifts for friends
- Show off favorite bands and brands in a more subtle way in the professional environment

Frustrations

- Lack of options to customize in online and in-store shopping
- Finding a great illustration but not liking the cut/size/style of merchandise it comes with
- Commissioning custom items can be extremely expensive
- The best band merchandise is often only found at live shows

Eloise is a young working professional living in a large city. Though she is a financial planner by day, her biggest passion is music. She loves going to see bands perform live and has maintained a tradition of always picking up new band merchandise at every live show she attends. However, now that she is established in the professional world, she's unable to wear most of this merchandise day to day. She would love to find a way to customize her options in music merchandise that would allow her to show off her favorite bands in a uniquely styled way customized just for her.

User journey map

Mapping the user journey shows clear frustration and annoyance which makes way for discouragement when Eloise is unable to truly meet her goal

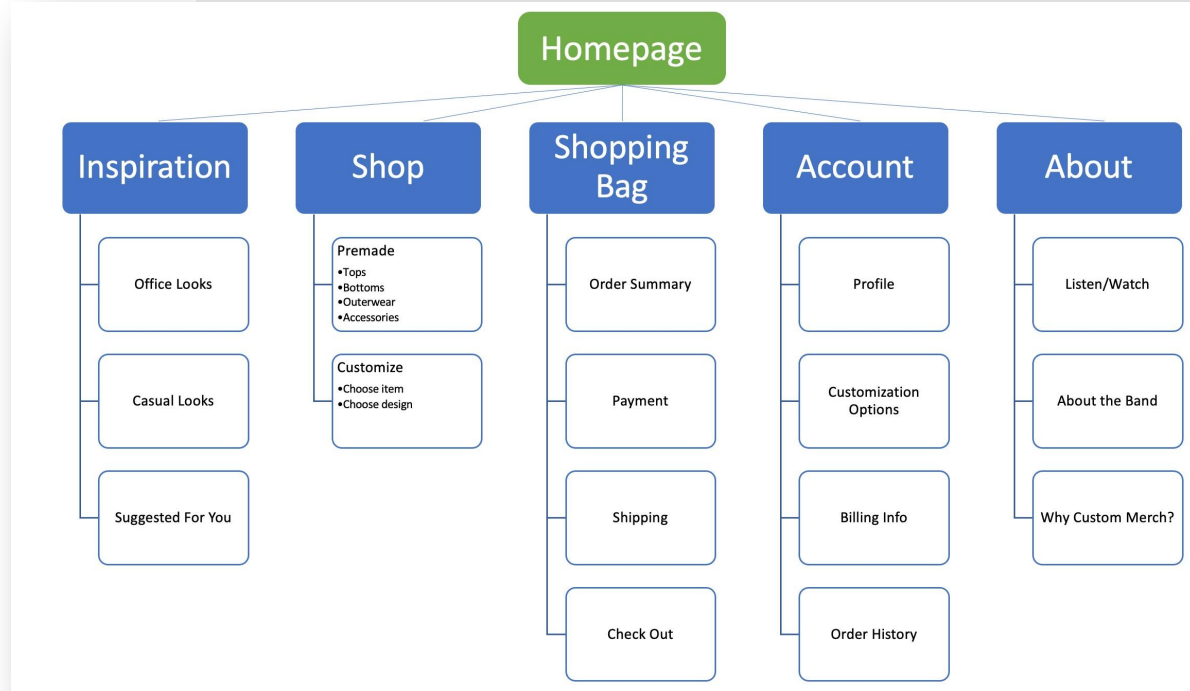
Persona: Eloise Everington

Goal: Purchase band merchandise to show off favorite band and match personal style

ACTION	Attend live show	Search website	View merch options	Look for more options	Purchase pre-made
TASK LIST	A. Enter venue B. Browse merch table C. Find various options matching style	A. Open band site B. Look for merch page C. Open merch page	A. View merch page B. Browse through options C. Look at prices and styles	A. Search other online retailers B. Search Amazon C. Search Google	A. Open band merch site again B. Select an option, even though it's not perfect C. Finalize purchase
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Anxious, frustrated, overwhelmed	Calm, excited, curious	Curious, frustrated, annoyed	Annoyed, sad, discouraged	Defeated
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Custom merch options, less pressure outside of a live music venue	Make merch easier to find when searching	Custom merch options, more options in general to fit various styles	No need to search outside official band merch	No need to settle for something pre-made that doesn't fully meet needs

Sitemap

Though the sitemap evolved to be more simplistic during wireframing, usability testing, and prototyping, the overall site structure really took shape by building a sitemap in advance of developing initial wireframes.



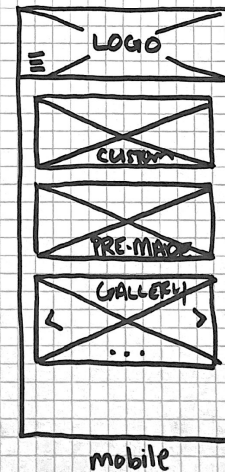
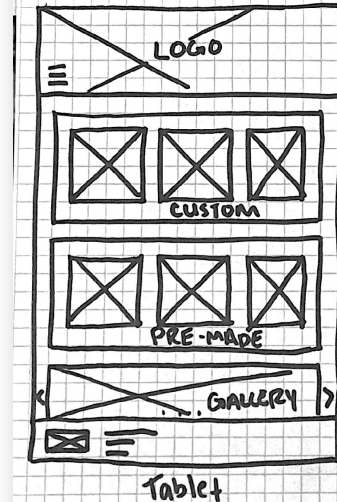
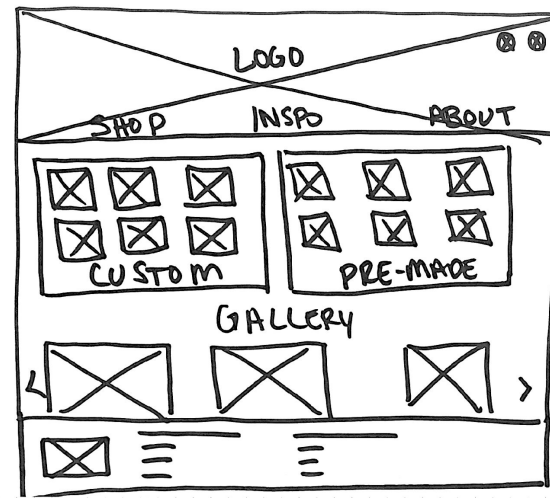
Paper wireframes

Sketching out 5 different versions of each page of the website was very helpful in brainstorming and thinking critically about the placement of various elements. As I sketched, I starred various elements I liked the best that were then combined into a V1 paper wireframe for each page.



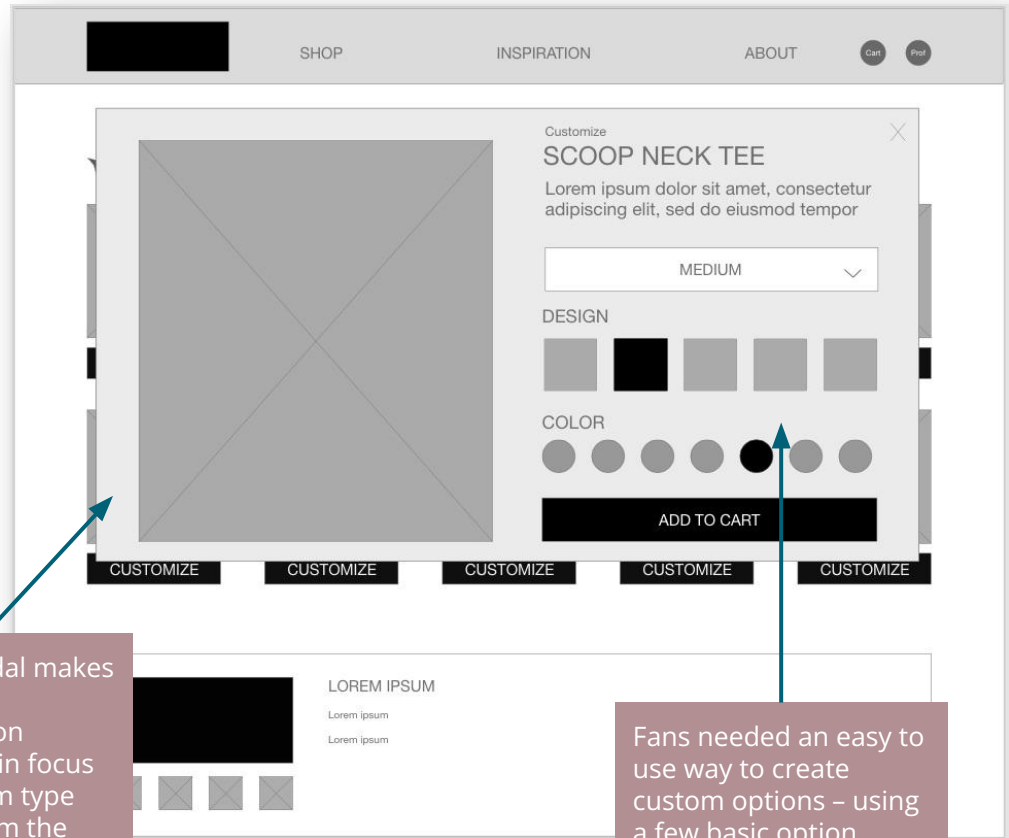
Paper wireframe screen size variation(s)

I used grid paper to create tablet and mobile size versions of the home page. Grid paper made it possible to be more precise with developing initial placement for responsive site elements.



Digital wireframes

Creating digital wireframes based on the paper versions was helpful to better visualize some elements like text and button size a bit more granularly in a digital context. I kept user problems (lack of customization options being the most important) top of mind based on initial research.

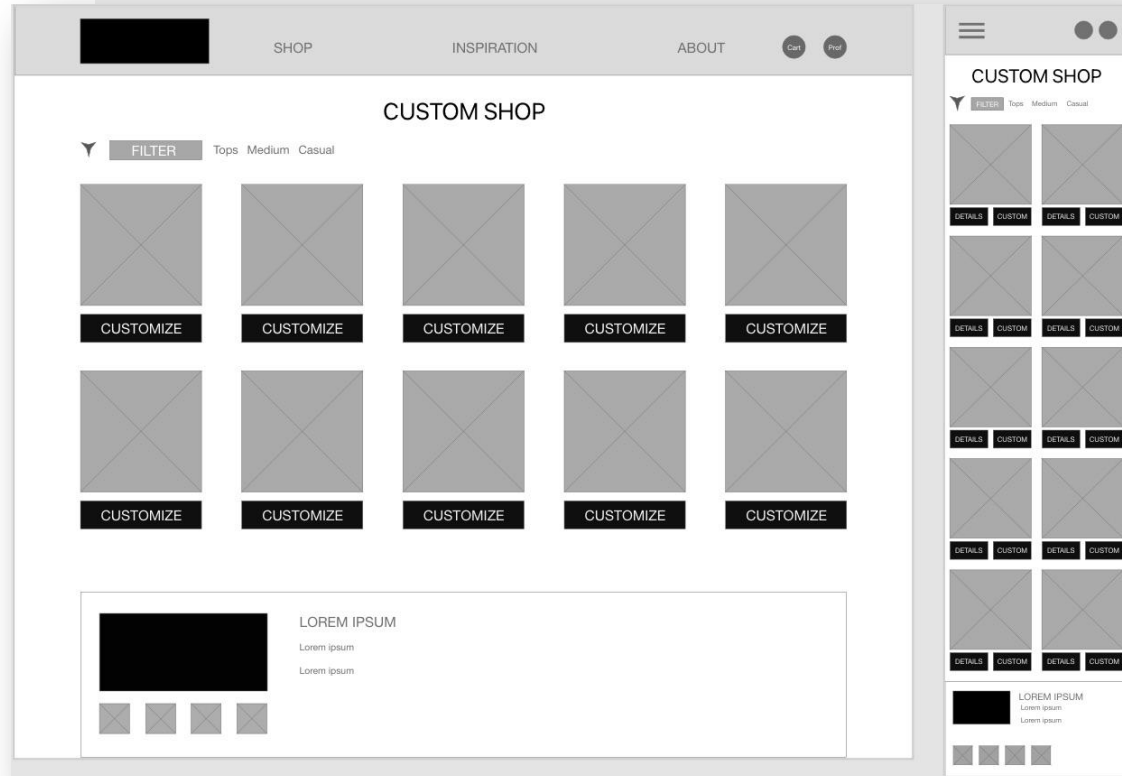


Using a modal makes it clear that customization options are in focus for each item type selected from the shop page

Fans needed an easy to use way to create custom options – using a few basic option selections should meet this need in a simple way

Digital wireframe screen size variation(s)

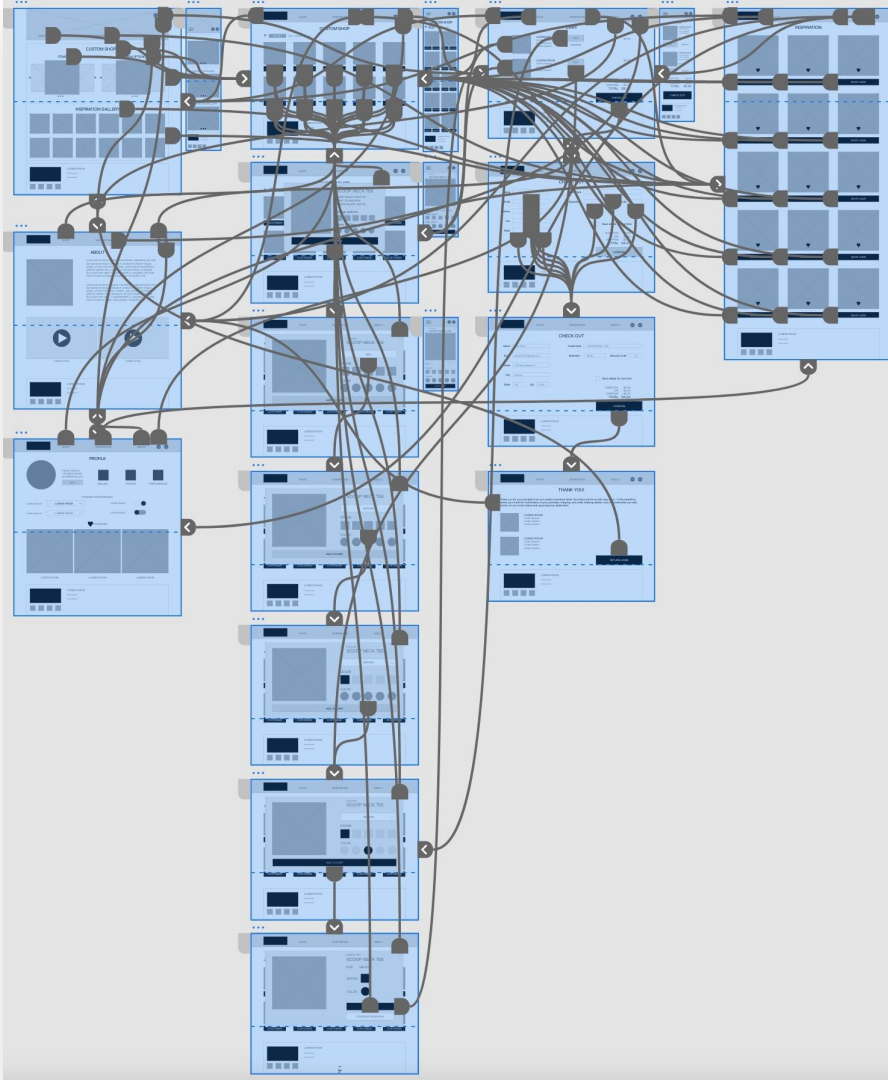
Developing a responsive site for various screen sizes was crucial – many users may not have desktop computers, or may like to browse options on their mobile devices. This wireframe of the shop page shows how elements can be condensed while still being simplistic and easy to view.



Low-fidelity prototype

Due to the complexity of a site where there are various entry and exit points to each flow, the prototyping wires look messy in this context! Click the link below to view the full low-fidelity V1 prototype to get more clarity of the user flow.

[Low-Fidelity Prototype V1](#)



Usability study: parameters



Study type:

Moderated usability study



Location:

United States, remote and on-site



Participants:

5 participants



Length:

10-20 minutes

Usability study: findings

A small, moderated usability study found strong themes across most participants:

1

Redundancy in flow

The customization flow modals had some redundancy in steps which caused confusion

2

Confusing profile

Including fashion preferences as settings on the user profile was confusing and distracting

3

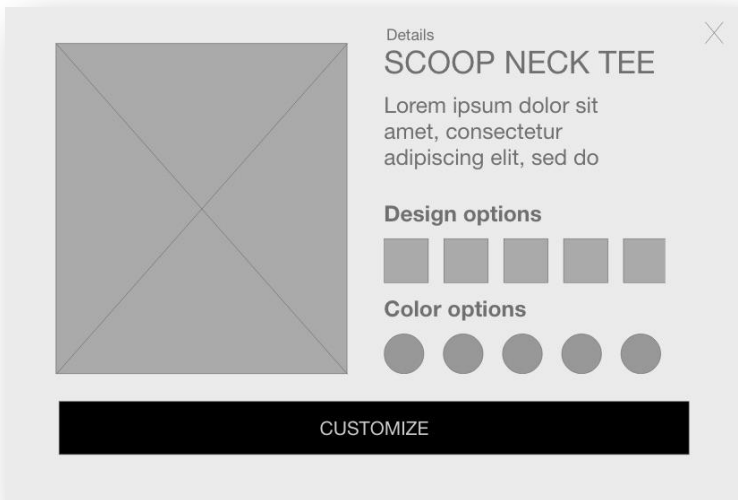
Cart clarity

Users needed more clarity on how items are added and removed from the cart – prototype limitations

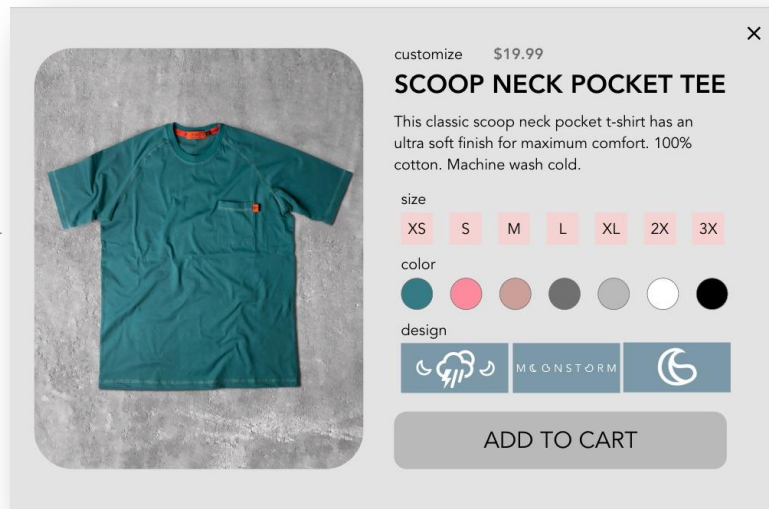
Mockups

My main usability focus while creating high-fidelity mockups was ensuring the customization flow felt smooth and intuitive. Initial feedback on low-fidelity prototypes indicated that having a button to customize within the modal was confusing, so I simplified this flow by making removing the concept of a separate product details modal and included all details in the customization modal flow.

Before usability study



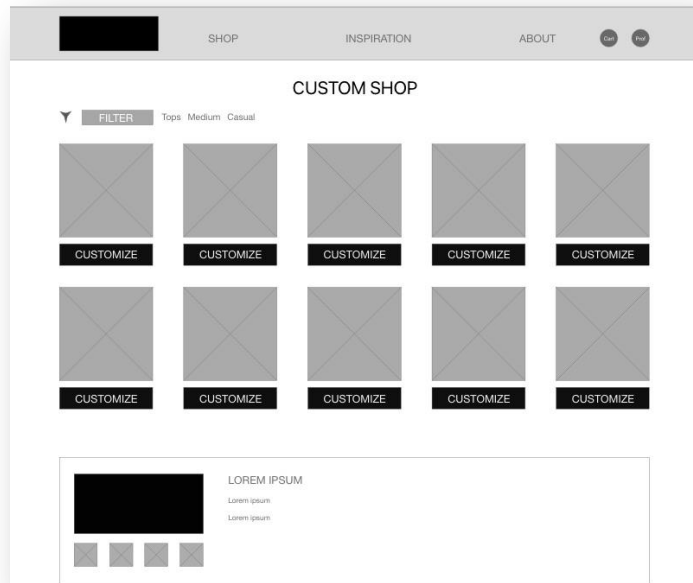
After usability study



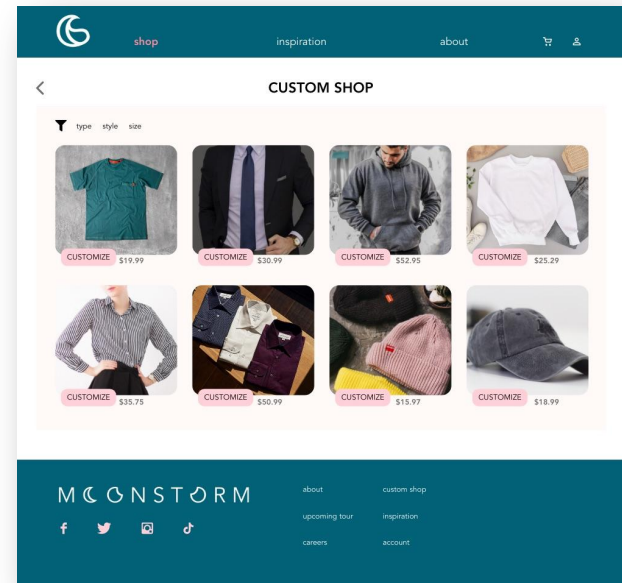
Mockups

Putting together mockups made it clear the Custom Shop page was not as intuitive as it could be. I cleaned up the Customize buttons and added price labels on all images, grouping them together in a more cohesive way for better usability.

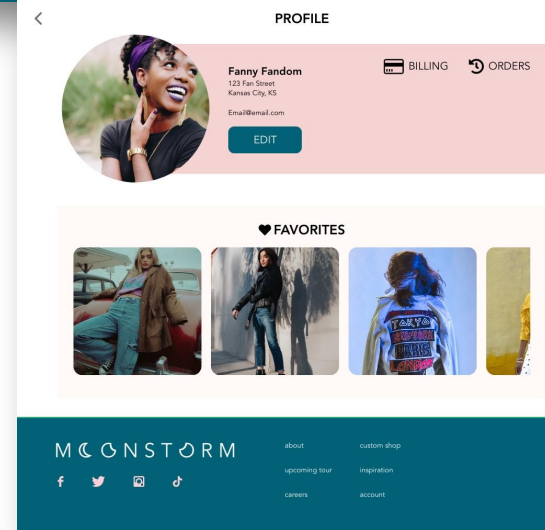
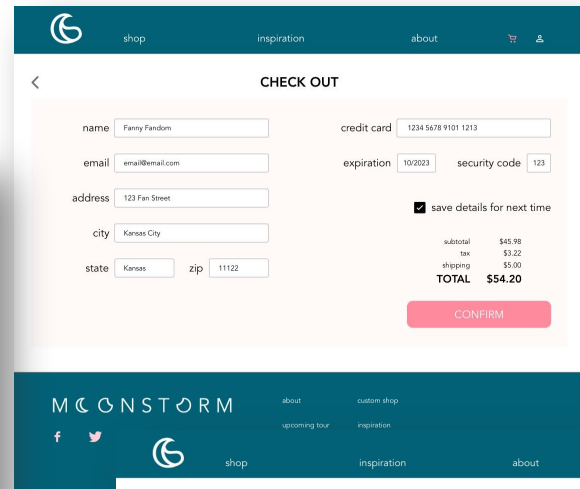
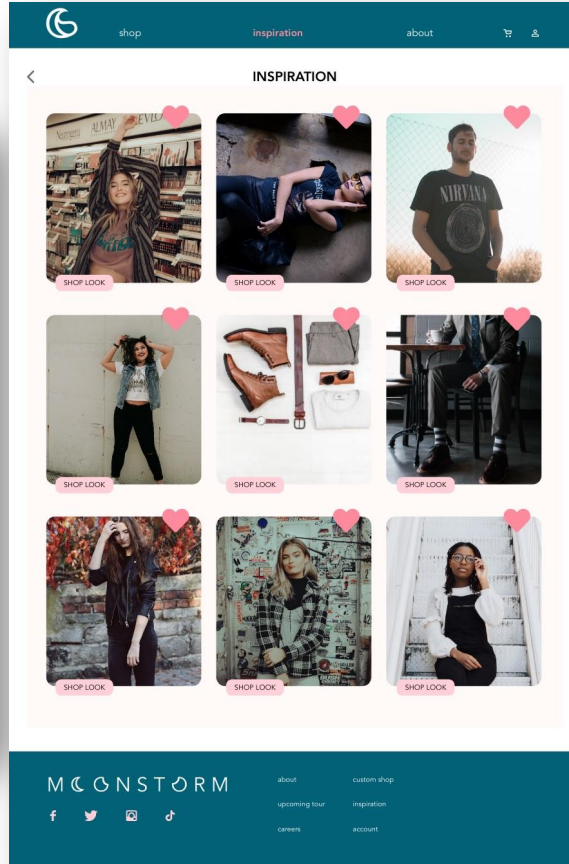
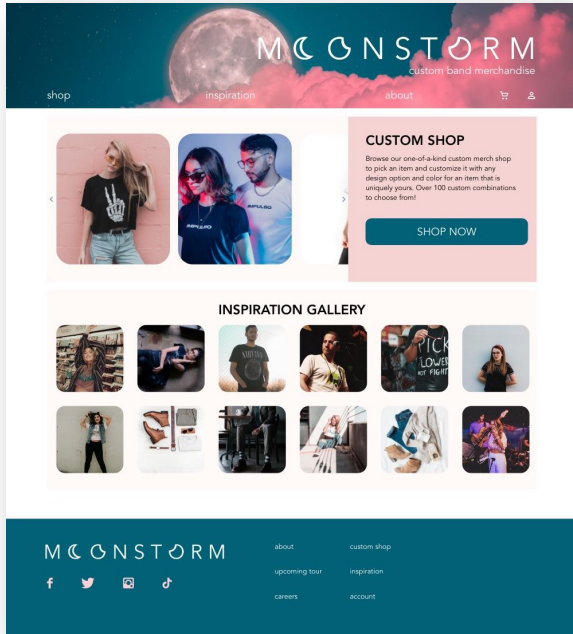
Before usability study



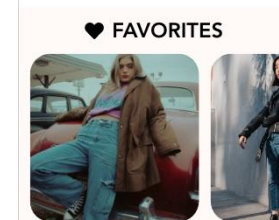
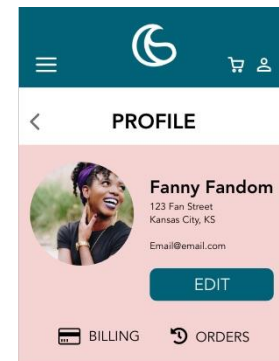
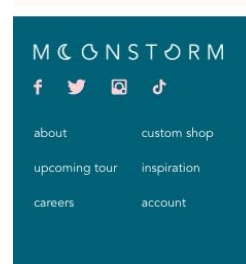
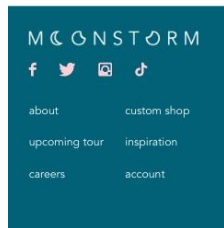
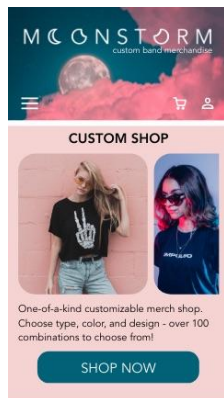
After usability study



Mockups: Original screen size



Mockups: mobile screen size variations

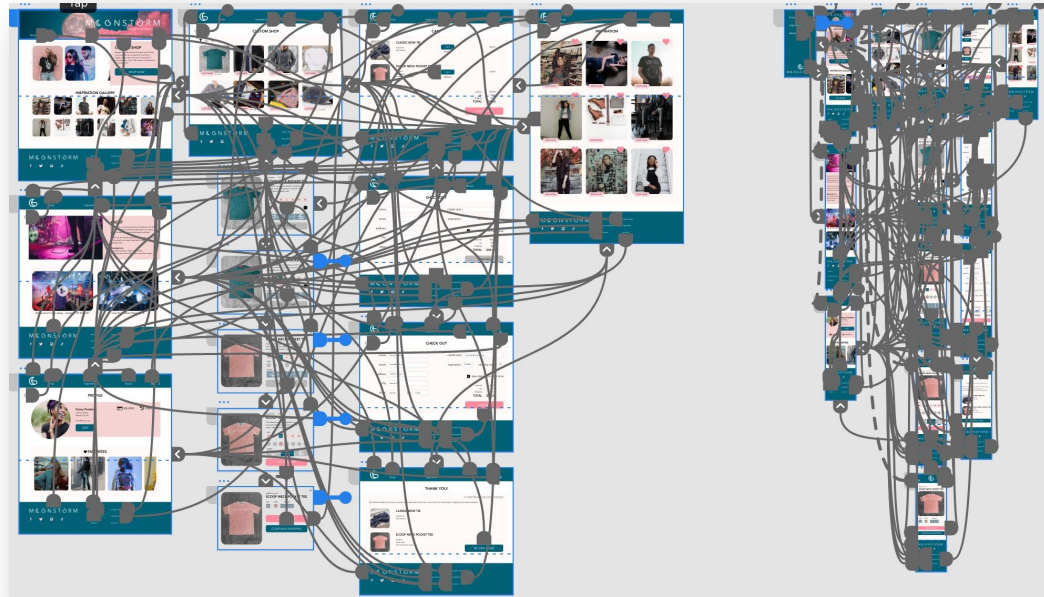


High-fidelity prototype

Click the links below to view the full high-fidelity V2 mobile and desktop prototypes to get more clarity of the user flow. In V2, I added a clearer Add To Cart confirmation page before pulling the user onto the cart page as automatically going to the cart after adding something felt a bit jarring to users.

[High-Fidelity Prototype Desktop V2](#)

[High-Fidelity Prototype Mobile V2](#)



Accessibility considerations

1

Varying size headers for specific purposes to assist visually and with screen reader technology

2

Strong color contrast for readability for those with or without visual impairments

3

Alt text on images to optimize for screen readers

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways



Impact:

This site is truly unique in the music/band space. Fans of music are very excited about this concept – being able to customize merch makes them more likely to make a purchase, which in turn means more “word of mouth” publicity for the band when the merch is worn, leading to more ticket sales and Spotify plays – the impact isn’t only for fans, but the band as well!



What I learned:

Designing a website was a very different experience from designing a purely mobile application! I really enjoyed having more real estate to work with on my screen size, but it was also a fun and rewarding challenge to translate a desktop screen into a mobile or tablet-sized concept. I’m excited to dive in more to responsive website and product design in the future!

Next steps

1

Conduct a final round of usability testing with polished final designs to ensure main problem areas are solved with the customization flow and website concept

2

Research nice to have functionality that could be incorporated into future versions of the website design (i.e. a more robust profile with AI-suggested customization options)

3

Continue to iterate on designs based on user feedback and areas of need.

Let's connect!



Thank you for reviewing my case study for the Moonstorm custom band merch website! If you'd like to see more of my work or chat about my experiences on product teams, please contact me at:

Email: kelsey.thomas@gmail.com

Website: