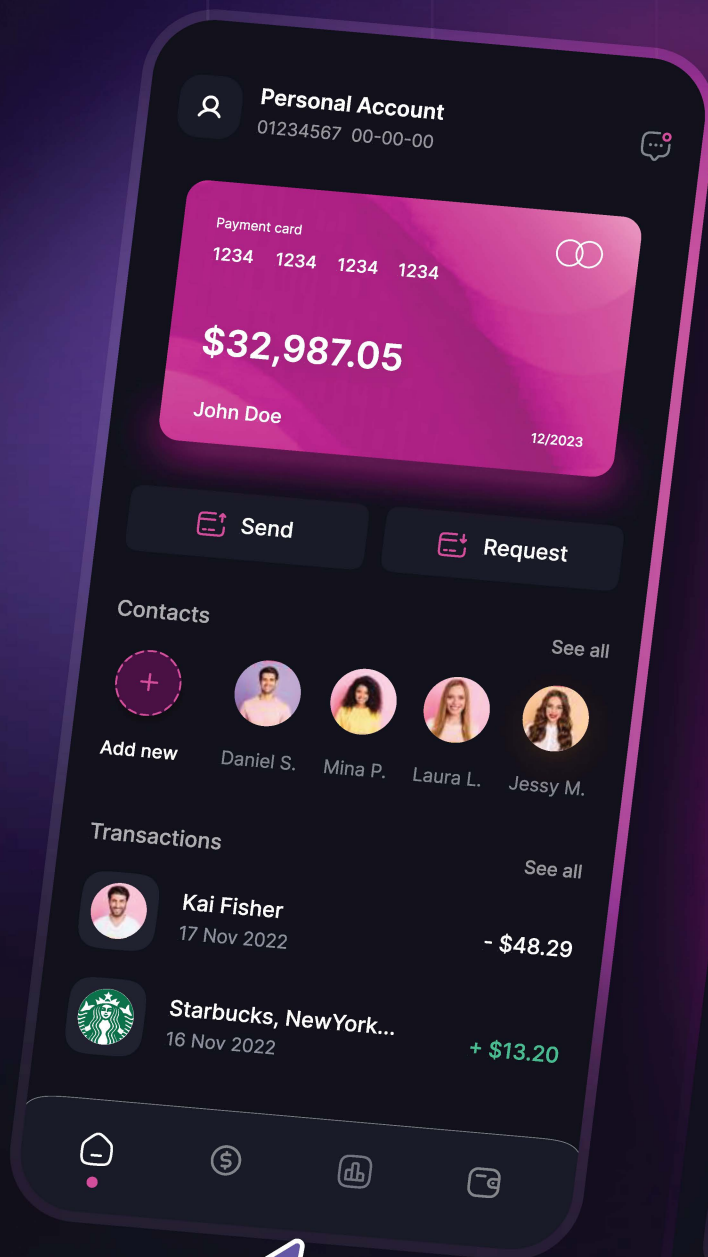
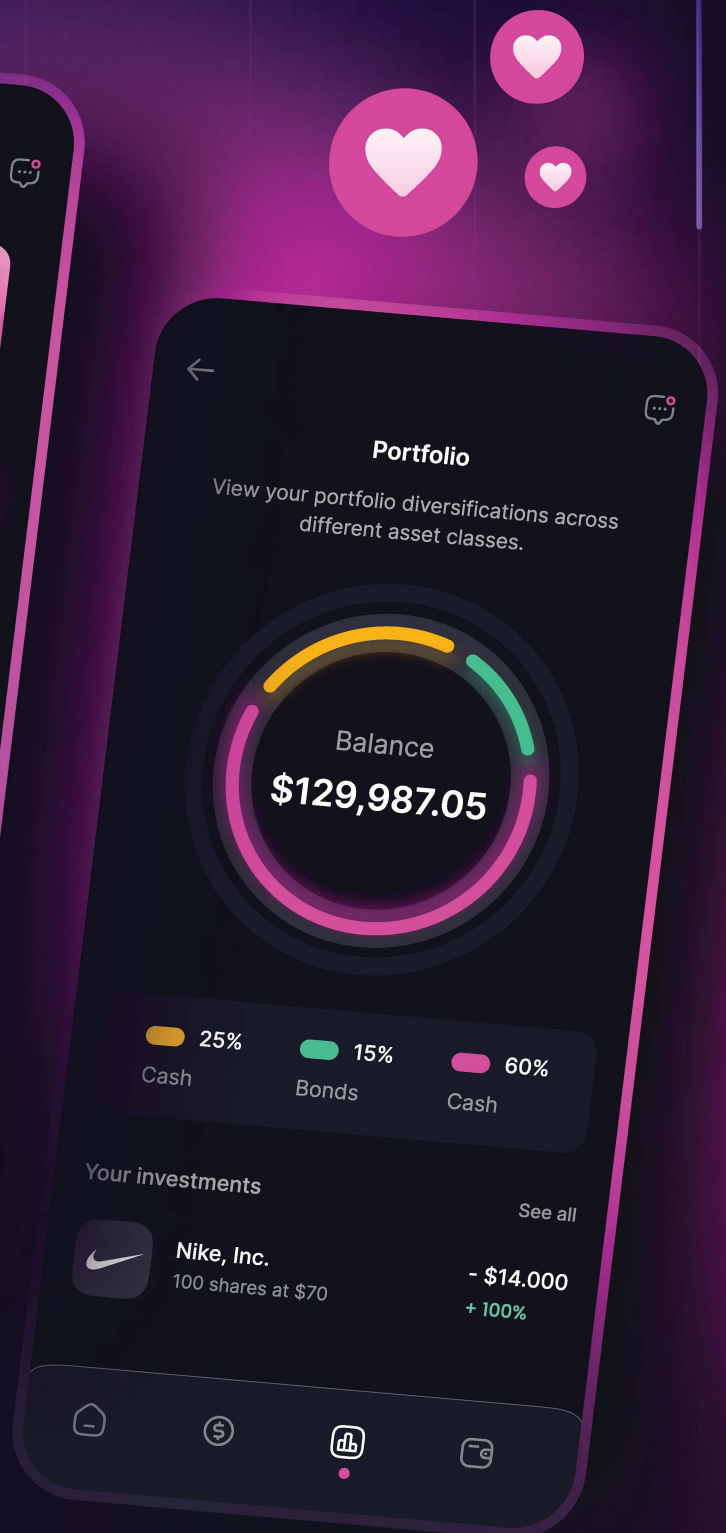


# The UI/UX Playbook

## Tips & Tricks for Exceptional Designs



uxpeak



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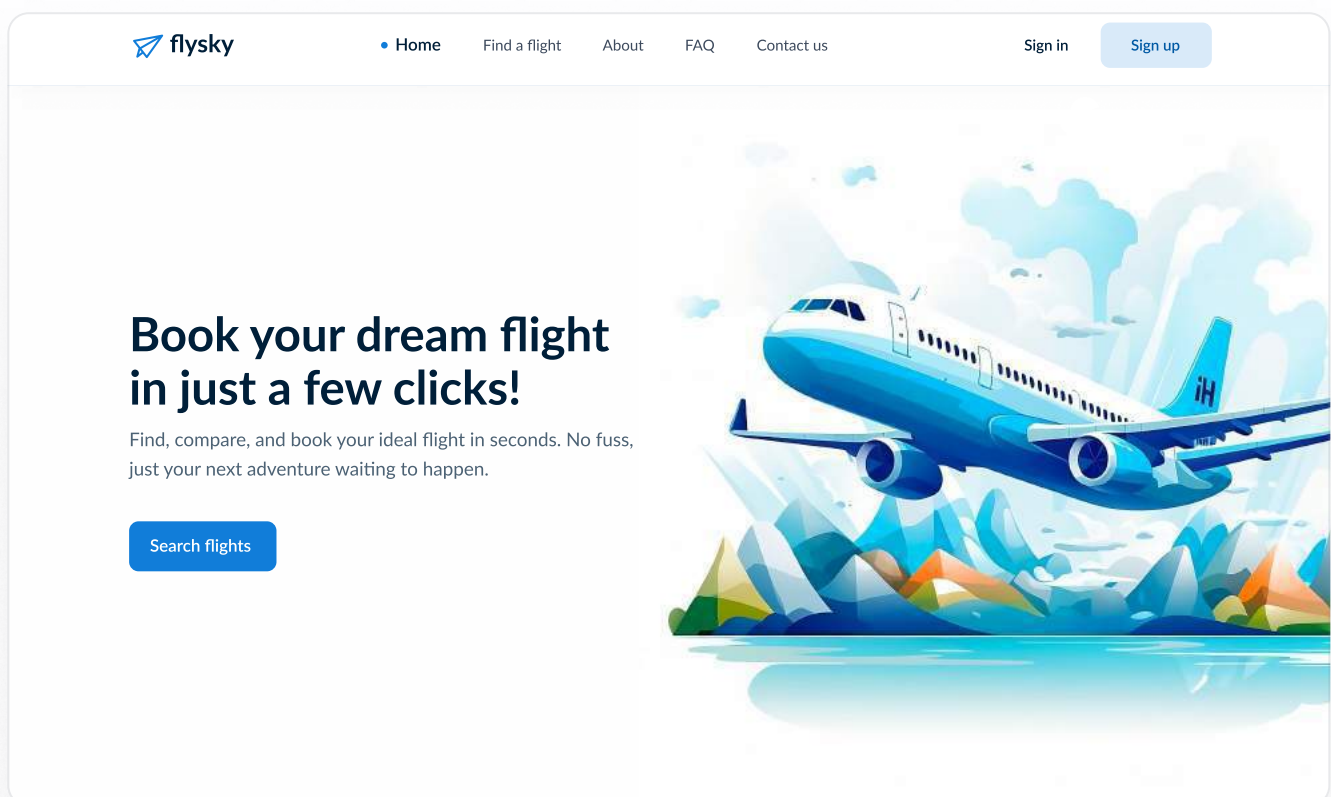
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# Create UI designs that people love

Imagine you've just downloaded an app or landed on a new website. Within seconds, you know if you want to stay or leave. Why? Because a product's user interface (UI) immediately sets the tone for the entire user experience. When people love using an app or a website, it's often because the UI design hits all the right notes—it's easy to navigate, visually appealing, and intuitively laid out.

Getting to this sweet spot isn't accidental; it's the result of carefully applying UI design principles. These principles are the building blocks that not only create an aesthetically pleasing UI but also improve user engagement and satisfaction, encourage retention, and ultimately contribute to the product's success.


It's also important to understand that UI doesn't exist in a vacuum, it's tied to user experience (UX). UI and UX are two sides of the same coin. You really can't have one without the other. We will demonstrate this through a few examples.



You've designed a product with a stunning UI—beautiful buttons, sleek typography, and eye-catching graphics. It's a visual masterpiece. But, if your users struggle to complete basic tasks, get lost in the navigation, or can't easily find what they're looking for, then all that aesthetic brilliance goes to waste.

On the flip side, let's say you've conducted rigorous UX research. You know your user personas inside out, their needs are well-documented, and you've mapped out intuitive user flows. Great, you've set the groundwork for a product that meets users' needs. But if you don't invest in a quality UI, you run the risk of delivering a product that feels outdated or is unpleasing to the eye. Even if it's functional and user-centered, it might not stand a chance against more visually appealing competition.



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The magic happens when you get both right. You'll not only have a product that looks good but one that users find intuitive, user-friendly, and—most importantly—love to use. Therefore, these UI design principles you'll learn aren't just about making things look pretty; they're also about giving people a good experience when using your product.




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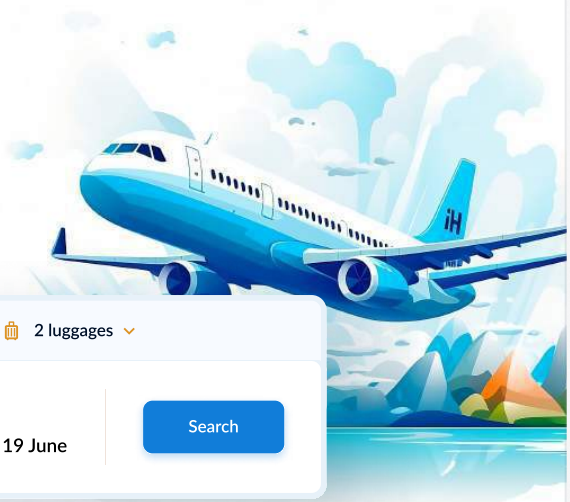
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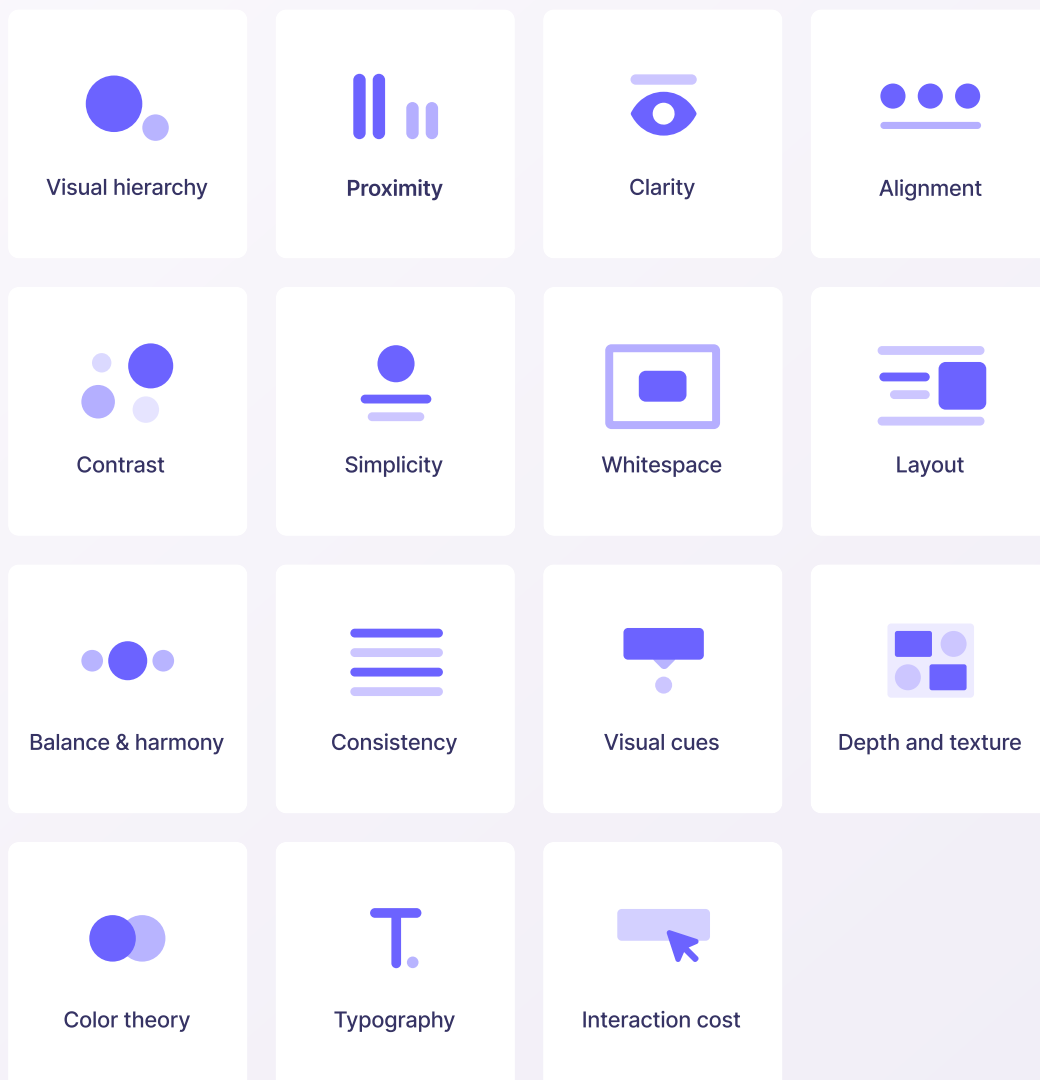
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# UI design principles

We'll be covering some of the most important UI design principles that make a big difference in how your designs are perceived and used. These principles serve as the foundation for plenty of practical tips and tricks you'll discover, all aimed at elevating your designs from good to exceptional.

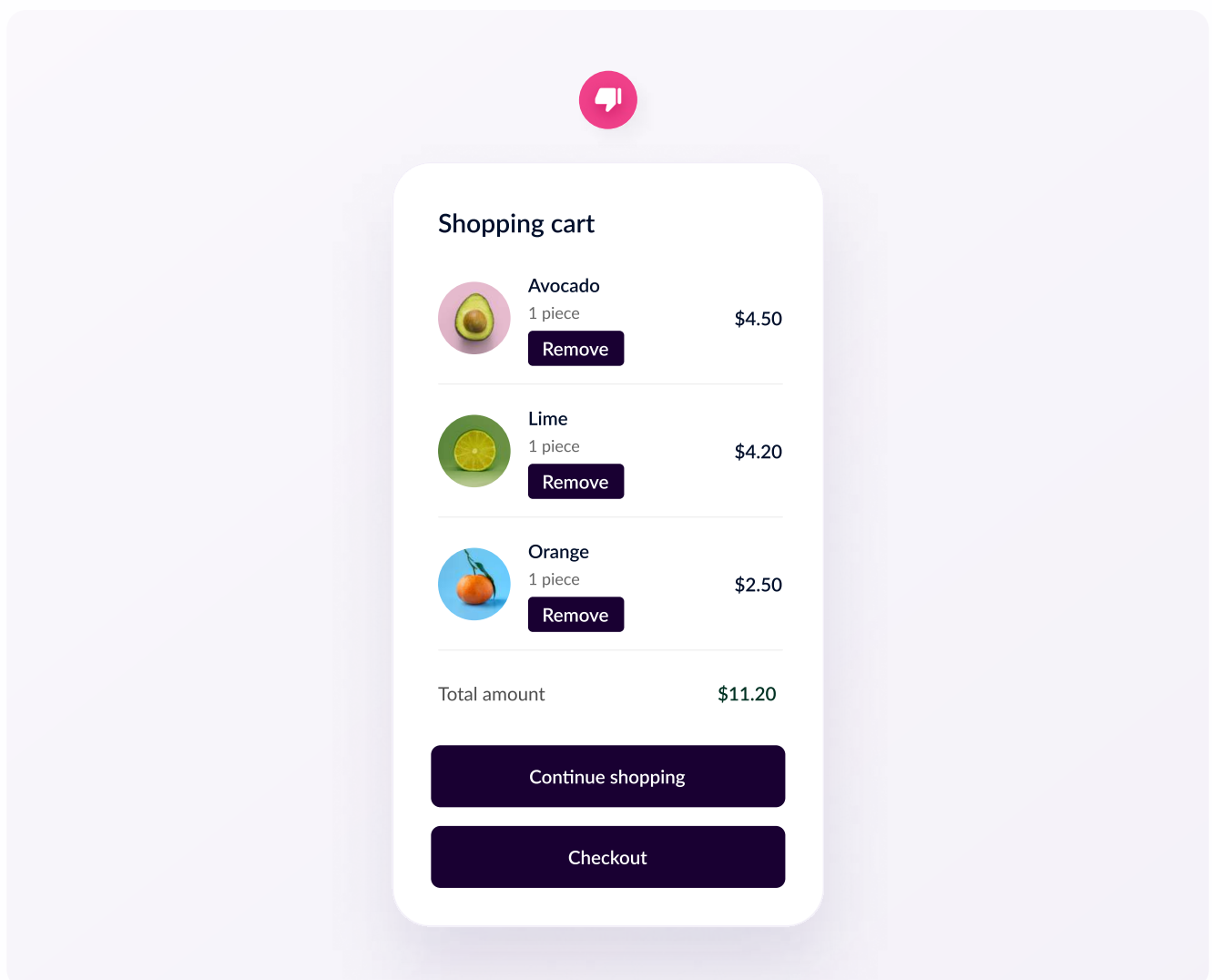
You'll learn not only what makes these principles important but also see real-world examples to understand how to implement them effectively—and how to avoid common pitfalls.



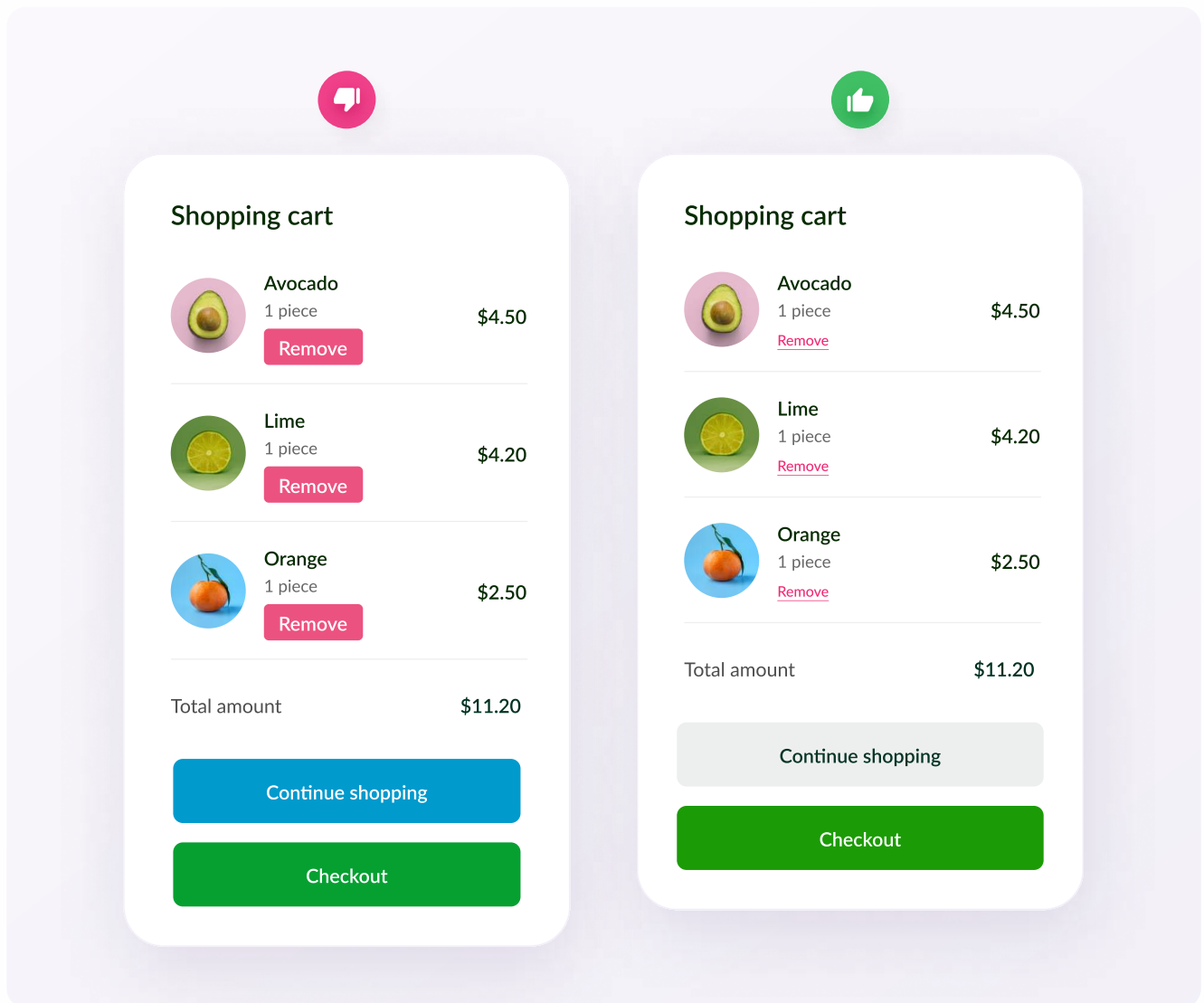
# Visual hierarchy

Visual hierarchy is all about how you arrange elements on a screen to show their level of importance. The aim of visual hierarchy is to guide the user's eye, attention and actions. To achieve this, designers utilize elements like size, color, weight, and position. If there is no visual hierarchy and everything looks the same—same size, same color—you're basically shouting all the information at once, and nobody knows what to focus on.

Have a look at the design below. You'll see a shopping cart screen featuring three buttons: "Remove," "Continue Shopping," and "Checkout." All these buttons look equally important because they're the same color and size. This can make it confusing for the user to know what action to take next.



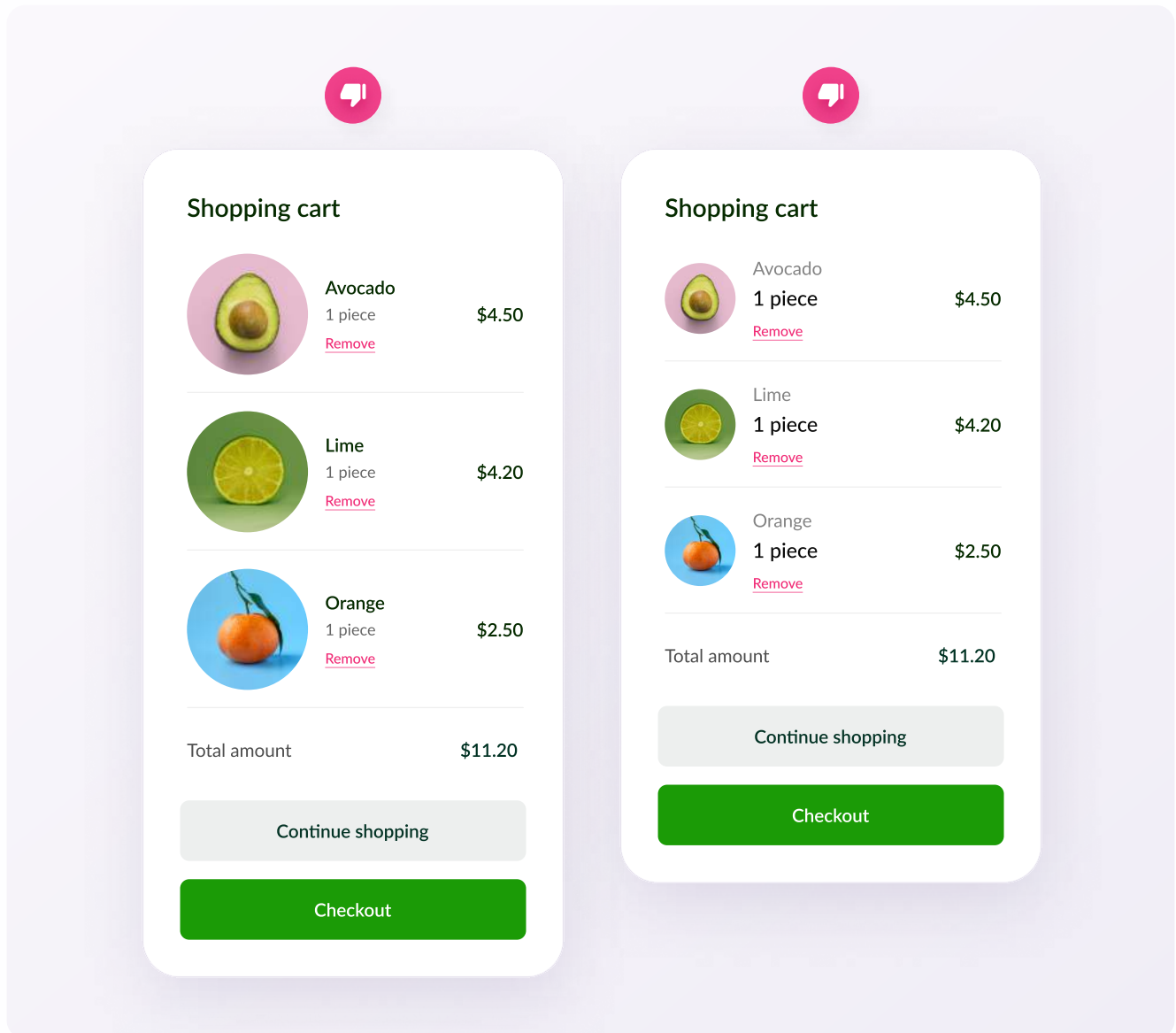
In the example below, the first design has the same buttons—"Remove," "Continue Shopping," and "Checkout"—but this time in distinct colors: red for "Remove," blue for "Continue Shopping," and green for "Checkout." While the colors set them apart, all the buttons share the same size and style. This can make it hard for users to figure out which action is the most important.



In the second design, the "Checkout" is clearly primary action, featured as a vibrant, green button that's easy to spot and click. "Continue Shopping" holds a secondary role. Even though it's the same size as the "Checkout" button, its grey color makes it less demanding of your attention. Finally, the "Remove" button is the least prominent, presented with just red color and an underline.

## Avoid prioritizing unimportant information

Now, take a look at the following designs. Do you notice any issues with them?



In the first design, the product images are way too big, stealing the spotlight from important details like the product name, price, and quantity. This throws off the balance, which we'll discuss as another key principle later on.

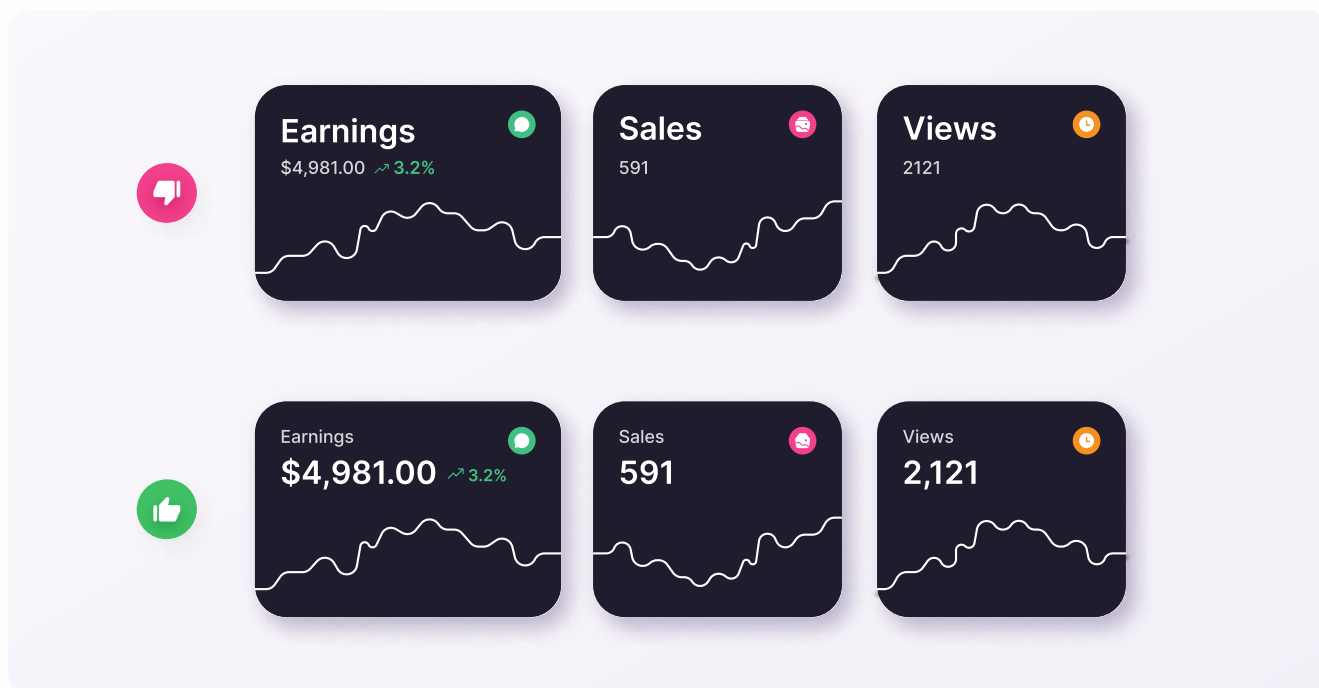
While the second design is more balanced, it highlights less critical information. The quantity is shown in a bigger font and has more contrast than the product name or price. While it's good to know the quantity, it shouldn't take attention away from what the product is or how much it costs.

## Prioritize important information

Before even touching the design, list out the features or elements you have to include in your UI design and rank them based on their importance to the user.

Then you can use the color, size, position, and contrast to effectively highlight the key information and guide users through the interface intuitively.

A common mistake is emphasizing the wrong elements. For example, consider two designs that display metrics:



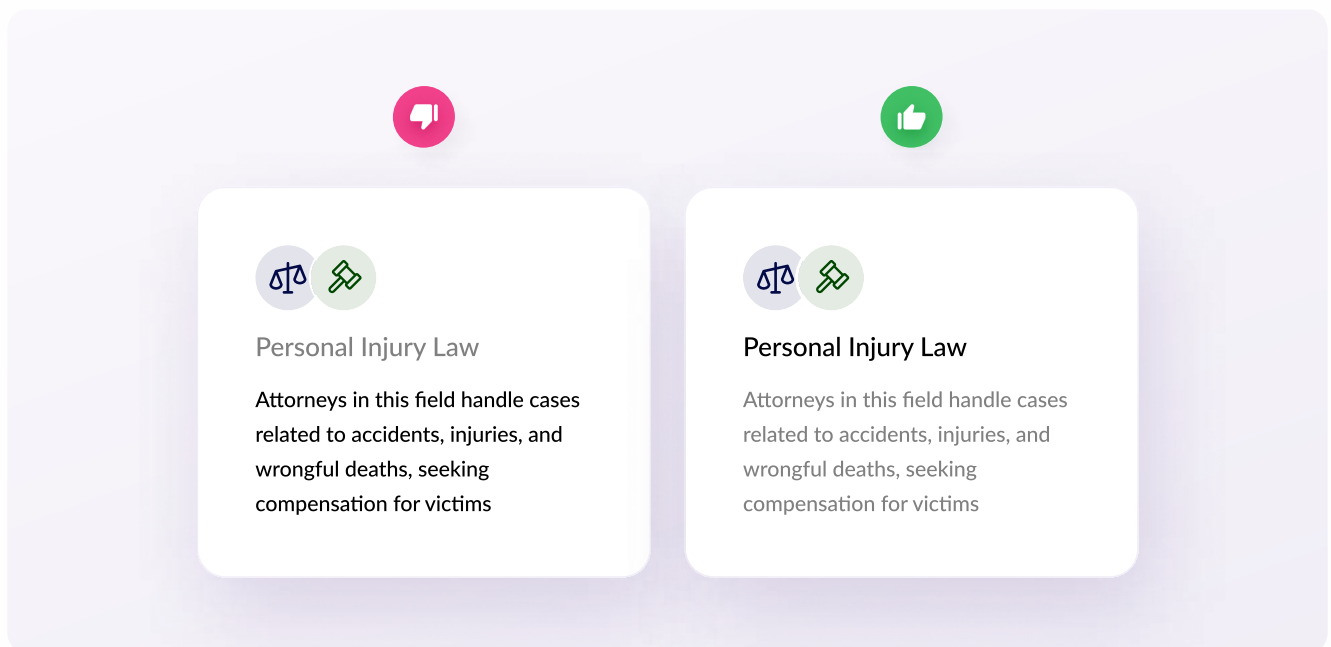
- In the first, the titles of the metrics (like 'Sales', 'Earnings', etc.) have large fonts, taking the focus away from the actual values.
- In the second, the important figures (e.g., '591') are more prominent, giving users the information they seek more quickly.

The second design gets it right. By making the key values stand out, you help users find what they're looking for more easily.

## Use colour to communicate hierarchy and importance

Color is a powerful tool for establishing hierarchy in your designs. Darker colors naturally draw more attention, signaling importance. On the other hand, lighter colors tend to recede into the background, indicating less significance.

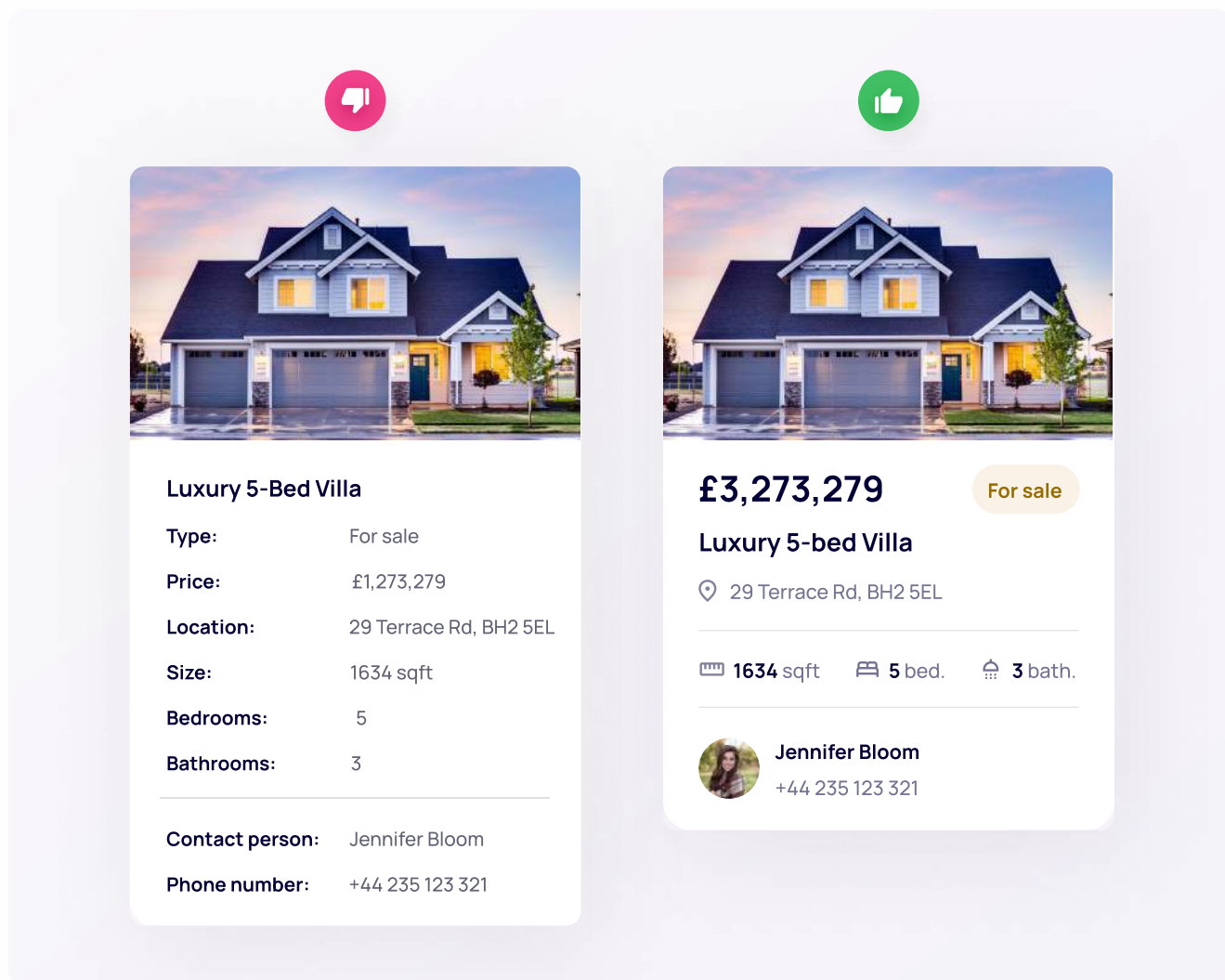
Let's consider two examples for better understanding. In the first, the title is gray while the paragraph text is dark black. This approach undermines the title's importance. In the second example, the title is in dark black and the paragraph text is gray. The title now rightfully commands attention, demonstrating effective hierarchy.



Another way to highlight important elements is by using more vibrant colors. For instance, if you have a button that you want users to click on, consider making it blue. The contrast between this colorful element and the rest of the text will naturally guide the user's eye to it, reinforcing its importance.

## Use size and visual cues to differentiate information

A common mistake in UI design is presenting all the information with no clear distinctions, leading to a monotonous visual experience. In such scenarios, users can struggle to discern or prioritize information.



The design on the left relies on label:value fields. While this might seem efficient, presenting all the information on a page in the same manner results in a lack of visual hierarchy. This makes it difficult for users to scan the page and identify important information.

By leveraging formatting options like font weight, font size, and color—as well as visual cues like icons—you can direct the user's attention to what truly matters.

# Proximity

Proximity is a crucial UI design principle, rooted in Gestalt psychology's "Law of Proximity." This law states that elements close to each other are perceived as related, while those far apart are seen as separate.

In a UI context, consider a contact form with a "Surname" label that has the same 28px distance from both its corresponding "Surname" field and the "First Name" field above it. This equal spacing makes it difficult to discern which label goes with which field. The form loses clarity, and the user may waste time second-guessing their inputs.

The image shows two versions of a contact form side-by-side, each with a circular icon above it (a red speech bubble on the left, a green thumbs-up on the right). Both forms are titled "Contact details" and contain five input fields: Name, Surname, Street address, and City/Town. The left form has a red speech bubble icon and a red circle with a white exclamation mark. The right form has a green thumbs-up icon and a green circle with a white checkmark. The left form has a 28px distance between the "Surname" label and its field, and a 28px distance between the "Surname" label and the "Name" field. The right form has a 32px distance between the "Surname" label and its field, and a 12px distance between the "Surname" label and the "Name" field. The right form is marked as the correct design with a green thumbs-up icon.

Now look at another version of the form, where the "Surname" label is 12px away from its corresponding field and 32px away from the "First Name" field above it. This optimized spacing makes it crystal clear which label corresponds to which field. The Law of Proximity is successfully applied here: items that are closer are understood to be related, making the form easier to comprehend.

By correctly using proximity, you significantly reduce cognitive load, leading to a more efficient and enjoyable user experience.

# Clarity

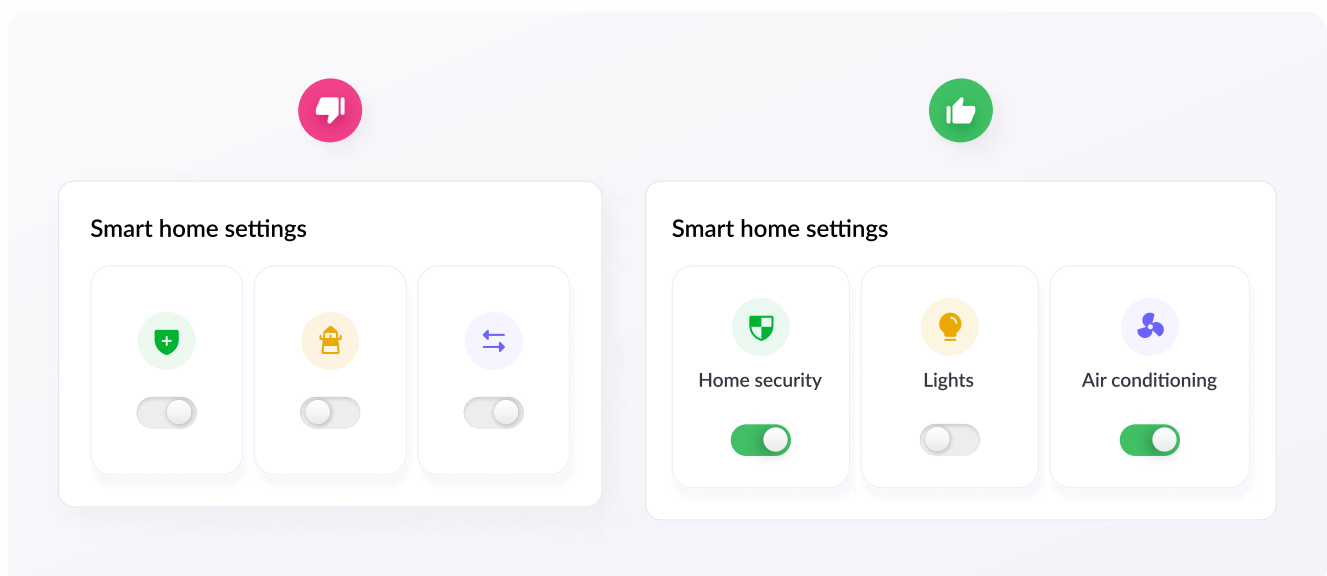
In UI Design, clarity is a guiding principle that can make or break a user's experience. When your interface is clear, it means that users can easily understand how to interact with it without getting lost or frustrated. This involves straightforward navigation, intuitive layouts, and easily readable text.

A lack of clarity can result in a frustrating experience, where users find it difficult to complete tasks or understand the purpose of certain elements. On the other hand, a clear interface minimizes the time and mental effort required to understand and interact with a design.

Many designers fall into the trap of making critical errors that undermine clarity. Watch out for these three common mistakes:

## 1. Oversimplification

At first glance, simplicity might seem like a straightforward way to achieve clarity. However, going too far can backfire. When a design is overly simplified, it can lack essential context or information that helps the user understand what to do next.



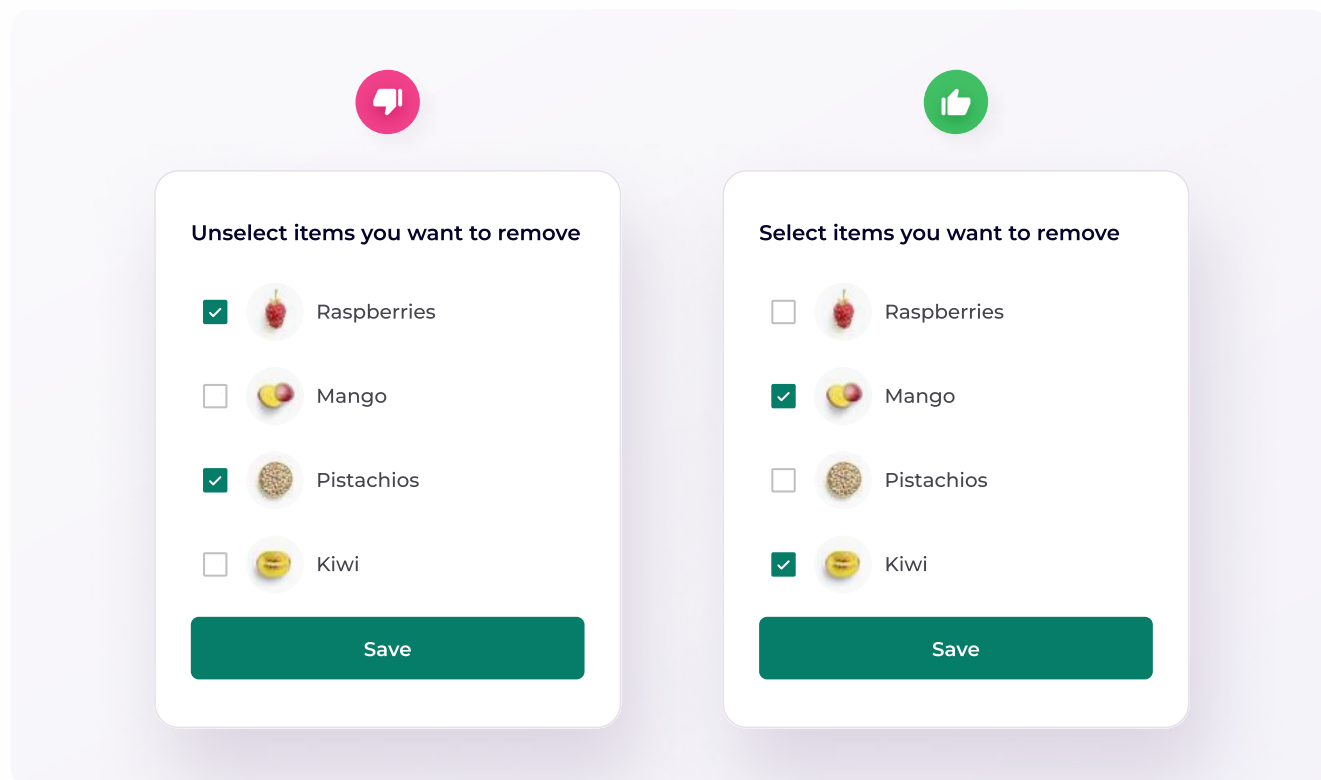
## 2. Overwhelming complexity

The opposite end of the spectrum is just as problematic. Interfaces packed with excessive options, buttons, and information overload the user, increasing cognitive load. While you might think you're providing more control or information to the user, what you're actually doing is making it difficult for them to make decisions or find what they're looking for.



### 3. Misguided UX

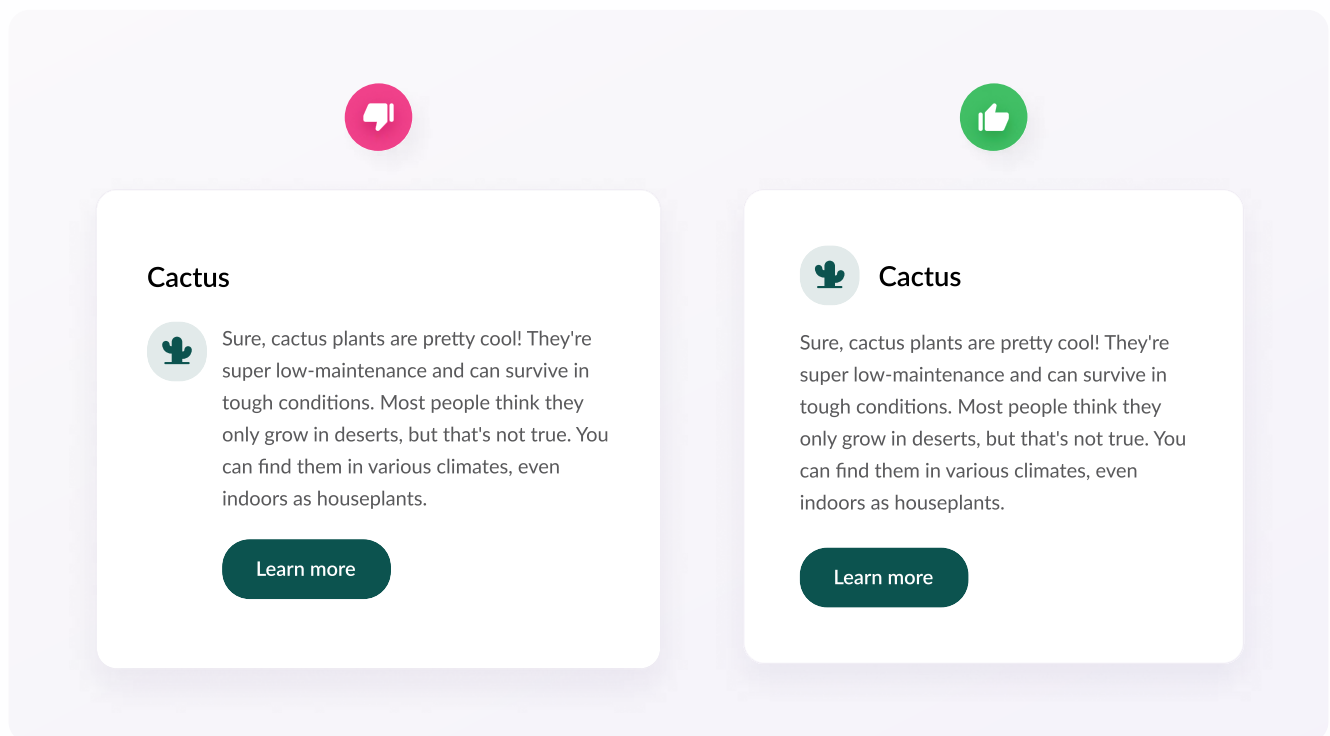
Even if your design strikes a balance between simplicity and complexity, you can still miss the mark on clarity by providing incorrect or misleading user experience. Let's have a look at the following example:



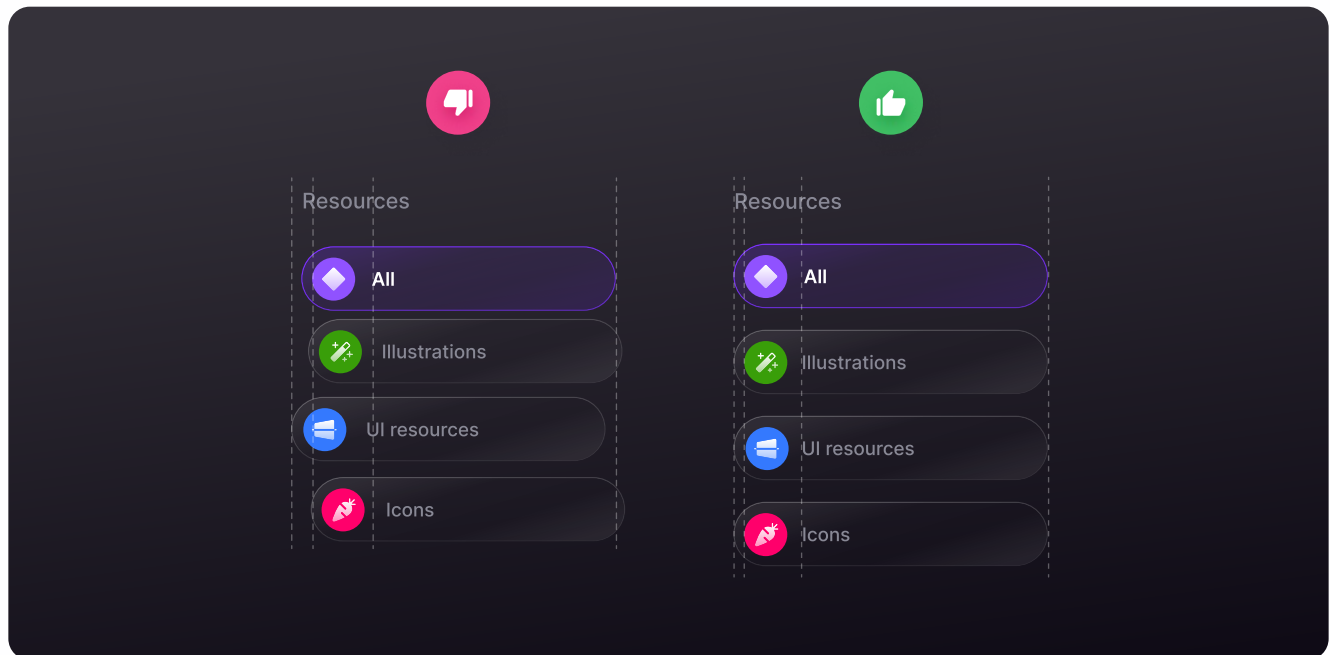
# Alignment

Alignment in UI design refers to the arrangement of elements in a way that creates visual order and harmony. It's about lining up text, images, and other components along certain lines or axes to give your interface a polished, organised look. If your alignment is off, your design can look messy and hard to use.

Sometimes a bad alignment can occur by misjudgement - aligning things incorrectly.



Other times, a bad alignment can occur by forgetting to align things together properly.



There are several types of alignment you might use in UI design:

## Left alignment

This is your go-to for most text. Why? Because it lines up neatly on the left, creating a clean edge that's super easy to read. This is especially handy for longer chunks of text, like paragraphs or lists.

## Right alignment

This one is great for numbers, like prices or data in a table, because it lines them up from the right, making it easier to compare values at a glance. It's also the way to go for languages that read right-to-left, like Arabic.

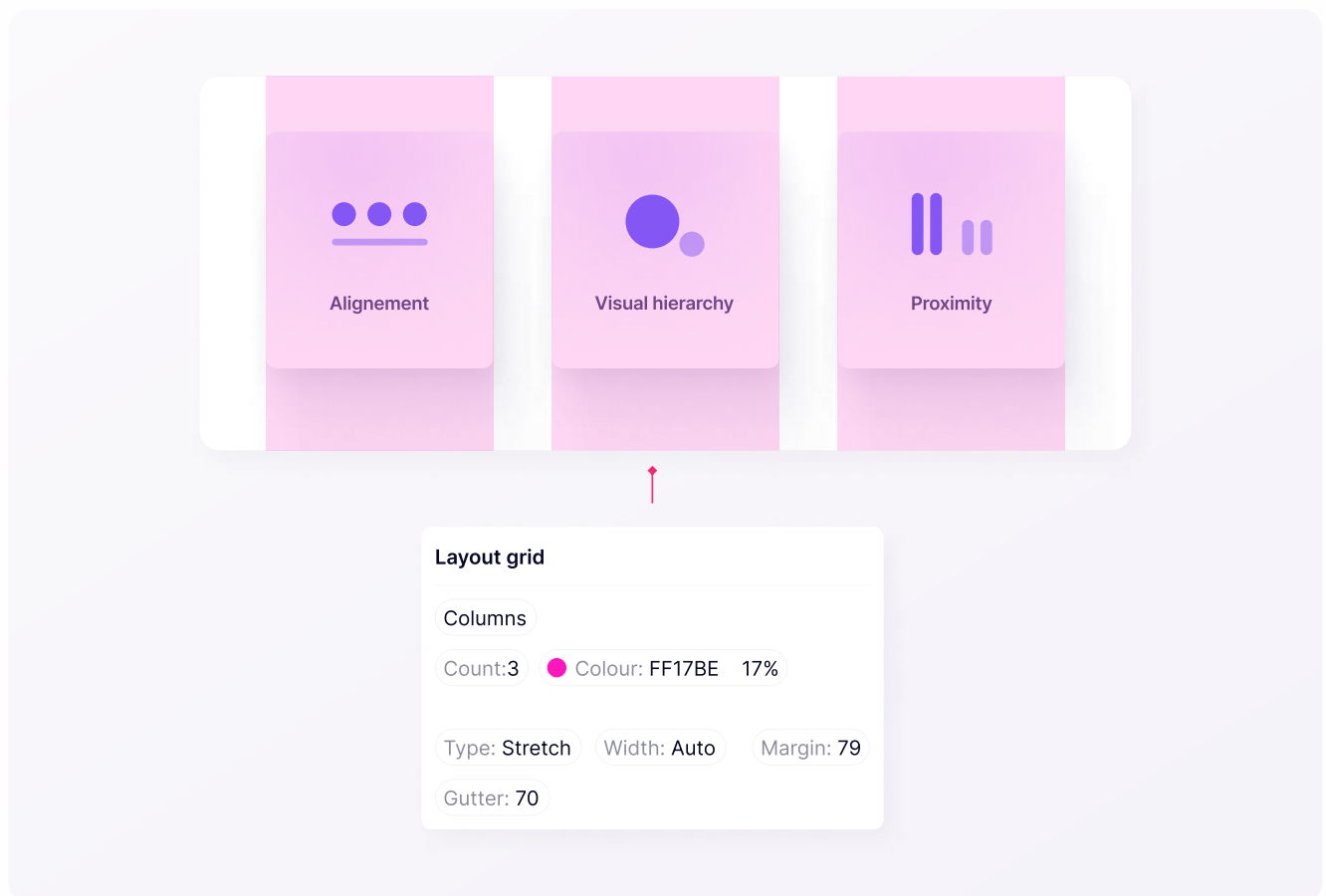
## Center alignment

This is perfect for things that need to stand out, like titles or call-to-action buttons. But be careful, if you try to use it for longer text blocks, it can get tricky to read. The starting point of each line changes, so your eyes have to work harder to track the text.

# Useful alignment tips

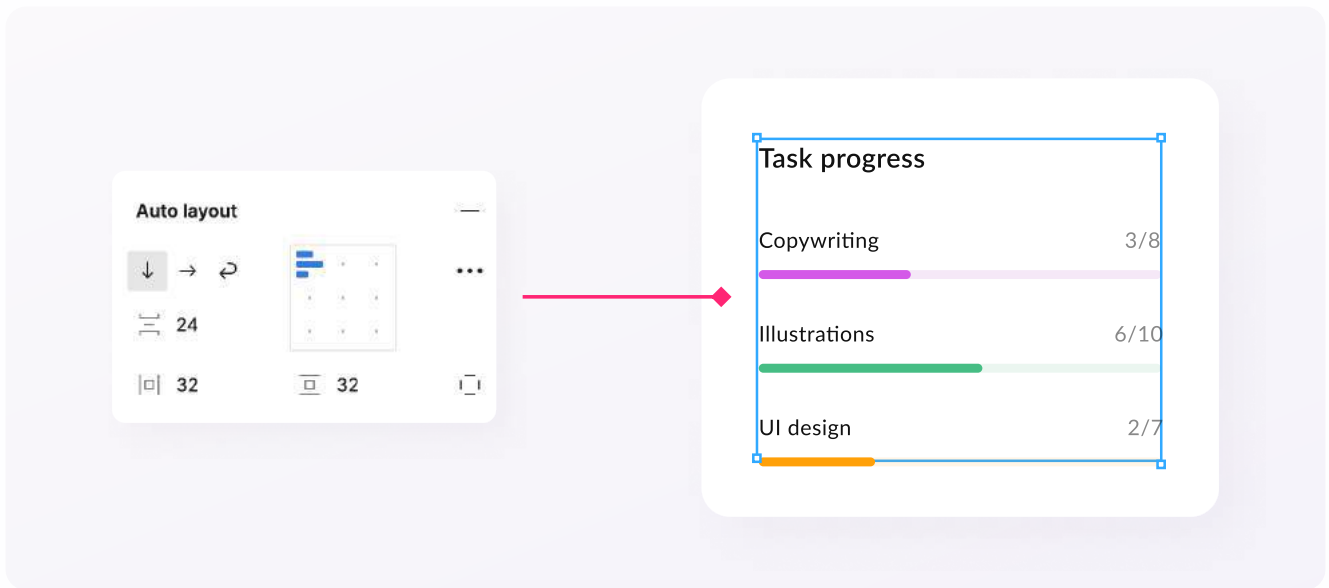
## Use grids

Implementing a grid system can make it easier to align elements and maintain consistency across different parts of your UI.



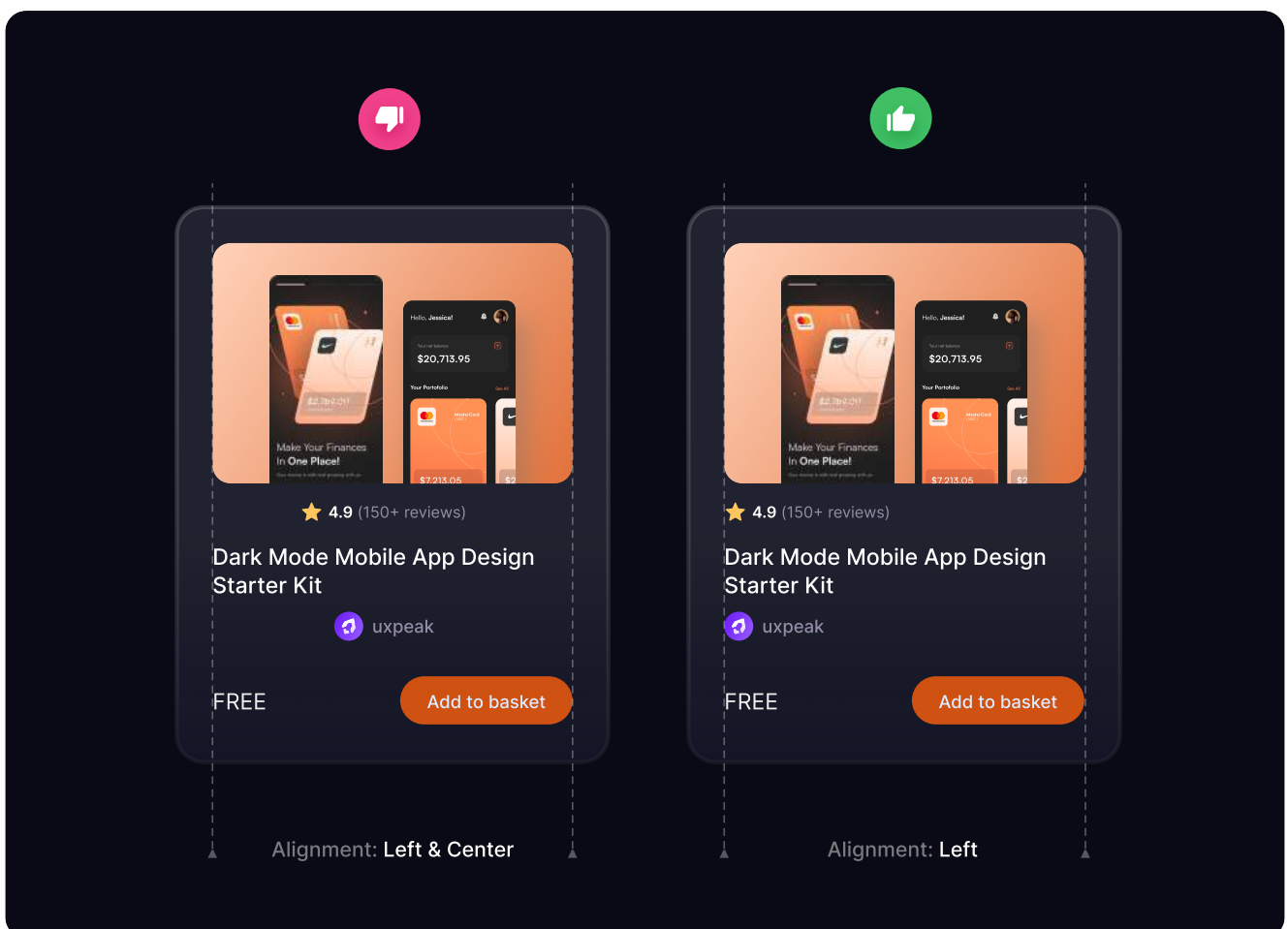
## Use auto-layout

This feature makes sure every element is exactly where it should be, so you don't have to adjust things by hand to get it just right.



## Be consistent

Choose an alignment strategy and stick with it across similar elements to create a cohesive feel.

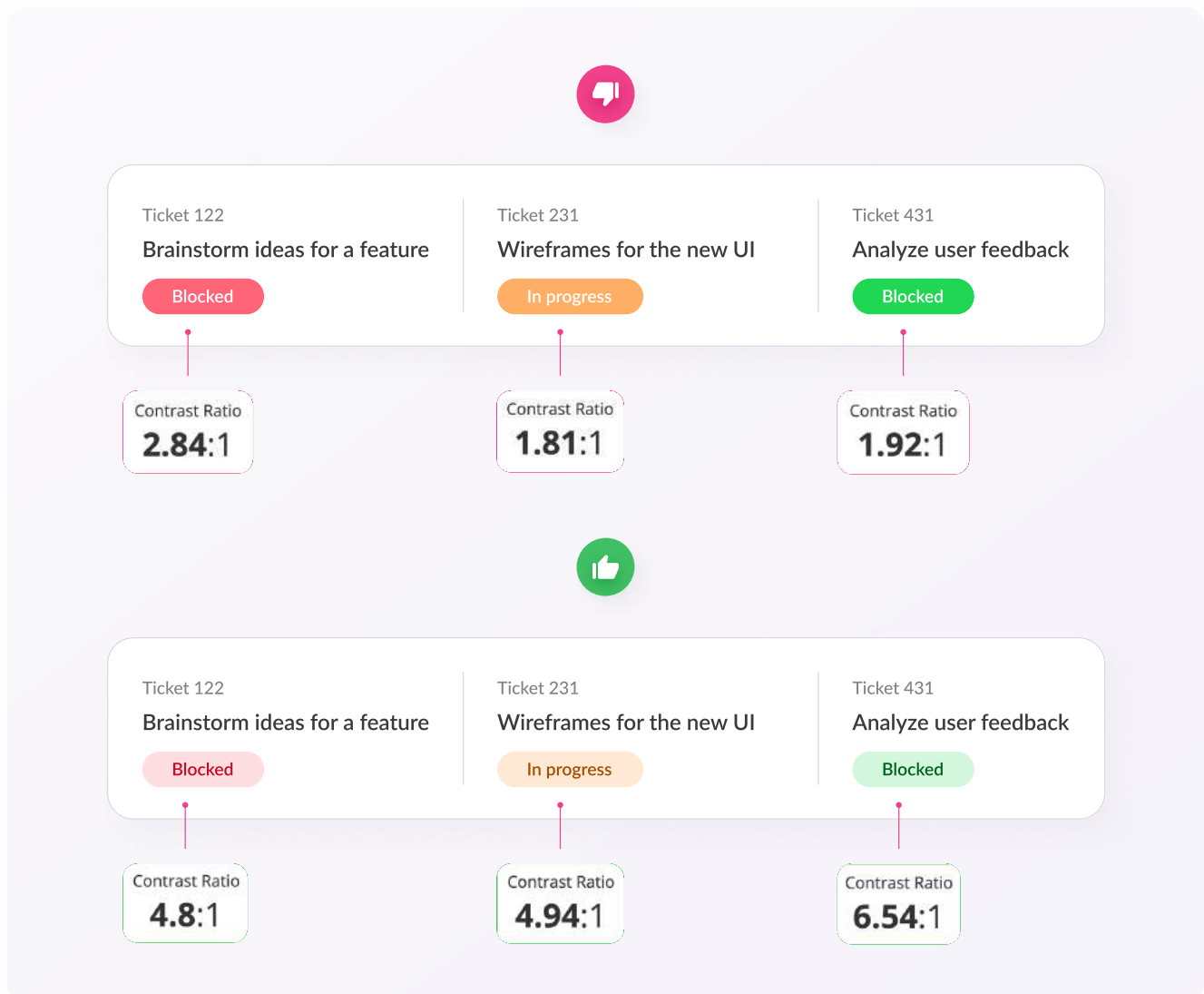


# Contrast

Contrast is a key part of UI design. It helps make different things on the screen stand out from each other, making it easier to see what's important.

Why is contrast important?

1. Readability: The primary goal is to make text and images easy to read and understand.
2. Guidance: Contrast helps direct user focus and encourages them to interact with specific elements.
3. Accessibility: Proper use of contrast ensures that content is easily visible to users with visual impairments, complying with accessibility standards like WCAG.



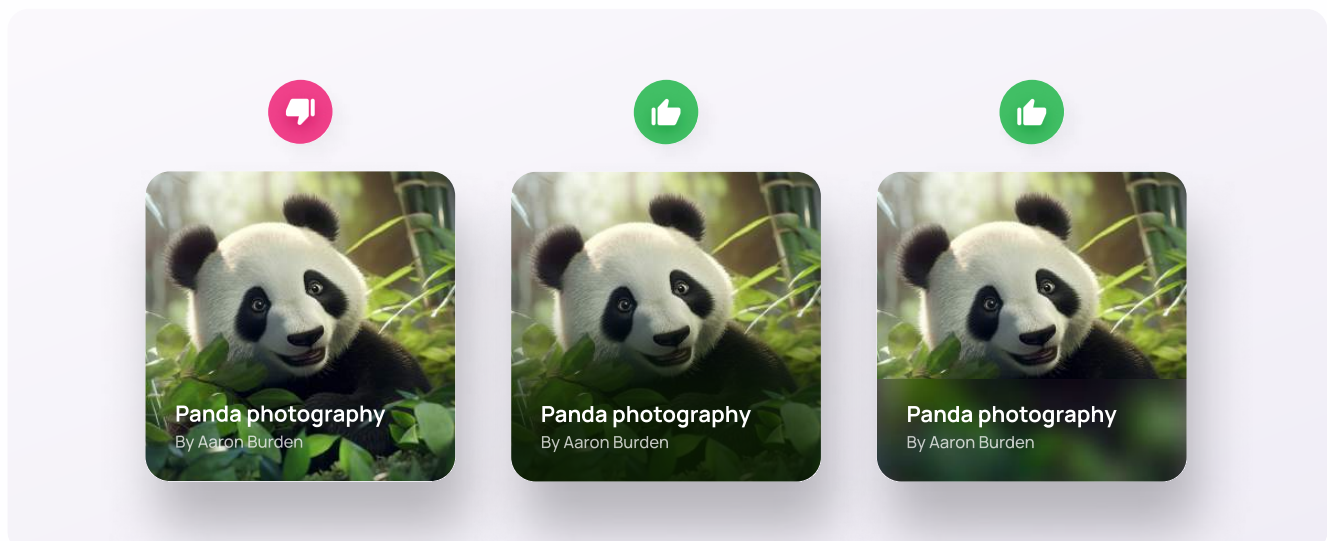
How to apply contrast in your UI design:

1. **Color:** Use complementary or analogous colors to differentiate elements. Keep accessibility guidelines in mind to ensure good contrast.
2. **Font weight & style:** Utilize varying font weights and styles to create contrast within your textual elements.
3. **Size:** Use size contrast to differentiate between elements on your screen. This helps set up a clear visual hierarchy.
4. **Borders & outlines:** If your elements are too similar in color, a well-placed border or outline can add the necessary contrast
5. **Shadows:** Shadow can make an element pop from its background, enhancing its visibility and creating a sense of dimension in your design.

## Use text over images the right way

When designing components that contain text over a background image, it's important to consider component legibility when it's to be used at scale. For example, light text over a darker background image might look legible, but will it look legible when a lighter background image is used?

To ensure that the component works well regardless of the background used, there are a few options you can employ. You can either place an overlay with a layer blur that compliments the image's tone or use a background blur.

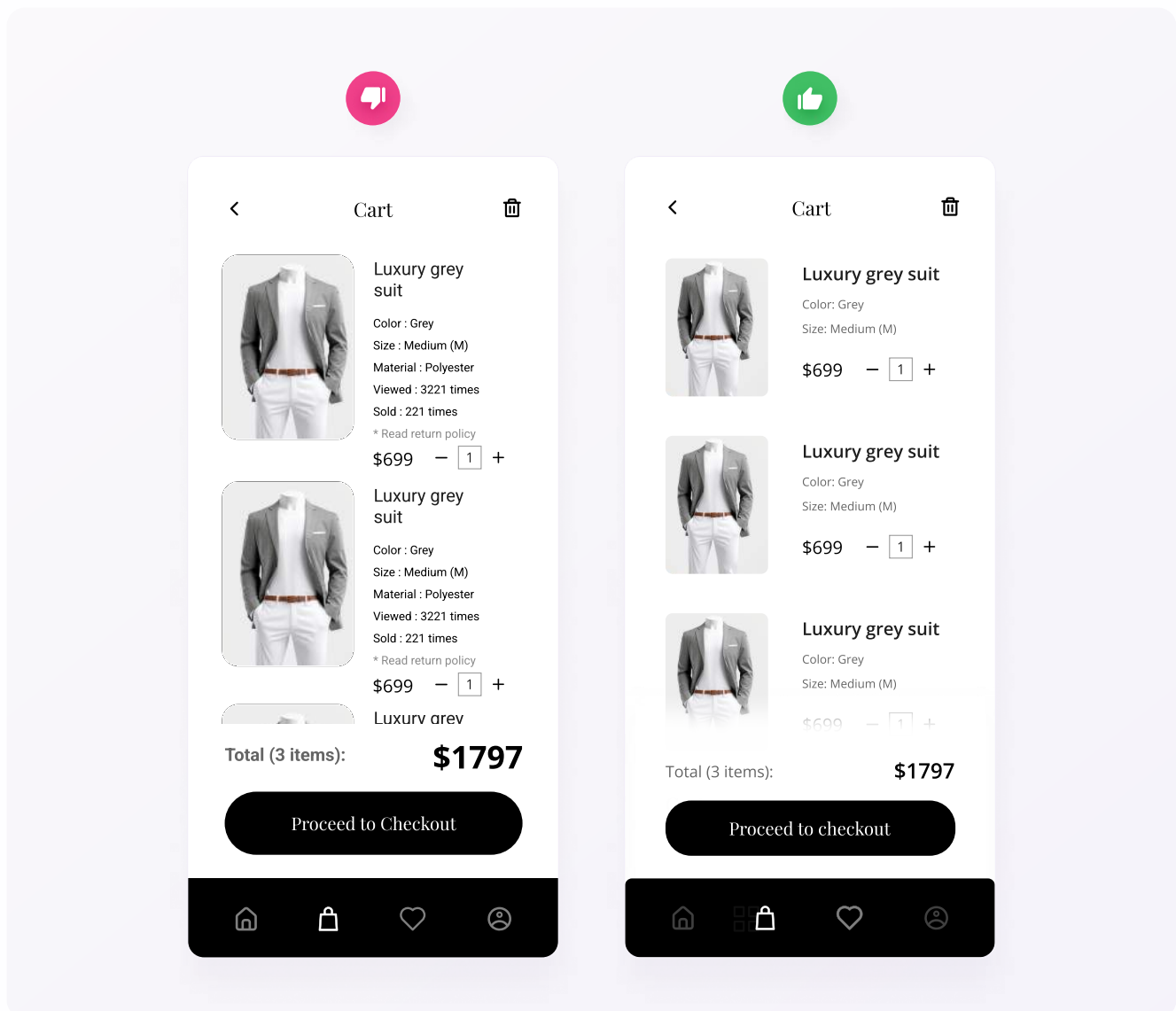


# Simplicity

Simplicity in UI design means reducing elements and content to their most essential forms. The focus is on a clean design that prioritizes essential features and information, making it straightforward for users to accomplish their goals.

## Why is it important?

A simple design reduces cognitive effort, making it easier for users to understand and navigate the interface. Overcomplicated or cluttered designs can overwhelm users, leading to confusion and reduced user engagement. Let's look at two contrasting cart designs to illustrate the power of simplicity in UI.



In the first design, there's a lot going on. Big product pictures, lots of extra details like how many people viewed the item, and even a note on returns. That's too much for a cart screen. You're supposed to be checking out, not reading a bunch of other stuff. Because of this, the screen is confusing and hard to understand quickly.

The second design takes a different approach. The product image is appropriately sized, not fighting for attention other elements on the screen. This design uses white space, font weights, and font colors effectively, contributing to a much cleaner and clearer interface. It's easier to focus on what's important, and the reduced cognitive load makes for a far more user-friendly experience.

When you look at both designs, you can see how simplicity can either help or hurt the user experience. The first design overwhelms and confuses, while the second design, thanks to its simplicity, makes it easy for the user to understand the information before completing the purchase.

## **Understand what is important for the user**

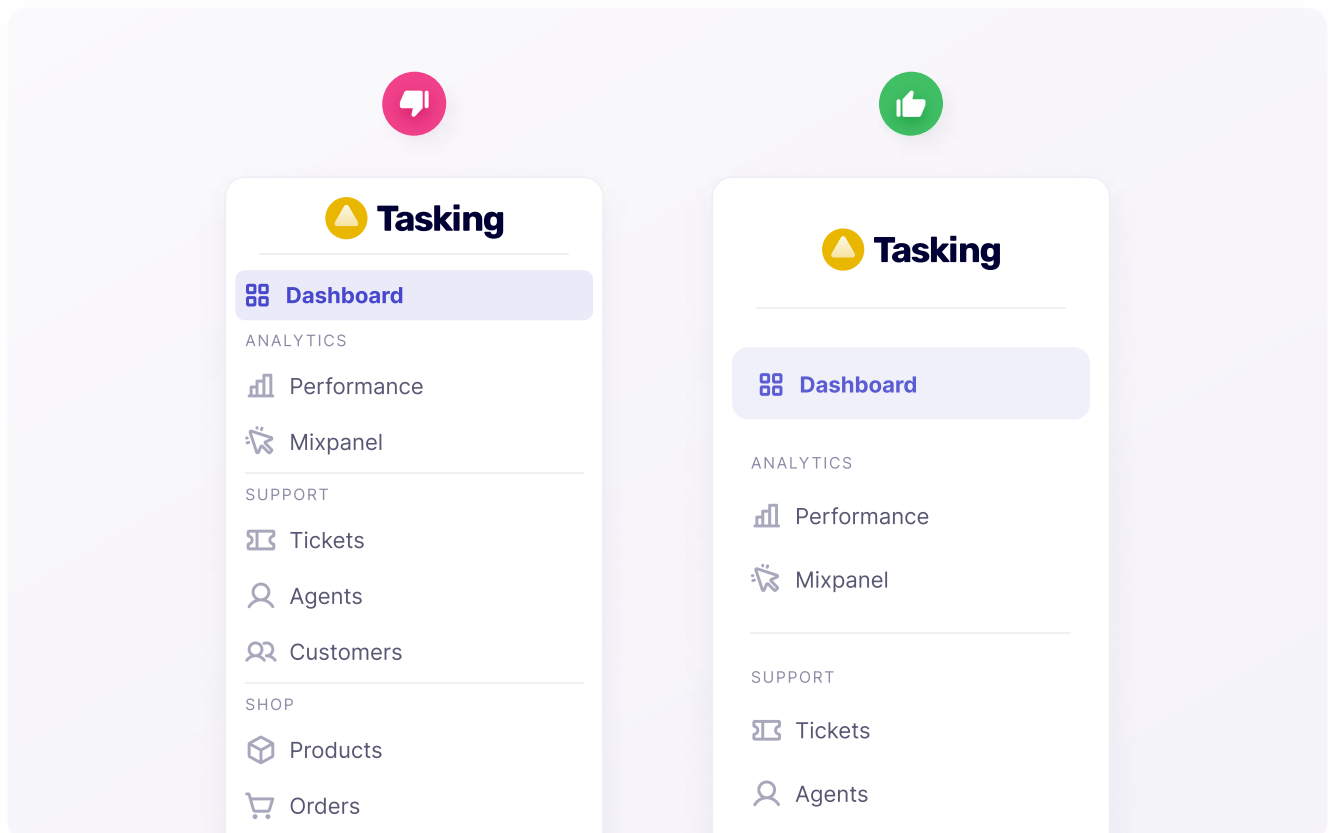
Keep only the most important elements and information. Every additional button, image, or line of text clutters the UI. Don't show users information that isn't relevant to the task they're trying to accomplish. This cuts down on cognitive load and keeps the focus where it should be.

# Whitespace

Whitespace, sometimes called "negative space," is the unmarked area between design elements. It's not just "white"—it can be any color, texture, or even a background image, as long as it's free from other elements like text or images.

Whitespace gives your design room to breathe. It enhances readability, guides the user's focus, and helps to break up a page. A lack of whitespace can make an interface feel cramped and confusing, overwhelming users with too much information at once.

Let's have a look at the two sidebar layouts below that use the exact same fonts, positions, and colors, but differ in how they use whitespace.

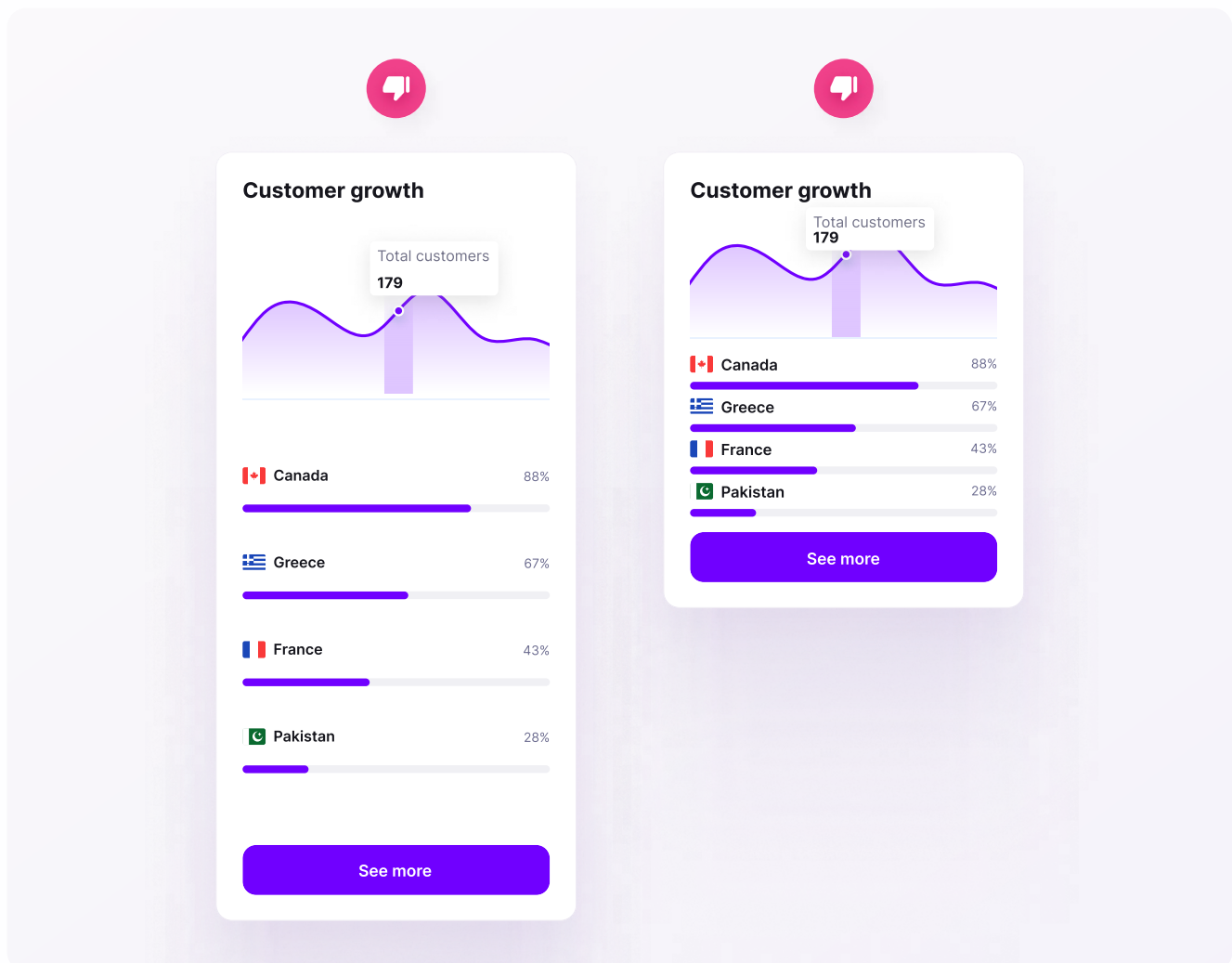


On the other hand, in the second design, elements have room to breathe. The result is a clean, visually appealing sidebar that helps users find what they're looking for without feeling overwhelmed.

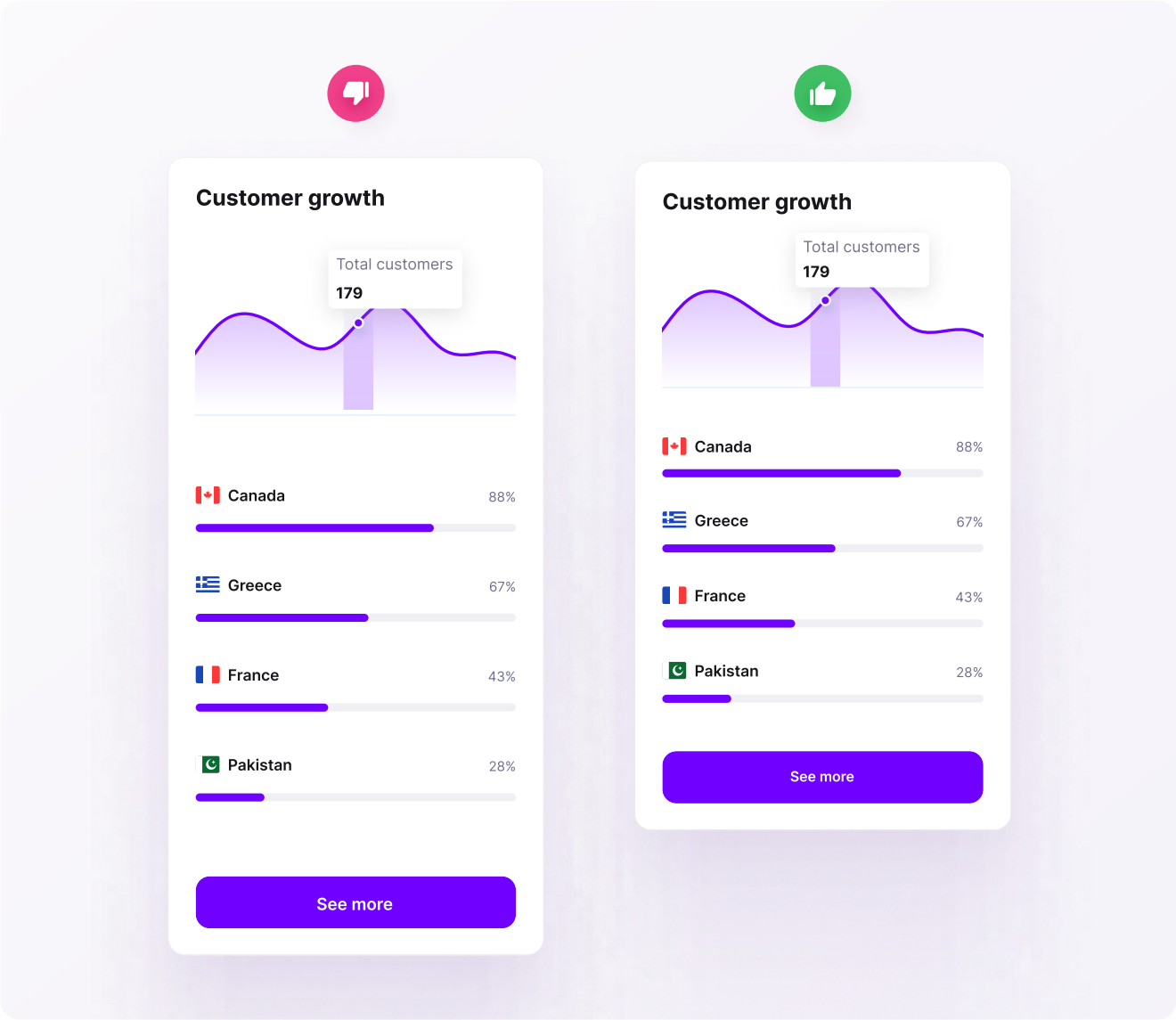
These examples show that even when other factors are the same, the proper use of whitespace can make or break your design. It's a crucial element in creating UI designs that people find easy to use and visually pleasing.

## Start with too much space

When it comes to whitespace, one of the most effective tactics is to start with more than you think you'll need. It might feel counterintuitive at first; you might even think it's wasteful. However, having too much space from the get-go is often a better starting point than having too little.



Starting with a generous amount of whitespace gives you the flexibility to scale it down gradually until you find the ideal balance. On the other hand, if you start with too little space, you might not notice the clutter, and you'll end up with a design that's hard to look at and navigate.



## Establish a spacing and sizing system

When it comes to whitespace, a well-defined system can be your best friend. A great tactic to make sure your whitespace is consistent and well-structured is by establishing a spacing and sizing system. Stick with a base unit and work in multiples. For instance, if you choose multiples of 4, your spacing options would be 4px, 8px, 16px, 24px, 32px, and so on.

When fine-tuning your whitespace, consider implementing a system based on multiples—like multiples of 2, 4, or 6. For example, if you opt for multiples of 4, your spacing could be 4px, 8px, 16px, 24px, and so on.

The image compares two contact form layouts, each with a circular icon at the top (a green thumbs-up on the left and a pink thumbs-down on the right). Both forms have the heading "Let's level up together".

**Left Form (Green thumbs-up icon):**

- Text: "You can reach us anytime via hello@uxpeak.com" (16px top margin, 40px bottom margin)
- Form field: "First name" (8px top margin, 24px bottom margin)
- Form field: "Email" (24px top margin, 24px bottom margin)
- Form field: "Message" (24px top margin, 24px bottom margin)
- Text: "You agree to our friendly privacy policy." (24px top margin, 40px bottom margin)
- Button: "Send message" (40px bottom margin)

**Right Form (Pink thumbs-down icon):**

- Text: "You can reach us anytime via hello@uxpeak.com" (7px top margin, 19px bottom margin)
- Form field: "First name" (8px top margin, 19px bottom margin)
- Form field: "Email" (19px top margin, 19px bottom margin)
- Form field: "Message" (19px top margin, 21px bottom margin)
- Text: "You agree to our friendly privacy policy." (21px top margin, 19px bottom margin)
- Button: "Send message" (19px bottom margin)

The left form uses a consistent spacing system with margins of 8, 16, 24, and 40. The right form uses inconsistent margins (7, 8, 19, 21) and lacks a bottom margin for the final button.

A standardized system ensures a consistent look and feel across the entire design. It streamlines the design process, making it quicker to make adjustments while keeping everything proportional. It also aligns well with the Law of Proximity. For instance, if you're using multiples of 4, and you decide that related items should be 8px apart, then it becomes an easy rule to apply throughout your design. This simplifies the user's cognitive load because their eyes and brain don't have to readjust to new spacing rules as they navigate through your interface.

## Avoid random numbers

You might be tempted to use spacing like 31px or 19px, but these odd, non-multiplicative numbers can throw off the harmony of your design. They can disrupt the rhythm and make your interface feel disjointed. Plus, they're harder to remember and reapply consistently.

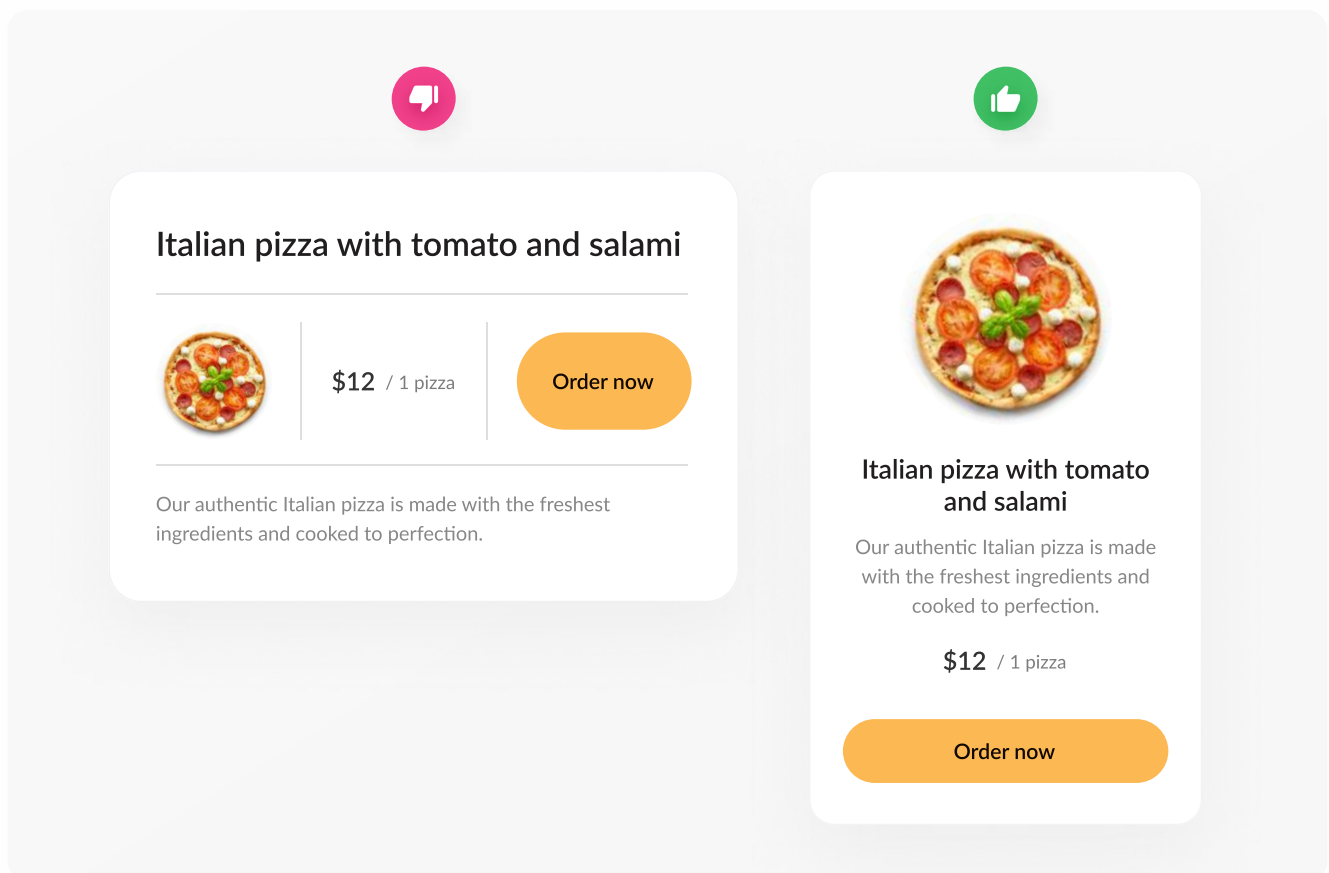
# Layout

Layout is another cornerstone of UI design, deeply interconnected with the concept of whitespace that we discussed earlier. When it comes to UI design, layout isn't just about what elements you place on the screen. It's also about where and how you place them. Think of layout as the framework that brings together aesthetics and usability. It's the visual presentation and the functional design working hand in hand.

Good layout matters for two main reasons:

1. **Aesthetics:** A visually pleasing layout catches the user's eye, setting the stage for a positive user experience.
2. **Usability:** An intuitive layout guides the user logically through tasks, helping them find what they need easily.

Now, let's look at two different layout examples for showcasing pizzas on a restaurant's website.



The first layout gives prominence to the pizza's name, placing the image, price, and order button in the same row, all separated by lines. Additional information about the pizza appears at the bottom.

On the other hand, the second layout features a large, eye-catching image of the pizza and utilizes a simple, single-column layout with generous amounts of whitespace.

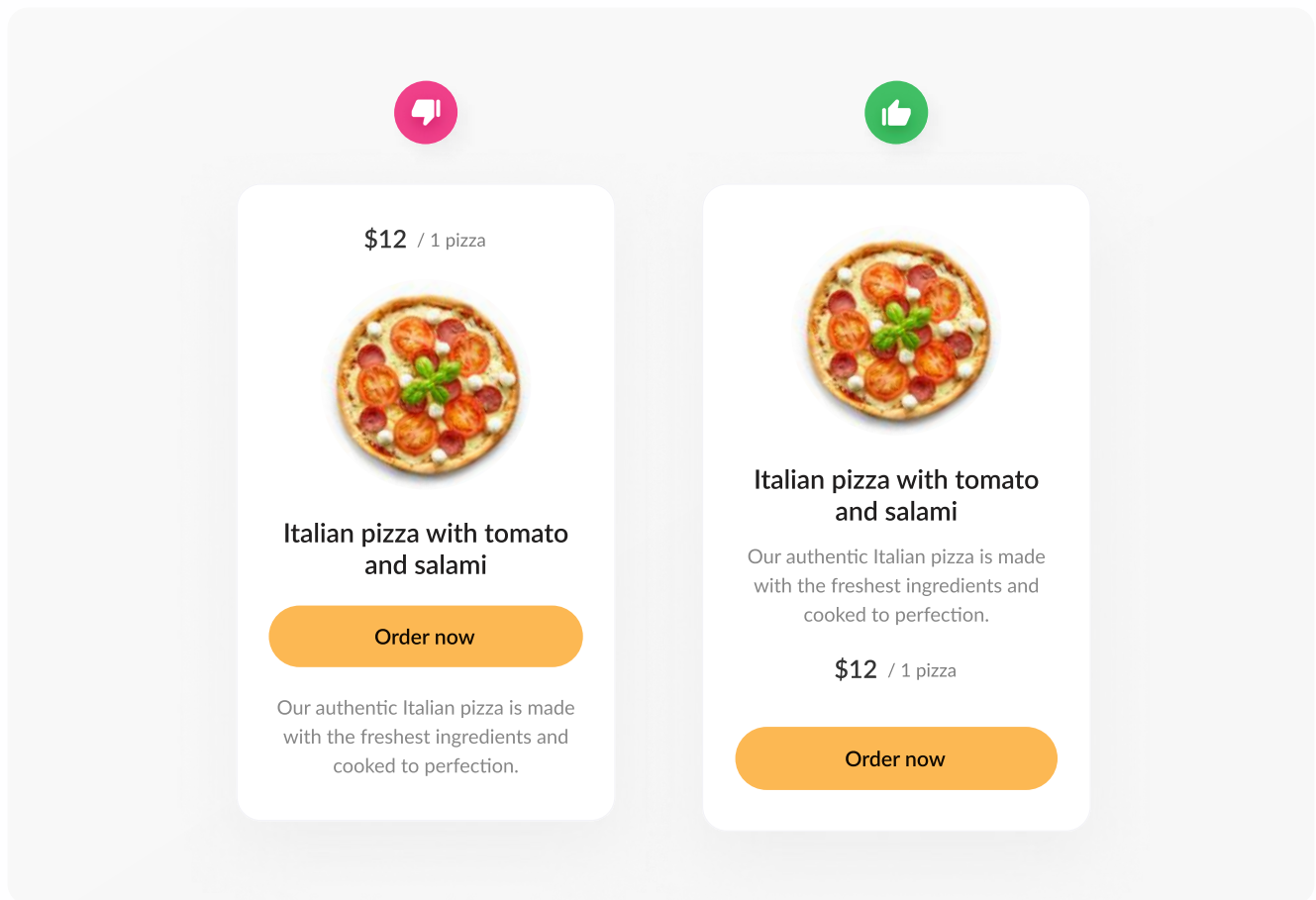
So which layout is more effective? The answer is the second one.

As a designer, understanding what's important to the user is crucial. When it comes to restaurants, visual appeal often drives customer decisions. The saying "we eat with our eyes" rings true here. The second layout understands this psychology. By showcasing a large, appealing image, the food appears more premium, giving the perception of greater value.

Moreover, the streamlined design makes it easier for users to quickly scan through multiple pizza options without getting bogged down in details.

## Getting the order right

Now let's look at another example. Here, we've got a large image, and all the elements are the same size and color. But the way these elements are arranged makes a noticeable difference.

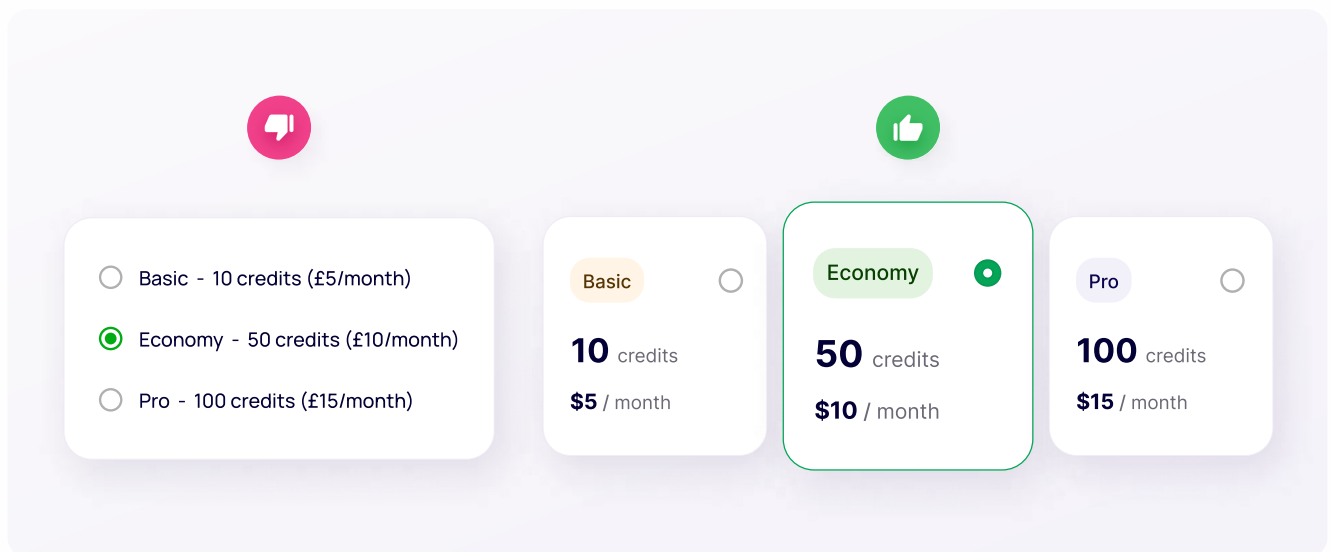


The first layout starts off with the price at the top, followed by the picture, the name of the pizza, the "Order Now" button, and finally, more details about the pizza.

The second layout takes a different approach: it starts with the picture at the top, followed by the name, a brief description of the pizza, the price, and then the "Order Now" button.

## Experiment with creative layouts

The traditional approach of a vertical list of text-based options can sometimes come across as bland and unengaging. The standard layout offers limited opportunities for visual differentiation, and while it provides clarity, it doesn't always contribute to a memorable user experience.



What if we could break free from the constraints of the typical list-of-options layout? An exciting alternative is to reimagine them as selectable cards. This approach adds a new layer of interaction and visual appeal to the user interface.

Each card can feature labels, colors, and even icons or images, providing more context and richness to the options presented. Such an approach not only increases the aesthetic appeal but also aids in making the information more digestible and the interface more engaging.

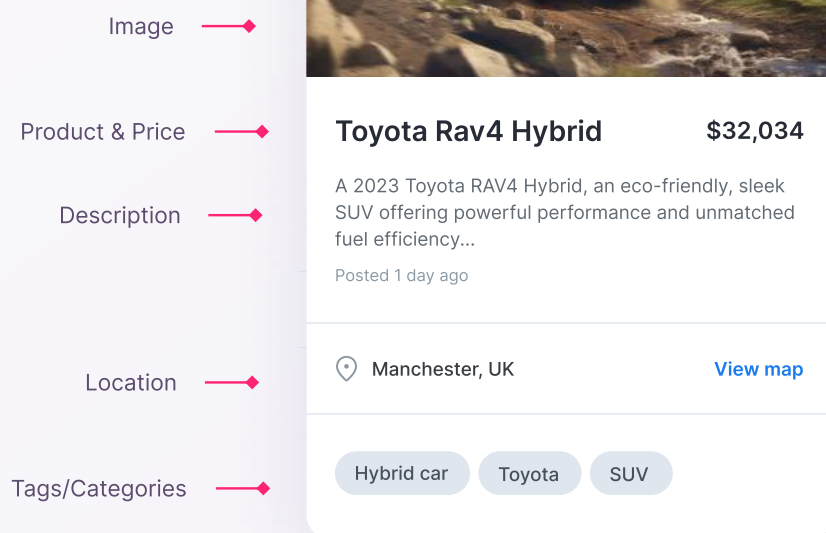
## Form layout inspired by the final output

Forms are the critical touchpoints where users share their information, preferences, and needs. Yet, they often get overlooked as dull or mundane aspects of design.

But what if we could turn this perception around? What if we could transform the form-filling process into a journey that is interesting, intuitive, and aligned with the user's goals?

A brilliant way to revitalize form design is to take cues from how the submitted information will be displayed or used.

### Final display



Suppose you're designing a form for a marketplace platform where users list items they want to sell. Instead of a standard, linear form, you could design the form layout to mirror the final listing page.

The image illustrates two different form layouts for a marketplace listing. The left layout is a standard linear form titled "Create new listing". It contains the following fields: "Item", "Price", "Description", "Categories", "Location", and "Images". The "Images" field includes a "Browse" button. The right layout is a preview of the final listing page, showing a card with an image placeholder, item name, price, description, location, and a tag button.

**Create new listing**

Item

Price

Description

Categories

Location

Images

Browse

**Add an image**

Item	Price
What are you selling?	\$0
<b>Description</b> Describe what you're selling in more detail ...	
<b>Location</b> Enter your address	
Add tag +	

If a user is listing a car, for instance, they could input the car's name, price, description and location in fields arranged similarly to how the information will appear in the final listing.

This approach gives users a sense of how their listing will look and function, making the form-filling process more relatable and engaging.

# Balance and harmony

Balance and harmony are principles that can make or break a user interface design. While individual elements like color, typography, and layout are crucial, how they all work together sets the tone for the entire experience.

## Why it's important

Having balance and harmony helps everything on your page fit together well. This makes the design not only look good but also easier to use. It helps people quickly understand what's on the screen and how to use it.

## How to apply balance and harmony

Achieving balance and harmony requires a keen eye for detail and a solid understanding of design fundamentals. To make it easier, consider the following:

### 1. Proportion and scale

Make sure that no single element overpowers the others. Everything should have its own space and prominence, but not to the extent where it becomes a distraction.

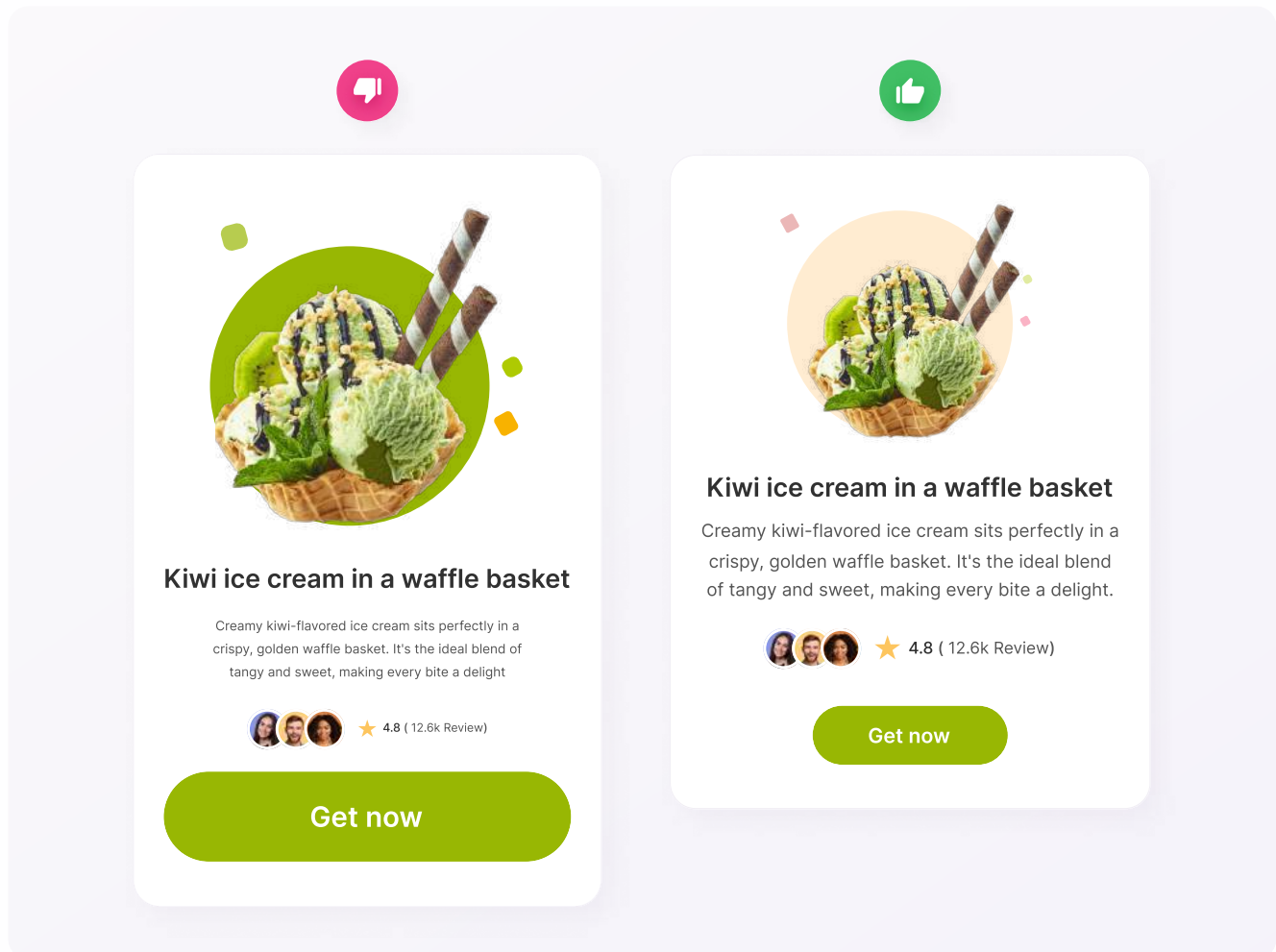
### 2. Color harmony

Overusing a single color can make a design feel monotonous or overwhelming. Use complementary or analogous colors to bring variation and emotional balance to your design.

### 3. Element relationships

Maintain consistent spacing, typography, and element sizes to create a harmonious relationship between all the components in your UI.

Look at the two examples that highlight wrong and right approaches to balance and harmony in UI design.



In the first design, you've got all the essentials: a well-thought-out layout and a proper attention to visual hierarchy. But something feels off. The image and the button are just too big compared to everything else, hogging all the attention. Your eye doesn't know where to go next, and other crucial details are lost in the shuffle. To make things worse, the color green is everywhere: the image background, the CTA, even other smaller elements. This overuse of a single color makes the interface feel monotonous and even a bit overwhelming.

The second design takes these fundamental elements and refines them. The image is still eye-catching, but it doesn't overshadow everything else. The heading and the call-to-action button are easy to see, but they're not too flashy. The colors are more even, so it doesn't lean too much on just one color.

# Consistency

Consistency is a key UI design principle that helps to create a unified and predictable user experience. It's all about making sure elements function and look in a similar way throughout your design, whether it's on the same screen or across different screens. Consistency helps users learn how to interact with your UI more quickly, which improves usability and satisfaction.

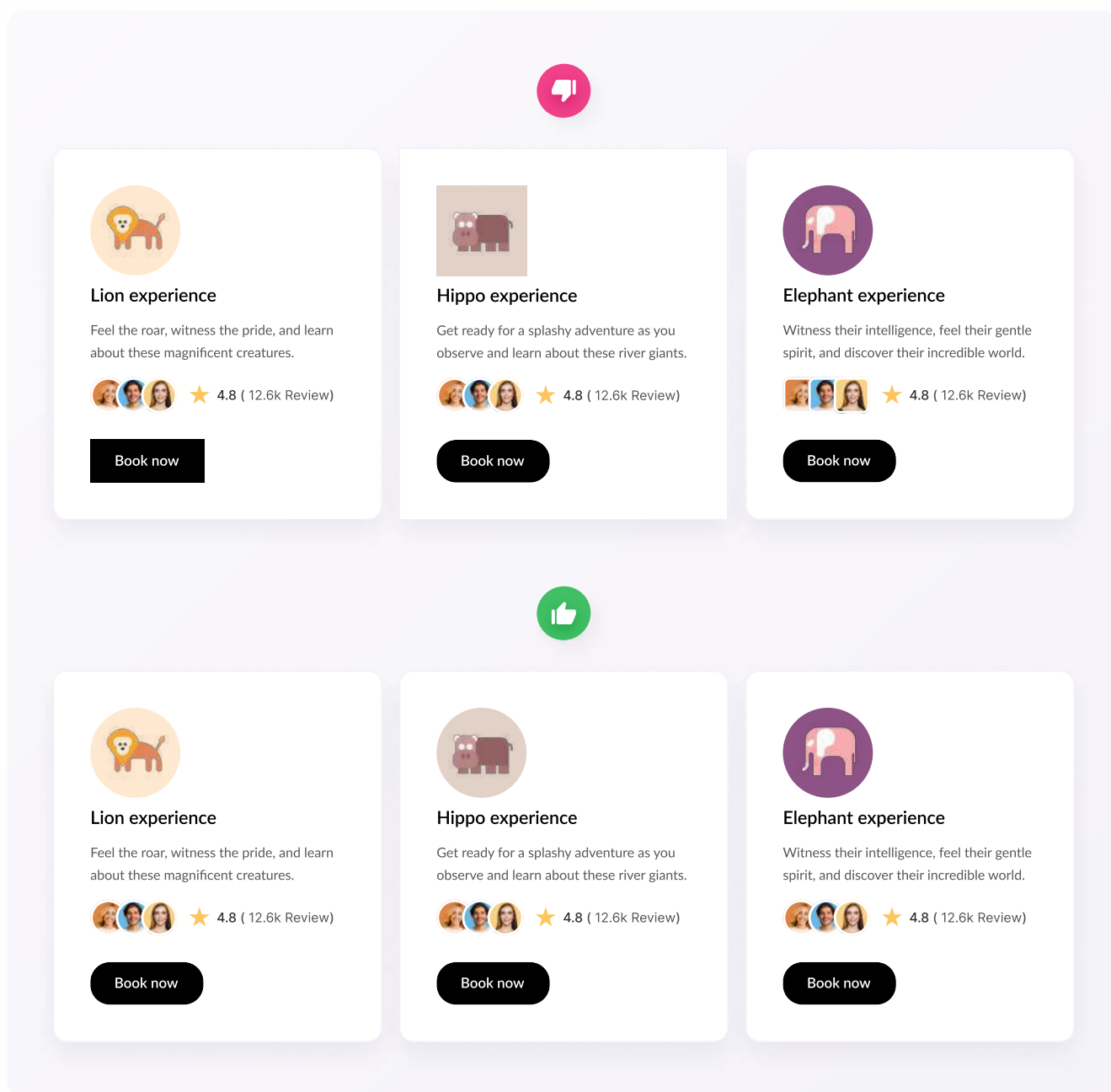
Now, consistency doesn't mean every single element has to look identical. For instance, you can have different backgrounds for product pictures. But essential UI components like titles, buttons, and input fields should remain consistent.

## Why is consistency important?

1. **Ease of use:** Consistent design elements make it easier for users to navigate your interface.
2. **Builds trust:** Consistency in design helps in building user trust, as it makes the interface appear more professional and reliable.
3. **Reduces cognitive load:** Consistency reduces the mental effort required to interact with the interface.
4. **Cohesive Aesthetic:** Maintaining a consistent look and feel across all elements not only makes your design visually appealing but also creates a unified experience that resonates with users.

## Maintain shape and corner radius consistency

Consider two designs that feature three cards. The first one has inconsistent corner radii for pictures and buttons. For example, it might have rounded pictures but square buttons. This lack of uniformity can confuse users, make your design look off-brand, and fails to create a cohesive look.

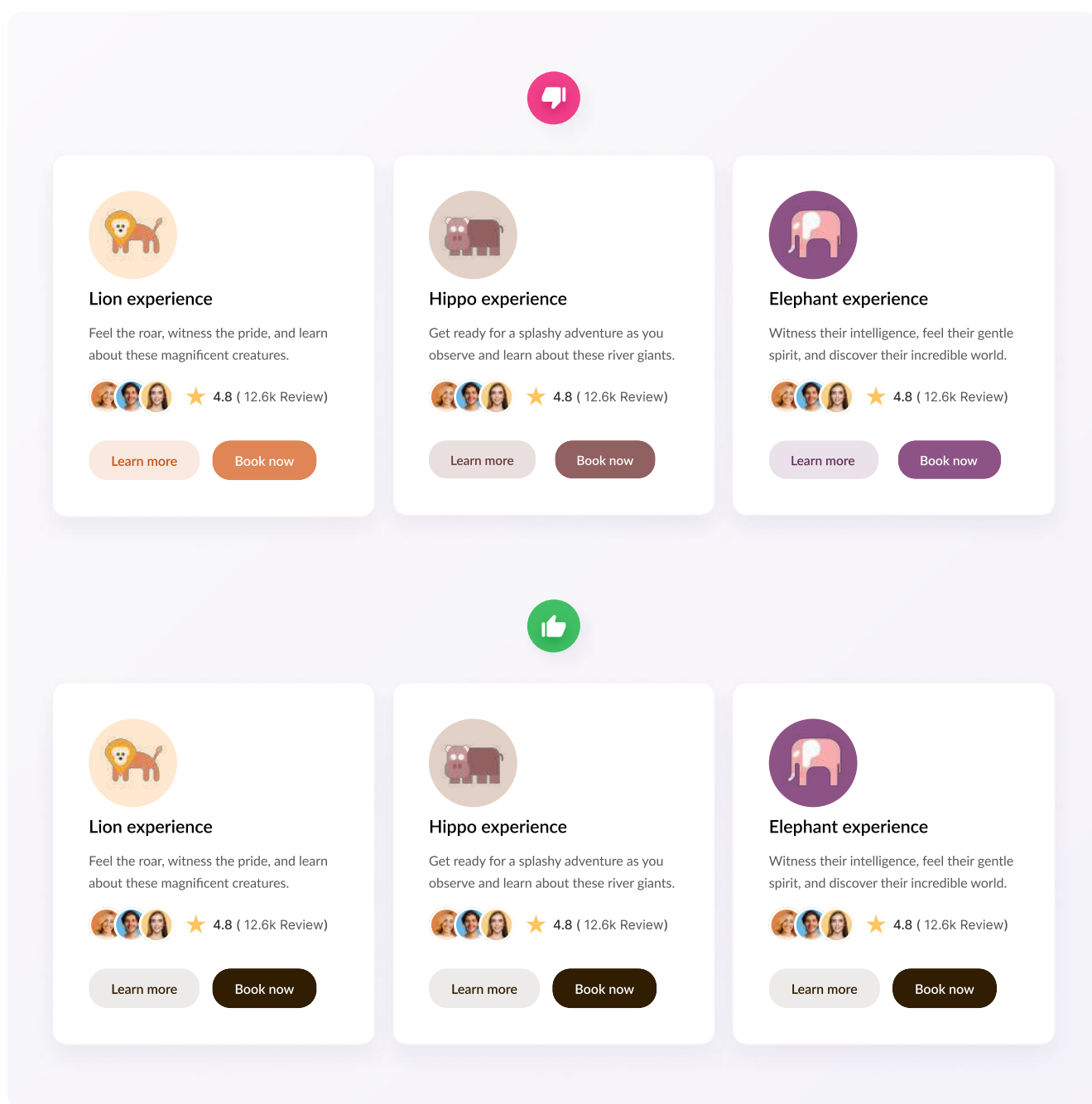


In contrast, the second design maintains a consistent, rounded appearance for all elements.

This unified approach makes the UI easier to navigate and more pleasing to the eye, enhancing the overall user experience.

## Maintain button consistency

A common mistake many designers make is using many different colors for their primary, secondary, and tertiary buttons. Look at the following examples:



In the first example, each card has different colors for the primary and secondary buttons, intended to complement the image. While this may come across as creative, it's not the best approach.

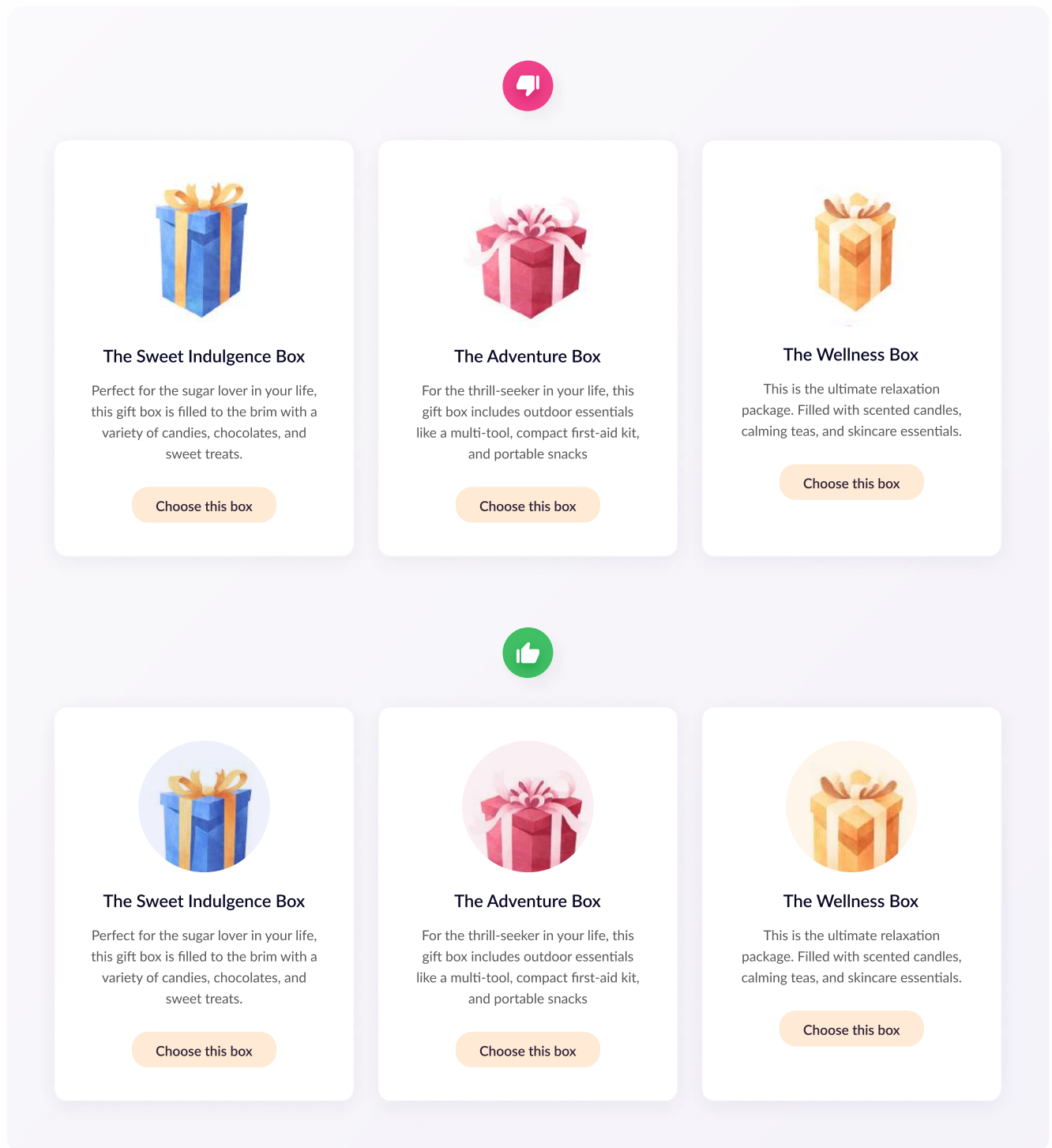
Different button colors can confuse users, making them wonder if each button has a unique function. This lack of consistency can also divert attention from the main content and potentially feel off-brand.

On the other hand, the second example sticks to one color scheme for all buttons—black for main actions and light grey for secondary ones. This makes your UI look organized and professional, and it also helps to clear up any confusion by making it obvious what each button does.

## Maintain image consistency

When you're working with a variety of image shapes and sizes, it can be challenging to create a harmonious look. But here's a neat trick to tackle this: place the images inside a consistent shape, like a circle, and then adjust their size or positioning. This simple adjustment can make a world of difference in how your UI feels.

Let's have a look at the example below:

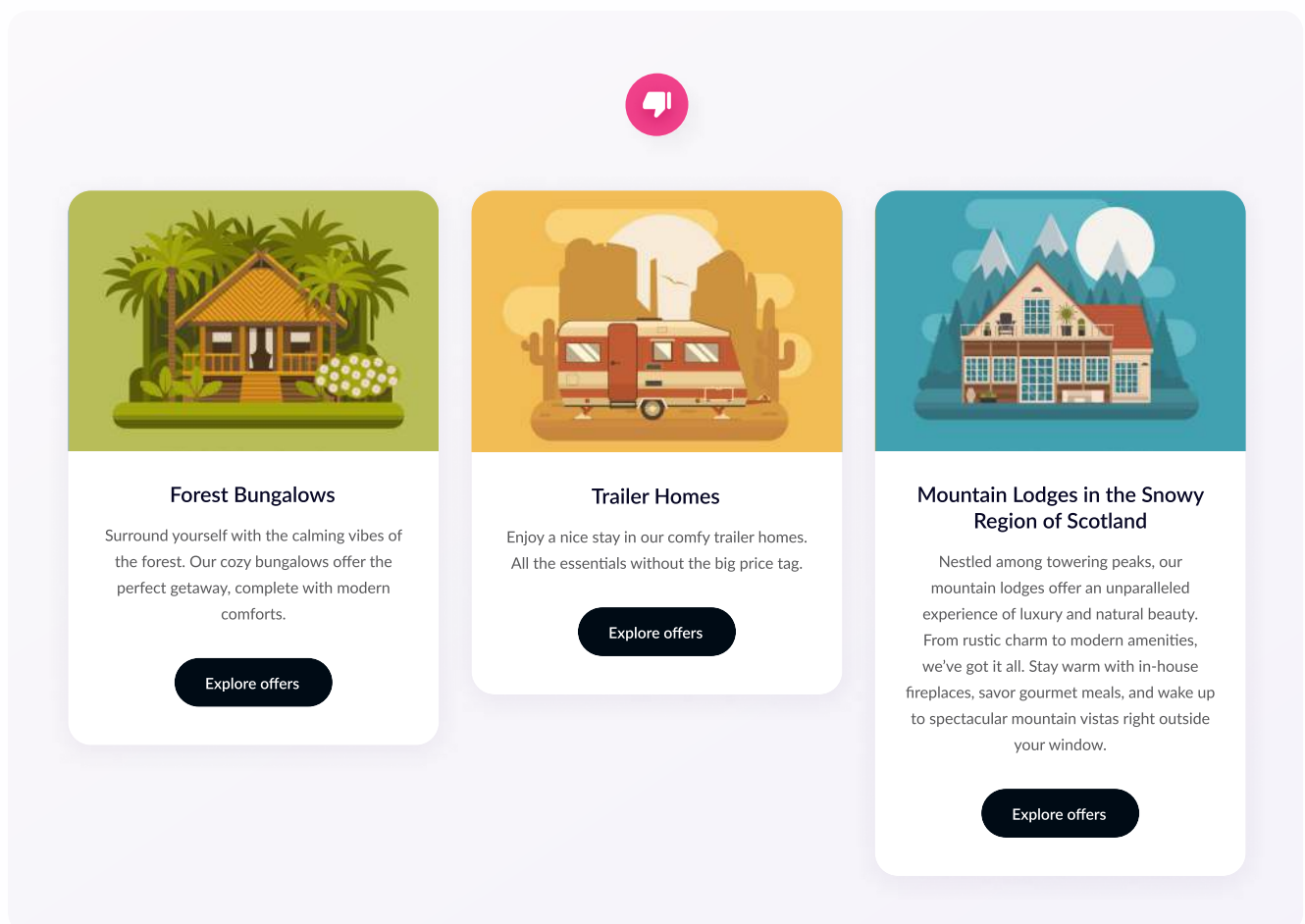


The first example has images of various shapes and sizes that look a bit out of place and disconnected. It's hard to see any unity or flow when you look at them.

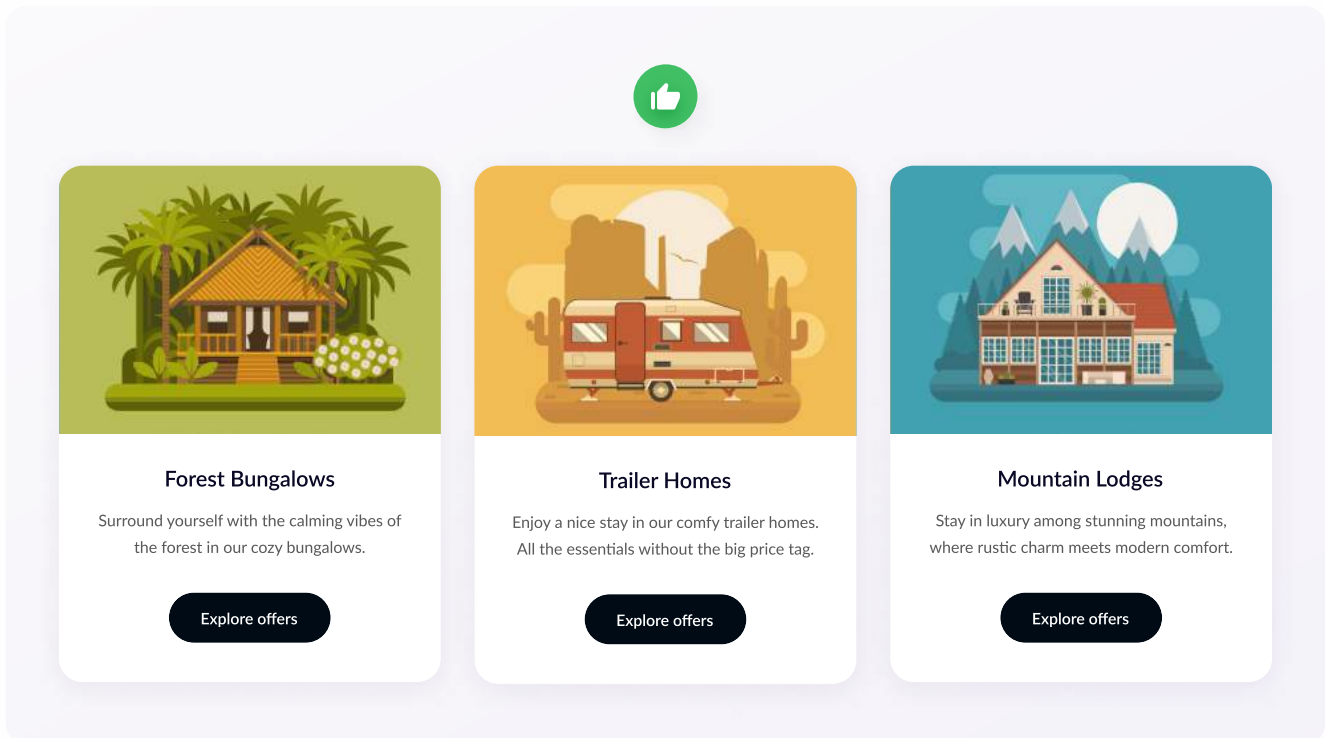
On the other hand, the second example puts all images in a circle, making them the same size and placing them in similar spots. This small change makes a big difference. It gives the design a cleaner, more put-together look, making the whole UI feel better.

## Maintain card length consistency

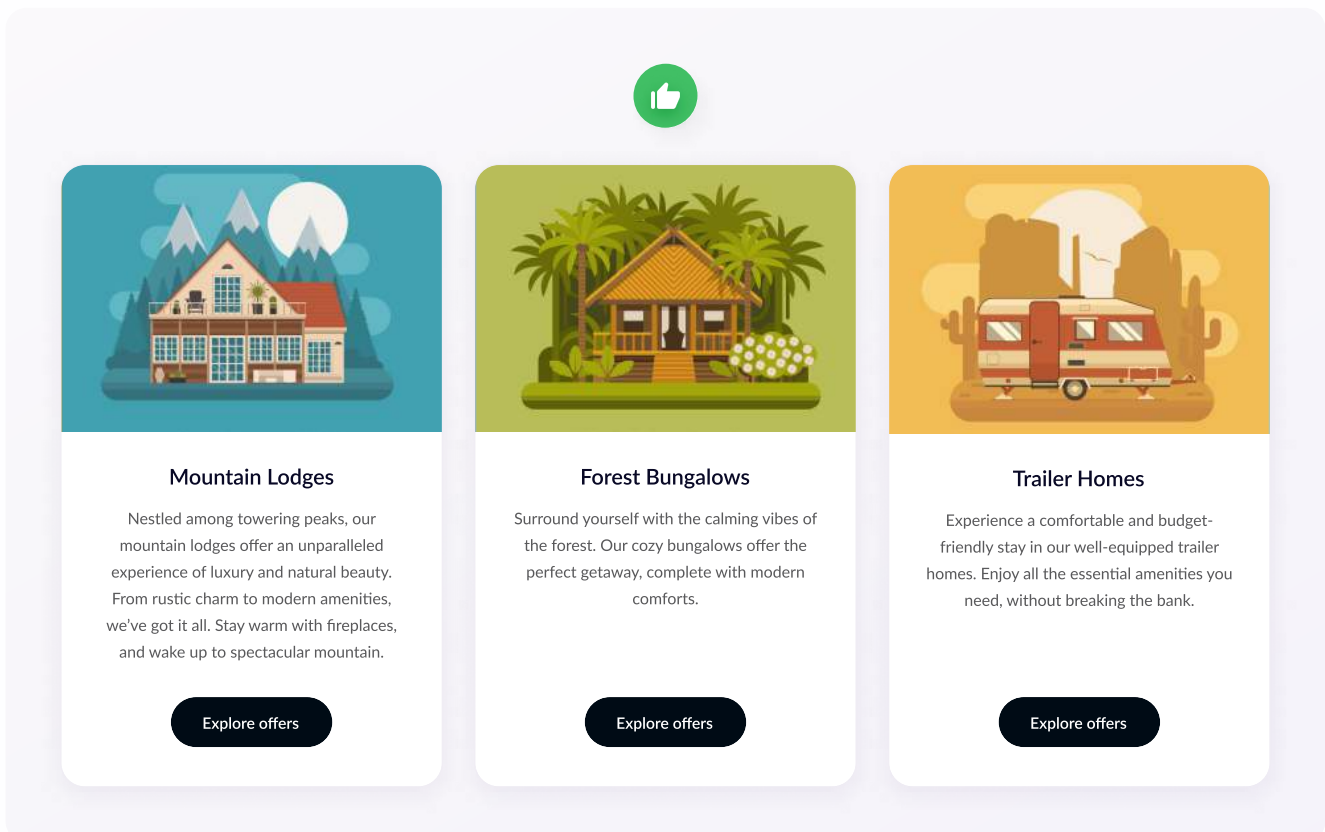
When you're dealing with a layout that has three or more cards, make sure that all the cards have the same height. This not only looks good but also makes things easier and more straightforward for the user.



Also try to make your headings and descriptions about the same length. This will help keep all your cards the same height, which makes your design look more balanced. If you can influence the UX copy, try to keep the number of lines the same across all cards.

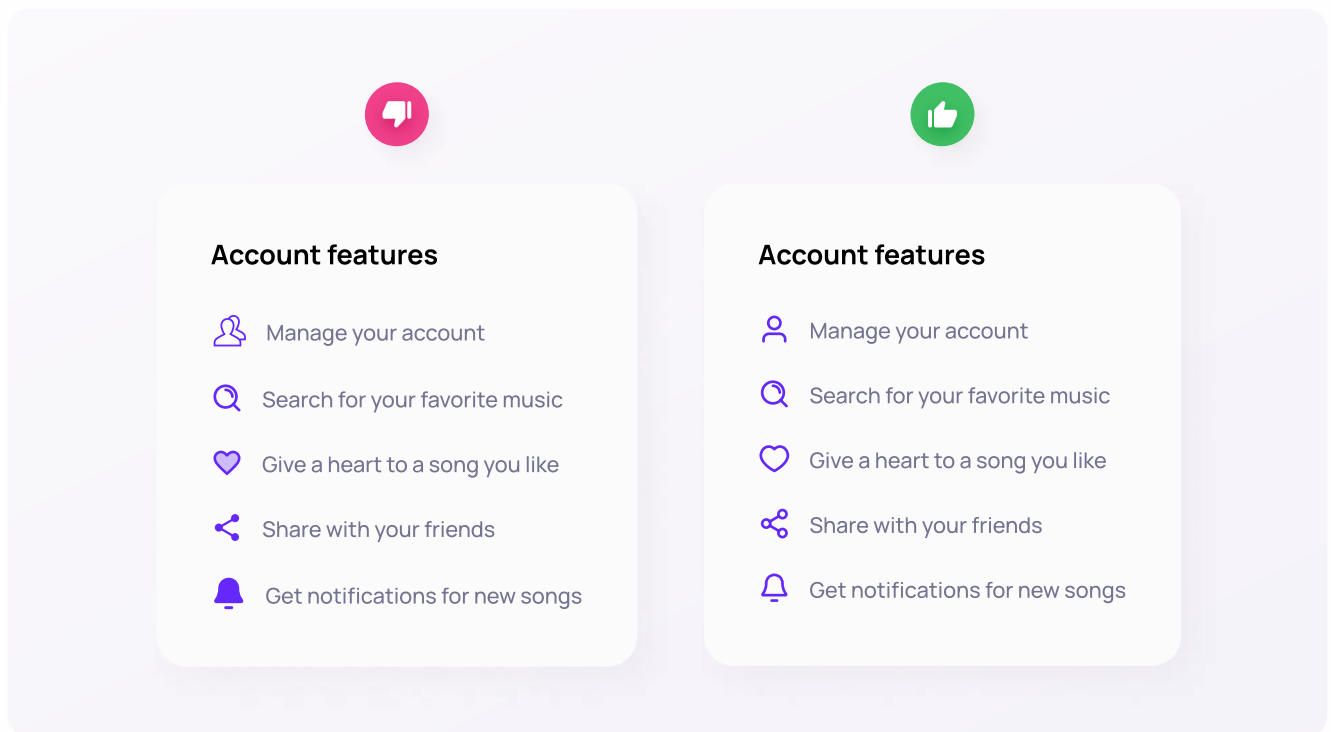


Now, what if you can't control the UX copy and find yourself dealing with varying amounts of content? Make all cards the same height, but align the CTA buttons at the bottom of each card, leaving any extra space in the middle. This creates the illusion of uniformity, even when the content varies in length.



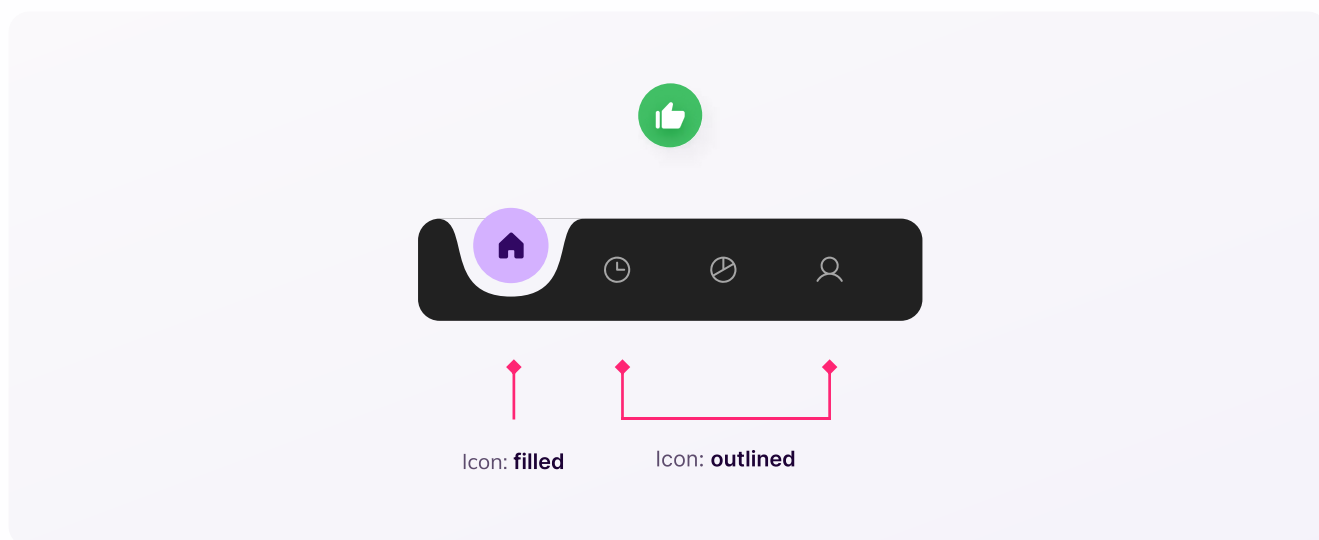
## Maintain icon consistency

A common error in UI design is not keeping icons consistent. This means you might have icons of different sizes or types mixed together. For instance, one icon might be simple and another really detailed, or you might have some icons outlined and others filled on the same screen.



The best practice is to decide on an icon style ahead of time and stick with it across all your UI screens. For example, if you go with outlined icons, then make sure to use outlined icons throughout your design.

That said, the rules aren't set in stone. There are instances where mixing different icon styles works to your advantage, such as indicating different states. A common example is in bottom navigation: the selected tab might use a filled icon, while the other tabs use outlined icons. This subtle change in style serves a functional purpose—helping users quickly identify their current location within the app.

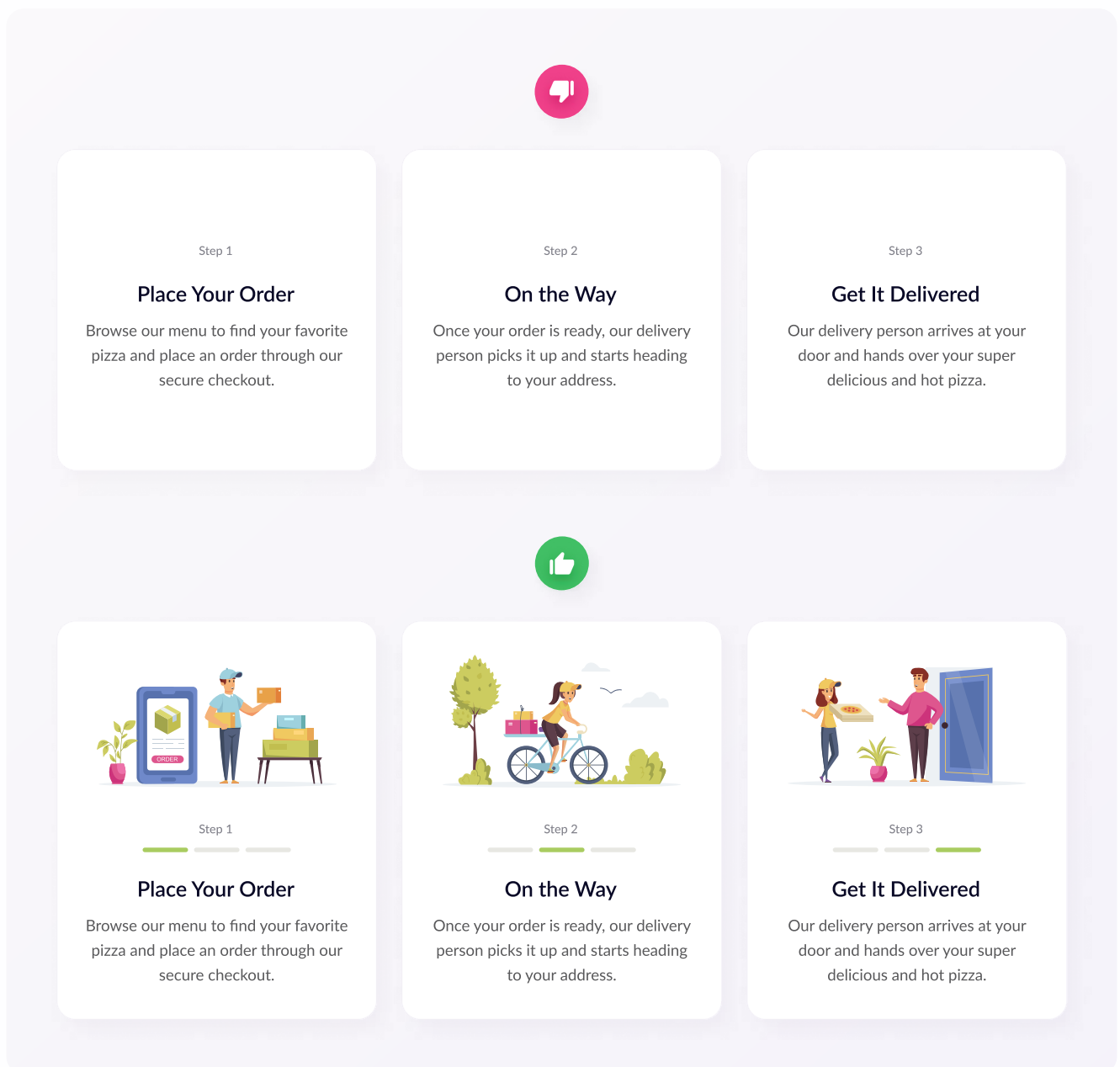


Having a custom set of icons is one way to achieve consistency. However, it's perfectly acceptable to use open-source icons in your UI to maintain a consistent look. Just ensure that the icon set aligns with your overall brand image and that you're not mixing two different sets of icons with varying properties.

# Visual cues

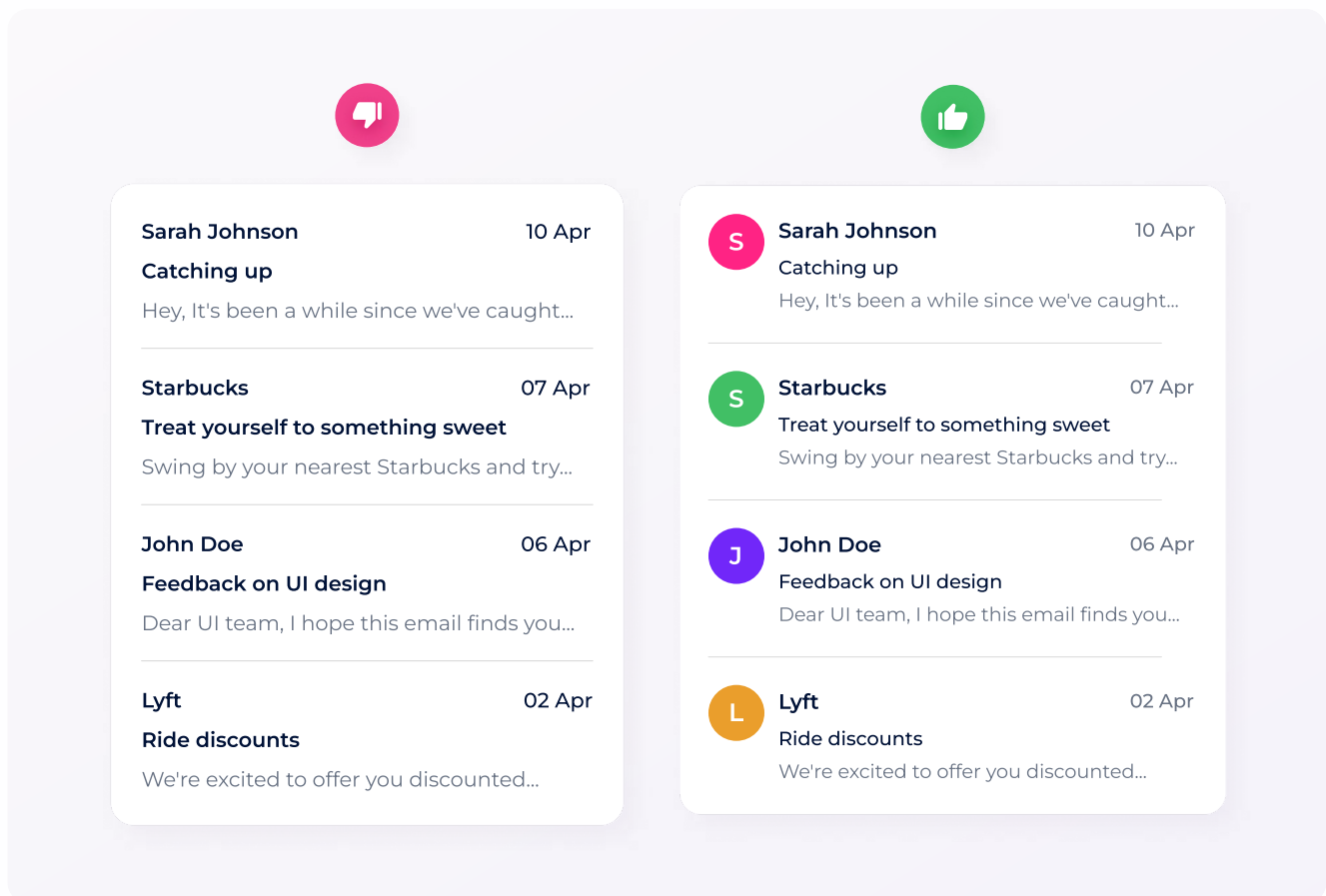
We could have presented all these UI design principles in this book in a text-only format, but we chose to use visual examples. Why? Because visuals make your learning—and any user's interaction with a design—far more engaging and memorable. Visual cues do more than just add flair or personality to your designs. They help users understand your message faster and enhance overall user experience by making information easier to grasp.

To show the impact visual cues can have, compare the following designs:



Now, let's have a look at another example of using visual cues to design better UI for email messages. In the first design, you can see a UI that doesn't apply the principle of visual cues. While this UI design is functional, there are opportunities to enhance the user experience and improve the overall usability of the email inbox.

Using icons with a set of colors and a first initial letter in the middle could be a creative and visually appealing way to represent senders in an email inbox or messaging app.



A more effective way to represent senders is to use images of people and logos of companies. With that, users can easily identify the sender and quickly understand the context of the message.



**Sarah Johnson**

10 Apr

**Catching up**

Hey, It's been a while since we've caught...



**Starbucks**

07 Apr

**Treat yourself to something sweet**

Swing by your nearest Starbucks and try...



**John Doe**

06 Apr

**Feedback on UI design**

Dear UI team, I hope this email finds you...



**Lyft**

02 Apr

**Ride discounts**

We're excited to offer you discounted...

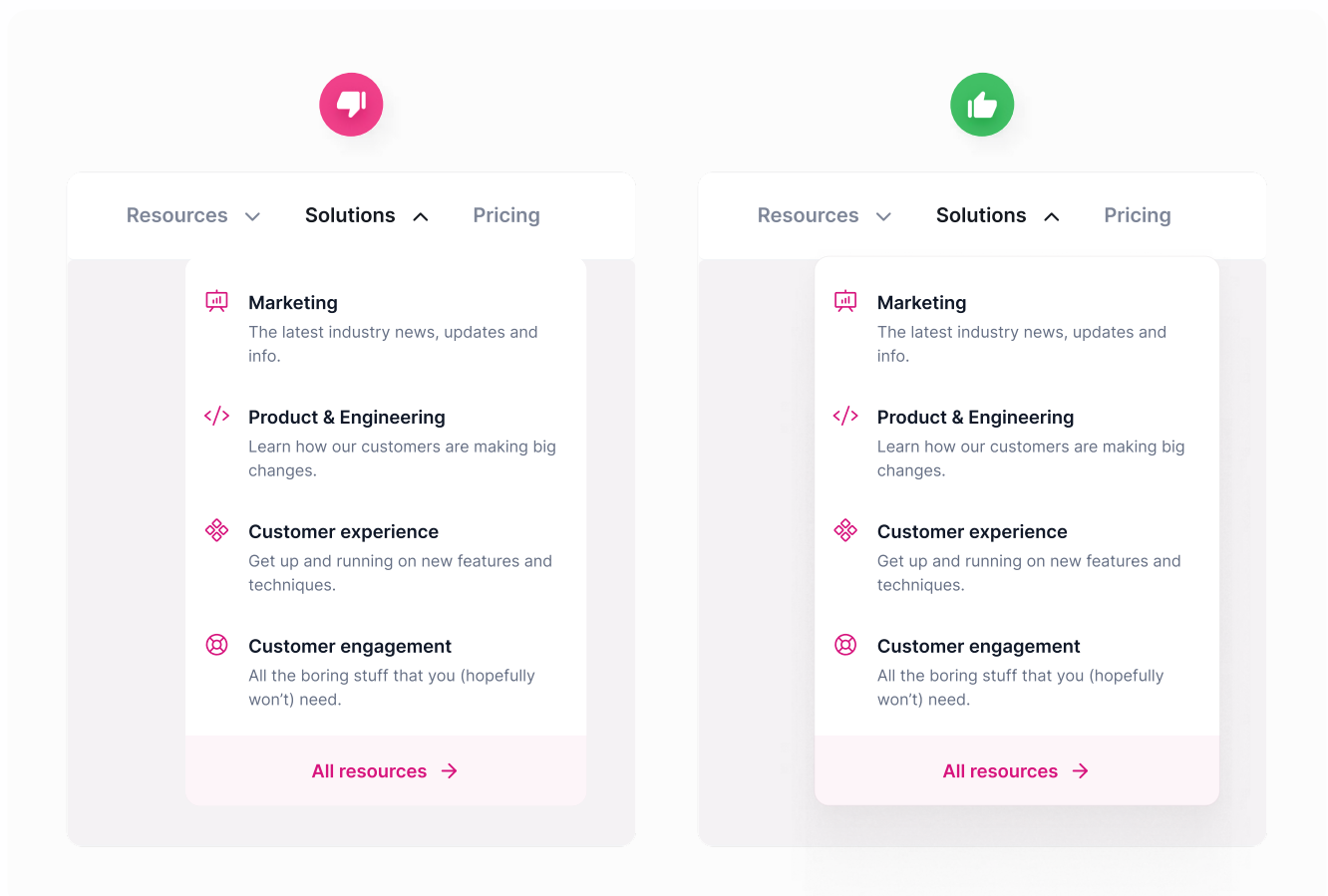
# Depth and texture

Depth and texture are extremely important design principles. Whether it's through the use of shadows, outlines, or even varying background colors, depth and texture can help guide users' eyes and actions. But it's not just about aesthetics; these elements also improve usability by creating visual hierarchies and making interactive elements more noticeable.

## Use shadows to add depth

Shadows are really useful in UI design for a couple of reasons. First, they create a sense of depth, helping users figure out which items they can click or move. Second, they make the design look better, moving it away from flat layouts.

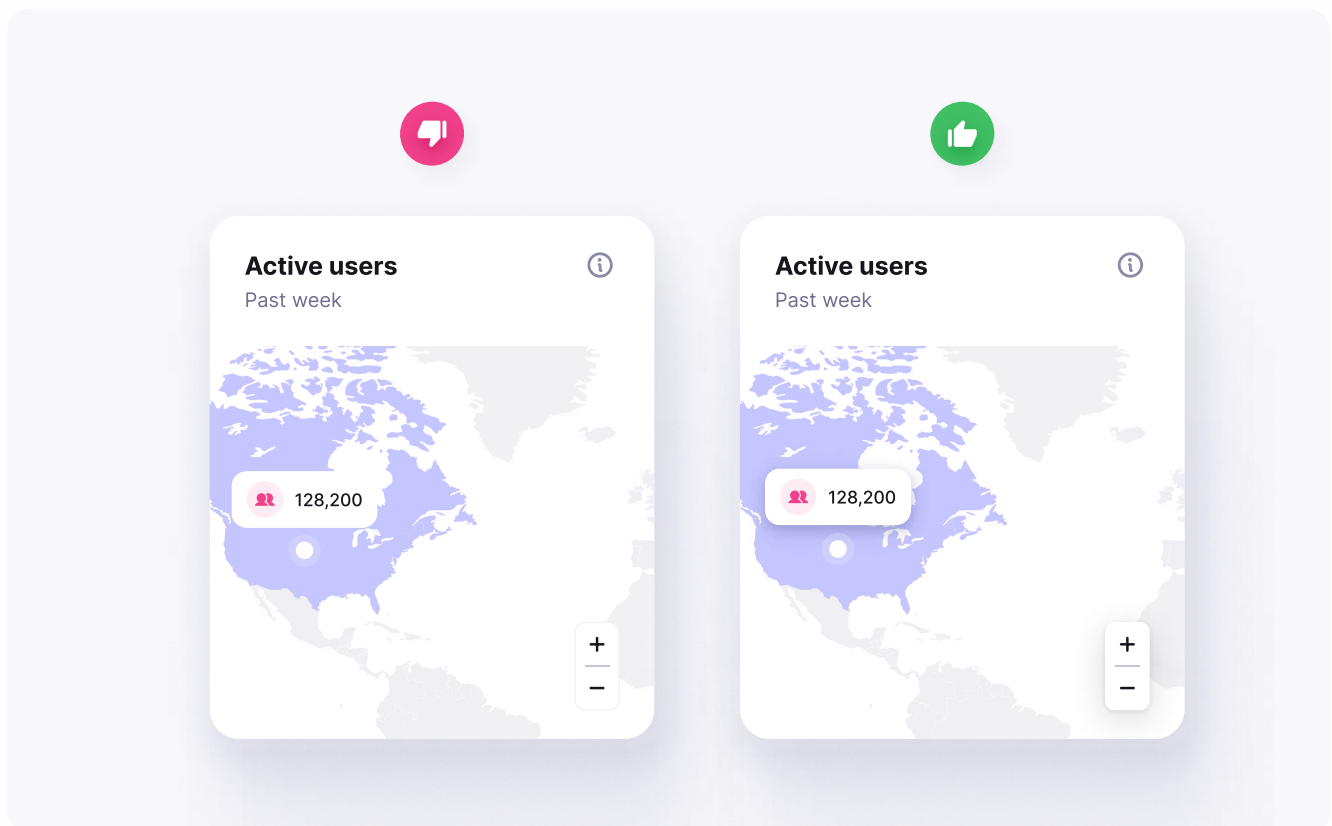
Now, let's look at a real-world example—website navigation with a dropdown menu.



In the design on the left, the dropdown doesn't have a shadow, while in the design on the right, a subtle shadow is applied to the dropdown. The second design is the winner here. Why? The shadow not only adds a layer of depth, making the dropdown seem like it's floating above the rest of the page, but it also helps the menu stand out from the background. This makes it easier for users to focus on the options available to them.

## Use shadows for elements over dynamic backgrounds

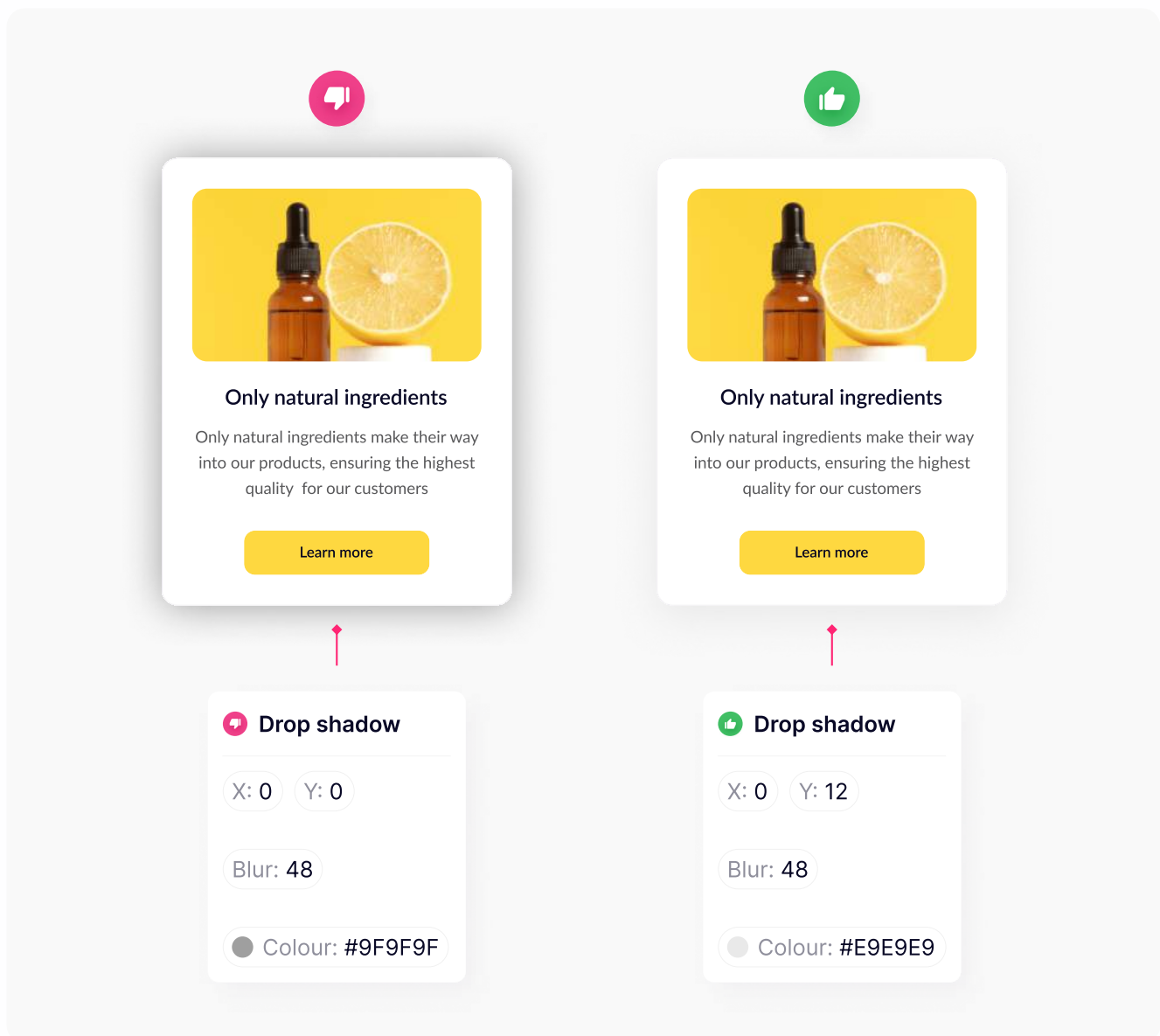
In UI design, elements that overlap with dynamic or complex backgrounds can often get lost in the mix. Shadows can be a real game-changer in such situations. Take, for example, a map interface with a label over America showing the number of active users and zoom in/out buttons at the bottom.



Using shadows for both these elements is a smart move. Without them, these elements risk blending into the complex, variable background of the map.

## Use soft shadows

Shadows can either make or break the aesthetic of your UI design. A common mistake is to use shadows that are too harsh or too distinct, which can create an overbearing effect and make your UI look unprofessional. The trick is to opt for softer shadows that blend well with the background and add just the right amount of depth without overwhelming the design. Let's have a look at the following example:



The first card has a strong, rough shadow that doesn't look great. The second card uses a lighter, smoother shadow that fits better with the design.

## Match your shadow color to the background

This is a pro tip many junior designers don't know about. When applying shadows, it's not just about the softness or depth; the color also matters a lot. Matching the color of your shadow to your background can make a huge difference in the cohesiveness of your design.

Let's explore this with an example featuring a light purple background. In the first case, a grey shadow is applied to the element, and in the second case, the shadow has a tint of purple to match the background.

The image shows a comparison of two design approaches on a light purple background. On the left, a card with a grey drop shadow is shown with a red speech bubble icon above it. On the right, a card with a purple-tinted drop shadow is shown with a green thumbs-up icon above it. Below each card is a settings panel for the drop shadow.

**Left Card (Grey Shadow):**

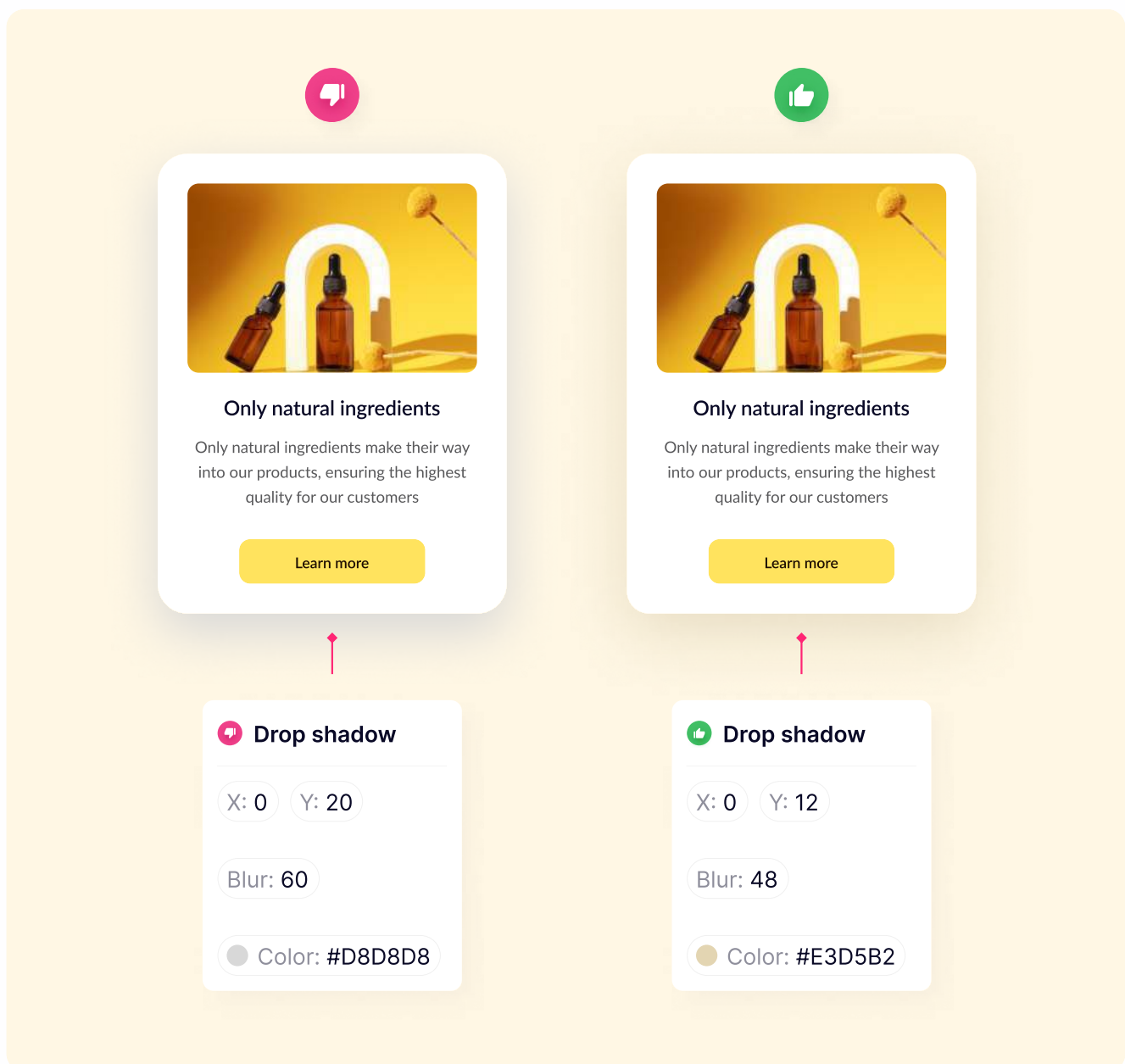
- Icon: Red speech bubble
- Image: Woman looking up
- Title: Be You, Only Better
- Text: Get a smooth, radiant look that lasts all day with our flawless finish foundation.
- Button: Get flawless today
- Drop shadow settings:
  - X: 0 Y: 19
  - Blur: 48
  - Color: #C7C7C7

**Right Card (Purple Shadow):**

- Icon: Green thumbs up
- Image: Woman looking up
- Title: Be You, Only Better
- Text: Get a smooth, radiant look that lasts all day with our flawless finish foundation.
- Button: Get flawless today
- Drop shadow settings:
  - X: 0 Y: 19
  - Blur: 56
  - Color: #CFC9DD

The grey shadow in the first example may look like a safe bet, but it actually clashes with the light purple background. It breaks the visual harmony, and the result feels jarring. On the other hand, the second example with a tinted purple shadow blends seamlessly with the background, creating a visually appealing design.

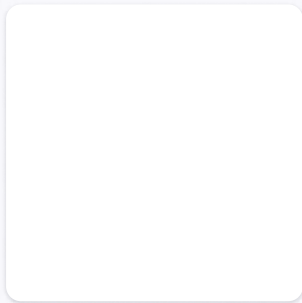
Once you learn this trick, you'll never go back to using pure grey or black shadows on colored backgrounds. It's an easy but impactful way to improve your designs, creating more coherent and engaging UIs.



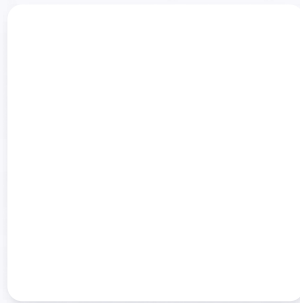
## Define your shadow system

So you've mastered the art of adding depth and color to your UI with shadows. Next, let's make sure you can do this across all your projects in a consistent way. A shadow system is like your rule book for using shadows the same way every time. This helps keep your design in line with your brand and makes the user experience better. So, whether your style is simple, flashy, or somewhere in the middle, your shadow rules should match that.

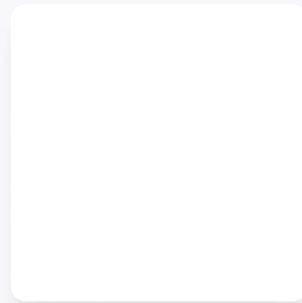
xs



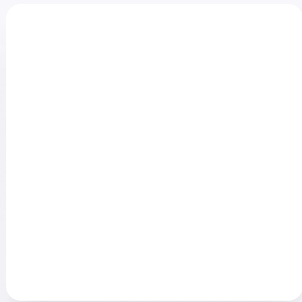
sm



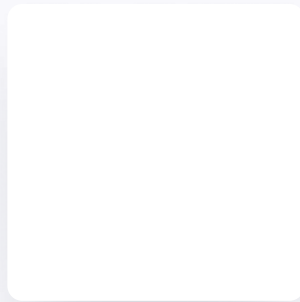
md



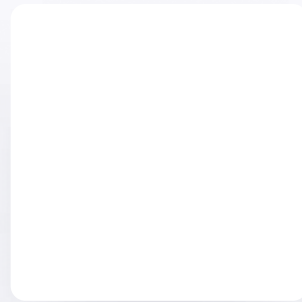
lg



xl



2xl



A good starting point is to have at least three different shadow styles for different uses:

1. **Soft Shadow:** Use this for general elements that you want to slightly lift off the page. This is great for buttons, small cards, and thumbnails.
2. **Medium Shadow:** This is for elements that require more focus, like modals or pop-up windows. The shadow should be a bit darker and have more spread than the soft shadow.
3. **Strong Shadow:** Use this for elements that need to really stand out or appear elevated, like dropdown menus or important alerts.

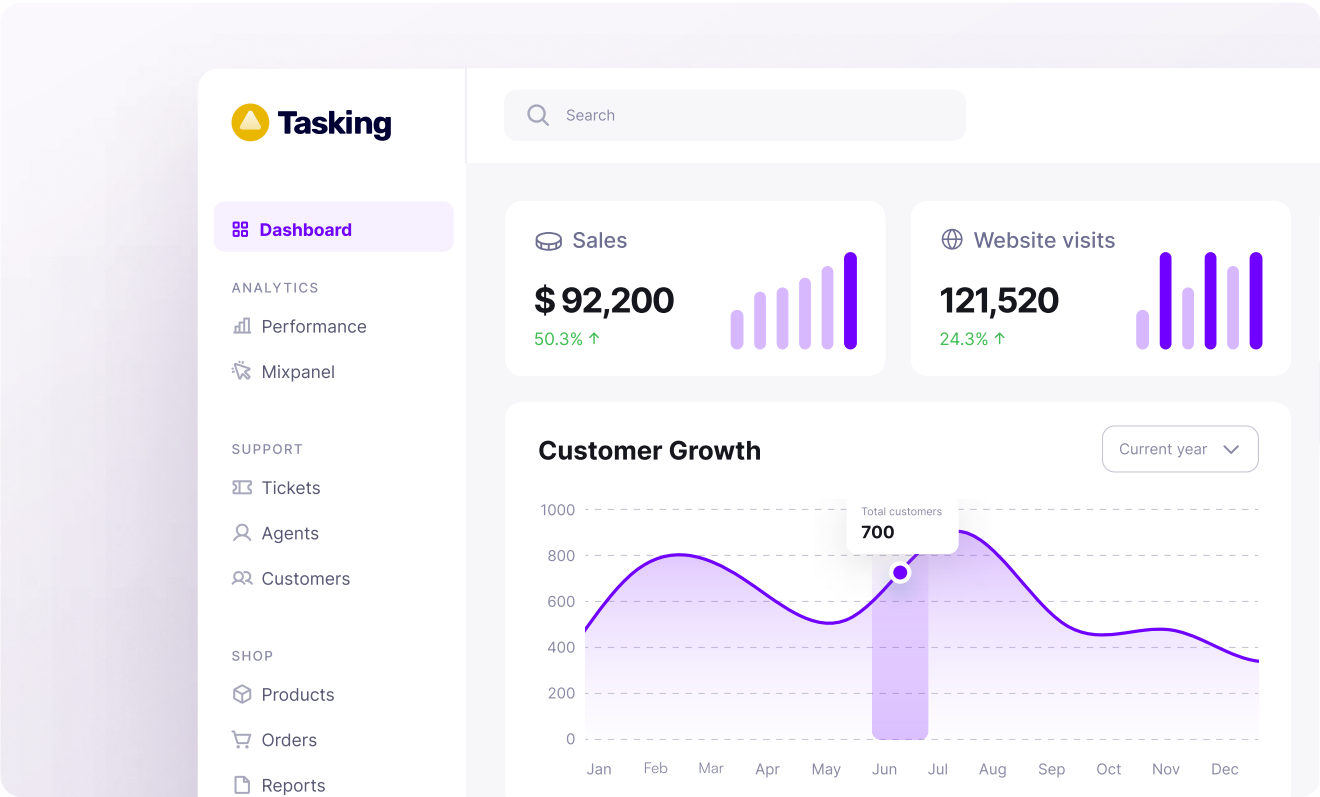
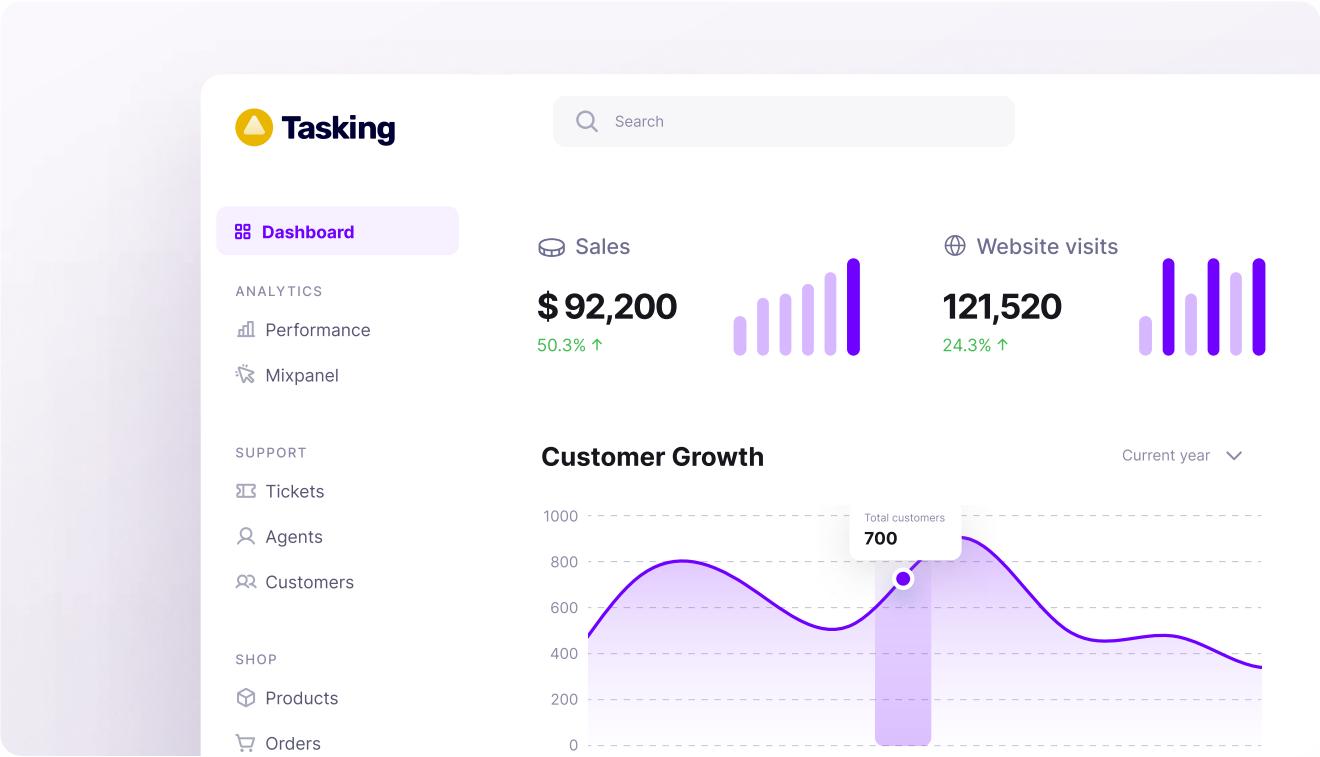
Each of these styles can have variations based on your specific needs. For example, you might want a medium shadow with a different color tint for warning messages. Or maybe a really subtle shadow for text boxes.

## Creating depth through outlines and background colours

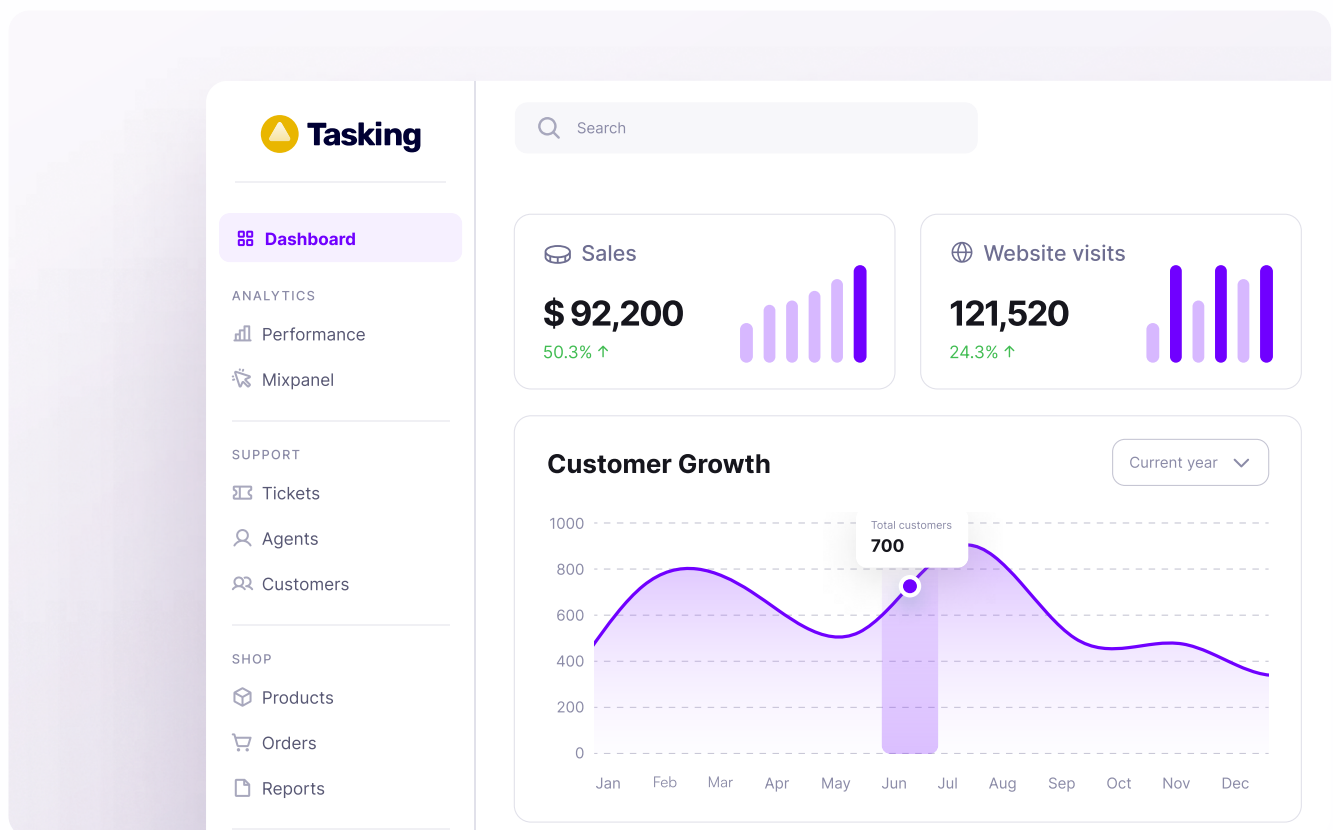
Sometimes, the smallest adjustments can lead to big improvements in your UI design. One such subtle but impactful change is using background color and outlines to create depth. This technique is especially valuable in interfaces with lot of different information, like dashboards. However, it's not limited to them.

Using pure white for your background and elements is a design choice that can work well, but it might make the interface look too plain.

A subtle change in the background color can effectively distinguish different sections or elements on your page. For instance, using a light grey background with white cards on top can create a layered effect. This approach gives the interface a more structured look, making it easier for users to focus on specific sections.



Alternatively, outlines can serve the same purpose. By using thin lines to segment areas, you guide the user's eye and create natural divisions in your design. These visual cues help in navigating complex interfaces more easily, and they add a touch of sophistication to your overall design.

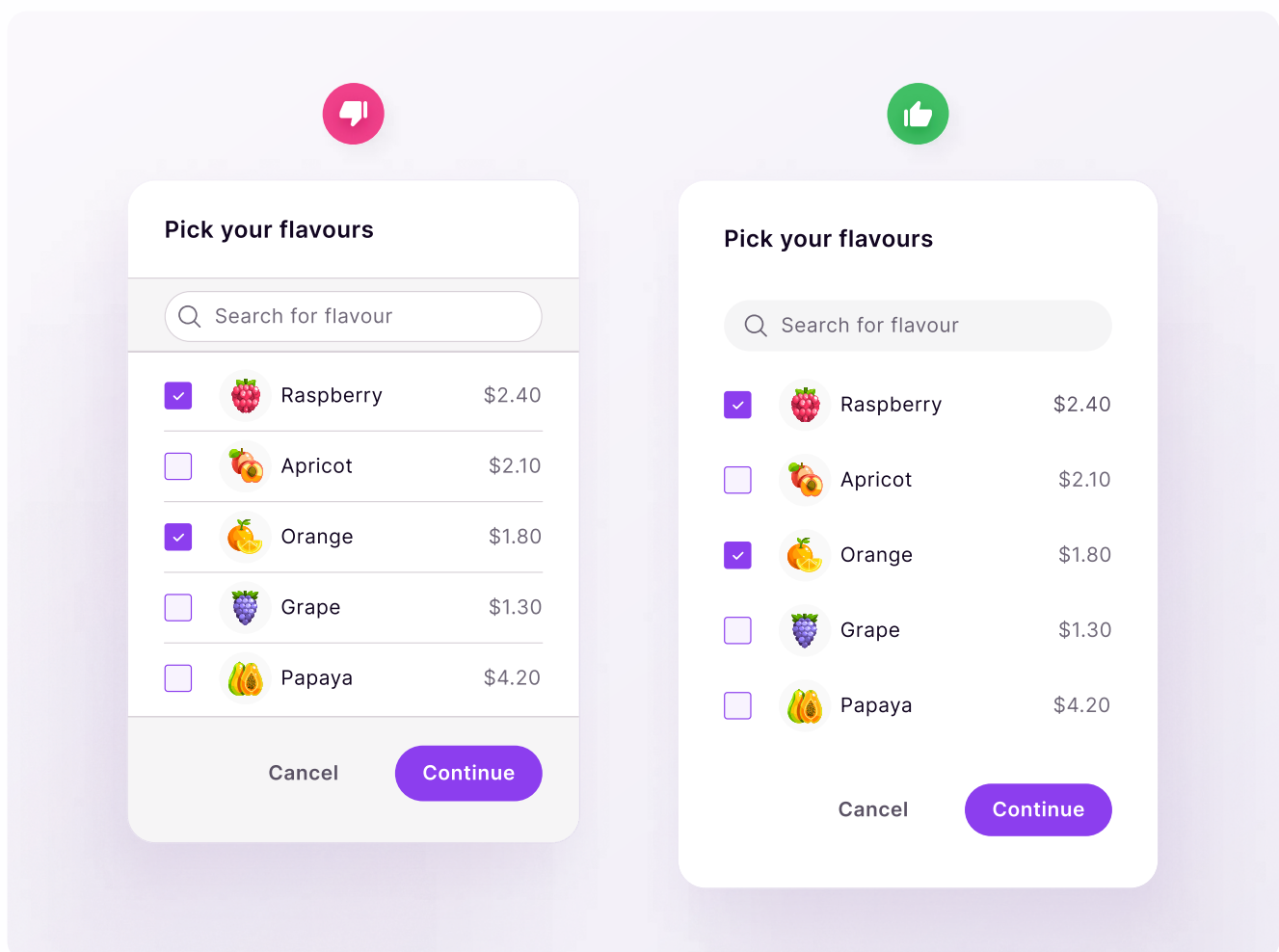


All of these techniques not only improve the aesthetic quality of your design but also enhance usability. It's a win-win, and once you start applying these simple adjustments, you'll notice the positive impact they have on your designs.

## Don't overdo it with borders

While outlines and background colors can add a lot to your designs, it's crucial not to go overboard. Overuse of borders can clutter your interface and make it look busy, confusing, or outdated. Excess lines and colors can detract from the content itself, making the UI feel overcomplicated and harder to navigate.

For example, consider a UI that uses multiple borders and several different background colors for each section. Though the intention might be to clearly define areas, the result is often a visual overload. Too many borders and colors can overwhelm the user, making it challenging to focus on essential elements.












In the second example, you'll notice that no borders are used; instead, the design relies on colors and a generous amount of white space to separate different sections like results and buttons. This creates a clean, uncluttered look that makes the interface easier to navigate.

When used sparingly and intentionally, borders can be effective. But it's crucial to find the right balance. Overdoing it can detract from your design's usability and aesthetic appeal. On the other hand, smart use of white space and background colors can achieve the same goals of separation and focus, without the added visual noise.

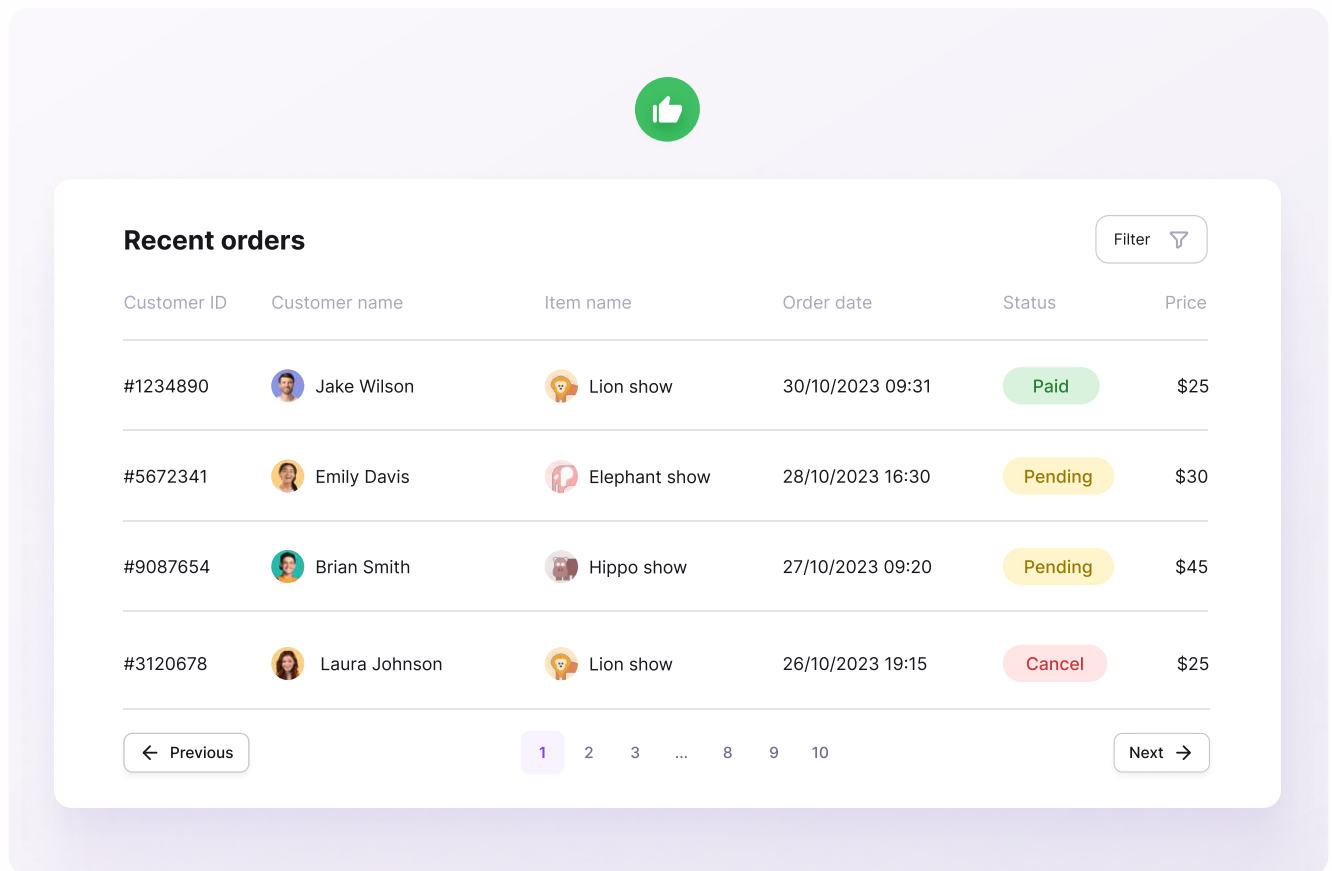
## Your borders should be thin and light

When it comes to utilizing borders in your UI designs, subtlety is key. Thick, dark, or prominent borders can overpower your content, making the interface feel heavy and outdated.



Customer ID	Customer name	Item name	Order date	Status	Price
#1234890	 Jake Wilson	 Lion show	30/10/2023 09:31	Paid	\$25
#5672341	 Emily Davis	 Elephant show	28/10/2023 16:30	Pending	\$30
#9087654	 Brian Smith	 Hippo show	27/10/2023 09:20	Pending	\$45
#3120678	 Laura Johnson	 Lion show	26/10/2023 19:15	Cancel	\$25
<div><div>← Previous</div><div>1 2 3 ... 8 9 10</div><div>Next →</div></div>					

On the other hand, thin and light borders can elegantly define different sections without stealing the spotlight. These less intrusive borders also help maintain a light and open aesthetic, which is easier on the eyes and makes for a more pleasant user experience.

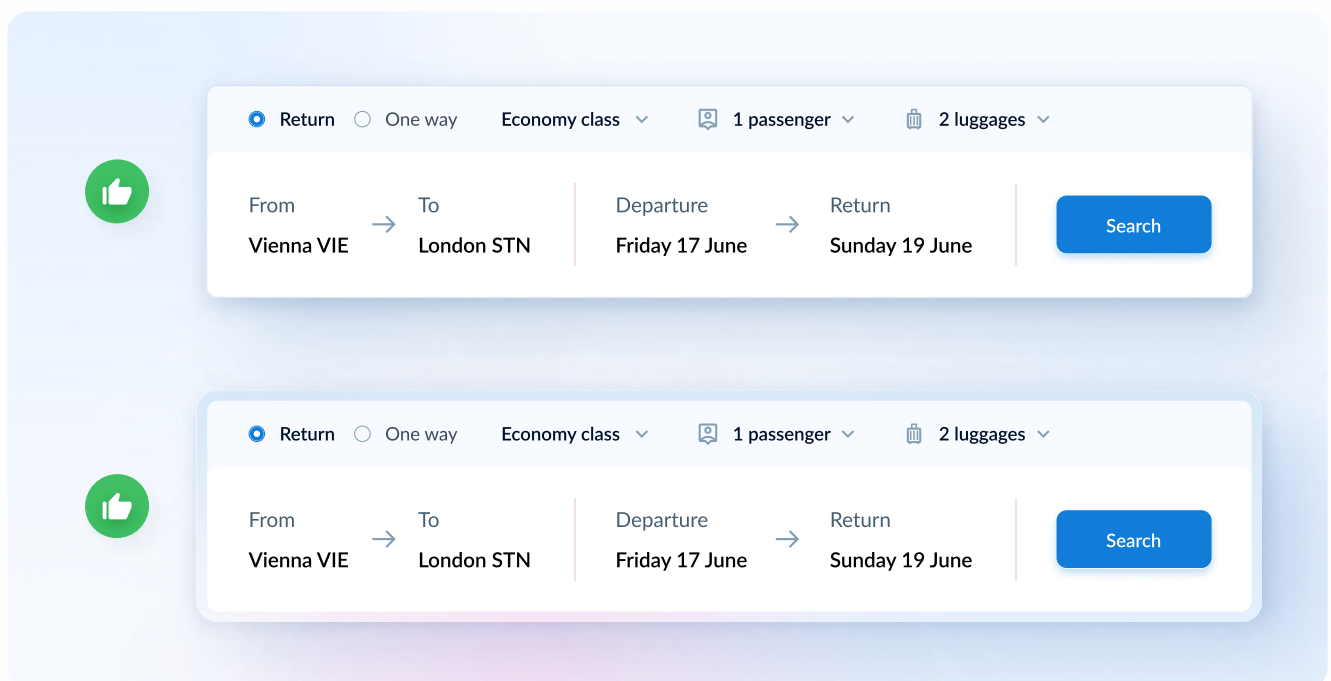


So, the next time you're considering adding a border, remember: less is often more. Go for subtle lines that perform their job without drawing unnecessary attention to themselves.

## Sometimes it's okay to break the rules

We've just covered the importance of using thin and light borders to maintain a clean, modern UI. But sometimes, breaking the rules can be just as effective, especially when you're aiming for a specific style or brand image.

For instance, consider a flight search box. In our first example, a subtle 1px outline border defines the search area. It's clean, it's modern, and it does the job. Now, in a contrasting example, we see a search box outlined with a bold 10px border. That's right, 10px! It's a significant departure from the "thin and light" rule, but guess what? It works too.



Both designs achieve different effects and cater to different styles, yet they are both effective because they maintain a sense of balance. Even with a thick border, the design avoids becoming overpowering by keeping the line smooth and soft.

Remember, it's all about balance and alignment with your overall design goals. So, whether you stick to the rules or decide to bend them, make sure you're doing it thoughtfully and deliberately.

## Bring your designs to life with a glass effect

The glass effect, also known as "glassmorphism," is a design trend that can bring a modern, futuristic touch to your interface. It has this cool ability to create depth and texture, making your UI elements look like they're made of frosted or blurred glass.

It provides a sense of realism and sophistication that flat designs sometimes lack. This can elevate your design, creating a more dynamic and engaging user experience.

However, the glass effect is not a one-size-fits-all solution. It's crucial to decide if it aligns with your brand and benefits your users.

For example, a SaaS company might find the glass effect to be a modern and fresh addition to their UI, while a luxury cosmetics brand may prefer a more traditional or minimalistic design approach.

Let's look at the following designs. The first design has a flat, plain background. It's clean, readable, and it does its job well.



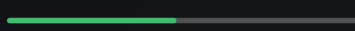
### Life of parrots

They usually live in groups called flocks. Being social animals, they communicate a lot, whether it's by making different sounds or using body language...

Documentary · 1 hr 3 min



02:15



04:32



In the second example, we introduce a glass effect to the component.



The glass effect here isn't just a trendy add-on; it serves a purpose. It elevates the visual appeal of the player, making it stand out without compromising on user experience. This example showcases how you can seamlessly integrate modern design elements to add a touch of sophistication and high-tech allure. The example strikes the right balance—it's modern but not overbearing, eye-catching but not distracting.



While the glass effect can bring a contemporary flair to your UI, it can easily backfire if not executed correctly. This third design illustrates this point. The glass effect is applied on a background that's too light, significantly compromising both accessibility and readability. The result is a design that, while aiming for modernity, actually hinders the user's ability to comfortably view and interact with the content.

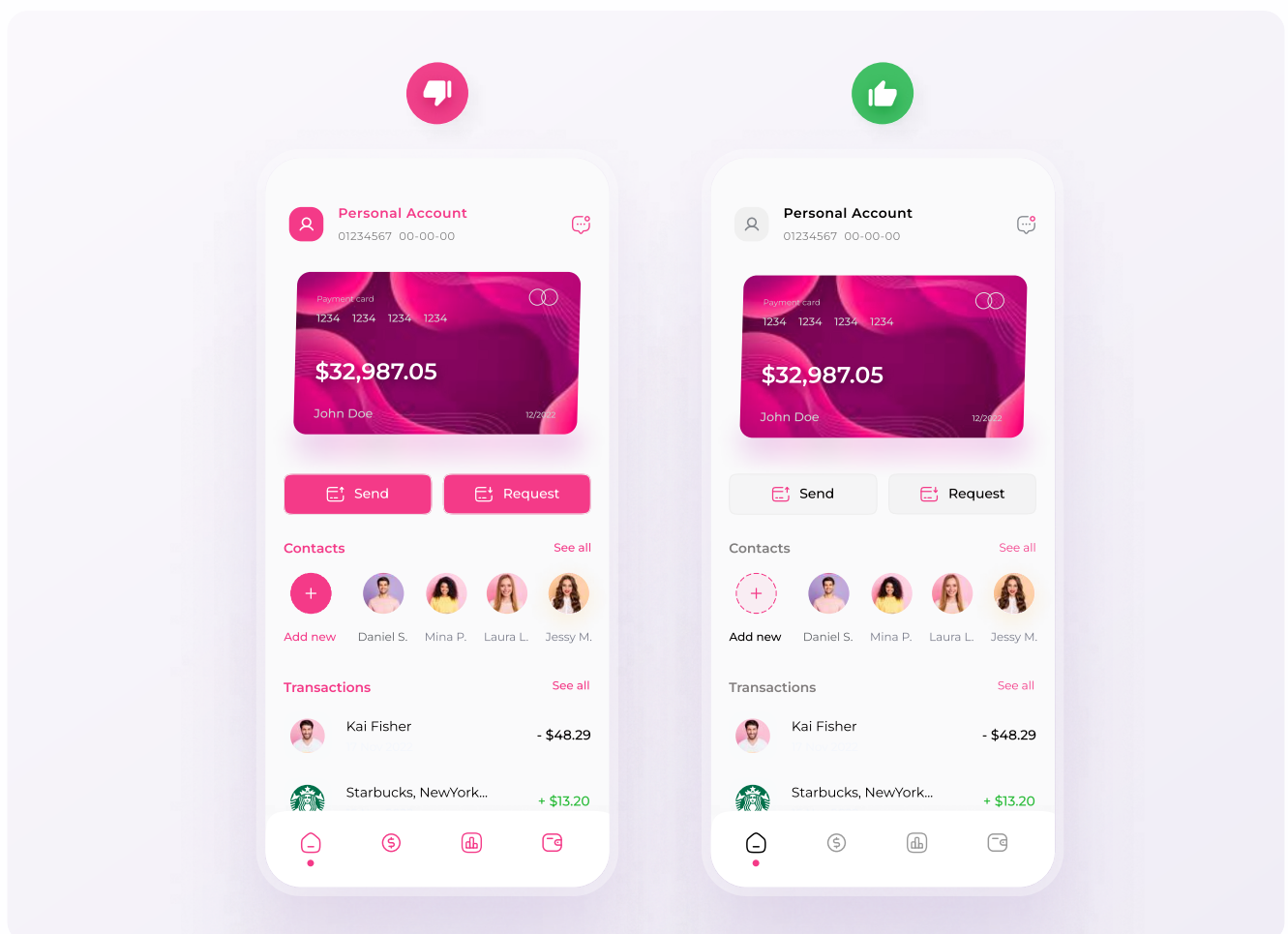
In this instance, the glass effect doesn't just fail to add value; it detracts from the UI by making it harder to navigate and read. The lesson here is that while it's tempting to employ the latest design trends, it should never be at the expense of basic design principles like readability and accessibility.

# Color

Color isn't just about making your design look good; it plays a fundamental role in user interaction and experience. It sets the mood, conveys brand personality, and can even influence user behavior. Different colors can evoke different emotional responses, and the right color scheme can make a user feel comfortable, engaged, or even excited.

## Less is often more

It might be tempting to go all-out with your brand's primary colors, especially when you're eager to make a statement. However, too much of a good thing can backfire. Overusing primary colors can overwhelm the user and detract from your content, making your design feel unbalanced. Let's have a look at the following two designs.



In the first design, the primary color is overused and the result is counterproductive. Instead of helping users identify key actions, the excessive use of the primary color confuses the interface. When everything is highlighted, nothing stands out. This diminishes the color's role as a guide for interactivity and makes it tough for users to understand what's important. In essence, it leads to a messy and disorganized user experience that can turn people off from interacting with your design. So, use your primary color thoughtfully to maintain its effectiveness in guiding user actions.

The second design uses the primary color sparingly, highlighting mostly clickable elements like buttons and links. This selective use serves as a visual cue for users, guiding them on where to click to perform specific actions. The color becomes a tool for navigation and interaction, making the user experience intuitive and focused.

Too many colors can have the same effect, causing visual clutter and making it difficult for users to know where to focus. So, it's not just about being conservative with your primary color, but also about having a balanced color scheme overall.

## Background color

When it comes to background colors in UI design, keeping it neutral is often the way to go. Neutral backgrounds—like shades of grey, beige, or soft whites—provide a clean canvas that lets your content and primary colors pop without competing for attention. They also make it easier for users to focus on tasks or absorb information.

To show you the impact of background color choices, let's compare the following designs.



While the first design may appear more dynamic or creative at first glance, it can make the interface feel less clear and a bit overwhelming. Vibrant backgrounds can clash with text and other UI elements, reducing readability and ultimately leading to a worse user experience.

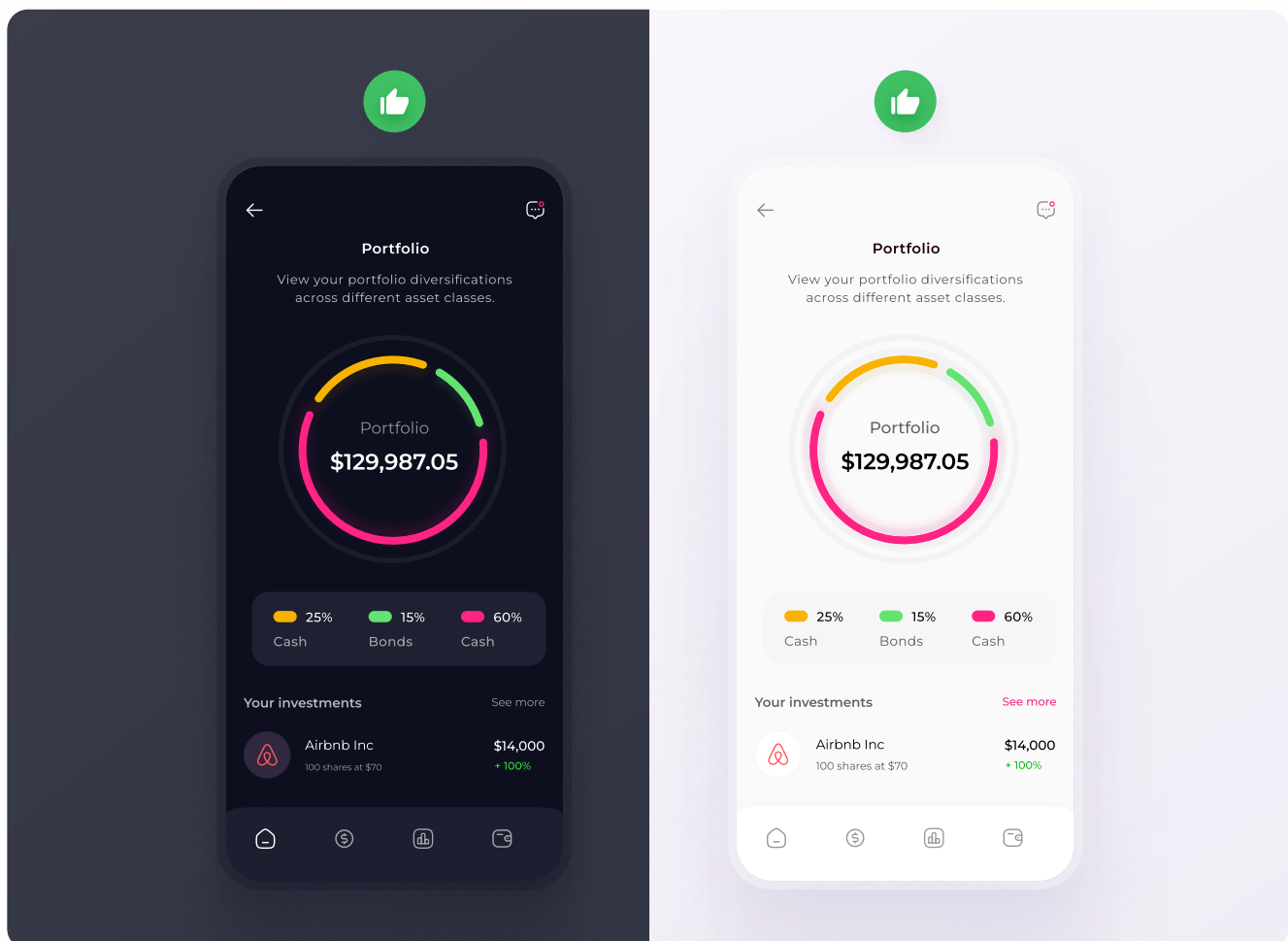
On the other hand, the second design with a white background feels clean and straightforward, letting users easily navigate and focus on the content. The neutral backdrop minimizes distractions and allows other design elements to pop, guiding users where you want their attention to go.

Of course, there are scenarios where a colored background could work beautifully, particularly for splash screens, headers, or specialized sections of an app or website. The key is knowing when and where to introduce color so it adds to the experience, rather than detracting from it.

## Dark backgrounds are great too

Dark backgrounds are far from just a trendy design element; they offer a host of benefits that can elevate the user experience. They provide a visually appealing contrast that makes text and other elements pop, making for an engaging and readable UI. But the advantages go beyond aesthetics.

Many users find dark backgrounds easier on the eyes, particularly when using devices in low-light conditions. Light text on a dark background reduces glare and minimizes flickering, lessening eye strain over extended periods of use.



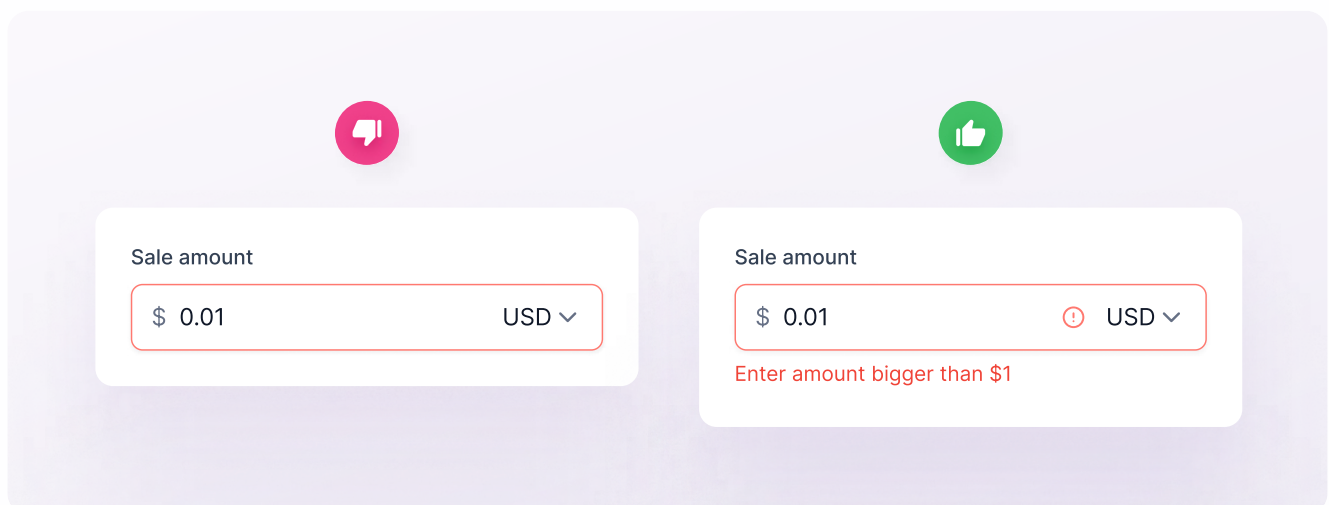
Offering a dark mode isn't just a nice-to-have feature anymore; for many, it's a must-have. By giving users the choice to switch between a light and dark background, you're catering to a broader range of preferences and needs, making your UI not just inclusive but also versatile.

To wrap it up, your choice between a light or dark background should not only consider user experience but also align with your brand's image. Whether you opt for a white or a moody dark tone, make sure it complements the overall aesthetic and message you want to convey.

## Don't rely on color alone

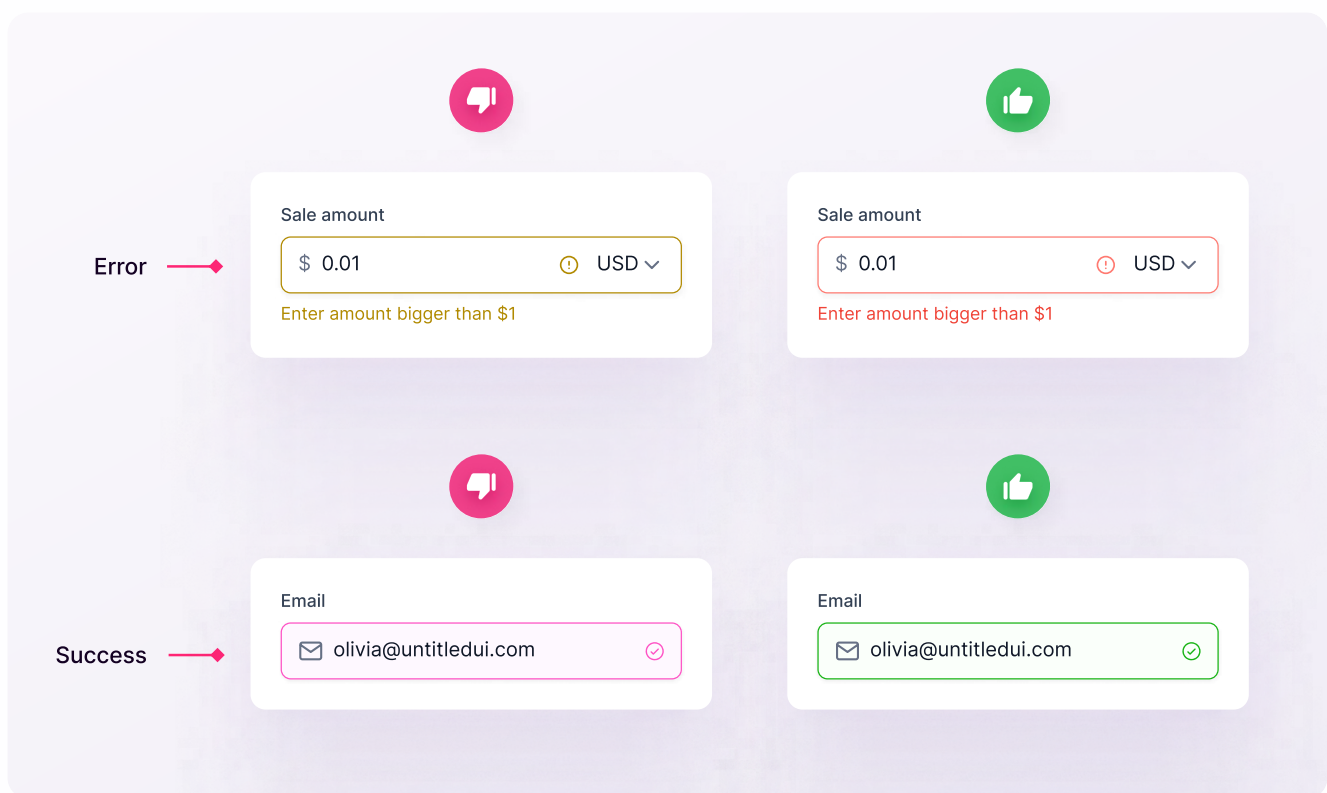
Relying solely on color to convey system states like errors, success, or warnings is a common pitfall in UI design. While a bright red may scream "error" to you, it might not convey the same urgency or meaning to all users. This is especially critical for those with color vision deficiencies or those viewing your interface in different lighting conditions.

Instead, consider combining color with other visual cues like icons, text labels, or patterns. For example, pairing a red background with an exclamation mark icon and a "Enter amount bigger than \$1" label offers a more comprehensive way to communicate an error state.



## Stick to color conventions for system statuses

So, you know that you shouldn't rely solely on color to indicate system states. But when you do use color, sticking to widely accepted conventions is critical. You might be tempted to get creative, using yellow for errors or pink for success, especially if those colors align more closely with your brand's aesthetics. Resist the temptation.



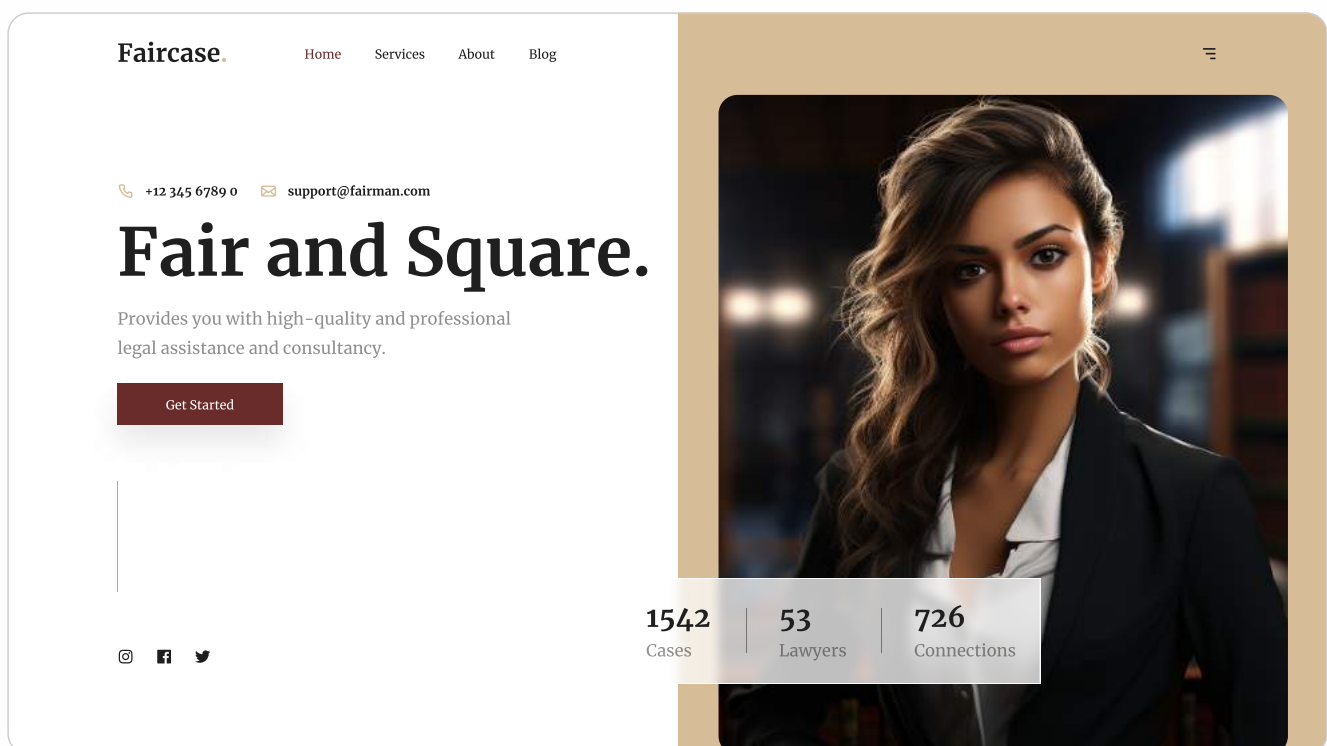
First off, these color conventions are not arbitrary; they are based on years of user interaction and design studies. Red universally screams "stop" or "error," and green usually means "go" or "success." Breaking these conventions can create confusion and slow down user interactions because people will have to think twice, trying to understand what your unique color coding means. "But what about my brand colors?" you might ask. While it's tempting to adapt system status colors to align with your brand's color scheme, this is one area where it's better to stick to what people know. Instead, you can play around with the tones of these conventional colors to make them fit more harmonically with your brand.

# Typography

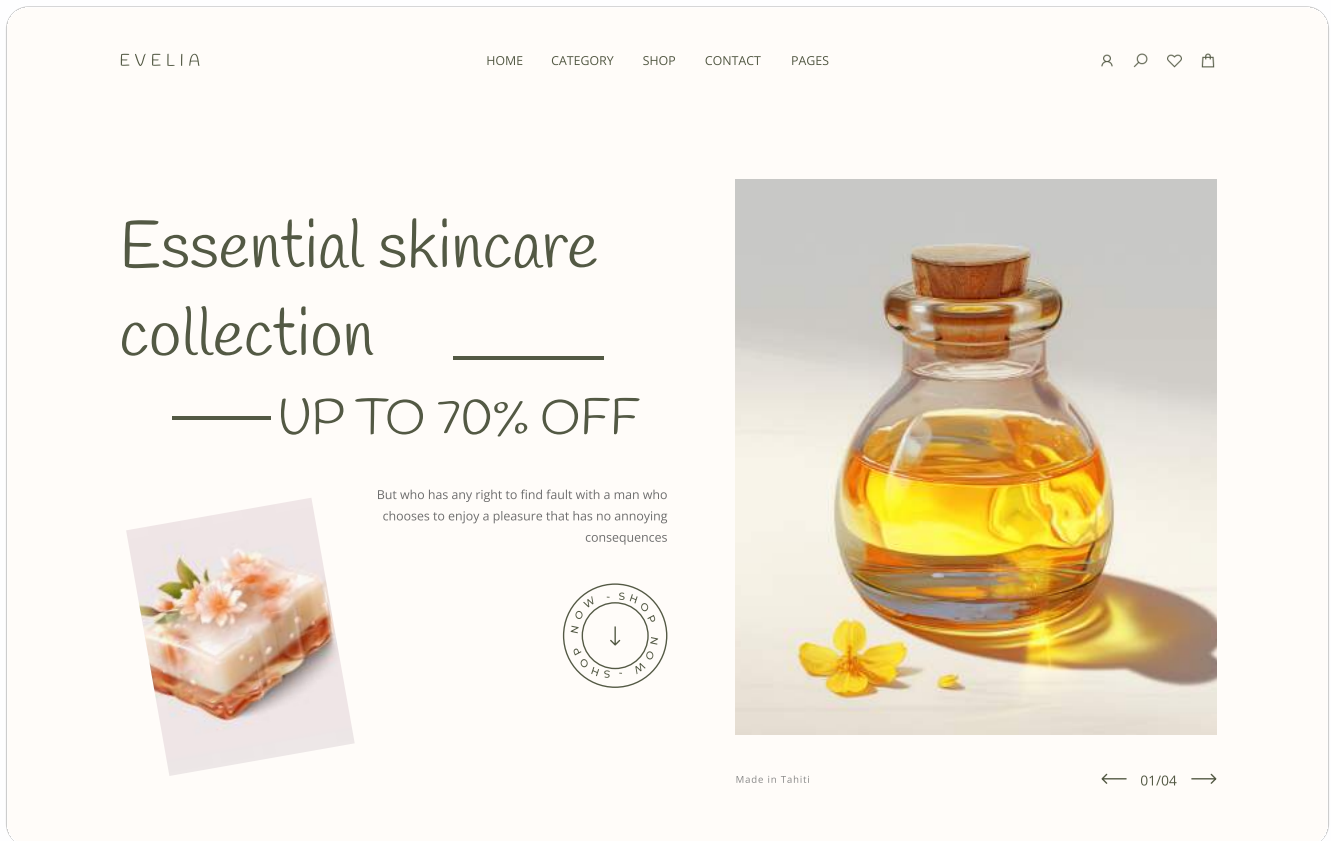
Typography is like the backbone of any good design. Imagine you're reading an article, using an app, or browsing a website; the way text is presented really affects how you feel about it, right? It's not just what the words say, but how they look that shapes your experience.

## Choosing the right font

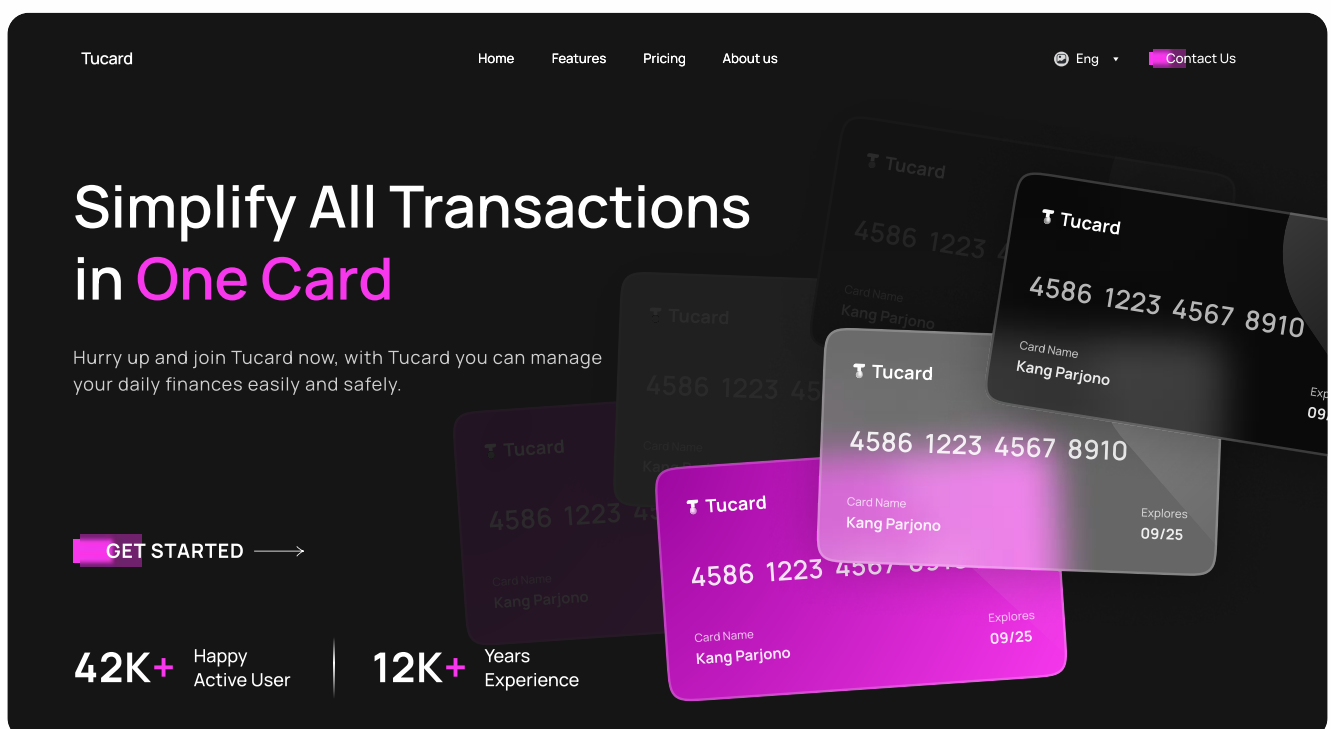
Choosing the right font is a bit like picking the right outfit for an occasion—it has to be appropriate, comfortable, and effective in conveying the right message. For example, if you're in more formal sectors like law, accounting, or education, you might gravitate towards a serif typeface to give your design a classic and polished tone.



On the flip side, if you're designing for sectors like beauty—where the mood is more relaxed and inviting—a script typeface might be something you can experiment with. It helps create a feel that's both warm and personalized.



And then there's the world of tech, music streaming, or messaging apps. Here, sans-serif fonts are your go-to choice, offering a sleek, modern aesthetic that resonates with these industries.



## Pick a font that is readable and aesthetically pleasing

We've set the stage for how typeface impacts UI design; now let's focus on the font selection. Don't underestimate this part—it's not just about beauty; it's also about clarity and readability. A poorly chosen font can quickly become the Achilles heel of your design, making your message hard to get across and frustrating your users.



### **The Art of Achieving Success: Unveiling the Secret Ingredients to a Fulfilling Life**

Japan is a fascinating country, renowned for its unique blend of ancient traditions and modern technology. From the bustling streets of Tokyo to the serene temples of Kyoto, there's something for everyone in this diverse nation.

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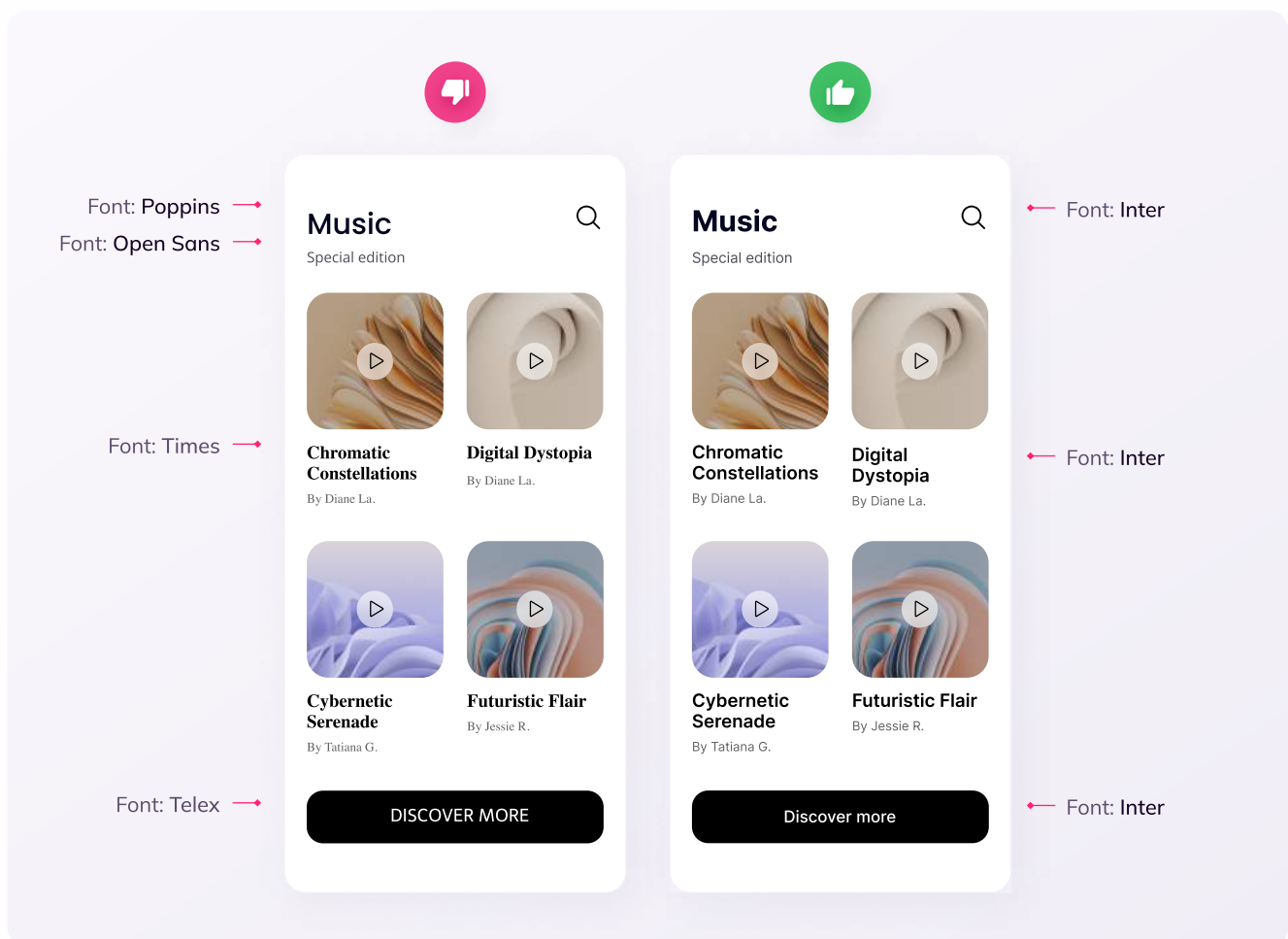
When picking a font, it's about more than just finding one that looks nice. You want a font that's easy to read, visually appealing, and matches the vibe you're aiming for. All these factors combined will make sure your design not only looks good but also communicates effectively with your users.

Some fonts are like that trustworthy friend who's good in any situation. Take a look at Inter, Gotham, Lato, Open Sans, San Francisco, Helvetica, Manrope and Roboto. These fonts balance style with readability, and they're some of our personal faves.

Here's another key thing to keep in mind—licensing. Always make sure the font you choose can be used for either personal or commercial purposes, depending on your project's needs. Never use fonts without a proper license. If you're on the hunt for free fonts that are safe to use, a reliable resource is [Google Fonts](#).

## Use max 2 different fonts

One of the temptations when designing a UI is to use a variety of fonts. However, using more than two different fonts can easily make your design look cluttered, confusing and off-brand. Compare the designs below:



The example with multiple fonts looks kind of messy, right? On the other hand, the one using just one or two fonts feels clean and is easier to look at.

The best practice for a clean, professional look is to stick to one versatile font. You can still make your design dynamic by using different weights and sizes within that single font.

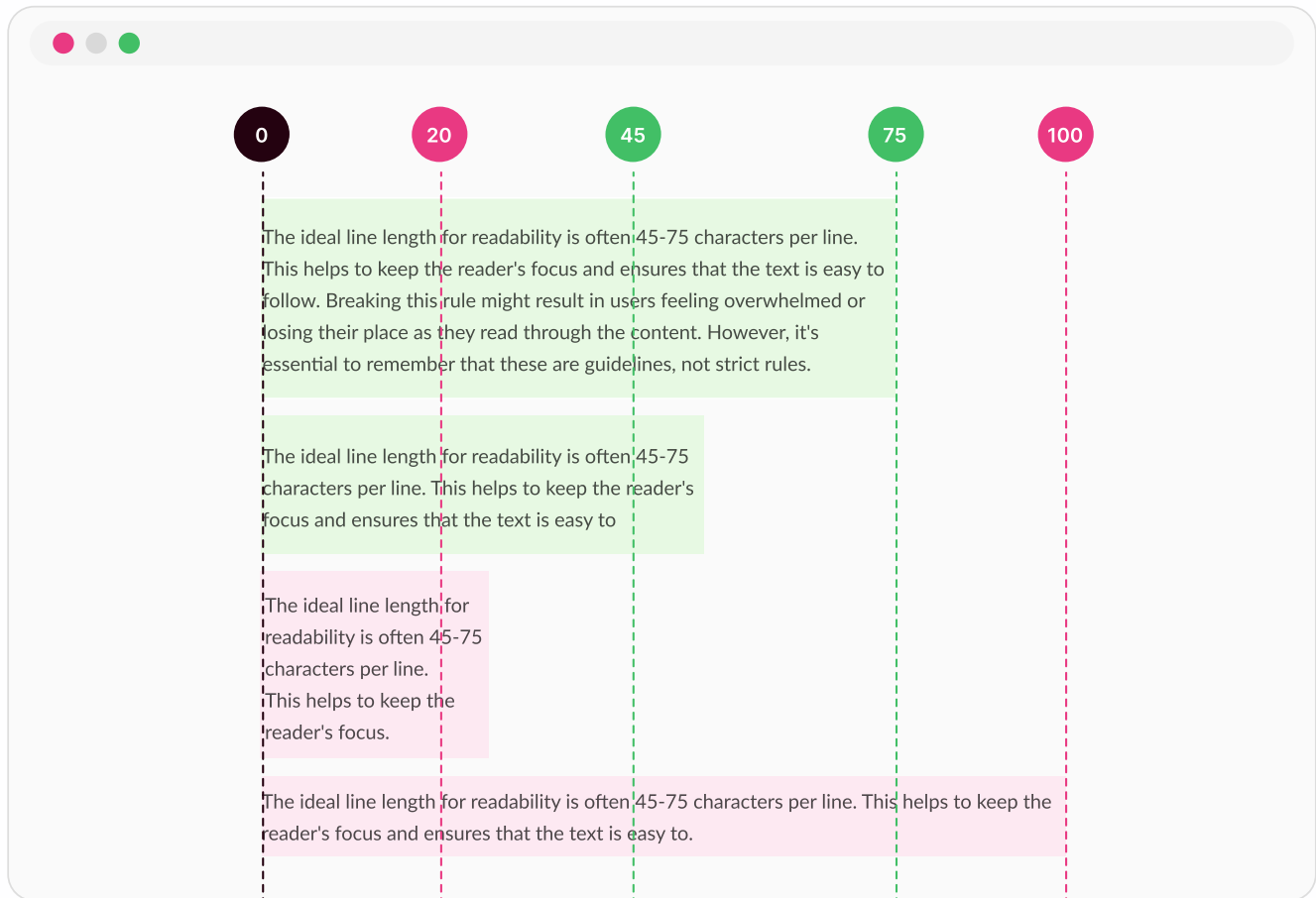
If you're more experienced and want to up your design game, you can effectively use two fonts. A classic combo is using one font for headings and another for paragraphs. For example, Playfair Display works wonderfully for headings, and Sources Sans Pro is excellent for body text. Other strong pairs include Raleway with Merriweather, or Montserrat with Open Sans.

For more good font pairings, you can bookmark a free resource featuring a curated list straight from Figma. [www.figma.com/google-fonts](https://www.figma.com/google-fonts)

## Understanding ideal line length

For the main text on your website or app—what's often called "body copy"—line length is a big deal. Why? It can make or break how easy it is for people to read your content.

The research-backed sweet spot for desktop interfaces falls between 45 and 75 characters per line. This range optimizes the balance between readability and visual appeal, making for an engaging and effective user experience.



On mobile devices, the constraints are different due to smaller screen sizes. Here, a good rule of thumb is to aim for 30 to 40 characters per line. Sticking to this guideline will help ensure that your text is easily digestible, even on smaller displays, without compromising on readability.

## Easy ways to measure

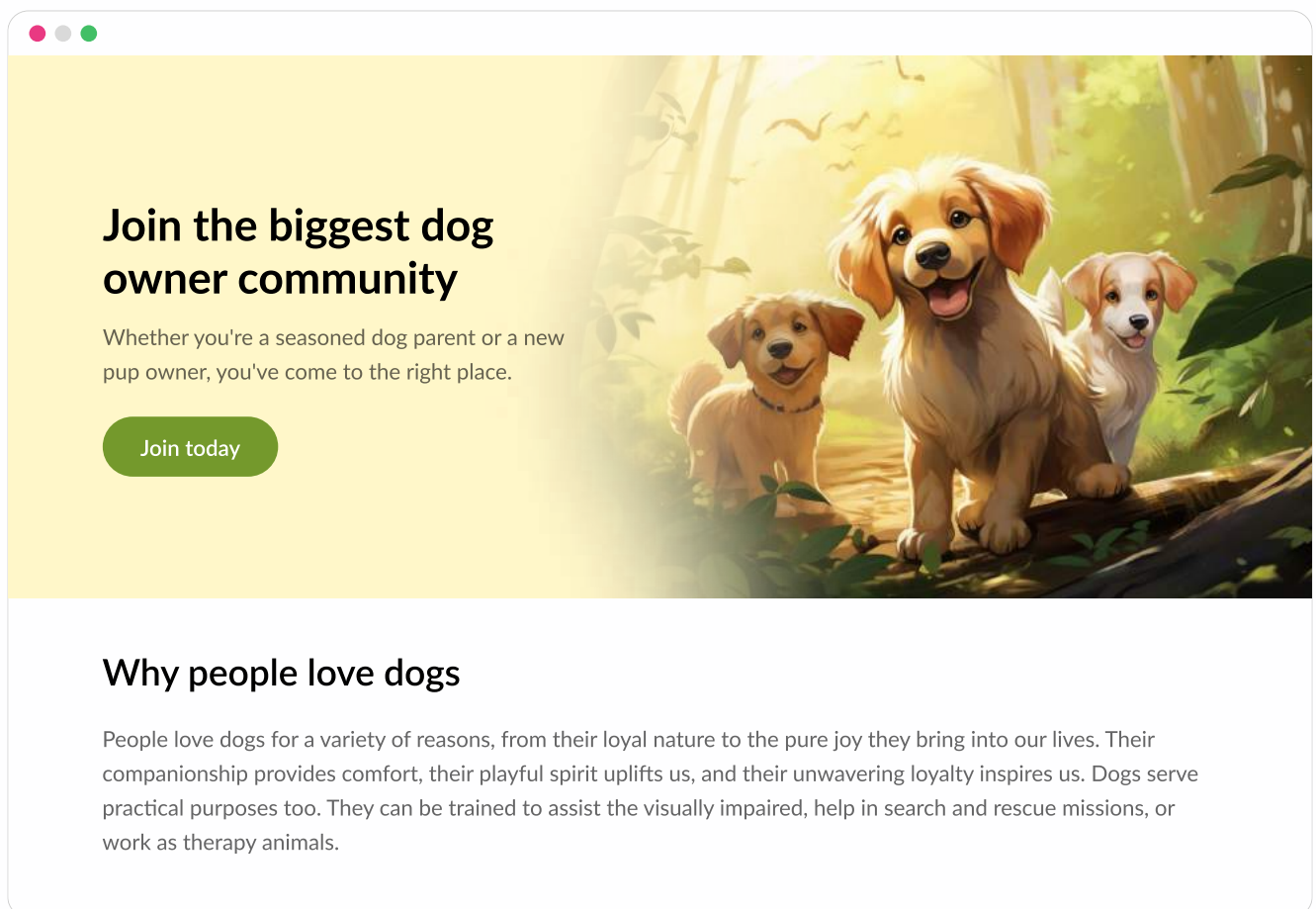
You don't need to count each character—design tools like Figma have plugins like "Character counter" that can do that for you. Alternatively, various online tools can assist you in maintaining the ideal range.

## Device-specific adjustments


While the 45-75 character range serves as a reliable guideline for most situations, it's not a one-size-fits-all rule. Depending on various factors such as content, design layout, or target devices, some flexibility in line length can be beneficial.

We've put together three designs to show you the importance of managing line length and text alignment for readability and aesthetics.

In the first design example, the text stretches across the entire width of the page, making it difficult to read. Your eyes have to travel a long distance from the end of one line to the start of the next, increasing eye strain and reducing readability.



In the first of our two recommended designs, the text below the image and introductory paragraph is center-aligned. By limiting the line length to a maximum of 75 characters, reading becomes a far more comfortable experience. Your eyes don't have to travel as far, making it easier to move from the end of one line to the beginning of the next.

An illustration of three happy dogs (two golden retrievers and one beagle) sitting on a log in a sunlit forest. The scene is warm and inviting, with sunlight filtering through the trees.

## Join the biggest dog owner community

Whether you're a seasoned dog parent or a new pup owner, you've come to the right place.

[Join today](#)

### Why people love dogs

People appreciate dogs for numerous reasons including their unyielding loyalty and the sheer joy they infuse into our daily lives. Their companionship goes beyond mere friendship—it offers emotional comfort, and their playful demeanor lifts our spirits. Moreover, dogs have practical benefits that are indispensable.

The second design option takes a different approach but achieves a similar outcome. Here, the text is left-aligned, giving it a traditional, straightforward feel. Much like the first design, the line length here also does not exceed 75 characters. The restricted line length ensures that the text is easily digestible, reducing eye strain and improving overall readability.



An illustration of three happy dogs (two golden retrievers and one smaller dog) sitting on a log in a sunlit forest. The scene is warm and inviting, with sunlight filtering through the trees.

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### Why people love dogs

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## Break up long paragraphs

When you're dealing with content-heavy sections in your UI design, never underestimate the power of shorter paragraphs. Long blocks of text can overwhelm users, making it hard for them to absorb the information and stay engaged. The solution? Break those lengthy paragraphs down into more bite-sized chunks.



### GreenMeal

When you choose GreenMeal, you're ensuring your meals are made from premium, locally sourced, organic ingredients. Experience vibrant flavors while maximizing nutritional benefits. Say goodbye to repetitive, boring meals. Our chefs are culinary artists, skilled in a multitude of cuisines. Get ready for an exciting, ever-changing menu that delights your senses. GreenMeal isn't a one-size-fits-all service. We know you're unique, and that's why our meal plans are tailor-made for you. Choose delivery frequency, portion sizes, and even dietary preferences like keto or vegan.



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GreenMeal isn't a one-size-fits-all service. We know you're unique, and that's why our meal plans are tailor-made for you. Choose delivery frequency, portion sizes, and even dietary preferences like keto or vegan.

Doing this offers a visual break, making the content easier to scan and digest. It also provides natural stopping points where users can pause and absorb what they've just read. This approach serves to highlight crucial information and make the entire reading experience more interactive.

## The magic of subheadings

Adding subheadings to your shorter paragraphs is like giving your users a roadmap to your content. Not only do subheadings make the text easier to scan, but they also grab attention, offer a sneak peek into the paragraph's content, and help break down information into digestible parts. You can make these sections stand out even more with simple touches like icons, lines, or just adding some extra space.



### GreenMeal

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### GreenMeal: your healthy dining partner

#### Organic ingredients for optimal nutrition

When you choose GreenMeal, you're ensuring your meals are made from premium, locally sourced, organic ingredients. Experience vibrant flavors while maximizing nutritional benefits.

#### Unlock a world of culinary delights

Say goodbye to repetitive, boring meals. Our chefs are culinary artists, skilled in a multitude of cuisines. Get ready for an exciting, ever-changing menu that delights your senses.

#### Customize to fit your lifestyle

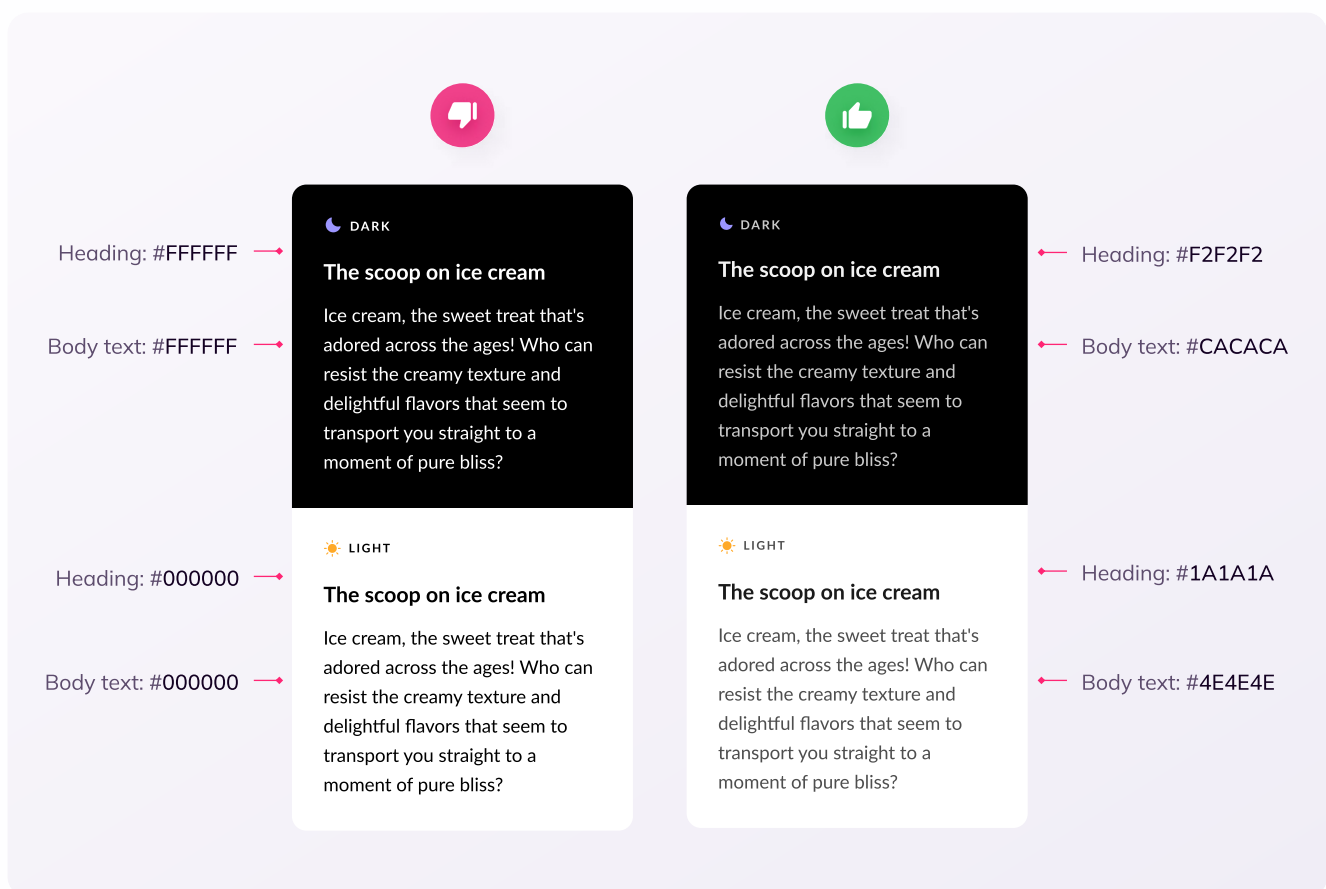
GreenMeal isn't a one-size-fits-all service. We know you're unique, and that's why our meal plans are tailor-made for you. Choose delivery frequency, portion sizes, and even dietary preferences like keto or vegan.

## Text contrast in UI Design

Avoid using pure black text (#000000) on a white background or vice versa, pure white text (#FFFFFF) on a dark background. It's not just a readability issue; it also disrupts the visual harmony we aim for in UI design. Instead, opt for off-black or dark gray for your headings and a lighter gray for your text. It's more soothing for the eyes and creates a refined contrast that just feels right.

A slightly softer color scheme also adds a level of sophistication and balance. A darker gray for headings says, "This is significant," without screaming for attention. Lighter gray text offers readability without compromising the overall aesthetic or overwhelming the reader.

Look at the two examples. The first one uses pure black on white, and it's pretty hard to look at, right? Now check out the second example. It uses a dark gray for the headings and a lighter gray for the text. Looks and feels way better, doesn't it? This shows why picking the right colors really matters in UI design





## Font weights



After picking the right colors, let's talk about another trick to make your text stand out in the right way: font weights. This is crucial for making your design both functional and good-looking. A well-chosen font weight not only adds visual interest but also helps your users know what's most important on the page.

The trick here is to go thicker for your headings—think bold, semibold, or medium. These weights grab attention and make it clear: "Hey, this is the key point." For your paragraphs, switch to thinner weights like regular or sometimes even light. This keeps the text readable and ensures it doesn't compete with the headings for attention.

Take a look at the two examples. The first uses the same font weight "Regular" for headings and text. It's harder to figure out what's important, right? The second example uses "Bold" for the heading and "Regular" for text. The difference is clear—it's easier to know what to focus on and what to skim.

The image shows two side-by-side card designs on a light purple background. Each card has a circular icon at the top, a circular dog photo, a heading, and a paragraph of text. The left card is marked with a pink speech bubble icon and has pink arrows pointing to its heading and text, both labeled 'Font-weight: Regular'. The right card is marked with a green thumbs-up icon and has pink arrows pointing to its bold heading (labeled 'Font-weight: Bold') and its regular text (labeled 'Font-weight: Regular').





Font-weight: Regular →

Font-weight: Regular →

Font-weight: Bold

Font-weight: Regular

### The canine connection

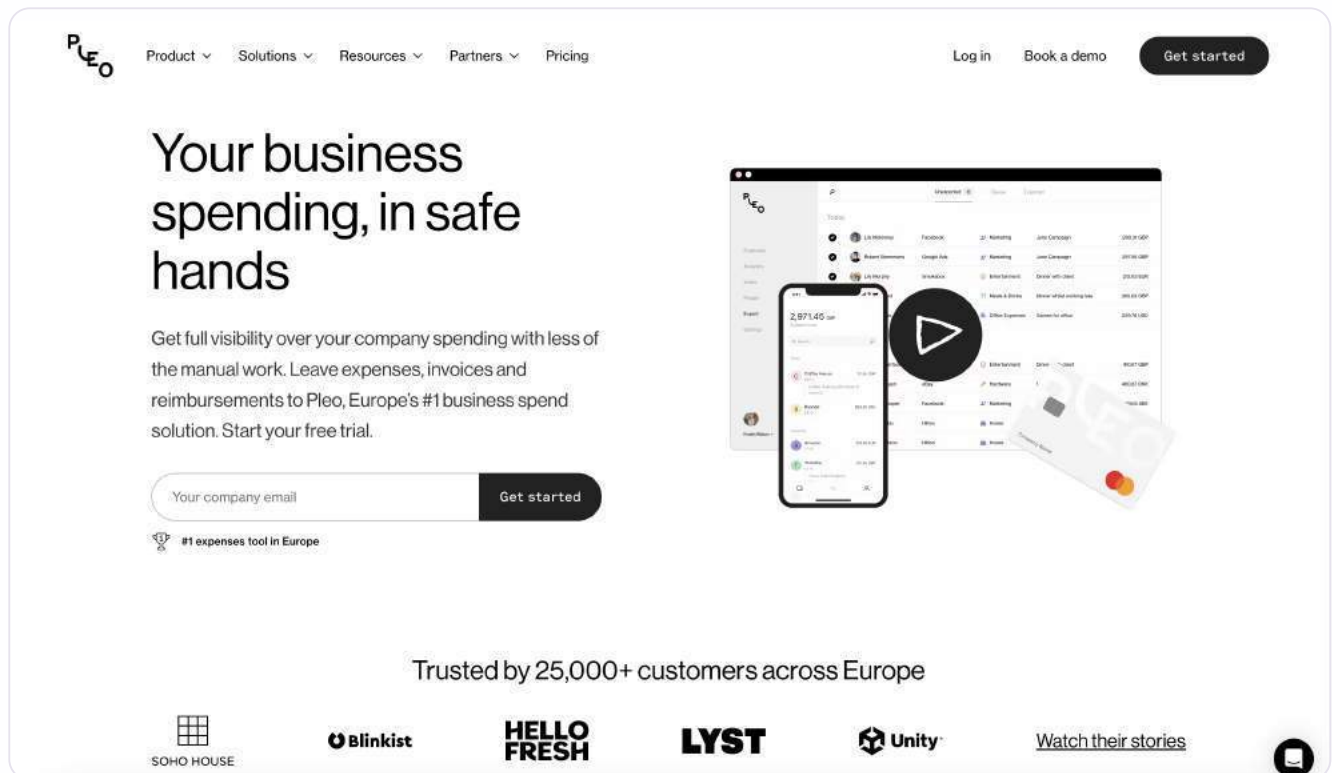
Dogs, often referred to as "man's best friend," have a special place in the hearts of people all over the world. These loyal companions come in all shapes and sizes, from tiny Chihuahuas to large Great Danes.

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## There can be exceptions

Many modern websites are going for a clean and sleek look by using lighter font weights for headings. You can see this in action on sites like Pleo or Linear. While this goes against conventional wisdom, it actually works for them.



How? They aren't relying on font weight alone to establish hierarchy. They use color. For example, they use darker colors for headings and lighter ones for paragraphs. But what they rely on the most to establish a good hierarchy is size. The font sizes they use for headings are noticeably bigger than the rest of the text, and this helps create a good contrast and clear hierarchy.



# Avoid extremes

Let's address a common pitfall many designers face: going to the extreme. Yes, pushing boundaries is cool, but not when it sacrifices readability and user experience.

## 1. Avoid too light colours

Imagine you're at a coffee shop, trying to read an article on your phone. If the text is too light of a gray, you might find yourself squinting or even tilting the screen to catch the words. Not a great user experience, right?

Designers sometimes opt for light gray text in the name of minimalism or aesthetic appeal. While it may look sleek and modern, it can be really challenging to read, especially for users with poorer vision.





### The Tranquil Aura of Yellow Mellow Fish

With their gentle glides and soft hues, these aquatic beauties add a calming essence to any environment they grace. Their presence in a space, whether it's a home aquarium or a tranquil pond, brings a soft palette of yellows and peaceful vibes.

Colour: #A9A9A9

WCAG AA:	Fail
WCAG AAA:	Fail



### The Tranquil Aura of Yellow Mellow Fish

With their gentle glides and soft hues, these aquatic beauties add a calming essence to any environment they grace. Their presence in a space, whether it's a home aquarium or a tranquil pond, brings a soft palette of yellows and peaceful vibes.

Colour: #626262

WCAG AA:	Pass
WCAG AAA:	Pass

## 2. Avoid extra light font weights

Extra light fonts may look sleek and modern, but they can be hard to read, particularly on smaller screens or in less-than-ideal lighting conditions. The thin strokes of the letters can blend into the background or break apart, making the text harder to decipher. This poses a real problem for users who may already have difficulty reading text online, such as older adults or those with visual impairments.

So, while the aesthetic appeal is tempting, it's best to stick to regular or medium font weights for the bulk of your text to ensure that your content is easily readable for everyone.



### Reef corals are pretty fascinating

Reef corals are pretty fascinating. They're not just rocks or plants but are actually made up of tiny animals called coral polyps. These polyps work together with algae to create the beautiful and colorful structures we commonly think of as coral reefs.

Font-weight: Extra-light



### Reef corals are pretty fascinating

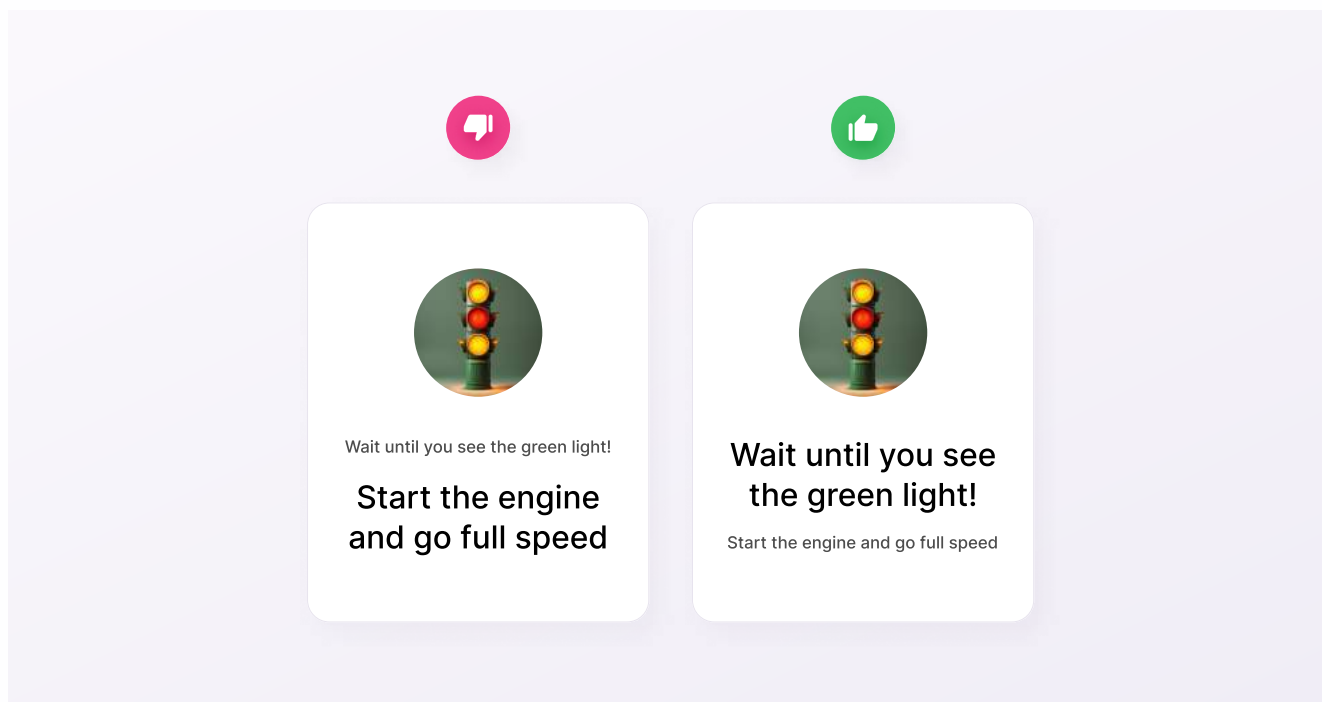
Reef corals are pretty fascinating. They're not just rocks or plants but are actually made up of tiny animals called coral polyps. These polyps work together with algae to create the beautiful and colorful structures we commonly think of as coral reefs.

Font-weight: Regular

## Use size to communicate importance

After learning the significance of font color and font weight for both aesthetics and establishing hierarchy in your UI designs, there remains one more key element to master—size. Size is perhaps the most direct way to establish hierarchy in your design. Bigger elements attract more attention, plain and simple.

Imagine you're in a car waiting at a red light. You see two messages: "Wait for the green light!" and "Go full speed now!"



If the "Wait for the green light!" message is way bigger, you'd probably wait for the green light like you should. Makes sense, right? But what if the "Go full speed now!" message is the big one? You might step on the gas too soon because the big text grabs your attention. And that could lead to something really bad, like a car crash.

This illustrates the importance of text size in your UI design. By making important text stand out, you can effectively guide people toward what they should focus on.

Now, let's have a look at another example:



## Timeless elegance watch edition

Introducing our new watch edition. This limited edition timepiece is more than just an accessory; it's a statement piece for those who value both functionality and aesthetics.

Get it today



### Timeless elegance watch edition

Introducing our new watch edition. This limited edition timepiece is more than just an accessory; it's a statement piece for those who value both functionality and aesthetics.

Get it today

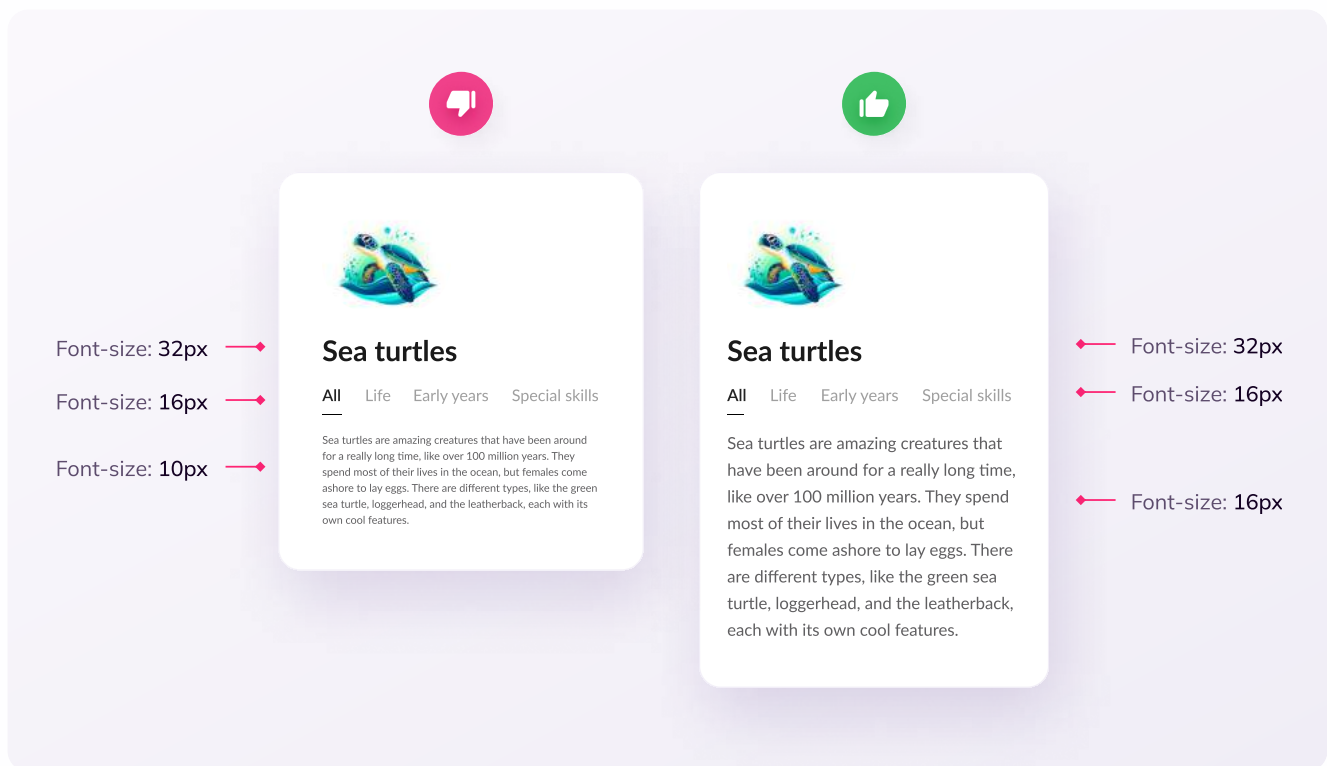


In the first design, the heading is much bigger than the text. Even with the same colors and fonts, this bigger heading is enough to create a clear visual hierarchy and contrast. It makes it easy to see what's important.

Now, in the second design, the title is the same size as the regular text. This makes it hard to tell what's important and what's not. It also doesn't grab your attention, so you might not want to read more.

## Use font sizes that are readable

It's not just about what looks good; it's about what's easy on the eyes. Your main goal here is readability.



The gold standard for main text is usually 16px. Why? Because it hits the sweet spot for most people, making your text clear and easy to read without squinting or zooming. However, this isn't a one-size-fits-all rule. Depending on the platform you're designing for or the specific font you're using, you might need to tweak this a bit.

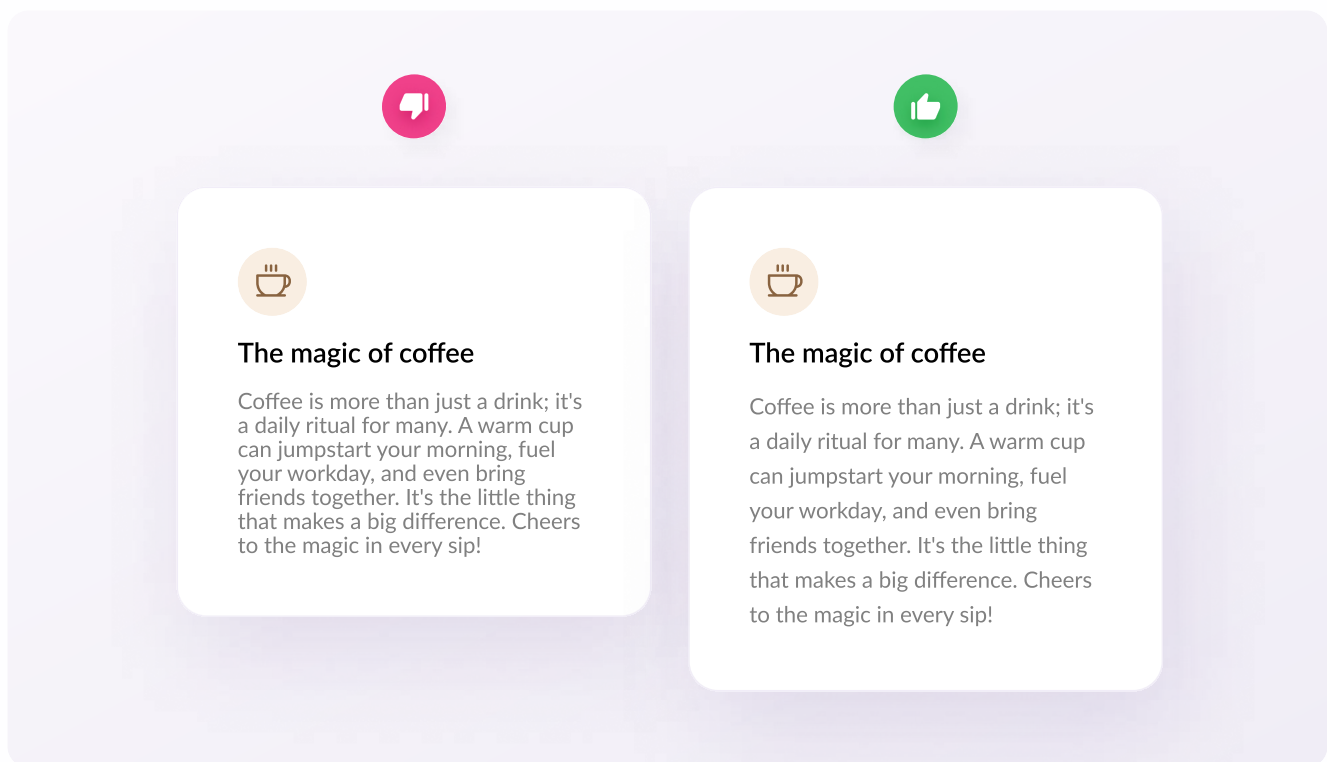
Anything below 12px for main text should be avoided. At that size, people might have a hard time figuring out the words. Small text can be a deal-breaker, causing users to bounce from your site or app. Plus, it can create accessibility issues for those with visual impairments.

While the ideal font size may vary, the principle remains the same. Your text needs to be legible. When in doubt, test it out—try your design on different devices and consult with others to ensure you're hitting the mark on readability.

## Bigger line-height is your secret weapon

Let's talk about another game-changer in UI typography: Bigger line height. This is your secret weapon to making your text not just look good, but super easy to read as well.

Let's have a closer look at the following designs. Both use the same font, same sizes, same colors. The only difference? Line height. A good line height can turn your text from "meh" to "wow" in an instant.



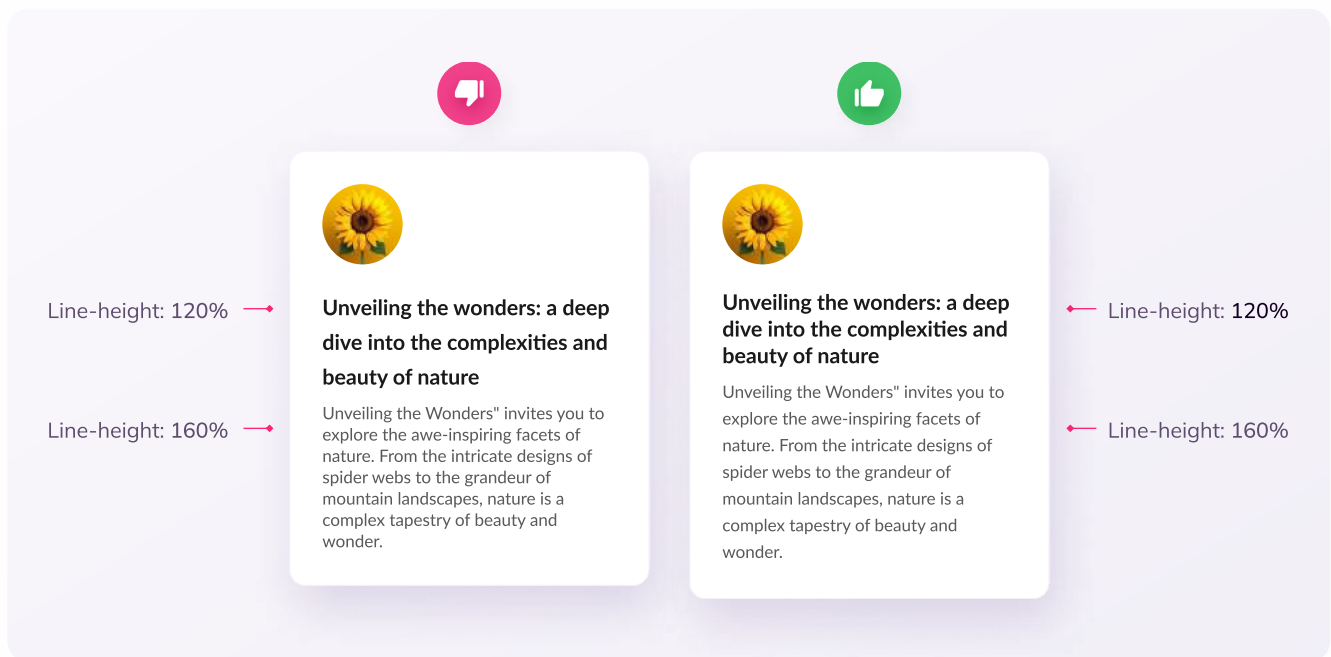
But finding the right balance is key. What's the ideal range? For standard text that's about 16px in size, aim for a line height between 1.5 to 1.6 times the text size—that's 150% to 160%. This gives you a comfortable read without making the text look either too squished or too stretched out.

If you go above 2 times the text size, your paragraphs might start to look like they're floating. And if you go below 1.2 times, your text could end up feeling cramped.

## Use smaller line height for headings and larger line height for paragraphs

Expanding on our earlier tip about line height, let's dive into a more advanced technique: tailoring line height based on the type of text. So what's the strategy? Use tighter line heights for headings and more generous ones for paragraphs.

For headings, a smaller line-height creates a compact, impactful look. It grabs attention and says, "This is important; pay attention here." In contrast, a larger line-height for your paragraphs allows the lines some space, making the text more inviting and easier to read. This draws the reader into your content, making it more engaging.

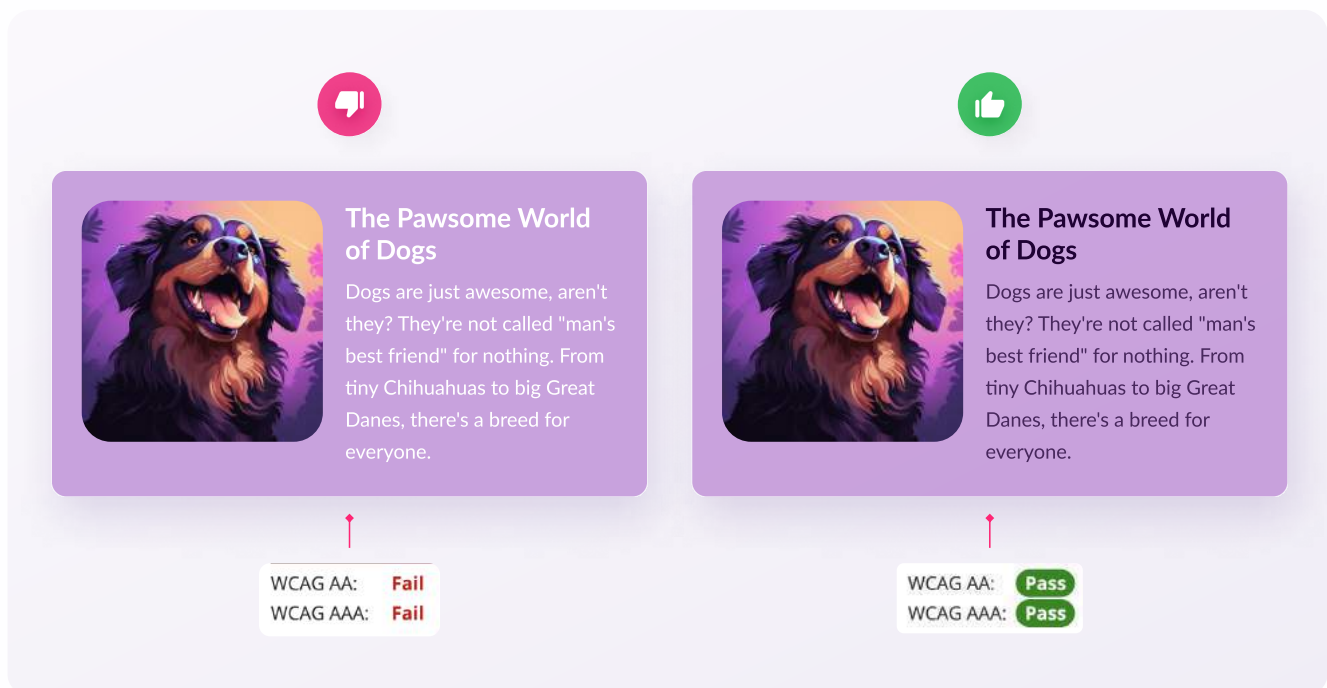


A good rule to consider: the bigger the text, the smaller the line height can be. On the other hand, the smaller the text is the bigger line height can be.

If you have a heading at 36px, you might want to go with a line height of around 1.3 times or 130 percent the text size. This will make your headings visually pleasing while still readable.

## Use good colour contrast between text and background

Many designers focus too much on making a design look trendy and forget about readability and accessibility. Using faint text colors on a similarly faint background might look stylish, but it's often hard to read. This is especially tough for people who have trouble seeing or are in places with bad lighting. Make sure you put readability first.

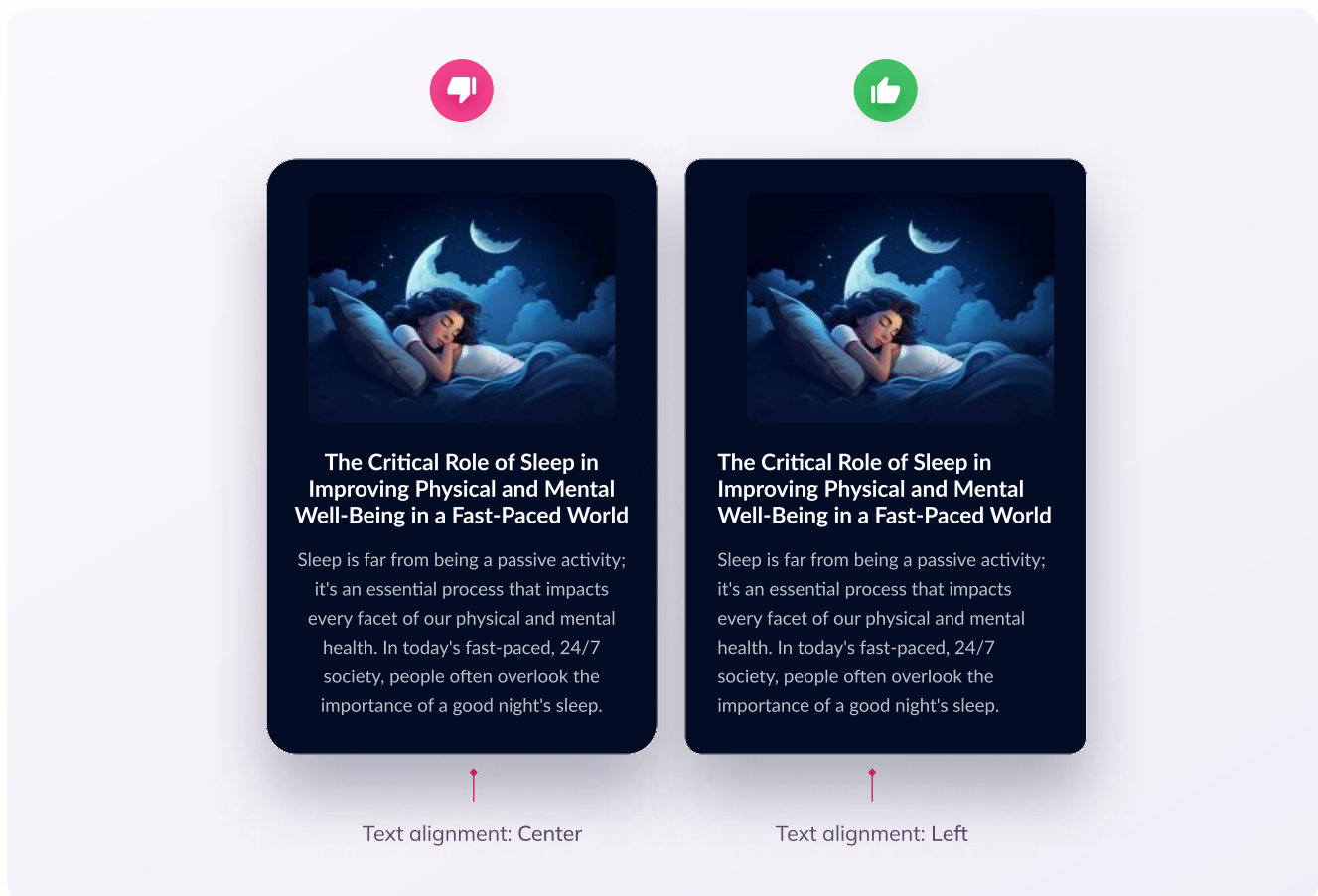


For most text, a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 is considered accessible.

If you're curious about how to choose colors with good contrast and accessibility, don't worry—there are tools to help you out. Websites like WebAIM provide great guides, and Colors.co is another good option. And if you're using Figma, the Contrast plugin by WillowTree can make checking contrast a breeze.

## Text alignment

When it comes to readability, especially for longer paragraphs, left-aligned text is generally your best bet. It creates a consistent starting point for each line, making it easier for readers to follow along. In Western cultures, where we read from left to right, left alignment aligns with our natural reading flow.





Now, you might be thinking, "What about center or right alignment?" These can work, but they're better suited for special cases. For instance, you might use center alignment for titles or short pieces of text where you really want to capture attention. But for most text elements—think paragraphs, lists, or long-form content—left alignment usually takes the cake in terms of readability.

Of course, there are times when center alignment or even right alignment can work well, like in decorative or artistic elements. The key is knowing when and where to use them effectively, without sacrificing ease of reading.

## Putting typography principles to the test

Below, you'll find two card designs: one is a shining example of typography done right, while the other could use some of the lessons we've discussed.

This is your chance to see the transformative power of good typography in action. Check out both cards and see if you can spot the differences. The correct card leverages everything from line height and contrast to font choice, proving that these seemingly small changes can have a massive impact.





Line height: 170%  
Font-size: 22px  
Font-weight: Medium  
Colour: #000000

Line height: 110%  
Font-size: 18px  
Font-weight: Regular  
Colour: #000000

Font-size: 22px  
Font-weight: Regular  
Colour: #FFFFFF

WCAG AA: Fail  
WCAG AAA: Fail



Line height: 120%  
Font-size: 28px  
Font-weight: Bold  
Colour: #1B000D










Line height: 160%  
Font-size: 18px  
Font-weight: Regular  
Colour: #5E5458

Font-size: 18px  
Font-weight: Semibold  
Colour: #141B12

WCAG AA: Pass  
WCAG AAA: Pass

Not only will you see the aesthetic improvement, but also notice how these elements come together to make the text more readable and engaging. It's a practical reminder that applying solid typography principles can elevate your design from good to great!

## Things to avoid

-  Using pure black (#000000) or pure white (#FFFFFF) for both headings and paragraphs
-  Using the same color for headings and paragraphs
-  Using the same weight for headings and paragraphs
-  Using a bigger line-height for headings than for paragraphs
-  Using bad contrast solely for an aesthetic look
-  Using font sizes smaller than 10px, though this can depend on the platform
-  Using extra thin font weights like Inter Extra Light or Inter Thin
-  Using more than two different fonts
-  Using fonts that compromise either aesthetics or readability

## Things to do



Using darker colors for headings and lighter colors for paragraphs to help differentiate between types of content and guide the user's eye



Using thicker font weights for headings, such as bold, semibold, or medium, and thinner font weights like regular or sometimes light for paragraphs to clearly distinguish hierarchical elements.



Using smaller line-height for headings and larger line-height for paragraphs to create a balanced visual flow and make the text easier to scan



Using good color contrast between text and background to ensure that your design meets at least Level AA accessibility standards according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)



Using font sizes that are readable for the user. The gold standard for the main copy is 16px, but this may depend on the platform you are designing for and the specific font you are using.



Using Sans serif typefaces for body copy to enhance readability. While fonts can be used to define your brand, Sans serif typefaces like Open Sans, Inter, and Roboto are generally more readable than Serif typefaces such as Times New Roman or Georgia



Using no more than two different fonts. The best practice is to stick to one font with different weights and sizes. However, if you have more experience, you can effectively combine two different fonts, for example, using Playfair Display for headings and Roboto for paragraphs.



Using left-aligned text as it is generally the easiest to read. Reserve center or right alignment for special cases only.



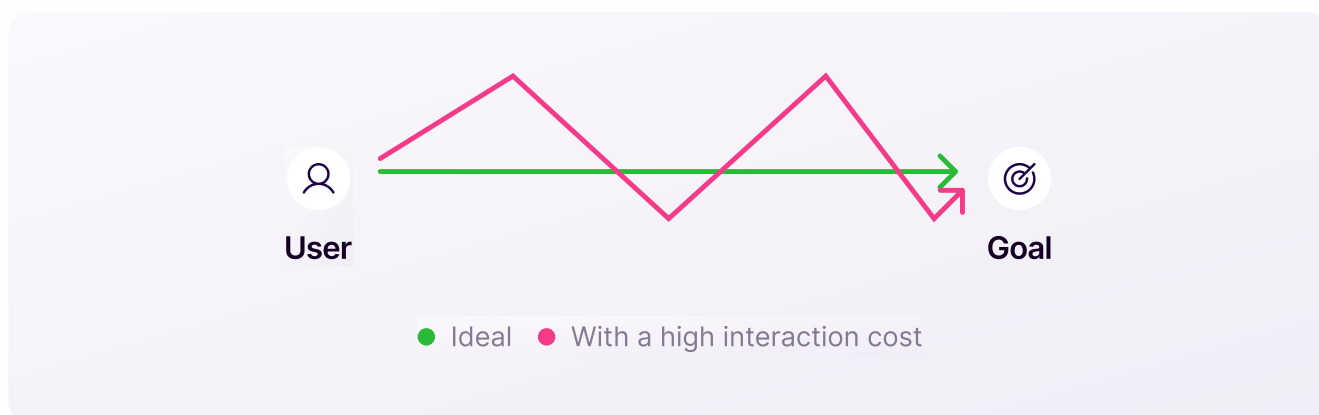
Ensuring that longer text blocks have adequate space between paragraphs to make them more visually appealing and easier to read.

# Interaction cost

Interaction cost is the amount of mental, physical and time effort a user must invest to interact with a user interface (UI) in order to achieve their intended goal. The goal of a well-designed site or app is to reduce the interaction cost.

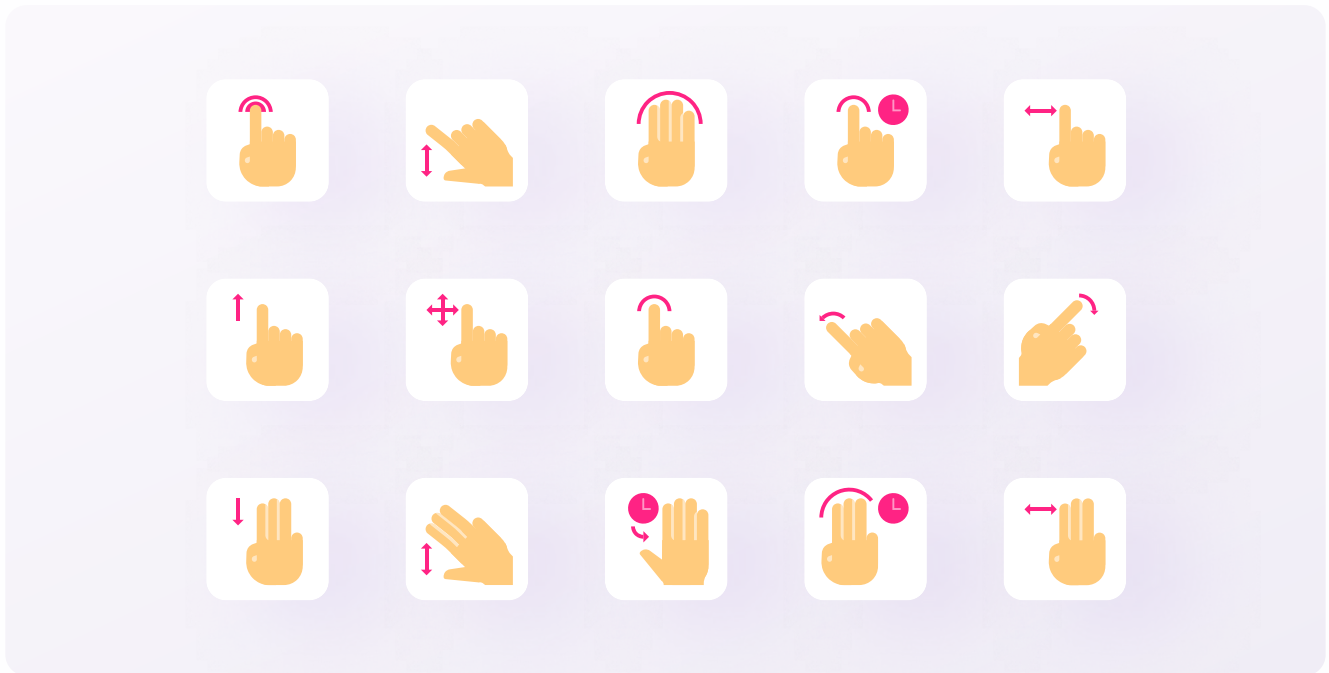
This “cost” can be categorized into three components:

1. **Cognitive effort:** This pertains to the mental processing power required to navigate a UI. A complex or unintuitive UI leads to a high cognitive load and, consequently, a high interaction cost. Conversely, a simple and intuitive UI reduces cognitive load and interaction cost.
2. **Physical effort:** This involves the physical exertion a user must undertake to interact with the UI, such as the number of clicks or keystrokes required to complete a task, the amount of scrolling involved, and so on.
3. **Time effort:** This refers to the duration it takes for a user to achieve their goal while interacting with a UI. Slow loading times, complex navigation, task complexity, lack of instructions or other factors can increase the interaction cost.



In an ideal world, users would find what they’re looking for immediately upon visiting a site or app, implying zero interaction cost. This is considered the ultimate goal in usability. However, due to the range of functionalities most sites and apps offer, achieving zero interaction cost is often unfeasible.

This could involve minimizing the amount of: reading, scrolling, searching for useful information, understanding the presented information, clicking or touching (without errors), typing, waiting for pages to load, and remembering information to complete a task.



## Effective strategies to minimise interaction cost

### 1. Keep related actions close

According to Fitts's Law, targets that are closer and larger are faster to click. Therefore, actions should be positioned near the elements they relate to and have a sufficient clickable area.

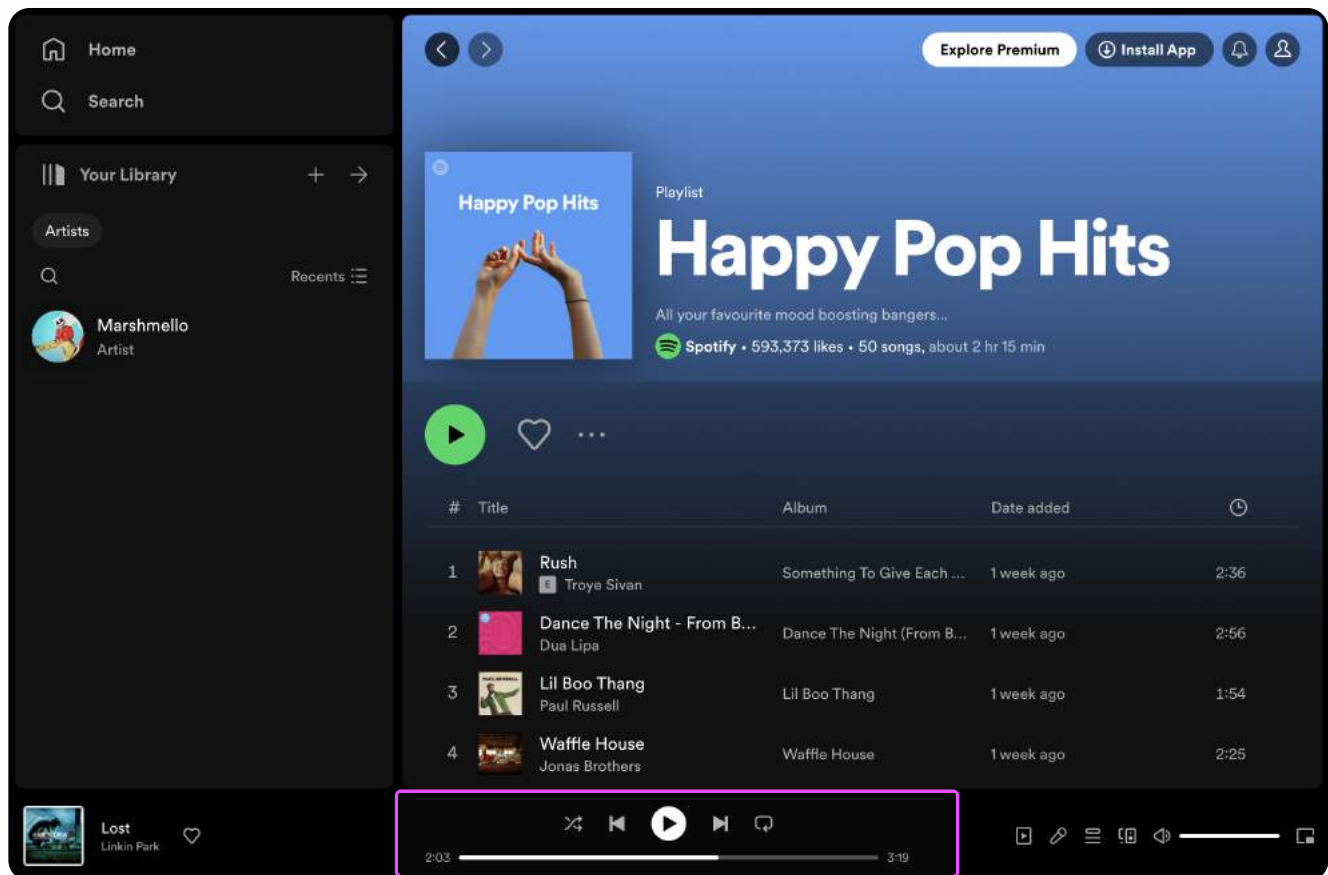
Real-life example: In a music streaming app like Spotify, the playback controls (play, pause, skip) are typically positioned at the bottom of the screen or in a fixed position, allowing users to easily control their music playback without having to navigate to a separate screen or menu.

# Effective strategies to minimise interaction cost

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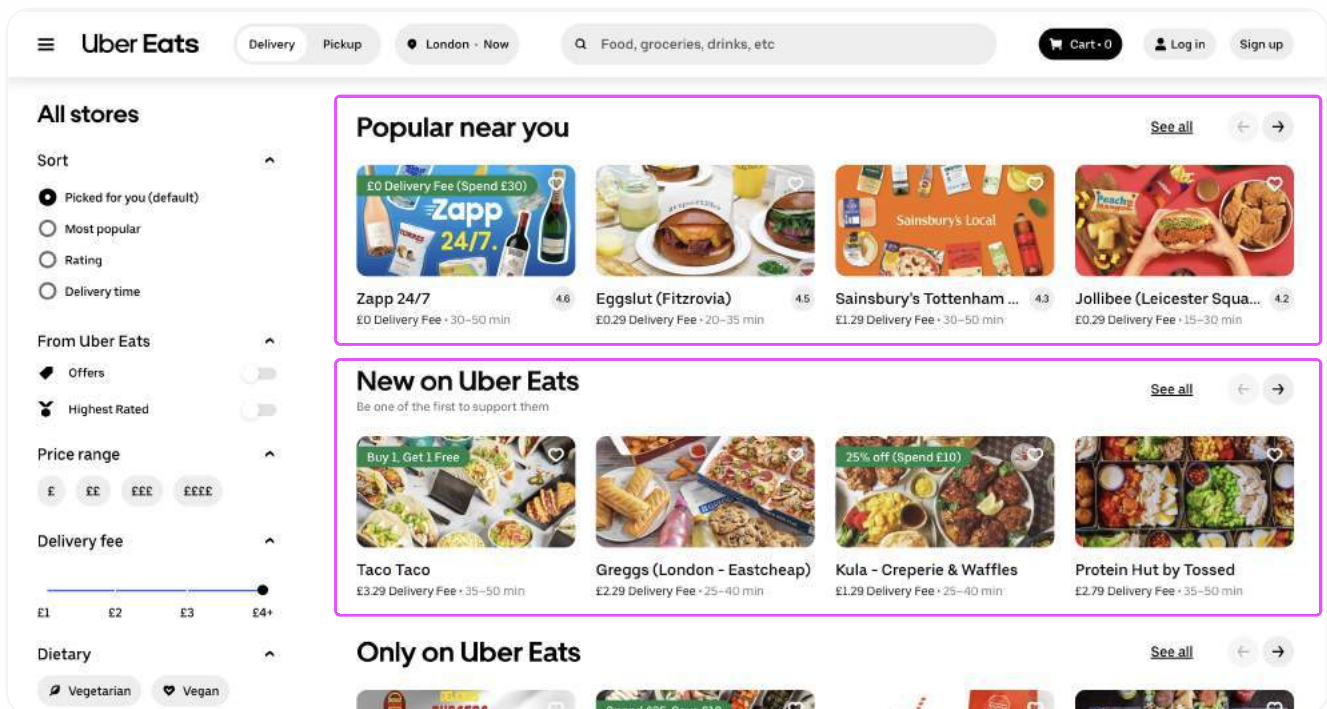
Real-life example: In a music streaming app like Spotify, the playback controls (play, pause, skip) are typically positioned at the bottom of the screen or in a fixed position, allowing users to easily control their music playback without having to navigate to a separate screen or menu.



## 2. Minimize choice

According to Fitts's Law, targets that are closer and larger are faster to click. Therefore, actions should be positioned near the elements they relate to and have a sufficient clickable area.

Real-life example: In a music streaming app like Spotify, the playback controls (play, pause, skip) are typically positioned at the bottom of the screen or in a fixed position, allowing users to easily control their music playback without having to navigate to a separate screen or menu.



## 3. Make better use of working memory

Cognitive psychologist George Miller theorized that a person can hold approximately seven items (give or take a couple) in their working memory. Organizing information into meaningful, manageable chunks can make memory usage more efficient.

Airbnb effectively applies this principle on their property listing pages. Instead of overwhelming users with a wall of text about the rental, they break the information into manageable chunks, with clear headings such as “Amenities”.

## Perfect Beachfront House

2 reviews · Nassau, New Providence, Bahamas

[Share](#) [Save](#)



### Entire home hosted by

10 guests · 4 bedrooms · 5 beds · 4 bathrooms



#### Dedicated workspace

A room with wifi that's well suited for working.



#### Unwind in the hot tub

This is one of the few places in the area with this amenity.

Daily housekeeping, generator and high speed internet.

Perfect vacation house located on one of the most beautiful beaches Nassau has to offer, with turquoise water and a white sandy beach. Enjoy and relax with your friends and family in the comfort of this modern beach house located in a small, private gated community. The property, amenities and complimentary daily housekeeping and on cal...

[Show more](#) >

### What this place offers



Beach access



Wifi



Free parking on premises



TV



Carbon monoxide alarm



Kitchen



Dedicated workspace



Private hot tub



Security cameras on property



Smoke alarm

[Show all 21 amenities](#)

£1,597 night

[2 reviews](#)

CHECK-IN	CHECKOUT
10/09/2023	17/09/2023
GUESTS	
1 guest	▼

[Reserve](#)

You won't be charged yet

£1,597 x 7 nights	£11,178
Cleaning fee	£140
Airbnb service fee	£1,918

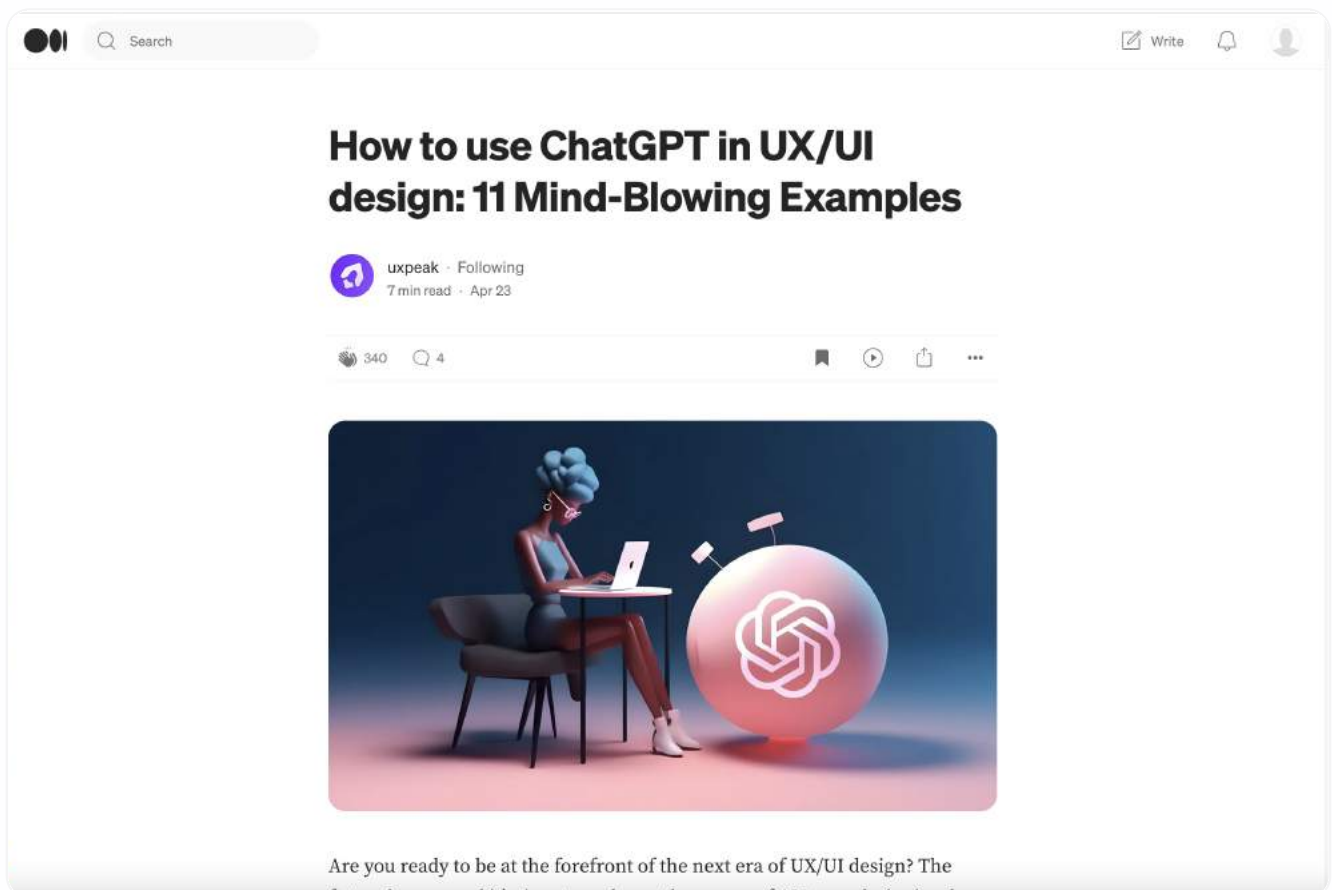
Total £13,236

[Report this listing](#)

## 4. Reduce distractions

Attention-diverting elements like animated banners, pop-ups, and unnecessary visuals can distract users from completing their tasks.

Real-life example: The Medium platform is a great example of minimizing distractions to improve user focus. When reading an article on Medium, users are presented with a clean, minimalistic interface that primarily contains only the text and essential navigational elements. Extraneous features, such as pop-ups and ads, are avoided to maintain the reader's concentration on the content, thus effectively reducing the interaction cost.

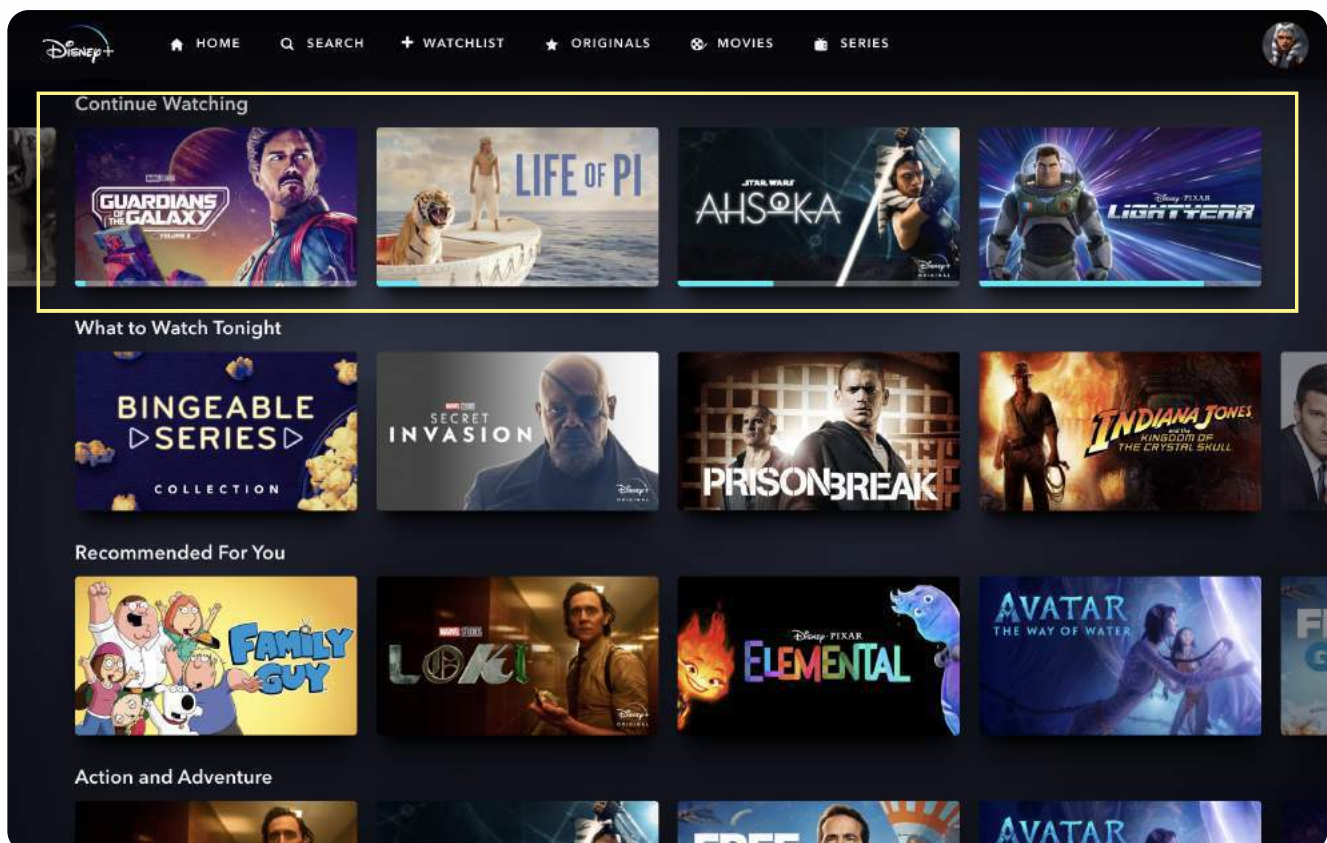


## 5. Promote recognition over recall

Promoting recognition means designing interfaces in such a way that users can quickly recognize and understand the actions they can take, rather than having to recall information from memory. This often involves using common symbols, icons, or phrases, and a logical layout to make the interface intuitive.

Real-life example: Disney+ employs a "Continue Watching" feature that remembers where viewers left off in their favorite shows or movies. This seemingly simple feature plays a crucial role in minimizing interaction costs.

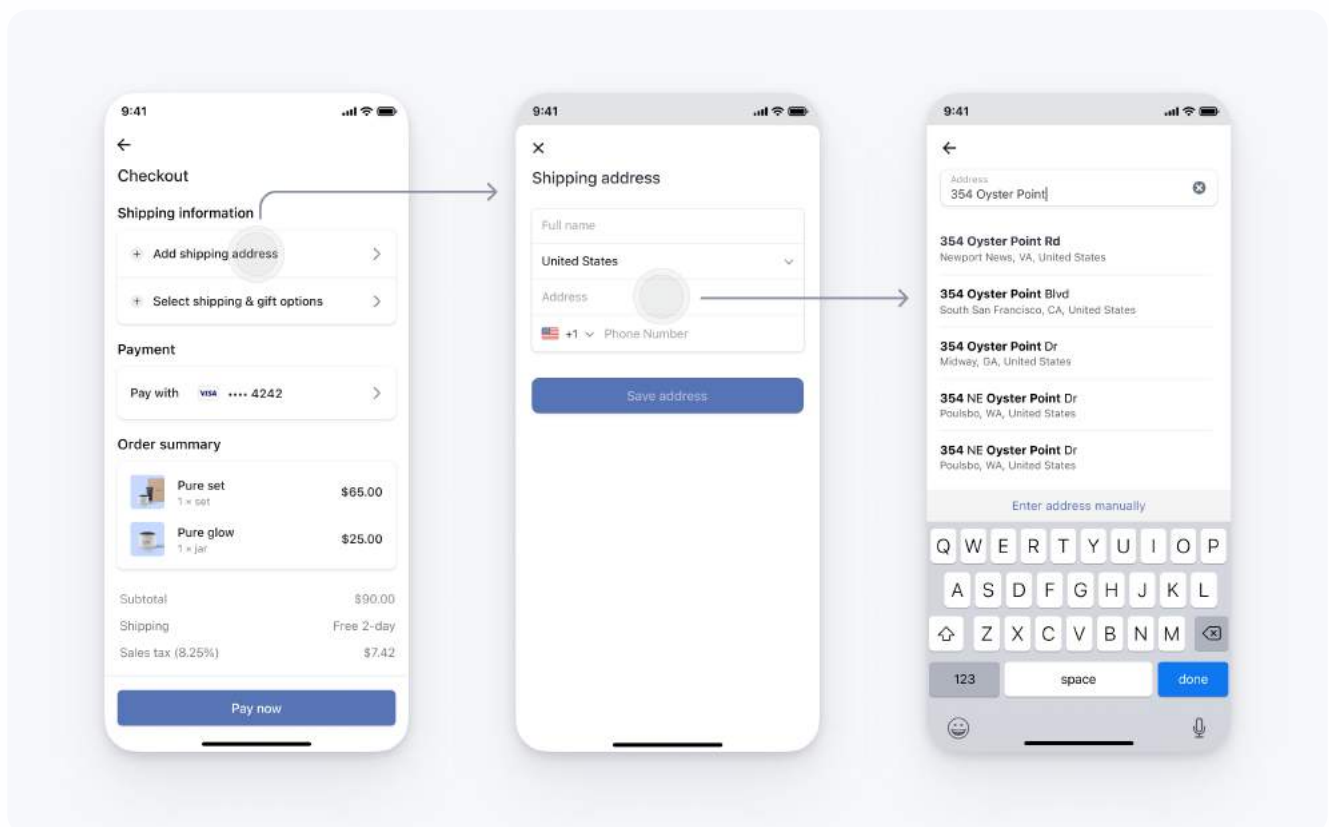
Imagine you're enjoying a series on Disney+, and life interrupts your viewing. With "Continue Watching," you can seamlessly pick up where you left off, eliminating the need to remember the episode or timestamp. This recognition of your viewing progress reduces frustration, saves time, and enhances your overall streaming experience.



## 6. Streamline tasks

Visualizing the total number of tasks involved in a process can identify opportunities to simplify and streamline operations. Steps that can be removed or combined without affecting the outcome should be considered. This reduction can lower the physical interaction cost and make the product more efficient.

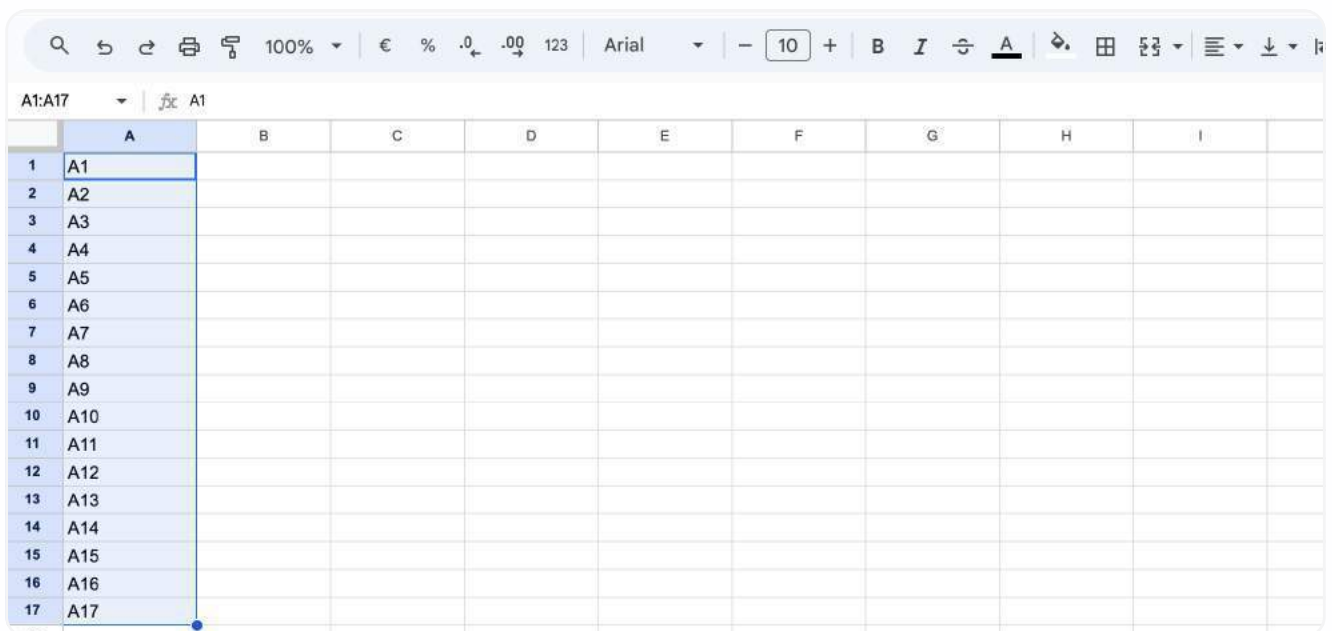
Real-life example: many online forms now auto-fill address or credit card details if they've been entered before, thereby reducing the number of steps involved in the process, enhancing efficiency, and lowering the physical interaction cost.



## 7. Reduce repetition

If certain tasks are repetitive, consider automating them or making them easier to perform, thereby decreasing both the physical and cognitive interaction costs.

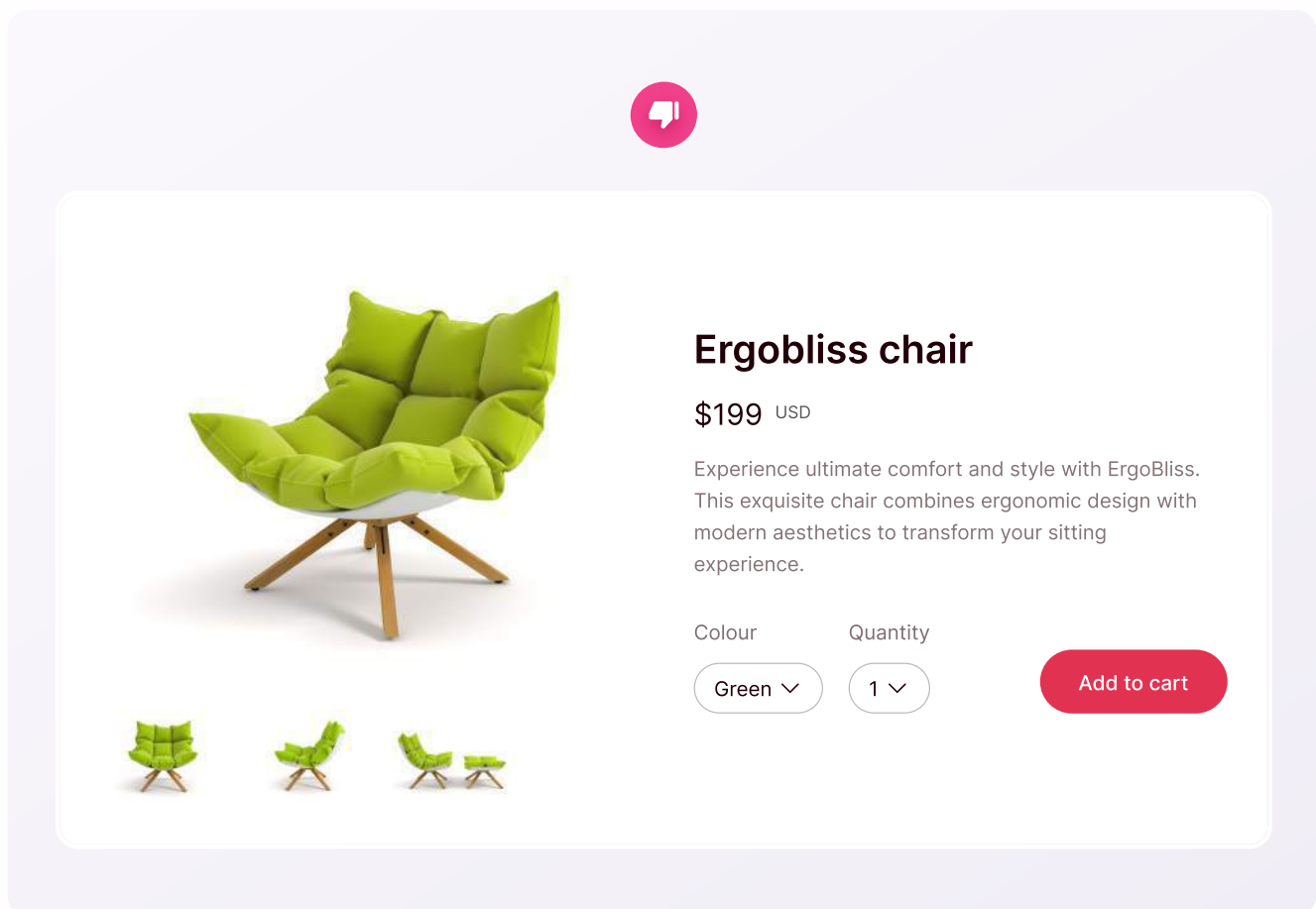
Real-life example: Spreadsheet software like Excel or Google Sheets, for instance, has features that allow a function or formula to be applied to multiple cells simultaneously, reducing the need to perform repetitive tasks.



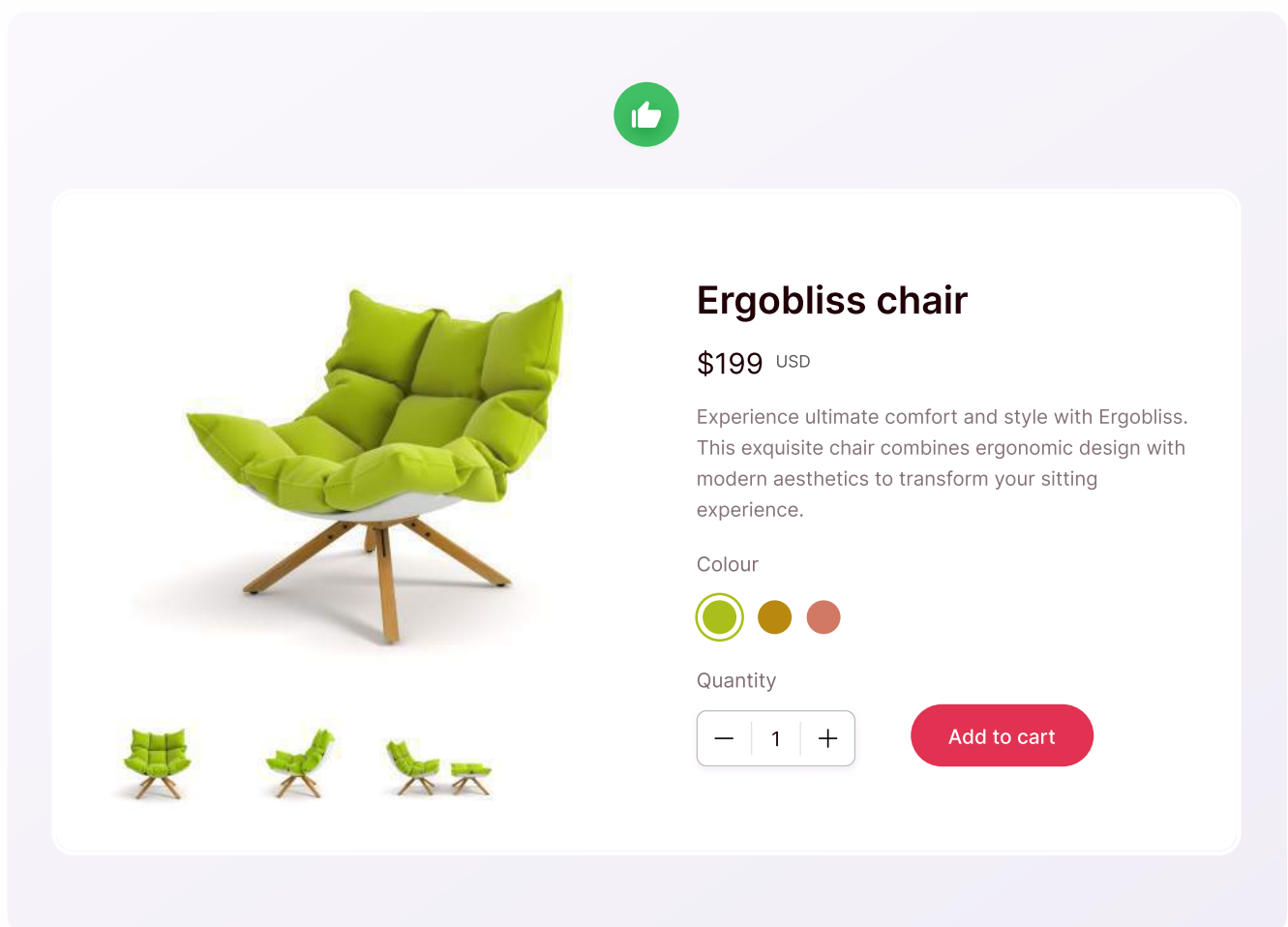
## Find ways to minimise interaction cost

Think about a user on a product page who wants to add two chairs to his cart, but isn't sure about the color. He needs to select a color from a dropdown menu, which takes two clicks and a scroll. However, he doesn't know what color options are available. When choices are hidden in dropdowns or nested menus, users might not know they exist. This can make it hard to find what they want and might lead to missed opportunities or frustration.

To select the quantity, the user has to do two more clicks and a scroll. After that, he needs to move his mouse to the "Add to cart" button and click on it. In this case, adding two red chairs to his cart costs five clicks, one scroll, and a short mouse movement.



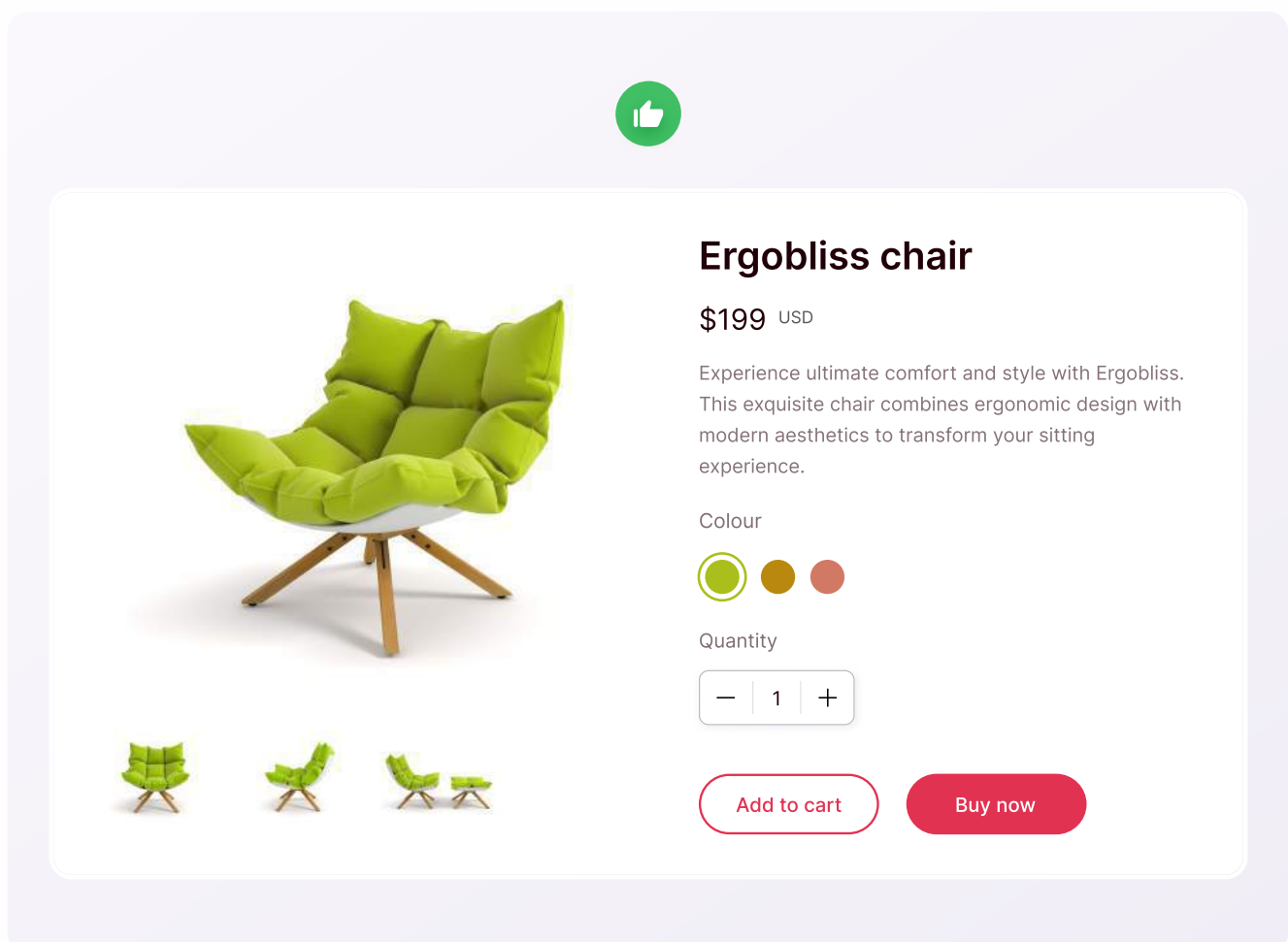
In the improved example, we apply the Principle of visibility to the color options. This gives the user a clear view of his choices right away, reducing the mental effort and the number of clicks needed. To change the color, the user only needs to move his mouse a short distance and click once. By showing all colors upfront, the user can try different colors before making a final choice, which further reduces the interaction cost. We also leverage the principle of visual differentiation and replace text with actual color samples to show the available color options. Using color this way is a powerful visual cue that users can understand quickly.



For the quantity, we use a selector that lets the user easily pick two chairs. Users can click on a plus sign or enter the number directly. This tool makes it faster and easier to make small changes. Lastly, we move the “Add to cart” button closer to the quantity selector to further reduce the interaction cost.

Let's further explore how to minimize the interaction cost. Traditionally, online shopping demands several steps: adding items to a cart, checking out, inputting shipping and payment details, and finally confirming the purchase. This process can be time-consuming and requiring numerous interactions.

One-Click Ordering, however, simplifies the whole process. It allows users to complete a purchase with just one click, bypassing the typical checkout routine. This feature relies on previously stored user data, like shipping and payment information, to expedite the purchase process.

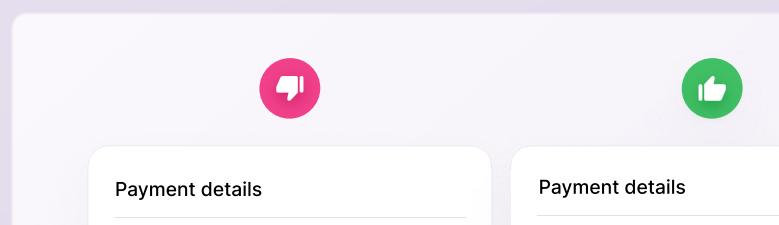
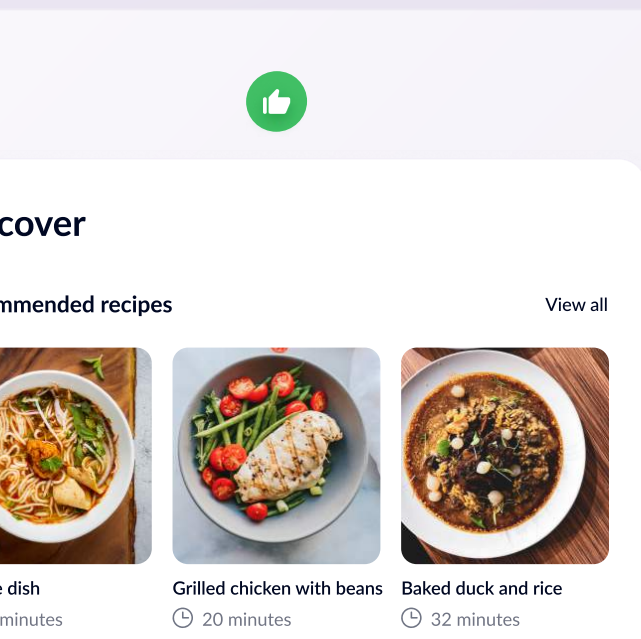
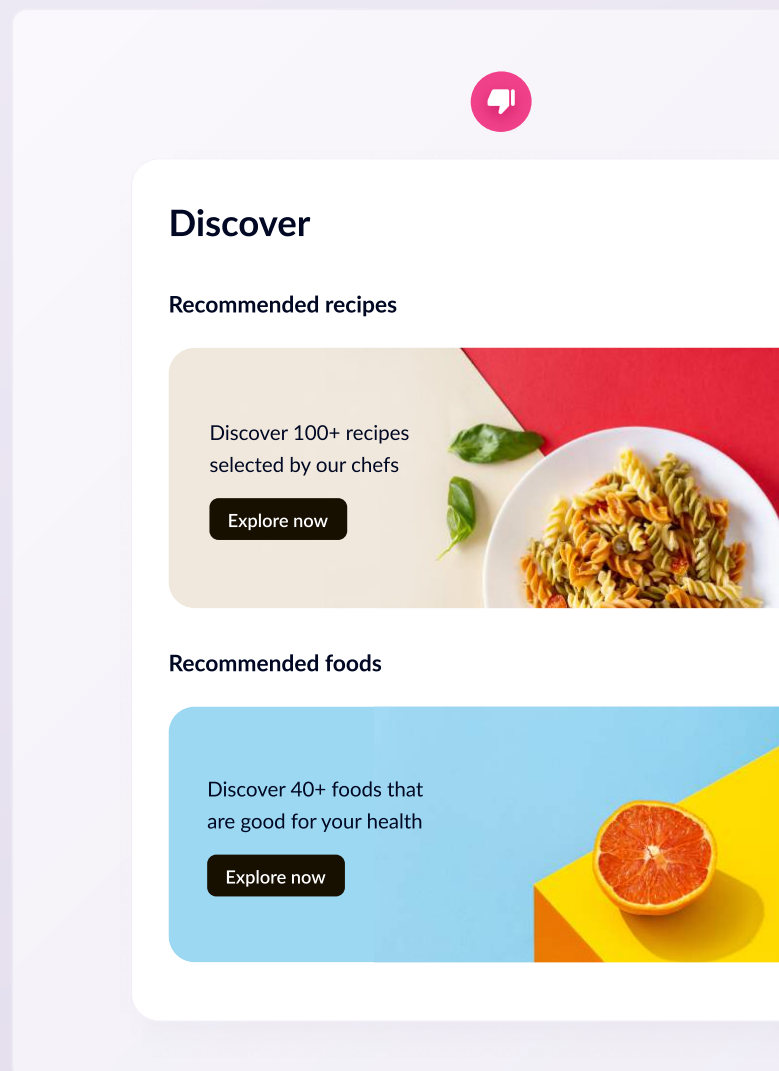
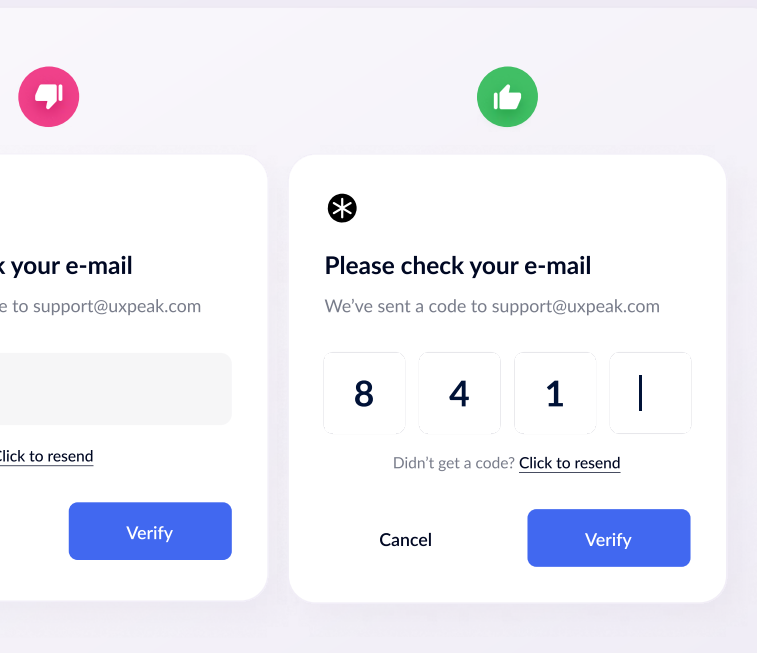


In our design, we introduce a primary 'Buy Now' button. The choice between highlighting 'Buy Now' or 'Add to Cart' as the primary button largely depends on your business model and the particular objectives of your user interface. This addition enables users to place an order in just one click, drastically decreasing the cognitive, physical, and time effort required.

# Bonus tips

Now that you've mastered the essential UI design principles, it's time to elevate your design skills even further!

We've prepared an exclusive chapter packed with bonus tips to help you refine your designs and make them stand out from the competition. These additional insights will build on what you've learned and provide you with even more tools to create visually stunning and user-friendly interfaces



# Reduce user barriers by exposing content directly

You're scrolling through a new app, and the first thing you see is a big banner saying, "Discover 100+ recipes selected by our chefs." It sounds exciting, but it's also an extra step. You have to tap on it to see the actual recipes. That's the interaction principle in action, which we defined as the cognitive, physical and time effort a user has to exert to reach their goal.



## Discover

### Recommended recipes

Discover 100+ recipes  
selected by our chefs

Explore now



### Recommended foods

Discover 40+ foods that  
are good for your health

Explore now



## Why it's important

In today's fast-paced world, users are looking for immediate value. By hiding content behind banners, you're creating an unnecessary barrier between the user and the value your app provides. This interaction cost may seem trivial, but it can add up, especially when the user is new to the app and unsure about investing time and effort.



### Discover

#### Recommended recipes

[View all](#)

Noodle dish

🕒 20 minutes



Grilled chicken with beans

🕒 20 minutes



Baked duck and rice

🕒 32 minutes

#### Recommended foods

[View all](#)

Tomatoes



Pistachio



Broccoli

Instead, imagine opening the same app and immediately seeing a curated list of "Top 10 easy recommended recipes." No tapping needed, the content is right there!

### **This does a couple of things:**

#### **Quick value**

The user instantly sees the value your app provides, making them more likely to engage further.

#### **Reduced friction**

The fewer steps a user has to take to reach their goal, the better the user experience. That means increased user retention and more interaction within your app.

#### **Relevancy**

When you expose content directly, you have the opportunity to showcase the most relevant or popular items, making it more likely that the user will find something that interests them right away.

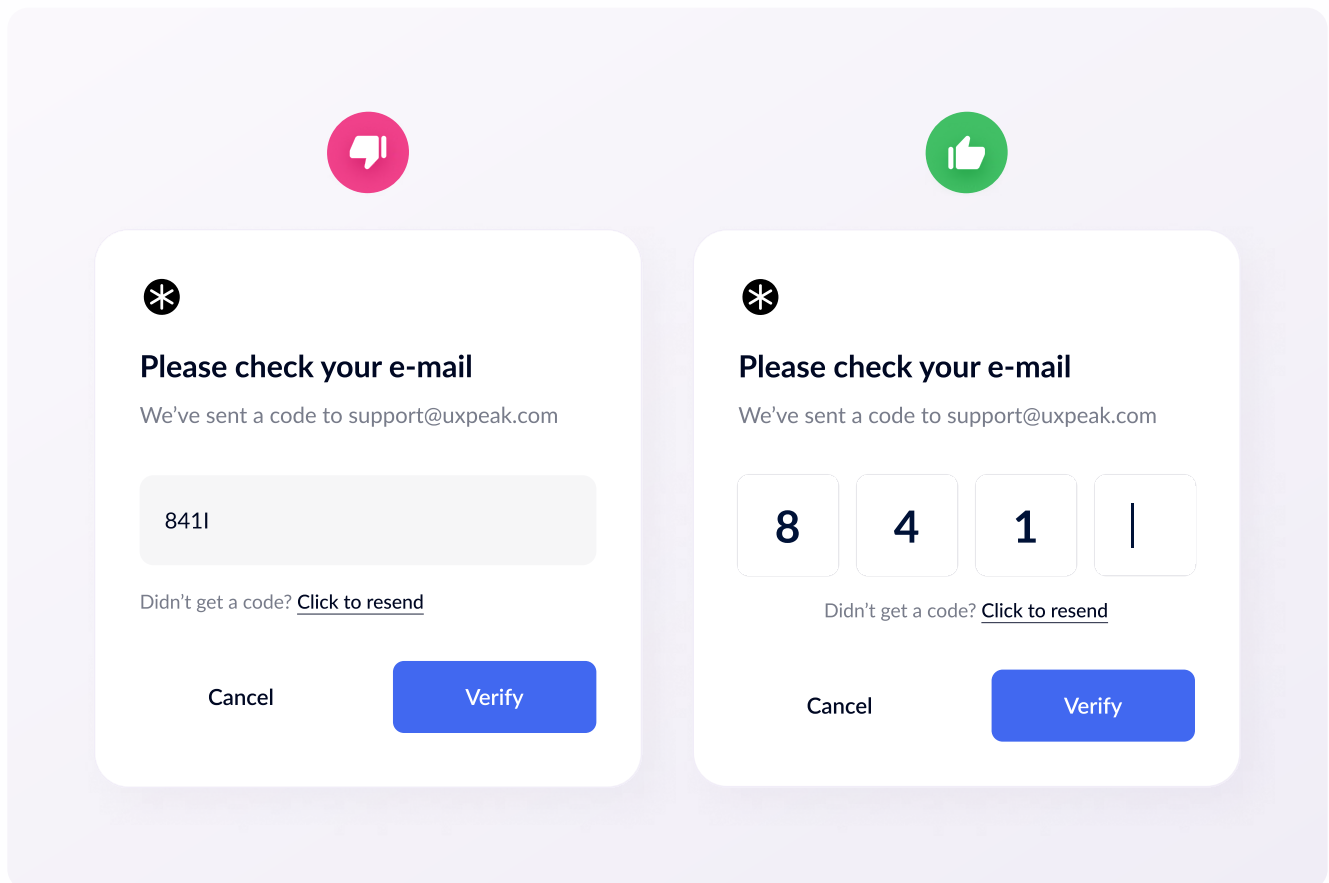
# Design fields for the type of input

When designing input fields in a UI, it's tempting to use a one-size-fits-all approach.

However, this practice is a disservice to the user experience. The key is to design fields that align closely with the type of information you're asking the user to input.

Doing so not only streamlines the interaction but also eliminates unnecessary cognitive load, making for a smoother, more efficient user experience.

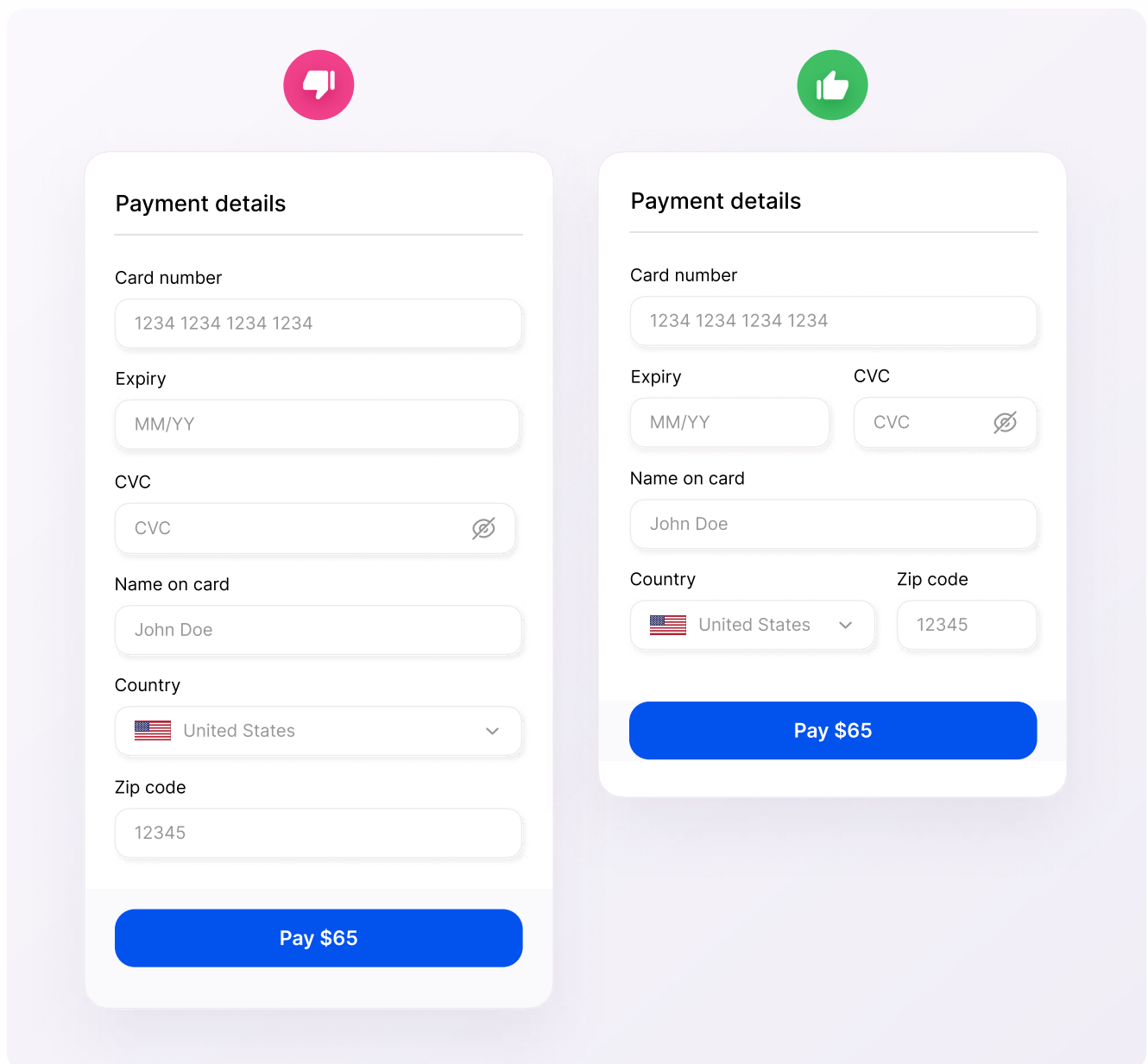
Let's start by comparing two designs for entering a verification code.



The first example features four separate, big boxes with enlarged typography specifically for the code. In contrast, the second uses a single long field with standard text.

The advantage of the first approach is evident: it minimizes the chance of error by providing a clearly designated space for each digit of the code. This simplifies the input process, making it quicker and less prone to mistakes. The enlarged typography further assists by making the digits easy to distinguish, especially beneficial for users who may struggle with smaller text sizes.

Now, let's discuss another scenario, entering card information.



The image compares two payment detail forms. The left form, marked with a thumbs-down icon, features large, separate input boxes for each field: Card number (1234 1234 1234 1234), Expiry (MM/YY), CVC (CVC), Name on card (John Doe), Country (United States), and Zip code (12345). The right form, marked with a thumbs-up icon, uses smaller, more compact input boxes for the same fields, including a dropdown for Country and a separate field for Zip code. Both forms include a 'Pay \$65' button at the bottom.

**Payment details**

Card number

1234 1234 1234 1234

Expiry

MM/YY

CVC

CVC

Name on card

John Doe

Country

United States

Zip code

12345

Pay \$65

**Payment details**

Card number

1234 1234 1234 1234

Expiry

MM/YY

CVC

CVC

Name on card

John Doe

Country

United States

Zip code

12345

Pay \$65

The first example has one long field for each piece of information, including CVC, expiry date, and ZIP code. The latter design is more effective because it matches the length of the field to the type and amount of data being entered.

A CVC is always a 3 or 4-digit number, so a shorter field is more appropriate and guides the user effectively. The same logic applies for the expiry date and zip code. These concise fields eliminate ambiguity, make efficient use of space, and ultimately lead to a more streamlined and user-friendly experience.

In both examples, the 'better' design makes the user's job easier by aligning the input field's design with the expected data. The form doesn't just capture information; it aids in the accurate and efficient entry of that information, which is a win-win for both users and designers.

# Don't use confirm password field

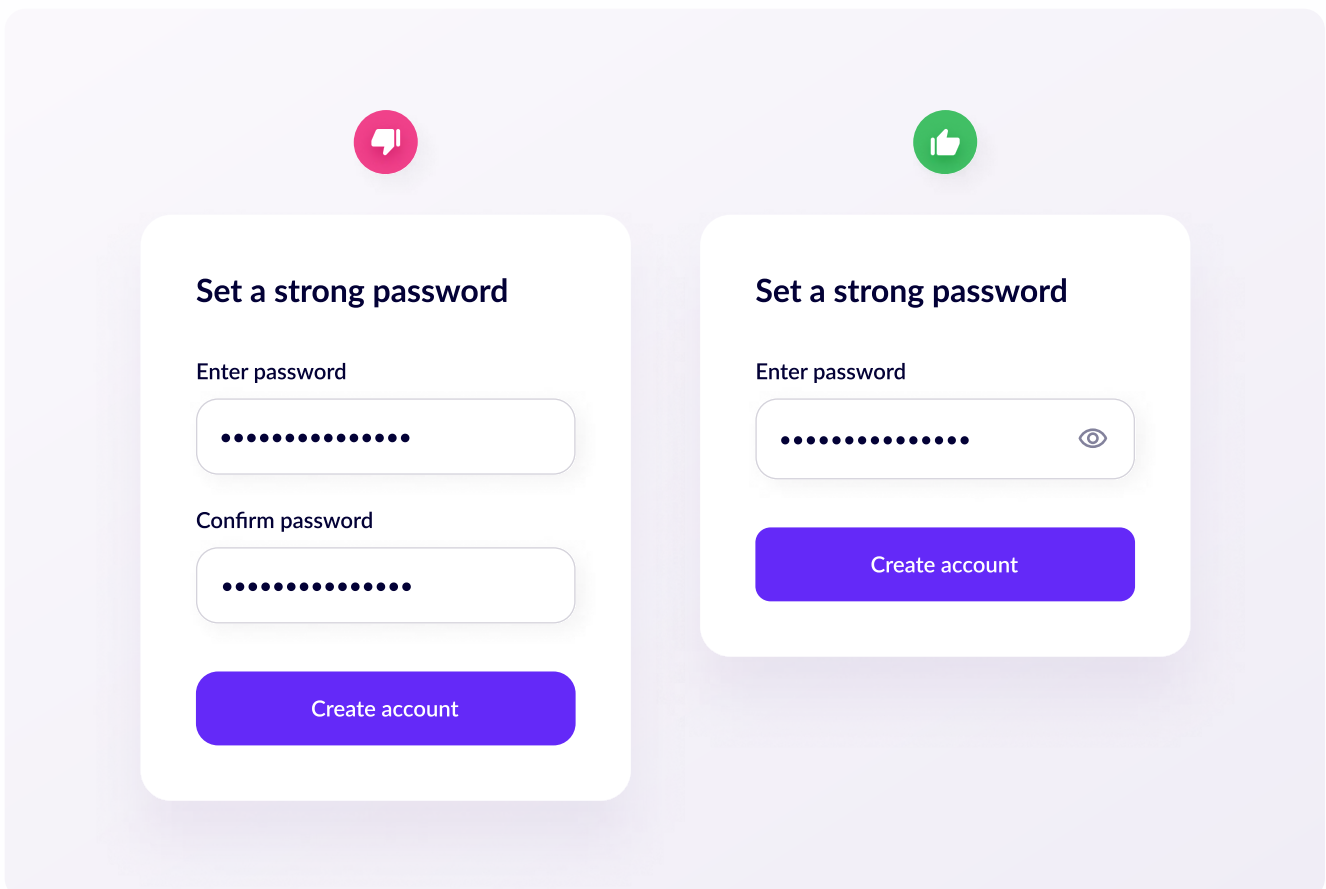
A commonly encountered yet outdated practice in UI design is the use of "Confirm Password" fields. While it might seem like a good idea to ensure that users correctly input their desired password, this actually has several downsides that negatively impact user experience.

## Increased interaction cost


Every additional field you ask a user to complete increases the 'interaction cost' of the user experience. In simpler terms, it's another thing users have to do to achieve their goal. The more steps, the less user-friendly your design becomes.

## Error-prone

If users make a mistake in confirming their password, they often have to start the entire process over again. Not only is this frustrating, but it also adds unnecessary time to a task that should be straightforward.



The image displays two side-by-side password creation forms on a light purple background. The left form is marked with a red thumbs-down icon and contains two password input fields: 'Enter password' and 'Confirm password', both with masked characters. The right form is marked with a green thumbs-up icon and contains only one password input field with a toggle eye icon, followed by a 'Create account' button. Both forms have a 'Create account' button at the bottom.




### Set a strong password

Enter password

Confirm password

Create account



### Set a strong password

Enter password

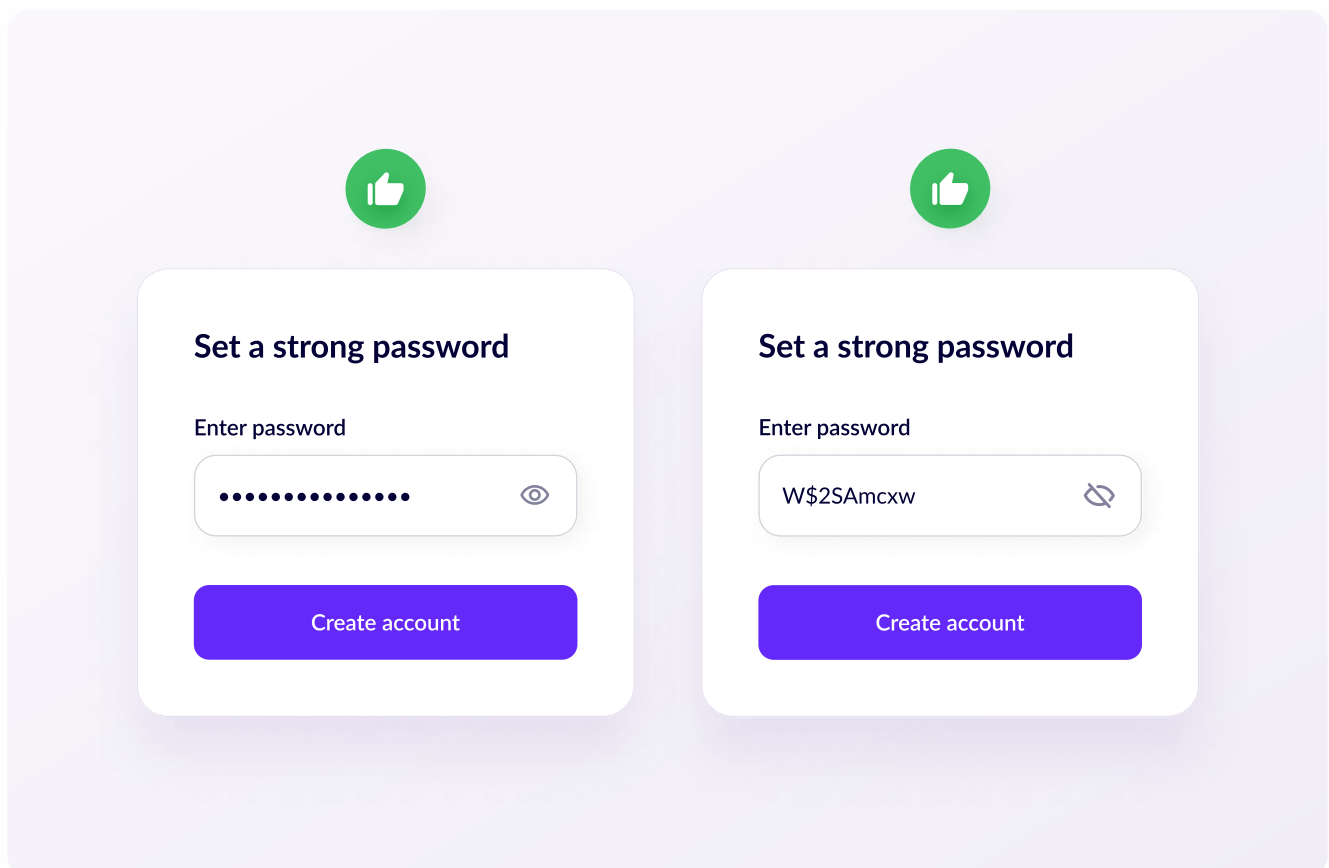
Create account

### False sense of security

Ironically, this extra field can also give businesses a false sense of security. A user could mistype their password the same way twice, thus defeating the purpose of the confirmation step.

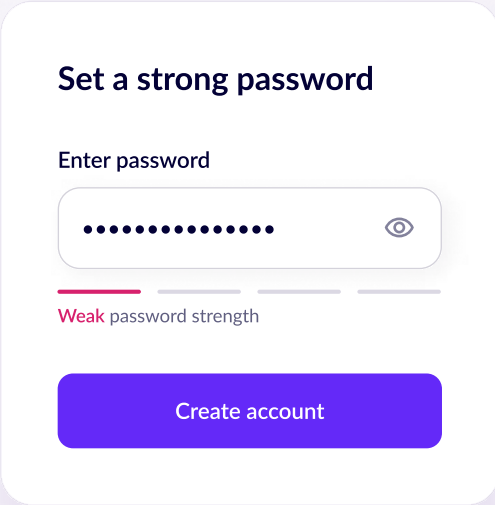
## Use show/hide password toggle instead

A show/hide toggle button for the password field allows users to check their input without needing a second field. This maintains security while providing the user with control over their visibility preferences. It's an excellent way to enhance user experience with password fields.



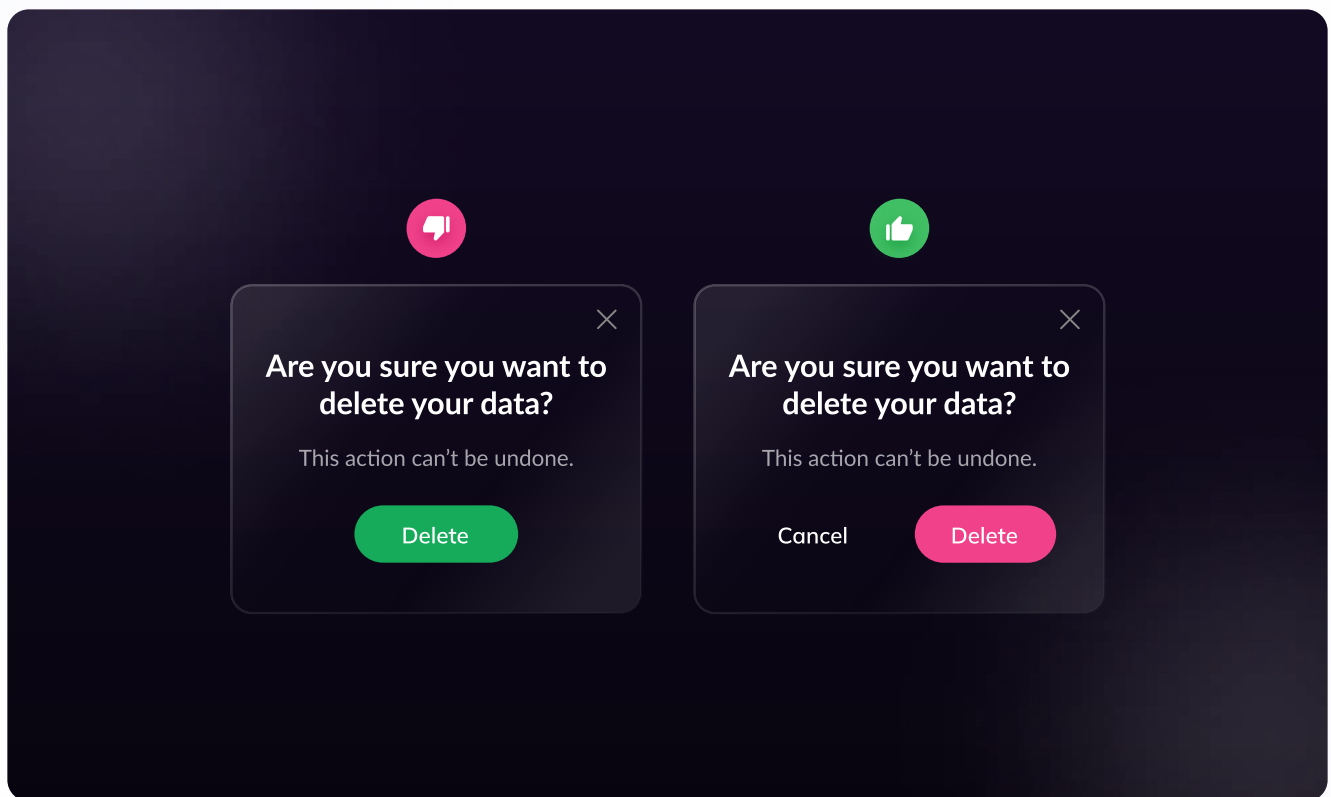
# Use inline password validation

A show/hide toggle button for the password field allows users to check their input without needing a second field. This maintains security while providing the user with control over their visibility preferences. It's an excellent way to enhance user experience with password fields.



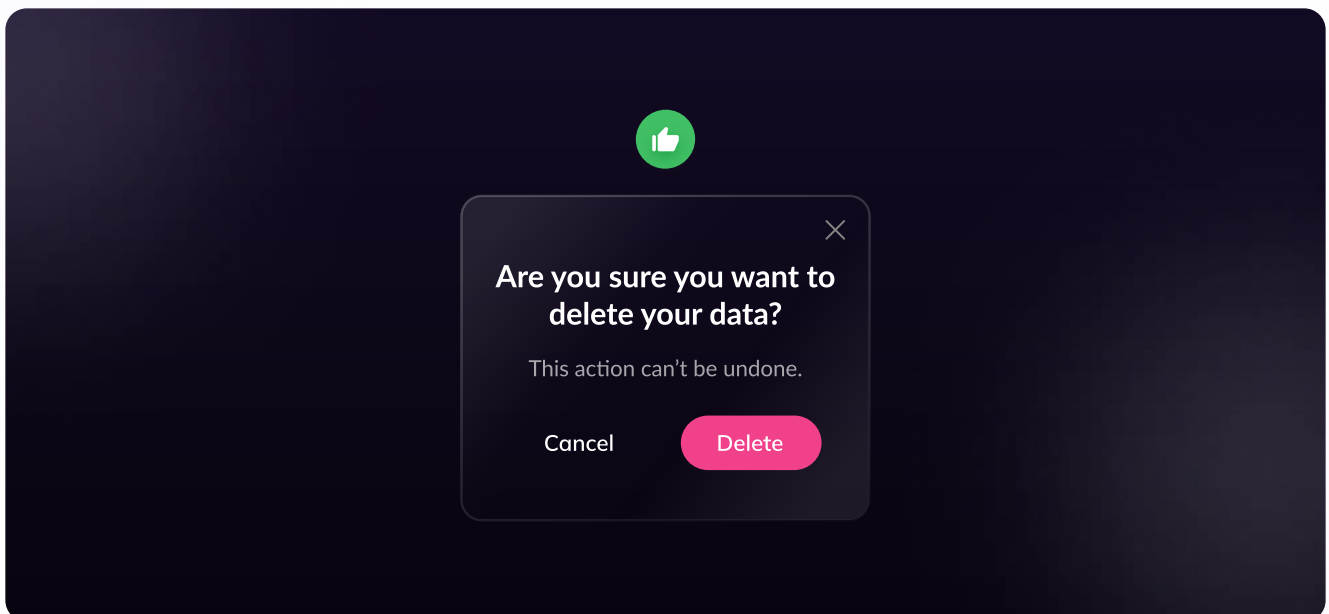
# Design better delete pop-ups by using the right color for the CTA

When you design a confirmation pop-up for a destructive action, like deleting your data, the color and text of the buttons play a crucial role. By convention, a red button usually signifies a destructive or irreversible action. Stick with this norm and make the "Delete" or "Remove" button red. Using for example a green button might confuse users because green often signifies a positive or safe action.



## Give users option to go back

Following conventions makes the interface more intuitive and minimizes user errors. When someone sees a red button, they'll know it's an action that they need to think twice about. The Cancel option acts as a safety net and reassures users that they have control, reducing the chance of accidental errors. The position of the "Cancel" and "Delete" is also important. The "Delete" button should be positioned to the right, signalling a move forward. On the other hands, the "Cancel" should be position to the left, signalling a move backwards.



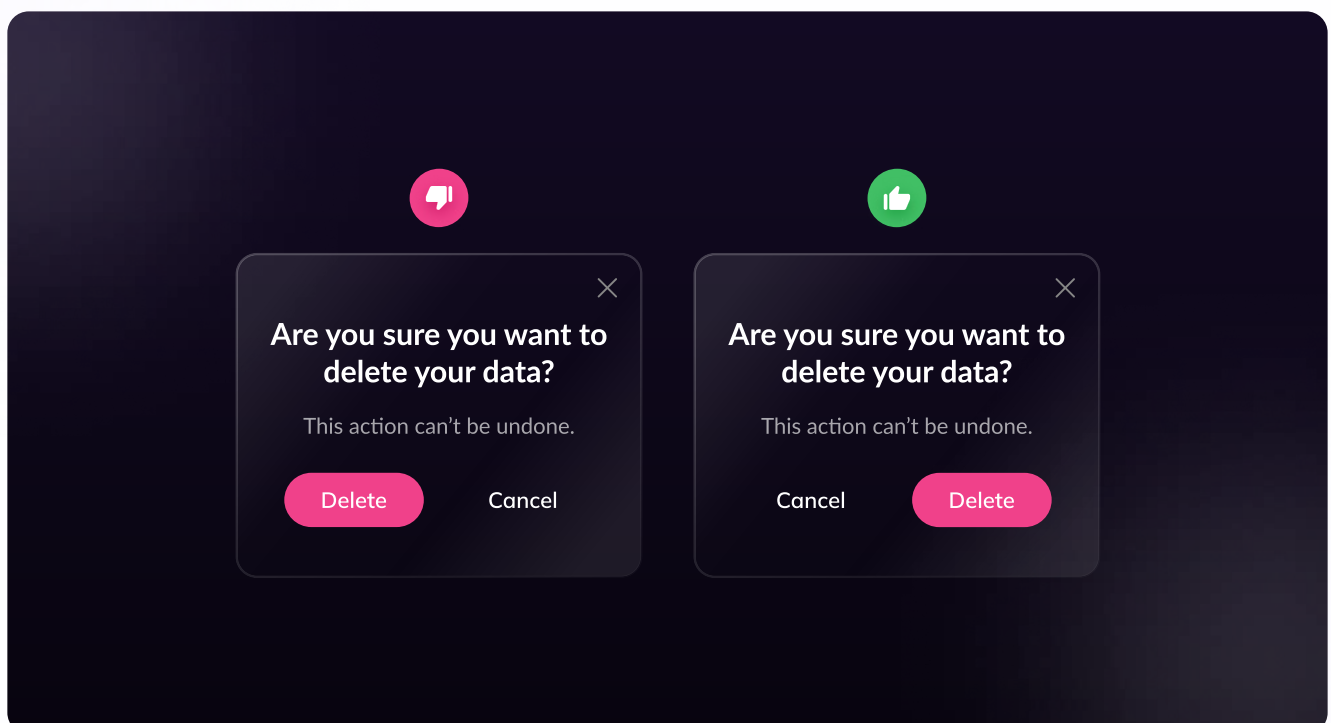
Following conventions makes the interface more intuitive and minimizes user errors. When someone sees a red button, they'll know it's an action that they need to think twice about. The Cancel option acts as a safety net and reassures users that they have control, reducing the chance of accidental errors.

## Position buttons correctly

The position of the "Cancel" and "Delete" is also important. The "Delete" button should be positioned to the right, signalling a move forward. On the other hands, the "Cancel" should be position to the left, signalling a move backwards.

The placement of your "Cancel" and "Delete" buttons in confirmation pop-ups is also important. Generally speaking, the "Delete" button should be on the right side, signalling a progression or move forward with the action. On the flip side, the "Cancel" button should be on the left, suggesting a step back or retreat from the action.

Why is this so? Well, in cultures where reading is done from left to right, people naturally scan interfaces the same way. Placing the "Cancel" button on the left means it's likely the first thing a user will read, offering them a quick exit before they proceed with the more severe "Delete" action on the right. This placement leverages users' natural scanning patterns to create a flow that's both logical and efficient, reducing the chances of accidental deletions or cancellations.



## Avoid using long block of text

In the digital realm, a user's attention is a precious commodity. Capturing and retaining it is critical, especially when presenting product information. A common pitfall is inundating users with dense, long-form text that's hard to digest, as it can overwhelm users and make them bounce off the page. But how do you convey detailed information without losing your audience? The key is in the presentation.

Take, for instance, a product page for an "UltraClean Vacuum Cleaner." A monolithic paragraph not only looks visually dull but also turns reading into a laborious task. Studies such as the famous Nielsen Norman Group research confirm that users often scan content rather than read word-for-word, making bite-sized information easier to process.



### UltraClean Vacuum Cleaner

Meet the UltraClean Vacuum Cleaner, your new go-to for impeccable home and office cleanliness. With a stellar **4.8-star customer rating**, this device is a tried and true solution for all your cleaning needs. Designed for convenience and efficiency, it boasts powerful suction capabilities that eliminate dust and debris in no time. The high-grade **HEPA filter** ensures that allergens and fine particles are safely captured, making it an excellent choice for pet owners and allergy sufferers. Its **cordless design** allows you to move freely and clean every corner of your space. The smart motor optimizes energy usage, so you're not only cleaning effectively but also **conserving energy**. User-friendly controls let you switch between modes and settings effortlessly. On top of its high performance, the device features a sleek design that blends seamlessly with any interior, and its low-noise operation ensures a calm cleaning experience. Its long-lasting battery enables you to clean multiple rooms in one go, adding to the convenience. The UltraClean Vacuum Cleaner doesn't just promise; it delivers, as evidenced by our 4.8-star reviews that celebrate its efficiency and ease of use. Choose this vacuum cleaner for a truly effortless and effective cleaning experience.

## Divide content into smaller sections

A more effective approach would be to divide the same big text into smaller, logically-organized sections. Adding icons, such as tick marks for key features or stars for reviews, also boosts engagement. Icons are quicker to process than text, offering an instant, clear point of focus. They also break up the monotony and add a visual touch that enriches the content.



### UltraClean Vacuum Cleaner

★★★★★ 4.8 (3,2k reviews)

Introducing our UltraClean Vacuum Cleaner, the ultimate cleaning solution for your home or office! This high-performance device is designed for those who want a cleaner living space without the hassle,

#### Key features:

- ✓ **Powerful Suction**  
Say goodbye to dust and debris; our vacuum cleaner offers superior suction to get the job done.
- ✓ **HEPA Filter**  
Ensures allergens and fine particles are captured, making it perfect for homes with pets or allergies.
- ✓ **Energy-Efficient**  
Utilizes a smart motor that minimizes power usage without compromising on performance.
- ✓ **User-Friendly Controls**  
Easily switch between modes and settings with the touch of a one button.

Our UltraClean Vacuum Cleaner not only offers top-tier performance but also comes with a sleek design that complements any interior. Get ready to make cleaning effortless and efficient!

You can take this design even further by considering using a two-column layout for the features. From a visual point of view, the two-column layout offers a balanced, symmetrical look that is pleasing to the eye. It's an efficient way to use screen real estate, making your page appear less cluttered and more organized.

From a UX perspective, the two-column layout streamlines information consumption. Users can quickly scan and compare features side-by-side without scrolling as much. Additionally, having a two-column layout encourages chunking, a cognitive process where information is grouped into 'chunks' to make it easier to remember and understand.



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### Powerful Suction

Say goodbye to dust and debris; our vacuum cleaner offers superior suction to get the job done.



### HEPA Filter

Ensures allergens and fine particles are captured, making it perfect for homes with pets or allergies.



### Energy-Efficient

Utilizes a smart motor that minimizes power usage without compromising on performance.



### User-Friendly Controls

Easily switch between modes and settings with the touch of a one button.

Our UltraClean Vacuum Cleaner not only offers top-tier performance but also comes with a sleek design that complements any interior. Get ready to make cleaning effortless and efficient!

Why settle for good when you can aim for exceptional? While you might be working with a given set of product descriptions or guidelines from your stakeholders, or even yourself, don't let that limit your creativity. Use it as a starting point, then consider other angles or content types that could add value to the product page.



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#### User-Friendly Controls

Easily switch between modes and settings with the touch of a one button.



#### 3X more powerful suction compare to other brands



Our UltraClean Vacuum Cleaner not only offers top-tier performance but also comes with a sleek design that complements any interior. Get ready to make cleaning effortless and efficient!

Are there additional benefits or features not outlined in the original brief that could tip the scales in your favor? Could customer testimonials offer social proof and build trust? Would a side-by-side comparison help show how your product stacks up against competitors?

Once you've identified these opportunities, take the initiative to propose them to key stakeholders. Even if these elements weren't part of the original project scope, they can be instrumental in deepening user engagement and giving your product a competitive edge.

The point is to never settle for just 'good enough' when you can offer 'even better.' By considering the user's needs from different angles and suggesting innovative solutions, you're not just enhancing the user interface; you're elevating the entire user experience.

## **Be creative but always keep it relevant**

While it's tempting to include as much information as possible, it's crucial to remain focused. Include only relevant information that your users or visitors will find useful or informative. Irrelevant details can clutter your page, detract from the user experience and decrease conversion.

Ask yourself, "Does this information directly benefit the user or visitor? Does it answer a question, solve a problem, or enhance their understanding of the product or service?" If the answer is no, consider cutting it or rephrasing it to make it more useful.

# Avoid distractions for a task completion

The main objective of most digital interfaces is to facilitate the completion of a task, whether that's signing up for an account, making a purchase, or finding information. Any elements that don't contribute to this end goal can be seen as a distraction and harmful to the user experience.

Imagine you're in the process of creating a new account on a car booking website. Just as you're about to enter your personal details, an eye-catching ad appears on the side of the screen, offering you a chance to book a ride in a Ferrari. While the ad might be interesting, it's completely unrelated to the task at hand. This kind of distraction increases the risk of errors, abandonment, or simply a frustrating experience for the user.



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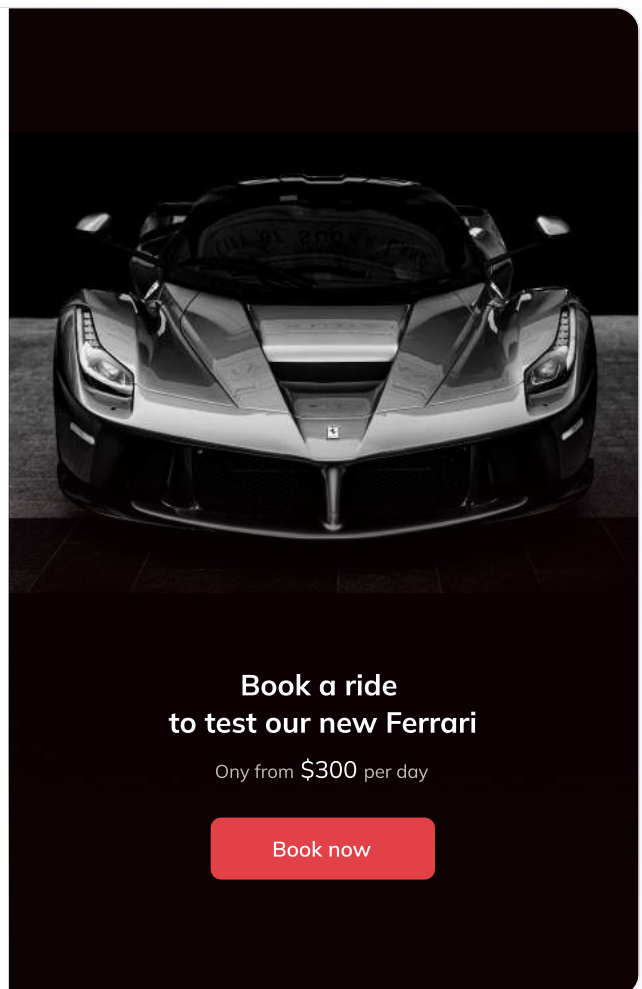
Password\*



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Building on our previous tip about avoiding distractions, there are times when adding a graphic element can actually enrich the user's experience without steering them off course.




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Take the example of a car booking website again. In the image above, the graphic serves multiple purposes: it resonates with the brand, evokes a certain emotion or feeling related to car travel, and enhances the overall aesthetics of the page. Most importantly, because the image is action-free with no accompanying text or call-to-action, it complements rather than competes with the sign-up process. This kind of thoughtful visual inclusion strikes the right balance between branding and usability, aiding in task completion without diverting focus.

# You don't need to fill the whole screen

Designers often face the temptation to utilize all available screen space, especially on larger displays like MacBook Pro or desktop monitors that offer a screen width of 1440 pixels or even more. While it may seem like a good idea to stretch a sign-up form or checkout flow to fill the screen, this approach is wrong.

For example, stretching input fields and CTAs to span almost the entire width of the screen can overwhelm users and make the interface appear cluttered. Long lines of text or fields can also be hard to read and can reduce comprehension.



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Instead, it's totally fine to give input fields and buttons only the space they genuinely need. By concentrating your sign-up or checkout fields in a clearly defined box and leaving ample white space around it, you create a cleaner, more focused user experience.

This white space isn't "wasted"; it's a powerful design element that helps to separate different sections and draw attention to what's most important.



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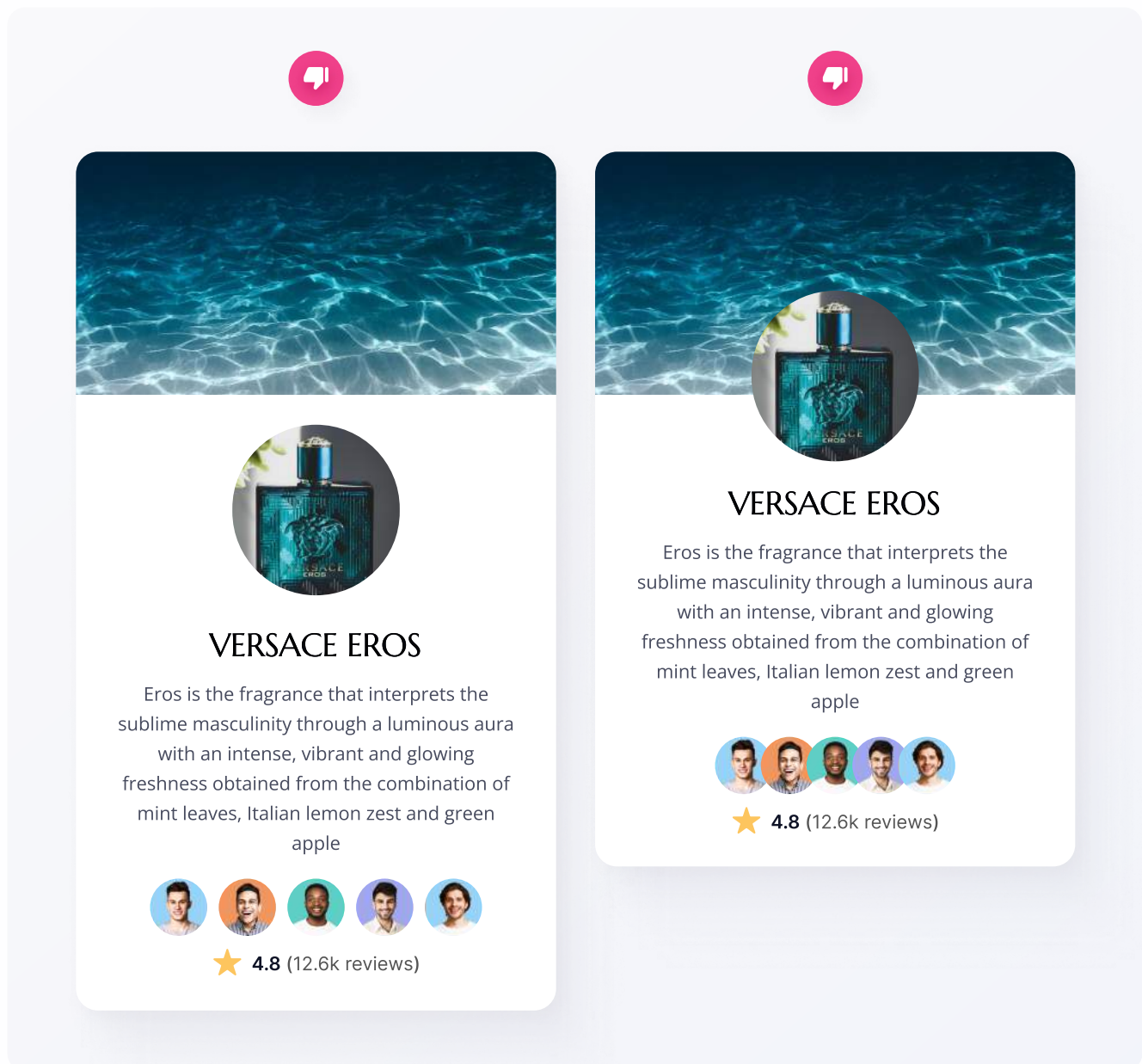
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You can further enhance this by using a different background color or a subtle image for the surrounding area, but the key takeaway here is that white space is your friend.

# Leverage overlapping images for visual depth and sophistication

Adding overlapping images to your UI design can introduce a level of sophistication and visual appeal that standard layouts often can't match. When done correctly, overlapping elements can break up the linear monotony and make the interface feel dynamic and engaging.

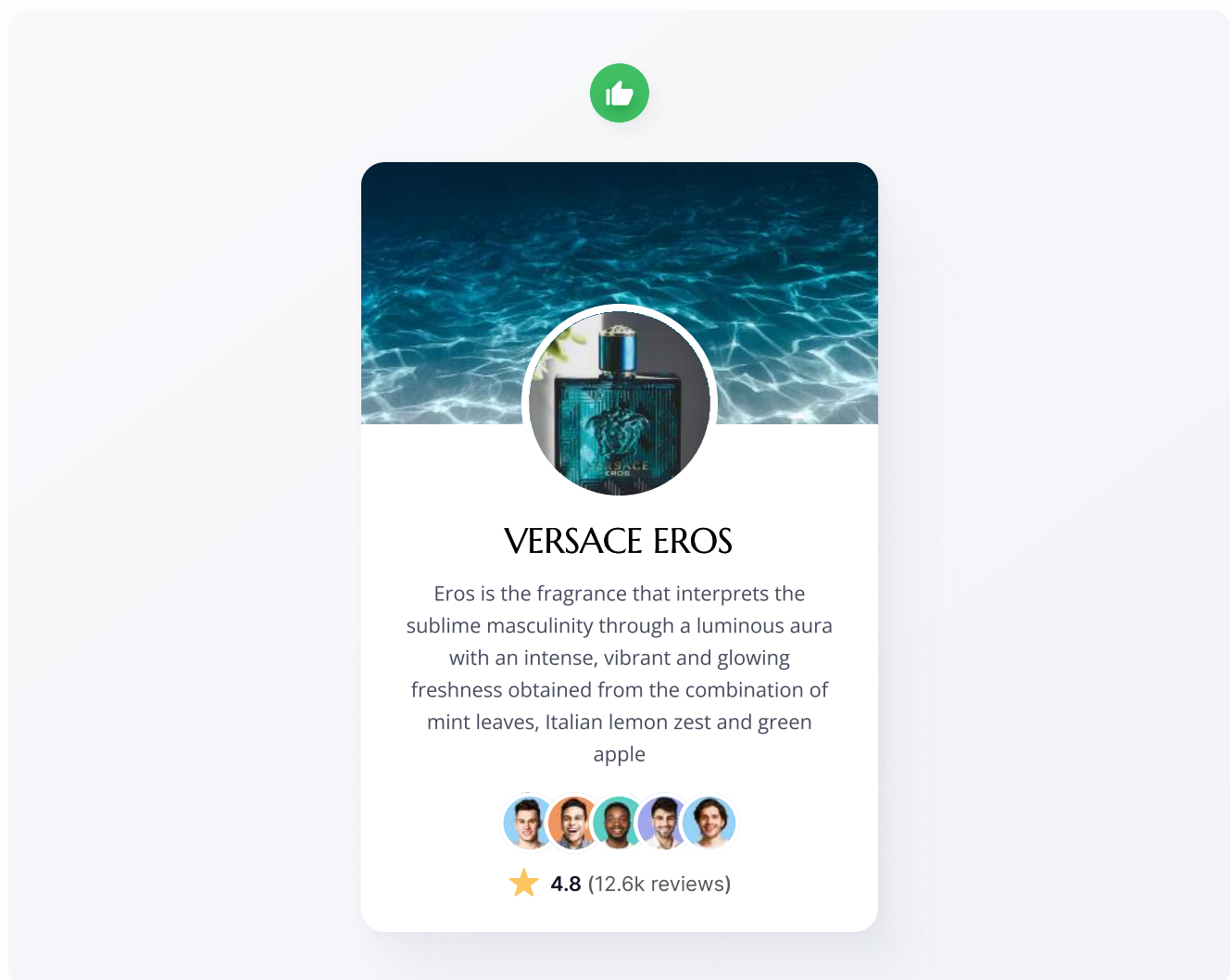
Let's look at some examples using Versace perfume product cards to illustrate the point.



In the first example, we have the basic layout where the product card is broken down into distinct sections. While it's functional and clear, the layout lacks a certain visual flair. Each image is separated by space, making it feel segmented and a little uninspiring.

In the second example, the design tries to be more adventurous by overlapping images and backgrounds. However, it falls short because the overlapping images and their colors clash, creating a visually jarring experience.

The third example takes cues from the second but fine-tunes it.



Here, the overlapping images have outlines that match the background. This small tweak manages to separate each element visually, creating natural white space and making the overlap work harmoniously.

# Design for the thumb zone

Mobile devices are often operated using just one hand, and primarily the thumb. Therefore, when you're designing a mobile interface, it's important to keep the 'thumb zone' in mind. This is the area of the screen easily reachable with the thumb.

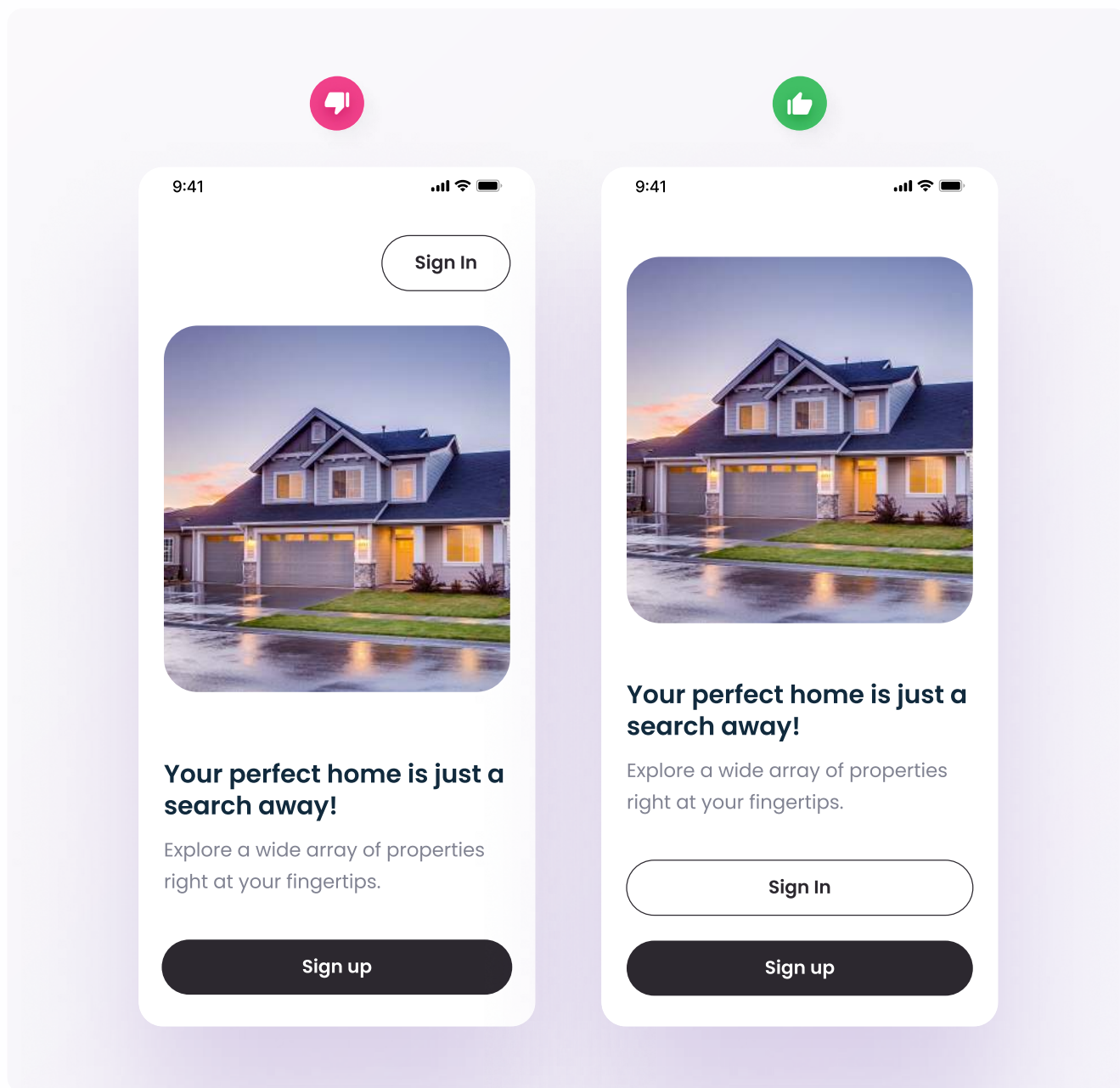
Placing key elements like buttons, navigation links, and calls-to-action within the thumb zone makes it easier for users to interact with your design.

Elements positioned outside of this area can be difficult to reach and could lead to user frustration or misclicks.



So, when you're laying out your design, make sure the most used features are easily accessible within the thumb zone. By doing so, you enhance usability and make your interface more user-friendly.

Let's take a closer look at these designs:



In the first screen, the CTA is located outside of the thumb zone, which means that users would need to stretch or adjust their grip to reach it. This can cause frustration and inconvenience, especially for users who are on the go or have limited mobility.

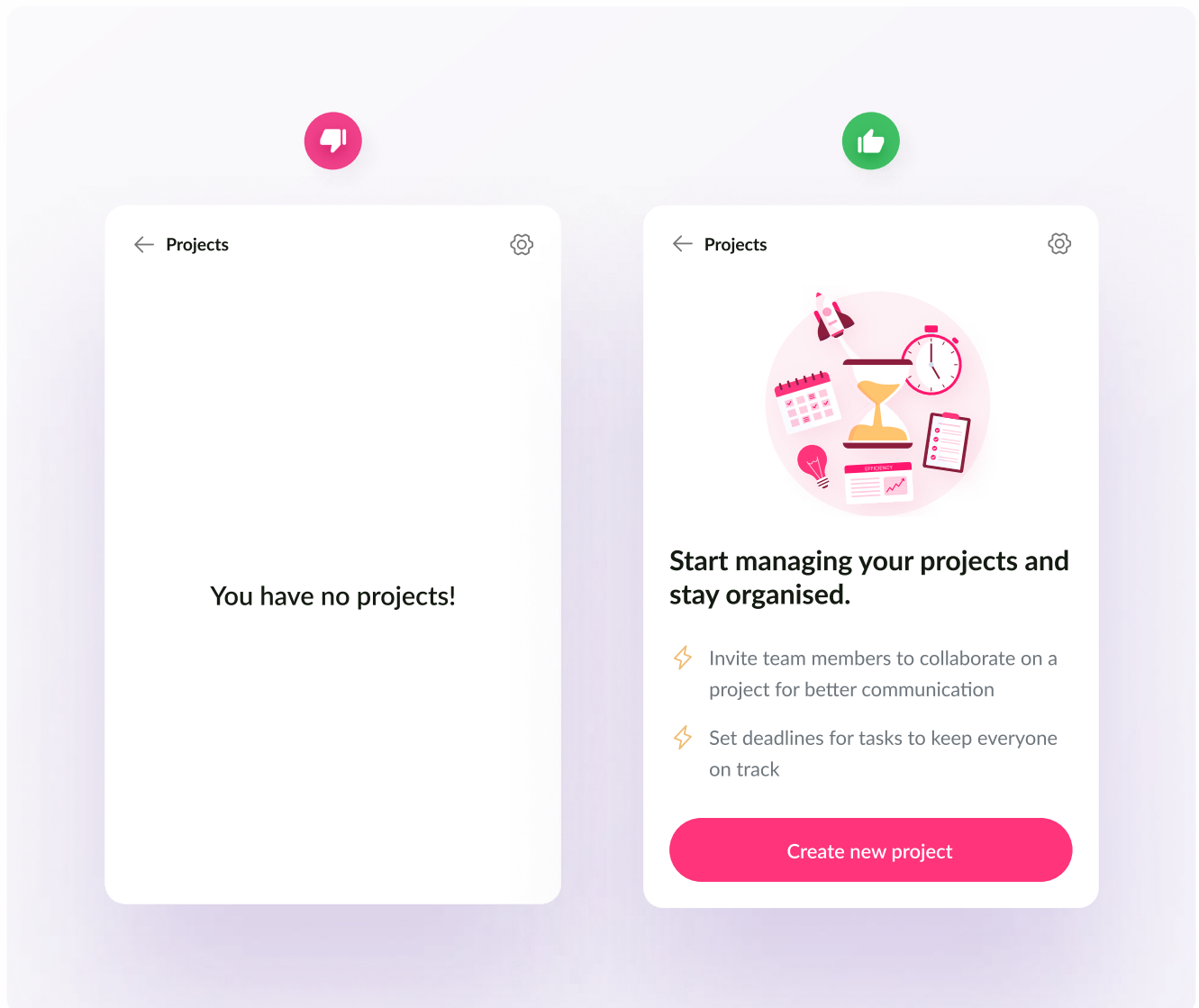
In the second screen, the CTA is thoughtfully positioned within the thumb zone, which is a common area where users' thumbs naturally rest when holding their mobile devices.

This placement ensures that users can quickly and easily interact with the CTA with just one hand, making it an excellent choice for mobile design.

## Turning empty states into opportunities

When a user encounters an empty state, it's like hitting a roadblock. An empty screen with no guidance or actionable steps can leave them feeling lost and frustrated. It's a missed opportunity to guide and engage users.

A bare empty state, such as a screen simply saying "You have no projects," fails to provide users with any value or direction. It's a dead-end that can make users feel stuck and unsure of what to do next.



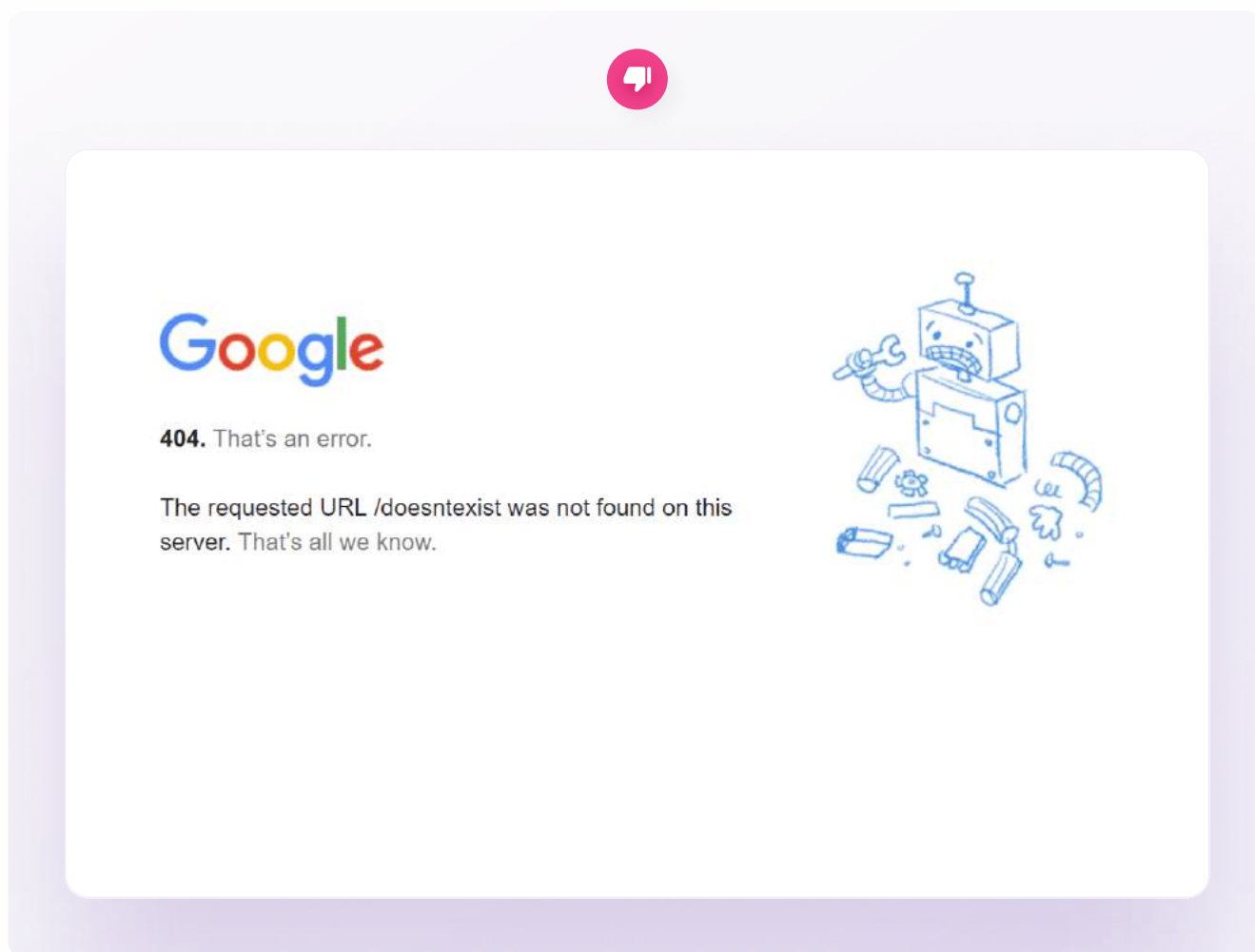
Conversely, a well-designed empty state can be a powerful tool to educate, engage, and encourage users to take action. It's a chance to turn a potential negative experience into a positive one.

For example, an empty state that says "Start managing your projects and stay organized" immediately offers a solution to the user's problem. It doesn't stop there, though. With an accompanying illustration, it becomes visually appealing and less daunting. By adding actionable tips like "Invite team members to collaborate on a project for better communication" and "Set deadlines for tasks to keep everyone on track," it provides clear steps for the user to take. Finally, a CTA button saying "Create new project" gives them a direct way to take action.

# Turn mistakes into positive experiences

Error states play a crucial role. Well-designed error states can prevent user frustration and guide them back on track when something goes wrong.

An error state, like a form validation error or a 404 page, is often where user journeys can go awry. A bad error state can leave users feeling frustrated and confused, not knowing what went wrong or how to fix it.



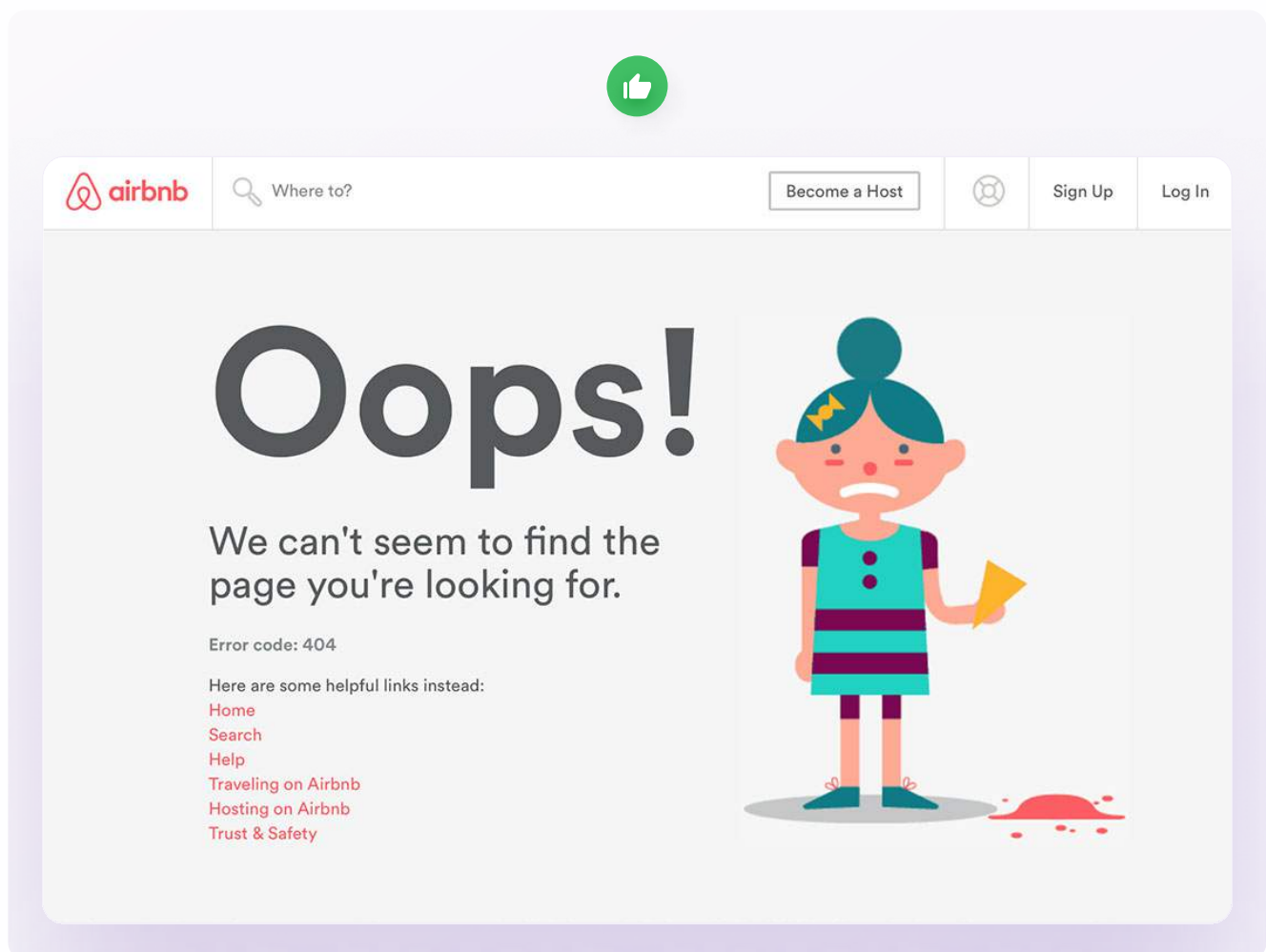
**A good error state should do the following:**

1. Clearly communicate what went wrong.
2. Offer a clear and actionable solution to fix the problem.
3. Maintain a consistent visual style with the rest of your application or website.

# Turn mistakes into positive experiences

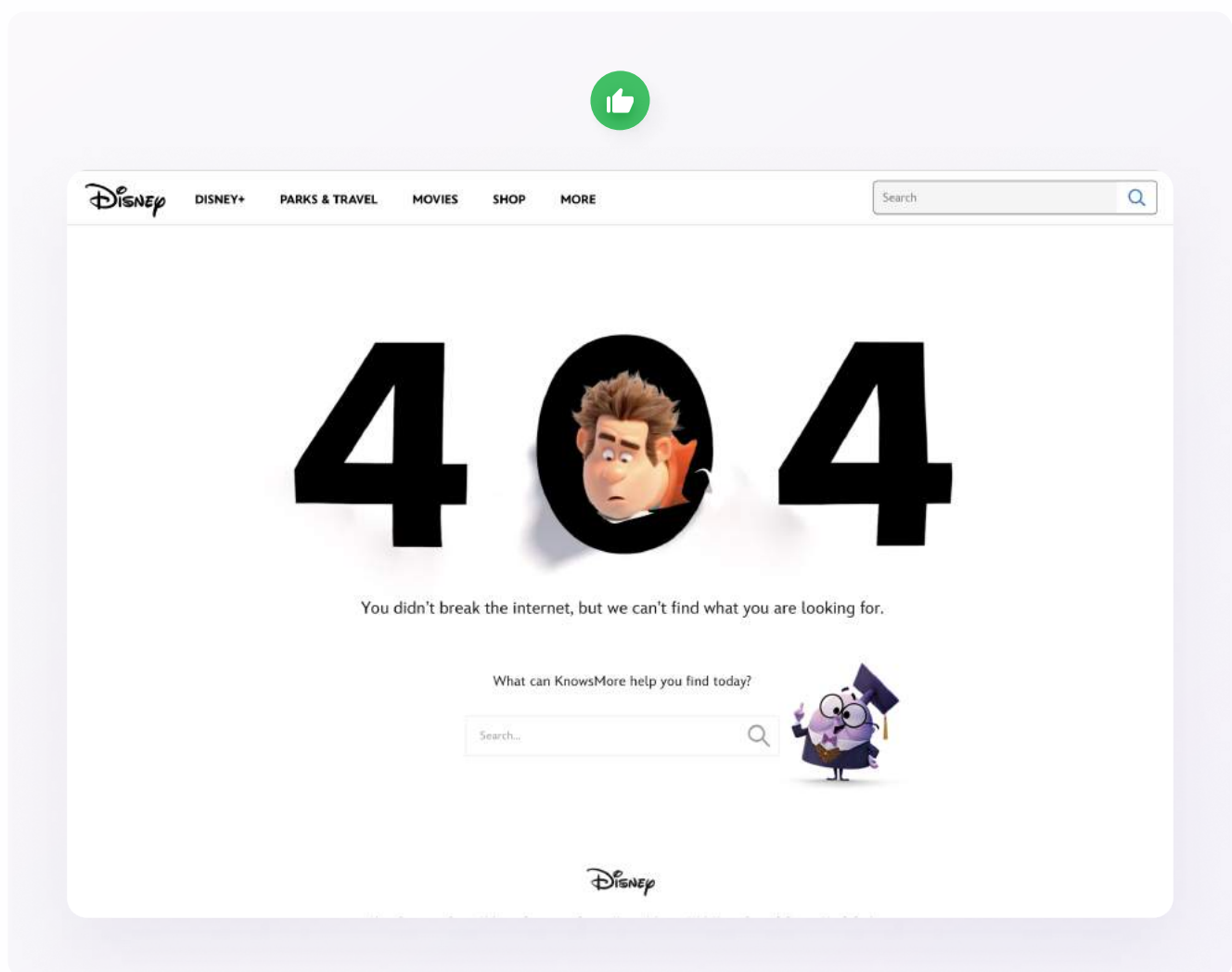
A bad example of a 404 page might simply tell the user that the page they're looking for can't be found, leaving them feeling lost and frustrated.

On the other hand, a good 404 page will not only inform the user of the error, but also provide helpful links or suggestions to get them back on track. This can turn a potentially negative experience into a positive one, by showing the user that you've thought about their needs even in the case of an error.



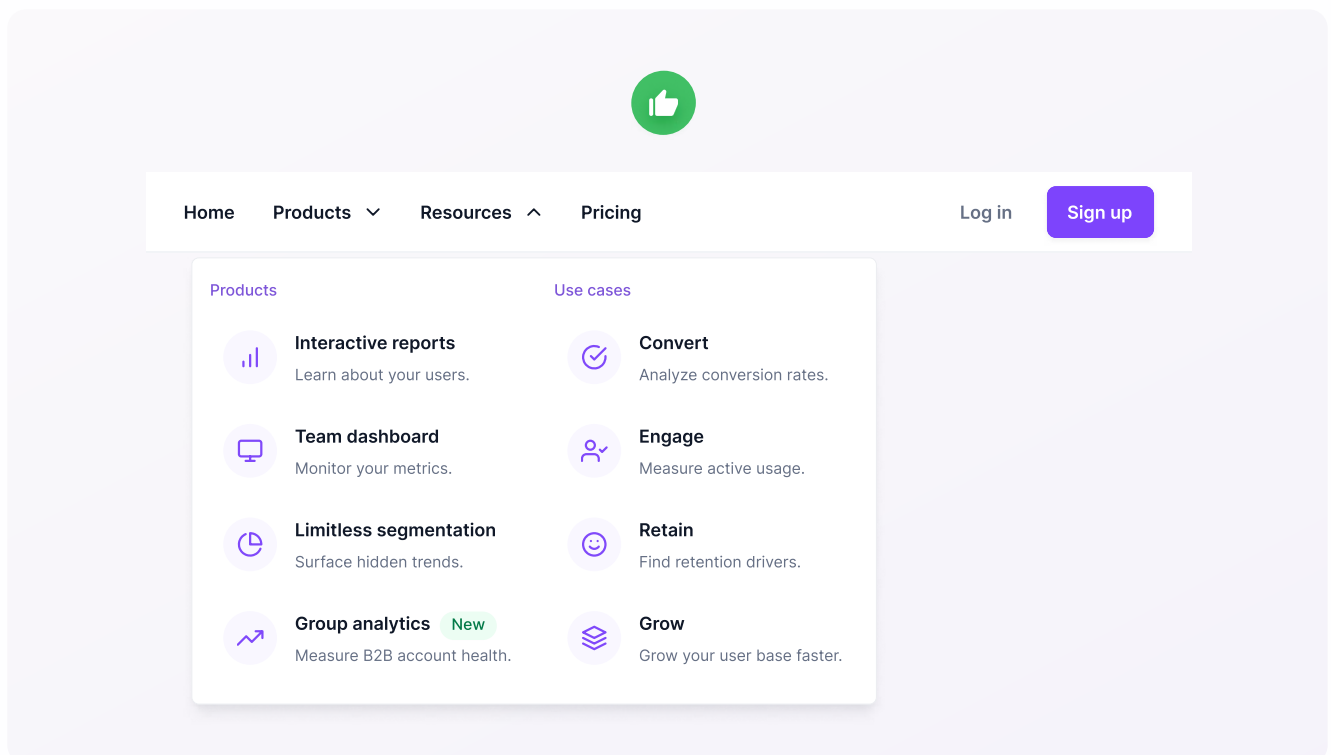
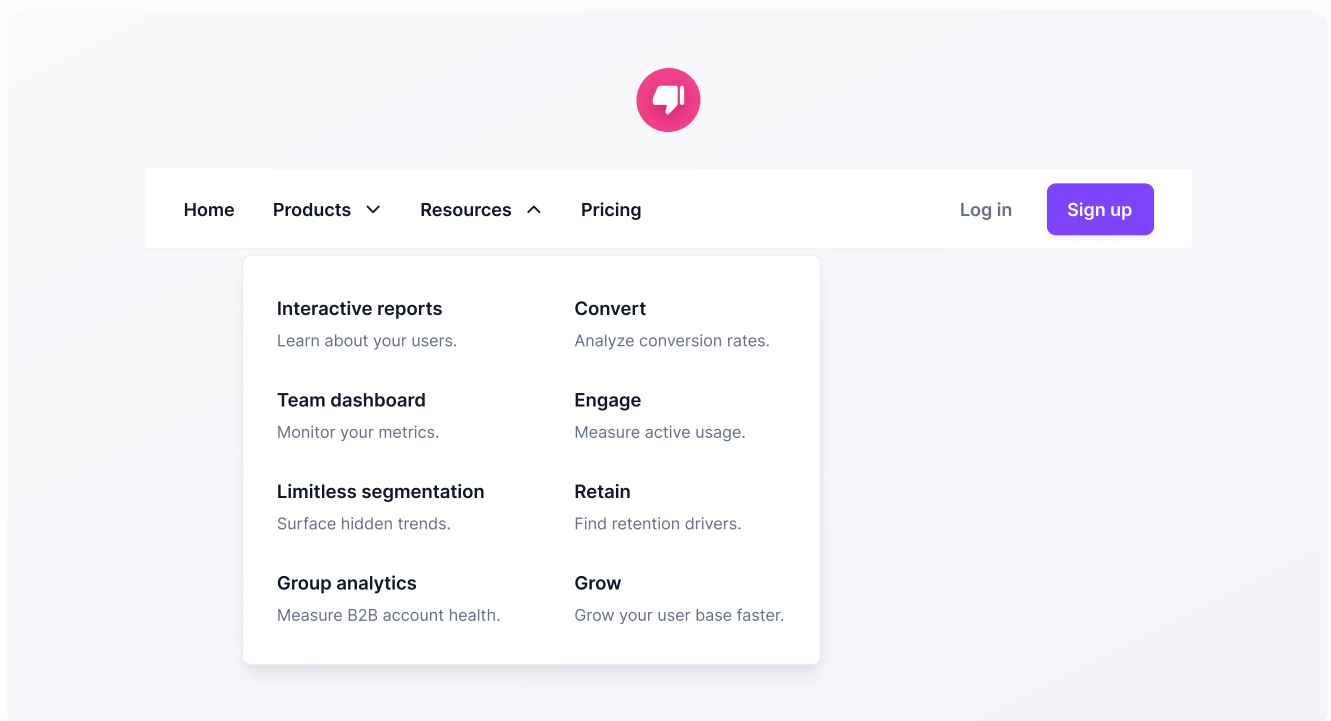
## Blend creativity with brand identity

A good 404 page also offers an opportunity for creativity and can be a reflection of your brand's personality. By injecting some creativity and brand elements into the design, you can turn an error state into a memorable and engaging experience for the user. This could be through the use of on-brand illustrations, humorous copy, or interactive elements that surprise and delight the user, while also guiding them back to the content they were looking for. By doing so, you can turn a potentially frustrating experience into a positive interaction with your brand, leaving a lasting impression on the user.



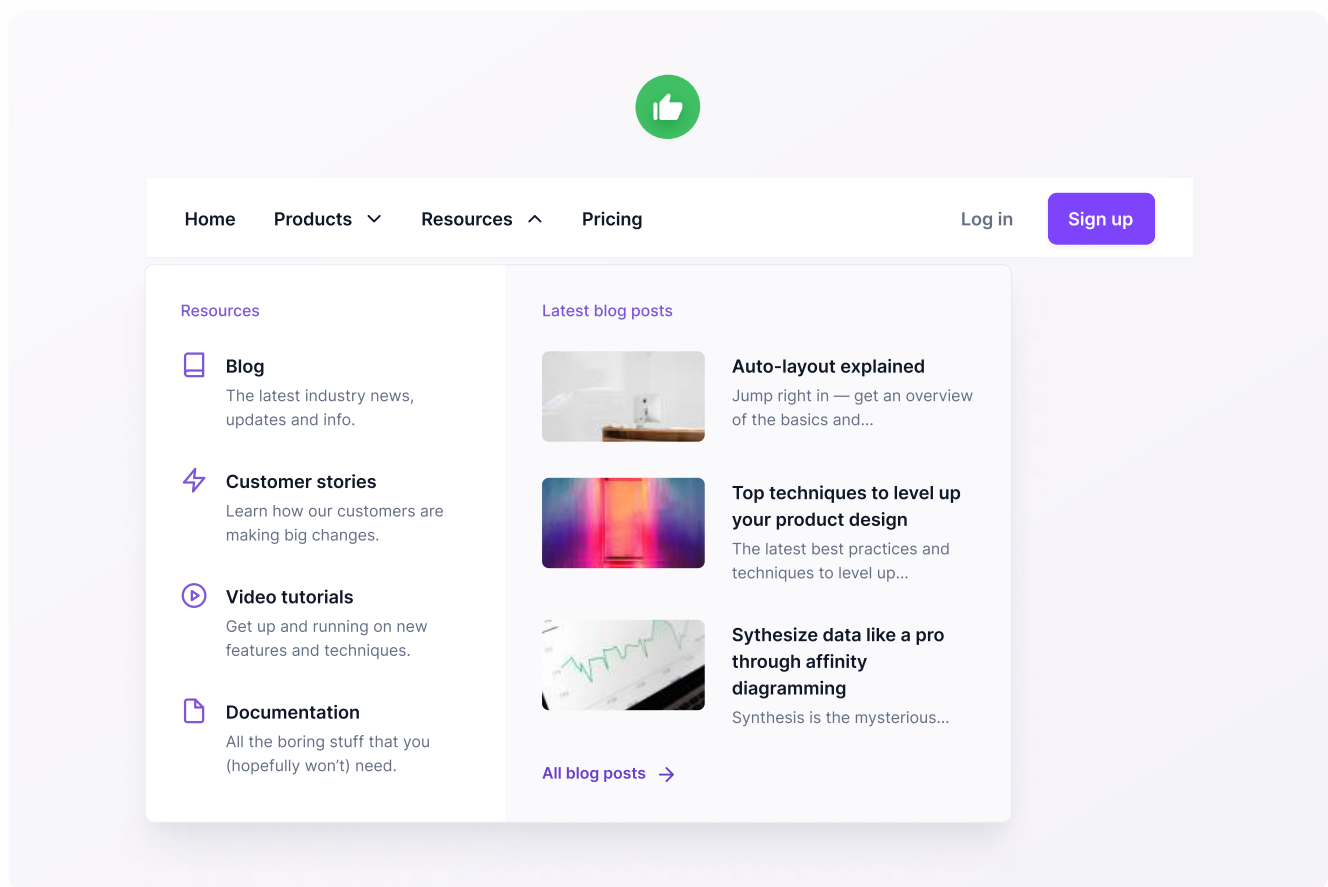
# Design better navigation dropdowns

Top navigation dropdowns help users navigate through the site, offering an intuitive way to access different pages or features. One method to improve the UX is to include icons in your dropdowns.



Icons serve as visual aids that can quickly communicate the purpose or content of a menu item. They not only make the navigation dropdown more attractive, but they also increase its usability.

It's also beneficial to group related items under distinct categories. By doing this, you help users quickly grasp the structure of your navigation and find what they need.



While icons add a layer of visual interpretation, images can take it even a step further by providing a more comprehensive visual context.

However, remember that less is often more. Including an image next to every item could overwhelm the user and clutter the interface. Instead, strategically choose to enhance only the items you want to highlight.

## Continue learning and leveling up

By applying the UI design principles and guidelines you've learned in this e-book, you're already on your way to crafting designs that are not just visually appealing, but also offer an exceptional user experience.

While these guidelines offer a strong foundation, the best designs also undergo real-world testing with target users. This e-book aims to give you the knowledge and confidence to create compelling, user-friendly designs. It brings together proven principles, strategies, and tips used by industry giants like Airbnb, Spotify, Apple, and many others to set you on the path to success.

## Your feedback means the world to us!

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Best wishes on your design journey,  
The uxpeak team

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