

How Micro-Interactions Support the User Journey When Ordering Food

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Figma File: <https://tinyurl.com/Grub-Prototype>

Introduction

Motion design in user interfaces helps to bridge the gap between user interactions and system responses. In this example, I created a conceptual food service page called Grub, in which I created microinteractions not only for decor but as functional tools to reduce cognitive load, provide immediate feedback, and establish a clear motion hierarchy. In this case study, I will outline the purpose, decisions, and overall impact of the user experience, demonstrating how the created microanimations help support the user journey of ordering food online.

Call to Action Button

The primary call to action button is the most important interaction point in a food delivery service. The animation aims to provide immediate feedback when a user pays for their food. In the case of my example, I created an animation that would allow you to cancel the purchase while also reassuring the user that it was processed. Using components, I made it so that when you hovered over the button, the colour would darken and the car engine would start. When I prototyped it, I used smart animate to make the car start and gave it a bouncy animation curve of **800ms** to give the car a bounce effect, representing the starting of the car. This will tell the user that this button can be pressed.

When the button is pressed, a cactus and cloud will spawn in with the text beside it saying "Cancel in 5 Seconds". For each second that passes, the **1000ms** delay of the smart animate after delay trigger will occur and change it to the next component, which will move the cactus and cloud back, tilt the car slightly to represent movement, and change the text to the next second. This happens five times, giving the user ample time to react if they need to cancel their order. Eventually, when the five seconds are up, the car will fly off the button and the text will change to "Confirming", which eases in after **300ms** to let the user register that the order is

being confirmed. Then, after **2000ms** (two seconds), the component will change to a green button with the text “Transaction Successful”, letting the user know their transaction is completed and assuring them that there were no issues.

This microinteraction reassures the user that their input has been noticed immediately, and it gives the user time to react to a possible misclick or error in the order. This removes any anxiety of “Did I click it?” or “Oh I forgot to!”. By providing ample reaction time, a fun animation that connotes processing of the order, and reassuring feedback, the interface feels functional, responsive, and trustworthy, which is essential for any ecommerce platform, especially a food service.

Dropdown Menu

The purpose of a dropdown menu usually is for filtering and selecting information, but in this project, I created a dropdown menu that would reveal the different items of your order without overwhelming the user or abruptly snapping into view, which can cause disorientation. I wanted the user to essentially press on the dropdown and look at their order so that they have the ability to reaffirm it is correct. Through smart animation and timing, each item appears one by one in quick succession, making it an engaging visual and ensuring that the user doesn’t just glance over it.

I implemented a gentle smart animation of **200ms** when the box was pressed, meaning it smoothly and quickly showed the box itself. Then, each item would fade in with a delay of **1ms** and a fading duration of **100ms**. You could then press the box again to make the items disappear and the box go up to reduce space, and this would be gently smart-animated and completed in **400ms**.

The box dropping down and the items appearing one by one actively help to guide the user’s eye to look downwards, letting them confirm each item as it goes down. This clear visual hierarchy allows the users to process the items, and the animation helps to transform a static UI feature into a smooth and progressive feature, which helps to enhance the service’s overall design and reassure the user as well.

Notification / Toast Message

The purpose of a notification is usually to let the user be aware of something, whether that is an update being completed or, in my example, an alert saying they have qualified for free delivery. By temporarily appearing on screen, this gives the user information that is primary to their eyes without being overwhelming for the design.

The notification bounces in after a delay of **3000ms** (three seconds) and states, “Since you spent over £20 on your order, your delivery fee is free!” with an animation appearing of a pound symbol moving to the left after a delay of **200ms** that lasts **200ms**. Then, a gentle fade in of the actual amount being saved appears after

200ms, which lasts **200ms** as well. Then, I went further with this and added an exit button on the top right which gently eases in after **200ms** and lasts for **200ms**. Once pressed, the box closes in an instant.

The animation achieves a balance between visibility and reservation, with the animations drawing enough attention to the user's eyes to notify them of this information. However, since the notification appears to the right of the screen and the user gets to close it manually, it does not obstruct their screen from important details, keeping the user informed without overwhelming them.

Tab Switching (Navigational Transitions)

When paying for food, there is a step that is just as important, and that is selecting delivery options. Sometimes you may want to pay the extra fees to get it delivered to your house, or sometimes you are at work in the town and can pick it up. Either way, these options have to be established when buying food online. In my example, I designed a subtle microinteraction which would allow you to switch from delivery to pickup.

For the tab switching, I created a copy of the frame I was working on and changed the delivery section to a pickup option, which would show the user where their order is coming from and the surrounding area. When the pickup option was pressed on the delivery frame, the frame would change with smart animate to the pickup frame, which would gently animate with a duration of **800ms**. A line under delivery would move to the pickup, which would last **800ms** as well. This gives the user an understanding that they have selected pickup for their order. I made it so that you can go back and forth between delivery and pickup with the exact same smart animation functions to ensure consistency.

The tab switching helps the user know whether they are choosing the right option or not. Say you wanted pickup but you had it set to deliver; you will see a pickup option not underlined and options for delivery (Priority, Standard, and Schedule). After pressing pickup, it will be underlined and show a map of the restaurant, confirming their request. The user will learn where they are and how to navigate back. This reduces friction and disorientation when navigating the payment screen, resulting in a more accessible user journey.

Conclusion

With the integration of microinteractions within the “Grub” interface, it demonstrates that motion design is far more than just aesthetic decor. It is a critical, functional component of the user experience, and by implementing deliberate, purpose driven animations, this highlights how motion can bridge the gap between system response and user needs in a food delivery service environment.

- The call to action button reduces anxiety the user may have by providing immediate visual feedback, a playful yet clear process, and a window for cancellation.
- The dropdown menu transforms a basic list into a more progressive reveal, smoothly guiding the user's eye to confirm their order details without overwhelming or damaging the layout.
- The notification message strikes a balance between visibility and restraint, delivering rewarding information like free delivery without obstructing core tasks.
- Tab switching (navigational transitions) uses clear spatial cues to anchor the user whilst reducing friction and ensuring confidence in their choices between delivery and pickup.

Together, these microinteractions reduce cognitive load, establish a visual hierarchy that is clear, and build trust. In the context of online food delivery, where clarity and reassurance are important, microinteractions elevate the Grub platform from a simple ordering tool to an engaging, accessible, and seamless experience that supports the user journey when ordering food.