



Helping Users Imagine New Styles

Background

I am conducting **research to better understand the user journey for individuals consulting with a new beauty professional** and to identify pain points and areas of improvement. By gathering insights directly from users, I hope to create a product that better addresses their needs and helps them feel more confident and comfortable in their search for a new beauty professional.

In this document, you will find survey results as well as direct highlights from the interviews I have completed for this project.

Who I talked to

Users eligible to participate in our research include anyone above 18 who has completed a consultation with a stylist for a service in the last 3 months. The first step is to create a survey to get some basic information such as perceived effort, cost of trial-and-error, and how successful they feel their consultation was. I will be reaching out to my network of clients as well as asking previous coworkers (hair stylists as well) to share the survey link on their social media.

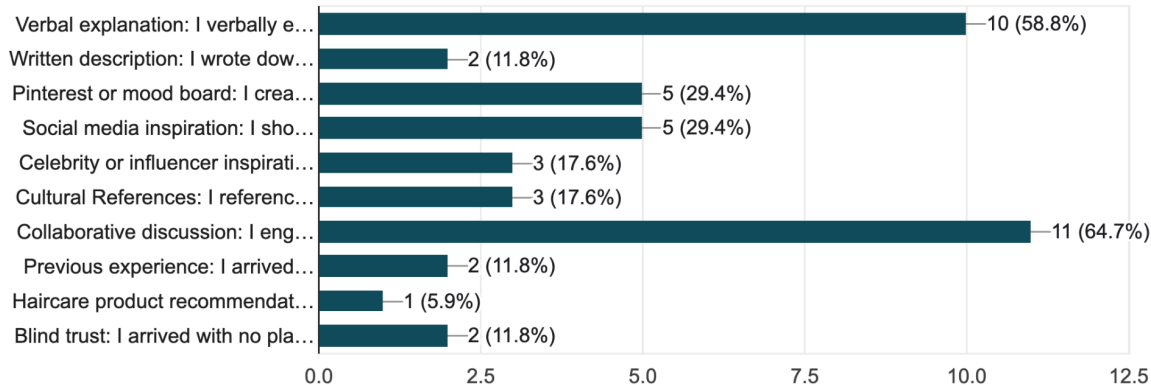
Summary of results

Before the interview, the survey highlighted the majority of users are utilizing google searches to find hairstyle inspiration and are most often frustrated because they aren't sure how to search for what they are picturing in their mind. During the interviews, the main themes were effective communication, trust, and personal customization. **The most common anxiety among users was a fear of not being heard or understood.**

Significant Survey Results

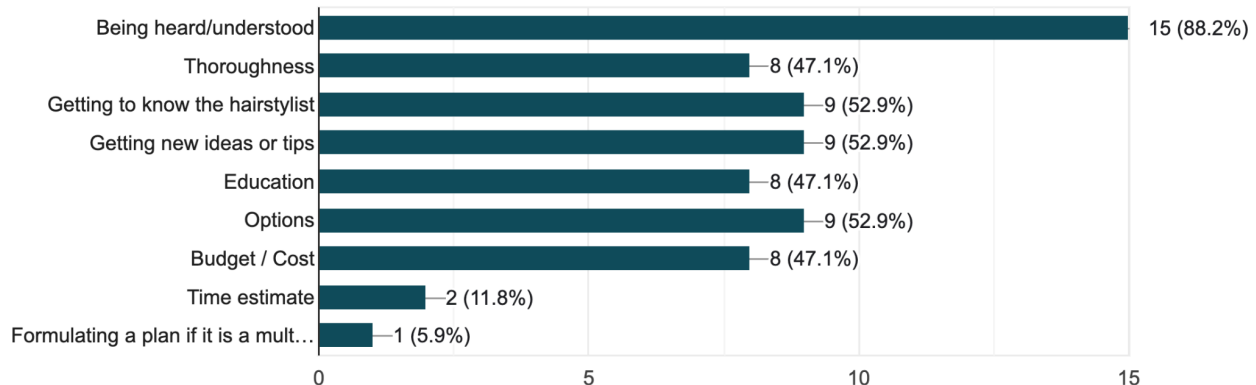
How did you plan to communicate your desired outcome to your service provider? *Select all that apply

17 responses



When you have a consultation with a hairdresser, what factors are most important to you? *Select all that apply

17 responses



Key Insights

- ❖ **Descriptive Terms with Accompanying Visuals:** Users expressed the importance of effective communication with their stylist. They wanted to be able to accurately convey their desired haircut and discuss any concerns or

preferences. One person mentioned the **anxiety of “not having the right words”** to explain what they wanted, while the other felt confident in discussing their preferences due to a long-standing relationship with their stylist.

Having **better descriptive terms associated with images of styles you like can make it easier for people to communicate their preferences.** Users reported being concerned that they would not be speaking the shared language as the professionals.

- ❖ **Reference Photos:** Users typically brought multiple reference photos to show their stylist the desired look, while the other did not bring any photos. However, they **all acknowledged the value of reference photos in communicating the desired style** effectively. This allows you and the stylist to have a visual starting point and a shared understanding of your expectations.
Interviewees expressed challenges in finding hairstyles that work well with their hair type or struggle to achieve their desired results. Because they don't know the official terminology, they have to wait until they are in the chair ready for a cut to receive personalized recommendations based on individual hair characteristics.
- ❖ **Trust in the Stylist:** Trusting the stylist's expertise and being open to their guidance and recommendations were important factors. One person mentioned the stylist being accepting and open, not minding if they used the wrong words. Another person had confidence in their stylist due to a positive referral and previous experience. The main point of this insight is that many do not make decisions until they have received personalized recommendations from a source they trust.
- ❖ **Hair Maintenance and Styling:** Consideration of hair texture and maintenance was discussed in all cases. One person had experienced a change in hair texture due to pregnancy and was unsure how to style it or even what type it is considered. Another person had fine, flat hair and discussed the stylist's recommendations for products and maintaining layers. As a stylist, part of the work is educating the client about the projected care needs for a specific style. This includes details about the level of maintenance, time required for styling, and any special products or techniques needed to maintain the desired look. These **details can often be hard to remember** and one interviewer described trying to frantically take notes in their phone while the stylist was working.

- ❖ **Managing Expectations:** Realistic expectations were important, especially in terms of the effort required to style and maintain a certain haircut. One person mentioned being honest about their level of laziness and the limited effort they would put into styling their hair. **Understanding the level of care and routine needed for specific hairstyles is seen as crucial.**
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Conclusion

The Goal:

At the beginning of this work, I sought to understand the journey, goals, and pain points of a person consulting with a beauty professional for a new style. By talking to a small but diverse group of people, I got an assortment of different kinds of stories but was thrilled to find the similarities in their experiences.

The Main Point:

I've discovered a clear knowledge gap in understanding their starting point as well as fluency in hair terminology that may indicate an opportunity to create a solution that allows users to discover their hair type, be educated about maintenance and styling, and generate personalized recommendations before they find themselves in a stylist's chair.

Business and Consumer Goals:

While everyone can access google, a tailored approach to understanding your hair and discovering new options for it does not exist. A solution of this nature could be beneficial for business as they would be able to partner with the app to provide tailored recommendations about which of their products would work for a given style or hair type. Hairstylists could also use this app to aid in communication with their clients and potentially provide marketing opportunities for stylists that specialize in a particular type of style.

Next Steps:

Journey Mapping: Creating user personas and a journey map to outline the steps and touchpoints users will encounter while using an app of this nature

Information Architecture: Define the structure and organization of the solution's potential content and features