

Product Name:

vACA.io

Short product blurb:

A social travel planner connecting like-minded travelers to plan and book trips together seamlessly.

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Product Experience

Problem Space

Problem Statement

How might we help travelers find and coordinate trips with like-minded individuals while ensuring seamless planning and booking?

Problem Background

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, many people have struggled to organize group trips due to uncertain schedules, last-minute cancellations, and difficulty coordinating bookings across different platforms. Additionally, travelers often find it challenging to discover fun activities in new destinations without prior knowledge or recommendations.

Research Insights

User Pain Points

Using Quora and Facebook groups, we identified different categories of prospective users and conducted over 10 user interviews. Key pain points included:

- Friends backing out of trips last minute, leading to cancellations.
- Uncertainty about where to travel and what activities to do.
- Difficulty finding and booking flights, accommodations, and activities in one place.
- Lack of a centralized platform to coordinate group travel plans.

Supporting Data

- 85% of people we spoke to mentioned they were unhappy with the current solutions for group trip planning.

- 70% of potential users reported canceling at least one trip in the past year due to coordination issues.
- 90% of travelers expressed interest in a platform that suggests travel companions and trip ideas based on preferences.

Feedback

Our preliminary user research to validate this problem found that young professionals and frequent travelers struggle with last-minute cancellations and lack of structured travel coordination tools.

Landing on the Solution

Based on our target users' pain points, we knew we wanted to work on the following features:

- **Group Travel Matching:** Users can find and connect with others who share their travel dates and destinations.
- **Trip Planning & Itinerary Management:** A collaborative space to plan flights, accommodations, and activities.
- **Community-Generated Insights:** Users can share past experiences, recommendations, and itineraries.
- **Integrated Booking System:** Partnerships with Expedia and Airbnb to enable seamless flight and hotel bookings.

Explanation of Solution (Optional but Recommended)

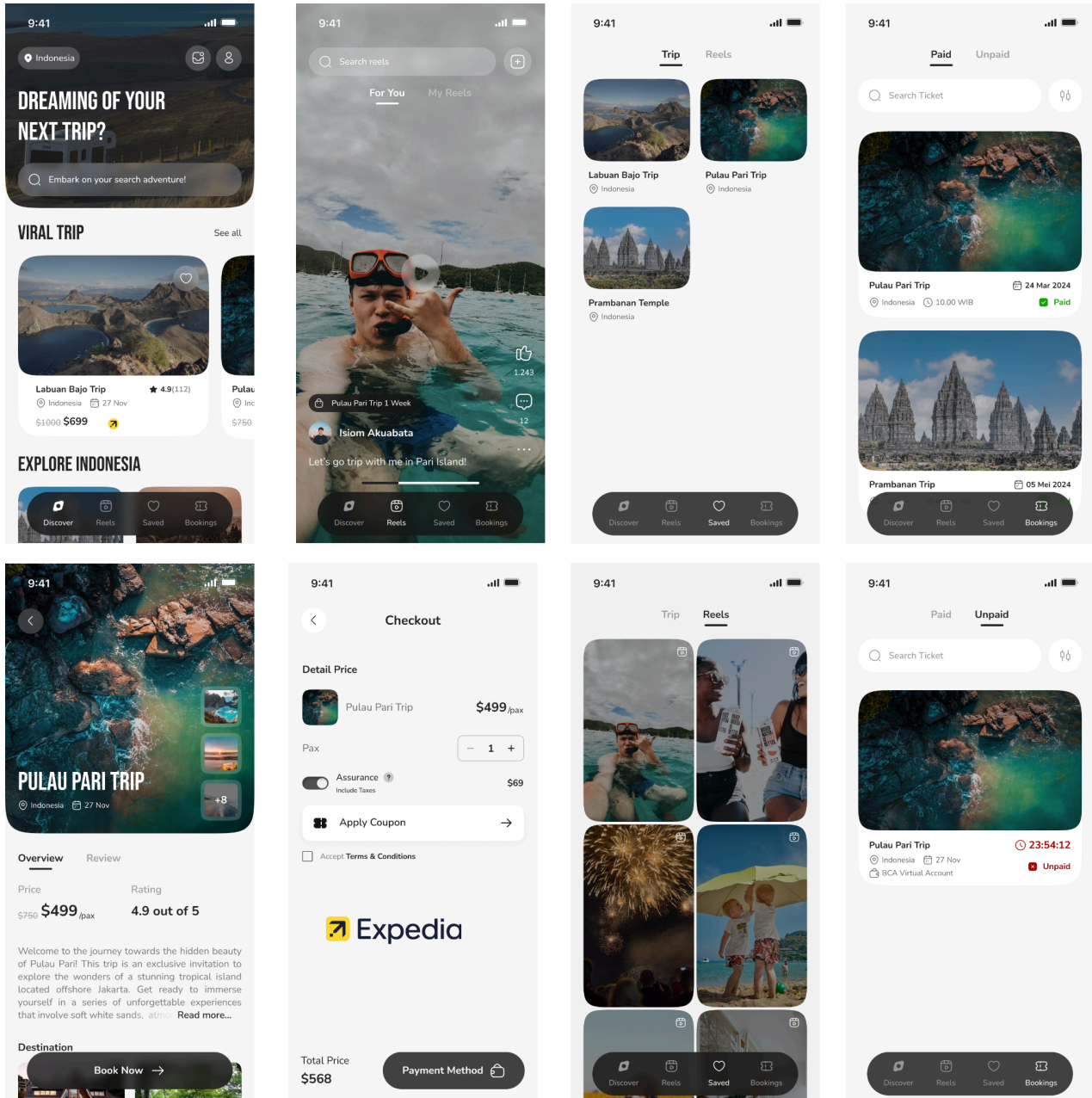
After showcasing our prototype to users, we learned that a major concern was trust and reliability when traveling with strangers. To address this, we implemented:

- Verification and social proofing features, such as mutual friend connections and past traveler ratings.
- Customizable trip preferences to match users based on travel styles and interests.

User Flows/Mockups

Userflow:

<https://www.figma.com/board/HxdKNWFUA9fGe5ec56lsDi/Vaca.io?node-id=0-1&p=f&t=cIMDH7zyvU2jAktq-0>



Future Steps

What We Learned from Speaking to Customers

- Users prefer a mix of personal and automated recommendations for travel companions.
- Many travelers want a flexible booking system to accommodate last-minute changes.
- Integrating budgeting tools would help groups manage shared expenses efficiently.

Possible Additional Problems to Address

- Expanding beyond individual travelers to small businesses or corporate retreats.
- Incorporating AI-driven travel suggestions based on past trips and interests.
- Enabling local activity booking for more immersive experiences.

Learnings

PM's Learnings

"Before joining the cohort, I never thought of this idea. Although I knew it was a painpoint I had experience, delving into the documentation process was never envisioned. The cohort taught me what I could do with AI and how I can use it to automate features on my App.

I am excited about the next phase of my idea!

My mentor was fantastic! His recommendations were mindblowing, I get to dive into lots of product management articles and podcasts to enhance the features I build for my customer.

Thanks to Co.lab for the learnings so far!