Project Report

An online platform
to connect the Artisans to team lal10

Ridhima Tapia
Interaction Design
176330012

IDC School of Design
अभिकल्प विद्यालय

IIT Bombay

Acknoweledgement

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Last but not the least I would like to thank my sister and my family for their constant encourangement and support throughout the duration of the project.

Contents

About the company

lal10 is a technology driven B2B platform for global need of authentic Indian handloom and handicraft products. lal10 creates a difference in the lives of its largest stakeholder , 'The Artisans' by empowering them with design and material innovations so that the value of their product increases multifold.

It creates a seamless and efficient supply chain powered by artisan micro-enterpreneurs called cluster champions, who facilitate production, crowd sourcing, quality checks, packaging and delivery from a craft cluster.

Abstract

This report details the design process from research to prototyping an eponymous application for lal10. This application aims to connect the artisans to lal10. The app is not only a communication platform but also an ecosystem where artisans can get information about the current market, market demands, and best practices. The Artisans can also set up their own shops online, create a catalogue of their products and download it.

The primary research was conducted over a period of two weeks with different clusters of artisans belonging to different areas and backgrounds. The same users were also consulted for user testing and studies.

The development of the app reached the protoyping stage, from paper prototypes used for testing and then was further developed to hi-fidelity clickable wireframes.

This report contains in detail the process involded in the formulation and development of the app till it's later stages of protoyping.

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Introduction

In the past artisans used to travel to different areas and different states to sell their products. Then came the era of technology. Though artisans still travel to states for exhibitions and door to door publicity of their products but techonology has made it easier.

With the access of technology in variety of consumer retail segments, applications like WhatsApp provides a friendly platform to sell products, but WhatsApp has its own limitations when it comes to meeting the various requirements the artisan may have.

The current business model of lal10 has all the dealings with the artisans over whatsapp and calls. They are following a reactive approach where the client places the order to lal10 and lal10 sources the right artisans and places the order to them. The business model right now is not properly structured and creates a lot of confusions at different stages which does not give a good experience to the artisans as well as the team lal10. The team lal10 on one side often gets confused with information such as which artisans to source , keeping a check on order proceedings, payments etc as there are an overwhelming amount of orders going on at a time. On the other hand, the artisan are doubtful of things such as assurity of payments, a written purchase order, proper specifications of the product, will the client accept his product or not, Trust issues with the client etc.

So to solve all these above mentioned issues the need to design an application/ web solution surfaced. There was a need for an app/website that can empower the artisans to sell their products quicker and more efficiently while also being simpler and easier to use and adapt for the atisans.

This application was to address major problems in the craft sector such as the tracking of payments, Tracking of inventory, the unclarity about the specifications of the products, proper generation of purchase orders and the non-visibility of inventory that is being made in the craft clusters in real-time, the knowledge of which can streamline the sales process of the company, multifolds and help in creating more impact in the form of artisan livelihoods.

Apart from solving the major issues the application also aimed to help artisans monitor their real time inventory and allow them create a market for their already existing products i.e a proactive approach.

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Problem statement

To build a bridge between the artisans and team lal10 which will resolve their issues and help the artisans grow more. The new environment designed should be more than just an app, an ecosystem which will be a communication platform and also provide services to artisans parallely.

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Understanding the Process

A better understanding of the process is illustrated below in the journey map which follows the order and flow of the current business model.
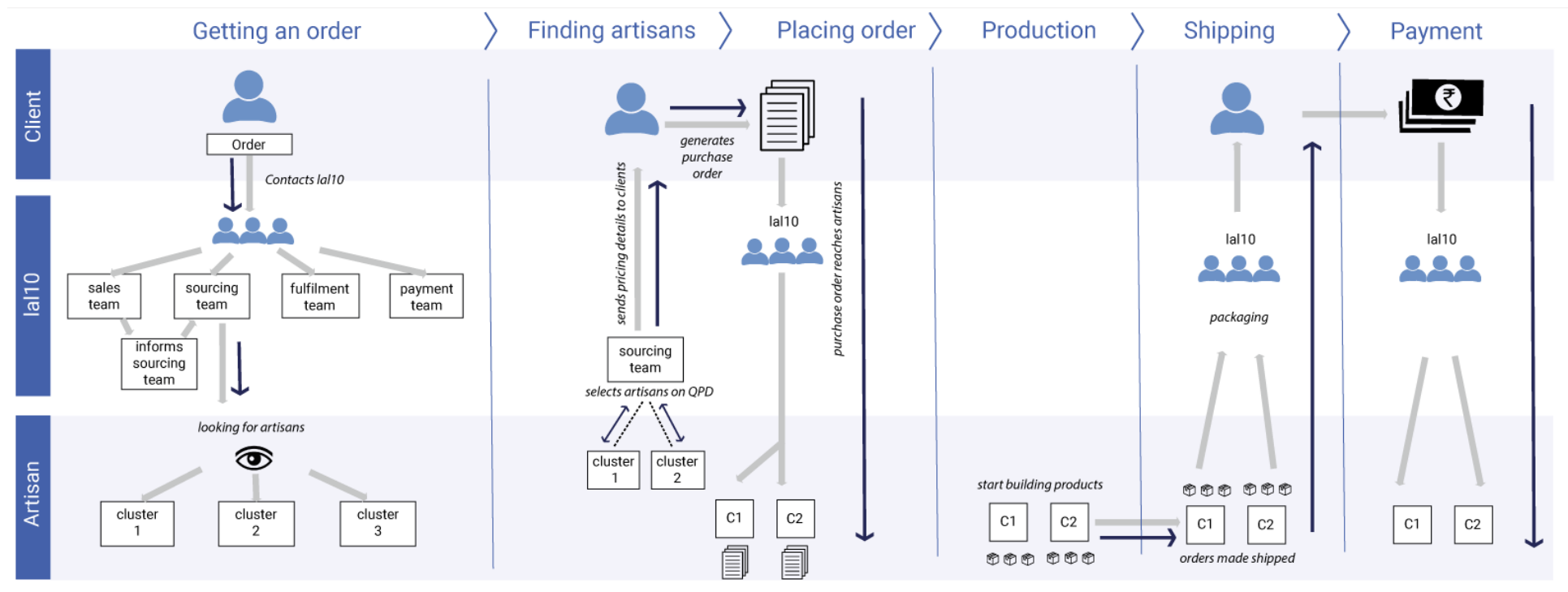

Fig 1. journey map of placing an order involving the client and artisans with lal10 being the moderator.

Primary Research

User Studies

The main stakeholders involved were identified as

- The artisans

- lal10's Fulfilment team

- Sourcing team

- Payment team

- Sales team

I started my user studies process by conducting the interviews with all the teams involved in the process. The interviews were focused on the ' The artisans'.

The interviews were conducted with following research questions:

- What is their major source to sell their products?

- How much do they rely on the online media for selling products?

- How friendly are they with using whatsapp?

- What are the issues they adresss while taking orders on whatsapp?

- Do they take bulk orders or just small orders?

- How do they think their business can be improved?

The first set of interviews were conducted in Janpath handloom house and Delhi haat where a craft exhibitions were underway. In Janpath a total of 11 users were interviewed.

Fig 2. A banarasi saree artisan at janpath Handloom house, filling in his contact details.

Fig 3. A bag and cushion maker lady outside janpath. She uses whatsapp to take and fulfil orders from clients.

In Delhi haat a total of 10 artisans were interviewed. All the artisans paracticed diffrent crafts from madhubani paintings, dhurries, ceramics, jute, wooden and metal products.

The second set of interviews were conducted at the factories where the craftsmen worked. A total of 3 users were interviewed, out of which 2 were from the jute factories in Delhi and the third wasa coordinator in a Chandigarh based NGO working with village ladies on Punjabi crafts.

Fig 4. A jute factory situated in Bhajanpura area Delhi.

The third set of interviews were conducted with the Soot atisans from Gujarat. A total of 2 ladies were interviewed. One was a middle aged woman and the other one was an elderly woman who couldn't understand hindi, which made the interview challenging but a lot of insightful comments were drawn.

Fig 5. Geeta ben ' a soot artsian' from Gujarat came for training people in HCL, Noida

The fourth set of interviews were telephonic interviews with artisans all over India. I was added to 3 all India groups on whatsapp— the craft channels with artisans and buyer from different states. A total of 20 users were interviewed through these groups.

Apart from Interviweing artisans I was able to talk to Mr. Pankaj who is the admin of all the all India craft channels whatsapp group. His insights along with suggestions to observe and study the craft channels were helpful. These whatsapp groups were like a platform connecting the artisans and buyers directly and Mr. Pankaj acted as a facilitator or a helper to both the sides.

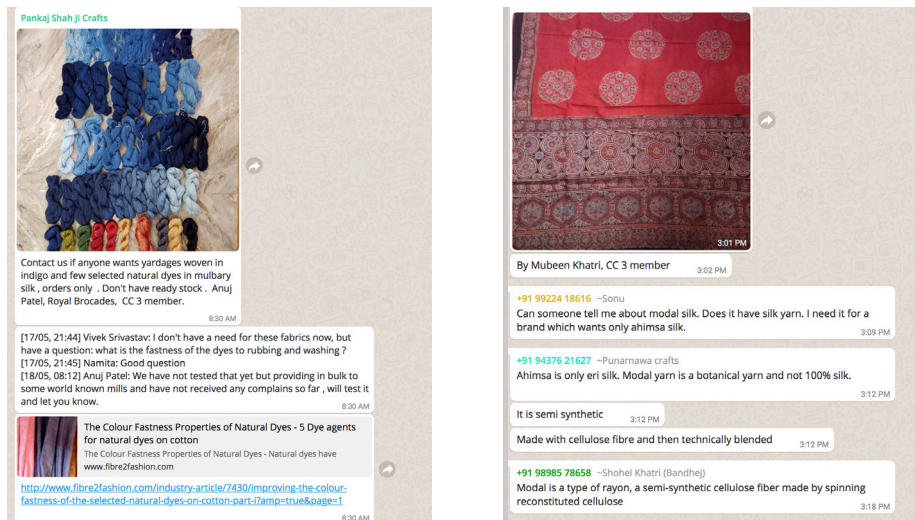Here are some of the screen shots of the group chats from all india craft channels.

Fig.5 Screenshots from diffrent craft groups. Mr. Pankaj acting as a facilitator.

Observing these craft groups actually helped in developing the user experience more better.The role of Mr. Pankaj in the group Provided many insights as he was acting as bridge between the artisans and the buyers.

Mapping User statements

From the use research, the comments and insights that were observed and noted down were assembled together on a chart. Similar statements were mapped together and an affinity was created forming various categories and sub categories. This furthered my understanding of the users and inferences were drawn along with the creation of a user persona.

Fig 6. mapping user statements to reach inferences

Findings and Insights

Artisans want recognition of their work and they are trying to adapt new methods which bring recognition and can enhance their growth. On being asked about their views about new online media, they state that they will be happy to learn the new platforms which help them grow but their only concern was that they wanted personal interaction as it will be easier for them if things are taught in person to them. They understand the potential of technology but they are somewhere struggling to adapt to it. Even while knowing that e-mail is a better option to receive and send orders, they rely more on whatsapp. This stems from their reluctance to learn new things or their perception of complexities of these new media. On the other hand they are very clear with the concept model of whatsapp. And they don't see any issues with whatsapp directly but their statements infer that there are problems using whatsapp. They require aid in marketing their products, designing products as per the market trend, making catalogues and clicking better pictures for them.

The major issue they face is with the product dimensions, purchase orders and payments. There is no clear data or tracking provided on above mentioned areas. They want the clients to agree on their terms for payments which never happens.

Secondary Research

A research on existing or relatable platforms in the same fields was conducted.

- Gocoop appto track inventory
- Whatsapp for business
- Meesho, a platfrom for women
- Talk to Mr. Pankaj Shah
- Kalakaar app
- Etsy App for selling

Exploring these apps and platforms helped further an understanding of what could be good and what wouldn't work in lal10's app.

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Personna
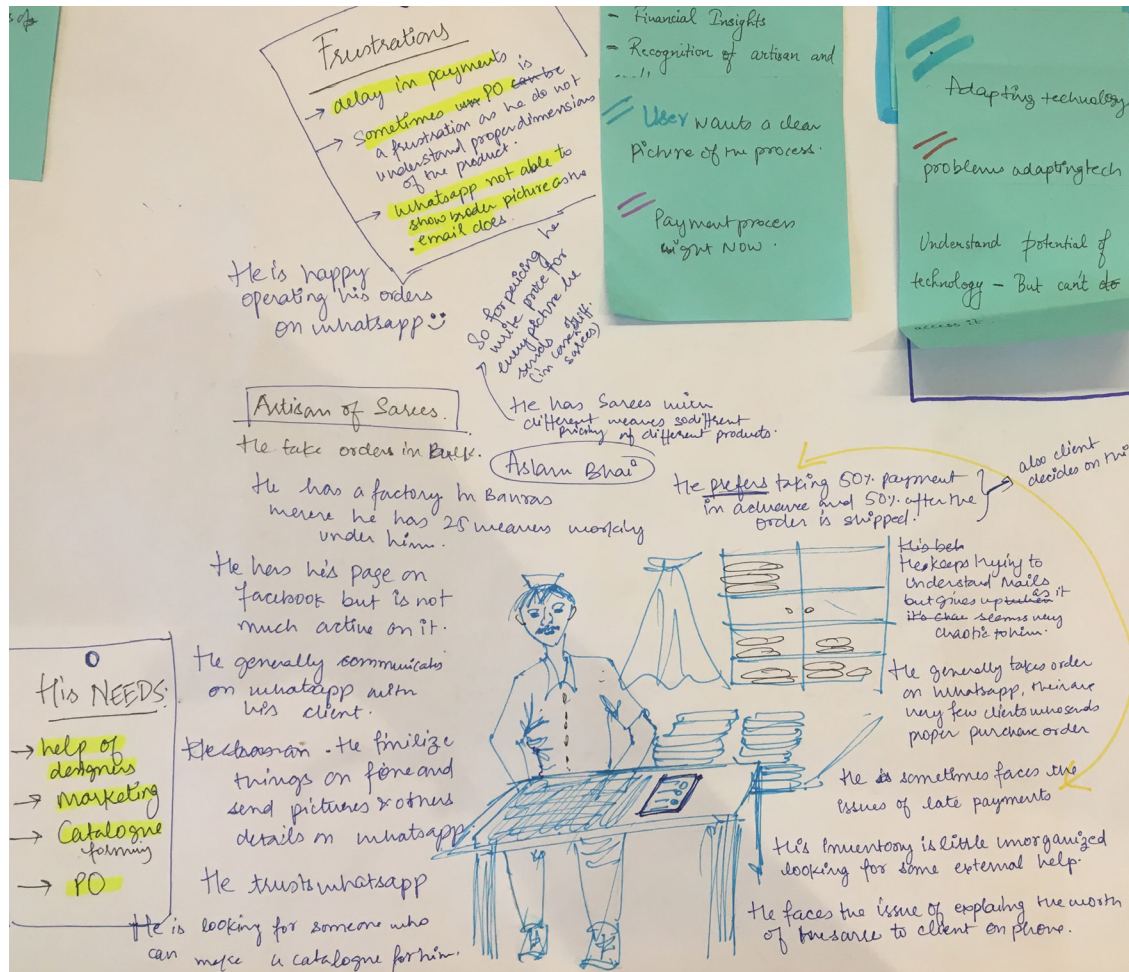
User Frustrations

- Delay in payments

- Not able to look on to the broader picture of order as the email does.

- Unable to understand the proper specifications of the product as purchase order is not sent

User Needs

- Finding market for his products

- Catalogue formation

- Help in refining the designs

- Understanding of market demands

- Recognition of his products

Design Goal and scope

The goal of the application was to make the communication between the artisans and team lal10 much more easier and smoother. Apart from inferences from primary and secondary research, the design needed to take the following into consideration.

The goals that Interface Design should address :

• Simplification of registeration process

• Reduction of choices

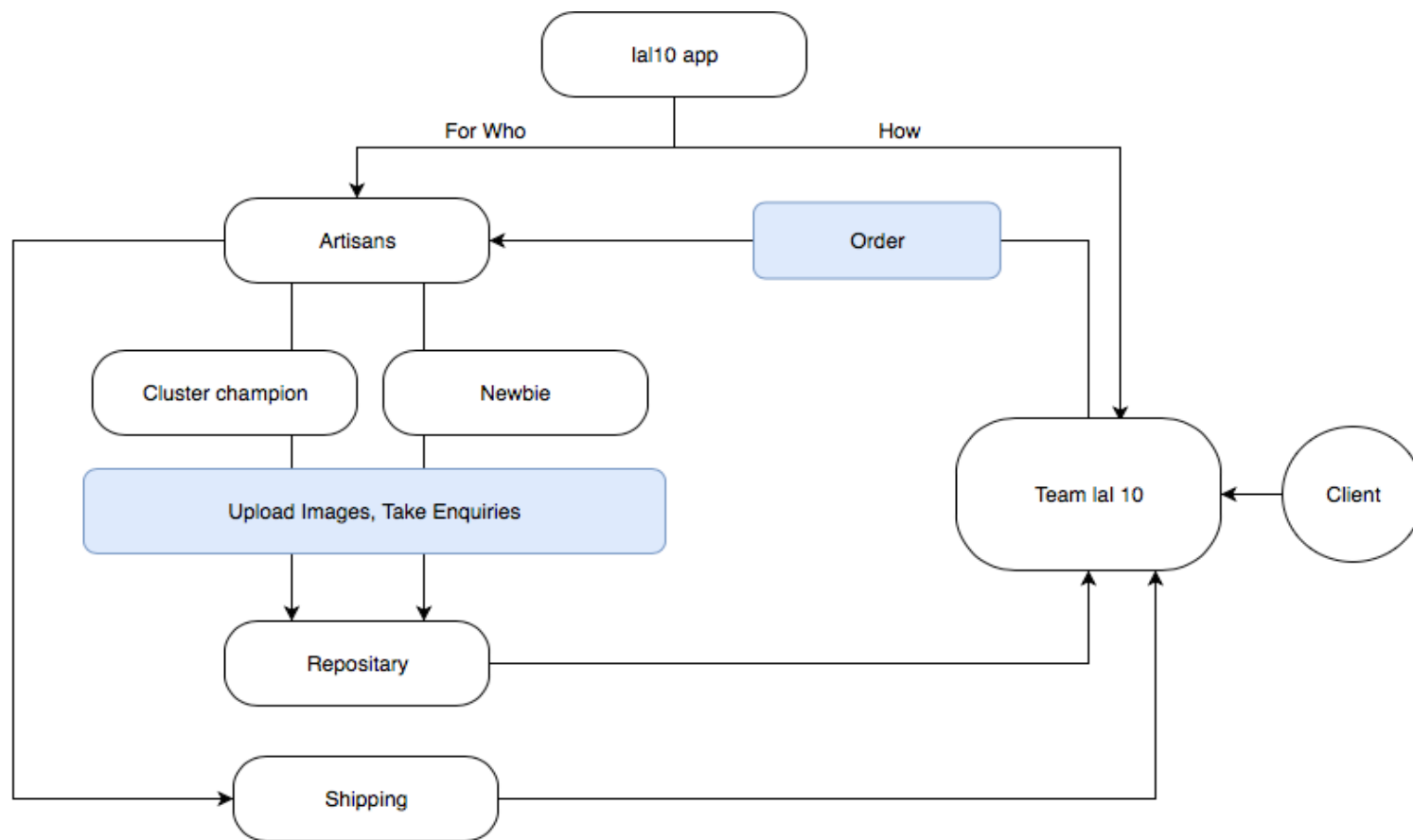• Freeing user from cognitive load

• Sacrificing features with less relevance in users context

Functional goals :

• The system should track the payments

• The artisans should be able to update their real time inventory

• The order production should be made visible to lal10

• Purchase order should be a mandatory thing
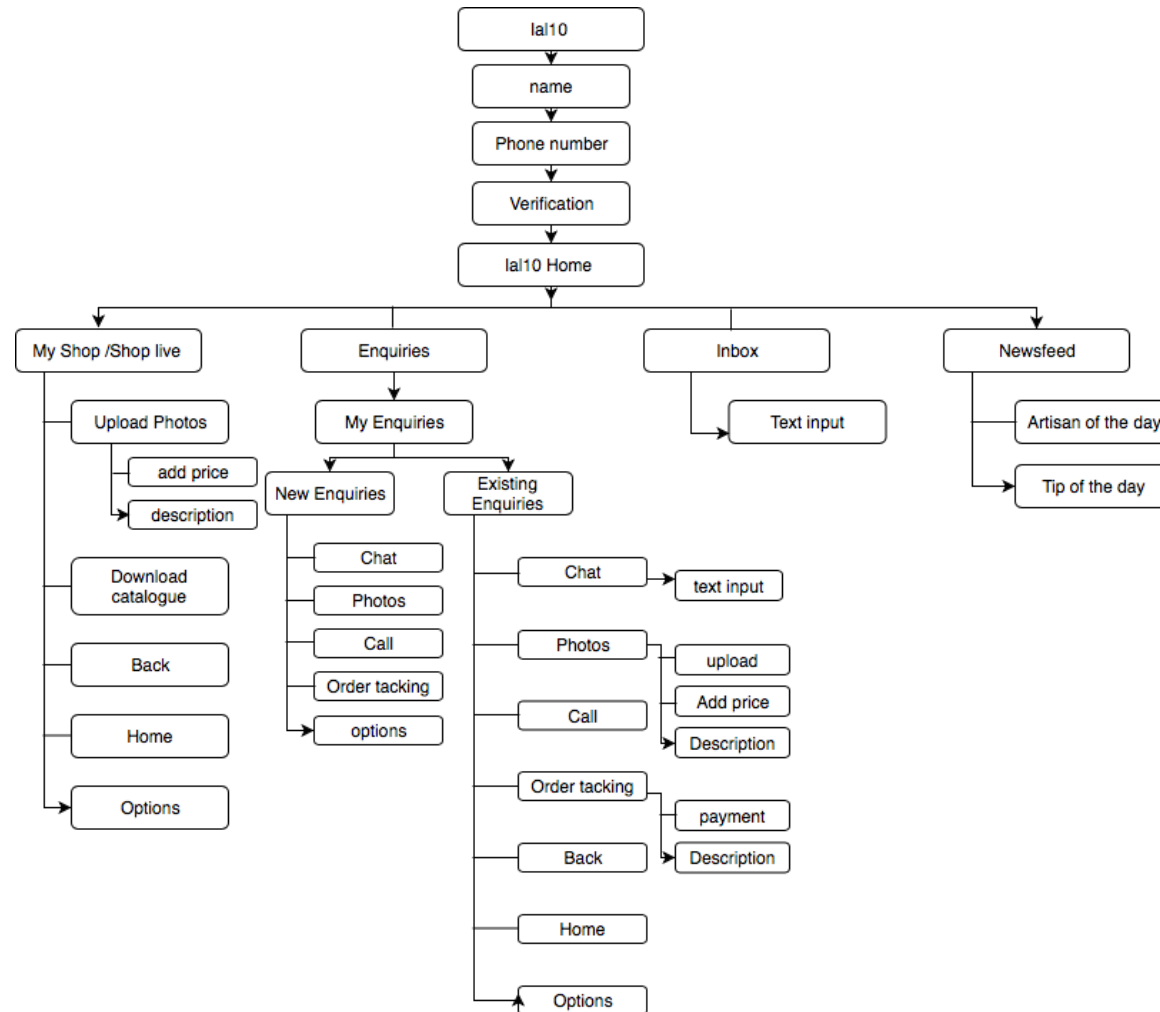
• Communication should be more easier and smoother

User Experience Goals

• Navigation should be easy i.e the system should be self intuitive

• It should be very easy and simple to understand

Concept map

Information Architecture

lal10 → name → Phone number → Verification → lal10 Home

lal10 Home branches:

My Shop /Shop live
- Upload Photos
  - add price
  - description
- Download catalogue
- Back
- Home
- Options

Enquiries
- My Enquiries
  - New Enquiries
    - Chat
    - Photos
    - Call
    - Order tacking
    - options
  - Existing Enquiries
    - Chat → text input
    - Photos → upload, Add price, Description
    - Call
    - Order tacking → payment, Description
    - Back
    - Home
    - Options

Inbox
- Text input

Newsfeed
- Artisan of the day
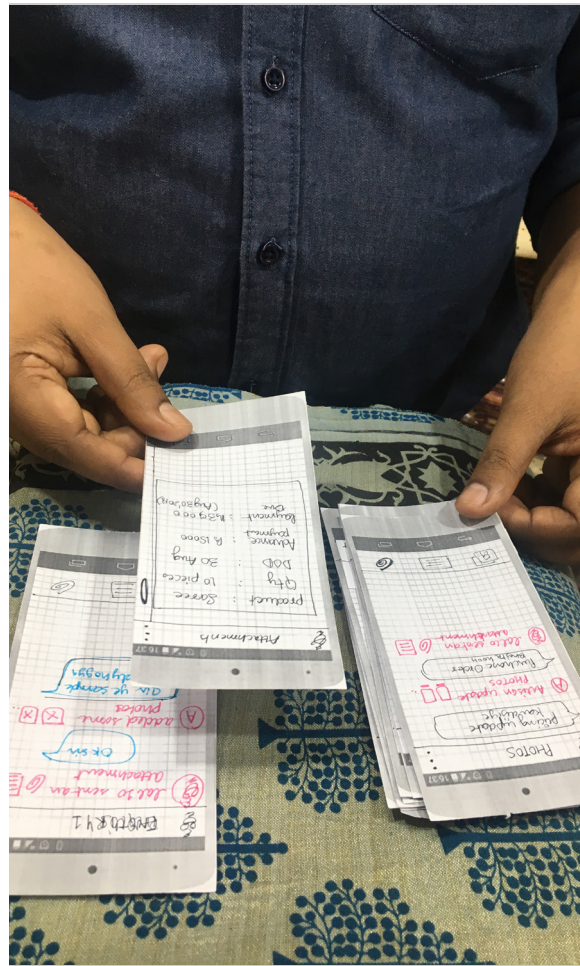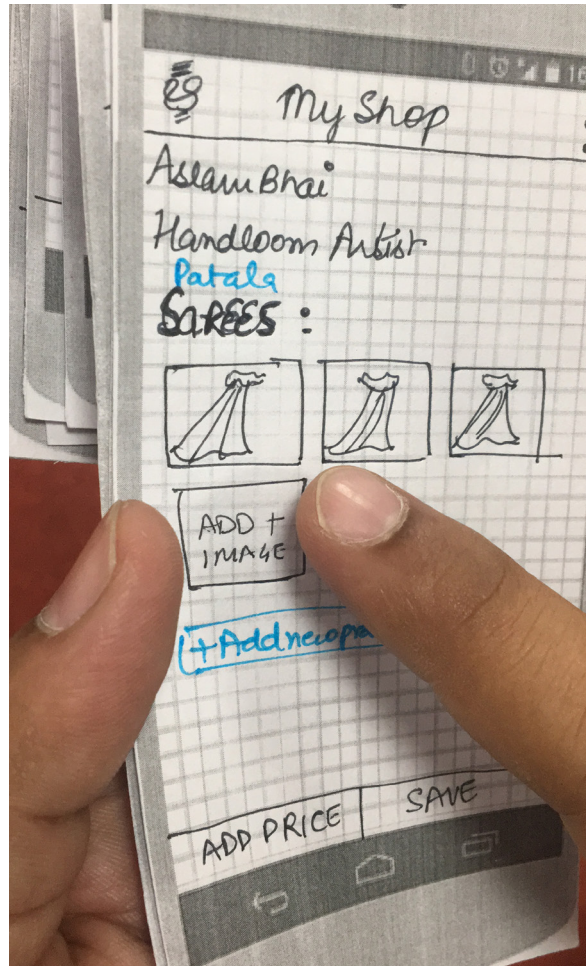- Tip of the day

Low fidelity wireframes

Keeping Users needs and design goals in mind I started developing low
fidelity wireframes for the app.
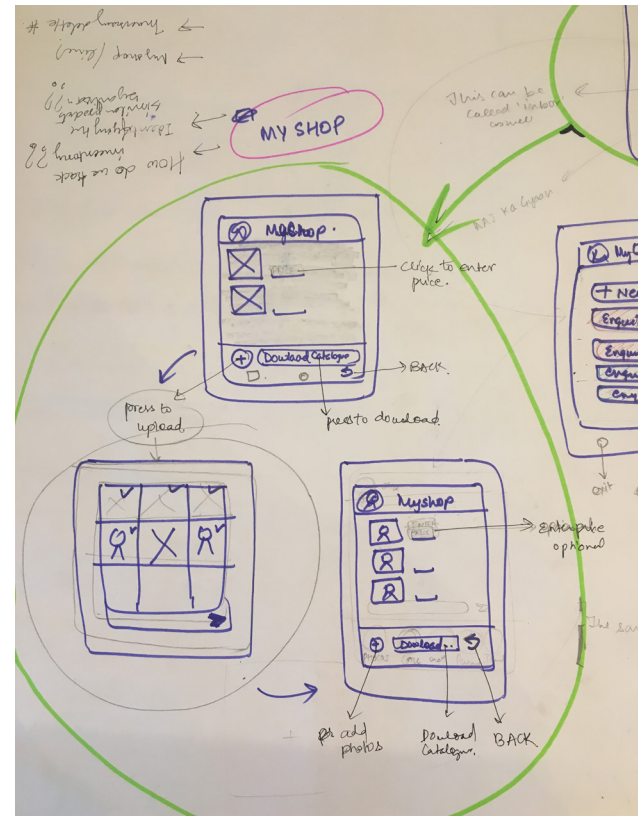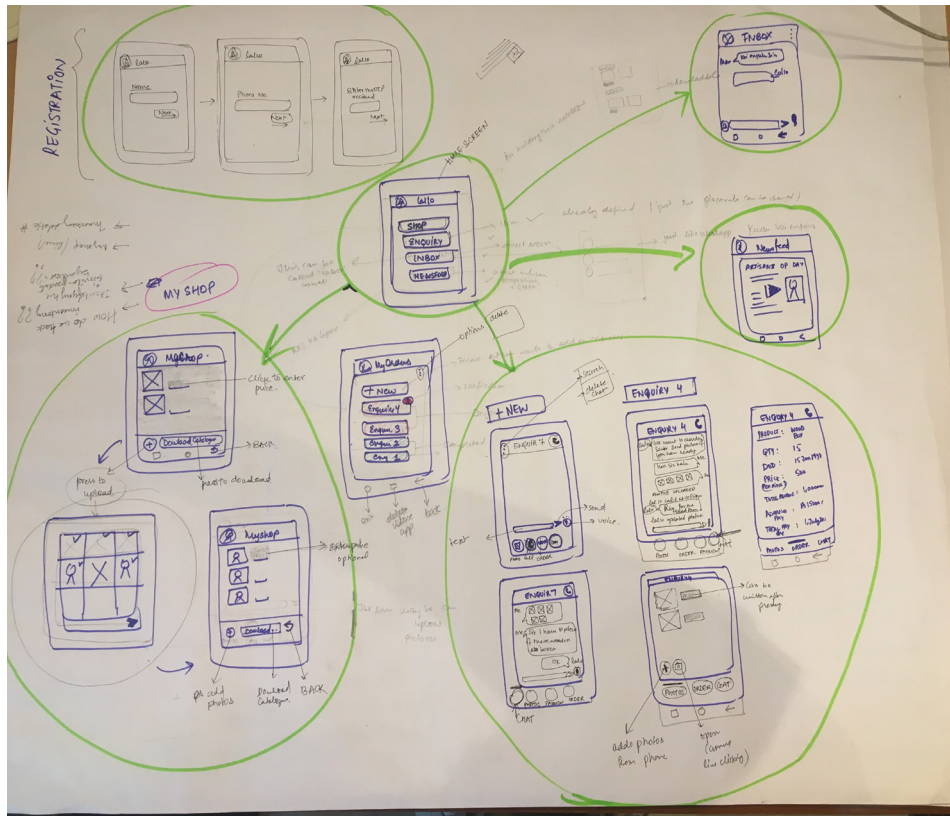
Paper Prototyping
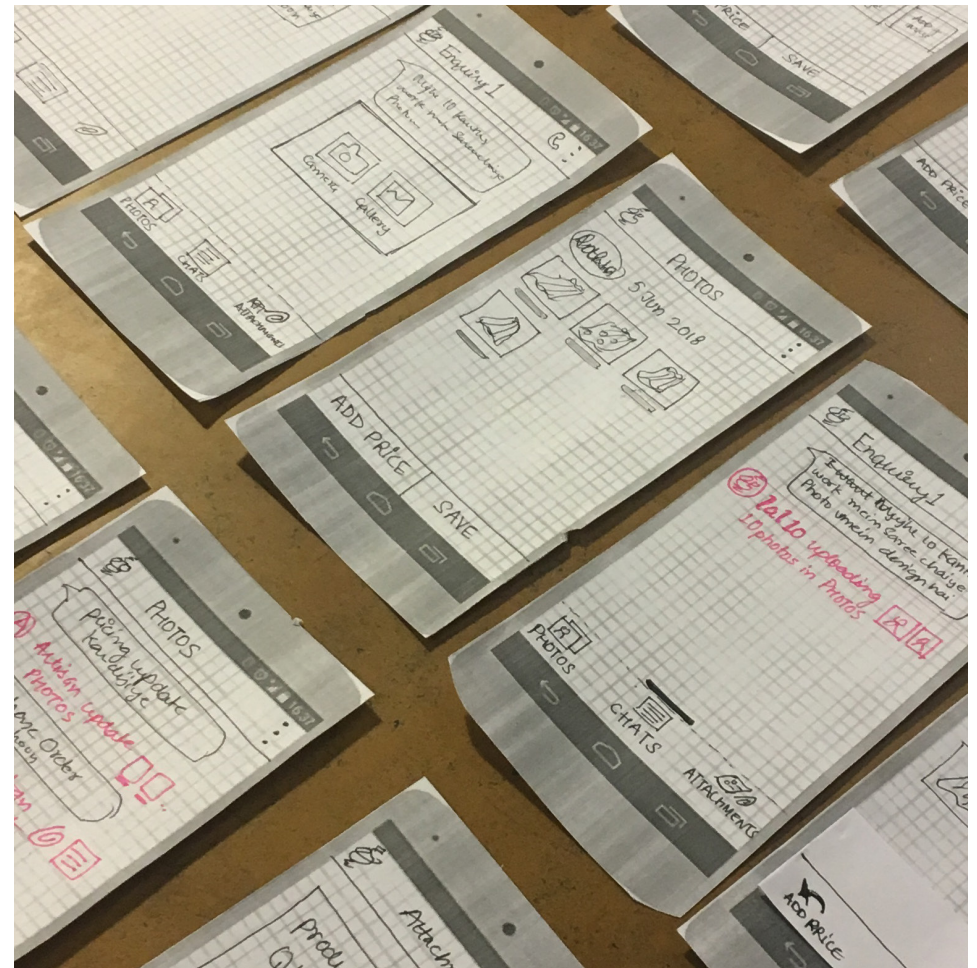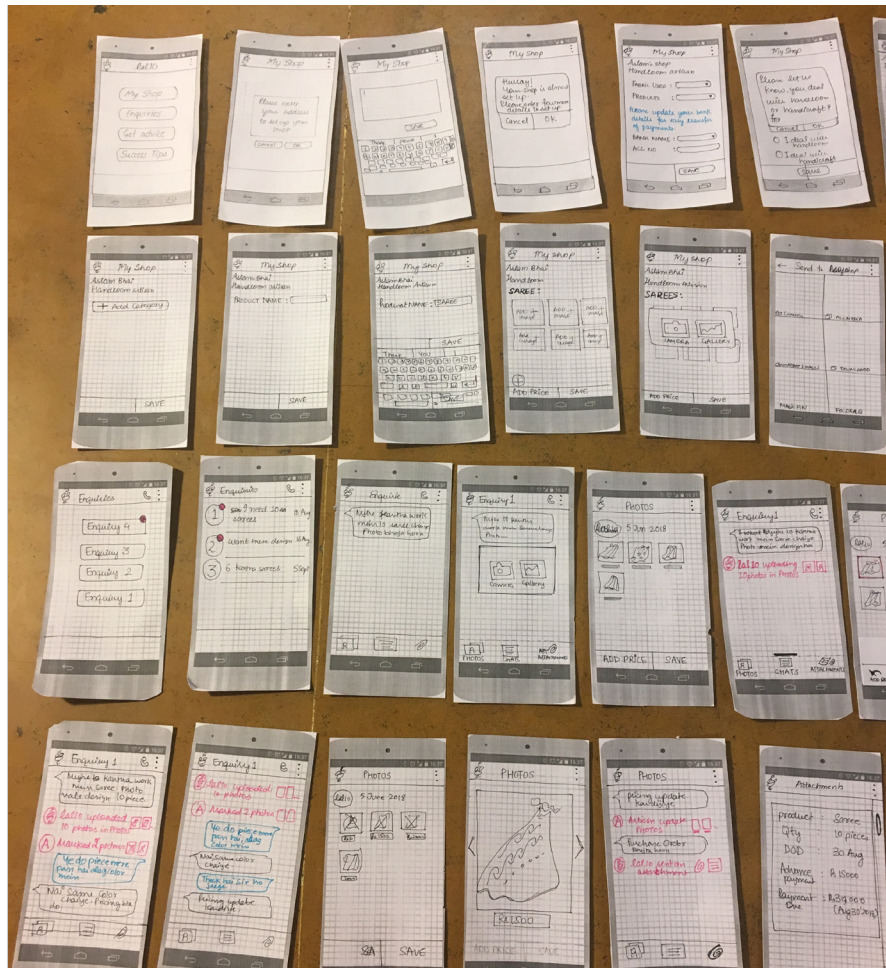
Testing

Testing was being conducted with them same set of users who were interviewed for primary research

Testing Outcomes

- Artisans were more familiar with the word shop than catalogue

- Mostly everyone voted for the my shop live option

- Categorization was bit challanging for handloom artisans

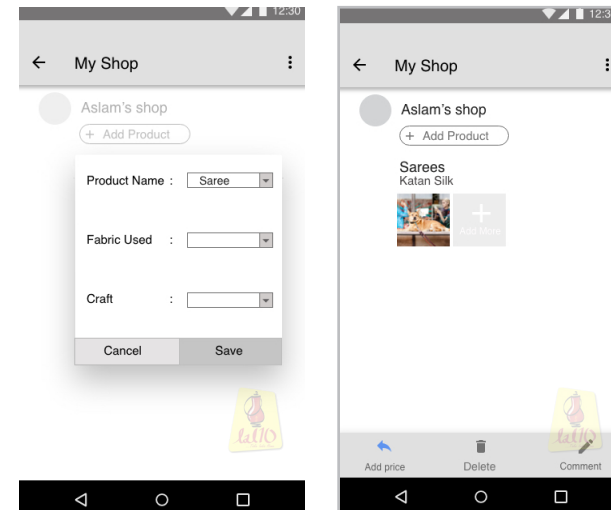- Most of the Users found the interface very easy and simple

Consedering all the testing results , hi fidelity screens were made and a clickable prototype was developed.
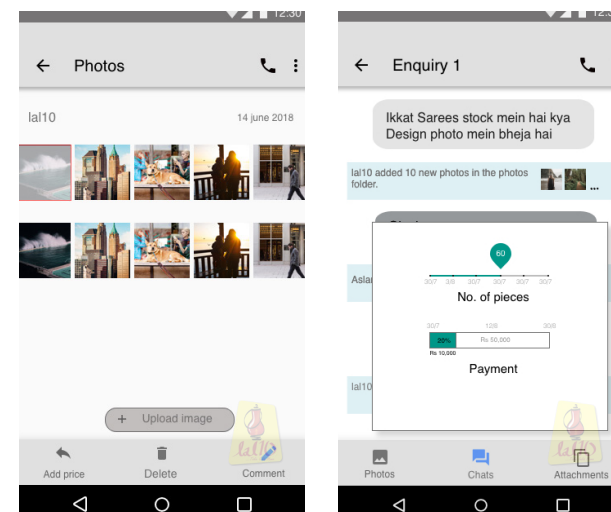
High fidelity wireframes

Home Screens
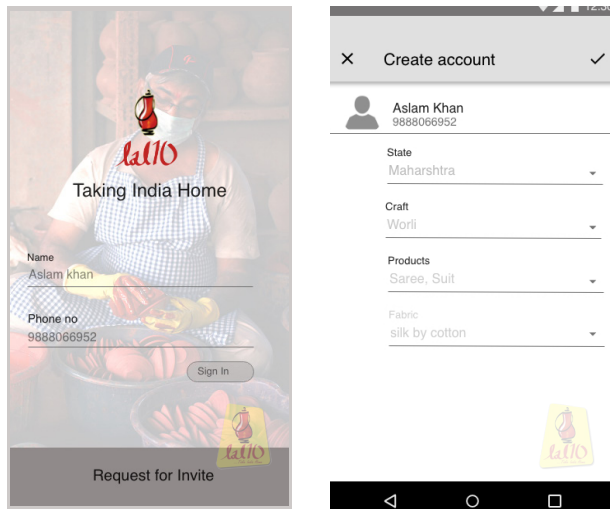
My Shop Screens

Enquiry Screens

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