Prepared for





csue1030 APPLIED UX DESIGN Assignment 1

RESEARCH REPORT

FOOD FOR THOUGHT PREPARED BY:

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RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Syzl's current kitchen listing process is in need of improvement to ensure users are able to set accurate kitchen availability, with specific attention on refining the rates and availability feature. Currently, the rates and availability feature is not accurate and users are not keeping it updated which results in cancelled bookings.

The methods used in our research phase include:

- 1. Heuristic Analysis
- 2. Usability Testing
- 3. Personas
- 4. User Interviews

Each research method explored the overall listing creation process with a focus on the rates and availability feature. The user interviews explored how individuals in kitchen management use scheduling tools and calendars, while the heuristic analysis and usability test analyze what is currently working and not working on Syzl's website.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- The kitchen management industry lacks standardization when it comes to scheduling. Kitchen managers don't necessarily use the same scheduling tools, however, traditional calendar views are preferred. In addition, kitchen managers may not be "tech-savvy", and often lack the skills to easily navigate an app or website such as Syzl.
- In general, Syzl's listing creation process is too long and the rates and availability feature is too complicated for the average user. The rates and availability feature specifically does not match other websites that use a calendar/availability feature, creating a hurdle for users. In addition to being too complex, the rates and availability feature does not contain clear instructions on how to set a date as unavailable, or how to bulk edit certain days.



HEURISTIC ANALYSIS

This heuristics analysis evaluated the Syzl website, focusing on the listing creation process with specific analysis on the hourly rates and availability functions. This analysis is divided into three parts, account creation, listing creation, and hourly rates θ availability. Within these three segments each heuristic failure is noted and explained in detail.

The 10 Usability Heuristics by Jakob Nielsen were considered, and this analysis was completed by two evaluators reviewing the Syzl website on desktop computers. The Syzl website failed to meet each of the ten Heuristics listed below:

- 1. Visibility of System Status
- 2. Match Between System and the Real World
- 3. User Control and Freedom
- 4. Consistency and Standards
- 5. Error Prevention
- 6. Recognition Rather than Recall
- 7. Flexibility and Efficiency of Use
- 8. Aesthetic and Minimalist Design
- 9. Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover From Errors

Part 1: Account Creation

Within the account creation process Syzl fails to meet the error prevention heuristic principle.

Error Prevention:

When a user is creating an account, there appears to be a glitch within the page function. If a user needs to change their browser settings to allow Syzl to access their camera for identity verification, this interrupts the account creation process and causes the "Continue application" button to become deactivated.

Part 2: Listing Creation

Within the listing creation process Syzl fails to meet the following heuristic principles: match between system and the real world, user control and freedom, consistency and standards (both internal and external), aesthetic and minimalist design and help and documentation. Below is a breakdown of how those principles are not met in detailed descriptions.

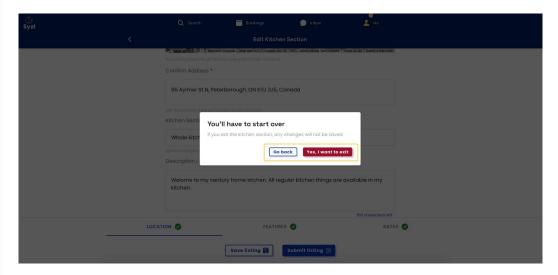
Match Between System and the Real World

The form field for booking extensions, with the text "Allow makers to extend their bookings if they need extra time" is grouped with insurance and photos. This specific text speaks to availability and should be grouped or included within the availability section.



User Control and Freedom

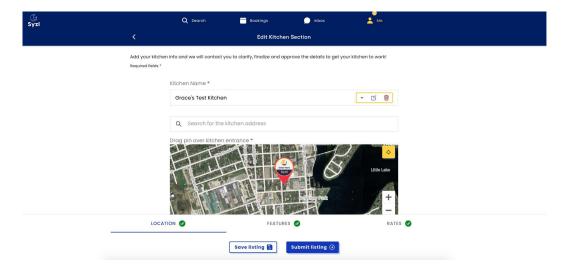
When a user is editing their listing and clicks the back button, the options in the warning prompt are "go back" and "yes, I want to exit". If the user clicks the "go back" button, they are actually left on the page they were currently working on. The "go back" option language is confusing and misleading.



Consistency and Standards

Internal Consistency:

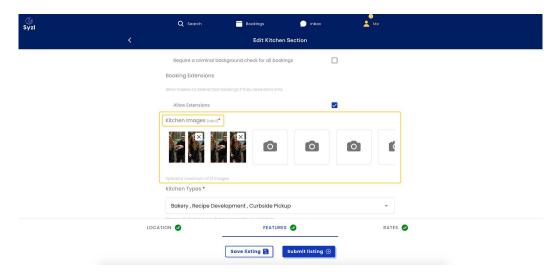
The first form field of the listing creation process requires the user to click the save icon to save the name of the kitchen before continuing, while similar forms autosave and do not require the user to click to save. While it is easy for the user to follow the instructions to save, it may create frustration and confusion early in the listing creation process. The kitchen name form field also requires the user to select an edit icon if they would like to revise the name. The user is not able to simply click and edit the title. This is inconsistent with the rest of the form fields within the site, but additionally inconsistent with traditional form fields. The change address field follows the kitchen name field, and the change address field has an edit icon and functions differently than the kitchen name field.





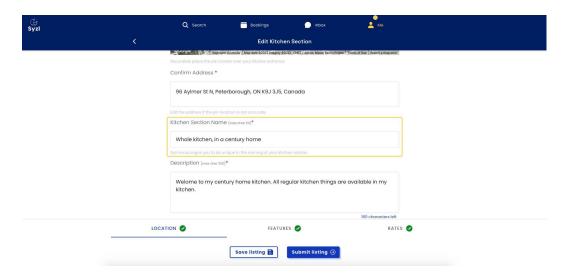
External Consistency:

- The drop down menus that allow the user to select kitchen type, dietary restrictions, and equipment types function as a combination of drop down menus and radio or check boxes. This does not follow standards or norms within other websites or apps. The user should be able to select items from the list without a drop down function in traditional checkbox or radio button style.
- Overall the listing creation process lacks hierarchy within the design, and is inconsistent overall. Examples of this include, first a title/heading such as "Kitchen Images," and then the images appear. Below that is an instruction that indicates "Upload a maximum of 12 images." This does not follow standard practices, and makes the flow of the listing creation feel fragmented and unclear.



Aesthetic and Minimalist Design

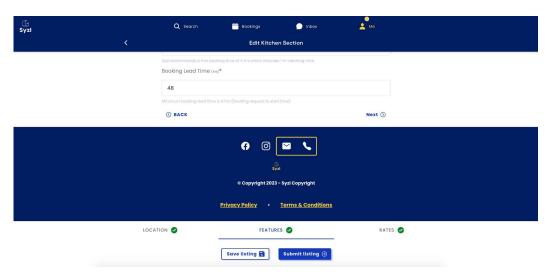
Various text is very small and difficult to read. The information is required, and it should be more clear and more obvious to the user. Examples of small text are "Min 1" within adding kitchen images, and "Max Char. 50" when setting a kitchen name.





Help and Documentation

- Within the listing creation process there are no additional resources available to learn more about creating a listing or request help from Syzl directly if needed. Specifically when creating listing availability, resources should be available for the user to understand how this calendar function works, in basic ways such as help articles, or FAQ.
- The footer does include a contact icon in both phone and email, however they are not entirely obvious or clear as they are paired with the social icons and no corresponding text. It is unclear if they are meant for general contact or for help specifically.



Part 3: Hourly Rates & Availability

The bulk of the heuristics errors or failures fall within the hourly rates and availability function.

The hourly rates & availability function fail to meet all of the heuristics within the analysis, excluding help and documentation.

Visibility of System Status

When the user is working within the hourly rates section, an indication of where they are in the listing process is no longer visible. This means that the user is unclear of where they are within the process. The hourly rates section functions almost as a pop up, but the status bar and other visual indicators are no longer available when the user is within this portion.

Match Between Systems and the Real World

- It is not clear that the row of buttons with the day names are for copying rates rather than switching the days of the week. It appears as though users should be able to click the buttons to edit the rates for the corresponding day, rather than cycling through the days of the week with the arrows.
- Currently, there is no way to switch the view of the calendar to view the entire week or month at the same time. Users might need to compare multiple days side by side as they would on their phone, computer, or paper calendars.
- The language at the top of the rates page says "Add your kitchen info and we will contact you to clarify, finalize and approve the details to get your kitchen to work!" is unclear, as this implies to the user that they will be contacted in all circumstances. If this is the process within listing creation this text can remain as is, but if the users are only contacted when there are issues with their listing, this should be removed.



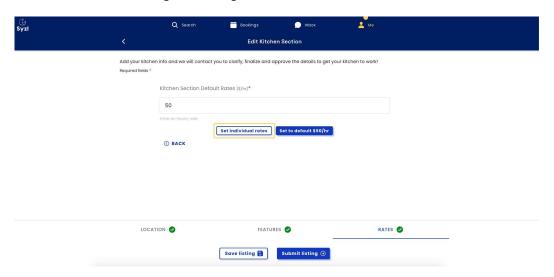
User Control and Freedom

Changing the daily rate or default rate automatically changes any time slots that were listed as unavailable to being available at the new rate. It is easy to accidentally reset hourly rates and unavailable time slots while editing kitchen availability. There is no way for the user to confirm or undo these changes once they have selected to update the daily rate.

Consistency and Standards

Internal Consistency

When the user arrives at the hourly rates page, the two buttons that appear are "Set Individual Rates" and "Set Default Rate X/\$ Hour." Not showing or visually indicating that a calendar feature or function will appear or populate may allow a user to bypass this function without thinking or noticing the ramifications of this choice.



The option to set unavailable days ("Set Sunday as unavailable") has a different style than the other buttons, including its static state and its rolled over state. As it's styled with red text and no frame, rather than as a blue button it may not be obvious that this is a clickable feature or function the user can use.





The option to set a rate to a specific time slot and then drag the tab down in order to apply the rate to other time slots is a feature that is uncommon and unusual. It is not something commonly used on other apps or websites. If this feature is new to users, it may be confusing, or difficult for the user to use.



- When the user is within the hourly rates function the lower breadcrumb and status bar disappears and is replaced with a large done button. This is inconsistent with the rest of the functionality and design of the listing creation process.
- The back and forward buttons to navigate within the listing creation are small, and require the user to scroll to access them. Additionally they are not not visible within the hourly rates function. This is both functionally inconsistent and visually inconsistent. The static elements within the listing creation process are sticky to the footer, but are not within the hourly rates function. These back and forward functions should be added to the sticky area and accessible at all times.

External Consistency

The view of the days to copy hourly rates shows 6 days at a time. The indication of which day the user is working on is unclear, and not indicated by a highlight or a consistent feature. When the user changes the day they are working on, the list of remaining days adjusts. This does not follow the general understanding that a week is 7 days long, but additionally does not follow standard conventions within calendar functions.

Error Prevention

Within the hourly rates page, if a user selects "Set Default X/hr Rate" there is no notification to inform the user that the rate will be applied to all dates and times within the calendar. The user needs to be notified of this change being applied.

Recognition Rather than Recall

When selecting and setting hours within the hourly rates page, there is no overview that shows an overview by week or month. The user must review on a daily basis, which forces a larger cognitive load to be experienced by the user.

Flexibility and Efficiency of Use

Overall, it is unclear and there are no instructions on how a user should change a single hourly time slot to being marked as unavailable.



In order for a user to set a time as unavailable, the user must first select "unavailable" to apply as a blanket to the day in question, and then add in hourly pricing. There is no option to indicate kitchen unavailable on an hourly basis. When thinking about how restaurant spaces and kitchens operate, it is likely that they would have hours they are not available within a 24 hour period, and that they would require this function. This function/feature forces the user to start by inputting that they are unavailable, to then add back what is available. It is not intuitive and does not follow standard functions or processes that are commonly used on other platforms.

Aesthetic and Minimal Design

When working within the hourly rates function, the design is very busy and unorganised. The day that the user is modifying is not positioned or designed in a way that is clear or natural in appearance. There are a considerable number of form fields that represent each hour of the day, and they are stacked in a visually busy way along with other functions and features to copy rates. The design of this page makes it unclear what the various functions of the page are.

Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover From Errors

There is no back or undo function within the hourly rates portion of the listing creation. As the user is setting rates on a daily and hourly basis, they should have the ability to undo or go back within this process.



USABILITY TESTING

This usability test was created to gather data on how well users can complete the tasks involved in creating a kitchen listing. Using Useberry as a host, this test was optimized for desktop and mobile devices.

The test was distributed to individuals who either currently own or manage a business with an industrial kitchen, UX Designers, and friends and family. With a broader pool of testers, a more accurate picture of the usability of Syzl's listing creation process can be painted.

Initial Observations

The qualitative results are analyzed from each user's screen capture and comments. From the screen captures, we can see where exactly each user clicked, how long they stayed on each screen for, and whether or not they clicked the target area.

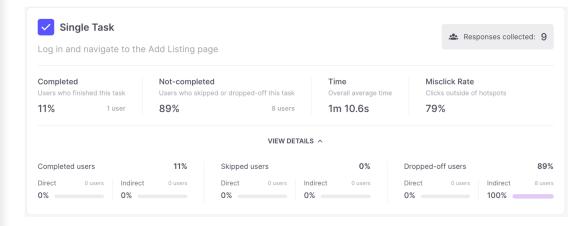
On the usability test optimized for mobile devices, most users struggled to complete the log in process. Some even showed their frustration by tapping the same spots on the screen repeatedly. Although almost all of them did land on the log in/create and account screen, they clicked around to the messages tab, and some of them began searching for listings before dropping out of the test. One user completed the listing creation process and submitted their listing, but missed several of the steps involved, such as setting the rates and availability as specified in the task instructions.

Much like the mobile users, many desktop users struggled with the log in process and ended up searching for listings before dropping out of the test. However, it is worth noting that the users who did complete the log in process rated the process as "easy".

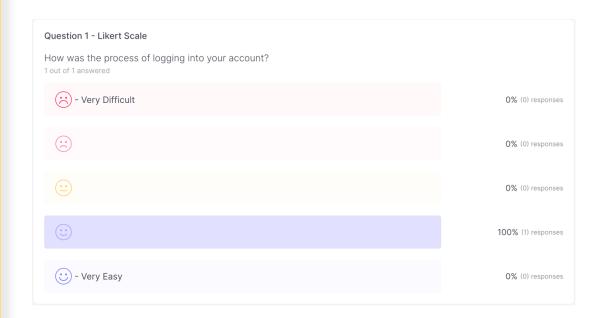
Task

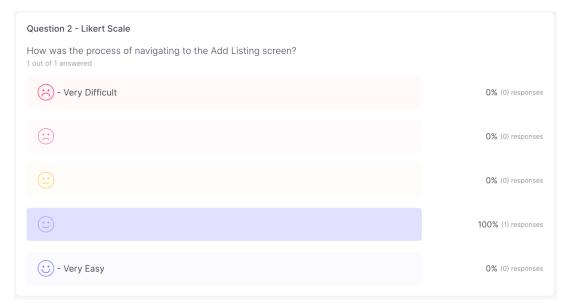
The first task asked users to log in with the credentials provided by our team and then find the "add/edit listing" page. Users were then asked to rate the process of each step on a scale of "Very Difficult" to "Very Easy".

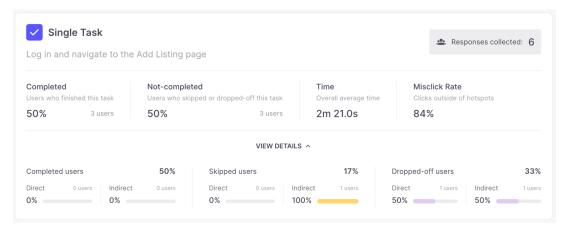
Mobile Test



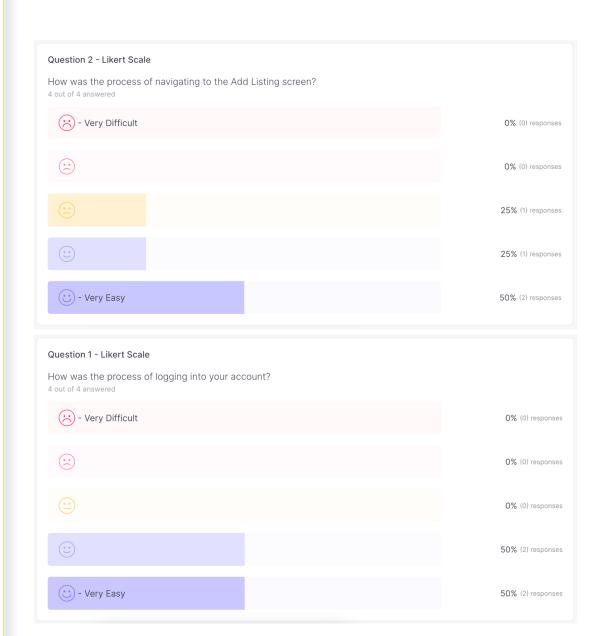












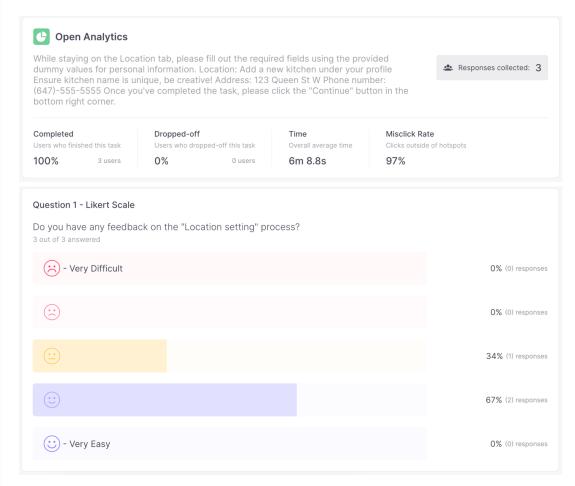


Task

The second task asked users to begin creating a new listing by filling out the kitchen name, address, and phone number (a fake address and phone number were provided by our team). Users were again asked to rate the task and provide comments in they have any.

Mobile Test







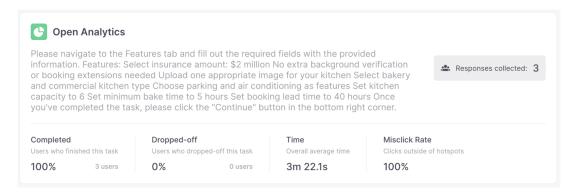
Question: Do you have any comments about the location setting procedure?

User answer: "I'm confused why I'm adding the location before providing my kitchen's name and description. Seems out of sequence. You could review forms on other sites to see how they order the information to make this form match the real world so there isn't any frustration."

User answer: "One of the form fields was hard to understand. Also thought the icons for "Save" and "Edit" could be accompanied by words..."

Task

The third task focused on the features of the listing. Users were given instructions on how to select the features, and were asked to set kitchen capacity to 6, bake time to 5 hours, and booking lead time to 40 hours.







Question: Do you have any feedback on adding kitchen features while creating your listing?

User answer: "I first looked for the feature tab at the top of the page not at the bottom. There are also too many tasks on this page. Had to scroll down too much. I would recommend moving the tabs to a left navigation menu and the process of adding a listing should be broken into themed steps and there should be a progress bar with breadcrumbs, back and next buttons on each page and then a complete button at the end process. As a user, I want to feel I'm progressing from left to right when using a desktop. The scrolling navigation should be used on a mobile device."

User answer: "No features listed in dropdown"

User answer: "The dropdown weren't working so I couldn't add the features"

Task

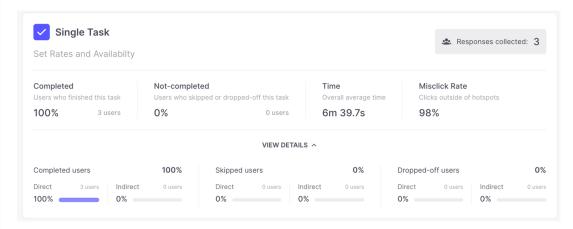
The fourth task focuses on setting rates and availability. This task asked users to set the rates and availability as follows:

Rates: Availability:

Set default rate to \$50 Specify kitchen availability as:

Set Sunday rate to \$40 Mon-Thurs: 6pm-11pm

Friday: Unavailable Sat-Sun: 6pm-10pm







Question: Do you have any feedback on the process of setting your rates and availability for your listing?

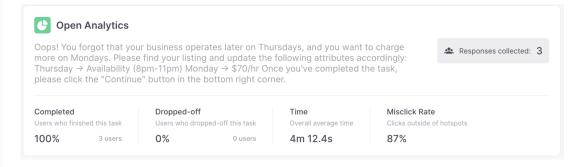
User answer: "Setting up the rates and and availability was waaaaaaay too difficult so I gave up and tried to submit the listing, but then the site wouldn't let me submit until I added the information in the other tabs, but I couldn't remember all of the information I needed to add it. This was not fun at all."

User answer: "Availability options not shown"

User answer: "It took a bit to figure out how to set the hours. Not very obvious."

Task

The fifth and final task asked users to go back and edit their listing, after this, they have completed the test.







Question: Any comments you would like to add regarding the edit listing process?

User answer: "I don't want to update the information because it was already too much of a hassle the first attempt."

User answer: "I'm not sure if it's the prototype but when I changed Monday's rate, it also changed the other days rates, which was frustrating/confusing."

Key takeaways

- 1. Users get frustrated and impatient very quickly. During times when the screen was loading, many users clicked or tapped the blank screen repeatedly.
- 2. Users are distracted. While talking with users who I knew personally about how the test went, many of them apologized and said that they weren't able to finish because they were either busy, or they had accidentally left the test to respond to a text or email.
- 3. The current listing creation process is too long and complicated. Many users dropped out of the test after not being able to complete the first task, although we gave them a time estimate, users were not motivated to continue on.



DAVID MILLER Culinary School Manager

PERSONAS



About

Age: 36

Family: Lives with girlfriend

Location: Toronto, ON

Education: BA of Business

Administration

Languages: English, French, Italian

Technical Proficiency

Internet Mobile Apps **Desktop Applications** Social Networks

Bio

Born and raised in Toronto, David has an energetic, outgoing personality. He graduated business school with a major in Marketing and Business Administration.

After university, David travelled the world and stayed in Italy for 6 months, where his family has roots. Being a young person, he enjoyed the food and amazing nightlife in Rome and Marcelle.

After returning home, he was excited to work in a culinary college, where his appreciation of food and passion for education allowed for him to have a perfect work life balance.

Goals

- Find a way to use the school's kitchen facilities during the summer school break
- Give students the opportunity to learn and experiment outside of the regular school curriculum
- Create partnership with independent entrepreneurs to bring new ideas to the school

Frustrations

- Lack of technical support, no reliable platform to manage kitchen space
- Concerns about the proper use of equipment by young and inexperience workers
- Liability insurance and supervision of potential renters



PERSONAS



About

Age: 46

Family: Married, with two children

Location: Markham, ON

Education: Diploma in Hospitality

Languages: Mandarin, English

Technical Proficiency

Internet

Mobile Apps

Desktop Applications

Social Networks



Bio

Macy immigrated to Canada as a child. Her family runs a small restaurant that sometimes feels like a second home to her. From a very young age, she learned to cook and later to run the business. Her English language skills, and knowledge of Chinese traditions and customs helped her to develop a successful business.

She completed a two-year college certificate in hospitality and then worked as a hotel manager for two years.

Having an entrepreneurial spirit, she always dreamed about owning her own business. She knew that smaller, family restaurants can sometimes have low margins and decided that a commercial facility would be a better choice for her.

Goals

- Build lasting business relationships with people who use commercial kitchen
- Invest in interior decor, so renters can use the kitchens for presentations and food photography
- Open a second commercial kitchen outside of Markham

Frustrations

- The cost of buying, maintaining and replacing the equipment
- Not enough stable revenue to hire staff on permanent basis or invest in marketing
- Difficulties attracting customers outside of the Chinese community and Markham location



INTERVIEWS

Individuals involved in kitchen management were interviewed to investigate challenges within Syzl's kitchen listing procedure. Using affinity mapping, we gathered insights from participants who hadn't previously used a kitchen rental service. In the context of the rapidly evolving restaurant industry and the diverse methods employed, we pinpointed three key themes. Participant input proved valuable in addressing high availability and equipment inconsistency concerns. Our results include findings, recommendations, and suggestions for refining Syzl's listing process in relation to these themes, ultimately enhancing the experience for both kitchen managers and potential renters, irrespective of their prior experience.

Participant Role	Company	Location
Kitchen Manager	Halal Guys	Toronto
Restaurant Manager	OakSide Bar and Lounge	Stouffville
Restaurant Manager/ Event Caterer	Esther Creations	Markham

Summary of Findings

- Inconsistencies exist in the scheduling tools used by kitchen managers, with traditional calendar views being the common feature among all tools.
- A lack of a centralized and standardized equipment maintenance and inventory system exists, with varying frequencies for equipment audits and a lack of a standardized method for conducting audits.
- Hygiene and safety are critical for the smooth running of shared kitchens, and ignoring these issues might reduce overall service quality.

Findings

THEME 1: Inconsistencies in scheduling tools

- Kitchen managers use a variety of scheduling tools, all of which typically use traditional calendar views. These tools include pen and paper checklists, third-party software, iCalender, Excel spreadsheets.
- While managers do plan ahead for events and shifts at least two weekends in advance, the nature of the industry means that unexpected situations often arise, leading to scheduling conflicts.
- Participants do not see any significant pain points in their current scheduling flow and are not actively seeking alternatives to streamline their process.



Quote: "It's usually a two week rule but like I said things happen randomly and it becomes a day to day thing"

Recommendations:

To address the issues of availability inconsistencies and unexpected changes, a more standardized and user-friendly scheduling system can be developed for Syzl's listing process. This can include a flexible week and monthly traditional calendar view for proposed availability and integration with external scheduling tools.

THEME 2: Lack of a centralized and standardized equipment maintenance and inventory system

Kitchen managers use a variety of methods to maintain their equipment, including manual checklists using pen and paper, and relying on staff to maintain equipment properly.

Kitchen managers have different preferences and practices for equipment audits, ranging from daily to every two months.

Participants do not see any significant pain points in their current equipment maintenance flow and are not actively seeking alternatives to streamline their process.

Kitchen audits are personally created and tailored to the individual(s) conducting the audit. However, there is a lack of a standardized method for everyone to understand how to conduct an audit.

Quote: "Just the management itself is involved ... we have a worksheet to go through for what is missing and what is not"

Recommendations:

- Make the equipment selection process more intuitive and user-friendly by using categories, filters, and search functionality. This will help Kitchen Owners find and select the relevant equipment more efficiently.
- Add short copy and images for each piece of equipment on the standardized list to help users understand the exact items they should be selecting. This can reduce confusion and improve accuracy.
- Integrate a reminder and checklist feature for equipment checks into Syzl's platform to enhance equipment consistency. Kitchen Owners can use this user-friendly and accessible tool at least a day before the scheduled rental to ensure that listed equipment is available and in good working condition before Makers arrive, ultimately improving their experience.

THEME 3: Neglecting workplace safety and hygiene can lead to workflow and organization imbalance, resulting in a poor experience or leading renters to completely abandon a kitchen.

Kitchen managers rely on various procedures and systems, with hygiene and safety being crucial components, to ensure smooth and efficient operations. Neglecting these aspects can potentially hinder the overall quality of service.

Kitchen managers can hire staff to be in charge of cleaning preparation for the situations that require it and use other companies to pick up rentals.

If a kitchen space isn't as advertised, and isn't safe to use or up to par in hygiene and safety, it can lead to an overall reduction in quality in terms of the product and efficiency of workflow.



If renters find it difficult to effectively manage a space, they may abandon it altogether and lose trust in using the website in the future. Ensuring that the advertised space closely matches the real representation will reduce the likelihood of complications.

Quote: "If major equipment pieces are missing, then the kitchen would not be used. I would have to find another place if the place wasn't suitable."

Recommendations:

- On the website, highlight how Makers and Kitchen Owners can report any concerns or issues regarding workplace safety and hygiene. Contact information, a dedicated email address, or a form to raise issues can all be included. Emphasize that all issues are taken seriously and addressed as soon as possible.
- Create and implement customer support channels, such as a hotline or chat support, allowing all users to seek assistance or report problems with equipment selection or usage. Responding to user inquiries or complaints as soon as possible will improve the overall user experience and customer satisfaction.
- To improve equipment consistency, provide a reminder and checklist functionality for equipment checks into Syzl's platform. Kitchen Owners can utilize this simple and easy-to-use tool at least a day before a scheduled rental to guarantee that the mentioned equipment is ready and in good operating order when renters arrive, therefore boosting the Maker experience.



FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS



- To address the issues of availability inconsistencies and 1. unexpected changes, a more simplified, standardized and userfriendly scheduling system can be developed for Syzl's listing process.
- 2. The date selection should follow the rules and design of a traditional calendar, it should be set up in such a way that users can quickly learn how to set availability and rates.
- 3. Equipment should be listed with supporting images and dropdown menus that can help users to list equipment quickly and correctly.
- 4. Integrate a reminder for Kitchen Owners to update their equipment and availability.
- 5. Create and implement a customer support chat or hotline, allowing users to seek assistance and report problems with equipment.



NEXT STEPS



- Creating a lean/value proposition canvas.
- 5/10 low fidelity sketch concepts.
- A Maker journey map of one of the concepts.

