

Reminder App

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UXD In Practice

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Problem

Project Background

A company had launched a reminder app for mobile devices. They were unsure of what direction to take with their product, but they knew they wanted to expand it from just a generic reminder app. They were looking for UX expertise to help figure out what users they should be focusing on, the problems they needed solved, and how to solve them.

Problem Statement

In lieu of the background above, the main purpose of the project was to answer the following question:

What direction should the company take to successfully expand their reminder app?

Supporting Goals

In order to answer the above problem statement, the following goals needed to first be answered:

1. What user group should be targeted for the next app release?
2. What problems does a generic reminder app present?
3. How should the problems identified in goal 2 above be addressed for the next app release?

Actions

Approach & Actions Taken

There were two phases during this project to address the above problem statement and goals. Phase I involved discoverability through user research, and was focused on achieving goals 1 and 2 above. Phase II was focused on completing goal 3 through solution design, evaluation, and refinement.

The LUMEN model was used as the main approach for this project. (See Appendix I for an overview of the LUMEN model.)

Phase I: This phase focused on the first two steps of the LUMEN model.

- Face-to-face interviews were conducted using a research protocol (see Appendix II), and users from applicable target user groups were selected to take part in these interviews. An anonymous survey was also sent to random individuals in the applicable target user groups.
- The interview and survey results were analyzed and a report was constructed that presented the approach used and findings from the interviews and survey. A target user group was determined for the future of the product and persona priorities were identified; thus, goals 1 and 2 were completed. (See Appendix III for target persona details.)

Phase II: This phase focused on the last three steps of the LUMEN model.

- Keeping the identified target user group and their high priorities in mind, workflows and screen wireframes were drafted using pencil and paper. The drafted workflows and wireframes depicted what a user's journey would be when using the new release of the product (see Appendix IV).
- A design assessment plan and materials were created and used in prototype test sessions with users from the identified target persona (see Appendix V for the full design assessment plan).

- Final iterations to the designs were made based on feedback and observations from the prototype sessions. This concluded Phase II, and goal 3 was completed. (See Appendix VI and VII for findings, recommendations, and design iterations.)

Discoveries That Motivated Change

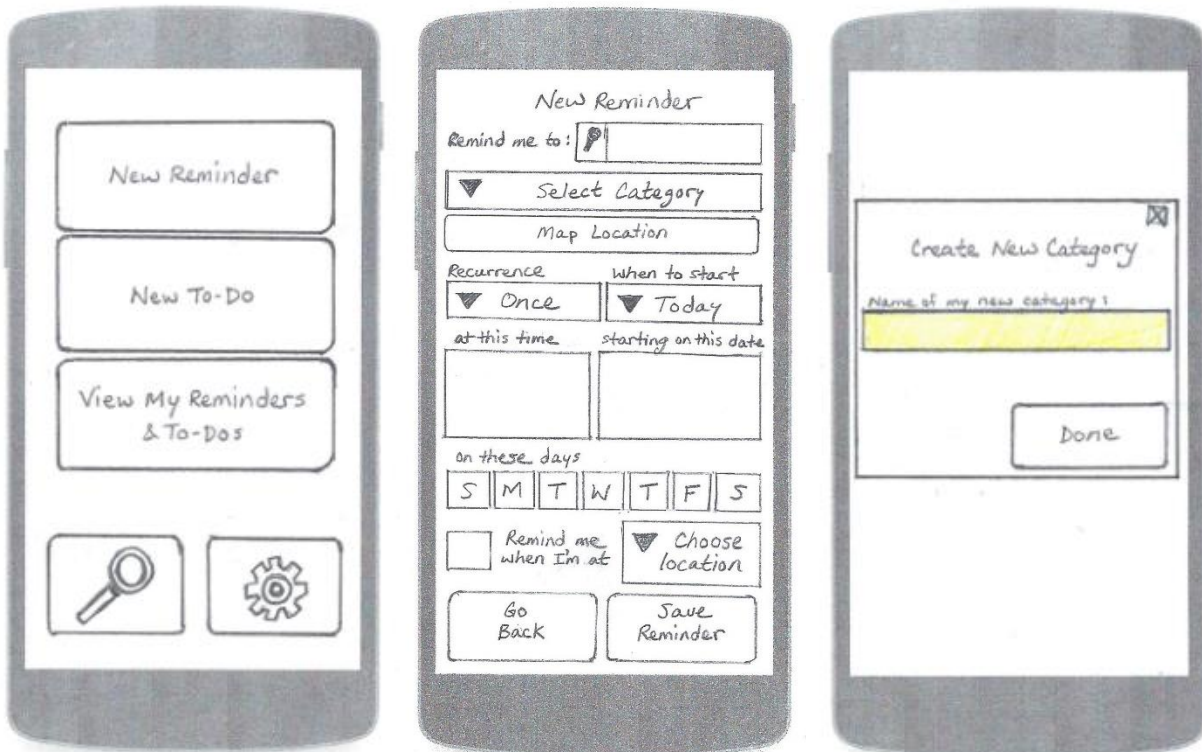
There were a several instances where my thinking changed or my approach had to be altered. I've included a table below that includes what discoveries motivated change in each phase of the project.

Discoveries that Motivated Change	
Phase	Discovery
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While interviewing applicable target users, it became clear that the users would not use the app for work-related purposes. They already had tools at work that allowed them to achieve their goals. Therefore, I started gearing my interview questions more toward their personal lives. • I went in with the mindset that individuals over 30 years of age would want to use the app more, and I expected this outcome from the user research. However, it was the complete opposite. So much in fact, that at least one person I interviewed didn't even want to do the interview because he was already set in his ways. I found that to be the ultimate reason why targeting users over 30 was not the way to go with this app. • While analyzing the interview and survey results, I was able to identify the target persona, as well as their high priorities. Initially, I was anticipating I would identify problems that a reminder app presents; however, I instead came out with a prioritized list of things the target persona wanted, which would ultimately drive them to use the app.
II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While doing test runs of the prototype sessions, I realized I needed to rethink how and when to ask the background and additional questions. I initially had it set up so I would ask all questions, then proceed to the prototype scenarios. However, I quickly realized I had to split up the questions: Background questions first, then additional questions after the user had a chance to simulate the scenarios. • It quickly became apparent that it was extremely difficult to video record a session with a mobile device, and try to conduct a prototype session at the same time. There were cutouts for the prototype, and I found it difficult to pull them off the paper and place them on the prototype when appropriate. I started just pointing to the cutouts instead. • The time allocation for each section of the prototype test sessions was slightly adjusted as the scenarios section took more time than originally planned.

Results

The problem statement and supporting goals were answered and achieved using the approach laid out in the Actions section, and the company was very pleased with the final design; hence, the project was a **success**. All of the work during this project resulted in the below final design for the new app.

Appendices II through VII include more details regarding the deliverables associated with this project including the research protocol, identified target persona, design workflows and wireframes, design assessment plan, findings and recommendations, and design iterations based off of those recommendations.



New To-Do

I need to:

▼ Select To-Do List

when

☐ ▼ Today

at this time

1 59

8 00 AM

0 0 0 PM

on this date

DEC 31

JAN 01

FEB 02

☐ Remind me at exactly:

▼ Day and time of to-do

Go Back Save Save & New

Create New To-Do List

✕

Name of my new to-do list

Done

View My Reminders & To-Dos

Reminders To-Dos

▼ Sort by:

Categories

Create New Reminder

Create New Category

<input type="checkbox"/>	Reminder 1 (no category)	X
<input type="checkbox"/>	Category 1	X
<input type="checkbox"/>	Category 2	X
<input type="checkbox"/>	Category 3	X
<input type="checkbox"/>	Category 4	X

Go Back Share I'm Done

View My Reminders & To-Dos

Reminders To-Dos

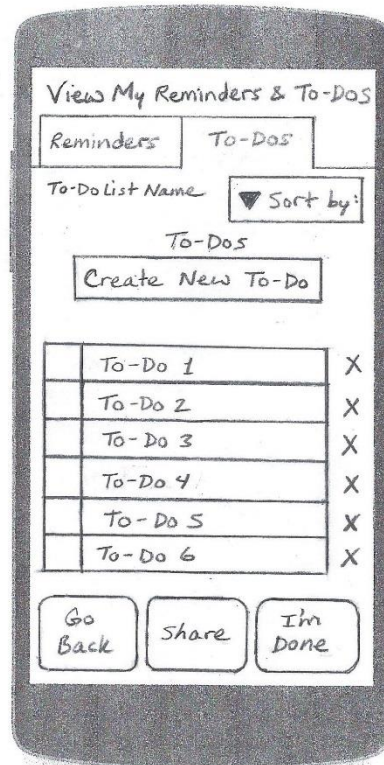
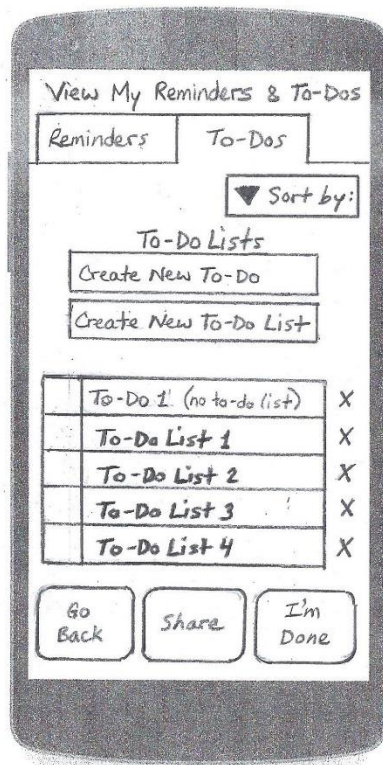
Category Name ▼ Sort by:

Reminders

Create New Reminder

Reminder 1	X
Reminder 2	X
Reminder 3	X
Reminder 4	X
Reminder 5	X
Reminder 6	X

Go Back Share I'm Done



Lessons Learned

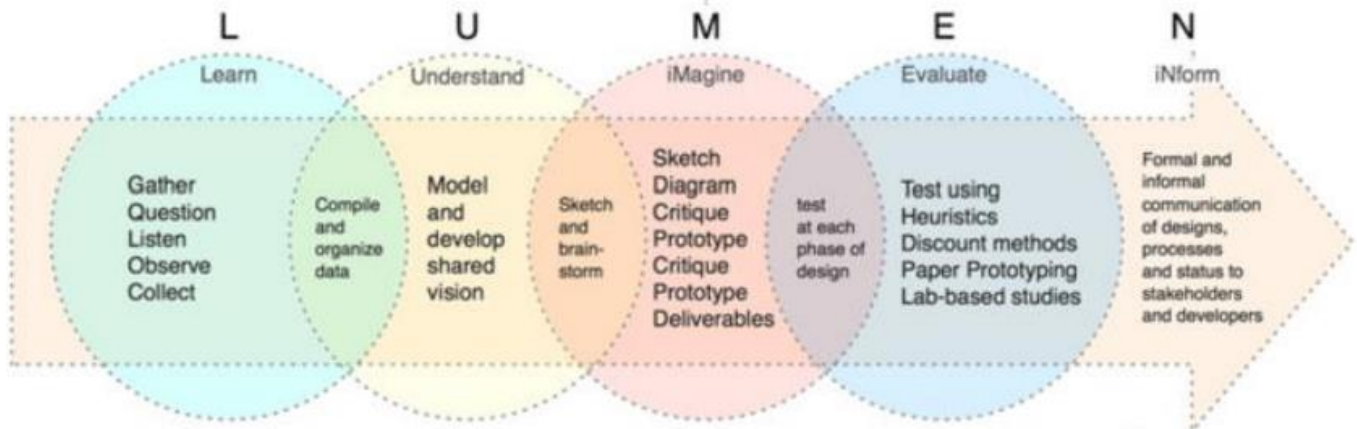
As with any project, reflecting on learnings is important in order to both continuously improve and be more efficient and knowledgeable in the next project. Here are the lessons learned:

- Anticipate change in thinking and direction of the project. It's okay if things change, as long as you're driving toward the end goal.
- Anticipate change in design. It's not going to be perfect, and there is most likely going to be something that you didn't think about.
- Don't assume you know your users. Users know themselves the best, so listen to them. They're the ones that will buy the product after all.
- When asking users questions, whether it be in an interview or during a prototyping session, don't be afraid to ask additional questions that may not be on your script. Your goal is to dig for answers. A good rule of thumb is to ask "Why?" often. You'd be surprised at how much useful and interesting information you can pull from it.
- Ask open ended questions during your user sessions. You're not going to get a lot of data if you ask a yes or no question.

Appendices

I – LUMEN Model

The LUMEN model is a step-by-step methodology used as a way to organize UX activities from project start to finish. See diagram below, (diagram provided by Kent State University, Ohio).



II – Research Protocol

The below research protocol was used in initial user research. Interviewed users fell in one of the applicable target user groups.

Introduction

Hi, my name is Kelly Van Wert. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I'm working on a UX project for a new enhancement of an app that I'm hoping you can help me with.

I would like to know more about how people stay organized, whether it be at work, at home, etc., and how they keep track of things they need to do every day. Yes, it's vague, but I would like to get your undirected feedback and input before I physically *show* you what I'm doing this research for.

Do you have any questions for me?

Okay, let's get started.

Background

- What are your hobbies? What do you like to do in your spare time?
- What would you consider your biggest strengths (overall)?
- What would you consider your biggest weaknesses (overall)?
- What kind of apps/websites do you use every day? What do you use them for? What do you like and dislike about these sites? Please explain.

Work & Home - General

- About how long have you been at your current company? Current position?
- What do you do in your job?

- Could you describe your typical work day? Non work day?
- Do you have any pet peeves at work? At home? Both? Please explain.
- What kind of frustrations do you come across at work? At home?
- What are some challenges that you face in your day-to-day job?
- If there's one thing you would change about your job, what would it be? What would make your job easier?
- What software/programs do you use for your work? At home, if any? Do you like these tools? Why or why not? What would you change about them to make your life easier?

Work & Home - Organization-Specific

- How do you keep track of the things you need to do at work? At home? How do you stay organized?
- What are some challenges you face in order to stay on top of everything? To organize yourself at work? At home?
- What are some things in your life that you wish were organized?
- If you had all the time and money in the world, how would you go about organizing every aspect of your life? Why?
- If you had all the money and time in the world, what kind of app/website would you build to help you in your every day life? To stay organized? Would you use this app/website for work? For home use only? Both? Why? What kind of things would you want it to include? Name the top 3 things you would want to include in this website/app? Why these 3 things?

Catch-All Question

Do you have any additional comments that you want us to know? Is there a topic that we have not discussed yet?

Product

Have user 'play' with the current app that ReminderX created ("To Do Reminder" app on Android phone)

- What are your initial thoughts? Why?
- What do you like about it? Not like?
- Would this be a solution to keep your life organized? Why or why not?
- How would you use this tool in your life, if at all? Is there something else you would use instead? Why or why not? What would make you use this app?
- What would you like to see in this app?

Scenario

Say you have been invited to _____ *event* _____, and it's in January. You're super excited about it, but you're worried you'll forget because you've been insanely busy recently. You need to remind yourself of this event. Go! (*Observe and take notes as user tries to put event into ReminderX app. What does he press? Are they confused? Are they giving indication that something in the app is not intuitive? Etc.*)

Closing

Thank you for meeting with me. I will use your responses to refine this product that I showed you. If you have any questions or thoughts about what we have discussed, you know how to get a hold of me.

III – Identified Persona

The target persona for the new app was identified in Phase I of this project. Anyone who is less than 30 years of age and has the following traits falls under this persona:

- Willing to learn new things, especially anything that will make their life easier and more organized
- Will use the new app for their personal life, as opposed to their work environment
- Still growing and potentially moving up in their career

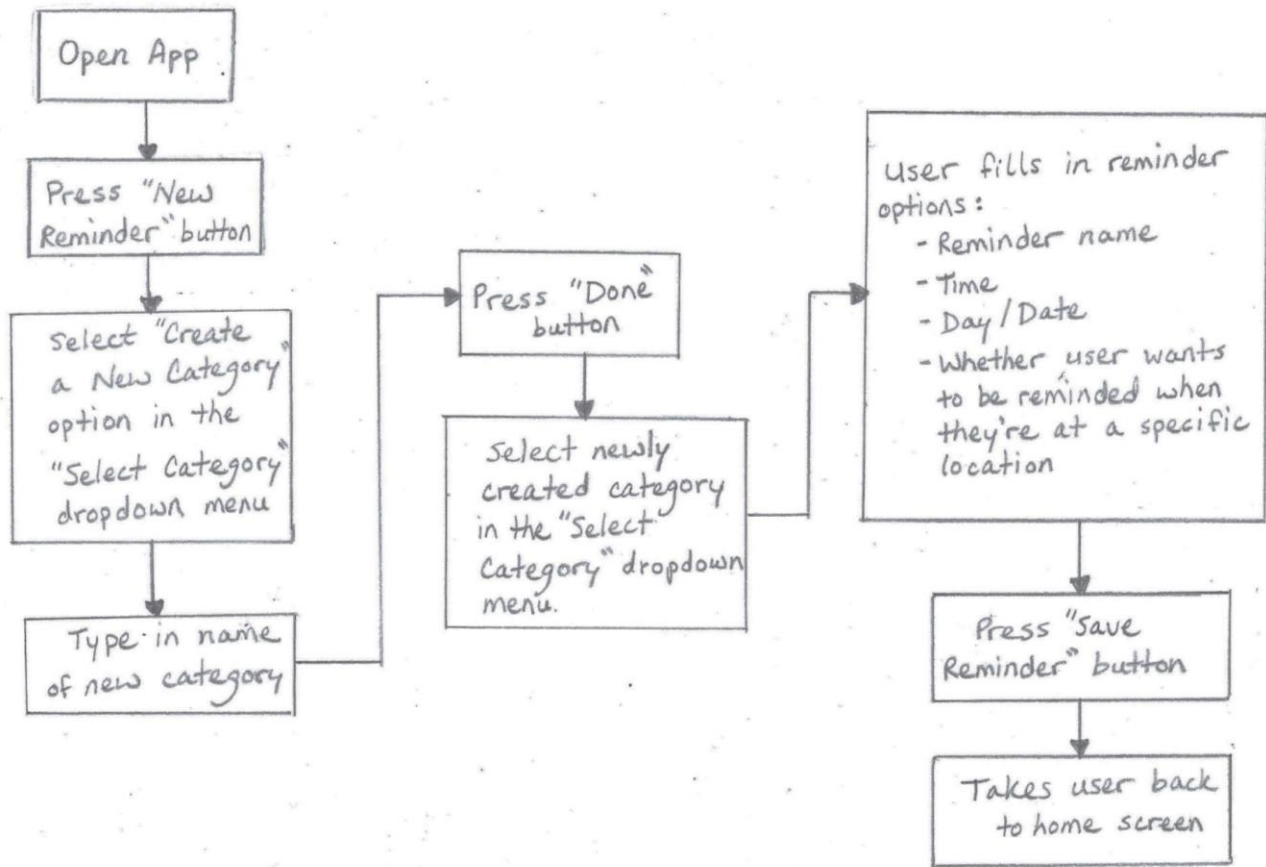
High Priority Target Persona Needs	
Target Persona Need	Priority
Keep it simple and organized; not a lot of bells and whistles, or too many options that will make it cluttered and confusing	High
Ability to have recurring events	High
Be able to create and share lists with others	High
Ability to catalog and filter items based on user's preference	High
Voice command	High
Be able to separate date and time; ability to pick a date and not a time, and vice versa	High
Ability to set reminders based on location (e.g. When leaving the house, a reminder to get gas)	High

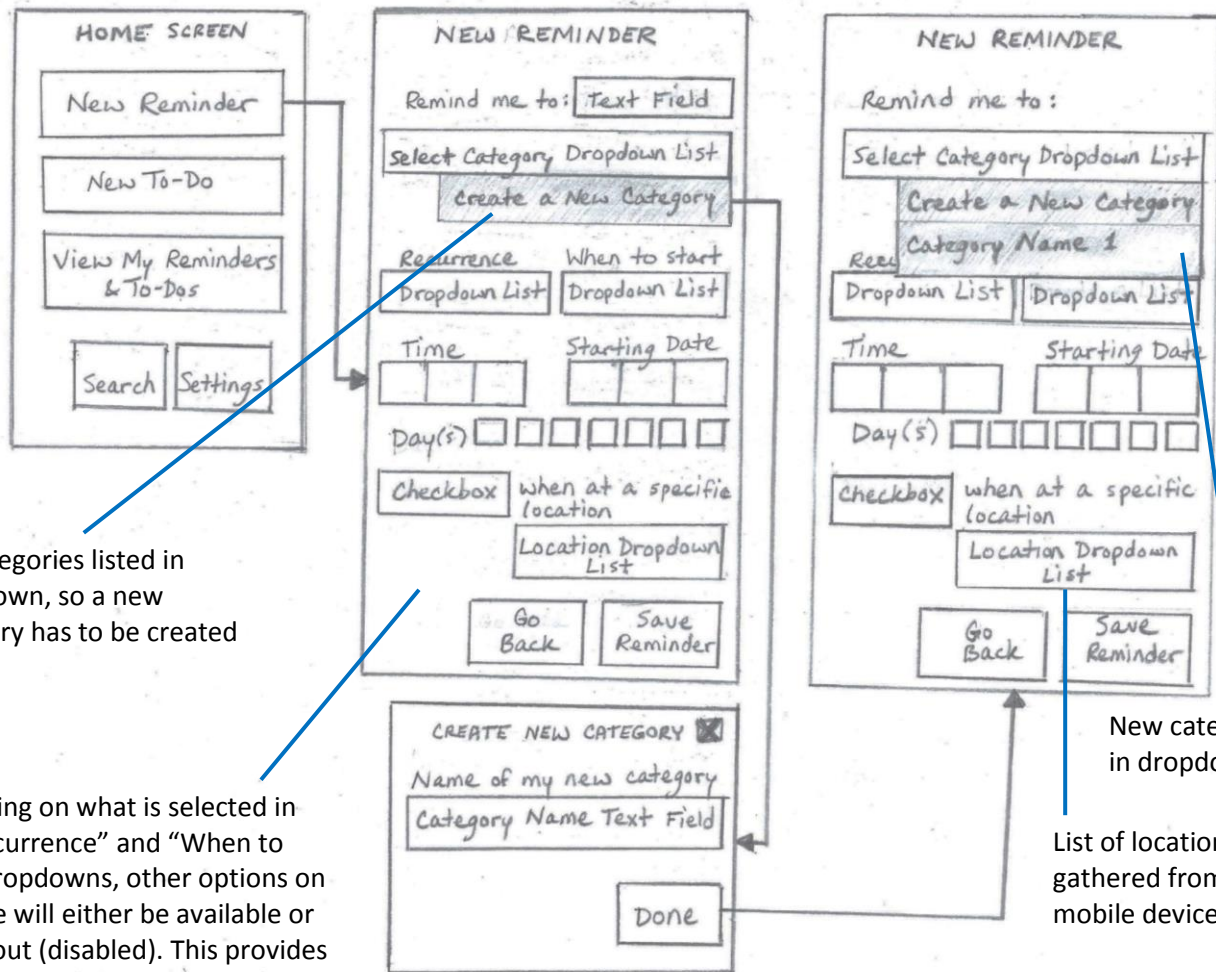
IV – Workflows and Wireframes

The workflow and wireframe designs reflect key user journeys that are expected to be taken in the new app. The key user journeys are as follows:

- Add a new reminder to a new category
- Add a new reminder to an existing category
- Add a new to-do item to a new to-do list
- Add a new to-do item to an existing to-do list
- Share a reminder with a friend
- Share a to-do with a friend

Add a New Reminder to a New Category





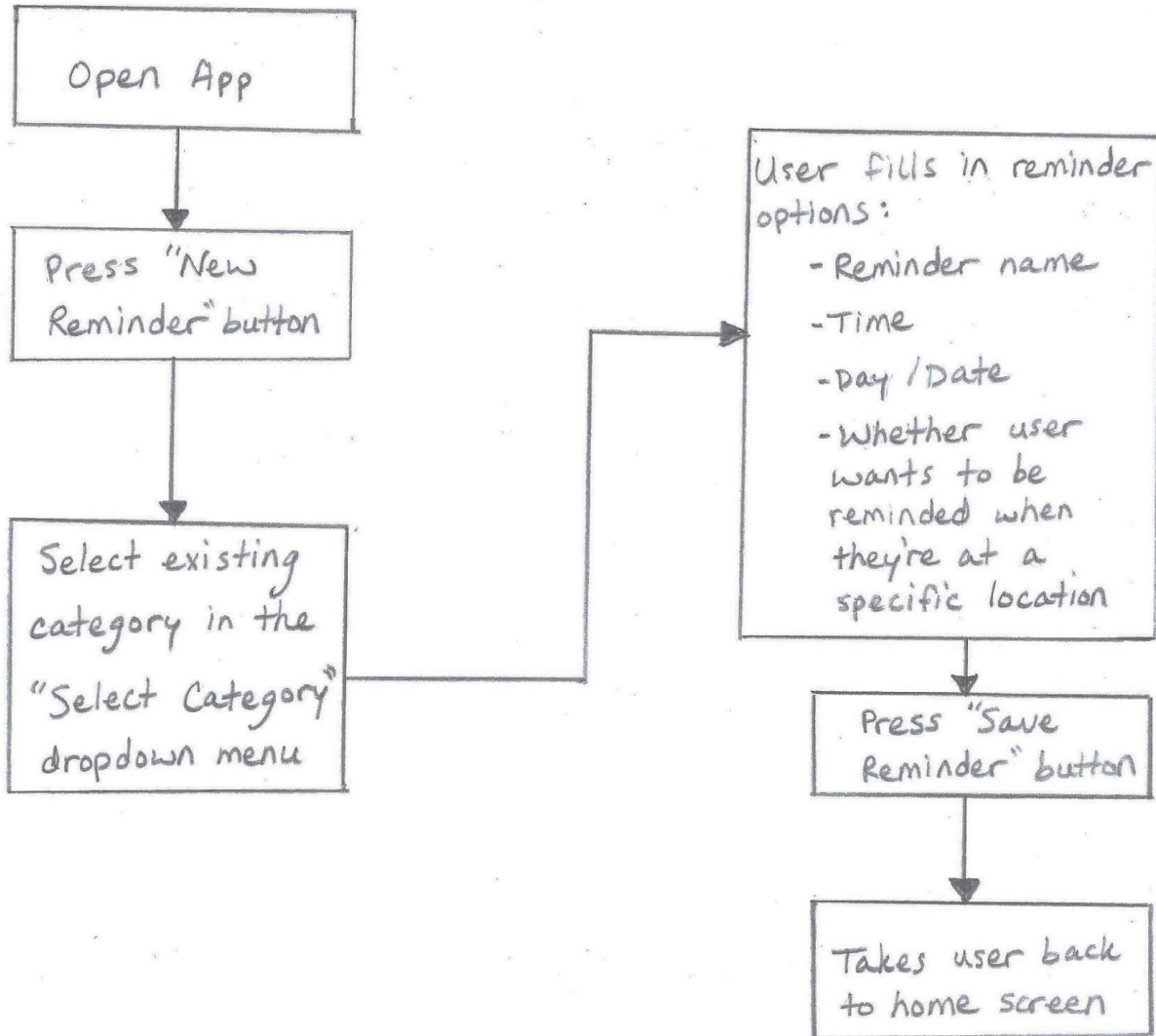
No categories listed in dropdown, so a new category has to be created

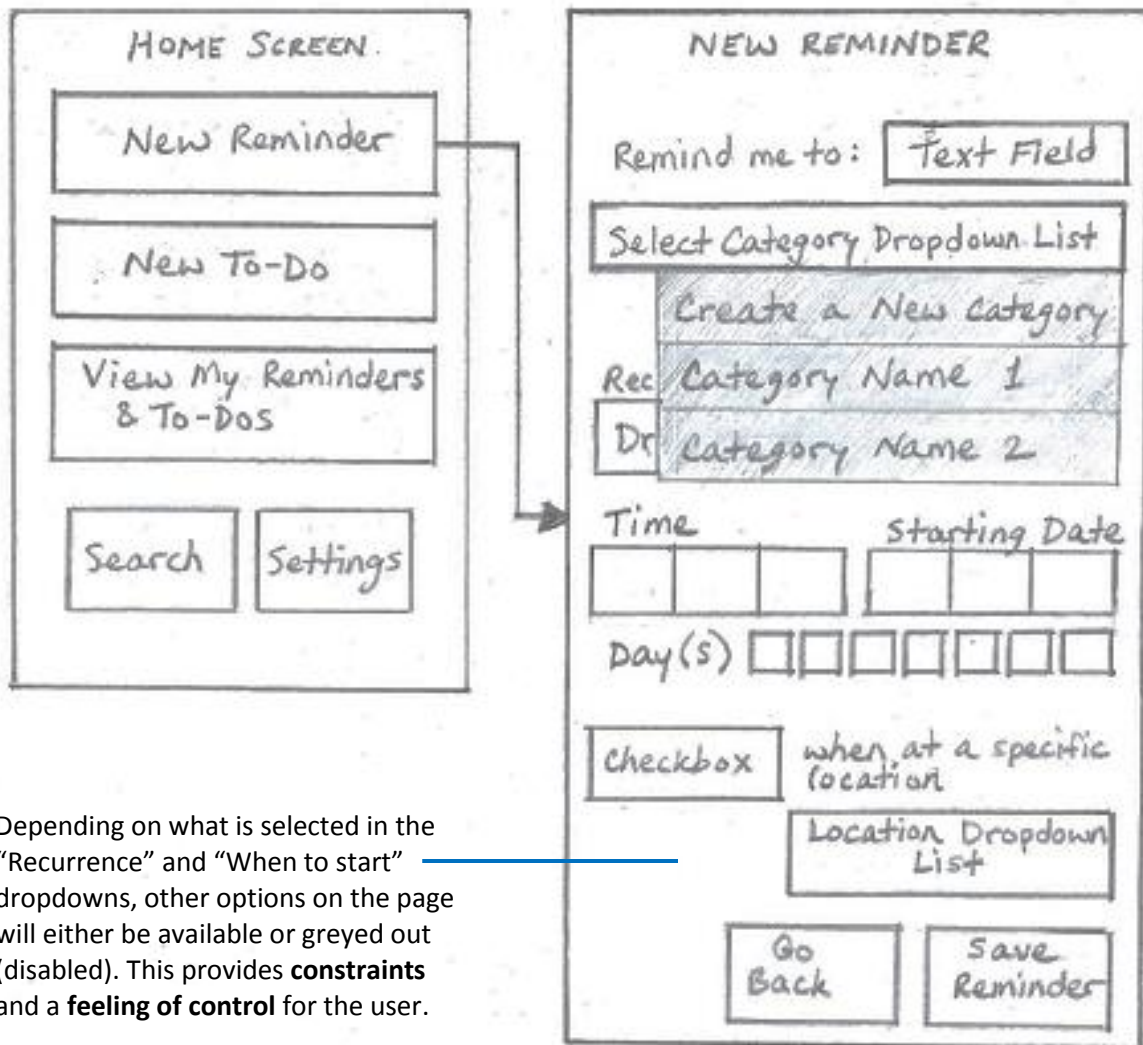
Depending on what is selected in the "Recurrence" and "When to start" dropdowns, other options on the page will either be available or greyed out (disabled). This provides **constraints** for the user so they don't feel overwhelmed. This also provides them with a **feeling of control**.

New category is now in dropdown

List of locations is gathered from user's mobile device

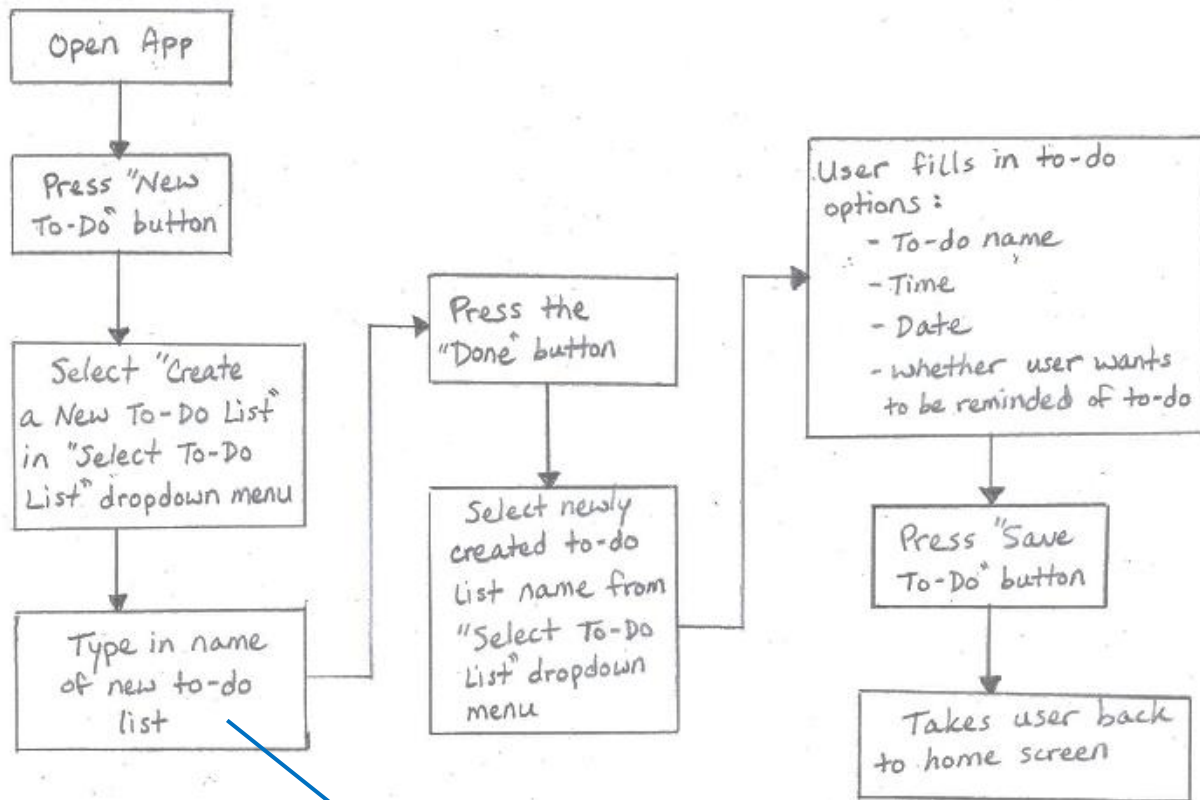
Add a New Reminder to an Existing Category





Depending on what is selected in the "Recurrence" and "When to start" dropdowns, other options on the page will either be available or greyed out (disabled). This provides **constraints** and a **feeling of control** for the user.

Add a New To-Do Item to a New To-Do List



The ability to create a to-do list is a high priority among the target persona.

HOME SCREEN

New Reminder

New To-Do

View my Reminders & To-Dos

Search Settings

NEW TO-DO

I need to: Text Field

Select To-Do List Dropdown

Create a New To-Do List

Checkbox When Dropdown List

Time

Due Date

Checkbox Remind me of to-do

When to remind dropdown list

Go Back Save To-Do

NEW TO-DO

I need to: Text Field

Select To-Do List Dropdown

Create a New To-Do List

To-Do List Name 1

Checkbox Dropdown List

Time

Due Date

Checkbox Remind me of to-do

When to remind dropdown list

Go Back Save To-Do

CREATE NEW TO-DO LIST

Name of my new to-do list

To-Do List Name Text Field

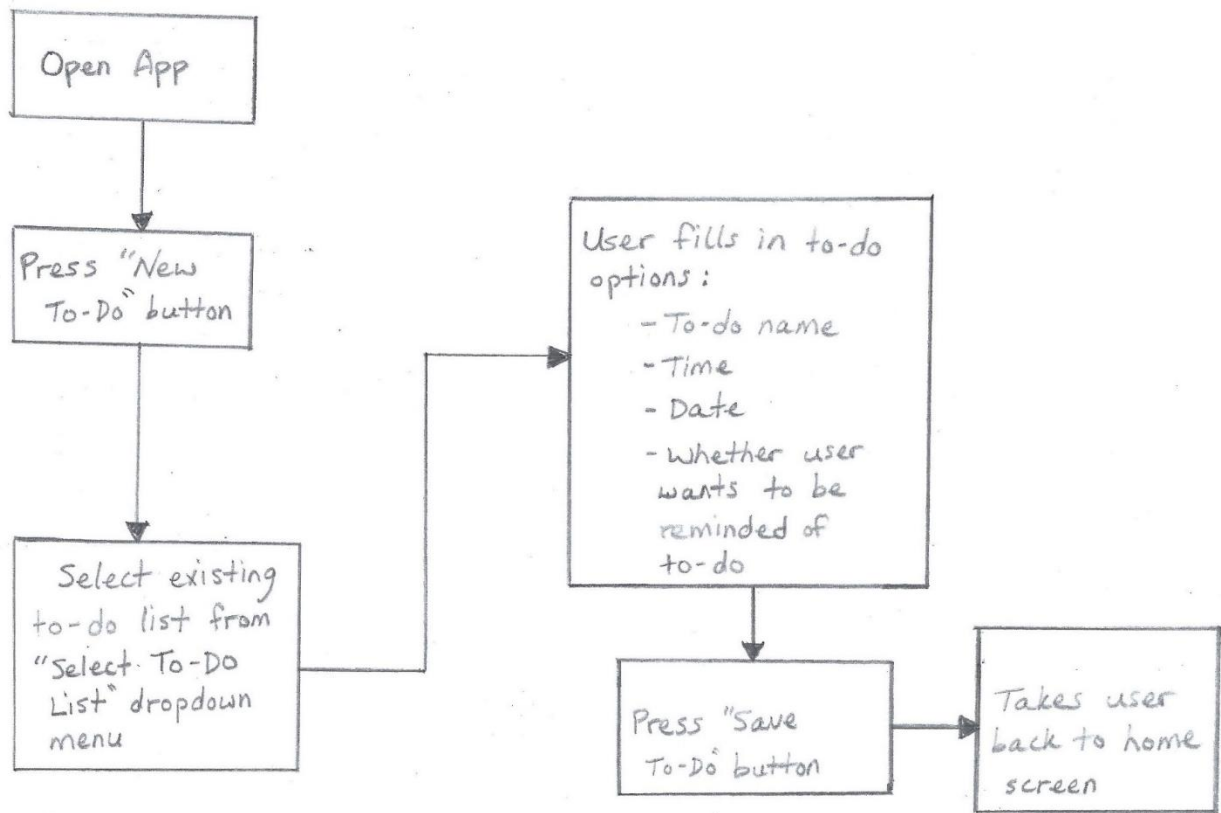
Done

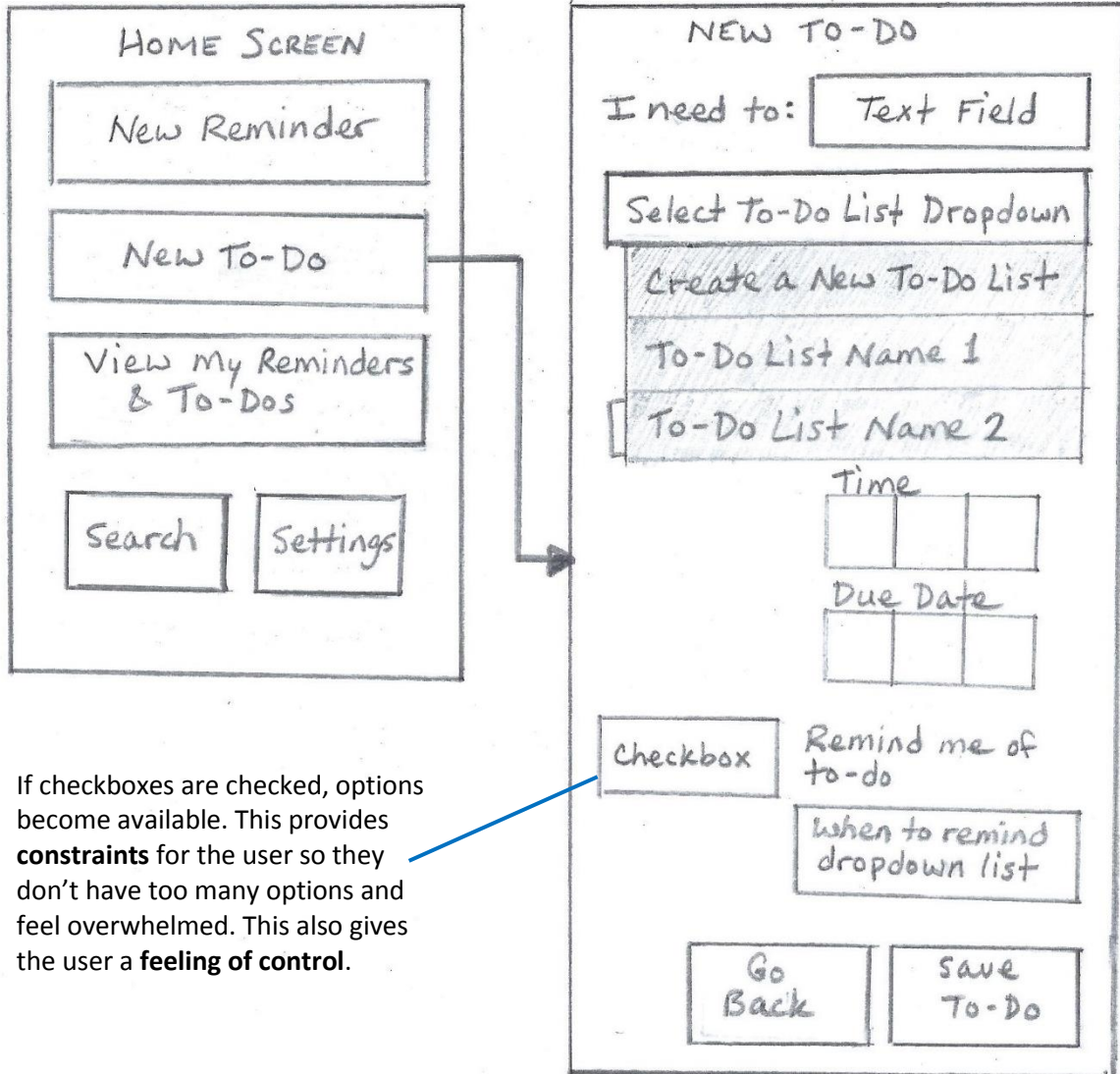
No to-do lists in dropdown, so a new list has to be created

New to-do list is now in dropdown

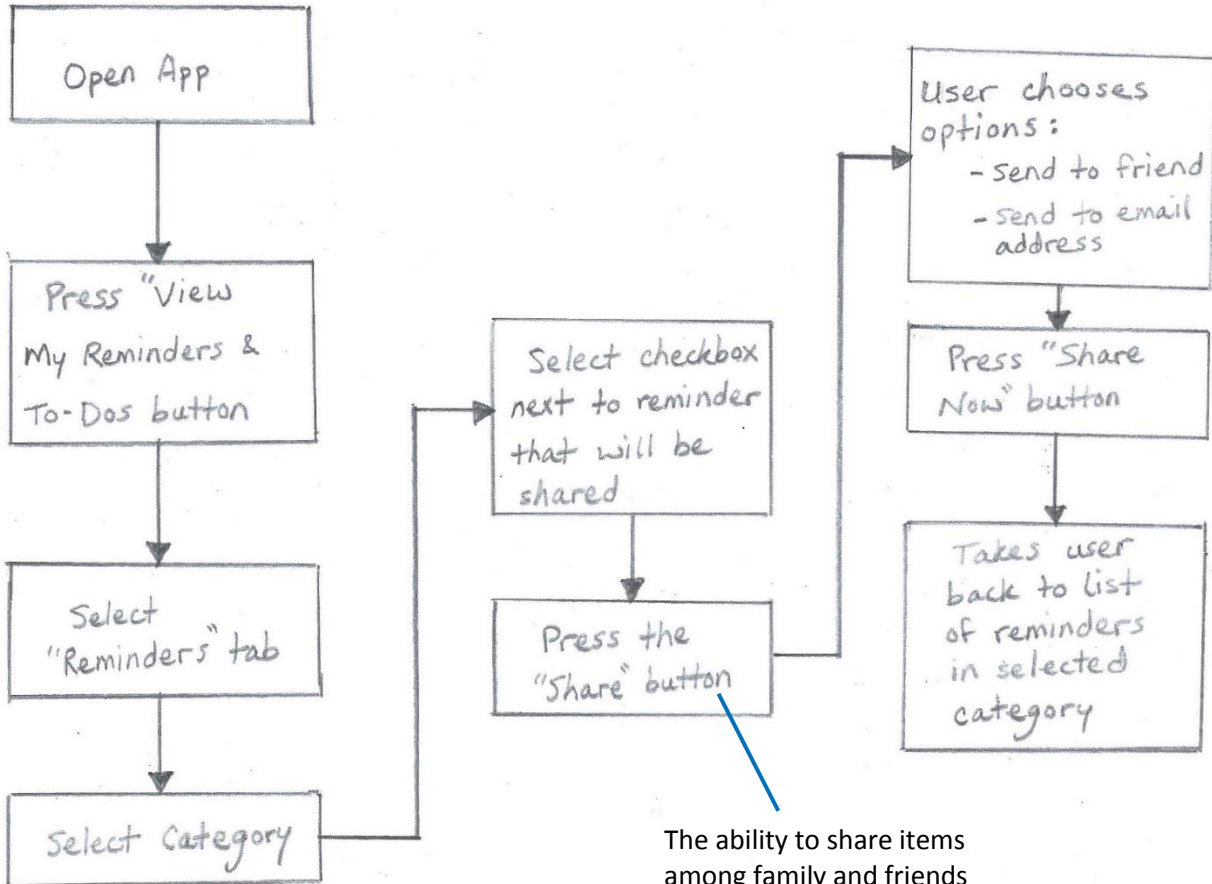
If checkboxes are checked, options become available.

Add a New To-Do Item to an Existing To-Do List

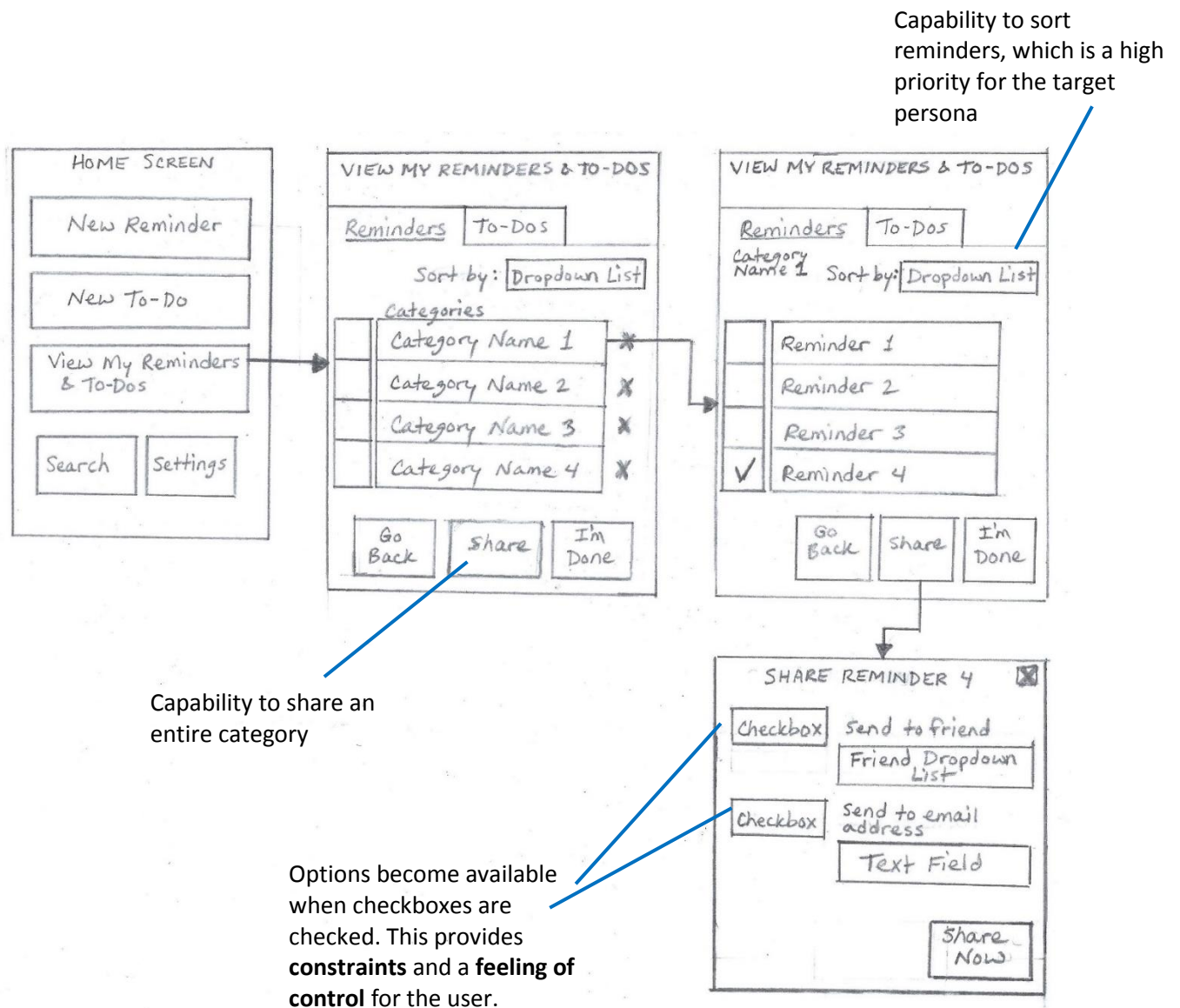




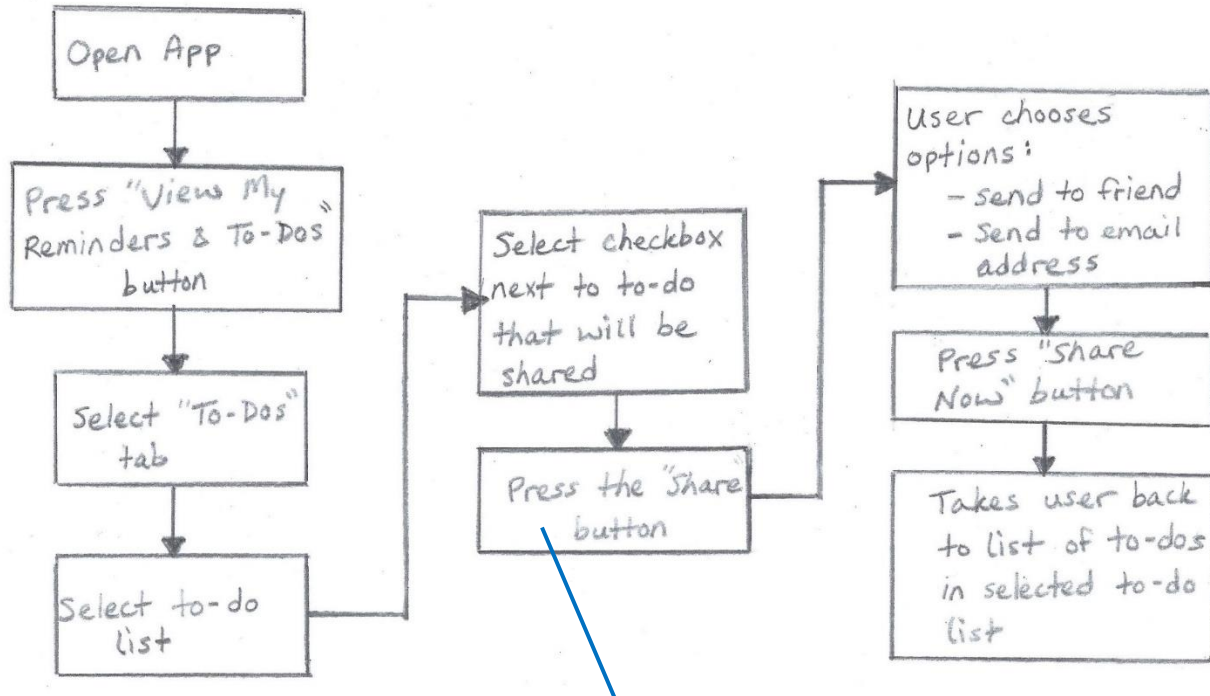
Share a Reminder with a Friend



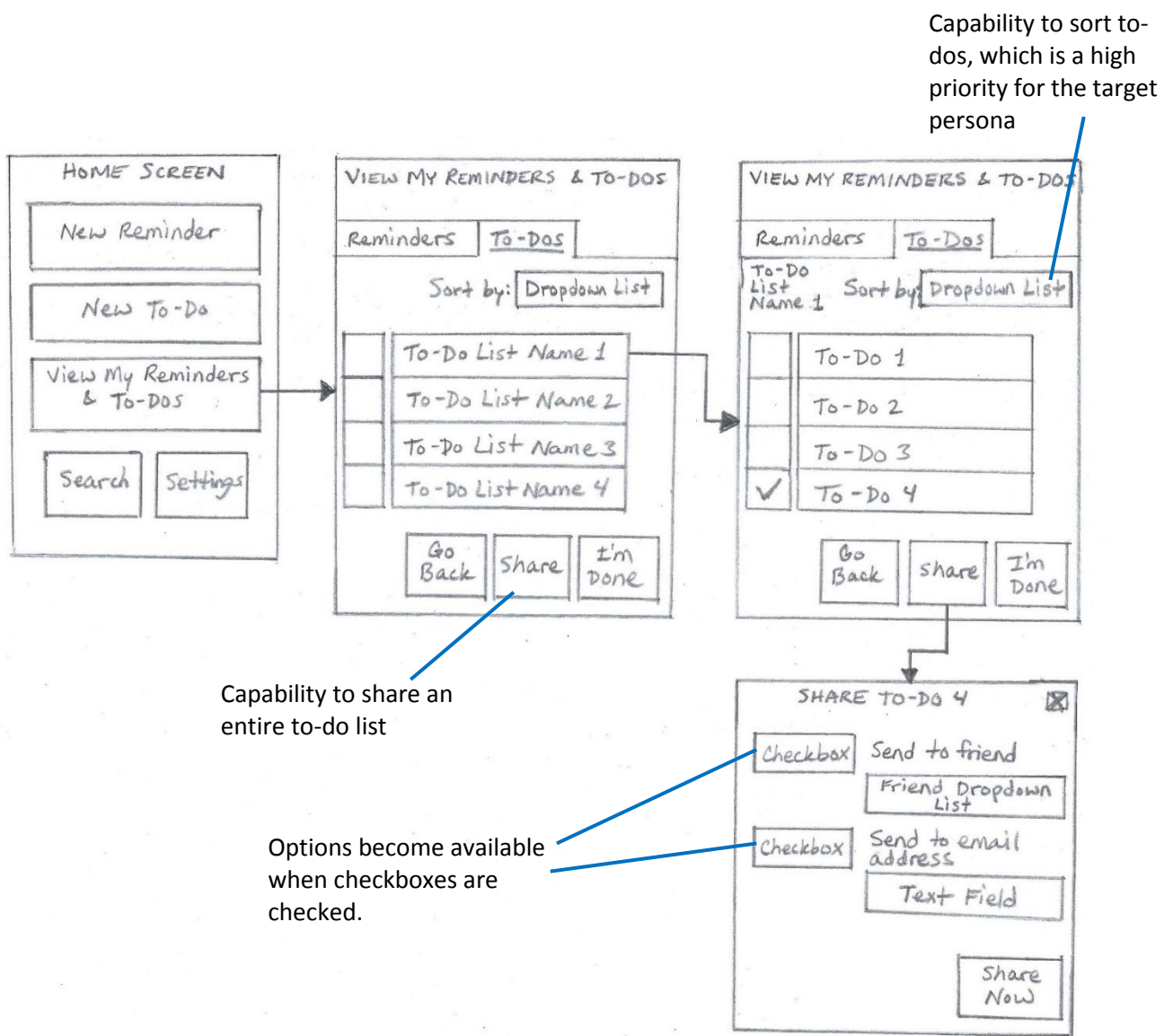
The ability to share items among family and friends is one of the highest priorities for the target persona.



Share a To-Do with a Friend



The ability to share items among family and friends is one of the highest priorities for the target persona.



V – Design Assessment Plan

Each usability test session consisted of three parts: Questions, Scenarios, and Other Activities. Both the Scenarios and Other Activities sections utilized a paper prototype, while the Questions section consisted of verbal questions and answers.

The paper prototype consisted of numerous hand-drawn screens of the new app design, and these screens were meant to help imitate the key user journeys that the company would be supporting in the new app.

Each session was video recorded using a mobile device, and lasted no longer than 30 minutes.

Questions

The Background questions were asked first in each session. The rest of the questions were asked after the Scenarios section was completed.

#	Question Category	Question
1	Background	What is your occupation? What are some of your hobbies, or what do you like to do in your spare time? What kind of apps (or websites) do you use? How do you currently keep track of things you need to do in your personal life? How do you stay organized?
2	Experience with the app	What are your thoughts about the app? Why? What do you like about it? Why? What do you not like about it? Why? If you just downloaded this app to your mobile device, what would be the first thing you'll do with it? (Add a specific reminder, add a to-do list, etc.) If there's one thing you would change about it, what would it be?

Scenarios

The scenarios outlined in this section were given after the Background questions were asked and answered, and the user reacted to each scenario by interacting with the paper prototype. Each scenario represented one or more high priorities identified in Phase I (user research) of this project.

#	Scenario Name	Scenario Details
1	Add a new reminder with new category	<p>You have just bought tickets to see a musical in Toronto on January 7th. You want to be alerted of the event at least 1 week in advance. You also anticipate you will be going to other musicals/plays in the near future. How would you use this app to help you in this case?</p> <p>Expected Outcome: User should add a new reminder with a new category</p>
2	Add a new to-do with existing to-do list	<p>You realize you have so many things you need to do around the house (take out the trash, do the dishes, etc.). You want to make sure they get done, but you feel so disorganized. How would you use this app to help you in this case?</p> <p>Expected Outcome: User should add to-dos to the existing to-do list, "Household".</p> <p>Alternative Outcome: User creates a new to-do list and adds above items to list.</p>
3	Share an entire to-do list	<p>You have just added items to a to-do list in the above scenario. You realize that you should probably share the list with your friend, Bob, who stays at your house often. It's about time for him to earn his stay. How would you go about sharing this list with Bob?</p> <p>Expected Outcome: User finds to-do list and shares it with Bob.</p> <p>Alternate Outcome: User goes to items in to-do list and selects every item in the list, then shares it with Bob.</p>
4	Add a recurring reminder	<p>You've just joined a local Wine Tasting Club, and they meet every Thursday evening. You don't want to forget! How would you use this app to help you in this case?</p> <p>Expected Outcome: User adds a reminder that recurs every Thursday at a given time.</p>
5	Set reminder when arrive at location, and share reminder	<p>You and your significant other (or friend) have really busy, erratic work schedules. You never know what time either of you will get home on any given day. However, <i>whoever</i> gets home first every day needs to water the plants in the new garden. How would you use this app to ensure that both you and your significant other (or friend) are reminded to water the plants when one of you gets home?</p> <p>Expected Outcome: User creates a reminder and sets it to go off when they arrive at a specific location ("My House"). The reminder is also shared with their significant other (or friend).</p>

Other Activities (Optional)

After conducting the scenarios, the user had the opportunity to use the remainder of the session to perform one or both of the activities detailed in the table below.

#	Activity Name	Activity Details
1	Additional feedback	The user can provide additional feedback either verbally or written directly on the paper prototype. If verbally, we (CoVan UX) will record the feedback either with a mobile device or on a sheet of paper.
2	Experience the app	The user can further experience the new design by 'playing' with the paper prototype, and ask any questions that they have. We (CoVan UX) will record any comments or questions either with a mobile device or on a sheet of paper.

Time Allocation

The time allocation for the three parts of each session are outlined in the following table.

Session Activities	Total Allocated Time (min)
Questions	10
Scenarios	15
Other Activities	5
Total Session Activities	30

VI – Design Assessment Findings & Recommendations

During the prototype test sessions in Phase II, there were a few things that consistently worked well in the new app design and did not present any issues.

- Navigation between all of the screens
- Verbiage and placement of main action buttons on each screen
- Flow of content from top to bottom on each screen

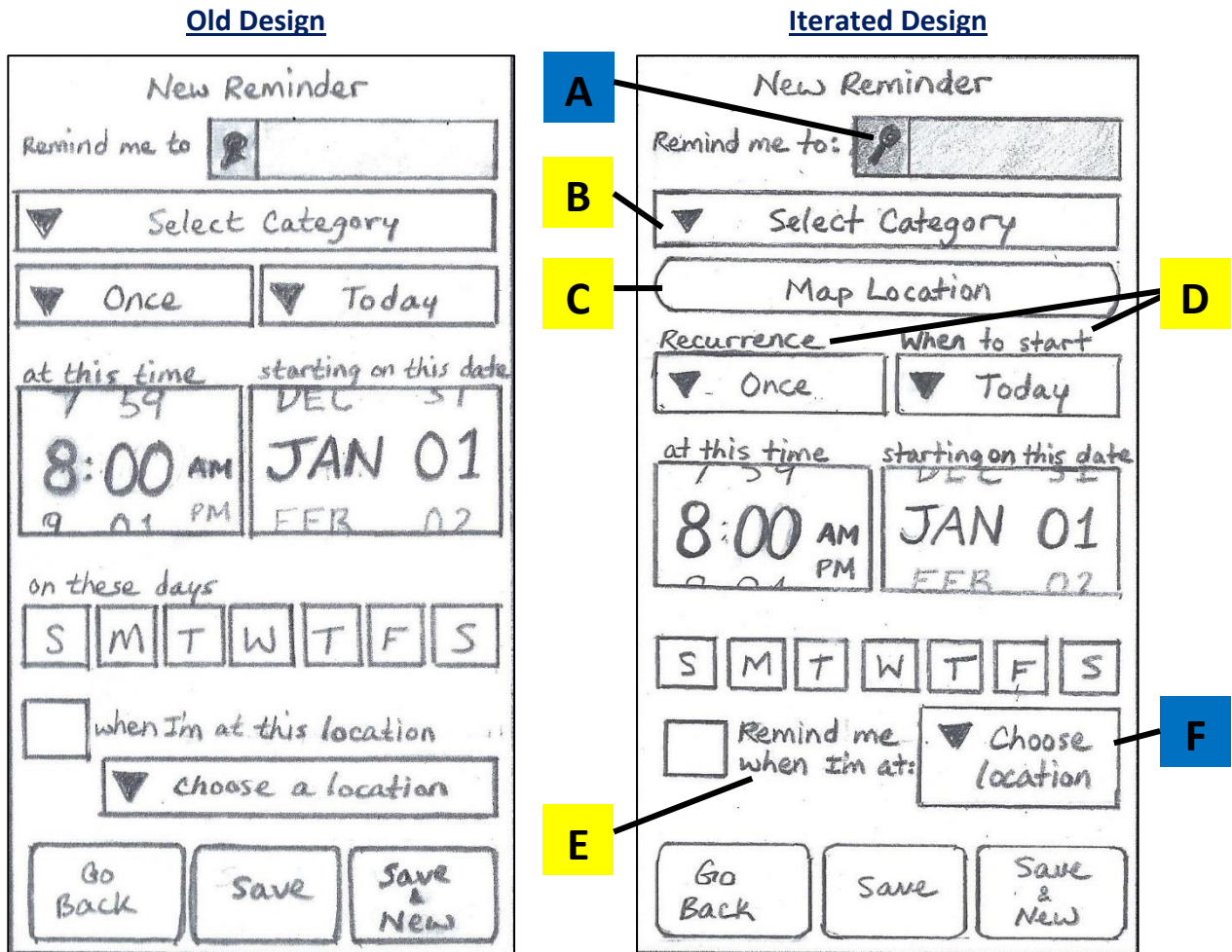
There were also a few things that the design fell short on. They are outlined in the table below, along with my recommendations that were provided in the previous deliverable to the company.

Where We Fell Short	Recommendations
1. The location feature in the New Reminder screen was misinterpreted by some users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Location feature verbiage should be more intuitive• Include options to map location of specific event/item, and to be reminded when user is at a specific location
2. Users became stuck in the View My Reminders & To-Dos screen if they didn't create/choose a category when they created a new reminder.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choosing a category or to-do list should be optional• Any reminders or to-dos without a category/to-do list assigned to them should be shown
3. Users had to click on the dropdown menus on New Reminder and New To-Do screens to determine their purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Labels should be added above the dropdown menus at the top of the New Reminder and New To-Do screens

VII – Final Design Iterations

The below designs only include what I iterated based off of the recommendations we mentioned in the above section. **The entire new app design is not included in this section.** (See “Results” section of document for full final app design.)

Yellow annotation boxes indicate an iteration based off my recommendations. Blue boxes represent additional callouts or features that are not associated with my recommendations.



- A. Voice feature allows users to verbally input a reminder.
- B. The Category dropdown is now optional. (“Findings & Recommendations”, #2 in table)
- C. New “Map Location” button allows users to map the location of their reminder. (“Findings & Recommendations”, #1 in table)
- D. Labels have been added above dropdown menus. (“Findings & Recommendations”, #3 in table)
- E. Verbiage has been changed in the location feature section. (“Findings & Recommendations”, #1 in table)
- F. The app pulls the list of locations from the user’s mobile device.

Old Design

New To-Do

I need to:

▼ Select To-Do List

☐ ▼ Today

at this time

8:00 AM

on this date

DEC 31

JAN 01

FEB 02

☐ Remind me of to-do at

▼ Day and time of to-do

Go Back Save Save & New

Iterated Design

New To-Do

I need to:

▼ Select To-Do List

when

☐ ▼ Today

at this time

8:00 AM

on this date

DEC 31

JAN 01

FEB 02

☐ Remind me at exactly:

▼ Day and time of to-do

Go Back Save Save & New

- G. Voice feature allows users to verbally input a reminder.
- H. The To-Do List dropdown is now optional. ("Findings & Recommendations", #2 in table)
- I. A label has been added above the dropdown menu. ("Findings & Recommendations", #3 in table)

Old Design

View My Reminders & To-Dos

Reminders To-Dos

▼ Sort Categories

Categories

Create New Category

	Category 1	X
	Category 2	X
	Category 3	X
	Category 4	X
	Category 5	X

Go Back share I'm Done

Iterated Design

View My Reminders & To-Dos

Reminders To-Dos

▼ Sort by: K

Categories

Create New Reminder L

Create New Category

	Reminder 1 (no category)	X
	Category 1	X
	Category 2	X
	Category 3	X
	Category 4	X

Go Back Share I'm Done

- J. Since choosing a category for a reminder is now optional, reminders without a category assigned are shown above the existing categories. ("Findings & Recommendations", #2 in table)
- K. Users are able to sort the items in this view.
- L. A "Create New Reminder" button has been added since there can now be reminders shown in this view. ("Findings & Recommendations", #2 in table)

Old Design

View My Reminders & To-Dos

Reminders To-Dos

▼ Sort To-Do Lists

To-Do Lists

Create New To-Do List

	To-Do List 1	X
	To-Do List 2	X
	To-Do List 3	X
	To-Do List 4	X
	To-Do List 5	X

Go Back Share I'm Done

Iterated Design

View My Reminders & To-Dos

Reminders To-Dos

▼ Sort by: N

To-Do Lists

Create New To-Do O

Create New To-Do List

	To-Do 1' (no to-do list)	X
	To-Do List 1	X
	To-Do List 2	X
	To-Do List 3	X
	To-Do List 4	X

Go Back Share I'm Done

- M. Since choosing a To-Do List is now optional, to-dos without a list assigned are shown above the existing to-do lists. ("Findings & Recommendations", #2 in table)
- N. Users are able to sort the items in this view.
- O. A "Create New To-Do" button has been added since there can now be to-dos shown in this view. ("Findings & Recommendations", #2 in table)