

UX / UI CASE STUDY — DETAILED EDITION

The Global Beauty Agenda

Building a brand identity and website from zero for a beauty-industry
B2B/B2C platform

DESIGNER

Shariq Rafeh

ROLE

Sole UX/UI Designer & Researcher

TIMELINE

Feb 2023 – Sep 2023 (8 months)

TOOLS

Figma / Adobe XD, Illustrator, Google Forms, user interviews

01 — OVERVIEW

A brand and website built from zero, for a platform serving two audiences at once

The Global Beauty Agenda (GBA) is a platform operating at the intersection of the beauty industry's business side and its public-facing side. On one hand it's B2B: memberships, summits, policy work, consultancy and industry education. On the other it's B2C: publications, events and a general audience that cares about what actually goes into their beauty products. GBA came to this project with a name and a mission, but no visual identity and no website. I was brought on to design both from the ground up, and to base every major decision — logo, colour, typography, layout, navigation — in actual user research rather than personal taste.

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THE PROBLEM

GBA had to speak credibly to two very different audiences on the same platform: industry professionals evaluating whether to partner with or join an organisation, and everyday consumers deciding whether to trust it. Most identity systems pick one register — polished and corporate, or warm and consumer-friendly — and default to it everywhere. GBA needed a system flexible enough to hold both without feeling inconsistent, plus an information architecture that actually separated the two audiences instead of blending them into one generic homepage.

02 — RESEARCH

Every major decision traces back to a finding, not a preference

Before opening Figma, I ran a mixed-methods research pass to find out what actually moves the needle on brand engagement and recall in this space, rather than assuming I already knew: a 22-item survey (20 respondents across designers, industry professionals and consumers) and four semi-structured interviews with two UX designers, a photographer/illustrator, and a brand-owning design professor. I paired that with a literature review on typography, colour psychology and logo design so the decisions below had a reason behind them beyond 'it looks nice'.

85%

of respondents linked typography directly to how engaged they felt with a brand

65%

named colour scheme as the single most attractive element of a brand website

60%

said visual consistency across touchpoints had a strong effect on brand recall

70%

rated appealing visuals as the top driver of a good website experience, ahead of speed or features

The clearest signal across both the survey and the interviews: typography and colour aren't decoration, they're doing real work in how a brand gets remembered and trusted. That became the design brief I held myself to.

WHY TWO PERSONAS

Because GBA is genuinely two audiences on one platform, I built two personas instead of one — a consumer-side persona and a partner/stakeholder-side persona — and ran a parallel empathy mapping exercise for each, rather than assuming one voice could represent both.

03 — USERS

Lydia — the citizen persona



Lydia

"Archetype"

- Age: 28 Years Old
- Occupation: IT Professional
- Family Status: Single
- Location: London, UK
- Character: Social Nerd

Bio

Lydia is a 28-year-old IT professional based in the bustling city of London. With a penchant for all things tech, she's known among her friends as the 'Social Nerd' due to her introverted nature and love for meaningful online interactions. Despite her quieter demeanor, Lydia is deeply passionate about environmental issues, particularly the impact of beauty products on our planet. Her drive to make a positive change fuels her journey towards a more sustainable and conscious lifestyle.

Personality

Introverted: Lydia tends to be more introverted, finding comfort in solitude and introspection.

Organised: She maintains a structured and organised approach to her work and personal life.

Analytical: Lydia possesses a keen analytical mind, always seeking to understand complex issues in depth.

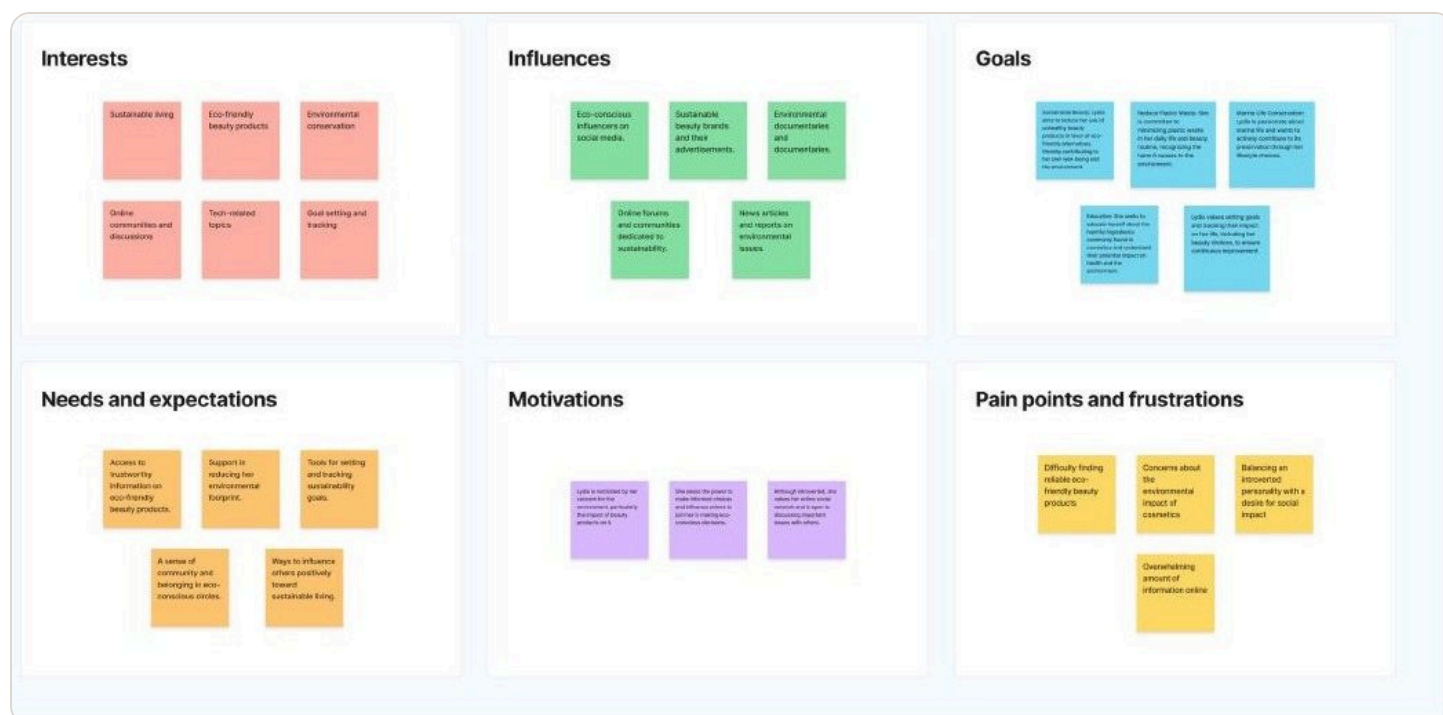
Independent: She is self-reliant and often prefers to work and think independently.

Busy: Lydia's professional life keeps her quite busy, and she values efficient use of her time.

Active: While she actively engages in discussions and social interactions online, she typically assumes a more passive role in face-to-face social situations.

28, IT professional, London. Introverted, analytical, and increasingly conscious of what's actually in the beauty products she buys. She wants to cut down on unhealthy ingredients and plastic waste, but she's sceptical of brands that only *say* the right things — she needs a platform that reads as credible, not performative.

EMPATHY MAP



Basic information

Andam
COSMETICS

Andam Cosmetics

"Archetype"

A Cosmetics Brand
Founded in 2014
London, UK

Bio

Andam Cosmetics is a thriving beauty cosmetics brand based in the vibrant city of London, UK. With a distinct British charm and a commitment to celebrating individuality and self-expression through makeup and skincare, Andam has garnered a loyal following among makeup enthusiasts and skincare aficionados. The brand has an emphasis on inclusivity and strives to offer a diverse range of products that cater to various skin tones and beauty preferences.

Instagram: [@andamcosmetics](#)

Facebook: [andamcosmetics](#)

Twitter: [@andamcosmetics](#)

Brand Personality

Empowering: Andam is all about empowering individuals to express themselves and embrace their unique beauty.

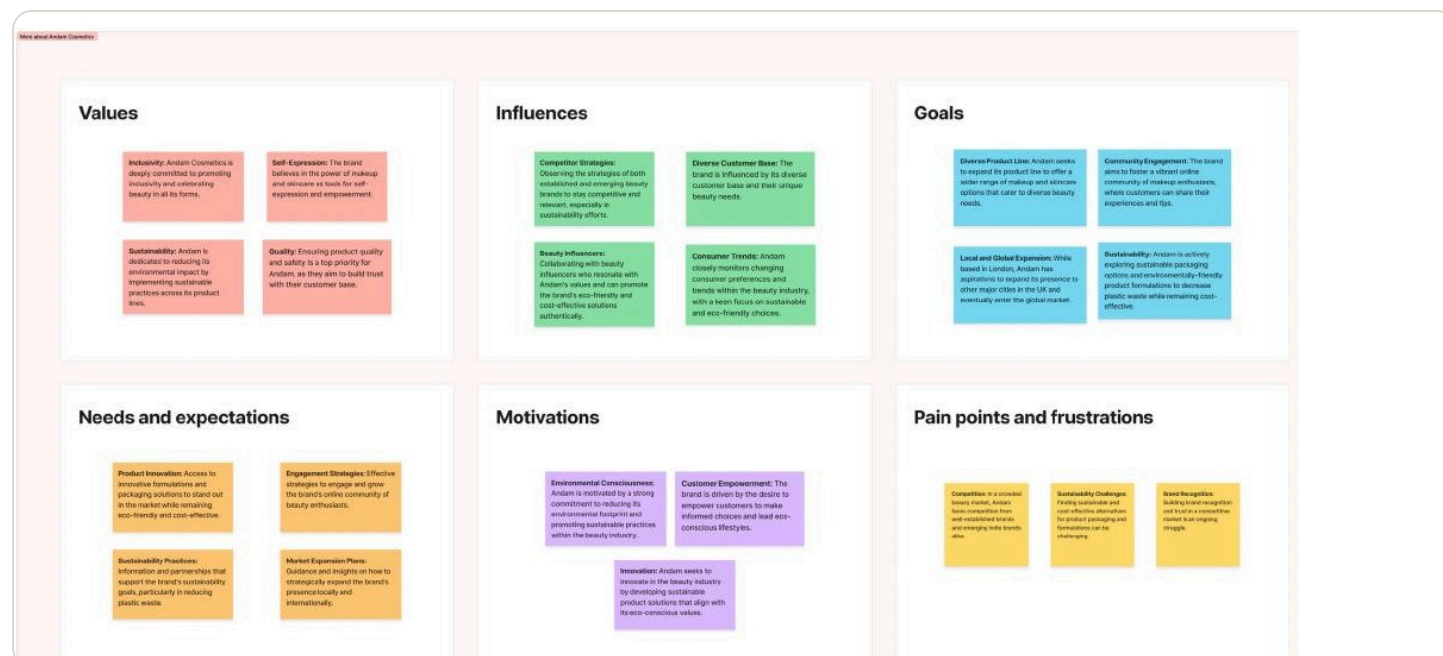
Inclusive: The brand is inclusive and embraces diversity, welcoming all customers regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity.

Sociable: Andam fosters a sense of community among its customers, encouraging them to engage and share their beauty journeys.

Eco-Conscious (80%): Andam is committed to eco-conscious practices, striving to reduce plastic waste and promote sustainable alternatives.

Accessible (70%): The brand aims to provide accessible beauty solutions, both in terms of price and ease of use.

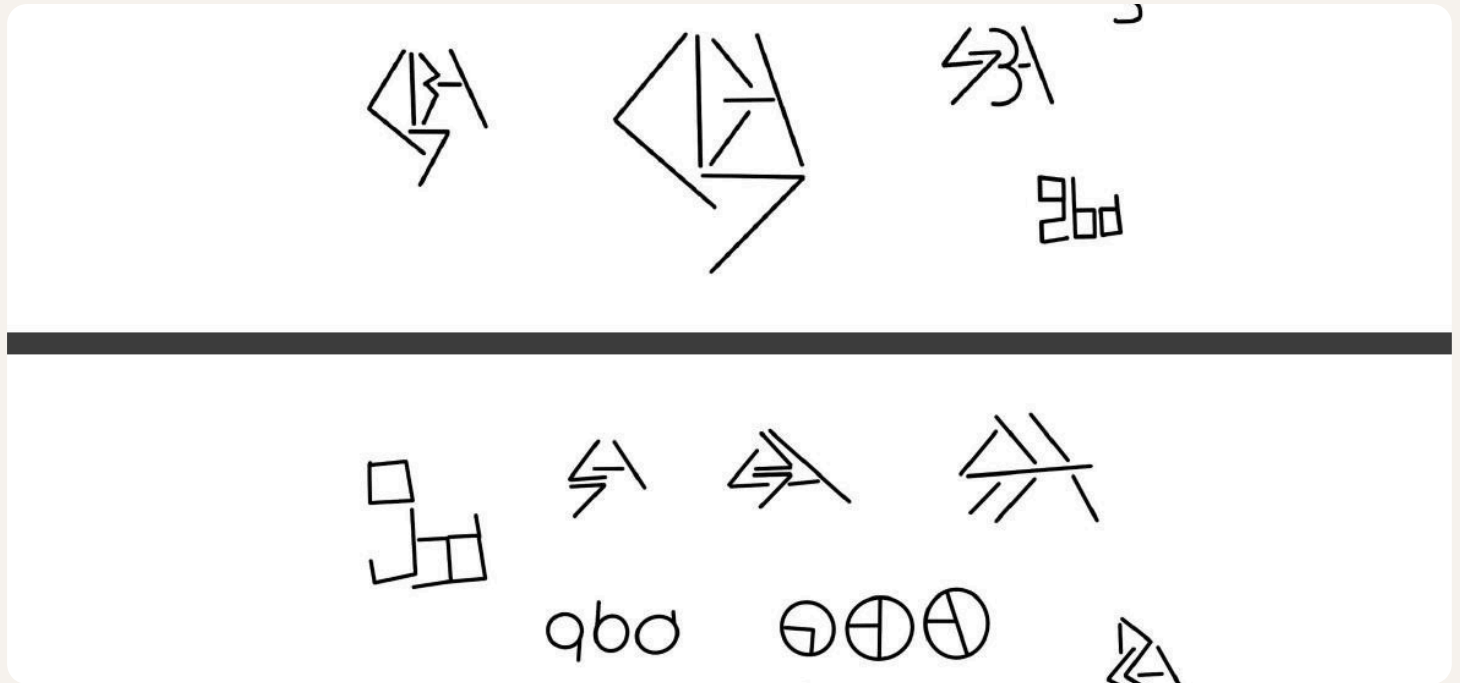
EMPATHY MAP



04 — PROCESS

Empathize, Define, Ideate — sketching the wrong answer first

I worked through a standard Design Thinking loop — Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test — but the interesting part isn't the framework, it's what each stage actually forced me to change.



The logo had to work as a small social-media avatar and as a large agenda header, in a single colour and in full colour, and it had to say 'beauty industry authority' without tipping into either cold corporate or overly soft. I started with shape-based sketches — abstract marks built from the G/B/A letterforms — before concluding that an abstract mark was solving a problem GBA didn't have. What the brand actually needed was legibility and trust, which pointed toward a confident wordmark rather than a symbol. That's a decision I only reached by sketching the wrong answer first.

04 — PROCESS

Choosing a wordmark over a symbol

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TV**

I tested the full wordmark against a stacked initials treatment (GBA) across dozens of weight, case and spacing combinations. A high-contrast serif in the wordmark reads editorial and established — closer to a publication's masthead than a tech startup's logo — which fit a brand built partly on educational content and publications. A clean geometric sans carries the UI and body copy, so the serif stays reserved for moments that need gravity.

GBA GBA

GBA

GBA

GBA

GBA

gba

nna

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● BEAUTY
● AGENDA● GLOBAL
● BEAUTY
● AGENDA

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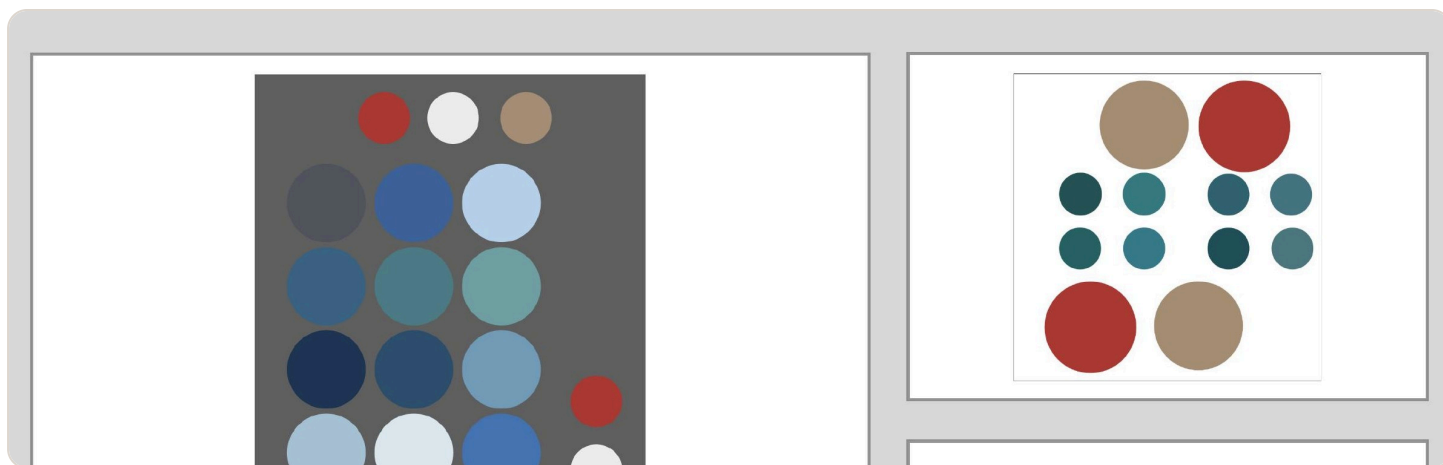
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○ BEAUTY
○ AGENDA

○ GLOBAL

04 — PROCESS

The colour journey: grey, then navy, then red

Colour took the longest to settle, and the process is worth showing rather than skipping to the final palette. I started in greyscale to prototype layout and hierarchy without colour bias, then moved to a navy-heavy exploration — navy reads as trustworthy and professional, which made sense for the B2B side, but on full pages it felt closer to a finance brand than a beauty one, and it flattened the emotional warmth the consumer side needed. I kept navy as a supporting colour and brought in a deep, editorial red as the primary accent — it's the colour that tested best for capturing attention and signalling energy without reading as aggressive, and it let the imagery (not the chrome) carry the warmth.



FINAL PALETTE

#BA2E2E

AGENDA RED

primary accent — CTAs, emphasis, the wordmark

#215170

DEEP NAVY

secondary — footers, industry-space sections, stability

#AB8D72

WARM TAN

supporting neutral — warmth against the red/navy

#EEEEEE

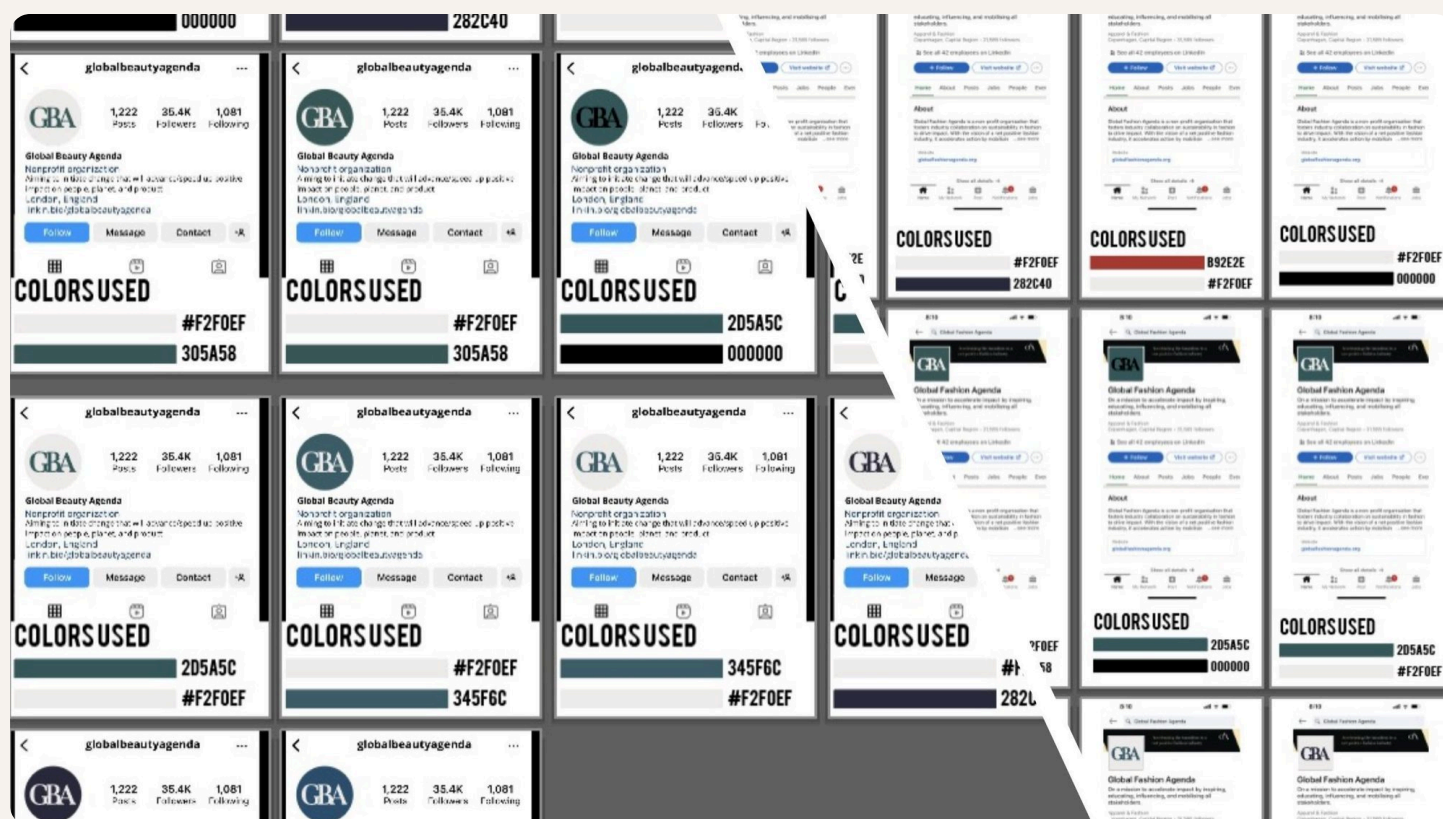
SOFT OFF-WHITE

base — lets editorial photography do the work

04 — PROCESS

Testing the palette outside of Figma

Before locking the palette in, I mocked the system into contexts it would actually live in — Instagram and LinkedIn post templates — because a palette that only works on a Figma artboard isn't finished. Testing it against real social formats caught contrast and legibility issues the artboard mockups hid.



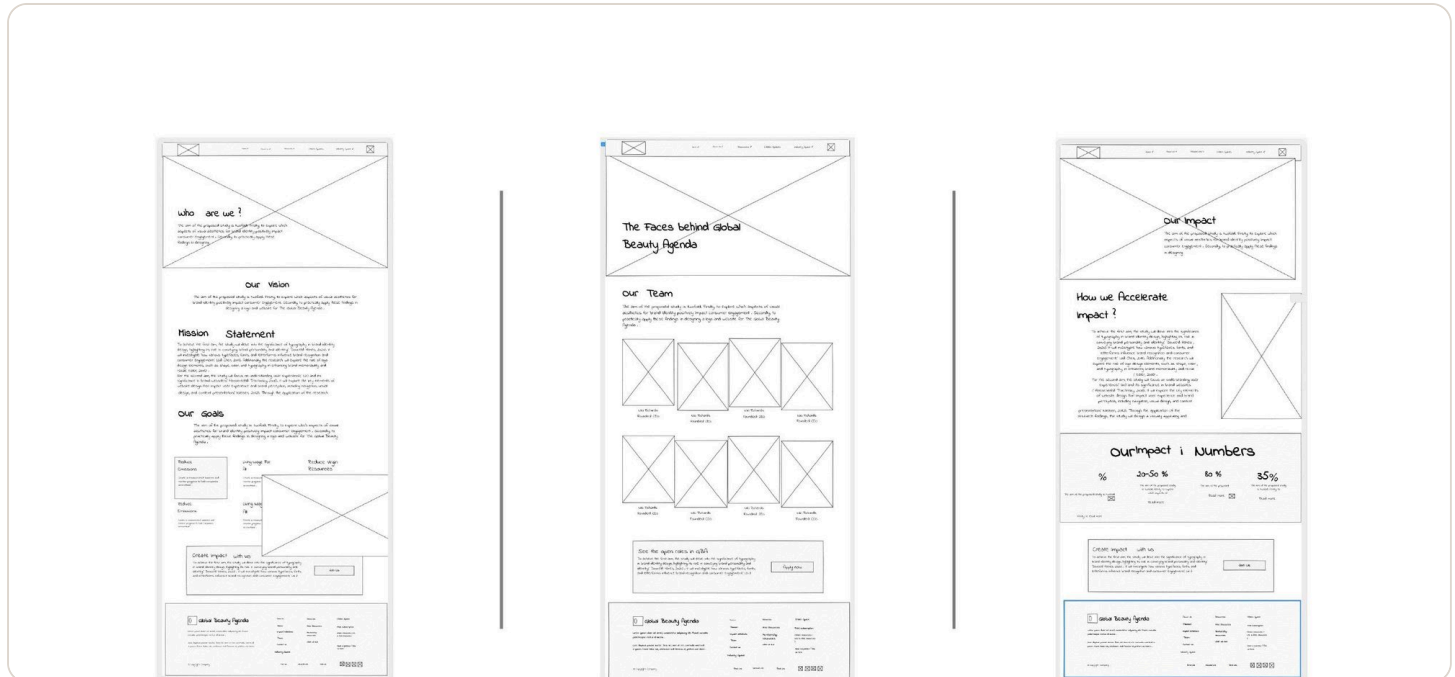
INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

The information architecture is where the dual-audience problem actually got solved, not just the colour palette. Citizen Space and Industry Space are separate top-level sections rather than a shared page with filters — a consumer never has to wade through membership-tier language to find a beauty resource, and a prospective partner never has to scroll past subscribe forms to find credentials.

05 — PROTOTYPING

Deliberately ugly, on purpose

Wireframes started deliberately ugly — grey boxes, placeholder type, no imagery — so that layout and hierarchy decisions weren't getting propped up by nice photography. Once the structure held up on its own, I moved to high-fidelity and applied Gestalt principles explicitly rather than intuitively: proximity to group related resource cards, similarity in card treatment so the eye doesn't have to re-learn the pattern on every scroll.



05 — PROTOTYPING

Applying Gestalt principles explicitly

Proximity and similarity aren't abstractions here — they're the reason the Resource Library grid stays legible once it's full of dozens of cards rather than three.

Citizen Resources



GBA launch 2023

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Read more →



GBA launch 2023

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Gestalt's Similarity Principle

Proximity



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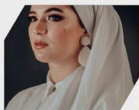
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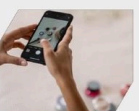
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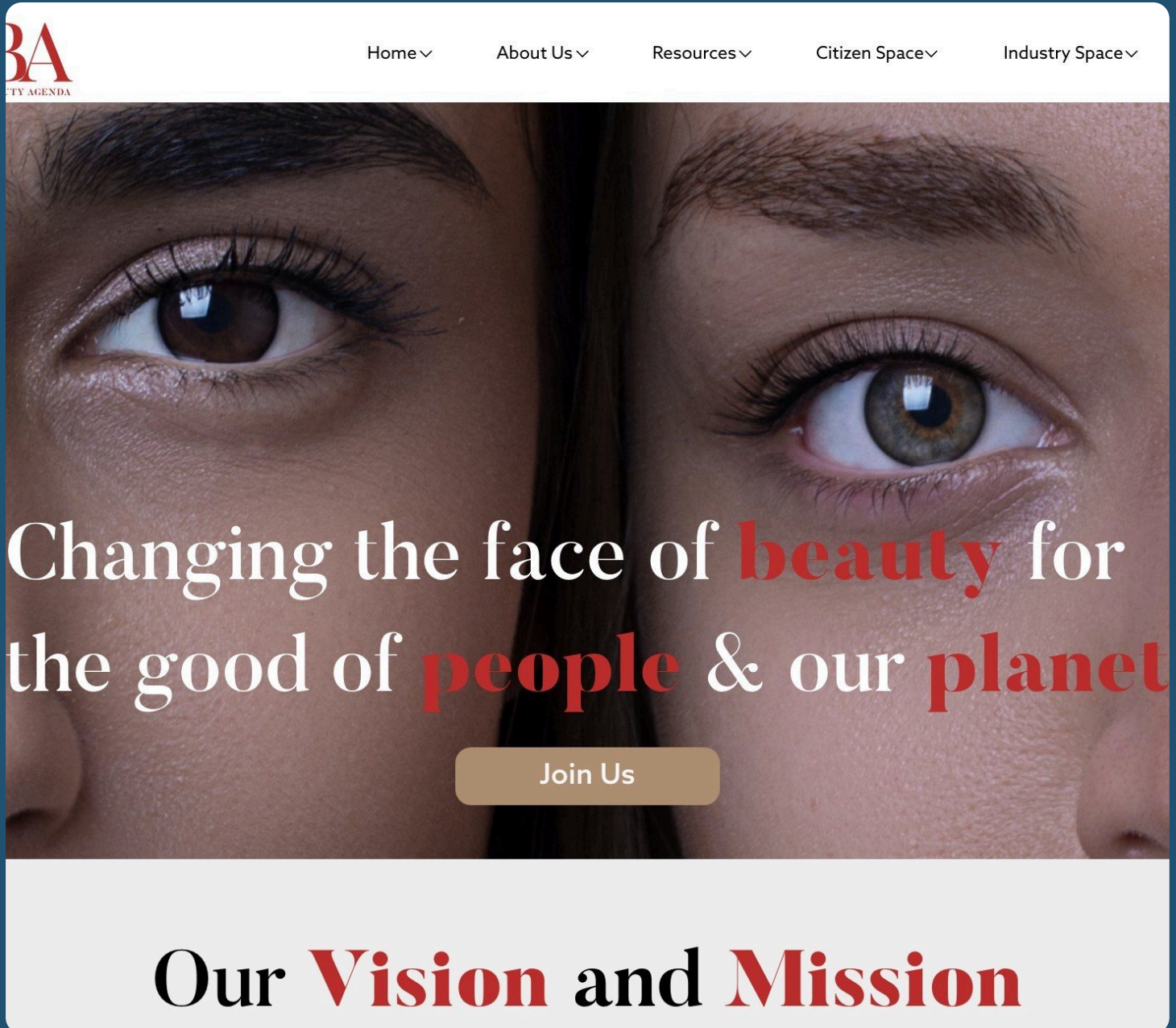
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11

06 — FINAL DESIGN

Home

Sets tone in one scroll: mission statement, the scale of the problem GBA exists to address, and clear entry points into both audiences.



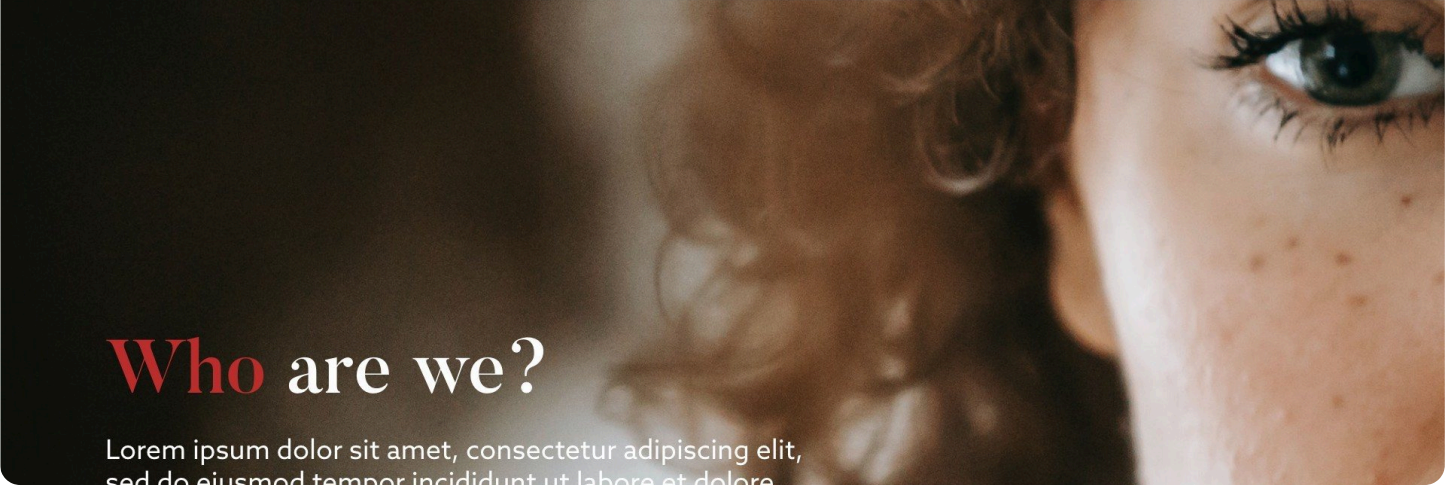
06 — FINAL DESIGN

Who We Are & Our Impact

Vision, mission and goals — written for a visitor who needs to be convinced GBA is substantive before they'll explore further.



Home ▾About Us ▾Resources ▾Citizen Space ▾Industry Space ▾



Who are we?

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Leads with the numbers GBA is accountable to, then makes the case for how it plans to move them.



Home ▾About Us ▾Resources ▾Citizen Space ▾Industry Space ▾



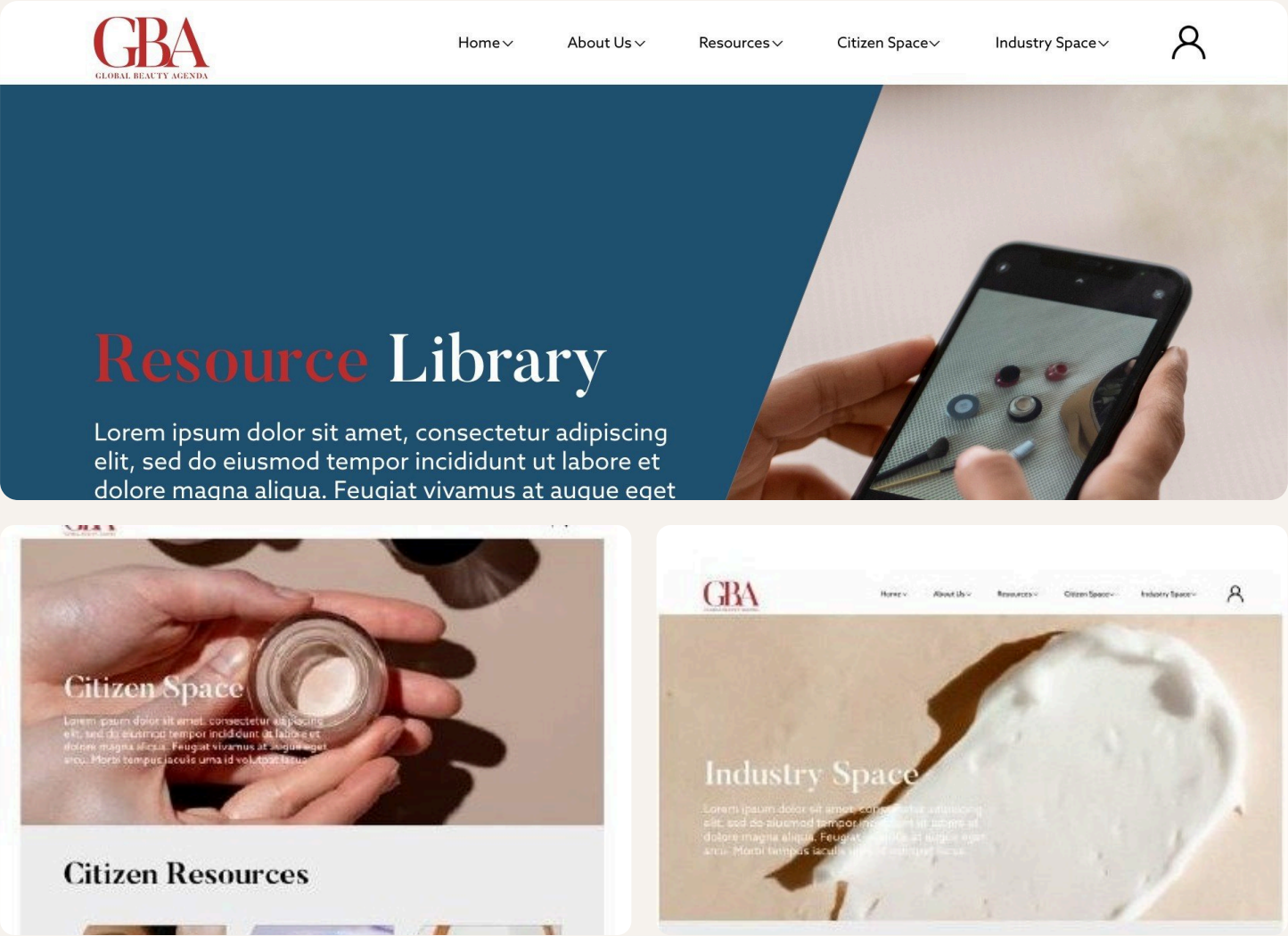
Our Impact

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06 — FINAL DESIGN

Resource Library, Citizen Space & Industry Space

A filterable library serving both audiences from one system — the card grid uses Gestalt similarity/proximity to stay legible at scale.



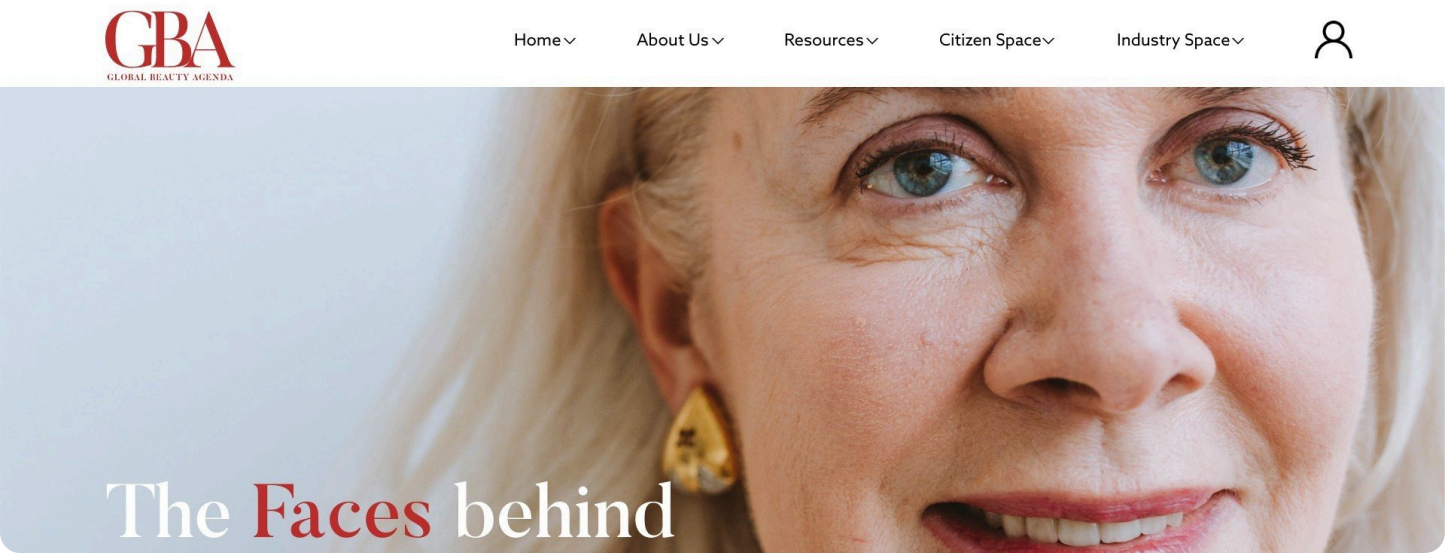
Citizen Space — The consumer-facing hub: resources, subscribe flow, a direct question form — b...

Industry Space — The partner-facing hub: exclusive content and a lead form aimed at brands l...

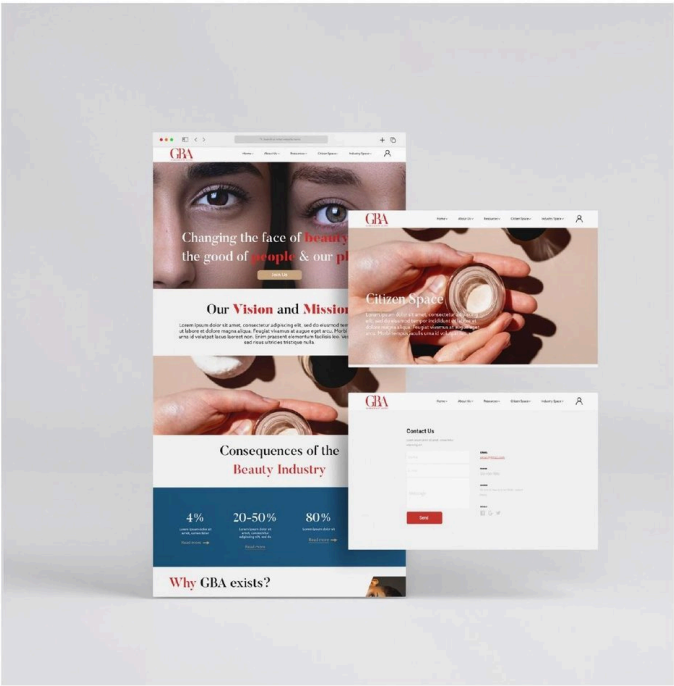
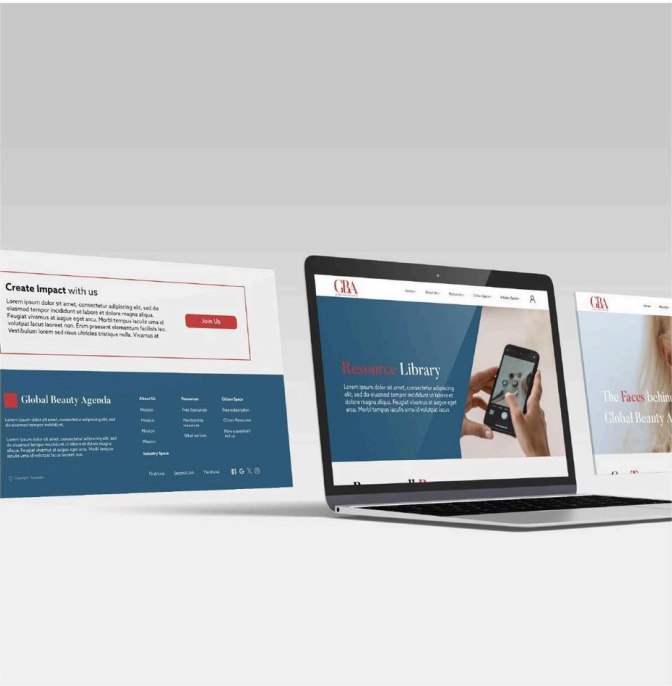
06 — FINAL DESIGN

Our Team

Puts faces to the organisation — a deliberate trust signal for both audiences, reinforced with an open-roles CTA.



ACROSS DEVICES



07 — OUTCOME & REFLECTION

Research-informed design, not a performance dashboard

This was a university major project delivered with a real client brief, not a shipped product with analytics behind it — so I want to be direct about what the 'results' here actually are. There's no A/B test or conversion data to point to. What I have is research-informed design: every major decision traces back to a specific finding from the survey, the interviews, or the literature, and I can defend each one on that basis rather than on aesthetic preference alone.

RECOMMENDATIONS DELIVERED TO GBA

The recommendations I handed to GBA going forward: keep colour and typography consistent across every touchpoint (not just the website) since consistency was the single strongest predictor of recall in the research; invest in imagery over decoration, since appealing visuals outranked every other factor in what makes a website experience feel engaging; and treat the Citizen/Industry split as a structural principle, not a styling choice, as the platform grows.

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

What I'd change if I ran this again: the interview sample skewed toward people with design backgrounds, which strengthened the quality of the feedback but narrowed how representative it is of GBA's actual mixed audience — a larger, less design-literate sample would stress-test the conclusions harder. And I'd push for even a small moderated usability test on the hi-fi prototype before calling the design finished, rather than stopping at stakeholder and literature validation.



Thank you for reading

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