The Challenge

**E**very day, 250 million passenger vehicles hit the road. Roadie founder Marc Gorlin envisioned an app that would disrupt the shipping industry by taking advantage of these drivers and their billion square feet of unused cargo space, allowing users to quickly and more efficiently send items—even ones that normally can't be sent by mail.

Discovery

At Big Nerd Ranch, our Design team kicks off our process with the Discovery phase, and this project was no different. The goals for our initial Discovery session were three-fold:

- Understand the client's business goals and peer-to-peer delivery concept
- Define and streamline the core functionality of the app
- Map and detail the user's experience

These were all accomplished through close collaboration with the Roadie team over a series of iterations. Deliverables during this phase included user flows, wireframes and various interactive prototypes.
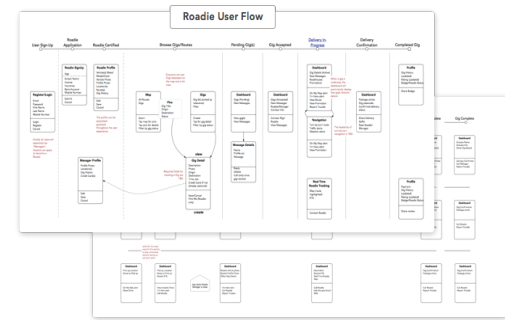
Development

Our Development Teams were met with a multitude of challenges, most notably:

- Verifying drivers' licenses
- Implementing geolocation
- Adding payment gateways
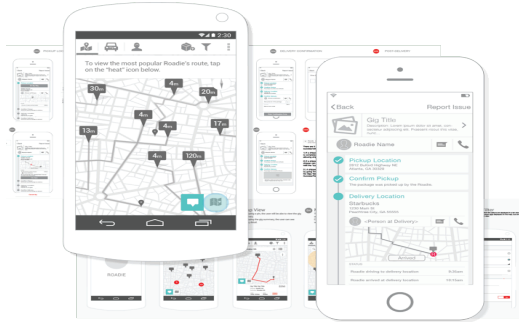
Our developers went to work on the app, creating a fast, geohash-based map searching algorithm that allows users to find Roadie "gigs" nearby, without burdening the server.

Our Backend Web team built a JSON API using Rails and Active Model Serializers to accept requests from the iOS and Android clients, and created tools to handle driver's licesnse verification, geolocation and payment gateways.

We built a system that tracks a driver's location as he or she progresses through a gig, giving senders peace of mind and helping them estimate delivery times, while image caching made the app faster and reduced data usage.

<UX> We added third-party integrations like Facebook login and Jumio ID verification to make Roadie easier to set up and use. We used Google Play Services to efficiently implement notifications, location services and maps.

Iteration and Collaboration

Our team worked with Roadie from design inception to the final product, and this collaboration was the key to successfully building the Roadie app. The Roadie team's hands-on involvement is a major element of the project's success. In addition to appointing a project lead, Roadie's team attended demos, actively prioritized needs and next steps, and gave feedback on each step of design and development.
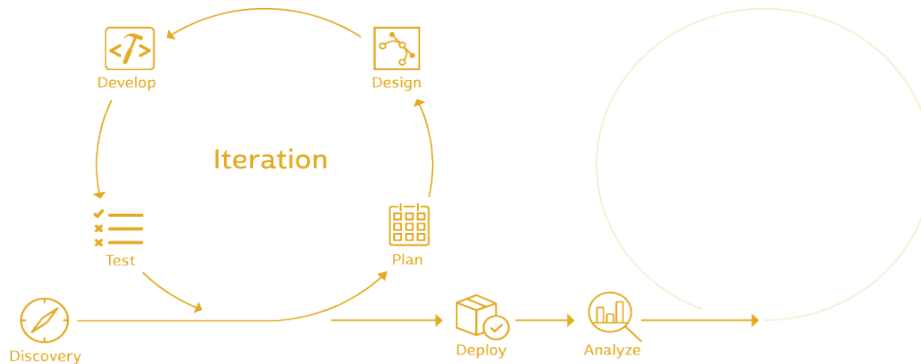

Our fully automated build, test, and deploy process creates a tight feedback loop between development and QA so that changes can be made rapidly. Daily "health checks" and weekly prioritization meetings helped keep everyone informed and identified roadblocks before they occurred. And by working with Roadie as they built their own developer team, we ensure that we could successfully transition ownership of the codebase.

The Results

Leveraging Roadie's existing visual designs and brand standards, we crafted custom UI designs that encapsulate the best practices and unique capabilities of each platform. Creating platform-specific designs reduces development scope and gives iOS and Android users the experience they've come to expect.

The Roadie brand was carefully integrated into the app and is reflected in the visuals of the user interface.

Roadie was built with a solid UX strategy and an architectural foundation that allowed the client to get to market quickly with a robust and stable app.
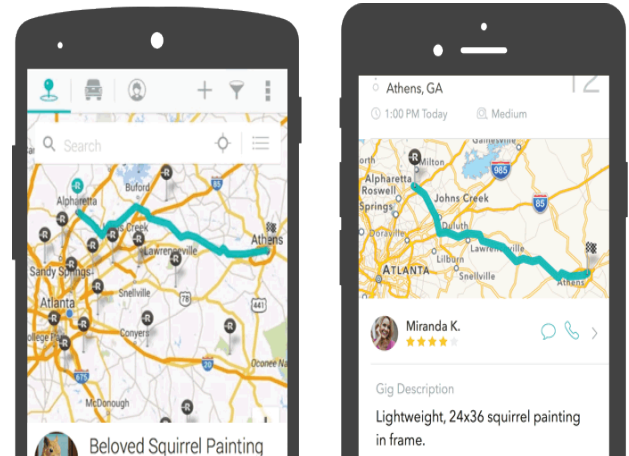
Our focus was on code quality and finding the right solutions for the project, allowing us to rapidly add new features and pivot where needed.

The results are clear: In just six months after launching in January 2015, the company celebrated more than 100,000 downloads and received accolades across both mainstream and tech media.

Roadie has been featured in: