

Redesigning Payroll: The 6-Week Playbook

Transforming a high-anxiety HR process into a transparent, self-serve experience for Alt by PeopleStrong.



UX Case
Study

Step-by-Step
Guide

Board Strategy
Overview

Our Roadmap for the Redesign



The Mission and the Mechanics



The Goal

Make spreadsheet-heavy, anxiety-inducing payroll transparent and self-serve.



The Squad

1 Product Designer, 1 PM, 2 Engineers, 1 HR Domain SME.



The Constraints

6 Weeks (One Sprint Cycle).



The Platforms

Android, iOS (Mobile-First), and Web Admin Console.

The Baseline: Two Sides of the Payroll Crisis

Employee Pain (The Anxiety)



“Did I get paid correctly?”

- ➔ Confusion over month-to-month deltas.
- ➔ Hidden tax declarations.
- ➔ Buried reimbursement statuses.

Admin Pain (The Grind)



“Did I miss a tab?”

- ➔ Manual cross-checking of attendance and leave.
- ➔ Disconnected compliance screens.
- ➔ Slow and error-prone payroll runs.

The Business Cost: High volume of low-value HR helpdesk tickets + severe compliance risks and delayed pay runs.

The Blueprint: Benchmarking the Market

	PeopleStrong (Legacy)	Zoho Payroll	Keka	Darwinbox
Payslip Clarity	Low	Medium	High	Medium
Reimbursement Visibility	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Admin Pre-Run Checklist	None	Partial	Yes	Yes
Mobile-First Design	Partial	Yes	Yes	Partial

Key Insight: We were lagging behind Keka and Darwinbox in core admin workflows and employee visibility. Closing this gap was critical for enterprise retention.

Step 01: Discover & Define the Users



Methodology

Conducted qualitative interviews across 3 client orgs, context walkthroughs with 3 admins, and analyzed support ticket volume to quantify the qualitative complaints.



Persona 1: The First-Jobber

Skims payslips looking only for net pay. Panics at unexplained month-to-month changes. Needs a clear headline view.



Persona 2: The Veteran Admin

Processes hundreds of employees. Hates switching tabs. Demands a single, consolidated pre-run checklist for attendance and exceptions.

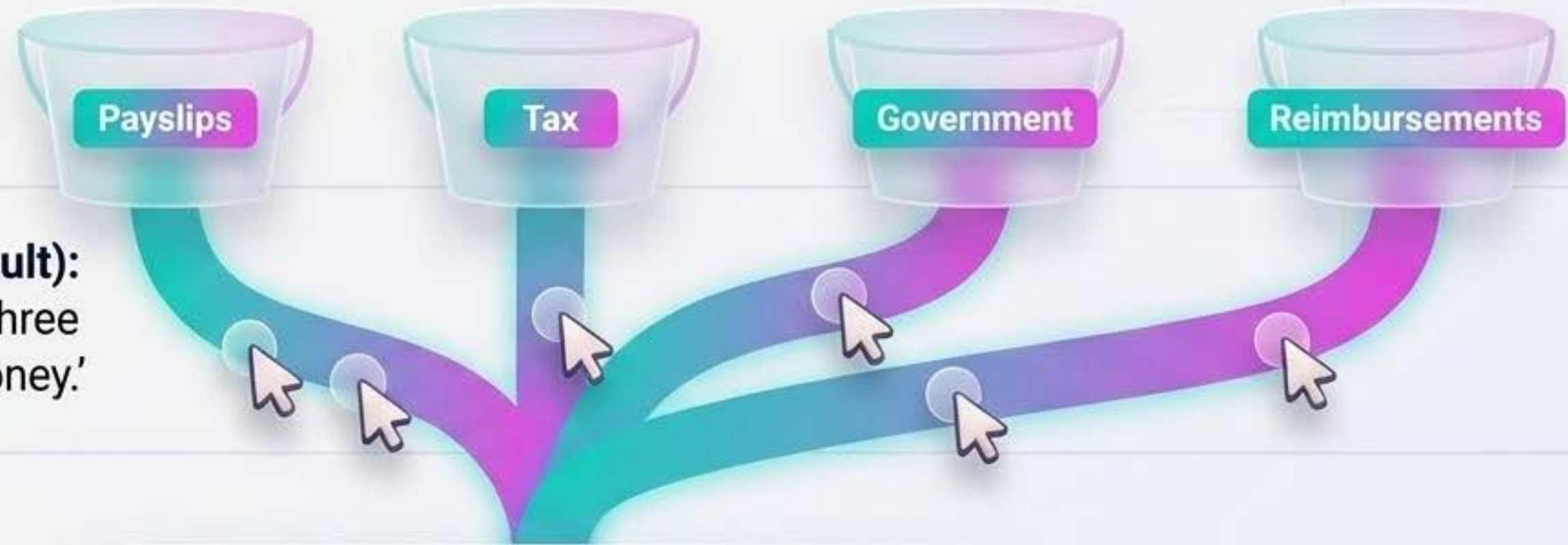
Step 02: Ideate & Architect via Card Sorting

The Assumption:

Build three separate tabs.

The Reality (Card Sorting Result):

Employees mentally group all three under a single concept: 'My Money.'



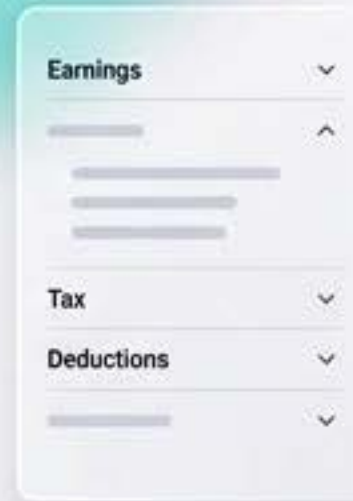
The Structural Win: We unified everything. This single decision cut the navigation depth to a user's payslip from 3 taps down to 1 tap.

Step 03: Design, Test, and Iterate



Phase 1 (Flat List)

Too much cognitive load. Users missed statutory deductions.



Phase 2 (Grouped Accordion)

Better organization, but still required too much manual tapping to find anomalies.



Phase 3 (Expandable Cards)

The breakthrough. Expandable earnings vs. deductions yielded the highest comprehension and lowest anxiety.



The SME Advantage: Two rounds of review with an HR Domain SME ensured all compliance-sensitive copy was bulletproof before high-fidelity rendering.

Visual Rules: Fluent yet Native

Typography

Aa 123,456.00

Clean sans-serif with distinct, tabular numeric styling so currency amounts remain instantly scannable.

Color Palette



Primary cool navy/blue (trust) with teal accents (positive action). Deliberately calm; alarm-colors avoided due to content sensitivity.

Components



Pending ⌚

Processed ✓

Reusable summary cards and distinct status chips (Pending / Processed).

Illustration Strategy



Friendly spot illustrations strictly reserved for onboarding and empty states to avoid competing with dense financial data.

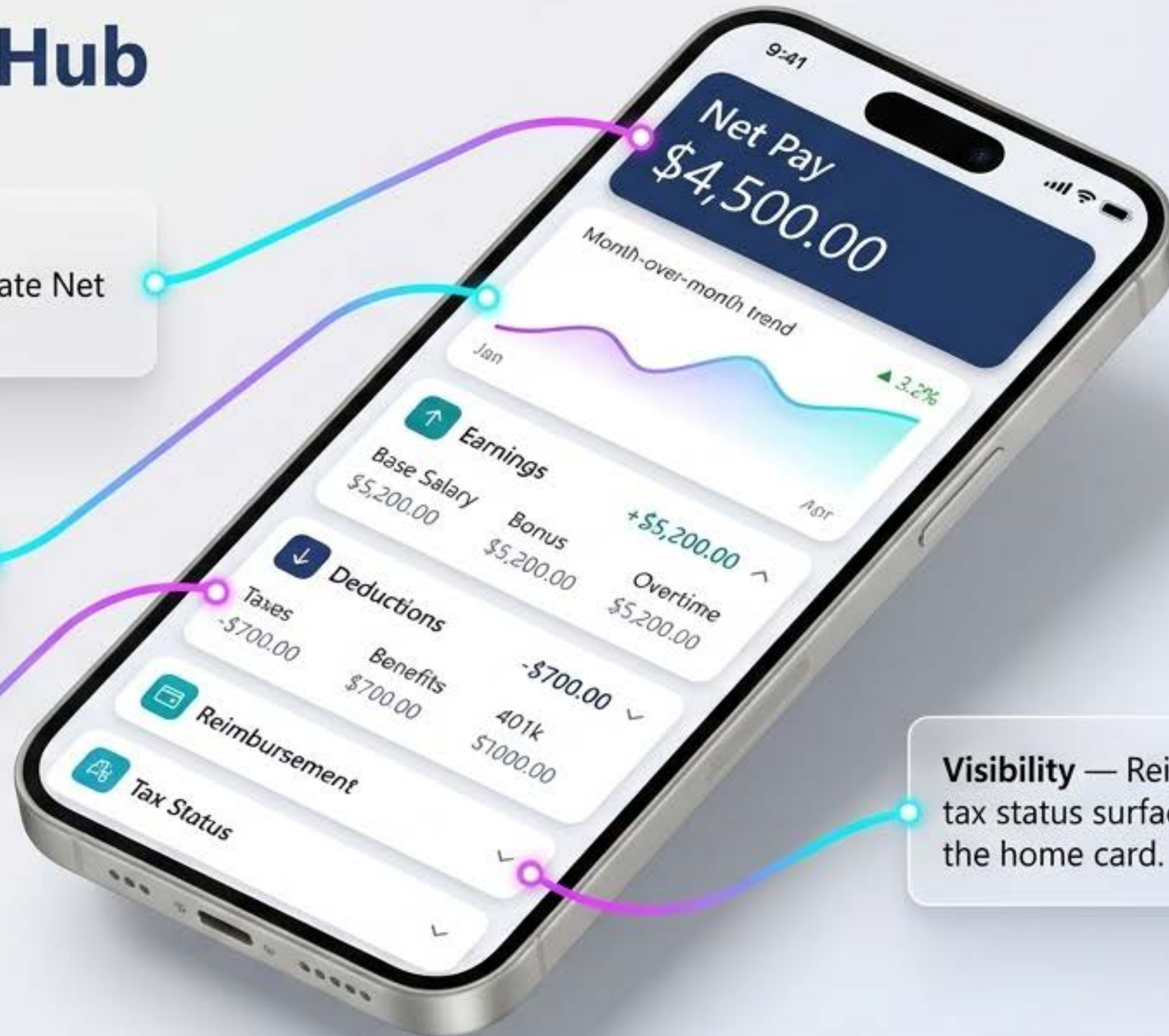
The Reveal: The Employee Pay Hub

Headline View —
Prominent, immediate Net
Pay card.

Context — Month-over-month trend
graph explains deltas visually.

Transparency — Expandable
earnings vs. deductions using
plain-language labels.

Visibility — Reimbursement and
tax status surfaced directly on
the home card.



The Reveal: The Admin Consolidated Checklist

~~The Old Way~~

5 separate screens/tabs. High risk of missing statutory data.

The New Way

1 unified pre-run checklist.

Core Features

A single-pane view of attendance exceptions, leave data, and compliance checks prior to execution. Drastically reduces processing time and filing errors.



The Transformation at a Glance



Legacy

Payslip Breakdown: Flat, unexplained line items.

Reimbursement Status: Buried 3 taps deep.

Admin Pre-Run: 5 separate screens/tabs.

Navigation Depth: 3 taps to find a payslip.



Redesign

Payslip Breakdown: Expandable earnings vs. deductions.

Reimbursement Status: Surfaced on the Pay Hub home card.

Admin Pre-Run: 1 consolidated checklist screen.

Navigation Depth: 1 tap.

The Scorecard: Impact & Results

75%

Meaningful reduction in payroll-related HR helpdesk tickets. ↓

10s



Faster time-to-payslip (under 10 seconds).

50%



Shorter admin processing time (consolidated workflow).

25+



Significant increase in System Usability Scale (SUS) score.



“Finally lets me see everything before I hit run, instead of hoping I didn’t miss a tab.”

— Admin Participant

“Actually explains where my money went, instead of just showing a scary total.”

— Employee Participant

The Golden Rule of Financial UX



The What



The Why



Trust

The Big Learning

For high-anxiety, numbers-heavy flows, visual polish is not enough. **Trust requires transparency.**

The Principle: Default to showing the 'Why,' not just the 'What.'

The Proof

Showing the actual calculation (earnings vs. deductions) reduced the perceived need to contact HR far more effectively than adding an FAQ or chatbot.

Beyond the Sprint: Next Steps

1. Quantitative Validation

Run longer A/B tests on the month-to-month trend view versus a simple flat summary.

2. Broaden the Scope

Expand usability testing to larger enterprise clients with more complex compliance structures.

3. Monitor & Iterate

Track real-world support ticket drops post-launch to validate ROI and identify new edge-cases.

