PuzzleNova

Overview

PuzzleMatch is a casual mobile puzzle game designed to offer quick, engaging gameplay with eye-catching visual rewards, and daily challenges. While the core experience is simple and enjoyable, the existing interface relies on basic shapes, flat design choices, and minimal visual hierarchy — creating an opportunity to improve clarity, engagement, and overall user satisfaction.

Problem Statement

Although PuzzleMatch offers a fun and simple puzzle experience, its current user interface lacks the visual hierarchy, modern design patterns, and interaction clarity needed to keep users engaged. The home screen presents multiple buttons with similar shapes and colors, making it difficult for users to identify primary actions. Additionally, essential game elements such as scores, streaks, and challenges are displayed without clear differentiation, reducing their impact on player motivation. The overall layout feels functional but outdated, resulting in lower retention, reduced daily challenge participation, and a less immersive gaming experience.

To improve usability and engagement, PuzzleMatch needs a more intuitive, visually appealing, and gamified interface that guides users effortlessly while maintaining a simple learning curve for casual players.

Research Insights

To understand how users interact with PuzzleMatch and identify opportunities for improvement, I analyzed common patterns in casual puzzle games, reviewed user behaviors, and examined UI standards in similar apps. The following insights summarize the key findings:

1. Users Prefer Clear Primary Actions
Players expect a single, visually dominant action button (e.g., Play Game) that stands out from secondary options. In the current UI, all buttons look similar, causing decision fatigue.

2. Gamification Elements Need Stronger Visibility
Features like Total Score, Streak, and Bonus are important motivators but are visually understated. Users tend to engage more when rewards and progress indicators are more prominent and visually dynamic.

3. Navigation Feels Functional but Not Intuitive
The vertical list of buttons provides basic navigation, but lacks visual hierarchy and modern interaction patterns. Players expect smoother transitions and a more engaging card-based or tile-based layout.

4. Visual Style Lacks Modern Game Appeal
Casual gamers respond well to vibrant gradients, soft shadows, animations, and more polished iconography. The current flat design feels outdated and reduces overall immersion.

5. Users Expect Quick Access to Daily Challenge & Achievements
Daily features like streaks and challenges, and achievements are strong hooks for retention. However, users indicated that these elements should be more prominent and accessible early in the experience.

6. Competition Benchmarks Highlight Gaps
Top puzzle games (e.g., Candy Crush, Brain Test, Woodoku) use:
- Prominent CTAs
- Strong visual storytelling
- Clear progression systems
- Reward animations and microinteractions
- PuzzleMatch lacks many of these elements, reducing its competitive appeal.

Design Thinking Process

1. Empathize
- Conducted heuristic analysis of the current app.
- Reviewed competitor puzzle games to understand industry standards.
- Identified emotional triggers and frustrations: cluttered UI, unclear hierarchy, minimal engagement cues.
- Understood user needs for a relaxing yet motivating puzzle experience.

2. Define
- Synthesized findings into core UX problems: lack of hierarchy, outdated layout, and low motivation.
- Created user pain points and personas to frame the problem.

3. Ideate
- Brainstormed multiple solutions for layout, navigation, and rewards.
- Sketched early concepts for home screen, level selection, and gameplay flow.
- Structured new user flows to reduce friction and increase clarity.

4. Prototype
- Created low-fidelity wireframes to validate structure and flow.
- Developed high-fidelity UI screens using gradients, soft shadows, and improved hierarchy.
- Built a cohesive component system for scalable design.

5. Test
- Shared prototypes with casual puzzle players for feedback.
- Observed interaction patterns, clarity issues, and visual preferences.
- Improved spacing, CTAs, progress indicators, and visual depth based on feedback.

User Persona

Aanya plays puzzle games during short breaks between classes or while traveling. She prefers simple, relaxing, low-pressure puzzle apps that offer quick wins and daily rewards. She avoids games that feel confusing or visually outdated.

Goals
- Quickly start a game without navigating too many screens
- Feel rewarded through streaks, bonuses, or level progression
- Enjoy a visually appealing, calming interface
- Reduce stress with short, satisfying puzzle sessions

Pain Points
- Home screen looks cluttered and unmotivating
- Hard to identify the main action (Play / Daily Challenge)
- No sense of progression or reward
- Ads disrupt gameplay flow
- Outdated visual style compared to competitors

User Flow

Visual Design

#3A0CA3 #9D4EDD #FF9F1C

#FF5733 #F7C948 #FFFFFF

#4C1D95 #A78BFA #6A4CFF

Typography

Aa

Primary Font: Inter, Poppins, SF Pro Display (iOS style), Roboto (Android style)

Font Usage Breakdown:
- Title → Bold, ~32–36px
- Subtitles → Semi-Bold, ~18–22px
- Small labels → Regular, ~14–16px

Thank You