UX DESIGN STUDY

E-COMMERCE SELLER
DASHBOARD

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INTRODUCTION

Dashboards have become the central workspace for e-commerce sellers. As online retail has matured, platforms like Shopify, Etsy, and Amazon have shifted from static reports to highly visual home screens that surface the most important business insights instantly.

Typically, these dashboards present key metrics such as recent revenue, order volumes, order statuses, best-selling products, inventory levels, customer messages, and visitor-to-buyer conversions. Some platforms also provide smart suggestions — like when to restock, which products need price adjustments, or which listings could benefit from promotion. This evolution reflects a growing need for dashboards not only to show data but to actively support decision-making.

Because sellers depend on this screen several times a day, the design must strike a careful balance: it should display all essential information but remain uncluttered and easy to read. Clear hierarchy, thoughtful grouping, and visual cues help users quickly understand what is happening in their business and what requires immediate attention. When done well, a dashboard becomes an efficient, intuitive starting point that empowers small business owners to operate more effectively and confidently.

COMPETITOR RESEARCH

Competitor research helps identify established patterns, user expectations, and proven design solutions. By studying leading platforms, I can understand what works well, what can be improved, and how to design a dashboard that feels familiar yet more efficient for the user.

Shopify

Shopify offers one of the most comprehensive and flexible analytics dashboards in the e-commerce space. It provides real-time revenue insights, detailed sales graphs, customer behaviour data, marketing analytics, and inventory tracking—all integrated into one visual environment. One of its major advantages is customisation: each dashboard card can be resized to small, medium, or large, allowing sellers to personalise their workspace and prioritise the metrics that matter most to them.

While researching, I also explored Shopify's community website, where sellers actively discuss updates and share their experiences. When Shopify rolled out a new dashboard version in summer 2023, many sellers voiced concerns and compared it with the previous design. These discussions revealed valuable insights into what sellers actually pay attention to, which graphs they find easiest to read, and which visual patterns help them make fast, informed decisions.

Link to Shopify's community discussion
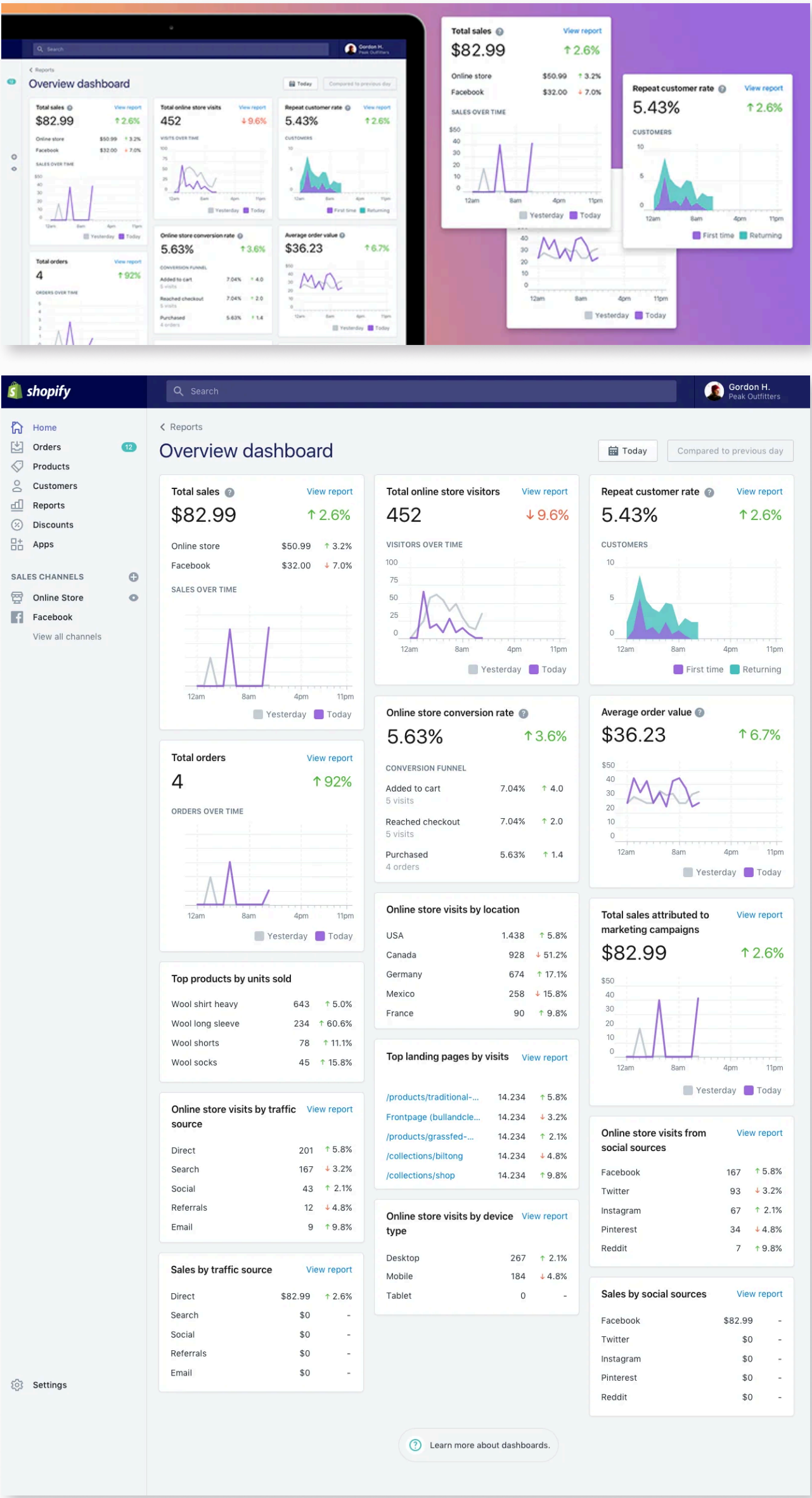
Etsy
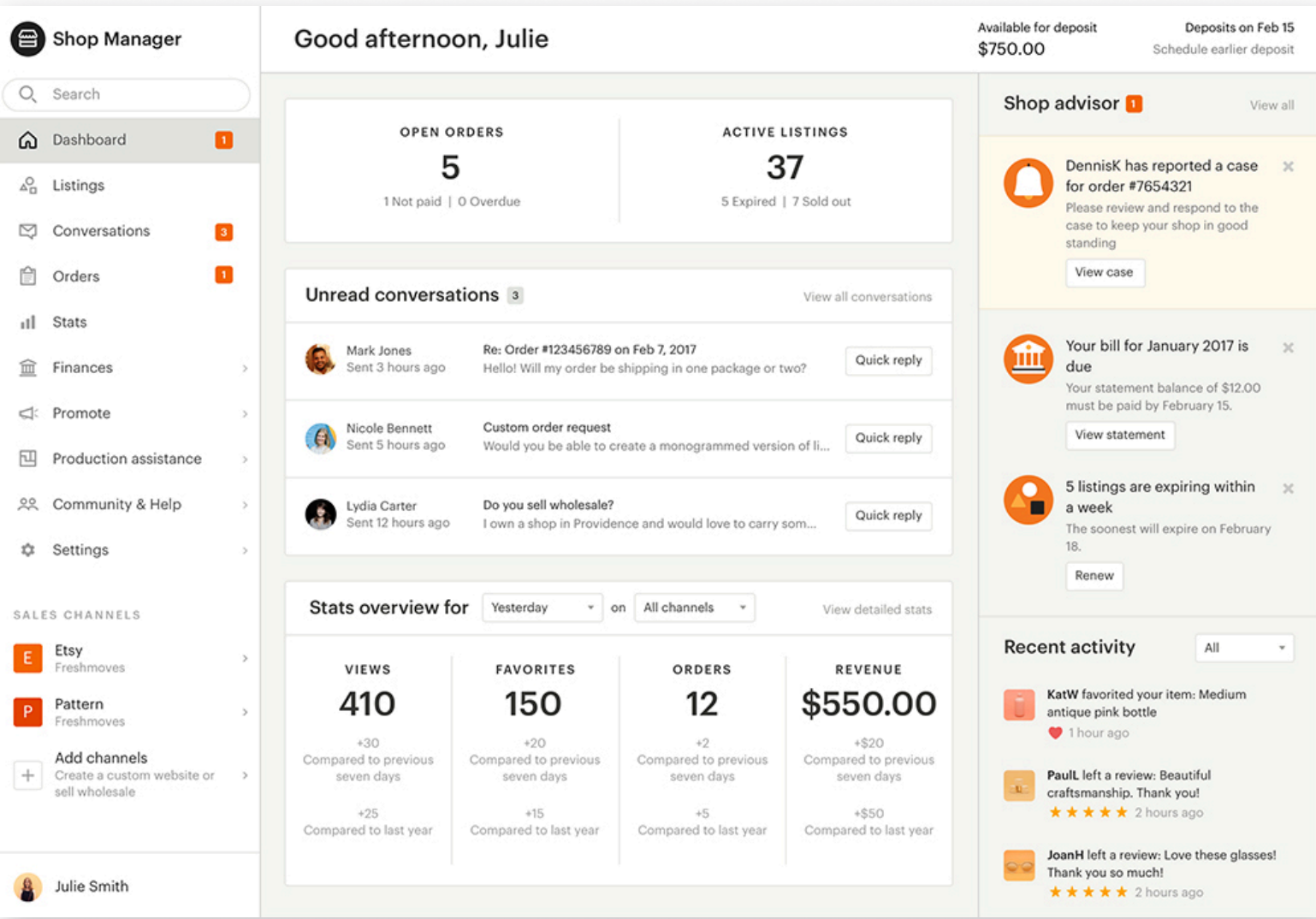
Etsy provides a seller dashboard that is optimised specifically for small creative businesses. It excels in giving quick, lightweight insights that matter most to handmade and boutique sellers: listing performance, visibility metrics, customer favourites, and traffic sources. The dashboard highlights engagement patterns in a highly digestible format and prioritises communication tools, such as customer messages and notifications. Etsy also offers tailored recommendations for improving listings, increasing reach, or addressing quality issues. Its strength is simplicity—clear, focused data that helps sellers understand what drives visibility and sales on a marketplace-driven platform.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS FROM

MY OWN DASHBOARD EXPERIENCE

Alongside competitor research, I also examined dashboards that I personally use on a regular basis. Exploring them in more detail helped me understand how different platforms visualise information, apply hierarchy, and structure interactions such as sorting, filtering, and time-period selection. Observing these real, everyday tools gave me practical insight into what feels intuitive, what becomes overwhelming, and which design decisions truly support efficient user behaviour.
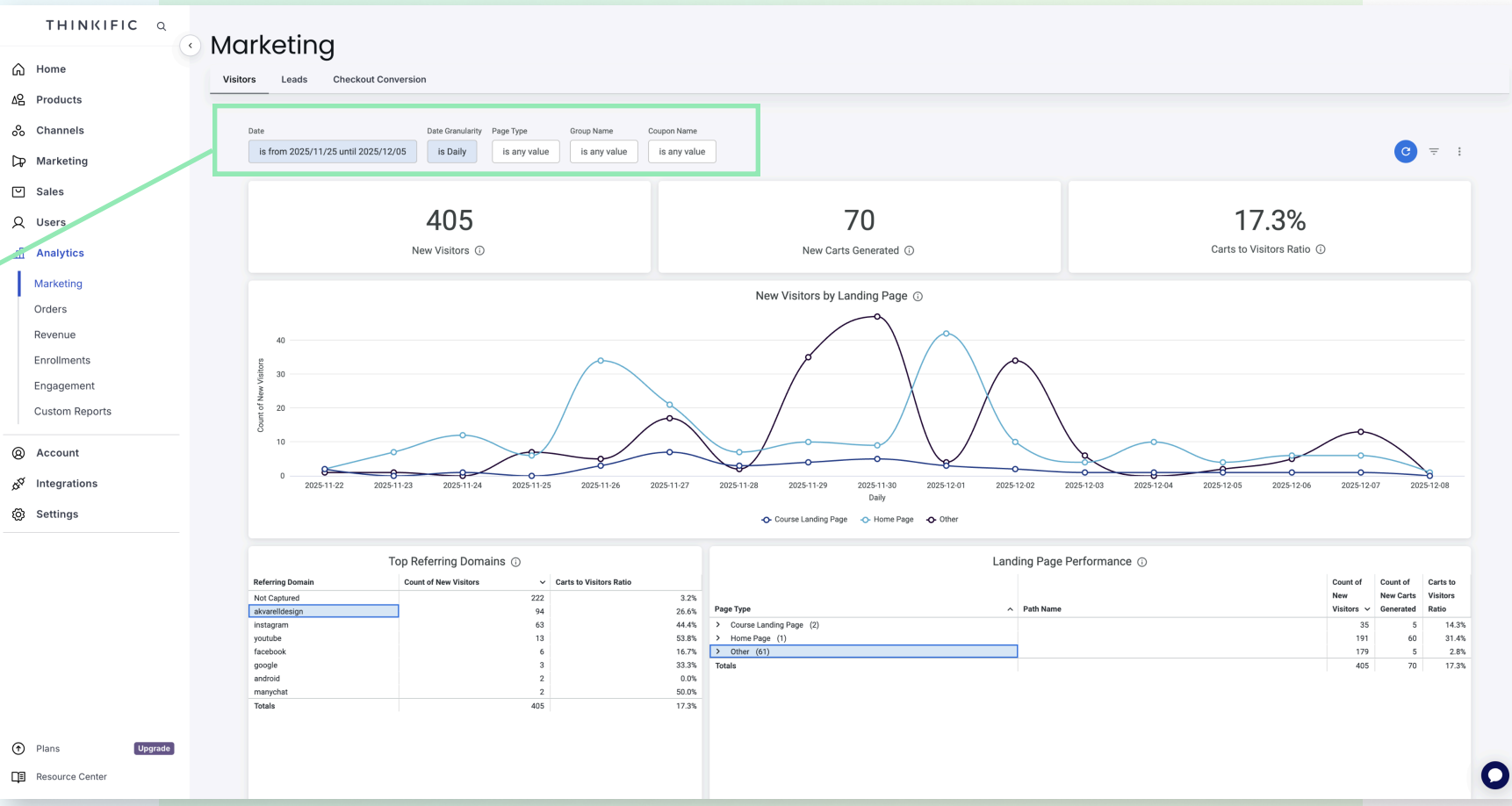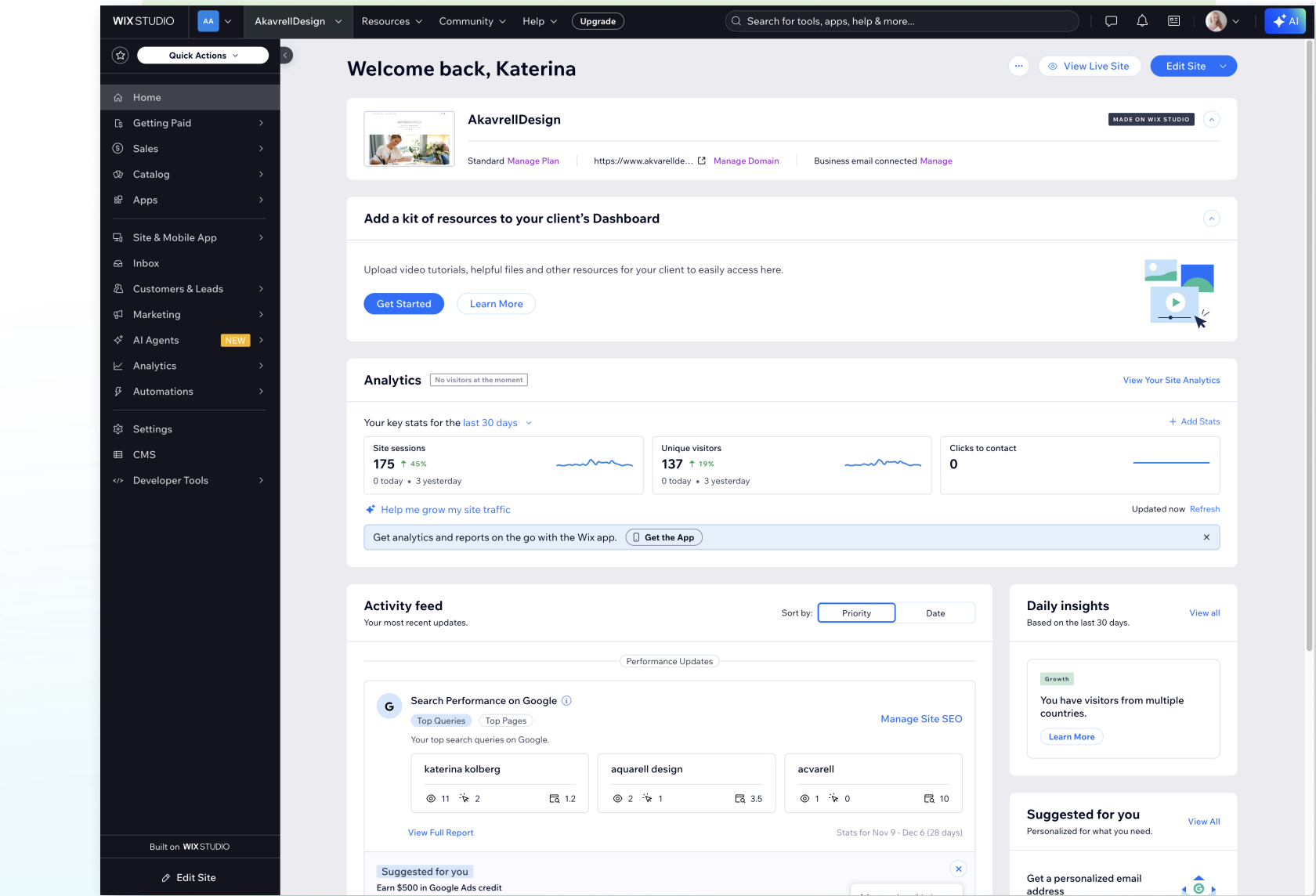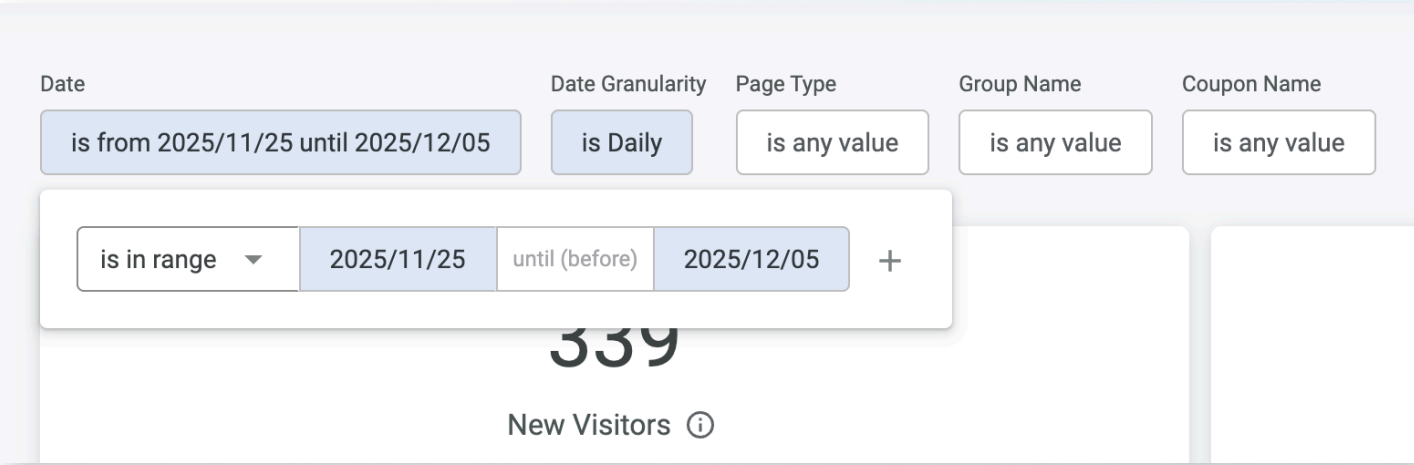
WIX Website Performance

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Thikific Online Course Performance

As an administrator of my watercolor courses, I interact with Thinkific's dashboard regularly and can clearly feel which metrics matter most in my context. I appreciated the filtering system, which allows me to adjust parameters and extract exactly the information I need. However, visually, the dashboard feels quite plain—the graphs use muted colours, and the data tables (such as users or orders) appear stylistically basic, making them less engaging to read. This contrast showed me how important it is not only to present accurate data but also to make it visually appealing and easy to navigate.

IDEATION

After completing my research, I revisited the brief and began exploring how each metric could be visualised in a way that felt clear and meaningful for the user. I sketched multiple variations by hand while researching different chart types online, comparing how each option communicates data such as trends, comparisons, or performance at a glance. This helped me understand which visualisation style would be most effective for each piece of information.

Sketching by hand is an important step in the early design phase because it allows quick exploration without being limited by layout grids or tools. It makes it easy to iterate rapidly, test different ideas, and focus on structure and logic rather than details. This process helped me refine the information hierarchy and set a strong foundation before moving into digital wireframes.
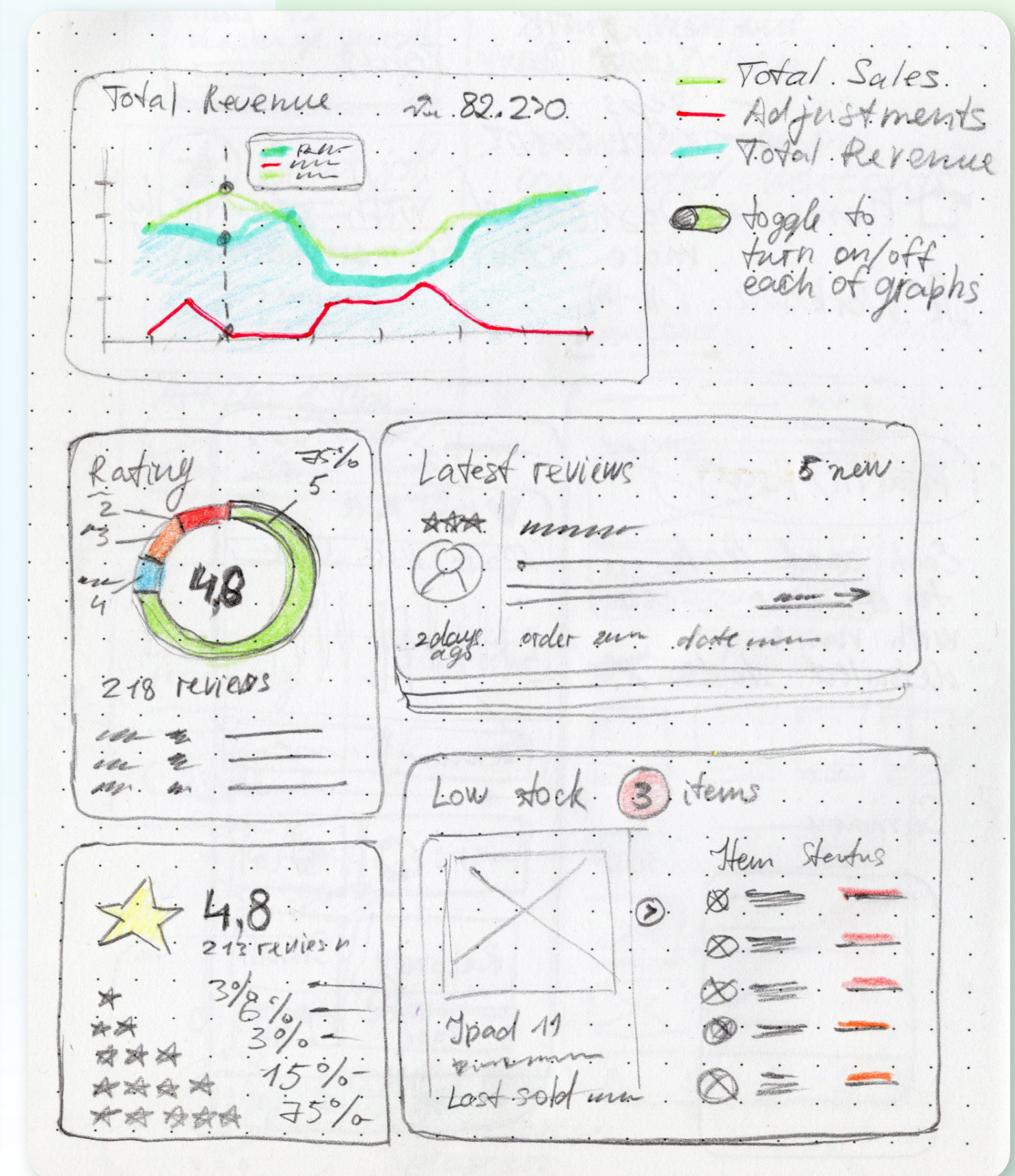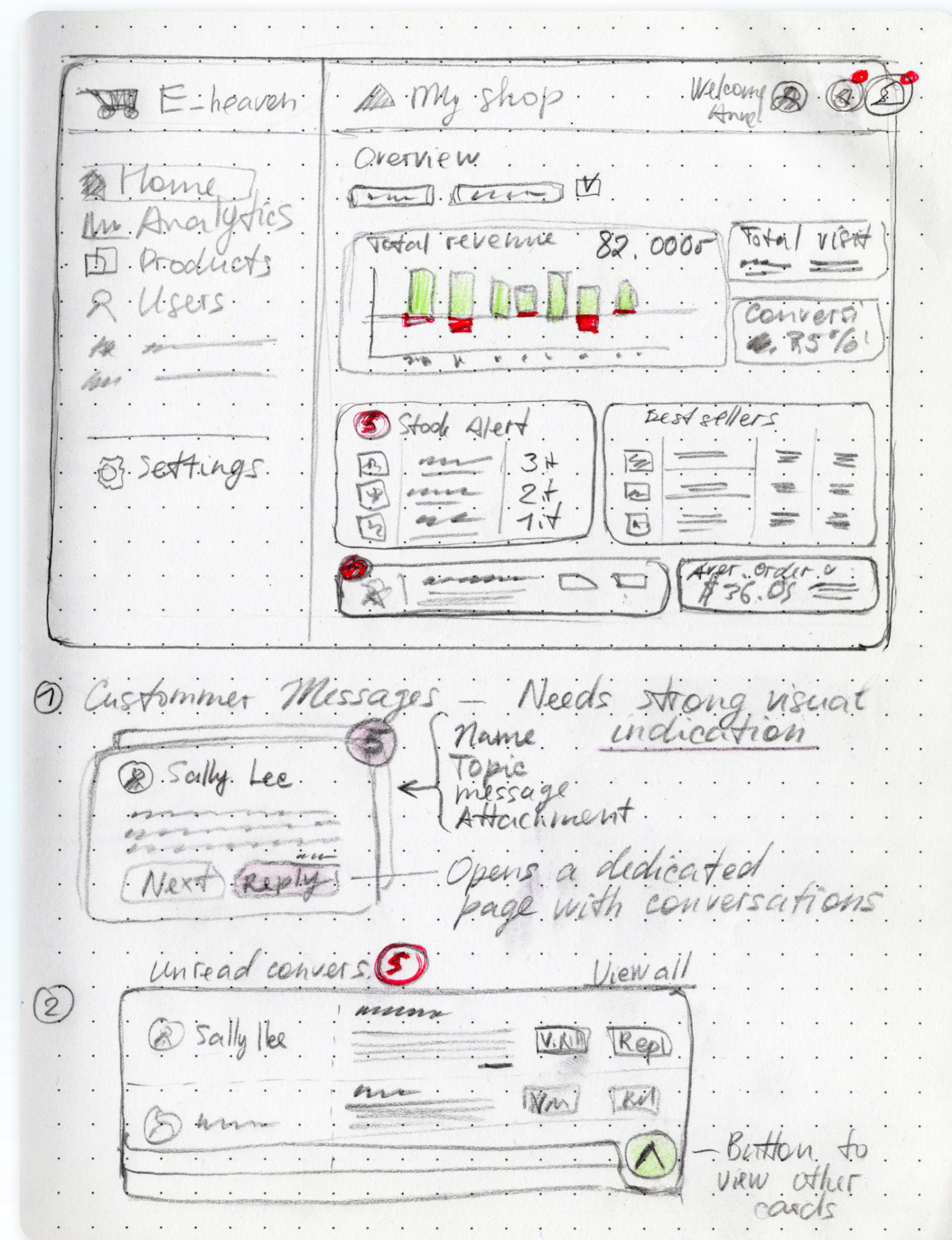
GRAPHIC DESIGN

Typography

I chose Lato for my e-commerce dashboard because it combines readability with a modern, approachable aesthetic. Its clean geometry makes data-heavy UI elements easy to scan, while its subtle warmth ensures the interface doesn't feel too technical or rigid. Lato performs well in tables, charts, labels, and headings, giving the entire dashboard a consistent and polished look. It also supports multiple weights, which helps establish clear hierarchy across cards and metrics.

Lato

Aa

Dashboard

Visual Style & Layout

The overall look of the dashboard is designed to feel clean, fresh, and easy to navigate. I intentionally included generous whitespace so that each card and data element has room to breathe, reducing cognitive load and improving scanability.

All cards, buttons, and UI components use a corner radius (mainly 8 px), and a subtle falling shadows, adding depth and giving the interface a soft, modern, and approachable feel that aligns with contemporary dashboard design standards.

Last 7 days

Compared to:

Filter

Quick reply

Colours

Research on Behance, Dribbble, and real dashboards showed that business interfaces often rely on limited, **muted colour palettes**, typically blues and greens. Based on this, I designed the dashboard in muted green tones to create a calm, professional environment.

For accents, instead of red (which can feel alarming or overly negative in a business context) I introduced a bright tangerine highlight. This keeps attention cues positive, modern, and more emotionally balanced while still ensuring strong contrast and clear visual hierarchy.

To ensure the dashboard is usable for all users, I checked all colours using Figma's built-in contrast checker. Every text–background combination meets **WCAG AA contrast** requirements, ensuring clarity, readability, and accessibility across the entire interface.

Design System in Figma

PALM
#023337

OCEAN GREEN
#4EA674

AQUA SPRING
#EAF8E7

SURF CREST
#C1E6BA

RAIN
#6467F2

TANGERINE
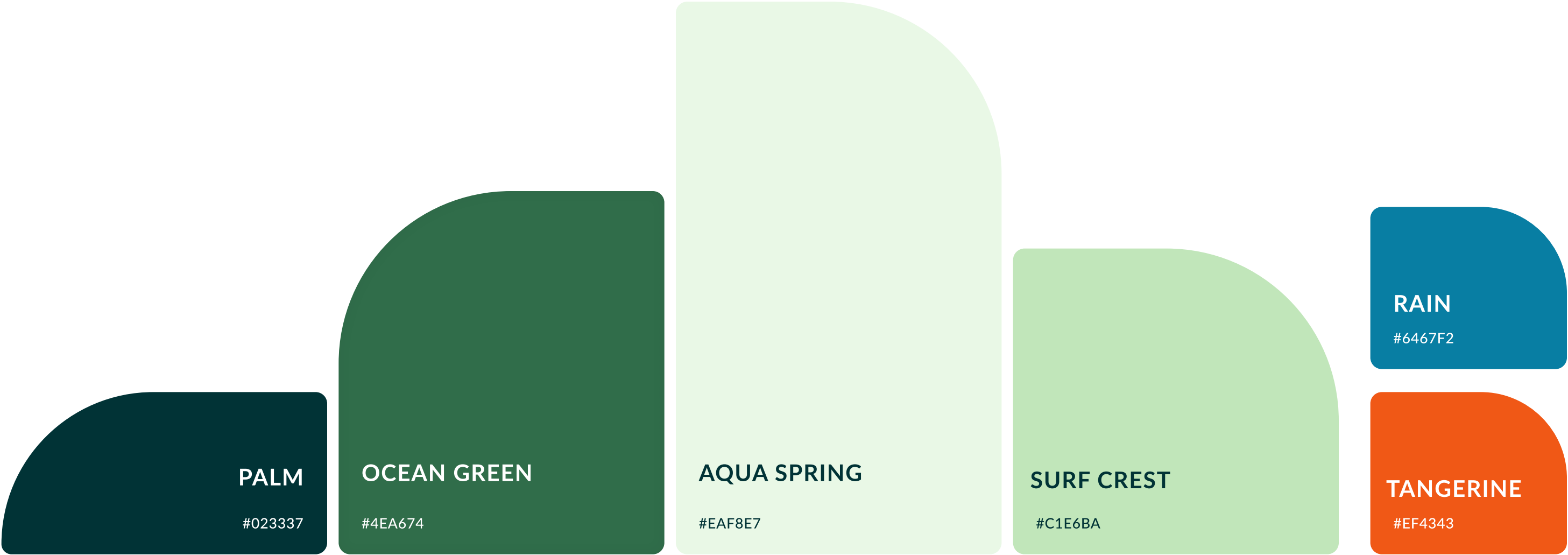#EF4343

DASHBOARD

Design Intent

For this project, I designed the home screen dashboard based on the brief, focusing on the key metrics and data that sellers need for a quick, actionable overview of their shop performance. The information is structured by priority, allowing users to make fast, data-driven decisions without navigating deeper into the platform. A more detailed **Reports** page is planned as part of the system, where users can explore advanced analytics and comparison tools.

The overall layout follows established best practices: a **top header** displaying the e-commerce platform name (I came up with a name StoreFlow) and the shop name, a left-aligned **navigation bar**, and a **grid-based** arrangement of **cards**. Each card presents a focused piece of information and fits into the design grid, making it easy to adjust layout or card sizes for different screen configurations. This structure keeps the dashboard clean, organised, and scalable as the product grows.

<u>Dashboard design in Figma</u>
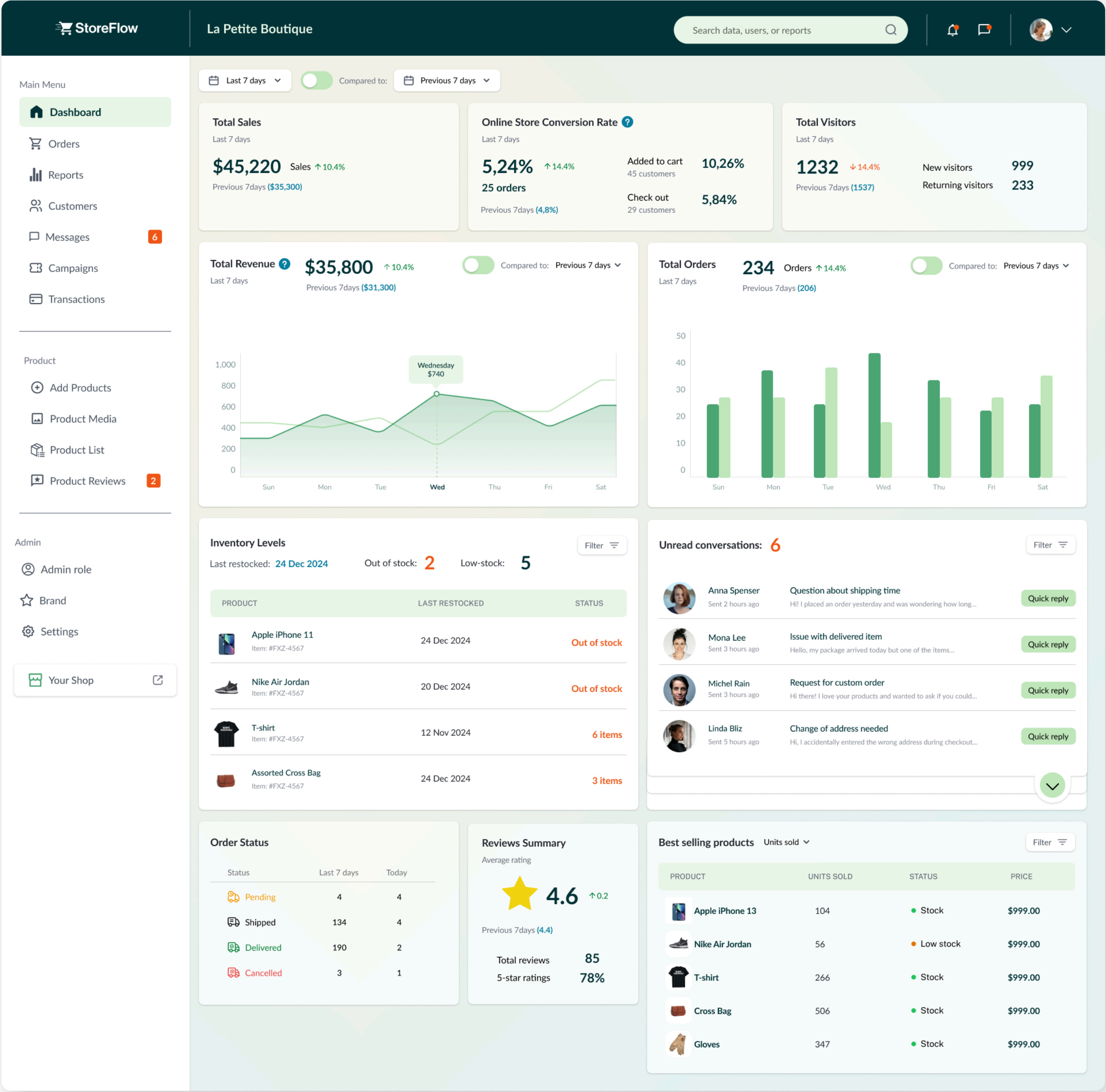
BEST PRACTICES

APPLIED IN THE DASHBOARD DESIGN

* The brief specifies that Visitors versus Conversions should be shown for the last 30 days. In my design, this is handled through the date picker. The user can simply adjust the selected time range to view this 30-day metric, ensuring flexibility while keeping the dashboard layout consistent and uncluttered.

- **Card-based structure:** The dashboard is built from modular cards, each clickable and leading to a dedicated page with more detailed data.

- **Header search bar**: Search is placed in the header for easy access, allowing the user to quickly find any information within the system.

- **Global date picker:** Placed at the top for maximum visibility. When adjusted, all cards update accordingly, allowing the seller to view all metrics for the same period.

- **Comparison toggle**: Inspired by Shopify's design patterns, the user can compare current metrics with the previous period using a simple toggle switch.

- **Trend indicators**: Each card shows trend changes (either in numbers or percentages) where relevant, helping the user quickly understand performance direction.

- **Contextual help:** Card titles include a question-mark icon when needed. On hover, a small pop-up explains the metric in simple terms.
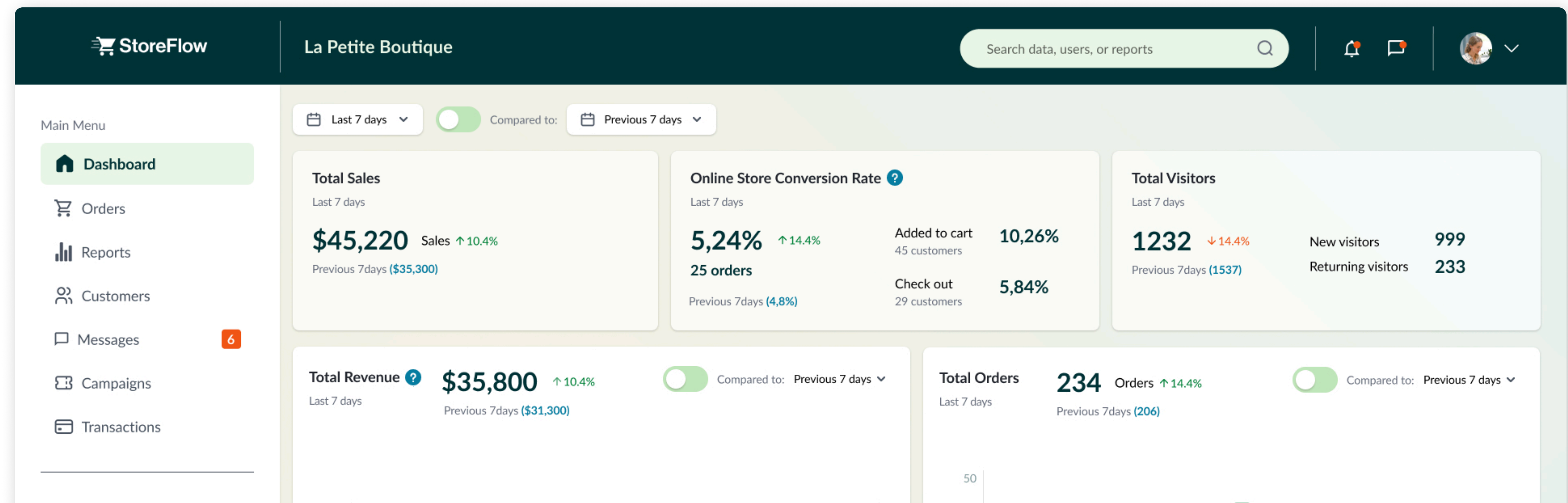
DESIGN PRINCIPLES APPLIED

1. Clear Visual Hierarchy

The dashboard is designed so users immediately notice the most important information. Placement, colour, and typography work together to guide attention and make the content easy to scan.

- Key metrics are placed in the most prominent areas of the layout.
- Colour and spacing separate primary information from secondary details.
- Typography (size and weight) reinforces the importance of titles, KPIs, and labels.

2. Consistency

A unified visual language improves usability and reduces confusion when navigating the dashboard. All components follow shared rules that create a cohesive and predictable experience.

- Shared styling for cards, buttons, and navigation elements.
- Repeated interaction patterns (e.g., clicking a card always opens deeper detail).
- Consistent colour palette and typography across all screens.

3. Minimal Cognitive Load

Since dashboards often contain a lot of information, the design focuses on simplicity and clarity. Non-essential elements are removed to keep the home screen light and approachable.

- Only high-value metrics are shown on the main dashboard.
- Whitespace and grouping help separate content types.
- Additional details appear only when needed through toggles, tooltips, or deeper pages.

4. Accessible & Usable Data

The data is presented using visualisations and components that prioritise clarity and readability for all users.

- Appropriate chart types are selected for trends, comparisons, and proportions.
- Text and background colours meet WCAG AA contrast standards (verified with Figma's checker).
- UI elements avoid unnecessary decoration that could distract or distort information.

5. Help & Learnability

To support users in understanding metrics that may not be immediately clear, I added small question-mark icons on specific cards. When hovered, they display short explanations or definitions.

- This reduces confusion and prevents misinterpretation of data.
- It allows new users to quickly learn the meaning of each metric without leaving the dashboard.
- It keeps the interface clean while still providing contextual help exactly when needed.

TAKEAWAYS

Through this project, I gained valuable experience in designing effective dashboards and understanding which elements are truly essential for users.

A significant part of the process involved researching how to visualise data effectively. I explored many different chart options and learned how to choose the most appropriate visualisation depending on the type of information and the user's needs. Studying best practices from top-performing platforms with millions of users also helped me understand which patterns are intuitive, reliable, and widely adopted in real-world products.

While working on this project, I learned how to create a clear hierarchy that highlights the most important metrics, and I experimented with UI components to ensure the right balance of font sizes, weights, and colour accents. This process helped me refine my ability to design interfaces that are not only powerful and informative at a quick glance, but also visually pleasing and comfortable to use. The project strengthened my skills in combining functionality with aesthetics - creating a dashboard that feels both useful and enjoyable for the user.

References

Resources

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Image References

- AI-generated illustrations using Adobe Firefly, generated on 9 December 2025.

- All photographic materials are sourced from https://unsplash.com/ and used in accordance with the Unsplash License.