The *invisible Power* of UI Typography

Oliver Schöndorfer

UI Designer 🇦🇹 Typographer

pimp_my_type glyphe

Teaching you how to *boost* your designs with pimped type.

Guesting at *podcasts*

Pairing typefaces using the font matrix

The following guest article was written by Oliver Schöndorfer*

Background reading:

Pairing typefaces by the same type designer or type foundry

The single biggest challenge we face when pairing type is choosing a secondary typeface that's different enough from our primary choice, but not *too* different, as described in our article "Pairing typefaces." This can be a challenge, because it's not always clear where the similarities and the differences should lie.

In this article, we want to share with you the concept of the font matrix—an approach based on the work of typography professor Indra Kupferschmid. Understanding it can change your perception of type and give you a framework to make better decisions when pairing typefaces.

Please bear in mind that combining type is not a science with hard and fast rules. It's a creative discipline and you can do whatever you think feels right for your project. Take the ideas shared in this article as guidelines to make your own decisions in the great adventure of pairing type.

The problem with the current models for classifying type

Topics in this article

Choosing type

Pairing type

Essential terms

Axis (in type design)

The angle of the "pen" in a letterform, usually implied by the contrast of a stroke.

Expert
guest author

Font Matrix – See and Pair Typef

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=731-k8xSyqE&t=11s

YouTube AT

font matrix

#typography

Font Matrix – See and Pair Typefaces Like Never Before

Pimp my Type
3320 Abonnenten

Abonniert

187 Teilen Clip Speichern

1833 Aufrufe vor 6 Monaten
🤘 Pairing Typefaces like a Pro – Online Course:
https://pairingtype.pro
Mehr ansehen

Chatwiedergabe anzeigen

Alle | Aus deiner Suche | Kürzlich hochgeladen

Check these 5 things before choosing a font – Font Follow…
Pimp my Type
1256 Aufrufe • vor 1 Jahr

My Tech Hot Takes!
Marques Brownlee
1,6 Mio. Aufrufe • vor 1 Tag
Neu

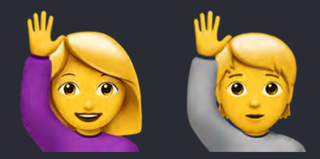
Classifying & Pairing Typefaces with Indra Kupferschmid
Pimp my Type
565 Aufrufe • vor 6 Monaten

Body Text – How to Choose a Proper Typeface?
Pimp my Type
2914 Aufrufe • vor 1 Jahr

Wer in Deutschland gegen trans Menschen hetzt | ZDF Magazi…
ZDF MAGAZIN ROYALE
1,3 Mio. Aufrufe • vor 3 Tagen
Neu

Das Mobilisierungs-Desaster: Wie Putin seine Propagandiste…
ARTEde
637.463 Aufrufe • vor 2 Wochen

Font Follows Feeling – A brief type classification and the…
Pimp my Type
2927 Aufrufe • vor 1 Jahr



I’m here because …

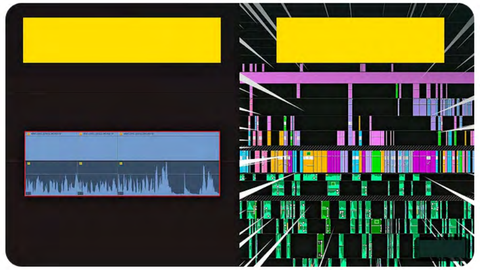
1. *I’m newer to the topic,* and want to level up.
2. *I’m experienced,* and want some more tools in my belt.
3. *I’m a typography pro,* and could always use a few more tips.
4. *Typography is the best way,* to cope with food coma.

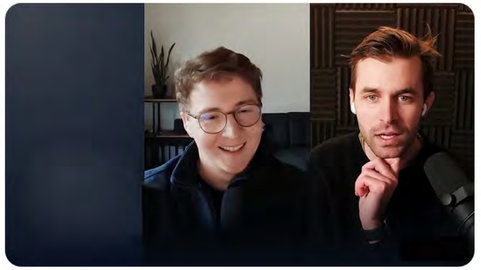
How can you make *typography work* for you?

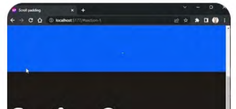
It's *only a little text!*

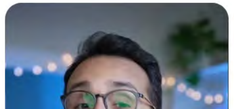
What difference does it make?

What are you looking for?

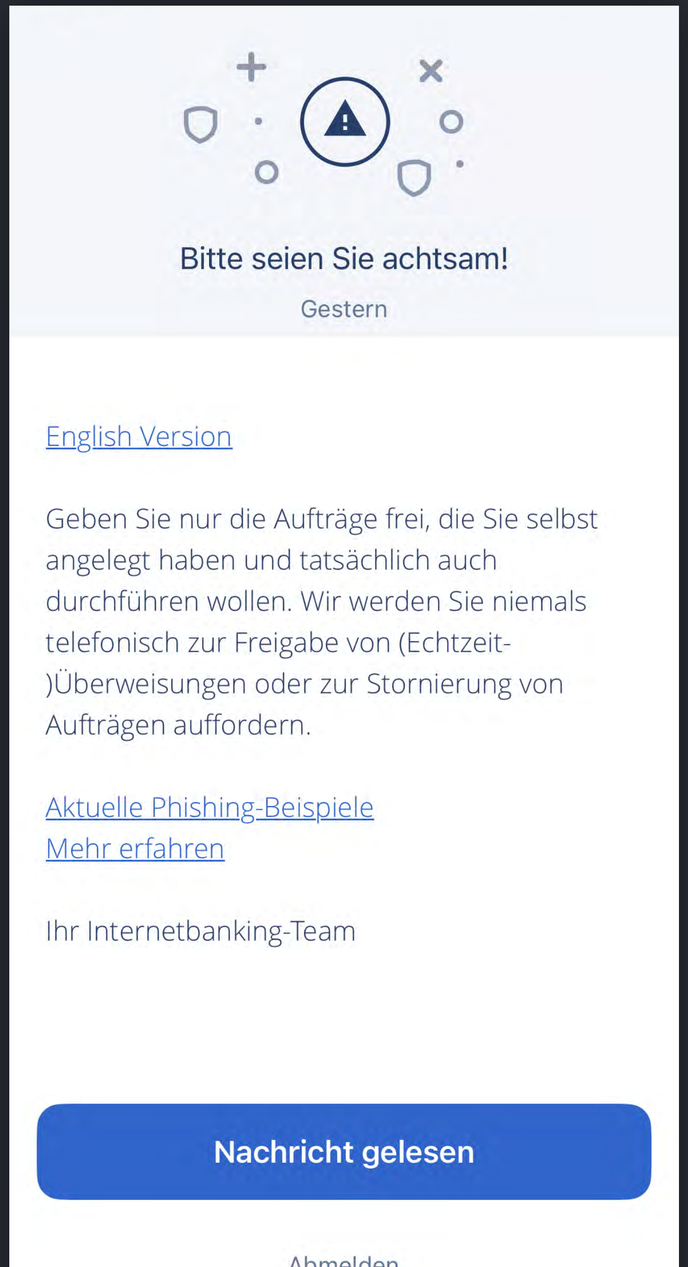






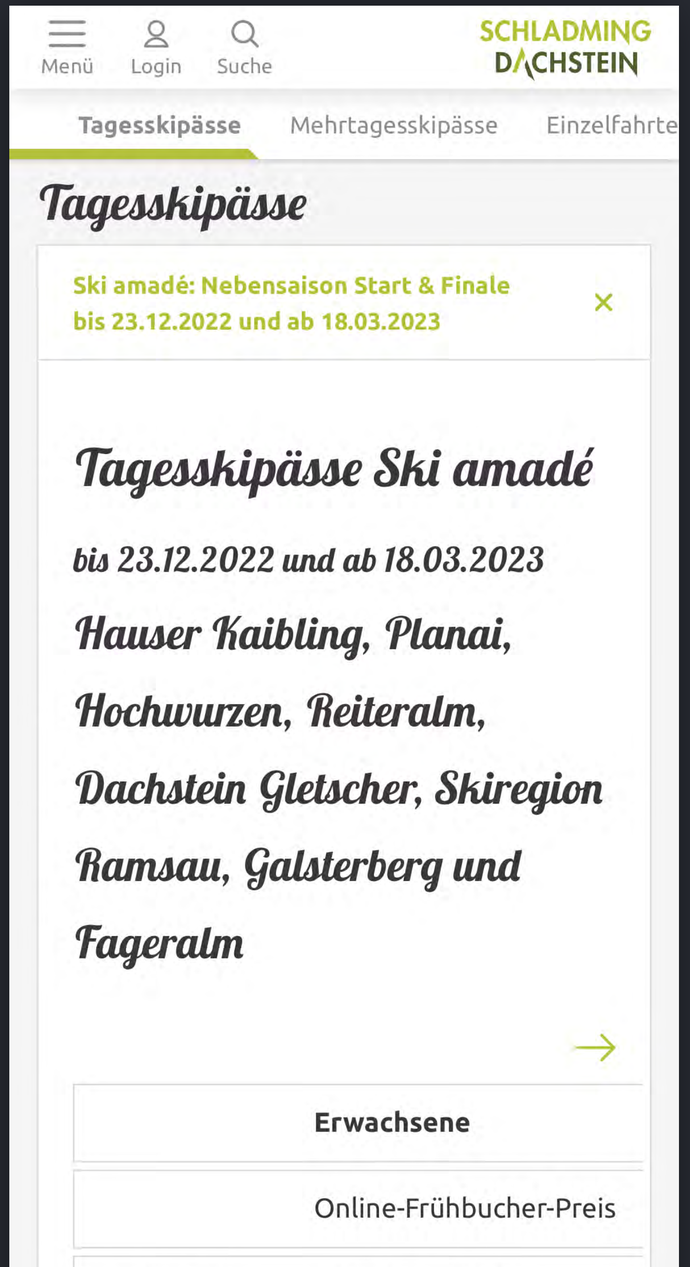


When Typography becomes brutally VISIBLE

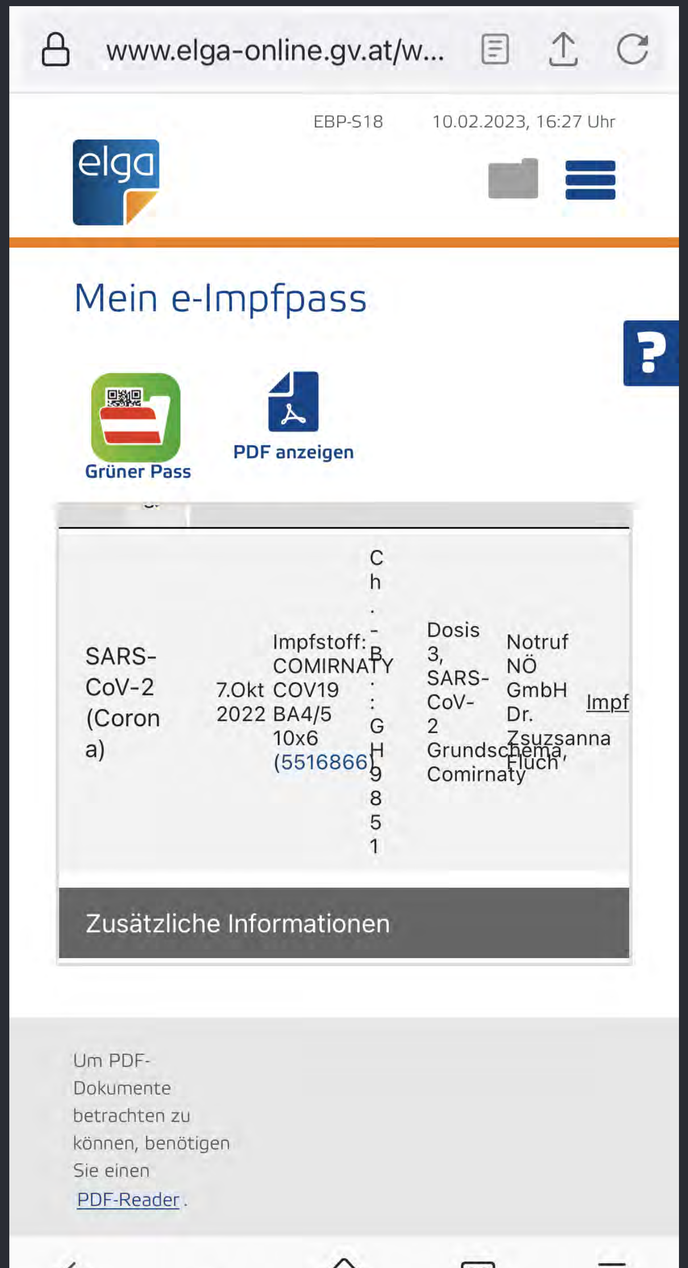


😣

Too light text

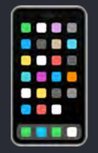


Inappropriate typefaces



😱

Typographic rampage



The interface *is* the product.

Shape

Content

Function

Type

We belong together

Style Script by Robert Leuschke

We belong together

Banshee by Tim Donaldson

Font choice

Hierarchy

Sizes

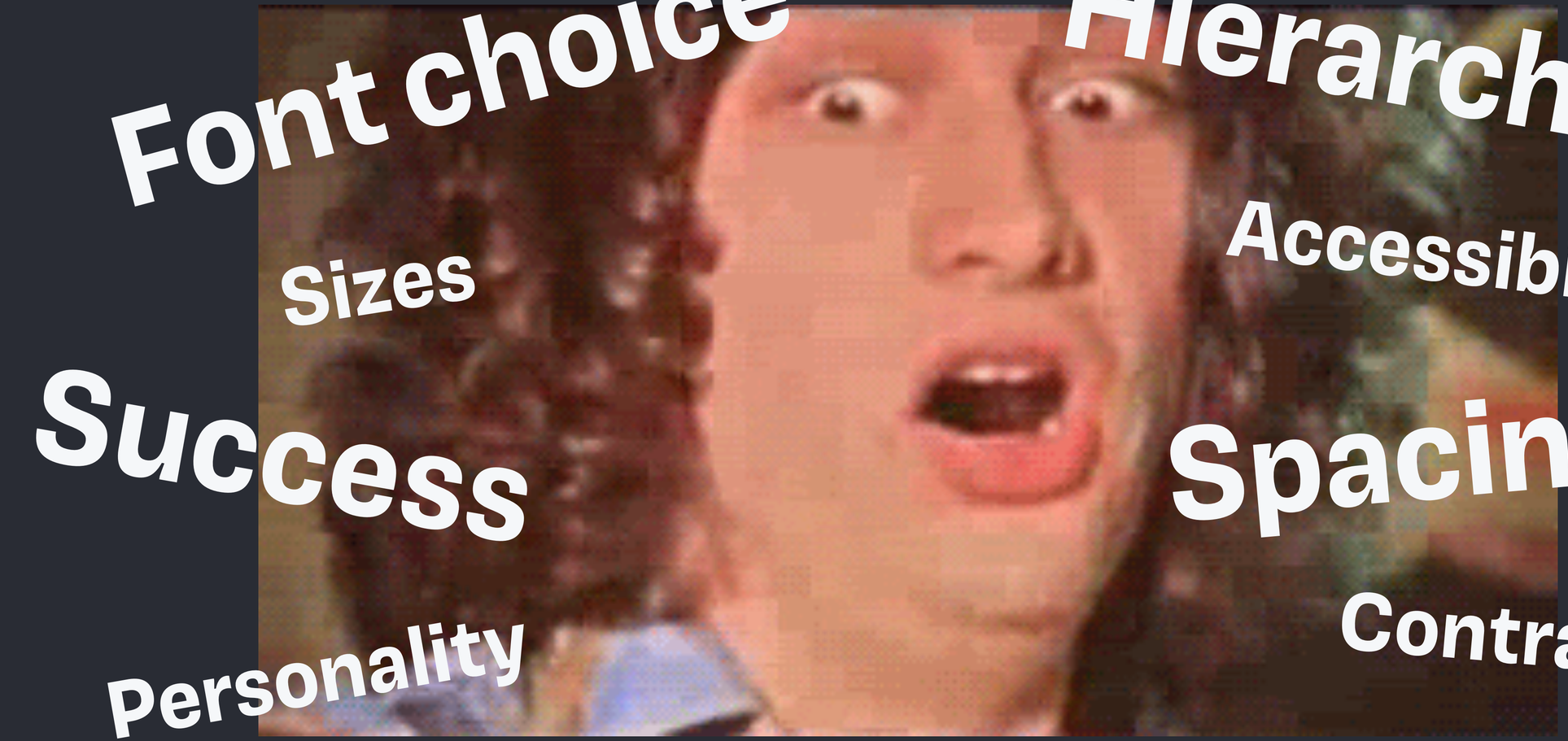
Accessibility

Success

Spacing

Personality

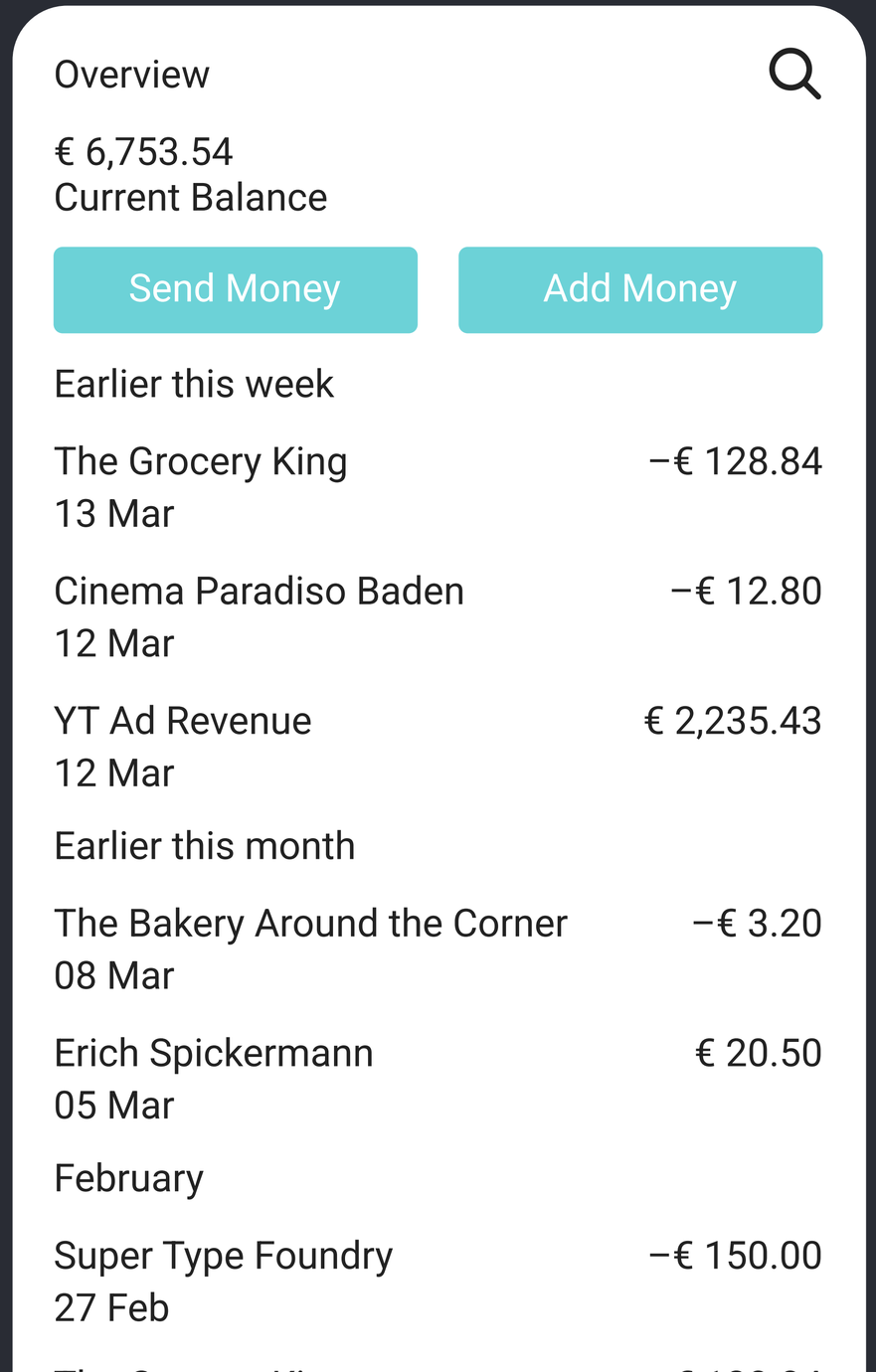
Contrast



Font choice
Hierarchy
Sizes Contrast Spacing

🤩

Personality
Accessibility
Successful



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February

Super Type Foundry 27 Feb	−€ 150.00

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Font Choice

TheGoodFilms
Why not using system fonts and chill?

Good afternoon

Roboto

Good afternoon

Titilium Web

Good afternoon

Ubuntu

Pick the right category

Strokes are even with little contrast

Nunito
Very even strokes

Right Grotesk
Contrasting ink traps

Playfair Display
Too contrasting

Letter shapes are open

Inter
Quite closed shapes

Fira Sans
Very open shapes

Neue Helvetica
Closed shapes

Letter shapes are open

esca

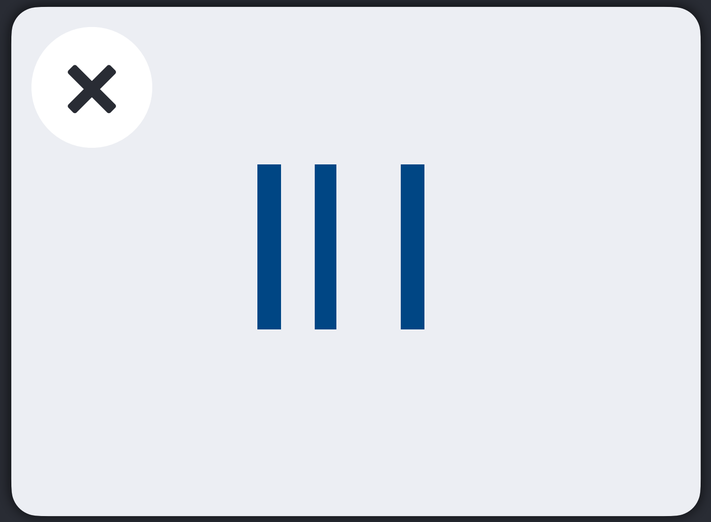
Fira Sans is more legible
in small sizes

esca

Neue Helvetica is harder
to read in small sizes

Letterforms are easy to distinguish

IBM Plex Sans
very distinct characters



Gill Sans
All the same shapes

SF Pro
More disitinct

Exercise #1

Open the exercises in Figma

1. Go to **pimpmytype.com/uxc**
2. Follow the link the Figma file
3. Get a copy

#1

Font Choice

10 min

1. Go to **Google Fonts**
2. Type in the sample text ***1 Ill Escape***
3. Pick two **candidates**
4. **Try them out** in the app design
5. **Decide** on a typeface

1. Megatypos
2. Megatypos
3. Megatypos
4. Megatypos
5. Megatypos

1 Megatypos — Quicksand is too striking

2 Megatypos — Rubik might work

3 Megatypos — Newsreader is too constrasting

4 Megatypos — Mona Sans might work

5 Megatypos — Oswald is too dense and dark

Rubik

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Mona Sans

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Rubik

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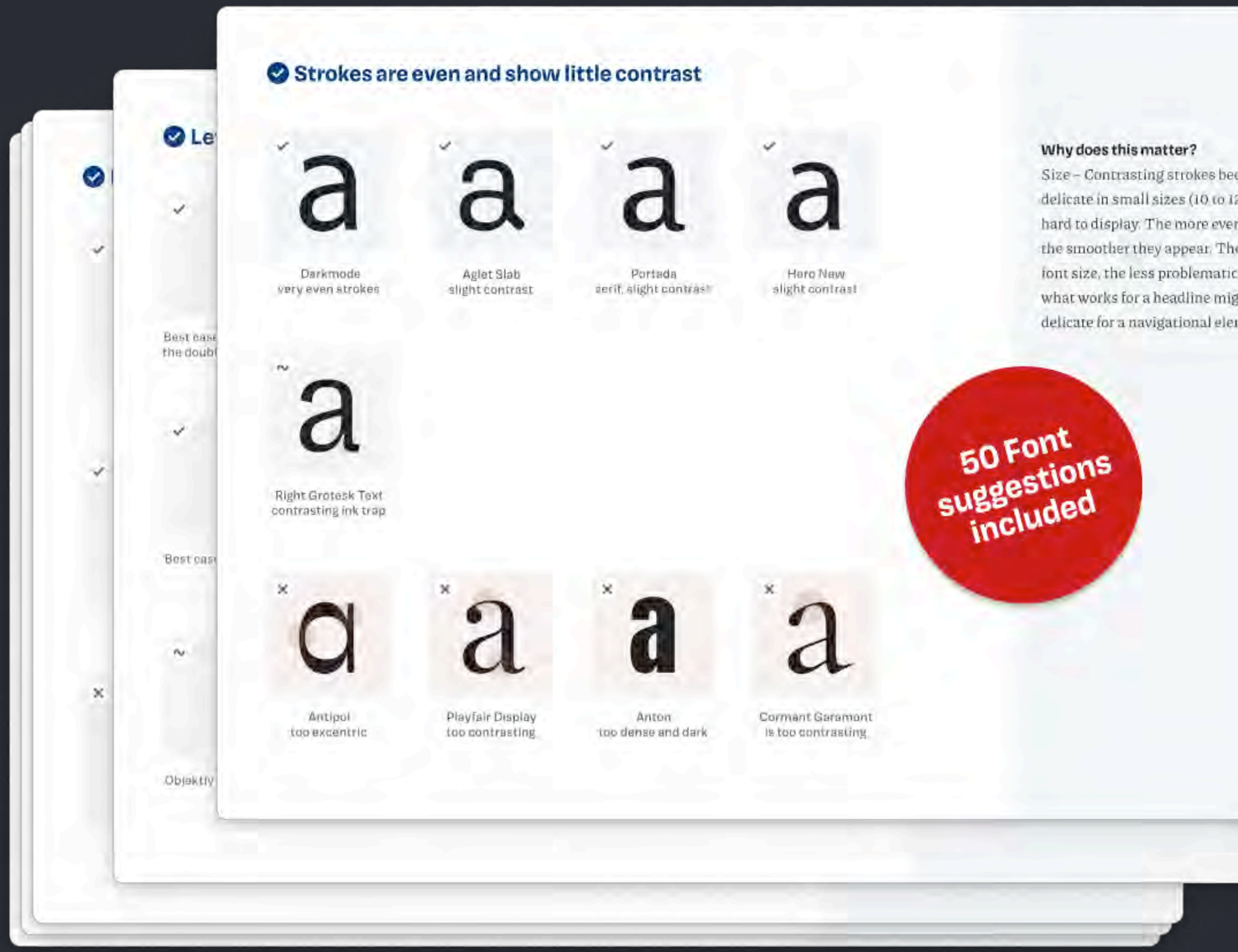
Font Choice

- Interesting enough but *not distracting*
- *Sans-serif* or slab serif typefaces
- *Mood fits* the project
- It has *even strokes* and little contrast
- *Open shapes* and distinct characters
- *Licensing* and technical conditions work

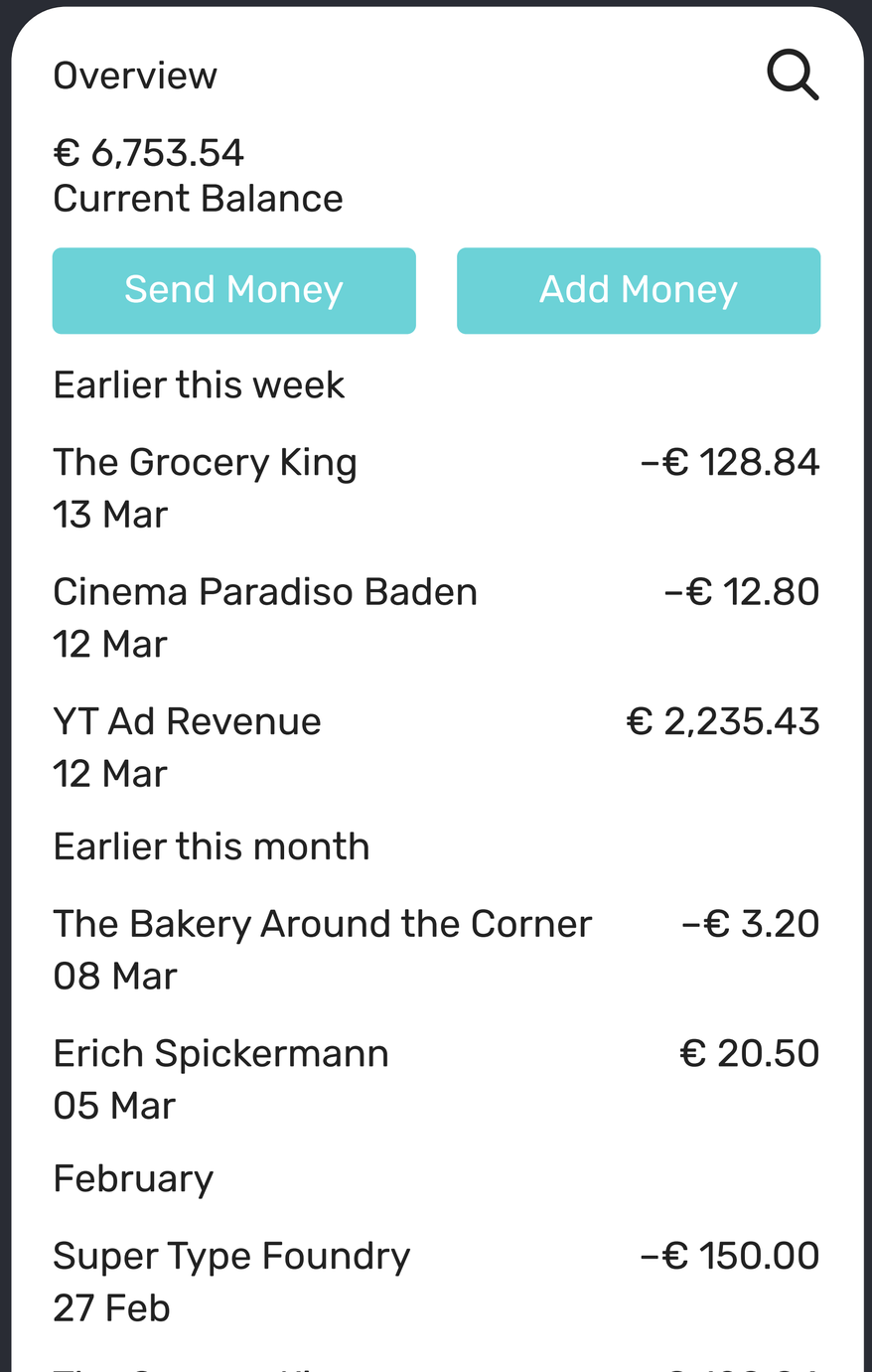
UI Fonts Checklist

Special offer later



Hierarchy

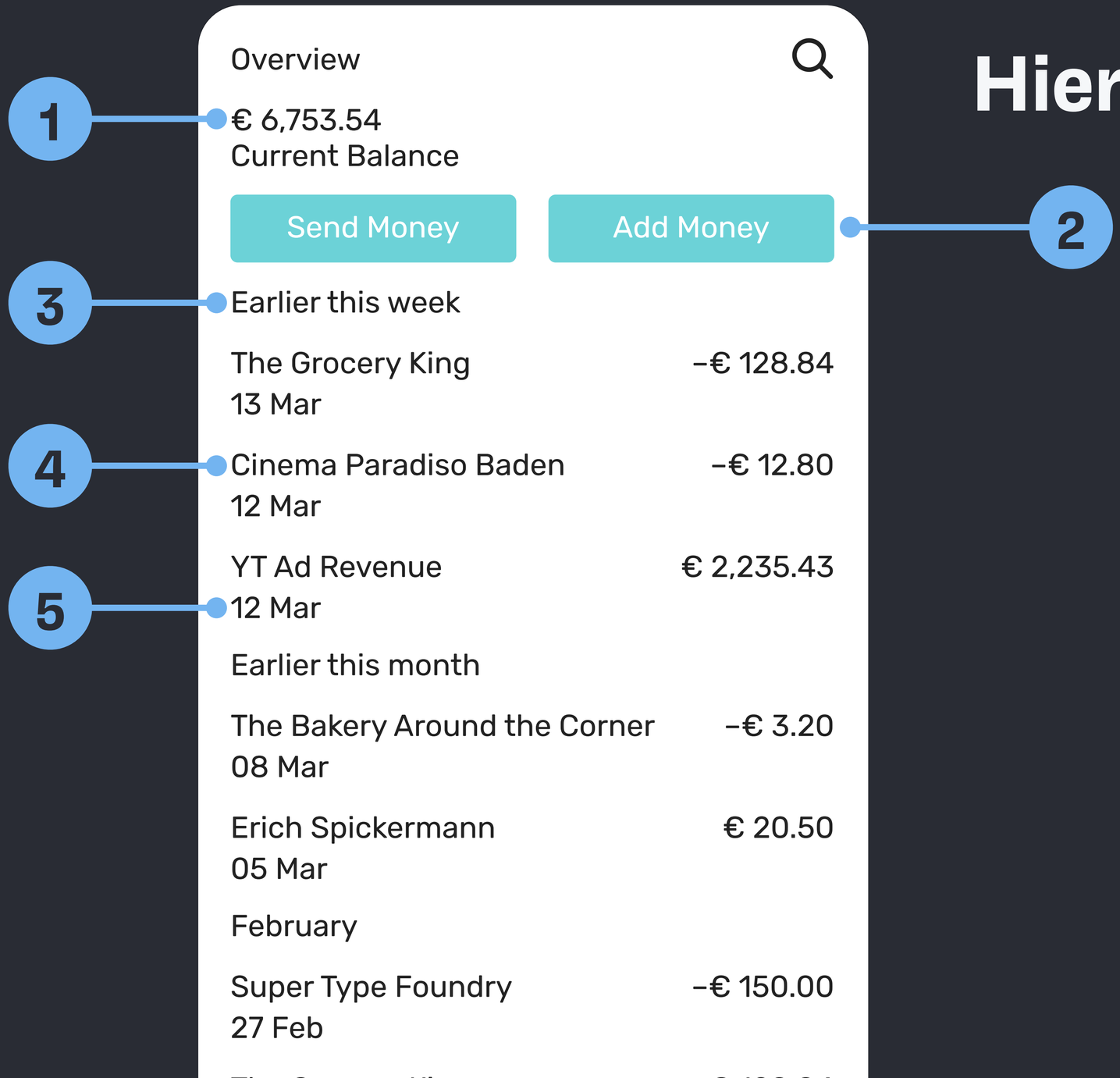
Which Hierarchies?

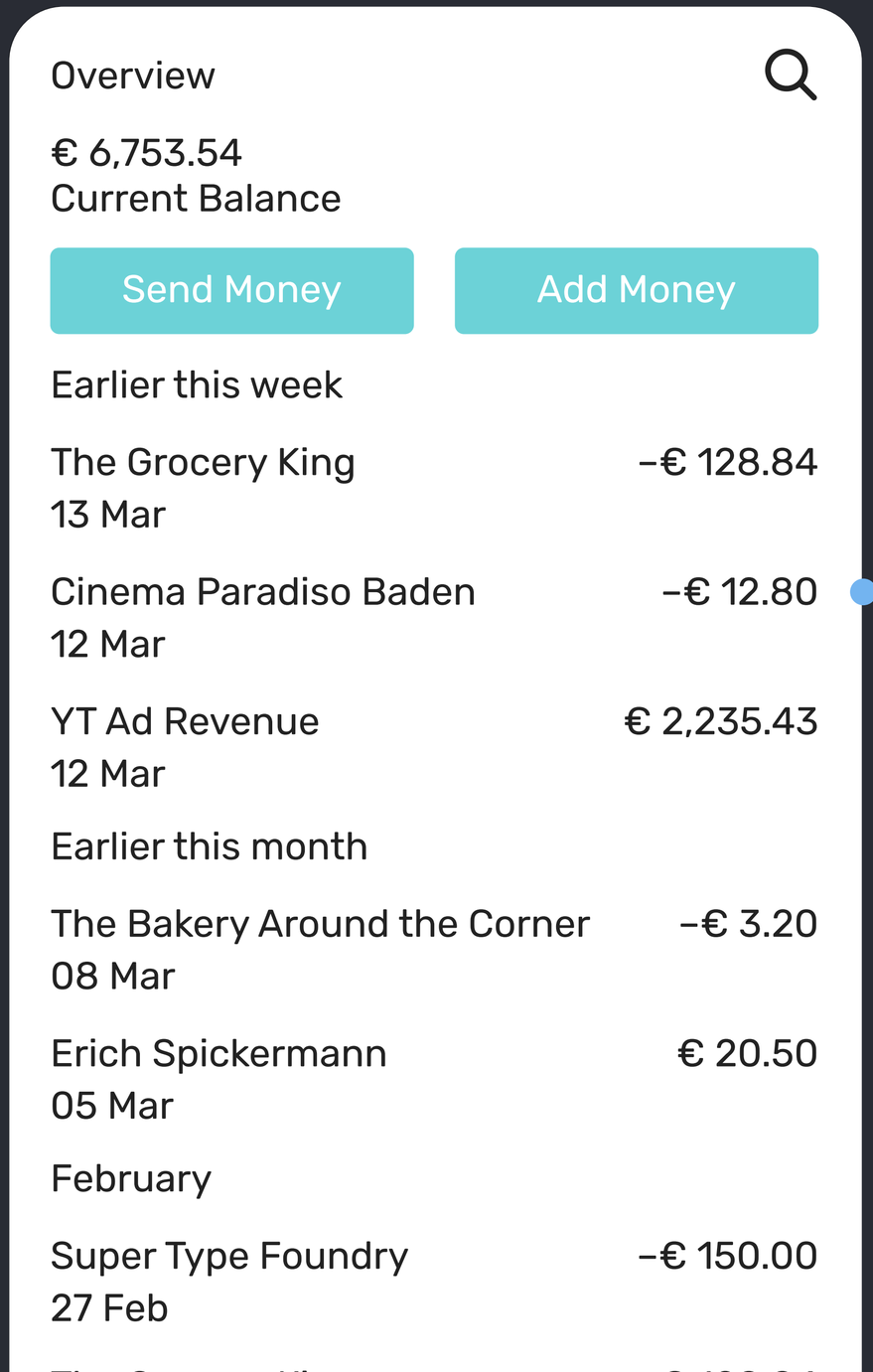


🤔

What is *most important* in this view?

Hierarchy levels





Hierarchy by size & weight

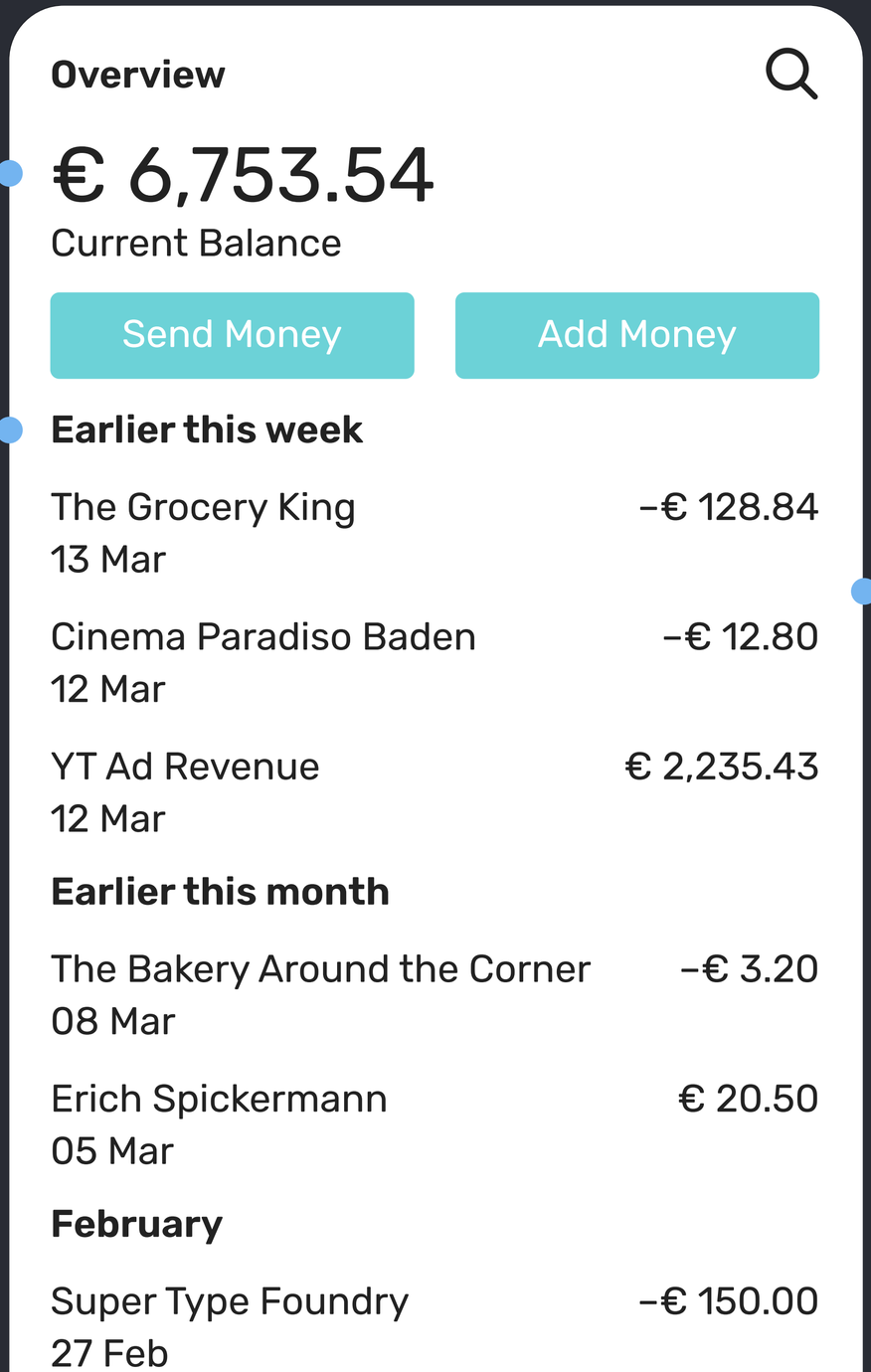
17 pt (body)
15–17 pt are ideal

Hierarchy by size & weight

34 pt Regular

17 pt SemiBold

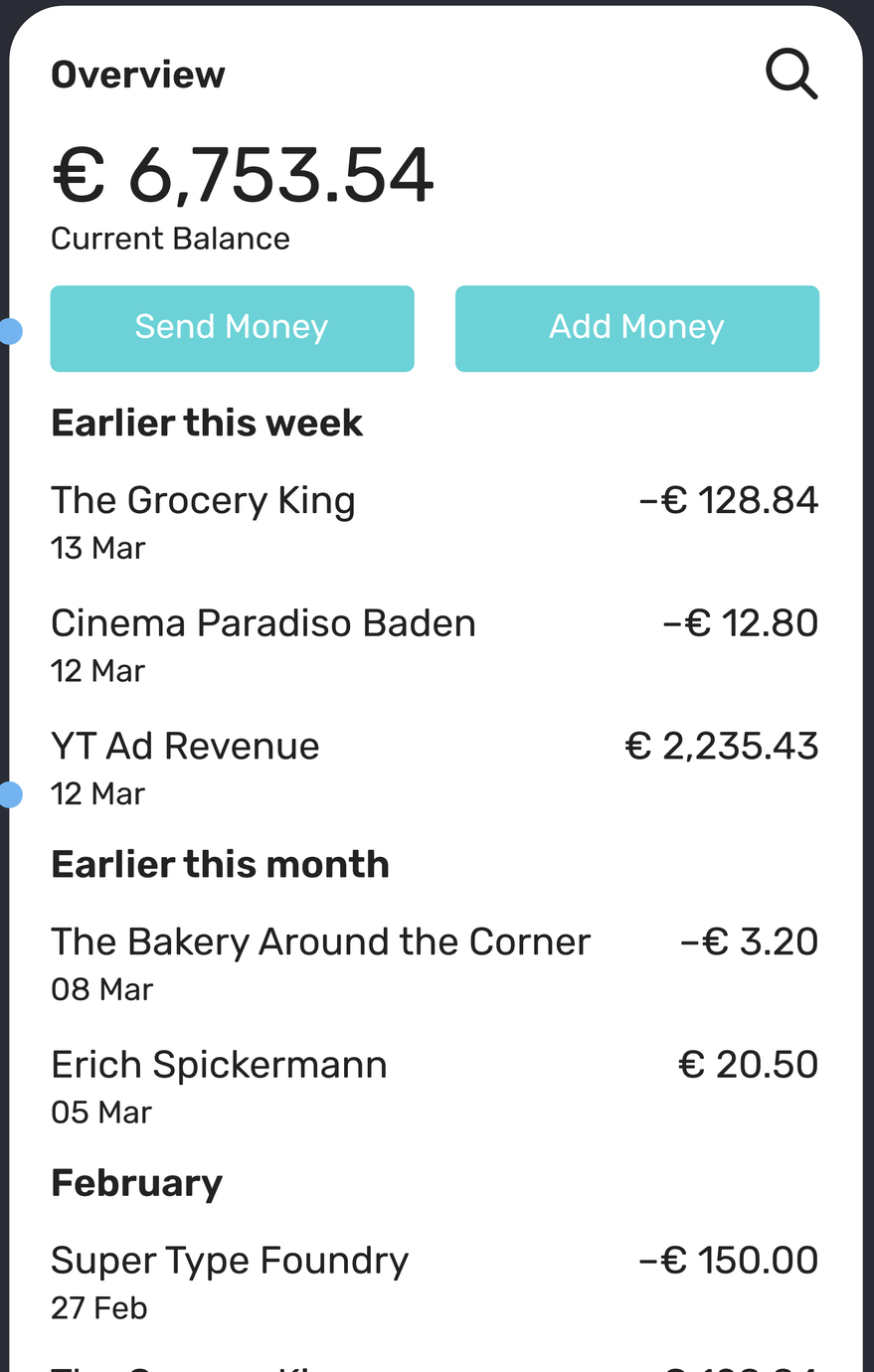
17 pt (body)
15–17 pt are ideal



Hierarchy by size & weight

15 pt Regular

14 pt Regular



#003471

#222222

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Hierarchy by color

#80888F

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⚠️ a11y alert ⚠️

#80888F

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⚠️ a11y alert ⚠️

3.59:1

✕ AA 4.5:1

#74777A

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⚠️ a11y alert ⚠️

4.5:1

✔ AA 4.5:1

font-weight: 400
letter-spacing: 0

YT Ad Revenue
12 Mar

Earlier this month

The Bakery Around the Corner
08 Mar

Erich Spickermann
05 Mar

February

Super Type Foundry
27 Feb

font-weight: 450
letter-spacing: 1%

YT Ad Revenue
12 Mar

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08 Mar

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05 Mar

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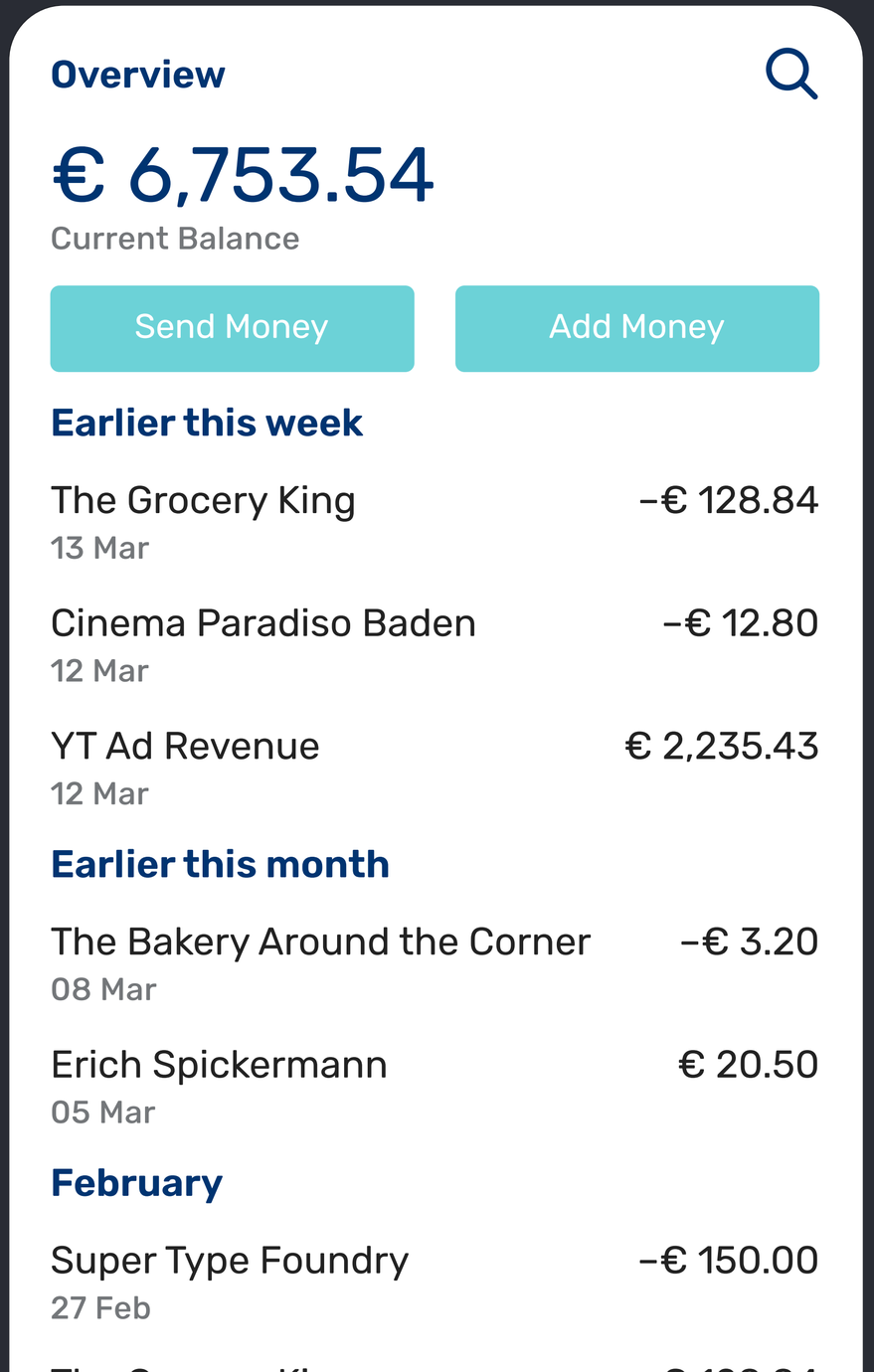
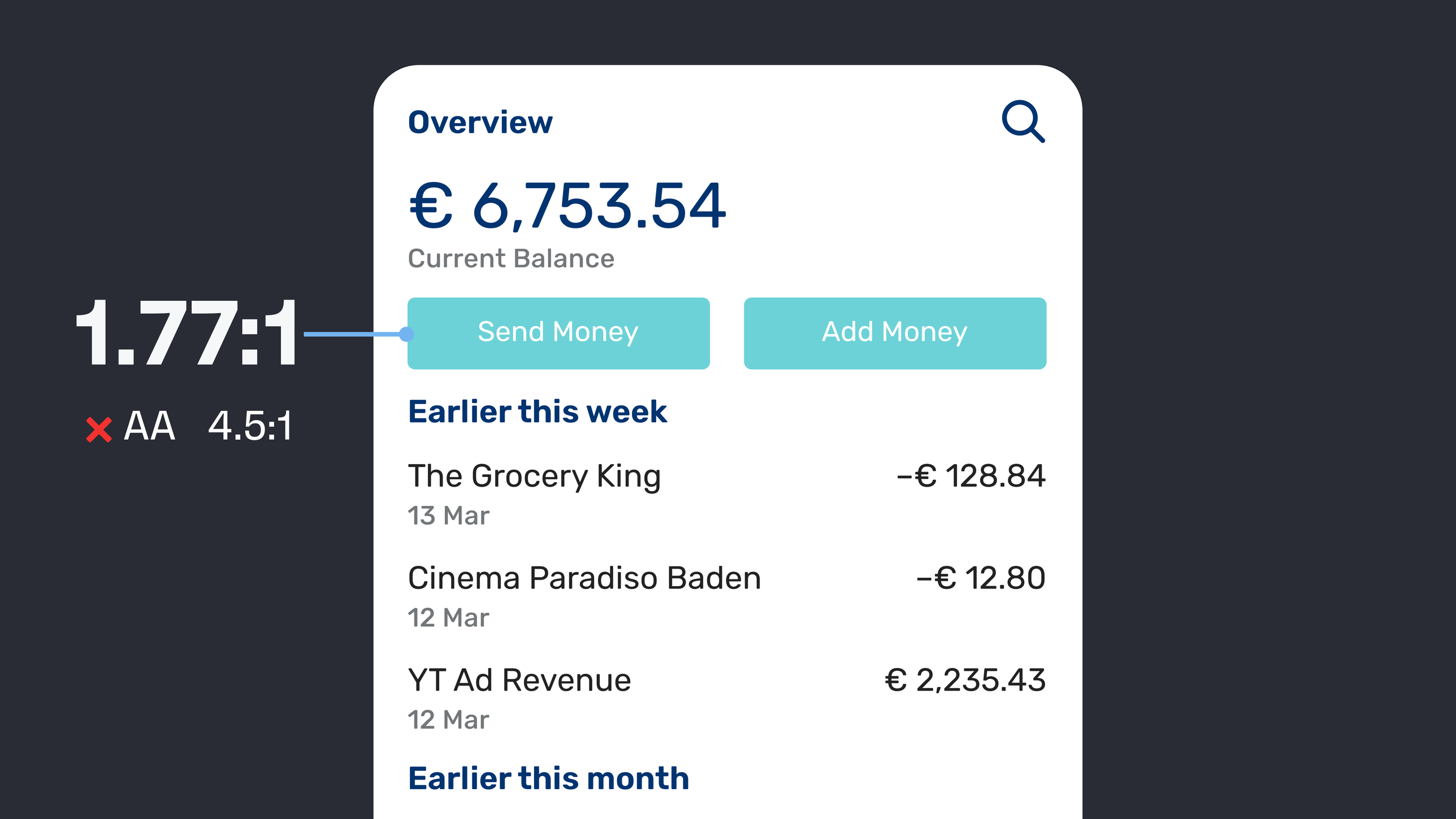
27 Feb



Hierarchy by color contrast


1.77:1
AA 4.5:1
Overview
€ 6,753.54
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Add Money
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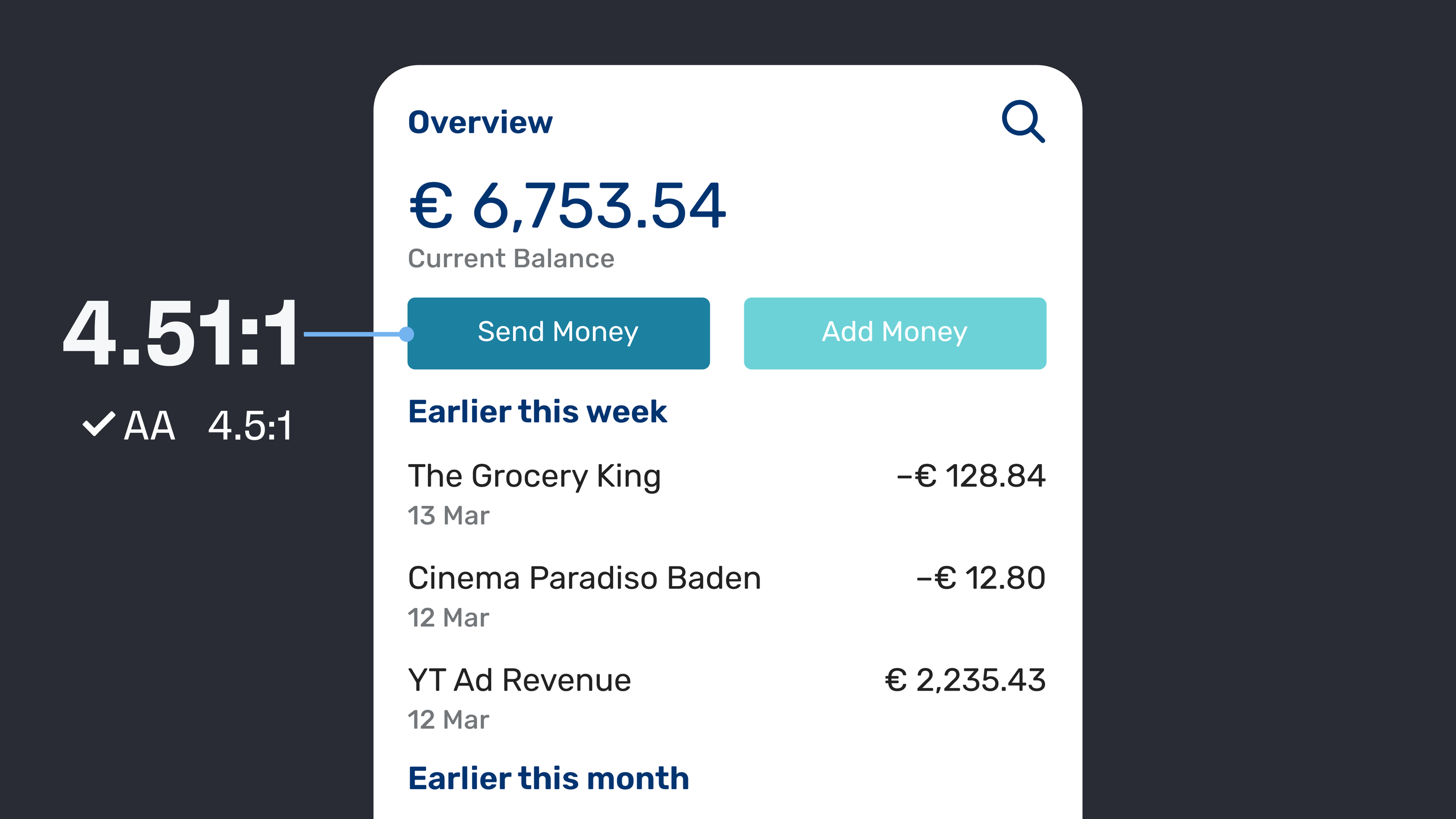
4.51:1
AA 4.5:1
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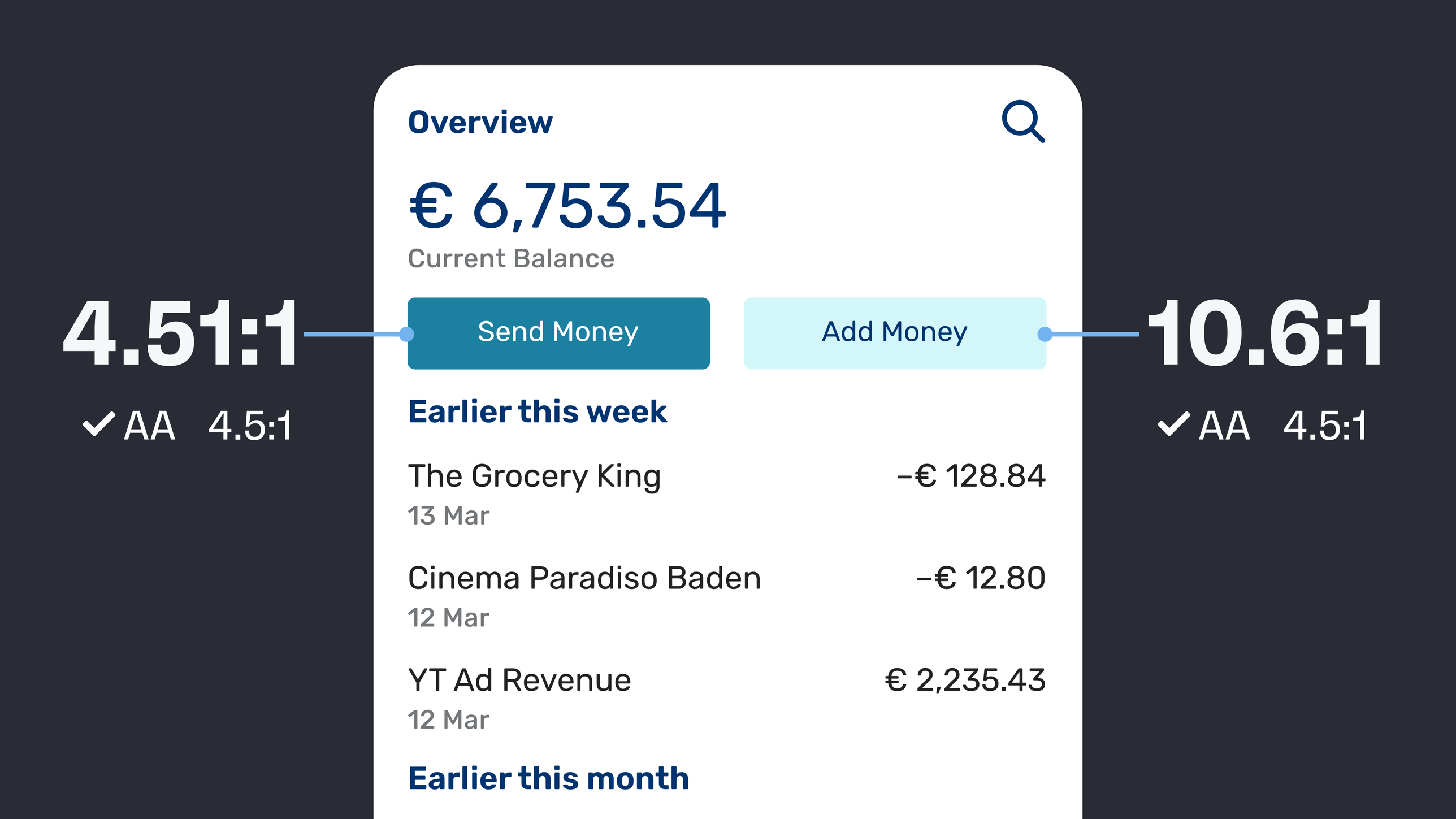
4.51:1
✓AA 4.5:1
Overview
€ 6,753.54
Current Balance
Send Money
Add Money
10.6:1
✓AA 4.5:1
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Add Money

font-weight: 400

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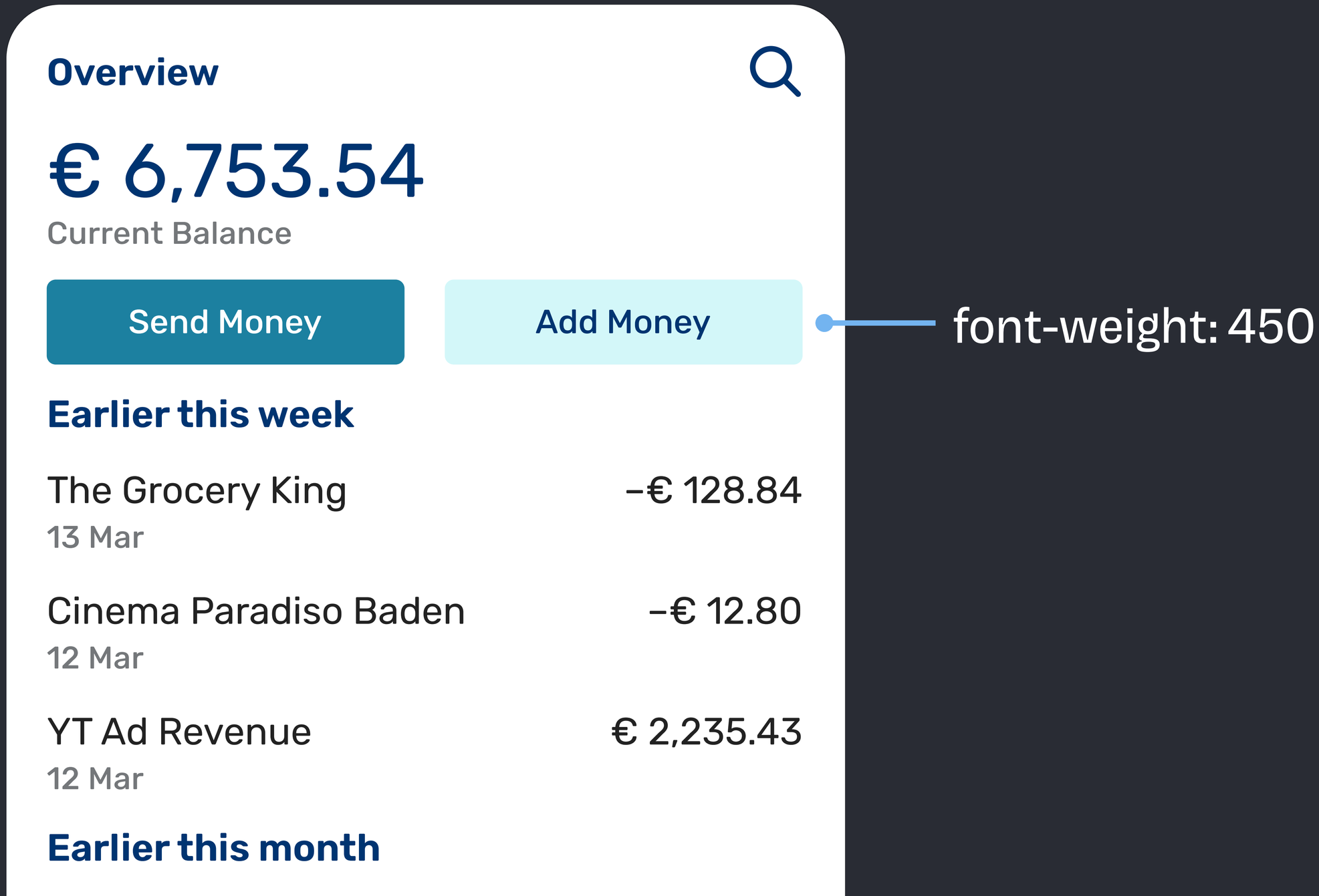
Overview
€ 6,753.54
Current Balance
Send Money
Add Money
font-weight: 450
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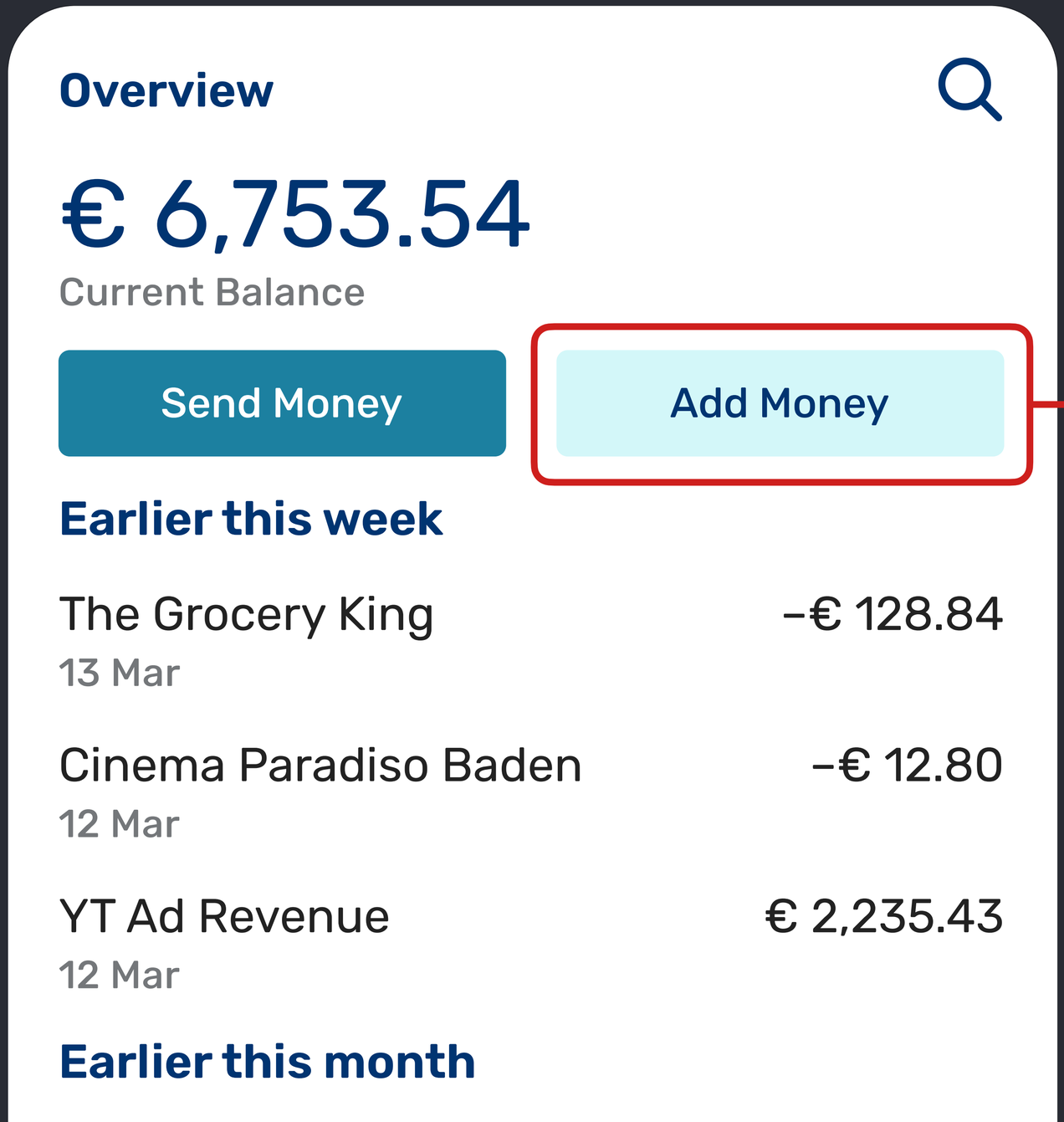
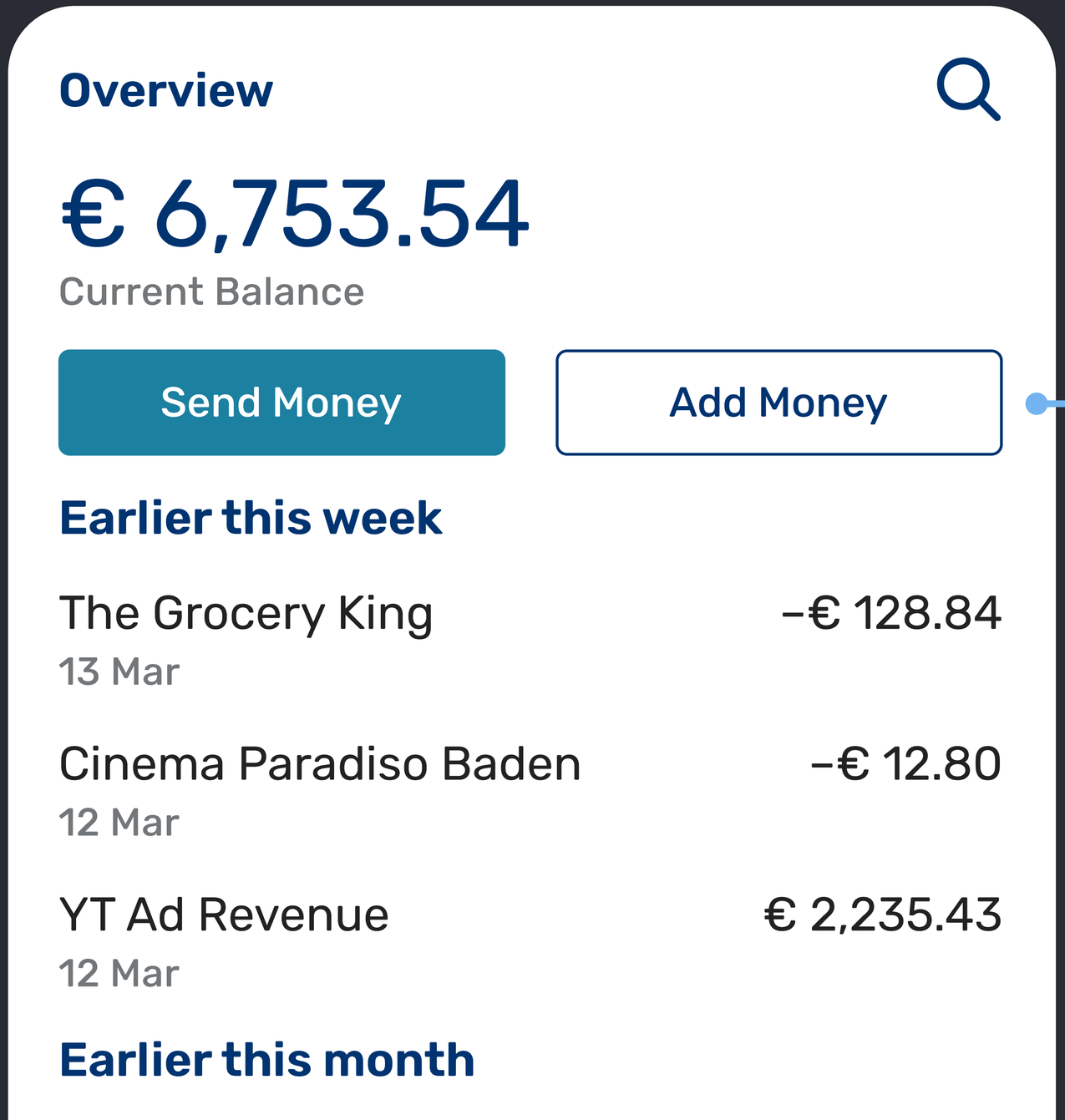


⚠️ a11y alert ⚠️

1.14:1

Button container color against background color falls below 3:1


Overview
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Current Balance
Send Money
Add Money
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12.14:1

✔ AA 3.1:1

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Establish hierarchy by *using size and weight*

Body text
15–17 pt
Regular

Labels
12–15 pt
Medium
Increase spacing

Headings
17–34 pt
SemiBold or stronger
Decrease spacing

Highlight hierarchy by *using color*

4.5:1
color contrast
for text

3:1
color contrast
for containers

Exercise #2

#2

Use size & weight to establish hierarchy

5 min

- **Primary information** should be larger and/or stronger
  17–34 px, Semi-Bold or stronger

- **Main body text** can remain
  15–17 px, Regular weight

- **Less important information** can be smaller
  12–15 px, maybe Medium weight

Exercise #3

#3

Bonus: Use color to create highlights

5 min

- **Primary information** can have a striking color
- **Main body text** should have a calm color
- **Less important information** can have a less contrasting color
- **Bonus:** If you still have time, check text and button colors for accessibility by using the Color Contrast Plugin

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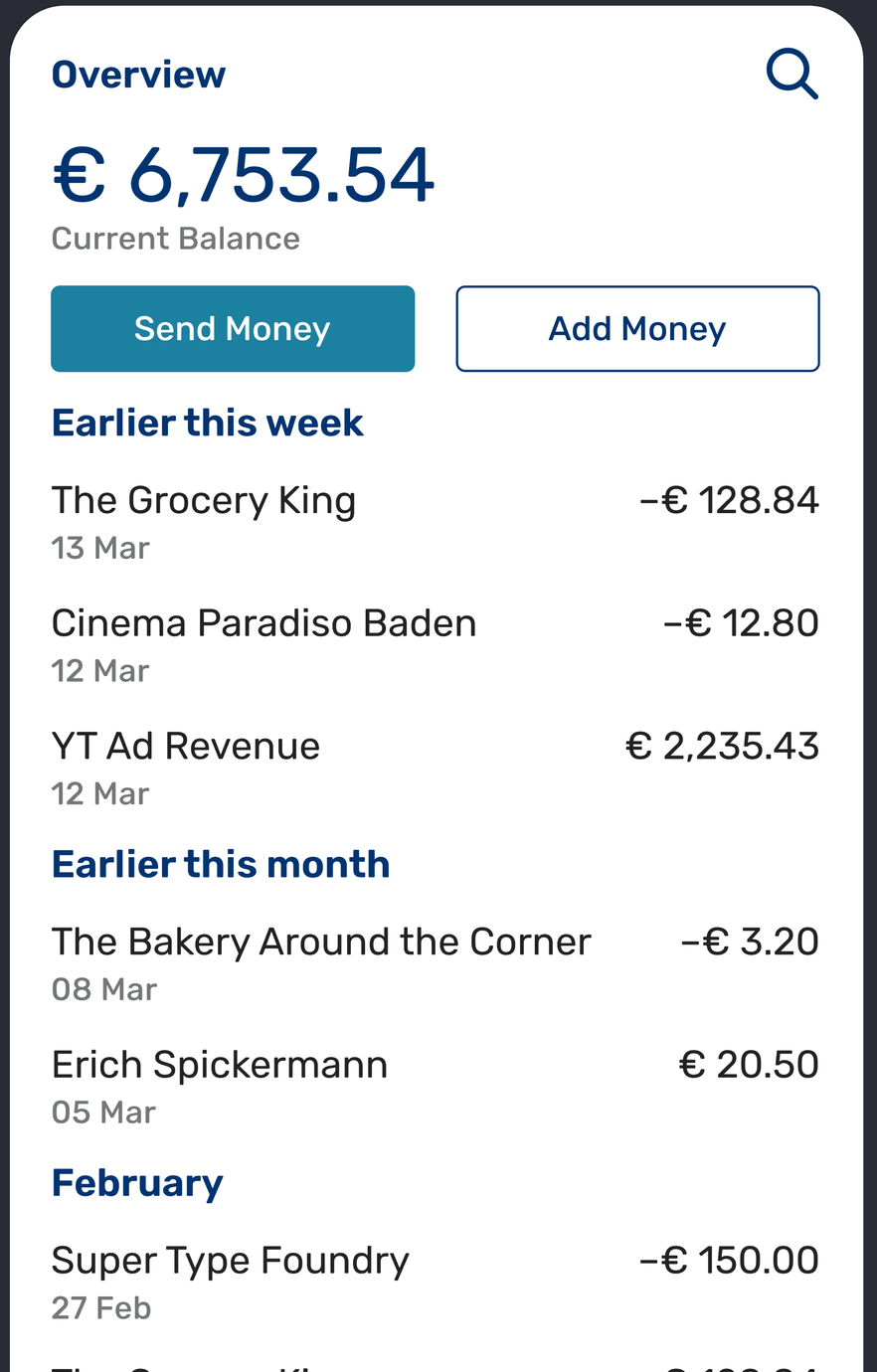
Spacing

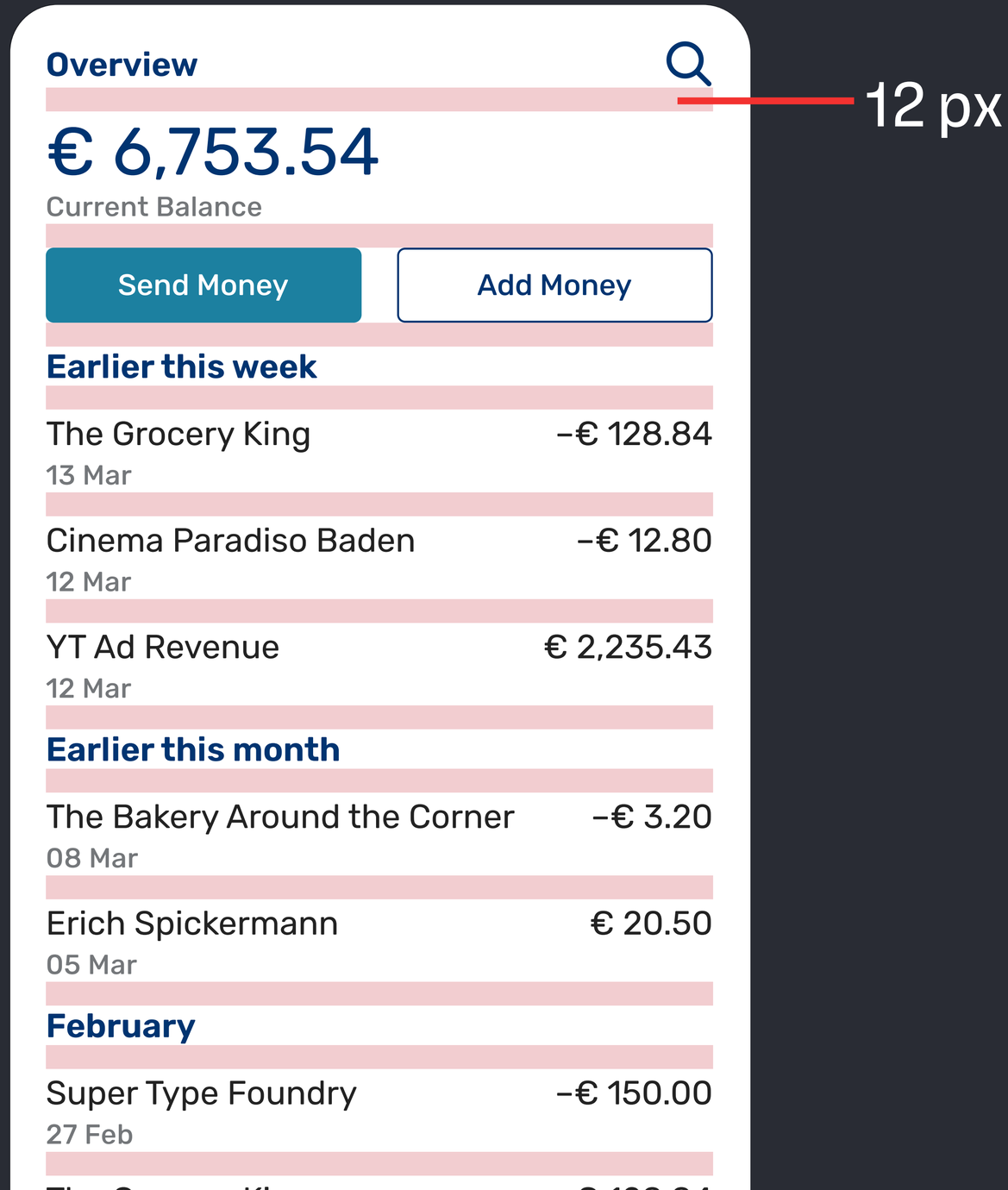
Unclear relations

Groups are little obvious.



Unclear relations

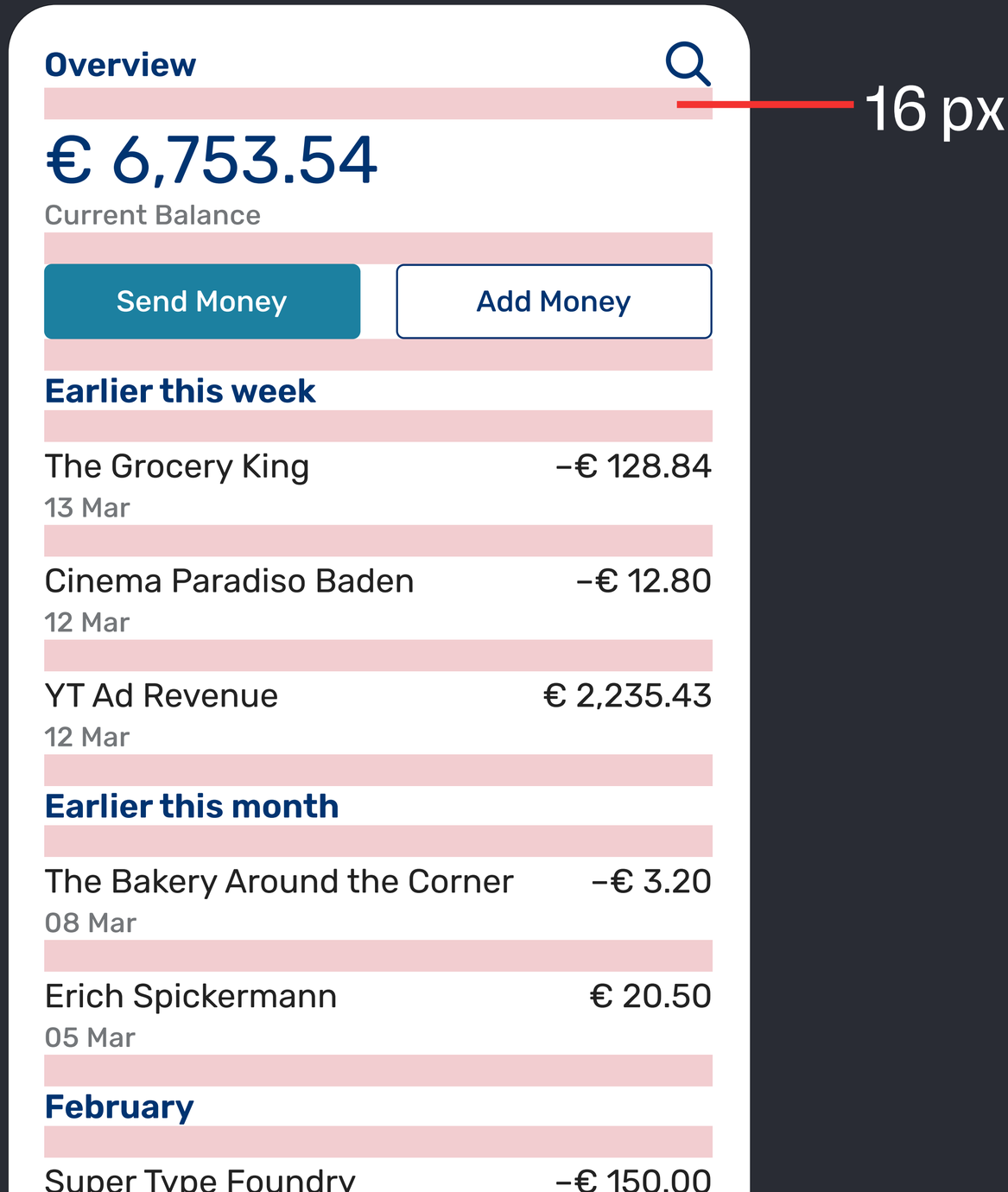
Groups are little obvious.



Increase spacing

while setting a base unit.

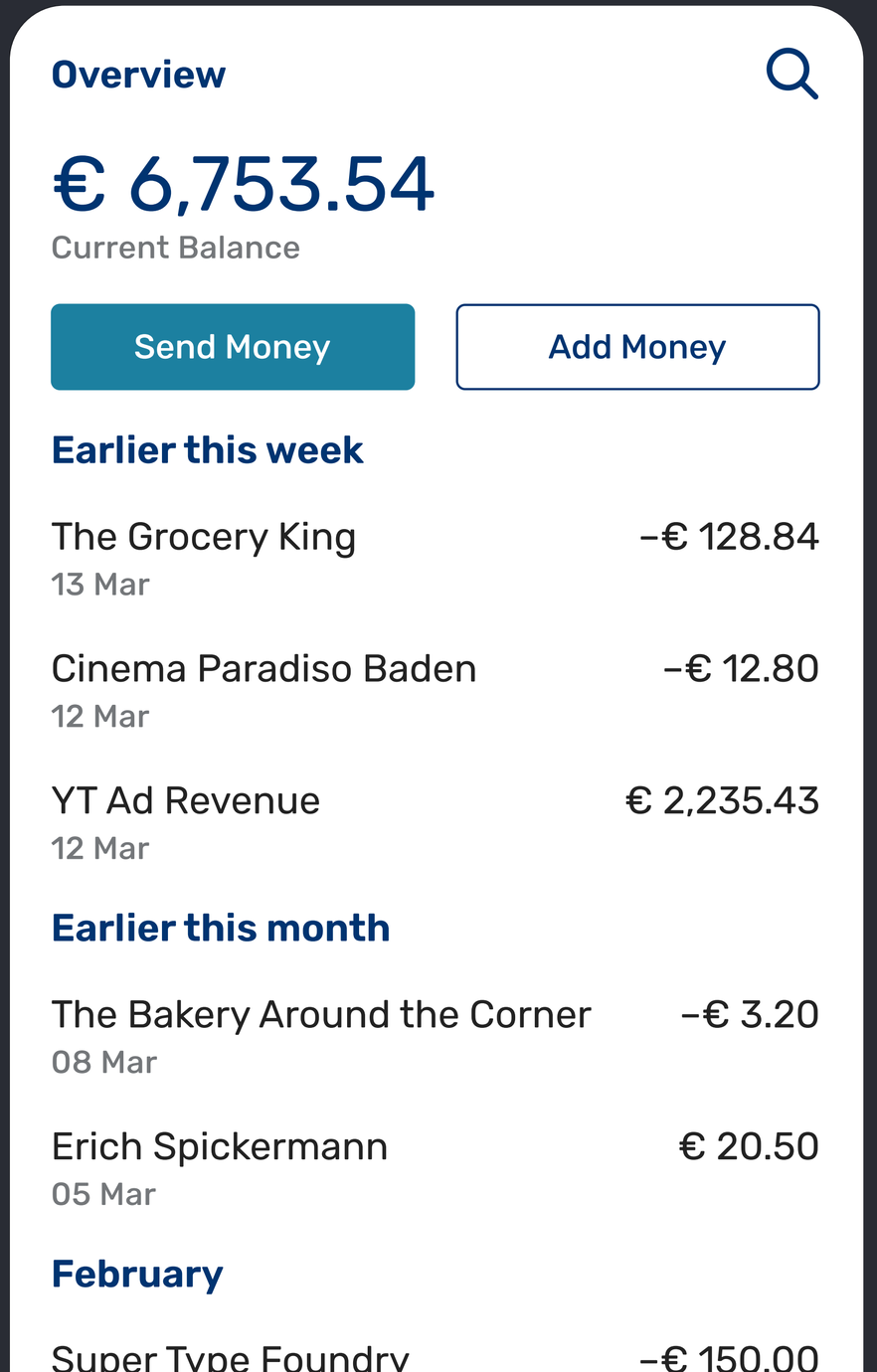
16 px



Create connections

Set elements closer, that belong to one group.

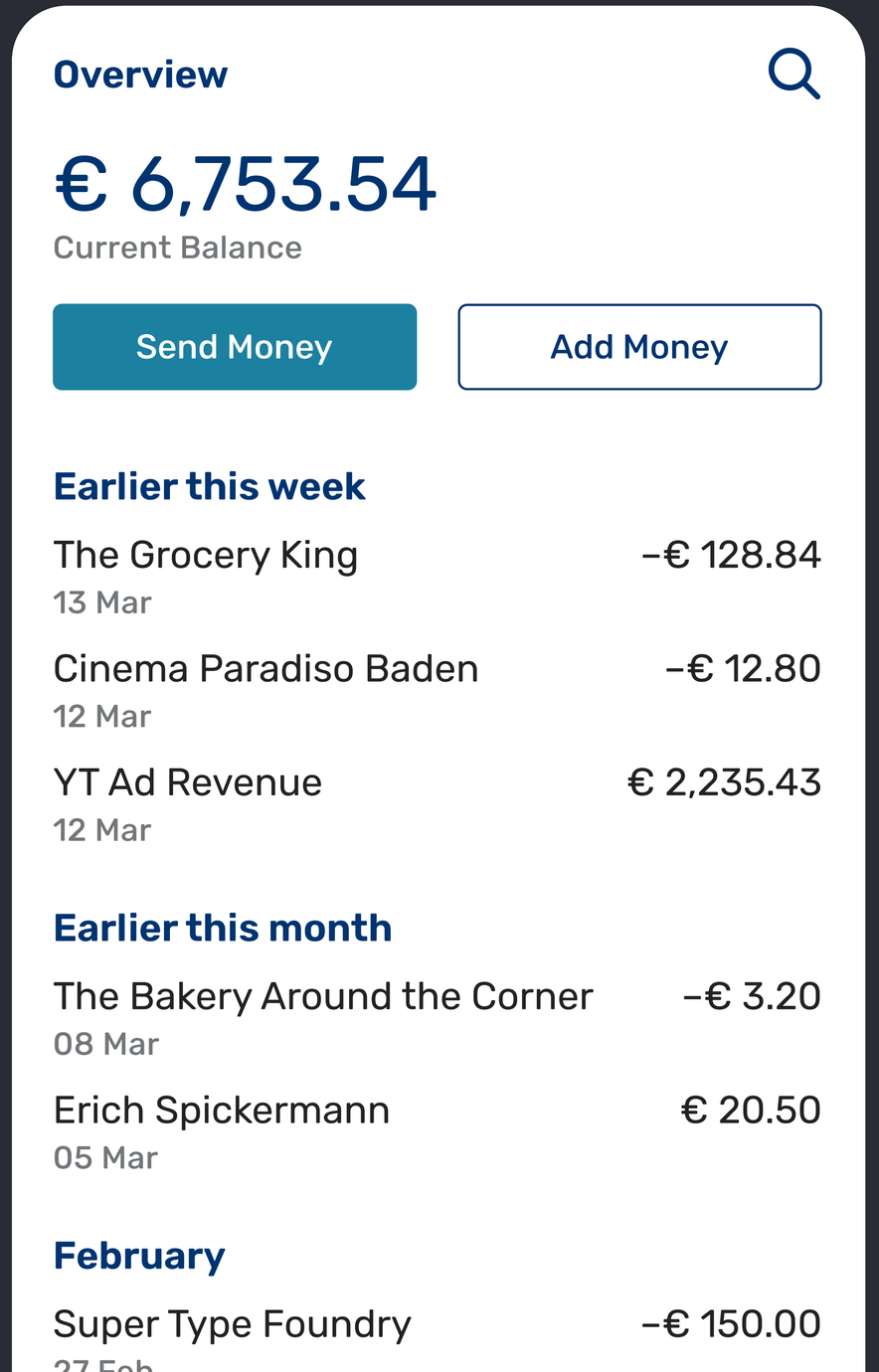
Add space around groups to clearly distinguish them.



Create connections

Set elements closer, that belong to one group.

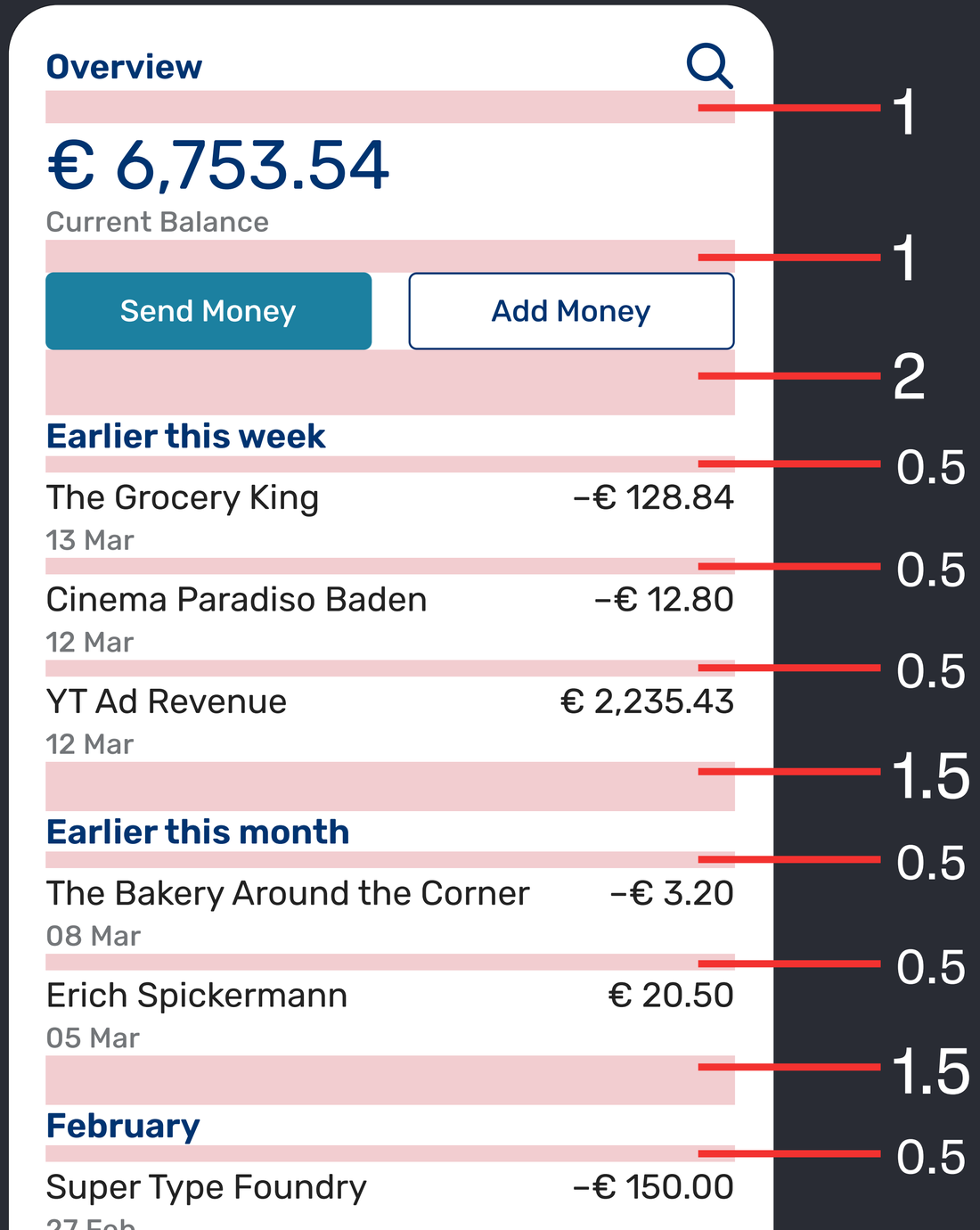
Add space around groups to clearly distinguish them.



Create connections

Spacing based on multiples or fractions of the base unit.

16 px = 1



Overview

€ 6,753.54

Current Balance

Send Money | Add Money

Earlier this week

The Grocery King 13 Mar	−€ 128.84
Cinema Paradiso Baden 12 Mar	−€ 12.80
YT Ad Revenue 12 Mar	€ 2,235.43

Earlier this month

The Bakery Around the Corner 08 Mar	−€ 3.20
Erich Spickermann 05 Mar	€ 20.50

February

Super Type Foundry 27 Feb	−€ 150.00

Exercise #4

#4

Adjust spacing to amplify hierarchy

10 min

- **Define a base unit**
  like 16px
- **Set elements closer** that belong to one group.
- **Add space around groups** to clearly distinguish them.
- **Use fractions or multiples** of the base unit
  like 0.5 = 8 px 1.5 = 24 px 2 = 32 px

Share your results

Paste your result here →

Original Design

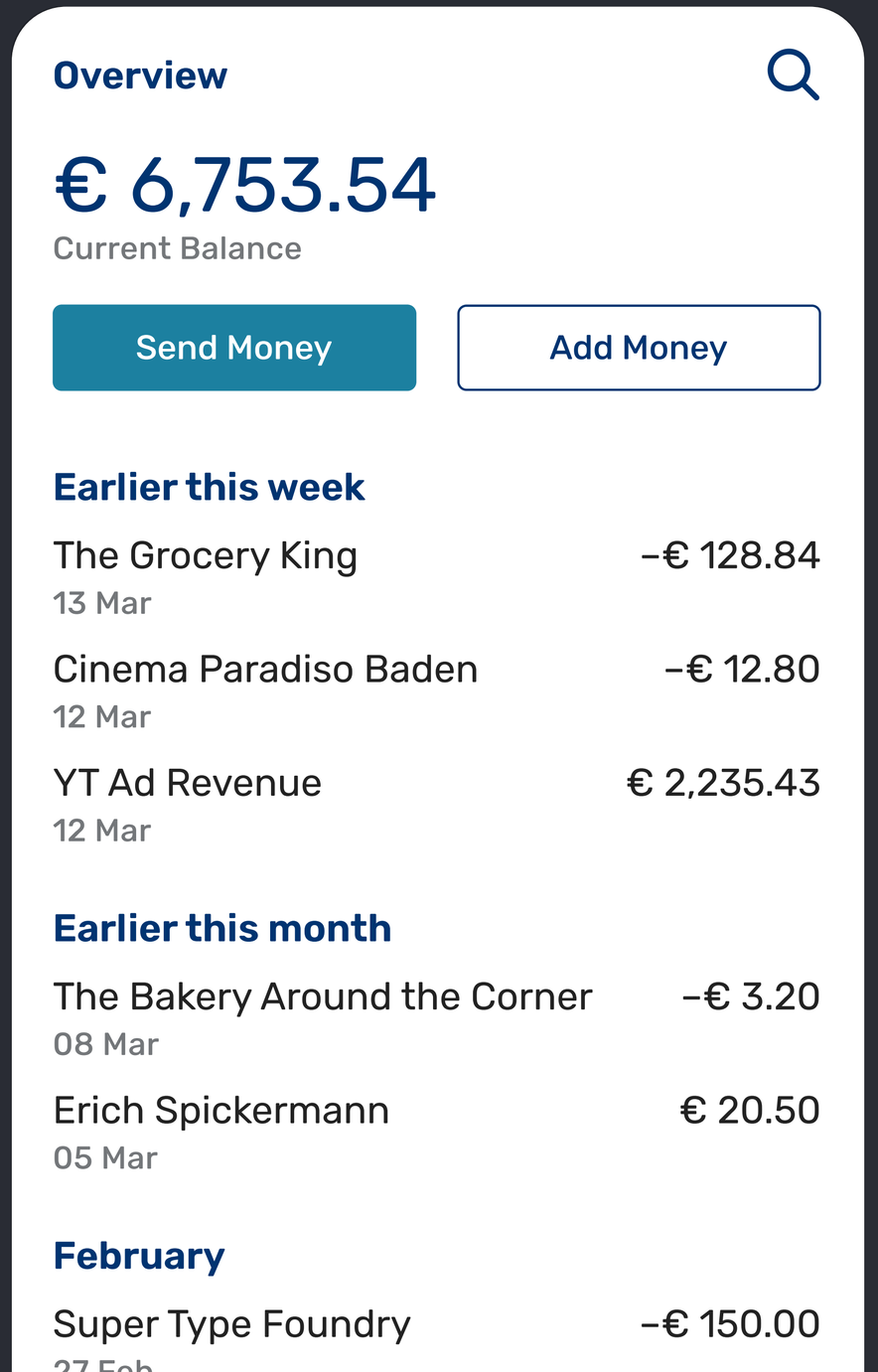
Original design

Result Oliver

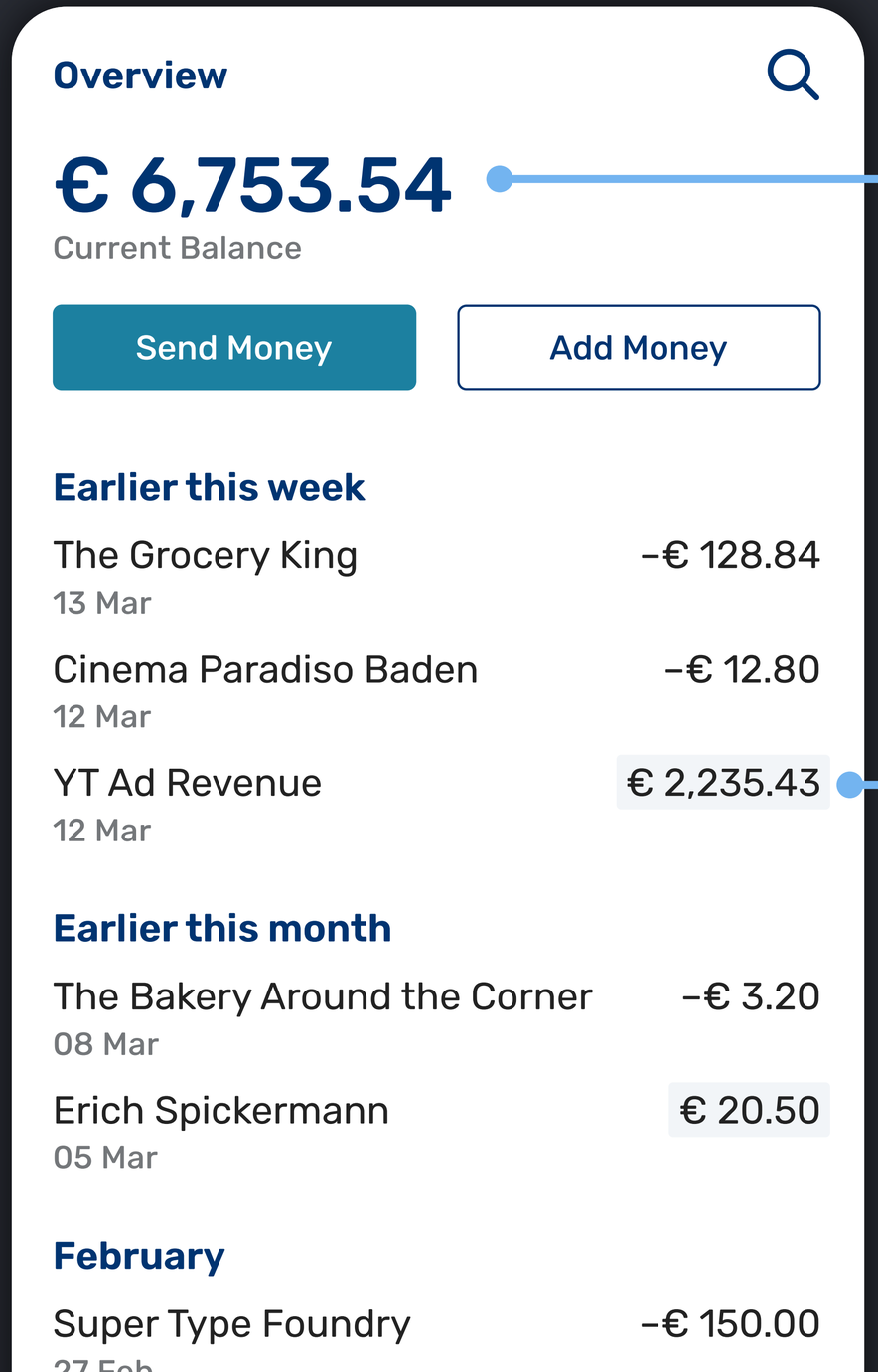
Oliver Schöndorfer

Your Name

Final polish

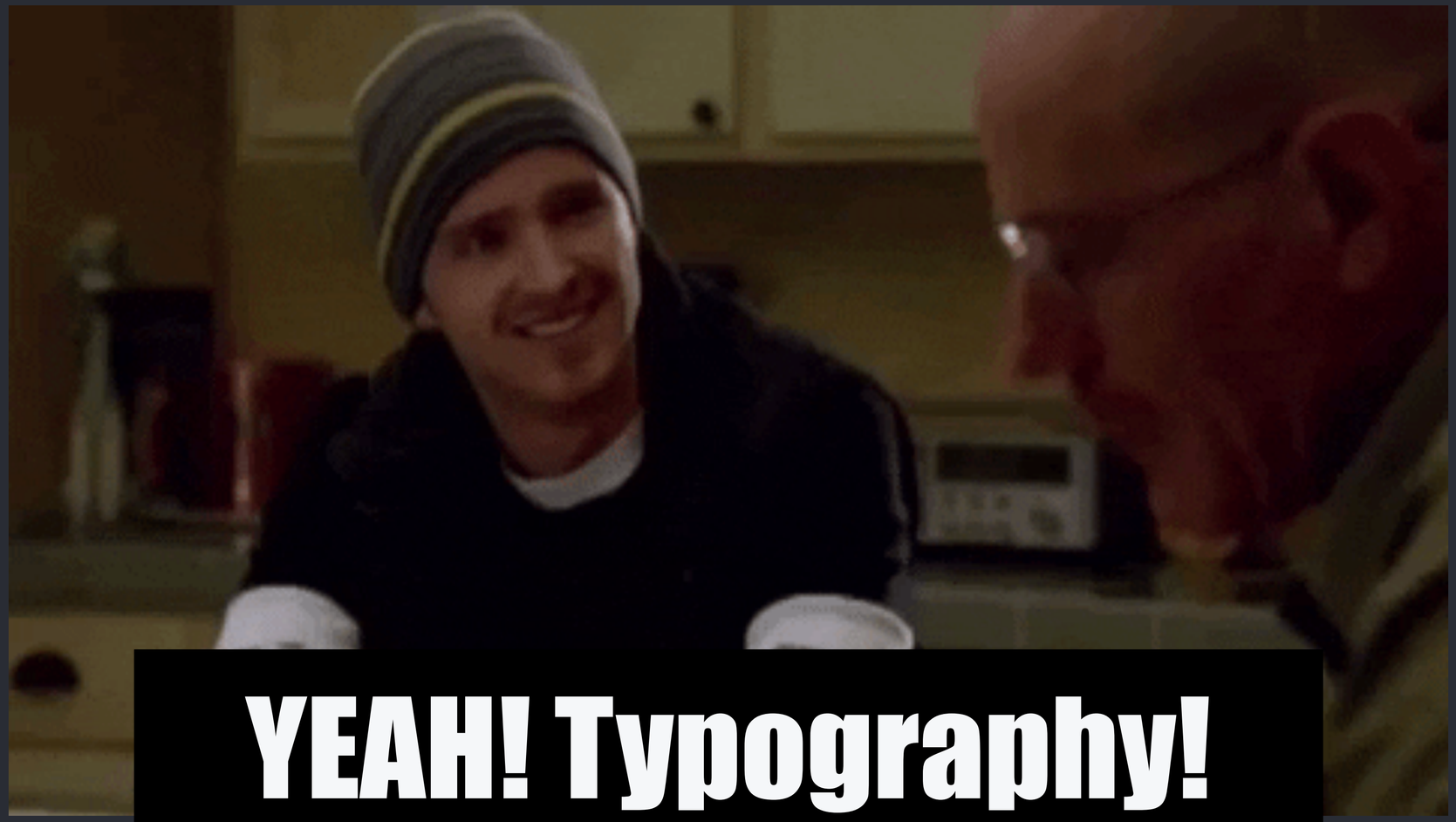


Final polish



Medium weight increased

Highlighted with bg color

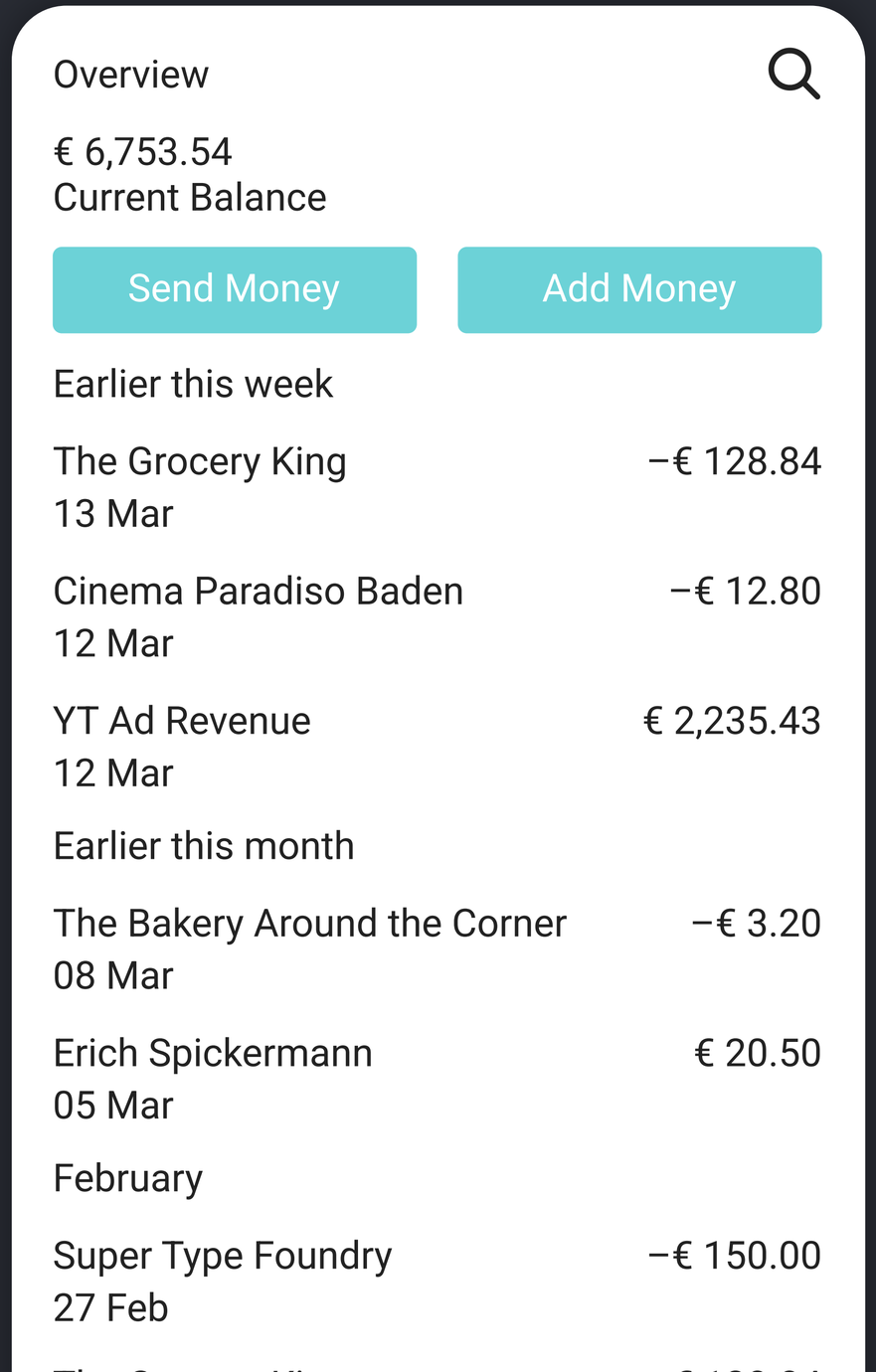

YEAH! Typography!

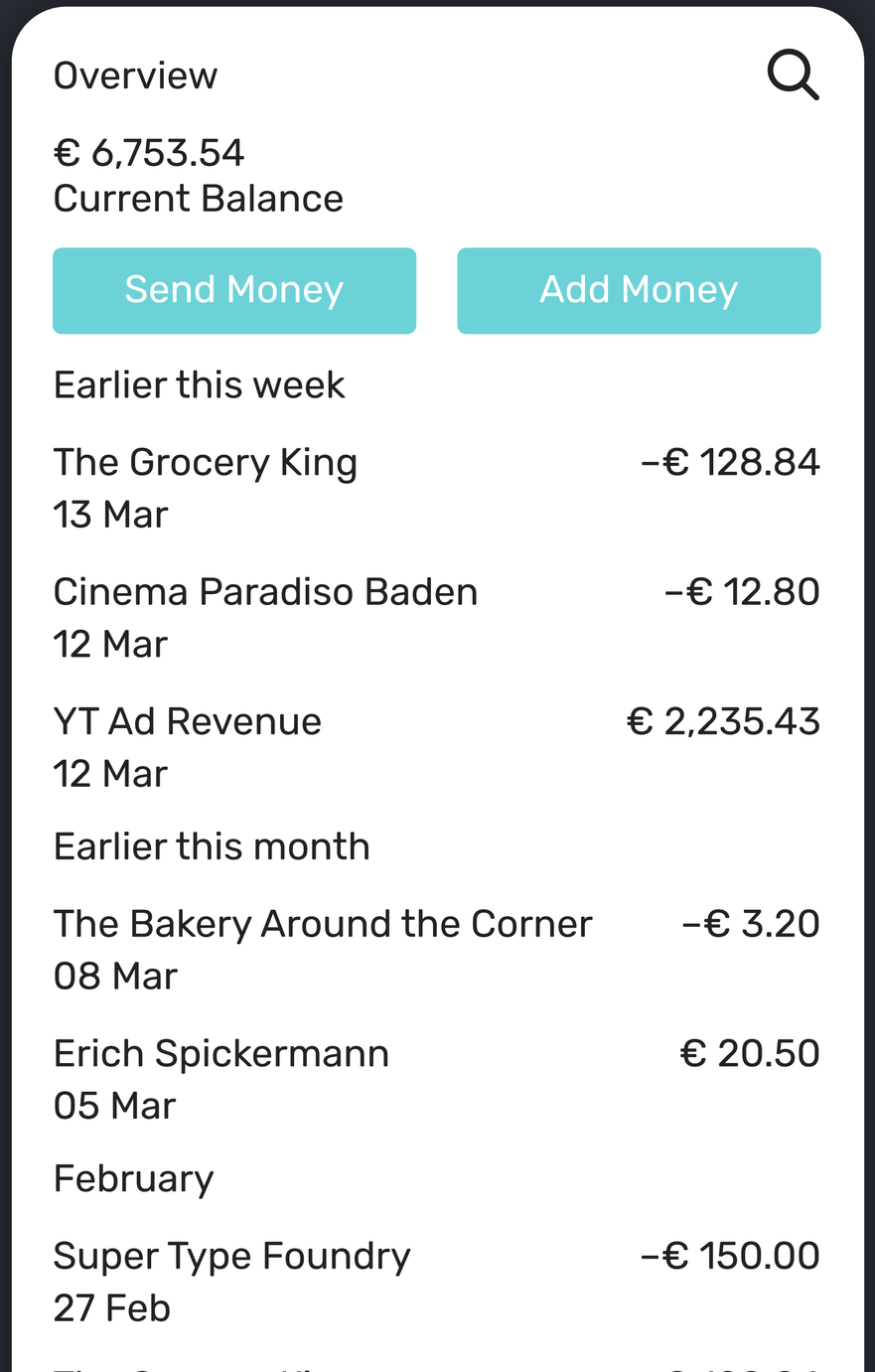
What was *the best thing*
you have learned today?

Your Results

How will your
next UI design **look like?**

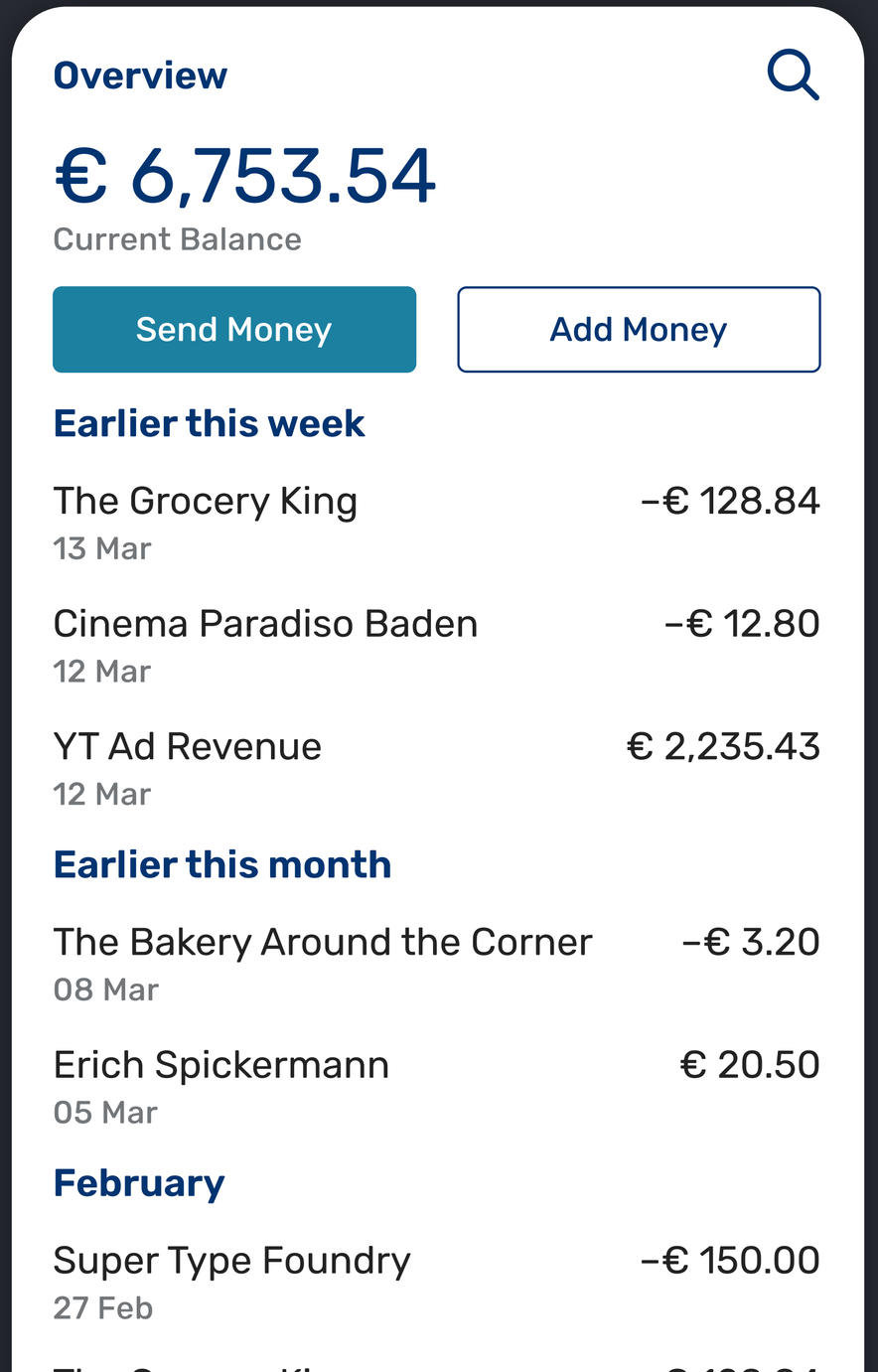
System Fonts

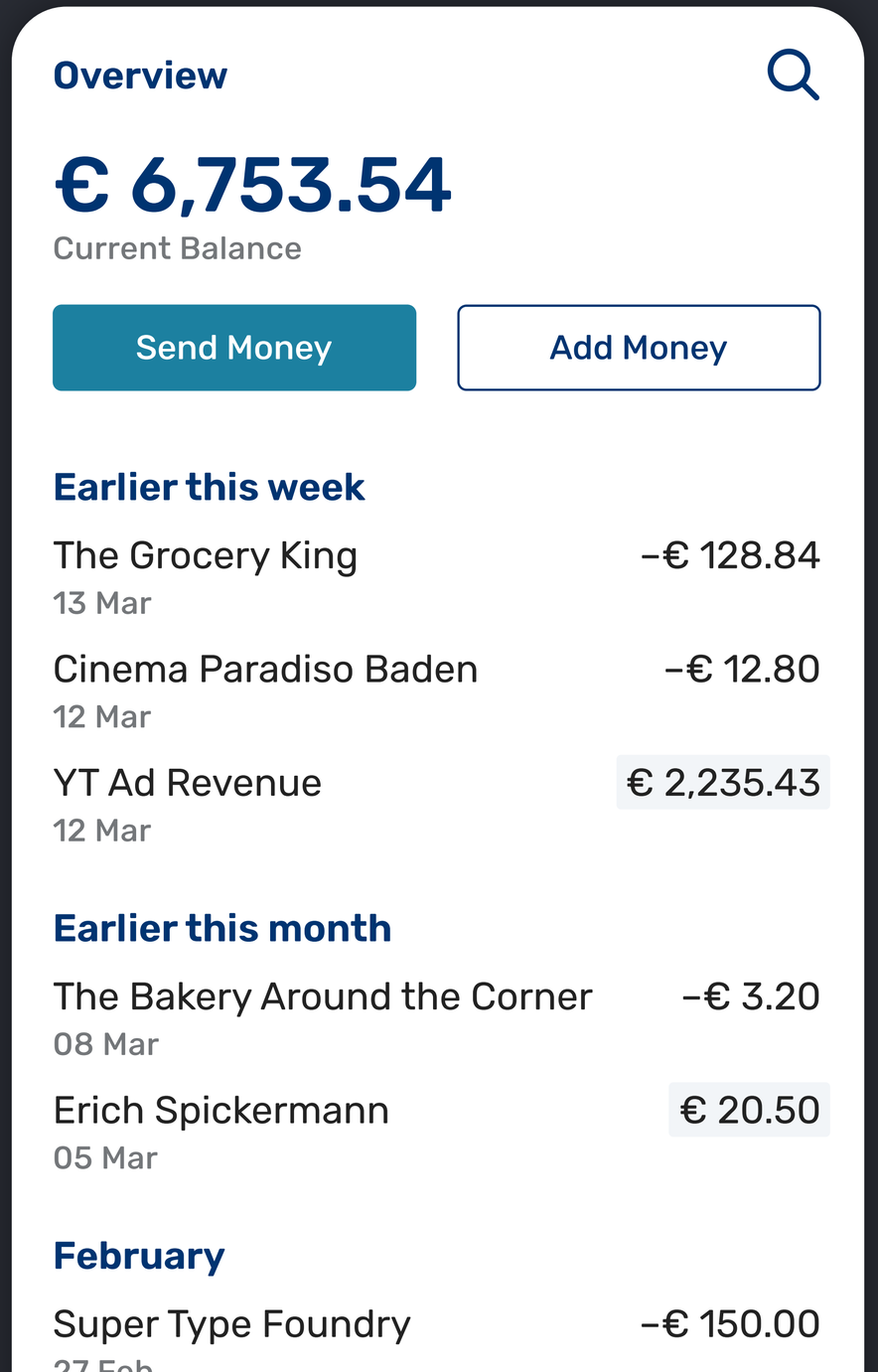




Individual Typefaces

Clear Hierarchy



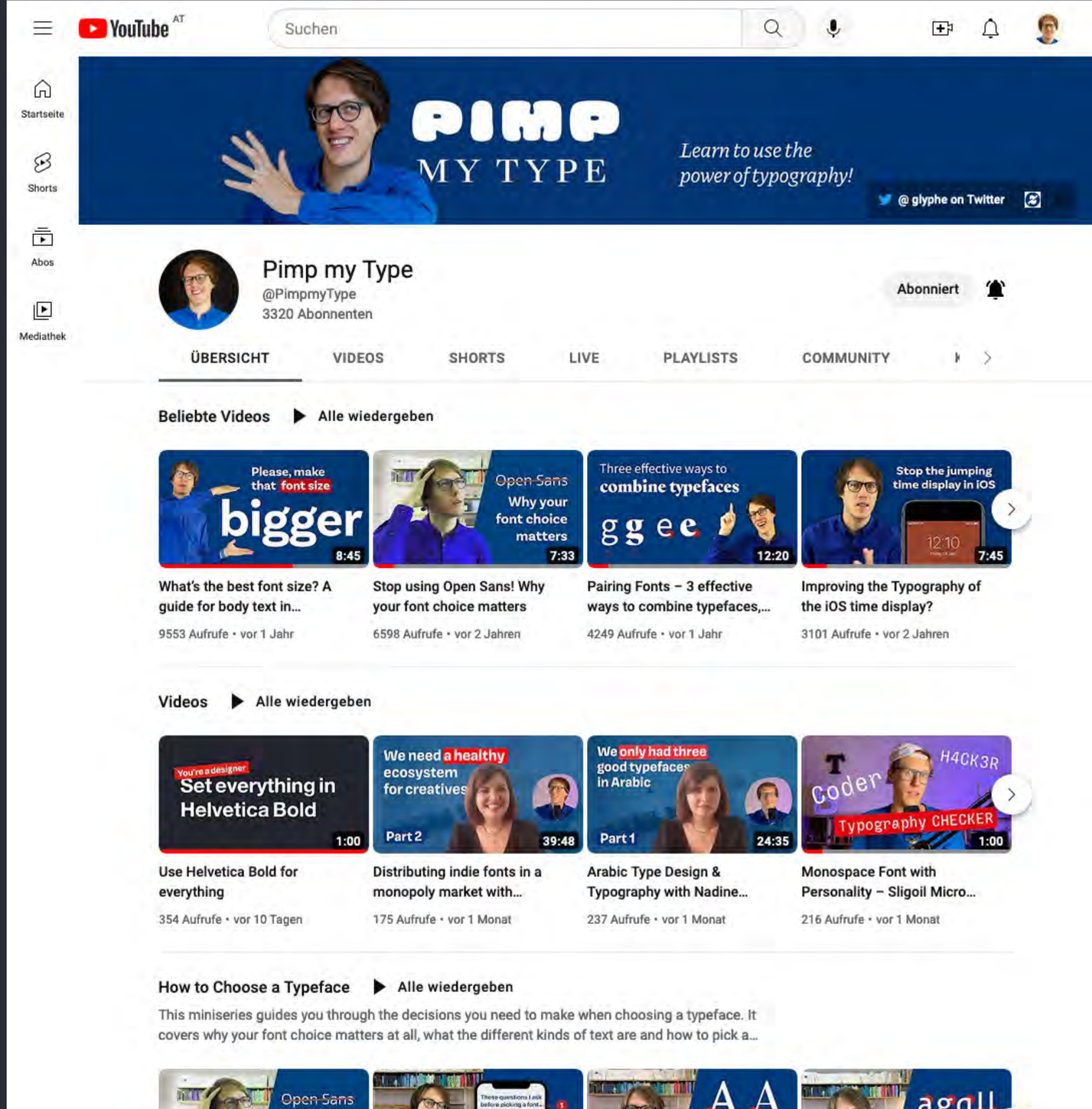


Proper Spacing

Your typographic adventure has only *just begun!*

On YouTube

Pimp my Type



On Font Friday

Weekly Newsletter

PIMP MY TYPE

Coaching Call Articles Online Course Fo

Category

Font Friday

Every Friday I recommend a typeface, write about for what digital applications it wo
not use it. Subscribe to the Pimp my Type Newsletter and get them directly to your i

Coline

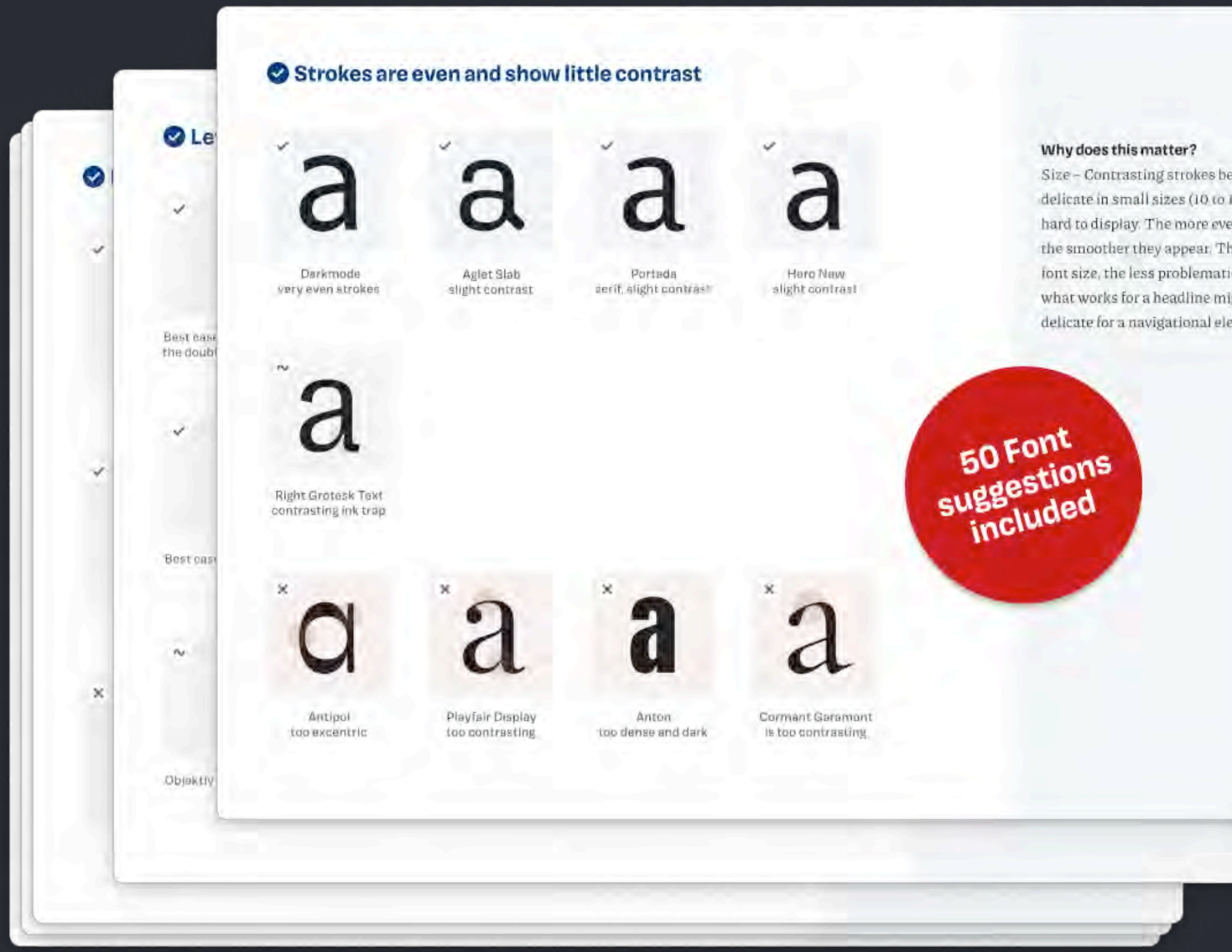
serif

Figtree (free font)

free font google fonts sans-serif

UI Fonts Checklist

Early access for only $ 9,90



Now go out there and pimp that type!

Oliver Schöndorfer 🤘 pimpmytype.com/uxc

pimpmytype glyphe pimp_my_type