

Business Case - 'Productivity Helper'

What is it?

The productivity helper is an app with simple but useful functionality. It's end goal is to help the user plan and follow through with a more productive and structured lifestyle, whilst giving them a sense of accomplishment upon completion. The core functionality of this app lies in its main 'todo' feature, providing users with a space in which they can add or review tasks which they need to complete along a short variable timespan of 1-7 days. Tasks on this list can be created manually or imported from another list made by the user, and can be easily sorted, edited, removed or accomplished. Users will also have the ability to set 'daily tasks' which appear in their 'todo' list each day. The app provides the user with the option to create and store a number of other lists, separate from the main 'todo' page, which are intended to contain details of projects being undertaken or the contents of a shopping list for example.

Upon task creation, users set a number of 'Productivity points' on the task which are to be awarded to them upon completion. This task metadata allows the app to provide the user with positive reinforcement when completed in the form of a points tally, which can then be used to present the user with pre-defined awards or historically reviewed to give the user an idea of how their productivity has developed over time. The app will be fast, sleek and easy to operate, due to its simplicity and user centred design. Developing an application which opens quickly and responds quickly is key for this type of product, as users will need to quickly reference their lists should they have a quick idea that they need to add.

Target demographics

This app is intended for use by students and full time employed individuals who have intentions to become more productive but who lose focus on tasks and generally need a helping hand in planning, organising and finding reward in their schedule. This leads the main focus on targeting the 18-24 year old university students, who generally have less structure in their lives as a result of being given independence to study by themselves. The introduction of gamification in the form of a points reward system is something which appeals to users in this age bracket, who like to feel rewarded upon completing tasks. Despite this target demographic, the app is suitable for use by mobile users of any age who wish to quickly jot down reminders for themselves, allowing the app to be widely used. The focus here is to provide the users with a good service, not treat them as targets for in-app monetisation.

Competition

If we classify this application based on its underlying functionality (essentially 'todo' list creation), and do a quick search in the android application store for example, then we can quickly see that there is a large amount of competition out there advertising different versions of list creation and manipulation.

Competitor 'Todoist: To-Do List, Task List' has 82000 downloads in the store, but charges an extortionate £25 annually to download the 'full' version, with the free version containing clunky features which complicate user experience. There are a number of similar apps, some with 250k+ downloads like 'Wunderlist' which have moderately positive reviews but which do not extend beyond the basic functionality of list creation, it also feels clunky to use and is overloaded with pages that may confuse the user and take away from its core purpose. After downloading and trialling a number of the potential competitors however, none fulfilled my criteria. We can see from the feedback on these apps that users consistently want this type of app to carry out its functionality in a different way, or with a different layout, the larger user group cannot be catered for all of the time.

Why is it viable?

After analysis of this applications competitors it may appear that this app would just get lost amongst a sea of somewhat similar versions, however this competition signifies to me just how popular apps like this are. It is apparent that keeping lists is widely accepted as a useful thing to do, as we can see from the millions of downloads in the app store. The wide distribution of the user base confirms my thinking in that everybody likes to keep their lists in a different fashion, we can see that no one app currently controls the market, and regularly new competitors arrive to fill different niches. This wide array of competition allows us to analyse the pitfalls of existing apps, letting it inspire our final products design. Not only does the Productivity Helper application contain additional functionality to help users stick to their plans and reward them for doing it, but the lists will be presented to them in a way which differs from its competitors.

This app stands out from its competitors being one of the few viable productivity applications not riddled with adverts or in-app monetisation, with a focus on the experience of the user. Its gamification aspect is something which can give the user a small reward in order to let them feel accomplishment upon completion of a task, and this is something which I feel is very important to helping motivate the individual. Being able to look back upon your previous 2-3 months of using the application and watching a steady progression in your productivity not only keeps the user satisfied, but also keeps them coming back to the application to earn more points... because at the end of the day everybody loves earning points, right?