

PRD - Marketplace App: Connecting Freelancers with Customers

Author: Rashmi Rekha Borah

Introduction:

The purpose of this document is to outline the requirements for an MVP of a marketplace that connects freelancing consultants with potential customers. The MVP should provide the basic functionality for users to browse and hire consultants, and should be designed to be easy to use and scalable.

User Persona:

The MVP should be designed with the following user personas in mind:

- Alice: an individual who is looking to hire a consultant for their service.
- Bob: a freelance consultant who is looking to advertise his services and find new customers.
- Carol: a job seeker who is looking to work as a freelancer in a specified field.

User Journeys(CUJs):

Here are the two possible user journeys which demonstrate how the marketplace app can provide value to both potential customers and freelancing consultants by connecting them and facilitating the process of finding and hiring the right person for a specific consultation.

- **Potential Customer:**
 - Raj is a college student who is looking for advice on career choices.
 - He searches online for career consulting services and comes across the marketplace web app.
 - He logs into the app and browses to find a career consultant who fits his criterias.
 - He views the profiles and ratings of several consultants and selects one to hire.
 - He contacts the consultant through the app and discusses the details of the consultation.
 - He schedules a session with the consultant and pays for their services through the app.
 - During the session, the consultant provides Raj with career advice and guidance.
 - After the session, Raj leaves a rating on the consultant's profile.
- **Freelancing Consultant:**
 - Seema is a freelance astrologer who is looking for new clients.

- She creates a profile on the marketplace app and lists her skills, experiences, certification, recognition and ratings.
- She receives a notification from a potential client about their interest in her services.
- Seema and the client communicate through the app to discuss the details of the consultation.
- She schedules a session with the client and receives payment for her service through the app.
- During the session, Seema provides the client with astrological guidance and advice.
- After the session, the client leaves a rating on Seema's profile.

Product Objectives:

The MVP should achieve the following objectives:

- Allow users to create an account and login to the app.(mobile + web app)
- Allow consultants to create their profiles and add relevant information.
- Allow users to browse and search for consultants based on their skills and experience.
- Allow users to view the profiles and ratings of the consultants.
- Allow users to hire consultants and pay for their services through the app.

Key Features and Functionalities:

The MVP should include the following key features:

- **Account creation and login:** Users should be able to create an account and log in to the app using their email and password. Users should be able to browse the profiles of consultants without logging in to the app but they can only book a consultation after logging.
- **Search and browse:** Users should be able to browse and search for consultants based on their skills, experience, location and other relevant criteria, and view the profiles of consultants who match their search criteria.
- **Consultant profiles:** Consultants should be able to create profiles in the app.Each consultant's profile should include information such as their skills, experience, ratings, availability, and rates. Users should be able to view and compare the profiles of different consultants to find the one that best fits their needs.
- **Contact and hire:** Users should be able to initiate contact with consultants through the app and discuss the details of the consultation, including the date, time and payment terms.
- **Payment:** The app should include a secure payment gateway that allows users to pay for consultations through the app.
- **Consultation:** The consultation should take place via a video call or other online communication method, as agreed upon by the user and the consultant.

- **Review and rate:** After the consultation, users should be able to leave a rating and review for the consultant on their profile, to help other users make informed decisions about the consultants to hire.

Non-functional Requirements:

- **Security:** The MVP should implement appropriate security measures to protect user accounts and data, such as encrypting passwords and using secure servers.
- **Scalability:** The MVP should be designed to handle a large number of users and consultants without performance degradation.
- **User experience:** The MVP should have a simple and intuitive user interface that is easy for users to navigate and use.

Layout and Wireframes:

Here is the basic layout of the marketplace app MVP:

- **Home screen:** The home screen should include a search bar, a list of top rated featured consultants, and categories for different types of consultations.
- **Search and browse:** The search bar should have a global search option where users can either search by consultancy type or consultant's name/surname. There should be a filtering option to filter consultants based on their skills, experience, location, ratings etc. The user should be able to browse the list of consultants and should be able to view their profiles.
- **Connect and hire:** The user should be able to select a consultant. On selecting, the user should be directed to the consultant's profile page which contains information about the consultant. There should be an option to chat with the consultant and book consultancy. On clicking on the book consultant, the user should be directed to the payment page to pay. Once payment is confirmed, the user will get notification informing about the confirmation for consultation.
- **Consultation:** The user should be able to attend the consultation at the agreed-upon date and time. The app should have a page which shows all the upcoming consultation for the user. For the active consultation, the app will provide a link to join the video call which will be hosted in house in the app. In case of network issues, the consultant should be provided with the user's mobile number and the user should be notified that they will receive a call on their mobile.
- **Review and rate:** After the consultation, the user should get a pop up in the app to rate the consultant and share feedback.
- **Customer support:** There should be a dedicated FAQ and customer support page to resolve any customer issues and provide support to the customers.

Link to Wireframes:  [marketplace-app-wireframes.pdf](#)

Key Product Metrics:

We will need a fixed set of product metrics to determine the success of the MVP. By tracking the following metrics mentioned below, we will gain insights into the performance and effectiveness of the app, and identify areas for improvement.

- **User acquisition and retention:** This includes metrics such as the number of new users acquired, the percentage of users who return to the app and the average time spent on the app.
- **Match rate:** This will measure the percentage of freelancers who are hired by the clients through the app.
- **Transaction volume:** This is the total amount of money exchanged through the app, including both the fees charged by the app and the fees paid to freelancers.
- **Transaction completion rate:** This is the percentage of transactions that are completed successfully through the app.
- **Average transaction value:** This is the average amount of money exchanged in a single transaction through the app.
- **User satisfaction:** This can be measured through surveys or other user feedback mechanisms.
- **Customer lifetime value:** This is the estimated revenue that a customer will generate over the course of their relationship with the app.
- **Cost of customer acquisition:** This is the cost incurred to acquire a new customer, including market and advertising expenses.

Competitive landscape:

A competitive landscape for our marketplace app would include other platforms that offer similar services. Some potential competitors could include:

- **Upwork:** Upwork is a well-established platform that connects businesses with freelancers in a variety of fields, including consulting.
- **Fiverr:** Fiverr is a popular platform that allows users to find and hire freelancers for a wide range of services, including consulting.
- **Thumbtack:** Thumbtack is a platform that helps users find professionals, including consultants, for various projects and services.
- **LinkedIn Pro Finder:** LinkedIn is a social networking platform that is also used by freelancers and consultants to connect with potential clients and pitch their work. In addition to this, LinkedIn has launched Pro Finder where users can find consultants and hire them.
- **Freelancer:** Freelancer is a platform that allows users to find and hire freelancers for a variety of projects and services, including consulting.

To differentiate itself from these competitors, our marketplace app can focus more on a specific niche within the consulting industry, such as astrology or dietetics, or it could offer additional features or services that are not available on other platforms. It should also focus on providing a

high level of customer service and user experience, to encourage users to choose the app over its competitors.

Hook Framework:

The Hook Framework can be applied for this app by providing clear triggers and action for the users which can be both potential customers and freelancers to take, and then rewarding them with access to valuable services and content. From potential customers point of view, the Hook Framework can be applied as -

- **Trigger:** The trigger for potential customers could be an external trigger, such as an email notification or a banner ad in some website, Google search, Social Media Influencer Ads, or an internal trigger, such as a desire to find a freelancer to complete a specific task.
- **Action:** The action for potential customers to open the app and browse available freelancers or search for a specific freelancer based on their skills and experience.
- **Variable reward:** The reward for potential customers could be the opportunity to browse the profiles and ratings of freelancers and select the one that best fits their needs. The app could also provide access to a variety of freelancers in different industries and skill sets, to keep the user engaged.
- **Investment:** The investment for potential customers could be the time and effort they put into finding the right freelancer and negotiating a contract. By making an investment in the process, the user is more likely to be committed to the app and use it again in the future.

For freelancers, the hook framework could work in a similar way, with triggers, actions, and rewards that encourage them to use the app to find and apply for jobs. The trigger could be an email notification of a new job posting, the action could be to apply for the job, and the reward could be the opportunity to work on interesting projects and build their portfolio. The investments for freelancers could be the time and effort they put into creating a strong profile and bidding on jobs.

Business Model:

There are several business models that could be suitable for this marketplace app depending on the specific goals and target audience in the app. The app can earn revenue by combination of below three mentioned models:

- **Commission-based:** According to this model, the app will charge a percentage of the freelancer's earnings as a fee for using the platform. This can be an effective way to generate revenue, but it may also reduce the attractiveness of the app for freelancers, as they will have to pay a portion of their earnings to the app. We can charge consultants to place ads for their services in the app. Sponsored consultants profiles will be ranked on top of the rest of the consultants in a specific category.

- **Subscription-based:** According to this model, the app will charge users a monthly or annual fee to access its services. This can be a good option if the app offers a high level of value to the users, as they will be willing to pay for access. But there will be a certain set of customers who might only want to use the app once and they don't want to pay the subscription amount. To make sure we have repeat customers, we can introduce prime membership which is a sort of subscription and prime members receive discounts on each consultation. This will ensure customer retention.
- **Advertising-based:** According to this model, the app will generate revenue through advertising or sponsored content. This can be a good option when the app has a larger user base, as advertisers will be willing to pay to reach this audience. However, it may lead to less streamlined user experience, as users will be exposed to more advertisements.

To determine the unit economics of the app, it will be important to consider the costs of acquiring and retaining users, as well as the revenue generated through the chosen business model. By carefully analyzing these factors, it should be possible to determine the overall profitability of the app.

Conclusion:

The MVP of the marketplace app should provide the basic functionality for users, while also being easy to use and scalable. Based on the feedback collected from users after the MVP launch, new features and improvements should be added to the final product to reach out to a wider range of customers and continuously improve. While developing the app our main focus should always be the users and everything should be about making the user experience as delightful as it can be while keeping business aligned.