REDEMPTION DRIVEN EXCHANGE

Executive Summary

Community Partner
David Palmer, Tim Daigle, Kim Reed
Student Consulting Team
Kieran Walsh
Emily Feng
Grace Joseph

Background

Redemption-Driven Exchange (RDX) is a nonprofit startup that aims to resolve poverty globally by supporting sustainable growth within the community. The founders of the organization are faith-driven entrepreneurs that wish to provide an empowering package for other entrepreneurs from all communities to succeed. The organization's target market is specifically Christ-following entrepreneurs and investors because although there are plenty competing business networking platforms and organizations, there are only 4% of them focusing on serving the Christian community.

Redemption-Driven Exchange currently operates on Mighty Networks, drawing in Christian entrepreneurs local to Pittsburgh to form a community online. Given that this organization is still in its early stages, their programs are limited to the meet and greets they have conducted with the members who joined through Mighty Networks.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

Since our client would like to see RDX become a sustainable global solution to poverty, it is important to introduce technology into the solution. Currently, our clients try to match users with suitable mentors by going around their own networks, and find people with specific expertises. This process is extremely time consuming and error-prone since the entire process relies solely on the memories of our clients and the number of entrepreneurs they are able to help is limited. A technology based solution would provide benefits of more accurate matching algorithms, easily manageable systems, increased capacity of users, and scalability.

Project Vision

We propose a technology solution that will store information about each entrepreneur, match entrepreneurs with mentors that have expertise in the fields they are facing troubles in, and provide a communication platform. We also see our solution to have a small learning curve, easily scalable, and easily manageable. Ultimately, what will set our vision apart from the other available resources is the opportunity to receive individualized guidance and mentorship from more experienced entrepreneurs, provide personal spiritual encouragement, and aggregate and mobilize mentors, investors, and entrepreneurs.

Project Outcomes

Our primary project outcome was a proof-of-concept networking platform built using Ruby on Rails where Christian entrepreneurs can sign up and find mentorship from other Christian entrepreneurs. In the process of creating this solution, we crafted user stories, developed many iterations of wireframes, conducted user testing, created an interactive prototype, and prepared extensive documentation for our implementation of the platform. In terms of process and technologies, we also set up tools and resources for RDX like Slack, Trello, Google Drive, and Figma to store all our shared content, collaborate on documents, and communicate effectively over the course of the semester.

Project Deliverables

Our final project deliverable consists of a proof-of-concept matching platform hosted on Heroku and its accompanying documentation. Given that our deliverable is a proof-of-concept, we expect that our community partner will change the domain when they choose to launch the platform. We have handed off our github repo and all accounts made for this project to our client as well as provided them access to all documentation for our platform via Google Drive.

Recommendations

We recommend that the client first focuses on improving the current matching algorithm by purchasing or outsourcing and finding potential users to test run teh application. In terms of software development, we suggest the following extension point:

a. Host it on AWS/Google Clouds or other cloud computing platform
b. Add in-platform chatting
c. Add mobile application
d. Add functionality to host images/videos on the RDX server

The client should consider hiring talent with expertise in web and mobile applications development and experience in managing NoSQL database. This allows the client to focus more on perfect their business value and strategy, and bring higer Return of Investment (ROI).

Student Consulting Team

Kieran Walsh was the Client Relationship Manager and Frontend Lead. He is a senior in Information Systems with a minor in Sonic Arts. Kieran will be starting full-time as a Systems Engineer at McMaster-Carr in June.

Emily Feng is a junior in Information Systems with a double major in Statistics and Machine Learning. She is the project manager and backend lead. Emily is interning at Google as a software engineer on the Google Cloud Platform in Seattle, WA.

Grace Joseph was the Quality Assurance Manager and Design Lead. She is a junior in Information Systems with a double major in Human-Computer Interaction. She will be interning at Google as a UX Designer on the Android Team this summer in Mountain View, CA.