

Topick Business Plan



The Topick Company

claudio.vigliarolo.dev@gmail.com

*Prepared By:
Claudio Vigliarolo
Software Developer*

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	
2. Company & Business.....	
3. Product & Services.....	
4. Core Values	
5. Team & Org Structure.....	
6. Products and Services Line.....	
7. Market Analysis.....	
8. Marketing Plan.....	
9. Sales Plan.....	
8. Financial Considerations.....	

Executive Summary

The app arises from the need for a new way of communicating, a new way of interacting with people using a variety of topics that are proper to any given situation.

We all have, more than once, experienced the dreadful feeling of “not knowing what to say” in a specific context. Maybe it was with a stranger, a foreigner, a girl, or even with people we already know, like our parents. We may feel comfortable with them but still don’t have a clear picture of what to talk about specifically. The app solves this need, providing engaging topics, no matter what situation or the person you want to converse with. Of course, the app cannot replace you. It cannot have the conversation in your place or make the conversation sound interesting even if it’s not. This all depends on you. What the app can do is unlock your potential in a conversation, providing great starting points, great conversational starters, great questions for each topic you like that are both appropriate and likely to generate a great impact on the person you talk with. If a conversation is fire, the app is a lighter, a match that helps you light up that fire that lies inside you. What you need to keep in mind is that the fire is inside you, not in the app. Every topic in the app is made up of dozens of questions. This doesn’t mean your conversation should be like an interrogation or a question-answer session. The app is not suitable for police questioning or some yes or no boolean responses.

We all know that a great conversation is way more than that. A great conversation involves feelings and passions, surprise and fear, and smiles. The key role of the app is to wake up those feelings and experiences we all have buried inside us. Maybe they date back a long time ago, and we may not remember them. We may forget some experiences we had in the past, like the time we learned to ride the bicycle or got our driving license almost hitting a cat, crossing the road at the wrong moment. We may not recall all these exciting facts about our life. At least, not so well to bring them up in a conversation. Our belief is that the questions will make you remember, will make you remind you of all these memories you may not even think about, and make bring them up to the table. Only thus will you be able to have a deep, inspiring conversation we all strive for.

As a rule of thumb, all great apps have a good user experience, which usually translates into easy-to-use.

Here also, the core idea is dead simple. When you don’t know what to talk about, you open the app and “pick” a topic. You can find a topic as you prefer: either filter by category, search by keyword or pick a random one. The app provides various sections to help you navigate through a great variety of topics as quickly as possible.

This can be incredibly useful also for many other activities:

Writing essays: we all struggle to write long texts. Finding great questions inside each topic can be a source of inspiration.

Practicing a language: whether you join a tandem language exchange event or simply practicing on your own, you always need a good topic to talk about.

Presentations or discussions: in all of these cases, the app reduces the complexity in finding a topic and related content. As the world is growing complex, the capacity to access specific and related information is critical. Google is a great example.

Company & Business Description

Company Purpose

At the moment of writing these lines, it remains unclear what a “specific” target could be. The possibilities are endless.

Potentially, all people who sometimes have no clear picture of what subject to talk about can be interested in the app. But this is just scratching the surface of potential users.

In fact, every person who is learning a new language should be interested in the app. If not, he is probably learning a language the right way, as you need to get comfortable in different subjects if you want to reach proficiency. These can be far more interesting than traditional paper books, usually divided into chapters.

Also, people who have to make a presentation or write an essay for academic or professional purposes may be interested as the field of the topics extends to these subjects as well.

Mission/Vision Statement

Making conversations among people better, facilitating the decision-making process for finding a new topic, create an active community of people exchanging content, opinions, and ideas.

Core Values

Simplicity: We value simplicity and user experience.

Respect: We will actively remove every form of offensive content

Integrity: We build our database using reliable content, organized in a clean and linear manner

Trust: we trust our content creators and the community of users of our app

Collaboration: the future of the app is on the hands of his users, their opinions, their reviews, and support

Team & Org Structure

The company is run by the founder of the business, known as the "root user" inside the main database. It has read/write access to all the content and freely hires new people to create new content. These are known as content creators. Their role is to create interesting content for the app that drives the entire business. They have read/write access to the sections of the content determined by the root user. Among those people, we also find translators. Their role is to translate the content from one language to another.

The translators can either be a subset of the content creators or a separate role depending on the need and cost of these professional figures.

The company structure may evolve over time, driven by new funds and fresh ideas. The company can be completely automated as the content creators get more skilled and independent in their job. It is also possible that the app could work cost-free in the future, propelled by the community's content and ideas. Anyway, some monitoring would also be necessary, even in this case, for policy reasons.

Products and Services Line

Product Offering(s)

Mobile Application for both Android and IOS. The app will be available in Google Play and App Store for free.

Pricing Model

The app will be completely free of charge and ad-free. While most of the content will remain free and available to everyone, there will possibly be some paid content in the future. Our belief is that the app should get popular first, then it will be possible to start charging money for more content. As the app gets more downloads, it is also possible that some ads will be added so as to further prompt users to pay for the premium account. Users who decide to pay for the premium content will be charged monthly with a fee of some euros. We believe that it is the best form of payment, as new topics should be daily added, and content creators should also be periodically paid each month.

Market Analysis

Buyer Personas

People struggling with finding good conversational topics, language learners, presenters....

The customer should be interested in finding topics about his area of interest. As new topics will be added every day, topics about current events will be published.

This would draw the interest of people who want to be informed about recent news and trends.

Location Analysis

The app will support the following language(and thus every country where the language is spoken): English, Italian, French, and Spanish.

These languages have been chosen because of their popularity and their ease of translation from one to another. As mentioned earlier, the number of resources, in this case, the number of translators, is limited. So we opted for relatively simple languages, whose translation can be reliably performed by known free software, like google translator. Specifically, the countries where the app would get popular, assuming each country would be interested in content only in his own language, are the States, Italy, Spain, Latine America, France, Canada, and all other English-speaking countries.

Competitor Analysis

The market of the app falls under a Blue Ocean Strategy, as there is hardly any competitor. Our belief is that the app will create this market, whose potential has been overlooked by competitors.

Although some apps already present on mobile platforms offer a similar service, the quality of their content is far lower than ours.

For example, one app is called "Random Topics for Conversations." The app has no navigation tabs, and only a tiny amount of questions are shown. The app just focuses on single questions and lacks the content structure and variety we offer.

The app also provides a timer to time each person's response, which we believe is not a great idea, as everyone should take his time to answer a question.

Another app comes from Germany, it is called "Keep talking, Gesprächstheme und Smalltalk". Also, in this case, the app content is minimal, just a few pages with a sad list of questions.

As a result, both apps didn't receive much attention and had less than 10k downloads overall.

We believe that our offer is way better than everything already present in the market. We expect to get more than 100k downloads in the first two years.

Marketing Plan

Positioning Strategy

They will be available in the App Store and Google Play, with no online marketing in the beginning. In the first few months, we will test acquaintances, like friends, family, and social media followers. In this way, every bug or problem would be easily solved without damaging the company's reputation.

This would also be the perfect time for finding good content creators and testing the reliability of the business model. The amount of work and the creative process will be defined, and based on their outcome, new strategic decisions will be taken. Once consolidated the business model and the processes that drive the entire business, a gradual marketing campaign will start. The targets will be young people, among 14 and 30-year-olds, who are more likely to be interested in the app. A good place for promoting the app would also probably be local English schools or internet learning platforms. In the beginning, marketing will be performed by actively participating in forums where potential buyers would be interested. We also do not rule out the possibility of promoting the app on social media, like Instagram or Facebook, and youtube, which are usually good places for app marketing. Anyway, we firmly believe that "word of mouth" would be the most effective strategy in this use case. The goal of our marketing strategy will be for it to trigger.

Tools and Technology

Besides the possibility of writing reviews on the App Store and Google Play, a social media fan page will be created. On this page, posts about topics and important news will be posted. This will attract new followers and potential customers for the business.

Sales Plan

Tools and Technology

To fee the premium users, Google and Apple pay services will be used. This simplifies the handling of payment at the cost of 20% as fee. This is the transaction cost that Google and Apple impose for hosting the app.

Financial Considerations

Startup Costs

Unlike most sectors where barriers to entry are present, in this case, the initial costs to get started are trivial. The development and maintenance of the software of the app are done by the founder himself. This saves money and also aligns the company goals and expectations with their practical implementation. The initial costs are represented by the publishing of the app on Google Play and App Store. They will charge 15 and 100 euros respectively. The hosting of the online dashboard is provided for free by Vercel. The server is hosted by Heroku and the database in Elephant SQL, which are both free in the beginning. When the number of requests increases and more processing power is needed, we could switch for a "Production Plan" on Heroku, which comes at a price of 25\$ a month. Likewise, in case 20MB of database won't suffice, we could switch to a paid plan, which comes at a price of 5\$ in Elephant SQL. The most significant cost is represented by the wage of content creators. People living in developing countries will be hired, possibly from Latine America or India. They will be paid less than 5\$ per hour, or alternatively by the amount of content they produce. In this case, we estimate that 2\$ per topic is more than enough.

It is clear that the initial investment is represented entirely by the app stores, where the app will be published. The remaining costs will be evaluated based on the app's growth and popularity.

Sales Forecasts

We estimate to have at least one thousand people willing to pay for the app with the first two years.

Break-Even Analysis

It will be possible to break even and start making money after the first year of release. Only then, a definite business will emerge, and paid content will be available.