

Discovery Interview Results

Interviewee Name: Sheikh Bablu

Occupation: Associate Product Manager at Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) in Manhattan

Relation: Professional mentor of mine who I met through the Streetwise Bridge mentorship program

Context: Travels 1 - 2 times a month for business and personal trips, mainly domestic and occasional international trips with his wife

1. Introduction

I began by explaining that our group is developing a Flight Delay Predictor App designed to give passengers early insights into potential flight delays. I told Sheikh that the goal of this interview was to learn about his real travel experiences, how he currently handles delays, and whether a predictive tool like ours could fit naturally into that process.

2. Flight Frequency

Sheikh mentioned that he flies around 15 - 18 times a year, especially during the spring and fall when he is busy at work. He said most of his flights are short domestic ones for business but he also takes at least two international trips each year. Delays tend to happen more often in the holiday season and with international flights.

3. Gripes with Flying

When asked to describe the last time his flight was delayed, Sheikh recalled a work trip from New York to Chicago in September. He only found out about the delay when he checked the airline app at the airport and saw a two-hour delay due to "air traffic." He spent that time re-arranging his meeting schedule on the spot.

His main frustrations include:

- **Delay notifications arriving too late**, usually after he's already at the gate.
- **Vague reasons for delays**, with no way to tell how serious they are.
- **No central tool** that helps him see delay risks before leaving for the airport or rebooking.

4. How He Currently Finds Out About Delays

He primarily relies on the airline's app and email alerts, but said they often "come after everyone at the gate already knows." He sometimes checks FlightAware or Google Flights, but finds the data inconsistent and not predictive.

5. Awareness of "Flighty"

Sheikh said he had heard of Flighty, used it once, and thought it was "nice but a bit pricey" at \$60 per year. He felt it had extra features he didn't really need like live maps, gate-change alerts, and aircraft history.

6. Perception of Our App Idea

When I described our concept of predicting delays, he said, "*If the predictions are actually accurate, I'd give it a try.*"

7. Trust and Decision-Making

When asked how confident he would feel acting on a delay prediction if the airline hadn't announced anything yet, he said he would "check a second source first, but if the app has a good track record, I'd trust it over the airline."

8. Target Users

- **Frequent business travelers** who fly monthly or bi-monthly.
 - **Employees with tight schedules** who need to plan meetings around flights.
 - **Families traveling during holiday seasons**, when delays are most common.
 - **Anyone flying on an international flight** where flight time knowledge is crucial.
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Takeaways / Insights

- Users value accuracy and timing of predictions over flashy/excessive features
- There is clear interest from frequent and time-sensitive travelers.
- Trust and proven accuracy are key for user adoption.