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Case study: LinkedIn product analysis, user personas, workflows, & MVP

9 min read · Jan 3, 2022



Apekshit Moudgil

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This post is about a case study in which the participants are required to choose a product and complete the following tasks :

- Identify the various features and user workflow.
- Who are the users of this product?
- Identify the underserved pain points of these users.
- Why do you think these pain points are not solved yet?
- What is the business market size of this product?
- Create user persona for identified users
- If you were to launch this product again as a product manager, what MVP features you would keep validating your idea.
- Do research or talk to at least 3 people in your network to understand the underserved pain points of users.

Product



LinkedIn logo

LinkedIn is a professional social network that provides business and employment-oriented online services through mobile apps and websites.

Launched in May 2001 (acquired by Microsoft in December 2016), LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with over 800 million members in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

LinkedIn's business depends on the revenue streams from membership subscriptions, advertising sales, and recruitment solutions.

Company Vision — *Create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce*

Company Mission — *Connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.*

It took LinkedIn until 2006 to seriously start looking into revenue generation and by the time it had filed for IPO, it was generating over \$500 million in annual revenue. LinkedIn has rarely stopped since then. Here are some key statistics -



Acquired by Microsoft
\$26.2 billion in 2016



Revenue - \$ 8bn (2020)
+19% year-on-year



39% of LinkedIn users
pay for LinkedIn Premium



800 million global
users as of Nov 21




120,000 schools
listed as of Nov 21



57 million companies
listed as of Nov 21




LinkedIn available in
200 countries

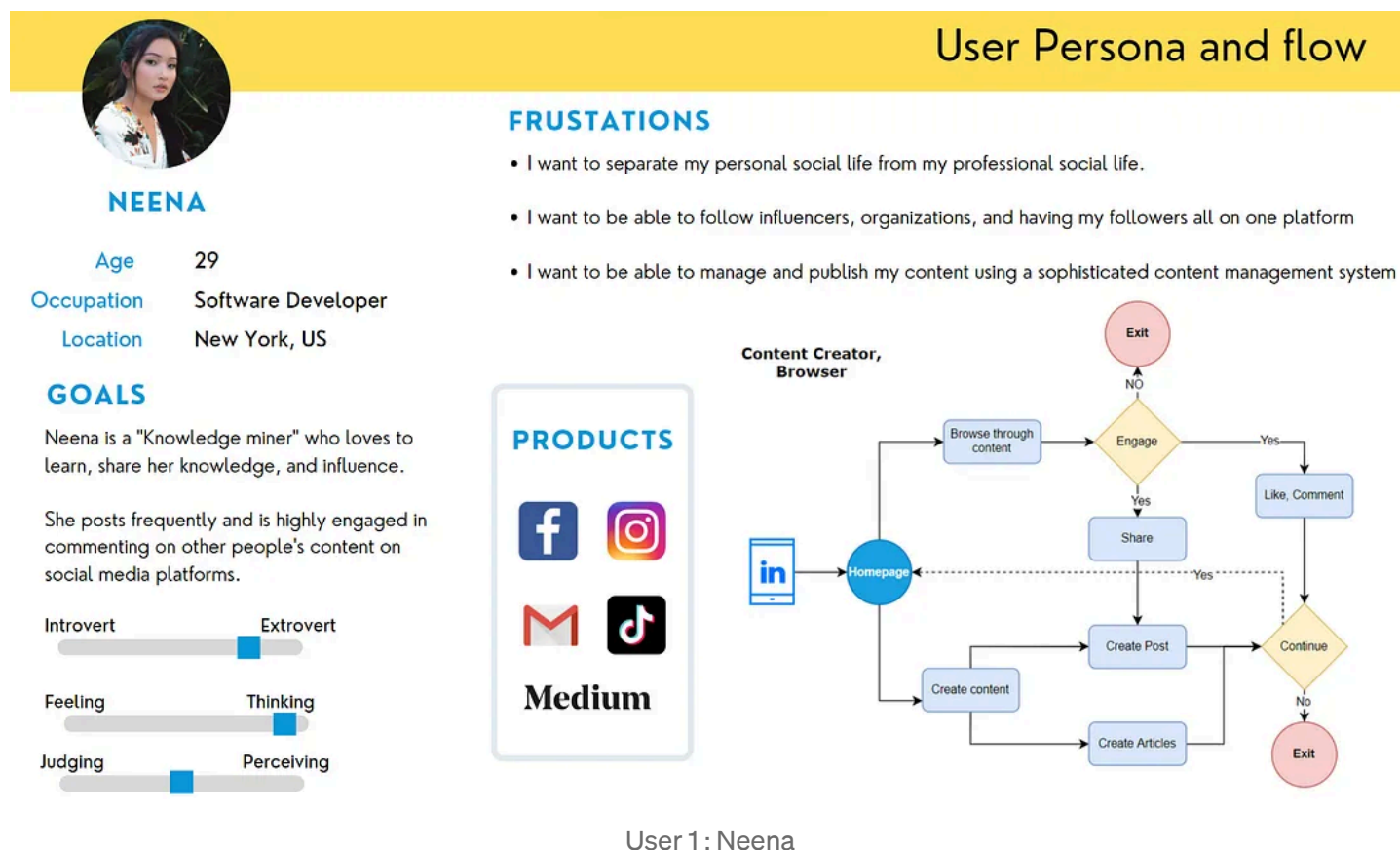


18 million jobs listed
in 2020

LinkedIn statistics

Looking at these stats, it doesn't take a genius to conclude whether you're looking for work, looking for staff, or simply trying to expand your professional network, LinkedIn is the place to be.

With an ever-increasing number of users, organizations, and institutions, a variety of individuals choose LinkedIn as their preferred choice for the services it provides. So who are these users? How do they use the platform? Let's find out:



LinkedIn has been a great source of all the knowledge hunting Neena is always after.

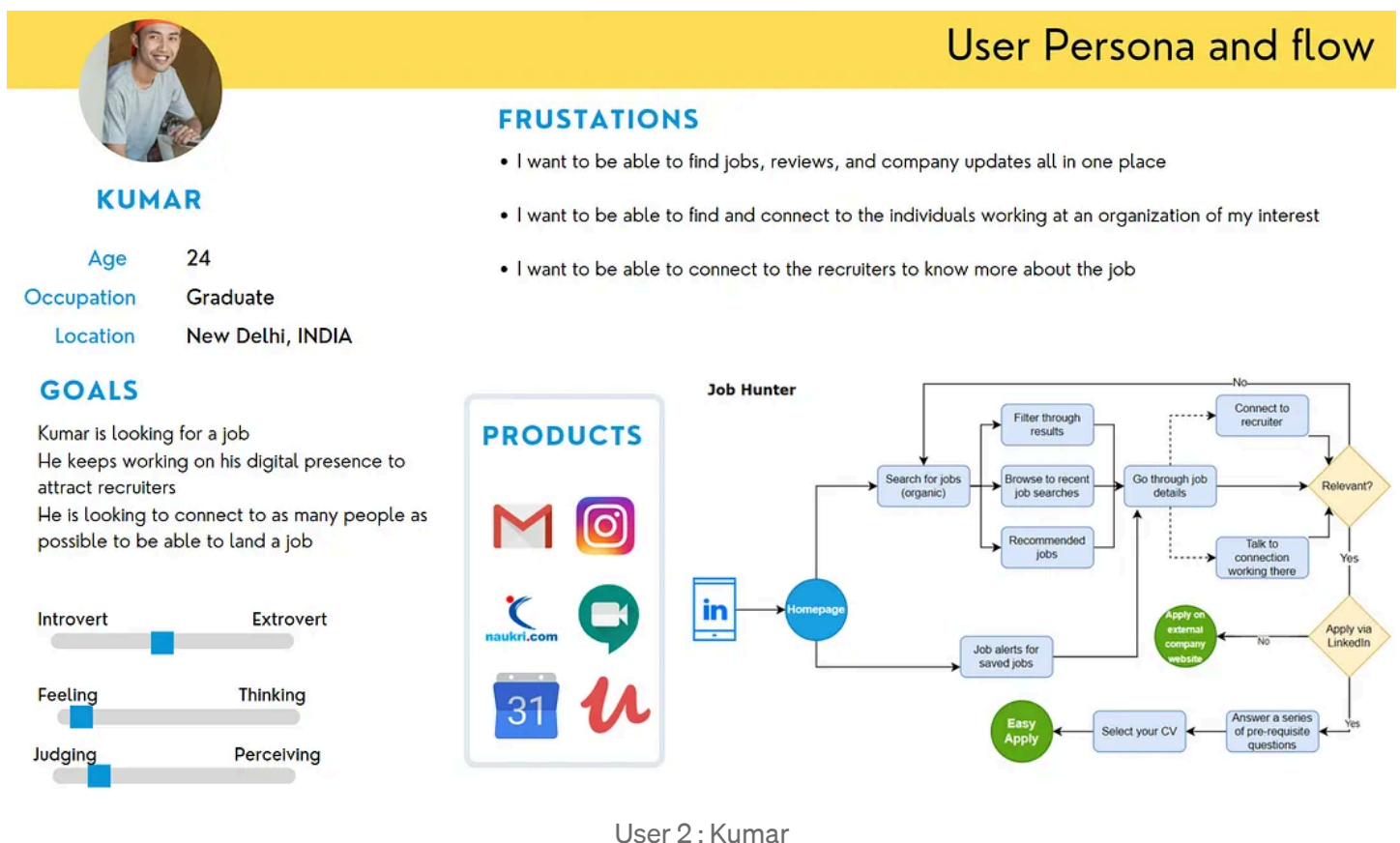
Neena chooses LinkedIn over other social media apps for her professional content.

Feature: Content creation and engagement

LinkedIn's content creation abilities viz. post and articles creation enable the users like Neena to express themselves in the professional world. Neena can create content and engage with others' content through like, share, and comment features. These features enable her to maintain and grow her personal brand. Neena also follows organizations and influencers on LinkedIn and consistently indulges in reading and sharing their posts, initiatives and updates. Occasional nudges in the form of notifications empower Neena to stay on top of industry developments and news.

Feature: Profile (individual and organization)

Neena is conscious of her digital identity and personal brand! This is a feature that LinkedIn has really nailed over the years. From education and work experience, LinkedIn lets users document and manage certifications, skills, projects, and much more. Data-rich elements like Summary, Title, Bio, and experience help the platform become one of the most frequently used in its space by employees, employers, and influencers alike to find and get found. Similarly, organizations can also create their pages.



Let's find out why has Kumar come to love LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the platform Kumar has been looking for! Kumar's frustrations have been mitigated by the features like networking, job searching, LinkedIn Learning, and messaging.

Feature: Networking

Networking starts (ideally) from finding people we know personally and connecting with them. Just after we connect, our connections become our 1st level network. The individuals our 1st level network follows are the 2nd and thereafter, everybody else is the 3rd level connections. This structure helps identify the degree of association and also nudges the users to expand their network, because otherwise, what's the point! One of the most admirable things about LinkedIn is how there are always enough options for us to connect, follow and engage with people, pages, organizations, and more. Kumar uses this feature to expand his professional network to help him get one step closer to his dream job.

Feature: LinkedIn learning

Kumar is serious about his learning and aims to learn from relevant e-courses that can help him excel in his career. This is where LinkedIn learning comes into the picture for Kumar. LinkedIn Learning is a massive open online course provider which provides video courses taught by industry experts in software, creative, and business skills. Kumar can now get a free pass for all the courses he is looking for along with his premium membership. The structure of the majority of courses on LinkedIn learning has been crafted as a series of learning which keeps the learner engaged and nudges them to complete the entire series in order to earn a badge and certificate.

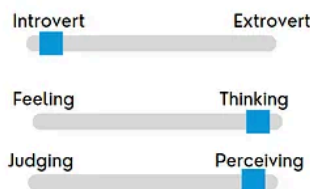


JOYCE

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Occupation HR
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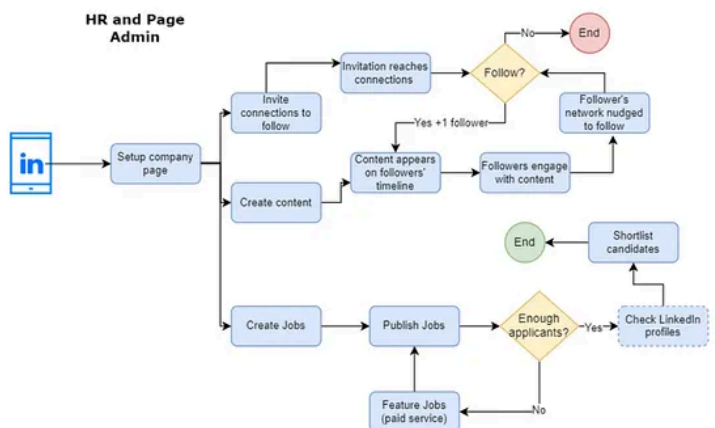
GOALS

Neena is a "Quiet Listener" who loves to learn, and not necessarily share or connect. She wants to gather information on potential candidates for open positions with her firm. She maintains her company's Social Media pages.



FRUSTATIONS

- I do not get enough background information about the candidates applying for jobs with my firm
- I want to create my firm's digital identity on professional platforms
- I want to be able to check other company's pages and understand the key trends in Human Resources



User 3 : Joyce

Let's find out what Joyce gets out of LinkedIn?

Joyce is driven by her passion for her work and she loves to create value for her company. To do so, LinkedIn provides her the option to post jobs for her company and manage her company's LinkedIn page. Joyce has come to love these features. Not only can she post the job, but she can also check the candidate's profile and activity for better shortlisting.

Feature: LinkedIn jobs

Jobs is arguably the most used feature on the platform. What sets it apart from the competition is the 'data' available for the recruiters and applicants. Jobs listed on LinkedIn are similar to any other hiring platform in terms of the information provided about the profile, skills required, etc. But when it comes to digging deeper about the company or the applicant, LinkedIn is an ecosystem of its own.

Candidates can start gathering more information about the company and the role by visiting the company's official LinkedIn page and connecting to the employees currently working there. Recruiters could browse through the applicant's profile to know more about the individual during the shortlisting process. This combined with 'Easy apply' and Inmailing the recruiters and applicants works like a charm!

Underserved Pain Points

No product can ever be perfect as there will always be users who will feel their needs are not fully met. LinkedIn is no different! After talking to certain users, I was able to find out a few underserved pain points:

1. Co-writing:

Use-Case — Neena wants to create content along with other users and be called the co-author of the post or the article. This would present the co-authors an opportunity to collaborate and use each other's network to create more engagement. Currently, Neena can only mention her co-author in the post and vice-versa.

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Why not?

I think the co-author option is a good way to generate more engagement and this trend has already brought in good results on other social media platforms like Instagram and Tik-Tok. However, distributing the engagement (views, likes, comments) could be a problem. This could also encourage the beginners to request (or even bug) established content creators to collaborate continuously. This could prove to be a bad user experience and introduce unethical practices of external payments for collaboration.

2. Searching for Posts on the timeline:

Use-Case — Kumar wants to search for a certain post on another user's activity timeline. Kumar is specifically searching for a 3-month-old post on an influencer's timeline who posts daily. The only option for Kumar right now is to manually scroll through the timeline and look for the post. LinkedIn could introduce filters like date, month media type to help mitigate this issue.

Why not?

I think the problem with implementing this solution could be infrastructure-based. Filtering requires processing power on servers which could substantially increase LinkedIn's infrastructure costs.

3. Resume previewing :

Use-Case — Kumar updates his resume before applying for any job to include relevant work experience. Therefore, he always has 4–5 copies of his resume handy. Currently, LinkedIn only lets Kumar download his recent resume while applying for a job. If Kumar wants to quickly check the content of his resume before applying, he either has to download the resume again or have a similar copy on his local machine with the same name. Previewing the pdf, word, or excel resume files would allow Kumar to browse through the resume gallery and select the relevant files.

Why not?

I think the problem with implementing this solution could be technical. Implementing this feature would require LinkedIn to integrate a rendering service that has costs associated with it.

4. Portfolio:

Use Case — Neena wants to share her posts and articles as a portfolio (collective) with a wider audience. She feels that as an influencer who writes regularly, the only option for her to achieve this is to copy the content and publish it on other platforms like Medium which lets users create a portfolio of written content. The solution could be for LinkedIn to allow users to bundle some posts as 'Save for Portfolio' and later share a link to the portfolio.

Why not?

I think the problem with implementing this solution could be user experience-based. LinkedIn already allows users to feature articles on their profiles. Additionally, profiles are central to LinkedIn as a platform, which could get bypassed with portfolios.

Prioritizing MVP Features

The idea behind LinkedIn is to connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.

The core elements crucial to achieving this are — 'connect' and 'professionals'. To create an ecosystem of professionals, we have to make sure we attract individuals willing to connect to like-minded professionals while ensuring that we have enough data to screen users.

The MVP features that would help us validate our ideas are —

Profile (individual) — A digital identity that would help users introduce themselves through a page (inspired by resume) on the platform. This page shall collect relevant information so that users can find each other and connect.

Data on Profile — Name, Picture, Title, Summary, Posts, Experience, Skills, Awards, and Honors

Profile (Organization) — A digital identity that would help companies create their pages. This page shall collect relevant information so that users can find and follow companies.

Data on Profile — Name, Picture, About, Posts, Website, Address, Phone

Connect and Follow — If two users find each other's profiles interesting or relevant, we expect them to network. Networking would allow individuals to get to know each other through the updates ('post' feature) they share and their interests. Similarly, users can also follow organizations and other users.

The connect and follow buttons shall be available on the profile (individual and organization). We also plan to show 'common' connections on the profile to maintain a level of association.

Content Creation & Engagement — To provide more depth to the degree of connection between users, we want to introduce content creation and the ability to engage with the content with the help of likes, comments, and shares. Content creation shall help users understand each other and also learn from each other.

Content shall be created in text format (for MVP) using a rich text editor. The share option shall start an individual post by the user visible on the profile. Content will

be screened on the basis of the degree of association and relevance. We shall ask the newly boarded users to search for other users or organizations they might know.

Other features to follow MVP —

Jobs

LinkedIn groups

People (on organization pages)



Let me know if you have any inputs for me :)

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Responses (4)



Write a response

What are your thoughts?



Apekshit Moudgil Author

Jan 12, 2022



Exactly my thoughts Abhinav.



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Shahabudin K

May 11, 2022



This is really excellent. One thought of adding a portfolio link like sharin it with medium. This can redirect to medium and might not make the user to stay on the platform for a pretty long time



1

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Abhinav Chitre he/him

Jan 12, 2022



Resume Previewing is a great idea! Having had this painpoint myself! it should not be very difficult to implement for tech team of LinkedIn. They can open the resume in a modal to view as well as edit and save on the fly. They can do some kind of... [more](#)

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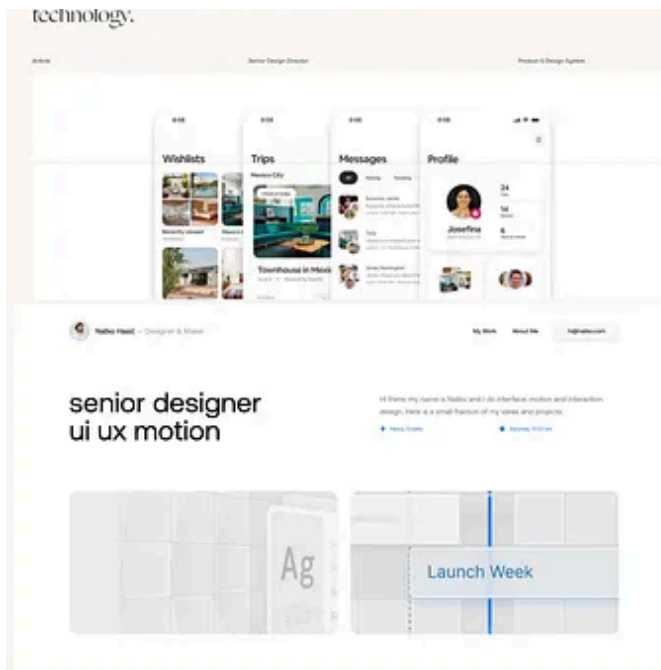


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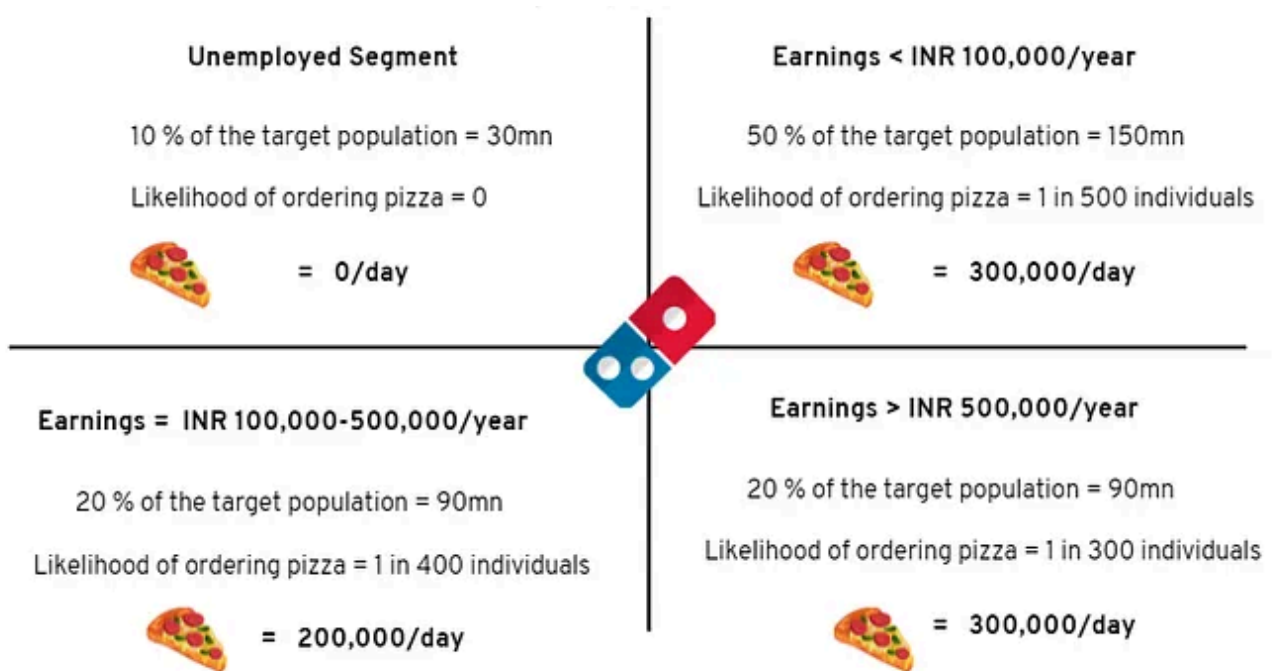
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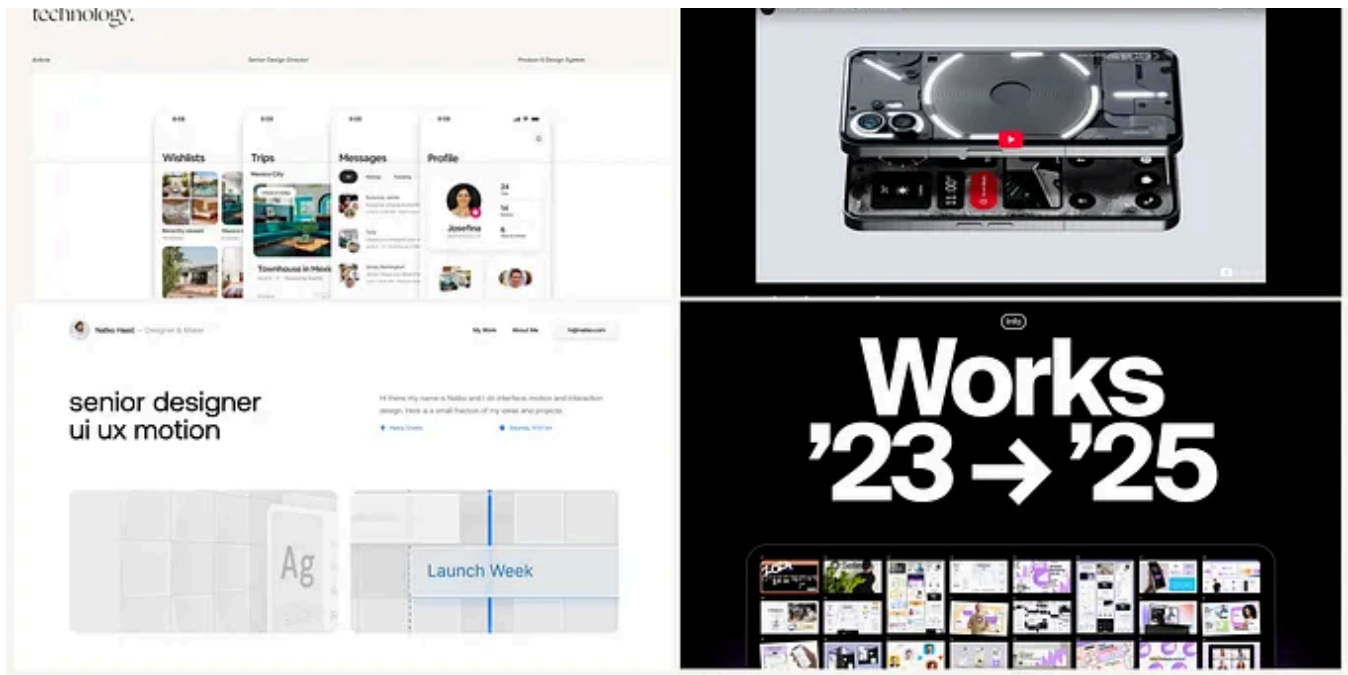


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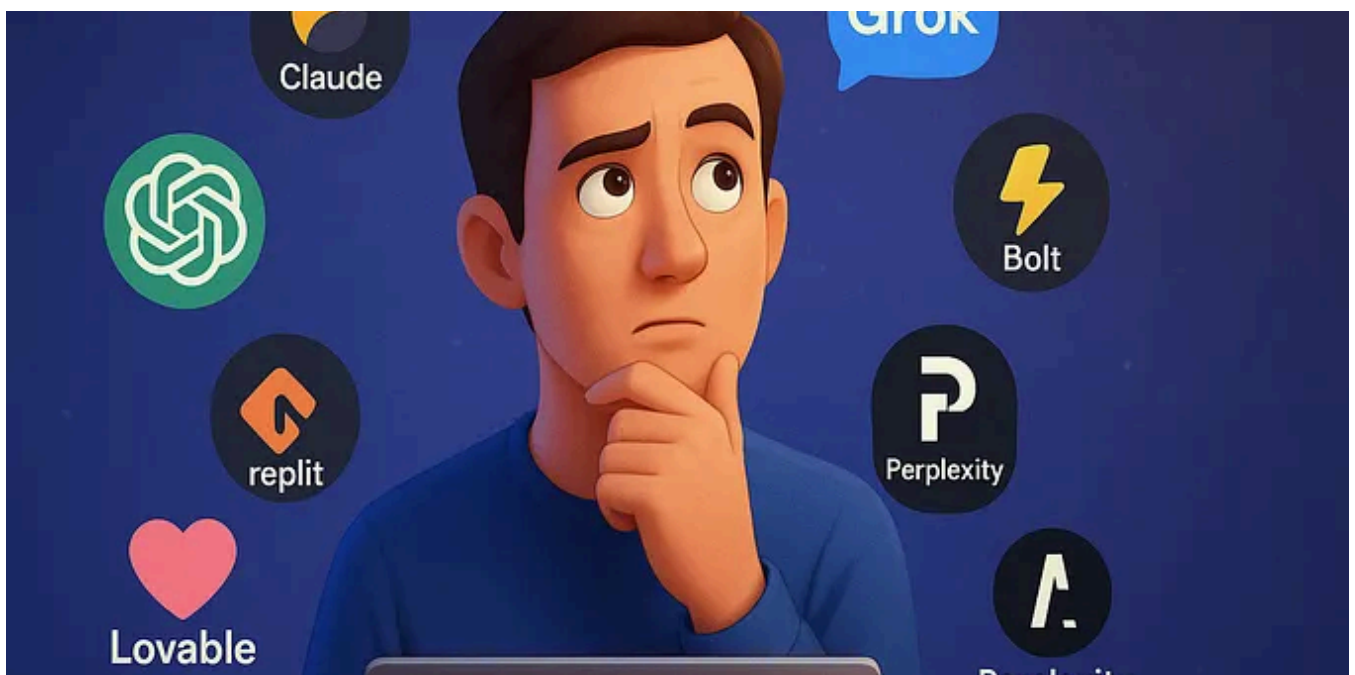
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