

INTERNSHIP QUALIFICATION TASK – CITY-BASED CLUSTER + MARKETPLACE UX CASE STUDY

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Internship Qualification Task

City-Based Cluster + Marketplace Platform

Candidate: M. Koteswara Rao

Role Focus: UI/ UX Designer

Company: Dignifiedme Technologies Pvt. Ltd.

1. Problem Understanding

Hardware and electronics startups face a much harder execution challenge than software startups. Converting an idea into a working product requires coordination between multiple specialized roles such as embedded engineers, PCB designers, QA, and mechanical engineers.

Most founders or product managers struggle with:

- Identifying the right mix of roles
- Choosing between freelancers or vendors
- Evaluating quality and trustworthiness
- Estimating realistic cost and timelines
- Managing accountability across multiple contributors

This platform is designed to help product managers **build execution-ready teams faster**, with **clear recommendations, trust signals, and guided decisions**, rather than overwhelming them with endless options.

2. Target User

Primary User:

Product Manager / Founder at an electronics or hardware startup

User Goals:

- Build a product quickly
 - Reduce hiring and coordination risk
 - Find trusted, local execution partners
 - Make confident decisions with limited time
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3. Key Assumptions

- Users may not know all required roles initially
 - Local teams reduce execution and communication risk
 - Hiring is a **high-trust decision**, not an impulse action
 - Users value clarity and guidance over too many choices
 - Comparing options before committing increases confidence
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4. Competitor Study (3 Platforms)

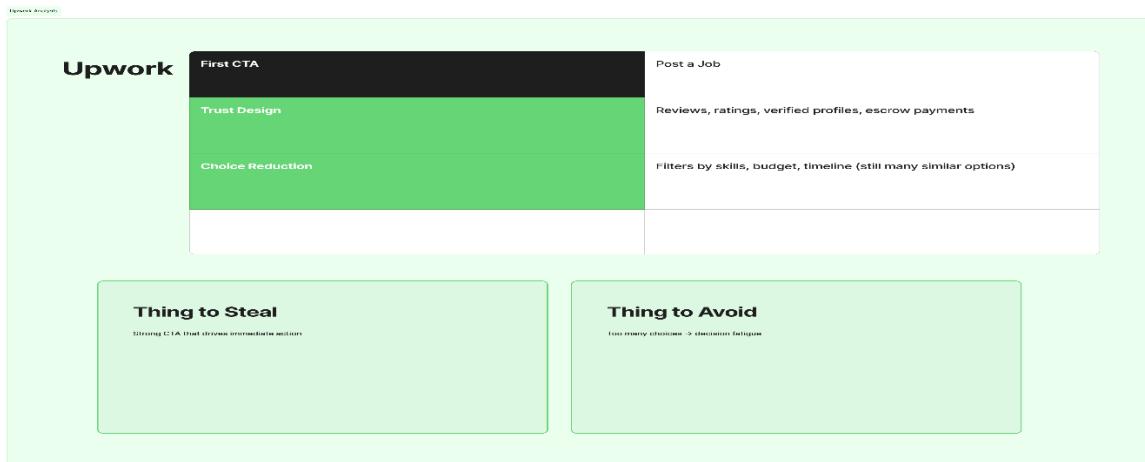
Platforms Analyzed

- Upwork
- Fiverr
- Toptal

Key Observations

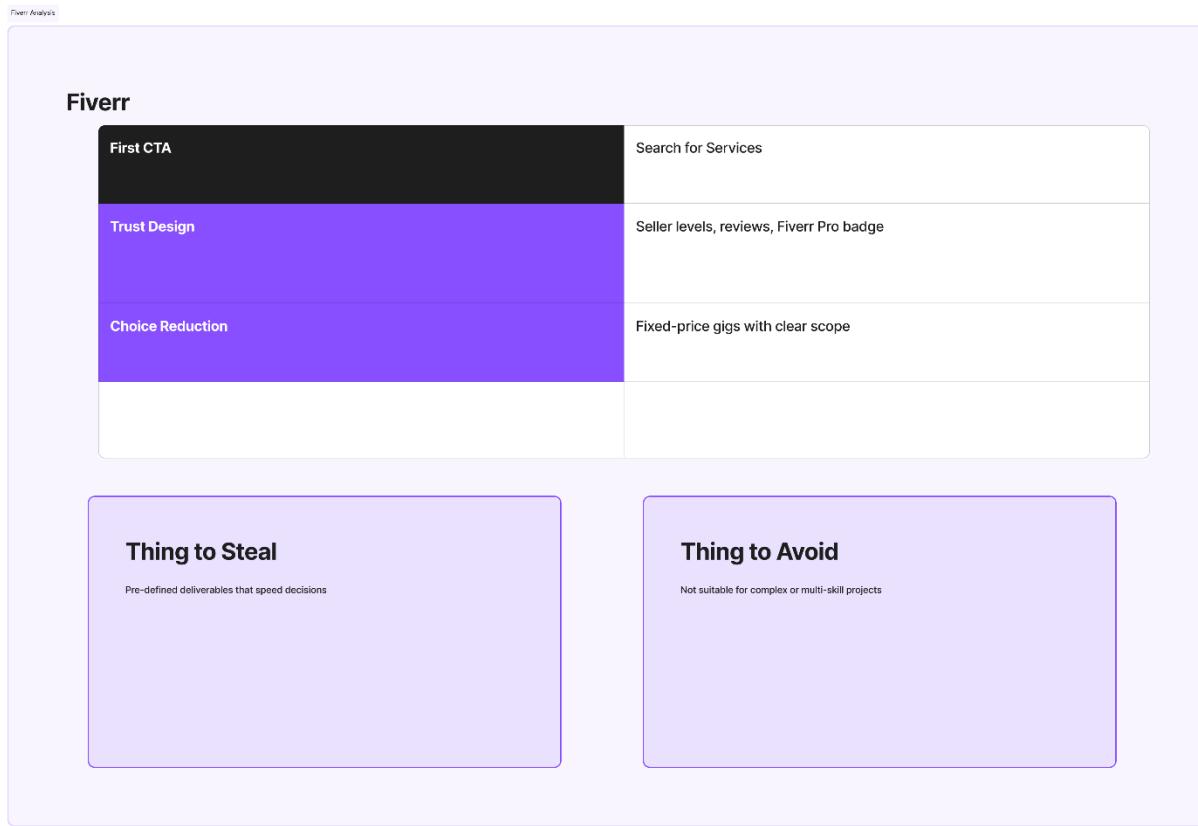
Upwork

- First CTA: *Post a Job*
- Trust Design: Reviews, ratings, work history, escrow
- Choice Reduction: Filters only (still many similar options)
- **Steal:** Strong CTA that drives action
- **Avoid:** Decision fatigue due to excessive listings



Fiverr

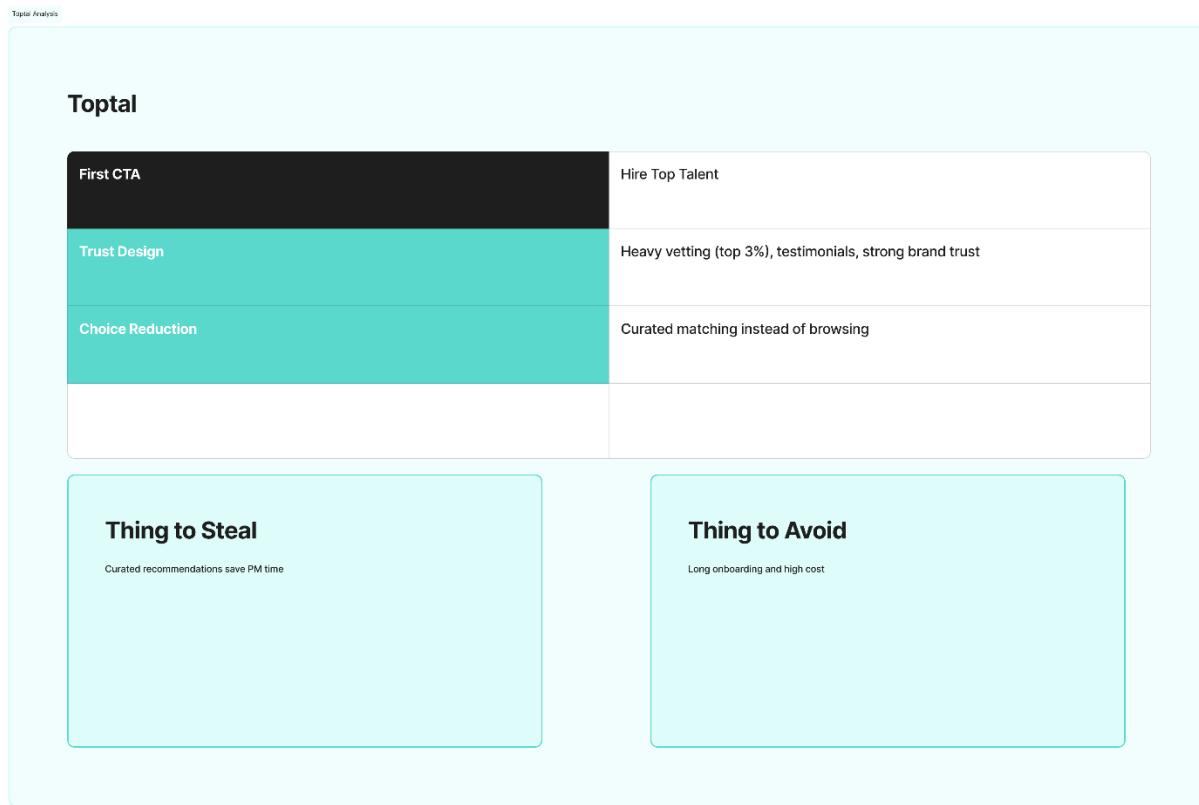
- First CTA: *Search for Services*
- Trust Design: Seller levels, reviews, Fiverr Pro
- Choice Reduction: Fixed-price gigs
- Steal: Pre-defined deliverables speed decisions
- Avoid: Not suitable for complex, multi-skill projects



Toptal

- First CTA: *Hire Top Talent*
- Trust Design: Heavy vetting, testimonials, strong branding
- Choice Reduction: Curated matching
- Steal: Curated recommendations save PM time

- ✗ Avoid: Long onboarding and high cost



5. User Journey & Information Architecture

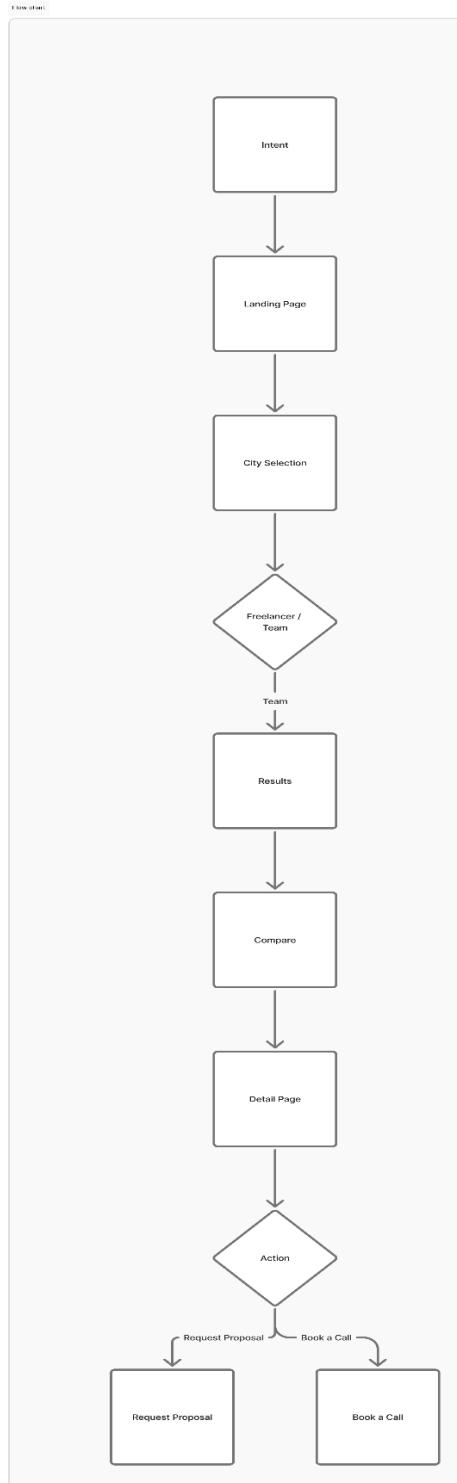
User Journey Flow

1. User lands on the platform with intent to build a product
2. Selects city to ensure local execution
3. Chooses engagement model (Freelancer or Cluster)
4. Views vetted results relevant to project needs
5. Compares shortlisted options
6. Takes a clear next step (Request Proposal / Book Call)

Information Architecture Logic

- **City first** → filters execution feasibility early

- **Engagement model next** → reduces confusion
- **Results & comparison** → builds trust
- **Commitment actions last** → supports high-confidence decisions



6. Low-Fidelity Wireframes (Based on Figma)

Landing Page

- Communicates value: *Build your product faster*
- Primary CTA: *Get Started*
- Trust reinforcement through verification and transparency

City Selection Screen

- Users choose their city or auto-detect location
- Ensures relevant local talent is shown
- Reduces noise early in the journey

Freelancer vs Cluster Selection

- Clear explanation of when to choose each option
- Recommendation based on user requirement
- Reduces decision anxiety

Results Page

- Filtered by cost, time duration, risk, experience
- Highlights verified and rated profiles
- CTA: *Compare Options*

Compare Options Screen

- Side-by-side comparison
- Focus on clarity before commitment
- Primary CTA: *Request Proposal*



7. Microcopy Examples

City Selection

- “Choose your city”
- “We show talent relevant to your location”
- “Detect my city automatically”

Freelancer vs Cluster Explanation

Freelancer

- Best for small, clearly defined tasks
- Lower cost, single point of contact

Cluster (Small Team)

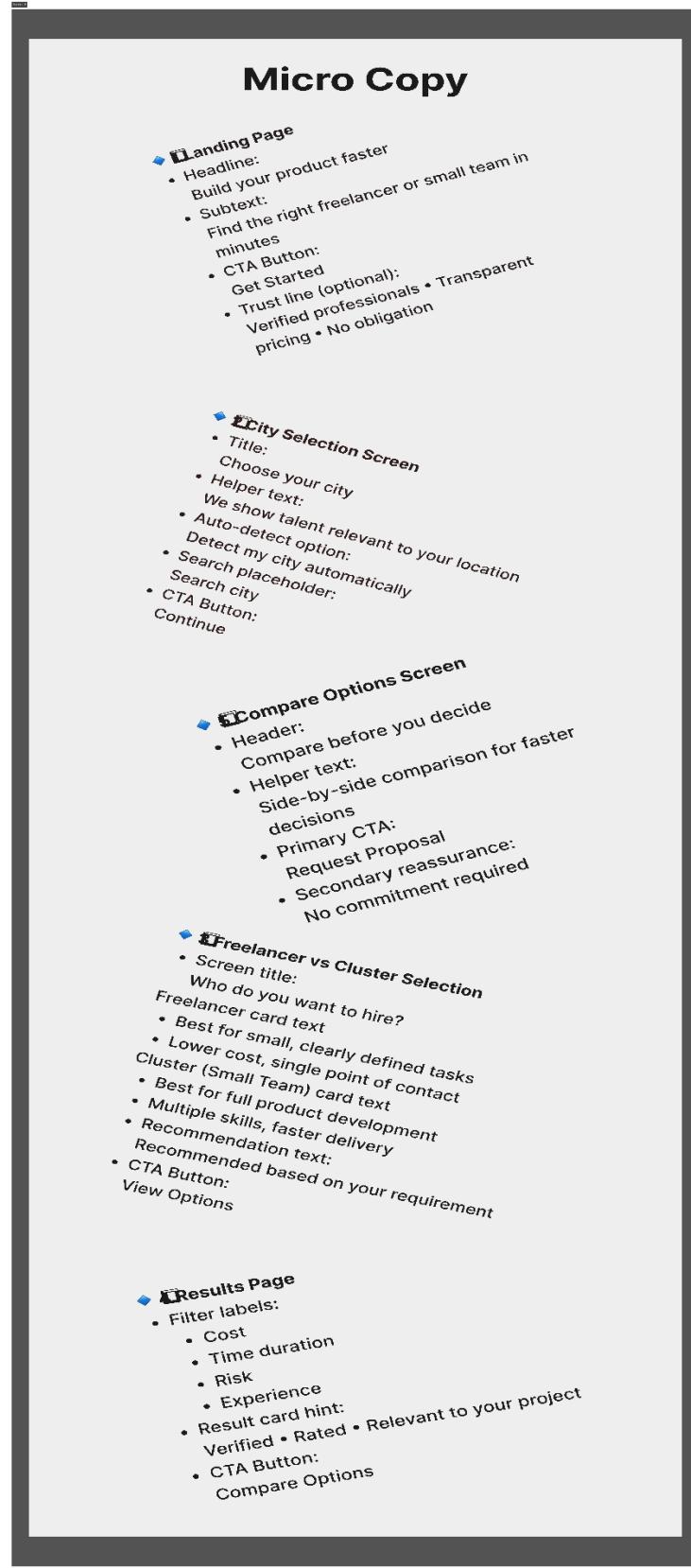
- Best for full product development
- Multiple skills, faster delivery, shared accountability

Trust Disclaimers

- “Verified professionals only”
- “Transparent pricing ranges”
- “No commitment required to request a proposal”

Empty / Error States

- “No matching teams found in this city yet”
- “Try adjusting filters or switching engagement model”



8. 3 Key UX Decisions (Core Section)

UX Decision 1: City-First Entry

Decision: City selection is placed immediately after landing.

Rationale: Hardware execution depends heavily on location; filtering by city early removes irrelevant options.

Impact: Faster discovery, reduced cognitive load, higher relevance.

UX Decision 2: Guided Freelancer vs Cluster Choice

Decision: Users are guided to choose between freelancer or cluster with clear explanations.

Rationale: Most users don't know which engagement model suits their project.

Impact: Reduces confusion and increases confidence in decision-making.

UX Decision 3: Compare Before Commitment

Decision: Comparison is required before requesting a proposal.

Rationale: This is a high-trust decision; users need reassurance before committing.

Impact: Improves trust, clarity, and conversion quality.

9. AI Usage & Original Thinking Disclosure

AI tools were used for:

- Competitor research
- Wireframe structure inspiration

Original thinking includes:

- City-first execution logic
- Engagement model guidance
- UX decisions focused on trust and speed for hardware teams

All UX decisions and flow rationale are derived from my understanding of product manager workflows and hardware execution challenges.

3 Key UX Decision (With Rationale)

1. City-First Entry Instead of Skill-First Browsing Decision:

The flow asks users to select their city early before showing freelancers or clusters.

Why (UX + Product Rationale):

Hardware execution depends heavily on physical proximity for prototyping, vendor coordination, and faster iterations. A city-first approach immediately filters out impractical options, reduces cognitive load, and helps product managers reach execution-ready talent faster.

What's Unique in My Thinking:

Most hiring platforms prioritize skills globally. I intentionally reversed this to prioritize execution speed over talent abundance, aligning with hardware startup realities.

2. Guided Choice Between Freelancer vs Cluster (Instead of Open Marketplace) Decision:

Users are explicitly guided to choose between Freelancer and Cluster (Small Team) using explanation cards with recommendations.

Why (UX + Product Rationale):

Product managers often don't know which engagement model is faster or safer. By framing this as a decision step (not a filter), the platform reduces uncertainty and prevents wrong hiring choices that slow delivery.

What's Unique in My Thinking:

Instead of letting users "figure it out," the UX takes a consultative role, behaving more like a decision-support system than a marketplace.

3. Compare Before Commit (No Immediate Checkout) Decision:

The primary action is "Compare Options" and "Request Proposal", not direct hiring or payment.

Why (UX + Product Rationale):

This is a high-trust, high-risk decision involving cost, timelines, and coordination. Forcing early commitment would reduce confidence and conversion. Comparison builds trust and enables faster internal approval for product managers.

What's Unique in My Thinking:

I intentionally avoided e-commerce-style CTAs to match the decision-making behavior of B2B hardware PMs, where confidence and clarity matter more than speed of payment.

10. Conclusion

This solution prioritizes **execution speed, trust, and clarity** over quantity of options. By guiding users step-by-step and reducing uncertainty, the platform helps product managers confidently assemble execution-ready teams in their city.