

Innovation and Design Thinking

Project Phase 2- Evaluate

Part 2a: Evaluate Phase | Test

Test, by conducting a direct interview with someone. Describe the product and/or service highlighting the features and benefits of the product. Features describe the how and what, benefits will target the why.

Document the questions and answers.

For this part of the phase, we interviewed two people who are into acting.

Interviewee 1: Brihadh Reddy

Brihadh is a Master of Science student at University of North Carolina, Charlotte. He is also a stage actor back in India. He performed a play along with his group during their welcome party at the college, and we decided to interview him for this project.

1. How is the Theatre club at your college?
 - a. It is great. We have more than 1 theatre clubs in our college and everybody is welcome to join.

2. Did COVID-19 impact the lives of actors you know?
 - a. Yes. I personally know a few people who are facing income loss due to COVID. Not only actors, but people like lighting technicians, light operators, and riggers, who are responsible for setting up the stage are also facing income shortages due to COVID- 19.

3. What platforms do you use to watch acting performances and plays?
 - a. I usually stay in touch with fellow actors on TikTok and Twitter. We share our content on YouTube. Also, Twitch is a good platform for performances. So, it is a mix of several platforms.

4. Is there a single platform that lets you to do all these tasks you mentioned?
 - a. As far as I know, all my friends use the previously mentioned platforms. If there is a single platform that lets us do all the things we do, we must have known about it by now.
5. What application do you use for doing live performances?
 - a. I don't do any live performances. Few people I know record their skits and post it on YouTube.
6. Do you know any people that earn money by posting their performances on YouTube?
 - a. Yes. People who spent time developing their channel earn money. But it usually takes months before your channel gets monetized and you start earning.
7. Do you know anybody who does live performances online?
 - a. No. We do it sometimes for fun but there is no income in online live performances. We tried doing it by charging money and giving meeting IDs to join, but IDs are easy to share and hence people who did not pay are watching too. So, we just stopped online streams.
8. What do you think about a platform that lets you to be in touch with fellow actors, share your performances, sell tickets for your live performances, and also receive donations from people who watch your skits?
 - a. It would be great. I don't think there is a platform that allows you to do so many things, so it will be good to have something like that.
9. If you were to develop such a system, what features would you add/subtract?
 - a. Is there a way to communicate with people other than actors? If not, I would add a feature that lets every actor has a group where people can discuss and interact with the actor. This will help actors communicate with people and can also act as a review platform where actors can improve themselves based on the suggestions. This is because we personally ask reviews from audience after a play so that we can improve.

10. Do you think such a platform would help struggling actors?
 - a. Yes. Also, this will be helping lighting technicians, light operators, and riggers.
11. May I know how?
 - a. If we have a stable income, actors can collaborate and do live stage performances on a bigger scale. This will provide work for the stagehands that are responsible for setting up the stage.
12. Do you have any other suggestions for us?
 - a. I prefer using applications on my phone rather than browsing websites. I think it will be easy for the users if the platform is an application rather than a website.

Interviewee 2: Leyda Martinez

Leyda is a Master of Arts student at University of Cincinnati. She did few performances as a stage actor before she returned to college again as a graduate student. She performed in various parts of Cincinnati including UC's Aronoff Center for the Arts and we decided to interview her for this project.

1. How is the Theatre club at your college?
 - a. It is great. The venue is well maintained, and they bring a variety of shows each year. In fact, I was fortunate to have played a character in a small play a couple of years ago.
2. Did COVID-19 impact the lives of actors you know?
 - a. Yes. I had to switch to a different profession myself and a few people that I know have also faced income loss due to COVID. However, I'd say stage actors and other artists for that matter have started to see the light at end of the tunnel with all the restrictions being lifted.
3. Do you share your content on social media?
 - a. Yes, we share most of our content on Facebook. Other platforms don't seem to attract a lot of views when it comes to plays. So, primarily it is Facebook and YouTube comes next.

4. Since the restrictions were lifted, have you or other stage actors you know faced any challenges? If yes, what are they?
 - a. The major challenge we are facing is that there are not a lot of audience. The second one being unable to bring the actors together again to perform plays.
5. How do you feel about performing virtually and live?
 - a. Interesting. So far, we have been using the virtual platforms only to upload the content after the plays were over. We never thought of live virtual performances.
6. If we were to provide a platform that lets you to be in touch with fellow actors, share your performances, sell tickets for your live performances, and receive donations from people, would you be interested in performing virtually and live?
 - a. Definitely! There aren't a lot of platforms that offer all these things together. Almost always we must use different platforms to reach out to different groups of people. Having a consolidated platform like this would make things a lot easier.
7. Would you say having such a platform increases the chances of getting more income?
 - a. Yes, this way the actors can do virtual and live stage plays and these plays can be broadcasted all over the world. This addresses a lot of limitations that we currently have like travelling to different places, seat limitations etc. With these limitations gone, there are more chances for increased income.
8. Do you think such a platform would help struggling actors?
 - a. Yes. Struggling actors and beginners can collaborate with veteran actors and improve their skills for a better future.
9. Would you like to add anything to this virtual platform idea of ours?
 - a. For a start, this is perfect. But it would be complete if it also comes with a mobile app version. As you know, people have been using mobiles more than computer hours lately.

Part 2b: Evaluate Phase | Feedback

Armed with this test information from the test, what have you learned. What works? What resonated with the user? What are the key attributes or benefits of such a solution?

From Interview 1:

- After conducting an interview with Brihadh Reddy, we heard that it was not only the actors but also the technicians, light men, cast and crew who were involved in setting up stage were facing problem in less income.
- Very few actors who spent their time developing their account on YouTube are earning money depending on their views.
- Actors don't have a unified platform where they can do live streaming, record their videos and post it, and earn money.
- We also heard that they do live performances and try to charge people for attending their shows but as links can be easily shared people who don't pay for the live also attend the show for free.
- There could be standard income if they have one platform which allows them to do all their activities.
- Building a platform that can be accessed on mobile phone is what they wanted as it is handy and easy to use.

From Interview 2:

- From interview with Leyda Martinez, we came to know that stage actors and other artists for that matter have started to see the light at end of the tunnel with all the restrictions being lifted.
- They share most of their content on Facebook. Other platforms don't seem to attract a lot of views. So, it is Facebook and YouTube.
- The cost of the live concert in person is significantly more than the virtual methods. This might affect the number of people attending the live concert.
- They have been using virtual platforms only to upload videos and they never imagined a platform that helps them with all sort of activities they perform.
- Struggling actors and beginners would benefit and improve their skills to build better future.
- Finally, it was said that if this platform is mobile enabled then it would benefit a lot of artists.

Summary:

Overall, I've learned that people are definitely interested in more options for improv shows and streaming online. In addition, people are interested in interacting directly with other participants. However, this approach should be carefully chosen to avoid confusion, such as improper behaviour that can disrupt or affect the participant's experience at the event. To avoid this, the monthly payment system can identify the user by subscription, which can discourage individuals from doing so (in profiles such as email, username, credit card number, etc.). The results show that the streaming applications currently available are not just focused on actors, but streaming services that provide a platform dedicated to plays will satisfy the market niche.

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