Business processes

Comparison between a software project to be used internally by a company for administration purposes and a project aimed at selling a product to customers. How do these two very different goals affect the software development team making the product? That is the question I will try to answer for myself based on my experience in the last 2 group projects at FHICT.

## Project descriptions

During semester 2 my team and I worked on a project for Netmatch. The product they wanted us to make was a travel booking website. The website needed to display multiple destination for 3 countries, advertised holidays (chosen by an employee) where to be displayed on the frontend. Besides this users needed to be able to search quickly through the available destination using both free search and guided search by means of filters. Finally the site needed a booking system that required the user to be able to select the amount of travel companions and required amount of rooms as well as the time period for the booking.

During semester 3 our assignment came from Achmea, one of the biggest insurance companies in the Netherlands. Achmea uses a lot of different software and deals with personal data therefore they have a strict list of requirements that all these product need to abide by. The problem they were facing was that the administration of the security measures was done via an expanded excel sheet. By doing this the required information was being on many different machines and errors where easily made (out of date version for security personal to verify being a primary example). The task they set our group was to make a centralized version of this administration form. This required users to create their project and then go through a checklist where they highlight what conditions apply to their project. This would return a list of security requirement that the project would be expected to abide by. The users should then be able to tick off any requirements they think they met aswell as be able to upload files of evidence to back this up. Furthermore security personal should be able to review projects and approve or decline the submitted evidence.

## Netmatch

For Netmatch their main business goal is selling holidays. This main goal can be broken up in a couple of important elements:

* User friendliness/Ease of use
* Attracting potential customers
* Ability to quickly get the customer in the booking process

As developers we took inspiration from multiple travel sites to find any common features and layouts that they all migrated towards. We took this as the baseline for our site. This familiar feel to a site helps making customers feel immediately familiar with the site even if they are first time visitors.

Our client Netmatch is trying to sell something to a customer so making the site look appealing was important. Good use of colours and images was therefore something that required extra attention.

When it came to setting up the booking process Netmatch shared some of their findings on how to guide users to making a purchase. Thus we incorporated this into the flow of our website. An example of this is making the user quickly able to see the price depending on their travel companionship. Another would be to limit the layout to the bare minimum when it comes to the filling out of the booking details.

## Achmea

For Achmea their main goal is to simplify their administrative process.

* Centralized hub
* Ease of use
* Able to fill in all the required information

For this project the finished product is going to be used within the company and won’t be accessible by non-employees.

Before we started developing our project we looked through the pdf file and the excel sheet that Achmea is currently using to handle the administration that we are going to need to centralize. From this we decided on the flow that our website should have.

We kept our site clear to view by grouping all the functionality per project and per requirement. We used similar layouts for both the developer and the security side of things. Thus if someone was to swap roles they could seamlessly continue using the site without having to learn new features.

We decided early on as a team to focus on the functionality off the project over the styling. This was a decision we made based on the product being intended for internal use and thus didn’t need to attract any customers.

## Differences/Similarities

Between these two projects the important similarity is that the website always needs to be easy to use and have a logical flow. In order to determine this needed flow it is important to have discussions with the client about who uses the site but also how they use the site.

The big difference between the two projects is that one is for internal use and one is going to be used by the companies customers. This aspect of a project will have a big impact on the time that should be allocated towards front-end design. For a customer driven website this might also require some market research that a site for internal use doesn’t necessarily require.