

PRD Report

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PRD: MentorWise

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Vision

For young professionals and budding entrepreneurs who wish to seek personalized guidance over career choices and new business endeavors, MentorWise is a platform that connects them to Subject Matter Experts and Seasoned entrepreneurs for 1-1 guidance. MentorWise's large network of experienced mentors will help professionals and budding entrepreneurs achieve their goals. MentorWise would offer a large variety of options such as subscription plans, free trials, personalization and in-person mentoring, which as a bundle is not available at any of the existing solutions.

Motivation

Customer Segments

- **Mentees:** The first customer segment we aim to cater are mentees (individuals between the ages of 21 to 35), these include young professionals in the early stage of their careers looking to upskill in certain functional areas or seeking guidance while making a switch in their careers. Additionally, another set of customers in this segment includes budding entrepreneurs who wish to seek guidance in their new ventures. We believe a platform to connect with mentors would be a huge benefit for professional advancement.
- **Mentors:** The second customer segment comprises of mentors (individuals between the ages of 30 to 65) who are subject matter experts/seasoned veterans (business/ technology) who seek to find a flexible and rewarding side hustle. MentorWise would also serve as a platform for freelance consultants seeking a platform to find potential clients for their expertise. Additionally, MentorWise offers an opportunity for retired professionals who are passionate about mentoring to serve as potential mentors on our platform.

To validate the viability of our concept, we conducted over 25+ customer survey interviews (refer *Appendix: D. Customer Interview Notes*) with potential end-users/customers to gain nuanced and valuable perspectives about our proposed idea. Our user interviews were in person, google forms and phone interviews.

Early adopters of a 1:1 mentoring application could include:

- Professionals and entrepreneurs who are always seeking ways to improve their skills and knowledge in their fields.
- People who are passionate about learning and self-improvement and are willing to try new methods to achieve their goals.

- Individuals who may have limited access to traditional mentorship opportunities, such as those living in remote areas or who lack the networks to connect with experienced professionals.
- Students or recent graduates who are looking to gain real-world experience and guidance in their chosen career path.
- Early-stage startups or small business owners who are looking for expert guidance to grow their businesses.
- On the other hand, mainstream users of a 1:1 mentoring application for budding entrepreneurs and professionals looking to upskill themselves in the areas of tech and business could include a broader range of individuals who are interested in personal and professional development. This could include mid-career professionals looking to enhance their skills, individuals seeking to change careers. As the platform becomes more widely known and adopted, it could potentially attract users from various industries and backgrounds.

User personas:

- **Muskaan (Mentee)**

Muskaan is an engineering graduate from MIT, she worked at Google for 3 years as a Product Engineer in California. She loves innovating and is always looking for new challenges. One day at work, she got a new idea for a product and started working on this concept as a side project. After a ton of iterative prototyping, she got an MVP. Her entrepreneurial instincts took over and she decided to quit her job and work full-time on this project to build a startup. While she had brilliant technical skills, she needed to build her business acumen. For instance, she wanted to know how to go about marketing the product, what kind of a business model to incorporate, financial strategies to ensure profitability, etc. Once she realized she couldn't possibly teach herself all this in a limited amount of time, she wished she could connect with a mentor who could help her out and guide her through the process.

- **Adam (Mentee)**

Adam is 26 years old, and currently working at Uber as a software engineer in Boston. He has about 4 years of work experience in the software industry. He is looking for a change in his career and wishes to get into UI/UX design. He signed up for an online course to explore this field, while he got some useful insights, they lacked a personal touch, and he didn't have a chance to clarify doubts and queries. He was determined to achieve proficiency in this field before he could start applying to new jobs. He wished he could find a mentor in the UI/UX field to guide him and provide 1-1 personalized mentorship.

- **Charles (Mentor)**

Charles is a Senior Software Manager at an MNC in Chicago. By nature, is very humble and is always ready to help anyone in need. He lives in the suburbs of Chicago with his wife, Lisa, and only son John. For the past 16 years, Charles has spent most of his weekends engaging in fun activities with his son, John. His Son has now moved to Boston to complete his undergrad at Northeastern University. And lately Charles has been feeling bored over the weekends, and due to his helping nature, he has decided to start mentoring young professionals to guide them in their career.

- **Sonali (Mentor)**

Sonali is a freelance consultant, who provides consultation in the field of finance and business growth strategy at a nominal fee. Until today all her clients were family and friends or mutual acquaintances. Lately she has been finding it tough to find new clients as she is already too occupied with the existing work and is unable to take time to attend networking events where she could find her potential clients. She now needs an application which could list her details and expertise and eventually find her new clients.

Unmet Needs

We believe budding entrepreneurs and working professionals experience the challenge of solving business problems and upskilling themselves when trying to navigate the complex landscape of running a business or advancing their career, which can hinder their growth and success. Based on this statement, we have classified our unmet needs below

- **Mentees:**

Mentees (Budding Entrepreneurs facing challenges or working professionals looking to upskill) face significant challenges when it comes to solving business problems and upskilling themselves. They need a personalized and effective solution that can help them overcome these obstacles and achieve their goals.

A 1:1 mentoring platform is the ideal solution, providing tailored guidance and support in their specific areas of need, such as finance, marketing, leadership, or technical skills. However, the key to success is having access to a pool of expert mentors who can share their industry knowledge, best practices, and real-life experience.

In addition, mentees need a flexible and affordable solution that can fit into their busy schedules and budget constraints. They require a solution that can offer them the right level of support at the right time, whether they need it for a short-term project or ongoing guidance for long-term growth.

Moreover, the platform should offer a seamless user experience, easy-to-use interface, and interactive features that can help them track their progress, set goals, and measure their success. It should also provide a variety of content formats, including videos, articles, case studies, and webinars, to cater to different learning styles.

Finally, mentees need a safe and confidential space to discuss their challenges, share their thoughts, and receive feedback from their mentors. The platform should ensure the highest levels of security and privacy, protecting their confidential data and sensitive information.

- **Mentors:**

Mentors require a platform that can help them efficiently and effectively mentor mentees in their specific areas of expertise. They would love to share their knowledge, skills, and

experiences to guide mentees on their professional or personal journeys. Mentoring allows them to make a positive impact on the lives of others and give back to their community. Additionally, mentors may find that the mentoring process helps them to develop their own leadership and communication skills, as well as gain new perspectives and insights from their mentees.

The platform should offer a user-friendly interface that allows mentors to easily connect with their mentees and manage their mentorship sessions. Mentors should have the ability to customize their mentorship program to meet their specific needs and preferences, including setting their availability, defining their scope of work, and communicating their expectations to their mentees.

Moreover, mentors need access to a diverse pool of mentees that match their areas of expertise and interests, allowing them to choose the mentees they want to work with and make a meaningful impact on their professional development.

The platform should provide mentors with various tools and resources to support their mentorship journey, such as a library of relevant content, mentoring templates, and feedback mechanisms. Mentors should also have access to a community of fellow mentors to share their experiences, best practices, and industry knowledge.

Finally, mentors need a safe and secure platform that protects their confidential information and data. The platform should ensure that all communication between mentors and mentees is confidential, and that mentees' information is protected.

Hypothesis test:

- **Mentee:**

According to a survey conducted by the National Small Business Association, 41% of SMB owners cited managing their business effectively as their top challenge, and 25% cited keeping up with technology and industry changes.^[3]

The 2021 LinkedIn Learning Report found that 73% of working professionals feel that upskilling is important to their careers, but only 33% said they have time to do it.^[4]

The same report found that personalized learning paths are becoming increasingly popular, with 59% of L&D professionals saying that they offer personalized learning recommendations to their employees.^[4]

- **Mentor:**

A study conducted by Mentorloop found that 69% of mentors found the mentoring process rewarding, and 62% felt that they learned from their mentee.^[5] The same study found that mentors valued having clear goals and objectives for their mentoring relationship, as well as the ability to track progress and measure success.^[5] According to a survey conducted by

Deloitte, 71% of professionals said that they were interested in becoming mentors, and 80% of millennials said that they would like to have a mentor.^[6] The same survey found that mentors valued the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience, as well as the ability to develop new skills and perspectives through mentoring.^[6]

Based on the survey results, there is a clear need for a personalized and accessible 1:1 mentoring app that can connect budding entrepreneurs and working professionals with experienced mentors who can provide guidance on managing their business effectively, keeping up with industry changes and technology, and upskilling for career growth. The app should have clear goals and objectives for the mentoring relationship and the ability to track progress and measure success. With a high interest from professionals in becoming mentors and having a mentor, the app can help fill the gap and provide a rewarding experience for both mentors and mentees. Additionally, offering personalized learning recommendations can further enhance the value of the app for working professionals.

Existing solutions that target customers currently rely upon include:

- Business consulting firms
- Online courses and education platforms
- Industry associations and networking groups
- Traditional classroom-based training programs
- Internal company training programs
- Personal and professional development books and resources
- A few online websites/applications targeted to cater but are either not affordable or have less pool of mentors.

While these solutions can be helpful in addressing some of the challenges faced by budding entrepreneurs and working professionals, they often have some limitations that may not fully meet their needs:

- **Limited personalization:** These solutions are often one-size-fits-all and may not cater to the specific needs of individual mentees or mentors.
- **High cost:** Some existing solutions can be very expensive, making them unaffordable for budding entrepreneurs and working professionals.
- **Limited access to experts:** Existing solutions may not provide mentees and mentors with access to experienced industry experts who can offer personalized guidance and support.
- **Limited flexibility:** Traditional training programs and consulting engagements can be time-consuming and may not fit into the busy schedules of entrepreneurs and working professionals.
- **Lack of ongoing support:** Many existing solutions provide a one-time engagement or training, but do not offer ongoing support and guidance to mentees and mentors.

Given these limitations, there is a significant opportunity for a 1:1 mentoring platform that addresses the specific needs of budding entrepreneurs and working professionals, providing personalized, affordable, and flexible support from experienced mentors.

A **Competitor Feature Matrix** of available online applications is attached below:

Parameters	MentorCruise	Clarity.fm	Growth Mentor	Betterup	Rookie up	MentorWise (Our application)
Pricing	Hourly and subscription-based pricing options. Hourly rates range from \$50 to \$250 per hour, while subscription plans start at \$399 per month.	Pay per call model, rates vary with maximum being \$500 per hour	Hourly rates range from \$80 to \$300 per hour, while subscription plans start at \$449 per month.	Customized pricing based on individual/enterprise plans.	\$70 for a 45-minute session.	Pay per call model, rates vary between \$70 - \$100 per hour based on mentor experience. Subscription plans available for long term commitments starting from \$349
Type of Mentors	Range of mentors in tech, design, and business. Their mentors are vetted and must have a proven track record in their field.	Mentors only in the field of business	mentors in marketing, product development, and other areas of business	Certified coaches across various industries, including business, leadership, and personal growth.	Mentors across various creative fields, including graphic design, UX design, and web development.	Entrepreneurs and Working Professionals with more than 10 years of experience
Free Trail	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Features	scheduling, video conferencing, and messaging	Scheduling, messaging, call recording	scheduling, messaging, and progress tracking	Cannot access features until we sign up	Cannot access features until we sign up	scheduling, video conferencing, and messaging

Industries Catered to	Technology, marketing, design, and finance	Marketing, Finance, Product Development	Business	Business	Design	Sectors such as Management, Business and financial operations, Computer and mathematics, Architecture, and engineering
Session Duration	From one day to 12 months depending on type of mentorship	15-minute initial call to understand the problem and then depends on type of mentorship	Hourly/Subscription	Customized session duration based on the plan.	45-minute sessions	One hour per session
Customer Segment	Professionals and Budding entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurs, Startups, and small business owners	Individuals and SMEs	Individuals and organizations.	Individuals in the design field	Entrepreneurs and Working Professionals
Market Reach	Global	Global	Global	US Based	US Based	US Based

Differentiation

MentorWise appears to be best equipped to meet the needs of individuals and budding entrepreneurs seeking 1:1 mentoring support. MentorWise offers hourly and subscription-based pricing options with rates that are relatively affordable compared to other platforms. Additionally, MentorWise offers a free trial, which is a great feature for potential customers to test the platform before committing to a plan.

MentorWise offers access to experienced mentors across various creative fields, including graphic design, UX design, and web development, as well as professionals in management, business and financial operations, computer and mathematics, and architecture and engineering. This wide range of mentors allows for more personalized guidance and support tailored to the specific needs of individual mentees.

MentorWise also offers scheduling, video conferencing, and messaging features, making it easy for busy professionals to fit mentoring sessions into their schedules. The platform also offers customized session durations based on the plan, which allows for more flexibility and can cater to a wide range of needs.

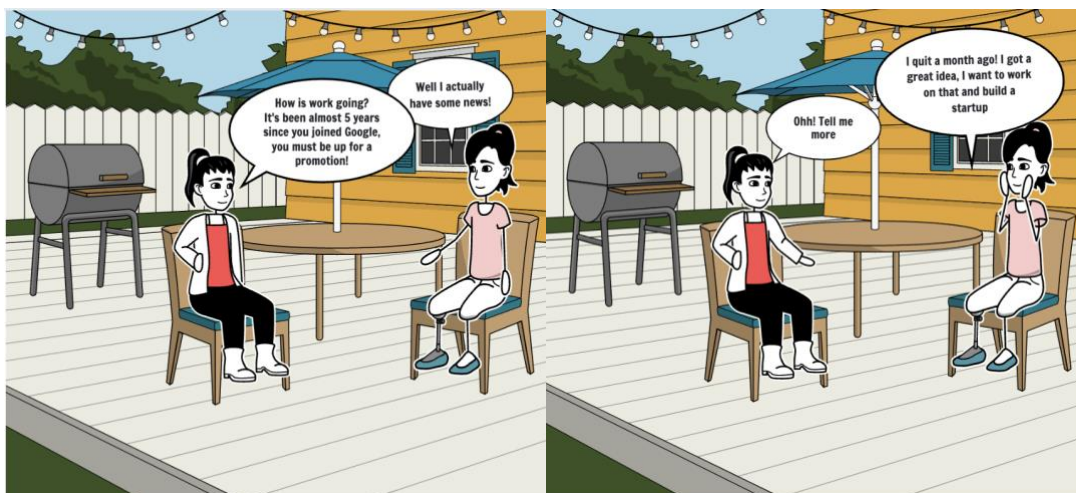
Why Now?

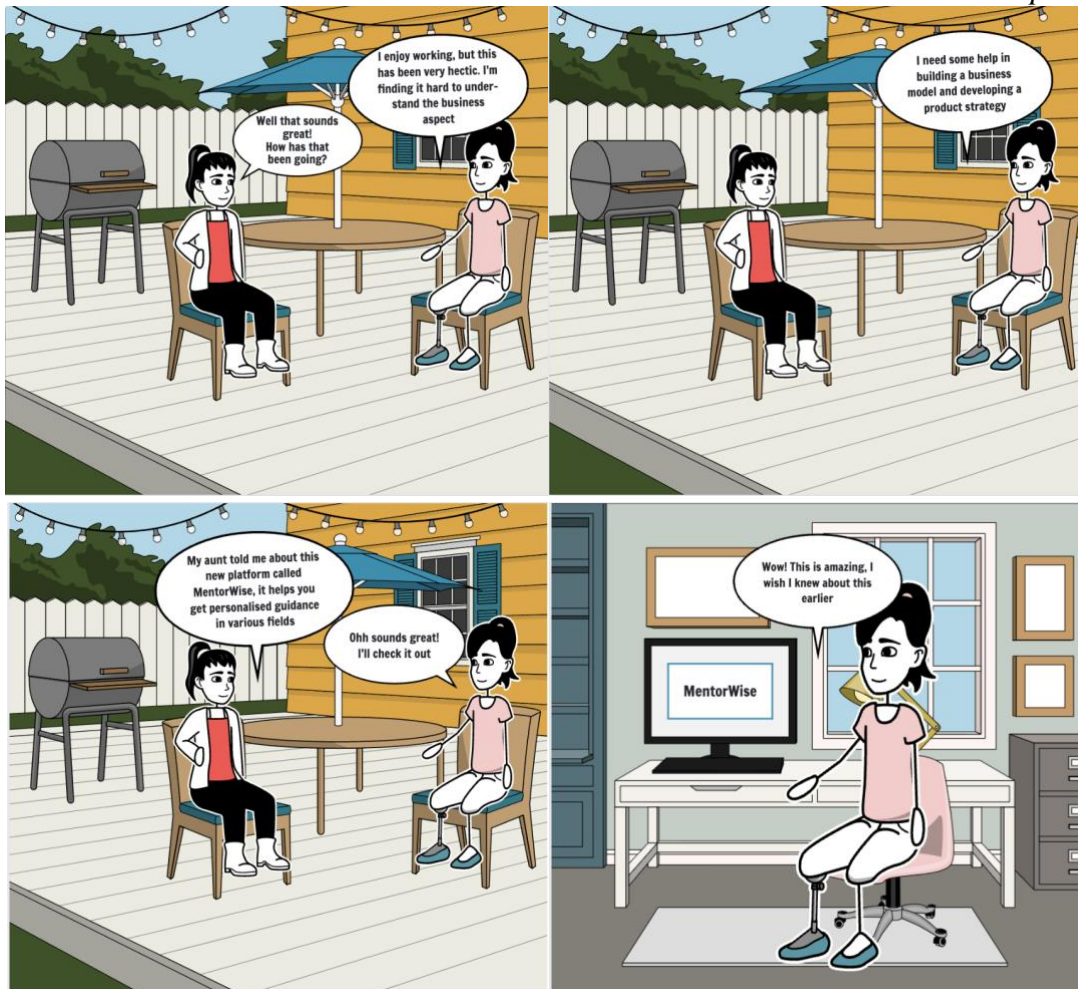
According to a report released by CNBC on January 13th, 2023, 96% of workers are seeking a new job/position in 2023, largely in search of better paying jobs, according to a report posted by Monster.com ^[1]. On August 12th, 2022, CNBC released another report which stated that job unhappiness is at an all-time high ^[2]. One of our target customers is professionals who are looking for new positions and jobs due to unhappiness at their current job or looking for career change. As these professionals would need advice and guidance from SMEs to make the right choice, it is the right time to introduce MentorWise in the market as soon as possible. At the same time according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor there are 31 million entrepreneurs in the United States and 50% of the businesses fail within the first five years ^[10], a resource like MentorWise would be a useful resource to entrepreneurs who seek help in maintaining and growing their businesses.

Verbal/Visual Walkthrough of Use Cases

Muskaan (Mentee)

Muskaan is an engineering graduate from MIT, who has worked at Google for the past 5 years. For the last few months, she was working on a startup idea as a side project and after successfully creating an MVP she quit her job at Google and decided to focus on her startup. But she is now finding it difficult to understand the business aspect (Marketing, business modelling etc.) of the startup and is confused on what to do next. Last week she met her college friend Sneha who suggested her to use MentorWise to find the right mentor who can guide her in the business aspect of her startup.





To request for a mentoring session on MentorWise Muskaan will using the Mentee User Flow mentioned in *Appendix: A. Mentee User Flow: Wireframes*

Charles (Mentor)

Charles is a Senior Marketing Manager at an MNC in Chicago. By nature, is very humble and is always ready to help anyone in need. His daughter Sarah recently moved to Boston to complete her undergraduate degree from Northeastern University. And ever since Sarah moved to Boston Charles has been feeling bored over the weekends. Lately he has been contemplating on starting a new hobby and that's when his wife tells him about MentorWise a platform where he can mentor other students and professionals. He is really excited to start this new journey and immediately registers himself as a mentor on MentorWise.



To start as a mentor on MentorWise Charles will follow the Mentor User Flow mentioned in *Appendix: B. Mentor User Flow: Wireframes*

Detailed Design & Features Description

Design Principles

1. The design of the MentorWise web application should be focused on meeting the needs, goals, and interests of its users.
2. The web application should be easy to use, navigate and understand, with minimal confusion. Users should be able to locate and access what they require quickly and with ease.
3. The design of the web application should be responsive and optimized for various devices and screen sizes. Users should be able to access the application from any device, including desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones using the web browser.
4. MentorWise web application should have a consistent branding and visual identity that reflects the values and mission of the organization.
5. It should be designed with data privacy and security in mind, with users' personal information and data being protected and stored securely.
6. The code should be modular, reusable, and easy to maintain. The application should be able to handle increased traffic and usage as the user base grows.
7. The MentorWise web application should have a feedback mechanism to collect user feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Infrastructure and Analytics	Details
Hosting Environment	The web application will be hosted on a cloud-based infrastructure like AWS or Azure to ensure scalability, high availability, and reliability.
Analytics	Tools like Google Analytics will be used to collect and analyze user behavior data to improve the user experience and make data driven business decisions.

Feature Information/Architecture

Feature	Detail	Dependencies	Priority
Landing Page	A simple and clean design with a clear value proposition. Includes a how it works section, featured mentors' section, and testimonials.		P0
Home Page	Mentor and Mentee Home pages where Mentor Homepage displays Mentoring requests and Mentee Homepage displays list of Mentors	Landing Page, User Registration and Authentication	P0

User Registration and Authentication	Simple and easy to follow process with clear instructions to create mentor/mentee profiles. This includes email and password, some personal information (mentors) and verification.	Third-party APIs such as Google etc.	P0
Session Booking Process	Ability to go to a mentor profile and book a session via email trail	Home Page / Landing Page, User Registration and Authentication	P0
	Booking via third-party calendar	Third-part calendar APIs	P2
Video Conferencing API integration	Integrating with third-party video conferencing applications	Third-party APIs such as Zoom, Google Meets etc., Session Booking Process	P0
Email Notifications	Email triggers for events such as session booking, profile verification etc.	User Registration and Authentication, Session Booking Process, Video Conferencing API integration	P0
Customer Support	Customer support via email	Home Page / Landing Page	P0
	Customer support via Online Chat		P3
Payment Gateway	Integrate with third-party online payment gateways to allow users to use Credit and Debit cards for payments	Third-party APIs	P0
	Include other payment options such as online wallets and PayPal	Third-party APIs	P1
	Introduce MentorWise Wallet		P3
Integrating Security Protocol	Incorporate security protocol for user privacy		P0
Feedback System	Adding a feedback system to receive Mentor and Mentee feedbacks regarding their sessions	User Registration and Authentication, Session Booking Process	P1
Mentor Category, Search, and filters	To enable easy browsing of mentors	User Registration and Authentication, Home Page	P1
Dashboards	Ability to view past, upcoming meetings, clocked time, and total earnings	User Registration and Authentication, Home Page	P2

Progress tracking	Ability of the mentor to track progress of his mentees	Dashboards	P3
Meeting Notes/Resources	Ability to record meetings notes and access resource by Mentor/Mentee	User Registration and Authentication, Feedback System	P3

Note: P0 indicates the highest priority, followed by P1, P2, and P3. The Dependencies column refers to features required for a particular feature to function properly.

Refer to *Appendix A. Mentee User Flow: Wireframes* & *B. Mentor User Flow: Wireframes* for visual representation of features and User experience using wireframes

MVP

Feature:

- Landing Page
- Home Page
- User Registration and Authentication
- Session Booking Process (Part 1: Ability to go to a mentor profile and book a session via email trail)
- Video Conferencing API integration
- Email Notifications
- Customer Support (Part 1: Customer support via email)
- Payment Gateway (Part 1: Integrate with third-party online payment gateways to allow users to use Credit and Debit cards for payments)
- Integrating Security Protocol

Priority: P0

Key Features of MentorWise MVP include a landing page/homepage, user sign up/ profile creation (Mentor/Mentee), mentor listings, mentor session booking process, video conferencing integration (email triggers), customer support (via email contact) and payment gateway.

vNext

- **Mentor Category, Search, and Filters:** This feature will allow users to easily browse mentors by category and apply filters based on various criteria. It will make it easy for users to find mentors who match their specific needs and interests.
- **Dashboards:** This feature will provide users with a dashboard that displays their past and upcoming meetings, clocked time, and total earnings. It will help users keep track of their mentoring activities and earnings in a clear and organized manner.
- **Progress Tracking:** This feature will enable mentors to track the progress of their mentees, set goals, and monitor their progress towards achieving those goals. It will provide a way for mentors to assess the effectiveness of their mentoring and make adjustments as needed.
- **Meeting Notes/Resources:** This feature will allow mentors and mentees to record notes from their meetings and access resources shared during the meetings. It will provide a way for users to keep track of their progress, goals, and next steps.

- **Video Conferencing API Integration:** This feature will enable integration with third-party video conferencing applications, such as Zoom or Google Meets, to facilitate virtual mentoring sessions. It will allow users to conduct meetings remotely and provide a seamless experience for both mentors and mentees.

vLongterm

- **Customer support via Online Chat:** We aim to introduce in-house Customer support via Online Chat, which will make it easier for users to get help using the application.
- **MentorWise Wallet:** Going ahead we want to introduce MentorWise Wallet which will make it convenient for users to make transactions.
- **Mentees Progress Tracking:** We would also want to add a feature to help mentors to keep track of their mentees' progress.
- **Record Meeting Notes and Shared resources:** We want to add a feature which would make it easier for mentors and mentees to record meetings notes and access shared resources in the MentorWise Portal itself.
- **Future:** We aim to expand its reach beyond the current target audience and make the platform available globally, connecting users with mentors from around the world.

Roadmap / Timing

Given below are key milestones for product development spread across 13 Months. The details of every milestone with respect to product features based on priority and effort can be found in the *Appendix: C. Project Wise Product Roadmap*. The following table assumes that the project starts on January 1st.

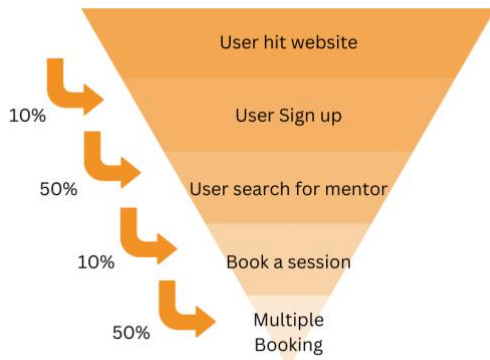
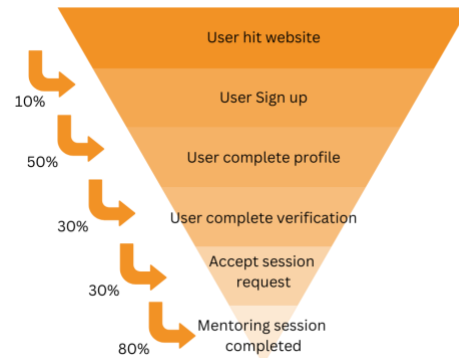
	Milestones	Deadlines	Notes
Q1	Alpha Launch (Internal Testing)	Jan 30 th 2024	Launch Basic Version of the Product for internal testing.
	Address feedbacks form Alpha Test and fix issues	Feb 20 th 2024	Fix bugs and issues reported
	Beta Launch	March 15 th 2024	Make the product available to a controlled group
	Address feedbacks form Beta Test and fix issues	March 30 th 2024	
	Full Product Launch v1	March 31 st 2024	First version of the web application launched in the market
Q2	Identify, define and develop next set of features to be incorporated for second version Simultaneously address feedbacks form v1 Product Launch and fix issues	June 16 th 2024	

	Perform Release Testing	June 29 th 2024	Testing performed to make sure no functionality breaking changes were made to the application
	Product Launch v2	June 30 th 2024	Second version of the web application launched in the market
Q3	Identify, define and develop next set of features to be incorporated for third version Simultaneously address feedbacks form v2 Product Launch and fix issues	September 16 th 2024	
	Perform Release Testing	September 29 th 2024	Testing performed to make sure no functionality breaking changes were made to the application
	Product Launch v3	September 30 th 2024	Third version of the web application launched in the market
Q4	Identify, define and develop next set of features to be incorporated for fourth version Simultaneously address feedbacks form v3 Product Launch and fix issues	December 16 th 2024	
	Perform Release Testing	December 29 th 2024	Testing performed to make sure no functionality breaking changes were made to the application
	Product Launch v4	February 10 th 2025	Fourth version of the web application launched in the market

Metrics

Quantitative Metrics	Customer Segments
Number of website visit	Mentors, Mentees
Number of sign ups	Mentors, Mentees
Number of users completed profiles	Mentors, Mentees
Number of searches for mentor	Mentees
Numbers of users completed verification	Mentors
Number of sessions booked	Mentees
Number of session requests accepted	Mentors

Number of repeated sessions booked	Mentees
Number of sessions completed	Mentors
Conversion rate = number of new bookings / number of new sign ups	Mentees

Mentee:**Mentor:**

User adoption: This metric measures how many new users (Mentors/Mentees) are signing up for the platform over a specific period. To compute this metric, we will use a web analytics tool like Google Analytics and track the number of new users who sign up for the platform each month.

Conversion rate: This metric measures how many mentees who sign up to the platform actually book a session with a mentor. To compute this metric, we will track the number of mentees who search for mentors and the number who book a session.

Mentor acceptance rate: This metric measures how many mentor requests for sessions are accepted by mentors. To compute this metric, we will track the number of mentor requests sent by mentees and the number of requests accepted by mentors.

User retention: This metric measures how many users (Mentors/Mentees) continue to use the platform over time. To compute this metric, we will track the number of users who return to the platform after their initial sign-up and the frequency of sessions booked by mentees and session request accepted by mentors over time.

User feedback and ratings: This metric measures the satisfaction of users with the platform and its services. To compute this metric, we will collect feedback and ratings from mentors and mentees through surveys and ratings systems.

In addition to these metrics, we will also track log data and statistics (qualitative metrics) to indicate the success and health of the platform:

User search behavior: This log data can show how users search for mentors, including which filters they use and how they sort the search results. By tracking this data, we will identify any trends or patterns in user search behavior and optimize the search function for better user experience.

Session booking data: This log data can show when and how often sessions are booked, as well as which mentors are most popular. By tracking this data, we will identify any trends or patterns in user behavior and optimize the platform's services accordingly.

User activity logs: This log data can show you how users interact with the platform, including which pages they visit, how long they spend on the site, and what actions they take. We will use this data to identify user behavior patterns and make informed decisions about improving the platform's user experience.

Error logs: This log data can show you any errors or technical issues that users encounter on the platform. By tracking this data, we will quickly identify and fix any technical issues that may be impacting user experience.

Performance metrics: These statistics can show you how fast the platform loads, how quickly it responds to user requests, and how much traffic the platform can handle. By tracking performance metrics, we will identify any performance bottlenecks and optimize the platform's performance for better user experience.

International

Our focus for the next five years is to establish a strong foothold in the US market and achieve significant growth and recognition before considering expanding to other countries. However, should we decide to expand globally, we plan to start with English-speaking nations where our product can be effectively utilized without requiring significant language changes. Nevertheless, we need to be aware of potential challenges that we may face when expanding internationally

- Language and cultural differences may require translation and localization of content
- Cultural norms and customs could affect user behavior and preferences
- Legal and regulatory requirements may differ between countries, including data privacy laws, tax regulations, and consumer protection laws
- Payment systems and currencies can vary from country to country, necessitating consideration of different payment options and currency conversion
- Adapting the product to work in areas with slower or less reliable internet connections may be necessary due to varying levels of technological infrastructure in different countries.

Projected Costs

The project includes several essential features like registration and authentication, payment gateway, and customer support, requiring several back-end and front-end components like server-side logic, database design, API integrations, and UI development. Additionally, mobile app development and social media integration adds to the overall engineering effort.

Therefore, considering these factors and assuming a standard agile development methodology, we have 20 engineers on board to complete the project within the planned timeline of 13 months.

Considering we have 20 engineers working across various departments and job functions, the machines/software required are:

Development machines: Each engineer will need a powerful desktop or laptop machine to perform development work. Assuming an average of two machines per engineer (one for development and one for testing), the total number of machines required would be 200.

Servers: The platform will require multiple servers for hosting, which could be physical or cloud-based depending on the project's specific requirements. This would include web servers, database servers, load balancers, and possibly other types of servers as needed. The exact number of servers required will depend on factors such as traffic, scalability, and redundancy.

Development tools and software: The engineers will need various development tools and software subscriptions for collaboration, project management, version control, testing, and deployment. These may include communication software, project management tools, version control systems, integrated development environments (IDEs), testing frameworks, and deployment tools.

Third-party services: The platform will likely require several third-party services for features such as payment processing, customer support, and social media integration. The exact number of services required will depend on the specific features of the platform.

To calculate the total project costs, we need to first determine the total cost of salaries for the engineers. If the average salary of an engineer is \$40/hour, then the total cost of salaries for the 20 engineers working on the project would be:

Assuming an average salary of \$40 per hour for each engineer, the total cost of salaries for the 20 engineers working on the project would be:

Total salary cost = Number of engineers * Hours worked * Hourly rate
Total salary cost = $20 * 13 * 160 * 40$
Total salary cost = \$1,664,000

Assuming server costs of \$6,000 and third-party software costs of \$5,000, the total project cost would be:

Total project cost = Total salary cost + Server costs + Third-party costs
Total project cost = $\$1,664,000 + \$6,000 + \$5,000$

Total project cost = **\$1.6 million**

Operational Needs

Support and operational assistance required for the success of the MentorWise project includes:

- **User-support team:** Responsible for resolving technical issues, handling user complaints, and ensuring smooth platform operations – Ongoing operational Need
- **Sourcers team:** Responsible for sourcing mentors from various industries, vetting them, and onboarding them onto the platform. - **Ongoing Operational Need**
- **Contractors:** For specific tasks such as software development, graphic design, and content creation, as required. - **Finite need as per the requirement.**
- **Marketing and Communications Team:** responsible for developing and executing marketing strategies, creating content, managing social media platforms, and maintaining brand consistency across all channels. - **Ongoing Operational Need**
- **Technical Team:** responsible for developing, testing, and maintaining the platform's technical infrastructure, including software development, database management, and server administration. - **Ongoing Operational Need**
- **Sales Team:** responsible for identifying and reaching out to potential clients, negotiating contracts, and managing customer relationships. This team is crucial for driving revenue growth and expanding the platform's user base. - **Ongoing Operational Need**
- **Background Verification (BGV) of Mentor Credentials:** This feature will include a third-party background verification process to ensure that mentors' credentials are valid and trustworthy. It will help establish the credibility and professionalism of mentors on the platform and give users confidence in the quality of mentoring they will receive. The BGV process will check the mentor's educational and professional background, work experience, and any relevant licenses or certifications. This feature will provide transparency and accountability in the mentor selection process and help maintain the high standards of the platform. - **Ongoing operational need**

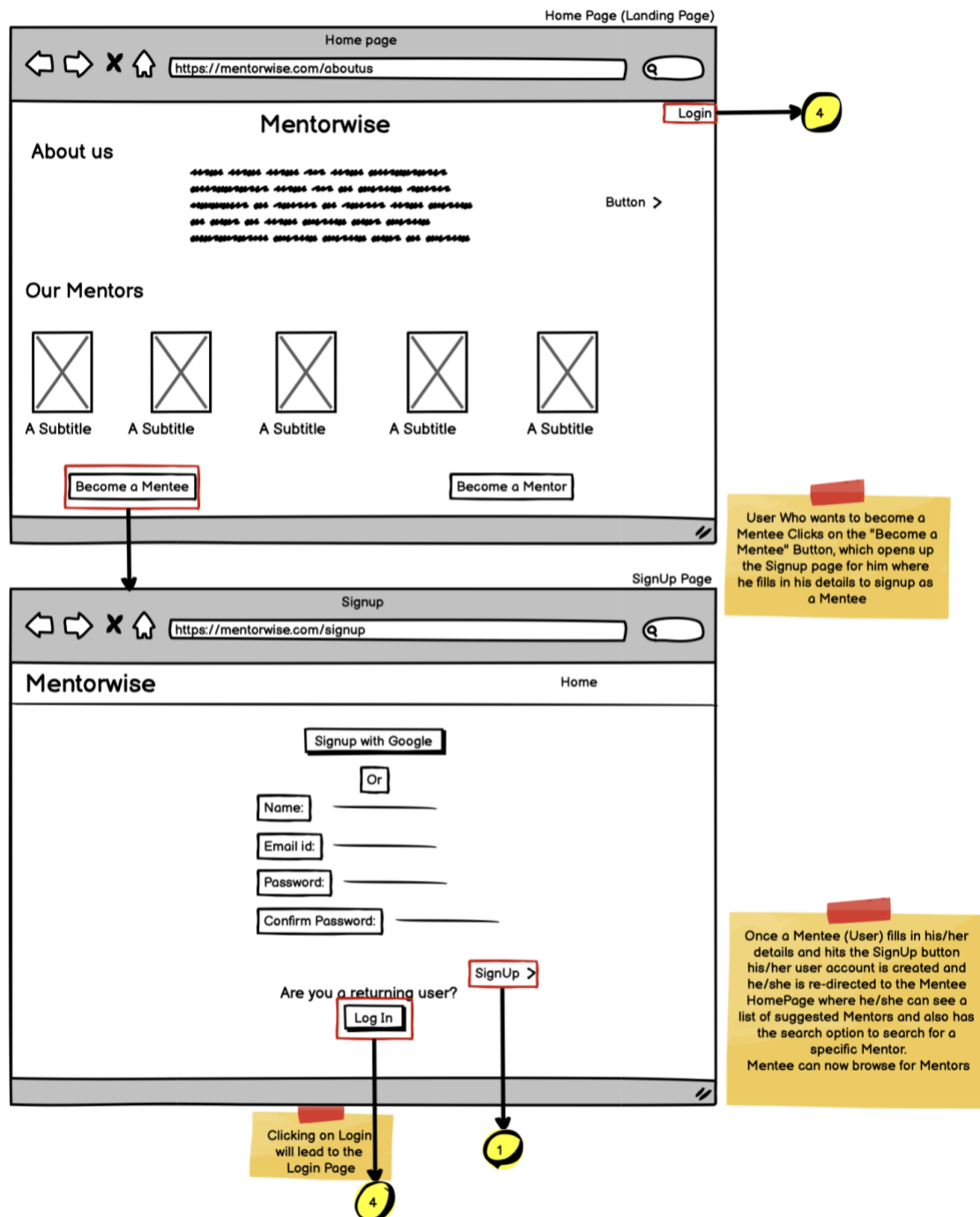
Additional operational needs may include staff for increased workload in customer support, marketing, and sales as the platform grows. Collaboration with external partners or contractors for specialized services may also be required.

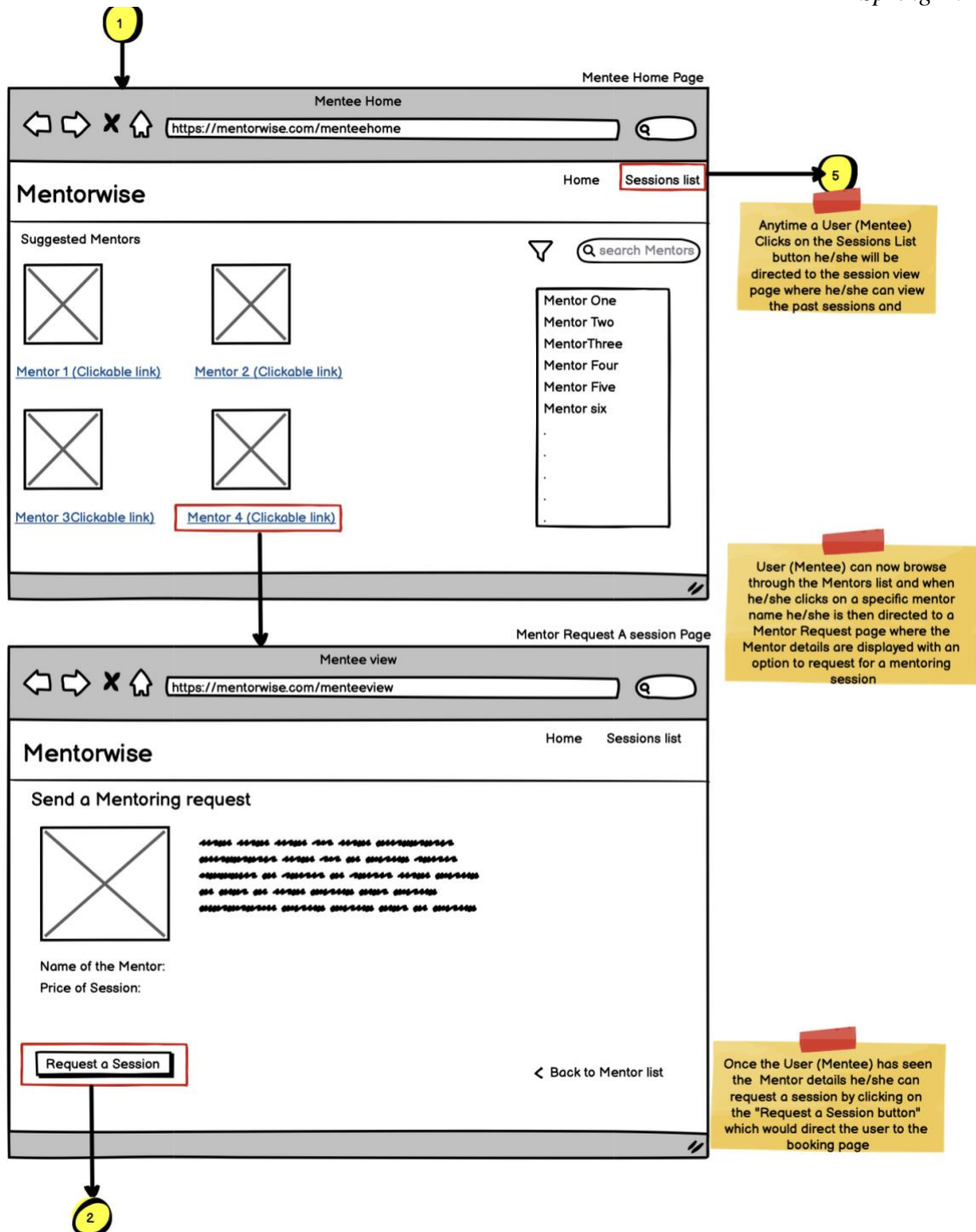
Addressing Caveats/Risks

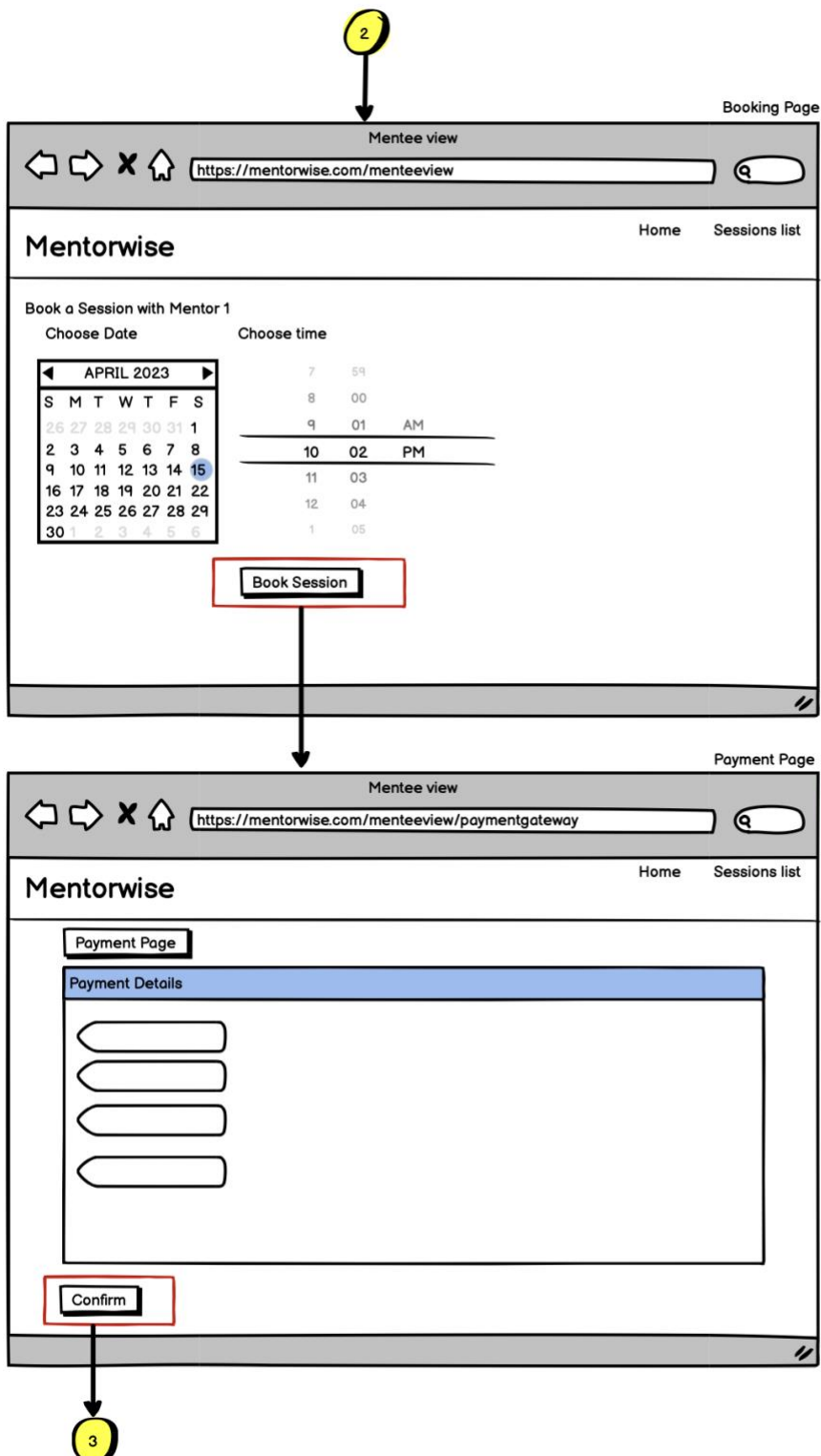
Risk	Description	Mitigating Strategy
Privacy concerns	Sharing personal and professional information could be misused/leaked. Data privacy policies and secure technology to protect user data. Obtain user consent and transparent information on data use.	Strict data privacy policies in place and invest in secure technology to protect user data. Obtain user consent and provide transparent information on how their data is being used.
Legal/patent risks	Legal issues related to intellectual property, copyrights, and trademarks.	Conduct thorough research and due diligence on mentors and ensure their guidance and advice does not violate any laws or infringe upon existing patents.
Quality of Mentors	Inexperienced or unskilled mentors could provide inadequate guidance.	Conduct rigorous screening process for selecting mentors and continuously evaluate their performance based on user feedback.
User adoption	Users may stop using the platform or switch to competitors if it is not useful or engaging.	Continuously improve and update the platform based on user feedback and invest in marketing and outreach to attract new users.
Availability of third-party video communication platform	Disruption or failure on the part of third-party providers could impact the user experience and lead to revenue loss.	Have backup providers in place and regularly monitor the performance and reliability of third-party partners.
Technical issues	Platform may face technical issues or bugs that impact the user experience.	Have a dedicated team to monitor and address technical issues promptly. Conduct regular testing and updates to prevent issues from occurring.
Funding and Financial Risks	The project may face difficulty in securing funding or generating revenue.	Have a solid financial plan in place with realistic projections. Explore multiple funding sources and diversify revenue streams. Conduct regular financial reviews and adjustments as necessary.

Appendix

A. Mentee User Flow: Wireframes

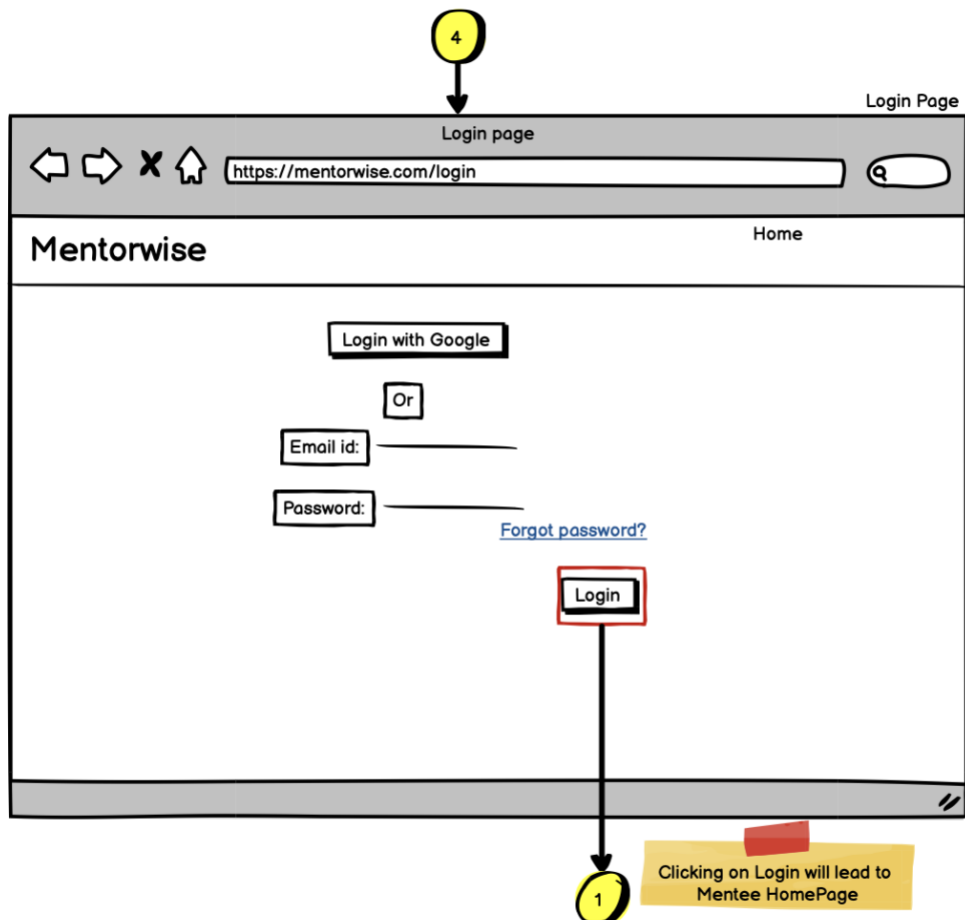
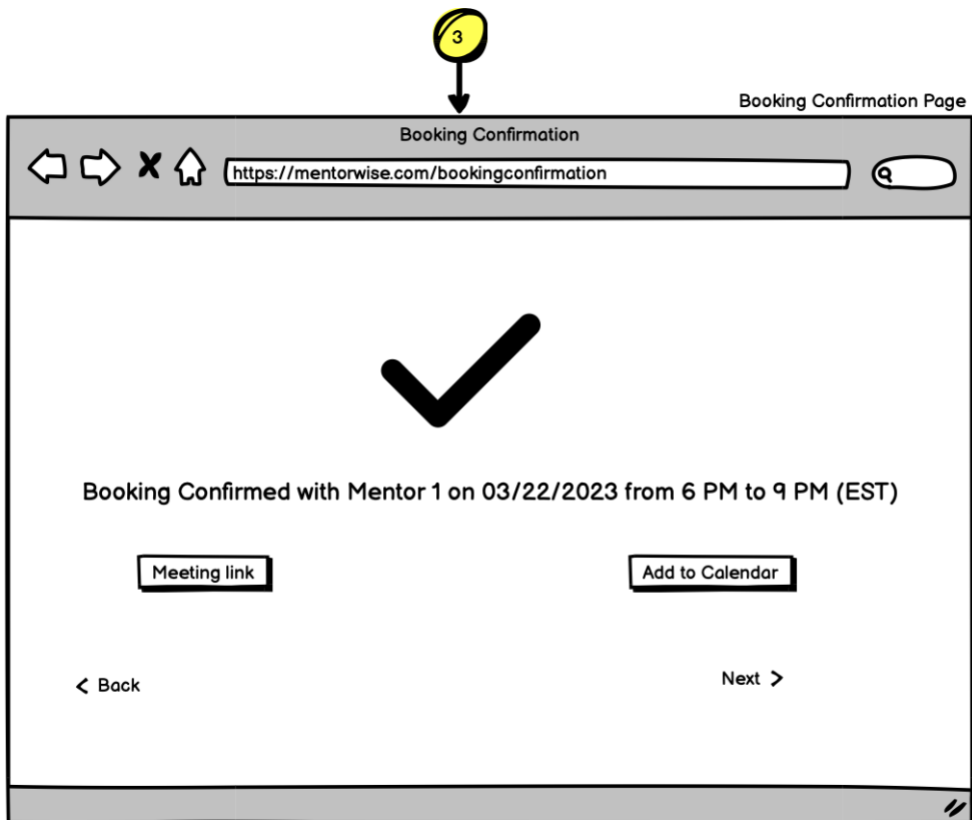


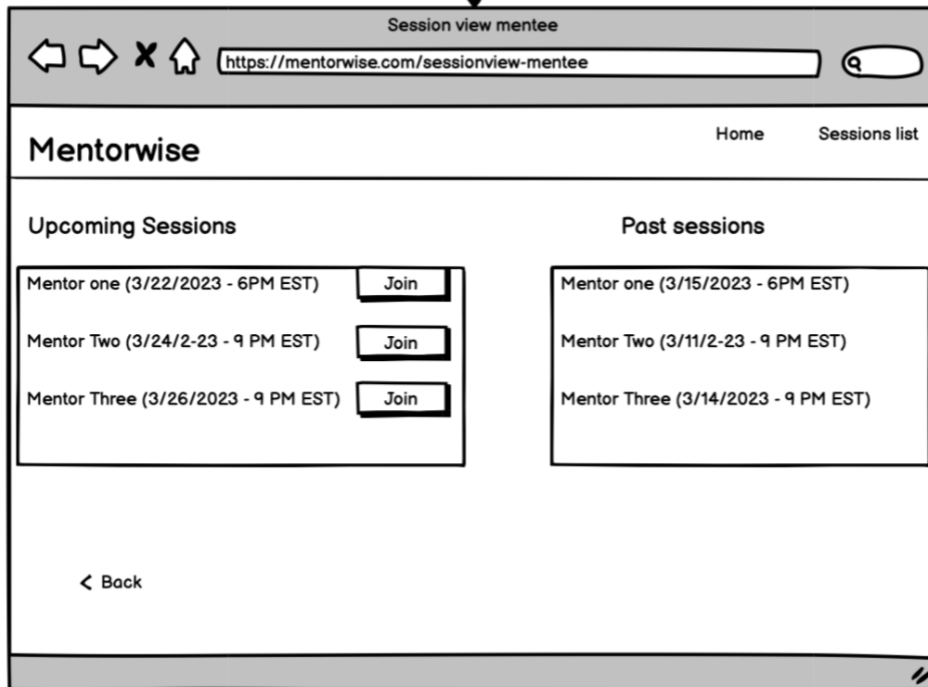




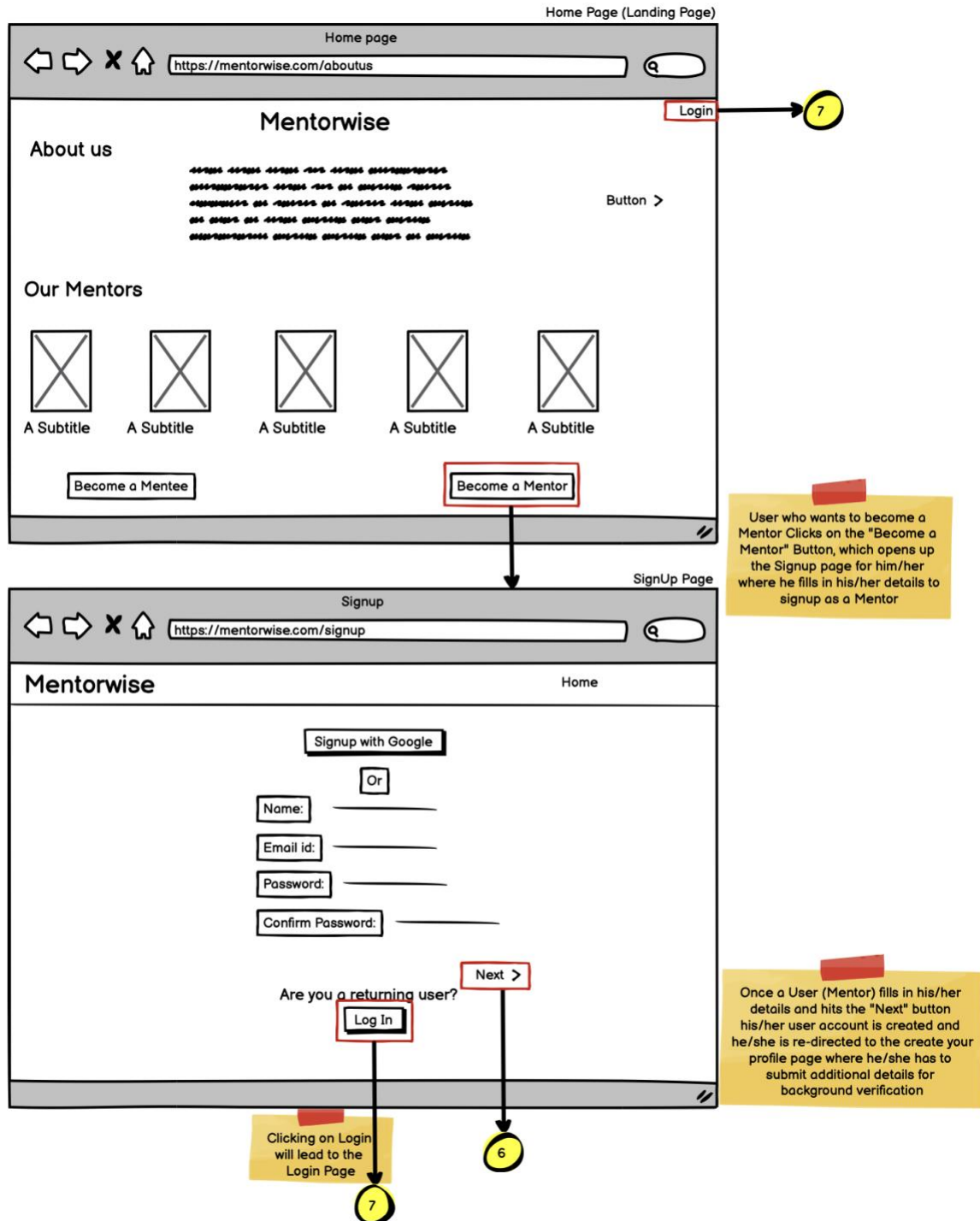
The User Mentee can now choose a suitable date and time and can book a session by clicking on the "Book Session" button which would lead the user to the Payment page where he/she can make the payment for the sessions

The User (Mentee) can now choose from the several payment options and click on the confirm button to book a session. This would send a session request to the Mentor
The User (Mentee) is then directed to the booking confirmation page





B. Mentor User Flow: Wireframes



6

Profile Page

Profile Page (Additional for mentor)

https://mentorwise.com/profile

Mentorwise

Some text Some text Some text

Please complete your profile

Highest Degree Earned: _____

University Name: _____

Additional details on Experience: _____

Upload relevant materials: _____

Complete >

Profile Complete Page

Profile Complete

https://mentorwise.com/profilecomplete

✓

User profile is complete and under-review we will get back to you once verification is complete

Logout

Once a mentor provides his details his profile goes into the validation phase

Once the verification is complete the Mentor (User) is notified via Email and he can now login into his/her Account

7

Login Page

Login page

https://mentorwise.com/login

Mentorwise Home

Login with Google

Or

Email id: _____

Password: _____

[Forgot password?](#)

Login

Once a User (Mentor) enters his/her email id and password and hits the Login button he/she is directed to the Mentor Home Page

Mentor Home Page

Mentor Home

https://Mentorwise.com/mentorhome

Mentorwise Home Sessions list

Mentoring Requests

Student 1 (Clickable link)

Student 2 (Clickable link)

Student 3 (Clickable link)

Student 4 (Clickable link)

Calendar (to check schedule)

APRIL 2023

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6

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Next >

Anytime a User (Mentor) Clicks on the Sessions List button he/she will be directed to the session view page where he/she can view the past sessions and upcoming session (with a button with the zoom link)

The User (Mentor) can now see all the mentoring requests he has received. He can browse through them and can view the Mentee details by clicking the Student/Mentee Name (As highlighted in the wireframe)

8


Mentor View Page

Mentor view

https://mentorwise.com/mentorview

Mentorwise Home Sessions list

Mentoring request



Name of the Mentee:

Requested time : 6PM to 9PM every Monday

☐ Accept request
 ☐ Reject Request
 Save

The user (Mentor) can now see the Mentee details and has the option to either "Accept request" or "Reject Request". Once the Mentor Selects one of the Radio Button he/she can hit the save button.

Session View Page

Session view

https://Mentorwise.com/Sessionview

Mentorwise Home Sessions list

Upcoming Sessions

Mentee one (3/22/2023 - 6PM EST)	<button>Join</button>
Mentee Two (3/24/2-23 - 9 PM EST)	<button>Join</button>
Mentee Three (3/26/2023 - 9 PM EST)	<button>Join</button>

Past sessions

Mentee one (3/15/2023 - 6PM EST)
Mentee Two (3/11/2-23 - 9 PM EST)
Mentee Three (3/14/2023 - 9 PM EST)

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C. Project Wise Product Roadmap

SE: Small Efforts, ME: Medium Efforts, LE: Large Efforts | LP: Low Priority, MP: Medium Priority, HP: High Priority

Parameter	Q1 Features	Q2 Features	Q3 Features	Q4 Features
User Experience	Project 1: Landing Page, Login & Sign-up and profile creation Goal: To have product homepage with buttons to help users' login/Signup (LE, HP)	Project 1: Introduce Feedback System Goal: Mentors and Mentee and fill in feedback forms after their sessions (SE, MP)	Project 1: Create dashboards Goal: Ability to view past/upcoming meetings (Mentors/Mentees); Hours clocked/Total Earnings (Mentor) (LE, HP)	Project 1: Introduce Meeting Notes/Resources Goal: Ability to record meeting notes/access resources by Mentors/Mentee (ME, MP)
	Project 2: Mentor profile verification Goal: Design a flow to perform mentor detail verification (ME, HP)	Project 2: List Mentors by Categories Goal: Enable a drop down to list mentors based on different categories (ME, MP)	Project 2: Search Bar for Mentees Goal: Ability to search for the desired mentors based on keywords (LE, HP)	Project 2: Progress Tracking by Mentor Goal: Ability for the Mentor to track progress of his mentees (ME, LP)
	Project 3: Mentor/Mentee Homepage Goal: Mentees can see a list of mentors and mentors can view session requested on their homepage (ME, HP)		Project 3: Third party calendar integration for bookings Goal: API integration with applications such as Calendly, Google Calendar for bookings (LE, MP)	Project 3: Adding filters to refine search Goal: Ease of use of the search process (ME, HP)
	Project 4: Session booking process Goal: Mentee can request a session and a mentor availability can be discussed via email trail post which a mentor can accept the request on the platform (ME, HP)			
	Project 5: API integration with Video Conferencing Platform			

	Goal: A meeting link is generated whenever a mentor accepts a session request (ME, HP)			
Communication	Project 6: Email notifications Goal: Emails are triggered on events in the following processes session booking, profile creation, profile verification etc.) (SE, HP)	Project 3: Weekly mentor email notification Goal: Notify Mentor about their weekly hours clocked and earnings (SE, LP)		
		Project 4: Reminder Email Goal: Session reminder email for both mentees and mentors (SE, MP)		
Customer, Engagement and Retention	Project 7: Enable customer support Via Email Goal: Provide customers with a mailing address to resolve their queries (SE, HP)		Project 4: Addition of FAQ page Goal: Reduce number customer support emails by introducing an FAQ page (SE, MP)	Project 4: In application chat option for all users. Goal: To enhance customer experience (ME, HP)
Payment Options	Project 8: Integrating third-party online payment gateway Goal: Enable users to make payments using Debit card and credit card options (LE, HP)	Project 5: Integrating third-party online payment gateway with more options Goal: Enable users to make payments using Cards, PayPal, and third-party wallets (ME, MP)		Project 5: MentorWise wallet to accept payments. Goal: Simplify the payment process for both mentees/mentors. (LE, LP)
Data & Privacy	Project 9: Implementing security protocols such as encryption and firewall Goal: Make sure that the user data is safe and secure (LE, HP)		Project 5: Implementing measures to unauthorized access Goal: Prevent unauthorized data access (LE, HP)	

D. Customer Interview Notes

Interview Notes #1: (Mentor)

Name: B.D. Acharia

Age: 63

Occupation: Managing Director at Lee & Muirhead Pvt. Ltd. (Phone Interview)

Q1: How would you like to help others gain knowledge in your field of expertise? How much free time do you have in a week?

Ans: I believe knowledge dissemination is a process which happens while working, by guiding fresh recruits, apprentices the correlation between the theory and practical, empowering them by delegating slowly to take decisions for immediate and long-term solutions etc. If given a chance to mentor, I would dedicate about 3 hours per week.

Q2: What do you believe are the most important technical/business skills needed when one is starting out in their professional career/starting a new business?

Ans: It depends on the career chosen by the person. For example, in the service industry knowledge of computers, ERP systems, Govt. statutes, Incoterms, are some of the technical skills that one needs to acquire to go up the ladder and be successful. Knowledge of the specific business is essential while negotiating with customers and convincing them about the reliability of the product, whether it is manufactured or service. Communication skills, written and oral, and confidence in self-presentation would be appreciated.

Q3: If given an opportunity would you mentor a student? What does an ideal mentoring session look like to you?

Ans: Yes, mentoring should start with making the mentee feel comfortable by checking about his/her family, background, introducing family of self to the mentee to make him feel at home. Secondly, it is important to understand the areas of interest, so as a mentor one must try and find out the same through various discussions, workshops etc. Once it is known the mentor needs to guide the mentee the various to achieve the targeted objective, through research, practical applications, etc.

Interview Notes #2: (Mentor)

Name: Srikant Acharya

Age: 38

Occupation: Senior Manager at Deloitte (Phone Interview)

Q1: Could you please let us know how many hours per week you would be available to mentor or guide a student?

Ans: I usually have around 3hrs of available time, where I can be available for mentoring.

Q2: In what ways would you like to contribute to the development of others' knowledge in your area of expertise? Please select from the following options: (Conducting online video sessions over platforms such as Zoom or other similar platforms, Meeting in person, if possible, or any other platform you suggest. What in your point of view would a mentor's rate range be?

Ans: Meeting in person is not always possible. The one that stands out for me is to be able to articulate one's understanding/idea and the way they communicate (through a presentation) held

online. A rate range for mentors (just for online mentoring/consulting) depending on the experience and age would be somewhere between \$50 to \$100 per hour.

Q3: If given an opportunity to mentor someone, would you be open to it? Could you describe how your ideal mentoring session would look like?

Ans: Yes, the ideal session would begin with introduction and getting to know about each other... Followed by topics for discussion. I would keep it informal, so my mentees are comfortable in expressing their interests and be open to exploring the opportunities for areas of improvement. Followed by action items that emerge out of the discussion which will be tracked in subsequent sessions.

Interview Notes #3:(Mentee)

Name: Marreddi Jaswanth Sai

Age: 25

Occupation: Graduate Student at Northeastern University (In person Interview)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: I had to choose between 2 new projects when I was working, this was a difficult decision because it would decide my career trajectory in the company. I wish a mentor with experience could help me with this decision.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: People who have been working in the company for a g time, people who worked in the company from the start, and people close to me because they would know all the loopholes and help me guide through hardships.

Q3: How do you think a customized and adaptable one-on-one mentoring and coaching platform would be advantageous to your career/entrepreneurial aspirations? What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: It will lead to filtered decisions because asking questions and guidance from a known person is more comfortable than an unknown person and it takes time to open. I will not pay until I like the service, so I want a week to understand the mentality of mentor and decide accordingly.

Interview Notes #4:(Mentee)

Name: Sai Revanth Reddy Boda

Age: 22

Occupation: Graduate Student at Northeastern University (In person Interview)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: Yes, initially when I was a fresher at an MNC I had been overwhelmed by lot of responsibilities with simultaneous projects, so I felt at that time it would been a good scenario to have a reliable guide to help me navigate uncharted waters.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: I usually contact seniors or someone with experience in the same domain.

Q3: What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: Depending on the session length I will be willing to pay a reasonable price around \$15.

Interview Notes #5:

Name: Pratyush Prasad

Age: 28

Occupation: Entrepreneur (Phone Interview)

Q1: What challenges did you face while you were working on your first venture? Did you wish to have a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: When I first started my application, it was difficult for me to understand where or how to start. I wasted a lot of time in finding the right developer and designer during the initial process. I would have loved a mentor by my side who would guide me then.

Q2: How did you go through this process during the initial days? What was it like?

Ans: I reached out to several freelancers and third-party companies to get their guidance and quotations for the work. It was a tedious task for as I was all alone, and I did not understand the market back then.

Q3: What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: During that time, I was desperate to seek some guidance. I would have been willing to invest around \$120-\$150/hr for mentoring.

Interview Notes #1: (Mentor)

Name: Vivek Prasad

Age: 37years

Role: Professor at JSSSTU (Phone Interview)

Q1: Could you please let us know how many hours per week you would be available to mentor or guide a student?

Ans: 2-3 hours per week

Q2: In what ways would you like to contribute to the development of others' knowledge in your area of expertise? Please select from the following options: (Conducting online video sessions over platforms such as Zoom or other similar platforms, Meeting in person, if possible)

Ans: Preferably online, but if the students are from my university, then I'm okay with in person

Q3: In your experience working in the professional industry, what do you believe are the most significant obstacles that students face as they enter the workforce or individuals encounter when starting a new business?

Ans: Building relationships and networking can be challenging, particularly for those who are just starting out in their careers. For students, lack of practical experience can be a significant obstacle when entering the workforce. They may be well-versed in theoretical concepts but applying those concepts in a practical setting can be challenging. Additionally, many students struggle with careers path selection

Interview Notes #2: (Mentor)

Name: Saurav M S

Age: 31

Role: Software Development Engineer at AWS (Phone Interview)

Q1: Could you please let us know how many hours per week you would be available to mentor or guide a student?

Ans: 1-2 hours per week

Q2: In what ways would you like to contribute to the development of others' knowledge in your area of expertise? Please select from the following options: Conducting online video sessions over platforms such as Zoom or other similar platforms, Meeting in person, if possible)

Ans: online video sessions (Zoom or GMeet)

Q3: In your experience working in the professional industry, what do you believe are the most significant obstacles that students face as they enter the workforce or individuals encounter when starting a new business?

Ans: Students usually have a lot of theoretical knowledge, it's hard for them to translate their concepts into practical applications. Eg: coding for a college project/assignment is different from using it for real world applications at work.

Interview Notes #3: (Mentor)

Name: Kedarnath

Age: 40 years

Role: Principal consultant at Cisco (Phone Interview)

Q1: Could you please let us know how many hours per week you would be available to mentor or guide a student?

Ans: 2 hours per week

Q2: In what ways would you like to contribute to the development of others' knowledge in your area of expertise? Please select from the following options: (Conducting online video sessions over platforms such as Zoom or other similar platforms, Meeting in person, if possible)

Ans: Online video sessions

Q3: In your experience working in the professional industry, what do you believe are the most significant obstacles that students face as they enter the workforce?

Ans: People who start their career right after their academic completion usually have a skill gap to excel in their preferred industry

Interview Notes #4: (Mentee)

Name: Akshay Kumar

Age: 26

Role: Entrepreneur (Phone Interview)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional/Academic life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: As a Project Engineer fresh out of college before starting my start up, I once faced the challenge of taking over a project with a tight timeline and limited resources. I was feeling overburdened and unsure of what to do. I wished I had a mentor or a guide to assist me to get through it and offer me suggestions on how to best manage the project and stick to the timetable with the resources I had. Sadly, I lacked this support network, so I was forced to rely on my skills and research to decide how to approach the job most effectively. I eventually finished it on time, but I learned how crucial it is to have mentors and advisors to assist me to get through difficult situations.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: Professor, Experience personnel, career counselors, alumni networks

Q3: What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: 100-150\$ per hour

Interview Notes #5: (Mentee)

Name: Sharan Kumar

Age: 25

Role: Graduate Student at NEU (In-person Interview)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your Academic life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: As a student, I faced the challenge of selecting courses and specializations that aligned with my academic goals and interests. I often felt overwhelmed and unsure of which courses to choose, and I wished I had a mentor or guide who could offer me advice and support to navigate these decisions successfully. A mentor could have helped me identify my strengths and weaknesses, suggest relevant courses, and provide insights into how to manage my workload effectively, ultimately making my academic journey smoother and more fulfilling.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: Alumni, experienced professionals

Q3: What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: \$15 - \$30 per hour

Interview Notes #1: (Mentor)

Name: Swati

Age: 30

Occupation: Graduate Student with work experience of 8 Years (Google Form)

Q1: How many hours per week would you be available to mentor or guide a student?

Ans: I would be available for 2 hours to mentor a student.

Q2: How Would you like to connect with the Mentees: Conducting online video sessions over platforms such as Zoom or other similar platforms.Meeting in person, if possible.

Ans: I would like to conduct video sessions through zoom.

Q3: In your experience working in the professional industry, what do you believe are the most significant obstacles that students face as they enter the workforce or individuals encounter when starting a new business?

Ans: Career transition from being a student to being a working professional can be quite challenging for most individuals.

Students or the new business owner do not have the experience and expertise that they need to succeed in the organization or in new business. Lack of experience and expertise can be one of the major obstacles they face when they start their professional career.

Sometimes they do not have the resources they need at work to make this career transition smoother. Without the resources, learning materials and guidance, it becomes difficult for them to build the skillset required for the new role at work. New entrepreneurs also feel that the lack of resources and guidance can be a major roadblock.

Interview Notes #2: (Mentor)

Name: Rajat (Mentor)

Age: 32

Occupation: Graduate Student with work experience of 10 Years (In-person Interview)

Q1: Could you please let us know how many hours per week you would be available to mentor or guide a student?

Ans: 1-2 hrs per week

Q2: In what ways would you like to contribute to the development of others' knowledge in your area of expertise? Please select from the following options:

Conducting online video sessions over platforms such as Zoom or other similar platforms.

Meeting in person, if possible.

Any other platform you suggest.

Ans: Preferably zoom but would meet in person if required

Q3: In your experience working in the professional industry, what do you believe are the most significant obstacles that students face as they enter the workforce or individuals encounter when starting a new business?

Ans: When students enter the workforce, they face difficulty in understanding the work they are doing, which has a long-term impact on the product and the next person who will work on it.

Interview Notes #3: (Mentee)

Name: Santrupti

Age: 23

Occupation: Graduate Student at Northeastern University (Google Form)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: During my previous work, I was working on a project that required working on some new tools. There were very few resources available online regarding this and I really wished I had someone to help me navigate.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: I go to my father and my seniors in the industry.

Q3: How do you think a customized and adaptable one-on-one mentoring and coaching platform would be advantageous to your career/entrepreneurial aspirations?

Ans: I think it would be extremely helpful. Getting one-on-one mentoring will give me some insights of the industry and help me better prepare myself.

Q4: What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: 15-20 \$

Interview Notes #4: (Mentee)

Name: Rameshwari

Age: 22

Occupation: Graduate Student at Northeastern University (In-person Interview)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: I have still not entered the workforce, but I would need someone to guide me when I am ready to enter it. To help me with difficult tools and concepts and help transition from student to employee.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: Family and friends

Q3: How do you think a customized and adaptable one-on-one mentoring and coaching platform would be advantageous to your career/entrepreneurial aspirations?

Ans: It would be helpful; it will be better to talk to a professional in the industry about the problems

Q4: What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: 14\$

Interview Notes #5: (Mentee)

Name: Shreya

Age: 25

Occupation: Graduate Student at Northeastern University (Google Form)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: I was stuck at a point in my career not able to decide what kind of projects to work on. My manager had given me the liberty to pick a project, but I was not able to decide on a project. It would have been helpful to have had a mentor who could guide me through it.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: Google search

Q3: How do you think a customized and adaptable one-on-one mentoring and coaching platform would be advantageous to your career/entrepreneurial aspirations?

Ans: It would give me a career path

Q4: What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: 15-25\$/hr.

Interview Notes #1: (Mentee)

Name: Amulya Acharya

Age: 24

Occupation: Graduate Student at Northeastern University (MEM) (In person Interview)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: I wish I had more guidance with my placement process back in college. I didn't know what kind of skills I needed to pick up, how/where to apply, what kind of career should I take up, what field/industry/department suits me best etc. Once I was out of college, I didn't have a schedule to follow anymore, and I felt lost.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: Depends. Sometimes I talk to my dad or people in my field that could help me out, based on their experience. Most of the time, I look it up online or reach out to people on platforms like LinkedIn.

Follow up Question

Q2.1 Is it easy to connect with people on LinkedIn, are people very approachable?

Ans: Not very easy. If I reach out to 10-15 people, only 1-2 people respond to me. Sometimes their advice is helpful, but sometimes it's not very relevant

Q3: How do you think a customized and adaptable one-on-one mentoring and coaching platform would be advantageous to your career/entrepreneurial aspirations? What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: I think having a platform would really help me out. It could help me make better decisions. I think being able to connect with someone from the industry to understand corporate expectations and gain insights about professional development would help me. Personally, I wouldn't pay much if it offered something generic. But if it was 1o1 mentoring would, I would spend about 20\$.

Interview Notes #2:

Name: Kshetra Hegde (Mentee)

Age: 26

Occupation: Graduate Student at Northeastern University (MSIS) (In person Interview)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: When I was preparing for my college placements during my undergrad, my coding skills were very average. It was very hard for me to get a hang of it, despite attending office hours with my professors, I was very slow at grasping the concepts. During this time, I wished I knew someone who could guide me better and help me understand concepts so that I could clear the technical coding rounds.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: My Dad is my coach/mentor. He provides insights on the areas I could improve on and gives me advice on how to go about my career path.

Q3: How do you think a customized and adaptable one-on-one mentoring and coaching platform would be advantageous to your career/entrepreneurial aspirations? What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: Something like that would help. If something like this existed during my placements process, I would have been grateful to have a mentor give me 1-1 mentoring to help me improve my coding skills. Depending on the quality of mentoring, I would be willing to pay around 15-45\$

Interview Notes #3:

Name: Manu Bharat

Age: 34

Occupation: Business Owner (Phone Interview)

Q1: If you are interested in mentoring, could you please let us know how many hours per week you would be available to mentor or guide a student?

Ans: Probably between 1-3 hrs/week, it depends on my schedule and other responsibilities for that week.

Q2: In what ways would you like to contribute to the development of others' knowledge in your area of expertise? Please select from the following options:

Conducting online video sessions over platforms such as Zoom or other similar platforms.

Meeting in person, if possible.

Any other platform you suggest.

Ans: I would be open to online sessions or in person sessions. But committing to an in-person session would depend on the location and my bandwidth. I believe an in-person session is more effective but it's also time-consuming. I think if it's a long-term commitment I would meet the person once or twice and then shift to online mentoring (hybrid model).

Q3: In your experience working in the professional industry, what do you believe are the most significant obstacles that students face as they enter the workforce or individuals encounter when starting a new business?

Ans: I believe there is a gap between the skills attained in schools/colleges vs the skills required in the workforce. If you decide to start a business fresh out of college, you may require a lot of skills that you would not have picked up at college. While starting a business you need to have some amount of surface knowledge across all domains. Eg: if you are an engineer and you decide to build a product, you also need non-technical skills to grow your business. You need to have a surface knowledge of marketing/ finance/ strategy etc. Even if you are not a SME, you should be able to identify the right talent and hire the right people when you start

Interview Notes #4:

Name: Muskaan Sancheti

Age: 23

Occupation: Co-founder of The State Plate (Email)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: I'm currently working on building my business. It's called The State Plate. Growing this business has been a huge challenge. I had to pick up a lot of skills during my journey as an entrepreneur. To just give one specific example, I'm a business student. Me and my partner decided to build an e-commerce platform that delivers authentic food sourced from different parts of India. Building the e-commerce platform was a huge task, I had no web development skills and one of the biggest tasks was to build a website with all functionalities. I had to pick up this skill by watching videos/ talking to friends and seniors from this field. This was when I wished that I had a mentor who could guide me through this process and help me.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: Usually it depends on the situation and what the advice is about. But typically, I ask my friends/ seniors or my parents for advice.

Q3: How do you think a customized and adaptable one-on-one mentoring and coaching platform would be advantageous to your career/entrepreneurial aspirations? What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: Having a platform that could connect me to a mentor would be very useful. As I mentioned I faced a lot of challenges when I started my business. An SME who could give me personalized mentoring would be great. If their expertise would save time (would help me finish a milestone in 1 week instead of 1 month) I would be willing to invest around 100-200\$ for a mentoring session

Interview Notes #5: (Mentor)

Name: Sailesh Shetty

Age: 65

Occupation: Freelance Business Consultant, Ex-VP of Toyota (Phone Interview)

Q1. How do you typically find your clients?

Ans: Word of mouth or people reach out to me on LinkedIn

Q2. How much do you charge your clients?

Ans: Depends on the scope of work and time commitment. It ranges from 150\$ to 500\$

Q3. How do you take your mentoring sessions? Online/Offline?

Ans: It depends on the client, commitment period, and compensation. If it's a long-term commitment I typically meet them in person. For 1-time sessions, I prefer virtual mode.

Interview Notes #1: (Mentee)

Name: Sushma Mandada

Age: 22 years

Occupation: Graduate Student at Northeastern University (In person Interview)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: Post my undergraduate I was really confused on what Career path to choose, if it was MBA or MS, and then either to write GMAT or GRE, It took me 2-3 months on what career to pursue and then went to several consultancies, and prepared for GMAT based on their advice for only 2 months, but the time was not enough and I ended up scoring badly, then I had to go way all around prepare for GRE. I felt at this stage If I had a true mentor who understood my case/problems in detail and guided me it would certainly have been different.

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: Parents, friends, Family circle who are into business/have relevant experience to guide me through.

Q3: How do you think a customized and adaptable one-on-one mentoring and coaching platform would be advantageous to your career/entrepreneurial aspirations? What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: As a Student, I think there are several sources which can help me with decision making in Key areas, however, in case I am stuck and have nowhere to go, then I would look out for subject matter experts and seek their help and gain a sense of understanding on how to proceed ahead. I would be willing to pay \$15 - \$20 per hour for the same if the expert is well qualified.

Interview Notes #2: (Mentee)

Name: Pawan Kumar Naveen

Age: 24 years

Occupation: Graduate Student at Northeastern University (In person Interview)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your professional life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: I was once stuck in taking a job decision, I had two very good offers from equally good companies but was not able to weigh one above the other, I was I had a mentor who could strategically guide me and improve my decision-making process

Q2: Who do you typically ask career advice?

Ans: Parents, Friends

Q3: How do you think a customized and adaptable one-on-one mentoring and coaching platform would be advantageous to your career/entrepreneurial aspirations? What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: I think one to one mentoring would not be required in most of the problems I face, just a 10-minute call with any experienced person in that field could solve my problems.

Interview Notes #3: (Mentee)

Name: Varshit Ratna.

Age: 26 years.

Occupation: Founder-Hashing Company. (Google Form)

Q1: Can you tell me about a time when you faced a challenge in your Entrepreneurial life that you wished you had a mentor or guide to help you navigate?

Ans: I have a VR tech startup, which I started with my friends. Soon we got multiple projects in this space, were able to afford a co-working space, but we wanted to scale, but we had no idea how to do it, since all we did was third party freelance projects, I wished I had a mentor who could understand my case and guide me through it.

Q2: Who do you typically ask for Business advice?

Ans: My professor from undergrad, parents, Close friends.

Q3: How do you think a customized and adaptable one-on-one mentoring and coaching platform would be advantageous to your career/entrepreneurial aspirations? What amount are you willing to pay for such a service?

Ans: It could help me get through roadblocks when I am stuck, there were few days where I was confused on what to do next, financial management was another problem since I started this straight out of college. I am willing to pay based on the case I need help with and experience and background of the mentor.

Interview Notes #4: (Mentor)

Name: Supriya.

Age: 41 years.

Occupation: Head-People and Culture at Backbase (Phone Interview)

Q1: How much free time do you have in a week? How would you like to help others gain knowledge in your field of expertise.

Ans: I usually find 6 hours/week of free time in a week as I dedicate most of my free time to fitness. I would love to help others gain people skills, negotiation skills as I have a degree in psychology

Q2: What Business skills do you think budding entrepreneurs should have/develop?

Ans: Problem Solving, Root cause analysis, People skills and ability to handle pressure

Q3: If given an opportunity to mentor someone, would you be open to it? Describe how your ideal mentoring session would look like.

Ans: Would be willing to spend 2-3 hours a week to mentor someone, ideal session would involve building the business case and problems initially and then solving them, I would mostly love to help small businesses.

Interview Notes #5: (Mentor)

Name: Poornima T.

Age: 38 years.

Occupation: Technical Lead/Scrum Master at Tide (Phone Interview)

Q1. How much free time do you have in a week? How would you like to help others gain knowledge in your field of expertise.

Ans: I usually can find around 3hrs/week free post all my professional and personal commitments. I would love to mentor budding tech entrepreneurs with the help of knowledge. I am doing the same now through a podcast and can look out for other options if required

Q2. What do you believe are the most important technical/business skills needed when one is starting out in their professional career/starting a new business?

Ans: The most important skills required are understanding a true problem and working towards it, design sense, technically strong and good decision-making skills.

Q3. If given an opportunity to mentor someone, would you be open to it? Describe how your ideal mentoring session would look like.

Ans: I would be more than happy to take up full time mentoring, Infact I discussed with my family to quit corporate job and take up part time from jobs to be able to take care of my son. The amount of knowledge I have gained in my 16 years of IT experience could definitely benefit someone. My ideal mentoring session would first involve what is the exact output the other party is looking for and then discussing it in detail and bringing out a tailored plan as per the scope of the problem.

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