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I-Corps Summer Accelerator
Team: Plug N Braille
July 16, 2019

The National Federation of the Blind National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada
Report Summary

As California State University, Northridge students enrolled in the I-Corps Summer Accelerator, we requested to travel to Las Vegas to perform customer discovery at The National Federation of the Blind National Convention which took place in Mandalay Bay Convention Center which is thought to be the largest gathering of blind people in the world. Our trip was a short 2-day visit which was entirely spend on conversing and interviewing people, with a very condensed schedule of attending exhibitions, talks, meetings, gatherings, and events. We spent more than 28 hours in the convention center performing customer discovery, interviewing potential customers, decisions makers, and key members in the blind community. We spent quite some time talking to every single vendor that was out there displaying their product and technology which was a key factor in deciding a reasonable price point for our product and where it stands in the current market. The market is very niche and competitive but is yet open for improved products and newer technology.

Our team met more than a few hundred blind people from all over the states, conducted a total of 75 customer interviews, and over 20 hours of recording, which was an essential factor in deciding whether our product has a market fit or not. The outcome was that it did, there is a demand among scholars, students, and professionals who are fluent in Braille. However, the price point of the product is to be highly took into consideration. Most of the population comes from a poor economic background which they are trying to improve, except wealthy families who come from a strong financial background and are on top of cutting-edge technology, which is about 1% of the population.

As a team, after our customer discovery trip, we decided to change our product slightly to fit the market need at the desired price point. We are currently working on that, we are redesigning the product and deciding on the technology and purpose it should lean more towards. This trip was very helpful and set us far more ahead from where we stood before. We highly thank the NSF I-Corps program for providing us with the needed resources to travel and make the customer discovery experience as precise and valuable as possible.