

Community skill exchange platform

Seek&Share

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main
~John Donne

Objective

Seek&Share is a community driven platform where individuals come together to seek, share and learn crafts no matter how simple or complex it maybe.

Problem statement

In today's dynamic landscape, individuals recognize the need for continual personal and professional growth, understanding that no individual can be a jack of all trades. Hence, learning new skills, meeting like-minded individuals are some of the best chances for personal growth.

Traditional learning methods often lack the personal touch that enhances knowledge retention, and many find it daunting to even initiate their learning journey. Even for those who commence learning, the inherent lack of motivation often hinders progress. Despite the evident benefits of learning new skills through communal interaction, there exists a pressing need for a structured, accessible, user-friendly, and technology-driven Community Skill Exchange Platform.

Our proposed platform aims to solve just that by providing an application that allows people to signup for their interested events, attend, and keep track of registered learning events that are happening in their community. It also allows the users to host, record their events and also notify other community members of their event.

The platform uses a virtual token system called energy, an in-app purchasable item will allow the user to register themselves for either an in-person or virtual skill exchange events. Gamification elements such as streaks, badges, achievements, challenges motivate and foster a sense of accomplishment in the users, encouraging them to learn even more skills in the future. With the help of the energy system, users are encouraged not only to learn, but also teach a skill of their expertise as a way of giving back to the community.

Project Charter

The project aims to develop a technology-driven Community Skill Exchange Platform to facilitate continuous personal and professional growth. It seeks to address the limitations of traditional learning methods by providing a structured and accessible platform for communal skill exchange. The goal is to foster motivation and knowledge retention among users while promoting collaboration and interaction within the community. The project charter authorizes the development of the platform to meet the evolving needs of individuals seeking to expand their skillsets.

Stakeholder Analysis

* Users

- *Interests - Skill learners seek accessible and structured learning opportunities. Instructors desire a platform to share expertise. Curious to mingle more with the local community people.*
- *Concerns - Users worry about the quality of instruction and the reliability of the application. Concerned about the availability of varied skills on the platform.*

* Community moderators

- *Interests - Interested in fostering growth and engagement of the community through skill exchange. To provide a safe platform that avoids hate speech and harassment.*
- *Concerns - May be concerned about the platform's impact on community dynamics and the potential for misuse. Concerned about the volume of data to moderate on the platform.*

* Development team

- *Interests - Aim to create a robust, user-friendly platform with secure and scalable technology. To carefully develop user requirements into successful features.*
- *Concerns - Concerns may revolve around technical glitches, data security, and platform scalability. To make sure the application is accessible on every operating system platform*

* Local businesses and organizations

- *Interests - May benefit from a skilled local workforce due to learning of various skills on the platform. Can offer support or collaborate for mutual benefit of both the platform and the organization.*
- *Concerns - Interested in ensuring the platform aligns with community needs and adheres to ethical practices.*

* Investors and sponsors

- *Interests - Seek a sustainable and impactful project with potential returns.*
- *Concerns - Concerns may include the viability of the platform, potential risks, and the social impact on the community.*

* Government and Regulatory Authorities

- *Interests - Interested in community development, innovation, and adherence to regulatory frameworks.*
- *Concerns - May have concerns related to data privacy, ethical practices, and potential social impact.*

The Software Approach

- ☑ Our proposed platform aims to solve the problem by providing an application that allows people to signup for their interested events, attend, and keep track of registered learning events that are happening in their community.
- ☑ The application will also allow the user to search for specific events by providing a variety of filters such as time, location, host name, field of interest, number of participants, mode of event etc.
- ☑ Event itinerary will be accessible, changeable, and exportable to any supported calendar application to always allow the user to stay on top of things.

- ☑ Gamification elements such as progress tracker, badges, milestone tracking, leaderboard system, exclusive challenges and events will be added to incentivize users, which will help foster a sense of accomplishment.
- ☑ Implementation of a virtual token system, called energy, an in-app purchasable item will allow the user to register themselves for either an in-person or virtual skill exchange events. With this system, users are encouraged not only to learn, but also teach a skill of their expertise as a way of giving back to the community.
- ☑ The host will be allowed to access the host tab of the application where he will be able to create events, set time slots, number of participants, RSVP functionality, provide event material beforehand and enable custom notifications.
- ☑ The application will be highly responsive and adapt to a maximum of 3440x1440 resolution. It will be capable of comfortably handling at least 50,000 simultaneous users during peak usage. The application size will be below 50mb.
- ☑ A skill matching algorithm will be implemented to help new users understand what skills they are looking for based on their interests and a survey, and help them find a great place to begin their skill exchange journey on the platform.

Market Analysis

Target audience

The primary target audience for our platform are individuals actively seeking continuous skill development and also providing skill training within a community setting. The platform aims to create a collaborative and supportive environment where community members can come and grow together.

I. Demographic Characteristics

- Our target users are typically adults between the ages of 18 and 65 encompassing young teenagers, students, working professionals, and individuals seeking personal growth opportunities.
- Users come from diverse educational backgrounds, ranging from high school graduates to professionals with advanced degrees, contributing to a dynamic and diverse learning environment.
- We focus on urban and suburban areas where community engagement is strong. Initial deployment will target regions with a high concentration of potential users. However, our platform is accessible to users from various locations.
- Our users may include working professionals, students, freelancers, and individuals exploring new career paths or hobbies.
- Our target audience is diverse, with an equal focus on engaging both male and female individuals. The platform aims to foster an inclusive community where everyone feels welcome to share and acquire skills.
- While the primary language of the platform is English and French, efforts will be made to cater to users with different language preferences, fostering inclusivity for non-native speakers.

II. Psychographic Characteristics

- **Motivation for learning** - Our target audience is driven by a variety of motivations for learning, including personal growth, career advancement, hobby exploration, and the pursuit of lifelong learning. These individuals are curious, proactive, and eager to expand their knowledge and skill set to achieve their personal and professional goals.
- **Community Engagement** - Users prioritize community engagement and value opportunities for collaboration, peer support, and networking. They seek meaningful connections with like-minded individuals who share similar interests, passions, and aspirations, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie within the platform's community ecosystem.
- **Time Management Skills** - Our audience demonstrates effective time management skills, balancing their learning activities with other personal and professional commitments. They appreciate flexible learning opportunities that allow them to engage in skill development at their own pace and convenience, whether it's during leisure time, evenings, weekends, or in-between work or school responsibilities.
- **Goal Orientation** - Our audience is goal-oriented, setting clear objectives for their skill development journey and actively seeking resources and support to achieve their goals. They value measurable progress and appreciate tools and features that facilitate goal tracking, milestone achievements, and feedback mechanisms to stay motivated and accountable.
- **Self Reliant** - The users seek out learning opportunities to learn and get better at doing a task they previously did not know or had to be dependent on other individuals or not even be able to perform the task for some reason. With the new skills acquired through the platform, they will be able to appreciate their evolved sense of autonomy.
- **Contribution and Recognition** - Individuals interested in contributing their knowledge about particular skills are given opportunities to do so through tutorials, guides, or answering questions from other learners. This not only helps others but also enhances the individual's reputation within the community, leading to recognition as a knowledgeable and helpful contributor. Additionally, receiving feedback and acknowledgment for their contributions can further motivate individuals to continue sharing their expertise and engaging with the community.

Competitor Analysis

Community skill exchange platforms are a very good market for businesses and as a result we see several competitors offer a similar solution, each vying for market share and user engagement. Notable competitors include Skillshare, Meetup, Skillharbour each with their unique approach to facilitate skill exchange.

1. Meetup

Strengths

- *Facilitation of in-person meetups and workshops for skill sharing* as the platform is good at arranging in person events like meetups and workshops. These events are great for hands-on learning and interact with others in the community. Talking in person can help people make stronger connections and learn better.
- *Active community engagement and networking opportunities* by platform's ability to help engage and network within the community and also by bringing together individuals with similar interests and goals, the platform creates an environment where members can share knowledge, exchange ideas, and collaborate on projects.

Weaknesses

- *Reliance on physical gatherings may limit scalability and accessibility* is necessary and it may limit the platform's scalability as it can be challenging to organize and coordinate in-person events across different locations. Additionally, not everyone may have easy access to these events due to various and conflicts, ultimately limiting the platform's accessibility to a broader audience.
- *Lack of structured learning resources compared to online platforms* as on the other hand the In-person meetups and workshops may offer hands-on experiences, but they may not always provide the same level of structured content or access to resources that online platforms offer. This could be a limitation for individuals who prefer more structured learning paths.

Opportunities

- *Integration of virtual events and online learning components* can be implemented through virtual sessions or webinars, by which the platform can enhance its accessibility and reach a wider audience beyond its physical locations.
- *Expansion into new geographic regions* to reach a wider audience can diversify its community and enter into new markets

Threats

- Competition from online platforms offering similar community-building features.
- Changing user preferences towards online learning over in-person interactions can potentially lead to decrease in attendance or engagement in physical gatherings as some may prefer the convenience and flexibility of online platforms

2. SkillShare

Strengths

- *SkillShare is a well-established brand with a very large user base.* Its reputation and extensive user base provide a strong foundation for growth and market dominance. It signifies trust and credibility among users, potentially attracting new users through word-of-mouth and brand recognition.
- *It focuses on creative skills and project-based learning* which appeals to users seeking hands-on experience and practical application of their skills. This focus fosters creativity, innovation, and real-world problem-solving abilities among learners.
- *The platform also boasts a intuitive interface and user experience,* making it easy for learners to navigate and engage with content.

Weaknesses

- The platform's *limited focus on community interaction and peer-to-peer learning* hinders opportunities for collaborative learning and knowledge exchange among users. It may result in a lack of engagement and a sense of isolation among learners.
- *Subscription model may deter price-sensitive users* from accessing the platform's content and services, potentially limiting user acquisition and retention. It also poses a barrier of entry for users who prefer free or pay-per-course alternatives.

Opportunities

- *Expansion into new skill categories and markets* such as gardening, carpentry, etc. will allow for diversification of platform's offerings and attract a wider audience and tap into niche markets with untapped potential.
- *Enhancing community features to foster greater engagement* by investing in community-building initiatives and features can enhance user engagement, retention, and loyalty.

Threats

- *Competition from emerging platforms offering specialized services* may attract users with niche interests or specific learning needs, diverting attention and resources away from the platform.
- *Rapid technological advancements and disruptions* may impact the platform's usability, performance, and user experience. Factors such as software updates, security vulnerabilities, and compatibility issues can affect user satisfaction and retention if not addressed proactively.

3. Skillhabour

Strengths

- Users can easily *request assistance for specific skills by posting their needs* on the platform. This streamlined process connects individuals seeking help with mentors possessing the required skills. Posting multiple skill requests increases the likelihood of finding immediate assistance, fostering efficient skill exchange.
- The platform allows its users to offer a *comprehensive range of skill categories*, catering to diverse user needs. From non-technical skills to technical expertise, users can address various aspects of personal and professional development, enhancing individuals' lifestyles and career prospects.

Weaknesses

- *Assessing the proficiency of mentors' skills poses a challenge*. Determining the skill levels of unfamiliar individuals may be challenging and could lead to uncertainty among users regarding the reliability and expertise of mentors.
- SkillHarbour's *reliance on one-on-one sessions* limits its ability to handle many users at once, making it harder to grow and reach more people. This approach also requires a lot of time and resources, potentially making it more expensive to operate. Plus, users might miss out on the benefits of learning together in a group.

Opportunities

- Implementing *mentor certification or skill verification processes* involves establishing mechanisms to validate the qualifications and expertise of mentors on the platform. This could include verifying credentials, conducting assessments, or providing certifications for mentors who meet certain standards which would help enforce confidence in its users.
- Collaborating with organizations, educational institutions, or businesses could involve partnerships where these entities contribute resources, such as funding, expertise, or access to specialized facilities. These *collaborations can enhance the platform's credibility* and expand its user base by tapping into established networks and audiences.

Threats

- *Time spent with uncertified mentors poses a risk to users*, as they may receive inaccurate guidance, leading to wasted time, effort, and potentially negative learning outcomes. This can erode trust in the platform and deter users from seeking assistance or participating in mentorship programs in the future.
- SkillHarbour's *lack of widespread recognition and visibility* in the market poses a threat to its ability to attract new users and compete with more established platforms. Increasing brand awareness is crucial to overcoming this challenge and expanding its user base.

Business Values

Energy token system

Seek&Share implements a virtual token system called energy, an in-app purchasable item will allow the user to register themselves for either an in-person or virtual skill exchange events. Newly registered users can begin their learning journey by purchasing energy (bundle of 5) through the app. When a user desires to learn a skill, energy has to be spent to register themselves for skill exchange sessions. Once the user depletes his five energies, only upon teaching a skill of his expertise will the ability to purchase energy be unlocked.

Contributors can teach skills at events continuously for five times, after which they will be forced to learn a new skill, only after which will the ability to host skill sessions be unlocked. This system fosters an environment where users are motivated to continuously learn and develop new skills. It emphasizes that users should not solely consume knowledge without also giving back to the community by contributing a skill. Similarly, it encourages users to engage in teaching others, provided they are actively learning and acquiring new skills themselves.

Skill Matching Algorithm

The application allows users to sign up on the platform while registering their information along with their desired expertise and varied skill interests.

When the users are not sure about their own skillsets, they can take a survey based on wider subject topics like technology, science, programming, soft skills, life skills etc. The algorithm will assist users to narrow down their field of expertise

The skill matching algorithm recommends a list of users that can offer a skill interest to an individual that they might like to learn from, and these lists of users can either be strongly or weakly matched. When there is a strong match, both users have a skill to offer each other. When there is a weak match, only either of the user has a skill to offer while the other user would only learn that skill without having any skill to teach in return.

This algorithm will therefore help new users understand what they are looking for and help them find a great place to begin their skill exchange journey on the platform.

Progress Passport System

The Progress Passport System boasts gamification elements like badges and achievements for mastering skills, completing courses, contributing valuable insights to discussions, and helping others in the community. There are also mastery badges given by contributors to their mentees when they believe they have mastered the skill which they are being taught. Badges can serve as visible markers of accomplishment and expertise.

Leaderboard system is used to rank users based on their participation, contributions, and achievements within the platform. This encourages healthy competition and motivates users to engage actively to climb the ranks.

Challenges and special events will be hosted for which only the qualified users such as members with certain badges, leaderboard toppers under certain divisions, highly rated mentors etc. will be allowed to participate to win large and very rare prizes and badges.

All these incentives can foster a sense of achievement to everyone who makes a progress through this software.

Seek&Share Summit

Seasonal Conventions will be conducted at major convention centres across the city where users will be able to learn trending and in-demand skills from experts in the field. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn, meet and make new connections or strengthen existing ones.

These conventions will be conducted for every quarter and even people from outside the Seek&Share community can visit the convention and get to learn about the vibrant community of skill exchange.