

INSTA-GOAL

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INSTA-GOAL is a mobile app that helps you reach your goals by pairing you with a peer accountability buddy with the same goal to share the journey with.

Objective

- Facilitate peer accountability by connecting people with others who have similar goals
- Gamify the self-improvement journey by using evidence-based research to make it fun and effective
- Encourage people by displaying metrics and supporting a visual journal to commemorate their journey

Commented [AA1]: use accountability pairs not partner?

User

- Busy people that want to improve their school/work/life balance
- People training for different fitness goals
- People that are trying to learn a new skill

Motivation

People are almost always looking for ways they could improve their lives, whether that means starting a meditation practice, training for a 5k, or finding time each night to read a novel. The problem is that many feel they don't have the time to incorporate something new, some don't know where to start, and others may be discouraged because they've had trouble building new habits in the past. In some cases, life and fitness coaches could be a solution, but for many they get expensive in the long term. In other cases, a coach may not fit the goal and what would really help is having someone by their side to reach the same goal with them. In any case, INSTA-GOAL aims to connect like-minded individuals to support and motivate each other to reach their goals.

INSTA-GOAL is unique because it can connect users with someone with a similar goal and motivation level. It will help them get comfortable with their accountability buddy by supporting a visual journal feature where they can see the highs and lows of each other's journeys. INSTA-GOAL will also provide freedom for users to work towards their goal in their own way but within a structured environment that is designed to keep them on track as well as help them be a great accountability buddy.

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HOW DOES IT WORK?

INSTA-GOAL will follow this end-to-end process:

1. Present the user with a variety of common goals to choose from for their ultimate goal.
Examples: Reading > Read every day, Read one book/month; Health & Fitness > Run a 5k, Weight loss; Professional Development > Read PD books, Listen to podcast regularly; Mind & Body > Meditation practice, Journal practice
2. Present the user with questions to understand their motivation level, experience, and preferred timeline.
3. Present the user with an appropriate number of interim milestones and allow the user to choose each interim milestone or pick from a suggestion list.
4. Prompt the user to choose interim rewards or pick from a suggestion list. INSTA-GOAL will reward the user with these randomly throughout the journey.
5. Match the user with an accountability partner and facilitate early conversation to help partners learn about each other and their goals. Use an introductory activity to communicate the expectations of being an accountability buddy to both partners as well as introduce the different features of the app.
6. INSTA-GOAL will help pairs decide on a preferred communication style (in-app message, text, video message) and frequency.
7. INSTA-GOAL will send individual users a nudge to communicate with their partner if they have surpassed the agreed upon check-in frequency.

INSTA-GOAL will send nudges to encourage users to post pictures of their journey with helpful prompts if users are unsure what to share.

INSTA-GOAL can provide helpful tips specific to their goals if users need some help along the way.
8. INSTA-GOAL will track or prompt for the necessary data and present pairs with their metrics in interesting visual ways. INSTA-GOAL will also track progress towards interim milestones using a game-like level map.
9. All users reach their goal and make a friend along the way!

Data

Goal Tracking

INSTA-GOAL will help each user create a success plan that will be made up of intermediate goals and rewards. The app will visualize these goals and rewards on an interactive UI that will look like the user is beating levels in a game.

INSTA-GOAL stores data about the user in order to track progress towards each goal. The data stored depends on the specific goal. For example, if tracking a fitness or health related goal, INSTA-GOAL will ask for permission to access the user's health data from their mobile phone for step count, calories burned, heart rate, etc. In other cases, the app will ask the user to input data, such as the number of minutes or pages read if the goal is to read every night.

INSTA-GOAL will then translate the user's data into interesting units to make progress tracking fun and engaging. For a goal of running a marathon, miles ran can be quantified as miles ran towards the user's desired travel destination. For a goal to meditate daily, INSTA-GOAL can represent how long the user has spent meditating in days on a different planet.

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Visual Journal

INSTA-GOAL supports a shared photo feed for accountability pairs to document their personal growth journey. The intention of the visual journal is to enable accountability pairs to connect on a deeper level while also documenting the highs and lows in order to motivate users to continue pushing towards their goals.

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Data Sharing

INSTA-GOAL's main objective is to support peer accountability, which is done through sharing the self-improvement journey with an accountability buddy with the same goal. To effectively do this, INSTA-GOAL will share the user's data with their accountability buddy, so that each accountability pair can celebrate their achievements together!

Challenges

Users will begin with different levels of accountability

INSTA-GOAL is centered around partners being able to hold each other accountable. This can be a challenge if one partner has low accountability or isn't taking it as seriously as the other. Likewise, if one partner is engaging more and putting in a lot of effort to hold their partner accountable, then they may not be benefiting as much from the app as their partner. INSTA-GOAL will need to have measures in place to (1) match partners up based on accountability levels, (2) facilitate how partners can better hold each other accountable, and (3) intervene if one partner is not benefiting from working with their partner.

Users will progress at different paces

INSTA-GOAL depends on partners being able to cheer each other on until they reach their ultimate goal. This gets tricky if one partner is meeting their interim milestones faster than the other. Who will hold their other partner accountable if one partner reaches their goal first? INSTA-GOAL will need to have measures in place to help users structure the timeline of their interim and main goals.

Users may not know how to reach their ultimate goal

INSTA-GOAL requires each user to identify appropriate interim miles that will lead them to reaching their ultimate goal. Some users may be choosing to use an accountability app because they need more direction and guidance towards reaching that goal; and therefore, may not be able to set themselves up for success on their own. That is why INSTA-GOAL will need to function as a planning assistant to make sure user's goals are time and skill appropriate, and be able to suggest reasonable milestones if needed.

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PROJECT PLAN

Approach

INSTA-GOAL will be designed for the course CSCI 5839 - User-Centered Design and Development, over the course of the Fall 2021 semester. The design process will follow an iterative prototyping and user testing approach and will culminate in a video demo of a polished prototype.

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Deliverables

Deliverable	Week	Description
Project Proposal	9/13	Documents the project objective, motivation, target user group, data use, and expected challenges
Personas and task models	9/27	TBD
Prototypes of key features	10/6	TBD
Complete prototype	10/25	TBD
User testing results and changes	11/3	TBD
Revised prototype	11/29	TBD
Video demo	12/8	TBD