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INTRODUCTION

My internship experience with the Accumulator Integration Team at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee (BCBST) has been a pivotal moment in my academic and professional journey. It offered me a unique opportunity to apply my academic knowledge in a real-world setting, deepened my understanding of software development, and provided a glimpse into the intricacies of application configuration and data integration processes. In this paper, I will discuss my learning objectives, how I met them, and the impact of this experience on my career goals.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS

At the start of my internship, I set several learning objectives to guide my experience. My main goal was to improve my programming skills by developing or implementing new features within existing applications. I also aimed to learn and apply a new programming language or framework, gain a comprehensive understanding of the team's application configuration processes, and enhance my collaboration and communication skills by working closely with team members and participating in daily Agile standups.

To meet my first objective, I focused on practical applications of my programming knowledge. One of my significant contributions was working on the TVA report, an important project for the team. The TVA report included analyzing and interpreting data from various sources, including external claims data, to provide insights that would inform decision-making processes within the organization. My role required me to work closely with the data integration processes, ensuring that external claim data was accurately incorporated into the core processing system, Facets. This system is vital for processing medical and dental claims, considering all

aspects of a member's health-related story. My work was particularly focused on pharmacy transactions and their relation to deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses. The experience allowed me to hone my skills in problem-solving and software development, providing a clear understanding of the complexities involved in real-world coding.

In addition to the TVA report, I was involved in fixing a bug in an existing project. This task was challenging, as it required a deep understanding of the system's architecture and careful attention to detail. The bug fixes not only resolved the immediate issue but also contributed to the long-term stability and functionality of the system. The code I developed to address this issue will be integrated into future projects, showcasing my ability to create sustainable solutions. This experience was invaluable in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, as I had to apply my understanding of C# and SQL in a complex and dynamic environment.

Understanding the department's application configuration processes was another critical objective. The Accumulator Integration team is responsible for bringing external claim data into the core processing system, ensuring that medical and dental claims account for all relevant information. This includes supporting integrations with various partners and managing data exchanges with pharmacy, vision, dental, and behavioral health benefit managers. Additionally, the team handles claim data intake for Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRA), builds Part B drug claims, specialty pharmacy drug claims, and paper-submitted claims, and manages customer service or third-party administration (TPA) connections.

Through active participation in these configuration tasks, I gained a comprehensive understanding of the application configuration processes. For example, I was exposed to projects that required integrating pharmacy transaction data with Facets to accurately reflect members'

deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses. This work was critical for ensuring that all aspects of a member's health-related story were considered when processing claims. My involvement in these processes gave me valuable insights into the technical and operational aspects of software deployment and maintenance, an area I had little exposure to before this internship.

Collaboration and communication were also key components of my learning objectives. The daily Agile standups were an important part of this process, as they allowed me to engage with team members, share progress, and discuss any challenges or roadblocks. These meetings not only kept everyone on the same page but also created an environment where ideas and solutions could be freely shared. Through these interactions, I enhanced my ability to communicate effectively and work as part of the team, skills that are essential in any professional setting. The collaborative nature of the Agile methodology also taught me the importance of adaptability and flexibility, as priorities and tasks often shifted based on the needs of the team and the project.

LESSONS LEARNED

When I started this rotation, I wanted to understand the bridge between academic learning and practical experience. I additionally wanted to understand how the concepts and theories I had studied could be applied in a real-world setting, particularly in software development and application configuration. In addition, I sought to gain deeper knowledge of the professional workflows, tools, and technologies used in the industry. This experience was also an opportunity for me to explore my career interests and refine my career goals, particularly in software engineering.

COURSEWORK APPLICATION

My academic coursework played a significant role in preparing me for this internship, particularly the Software Engineering courses I completed. These courses provided a solid foundation in Agile and SCRUM principles, which were directly applicable to the daily standups and project management processes I encountered. The Agile methodology emphasizes iterative development, continuous feedback, and collaboration, all of which were integral to my work with the Accumulator Integration Team. Understanding these principles allowed me to navigate the complexities of the projects I worked on and contributed to my overall success in the internship.

The real-world application of these concepts, however, highlighted the differences between academic exercises and professional practices. While my coursework provided theoretical knowledge, the internship offered practical experience that brought these theories to life. For example, the iterative nature of Agile allowed me to see the immediate impact of my contributions and how they fit into the larger project. This experience reinforced the importance of flexibility and adaptability in software development, as project requirements and priorities can change rapidly.

CAREER GOALS IMPACT

The internship has had a profound impact on my career goals, both in the short term and long term. In the short term, it has provided me with practical experience in software development and application configuration, two areas that are essential to my career interests. The hands-on experience I gained in programming, data integration, and configuration tasks has

strengthened my technical skills and given me a clearer understanding of the industry's expectations.

In the mid-term, this experience has reinforced my desire to pursue a career in software engineering, with a particular focus on application development and configuration. The insights I gained into the practical aspects of software development and maintenance have clarified my interest in these areas, and I am eager to continue building on this knowledge in future roles.

In the long term, the internship has solidified my career direction and aspirations. It has provided me with a deeper understanding of the technical and business aspects of software solutions, as well as the importance of collaboration and communication in a professional setting. This experience has also expanded my professional network and provided valuable connections that will be beneficial as I continue to pursue my career goals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, my internship with the Accumulator Integration Team at BCBST has been a transformative experience. It has allowed me to apply my academic knowledge in a practical setting, gain valuable insights into the industry, and refine my career goals. The learning objectives I set at the beginning of the internship were met, and I now have a solid foundation for my potential career in software engineering. The hands-on experience, exposure to real-world coding practices, and understanding of application configuration processes have all contributed to my growth and development. As I look forward to the next steps in my career, I'm grateful for the opportunities and experiences this internship has given me.