Marketing for Entrepreneurship

Executive Summary

Community Partners
Professor Dave Mawhinney
Professor Bob Blattberg
Student Development Team
Nicholas Gasbarro
Justin Hilliard
Zehni Khairullah
Daniel Shlyuger

Background

The Carnegie Mellon Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) is a department within the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon. It offers opportunities at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. The CIE maintains several avenues for budding entrepreneurs to grow, as well as seek seed funding and advice. Its mission is: (1) to define CMU as the "destination of choice" for all individuals interested in entrepreneurship, (2) to foster an "inside-out" approach to creating winning commercial ventures from cutting-edge research and ingenious ideas for the benefit of society, and (3) To develop an extensive, vibrant network of alumni entrepreneurs.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

In the fall of 2014, CIE Professor Dave Mawhinney collaborated with distinguished Marketing Professor Bob Blattberg to offer a new MBA course titled "Marketing for Entrepreneurship." All content for this and all other Tepper courses are hosted on Canvas, which is a Learning Management System (LMS) similar to Blackboard. Bob and Dave wanted the ability to allow alumni, and others not currently enrolled in the course to access course content, and to control access to content.

Project Vision

This solution will benefit the course instructors, as it enables them to create a larger and more engaged alumni community, by giving alumni access to valuable course content. This expanded community is a key goal for the CIE. This will also benefit the course administrators, as it saves them from the laborious process of manually creating accounts for each student. Finally, it will benefit the alumni community, as it gives them access and keeps them engaged. Our vision for the project evolved over time from a custom solution into a workflow that allowed our clients to continue using Canvas, led by our client's desire for maintainability.

Project Outcomes

Our project outcomes involve their own large sets of work but are all intimately related, for example, our initial support documentation and analysis for course hosting solutions led us to suggesting the use of canvas for our client, preserving much of what they like about that system and giving us a clear path to exploring and ultimately implementing alumni access solutions.

Project Deliverables

We created extensive documentation to both our client and our advisor on all aspects of the project, a task that ultimately helped us use good judgment throughout the duration of the project. As mentioned above, our client wanted to stay away from a custom system due to maintainability issues. For this reason, we are delivering a Google Form with an Add-on script that will help to gather and organize the information needed to give access to alumni. The client will be able to send a specially formatted file to Tepper's Canvas administrators to process the adding request. We are delivering proper documentation on the usage of our plugin, as well as extensive research on the existing canvas plugin ecosystem that will help our client implement additional functionality on their Canvas course in the future.

Recommendations

Our team recommends that our community clients use the solution we provided until CMU gives alumni Andrew IDs. Our client will be able to grant access to alumni who are interested in the course content and will enable them to engage the alumni community. Furthermore, in the near future, when CMU gives Andrew IDs to alumni, it will be easier to add the students through the existing technology instantly without the need to use the Google Form Add-on.

Student Development Team

Daniel Shlyuger served as innovation lead. He is a junior major in Information Systems and Computer Science. He will be interning as a software engineer for Custom Ink and looking for a career in software engineering or technical product management.

Justin Hilliard served as technical lead. He is a junior major in Information Systems and a minor in Business Administration. He will be interning for JP Morgan as a business analysis and looking for a career in software engineering or technical product management.

Nicholas Gasbarro served as project manager. He is a senior majoring in Information Systems and minoring in Business Administration. He will be working for BNY Mellon, and is looking for a career in technology consulting.

Zehni Khairullah served as technical consultant. He is a junior major in Information Systems and minor in Business Administration. He will be interning for Host.qa as a tech consultant and web developer this summer and is looking for a career in technology or management consulting.