

Open Up

Executive Summary

Community Partner
Open Up
Student Consulting Team
Alex Lewis
Savannah Xu
Pauline Zhang

Background

Open Up is a nonprofit based in the Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh that delivers mindfulness tools through movement practices and interactive arts, with a special focus on people living with disabilities. Since its founding in 2014 and formal nonprofit launch in 2020, Open Up has grown into a multi-faceted wellness hub offering six monthly programs—Open Spaces (community engagement events), Open Movement (inclusive movement classes), Open Training (in-person teacher training), Mindfulness 1-1 (private coaching), and Community Events (e.g., Spectrum Yoga for individuals with autism). Supported by six full-time staff, a network of part-time instructors, and an 11-member board, Open Up has served over 350 graduates and maintains strong partnerships with local nonprofits and funders such as AARP and BikePGH.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

The opportunity was to help Open Up migrate part of its in-person training into an accessible, self-paced online format, reducing physical barriers for learners and enabling long-term scalability, certification tracking, and potential new revenue streams.

Project Vision

Our goal was to help Open Up transition their in-person training programs into a scalable and sustainable online format by leveraging existing learning management platforms. We planned to build and publish a pilot course on two platforms, Thinkific and Udemy, using a modular and repeatable structure that Open Up could eventually expand independently. As part of the project, we aimed to conduct A/B testing with target learners to evaluate platform usability and learning experience, with the intention of recommending the best-fitting platform based on user feedback. We also intended to create supporting documentation to enable Open Up's team to manage and grow their online course offerings in the future.

Project Outcomes

Type	Outcome
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Role clarity enabled smoother execution and stronger team ownership.• The client explicitly praised our transparency, professionalism, and responsiveness during check-ins and via email.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A repeatable course-building process was created and documented in a detailed Thinkific How-To Guide.• Clients now understand how to publish, update, and manage courses without outside support.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The “Building Inclusive Workplaces” course was fully implemented on both Thinkific and Udemy.• Both Udemy and Thinkific courses include modular chapters, quizzes, downloadable resources, and an auto-generated certificate.• Conducted A/B testing to gather quantitative and qualitative data to support the final recommendation we proposed to Open Up

Project Deliverables

- Published versions of the “Building Inclusive Workplaces” course on Thinkific and Udemy
- A full Thinkific How-To Guide for future course development
- Detailed documentation for both platforms (curriculum, pricing, structure)
- A/B testing feedback and analysis to guide future course design decisions

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 focuses on the platform recommendation for Open Up with clear steps for sustaining and scaling their work on Thinkific.

Recommendation 2 focuses on selecting the most cost-effective Thinkific pricing plan, starting with the Basic plan and outlining when and why to upgrade.

Recommendation 3 is directed toward future course generators who may build additional courses or extend functionality on Thinkific.

Student Consulting Team

Alex Lewis

Alex is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with additional minors in Statistics and Business Analytics & Optimization. As the Quality Assurance Lead, Alex ensured that all deliverables met a consistent and professional standard before being shared with the client. He also supported Thinkific course testing and contributed to synthesizing feedback from the A/B testing rounds to inform final design decisions.

Savannah Xu

Savannah is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with an additional minor in Product Management. She led the Client Relationship Management efforts, serving as the primary point of contact for Open Up. Savannah facilitated clear and timely communication, organized weekly check-in meetings, and ensured that all client feedback was documented and addressed. She also took the lead in developing and implementing the Thinkific version of the course, aligning it with both user needs and platform capabilities.

Pauline Zhang

Pauline is a fourth-year student majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Human-Computer Interaction. As the Project Manager, she coordinated the overall direction of the project and ensured the team stayed aligned with the timeline, deliverables, and client expectations. Pauline was responsible for scheduling and facilitating team meetings, tracking milestones, and synthesizing weekly progress updates. She also led the development and testing of the Udemy course, created check-in presentation materials, and contributed heavily to the platform recommendation and Thinkific documentation to ensure a smooth client handoff.