TIMS3311 Assignment 2

Critical Reflection

Mitchell Buist (s4784872)

Words: 1489

Personal Lessons

Throughout this work-integrated learning process, I have learnt and refined many skills that will be useful for my future career. A main one that came vitally from the WIL interview process is persistence mixed with a healthy amount of confidence. Interviewing people in an industry as introverted as the pharmaceutical industry required a lot of persistence and confidence, as without it, people would be unwilling to talk to us. From a more business-oriented perspective, I not only learnt how to apply a lean startup model, design thinking, and effectuation, but I also learnt many stakeholder communication and market analysis skills. Being put into a startup company that I knew nothing about and an industry that I am unfamiliar with required me to be adaptable and to push myself to become familiar, in particular with an MVP that I had not created and was not overly comfortable with. The lean startup methodology of build-measure-learn ironically helped me learn more about the MVP, as I walked through it with people who were more familiar with the terminology on the software, it became more familiar to me.

The major challenge of the process was the reluctance of industry personnel to speak to us, but it also became one of the highlights. Pillflow wanted us to focus on pharmacists in our interviews, which led us to email every pharmacy in the greater Brisbane area, with not one response. This pushed up to be more innovative, talking to people who aren't directly in the industry, and one of the biggest highlights was when we would make unexpected breakthroughs with random people. For instance, when we found out what the Pharmaceutical Guild of Australia was. Overall, if we were to do this process again, I would reach out to more people who are indirectly linked to the industry, as they are more open to speaking about the flaws and have a larger, often more niche, perspective on the industry.

Networks Created

Unfortunately, due to the student team being only two of us, I did not make any new connections within it. However, beyond that, I feel that I made a great new connection with the startup team of Alfred and Viknesh, and if we don't continue to work together, I will definitely be invested in the success going forward. Outside of that, the interview process allowed me to create networks with strangers, with a specific example being two pharmacists at a local Chempro. Though the connection is not deep yet, the conversations that we had about topics they

were passionate about opened a channel of friendship and further connection. When I go in there on occasion, we talk more about this course, and further challenges they are facing, and will continue to do so, which will continue to help me develop skills such as confidence and stakeholder communication. Overall, I really enjoyed the process and the connections I created throughout it.

Past Knowledge

Being in the process of a dual degree in business management and design**,** I am quite familiar with the base theories and skills needed to launch a startup. I have come across the main theories of lean startup, effectuation, and design thinking, and have applied the theories to different courses, such as in design infrastructure. In the course, we had direct communication to are target audience, being aged, care residents. During the process, we tested theories with MVPs and codesign to develop a functional and effective product as part of the lean-startup methodology. While I had a decent baseline knowledge of theories and applications, I still had a long way to go to be effective in the innovation and entrepreneurship space. In particular, I had not put effectuation into practice.

Current Knowledge

An important entrepreneurial concept that I put into practice through the WIL process is the lean startup methodology. Throughout the semester, we tested many assumptions, with our biggest confirmed one being the reluctance of the pharmaceutical industry, which required us as managers to be flexible and adaptable. The industry's reluctance to communicate and change made me question whether Pillflow should pivot or preserve its initial choice of targeting pharmacies as its pilot programs. However, with further discussions with the guys at Pillflow, they justified their choices. The importance of an MVP really stood out throughout the WIL process, as it allows me, as an entrepreneur, to waste less time being stuck in a design slump and hyperfocusing on unimportant factors of my startup. Constantly having communication with the target audience allows entrepreneurs to develop the most effective product possible and reduce wasted resources.

Though I have come across them before in my previous courses, it was beneficial to put design thinking and empathy mapping into practice in the real world. Mapping out the target

audience's feelings, thoughts, and pain points helps put into context the current industry's flaws, and combining that with a SWOT diagram exposes the next steps that the startup should take, depending on its opportunities and threats. Understanding, through empathy mapping, workflow frustrations in the current industry, such as slow updates, error-prone, and time-consuming, helps reinforce the importance of the Pillflow service.

Unfortunately, due to the deliverables expected from Pillflow, we did not put into practice the effectuation methodology ourselves; however, the theories of affordable loss and starting with your means were observable in the way the entrepreneurs at Pillflow acted. Viknesh used his current means, a career at Terry White, to launch their first pilot program, which developed their idea from there. They put effort into expanding their means by participating and winning a Shark Tank equivalent convention, which shows commitment and innovation. Though I would've been interested in putting the effectuation methodology into practice myself, it was insightful to see how two committed startup entrepreneurs put it into practice.

Moving past the main theories taught within the course, another skill that I learned throughout the WIL process is the development of a value proposition through stakeholder communication and interviews. Value proposition, as a concept, has always been one of the more confusing ones on the business model canvas, but this WIL process taught me how to effectively create value. Listening directly to the target audience and stakeholders allows you to quickly develop the essential features of your service or product, instead of just guessing what would be desired. Going straight to the target audience is what I will be doing in the future in all my startup contributions, as it will give me an easy understanding and an effective starting base.

Overall, the work is an integrated learning process that has taught me a lot of useful skills in practice and theory, which I will use in the future to help my and others' startups succeed.

Future Knowledge

Now that I reflect on my time within the WIL process, I believe that the skills and knowledge I have gained throughout the semester will positively affect my future career, whether that is as a self-employed entrepreneur or working for a company. While I don't understand the scale of impact as of yet, I believe my understanding of the startup process has given me a competitive career advantage. I feel more confident and less overwhelmed in my ability to create my own startup if I feel that I have a valuable idea. Viewing committed startup entrepreneurs in

action has inspired me to take a similar path and taught me positive steps I can take on my way to my goals. I believe that having a confident and proven grasp of concepts like lean startup, design thinking, effectuation, and value creation will positively impact my chances in the job market and may even shape my future as an entrepreneur.

Course Feedback

As stated in the previous sections, I believe the skills that I have learned in this class will positively impact my path in my future career, which I value a lot in this course. I also value the real-world experience that I can take into my future courses and career.

If I were to make improvement to this course, for starters, I understand the point of minimal structure in regards to the work-integrated learning process. It occasionally felt like we were a burden on the startup because they felt like they needed to make up tasks for us to do. For future runs of the course, it might be necessary to ensure the startups have a vetted task list so that it doesn't make them feel pressure to work around us. Secondly, while the real-world experience is irreplaceable, it sometimes felt like my success in the course was determined by outside factors such as startup commitment and stakeholder responsiveness, though it did provide a good challenge to the course. Finally, the WIL ultimately felt pointless in the end when we didn't have an assignment on the deliverables that we sent to them; it was of our own volition. Overall, the course gave me a lot of valuable skills, and could be even better with a few adjustments.