Interview Report

The Recruiting Team
3/8/2020

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https://docs.google.com/document/d/1R70ZmRIFgvM0YkM2O1-2LYEAiKzRdRMbTKgNAvNlG7w/edit?usp=sharing

Introduction

This report will be focused on understanding the recruiting process for the University of Michigan College of Engineering Computer Science junior and senior internships in software development and project management. Specifically, we are interested in learning about positive experiences, negative experiences, and how useful the Engineering Career Resource Center (ECRC) was during the recruiting process.

The research question posed for this report is the following:

- What is frustrating about the junior year internship search process?
- What are the tools that people use and how are they using them? What value is derived from using these tools?

The goal of this report is to understand the opportunities to improve the recruiting experience for University of Michigan Computer Science engineers. We see possibilities of either helping the College of Engineering improve their recruiting resources or creating a new product that amplifies the strengths of the resources and addresses the pain-points.

Methods

The Interview Analysis method will be employed for this project. The Interview Analysis method was chosen in response to the chosen research questions. Our questions require a deeper understanding of the user experience and involve a lot of user opinions.

Data collection

- Demographic Criteria:
    - Current University of Michigan Engineering Students
    - Computer Science Engineering Major
    - Upperclassmen (Juniors or Seniors)
    - Secured a junior year summer internship
    - Software Engineering or Project Manager internship position
- Methods of Recruitment:
    - Utilizing researcher personal and professional network
    - Filtering matching majors and internship roles through LinkedIn
- Summary of Participants:
    - Software Engineer Interns at FAMGA (Big Tech Companies)
    - Project Manager Interns
    - Female Software Engineers
- Interview Protocol:
    - Appendix A

- Interview Transcripts:
    - Appendix B

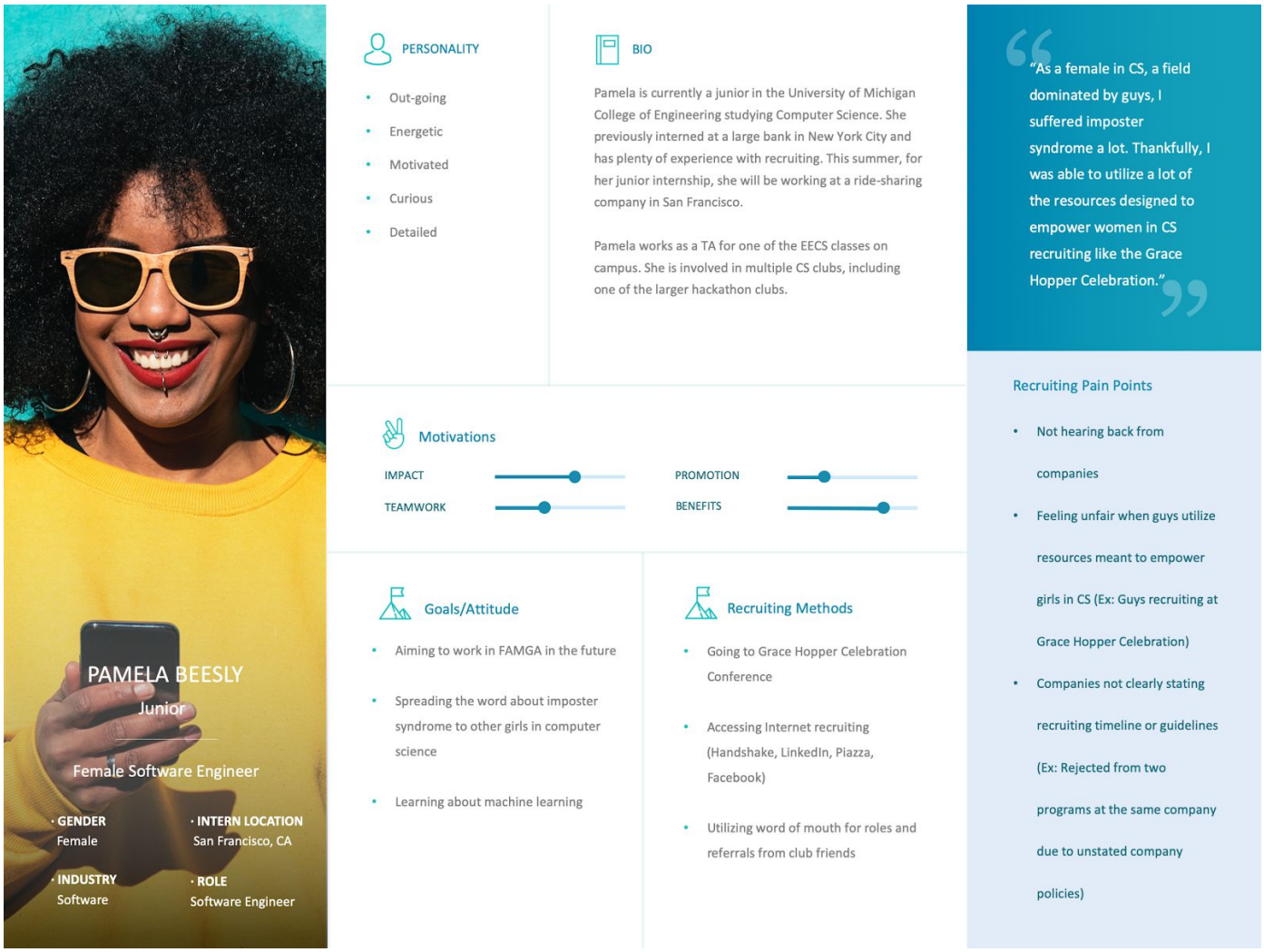
Data analysis

- Affinity Diagram
    - Appendix C

Findings

(All Personas and Scenarios can be found on this Google Drive: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1q0-IhkqufzZzhXKWUg1hdUgRaEIO8J9x?usp=sharing)

Personas



MIKE SCOTT

Senior

Project Manager Intern

- **GENDER** Male
- **INTERN LOCATION** Mountain View, CA
- **INDUSTRY** Software
- **ROLE** Associate Project Manager Intern

PERSONALITY

- Team Player
- Driven
- Positive
- Cautious
- Risk Taking

BIO

Mike is currently a senior in the University of Michigan College of Engineering studying Computer Science and Data Science. He previously interned at a startup doing program management work. He will be working full time as an Associate Project Manager Intern at a Big Tech company in Silicon valley.

On campus, Mike is involved in multiple different clubs. He is a project manager in a consulting club and is highly involved in both the business school and the engineering school.

> "PM recruiting is really tough because there are not that many great PM offerings to begin with and not that much documentation on the company's side. The best way to recruit for PM is through networking."

Motivations

IMPACT		PROMOTION	
TEAMWORK		BENEFITS	

Goals/Attitude

- Working towards starting his own business in the future
- Achieving a great work-life balance
- Being able to learn new skills at his job
- Finding purpose in his job and being able to enable his team at work

Recruiting Methods

- Utilizing online resources and database like APMlist.com to find good project management programs
- Going to career fairs and being connected to recruiters
- Preparing for Project Manager specific interview questions with club friends
- Hearing about PM jobs through club

Recruiting Pain Points

- Not hearing back from companies
- Lack of information on company's part on roles and lack of guidance and resources on university's part
- Needing to rely heavily on personal network and word of mouth

WILLIAM HALPERT

Junior

Software Engineer Intern at FAMGA

- **GENDER** Male
- **INTERN LOCATION** Cupertino, CA
- **INDUSTRY** Technology
- **ROLE** Software Engineer

PERSONALITY

- Reserved
- Techy
- Open Minded
- Introverted
- Perfectionist

BIO

William is currently a junior in the University of Michigan College of Engineering studying Computer Science. He previously interned at a small tech company building programs in C++ and was in touch with the recruiters from FAMGA. He will be working full time as a software engineer in Silicon valley this summer.

William is not really involved in any clubs on campus. However, William is really close with a few of his computer science professors. He spends most of his time doing his coding homework and even takes on extra coding challenges and passion projects.

> "Career Fair was really a mixed bag for me: I got offers from some companies through that, but others straight up ignored me. The worst part is definitely the uncoordinated timeline of companies and some not even letting you know decisions."

Motivations

IMPACT		PROMOTION	
TEAMWORK		BENEFITS	

Goals/Attitude

- Dreaming of working on projects that is highly visible to consumers
- Saving enough money in his 20's to buy a house in San Francisco
- Becoming C-Suite in either his current company or another one in his 50's
- Traveling to every country in the world

Recruiting Methods

- Going to University Career Fair
- Applying online through company website
- Seeking referrals from classmates and friends
- Looking for opportunities on Handshake and LinkedIn

Recruiting Pain Points

- Not hearing back from companies
- Feeling like the Engineering Career Resource Center is not helpful throughout the process
- Hating how repetitive it is to redo the application for each individual company

Scenarios

Grace Hopper Celebration Conference

Female Software Engineer

Scenario

Pamela first heard of the Grace Hopper Celebration through her club friends. Her friend went to the conference and suggested her to go too. Pamela began looking into scholarships to attend the celebration. Unfortunately, she missed out on the celebration her freshman year because she was not aware of the opportunity

Pamela was able to secure a scholarship from a bank to go to the conference in her sophomore year. She was lucky in the sense that the company reached out to her about the scholarship. She knew many of her other female coder friends who were unable to even locate scholarship opportunities let along receive one.

At the celebration, she was able to network with a financial technology company that does not recruit on-campus and receive on-site interviews with them. She crushed the interview and was able to secure a sophomore internship.

Now that Pamela is a junior, she does not think the conference would be as useful. A lot of the top tier Big Tech companies actively recruit on campus. Pamela decided to not join the conference but was able to utilize the network she built at the conference to secure a junior internship.

Recommendation

- More awareness needed for diversity opportunities such as Grace Hopper Celebration
- Opportunity to create an aggregated location for all the opportunity similar to handshake
- Another opportunity to help people who on the fence about if they want to join the conference decide if they should go by listing out companies that does not actively recruit on campus

Online Research on Opportunities

Project Manager Intern

Scenario

Mike is actively looking for a junior internship in project management. He knew that PM jobs are really hard to find, especially at a good firm. He began asking around to see what resources his friends used. What he found was that there are many good sources online to help him.

Mike found a few website that aggregated all good project management programs at larger companies. He decided to visit every career page on the list of programs he found but discovered that many of the pages are either offline or not updated correctly. He also found Linkedin and Handshake mostly useless.

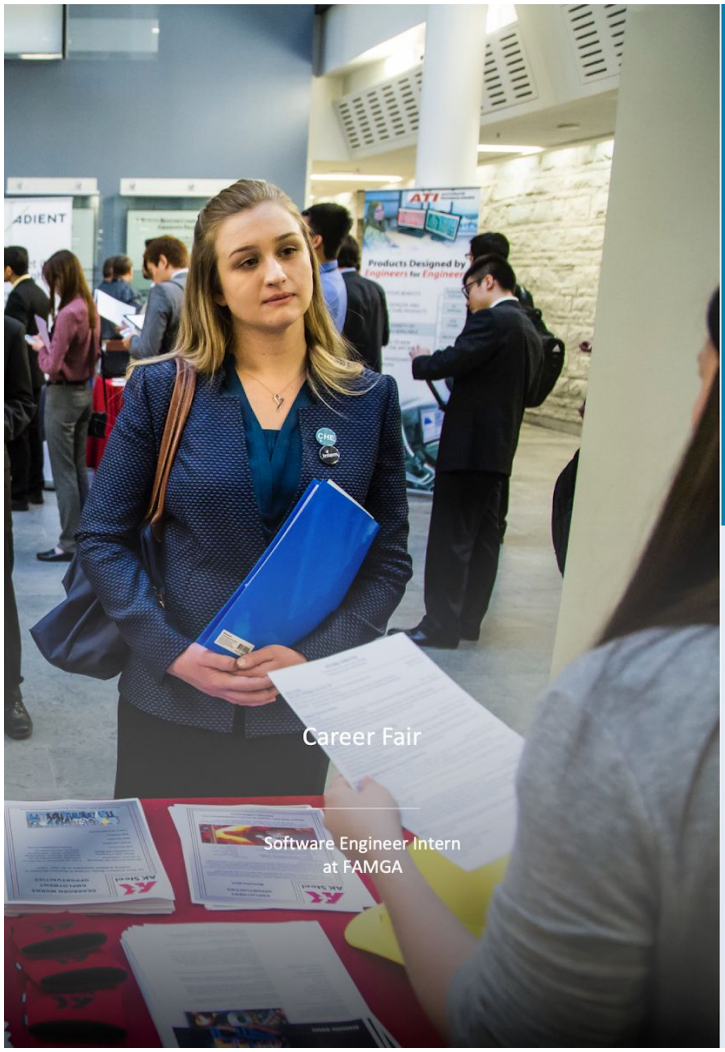
Mike was able to gain more information about the programs by getting connected to the company recruiters. Mike was fortunate that he actively networked at career fairs previously so had a lot of recruiter's emails.

Mike heard back from a lot of the companies he was aiming for. However, he also never heard back from few of the companies. He then flew out to the headquarters of some of these companies and completed product manager specific interviews.

Mike was able to secure an internship for his junior year.

Recommendation

- An opportunity exists for a central location for all different product manager roles offered by companies
- A centralized timeline for when different companies offers their product manager internship application would be beneficial for students looking for them
- Students would benefit from having easier access to recruiter's emails



Scenario

William is aiming to work for one of the Big Tech, FAMGA, company for his junior internship. He is really excited as he knew all the companies he was targeting is on campus at the Career Fair. He knew about the information through the Career Fair app. The app is particularly helpful as it lists all the companies present, date, location, positions offered, and whether or not they sponsor international students.

However, William knew career fairs are always a mix bag. It is possible he ends up with an interview right on the spot or simply spend an hour in line resulting in a 30 second useless conversation. It is a risk William is willing to take.

William ended up briefly networking with a few FAMGA recruiters and got their emails. He followed up through email and was actually able to learn a lot about different non-public opportunities at the companies. He ended up securing a job at one of the FAMGA companies through this method.

Recommendation

- The Career Fair application is unanimously agreed to be super helpful for the career fair. Strengthening the Career Fair app with more information could make it even better
- For both people who think Career Fairs are useful and those who do not agreed that the lines are the worst part of career fairs. A scheduled system where people visit the booths at the exact time they signed up for could improve the experience

Summary of Findings

Three key findings were present in our affinity diagram: Information regarding career fairs, companies in general, and network. This is the case as these are some areas with the largest effect for a student going through the recruiting process. Interviewees were split on how useful career fairs are but generally agreed the lines are the worst and the application was helpful with the information given. There is a general pain point in regards to the timeline of companies and how much information companies give regarding their internships. Lastly, interviewees found different ways to utilize their network to put them in a better position in the recruiting process.

Key Findings

- Career Fairs
    - The Career Fair app, which is indirectly tied to ECRC, was extremely helpful in navigating career fairs
    - Lines at the career fair are too long for the short time of interaction

with the recruiter
    - The best part of career fairs is the face to face interaction with companies
    - The career fair could be helpful because it can sometimes lead directly to a 1st round interview, oftentimes on the exact same day
    - ECRC is not helpful outside of the career fairs offered
- Relating to Companies
    - Application writing is tedious, especially when you enter in the same information for multiple companies
    - One of the greatest pain-points and common among almost all of the interviewee is that some companies do not respond in a timely manner or simply does not respond at all
    - There is a lack of coordination amongst company timelines is a significant pain-point
    - The recruiting process began around September and October; however, for PM and SWE roles it is often a floating application process
- Utilizing Network
    - Many opportunities are currently spread through word of mouth through the student body. This creates an advantage with students with larger networks through clubs and a disadvantage for those who do not
    - Referrals are very important to gain a 1st round interview much not for much else after. This creates the same advantage/disadvantage situation as word of mouth opportunities
    - There were a plethora of tools used in this process, with each student using different resources

Recommendations

- Improvements to the current process:
    - Implement a scheduling system for career fairs where students sign up for a block of time to talk to recruiters (According to supply chain management theories, this would allow for less variance in how long each person gets to talk to a recruiter and allow recruiters to more accurately collect data on people they talked to)
    - The ECRC career portal is underutilized and not helpful for the process. The resources should be directed to expanding career fair usefulness
    - ECRC could help its students better by aggregating recruiter emails
- Opportunity for new services:
    - A central timeline for the different software engineer and product manager internship application that could facilitate coordination between companies to avoid overlapping interview process
    - A central database for roles that are less easy to find like product management

- A service similar to Handshake but instead is used to help companies make internship applications
- A program that helps students automatically fill out internship applications, especially for basic information or repetitive information

Conclusion

In conclusion, through interviewing current computer science majors, we were able to understand the positive points, pain points, and helpfulness of university resources throughout the recruiting process. We found that there is no single best practice for recruiting: Some people utilized diversity events, some used the career fairs, and others utilized their network. In general, people find lines at career fairs horrible, hate companies that do not respond and use their network to a certain degree. Opportunities exist for the university to improve the career fair opportunities and what resources they should focus on offering such as databases on relevant recruiter information. There are also possibilities for new services to be created such as a single location for all companies to put their internship applications.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

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Introduction

Hello, my name is _____. How are you doing today? Thank you so much for participating in this short activity. My team and I are interested in learning about the engineering summer internship recruiting process. We are doing this by conducting interviews which is what you will be participating in today. I will start off asking a few questions, and we can have a conversation about your experiences from there. There is no time limit although this should not take longer than 20-30 minutes. There are no right/wrong answers either. I want to reassure you that your identity will be kept anonymous and all your answers will be confidential. You also have the right to stop the test at any point if you want. I do want to mention that we will record our participants but the recordings are strictly confidential and are used only to aid the analysis process. These recordings will not be shared with anyone. Do I have your verbal consent to record and proceed with the study?

Questions

1. Walk me through your junior year summer internship search.
    a. How was this experience?
        i. If GOOD…
            1. What about the search process did you like the most?
            2. Can you attribute your positive feelings toward anything in particular?
        ii. If BAD…
            1. Although the results weren't what you had hoped, what about the search process was helpful?
            2. You mentioned something <insert bad/ frustrating part>, can you elaborate on that more? How did you feel when that happened?
            3. What about it was the most frustrating?
2. How did you hear about job opportunities?
    a. Is this something you would consider using again? Why or why not?
        i. If YES…
            1. What features/ elements of it do you think was most helpful?
        ii. If NO…
            1. What about this method made you say no?

2. If you could make a change to this method, what would you suggest, if anything?

b. [If there was a resource mentioned] How did you hear about this resource?

3. Can you tell us about your experience with the Engineering Career Resource Center?
    a. [If informed student] Did you utilize these resources?
        i. If YES...How was your experience using these resources?
4. What was the biggest pain point of your internship search process? Why?
    a. If there was one thing you could change about this pain point, what would it be, if any?

Appendix B: Transcripts
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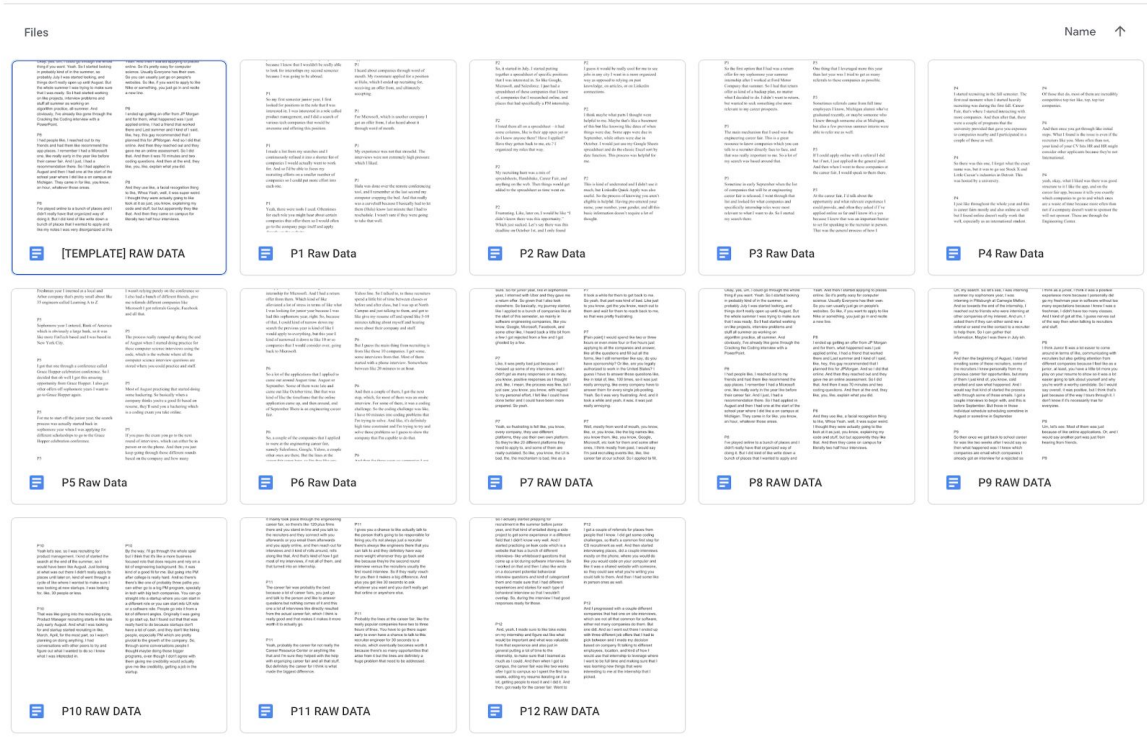

Appendix C: Affinity Diagrams

Diagram:
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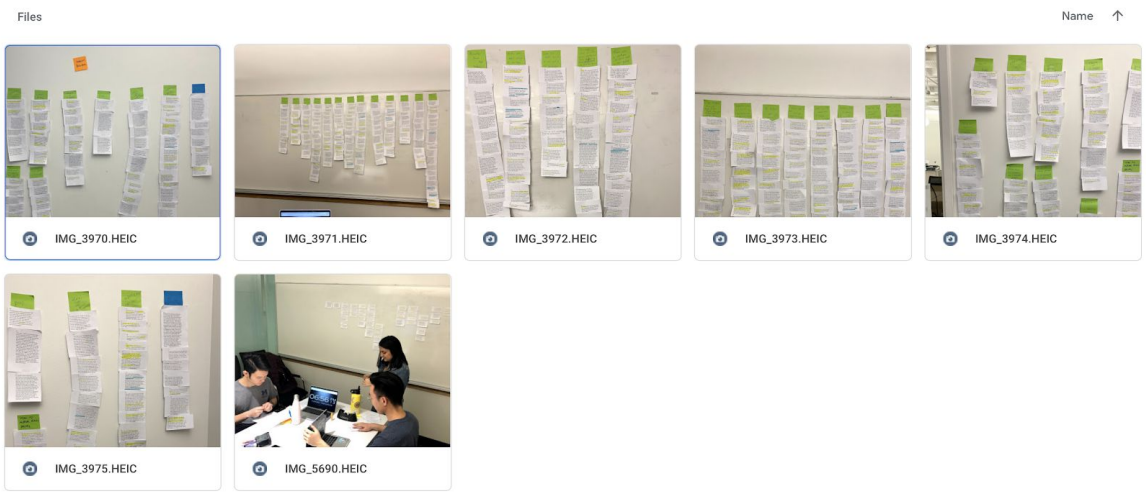
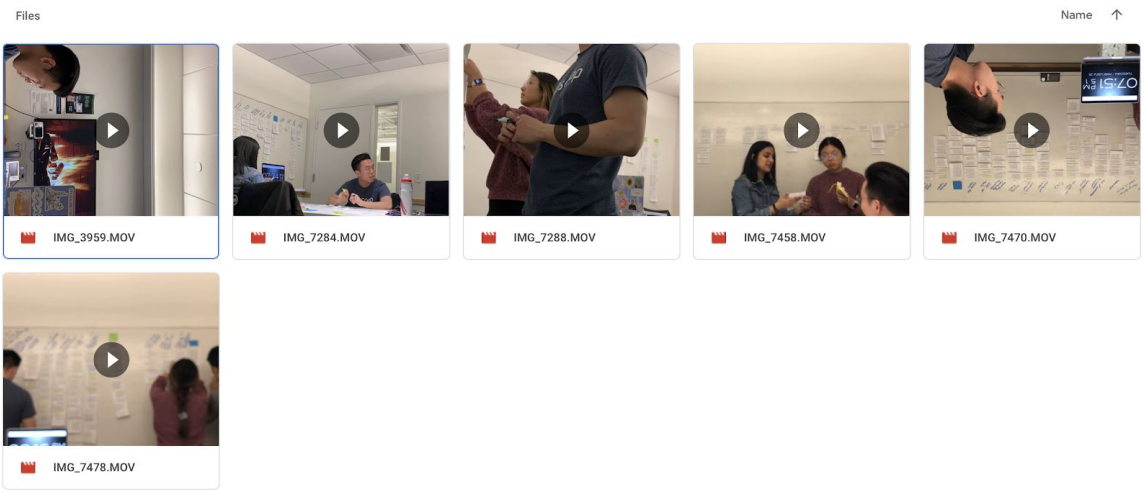
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