Discussion 1

Checking In

This semester, I landed an OutSystems Developer Intern position at OCG Technology. My primary responsibility is to undergo training and build responsive web applications with OutSystems, an innovative low-code development platform to create high-performance web and mobile applications. There are also works related to relational databases, CSS, JavaScript, and ReactJS. For the first few days, other interns in the team and I were introduced to the company's working guidelines, main domains, and the plan for our internship. We will spend the first two weeks learning OutSystems and how to build and structure our web apps in the platform with advanced components and functionalities. Afterwards, each intern will work with a mentor on our assigned tasks and the personal project. There will be scheduled tests every two weeks, a performance review and two interviews. This is my first official internship, so I am nervous about the challenging tasks. However, I can finish the internship with good results and a return offer with consistency, determination, and a good learning attitude.

Culture Norms

The internship takes place in Hanoi, where I have lived for 20 years, so there are few cultural barriers. A new perspective is that the company's significant shareholders are VMG Media (Vietnam) and NTT e-Asia (Japan). Therefore, there are Japanese co-workers in the office where I am working. However, I have yet to have the chance to work with them, but I am looking forward to it.

Discussion 2

How the internship is going:

- Co-workers: In this internship, my co-workers are divided into two groups: other interns in the team and mentors. Other intern peers are knowledgeable and friendly. They can learn and implement new concepts quickly while keeping a humble and eager-to-learn attitude. They also help each other with our tasks, developing a team dynamic. Our mentors are experienced with many years of experience in the field of software development. They have taught us knowledge and skills about OutSystems, web development, relational database design, and scrum project management framework.
- Workspace: My work office is a typically modern and professional space on the 7th floor of the Vien Dong Building on Hoang Cau Street. The company has four offices, 2 in the Vien Dong Building and 2 in Peakview Tower nearby. The intern team was assigned to work in a meeting room in the Vien Dong Building's venue.
- Communication: Our primary methods of communication are Gmail, Zalo, and in-person meetings. The in-person meeting sessions are for training and task assignment, while Gmail and Zalo serve as our tools of indirect communication. Gmail is for report and task submissions, while Zalo is for quick messages among interns, mentors, and supervisors.

Techniques and tips I find helpful for setting and accomplishing goals:

- Use the SMART model to develop specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals.
- Break down more significant tasks into smaller and achievable tasks.
- Prioritise your tasks based on importance and due date.
- Keep track of your progress and evaluate the efficiency of the task that you are doing.
- Reflect on yourself based on the measurements of your goals and the feedback co-workers provide.

In the past, I needed to set the timeline for my goals and procrastinated a lot, losing both time and motivation. Setting the time to execute the task with the help of productivity tools like Notion and Google Calendar helped boost my efficiency and the quality of my work.

Discussion 3

The Surface Aspects of Culture in My Workplace:

- **Individual Behaviour**: Our workplace's professional demeanour, attire, and communication emphasise maintaining a respectful image. This evidence reflects the organisation's professionalism and fosters a positive working environment.
- **Team Dynamics**: While most assigned tasks are individual, the company encourages collaboration among interns in the team. This exchange of project ideas, implementation strategies, and debugging techniques supports the value of teamwork and knowledge sharing.
- **Relationship with Team Members**: My teammates' friendly and supportive nature cultivates a collaborative atmosphere. A culture of open communication, where asking and answering questions is welcomed, facilitates knowledge transfer and mutual growth.
- **Interactions Between Teams/Departments**: The workplace culture supports collaborative engagement with supervisors and mentors. Their role in guiding, providing tasks, and helping overcome challenges reflects the organisation's commitment to nurturing and fostering interns.
- **Team's Performance Track Record**: The daily reporting system, used to log and track progress with mentors, demonstrates the organisation's focus on accountability and performance evaluation. This commitment to regular reporting encourages transparency and continuous improvement.
- **Conflict Resolution**: An open and respectful approach to giving feedback is a hallmark of a healthy work culture. The organisation values honest communication and encourages employees to address conflicts with civility, reflecting a commitment to maintaining a harmonious and productive workplace.

Organization's Espoused Values and Expected Staff Behaviour:

The organisation's values likely revolve around professionalism, collaboration, continuous learning, and open communication. These values are expected to emerge in staff behaviour as employees demonstrate respect, teamwork, a commitment to personal and professional growth, and transparent communication.

The organisation may also encourage adaptability and problem-solving as staff navigate challenges and seek innovative solutions.

Values/Beliefs and Assumptions Driving Team Behavior:

Although the values and beliefs that motivate the behaviour of my team differ, they include working together, supporting one another, and having a strong desire to learn. My team members operate under the belief that when everyone contributes and shares their knowledge, it leads to better performance and a positive atmosphere at work. These values encourage my team to be accessible and willing to engage in discussions and receive feedback.

Values/Beliefs Alignment with Corporate Values:

The values and beliefs of my team fit in perfectly with the broader corporate values. Both stress the importance of working together, collaborating, communicating openly, and maintaining professionalism. This alignment creates a harmonious and productive work environment where we are encouraged and appreciated for personal and collective growth. It shows that my team's actions align with the overall cultural atmosphere of the organisation.

Discussion 4

1. ***How can I describe and articulate my professional identity to a wide audience?***

As an OutSystems Web Developer Intern, my work primarily focuses on the technical backend. I do not directly exchange business requirements with the client but rather with my supervisor and other interns in the team. I want to draw insights from the readings, particularly Chapter 1 of 'Exploring Professional Communication' by Schnurr (2012). Schnurr's insights on professional communication, as outlined in Chapter 1, resonate with me. I aim to describe my professional identity concisely, emphasising my role in backend development and how it contributes to the overall project. This ensures clarity and alignment with the team's goals.

2. ***How can I do this in a short amount of time so that it is clear, engaging and straight to the point, meeting my audiences' needs?***

Navigating the insights of web development as an OutSystems Web Developer Intern, I recognise the importance of articulating my professional identity clearly. Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) discuss insights on cultural learning, in which I adapt my communication style to the technical depth of our development team. This involves using specific technical language and presenting supporting examples in my internship to engage my colleagues efficiently. By striking a balance between brevity and being straight to the point, I aim to communicate my role and contributions effectively, meeting the informational needs of the team without overwhelming them with unnecessary details.

3. ***How can I use reflective practice to help me document this journey?***

Embracing reflective practice, as highlighted by Schnurr, proves instrumental in documenting my

professional journey as an OutSystems Web Developer Intern. By reflecting on experiences, challenges, and personal growth, I can effectively communicate my learning outcomes to the development team. Zhu's (2014) emphasis on cross-cultural contexts resonates, encouraging me to adapt and learn from these experiences, ensuring effective communication within our team. I want to hear how fellow developers integrate reflective practices into their professional growth and communication strategies.

References

Schnurr, S 2012, *Exploring Professional Communication: Learning in Action*, Routledge, New York, NY.

Zhu, Y 2014, 'A Situated Genre Approach for Business Communication Education in Cross-Cultural Contexts' in V Bhatia & S Bremmer (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Professional Communication*, Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 26-39.

Ward, C, Bochner, S & Furnham, A 2001, *The Psychology of Culture Shock*, Routledge.

Discussion 5

During my internship at OCG Technology, I encountered some communication-related challenges, particularly in a team where awkwardness and shyness were prevalent, including my own. As a group of interns navigating our first professional exposure, we needed help breaking the ice and fostering open communication. The challenge related to the concepts discussed in The Business Communication Handbook (Dwyer, J & Hopwood, N 2015).

The journey began with acknowledging our collective shyness, which I later discovered was a shared sentiment among the interns. Drawing from the insights of assertive communication, we consciously created a space for open dialogue. By sharing our experiences and difficulties with each task, we broke down communication barriers and established a foundation of trust within the team. This collaborative approach allowed us to recognise common challenges and find collective solutions.

As we progressed, occasional conflicts emerged, a natural part of any collaborative effort. Leveraging insights from Levine (1998), we approached conflicts focusing on constructive dialogue. Encouraging each team member to express their viewpoints and actively listening to understand different perspectives played a pivotal role in resolving conflicts. Encouragement not only strengthened our communication but also fostered a positive team dynamic.

In conclusion, overcoming shyness in a team of interns required intentional efforts to create a communicative space. The assertive communication and conflict resolution principles provided valuable guidance, shaping our interactions and contributing to a more cohesive and productive internship experience.

References
Chapter 4: Levine, S 1998, *Getting to Resolution : Turning Conflict Into Collaboration*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco.
Pages 37-52: Dwyer, J & Hopwood, N 2015, *The Business Communication Handbook*, Cengage

Australia.

Discussion 6

New cultural conditions and norms in the online workplace
- Remote work has become the norm: The COVID-19 pandemic has leveraged the acceptance of remote work. Gill (2020) states that most companies have transitioned to remote or hybrid work models.
- Flexible working hours: With remote work, the performance metric has been emphasised on the generated results rather than the hours an employee has put in. Companies are also starting to adopt flexible working hours to accommodate the various schedules of their employees.
- Virtual collaboration tools: The dependence on virtual meeting tools has led to the creation and growth of Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet. These tools have enabled a connected and collaborative online culture.
- Emphasis on well-being: Virtual wellness programs and mental health resources have been created to deal with burnout from WFH.

Benefits, limitations, and frustrations
- Benefits
  - Flexibility: Work-life balance has been promoted as remote work allows employees more flexibility in their work schedules.
  - Cost-saving: Both employees and companies are saving costs, as commuting fees, office space needs to be rented, and other utilities usage are reduced.
  - Increased productivity: Many employees report increased productivity in remote work, eliminating commuting time and reducing workplace distractions.
- Limitations:
  - Communication: Collaborating on projects can be more challenging when team members are not physically present, leading to potential delays and misunderstandings.
  - Team culture: Building and maintaining a strong team culture can be challenging when team members are divided into different locations, impacting collaboration and cohesion.
- Frustrations
  - Isolation: The lack of social interactions that come with a physical workplace can create the feeling of isolation and loneliness in workers.
  - Separating work and personal life: The line between work and personal life can become thin, making it challenging to separate from work-related responsibilities.

Reflection on my experiences with communication and interpersonal relationships
In my role as an OutSystems Web Developer Intern, despite the primarily offline nature of my tasks, I have actively engaged in meaningful communication and fostered interpersonal relationships within the team. Collaborating on project requirements, discussing development strategies, and seeking colleague guidance have been integral to my work. I have also actively sought to give and receive feedback, contributing to a collaborative and learning-oriented environment. While most of my work involves coding and development, I recognise the importance of effective communication in driving project success and maintaining a positive work atmosphere.

References
Gill, RJ 2020, 'Graduate employability skills through online internships and projects during the

COVID-19 Pandemic: An Australian example.', Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 146–158.

Discussion 7

Part 1:

I have met my goals at the beginning of the internship. As the internship ends, I will give a detailed review of these goals and the techniques I used to achieve them.

Objective #1: Mastering OutSystems and Web Development Technologies

- I have gained proficiency in OutSystems, a new low-code development platform. Since the concept of low code is new to me, I have achieved this aim by actively attending training sessions and creating a few personal projects to practice the concepts I learned.
- During the internship, database and SQL skills are instrumental. I had the chance to learn a new DBMS - Microsoft SQL server.
- I have also gained experience in web development technologies, including JavaScript, CSS, and ReactJS. I had previous experience with these technologies from the university and another internship. Therefore, integrating them into the Outsystems platform was seamless and practical.

Objective #2: Independent Project Development and Implementation

- I have developed and deployed a fully functional web application within eight weeks by combining thoughtful design thinking with practical development. It also gave me experience in conducting market research and user analysis.
- For the documentation, I write comments and descriptions for my code, which I can utilise later using a Forge plugin.
- Last week, I presented the project in the performance review and received good results from the supervisor.

Objective #3: Continuous Learning and Adaptation

- Each week, I dedicated 8-10 hours to study in addition to the full-time position.
- I have also made good relations with my mentors and colleagues by being eager to learn and showing respect.

Part 2:

Using Gibb's Reflective Cycle, I will discuss the skills I developed during my internship.

1. **Description**

I successfully mastered OutSystems and web development technologies during my internship, including JavaScript, CSS, and ReactJS. I also gained proficiency in Microsoft SQL Server for database management.

2. **Feelings**

I initially felt excitement and nervousness, but a sense of accomplishment emerged as I actively engaged in training sessions and hands-on projects. Presenting my project during the performance review was particularly rewarding.

3. **Evaluation**

The internship exceeded my expectations, enhancing my low-code development, database management, and web development skills. The positive feedback on my independent project validated the effectiveness of practical learning and well-documented code.

4. **Conclusions**

The internship significantly boosted my skill set, emphasising the importance of continuous learning and adaptability. Building solid relationships with mentors and colleagues added value to the overall experience.

5. Action

Moving forward, I aim to maintain the momentum of continuous learning and leverage the relationships built for future collaborations and mentorship opportunities. Overall, the internship has been transformative, equipping me with technical and soft skills for a successful career in technology.

References

Mind Tools Content Team 2022, 'Gibbs Reflective Cycle', www.mindtools.com, viewed 17 November 2023, <https://www.mindtools.com/ano9qiu/gibbs-reflective-cycle>.

Discussion 8

*1. **What was the best part of your internship?***

As an OutSystems Web Developer Intern at OCG Technology, the most rewarding part of my internship was the hands-on experience I gained while training and doing my designated tasks. I have learned many new things from my mentor and other interns, their unique approach to solving problems, and their mature attitude towards resolving conflicts.

*2. **What was the most challenging?***

The most challenging part of my internship was the company's technical requirements. OCG required a solid technical background, while a lot of new knowledge about OutSystems and other web technologies was needed to be part of our self-studies. However, our supervisors and mentors were always eager to help us whenever we were stuck on a bug or advanced concepts like processes.

*3. **What was most surprising about this experience?***

The most unexpected thing about this experience was the amount of team interaction and communication involved. As software developers, most of our time would be focused on technical development and less on communication. However, to get the requirement right, a lot of both verbal and non-verbal interactions were involved from our mentors and supervisors. Learning to communicate effectively was also crucial regarding maintenance and bug fixing.

*4. **Has this experience changed your understanding of the industry you are in?***

The internship has played an instrumental role in broadening my understanding of the software development field. I have gained insights into new software trends and technologies, project management, and effective communication.