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Design Problem Statement

Our problem is people wanting to show their gratitude and appreciation to food service workers. The problem is occurring in restaurants when customers cannot directly express gratitude towards workers. With COVID, restaurants are more understaffed than ever and workers are often overworked and underpaid. While this solution doesn't provide a tangible solution, it will help to boost morale and provide encouragement, which in turn will motivate the workers more. And let the workers know they are appreciated when often it's hard for a customer to express their gratitude towards the work staff, other than just giving a generous tip. Particular activities that are important to individuals in the target domain are going out to eat. Trying new food services. Individuals also like to appreciate the service they experience. People who want to let the workers in the food industry know they appreciate the work they are doing. These individuals are families and young/middle aged adults ranging from 20-54 years old.

Currently on the market there are applications and software that can be used by employers to promote gratitude and productivity within the workplace. Such apps feature employee-to-employee as well as employee-to-employer engagement in order to allow a timely approach to showing appreciation. Benefits to apps like this include the allowance for quick interaction that can take place at any time, anywhere and can help with building stronger staff bonds and communication. What does not work well about this current practice, especially from the aspect of our design problem, is that it does not include space for service-industry workers (such as restaurant workers) to receive feedback and appreciation from customers and other individuals residing outside of their own immediate workforce. Review sites such as Yelp, for example, help support this activity providing a place to leave reviews for restaurants, their service, etc., but fall short in the sense that those reviews will only be seen if they are sought out by someone searching for such information. In addition, said sites are not only a place to express gratitude and people have access to leave negative comments.

In order to first be able to support this activity restaurants would need to adopt the use of tablets to be placed on each table allowing for the customer to be able to do things such as view the menu, order food, pay the bill, etc. While such tablet use and functions are already in practice at some establishments such as Chilis or Applebees, our software aims to promote gratitude and include functions that provide customers the opportunity to engage with all members of the staff. The first function our software would include would be a feature that allows customers to send notes of appreciation directly to their server, or even the chef via the tablet located on their table. Through another feature which would be the 'server database', servers would have their own profiles that include a timeline of comments left to them by customers. Included on the profiles there would be QR codes [associated with each person/profile] that allows customers to scan and leave comments through their phone instead of the provided tablet. The inclusion of both of these features allows for customers to be able to express their gratitude in real-time, or even after the

fact. Additionally, the software would include a 'leaderboard' to help promote internal competition and productivity between workers, where customers can receive "boosts" with their compliments and tips to see how well customers viewed employee performance on a given day. The more "boosts" an employee receives from customers, the higher up on the leaderboard they would be. Lastly, in order for this software to effectively promote gratitude in the workplace, it would include a feature designed to filter out negative comments by blocking the use of certain keywords, and having a pop-up reminder [telling people to only use the app for positive feedback] displayed before notes are able to be sent.

We have three main target users which are those who are eating out frequently at restaurants, restaurant owners and workers that want to install a platform where they receive gratitude from the consumers. Our target users' goals are to create a platform where people eating at a restaurant can thank or give feedback and appreciation to the staff members at the restaurant they are dining in. Currently one of the target users are people who are going out to dinner and enjoy the services but are only able to demonstrate gratitude through leaving a larger tip amount on their check and if not then using an app like Yelp to leave feedback. However, this solution is not sufficient and falls short to solve this issue of being unable to leave a customized message or feedback to the waiter/waitress or cook without having to interrupt their work. What we will do to provide a better solution to users problems is to create an easy, customizable and reliable interface for users to interact with and congratulate employees that is currently not offered.

Related Work

Related Work #1:

The application I am reviewing is Greeting Cards. I downloaded it from the app store on my phone and reviewed each aspect of the app. Some design problems this system has are there are very few template options and half of them have spelling errors. This system I do not believe fully addressed their related problem, they may be in the works right now revamping their application and trying to get more template options and correct spelling. Some good points from this system are it is an easy and comprehensive application that is fast to learn how to use. I believe the easy to use aspect will be added to our system but the low number of templates makes me want to give more to our users and more tools to create something more personal. The deficiencies, gaps, frustrating aspects with this app show me the issues and aspects in respect to dealing with our project. When laying out the different aspects of our project this app has pointed out some aspects that are vital for our project. The app has shown me that easy to use is important for this project especially for people sitting at restaurants just wanting to do something nice and appreciative but also not spend time learning how to use the application.

Related Work #2: *Promoting GRIT (Gratitude, Resilience, Integration, Technology) to Enhance Healthy Work Environment Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic* by Elizabeth Borgueta, MSN, RN, CCRN, SCRN

<https://sigma.nursingrepository.org/bitstream/handle/10755/21634/Abstract.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

This study looks at problems surrounding healthcare workers amidst the Coronavirus pandemic, and looks at how technology can be used to strengthen teamwork, healthy connections, and emotional well-being in the workplace (especially) during this time. It also identifies lack of overall nursing staff engagement and how leveraged use of technology and social media can help. This system addresses the related problem of internal staff productivity and communication by producing multimedia platforms as a way to spread information to workers and enhance connections. These platforms consist of weekly virtual meetings, daily updated research emails (regarding COVID), and a COVID-19 resource application for mobile devices. In relation to ways researchers address the problem of staff well-being [support and gratitude/ appreciation], social media was used to send text and video messages to frontline workers to express appreciation. This study more so supports the idea that the use of technology in the workplace can be beneficial when it comes to overall productivity and engagement as well as the idea that increased expressions of gratitude to workers enhances those things. One principal of this project I could potentially apply to our project is the implementation of daily notifications whether it be workplace updates or words of encouragement from managers. In addition, this study has inspired a potential new feature which links our software to social media applications for gratitude to be spread more widely. Some deficiencies with their study in regard to the design problem I am dealing with include the lack of a direct way for people to interact with/ express gratitude to specific people as they only noted social media as a way to support and show love to frontline workers.

Related Work #3: Ink Cards: Send Custom Cards

I looked at the app “Ink Cards: Send Custom Cards”, the design problem this system justified was being able to make real one-of-a-kind cards without a trip to the store. Instead of giving a generic card you can create your own customizable card for every occasion.

This app reminded me of our design problem. We want to make an app that allows someone to show gratitude towards food service workers. This app allows you to send a customizable Thank You card to someone. Our app could have two interfaces, one that is for the restaurant to download, but also another one that allows people who don’t own a restaurant to send out a message or card that shows their gratitude.

This app has many good principles that we could include in our own design. They have multiple categories that you can click on. Whether you want to do a Birthday card or a Thinking of you card, you can click the category and get lead to all the cards that are available in that category. I think it would be a good design for our app to have categories if they want to send the worker a personal message, or a bitmoji, or an automated message.

One frustrating aspect in this app is that there is nothing stopping a user from making a negative card. Which is also a problem we are dealing with in our design problem. How do we stop people from leaving negative comments towards the workers.

Related Work #4: Kudos- An Employee Recognition App for Workforce Appreciation

This App is an employee recognition, feedback and organizational communication platform, however the design problem is that it does not account for customer to employee feedback. It more focuses on building a better work system internally within a workspace.

This system addresses our related problem because it contains aspects of feedback in a workspace through an interface. However, it doesn’t include an aspect of customer input, but rather just employee to employee critique.

The app's positive design aspects are that through the interface you can look at analytics showing leader reports and deeper insights into the missions and values the restaurants want to contain. This app is helpful for our project design ideas because it demonstrates an easy to use, secure platform for employee recognition that will offer motivation. We would like to include aspects of this app while moving through our design process.

Some of the deficiencies with the problem we are addressing in our project are how we are going to integrate a system that is similar in design to “Kudos”, but will differ by not being just employee to employee.

Related work #5: Workpulse

<https://www.workpulse.com/performance-management-and-training/employee-engagement/>

The system Workpulse identifies the issue of employment engagement in the workplace, as well as job satisfaction. Oftentimes employees are not engaged with their jobs and have no motivation, so the application Workpulse aims to combat that issue.

This system addresses the problem by implementing a social network for the workplace where employees can interact with one another, share posts, comment, and so much more in order to create a more productive work environment for everyone.

One great thing about Workpulse is that there are points awarded to employees. The more engaged and motivated they are, the more points they will be rewarded by their supervisor or manager. These points can be redeemed for rewards, which in turn encourages workers to do better. This concept could be applied to our project, since it could help to further extend gratitude to employees that work hard and try their best to do well.

One thing that this application is deficient in is incorporating customer opinions, which is the main premise of our project. We are aiming to provide encouragement and gratitude from customers to employees, rather than from managers to employees.

Works Cited

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