

## CSC8013 Coursework

### 1. Self-assessment and Skills Portfolio

#### Skills Portfolio

Skills I scored the highest in the skills audit were:

- Written communication (Yes: 4, No: 1)
- Interpersonal communication (Yes: 4, Don't Know: 1)
- Problem solving (Yes: 4, Don't Know: 1)

I picked interpersonal communication skills to answer the competency-based interview question.

**Competency-based Interview Question:** Describe a situation where you were asked to do something that you'd never attempted previously and how you were able to link your previous experiences or skills to overcome any obstacles along the way.

Throughout my Bachelor's studies in the department of English Translation and Interpreting in Izmir University of Economics, I took a course named "Applied Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management" in my third year, during the 2021-2022 fall term, because I was always really interested in startups and how it all worked. During this course, I have learned about startups and the stages startups go through. At the end of the course, the students taking this course were asked to form their groups and each group was to come up with their own startup idea and go through each phase towards preparation for the pitching presentation to the investors, as well as to choose a leader to perform the pitching presentation in question to the final jury consisting of real potential investors interested in investing in our ideas. None of the students had an experience with a pitching presentation or a startup before, including me.

In this situation, I have first familiarized myself on the topic of startups, focusing on the main areas covered in class by the lecturer. I have done additional research and reading on the topic, having the additional resources I have obtained from the lecturer by asking for further materials.

I then took action by deciding to plan everything according to what we have learned throughout the class and followed each step early on to ensure the process goes smoothly. I claimed the responsibility of choosing reliable students for working towards this presentation together well advance by getting to know my coursemates, therefore I was able to identify their strengths and weaknesses. My coursemates were coming from intensely diverse backgrounds, studying different majors. I got to meet some similar people as me, being double major students, studying two majors at the same time just like I did. Having the knowledge and expertise in their field and a multidisciplinary way of thinking, I thought these people would be a great fit. Due to the fact that double major students had to have good grades to be let studying two majors at the same time, I knew these people would be hardworking, disciplined and multitasker individuals with decent time-management skills having experience in group projects and presentations. Depending on the guidelines of the presentation, I have come to the conclusion that I would need some people from marketing and accounting as these parts played a crucial part, therefore in my team, I had a coursemate from Accounting and Auditing department who was double majoring in Business Administration, as well as another coursemate from Business Administration with an emphasis on Marketing. I was studying English Translation and Interpreting, therefore I brought my strong communication skills to the table. The other coursemate I have chosen had creative thinking skills, therefore I thought we could rely on him when it came to the startup idea and implementation of the different stages. Lastly, the last coursemate I chose was good at visualizing and presenting data in a simple but effective way, which dealt with the presentation visuals. Overall, this is how I divided the task into manageable tasks depending on people's strengths.

To guarantee an effective communication flow, as the leader of the team, I have planned regular meetings with the team, where everyone talked about how their task was going and asking for advice and/or help in the parts they

struggled with. I created a WhatsApp group to have a direct communication channel. In addition, I arranged meetings where we worked on the task together, brainstorming on what we could do to make the presentation work out the best. With some collaborative thinking, different disciplines have come together to drive their part in which they're experts in to perfection. Throughout the discussions, I have learned different skills from my coursemates such as financial planning and data visualisation as well as contributing to their workload by sharing my own disciplines' perspective with them.

In terms of the content of the presentation, the team worked on having a realistic approach on our business model, starting from idea generation. The idea had to be something people needed, something that would solve a lot of people's problems would especially work so the team and I brainstormed on the problems and came across the ever-increasing pet food prices in our country, how pet food has preservatives unhealthy for animals, unbalanced nutritional facts causing malnourishment in pets, and heavy packaging. To be profitable, I knew the market had to be of an appropriate size so to validate the problem choice, research to make sure it was possible to be profitable in the market was made by my team, also taking into account the customers to be targeted. With the knowledge I had from business, I knew my team had to distinguish themselves from the rival companies to ensure revenue, so a focus on product differentiation was important. Taking this into account, then came the extensive research towards a solution, which turned out to be food pet owners could prepare at home with a kit. It would be affordable, healthy, and homemade, differentiating us with these qualities. Then came the financial part, where my team created the expected growth, balance sheets, income model & distribution, etc. Here, my groupmate from accounting and auditing was really helpful and with her, the team went through each financial aspect required. The last part was marketing, where all of the team members contributed to visualizing and presenting data in an easy, understandable, plausible and attention-raising way. I have created a logo and slogan for the startup at this stage, working through the slides to ensure they're not bombarding information but at the same time easy and catchy to be remembered even after the presentation by the listeners.

Just like any collaborative effort through group work, my team also had some conflict. As the leader, I made sure to solve any disruptancies to the work by using my communication skills, for instance mediation that I have gained by my active role in managing a student club, GDSC IUE(Google Developer Student Clubs Izmir University of Economics) as a member of the Organisation Team as well as my voluntary mentorship to 13 freshman students towards their adaptation to the university life. I have had also helped and engaged with exchange students foreign to our school and country by the Buddy Programme of ESN IUE(Erasmus Student Network Izmir University of Economics) and demonstrated my cross-cultural communication skills with the help of culture-related classes I have taken during my Bachelor's degree, such as Comparative Language and Culture Studies.

In terms of the difficulties for leading the team properly, I had previous experience as I have led many teams in the past because of the classes requiring teamwork, as well as knowledge in leading as I was a double major student in the Business Administration department. Throughout my studies there, I was especially interested in leadership and management, therefore have taken many classes such as Management Science, Management and Organisation and Management Information Systems towards fulfilling my vision of having a managerial role in the future. Out of 58 additional credits I have taken from different majors out of pure interest and passion during my Bachelor's studies along with the required 240 credits, these classes made up 17 credits, making the sum 298 out of 240 towards a successful graduation.

A very strict requirement for the presentation was the duration: it had to be at most 3 minutes but cover every area, so as the pitching day approached day by day, I have practised the presentation by presenting it to my groupmates and working on my timing, also taking into account the request of using as much hand gestures as possible. Then, I have recorded and edited the video of the pitching presentation using my editing skills I have gained through self-studying and uploaded it on YouTube as our lecturer wanted us to do. When the pitching day came, my team gathered and the jury watched all the presentations given by the teams, including mine.

The result was a huge success: out of 16 groups consisting of 5 students each, my pitching was the most liked and to be seen as a feasible investment option by the jury and therefore my team got the first place. All of my teammates got AA, the highest grade achievable in this hard course. The lecturer was really pleased of my presenting and leading skills. I was really happy and satisfied with how it all turned out in the end. One of the jury members said it was one of the most remarkable pitching they have seen in years, if not the best. Hard work really pays off!

## Skills Development

Skills I scored three or less in the skills audit were:

- Oral presentation (Yes: 3, No: 1, Don't Know: 1)
- Teamwork (Yes: 3, Don't Know: 2)
- Planning & Organizing (Yes: 2, No: 2, Don't Know: 1)
- Initiative (Yes: 3, No: 1, Don't Know: 1)
- Adaptability (Yes: 2, No: 1, Don't Know: 1)
- Numeracy (Yes: 3, No: 2)
- Computer Literacy (Yes: 3, No: 1, Don't Know: 1)

I prioritized working on my planning & organizing, adaptability and numeracy.

**Planning & Organizing:** I plan to improve my planning and organizational skills specifically through attending the workshops held on our university during next term for time-management, task prioritization and organizational skills and participating in training sessions on planning tools and project management methodologies and taking notes on what I think could work for me. I will aim to save at least 20% more time by applying what I learn through these activities. This is achievable as I know no strategies for planning and organizing and through these activities I will at least learn and have a roadmap to follow, not to mention the activities are held quite regularly so I won't have much trouble trying to fit it in my busy schedule. Without a good plan, students cannot use their time effectively and therefore be more productive and achieve their goals more easily and fast. I will review what kind of planning works well for me each month to stick to what works and also change what doesn't.

**Adaptability:** I plan to improve my adaptability skills specifically through learning new technologies I have not before known of through internet and from resources that can be found in our university's library as they have an extensive collection that can also be accessed online. I will aim to learn at least 2 new technologies in intermediate level in two months. This is achievable as we already learn new technologies in our modules, I will have to take it up a notch by learning more to take my level to intermediate by focusing on my adaptability and keeping track of my progress. Without adaptability skills, as we have to learn new technologies all the time because of the changes in the sector, between companies and different roles, I wouldn't be able to keep up with the required technologies and possibly lose my job. I will review my progress in two months to see how well I improved my adaptability skills.

**Numeracy:** I plan to improve my numeracy skills specifically through engaging in data analysis projects using R, especially by focusing on the statistics and data visualization. I will aim to finish at least one simple project per week. This is achievable as I have a little experience and knowledge in data analysis as I have taken a data analysis course from Google through Coursera before and I'm able to use free online tools, such as Kaggle, Tableau Public, Power BI and so on as well as resources in learning platforms like Coursera and Udemy. I will also keep in touch with my lecturers for any questions I may have along the way. I know I will stick to it because I liked it back then and was able to stick to a learning schedule even if it was summer and I am naturally interested in visual and analytical things. In the even faster everchanging business world with the technology, having data analysis and visualization skills really separates you from others and puts you in a better position than others and not having such skills can do the exact opposite and drag you down. I will review my progress after a month with 4 projects in hand.

## 2. Employer Research

Google is a multinational technology giant company. It is considered as one of the big five companies in technology, next to Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Meta, and Microsoft. The company concentrates on search engine technology, online advertising, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and much more.

Google was found by Larry Page and Sergey Brin who were Stanford University PhD students at the time, on 4<sup>th</sup> of September, 1998. The current CEO of Google is Sundar Pichai. The company covers many areas in terms of its products: the Google Search takes the lead, with Gmail, Maps, Cloud, Chrome, YouTube, Android, Drive, Translate, Photos, Meet, Fitbit, YouTube Music, YouTube TV, TensorFlow, Workspace, Nest, Pixel devices, Google Assistant and much more to follow its footsteps.

Google's search engine transformed online information retrieval by swiftly providing highly relevant search results using its advanced algorithm. Constantly evolving, it now includes features like the Knowledge Graph to directly answer user queries.

Google Ads plays a vital role in Google's earnings, enabling businesses to target ads based on user interests, demographics, and search terms. Advertisers pay for each click to reach potential customers across Google's vast network.

Google Cloud offers a comprehensive suite of cloud services, including computing, storage, databases, and machine learning. It caters to diverse needs, from basic web hosting to complex machine learning applications.

Google's software suite, such as Android, Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Docs, enjoys widespread global use. Android, the dominant mobile operating system, powers numerous smartphones. Meanwhile, Gmail and Google Drive provide email and cloud storage solutions.

Google's hardware line-up features Pixel smartphones known for their software integration and top-notch cameras. Google Nest offers smart home devices, and Chromecast facilitates streaming from devices to TVs. Google Home incorporates voice assistants for home control.

Google's AI and machine learning advancements enhance various products, from refining search algorithms to empowering features like image recognition in Google Photos and language translation in Google Translate.

In their website, Google states that their mission is "To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.". This goal reflects Google's commitment to using technology to provide widespread access to valuable information. The company not only aims to make information easily reachable but also strives to ensure its usefulness in people's daily lives. Google continually enhances search algorithms, introduces new products and services, and embraces technologies like AI to fulfil this objective. Beyond search, Google's mission encompasses various domains, including cloud computing, hardware development, and supporting an array of tools and applications. Through these efforts, Google intends to empower individuals, businesses, educators, and communities by making information accessible and beneficial to all, irrespective of geographical or socio-economic constraints. This mission serves as the guiding force for Google's initiatives, driving continuous innovation and a persistent commitment to making information universally accessible and valuable to humanity.

Their core values, also stated in their website in the name of "Ten things we know to be true" are:

1. Focus on the user and all else will follow.
2. It's best to do one thing really, really well.
3. Fast is better than slow.
4. Democracy on the web works.
5. You don't need to be at your desk to need an answer.
6. You can make Money without doing evil.
7. There's always more information out there.
8. The need for information crosses all borders.
9. You can be serious without a suit.
10. Great just isn't good enough.

Google takes many things into account while recruiting employees: first, they make sure of the technical proficiency. The relevant programming languages are crucial and varies depending on the role, while the most common ones are Python, C++ and Java. Algorithms, data structures and software development knowledge is also required. Second, they look at analytical thinking and problem-solving, being able to analyse the problems, break them into chunks, and come up with successful solutions. Data analysis and interpretation is highly valued by the company for that matter. Third, adaptability is considered, as the employees have to keep up with the ever-changing technology. They should be able to learn new tools all the time. Fourth, teamwork is really important and brings the importance of communication skills. Having to work with diverse teams, people should have cross-cultural communication skills and a mutual understanding towards each other. Fifth comes demonstrating innovative and creative thinking and being able to come up with one's own projects. Sixth, even if it is not required for all of the roles, comes leadership. Seventh,

having previous education and/or experience is advantageous. Eighth, having a customer-focused approach to meet and satisfy the need of customers and gaining value is beneficial. Lastly, a passion for technology and having the mission of being a part of Google in being more accessible. Applicants with such skills would be highly sought after by Google.

In the recent news, Google has announced that they are shutting down Play Movies & TV in January and is shifting users to another platform until then. Additionally, according to BBC, Google claimed their new AI, Gemini AI, thinks more carefully.

On their website, I see several events to be held. DevFest 2023, an event held by Google each year is happening between October 1 and December 31<sup>st</sup>. This event offers hands-on learning experience as well as technical talks from the experts in the field. It is held both in-person and online. “Google for Startups Accelerator: Black Founders Demo Day” will be held by Google virtually on November 30th, where 12 startups will be sharing how they solve problems by using technology. “Computer Science Education Week: Insights from leading developers” will be held by Google virtually on December 6th. During the panel, developers will be sharing their experiences, insights and visions. Women in ML Symposium 2023 will be held by Google on December 7 virtually where generative AI, privacy and real-world applications will be in focus for the talks. Provided by Google Play, “Indie Games Accelerator” is a 10-week virtual accelerator where people can get mentorship for their developed games. Applications are open until December 12. Lastly, ongoing Kaggle competitions are held virtually.

**Question to the Employer:** Could you elaborate on how Google supports employees on their continuous learning and professional development journey?

## References

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