**Group 11 Focus Group Interview**

**Interviewer:**

Yeah. So I can say a little bit more about myself. My name is [--------] and I've been doing research on software startups at DD for the last two, two years, and some months. And actually, I'm interested to hear more from your perspective about the customer-driven course. And I would love it if you could present yourselves quickly. What is your full name? And what is your study background?

**Interviewee 1:**

I can begin. I mean, I am [--------] I met my fourth year in computer science with a specialization within AI.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, thanks.

**Interviewee 2:**

Yeah. My name is [--------]. I'm also a fourth-year student in computer science and also specializing in A.I.

**Interviewee 3:**

My name is [--------], and I'm a fourth year as well I am studying specialization in graphics.

**Interviewee 4:**

Yeah. My name is [--------] And I'm also a fourth-year computer science specializing in software systems.

**Interviewee 5:**

I am a first-year computer science student doing a specialization in A.I.

**Interviewee 6:**

Hi, my name is [--------]. I'm also a fourth-year computer science student studying software systems.

**Interviewer:**

Thank you so much. Okay. Yeah, sorry. We have one more.

**Interviewee 7:**

I am [------] and I am doing what most of the students are doing and specializing in A.I.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, thanks a lot. And can you tell me a bit more about the project that you're doing now?

**Interviewee 2:**

Yeah, we have Telenor and Antonio as our customers. Our project is mainly developing a mobile application that visualizes air quality levels in the [-------], as well as adding a gamification aspect to that. To bring users back into using that basically.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah and I'd love to hear a little bit about the tactical aspect of the project, like technical skills that you have gained while doing this project, and what do you feel that have been also the technical challenges that you have had?

**Interviewee 2:**

So I think we've used a lot of new technologies, technologies that are new to almost everyone. So in the beginning, we spent a lot of time learning new technologies. That's everything from frameworks for making mobile applications to back-end hosting services and databases and stuff like that. So I think everyone is gaining a lot of knowledge. across the whole, all technology is basically everyone, everyone has been involved in both the front end and back end in some sort of way. So I think every one is getting a lot of experience.

**Interviewer:**

Any challenge while doing the project

**Interviewee 2:**

There have been a lot of challenges yet, but well, the first challenge was probably getting everyone on the same page, basically, getting everyone up to date with the technologies that we're going to use and also figuring out which technologies to use, because we have different backgrounds and experience with different technologies. And yeah, also the scope of the project has been really just finishing, finishing everything the customer requires has always been a challenge.

**Interviewee 1:**

Yeah, I also think we underestimated the need for the design in the beginning. Okay, so it was that challenge and that design was decided too late in the project.

**Interviewer:**

And who decided to design is it you or Was it the customer?

**Interviewee 1:**

It was me and in discussion with a group. Yeah. And we showed it to the customer and they gave their feedback. So they were pleased with it.

**Interviewer:**

I see. That's good. How about the soft skills part? Like you have to write this? I think also in your final report. In this part of the team dynamics, how do you feel about soft skills? Like communication skills? Teamwork? Yeah. Everything like that. How's that been? Are there any challenges? Do you feel something has improved?

**Interviewee 2:**

I think mostly, I've been pretty good. The whole group has been really well, everyone has been on the same page. And there haven't been any really any conflicts. So I guess that's just Well, during this project, we learn more about how to communicate with each other. But everyone was kind of on the same page from the beginning. So that wasn't a huge problem at all.

**Interviewer:**

But have you learned something new at least? Or maybe somebody else can see? Is this like your first or second project to be a teamwork-based project, or?

Interviewee 6:

I think most of us have done projects like this before. But it was cool to try it on bigger projects, and also use other aspects of experience.

**Interviewer:**

See, the team has done a good job. At least you haven't had major conflicts, that's good. How about project management, then? You were the project manager, what did you do in that area? What skills do you think you have gained?

**Interviewee 2:**

So I've been the project manager. And it's been a new role for me. So I think I've gained a lot of experience just getting to know actually what the project manager role actually is, and what kind of tests you're faced with. So I've learned quite a lot from them. And I think, I don't know, maybe the whole team has tried new roles and then again, new experiences, new experiences.

**Interviewer:**

What kind of practices did you use in particular? What kind of project management practices? What kind of agile practices did you use in developing your project?

**Interviewee 2:**

We use some parts from Scrum and also XP and us kind of I guess, create our own with different aspects from Scrum and XP and stuff like that.

**Interviewer:**

How about XP? What did you use for XP? I am very curious.

**Interviewee 2:**

Well, I think it was pair programming from XP. So we've done quite a bit of that

Interviewee 6:

Yeah, creating common ground for...

**Interviewer:**

I barely heard that. It's called reviewing and?

Interviewee 6:

yeah, we used to call the reviewing through. Whenever we want something new in the branch someone else reviews it. And we also sat together and created rules for coding, coding.

**Interviewer:**

Okay, how much were the customers involved? Like did you have weekly meetings or once into once in two weeks when you had sprint reviews?

**Interviewee 2:**

We had a meeting with our customer every other week. Then we had a demo and that zone meeting every two weeks but we kept being contacted on a weekly basis.

**Interviewee 7:**

One week, each customer and then we went over two weeks to fit our springs

**Interviewer:**

Okay. Now, this is more about the motivations part first things first, this Did you have any motivations for joining the course? Or was it like you had to take this course? Was it obligatory?

**Interviewee 7:**

Yeah. I don't look forward to it. Yeah, it's, it's actually practical, very relevant for the job soon, we probably get.

**Interviewer:**

All of you were like, Okay if it wasn't obligatory, you're still taking the course. Right.

**Interviewee 7:**

Yeah

**Interviewer:**

Somebody has different opinions. I don't know.

**Interviewee 4:**

I agree that the like, I think the point course, where you get to go deep in some kind of project is really nice to have really breaks up the routine of taking these theoretical courses that have maybe its application in the real world.

**Interviewer:**

Yep. Any other benefits or motivations?

**Interviewee 6:**

I was stressed about taking the course. At first. Okay, I heard a lot about how much work it was. And it was, as I have a part-time job on a site where I get a lot of relevant experience, I was unsure if it would be too much. And also, like, the tasks have been so different, that you don't really know what you're going to have. But I'm really glad I ended up taking the course, I've learned a lot. And I think it turned out to be a really cool experience.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, that's nice. Now, this shifts a little bit, but my question is, like, what motivates you to create a startup with the project that you're doing now?

**Interviewee 5:**

So continuing this project and making it a startup?

**Interviewer:**

Yeah.

**Interviewee 4:**

I think the problem without our project is that it's very dependent on Telenor. And it has no commercial value, almost. It's more like a public group kind of thing. So we would have to, like secure grants or something. I mean, that would be a big consideration if we were to continue.

**Interviewer:**

So the way I feel it, you might have to speak up a bit, because I barely hear since you're a bit distant from a computer, but the way I understand it, that the process is not very stock topic kind of project, or it doesn't really bring the innovation part of the market side of it.

**Interviewee 2:**

Yeah. So we don't feel like it necessarily, or it doesn't really fit the startup. Because it's so dependent on Telenor, and also doesn't really have a real market value. I guess we don't feel like it can make it into a startup.

**Interviewer:**

But it would have been interesting to have this context within the course, like do an interesting, innovative project, which is of course, based on software engineering practices, software engineering in particular.

**Interviewee 2:**

I mean, if you could make interesting projects, then surely if you line it up with the course so that students could make it into a startup that will be I think that would be a cool concept.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah. How about the rest of you? Because this is something like a question for everybody.

**Interviewee 1:**

I also think it would be a cool concept. Better, you should take into consideration that the next semester is also busy. So if it was possible to combine it with the next semester, I think that would be a cool thing. Yeah. Sure.

**Interviewer:**

Before the course, or something like that. That's what you mean.

**Interviewee 1:**

Like arranging our 7.5 Course, like a regular course that could expand this one? I think. Really cool.

**Interviewer:**

Good idea. Yeah. Anybody else?

Interviewee 6:

Give us a bit of a way to kind of give up on the project now or quit because there's so much more that could be done. So if the customer would have been interested in letting us continue, that's something that would be good.

**Interviewer:**

I see, I know this comes as a bit of an awkward question, but would you involve each other in case there was this follow-up course that you mentioned? Yeah, would this be Interesting if you work with the same people and the same team, you don't change? Or? I don't know, I know, it's an awkward question because of course you like each other after three months of working. So you wouldn't say those things now. But just to be sort of honest, what do you think of the team and.

**Interviewee 2:**

I mean, afterward working together for the whole semester, if the project was to continue, then I feel like it would benefit everyone to have this thing good. Because everybody knows the project. Then it would also, it would be nice to get some new people in and also get fresh ideas and new points of view on projects.

**Interviewee 2:**

So you can make almost the same group and then add a few more people or something like that.

**Interviewer:**

I see. You have the course, experts in teamwork courses I think next semester. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I used to run the village, which is called Startup driven village, which is mainly doing the similar stuff, and has software engineering practices for creating startups. These are students but they a follow-up from customers for different courses. So it's, they meet there, and it's random. They have new team members, of course, etc. And they have some expertise from other fields of study as well. This is sort of the last question. If you have this innovation, Bootcamp activity, or hackathon or something like that brings in the first very first three days of the course, a lot of communication with the customers brainstorming, understanding the idea, understanding the technology, and so on, but also understanding how the project would be fit for a startup or for putting it into the market. Would that be beneficial to you? Or do you think like three days of Bootcamp at the very beginning, you work hard three days in a row? And then you understand the value of the project? Also, in a broader perspective?

**Interviewee 1:**

Yeah, for sure. I think that would be really beneficial.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, maybe I made the question very, like, do you want it or not? But can you elaborate a little bit more why?

**Interviewee 1:**

I think it would be beneficial to start with a project earlier, because it's really demanding, you use a lot of time on it. And we have kind of a busy schedule, so too. So it would be beneficial to start earlier. And I think boot camp would get a group to start working. So I think that would be really nice.

**Interviewee 4:**

Okay. So just sort of capturing the customers for three days will be really nice to force them to say exactly what they want.

**Interviewer:**

You said captured for. So I'm not sure if you're going to manage that within a Bootcamp but yeah. Very impulsive things, but it's okay. Yeah, I understand the point.

**Interviewer:**

That's good, but the idea of this innovation Bootcamp, it's more like to brainstorm and discuss the idea and also to understand it better, but also to analyze the idea within the context of value, like every software we do today should bring some value. That's what I believe, at least, then, you know, just to you as a team, not just to one customer, but value to the community and to the social aspect of the project as well, as you put it there as a software solution, but it does some good. That's important. And addresses some calls, perhaps. And that's also important. And I don't think you have discussed any of the things I'm saying now, during the whole semester, right?

**Interviewee 1:**

We have discussed the social aspect of our app. It's supposed to be used by the inhabitants of Trondheim Ministry, that city. So it's quite important for our project.

**Interviewer:**

But you know, the worry I have most of the time when you have student projects is that they get thrown away not because they are poor quality, but because the needs are not really there. Yeah. This is my concern, but it's my perception. So that's why with a Bootcamp you might make a lean canvas model and understand what are the needs. Who is the customer and who is going to use it at all? You're just your customer who tells you what to do for the end user.

**Interviewee 1:**

We could invite some potential users' products so that you can get their perspectives on what they need early on. I think that can be beneficial. Yeah.

**Interviewer:**

That's a nice thing. Okay, the Bootcamp will also be organized for two days at the beginning and one day for inviting new customers, like you say, because now you have a working prototype, the end users, so you can invite them at the very end and see what their feedback is. Yeah. Or in the middle of the course. Whatever. That's also a possibility. Okay, but I'm mainly done. I don't want to stress you more with these questions. You have your project to deliver tomorrow. I thank you a lot for the answers. Unless you have any questions for me. I really recommend maybe one of you either came or somebody else tries to fetch those pizzas, but I'm really in doubt if they have made the order now. But you can tell me in an email immediately. If the order is not gone through or did not go through? Then I can make the order immediately for next week on Monday or Tuesday or whatever works for you guys. What are you meeting again?

**Interviewee 6:**

I don't know if we are.

**Interviewee 2:**

There are digital meetings so we were not really sure yet.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah. Now how about the final presentation? You're going to be all online in separate places.

**Interviewee 2:**

Maybe we will meet for the presentation, but I guess we are kind of based. Not ready for pizza then.

**Interviewee 1:**

Is it possible to get it later today? If it's not ready for three o'clock, is it possible to get it at like four or five?

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, I sent the order to the department and there is a public person responsible there that does this, but I'm not sure if she did it. That's my concern because I sent it yesterday evening. And as I told him before, this takes some days before usually okay, and I didn't know what you ordered because it was very broad and I was like, then it came up you don't have you shouldn't order cheese these pizzas I think because of some allergy you have in the group. So it is hard for me. Maybe I'm not, it was my bad. But what I'm trying to say is that usually what they expect is like oh, we want this five pizzas or we want six pizzas or eight pizzas. It doesn't matter the number but we want this order straightforwardly because it avoids like, you know me choosing for you guys. This is the point.

**Interviewee 2:**

But I can check yes. If they don't have it then.

**Interviewer:**

But I mean you can't even make it like meat if it doesn't go through because it will be very I feel very bad if I say something doesn't happen. You can't even meet him eating a pizza together next week.

**Interviewee 2:**

I mean I'm sure you can regenerate yourself.

**Interviewer:**

Or you can go there together. Pick up the pizza and go home can you do this at least Yeah, is that does it work? Yeah, it works. Yeah,

**Interviewer:**

Okay, so I don't feel really bad now about who gets the pizza in some way. So you can go there to pick it up because this was a challenge also with another team. Go there, pick it up and go home if you need it online. We don't know each other. I don't know. The situation is not very nice. So I understand. Okay, but Kim tries now and then you tell me and I'll make the order again.

**Interviewee 2:**

Yeah.

**Interviewer:**

If it doesn't work for me. Thanks a lot. And thank you for all the very good answers. I wish you the best of luck for tomorrow and I hope you get a very good evaluation out of the project as well.

**Interviewee 1:**

Thank you.

**Interviewer:**

Bye.