**Hack2Hire Experience**

It was 26th March 2022, 7:15am in the morning when the registration for the hackathon had begun. I was super excited to get to know my team and the problem that we would be working on. The first hour was spent briefing us about the process and explaining the 5 problem statements that we could choose from. The 5 problems were divided into 3 categories: Front End, Full Stack, and Data.

Provided Problem Statements:

1. *Front End ReactJS focus*: Social Trading App – Charting and Gamification
2. *Full Stack*: Digital Customer Onboarding and Fraud Detection (using Biometric and OCR)
3. *Full Stack*: Geolocation based Loyalty Rewards – Earn and Burn
4. *Full Stack*: City Bike Share – Bike Share City Finder with Weather overlay
5. *Data*: Customer Spend Patterns based on Income Level with Data Engineering and ML Driven Data Enrichment

Since our team consisted mostly of Data and ML Engineers, we chose the Data Problem for our Hackathon (each team was free to choose from the options as per their members’ skillsets).

There were more than 500 participants from India and Singapore (perhaps few from other countries as well) and more than 40 teams (wild guess). The hackathon lasted for 6 hours wherein the teams were to build a working model to be presented to the judges at the end of the Hackathon. The role of the judges was to select the top 3 teams.

Each team, consisting of 8-10 members playing different roles like Scrum Master, Tester, Developer, etc. was assigned a table mentor who would not only be helping the team with doubts or queries related to the problem but would also be silently judging all the participants throughout the Hackathon. The table mentor is responsible for selecting participants for the next round.

As per my experience and understanding, they judge you on the below skills:

* How well do you collaborate with others
* How actively you participate and contribute to the team
* Communication Skills
* Your ideas and how you put them forward to the team
* Are you comfortable using the tools like GIT, Bitbucket, AWS (in our case it was S3, Sagemaker, EMR)
* Were you able to help others in your team
* Were you able to demonstrate your skills

The chances of selection increase if your team is in the top 3. But, even participants from other teams that could not complete their respective tasks were selected for the next round.

The day concluded with the closing ceremony where the top 3 teams presented a demo of their models to a larger audience, after which the winner was announced.

Selected candidates received the call that evening itself, and the final round (30 mins) happened the next day.

Though we did not make it to the top 3, I would say it was a great leaning experience overall and I am glad I could work with some brilliant people and build a solution within the stipulated time.

All the best to the future participants!