**Mission Statement**

To give individuals the tools and resources to immerse themselves in and discover their community, and in so doing identify the ways that they can most meaningfully provide value to the organizations that are serving that community. For those social impact organizations, providing a way to show the community who they are and what they do, and connect them to community members that can support those organizations’ most critical needs.

**Vision**

A world in which individuals are empowered to engage in their communities and maximize the positive impact they can deliver, while social impact organizations have available the full set of resources needed to serve their constituents in the most effective manner possible.

**Background**

For a large portion of the general populace, engagement in the non-profit sector is minimal. People lead busy lives and getting engaged in a meaningful way is rarely easy of facilitated. When individuals must *do work* to give something away, it disincentivizes and limits what someone chooses to do. Fundamentally:

* Individuals have no way to efficiently or comprehensively see what social impact activity is going on **in their community**
* There exists no resource to see the **full breadth of needs** that a social impact organization has that they could contribute to
* The tools that link individuals to social impact organizations are limited in scope, and provide no way to **deepen the experience and journey** with the organization

If people aren’t aware of what’s going on, nor able to fully see what is needed, nor given the opportunity to build understanding and trust with an organization – how can they be expected to devote their valuable time, talent, and treasure to a worthy cause?

For social impact organizations, this creates a host of challenges. Non-profits often depend on individual donations to support general operating expenses. These funds are critical, and institutional sources of funding such as foundation and government grants can be tremendously restrictive in what can be used for general operations. As such, non-profits are forced to devote tremendous time and resources to create engagement opportunities for individuals. This takes the form of fundraisers, volunteer activities, and general marketing efforts. Each of these is rife with inefficiency in today’s environment, and for many organizations they are qualified as a ‘necessary evil’, and often relate to one another:

* Fundraisers are a huge cost both in time and money. Struggles include costs to promote, attracting the same audience year after year, balancing providing a ‘good time’ to attendees while still giving exposure to the mission. Organizations loathe these events but do it out of a perceived or real necessity.
* Volunteering programs are the most natural way to engage the general populace – but for many organizations it comprises <1% of their actual program work. In the public’s mind, ‘contribution’ is defined as an ‘hour of volunteering’ and non-profits are forced to work through that lens. Unless carefully crafted, volunteering may not place individuals on a path to further cultivation and result in a one and done experience with the organization.
* General marketing is a struggle, notably for smaller organizations and other ‘non-brand name’ institutions. Costs can be significant, and social media activity is generally drowned out by surrounding activity on the traditional platforms. Put simply, a lot of work goes into simply getting 7 likes per post.

Ultimately, one must ask if non-profit engagement with the public is an efficient market when:

* Individuals are asking each other on Instagram for organizations that support racial justice
* Companies are asking employees for organizations that would be good to give money to
* Non-profits are constantly looking for new board members, only able to leverage their own individual networks
* Community members are not aware of organizations mere blocks away that do activities that resonate with them
* Civic engagement groups – such as Young Involved Philadelphia – are inundated with volunteer opportunity requests
* Groups spend thousands of dollars on social media advertising with little ROI, justified as ‘raising brand awareness’

However, this does not need to be the case. Activity and connections and meaningful collaborations do occur, but today it is too often through word of mouth or happenstance. To provide a solution, the following principles are cornerstones to getting meaningful engagement out of individuals, and allowing social impact organizations to benefit the most:

* Individuals need a **seamless path to identify their community**, as they define it, and see what activity is going on in their community on an ongoing basis
* This ongoing exposure must provide **immersive exposure to the organization**, to cultivate the trust and confidence to get meaningfully involved
* When providing engagement opportunities to individuals, non-profits need a way to demonstrate their **full breadth of needs**, as they define them
* The non-profits’ process for providing this information and opportunity to the masses must allow them **to get more return with less effort** – a good solution will carve off inefficiencies by taking *less time* than what is required today, *cost less* than comparable services, and provide *better return* in terms of engagement, awareness, and donations

The theory is that by providing a navigable environment for the ecosystem of the social impact activity that is already occurring, the general populace will be more engaged, better connected to it, and more willing to provide what they personally can offer. By crafting the solution in a way that is consistent with how non-profits align their needs, that engagement is packaged in a way to be most useful for the organization, rather than force non-profits to contour their needs to the general population.

**Platform**

In delivering transformation to the social impact sector CascAid maintains a dual purpose in delivering value to individuals and social impact organizations. For individuals, it serves as a social impact-oriented social media platform. For social impact organizations, it is a marketing and communication tool which is made unique by bringing the target market in-house to the platform.

The product journey for individuals on the application starts with a **discovery** of their community. Since an individual’s community may be defined in various ways depending on the user, a succinct list of search and filter criteria will be used to allow for that definition to occur. Geography, impact area, and organization type are key characteristics one may use to isolate the institutions that resonate most. Though other criteria may accompany searches for events, the primary purpose of discovery is to identify organizations, which can be followed for further engagement. Through search and automatic recommendations based on personal geography and interests, as well as what friends are following, a full population of relevant organizations to the user is created.

Accumulating these organizations, allows for the cultivation of the platform section **My Community**. For all organizations that are followed, users can see the ongoing activity (in a further tailored/cultivated view, if desired) in both a news feed format and a calendar view. This makes the exercise of feeling and being connected to the community immediately accessible. Furthermore, this begins to provide exposure to the user in a variety of valuable ways. This is a dedicated place to see communication on their impact. It is a dedicated place to see there are events beyond the ‘hour a pop’ volunteer activity – whether it be advocacy, community events, information panels, or other activities. The calendar feature makes it easy to stay aware of what these organizations have available to attend – rather than churning through websites, newsletters, or culling social media platforms.

As immersion with an organization occurs, the user can explore the full suite of how they can get involved on an **Organization Page**. Though traditional volunteer events may be present, the social impact organization may also advertise in-kind donation, board or committee member needs, significant project-based needs, general skill sets needed on an advisory basis, among other opportunities. The full capture of needs allows the user to see every way in which they may contribute, and best align it to their skill set.

Finally, a **Dashboard** brings together all their activities across the platform to one place, allowing the user to identify their accomplishments. If they are a significant/top volunteer, donor, contributor, etc., in a given month, this appears on their dashboard as an accomplishment that they are encouraged to share on their feed.

Other significant feature options for the individual application:

* Posting
* Message Boards
* Challenges & Goals
* Job Search

The platform for non-profits more closely represents an enterprise level tool. Here, the tools and modules are built on top of the ecosystem of a community of users who have identified themselves as being interested in social impact – the exact target market for the organization.

First, the **Organization Page** provides a background on the organization, key highlights on its program work, and most importantly the full suite of opportunities that the public can engage in. The comprehensiveness of the module allows needs to be much more broadly sourced, where they would otherwise be unaddressed or solved through out-of-pocket expenses. Today, at any given time there are a host of needs a social impact organization might have, which are solicited through word of mouth or varied, scattershot platforms. Here, no needs go unidentified, with the most important being singled out with a ‘Top Need’ identifier.

To foster the cultivation of the user base and bring them to the Organization Page, **Posts** are made to populate the organization’s feed with recent or upcoming events, highlights of program work, relevant community or sector news, or anything else deemed of interest to the general public. By nature of the platform, posts can be amplified with *non-profit specific* criteria, such as users’ favored impact areas, past social impact experience, or followers of comparable organizations. To enhance the productivity of the module, posts can be replicated as is or with minor modifications to other social platforms, and all can be posted live or at a scheduled date and time. Posts saved in draft form or scheduled for future publication may be revisited individually or as a communication **Calendar**.

Beyond communicating activity through posts, organizations may explicitly **Prospect** for individuals who may be able to provide something of value to that organization. Based on information a user may include in their profile, which may highlight impact areas of interest, special skills and experience, and desired ways to contribute, the organization can filter and identify individuals to be incorporated into custom lists. Integrations with commonly used applications such as Black Baud can allow for a more holistic approach to prospecting on CascAid.

Though individual prospecting can occur, through these custom lists the social impact organization may **Cultivate** that target market through campaigns and coordinated forms of outreach. Statistics would show levels of engagement and by user a history of their interactions with the organization on the platform would be available.

Finally, a **Dashboard** provides an update on high level activity – number of followers, count of users reached through content, etc. Most importantly, a series of automated notification appear to facilitate outreach activity. Prompts to send messages or content to specific groups, event attendees, new followers, message responses, among other areas, will be provided to allow for one-click tasks or customized messages which allow the organization to fluidly maximize the amount of touches and interactions they can have with their audience while incurring negligible staff time.

Other significant feature options for the institutional application:

* Institutional Collaboration
* Advocacy
* CRM feature enhancements to Posting & Prospect Management
* Message Board
* Job Search
* Training/Volunteer Prep Modules

Other user bases that could be assimilated with relevant modules

* Political Candidates
* Funders

**Product Themes**

Individual User

* Immersion – Individuals will be motivated toward the highest amount of contribution when they have familiarity, trust, and confidence in an organization. Facilitating interactions between the individual and the organizations that they do or could follow is paramount.
* Action Oriented – Individuals are motivated to do good, but look the environment to facilitate it. Users should experience a consistent, robust landscape of actionable opportunities that they can participate in or action.

Institutional User

* Simplicity – social impact organizations have an incredible sensitivity to resource drains. The core features must be beyond seamless for adapting into the organization’s processes.
* Non-Profit Centric – where current tools and platforms do not align to what a non-profit needs, and forces them to fit a different mold, the environment should be aligned to the needs, processes, and priorities that a social impact organization actually experiences

**Go-To-Market Strategy**

The core offering starts as a tool for individuals which aggregates social impact activity across existing platforms. This tool immediately provides a service not available now – what is happening in the community, and how can one get involved. This can be provided with only one side of the market active – social impact organizations need not explicitly perform any activity ‘in-house’, the ability to simply capture and geographically visualize a community’s social impact activity is independently valuable. Traffic will be generated toward this tool through online advertising and key partner promotion. Individuals will be provided referral links which can be used to register non-profits. Non-profits who register with the link will get a ‘referral donation’ credited on the platform to the referrer, and they will be highlighted on the global feed for their city. Similar promotions can be offered for qualifying numbers of individuals that register using one individual’s referral link.

From there, non-profits will be encouraged to originate their content, activity, and communications from the platform which would then replicate to their original social media sites. The advantage would first be the ability to automate this business function across multiple platforms, which is manual for many organizations. But more so, the generation of their content on CascAid would be aligned to advertising their needs to the general population. Rather than content be disparate and simply *allude* to what the organization is looking for, the content would structurally align as engagement opportunities within the platform: it accrues to their organization page, it is searchable and persistent, and categorized appropriately. To facilitate social impact organization participation, waived subscription fees and discounted and/or free marketing dollars will be offered if the following conditions are met:

* three separate email blasts to their membership lists encouraging them to see the organization on CascAid, with at least one of these emails solely highlighting CascAid
* a listing as CascAid as a partner
* a link from their website back to CascAid

These collective incentive programs will allow an inertia to build on both sides of the market – each organization will benefit by recruiting from their full membership, each individual will benefit by finding more individuals.

**Market Sizing Analysis**

Non-Profits Institutions

* 1.54 million registered charitable institutions in the United States (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2017)

Volunteering

* An estimated 25.1 percent of US adults volunteer, contributing an estimated 8.8 billion hours. The value of these hours is approximately $195.0 billion. (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2017)

Marketing

* Total nonprofit marketing spent in the US is roughly $7.6 billion. (Harvard Business Review, 2009)
* In 2005 Save the Children (one of the larger charity advertisers) spent about $6.4 million on advertising. (Harvard Business Review, 2009)

Philanthropy

* Total charitable giving is $410.02 billion, or 2.1% of GDP. (Charity Navigator, 2017)

CSR

*One of the key dimensions of CSR SaaS is employee engagement, but many of those are underserved. According to csrmatters.com, “roughly 90 million American workers in SMBs who are rarely engaged by CSR SaaS software platforms”. As of late 2018, this site labeled CSR under the employee engagement discipline as an emerging market.*

* The CSR SaaS market is over $800 million, and by 2028 the market size of the sector will reach $1.4 billion. (Adroit Market Research, 2020)

Current Market Participants

* Benevity (CSR) $100 million annual operating revenue, market cap of $400 million (2019)
* Blackbaud (CRM, Fundraising, CSR) $1 billion annual revenue, market cap of $2.8 billion (2020)

Overall, a huge market exists across CSR solutions, non-profit marketing, and philanthropic activity and giving. CascAid’s approach will be to provide a unique solution by being at the nexus of community social impact activity, bringing together in one place CRM tools, targeted marketing opportunities, and CSR integrations, all unified by *bringing the target market in-house*.

**Differentiation**

Many offerings exist today in the social impact space – so what about CascAid makes this a uniquely valuable endeavor? The greatest challenges that most platforms that are used for social impact face fall into two categories – they are not social impact specific, and/or they all but exclusively serve one side of the market.

In the first category are the ‘household name’ social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Non-profits, community groups, and other impact organizations use these out of necessity – but consistently are characterized by those organizations as huge resource drains with minimal effort. Outside of the brand name non-profits, audience reach and interactions with content are low relative to what their goals are, and *certainly* low relative to the accessible and potentially interested market. Put simply, there is too much noise in a completely horizontal social media platform to organically grow an audience and cultivate relationships without paying heavily on advertising or winning the ‘virtual lottery’ on a viral post.

In the second category, for those platforms that are by construct in the social impact space, they attempt to serve one side of the market – if they meaningfully serve any at all. Most of these serve the individual – VolunteerMatch, Catch a Fire, NY Cares, Pay it Forward Live – they are driven by the needs of the individual and their experience. Obviously the individual needs to be accommodated should they be expected to contribute, but making that the sole focus forces the organizations (the ones doing the actual program work) into a construct that does not make sense for them. These sites and services are often looked at as a burden, or again a ‘necessary evil’ – they rarely vet the individuals that come through, they drive down volunteering to the lowest common denominator (busy work exercises meant to expose individuals to the organization, as opposed to drive direct value), and provide no structural opportunity for ongoing engagement and interaction. There is a reason that social impact organizations are not driven to create or maintain their own pages on these sites.

Catch a Fire does, to its credit, specialize in skills-based and project-focused activities which represent real value drivers for the organization. However, the final missing piece is the actual immersion with an organization: the development of a trust and confidence-centered relationship to drive someone to commit such a meaningful amount of time and make that impact. Traditional marketing would tell you that often seven or more touches are needed to close a sale. Here, one touch (if you can even get that with the lack of a geographic search) is what is offered. The user is presented with an organization they have likely never heard of, asking for 20, 30, 40+ hours of their time. Though there is likely a segment of the population willing to give that without a history or knowledge of the organization, and the Catch a Fire’s of the world presumably are able to capture that, there is a tremendous amount of untapped potential.

With CascAid, both major obstacles are removed. The platform is social impact focused – by construct – allowing for an environment purely designed for the exploration of all things charitable. This ensures that for social impact organizations, in particular with non-profit specific demographic and other filter criteria, they are focusing their efforts and resources properly with the right market. The completeness of engagement opportunities that would be advertised by the organization (which is of course searchable by the user) ensures that what they want to offer to the public is representative of their needs. Modules which replicate CascAid developed content on other platforms ensures that additional time and resource needs is not created – if anything it is centralized, streamlined, and reduced. This efficiency is gained by having the management and communication vehicle be the platform that *houses the market itself*.

CascAid would be the only platform that allows a two-way experience of interaction between individual community members, and social impact organizations.

**Revenue Model**

The primary revenue stream for CascAid will be advertising on the platform. Similar to other social media sites, sponsored content can appear on user feeds, with the payment being used to augment the number of impressions a piece of content will have, or enable or certain specialized targeting criteria. Social impact organizations have an incentive to advertise their content, which they currently do on alternative platforms for generally nominal return across a very broad populace. Though a social impact-focused platform, corporate entities will be able to take advantage of marketing opportunities as well. Geographical targeting options, in particular advertising to all anticipated foot traffic in an area based on event RSVPs, provide a valuable business development option for brick and mortar businesses. Businesses who target social impact organizations as their customer base will be highly incentivized to use CascAid for their business development efforts.

A secondary avenue revenue generation is on subscription fees. Social impact organizations will register at different subscription package offerings, starting at $25-50/month, with the potential for increases and/or higher tiers as new modules and functionality is added. Individuals may be provided the option for a premium subscription option at a later date, but this is not contemplated as a near term impactful lever for revenue. An individual premium subscription may include the ability to post content, increased direct messaging credits, or visibility should a job marketplace be built in the future.

As the ecosystem of social impact activity is developed, a monetized product for Corporate Social Responsibility can be offered. With the natural environment native to CasCaid, a CSR module can easily allow a company to see and report on its employees’ activities, establish and communicate partnerships with non-profits, run donation drives, and organize collective efforts for skills based projects. Though planned as a future module, groundwork design will be kept in mind for a CSR product, such as systematically capturing and cleansing users’ employers.