CS 147 - Behavioral Change Studio
ASSIGNMENT 2
POVS and Experience Prototypes

Introduction

Meet The BetterMeet Team

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We are a team of Stanford students in the behavioral change studio.

Problem Domain

    Our problem domain is **meeting productivity.** There is little ownership and minimal preparation over the organization and execution of meetings. From our field research, we were able to break our problem into three categories: meeting preparation and follow-up, meeting dynamics, and project lifecycles as a whole. We looked at behaviors in all three of these areas.

Preliminary POV

    We met Baiju, Robinhood's co-founder. We were amazed to learn that organizational structure can have a noteworthy impact on meeting dynamics and productivity. It would be game changing if a solution could be designed to break down company hierarchies and create a level playing field for all individuals in attendance at a meeting.

Additional Needfinding Results

    To further test our POV, we went back into the field. Below are the key findings from four more interviews.

We talked with Kay, who works with a nonprofit called Words Alive. Kay explained the meetings she attends for her nonprofit work are very different from her work life. People are not paid, so they are much less productive. This is incredibly frustrating for meeting organizers.

We met Grant, a project manager at CBS. Grant's biggest complaint is that his meetings are too large and lack purpose. He said, "There is always a group of people sitting in the back on their computers that clearly do not need to be in the room. You've been there, I've been there." He isn't sure when it will be productive for him to attend a meeting, but feels obligated to go if the organizer invited him.

We talked with Ruth, who is involved with a religious group on campus. She said that she enjoys all her group's meetings. They don't often have purpose, but that is the point. She said, "We gather to talk and spend time together. That's the agenda."

We met Tom, an MS&E professor at Stanford. We went into detail about why and how Tom schedules meetings and found that he has no reason for most of his scheduling. He explained, "I schedule meetings every week and assume an agenda will arise in the time between meetings. Now that you're making me think about it, I have lots of pointless chats. Lots of them."

Revised POVs, HMW statements and Prototypes

POV 1

We met Grant, a project manager who needs to know when and why he should go to a meeting. It would be game changing if Grant knew the purpose of a meeting in more detail than "Data Pipeline Chat" so he could know if he should attend.

POV 1's HMWs

How might we...
- **ensure that only relevant people are in meetings?**
- **ensure that people don't feel obligated to attend if they don't add value?**
- **ensure people know the agenda?**
- ensure people's thoughts about meeting management are expressed?
- ensure people are satisfied after and during a meeting?
- ensure scheduling is done so that the least number of interruptions occur?
- create a productive culture around meetings?
- keep individuals focused in meetings?
- encourage individuals to be present in meetings, as opposed to distracted?

Experience Prototype 1

Meeting Agenda

Agenda:
- follow-up on Sunday's club meeting
- decide how to go forth with project and team creation
- decide which speakers to bring in over the next few weeks
- decide on point people for the various teams
- decide on what we will do next Sunday

* Required

Why do you need to be at the meeting? *

[   ]

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	A	B	C	D	E
1	Timestamp	Why do you need to be at the meeting?			
2	10/5/2015 16:03:37	I want to bring in Joe and be a point person for the external community team.			
3	10/5/2015 16:03:39	To bring my insights to the table.			
4	10/5/2015 16:04:11	I want to start my own project maybe and talk about that.			
5	10/5/2015 16:04:20	I don't NEED to be, but I want to			
6	10/5/2015 16:06:39	Honestly I think we can do most of that online			
7	10/5/2015 16:06:59	idk			
8	10/5/2015 16:06:59	I want to be the point person for projects			
9	10/5/2015 16:07:25	So we can all meet			

For this experience prototype, we tackled the problem of needless attendees. We assumed that forcing people to write why they are needed at a meeting would help people make better decisions about attending. First, we asked the organizer to write down why each potential attendee was invited. Second, we asked attendees to write

down why they themselves needed to be present. Lastly, we asked the meeting organizer to write down a meeting agenda. We tested two prototypes.

Prototype 1:

      Before scheduling a meeting, Derin created an agenda and wrote why he invited who he did. There were originally 10 invitees, but he identified two that did not need to be present and two that could be updated electronically. An issue arose when someone who wasn't needed at the meeting reached out to ask for the meeting location. Although the meeting wasn't valuable to her, she did not appreciate that the choice to attend hadn't been hers.

Prototype 2:

      While scheduling a separate meeting, Derin sent out a Google Form to attendees asking why they needed to be there (top picture). As a result, the meeting ended up being moved to an online chat. However, there was some negative feedback. One attendee said, "This could get annoying for repeat members." Another, "I feel like people will just put filler answers."

POV 2

      We met Jane who needs to learn to speak up because she feels that only those with loud voices and superior titles are heard. It would be game changing if everyone's ideas were heard to the same degree and people felt compelled to interact with others' ideas in the meeting room.

POV 2's HMWs

How might we...
- **ensure productive speaking during meetings?**
- **stop people from cutting others off?**
- **ensure that certain individuals do not overshare?**
- understand what ideas and comments are productive?
- ensure that organizational structure promotes equality in meetings?
- ensure everyone feels their ideas are heard?
- ensure people stay focused and attentive?
- ensure topics are not changing without proper discussion?

Experience Prototype 2

For this prototype, we simulated a moderated discussion through the use of signs and a queue of "speaker priority". Only one person was allowed to speak at a time. The meeting consisted of 8 people trying to plan a trip to Thailand.

The following instructions were given to meeting attendees: You have 2 cards, one with an X and one with an O. If you wish to speak, raise one of the cards (X for the current topic, O for a new topic) to be put on a queue. When someone has finished speaking, I will call out the next person in the queue to speak.

Although there were moments of successfully moderated conversation, most of the prototyping session elicited negative responses from participants. This meeting was one where everyone had to speak, but only for short periods of time. Additionally, sometimes people would forget the topic they wanted to speak about or their contribution would no longer be relevant to the current topic by the time it reached their turn. Overall, the addition of the prototype to the meeting seemed unnecessary and frustrated many participants.

We met Tom, who needs to know when meetings should happen because he currently schedules meetings on a weekly basis, as opposed to in accordance with their necessity. It would be game changing if he could understand how having a meeting fit into the long term goal of a project's lifecycle.
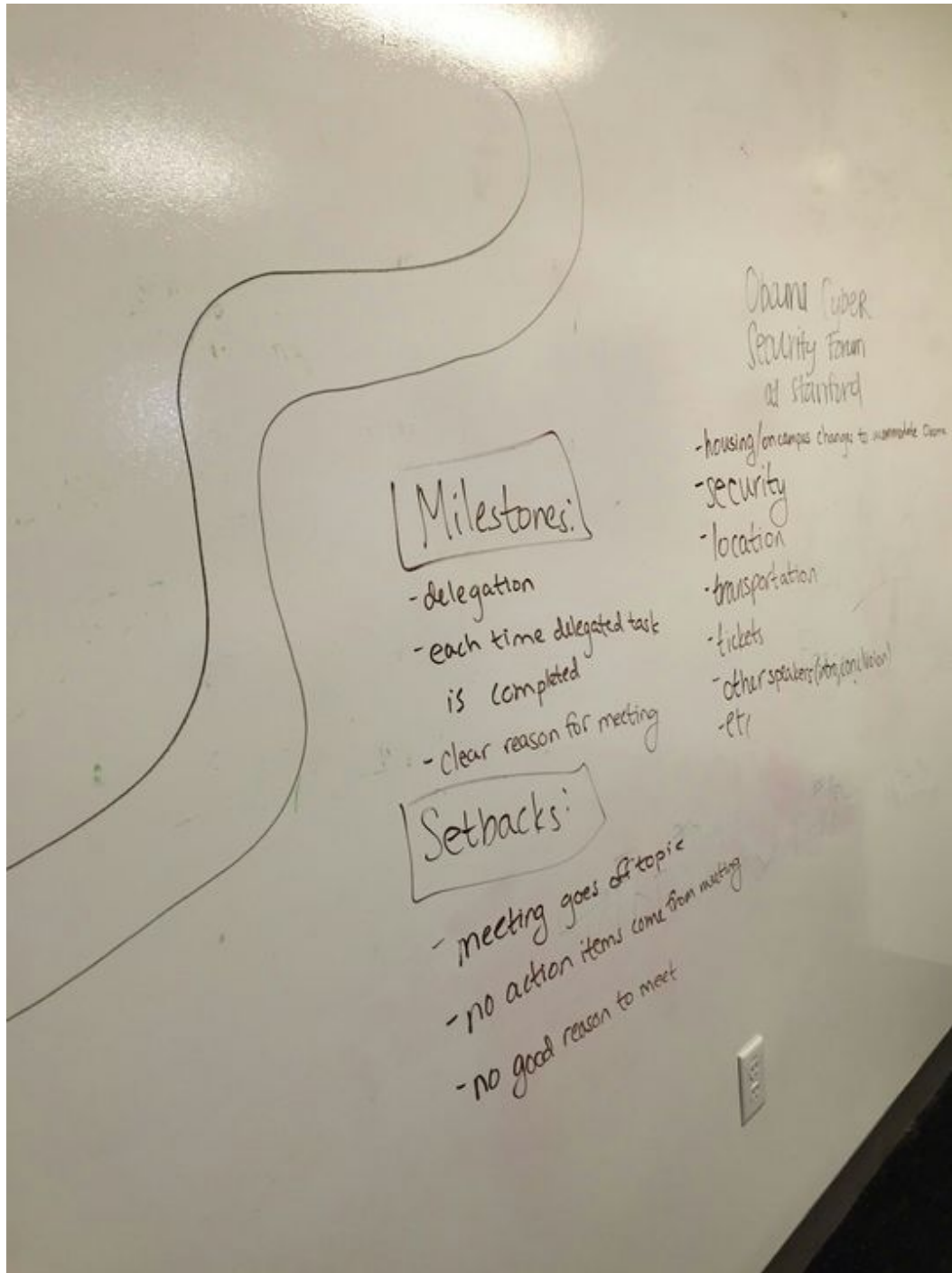
How might we...

- **visualize the productivity of meetings in a project lifecycle?**
- **change the culture around meetings?**
- **ensure meetings only happen when they need to?**
- measure the productivity of meetings and track their necessity?
- ensure meetings only happen when they move a project forward?
- ensure delegation occurs properly?
- help individuals understand where meetings fit into a project lifecycle?
- impact behavior around meeting management?

Experience Prototype 3

For this experience prototype, we used the assumption that there is little incentive for people to hold fewer meetings. We wanted to model a visual progression through a project lifecycle to help people see when meetings were helpful and when they weren't. To do this, we drew a pathway that had a starting and ending point. The user's goal is to try to make it through the entire project lifecycle, or to the end of the path. Every time the user hit a milestone, they would move forward. Every time the user had an unnecessary meeting, they would move back.

Milestones:
- delegation
- each time delegated task is completed
- clear reason for meeting

Setbacks:
- meeting goes off topic
- no action items come from meeting
- no good reason to meet

Obama Cyber Security Forum at Stanford
- housing/on campus changes to accomodate Obama
- security
- location
- transportation
- tickets
- other speakers (intro, conclusion)
- etc

To test our experience prototype, we had volunteers work on organizing an event together. We gave them a starter list of various items they would need to do, such as booking a venue. The participants were not allowed to talk to each other; however, if at any point, any of them felt like they needed to have a meeting to discuss what was going on, they could raise their hand to call a meeting.

We learned that task delegation was also a big problem in meetings. Because tasks and action items weren't properly delegated, our volunteers had to constantly hold follow-up meetings. Throughout the exercise, our volunteers were consistently meeting every time we introduced an issue in the simulation. We realized that meetings would occur regardless of whether or not people were incentivized otherwise, particularly since the map visualization only tended to influence the project leader; however, the main issue was actually with the delegation of tasks. Meetings had to occur when issues arose because delegation was not clear.

Key Takeaways/New Assumptions

We learned a lot this week! We saw many things about meetings that we hadn't really paid attention to before. We had tons of takeaways and assumptions, but will focus on our top three. First, people prefer to have natural conversations during meetings. Speakers rapidly change and cut each other off and extra actions such as raising a sign to talk are incredibly annoying. Second, delegation needs to be clear. People need to know if they have the final say on their task or if they need to report back to the project leader. Third, the meeting organizer is almost always the most invested in the meeting, but as we saw in the first prototype, people who are not invited to regularly occurring meetings take it as an insult even though they didn't need to be there. Perhaps the key takeaway from that realization is simply to not create attendance expectations in the first place and avoid regularly-scheduled meetings.

All in all, we realized that prototypes 2 and 3 were too disruptive and tended to do more harm than good--so it's great we figured that out now instead of halfway through developing the product! Prototype 1, on the other hand, was extremely successful in the initial goal of reducing the number of meetings, and we're really excited to iterate on it more over the next few weeks. We now have a new assumption: the best way to make meetings more productive is to not have them at all!