Ramble Rides

Product concept: A carpooling network for daily commuters

Motivation / Background

Ramble Rides is a product concept I developed for two reasons: I love thinking about new products and because I wanted to hone my product management skills. The concept originated from a friend of mine who commuted daily from San Francisco to San Mateo. Although many of her coworkers worked the same hours and lived blocks away (and were her friends outside of work), they never carpooled together. I didn't understand why not.

Over the course of a few weeks, I did the following:

1. Performed top-down & bottom-up market analysis and researched the competitive landscape for services aimed at daily commuters
2. Conducted Google Consumer Survey to understand user motivations
3. Built a simple landing page with a contact form
4. Posted Craigslist Ads (aimed at the landing page) in different markets to test different messages
5. Created prioritized feature list and product roadmap
6. Built a clickable wireframe

In a nutshell, the product concept is platform for daily commuters to find carpoolers and to share their ride to work.

*A slide-deck with a more complete overview of my process and results is available **here**.*

Prioritized Feature List

Feature	Priority	Bucket	Details
As a commuter, I will be able to sign up via Facebook, LinkedIn or email.	Must	Acquisition	This feature should drive the user to sign up via a social network as opposed to signing up via email, because access to their network will enable us to provide better matches.
As a commuter, I will be able to enter my commuting information	Must	Activation	The user will enter this information in a simple form with the required fields.

(home and work address, and normal schedule) to generate a list of potential carpooling matches, and a public message to be shown to other users.			
As a commuter, I will be able to see a list of potential matches with information about how I am connected to them, their personal information, and how much additional time driving them will add to my drive	Must	Retention	These listings should show if a listed match is within the user's social network(s), and if so, which one(s). The application will also have to calculate the additional time added to the user's drive for each potential match. This could either be estimated based on simple distances, or it could be calculated more accurately using a service like Google Maps.
As a commuter, I will be able to save potential matches to a “favorites” list for easy access	Could	Retention	This feature could be implemented like Twitter's “favorite” feature or Gmail's “star” feature. A simple, binary, visible star to indicate if that listing should be saved for later.
As a commuter, I will be able to message potential matches that I think will be a good fit	Must	Retention	The app will implement short in-app messages from user to user. The user will have the option of **also** receiving and replying to these messages by SMS and/or email through a relay system served by the app.
As a driver, I will be able to charge my passengers a fair amount for giving them a ride As a passenger, I will be able to pay my driver a fair amount for the ride to work	Should	Revenue	For non-instant rides, users will have to tell the app which user they drove in order to calculate the correct payment. This feature will work similar to Venmo, except that the amount is fixed and calculated by the app. For instant rides, which are matched

			in real-time through the app (see below), both the driver and passenger are known, so the app can put through the charge when the instant ride is accepted. The app will automatically calculate the amount owed from the passenger to the driver, accounting for: -total distance traveled -additional distance traveled -local gas prices -automobile depreciation -miscellaneous fees (such as tolls) -Ramble Rides' fee
As a commuter, near the time I'm about to go to work on a given workday, I will be able to tell Ramble Rides that I'm leaving in a given amount of time, and I will see real-time options regarding who I can pick up or who can pick me up	Should	Retention	The app will implement a real-time database that will track when users say they are leaving for work (or leaving for home). Since the geographic location of users and their work is known beforehand, we match users in real-time when their stated departure times are within a short window.

Key Performance Indicators

Metric	Bucket	Detail
Signups	Acquisition	The number of signups will give us insight into our messaging/market fit and the effectiveness of distribution channels.
Signups through Linkedin/Facebook	Acquisition / Referral	Signups through a social network are more valuable because they help the app to provide more relevant matches, and provide a platform for referred distribution.
Users with commute data provided	Activation	This is the first point of engagement with the user and the first substantive action the user can take. It is also

		the first opportunity for the app to build value in the network.
Users who have favorited at least one match	Retention	This indicates that the user is actively looking through the available listings and has the intention of reaching out to their favorites in the future. This will also indicate how successfully we are providing relevant matches to our users.
Messages (sent / replied-to)	Retention	Messages indicate that users are actively reaching out to their matches and seeking an opportunity to share their rides with them.
Payments	Revenue	Since this is the key revenue channel for Ramble Rides, it's critical to track how many payments are being made through the application.
Instant rides taken	Retention	Instant rides are a more advanced feature and have a value proposition more oriented around convenience and flexibility. Usage of this feature will help determine how important these are in practice.

Mockups / User Flows

A clickable mockup is available here. (The orange buttons are clickable.)