

ASSIGNMENT 1

Needfinding

Team Members



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Domain Selection

Our initial domain selection began with a brainstorming session about *behaviors* we were interested in.

MENSTRUAL CYCLE

GOING TO THE GYM NUTRITION

EXERCISE GAMES SELF-CARE SCREEN TIME

DOOM SCROLLING GOING OUTSIDE

We found a common theme that we chose to explore as our domain...

Keeping track of important health-related information



Improving one's **accountability**

Digital distractions

**We decided to explore
the domain of personal
& social *accountability*.**

Specifically, we wanted to understand **how people hold themselves accountable** for the tasks they need to do.

We also wanted to learn more about how **external factors** can affect someone's accountability.

A1: NEEDFINDING



Needfinding Methodology

Locating Participants



Non-Stanford Affiliated

We wanted our user research to be representative of more perspectives than just those in the Stanford bubble.



Variety of Tasks

With accountability, there has to be things you're keeping accountable for. We wanted to learn more about a variety of tasks:

- Schoolwork?
- Chores?
- Job-Related?



Diversity

We wanted to represent a diverse range of perspectives & life experiences. Thus, we looked for diversity in:

- Age
- Gender
- Careers

NEEDFINDING METHODOLOGY

A1: NEEDFINDING

Posts

 **Steven Le**
Stanford Campus · 6 days ago · @

Hey Everyone! I'm a Stanford student taking a class where I need to do some need-finding interviews. If you are around the Palo Alto area, please let me know. [See more](#)



Welcome Steven with a virtual gift

 Confetti 11

 Flowers 8

 Cookies 12

5 12



Joy Rose · Midtown · 6d



Can you elaborate just a little bit on what you mean by "need finding"?

Like Reply Share



Steven Le · Author · Stanford Campus · 6d



Hey

Joy

! A need finding interview is one where my group and I are trying to identify a market need for a product or solution.

Basically, the class I am in, it requires us to build out an app from scratch, but the first step in doing so is figuring out what kind of app we want to build which would be useful to people. Therefore we are trying to find a "need" that people have, in which we can build the app to help out those people!

Let me know if you need me to clarify anything else

Like Reply Share



Natasha Vaynshteyn · Greenmeadow · 5d



Hi, Steven, I would be interested in your interview.
Natasha

Like Reply Share



Steven Le · Author · Stanford Campus · 5d



Thank you

Natasha

! I'll DM you!

Like Reply Share



Small Business of New Jersey

Private · 11K members · 10+ posts a day

This group is for small business to post their business pages on here for anyone in the group to contact to purchase their product. If you do not have your home tow...



North Carolina Living

Public · 24K members · 9 posts a day · 25 members said they went to Stanford University



We interviewed...



Andrew

17 yrs old

High School Senior
Raleigh, NC



JJ

22 yrs old

College Student +
Caregiver
San Francisco, CA



Ann

66 yrs old

Retired Librarian
Santa Clara, CA



Madison

21 yrs old

ROTC Nursing
Student + Business
Owner
South Orange, NJ



Alex

56 yrs old

Mortgage Banker
Richmond, VA

WHY these participants?

Age Range



17



21



22



56



66

Wide Range of Daily Responsibilities

Gender and Income Diversity

Willingness to Speak to Us

Our Interview Plan

- **WHERE:** Conducted 3 in-person interviews, 2 on Zoom
- **WHEN:** After outreach, scheduled meetings based on participants' availability
- **SCRIPT:** Emphasis on listening to the user's **stories**, asking “why”
- **APPARATUS:** Zoom and audio recordings, or written notes
- **ETHICS:** Coffee on us for their time, established **trust** through conversation
- **LENGTH:** Our interviews ranged from 25 minutes to 50 minutes
- **PROCEDURE:** Most interviews had 2 people, one interviewing, another taking notes



We asked about...

current methods,

How do you keep yourself accountable?

What do you keep yourself accountable for?

challenges,

What are some of the biggest challenges you face when keeping accountable?

success,

What habits or practices have you developed over time to improve your accountability?

and next steps.

How do you think technology could help you stay on track?



Results & Analysis

Empathy Map: Ann

Says

Lists have always worked for me. I follow them, and I get things done.

Paper lists are simple.

Lists help remember what to do, even without them in front of her

Don't need external feedback.

Her kids try to get her into apps but she didn't like it.

I know I'm done when I've finished my list.

I like checking off everything I have to do.

I stick to routine.

I don't need anything fancy.

I never considered using anything else.

Thinks

Visibility is important for remembering things.

Her routine helps her stay on track.

Technology for accountability isn't necessary for people her age.

Her process works well already, why change it.

Other people are looking too externally to find a system for accountability

Getting rid of my paper lists wouldn't work for me.

I didn't grow up with phones so I couldn't get used to it.

Current apps are too complicated to get started with.

Dedication is the most important piece to making a system work for you.

Old school systems are tried and true.

Does

Writes paper lists for groceries, tasks, and other to-dos.

Checks off tasks as they're completed.

Keeps multiple lists for different parts of life (ex, home, grocery)

Keeps lists at home, even when going to work.

Keeps track of tasks for her husband and kids.

Leaves lists in visible places like the microwave.

Uses a paper calendar for meetings, events, and important dates.

Sticks to her lists despite her kids recommending other things.

After retiring, stayed with her list and paper calendar method.

"Never" fails to do something she wrote down to finish.

Feels

comforted by the routine of making a list

curious about digital tools that could work better but hesitant to try

Proud when she completes a list.

Empowered by writing her lists to do all of the tasks.

Overwhelmed by the options and complexity of modern planner/tracking apps.

Satisfied with the simplicity of her accountability method.

Confident in her ability to manage tasks without external feedback

saving time and money by sticking to a simple list on scrap paper.

Overwhelmed by the options and complexity of modern planner/tracking apps.

She needs to be consistently accountable for her family.



Empathy Map: Ann

Says

Thinks

I like checking off everything I have to do.

I don't need anything fancy.

Current apps are too complicated to get started with.

She needs to be consistently accountable for her family.



Does

Feels

Leaves lists in visible places like the microwave.

Keeps lists at home, even when going to work.

Comforted by the routine of making a list

Confident in her ability to manage tasks without external feedback



Insight

People prefer **simple, familiar systems** to manage their tasks because these methods **provide a sense of control and independence**. People who have strong sense of routine value following one **without needing external feedback or complicated technology** to feel productive.

Need

Users need a way to **maintain their sense of accomplishment and control** in staying accountable. People seek methods that **support their existing habits and preferences** while ensuring they stay organized and carry out their commitments.



Key Quote

“I like checking off everything I have to do and then I know I’m done. It’s simple, **I just do what I planned** and I can’t go wrong.”

Surprises

- Ann said she exclusively uses her paper lists and calendar to remember things, but she doesn’t bring these to work.
- Ann said that the act of writing things helps her to remember what she needs to do, even without the lists in front of her.
- Ann said she can’t remember ever losing a list that she needed.

Empathy Map: Alex

Says

Likes to try the new	Social Media makes it hard to breathe	Life is not vertical. It's a Zig-Zag. (Aka, It's not perfect)	Great memory of a company trip he got because he being very accountable	With social media, it's hard to breathe
We all put a lot of pressure on ourselves to keep a certain status.	He tells his kids: "You will fail. It's not a bad thing. Just move on."	You need stability and guardrails to maintain what you gotta maintain.	Certain numbers must be met for his job	If you do your work, then who cares?

Thinks

It's important to stay off social media	Technology is necessary for sales, even though he was hesitant at first	It's important to know how to get back up and re-orient yourself	Technology is just part of his job now and he accepts it	Is comfortable with his current methods of accountability
Accountability is his role and position on the team	Needs to find ways to stay accountable with tasks and goals.	Could be better at trying new things	It's hard to stay on track with everything, especially when the industry isn't doing well.	Co-working bring another level of accountability in addition to boosting friendship



Does

Collaborates with a coworker to stay accountable in a sales group.	Keeps a todo list next to him	Writes a todo list at the beginning of every week	Journals daily and weekly goals, mainly focusing on work.	Plans out his work-related tasks.
Uses a personal notebook and pencil to track goals	Uses already-provided work technology like Salesforce.	Follows company-required tracking systems that record his calls and meetings.	Does not indulge in social media	Writes paragraphs of what happens in every meeting

Feels

Pressure from external factors (eg. Social Media), like quotas and social expectations	Frustration with social media's unrealistic portrayals of success	Physical Accountability > Technology Accountability	A sense of necessity to maintain order (via todo list).	Struggling to keep up with the changing industry but adapting.
A sense of pride for past accomplishments, like making it to the company's President's Club.	Relieved that failure is normal and that it's okay to fall behind sometimes.	Comfort in having stability through personal systems and guardrails to maintain consistency.	The importance to achieve our goals	Loves the convenience of automatic checking system

Empathy Map: Alex

 Says

He tells his kids:
"You will fail. It's
not a bad thing.
Just move on."

Great memory of a
company trip he
got because he
being very
accountable

 Thinks

Could be better at
trying new things,
although
comfortable with
current methods

It's hard to stay on
track with
everything,
especially when
the industry isn't
doing well.



 Does

Writes a todo list
at the beginning of
every week to plan
out his work-
related tasks.

Uses a personal
notebook and
pencil to track
goals alongside
work technology
like Salesforce.

 Feels

Pressure from
external factors
(eg. Social Media),
like quotas and
social
expectations

Comfort in having
stability through
personal systems
and guardrails to
maintain
consistency.



Insight

People value **stability and consistency** in an unpredictable work environment, but also acknowledges the inevitability of failure and the **importance of being able to adapt**. Adapting is an integral part of the job, and people find comfort in simple, reliable methods.

Need

Users need tools or systems that help them **stay accountable and maintain stability**, while also **allowing them flexibility** to adjust when things don't go according to plan. These tools should **integrate with their work, support their existing habits**, and **provide guardrails** that prevent them from falling too far behind.



Key Quotes

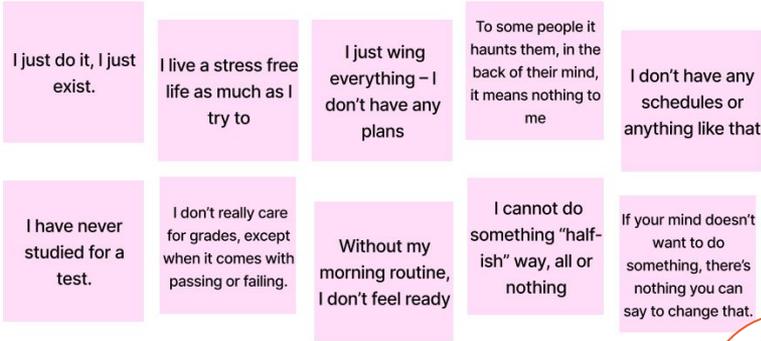
“I have my own **written todo list** at my work desk that I make at the **beginning of each week** detailing the goals I set.”

Surprises

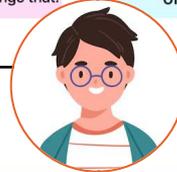
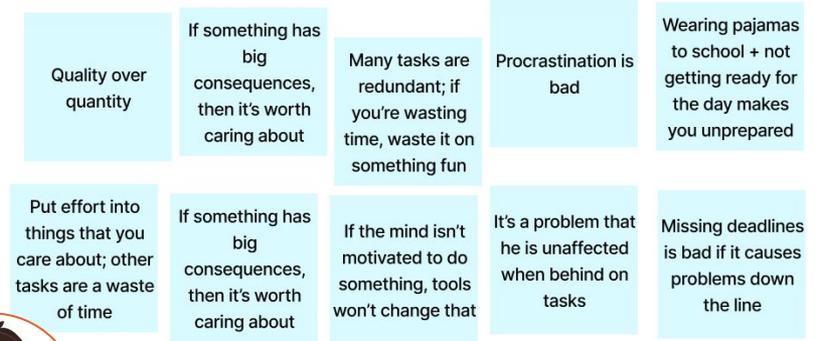
- Only utilizes technology for his work
- Is comfortable with failure, granted he is able to learn and improve.
- Loves the reliable, easy methods that he is used to, but still wants to try the new.
- Does not like social media

Empathy Map: Andrew

Says



Thinks



Does



Feels



Empathy Map: Andrew

Says

If your mind doesn't want to do something, there's nothing you can say to change that.

I don't really care for grades, except when it comes with passing or failing.

Thinks

If something has big consequences, then it's worth caring about

It's a problem that he is unaffected when behind on tasks



Does

Procrastinates and puts off work as much as possible

Puts in a lot of effort in work that he cares about

Feels

Enjoyment when able to focus on a singular task with a focused goal

Motivated when his task has big consequences



Insight

Some people are motivated to do work only when it is **personally meaningful** to them and has **big consequences**. Otherwise, they might not feel compelled to put in the work or take on a lot of different obligations. Instead, they may enjoy a **comfortable routine** that gets them through the day.

Need

Users need to feel **motivated to do their tasks** in the first place. Tools can help them recognize **consequences of their procrastination** and **find it fun to** complete the tasks overall. They should provide compelling motivation to get the user started on what they need to accomplish.



Key Quotes

“I’m a firm believer in **quality over quantity**. If someone tells me to do a slideshow, I put all my energy into that one slideshow... I cannot do something halfway; it’s **all or nothing**.”

Surprises

- No formal accountability system
- Indifferent to deadlines
- Perfectionist
- Emphasizes routine and stress-free life

Empathy Map: Madison

Says

I have my phone with me 90% of the time

Running a business with my sister

I prioritize tasks based on their deadlines, like homework or dr. appointments

When I have a lot of tasks, I try to tackle the most urgent ones first

I feel more focused after following my morning routine

I've realized that taking regular breaks helps me avoid burnout

I use Microsoft To-Do because it helps me stay organized

I have a whiteboard calendar to see all my tasks at once

Taking naps helps me recharge when I feel too tired to keep working

Post-it notes didn't work for me—they didn't remind me at the right time

Thinks

Technology can help, but it doesn't provide motivation

If she prioritize health, she performs better in school

Deadlines help her determine what's most important

Silence helps her focus better

Staying ahead on work makes her feel accomplished

She gets distracted by social media too easily

Stress makes her procrastinate more

Breaks are essential for staying productive

Family distractions make it hard to stay focused

Her environment plays a huge role in how focused she is



Does

Writes down information to help memorize content

Manages inventory and social media for her business

Attends ROTC workouts in the morning

Writes tasks on a whiteboard calendar and erases them when done

Prioritizes tasks based on deadlines

Schedules workouts to ensure she stays healthy

Studies for exams for nursing school

Balances business tasks with schoolwork

Travels to her storefront and home during the week

Uses the Microsoft To-Do app to manage tasks

Takes naps when tired to recharge

Tries to limit phone time for business social media use

Feels

Frustrated when she procrastinates due to stress

Overwhelmed by distractions from family and social media

Proud of staying on top of her work last semester

Anxious when tasks pile up without being addressed

Disappointed when motivation is lacking, even with reminders

Stressed when deadlines approach

Satisfied when she balances her health and work

Relieved after taking breaks or naps to recharge

Happy when she's ahead of schedule with her homework

Tired after a long day of workouts, clinicals, and work

Empathy Map: Madison

 Says

 Thinks

When I have a lot of tasks, I try to tackle the most urgent ones first

I've realized that taking regular breaks helps me avoid burnout

If she prioritize health, she performs better in school

Technology can help, but it doesn't provide motivation



 Does

 Feels

Tries to limit phone time for business social media use

Schedules workouts to ensure she stays healthy

Frustrated when she procrastinates due to stress

Proud of staying on top of her work last semester

I have my phone with me 90% of the time. I prioritize tasks based on their deadlines, like homework or doctor appointments. I've realized that taking regular breaks helps me avoid burnout. I have a whiteboard and I use it to see my tasks at once.

Technology can help, but it doesn't provide motivation. Staying ahead on her schedule. Deadlines help determine what's most important. She gets distracted by social media easily. Productive.

Uses the Microsoft To-Do app to manage tasks. Writes down information to help memorize content. Prioritizes tasks based on deadlines. Manages history and media for business. Takes nap when tired to recharge. Balances business tasks with schoolwork. Tries to limit phone time for business social media use. Schedules workouts in the morning.

Frustrated when she procrastinates due to stress. Proud of staying on top of her work last semester. Disappointed when motivation drops, even with reminders. Stressed when deadlines approach. Frustrated after breaks due to health and work. Proud of staying on top of her homework.



Insight

Many users struggle with accountability, not due to a lack of organization but because of **low motivation**. Even with tools like apps and calendars, **distractions** (such as social media, family, and their environment) and **procrastination** often prevent them from completing tasks.

Need

Users need tools that do more than remind them—they should provide **motivation**, **reduce distractions**, and break tasks into manageable steps. These tools should **help users feel accomplished** and maintain focus, making tasks more engaging and achievable.



Key Quotes

"My biggest challenge is motivation.
The apps remind you of things to do,
but they don't motivate you to
actually do them."

Surprises

- Minimal use of written tools
- Aware of social media distractions, still gets distracted even with limits
- Prioritizes her health
- Uses Microsoft To-Do

Empathy Map: JJ

Says

- I play mind games on myself to stay productive
- I don't procrastinate much anymore, it's built into my routine
- I know all my class times and what I'm doing each day
- If I prioritize my health, I can do everything else better
- I drop everything if my family needs help
- I feel proud of getting my associate's degree, it showed progress
- I want to improve my discipline, especially on bad days
- I don't rely on tools, but I probably should write down a schedule
- Breaking up studying into shorter sessions works best for me
- I can work through noise, but some days it's more distracting

Thinks

- Health is the foundation for productivity
- Distractions like family and digital noise can really throw him off
- Working ahead is essential, especially with my demanding schedule
- Sacrificing meals is sometimes necessary
- Breaking tasks into smaller chunks helps him stay on track
- Technology could help, but it's often more distracting than useful
- Staying disciplined, even on bad days, is the key to success
- It's hard to stay accountable with long, complex study sessions
- Discipline matters more than motivation
- Of the bigger picture to stay motivated



Does

- Prioritizes health by eating well, sleeping enough, and exercising
- Plans meals in advance to avoid hunger interfering with tasks
- Works ahead when possible to accommodate unpredictable schedules
- Zones out distractions by hyper-focusing on the task at hand
- Juggles caregiving with school by carefully managing time
- Avoids using written tools like schedules or to-do lists
- Packs snacks for long school days
- Breaks study sessions into smaller chunks
- Manages to work through distractions when necessary
- Uses breaks between classes to do homework
- Sacrifices personal time or meals if needed to fulfill responsibilities

Feels

- Proud of staying on top of his routine without procrastination
- Stressed but manageable when falling behind
- Frustrated by distractions from his environment
- Confident in his ability to block out distractions
- Overwhelmed on days when work and school pile up
- Proud of his academic achievements, motivating him to get his degree
- Discouraged when working in cramped or noisy environments
- Content when his routine runs smoothly
- Satisfied with breaking up tasks into manageable pieces
- Anxious when tasks pile up, but relies on discipline to meet deadlines

Empathy Map: JJ

 Says

If I prioritize my health, I can do everything else better

I want to improve my discipline, especially on bad days

 Thinks

Technology could help, but it's often more distracting than useful

Discipline matters more than motivation

 Does

Avoids using written tools like schedules or to-do lists

Zones out distractions by hyper-focusing on the task at hand

 Feels

Satisfied with breaking up tasks into manageable pieces

Frustrated by distractions from his environment





Insight

Some users rely primarily on **internal discipline** and mental routines to stay accountable, rather than using external tools or apps. However, **unpredictable schedules** and **external obligations** can disrupt their accountability, and they may struggle when their discipline is tested on challenging days.

Need

Users need **supportive tools** that enhance their internal strategies without adding distractions. Tools should seamlessly **integrate with their mental routines**, help manage unpredictability, and reinforce their focus and health priorities.



Key Quote

“I don't procrastinate much at all, so I don't really have to keep myself very accountable anymore—**it's like kind of built in**. It's my routine already.”

Surprises

- Minimal use of tools
- Health first but would sacrifice meals and sleep if needed
- Adapted to distractions by hyper-focusing on tasks

Extreme Users



Ann

66 yrs old
Retired Librarian
Santa Clara, CA

Ann uses paper notes and prefers to avoid social media whenever possible. Being retired, she has less work obligations to actively keep track off.



Madison

21 yrs old
ROTC Nursing Student
+ Business Owner
South Orange, NJ

Madison uses to-do list apps to track her tasks and obligations, often relying on her phone to remember everything on her plate.

Extreme Users



Andrew

17 yrs old
High School Senior
Raleigh, NC

Andrew does not have a formal accountability system and instead relies on internal motivation. He procrastinates as much as possible.



JJ

22 yrs old
College Student +
Caregiver
San Francisco, CA

JJ maintains accountability through mental discipline rather than tools, prioritizing health to stay productive. He avoids procrastination by sticking to a structured routine.

A1: NEEDFINDING



Conclusion

Putting it all together

01

Stability and Consistency

Users value systems that provide stability in their routines. The app should ensure users can rely on it without needing to overhaul their habits or adjust to overly complex features.

02

Flexibility and Adaptability

Users acknowledged that flexibility is essential when things don't go as planned. The app should allow users to adjust their goals and tasks while still feeling in control.

03

Support Existing Habits

Users seek tools that align with their current systems, providing a sense of control and independence. The app should be intuitive and integrate with the workflows people already use.

04

Minimal Intrusiveness

Users like subtle reminders or prompts to help stay on track without being overwhelming. The app should foster accountability without being overbearing.

Challenging Assumptions

- Importance of getting outside the Stanford bubble
- Challenging our assumption on the importance of technology & productivity
- **Andrew** is selectively motivated
- **JJ** uses no technology, but is very disciplined
- **Madison** uses technology, but gets distracted



What's Next?

More Interviews

We will interview more users who provide unique perspectives on the topic of social accountability. We aim to talk to more users with diverse backgrounds and lifestyles.

Identify Patterns

We will continue to analyze the insights and trends in our interviews. We will use these to explore possible needs and develop HMWs to better inform our project moving forward.

Narrow Scope

We will take all of our learnings and narrow the scope of the problem within social accountability that we are looking to build a solution for.

A1: NEEDFINDING



**Thank
You!**



Appendix

Questions

- What do you currently do for a living?
- Could you tell me about how you currently keep accountable?
- What are some of the things you try to stay accountable for?
- How do you decide which tasks are the most important to stay accountable for?
- Have you ever tried a tool that didn't work for you? Why didn't it work?
- What are some of the biggest challenges you face when keeping accountable?
- What external factors lead you to lose accountability?
- In what ways does your environment (physical or digital) impact your ability to stay accountable?
- Are there any particular settings or situations where you find it easier or harder?
- How do you feel when you fall behind on tasks?
- What motivates you to stay accountable for certain tasks or responsibilities?
- What habits or practices have you developed over time to improve your accountability?
- Describe a time when you felt really proud of staying accountable. What helped you succeed?
- How do you think technology could help you better stay on track?
- If you could wave a magical wand and improve any aspect of your accountability, what would it be and why?

Interview Artifacts

