

Team 2: Continued Needfinding & Brainstorming

Alexander, Armita, Cate, & Manas

Our Team



ALEXANDER



ARMITA



CATE



MANAS

The background features several abstract, organic shapes in a light beige or tan color. On the left side, there is a circular area filled with a pattern of small, dark blue dots. Another similar dotted area is located in the bottom right corner. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

Entering a New Industry

Those either entering the professional world for the first time or who are transitioning career fields.

The background features a light beige color with several abstract shapes. On the left, there is a large, dark brown, rounded shape. To its right, a smaller, light brown, rounded shape contains the number '01'. Further right, there is another light brown rounded shape, and a larger, light brown rounded shape at the bottom right. In the top right corner, there is a pattern of small, light blue dots arranged in a grid-like pattern.

01

Additional Interviews

Rhonda



- ❖ Part-time freelance crocheter on a gap year
- ❖ Used social media traction to gain clients
- ❖ Is struggling to grow her clientele after initial popularity

Rhonda's Learnings

Building Clientele

Gained clients from TikTok traction

Hit a plateau with her following and is having a hard time finding new clients

Working with Clients

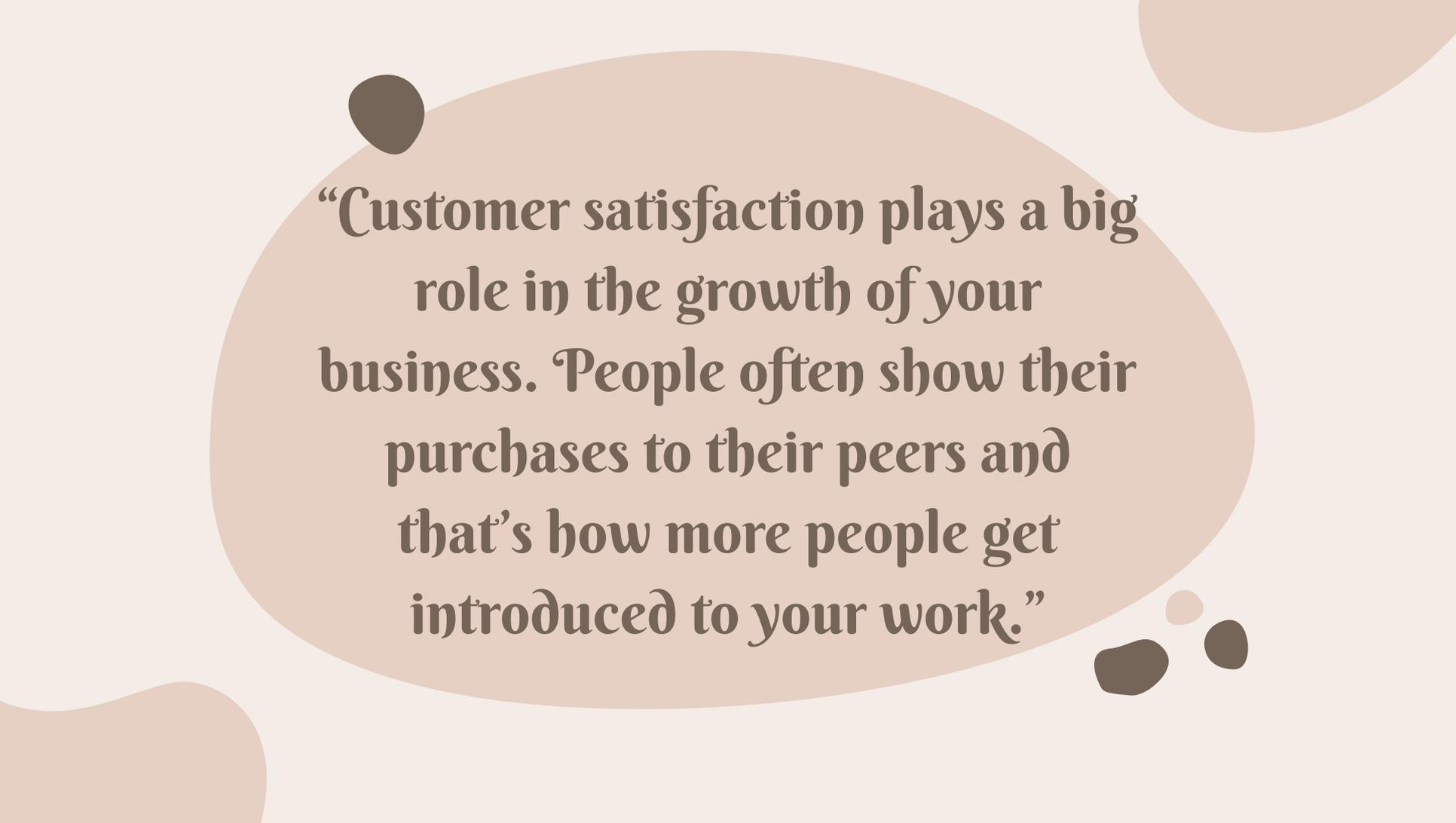
Builds credibility by showing the process of how she makes each item

Learning curve for managing client expectations: everyone has different tastes, budgets, timelines

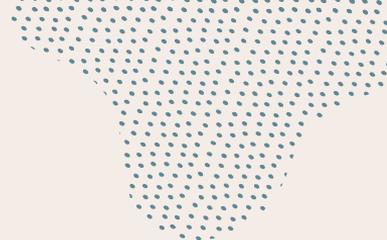
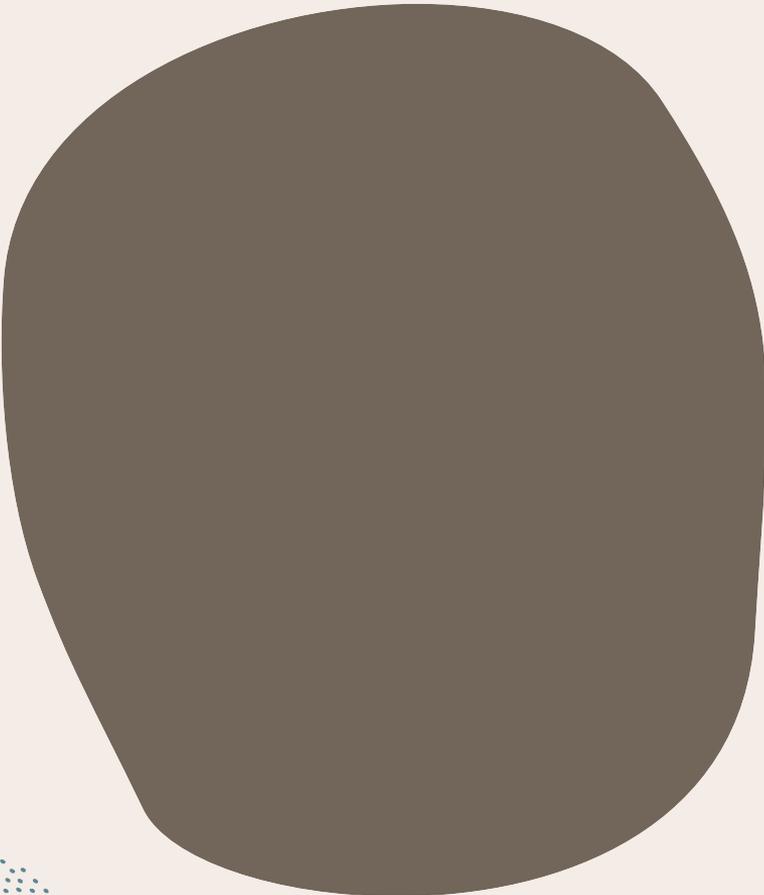
Reflections

It's hard to set clear boundaries with clients and not undersell her products

Biggest skill that helped her was doing social media



“Customer satisfaction plays a big role in the growth of your business. People often show their purchases to their peers and that’s how more people get introduced to your work.”



Dylan

- ❖ **Recent grad in cybersecurity looking to join the industry**
- ❖ **Has had one relevant internship**
- ❖ **Network is mostly friends who have gone to school with them**

Dylan's Insights

Finding Jobs

Relies on job boards

Struggles with tailoring resume and cover letter to each position – takes hours

Hard time gauging what to do besides just applying

Networking

Is not sure how to tap into peer network for this specific career path

From their one small-team German internship, doesn't have many professional contacts

Feelings

Understands what they need to do from the few friends they have that "Have it figured out"

"I know I should be connecting with people and asking for informational interviews, but that feels daunting"

Interview Key Learnings

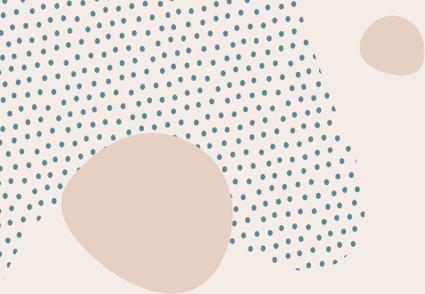
- For freelancers, return customers and customer referrals are crucial for business → long term relationships
- Contradiction: Dylan says applying to jobs is “easy” despite complaining about tailoring resumes
- Having a network doesn't necessarily mean you feel comfortable utilizing it

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02

POV

Development



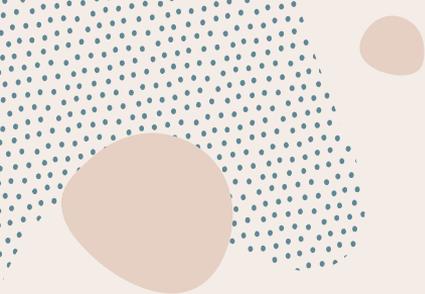
We met Sammy, a new lawyer and recent law-school graduate who transitioned out of tech sales.

We were surprised to realize how despite her well-thought out networking goals it was still hard emotionally and logistically.

We wondered if this means she felt vulnerable connecting with strangers when having less experience.

It would be game-changing to...





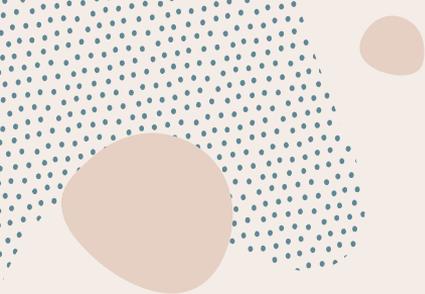
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We wondered if this means she felt vulnerable connecting with **professionals in a new field** when having less experience.

It would be game-changing to **make building a network of professional development mentors in her new field less intimidating.**



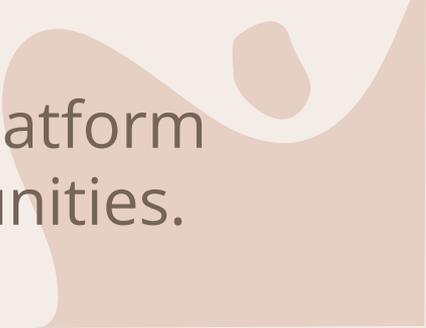


We met Hannah, a freelance artist who works across industries after just graduating college.

We were surprised she felt frustrated that job boards did not post any roles she's looking for.

We wondered if this means that she felt exhausted to have to seek out collaborators and employers by herself.

It would be game changing if she could have a platform to help find potential collaborators and opportunities.



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03

How Might We's

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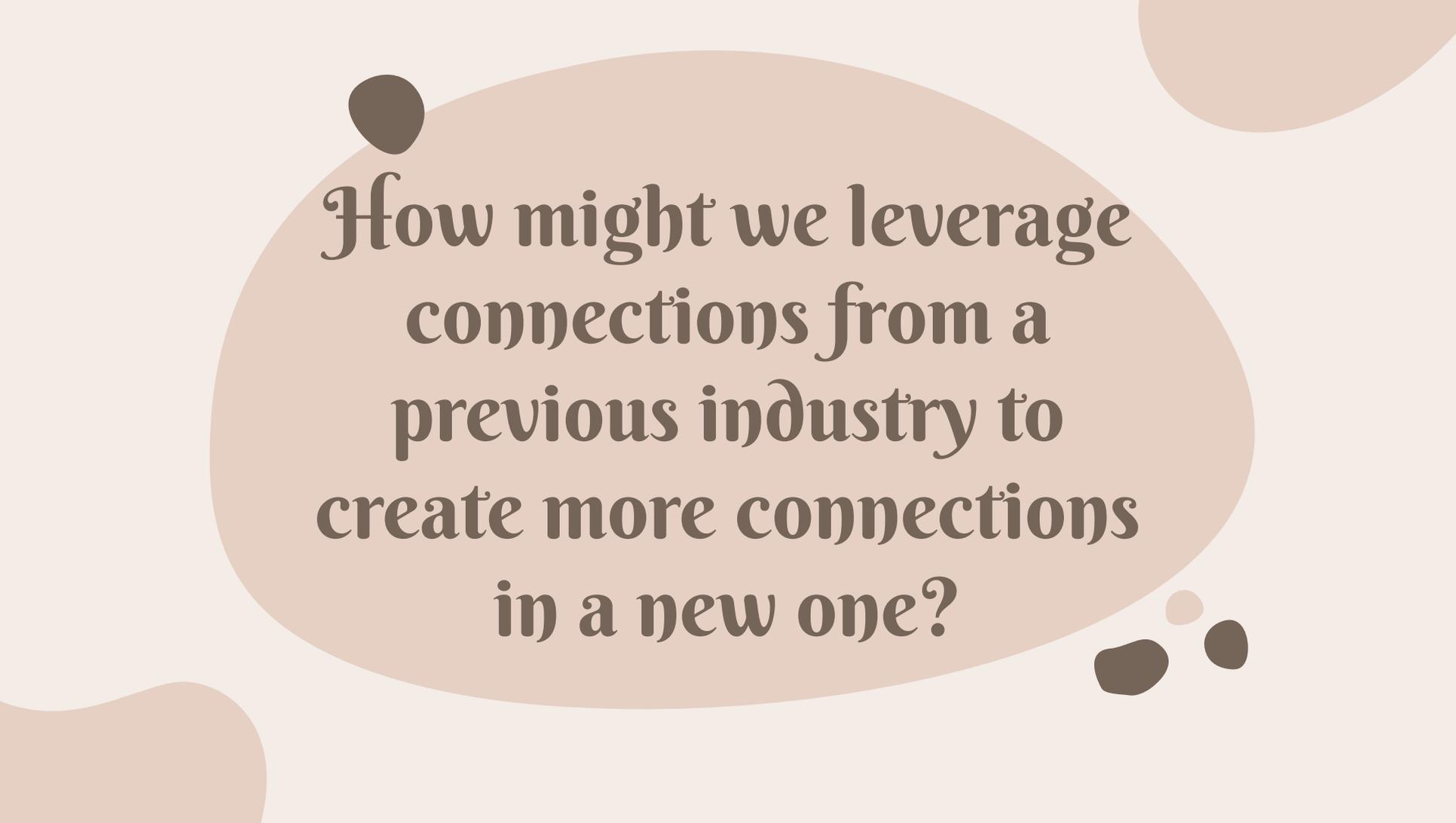
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**How might we
make professional
mentorship
conversations a
group activity?**





**How might we leverage
connections from a
previous industry to
create more connections
in a new one?**

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How might we use
social media to
increase potential
clients' exposure to
freelance workers'
projects?



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04

Solutions & Prototypes

How might we
make
professional
mentorship
conversations a
group activity?

**Connect multiple
mentees with similar
backgrounds to do
an informational
interview together
with one mentor**

ASSUMPTION

People feel more
comfortable reaching
out to network in
groups

Experience Prototype #1

HAVE USERS RANK AND TALK THROUGH HOW LIKELY THEY WOULD BE TO GO TO A NETWORKING EVENT: SOME WITH A FRIEND



ROLE

A student beginning their professional journey deciding how to network



PROPS

5 sample emails about networking events



ENVIRONMENT

A student's room & email browser

Event: E

FROM: Friend from University

Yo

Hope you've been doing well since the Birthday party last month! I was thinking of going to a resume review workshop and mentor program later this week. I know you've been on the engineering grind too so let me know if you'd like to come with.

- Your friend from university

Prototype #1 Results

WHO

Senior in CS

Asked if folks who went to the career fair wanted to chat

Planning on entering the SWE field post-grad

SUPPORT

Thinks group events are the most fun

Says 1-on-1 is more intimidating

AGAINST

Thinks would be more inclined to have fun than work

Wants work events to just be work-focused

Individual events help you stand out

CONCLUSION

Incorrect Assumption

KEY LEARNING

Comfort doesn't necessarily lead
to the best networking

MOVING FORWARD

Increasing comfort shouldn't
come from a buffer

How might we use social media to increase potential clients' exposure to freelance workers' projects?

Create a social media platform for freelancers featuring their portfolios to connect them with long-term project partnerships.

Suggest possible freelancers that are collaborators or inspired by others whose work users like.

ASSUMPTION

Looking at personal portfolios makes you more likely to want to work with somebody

Experience Prototype #2

HAVE ARTISTS DECIDE WHO TO INTERVIEW AS A COLLABORATOR FROM PROFILES WITH VARYING AMOUNTS OF PORTFOLIO + RESUME



ROLE

A theatrical designer looking for an assistant



PROPS

8 printed profiles, with varying portfolios and/or resumes



ENVIRONMENT

Their office

Prototype #2 Results

WHO

A local professional
Costume Designer

Co-Worker &
Stanford Faculty

Regularly hires
assistant designers

SUPPORT

Helps determine the
style of work they do

Can match a person
to a project

Helps determine if
anyone's off the
table

AGAINST

Doesn't think photos
correlate to skill

Job is also how you
work with people

Would rather see
names of who
they've worked with

**“No photo will
edge someone
ahead if I have
an easy contact
who has worked
with someone
else.”**

**“Anyone
can have a
good photo
taken.”**

CONCLUSION

Incorrect Assumption

KEY LEARNING

References Drive Hiring

MOVING FORWARD

Feature Network First

Solution
#03

**Suggest possible
freelancers that
are collaborators
or inspired by
others whose
work users like.**

ASSUMPTION

If you like someone's work, you will like their collaborators & who they are inspired by

Experience Prototype #3

HAVE USERS TALK THROUGH HOW THEY PICK 3 ARTISTS THEY LIKE THEY ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO HIRE. SEE IF THEY ARE ARTISTS INSPIRED BY EACH OTHER/ARE COLLABORATORS



ROLE

A person looking to hire a freelance artist for a piece for their home



PROPS

12 artwork profiles. 4 groups of 3 artists which have been inspired by each other



ENVIRONMENT

Their own home



1



4



7



10



2



5



8



11



3



6



9



12

Prototype #3 Results

WHO

Student with arts background

Housemate

Enjoys arts museums

SUPPORT

Picked 2 images from the same group

Those 2 images had similar colors/scenery

AGAINST

Half of the images were in different groups

Picked based on the objects in the paintings

Picked based on style such as "futuristic"

CONCLUSION

Incorrect Assumption

KEY LEARNING

*The work of collaborators
isn't always similar*

MOVING FORWARD

*Focus on similarities
between the work itself*

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05

**Solution
Moving
Forward**

Composite Solution

01

FEATURE CONNECTIONS

Suggest freelancers by noting who your closest mutual connections are

02

SHOWCASE WORK

Out of suggested freelancers, showcase their work to see who is the best fit for this project

Ethical Concerns



STOLEN WORK

Collecting portfolios puts artists' work at risk of being stolen



REINFORCES PRIVILEGE

Featuring existing connections can reinforce bias in hiring processes and benefits those who have already had success

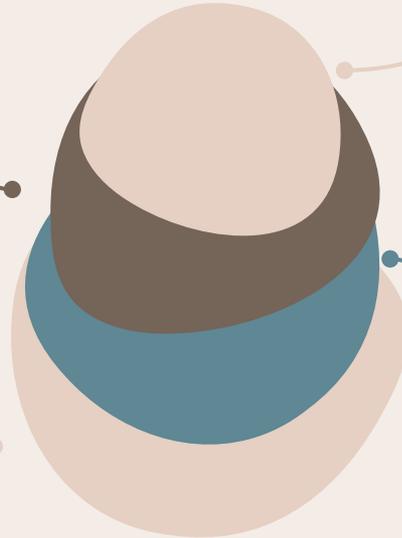
Who Does This Serve?

Those with access to internet and social media

Those who have resources to create a portfolio

Those with connections at the level they want to work at

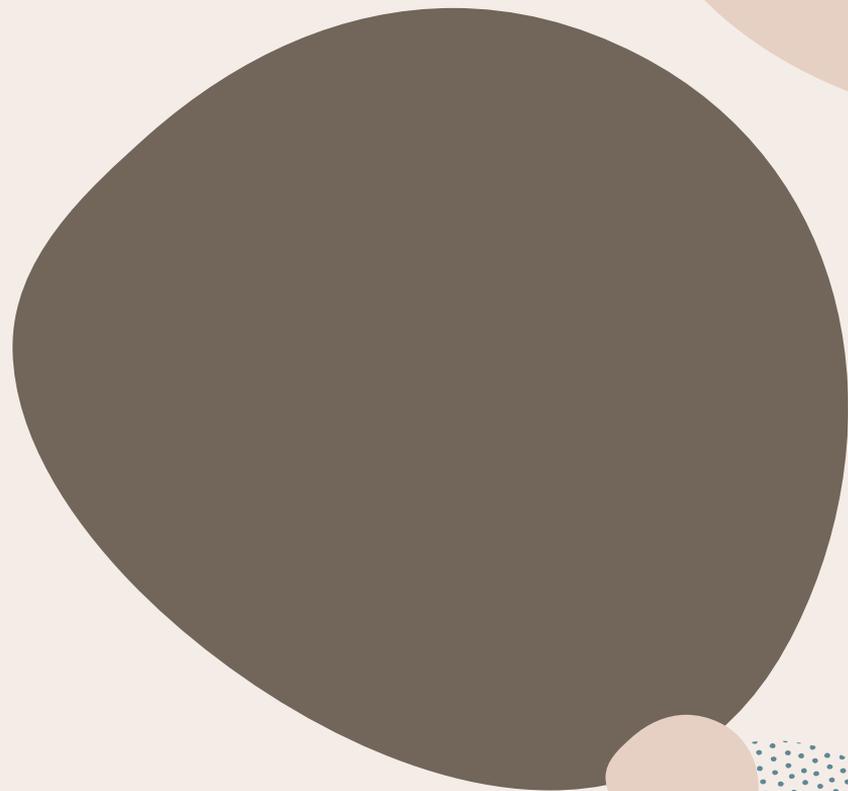
Those who already have job experience



Thank you!

QUESTIONS?

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Appendix

We met Sammy, a new lawyer and recent law school graduate who transitioned out of tech sales. We were surprised that she felt more comfortable re-contextualizing her skills than building a new network. We wondered if this means it feels vulnerable to connect with strangers when you have less experience. It would be game changing to find people who are less intimidating to talk to.

- HMW we make it exciting to talk to professional mentors
- **HMW make professional mentorship conversations a group activity (multiple people learning and bouncing off each other, built in support system?)* ***
- HMW organize LinkedIn connections and suggested people
- HMW foster long-term relationships with professionals
- **HMW connect people with fewer existing connections (didn't go to college or don't know anyone in the industry) to folks who are excited about talking to new people ****
- HMW find professionals who actively want to mentor the next generation*
- HMW make it rewarding for professionals who do coffee chats *
- HMW help facilitate genuine conversations that could also help build a network
- HMW help people get to know and connect with people in their area/local community*
- HMW create online communities centered around shared interests and goals
- HMW make potential employers less intimidating
- HMW give her more experience to boost her confidence
- HMW make building a network less important
- HMW connect her directly with potential employers to cut out the networking step
- **HMW leverage connections from a previous industry to create more connections in a new one**

Sammy How Might
We's

We met Hannah, a freelance artist who works across industries after just graduating college. We were surprised to realize she doesn't check job boards because the roles she's looking for don't exist there. We wondered if this means that it's hard for freelance workers to find people who need their skills. It would be game changing if we could connect freelance workers with companies who need their skills.

- HMW make employers make their job postings more visible to those who are looking for them
- HMW make freelance workers have profiles more visible to employers
- HMW connect freelance workers with those who need services *
- HMW create a streamlined platform for freelancers
- HMW make it easier for freelancers to find jobs relevant to their offerings
- HMW help freelancers maintain long-term relationships with their clients*
- **HMW use social media to increase potential clients' exposure to freelance workers' projects ****
- HMW incentivize employers to post their jobs
- HMW visualize/make accessible the personal connections that lead to jobs
- HMW we make connecting freelancers to employers like making a new friend **
- HMW we showcase freelance work to make others reach out to them
- HMW allow people to experiment with freelancers to find the best collaborators
- HMW we create a job board of freelancers looking for work

Hannah How
Might We's

How use social media to showcase freelancers work to potential clients?

targeted ads?

→ Pinterest
→ various content ideas

new types of content

↳ prompts

↳ bundle prompts

↳ suggest combinations / your imagination

Pinterest

↳ walls of photos

↳ build/categorize different things you're looking for

create new social media platform for freelance workers

↳ swipe left/right on Tinder

learn + suggest what you might like

1. Things you're looking for

2. Explain

post ads/show people who do that work already.

↳ collaborations of popular influencers

if you like this person → you'll like their collaborators

↳ who they're inspired by

using relevant trends to get on. People's fears

implanting ideas in people's brains

do your work in where it's not welcome

↳ graffiti
↳ private property

Social Media Brainstorm

tiMW make professional mentorship conversations a group activity

multiple mentees

w/ similar backgrounds
do a coffee chat together

Show mentees who have
been helpful for you

Show company security
resources

post your experiences
online

make post-work
meets for board
games

creating groups to go to
career fairs (less daunting fun)

Host professional
gatherings

reddit platform?

↳ slack → both of professionals
PPT course as of → peers
annual → share
learnings

share resources
for interview prep,
job boards, etc

make ads in
newspapers looking
for mentors, peers

Charter private jet to
Hawaii with mentors

↓
Pay mentors

networks
anchored
↓
accountability

Group Mentorship Brainstorm

HMW connect people with fewer connections to people who want to develop their talent.

Tinder

↓
social media
profile recommendations

Job board

Offering up company
confidential info

targetted recruiting for
people who aren't at
a big university

↳ Temp agencies

Give your resumé to
drug dealers and they
can distribute

↳ hand out business
cards in social spaces

↳ QR code to your
resumé

affinity
groups

Phone book

Salary increase
for people who
bring in/mentor
good people

directory of
people open
to mentoring

Use job
monitoring systems
to see who's doing
the least work & offer
them up

Fewer Connections Brainstorm

SAYS

She thought it would be a chill side hustle, but managing orders and deadlines has become stressful.

She has always wanted to have more control over her time and income

Says she still sees it as a part-time side hustle, not a long-term career path

Is interested in doing something in the realm of business or creating her own business as a full-time career

Her pricing system is based on material cost and hours spent

It's important to not be afraid to charge what your time and effort are worth

"People often show their purchases to their peers and that's how more people got introduced to your work."

Utilizing social media is one of the best and only avenues if you want new clients

People will try to dictate how much your hobby is worth

It's hard to maintain an audience after the first few times you go viral

Managing expectations and communication with clients was one of the hardest parts

Runs multiple aspects of business on her own: "It's not just about creating, but also managing all the behind-the-scenes stuff."

Freelancing would be chill and flexible

She realized there was demand for these items after she posted TikTok tutorials and people asked if they could buy her pieces

People undervalue hand-made work: "Not a lot of people understand the time, value, and labour that goes into making a handmade piece"

It takes a lot of time management and self-discipline

"I always thought the market would be there if the product you're selling is unique enough, but I was greatly mistaken. Finding clients is difficult regardless of what you're offering."

Being able to make money from a hobby or something you'd still do otherwise is a huge motivator

It's possible to turn a passion into something that is financially sustainable

Sees a future for herself that is not tied to Q to 5. Wants a similar freelance style career.

Boundaries are key in freelancing, and you should be clear about what you can and cannot do

Starting small and learning as you is essential

While social media is good for attracting your first clients, maintaining that traction is difficult

Succeeding in freelancing is not just about skills, it's about networking and building relationships

THINKS

DOES

Shares pictures of crochet on social media

Takes custom orders from people online as her main client source

Says no to rush orders or charges more from complex orders when necessary

Asks a lot of questions upfront to ensure clarity, produce high quality work, and manage client relations

Feels encouraged by positive feedback and support

She started when she was in school and sometimes feels overwhelmed balancing all her work with crocheting

Proud when clients appreciate the craftsmanship behind her pieces, but frustrated when they undervalue the work.

Excited about the prospects of growing it into a larger business but also nervous about whether she can do it

FEELS

Shows the process of creating items on her TikTok and YouTube accounts to gain traction and clients

Explores other ways to find new customers and expand her audience, such as workshops and digital crochet patterns

Manages multiple aspects of her business including tracking expenses, marketing, pricing, etc on her own.

Focuses on trying to build credibility as that is how she can get more customers

Feels pressured by the unpredictability of income and client demand

"It's made me a lot more open to unconventional paths" - feels more confident in trying less traditional careers.

Confident in her pricing and product value

Feels that freelancing in a low stakes manner is a way to dip her toes in self-employment.

Maintains relationships with clients in order to keep them as recurring clients

Sells her crochet pieces to small stationary shops which then sell them and give her a fraction of the revenue

Does not upload as frequently on social media anymore

Started crocheting because she needed an extracurricular for a school requirement.

Feels freelancing can often place more emphasis on marketing and networking than product quality and value

Not confident about people's willingness to pay adequately: "If I priced my items how much they actually cost, I wouldn't sell anything."

It's easy to underprice you already enjoy doing

Difficult trying to set expectations when each client can be so different

Rhonda Empathy Map

"I look to my close friends from university for guidance"	It's been hard to show my experiences	I haven't done enough internships	Most of my life is not spent on my professional life	"I should be networking more"	Has skills from university, not enough experience	"Want to start the next chapter of my life but am stuck"	I don't have role models outside of my peers
The job app process is easy but takes hours	I should be making more connections	"I struggle with tweaking my resume per app"	No one in my family is in engineering	The easiest part is applying to jobs	Satisfied with how they navigate jobs	As long as I don't feel behind my friends I'm good	I've missed opportunities where I could have built proof of skills
The job app process is easy but takes hours	"What's the least I can do for the most impact"	There's a standard practice for how to have appealing skills	I should be better at showing my expertise	"I'm not the best at networking"	I will never find a job	I should reach out to some professors from uni	I don't know how to get to talking to those I need to
Uses a spreadsheet to manage most of job search	Sets reminders on phone for low priority tasks	Applies to 1-2 jobs everyday	Is currently not working on anything	"I know I should be connecting but it is daunting"	Feels anxious not having full time role	Confident in doing tasks	Is at his best when working on something
Studied cybersecurity, trying to get first full-time job	Is getting online certifications for skills	Worked abroad in germany (remote)	Look at what past connections are doing on linkedin	Confident in his technical skills	Regrets being lazy with networking	Has trouble demonstrating experience	Comforted by friends in similar situations
Focused on 'gaming' the job app system	Talks to friends who "have it figured out"	Reaching out to close friends now	Uses job boards and aggregating sites	Feels annoyed by task they describe as easy (applying)	Confused as to what they are doing 'wrong'	Has never felt personal connection to expert in his field	Staying organized and focused on career is hard

Dylan Empathy Map