Meeting details:
- **Date & Time:** Saturday, Sept 30th – 11AM EST
- **Location:** Zoom meeting (virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Potential customer (Primary)
- **College:** University of Florida
- **Degree (Grad Date):** MS, Computer Science (Summer '23)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Race:** Indian
- **Observations:** Dhanush graduated from UF this summer and has been actively looking for employment since. As an international student, he has a tight timeline to work with to avoid visa complications and is focusing on upskilling himself to stay competitive.

Job search experience:
- *"I start by focusing on small-sized startups and then explore new grad positions in MNCs. I also initiate my search for recruiter contacts through email and LinkedIn, draft my messages to specific roles in their respective companies and schedule them for the next day."*
- *"Approximately half of my day is dedicated to applying for jobs and reaching out to recruiters. The remaining time I get to develop my skills and start my interview preparation with the hope of getting one in the current competitive job market."*
- *"However, I haven't received a single positive reply this week, which is disheartening."*

Networking Process:
- *"I search for major staffing companies and connect with as many recruiters as I can. I follow them to keep an eye out for new posts and other recruiter contacts."*
- *"I also use ycombinator job search up to get in touch with founders and co-founders of startups working on some of the most exciting technologies."*
- *"Websites like hunter.io assist me in finding company mails for reaching out for referrals."*

Impact of collegiate organizations on networking/job search:
- *"They helped me establish valuable connections and improve my professional network. I now have contacts I can reach out to for potential referrals and some of them even share job postings they come across. These connections have proven to be beneficial in making my job search manageable."*

What was most surprising about the job search process:
- *"For me, it was the sheer volume of applications being sent to each role. A job posted an hour ago would sometimes have more than 500 applications."*
- *"There are a few paid software tools that apply to irrelevant job roles just to meet their daily requirements. This slows down the recruitment process and makes things harder for the suitable candidate's job profile to reach the recruiter."*

Meeting details:
- **Date & Time:** Friday, Sept 29th – 5:30PM EST
- **Location:** Twinnie's Cafe, Duke University
- **Stakeholder:** Potential customer (Primary)
- **College:** Duke University
- **Degree (Grad Date):** MEng, Biomedical Engineering (Winter '23)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Race:** Indian
- **Observations:** Shruthee graduates from Duke this winter and has been actively looking for employment in preparation. As an international student, she has a tight timeline to work with to avoid visa complications. She currently juggles multiple courses and projects, an independent study and a part-time job while also working on her resume and preparing for the job market.

Job search experience:
- *"I mostly use very few sites to look for jobs. The challenge lies in the fact that companies have varied titles for a position that have similar requirements and job responsibilities."*
- *"I sometimes go directly to the company's site to look for openings, and also follow them on LinkedIn to stay updated."*
- *"The experience the past week has been underwhelming to be frank, given the sparse openings in roles as well as receiving no response from the companies I have already reached out to."*

Networking Process:
- *"I generally tend to begin looking for alumni from my program that have had a similar profile as I do and look for their current work status."*
- *"I would reach out to them, either by sending them a message or an email, to connect and set up an interview. If and when they respond, I try to set up a time to talk to them."*

Difficult part of networking virtually:
- *"More often than not, not everyone responds to your message. It is only natural that people have their own things happening and trying to talk to a random person about their life might not be on top of their to-do list. Only a few people tend to respond back, and very few out of that would continue talking."*

What was most surprising about the job search process:
- *"That it is not a straightforward process, and that you would receive no assistance."*
- *"Coming from an undergraduate institute that ensured that students had an easy way to network with recruiters, and well as hold meaningful career fairs and opportunities, it has been difficult having to do the whole process blindly."*
- *"It is also surprising how much networking and having meaningful connections play a role in landing a job."*

Meeting details:
- **Date & Time:** Thursday, Sept 28th – 3PM EST
- **Location:** Zoom meeting (virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Potential customer (Primary)
- **College:** New York University
- **Degree (Grad Date):** Management of Technology (Summer '24)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Race:** Indian
- **Observations:** Teja is halfway through his program at NYU. While currently working as a product management intern since the summer, he has been able to gain valuable experience in the US job market. However, he is still nervous about his prospects for the coming months.

Job search experience:
- *"I've been looking for jobs on LinkedIn and Indeed – mostly LinkedIn, and I search for the usual terms and see if there are any new job postings. I try to find ones that are not really promoted, mostly to avoid reposted applications."*
- *"I filter applications on experience basis, and then modify my resume as per the keywords needed before applying."*
- *"I try to find the team that the opening pertains to, and reach out to them – usually for thoughts, sometimes for referrals."*

Networking Process:
- *"My process is very straightforward – telling people what exactly I want is important to me. If I want a referral or guidance, I make sure to mention what I'm looking for."*
- *"Most people don't respond – but for the ones that do, I have a conversation with them for a little while."*

Difficult part of networking virtually:
- *"Personally, I struggle with feeling and being real. It feels like a barrier because I only reach out for something that I need. It is not a positive feeling."*
- *"The process itself feels mechanical and artificial, and does not let me make meaningful connections."*

What was most surprising about the job search process:
- *"ATS is very puzzling – even after applying for 400-500 jobs with the resume, I still don't understand why one resume gets picked or not."*
- *"If you reach out to a 100 people, only 10 might respond. But what's surprising is the extent that they're willing to go to help you."*

Meeting details: (Not Verbatim)
- **Date & Time:** Saturday, Sept 30th – 2PM EST
- **Location:** Zoom meeting (virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Potential customer (Primary)
- **College:** Duke University
- **Degree (Grad Date):** Engineering Management (Winter '23)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Race:** Indian
- **Observations:** Palash graduates from Duke this winter and has been actively looking for employment in preparation. As an international student, she has a tight timeline to work with to avoid visa complications. She currently juggles multiple courses and her responsibilities as the President of the Product Management club.

Challenges in job search:
- Despite lots of applications, conversion is very low.
- There are lots of pseudo-openings that are not intended to take anyone, but are still posted.
- This is a large source of time wasted for students.

Career resources experience:
- LinkedIn needs improvement in terms of access.
- Career services feedback is very generic, leaving a gap for personalized feedback.
- AI feedback tools like Quinncia help bridge some of the gap, but there is still scope for improvement.

Impact of collegiate organizations on networking/job search:
- Companies volunteer to partner with clubs to promote roles and company.
- Outreach is done via professors or online sources.
- Cold messages work with small companies but not large ones.
- These events helped her get better network and also improve her resume.

Meeting details:
- **Date & Time:** Sunday, Oct 1ˢᵗ – 1:30PM EST
- **Location:** Zoom meeting (virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Potential customer (Primary)
- **College:** Duke University
- **Degree (Grad Date):** Engineering Management (Winter '23)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Race:** Indian
- **Observations:** Shubham graduates from Duke this winter and has been actively looking for employment in preparation. As an international student, he has a tight timeline to work with to avoid visa complications. Having served as the president for the Product club, he now leads as the President of the student club's body.

Impact of collegiate organizations on networking/job search:
- *"We try to have these club interviews or club sections wherein we ask alumni to be a part of the panel so that that's a way of you know introducing them out there."*
- *"That's one way to do networking, because now you're representing not yourself, but as a member of the PM club. So that creates more impact as compared to just a normal person."*
- *"Alumni also love being, you know, conducting these interviews and helping others understand. So that creates a better bond in terms of, you know, having these relations between people and that's another way of having networking."*

Networking experience:
- *"What I usually was trying to do is connect to people on LinkedIn, finding the alumni out there. I usually send these connections on LinkedIn requests, but I add a note because otherwise you know people might not accept the request."*
- *"I also try to capture their email IDs if possible so that I can also capture their attention. Even if people might not open their LinkedIn, they might open their professional email. Sometimes people have a negative reaction to that because you know, how did you capture my email?"*

Ideal partnership between student body and employer:
- *"Having these small cloud events or maybe you know with the limited amount of people out there for any specific event so that everybody gets time to interact with everybody."*
- *"So maybe this does not work right now in the situation because of the job market going on, but this way you can get to know about the person as compared to like having 10 people around at the same time asking them the same questions."*

Meeting details:
- **Date & Time:** Saturday, Oct 28th – 1:30PM EST
- **Location:** Zoom meeting (virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Potential user (Primary)
- **Experience:** Ex-university recruiter
- **Gender:** Female
- **Observations:** Karen (name modified)

Resume building and feedback:
- *"Students often struggle to craft effective resumes and cover letters, but there are resources available to help."*
- *"Get feedback on your resume and cover letter from recruiters or other experienced professionals to ensure they are tailored to the specific jobs you're applying for."*
- *"Highlight your skills and experiences in a way that appeals to recruiters by using keywords and specific examples."*

Networking experience:
- *"Networking is essential for the job search process, but it can be challenging to know where to start. Sparc can help by providing a feature that helps students discover alumni and professionals in their desired field for informational interviews."*
- *"I encourage people to attend industry events or join online communities to meet other people in your field."*

Virtual career fair:
- *Virtual career fairs are a great way to connect with recruiters and learn about different companies, all without having to leave your home."*
- *"Recruiters face challenges when trying to reach out to a large number of students during career fairs."*

Meeting details:
- **Date & Time:** Sunday, Oct 29th – 5:30PM EST
- **Location:** Zoom meeting (virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Potential user (Primary)
- **College:** Duke University
- **Degree (Grad Date):** Engineering Management (Winter '23)
- **Gender:** Female
- **Race:** Indian
- **Observations:** Sudha graduates from Duke this winter and has been actively looking for employment in preparation. As an international student, she has a tight timeline to work with to avoid visa complications. She currently juggles multiple courses and projects, an independent study and a part-time job while also working on her resume and preparing for the job market.

Job search experience:
- *"I think this week, I've specifically like, I specifically sat down to modify my resume, like for one particular job description. And then I applied to like that job description"*
- *"I think, one thing that has worked for a couple of people in the past and not yet for me. But is that them messaging directors, or like the managers who would be on the team."*

Networking Process:
- *"It's like a numbers game. It's not like, you know, you'd want to build a connection, because I don't think anyone's looking to do that anymore."*
- *"For an average hiring manager- I think they get around 50 to 60 messages every day, because there's so many students searching for jobs."*

Difficult part of networking virtually:
- *"No matter how qualified you think you are for the position and you like, reach out to someone and you're like, Oh, wait! They're gonna reply to you. That's not gonna happen it. It's so it's like it's a game of luck, because if they, if they see your message, and if they like your message, if they like your profile, then they might reply to you."*
- *"It would have been easier if we had more interaction with more alumni on campus. And then we actually get to ask questions. And, like, you know, build a connection, even if it's just like 5 min."*

What was most surprising about the job search process:
- *"I knew that there would be competition, obviously. But I think when you know that like when you fit the job description perfectly like each and everything. Is like a big mark from your end, and like the next day you get like a reject, and you just don't know why. "*

Meeting details:
- **Date & Time:** Saturday, Oct 28th – 8PM EST
- **Location:** Zoom meeting (virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Potential user (Primary)
- **College:** Cornell University
- **Degree (Grad Date):** Engineering Management (Winter '22)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Race:** Indian
- **Observations:** Aditya graduated from Cornell in Winter '22 has started working at Lowe's. However, his job offer was the culmination of a long drawn-out process of networking and building connections.

Job search experience:
- *"I split my time between applications, networking, mock interviews and resume reviews. Networking and applications took the majority of my time, but I tried to do the other two consistently."*
- *"Being an international student, the limited job opportunities which are available for sponsorship make it difficult during the job search process."*

Networking Process:
- *"I would reach out to people with similar experience and interests - mostly who were in L3 and L4 categories for meetings and referrals."*
- *"If their profile was very interesting, I would frame the prompt in such a way that it highlighted all my interests which aligned with theirs. I saw a slightly higher response rate for the ones which were customized."*

Difficult part of networking virtually:
- *"I think the most important part of networking is to put your personality out there, and it depends on the other person if they resonate with you."*
- *"But virtual networking doesn't allow us to do that - since messages and emails can be misinterpreted and are not as effective."*

What was most surprising about the job search process:
- *"The number of students who are applying for the same role, and the number of rejects."*
- *"And also, not knowing why I was being rejected. Probably a one-liner reason for the rejection would be great for the efforts put in during the application process. "*

Meeting details:
- **Date & Time:** Friday, Oct 27th – 4PM EST
- **Location:** Zoom meeting (virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Potential user (Primary)
- **College:** Duke University
- **Degree (Grad Date):** Engineering Management (Winter '23)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Race:** Indian
- **Observations:** Roshan graduates from Duke this winter and has been actively looking for employment in preparation. After completing a corporate strategy internship over the summer, he has focused his job on the consulting domain.

Job search experience:
- *"I believe cold applications are an important part of my job search strategy, however increasingly I have been trying to network with individuals at firms to further improve the visibility of my application through referral or recommendations."*

Difficulties in networking virtually:
- *"Networking in my opinion is an opportunity to build a personal rapo and get to know the personal side of the individual, except for rare cases, virtual networking calls seem very professional to me. Getting to know an individual at a personal level might contribute to my application's success."*

Ideal networking platform:
- *"An ideal networking platform for me should enable me to connect with people in the most efficient way possible."*
- *"Additionally, a platform should enable me to better plan, schedule and organize meetings and calls. That to me is a completely integrated product solution."*

What was most surprising about the job search process:
- *"The competition is extremely high and sometimes a great deal of networking, referral and recommendation systems might not completely help you out. They are important, but they can't give you an interview invite."*

Meeting details:
- **Date & Time:** Thursday, Oct 26th – 10:30AM EST
- **Location:** Zoom meeting (virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Potential customer (Primary)
- **College:** University of Wisconsin
- **Degree (Grad Date):** MS, Computer Engineering (Summer '23)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Race:** Indian
- **Observations:** Chaitanya graduated from UW this summer and has been actively looking for employment since. As an international student, he has a tight timeline to work with to avoid visa complications and is focusing on upskilling himself to stay competitive.

Job search experience:
- *"I reach out to recruiters on LinkedIn and email to learn about other opportunities. I tailor my messages to each specific role and schedule them to be sent the following day."*
- *"I spend about half of my day applying for jobs and contacting recruiters. I use the rest of my time to develop my skills and prepare for interviews in the competitive job market."*

Networking Process:
- *"I constantly reach out to the recruiters I've spoken to before and try to get new contacts through them. A simple introduction always helps your message."*
- *"I use various websites to get company emails and cold-email them. It doesn't always work, though."*

Impact of collegiate organizations on networking/job search:
- *"More than collegiate organizations, the alumni network has been particularly valuable in helping me network. People are very open to talking to students from their university."*

Meeting Details:
- **Date & Time:** Friday 29ᵗʰ September 2023 – 7 pm EST
- **Location:** Zoom Meeting (Virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Job Seeker (Primary)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Observations:** Just talking to Mark (name modified) for a few minutes, one can notice an insatiable hunger for learning within him. He approaches life with an admirable level of activity and enthusiasm, always on the lookout for opportunities to expand his horizons. His proactive approach to self-improvement is not only commendable but also serves as an inspiration to those around him.

Journey till now:
- "Hey, my name is Mark. I've done and lived my life by one principle that is to try all the things which I'm interested in, so I started with acting, then realized that creative endeavors is something which I think I'd like to base my career in, so started writing and then producing and directing and now venturing into design and social media organic marketing.
- Currently, I am positioned as Business Specialist and Treasurer at a mid-range startup of design and marketing collaterals. But now I'm looking to switch it up, wanting to move into more of a role where I get to work hands-on in design, marketing, and consulting."

Job Search Process:
- "I am pretty sure which way I want to go in, hence I am relying on testimonials of people that work there and only applying to jobs which have a great workplace.
- As opposed to the majority, I am not applying on LinkedIn, but only applying and cold emailing at places where I really want to work at."

Challenges in job hunting:
- "It's been difficult finding a match between the places I want to work at and the places that want me."

An incident/experience where you felt a disconnect in the job search process:
- "I was in the process of interviewing for a job. I had a final interview with the VP. I had a great conversation with the VP where he even hinted at me getting the job.
- Post that I didn't get a response for a couple of weeks. After following up multiple times, I was informed in a message that I am not eligible."

Approach to Networking:
- "The way I do networking is mostly via social media, it goes from appreciation to asking for a one-on-one call and getting straight to the agenda and see how we can both be mutually beneficial to each other."

What changes would you like to see?
- "Something which tells me where I need to improve on, so I know where I'm supposed to improve on and know the places where I'm yet to improve at.
- Also, there needs to be more transparency as people do not tell why you've been rejected."

Background information about yourself and the club:
- "My name's Kevin. I go by Kev on campus. I am a PhD student in the computer science department, a fourth year, and I work on vaccine misinformation.
- People might know me more commonly because of my involvement in DACC, which is the Duke Advanced-degree Consulting Club. I have been the president of DACC for three years now.
- DACC is basically a consulting club where the mission for a long time has been to try to help people, to drive them towards getting ready for consulting as a career."

Partnering with companies:
- "We engage with about 24 clients per year for our pro-bono consulting wing. Most of that is driven through our alumni network.
- We also host a lot of events, entirely in, in partnership with these consulting firms. So, for example, we bring in BCG and McKinsey on campus all the time. Usually when we bring these consulting firms on, they're doing some bigger event that we're marketing for them."

Challenges in forming these partnerships:
- "I think what's hard is when you're just getting a club up on the ground, it is hard to build those network connections, especially when you haven't built credibility."

Impact of the club:
- "We had a theology student come to DACC. They were extremely smart, extremely motivated to get things done and just interested about the world.
- They were involved with DACC for a long time. They helped run the case competition. They were able to spin a story together about how their study of the ancient economic systems in the Bible has given them the perspective and nuanced understanding of how the history of economics has evolved for thousands of years.
- They're now at McKinsey. And so, this is a pretty common story. It's a story of people with similar interests that come together, find their own story, and make great connections along the way."

Ideal partnership between student clubs and employers:
- "Finding the right match between students and employers so that employers get tangible value that's added to their business. Also, the students get to prove that they can apply their academic skills that they've been working on for years to solve business problems."

Background information about yourself and the club:
- "I come from India. I did my undergrad in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering, I was the General Secretary of my college and then I worked for three years at KPMG, initially as an analyst and then moving to consulting. Then moved to Duke to pursue MEM. Initially I was a part of the PM club and currently I am the president of the Duke MEM student body."

Impact of being in a collegiate organization:
- "When reaching out to people, saying that I represent a club from Duke makes a lot more impact.
- Also, through various events and sessions, I got the chance to interact and connect with a lot of different people."

Job Search Process:
- "I try to connect with people through LinkedIn by adding a note otherwise they may not accept the request.
- I also try to reach out through email if possible so that even if the person may not open their LinkedIn, they might still open their professional email.
- I would say the conversion chances are like 5% in terms of capturing their response via emails as compared to like 15 to 20% on LinkedIn."

Improving the Job Search Process:
- "Having a career fair specific to graduate students requiring H1B sponsorships would really help.
- Also, there should be more small cloud events with limited amount of people so that everybody gets time to interact with each other and it turns out to be meaningful.
- Another way is having an internal structured list of the alumni that are out there. This will help students get referrals and connect over a coffee chat easily."

Meeting Details:
- **Date & Time:** Thursday 28th September 2023 – 7:30 pm EST
- **Location:** Zoom Meeting (Virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Job Seeker (Primary)
- **University:** North Carolina State University (NCSU)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Observations:** David (name modified) comes across as very hard working and dedicated in his behavior. He is always open to learn and comes across as easy to work with.

Journey till now:
- "Hi, I am David and I am a first year grad student majoring in Computer Science at North Carolina State University. My primary interests are in Software Development and Data Science, and I am currently looking for internships in the same domain."

Job Search Process:
- "I primarily use GitHub for my job search process. I follow a repository that compiles and maintains a list of all the job openings in the tech field.
- Additionally, I use LinkedIn to explore other open positions. I try to apply as soon as possible and make it a point to apply to at least 10 companies every day."

Challenges in job hunting:
- "For me, managing time has been the biggest challenge. It gets quite cumbersome at times to find time for 10 applications every day.
- Also, the fact that one needs to apply to such large number of companies just for an internship shows how competitive the current job market is."

Disconnect/Gaps in the job search process:
- "The waiting time between first applying to a company and finally getting an interview is very long, which makes the whole job search process way more exhausting than it needs to be.
- It is also difficult to track and keep up to date with status on so many applications."

Approach to Networking:
- "When I'm particularly interested in a company, I visit their website and then connect with people working in similar roles on LinkedIn. I also reach out to people from the team I might potentially intern in as well as recruiters.
- I recently attended a career fair, which provided a lot of networking opportunities. After the fair, I connected with the individuals I spoke to on LinkedIn."

What changes would you like to see?
- "Receiving rejections rather than being ghosted by companies would be a lot better as it helps us focus on the other things. A lot of companies leave students like us hanging, which is not professional.

- A job tracking tool integrated within a job search platform like LinkedIn would be great as it will help manage things without needing to manually track it on some other platform.

Background information about yourself and the club:
- "Good afternoon, my name is Rachel. I am currently pursuing MEM at Duke and interning at Confluent. I am also the President of the Product Management Club at Duke.
- The main goal of our club is to share knowledge and build skills required for succeeding as a PM. We focus a lot on building soft skills through our events."

Partnering with companies:
- "Every semester, we partner our students with companies to work on real-life client projects.
- To partner with companies, we reach out to companies via professors, and we target small companies."

Impact of being in a collegiate organization:
- "Personally, I have benefited a lot because of my association with the club. Events like resume review helped me a lot."
- Found a great mentor through these events that she is still in touch with.

Job Search Process:
- "Current focus is on getting the internship converted to a full-time job.
- Consistently network with people on LinkedIn and setup informational calls to make a good connection.
- Apply to open positions on LinkedIn regularly.

Challenges in job hunting:
- "There are a lot of pseudo-openings, they don't intend on taking anyone, but they still post it online. Hence a lot of students end up wasting their precious time."
- Average number of people applying to a full-time role is in hundreds hence very competitive."

Disconnect/Gaps in the job search process:
- "There are no resources to get personalized feedback on job search platforms."
- Customized feedback for a user based on their profile integrated within the job platform may help a lot of users.

Ideal partnership between student clubs and employers:
- "An ideal partnership would be where the club and the employers both benefit from each other."
- An employer finds quality students they are looking for and students get an opportunity to work on challenging problems.

Meeting Details:
- **Date & Time:** Friday 27th October 2023 – 4 pm EST
- **Location:** Teams Meeting (Virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Job Seeker (Primary)
- **Company:** Shell
- **Gender:** Male
- **Observations:** Harsh (name modified) is visibly dedicated and diligent in his work ethic. His persistent efforts and open-mindedness towards learning make him an adaptable and easy-to-work-with team member. He consistently demonstrates a commitment to self-improvement.

Journey till now:
- "I am Harsh. I have done my Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Bombay. I am currently working as a Process Engineer at Shell in Bangalore, India.
- I was born and brought up in Mumbai and my hobbies include photography and playing cricket."

Job Search Process:
- "When I was looking for a full-time job, I mainly applied to the different core chemical companies that came via my college's placement cell.
- I also applied to some positions through LinkedIn, but I mainly relied on my college placement cell as all the top companies recruited through them."

Challenges in job hunting:
- "For me, the main challenge was getting shortlisted through the resume screening phase.
- Initially, I kept getting rejected at this step itself and then I had to work on my resume, incorporating feedback and guidance from seniors."

An incident/experience where you felt a disconnect in the job search process:
- "The whole resume screening process felt very ambiguous and strange to me.
- I kept getting rejected at this step without getting the chance to interview.
- I wish I had more guidance and help from industry professionals so that I was ready for the companies and didn't miss out on my dream company."

Approach to Networking:
- "This is something that I am still trying to figure out. Initially, my idea of networking was just making as many connections as possible.
- However, I follow a more targeted approach now. I look to connect with people in a similar space and try to form a genuine connection by keeping in touch with them and mutually helping each other."

Changes that you would like to see:
- "I would love to see more transparency in the hiring process by companies. Giving feedback along with rejection should be a standard practice as the candidates deserve to know why they were rejected and how they could improve as they spend a lot of time working on their resume, cover letter, etc. while applying to a company.

Meeting Details:
- **Date & Time:** Saturday 28th October 2023 – 7 pm EST
- **Location:** Zoom Meeting (Virtual)
- **Stakeholder:** Job Seeker (Primary)
- **University:** North Carolina State University
- **Gender:** Male
- **Observations:** Nimesh (name modified) shows a palpable thirst for knowledge and personal growth. Engaging in conversation with him reveals a proactive and enthusiastic approach to life. His passion for learning serves as inspiration for those around him.

Journey till now:
- "I am Nimesh, and I am currently studying Master's in Computer Science from North Carolina State University.
- Previously, I have done my bachelor's from University of Mumbai, and I am really passionate about systems with a blend of Machine learning"

Status in terms of jobs:
- "Currently, I am looking for an internship opportunity to be pursued in the summer of 2024.
- I am looking for a software engineering role as it gives me the flexibility of projects to pursue both in systems and ML.
- I, recently, also had an interview with a company LexisNexis for the same!"

Job Search Process:
- "This week has been a bit hectic for me with the assignments, midterm studies so I have not been able to do much internship applications.
- Usually, I look for openings from a GitHub open source repository owned by simplify. Also, I use LinkedIn actively for my job search process."

Challenges in job hunting:
- "I would say there are 2 aspects of these
- 1. The consistency to fill out applications and change resume accordingly for each company
- 2. Sometimes, I get to know about the postings a bit late and I lose that opportunity"

Approach to networking:
- "For networking, I mainly prefer LinkedIn and peer connections. Whenever I find a job posting that I am really interested in, I go through the LinkedIn page for the company and filter out my seniors from NC State who work in the company. If I find one, I InMail them and ask for a referral if they can. Usually, if they see same university, they do respond."

Disconnects/Gaps in the job search process:
- "The one thing that is the major issue is the ATS that companies use to filter out the candidates. I feel like there can be some improvements in this section of filtering out the candidates as just a basic score that the ATS scan provides is not sufficient to know about the candidate."

Changes that you would like to see:
- "Making the ATS system more specific to job roles and match more efficiently with job requirements so that the right candidates get filtered out."

Meeting Details:
- **Date & Time:** Sunday 29th October 2023 – 12 pm EST
- **Location:** MS Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Team
- **Stakeholder:** Recruiter (Primary)
- **Company:** JP Morgan Chase
- **Role:** Vice President, Software Engineering
- **Gender:** Male
- **Observations:** Jash (name modified) communicates with a composed and approachable demeanor, even with his extensive experience. This encourages collaboration and the exchange of ideas, reflecting his commitment to fostering a collaborative work environment. His willingness to share knowledge is a valuable asset.

Background information about yourself:
- "I am Jash, based in Mumbai, India, and I am currently the Vice President of Software Engineering at JP Morgan Chase.
- My focus lies in leading the development of cutting-edge solutions that power critical operations within the financial industry, including algo trading platforms and risk management systems.
- Additionally, I play an active role in recruitment efforts for the software engineering division, identifying, and nurturing top talent to bolster our team's capabilities."

Channels of recruitment:
- "For entry-level roles and internships, most of our recruitment happens via colleges. The job role is also posted on our career page and job boards.
- For all other roles, we post our job listing on our career page and major job boards like LinkedIn, Indeed and Glassdoor."

Distribution between different channels:
- "For entry-level roles, we have a criterion in terms of number of people we are planning to recruit from different colleges and online based on how satisfied we are with past hires.
- For job roles requiring more experience, we compile applications from all job portals and then move forward with applications that seem like a great fit."

Problems in the recruitment process:
- "Striking the right balance between recruiting from colleges and online platforms to ensure a consistent quality of candidates is a bit challenging.
- Also, managing the large volume of applications, sourced from various sources becomes cumbersome."

Changes to the recruitment process:
- "Overall, I would look at implementing a more data-driven approach to target platforms that have a proven track record and likelihood of providing me with top-tier talent.
- Also, look at ways to reduce or effectively manage the high volume of applications we receive."

Background information about yourself and the club:
- "Hey, I am Charles, first year MEM student at Duke University. I have completed my undergraduate program in Production Engineering. I am also an active cabinet member of MEM Supply Chain Management Club.
- Our club has a vision to assist students interested in SCM as a potential career option via conducting guest lectures, mixer events and other competitions to prepare them for excelling in this domain."

Partnering with companies:
- "We definitely look at partnerships with companies. We are currently looking to partner with a company in a way where students will gain real world exposure of working in the industry.
- We are also planning to conduct an industrial visit where students can not only interact with professionals but also get to see some real-world problems in the domain of SCM."

Challenges in forming these partnerships:
- "One of the main challenges we face is dealing with a very low response rate. Industry officials are generally busy with their work schedule. It is sometimes challenging to connect with them quickly."

Impact of the club with regards to aiding students with job search:
- "We organize events where all the students interested in SCM gather to have a coffee chat with industry professionals. This helps them get insights and better prepare in strategizing job application process.
- We also organize guest lectures that are usually delivered by Industry leaders where students get a golden opportunity to network and form a connection with the speaker."

Ideal partnership between student clubs and employers:
- "I would say partnering with a company where an industry leader is already involved in industry-academia roles would be an ideal situation.
- This way the student can benefit by getting the information in the best way as these individuals have an experience of delivering the right content to the students with practical knowledge of the world."

Meeting Details:
- **Date & Time:** Saturday 28th October 2023 – 2 pm EST
- **Location:** MS Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Team
- **Stakeholder:** Job Seeker (Primary)
- **University:** Duke University
- **Gender:** Male
- **Observations:** Dharmik (name modified) exudes a contagious energy that is both motivating and invigorating. He thrives in situations where there is a multitude of tasks to be accomplished, showcasing his effectiveness in various engagements and endeavors.

Journey till now:
- "Hey, my name is Dharmik. I did my undergrad in information technology, after which I worked with Salesforce as a Technical Support engineer and progressed into being the support team lead.
- I wanted to go into Product Management after spending time in consulting, so I chose Duke as my next college."

Job Search Process:
- "I have a Google sheet where I make an entry of all the companies I am applying to.
- I look for job postings through LinkedIn and go to the career website from there and from there I just fill out information and apply.
- I prefer using the autofill with resume option because it reduces the time to fill the application.

Challenges in job hunting:
- "There are a lot of hurdles like you must create an account, then there are lot of details to fill out in the application. On average, it takes up to at least eight to ten minutes for one application.
- Some also have an assessment like video introduction or other behavioral/cognitive assessments, which take an additional 30 mins.
- It takes me at least maybe 1-2 hours per day on average doing applications, which is very tiring sometimes."

Approach to Networking:
- "I think it makes the process of applying easier because if you maintain that connection with the recruiter, they will be able to provide more insight about the role and application.
- I try to reach out on LinkedIn, but the outcome is generally not positive. I try my best in making connections."

Changes that you would like to see:
- "The companies should leverage Workday in a meaningful way. Instead of everyone having different Workday platforms, all the companies should agree on one Workday platform so the same information can be used in applying to multiple jobs.
- Companies should not ask for too many details and questions upfront. First check with the resume if there is a fit, they should proceed with asking for more information."

Stakeholder: President of the Product Management Club at Duke University
Gender: Female
Race: Indian
Observation: Throughout the interview, her answers reflected genuine engagement and a profound understanding of both the club's objectives and the broader challenges faced by students. She came across as articulate and introspective, having deeply benefited from the PM Club. She painted a vivid picture of her journey, allowing a peek into the tangible impacts such student organizations have on individual career paths. Her responses were candid and rooted in her personal experiences, showcasing how instrumental the club was in refining her skills, providing networking opportunities, and subsequently enhancing her internship search.

Interviewer: "Can you start by telling me a bit about yourself and your background?"
Interviewee: "Last semester, I was a cabinet member of the PM Club, and currently, I am serving as the president. Our club's main goal is to share the knowledge and skills required for project management to students, particularly freshers."

Interviewer: "What role do student organizations play in college curriculum, and how do they help in the careers of members?"
Interviewee: "Our student organization at PM Club plays a pivotal role in focusing on soft skills, resume review, etc. We facilitate events which I have personally benefited from, in terms of networking and resume enhancement."

Interviewer: "Do you partner with companies for training, projects, and recruitment?"
Interviewee: "Companies often volunteer to partner with us. We usually reach out through professors, online outreach or cold messages, particularly targeting small companies. Unfortunately, large companies don't participate much."

Interviewer: "You are also a student; can you describe your current job search process?"
Interviewee: "I, along with many of my peers, am networking on LinkedIn and connecting with professionals for referrals, setting up informational calls, and utilizing LinkedIn for job applications."

Interviewer: "Can you tell me about the process for the last job you applied for?"
Interviewee: "I found out about the last job through the club events and networking opportunities it provided. The club has really been helpful in guiding students like me who are struggling with moving to a new country and adapting to new things."

Interviewer: "What are some recent challenges faced by you and other students in terms of job search?"
Interviewee: "We often have to apply a lot, and conversion is very less. Many posted job openings are pseudo openings, which don't intend on hiring and result in a waste of time."

Interviewer: "How do you currently facilitate connections between your club and employers?"
Interviewee: "We collaborate with small companies for real-world projects, which are beneficial for both students and companies. However, the number of projects are limited as the cabinet members are only eight."

Interviewer: "What kind of support or features do you believe would enhance the effectiveness of student clubs in bridging the gap between students and employers?"
Interviewee: "First and foremost, there's a need to improve our approach on platforms like LinkedIn. Often, the career advice we receive is very generic. What we truly need is personalized feedback for each student. An AI tool or something similar that's customized to assist each student in their job search process would be immensely beneficial."

Stakeholder: President of MEM consortium of clubs
Gender: Male
Race: Indian
Observation: During the interview, he exuded composure and articulated his insights with clarity. His well-prepared responses, peppered with structured anecdotes, highlighted his organizational skills and introspection. Rather than just recounting experiences, he delved deep, showcasing an analytical approach and a grasp of the broader context, especially concerning networking and job search dynamics. Open to dialogue and candid in sharing both achievements and challenges, his transparency reflected self-awareness and a drive for continuous improvement.

Interviewer: "What impact has being in a collegiate organization had on your networking and job search?"
Interviewee: "Being a part of these organizations has provided me with immense networking opportunities. Through the club sessions, we often invite alumni to participate, which has been great for staying connected and representing the entire club. These sessions provide a platform for better connections and open up avenues for impactful networking. Moreover, we're also working on non-alumni networking initiatives, such as the MEM innovation challenge across other graduate colleges. This allows us to connect with student leaders from other universities and use these inter-college events to further broaden our connections."

Interviewer: "How do you engage and provide opportunities to students in terms of networking and connecting with employees?"
Interviewee: "Our primary focus is on alumni engagement. We keep in touch with our alumni, organize sessions with them, and represent our club at various forums, which amplifies our impact and connectivity. Additionally, we're trying to introduce an inter-college event by collaborating with other MEMPC colleges. This gives us a chance to interact with student leaders from these institutions, like in the Northwestern student interview, to further extend our network."

Interviewer: "Walk me through your job search experience this week."
Interviewee: "Most of my job search revolves around connecting on LinkedIn, especially with alumni. I have concerns about job prospects, so I directly reach out to potential employers or connections with a personalized note. If someone isn't active on LinkedIn, I try to find their email IDs and reach out there. Though the conversion isn't very high, about 5% via emails and 15-20% on LinkedIn, it's a numbers game. So I simultaneously apply across various channels."

Interviewer: "What would you want to change about the job search process and why?"
Interviewee: "I feel there's a need for a more specific career fair, particularly for graduate students looking for sponsorships as international students. The current process should be streamlined. For instance, the Fuqua alumni remain connected with current students and maintain an internal structure of contacts. This significantly aids in securing referrals or setting up informal chats. During the GHC- Grace Hopper Conference, I noticed a mismatch in the number of employers and employees. I believe in having smaller events with limited participants to ensure meaningful interactions."

Interviewer: "Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us. Is there anything else that you would like to share that we didn't ask you about?"
Interviewee: "Yes, I've been quite impressed with the supply chain club, especially their resume review sessions. It was enlightening to have interns from top companies share their experiences. Gaining insights from our seniors certainly simplifies the navigation through the job search process."

Stakeholder: MEM 2023 Fall student, searching for internships currently
Gender: Female
Race: Indian
Observation: She exuded a balanced mix of confidence and enthusiasm during our discussion. Her articulated goals and thoughtful approach to her internship search revealed a well-rounded, strategic mindset. Subtle artistic elements in her surroundings hinted at a layered personality, potentially indicating a creative and innovative approach to problem-solving and a unique perspective on tasks.

Interviewer: "Hi, thank you for joining me today. Can you start by giving a brief overview of your academic journey leading up to Duke's MEM program?"
Interviewee: "Certainly. I completed my undergraduate studies in India and was always passionate about integrating engineering principles with management practices. This drove me to join the MEM program at Duke in Fall 2023. It's been an enriching experience so far."

Interviewer: "Great to hear. What motivated you to pursue internships at this stage of your MEM program?"
Interviewee: "Internships offer a practical insight into the industry. I believe it's crucial to apply what I've learned in a real-world setting. Plus, gaining industry experience now can significantly benefit my future career prospects."

Interviewer: "Could you share your current strategies and the platforms you're using for your internship search?"
Interviewee: "I've been leveraging Duke's career services, attending career fairs, and networking events. Additionally, I actively use LinkedIn to connect with professionals and alumni. I'm also part of some student groups where we share opportunities and experiences."

Interviewer: "What challenges are you facing during your internship search?"
Interviewee: "One of the main challenges is the sheer competitiveness. Many of my peers are seeking similar opportunities. Additionally, while there are many job listings, ensuring they align with my skills and interests requires thorough research. And sometimes, it's challenging to get noticed among a sea of applicants."

Interviewer: "How would you envision an ideal partnership between student bodies and prospective employers to improve the internship/job search process?"
Interviewee: "An ideal partnership would involve regular interactions, workshops, and collaborative events between students and employers. This would allow both parties to understand each other's expectations, needs, and offerings better. Additionally, having a structured communication channel to facilitate continuous engagement and feedback would create a conducive environment for professional growth and learning."

Interviewer: "In your opinion, what features or support would enhance the effectiveness of student networking and job search platforms?"
Interviewee: "I believe a platform that provides real-time and updated listings, facilitates direct and meaningful interactions with employers, offers personalized career advice, and helps in showcasing my skills and experiences effectively would be highly beneficial. Additionally, having a streamlined and user-friendly interface to navigate through various opportunities would enhance the overall experience."

Interviewer: "Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences. Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't asked you about?"
Interviewee: "Yes, I believe that while platforms and events are crucial, the human touch remains paramount. It's not just about finding a job, but finding the right fit where I can thrive and contribute. Mentorship and personalized interactions with industry professionals can provide the nuanced guidance that broad platforms often miss. Their insights could help tailor my approach and better prepare me for the challenges of the job market."

Stakeholder: PhD Candidate at Arizona State University, focused on quality and reliability of circuits and flexible electronics packaging, and currently navigating the job market.
Gender: Male
Race: Indian
Observation: Throughout our conversation, he showcased a deep-rooted passion for his research and a genuine dedication to his academic endeavors. His calm demeanor was contrasted by an underlying sense of urgency regarding his career trajectory. Subtle musical instruments and paraphernalia in his backdrop indicated a strong affinity for music, suggesting that he might use this artistic outlet as a means of relaxation and rejuvenation, hinting at a holistic approach to maintaining well-being amidst academic pressures.

Interviewer: "Thank you for joining me today. Could you please start by telling me about your background and your research focus at ASU?"
Interviewee: "I appreciate the opportunity to share my journey. I am a PhD candidate at Arizona State University, focusing on the quality and reliability of circuits and the packaging of flexible electronics. My passion lies in exploring the nuances of how electronics can be made more resilient and efficient."

Interviewer: "That sounds fascinating! What strategies have you implemented in your job search to find positions that align with your specialization?"
Interviewee: "My job search has primarily involved seeking out roles that value expertise in circuit quality and electronic packaging. I've been leveraging academic job boards, LinkedIn, and industry-specific forums to find opportunities. Networking events, conferences, and connecting with alumni and professionals in my field have also been crucial components of my strategy."

Interviewer: "Have you encountered any significant challenges or barriers in your job search journey?"
Interviewee: "Yes, finding positions that precisely align with my specialization has been challenging due to its niche nature. Many organizations often prefer candidates with specific postdoctoral or industry experience, creating additional hurdles."

Interviewer: "How has this prolonged job search impacted your PhD journey, and what prompted your decision to extend your research time?"
Interviewee: "The difficulty in securing a position has led to my decision to extend my research, allowing me more time to enhance my profile with additional publications and experiences. While it offers an opportunity for further learning, it's also a reflection of the challenges in transitioning from academia to industry or research institutions."

Interviewer: "In your perspective, what changes or support would have facilitated a smoother transition from your PhD to employment?"
Interviewee: "Enhanced university-industry collaborations leading to more tailored placements or interviews for PhD candidates would have been incredibly beneficial. Specific workshops on skills translation and increased networking opportunities with professionals and alumni in my field could significantly impact the transition positively."

Interviewer: "Thank you for your valuable insights. Before we conclude, is there anything else you would like to mention or any advice you'd like to offer to fellow PhD students?"
Interviewee: "Certainly! I'd advise my peers to commence their job search early and be receptive to a range of opportunities, even those slightly divergent from their research focus. Networking is pivotal; it can open unforeseen doors and create unexpected pathways in one's career journey."

Stakeholder: CTO and Recruiter for "XHealth" (name modified), an LIS software startup company.
Gender: Male
Race: Korean
Observation: During our interaction, he exhibited an amalgamation of technical expertise and an astute sense for talent acquisition. His articulated insights into the software world, particularly within the LIS domain, were paired with a keen understanding of the human element in his company's ecosystem. The organized and high-tech setup of his workspace hinted at his methodical approach to his role. Throughout the conversation, He maintained a pragmatic perspective, reflecting a leader who is deeply intertwined with both the technological advancement and the human-centric evolution of "XHealth".

Interviewer: "What challenges have you faced in connecting with potential candidates, especially those fresh out of universities or colleges?"
Interviewee: "One major challenge is breaking through the noise. There are numerous platforms and channels, and it's easy for our outreach to get lost. For fresh graduates, sometimes there's a mismatch in expectations – they might be seeking larger corporations, unaware of the dynamic opportunities a startup like XHealth can provide.

Interviewer: "How do you engage and provide opportunities for recent graduates or young professionals in terms of onboarding and connecting with the team?"
Interviewee: "We believe in immersive experiences. New members, especially young professionals, are immediately integrated into project teams, where they can learn, contribute, and grow. We also prioritize mentorship and ensure that they have a go-to person for any guidance."

Interviewer: "Could you walk me through a recent recruitment experience? What went well, and what do you think could have been improved?"
Interviewee: "Recently, we tried recruiting through a few online platforms. We received a deluge of applications, which was great in terms of quantity. However, filtering through to find the right fit was time-consuming. I think a more direct, focused approach, perhaps targeting specific universities or courses, could have streamlined the process."

Interviewer: "In your opinion, what would an ideal partnership look like between a startup like XHealth and a prospective talent, especially from academia?"
Interviewee: "An ideal partnership would involve direct channels of communication with institutions, maybe through career fairs, hackathons, or guest lectures. It would allow us to present XHealth directly to potential candidates, understand their aspirations, and gauge if there's a mutual fit."

Interviewer: "What do you believe is required for startups and young talent to have more streamlined and effective interactions?"
Interviewee: "There's a need for platforms or initiatives that foster direct, meaningful engagement. Beyond just resumes or profiles, opportunities for real conversations, workshops, or joint projects can provide deeper insights into compatibility."

Interviewer: "Thank you. Before we conclude, is there anything else you'd like to share or any feedback you have on the current recruitment landscape?"
Interviewee: "I feel there's a gap in the way startups can engage with fresh talent. While technology has made connections easier, the depth in those interactions is often missing. Platforms or initiatives that bridge this gap, offering both reach and depth, would be a game-changer for startups like XHealth.

Stakeholder: Technical Recruiter for "Maania Consultancy Services."

Observation: During the interview, his meticulously organized workspace, punctuated with notes, candidate profiles, and a well-maintained calendar, underscored his attention to detail and dedication to efficient recruitment. His thoughtful responses, combined with the frequent glances to his notes, demonstrated his proactive preparation and commitment to each candidate's journey.

Interviewer: "Hi, it's a pleasure to have you here today. Could you provide some insights into your journey into technical recruitment and your association with 'Maania Consultancy Services'?"

Interviewee: "Certainly. I've always been passionate about aligning talent with opportunities. Joining 'Maania Consultancy Services' allowed me to harness this passion, ensuring that we have a robust database of professionals and facilitating their alignment with our clients' requirements."

Interviewer: "Given your significant experience, what do you believe are the primary challenges in technical recruitment today?"

Interviewee: "The field is always evolving, and the challenge lies in staying updated. With technology and job roles rapidly changing, ensuring that our database remains current is paramount. Another challenge is managing expectations - both of the hiring entities and the candidates."

Interviewer: "How do you manage your day-to-day interactions with vendors and monitor their performance post-project completion?"

Interviewee: "It's all about effective communication and setting clear expectations. We establish benchmarks for performance, schedule periodic check-ins, and always maintain an open channel for feedback. This ensures that any potential issues are addressed promptly and effectively."

Interviewer: "Your role involves leading staffing managers and recruiters. How do you ensure team cohesion and high performance?"

Interviewee: "Leadership is about empowerment. I believe in providing my team with the resources and support they need. Regular training sessions, open discussions, and feedback mechanisms ensure that we're all aligned and moving in the same direction."

Interviewer: "Considering the dynamic nature of the recruitment landscape, what strategies do you employ to maintain an up-to-date and robust database of professionals?"

Interviewee: "Continuous engagement is the key. We participate in job fairs, engage with universities, and leverage digital platforms to source talent. Additionally, we have a system in place to periodically review and update our database to ensure its relevance."

Interviewer: "With your depth of experience, what advice would you give to new entrants in the technical recruitment field?"

Interviewee: "Stay curious and be adaptable. The recruitment landscape is ever-evolving, and to stay ahead, one must be willing to learn continuously. Building genuine relationships is also crucial - remember, it's not just about filling roles but aligning aspirations with opportunities."

Interviewer: "Thank you. Before we wrap up, do you have any observations or feedback on the current state of technical recruitment?"

Interviewee: "The industry is at an exciting juncture with the fusion of technology and traditional recruitment methods. However, the essence remains the same - understanding human aspirations. Tools and platforms will evolve, but the core of our job is to connect individuals with opportunities that help them grow."

Stakeholder: Career Advisor at "XConsult." (name modified)
Observation: Heexudes passion and dedication as a Career Advisor. His deep understanding of the job market, combined with his intuitive grasp of individual aspirations, makes him a linchpin at "XConsult." Every gesture and response from him underlines a genuine investment in the success stories of his clients and his unwavering commitment to guide them every step of the way.

Interviewer: "Hi, thank you for joining us today. To begin with, can you detail your journey and role at XConsult?"
Interviewee: "Of course. I started my career passionate about helping others find their path. At XConsult, I've been privileged to guide numerous professionals, from recent graduates to experienced individuals looking for transitions. My role revolves around offering strategic advice, tailored to each individual's unique strengths and goals."

Interviewer: "The job market is ever-evolving. In your view, what are some of the pressing challenges faced by professionals today during career transitions?"
Interviewee: "Indeed, the market is fluid. One primary challenge is the overwhelming amount of information out there. Many professionals grapple with discerning which opportunities align with their aspirations. Additionally, the competition has intensified, making it imperative to not only have the skills but also to market them effectively."

Interviewer: "Given these challenges, how do you structure your career consultation sessions at XConsult?"
Interviewee: "Every session is unique because every individual is unique. Initially, it's a deep dive into understanding their background, aspirations, and perceived challenges. We then move on to identifying gaps, strategizing on personal branding, and leveraging networking opportunities."

Interviewer: "Networking is often touted as the key in today's professional world. How do you emphasize its importance?"
Interviewee: "Networking is undeniably crucial. I always remind professionals that beyond the immediate job applications, it's the relationships they build that will stand the test of time. These relationships can lead to unexpected opportunities and collaborations."

Interviewer: "With the digital age, there's been a surge in platforms like LinkedIn for career growth. Have you noticed any trends in this direction?"
Interviewee: "Absolutely! Digital platforms, especially LinkedIn, have revolutionized the way we approach career growth. It's not just a tool for job applications, but a platform to showcase expertise, share insights, and most importantly, build a professional community. At XConsult, we guide individuals on optimizing their profiles, content creation, and engaging meaningfully on such platforms."

Interviewer: "For someone at the threshold of their career, any foundational advice?"
Interviewee: "Stay inquisitive and open to learning. The start of one's career is a phase of exploration. While skills are vital, it's equally important to cultivate a network and be open to feedback."

Interviewer: "Before we wrap up, where do you envision the future of career advising, especially at XConsult?"
Interviewee: "The essence will always remain personal connection and tailored advice. However, with technology advancements, I foresee a more integrated approach – blending personal consultations with AI-driven tools to provide deeper insights and strategies for our clients."

Stakeholder: CEO of "XStart," (name modified)
Observation: Jihoon's inception into "XStart" was a collaborative endeavor with close associates, highlighting a foundational bond and shared ambition amongst the core team. He underscores the significance of a rigorous in-house recruitment process, which demonstrates the firm's dedication to attracting unparalleled talent. Given the compact team structure, there is a clear emphasis on maximizing efficiency and prudently utilizing every moment.

Interviewer: "Jihoon, could you illuminate your background and what drove you to co-create XStart?"
Interviewee: "Absolutely. I've always been fascinated with the intersection of technology and business, which led me to my entrepreneurial journey. Spotting a gap in the LIS software arena, XStart became my platform to address that void and to champion innovation."

Interviewer: "How does XStart approach the recruitment process, given the competitive nature of the tech industry?"
Interviewee: "Our approach is quite structured. We have an in-house recruitment team that conducts the initial screening and interview. Following that, candidates go through 4-5 stages of interviews, each managed by different members of the XStart team. We've found that by doing so, we can quickly identify if a candidate aligns with our expectations and values. Given our compact team size, it's crucial for us to be efficient in the recruitment process. Every minute is valuable, and we want to ensure we're dedicating time to potential hires who truly resonate with XStart's mission and ethos."

Interviewer: "How does XStart ensure streamlined communication across different stages of recruitment?"
Interviewee: "At XStart, we prioritize clear and cohesive communication. To achieve this, we've implemented a centralized system where feedback from each interview stage is meticulously documented and stored in our shared Google Drive. This way, both our recruitment team and departmental leaders have immediate access, ensuring everyone remains informed and aligned throughout the recruitment journey."

Interviewer: "Where does XStart advertise its job listings?"
Interviewee: "We primarily use popular job listing sites, much like Indeed. However, we're also active on platforms relevant to our industry, ensuring we reach the right audience."

Interviewer: "Has XStart ever tried hiring through training programs or internships?"
Jihoon: "We experimented with similar programs in the past. However, the return on the time invested wasn't always justifiable. We now prefer small team sizes and ensure we understand a candidate's background thoroughly before assigning them projects."

Interviewer: "For new hires, especially those without a significant track record, what does XStart focus on during hiring?"
Interviewee: "For such candidates, we place a strong emphasis on their resume and portfolio. It provides insights into their capabilities, potential, and whether they align with XStart's objectives."

Interviewer: "What do you look for in potential candidates, apart from their professional skills?"
Interviewee: "At XStart, we value passion. We want to know if they have a genuine desire for the industry they're stepping into. Continuous learning, adaptability, and a hunger for innovation are traits we hold in high regard."

Interviewer: "Thank you, Jihoon. Before we conclude, is there anything else you'd like to share or any feedback you have on the current recruitment landscape?"
Interviewee: As recruitment evolves with technology and workforce shifts, traditional methods aren't always optimal. We prioritize a candidate-focused approach that assesses skills and cultural fit. It's less about merely filling roles and more about fostering lasting relationships. This holistic approach, I believe, is recruitment's future."

Stakeholder: Alumnus of North Carolina State University, MS in Computer Networking, currently a software engineer at Hughes.

Observation: During our conversation, he displayed a profound understanding of both the theoretical and practical aspects of computer networking. His journey, transitioning from academic excellence to industry relevance, is a testament to his adaptability and resilience. A keen listener, he often paused to reflect before answering, suggesting a meticulous and detail-oriented nature.

Interviewer: "Hi, thank you for joining me today. Can you provide a brief account of your academic journey leading up to your MS in Computer Networking?"

Interviewee: "Of course. I began my undergraduate studies in India, diving deep into computer science fundamentals. My passion for networking and its rapidly changing dynamics drove me to pursue an MS in Computer Networking at North Carolina State University. The experience has been transformative, bridging my foundational knowledge with cutting-edge network practices."

Interviewer: "Could you shed some light on the strategies and platforms you employed during your job search post-graduation?"

Interviewee: "Certainly. I heavily relied on the NC State's career services, participated in numerous job fairs, and engaged in networking sessions. Platforms like LinkedIn were instrumental, allowing me to connect with industry professionals, alumni, and potential recruiters. Additionally, joining study and alumni groups provided insights and job leads."

Interviewer: "What hurdles did you encounter during your job search and how did you navigate them?"

Interviewee: "One significant challenge was the overwhelming demand for experienced candidates in the field of networking. As a fresh graduate, I had to work hard to showcase my academic projects, research, and internships to highlight my practical knowledge. Tailoring my resume and cover letter for each application and building a strong online portfolio were some strategies I adopted."

Interviewer: "In hindsight, what mechanisms or collaborations between universities and potential employers could simplify the job search process for students?"

Interviewee: "Regular industry-academia interactions, like guest lectures, workshops, and joint research projects, can bridge the gap. This ensures students are industry-ready upon graduation. Moreover, a platform that allows students to engage in mini-internships or projects during their academic years would provide invaluable real-world exposure."

Interviewer: "From your experience, what features or elements would you suggest to enhance the efficacy of professional networking and job search platforms for students?"

Interviewee: "A platform that offers a clear categorization of jobs based on specialization, facilitates direct interactions with hiring managers, and provides mentorship from industry veterans would be a game-changer. The platform should also integrate AI-driven insights to match candidates with suitable opportunities."

Interviewer: "Thank you, for your valuable insights. Before we conclude, is there anything you'd like to add or emphasize that we might have missed?"

Interviewee: "Certainly. I'd like to stress the importance of continuous learning in the tech industry. The landscape is ever-evolving, and staying updated with the latest trends and technologies is crucial. Networking, both in the digital and physical realm, plays an integral role in professional growth. It's not just about securing a job but fostering meaningful connections that can guide and support your career trajectory."

Stakeholder: Engineering Management Master's Candidate at Duke University, actively looking for Summer '24 internship opportunities, with aspirations of becoming a Product Manager.
Observation: She exudes a blend of technical acumen and client-focused sensitivity, indicative of her client-centric problem-solving prowess. The digital artifacts around her, from tech blogs to product design modules, reflect her genuine enthusiasm for technology and product management.

Interviewer: "Hi, thank you for joining us today. Can you describe your journey leading up to your Master's in Engineering Management at Duke University?"
Interviewee: "Absolutely. I've always been intrigued by the intersection of technology and its impact on users. My undergraduate studies, combined with some early-career experiences, honed my technical skills. However, I wanted to expand my horizons and understand the managerial aspects of technology, leading me to pursue Engineering Management at Duke."

Interviewer: "Impressive. As you're currently on the hunt for internships, what are you aiming to achieve in this phase?"
Interviewee: "My goal is to immerse myself in real-world product development scenarios. I'm eager to apply my academic knowledge and gain practical experience, especially in understanding user needs, strategizing product roadmaps, and collaborating with cross-functional teams."

Interviewer: "Which platforms or strategies are you employing in your internship search, and how do they align with your objectives?"
Interviewee: "I've been making the most of Duke's extensive alumni network and career services. Moreover, platforms like LinkedIn have been invaluable for networking and discovering opportunities. Additionally, I participate in tech webinars and product management forums to stay updated and connect with industry professionals."

Interviewer: "Can you share some challenges you've faced during your internship search?"
Interviewee: "Certainly. The realm of Product Management is vast. Pinpointing roles that perfectly align with my aspirations, while also considering company culture and product domains, has been a bit challenging. Plus, distinguishing oneself in such a competitive field requires showcasing both technical expertise and a deep understanding of user experiences."

Interviewer: "In your perspective, how could universities and prospective employers better bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industry requirements?"
Interviewee: "Collaborative workshops and real-world case study sessions can be incredibly enlightening. These engagements would enable students to understand the ever-evolving industry landscape and would give employers a chance to spot budding talent early on."

Interviewer: "Looking at the current job search platforms, what features or enhancements would you find beneficial in streamlining your search?"
Interviewee: "A platform that provides insights on aligning one's skills with industry demands would be great. Features like AI-driven feedback on applications, real-time industry trends, and interactive mentorship sessions would indeed refine the job-hunting experience."

Interviewer: "Before we conclude, are there any insights or experiences you'd like to share regarding the transition from a student role to a professional one?"
Interviewee: "The journey from a classroom to a corporate setting is enlightening. While academic pursuits offer a structured approach, the professional world thrives on adaptability. I believe it's crucial to stay agile, continuously learn, and be receptive to feedback. It's this amalgamation of knowledge and adaptability that I aim to bring to my future role in Product Management."

Meeting Details:
- Location: Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Group
- Stakeholder: Student Organization
- Position: President, Duke MEM student council
- Gender: Male
- Race: Indian
- Observations: ⨯⨯⨯⨯ has a very calm personality and gave very articulate responses. He is enthused about his initiatives as MEMSC president.

Background:
- "In terms of my background, I come from India. I did my undergrad there and electronics and telecommunication engineering.
- I worked for three years in KPMG as an analyst. Then eventually when then Saltant and then I transitioned myself into university in US doing my masters.
- I love doing these extra activities, just more things studies."

Role of student organizations in job search:
- "So, we try to have these club interviews or club sections wherein we ask alumni's to be a part of the panel so that that's a way of you know introducing them out there.
- Alumni also love being, you know, conducting these interviews and helping others understand.
- So that creates a better bond in terms of, you know, having these relations between people and that's another way of having this so networking part."

Personal job search process:
- "What I usually was trying to do is that connecting through people on LinkedIn, finding the alumni who are out there.
- Sometimes when I'm very concerned, you know, in terms of getting a job. I try to directly message them. Is there any referral that you can provide me with?
- I usually send these connections on LinkedIn requests, but I add a note because I prefer adding a note otherwise you know people might not accept the request even if they wanted to and you know, try to capture their email IDs if possible so that I can also capture the details in terms of even the people might not open their LinkedIn, but they might open their profession email. So, I wanted to make sure that they're getting my message in any way possible.
- So, I would say the conversion chances are like 5% in terms of capturing their response via emails and on LinkedIn it's more, I would say like 15 to 20%, but it's always the numbers game."

Suggestions on improving the job search process:
- "So, if maybe the job fair or the career phase that we have, we one we can include something very specific to graduate students requiring H1B sponsorships.
- And the second thing that I'm going to talk about, so in focus School of Business, what we have as streamline processes that people who are alumni of Fuqua usually are in touch with their Duke email IDs. So, this helps them, you know, get referrals and what connect with maybe have a coffee chat you don't you always don't need a referral.
- GHC has always is always a huge success, but this time as you know how the 2023 market is going on, unfortunately the number of potential employers were obviously a lot less than potential employees. So, having these small cloud events with the limited amount of people out there for any specific event so that everybody gets time to interact with everybody."

Meeting Details:
- Location: WhatsApp call (Virtual) - Group
- Stakeholder: Student Organization
- Position: President, Duke MEM Product Management club
- Gender: Female
- Race: Indian

Background:
- Pursuing Masters of Engineering Management at Duke, joined last fall.
- Last semester was cabinet member of PM club.
- Did bachelors in biomedical engineering from DJ Sanghvi College of Engineering, India.
- Worked for Kraftshala in product domain after undergrad.

Role of student organizations:
- Share knowledge and skills required for PM to students particularly for freshers.
- Focus on soft skills, resume review, and career advice from alumni.
- Companies volunteer to partner with club and club reaches out to companies via professor or online outreach, cold messages.
- It's usually smaller companies that partner and not the larger ones.
- Projects typically revolve around user experience, wire framing.
- Herself benefited from events of PM club in terms of networking, resume, and finding internship.
- PM club outreach: 2022 & 2023 MEM batch – 400, total turnout kind of 40-50 for in person events and virtual event- 100-200. Combined event all clubs, then 80-100 students in-person.

Personal job search process:
- Currently, doing an internship and hoping to get it converted into full-time job.
- Networking with people on LinkedIn for referrals and information calls.
- Using LinkedIn for job applications.

Challenges in job search process:
- Applied to a lot of jobs but getting interviews for very few.
- Facing issue of "pseudo" job posting, wherein companies are posting job but don't have any intention of actually hiring.
- Current processes are very inefficient for students.

Suggested improvements for career resources
- LinkedIn platform should be improved.
- Personalized job search assistance- Career center coaches give very generic feedback and there is no way to get personalized feedback on how to go about the job search.

Meeting Details:
- Location: Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Individual
- Stakeholder: Student
- Gender: Male
- Race: Indian

Background:
- "I am 24 years old.
- I'm an engineering management graduate student at Duke University
- I have done my bachelors in mechanical engineering and post that I have worked for two years in the domain of analytics and project management.
- I am interested in pursuing a product management role here after my Masters and I have taken similar courses and the product management."

Personal job search process:
- "I applied for an internship. I think last three days ago, which was the product related internships, that internship specifically in needed someone with an analytical background, which I already had.
- Particularly looking for jobs I am not using any other platform right now as other than LinkedIn that is my only source.
- Apart from it if I sometimes get a link from someone about a particular posting that may seem interesting.
- I have done this previously and what I learned and what I've understood is refining a profile time and again so as to match that exact criteria that they want and what you have to give them and also being consistent about the process.
- Consistency is the most important is what I feel so my strategy is to keep working on my profile and all the things that I can control."

Challenges in job search process:
- "A common challenge I feel is the right alignment toward the recruiters need and what we have to offer. There is always a gap.
- Let's say work in a product-based role, but I don't have the exact ideal experience of being a manager or having developed the product from scratch, it becomes difficult.
- Sometimes you don't get to know about a role that opened and only get to know about it after the deadline of application."

Suggestions on improving the job search process:
- "Getting to know the exact skills required for this role so that I can educate myself.
- Secondly, somehow getting to talk to people who actually work on that role, there is no better insight than someone who actually pursues that role that you can receive rather than you just finding it on YouTube or LinkedIn, I think the best source is someone who's actually working on what you want to work is the best source."

Meeting Details:
- Location: Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Individual
- Stakeholder: Student
- Gender: Male
- Race: Indian

Background:
- "I have a background in software engineering for the past two years I've been working as a software engineer in Capgemini.
- Currently I'm pursuing my Masters in engineering management from Duke university.
- I always felt that I like managerial skills and I need to work on those and I always had management as my passion, so I always wanted to pursue something which has to work with management. So, I decided to pivot into something which perfectly balances technology and management, which the master of engineering management was providing me."

Personal job search process:
- "Currently using LinkedIn and Indeed, I go to job section and find companies that have open roles and go through the job descriptions and apply directly on the site.
- I spend a lot of time on resume and other than that, I get in touch with people who work in those specific companies and I discussed about what would make my profile stand out and what skills I do need to acquire before applying to the job."

Challenges in job search process:
- "Depending on only two websites is somewhat that I feel uh, limit test and limits are job search capabilities.
- Sometimes it seems that the job listings that are on the websites they are from a long time and they don't seem to update it. So, this was a major problem that I was facing because most of the companies I had to look for the job posting date and how recent it was.
- On Indeed, I guess uh, it was telling me to create a profile I guess, which is in something which is not something which I'm particularly, you know, uh, which I don't particularly prefer."

Suggestions on improving job search process:
- "For LinkedIn, one thing that I would like to suggest is when you go to a job posting a job page, I have to pay premium subscription to see where your connections and your peers stand at which position in comparison to you, what skills they have, which is a like they went to the job description and what's what skills you have. If someone is offering it for a free of charge, a minimal charge, I guess, and it would be a great feature to have, it would help many of the candidates to see the position that they're at while applying."

Meeting Details:
- Location: Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Individual
- Stakeholder: Student
- Gender: Female
- Race: Indian

Background:
- "I am currently pursuing my masters at Duke University and coming to my background I have done my undergrad in computer science.
- After that I have worked for a year where I worked in a company named Minty as a software engineer, and then I worked in strategy at a startup.
- Apart from all these, I am a dancer. I've completed my diploma in Kuchipudi Dance."
- I wanted to start my own startup. But then I don't have all these skills or knowledge right now which are involved in this, so I personally thought that I will just be in the ecosystem of being a product manager or something so that I'll be able to know how things work and maybe in the future I can start my own thing."

Personal job search process:
- "I haven't started applying actively, but yes, I did start it.
- I have applied for is Google how I found out that is it's a funny story. So, because like we are having this thing called as career design, right? So, for that they asked us at JD and then for I was just searching for daily for PM applications and then I came to know that that particular day was the last day for apply.
- I'm doing is just LinkedIn general job search and after that I am also seeing the post whichever people are reposting or commenting or liking or something.
- I'm also trying to use indeed or Glassdoor, so as of now I'm just focusing on them.
- At present I would say a there is I'm not following any particular strategy.
- I did not hear any callbacks or whatever accept or rejection mails from anyone."

Challenges in job search process:
- "First thing is it's super scattered. Like for example I want to become a product manager and I see the job description as super vague and I don't know whether that particular job description and my aspirations are matching or not.
- Second thing is again like having a lot of platforms in which I'm unable to have some track or something of how many have applied or how many more are there to apply in general like how many uh positions are uh available for everybody.
- There at times when some of the things which I wanted to know, but these are like nowhere and I'm being like super confused."

Involvement in student organizations:
- "I'm a part of consulting club, but I'm not any cabinet member.
- So, two things I would like to gain from this consulting club.
- One thing is that as I have like very like one year of experience, I thought that having more experience where I can do client-side projects helps me to build a different kind of mindset.
- Second thing is that, uh, I would like if I'm being a part of a club, then I would get to meet a lot of people."

Meeting Details:
- Location: Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Individual
- Stakeholder: Student
- Gender: Male
- Race: Indian

Background:
- "I'm currently doing my masters in Masters in engineering management at Duke University.
- I graduated back in 2019 in mechanical engineering and posed that have been actively involved in product design and development and in in my recent stent, I was working as a product manager for a company called Source One.
- After graduation, I see this degree as an entry level for the US market to get into product management."

Involvement in student organizations:
- "I'm currently working for a company called Kahana as a student consultant working mainly on their improvisation of UI, UX and some strategy related stuff.
- These clubs have an active relation with companies that can provide industrial level experience to students.
- I get some hands-on experience and brush up my skills and see how people in US usually go around working in the product management field and get to know how the work culture is especially coming from India."

Personal job search process:
- "I've created an alert on LinkedIn so whenever new internship positions open up for product management, I usually get a notification on my email.
- I spent around 15 minutes to 30 minutes every day and complete like three to four applications every day for internship roles."

Challenges in job search:
- "It's kind of like shooting in the dark. I do not know if the recruiter has even received management or are they even considering me.
- It's like out of 10 applications I make, I get like one response which is either reject or an assessment test.
- I do not have any idea where my application lies in the process."

Suggestions:
- "I think if there is something that could track all my applications, at least give me an idea where my application stands that would really be helpful.
- Also, if my application is rejected it would be much more helpful if I get to know that reason so that I don't have to guess what went wrong and can actually improve on the shortcomings."

Meeting Details:
- Location: Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Group
- Stakeholder: Student
- Gender: Male
- Race: Indian

Background:
- "I did my undergrad in information technology, post that I worked with Salesforce as a Technical Support engineer and progressed into our support team lead.
- I wanted to go into a product management after spending my time in consulting, so I chose Duke as my go to college for engineering management program."

Personal job search process:
- "I just have a Google sheet and making entry of all the companies I'm making applying to.
- I find job postings through LinkedIn and I immediately clicked on the apply button there, which usually takes me to their career website and from there I just fill out information and submit.
- It's up to the individual to choose to enter the details manually or use the auto fill, but I generally prefer going like autofill because it reduces the time to fill the application."

Challenges in job search:
- "There a lot of hurdles before we apply, like you have to create an account with them that's mandatory.
- There are lot of details to fill out in the application. So, on average it'll take up at least eight to ten minutes for one application.
- Some will have an assessment like video introduction or any other behavioral cognitive, which means more time like 30 mins or so.
- It takes me at least maybe 1-2 hours per day on average doing applications.
- It can be very tiring sometimes."

Role of networking in the job search process:
- "I think it eases the process of applying because if you maintain that connection with the recruiter or the person who's in charge, they'll give you more insight about the role and application.
- I'm try to reach out on LinkedIn but the outcome is mostly not positive, still I try my best to make the connections like directly cold mailing the recruiters."

Suggestions:
- "The companies can leverage Workday in a in a meaningful way. What's happening is each company is utilizing Workday as an individual platform. All the companies should agree on one Workday platform so you can use same information and apply to multiple jobs instead of entering the same information multiple times for multiple jobs.
- Not asking too many details and questions upfront. Just take the resume if there is a fit, we can proceed with other information."

Meeting Details:
- Location: Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Individual
- Stakeholder: Student
- Gender: Male
- Race: Indian

Background:
- "I am currently pursuing of masters of engineering management from Duke University.
- I have a background in computer science and I've done my undergraduate degree from Vellore Institute of Technology.
- I interned at Fampay as a product manager for around 10 months.
- So, my primary goal after graduating from Duke, that is in terms of short-term goal is to get a job as a product manager in a SAS based company.
- Long term goal would be to do something of myself."

Personal job search process:
- "I am currently applying for internships in product management, program management, product marketing.
- My first approach is to go to a job boards or job search like LinkedIn, Indeed, and Glassdoor.
- I am very active on LinkedIn like I like to open LinkedIn at least once in one hour and I keep following people who post, you know, different kinds of internships for the role that I'm looking forward to.
- I really like companies when they, you know, make an inbuilt job application system. That is, when we click on the apply now button on their website, it directly takes to the application form upload resume and submit."

Challenges in job search:
- "I really hate it when I come across Workday or ICMS. I don't like is that these websites we have to create a separate account for every company.
- When we are applying on the same platform and 80 to 90% of the questions are same, why don't why doesn't work there as a common profile instead of filling the form every time from scratch which takes up a lot of valuable time."

Involvement in student organizations:
- "I'm basically acting as a project associate for a hackathon on campus, which goes by the name Masters Impact Challenge, so we are a team of five, so there are five projects and one associate for each and every one has got a different segment to work on.
- I'm learning cross-team collaboration and meeting people from other schools like Fuqua or political science department. Also, I think these connections will really help me in the long run when I'm finding a job."

Suggestions:
- "As a Duke student, where there is a very huge alumni network, I feel that there should be a like one to two events each week where companies visit on campus like a networking event and info session."

Meeting Details:
- Location: Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Individual
- Stakeholder: Student
- Gender: Male
- Race: Indian

Background:
- "I'm doing masters in engineering management student here at Duke University.
- I am from Pune, India.
- My background is in mechanical engineering, so I worked for one year as a technical sales engineer.
- I'm pretty passionate about product management and I hope to get an opportunity in that field."

Personal job search process:
- "As a student and there's a lot of unpredictability in my schedule due to courses, extra-curriculars; time management can be difficult.
- First step is to manage our time enough to have the time to apply to enough number of internships.
- I go through websites like LinkedIn or Way up or Glassdoor and I search for relevant roles and I look for postings that seem the best fit and apply."

Challenges in job search:
- "A lot of times you will have these companies that are, you know, like they say that they're looking for undergrads or grads and what happens is they would rather prefer undergrads in certain roles.
- Same with international student status, they don't mention if they sponsor or not.
- Companies mention engineering in qualification requirements but it seems like they prefer especially the big companies they prefer software guys."

Suggestions:
- "A lot and all of them, almost all of them have the same questions like about the veteran status or the disability status or if you require future sponsorship so it would really help if one of these platforms just gives automated answers, because my answer is the same to every application. That could really you know help me save my time and effort.
- Provide feedback because as mentioned before it is hard to understand why am I getting rejection, you know, is it my background which is mechanical engineering or visa sponsorship or resume or something else.
- Maybe a way to talk to people who are recruiting for their teams or having a connection like that, so that they could provide better insights into the role."

Meeting Details:
- Location: Teams Meeting (Virtual) - Group
- Stakeholder: Recruiter
- Gender: Male
- Race: Indian
- Role: Vice President, Software Engineering
- Company: JP Morgan Chase

Background:
- "Based in Mumbai, India.
- My focus lies in leading the development of cutting-edge solutions that power critical operations within the financial industry, including algo trading platforms and risk management systems.
- I play an active role in recruitment efforts for the software engineering division, identifying, and nurturing top talent to bolster our team's capabilities."

Current recruitment process:
- "For entry-level roles and internships, most of our recruitment happens via on-campus recruiting. The job role is also posted on our career page and job boards. Recruit from different colleges and online based on how satisfied we are with past hires.
- For all other roles, we post our job listing on our career page and major job boards like LinkedIn, Indeed and Glassdoor. Then move forward with applications that seem like a great fit."

Challenges in the recruitment process:
- "Ensure a consistent quality of candidates is a bit challenging.
- A lot of candidates apply without satisfying the job requirements.
- Managing the large volume of applications, sourced from various sources becomes cumbersome."

Suggestions:
- "I would look at implementing a more data-driven approach to target platforms that have a proven track record and likelihood of providing me with top-tier talent.
- Look at ways to reduce or effectively manage the high volume of applications we receive."

Interview 1- LinkedIn Manager

This manager used to hire for project managers. I chose them to interview to know the perspective of a recruiter and how we can make it easy for them with Sparc.

- They have target universities but It is difficult for them to reach out to them since reaching out to the university recruiter would only make the process model India and also have access to the entire code should include students that are not really interested in that particular job or field but would still attend in the event would be totally crowded.
- Having access directly to the student organizations president will make it easier to get candidates in the session or career fair who are truly interested for the job role. Moreover, the app having a feature of assigning student president or candidate who can actually shortlist people. This can also reduce the footfall while giving the students actually attending a real opportunity to interact peacefully with HR.
- The manager mentioned that currently the process that they follow is lengthy and tedious and often leads to the recruiters who are trying to talk to each and every student get exhausted. Moreover, they attended a similar event at GHC this year and realized that they collect so many resumes for a single job positions of which most of them are irrelevant and that leads to Improper screening.
- They like the idea of sparc from a perspective that this this app will help them notify the university specifically that they're interested to hiring students from about any job openings they have. It will also let them contact them for events they want to host. Even the smallest of events with the university students they want
- She talked about an instance, where she tried to reach out to one of the universities that they usually hire from and faced a lot of difficulty organizing the event because there are so many communicators involved at the same time. Having a platform which will help them invite, keep track on the calendar about event schedule at the same time host events online on the app itself will make it simpler.
- Upon asking about the queries, I request she sees from these College and organizations are students were currently studying in college. She mentioned that she receives a lot of email asking about the status of application meeting having an app where I can track the status of that their application usually helps reduce the email influx. Moreover, there are some students asking about what an ideal candidate would look like for a position or if there are any minimum requirement. This information is already clearly mentioned in the job description but students to last is this this question so having a route to Goa, the student President to reach at the HR will only you know help the students ask these questions are student President get resolved easily.

Interview 2- Duke MEM Student (███████)

███████ is a Duke MEM student currently looking for full-time PM jobs. I chose her as an interview candidate to know the perspective of a user that currently uses our competitive apps to understand what pain points, they have right now and how efficient we need to make Sparc for the same.

- Upon asking about the factors based on which she decides to apply, the first one was the date the job was posted. If it was posted recently, she would see more hope and apply immediately.

- I learnt that while it is great that student orgs can find opportunities for her, she highlights that that is not enough. There are people who are not a part of it and thus cannot access them.

- She mentioned about how a feature that could let her pitch herself, apart from the resume, since that builds more connect would help better understand her behaviorally.

- A feature like having an opportunity to host an information session would be useful to know the exact details as well as understand the company culture. She highlighted the need for an app that allows student organizations to seamlessly connect with recruiters and schedule sessions or events.

- We can make career fairs more accessible and effective by including a virtual career fair feature. This would allow students to explore access resources like company profiles and job descriptions prior to the event and have 1:1 conversation without any rush.

- Provide an option to collegiate orgs to add their members' profile in the app so that they can send them all together to a recruiter or the recruiter can check quality of students before approaching them

- She appreciated that the app allows the president to directly reach to the HR or recruiter so that things can be clarified and this might reduce turnaround time.

- She goes online to check relevant jobs for herself while Sparc could provide her with companies reaching out to college orgs.

- The job role gets discussed after the person is hired, whereas now they can ask what the role is and apply only if it seems to fit their needs.

Interview 3- CMU MSSM Student Club president (██████████)

██████████ is a CMU grad student currently pursuing his Masters in Software Management. He is also the president of the Product Management Student Club. I chose him as a candidate to know what the club does for its members to help them get internships/ jobs and how they communicate with other stakeholders.

- Companies often volunteer to partner with these clubs to promote job opportunities and their respective organizations.
- Involvement in these collegiate organizations, and the events they host, has significantly improved the interviewee's network and enhanced their resume. This illustrates the practical benefits of participating in such extracurricular activities, as they provide valuable opportunities for skill development and networking that can positively impact one's job search.
- Outreach efforts to connect with potential employers vary. While some connections are initiated through professors or other academic channels, others are established through online platforms. The Sparc channel can prove to be very helpful.
- Despite submitting numerous job applications, the interviewee noted that the conversion rate – the rate at which job applications turn into interviews or job offers – remains disappointingly low. This observation highlights the fierce competition in the job market and the challenges that students face in standing out. If the HR has the chance to reach out, it would improve chances of particular university students.
- The interviewee also pointed out the prevalence of "pseudo-openings" – job postings that are not genuinely intended to hire anyone but are still advertised. This phenomenon adds a layer of frustration to the job search process, as it consumes valuable time and resources. If the HR directly asks to apply via Sparc, it has to be legitimate. Thus, such a platform will prove valuable and useful.
- The interviewee also mentioned that the feedback received from career services tends to be generic, leaving students craving more personalized guidance. This gap in tailored advice can hinder the job search process, as individualized feedback can be crucial for improvement. If there is an opportunity to host event with an HR or recruiter who does resume screening on a regular basis, they can get valuable feedback.

██████is a Duke grad student pursuing her Masters in Data Science. I chose her as a candidate to identify if there are any differences while looking for a technical job. Since the above to would provide me product related information, I wanted to know the side of a technical job hunter.

- Her a typical job search strategy is to apply via LinkedIn or glassdoor by role names to any and every job opening that she sees.
- She finds company events that are hosted, to either provide information or market the company product, or whether it is a career fair helpful. In terms of that she gets to hear the HR's perspective, the recruiter's opinions on her resume.
- They event also helps her if not to find a job to build meaningful connections and network, with her peers and people from the company and industry.
- Some key challenges that she faces with the application process is that there are a lot of applications for a job and the turnaround is low even after replying to a lot of applications. Also, the turnaround ratio for interviews is pretty low.
- It is difficult to sort the job openings based on the job description since they are very generic and not specific about what are the job role would actually entail.
- She also mentioned that when there is a career fair, the footfall is too high while the company representatives are too less in number that leads to it not being so productive. She suggests that if a platform can help her host a virtual career or a virtual event so that each student attending can get limited one-on-one time, it would help her make the most out of it.
- Currently, even when she messages the HR or the recruiters, they don't respond to them because she understands that they might be receiving bulk messages too. Thus, a company like Spark can help her go via a channel to actually reach out to the recruiter and express interest.
- Having the club president in the middle as communicator between the company and them might be a good idea since it would be professional as well as the club president would be speaking for a large number of members thus helping many just buy one way.
- She believes that her graduating from a renowned college is a benefit for the company as well to consider her application and thus believes that that is the incentive for a company to conduct an informational session which would help her better apply to the job.

Interview 5- Duke Club President (⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚)

- The interviewee stressed the significance of representing CMU clubs when reaching out to professionals, indicating the brand value of the institution.
- The ability to connect with a diverse array of individuals through club events highlights the networking advantages associated with collegiate organizations.
- Email outreach is recognized as a viable alternative, although it yields a lower response rate. The interviewee's experience sheds light on the differing conversion rates between email and LinkedIn, highlighting the importance of choosing the most effective communication channel.
- The interviewee suggests tailoring career fairs to meet the needs of graduate students seeking H1B sponsorships, acknowledging the specific challenges they face.
- Smaller, more focused networking events are proposed as a means of ensuring meaningful interactions and connections among participants.
- The concept of maintaining a structured list of alumni is seen as a practical solution to facilitate referrals and coffee chats, streamlining networking efforts for students.
- He agrees that the opportunity for club president would ease up the process of reaching out to HRs and it would enable him to be able to aid his peers as well.
- On the other hand, it would put responsibility on his shoulders to find the correct candidates and help them take a step ahead. This would require a vigilant selection of candidates and cabinet.
- Currently, his responsibilities are:
  1. Hosting relevant events for his team and cohort.
  2. Hosting events that will help students gain or enhance particular skills.
  3. Arrange for seminars or sessions that could give them an opportunity to apply their skills and learn at the same time.
  4. Meet and greet with alums.
  5. Provide feedback or review on how things should go ahead.
  6. Guide students.
- Having a feature that enables him to ask questions about a posting or offer to host sessions can help build relationships and have access to more data.
- Have to go via the university recruiter to get details of HRs, it is lengthy process which often leads to missed out opportunities.

Interview 6 - Global Operations Lead from Hitachi ▨▨▨▨▨

▨▨▨▨▨, a seasoned Global Operations Lead at Hitachi, shares his insights into the job search process from the perspective of a global corporation and how Sparc can add value to both large companies like Hitachi and the job seekers they aim to recruit.

- ▨▨ discusses the challenges faced by global corporations like Hitachi when seeking top talent. He highlighted the need for a streamlined process to connect with universities and access a diverse pool of candidates worldwide.

- He recognizes the importance of targeting top-tier universities but also the challenge of efficiently reaching out to them without overwhelming university recruiters. ▨▨ envisions Sparc as a solution that can facilitate direct and structured communication between global corporations and university recruiters or club presidents when explained the idea.

- Large corporations like Hitachi often host various events and job fairs globally, and the logistics can be complex. ▨▨ suggests that such an app could help manage and streamline these events, from scheduling and attendee management to ensuring that candidates have a clear understanding of Hitachi's global presence and career opportunities.

- He envisions a platform where global corporations can showcase their culture and values through multimedia content. This feature can be a valuable tool for attracting candidates who align with the company's mission and ethos.

- He emphasizes the importance of efficient candidate screening and recruitment processes. Such an app could assist in managing and organizing candidate data, making it easier for global corporations to identify the best-fit candidates for their specific job roles.

- ▨▨ recognizes the need for effective communication channels between large companies and candidates, including pre-event communication, post-event follow-up, and ongoing engagement. Sparc could provide a centralized platform for facilitating such interactions, enhancing the candidate experience.

- ▨▨ envisions that Sparc could serve as a global talent pool, allowing large corporations to tap into a diverse and dynamic workforce while also offering job seekers the opportunity to explore career opportunities on a global scale.

- He acknowledges the need for international students to find suitable roles in global corporations like Hitachi.

- ▨▨ believes that Sparc can contribute to Hitachi's commitment to diversity and inclusion by providing access to a wide range of talents from various backgrounds and regions.

Karen is a university career coach with experience in guiding students through their job search and career development. I interviewed her to understand the challenges and pain points faced by both students and recruiters in the job market.

- Karen mentioned that students often struggle with crafting effective resumes and cover letters. They have difficulty showcasing their skills and experiences in a way that appeals to recruiters. Sparc could provide guidance on resume building and allow students to receive feedback directly from recruiters.

- She highlighted the importance of networking in the job search process. However, students often find it challenging to identify and connect with the right people. A feature that helps students discover alumni or professionals in their desired field for informational interviews could be highly beneficial.

- She also mentioned students often miss out on opportunities because they are not aware of job openings that match their interests and skills. Sparc should provide a feature that sends personalized job alerts to students based on their profiles and preferences, helping them stay informed about relevant opportunities. This might be difficult to incorporate since it would make it just like some other job application portal.

- Karen also emphasized that recruiters face challenges when trying to reach out to a large number of students during career fairs. It becomes overwhelming for both sides. A virtual career fair feature like what Sparc plans, where recruiters can schedule one-on-one virtual meetings with students, could alleviate this issue and make interactions more meaningful.

- She mentioned that students often underestimate the importance of soft skills and behavioral aspects during interviews. There should be more resources and articles on interview preparation, including behavioral interview techniques and tips for showcasing soft skills effectively.

Interview 8 - Recent Graduate Job Seeker ▨▨▨▨▨▨

▨▨▨▨▨▨ is a recent graduate actively searching for job opportunities. I interviewed her to gain insights into the struggles faced by new graduates and how they navigate the job market.

- ▨▨▨ mentioned that as a recent graduate, she often encounters job postings with unrealistic experience requirements. She believes that a feature in Sparc that allows students and recent graduates to connect with entry-level job opportunities would be extremely valuable. This would reduce unnecessary application on recruiter's side as well as allow students to apply to the ones where they actually stand a chance.

- She also pointed out the lack of clarity in job descriptions. Many job postings lack detailed information about the roles and responsibilities, making it challenging for candidates to understand what the job entails. There should be a way to encourage recruiters to provide more comprehensive job descriptions. This would give seekers a better idea of how things would look and if it matches their profile and timeline better.

- She expressed the need for more effective communication between job seekers and employers. She believes that a messaging platform, where candidates can directly interact with recruiters, could streamline the communication process and provide clarity on job-related queries. Although, this will have to be made being careful that it does not turn out like other apps where there are 1000s of such messages lying around unopened.

- ▨▨▨ was concerned about the application process becoming a numbers game. She applies to multiple jobs but receives very few responses. Mass application neither is effective nor is good for the other side. Sparc could offer features to help job seekers track their applications, monitor the status, and provide suggestions for improving their applications.

- She also highlighted the importance of feedback in the job search process. There could be a feature where recruiters can offer feedback to candidates and the other way round, even if they were not selected for a position. This constructive feedback can help candidates improve their applications and interview skills. But again, this can only be done when there is a limited pool. Or, this should only be done after a certain filtering is done.

Interview 9 - Graduate Club President ▨▨▨▨▨▨

▨▨▨▨▨▨ is the President of the Graduate Student Association. I interviewed him to understand the role of student organizations in the job search process and how platforms like Sparc can support their efforts.

- ▨▨▨ highlighted that student organizations often struggle to effectively communicate with recruiters and companies. Sparc could facilitate direct communication between student organizations and recruiters, enabling them to collaborate on events, job postings, and opportunities. This could be enhanced in a way that recruiters can trust these students as well.

- Student organizations host numerous events, workshops, and seminars to benefit their members. However, coordinating these events can be challenging. There could be a feature where student organizations can schedule and manage events, invite companies to participate, and streamline event planning. Basically, suggesting a different sub-app for seekers and presidents all together to manage happenings related to career enhancement.

- He mentioned the need for improved tracking of member engagement and participation in job-related activities. Sparc could provide this side of app with analytics to measure the effectiveness of their initiatives and events, helping them tailor their efforts to student needs. This can take up some load from the end of career coaching and training.

- ▨▨▨ talked about the importance of mentoring and peer support in the job search process. There should be a the creation of mentorship programs within student organizations, connecting experienced students with those seeking guidance and advice from alums or other connections of the university and so on.

- Student organizations often struggle to attract and engage industry professionals for networking events. Sparc could provide a platform where professionals can connect with student organizations and offer their expertise, leading to more valuable interactions for students.

She is a graduate student pursuing a Master's degree in Computer Science. I interviewed her to understand the challenges and experiences of graduate students in the job search process, particularly in the tech industry.

• She expressed the challenge of balancing coursework and the job search. Graduate students often face heavy academic workloads while simultaneously seeking job opportunities.

• She mentioned that tech companies often have demanding technical interviews. Sparc could provide a dedicated section with technical interview preparation resources, coding challenges, and mock interview opportunities to help students prepare for these assessments effectively.

• She highlighted the need for more visibility of job opportunities from startups and smaller tech companies. While larger tech giants are well-known, smaller companies may offer equally exciting roles. There should be a way to promote such opportunities and help students discover diverse tech job openings or job opening related to their field and choice.

• She talked about the importance of industry-specific networking. Tech-focused student organizations play a vital role in connecting students with tech professionals. Sparc could create a platform that encourages networking, collaboration, and mentorship within the tech industry.

• She expressed her concern about the lack of diversity in tech roles. Sparc could emphasize diversity and inclusion initiatives and provide students with access to companies that prioritize these values.

These insights shed light on the unique challenges faced by students pursuing technical degrees and entering the job market. Sparc can tailor its features to meet the specific needs of graduate students seeking opportunities in the tech industry, since we didn't keep that profile completely in mind during the first half.