

LeadTeam – Briefings

From these 10 interviews – what did we learn?

Marnix Griffioen

Marnix is a 20 years old Dutch Business student, doing its undergraduate program at Free University, in Amsterdam, Nederland. Currently, he is doing a 6 months exchange program at ISEG Lisbon. In its management career, he has to deal with many different groups, with different background and has sometimes to experience some troubles while teamworking mainly because he sometimes doesn't get what does the teacher expect from them. Plus, it's not that easy to manage people with different expectations (namely being in Lisbon as Erasmus). However, he really likes teamwork to meet people, brainstorm and he is quite satisfied. It's quite easy going despite some issues.

In terms of platform, he would obviously prefer to use another platform than Facebook. According to him "Facebook is not a place to study", hence, it's not designed to work and be efficient. Most of the time, he tries to convince people to use GoogleDocs instead of a Facebook group creation however, people always tend to create the FB group and he has no choice than switching from a platform to another. He never thought about possible changes to make or features to add but, he admits that the platforms he has been using until now are far from being perfect and improvements might be done to make the most of the team work projects. He tried once the Evernote platform but didn't find it user-friendly so stopped and got back using the mainstream ones: GoogleDocs, DropBox, Facebook.

Paul

This interview showed that Paul is quite satisfied with the existent solutions for teamworks. He mainly uses Facebook and Dropbox, even if he thinks that there are more efficient platforms such as Assana or Base Camp. Indeed, Facebook and Google Drive are used by almost everyone, and it makes it easier to start any teamwork, no one has to subscribe to a new platform. This will be a huge obstacle for us. Paul has a specialization in Strategy and Entrepreneurship and is not very confident about our project. He believes that the universities will not be willing to pay, and the students probably neither. Moreover, he thinks that the advertisers won't bring us enough revenue to be profitable. We really need to work on these issues, and find a way to overcome these eventualities.

Margaux

Margaux is overall quite satisfied with teamwork platforms, even if she doesn't feel frustration she thinks that a better solution still could exist. She would appreciate an all-in-one platform, and thinks it is very time-consuming to book meetings. She also finds annoying and inconvenient the discussion tracking on Facebook. She would be willing to pay for features that would solve these problems which is a good point for us. For her, just as for Paul, she imagines a tool in connection with Facebook. This is really an issue, because it seems that students can't imagine do their teamwork without Facebook, maybe the platform should be more integrated to Facebook.

Corentin

Corentin studies in a Business School and just like the other interviewees believes that it is too time-consuming to book meetings, and he thinks that several platforms are not convenient for teamworks. Moreover, he finds it difficult to book a location for meeting the other members. This last issue could be solved in our calendar feature that would select a place proposed by the students for example ("Room 101 in the university", "my place",...). He would be willing to pay a cheap price for new and improved features, such as 0,50€ per year. Corentin is looking for something easy to use, complete, and convenient. He is always connected to his iPhone, and agrees to pay for something that is efficient.

Carolina Chacón

Carolina Chacón mainly uses DropBox but uses as well WhatsApp and Facebook to discuss and communicate with other team members. She recognizes as the main problems when doing teamwork arrange meetings because each one has a different schedule and keeping track of the deadliness because it is often not clear when to deliver and even can happen that some members of the team do not know what to deliver.

She really would like to have a platform that offers the possibility of easily schedule meeting and that sends her reminders when she needs to deliver a task to the group, because since there are many things to keep track of, it occurs often that you remember what you have to do with not enough time to accomplish it.

Regarding our solution, she suggests it should be an all-in-one platform but still being simple and easy to use. Finally it is not for creating the next airbus but for university team working.

Diogo

Diogo is currently taking his Master degree in Business Administration in Católica-Lisbon. Although he cannot say he is completely frustrated with team work he feels it is a suboptimal solution. He points out how difficult it is to book meetings (with so many different people in each subject – sometimes even has to let one person out of the meeting) and to manage people without having any authority (namely, when expectations are dissimilar). The latter is something we can consider including in our platform – an evaluation method, possibly based on the amount of work made by each member, or on the effective part made by each (the teacher could see who did what).

Even though he sees value in our solution he points out that this is yet another platform to log in and check all the time – notice that he is already on Facebook, so for him is very easy to keep update of what is happening in the group. Highest value would be attained with a solution integrated in Facebook, which is clearly not customized for teamwork yet! This is completely possible due to the open API of this platform. This is a great insight for us, if other interviewees feel the same way, we can adapt our Business Model towards this idea! The Network effect would already be triggered and the costs of multi-homing minimized.

Finally, he would be willing to pay 1€ yearly (what Whatsapp asks) for tools not existent in the market, like the assistant. This means we should try to find out more things not in the market yet to include in our premium version.

Vitor

Vitor Coutinho's concerns regarding team work start with the fact that you are very dependable on other's people work, which not always correspond to your expectations. Also, as he and most of his colleagues work while doing the masters, it gets very difficult to find both an opportune date and place. Turns out, working students may be a very important part of our University Students segment which we did not considered before – perhaps we can have a special approach in the scheduling and calendar part, with synchronization to the Outlook Agenda already used at work.

Vitor believes the best solution is not to create a separate platform but rather to integrate it in an already existing one – widely used. Initially he thought that evolving Dropbox into a team work platform would be the best option, yet, by the end of the interview, he said that probably Google would be more appropriate, as they already have different sections (Google Docs, Google Forms...) – could create a specific one, for instance inside Google Scholar, with all those features we are planning to provide. So again, the integration is brought up by a potential client, with concerns regarding costs of multi-homing and network effect – this is something we will have to review.

Another interesting idea that came up during the conversation was the creation of forums inside each group – each forum would correspond to a particular topic of discussion – this would minimize mix of comments and ideas which ultimately leads to confusion and difficult tracking (losing comments sometimes). This could be easily implemented in our platform!

Nataly Quiroga

Nataly is an international student at Catolica Lisbon who has different teams in her master courses. The problems she highlights as her most important issues regarding teamwork at university are discussion tracking, files management and the use of more than one platform. Nataly most used app is Facebook but she accesses to cloud services and send and receive information by e-mail as well.

She really would appreciate a team working platform where she can have instant messaging and collaborate in files elaboration at the very same time. Besides, Nataly considers she would have a particular interest in a solution that could offer her templates for planning and that could allow task allocation, she would even pay for it.

Baptiste Faure

Baptiste Faure is currently doing his Master degree in Marketing at Insec Business School in Bordeaux, France. He has been dealing with many teamwork with different people, especially when he was doing his exchange in Canada (different background, cultural gap), but he doesn't feel frustrated by teamwork because most of the time, people had quite the same expectations and also had the same work team methods than him. Plus, it was easier to book meetings this way. Otherwise, it's almost impossible and manage to find a time.

He doesn't consider Facebook as a teamwork platform because notifications from friends come to distract you so you lose so much time by checking stupid things in your home page without wanting it. So, when doing a teamwork, he looks for people on Facebook, a group is created to arrange meetings (time + room booking), split up the work but then, every member does its part individually and upload it on Dropbox. Since Dropbox and Facebook made a partnership it's easier to upload files however, the cloud is quite limited on Facebook so it's not that convenient.

Dropbox is the best solution according to Baptiste and he is very satisfied with it. The network effect plays an important role, everyone knows this cloud service and you can organize yourself in a very efficient way. He doesn't like chatting that much so doesn't miss this tool on Dropbox: Baptiste prefers to focus on the part he has to do instead of being disturbed by people talking. However, sometimes it takes much time to put all the work together because everyone did it in a different way (layout).

Finally, he would be willing to pay 0.5€ to get the template for planning and the task allocation to divide more efficiently the work.

João

João feels that most of the times it is very difficult to work in group due to the dissimilar levels of expectations and contributions, otherwise, group works could be very beneficial. The other 2 main problems he identified were Facebook's distractions and fights among group members (namely, many times, each person already knows what they want to do regardless of other's opinions).

The current multi-platform solution is rather unpractical and he only uses it because there is no other alternative. When asked about platforms such as Azendoo and Evernote, he said that, since no one is there, he didn't even think about them when constituting a group. This emphasizes the importance of marketing in our main activities, making sure we trigger the network effect (this will be reinforced by the Universities' partnership which can be our first contact with the students, creating a good initial customer base)

In Facebook's case, even though it is user-friendly and good to discuss and share files, he reaffirmed that the high amount of non-professional information was very distracting (he loses his focus easily). This highlights the importance of developing a platform which is strictly professional.

Interesting suggestions came up during the interview. Firstly, a Gamification option, with team building games in the beginning of the work (especially when the team members don't know each other). Another would be an evaluation method so that grades differentiation could be made (the problem of different expectations could be minimized). These are good ideas we may consider, particularly the latter, which can resolve a problem that has been pointed out before (other interviews).

Flora Yameogo

Flora is currently doing an internship in Montréal, Canada for 6 months and then, will be back to Laval University, Québec to finish her MBA which specialization refers to International Management. She is from Burkina Faso, Africa but started studying abroad since she is 18 years old (Undergraduate + Master in Canada). Hence, she is very oriented international and over there, she met people from different countries, different culture, opposite way of working. When dealing with different business/management/marketing projects, it was sometimes difficult to meet all needs and expectations. Cultural gap was a very big issue to deal with. Especially according to deadlines requirements: Canadian teachers are very strict with deadlines and sometimes people didn't remind at the right time. Scheduling calendar and reminder are features she would be willing to pay for.

Flora uses Facebook to communicate on the group, Google Drive to work online and brainstorm at distance, share the final versions on the Facebook Group and keep it on an online safe cloud such as SkyDrive. She also thinks that better solutions might be implemented in order to facilitate team working because even if Facebook is quite convenient (everybody has it) it's absolutely not designed to work (it's impossible to track all the comments so most of the time, you are losing nice resources and good comments). Moreover, distractions are omnipresent so you are not as efficient as you could be. Nevertheless, she is not completely unsatisfied and doesn't feel frustrated. She would be happier with a platform which combines many tools and prevent students to be disturbed.

She pointed out the idea that usually, students are not very enthusiastic to pay features and additional services (even for good ones) so, dealing directly with universities might be a better option.