

Internship with CourseStars

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Organization Name: CourseStars

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Executive Summary

The plan of the company was to rework some parts of their website to automate submissions by employees and to attract more clients. The company I was interning with was CourseStars, a company that prides itself on finding excellent tutors to serve students. However, the project had a lot of complicated parts due to privacy issues and company policies.

First, the company needed to ensure that there was an easier way for them to give out tutor applications and publish tutors' information on their website. The second issue was to drive tutors to work with CourseStars and make it easier for them to access the application on the CourseStars website.

The ideas for the form already existed on google forms and it needed to be moved to the official website for better accessibility and less confusion. Furthermore, this will make it easier for CourseStars to manage their tutors since all data will exist in one place.

There were several issues with how the application forms would work and that was the primary focus of my research.

Business Context

Generally, companies that offer tutoring mostly work in the same way where a tutor is hired as an independent contractor and a percent of the money made by the tutor is given to the website hosting them. This system makes it so the tutor is under no obligation to tutor everyone that offers him money and it takes from the tutor having to market himself. There are multiple big companies that dominate the industry in this way such as Varsitytutors, Chegg, and Wyzant. The business model allows the company to hire these contractors without them having to take any risks. Furthermore, due to the big clientele the company keeps its tutors and regularly provides them with chances to work. The company that I was interning for is CourseStars and it also offers tutoring services to students who request it.

CourseStars is a tutoring company that originally offered tutoring only to college students. However, starting this year it increased its availability to students of all ages, to be specific from K-College. CourseStars offers tutors a chance to teach both in-person and online. Furthermore, it promises to provide excellent tutoring by the people who have previously aced those courses. CourseStars is different from other tutoring services because the tutors are chosen through a lot of questionnaires which try to find the best tutor for each individual student. It also takes into account their study habits, personality and even little things like break requirements. These are all showcased on the CourseStar's website through the personalization surveys. CourseStars prides itself on providing a tutor who will fit perfectly with the student, hence enhancing their tutoring experience.

The department that I worked closely with was website management. I was in charge of making changes to the tutor application forms so that they could all be done on the website and the company would no longer need to rely on the google forms. Website management works on managing the website and making changes to the website to make it easier for the company to access its resources while driving traffic to the website.

Business Project Description

I worked on a critical part of the website which dealt with how tutors could apply to be a part of CourseStars tutoring service. Previously, the tutor application forms were all handled through google forms and then moved to the website manually. The idea behind my work was to ensure that everything was automated and nothing needed to be done manually. Furthermore, my work required me to move everything to Wix (the platform where the website was based) and remove google forms as the primary source of application.

First, we needed to ensure that the application process would flow smoothly since the tutoring application form had three sections. It started with a general information form which was an interest form that informed CourseStars that a person was interested in being a tutor. Previously, it wasn't connected in any way so every time a person would submit this form, we needed to access Wix in order to get this information. This made the tutor selection process much slower. Therefore, it needed to be reworked, so the company would be able to get this information much quicker. We put in place an automated email system that would be sent directly to CourseStars each time someone submits this form making the process a little faster. It became faster because the second part of the application was an interview and getting information quickly from the Interest Form allowed a quicker set up of the interview sessions. We spent the first eight days working out the finer details and testing the page to ensure it worked properly.

The third and the final part of the application process was the official documentation of all their information. It involved submission of all the information such as transcripts, picture, resume, and other critical information along with the price they wanted to charge and some other confidential information. This page first needed to be secured so only the intended people could get access to the information.

Hence, the first part of internship was spent to ensure that the page was safe and could only be accessed when it is intended by the company. In order to ensure security, the page was a hidden page which could only be accessed through a given link and was password protected. In order to access the page, one needed both the link and the password which could be changed manually whenever intended. We spent up to ten days making sure that the page was secure and only accessible with both the link and the password.

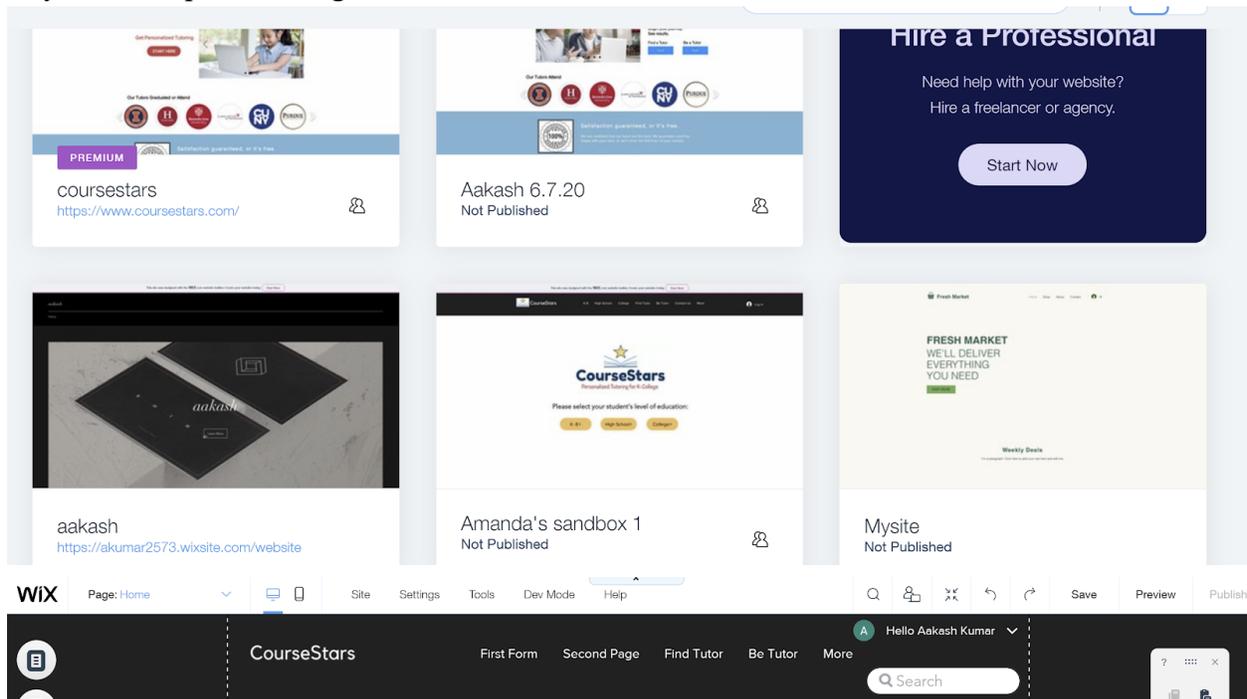
However, this entailed multiple issues because previously tutors were allowed to pick multiple prices for their products. However, due to limitations with Wix's editor we could only pick one price in order to make automated tutor pages. Hence during our first meeting on this subject we moved towards staying with one price for all services by the tutor.

As we moved further along in the project, we had other major issues like taking in the subjects they would like to tutor. The major issue here was that Wix's editor had limited options to present this question. The sophistication of the number of subjects that exist especially in college mixed in with newly added K-12 courses made it difficult to add all the subjects in the application form. There was only one way to take in all the answers to that question and it was to answer the question in a short paragraph. This method wasn't perfect either because there was no way to separate these answers, hence the search bar would never be able to distinguish tutors

based on the subject. We decided to make a multiple choice checkbox question to add all the subjects. It took us about 12 days to ensure that this page worked.

However, due to COVID-19, more changes ensued as clients are looking for a more variety in tutors. Since, the schools have moved completely online, some parents are requesting tutors to sit through the virtual classes and then tutor the same subject afterwards to better help their kids. So the previous forms were completely changed and a new form was created to ensure that such demands were being met. This form took a total of five days to complete.

We ran into another unforeseen issue where most of our saved work was lost in Wix. This was a very big issue and it took us two days to solve it through customer care. This also led to some very messed up scheduling.



Business Project Research

The research part of this project was quite simple and only ever included meetings with the CEO of CourseStars, Jill Ko. The entirety of the project was based on what CourseStars needed to do in order to make its conduct easier. The question that we looked at was how to make the tutor application on the CourseStars website better and automated. In general, we met twice a week for an hour where we talked about what needed to be done to the form and how exactly we should change it so it better serves CourseStars.

Most of the decisions were made by the Ms. Ko and the marketing team to make sure that it appealed to as many people as possible. The calls between the website management team and Ms. Ko generally detailed exact changes and possibilities of the changes. The website management team would often suggest what exactly could be done in order to implement the views of the marketing team. We often took the information given and followed through with it or suggested changes that could make it better.

This kind of research helped me develop good communication skills with the teams that were working and also helped me come up with quick ideas (critical thinking). These two skills, communication and critical thinking, were very important to my task as an intern because often I needed to come up with a solution really quickly despite not being fully aware of the potential of Wix and having good communication helped with designing the website according to company needs.

The project almost finished till some other changes needed to be made due to COVID-19. Hence, as it is now it is more than half-done a few more changes could ensure that it performs as intended.

Key Learning

In this project, I learnt a lot about the difficulties of running a business and the strategies that make a businessman successful. CourseStars is a very complicated business system that relies on so many different variables and to take all that into consideration while running a business is truly what an ideal business should aspire to do. In business, you need to be able to communicate clearly what needs to be done and what is the most important task at hand. Then, you need to be able to work on it strategically by coordinating with other interns. These communication skills are truly what makes any businessman shine.

Alongside the ability to communicate, critical thinking was almost always required for a good product to come out. To make use of thinking skills and filling in the gaps left by the instructing team makes the project go a lot faster and smoother. The ability to think about upcoming problems and to foresee some of the difficulties with the marketing team's views is another display of critical thinking skill that I developed.

Ms. Ko was an amazing mentor, she knew how to give us work without overloading us with work and making sure that we did work as it needed to be done. I think CourseStars' decision to start tutoring even younger students is a great one. CourseStars is very unique in what it offers and I think the Company should continue to offer what it does. No other tutoring company looks after the needs of the very individual as CourseStars does.

Annotated Bibliography

Varsitytutors. *Online Tutoring, Classes, and Test Prep - Varsity Tutors*, Varsitytutors,

www.varsitytutors.com/. Varsity Tutors is one of the websites that hires tutors as contractors and presents them to parents and students who can then choose to hire them. This website has a lot of tutors and it was used as a reference for the choosing of the subjects that should be displayed on the website in the tutor application form. It also served as a creative guide of how the subjects should be arranged on the forms.

Wix. "Help Center." *Wix Support*, Wix, support.wix.com/en/. Wix is the website that hosts the

CourseStars website. This is also the website that provided us with all the details on how to manage and change things on the website. It was a guide that provided the details for the project and also served as a mentor.

Wyzant. "Learn Something New on Wyzant.com!" *Wyzant*, Wyzant, www.wyzant.com/. Wyzant

is another one of the websites that hires tutors as contractors and presents them to parents and students who can then choose to hire them. This website has a lot of tutors and it was used as a reference for the choosing of the subjects that should be displayed on the website in the tutor application form. It gave a better understanding of the importance of subjects and also helped in the process of making tutor pages.

Appendix

Tutor application forms that were created by me. The first form is complete, the second form still has work to be completed.



APPLY NOW

To Be Listed On CourseStars

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Phone *

Zip Code *

Important: Tutors listed on the CourseStars Site must be at least 18 years old, reside within the United States, and have a valid Social Security Number, per the Site's Terms

CourseStars connects Experts with Students looking for tutoring.

*** Set Your Rate**

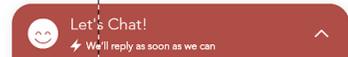
Earn what you deserve for your expertise and experience.

*** Set Your Own Schedule**

Work the schedule and hours you want

*** Get Paid, Hassle-Free**

Set up direct deposit or Paypal for quick and secure payment.



Tutor Sign-Up

Welcome! Please take your time and fill out this form in 1 sitting. The information you enter will appear on your tutor profile page exactly as you enter. If you have any questions, please email us at jill@coursestars.com

Today's Date *

First Name

Middle Name *

Last Name

Please select one of the followings: *

- I am filling out this form for the first time.
- I filled out the form already, and I would like to replace my previous information with the information on this form.
- I filled out the form already, and I would like to add to my previous information with the information on this form.

