Taylor Smith
IST 261
Project Proposal
1/13/24

Problem Domain

Over the past centuries, there has been an on-going stigma attached to mental health that continues even into modern day. One significant area where mental health often gets overlooked is in the corporate workforce. Today's fast-paced workplace environment creates daily stress for employees across a wide variety of industries. Due to tight deadlines, heavy workloads, and the demanding nature of many work environments, high stress is a common factor. The pressure put onto these employees goes on to then affect their overall job performance and takes a toll on their mental health.

A common term in many occupations among their employees is the phenomenon of experiencing "burnout". According to Psychology Today, "burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress"(Psychology Today, n.d.). Burnout can be a result of a wide variety of factors but, the term is mostly used by employees when referring to repeated stress caused from their place of employment. For many people, the typical work day may seem repetitive and dreadful. Without motivation to get through what could be described as feeling like a never ending cycle, the average nine to five may take a hefty toll on the mental health of employees. These employees who experience repeated stress need a reminder that taking care of themselves and their mental health is just as important as their jobs.

This problem domain displays the need for a solution that addresses the daily challenges in the workplace and helps to create an emphasis on the well-being and stress management of employees. A solution is imperative in order to make the mental health of all employees a priority.

Specific Problem or Opportunity

The specific problem at hand is a lack of accessible and tailored resources for employees to manage and express their stress associated with the workplace. Most workplaces have a Human Resources department, but more times than not, the solutions offered to employees who express their mental health frustrations are general and not catered to the specific needs and struggles of individual employees. Another common failure in HR, is failing to provide a supportive community for the employees of the workplace to feel comfortable expressing their experiences and feelings in relation to their occupation.

Without an effective solution to this issue, an opportunity lies in creating a mental health app that would cater to the individual needs of employees. This would include offering personalized stress reduction plans, community support, and resources to empower individuals and motivate them to power through the daily challenges associated with their work environments. This app would provide an opportunity to allow employees to actively manage their mental well-being on and off the clock.

Overall, this app would strive to create a relaxed and less-tense work environment. This mental-health app would do-away with general solutions to employee problems given by HR. Instead, the app would provide personalized plans, an outlet to vent about their frustrations, and resources to keep employees motivated.

Proposed Solution

Desk De-Stress is a new and upcoming mental health app designed to transform workplace well-being. It integrates many stress management reduction plans, strategies, and resources created by psychology and healthcare professionals into one cohesive platform. Some key features of the app include anonymous peer support forums, stress-relief exercises, a way to input and track daily goals, as well as pop-up messages that allow the user to input their feelings during and after completing a goal and motivational messages to help them power through. Another important feature of the app is access to mental health professionals who employees can relay their feelings and workplace frustrations to. These mental health professionals can then give advice and construct customized stress and task management plans for the individual in need. The Desk De-Stress app aims to create a way for employees to track their own well-being and discuss any challenges they encounter at their everyday job. The hope is that by using Desk De-Stress colleagues will become more understanding of each other and help corporations create an overall more positive and enjoyable work environment.

The Desk De-Stress app is designed to be simple and easy on the eyes, as well as being easy to navigate. This design strategy is intentional, in order to avoid the extra stress, overstimulation, and confusion that comes with viewing an over-crowded or busy screen. The main goal of the app is to alleviate stress and frustration, not add to it.

Figure 1: Chat with a Mental-Health Professional Screen
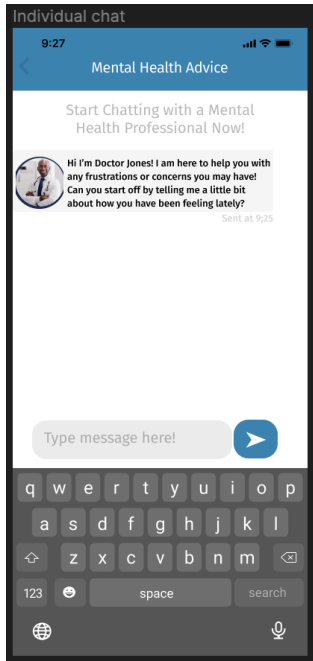
Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders for Desk De-Stress include individual employees seeking stress management/relief, corporate HR departments interested in enhancing employee well-being, and mental health professionals that can contribute their resources. Interest from all three of these groups is apparent in making Desk De-Stress successful.

Stakeholder Table

Stakeholder	Description
Individual employees	Individual employees may be interested in the app because they are in need of a way to relieve occupational stress and access resources to help guide them.
HR departments	HR departments may be interested in this app in order to better the well-being of employees and help manage recurring issues at the workplace.
Mental health professionals	Mental health professionals may be interested in contributing resources and advice to support employee well-being. This could also open employment opportunities to these

	professionals.
App developers	The Desk De-Stress app developers make sure that the app runs smoothly and makes all the app functions possible.

Challenges, Risks, and Constraints

During the development of Desk De-Stress there will likely be a variety of challenges, risks, and constraints that come into play. The first challenge will be making sure that user information is secure to ensure complete privacy for Desk De-Stress users. Another challenge will be getting users to download and use the app regularly. According to an article titled "App Engagement and user retention: The definitive guide", "Every 1 in 2 apps is uninstalled within the 1st month after being downloaded, with "not in use" being the top reason users uninstall a mobile app (39.9%)"(AppsFlyer, 2023). The goal is to keep users engaged and interested in the app's features long after the initial launch.

Now onto risks, one of the main challenges in developing an app is maintaining and using the budget wisely. There is always the risk that unexpected constraints will pop-up that require a portion of the app's development budget. Dealing with a tight budget and having a time limit is a high pressure task. In order to combat this issue, some app features may have to be compromised and the development plan may have to be rethought. Another risk is that companies won't value their employees' mental health and well-being enough to use Desk De-Stress or advertise it to their staff. Adding to this point, there's also a risk that some workplaces won't take Desk De-Stress seriously, even if it is implemented in their workplace. Convincing corporations to invest time and energy into using this app could be an unexpected challenge. Promoting how the app benefits employees and contributes to a healthier work environment may be a potential solution to this issue.

References

Burnout | Psychology Today. (n.d.). https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/burnout

AppsFlyer. (2023, August 20). *App Engagement and user retention: The definitive guide*. https://www.appsflyer.com/resources/guides/app-engagement-user-retention/