



Diary Thesis: Working in a start-up

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Abstract

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<p>This is a diary type thesis that follows authors professional development as working in a Finnish technology start up for emerging economy for eight weeks observation period. The thesis consists of the introduction, description of initial situation, diary entries, discussion, and conclusions. Introduction part focuses mainly on the company and its product. In addition, it provides background information about the author and brief discussion of the product.</p> <p>Description of initial situation section is summary of my current work analysis. In addition to that, the section briefly mentions about different internal and external stakeholders who forms the group of people the author mainly interacts with. The last part of this section explains common tools or methods which used for communication between different parties within the project. The diary entries are separated weekly and consists of daily tasks, challenges report and weekly analysis. The main tasks were related to software development, scrum master, sales and business start-up and management. And the discussion and conclusion focus on assessment of initial situation and developments during diary report.</p> <p>The observation period was 06.06.2022-29.07.2022. The main objective of this thesis was to demonstrate daily practices and challenges of software development in a start-up. Focus was daily tasks, learning activities, overcoming challenges, time management, communication, sales, leadership, starting tech business and improving authors skills in scrum master and customer-oriented software development. Writing this thesis was interesting journey. The author has learned better understanding of customer-oriented software development and challenges within a tech start-up. It led to improve the author competency in tech business and software development processes.</p>
Keywords Software development, start-up, API, Scrum master, crypto, recruitment, frontend, backend, REST API, Django, CSS3, sales funnel, KPI, ROI

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1 Introduction

This thesis project is written in diary format for 10 weeks. One beginning week, eight observation reporting weeks and one revision week consisting of final analyses and a discussion. The main objective of this thesis is to demonstrate my daily work practices in a project to build data driven recruitment platform for Ethiopian market with a Finnish start up called Fairway Oy and report weekly analysis and challenges as a chief customer officer. Daily observation reports were written by following similar patterns. The days start with tasks explaining the criteria and acceptance of the tasks. The weekly analysis covers any learnings, challenges, and skill development during the week.

1.1 Background

I have been always fascinated by technology from my childhood even though I grew up where there wasn't much of development but been always intrigued by how things work. That has led me to study electrical engineering as my first degree and worked on hydropower project plant before moving to Finland to study another bachelor's degree, which I quit when started working in one Swedish-Finnish company in Finland.

It was back in 2015 that I felt I must go back to school to study software development and got admitted to Haaga-helia university of applied sciences while working full time. I worked as a product developer, took responsibilities such as designing products according to customer requirements and delivering fulfilling products, quality assurance and troubleshooting during machine failures and so on. However, since my work was so demanding physically, I was forced to pause until 2021 after one semester of study, when corona pandemic hit the world, finally, realized it is time for me to follow my heart and got back to study again. I have done most of the courses during 2021 and 2022. Helping and lifting people up has been part of my dream and one way of doing is by using lifechanging technology. In 2021 my friend told me about starting new company in emerging Ethiopia and expand to international market. After listening the idea and its future impact on the generation, I joined fairway believing it will impact positively many people. Joined Fairway Oy start up from 2021 as a frontend developer and later as a scrum master in a team of developers.

Fairway is a Finnish startup aiming to build an autonomous recruitment SaaS from job posting to interview processes starting from Africa. It is established in 2020 therefore limited workers of six peoples with broad responsibilities. It has built first phase of the project which was creating a website at the end of year 2021. As it is a startup I have promoted to more responsibilities as team leader and scrum master and later as CCO since 2022. Currently I am working as chief

customer officer participating from product development, development, sales, and customer acquisition. A lot has been done with recruitment industries in the last couple decades from jobseekers to recruiters specially in the developed world. In an emerging economy such as Africa there is still a lot to be done, and with technology Africa could catch up with the rest of the world in in modernized recruitment parallely fighting nepotism, corruption, and discrimination. In this thesis I will be participating in a pilot project to develop automized recruitment platform for Ethiopian market focusing on financial sectors.

One of the critical technologies to innovation in the recruitment industry are machine learning algorithms that can match workers and employers. Fairway plans to use AI to optimize matching based purely on professional criteria. On the other hand, AI can ensure an employer will not miss out on great candidates no matter where they are in the world. At same time workers have access to all jobs that suit their skills and experience. They can rest assured that biases based on age, race, ethnicity, or background are not affecting their opportunities. That is where blockchain plays a role. However, this diary-based thesis will focus on a project to develop the first phase of the project and activities within a startup which will be later implemented on blockchain based databases. Once the technology implemented it will benefit recruitment industries in finding the fitting talents and genuine candidate for their companies.

Fairway is developing a pilot project which will be released in August and currently the design of the project is almost finished, and the frontend and backend development will start next month. I have been participating in this pilot project development which will be released in the coming months in Ethiopia. The main objective of this thesis is to learn and demonstrate my daily work practices and responsibility in a startup, including my regular activities, learnings and handling challenges demanded by the project.

Learning objectives in this thesis were:

1. learning how to launch a pilot project,
2. learning customer-oriented product development,
3. improving my software development skills.
4. to get experience in sales and customer acquisition
5. developing soft skills such as teamwork, conflict resolution, leadership.

The pilot project will deliver an app that lets a business to post jobs and job seekers to apply for a work in secure, fast, and easy to use manner. In addition, it will filter the top candidates for recruiters until interview phase, and the next phase will be dynamic blockchain integration with current project. Employers and employees will use Fairway platform centralized website for posting vacancies and applying for it.

However, the platform will only be used for bringing employers and jobseeker in financial sectors such as accountants, tech developers, management, business analysts. The platform also guarantees personal data like passports, bank details, social security numbers, addresses and telephone numbers will be secured. Fairway will store such data on private servers and encrypt it with crypto/graphical keys stored on blockchain however it won't be covered in this current project. Deliverables of pilot project will be:

- Responsive website
- A secure, reliable, and practical recruitment system architecture
- User friendly platform
- Anonymity
- Fast and robust website

The project will benefit recruitment industries in finding fitting talents and genuine candidate for their companies and jobseekers which, benefit them to have secure, fast, impartial, easy to use platform which will help to interact with organization seamlessly, privately, and securely.

2 Description of the initial situation

2.1 Analysis of current work

I first joined the company as a junior developer trainee later on promoted to Chief customer officer position with more responsibilities focusing on customers and customer needs. As a developer and scrum master, my daily tasks vary from day to day and depend on part of the application. Since the startup was in its early-stage responsibilities were changing from day to day. However, my main responsibilities in this project include:

- Scrum master
- Preparing sales pipeline
- Leading team of developers
- Establishing relationships with customers
- Product development
- Writing tests and participating in interviews to hire new employees
- Customer acquisition
- Facilitating sales meeting

Here is a brief list of technologies used in developing the project:

Front-End

- React : Used for user interface building
- Javascript ,
- Typescript

Styling

- HTML5 and CSS3
- Tailwind css
- Firebase (Deployment)

Backend

- Python programming language
- Django (REST Api) -framework
- PostgreSQL database
- Azure-server, VMasahost
- Atala PRISM SDK

Designing and Collaboration

- Kanban: An agile project management tool designed to help visualize work, work in progress, and maximize efficiency.
- Miro: online collaborative white board platform that enables distributed teams to work effectively together
- Figma: User interface tool to create collaborate, prototype and, and track of the project

The task requires the ability to work in pressure, software development, business intelligence, sales and at least one of the above technologies. Additionally soft skills such as communication, problem solving, creativity, design thinking mindsets are a must. Since we follow agile development methodologies it is expected to have some degree of knowledge of scrum framework and its guidelines.

Even though technology isn't new to me, I didn't have experience in software development, blockchain, sales, leadership, or communication, however, during this thesis project I have acquired new experience and reached my new potentials that I didn't notice existed. The focus for professional development must be on learning how to start my own tech business and develop customer-oriented software. I want to improve my communications, sales, scrum mastering and problem solving

2.2 Stakeholders

Being an early-stage start-up there is only six employees in the company. There are business side groups who mainly focuses on the customer requirement and needs, marketing, sales. The other is tech group that focuses on developing software product.

The team follows scrum methodology, all the daily activities and tasks require active communication between developers' team, scrum master, product owner and product manager. Usually after features development, team of developers also meet customers and users to discuss to what extent the customer requirements are met. I involve both in development as a scrum master and help the sales team. Customers and users are the main external stakeholders. So, all developments are customer oriented (see Fig 1.)

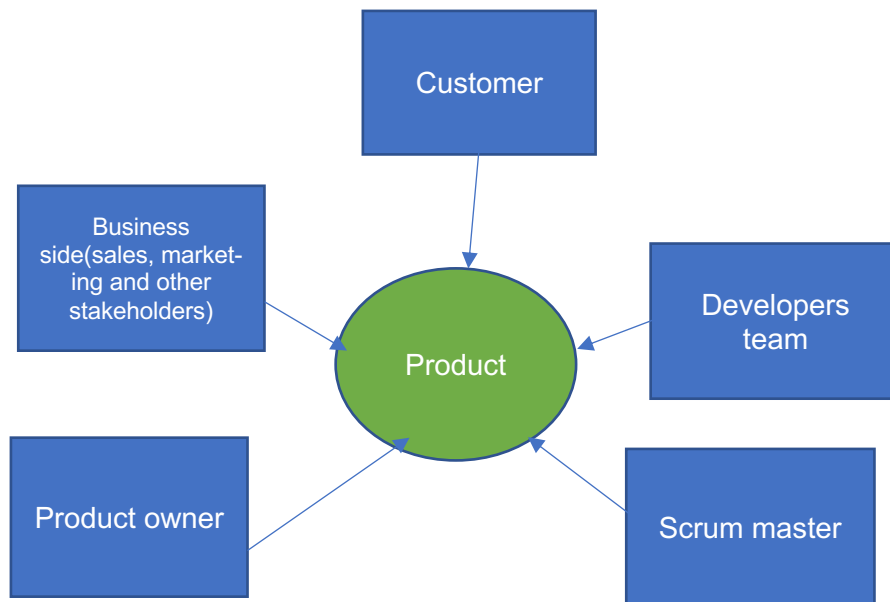


Fig 1. Stakeholders' illustration

2.3 Interaction situation

Communication is crucial for companies to succeed. The teams are communicated in different channels based on with whom the communication takes place. Our main communication channel within the company was google meeting. This is a platform where most internal team meetings are carried out. Since half of our developers live outside Finland most of the works are done virtually, so it is vital to use online communication efficiently in our company. Another way of communication is email, telegram, zoom and WhatsApp. Telegram is widely used for individual meetings and group communications and idea sharing purpose.

For meetings with customers, zoom was the main channel of communication. The author has used different platforms to execute sales to contact prospects such as LinkedIn, phone call and live meetings. As a scrum master the author communicated often with product owner and stakeholders through emails, telegram, google meeting and live meetings.

Virtual communication has been very useful, however sometimes interaction with participants were difficult. In my case there was connection problem with two of our developers and that has slowed the work. Despite that the team performance was exceptional. We used Kanban to track tasks and performance.

3 Diary entries

3.1 Observation week 1

Monday 06.06.2022

Mondays we start in the morning with weekly meeting with founders and developers. We discussed what each of has done during the previous week and what task has to be moved to this week. Today we discussed how to proceed with our next project which is to build business side of the software which businesses are going to use for hiring new talent .

I was assigned to do part of requirement analysis during the week. As an Ethiopian born, I was given a responsibility to figure out how businesses are doing recruitment in Ethiopia. What requirements do they have to post during job posting in an online, newspaper or billboard vacancy announcement? I started doing online research to gather information on how jobseekers are getting hired and the processes they must pass through to land a job in Ethiopia. As most of Ethiopian recruitments are done in a traditional and manual way it was quite hard to find complete data from the internet. However, I was able to collect sort of information that we could use as starting point.

From today's research I found out business post a job in different platform such as newspaper, billboard with their own requirement. After going through few job-posting platforms I found out that most business focus on GPA and experience for eligibility of a candidate.

The rest of the day we brainstormed with founders about the future of the product and how to get customers on board and difficulties and challenges which we do it in daily bases. Specially How we could understand customers best that we can develop the best product that could change their way of doing recruitment.

Tuesday 07.06.2022

Today I am aiming to continue my research online and through connections I have made in previous trip for doing preliminary research and analysis for jobseeker's project to figure out the requirements of businesses in Ethiopia to hire top talent. I called friends and connections I have from Ethiopia to make sure information online are correct and matching with the current process in work.

I managed to ask one similar company that is doing a business in Ethiopia their own process of hiring a competent jobseeker. In Ethiopia process of recruitment is quite complicated and it goes through a lot of bureaucracies, nepotism, corruption and discriminations involved. First business posts a job in different platforms such as billboard, newspaper and sometimes online. Then jobseekers apply by submitting required documents in person, by post or by sending

them by post, email, in person. Today in general I finalized analysing of available information online by collecting how businesses post jobs and reach candidates.

Wednesday 08.06.2022

My today's plan is continuing to call company's connections and potential customers to figure out what processes they must pass through before posting a job. Most of businesses have similar bureaucracy even though they have their own rules and own specification. I have listed the process of internal recruitment process in financial sector goes through different decision makers. I figured out the human resource manager is the one who decides the job posting and the platform to be posted one. Once a department or a branch of a bank needs an expert, they inform for the main branch where the decision must be made. The skillset and requirement for the vacancy is determined by an expert of each field then hand over for the HR manager position. Once it is known there is an open position it takes one to two weeks until posting. Today I wrapped up by collecting the information I got from few banks about their job posting process (fig 2) and I reported for Fairway teams. We brainstormed on the findings. I was quite happy after the day because people were very cooperative in all aspects.

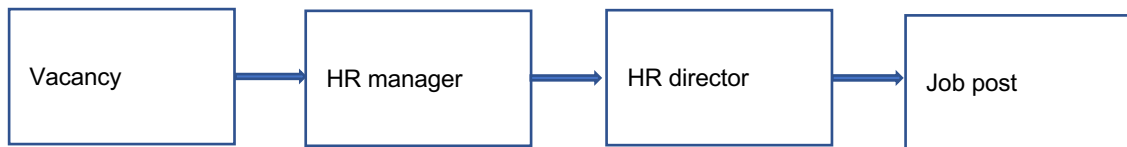


Fig 2. Job posting process diagram

Thursday 09,05,2022

My goal for today is to make calls to financial sector businesses to ask them some question, which is going to help to develop customer-oriented software. Based on what is going to be developed I asked them questions such as: how they feel about their current way of recruiting, what are their challenges and difficulties? what is the most important challenge they wish they could solve as soon as possible? How willing they are to pay if their problems could be solved by technology?

After calling few of the businesses I found out that most of their problem was how hard it is for them to handle a lot of paper from all applicants and to go through all the papers to select the right candidates who is going to sit for the exam. It is time consuming and need more human power to execute the task. Their other challenge is due to the longevity of the processing time they feel the pressure of not hiring candidates at the right time which costs business more money. Most of the businesses also responded that they are willing to pay for digital solution if it doesn't cost businesses more than their current processing fees including employee's salary.

Today I was lucky enough to get my calls through to the right people as it is usually not easy to get the right people from businesses on phone. I have managed to collect important data for our software. I reported to my supervisor about the information found from today's call and we had a brainstorming session how we could solve and include the solution in our software. It was productive day.

Friday 10.06.2022

My today's aim is to call same businesses that I have called before and ask about their processes in detail which is the important part for our software development. I will reach five to six banks and will ask them on the different field of vacancies.

I reached out to my first bank, and they mentioned that after job post is closed, they have a preliminary selection, which selects the fit candidate that fulfils vacancies requirements. Once the job seekers documents are checked all eligible candidates will be seated for an exam. From the exam those who scored the highest point from an exam will be asked contacted through their mobile phone for an interview. Most of the time they interview about five three to five people for each position then after references and medical exam is checked the hiring will happen. After calling all the contacts I had I have got the same answer except the institution where the exam is prepared and held.

Today's call was a bit exhausting as some of them were thinking like they are wasting their time by the time they spend on the phone and giving information. However, I have managed to get the information I needed for today.

As usual I wrapped my day up by reporting the findings for the developers and my supervisor and brainstormed with the teams.

weekly analysis

Overall, I could say my week was productive even though it was frustrating to call prospects that I didn't meet in person at first. In the beginning I found it difficult to communicate on the phone as I have never done sales or surveys before. But I managed to achieve the goal of the week which is to analyse customer requirement for our project. It is exciting to interact with customers and understanding their problem somehow it also tiresome. Sometimes some businesses are unwilling to cooperate, but I got to convince them that what we are doing is to solve their problem and to save time and money for them.

I understood when communicating with business is crucial to highlight the values it brings to their business. There were challenges with network connection when doing the call as well as the network got cut often which has affected the flow of communication between me and businesses despite that I have done the requirement analysis, which was the goal.

I have learned how important it is to listen customers pain points to access the information needed and to develop customer-oriented software product. I learned sales call, improved my communication, better understanding of the service.

From this week recruitment I have learned that to land a job in Ethiopian financial sector such as banks every jobseeker must pass through four phases. Preliminary selection, exam selection, interview selection and reference check phases. In addition, I have learned how to ask the right questions to understand what customer has looking for and what will be the right solution I got a big insight on how to develop customer-based software.

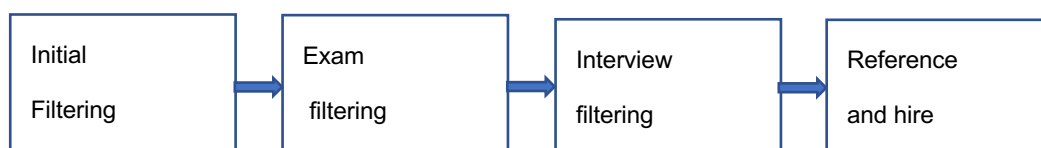


Fig 3. Recruitment process in Ethiopia

3.2 Observation week 2

Monday 13.06.2022

Today I started my day with checking through my email and calendar. Monday is a bit more busy than usual as it involves also planning of the week and sprints and sprint backlogs. First, I have weekly meetings with all the teams. We discussed about the information collected last week from different team members as some of our members are also from Ethiopian.

Then I will be meeting with developers how to proceed with software side development and what development methods we are going to follow. I started the meeting by asking how it is going with the projects, what went well from the previous project and what are impediments currently. Each member has said their own stories and we proceeded to this week tasks. We agreed that to follow agile development for the development for the project. I created sprint backlog for this week which is to create login and forgot password feature. From user stories I prepared features for development and planned the weekly sprint.

For the week I agreed with developers' team to create Login and forgot password feature.

I was happy after the day was over because I am doing something new which I didn't do before, facilitating for group of developers. In General, it was busy day but managed things to be done for the day.

Tuesday 14.06.2022

Today I aiming to make daily stand-up with team of developers and discuss how it is going with the product. If any obstacles, they have encountered that I must fix. In addition, I will discuss with the product owners about the planned spring backlog and features.

I had daily stand up with the team in the morning, I asked what they have done yesterday and any difficulties they encountered. I have noticed two of team members had disagreements on where to push the code on git. Backend developer wanted the frontend developer to push his code through his git which the frontend developer didn't like and some disagreement raised from that, and it has affected the team spirit. However, both have focused on their tasks, the frontend has been working on UI for registration and the backend was working on route for registration.

When I noticed the problem immediately, I set a quick meeting with both individually and I decided that both could push the code to their own git and push to fairway git where both have access to review it later. I also reviewed the plans and discussed with other product owners. set a meeting with the product owners about the disagreements and the action I took and so on. From Today I realized that sometimes even we speak same language and from same culture, still teamwork is not easy but when things are discussed openly it is doable. At the end I managed to get done of all my goals. Very happy about the outcome of the disagreement I settled within the team.

Wednesday 15.06.2022

My today's plan is quite like Tuesday's one, I am going to have daily stand-up with team of developers, where I ask their how their yesterday's task went, any difficulties, things to be facilitated if any and will report for the product owners and if there are any impediments.

I will also meet with the founders to report how the developments has been going.

In the morning I started with our common daily stand-up meeting with the developers. Team spirit looked like so much better than Tuesday's one seems they both agreed on the decision taken. One of the team had a problem with his computer which might slow him down from the tasks, but he agreed that he will get new computer tomorrow so there won't be big changes coming with the development. The front-end developer will continue to work on the login UI and the backend will continue with the login registration. I had a meeting with the founders and reported the situation the developments are and how it is proceeding.

Today was quiet good day as the team spirit looked strong and I had successful meetings with the founders. Sometimes I find it hard to facilitate meetings on time which I had to learn more on getting organized. I also discussed how we could succeed with the project

And the probability of me being helping in sales as I speak the same language as the locals which is going to be another opportunity for me to learn more.

Thursday 16.06.2022

Today I will be aiming to have daily stand-up meeting with developers and must review product backlogs with the product owners. I will also start to aim for the next week sprint.

I started the meeting with developers and things seems moving smoothly forward. I asked what they did, and UI registration was ready and forget password will be what one of the developer focuses on. The has also finished the route for registration and he will be focusing on router for forget password. There weren't impediments on their way, so I agreed to proceed. I also facilitated a meeting with one of fairway potential prospect to discuss future collaboration.

Today was in general a successful day meetings and discussions. I was not so confident how to communicate within a group of people specially when presenting and a like, but I managed well at the end.

Friday 17.06.2022

My main goal for today is to push a the team a bit that we could do the a bit faster . I will also have routine daily stand-up meeting. The goal is to do testing on user and unit testing on Friday. I started my work with meeting with developers and I asked what they did yesterday, what they do today and what are impediments on their way. Both the frontend and backend developers have finished coding of their tasks for this week so today they will be doing UI testing and unit testing. I agreed and we closed the meeting. I met with my supervisor and told how things are proceeding and what difficulties we could phase and how to overcome it. I also reviewed product backlog and prepared weekly sprint backlog suggestion for next week which am going to plan with the developer's team.

Today's challenge was a bit team spirit was not great. The product owners had some disagreement on the features, so I had to get in between to set out the benefits and drawbacks with the cultural, environment, the people, and values within the market to give them an insight about the reality on the floor. I have learned how to communicate and steps of development even though sometimes I needed guidance, read and search from online materials how to interact.

Weekly analysis

The week was relatively busier than the usual weeks but inspiring.. We have managed to kick start the development which is exciting. In the beginning it was a bit scary and uncomfortable to work as scrum master or so with developers, however I am excited to learn even more, and I got the chance to read a bit about scrum and how to implement agile in an organization.

I felt proud to plan weekly sprint and discussed with the rest of the team and we get it done the task and UI and unit testing is done. What I believe a great success.

It was challenging to organize and facilitate meetings sometimes, but I have learned the more doing it the more I will be comfortable and more natural to it. I have also found it a bit challenging in start-up as there is not well documented company culture or roadmap, so I have learned making many decisions on time and by myself is a key. Resolving team conflict or disagreement crucial might scaleup big also if not acted fast and on time. That is what I will keep learning throughout the process and time. I have improved my communication. Now I will be more focusing on facilitating for the developers as we got two developers which is more than enough for the current project, this gives another opportunity to learn on project management skill or scrum master. Overall, the week was fruitful as the team and founders are happy about my performance so far.

3.3 Observation week 3

Monday 20.06.2022

Today I am aiming to make retrospective with the teams and product owners to go through the last week sprint. First, I discussed with the team of developers if there were in impediment or obstacles, what must be improved how was the team spirit is between them. If there was openness and communications, if everyone feels ownership and freely criticize and talk how they feel. After we discussed I prepared a meeting room with big screen where we could see the sprint backlog developed by each team and what has been done during the last week and check with the product backlog. Everyone had their sayings on what they had done, and I took list of comments and feedbacks. There was a comment from product owner that if other options of login and signup if customers will be able to sign in with different accounts directly by using their social media accounts. Developers agreed that it is easy to implement the user story into the development. User interface under development fig 4.



Fig.4 user interface sample under development

After the meeting I sent an email for each team with today's meeting recap, takeaways, next step and closing. Then I had sprint planning meeting for next sprint with developers and they

suggested to develop more UI components and more integration with front end and backend as well as notifications module for the backend.

The day was hectic, but things seem on the track after the end of the day. I will be working on sales for the pilot project which I am going to prepare sales strategies in the coming days besides facilitating or acting as scrum master.

Tuesday 21.05.2022

Today I am aiming to set daily stand up with team of developers and ask three questions like every day. What did you do yesterday? What will you do today? What went well? what are impediments? Then I will start collecting prospects for the sales strategy.

Our daily stand-up went well except one of the developers had a family issue which might affect on his performance. So, I needed to think about the schedule, what I could do, if I need to discuss in private with him. I decided to meet him after the daily scrum, and we discussed about his issue, and I asked if he needed some free time, but he agreed that he can work just wanted to know the team that he might lag a bit behind which was a big relief.

I assured him that if he feels to share or talk in private as that he could contact me at any time.

I decided to follow sales processes Fig 5, prospect, prepare, approach, meeting, objection-handling and follow up.

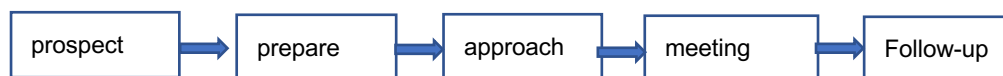


Fig. 5 Sales process

I started collecting prospects today through different channels such as businesses' websites, LinkedIn, connections, and social medias and collected five prospects with their contact persons details, number of employees, their values, mission and visions, locations and so on.

It was quiet busy day but managed to get through the things I supposed to do which was a big relief. Today I have learned that listening and making everyone is valued in the team is such an important aspect specially when acting as scrum master. I am also learning more and more how to manage a product on the way. Overall, it was great day.

Wednesday 22.05.2022

Today I am excited about continuing searching for more prospects as my aim is at least to search for about 20 prospects for the pilot project we are going to launch in August. Before this I will also have quick meeting with the team on google meeting to discuss what did they do, yesterday, what are impediments, what they will be doing today the common questions we have to do. In our todays our scrum daily one team member was not available, but we proceeded with the present team members and things are going well and according to the

plan. I contacted the absent developer and he mentioned that he couldn't make to the meeting due to transportation delay and that he didn't have connection on his phone. I assured him that it is totally fine, and I asked similar scrum question if everything is going well yesterday and what he is going to do. Then I continued looking for more prospects online and through calls with friends and connections.

It was difficult to find the person to be contacted from websites of the businesses we are targeting so I had to send cold emails to random workers from websites.

I prepared another five list of prospects with their contact details and some still missing which I will fill them once I got a reply from the cold email. I have learned how to look for prospects and contacts to approach that could be future customers.

Thursday 23.05.2022

Today my plan is to have a daily scrum with developer teams asking the usual questions each day what they did yesterday and what they are going to do today and if they have any obstacles to keep the weekly sprint in check. Then I will prepare a sales funnel for our sales. I am a bit nervous about sales since I didn't do it before. I started the meeting with the developers, and everyone seemed managing well their tasks and one of the developers who was a bit slow in the beginning of the week is finally fine and everyone seemed happy, and the meeting was over. Then I searched for some materials from online and from the course I learned last semester which is solution selling and prepared a sales funnel.

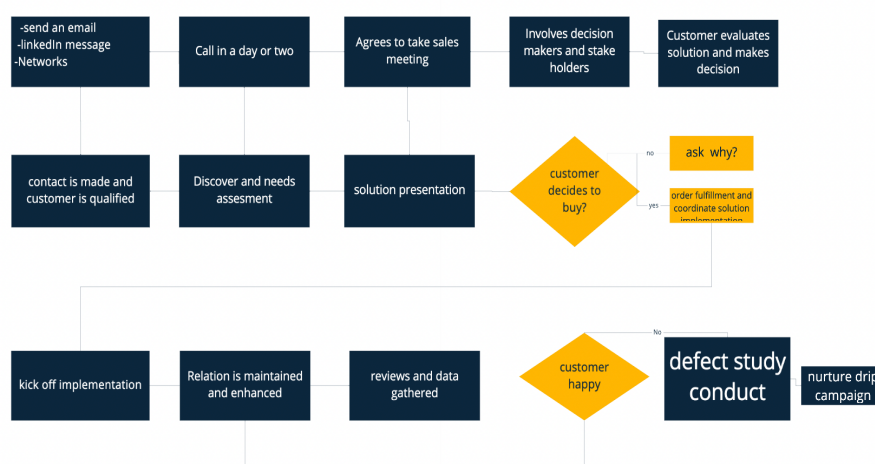


Fig 6. Sales funnel

It was great day at the end I am learning SaaS sales which is new to me, it is always exciting to grab new skill specially when the company is in such an early stage. It was a bit challenging to accept the role in the beginning however now I am excited to do it.

Weekly analysis

This week has been overwhelming specially on Monday and then when I was given another responsibility to take care of besides managing the project. The biggest challenge of this week was finding the right prospects specially since this companies are not residing in Finland, but I overcame through deep online searching and calling some random workers from the company, and it is helping. The week seemed successful as the product owners are happy with the pace and the development, as well as developers seem doing good in team spirit. That is a big thing as I was worried about the team spirit in the beginning. This week I have learned team spirit, leadership, a bit of sales and communications.

3.4 Observation week 4

Monday 27.06.2022

The first task for Monday is to have daily scrum meetings with the developer teams and go through the tasks and responsibilities of the week. We look through the completed work from the first half of the week and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. Today there was good news from the HR personal that we got new team member who has graduated from alto design school whom we needed to enhance our sales deck and product backlog. From the meeting things were going forward according to the plan even though there are some worries how it will work out in the market. I held a meeting with team of our developers, there was codes refactoring to make it usable they informed me. Also, we are getting another developer in this week from Ethiopia so asked them how they feel about her. She has experience in mongodB and python development, we have been talking that they might need help to reach the deadline for the project. Tracking module, selection process will be started next week. We have some of the components for individual screenings ready so this week we going to have testing with two of our potential prospects as well which we discussed and I am going to facilitate that for tomorrow, let them know and the frontend developer will be participating with the customer testing.

The team looked that they are in a good shape, everyone doing their tasks in team spirit which is great. Overall, the day has been busy as usual Monday, however today's goal seemed achieved and looking forward for the week.

Tuesday 28.06.2022

Today I will facilitate a meeting in a google meeting and then I must call and arrange the test meeting with couple of our potential customers and if I have time, I will keep working collecting prospects and their contacts. I started my day with daily scrum with my teams asking what they did yesterday, what they are going to do today and if there are any impediments that is hindering them in the development or any issues with their life that could affect the work. The

meeting was successful, in addition to the meeting we discussed about the new developer, how to integrate her to the team and which task should be handed for her based on her experience and so on. This week she will be just checking through the things that has been done so far and next week the notification module will be given for her since her experience are related. In the afternoon I called one of the potential customers who is going to test our developed sprint. It was challenging in the beginning to get him online due to bad internet connection and his computer which was an old version. Also, it was not possible to record from google meeting, so we had to change to zoom meeting as we needed to record the customer reaction with the new feature without telling how it works what to do or anything. The customer reaction overall was good and, he gave good comments and feed backs what we are going to update in the following sprints. For example, he mentioned some of the terms were difficult for him to understand which was important for the company as they are looking to develop user friendly product.

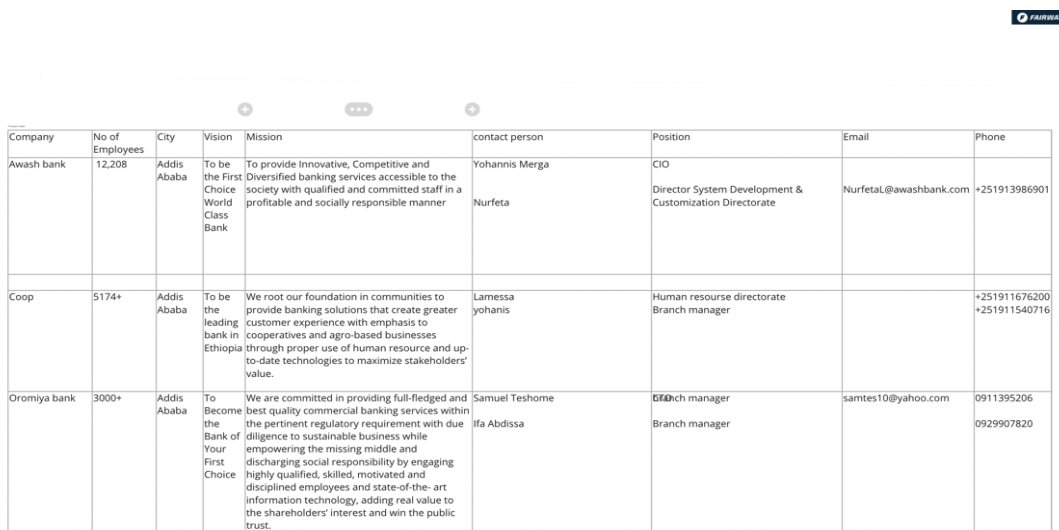
On the other hand, we missed considering some detailed process specially with their companies' rules and cultures. Then I arranged a meeting with the second tester learning from the first one this time on zoom to record the whole meeting. His reaction was considerably better than the first one, he understood most of the terms however he commented how to tailor some of the features to their company's standard which we are going to discuss about that with the product owners and the developer. In general, the testing meeting went well, and we are going to update some of the features based on the customers of feedback.

Today I have learned how beneficial it is to participate customers in early stage to have working product and acting based on their feedback makes the customer to think that we value their say and values that could make it easier to have them onboard.

Wednesday 29.06.2022

Today I will facilitate a meeting in a google meeting with our developers and then I will continue working on sales strategy. Looking for prospects, collecting their contacts.

I started my day with daily scrum with my teams asking what they did yesterday, what they are going to do today and if there are any impediments that is hindering them in the development or any issues with their life that could affect the work. Everyone has said what they have done and what they are going to do, and our new developer is also doing well, after got informed I continued working on sales strategy. Today I have searched about five banks and checked through their websites about their vision, mission, and values, the right personal to adapt new technology and its purchase. Sometimes it is very hard to know who is doing what as some companies are not as transparent. In those situations, I tried to call some random workers to collect who is doing what which somehow helped me to figure out the right person to contact for the pilot product.



Company	No of Employees	City	Vision	Mission	contact person	Position	Email	Phone
Awash bank	12,208	Addis Ababa	To be the First Choice World Class Bank	To provide Innovative, Competitive and Diversified banking services accessible to the society with qualified and committed staff in a profitable and socially responsible manner	Yohannis Merga Nurfeta	CIO Director System Development & Customization Directorate	Nurfetal@awashbank.com	+251913986901
Coop	5174+	Addis Ababa	To be the leading bank in Ethiopia	We root our foundation in communities to provide banking solutions that create greater customer experience with emphasis to cooperatives and agro-based businesses through proper use of human resource and up-to-date technologies to maximize stakeholders' value.	Lamessa yohanis	Human resource directorate Branch manager		+251911676200 +251911540716
Oromiya bank	3000+	Addis Ababa	To Become the Bank of Your First Choice	We are committed in providing full-fledged and best quality commercial banking services within the pertinent regulatory requirement with due diligence to sustainable business while empowering the missing middle and discharging social responsibility by engaging highly qualified, skilled, motivated and disciplined employees and state-of-the-art information technology, adding real value to the shareholders' interest and win the public trust.	Samuel Teshome Ifa Abdissa	Branch manager Branch manager	santes10@yahoo.com	0911395206 0929907820

Table: 1. Prospects contact collected from internet

My goal is to figure out as much prospects as possible that qualifies for our product probably around 40 of them.

Some of the bank's website are not so responsive or haven't been updated for some time and that was a challenge but calling and reaching out has helped me to figure out on. Overall, I have done today's job and my supervisor is happy about the progress which feels good.

Thursday 30.06.2022

Today my day started as usual with meeting with team of developers my teams asking what they, what they are going to do today and if there are any impediments that is hindering them in the development or any issues with their life that could affect the work. Everyone has said what they have done and what they are going to do and our new developer is also doing well, after got informed I continued working on sales strategy.

I had a meeting to report for my supervisor how many prospects could be reached and what is the best strategy to have them on board for piloting. How difficult it could be doing business oversee as it could be different than the Finnish culture. Obviously, most of the businesses over there uses old selling strategy and businesses are skeptical about adapting new technology and how we could tackle those challenges. I suggested to approach them with changing their routine how they could adapt our product that benefits them saving time and money and energy. We had brainstorming on this topic, and I had to continue searching for prospects and revising the call script, email script and we continue discussing on the approach. I collected more prospects, and my day was over. It is exciting trying to do something I always felt I am not good at sales.

Friday 01.07.2022

Today my day started as usual with meeting with team of developers my teams asking what they, what they are going to do today and if there are any impediments that is hindering them in the development or any issues with their life that could affect the work. Everyone has said what they have done and what they are going to do, one developer needs help for the selection process module, so I came up with the idea of sharing tasks with the new developer, after got informed I continued working on sales strategy. I have been calling some of our prospects and just to follow up and informed the pilot project timings. The following table 2 shows the prospects I have collected during the day.

Company	No of Employees	City	Vision	Mission	contact person	Position	Email	Phone
Bank of Abiinia	8146+	Addis Ababa + all over the country	To become the leading commercial bank in East Africa by the year 2030.	Provide excellent financial services through competent, motivated employees and digital technology in order to maximize value to all stakeholders.	Daniel Habtu Teshome, PhD	CEO	Linkedin	
commercial bank	34879	Addis Ababa	To become a world class commercial bank by the year 2025	We are committed to best realize stakeholders' needs through enhanced financial intermediation globally and supporting national development priorities, by deploying highly motivated, skilled and disciplined employees as well as state-of-the-art technology.	Ifa Addisaa	Branch Manager		0929907820
Fibret Bank	6536	Addis Ababa	To globally be the preferred financial service provider of innovation solutions across Africa	Committed to exceeding the expectations of our customers and other stakeholders by providing competitive financial solutions while ensuring efficient service delivery and people empowerment.	Ethiaday Teshome	Branch manager	ethaday2000@ya-hoo.com	0911971352
Zemen Bank	484+	Addis Ababa	to bring a new dynamism to the financial sector and banking business in Ethiopia.	superior customer service is a key part of this vision and we strive to make all our customers' experience a positive and rewarding one. Our Values include: Upholding the highest standards	Samuel kuma	Manager of Core Banking and Software Development Division	linkedin	
Abbay bank	2000	Addis Ababa		To provide effective and efficient full-fledged banking service focused on development, business growth and profitability to meet the expectation of stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essentially, pursuit of Excellence is the core philosophy of the Bank. Committed to community investment. High Standard of corporate code of conduct and ethics. Trust worthy and transparent. Institute of corporate governance. Emphasis on risk management. Quest for excellence. Empowered and engaged staffs 	Solomon Zawdu Human Resources Positions	Linkedin	
Bunna Internationa Bank	192	Addis Ababa	to be a public-powered and uniquely favored Bank.	to provide distinctly favored banking services with unparalleled commitment to enhance values of our key stakeholders and ensure public trust through diversification, state-of-the-art technology, and ethically motivated	Solomon Ayalew@Oromia-Vestibank-Ayalew's profile	Chief Information Officer at Bunna Bank	Linkedin	
Addis international bank	33	Addis Ababa		To provide efficient and effective full-fledged banking services by utilizing qualified, honest and motivated staff and state-of-the-art technology and thereby optimizing shareholders' interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Social responsibility. Creativity and innovation. Professionalism. Highest personal standards of integrity at all levels 	Assefa Amare Manager-IT Infrastructure Division	Linkedin	
Debab Bank	638	Addis Ababa	To be a World Class Development Bank that Help to achieve Ethiopia's Economic Transformation Vision by 2030	enhances stakeholders' value by providing excellent banking services to its customers using state-of-the-art technology, providing competent leadership and employee capable, disciplined and satisfied employees through effective recruitment, training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Customer Service. Shared Ownership. Common Purpose. Honesty. Accountability. Learning. Corporate Citizen 	Dr.Tesfaye Boru Leissa President	Linkedin	

Table: 2 collected contacts of prospects from different sources

These are the prospects I was able to collect from online resources which I start calling in the coming weeks after sending cold email. The rest of the day I spent on arranging next week meetings and workshop specially, one workshop is about doomsday that everyone comes up with the worst scenarios that could happen in case that happens and how to tackle and avoid it.

Weekly Analysis

This week has been relatively self-reflective, mostly focused on the product under development, testing with customers, new hire, and sales. Specially the feedbacks of the customers have awakened some thought of how we should approach the market and penetrate it. That has encouraged the product owners to revisit some of the features to achieve the goal of releasing the product in August.

This week I have learned how to test new feature or sprint with customers and how it is vital to prepare vital tools to make the tester comfortable and successful. I am also learned how to look for prospects in different channels to find the right person to be contacted. Saas selling is very interesting unfortunately there isn't a team member who has done software sales so, I

have to read by myself and look for materials from different resources to do sales from scratch, challenging but useful for my future.

In addition, since I didn't do scrum master before I had to read other online materials so, this week I have enrolled to Coursera for scrum master to develop myself better.

The challenging thing this week was that I didn't have an experience with what I am doing, however I am pushing to do my best to learn more and improve myself while helping my company owners to be successful. It is also important to understand the technology and business at least on high level because they can have many components that could affect the product. The book written by Alli Decker about sales on seventeen sales strategies and plans and initiatives for success has helped me to plan the sales funnel. The books suggests seven sales strategy: Increase online sales through social media, become a thought leader, don't shy from cold call, offer the demonstration of the product, provide personalized and clear end product, be willing to adapt your offer, close deal with confidence and nurture existing accounts for future selling opportunities.

When customers come to business, they aren't necessarily looking for a product or service, they're looking for their desired end result. These customers want to purchase a means to improve their own operation, or simply improve their strategies with the help of your offering.' 'After explaining your product or service offering, you must personalize the benefits to each client in a way that's valuable to them. If you're selling customer service software to a small business that has no experience with one, it's your job to educate them on its use in the setting of a small business, not to manage hundreds of employees in larger ones. By doing so they will have an easier time seeing how they can use it and spend less time debating what they'll use it for.(Alli Decker)

This book has given me an insight how I could make successful sales strategy which I will keep working on it during the release of pilot product. Building up my knowledge on different solutions will help me a lot in the future and it is important in terms of professional development to stay in tech business. This week was exciting as it has thought me how to lead a team and act as scrum master, creating sales process, team play, setting meetings, software development processes and the learning is continuing.

3.5 Observation week 5

Monday 4.07.2022

The first task for today is to have weekly meetings for about two hours to report our weekly performance and daily scrum meetings with the developer teams and go through the tasks and responsibilities of the week as usual. We look through the completed work from the last of

week and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. The second task is to plan what must be done during the week and assigning tasks for each team. Thirdly to continue the preparation of a sales deck for the pilot project.

Currently we are group of three participating in the development including our new bee in the team. Ermias who has more than 5 years of experience in software development is product head who is responsible with the frontend and ux, kidus is a backend developer who has studied in Aalto University and mostly working on the backend and Mieraf who is going to help with the future integration of our product with block chain currently she helps with backend development and tasks assigned by the Ermias or and Kidus.

Kidus has informed me that that he has worked last week on waitlist and invitation generation for jobseekers and this week he is going to work on updating the existing models and duplicating cv's when applying for a job. Ermias has done integrating firebase analytics and firebase performance and this week he will be working on creating new UI components and UI views while Mieraf will continue getting used to the development environment in fairway and she will continue this week as well working on the notification component from backend. After the completion of weekly meeting and developers' team meeting, I started working on the sales deck. There was another meeting I had to set with our marketing personnel who has more experience in sale and marketing to give and advice and comment on the contents of the marketing I am working on.

The main learning of the day was how to create an adequate sales funnel and sales deck for a SaaS business. I learned the importance of creating trust with prospects to succeed in sales. For this a book called Best sales strategies, plans and initiatives for success written by Allie Decker was helpful suggesting that 'sales strategy can't compensate for targeting the wrong customers. To ensure your selling to the right type of customer, before attempting to discuss your product research and qualify the leads. They'll find that more work on the front end can lead to smoother closing conversations later. Outline the criteria a prospect should meet to qualify them as a high-probability potential customer. This should be based on a prospect's engagement history and demographics.

Tuesday 5.06.2022

My aim for today is having daily scrum meetings in the morning with the developers' team and go through the tasks and responsibilities of the day as usual. We go through if there is uncompleted work from yesterday and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. Then asking what they are going to do today and if any help they need to perform better ideas suggestions. The I will have a meeting with product owners to report how the project is progressing and how we could have successful pilot product launch. From the meeting I

understood the addition of another developer has eased the burden of workload and seems everyone is doing well. After the meeting from the suggestions and feedback I got from our marketing personnel Valery I must add few designs from the product with help of designer whom we are going to work in project or time based. For example, in the following figure that I made needs to be brushed with help of designers

Here's How It Works.

Experience unmatched efficiency with Fairway

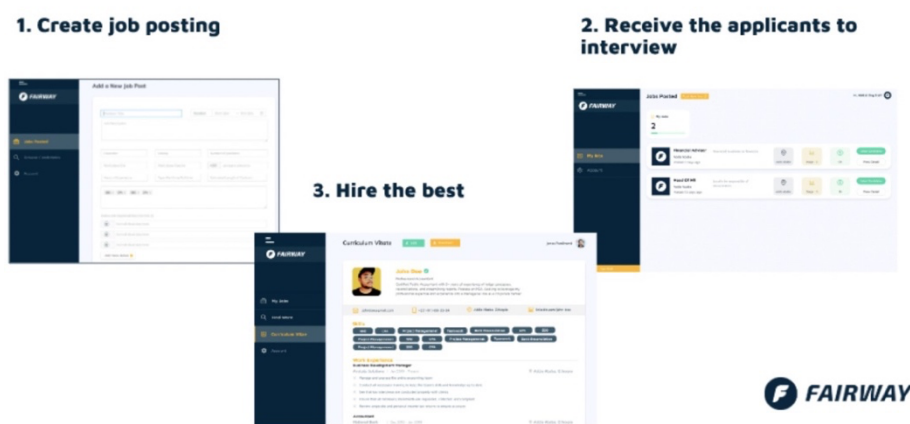


Fig.7 sample user interface illustration

In this figure I wanted to give the intention of user-friendly product and idea of how our product is going to work however I am going to update depending on the designer feedback.

The rest of the day I was engaged on reading the sales strategy book written by Allie Dicker Best sales strategies, plans and initiatives for success from HubSpot as well as from online sources and that forced me to revisit the phone script created last week as cold call is unavoidable and it doesn't have to be miserable cold calling, it needs to follow techniques that really works such as practicing cold calls on one another before making actual calls could boost confidence and gets comfortability with the script. The main learning of the day was how to create an adequate sales strategy, teamwork, and sales deck for a SaaS business. The main challenge was lack of experience in sales however, asking for help without hesitation from people doing same thing has helped.

Wednesday 06.06.2022

My aim for today is having daily scrum meetings in the morning with the developers' team and go through the tasks and responsibilities of the day as usual. We look through if there are completed work from yesterday and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have

faced. Then asking what they are going to do today and if any help they need to perform better ideas suggestions. The I will have a meeting with product owners to report how the project is progressing and how we could have successful pilot product launch. The meeting went well as everyone is doing well with their respective tasks. There was news from one of our developers that his visa application went through, and he got work based resident permit to join the rest of the team in Finland while the other developer is still waiting for the process. He has a bit worried that the process is taking time besides applying at the same time for both developers, only one process is done, and the other is still in process. I assured him even though it is taking more time that he will be issued as he has valid working contract in Finland.

After the meeting I went to check the profile of prospects who are based on LinkedIn to collect what they are interested and comments they made to understand them better and send tailored message. I have sent cold messages for employees believed to be the right person otherwise that they could reference to the proper person responsible for task of purchasing software products and decision makers. It was noticeable also most of the decision makers profiles were inactive which is a bit worrying for me to get into those prospects.

Thursday 07.06.2022

My today's plan is going to have daily stand-up with team of developers, where I ask their how their yesterday's task went, any difficulties, things to be facilitated if any and will report for the product owners and if there are any impediments. I will also meet with the founders to report how the developments has been going and sales strategies and possible prospects and their business culture. In the morning I started with our common daily stand-up meeting with the developers. Team spirit looked like fine. During the day I kept on connecting with more LinkedIn possible prospects and understanding the values and their interests. Sending cold messages to selected prospects that responded to my request to connect. Some of the prospects were reply with referencing to other colleagues within the company and some of them didn't respond at all that is a bit worrying and it stresses me somehow. However, To say sales is a stressful job is an understatement. No matter how much you crush your month, it's the 1st again before you know it and you're back at square one. It's why so many salespeople work such long hours and why stress management is key for avoiding burnout. Our survey shows that 61% of salespeople work weekends. To balance the sales stress, 62% say they exercise or play sports.

The favorite way to spend office downtime is reading web content, say 53%. Self-improvement is a weekly investment for almost half our respondents 35% focus on books, while 15% prefer to solicit feedback. (Salesforce). Today I was stressed thinking about how hard it could be to have customers onboard, however, learned balancing is the key. In the end today was successful day learning another aspect of working on different roles.

Friday 08.06.2022

My task for today is to have daily standup meeting to report daily performance and meetings with two prospects who I found from connection and discuss about the product we are developing then I will continue sending cold messages and calls.

We went through the completed work from the last day and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. Asking similar questions as usual what they are going to do today and if development is going within the timeframe. Development is going forward according to the plan, after getting informed I attended a meeting with one of our prospects. It was successful meeting as he assured that the development of the product will for sure beneficial for the businesses in Ethiopia and beyond. Additionally, he made sure that he is willing to help in connecting us with other businesses who are in similar market. The meeting has given us an insight of features they value the most, and he shared their companies culture in acquiring software which is helpful. My second meeting was not as successful as the previous one unfortunately as he is leaving his current company for another. However, we had great meeting discussing what his soon old workplace values in recruitment and potential connection.

The day was full of meetings, and it has been stressful to stay positive and trying to keep meeting participants comfortable. Despite that I have learned how to interact with customers and listen more and talking less but asking more to learn and understand them well.

Weekly Analysis

This week has been full of events and challenges as well as learnings.

The main learning of the was how to create an adequate sales funnel and sales deck for a SaaS business, interacting with prospects and businesses. I got the opportunity to read part of a book called best sales strategies, plans and initiatives for success written by Allie Decker and learned that sales can't compensate for targeting the wrong customers. Importance of targeting the right prospects and customers by trying to discuss the product research and qualify the leads and more work on the front end can lead to smoother closing conversations later. Outlining the criteria, a prospect should meet to qualify them as a high-probability potential customer is very necessary. This should be based on a prospect's engagement history and demographics found during the research. Time management was an issue during this week, but it was understandable in a sense that there were many things to finish during this week. We want to focus our development work on the pilot project and at same time raising funds to keep running the startup and pay salaries. I still need to work more on my time management and communication. As a team we also want to finish the project on the timeframe set as it has been postponed by one month in the previous project, we want to avoid not to make the same mistake.

Time management is a process to be learned through time and this project will help to learn faster. Another thing I realized is the importance of communication during the week. Because of mis-communication some issues related to the project came up during the week from founders. Sometimes emails are not enough to communicate some issues and it is better to arrange a meeting, but this causes issues in time management if everything needs to be discussed in a meeting. It's difficult to ensure that every important party understands what a specific project is planning to do and sometimes it might be impossible to inform everyone individually. This makes it extremely important to have full information when meeting with customers indifferently. Customers won't be as strained when you tackle some of the questions before hand. Communication is something I want to improve in the future but it's also something that needs a lot of work within our team. I will try to improve more on my communication skill by practicing it is related to how I grew up which is not going to be easy. It's important to identify the correct channels for communication within our company based on what kind of information I'm providing. It's good to review what to be announced to a team together with your team and getting prepared in advance about some of the issues the customers might ask me about.

Communication is also playing a key role in my everyday work. It is extremely important to make sure everyone in the project has the same understanding and information about different parts of the project travels to all the important parties in the project. (Oz & Crooks, 2020.) Building up meaningful work relationships is much harder whilst working remotely. It's very important that collaboration work is effective, and time is not wasted during the Teams meetings because of issues in communication.

I have noticed that emails are used a lot more for communication that used to be done during the meetings. This has led to sometimes important communication getting lost in the large number of emails and sometimes we need to discuss issues and problems we have already talked about in emails. Improving the efficiency of communication and at the same time the documentation process will be very important in the future. Even though we use mostly google meets with our teams besides some customers prefer to zoom and teams. I have been also learning how to lead a team even though we are only four people. Just motivating, inspiring, building relationship and mediating between them sometimes during the process. This are crucial for my future personal development and professionally to ascend to the management ladder.

3.6 Observation week 6

Monday 11.07.2022

My first task for today is to have weekly meetings to report our weekly performance, overall progress and daily scrum meetings with the developer teams and go through the tasks and responsibilities of the week as usual. We look through the completed work from the last of week and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. The second task is to plan what must be done during the week and assigning tasks for each team. Thirdly to continue planning completion of a sales deck and landing page with Emma our UI designer for the pilot project. The meeting has progressed well there was a pressure on the developers as well as on the sales sector to release the software on the due date. However, we agreed to continue pushing for the deadline from all aspects. From backend perspective kidus informed me that from email system module choose between SendGrid and mailjet comparison has done, template to send invitation, registered fairway email domain to the email backend and install any email wrapper to easily swap email backends. This week backend team will be focusing on verification of signup email from user and business profile module create business user, modify table names, and create business profile are done and he will be working on modify user registration process by having email verification. So, from backend about 70 % of the sprint is ready and by next week the sprint will be completed. From frontend side Ermias has informed from create base components, Modal Component, Checkbox Component, Click Outside, Stat boxes, Pie charts, are completed last week and filtering all vs single, Wagon he will be doing it this week. From refactoring onboarding Fix Proper error handling in all Onboarding operations (login, signup ...), Update Password reset route, Replace Organization staff with business routes, Update business registration confirmation page and route are completed and allow password update inside app will be his next task.

In general, it was long meeting with the whole team and product owners until lunch time. Development is progressing and so far, there aren't impediments that could slow the speed of development. We all agreed to continue working as much as possible and I didn't want to pressure too much on developers' team that it doesn't cause pressure on the workload. In the afternoon had a meeting with Emma and founders to discuss the designs and pictures she added to the sales deck and landing pages for jobseekers and businesses. We brainstormed, gave feedback and comments as well as setting a deadline for next Thursday to be ready. It was busy day full of meeting and informative.

Tuesday 12.07.2022

My aim for today is having daily scrum meetings in the morning with the developers' team and go through the tasks and responsibilities of the day as usual. We look through if there are

completed work from yesterday and resolve any issues or obstacles that they might have faced. Then asking what they are going to do today and if any help they need to perform better, ideas, suggestions. My second task for the rest of the day is sending more cold messages for prospects and reply to those who already replied to previous cold messages. Led very quick meeting, Kidus informed me that the backend development is progressing well, and he has been working on email system module and he will be continuing with Meiraf. Meiraf has also enrolled to PRISM pioneer program for the future integration of our software with blockchain. From frontend side Ermias has been working on filtering all and he will continue today doing on the same component.

The rest of the day went to LinkedIn and started sending tailored cold messages to more prospects. Few of the prospects are replied to the cold message by suggesting they aren't the right person but referring to the respective person. I followed by asking for the right person to continue onboarding customers. Today's reply from the prospects was motivating even though it doesn't confirm that this business will be on board, however, seems there is a positive sign to grow the prospects to customer from this channel. Today I have learned that I must do deep search to identify the right personnel even though it is not uneasy task. Reaching to the right person is crucial.

Wednesday 13.07.2022

My aim today is to have daily scrum meetings to report daily performance, overall progress with the developer teams and go through what has been done yesterday and what they are going to do today and if there were any difficulties that hindered their performance. We look through the completed work from the last day and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. The second task is to have a meeting with media personality and digital marketing from Ethiopia which I found through my connection. Thirdly to continue planning completion of a sales deck and landing page with Emma our UI designer for the pilot project. The meeting with developers went well, everyone had said what they have been doing and what must be done today, and the team spirit was great. I closed the meeting and started working on the deck completion and contents and designs Emma has sent me before the meeting. Then I had a meeting with Emma after lunch and she presented her work which looked great except some pictures which didn't express the company's targeted business mission. We agreed to change the picture and some of the contents as well and she promised to finish by tomorrow which will be helpful to start sending qualified prospects cold email.

The continued the day by sending cold messages to qualified prospects through LinkedIn messages. Additionally, I have called few of our connection within Ethiopia if they got the contacts from the sectors, we are looking forward to doing businesses with. My next meeting was with the digital marketing and media personnel Melat. Melat works in one of the big media houses in Ethiopia and she also creates contents for local users, so I told her that we are going to release a pilot project in Ethiopia, and we are looking for ways to get into the market. It was a good meeting she gave us different insights on bureaucracy of businesses and marketing in Ethiopia. She is going to help us, and she will come up with a plan in the coming week and agreed to make project-based payment. Today went well however, it was challenging to negotiate with Ethiopian businesses as the ways of payments are a bit different than in Finland. Communicating in detail helped it out.

Thursday 14.07.2022

My plan today is very similar to Wednesday having daily scrum meetings to report daily performance, overall progress with the developer teams and go through what has been done yesterday and what they are going to do today and if there were any difficulties that hindered their performance. We look through the completed work from the last day and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. Had productive meetings with the developers, they all had their say and development is progressing well. Kidus our backend

developer told me that he is moving out to new place so he might need one day off, and we agreed that he will get Friday off. Next, I had meeting with the founders and reported about a day-off of one developer and the progress of the project. My next task was to review the sales deck and start sending tailored cold emails and warm emails to the prospects. I decided not to use email mass send to include the values and missions of the prospects, as we are focusing on the financial sector there are limited number of financial institutions. The rest of the day I was sending cold and warm emails to a qualified prospects I have prepared previously. Today was successful day in a way that realizing I am developing my sales skills, leadership and communication skill and understanding tech business.



Fig.8 sample slide from the sales deck

Friday 15.07.2022

My aim for today is very similar to Wednesday having daily scrum meetings to report daily performance, overall progress with the developer teams and go through what has been done yesterday and what they are going to do today and if there were any difficulties that hindered their performance. We look through the completed work from the last day and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. The meeting went well both the frontend developer, and the backend team informed me of the work done yesterday and what they are going to do today. Then I went to meeting with the founders and our UI designer who was working on the landing page to see and review it. Both the business and talent landing page were ready. In the following fig. 8 and fig.9 are the samples of the landing page developed were the author participated on the ideation and contents.

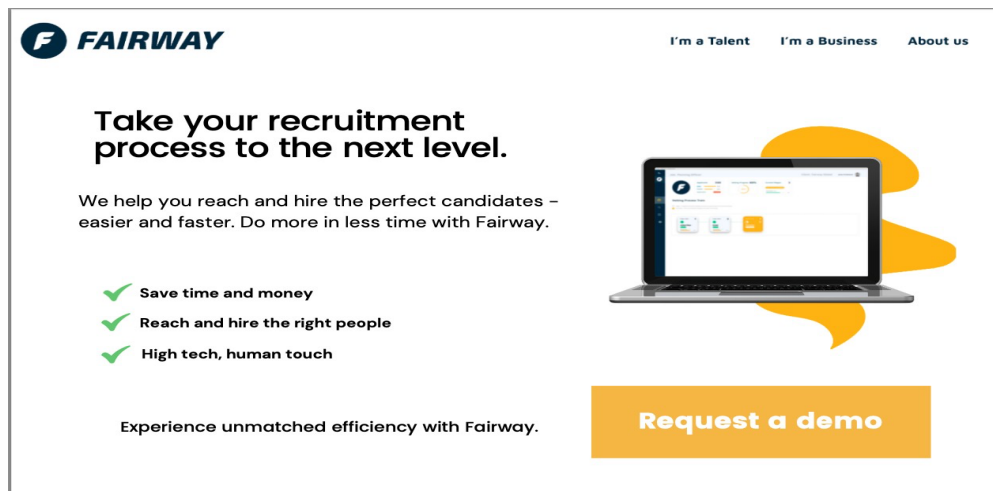


Fig.9 Sample businesses landing page

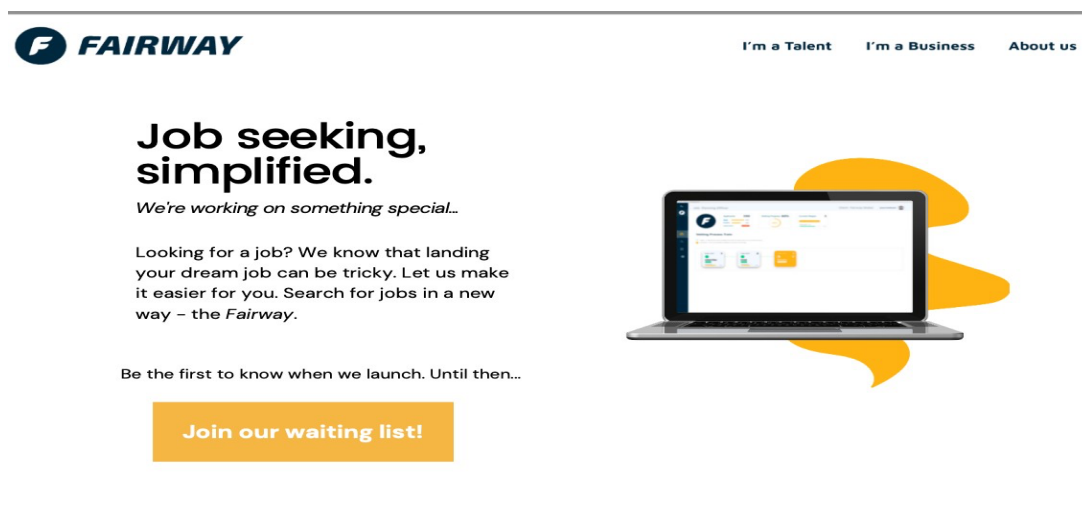


Fig.11 sample jobseekers landing page

Weekly Analysis

This week was busier than usual, but it was fruitful. During the beginning of the week, it was great seeing the development was progressing well, specially from the current sprint about 70% is ready. This week I have participated actively in sales, development and team leading which gave me experiences through tangible work. It was challenging for me to identify the right person from the company as the companies' rules and regulations are different from one another. Last week cold message I have been sending some of them ended up with the wrong personnel in the company and this sometimes complicates the process of sales.

To curb this challenge reading an online magazine from Use the Internet (GOV.UK/Business) was very helpful. The size of a business will usually dictate who you need to address your sales pitch to for your product or service. Purchasing decisions in smaller businesses are often made by the owner or a managing director. In larger companies, you may need to target the head of a particular department, as well as the budget holder, if these are different people. So, when you're selling to other businesses, you need to identify these people and target them accordingly. It is worth carrying out some research to ensure you know who to approach before you plan your pitch. See the page in this guide on how to find out who to talk to. It's generally best to aim as strong up the chain as you can. So, if you've discovered that it's the managing director who'll sign the cheque for your product, that's who you need to get in touch with first. The person at the top of the chain may put you through to the manager of a relevant department or ask you to send them an email or letter. But at least the ultimate decision-maker will be aware of your presence. And there are several methods you can use to find out who the decision makers in your target business are. Organizations often give biographies and contact details for key members of staff on their websites. If you don't know their website address, you can usually find it using a search engine. Telephone the business to ask who's responsible for purchasing your product or service. It is a good idea to have your sales pitch ready before you do this, in case the relevant person answers the phone when you call and wants to know why you are calling. Keep an eye on the trade press - articles on potential customers will often include a quote from a senior manager. Get hold of marketing literature - it can be a useful source of contact information. Attend trade fairs and exhibitions and chat to staff on the stands of your target customers. If you're lucky you may meet a decision maker - and even if you don't, the people there should be able to point you in the right direction. If they are a business corporation, you may be able to find details of the directors on their company stationery or through the Registraire des entreprises.

Not only about secrets of reaching out to the right person in sales, but I have also learned importance of talent landing page and business landing pages before the launch of a software product. How crucial it is to pay attention into small contents that could attract customers and users to the page. Professionally this week I have learned the solution selling, software component and modules development, leadership, teamwork and working independently.

3.7 Observation week 7

Monday 18.07.2022

My first task for today is to have weekly meetings to report our weekly performance, overall progress and daily scrum meetings with the developer teams and go through the tasks and responsibilities of the week as usual. We look through the completed work from the last of week and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. The second task is to focus on sales and sending tailored cold emails to prospects. Today's meeting was focused more on the current sprint, what has been done and what must be done, building marketing team and the software release date. Developers team has reported the development is going a bit behind the schedule and asked to extend the pilot software project release by a week. Developers informed the completion of the sprint including testing. The meeting took more than 4 hours and we had to continue discussing and brainstorming how to do the marketing of the pilot project. We discussed if we know someone familiar with the local market and experience on marketing to hire as well as what marketing strategies we should follow.

One marketing personnel who has been working on digital marketing whom I have suggested last week. Melat the new marketing manager was welcomed as a new team and shared her previous experience and ideas how Fairway could penetrate the Ethiopian market and discussed strategies and plans.

Then we had quick meetings with team of the developers and discussed tasks to be done this week and in the coming weeks. I managed to send couple of prospects tailored cold email before closing the day. The day was hectic day but got helpful experience and knowledge from other peer's experience and skillset.

Tuesday 19.07.2022

My aim for today is having daily scrum meetings in the morning with the developers' team and go through the tasks and responsibilities of the day as usual. We look through if there are completed work from yesterday and resolve any issues or obstacles that they might have faced. Then asking what they are going to do today and if any help they need to perform better, ideas, suggestions.

My second task for the rest of the day is sending more cold messages for prospects and reply to those who already replied to previous cold messages.

Our daily standup meeting went well Kidus informed me that the backend development is progressing well, and he has been working on filtering module and paused for a time being working on a status report and he will be continuing working with meiraf. Meiraf has been assigned to notification module development and still working on that. From frontend side Ermias has been working on exam evaluation and wagon finishing and API integration and he will continue today doing on the same component. The rest of the day went to LinkedIn and started sending tailored cold messages to more prospects as usual and sending cold emails to those their emails was found. Most of my days this week are going to be very similar meetings, sending emails, and replying to those who respond to my cold emails. Few of the prospects are replied to the cold message by suggesting they aren't the right person but referring to the respective person. I followed by asking for the right person to continue onboarding customers.

Wednesday 20.07.2022

My daily responsibilities are quite similar this week as I am focusing on getting prospects onboard for pilot project. Today I will have daily scrum meetings to report daily performance, overall progress with the developer teams and go through what has been done yesterday and what they are going to do today and if there were any difficulties that hindered their performance. We look through the completed work from the last day and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. The second task is to have a meeting with media personality and digital marketing from Ethiopia who was hired in project base.

The meeting with developers went well, everyone had said what they have been doing and what must be done today, and the team spirit was great. Specially the frontend has new task for today in integrating the individual filtering module API. The rest of the day I spent sending cold emails and cold messages on LinkedIn as well as calling prospects. One of the prospects is interested to see more details of the software scope and functionality before buying the pilot project. It was a good sign to find responsive customer however must do proper follow up with the customer to keep them with fairway for the future collaboration and onboarding.

Thursday 21.07.2022

Today I am aimed at having daily scrum with team of developers to discuss what was done yesterday, what will be done today and if there were any impediments on their performance. overall progress with the developer teams and go through what has been done and what they are going to do today and if there were any difficulties that hindered their performance I will address. My second task will be having a meeting with the founders to discuss on the sales progress and thirdly I will have a meeting with the new marketing manager as sales and marketing should work pretty much together.

The meeting with developers was great I was informed of the progress in development, from backend point of view they are still tight however they are pushing hard to make the project happen on time while the frontend development is well on time and progressing faster.

During my meeting I discussed with the founders about the sales, as one of the founders has done sales in his previous experience and he wants to help me succeed in the sales, so he was giving me crucial advises. One of it is instead of what our product can do, here's what you can do with our product" sound similar, but they are completely different approaches. What we discussed during our meeting we discussed fig.1 on customer onboarding that people don't buy products; they buy better versions of themselves. We discussed with Melat our marketing personnel how to proceed and run the sales and marketing parallelly. Also, about doing marketing on Telegram in addition to other social medias as most young Ethiopian are active on telegrams than other social medias.

Friday 22.07.2022

Today I will aim doing similar routine of having meeting with team of developers to discuss daily performance, overall progress and daily scrum meetings with the developer teams and go through the tasks and today's task as usual. We look through the completed work from yesterday and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. The second task is to focus on sales and sending tailored cold emails to prospects. Then I will focus on reading an article written on sales and marketing to learn and perform better. Ermias has informed me from frontend he has completed update business registration confirmation page and route, checkbox component, Stat boxes and motivation questions creation and initial filtering API integration. Kidus has completed email system module while meiraf has been doing on the notification module which she will going to continue to work on. Today I have sent about ten cold emails for prospects and two warm emails for potential customers in the afternoon before closing the day. It is exciting to learn new skill even though it is challenging.

Weekly Analysis

This week we focused mostly on the sales funnel and marketing as well as how to curb some of extra features to finish the project on time and add some of other features for premium features we are going to build for premium version. During the beginning of the week, it was great seeing the development was progressing well even though there is a bit of workload on developers as well as on me. This week I have participated actively in sales, development and team leading which gave me experiences through tangible work.

I have read an article written by Jamie Johnson on seven things about sales and marketing today that mentions that purchasing process now a days is quite different from how it was done in the old days. Consumers or users learn about a product mostly through calls, billboards, or newspapers. However, now a days they tuning to social medias, YouTube, or search engines to make decision by their own. People take time to understand about the product and available competitors before they can engage with sales personnel. So, it is needed to shift the strategies of sales and marketing to acquire the targeted customers. Today focusing on data driven approach provide better results than marketing only on social medias. (Jamie Johnson)

This week author has learned the solution selling, marketing tactics, value of data in sales and marketing software component, leadership, teamwork and working independently. "Sales and marketing are oxygen of a business" (Sabri Suby, selling like crazy.) Usually, tech companies focus mainly on developing a product, however I realized more times should be invested on sales for a startup to succeed. It was productive week, noticed that it is crucial to sale, to understand the customers main problem. It has helped me to realize how important it is to create a trust with customers and nurturing customers besides great product. Additionally, the author has learned email marketing and content-based marketing, which are believed to be the future of sales than phone calls, as it enables us to reach millions of internet users in few clicks.

3.8 Observation week 8

Monday 25.07.2022

My first task for today is to have weekly meetings to report our weekly performance, overall progress and daily scrum meetings with the developer teams and go through the tasks and responsibilities of the week as usual. We look through the completed work from the last of week and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced.

The second task is to focus on sales and sending tailored cold emails to prospects. Additionally, we will talk about the soft launch in Ethiopia, trips and events.

Our weekly meeting took more than usual as we are preparing to launch part of the software. We discussed how to proceed with the launch and if part of the selection process of the software would be available for customer for demo as well as talent and business landing pages. We decided to travel to Ethiopia for two weeks for the launch and on 30th of August. The rest of the days I was sending follow up emails for businesses and sending new cold emails for potential prospects. Few businesses so far has showed to participate on our pilot project which is good news for our businesses.

Tuesday 26.07.2022

My aim for today is having daily scrum meetings in the morning with the developers' team and go through the tasks and responsibilities of the day as usual. We look through if there are completed work from yesterday and resolve any issues or obstacles that they might have faced. Then asking what they are going to do today and if any help they need to perform better, ideas, suggestions. My second task for the rest of the day is sending more cold messages for prospects and follow up those who already replied to previous cold messages as well as setting meetings for sales presentation during our stay in Ethiopia.

Our daily standup meeting went well Kidus informed me that the backend development is progressing well, and he has been working on finalizing selection modules he will be continuing working with meiraf. Meiraf has been assigned to notification module development and still working on that. From frontend side Ermias has finished on exam evaluation and API integration, and he will continue today doing on the new components and fixing bugs. The rest of the day I went to LinkedIn and started sending tailored cold messages to more prospects as usual and following up with previously sent emails. Most of my days this week are going to be very similar meetings, sending emails, and replying to those who respond to my cold emails. Followed up with prospects and suggesting time and dates of meeting.

Wednesday 27.07.2022

My daily responsibilities are quite similar this week as I am focusing on getting prospects onboard for pilot project and soft launch of our software. Today I will have daily scrum meetings to report daily performance, overall progress with the developer teams and go through what has been done yesterday and what they are going to do today and if there were any difficulties that hindered their performance. We look through the completed work from the last day and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. The second task is to have a meeting with media personality

and digital marketing from Ethiopia who was hired in project base. The meeting with developers went well, everyone had said what they have been doing and what must be done today, and the team spirit was great. From frontend point most of the development are finalized for launch and from the bank end the selection modules are not ready yet but he will try to make it ready for the launch. I had to push a bit the backend developers work a bit more that we could release the software on time. The rest of the day I spent sending cold emails and cold messages on LinkedIn as well as calling prospects. Few of the prospects is interested to meet us and pitched about the product. So far, I have managed to set three business meeting with potential prospects.

Thursday 28.07.2022

Today I am aimed at having daily scrum with team of developers to discuss what was done yesterday, what will be done today and if there were any impediments on their performance. overall progress with the developer teams and go through what has been done and what they are going to do today and if there were any difficulties that hindered their performance I will address. My second task will be having a meeting with the founders to discuss on the sales progress and thirdly I will have a meeting with the new marketing manager as sales and marketing should work pretty much together.

The meeting with developers was great I was informed of the progress in development, from backend point of view they are still tight however they are pushing hard to make the project happen on time while the frontend development is well on time and getting finalized.

In Fig 1 It shows the business front page and fig 2 demonstrates the user or jobseekers' interface.

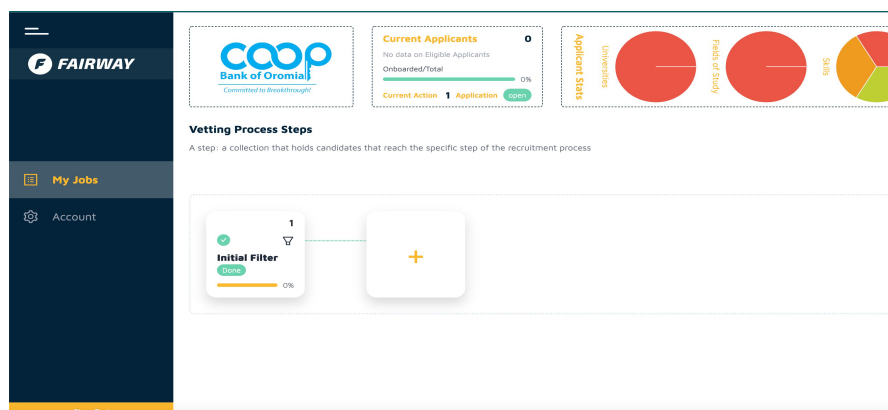


Fig 11. Business vetting page

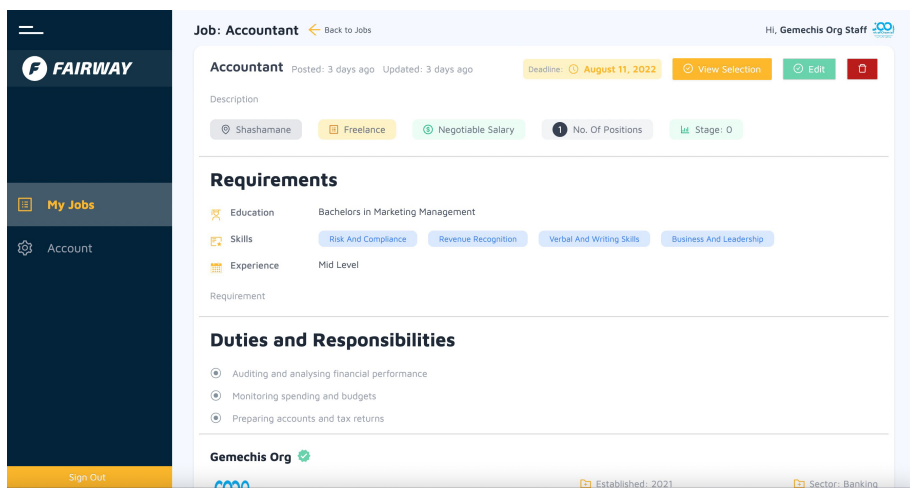


Fig 12. Job seekers applied for job user interface.

I met with founders and discussed with the founders about the sales of pilot project and how we could on board as much businesses as possible and as well as how to get more jobseekers on our platform. We discussed what channels are commonly used by jobseekers in Ethiopia and how we could do the proper advertisement to reach out talents and to sign up to our app. Most of jobseekers in Ethiopia use telegram, Facebook, and Instagram so, our marketers are preparing contents to advertise them in those social media. I discussed with Melat about marketing how to proceed and run the sales and marketing parallelly specially the press release. Also, about doing marketing on Telegram and creating telegram bot in addition to other social medias as most young Ethiopian are active on telegrams than other social medias.

Friday 29.07.2022

Today I will aim doing similar routine of having meeting with team of developers to discuss daily performance, overall progress and daily scrum meetings with the developer teams and go through the tasks and today's task as usual. We look through the completed work from yesterday and resolve any issues and obstacles that they might have faced. The second task is to focus on sales and sending tailored cold emails to prospects. Then I will focus on reading an article written on sales and marketing to learn and perform better.

Ermias has informed me from frontend he has completed adding notifications badge, a way to answer notifications, job application status in job detail page, making a possibility to save draft job and publish a draft job and notifications list page has added to the front end. Kidus has completed email system module while meiraf has been doing on the notification module which she will going to continue to work on. Today I have been sending more cold emails for new prospects and two warm emails for potential customers in the afternoon before closing the day. It is exciting

to learn new skill even though it is challenging. In addition to my daily work, I have read an article about what is scrum by Scrum co-creators Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland. Even though we didn't implement the scrum methodology fully reading this scrum book has helped us to address and run the project successfully. Scrum is a lightweight framework that helps people, teams and organizations generate value through adaptive solutions for complex problems. Scrum's has accountabilities, events, artifacts, and the rules that bind them together.

Weekly Analysis

This week we focused mostly on the sales, software launch and marketing as well as how to curb some of extra features to finish the project on time and add some of other features for premium features we are going to build for premium version. During the beginning of the week, it was great seeing the development was progressing well and we are travelling for work is exciting even though there is a bit of workload on developers as well as on me to close sales of the software. This week I have participated actively in sales, development and team leading which gave me experiences through tangible work. I have realized during last week that our communication is not clear and sometimes too much meeting and the time goes without reaching concrete goal. I raised about this concern to the founders to participate only in limited meetings to use my time properly. We discussed time management as one of the biggest issues in this project and I wanted to focus on improving my time management during this week and in the future. Everyday I tried to evaluate my upcoming schedule and tasks which was a very good way to focus myself on the upcoming tasks. I also evaluated all the upcoming meetings and if they were important for me to be part of. There were already quite many meetings I declined during this week because they were not something I could currently focus on or wasn't relevant for my work. One of challenges this week was arranging the travel and meetings in Ethiopia. However, I have managed to set three days of meeting with businesses where they try our software for hiring few jobseekers as a testing. Still, it was something I couldn't really plan before hand since I have never done sales or pitching of a new product. Besides I needed to help because I was the only person within our team who could help specially within Ethiopia. I think I improved a lot in time management and will keep focusing on this aspect even more in the future , sales tricks and new software product launching aspects specially the product and timing. With this regard reading *The Ultimate Step-by-Step Guide to Launching a New Tech Product* by By Ivan Zografski was helpful.

When planning to launch a new tech product, there are two things need to know first:

First the product. Before doing anything with the product, needs to be sure knowing it well. Must know its characteristics, features, and capabilities. If we are planning to sell from website, how many users can the website handle? What do users find on the site, and is the site user-friendly so

users can easily find what they're looking for? These are things needed to know before starting to prepare campaigning and the second is timing. Timing is key to a successful product launch. There are many entrepreneurs who get overly excited about their products and can't wait to release them. If you launch before you're ready, mistakes can occur, and if you leave a bad impression with customers at the beginning, it's very hard to change public opinion later.(Ivan Zografski 2022.) Moreover, if the product is related to a certain season, it is important to think about the right time of year to release it.This has helped me to understand more on software launch and to keep on learning more on software release and time management.

4 Discussion and conclusion

This diary thesis and observation periods were such an exciting time, it has thought me a new skill and experience that are useful for my profession and daily life. In the beginning I didn't know much of what I was going to do with the roles I was assigned. However, connecting the dots of what I have learned in Haaga-helia played a huge assistance to perform and work efficiently. I have developed in working in a team, preparing sales pipe and strategies, software development processes, communication, starting businesses, raising funds.

Working in a startup has advantages of working in many roles not assigned to, which is advantageous to acquire bigger skillsets. But it is not without the pressures, stress, and workload at a time. During team leadership I have noticed the load on all of us and acted making the development flow easier and comfortable for my team using the project management techniques I learned in Haaga-helia. During this observation reports it is noticeable how much my personal skillset has grown. I have managed to land about nine new customers even though the startup is quite new before the software was released fully. It something that I am proud of thanks to Haaga-helia course called solution selling. I have used the solution selling strategies I have acquired from Haaga-helia in the previous semester.

Given that startups are still in the early stages of development, you can expect the company to grow quickly. As a result, you'll see a significant advancement in your career.

When you work for a startup, you have more opportunities to advance inside the company than if you worked for a large corporation. If you decide to change jobs in the future, the title you have earned during your time at a startup will allow your resume to stand out to potential employers.

During this diary thesis I have noticed how much communication and time management is important. In addition, I have found sometimes very difficult to manage workload and studying at same time. However, this thesis writing has helped me to learn how to use my time efficiently and this very crucial for my future working and personal life.

Because startups have a small employee base, there is plenty of opportunities to learn about the company and how it operates. While being hired for a specific skill set, you will be learning a lot about the position on the job. Another feature of working at a startup is gap filling, in which you will be expected to complete tasks that are similar to but not necessarily included in the position(angel.co).

Professional wise I have learned being scrum master, software development even though I didn't participate deeply during current project, solution selling and soft skills such as teamwork,

communication, adaptability, problem solving and working hard. Another thing I realized during this thesis was that not being afraid of new responsibilities instead to take the risk and figuring out later. Weekly analysis has thought me to see through my daily works, to figure out what went well and what must be improved. It is critical how small actions can improve overall performance. It has given me insight of what to focus on the following weeks and take actions depending on the analysis I made on the previous week; this the action am taking even after finishing the reporting on the observation weeks.

In general, during my time working for a startup, the writer has worked on a variety of tasks, including some completely outside range of my skills. This is especially great if you are still unsure of your current career path, as it gives you the freedom to discover which components of your position you prefer and always trying to push myself to learn on different areas and understand how to start software business. In the future I want to start a software business which I got the idea years ago, but I didn't know how to start or bring the dream in to reality. Thanks to this diary thesis and my current job I am confident to start my own tech company in the future using the skills I got from Haaga-helia and experiences I have got working in a startup.

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