

Bizburgh: A Pittsburgh Startup Simulation

Executive Summary

Pittsburgh, a city known for their growing technical hub, has an untapped network of startup resources, such as low costs of living and a strong startup ecosystem. Bizburgh taps into this market by walking prospective entrepreneurs through a simulated process of creating a startup in Pittsburgh. With its variety of features, Bizburgh enables startup owners and founders to experience exploring locations, recruiting, budgeting, networking, and more in Pittsburgh.

Background and Approach

Pittsburgh, like many other cities, faces the dilemma of attracting and retaining new professional talent (Slaby, 2018). This raises the questions of why young professionals move, and what attracts them to new cities?

Whether it is a fresh college graduate or a seasoned professional, migrants value the prospects a city has to offer, career prospects in particular. In fact, over 80% of relocations within the US are cited for job-related reasons (Falcon, 2019). Furthermore, people tend to gravitate toward communities that share their interests and values (Vellucci, 2020). Since the current generation of young professionals is known for their entrepreneurial spirit (Alton, 2017), we want to develop Pittsburgh's reputation as an attractive startup hub.

Instead of directly targeting individuals to relocate, we believe that targeting startups to expand or launch their businesses in Pittsburgh would bring a more sustainable growth of professional talent in the long run. Through Bizburgh, we will not only establish the image of Pittsburgh as a hotspot for innovation, but also retain the talent from the 33 Pittsburgh universities and attract new professionals for many decades to come (Vellucci, 2020).

Proposed Application ([Prototype link](#))

Here are other key features of the app (see Appendix for more details):

1: Signing Up: provide pertinent personal information to shape the rest of user experience

2: Simulation: allows the user to envision and plan the process of opening a startup in Pittsburgh

- Locations: allows user to explore locations for their startup as well as nearby businesses
- Pittsburgh Specific Restaurants and Attractions: emphasizes what Pittsburgh has to offer for company events and employees on the weekends
- Recruiting Talent: highlights local universities and the large skilled workforce available
- Costs Calculations: provides a breakdown of the costs needed to set up a startup based on the user's choices and how they compare to other startup cities

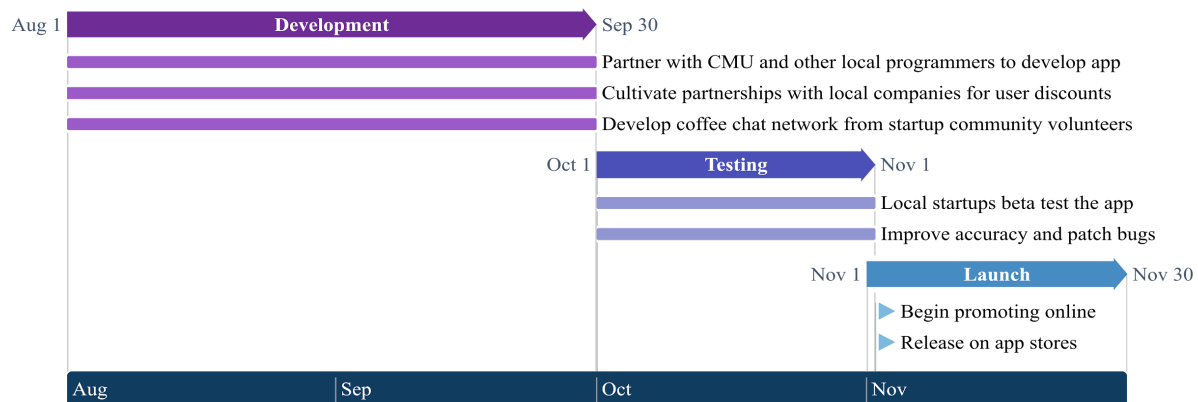
3: Menu Page: access additional pages of relevant information to guide startup owners

- Daily News Feed: highlights the success stories of other local startups
- Progress Bar: indicates the stage of building a startup that the user is currently in
- Resources: a complete, one-stop page of resources specific to startups in Pittsburgh
- Coffee Chat Sign Up: connects potential Pittsburgh startup owners with past and current owners to foster the sense of a startup community

4: User Summary Page: lists personalized links to resources based on simulation choices

- Past Simulations: allows for comparisons on the effects of different choices in past runs
- Future Rewards & Discounts: local special offers for users who visit Pittsburgh

Implementation and Timeline



There are about 250 registered startups in Pittsburgh (“Pittsburgh Startups,” 2020). Our goal is to have 20% of them join our coffee chat network and 10% of them to test our app. Our one-year, post launch outlook is to advertise on 50 websites and gain 20 new users per ad. Of the new users, we expect 25% to visit and half of those visitors to move and bring their startup to Pittsburgh. Next, we expect those startups to hire, on average, 10 employees, bringing 1,250 professionals to the region.

Next Steps

After this application is successfully implemented, and Pittsburgh’s startup population increases, a next step would be attracting individual young professionals as employees for the startups. A similar application could be created for them that would simulate their new lives working and living in Pittsburgh. Instead of calculating the expenses of developing and operating and selecting a startup, this application will calculate the costs of living and allow users to explore residential areas and school districts. Along with Bizburgh, this app can be a part of a series that emphasizes building an extensive professional network of all talented individuals in Pittsburgh.

Limitations

User base growth might be limited in that users would need to have considered Pittsburgh as a potential location for their startup before seeking out Bizburgh. However, through initial heavy advertising and promotions on startup community websites, we hope to spread the popularity of Pittsburgh as a hub for startups to entrepreneurs all across the country. Additionally, this simulation does not consider the restrictions that may be in place due the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and limited funding in this period. To combat this, we plan to regularly update Bizburgh with real-time data on pandemic policies, price fluctuations, and sources of funding.

Conclusion

By branding Pittsburgh as an attractive hub for startups and for innovation, we can attract young professional talent to the city. As we tackle the problem through building careers, we hope to maintain a long-lasting stream of new talent into the area through a self-reinforcing cycle: the more startups founded in Pittsburgh, the better the image and job prospects. This leads to more professionals seeking growth in the region, which completes a transformation for the city.

References

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Appendix

| Feature | Purpose |
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| <u>1</u> : Signing Up | Provide pertinent personal information and interests such as your startup development phase and knowledge of Pittsburgh that would shape the rest of the user experience in the simulation |
| Industry Specific | Determine the locations provided in the simulation, estimated costs, coffee chat options, relevant news |
| <u>2</u> : Simulation | Allow the user to envision and plan the process of opening a startup in Pittsburgh |
| Making Choices | Provide realistic options for business buildings, universities for recruiting, and locations for company events. Each choice made will impact the future experience of the simulation |
| Locations | Enable the user to select a building to base their startup in while showing nearby businesses in the districts and the estimated rent of that location |
| Pittsburgh Specific Restaurants and Attractions | Emphasize what Pittsburgh has to offer for company team building events and for employees on the weekends - partner with locations to provide discounts for startup owners who end up launching in Pittsburgh and their employees |
| Recruiting | Highlight the many universities located in Pittsburgh and the large skilled workforce available |
| Costs of Operation Calculations | Provide a breakdown of the costs that are needed to set up a startup based on the choices made (locations, company events, etc.) and how they compare to other cities like NYC or San Francisco |
| <u>3</u> : Menu Pages | Access additional pages of relevant information to guide startup owners |
| Local Startup News | Highlight the success stories of other startups in Pittsburgh |
| Progress Bar | Indicate the stage of building a startup that the user is currently in |
| Resources | Lay out a complete, one stop page of resources specifically for startups in the region including Pittsburgh accelerators and incubators |
| Coffee Chat Sign Up | Connect users of the app thinking about moving or starting a business in Pittsburgh to past startup founders to foster the sense of a startup community |

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| 4: User Summary Page | Give the user a list of personalized links to resources based on choices in the simulation (ex: for a tech startup, we will provide the link to sign up for CMU's annual TOC (Technical Opportunities Conference)) |
| Past Simulations | Allow for comparisons on the effects of different choices in many saved rounds of the simulation, including a snapshot of key information such as costs and locations |
| Future Rewards and Discounts | Partner with local restaurants and attractions (featured with a badge on app) to provide discounts to the startup/its employees should the startup move to Pittsburgh |