ONLINE BRAINSTORMING TOOL
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1. PRODUCT

Our brainstorming service provides solution to problems that may arise during brainstorming sessions such as no possibility for meeting face-to-face, categorizing and handling of the ideas generated within big groups of people. It also aims to make the whole brainstorming process more efficient and enhance user experience.

1.1. Value Proposition

We are eager to put all our resources (i.e. knowledge, capabilities and networks) to the solution which bears essential value for the customer.

1.1.1. Facilitating idea generation

Users can search for the ideas within the area of their interest and get their own ideas based on ones they find. Moreover, reviewing ideas generated by one of the project collaborators may again facilitate and inspire creation of one’s own ideas. Thus, the tool enables generation of a large number of ideas, enhancing team synergy and collaboration with the help of suggestions.

1.1.2. Overcoming geographical and time limitations

The service enables users who cannot physically attend meetings to take part in and make their input into brainstorming sessions.

1.1.3. Managing ideas

It is often a hurdle for big teams and especially their managers who are in charge of summarizing, organizing and managing the many ideas generated during these sessions. Our service makes managing and prioritizing ideas much easier thanks to such features as rating, saving and identifying similar or related of ideas.
1.1.4. Connecting teams and ideas

Our brainstorming tool also utilizes related topics and provides access to a large network of people with similar interests, thus, connecting teams and ideas from the very beginning of a project.

1.1.5. Avoiding idea suppression

Our service discourages negative feedback and encourages generation of all kinds of ideas and every user has an equal right to add an idea. Thus, some people who usually feel discouraged to add a new idea in a real-life meeting may be more inclined to do so using our online tool. Moreover, features that encourage giving feedback, enable rating and real-time updates about new ideas make suppression of newly created ideas less likely.

1.1.6. Receiving personal visibility

The most active users can receive personal visibility which may bring them many benefits such as attention from businesses and potential employers.

1.1.7. Themed brainstorms and head hunting

Companies or any other organizations can search for the most active users within the area related to company’s project and invite them to contribute their ideas to the project and provide a reward for best idea(s). This may also provide good contacts for future recruitment or/and collaboration.
2. CUSTOMERS

2.1. Targeted groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User group</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number of users</th>
<th>Importance of the group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students and Academics</td>
<td><em>Customers</em>: Educational institutions as well as individual students and academics. Value: Ability to participate in brainstorming without face-to-face meeting</td>
<td>&gt;7000</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td><em>Customers</em>: Individual researchers, research organizations and centers. Value: Connection with other researchers</td>
<td>&gt;5000</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate workers</td>
<td><em>Customers</em>: Different business organizations. Value: Increased efficiency of brainstorming</td>
<td>&gt;5000</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals (Unaffiliated)</td>
<td><em>Customers</em>: Individuals. Value: Increased efficiency of any type of brainstorming, including ones as/for leisure activity</td>
<td>&gt;5000</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of all above listed groups, we will focus on students and academics in the beginning, when the service is just launched, due to limited time and scope of the project. However, as one can see, we attributed the same level of importance to other groups such as researchers and businesses because we see significant potential in creating demand for our service within these groups.

2.2. Distribution Channel

The main distribution channel for our service is Web. The system supports the modern web infrastructure and is able to use third party API:s.
2.3. Customer Relationship – Ecosystem

3. CUSTOMER DEVELOPMENT

3.1. C-P-S

Customer: Our primary customers are educational organizations because we believe that there is great need for our service since brainstorming for different kinds of projects and works is essential for and happens on a constant basis within these organizations.

Problem: Students and academics often do not have an opportunity (e.g. time, location, etc.) to meet. They mostly use only e-mails or messenger services to brainstorm in this case, or post-its when a real meeting is possible. It is very hard and time-consuming to organize, prioritize and save ideas generated using these tools. Some people might
also be shy to speak out or need more time to come up with ideas. Some good ideas may be also suppressed at the very early stage of idea generation.

Solution: Online brainstorming tool which enables idea generation, organization and prioritization anytime and anywhere. Also, it encourages people to come up with ideas and make others review them by linking and suggesting related ideas.

3.2. Positioning
The main differentiator for our service is that it enhances brainstorming and idea generation process. In particular, it improves processes of managing ideas, creating ideas with links and suggestions, encouraging collaboration in brainstorming with other members of the service, etc. It is not a collaboration or project management tool, even though it does indirectly assist them both.

4. MARKETING ROADMAP
The marketing efforts are quite important for our service because of the novelty of the concept. Being a web-based service most of marketing will take place in online environment. When marketing our service, the focus should be on benefits, value and novelty of the service.

4.1. No cost during first year
The biggest promotion for our service will be a totally free offering during the first year of existence of the service. The customers can explore, use and save all their activities in our service at no cost at all. Such an offer will be our biggest effort to promote our service and to gain critical masses.
4.2. The Internet

4.2.1. Search Engines

Search engine optimization marketing is highly important nowadays, especially for an online service. Thus, we will devote a large part of our marketing efforts and resources to gain high rankings in search engines and to be more ‘valued’ by them.

4.2.2. Banners

To reach the right target groups and good click-through-rates, the channels for the banners should be chosen with care. First, we may start with university related websites such as AYY, Service Factory and HIIT websites for Aalto University. However, other websites may be chosen based on the relation to brainstorming topic or those websites that are valued by the targeted groups.

4.2.3. E-mail

At the later stage of service development, we will use e-mail marketing for registered users to promote the premium version of our service. If the user has given permission to send her e-mails, we will send a promotional e-mail to her registered e-mail address or inbox on our website.

4.3. Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is word-of-mouth communication over the internet. Our main goal is to get users to spread a message to their friends by using their own networks and to get as large an audience as possible for the message. Instead of established institutions and figures of authority, people trust their peers as the best sources of information which is why we should develop peer-to-peer dialogue among consumers.

These tools listed below are enablers of viral word-of-mouth marketing. The more people it can allure, the more likely people are to discuss about it both in the real life and in virtual discussion forums. Most of these tools are social networks (social media) or other Web 2.0 channels.
4.3.1. Facebook and Twitter

Facebook can serve as a quite easy and budget tool for marketing our service. At first, we will create a fan page and add Facebook ‘like’ button on our page. Fan page will be a good marketing and communication tools to increase awareness about our service, inform ‘fans’ about new features of the service or any other news. In addition, every time one of the users ‘likes’ our service on the Facebook itself or by pressing ‘like’ button on our page, it will appear on her friends newsfeed and hence is likely to get attention from other members of the network.

We will also create a Twitter account so that, similarly to Facebook, users can follow our news on Twitter.

4.3.2. University Social Networks

To particularly reach our targeted groups, students and academics, we will establish our presence in specific university social networks such as Ossi (Aalto University of Technology), Onni (Aalto University of Art and Design), etc.

4.3.3. Wikis

Another Web 2.0 channel to market the service and create awareness about it is wikis. For instance, we could use KY wiki to reach Aalto School of Economics students or Aalto’s wiki (previously just TKK’s wiki) to reach all Aalto students.

4.4. Word-of-mouth

We will also rely on one of the traditional marketing tool which is word-of-mouth. Since our service is very ‘community’ oriented it is likely to raise discussions in real life too. Also, as it was mentioned before, viral marketing may in its turn facilitate word-of-mouth marketing increasing awareness and interest in our service.

4.5. Wikipedia

Once our service is launched, we will create our own Wikipedia page where customers can find general information about the tool.
5. REVENUE MODEL

As it was mentioned before, we will focus on students and academics at first, because we found that there will be demand for such service in this group. Yet, we will modify our revenue model later on when we start marketing our tool to the rest of the targeted groups.

5.1. Free Business Model

Since it is very important for our service to gain critical masses in the beginning, it will be totally free for our customers at the start. In addition, we discovered from the interviews with students that they would not want to pay for a new service that they do not know and there is no peer pressure to use the tool. Therefore, we want to provide them with time to familiarize with and use the service and develop customer loyalty. The service will include features that will become premium in the future but all users are free to use during this promotional period. The promotional period will approximately last for a year and its main goal is to attract as many customers as possible.

5.2. Fees for premium features

At the later stage of our service development we will introduce premium features that we will charge a special fee for. At this stage, we will expand to creating demand within the rest of targeted customer groups such as businesses, researchers and unaffiliated individuals. Since some of these customer groups include organizations which would appreciate large project and brainstorming groups, we will introduce ‘volume pricing’. Nevertheless, as we strive to have a big network of users, we would like to sustain customer base we developed thanks to educational organizations. Therefore, the service will still be free even with the premium features for all universities in the world, while the basic service without any premium features will be free for everyone.

Specifically, premium features will be available for users who pay special fee based on the number of participants and time that they want to keep the project private. So, if a user creates a project that she wants to keep private from other users for X of the website and invites Y number of other users to join the project, the price can be found in the table below on the intersection of X and Y values.
Volume Prices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># (X)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2 – 10</th>
<th>11 – 25</th>
<th>26 – 50</th>
<th>51 - 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time (Y)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>1€</td>
<td>2€</td>
<td>2.5€</td>
<td>3€</td>
<td>4€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>1.5€</td>
<td>3€</td>
<td>3.5€</td>
<td>4€</td>
<td>4.25€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>2€</td>
<td>4€</td>
<td>4.5€</td>
<td>5€</td>
<td>5.25€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 month</td>
<td>3€</td>
<td>5€</td>
<td>6€</td>
<td>6.5€</td>
<td>6.25€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 month</td>
<td>7€</td>
<td>10€</td>
<td>12€</td>
<td>13€</td>
<td>13.5€</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table, one can see that marginal fee for an additional number of collaborators and length of a project is diminishing as the number of collaborators and length of the project grow.

Premium features will be:
- Ability to create a private project
- Access to a rating list of the most active users (i.e. idea generators)
- Group recommendations