

Global Enterprise Experience Journal

Launch day had finally rolled around! Excitedly I emailed my team my letter- I had been waiting for that moment since I wrote it! I received a few replies that night. The next day flew by and I still hadn't heard from half my team, so like any reasonable sane person, I went on a Facebook adding rampage!

I typed my team member's full names, preferred names, country, university et cetera, to get the most likely matches. I requested to be friend a lot of people, on acceptance, I messaged them asking them if they were enrolled in GEEBIZ, if not- a simple 'Sorry wrong add' and delete! And then moved on to the next!

This was effective to find all except for my Nepali member, especially after the first earthquake. The rest of the team had been collaborating on our Facebook group and chat. It was midnight Sunday- Monday of the first week when we had our first team meeting that ran from 12am- just past 2am NZ time. 30 minutes into the meeting, Aashish Pant accepted my request. I messaged him, and he said he was taking part in GEEBIZ. Naturally, I trusted that he was the correct Aashish. Never did I think I would have to ask for proof of identity! So I added him into the group/ chat and he started contributing! (He wouldn't have even known what we were doing!). So for our first meeting, I had a full house, I was stoked! He was my 8th and final member (at the time).

He continued to contribute, on May the 3rd at 4am, another Aashish Pant accepted my request. I was getting ready to delete him, until I received the message, 'Hi...hope you heard about the earthquake in Nepal and the crisis we are in. we have no electricity and internet...hope you shall understand..' I immediately messaged him back to see if he was safe along with all of his friends and family and reassured him it was absolutely fine! I couldn't believe it when I realized what had happened! He had had absolutely no power nor internet for seven days, yet he had such high spirits. So I welcomed him into the team and explained to the rest of the members what had happened, luckily everyone was happy!

So team 100 grew to 9 members! The more the merrier as the saying goes!

So next day, I go to the tutorial. Everyone was talking about their experiences, and when it came round to a certain leader, she explained how six days in, she had already kicked off her team member from Otago. We saw the email thread, and upon seeing a fair representation on both sides, I couldn't help but feel the Otago girl had been given a raw deal. Personally, I would have conducted myself differently if I were in that position. So anyway, I went about the rest of the afternoon- went to the lecture, got groceries for the week, made dinner, and by this time I still felt awful as I had the story still sitting on my mind. So I thought to myself- be the leader you aspire to be and push for change instead of sitting back. I saw an opportunity to be productive and help the girl, instead of just feeling bad.

That week is the only time I attended another time slot, complete random decision (apart from ANZAC day). Thus, I believe I was meant to go to that tutorial to hear this girl's story. So I emailed Deb, she worked her magic, and just like that the next day I woke up, and in my inbox I had an email from Deb and the Otago girl. Her email had such an exciting energy to it, it was absolutely the best feeling. She was so thrilled to be part of a team again, worked out so well that it really does seem it was meant to be!

And then it was welcome to team 100, member number 10!

We seemed to be expanding as a team at quite the rate! You would think it would stop there right? No, think again! Admittedly, I did have a few fears for a moment, that it could get to be too much to handle and keep track of, and that I would end up letting my team down. But there was no time for doubts and worrying, it was full speed ahead! We were over half way in the contest and I thought no matter what happens, I am taking my team through to the finish line!

So, I was thinking to myself and thought everything I assumed I knew about Aashish was from his bio, which turned out not to belong to him! I only actually knew what his Facebook information stated, and by what he had previously told me. So I asked him a series of questions, one being his age (Facebook info said 18!). I learned he was actually only 12! I still cannot wrap my head around it. I am beyond astounded. I am in awe of him and their Nepali culture. It breaks my heart to think of how mature he is at such a young age and to have seen what he has due to the earthquake crisis. He is an amazing individual, and I have every faith that he will achieve amazing things in his bright future. I learned that his sister Anjana (15 y/o), also wanted to join.

On consulting with the group, we welcomed her. To be interested in such a project so young is amazing, especially to fully understand it. Anjana is shy than her brother, so often messaged me privately. I am excited to keep in contact with them to see what they get up to in the future!

Phew! We were now a team of 11! Bring it on I said!

In regards to 21 year old Aashish, I feel I have definitely made a lifelong friend. He is one of the most amazing people I think I have ever met, (well talked to, I haven't met him, yet!) He is kind and caring, selfless, and I believe he would do anything for the people he cares about. Despite the earthquake crisis, he still has such high spirits, and still jokes. He has taught me so much. We communicate through Viber, as the internet has not been strong enough for Facebook (he even kept going on the rooftop to try get a connection!). We have talked a lot about our project of course, but also a lot about our lives and everything in between! I love how after what he has been through, he can still joke so much. He said to me 'Do not get too serious about life, no one makes it alive.' He wanted to teach me some Nepali words, so he taught me 'Ji', which is like an adjective of respect to be used after a name or designation, so he frequently calls me 'leader ji' or 'Moni ji', of which I return to show how much respect I have for him. I let him know that he had an extension on the journal, but he was adamant on submitting it on time, so he biked 2 hours in extreme heat to another town where he could have access to a computer and then 2 hours back! He and his family were out of Kathmandu for his sister's wedding a few days prior, so he was desperately wanting to get back to help out with recover missions. They were trapped in with landslides et cetera. He has even told me that if I decide to visit Nepal, to not hesitate as I will have a friend waiting at the airport! He has astounded me by his dedication, insights and how honorable he is. Aashish has taught me by his actions and by being a living example, to never let anything bring down my high spirits and to always strive to be the best person I can be. I aspire to be as amazing a person as I believe Aashish is, and to live up to it.

Aashish did not have much time collaborating with the other team members due to connectivity issues, thus I would always pass on important information/ new revelations in both directions. The rest of the team understood this. Guchee from Nigeria, also had power supply issues towards the end due to a fire in her hostel a few weeks prior. It was challenges like this that really emphasized how strong our team was. Everyone believed and respected that our fellow teammates were doing their best, and we carried on!

Having such a diverse team lead to lots of strong views and lots of ideas! In the creativity stage, we spent a lot of time discussing ideas. We started out just over 20 brilliant ideas! To give each idea a fair chance, we spent a lot of time discussing pros/ cons/ etc. in team meetings. Thus, we spent a lot of time on this stage, however I do not regret this, as I have learnt so much about all my team members through their views, what they find interesting/ important, and I have learnt so much about different countries and the important issues that people have to face day to day.

I ended up using Facebook alone as a platform, which worked out excellent! At the very beginning, I posted a poll question asking if the team would prefer to try out Wiggio or Loomio. I attached videos on how to use them, but only got few answers back. So I stuck to Facebook! We tried video chat, but it didn't work for everyone. A joint Facebook chat worked excellent especially as we could backtrack to previous conversations for reference. I constantly hassled everyone on private chat where it got to the point that they would message me first sometimes!

Without a doubt this has been one of the most challenging things I have done. I am so glad I didn't get scared off after the first lecture, it sounded so daunting! I have learnt so much, even about myself, I have pushed my limits and I will continue to do so. I have put 100% my all into this contest, it has never left my mind. The past 3 weeks have been live, breath, eat, sleep (or therefore lack of sleep), work GEE! Looking back at how I have handled the past 3 weeks, I could not be more proud of how I have conducted myself, nor could I be any more proud of my team members and our final report. I have grown as a person, and I will carry everything I have learnt from this experience into my everyday life.

Through this experience, I have felt many lows, with frustration at the beginning mainly, getting overtired and when it seemed like there was no end! But for every low, there was over ten times the amount of highs, a feeling like no other! I wish I had space to talk about each of my members, they really are 11 of the most beautiful people I have known. The knowledge, insights and lifelong friends that I come away with due to this experience is priceless. There is no monetary value that I could ever place on it. For that, I am immensely grateful for GEEBIZ and the opportunity I was given. I would do it over again in a

heartbeat. It has been the 3 of the most intense, rewarding and amazing weeks of my life. I believe I have come out a better person, I come away from this experience as a winner, alongside my teammates.