

# MGSM at Macquarie University



## Overview

Communit eer engaged with Macquarie University (MQU) MBA students to collaborate with skilled volunteers for the goal of improving bottlenecks within our consultation process. This benefitted the students in providing workplace experience and Communit eer with a project designed by skilled volunteers, increasing our capacity.



## Project Length

10 weeks as part of the MBA program at MQU

## Problem Statement

Communit eer has identified two key bottlenecks that affect our ability to scale our impact in the community:

1. Limited capacity to identify volunteering opportunities as part of ongoing engagement.
2. The creation and maintenance of a consultant panel for undertaking consultations.

## Aim of the project

To develop a model to create a sustainable consultancy arm for Communit eer.

## Project Outcomes

1. Students were able to create a recruitment model for bringing consultants into the consultancy panel, including job descriptions, process low and onboarding pack.
2. Students were able to suggest improvements to Communit eer's consultation process, particularly a diagnostic pre-consultation form to save our team time in the collection of data from NFP clients.
3. Students were able to identify the key personas that will be related to the consultation process.

## Time Committed & Cost Saved:

- 2x students from a subject unit and 1 as a volunteer contributed a total of **539** hours, worth **\$19.84** per hour based on Australia 2020 minimum wage.
- A volunteer mentor contributed **11** hours, with a predicted worth of **\$100** per hour, based on median consultant fee.
- A volunteer project manager contributed **100** hours, with a predicted worth of around **\$43** per hour.

Therefore, this project has a total worth of around:

**\$16,093**

## Overall Achievements

Providing students with a real world experience, allowing them to apply relevant study content.

"I wanted to be a consultant after I graduated and this gave me an opportunity to learn and be a consultant."

Students developed key skills to prepare them for the workforce, including adapting to evolving circumstances and group collaboration.

"Between the three of us, the two of us came into this internship through a subject unit and the volunteer student did not. This created slight tension between us as we had differing motivations. However, we managed to clear it up and managed to work together."

Providing a network of professionals to students to gain industry insights and improve their chances of post-graduate employment. Based on a survey provided to the students, both in the middle and end of the program, students felt like they had expanded their professional contacts. 2 students felt they had expanded their network, while the other felt neutral.

Increasing the students overall perception of their employability. 2 of the 3 students feel confident in the search for employment after graduating while 1 of the 3 feel neutral.

## Challenges

- **The importance of mentors in the running of the project was clear.** Students took some time to understand the project scope and therefore needed a mentor to guide the students, preventing scope creep and ensuring the completion of the project in a timely manner to the clients expectations.

- **Students had to be encouraged to voice misunderstandings.** Students were unsure at the beginning as to whether the project was too large for the program and were concerned of overcommitting or underdelivering, rather than seeking to understand the clients expectations. They were suggested to be upfront with the client and negotiated on these expectations, improving communication skills.

- **Students underutilised the collective knowledge of the mentor and other stakeholders.** Students were given feedback on utilising the weekly meeting time more effectively by presenting the actual data they have been gathering rather than telling the group their planned work for that week.

## Conclusion

Communitier has been provided a consultation model that will **scale our capacity** and **support a better customer experience** for our NFP clients. The students gained valuable insights into the running of a social enterprise, as well as the soft skills in communicating their challenges and regular updating of their progress. We believe this was a great success and presents a viable case for the introduction of similar programs into universities with NFP client project as the focus.

