

Children's Institute

Executive Summary

Community Partner

Brian Furfari, Chris Mader

Student Consulting Team

Jarrek Holmes

Vivian Huang

Michelle Lim

Background

The Children's Institute is a non-profit organization seeking to help children with developmental disabilities find a place to grow academically, socially, and physically by providing various services (therapy/educational). It is located in the Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh, PA. In their own words, they say that their mission is: *"To heal. To teach. To empower. To amaze."* It employs around 500 people, which include teachers, clinical and behavioral professionals, management, and facility coordinators. There is also a small IT department with around nine employees, including one dedicated software developer and the CIO. The Children's Institute is attempting a major effort to digitize all of their processes.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

The Children's Institute is going through a major culture shift after closing down parts of the hospital system and suffering from significant downsizing. This has led to low morale and a lack of motivation among the staff. Wendy Pardee, the Institute's CEO, is looking for a way to increase morale by improving the employee recognition process. The current process is inefficient, lacks standardization, and results in unequal benefits across different program departments. It is worth noting that many supervisors like the current system because it is personal and meaningful to the employees.

Project Vision

We envision a simple, easy-to-use system for employee nomination. We want to streamline the approval process for employees instead of having week- or month-long delays. We want to be able to easily appreciate the employees who have been recognized widely by many of their peers. Most importantly, we want to highlight exceptional employees and provide them with a meaningful and sizable suite of perks to incentivize their hard work.

Project Outcomes

The main outcome of our project was to develop and deliver an employee recognition system app, that is designed for use among the company's deployment SharePoint website. The app features three main flows. First, it features a nomination system which allows users to nominate an employee that they believe has done outstanding work. Secondly, there is an approval system for allowing supervisors of the employees to easily approve an employee nomination. Lastly, we have a dashboard that includes recently approved nomination and a leaderboard of which employees have the greatest number of CI-bucks to promote friendly competition and incentivize working hard during the company's culture shift.

Project Deliverables

The project deliverables include access to our React/Microsoft Graph solution for employee recognition, a link to the GitHub repos that include all of our code and process documentation, and access to the Google Drive folder we created for the employee recognition system application which contains all of our documentation, meeting minutes, design documents, network diagrams, and user testing files.

Recommendations

We recommend conducting a demo with all of the employees in the company to learn about how to effectively use the application, as this will increase employee participation for the recognition system process. We also suggest that a store is developed in relation to the employee recognition system, so that employees do not have to go through multiple processes to cash in their CI-bucks. We recommend that surveys are periodically given out to employees once the application is deployed to understand ways to iterate and improve the application for easier usability.

Student Consulting Team

Jarrek Holmes served as the project manager and lead backend engineer for the project. He worked with Chris Mader to develop the Loopback API and Microsoft Graph authentication. He is a senior majoring in Information Systems and minoring in Computer Science.

Vivian Huang served as the client transition manager, QA manager, and lead frontend engineer for the project. She built the main functionalities of the web application via React. She is a senior majoring in Information Systems.

Michelle Lim served as the client relationship manager and lead designer for the project. She worked on styling the React components using CSS and JavaScript for the website. She is a junior majoring in Information Systems and minoring in Human-Computer Interaction.