NextGenHQ Product/Engineering Summer Internship
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Introduction

My name is Quan Nguyen and I'm a Math and Computer Science student in the Trinity School. This past year, I was on leave and realized my passion for startups and Entrepreneurship. I interned at three different startups and tried to validate many of my own ideas.

This past summer, I interned at NextGenHQ as part of the Engineering and Product team. My team was based in New York City, NY, but I was mostly working remote.

NextGenHQ is a leading business and entrepreneurship hub founded by a Duke alumni.

My goals for my summer internship this year were:
- Apply the concepts and skills that I had learned in the last 2 years of Math and Computer Science at Duke.
- Develop strong relationships with my team.
- Network with other entrepreneurs across several different organizations.
- Narrow down an area of interest for my future career in tech.

NextGenHQ is media services company that provides investment, educational content, and community for entrepreneurs. I was a part of the product and engineering teams tasked with building the minimum viable product for NextGenHQ. They want to pivot to a more technology-based company and translate all their existing services onto a technical format. I was brought on to help build this product.

I was tasked with a project revolving around user engagement and think about what would influence user retention on the platform. I took complete ownership of this particular project and had influence on both the design and implementation of the project as it related to the platform. Due to proprietary reasons, I can't show the final product or designs for the MVP, but I will outline what I did.

These are the general accomplishments that I made during my time there:

- Co-led planning, design, and competitor analysis for full-stack development of gamification features and analytics for NextGen's platform MVP (React.js, CSS, HTML, typescript, javascript)
- Coordinated meetings with senior PM, head of product, lead designer, and engineers to fully develop and implement frontend for the Momentum Meter and Streak Count intended to gamify the platform and incentivize usage through future rewards programs
- Lead implementation of MixPanel data analytics to track essential product metrics such as user registration, dropout rates, and user flows

Conclusion

In the Summer of 2020, I made the decision to take a gap year, as I was unsatisfied with the trajectory I had laid out for myself up to that point in time. I had no plan, but knew that I wanted to come out of my time off with a strong sense of what I wanted to accomplish in my career and what I was genuinely interested in.

Here's what I found out: I enjoy thinking about and attempting to solve challenging problems, exploring and learning about new technologies, and the entrepreneurial process as a whole. I learned this from my experience working at three wonderful startups, and especially at NextGenHQ.

My experience at NextGenHQ has influenced the trajectory of my career in many ways. I now know for a fact that I want to operate my own startup in the future and want to continue exploring new technologies and industries. This is just the beginning of my journey and I look forward to what the future holds.

Challenges

Working virtually from home:
- Feeling alienated from my team due to distance and remote work.
- Working from EST was a difficult adjustment.
- It was harder to get to know my coworkers on a personal level and interface outside of work.

Learning curves for different tech stacks and frameworks

Highlights

- I got to meet a great group of people and work on an exciting new product
- I took a trip to New York with another Ruby(who was also an intern) to visit the office, the team, and the city. I had a wonderful time!