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PROBLEM STATEMENT

Young adults need an accessible way to make friends and meet others with similar interests.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Many young people and college students have a difficult time finding friends in adulthood. Research has shown that this demographic experiences significant rates of loneliness and social isolation, even when they have large social networks. According to the National Library of Medicine, 50.8% of those between the ages of 16 and 24 reported feeling lonelier than 30.9% of the general population. This suggests a need for more meaningful connections rather than just acquaintances.

Our target market includes young adults, college students, and recent graduates between the ages of 18 and 25 who are seeking new ways to build authentic relationships. This demographic is at a transitional stage in life: moving away from their hometowns, adjusting to new academic or professional environments, and navigating the challenges of independence. While traditional social media platforms allow for passive connection through likes, comments, and follows, there's a growing demand for intentional community-building.

Our app, Orbit, is designed to help bridge this gap by creating a platform where users can meet others based on shared interests, lifestyles, and campus affiliations. Users will have the ability to link their profile to their college or alumni network, allowing them to connect with

peers who have similar experiences. This feature will help foster a sense of belonging both within and beyond the university setting. Our mission is to help users “find their inner orbit” by helping them form a trusted circle of friends who provide support and encouragement.

In addition to individual users, universities and student organizations could benefit from Orbit’s community features as well. Campus groups, clubs, and events can use the app’s community board to reach students who might otherwise feel disconnected. The potential to bridge the digital world with relationships in the real-world sets Orbit apart as a tool for community development.

COMPETITION

There are many apps and even social events dedicated to helping adults make new friends. Apps such as Hoop, Yubo, BeFriend, BFF by Bumble, Peeps, and Chat aim to help users make new friends or connections, but many of these platforms blur the line between friendship and dating, often prioritizing appearance-based matching. Additionally, these apps tend to lack localized or university-specific options, making it difficult for users to find meaningful relationships in their immediate environment.

For instance, BFF by Bumble is a popular option for making connections, only heightened by its brand recognition. However, its direct association with the dating app blurs that line between friendship and dating. Another app, Yubo, focuses on Gen-Z by utilizing live streaming and small group hangouts, making it a high energy platform. This makes it harder for young adults not in that generation to be able to utilize the platform to foster close personal relationships. Offline alternatives such as local community centers, meetup groups, or university

events also provide social opportunities, but are often limited by time, location, or the participant's comfort level. In this digital age, many students and young adults feel anxious about attending social events alone or struggle to find activities that align with their interests and schedules.

Orbit stands out by combining digital accessibility with localized, interest-based connection. Unlike its competitors, the app emphasizes authentic friendships rather than a fast-paced environment or potential romantic connections. By integrating college networks, users can choose to connect with others from their campus, nearby universities, or among recent alumni.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

To help adults and young adults form genuine relationships more easily, our team proposes an app called "Orbit" that mirrors the interface and style of popular dating apps like Tinder and Bumble but is designed exclusively for making friends. Think of it as "speed friending" in app form. Users can swipe to find potential friends who share similar interests, hobbies, and personalities, making the process of connecting less awkward and more authentic. To bring this idea to life, the app would require resources such as app developers, UX/UI designers, and marketing specialists to ensure the platform is user-friendly and engaging. Additionally, partnerships with local businesses and community organizations could provide access to event listings and collaboration opportunities. The app would notify users about local gatherings, such as in-person speed-friending events, and recommend activities based on their interests like pottery classes, concerts, or gaming competitions. These features help connect the app to the target audience by encouraging real-world interactions and community engagement. Overall, the goal is to create an efficient, inclusive, and effortless way for people whether

introverts, extroverts, or anyone looking to step out of their comfort zone to find their “galaxy” and build meaningful friendships.

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

Since Orbit is a small student developed concept, the financials would focus primarily on creating a working prototype and promoting the app on college campuses and through socials. The estimated startup is around \$5,000 and this would include small expenses like the app development software, domain hosting, as well as marketing materials like flyers, influencer marketing, paid media, and other promotional physical items.

Once app is fully developed maintenance and upkeep would also be a cost to make sure the servers are up to date and compliant.

Orbit’s long-term financial plan is to be a freemium model, where the basic app remains free to encourage accessibility while there are optional premium features like verified profiles or local event insights. This could generate small revenue by having low-cost subscriptions like \$2.99 - \$5.99 a month.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

The marketing plan for orbit focuses on reaching college students and young adults through digital storytelling, peer engagements, and partnerships with campus organizations. The overall goal is to make Orbit feel approachable and community driven, not commercial.

Campus outreach would be promoted during prime tabling days on campuses to help spread awareness by word of mouth and via flyers with a small booth.

Social media promotions are another obvious way to promote Orbit. Using Instagram, TikTok, and X to gain an audience by posting trendy and culturally relevant content. Lifestyle content is preferred showing day in my life or grwm to meet a new friend via Orbit.

Email and partnerships with student orgs and even small community events to spread the word and awareness. This gets Orbit in front of the right eyes and the target audience by meeting them in the middle at young adult life events.

LIMITATIONS

A significant human issue could occur from users misusing the app for romantic purposes instead of forming friendships. Although the app would prohibit certain relationship-related keywords, there's still the risk of people developing romantic intentions toward someone who only wants friendship, which could lead to awkward or uncomfortable interactions in person. Another human challenge involves user behavior, particularly among shy or introverted individuals who may hesitate to meet face-to-face. Research shows that around 40% of adults identify as shy, and a YouGov survey found that 57% of British adults also consider themselves shy. While the app aims to encourage in-person connections through speed-friending events and local activity recommendations, some users might prefer to keep interactions online, which could limit the development of deeper relationships. On the technical side, a major challenge would be ensuring the accuracy of the app's algorithm and data. One potential issue is a variance error, which occurs when an algorithm produces inconsistent or unreliable predictions. In other words, it may "change its mind" and deliver different results under similar conditions. Because the app relies on matching users based on shared interests and personalities, perfect programming is essential to minimize these types of errors. If not addressed properly, the algorithm could pair

users with conflicting interests, such as a dog lover and a cat lover, or fail to consistently identify compatible matches, leading to user frustration and dissatisfaction in the app.

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