

Individual Reflection Emerging Trends

Project: SideKick, The medication reminder app

Team leader Reflection

My experience of working within the team

Leading this team was a dream and presented a few challenges, rather early on I took initiative to establish a clear plan for the project. The initial team meeting discussed each members skillset from which the best structure I found was, Serena on Research feeding into Sharise's design decisions, through to Jamie's database work assisting Max's development, which in theory meant the workflow should have been fairly seamless. I used Trello to distribute and visualise leftover tasks, from this members in the team would leave comments on various tasks, discussing further work required or progress made.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the experience was seeing how well four out of the five members responded to the structure I put in place. Serena, Sharise, Jamie and Max were all highly engaged, proactive and professional throughout. Collaboration between all parties felt natural and productive, and I felt genuine confidence when delegating responsibilities to each party, knowing that they would deliver to a high standard.

However, Managing Jacob's involvement became one of the most difficult aspects of my leadership role. Jacob was assigned QA testing and user surveys, two roles that are measurable by the work produced such as test results and Survey answers. Despite communicating in group discussions, he consistently fell behind when it came to completing tasks in a timely manner. Incomplete survey data and insufficient QA coverage meant other members of the team had to pick up the slack, placing additional pressure on the team. This experience taught me a great deal about managing underperformance tactfully while keeping the team motivated and focused

Team Performance ratings

The following ratings reflect my honest assessment of each team member's involvement and contribution across five areas: overall contribution, quality of work, communication, reliability, and teamwork.

Serena (Researcher) – 5/5

Serena excelled in her role as Researcher. Her background work laid a strong foundation for the entire project. The insights gathered around user needs and medication

adherence patterns directly informed key design decisions. She consistently delivered throughout the project, with well structured reports and always on time, and committed to clear communication with the rest of the team. Serena was also always willing to go beyond what was asked. Her contributions were instrumental to the direction of SideKick

Sharise (Designer) 5/5

Sharise was an exceptional designer whose work elevated the overall quality of SideKick significantly. She translated Serena's research into thoughtful, user centred interface designs that were both visually polished and practically accessible. She brought creative energy to discussions, remained open to feedback and delivered her designs consistently on time. She played a key role in keeping the group morale high during stressful moments of the project.

Jacob (QA & Surveys) – 3/5

Jacob was assigned to QA testing and user surveys. Roles which are inherently measurable by completed work. Unfortunately, his performance in both areas fell well below expectations. Survey collection was incomplete, reducing the volume of user data available to influence design decisions, and QA testing was inconsistent and insufficiently documented. While he communicated and participated with the team during meetings, unfortunately the gap between his verbal participation and actual output and was the defining challenge of his contribution to the project.

Jamie (Database Developer) 4.8/5

Jamie performed excellently as our database developer. He designed and implemented a clean, well structured database that reliably supported SideKick's core Pharmaceutical barcode functionality. His technical work was thorough and had a high standard, and he communicated clearly whenever he needed input from the team or directly from me. There was one or two occasions where he missed a team meeting, however his personal life was incredibly busy, and his contribution made up instantly. Overall, Jamie was a dependable and positive force in the group.

Max (Developer) 5/5

Max was an outstanding developer and one of the most reliable members of the team. He built the core functionality of SideKick with a high technical standard working closely with Jamie, to ensure the front end and database layers integrated smoothly. He completed every task assigned to him thoroughly and on time, communicated proactively and consistently contributed to a positive dynamic. His ability to focus and deliver under increased scrutiny and pressure was a real asset to the group.

Evaluation of design limitations

While I am proud of what the team produced, SideKick as a solution has its issues, firstly the application had 2 completely different bugs in the live Demo, the first being the app failing to load due to a context error, the second being setting up a medication would soft lock the app on occasion. These two bugs could have been caught with a little more QA testing.

Secondly, the current design does not account for medication changes. In real world usage, prescription are regularly amended, dosages adjusted, and new medications added. Without a streamlined way to update the barcode database, users may find the app becomes out of date because of this

Finally, our design was prototyped and evaluated primarily within a university setting, which means it has not been tested with real users in authentic medical context. The absence of user testing with the actual target audience means the design assumptions we made may not fully reflect real world needs.

Risk factors encountered

Several risk factors emerged during the project that required careful management. The most significant was the uneven distribution of effort within the team. Jacob's underperformance in his QA and survey responsibilities created a concrete risk: without sufficient user survey data, our design decisions lacked the empirical grounding they needed, and without thorough QA coverage, bugs and usability issues risked going undetected. I mitigated this by redistributing survey tasks to other members and conducting additional reviews of the application myself. But this added workload that I had not originally been able to plan for.

Another significant risk was scope creep. As the project progressed ideas for new features and functionality grew quickly within the team, and there was a temptation to expand the scope of SideKick beyond what was feasible within our timeframe. As team lead, I had to make difficult decisions that prioritise core functionality over additional features, which required difficult conversations between members of the team.

Conclusion

Overall, this project was a learning experience, both technically and interpersonally. Leading a team taught me how to balance direction with flexibility, how to manage differing levels of engagement, and how to maintain momentum even when faced with setbacks. I am proud of what the team produced with sidekick and believe it represents a genuine response to a real problem. The limitations and risks we encountered have given me a more realistic and grounded understanding of what it takes to design and deliver a solution effectively, and I will carry these lessons with me into future projects.