Designing for Entrepreneurship in The Slums of Johannesburg

A Case Study of Cross-Cultural Digital Design

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The Team
- 6 MBA’ers coming from USA, Niger, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Philippines, Russia: 1 artist, 5 business people

The Client
- A local welding shop, producing elaborated metal works: gates, stairs, doors, etc.
- Normally catering to the needs of their neighborhood but recently aiming at the rich residencies of Johannesburg
- Owned and primarily managed by Klaas, a quiet and concise father of three, who’s main concern was to provide consistent wages for his four permanent workers

The Challenge
- To help grow the business by extending its reach into the digital space and deliver the client with a product in 4 days
- At the end, we were suppose to go on a stage and declare to the rest of our cohort if we “failed” or if we “succeeded”
Our Process

DAY 1  •  ALIGNMENT  ➔  RESEARCH  ➔  IDEATE
DAY 2-3  •  DESIGN  ➔  TEST
DAY 4  •  REFINE  ➔  COMMUNICATE  ➔  DELIVER
Opportunities we missed:

- **ALIGNMENT**
  - USER, CLIENT, CUSTOMER
  - WHO ARE YOU DESIGNING FOR?
  - BRING IN A LOCAL DESIGNER

- **RESEARCH**
  - HOFSTEDE CAN ONLY TAKE YOU SO FAR
  - CULTURE WITHIN A CULTURE
  - OPEN QUESTIONS ARE DIFFERENT IN BOSTON

- **IDEATE**
  - Again, BRING IN A LOCAL DESIGNER AT THE TABLE
  - MAKE IT FUN FOR THE CLIENT, BRING THEM IN, BRING THE KIDS IN!
Opportunities we missed:

- DESIGN
  - WHAT YOU KNOW IS NOT WHAT THEY NEED
  - Hofstede for Design
  - Local Language
  - Hey, how about bringing a local designer at the table?

- TEST
  - Listen

Day 2-3
Opportunities we missed:

- COMMUNICATE
  - ASK QUESTIONS
  - THE COMMUNICATION COULD HAVE BEEN A TEST IN ITSELF

- DELIVER
  - NEGOCIATE THE TERMS