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Moodboard: A Digital Solution for the Work-Life Balance in an Advertising Agency

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MOODBOARD
A Digital Solution For The Work-Life Balance In An Advertising Agency

Shalaka Shantaram Haldankar

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design

School of Design
College of Imaging Arts & Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, NY

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**Thesis Title:**  Moodboard: A Digital Solution For The Work-Life Balance In An Advertising Agency

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Abstract

The long working hours prevalent in the advertising industry is a well known fact. It has become a common practice in agencies for quite a while now, leading to work-life imbalance for employees. The advertising agencies follow this practice, not because of its effectiveness, but because that’s what everyone else does. They completely ignore the fact that short breaks from work can increase productivity. A common belief of the industry is that the more nights/weekends you spend at work, the more productive you are. Research proves such work stress affects your personal life and health.

The goal of this thesis is to help the employees of advertising agencies to have a better work-life balance. The work-life balance in this context is defined as having a happier professional life which does not affect your personal life in a negative way. This will further lead to better creativity and productivity.

“If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it.”– Lord Kelvin

This quote states that what you can measure, has room for improvement. Similarly, the basis of this digital mood tracker will be offering a way to measure company morale. The proposed solution is a tracker of employee’s moods at work by using facial recognition technology. The employees can also express appreciation and thank each other in the form of points. These points can be redeemed for discounts on activities beyond work. Self-awareness of moods and expressions of appreciation inside the company could boost company morale. The company morale graph would be derived from the data collected on the digital display. Similarly, the employers can take necessary actions if results show a lower company morale. It will help keep the employees healthier and happier at work, while serving as a beneficial tool for both the employers and the employees.

Keywords

Advertising agency, work-life balance, company morale, long working hours, productivity, track employee’s happiness, feelings, praises, moods, encouragement, points, redeem, activities, discounts.
Situation Analysis

A young copywriter at Y&R Indonesia, Mita Diren, died at the age of 24 due to continuous work that lasted 30 hours. This incidence moved the industry, resulting in several articles criticizing the culture of working long hours. Her last tweet mentioned her continuous work to meet deadlines. She had consumed strong energy drinks to survive these hours. Sadly, this incidence did not change the industry patterns.

Working late nights and weekends is a trend of the industry since it started. It’s expected that employees will work overtime in an advertising career. A study stated most of the advertising professionals leave advertising jobs because of poor work-life balance. This research compared competitive industries, proving advertising agencies the last place for “good work-life balance.” The agencies started giving away perks or compensatory time off for weekend work days to improve the work culture.

The advertising industry is one of the leading industries with work stress problems. There are existing work-life balance apps for productivity. These apps track your time to keep you aware of your time distributions. Not many agencies are using digital solutions to keep up the company morale other than annual trips and Friday happy hours.

There is face recognition technology being used in several apps. These facial recognition apps can also track moods. None of the companies use it facial recognition technology to track their employee’s feelings.
Thesis Statement

The focus of this thesis is to build a digital solution for advertising agencies in order to help them improve the morale of their employees. To investigate the morale this thesis refers to the work-life balance of employees.

Problem Statement

A few years back, Sweden declared a national working time of 6-hours a day to make employees happy and productive. Their aim was to utilize the time effectively, so people enjoy their private lives. They proved that a continuous 8-hour work day can slow down productivity. On the other hand, an advertising agency considers it to be an achievement to work long hours.

At an average the 12-hour shift is a common practice in the industry. These long hours lead to stress, pressure, and a lack of focus. Such exhausting work hours cannot lead to any creativity. They do not consider an interruption in your personal life as an exception for ongoing deadlines and pitches. Most of the agency professionals leave the industry for its long hours and poor work-life balance. This work stress and exhaustion affect personal life.

The death of a 24-year old copywriter due to 30-hours of continuous work moved the industry. But it changed nothing about the working long hours. Because they gave much more importance to the pitches and deadlines than someone’s life.

This thesis project will explore digital interactive solutions for advertising agencies to improve the company work-life balance or morale.
Survey Literature

The Culture of Long Agency Hours

In this article, the writer Jack Marshall talks about working long hours is an agency trend, not a necessity. Most of the agencies work longer because they think it’s the right way. There are several types of research that prove rest is a necessity for creativity. It is easy for an agency to say “we are working this weekend” rather than doing the wholesale change. Due to the pressure of the competitive industry, seems almost impossible that the agency culture is changing anytime soon.


70% of marketing and communications agency employees say work affects their health.

According to the survey conducted by The Drum, 70% of agency employees believe their health is affected by their work. The survey was taken after the death of a 24-year-old PR agency in China due to over-work. Almost 90% of the people agreed that the work pressure is increasing.

Survey Literature

Is there a work-life balance in an advertising agency?

This article is a debate that stirred up Ms. Friedrich stated, the new talent is less dedicated. A working professional of different age commented, working long hours doesn’t necessarily mean productivity. The employees are human and must have a life beyond work.


Of long hours, working hard and advertising: Part 1

After the death of Mita Diran, many advertising professionals called upon the agencies to re-think their employee’s work-life balance. They suggested saying “no” to unreasonable work. The writer sarcastically says the death of an employee or talking about work-life balance is a smaller issue compared to the next big campaign or pitch. Working late is routine for the agencies. It is not hard work or working late that bothers but after a while, it becomes a habit, an expectation, and a work culture.

Survey Literature

Study Reveals The Obvious: People Leave Agency Jobs Because Of Low Pay, Bad Work/Life Balance, Lack Of Strategic Vision

This article discusses, how people leave agencies for different reasons like low pay, bad work-life balance and lack of strategic vision. As per the poll with other 8 competitive agencies, advertising industry came last in work-life balance. The research also shows that professionals in the advertising agencies are looking for more than the money. Telling the story of their culture and purpose, by showcasing their talent brand in a compelling way that offers sustainable differentiation, can fill in this gap.


Work-Life Balance Defined

The writer defines work-life balance in different ways. He says work-life balance is not equally distributing time for work and personal activities. It means an equal balance between achievement and enjoyment.

Survey Literature

Manage Your Emotional Culture

Several researches in the past decade found that there is emotional culture leads to employee satisfaction, burnout, teamwork and even better performance. Positive emotions improve performance while negative emotions lead to bad decisions.


Facial-recognition sensors adapt to track emotions, mood, and stress

In this new age, image and video sensors are helping in driving safety, medical and biometrics. The face recognition tools are helping out to detect gender, moods, intentions, age or even blink estimation. Some of the doctors use these tools to track moods of the patients while diagnosing diseases like anger management, autism and depression.

Survey Literature

A Fitbit for Your Employees’ Emotional Health? It’s Already Happening.

One out of eight employees is going through depression. Due to which 68 million days of work are lost each year. The emotional health of the employees is an important factor for companies to care about.


How does that make you feel? Why employee is mood important?

It is necessary to measure the pulse of the company on regular basis. Finding out employee satisfaction just once or twice a year is not enough. If employee morale is not taken care of, it can result in the dropping of the productivity of the company.

Survey Literature

The future of wearables and their role in the workplace

This article cited that in the matter of privacy less than 25% of employees said they would mind letting employers track their time, hours worked, breaks taken and other activities. Most of the employees were happy to share the information for better productivity at work.

Survey Literature

How Emotion and Mood Influence Behavior

Moods and feelings at a workplace affect different aspects of your life. Exposure to bad mood for a long time can lead to diabetes, heart disease or ulcers. On another hand, exposure to the positive environment can increase creativity and productivity.

Competitive Analysis

Affectiva

Affectiva is tool that uses a webcam or device camera to detect facial expressions. This tool provides unfiltered consumer insights. This can be a great benefit while creating emotionally aware digital experiences. This is used in media industry to know feedback of their audience. It also can be used by healthcare, automotive, video communication and robotics.

Eyeris

Eyeris brings us the Emotion Analytics that transform Human Machine Interaction (HMI). The vision technology enables everyday devices to understand how we feel, who we are and how we perceive the environment around us. Eyeris uses machine emotional intelligence for deep understanding of feelings.

Emovu/Eyeris is an emotion recognition software. The ultra-lightweight software runs locally and requires minimal processing power. It also can be customized as per race, environment, and context.
Competitive Analysis

Kairos

Kairos helps users measure emotions in real-time and track important demographic data, and allows you to see where the audience loses interest. This tool allows to tag people easily. Companies use the software for tracking employee’s work hours. They do not have to receive anymore timesheet reminder emails. It helps in accurate identification and verification of employees without any physical contact.

Microsoft Cognitive Services

Microsoft Cognitive Services such as emotion and video detection; facial, speech and vision recognition; and speech and language understanding – into their applications. It gives distill actionable information from images, allows you to personalize user experiences with emotion recognition. The Emotion API takes a facial expression in an image and the bounding box for the face, using the Face API. The emotions detected are anger, contempt, disgust, fear, happiness, neutral, sadness, and surprise.
Competitive Analysis

Face++

Face++ is used for face detections within images, and get high-precision face location rectangles. It allows you to detect different attributes, including age, gender, emotion, head pose, eye status, ethnicity, face image quality and blurriness. Face++ is used to compares faces with stored faces - perfect for name tagging photos in social networks.

FacioLytics

FacioLytics is a real-time application that analyses facial behavior. It is detects gender, ethnicity, age, expression, engagement, rate of blinking, and many more factors.

Analysis

Most of the face recognition tools are used for media analytics, healthcare, automotives, video communication, and robotics. Such a solution is yet not used to study employees moods, or to help benefit company morale.
User Persona 1

Steve Fisher, CEO of Advertising Agency

“I know working in the advertising industry can get a little overwhelming. I would definitely take any step I can to help my employees.”

Age: 39 years old
Status: Married
Education: Masters of Communication Design.
Profession: Advertising

Steve started his own digital agency 8 years back. He currently has around 200 employees. He hasn’t forgotten the stress and the pressure he faced as someone else’s employee. The long-hours is a trend in the advertising industry resulting in poor work-life balance. To see the change you have to be the change, he says. As a company owner, he wants to take right measures to prove that long hours are not directly proportional to productivity.

He wishes that his employees are both productive and happy in the workplace. Even though he is not sure how to achieve it, he is willing to go an extra mile.

Personality: Introvert, cares about his employees.
Interests: Traveling, reading, foodie.
User Personas 2

Aria MacLauren, Client Servicing

“There are some days when I want to say ‘I love my job’ and most of the days I want to say ‘I quit.’”

Age: 43 years old
Status: Married
Education: Masters of Business Administration.
Profession: Client Servicing

Aria is a potential employee with many years of experience. She works as a mediator between the client and the team. Her responsibility is to see if the creative team works effectively and delivers work on time.

She has started considering switching the industry. It is tiring to carry work stress at home. The late nights and working the weekends are making her compromise her health. Nothing stopped the client or the employer to contact her after hours. There is no private life while you are working in the industry.

Personality: Extrovert, courageous.
Interests: Playing guitar, writing, talking.
User Persona 3

Celina Parker, Employee at agency

"I have worked in the industry for 6 years. I love what I do. But work gets stressful at times."

Age: 29 years old
Status: Single
Education: Interaction Design, M.F.A.
Profession: User Experience Designer

Celina is really passionate about her work. She always knew advertising was a stressful job. Until now her life revolved around her career. She recently got married. It has been difficult to create a balance between her professional and personal life.

She is rethinking her career because she has no time for her family. Each and everyone in the industry suffers due to work-life balance issues. No one yet has addressed it. Celina's wants to solve this problem as a user-experience designer.

Personality: Extrovert, family oriented.
Interests: Problem-solving, films, shopping.
User Persona 1 - Empathy Map

HEAR

To be a successful company, I must take care of my company’s emotional culture.

I hear work-stress complains from my employees.

I’m giving it a lot of thought, how can I improve my company’s morale.

I understand to see the change you have to be the change. I need to start with my own company.

SEE

Not everyone is happy in the workplace.

The employees have to change personal plans to meet the client expectations.

I tell my employees to be open to me about these kinds of problems.

I’m beginning a better culture in the company to keep my employees happy.

THINK & FEEL

SAY & DO
User Persona 2 - Empathy Map

**HEAR**

If you leave work at 6 pm, people ask you “Is something wrong? Why are you leaving so early?”

Before joining any agency, the company promised to take care of the work-life balance.

Since a long time, people consider this an industry culture.

I know if my job is affecting my health its not worth it.

**SEE**

The entire industry complains about having no work-life balance. But it is assumed as the agency culture.

It is a known fact you will have no personal time if you work in advertising.

I keep telling myself to leave work early for spending time with my family. But it never happens as I’m always interrupted by work.

I want to leave advertising for good.

**THINK & FEEL**

**SAY & DO**
User Persona 3 - Empathy Map

HEAR

The death of a 24-year-old copywriter due to 30-hours of continuous shift moved the industry.

Long hours and work pressure are the most common thing in every agency.

I’m stressed that I’m not able to manage my time well between work and family.

Being a user experience designer myself, this problem needs to a solution.

SEE

Everyone complains but no one is acknowledging the problem.

The advertising agencies work this way.

I tell myself to not to stress about work.

Because of the work strain, I’m unhappy at home too.

THINK & FEEL

SAY & DO
User Scenario 1

Situation

Steve wishes to improve his company’s morale. He tried to introduce different activities for helping his staff. Every time some of the employees back out due to deadlines. He wants his employees to be self-aware of their struggles. He wishes to have a simple digital solution for taking care of the company’s emotional culture.

Action

Steve’s friend suggested the Moodboard. He wished to test the product with his employees. They tracked their moods within 2-3 seconds. The application asked permission for accessing their front camera. The results were in form of color-coded graphics. They could skip the process after the mood tracking.

Outcome

Steve loved the fact that the product was not time-consuming. The color-coded results helped in self-awareness. Knowing their mood made them realize their struggles. The employees were happy that they could skip the process. They didn’t get overwhelmed by using the application extensively.
User Scenario 2

Situation

Aria is a mediator between the client and her team. She needs to keep her cool to take care of her team’s mood. Meeting the deadlines is stressful. It is hard to find out if the commitments are overwhelming by the team.

Action

MoodBoard allows Aria to track her mood. She visited the website to see the details. The graph splits into self, team and both. The product helped her compare both the graphs.

Outcome

Aria understands the company took a good effort towards by installing this product. The comparison of graphs helps Aria realize how her team is doing. This helps her take care of the team’s morale.
User Scenario 3

Situation

Celina’s work is her passion. She has some tough days when she the pressure becomes unbearable. The work stress affects her personal life. She never received appreciation for several years of work in the company. Her colleagues sometimes support and help her when she has too much on her plate.

Action

Through Moodboard she received and gave appreciation to her teammates. She recommended them for the help she received. She redeemed the points for discounts provided by the company. She read the life-changing stories by coworkers.

Outcome

Her colleagues and managers could appreciate her comfortably. The employer acknowledged her hard work. Workload did not stress her anymore. The healthy environment in the team kept her positive which reflected on her personal life too. The stories employees shared on Moodboard were exhilarating.
Word Mapping

MOTIVATE
INSPIRE

ISSUES
COLLEAGUES
MANAGEMENT

TEAMS
PRESSURE
FEEDBACK

FEELINGS
DEADLINES
HELP

MOODS
RECOMMENDATIONS
STRESS

ROUTINES
PITCHES
PRAISES

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

PERSONAL
ACTIVITIES

REST
HEALTH
SOCIAL

SKILLS
FEELINGS
MOMENTS

ENJOY
RESPONSIBILITIES
RELAX

REJUVENATE
WEEKENDS
MORALE

LEAVES
FRIENDS
FREE TIME

Figure 3.1
Names for the solution

- Ad-balance
- Ad-lyfz
- Harmony
- Life after work
- Ad-chores
- Creative balance
- Breathe
- Happy Hour
- Ad-time
- Beyond 9to5
- After Hour
- Agency Equals

- Create Time
- Agency 9to5s
- Life Goals
- Agency Limits
- Equations
- Ad Equations
- Agency Pulse
- Agency Harmony

- **Moodboard**
- Mood Pulse
First Proposed Solution

Harmony was the first proposed solution. It was a feeling tracker plus social platform for employees. You can share issues or weekend activities. The shares inspire to work and live better. The following are the characteristics of the application:

• Track the employee’s feelings about work, management, personal, colleagues, etc.

• Allow them to share reviews, feedback, and recommendations.

• They give and get rewards for best copy, artwork, the idea of the week.

• The highlights of the week/weekend, other activities or any unique skills they can share with others.

• The trending shares will motivate others to try new skills/activities.

• They can share issues to ask for help.
Flowchart

Figure 3.2
Wireframes
User Feedback

PHONE APPLICATION

• Downloading and using an application on the phone was one more addition to their task list.

• The application was time-consuming with the extra features.

• The employees might not be very honest about their feelings.

• They could answer anonymously.

• The employees felt concerned if their feedback would be used against them.

• The skillshare was a good addition.

• Overall the application might overwhelm a user as it had a lot of features to offer.
Second Proposed Solution

Design Ideation

The second proposed solution was a digital display wall installation. This digital wall records moods of the employees through face recognition. The results would help in self-realization. This solution worked like a Fitbit for the agency's morale. The data collected from all the staff represented the overall company's mood. The result displayed graphical representation on the lock screen.

This product focused on two areas, self-awareness and exchange of points. The mood detection can help in self-realization about company’s mood. The teammates could interchange these points for help received or good job done. The firm could provide discounts for redeeming their points. The overall impact could improve the company’s spirit with better productivity, healthier and happier life. It will be beneficial for both employers and employees.
Flowchart

Digital Display

Start Camera

Record Mood
by face recognition

Recommend

Pop-up on screen

Record Moods
by face recognition

Thank you

For Help Received

Good Job

Points gained

 Redeem
for discounts on activities

Will always display company morale graph

Figure 3.7
Lo-Fi Wireframes

1. Scan your face on the digital wall.
2. Analyze your mood.
3. Recommend your colleagues.
4. Redeem points for a discount.

70% of the company feels happy today!

Figure 3.8

RECOMMEND

FOR HELP RECEIVED
GOOD JOB
REDEEM

Figure 3.10

REDEEM POINTS

POINTS RECEIVED
REDEEM

TRENDING

Jay Thanked Asin For Her Help 10
Ross Appreciated Joey For His Good Work 10
Jay Thanked Asin For Her Help 10
Ross Appreciated Joey For His Good Work 10
Jay Thanked Asin For Her Help 10
Ross Appreciated Joey For His Good Work 10

Figure 3.9

Figure 3.11
Hi-Fi Wireframes

1. Scan your face on the digital wall.
2. Analyze your mood.
3. Recommend your colleagues.
4. Redeem points for a discount.
User Feedback

FACE-TRACKING

• People might give expressions if they see their face on the screen.

• Would my results be accessed by the employer to use it against me?

• Regular feedback would be good for self-awareness.

REWARDS

• Recognition can create healthy competition within the company.

• Recommendations will lead to positive feelings towards each other.

• Rewards shows that the company is taking care of their culture and their employee
Strategy and Improvements

Privacy was a huge concern for the user group. They believed the employer could use the mood-tracking results against them. Considering the feedback, the final solution is privacy protected. A pop-up will appear on your screen every week. The software will ask for your permission before using your camera. If the user allows the camera, the software can track your facial expressions to detect your mood. The result will be in form of a visual feedback. To watch your own face on the screen makes people give expressions. A graphical representation is a way to avoid tampering the honest feelings. The mood-tracking is a one-click process which will not hinder the company’s time. Only if time permits the individual visit, the website to see detail graphs to compare his personal graph with the teams. The comparison would help him/her in self-awareness of their state at a workplace.

The employer has no access to individual outcomes. They can only access the team result. In case a poor result of the team, the employer can take right measure to help their company.

They can recommend colleagues for help and a good job. Both for recommending and for receiving recommendation can increase your points. This will motivate them to use MoodBoard more often. It is encouraging for the staff to redeem their points for discounts. This solution can let the employers show their affection towards their organization.
Flowchart for the Screen Pop-up

1. Face-Tracking
2. Pop-up on your screen every 7 days
3. Allow camera access
4. Analyses your mood by face tracking
5. Know more

Figure 4.1
Flowchart for the Website

Dashboard

Feedback
  - Check your mood graph
  - Check your team’s mood graph
  - Compare your and team’s mood graph

Recommend
  - Search for colleague
  - Choose reason for recommendation
  - Recommend
  - Earn points for recommending

Redeem
  - Search for offers
  - 40 points for each offer
  - Redeem

Figure 4.2
Lo-Fi Wireframes for Screen Pop-up

Figure 4.3
Lo-Fi Wireframes for Website Dashboard

Figure 4.4
# Questionnaire Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Do you have a good work-life balance?</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Yes: 10, No: 0, Neutral: 0" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is your company helping you with it?</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Yes: 2, No: 5, Neutral: 3" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you like the design?</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Yes: 9, No: 0, Neutral: 1" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was it easy to understand?</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Yes: 7, No: 3, Neutral: 0" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you think this solution will help employees in advertising agencies to improve their morale?</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Yes: 7, No: 0, Neutral: 3" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Would you like to have this product at your workplace?</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Yes: 5, No: 0, Neutral: 5" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
User Feedback

- The calendar was hard to find, as the icon wasn’t self-explanatory.

- Due to the darker design, the font and the background color needed to increase contrast.

- The comparison between the self-graph and the team graph would create a good understanding of your position.

- The help section is a good addition to the first-time users.

- A pop-up on my screen helps so I do not have to waste much time.

- On the pop-up I don’t see my face to give expressions, hence the mood feedback would be more accurate.
Hi-Fi Wireframes for Screen Pop-up

Figure 4.5
Hi-Fi Wireframes for Screen Pop-up

Figure 4.6
Hi-Fi Wireframes for Website Dashboard

Figure 4.7
Hi-Fi Wireframes for Website Dashboard

Figure 4.8
Hi-Fi Wireframes for Website Dashboard
Style Guide - Branding

Logo Experiments

Final Logo

moodboard
Style Guide - Typography

Logo Type

Co Headline:
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Website Font

Swiss Roman:
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Swiss Heavy:
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
Style Guide - Color Palette

#B40565  #EC2A56

#93278E  #C92D90

#5328B6  #642D92

Gradient

#BBBDBF  #797C8E  #535466  #303044  #23232D  #17171E
Interface Design For Screen Pop-up

Figure 4.10
Interface Design For Screen Pop-up

Figure 4.11
Interface Design For Screen Pop-up

Figure 4.12
Interface Design For Screen Pop-up

Figure 4.13

Figure 4.14
Interface Design For Screen Pop-up

Figure 4.13

Figure 4.14
Interface Design For Dashboard

Figure 4.15
Interface Design For Dashboard

Figure 4.16
Interface Design For Dashboard

Figure 4.17
Interface Design For Dashboard

Figure 4.18
Interface Design For Dashboard
Interface Design For Dashboard

Figure 4.20
Interface Design For Dashboard

Figure 4.21
Interface Design For Dashboard

Figure 4.22
Interface Design For Dashboard

![Dashboard Interface](image-url)

**Figure 4.23**
Interface Design For Dashboard

Figure 4.24
Interface Design For Dashboard

Figure 4.25
User Group

Advertising Employees

Samantha Hodian
Art Director | CPB

Jon Colon
Copy Writer | CPB

Saby Rodrigues
Project Manager | Digitas LBi

Will Brower
Developer | Dixon Schwabl

Agency Owners

Arnab Biswas
CEO | Triature Digital

Ex-agency Employees

Aditi Kapadia
Servicing | New Control

Trushna Billimoria
Designer | Freelancer

Sheetal More
Web Designer | TCS

Rakhi Pawar
Project Manager | Sapient Nitro
Prototype

The Principle software was used to create the prototype. It was tested with the users to obtain feedback. The designs went through final alterations before developing into a demo video.
Evaluations

The advertising agency employees, owners, and a group affected due to work-life balance issues formed the user group. This was used to study the expectations, objectives, and problems faced by both the groups. The high fidelity wireframes were tested before developing the final interface designs.

Each user tried the principle prototype of the final interface design. To find out if the product was time-consuming, we recorded the time spent on it. A questionnaire was filled out after using the prototype.

Questionnaire

The following were the questions asked of the participants during the testing process:

•  Did you think this product wasted your time?

•  To use this product once a week, would you think of it as one more addition to your task list or not?

•  Do you think this can help employers in taking care of the company’s emotional culture?

•  Was it easy to use this product?

•  Do you have any design feedback?

•  Do you consider earning points will encourage employees to perform better?
Evaluations

Response to Questionnaire

1. This version is much simpler and less intense. Mood detection and recommendation seems interesting. This product can help the firm show respect their staff. The product was easy to use. I could find everything in one place. Plus, it allowed me to skip after step one. I like the vibrant colors. Also, the designs look corporate at the same time dynamic. The teams could find the discounts encouraging.

2. No. The solution allowed me to skip the pop-up if I was busy. I’m glad I don’t see my face while the software is tracking my mood. I’m so swamped with work. So its appearance on my screen makes more sense. Facial mood tracker seems like a cool thing. I can compare my graph and the team graph. The typography needed more contrast.

3. The tracker took 5 seconds to detect my mood. I will consider using the product. I like the look of the device. The visual feedback for the results could look better. I thought there was a lack of hierarchy between graphical representations and the recommendations. This product might not solve the problem would spread more awareness about work-life balance.
Evaluations

Response to Questionnaire

4. I like that the camera asks for permission. If it wasn’t so I would feel my employer is invading my privacy. Earning points for recommending someone is motivating. Designs look neat. I would love to have this product in my workplace.

5. Its an internal social media portal for the company employees. Where employees can inspire, appreciate and be thankful to one another. This solution can bring my employees closer and let me push them to create balance. I will like to invest in this product for my company!
Imagine RIT Exhibition

Imagine RIT is an innovation and creativity festival held on RIT campus. Thousands of visitors attend this event to go through different exhibitions. It is a great opportunity for getting feedback and validating the proposed solution.

The VCD lab allotted a iMac for each student. An A3 size poster was installed at the station. The visitors explored the working Invision prototype installed on the computers. Some of the audience filled in their feedback on a printed survey form kept on the table. It was a great experience sharing the product with the visitors. Even though most of the audience wasn’t related to the product, this process gave me a good visual feedback.

The poster attracted a lot of visitors to the station to learn more about the product. The survey results evidently showed a positive response towards the design. At least 80% of the visitors understood their way about the prototype.
Conclusions

This thesis investigated one of the advertising industries biggest problem, the work-life balance. This project did not aim to reduce the workload. It meant creating a better mood at work to reflect on their personal life. This thesis project considered and tested many design iterations before reaching the final solution. The main aim was to take care of company’s emotional culture.

The user-research played an important role while designing the proposed solution. Usability testing conducted on the user group allowed understanding the drawbacks. Considering the target audience at every stage helped in creating a meaningful user experience.

The design iterations started in form of an application and a digital wall. These solutions consumed more time and effort. They weren't feasible options for the fast-paced advertising industry. The final solution was in form of a screen pop-up and a dashboard. After an extensive user research and testing proved that a traditional medium well-suited this situation.

The evaluations done with the user group proved that the final product solved the claimed problems. The work-life balance is a huge problem that has existed in the industry. One solution cannot solve such an enormous issue. But Moodboard is taking a small step to help one agency at a time.
Final Considerations

Moodboard was a design solution for improving the work-life balance of an advertising agency. One particular agency was the focus of the user research and usability testing. Narrowing down the subject helped in studying the audience well.

Although, for future considerations, Moodboard wants to target the whole advertising industry. The solution might give options based on the size of the company. They want to create an understanding and awareness of the issue within the corporation. It helps to advertise industry for not being one of the most affected industry due to work-life balance. This change can make many lives easier and happier.
APPENDIX

A2 Thesis proposal
A3 Bibliography
A4 Acknowledgment
HARMONY

A Digital Solution For
The Work-Life Balance
In An Advertising Agency

Shalaka Shantaram Haldankar

MFA Thesis Proposal
Visual Communication Design
Rochester Institute of Technology
October 18, 2016
Thesis Approval Committee

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Abstract:

The long working hours in the advertising industry is not a written fact, but a known fact. It has become a common practice in agencies for a while now, leading to work-life imbalance for employees. The agencies follow this practice, not because of its effectiveness, but because that’s what everyone else does. The advertising industry easily ignores the fact of short breaks from work increase productivity. The more nights/weekends you spend at work, the more productive person you are, is a common belief of the industry.

The purpose of this thesis is to help the employee of an advertising agency to have a better work-life balance. It will be beneficial for the employer and the employees. It would inspire the employees to improve life at work and after it. Similarly, the employers can take care of their employees. The tracking of time and feelings will create awareness to inspire employees to not just work but do other activities too, which will further lead to better creativity and productivity.

“If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it.”–Lord Kelvin
This quote states what you can measure, has a room for improvement. The basis of this thesis is on similar lines. The solution-tracker of employee’s feelings about work, management, colleagues, personal life, and other activities. The data collected will let the employers know their employee’s happiness or frustration and offer assistance if needed. The employees can share their highlights of the week/weekend, skills, and other activities to encourage their colleagues to try activities other than work. Employees can share reviews, praises and encourage each other to have a life beyond work.

Keywords:

Advertising agency, work-life balance, long working hours, productivity, track employee’s happiness, feelings, praises, reviews, encouragement, sharing.
Situation Analysis:

A young copywriter at Y&R Indonesia, Mita Diren, died at age of 24 due to continuous work of 30 hours. This incidence moved the industry, resulting in several articles criticizing the long working hour’s culture. Her last tweet mentioned her continuous work to meet the deadlines. She had consumed strong energy drinks to survive these hours. Even this incidence could not change the industry patterns, though.

The late night and working weekends is a trend of the industry since it started. It’s assumed to have overtimes in an advertising career. A study conducted stated most of the advertising professionals leave advertising jobs for bad work-life balance. This research compared the competitive industries, proving advertising agencies the last for “good work-life balance”. Some agencies started giving away perks or compensatory time off for weekend work days.

The advertising industry is not the only one but a leading one to face this problem. There are existing work-life balance apps for productivity and time management. These apps track your time to keep you aware of your time distributions. But none of these apps are focussed on the advertising agencies. None of the agencies are encouraging their employees to manage their time well.
**Thesis Statement:**

This thesis research is focussed on building a digital solution for advertising professionals which would encouraging them to have a better balance between their professional and personal life.

**Problem Statement:**

A few years back, Sweden declared a nation working time of 6 hours a day. To make people happy and productive. Their aim was to utilize the time effectively, so people enjoy their private lives. They proved that continuous 8 hours work can slow down the progress. On another hand, an advertising agency considers it to be an achievement to work long hours.

At an average 12 hours, the shift is a common deal in an agency. These long hours lead to stress, pressure and lack of focus. Such exhaustion cannot lead to any kind of creativity. An interruption in your personal life is not considered as an issue for deadlines and pitches. Most of the agency professionals leave the industry for its long hours and bad work-life balance.

The death of a 24 year old copywriter due to 30 hours of continuous work moved the industry. But it did not change anything about its long hour culture. Because they gave much more importance to the pitches and deadlines than someone’s life.

This thesis project will explore digital interactive solutions for people working in agencies for a better work-life balance.
Survey Literature:

The Culture of Long Agency Hours

In this article, the writer Jack Marshall talks about working long hours is an agency trend, not a necessity. Most of the agencies work longer because they think it’s the right way. There are several types of research that prove rest is a necessity for creativity. It is easy for an agency to say “we are working this weekend” rather than doing the wholesale change. Due to the pressure of the competitive industry, seems almost impossible that the agency culture is changing anytime soon.


70% of marketing and communications agency employees say work affects their health.

According the survey conducted by The Drum, 70% of agency employees believe their health is affected by their work. The survey was taken after death of a 24 year old PR agency in China due to over-work. Almost 90% of the people agreed that the work pressure is increasing.

Survey Literature:

Is there a work-life balance in an advertising agency?

This article is a debate that stirred up Ms. Friedrich stated, the new talent is less dedicated. A working professional of different age commented, working long hours doesn’t necessarily mean productivity. The employees are human and must have a life beyond work.


Of long-hours, working hard and advertising: Part 1

After the death of Mita Diran, many advertising professionals called upon the agencies to re-think their employee’s work-life balance. They suggested to say “no” to unreasonable work. The writer sarcastically says the death of an employee or talking about work-life balance is a smaller issue compared to the next big campaign or pitch. Working late is a routine for the agencies. It is not hard work or working late that bothers but after a while, it becomes a habit, an expectation, and a work culture.

Survey Literature:

**Study Reveals The Obvious: People Leave Agency Jobs Because Of Low Pay, Bad Work/Life Balance, Lack Of Strategic Vision**

This article discusses, how people leave agencies for different reasons like, low pay, bad work-life balance and lack of strategic vision. As per the poll with other 8 competitive agencies, advertising industry came last in work-life balance. The research also shows that professionals in the advertising agencies are looking for more than the money. Telling the story of their culture and purpose, by showcasing their talent brand in a compelling way that offers sustainable differentiation, can fill in this gap.


**Work-Life Balance Defined**

The writer defines work-life balance in different ways. He says work-life balance is not equally distributing time for work and personal activities. It means an equal balance between achievement and enjoyment. This definition can change for a single or a married person.

Survey Literature:

**Time Tracking: The One Thing That Will Tell You Exactly How Productive You Are... Or Aren’t!**

This article states, what you can measure has a room for improvement. The only factor that matters in improving productivity is time. A track of time can help you be productive.


**How to Improve Work/Life Balance for Employees**

This article talks about suggestions for work-life balance of your employees.
- Allow employees to work from home,
- Give importance to outcomes, not hours worked.
- Looking deeper at workplace culture.
- Compulsory breaks in the work day,
- Extra time off for charitable pursuits or volunteer work.
- Unlimited vacations.
- Offering maternity/paternity leave childcare benefits to parents.
- Getting feedback from employees,
- Provide help for employees everyday tasks done.

By Allowing Employees More Flexibility in What Hours They Work in a given Day, Employees Can Better Manage Their Time around All Obligations. Some Companies Are Even Going for Flexible Work Weeks in Which Employees Can Work 4 Longer Days and Take a 3-day Weekend Every Week. If This Is Too Much, Consider That Flexible Hours Could Even Mean Allowing Employees to Make up Hours Lost to Personal Appointments or Errands, so They Do Not Need to Take Time off to Accomplish These Things. “How to Improve Work/Life Balance for Employees - HR Daily Advisor.” HR Daily Advisor. 2016. Accessed October 17, 2016. http://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/2016/02/10/how-to-improve-worklife-balance-for-employees/.
**Survey Literature:**

**Frequent short rest breaks from computer work: effects on productivity and well-being at two field sites**

In the study conducted, the computer workers were made take 30 sec break and 3 minute break every hour of work. The 3 minutes breaks were preffered over 30 secs breaks. The results provided an evidence that short break between continuous computer work increased productivity.


**How To Achieve Work-Life Balance In A Creative Agency**

It is a common fear to be in the creative agency and have fear of not having a date, a dog, time to go to the gym, and have ready-to-eat noodles until they retire or quit. As an agency, it is obvious the employers might love their workaholic employees. But employees who get involved in other activities also should be hired or the company will be missing on the outside world.

Competitive Analysis:

Daily Routine

• Daily Routine keeps track of your routine.
• Lets you know whether you are workaholic or take too many breaks.
• Set routines to pick from or create one.
• It takes care of your multiple demanding roles in one single app.
• Reminders for activities depending on your crazy day.

Crunch Time

• The most comprehensive overtime tracking app.
• Track multiple projects & jobs at the same time.
• Add friends & colleagues, to your Friends List.
• Track regular hours, sleep hours, overtime hours, mood, weight, vacation hours, & more.
• Send & receive messages between friends.
• Set personal Work|Life balance goals.
• Receive achievement badges for accomplishments.

TimenEye

Timeneye time tracking app features:

• Overall view of your daily time entries
• Easily browse by timer and timers’ tasks
• Customizable alerts to notify that you have an active timer each 15/30/60 minutes
• Time entries are automatically saved to the web app (track.timeneye.com)
Competitive Analysis:

Asana

- Add & edit tasks from anywhere.
- Track all of your work.
- Communicate with colleagues through asana.
- Free unlimited usage.

Ekomi VOE

- Create and join teams
- Track feedback of the employees
- Create reports
- Ask questions and track responses.
- Gamification to reward employees.
- Complete privacy control so employees can post feedback or ask questions anonymously.

Analysis

Most of the work-life balance app track your time and daily routines. They help to keep you aware of the distribution of your time. The employee focused app track your feedback to create reports. None of the apps are focused on the work-life balance of advertising professionals.
Design Ideation:

Word Map

MOTIVATE  INSPIRE
ISSUES  COLLEAGUES  MANAGEMENT
TEAMS  PRESSURE  FEEDBACK
FEELINGS  DEADLINES  REVIEWS
TIME TRACK  OVERTIME  STRESS
ROUTINES  PITCHES  PRAISES

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

PERSONAL  FAMILY
REST  HEALTH  SOCIAL
SKILLS  FEELINGS  MOMENTS
ENJOY  RESPONSIBILITIES  RELAX
REJUVENATE  WEEKENDS  HOLIDAYS
LEAVES  FRIENDS  FREE TIME
Design Ideation:

Flowchart

- HARMONY
  - HOW YOU FEELING ABOUT
    - WORK
    - MANAGEMENT
    - COLLEAGUE
    - PERSONAL
  - PERFORMANCE
    - REVIEWS
    - FEEDBACK
    - RECOMMENDATIONS
  - UPDATES
    - WEEKEND STORIES
    - OTHER ACTIVITIES
    - SKILL SHARE
    - ISSUES

ADD A COMMENT
ANONYMously
Design Ideation:

- Tracking how are the employees feeling about work, management, personal, colleagues, etc.
  a. This will benefit the employers understand their employees and their problems.
  b. Help will be provided to the employees to have a better balance between work and life.

- Allow them to share reviews, feedback, and recommendations.

- They give and get rewards.

- Vote for best copy, artwork, idea of the week.

- The employer can track their performance for promotions and also provide assistance if needed.

- Things like highlights of the week/weekend, other activities or any unique skills they know can be shared with others.

- The trending shares will motivate others to try new things like their colleagues.

- They can share issues to ask for help.
Design Ideation:

Wireframes

- How you feeling?
  - Work
    - happy
    - sad
    - angry
    - neutral
  - Add comment
  - anonymously
- Management
- Colleague
- Personal

- Overall Graph
  - Work
  - Life
  - Balance

- Performance Chart
- Ratings
- Feedbacks
- Reviews
- Recommendations
- Copy of the week
- Artwork of the week
- Idea of the week
- Campaign of the week

- Trending
  - Weekend highlights
  - Other activities
  - Skill Shares
  - Issues
  - Upcoming Events
Methodology:

The thesis project explores interaction and user-experience design to build a digital media platform for advertising professionals and employers. In addition to that digital design elements for the platform.

Target Audience

• The advertising professionals who due to the long working hour culture of the industry have a bad work-life balance.

• The employer who care about their employees unlike other agencies.

Anticipated Project & Components

• App Design
• High-fidelity app prototype for user interaction and testing
• Iteration of high-fidelity app prototype after user feedback
• Design Document (in PDF):
Implementation Strategy:

The process of implementation of this project will utilize softwares like illustrator, photoshop, and indesign for design and Invision/Adobe XD for prototype. To start with brand identity for the product and a visual guide will be created. The final execution will consist of an app design and a high-fidelity prototype. A paper prototype for user-testing the product with the advertising industry professionals. Lastly, incorporating the user feedback in the designs and high fidelity prototype.

Dissemination:

For future audience interaction the thesis will be showcased at:

- Thesis Show 2017 Rochester Institute of Technology
- D&AD Professional Awards 2017
- Behance Student Show, Online
- Kyoorious Design Awards 2017

Evaluation Plan

The interactivity of mobile application will be tested on advertising professionals from different agencies. The user feedback will be used to revise the design accordingly. There will be two iterations made to the final prototype. The prototype will be tested with face-to-face observations.
Some important points will be considered while evaluating:
- Do the advertising professionals like the solution?
- Will the agency be using such a solution to encourage their employees?
- Is the app easy to use and navigate?
- Has the product made an impact to convince the target audience?
Timeline:

**THESIS TIMELINE FALL 2017**

- **Aug 22**: Ideation
- **Aug 29**: Research
- **Sep 5**: Survey literature
- **Sep 12**: Proposal
- **Sep 19**: Oct 25
- **Sep 26**: Proposal documentation
- **Oct 3**: Development
- **Oct 10**: Review presentation
- **Oct 17**: Competitive analysis
- **Oct 24**: Presentation
- **Oct 31**: Nov 7
- **Nov 14**: Nov 21
- **Nov 28**: Dec 5
- **Dec 12**

**THESIS TIMELINE SPRING 2017**

- **Jan 23**: Process flowchart
- **Jan 30**: Paper prototype
- **Feb 7**: Evaluation & feedback
- **Feb 14**: High-fidelity prototype
- **Feb 21**: Prototype adjustments (iteration 2)
- **Feb 28**: Evaluation & feedback
- **Mar 7**: Usability protocol
- **Mar 14**: Final presentation
- **Mar 21**: Thesis presentation
- **Mar 28**: Apr 4
- **Apr 11**: Apr 18
- **Apr 25**: May 2
- **May 9**: May 16
- **May 23**
Bibliography:


Bibliography:


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