Pitch In Functional Specification

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1.0 Purpose of Pitch In Specification

The purposes of this document are to:
- inform readers of the problems with the current scenario
- explain Pitch In’s transformed scenario
- guide creation of Pitch In programming
- create an account of the transformations of Pitch In as needed.

2.0 Connecting Volunteers with Volunteer Opportunities

The goal of Pitch In is to transform the way people look at volunteering and, in turn increase the hours of volunteer time nonprofit organizations receive. We want to encourage volunteers by validating their efforts, providing a sense of community, and boosting motivation. We are aiming to create a community of volunteers that will make a positive change in the world.

Volunteering is a tool by which all people can come together and encourage change to create a more just world. By volunteering, individuals can make a difference in the life of others and help to improve the balance of life right in their own community. Each person making a small effort will result in a huge advancement in the overall picture. Pitch In strives to bridge the gap between volunteer coordinators and volunteers by utilizing profiles, schedules, reminders, social links, and graphic counters.

3.0 Users of Pitch In

Pitch In will accommodate two main types of users:
- Volunteers
- Volunteer Coordinators
3.1 User Roles Definitions:

- **Volunteers** are people looking for volunteer opportunities. They need to be able to create and update profile, input a schedule, initiate connections with volunteer organizations, receive opportunity notifications and reminders, and communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator. In addition, they may want to be able to search for volunteer opportunities, link their volunteer activities to their social media, and set goals for their volunteer activity.

- **Volunteer Coordinators** are people that are officially recognized as having the ability and responsibility of coordinating volunteer activities for a non-profit organization. They need to be able to create and update profiles for the organizations they work for, confirm organization connections with volunteers, post volunteer opportunities and details, receive program notifications, accept and deny volunteers for events, search the volunteer database, communicate with volunteers, and verify volunteered hours. In addition, they may want to be able to create notes about volunteers and create social connections with volunteers and volunteer groups.

3.2 User Tasks: The object tools available to users of Pitch In are:

- personal profiles
- volunteer connections
- social connections
- schedules
- volunteer opportunities
- graphic counters
- site search engine
Pitch In is meant to be the bridge between volunteers, organizations, and opportunities. Figure 1 shows the exact roles each user will play throughout the connection process.

![Figure 1. Pitch In swim lane diagram.](image1)

The class diagram in Figure 2 depicts all of the interactions and actions made available to the users as well as the role that Pitch In will play (as represented by the arrows).

![Figure 2. Pitch In class diagram. Arrows represent the role of Pitch In](image2)
Every interaction in Pitch In will be interchangeably directed between volunteer and volunteer coordinator. Pitch In's purpose is to facilitate these interactions and allow for a smooth and lasting relationship between users.

On initial use, every user will need to create a personal profile and select preferred volunteer position categories. The profile will resemble a resume and will include skills, interests, goals, and any other special needs or accommodations to aid volunteer coordinators in creating niche groups. The profile and volunteer categories will remain available for editing.

The next step will differ for users. The volunteer will sync to an existing calendar or create a new calendar in the app. Using the calendar the volunteer coordinator will be able to post available volunteer opportunities with their non profit organization. Volunteers will be able to look for specific opportunities that match the free time in their schedule. Both users will receive regular prompts from Pitch In to update this information.

All users will have the option to create and edit posts that will link to selected social media platforms and to use a search engine to create personalized searches of availability and opportunities. With this information entered, Pitch In will be able to match availability to opportunities and send opportunity notifications and reminders to users.

Pitch In will include the possibility for the users to set goals. The app will have a graphic counter that users will set to their specific goals, which will vary by frequency, and hours. The app will encourage users to meet these goals and continue to participate within the app.

Users will also have the ability to post all volunteer activity to their social platforms, which will help spread awareness of the product and of volunteer opportunities. Whenever a user reaches a goal they will also have the chance to post this to their social circles.
3.3 Connecting Users: The process of Pitch In can be visualized clearly through the following scenarios.

3.3.1 Volunteer Scenario

John is a father who is interested in volunteering with his 12-year-old daughter Tina. He has volunteered with the Capital Area Humane Society and the ASPCA in the past and has heard great things about Pitch in. John happily filled out his schedule and profile and is waiting for volunteer opportunities to become available. He has indicated on his profile that his priority is spending time volunteering with his daughter.

John receives a notification of a volunteer opportunity with the Capital Area Humane Society for July 11th. He confirms his interest and availability right away but is unsure if the opportunity could include his daughter. The next day John received a reply from the volunteer coordinator who agreed to allow Tina to accompany him at the event.

Figure 3. Pitch In Cultural Model.
In the cultural model (figure 3), John and Tina as a team are represented by the volunteer object. Pitch In has now identified a volunteer opportunity for them with the Capital Area Humane Society. The volunteer coordinator has accepted them for the event and they have now confirmed their attendance.

3.3.2 Volunteer Coordinator Scenario

Sara is a volunteer coordinator at the Capital Area Humane Society. She has planned two pet adoption days at a local pet store and needs five volunteers each day to make it happen. She uses Pitch In to post her need for five volunteers on July 10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th}.

Pitch In compares the time availability of volunteers to the Capital Area Humane Society to Sara’s posted volunteer opportunities. It finds eight possible volunteers for the 10\textsuperscript{th} and four possible volunteers for the 11\textsuperscript{th}. Volunteer opportunity notifications are sent out to the 12 interested volunteers by Pitch In, and Sara is sent a notification of who may be available on each day.

Six volunteers confirm their interest and availability to volunteer for the 10\textsuperscript{th}. Sara is thrilled with the response and accepts all of them to help. An extra body is always welcome and many hands make light work.

Unfortunately, Sara is not quite as lucky with her response for the 11\textsuperscript{th}. Only two of the four possibilities confirm their interest and availability for that day. This leaves Sara needing three more volunteers.

Sara accepts one of the volunteers, but sees on the other interested volunteer’s profile, John, that he is really wanting to volunteer with his 12
year old daughter. Sara sends a query back to John asking more about his situation.

Needing more volunteers, Sara also sends queries out to the other two possibilities provided by Pitch In to let them know that she really needs help and to see if they could help out.

The personal touch that Sara has offered in her outreach works and both people confirm that they can help her out. Sara now has four definite volunteers and is feeling better about the day, but is still short one person.

To make sure she has enough hands on deck, Sara continued to search for one more volunteer for the 11th. Cathy, an elderly lady that lives in the neighborhood with the pet store answers her call and agrees to participate as a volunteer. Sara finally has the volunteers she needs with a little extra cushion.

3.3.3 Combined outcome: Results of the utilization of Pitch In for the example scenarios.

1) The adoption day on the 10th and 11th were successes thanks to those who utilized Pitch In.

2) Cathy befriended Tina and the two of them worked as a team drawing people in and answering their questions about the animals they had up for adoption.

3) John was able to successfully introduce Tina into the world of volunteering.

4) Sara adopted out 5 kittens, 2 cats, 4 puppies, and 3 dogs during the two events.

5) Cathy was enchanted with Tina and approached Sara about calling her to volunteer with the girl again next time, saying, “It was a
delight to work with such a kind hearted, youthful girl and be reminded what a difference everyone can make.”

4.0 Wireframes

4.1 Interactions: The cornerstone of Pitch In is the ability for users to set up their schedules within the app so Pitch In can find volunteer opportunities for them. The calendar in Pitch In will allow for direct inputting of a schedule by the user or integration with the two most common calendar applications: Apple and Google.

After the user has successfully shared their calendar with the application, Pitch In will do the work of finding opportunities for them. The app will send the user notifications about these opportunities, these notifications will include: the initial match, acceptance on both parties, and alerts as the opportunity approaches.

Volunteer coordinators will be tasked with verifying the time that a volunteer has performed at an opportunity. This wireframe shows that screen for the volunteer coordinator as well as what the volunteer will see as their opportunities are completed and verified.

4.2 Views and Objects

4.2.1 Calendar View

After setting up their profile, the user will be asked to input their personal calendar into the app so Pitch In can go on to match the user with volunteer opportunities. The calendar will need to be filled out in some form or another, either with a little or a lot of manually entered information
into Pitch In’s calendar or by syncing one of their own that is already filled out.

The stars on the right, which can change to any number of signs or markings, signify where Pitch In has found a correlation between a volunteer’s schedule and an opportunity at an organization. The user will be able to click on the signifier to learn more about the opportunity.

4.2.2 Notification View

This is the notification screen that users, both volunteers and volunteer coordinators, will see as a log of their interactions and opportunities.
Any updates on Pitch In’s end will be sent to the user on their phone using a push notification. When the user clicks on the notification, or simply enters the app later, they will find this notification screen where they can view the updates and click on specific ones to view more in depth in those areas of the app.

4.2.3 Verification View

This is the verification screen that the volunteer and volunteer coordinator will see as opportunities are completed on both ends.

It’s important that the volunteer is actually arriving to and completing the opportunities they sign up for. The verification page on the left will be what
the volunteer coordinator sees after an event has come up and ended. They will see a list of names of volunteers that used Pitch In in order to attend the event. The coordinator must simply check the box next to their name to verify that the volunteer did indeed complete the opportunity.

The right view is what the volunteer will see in regards to all of their completed opportunities. An orange circle next to the opportunity name will be filled in if the hours were verified, or left blank if not.

5.0 Testing Overviews

5.1 Volunteer: The biggest problem we found was lack of time for volunteering. Our initial research was designed to probe into how and what went into the volunteer decision process. Things like what factors people considered when
choosing where to volunteer, where they searched, difficulties they may have faced, and how much time they were willing to spend to find “the right fit”.

We observed participants in a range of ages, from high school through retirement, to gain a sense of the generational differences in the process. Location and simplicity were factors that influenced all of the participants. Everyone we talked to said they were not willing to spend much time searching for opportunities. One participant observed, “Why spend a ton of time looking for a volunteer opportunity, when I could be volunteering? Time is at a premium.”

So our next research task was designed to investigate how much time the process really took. We set up a role play scenario asking participants to allow us to watch them as they searched for and found a volunteer opportunity. The average time was 3 minutes and 45 seconds with the longest being 6 minutes (see figure 4), well within acceptable limits. We found that six out of seven participants went directly to google and searched for volunteer opportunities and then chose one of several volunteer databases available online.

![Figure 4](image.jpg)  
*Figure 4* Time spent in search of volunteer opportunities by seven project participants.
In one of these databases, volunteermatch.org (see figure 5), a participant enjoyed the opportunity to refine her search to get more personal results. She said, “I liked how it has categories that were in areas that I hadn’t considered before.” The search option made it easy for them to refine the search by keyword choices resulting in a more personal list of opportunities. We also found a feature to choose virtual volunteer opportunities. Although none of the participants chose to use this option, it provided a window for a wider variety of possibilities. By discovering that it is quite simple to find and connect with volunteer positions, we began to see a larger window of opportunity in connecting nonprofits and volunteers on a more daily basis and trying to create additional motivation for volunteers to participate.

We noticed that the available sites did not meet specific volunteer needs. For instance, Paula is a single parent with a 12 year old daughter and she is eager to incorporate more volunteering into their life. Currently, their opportunities are limited to what they can do together.

To transform this scenario, Pitch In could provide a way to search for and request volunteer opportunities that are child-friendly. In addition, each user’s profile could state if they have children that they would need to bring with them to the opportunity. Organizations would then know whether this volunteer is a good fit for them based on whether they allow children to volunteer or if they provide child care services for those that need it.
Figure 5  Volunteermatch.com screenshot showing varied cause areas and virtual opportunities.

Creating a personal connection between volunteer and nonprofits is important to provide motivation to continue volunteering with the organization. Repeat volunteers say that they are more likely to dedicate time to a cause that they feel passionate about. It is easier to stay involved when there is a personal connection with the cause and a personal relationship developed between the event organizer. Evan, one of our research participants, explained that “Sometimes I see volunteer opportunities that I am interested in, but I find it hard to go out of my way to really get involved with them, or to contact someone I don’t know.” This shows an opportunity for Pitch In to create lasting relationships between new volunteers and organizations.

5.2 Nonprofit Organization: A very large opportunity for transformation lies with considering the needs of the nonprofit - through the volunteer coordinator. We spoke with Michelle Adams, an AmeriCorps volunteer coordinator, she told us that in, “designing a recruitment strategy, you need to take into affect volunteer's motivations, why do they want to volunteer? For professional experience,
court-ordered mandate, because they want to feel good about themselves, because they want to genuinely help the community? This is a pretty tricky thing to determine, but once you determine their motivations, you can tailor your recruitment messages to specific motivations.”

Michelle walked us through a 10 step process that she followed based on the types of projects and volunteers she was working with.

1. Determining needs of an organization and completing a needs based assessment
2. Gaining buy-in from an organization
3. Creating a position description
4. Designing a recruitment strategy
5. Recruit volunteers
6. Orientation and Screening of volunteers
7. Training (if needed)
8. Running and implementing the project
9. Evaluating your project
10. Reporting (for our AmeriCorps recruitment)

Michelle said that volunteer coordinators are always looking to decrease the amount of time it takes to build a recruitment strategy. She also mentioned that once the reason for motivation has been established, it is easy to determine what roles will work well for specific people. In this thought process, Michelle has shown us the benefits of another opportunity for Pitch In. A personal profile page expressing each volunteer’s specific skills, abilities, and motivation could go a long way in helping volunteer coordinators in evaluating the best placement for volunteers; benefiting both parties.
6.0 **Future Steps**

Our next step for Pitch In is to start creating a prototype. We realize that we need a dual interface system because we expect the volunteer to lean towards needing an app, while the volunteer coordinator will spend more time using a computer interface.

At this point, we need to focus on providing a medium for schedules, volunteer opportunities, personal profiles, communication, volunteer connections, social links, and a basic site search engine.

Obstacles that we foresee:

- Convincing volunteer coordinators to spend the time necessary to get established in the system and to motivate them to stay active
- Maintaining an app for ease of use on the volunteer end and web presence for the volunteer coordinator

The app will allow direct communication between volunteers and volunteer coordinators. The Pitch In volunteer profiles, combined with specific opportunity postings by volunteer coordinators will reduce and hopefully nearly eliminate this issue. It will streamline the process of finding volunteer opportunities, making it not only easier but more fun and interesting.

Pitch In will improve the volunteer search process and encourage more and more people to volunteer and to better their community.