

12<sup>th</sup> September 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

Ignite Data Solutions partnered with Monash University, taking on a mentoring role within the Postgraduate Industry Capstone project. This project focused around bringing together industry professionals and students from multiple disciplines within the Faculty of Information Technology Master's Program. The aim was to develop innovative systems for commercial use in an industry focused setting, rather than in a purely academic sense.

The Monash University Capstone project was designed to help Monash students gain authentic and worthwhile experiences, and to assist with increasing their employability. The regular engagement with industry partners exposes them to current best practices, and what it may be like working in the IT industry. Further, the systems developed can be of great value to the wider community.

Monash University's Gail Bourne stated that *'we are keen to get organisations on board that are professional, innovative, practical and ambitious. We recognised that Ignite was one such organisation with a great deal of expertise, particularly in the data analytics business intelligence area.'*

The students were tasked to work within multi-disciplinary teams to analyse open data, as well as identify community problems or opportunities that arise as a result. They then used an agile approach to develop and implement solutions to meet those needs.

As mentors our aim was to support and grow the community knowledge base, as well as provide access to industry best practice. This was done within a supportive environment that provided an open platform for discussion around differing approaches and constructive feedback.

Students were exposed to a professional industry development environment. As such, they experienced the intensity of solution development to a very tight deadline and the sense of achievement and confidence that results from successful completion. They learnt how to resolve conflict, handle issues and problems within their self-managed teams and achieve outcomes, which are all useful strategies for future employment.

The mentors played a key role coaching, questioning, opening students' minds and providing feedback throughout the process. The feedback given was used not only by the students, but by the program to make sure the experiences gained were of practical use to industry.

When Ignite was first approached to contribute as mentors, we had concerns around the time commitment required. After looking into the program further, it was evident that there is a myriad of benefits, both from the perspective of the mentee and the mentor. The ability to identify and support future talent, as well as the opportunity to contribute to the generation of new ideas provided a distinct advantage to us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shelley Chand".

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