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StartupBus Day 3: Time to hustle

Since we'd spent the first nighton a plane, our stop in Durham was the first occasion for the SF StartupBus team to take a shower since the beginning of the trip. In the morning you could see the smiles on our faces, happy to be clean and well rested again!

Before hitting the road to continue our entrepreneurial journey, we were invited to breakfast with the Shoeboxed team at American Underground. You've probably heard of Shoeboxed, they are building a solution to take care of business trip expenses. You send them envelopes full of receipts, and they scan everything for you. They've managed to get traction outside of North Carolina and are one of the most successful companies in Durham. The founders shared their stories as well as some marketing tips, which would be really helpful to us as the third day of StartupBus is usually dedicated to getting users and traction. With that, we were ready to start our last leg of the trip – from Durham to Nashville with the combined West Coast + Florida SuperBus and the New York bus that had arrived late in the night.

While my teammates were resting, I managed to complete a working prototype of our app so we could start selling it on our way to Nashville. Our ultimate goal was to get our first customers and try it in real conditions in downtown Nashville. At this point we also took the time to connect with local journalists that might be interested in covering our story, but our timing was too late – it was already Saturday.

Since our project was based on a real physical product that we would deliver to customers, we couldn't have all of the logistics completely set up in time for the StartupBus judges. Our goal was to deliver a "close-to-real" experience to our first customers, even though we only had a 3-day-old project. Thanks to Bill, the SF conductor, we managed to get in touch with a local print shop in Knoxville on our way to Nashville. They made 100 stickers of our logo for free! That's exactly what we needed to make it feel real. I have to say, it was really fun to see the faces of our fellow buspreneurs when they realized how seriously we were taking our project. It also meant that there was no way back; we would have to ship the app for users to get a real experience, and we would have to deliver orders as if they were real.

When we arrived in Nashville, our plan was clear: go downtown to meet potential users and get orders. This would show enough hustle to convince the judges the next day that we have a legit project.



While we were outside “selling” our idea, the other the teams continued working on their pitches and products with only a few hours left before the semi-finals. That’s where everything happens. Where it’s determined whether you’re done or whether you have to keep working…