

BUILDER GUIDE

ProjectVertex 2026

Build What Matters.

Everything a registered team needs for the weekend — the journey, the dashboard, the sprint, and how to avoid losing marks you have already earned.

FOR

Registered Builders

CHALLENGE DATES

31 October – 1 November 2026

DOCUMENT VERSION

1.0

Read alongside the Official Rulebook, which governs where the two differ.

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Welcome, Builder

You are registered. From here the job is simple to describe and hard to do: find a real problem, build something that solves it, and have it running by nine o'clock on Sunday night.

This guide is the practical companion to the Rulebook. The Rulebook tells you what the rules are. This tells you how to actually get through the weekend without the avoidable mistakes that cost teams marks every year.

DO THESE THREE THINGS TODAY

1. Every member joins the official WhatsApp channel — announcements go there first.
2. Every member signs in to the team dashboard once, to confirm their email works.
3. Agree who is doing what before Saturday. Teams that decide roles during the sprint lose hours.

Your Journey

Before 31 Oct

Prepare

Join the channel, sign in to the dashboard, agree roles, set up your development environments.

31 Oct • 18:00–21:00

Builder Kickoff

Three hours hands-on. The challenge brief is released at the end.

31 Oct • 21:00

Sprint opens

Twenty-four hours on the clock. Scope down immediately.

1 Nov • ~15:00

Feature freeze

Self-imposed, but the best teams do it. Stop building, start finishing.

1 Nov • 21:00

Submission closes

Hard deadline. No extensions.

2–3 Nov

Evaluation

Judges score independently against the published rubric.

Showcase and results

Top teams present. Everyone receives a certificate.

Your Team Dashboard

The dashboard is where your Team ID, announcements and results live. Any registered member can sign in — not just the team lead.

Signing in

1. Go to the portal from the link in your confirmation email.
2. Enter the email address you registered with.
3. Open the sign-in link we send you. It works once and expires after 15 minutes.
4. You stay signed in on that device for 30 days.

WHY THERE IS NO PASSWORD

Passwords get forgotten at 3am during a sprint, and storing them creates a security risk we would rather not carry with your personal data. Proving you can open your own inbox is simpler and safer for everyone.

What you will find there

Team ID

Your official identifier, needed for check-in and any support request.

Your team

All members, with the team lead marked.

Announcements

Everything official, mirrored from the WhatsApp channel.

Leaderboard

Appears once judging closes and results are published.

Builder Kickoff

Three hours on Saturday evening, designed so no team starts the sprint from zero. Attend it even if you already know the material — the challenge brief is released at the end.

Come prepared

- A laptop per member wherever possible, charged, with chargers
- Your development environment already installed and working
- A GitHub account, and a repository created and shared with your team
- Accounts created on the free-tier AI services listed in your kit

- A mobile hotspot as a backup — venue wifi is never as good as promised

The Product Sprint

Twenty-four hours is less time than it sounds. Scope is the whole game.

A workable shape for the 24 hours

WINDOW	FOCUS
21:00 – 22:30	Choose the problem. Write down, in one sentence, who it helps and how. Do not open an editor yet.
22:30 – 00:00	Decide the smallest thing that demonstrates the idea. Cut every feature that is not that.
00:00 – 06:00	Build the core path. One thing working end to end beats five things half-built.
06:00 – 10:00	Rest in shifts. A team that has not slept makes poor decisions in the final hours.
10:00 – 15:00	Finish the core, then improve the interface. Judges must be able to use it.
15:00	Feature freeze. Stop building.
15:00 – 19:00	Record the demo, write the deck, clean the README, deploy if you can.
19:00 – 20:30	Submit. Then test every link in a private browser window.
20:30 – 21:00	Buffer. Something will go wrong. This hour is why you survive it.

THE MOST EXPENSIVE MISTAKE

Building until the last hour. Teams that stop at 15:00 and spend the remaining time finishing consistently outscore teams that were still adding features at 20:00 — because Presentation, UI/UX and a working demo are worth 35 marks, and a half-finished sixth feature is worth none.

Build Resources

Every team receives these at Kickoff:

Challenge brief

The problem statements and any constraints for your track.

Starter repositories

Boilerplate so you are not configuring a build system at midnight.

Prompt library

Patterns that behave predictably rather than impressively.

UI templates

Design assets, so a working product does not have to look unfinished.

API guidance

Which free tiers to use and how to stay inside them.

Evaluation framework

The full rubric. Build against it deliberately.

Guidance only — no live or paid API keys are distributed. Use your own accounts, and stay on the free tiers recommended in your kit to avoid unexpected charges.

Submission Checklist

Work through this from 19:00 on Sunday, not at 20:55.

ITEM
☐ Prototype runs. Someone outside your team can open it and complete the core task.
☐ Repository is public. Open it in a private browser window. If it 404s, judges see a 404.
☐ README explains setup , and discloses any boilerplate or third-party code you reused.
☐ Demo video under 3 minutes , showing the product working, not slides.
☐ Video link is public. Not restricted to your college account.
☐ Deck is 10 slides or fewer and covers problem, solution, users, revenue model, future scope and AI architecture.
☐ Deployed URL still live , if you submitted one. Do not switch it off after testing.
☐ Submission saved in the dashboard, showing a timestamp.
☐ Every link opened in a private window as a final check.

How You Will Be Evaluated

CRITERION	WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR	MARKS
Problem statement	A real, specific problem — not a category	15
Innovation	A genuinely interesting approach	20
AI implementation	AI doing real work, not decoration	20
Technical execution	It runs, and the code holds together	20
UI / UX	A stranger can complete the core task	10
Business potential	A plausible path beyond the weekend	10
Presentation	Clear deck, clear demo	5
Total		100

Note where the marks are. Forty of them — Problem statement, Business potential and half of Innovation — have nothing to do with code. Teams that treat this as a pure engineering contest leave those on the table.

Common Mistakes

Solving a category

"Healthcare" is not a problem. "Rural clinics record patient visits on paper and lose them" is.

Scope that never shrinks

Five features at 60% each score far worse than one that works completely.

AI as decoration

A chatbot bolted to a CRUD app scores poorly on 20 marks. Make the model do the hard part.

Building until the deadline

No demo, no deck, no marks for the work you did.

Private repository

Judges cannot score what they cannot open.

Fake demos

Presenting staged output as working functionality is a disqualification, not a shortcut.

Nobody rests

Decisions made at hour 20 without sleep are usually reversed at hour 23.

Ignoring the rubric

It is published. Build against it on purpose.

Tips for Winning

- **Spend the first ninety minutes not coding.** The teams that win choose better problems, and problem choice is worth 15 marks before a line is written.
- **Find one real user.** Message someone who has the problem. One sentence from them in your deck outweighs any amount of speculation.
- **Demo the core path first.** Open your video with the thing working. Judges watch a lot of videos.
- **Write the README as if you will be hired from it.** Often the most-read artefact after the demo.
- **Assign a finisher.** One person owns the deck, video and submission from 15:00. They do not write code after that.
- **Deploy something.** A live URL a judge can click is worth more than a local build, even a rough one.
- **Say what does not work.** Naming a known limitation reads as engineering judgement. Hiding it reads as a bug when found.
- **Ask for help.** Mentors are there the whole night. Using them costs no marks.

Important Links & Support

Team dashboard	projectvertex.nextchapterskills.com/portal.html
Official WhatsApp channel	Link in your confirmation email — announcements appear here first
Support (urgent, event day)	+91 93530 36483 · WhatsApp
General enquiries	info@nextchapterskills.com
Rules and policies	ProjectVertex 2026 Official Rulebook

DURING THE SPRINT

Technical help, clarification on the brief, and anything blocking your build: message the support number. Response is fastest on WhatsApp overnight. There is no penalty for asking.

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Closing Note

Build something that deserves to exist.

Twenty-four hours from now you will have a product that runs, a repository you can show anyone, and the experience of shipping under real pressure with a team. That is worth more than the ranking, and it lasts considerably longer.

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