1. What makes Alfie a Platform? What are its key features?

When its founders started Alfie in 2016, the goal was to become the "Uber of the fitness industry." Alfie is available both through a website and through a mobile app and is an on-demand digital service that connects personal trainers with people who are looking for training sessions that are outdoors or in their homes – places outside the normal gym setting.

Some of the key features that Alfie provides its users are dual app versions. This gave the trainers and trainees separate user interfaces that had features that were desirable to each group. There were also features in there that easily allowed for connecting and exchanging information between the parties. The trainer app was designed around the monitoring and management of their bookings.

Trainers on the platform had the autonomy to oversee their professional activities through several integral features. These included a sophisticated notification system designed to alert them promptly about new training requests that matched their expertise. They also had access to a request management interface, allowing them to efficiently accept or decline these proposals. An integrated agenda feature was essential for organizing and tracking upcoming training sessions, ensuring a well-managed schedule. Additionally, trainers could personalize their offering by setting their rates and describing their classes, enabling them to tailor their services to their target clientele and market themselves more effectively. This suite of tools empowered trainers to operate their businesses more smoothly and responsively within the platform's ecosystem.

The Alfie trainee app was crafted for ease of use, offering users two main ways to book training sessions. The trainees can either send requests to trainers based on time, location, and activity or directly choose a specific trainer from Alfie. Trainers have three hours to make an offer, which trainees can accept or reject. Upon acceptance, trainees are notified about session details. Alfie facilitates communication and transaction processing through an automated system, charging a fee to the trainee post-session.

The last important feature that Alfie has is curated trainer profiles, which help guarantee quality experiences for the trainees. Personal trainers undergo a registration process, including a security check by a third-party for certification verification, before their services can be listed.

Trainers can then showcase their expertise in up to two activities from over 20 options available on the platform, offering trainees a wide variety of training choices.

2. What tactics has Alfie successfully implemented to address key challenges associated with Platform Design?

Alfie's first tactic towards successful platform design is defining their value unit of training sessions. The firm has recognized fitness trends moving towards catered training and mobile apps so they chose to capitalize on this movement by creating a platform to connect trainers with trainees. The second tactic that Alfie has implemented is to build their platform to facilitate interactions between trainers and trainees around the value unit. This tactic is implemented differently for trainees and trainers with the end goal being to facilitate the transaction and provide benefits to both sets of users.

Trainees can filter for trainers based on criteria like time, place, and activity. This type of tailoring is invaluable to an individual looking to participate in individualized training programs. From this point, the trainee can make a request and the request would flow out to all trainers that matched the criteria which increases the likelihood of generating a match. Also, the trainee may request a specific trainer from a list of trainers. This variation in request making enables Alfie to appeal to a wider range of users that have different preferences for finding relevant trainers. The matching aspect of the platform is another important part of a successful platform since this is where the main value is generated for trainees.

Alfie realized that they should focus on the supply-side of their platform by ensuring they had a strong base of trainers signed up on the platform prior to mass sign-up by trainees. Through exploiting informal social networks, referral mechanisms, outreach to existing trainer communities, and using social proof on social media, Alfie was able to garner a strong and core base of around 100 personal trainers in early 2017. In the trainer's version of the app, any interested personal trainers that wanted to relay their services via Alfie had to go through a background check to ensure that they were certified for the services they offered. This method ensured trainees that they were receiving high-quality experiences if every trainer on the platform was verified to be certified. Trainers were also allowed to offer up to two types of training which provided a wide variety of services and training to trainees.

For trainers, Alfie also realized that their tactics needed to alleviate any struggles regarding client outreach and to facilitate ease of use in order to keep trainer retention high. Overall the trainer's version of the application facilitated the bookings and communications that trainers had with interested clients. The app allowed trainers to have a more widespread net to targeted users and clients that may be interested in their services rather than having to manually approach fitness centers to garner interests for their services. This improved the overall efficiencies of bookings for trainers and even allowed some to have a steady source of income. In addition, the app also allowed trainers to monitor and manage their bookings by incorporating certain features such as a notification system for training requests, a request management process, an organized agenda, and the ability to customize prices for specific services and classes.

3. **Platform Leakage is a monumental threat to Alfie. How can it be addressed? Provide specific platform design solutions with sound support.**
    a. ***Leakage happens when buyers and sellers coordinate outside the platform to cut out the middleman, usually to avoid paying fees. Although platforms are concerned about losing revenue, leakage—by its very nature—is hard to measure and manage***

Platform leakage can lead to a decline in the platform's earnings and weaken its core business offering. To combat this, a comprehensive strategy is needed that concentrates on increasing the loyalty of both users and providers, providing distinctive value, and incorporating elements that deter such leakage. There are multiple design strategies for the platform to tackle the issue of platform leakage.

To enhance user engagement and personalization, the platform can utilize advanced AI to customize workout and diet plans, offering a unique level of personalization not found outside the platform. Additionally, it incorporates gamification elements such as rewards, competitive leaderboards, and interactive challenges, further deepening user engagement and encouraging continued use of the platform through an interactive and rewarding experience.

Alfie can also focus on fostering a vibrant community by developing features like discussion forums, collective challenges, and social media integration, which collectively nurture a strong sense of belonging among users. Additionally, the organization of exclusive online

events and educational workshops offers members unique opportunities for learning and interaction, further strengthening the community bonds within the platform.

Alfie has already started the process of fostering trust and quality assurance, but they can apply a more stringent selection process for trainers, ensuring the platform offers high-caliber services. They can also create a system for users to rate and review services, enhancing the platform's trustworthiness and transparency.

The platform can also set itself apart by offering exclusive content and features, such as specialized fitness series, expert-led seminars, and unique wellness events, making these offerings accessible only through the platform. To enhance the user experience further, it can introduce cutting-edge features like immersive VR workouts and AI-enhanced performance analysis, distinguishing the platform with innovative solutions that cater uniquely to its user base.

To further support Alfie's growth and reduce platform leakage, they can implement a tiered subscription model to enhance the platform's financial structure by offering access to more advanced services and content at higher levels, thereby catering to a diverse user base with varying needs and preferences. Additionally, developing a rewards program can incentivize regular use and long-term commitments to the platform, fostering user loyalty and encouraging continuous engagement with Alfie's offerings. This approach can effectively increase user retention and generate a steady revenue stream.

To prevent platform leakage at Alfie, they can establish robust agreements with service providers. By formulating contracts that include clauses to discourage fitness professionals from offering their services outside the platform and providing incentives for exclusivity, Alfie can secure a committed network of trainers. Furthermore, offering benefits to trainers who remain on the platform—such as promotional support, access to analytical tools, and bonus schemes—can enhance their satisfaction and loyalty, thus ensuring a stable and exclusive offering to users.

The last solution to help safeguard Alfie against platform leakage is to create a strategy centered on regular updates and innovation. By continuously refreshing the platform with new features, workouts, and content, Alfie can keep user interest piqued. Staying ahead of the curve

by incorporating the latest trends in fitness and technology ensures that Alfie remains a competitive and appealing choice for both trainers and users, thus reducing the likelihood of them seeking alternatives outside the platform. This approach fosters a dynamic and evolving platform environment that encourages long-term engagement. By implementing these approaches, Alfie can strengthen its platform, making it more appealing and valuable to users and trainers alike, thereby effectively mitigating the risk of platform leakage.