COL-CREATION

LEARN, SHARE AND CREATE FOR YOUR FUTURE SUCCESS

Student Manual

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INTRODUCTION

The COL-CREATION Training Course has been developed within the development of the COL-CREATION Project, launched with the main objective of increasing the competences (attitudes, skills, knowledge) of Professionals in the Creative Industry on how to develop successful Business Models based on Collaboration supported by Co-Creation, innovative Sharing Economy Platforms and Open Innovation and promoting the proper use of these models and platforms as part of global and sustainable self-employment and entrepreneurship project.

The Training Course is divided in several modules. Each of them comes in this Student Manual with a chapter in the different topics, providing you with background information, and gives links to additional materials (web articles, videos, etc.) to be used along the Training Activities which have been designed for enhancing the implementation of the Training Course with the support of the trainers, based on the collaboration among trainees and focusing in the development of creative solutions to real market problems.

The course contents are divided into the next topics:

Topic 1 Creative Industries and Trends: summary of the main trends affecting the Creative Industries business, competences and labour relations with specific emphasis in those related with the collaboration among companies and professionals.

Topic 2 What are collaboration, co-creation, open-innovation and platform economy: summary of these concepts, impact for companies and professionals in the Creative Industries and basic guidelines for their implementation.

Topic 3 What is Human-Centered Design Methodology: Introduction to human-centered design methodology (HCDM) to tackle wicked problems. This module will introduce you to the methodology. It will teach you the theoretical methodology of human-centered design, which you will use throughout the course. Furthermore, it will explain you what wicked problems are, and how human centered design can help you to tackle those problems and create solutions to work together effective and gives you the possibility to create solutions to the client's problems, based on the HCDM;

- Client introduction and problem briefing; During the course you will work on a wicked problem, presented by a real client. You will learn to prepare yourself for a briefing to relevant questions, and to make a planning based on a client's briefing.
- Finding the problem (discover and define); You will quickly discover that most problems are not what they initially appear to be. Via a process of divergence and convergence, you will analyze the problem and find its root causes to be tackled.
- Finding the solution (ideate and prototype); You will brainstorm and develop multiple solutions through cheap prototypes, test them, and come up with the best solution.

Topic 4 Management of collaborative teams; During this COL-CREATION course, you will work in a team. Get to know your team mates, and learn what their strengths and expertise are. You will also analyze which competences are absent in your team, and how you will deal with this and how to lead a creative and collaborative team.

Topic 5 How to launch your solution on the market; As the final module, you will work on creating a plan to implement your idea in practice and present your solution to the client.

TOPIC 1 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND TRENDS

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Introduction

The Creative Industries have become a topic of increasing interest over the last two decades. This can be attributed both to the emergence of new forms of employment in these fields and to the economic potential ascribed to them. In the meantime, innovations first introduced in the creative industries have often diffused into other economic fields. However, evidence from social research shows that work in the creative industries is characterised by a highly competitive working climate and relatively unstable employment with long working hours, intense workloads and sometimes discontinuous careers.

1.1 Main characteristics of Creative Industries

Merkel (2008) describes the interpenetration of culture, creativity and economy and the change in work organisation as typical characteristics of the Creative Industries. According to him, a tension between local production and global marketing of creative outputs is also indicative of these fields. Other authors see an above-average educational level, flexibility regarding the pattern of orders and earnings and resulting spells of low income, an openness towards further education and high intrinsic motivation as individual prerequisites for working in the Creative Industries. Likewise, the creative milieu has been defined by four criteria: communication between the actors, knowledge about the shared information, competences in special areas and the creation of something new through the combination of these aspects. Last but not least, the role of local embedment and both the ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructure necessary for enabling creative production has also been highlighted.

Creative work is thus often presented as a model of the project-based and freelance economy and a field of labour in which great importance is attributed to self-expression, authenticity and reputation. As a consequence, flexible and temporary cooperation often go hand in hand with relatively high levels of autonomy at work. By definition, creative work is not amenable to direct control by supervisors or to control through organisational and technical structures. Workers’ discretion is required so that companies may benefit from workers’ ingenuity and creativity. Generally, within an internalised employment relationship, the indeterminacy of labour may be overcome also by indirect forms of control aiming at eliciting workers’ effort through target setting, paying bonuses, promising employment stability and advancement, addressing normative orientations, influencing workers’ beliefs, norms and values or creating corporate identities.

Creative workers, such as musicians, in fact ‘self-manage their own creativity’ within the framework set by production and business managers who control the access to resources and to the market. On top, creative work seems to be particularly amenable to normative control because of the special relationship to work: The attachment to the content of work is usually rather high as it provides opportunities for self-expression and the products ‘may still be experienced as in some sense owned’ (Huws, 2010). The desire for public recognition and the search for opportunities to build up a personal reputation are part of workers’ perspectives and thus enter into the bargaining process with the employer’ (Huws, 2010).

However, in many creative industries, the internalised employment relationship seems to be the exception rather than the rule as many workers are self-employed. Project-based and freelance work are typical of film, graphic design, architecture, music, advertisement and other creative sectors. Given the widespread absence of an employment contract, one might assume that the issue of managerial control is not relevant. For several reasons, however, we argue otherwise. First, self-employment may include working for only one customer at least for a certain period of time. This blurs the boundaries between freelancing and dependent employment. Second, even in more independent freelancing there is a problem of indeterminacy of outcome. The customers or cooperation partners want to ensure smooth cooperation or the timely delivery and the

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appropriateness of the contribution or product they ordered. In the creative industries, reputation is of particular importance for being able to continuously find work on a project basis. As a consequence, workers' behaviour is strongly influenced by their concerns for their reputation and therefore reputation is at the core of control strategies.

1.2 Creative Industries and New Technologies

Creative occupations both use and develop new technologies in particular in the area of Information technology which has profoundly changed creative occupations already some two decades ago turning the computer into a universal work tool. Major new fields of work have emerged for creative occupations due to the spread of broadband internet access, the digitalisation of content and multimedia applications. In particular, transitions from "old" to "new" media or the use of video for communication and documentation have changed work in the relevant occupational fields. What is more, the internet offers and creates a "global information space" which provides easy access to information and allows new ways of distributed working. ICTs enable outsourcing and relocation, facilitate cooperation over long distance and allow the digital delivery of immaterial products helping to overcome restrictions of transport giving room for new business models such as e-commerce and crowdworking platforms.

Artistic or creative occupations are particularly well-positioned to bring about new trends in structural changes in the world of work. The diffusion of long and flexible work-time models, as well as the blurring of boundaries between work and private lives, have been attributed to various branches of the creative industries. While different models of the organisation of labour in the creative industries have contributed to the overcoming of problems and challenges in a deregulated world of work – and these models were hence thought of as trend-setting – today, they are more commonly thought of as "models of post-fordist labour policies", in which labour is increasingly seen as "always ready […] and highly subjectified" (Manske and Schnell 2010). Atypical and precarious forms of employment are generally becoming more frequent, as well as multiple (simultaneous) employments and new forms of self-employment. The growing insecurity and rising demands on employees require a continuous re-orientation in regard to knowledge, labour practices and labour relations, requiring the workers to act self-reliantly. Causes for this are, for instance, increasing outsourcing- and networking- processes, which have become the norm in the coordination of economic activities for the production of most goods and the delivery of many services. At the centre of these developments are continuous improvements of information and communication technologies, which greatly affect the organisation of work processes and work conditions in the creative industries. Through the integrating effects of information and communication technologies outsourcing and relocation of labour is facilitated, and for all digitalisable goods and services the "information space" on the Internet becomes a new "place" of production.

An increased spatial concentration of artists in specific regions (cities, city districts, neighbourhoods) therefore allows for the development of social contacts between creatively working people and leads to the formation of geographical clusters through tight and lose structures of communication (especially face-to-face communication). Gong and Hassink (2017) write in this regard "Regions that constitute a "nexus of untraded interdependencies" can enjoy place-specific conventions, rules, norms and practices which support the knowledge-seeking aspects of CIs". Within these clusters, experiences, information and knowledge are exchanged, (business) relationships are formed and technology is commonly used. The creation of tacit knowledge, opposed to formalised, codified knowledge is crucial for the success of such creative industry clusters (Gong & Hassink 2017). According to Clare (2012), creative work is strongly embedded in a social context and social connections among the creators and artists – as well as among businesses – are a constitutive aspect of the creative industry. Merkel and Oppen (2012) describe a "co-presence" (a common physical presence) and "co-location" (living in the same places). This proximity to other creative workers and the potential opportunities for cooperation fosters social interactions within a smaller social milieu, as well as between creative sub-groups, whether for the creation of common products, to exchange ideas, to inspire or critique created works. Hence, through cooperation, co-presence and co-location, as well as through the mechanisms which create boundaries in relation to other groups, homogenous social milieus are formed. Lazzeretti et al. (cited in Gong & Hassink 2017) term such clusters “creative local production systems”. Currid (2007) names the social milieu as the most important mechanism of cultural economy because localisation in a social milieu also provides its stakeholders access to gatekeepers of their specific cultural field.

The communication structures among stakeholders in these social networks can be based on lose and informal or close-knit connections (weak or strong ties). Strong ties tend to be assigned to a local scale, meaning they are assigned to a geographical location, where tacit knowledge comes into existence. Weak ties are ascribed to a global scale where knowledge is passed on explicitly. This contrast of “local/strong” and “global/weak” is increasingly being replaced by the dichotomy of “local/tacit” and “global/explicit” (Grabher 2004), shifting focus to the types of communication rather than their intensity. Depending on the kind of networking relationships, Grabher (2004) defines three different models that can be used to depict networks within the creative industry: The “communality” model (1) is defined by close-knit and recurring relationships; these networks involve private and professional dimensions and trust is built between stakeholders. Because of close-knit and recurring exchanges, implicit knowledge plays an important role in these networks. “Sociality” (2) includes equally close-knit connections, which are, however, not recurring or lasting but temporary. “Connectivity” (3) as a model defines the loosest structure of networks with almost no local embedment in which primarily information relevant to work is exchanged; these networks can mostly be found in a virtual context.

1.3 Creative Industries and Crowdwork

Crowdwork is currently still a relatively small phenomenon within the Creative Industries. This pertains to both the number of enterprises sourcing out creative work through crowdworking platforms and the number of creative workers who look for and take on jobs over such platforms. However, platforms like Upwork, Freelancer or 99 designs show great potential for growth and demand closer attention (see Topic 2).

Crowdwork can be seen as a form of outsourcing in which the working relationship is entirely digital, while sometimes being quite dispersed spatially. All that is needed is the technical infrastructure including an internet connection and the competence to use it properly. By now, tasks of all complexity levels with all levels of requirement and payment are being outsourced. Typically, the cost is below the level for performing the respective task offline. The platforms present themselves as brokers who don’t contribute to the tasks being fulfilled, but only bring together supply and demand.

In the Creative Industries, mainly two kinds of crowdwork can be found: The allocation of work assignments can either be done through “pitching“. This means that products more or less close to completion are submitted in a competition. Only the winner gets paid. Alternatively, a tender is issued with offers being submitted based on which one bidder is chosen and the assignment is completed after this process. Moreover, some platforms offer additional models of distribution like online shops where completed products (e.g., logos, video intros, other designs) can be purchased for a fixed price.

In relation to the theoretical discussions on the creation of social milieus and the formation of creative clusters it is crucial to note the discrepancies between on the one hand the aforementioned arguments for the close geographical (co-) location, regular social contacts, face-to-face-communication or the establishment of tacit knowledge within the social milieu and on the other hand the virtual communication used over online platforms, where close and regular social interaction is rare and anonymity prevails. First, it remains unclear to what extend creative and cultural industries are moved to an online realm. Crowdsourcing is in general a rather small phenomenon and in creative fields is usually confined to areas where the products of the work can be easily digitalised and are rather small in scale, such as in logo design or the production of small videos. Secondly, it also remains to be seen to what extend changes in communication patterns and an assumed lack of face-to-face interaction are going to affect creative and cultural production and if face-to-face communication can be substituted with virtual online communication.

1.4 Trends affecting the business and labour relations in SMEs Creative Industries

Research shows that technology and digitalisation in particular is the main driver in the creative industries in the future. These developments in technology and digitalisation have outstanding effects on the future of the creative industries. The implications on the organisation of the future as well as the mode of working in the future are tremendous. The options for new business for creative people increase with increasing digitalisation. Digital competences are seen as the key element for adaption to the digital change – they open the door for new business models.

The company of the future will be organised as a ”fluid organisation” – often you can‘t differentiate who belongs to the enterprise and who doesn‘t: agencies, consultants, external experts are involved in business processes as well as permanent staff. A new innovation-ecosystem evolves (see Fig.1).

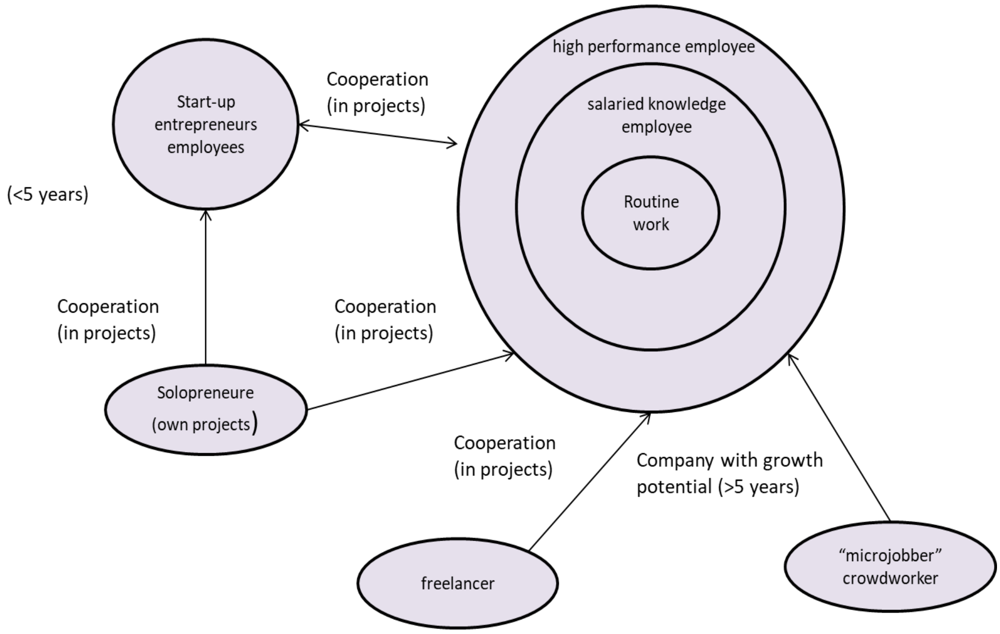

Figure 1: Ecosystem “Creative industries of the future”. Reference www.thriveproject.eu

A “typical” company consists of high-performance employees that mainly work on innovations and new business models. They have a high degree of entrepreneurial spirit. The second group are the salaried knowledge employees. They have an over-average qualification and conduct challenging tasks in business administration. The routine jobs are executed by “micro-jobbers” (often crowd workers). In the context of entrepreneurship and innovation these companies cooperate with other companies, start-ups, freelancers and/or solopreneurs.

Megatrends

Megatrends mark middle-to long-term perspectives in society, economy, environment, demography, politics and technology. In the research phase of the EU Thrive project there was analysed a Gigatrend, the “Digitalisation” (technology), and 12 megatrends; Silver Society/Demographic Change, Neo-ecology, Mobility, Urbanisation, Connectivity, Gender Shift/Diversity, Globalisation, New Work, Knowledge Society/New learning, Health, Individualisation, Safety and Security.

This research has tried to identify impacts on the future of the creative industries. There are impacts both on new products and services as well as on the way to work and the structures of the companies of the future.

More information available in https://www.thriveproject.eu/images/outputs/o1_part_2_-_en_-_future_profiles_report_v2105620def.pdf

Megatrends offer manifold opportunities for new, individualised products and services, customers and market segments. This development tends to forward entrepreneurship in the creative industries and beyond. Intrapreneurs and Entrepreneurs must be able to analyse trends and future developments in order to identify consequences for their business. That implies:

- To know and be able to use different sources of information on trends and developments (e.g., trade-organisations, specialised consultants, science – universities and research institutes).
- To know and be able to use basic methods and tools of “impact assessment”.
- To be able to identify chances as well as risks.
- To be able to think in the “philosophy” of business models.

The so-called digital transformation is the overlying trend that dominates the debate on the future of industry, work, society etc. The central directions of the development respectively the consequences for work in the creative industries of the future in short are:

- Individualised products and services (“job lot 1”).
- Marketing via digital channels (social media).
- Distribution via online-shops/online-channels.
- Routine-jobs are mostly automated.
- Real-time information increases efficiency.
- Logistic processes are automated.
- Cloud-computing becomes usual.
- High-demand on data privacy protection.
- Big data is central – artificial intelligence, deep learning and data analytics deliver hints for (individualised) new products and services.

The digitalisation creates **4 new modes of working** (Klug/Lindner 2017: 185ff):

- **Solopreneur**; Is a constitutive entrepreneur who builds up her/his enterprise all alone. She/he has the objective to build up a scalable enterprise (respectively services) (that is the distinguishing feature of a solopreneur to a freelancer). The solopreneur works on her/his own projects (a freelancer works on projects of other persons). The solopreneur starts as a freelancer – until her/his projects and products generate enough income.

- **High performance employee**; She/he has an educational background above-average and is highly specialised. Has a performance-oriented mode of working and has a very good self-organisation. This employee possesses a high degree of "self-marketing". Is sometimes oscillating between the status as an employee and an entrepreneur (Why does she/he work as salaried employee? She/he is "on the edge to entrepreneurship" – and from the perspective of the company it runs the risk of losing her/him as an important employee).

- **Salaried knowledge-worker**; This knowledge worker is relatively good educated (graduated). She/he has little or no specific competences/skills.

- **Digital day-labourer or clickworker**; Fulfils routine-functions. Mostly this kind of work is poorly paid.

This trend is a result of the radical changes that society and economy are undergoing. It characterises the merging of work and leisure due to work flexibilisation and the new value of human beings in an automated, digitalised and globalised working environment.

The transformation from an industrial to a knowledge society, based on creating immaterial value, will result in changing corporate structures and employer behaviour. The workforce in areas such as service, information, and creativity will become a key factor for the global economy. Processes, experience, and ideas will become increasingly important.

Impact on work and organisation of the future:

- Supportive factor for intra- and entrepreneurship.

- Chance for employers on how to use different leadership styles for different groups in the company, side by side of each other.

- Importance of lifelong learning increases.

- Manifold opportunities for employees:

  - Work-life-learn-balance becomes more and more important – and can be put into practice much easier in the era of digitalisation.
  - Digitalisation and platforms open prospects for working on one's own projects.
  - Job change is easier.
  - Assisting technologies offer more working opportunities for older employees.

- New challenges for employers:

  - Recruiting may become more difficult – requirements of employees are challenging and manifold.
  - Organisation of work becomes more complex.
  - Incentives gain importance for retention management.
  - New organisational structures must reduce hierarchies and have to facilitate extensive participation of employees in development and decision-making processes.

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TOPIC 2 WHAT ARE COLLABORATION, CO-CREATION, OPEN-INNOVATION AND PLATFORM ECONOMY

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Introduction

Collaboration is the central topic of this Training Course. As we have seen in Topic 1, there are challenges and opportunities within the creative industries to be addressed through collaboration and co-creation. This could be done punctually through a collaborative project as a reaction to a specific demand or collaboration and co-creation could become the core and main strength of your business models.

On the other hand, there are several additional trends and methodologies which could boost and enhance the collaborative process. Platform Economy (Sharing Economy) is changing the way how companies, employers, employees, self-employed persons and customers interact and can be used for promoting the implementation of collaboration among them. Open-Innovation means bringing external ideas or input to an innovation process and is also based, overall, in understanding the need and benefits of collaboration.

In this Topic you will find and introduction of these concepts, basic guidelines for their implementation and also a summary of the collaborative competences that everyone should develop.

2.1 What is Collaboration?

Collaboration can be defined as "*the process of two or more people or organizations working together to complete a task or achieve a goal.''*

Collaboration exists out of three parts, there has to be two or more people (team) working together (processes) to complete a task or achieve a goal (purpose). This definition doesn't mention technology but it provides a good understanding of what collaboration means.

Collaboration is well defined by Anderson (1995, p. 58) as "*a strategic mode of integration in which two or more organizations co-operate on parts or all stages of production, from the initial phase of research to marketing and distribution. Collaborative agreements can be short-term or long-term and encompass a spectrum of co-operation that lies between outright merger/acquisition and arms-length market transaction*"[1].

The rationale behind collaborations can vary. Among others, De Man (2004) mentions getting access to market, increasing efficiency, getting access to new competencies and the sharing of R&D risks as potential drivers for collaboration. Arku (2002) identified the reasons for collaborations while accounting for the size of the company. He showed that one of the largest reasons for smaller companies to collaborate is to get access to technological know-how or to specialized skills. Main reasons for larger companies seem to be to penetrate new geographical markets or to product markets.

A Collaborative network is a network which brings together a various number of entities or autonomous persons, who might or might not have a common occupation, but will work towards achieving the same goal or result. Nowadays, these interactions are supported by computer networks.

[1] Collaboration and Business Models in the Creative Industry. Exploring heterogeneous collaborations. Technology University Eindhoven

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Collaborative Business Models

'Business model' is a frequent used and misused term in literature and today's business. There are however, many different definitions in literature. Here are some examples of what different authors think is a business model[2];

- *"A business model describes the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers and captures value"* (Osterwalder, 2009).
- "*A concise representation of how an interrelated set of decision variables in the areas of venture strategy, architecture, and economics are addressed to create sustainable competitive advantage in defined markets*" (Morris et al., 2005).
- "*A business model is an abstract representation of some aspect of a firm's strategy; it outlines the essential details one needs to know to understand how a firm can successfully deliver value to its customers*" (Magretta, 2002).
- *"The business model provides a coherent framework that takes technological characteristics and potentials as inputs, and converts them through customers and markets into economic outputs"* (Chesbrough and Rosenbloom, 2002).
- "*We define a business model as a representation of a firm's underlying core logic and strategic choices for creating and capturing value within a value network*" (Shafer et al., 2005).

What we can learn from these different definitions is that business models perform two important functions; (1) they create value; (2) they deliver value to a customer; and (3) they capture the value and turn it into economic output.

During the last decades changes in the competitive environment forced manufacturing firms to adopt new business models increasingly focused on partnering with different actors within complex ecosystems (Myers, 2006). "*Competitiveness is no longer between enterprises, but between enterprise networks*" (Lee et al., 2010). Furthermore, in the context in which knowledge and competencies become the real source of the competitive advantage, the interaction between many players is more and more critical for firms in developing dynamic and successful strategies (Russo Spena and Colurcio, 2010)[3].

Collaboration is a necessary strategy - especially for small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) - both of them to overcome their limitations of resources and to balance the size/power asymmetry (Colurcio, 2009, Johnsen and Ford, 2008). Many authors have highlighted that external partnerships give SMEs the flexibility to open up to new frontiers (market/technological/relational) and face the fast-changing environment as well as to bridge their own resources gaps (Colurcio et al., 2012; Ulaga and Eggert, 2005). The strategy of collaboration is - in some cases - the only way to survive and compete in the market.

Social interaction through web-based technologies (WBTs) discloses a high potential in sustaining companies' competitiveness, as it allows SMEs, that traditionally rooted their competitiveness in a mix of economic relationships and social ties (Chiarvesio et al., 2004), to collaborate with customers (Schau et al., 2009; Sawhney et al., 2005; McAlexander et al., 2002), as well as, with the entire firm's network (e.g., experts, suppliers, etc.). Furthermore, WBTs provide new commercial opportunities (electronic market) for SMEs, enabling them to reach customers in new ways and through a multitude of channels (Chiarvesio et al., 2004;

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[2] Collaboration and Business Models in the Creative Industry. Exploring heterogeneous collaborations. Technology University Eindhoven

[3] Designing a collaborative business model for SMEs. Angela Caridà - Maria Colurcio - Monia Melia. Italian journal of management Vol. 33, N. 98, 2015

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Osterwalder, 2004). In other words, the availability of WBTs increases the possible business configurations that companies can adopt (Osterwalder, 2004).

The technological evolution has led to the emergence of collaboration platforms (Camarinha-Matos, 2009) that require the development of new business models able to ensure the technological, strategic and relational alignment of the partners. This is a precondition to enhance collaboration between actors and to create a synergistic value: "*through their interactions, partners transfer knowledge and other resources in developing organizational learning; […] knowledge, skills and other resources are integrated to put together a network of firms possessing a set of competencies capable of offering a value innovation that is an innovative value proposition which enables higher value co-creation*" (Mele et al., 2010).

Alliances account for a large portion of company revenues and costs. Companies invest 30% of their research expenditures in alliances that generate over a quarter of their revenue (Kale & Singh, 2009). In addition to generating revenue, alliances play an important role in innovation (Kavusan, Noorderhaven & Duysters, 2016). Still, many alliances do not realize their full potential. Executives do not pay sufficient attention to the fundamentals of collaborative business models that align company and alliance interests, without which alliances cannot bloom. In a collaborative business model, alliance partners can create, capture, and deliver value (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010; Rohrbeck, Konnertz, & Knab, 2013). The literature on alliances is extensive and has identified a number of building blocks for **collaborative business models**. Table 1 synthesizes the literature in three primary collaborative business models: Sharing, Specialization and Allocation. Each of these models has specific characteristics for value creation, value capture and value delivery.

Table 1. Primary collaborative models compared

	Sharing	Specialization	Allocation
Value creation			
Economies of	Scale	Skill	Risk
Capabilities	Similar	Complementary	Overlapping
Relationship of the partners	Horizontal	Diagonal	Vertical
Value creation potential	Predictable	Unpredictable	Increased predictability
Value capture			
Mechanisms	Pre-agreed split	Each partner carries own revenue/cost	Incentives tied to performance
Value delivery			
Interdependece	Reciprocal	Pooled	Sequential
Level of integration	High	Low	Focused

Table 1. Collaborative business models[4]

The Sharing Model creates value by combining similar capabilities to reach greater scale or network effects (Dussauge, Garrette, & Mitchell, 2000; Oxley & Sampson, 2004). These alliances are horizontal in that they operate on the same stage in the value chain (Dussauge et

[4] Collaborative business models: Aligning and operationalizing alliances. Ard-Pieter de Man, Dave Luvison
a School of Business & Economics, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands
b Sellinger School of Business & Management, Loyola University Maryland, 4501 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21210, U.S.A.

al., 2000). The benefits of working together tend to be predictable because economies of scale are often easy to identify.

The Specialization Model focuses on economies of skill by combining complementary capabilities into an innovative offering that neither partner could have developed alone (Dussauge, Garrette & Mitchell, 2004; Grant & Baden-Fuller, 2004). Specialization alliances are diagonal, involving partners from different businesses. Because specialization models relate to innovation, the value creation potential is unpredictable as learning needs to take place (Ireland, Hitt & Vaidyanath, 2002) and innovation success is hard to predict. In fact, such alliances are reorganized more frequently than the other two forms (Dussauge et al., 2000).

The Allocation Model revolves around an important driver for alliances: managing risks (Das & Teng, 2001; Hwang, 2017; Mayer & Teece, 2008). In the allocation model, value is created by allocating roles and responsibilities in connection to risks between partners in an optimal way (Dyer, 2000; Kaplan, Norton, & Rugelsjoen, 2010). This model is applicable when partners have overlapping capabilities but one of the partners is more adept at a specific activity; this often shows up in vertical relationships. By allocating activities to the partner best suited to manage the risk associated with that activity, partners create greater combined value, lowering the overall risk profile of the alliance. Residual risks that no partner can influence individually can be shared jointly. By improving the allocation of risks between partners, value creation becomes more predictable as each partner focuses on what it does best.

A second element identified in the literature is the nature of **value capture** (Gulati & Singh, 1998). Alliances create two different benefit types for participating firms: common and private benefits. Common benefits are shared between partners, whereas private benefits are gained individually (Dyer, Singh & Kale, 2008). These different forms of value capture offer different incentives to companies involved in alliances. Balance between the two benefit types requires alliances to implement different value capture mechanisms.

Sharing alliances generate more common benefits because the partners share capacity, revenues and/or costs. Specialization alliances, on the other hand, generate benefits that are unique to the contribution of the respective participants. Allocation alliances contain a mix because they generate value based on how well the partners manage joint and individual risks.

Value capture mechanisms follow this logic:

- In the sharing model, partners use a pre-agreed split to capture value (50/50 or other).
- In the specialization model, each partner carries its own revenue/cost.
- In the allocation model, incentives or targets are tied to how well the partners manage risks (de Man, 2013).

The third element of collaborative business models is **value delivery**, which requires managing the interdependence and level of integration needed to achieve the desired economies of scale, skill or risk. The higher the level of interdependence, the more the information processing needs of participating firms increase (Aggarwal, Siggelkow, & Singh, 2011). This increases coordination efforts among firms (Gulati, Wohlgezogen, & Zhelyazkov, 2012).

In sharing alliances, the partners need to coordinate similar capabilities simultaneously in order to achieve alliance goals. This reciprocal interdependence (Thompson, 1967) requires a high level of integration (Dussauge et al., 2000) because the alliance needs to be run as a single business. That is why joint ventures–alliances in which two or more partners create a new separate company use the sharing model. Specialization alliances, on the other hand, require partners to contribute dissimilar resources that can be developed separately but that, when combined, aggregate to a complete customer solution. This pooled interdependence can be managed by a low level of integration because each partner can focus on its own specialization (Grant & Baden-Fuller, 2004). As allocation alliances revolve around similar operational processes requiring crucial handoffs between partners, there is the need to coordinate activities at a sequential level, focusing mainly on the activities involved in the handoff.

Alliances often face specific circumstances such that the primary models must be adapted to fit the specific needs of individual alliances. In addition, even though the main goal of an alliance may be to realize either economies of scale, skill or risk, there usually is a secondary need to also manage the other two elements. Therefore, and as the cases show, collaborative business models usually incorporate elements of the other models. This leads to the emergence of hybrid forms.

Example of the Sharing Model

As an initial example, take a successful and long running alliance: the alliance between Air France-KLM and Alitalia Air Lines (DAFK). In an effort to expand their businesses, the partners realized they could increase revenues by connecting their networks.

Through this partnership, each airline increases the number of destinations it can offer to it passengers, thus making it more attractive for passengers to fly with the alliance. On paper, this was a logical thing to do. However, in practice, the members faced three significant alignment challenges:

- How to ensure the right level of coordination to realize the desired revenue growth.
- How to ensure each partner captured a fair part of this value for itself.
- How to manage changes that might affect each partner differently and thus undermine the alliance.

The DAFK alliance is an example of the sharing model. Economies of scale are captured by combining similar capabilities. Since the value of the DAFK alliance lies in increasing the number of passengers, the firms made the decision to share all the revenues and costs on transatlantic flights. The partners create value when they sell tickets to each other's destinations. Offering to the passengers a one-stop shop to more destinations benefits all partners since this attracts new passengers. It also is a relatively safe bet because the benefits of this are predictable: there is little doubt passengers like the idea.

The partners capture value through a pre-agreed split: they share the profits equally between the American and the European sides of the alliance.

This model ensures all parties have the same incentive: maximize profitability on their transatlantic routes.

Example of the Sharing Model within the Creative Industries

The cooperation developed between print media company Grand and communication company Traffic&Co. Grand is focussed on design, they create flyers, magazines, books envelopes and stationery in their own design studio. But also: photography, print (offset or digital) and finishing. Traffic& Co is advising on a communication issues: designing and building websites, realizing a magazines or corporate film. But also, consultancy on a complete process of communication-strategy and execution.

In this case the both partners see the advantage to share their network and clients to generate more profit. The two companies have different services but also similar services.

Through the partnership they can give their customers more services. So, they can create the image of a total package to fore fill the needs of their customer. By using each other's network, they can offer services they (partly) do not deliver by themselves. They also share costs in supporting services as administration, sales, etc.

Example of the Specialization Model

An example of the specialization model is the alliance between Philips and coffee brand Douwe Egberts (DE). As part of the alliance, Philips created a new type of coffee machine called Senseo. DE created Senseo pods, pre-packaged ground coffee beans in their own filter, which are inserted in the Senseo machine. The capabilities of the two partners were perfectly complementary: Philips understands the coffeemaker business, DE understands coffee. Overlap in their capabilities is zero. However, this diagonal relationship also raised the issue of how to align such diverse capabilities in a way to create a seamless proposition for clients. The problem is that the Philips and DE revenue models are different. Philips' revenue model depends on one-time sales of coffeemakers, whereas DE's revenue model depends on reoccurring sales of coffee pods. In addition, the production processes are totally different. Hence, there was no natural way to share ongoing revenue and costs as in the DAFK alliance.

Each partner had its own costs and revenues from selling the coffeemaker (Philips) or selling the pods (DE). As the partners agreed that the coffeemaker would be introduced at a low price in order to create an installed base quickly, Philips received some income from the pod sales to compensate for that. Marketing costs were shared on roughly a 50/50 basis. Each partner carried its own expenses and a regular check was done to determine that costs were still balanced.

Example of the Specialization Model within the Creative Industries

Rodix and Infostart are working from different business disciplines but they developed "Real Games" for urban promotion. Rodix by publishing municipal information guides and Infostart by interactive information systems, both aimed at the tourist visitor.

By the development of Real Games, both companies ensured a new communication product that gives direction to the existing business activities in the future. The companies believe that communication will increasingly focus on the experience of the product than on its function.

The product "Real games" connects the tourist destinations in a city. The city will be offered to the visitor more as a whole instead of each destination individually.

The product "Real games" has a game form element as a basis, making it challenging for children and young people and in the wake of the elderly to use the game as a guideline to visit the sights and attractions of a city. It is a combination of using interactive information connected to information guides in print.

Example of the Allocation model

The allocation model recently become popular in public-private partnerships around large infrastructure projects. In alliances created by ProRail, a Dutch governmental organization tasked with railway construction, risks are now divided between ProRail and the respective contractor, with each managing the risks it can influence directly. In traditional contracting models, risks were borne either by ProRail or by its contractors. When ProRail incurred all the risk there was no incentive for contractors to perform, which led to budget overruns.

When contractors were responsible for all the risks, they found they were unable to address risks that were outside of their sphere of influence, also leading to budget overruns or extreme financial losses for the contractor.

An alliance using the allocation model solves this conundrum. Under this model, risks are allocated to the partner best able to influence them. For example, contractors carry the risk of malfunctioning equipment, which they can mitigate through regular equipment maintenance programs. ProRail carries the risk of delays in obtaining official building permits, which, as a government entity, it is in a better position to influence.

For the risks that cannot be foreseen or that neither party can influence, ProRail creates an alliance fund

Example of the Allocation Model within the Creative Industries

Safety-Print is a company specialized in secure printed products, such as the national school exams for secondary education. They work together with Security Logistics that have services on storage and distribution of materials that need to be secured. Safety-Print has, due to security problems with exams in schools, started to cooperate with their partner to deliver "just in time" the exams to the schools. Safety-print is responsible for securing all activities in the printing company until the secured printing product leaves the company premises. Security Logistics is responsible to store and deliver the exams at the schools on the right moment. This ensures that there is no chance that the content of the exams can leak out at an early stage or that exams can be stolen, so that exam candidates can benefit. The organization with the best competences bears the right risks in this collaboration.

Competences and valued needed for Collaboration

When collaborating, it´s important to be aligned with every stakeholder about sharing values, trust and attitude.

Research has distilled a core set of competencies and capabilities for collaborative practice; an ability to work skillfully across boundaries, to frame the operating context in a way that prepares members for joint working, and the nimbleness to work with an emerging set of norms, roles and values.

Excellent collaborators have the ability to mobilize and energize others to create a common vision to solve problems. They facilitate the work of others, can read a situation as it unfolds and are instinctively resourceful in that they can identify and tap into the array of assets held by members. Successful collaborators listen and take time to learn about the problem before launching into solutions. In so doing, they 'step into others' shoes' and try to appreciate the various perspectives and experiences of members.

The best collaborators can identify and constructively and group facilitation skills and are capable of big picture thinking, modelling collaborative behavior and can coach others to work in more collective styles.

They can build coalitions around issues by identifying the right mix of people to come together and by subtly these relationships to achieve outcomes. Importantly, they know when to exercise 'political savvy', to identify and understand the internal and external politics that may impact on the work of the collaboration. They can align top-down policies and bottom-up issues, know who to include in the collaboration, and can gain the support of people who can legitimize the effort.

Add to all that, mediation and negotiating skills, (especially interest-based negotiation which encourages win/win outcomes), risk analysis and strategic thinking and managing task assignment and responsibilities, and you have all the essential elements of the collaborative tool box.

Many of the personal attributes of emotional intelligence may also have strong resonance with collaboration, for example; trustworthiness, sense of humour, empathy, integrity, comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty, a dynamic or charismatic personality and a strong commitment to the collaborative process. **Table 2** categorizes the core competencies/capabilities

The set of competencies and capabilities necessary for effective collaboration is extensive and can take time to develop. Collaborative capabilities are generally very different to the set of competencies and capabilities enshrined in most work programs and are rarely valued or rewarded at the same level as conventional performance modes. For collaboration to become core practice, organizations may need to review their modus operandi. New human resources policies may be needed, and a revised training agenda may be required with an emphasis on skills and practices that help people and organizations to work together, including, for example, developing a greater sense and commitment to "the whole' or the collective, rather than to single agencies" approaches.

The skills and characteristics of collaborators are different to the norm. While some people inherently possess collaborative competencies and characteristics, they can be learnt if members are willing to step outside the comfort zones of usual practice.

Everyday skills used to manage public and non-collaborative work, especially with regard to the implementation stages. For example, managing human and rules that guide operations, and designing and implementing effective communication, information and strategies are common in both hierarchical and collaborative contexts. The challenge is translating these everyday skills to a collaborative context which is inherently more complex, fragile and idiosyncratic than conventional organizational settings and therefore difficult to control[5].

[5] Collaborative competencies/capabilities. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. 2013

Getting things done through others	Analysis and planning	Driving the process	Personal attributes
Comunnication skills Relationship skills Build and maintain Nurturing Leadership skills Process catalyst Group Process skills Change Management skills Negotiation skills (interest based) Deal constructively with conflict	Listening and learning Problem assessment Strategic planning Strategic relationship building Work planning Performance measurement and evaluation Aligment of top down and bottom up processes	Vision setting Resources Linking and leveraging relationships Getting `buy-in´ from members Energise and mobilise Building coalitions Modelling elaborative practice Community building Managing relationships/expectations Assignment of tasks and people	Able to `read´ interactions and exchanges Trustworthy Sense of humour Empathy (step in shoes) Flexibility Patience Perseverance Commitment Cooperative spirit Strong personal presence Politically astute/savvy

Table 2. Collaborative competencies/capabilities

2.2 What is Co-Creation?

The term “Co-Creation” is not fully homogeneous in the literature. In the framework of the “COL-CREATION” project several definitions will apply.

“Co-Creation” is a process which brings various stakeholders together and they engage with solving a problem and finding a solution to it, create something or look for an innovation. The process may involve stakeholders from different social groups or backgrounds (e.g., policymakers and representatives of a business sector or simply citizens) and different techniques can be used like open discussions, exchange of best practices, exchange of knowledge, collaboration, etc.

A business strategy to collaborate with others is “Co-Creation”. “Co-Creation” is a business strategy focusing on customer experience and interactive relationships. “Co-Creation” is a process by which products, services and experiences are jointly developed by companies, their partners/stakeholders and the final consumer, leading to a new space where the value created would be shared. “Co-Creation” allows and encourages a more active involvement from the customer to create a value rich experience. “Co-Creation” is a way to solve problems together in order to reach future innovative solutions.

“Co-Creation” is the collaborative development of new value (concepts, solutions, products and services) together with experts and/or stakeholders (such as customers, suppliers etc.). “Co-Creation” is a form of collaborative innovation where ideas are shared and improved together, rather than kept to oneself[6].

6 https://fronteer.com/what-is-co-creation/

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"Co-Creation" is a process by which products, services and experiences are jointly developed by companies, their partners and the final consumer, leading to a new space where the value created would be shared[7].

"Co-Creation" is the act of collective creativity shared across a group of individuals and applied at different stages of a design development process. It facilitates meaningful outcomes that can address community problems and provide a context for integrating design, inquiry and local knowledge[8].

As we can see, main definitions about Co-Creation include, and, often, highlight the participation of customers as part of the stakeholders, and not only the collaboration of designers and other professionals.

2.3 What is Open Innovation?

Open-innovation is about bringing external ideas or input to an innovation process. The founder of the open-innovation concept is Henry William Chesbrough, who coined the term "Open Innovation" describes in his book "Open Innovation: The New Imperative for Creating and Profiting from Technology" (2003) how companies have shifted from so-called closed innovation processes towards a more open way of innovating.

Traditionally, new business development processes and the marketing of new products took place within the firm boundaries (Figure 2).

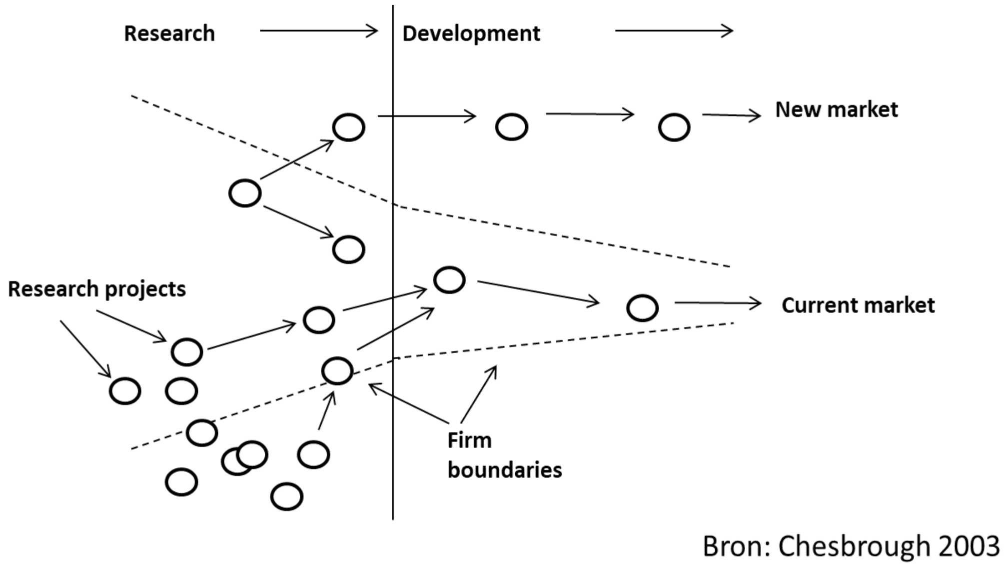

Figure 2 Closed innovation

However, several factors have led to the erosion of closed innovation (Chesbrough, 2003). First of all, the mobility and availability of highly educated people has increased over the years. As a result, large amounts of knowledge exist outside the research laboratories of large companies. In addition to that, when employees change jobs, they take their knowledge with them, resulting in knowledge flows between firms. Second, the availability of venture capital has increased significantly recently, which makes it possible for good and promising ideas and technologies to be further developed outside the firm, for instance in the form entrepreneurial firms. Besides, the possibilities to further develop ideas and technologies outside the firm, for

7 https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/co-creation/4101

8 https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/co-creation/4101

instance in the form of spin-offs or through licensing agreements, are growing. Finally, other companies in the supply chain, for instance suppliers, play an increasingly important role in the innovation process. Open Innovation can thus be described as: *“combining internal and external ideas as well as internal and external paths to market to advance the development of new technologies”.*

In the first place, the shift described above means that companies have to become aware of the increasingly importance of open innovation. Not all good ideas are developed within the own company, and not all ideas should necessarily be further developed within the own firm’s boundaries. **Table 3** below further illustrates this:

Closed Innovation Principles	**Open Innovation Principles**
The Smart people in the field work for us.	Not all the smart people work for us, so owe must find and tap into the knowledge and expertise of bright individuals outside our company.
To profit from R&D, we must discover it, develop it, and ship it ourselves.	External R&D can create significant value: internal R&D is needed to claim some portion of that value.
If we discover it outselves, we will get it to the market first.	We don’t have to originate the research to profit from it.
The company that gets an innovation to the market first will win.	Building a better business model is better than getting to the market first.
If we create the most and the best ideas in the industry, we will win.	If we make the best use of internal and external ideas, we will win.
We should control our intellectual property (IP) so that our competitors don’t profit from our ideas.	We should profit from others’ use of our IP, and we should buy others’ IP whenever it advances business model.

Table 3. Closed and Open innovation Principles

This means that within the company a shift should take place in the way people look at the company and its environment. Involving other parties when developing new products and technologies can be of great added value. Think for instance about cooperation with other firms in your sector, suppliers, universities, and of course end-users.

The business model plays a crucial role in this. After all, how and when external knowledge is required and used is to a large extent determined by the companies’ business model which describes how value can be created from innovations and which elements have to be sourced internally or externally[9].

With open-innovation it´s necessary to keep in mind that not everyone neither wants nor should give away all their Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) just to maximize the improvement of their innovation. It is logical that companies also want to profit from what they already got and make sure that the competition does not run away with their efforts or ideas. One way to make sure this doesn’t happen is to use the company’s Intellectual Property Rights as an asset which could be exchanged with the partner company. An option could be to create exclusive rights for both of the parties. In the following video the concept of open-innovation is explained: Video open-innovation[10]

[9] Chesbrough, H. (2003), “*Open Innovation: The New Imperative for Creating and Profiting from Technology*“, Harvard Business School Press.

[10] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GD2wCS2xwWQ

2.4 Collaboration Business Models and Co-Creation in the Creative Industries

Collaboration in the creative industry is indeed very important. There are several reasons for collaborations between partners in the creative industry. The creative industry is characterized by many Small & Medium sized enterprises (SME's) and Freelancers. They lack resources to leverage their creativity to bring successful products to the (global) market. Bigger companies and multinationals do have the possibilities to bring creative products to the market, however often lack creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. Collaboration between these heterogeneous parties could therefore create interesting opportunities for both parties. Other heterogeneous collaborations can be established with cultural institutions, knowledge institutes, etc[11].

There are heterogeneous collaborations in the creative industry;

a) between different type of partners: e.g., Freelancers, SME, start-ups, large corporations, knowledge institutes, cultural institutes

b) between partners from different disciplines.

c) with different positions in the value chain/on different topics: e.g., concept development, marketing and customer involvement, supply chain, etc.

Important **problems** recognized in collaborations in the creative industry are:

a) economic valuation of creative/cultural value is difficult since this value is to a great extent intangible, which often rises problems with the protection of Intellectual Property or in the attraction of money.

b) differences in culture and approach between partners (e.g., formality, hierarchy, scale).

The collaboration problems are not incidental but structural.

Important enablers for collaborations in the creative industry seem to be development environments (like co-working labs), networks (like social networks), and communication and trust (versus formalization, contracts and Intellectual Property management).

Two dominant type of business models could be identified in the creative industry, namely **creators**, in which products are created and sold to buyers (physical as well as intangible assets are being sold) and **brokers**, facilitating sales by matching potential buyers and sellers, of mainly intangible assets (based on the framework of Malone, 2006). Some other business model related aspects we found are:

- every model is unique.
- alignment of the partners' business models is essential in fruitful collaboration.
- open innovation (inside-out and outside-in) stimulates collaborations and enables new ways of doing business.

Some specific questions for further research on business models for heterogeneous collaborations are:

How to create and appropriate value

[11] Collaboration and Business Models in the Creative Industry. Exploring heterogeneous collaborations. Technology University Eindhoven

- with business models that combine different types of value, not only economic value, but also immaterial value (like cultural value, social value, knowledge value, idealistic, sustainability).
- with a business model that is both innovative and still accepted in the industry.
- with (not-used) IP of larger organizations (Philips Research, TNO, etc.), based on collaboration between larger organizations and SME/creative Freelancers in a win-win situation?.
- based on collaboration between creative Freelancers/SME and larger organizations in a win-win situation?.
- in interface between big players and users/ Freelancers /SME? (e.g., platform development between professional content providers and users)?

How to support value creation and appropriation

- in inter-organizational business models? (Business models that do not belong to one organization, but to the value chain; next to the business models of partner organizations).

Regarding "Co-Creation", there are some equivalences to the term "Co-Creation" that could better sound in the framework of the Creative Industries, like "Co-Design" or "Participatory Design", focusing in the cooperation between designers and other creative professionals while Co-Creation seems to be a broader innovation management tool that could be implemented by any company of any sector.

Co-design reflects a fundamental change in the traditional designer-client relationship. The co-design approach enables a wide range of people to make a creative contribution in the formulation and solution of a problem. A key tenet of co-design is that users, as 'experts' of their own experience, become central to the design process. A wide range of tools and techniques are available to support the co-design process, these can help participants create user personas, storyboards and user journeys. Potential solutions can be tested through prototyping and scenario generation techniques.

Co-design can take place at any point across the design development process. However, involving people with different perspectives early (and often) can help determine the real problem space early on-leading to more advantageous outcomes. Admittedly, involving multiple stakeholders throughout the process can be challenging, but through a guided process of discovery, ideation and development, we can give a voice to both end users and the people who serve them. By doing so, informants turn into participants, contributors, and partners and that can have a powerful and meaningful impact on the outcomes.

Participatory design (originally co-operative design, now often co-design) is an approach to design attempting to actively involve all stakeholders (e.g., employees, partners, customers, citizens, end users) in the design process to help ensure the result meets their needs and is usable. Participatory design is an approach which is focused on processes and procedures of design and is not a design style. The term is used in a variety of fields, e.g., software design, urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, product design, sustainability, graphic design, planning, and even medicine as a way of creating environments that are more responsive and appropriate to their inhabitants' and users' cultural, emotional, spiritual and practical needs. It is one approach to placemaking.

The next aspects have been identified as critical for the management of collaborative business models and co-creation in the creative industry.

- Communication & Trust; There are many operational variables which affect a successful collaboration. However, communication and trust are almost the only pre-requisite.

- Having a network; a network allows the professionals to tap into new knowledge, and it can create brokerage opportunity by linking people, firms, or technologies to create new products.

- Intellectual property rights; this is not surprising since IP is one of the most valuable assets of an organization and companies. However, protecting IP leads to various problems that seem to be strengthened by the type of industry and the extent to which creative companies collaborate with larger organizations.

- Budget management; clear and fair agreements based on real reported costs and revenues of all the involved partners must drive the distribution of benefits and decisions in terms of costs and business orientation.

- Heterogeneity in size and discipline; Heterogeneity between firms and/or freelancers is another important determinant in successful collaborations. Heterogeneity can either be specified by size (e.g., small companies vs big companies) or by discipline (e.g., artistic vs commercial)

2.5 Platform Economy (Sharing Economy)

General Background on the Sharing Economy and New Technologies

Technological advancements in information and communication systems have profoundly affected many aspects of people’s lives. Rapid changes over the past years led to new forms of work, to new and fast ways to communicate and to many changes in the world of consumption. Emerging tools, applications, soft- and hardware, etc. are opening opportunities to engage, participate and share. Theoretically, people from different regions and countries, with different backgrounds and of different age can relatively easily connect over the internet. Especially the spreading of easy-to-use mobile devices and the wide availability of broadband connections contribute to this development. There is no clear terminology; “platform economy“, “platform labour“, “crowdsourcing“, “crowdwork“, “cloudsourcing“, “co-creation“ and “prosumption“ are a few more of the terms currently in use to describe it (Huws, 2016; Huws et al., 2016; Pongratz, 2018). Online platforms are mediating the interaction between people, existing in many different sectors and for a variety of services – space-bound and space-independent alike – this way of brokering services or tasks between people increasingly impacts the communal life. Many things may be mediated over such online platforms: frequently we witness the phenomenon in transportation, (food) delivery, accommodation, work organisation, neighbourly help, peer-to-peer sharing and so on. In recent years, online platforms have increased in economic significance and attracted widespread attention from policy-makers, media and industry (European Commission, 2016). At the centre of these developments are continuous improvements of information and communication technologies, especially the widespread availability of broadband connections and spread of smartphone usage. Through the integrating effects of information and communication technologies outsourcing and relocation of labour is facilitated, and for digitisable goods the information space on the Internet becomes a new place of production (Boes & Pfeiffer, 2006; Huws, 2016a). Here, the Internet seizes the role of modern work agencies, connecting customers and service providers and skipping other intermediaries. Especially the space-bound services in accommodation, transportation and household work that are facilitated by (mobile) internet have soared since around 2010 and contributed substantially to revenues and commerce (European Commission, 2016).

Chances for the labour market

For the European economy these new labour market intermediaries convey the promise of increased labour market participation and economic performance of specific regions and the European Union overall. Online platforms provide employers or customers with access to a large pool of labour, qualifications and creativity but also the opportunity to profit from higher flexibility, often lower costs without long-term commitment to the workforce (Felstiner, 2011; Shepherd, 2012). Similar to outsourcing, this form of labour mediation allows companies to externalise costs of direct employment (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Howcroft, 2014; Ford et al., 2015). In theory, this mode of work offers workers new job opportunities, the possibility to be one's own boss and to flexibly arrange working time, including when and how long to work, which jobs to accept and which to decline (Kittur et al., 2013). Importantly, such online platforms may offer opportunities to cooperatively solve problems (Barnes et al., 2015) and bridge physical distances between creatives who strive to cooperate. The European Commission highlights the potential increase in the European markets competitiveness and growth, the consumers' access to goods and services and especially acknowledges new and flexible working opportunities (European Commission, 2016).

Risks of Platform Economy

In a recent policy brief the OECD (2016) highlights: *"As workers in the "platform economy" are more likely to have multiple jobs and income sources, the role and meaning of traditional labour market institutions are being challenged"*. Research shows that the impact the clients of online platforms have on the working and private lives of workers – i.e. in respect to working time or availability or to health and safety issues – is tremendous (Huws, 2015; Schörpf et al., 2017). As crowdsourcing resembles a multi-employer constellation (Marchington et al., 2005) or triangularised employment relationship (Helfen, 2014), classification of employer and employee is complex and the platforms frequently deny their role of an employer. For the workers this means that they are formally self-employed, however, clauses and terms and conditions may be contradictory to existing regulations or are not reflecting reality (De Stefano, 2015). Often, work or employment via online platforms is described as temporary and short-term and it demands high levels of availability during project acquisition and renders standard working time regimes insignificant. This is supported by the tools online platforms provide for controlling workers or providers, for instance through online surveillance of keystrokes or screenshots of work progress. One crucial aspect certainly is online reputation through platforms' rating systems and the rules for workers' profiles. Regulation of employment status remains uncertain, and while compensation schemes, trust building systems and features for voting and rating contribute to classifying workers as employed rather than self-employed, work for multiple online platforms and the use of own equipment rather lean towards self-employment. Recent court-cases in the UK have challenged the designation "independent contractors", ruling that they should be classified as "workers" but not as "employees"[12].

Elsewhere the risk of a commodification of labour (De Stefano, 2015) and of rising standardisation and modularisation of work (Huws, 2016) as well as the potential undermining of existing principles and rights are stressed (Huws & Joyce, 2016). Emerging business models may not fit within the respective legislative context and ascribing which regulatory context and which standards to apply proves difficult. Differences in regulation may create uncertainty and market fragmentation (European Commission, 2016).

[12]These cases have concerned workers for Uber, City Sprint, Deliveroo and Pimlico Plumbers.

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How Online Platforms Work

Despite the vast number of crowdsourcing platforms popping up in the world wide web, with their multiple distinguishing features, essentially four different forms of intermediary crowdsourcing platforms can be distinguished. First, there are bid-based and contest-based platforms. On **bid-based platforms**, clients post short briefings and set a basic framework for the tasks, which might include a job description, a fixed or an hourly price, a time frame, possible milestones and maybe some reference work. Workers on the other side can apply for a job by responding to a briefing and by specifying their terms, including clarifications on the job, negotiations about price and time frame and the setting of milestones. Depending on which mode the parties agree on, there might be payments at specific milestones, usually, however, once the job is finished and the customer is satisfied, the payment is processed by the platform providers (by releasing the payment on the client's side and transmitting the final files on the workers' side). Differing from platform to platform, a certain percentage of the volume of order and/or a flat rate is charged by the platform for providing their intermediary services. Some platforms also charge the workers for placing a bid on a job offer.

The second form of crowdsourcing platforms is **contest-based** and these are probably the most important platform iteration for creative work and specifically for self-employed and small and medium enterprises in the creative industries. Clients post a briefing with a fixed prize money (e.g., by choosing a ready-made prize category set by the platform). Workers have the opportunity to submit finished or near-finished products to a client, hoping to win the contest. The clients, however, can choose from multiple submissions. To have a higher chance of being selected as the winner, workers often submit multiple versions. Usually, there are different stages of selecting a product. Shortlists with selected workers play an important role. These workers might be given feedback and/or suggestions for improvement, before the client makes his final choice. In some cases, workers on this shortlist already get some financial compensation. Once the winning design is selected, the client can only expect minor changes to be implemented. After the product is accepted, the worker gets paid. While the remuneration (price money) is usually higher than on other platforms, contest-based platforms are not the favourite mode of working for many workers, due to the slim chances of winning.

In addition to contest-based and bid-based mediation of work there is automated matching on the basis of certain variables, i.e., service providers and customers are matched via an application according to distance to the location where the service is to be carried out (Uber, or similar transportation services). The workers (drivers in this example) receive a ping, and may choose to provide the service. At the time of writing, we are not certain if any additional variables are taken into consideration, such as the driver's online rating or experience. Pricing of the service again depends on several variables, such as the distance covered or the actual demand in a certain area. When there is high demand and low driver density in an area, prices surge, and vice versa, if there is low demand, prices go down. This method is set to incentivise drivers to cover other areas and to keep waiting times for clients low[13].

Identification of Online Platforms

In the world of online work and ICT enabled work exist a great number of intermediary platforms, acting as a third party between clients or employers and workers or employees. Generally, there is a constant state of flux with mergers, acquisitions, takeovers and disappearances of smaller and medium sized platforms. Some big companies, often established in the english-speaking world, act on an international basis. While these platforms have a customer and worker base in many European countries, there is strong evidence that

[13] https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/04/17/how-uber-surge-pricing-really-works/

language plays a crucial role for the reach and spread of online platforms. As a result, there are frequently some international players and usually a number of platforms oriented along locality or language lines.

In the COL-CREATION project the collaboration and co-creation between workers and between clients and workers is crucial for selecting appropriate online platforms. As mentioned above, contest-based platforms are likely to be more common for larger creative projects than bid-based platforms. Automated matching is very unlikely to be found for this kind of professional creative work. As a result, the focus lies on contest-based and bid-based online platforms. For the European context important bid-based platforms are **Freelancer**, **Upwork**, **Crowdflower**, **Topcoder**. For contest-based platforms **99designs**, **Jovoto**, **Local Motors** and **Threadless** are crucial.

Becoming an online worker

With this theoretical background, we can take a closer look at people's opportunities in regard to new forms of work and specifically finding work via online platforms. First, and most importantly, people can earn income over platforms through offering their work, knowledge and competencies. This can either be done by offering services or by selling products.

Usually, people are registered on more than one platform to complement their portfolio and to access a larger client base. For instance, a person who starts selling services over a platform, might as well register on several platforms and offer her/his services there as well. Besides broader access to clients, this helps to overcome the problem of a fragmentary order situation, with long time spans between sells or projects. Finding work over online platforms is especially tempting for people in regions lacking economic performance or where finding work is difficult. Furthermore, collaborating with other creative professionals may be another incentive to work over online platforms.

There are many platforms for many different products or services available and many platforms are open to promote undefined services. A list of possible services and products offered is only helpful if the work carried out in the collaborative economy is categorised. The linking connection between all kinds of work is the mediation through online platforms.

First, there are services that are digital or can easily be digitalised and thus can be performed on a computer, laptop, tablet, etc. These services can basically be performed anywhere, meaning that people do not necessarily need an office, but could work from home. The services provided can be very simple, highly repetitive and may only take a short amount of time to finish; or services may be more complex, requiring knowledge and skills and stretch from hours to days or weeks. Examples are coding, administrative work, creative occupations such as design, animation, video, music, etc., or other tasks that can be performed online. This sector of the collaborative economy is already established and there are multiple, easily accessible options to engage in.

Second, not services, but physical products are also sold over online platforms. These products can be produced anywhere, cannot be digitalised and are of physical nature. Products may be produced at home and are sent to the customer by mail. This category is not new per se and developed over the past decade, but it conveys the option for broadening customer bases and selling products over long distances. The place of production is not very relevant and could be in rural areas, where maintenance costs are low. Examples are hand-made products or products with low quantities produced and can be basically anything. Selling physical products online may be especially useful for people who already have experience in producing and selling goods and who lives at remote places with little access to a sufficient customer base.

And third, people might engage in platform labour via non-profit sharing platforms, this however won't allow to generate income, but rather is a way to minimise costs through sharing an office or other services. This sector, which can be seen as the blueprint for today's for-profit gig-economy platforms, is far less represented in media and scientific literature. In the scope of this project non-profit sharing activities may be used by people to collaborate on non-profit projects, commute from and to the workplace, share office premises, access knowledge or reduce other costs of daily life. Widespread usage of sharing platforms can be found in transportation (car sharing, carpooling/ride sharing, bicycle sharing, etc.), in accommodation (sharing flats or houses), for office space (co-working spaces) and for other services (this is a very broad category, i.e., time sharing, time banks, alternative currency platforms, collaborative financing, etc.).

TOPIC 3 WHAT IS HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN METHODOLOGY

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Introduction

In the COL-CREATION learning process, trainees will tackle in a team a real-world problem put forward by a client. To do so, we will use the methodology called Human-Centered Design. The rationale behind this methodology is that good design is built on three important elements (Fig.3):

- The design is technically feasible.
- The design is economically sustainable.
- And, most importantly, the design is desired and adopted by its intended users.

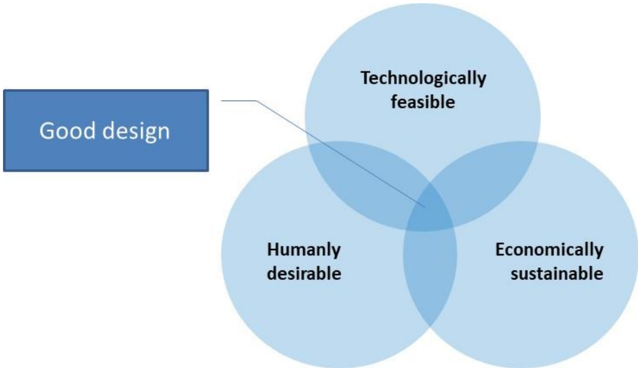

Figure 3 Rationale of Human-Centered Design methodology

3.1 The Human-Centered Design methodology

Human-Centered Design is a methodology to design products and services or solve problems in organizations that hit this sweet spot of good design. We will do so by focusing on solutions that are humanly desirable.

The following video by IDEO gives a short introduction to human-centered design; "*What is Human-Centered Design*" www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBu1kkSCHfs

Perhaps you've heard about human-centered design before, perhaps not. But it's also possible that you've heard terms like user-centered design, designing thinking and design research. These are all design and/or research philosophies that are based on the same principles. So, we will follow the human-centered design methodology in this course, but if you encounter any of these other methodologies you will discover many similarities.

The Human Centered Design mindset

Human-Centered Design requires a certain mindset. Below are eight statements that we need the COL-CREATION teams to subscribe to. Please study them carefully and discuss them with your team to see if you all agree.

1. **Everybody is creative!** Regardless of whether you have a design background or something that is traditionally seen as less creative, please be aware that everyone is a creative person, even you. We were all creative as kids, so you must still have this skill somewhere in you. Creativity comes in many forms: some are very good at drawing or building things, while others are creative in developing ideas or applying existing concepts in new ways. Find your creativity and use it. Build your creative confidence.

2. **Learn from the people for whom you're designing/working.** Don't always look at the world from your own perspective but empathize with the people you are designing/working for. New ideas don't come falling from the sky, but they are the result of insights, empathy and understanding of other people.

3. If you don't know an immediate solution to a problem, then research it! Solutions often require a certain insight. Don't make too many assumptions but test your hypotheses.

4. Show, don't tell! Words are ambiguous. When you want to discuss or show your idea, find ways to bring your ideas to live. Draw them, make a mock-up, do role playing, make prototypes!

5. Embrace ambiguity! There is no one truth, nor is there only one right solution to a problem. In your journey, you will find conflicting information, and when you talk to people, they will tell you many different things. Accept that your end users are not homogeneous, they are personalities with differences. Sometimes it's better to develop a very good solution for a small subset of your user group than a mediocre solution for everyone.

6. Failure is an opportunity for learning! There's no harm in failing as long as you fail early and fail cheaply. So, go out and test ideas immediately before developing them. If you fail early and cheaply, it means you learned something, and you can close certain doors or pivot your idea to something better.

7. Ask feedback! Constantly. From early ideas to final solutions, your end users will indicate you what works and what doesn't. Don't take criticism personally but welcome it as opportunities for improvement.

8. Be optimistic! There is no room for cynicism in Human-Centered Design. Believe there is a solution for your problem somewhere, and keep on working towards it. Progression is always possible.

Methodology

The Human-Centered Design methodology consists of three main phases: a double diamond and an implementation phase (Fig.4).

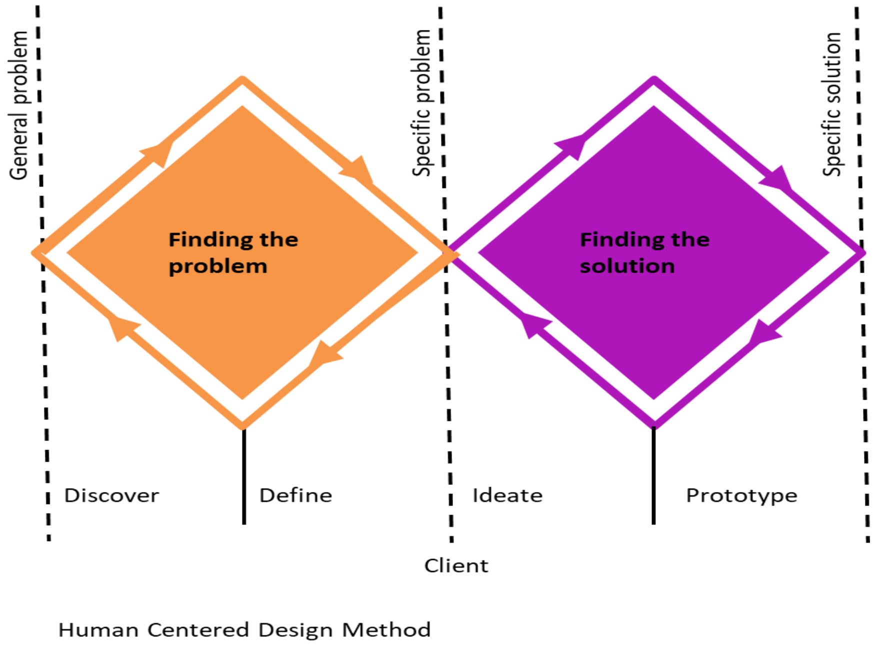

Figure 4 Human-Centered Design Methodology

The two diamonds each consists of a phase of divergence and convergence. In the coming topics, you will walk through the diamonds in more detail, but here is a short overview:

- **Diamond 1: Finding the problem.** One problem with design is that we often jump to solutions to quickly. Opinions are mostly more important than facts (see the fake-news problem on social media). In the first diamond, you're only investigating the problem, we're not thinking about solutions yet. We're going to try to understand the users and find out what their problems really are. After all, often problems have underlying causes. You might think you're going to solve problem X, and find out along the way that the real problem to fix is problem Y.

- **Discover (divergence):** You're going to find out as much about the users and the problem as possible. Talk to people, observe them, try to really understand why they do things the way they do. Collect as much as possible. Gather facts!.

- **Define (convergence):** In this phase you're going to organize all the information you got into a limited number of key problems you feel you need to tackle. Next, you're going to analyze these problems, and select one or a few you want to solve in the next diamond.

- **Diamond 2: Finding the solution.** Finally, you can start thinking about solutions in this phase! But thanks to the first diamond, your solutions will hopefully be more focused towards the real problems that needs solving.

- **Ideate (divergence):** Time to be quantitative again! Try to come up with as many ideas as possible that might solve the problem. Nothing is too crazy or ambitious, selection happens in the next phase.

- **Prototype (convergence):** You're going to select a few solutions that seem both ambitious and realistic. You're going to make quick prototypes to test with your users. You will find out that some solutions don't work in practice or need modifications. Learn and adopt! The idea is to cut down again and end up with only the best solutions.

- **Implementation.** We're not going to cover it in this course, but once you've found the best solutions, and you've tested them with real users, you can implement them. This means that you're going to turn them into real products, think about the business model, etc.

Additional information:

- How to prototype a new business, IDEO. https://www.ideou.com/blogs/inspiration/how-to-prototype-a-new-business

- Desirability, Feasibility, Viability: The Sweet Spot for Innovation, Kristann Orton. https://medium.com/innovation-sweet-spot/desirability-feasibility-viability-the-sweet-spot-for-innovation-d7946de2183c

3.2 Techniques and tools for defining the client's real problem

3.2.1 Client introduction and project briefing

Note that the clients are not necessarily the ones who experience the challenge or opportunity themselves; it could be that they see problems for other stakeholders they work with. For example, a law firm could provide a case based on the observation that vulnerable groups in society don't have access to legal representation. In this case, the members of the vulnerable groups are the users having the problems. Or a sector federation in the print industry could identify the need with many printing companies for more knowledge regarding sustainability. In this case, the target group of the problem are the printing companies, despite the sector federation being the client. But the client may not just bring challenges they see as problematic, they might bring an opportunity or ambition that they want to take advantage of or achieve as well.

Inform yourself

- Do you already know the client? Can you already find out — e.g., via an internet search or via your networks — what their business is, who their clients are, what kind of projects they do, how they profile themselves compared to their competitors, where they are located and conduct their business, etc.?

- Do you have knowledge on the sector of the client? Try to read up on some trends or current events in the sector of your client, for instance is specialist magazine or blogs.

- Do you have some information on the briefing already? Perhaps the teacher has provided you with a title or a short summary. Try to find out as much as you can beforehand.

Think about the information you need

Apart from the knowledge above, you can probably already make a list of questions you would like to get answered during the briefing. Examples:

- What are the priorities for the client? Why do they want this project executed? What is in it for them?

- Via which channels and how intensely does the client wish to communicate? Will you have regular meetings?

- Are there any intermediate deadlines? What kind of (sub)products would the client like to see?

- Does the client already mention important stakeholders, and if so, can they provide you with contact details or initiate a meeting?

- Will the client provide you with documentation or other knowledge you need? Will you work in an open collaborative spirit, or does the client want the people you talk to sign non-disclosure agreements?

- Will the client provide a budget?

Analysis

When you analyse the briefing, the Value Proposition Canvas by Alexander Osterwalder might help you (Fig 5. Reference: strategyzer.com).

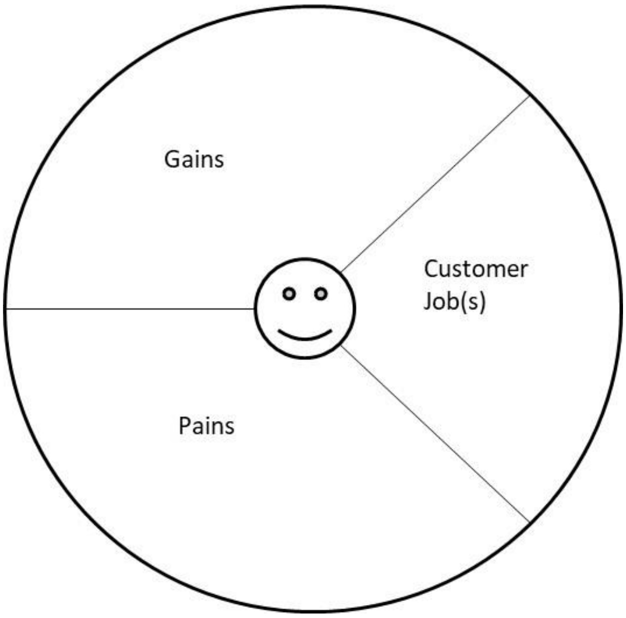

Figure 5 Value Proposition Canvas by Alexander Osterwalder

This canvas allows you to analyse the value proposition you can create for the end user. Probably you can't fill in all the fields at this moment but treat this as a 'living document'. Try to fill it in now, and probably you will modify and extent it during the later modules.

Perhaps you are already familiar with the value proposition canvas. In that case you might notice something odd. The figure above only shows half of the canvas. Since we're applying a Human-Centered Design process, first we're going to concern ourselves with understanding the problem thoroughly, before thinking about solutions. Since the other half of the value proposition canvas is about solutions, we can skip that until the subject: "finding the solution".

Start from the perspective of your end user. Note that this is not necessarily the client – perhaps they created a briefing with a problem of a different group. Fill in your end user under customer segment. If you think you have multiple end users or customer segments, or if you're unsure at this point, feel free to create multiple canvasses.

Under Customer Job(s), try to list all the activities your end users concern themselves with on a typical day. During the "empathising stage" you will get to know your users much more in depth but try to already make a start here.

When the end users are busy executing these activities, they might run into certain problems. E.g., they lack certain information, and certain actions are very frustrating to them. These are the pains your users encounter. These are not literal pains, but it's stuff that annoys them, costs them time, etc. List them here. All these pains are inspiration for your team to find good problems to solve.

Next to pains, your users can also see gains. These are not problems as such, but they are things that would make their life easier or more pleasant. What would make them smile, or make their day?

Now you have an initial idea about your end users, their work, their frustrations and their wishes. In the next module, we are going to refine this.

Additional information

- Value Proposition Design, talk by Alexander Osterwalder on Youtube. www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_X18bmpHaw.

- From first sketch to the final success, keynote talk by Dennis Lück (JungvMatt), amongst others how he creatively (re)interprets client briefings. Recorded for the Erasmus+ project Commercialpolis. https://vimeo.com/292928027.

3.2.2 Finding the problem. Discover

Your client has presented you with a general problem or opportunity in their briefing. Probably you've analysed by now who the target audience is (the "problem owners"), but that doesn't mean you completely understand the problem, let alone your target audience. In this module, you will empathise with them in order to better understand their needs, wishes, desires, etc.

One of the key concepts of Human-Centered Design, is that instead of designing the thing right, you want to design the right thing. The first diamond should take care of this.

We will do this in two phases. First will diverge (the discovery phase), and then we'll converge (the define phase) in order to arrive at a specific key problem. That means we'll work through the first of the two diamonds, in the Figure 4 "Human-Centered Design Method".

When we're finding the problem, we're not thinking about solutions yet. This might be difficult or awkward initially but try to refrain from already bringing possible solutions forward. This phase is just about understanding. Don't try to fix things yet, we'll deal with that later.

Since this is a very important and time-consuming exercise, you have to take your time to work on this.

The goal of the discovery phase is to completely immersive yourself in the topic space of your problem. That means you will do research, you will investigate. The aim is to get as much information as possible – we'll deal with selecting the most relevant information later.

You can get information from your target audience directly but try to also think broader than that. Investigate their environment, their working or living conditions, learn what experts have to say on the topic, etcetera.

There are several **methods to find inspiration**. Here we will introduce for of them, but this list is not exhaustive.

Talk to people; Meet people and talk to them. Try to understand them completely. These people can be the target audience of your general problem, but it can also be people they interact with. Try to find methods that both you and the people you're talking to find comfortable. This can be standard interviews, but later, we'll provide some more creative options as well.

- **Talk to experts;** Apart from the people you're designing for, you can also talk to experts. The big difference is that with the first group, you try to empathise, to understand their world and their lives. When you're talking to expert, the focus is not on personal experience, but rather about the professional expertise of the person. People will talk about their own lives and provide you with valuable anectodical clues, whereas experts will provide you with research, numbers and trends. Experts can be researchers, but also policy makers, managers, journalists, etc.

- **Immersion;** Apart from talking, you can also empathise by experiencing things yourself. Immersion means you try to (re)live the experience of the target audience. Are you working on an educational problem for students? Try to attend one of their classes to see what the experience is like. Designing for prison inmates? Apart from talking to them, see if you can get the full experience by spending some hours in cell. Or if your client is a direct marketing printer promoting a leisure centre, go along and try the leisure centre and speak to other guests. This will allow you to create a much deeper understanding of the people you're designing for as might experience some of their emotions.

- **Analogous inspiration;** Apart from experiencing the real thing, you can also look at similar situations and find inspiration in how these people deal with similar problems. When designing an operating theatre where medical professionals work under great stress and time pressure you might find inspiration in Formula 1, where pit-stop teams work under a similar stress. When designing for youth movements where teams of adolescents need to make independent decisions, you might look at how leadership is dealt with in the military for inspiration. Of course, this doesn't mean you can or need to copy solutions one-on-one, after all, it is only inspiration.

Who to learn from?; The next question is who you can learn from. You can look for typical users, but sometimes you can also make more interesting choices. When trying to develop something for a broad audience, average or typical users can be a good choice. Outliers, however, can be very interesting, when you're interested in developing something for a niche. Who are the power users, the real fans, the people with special needs?

How to learn; People are complex beings. You might want to empathise with them because they perform a certain role (e.g., they are a "student", or a "surgeon") but they are more complex beings than that. They might also be a father, a musician, a football fan, a shy person, a diligent worker, etc., and this all has an impact on how they behave in their role. Try to understand the whole person. For instance, try to understand what drives them. What are their values, needs, ambitions…? If you want to learn their priorities, try to get insights into how they spend their money or time. For most people these a very scarce resources, so the way they spent them tells you a lot about what's really important to them. Try to meet with people in a natural environment for them, like their home or their working place. This might mean more travel time for you, but it has several advantages. First of all, it is usually an environment where they feel comfortable and might share more. Second, once they are in the right environment, apart from telling you things, they can also show you. This helps you to understand them better. And most importantly, people are the experts on their own lives. Try not to judge or steer. Just listen and learn.

Techniques

- **Interviews;** The most common way to empathise is by doing interviews. Preferably you do this face-to face, but when this is not possible phone or online interviews might be an option. This might sound simple, but here are some tips:

❖ Try not to stick to your question list rigidly. If people venture into topics they want to talk about, encourage them and ask follow-up questions.

❖ Try to make a topic list of the most important things you want to discuss. This is your checklist to see if you covered everything that is essential.

❖ Try to think of some icebreakers to get the interview going or to introduce new topics.

❖ Make sure you can document the interview. Perhaps record it (always ask for permission) or ask someone else to come with you to take notes while you talk.

❖ Take pictures of people and places. This will help you do bring back memories later. Of course, always ask people beforehand if you can take their picture.

❖ If you work in large teams, feel free to split up, e.g., in groups of two, to do more interviews. The team members will learn about your interviews in the next phase.

❖ If you do interviews together with team members, divide the roles beforehand. Discuss who will take the lead in asking questions and who will take notes. This doesn't always have to be the same person but agree on this before every interview starts.

Apart from interviews with questions, there are other techniques as well that might suit you:

- **The five why's.** When a respondent tells you something, ask 'why?' When they give an answer, ask 'why?' again. Do this five times. You might recognise this as a way child learn to discover the world (and annoy their parents, so be careful when you use this technique), but it is also a very good way to dig deeper and really understand the motivations of people.

- **Draw it.** Sometimes a drawing tells you more than many words. Bring paper and pens, and let respondents draw what they mean.

- **Demonstrate: Show it to me.** Similarly, instead of letting them explain certain procedures, ask them to show you. This way you can observe them and might miss details the respondents wouldn't have told you, for instance because it is too obvious to them (but not to an outsider).

- **Tell me about the last time.** When people talk about general procedures, they often forget about details and exceptions. Instead, ask them about the last time something happened and let them tell that story in detail. So, instead of asking shop staff how the return policy in their store is, ask them to talk about the last person who came to return certain items and how that went.

- **Superpowers.** To understand what skills and competences are important, ask people what superpower they would like for their job if they could choose. Mind reading? Encyclopaedic knowledge in their head? Having people immediately trust them? The answer tells you a lot about what really is important in their role.

- **Card sort.** Often people are kind and willing, and if you ask them 'is topic X important to you' they will often say 'yes'. To find out their true priorities, you can use a card sort. Prepare a set of several small cards with topics written on them and ask the respondent to sort them in a certain order. For instance, from most important to least important. Or from most difficult to least difficult. This will force them to make decisions and prioritise the items. You will gain even more insights if you ask them to think aloud while they do this.

Your discovery phase ends when you feel you have all the information you need. A common way to notice this, is the saturation point. When you're talking to more people, but you feel that everything they say is something you already heard before in a previous interview, you've reached the saturation point. There's no hard rule for this, normally you will know yourself if you feel confident with the amount of information you've got or not. If you don't do enough work in this face, it will make your job in the later phases more difficult, or you might discover later that you're designing the wrong solution.

3.2.2 Finding the problem. Define

Where the discovery phase was about diverging, the define phase is about converging. You're going to bring all your information back and distil the most important information out of it.

We'll do this in three (four) steps: Download the learning; Find themes and insights; Craft 'How might we…' questions; If necessary: Analysis.

1. Downloading the learnings

You probably have learned heaps during your empathising. This information is mostly in your head, and hopefully you also documented most of it. Especially if you work in teams, you might have not been present at all interviews. Therefore, we're going to "download" the learnings, meaning that we download it all from your heads and notebooks into a space where the whole can access it.

To do this, you need a quiet place with your whole team present, and lots of paper (preferably flip-charts), post-its and markers.

Work through your interviews one by one. Take a big sheet of paper and put the name of the person on top. If you have a picture, attach it to the paper. One of the people present during the interview, preferably the interviewer or the note-taker, tells the story of the interview. Give as much details as possible, use pictures and drawings when needed. All other team members take post-its and pens, and as soon as they hear something, they find interesting or significant, they quietly write it on a post-it. Write one idea or statement per post-it. Don't explain them yet, just listen and write. Stick the post-its on the big sheet for each interview and hang the sheets on visible places in the room.

Go through all the interviews this way: one person talking, all others writing post-its. At the end, your workspace should be full of sheets of paper with post-its.

2. Finding themes and insights

We now have a room full of papers and post-its. It's time to create some structure in them. One good way to do this is by organic clustering. Prepare by reading all the post-its, so you have a rough idea of which ideas are available. Also, make sure you have one wall or large table empty – this is your workspace for the organisation.

The next step is what we call "gemming". You're going through all the post-its individually, and each person can take the five ideas or statements they find the most important and bring them into the workspace. These are your gems. That doesn't mean that all other ideas are not important, but for the moment we're going to focus on these gems.

With the whole team, go over all the selected gems. Team members can explain in a few sentences why they selected that gem, if they want. As soon as everybody is ready, start organically clustering the gems. Move post-its so that similar ideas are hanging near each other. As soon as you see thematic clusters emerge, name them for everyone to hear, and write down the name (e.g., on a differently coloured post-it) to mark the cluster. Keep on clustering until you have around 5 or 7 themes. Make sure there's plenty of space, and the clusters are wide enough apart for the next step.

Now, once you have your clusters, go back to your original flipcharts with post-its and find ideas that fit into the clusters. Move them to the clusters as well. This way, out of the chaos of all your interviews, you've identified 5 to 7 important themes with a lot of ideas surrounding them.

All the post-its that do not end up in a cluster will be discarded for now. Don't throw them away, but we're not going to actively work with them anymore. Apparently, they are not important enough (otherwise they would have been picked as a gem) nor do they relate to one of the core themes (otherwise they would have been clustered).

3. Crafting 'How might we…' questions

Within the themes that were created by you and your theme, we're going to formulate 'How might we…' (HMW) questions. This is a question that starts with 'How might we…' Note that this formulation is intentionally positive. We're still talking about problems here, but we're slowly creating the bridge to working on solutions.

Look at your work so far and identify the most interesting themes and insights. For each of them, try to create a HMW question. This is turning challenges into opportunities for design. If one of your insights is that students don't have enough time to exercise as much as they would like, a good HMW question could be "How might we integrate exercising and sports in the existing daily routines of students?'

Make sure your HMW questions are not too narrow or broad. "*A good HMW is like a faucet. A question that is too narrow only allows for a few ideas to pour out. But one that is too broad will feel unmanageable, like you're trying to fill the ocean. Your HMW should spark a steady stream of at least 5-10 ideas almost immediatel*y." (IDEO Design Kit Facilitator's Guide, p. 52) If you feel your question is too narrow, ask yourself (and your team) "Why do we want this?" to get to a higher level. If you feel your question is too broad, ask yourself (and your team) "So, what's stopping us?" to get to more tangible challenges.

To end this phase, together with your team settle on one to three HMW questions that you will work on for the remainder of this course. We're not in the middle of the double diamond, where we have one to three specific yet relevant problems to tackle.

4. Analysis

After finishing this exercise, it might be good to bring back the Value Proposition Canvas by Alexander Osterwalder (Figure 5 Value Proposition Canvas by Alexander Osterwalder).

You have already filled this in at the end of the first stage, but with your new insights you might want to update your model. Further on next stages you will expand this model.

3.3 Techniques and tools on finding solutions and prototyping

3.3.1 Finding the solution

After completing the stages of "3.2 Techniques and tools defining the clients real problem", you should have one to three 'How might we' questions. That means that in our double-diamond journey, we are now in the middle between the two diamonds, where we have narrowed down the general problem to one or more specific, actionable problems (Figure 4 "Human-Centered Design Method").

Just like in the first diamond, we're going to work with two sub phases again. In the ideate phase (divergence) we're going to create as many ideas for possible solutions as possible. In the prototype

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phase (convergence) we're going to narrow down these ideas again and refine them to arrive with the solution(s) that has/have the most potential.

3.3.2 Ideate

In the ideate phase, we're going to generate ideas for each of our HMW questions. This works by means of a brainstorm. With your team, gather around a whiteboard or have an empty wall and plenty of post-its. Tackle one HMW question at a time.

You might have done brainstorms before, with or without rules. This time we're going to have eight strict rules.

1. **No judgement.** Don't judge the ideas of your team mates. Nothing is impossible, nothing is too weird. Any idea counts now.

2. **The wilder the better**. Don't be too confined by reality. You don't have to build everything you say here, so spit it all out. Maybe an idea is unrealistic or too ambitious at this point, but it might inspire team members for more realistic ideas (see rule 3).

3. **Build on ideas**. Brainstorming is not an individual activity. When you bring an idea forward (e.g., by sticking a post-it on the board), say your idea out loud. When it's not your turn, listen to the ideas of others. It might inspire you to come up with improved or new ideas.

4. **Focus**. No idea is too wild but try to stay within the topic. You're only focussing on one HMW question at a time, so refrain from everything that has nothing to do with that specific question.

5. **One conversation at a time**. When you bring an idea forward, the conversation is on you and your idea. Don't write things down in silence, it's a group process. When it's not your turn, respect your team mates, listen to them, and see how their ideas might inspire you.

6. **Be visual**. Don't write complete stories on one post-it. Keep it simple and keep it visual. A drawing or an icon is better than five lines of text. Stick figures are people too. If you don't draw, limit yourself to a few keywords. This helps you to keep an overview of your brainstorm board.

7. **Quantity beats quality**. Focus on generating as many ideas as possible. Quality doesn't matter so much; we'll filter them in a later step. The more ideas the better.

8. **Have fun**. Keep the atmosphere positive, this will inspire more creative ideas.

Figure 6 Brainstorming´s rules

Once you feel your team has exhausted all your ideas for one HMQ question, move on to the next. Once you've tackled all of them, you should have one to three boards full of ideas.

3.3.3 Decide

To decide which ideas are the best to work on, you can use the COCD method. This method classifies ideas into four quadrants based on two criteria: whether the idea is common (easy) or original (innovative), and whether the idea is feasible or not (yet).

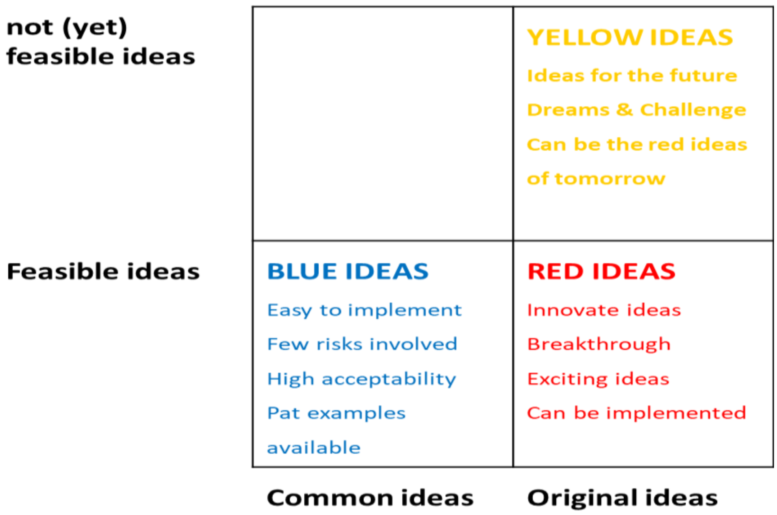


Figure 7 COCD Matrix

Since we're working on a relatively short-term design challenge, it's better to focus on the feasible ideas. That means we're mostly interested in the blue and red quadrants of the COCD-model. The blue ideas are the realistic ideas. These are the low-hanging fruits. They might not change the world in a radical way, but you might feel very confident that you will succeed in realising the idea. The red ideas are more innovative. They will probably have a bigger impact, but at the same time they are also riskier, and there is a chance they might fail. These are the ambitious ideas.

In general, with change projects, you want to ideally realise a blue and a red idea at the same time. The red idea will have a big impact if it succeeds. But if it fails, you always still have the more realistic blue idea to fall back on – so your project won't be a failure.

You can implement the COCD method on your brainstorm by applying a team vote. Each time member gets two or three blue stickers and two or three red stickers. If you don't have stickers, you can also work with markers and putting dots on ideas. Without discussing with others, each team member votes using their gut instinct on their favourite realistic ideas (blue) and their favourite ambitious ideas (red).

Once everyone has voted, look at which ideas turned out to be most popular. If there are ties, feel free to have a group discussion, and if necessary, an additional vote. Based on this process, select one to three ideas to take with you to the prototyping phase.

3.3.4 Prototyping

The next phase is the prototyping. Here, we're going to bring the best of your ideas to live to test them with real people. Of course, you could also tell people about your ideas, but creating real prototypes make your ideas tangible and will elicit much more response from the people you are designing for.

Of course, your solutions might not be perfect, especially the first time around. That's why prototyping is a test. Within Human-Centered Design, failure is a learning opportunity, but you want to fail as cheaply as possible. That's why, in this stage, we're not building full products and services yet, but prototypes that will help the people imagine what the real thing will look like. At the same time, you can take all the feedback you can get to modify and improve your prototype while you go along.

Prototypes don't have to be perfect. In many cases, it is even better if they are not. If people see an artefact you clearly made with a piece of cardboard, a marker and two ropes, they feel much freer to criticize it as when they see the same artefact already moulded in high-quality plastic. Don't make your prototypes look as if you've invested a lot in them already, because then people will refrain their feedback to save your feelings. And remember, what we're after in this stage is feedback, not praise.

You can see the same principle when you look at the wireframes that web and app designers use to show mock-ups to clients. These wireframes often look sketchy and with handwritten fonts, while the designers could have just as easily made mock-ups with real buttons and modern typefaces, but just because the designs look nothing like the real thing, clients are not paying attention to aesthetics yet and focus on the functional design and feel free to give feedback.

Of course, there can be many types of prototypes. A good way to start is a storyboard. You can draw them yourself or you can use online tools like bit strips. But essentially, what a storyboard allows you to do is to map the whole user journey of the person using your product or service. Showing the storyboard to them might illicit a lot of responses.

Another type of prototypes is a rough mock-up. Use hobby craft materials, use Lego, use coloured types of clay, everything is good enough. As long as the people you're testing with get a sense of what you're designing for them. If your desired product is a magazine, start with prototyping mock-up articles, and later a mock-up edition, to test with the audience. If it's a newsletter or a direct mail, start by creating some sample editions.

When you're designing apps or websites, a very good way is also using paper prototyping. Here you draw screens on pieces of paper and ask the user to perform certain task. As soon as they press a button on your piece of paper, you change the paper, so that a new one appears (see the additional information at the end of this module for more information.)

When designing services, role playing can be an excellent way to prototype. Is it too difficult to build a final product or service yet? Make the idea come alive by creating a fake newspaper article about it. Or start by making a promotion video.

When you go out and test your prototype, make sure to elicit feedback from your user. Introduce the prototype as a work in progress, invite the users to treat the prototype as if it were real, and explicitly ask for ways to improve it. Don't try to sell your idea, but rather see how people react to it.

Next up, try to integrate the feedback as you progress your prototypes. The more confident you are that your prototype is on the right track, the more you can invest in making it real.

Analysis

Let's have a look again at the Value Proposition Canvas from Osterwalder in (Figure 4 Value Proposition Canvas by Alexander Osterwalder). The model you've seen so far, is only half of the model. Below you see it in full.

You already completed and refined the right side in the last modules, but now let's look at the left half. Each pain that a person in your target group is faced with is a problem you can solve. See your HMW questions for instance, and the solution ideas you've created for them. This is what Osterwalder calls pain relievers: things you can do to solve or lessen a pain for your target group. Not all ideas arise from problems, sometimes you work starting from a potential gain: then you're designing a gain creator. The pain relievers and gain creators are still ideas. Your prototypes, and later implementations, fall under the Products & Services based on these ideas. Fill them in here and complete your model. If you progress and refine your idea, feel free to come back to this model and adapt it accordingly.

Additional information

- 10 prototyping tools, Board of Innovation. https://www.boardofinnovation.com/staffpicks/favorite-prototyping-tools/
- Paper Prototyping: The 10-Minute Practical Guide, by Jerry Cao. https://www.uxpin.com/studio/blog/paper-prototyping-the-practical-beginners-guide/

3.3.5 Implementation and presentation

Now that you have a good prototype, there are only two steps left. Making a plan for the real-world implementation of your idea and present it to your client (See Chapter 5).

TOPIC 4 MANAGEMENT OF COLLABORATIVE TEAMS

Introduction

Effective teamwork is what makes organizations and projects succeed. Much of modern business thinking is centered on understanding what makes effective teamwork tick.

The ability to build and lead high performing teams is especially critical in small-to-mid size businesses. Here, people must work closely together, wear many hats and work effectively across the organization to get tasks accomplished quickly enough to remain competitive.

In order to understand the competencies needed to build and lead high performance teams, it is helpful to first define a team. Here is a simple but effective description from The Wisdom of Teams (Harvard Business School Press, 1993.); "*A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable*."

The central issues in this part of the COL-CREATION course are to learn on how to work in a team and manage the collaboration. To get reflection on the own behaviour we have developed a self-assessment tool on internet. With this tool you can enlarge your insights on the own behaviour. In the second part of this Topic, we work further with the Human Centered Design methodology focussed on creating the team. This topic will teach you to analyse both your technical skills needed for the Human Centered Design assignment, as well as your personal soft skills. Finally, a summary of existing ICT tools for supporting the collaborative project management is given.

4.1 Self-assessment tool

Assessment refers to the act of determining or estimating the value of something and making appropriate judgments on issues. It´s used interchangeably with words like evaluation, examination etc. Similarly, self-assessment is the ability to examine yourself to find out how much progress you have made. It´s a skill that helps individuals monitor their own work or abilities, find out what their weaknesses and strengths are, and self-diagnose relevant solutions.

The purpose of self-assessment is to help the individual know the extent of his/her abilities and to improve upon them without the need of a performance appraiser. It involves the use of questions such as; what are my strengths; what are the obstacles, etc.

Aside it being a part of formal employee appraisal, it´s essential for every professional's personal development. Some general benefits of self-assessment are:

- Self-assessment makes you sure and confident about your capabilities. It eliminates or reduces work related fear and uncertainty.
- It enables the employee/student to assess himself, make corrections quickly and improve on his abilities. In other words, it enhances capacity building.
- Self-assessment provides direction for training. Once you know what your strengths and weaknesses are, you can choose the right tutor or training that best fits your career needs.

You can find the self-assessment tool on the competences related with the management of collaborative teams on the COL-CREATION project website and e-Training Platform which can help you in understanding your main strengths and weakness and take bigger profit of the further contents of this Topic 4.

4.2 How to create a collaborative team

This part deals with the division of labour: team composition and complementarity.

Now that you know your team, you need to define internal roles. You will analyse which competences you lack in your team, and how you will deal when these competences will be required.

More and more we need to work in teams (Co-Creation). The complexity of problems we try to solve asks for different disciplines, cultures and even race. The fast introduction of new technology demands new ways of adoption and co-working. The diversity on different levels of a team brings added value into a team.

What does a team need?

According to a study on Entrepreneurial teams, three diversity aspects are important: (Zhou, 2015)

- Demographic diversity: Age (phase in life), gender, "tenure", among others.
- Personality diversity according to the big five characteristics: openness, conscientiousness, extravert, agreeableness, emotional stability. Personal interests and lifestyle, values.
- Informational diversity: education, educational background, experience, competences, function.

According to a study of the MIT in Boston, some teams act smarter, and we all know that. But what are the characteristics of smarter acting teams?

- Their members contributed more equally to the team's discussions, rather than letting one or two people dominate the group.
- Their team members scored higher on a test called "Reading the mind in the eyes", which measures how well people can read complex emotional states from images of faces with only the eyes visible (non-verbal behaviour).
- Finally, teams with more women outperformed teams with more men. Indeed, it appeared that it was not 'diversity' (having equal numbers of men and women) that mattered for a team's intelligence, but simply having more women. This last effect, however, was partly explained by the fact that women, on average, were better at 'mindreading' than men.

There are several tools that can help you with the formation of your team and the division of roles. In this topic we will use three: the Team Charter Canvas, the Network spin and Entrecomp.

Team Charter Canvas

To work with the Team, follow the exercise below. Arrange for a comfortable environment. Surely not a meeting room.

Let everyone do a short introduction. The person speaking should be standing. Another way is to have everybody make one simple visual of who they are, what is important for them, and what they strive for. This is a great way to getting to know each other and for breaking the ice.

Checklist

- Arrange a relaxed, positive and private environment
- Have markers (fine tip) and paper for everybody
- Print or draw the canvas on a big sheet of paper
- Have plenty of sticky notes and markers ready

- Allow yourself 45-60 minutes of undisturbed time.

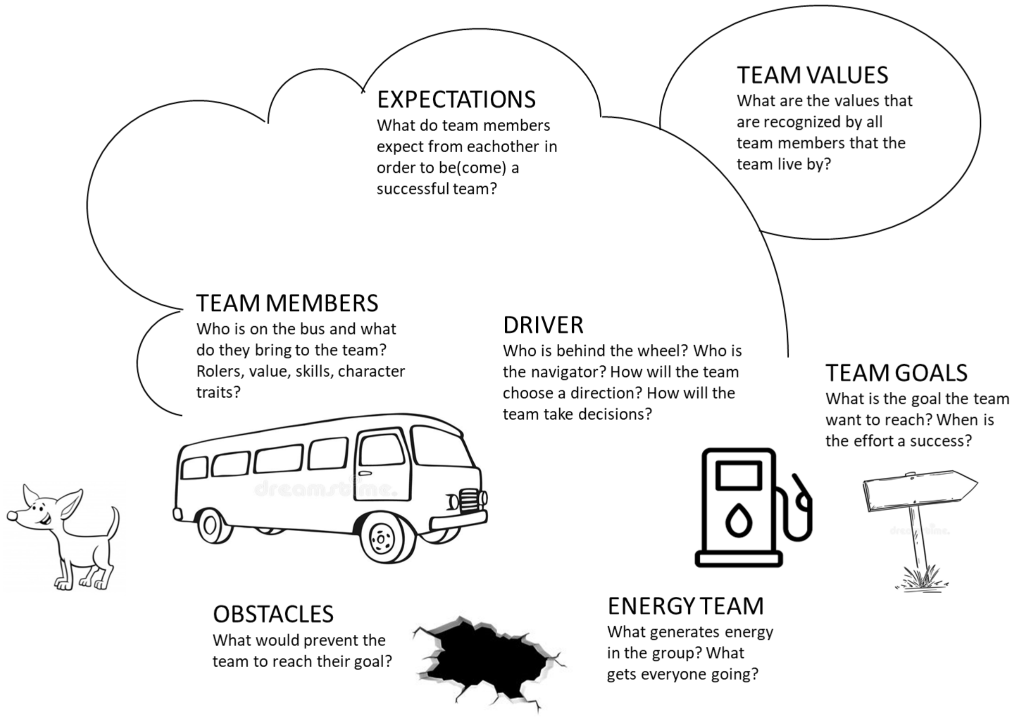


Figure 8 The Team Charter Canvas

Team members present themselves; As mentioned, it is very important that everybody is introduced properly, that people know what everybody's expectations are (why they are in the room) and that there is a relaxed atmosphere.

Team members have to tell where they want to be on the bus; Ask every team member where they want to sit in the bus. If someone wants to sit in the driver's seat. That's great! More room for you as a facilitator to facilitate!

Individual; Individually people need to write on sticky notes what their expectations are (max. 3), what they see as obstacles (max. 3), their 1 most important value, and what will give them energy. Also, each should write down the most important value they want to add to the group.

A step back; Take a step back and discuss the values expectations, values, energy sources, and obstacles. Again, it is not a discussion about right or wrong, but about making sure they all can identify themselves with what is put on the charter. Either the team will come up with common input, or if not, the sum of the sticky notes is what the team represents.

Identifying common themes; When clustering the sticky notes per topic. Overarching themes may arise. This is great but should not be forced. Don't try to be too practical here as a facilitator.

Team goals; Now that everything is filled in an everybody recognizes themselves as an acknowledged and valued team member, let's fill in the team goals. The team should discuss and come up with a maximum of 3 goals. Make sure they are not all directly related to their functional goal.

The team contract; After the session is finished, have all team members sign the team charter canvas. It is their contract amongst each other to make the team successful.

Network spin

The network spin was developed within Artevelde University College. It allows you to map the network that your team already has, and that you would like to acquire.

Each team member fills in his or her network. Networks are important to reach out to people who you “really” know. They can help and support you among your projects, start-up and other things even outside your work they can be very important.

We start with the informal network, from family to friends. Then we map our professional network. The idea is that you really know the people, that means you can call them, you have their specifications to contact them.

You can use this tool to evaluate whether your network grew while working on your projects as an individual or as a team (before and after).

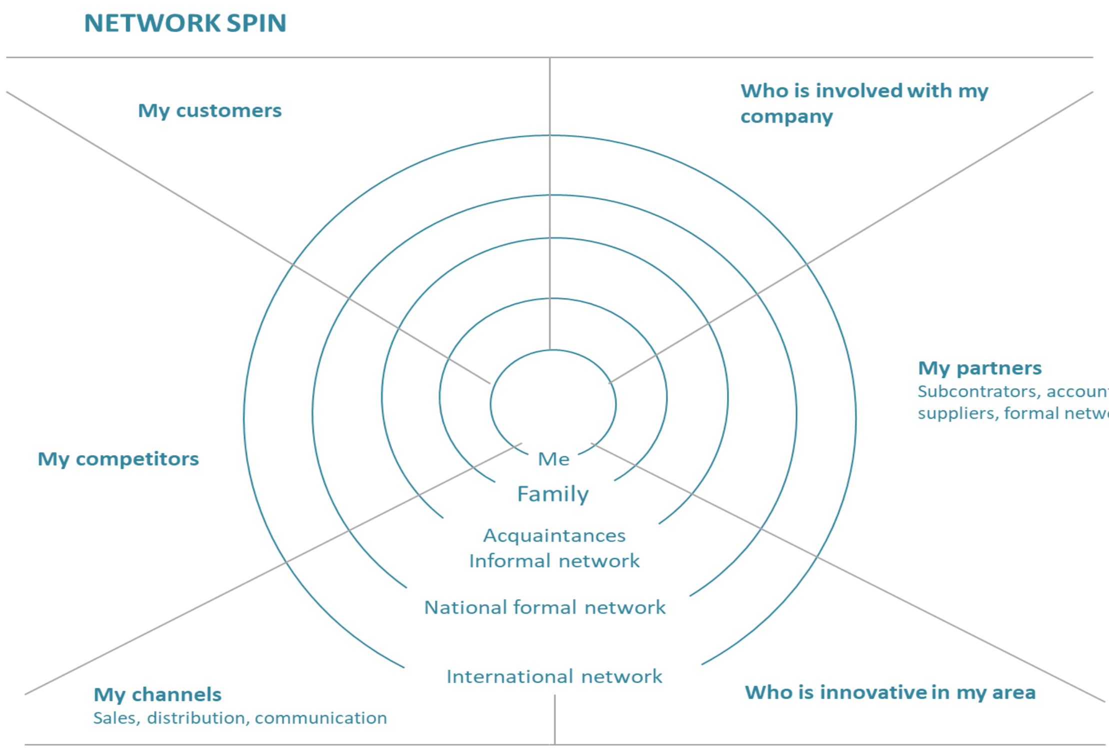


Figure 9 Network Spin

Entrecomp to measure soft skills

Entrecomp is an EU Framework on entrepreneurial competences. You can also use it as a tool to measure your entrepreneurial soft skills set. It works with soft skills to support entrepreneurs or employees of companies/organizations with their personal and professional growth. From previous research it was detected the most important ones for an entrepreneur. (ESF Start2Go 2017-2018 or Thrive-project, research on developments in the creative industries). Within these soft skills we can measure (from ‘foundation’ towards ‘advanced’) what the current status is and how the evolution or experience and improvement is when the project is finished.

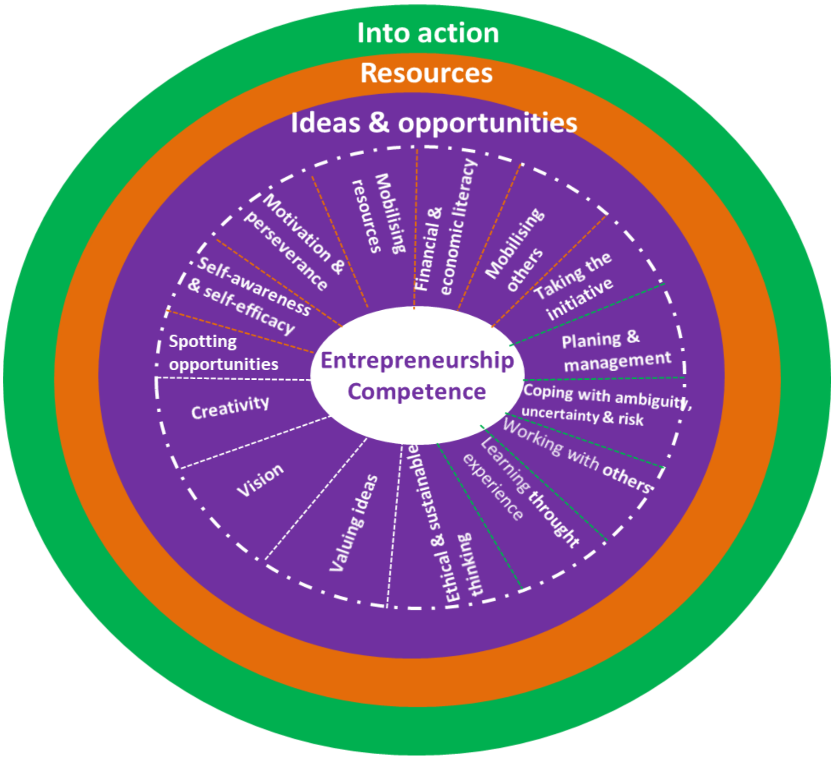


Figure 10 Entrepreneurship Competence Framework

Additional information

EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework:
https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC101581/lfna27939enn.pdf

Thrive: Research on company profiles and entrepreneurial competences in the creative industries:

https://www.thriveproject.eu/research-1-2-development-profiles-and-skills.html

4.3 Management of dynamics of collaborative teams

Team dynamics are critical for organizational success. Without positive team dynamics, your business can't fully leverage the potential of your employees and tap into their skills and experience. So, what are team dynamics and how can you manage and improve your team's performance through enhanced dynamics? No two teams are exactly the same, so improving team dynamics starts with identifying any issues and formulating a tailored strategy for your team.

The research on team dynamics or team processes originates from the concept of groups dynamics and the notion that the "whole is greater than the sum of its parts". The social psychologist, Kurt Lewin, conducted research on the interaction between individuals and considered group dynamics to describe both the positive and negative forces within a group. Lewin noted that people often take on distinct roles and behaviors when they work in a group. "Group dynamics" describes the effects of these roles and behaviors on other group members and on the group as a whole.

More recent researchers have built on Lewin's ideas, and this work has become central to good management practice. A group with a positive dynamic is easy to spot. Team members trust one another, they work towards a collective decision, and they hold one another accountable for making things happen. As well as this, researchers have found that when a team has a positive dynamic, its members are nearly twice as creative as an average group.

Group dynamics can be understood as how team member's distinct roles and behaviors impact other group members and the group as a whole. Team dynamics are therefore the unconscious, psychological factors that influence the direction of a team's behavior and performance.

In a group with poor group dynamics, people's behavior disrupts work. As a result, the group may not come to any decision, or it may make the wrong choice, because group members could not explore options effectively.

A team with positive group dynamics tend to have team members who trust each other. They can work towards collective decisions and they are held accountable for outcomes. A team with good group dynamics may be constructive and productive, and it may demonstrate mutual understanding and self-corrective behavior.

Group dynamics matter because they impact things like creativity, productivity and effectiveness. Since group work is integral to organisations, for business leaders, addressing group dynamics can lead to better work outcomes, customer satisfaction and an improved bottom line.

What Causes Poor Group Dynamics?

Group leaders and team members can contribute to a negative group dynamic. Let's look at some of the most common problems that can occur:

1. **Weak leadership**: when a team lacks of a strong leader, a more dominant member of the group can often take charge. This can lead to a lack of direction, infighting or a focus on the wrong priorities.

2. **Excessive deference to authority**: this can happen when people want to be seen to agree with a leader, and therefore hold back from expressing their own opinions.

3. **Blocking**: this happens when team members behave in a way that disrupts the flow of information in the group. People can adopt blocking roles such as:

- The aggressor: this person often disagrees with others or is inappropriately outspoken.
- The negator: this group member is often critical of others' ideas.
- The withdrawer: this person doesn't participate in the discussion.
- The recognition seeker: this group member is boastful or dominates the session.
- The joker: this person introduces humor at inappropriate times.

4. **Groupthink**: this happens when people place a desire for consensus above their desire to reach the right decision. This prevents people from fully exploring alternative solutions.

5. **Free riding**: here, some group members take it easy, and leave their colleagues to do all the work. Free riders may work hard on their own, but limit their contributions in group situations; this is known as "social loafing."

6. **Evaluation apprehension**: team members' perceptions can also create a negative group dynamic. Evaluation apprehension happens when people feel that they are being judged excessively harshly by other group members, and they hold back their opinions as a result.

Strategies for Improving Team Dynamics

Use these approaches to improve group dynamics:

1. Know Your Team. Conduct a diagnosis and get to know your team; As a leader, you need to guide the development of your group. So, start by learning about the phases that a group goes through as it develops. When you understand these, you'll be able to preempt problems that could arise, including issues with poor group dynamics.

Conduct a diagnosis of what is going wrong in your team by doing a team health check. Observe your team at work and conduct individual interviews in a private, safe and confidential space. Talk to other relevant people, such as customers and line managers, to find out as much as you can about your team's problems. As you do, stay aware of the common causes behind poor group dynamics as stated before.

Other potential causes of poor group dynamics include poor communication and a lack of focus. Take time to observe, talk to team members and figure out what is happening amongst the team.

2. Create a team charter. Define roles and responsibilities; Teams and individual team members need a strong focus to thrive. If you create a team charter and offer clearly defined roles, you could motivate team members to address their responsibilities and work together more effectively. A clear charter also helps you set clear behavioral and outcomes expectations. It gives you standards by which you can hold underperforming team members to account.

3. Enhance team culture; Deliberately build a supportive team culture. Use team-building exercises to encourage stronger relationships between individual team members. Create a workplace that supports employee well-being, success and enthusiasm for work. Value diversity and think about how you can build trust and respect among team members. Support open communication, sharing of ideas through an inclusive work culture.

4. Tackle problems quickly; If you notice that one member of your team has adopted a behavior that's affecting the group unhelpfully, act quickly to challenge it. Speak to the team member directly and invite him or her to reflect on the behavior and how it can be changed to support the team's goals. Conflicts can happen from time to time – even in the healthiest of teams – so encourage open discussion of the conflict and help guide team members to a resolution, allowing your team to return to a state of positive group dynamics. Provide feedback that shows your team member the impact of her actions, and encourage her to reflect on how she can change her behavior.

5. Break down barriers; Use team-building exercises to help everyone get to know one another, particularly when new members join the group. These exercises ease new colleagues into the group gently, and also help to combat the "black sheep effect," which happens when group members turn against people, they consider different.

6. Build and focus on communication; Open communication is central to good team dynamics, so make sure that everyone is communicating clearly. Include all of the forms of communication that your group uses – emails, meetings, and shared documents, for example – to avoid any ambiguity. If the status of a project changes, or if you have an announcement to make, let people know as soon as possible. That way, you can ensure that everyone has the same information.

7. Pay attention; Watch out for the warning signs of poor group dynamics. Pay particular attention to frequent unanimous decisions, as these can be a sign of groupthink, bullying, or free riding. If there are frequent unanimous decisions in your group, consider exploring new ways to encourage people to discuss their views, or to share them anonymously.

As part of the organisation's leadership, you should always be paying attention to your team and know what is going on. Look out for unacceptable behaviors such as bullying, groupthink and freeriding so you are ready to address them right away. Reinforce positive behaviors like successful collaboration, sharing of ideas, trust and respect.

Excellent group dynamics can facilitate employee productivity and satisfaction while allowing your teams to reach their set targets on time. However, teams with excellent dynamics still require ongoing observation, correction and guidance, so be prepared to continue providing your team with the leadership and training they need to thrive.

Building Teams and Groups Cohesion

Based on Patrick Lencioni's book called "*The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*", this author stated its central theory that there are 5 key elements to a cohesive team. In order of importance, they are:

- **Trust**; they trust one another
- **Healthy conflict**; they engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
- **Commitment**; they commit to decisions and plans of action.
- **Accountability**; they hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans
- **Results focus**; they focus on the achievement of collective results

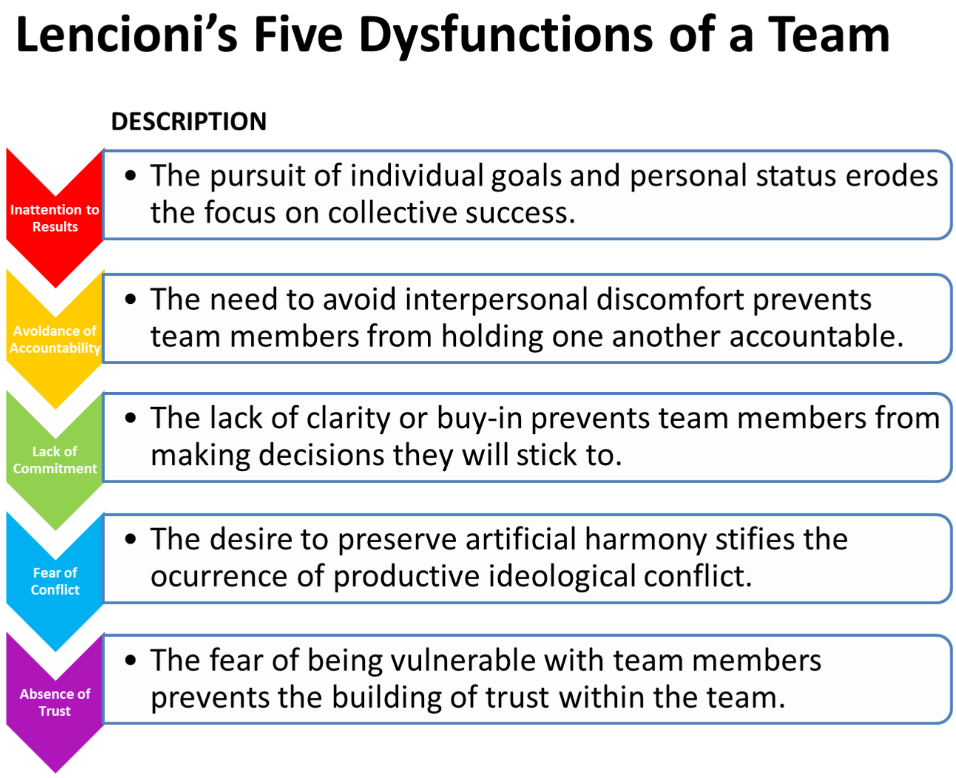


Figure 11 Lencioni´s Five Dysfunctions of a Team

The five behaviors Lencioni identified will result—if each is maximized—in a team that operates as efficiently and effectively as possible. The behaviors are Trust, Conflict, Commitment, Accountability, and Results. Each behavior in the model builds upon the previous and supports the others. The team profile and facilitated program lets team members know how they and the team are doing, and how they can become more cohesive.

- **Trust**; At the base of the pyramid is trust. Trust is the foundation element because it is only with trust that team conflict can be possible. Without trust on the team, very little progress can be made in gaining cohesiveness overall. Vulnerability-based trust (the ability to expose one's weaknesses) is key to building the relationships required to be able to withstand and even benefit from both the routine and unique challenges every team faces

- **Conflict**; Conflict is sometimes considered dangerous on a team because it can lead to hard feelings. However, if the team has relationship trust, members feel secure enough to be honest and courageous. If trust is truly in place, conflict is constructive. In fact, conflict is critical to ensuring that all points of view and aspects of issues have been discussed, understood, and taken into account. Teams without conflict tend to shut out valuable feedback which can lead to poor decision-making. When teams engage in productive conflict they can confidently commit to decisions. This is where real commitment to team goals happens. Teams become dysfunctional when they are unable to productively deal with conflict and all meaningful relationships require productive conflict for them to grow.

- **Commitment**; Gaining commitment from team members is not the same as getting consensus. According to Lencioni, reaching consensus means compromise, and compromise might not yield the best result. Commitment comes with clarity of purpose. Take a problem for which there are several ideas. With trust and appropriate conflict, the team chooses the idea they will pursue. Though only one idea is chosen, every member understands why that idea was selected and supports the idea—both inside the team and when communicating externally. Without team commitment you cannot have accountability.

- **Accountability**; Accountability is typically the most difficult behavior for a team to master. Most will never get to the point where each team member routinely holds all other members accountable. Reaching and maintaining good scores in the previous steps will make accountability much easier. Accountability can become part of a team's overall dynamic. If the team is to be accountable, everyone must have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. When teams are not held accountable, they tend to look out for their own interests, rather than the interests of the team. A healthy team places team results as the most important goal of all. When all team members place the team's results first the team becomes results orientated.

- **Results** Achieving team objectives is why the team exists. If each prior behavior is functioning well, each member of the team is focused on achieving the team's goal. The team goal becomes more important than any individual's personal goal, and everyone feels rewarded by being part of the team result.

The five behaviors that make a team cohesive are rarely mastered and as things change (members, leaders, goals, etc.) the team will move through the different behaviors. Often, change will require the team to start over having to rebuild trust, thus working through each behavior again.

A cohesive team not only accomplishes more for the organization, but is more fun to be a part of. The work to build the most cohesive team possible is well worth the effort.

Team Development

Team dynamics is a broad concept and represents the way in which team members behave and the psychological processes underlying these interactions within the team. When team members engage in work projects, their behaviors are interdependent and from these interactions, there is a team emergence of attitudes, motivation, and cognition that influence how team members feel about each other, their team, and team projects. This constellation of affect, attitude and behaviors represent team dynamics and are the foundation for team work (Bell, Brown, Colaneri & Outland, 2018; Salas, Cooke & Rosen, 2008). Team cognition, cohesion and conflict are important dimensions of team dynamics.

- **Team cognition** focuses on team decision-making and how team evaluates situations (Cooke, Gorman & Winner, 2007). Most research on cognition focused on individual decision-making and information processing. Moreover, team cognition has previously been linked to individual knowledge and how this knowledge is distributed across team members (Cooke et al., 2007). However, interactive team cognition theory proposes that cognition resides in team interactions (Cooke et al., 2007).

• **Team cohesion** refers to the social connections or bonding that occurs between team members. Motivational factors that create these social binds between team members tend to increase team productivity (Beale et al., 2003). Cohesion is generally interpreted as the force that causes group members to remain united and is superior to the forces trying to separate them. Joining a group makes individuals proud of belonging to it and making them feel more morally satisfied. As stated above, a cohesive group is one in which its members are attracted to each other. In low cohesion groups, there is no incentive to help foster personal relationships among its members. Let's look at the reasons that explain this attraction to the group:

1. The objectives of the group and those of its members are compatible and clearly specified.
2. The group has a charismatic leader.
3. The reputation of the group as a whole is that it is successful in the execution of the tasks.
4. The size of the group is small enough for all opinions to be heard and evaluated by the other members.
5. There is an attraction among members that makes them help each other to eliminate obstacles and barriers that prevent personal growth and development.

• **Team conflict** occurs when there are disagreements between team members in terms of both disagreements concerning tasks and also conflict within relationships between team members (Weingart et al., 2015). Task conflict occurs when there is disagreement about the content of tasks and relationship conflict occurs when there is a clash of values between team members. The research suggests that task conflict can actually be beneficial for team performance whereas relationship conflict is detrimental.

In the development of work teams, **maturation process stages** are generated that begin with **dependence**, continue with **counter-dependence**, lead people to **independence** and finally integrate them, through **interdependence.**

TEAM DEVELOPMENT: MATURATION PROCESS STAGES

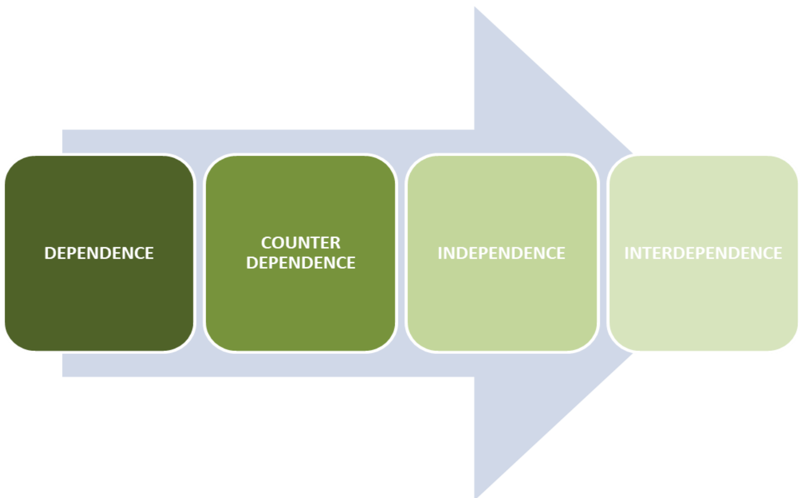


Figure 12. Team Development. Maturation Process Stages

• **Dependence**. The first stage to be undertaken by the team members is the acceptance of their experience of being dependent on formal authority, as stated by the name "hierarchical dependence", traditionally used in organizations.

The state of dependence is characterized by the uncertainty and anxiety of people in the absence of the objectives and expectations of the formal leader, who assumes, by his investiture of power, the organization and direction of the life of the group.

The behavior of the team is oriented to demand precise instructions of what to do, how to do it. The consequences of such a situation do not wait, namely: lack of collaboration and dissatisfaction, which affect productivity. If the formal leader has the necessary sensitivity to identify the negative effects that this state of affairs will produce in the results, he will seek a change oriented towards integration.

- **Counter-dependence**. This is the stage of the maturation process that requires more openness and availability on the part of leaders and supervisors, since the members of the group will begin to express not only their opinions regarding the work, but will express their moods with more and more naturalness and will raise their needs or disagreements with less fear.

The leader must use his ability to listen to the points of view of others, talk with them to clarify possible differences and negotiate the terms of a greater commitment, based on the distinction between needs and desires, both Institution as of individuals.

This stage is characterized by contradictions through which the group seeks its identity and the roots of its commitment to the institution. This favors the management of the sense of social responsibility.

- **Independence**. At this stage, the team feels relaxed and seemingly cohesive. A typical search for unanimity or consensus in decision-making is a symptom of this distension, as if the expression of a disagreement once again calls into question the basic independence pact. At this stage the team members ask themselves about the implications of their integration.

Once again, the team seeks in the midst of confusion and opposing opinions, what is the level of authentic participation that allows both to cooperate and not lose individuality. When this is possible, the team has achieved more complete communication.

- **Interdependence**. At this stage the team members are clearly aware of the ability of each member and their abilities, as well as the acceptance of himself and others with all its possibilities and limitations.

Given its interdependence, the team is able to take care of itself and thus express its autonomy. It knows how to evaluate its own progress, control its operation, regulate the tensions that arise and actively intervene to modify the situation when it is not satisfactory or productive.

Skills needed to enhance team dynamics

- **Leadership;** The leadership role in the group is a crucial characteristic of it. The leader influences the group members. There are leaders in formal and informal groups. In formal groups, the leader sometimes has some sanctioning power legitimized (he can reward whoever meets directives or norms or punish those who break them). In informal groups, the leader is usually a highly respected, high-status member who:

- Contributes to the group achieving its objectives.
- Allows members to meet their needs.
- Gives body to the values of the group, personifying the values, motives and aspirations of the members.
- Is elected by group members as a representative of their opinions when relating to leaders of other groups.

- It is a mediator in group conflicts, an initiator of its actions and should strive to maintain it as a functional unit.

Finally, other characteristics of the group leader are the following:

- Has clear vision and objectives
- Willing to work both, up (the direction) and down (peers of equal or lower level)
- He is a good communicator capable of initiating dialogues that generate commitment.
- It is open (encourages participation) and authoritarian (intervening when necessary to achieve the objectives of the group).

- **Communication Skills**

a) Active and Empathic Listening

Listening is to understand the point of view of our interlocutor, to understand the situation in which he or she is and the reason for his or her behavior. It also implies taking charge of the feelings that our interlocutor experiences in this situation, etc.

The first step to listen is a matter of a decision: do I listen or not? The circumstances, my goals and even my scale of values form the triangle of that decision.

Now, if I decide to listen, I need to land my interlocutor's point of view, examine it, investigate it until I know it, let's see.

The 5 steps of the active or empathic listening:

1. **Forget your point of view just for a moment:**

- Do not counterargue
- Do not mentally counterattack
- Do not anticipate your answer

2. Focus on his/her point of view:

- Pay attention
- Do not interrupt
- Do not judge or evaluate

3. Investigate his/her point of view until you understand it:

- Reformulate: "you mean that ..."
- Ask questions, open and closed.
- Do not assume or don't make deductions

4. Show him or her that you have understood his/her point of view/feeling:

- Reformulate: "I understand what you mean ..."
- Take charge of his/her feelings: "I understand how you feel ...", "I may be in your place ..."

5. Look for an agreement, total or partial:

- Partial agreement: "It is true that...", "from that point of view I understand what you say because ..."
- If you disagree, at all: "I understand your position, even so..."

Now ... you can show your point of view.

b) Feedback

The Feedback consists, in the case of a team member, in giving opinions about the action or conduct of a teammate. The utility is twofold: to say which behavior is appropriate (to continue doing) or which is not (to correct). Therefore, it´s a very powerful tool to apply in practice the coordination function within a team.

Some ideas to implement it:

- **Be descriptive;** Avoiding all value judgments. What is easier for a partner to understand: hear that it is unpunctual or that today you are late?
- **Be positive and balance**; No one learns when he hears only the negative of our actions, please balance the feedback, mixing negative and positive things.
- **Be specific**; It´s easier for a collaborator to understand what we tell him if we give concrete information about his behavior. For example: the other day when you repeatedly interrupted John... (the opposite would be to tell him: *you never respect the word shift of others*).
- **Say things in the right moment**; What is your mood? What about your collaborator? Do you have to tell him in private?
- **Make it useful**; The collaborator must be helped by showing him what he should do in the future. But consider yourself: will he be able to do it?
- **To be requested**; Or at least, ask permission. For example: I wanted to tell you my opinion about what happened the other day, do you have a moment? Remember that the more predisposition there is to listen, the greater the possibility of influencing.
- **Order it to the present and the future**; What done is done. So, point to the future and give orientation.
- **Admit that you can be in an error**
- **Check that they understand you:** OK?
- **Listen by system:** get all the information.

c) Assertiveness

It is having the ability to defend one's rights without violating those of others under any circumstances. It´s the appropriate behavior style for conflict management without damaging the relationship. Being assertive implies:

- Defend your rights and respect those of others.
- Express your opinions and views openly.
- Act in favor of my interests without feeling guilty.
- Knowing how to say NO when that is the answer you want or understand what you should give. Avoid being taken advantage of.

IF I AM ASSERTIVE, I KEEP MY SELF-ESTEEM. I RESPECT ME AND RESPECT OTHERS.

Steps to be assertive in the management of a conflict

- Describe the situation, what is happening being objective and as descriptive as possible. Avoid judgments or assessments of the other's behavior (do not label).
- Say how you feel about this situation.

- Say what you have decided to do, or what you ask or suggest to the other person to do.

"WHEN IT HAPPENS ..., I FEEL ... I HAVE DECIDED OR I ASK YOU ...

Normally, being assertive in any situation requires five stages:

1. Describe the behavior ("When you behave like this ...")
2. Express feelings ("Before your intervention, I felt ...")
3. Emphasize ("I understand why you ...")
4. Negotiate a change ("I want you ...")
5. Indicate the consequences ("If you do that ...")

Regarding Communication Skills, we can identify the next Basic Styles of Interpersonal Conduct

- **Aggressive Style**: Attack others without considering their feelings at all. Results.
  - There is never a winner
  - Aggressive behavior is directed to attack another.
  - Generate stress and discomfort
- **Passive Style**: Does not defend their interests and let others step on it. He does everything he is told no matter what he thinks or feels about it. Results:
  - No get anything
  - You lose respect for yourself
  - Resentment and revenge
- **Assertive Style**: Defend your own interests, express your opinions freely and do not allow others to take advantage of it. It is considered with the way of thinking and feeling of others. Results:
  - No need to insult to solve problems between two people.
  - Plan to follow and negotiate mutual agreement the best solution to the problem.

A summary of basic styles of interpersonal conducts is given in Table 4.

ITEM/STYLE	PASSIVE	AGRESSIVE	ASERTIVE
MESSAGE	You are right. It doesn't matter what I think. It doesn't matter how I feel.	I am right. If you don't think like me, you are wrong. Your feelings do not count.	This is how I see it, is what I think. And these are my feelings
OBJECTIVE	Avoid conflicts	Get what you want: win.	Create mutual communication and respect.
VERBAL COMMUNICATION	Weak and hesitant voice	Strong and presumptuous voice, gushing out, with a sarcastic inflection.	Firm, warm and well-modulated tone. Uniform cadence
NO VERBAL COMMUNICATION	Looking away or low. Shrunken and crestfallen posture, nervous movements of the hands.	Cold and penetrating look. "Stretched" and rigid posture, hands on the hips, frequent finger pointing, hands closed, fist bumps.	Direct, open and sincere look. Relaxed and well balanced posture. Loose hands on each side of the body, relaxed gestures.

Table 4. Summary of Basic Styles of Interpersonal Conducts

4.4 Collaborative Project Management

Collaborative project management (CPM) is the method used to ”plan*, coordinate, control, and monitor distributed and complex projects. It also enables project teams to collaborate across departmental, corporate, and national boundaries and to master growing project complexity*” [14]. This type of work is also known as “working in the open” and unlike in the traditional top-down project management, CPM represents a delivery methodology which allows sharing of responsibility, management of planning, execution and delivery of tasks to be shared across the project team. The implementation of this collaborative approach solves one of the most common problems of the traditional project management, i.e., the requirement of all information and communication flow to go only through one person - the project leader.

The concept of the collaborative project management was developed in the 1990’s by Dr. Rupert Stuffer. The methodology was created in order to tackle issues in the management of complex product development projects that were beyond the capability of a person using the traditional techniques. In the recent years, the essence of the CPM has changed to a more complex process, including the use of different technologies, platforms and social media, which are considered as the biggest drivers of this change.

What are the features of the effective Collaborative Project Management?

As collaborative project management differentiates from the traditional methods for project cooperation, and is considered as relatively new approach, there is not a standard way for implementation yet. Nevertheless, there are some common features for successful execution of CPM:

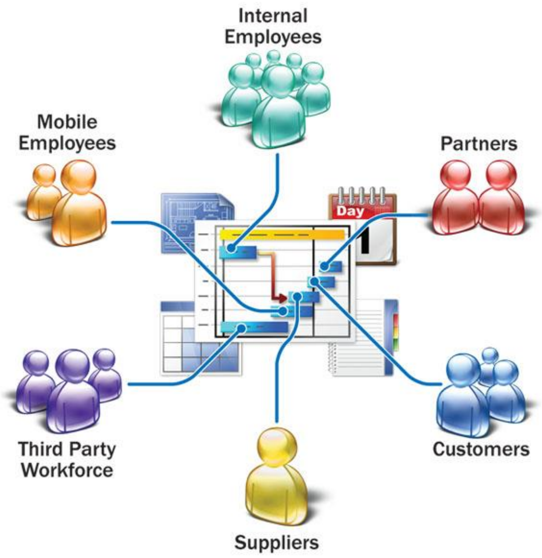
- **Platforms for collaboration;** Unlike in the traditional project management, where interaction usually takes place face-to-face, CPM requires the usage of a specific platform which allows participants to have access to all of the necessary information regarding the project they are working on, anytime, wherever they might be located. A good platform for CPM provides the functionality that is needed in order to enhance collaboration and contribute to the proper implementation of responsibilities among all members of the team. The chosen tool or software needs to update in real time, so the project team can always work with the most up-to-date information which guarantees that the implementation of tasks moves forward smoothly. The platform also serves as a place where all members of the team can store and manage project task-related information and gives immediate access to the latest data without the need to search for it in multiple tools such as hard drives, e-mail inboxes, etc. The usage of such software also ensures that all members of the collaborative team can work at the same time and edit simultaneously which shortens the work time and contributes to successful compliance with the set deadlines. Platforms for collaboration are the most effective tool for CPM, as they give opportunity to logically organize and plan ahead future tasks and monitor the progress of the current projects to ensure that nothing falls behind.

- **Cross functional ownership**; In the traditional project management, there is hierarchical structure where managers are sitting at the top, pushing their decisions down to the organizational chain, which restricts the rest of the team from participating in the decision-making process. In the collaborative project management, each of the individuals in the project team has “seat” at the table, i.e., the entire team contributes to decision making process and execution of tasks. CPM requires active involvement of all team members in the process of decision making, planning, designing and implementation of activities, as this is the core of the collaborative project work. The

[14] Collaborative project management. The information is taken from Wikipedia on November, 26th, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collaborative_project_management

team needs to share responsibility and find the best possible way to do the work effectively. The dedication of the team to the project implementation from the beginning to its end is the most important feature of the CPM, and it is considered as the biggest driver of team spirit.

- **Distribution of tasks**; Splitting of projects into smaller sub-tasks is another typical feature of collaborative project management. Responsibilities are usually broken down into smaller tasks and then assigned to each of the members of the team. All sub-tasks are distributed and synchronized in order to tie all team members in a system which promotes common understanding of the overall planning of the project. This way, the team members have consolidated view of the whole project, and at the same time are working on own tasks which are based on their knowledge and expertise and their particular role in the project.



- **Open and transparent communication**; The overall communication and data regarding each project need to be transparent, honest and based on a constant feedback between the individuals in the team, so if a question or concern arise, it can be solved as quickly as possible. All communication must take place in real time, using different communication tools and channels, such as live chats, interactive whiteboards, instant notifications or social media. This way, if you bring someone new to work on a project, he will be able to learn everything immediately, without taking your time to explain every project detail. Moreover, in the collaborative work, sometimes you need to change project details or add some extra sub-tasks, and it is important to let the team know about it immediately, so that everyone is working on the most important tasks. Real-time, two-way communication is essential – essential for the team, to be able to get on the same page, and to creatively motivate and bounce ideas off of each other.

Why Collaborative Project Management matters?

Collaborative project management is a methodology used for successful project implementation that requires bringing together the right people and removing the hierarchical barriers which are typical for the traditional project management and prevent the project team from taking decisions on their own. Moreover, traditional project management maintains the so-called top-down approach, where team members are sitting outside the “box” waiting for orders from the project manager, while CPM provides space in the “box” for each team member. Though, this top-down approach is no longer the best solution, as with the rapid change of technology and increasingly complex projects, together with the growing use of remote resources, the teams using the traditional project management struggle to deliver. Collaborative project management reflects all changes that have emerged in the recent years and allows collaboration between individuals with diverse background and experience that even do not have to be on the same geographical area anymore. If you are launching a new product, doesn’t it sound like a good approach to have a designer, who can create the design? And what about involving a customer – to tell you what likes and dislikes about your product? And finally, it would be great if you have a person involved in marketing and sales to launch the product on the market, right? Collaborative project management can bring a group of people that have all knowledge, expertise and resources it needs to bring a project to its end. This means that you can involve designers, customers, suppliers, marketing experts and others, and using the right technology – to implement a successful project.

Collaborative project management is considered as one of the most useful approaches for cooperation and it can increase the benefits for a team or a company, as it:

- **Supports distributed teams**; This allows taking advantage of people with excellent expertise all over the globe and contributes to the CPM efficiency. By means of different software and platforms for collaboration which ease the process of communication it´s no longer a problem for distributed teams to cooperate easily and implement tasks under common projects without the need of face-to-face meetings that can unnecessarily slow down the process of project implementation.
- **Promotes team dedication**; CPM requires active involvement from all members of the team and "forces" them to put a lot of efforts in the entire process of execution of tasks. When having such level of ownership, people are able to see their own roles within the overall context of the project which helps them to improve their performance and become even better with time.
- **Promotes more creative inputs**; Gathering different people with different backgrounds and experience to work in a collaborative environment allow the process of brainstorming in order to come up with more creative ideas and solutions to help with the project implementation. Team members also add value bringing their innovative thinking to the team for consideration which motivates people to share and critique ideas productively.
- **Increases productivity;** CPM promotes efficient distribution of project responsibility among the team and helps allocate each task to a member that has the required skills and time to finish the work. Instead of having the whole team working on the majority of the tasks, collaborative project management approach equally distributes the work and ease the overall working process. If the team is well-organized, this will result in better productivity, higher quality of products and greater efficiency.
- **Improves delivery time**; Working in a team allow you to achieve results that would take unreasonable amounts of time for an individual to obtain and contributes to more condense production processes. Working collaboratively also speeds up the process of delivery and distribution of the product or service as it provides transparency and allow all members of the project team to "self-monitor" each other, which contributes to producing faster results.
- **Improves networking skills**; Working in a collaborative team toward the same goal creates natural bond between the members. People are able to get to know each other and with each of the projects you are involved in, you get to know professionals from different spheres. Even though that at that time the connections you are establishing with them might seem practically meaningless to you, do not underestimate these connections – you might find yourself in a situation that requires to have connections in order to implement a specific task. Indeed, you must not neglect the power of networking while having the opportunity to work with different people.

Working in a team is like a puzzle – each member has its own unique shape that becomes part of the bigger picture. Being able to work with professionals of different personalities, backgrounds and experience can make you more effective professional, indeed. Nowadays, the rapid development of technology makes it easier than ever before to work together and cooperate without having the need to be in the same room. We are collaborating with each other more than ever which turns collaboration into a major key to business success. Employers more and more often expect to see any type of collaborative work experience in the portfolio of e person and recognize it as advantage simply because very few can work individually and nobody works without having to communicate in their daily tasks. Effective collaborative project management is becoming a great competitive advantage and the adoption of such practices in the work process can also help your team or company to deliver more successful projects on-time and on-budget. As the world becomes increasingly connected, companies and individuals that cannot manage to collaborate well often find themselves replaced by those that can.

Collaborative Project Management Tools

By now you have probably already guessed that in order to run successful project management collaboration, you are going to need a bit of technological help. Since we live in a digital age, there are plenty of tools to get you started with. In this section we are going to introduce you to some of the most popular online project management tools which, judging by our own experience, will enhance your collaboration while keeping things simple at the mean time.

We've chosen the following online tools, because of their ease of use, functionalities and last but not least – they have a free *working* option, which to be honest is hard not to like. Here we go.

***Trello* (**www.trello.com)

Trello has been around for almost a decade now and you may have heard of it at least – it was originally created in 2011 by Fog Creek Software and later on sold to Atlassian in 2017. We must say it actually makes collaboration fun in a natural way. Actually, in Trello's own words: "*Trello's boards, lists, and cards enable you to organize and prioritize your projects in a fun, flexible, and rewarding way*". We agree.

How to access Trello; This is a pretty standard process: just go to www.trello.com and click on the "Sing up" button in the upper right corner. Follow the on-screen instructions to create your account and confirm it by clicking on the link sent to you by email and voila – you are officially in Trello now.

Getting started ; First things first, we need you to understand a few unique to Trello terms such as:

- Teams; Kind of self-explanatory, but just so we are on the same page – in Trello you can create your own team of people you want to work with, you can join other teams and invite people to join yours. This happens because the Trello database is made up of usernames (you probably remember this from the sign-up form) thus making it possible to collaborate with basically anyone.
- Boards; We just mentioned what that means – it is basically the name of your project and the place where things are organized and tasks are being carried out. Think of it as your team's "virtual office desk" where you sit down and get to work. You can create boards just for yourself (unlimited personal boards) or create ones with your team (limited to 10 free boards). Creating a board (or a team) can happen easily from the main task (top of the page) by simply clicking on the "+" button. Have a look at the example down below.

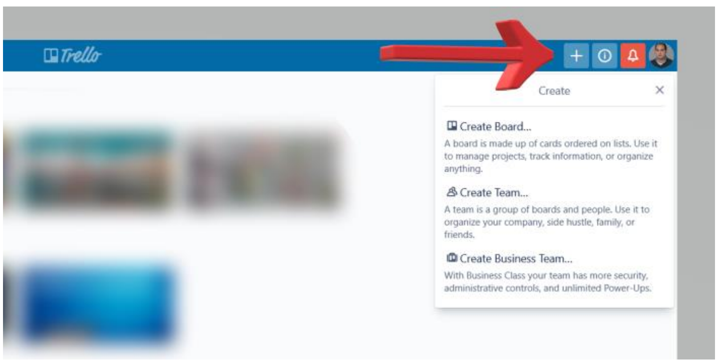


Figure 13. Trello Board

- Lists; Trello allows you to create multiple lists in each of your boards, where ideally each one represents a group of tasks which (usually) have to be completed in order to progress to the next list. By using lists, you will have to breakdown your project into smaller bids and then assign the appropriate people to work on them. Lists can also be moved from on board to another if necessary. We are showing you an example of a list a bit further below.

- Cards: Finally, there are cards which can be customized according to your project planning. Remember when we said we like Trello because it's easy to use? Well, we like it even more because it is intuitive – cards can be moved or copied from list to another, by simply dragging them with your mouse. Let's say you have a list named "draft", and you have a card in that list which is now complete, you can then move it to your next list e.g., "waiting for approval" or "testing". Also, titles you give to lists or tasks can be changed by directly typing over them. Cards also bring a great deal of functionality: You can add a description, you can create a checklist, you can set a deadline, you can assign a team or individual members, you can label your tasks, to make them more visual, you can attach a file e.g. from your computer, OneDrive, Google Drive, Dropbox or Trello (a limit of 10MB per file attachment, you can use the card to leave comments for your teammates and mentioned them the way you would in any social network i.e. using the "@" symbol. Cards can be also customized by adding a cover to make them stand out from each other and make them easier to recognize. You can also choose to "watch" a card, so you may never lose track of its progress.

So now, combining boards, lists and tasks you can achieve a visual representation of your progress without sacrificing productivity.

Figure 14 shows and example of a sample board with 5 lists and a few tasks in each one of them:

Figure 14. Trello Board 2

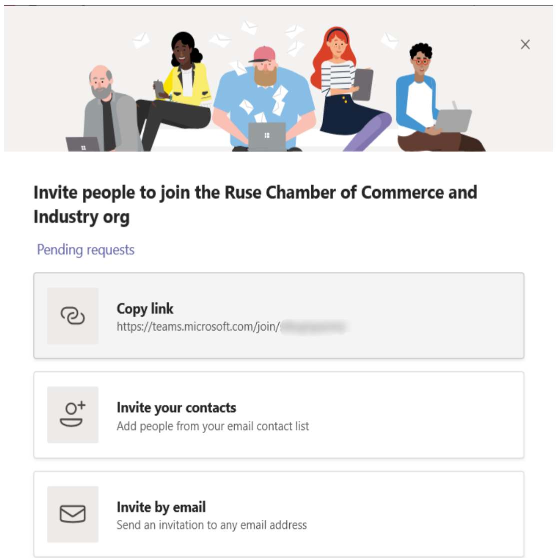
Microsoft Teams

Unlike Trello, there is a chance that you've actually never heard of or used Microsoft Teams, because it is a relatively new service – it was first announced in 2017 during an event Microsoft held in NYC. Teams is the successor of Skype for Business, but redesigned and directly integrated with Office 365. So, what exactly is Teams? It is a unified communication and collaboration platform that combines persistent workplace chat, video meetings, file storage (including collaboration on files), and application integration. In 2018, Microsoft announced a free version of Teams which is still available today, and this is why we are bringing it to your attention - it offers most of the platform's communication options for no charge. Sounds cool right? Let’s have a quick look.

How to access Teams; Microsoft Teams is available in three options: web-based app, a desktop app and a mobile app. Good news is that it’s also available for Mac and Linux devices. You can use Teams with your existing Microsoft (outlook) account or you can create a new one should you wish.

Getting started; There are certainly lots of things to like about Teams even if you decide to stick to the free version. The main features of the tool are visible via a ribbon (picture on the left): *Activity, Chat, Teams, Calls, Files*.

Here are some the features to get you started:



- Teams: the largest unit within the tool. Creating a team is actually one of the first things you do while setting up your account. You can choose to create your own team or become a part of one via an invitation link sent to you. To do the latter just go to “Teams” located in the ribbon on the left -> then click on the “Invite people” link in the lower left corner and you will have the following options as shown in the picture on the right. The maximum number of users you can have is 300, which is much more than most businesses need.

Teams gives the opportunity to create multiple teams, which can be private (people will need permission to join), public (anyone in your organisation will able to join) or organisation-wide (everyone in your organisation automatically joins). To create a team, click on “Teams” located in the ribbon on the left -> then go to “Join or create a team” -> click on “Create a team” -> then “Build a team from scratch” -> choose the type of the team you want to create (e.g. private) and finally – add a name and description to it and you are done. After creating your team, you can move on to the next unit: channels.

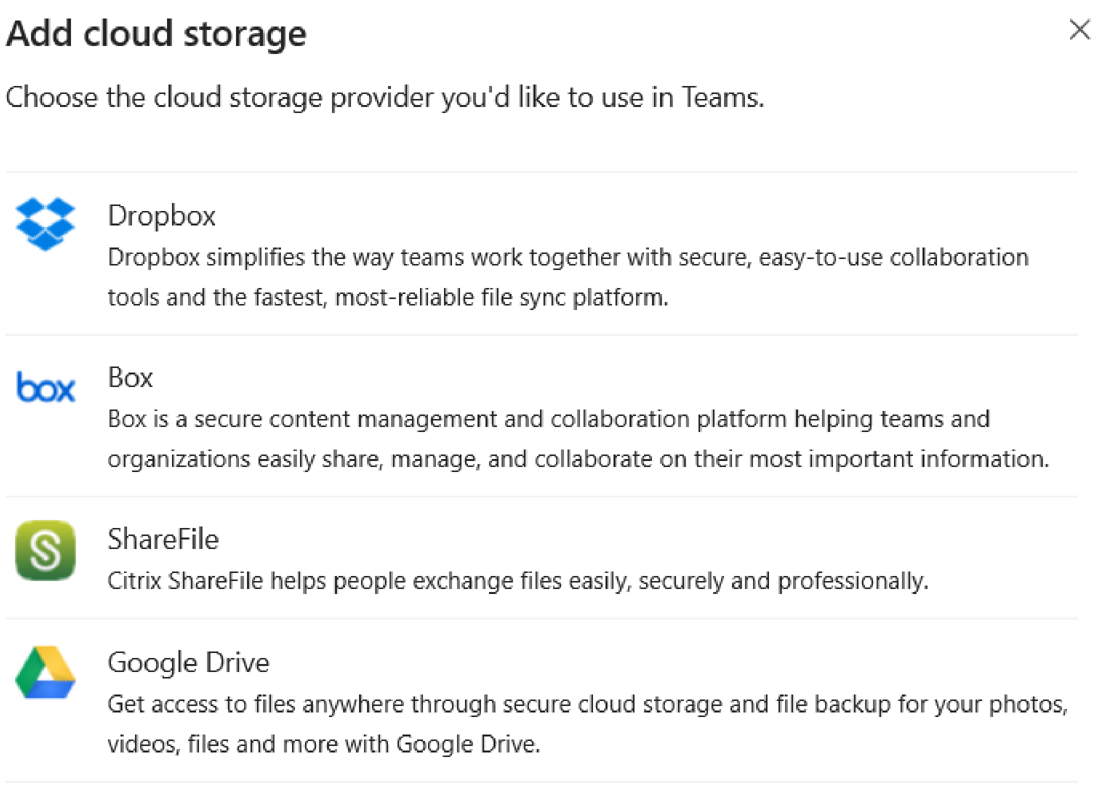
- Channels: teams are made up of channels (i.e., working sections) which are meant to represent your team’s workflow and you can create as many as you need. Have a look at the example below:

- The Teams Feed: within a channel you will also have a feed which consists of the latest developments in it i.e., chats, tasks, shared files, mentions etc.

- Chat, Audio & Video Calling: these are all features we are so accustomed to, that it just feels natural to have when talking about collaboration. There is a dedicated section for “Calls” in the main left ribbon, which can be used to add a speed dial or create an entire group to find people more easily. You can also hit the “Reply” button to a message in your feed and directly respond to someone in your team conversation. Another familiar feature available is to “react” to a message in your feed – just point anywhere on the message itself until you are shown a few options to fast express your opinion:

You can start a chat/audio/video with anyone in your team by clicking on the “People panel” button in the upper right corner and then simply point or click on the icon in front of their user name:

- Real-time collaboration via Microsoft Office: share and edit Office files directly in Teams with familiar applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote.
- File sharing: you can easily share files in Teams and search for them in case you need to. In the free version of Teams, file attachments in chat are limited to 2GB per user and file sharing within teams/channels are limited to 10GB across all teams.
- File storage: in the "Files" section on the main left ribbon, you are given a preview of all the files shared by your team, including those send via chats. You can also add your personal or other type of cloud storage (e.g. One Drive, Google Drive, Dropbox) which is a great addition in case you need more space or fast access to your files. To connect additional cloud storage, go to "Files" section and click on the "Add cloud storage" button in the left corner, which will bring up the available options:



- Apps: this feature allows you to use already known apps (e.g. Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Trello, Evernote etc.) within Teams. There more than 250 available apps and services for Teams. You can even turn your favourite apps and files into tabs at the top of a channel if you wish like this:

- Search: make use of this option to search for people, conversations or files. You can also use it to perform other interesting stuff e.g. Praise a member of your team for a well-done job, bring up the latest news, look up a video on YouTube or just check the weather. Check out this cool feature by going to the search bar and just type the "@" sign:

We think Trello and Microsoft Teams are wonderful tools for both beginners and advanced users. Our recommendation to you is to go ahead and explore both in order to figure out the one that would serve you and your future collaborators in the best possible way. However, there are three additional collaboration tools used by thousands of users (including large and famous worldwide brands) and perhaps you might choose to explore them as well:

Workplace

If you like Facebook and you are into its features, then you'll probably like using Workplace, because it's like Facebook, but adapted for work. The tool was officially launched in 2016, after a short testing period in 2015. Here are some of its features:

- Talk (and listen) to your whole organization
  - Share important info with your whole organization
  - Mark info as important so everyone sees it
  - Find out what employees think by running a poll
- Connect your team to your goals and each other
  - Hold quick conversations in Workplace Chat
  - Make HD video calls at the touch of a button
  - Hold deeper conversations in Groups
  - Find the right person to speak to with Org Chart
  - Talk to anyone in any language with Auto-Translate
  - Express yourself with quick reactions and GIFs
  - Keep in touch on the go with mobile apps (iOS and Android)
- Connect with other known tools
  - Connect with over 50 popular enterprise tools
  - Familiar features make Workplace easy to adopt
  - Automate everyday tasks with bots
  - Build your own bots and integrations
  - Share files and photos in groups
  - Machine learning makes Workplace smarter and more relevant over time
  - Create groups with training resources for new starters

Workplace by Facebook has a free pricing plan called "Essential" which should suffice your collaboration efforts, because it is meant to be used by teams.

Learn more about Workplace here (https://www.workplace.com/)

Podio

Podio is actually quite popular in the project management environment, because it has been around for quite some time – since 2009. With content, conversations, and processes structured and together on one tool, Podio creates the focus and clarity your people need to get their best work done. There are many use cases you can perform with Podio e.g. project management, CRM, social intranet, collaboration, planning, workflow management and more. Since we are talking about co-creation and collaboration you might want to have a look at what Podio says they can do for you here. Here are some of the Podio features:

- Task management - break down projects and workflows into easily managed pieces

- File sharing
- Task management
- Mobile apps - the Podio apps are available for iOS and Android
- Podio API – the feature which will be greatly appreciated by any developer is to Developers – build on the Podio Platform to create custom integrations and even new apps.
- Extensions – get access to add-ons for Podio, built for specific use-cases from Gantt charts to time tracking, GoToMeeting and Mailchimp integrations.

Learn more about Podio here (https://podio.com)

Redbooth

Finally, Redbooth is another collaboration tool which is worth mentioning. The tool was first created in 2008, but with a different name - Teambox Technologies S.L. Today Redbooth currently has *no* free version available, but since it is widely used thousands of people worldwide, we still feel like you should check it out. Here are some of the Redbooth features:

- Status updates and conversations – Redbooth has an integrated status update/conversation feature i.e. “feed” which is used to communicate with the rest of the team members involved in the project
- Task management – within your projects you can set a task list which is very closely related to the conversation system e.g. conversations can be converted to tasks. You can also add tags, time tracking, delegation and due date properties for tasks.
- File and content management: you can share, work on and search for files in Redbooth. Another handy feature is file storage integration e.g. Dropbox, Box, Google Drive
- Real-time communication: Redbooth offers HD Video conferencing for up to 100 people, screen sharing, and group chat to communicate with your team in real time.
- Role-based permission to access to projects
- Integration with other systems (CRM, ERP, etc.)
- Pages — Pages are a wiki type documentation feature
- Discussion forums
- Mobile apps for iOS and Android

Learn more about Redbooth here (https://redbooth.com)

4.5 Selecting a proper platform for COL-CREATION

Central for the COL-CREATION approach is the restriction that some part of the exchange process between creative professionals, platform and clients is carried out online. That may include the “matching” or intermediation of services, the transfer of information or the provision of services. It may also entail the creative process that is carried out in collaboration with other creative professionals. In cases that concern “pure” online platforms, the intermediation (or matching) between participating people is carried out online. However, besides these formalised and often profit-oriented exchanges over third-party platforms there is other creative and collaborative online interaction falling into the scope of the project’s definition:

- First, there are online communities, such as forums (also Moodle), blogs, wikis, online tutorials and social network platforms, such as Instagram, Pinterest, Reddit, DeviantArt or Behance, and also proprietary software like Facebook or WhatsApp etc. Online communities allow people to exchange ideas, share work and discuss without significant entrance barriers and little investment. However, online communities are somewhat limited when it comes to creating a joint output, as such communities sometimes lack a common goal or (financial) incentives[15].

- The second form of creative online collaboration manifests in specialised software programmes, or online tools that facilitate the exchange of ideas, information and creative output. Tools falling in this category encompass Cloud software to share data, such as Google Drive, but also more specialised project management applications, such as Slack, Trello or Basecamp.

For the project, collaboration over online platforms between professional creatives is important. Hence, platforms have to offer a feature or software (a programme, application, extension) where people may collaboratively work on a creative piece. Such tools usually are tools for communication and may include: chatting function on platforms, VoIP and video conferencing tools, groupware or enterprise social media. Also included is software as a service (SaaS), where people are able to jointly work on a work piece.

Co-creation requires connection between professional creatives and clients. Online platforms for collaboration are important as they provide the basis for improvement of the speed and efficiency of work. In order to collaborate effectively, platforms have to offer facilitation to people who are working in different places through:

- Appropriate communication tools, allowing them to cooperate and get things done regardless of their location (e.g., instant chat, voice recording and messaging, video conferencing). This will ease both professional creatives and clients, as it will help with scheduling, prioritizing, discussing and keeping track of the task progress. Clear communication can reduce uncoordinated work and save not only time, but money and efforts as well.

- Instant file sharing (available in different formats depending on the task) and file hosting which will allow people who are working under specific task to be aware of the working progress.

- Possibility of sharing feedback on different parts of the task until it´s fully completed. This will allow professional creatives to exchange knowledge and experience and at the same time will help clients to follow the implementation of the assignment and give their opinion in the course of action, so that the necessary changes can be made on time according to their preferences;

- Possibility of adding annotations/notes directly on the image/document/file so it can be easily followed which are the remarks and what exactly needs to be done to improve the current status of the assignment.

In order to summarize all mentioned above, we can say that a platform for COL-CREATION would be a platform, where individuals (producers, designers, professionals, consumers, citizens, and other stakeholders) with different background, knowledge and experience and (perhaps) geographical location are free to group up online in teams with other people with similar interests and skills and collaborate in order to implement one or more specific task. Through tools embedded in the platform itself, the creative professionals should be able to communicate with each other as well as with their clients by using various types of communication channels – chat, video and voice messages, etc. Moreover, the platform should support features, such as file sharing and file hosting, as well as the possibility of sharing feedback and adding annotations and remarks to certain parts of the files (e.g., on the image, on the document, etc).

[15] Certainly, there are notable exceptions, for instance in the realm of open collaboration Wikipedia is very successful for nearly two decades.

TOPIC 5 HOW TO LAUNCH YOUR SOLUTION ON THE MARKET

Introduction

We live in a society, where trends and developments rapidly influence each other. Thus, it becomes increasingly important to develop your own strategies and positioning on the market in order to be prepared for the future. No matter if you are an SME, single entrepreneur, start-up or a freelancer, it is equally important to apply activities of strategic marketing in order to adapt to the current situation on the market and be able to define your business vision, mission and objectives to follow, so you can contribute to your future business development. When defining your marketing strategy, you are defining your future success, so you have to make sure that you are applying the appropriate marketing instruments and tools in your daily business management in order to ensure the right direction for your ideas.

There are enough experts who can argue that the creation of marketing strategy is not a mandatory element and companies are not obliged to go through this step in order to have successful business. However, it´s important to note down that, especially if you are a start-up or a new player on the market, it is vital not to miss this step as this will define who you will become and will gain you experience, so one day you could be the person who do not need a marketing strategy in order to make his idea successful. But until then, you are not allowed to miss important elements that will help you launch your product on the market successfully, so if you have an idea, it is better to start with the development of your marketing strategy now.

5.1 How to Build a Proper Marketing Strategy?

Definition of the Term "Marketing Strategy"

Before we even start to think about the creation of our marketing strategy, we have to understand what marketing is all about. For the average business person, marketing is equal to a promotion or advertisement, where you explain how great your product or service is, and why people should buy it. In other words – marketing could be an ad, a press release, a brochure, and in the recent years, a Facebook or Instagram page. In reality, or to explain it in a more formal way, marketing "*refers to activities undertaken by a company to promote the buying or selling of a product or service. Marketing includes advertising, selling, and delivering products to consumers or other businesses*" [16]. Although when hear the word "marketing" the most often association that people make is with promotion, it´s important to note down that marketing is much more than commercials. It´s the process of planning and implementing your ideas, products or services in a way, in which your needs and those of the individuals (the clients) are met.

Once we have understood what marketing is, we need to clarify what marketing strategy is as well. It can be defined as to a *"business overall game plan for reaching prospective consumers and turning them into customers of the products or services the business provides. A marketing strategy contains the company's value proposition, key brand messaging, data on target customer demographics, and other high-level elements"* [17].That is why, when we talk about strategic marketing, it´s important to remember that the main task you have is to adapt to your current situation to your intended objectives. This means that the first thing you need to do is to come up with a viable idea. From there, you need to discover a profitable niche, define a target audience and have something of value to sell them. Always know the needs of your customers so that you can make yourself attractive to

[16] Investopedia. "What is Marketing" by Alexandra Twin. 2019, June, 25th, https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/marketing.asp

[17] Investopedia. "Marketing Strategy" by Adam Barone. 2019, October, 7th, https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/marketing-strategy.asp

them and then accelerate their buying process for selecting you. And remember - both your marketing strategy and marketing plan are keys to your long-term success, whether your business is a small start-up or a global business.

How to Build a Proper Marketing Strategy?

It is often the case when you ask yourself the question *“Does my business really need a marketing strategy?”* and the answer is – yes, it does. It is common, especially for small businesses or individuals, to underestimate the role of marketing strategy, but the truth is that every business needs a strategy in order to succeed, so the more appropriate question you should ask yourself is *“How I am going to sell my product or service if nobody knows about them*?” and the answer is – you need a marketing strategy.

Development of a marketing strategy comes down to several analyses which role is to give you an idea on how your products or services are different from those of your competitors, and how this could be reflected in your marketing strategy. It´s all about being different and you must identify these differences early in the planning process of your marketing strategy. The development of an effective marketing strategy is not a quick and easy task and it usually depends on the type of your business, but there are some basics, which can be broken down into several key steps:

- **Identify your goals;** The first step in the development of your marketing strategy is to clarify which are your goals, i.e. what do you want your business to achieve now and in the future. Your goals must be always linked to sales, and they can be formulated as a percentage of the market, sales turnover, units of products sold or as profits. Your purpose will be always to sell your products or services and your task is to formulate a measurable goal to pursue in the future. Make sure you have clearly defined your aims yet in the beginning, so you will be able to further develop your strategy knowing exactly what you want.

- **Identify your strengths (SWOT Analysis);** SWOT Analysis is practical method which is frequently used planning tool that examines the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and assesses challenges and opportunities by both internal and external factors.

Strengths: What advantages does my business (product or service) offer over the others? This might be customer service, attitude, quality, operations, diversity of offers, human resources, accessibility, support, etc.

Weaknesses: What could be the reason for losing customers to my competition? This might be unattractive packaging, poor quality of the product or service, bad reputation, lack of offers, etc.

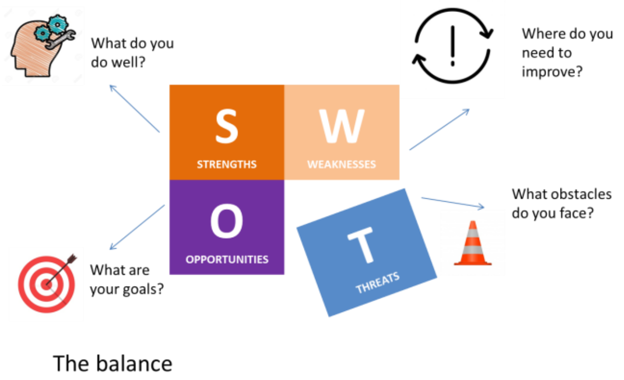


Figure 13. SWOT Analysis

Opportunities: Which of the upcoming trends could benefit my product or service? This might be trends to buy environmentally clean products, trends to buy products with less usage of plastic in packaging, increasing health awareness, etc.

Threats: Which of the upcoming trends could threaten my product or service? This might be the rapid change in the taste and preferences of customers, recession, innovative and highly competitive products or services, etc.

The SWOT analysis, if used correctly, can direct attention and reflection toward aspects of the context that may have been overlooked or underappreciated and the results can become substantial raw material for further product marketing.

- **Identify your competitors;** Observing the competition helps you understand what your competitors are doing in terms of marketing, which are the products and services similar to yours and how they interact with their clients. The competitor analysis, also known as competitive intelligence, identifies the strengths of your competition, so you know what they are doing well and where they might be vulnerable losing market share to your products or services. The majority of the competitors vary by target market, so it might be the best solution for you to also divide the competitor analysis in that way.

You should have a good perception of your competitors, but the best source are your customers themselves, so asking them in surveys to pinpoint other providers that they considered for their purchase is a way to tackle this. Be creative in order to find out what kind of experiences your consumers had with competing providers – you might also find out that a competitor could be a partner on a certain topic.

- **Identify your customers;** Customer market analysis help you to learn as much as you can about your target clients, e.g., who are they and what do they want. The main categories of information that you must obtain include:

- Demographic and socio-economic characteristics (such as age, gender, location, etc.);
- Non-traditional information (such as preferences, main motives for buying, etc.);
- Likes and dislikes (main reasons for buying or not buying a product or service);
- Media usage (what are the media mostly used by your target audience, e.g. social media, TV, newspapers, brochures, etc.);
- Suggested improvements of the product or service (what your clients think you must do in order to improve the quality of your product or service - you will be surprised how honest people might be in such situation).

This type of analysis will help you understand in which direction your marketing strategy should go as it all comes down to understanding your audience, choosing your marketing channels and adapting your product to their needs.

The Elements of the Marketing Mix

The term “Marketing Mix” was used for the first time in 1948 in a research bulletin on the management of marketing costs written by professor James Culliton. Later on, in 1960, the famous marketer and academic Jerome McCarthy laid down the foundation for what is known as marketing mix in the modern age. The term is a general expression used to describe the various types of marketing decisions, which need to be taken to bring your product or service to the target market. It refers to the set of actions that an individual or a company uses to promote its brand or product on the market. When we talk about Marketing mix, we usually visualize the 4Ps which make up a typical marketing mix - Price, Product, Promotion and Place. But why are they so important for the success

Figure 14. Marketing Mix

of your business? The marketing mix is a combination of several important elements and usually, these elements need to be combined in a specific way in order to reach its target market. The use of a marketing mix is crucial to help you understand what the product or service can offer and how to plan for a successful product offering, commonly executed through the 4Ps:

- **Product;** Usually, the product is a tangible good, although sometimes it can also be understood as something non-material. This “product” should meet the customers’ specific expectations or needs. Products usually follow a natural lifecycle and that’s why you should strive to understand and plan for each stage accordingly, identify what the product is expected to 'solve' and understand the benefits as well as the features of the product itself. For a product or a service to be successful, it has to meet and satisfy a specific need and it should be able to function as promised. The features and benefits of the product or service should be clearly communicated to your current and potential customers. Another vital feature of a product is branding, because this is what differentiates itself from other similar products on the market.

- **Price**; Price refers to what you expect the customers to pay for your products and can have either positive or negative impact on its selling. This depends more on how your customer perceives the value of this product than on the actual value of the product itself. Therefore, it is important to understand what your customer perceives before you decide to price a product. If the customer’s perception is positive, it is likely that the product will even go for a higher price than its actual value. On the other hand, if the product has very little or no value for the customer, it might be beneficial to under-price the product just to make some sales. Your pricing strategy should reflect your product’s positioning on the market and the resulting price should cover the cost per item and your profit margin.

- **Placement**; Placement or also known as distribution refers to how the product will be made available to your customers. A suitable placement strategy will assess the best and most suitable distribution channel for the product. Placement also refers to distribution or to the methods and location you use that your products or services become easily accessible to the target customers. The type of your product or service dictates how it can be distributed.

- **Promotion**; Promotion refers to the marketing strategies and communication techniques used to advertise your product to the targeted customers. It includes activities like special offers, advertising, public relations and also sales promotions. Any promotional channels used should always be adequate for your product, for your customer and also for the price. Remember, marketing is different from promotion because promotion only concerns the communication aspect of marketing. In order to convince people to buy your product or service, you need to explain what it is, and why they should buy it. Promoting makes your customers feel that their needs can be satisfied by what you are offering to them!

The Role of Marketing Communication

If you want to have successful marketing strategy, communication is one of the key elements that you have to develop. Marketing communication "*refers to the means adopted by the companies to convey messages about the products and the brands they sell, either directly or indirectly to the customers with the intention to persuade them to purchase*". [18] Communication is not just advertising your products or services to the customers – it is to be able to establish good relations with your co-workers, suppliers and other important stakeholders. Communication is essential for each individual or a company, as it is considered as one of the main areas of the marketing mix together with the 4Ps, and it should be incorporated in the marketing strategy from the beginning of its development and occupy equally important position.

In order to have effective marketing communication, you have to make sure that you are delivering to the audience your message explicitly and your communication arrives without interference, so people understand your message entirely. It is very important to get to know your target audience, so you can choose the right message and communication channels. In any case, you must determine the type of your message according to the desired effect and the result you want to achieve with it. Once you have defined your audience, you should understand which are the communication channels they are using, so you can select the right ones to ensure the successful delivery of your message. The proper usage of marketing communication will help you deliver your message in the most effective way, while at the same time will engage with the creation of good corporate image and retaining high level of customer satisfaction. In order to strengthen your marketing strategy and communication, you can also rely on different marketing tools, such as the Elevator pitch and Unique selling proposition to further promote you, your company or the products and services you offer.

It should be noted that the various communication activities cannot be regarded separately and that they should result in a holistic action. Ideally, they fit into each other and are firmly anchored in a marketing plan. The field of communication requires careful planning and should certainly not be the area to which less attention than to other areas of the marketing mix is paid.

The Role of Personal Branding

Personal branding has always been associated with the bigger companies only, but the truth is that in today's world, every person has its own reputation. Personal branding refers to the "*conscious and intentional effort to create and influence public perception of an individual by positioning them as an authority in their industry, elevating their credibility, and differentiating themselves from the competition, to ultimately advance their career, increase their circle of influence, and have a larger impact*". [19] With other words, personal branding i.e. self-branding represents the way you create and manage your reputation and attitude among society in order to help you stand out from the rest. Personal branding communicates your value to the world and it is the most essential element when building your professional future, as it has major effect on the growth of your business.

For whom Personal branding is beneficial?

If you are a start-up company and you are just getting started with the development of your professional career, as personal branding will help you build and maintain positive image and reputation among society and will make you more recognizable. In this way, people will be able to differentiate your business from competition and find out what makes you one of a kind.

[18] Business Jargons. "Marketing Communication". https://businessjargons.com/marketing-communication.html
[19] Personal brand. "Definition of a Personal Brand vs. Personal Branding". https://personalbrand.com/definition/

If you are self-employed or an entrepreneur, personal branding will help you demonstrate the value of the products and services you offer on the market which for sure will attract audience who does not know about your business yet, so you can win several new clients.

If you are working in the field of Sharing economy and co-creation as probably all of your relations (with employers, employees, co-workers, customers, etc.) are happening online and the communication takes place between people who are at different places. In such situations, it is of high importance for your future work to present yourself and create personal brand, as you often have to make the choice of trusting the online identity of the other person and rely on it in order to be able to cooperate.

How to develop successful Personal brand?

In order to begin with the development of your personal branding, make sure you have focus and specialization. If you are searching for a job, define who your "dream" employer is (taking into consideration field of activity, values, way of thinking, work environment, work conditions, opportunities for development, etc.) and start to build your personal branding in accordance with this job. If you are looking for clients or followers find out what are their values, way of thinking, needs and problems that need solving, so you can propose a solution using your personal brand. Concentrate your efforts in one direction and believe in what you offer – otherwise you are risking not being recognized as someone who offers a solution to a particular problem, but as another person who wants to find solution to their own problem by seeking for work, clients or help.

If you want to be sure that you are developing your personal brand in the right direction, make sure you have online presence. This is a must-have in the digital era we are living in. For example, when someone decide to search for your name or product on the Internet, they should be able to find enough information to get them interested to get in touch with you. A good starting point is to create personal website that could represent your skills, experience and work, so make sure to include information about yourself i.e. biographical part or CV – this way people will be able to understand more about you and what you stand for.

Social media is one of the most powerful tools these days, so it is a great opportunity to show yourself in the best possible way, whether through Facebook, YouTube, Instagram or other media which corresponds to your content and goals you want to achieve. Make sure to post interesting content on a daily basis, so you can engage with your audience, communicate with people, ask questions and let people share their opinion with you. The point of this interaction is to convince your audience that you are adding value to their lives and create bond with them which can further develop into trust and a good image for yourself.

Do not forget to take care of all the information about you, because there will be always someone who is going to screening you online. No matter what you do in your life – whether you are self-employed or an employee in a company, it is better to control what appears about you on the Internet. Make sure cleaning up your social media accounts from outdated and inappropriate contents, because you definitely do not want some old posts to negatively impact your presence. Build your self-branding based on your interests and remember that to develop a personal brand is the perfect way to show your potential clients that you have worked really hard to be able to build a positive image online.

Building your personal brand is not something you can do without putting enough efforts or just for hour or two. Self-branding takes a lot of time, efforts and persistence to be developed and it needs to become a habit and a significant part of your life. Personal branding is collection of all the elements that are related to your personality - how you look, how you talk, how you act, what you do – everything has to "fit" your image. When we talk about attracting customers, followers, employees or employers, personal branding is an absolute necessity, because it is not enough to be good at what you are doing. The right people need to know it, in the right way. No matter how good you are in your sphere, you should not stop getting even better every day and you should not stop learning. The world, the people, everything around us is changing, so you can't stay in one place. You have to adapt and change for better, every day. Every day you have to prove how good you are in your field, because today is the time when personal branding is your biggest competitive advantage that can elevate you and your business above the rest.

5.2 Implementation and presentation of your solution

In the previous *Topic 3.3 "Techniques and tools on finding solutions and prototyping*" we referred to the relevance of creating a prototype that should meet the members of the target group's needs. You've covered the human desirability, and hopefully in the process you've also thought about the technical feasibility. The only thing left to make your idea 'real' is the economical sustainability.

Now that you have a good prototype/solution, there are only two steps left. Making a plan for the real-world implementation of your idea and present it to your client.

Implementation

You can make a plan for this using the Lean Canvas by Ash Maurya. This is a variation on the well-known Business Model Canvas by Alexander Osterwalder – the same person who also created the Value Proposition Canvas you've used before – specifically geared towards start-ups.

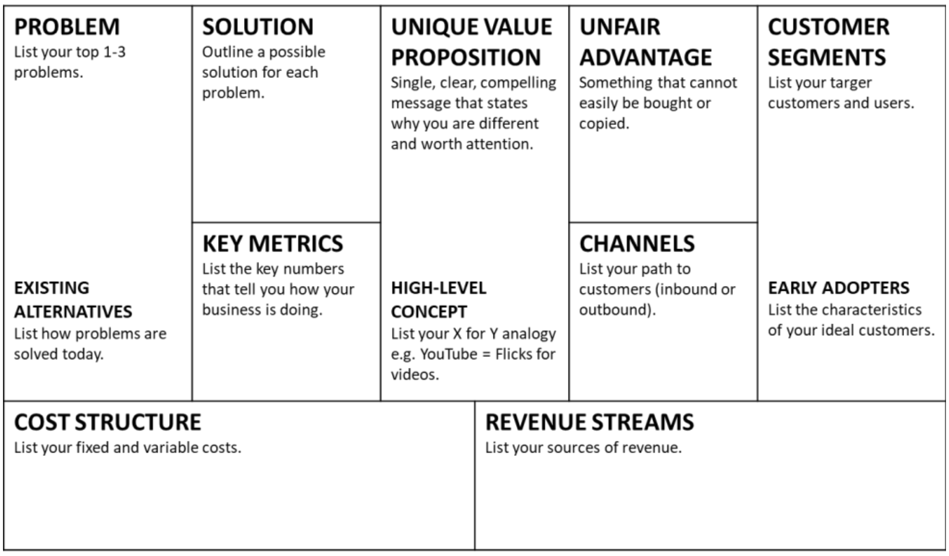


Figure 15. Lean Canvas by Ash Maurya

The canvas has nine fields to fill in. You can do this digitally using certain apps and websites or you can print it out and use post - it's with a group. Examples of digital tools are;

- https://trello.com/b/Mj3ARCrP/business-model-canvas-template
- https://miro.com/templates/business-model-canvas/
- https://next.canvanizer.com/demo/business-model-canvas

The canvas mostly serves as a check-list for your ideas, as it lists nine aspects to think about. Most important is that you have a plan for each of these nine aspects and that they are coherent with each other.

Now we'll explain each of the nine aspects one by one:

- **Unique Value Proposition;** We'll start in the top middle, with the value proposition. This should be easy for you by now, as you should know your value proposition by now, as you've used it in the Value Proposition Canvas as well. You can describe it as-is, but you can also add a more high-level concept to it, which Maurya calls an x of y analogy. E.g., 'we will be the Uber for your heavy shopping bags'.

- **Customer Segments;** Define your customer segments here. Try to see if you can distinguish subgroups that might have different expectations for a value proposition and other functionalities. E.g., you could see that Spotify caters to both the casual music fan (who just want to press 'play' and hear music they like) and people with a passion for music (who want to build their own music collections, create their own playlists, etc.). Also try to see if you can identify early adopters, who should be easy to get aboard in using your product and services, and can serve as role models (and test users) for the majority.

- **Channels;** Now that you know who your customers are, try to identify the best channels you can use to reach them, to either inform them about your product or service, but also to keep in contact and build a bond.

- **Unfair advantage;** You can start a successful business, but if you don't have an unfair advantage, a player with existing customers and bigger pockets can easily copy your idea and run with it. E.g., look at what Instagram (owned by Facebook) did to copy Snapchat and take over their market. Think about what makes your idea special and hard to copy. Do you have the best algorithm? Do you have special important partners? Do you know the local market better than the big players? Etc.

- **Problem and solution;** This can be copied from the Value Proposition Canvas as well. Try to come up with existing alternative solutions to the same problems as well. These might not be direct competitors on first sight, but from a customer perspective they all solve the same problem – so you do compete with them.

- **Key metrics;** You want to fix your users' problems. Or create gains for them. But how do you know if you are succeeding? Try to come up with some metrics to see if you're on the right path. (And of course, measure these metrics afterwards.)

- **Cost structure;** What would your costs look like when you would operationalise your business idea? Do you need to hire offices? Staff? Do you need to hire capacity in data centers? Also, try to understand how scalable your idea is. Offering your service to ten customers is different than offering it to ten thousand.

- **Revenue streams;** Finally, how do you intend to make money? You can charge your users, but there are alternatives. If you have a two-sided market (e.g., a marketplace) you can only charge one side to attract more of the other with a free offering. You can apply a freemium model, where only some users pay. You can also let third-parties pay, like with an advertisement scheme or by applying for subsidies or donations.

Presentation

With all the information and insights, you've developed during the past chapters in Topics 1 to 4 it's time to turn them into a pitch towards your client. Depending on the time you have, you need to make choices on what to present and what to omit. Think about this well in advance and do take into account it is often better to make a few points really well, then to try to tell everything and rushing through a presentation. Stick to the highlights, and leave the details in hand-outs or for the Q&A.

In the additional information section of this Topic 5, you can find some pointers towards giving clear presentations and pitches and in the next points of this module, you will be able to learn how to present yourself and your idea in the best possible way.

5.3 How to use the Unique Selling Proposition for the promotion of your created solution?

Introduction

Globalization today is strongly contributing to the development of the world market. Trade is one of the fastest growing industries and the choice of products on the market is greater than it has ever been before. Consumers are “swimming” in the sea of market offers, which makes it hundred times more difficult to design the best option or proposition that will catch their eye and tempt them to buy from you. Now, it is more important than ever to differentiate from your competitors and have innovative ideas, so you can constantly increase your revenue.

In marketing, one of the key elements in order to be successful is to define your Unique selling proposition (USP) – the most important approach for creative execution in advertising. The USP is often used to help consumers to understand what are the differences between the offers in one category, provided by various brands. Moreover, companies use the USP to convince consumers to shape positive attitude towards their brand and thus contribute to the improved level of brand recall.

These are just some of the reasons due to which companies engage with the creation of their Unique selling proposition. But before start with the development of your USP, it is important to learn the key milestones in its development and why it is of such importance to incorporate it in your marketing strategy.

Definition of the term “Unique Selling Proposition (USP)”

The Unique selling proposition (USP) in business is that special and unique “thing” that a company can offer to its customers and that no one else can offer, and at the same time it has to be a feature that highlights the most meaningful benefits to the clients. The USP is considered as marketing concept and a key element in branding, used for the very first time in the early 1940s explaining a pattern in successful advertising campaigns. The definition was further developed by Rosser Reeves, who at that time was engaged in television advertising of Ted Bates & Company. In 1961, in his bestseller “*Reality in Advertising*”, he defined the concept consisting of three parts:

1. Each advertisement should make a tempting proposal to the customer. You are not supposed to use just words or product puffery, you are supposed to create an ad that says to each of the customers “Buy my product, and you will instantly get this benefit”;

2. Your advertisement must be unique and consist of elements that no one of your competitors can offer – it might be the uniqueness of the brand or a claim that has never been used in that particular field of advertising;

3. The advertisement should be so impactful, that it can reach wide audience and earn new customers to buy from your brand.

Rosser Reeves's words to his manager to describe why it is so important to have a USP and differ from the rest are the following: *"No, sir, I'm not saying that charming, witty and warm ad copy won't sell. I'm just saying I've seen thousands of charming, witty campaigns that didn't sell."* [20]

Nowadays, very few businesses are considered as one-of-a-kind. If you look around, you will notice that so many brands and merchants are basically selling the same products, at different prices, which makes you rethink how many clothing retailers, hardware stores and shops for handmade items are truly unique. Do you ask yourself how your products and services differ from the rest on the market? If you are not aware what is your Unique selling proposition, it is very likely to face serious difficulties with what you are selling or offering on the market, as you will lack clear differentiation from your competitors. This can lead to a situation where you put a lot of efforts and yet receive low results in return. And this is the exact moment when you should find out what your USP is.

How to define your Unique Selling Proposition?

In order to have a starting point, you can begin with analysing how other companies, brands or sellers use their USPs, so they can achieve competitive advantage by keeping a close eye on their ads and marketing messages. To do this, you can always check their websites, social media pages and keep track of their advertisements. If you analyse what they say in order to sell and not just the characteristics of their products and services, you will be able to learn a lot on how different brands distinguish themselves from their competitors and still manage to be successful. Although you will be able to see their strengths, it is not recommended to use it the same in your USP – be unique and find the best features of your product or service and try to make it work for you!

Always put yourself in your customer's shoes.

It happens too often to fall in love in your product or service so deeply, that you almost forget to think about customer's needs. For example, imagine that you own a restaurant. It is without a doubt that people come to your place for food, but do you think that this is all you can offer? All of your competitors offer food, but in order to be different and attract more clients, you have to propose to these people a good reason to come back to your place again and ignore the competition. In order to find what this reason is, it is of high importance to know what your clients think about you, so it is obligatory before start working on the development of your USP, to conduct a research among your clients and ask for their opinion on what they like or dislike about your product or service. By sharing their customer experience and feedback with you, you will have the chance to discover the strengths and weaknesses of your approach and make the necessary changes based on customers' needs. In case you are a start-up, it is possible not to have enough customers to ask, so the best way to receive feedback is by "investigating" the customers of your competitors. Find out what and how they are selling and ask their customers if they are satisfied with the products or services and what is that they would change in order to improve it. Once you have understood your clients – what they are looking for, what do they like and what is their main buying criteria, you will be able to further develop your USP based on your findings.

Find what motivates your customers' buying decisions.

In order to be able to develop your Unique selling proposition, it is your responsibility to find out what motivates customers to buy from a certain brand and on what are based their purchasing decisions. If you want to do effective marketing, try to escape from the traditional demographics with the most basic elements that all of your competitors are using to analyse their clients, e.g. race, gender, age, etc. Just because you are a man does not mean that you cannot buy face cream, and

[20] Branding Strategy Insider. "The Advertising Wisdom of Rosser Reeves" by Derrick Daye. 2010, October, 27th https://www.brandingstrategyinsider.com/2010/10/the-advertising-wisdom-of-rosser-reeves.html#.XcKCOegzZPY

just because you are a woman does not mean that you will not buy a car. Instead, you can try to understand which are customers' motives to buy and what are the most important aspects from their customer experience, e.g. customer service, quality, convenience, attitude, price, etc. This way you will be always one step ahead from your competition. A thing you should remember is that the price tag is not always leading and definitely not the only reason people to buy. If your competitors retain better pricing than yours, find another sales feature that addresses customer's needs and build your USP based on it.

Define your strengths

The determination of your Unique selling proposition should not be based on your competitors and customers only. The USP should be based on your strengths as a producer or brand and the unique features of the products or services you offer to your clients. Often, it can be that you share some of your strengths with other competitors, but this do not have to bother you – you just need to find something important and specific (or a combination of things) in which your business is really strong and stands out. To do this, you can always use the SWOT analysis in order to find which are the most important positive features of your product or service. And remember – do not get easily discouraged. When creating your USP it is not the most important only to have the best product or service, but to make them unique and extraordinary even in a market full of similar items.

Formulate your Unique selling proposition

Once you have gone through all of the above-mentioned steps and you already have a clear idea of what your competitors are doing, which are the features that your clients like and dislike about your product or service and what motivates them the most to buy, you can begin to think how to turn your strengths into profitable marketing strategy based on your Unique selling proposition. USP is important competitive advantage and you must be able to formulate it in words. When formulating your Unique selling proposition, you should bear in mind that it has to be simple, relatively short and very clear, so that your audience can understand and remember it the first time they hear it or see it. Besides your message being explicit, it is recommended to reflect something that is considered as a strong advantage of your company, brand, product or service, and at the same time be essential to customers – the link between these two should be really close. If you have already formulated your elevator pitch, you can also use it in combination with your USP so you can get the most out of it. You can use a free-form text or design your USP to sounds like a corporate motto or slogan, e.g. *"Our product is of the highest quality – like a Mercedes!"* or *"Great events start with smart meetings."* And finally, you do not have to forget that there is no point in claiming that you are the best at something if your customers do not find it the same way. The value of the product or service your offer is determined by the client, as he is the person on whom your success depends.

Examples of Unique selling proposition

Let's take a closer look at 2 of the most famous and successful Unique selling propositions of all time and analyse their meaning!

The Unique selling proposition of "Avis" Company:

In 1962, "Avis" (a company for car renting) was facing difficulties in its business. For many years, the company could not cope with their main competitor on the market – "Hertz" and was losing its competitive advantage. With the help of well-known advertising agency, "Avis" started looking for their USP and they finally found it in the slogan "*We are second in the industry. We try harder*." This slogan became the basis of Avis's advertising campaign and thanks to it, the company's market share jumped from 11% to 35% in just 4 years. "*We try harder*" proved to be such successful motto, that it remained the official company's slogan for the next 50 years. [21]

Why the Unique selling proposition of "Avis" turned out to be so successful?

The first part of the wording of their USP – "*We are second in the industry*" shows honesty and authenticity, because the company is not ashamed and does not hide that it has more powerful competitor on the market. "Avis" openly admits this, and turns it from a minus into a plus. The second part of their slogan – "*We try harder*" is basically their promise to customers to do their best to ensure the highest quality of their service. It also positions the brand and differentiates it from the competitors. The main competitive advantage of the company is its attitude towards customers.

The Unique selling proposition of "DeBeers" Company:

In 1948, "DeBeers" company was a monopolist in diamond mining and trading, but the sales to individuals were not that common at that time. The reason for that was simple – during these years, the diamond ring was not a symbol of marriage and engagement. People did not see it as an appropriate gift or a sign of bonding between lovers. "DeBeers" decided to create their slogan "*A diamond is forever"* and this proved to be such a successful formulation of their USP, that later on, the "Advertising Age" magazine distinguished it as the most successful advertising slogan for 20th century. [22]

Why the Unique selling proposition of "DeBeers" turned out to be so successful?

The idea behind their USP was that the diamond is so hard and solid that it is impossible to be broken and in practice, is eternal. Therefore, the diamond symbolizes the eternal, indestructible and undying love. As a result of the promotion of "*A diamond is forever*", the diamond ring became a must-have gift when it came to engagement or wedding rings. This had an immediate impact on DeBeers' sales as it positions them as the most preferred supplier for wedding and engagement gifts. At the same time, the company artificially restricts the supply of new diamonds for machining, thus maintaining high prices and, of course, earning more.

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[21] The Daily Egg. "What is a Unique Selling Proposition (USP)". 2017, November, 24th, https://www.crazyegg.com/blog/glossary/what-is-a-usp/

[22] The Balance Careers. "Famous and Unique Selling Propositions - USP" by Wendy Connick. 2019, August, 6th https://www.thebalancecareers.com/unique-selling-proposition-examples-2917411

Examples of Unique selling proposition in the Creative Industry

Vistaprint, a Cimpress company, helps small business owners create professionally designed, modern marketing tailored with the range of products they need to appear professional and prepared.

Their Mission is: “Where small entrepreneurs get big ideas”.

They have started to print business cards on 70x100 offset presses. They did this in an organization that focused on the business model “cost price leader”. The organization was also focused on efficiency in which employees produced through strict rules for quality, the environment and working conditions. They are best known for their business cards and they have printed billions of these since Vistaprint was founded in 1995.

But today Vistaprint offers so much more: an extensive range of customizable marketing products for small entrepreneurs; expert ideas and assistance for those who could use some help; and a simple, intuitive process for those who know exactly what they want.

Taken together, their customers can easily design a consistent, cohesive look that runs through their business, whether in a store, online, on location, or on the go. With that, they can come out confident, knowing that they are not inferior to the competition, and take matters into their own hands.

So Vistaprint do not create only a challenge for their customers but an opportunity. And Vistaprint helps entrepreneurs seize their opportunities.

5.4 How to use the Elevator Pitch Technique?

Introduction

Often it can be really difficult to stand up in front of audience and present your thoughts in a way that will make people want to invest in your idea. The elevator pitch technique can help you to sell your product, but in order to do this you have to give your best when presenting the main advantages of your creation. When using the elevator speech, you have to be sure that people, stakeholders and investors are listening to your pitch, because they want to know how good the offered idea, product or service is going to be and decide whether it deserves attention in a world full of diversity.

In the recent years, to grab the interest of a client or investor became extremely difficult. Research shows that 20 years ago, it took an average of 4 rejections until a customer was interested to look or hear about your product or service. Today, to receive attention became twice as difficult – an average of 8.4 rejections. To understand this better, you can imagine the following situation: If you advertise your product or service, most people will only be interested in the ad after seeing it more than 8 times, which greatly increases your advertising costs; or if you make contacts over the phone or through e-mails, then most of the people will probably not answer you or say "I have no interest" until you contact them at least 8 times. All this means that it is extremely important exactly what you are going to say every time you communicate with a potential client or investor. When presenting your idea or product to an investor or stakeholder, you need to be clear, accurate and most importantly – quick. In such situations, when you have very short amount of time to present the best of your idea, you can always rely on the elevator speech, and use this technique to master your presentation skills.

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Definition of the term "elevator pitch/speech"

The elevator speech is "*a slang term used to describe a brief speech that outlines an idea for a product, service or project. The name comes from the notion that the speech should be delivered in the short time period of an elevator ride, usually 20-60 seconds*". [23] To create your elevator speech is very similar to write a tweet. When writing a post on Twitter, you have character limit per tweet, which is 280 symbols. In the business world, when presenting your elevator speech, it should take no more than 30 seconds to 1 minute, similar to the time it takes for people to ride in an elevator from the first to the last floor of a building. Presented in other words, the elevator pitch should contain clear message, which is short enough, catchy and straight to the point. The idea hidden behind the elevator speech is that you have to be ready and prepared to share information with anyone, anytime, even in a lift. The elevator pitch serves as a "magnet" to potential customers and motivates them to take the next action, which is to search for more information about your product, service or idea and make a purchase. The message of your elevator pitch must become your constant greeting when having conversations with potential clients, so they can see and hear about it every time they contact you or your company.

How to develop your elevator pitch?

There are a lot of stories out there about the famous Steve Jobs' elevator speech and the employees in his company, who were preparing small presentations in the range from 30 seconds to 1 minute in order to show in this short time in what way they contribute to the success and development of "Apple Inc."

When creating your elevator pitch, you must bear in mind that the speech has to be quick and grab the audience. In order to find "the right" wording might take you a while, but the most important aspect is the experimentation. It is possible to go through several versions until you make sure that a particular one sounds the most "seductive".

In the process of creation of your elevator pitch, you can use the following guide, based on several steps, in order to help you develop the best speech:

- **Find out what your goal is**; The first, and the most important step in the preparation of the elevator pitch is to make sure you have a clear idea about what your goal is. Think about the things you want to achieve with it and ask yourself which is the best way to define it with a few words. Do you want to present your idea to an investor? Do you aim at advertising and presenting your product to a potential client? Do you want to present yourself and your best qualities to an employer or a team you have the desire to work with? In all of the above-mentioned cases, the highlight will be different, depending on the occasion. And that's why it is good to know what your goal is – so you do not miss your chance.
- **Define who you are and what are you working on**; We live in a world full of diversity. There are hundreds of companies and individuals out there working in the same line of work as you do, so it becomes more and more difficult to stand out from the rest and prove that you have the best idea or you offer the best product or service on the market. Focus on the things that matter the most for you and do not forget to start your pitch by giving clear message about yourself – who you are, what is the small thing that makes you stand out from the rest and what is your passion. Use the shortest sentence possible to explain what is that you currently work on and which are the features that differ it. Answering to all these questions will make you rememberable and will help the other person e.g. investor, stakeholder or potential client to imagine what can actually benefit from you.

[23] Investopedia. "Elevator Pitch" by Will Kenton. 2017, December, 7th, https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/elevatorpitch.asp

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- **Explain what you need**; Once you have clarified your goal, who you are and on what you are working on, you have to explain what do you need. If you have an idea, you have to tell to the investor that you need funding in order to explore and develop it further. If you want to offer a new product or service on the market, you probably need someone to help you with the market research or you see a potential client to whom you can offer your innovation? No matter who is the person standing in front of you, you have to let him know exactly what is that you really need and why.
- **Introduce your USP (Unique Selling Proposition)**; Your elevator pitch should also contain one of the most important elements of marketing – the USP (Unique Selling Proposition). To do this, you need to identify what makes you unique as a person, or your product – outstanding. Once you find what is this thing for you, be sure to communicate it. For example, you might be able to speak 2 not so commonly known languages at the same time, or be a programmer who specializes in difficult and increasingly promising programming language. Indeed, it is your job to find your USP and communicate it to the other person in the best possible way.
- **Think how to catch the audience's attention**; Always keep in mind that your priority is to catch the audience's attention. And you have to do this in less than a minute. Investors hear many pitches daily. How can you stand out from the crowd? Firstly, be very clear about who you are and what you want to do. Secondly, know what you need in order to achieve this. And last, but not least, start with an attention-catching question. Make people wonder and by the end of your pitch provide them with a solution. (Remember that you might be the solution).
- **Write it down**, When you complete all of the above-mentioned points, write one common text. Writing allows us to process information in a different way, so that we have our idea in front of our eyes and not only in our head. Once you have it written down you can actually visualize it, so you can start working on how it sounds, add extra clarification where it is needed or cut some misused words, which make the speech longer than 30 seconds.
- **Practice, edit and refine your speech**; When you are done with writing your elevator pitch, you can start practicing it. You can begin with reading the text aloud in order to see how it sounds and how long it takes you to read it. If it exceeds the maximum of 30 seconds, there is a high risk of losing the interest of the person who is standing in front of you. Try to cut out anything that is not absolutely necessary. Moreover, do not forget to pay attention to your body language – use a mirror or a person who is capable of pointing out your mistakes while practicing your speech. Remember - your speech should arouse curiosity, not yawns. If your speech arouses the interest of your audience, you may have the opportunity to talk about it in more details later.

How to use the Elevator pitch technique?

Just because the term says "elevator pitch" does not mean you are supposed to use it only in the elevator. It is designed to be used anytime, with everyone and in various situations – if you are at business presentation/forum, at a party, on the playground or on the bus and you need to get off at the next stop. Imagine that you are at the airport waiting for your flight when accidently meet a former client. After exchanging the usual greetings, he asks you to share more on what your new company is doing. You start to think what to say and just before open your mouth, you pause. And while you are making effort to organize your thoughts, your flight is called and you have to go. In such situations, you have to

Another Perfect Business Opportunity **Wasted** Because of No Good **Elevator Pitch** know exactly how to act and what to say, because if you are well prepared, you might have been able to even schedule a next meeting.

The role of the elevator pitch is the same as of the CV and motivational letter, but used in another, more informal situation. Its main role is to present you and your thoughts in the best possible way so you can catch the attention of the person you are talking to. When using the elevator pitch, make sure you are speaking to the right person, so you can avoid misunderstanding or awkward situations. Always try to assess the situation correctly, so it does not turn out that you are talking to a person who has nothing in common with your case. Also, a good approach would be to always keep some take away items with you, like a business cards, brochures or leaflets with the information you would like to transmit to the person you are talking with. This way, even if the 30 seconds are over, the person can easily re-read the information and get in touch with you if he or she is interested in what you are offering. Always remember that your elevator speech has to inspire you first, so there is a chance to be interesting for someone else. You do not have much time available so yet in the first few seconds you have to bring a smile or a lively interest.

Examples of Elevator Pitch

Let's look at some examples of the creation and usage of the elevator speech!

Bob is a 30 years old man, working in the creative sphere. He creates illustrations and logos for different websites and brands. But as the digital era is arousing more and more these days, he barely manages to handle all the tasks on his own. He starts to think that it would be better to find people sharing his passion for work and collaborate with them on projects in order to be able to deal with the amount of work and provide faster and quality services. He has the difficult task to convince people that it would be beneficial for them both to work together on collaborative projects. He decides to create an elevator pitch, which he can use in his future attempts to develop his collaborative team.

If you are pitching in a situation, in which you are searching for collaborators, an example for elevator pitch could be the following:

Hello, my name is Bob and I create illustrations and logos for websites and brands. My passion is coming up with creative ways to express a message or motto, so I am drawing illustrations which people can easily share on their social media. I am looking for people sharing the same passion and desire to collaborate on new exciting projects. If you are interested, we can organize another meeting and I can explain you in more details.

If you are pitching in a sales situation, an example for elevator pitch could be:

Have you ever experienced a situation when you want to change the corporate image or illustrate a problem or a solution graphically in the social media, so it can achieve greater recognition? My name is Bob, and my work is to create graphical illustrations and logos for websites and companies, which are greatly recognizable. Unlike other competitors on the market, I am developing each design from scratch, which guarantees to every client the uniqueness of the final product. The most recent works I have been working on you can find on my Facebook page. Do you have interest to send you the link, so you can check it out?

As you can see, both examples can be used in different situations and you can personalize and adapt it according to your personal needs. When starting to write your own elevator pitch, remember that it is not obligatory to copy it exactly. Just be sure you are following the right structure.

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Additional information

How to Create Your 30 Second Elevator Pitch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lb0Yz_5ZYzI

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