

Verifying Home-Grooming Business Idea

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<p>The report explains how service design process help in verifying a business idea by testing a prototype and visualise the business idea with a business model canvas.</p> <p>Barbering services has not changed for a long time, a new service idea that consists of app development is presented. The app help users to receive their haircuts at their place of residence and select amongst different individual barbers with different prices, skills and experience level, that will help the users to potentially save time travelling from and to the barbershop and by saving the queueing time, furthermore, it can help create more jobs to barbers and give them the opportunity to manage their own times and do their own marketing on the platform.</p> <p>The idea is to be tested by developing showcasing a prototype that reflect the business idea to potential users who are most likely to use the app and gather their feedback on its features, the idea itself and their haircut habits.</p> <p>The objective of the study is to use the collected insights that will then help to update the prototype and visualise the insights in a business model canvas that will help guide the business and bring the information together. All the process will be done following the guidelines of service design and its tools.</p>	
Keywords Service Design, Business Model Canvas, Prototype, Barbering Services, Home haircut.	

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1 Introduction

The very first barbering service had started as far as almost 6000 years ago in 5000 B.C with very limited instruments in ancient Egypt (National Barber Museum 2014). Since that time, we have not seen any major change or reforms to the industry, hairdressers used to have their shops and they still do. The global hair care market size is estimated at \$18,072.9 million in 2017 and it is projected to reach \$26,242.7 million by 2026 (Allied Market Research 2019.) The industry is open for a change and the resources to take it online are available as many other industries, therefore, I have had a personal experience which led me to think of a change or perhaps an improvement to the service that can be introduced into the market.

Like many products and service in the market my business idea originated from a personal need, where I had to get a haircut for an important formal event that I was planning to attend next day, the weather was so bad snowy, windy and extremely cold and I was already busy preparing for my presentation for the event next day. I wished that I could call up my barber to come and do the haircut at my apartment which save me time, effort and possibly money. From that point on, I started to look online for similar services and I could not find anything similar or anyone who provides the same service. I started to think why there is not such service as Uber, where barbers can register themselves and work independently in their own times, and offer their own expertise, prices, skills and get their own customer base.

I found one similar service in USA where they deliver the haircut at the customers' place of residence but the main difference is that they hire all the barbers and they have limited number of barbers available. That was unrealistic for me now as I do not have the resources to hire barbers, and at the same time when barbers are given their own business, they can control their resources and income better, it can be even more lucrative for them. I had the chance to speak with few friends about the idea and get their thoughts on it, moreover, to speak two barbers I know personally, it turned out that for these barbers the idea could be very useful for them from many aspect, the income and running their own times, so everything started from there.

The objective of this study is to find out more information about the potential users' haircut habits, to test and improve an initial prototype and bring the information together visualized in the business model canvas. That will be achieved by conducting a research with the help of the service design process and tools which will help to build an improved and tested prototype based on the target group needs and wishes, and to establish a business

model canvas that can guide the business and put it in the right direction. The business model canvas and the prototype will eventually help to build the actual product, the prototype can be presented to app developers and investors to assess the business idea and make major decisions.

2 Service Design

One of the strengths of service design that its definitions have not settled on single one. Industries where the definition have not changed are more likely dying (Buchanan 2001, 03-23). Service design is constantly evolving and that shows that so far there are no common definition or enunciated language of the service design (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 28-29).

The Copenhagen Institute of interaction Design has described service design in 2008 to be focused on well planned experiences by using a variety of mediums either tangible or intangible. It can generate a lot of benefits for the end user experience when implemented, for example, in retail, transportation, banking and healthcare. Furthermore, it adds systems and processes that help the user to have a comprehensive service. The service design practise requires a different set of skills which involve management, design and process engineering. The service has existed long ago, however, purposefully designed services that includes new business models are made in accordance to user's needs and aim to add socio economic value that affect society (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 30-31.) Service design aims to create or improve existing services to make them more appealing, desired and useful for customers, moreover, effectual and structured for organisations (Moritz 2005, 38-39.) Implementing service design also try to ensure that service interfaces that end users use are helpful, efficient and effective and can be distinguishing from the suppliers' perspective (Mager 2009, 28-42.)

According to Engine Service Design, service design is a speciality that aim to create and deliver amazing services to the user. Service design focuses on improving the service to be user friendly, loyalty and satisfaction in areas like products, environments, people and communications (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 32-33.) Furthermore, Frontier Service Design, Continuum and Live|Work agencies that specialise in service design have described service design as a comprehensive way for companies to gain compassionate customer needs' understanding. It can also prepare the tools, processes and the environment for employees to be able to deliver high-level of service in a way which is exclusive to the brand. Service design is the implementation of design process and skills to the creation of services. It is a practical and innovative way to create or improve a service (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 32-33.) If you have two coffee shops and they both offer the same coffee with the same price, service design is what plays major part of you walking into one and not the other (Fonteijn 2008.)

3 Service Design Process

Service Design is an iterative process. Designing a tangible product such as a car can be started with market research to understand customer preferences, what features, colours, engine and interior and based on those explorations, ideas starts to be generated. Tangible prototypes can be created and tested for functionality, cost, pricing and usability. After all results show positive outcome then the car can be produced. While designing a service is nonlinear, a structured process can be outlined. At every stage of the process, it is possible that you may need to start back from the beginning and learn from the mistakes of the previous iteration. Service design starts with designing the process because it may vary based on the context of service from project to another (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 113-117.) Best, Mager and Miettinen have all described that the practise and literature introduce many frameworks made of a variety of steps from 3 to 7 or more but essentially, they all share the same fundamentals and mind-set. The steps are also introduced with different names like, identify-build-measure and Insight-idea-prototyping and delivery (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 188.)

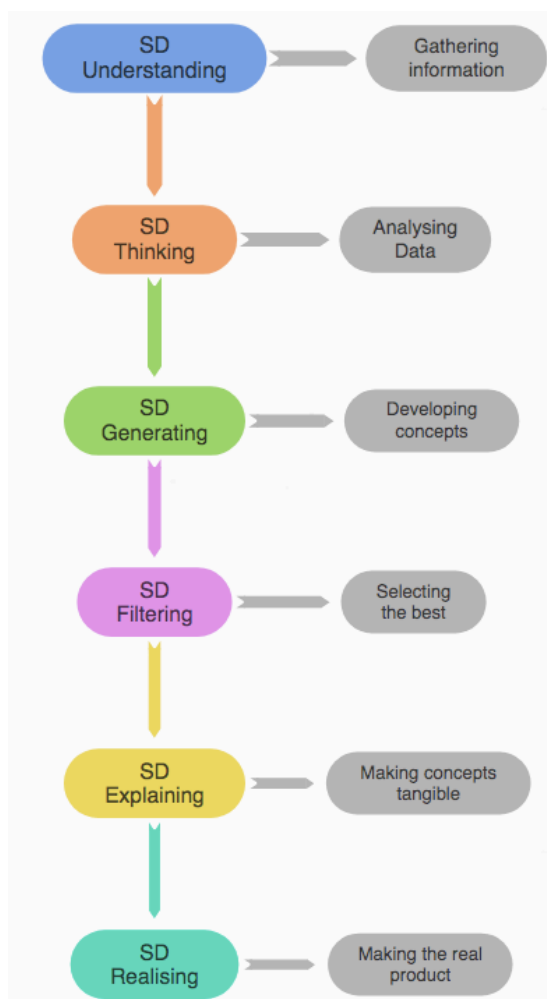


Figure 1. Service Design Tasks (adapted from Moritz 2005)

The steps that I decided to go through which resembles the most thorough process of service design are developed by Stefan Moritz in his book *Service Design Practical Access To An Evolving Field*, to develop my updated prototype and verified business model canvas. Moritz explains that each of these stages need a different settings, mind-set and environment in order to achieve the best outcome possible, moreover, the people involved may have to change in each stage (Moritz 2005, 122.)

The process is split into 6 steps that include, SD Understanding which focuses on finding out and learning, SD Thinking that gives strategic direction to the project, SD Generating which evolves around developing concepts, SD Filtering to select the best concept, SD Explaining to enable understanding and making the concept tangible and finally SD Realising which makes the whole design happen. SD Realising will not be achieved in this research as the product will not be launched yet, however the prior phase in SD Explaining the tangible concepts will be created such as the prototype and the business model canvas.

3.1 Understanding

In this stage, customer needs must be studied and understood alongside any limitations and possibilities. The understanding phase highlights the areas where the company should be looking to work on. It starts with exploring what the customers need, want and what motivate and demotivate them. Furthermore, at this stage customer goals and desires should be clarified. SD understanding phase is important to ensure outcomes are true and relevant (Moritz 2005, 63). The main task is to identify a problem not to find a solution, collecting enough insights from potential and existing customers is crucial at this point by using a variety of tasks (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 120-121.)

Research methods should be determined for this stage, quantitative research may not be as useful to provide crucial information about how customers use a service, especially those with complex behaviours. Most people are incapable of assessing their habits and behaviours. Looking into certain areas might help guide the way for this stage to customer understanding. Goals, values, behaviours, problems, needs and demographics are areas where you can start with, these areas need to be corresponded with the context with regard of the following: political situations, economics, social, legislations, competition, culture, competition or any other circumstances that needs to be considered. Furthermore, the influential elements should be considered because they may affect the project or the people involved, such elements could be: Technology access, language, personal issues,

finances, skills and knowledge. There are different methods and tools to achieve the desired results, some of these are: benchmarking, reading, surveys, focus group, interviews, observations, trends analysis, mystery shopping and more (Moritz 2005, 124-126.)

3.2 Thinking

SD thinking is responsible of setting the directions of the project. It involves a set of actions and tasks that help identify criteria, establishing framework including all the details and turning all the data gathered in SD Understanding into insights. Furthermore, it also gives purpose SD understanding. It generally gives the direction and the guidelines of the whole project (Moritz 2005, 128.) According to Stickdorn & Schneider at this phase all the findings must be visualised which could reduce the complexity of the process (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 121).

At this phase, the main tasks are to pinpoint the problems, the focus of the project, motives and most importantly the criteria which gives the project its direction. Analysing competition, all the data and reviewing the findings. Finally, set the time plans, guidelines and allocate the team. There are multiple tools that can help accomplishing these tasks such as, visual thinking (sticky notes), flow charts, Mindmap, Brutethink to name a few (Moritz 2005, 130.)

3.3 Generating

Generating essentially evolves around brainstorming and developing ideas that are relevant to the aroused issues in previous stages. The ideas need to be developed and merged into strong concepts. The ideas must include solution and processes that help solve the problem, moreover, the ideas must be as detailed as possible (Moritz 2005, 132.) At this stage, it is all about testing and retesting the ideas (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 122). SD generating needs information and insights for the professional creators to base their ideas on and give direction to the project, to produce relevant and great service design experience challenges should be addressed with creative solutions that are helpful to the end customer and to the organisation. SD generating cannot be a random brainstorming session but should be based on insights and strategy. The creators must visualise their ideas in order to make them understandable and sensible (Moritz 2005, 132.) To achieve a comprehensive and continual solution it is critical to include all the main stakeholders which possibly include clients, employees, designers, engineers and all the other people involved (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 123.)

There are a variety of tools and methods that can be used in the SD generating phase, things such as Bodystorming which involves imagining the service to be existed and acting accordingly which allows the users to envision a solution (Barry 2010). Sketching experience is used to visualise and express ideas (Moritz 2005, 134.)

3.4 Filtering

After all the ideation process are done, the filtering phase focuses on selecting the best ideas and combing them. The ideas should be chosen by experts or be selected with specific pre-defined criteria. Ideas can be assessed based on different criteria for example, legality, economic, technical or which can require less resources. The main aim is to test performance and quality of different ideas. Furthermore, Decisions needs to be made in this stage, therefore, people who are involved should be able to make the calls. For example, scenarios are made and presented to potential customers so they can evaluate possible problems or pains. The tools that can be used at this stage are, card sorting, personas, SWOT analysis, expert evaluation (Moritz 2005, 136-138.)

3.5 Explaining

Explaining phase is about putting all the data and ideas collected in recent stages and visualising all of them and making them sensible. This also includes all the scenarios and processes that has been accomplished during previous stages which can help in outlining and showing future potential of all the ideas (Moritz 2005, 140.) At this stage prototypes are built and tested, the main challenge would be at this stage is to build intangible prototype, so gathering feedback can be somewhat difficult. Customers usually like to have something visual to reflect on, so the purpose of this stage is to find a way to visualise the service or the idea in the mind of a customer. The emotional engagement is necessary, yet it still does not provide the user interaction, emotional engagement can be realised by presenting pictures, videos or storyboards. That is why prototyping service design in reality or circumstances close to reality is crucial (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 124-125.) The tasks for this stage is to visualise ideas, creating models and prototypes or scenarios, and the tools can be mock-ups, scenarios, role play, creating personas (Moritz 2005, 142).

3.6 Realising

SD realising is all about the implementation of all the planned ideas, processes, prototypes and solutions. It is the stage where business plans and guidelines should be written to direct the service in every detail on how it should work. At this stage, all the resources required should be prepared to implement the predefined concepts. In Realising, it is either having the prototype ready to test or the actual service depending on complexity of

the service. Moreover, training the staff involved in the project is part of the SD Realising so they can be able to put the service into market (Moritz 2005, 144.) It is crucial that employees understand the service and support it, employees' motivation and engagement is critical for a sustainable service execution and therefore they should be involved from the start of the process (Stickdorn & Schneider 2011, 126-127.) All the details and plans should be checked to deliver a high-quality service. The service might still need improvements along the way to make sure it provides the best potential performance. Service blueprint, business models or guidelines could be some of the methods and tools of SD Realising (Moritz 2005, 146.)

4 Business Model Canvas

The business model explains how a company create, deliver and capture value. The business model canvas helps simplify business model concept so everybody can easily understand, a canvas that combine discussions and descriptions. The main challenge is to make the concept relevant, easy to understand and simple but at the same time making sure to include all the complex functions of an enterprise. The business model canvas allows companies to discuss and think business models amongst competitors and own company which can become a shared language to alternate and use new strategies for business models. The business model can be presented through nine stages that show the process of how a company is planning to make money, these stages include four areas which every business have, infrastructure, offer, customers and finances. The nine stages are customer segments, value propositions, channels, customer relationships, revenue streams, key resources, key activities, key partnerships and cost structure (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 14-17.) The business model canvas is a tool of management template for creating new or documenting existing business models (Barquet 2011, 332-337).

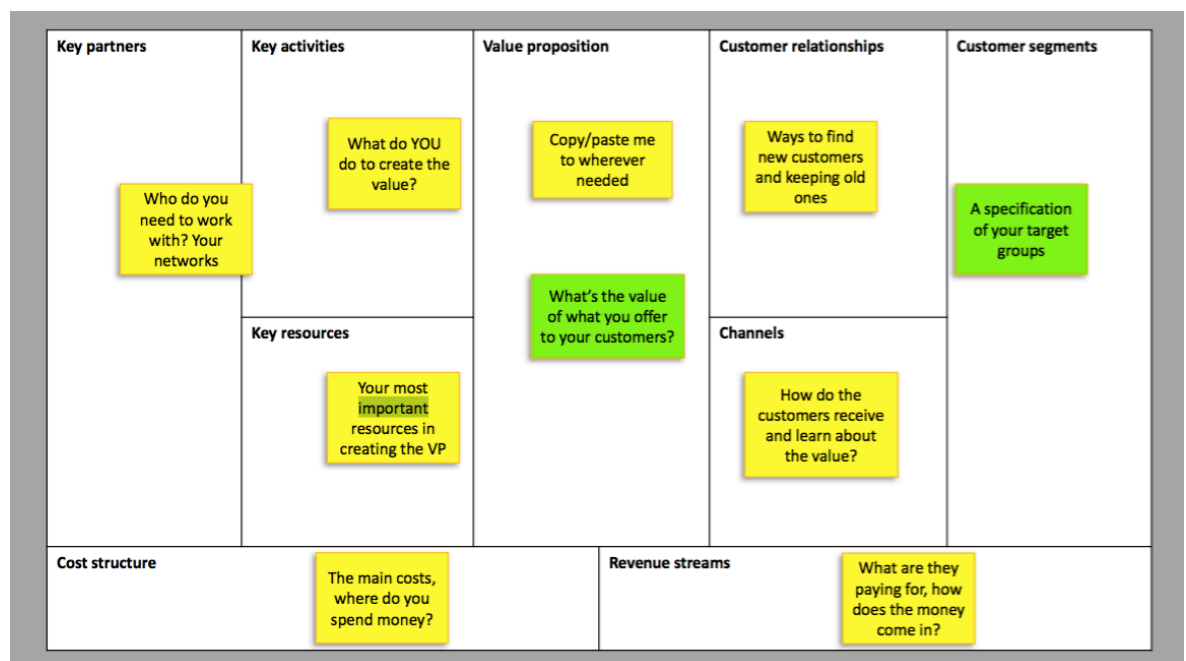


Figure 2. Business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010)

Business model canvas help to direct companies on how to get their products or services to their targeted customers, it also helps you to design your product correctly and that can provide you a competitive edge over others. BMC can be a great tool to document your process throughout your business journey and that can easily help you modify your business model anytime along the way compared to a business plan which consists of 50-100 pages which can be challenging. It also helps you ease the communication between all

stakeholders, especially investors. BMC can, furthermore, help put your focus on the customers and their needs and if your product fit in the market. It can also be a factor to avoiding failure as it guides you to implement all the needed steps to execute your idea and bring it to the market (Young 2018.)

4.1 Customer Segments

The customer segment describes the different potential groups of people or companies that a business is intending to reach and provide their services to them. Customers are the main aim for each business, without enough customers, companies cannot be in business. To satisfy these customers, a company can divide customers based on their needs, interests, pains and other attributes. In business model, there might be many big or small customer segments, companies should choose the right customer segment to focus on and leave the rest as they are not within their target segment. After selecting the right customer segment the business model can be more focused on those customers and understanding their needs. Customer groups can be separated in different segments if, their needs and pains require a defined offer, they are to be reached by different means and distribution channels, they entail different kind of relationship, they have different profitability or they may pay for different aspects of the product or service offered (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 20.)

There are different types of customer segments, for example:

- **Mass Market:** Business model that lay its attention on mass market do not differ between different customer segments, therefore, it focuses on large group of clients that have similar pains and needs, this is usually the case in electronics sector.
- **Niche Market:** it focuses on specific target group that have special needs and problems. The value proposition, channels and customer relationships are created for the needs of that niche market.
- **Segmented:** this model serve similar customer with slightly different needs and problems, for example a company that specialize in manufacturing solutions and it provides for three different client segments, watch industry, medical industry and automation industry which require somewhat different value proposition for each.
- **Diversified:** business model that is diversified serves two totally different segments, for instance, Amazon serves two very different customer segments individuals and companies as they sell their online storage space for web companies, and at the same time sells products to individual customers.

- Multi-sided markets: this model designed to serve two or more segments, such as newspaper organizations which need a large base of readers to attract different kind of advertisers (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 21.)

4.2 Value proposition

The value proposition section is to create value for product or service that an organisation is offering for its specific clients. Value proposition is the main reason why a customer may choose a company from another. It satisfies a need or solve a pain for targeted customers. The product or service proposed by any company should provide a specific value proposition for their customer segments. Value proposition provide value for customer segments by delivering a mix of different elements that can be quantitative like price or service delivery speed or qualitative like experience or design (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 22.)

There are different elements to create value for customers, some of them are, Newness which includes an entirely new solution for a problem that did not exist before in the market. For example, that could be seen usually in the technology industry like phones or computers and other innovations. Performance, this evolves around improving or developing a product or a service that exist before but now introduced in a better way for customers. This does not necessarily always create more value to the customers, as we see from the PC industry recently, even after improving technicalities in the product demand has not been increased substantially. Customization can be another form of creating value for customers when delivering a product that is specifically made to meet a customer's need. Sometimes the value can be by delivered simply by providing a product or a service that gets the job done such as reliable air jets engines. On the other hand, design can create value for an offering but it can be challenging, this particular value can be found in the fashion and electronics industry. Brand image does also reflect a significant value for some customer segments like wearing a Rolex to reflect wealth for example. Price can be one of the value creation tools when offering same service or product at lower price to meet the needs of those customer segments, however, the low-price value proposition has side effects on the rest of the business model. Cost reduction for customers is another way to create value for customers, risk reduction, accessibility and usability such as making things easier for customers are also ways to create value for customers (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 23-25.)

Value proposition can help business grow faster and can define the marketing message and help in the campaigns. Companies that included their value proposition message in

their marketing campaign achieved a 168% growth, compared to 27% to the ones that had great advertisement but weaker value proposition (Couch 2017.)

Moreover, value proposition can be a differentiator between you and competitors, increase the quality and the number of relevant leads, get a market share, make sure that everyone in your company communicate the same message to the customer and ultimately increase revenue (Kauffman Foundation 2007.)

4.3 Channels

The channel section explain how customer segments will be communicated and how to reach them to deliver the value proposition. Channels plays a major part in customer experience and provide several functions including, raising awareness for a company's offerings, it also helps customers buying specific products or services, helps delivering the value proposition put by a company to customer segments and make sure customers reach post purchase customer support. It is crucial that we understand which channels our customers want to be reached through, how are our channels implemented, which of the is working most efficiently and which is most cost effective. It is also important to distinguish between own and partner channels. Partner channels have lower margins but at the same time give more reach and derive strengths from partners, the strengths lie in having the two mixed to reach maximal benefits (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 26-27.)

4.4 Customer Relationships

It defines the type of relationship a company wish to have with their customer segment. Customer relationship is specified depending on three factors, customer acquisition, customer retention or boosting sales and from here it the relationship can be determined. Different relationships result in different customer experience. There are several customer relationships types some are, personal assistance which can be found in retail stores and involve human interaction throughout the sales process. Another type of customer interaction is more dedicated customer assistance as customers may have an individual assistant taking care of them and it reflects the most intimate kind of relationship, those can usually be found in private banking when taking care of high net worth individuals. Self-service is where a customer has no direct interaction with the company and they can serve themselves. Automated service can be self-service but in an automated way which can also offer a customized service as the automation can recognise each individual customer and their needs and act accordingly. Communities are also built in some busi-

nesses to allow customers to have a place to discuss, this can help companies understand their customers better and they can have a sense of belonging (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 28-29.)

4.5 Revenue Streams

The revenue streams present the money a company is making from each customer segment. Revenue streams are important to understand what value are each customer segment is paying for and where can a company generate more streams. Each revenue stream has different pricing mechanism, for example, fixed prices, negotiation, auctioning, market dependent or volume dependent. Business model can be formed with two types of revenue streams, one time customer payments, or recurring revenue from ongoing payments from selling a service/product or a post-purchase customer service.

There are several revenue streams, here is a list of some examples:

- Asset sale: The most common and simple revenue stream which is about selling physical product, such as books, electronics etc.
- Usage fee: the usage fee is for services such as mail delivery, hotel for the nights spent and telecommunication for the phone minutes' usage
- Subscription fee: this is a recurring fee that usually happens when selling a service that is continuous
- Renting: it gives the permission to someone to use the asset for a fixed period of time
- Licensing: it works when an intellectual property is given to someone else to use in exchange for a fee
- Brokerage fee: the service provided by brokers to act as an intermediate between two parties such as Credit Card and real estate agents
- Advertising: the revenue stream is generated by advertising a product, service or a brand such as the media agencies (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 30-33.)

4.6 Key resources

Key resources represent the most important assets needed to make the business work. The resources are required by every business to reach their customer segment, deliver the value proposition promised and generate revenue. The resources can be different and dependent of the type of business, some are physical such as factories or machines, financial such as cash or credit, human such as workforce and skills or intellectual like patents and copyrights. The resources usually are either owned or leased by the business or received from partners (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 34-35.)

4.7 Key Activities

Key activities represent the crucial actions that a business should take for the model to work. Key activities also play a major role in delivering the value proposition and reach customer segments and maintain customer relationships. Key activities are also dependent on the type of business. Key activities can be production like the design and making process of a product and that usually is the main concern and activity for manufacturing businesses, platform like eBay and that take regular maintenance or problem solving such as creativity or solutions to a problem that also involves hospital operations (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 36-37.)

4.8 Key partnerships

Key partnerships also represent the most important suppliers and partners that a business needs to operate successfully. Businesses form partnerships for some reasons including, business model optimization, risk reduction and resources acquisition. There are also different types of partnerships such as, strategic partnership between non-competitors, cooperation between competitors, joint venture to develop a new business and supplier-buyer relationship to ensure reliable supplies.

Here is some motivation behind partnerships:

- Optimization & Economy of scale: It is a partnership to reduce costs and means outsourcing and sharing the same infrastructure. This partnership is also formed to optimize the resources and activities.
- Risk reduction: Partnership which is formed with competitors that aims to develop a new technology for example, once the technology is developed the companies can still compete in selling their offerings
- Acquisition of resources or activities: some businesses perform all their activities but lack the knowledge or licences to certain areas in which they need a partner for (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 38-39.)

4.9 Cost Structure

This section includes all the important costs and expenses included in a business. Once key activities, key resources and key partnerships are defined the cost can be defined as well. There are two main classes of business model cost structures, cost driven which emphasis on lowering costs, it also aims to maximise the use of automaton and outsourcing such as EasyJet and Ryanair. On the other hand, value driven structure which mostly focus on the value created rather than the cost.

Cost structure characteristics:

- Fixed Costs: Costs that stay the same regardless of the volume of the goods or services produced. For instance, rents, salaries etc.
- Variable costs: costs that change based on the volume produced
- Economies of scale: this occur when a company benefit from lower bulk purchase rates, this result in lower price per unit as output increase
- Economies of scope: a business that enjoys because of a large scope of operations such case happen in large enterprises as the marketing activities distribution channels might help in other products (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 40-41.)

5 Research Methodology

Research methodology is a plan of action and system that is used to identify, choose, process and analyse data or information about a specific problem or topic. It also allows the evaluation of a study's reliability and validity (University of the Witwatersrand 2020). Furthermore, research methodology shows the way through which researchers formulate the problem and objective and present the data and information collected in the study period (Sileyew 2019). The qualitative research reflects to the concepts, descriptions and definitions of things and not counts or measures like quantitative research. It explains how a situation might occur, not how often it occurs. (Lawrence & Howard 2012).

Table 1. Difference between Quantitative research & Qualitative research (adapted from Streefkerk 2020)

	Quantitative research	Qualitative research
Purpose	Testing hypotheses and theories (Statistical)	Exploring ideas, understanding social interactions (Description)
Analysis	Statistical analysis	Summarizing and interpreting
Group Studied	Larger number	Smaller number
Data type	Numbers and statistics	Words, images and objects
Data form	Closed-ended such as surveys, observations (numerical)	Open-ended answers, interviews, observation
Results	Generalized that can be used on another population	Specific findings

The study will be conducted through testing a prototype that will assist in gathering the required information to visualise and design the business model canvas and to improve the final prototype version. The method used is qualitative research as it is recommended in service de-sign to collect and understand the customer interaction with a prototype presented to them. This will allow more in-depth analysis of the service and will provide a deeper understanding of the customer experience and expectations. Information will be mainly collected as primary research using interviews to finalise the last edition of the prototype. More information will also be collected as a secondary data as a supportive information for the business model canvas.

5.1 Prototyping

Prototype testing is done to find any flaws or missing parts of a service or a product before the launch of the final product, that also allows you to see your service in action to determine what works and what does not. The prototype usually goes around several rounds before the final product launch so all parts can be fixed and tested on the actual product (Blackwell & Manar 2015.) Prototype testing is also done so that you can make decisions for the product before you make any big investments (DIY 2020). The prototype is produced to assess a new design of a product for the goal of enhancement suggested by the potential users (Gero 1990, 31).

The prototype depends on your product or service, it can be presented with acting the service, built by physical tools or built using designing tools, the most important part is that the prototype should reflect the service or product on offer and can tell the users what they are getting. After determining how to build your prototype, first the target group should be determined before starting the testing, these potential users will then test the prototype on their devices and provide usability feedback. From this feedback improvements can be made to the developed product or service. The prototype should include the parts that needs to be tested, however, the prototype does not need to be fully functional but only the parts that you are planning to test and improve. You can describe sometimes the functions that a certain action can make if needed to be able to make the user understand the aim and reflect upon it (Schmid 2016.)

5.2 Interviews

In this research, semi-structured interview format is used as it is the most recommended and effective type of interviews to be used in qualitative research and service design to collect data. That will allow the interview to involve also a discussion which can reveal more important information and open about relevant issues for the prototype to be improved. The questions are aimed to reveal the experience and the feelings of the participant about the current service and the proposed service solution. Moreover, the participants will have the chance to test and interact with the initial version of the prototype and involve on a discussion about what can be improved and what their experience are.

5.3 Sources reliability & validity

The sources that are used in any research should be from a reliable source so that no unreliable or invalid sources are used as it can cause the end results to be unreliable to use or base any other research on (Middleton 2019). Therefore, in this research I used the following sources to ensure that all sources can be used as basis for the research:

1. Haaga-Helia Finna Online Library for books, articles and journals
2. Google Scholar
3. Official expert websites with reliable authors

5.4 Data Collection & Analysis

Data is the information that are collected to help understand the research problem. In qualitative research, a plan should be set to develop a systematic and advanced data collection protocol. Qualitative data collection protocol has three vital elements 1) clear collection strategy development 2) identifying and sampling the target group and 3) gathering data (Ranney & Meisel 2015, 1103-1104.)

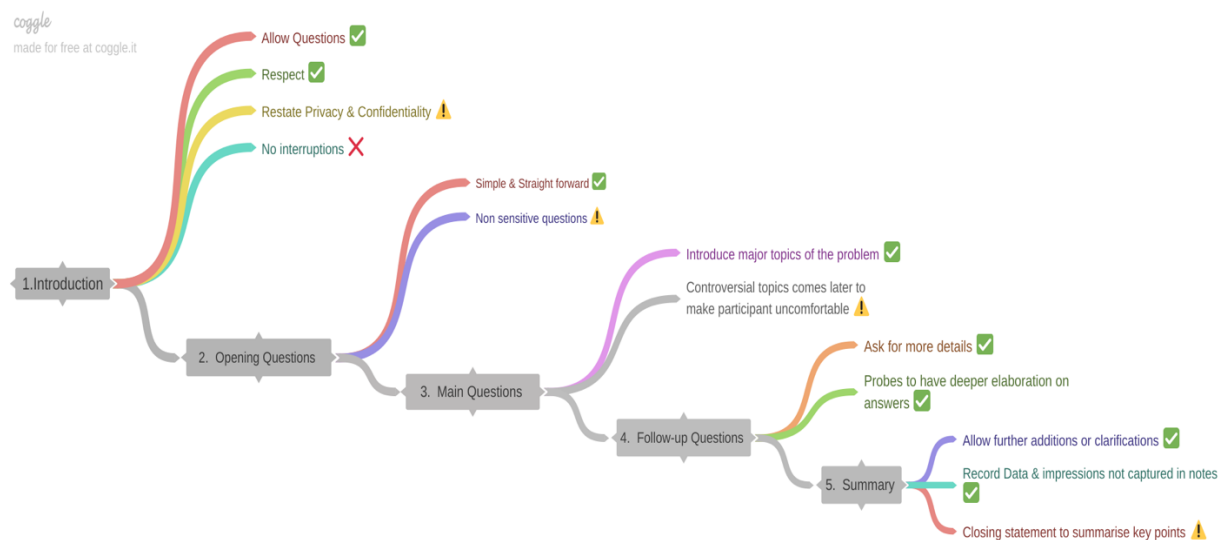


Figure 3. Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews (adapted from Ranney & Meisel 2015)

The figure above outline the guidelines and the collection strategy in which the interviewer should familiarize herself/himself with. These arrangements will help collect the data more efficiently and makes the interviewee more comfortable to answer all the proposed questions with no bias. It will, furthermore help the process of the interview to flow smoothly. It is also highly important that the participants in the interview be within the target group of interest to the research, in which he or she intends to gather more information about them regarding the subject in question (Ranney & Meisel 2015, 1105.)

Before starting the interviews and after defining the data collection strategy and identifying the target group, a list of interview logistics should be prepared that list should include the following:

- Recording devices availability if needed
- Room booking or location
- Check for any challenges in the location (Noise, set up, temperature)
- Facial tissues
- Refreshments
- Paper and pencil if the applicant as to write notes
- All needed resources according to the topic
- Privacy of the interview (Ranney & Meisel 2015, 1107.)

There are also some techniques that can be used to direct the interview such as: making encouraging gestures, reflecting on the participant's input, following up on a certain subject that was mentioned by the interviewee or introducing a new topic. These directive techniques should not influence the answers of the interviewee, therefore should be presented only when more information is needed. There are also some challenges that should be determined before the interview take place for instance, interruption coming from outside, distractions, asking embarrassing questions on sensitive information for the interviewee without previous knowledge, jumping between subjects, giving own opinion, concluding the interview too early, translations if the participants speak different language or superficial questions (Britten 1995, 253.)

After gathering the data from the interviews, analysis method should be determined. For this research, thematic analysis will be used to collect patterns that help identifying the experience and improvements that the users point out for the prototype. Thematic analysis is presented with six steps:

- Familiarizing
- Data Coding
- Generating themes
- Reviewing themes
- Defining and naming themes
- Writing own analysis

First, getting to know the data that was gathered during the interviews, that means listening to records and writing down the transcript then reading them and making initial notes to understand what is between the lines. Second, highlighting parts of the text that includes words, sentences or phrases that reflect upon a subject and replacing them with short labels or codes to describe them. After collecting the codes with different keywords,

codes are usually more limited than themes, therefore, codes will be combined under single theme. Thereafter, we must make sure that our themes represent the actual results from the interviews and they are an accurate representation of the original data. Defining and naming themes is done after that we have reviewed the themes, and from here themes should be named in a way that is more understandable. Lastly, writing own observation and reflection about the findings (Green & Thorogood 2018, 258-265.)

6 Results

All the results for testing the business idea were achieved by the help of the service design process and tools. The process of SD introduced by Stefan Moritz which starts with understanding the users, I have used interviews to better perceive my target group and their needs. Then comes thinking which involves analysing the data gathered and making sense of it, and thirdly, generating concepts which was achieved by designing initial business model canvas and prototype. After having the solutions in hand, I followed the filtering phase where I enhanced the features and the design of the prototype based on the interviews' insights. In explaining phase I have updated and filled all the information of the business model canvas based both on the interviews' insights and my enhanced understanding of the target group needs and wishes. Finally, the SD realising is not yet in use as the service is being furtherly studied. The SD process has helped me put a direction to my business idea and service and that is shown in the results.

The results include the testing process of the idea, the steps of creating the prototype and the tools used, the prototype testing process and the target group information, the interview findings and analysis and lastly the final products which are the prototype updated and the verified business model canvas based on customers' feedback.

6.1 Testing Process

I have firstly decided to create a prototype, so I can pitch it to potential customers, investors and even app developers when eventually needed. I created the prototype which represent the business idea with its main features, I started to think who would use such service and have narrowed down my target group to males aged between 22-45 after observing the age group of people that visit the barber shops, also discussing with my friends and asking them questions about their haircut habits. Furthermore, I have asked the participants how many times they get a haircut to make sure it is the right target group.

I have then prepared a set of questions which covers all the areas that can be useful to understand about the potential customers. The questions had two parts, one for the haircut habits and relating issues of the customers and one for the prototype. In the first part, the interview discussion included describing customer experiences when getting haircut, how many times they visit the barber shop, process of finding a barber shop, services that they ask for at the barbershop, the choice of specific barber shop over another, if they use a regular barber, queueing time, journey time and transportation used. Collecting this information will allow me to better understand the users and if they have a problem and it will help guide me to build a service with an experience that can be useful to them. The

second part is about the prototype, its features and technicalities, service idea, if they have any fears for using such service and if they would use this kind of solution.

I started by building a target group list from my networks for the people who fit the age criteria, at the end I have managed to secure 17 participants in which 5 were face to face interviews and rest have answered the questions by email. However, looking at the answers, I had received in-depth reviews from both methods. The participants' answers were not biased as I did not have any personal relationship with them but they were only within my networks and that mainly reflected in the results as they were straight and clear to what they think.

6.2 Prototype Creation

The prototype design was built using two software, Canva is for designing the pictures and all the content and InVision Studio to create and map out the interactive prototype. I have decided to make the prototype interactive so participants can get to sense as the service is real and they could get as close to reality as possible, moreover, to understand the idea and reflect on it clearly.

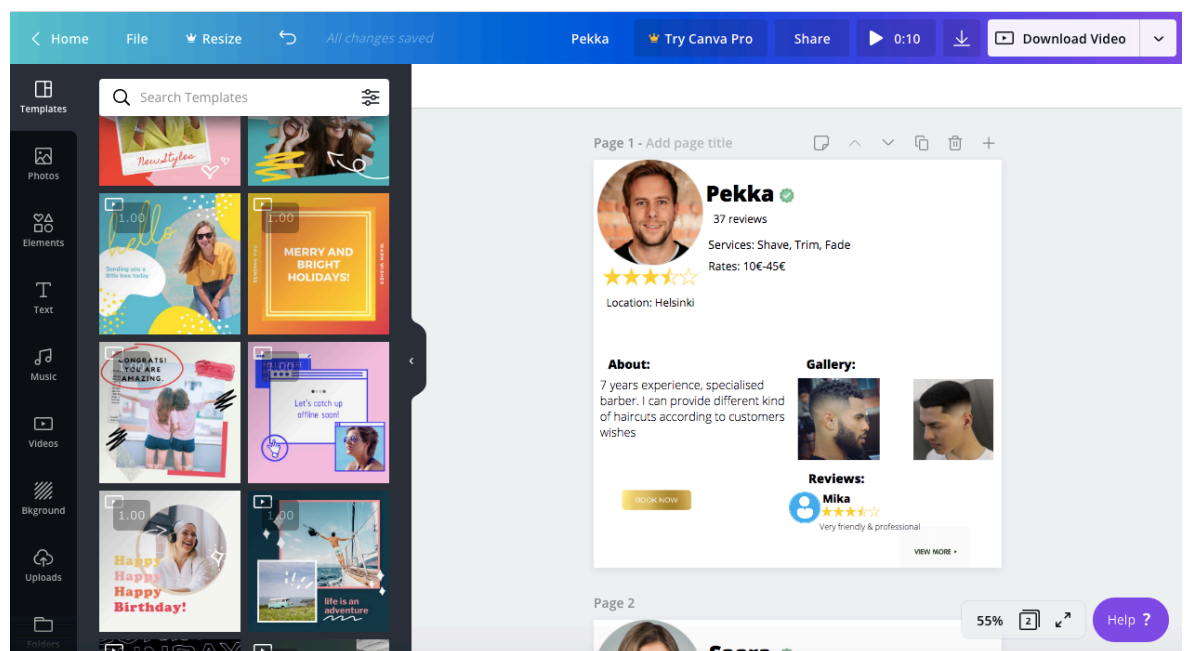


Figure 4. Prototype content design using Canva

As shown in figure 4, all the content for the prototype was designed using Canva. The content, pictures, text and icons are selected separately and was merged as shown to make a full screen for the users. The prototype reflects the service idea and include all the

features that are needed in such services such as, sign in, location, prices, reviews, barber service description, gallery, ratings and booking.

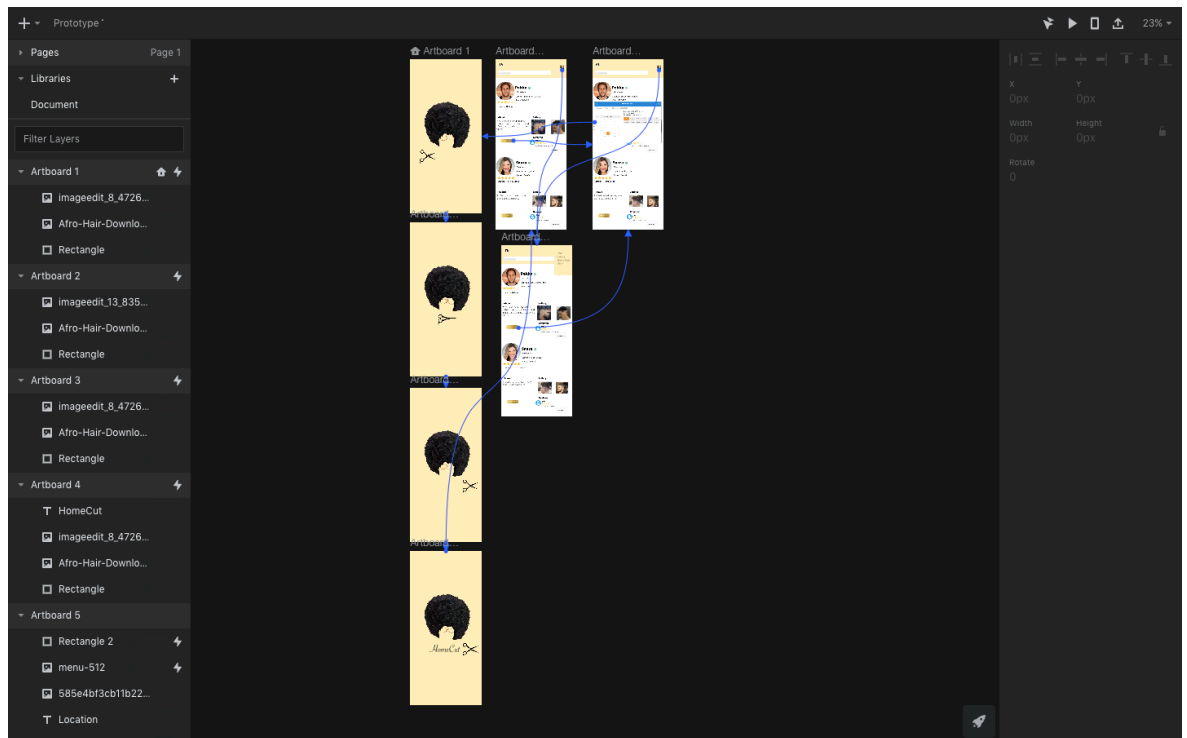


Figure 5. Prototype creation using InVision Studio

After completing the prototype design, it was all transferred to InVision Studio to create the prototype. InVision Studio is used by the biggest companies around the world such as, AirBnB, Amazon Netflix and HBO to design and test solutions. The studio allow you to add pictures to the artboard and create a nice flow between pages, and that helps you design the itinerary for the user. I have started with a logo page which shows the app name and transfer you to the app main page automatically with a smooth motion, from the main page the transition does only happen when the user interacts with the app, such as scrolling down or pressing on buttons. This way the user can feel that the app is more realistic and reflect on more specific issues rather than the app function. Furthermore, once you open the prototype you will notice the app frame is a mobile phone which also gives a sense of realism to the participants.

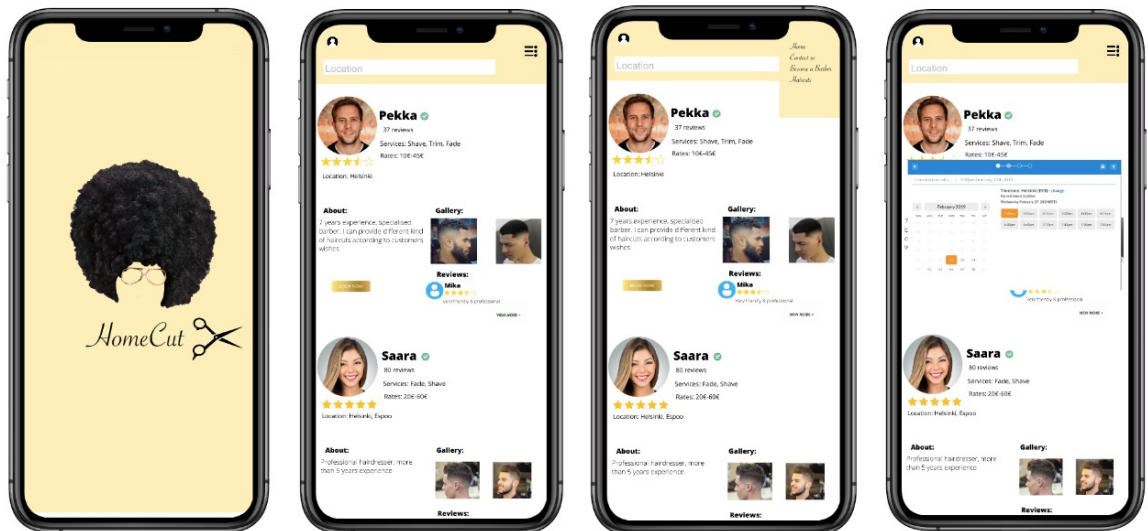


Figure 6. Prototype presented to interview participants

As shown in figure 6, I started by making a cover photo that relates to haircuts and a logo when opening the app, after that you will be able to see the app main page which includes barbers' selection, here you can scroll up a down to see two barbers as an example. Then you will be able to check the prices, reviews, gallery and service description by the barber's page. The interactive buttons included are two, the menu page on the top right of the page that include (Home, Contact Us, Become a Barber, Haircuts) these options are not interactive but only give an idea of what can the app include. The second interactive button is (Book Now) when pressed it will show an example of how to book an appointment with the barber such as dates and time.

6.3 Prototype Testing

After that I have finalized the prototype design and created my participant list from potential users, I started to contact them and ask for an interview. I have managed to secure 17 answers in total, in Mid-March the participants initially agreed to have a face to face interview that was when I firstly approached them. Within few days, the Coronavirus situation in Finland and worldwide already started to get worrying and when I followed up with many of the participant, they started to retract and postpone saying that they are not going out as much anymore and they are busy preparing for grocery shopping. However, one of the participants agreed at the same time I asked and we arranged the meeting in the same day, other four participants have suggested to make a Skype interview which sum it up to 5 face to face interviews. The rest of the participants never came back to me so I re-

formed my interviews and sent them by email to them so they can answer at their convenience, ultimately, I had all of them answer after some frequent follow-ups. The questions form that are sent by email to participants is attached in appendix 1.

The 5 face to face interviews were not very formal or hard as I am familiar with the participants. I started the interviews by introducing the business idea, my thesis, data usage and the privacy of the answers given. The participants opened up about their current experience and how to make it better and how does my service affect their choice.

6.4 Interview Findings

The participants referred to their last haircut experience mostly as regular “nothing special”, they had a chat with the barber and relaxed while they waited. Some have had to book a time before going which was not favorable for them but they had to do it so they do not wait. One participant described his struggle while getting to the barbershop with his car which was annoying as it was in the city center or being lazy to go there because it is far. Most of the participants referred to trying to avoid queueing by calling beforehand. Most participants get a haircut once a month or per two months, but they wish they can go more if they were not having to struggle with getting there.

The participants process of finding a barbershop was mostly through friends’ referral, price, having same barber for too long or online search and checking ratings. The process was described as exhausting by one of the participants as he searches a lot and go through comments. 15 out of 17 participants said that they only ask for a haircut at the barbershop, others may get a beard trim from time to time. The participants’ choice of barbershops was hugely reliant on the next factors:

- Location
- Price and quality
- Recommendations
- Reviews
- Barber skills

Most of the participants have their own regular barbershops, the reason is that they like the skills of the barber and the results that they are getting. Moreover, price is also a factor a big factor for keeping the same barber as well as they shop’s location. However, not all participants have a regular individual barber that takes care of them but they ask for anyone in the shop to get the haircut. The reason is that they trust the place and they know they have all skilled barbers, the ones who do have a regular individual barber described the reason as being friends with the barber.

Nine participants said that they book time before they go to the barbershop. The others who do not, wait between 10-30min until they get called up or they come back another day when it is not crowded. The participants either use public transportation, walk or drive to get to the barbershop, it gets them about 5-40min to get there. When asked if the experience differ for them in summer or winter, 7 participants answered no. On the other hand, some said the queue can be smaller as people do not go out as much during winter, some said they visit the barber more often and some have said they can reluctant during to the weather conditions and if it is cold.

After trying the prototype the participants had different descriptions, simplicity came as most common answer, followed by nice style, informative and easy to navigate. One of the participants found it lagging on their device. All participants had a clear idea of what the app service is and understood the service offered, one participant mentioned the importance of describing the exact service in the prototype, he would not have known what is the service about by looking at the prototype if I have not introduced it at the beginning of the interview. When the participants were asked if they would make use of such service, 12 have answered yes for different reason, mostly transportation, time saving and more freedom being at home or once used and recommended by friends. Others, however, have described their fears of using such service because they do not want to book a time, or having a stranger at their place, or for cleaning after the barber is gone.

When asked what would make you use the app, some have said if they do not use their regular barber anymore they can consider. If the benefits of the app were useful to them, if they can skip booking and instead ask for the barber to come instantly. They also mentioned that some features can be more useful such as, more precise location, sorting or filtering and social media links. The participants had also some fears when using such app, for example, prices, trying new barber, stranger coming into their house, cleaning after barber and payment security.

Table 2. Interview findings simplified

Subject	Common Answers
Last haircut experience	Regular
Barbershop visits	Once a month
Finding a barbershop process	Friends' referral, prices

Services needed at barber-shop	Haircut
Factors affect barbershop selection	Location, price and quality, reviews, barber skills
Regular barbershop?	14 yes, 3 no
Regular barber?	7 Yes, 10 No
Queueing time	9 book time beforehand, rest wait between 10-30min
Journey to the barbershop	5-40min (transportation, car, walk)
Winter or summer difference when getting haircut	7 no difference, 10 find it harder because of the weather in winter, longer queue in summer
Prototype general thoughts	Simplicity, nice, informative, easy to navigate
Service idea clarity	Yes (Clear and understandable)
Would you use the app?	12 yes (Avoiding transportation, time saving), No 5 (do not like booking)
What would make you use the app?	Friends referral, instant booking, if regular barber is not in use anymore
App features suggestions	Precise location, filtering, social media links
Fears	Cleaning, prices, payment security

6.5 Findings Analysis

The overall understanding of the feedback is that the participants have no special memory when having their haircuts, it is rather an unpleasant experience for them. That experience happens between 1-2 a month and they try to avoid it, so bringing something new to the industry can be promising. The trust in this industry is very important, therefore, the barbers provided in the app should have very specific information about their skills and proof of experience. The participants showed a willingness to pay according to the quality that they receive so that also creates a new space for competition amongst barbers when providing their services in the platform, and showcasing their portfolio and offering their prices.

The majority of the participants have described that they somewhat keep the same regular barber or barbershop, and that can cause a problem to the customers if their favourite barber is always booked but the reviewing system may help boost customers' trust to try new barbers more frequently. Moreover, most of the participants do not favour queueing but also do not like to book a time ahead, so instant booking can be a solution when

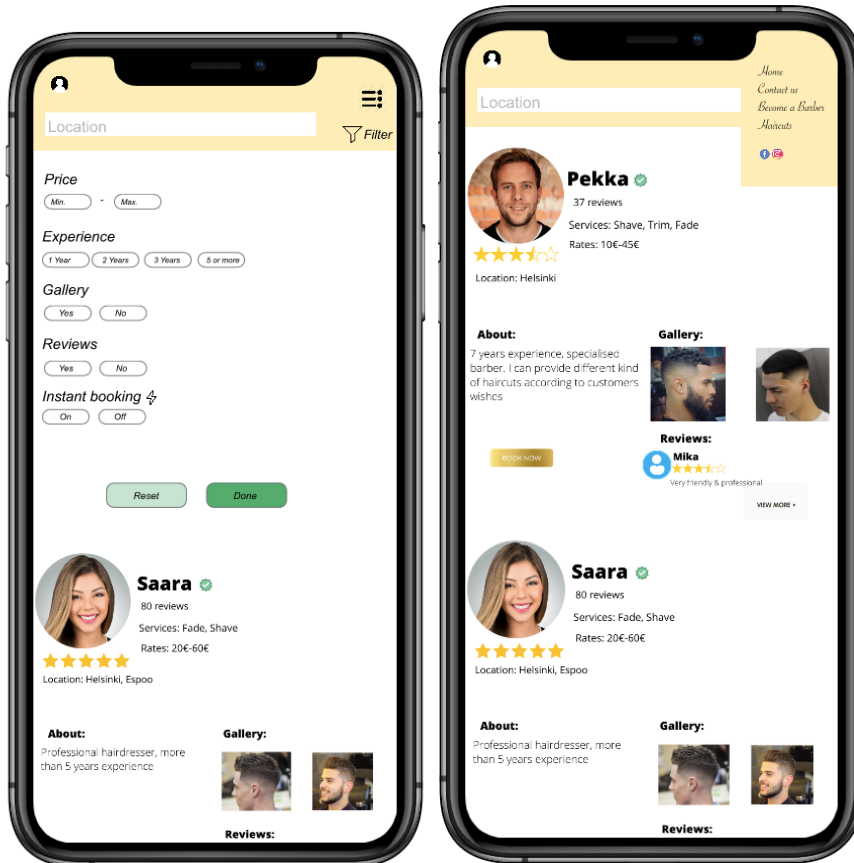
needed for this segment. Most importantly, using home haircut service can save the participants on average 20-110min which comes with the journey back and forth and the queueing time. In winter times, when using the service the weather will not be a factor for those participants who find it a struggle to get to the barber, and in summer times, those who cannot find a booking or need more haircuts can also get their haircuts faster when looking for available barbers. The barbers' selection is mostly based on price, location, quality, reviews and barber skills which should all be filtered very accurately so customers can get exactly what they are looking for without a hassle.

The prototype generally looked good for the participants, simplicity was mentioned several times and that emphasizes the importance of it to the users when creating the actual product. The service idea is clear and easy to understand, which also reflects simplicity which is favoured by the users. The users have showed interest in trying such service but also needed some reassurance such as friends' referral or some other benefits they can sense. The participants have commonly showed fear of higher prices than the ones on offer, as the service is delivered at their place of residence, therefore, prices should be monitored and delivered at the same or better than the current providers. Payment security is also mentioned, and for that reason an online trusted local payment provider should be placed in the app so the users can trust it. Finally, the cleaning concern brought up by the users, the cleaning shall be handled by the barbers by having a handheld vacuum and sheet to place under the seat when providing the haircuts, and that needs to be assured by the service provider as a requirement for barbers to join the platform. Precise features need to be added such as location so the users searching experience do not come as a hassle and reminds them of regular current service providers.

6.6 Prototype Updated

The results of the interviews have given me insights to improve my prototype and verify my business model canvas, it has helped me understand the target group better and create the prototype based on their needs.

I have made changes to the prototype based on the interviews' insights, these changes mostly focus on the features that the participants have pinpointed such as filtering feature and social media links.



Figures 7 & 8. Prototype updated with filtering and social media links

The changes shown in figures 7 and 8 are made after multiple participants have pointed out that these features can be useful to have. The filtering includes price filtering, experience, gallery, reviews and instant booking feature, the instant booking feature was added because most of the participants that mentioned that they will not use such service because they do not like booking. This would eventually make it easier for them to look for barbers available at the time they visit the app.



Figure 9. Prototype updated with service description and friends' referral

I have also added a service description and an invitation feature that comes with a discount based on the insights gained from the interviews. These features help guide the first-time users and encourage them to invite their friends as that was one main factor for the participants. Friends' referral help increase the publicity but also helps the user to get his referral and discount.

6.7 Business model canvas

I have created a business model canvas that reflects all parts of the business and its core information. After collecting the insights from the interviews I was better able to verify the business model canvas by visualising and bringing the information together in the business model canvas based on the information based on the participants' insights.

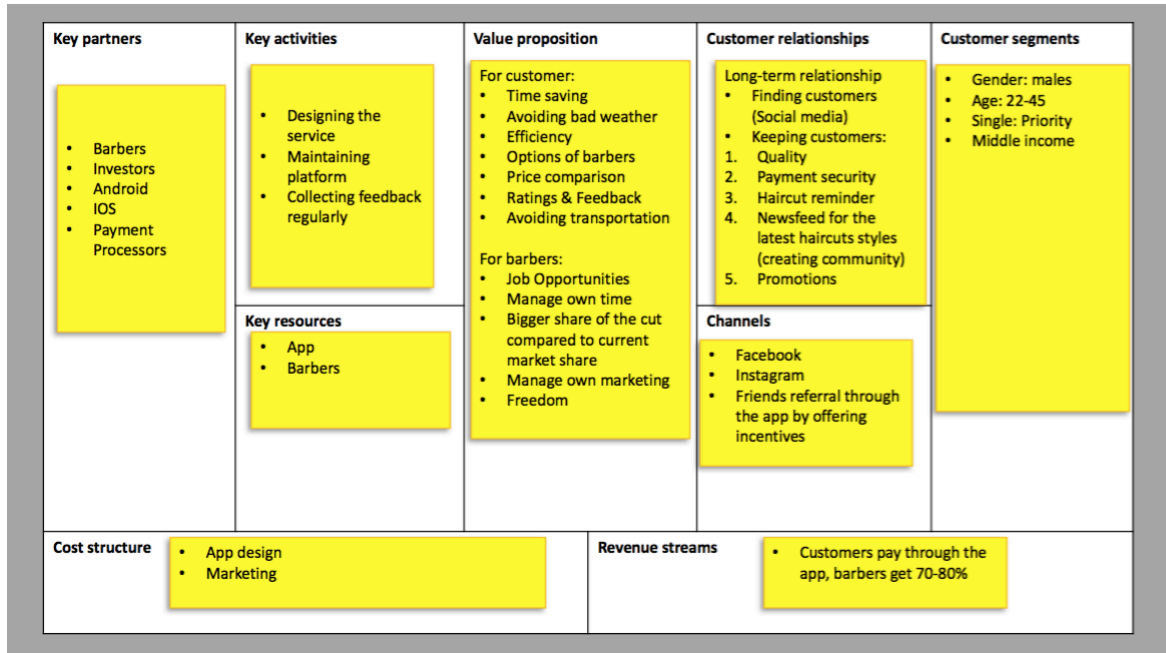


Figure 10. Business model canvas verified

The business model canvas shown in figure 11 is the final version after reviewing each part of it. My target group in the customer segment consist of males who are aged between 22-45, single and have a middle income. This target group only focus on providing a home-grooming service for males because I am familiar with the services that are requested usually by males and the length and process of completing them, while for females after researching online and talking with friends, I have learned that most of the services requested by females at the hair salon usually takes longer process and are more challenging to achieve at home by a hairdresser, such as hair dyeing. The age group is also selected after observing the age groups that mostly visit the barbershops more often, furthermore, being single is added so that the person who is getting the haircut does not have to worry about others' time and privacy while inviting someone to do the haircut for them at their place of residence, however, that is to be tested further when launching the service, as most of the participants who have joined have partners but also said they would use the app, although one has brought up the privacy issue. As for the income, people who I have invited to the interviews have stressed the importance of price to them, so I suppose they would be using the app and look for good prices that suits their income levels.

The participants' have stressed on multiple values that the service can bring them if existed, most of them have somehow agreed that using the service will save them time and effort, avoid bad weather, options of multiple barbers with reviews, prices comparison and avoiding transportation. On the other hand, I have chatted earlier with my barber and here are my findings based on the value my service can bring to the barbers. Mainly more job

opportunities as this opens for barbers with different skills and experience levels like fresh vocational school graduates to run their own business, give more freedom to their choices of working hours or days, manage their own marketing by creating and editing their own page, prices, pictures etc. on the app and more importantly get a bigger cut than the ones that are offered in the market right now. The barbers side needs further investigation as I did not yet conduct an in-depth research for them, but I have collected these insights by comparing what can my service offer compared to their current jobs and based on the insights from my barber.

The channels to find new customer will be social media, as all participants have mentioned that they look online for barbershops and reviews, and since the skills of a barber are important to the customer, social media can help showcase what is on offer. Moreover, the target group exist mostly on Facebook and Instagram. The friends' referral feature that will be added to the app will also help acquire new customers.

Customer relationships will be long term as this service do not stop once used but is used regularly on a monthly basis as the participants described. Keeping the customers will be achieved by maintaining quality by ensuring that the app has features to showcase and verify barbers claims of proficiency such as work experience and reviews. Moreover, the answers by the participants have emphasised on the importance of payment security methods, and that will be achieved by linking an authorised common and local payment processor service. Haircut reminder feature will also be added so that customers can be reminded of their monthly haircut time as some participants mentioned that sometimes they get lazy feeling and do not go for the barber. Furthermore, a newsfeed will also be added to the app so users can follow latest trends and share their thoughts to be part of something like a community, and that will enhance the users' attachment to the app. Ultimately, the running promotions like friends' referral discount and others offered by barbers will help maintain the users active and looking for promotions as they value the pricing.

The revenue stream is generated by customers paying for the service that they get like the haircuts. The payment will automatically cut 20-30% of the payment for the company and the rest will go to the barbers. That is to be better determined at a later stage when financial costs are studied and barbers are interviewed, but initially that share is common in for example Uber strategy and is way too higher than what barbers' share are currently offered in the market as per my barber, he for example receives 10-20% compared to 70-80%.

The key resources are essentially the app as it will hold all the business activity and the users, and more importantly the barbers as this business is all built around barbers so getting barbers to join the platform and offering their services is crucial. The key activities will include, the app designing initially and maintaining later and collecting regular feedback to be aligned with customers' needs and wishes. On the other hand, the barbers are also considered partners because they will not be employed by the company but they will be entrepreneurs doing their own business with the help of the platform. Finally, the cost structure will include the app design and regular maintenance also the marketing activities to acquire new customers and build trust.

7 Conclusion

The thesis process has been successful for the product development aimed which is the verified business model canvas and the updated prototype. The data collection was sufficient to the purpose as the answers had few differences and many similarities, however, the data collection method for the 17 participants were planned to be achieved by face to face interviews and eventually the circumstances changed to 5 face to face interviews and the rest answers are sent by email. The changes to the course of the plans, however, did not have a major impact on the extent of results as the answers gave sufficient findings to the areas that are being tested. Face to face interviews could have improved the emotional analysis and the reading between the lines and observing the participants' reactions when taking actions on the prototype which could have helped in more in-depth understanding. From this experience, I have learned that all plans can have unexpected turns and one needs to make use of the resources available and adapt to the situation, I have learned how to design a prototype with its crucial functions to test and retest certain areas. Designing and testing the prototype have also showed me the importance of customers' feedback as it may alter your understanding and start to think from user point of view. More importantly, I have acquired the information needed to my product development and the information that I gathered helped fix the prototype according to the customers' needs and put together all the information visualised in the business model canvas, the interviews' results helped mostly in the value proposition section where the insights redirected my initial service value thoughts to the pain relievers of the customers.

The results of customer understanding have enabled the creation of the final prototype and guide gathering and visualising most of the business model canvas. Service design focus on thinking of the outcome for the users rather than thinking of the artifact. I had adapted that approach throughout the designing process, and that has helped me to shift my thinking from "I will create an app for home-grooming" to "How to help customers save time and travelling effort when deciding to get a haircut".

Finding the right app developers can be a challenge and the costs of creating the app can be expensive considering the complexity and the quality requested in this sort of platform. Apps on Android and Apple store are also not easy to launch, the platforms request high standard of the app quality and the app developer should have a decent portfolio and experience to be able to achieve that. All the other financial costs need to be studied such as app developers, payment processers and app design. Therefore, the results available now can be used to pitch the idea for potential investors which I possess in my networks and to present them to app developers to get quality and price quotes. However, there are

still many things to do to be able to fully understand the business and its needs, now the potential target group has been studied, next the barbers which are presented as key partners in my business model canvas shall be researched, interviewed and involved in designing the service. The current results in hand are very crucial for my business idea and it will guide me to the next steps of achieving and realising the business.

For the next phase, I will be presenting my idea to barbers and getting deeper feedback, once that is achieved, I will be looking for price quotes for my app cost. Before presenting my idea to investors I am planning to launch the business using a website with limited resources, to test it in the real market and I will be working on marketing by myself on social media. The reason I will be doing that is that investors always prefer results in hand before making any investing decisions so I will either work with lighter resources which will certainly affect the quality but will reflect and keep the core value, or try to collect investment from friends and family.

In conclusion, my business vision and my goal is ultimately turn the business from B2C to B2C and B2B by building a platform that retain a regular number of visitors, then I will be able to create a community and draft stores to sell and advertise relevant beauty and hair products on my app and publish barbershops on the app as well so the user can either choose an individual barber to come and serve the haircut at their place, or to choose amongst barbershops. That will only be achieved if the platform succeeded in acquiring regular number of users.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

Please send back your answers before Sunday 30.03.2020

Service Description: HomeCut is an App for barbering service at the customer home/residence. The customer can use the app to choose between many individual barbers with a variety of prices, locations and reviews. The barber then come to your location and provide you with the haircut in your place and at your convenience.

There are 16 questions, please try to elaborate your answers in order to get a deeper understanding of your experience. You can answer using the same document at the end.

Interview questions:

1. Describe your last experience when you wanted to get a haircut?
2. How often you visit the barber?
3. Describe the process of finding a barber shop?
4. What kind of services do you usually ask for at the barber?
5. What factors affects your choice of barber shop?
6. Do you have a regular barber shop? and why?
7. Do you have an individual barber that usually takes care of you? and why?
8. How long do you wait for your turn at the barber shop? Or do you book time before going?
9. How long is the journey from your home to the barbershop? What transportation do you use?
10. Tell me about the difference between getting to the barbershop during winter or summer?

Please read the questions then access the prototype using the link below. The prototype will open in home screen, it is not fully interactive but there are some sections which are interactive. The places that are interactive will be highlighted when you press anywhere on the prototype. The aim is to give you a sense of the service that is being developed.

Prototype: Link: <https://alaa573284.invisionapp.com/prototype/ck7akc9u0001dtr01hg1j81yf/play>

1. Take a look and try the app and tell me what do you think?
2. Is the service idea easy and clear on how to use?
3. How would this work for you?
4. What would make you use the app?
5. What should the app include (features)?
6. What fears do you have for using this service?

Data usage: The data will be used for my thesis research in HH and the name of participants will not be published. The data will be used to better understand the customers' needs of barbering services.