

The Center of Architectural Preservation

A Service Design Project for Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f.

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Abstract

The objective of this thesis was to create a knowledge center of architectural preservation for Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. The research questions were: What is the need of the customers? What kind of services is Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. able to offer? What would the finished service consist of? and How would the project be financed?

Architectural preservation is a growing trend, not only in Ostrobothnia, but all over the country. With mostly modern ways of renovating being what most craftsmen are taught to do, it can be difficult to find craftsmen and retailers to help with restoring old buildings. The need for a platform that would bring together customers with craftsmen and suppliers is significant.

This thesis explores the possibilities of creating a knowledge center, and by using service design methods a project plan was developed. The methodology and tools used in this thesis are, for example, online ethnography, qualitative interviews, customer journey maps and personas.

The results showed that there was a significant need for a platform where customers could access information about craftsmen and restoration methods. A plan for the knowledge center was developed for the commissioner.

Language: English

Key words: service design, architectural preservation, museum, benchmarking

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1 Introduction

Architectural preservation has grown significantly during the last decade or so in Finland. There is a need to balance the quick development and fast pace in our everyday lives, with something slow moving and authentic. Especially in Ostrobothnia, there is a significant increase in popularity when it comes to restoring old log houses for private use. These large buildings from the 19th century are often moved from their original building sites to new lots and built back up, log by log. There is not a lot of information about this form of building technique available, which is why Brage open-air museum would like to offer a center, where ideas and knowledge could be shared. The center would offer information from all different stages of the restoration; from carpenters to vendors, and what products to use.

In this thesis the author will design a service for Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. by developing a plan for a *Center of Architectural preservation*, which would be a knowledge center for people interested in architectural preservation. By using different service design methods, such as benchmarking and interviews, a service design concept is developed for Brage open-air museum.

In this thesis the author uses the term knowledge center, which refers to a digital platform containing information about architectural preservation; both instructions on how to restore old houses as well as contact information for craftsmen and retailers. A knowledge center can also include an interactive part, such as a chatroom for customers. The author is employed by Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. and works at Brage open-air museum as an Executive Director.

1.1 Commissioner

The commissioner is Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f., that run the Brage open-air museum in Vasa. Brage open-air museum was founded in 1933 and is located on a valuable natural site within the city limits, just a few kilometers from the city center of Vasa. The museum area contains 23 buildings, which were moved from Böle in Närpes in the late 1920s. The different buildings in the open-air museum represent a rural, cultural and functional unit

that leads the visitor into a traditional Ostrobothnian farmstead with the main building in the center. (Skott & Nabb, 1993, p. 14.)

Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. was founded in 1908, when Arvid Spjut, Edvin Sundqvist, A. R Hedberg, Uno Finnilä and Otto Andersson among others, wanted to spread the knowledge of the Swedish Ostrobothnian culture and preserve the cultural heritage. They valued things like authenticity, respect, and reverence for earlier generations. Open-air museums were very popular at the time, which is why Brage decided to open the museum, as a way of preserving the cultural heritage of Ostrobothnia. (Skott & Nabb, 1933, p. 3,7.)

The image below (figure 1) depicts Brage open-air museum, and shows what a typical Ostrobothnian farm looked like in the 1800's. The courtyard is surrounded by the main house, a stable row, a cattle house and a small cottage. (Brages friluftsmuseum, 2018.)



Figure 1 Illustration of Brage open-air museum in Vasa. (Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f., 2013)

1.2 Aim

The aim of the project is to design a knowledge center that caters to the needs of the customers. The goal of the project is to find out the key factors that will answer the

questions: where, how, who and what. The commissioner is also interested in finding out whether it is a service that should be combined with something else, done as a project with partners or even if it is something that should be outsourced.

The target of the commissioner is to spread knowledge and peak interest for old buildings and culture and encourage more people to restore old houses instead of building new ones.

1.3 Background of the project

The idea for this project came from a course, *Byggnadsvårdsdag*, offered by Brage in April and May 2018. The word byggnadsvård is Swedish and translates to building preservation. It is a term used to describe a way of not only preserving old buildings, but also preserving building methods and knowledge (Länsmuseet Gävleborg, 2022). The participants of the course visited four old, restored log houses in order to get ideas and inspiration for their own projects. These houses were in different stages of the renovation process, so that the participant would understand the extent of the projects, as well as be able to ask the owners questions about the different stages. The course was set up over two days, April 21st and May 19th. A total of 46 people participated in the course. There was a visible need for more information after the course, which sparked the idea of a knowledge center where ideas could be shared.

Architectural preservation is a trend that has grown a lot in the last few years. It is called a trend because it is very influential and people get their ideas and inspiration from other people's projects. There is a flood of Instagram accounts about architectural preservation and accounts, made purely so that the followers will be able to see the whole process from start to finish.

Especially in Ostrobothnia, the trend has grown significantly. One of the reasons being, that old log houses are very cheap to buy, even free sometimes, although the whole renovation process can become very expensive in the long run. People who inherit old log houses from relatives for example, tend to want to get rid of the houses quickly. So the options are: a) sell it, b) have the fire brigade burn it to the ground, or c) give it for free to someone as long as they come and "pick it up" and move it to another site.

In Finland, there are a few architectural preservation associations. These associations want to preserve old buildings and offer support and knowledge to those who need it. There is also a website, *Perinnemestari*, which gathers all information regarding architectural preservation. The background to this website is that there was no other place to find information, which is why the creator, Hannu Rinne, decided to create the website as well as a TV-series. Even though there is a platform for information, every house has different needs. There is not one model that fits all. Therefore, they wanted to create a website, where you could get information on such a level that someone who is not a tradesman could do the job. (Rinne, 2019.)

The main guidelines for architectural preservation is that the building needs to be renovated in the same way it would have been done when it was built, using the same methods and if possible, the same tools. The finished product also needs to reflect the time and style it carried when it was built. (Rinne, 2018.)

1.4 Research objectives

The objective of this thesis is to create a project plan based on the need of the customer. Through research the author aims to find out what kind of service is needed and whether Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. could be able to provide such a service. Critical aspects such as funding will be looked into as well.

1.5 Research questions

The research questions for this thesis are:

1. What is the need of the customers?
2. What kind of services is Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. able to offer?
3. What would the finished service consist of?
4. How would the project be financed?

2 Research process

In this chapter the research process will be presented: the timetable, process chart and the frame of reference.

2.1 Timetable

The writing process started at the end of March 2020, when the project plan was also presented at the first seminar. The initial task was to do research and map out all old and new customers. The next step was to conduct the interviews, both with the customers and also with the commissioner. Most interviews were concluded by mid-May.

The second presentation was done at the second seminar on May 8-9th 2020. After the second seminar the work continued with the project based on the feedback. Expert interviews were conducted in September of 2021.

Table 1 The timetable

When	What
March 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presenting the draft at 1st seminar 2. Developing draft based on feedback 3. Literature research
April 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Interviews 5. Literature research 6. Defining research questions
May 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Presenting at 2nd seminar 8. Developing project based on feedback
June 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Analyzing results from interviews
September 2021- February 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Benchmarking and online ethnography 11. Developing the service with the help of service design methods
May 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Finalizing the thesis 13. Presenting at 3rd seminar

2.2 Frame of reference

The focus of this thesis is to create a service that is built on the customers' needs. The customers are the potential clients of the knowledge center. The service provider is Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f, and the service provided is the Center of Architectural Preservation.

All these together with service design and design thinking form the customer experience. This is envisioned in figure 2.

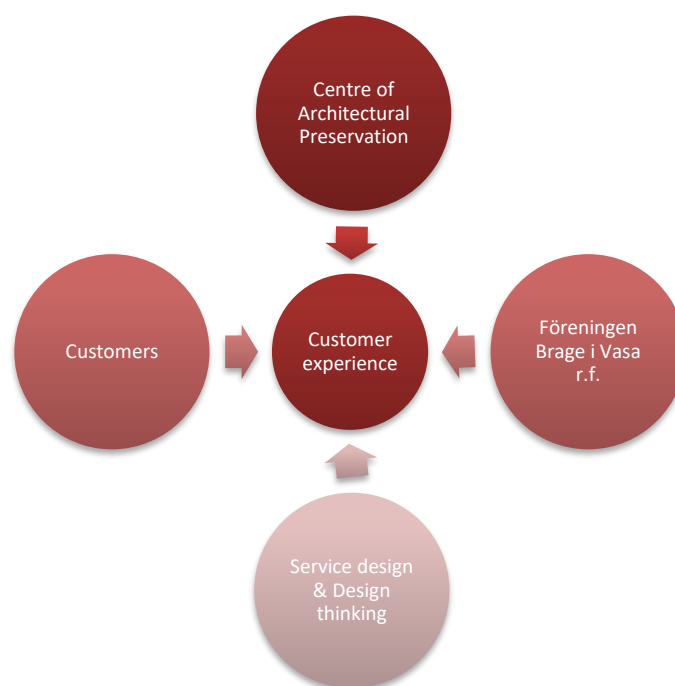


Figure 2 Frame of reference

3 Service design

Service design dates to the beginning of the 1990s. It has its origins in the significant development of the service industry, and the need to develop the services further. The continuous need for service design is due to the development of technology. Service design can be explained in many different ways. The definition is not unambiguous, which is considered a good thing and one of the strengths of service design. Service design is the systematic process and innovation in developing services. The process can be viewed both as analytical and intuitive. (Tuulaniemi, 2013, p. 10, 12, 61.)

According to Marc Stickdorn (2018, p. 14) service design is based on a multitude of different tools, such as branding and marketing to name a few. It focuses on solving the right problem, based on the need of the customer. By using different kind of tools and methods it focuses on the actual need instead of trying to find a quick solution. Instead, the results are based on a process where each part plays a significant role. The tools of service design have been carefully developed and work well together when developing a service. Businesses from all kinds of different areas have realized the benefits of service design. It ranges from airlines to banks as well as hospitals and educational institutions. (Stickdorn et al, 2018, p. 14-15)

3.1 The principles of service design

Stickdorn et al. (2018, p. 25) have developed six principles of service design. The principles were originally developed in 2010 and consisted of only five principles, as seen in figure 3, but as service design has evolved during the last few years, Stickdorn felt the principles needed to be updated. Here are the six principles:

1. **Human-centered** – all people affected by the service should be considered in the design process
2. **Collaborative** – include all stakeholders in the service design process
3. **Iterative** – repeat the process and learn from your mistakes
4. **Sequencing** – the service should be broken down and visualized in a sequence

5. **Real** – research and prototyping should be done in reality
6. **Holistic** – keep all stakeholder in mind through the whole process

These principles are used as a service design tool when developing a service, and good to keep in mind throughout the project. Internalizing the principles is part of service design thinking and is highly effective when solving a problem. (Negbenose, 2021.)

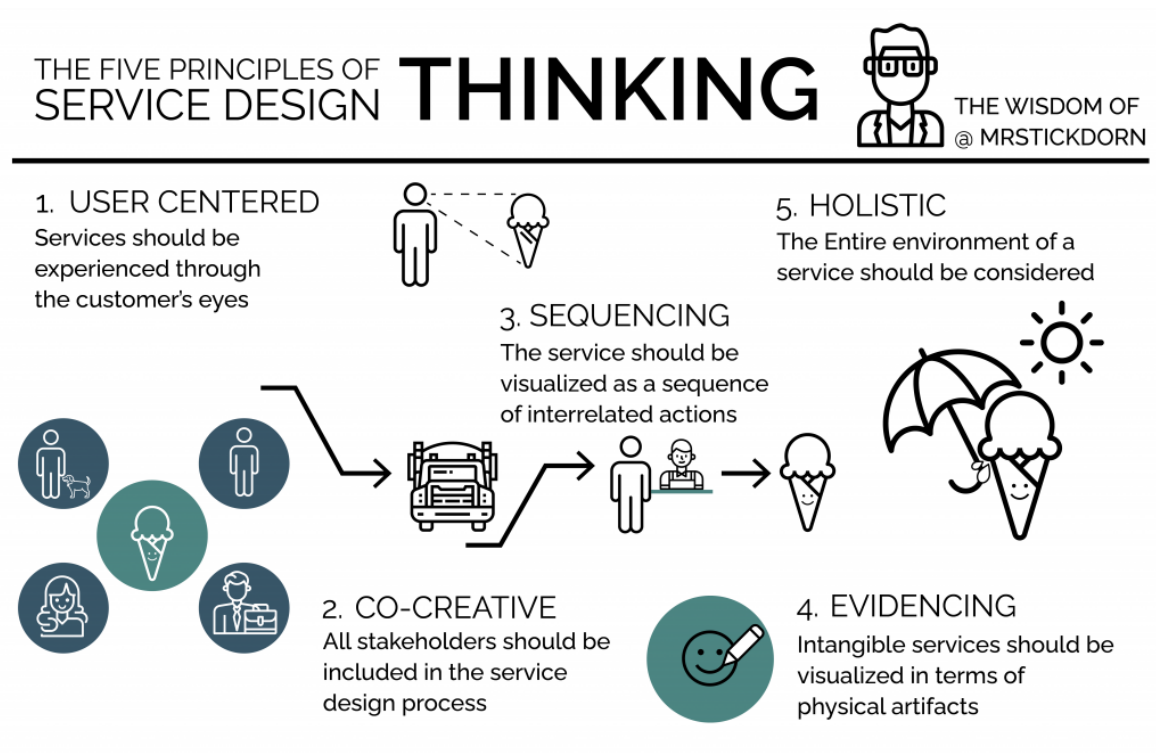


Figure 3 The original five principles of service design thinking (Stickdorn, 2015)

3.2 Service design process

The service design process according to Tuulaniemi (2013, p. 128) consists of five stages: definition, research, planning, production, and evaluation. The process is explained visually in figure 4, which also shows the process of this project.

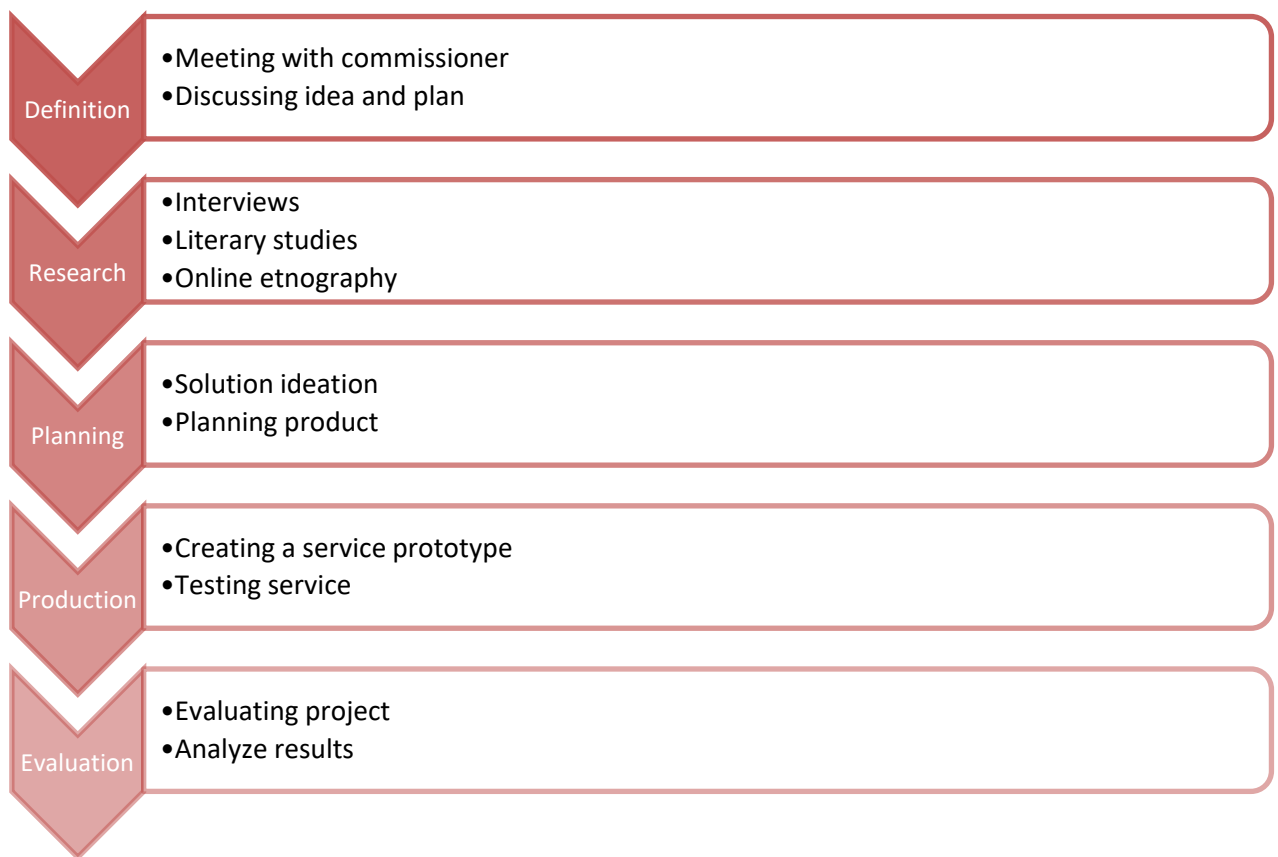


Figure 4 Process chart

- The first stage is to *define* the problem: What problem needs to be solved? What is the need of the client?
- The second stage is the *research*. This is done by using different service design methods, e.g. interviews, customer surveys, etc.
- The third stage is *planning*. Based on the results from the research, ideation for the service development can begin. The ideas can also be tested on customers in this stage.
- The fourth stage is *design*. This is where the service concept is designed and tried out on the customers. The final service is planned at this stage.
- The final stage is *evaluation*. At this stage it is time to evaluate the service design process. The final service is evaluated and tuned based on the results from the trials.

Different tools are used in the service design process. It is important that the services are developed from a user-friendly perspective. It is important to acknowledge the needs of the user and to be able to identify with the customer. (Jyrämä & Mattelmäki 2015.)

The aim of service design is to improve the customer-experience (Miettinen 2013, p. 26). The goal is to create a service that the customer is happy with, as well as the service provider. From a user's perspective we are looking at usability, desirability, and consistency. (Tuulaniemi 2013, p. 101.)

4 Architectural preservation

Architectural preservation refers to repairing and building by using old techniques and materials. The aim is to preserve and restore the building's cultural value. (Itä-Suomen yliopisto, 2014.) It is not only desirable to restore and preserve old buildings, Finland has also agreed to international contracts, that binds us to preserve our cultural heritage as much as possible. (Laine & Orrenmaa 2012, p. 124–125.) In the last 10 years or so we have also started to understand the value of old buildings and how important it is to preserve them for future generations.

Besides the international contracts, everyone can contribute with small actions to preserve the cultural heritage for future generations. Many of the owners of old buildings are genuinely interested in preserving as much as possible of the old and using good, old methods and materials. Some old buildings which have a cultural, historical value are also protected by The Building Protection Act. The most important guardians of the cultural heritage are: UNESCO, the EU, the European council and many organizations, such as Europa Nostra. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020.)

You can apply for funding if you want to preserve a cultural, historical building. Funding is granted by the state, regional Centers for Economic Development, Transports and the Environment, and the Finnish Heritage Agency. It is possible to get state funding if the building has cultural, historical value. The Center for Economic Development, Transports and the Environment grants funding for restoration of old buildings, where the aim is to restore special features of the building. The Finnish Heritage Agency grants funding for nationally important buildings that demand large restorations executed by professionals.

There are many different grants to apply for, and private building owners, organizations, communities and municipalities are eligible to apply. (Rakennusperintö, 2019.)

Architectural preservation is overseen by many different instances. In Finland, the main regulator is The Finnish Heritage Agency. As an expert official, The Finnish Heritage Agency offers their services to other authorities, businesses and private persons. They monitor and offer assistance in architectural preservation and also offer financial aid for restoration projects. (Museovirasto, 2021.)

Architectural preservation decreases what we call building debts and prolongs the building's lifespan, because regular upkeep has a big impact on the cultural environment from generation to generation. Architectural preservation also employs more people than new builds, but it also demands more knowledge from the planners and builders. The builders will need knowledge of different materials and techniques from different times. Architectural preservation is part of sustainable development and most traditional materials and techniques have been proven more durable when aged. (Mäkelä-Marttinen, 2015, p. 9.)

Problems occur when the owners or builders do not have enough knowledge and choose the wrong materials for the building. This usually happens when builders want to use modern techniques and new materials for restoring old buildings. These materials are, for example, plastic, which is not something that has been used when the building was originally made. Restoration and recycling of materials is beneficial for the environment and also the aim of the new Waste act. Restoration, recycling of old materials and choosing materials based on their carbon footprint, have a positive impact on the climate change. Recycling has been part of the Finnish culture for centuries, when old buildings were moved across town borders. State restoration strategies support the development of architectural preservation. One of the main targets of the restoration strategy is to broaden the knowledge of restoration culture and increase knowledge. (Mäkelä-Marttinen, 2015, p. 9-10.)

There are a few architectural preservation knowledge centers already in Finland, such as Rakennusapteekki in Billnäs, Salvus in Porvoo and Roseborg in Ruotsinpyhtää. Most of them get influences from Sweden, where they have a lot more of these centers. Some

centers get financial aid from the EU and the aim is that the business will be prosperous in the future. Almost all of these knowledge centers have some sort of antiques or restoration products for sale, as well as guidance and courses that they offer. These knowledge centers are upheld by organizations, as well as private business owners. (Mäkelä-Marttinen, 2015, p. 10, 13.)

4.1 Cultural heritage

Cultural heritage refers to both tangible and intangible assets that we have inherited from previous generations. Tangible assets are monument, books, buildings, arts, and artifacts etcetera, whereas intangible refers to folklore, language, traditions, and knowledge. Our cultural heritage affects our lives in more ways than one; it guides the way we think and act, our values, and beliefs as well as what we bring forward to future generations. Cultural heritage helps preserve our culture and traditions for generations to come, in the form of music, food, art, literature and knowledge. (Utbildningsstyrelsen, 2022.)

Both tangible and intangible cultural heritage is protected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO. Every year Unesco reviews their list of world heritage sites as well as their list of intangible cultural heritage. In Finland, we have a few historical sites and traditions on Unesco's lists of cultural heritage, for example, the old church in Petäjävesi and our sauna tradition. (Utbildningsstyrelsen, 2022.)

KulturÖsterbotten is a forerunner of cultural heritage preservation in Ostrobothnia. They are a division of the SÖFUK Federation of Swedish Municipalities in Ostrobothnia for Education and Culture and consists of 14 member municipalities. On their website, it states that *"The aim of KulturÖsterbotten is to strengthen the cultural identity of the Swedish-speaking population of Ostrobothnia, deepen the cultural co-operation in all fields and on all levels and promote creative activities in the region"*. Their last project, *Kulör*, focused on intangible Ostrobothnian cultural heritage, such as rye bread, fishing and seasonal traditions. The project ended in 2020 and was soon followed by *Kurant*, which focuses on how to preserve traditions for future generations. (KulturÖsterbotten, 2021).

The tangible cultural heritage in Ostrobothnia is visible through the many wooden houses. The first towns in Ostrobothnia were built in the 1600's, and timber was the main building material. This naturally posed a fire hazard, and many of the wooden towns have burned at some point. However, in the countryside farmhouses were built sparsely so that the fire hazard could be avoided. That is why we still have many old farmhouses intact in the Ostrobothnian countryside and why they are such a big part of our cultural heritage. (Österbottens förbund, 2022.)

4.2 The history of the Ostrobothnian farmhouses

The Ostrobothnian farmhouse model dates back to the 1600s. It started with the smaller cottages, which consisted of a single room with cooking quarters, beds and living areas all in the same room. The farm house model adds rooms to either one or both ends of the building, with the main living area and kitchen in the middle, bedrooms at one end and usually a drawing room at the other. The entrance to the house was from the middle, as seen in figure 5. These bigger farmhouses were a result of the growing agriculture in the late 1700s. The economy was blooming in Ostrobothnia, which we can see in the number of large farmhouses. (Lång-Kivilinna, 2005, p. 6-7.)



Figure 5 A typical Ostrobothnian farm house at Brage open-air museum. (Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f., 2018)

In an interview with one of the participants in the course Byggnadsvårdsdag offered by Brage (Participant A, personal communication 24.4.2020), the participant A explained the background of how their house came to be in its current position. In the late 1700s to the early 1900s it was accustomed that when you married, your parents would gift you with a house if one was available. If you had siblings, a long model farmhouse could be split into several parts and moved to their own lots where it was built back up into an individual house. Participant A's house was moved to a new lot in the 1930s. It belonged to a farmer whose daughter got married and the house was moved to a new lot where she and her husband would start their new married life. The houses were taken apart log by log, moved by horse and carriage and put back up in their new location. The logs were numbered when they were taken down so that it would be easier to put them back up again. Participant A's house had been used as a summer house since the late 1970s and it had been empty since the 1990s. Participant A bought the farmhouse in August 2017 and finished the restoration in April 2021.

This statement is also supported by Anne Räsänen from Kymenlaakso University of applied Sciences (KYAMK, 2015, p. 9). She states that many log buildings were historically moved to new sites, preserving interiors such as wallpapers during the move.

4.3 Legal restrictions

There are about a dozen international contracts about preservation of our cultural environment. The most significant ones are the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage agreement and the 1987 ICOMOS charter for the conservation of historic towns and urban areas, which have also influenced the laws regarding restoration of historic buildings. (Laine & Orrenmaa, 2012, p. 125.)

The law regarding conservation and restoration of immovable cultural property aims to protect our cultural heritage. The Finnish Heritage agency and the Center for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment oversee that this law is followed. Some buildings are protected by law, which means that they cannot be demolished, they should be kept to a certain standard, the usage of the building should not be other than it is intended to be originally, all renovations must be done so that it does not change the characteristics of the building, and continuous contact should be kept with the

regulators. In order for a building to be protected by law, it has to fulfill a certain criteria. For example, it represents a certain time in history, it has certain features that needs to be preserved or it is a historically important building. The owner of a building can apply for it to be protected by law, which allows them to apply for restoration and upkeep grants. (Finlex, 2010.)

4.4 Mega trends affecting housing

Mega trends are long-lasting, slowly developing phenomena that do not suddenly change. They have a clear direction of development and are considered to guide the course for the future. (Rubin, 2004.) In the cultural environment strategy it is viewed that globalization on one hand enriches cultures but on the other hand uniforms and impoverishes it (Tampereen kaupunki, 2013).

One of the impacts of globalization is urbanization: Over half of the world's population already live in cities. The main argument for urbanization and concentration to bigger cities in Finland, is that we want to minimize our carbon footprint and climate change by minimizing the growth of traffic. That is also why it is harder to get building permits in the countryside, than in urban areas. However, in an analysis made by Sitra, it shows that 58% of decision makers in municipalities estimate that living in the countryside uses less energy and less resources than living in the city. (Hellström, 2010.)

The counter trend to globalization is localization, which signifies gratitude to one's own culture, traditions, and location (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2014:12). People are more and more concerned about the environment and climate change has a big impact on living trends. Consumer behavior is already changing but the biggest changes are still ahead. One thing that has a huge impact on consumers is social consuming. This can be seen through influencers in social media who have a huge impact on their followers. Due to the high amount of information available on the Internet, people are learning more and more about the climate change and the things they can do as individuals to decrease global warming. This decreases consumerism and increases ecological thinking. The consumers of the future are more aware of the impact their choices have and make purchasing decisions more thoroughly thought through. (Heinonen, 2011, p. 20-23.)

During the past two years there has been another factor influencing people to move from cities to more rural areas: the pandemic. At one point another we have all had to isolate ourselves into our living quarters. This has made people realize that they would rather quarantine in the countryside than in a small apartment in the city. With more and more companies allowing their workers to work from home, the possibility to move further away from bigger cities arise. (Maaseudun tulevaisuus, 2022)

5 Methodology and research

The research methods of the project consisted mainly of interviews, both with old and new customers. Applicable service design methods were also used, such as SWOT-analysis, business model canvas and stakeholders map. To get the input of an expert, I contacted Hannu Rinne at Perinnemestari for an interview.

5.1 SWOT

A SWOT-analysis is made to understand four core parts of your business or project: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It was created in the 1960s and is still to this day one of the most popular strategic tools. It is a simple, yet a very helpful way of understanding these parts of your business. (Vuorinen, 2013.)

The SWOT-analysis is made by dividing the core parts into four columns as seen in figure 6. In this project, the **strengths** are that the customer is already known. The service provider knows who to offer the service to, and most of the customers know who to contact to get the information needed. The service provider also already has an existing network of contacts, which works as a good base for starting the new service. Another strength is that Brage open-air museum is at a central location and is a well-known organization in the area.

The **weaknesses** are that the customers are quite widespread. This can cause problems when offering physical services. There is also a lack of knowledgeable craftsmen in the area. Hiring craftsmen specialized in architectural preservation is necessary for the projects, but can result in long waiting times for the customer. Another weakness is that the service provider has a very limited budget for the project. This could limit the service provided and it might be possible to only offer the service for a limited time.

The **opportunities** are that it opens the possibility to build a bigger brand for the service provider. This project could also increase the preservation of old buildings, as well as preserve our cultural heritage.

The final part of the SWOT-analysis is **threats**. The main concern is that the service provider would not be granted funding for the project. Laws and regulations could also be seen as a threat, as there could be new laws put in place in the future that would regulate the restoration of old buildings.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The customer is known • The customers know to contact the service provider for information • Existing network of contacts • Central location • Well-known organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread client base • Not many knowledgeable contractors in the area • Limited budget, possibly only short-term project funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a bigger brand • Preserve more old buildings • Preserve our cultural heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not get funding for the project • New laws and regulations that hinder customers from investing in old houses

Figure 6 SWOT- analysis

5.2 Stakeholder map

The stakeholders in this project consist of the service provider, employees, the customers, and collaborators. You can see the stakeholder map for this project depicted in figure 7. In the first tier is the service provider: Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. The location for the project was Brage open-air museum in Vaasa. Föreningen Brage is led by a board of members. In the second tier we have the employees, or in this case, just one employee: The Executive Manager. The Executive Manager is the only full-time employee at Brage open-air museum and the person who was responsible for the project. In the third tier we have the customers, i.e., people who will be using the service in the future. In the last tier we have the collaborators: Stundars open-air museum that could possibly collaborate with know-how, Quiriosa which is a retailer specialized in antiques and old-

fashioned building materials, and lastly, the city of Vaasa, that Brage has collaborated with a lot in the past and could be a possible partner in this project as well.

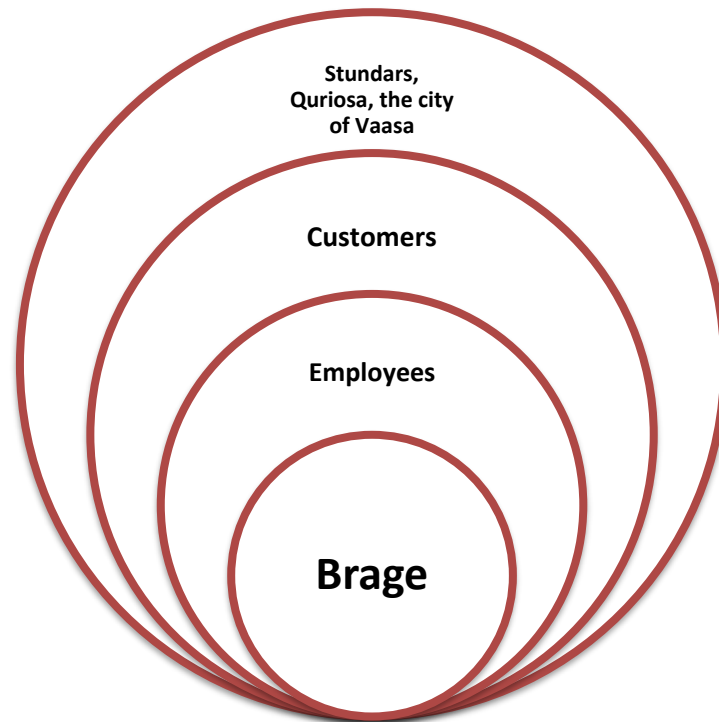


Figure 7 Stakeholder map

5.3 Interviews

Interviews is a very useful tool in service design. It gives an insight into the individual's life as well as their experiences of using the service. Interviews are part of the ethnographic methods and the results are used to inspire and lead the service design process. (Tuulaniemi, 2013, p. 147.) It is important that there is a natural trust between the interviewer and the interviewee, so that the interviewee feels comfortable enough to give honest answers. Interviews can be done through personal communication, phone calls or e-mail. (Tuulaniemi, 2013, p. 148.)

For this project I decided to go forward with two types of interviews. The first type is personal communication, both through discussions and e-mail. Those interviews were conducted with previous customers, who had used the services of Brage. The second

type is expert interviews done with experts in the field of architectural preservation. The results from the interviews will be presented in chapter 6.

5.4 Online ethnography

Ethnography is a method used to observe culture, individuals, or groups in their own surroundings (Skågeby, 2011, p. 411). One of the main characteristics of ethnographic research is to adapt the point of view from the research object. It is important that the researcher shows empathy and genuine interest towards the individual. (Tuulaniemi, 2013, p. 147.)

Jörgen Skågeby at Linköping University explains online ethnography to be a “*potent way to reach qualitative understanding of online communities*” (2011, p. 410). The method can be used to observe, document, and interact. As a qualitative approach, online ethnography can be a very effective method for collecting data. Online ethnography is in fact not very different from traditional ethnography, and it’s a very natural adaptation to the development of online communities. (Skågeby, 2011, p. 411.)

In this case, there are a lot of different groups on social media platforms that can be researched. The aim was to find out what the need was amongst these online communities. To reach this goal, the focus was on Facebook groups about architectural preservation in Ostrobothnia.

The first group was *Pohjanmaan perinnerakentajien apteekki*. This group focuses on Ostrobothnia, has 3900 members, and was started in 2012. The aim of the group is to serve as a platform for exchange between buyers and people, who wish to get rid of either old farmhouses (figure 8) or antiques, as well as a contact forum between craftsmen and employers.

When looking closer at the group, the main posts were made by members sharing pictures of things they wanted to get rid of, either by selling or donating the items. It varied from windows and doors to wood stoves and furniture. Since the group was so big, it seemed to fulfill its purpose quite well: members were interacting and most of the group members had their needs met when posting.

The other group that was studied was *Ödehus och -gårdar i Österbotten – köp och sälj*. This group that was started in 2019 also focused on Ostrobothnia and had around 5500 members. The main goal of this group, however, was to serve as a platform for sellers of old farmhouses and buyers to meet. Many of the listings made by the members were of abandoned houses, some buildings were sold to be moved away. This group was not as active as the previous one, but it still had about ten posts a week. The creator of the group initially started it because there are so many abandoned houses in Ostrobothnia, and she felt like there needed to be a platform where sellers and buyers could meet. Many times, these abandoned houses are in such bad shape that it is not profitable to hire a realtor to sell them. Instead, they list them in open forums like these and sell them for an affordable price.

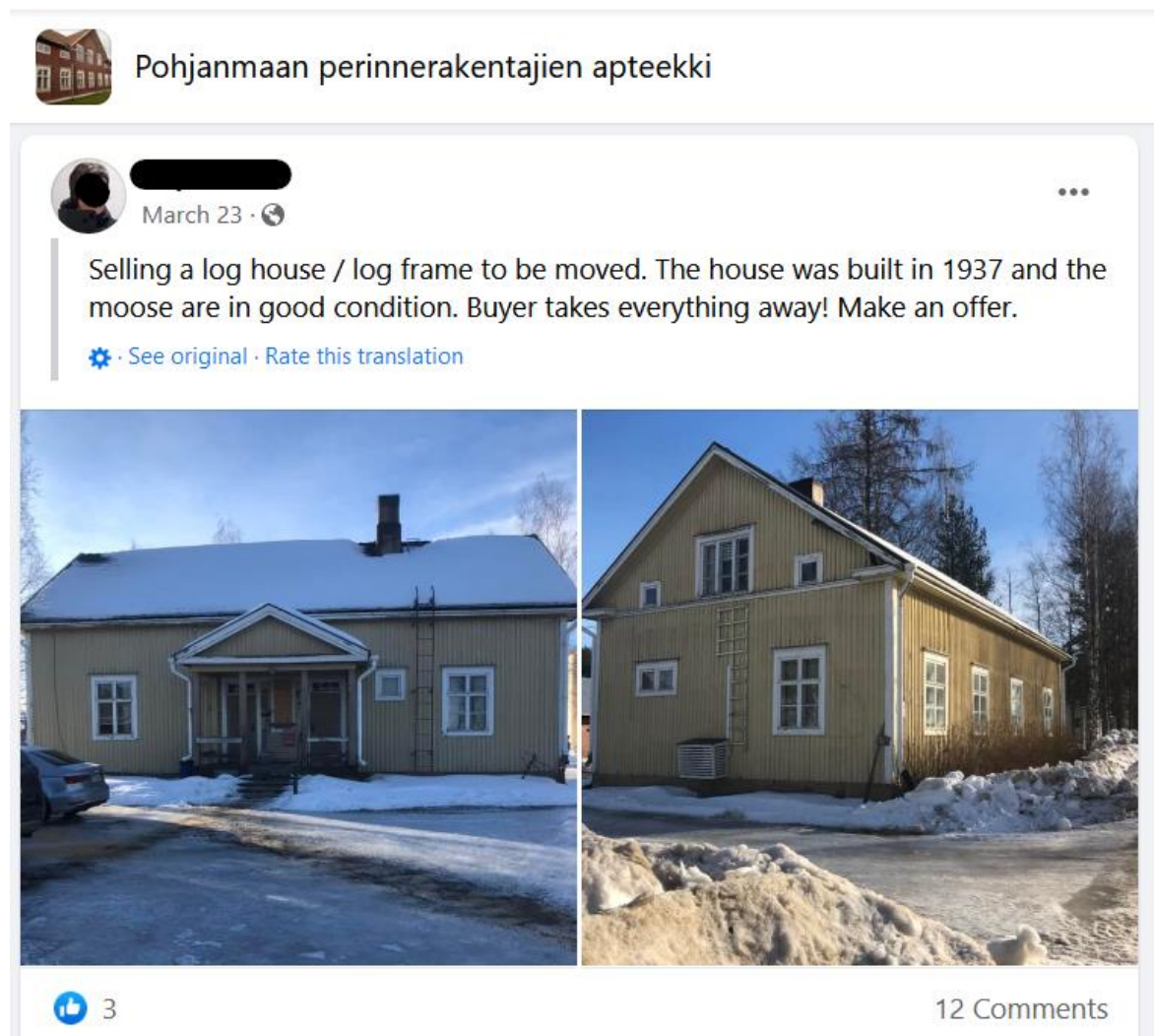


Figure 8 An example of a listing in Pohjanmaan perinnerakentajien apteekki on Facebook (Pohjanmaan perinnerakentajien apteekki, 2022)

5.5 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is used to develop your own business by learning from others, by comparing strategies, products, and services. It is an easy way of finding out what works and does not work in similar projects. (Tuulaniemi, 2013, p. 138.)

Some benefits of benchmarking are avoiding similar mistakes as well as benefiting from good procedures used by others. It can also help with finding your own niche after researching benchmarking businesses. You can then make strategic choices based on your research. (Tuulaniemi, 2013: 139.)

According to Vuorinen (2013) benchmarking strategy can be divided into four parts

1. **Internal benchmarking** - the company compares their different actions within the company
2. **Competitor benchmarking** – the company compares their actions to those of successful competitors
3. **Functional benchmarking** – the company compares their actions to those of other successful businesses outside of their own field
4. **Branch benchmarking** – the company compares their actions to multiple companies from the same field.

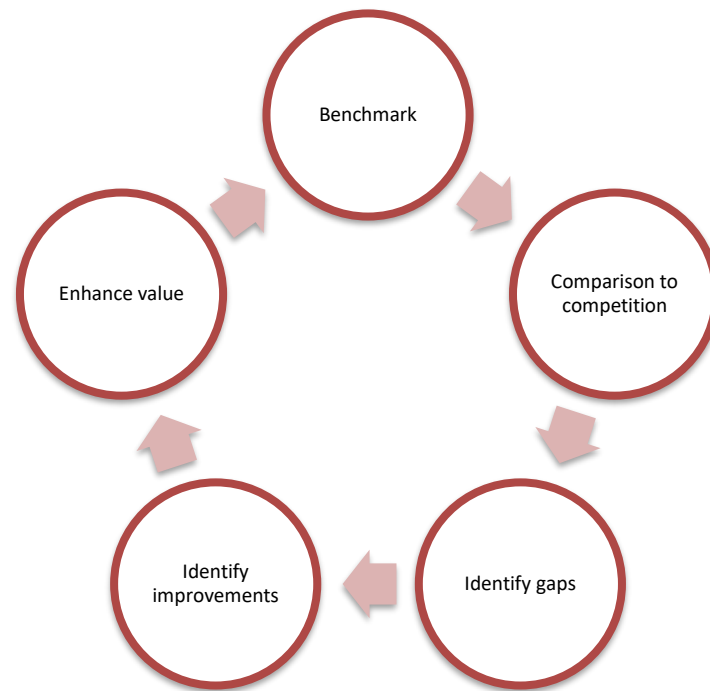


Figure 9 Benchmarking value cycle

The benchmarking process consists of five different stages as described in figure 9. The first stage is to choose which service or product you want to benchmark. Then you have to research similar companies and find the suitable ones for your benchmarking process. By looking closer at their metrics, you can identify gaps in their service as well as improvements. With the collected data you can develop your own service based on what works and what does not. (Laiaatik, 2012.)

5.5.1 PERKO-project

In 2013 Kymenlaakso University of applied Sciences started the PERKO-project (Perinne- ja korjausrakentamisen keskus). The aim of the project was to start a center of traditional building methods. The center would offer services and information as well as a physical spare part business. The goal of the project was to find sustainable ways to keep the center running for years to come. They did this by involving a lot of local businesses from the start, so that they would all be involved and therefore benefit from the project. Inspiration for the project was found through Swedish, Danish and German channels, where they could observe how similar projects had been done. The customers in the PERKO-project were builders, recycling businesses and educational instances, whereas

the customers in our case are the homeowners and tradesmen. (Kymenlaakson ammattikorkeakoulu, 2013.)

After the project was finished, the conclusion was that it would not be possible to run an architectural preservation center on its own, but that it would have to be combined with other areas such as spare part recycling, course offerings, design services etc. Another thing that became clear was that location is crucial and it would be good to combine some sort of tourist attraction to the center as well. (KYAMK, 2015, p. 8.)

These are things that stand out positively with our project. The organisation already has other services that they provide as well as the physical location, Brage open-air museum, which is both central and a tourist attraction.

The first architectural preservation centers in Finland were established on the west coast, starting in the south and moving up. Benchmarking ideas have been taken from similar businesses in Sweden. Many of these centers have been situated in old buildings or farmhouses, so that the visitors can see the process first hand. Some of the centers mentioned in the PERKO-project are Strömfors Iron Works and Roseborg in Loviisa. Strömfors is a museum with a café and restaurant as well as a smiths in the old iron works. Roseborg is a retailer of antiques and restoration materials. (KYAMK, 2015, p. 10.)

5.5.2 Rakennusapteekki

Rakennusapteekki was founded by Anette Ringbom in 2015 and is a wholesaler of building materials, a manufacturer as well as a center of expertise. Their main goal is to ensure the supply of high-quality traditional building products. They use traditional methods for production and spread the use of traditional materials. The products sold by Rakennusapteekki are replicas of the old designs which makes them perfect for architectural preservation. (Rakennusapteekki, 2020.)

The idea behind Rakennusapteekki started with the restoration of an historic building in Ekenäs. The building was meant to be sold after the restoration was completed but it turned out to not be economically wise. Therefore they started the business instead, to help others with their restorations. (KYAMK, 2015, p. 14.)

6 Results

In this chapter the results of the research will be presented. Interviews were conducted with both customers and experts in the field. Both personas and a business model canvas were created based on the results from the interviews.

6.1 Personal communication: Interviews with customers

For the first interviews I wanted to talk to the customers, who had previously participated in the course *Byggnadsvårdsdag* at Brage. I interviewed participants A and B in April 2020 and participants C, D, and E in October 2021.

6.1.1 Interviews with participants A and B

I first contacted were a couple who at the time of the interview lived in Vaasa with two children. They had participated in the course *Byggnadsvårdsdag* in 2018. Participants A and B purchased an old farmhouse in August 2017. It is located in Malax and was moved to the lot where it currently is in the 1930s. It was moved approximately 6 km from its original lot. They started by doing a thorough investigation of the house to know the extent of the project. The whole house was stripped down to the logs and a fair amount of logs had to be replaced due to water damage, as seen in figures 10 and 11. They then started restoring it to its former glory: a new roof was put on as well as paneling on the outside, new floors, and paneling inside as well as new ceilings in some places. There was neither running water nor electricity in the house. They did most of the work themselves, but craftsmen had to be called in to do more demanding tasks. The project was finished in April 2021.



Figure 10 Stripping down an old farmhouse

Their interest in architectural preservation had grown slowly for the last few years before purchasing the property. They participated in the course because they were interested in learning more about architectural preservation and get inspiration for their own project. They wanted to meet like-minded people, who had had similar projects and have first-hand experience of such projects. By meeting these people, they wished to get a better picture of what challenges to expect and what the project holds. They also wanted to see finished projects and get motivation for their own project; to see the finished results and how rewarding it is even though it is a lot of work.



Figure 11 Renovation process on the outside

It was the aversion to the unsustainable way of living and short-lived products of today that they find appealing and that motivated them to start their project. It used to be that buildings were made to last for centuries, and appliances were made durable, but nowadays everything is made to be replaced. Nothing is repairable; consumerism is supported to increase revenue for companies. By building and renovating using an old style, it will never be out of date, it will always “belong” to the style of the house and that specific time. They also wanted to build an authentic and durable house, using natural materials. It gives them a point of safety in an unstable world; a haven, something that feels familiar.

They were both very pleased with the services that Brage has offered them: Courses where you can meet others in the same position. Although they were at the end of their project, and they felt that the course was mostly useful for people in the preface of their projects. They wished that Brage could also offer gardening courses, how to build a roundpole fence or a course about gardening or botany centuries ago.

Participants A and B explained that it is difficult to find people, who can and will do the renovations using old methods. They would have wished for a place where you could learn how to do things yourself, maybe through instruction videos on how to do certain things, clamping paperboard, for example. They also wished for a list of people to hire to do jobs, a list of carpenters, handymen etc. They found that it was difficult to find people who could do the work using old methods, and a lot of time went into finding these people. Carpenters were quite easy to find but craftsmen who specialized in laying bricks (figure 12) or cutting stone posed a challenge. Sometimes they could not find anyone, so they had to do it themselves. As an example, they listed that they had to learn how to cut stones by hand themselves (figure 13) since no one was available to do the job. A list of where to buy products, retailers, online stores etc. would also have been handy. Architectural preservation is still in the early stages in Finland; if you compared to Sweden they are miles ahead, and it is much easier to find products there. A physical shop at Brage would also be great, where you could buy paints and products that are hard to find in “normal” shops.



Figure 12 Craftsman laying bricks

My last question was that if Brage were to offer a knowledge center, would they use the services? The answer was clear: *“Yes. Even after our project is technically finished so that we could move in, there will still be many small projects to do, such as gardening, decorating, building a guesthouse and renovating the old outhouse”*, they said.



Figure 13 Hand-cut stones made to steps

6.1.2 Interviews with participants C and D

Participants C and D both participated in the first course of Byggnadsvårdsdag 2018. Similar to participants A and B, they have a large, ongoing build in Korsholm which had been started in 2011. The farmhouse, which was built in 1880, is a traditional long model with the porch in the middle as seen in figure 14.

They had always had an interest in old farmhouses and especially in the way they are restored. Before starting their project, they had planned it for a decade, and waited until they came across their dream house. Everything in their build has been made according to the old way of building and all materials used are either recycled or made from natural sources, so that it is both sustainable and ecological. This results in a very laborious project that has taken much longer than anticipated. The project is still ongoing, and although a lot has been done, there is still plenty to do.

Participant C had worked at Stundars open-air museum, so she had some knowledge and contacts in the industry. They had found a lot of useful information online and in books, but still felt a lack of information about craftsmen and the possibility to find materials in the region. Much of the materials needed, had to be ordered online or searched for a very long time. Hours had been spent researching materials and techniques since there were no craftsmen in the area, who could perform certain jobs. It was time consuming but cost effective. They wished that there could be an online forum where people with similar projects could share information and tips. They also wished for more courses and lectures about the subject. Participant C has also led courses about architectural preservation and those were always fully booked, which hints that there is a high demand.

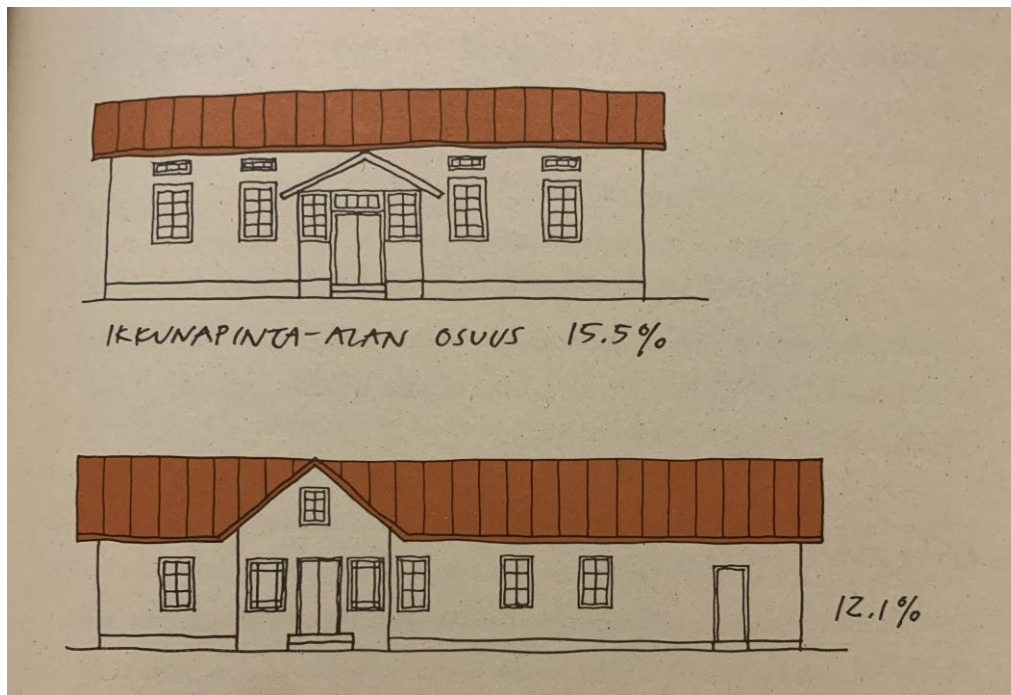


Figure 14 Traditional farmhouse models (Aarrevaara, 1995)

6.1.3 Interview with participant E

Participant E participated in the second course of Byggnadsvårdsdag 2018. She said she was interested to see how people have restored their houses to get inspiration for her own project. Her project is a house built at the end of the 1800's, which has been renovated in the 1980's. A lot of alterations were made in the 80's to cover up the original carpentry, so now she is trying to remove those. The aim is to bring the house to its former glory. Participant E feels that houses nowadays are not made to last, and she wishes to lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

Her wish is that Brage would offer similar courses that they have offered before, or even seminars about different subjects. *"I would definitely use the services of a knowledge center, because sometimes it's hard to find reliable workers, who feel passionately about architectural preservation"*, she said.

6.2 Expert interviews

Hannu Rinne is the creator of Perinnemestari.fi, a website that provides useful information to renovators of historic houses. In an interview with Rinne (personal communication, 22.10.2021) he said that during the last twenty years, architectural

preservation has grown significantly. Interestingly, it has become even more popular during the last two years due to the situation with COVID-19 and people wanting to move away from the bigger cities and out to more rural areas. The trend also saw an upswing when restoration products and materials became more easily accessible in 2015, after the founding of Rakennusapteekki Oy.

People usually contact Rinne with questions about their projects. Mostly the questions are about different stages of the renovation process. Even if a lot of information is already available on the Perinnemestari-website, as well as in books written by Hannu Rinne, customers want to confirm with Rinne that they are doing things the right way. It takes a lot of courage to do the renovations yourself, even if there is plenty of information available. A lot of questions concern the order of doing the renovations, what materials to use and where to find the right craftsmen.

When it comes to architectural preservation, there are quite a few challenges according to Rinne. Since it is such a specific way of renovation, it is hard for the customer to shy away from modern techniques and materials. It might be tempting to use, for example, polyurethane foam to fill in gaps when building, but it is important to stick to only old materials and techniques. Otherwise, you might run into problems later on, with indoor air quality etc. It is also important for the customer to have enough knowledge about materials when going into a hardware store, since they tend to try to offer materials that are better suited for newer builds. In short, architectural preservation is simple, but people are afraid to do it the simple way. A lot of challenges arise when the customer does not have enough experience, but with these projects you learn by doing.

At perinnemestari.fi the customer can find useful information about all stages of the restoration process, ranging from decoration tips to infographics about getting the right airflow in a historic building as depicted in figure 15.

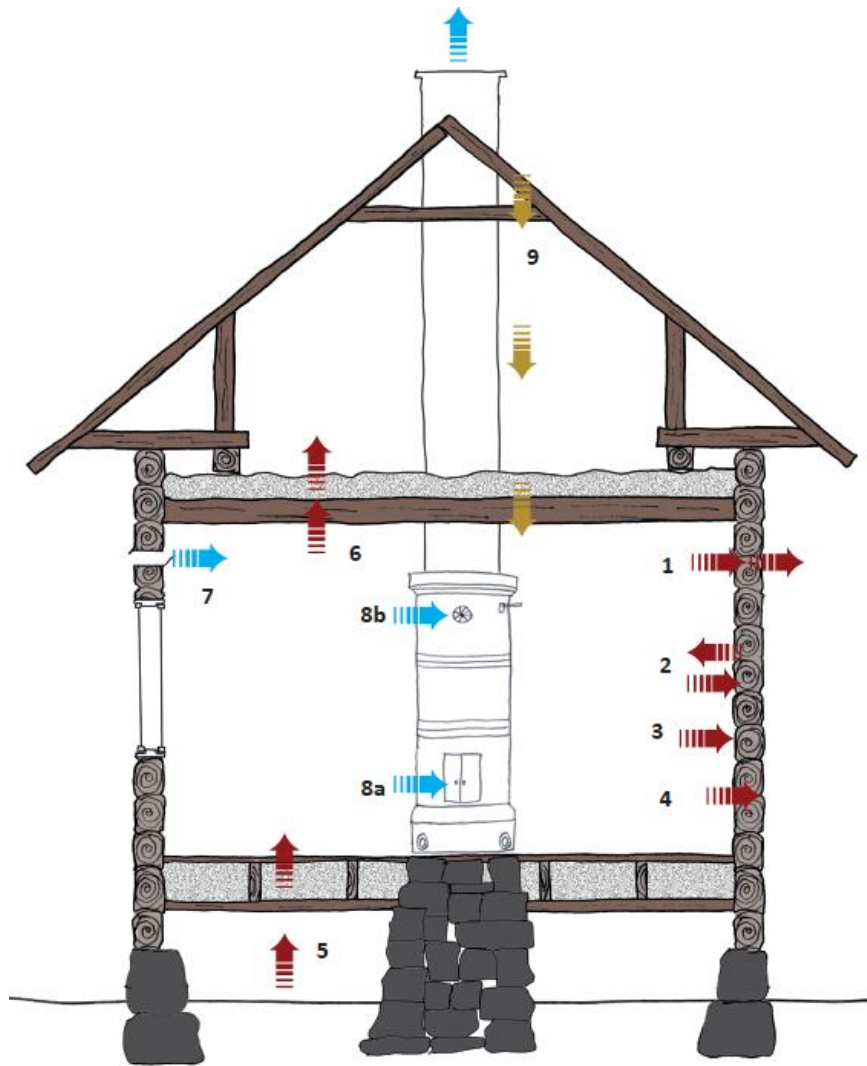


Figure 15. Descriptive images from Perinnemestari.fi (Rinne, 2019)

6.3 Persona

Creating personas is a way for the service provider to always keep in mind who they are developing the service for. Each persona is a representation of the customer and captures their habits, needs and different behaviors. Personas are a useful tool when deciding which parts of the service to keep and which to get rid of. They help keeping the customer at the center of the process all the way through. A well-made persona supports the project all the way from ideation to conceptualization. (Tuulaniemi, 2013, p. 154-155.) The personas created for this project are based on the research and presented below.

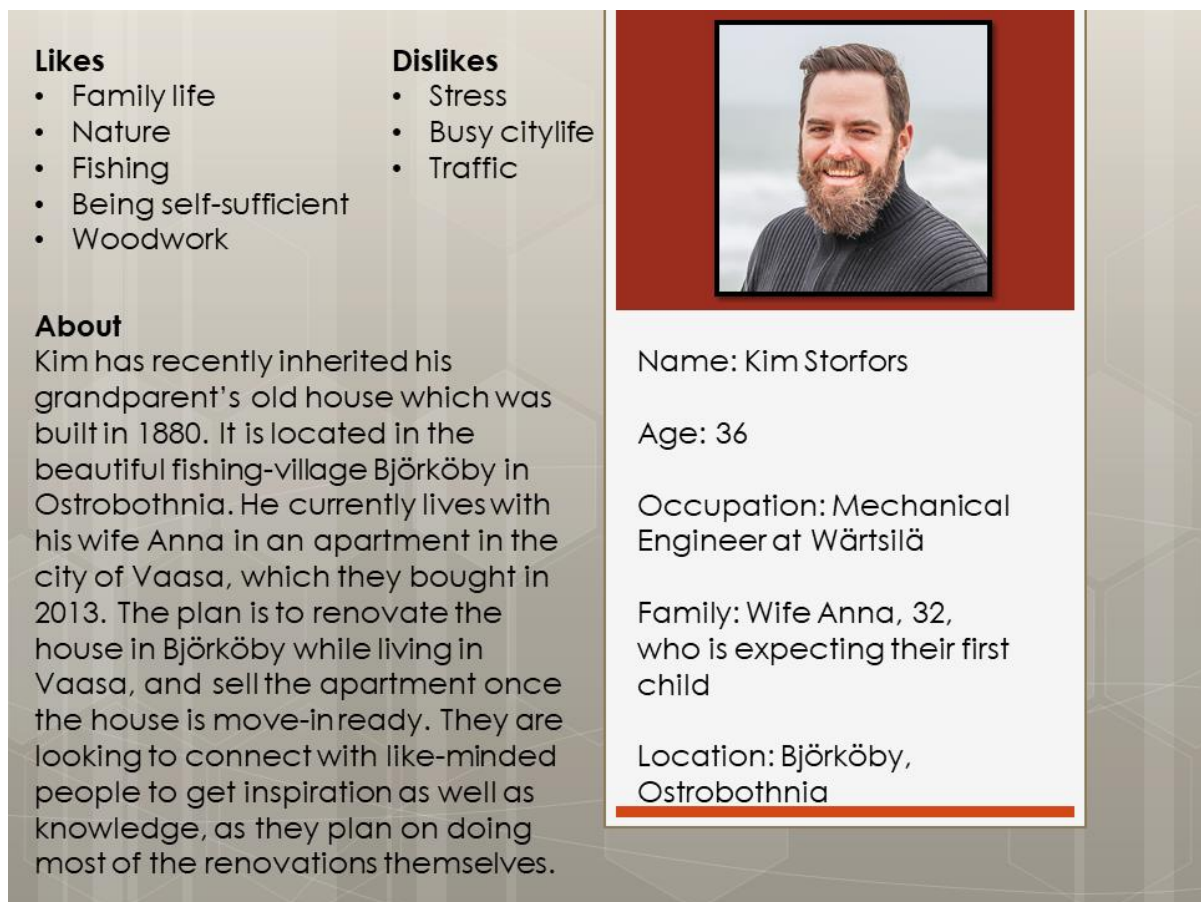


Figure 16 Persona 1

Two personas were created for this project. As you can see in figures 16 and 17, both personas are quite similar. The similarities in this customer segment are due to their location, age, socio-economic status and culture. Architectural preservation attracts a very specific type of customer, who is motivated enough to embark on such a large project.

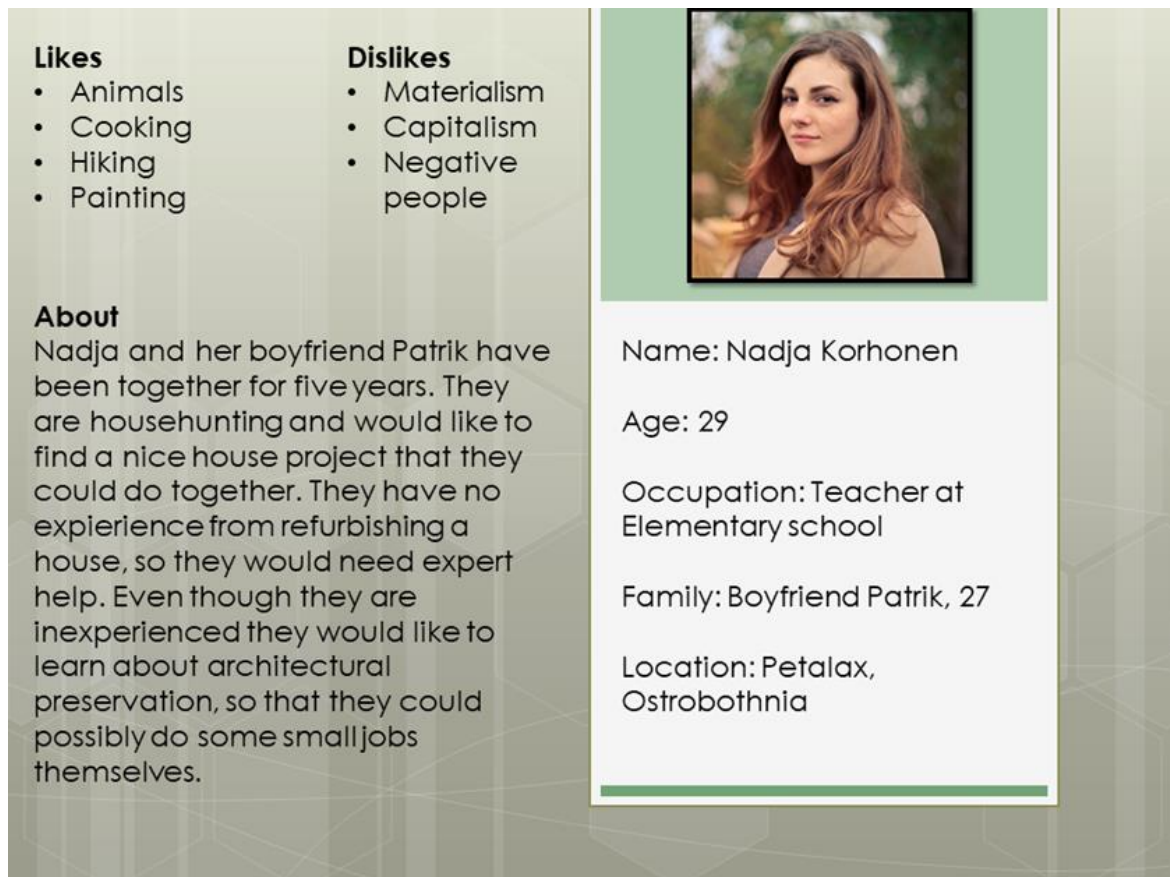


Figure 17 Persona 2

6.4 Business model canvas

The business model canvas is a great visualization tool for businesses and service development. It helps with understanding the key elements of the service and outline partners, customers, and services. The business model canvas consists of nine parts and each part has central questions to answer. By adapting your own project to these parts, you can get a better picture of what the key element of your project is. (Tuulaniemi, 2013, p. 177-178.)

The nine parts of the business model canvas are:

1. Key partners
 - Who are our key partners?
 - Who are our key suppliers?

2. Value propositions

- What value do we deliver to the customer?
- Which of our customer's problems are we trying to solve?
- Which customer needs are we trying to satisfy?
- What products and services are we offering to each customer segment?

3. Key activities

- What key activities do our value propositions, distribution channels, customer relationships and revenue streams require?

4. Key resources

- What key resources do our value propositions, distribution channels, customer relationships and revenue streams require?

5. Cost structure

- What are the most important costs for the project?
- Which key resources are most expensive?
- Which key activities are most expensive?

6. Revenue streams

- For what service are our customers willing to pay?
- What are they currently paying for?
- How much are they currently paying?
- What are the revenue streams?

7. Customer relationships

- What relationship is each customer segment expecting from us?

- What relationships have already been established?
- How much do they cost?
- How are these relationships integrated to the rest of our business model?

8. Customer segments

- For whom are we creating value?
- Who are our most important customers?

9. Channels

- What channels should be used to reach the customers?
- How are we reaching them now?
- Which ones work best?

(Tuulaniemi, 2013, p. 178-179.)

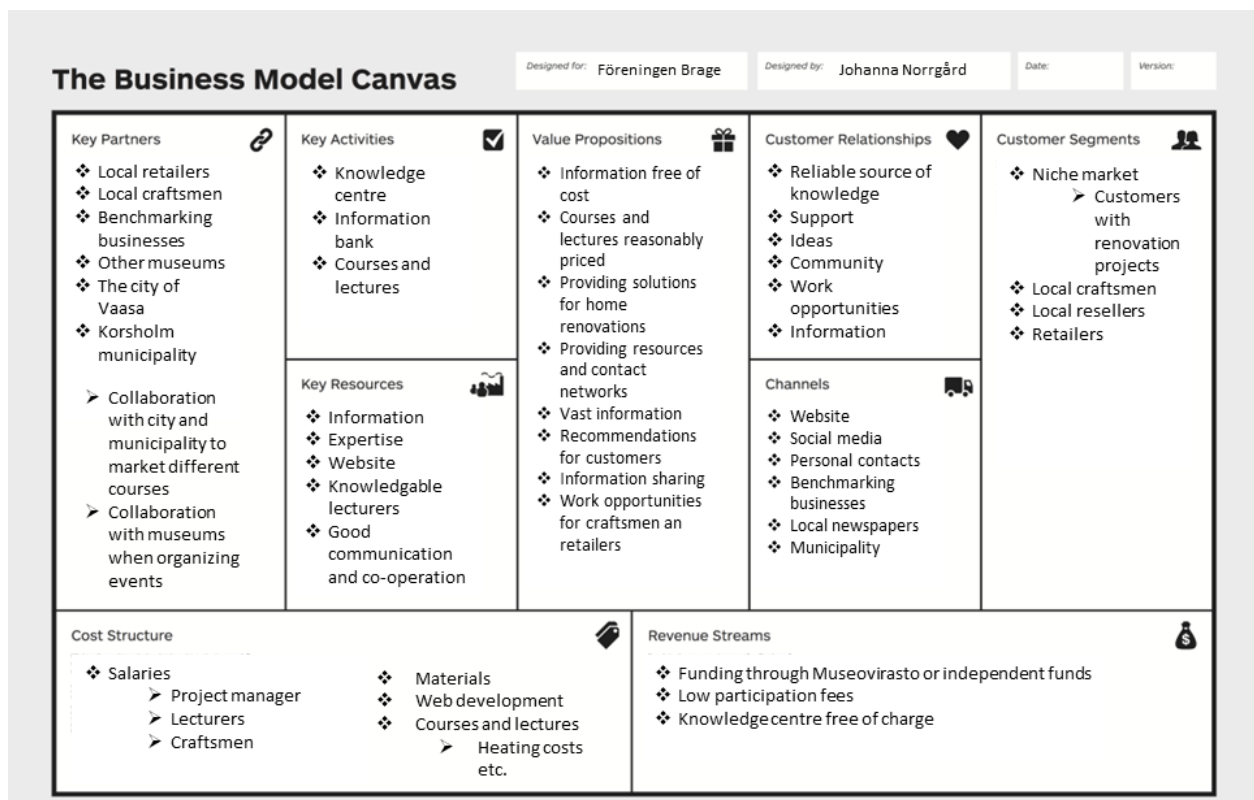


Figure 18 Business model canvas (Strategyzer)

In figure 18 you will see the business model canvas used as a method in this project. In key partners, we find local retailers, local craftsmen, benchmarking businesses, other museums, the city of Vaasa and Korsholm municipality. There would be collaboration with the city and municipality to market different courses and collaboration with museums when organizing events.

The key activities would be the knowledge center consisting of an information bank, as well as courses and lectures. For key resources we have information, expertise, a website, knowledgeable lecturers, good communication and co-operation.

The value propositions are that the information is free of cost, the courses, and lectures reasonably priced, we are providing solutions for home renovations, providing resources and contact networks, offer vast information and recommendations for customers as well as work opportunities for craftsmen and retailers. The customer segments are quite niche, customers with renovation projects, local craftsmen, local resellers and retailers. The relationship to these segments is that the service provider is a reliable source of knowledge, we offer support, ideas and a community as well as work opportunities.

The channels that would be used are the website, social media, personal contacts, benchmarking businesses, local newspapers, and the municipality. The cost structure consists of salaries for the project manager, lecturers, craftsmen for courses, and materials, web development and utility costs. The last box is revenue streams, and consists of funding through the Finnish Heritage Agency or independent funds, and some small participation fees.

6.5 Customer journey map

The customer journey map is a tool used to depict the process the customer goes through when using the service. It is done in chronological order and follows the best-case scenario of the service process from the customers point of view. It works as a tool to aid the decision-making process for the service developer. It helps to visualize the different stages of the process so that the developer easier can distinguish what is needed for each step of the process. (Tuulaniemi, 2013, p. 209-210.)

In figure 19, you can see the journey the customer takes when using the services offered by Brage. The different stages of the journey are awareness, consideration, decision, service, and loyalty. The aim is to keep the customer satisfied throughout the whole process, and the customer journey map can be a useful tool to evaluate further down the line to make sure the customer stays satisfied.

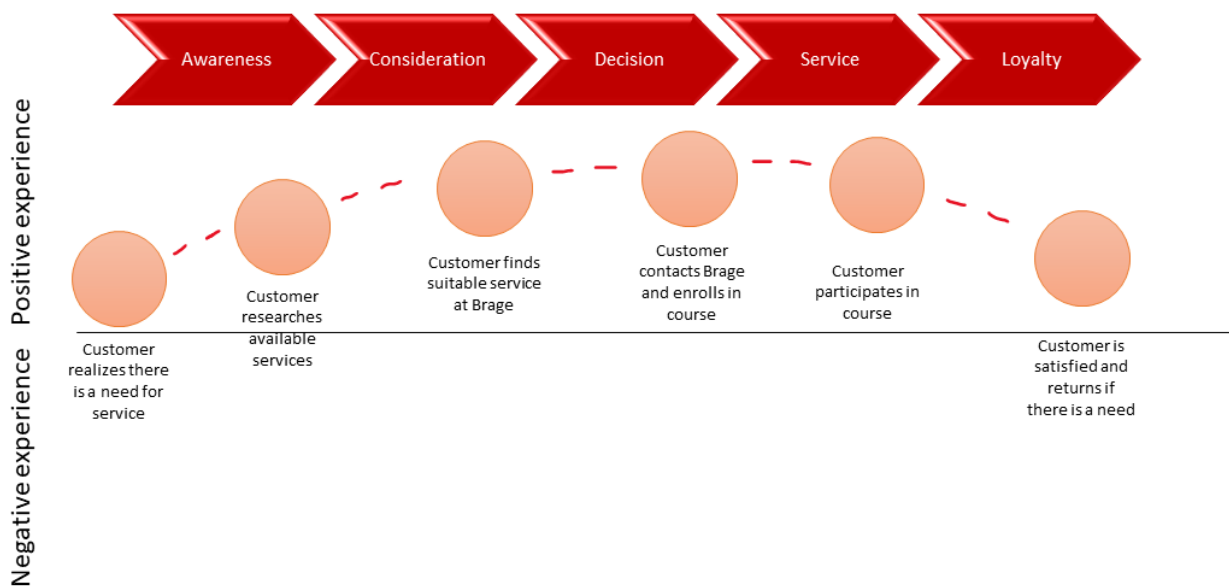


Figure 19 Customer journey map

6.6 Value proposition canvas

The value proposition canvas is a tool that helps service providers ensure that there is compatibility between the service idea and the market. It provides a detailed overview of the relationship between customer segments and value propositions, highlighting the roles involved, the pain and profit, and how the service can be matched with the proposition in the end. The tool is used to visualize the value created by the service, by mapping out how you can relieve pain and create gains for your customers. (SDT, 2020.)

Figure 20 depicts the value proposition canvas for this project. Based on the interviews, we have found out that customers find it hard to find craftsmen, since the work demands specialized skills. It is time consuming to look for craftsmen and the project gets delayed.

These are the pains of the customer. The gains would be to find craftsmen and save time, as well as find information on how to do certain tasks yourself.

The service provider could offer pain relievers for the customers in the form of courses and a knowledge center. These pain relievers would be that it is easy for the customer to access valuable information and that everything would be concentrated in one place. The information would also be updated regularly to avoid outdated information.

The service provider would create gain by helping the customers finish their projects on time when less time is spent on doing research.

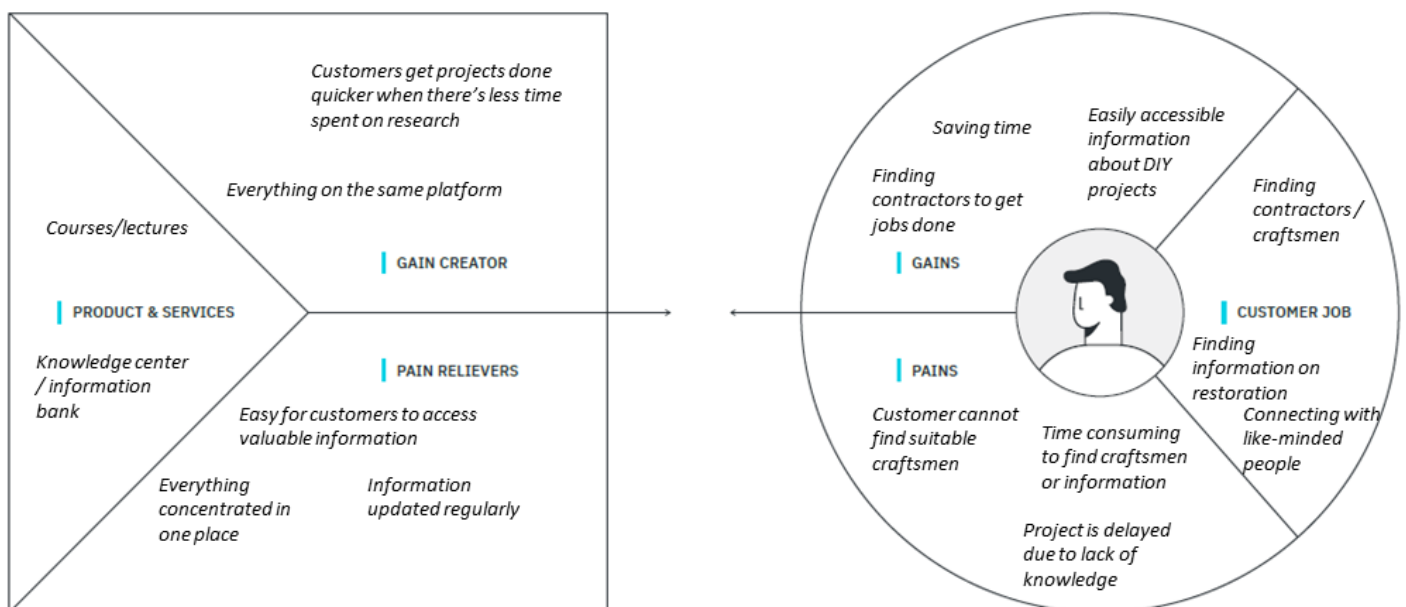


Figure 20 Value proposition canvas

7 Service development

The process of analyzing the results of the study is already initiated during the research process. The preconception of the researcher usually affects the analysis, but it is important to keep to the results. The analyzation process consists of combining the theory with the findings from the research. The goal of the analysis is to interpret and understand the results found in the research. (Puusa et al, 2020, p. 139.)

Based on the research conducted in this study, a project plan for the development of this project will now be presented.

7.1 Design concept

The design concept is where the big picture of the service is described. It is a map to guide the project and leaves room for development. The concept answers questions like what kind of service will be provided, how it will be produced and how it meets the needs of the customer. (Tuulaniemi, 2013, p. 191.)

The concept of this project would be a knowledge center for customers interested in architectural preservation. As Hannu Rinne mentioned in his interview (personal communication, 22.10.2021), architectural preservation is a growing trend. According to Anne Räsänen (KYAMK, 2015, p. 9.), architectural preservation stood for 5% of the annual BNP in 2010. It decreases the so-called maintenance backlog and prolongs the lifecycle of the building, which makes it economically sustainable. However, it requires knowledge and use of correct materials, since there are vast differences between new and old materials. This can be frightening to home renovators, as there is often a fear of doing things the wrong way and ending up with a mouldy building etc. Based on the interviews conducted with past customers there is a significant need for knowledge in this field. Therefore, Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. would like to offer this kind of service, to increase the confidence amongst customers to take on restoration projects.

Based on the research, a plan for the service was developed. The service offered would consist of three different parts:

1. The knowledge center

A digital platform where people interested in architectural preservation could gain access to material about restoration, a list of craftsmen with contact information and a list of retailers and resellers of specific restoration products. The platform would be available on Brage's website and marketed through their social media channels as well as through Google ads. This service would be free of charge and updated regularly so that the information would stay relevant. It would also link to other platforms such as facebook groups and perinnemestari.fi so that the customer could access suitable information.

2. Courses and lectures

Different stages of the restoration process would be demonstrated during courses and lectures. It would range from clamping paperboard (figure 21) and fixing old windows to building round pole fences and replacing old logs. These courses would be taught by experienced craftsmen and lecturers. The idea would be to arrange a multi-part course with different topics for each course. A small fee of 10€ per lecture would be collected from the participants. The participant could choose to participate in all lectures or only in the ones that interest them. These lectures would be arranged during the weekend so that it would be easier for the customers to participate. It could be, for example, a four-part course during every Saturday in April, for four hours per time. It would start with a lecture on the topic, a coffee break and discussion about the individual participant's projects, and end with a practical task so that the participants can learn by doing. This way the customers could learn to do small tasks by themselves and save money while restoring their old houses. There are a lot of material available online on the different tasks while restoring houses, but it can sometimes be a bit too challenging for someone with no experience to start these tasks. That is why it is good to offer the possibility for the customer to try these tasks under supervision. These courses would also be continuous, tackling eight to ten topics each year and offering the same courses every two years.

3. Excursions

Daytime excursions to see restoration projects would be the last part. These would be done locally and would be similar to what Brage offered in 2018. The excursions would be marketed through posts in social media as well as paid ads. The aim would be to arrange four excursions each year, possibly to houses that are in different stages of the renovation process. The participants could ask questions as well as learn about different methods used in the restoration process. Each excursion could fit 20 participants, and they would arrive at the location on their own. After the visit there would be a lunch with the possibility to discuss further and share thoughts about each other's projects. The price for the excursion would be 20€ and the cost would cover cleaning costs for the homeowners who welcomed the group to their home as well as the cost of lunch.



Figure 21 Course participants learning how to clamp paperboard

7.2 Funding

Funding for this project would be external. There are many different private funds and foundations that support these kinds of projects. Brage open-air museum is a professional museum, which limits the funding a bit since professional museums are eligible for state shares. The Finnish Heritage Agency offers a grant for innovative projects at professional museums which can be applied for in November each year. These grants are usually for around 20 000 euros, which would be sufficient to get the project running.

Another private foundation is Hedmanska stiftelsen, which also offer grants annually. The application time runs from January to February annually. These grants are significantly smaller but could be used as an extension to other grants.

If funding is not secured from one of the above-mentioned foundations there are quite a few other options, such as The Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland or the municipality. It could, however, mean that the concept would have to be simplified. This could be done by minimizing the specs of the digital platform, consequently minimizing the costs.

A small contribution to the funding would also be the participation fees. These would help once the project is up and running, to pay for lecturers and the running costs.

7.3 Employees

A project manager would be hired part-time for the start of the project. They would be working alongside the executive manager in researching resellers, contacting craftsmen, planning courses and lectures, and creating the digital material. During the courses lecturers and craftsmen would be hired to teach customers on site how to do certain jobs. A digital developer would also be hired to create the platform for the knowledge center on Brage's website.

7.4 Customers

Based on the results of the interviews with past customers and the business model canvas, the customer segments for this project would be people with their own restoration projects, local craftsmen, local retailers, and resellers of restoration material.

7.5 Competitors

There are no official competitors for this project. It would be a non-profit project so there would be no fear for loss of income. There are a few actors that offer similar services, however, Brage rather sees them as collaborators, than competitors.

7.6 Stakeholders

In figure 22 you can see the stakeholder map depicted. The first tier is the service provider and the service. In the second tier we have the employees, which would consist of the executive manager, a project leader, a digital developer, and the people leading the courses. In the third tier we have the customers, the craftsmen, and the resellers. In the last tier we have the collaborators: these would be benchmarking businesses and possibly also the city of Vaasa and the municipality of Korsholm.

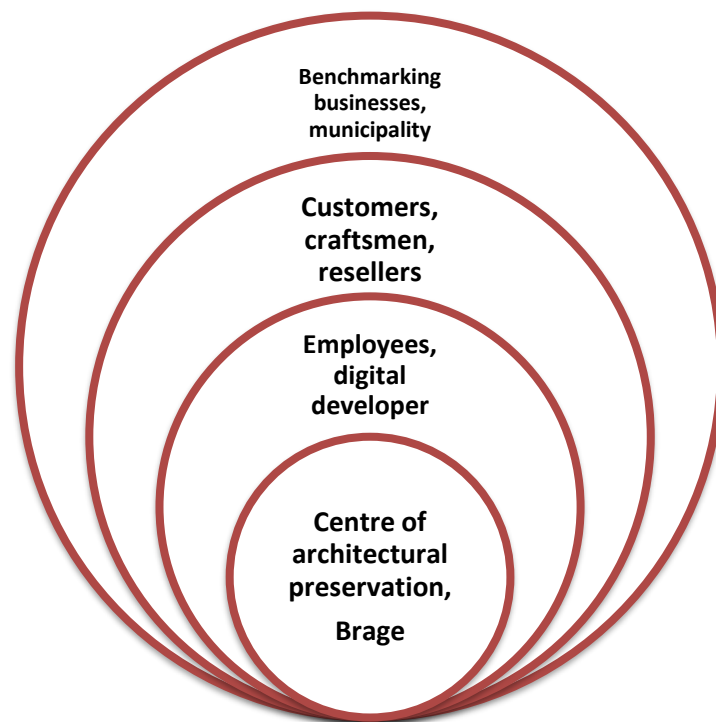


Figure 22 Stakeholder map

7.7 Platform

The service would be offered on a few different platforms. The most important one would be the digital platform. This would be an umbrella website for Brage open-air museum. The website would consist of three segments: the first segment would contain information about craftsmen, resellers, and antique dealerships. The second segment would contain information about upcoming courses and lectures. If possible, there would also be a forum where people could discuss and share tips and information. The third and last segment would be a material bank where all documentation and information from past courses would be stored and available to the public.

The courses and lectures would be held at Brage open-air museum. There are 23 historic buildings on-site so there are always new projects to do and places for the participants to practice their skills. Excursions would be done in the nearby region, from Malax in the south to Vörå in the north, not too far from Vasa so that it would not be an issue for participants to reach the destinations.

8 Conclusion

This study examines whether creating a center of architectural preservation is a possibility for Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. The commissioner wanted to find out the key factors that would answer the questions where, how, who and what.

Through the research done in this study, the author managed to answer these questions as well as the research questions that were asked. The project is possible to execute if external funding is granted. This study would serve as a thorough base for a funding application and should help in securing sufficient funds.

The research questions in this study were:

1. What is the need of the customers?
2. What kind of services is Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. able to offer?
3. What would the finished service consist of?
4. How would the project be financed?

The need of the customer was researched through interviews, theory, online ethnography, and benchmarking studies. In Ostrobothnia there is a noticeable need for this type of service, and it would be a great way of connecting the right craftsmen to the customer.

The service planned would be a project financed with external funding. It would be a combination of three different parts with the idea that each part would also be sufficient on their own. The service would consist of an online based knowledge center, courses, lectures, and excursions.

A lot of useful insight was found through benchmarking research. It was surprising to find so many similar projects after learning through the interviews that it had been difficult for the homeowners to find information, craftsmen, and resellers. However, many of the projects had moved on to producing or reselling materials. The PERKO-project was no longer active even though a lot of work had gone into creating it.

What really stood out through both literary research and the interview was the need to find good, reliable craftsmen. That is why it is such an important part of this project. Even if it only caters to this region it is crucial if we want more people to take on architectural restoration projects. What our customers all have in common is a frustration with their builds because of delays due to it being so hard to find craftsmen. This service would help immensely.

9 Discussion

Although the methods used for this service design project were suitable, there could have been broader research done. When you work in the field you are researching, it is often easy to consider some information obvious and forget to take the reader into consideration. You get blinded by your own expertise.

Especially benchmarking could have been broadened to an international level, instead of focusing solely on Finland. Many of the Finnish benchmarking businesses have taken their influences from other Nordic countries, where architectural preservation is even more popular. It could have been a useful insight to see whether the success rate of Swedish benchmarking businesses was better. However, this is something that could still be done as a next step in the service development.

The results from the different methods all indicate that there is a need for the service, and it also shows what kind of service is desired. The service that was developed based on the results fits the need, and there is a clear way forward. The next step for Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. would be to apply for funding. While waiting for funding to be granted, the next step would be to start compiling the list of craftsmen and retailers. This would be done manually, by contacting contractors and craftsmen in the area to find out what kind of jobs they are able to do. If the project is granted funding, the service provider can move onto the next step: hiring a project manager. The project manager could then begin planning the courses and excursions, as well as outsource the web development. Before the next steps will be taken, the thesis will be validated by the board of members at Föreningen Brage i Vasa r.f. A meeting will be held to discuss the results and further develop the service.

I hope this study is a good ground for starting the center of architectural preservation at Brage open-air museum, and that we can keep the trend going and preserve our beautiful cultural heritage.

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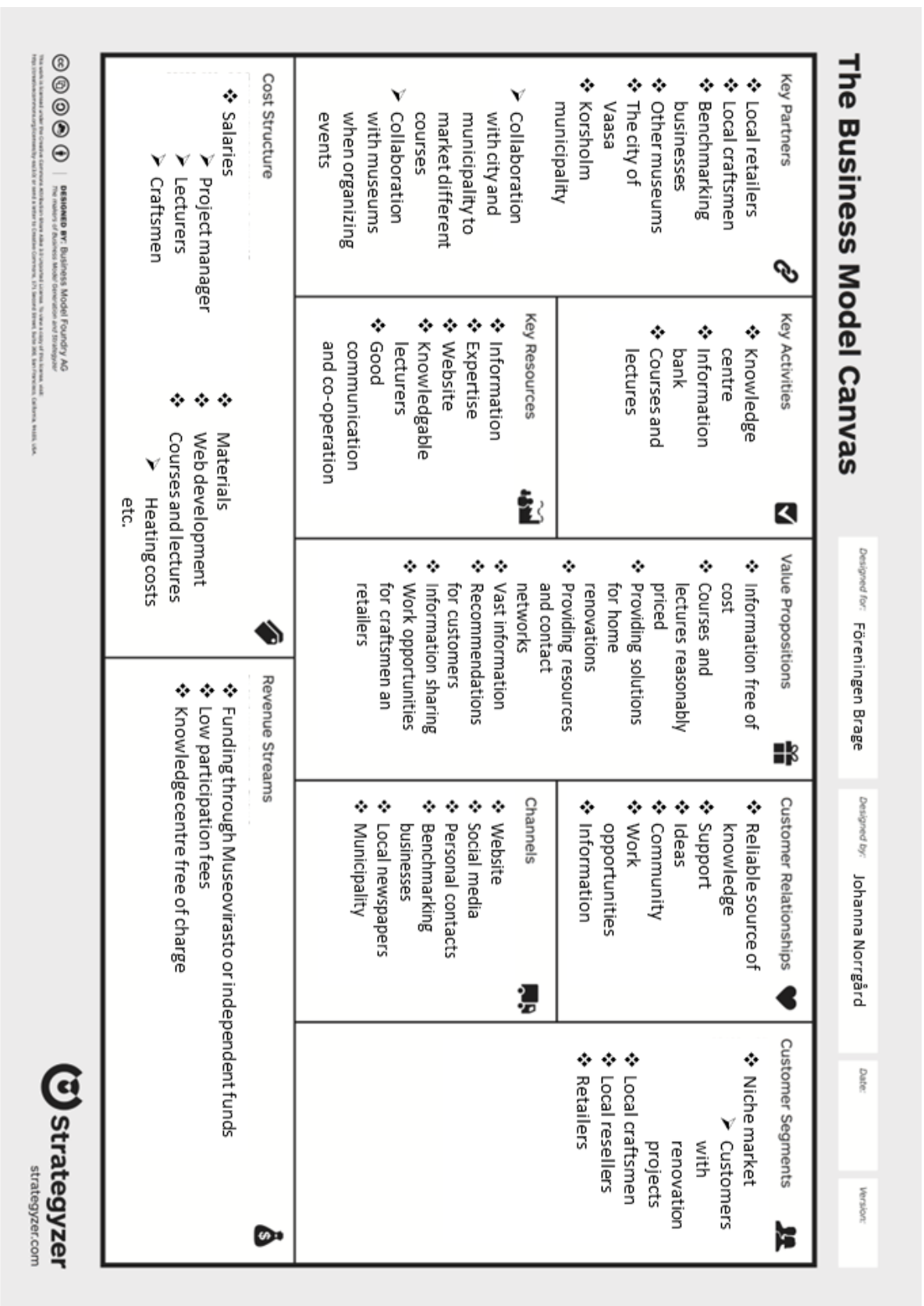
Appendix 1: Interview questions for past customers

1. Why did you participate in the course?
2. What is your project?
3. What motivated you to take on such a project, what draws you to this kind of project?
4. What kind of services would you wish Brage would offer in the future?
5. What would you have needed during the build?
6. If Brage were to offer a knowledge center, would you use the services?

Appendix 2: Interview questions for Hannu Rinne at Perinnemestari

1. Onko perinnerakentamisen suosio kasvanut viimeisen 10 vuoden aikana?
2. Mitkä asiat kiinnostavat asiakkaita eniten perinnerakentamisessa?
3. Mikä on haastavinta perinnerakentamisessa?

Appendix 3: Business model canvas



Appendix 4: Customer journey map

Negative experience Positive experience

