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Co-created Corporate Story -

Creating a Concept for Engaging Staff into Change Implementation

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Co-Created Corporate Story -
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Companies are currently facing vast changes in many levels. The economic, generational and global changes affect companies' strategies, and interactive technologies have enabled people to communicate and share their thoughts freely, turning them from passive receivers into active contributors. While people tend to accept the changes better if they have ownership in them, question arises how could change be co-created together with employees?

This thesis asks if a service could be designed to help implementing change initiatives in companies and aims to create a service concept that facilitates the implementation of change while at the same time communicating and marketing it both internally and externally. It uses service design as an approach and crosses the fields of change management consulting, corporate communication and service marketing. It investigates corporate change implementation from three perspectives: corporate storytelling, internal marketing, and communityship and unites these with employee co-creation.

The concept is created in a lean method and it introduces design thinking to a new industry, to corporate communication. It invites employees to co-create a corporate story online with the help of fictional cruise and weekly questions about a company's new direction. The concept is called "Matka tulevaan", a journey to the forthcoming. It was piloted in a mid-size Finnish company, and the results of the first iteration round are presented in this thesis.

In a process that featured the participation percentage of 83 % and that took on average 1 hour 15 minutes of the staff's time, the employees submitted over 450 posts that were used a basis for creating a common voice for the company and were refined into marketing materials. While participating into the process, employees also became aware of the company's new strategy and had to reflect it in the context of their own work. The feedback from the participants was mainly positive but some points of improvement concerning the concept were also identified. These findings are presented and suggestions for future iterations are made.

Keywords: change implementation, co-creation, corporate storytelling, service design concept.

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**Yhteiskeitetty yritystarina -
Konsepti henkilökunnan sitouttamiseksi muutoksen jalkauttamiseen**

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Nopeat muutokset yhteiskunnan monilla tasoilla pakottavat yritykset muuttamaan toimintamallejaan. Taloudelliset, globaalit ja sukupolvien väliset muutokset vaikuttavat suoraan yritysten strategioihin, ja vuorovaikutteinen teknologia on muuttanut asiakkaat passiivisista vastaanottajista aktiivisiksi osallistujiksi. Nämä muutokset vaativat totuttelua kaikilta. Koska ihmiset yleensä hyväksyvät muutokset paremmin, jos he ovat itse osallisina päättämässä niistä, herää kysymys, miten yritykset voisivat luoda muutosta yhdessä henkilökunnan kanssa.

Tässä lopputyössä pyritään löytämään vastaus siihen, voitaisiinko yritysten muutostoimenpiteitä helpottaa siihen tarkoitukseen muotoillun palvelun avulla. Siinä luodaan palvelukonsepti, joka auttaa fasilitoimaan muutoksen jalkauttamista samalla kun muutosta viestitään ja markkinoidaan sekä sisäisesti että ulkoisesti. Näin konsepti yhdistää konsultointi-, markkinointi- ja viestintätoimistojen tarjoamat palvelut.

Lean-menetelmällä luotu konsepti vie muotoiluajattelua kokonaan uudelle alueelle - yritysviestintään. Luotavassa Matka tulevaan -konseptissa yrityksen henkilökunta kutsutaan mukaan luomaan yrityksen tarinaa. Kuvitteellinen risteilyalus ankkuroi henkilökunnan kerran viikossa yrityksen uutta suuntaa käsittelevien teemojen ympärille ja kysyy työntekijöiden näkemyksiä uudesta suunnasta.

Konsepti on pilotoitu keskisuudessa suomalaisyrityksessä. Pilottiprojektin osallistumisprosentti oli 83 %, ja se vei henkilökunnan aikaa keskimäärin 1 tuntia 15 minuuttia. Se tuotti yhteensä yli 450 kommenttia, joista muotoiltiin yrityksen yhteinen tarina sekä siitä kertovat markkinointimateriaalit. Osallistumalla prosessiin työntekijät tulivat tietoisiksi työnantajansa uudesta strategiasta ja joutuivat pohtimaan, miten se vaikuttaa heidän omaan työhönsä. Osallistujia haastateltiin jälkikäteen konseptin kehittämiseksi edelleen. Palaute oli suurimmaksi osaksi myönteistä, mutta myös kehittämiskohteita löytyi. Raportti esittelee haastattelutulokset ja ehdottaa jatkotoimenpiteitä konseptin seuraavaa iteraatiota varten.

Avainsanat: muutoksen jalkauttaminen, palvelumuotoilukonsepti, yhteiskeitetty, yritystarinankerronta.

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1 Introduction

It takes a thousand voices to tell a single story. (Native American Proverb)

Companies are amidst of a rapid change that is going on in many frontiers. The ongoing economic, organizational, global, generational, and technical changes leave hardly any companies untouched. The structures and processes once established are now breaking down within a great number of industries. (Howe 2006; Groysberg & Slind 2012.)

While it is necessary for companies to change in order to match the changing world and market around them, employees are not usually responding well to change initiatives, and up to three quarters of organizational change efforts fail to deliver the expected results (Stanleigh 2008, 34; Kotter 1995). However, Stanleigh (2008, 37) argues that if a change initiative is successful, a company improves its competitive standing and positions itself for a better future. Hence, it is worthwhile to find ways to implement change effectively in companies.

At the same time, another wave of change that concerns corporate communication is swiping over companies, driven by these same ongoing changes. Groysberg and Slind (2012, 2) claim that changing operational environment is forcing companies to shift their communication culture to a less hierarchical and more conversational model. The rise of interactive technologies has perhaps influenced this shift the most. Ramaswamy and Gouillart (2010b, 2) note that Internet and other interactive communication technologies have brought people's inherent willingness to participate to a new level; people now expect to be able to freely communicate and share their thoughts with each another.

Many companies have realized this and invested in programs that allow dialogue with customers. However, Gregory (2007, 59) points out that employees are often left out of this dialogue; they are seen as targets of actions rather than partners. But, as Ramaswamy and Gouillart (2010b, 2-4) note, when employees' are treated only as passive recipients, their input to their work tends to remain passive and stay only on a mediocre level. Thus, Ramaswamy and Gouillart (2010a, 149) argue that it is beneficial to transform company culture and management models together with employees.

Against the backdrop of changing operational environment and changing communication requirements in companies, it is fair to ask how change could be co-created together with employees? Could a service be designed to help implementing change initiatives in companies? This thesis aims to create a concept that facilitates the implementation of change while at the same time communicating and marketing it both internally and externally, thus crossing

the fields of management consulting, communication and marketing. The leading thought is if employees are involved in the change process, they also adapt change better.

1.1 Background

Ostrom, Bitner, Brown, Burkhard, Goul, Smith-Daniels, Demirkan and Rabinovich (2010, 4) argue that as the importance of services is constantly growing and all developed economies are dominated by services, academic research is needed to shed light to the mechanisms, processes and outputs of services. In a vast research including hundreds of academics and business practitioners, Ostrom et al. (2010) identified ten most pressing research priorities for service research that require research attention. In addition to these ten priorities, Ostrom et al.'s (2010, 6) indicated six emerging themes that apply to all of the priorities. These are presented in Figure 1.

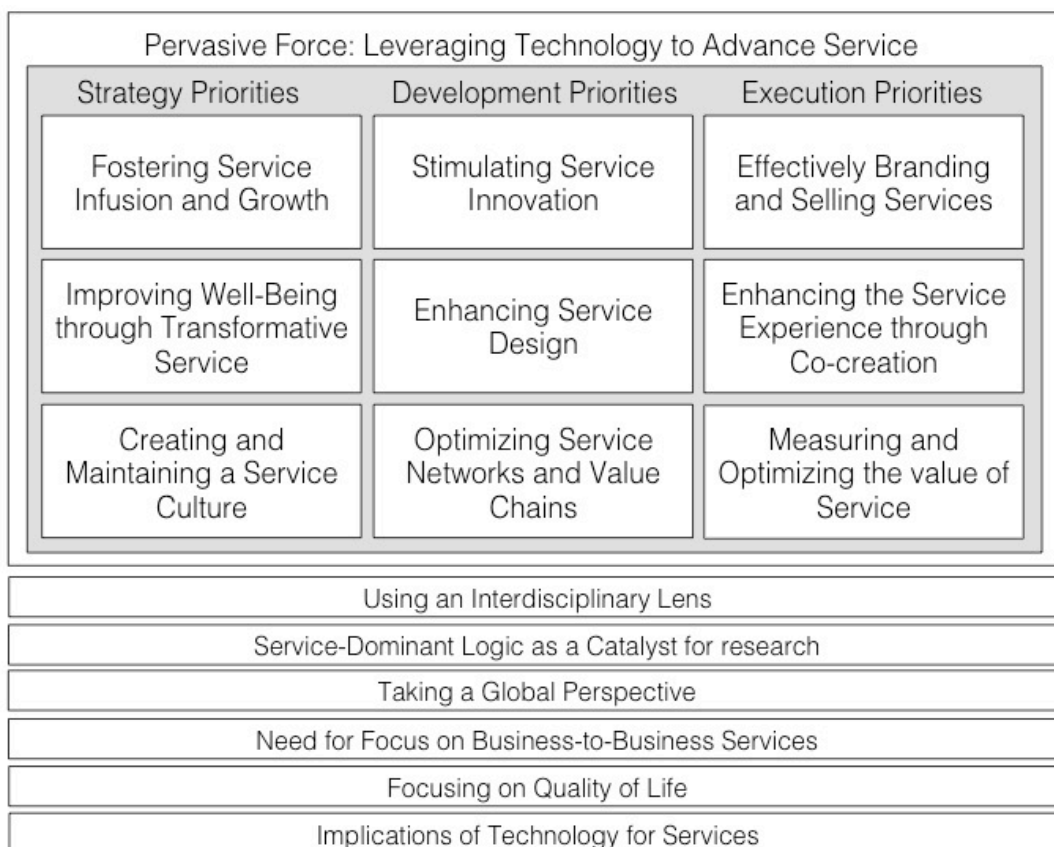


Figure 1: The ten research priorities and six emerging themes in service research (Ostrom et al. 2010)

From the point of view of this thesis, two research priorities are particularly interesting. These are *Enhancing Service Design* and *Enhancing the service experience through co-creation*. Ostrom et al. (2010, 17) note that the former, *Enhancing Service Design*, is important for all

types of service systems from companies to nonprofit and governmental organizations because it is an activity that brings service ideas to life. This priority includes six subtopics, illustrated in Figure 2. The one that is especially interesting from the point of view of this thesis is examining how design thinking could be integrated into service practices, processes and systems.

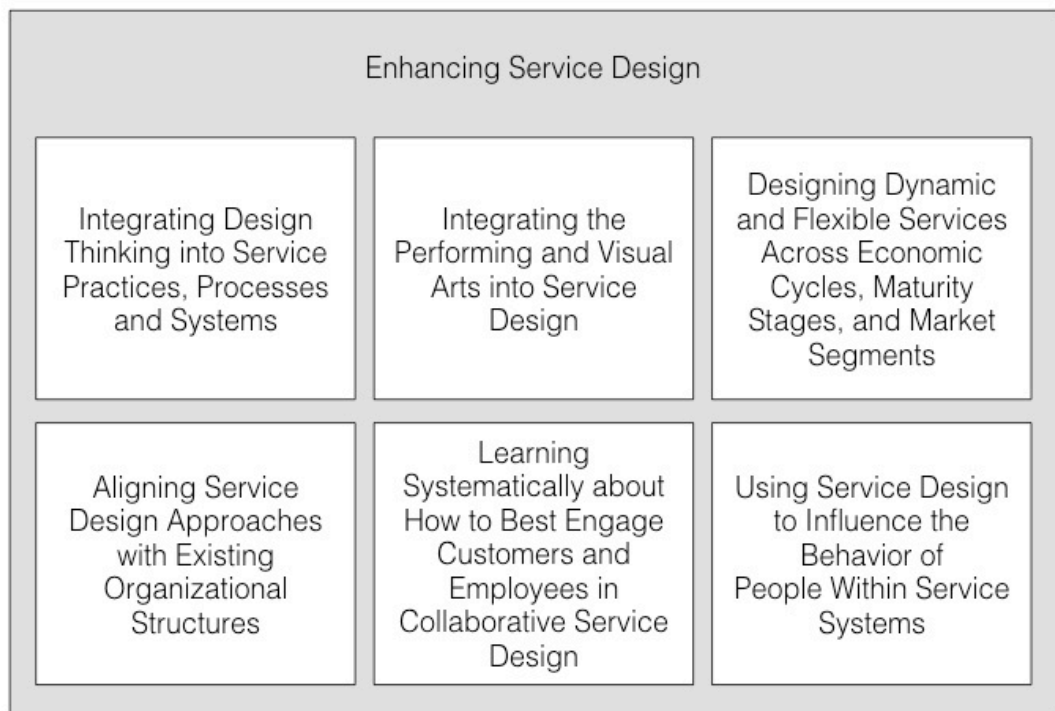


Figure 2: The subtopics of the research priority of Enhancing Service Design (Ostrom et al. 2010)

The latter, *Enhancing the service experience through co-creation* is, according to Ostrom et al. (2010, 24-25), significant both economically and mentally since service experiences are central to creating value for customers and capturing value for organizations. This priority includes five subtopics, which are illustrated in Figure 3. One of them is particularly interesting in the context of this thesis; further knowledge is needed on how to develop methods for motivating customers to effectively collaborate in service co-creation.

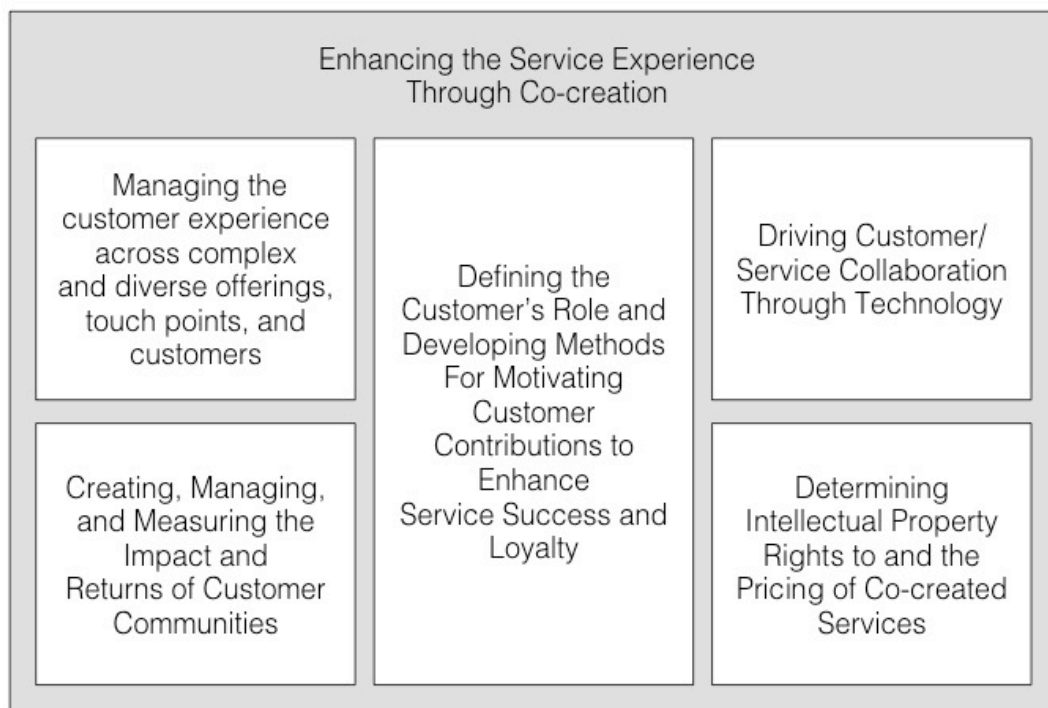


Figure 3: The subtopics of the research priority of Enhancing the service experience through co-creation (Ostrom et al. 2010)

From the six emerging themes, two lay ground for this thesis. Ostrom et al. (2010, 5-6) argue that there is a need for the use of interdisciplinary lens in service research because new opportunities are most likely to be found from the intersection of several disciplines. This notion is supported by e.g. a Tekes report (2010, 8) which states that the opportunities for future's business innovations lie at the intersection of several customer needs, either articulated or unarticulated ones. Ostrom et al. (2010, 6) also claim that there is a pressing need for additional focus on business-to-business (B2B) services, which is currently underrepresented in service research.

Hence, this thesis sets out to contribute to service research by shedding light to the integration possibilities of design thinking and to the collaborative motivation methods. It uses an interdisciplinary lens and is set in a B2B environment.

1.2 Research objective

In the light of insights presented in the introduction, it is important to invite employees into a co-creative process that helps a company to change and meet the challenges in its changing operational environment. Companies often seek outside help for their change initiatives from

a management consulting, advertising, marketing, or communication agency - or from several of these. This indicates that there is a need for a service that facilitates change initiatives in a company. In order to save B2B customer's time, money, and efforts, it could be beneficial if the service would combine the services bought from outside operators. This would not only make the process and its outcomes more cost-efficient, but also more coherent.

The aim of this thesis is to create a service concept that facilitates the implementation of change while at the same time communicating and marketing it both internally and externally. Thus this service concept crosses the fields of management consulting, corporate communication and service marketing. As the guiding thought of this thesis is that employees adopt changes better if they are involved in the change process, this thesis introduces a co-creative method in order to engage employees.

Ramaswamy's and Gouillart's (2010b) thoughts about co-creative enterprises form the basis of the theoretical framework of this thesis. According to them, co-creative enterprises, among other features, call on employees to participate in redesigning their work experience and to develop interactions that did not exist before. This leads to increased employee engagement; employees are more committed to the company and enjoy the psychological or economic value the co-creative process provides. Organizations themselves profit from it too e.g. in the form of higher productivity.

This thesis investigates change implementation in companies from three perspectives: corporate storytelling, internal marketing, and communityship. These perspectives are chosen because they offer a potential for co-creation with employees.

The search for the service concept proposed in this thesis is conducted with the principles and methods of service design. Stickdorn (2013) describes service design as an evolving interdisciplinary field that focuses on humans rather than organizations and tries to find ways for organizations to support value co-creation with its stakeholders.

As mentioned, the aim of this thesis is to create a service concept that facilitates the implementation of change while communicating and marketing it both internally and externally.

The following research questions are posed in order to reach the aim of this thesis:

- How could change be co-created with employees?
- What kind of service concept could help to facilitate the implementation of change in companies?
- Could design thinking be introduced into the field of corporate communication?

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The first chapter introduces the reader to the topic. It sets the research questions and explains why the chosen topic needs to be researched. It also explains the main terminology used in the thesis.

The second chapter opens the theoretical part of this thesis. As this is an interdisciplinary thesis that crosses the disciplines of change management, corporate communication, and service marketing, this chapter provides the reader with the background information that is relevant for understanding the empirical part of the thesis and introduces the employee co-creation triangle in order to show the relationship between the disciplines used in this thesis. The second chapter also goes deeper to the relevant aspects of these disciplines and presents more thoroughly such phenomena as communityship, storytelling, and internal marketing, all of which play an important role in this thesis.

The third chapter presents service design and some of its key principles, such as design thinking, co-creation, and lean methodology. It also provides a definition for a service concept. In addition, it explains the service design process in theory.

The fourth chapter contains the empirical part of this thesis. It explains in detail how the concept for engaging staff into content creation was created. Even though service design processes tend to be iterative, this thesis presents the process linearly so that it would be easier for the reader to follow. The service design methods and tools used in thesis are also explained in this chapter, in the order they were utilized in the design process so that the reader can reflect them in theory and in practice at the same time and he or she can see the relation between the tools and the context they were chosen in.

In the fifth chapter, the conclusions made during the research process are drawn together. The contributions this thesis makes for service research are also summarised. Finally, the prospects for future research are presented.

1.4 Key concepts

This thesis discourses the themes of co-creation, employee engagement, corporate communication, service marketing, and several other topics subject to these. In this chapter, the reader is offered a definition for the terms that are used in this thesis. However, the most profound constructs are defined and explained in chapter 2.

Grönroos's (2008, 300) definition about *service* is adopted in this thesis. Service is defined as "a process where someone does something to assist someone else".

Co-creation is used somewhat differently in different disciplines. In service design literature, it can be understood as a *practice* where systems, products, or services are developed through collaboration with customers, employees and other company stakeholders, as is defined by Ramaswamy and Gouillart (2010, 4). On the other hand it can be considered as a *principle* that means "engaging people to create valuable experiences together while enhancing network economics" (Ramaswamy & Gouillart 2010, 35). In this thesis, the word is used mainly to describe a practice where employees participate in the content creation process. However, the reason why they are invited to participate in the process is the principle that it creates a value proposition for them; if they are involved, they have ownership of the process and they adapt it better. To distinguish these two meanings, the construct of co-creation is further examined in chapters 2 and 3.

This report considers the implementation of a strategy when it requires making changes to organization's policies or functions. This phenomenon is described in a term *implementing change*. Cicmil (1999, 123) separates organizational change initiatives into three parts: the "why", the "what", and the "how". According to her, change implementation represents the "how" of the initiative. Tornatzky and Johnson (1982, 193) specify that implementation is "the translation of any tool or technique, process, or method of doing, from knowledge to practice". Sonenshein (2010, 477) sees the implementation of strategic change as one of the most important undertakings an organization can have. This thesis concentrates only on the "how" part and does not editorialize why the strategy has been created or what it includes.

Corporate communication can be described as a managed effort to communicate matters that concern the corporation effectively and in a coordinated and clear manner, with the use of a variety of management activities to make information accessible and to involve stakeholders in activities that are mutually beneficial (Goodman 1994). This broad description incorporates also marketing (Botha 2010, 98).

Traditionally *marketing* has been described with four P's: price, product, promotion, and place (McCarthy 1964). Even though this classical marketing mix has been expanded by several researchers for example to seven P's of service marketing mix, including people, physical evidence, and process (Booms & Bitner 1981) and up to 15 P's (Baumgartner 1991) which imply that marketing is virtually everything, this thesis considers marketing from the points of view of promotion and physical evidence. Promotion includes functions such as advertising, media types, publicity, web strategy, and training of salespeople. Physical evidence includes features that render the intangible service tangible, such as sales equipment, statements and

business cards. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler 2008, 20.) However, the lines between marketing and communication are blurring and these two functions are becoming more and more integrated. Many marketing efforts, such as internal marketing (marketing aimed at employees) and strategic public relations are also organizational communication activities. (Varey 1998.) However, it can be said that marketing generally focuses more on products and is more technical by nature than communication (Botha 2010, 107-108). In this thesis, the last-mentioned view is adopted; marketing and communication are different sides of the same coin but they have different focus. While communication is about the “what”, marketing is about the “how”.

Customer in this thesis includes both business-to-business (B2B) customers and end-users. The words business-to-business customer, B2B customer, business customer and customer company are used as synonyms in this thesis and they all refer to institutional buyers.

Stakeholder is defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman 1984, 46). It usually means company’s customers, employees and shareholders, and in wider sense government and communities. In this thesis, the word stakeholder is used only when referred to background literature.

Employee engagement holds many definitions, but in the academic literature it is mostly defined as a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral construct that is associated with individual role performance (Saks 2006, 602).

Content here refers to what is communicated, the message material (Welch & Jackson 2007, 185). Content can be for example sales materials, corporate stories, and corporate identity creation.

1.5 Delimitations of the thesis

Designing a desirable, economically viable, and technologically feasible service concept might require several iterations, which mean design rounds that are conducted to improve the concept. This thesis reports only the initial concept design phase of a service concept that is created with a lean method, the pilot case that tested out the assumptions made in the design phase, and the reflection phase that takes note on the experiences and feedback gained from the pilot case. The areas of the service concept that need further iteration are presented after the case study, but due to scope and timing, the testing of them in a second iteration is left outside of this report. Also some other relevant next steps such as building a measuring system for the created service concept and reflections on the financial model are left out of the scope of this thesis.

As this thesis is interdisciplinary and crosses the fields of corporate communication, service marketing, and management consulting, it can only deal with each of these fields shortly and on a superficial level. This thesis is not casting a thorough look on the achievements of each of these fields but rather tries to find similarities between them so that one service can be created around them.

This report does not cover the building of a corporate strategy. In this report, it is assumed that strategic choices have already been made. This is not to say that it would not be important to involve employees also in the strategy creation process. The first iteration of the service concept, however, was done in a situation where the most important strategic choices had already been made.

The point of view in this thesis is that of a service designer, not that of a B2B customer. In fact, to keep the scope on the service design process, the customer company is not mentioned by name. However, the company serves as a mirror to reflect the choices that were made, and the representatives of the company provide valuable feedback so that the concept can be further iterated. This report also concerns only the design part of the concept and not the outcomes that the concept brought to the B2B customer in the long term.

Even though the service concept showcased in this thesis is still subject to further iterations, it brings service design thinking to a new area and as such widens the discussion on how, when, and where to use service design principles and methods.

2 Co-creation of change

This thesis follows the prevalent theory of service marketing, the service-dominant logic presented by Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2006), which states that value is always created and determined by the user through use (“value in use”). Companies can only make value propositions for their customers and the customer is always a co-creator of value. Ind and Coates (2013, 86) describe this as a shift in thinking from the logic where organizations define value to a more participative one where people and organizations together create and develop value by meaning.

Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) move the focus from the organization’s offerings to its culture and note that successful companies are able to connect with their stakeholders. This idea was taken further by Ramaswamy and Guillard (2010) by their proposition that companies themselves need to become co-creative. They (2010, 4) define co-creation as “the prac-

tice of developing system, products, or services through collaboration with customers, managers, employees, and other company stakeholders” and insist that companies must engage people as “active co-creators in defining and delivering value”. They split co-creation into two perspectives: outside-in and inside-out. The former implies to an experience where the end-users create a platform that connects their experience to the offerings of a company. The latter means an organization-led experience where end-users are invited into participating in co-creating processes by the organization. (Ramaswamy & Guillard 2010, 17-18; Degnegaard 2014, 7). The outside-in perspective is adopted in this thesis, and the statement about companies’ need to become co-creative supports the theoretical part of this thesis. According to Ramaswamy and Guillard (2010, 149), employees that are involved in the change process, adapt changes better.

The whole second chapter of this thesis seeks an answer to the first research question posed in the introduction: how could change be co-created with employees. As the goal of this thesis is to find a service concept that lies in the intersection of management consulting, corporate communication, and service marketing, this chapter presents the parts of these field that are relevant from the point of view of employee co-creation. In order to describe the logic of this chapter and to act as a theoretical framework for this thesis, an employee co-creation triangle is constructed (Figure 4). It places employee co-creation in the middle and touches certain areas within the field of change management, corporate communication, and service marketing where co-creation with employees could take place. These are the concept of communityship, corporate storytelling, and internal marketing. These areas are marked in darker gray in the picture and they represent the areas of interest from the point of view of this thesis.



Figure 4: The employee co-creation triangle

The following chapter introduces first co-creation as a principle and as the main driver of this thesis. Then three fields that are often affected by change efforts, change management consulting, corporate communication, and corporate marketing are briefly presented. A deeper dive is taken into each of these fields and the constructs of communityship, storytelling, and internal marketing are examined more closely.

2.1 Employee co-creation

Ind and Coates (2013, 87-88) state that from a managerial perspective, the growing recognition of the importance of the consumer as a value creator and the possibility for engagement the Internet has enabled have catalyzed the significance of co-creation. Despite the popularity of the term, it is hard to define. Frow, Payne, and Storbacka (2014, 1) have defined value co-creation as an interactive process that involves at least two actors that are actively and willingly creating novel value that is mutually beneficial via engaging forms of collaboration.

Although the academic discussion around co-creation is vivid, it revolves around the end-customer, and the co-creation between the company and its other stakeholders is left with little attention. Employees' importance is noted as the representatives of the company when

interacting with customers and as their first-hand knowledge about customer needs and wants (Grönroos 2011, 290).

Amongst the few to turn their attention towards employees are Ramaswamy and Guillard (2010, 149) who argue that the transformation of company cultures and management models has to be created together with employees and other relevant stakeholders. They claim that successful initiatives involve and engage the people who are affected by the initiative. A co-creative process engages the staff because it is in their own self-interest to be engaged. A co-creative initiative starts from the individual's experience instead of firm's processes. It creates value in two simultaneous ways: it enables the identification of innovative ideas and allows motivated people to take action on them. (Ramaswamy & Guillard 2010, 165.)

However, individuals are generally far ahead of organizations in their eagerness to participate in value creation. This imposes a great challenge to companies whose managers are accustomed to focus on process efficiency. Organizations profit from co-creation, though. Co-creative enterprises call on employees to participate in redesigning their work experience and to develop interactions that did not exist before. As a result, employees are often more committed to the company and enjoy the psychological and/or economic value the co-creative process provides. That, in turn, often also increases the productivity of the company. (Ramaswamy & Guillard 2010b, 3-4.)

While co-creation lowers hierarchy, it does not mean that all the power is given to employees. In order for a change process to be successful, senior management has to have a high-level view about the goal of the process. They also facilitate and guide the transformation. (Ramaswamy & Guillard 2010, 166; 2010b, 5.)

Since co-creation is beneficial to companies both economically and mentally, it should be encouraged in change efforts. This thesis is looking for answers how this could be done. The following subchapters try to find paradigms and means that would allow employees to be actively involved in and to contribute to change initiatives that concern them. The understanding built in this part of the thesis is transformed into a service concept in the empirical part of the thesis.

2.2 Towards a distributed change management

This subchapter touches the change management consulting area of this thesis. It casts a look at the leadership-centric approach to change management that has dominated the academic discussion until recently. After that, an alternative is given in the form of Mintzberg's (2009) vision of communityship. The construct of communityship is important because it does not

only suggest the shift of power from leaders to middle managers, it also adds a new word to the lexicon of leaders to describe a desired outcome of this shift.

2.2.1 A look backwards to change management

As Kotter (1995, 59) notes, corporate change initiatives are rarely success stories. Stanleigh (2008, 34) reaffirms this by noting that up to three quarters of organizational change efforts do not deliver the expected results. Kotter (1995, 60) mentions that human beings seem to naturally resist change - or at least the step outside of their comfort zone change often means. However, change is essential for companies because no business can survive over the long term without reinventing itself to match the changing world and market around it (Harvard Business Review 2007, 4).

The change initiatives within a company are determined in the company's strategy. According to Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (2005a, 9-15), strategy refers to the plan, the pattern, the position, the perspective, and the ploy a company undertakes in order to succeed. However, Mintzberg et al. (2005b) note that creating, implementing, and following a strategy is not easy; managers, consultants and theorists all struggle with how it should be done.

Mintzberg (2009, 141) claims that for two decades, many change initiatives in companies have been more or less conducted after Kotter's (1995) eight-step process to change or after other practical guides given to leaders. According to Kotter's popular approach, change initiatives go through certain phases and completing a change process successfully requires a lot of time and managerial efforts. The change initiatives are started by establishing a sense of urgency and by forming a powerful guiding coalition to create an easily understandable vision for the future. This, in turn, needs to be communicated to the employees.

Over the years, scholars have added some valid points to this kind of approach. For example Stanleigh (2008, 34-36) states that it is crucial to engage also employees in the change process; in fact most change initiatives fail because they are not. He adds that amongst other most common pitfalls of change management are conducting managing efforts solely on the executive level and telling people they have to change and not allowing them enough time to vent before the change.

However, Mintzberg (2009, 141) notes that the approaches presented here, as well as the vast majority of change management books and theories, represent a traditional top-down management model. They build on the assumption that change initiatives are something reserved only to senior management; the senior management is the one that creates the vision, others carry it out.

The leader-centric viewpoint has also been challenged by some scholars. Diefenbach (2007, 139) claims that it is well known that change programs that are initiated from the top down do not work. Ramaswamy and Gouillart (2010, 149) state that many change processes fail because the process itself is not co-created by those affected by change. Mintzberg (2009, 141) implies that one reason for unsuccessful change initiatives could be the prevailing, age-old focus on leadership. I shall continue to look deeper into Mintzberg's thoughts in the following chapter.

2.2.2 From companies to communityship

Mintzberg (2009, 140-141) remarks that people's need to belong to something larger than themselves is greatly neglected in companies. In fact, he claims that the whole current economic crisis originates from bloated sense of individualism that has led to short-term management and efforts to maximize personal incentives. This has caused a situation where executives are not familiar with the everyday work and employees are indifferent about it.

Mintzberg (2009, 141) states that in order for people to care about their work, their co-workers, and the company's success, they need to have a sense of belonging into a community. He has coined the term "communityship", as opposed to "leadership" to describe this sense of community at workplaces. To achieve communityship, Mintzberg suggests that companies need *engaged* and *distributed* leadership. In this more modest form of leadership, a leader is personally engaged to his/her work community and engages others so that anyone can exercise initiative. This could be called *just enough leadership*; it takes action only when necessary.

It is not an easy task to turn an established hierarchical organization based on strong leadership into a community, but according to Mintzberg (2009, 141) there is one group of employees who is in key position in doing this, namely the middle management. He claims that middle managers are often the ones to drive changes in an organization. They are in a special position because they have access to the company's strategic work but they also know the day-today routines, mindset, and problems of the company.

Middle managers often also have a vast knowledge about the company and they are deeply committed to it and to its employees. They understand what the company is all about and what pieces are needed in order to re-establish a sense of community in the company. Mintzberg (2009, 142) claims that it is far easier to build communityship on those principles than from the scratch.

Mintzberg's thoughts have raised some counterarguments, as well. Wolfe (2011, 73) criticizes that Mintzberg decries the discipline of management at the time when we need leadership the most. According to him, managers that have a pragmatic training in communication are able to eliminate many organizational pinch points since they can coordinate the direction an organization takes and create cultural coherence amongst empowered employees.

2.3 Communication as a way to engagement

This chapter explores the bottom left corner of the employee co-creation triangle and explains what role communication plays in implementing change. First, corporate communication is studied in detail. Then the focus is shifted to content creation process. Third, the power of storytelling is investigated.

2.3.1 Corporate communication creates shared meanings

According to Cornelissen (2004, 185), corporate communication can be defined as “the functions and the process of managing communications between an organization and important stakeholder groups”. While this definition may be somewhat mechanical, according to Echeverri (2006), communication itself is not. He sees communication as a primary instrument for human interaction; it allows people to move toward a shared meaning.

Dowling (2006, 83) claims that corporate communication plays three important roles. It has an external dimension that aims to establish trust by raising awareness and generating understanding amongst the organization's key stakeholders. Second, it explains and defends company's actions. The third role is internal, and its purpose is to explain and reinforce the mission and morality of the company.

However, many organizational communication scholars argue that communication should be considered as an integrated whole. Welch & Jackson (2007, 180) note that internal communication becomes external as soon as one message is forwarded outside of the organization. Following the same logic, news about the company on media are messages that might be targeted to external stakeholders, but internal stakeholders make their own interpretations about them as well. Individuals might also have a double role as both internal and external stakeholders, such as that of an employee and a customer.

While the abovementioned definitions explain what corporate communication does, they do not mention who, in fact, is communicating with various stakeholders. Groysberg and Slind (2012, 1-4) note that in the traditional corporate communication model, content creation is monopolized by the top management and professional communicators who govern what can

be said about the company, who can speak about it, and where this can take place. They propose that standard corporate communication should be replaced by organizational conversation that is based on intimacy, interactivity, inclusion and intentionality. This means that communication should be non-hierarchical and open, but not aimless. Employees should be invited to a dialogue and content creation. The inclusion of employees has many benefits; it turns them into brand ambassadors, thought leaders, storytellers and content providers, and also raises the level of their emotional engagement to the company.

2.3.2 Changing corporate content creation

Even though the act of creating content is age-old, the construct of it is somewhat new in academic research. It has been addressed to mainly in digital context and more recently, in participatory context (Tacchi, Watkins & Keerthirathne 2009; Hargittai & Walejko 2008; Watkins & Nair 2008).

Often the phenomenon of content creation is looked from the viewpoint of vanished gatekeepers. Abadie, Maghiros and Pascu (2007, 7, 13) note that digitalization has changed industrial structures and business models in the entire field of content creation, especially in the industry of creative content. Previously dominated by large right-holders, the content industries from especially music recording to audiovisual production but to some extent also from print publishers to cultural spaces such as libraries have gone through an upheaval where old structures have been wiped out. Tacchi et al. (2009) point out that digital platforms have enabled ordinary people to gain control of media and allowed them to create unedited content. Hargittai and Walejko (2008, 253) emphasize that traditional consumers of material can now also become producers of content.

In the absence of accurate academic research of corporate content creation, I am using my preunderstanding about the subject. Gummesson (2000, 57-58) states states that preunderstanding is not given sufficiently consideration amongst academic researchers; according to him, often the best way to build preunderstanding is to operate as an active participant in the process in question rather than as detached observer or interviewer. He notes that industry processes and conventions are usually the type of knowledge that requires firsthand preunderstanding, i.e. insights and experience researchers already have about an industry when they choose their scientific approach and methods, because this kind of information is usually withheld from outsiders of the industry.

Based on my own ten-year-long experience with content creation in media industry and my so formed preunderstanding about the subject, I propose that in the field of media, marketing,

marketing communication, and custom publishing (corporate journalism), professional content creators still hold an important position.

My previous personal experience shows that the process of content creation for a B2B customer follows roughly the following pattern: the business customer expresses the need to communicate with its stakeholders to professional content creators which are often external subcontractors and represent an advertising agency, marketing agency, communication agency, or custom publishing agency. Professional content creators then come up with a plan on how to achieve the business customer's target and choose the peg of the content, i.e. the most important thing to communicate. The content is then produced by a professional content creators, such as a writer and a photographer, with the help of a few sources of either their own choice or of those assigned to them by the business customer. The produced content is often edited and proofread by another professional content creator. If the publication is for the business customer's marketing purposes, the content is then sent to the business customer for approval. The business customer might make changes to the content or ask for changes to be made by the professional content creators, and ultimately the business customer decides whether the content shall be published or not. The gatekeepers are thus the professional content creators and, in the case of custom publishing, both the content creators and the representatives of the business customer company.

This type of traditional content creation is reserved to designated professionals and customer company's top management or communication representatives. Recently, these professionals have faced a new competitor as crowdsourcing has become increasingly popular in content creation. According to Howe (2006), crowdsourcing means the outsourcing of activities by a firm to an online community or network of people in the form of an open call. Whitla (2009, 25) notes that even though the use of crowdsourcing is still in its infancy, it is probable that companies, especially smaller ones, will show growing interest towards it because it provides access to a wide pool of skills at reasonable prices.

Crowdsourcing is by definition open to anyone who wants to participate into content creation whereas participatory content creation is done with designated people. Watkins and Nair (2008, 81) define participatory content creation as "content created after extensive discussions, conversations and decision-making with the target community, and where community group members take on content creation responsibilities according to their capacities and interests". However, Tacchi et al. (2009, 581) note that participation often follows a "top-down" logic, despite its innate promise.

Aitamurto (2013) has studied co-creation in magazines, which are traditionally created solely by professional journalists. According to Aitamurto (2013, 229), co-creation in this context

refers to “an online process, in which experts and amateurs work together online to produce a new product or to improve existing ones”. Aitamurto (2013, 242-243) argues that in co-creation, the traditional roles of journalists and readers - “we write, you read” - are renegotiated into a new order. The co-creative dogma of journalism could be described in a form “we ask, you respond, we listen, we write, you read”. She also states that co-creation is a more challenging open journalistic practice than crowdsourcing, because it involves a dialogue with readers; in crowdsourcing the interaction between the writers and the readers is small or nonexistent. She calls co-creation a step ahead in openness compared to crowdsourcing, because the process itself and the inputs from the participants are open.

Tacchi et al. (2009, 573, 575) claim that while participatory, crowdsourced, or co-created content-creation activities may enable communities to have a voice of their own, i.e. to feel they have a right to communicate and participate into discussions that affect their life, it is noteworthy that not all the members of the community use this possibility equally. Hargittai and Walejko (2008, 240, 252) state that only those who actively produce and share content set the agenda of discussions. For example, women tend to share their creations on the web significantly less than men. Tacchi et al. (2009, 575) note that it is also relevant to ask whether everyone even wants to have a voice.

2.3.3 Corporate Storytelling

This chapter turns the focus on one specific form of corporate communication: corporate storytelling. The main difference between corporate communications and corporate story is, as Marzec (2007, 26-27) puts it, that the former provides information, the latter inspires action. He defines corporate story as “a narrative tool that tells the tale of a company’s strategy in action”. It is a clear, structured, compelling articulation of “who we are” and “where we are headed” that rallies emotional and rational support from stakeholders.

Marzec (2007, 27-28) claims that humans are fundamentally wired to learn through stories. The story format provides us a framework to demonstrate the interrelated connections between key concepts and events. It helps us to process, retain, and recall information, and it also internalizes the ideas by creating a personal relevance. The narrative form invites listeners to imagine an alternative reality and to see themselves in the plot as actors.

Denning (2004, 4) notes that storytelling has become an increasingly accepted method for achieving management goals. Sole and Wilson (2002, 6) argue that storytelling is an option to less personal knowledge sharing methods such as modeling, simulated experimental situations, codified formal sources, or symbolic objects. Dowling (2006, 84, 98-99) reinforces this by stating that stories are a more believable and a more memorable way to pass information

in a corporate context than the more sanitized statements companies usually produce, and they tend to generate more enthusiasm and inspiration. Storytelling enhances a corporate culture where people trust each other and the company's values.

Dowling (2006, 83) notes that corporate story serves to explain the behavior of a company in terms of its mission and morality. It aligns leaders, drives decision-making, and mobilizes the organization. Marzec (2007, 26) adds that management can use stories to build a common vision of the future and a journey to achieve it, as well as to help employees to appreciate their personal role in the realization of the journey. According to Sole and Wilson (2002, 3-4), storytelling is also a way to share norms and values as well as tacit knowledge, develop trust and commitment, facilitate unlearning, and generate emotional connection.

Denning (2004, 2) points out that traditional stories with a richly detailed narrative do not necessarily work in corporate context. In a modern workplace, people generally do not have time or patience to listen to a fully developed story. Point has to be made in seconds, and employees have to be able to connect the teaching of their story right into their daily work. Corporate tales should be minimalist enough to provoke the audience to look for answers. Marzec (2007, 31) shares this opinion by pointing out that the more complex the story is, the harder it is for stakeholders to follow it. Thus, corporate story should not include too many elements; only the issues and opportunities that bring the greatest value to the company should end up in the story. Sole and Wilson (2002, 5) state that if a story is too compelling, the listener is absorbed into it and finds it difficult to use it as template for his or her own experiences.

Dowling (2006, 96) emphasizes that the most important matter in a corporate story is that the stakeholders accept it. In corporate storytelling, the critical audience is employees, so the story has to resonate with them. Marzec (2007, 32-34) stresses that a company must ensure that the corporate story is understood internally before a company can launch it externally. In order for the corporate story to become accepted and retold in the organization, employees must believe the company is heading to a right, obtainable direction, they must have a personal stake in its success, and they must see the corporate story reinforced every day. Marzec (2007, 28) argues that storytelling helps employees to envision a new organizational reality and their own role in it. Thus, it sets the scene and defines opportunities for employee engagement.

It is not an entirely new idea to create corporate storytelling in a co-creative way. Mattia and Esse (2005, 8-9) have emphasized the importance of co-creation when crafting a corporate story, but like traditional company narration, also their approach started from the executive management and communicators, and co-creation only took place with senior management.

Nevertheless, their case was amongst the first ones where co-creation was used for building co-ownership of the story.

2.4 Marketing Change

In the following chapter the bottom right corner of the employee co-creation triangle is examined. In order for the corporate change initiative to be successful, it needs not only to be communicated internally but also marketed internally and eventually externally. As explained in chapter 1.4, the difference between marketing and communication is not very explicit; they are often organized differently in companies, and furthermore, these two functions are moving towards an integrated approach (Botha 2010, 94; Varey 1998, 184).

However, there are certain viewpoints presented in the literature of service marketing that are important from the point of view of this thesis, and the most important one of them is internal marketing, not least because it plays a significant role in change implementation. This thesis also touches the concept of external marketing because the service concept developed in this thesis includes a promotional aspect and the aspect of physical evidence that describes the changed strategy to outsiders.

In the following chapter, the strategic framework called service marketing triangle is presented. It indicates three interlinked groups that develop, promote and deliver service promises and the different types of marketing that occur in the context of services. Secondly, this chapter casts a closer look over the academic literature on internal marketing that can be used for motivating employees to accept changes.

2.4.1 Different aspects of service marketing

Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2008, 18-19) state that service marketing is about making and keeping promises to customers. There are three groups of people who act together in order to develop, promote, and deliver these promises; company management, employees, and customers. These three groups need different types of marketing efforts - external marketing, internal marketing, and interactive marketing - so that the company can make and keep promises. External marketing is used to set up customers' expectations and to make promises about the company's offering to customers. Internal marketing is used to ensure that employees are able and willing to deliver the promises made. Interactive marketing is used for delivering the promise from employees to customers. The three sides of the triangle should all be aligned: external promises should be analogical to what is delivered, and the promises made to customers should be fully understood internally by those who enable the

service. Service triangle in Figure 5 illustrates these interlinked groups and the different aspects of marketing.

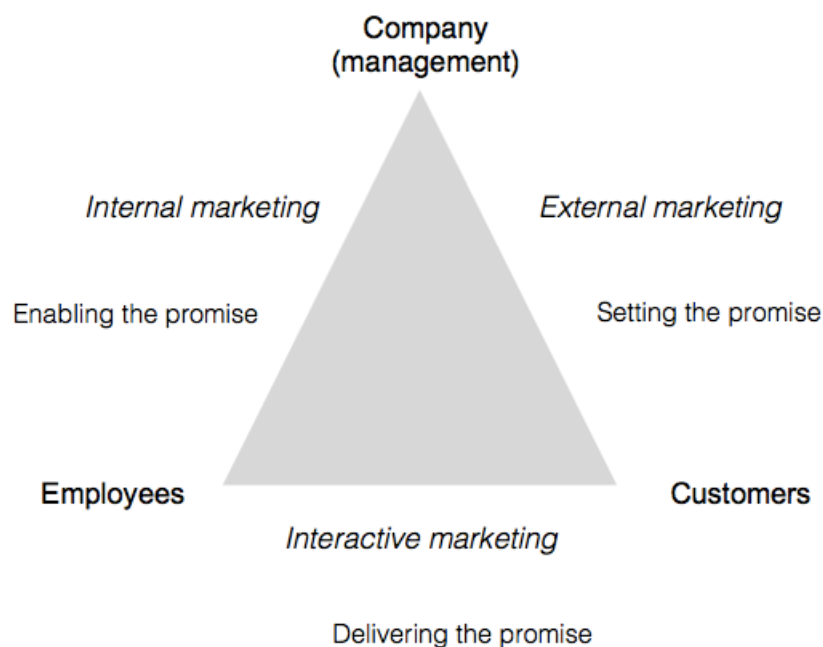


Figure 5. The services marketing triangle (Wilson et al. 2008, 18-19)

Wilson et al. (2008, 406) note that these different aspects of marketing are often executed in different parts of the company or by different subcontracting agencies. External marketing is conducted in the marketing department, and the execution of external marketing often includes several subcontractors such as public relations agency and direct marketing company. Sales department is responsible for sales communications, internal marketing usually belongs to human resources department, and customer service department sends yet another message via its employees. The emphasis of this thesis is on internal marketing, because it is in a key role in implementing change initiatives. It shall be examined in detail in the following chapter.

2.4.2 Internal marketing as the effort to implement change

Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, 450-452) argue that internal marketing is not only in a significant position when implementing change; rather it has become to *mean* the implementation of change. The concept of internal marketing has evolved from the paradigm of employee motivation and satisfaction to the paradigm of influencing employees for greater customer orien-

tation and finally to paradigm of organizational change management and implementation of strategies. Rafiq and Ahmed (2000, 454) propose a following definition to this modern paradigm of internal marketing:

“Internal marketing is a planned effort using a marketing-like approach to overcome organizational resistance to change and to align, motivate, and inter-functionally co-ordinate and integrate employees towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies in order to deliver customer satisfaction through a process of creating motivated and customer orientated employees”.

Ferdous, Herington and Merrilees (2013, 639) note that despite the great amount of literature devoted to internal marketing, the concept of it is still not universally understood. Nevertheless, they argue that previous literature has some elements in common; these are the use of motivational tools, customer-centric focus, and a marketing-like attitude towards internal stakeholders. These, in turn, result to better internal service quality, improved external customer orientation, and business success.

Ferdous et al. (2013, 638) conclude the previous academic research from four decades by suggesting that organizations that are highly invested in internal marketing implement more effective practices that lead to positive organizational outcomes than those who are less oriented towards internal marketing. They also propose that such companies are more likely to build relationship-oriented internal programs whereas companies that invest less in internal marketing are more likely to build transaction-focused programs. Furthermore, relationship-oriented programs more likely lead to stronger relationship between the company and the employees.

Many academics share the opinion that internal marketing is fundamentally linked to external marketing. Ferdous et al. (2013, 642-647) claim that internal marketing generally has a positive impact on external marketing and it works as a tool to align marketing to business success. Foster, Punjaisri and Cheng (2010, 403) argue that a successful corporate branding strategy requires an implementation of an internal branding program. Elving (2010, 7) states that ultimately organization dictates internally what is communicated externally. This is why internal marketing is an important part of the corporate communication field.

Closely tied to internal marketing is the concept of internal communication. According to Welch and Jackson (2007, 183, 190), internal communication is a form of communication that happens constantly within an organization and includes both informal and managed form of communication. It can be viewed as the strategic management of stakeholders' interactions and relationships at all levels of the organization. One task of internal communication is to engage employees throughout the organization: to promote commitment and a sense of be-

longing to the organization, to raise employees' awareness of the organization's competitive environment and the consequences this poses to the company's strategy. If employees do not understand these matters, they cannot be fully committed to the company's strategy and may be unwilling to trust their managers.

To conclude this chapter, this thesis proposes that an answer to the first research question - how could change be co-created with employees - is that employees need to participate in the change initiatives that affect their work, preferably with the guidance of middle managers instead of the top management. They could achieve an ownership in the implementation process of a change initiative by participating in the communication and marketing efforts of the change, since the organization ultimately dictates internally what is communicated externally. Corporate storytelling provides an excellent possibility for employee participation because the story form is efficient in helping employees to envision the new organizational reality. Also, this would ensure that employees approve the corporate story before it is launched externally.

3 Introducing service design

This chapter looks for answers to the second and the third research question. The second research question of this thesis was what kind of service concept could help to facilitate the implementation of change in companies. As presented in the second chapter of this thesis, it would need to include employees as co-creators of change. For achieving this, the service is created with service design principles and methods, known for their user-centricity. The third question was if design thinking could be introduced to the field of corporate communication. Hence, the concept developed in this thesis is investigated from the viewpoint of a service provider; the idea is not to develop a service concept for the needs of one business customer but rather to develop a service design offering that can be duplicated to meet the needs of several business customers in a similar situation.

This chapter presents first service design as a discipline and some of its most relevant principles in the context of this thesis: co-creation and lean start up methodology. Then, the concrete outcome of these principles, a service concept, is presented from a theoretical point of view. Finally, the service design process is explained in order to ground the next chapter that covers the actual service design process for a co-created corporate story.

3.1 Defining service design

Almost everyone who has tried to define service design admits that it is difficult. Miettinen (2012, 6) states it is both a practise and an academic discourse, but the discipline still lacks a commonly accepted definition. Tuulaniemi (2011, 15) notes that there is a good reason for this: service design practises what it preaches and is consequently in a constant state of development. Stickdorn (2013, 18) notes that service design is interdisciplinary and therefore cannot be described as a discipline.

Tuulaniemi (2011, 9) describes service design as a systematic way to approach the development and innovation of services both from the analytical and intuitive point of view. Tuulaniemi (2011, 15) continues that service design helps organizations to acknowledge the strategic potential of services in their business, to develop the existing services, and to innovate new ones. It is not a new innovation but a way to combine existing matters in a new way. Bitner (in Ostrom et al. 2010, 17) states that service design orchestrates the clues, places, processes, and interactions that together create holistic service experiences for customers, B2B customers, employees, business partners, or citizens.

In the absence of a common definition, Stickdorn (2013, 34) lists five principles that characterize service design: it is user-centred, co-creative, sequencing, evidencing and holistic. These characteristics indicate that services should always be designed through the eyes of the customer and that all the stakeholders should be involved in the design process. The service process should be described as a sequence of interrelated actions, and physical artefacts should be brought in to concretize the intangible nature of services. Last but not least, services always occur in a context and the whole environment should be considered when designing a service. Based on these principles, it could be said that service design is a multidisciplinary, human-centred approach that uses understanding of customer experience as a backbone to design service offerings.

3.2 Design thinking

Closely related to service design is the construct of design thinking. Leavy (2012, 26) states that traditionally design thinking has been used in industrial design to solve issues like product aesthetics and easy usability. Brown (2008) coined the term design thinking to describe the process that can also be used to innovate strategies, organizational structures, and services. According to Brown (2008, 86), design thinking integrates people's desires with what is technologically feasible and economically viable. Tschimmel (2012, 1) explains it as a "complex thinking process of conceiving new realities". Martin (2010, 37) notes that design thinking can bring sustainable competitive advantage to companies, and Liedtka (2011, 13) con-

firms that it has already been proved to be an efficient tool for innovators. Martin (2010, 37) also notes that design thinking allows companies to optimize value by exploiting the existing knowledge and creating new value by exploring for new knowledge. As such, it goes far beyond product aesthetics.

Brown (2008, 86) notes that as economies shift from industrial manufacturing towards services and knowledge work, innovation expands to new areas; in addition to physical products, all sorts of processes, interactions, and ways of communicating and collaborating have to be designed. Design thinking with its human-centred, empathetic, experimentalist, and collaborative way of working can offer significant strategic insight to this.

According to Liedtka (2011, 14), design thinking begins from the question what the company could do for the customer to make their lives better. Leavy (2012, 26-27) notes that it comprises the practices and techniques traditionally used in design activities such as observation, brainstorming, prototyping, and role-playing, and it is usually conducted in co-operation with customers or users. It is preferably done in an interdisciplinary design team.

Liedtka (2011, 16-18) states that success in innovation comes from willingness to learn, from customer empathy, and from a low-risk approach. Showing personal interest in the customers rather than just examining demographic data or marketing categories allows innovators to identify real people's unarticulated needs; in them lies the most secure source of new ideas that have competitive advantage. Knight (2012, 172) notes that design is not just thinking but also communication. A designer ought to communicate what the service is or what it's potential is so that it is understandable to others.

3.3 Co-creation in service design

In chapter 2, co-creation was defined from the point of view of service-dominant logic. In this chapter, the lens is design-driven as co-creation is also an essential concept in design thinking and in service design. Degnegaard (2014, 9) points out that for design-driven aspect of co-creation, two central parameters are user-centricity, which implies to a close link with designers and users, and the significance of value, which could also be described as user needs. Co-creation in design has come to mean ways to identify needs and value potential for the user. Vuorela, Ahola, and Aro (2012, 118) note that in service design literature, co-creation is closely related to co-design, collaboration and co-development. Wetter-Edman (2012, 107) states that co-creation in this sense means that the designer is only partly in control of the result of the service design process. For this reason, it is crucial for the designer to develop a deep understanding of the design object and the users in a given service context. The designer is leading and facilitating cooperative activities and helping to create a context where us-

ers can get involved. The designer is also interpreting the process and proposing solutions to the customers. Leavy (2012, 29) argues that co-creation can apply to any business whose customers interact with the company or with each other, and it can occur in many forms, from intimate face-to-face meetings to web-enabled large-scale interactions.

Alam (2006) argues that co-creation with customers has already proved to be a widely successful approach for many companies. The success of many forerunner companies proves that time and resources spent on interacting with customers are often worthwhile. Involving customers in the creation process can lead to significant profits, and it certainly leads to better services and more satisfied customers. Gustafsson, Kristensson, and Witell (2012) note that whereas it is widely accepted that co-creation with customers is beneficial, it is still not fully agreed how and why exactly this should be done. According to them, co-creation is very much connected to the way companies communicate with their customers in order to understand their future needs; the most profitable results from customer co-creation are obtained through frequent contact with customers.

Ind, Fuller, and Trevail (2012) list four principles that help organizations to facilitate co-creation. First, organizations have to focus on people. This is especially important for managers who often become disconnected from the customers as their orientation becomes more strategic. Second, organizations have to build trust. In a trusting atmosphere people are willing to share their ideas. Trust can be built via honesty, openness and transparency. Third, organizations have to commit to learn together. Innovation is iterative by nature and as it does not happen overnight, it requires a willingness to experiment. Fourth, organizations need to build consensus for change. One of the key factors for change is involvement; the more people are participating, the better are the chances of generating real and lasting change.

3.4 Service concept

As the aim of this thesis is to create a service concept, the construct of a service concept has to be examined more thoroughly. According to Goldstein, Johnston, Duffy and Rao (2002, 124), service concept is in the key role in service design; it defines “the what” and “the how” of the service. Clark, Johnston and Shulver (2000, 72-73) portray a service concept as the mental image held by all the actors who participate in the service. It encapsulates the essence of the service and articulates the value, the overall shape of the service, the experience as perceived by customers, and the outcomes of the service. They state that a concept is a developed form of an idea; it has evolved along many discussions and screenings. Goldstein et al. (2002, 122-124) use an even wider definition of a service concept that covers the whole conception of the service including the way the service is delivered, the customer’s

experiences on it, the benefits of the service for the customer and for the organization, and the value of the services weighed against its cost as viewed by the customers. To customers, service concept means their expectation of what the service should be like and how it fulfils their needs.

Goldstein et al. (2002) describe the concept-building process as a flow from the ideation stage to design phase and finally to a delivery stage. But the process does not stop there; it is iterative because services require constant investment on workforce and assets as well as improvements in processes. All of these reconsiderations develop the concept further. They also note that the service concept is a foundation for all the different components of the service delivery system. A service delivery system includes the structure (e.g. facility and materials), the infrastructure (e.g. personnel skills), and processes for the service. It has to also comprise the strategic intent of the firm, its relative position in comparison to competitors, and customer groups to target as well as the type of relationship to pursue with them. In addition, it must include a plan for a service recovery process.

Clark, Johnston and Shulver (2000) point out that it is important to form a clear service concept because services are typically perceived differently from internal and external perspectives and they have a different affect on every consumer. A clear statement about the service helps internal and external actors to form a correct view about the service and their own role in it. Patrício, Fisk, Falcão e Cunha and Constantine (2011, 5-6) argue that services are often co-created in a networked manner in partnership with other companies. The service concept captures the company's value proposition but it should also include the value proposition in a wider context within its value network.

It needs to be reminded here once more that this thesis does not set out to develop a service concept for a customer company, as often is the case in service design projects. The third research question in this thesis was if design thinking could be introduced into the field of corporate communication. Hence, this thesis embarks to develop more than a service concept; it pursues to develop a concept that extends the principles of service design to a new area, thus striving to develop rather a *service design concept* than merely a service concept. However, as service design concepts are also service concepts for the company that produces it, the concept developed in this thesis is called more conventionally a service concept.

3.5 The principles of service design processes

There is not only one way to start to design a service concept or only one order in which service design tools can be used. Stickdorn (2013, 126, 148) notes that each service design project is different and requires its own set of tools that caters the needs of the given context. It

is up to the designers to find a combination of tools that help them to conceptualize, develop, and prototype their ideas. Thus, the very first step of a service design process is to design the process.

However, Stickdorn (2013, 124-135) points out that there usually is a certain structure in service design processes that guides designers to diverge and converge their thinking. First, the designers need to understand the big picture of the task at hand, including the culture and the goals of the customer company. Based on these, they can identify the real problem and develop solutions to it. Next, the initial concepts need to be prototyped and tested in order for designers to receive feedback, notice mistakes, and improve the concept so that they meet customer needs better. In the last phase, the concept is implemented. The whole process is iterative by nature. This means that steps can be taken back and forth or the process can be restarted from the beginning according to the knowledge gained during the process. The goal is to make the mistakes as early in the process as possible so that the final concept is successful.

The divergent and convergent stages of the design process can be visualized as a double diamond, a model also known as 4D that was developed by the British Design Council in 2005. It is illustrated in Figure 6. The 4D model features design phases called discover, define, develop, and deliver. (Design Council 2005.) Stickdorn (2013, 122-124) calls these phases exploration, creation, reflection, and implementation but notes that in reality, the process is iterative and non-linear and the phases loop and overlap. Brown (2009, 16) sees a design process as spaces of inspiration, ideation, and implementation, but also emphasizes the iterativeness of the process. I have adopted the lexicon of Stickdorn in this thesis because of its comprehensibility and popularized terminology. Even though Stickdorn's naming practice is based on the Double Diamond approach, it does not concentrate too much on the diverging and converging phases, and thus reflects better the iterativeness of the process. The names of the phases as described by Stickdorn are included in bold in Figure 6.

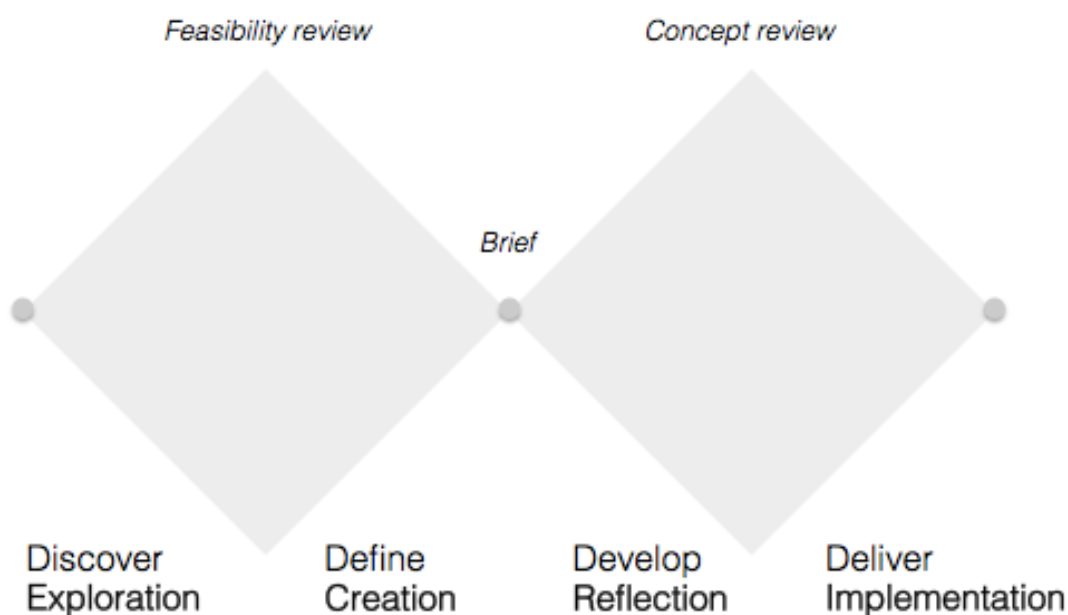


Figure 6: The Double Diamond diagram as described by The Design Council and Stickdorn (2013, 122-123)

Liedtka (2011, 17-18) introduces a set of four questions that correspond to four stages of the innovation process and that should be routinely asked by innovators. They are “what is”, “what if”, “what wows”, and “what works”. The first one (“what is”) can be answered by tools such as customer journey mapping, value chain analysis, and mind mapping. The second question (“what if”) can be tackled with brainstorming and concept development. The third question (“what wows”) can be met with assumption testing and rapid prototyping, and the final question (“what works”) can be responded by customer co-creation and learning launch.

4 Service design process for a concept of co-created corporate story

Two communications professionals, me as a content designer and my colleague as a custom publishing expert, started to think whether design thinking and co-creation could be introduced to the field of corporate communication. We wanted to make corporate communication less hierarchical and give space to the voices of employees. Hence, we set out to develop a concept that helps to implement change within an organization while simultaneously communicating and marketing it.

The service concept to be designed in this thesis seeks to cover services traditionally offered by consulting agencies, communication agencies and marketing agencies. It was developed in late 2013 to cater the marketing and communication needs of a mid-sized Finnish company.

However, the interdisciplinary nature of the concept and the service design approach it embraces made us think whether it could be refined into a duplicable service concept that can help many companies to implement change in an organization via a co-creative content creation process. The concept for a co-created corporate story was named “Matka tulevaan” - a journey to the forthcoming.

The following chapter explains the design process thoroughly from exploration to the implementation. However, this thesis only consists the first iteration of the design process; the lessons learned during the first iteration would need to be validated in action with the next possible B2B customer.

4.1 The visualisation of the design process

Before going into the details of the design process of the concept, the whole design journey is presented visually to give the reader an overview of the process. The overview is illustrated in Figure 7. The figure captures the double diamond model of the design process, and the upper row demonstrate the actions taken during the process while the lower row showcases the used service design tools. The undermost line shows the timeline of the process.

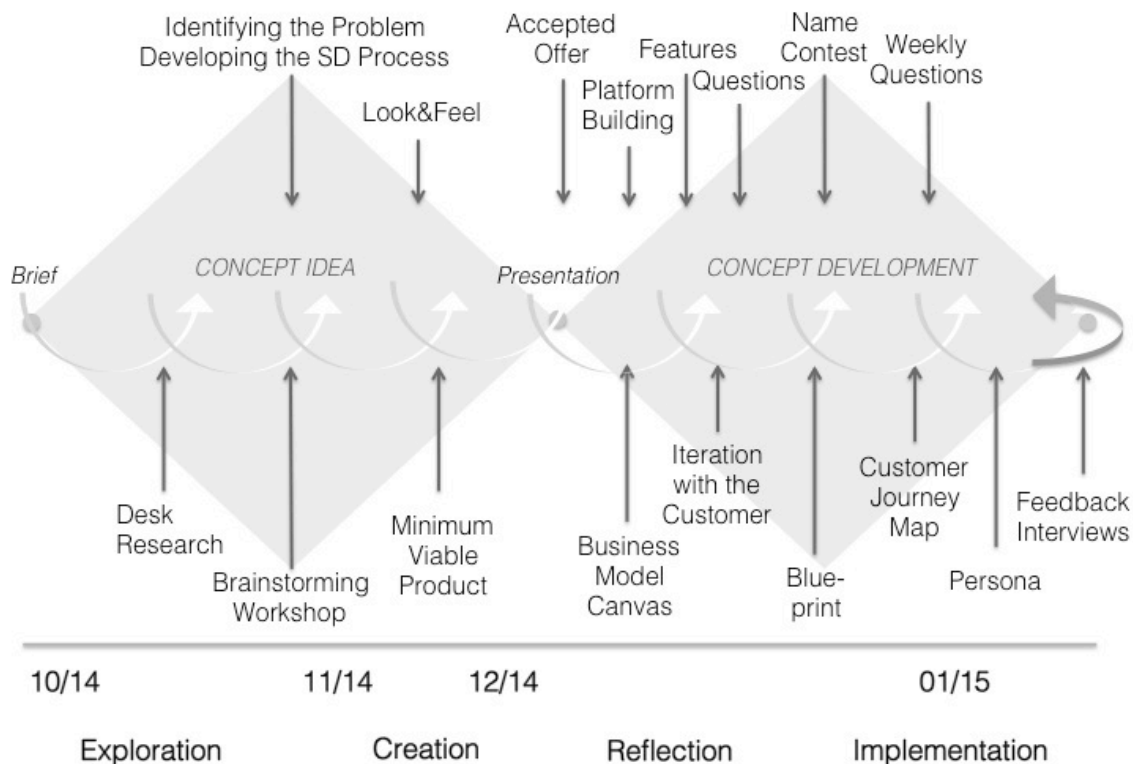


Figure 7: The design process of the Matka tulevaan concept

The following chapters explain the process linearly from exploration to creation, reflection, and implementation. The service design methods and tools are presented both in theory and in practice at the point where the need for them emerged during the design process. This enables the reader to go through the process with us and to reflect whether the choices made during the process were fitting and brought desired results.

4.2 The design brief

The idea for a co-creative content creation process arose from our B2B customer's need to communicate its new strategy to its customers. For months, the B2B customer had been amidst a strategic change process. The company was redefining and expanding its role in their B2B customers' processes.

Our B2B customer operates in the entertainment industry and is a market leader in its field. The company has grown rapidly during the past decade and operates now in three cities in Finland, employing nearly 60 people. There are three major operators within the same field and our business customer wanted to distinguish itself more clearly from its competitors.

Our B2B customer had been renewing its strategy with an advertising agency. The process had been fruitful and the company had found its competitive factor; the executive board had determined what the company wanted to be and where it should go next. However, the ways to get there remained yet undefined. The company faced the question "now what?" The company knew the outcome of the strategy renewal process would need to be communicated to its existing and potential customers, and we were asked to produce the external marketing materials.

In October 2013 my colleague went to meet the Sales and Marketing Director of the B2B customer to discuss the content creation process. She learned that the new strategy was yet to be communicated internally, as well. The B2B customer was a bit worried how the staff would react to the new approach since the company had previously had problems with a lack of enthusiasm from the staff's part.

4.3 Exploring the case via desk research

Ojasalo, Moilanen, and Rilalahti (2010, 28) note that before a team can start designing a development process, they have to get to know the target of development as thoroughly as possible. Hence, after the brief, we started to get acquainted with our B2B customer by e.g. reading the existing publications such as the sales and the marketing materials of the customer company and its competitors, the customer segmentation data, and several issues of

the B2C magazine the company publishes. In November 2013, my colleague and I held a day-long internal workshop where the two of us tried to figure out how we could cater the needs of our B2B customer and create a publication around the company's newfound main theme. We spent the morning doing some more desk research about the company's and its competitors' online presence. We knew our customer company had some interesting cases they could showcase, but that approach would not have made the publication to stand out from its competitors' materials. We also expanded our understanding about the company by getting acquainted with the materials concerning its new strategy that were developed together with an advertising agency. Because of the both internal and external communication challenges, we reckoned the company could benefit from something else than a traditional content creation process. The company was in a new situation and required actions that would allow the change to step in.

The desk research gave us an overview of the situation and helped us to identify the white spots in the current communication and marketing materials. It diverged our thinking and helped us to tackle the first two tasks of a service design process: the developing of the service design process and the identification of the real problem. We identified three needs the change process had raised in our B2B customer: that of employee engagement, that of corporate story, and that of marketing materials. As Stanleigh (2008, 36) had argued, change process is not complex but it has to be given time. Building upon this, we wanted to engage the staff into the creation process as Ramaswamy and Gouillart (2010) had proposed; we anticipated that it would help them to take in the changes and to commit to them.

As Marzec (2007, 28) had pointed out, storytelling is a form of personal knowledge sharing and it taps into people's motivation by inspiring them. Hence, we deemed that storytelling could be a useful tool for executing the process. Storytelling would allow us to enhance our B2B customer's corporate identity in a compelling way.

We knew that, as Marzec (2007, 32) had stated, the critical audience in corporate storytelling is the staff and the company must ensure that the corporate story is first accepted internally before launching it externally. In order to get the staff to adopt and accept the message, we wanted the staff to have ownership in it; we wanted to co-create the corporate story with them. To make the marketing publication even more interesting to future readers, we wanted to feature truly unique content: the employees' own stories about the company. As Marzec (2007, 34) claims, for a corporate story to succeed, employees must have a personal stake in it; by casting the employees in the main role we reckoned that the stake is as personal as it can get.

At noon, we took a pause in the workshop knowing that we wanted to create a service concept based on co-creation and use storytelling as a method to do that. Based on our preunderstanding of the content creation process, we recognized that the idea of a co-created corporate story was a new offering in the field of content creation. We wanted not only to create a service concept to this particular B2B customer, but to create a service concept that we could duplicate and that would help us to create content with the principles and methods of service design for our potential future B2B customers, as well. As such, we were practically developing a service design concept. Since we were basically developing a business offering for our own companies and we in the middle of an internal workshop without the presence of our B2B customer, we adopted a lean way of developing the idea further.

4.4 Creating a service concept

There are numerous ways to start building a service concept based on the understanding that has been gained in the exploration phase. Ethnographic methods, such as observation and interviews, are amongst the most commonly employed approaches in service design, but there are other methods, such as the lean start-up. (Stickdorn 2013, 128-129; Blank 2013, 4.)

4.4.1 Lean start-up method

According to Blank (2013, 4, 6) the lean start-up is a methodology that is based on the understanding of customer's needs and features and that takes advantage of rapid testing and iteration. It implies to an operation mode where experimentation is favored over elaborate planning, customer feedback from real life situations is appreciated over designer's intuition, and iterative development is advocated over traditional, linear waterfall development approach, where the project is delivered all at once.

The term originates from the start-up scene. Successful start-ups move quickly from failure to failure, and while doing so, they adapt their practices, improve their ideas and make structural course corrections or pivots to their offerings. Lean start-up practices have gained significant recognition outside the fast-growing technology ventures, as well. Among the fields that have adopted lean methods are business schools, science research projects, and large companies. (Blank 2013, 8-9.) They have become more popular in service design, as well. The lean start-up is an especially useful way of thinking when developing digital services, but it is also valid for constructing and testing more traditional service proposals.

According to Blank (2013, 5), the lean method builds on three key principles. First, it acknowledges that a development of an offering starts from a series of untested assumptions. These are gathered into a business model canvas. The standard framework for business model

canvases was developed by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) and it shall be explained in detail in chapter 4.5.1. Second, the developers of the offering go out and test their assumptions, one by one. This phase is called customer development and it means asking the potential stakeholders for feedback on all the elements of the offering. The feedback is taken into account and the offering is redesigned accordingly, making small iterations or more substantial pivots to it. Third, the development is done in an agile way, together with the customer. This operation mode aims to eliminate wasted time by iterative and incremental development.

The first step in lean startup methodology is to figure out the problem that needs to be solved. Then, the development team sets to learn about customer needs and about the offering's fit to market by building a minimum viable product (MVP). The purpose of the MVP is to test users' interest towards the offering, demonstrate the value it brings to the users, and gather user feedback with a minimum amount of effort and the least amount of time. With the knowledge gained from the MVP, the company can speed to market with customer-driven versions of the product. (Ries 2011; Rancic Moogk 2012.)

4.4.2 Brainstorming the first draft of the concept

In the afternoon, the two of us started brainstorming ideas on how to turn co-creation and storytelling into a service concept. According to Ojasalo et al. (2010, 145-147), brainstorming is one of the standard methods to produce ideas in a group. Although it is usually conducted in a group of 6-12 people and with a facilitator, in our case there was just the two of us. However, given the differences in our background we did not see this as a great limitation. Otherwise we followed the basic rules of brainstorming; we were not judging any ideas, we were supportive of inventing wild and exaggerated ideas, we favored quantity over quality, we adopted a "yes and" mentality where we developed each other's ideas and valued each idea equally.

The main question we pondered upon in the brainstorming was how could we include the staff into a storytelling process. We brainstormed the ideas with the help of pen and papers. The initial drafting on the form of the service offering is shown in Figure 8.

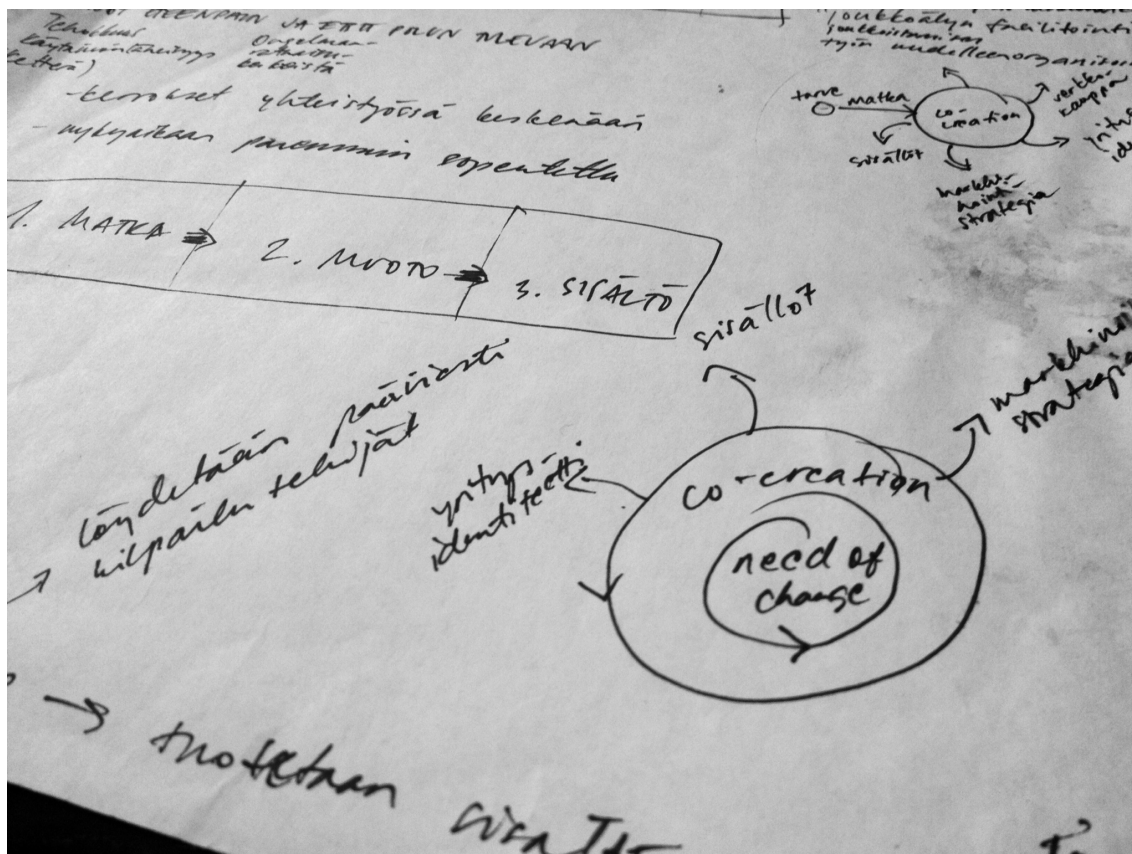


Figure 8: Drafting the idea of co-created corporate story

Soon we arrived to a conclusion that the process could be conducted online. As we wanted to include every employee in the process and the personnel was scattered in three cities, online execution would be the most cost-efficient way to get a hold of everyone. We also considered interviewing the staff but decided that individual or even team interviews would have required a lot of time so they might have become quite expensive for the customer.

My colleague had recently used crowdsourcing as a method of content creation in two separate cases and had had excellent results from both of them. Also I had previous experiences on developing a web service together with customers online with very satisfying outcomes. Hence, we started to take that idea further. We thought that it could be worthwhile to test how a co-creative content creation works in B2B storytelling context. We figured we could build a simple extranet site with a content management system WordPress for the gathering of data. This way we would have a controlled access to the platform.

4.4.3 Co-creation as a method

According to Van Dijk, Raijmakers and Kelly (2013, 199), one strong benefit of co-creation is that it creates the feeling of a shared ownership over a developed concept. It also brings

people together and thus cultivates ground for future collaboration. This statement was in line with our goals for the service concept.

According to van Dijk et al. (2013, 198), some barriers have to be taken into consideration when converting the principle of co-creation into an exercise. People might be afraid of taking the stage, saying the wrong thing, or disagreeing with their superior. Co-creation sessions have to be constructed and moderated so that these barriers are overcome and that the process can generate useful results. To us, the online execution seemed like an ideal solution to tackle these obstacles.

Van Dijk et al. (2013, 199), also note that co-creative exercises are meant for exploring potential directions and gather perspectives. As such, they are not equal to group decision; the proposed thoughts are always filtered so that only the most resonant themes will survive, and the core design team will develop them further. Also this precondition suited our goals because we only wanted to use co-creation as a catalyst for content creation; it was apparent to us that there would be a lot of pruning and editing before these stories would be ready to be published.

One principle that also supported the idea of an online execution was that we wanted to emphasize the role of the staff. We wanted to make the staff feel like they are the ones creating the outcome of this process, and to support that thought, we wanted to keep our own roles minimal. We wanted to make the staff to enjoy the process, share experiences together, not miss out on anything, and make them feel appreciated. We continued our brainstorming session to find a way to communicate this.

4.4.4 Communicating the concept

In order to communicate these goals in an easily understandable way, we wanted to find a commonly known metaphor for the process. We came up with an idea of a journey as a concept, and considered several ways to describe it in a more detailed way. We, for example, reflected the customer experience in every possible vehicle and came to a conclusion that generally speaking a cruise probably has the most positive connotations.

We took the idea a bit further and defined that the service could take the mental form of an old-fashioned Caribbean cruise. The journey would unfold like a cruise with several mooring points that would be tied around certain topics. A new topic would be introduced every week in the extranet site and the employees could write and share their own insights about the topic. Much as Stanleigh (2008, 36) suggests to have a guiding coalition, we also came up with the idea of designated “tour leaders” who would oversee that everybody is doing their share.

We visualized the concept with an illustration of an antiquated cruise ship, shown in Figure 9. We named the concept “Matka tulevaan” - a journey to the forthcoming - to emphasize the strategic point of the process; the concept co-creates the future of the organization.



Figure 9: The illustration of the Matka tulevaan service concept

After putting together the first draft of the concept, we had to test the idea. Our first untested assumption was whether there was demand for a co-creative content creation concept. We evaluated the risks that the idea contains and identified that the biggest one was that management might not want to give away its power to employees. In order to test this assumption, we created two tenders for our B2B customer. The first one included the co-creative online process; the publication would be formed on the basis of the outcome of the process. It was described to our customer with such terms as “creating strategy with the staff”, “corporate story created by crowdsourcing” and “co-creative process”. The second tender represented a conventional tender for content creation process including the conceptualization of the publication, the interviews of the people the B2B customer indicates, and the production and visualization of the publication with two correction rounds. The first offer included 180 hours of work, and the second one 112 hours. The price of the second offer was

roughly one third cheaper than the first one. The first tender acted as a Minimum Viable Product of our service.

4.5 Reflecting the concept

Our B2B customer contacted us almost immediately after receiving the two tenders and announced that they were interested in the first offer, that of the co-created corporate story, and we were invited to present and discuss the concept further in a workshop in December 2013. That left us time to develop the concept further - after all, it had passed its first real-life test.

Over the next weeks, the two of us had several conversations both live and over Google Hangout video chat platform. During them, we iterated the concept further and discussed the details of it. We for example defined the duration and the steps of the process and drafted the questions we thought would be useful for the purposes of our customer. We wanted to adopt a broad view on the process and tackle some of the challenges we had learned the staff was struggling with. We also tested the questions on real people in a café to see how they were perceived and what kind of reactions and answers they provoked.

The questions we proposed were based on the main theme of the B2B customer's new strategy and they were designed so that they first examined employees' work from a very individual level, such as "when have you felt you have succeeded in your work" and gradually expanding to wider, organizational context, such as "what makes your employer to stand out from other companies". The questions were later presented to our B2B customer's executive board for approval.

We also started to build the online platform on a content management system WordPress and reflected on issues that came up with that task, such as whether the participants should be answering with their real names or whether they should appear as anonym commentators, whether they would be able to comment each others' texts, and how would we make the registration process easy to tackle so that we could make the participation barrier as low as possible. The front page of the online platform is shown in Figure 10.

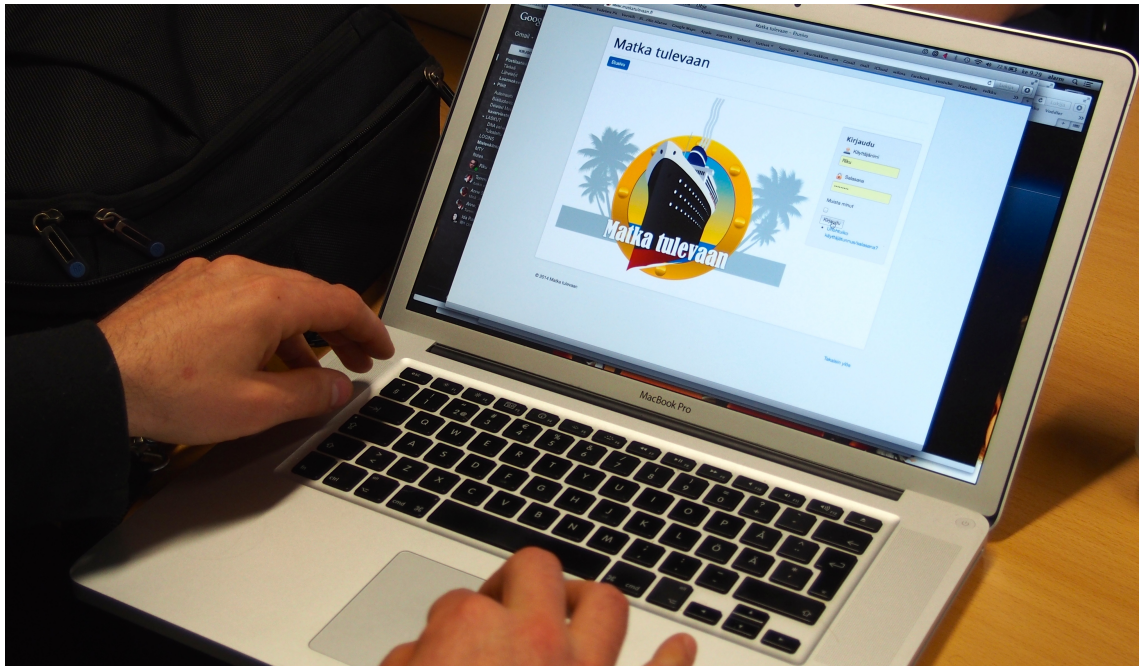


Figure 10: The login page of the Matka tulevaan online platform

We also considered how we could scale the concept according to different needs of potential business customers in the future and realized that the concept had a potential to be modified for example into mini cruises and training events.

4.5.1 Business model canvas

In order to describe the service concept and to reflect how it creates value for us as service providers and for our business customers, we created a business model canvas of the service. The business model canvas created by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) is, according to Van Dijk et al. (2013, 212), a tool that helps to describe business models in a simple, but not oversimplifying way and it showcases how a company or concept is going to create value for customers and for itself. It has become increasingly popular in many sectors.

There are also other canvases available for showcasing the value propositions of a business offer, such as the lean canvas by Maurya (2012) and the value co-creation canvas by Rampen (2011). They all serve to demonstrate in an intuitively understandable way how the business offer is going to help people and how it is going to make money. In this thesis, the original business model canvas by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) is used because it is the most established one and it is suitable for many different contexts.

The business model canvas, presented in Figure 11, is a table that consists of nine blocks that cover the main areas of business. Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010, 21) advise to start from the

customers and to define the different groups the company wants to reach and serve. The second block to fill is the company’s value proposition. It describes the reason why customers turn to the company with the aspiration of solving their problem. Third, the channels via which the offering reaches the customers and communicates with them have to be indicated. These channels are customers’ touch points with the company and they might for example raise awareness about the company’s services among customers or allow customers to purchase them. Fourth, the relationships types a company establishes with its customers should be considered. Fifth, revenue streams are considered by asking what is the value that customers are willing to pay for and for what they are currently paying. Next, Osterwalder and Pigneur encourage listing the key resources the company needs in order to make the business model work and the key activities the company must do to operate successfully. Then, the attention is focused towards key partnerships, which means the suppliers, subcontractors and partners that make the business model work. Finally, cost structure is examined by describing all the costs that are incurred to operate a business. (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 21-40.)

The business model canvas is supposed to bring clarity to the offering’s core aims and it helps to identify its strengths and weaknesses. As an easily grasped “snapshot”, it helps organizations to implement the results of a service design project. (Van Dijk et al. 2013, 212.)

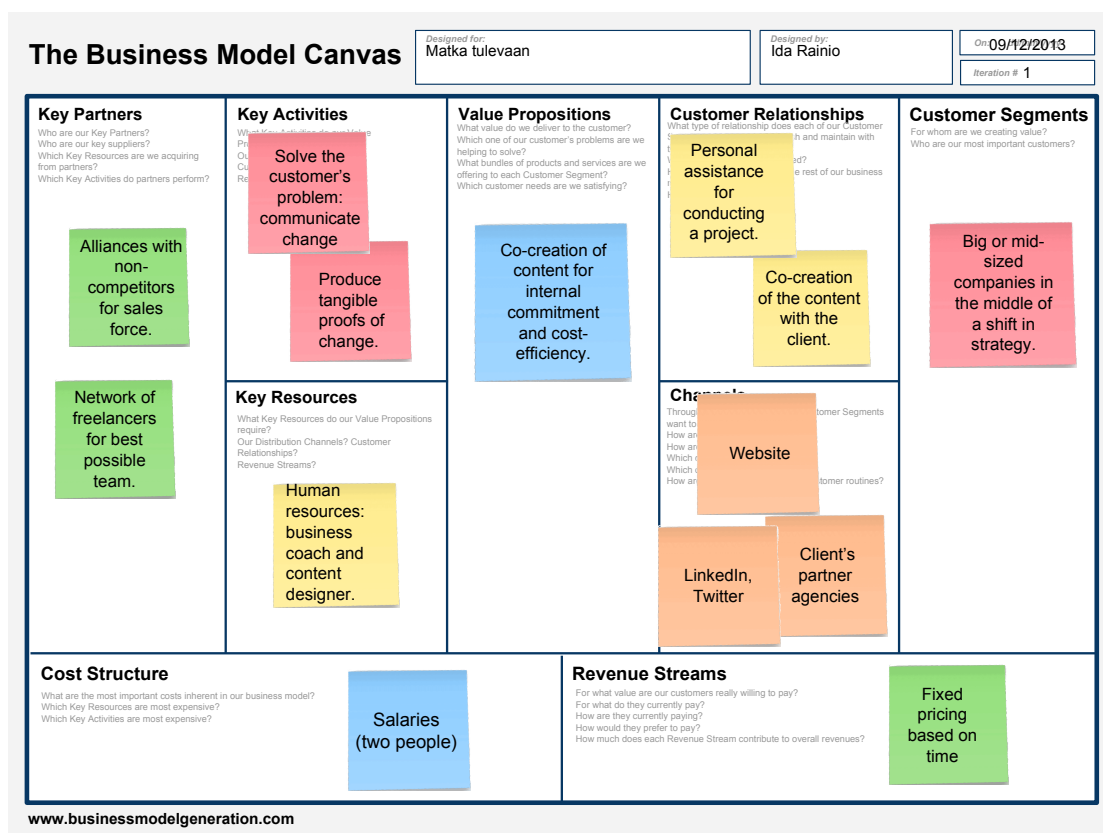


Figure 11: The Business Model Canvas of the Matka tulevaan concept

Table 1 explains the blocks of the business model canvas in more detail. The listing follows the order in which Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) advise the aspects to be considered.

Table 1. The explanation for Business Model Canvas of the Matka tulevaan concept

Customer segments	This block defines the different groups the company wants to reach and serve. In our case there is only one customer group: established companies who are in the middle of a shift in strategy. This situation usually requires outside help and companies are used to paying for this kind of help.
Value propositions	This block answers to question what do you do. It describes why customers turn to the company with the aspiration of solving their problem. In the Matka tulevaan concept, the value that is offered is co-creation. Involving the staff in the content creation process is very cost-efficient and results in a great level of commitment by the participants' side.
Channels	Channels block explains how the company reaches its customers and communicates with them. In the Matka tulevaan concept, the main sales force will be the website. We are also building business ties to companies that are in contact with B2B customers when they change their strategy.
Customer relationships	This block describes the relationships types a company establishes with its customers. In our case, there are two types of relationships: first, we offer the B2B customer personal assistance to conduct a project, and second, we co-create the content with the customer, its staff, or its audience.
Revenue Streams	This block answers to the question what is the value that customers are willing to pay for and for what are they currently paying. Our business customers pay for skills and services they do not have or do not have time for. Our pricing is based on the time we consume with the project.
Key Resources	Key resources block demonstrates what is needed for the company to deliver and capture value. We need mainly human resources so that we can reach markets, maintain relationships with customers, and earn revenues.
Key activities	Key activities are the most important things the company must do to operate successfully. We have to solve the customer's problem of communicating change and produce a tangible proof of this change.
Key Partnerships	This block explains who will help the company to make the business model work. But we are forming strategic alliances with other agencies for selling our service. In addition, we need a network of freelancers so that we can offer different B2B customers the best possible skills for their projects.
Cost structure	Cost structure block describes all the costs that are incurred to operate a business. In our case the costs come from our own salaries. Our business model is mainly value-driven; we offer a highly personalized service, but we are also cost-driven in the sense that we operate in a networked way.

Over the following weeks, the canvas was presented to and discussed with several potential partners and customers. The initial feedback was promising, but the canvas also helped us to spot the risky parts of our offering. The most common feedback was that the idea is good but companies might not know how to buy this kind of a service. Also, big companies have a tendency to work with other big companies so mid-sized companies might be a more realistic customer segment for us. The canvas also helped us to see that our business model is based on separate projects that would all have to be sold separately and there was no solid income. Based on this feedback, we decided to first conduct our B2B customer case and have feedback from it, and pivot the concept only after that - even though that would take us a few months.

4.5.2 Iterating the concept with the B2B customer

In December 2013, we held a meeting with our B2B customer, where the two relevant people in the project, the Sales and Marketing Director and the Marketing Communication Manager, were present. They liked the idea of a cruise and the slightly playful attitude the concept featured. They accepted our tender about the co-creative content creation process. We went through their needs, problems, and requests in detail and discussed their brand guidelines and restrictions. On a side note, our business customers started deliberately to use the cruise terminology in the meeting, which showed us that the allegory is not only easy to communicate but also easy to understand.

Soon after our concept and offer had been accepted, our customer company was having a get-together, and we were invited to present the idea there. Unfortunately the event was held out of town, and due to the short notice and range of the location, my colleague and I were both unable to attend the happening. It would have been a unique opportunity to connect with the staff in a relaxed atmosphere and inspire them to look forward to the upcoming common experience. To make the most of the unfortunate situation, we made a short presentation for the staff that was introduced by the Marketing Communication Manager. We agreed that we would launch the idea with a playful name contest for the ship that illustrated the cruise; we would later use the winning suggestion in materials needed during the process, such as boarding cards with registration instructions.

We held a second meeting two weeks after the first one with the Sales and Marketing Director and the Marketing Communication Manager. During that meeting, we agreed on a number of practical details, such as who was to be our contact person, who were the tour leaders, how should they lead their team through the process, when would the process start, what kind of kick-off event should be organized, how and when would the staff be informed about new

questions, how would we follow that everybody is participating and would they be reminded if that was not the case, and who would we report to and how frequently.

Two days after the second meeting with the B2B customer, we presented the concept of the co-creative corporate story to the executive board and to the team leaders. We also presented the questions we wanted to ask the staff and asked them to reflect whether they were the right ones from the points of interest of the company. Our co-creative approach raised some debate among the executive board since the members of the board had different opinions on what kind of content the sales materials should include. Based on the discussion we changed some of the questions.

4.5.3 Blueprinting the service

Before the “cruise” actually started, we produced a service blueprint of the process. Teixeira, Patrício, Nunes, Nóbrega, Fisk and Constantine (2012, 363) point out that a service blueprinting is a commonly used technique for designing the service delivery process. Meroni and Sangiorgi (2011, 112-113) describe a service blueprint as a map of user journey, touchpoints where the service interactions occur, and frontstage and backstage processes. Frontstage refers to interactions that take place in view of customers, and backstage points to internal actions that are hidden from customers. Service blueprint describes the big picture, acts as a process of analysis, and helps to plan out projects and to generate new ideas. It also adds transparency to the service process. Furthermore, Patrício et al. (2011, 4) note that a service blueprint enables the service to be replicated by other people. However, Teixeira et al. (2012, 364) remark that it is only a scheme since a company cannot design service experiences that follow the predicted outcomes. Blueprinting has also been criticized; Heinonen, Strandvik, and Mickelsson (2010, 2) argue that it is too producer-centric as it only describes the service process from the service provider’s point of view.

The blueprint helped us to think the process through, but it also made the process transparent and visible for the customer. As we were producing the service in a networked manner, we also included the tasks of our external partners, such as video production. We printed the blueprint on a large canvas and gave it to the customer before the kick-off so that they could follow the process and see what is happening in the backstage even when they were not seeing or hearing from us. The first version of the blueprint is attached in this thesis as Appendix 1. The service blueprint was later, after the implementation phase, iterated to be more general and easily understandable. The second version is attached as Appendix 2.

4.5.4 Customer journey map

It is equally important to describe the process from the user's point of view. As Stickdorn (2013, 132) notes, at the point of testing ideas and concepts, it is important to generate a good mental picture of the service concept and to keep in mind the emotional aspect of the proposed service concept. For this, a mere description of the service is usually not enough; it has to be visualized somehow. Customer journey maps is a useful tool for this purpose. It provides a structured and easily understandable visualization of the service user's experience and gives an overview of the factors that are included in the service experience. The customer journey map includes all the touchpoints, i.e. the points where the customer in some way interacts with the service provider, and all the activities and events that the customer perceives as part of the delivery of the service. The user's path from touchpoint to touchpoint forms a visual story of the user experience. (Patricio et al. 2011, 3; Van Dijk et al. 2013, 158.)

The customer journey map for Matka tulevaan was in fact included into the first version of the service blueprint; one row of it was indicating the process from the B2B customer's point of view and this was also explained to our business customer. However, after the pilot project, when the service blueprint was iterated, also a separate customer journey map was produced to demonstrate the process in one glance. This is illustrated in Figure 12.

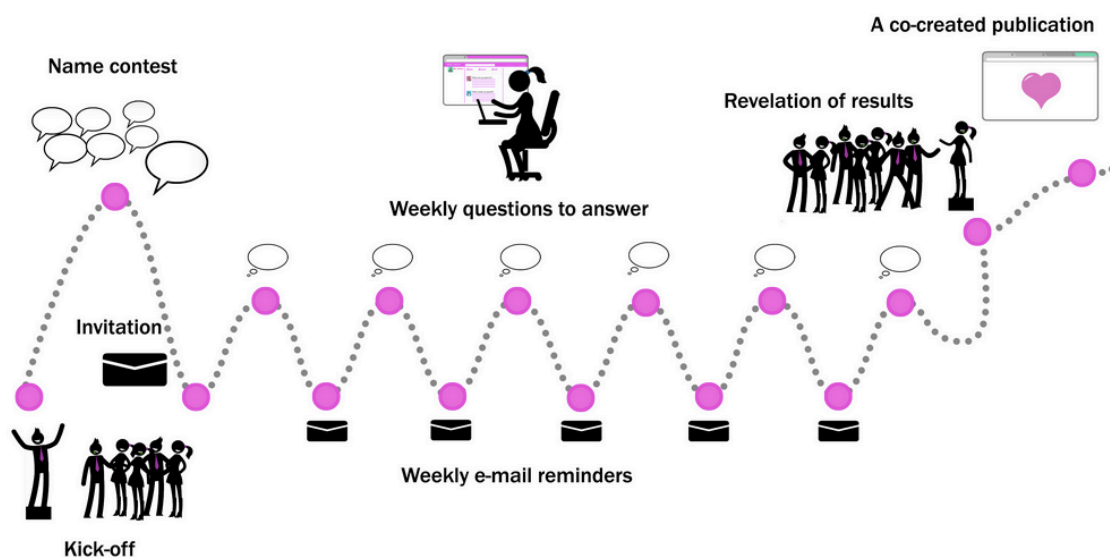


Figure 12: The customer journey map of the Matka tulevaan concept

4.6 Implementation

In December 2013, the B2B customer held the get-together where the concept was briefly introduced to the staff and where the name contest was announced. In January 2014, when everyone was back from the holidays, we conducted a brief kick-off event where we handed out a personalized boarding card for every employee and explained briefly what was to follow. With the information provided in the boarding card, the staff could log in to an extranet site and answer weekly questions that revolved around the B2B customer's main strategic theme. We also announced the winner of the name contest and rewarded two staff members who had suggested the same winning name. The kick-off was held in one of the operating sites of the customer company and video conferenced to another site. One site heard the instructions over telephone.

During the following six weeks, the staff was sent an email containing the weekly question on Monday mornings and a reminder mail on Thursdays. We had decided that it could be beneficial to give the staff an easy start for the weekly questions so the first question was answered anonymously and the rest were shown with the answerers' real name. This was indicated in the weekly mail, as well. This allowed us to test the effects of both anonymous and identified answering methods, too. We monitored the discussion and gathered data from it. We noticed that the first question received the most answers and encouraged the most conversation in the form of comments. However, we cannot be certain whether this was because of the novelty of the experience, the fact that the conversation had not taken any direction yet, or because of the anonymity.

We, the facilitators, were not participating in the online discussion but we monitored closely the staff's activity. We had asked the tour leaders to remind their team about the ongoing assignment. In the middle of the third week, we sent an extra reminder personally to people who had not yet answered to any of the questions.

Around the same time the conversation started to pace down, as Figure 13 demonstrates, which made us to reflect our own participation. We were asking ourselves whether we should participate in the discussion or continue let it unfold internally. As we wanted to keep the process internal, we decided to participate in a different way and conduct a little poll to keep the discussion alive and make the journey a bit more amusing. This way we could also have insights on how polls work in this kind of environment.

Matka tulevaan Page Downloads (total 2 593)

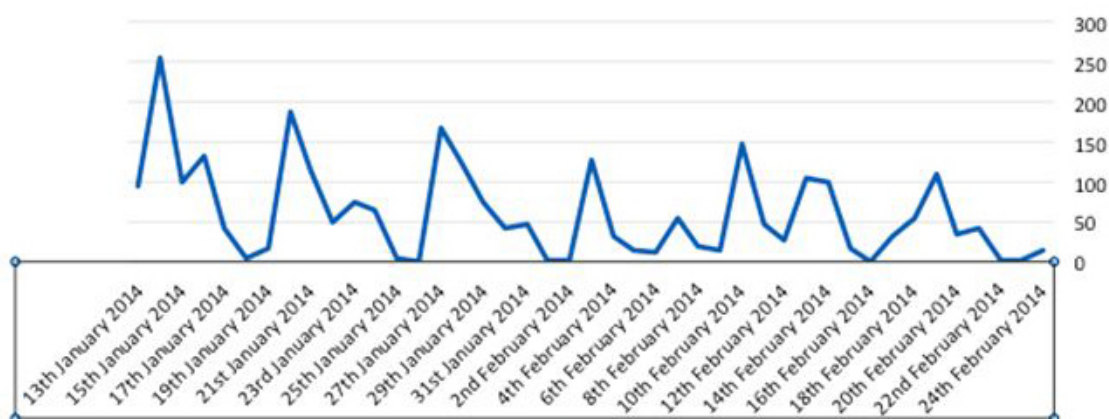


Figure 13: The user activity during the Matka tulevaan process

As the “cruise” went on, we were simultaneously reflecting how we could turn the content produced by the staff into a corporate story and into a publication. As for the publication, we wanted it to be useful for readers and not only contain traditional type of push messages that highlight the excellence of the company. Hence, we had to look at the answers from two different viewpoints, that of the internal story and that of the external customers. We held two workshops with a graphic designer to create a concept for the content and the visual look of the publication, and continued to develop it via e-mails. We also had one meeting with our B2B customer and a video producer where we discussed how to present the same message in video form. We agreed that a video is made out of only one customer reference, and that same reference is showcased in the publication.

When the process came to an end, we had 152 answers and more than 300 comments to use as a basis for the corporate story. The participation percentage turned out to be 83 %. The statistics showed that 59 employees had produced a total of 550 visits and 2 593 page loads, indicating that people were reading other people’s writings as well. Each visit lasted on average 8 minutes. In total, the program required 66 hours from the staff, on average 1 hour 15 minutes per employee.

We held a meeting after the “cruise” with the B2B customer and showcased the results of the co-creative journey. In this meeting, we had the first real feedback about the service. Our customer was rather pleased with the figures concerning the concept, but they would have hoped that everyone would have participated into the process. They suggested that it might be a good idea in the future to let the directors of the customer company to know more regularly how each individual is doing - after all, this was a work assignment for the employees.

We also discussed in more detail what to do with the information we had received during the process. We had plenty of material for the marketing publication but we also had insights about the company's strengths and weaknesses as well as about its potential competitive advantage. We were asked to present these findings in the customer company's internal development day. As it was once again out of town, only my colleague attended that event.

The submitted stories served as an inspiration for the external marketing material and they were eventually turned into a corporate story and a description of how the company works, presented in a reader-friendly visualization of how the company serves its customers. A print publication and a website were made out of this material, and video testimonials from the B2B customer's customers from around the same topic helped to penetrate the message.

4.7 Iteration

According to the principles of lean development, the company should go out and test their idea as soon as possible and iterate its offering based on user feedback and real-life experiences. As Stickdorn (2013, 126) mentions, the iterative process of design thinking is only useful if the designer learns from the mistakes of the previous iteration.

When the cruise was approaching its end and we already had some insight about the process, we held another internal workshop with two more colleagues to consider specially the marketing of the concept. We tried to simplify the selling points of our concept and find answers to potential B2B customers' questions such as "why take the co-creative approach", "why the process works" and "how the process makes my job easier". We put key statements about the process on post-its in order to crystallize the concept (Figure 14). Among them were statements like "change is a possibility", "people engage when they are part of the story", "the staff articulates the purpose of the company", "participation by doing, not by listening", and "internal ideation has better chances to become implemented".

We also reflected the process companies already have for buying change initiatives. Since we knew that our concept represented a new kind of approach, we wanted to adopt the lexicon of the potential business customer by using arguments such as "tackling the bottlenecks of internal communication", "managing experts", and "accepting change as a permanent condition".

We also considered the different ways to conduct and to visualize the process. In addition to a fictional cruise, we could use the metaphors of e.g. a fictional formula race or a mountain conquering expedition. We thought it is important to use metaphors that suit the customer.

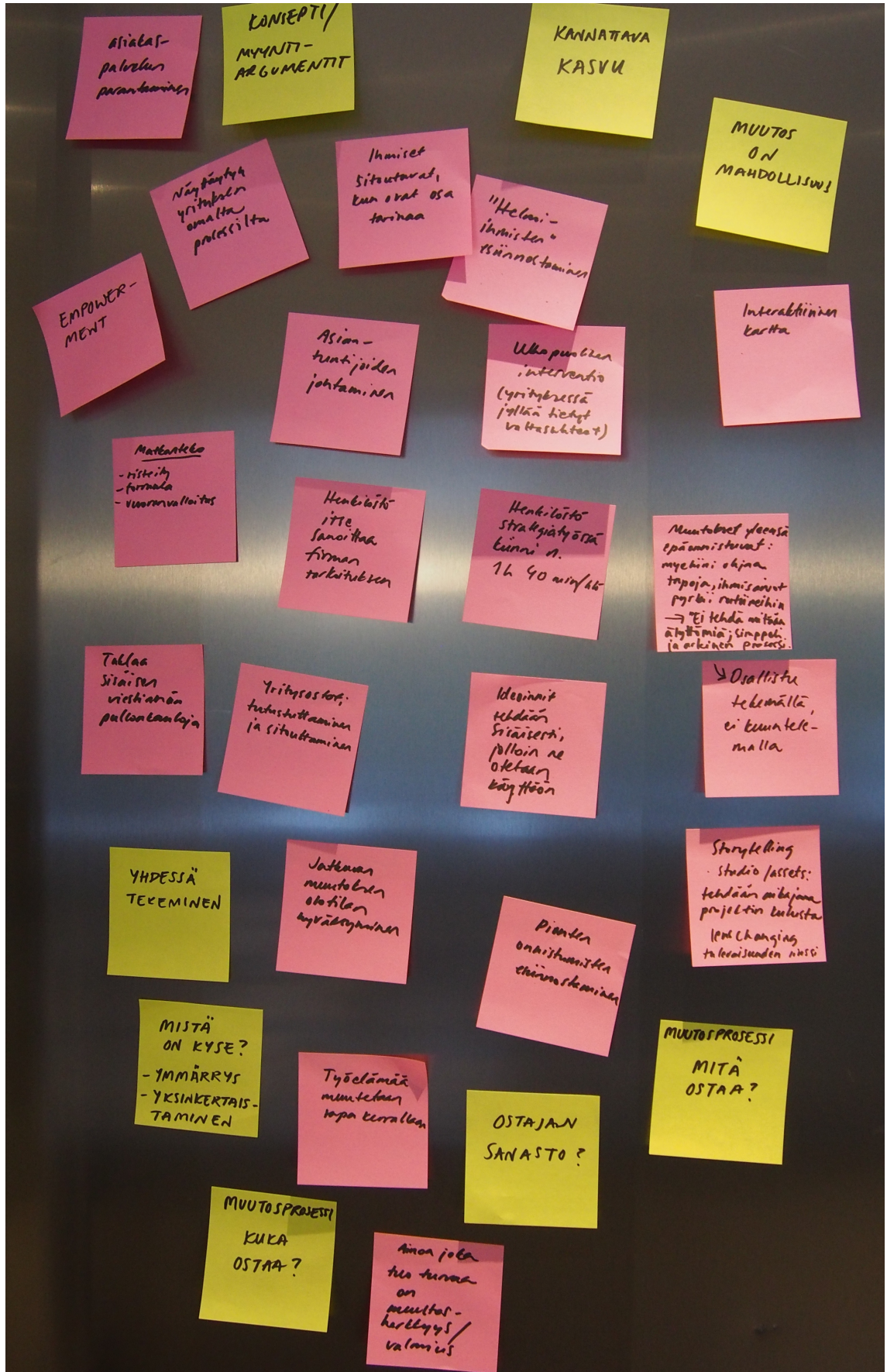


Figure 14: iteration workshop for the Matka tulevaan concept

4.7.1 Building a persona

Based on the interviews, we were also able to draw a persona who represents our potential B2B customer (Figure 15). As van Dijk et al. (2013, 178) explain, persona is a fictional profile that is developed based on the information elicited during the research phase. Even though the character is fictional, his or her features and motivations are real. Personas help design teams to engage with the customer.

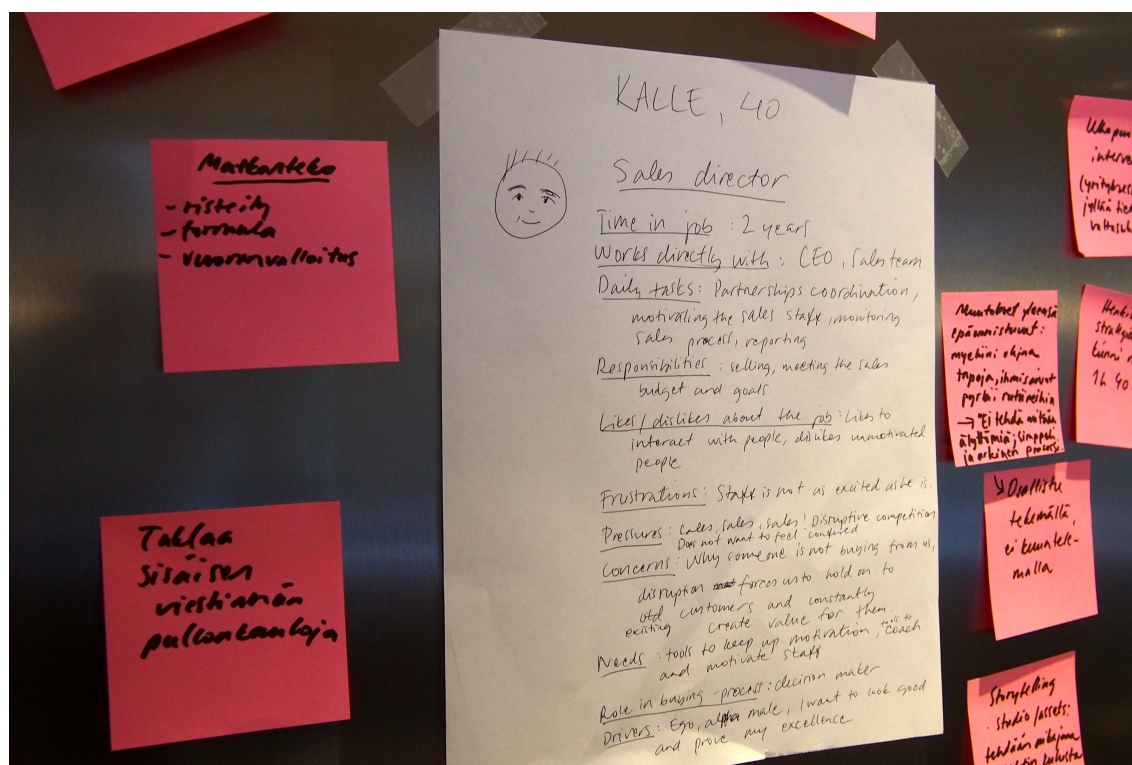


Figure 15: Creating a persona for the potential buyer of the Matka tulevaan concept

We indicated our potential customer to be a Sales Director whose daily tasks include coordinating partnerships, monitoring sales, and motivating the sales staff. He likes to interact with people but dislikes unmotivated people. His main frustration is that the staff is not as excited about the company's initiatives as he is. He feels pressured about the sales figures and meeting the budget, but also about the disruptions in his operational environment; he does not want to feel confused. He needs tools to motivate his subordinates but his is equally motivated about succeeding in his own job. Creating this persona helped us not only to know our potential future customer better but also to feel empathy towards him.

4.7.2 Starting the production

When we started to work on the marketing material production, we noticed some improvements we could have done with the questions. Our questions had been in closed form, and as a result, we got quite short answers from people. We should have encouraged longer answers, used open-ended questions with e.g. sentence completion method and kept in mind that “a story” means different things for non-professional writers than to professional ones. However, we were easily able to find the form that we could give to the “stories” so the matter was not an obstacle in this case. Rather, it served as a reminder for a potential next case.

We produced the first drafts of the content in a workshop with my colleague and took them for approval to our customer. Traditionally, marketing materials are produced in a way that the B2B customer first approves the texts and then the visualization. As our suggestion for the material was very visual, we tried to put these two in one round. But if the concept of co-creation in content production was new to our B2B customer at the beginning, so was the concept of customer-centric content production. We had to take the content draft back and forth several times and abandon some of the parts we thought truly reflected the core of what the staff had communicated before the material was finally accepted.

4.7.3 Feedback interviews

After the “cruise”, the CEO, the Sales and Marketing Director, and the Marketing Communication Manager as well as three members of the staff - one of them on a managerial level - were interviewed in order to learn about their personal experiences and to iterate the concept further.

According to Curedale (2013, 174-176), interview is a conversation where questions are asked directly from the user in order to obtain information and it is a useful technique when the researcher wants to frame insights, exchange ideas, and gather information about the service, or know the context and the users of the service. This is because interviews uncover user’s tacit information and information people might not be consciously aware of. It has some challenges, however; the interviewer may be biased towards the given information, or the interviewee may start to lead the conversation. To tackle this, Portigal (2013, 70, 90-91) advises interviewers to ask very specific, open-ended questions. The researcher should also probe what is left unsaid by asking for clarifications. Portigal (2013, 19) also notes that it is important to keep the mindset that the interviewee is the expert and the interviewer is the novice.

The interviewees were chosen based on to their position in the company and according to their activity in the Matka tulevaan process. The executives were interviewed because of their strategic view, and the Marketing Communication Manager was interviewed because she was our primary contact person during the process and had the most insight about how the process went. The interviewees from the participants were chosen according to following criteria: one active participant, one tour leader, and one participant who was less active and who usually likes to stay on the background. The interviewees were selected together with the B2B customer.

The interviews with the CEO, the Sales and Marketing Director, the Marketing Communication Manager and one member of the staff were conducted face to face during the spring after the "cruise", and each of them lasted approximately an hour. Two interviews with the members of the staff were conducted over the telephone because of geographic distance.

The interviews followed a semi-structured field guide. I had prepared a list of questions but asked a lot more specifications and examples than my field guide suggested. This method combines the advantages of a structured interview - an easy analysis of the result - and an unstructured one - it makes interviewees open up more easily (Curedale 2013, 188-189). The questions included for example "How did you experience this process", "how would you describe this process to your colleague" and "what we could have done otherwise during the process". The complete list of questions is attached in the end of this thesis (Appendix 3).

I both recorded and typed the interviewees' answers while they spoke. This method was beneficial, because it allowed natural moments of silence during the interview that in many cases encouraged interviewees to continue on the theme of the question even though they had already answered the initial question. This provided me more valuable information.

To sum up the interviews, the CEO stated that the program was in an essential role in the internal communication and implementation of the new strategy and in the internal development of service culture. He emphasized that his role in the process had been small and that the Sales and Marketing Director had been the one leading the process, but he was impressed by the activity rate of the employees. The company had never taken the whole staff along to a strategy process, and he appreciated the fact that so many of his employees had actually reflected upon the new strategy and asked themselves "what is in it for me". He concluded that in his opinion the process was successful but the true results of the process can be seen only in retrospect, after a year or so. He also added that even though the company is quite small, it has constantly several ongoing development projects. Thus, it is hard to say what is the role of this process in the whole.

Also the Sales and Marketing Director thought the process was first and foremost about internal communication. He described the concept as a method to create internal discussion and to define what the company is, what it does and what it is good at. He also noted that the process showcases those stories that the staff is genuinely proud of, not just those that the executives value. He appreciated the fact that the staff was included in the conversation about the strategy and that they were willing to participate in it, too. It concretized the theme of the new strategy to the staff. He thought it was crucial both internally and externally for a company to have a corporate story; it turns the employees and the customers into a tribe. He pondered whether it would have been fruitful to expand the process and include the company's business customers in it as well so that the tribe would have become bigger. He said he was skeptical whether stories can be created by "inviting everyone to sit by the bonfire" but thought that on the other hand, a story needs to be given a possibility to be created, otherwise there will be no story. He suggested that the process should include training on how to narrate the story to customers.

The Marketing Communication Manager said that the process encouraged the employees to discuss good and bad things more openly. In her opinion, many employees appreciated the fact that an actual *process* was conducted to learn more about the employee's insights. She appreciated the fact that the process invited everyone, also the more quiet people, to discuss the future of the company. She thought that an online process as an approach was better than discussing the strategy in small groups because it forces also the quiet ones to participate. She felt it was, however, difficult for employees to see the whole purpose of the process, i.e. not only gathering people's opinions but also to implement change. That made us to realize that we should have communicated the big picture better. On the other hand, in her opinion, every employee did assimilate the new strategy and did not question it. According to her, the fact that positive aspects about the company were brought in the limelight and that people's opinions were asked generated unexpected positive outcomes; people have started to discuss things more and innovate new practices in teams; they have gotten a "permission" to express their feelings publicly. She suggested that the process could involve a live team discussion to support the online discussions. Also, she thought it was beneficial that an "outsider" conducts the process because people tend not to see things clearly from within. Outsiders help people inside the company to see the value of something they themselves have become blind to.

All the interviewed staff members expressed their appreciation over the fact that their opinions were asked, but their opinions about the process diverged quite a bit. Two interviewees were pleased that this kind of strategic process was conducted in a fun and less-serious way, one said that it was not really her type of a process. Two interviewees mentioned that even though it was important that practically everybody was participating in the process, they

found the process somewhat arduous in their busy schedule. One interviewee, a middle manager, said that the process remained somewhat disconnected from other ongoing things; the briefs before and during the process were quite short.

Every interview also mentioned that it had also been a tad unclear to them what the actual outcome of the process would be. They understood it when we explained that the outcome would depend on the answers we received, but nevertheless, they had felt a bit obscure during the process. One interviewee suggested that the concept should be named after the B2B customer's current lexicon and not as generically as "a journey to the forthcoming". This interviewee also suggested that the process could be conducted live in small groups and only once. While saying this, though, he also anticipated that that might keep the quiet ones quiet once again. Another interviewee said that even though answering to questions sometimes felt tedious, it helped her to bear in mind the renewed strategy. Also the middle manager said that the process helped the staff to think about the new operation model and to focus on the good things the company represents. She asked to have a copy of the gathered data so that she could further use the knowledge gained based on it in her team.

Based on the interviews, it can be stated that we received good feedback from the people we worked closely with during the process. That indicates that we succeeded well in building a relationship with the B2B customer but not so well in communicating the concept to strangers. This puts our initial assumption that the concept should appear as an internal process at stake. We cannot rely too much on the fact that someone else communicates the instructions on our behalf. However, the participating approach was valued by every interviewee; the philosophy resonated with the interviewees but the execution of the concept needs some ameliorating.

4.7.4 Take-aways for the next iteration

Based on the lessons from the first iteration, following improvements can be suggested. The next iteration of the concept should be conducted anonymously online and live in small groups. It should be named according to the B2B customer's context. The name could for example have a changing part in it. The process should appear as a facilitated service design process with a small - but only a small - blink in the eye. The customer journey map should be included in the invitation card in order to communicate the process in one glance. We should also visualize the purpose and the potential outcomes of the journey better.

In addition, we should invite the managers to introduce new topics but not to take part in the conversation after that; that way we can demonstrate their involvement but keep the discussion open and give space to also complaints and suggestions for improvement. The matter at

hand should not be, nor appear, as something that is already decided by the management. The chosen topics should be such that the staff can actually have a say in them and that they can see their own suggestions becoming implemented. Finally, we should better reflect how to finish the project and to communicate the gained information to the staff, and not only to the managers. The key lessons are showcased in table 2.

Table 2: The key take-aways from the first iteration of the Matka tulevaan concept

The key take-aways for the next iteration
Find another name for the concept that could be localized in a customer company.
Include live meetings in small groups to the concept alongside the online discussion.
Keep the approach humorous but do not take it too far.
Let the concept openly appear as a process facilitated by outsiders.
Include a customer journey map to the invitation card.
Communicate better to the employees what the end product will be like.
Concretize better how the process serves to change the company culture.
Draw clear guidelines whether the executives can or should participate into the discussion.

The interviewees also enabled us to realize that we were on a right track with many aspects of the service. These are presented in Table 3. The features to retain in the concept include the participation of every employee, because otherwise the quiet ones would continue to stay on the background. The vast majority of employees were active in the process, and they were quite eager to give their insights about the weekly questions. The weekly repetition of the same theme from different angles also proved to be beneficial because it helped every employee to digest the new strategy and to reflect what it means in his or her work.

The interviews indicated that the process the staff went through lowered the barrier to address unpleasant things publicly, and thus decreased the habit of complaining behind the back of the management and lifted the overall atmosphere. The process encouraged internal cooperation in other fields of business as well. The process put employees in an important role in the marketing materials. As one interviewee commented: “it made me realize how faceless our marketing had been previously”.

Table 3: The features that proved to be valuable in the Matka tulevaan concept

The key lessons about positive features:
Inviting everyone to participate, because otherwise the quiet ones would have continued to keep quiet.
The weekly repetition of the same theme from different angles helped the staff to digest the new strategy and to reflect what it means in his/her work.
The vast majority of employees were active in the process and eager to participate.

The process lowered the barrier to address unpleasant things publicly and thus decreased the habit of complaining behind the back and lifted the overall atmosphere.

The process encouraged internal cooperation in other fields of business as well.

The process put employees in an important role in the marketing materials.

4.8 Evaluating the concept

It took on average 1 hour and 15 minutes from each employee to contribute in the corporate storytelling - the amount of time equivalent for one meeting. During this time, the employee was brought to ponder upon the company's new strategy several times and made to think about his or her reaction, attitude, and beliefs towards it from several viewpoints.

The pilot case conducted in the customer company showed positive results; the managers told in the feedback interviews that the overall atmosphere in the company had improved a lot during the time the process went on and the coffee break discussions revolved often around the "cruise" and the weekly questions. However, the B2B customer introduced also other initiatives in order to change the atmosphere, so it is difficult to say which of the improvements were caused by the Matka tulevaan process. As this might well be the case with future B2B customers as well, a more thorough measuring system needs to be built in order to prove the efficiency of the process to the potential customer and thus to add transparency to the service.

The time the Matka tulevaan process went on was also full of changes and even some unexpected obstacles in the customer company. Even though the process did not require a lot of time - one average session lasted for 8 minutes - the ongoing challenges kept some of the employees extremely busy and for them, the process seemed somewhat interruptive. As the times of stillness are presumably over in most companies, the process would have to be fine-tuned in the next iteration so that it disturbs employees as little as possible. Conducting at least part of the process in live discussions could help the employees to concentrate better on the questions at hand and would enhance better the feeling of a common journey. Process that goes on only online might not be enough to create a feeling of communityship.

As for Liedtka's (2011) remark about the four essential questions a designer needs to ask, the first iteration answered mainly to the questions "what is" and "what if"; what this service is and what if the staff was invited to the change implementation process by creating content that communicates the change. It also pointed out some indicators of "what wows" and "what works" with the B2B customer, but also proved some assumptions wrong. These should be looked into more carefully in the second iteration of the concept. The second iteration

should concentrate on finding an operational model that communicates the process and its anticipated outcomes more clearly to employees and that turns the material-gathering process into an enjoyable and uniting experience for employees.

The pilot case with its 83 % participation rate indicated that employees are generally willing to participate in a co-creative process. As Tacchi et al. (2009, 575) note, not everyone is eager to have his or her voice heard and to participate in a co-creative process. The majority of the employees of the customer company are women; could the findings of Hargittai and Walejko (2008) about women's smaller online participation activity apply also to this context? It would be beneficial to measure also this during the next iteration.

Nevertheless, we finished the six-week "cruise" with 152 answers and more than 300 comments to use as a basis for the co-created corporate story. In the pilot case, they were turned into a company brochure, a website and a video clip that present the company in a new light to its B2B customers. The process also revealed a lot of information and insights about the staff's strengths, attitudes, and thoughts, and we would need a way to convert these "by-products" into a service, as well. Because of the personal touch the process enabled, the content that was produced features a truly unique approach and as such, stands clearly out from the content produced by the company's competitors.

The feedback interviews after the process gave us a lot of valuable information about how to iterate the concept, but also about how to market it. One of the most insightful pieces of information was that the CEO considered the concept to be a tool for internal communication. That gave us a sense of the lexicon we should use in marketing. But the interviews also demonstrated the challenges that a new approach features. The executives said they would not have known that such approach to content creation could be taken and they would not know how to buy this kind of a service. They would not even know from which type of agency this sort of a concept would belong to - to advertising agency, to communication agency or to management consulting agency. The closest benchmark the executives could find was the change management company Trainer's House.

That remark led us to think that even though in a theoretical level the idea of engaging employees to co-create a corporate story was good, and in an empirical level the approach produced fruitful results, the Finnish business environment might not be quite yet ready for this kind of a concept to break through. However, academic literature does not necessarily back this idea; Liedtka (2011, 13) states that the dismantling of traditional barriers now taking place favours revolutionaries who are not wedded to the status quo. Leavy (2012, 28, 31) claims that the transition to co-creative modus operandi is likely to be evolutionary for companies. It starts with individual initiatives and local experiments. This was the first such ex-

periment in our B2B customer company. It took a step towards to becoming a co-creative enterprise.

5 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to create a service concept that facilitates the implementation of change while communicating and marketing it both internally and externally. As such, the concept would lie in the intersection of change management consulting, corporate communication, and service marketing, and companies that seek help from management consulting agencies, communications agencies, and marketing agencies could find a cost-efficient and coherently executed service in the form of this concept.

The following research questions were asked in order to reach the aim of this thesis:

- How could change be co-created with employees?
- What kind of service concept could help to facilitate the implementation of change in companies?
- Could design thinking be introduced into the field of corporate communication?

In order to answer to the first research question, “how could change be co-created with employees”, the theoretical part of the thesis cast a look at employee co-creation from three viewpoints which fall under the fields of change management consulting, corporate communication, and service marketing. The existing notions about employee engagement, change management, corporate communication, storytelling, service marketing and internal marketing were looked at and the benefits of co-creation with employees were explained. The employee co-creation triangle (Figure 1) illustrated the chosen perspective and acted as a theoretical framework for this thesis.

The guiding light in this thesis was Ramaswamy’s and Gouillart’s (2010) argument that change initiatives are successful only if they engage people who are affected by the change. The prevailing change management models have been quite leadership-centric but recently some researches have started to question them. Mintzberg (2009) points out that the problems many companies are experiencing right now are caused by the fact that companies have neglected employees’ need to belong into a community. To build a sense of community, or communityship, he argued that companies need engaged and distributed leadership, and that instead of executives, middle managers should be the ones leading change in companies.

Corporate communication is another area that is monopolized by the top management alongside with professional communicators; they govern what can be said about the company and who can give statements about it. Groysberg and Slind (2012) propose that the current corpo-

rate communication should be replaced by organizational conversation, which is a more intimate, interactive, inclusive, and intentional form of communication. Employees that are included in corporate communication turn into brand ambassadors and content providers, and they become more emotionally engaged to the company.

It was also evaluated why storytelling is such an efficient tool in corporate communication. While communication provides information, storytelling inspires action. Storytelling helps employees to envision the changed organizational reality and their own role in it, but in order for it to be efficient, employees have to accept the company's story. However, the academic literature about corporate storytelling concentrates on the leaders; employees are often left in the passive role of the audience.

As for service marketing, the assessed theory implies that internal, external, and interactive marketing is conducted in silos in companies. In this thesis, special attention is given to internal marketing, because it is in a significant position in implementing change. Ferdous et al. (2013) note that organizations that invest in internal marketing tend to generate positive organizational outcomes.

The showcased literature in the theoretical part indicates that co-creation with employees is beneficial in many ways and that co-creating change with employees could have positive result in multiple levels. It lowers hierarchy and organizational silos, thus uniting people and creating a sense of community.

To answer the first research question - how could change be co-created with employees - this thesis suggests that employees need to participate in the change initiatives that affect their own work, preferably with the guidance of middle managers. By participating in the communication and marketing efforts concerning the change initiative employees could develop an ownership in the initiative and thus adopt it. Corporate storytelling offers employees an excellent context to participate in these because the story form makes it easy for employees to envision the new situation. Also, this would ensure that employees approve the corporate story before it is launched externally. Ultimately the organization dictates internally what is communicated externally.

The second research question was "what kind of a service concept could help to facilitate the implementation of change in companies". To develop a service that helps to facilitate change, service design approach was used. The third chapter presented the interdisciplinary and collaborative field of service design as well as some of its key principles, such as design thinking, co-creation, and lean start-up method. Also service concept and service processes

were explained in a theoretical level. This chapter also lay ground to the third research question “could design thinking be introduced into the field of corporate communication?”

The fourth chapter explained thoroughly the service design process used for developing the concept of co-created corporate story. The design of a service concept started when a B2B customer commissioned marketing materials from us. The brief with the B2B customer indicated that there was also a need for internal marketing, and while looking for ways to cater the business customer’s twofold needs, my colleague and I started to developed a co-creative concept based on corporate storytelling. The concept was created with lean methods instead of in co-creation with the B2B customer because it extended the limits in which we were asked to act. Lean method emphasizes the importance of experimentation, real life testing, user feedback, and iterative development.

The design process followed a typical service design process where the diverging and converging phases follow each other, thus forming a double diamond. The first “diamond” took form when the customer needs were studied using desk research and the potential offerings were considered in a brainstorming session. This phase ended in the development of a minimum viable product; it was a tender containing two options: a co-creative storytelling process and a traditional content creation process. The other diverging and converging “diamond” was formed when the B2B customer accepted the offer for the co-creative process, thus giving us green light to develop the concept further. In this phase, the big and the small components the service concept should include were reflected. A business model canvas was built in order to showcase the concept in a simple way and to reflect how it creates value for customers as well as for the producers of the service. A service blueprint was also built to help us to see the little components inside a big picture and to communicate the process to the B2B customer. The blueprint included also the customer journey map, but the customer journey was later drawn into a separate visual form so that the process would be easy to communicate to every participant.

The concept consisted of three phases. The first one, the preparatory phase, involved only the management and it set the purpose and the target for the process. The second one, the co-creative phase or “the cruise”, gathered stories from the employees. It required some self-examination and collegial sharing from them but also drew attention to the personnel’s professional strengths and potential. This part put middle managers in a guiding position as “tour leaders”, thus complementing Mintzberg’s (2009) idea of communityship. The third phase, the production, put the stories together and created a physical evidence of the company’s new, co-created voice.

We chose to keep our own roles minimal so the process would be perceived like an internal program. When the concept was ready to be tested and the “cruise” began for the participants, we monitored the discussions and started to plan how to use the stories the employees submitted. We noticed some aspects with our questions that we would need to iterate; we received quite short answers and estimated that in the future, it would be beneficial to see if the answers were different if the questions were open-ended. However, we ended up using the material in such form that the shortness of the answers was rather a positive feature. Eventually a print publication and a web site were created based on the co-created material, and a third party also produced a video clip to communicate the message about the new strategy.

After the pilot case ended, two executives, two managers and two employees were interviewed. Each interview lasted about an hour and generated a lot of valuable information on user experiences. The interviews helped us to see the points that would need to be reconsidered in order to iterate the concept further. Based on the lessons learned during the pilot case, this thesis proposes that the answer to the second research question, “what kind of a service concept could help to facilitate the implementation of change in companies”, is that the service should invite every employee in the storytelling process and it should ask the employees their insights about the changed situation in several separate occasions. Also, the employees should be given quite a visible role when communicating the situation externally. A concept featuring these elements pleases a large majority of employees and it can help to lower their barrier to express themselves also in other on-going discourses and thus improve the overall atmosphere in the company. It can also encourage internal cooperation.

The third research question was “could design thinking be introduced into the field of corporate communication”. Because of this question, the focus in this thesis was set on the service provider company rather than the customer company; the main idea was to develop a duplicable concept for our use and not only a concept that serves the one-time needs of one B2B customer. The *Matka tulevaan* concept is essentially a *service design concept*, not a service concept created for a customer company. The pilot showed that design thinking approach is indeed applicable into corporate communication, and it provided promising results in the enhancement of communityship.

The pilot case conducted with our B2B customer represented only the first iteration of the concept developed with a lean method. The following chapter presents the conclusions we were able to draw from the pilot case. They serve as a base for a second iteration.

5.1 Conclusions drawn from the work

The thesis sets out to find out how change could be co-created together with the employees. The theory assessed in this report implied that storytelling could be an efficient tool for that. However, the pilot case showed that “a story” can be understood in many ways. As Denning (2004) had noted, richly detailed stories do not tend to work in corporate context, because people are usually too busy to listen to a fully developed story. In the light of this, it is not surprising that also the stories the employees submitted were short, usually containing only one or two sentences. Since we, the facilitators, were professional writers, we clearly had different connotation for a story. Open-ended questions might have made a difference, and that is something to experiment in the second iteration.

Also, conducting the process online might make storytelling challenging. For others than professional writers, stories could be easier to generate in a verbal form. Conducting the process online had some advantages: it allowed employees take action when it suited them, and it was quite inexpensive for the B2B customer as the process did not consume a lot of employees' time. However, the feedback interviews gave contradictory information about the online participation; managers said that it was good because it made also the more quiet ones to take a stand. But the two non-managerial interviewees - one of them extrovert, one of them introvert - had some criticizing remarks about it. It should be tested next whether live interaction sessions with employees would produce different kind of results. It is also worth investigating whether the online process is necessary at all or whether it should be used together with live interviews. Nevertheless, the co-creative storytelling process in the pilot case produced the results we needed in order to create a publication out of employees' stories so in this case, it served us very well. With some minor tweaks it could have worked even better, but we had more than enough material to produce a publication for our B2B customer. Hence, it would be accurate to say that storytelling as a way to co-create with employees was an applicable approach. It can also be said that introducing design thinking approach into corporate communication produced fruitful results and generated an outcome that was different from and “less faceless” than communication forms the B2B customer's competitors have used.

The aim of this thesis was to create a service concept that would facilitate the implementation of change while communicating and marketing it internally and externally. We started to design the concept in a lean way, starting from the assumption that the concept should combine elements from change management consulting, corporate communication, and service marketing. We assumed it would be a compelling and a cost-efficient way for B2B customers to combine services that would assist them to implement change initiatives. However, the feedback interviews showed that the executives were not aware that such approach could be taken, and had we not proposed it to them, they would have conquered their challenges in a

more traditional way. While we anticipated that executives might not want to give away their power to employees, this did not seem to be a problem in the pilot case. Rather, our approach was so new that they did not know whether they could trust it. For this reason, storytelling and corporate brochures for external marketing represented a good starting point; we could have produced the marketing material in the traditional way had the “cruise” been unsuccessful.

The service concept that was created for the co-creative process proved to contain desirable and less desirable features. The playful approach put a little smile on the faces of many employees but it did not please everyone. It is possible that not everyone understood why the theme of a cruise had been chosen. One interviewee pointed out that it would have been clearer if the theme had been in accordance with the company’s new strategy.

Based on the pilot case, it can be said that the lean method and the iterative process were the right choices in this context as we were not designing a service for a B2B customer but for our own company to productize a service design offering. It is difficult to involve outsiders into a process that aims to create a completely new offering - much like Henry Ford could not ask whether his customers wanted to have a car when all they knew were horses. Instead, we set out to test our assumptions and gained user feedback from a real-life situation. Table 4 indicates the strengths and the pivot points that the first iteration of the Matka tulevaan concept revealed.

Table 4: The strengths and the pivots to consider found during the first iteration of the Matka tulevaan concept

Strengths:	Pivots to consider:
Including everyone to the process allowed also the quiet ones to have their voice heard.	Find another name for the concept that could be localized in a customer company.
The weekly repetition of the same theme from different angles helped the staff to digest the new strategy and to reflect what it means in his/her work.	Consider conducting part of the process in live meetings in small groups alongside the online discussion.
The vast majority of employees were active in the process and quite eager to give their insights about the topics in question.	Keep the approach humorous but do not take it too far, i.e. use also professional lexicon.
The co-creative process lowered the barrier to address unpleasant things publicly and thus decreased mumbles. This lifted the overall atmosphere.	Let the concept openly appear as a process facilitated by outsiders.
The process encouraged internal cooperation	Take a bigger role in the online

in other fields of business as well.	discussion.
The process put employees in an important role in the marketing materials.	Draw clear guidelines whether the executives can or should participate into the discussion.
	Concretize better how the process serves to change the company culture.
	Communicate better to employees what the end product will be like.

To sum up the findings, it can be stated that employees were generally impressed by the fact that everyone was invited to participate in the process that co-created the corporate story. The process gave them a permission to speak their minds; this sense of permission also expanded outside of the online platform, thus improving the company spirit. It also turned the company's external marketing from faceless to the one featuring real people with their names and opinions. The company's new direction was approached from several angles and thus the matter became familiar to the employees. They also had to reflect how it affected their own job. Hence, the concept should include some kind of repetitive aspect, if not a six-week "cruise". The playful approach should perhaps have to be fine-tuned a bit and the concept should include also live conversations with employees. External facilitators should conduct the process, and role of the executives should be clearly defined before the process starts. Also, the value promise of the concept as well as the promise about the outcome of the concept - the physical proof of the change - should be more clearly communicated.

5.2 Summary of the contributions

As indicated by Ostrom et al. (2010, 4), there are ten most pressing research priorities within the field of service research that require further studying. Amongst them are *enhancing Service Design* and *enhancing the service experience through co-creation*.

Concerning the former, Ostrom et al (2010, 17) called for research on how to integrate design thinking into service practices, processes and systems. This thesis introduces service design to the field of corporate communication. The created service concept is essentially a service design process designed for producing corporal content. Co-creation is one of the most important design thinking methods. Engaging employees with co-creation is a new thought in corporate communication, and it produced promising results in the pilot case. Thus, this thesis enhanced service design by integrating design thinking into service practices and processes of a new field.

At the same time, this thesis enhanced the service experience through co-creation. Ostrom et al. (2010, 24-25) demanded further knowledge on how to develop methods for motivating customers to effectively collaborate in service co-creation. This thesis used co-creative storytelling as a method to motivate employees as internal customers and to engage them into a change process.

In addition, Ostrom et al. (2010) called for focus on currently underrepresented business-to-business services and on the use of interdisciplinary lens when studying services. This thesis studies the creation and implementation of a B2B service concept that calls employees as internal customers, to create a corporate story together with the executives. Thus it also expands the construct of a customer, which often means consumer in service research. In addition, this thesis has adopted an interdisciplinary approach and has attempted to combine phenomena from the disciplines of change management, corporate communication, and service marketing.

This thesis also contributed to the field of corporate storytelling. While the process presented here was not the first co-creative storytelling process, it was the first one to include the whole staff in the creation process, since the co-creative storytelling process Mattia and Esse (2005) reported was conducted only among senior management.

Denning (2004, 4) points out that narratives alone are not enough to establish values in an organization. He states that leaders need to live values daily. But inviting employees to the creation of the corporate story, like was the case in this thesis, means that it becomes a shared project. Instead of following the leader, employees co-live the values and are thus involved in establishing the new values.

5.3 Prospects of future research

This thesis took the viewpoint of a service designer; it explained the creation of a service design concept. However, it would be beneficial to take also the viewpoint of the B2B customer and study more quantitatively how the process was experienced in the customer company. Building understanding on the long-term impacts of the co-creative storytelling would also offer depth to the understanding of the subject.

It would also be enlightening to know the multiple ways a co-created content could be used. In the case of this thesis, a publication and a website were produced, but this was because the B2B customer had a need for these. Co-created stories offer a well of potential for communicators and content creators to tap.

This report only covered the part how change was implemented in a corporation, but it is equally important to involve employees in the strategy creation process. Could this be done in a same way, using co-created stories, is for next researchers to answer.

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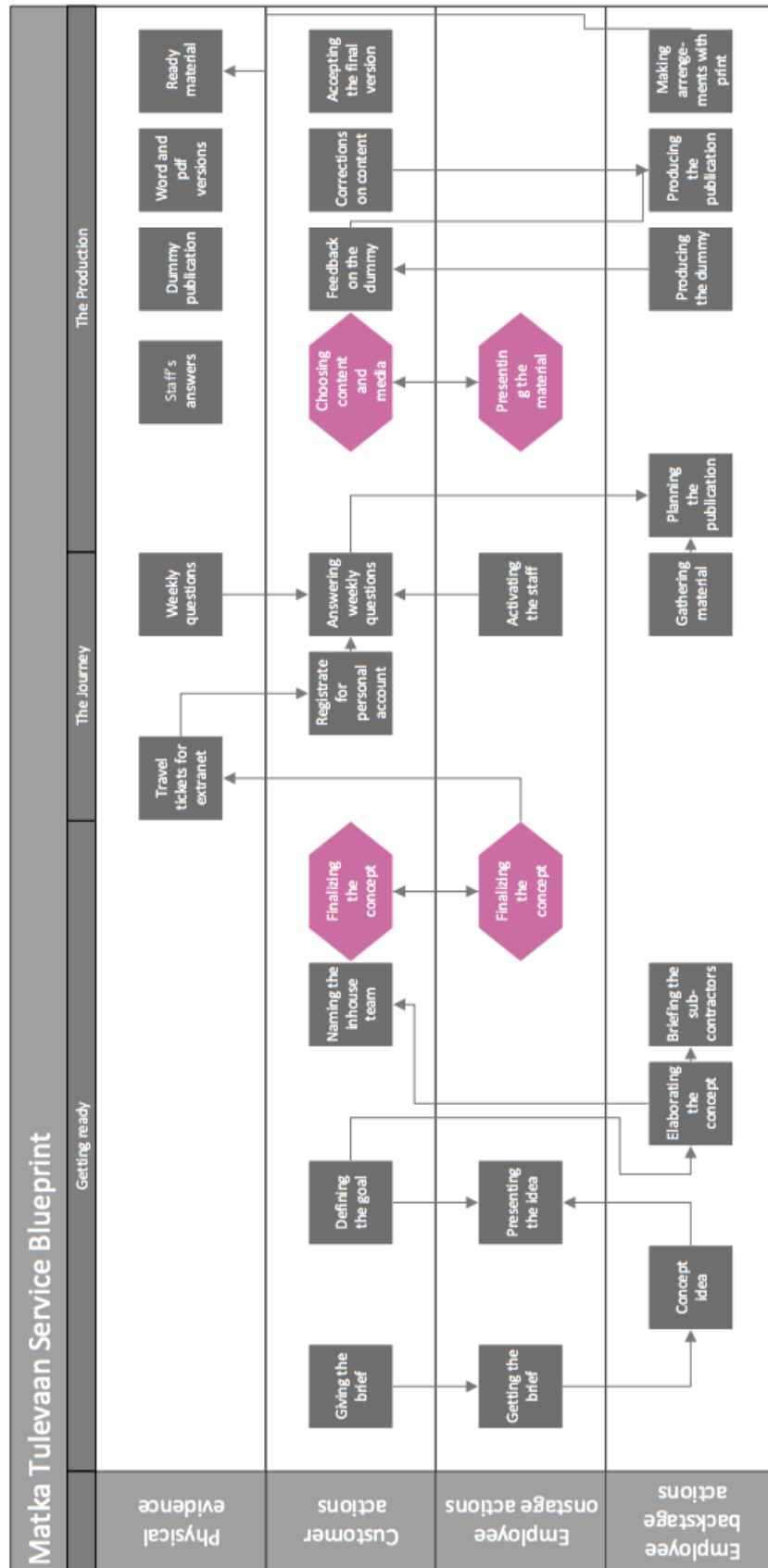
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Appendix 1
The initial blueprint for the Matka tulevaan concept

	1. SOUNDING	2. KICK-OFF	3. PLANNING	4. WORK-SHOP 1	5. SETTING READY	6. THE JOURNEY	7. WORK-SHOP 2	8. PRODUCTION	9. VISUAL CHECK	10. CORRECTION ROUNDS	11. LAUNCH
PHYSICAL EVIDENCE	The offer			Blueprint	Taxi, scooters and website	Weekly meetings with team members Reminders for the group leaders	Review, modification for actions		Dummy	1st job-versions of materials 2nd job-versions of materials	Ready materials
ONSTAGE TECHNOLOGY						Website and personal account Screen on the website					
CUSTOMER ACTIONS	Contact and call for offer Click the brief Taking the brief Advising the offer and making a kick-off	Defining the goals	Naming group and defining the goals	Comments on the concept	Likes the staff	Adjusting personal account Writing personal stories Participating the staff	Choosing the material for the product	Feedback on the visual aspect	Feedback on the visual aspect	1st check round: comments 2nd check round: approval	Distributing the material
EMPLOYEE ONSTAGE ACTIONS	Send the offer Take on concept and collaboration	Presenting the idea		Presenting the concept	Sending the social updates	Reporting the progress Sharing the materials	Presenting the material and the website			Presenting the 2nd version	
EMPLOYEE OFFSTAGE ACTIONS			Defining the website presentation Media content creation Defining the phrases Adjusting the concept Opening the website	Preparing the social content Creating a set of the content Planning the content	Gathering the material Choosing the cases for approval	Preparing the workshop	Building the AD	Editing the material	Consulting the marketing house	Correcting the material Correcting the video	Adding references Sending the material and video
SUPPORT				Thinking the idea on video		Video script	Presenting the video concept	Planning the video aspect Shooting the video aspect	Presenting the video aspect	Correcting the material	

Appendix 2
The refined blueprint for the Matka tulevaan concept.



Appendix 3

List of feedback interview questions:

- How have you experienced this process?
- What did you like about in this kind of co-creative process?
- What do you think we should further develop? What should we do differently?
- Do you feel you got something out of this process?
- What kind of new things you started to think during this process?
- Was this too much trouble for you?
- Would you have wanted to add another perspective to those that were covered during this process?
- Could we have asked something that would have helped you in you job even more?
- How did you find this slightly playful approach?
- What do you think the staff got out of this process?
- Did the staff start to think differently during this process?
- What if we had approached the matter at hand differently, for example via personal inter-views, what benefits do you think we would have gained that we did not gain now?
- How would you have implemented the new strategy if it weren't for this process?
- Could we have acted as a tighter team with you?
- Could we have distributed responsibilities differently?
- How are you going to use the data that was created as a by-product of this process?