

HR Design Thinking Hacks to Drive HR Transformation

Sophia Boleckis

Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

Thesis in Design

Abstract

This study is about understanding whether design thinking, as a methodology and tool, can be taken into use by HR to help them to facilitate change, create understanding within business in any of the HR areas, build processes and solutions that take employee experience into consideration and overall to establish their position as the core change agent and business driver within the organization.

The study begins with describing the changing business environment and the demands that it puts into HRs role and way of working. It also explains the development of design thinking and how it has evolved to supporting functions not traditionally thought to be key in thinking from the user perspective.

A customized HR design Thinking Hack -concept was created and this study describes the concept itself and its content. In addition, the study is about how the five different Hack events, covering different HR topics: talent acquisition, talent management, tools and applications, culture and employer branding and new way of working, worked for provoking understanding and knowledge about design thinking as well as producing concrete solutions that organizations could take into use, either directly or in-directly. The Hack events were run during Spring 2018 and they were marketed in Eventbrite and LinkedIn.

Each Hack is described on its own including the feedback received for each of them, as well as short conclusions and findings.

Key words: design thinking, HR, HR transformation, Hack, employee experience.

Tiivistelmä

Tämän lopputyön tarkoituksena on tutkia, voivatko henkilöstöhallinnon (HR) tehtävissä työskentelevät henkilöt hyödyntää palvelumuotoilua metodologiana ja työkaluna esimerkiksi muutosten mahdollistamisessa, liiketoiminnan ymmärtämisessä, työntekijäkokemusta edistävien prosessien ja ratkaisujen toteuttamisessa sekä henkilöstöjohtamisen muutosagenttiroolin ja organisaation liiketoiminnan edistämisessä.

Lopputyö lähtee liikkeelle muuttuvan ja muuttuneen liiketoimintaympäristön kuvailemisesta sekä henkilöstöjohtamisen rooliin ja työtapoihin liittyvien haasteiden esittelemisestä. Ensimmäisessä osiossa esitellään palvelumuotoilun historiaa ja sitä, kuinka se on kehittynyt tukemaan sellaisiakin toimintoja, joiden ei perinteisesti ole katsottu kuuluvan käyttäjälähtöisen ajattelun ytimeen.

Lopputyön keskiössä on lopputyötä varten kehitetyn henkilöstöjohtamisen ja palvelumuotoilun yhdistävän Hackaton –konseptin tarkastelu. Tutkimuksessa perehdytään viiteen tällaiseen Hackaton-tapahtumaan, joiden teemat vaihtuivat eri henkilöstöjohtamisen osa-alueen ympärillä: rekrytointi, osaamisen johtaminen, työkalut ja applikaatiot, kulttuuri ja työnantajakuva, ja uudet työnteotavat. Tapahtumien osalta tutkittiin erityisesti sitä, miten ne kasvattivat ymmärrystä ja osaamista palvelumuotoilusta sekä sitä, miten osallistujat onnistuivat kehittämään konkreettisia ja käyttökelpoisia ratkaisuja organisaatioille. Hackatonit järjestettiin keväällä 2018, ja niitä mainostettiin Eventbritten ja LinkedInin kautta.

Työssä esitellään jokainen hackaton tapahtuma erikseen. Lisäksi on esitelty tapahtumista saatu palaute sekä niistä tehdyt päätelmät ja löydökset.

Avainsanat: palvelumuotoilu, HR, HR:n muutokset, Hackaton (Hack), työntekijäkokemus

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1. Introduction

1.1 Digitalization and disruptions in Human resources (HR)

Winds of change are transforming global business in an unprecedented way. Not only is business facing a truly global technological transformation that has led to many organisations having to rethink their business models, demographics, services and products, it has also led to a tremendous change in peoples' expectations to work, its content and ways of working, forcing human resources (later HR) to re-develop the way organizations work while also rethinking how to prepare leaders and employees to succeed and stay engaged. This can be called an era of reinvention of HR for the digital era.

Let's take a few steps back and define what is meant by human resources (HR) and how the definition of HR has changed during the last decades. HR has traditionally been seen as one of the corporate support functions, taking care of many administrative tasks that derive from the entire employee life-cycle: from the day a new employee joins the company, works there and then eventually leaves, voluntarily or involuntarily. Before the introduction of several IT tools, HR's work mainly consisted of managing a lot of paper work, documents and files. During the decades HR's role has slowly evolved closer to business and supporting leaders and later on employees as well. In this role, HRs have essentially a more strategic role in supporting with business and financial decisions, designing organisations, ensuring well-being and thriving atmospheres, even working with customer relations and product development from the people perspective. However, even still it is more or less the norm, that although HR's are more and more been called HR business partners, the business acumen and role in most part is totally missing. This is not that there would not be such roles, but it is more due to the timidity of HRs themselves to take stronger and more central roles in the organisation. The HR Business partner role concept was an idea popularised by David Ulrich in the late 1990s. Since then the model of having a more strategic HR who does not get his/her hands dirty with the operational tasks has led to many organizations losing the very basic platform of their people processes as they have become unattended or totally forgotten. This is the very heart of the challenges that hit hard on HR today. Businesses have become more and more complex, creating a need for a multi-talented, agile thinking, thought-leader HR who at the same time keeps the basic processes in place and manages all the administration linked to them. Luckily enough, through digitalization, different tools help with the latter tasks.

Next let us take a look at what are the forces that are challenging HR at this very moment and will continue to challenge HR in the future. At the 2017 CHRO (chief

human resources officers) Conference in New York on September 15 2017, more than 50 HR leaders, representing companies with a combined total of nearly 2 million employees and \$700 billion in 2016 revenues, gathered to discuss how organisations are to adapt to the high-speed changes taking place.

Keynote speaker of the conference, Grant Freeland, a Boston Consulting Group senior partner and the global leader of the firm's People & Organization practice, described how "twelve primary forces, including digital automation, agility and innovation, and skill imbalances and talent gaps are redefining technological and digital productivity, changing the way business value is generated, altering resource distribution, and transforming workforce cultures and values."



Figure 1: Allison Bailey, 2017

These 12 forces highlight challenges and possibilities such as reskilling workforces, attracting talent, using agile processes to improve culture and leadership, utilising artificial intelligence to increase employee experience and create smoothness in processes as well as managing company brand in a hyper global and networked society that actually manages your brand for you.

We are living moments of change in which the introduction of chat bots and cognitive tools help make decisions as well as secure efficiency to release time for tasks that re-create more than re-do.

This all leads to the blunt fact that HR's traditional role as a 'behind-the-scenes' support function and cost center has come to its end and instead it must see itself as core driver in business transformation, digitalized practices, source of solutions and human-centricity. "Transparency is now everything, and that raises the ante for leadership," Diane Gherson, the senior vice president of human resources for IBM said. "Saying 'trust me' to employees no longer works. They need us to show them." (Allison Bailey, 2017)

1.2 HR in 2020 and the needed transformations

What does future HR then look like? I would answer the question by examining the 2020 organization and future of work. They are both provoked by the over-disrupted ways of how, what and when we work as was stated earlier. Social networks and eco-systems set the norm of work-life, defining interactions, behaviors and rules. No longer are they set or managed by employers or organizations. This if something sets a totally new scene for business leaders and especially HR. In practice it means that 2020 HR will be defined, not by its own predictions, processes, and concepts, and not by the traditional areas it has held as their sole property and as their playground of knowledge, but by all people. And not only the organization's own employees, but by anyone who finds interest in wanting to disrupt that particular organization.

As in their book "The 2020 Workplace" Jeanne Meister and Karie Willyerd put well:

- "Never in the history of the modern world have there been four generations much less five- in the workplace that bring such vastly different sets of values, beliefs, and expectations.
- Never has a generation entered the workplace using technologies so far ahead of those adopted by its employer.
- Never has it been possible to acquire, use, and seamlessly integrate talent from around the world.
- Never has technology made it so possible to connect anyone anywhere asynchronously as a collaborator.
- Never before has society put as much pressure on organizations to be socially responsible." (Willyerd, 2010)

Never has there been such pressure for HR to redevelop its practices, thinking, ways of working, and interactions as well as re-establish its role within the center of all disruption and change. Agility of thinking and re-thinking will become one of the main tools for HR in the future. To become part of change one must change – and on a constant way. Letting go of traditional thinking and practices that have set a structured well-organized mature roles and tasks can be painful. However, we cannot keep something still when everything else around us is moving.

In addition, it is not all about transformation and creating change and being part of it. The tremendous talent shortage and the fact that people have become more aware and more conscious for better employee experience throughout their employee lifecycle, organizations and HR especially are forced to put full efforts to secure that employees feel happy, inspired and motivated in the midst of all the transformations happening.

This is especially important when looking in to the Global Workforce survey involving around 32,000 people which was carried out by Towers Watson in 2014 (Global Workforce Study, 2014). The findings of this survey were disturbing, as it showed that only 40% of employees across the world were actively engaged in their job. In this study the importance of good leadership was stressed as the key factor to creating engagement and it is absolutely critical that HR takes an active, consultative role in making this all happen.

1.3 Design thinking and HR

1.3.1 Design thinking origins and background

There is not a clear starting point of design thinking as we know it today. It is a series of different evolutions “of different (collaborative) design process methods that were developed to improve and extend design to other areas of practice”. (A brief history of design thinking, 2013)

As can be seen from the diagram below, it all started from participatory design which can be dated back to Plato’s times. Idea being that in creating new people had the possibility to participate in the design. The pitfall of participatory design was that it did not take user-experience into consideration after which user-centered design evolved in the 1980’s and was introduced by design theorist Donald Norman. “User testing became less about usability and more about a user’s interests and needs. Norman favored user-control and humanized participatory and system design by “making things visible”. This was to ensure users could discover errors and have control over resolving them.” (A brief history of design thinking, 2013) After the turn of the millennium the focus was shifted more to understanding customer experience and user-journey and thus service design was created. Also, the distinction between product and service design became irrelevant and design became multi-disciplinary, entering all fields of service and product design. “Rather than focusing on the ‘end user’ (the customer: marketing/user centered and participatory design), service design seeks to collaborate with all users of a service; building relationships between stakeholders to open up communication for the exchange and development of value and knowledge.” (Russo, 2012) And this is where this study focuses in: how can design thinking support HRs in transformation, in opening up this exchange of communication and creating value for the organization.

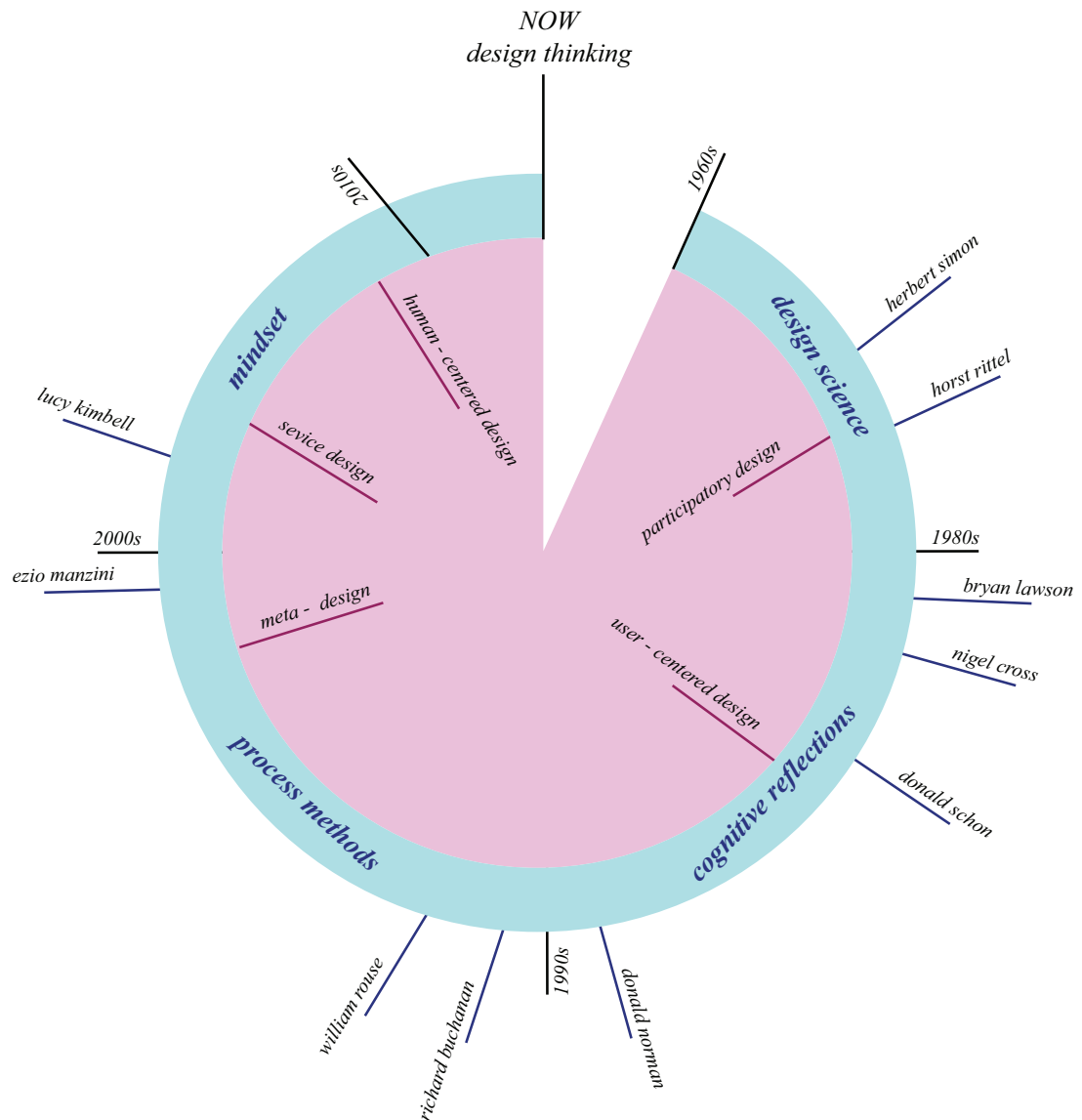


Figure 2: A brief history of design thinking, 2013

1.3.2 HR as design thinkers

Although HR is commonly seen as the function in which people matters are put upfront, it is unfortunate that in very rare cases are the processes, concepts and tools created or co-created by HR really taking employee experience into consideration. HRs, as experts in contract law, in managing talent, in recruitment and resourcing etc., have traditionally based their work on strict laws, processes, guidelines –and there has not been space for ideation, creativity and making ad hoc decision. “HR is a function specifically created for people. However, it has been observed that people practices developed by HR often fail to create an engaging experience for employees. So, in HR’s context, the principles of design thinking are applied to answer human-cantered questions and challenge assumptions.” (Team, 2017)

The different talent shortage challenges, and quick changes in the business environment have made it mandatory for HR's to look beyond and take into use more agile thinking processes. These are seen through human-centric designs which means that organizations have to re-create their processes to fit the needs of the candidates not the other way around. "Today, we are driven by a labor market where an employee's needs, requirements, and comfort are taken into consideration. Any organization that understands what a candidate is looking for has a winning hand compared to their competitors. In addition, HRs need to utilize creative problem solving and collaborative design." (How important is design thinking in HR?)

I think that the most critical factor of driving HR's to really think beyond administration and processes is their understanding that being the advocates of employees the employee experience is and should be their number one aim. "The new generation of HR Operational Services presents a different picture. In addition to providing more accurate and cost-effective solutions to the business, these organizations tend to adopt an outside-in perspective that puts the HR customer experience at the center of every decision." (Kraig Eaton, 2017) There are even changes to titles happening: "Airbnb has changed Chief HR Officer's function as Chief Employee Experience Officer function, understanding that experience is the essence of any workplace". (How important is design thinking in HR?)

To summarize, combining HR and design thinking is a very new phenomenon. This new way of thinking is just being introduced and slowly taken into use by human resource experts. Basic understanding has been formed, but utilizing design thinking as a day-to-day methodology is not in place yet.

1.4 The aim of this study

The aim of this study is to draw conclusion whether design thinking, as a methodology and tool, can be taken into use by HR to help them to facilitate change, create understanding within business in any of the HR areas, build processes and solutions that take employee experience into consideration and overall to establish their position as the core change agent and business driver within the organization. In addition, I wanted to test out whether a HR design Thinking Hack would be the means in provoking understanding and knowledge about design thinking as well as if the Hacks would actually produce concrete solutions that organizations could take into use, either directly or in-directly.

2. The HR Design Thinking Hacks

2.1 Aim

The overall aims of the actual Hacks were two-fold. First of all, I want to experiment whether HRs would feel that design thinking, as a methodology, would work for them as a way to create dialogue, to build understanding of employee experience and its importance, co-create new within their organisations, work as a facilitating method. Especially as HR as a role and function is going through tremendous change as noted in the introduction. Secondly, I wanted to test and see whether HR could co-create and come up with new ideas and prototypes that they could actually concretely take into use, either directly or then via customization or further definition.

2.2 Creating the method and Design Thinking Hack content

I wanted to approach my aim of seeing how design thinking methodology would work to support HR in change by creating a new, unique and customised way of introducing design thinking. My thinking was that I wanted to create a compact, inspiring, fun and eye-opening Hack to introduce design thinking as a methodology, its background and process go through and discuss different changes that are occurring and which impact HRs work: around in the world, within organisations, HRs work and role and in addition to:

- go through and discuss the implications of employee experience and its growing importance, both in organisations and HRs work and role,
- inspire and challenge HR to think out of the box and create new, workable, ideas and concepts,
- And support HR in building their network.

In the Hacks I was not interested really in the ideas and content generated as I felt that part was not key for this thesis. It is of course key for the participants, but not for this study itself. For this reason, I will not analyse or go through in detail the contents generated by the participants. My idea is to analyse more on how the methodology itself helps HR.

I started off my work with deciding first on the length of the Hacks and also started initially planning on the different themes of them. I came to the conclusion that if I wanted busy HRs to be able to attend, the Hacks need to be compact and also allowing them to be able to get back to work for the afternoon. Thus, I decided on a 4-hour Hack starting 8:00 am sharp to be able to end just before lunch.

I then started planning on the structure: allowing time for the introductions and background information and discussions and time to go through the design thinking

process itself. I opted for a 1-hour introduction part and then at 9 am I would initiate the process.

For the introduction I initially had 23 slides, including the cover slide. As I proceeded with the Hacks I dropped off a couple of slides. I will explain the reasoning with each slide below:



Figure 3: Slide 1

Cover slide. Although the Hack was not done directly for Symbio, the company I work at, I introduced it as well as an important part of Symbio's way of working in actually creating design thinking sprints for their customers. On the cover page I had our cultural statement: We Make the World TICK.

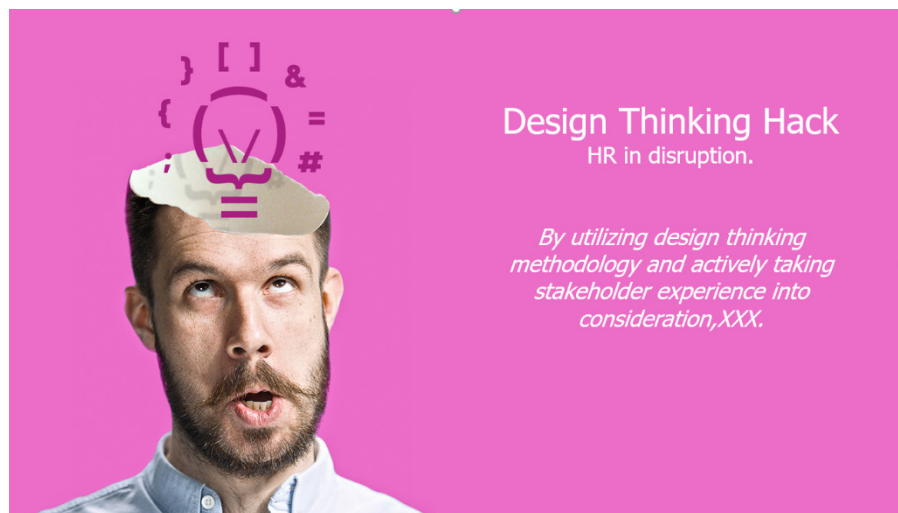


Figure 4: Slide 2

Second slide on the theme of the Hack. For each Hack I created a challenge for the participants to think about beforehand. In this slide the "XXX" on the slide changed per theme. More information on this in chapter: Themes of the HR Design thinking Hacks.



Figure 5: Slide 3

In this slide I introduced the aims of the Hack: participants would be able to grow their network by meeting new people and linking with them after the Hack, they would get a “macaron” of design thinking, i.e. a compact intro to what it’s all about, they would hopefully get new ideas for their work and also get new ideas of how to utilize design thinking methodology and finally I wished that they would become HR designers in their organisation and utilise the mind-set of design thinking in their everyday work.

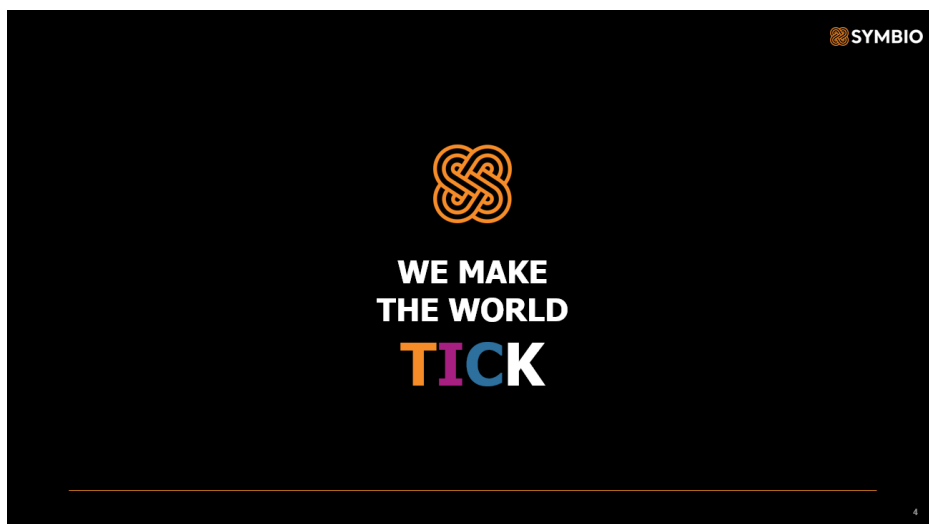


Figure 6: Slide 4

In the first two Hacks I also introduced Symbio’s culture statement, but in the last three I decided to leave it out, to save time and also as I felt it was not really in line with the topic, and thus unnecessary.



Figure 7: Slide 5

Then we had the introductory round in which in addition to the basics I asked people to share their experience with design thinking as well as their secret superpowers. Most participants commented that they had very little or no experience with design thinking, however, many said that they might have, intuitively, used design thinking in some facilitations. The super power aspect was first thought to be just a fun element, but it actually turned out that it came in handy in the team work as people then knew more about each other and their strengths (which they could then use during the Hack process).



Figure 8: Slide 6

AND WE KNOW OUR STUFF END-TO-END ...

OUR OFFERING:

Innovation 	Artificial Intelligence & Robotics 	Embedded Solutions 	Digital – Intelligence of Things 	Quality Assurance & Testing
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We embrace methodologies such as Design Thinking to get you started and get to your idea right. We co-create the solution together with you using tried and tested tools. Finally we can take care of quality assurance for your solution or service for global use.

We are a technology house at the heart – whether it's embedded or cloud we will not shy away from it. We know our machine learning and robotics. We can take care of connectivity, sensor fusion or build that web site and mobile app for you.

Figure 9: Slide 7

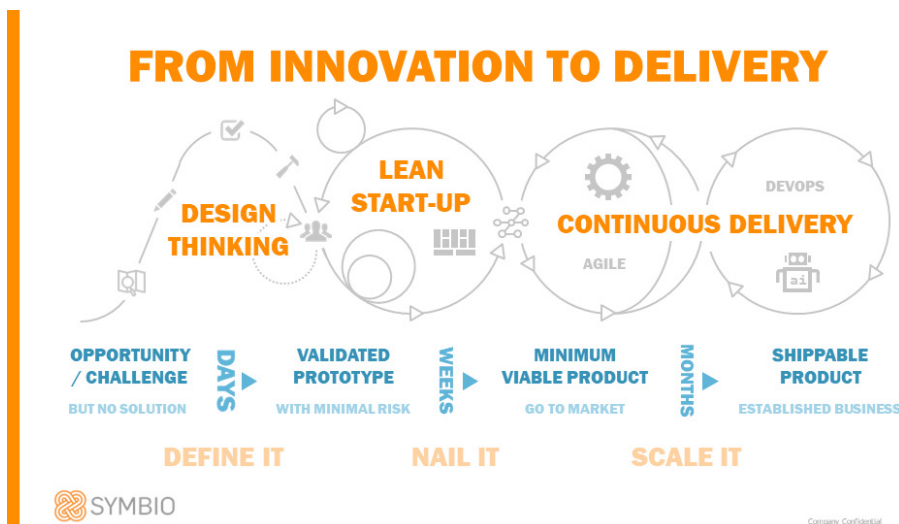


Figure 10: Slide 8



Figure 11: Slide 9

Then I had four slides shortly telling about the company that I work in. Describing our core business as well as our way of working in implementing design thinking process in our innovation processes with our customers. Initially I went through all of these four slides. In the last Hacks I only described our core business as well as the innovation part, and left out the in-depth info of our business. I noticed again that it was unnecessary to put too much time on describing our company.

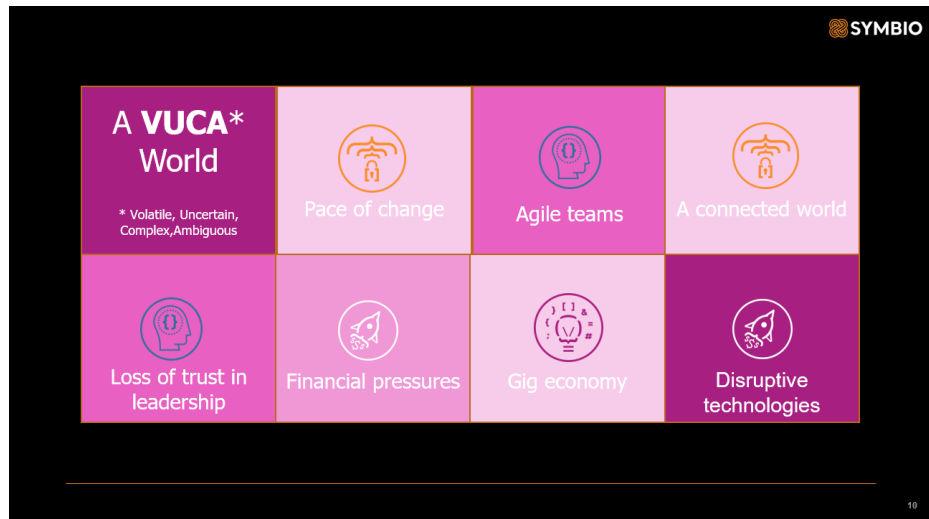


Figure 12: Slide 10

Then I started the actual introductory part to the theme of the day. As said previously in the chapter “Creating the method and Design Thinking Hack content”, I wanted to go through and discuss different changes that are occurring and which impact HRs work: around in the world, within organisations, HRs work and role.



Figure 13: Slide 11

This slide's intention is to joke about how the pace has changed in organisations and how agility and experimentation have become so much more important. Also, essential

for HR to understand that this effects also their ways of working. HR traditionally want to have everything ready and 100% correct before taking things forward. In the VUCA world this is not possible anymore.



Figure 14: Slide 12

In this next slide I then went into the change that occur in organisations. I used Boston Consulting Groups analysis (Vikram Bhalla, 2017) to describe and discuss the changes both in the demand of talent as well as supply of talent which are most effecting HR work at the moment.

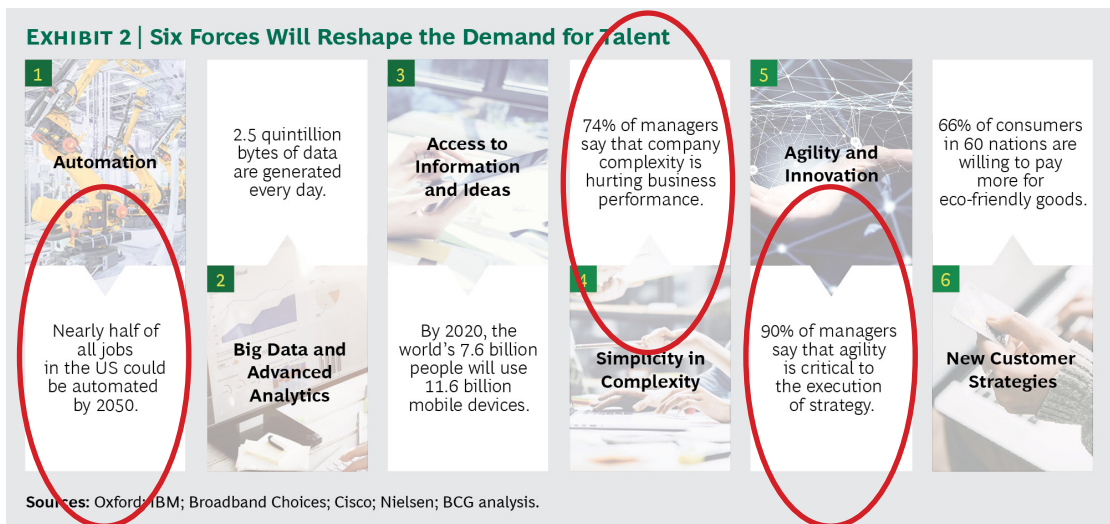


Figure 15: Slide 13

Here a more in-depth introduction of the six forces that will reshape the demand of talent according to Boston Consulting Group. I circled those that I felt are impacting HR the most.

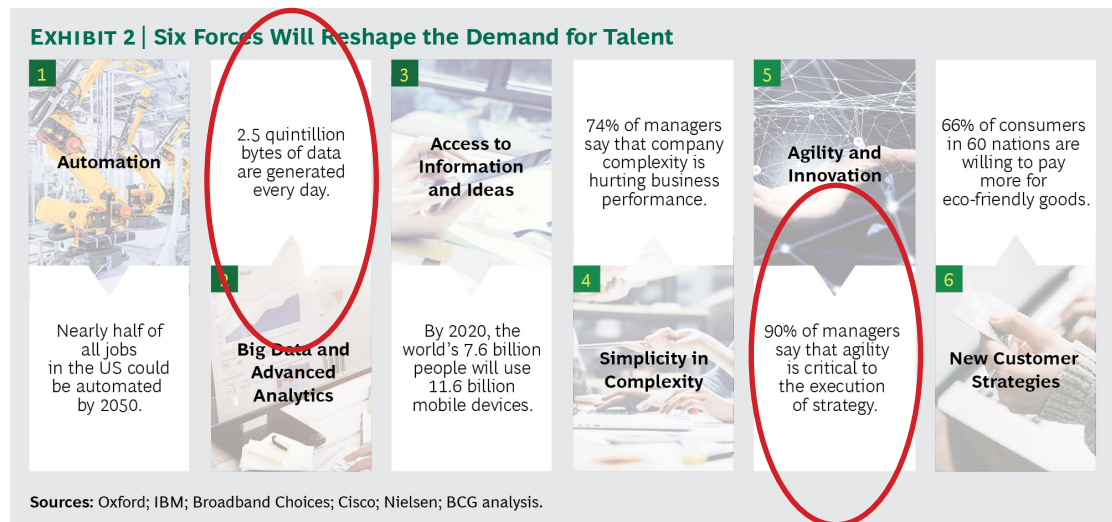


Figure 16: Slide 14

Then the six forces that will reshape the supply of talent. And again, circled those that I felt would interest HR the most.

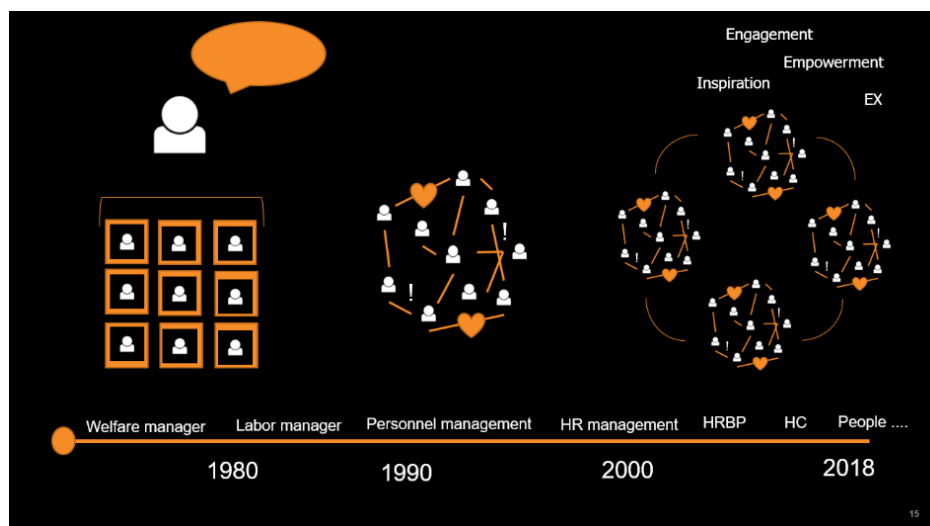


Figure 17: Slide 15

We then moved to discuss changes in HR, both from the title and role perspective as well as how the changes occurring in the outside world (agility, pace, shortage of talent etc.) effect how HR should support management, leaders, and the organization.

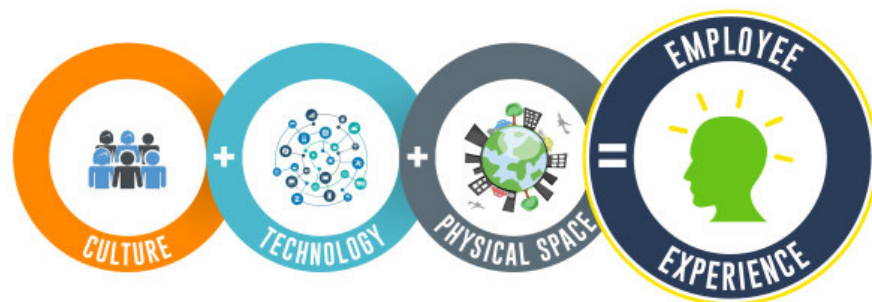
Employee experience



Figure 18: Slide 16

Then to the actual theme of Employee experience. Here I linked the discussion of change, and the need for HR not only to create processes and tools that are 100% correct and accurate, but ones that really work for the organisation, are agile and mobile, flexible, transparent and create happiness within the organisation.

THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE EQUATION



© Jacob Morgan (thefutureorganization.com)

Figure 19: Slide 17

In my first Hack I also presented Jacob Morgan's employee experience equation. He is one of the world's leading authorities on the future of work, employee experience, and how the workplace is changing. (Morgan) I left this slide out in later Hacks as I felt that this did not bring extra value for our discussions.

Design Thinking is a design methodology that provides a solution-based approach to solving problems. It's extremely useful in tackling complex problems that are ill-defined or unknown, by understanding the human needs involved, by re-framing the problem in human-centric ways, by creating many ideas in brainstorming sessions, and by adopting a hands-on approach in prototyping and testing.

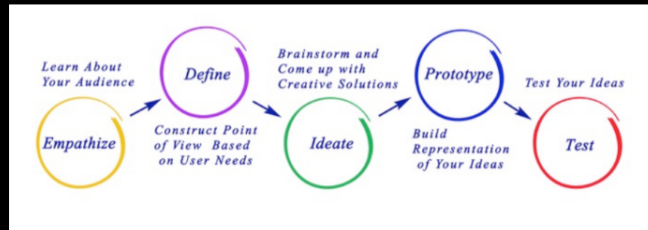


Figure 20: Slide 18

I then moved on to explaining design thinking in short as well as the basic process as described by Prince Pal (Pal, 2016). I shared some background information on how design thinking has evolved, as described in chapter: Design thinking origins and background.

Also, I described each part of the process individually and then explained that in our Hack we will concentrate on first four parts, leaving the fifth one, “Test”, to the participants themselves. The process steps are described in the chapter: The four steps in the Hacks.

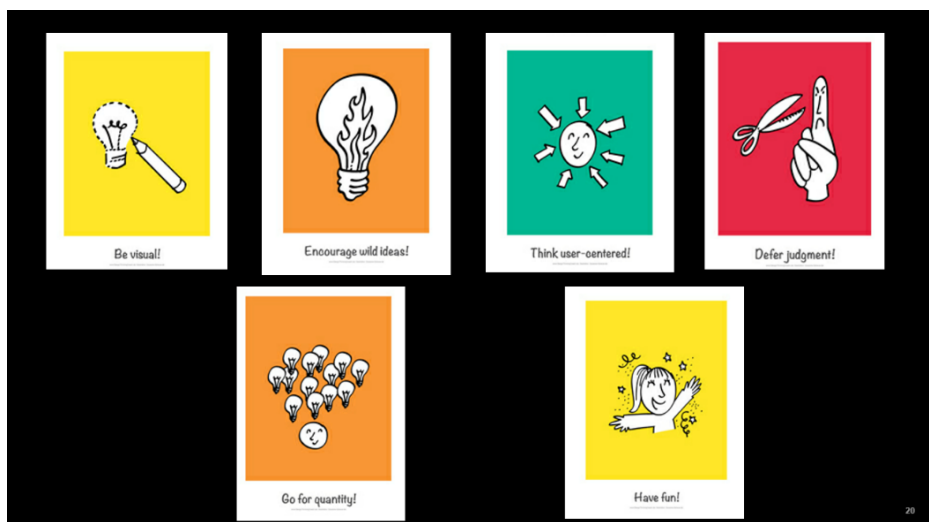


Figure 21: Slide 19

Then I started to explain about the Hack itself, first starting by explain the “rules” or behaviors. Pointing out that the more ideas, the more creativity and quantity in all aspects, would give them better results.



Figure 22: Slide 20

It also underlined and challenged them to think out of the box at all times, and forget their current role. This, I noticed in the Hacks, was one of the most difficult aspects for the participants. To let go of what they know from within their current job and all the realism that many times leashes your thinking, was for many very difficult. After this slide one hour had gone and the actual Hack started off. I will describe the flow and content in the next section.

2.3 The four steps in the Hacks

I started by explaining the basic practicalities in my slide:

“I will document everything and it will be sent to you together with a feedback form.

I will also contact you in 2 months’ time to ask for feedback on how you have possibly taken the methodology/solutions forward. We have 2 hrs 45 minutes’ time. There are 10 steps to take, in 4 different areas. We will go forward one area at the time.”

I then asked them to:

“Form groups of 4. Gather around the work canvas. Name one person responsible for keeping time. Each part of the canvas is numbered –one step at a time.”

Beforehand I had decided that the ideal group size would be four participants, and it also proved to be true in reality. I will explain more about this in the section describing the different Hacks. I asked the participants to gather around the A3 sized work canvases of four pages which I had copied and laid on the tables beforehand. I also

asked them to name a person to manage time as I was very worried beforehand about time management. However, this turned out to be totally unnecessary as the time reserved for each step of the process turned out to be ideal and the timing worked out perfectly in all Hacks.

I re-named the four steps in the following way:

Becoming aware (empathize)

Refine (define)

Ideate (ideate)

Solution (prototype)

I created the overall idea of the utilising work canvases, and the model especially in the first step “Becoming Aware”, by using the ideology and form from “The Value Proposition Canvas” created by Strategyzer (Strategyzer), a Swiss company offering business canvases, workshops and books to understand customers and create better products.

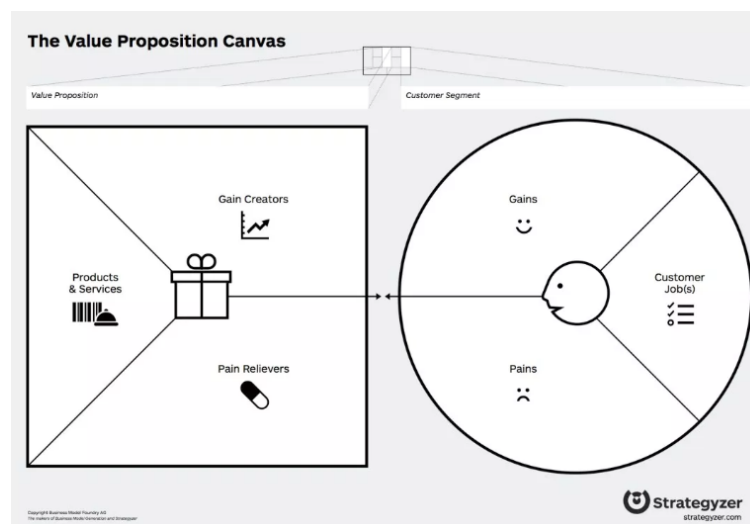


Figure 23

The four work canvas sheets and the ten steps in them were the following (see appendix 2) :

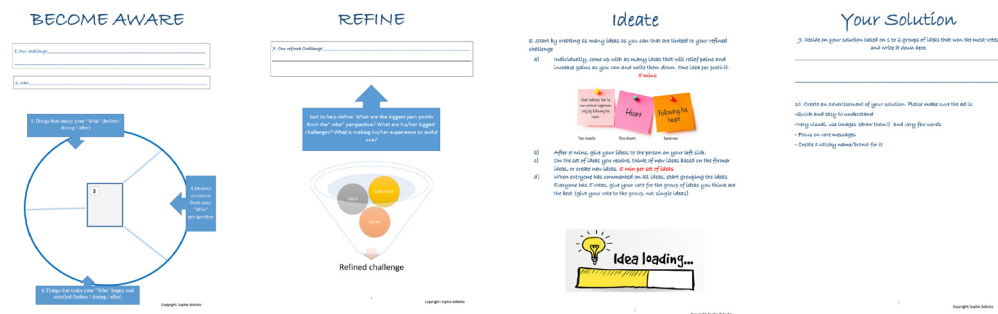


Figure 24

2.3.1 Becoming aware

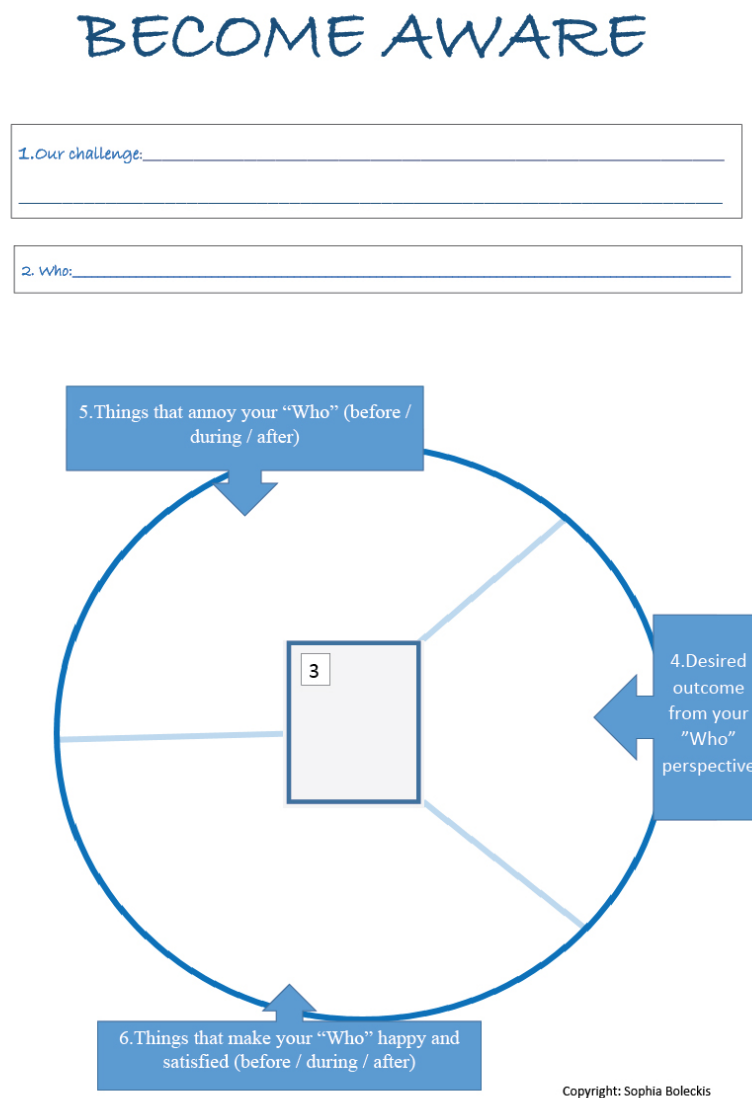


Figure 25: See appendix

The starting point of a design thinking process is empathizing, understanding the challenge in hand from the users point of view. I chose the Value Proposition Canvas model as I saw that it helped to concretize the thinking in understanding the user's perspective.

This work canvas has 6 different steps, marked by numbers, to be followed.

Step 1: Our challenge: participants were asked to decide on the challenge they would proceed in that Hack.

Step 2: Participants were asked to name the "Who", i.e. whose perspective do they want to become aware of.

Step 3: Participants were asked to draw the "Who", to concretize and remind them to see the challenge from that person's perspective.

Step 4: Participants were asked to discuss the "desired outcome from the "Who" perspective.

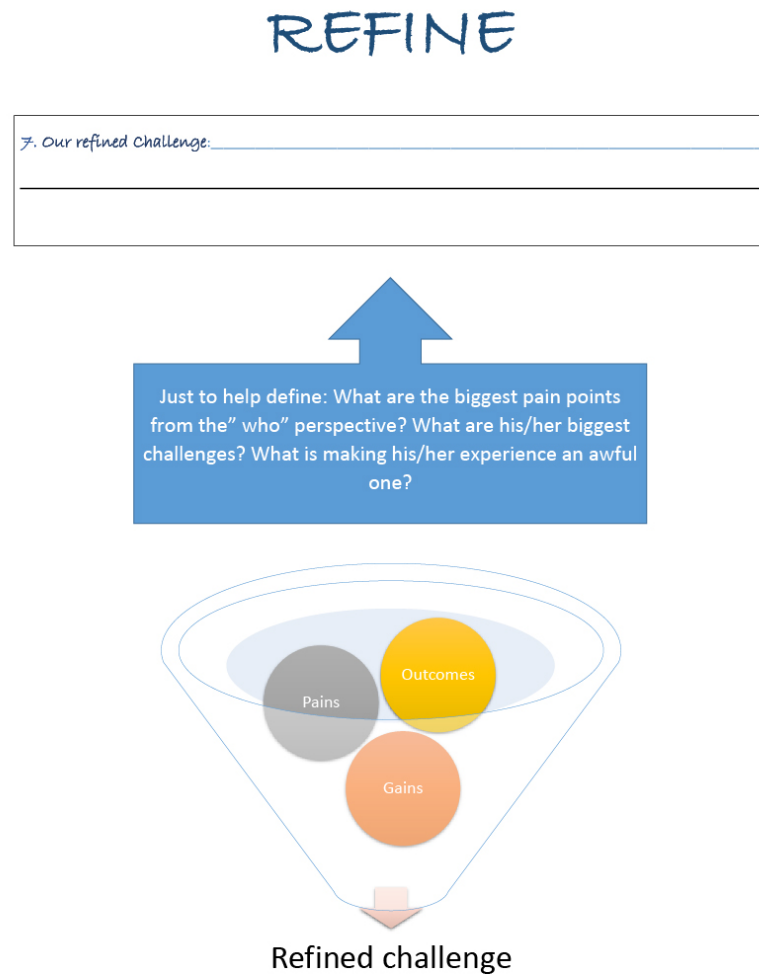
Step 5: Participants were asked to discuss things that annoy their "Who" before, during or after (for example an HR process).

Step 6: Participants were asked to discuss things that satisfy or make the "Who" happy before, during or after.

For steps 4 to 6 I gave the participants the freedom to discuss them in a random order if they wished to do so. They were given approximately 45 minutes to discuss and fill in the first work canvas.

The aim of this first step was to really dive deep into the mind of the user. In these HR hacks it was usually employees, line managers, management teams and HR themselves. I asked them to free their mind totally and really think out of the box from the user perspective. This first step turned out to be the most difficult of these all, and I noticed after a couple of Hacks that I need to put extra effort in explaining, giving more precise instructions as well as reminding them about keeping the perspective of their discussions on the "Who". Many times the participants were driven back to their HR roles and discussed the challenge from the HR perspective, not the user's.

2.3.2 Refine



2

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Figure 26: See appendix

The next step was to refine the initial challenge, in other words to define in more detail what the challenge actually was after gaining a much better understanding of the user's perspective. For this step I gave them 15 minutes to complete Step 7: Our refined challenge.

I gave the participants the following questions to help them come up with their refined challenge.

What are the biggest pain points from the "who" perspective?

What are his/her biggest challenges?

What is making his/her experience an awful one?

What should become true?

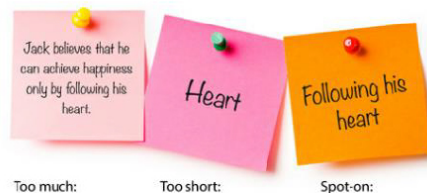
The participants found this step fairly easy and they also came up with great refined challenges that in many cases were very different from the actual challenges they started off. In most cases they were very detail and precise, which of course helped them in the next part.

2.3.3 Ideate

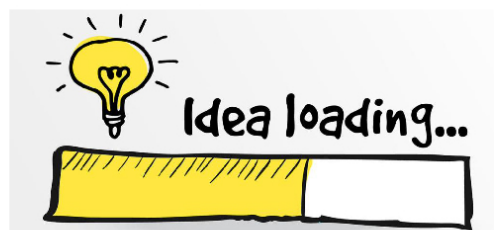
Ideate

8. Start by creating as many ideas as you can that are linked to your refined challenge

- a) Individually, come up with as many ideas that will relief pains and increase gains as you can and write them down. One idea per post-it.
 5 mins



- b) After 5 mins, give your ideas to the person on your left side.
 c) On the set of ideas you receive, think of new ideas based on the former ideas, or create new ideas. *5 min per set of ideas*
 d) When everyone has commented on all ideas, start grouping the ideas. Everyone has 5 votes, give your vote for the group of ideas you think are the best (give your vote to the group, not single ideas)



3

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Figure 27: See appendix

We then moved on to most creative part of the Hack – the ideation step with its Step 8 with the following instructions:

“Start creating as many ideas as you can that are linked to your refined challenge:

- a) Individually, come up with as many ideas that will relief pains and increase gains as you can and write them down. 5 minutes.
- b) Give your ideas to the person on your left side.
- a) On the set of ideas, you receive, think of new ideas based on the former ideas, or create new ideas. 5 minutes per set of ideas.
- b) When everyone has commented on all ideas, start grouping the ideas.
- c) Everyone has 5 votes, give your vote for the group of ideas you think are the best (give your vote to the group, not single ideas).

For this step I gave the groups 30 to 45 minutes, depending on how swiftly they had completed the previous steps.

I chose this idea generating method as I had personally tried it out earlier in a different project and found that in all its simplicity it works well in situations that you have limited time but you want to create as many out-of-the-box ideas as possible. As one of my aims in these Hacks was to “inspire and challenge HR to think out of the box and create new, workable, ideas and concepts” (chapter: The aim of this study). I wanted the participants to be inspired in noticing how creative they can be, even in a short time, and how through these ideas create something really workable and concrete. This method worked extremely well in all of the Hacks and the participants gave a lot of positive immediate feedback on it. The only aspect I changed as going forward with the different Hacks was the last part in which the participants vote for the best ideas. Eventually I also allowed them to vote for single ideas, not only groups, as in some situations there was only 2-4 groups of ideas.

2.3.4 Solution

Your Solution

9. Decide on your solution based on 1 to 2 groups of ideas that won the most votes and write it down here:

10. Create an advertisement of your solution. Please make sure the ad is:

- Quick and easy to understand
- Very visual, use images (draw them!) and very few words
- Focus on core messages
- Create a catchy name/brand for it

4

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Figure 28: See appendix

The final step was creating the solution or prototype utilising the ideas that won the most votes. For this step they also had 30 to 45 minutes. This step had two steps.

Step 9: Decide on your solution based on 1 to 2 groups of ideas that won the most votes and write it down here.

Step 10: Create an advertisement of your solution. Please make sure the ad is:

- Quick and easy to understand
- Very visual, use images (draw them!) and very few words

- Focus on core messages
- Create a catchy name/brand for it

I came up with this idea of concretizing the solutions as I wanted the participants to be able to easily visualize their solution, have fun and create it in a way that would be easy to explain it to the other participants. The participants were given a large amount of different types of hobby craft materials, coloured papers, stickers, yarn etc. to utilize and make an as creative ad as possible. After they were done, each group had 5-7 minutes' time to sell their idea to the others who acted as their initial "Who" and after the presentation the participants acting as the "Who" were able to challenge the solution and ask questions.

2.4 Practicalities regarding the Hacks

The HR Design thinking Hacks involved several different actions regarding practicalities in organizing them:

2.4.1 Marketing and participants

I created an Eventbrite (Eventbrite.com) event named HR Design thinking Hack with the five different sessions on five different Fridays during Spring 2018. I then marketed the Hacks in two ways. First of all, I sent out invitations to HR professionals via LinkedIn messaging as well as let Eventbrite market my sessions as they were marked as open sessions for all.

2.4.2 Invitation

For those who registered to the five different events, I sent out an invitation on the same week of the event to welcome them to the Friday session. The invite included the practical information of where and when the Hack will be held as well as a request to think in advance of challenge that was linked to the theme of the Hack they were joining.

2.4.3 Setting up the scene

I reserved a big meeting room in the building that the company I work for has its office. I wanted the room to be as relaxed as possible, avoiding a school-like setting of tables and chairs. I offered the participants some coffee and some small snacks to keep them energized. In addition, I laid out the work canvas papers on the tables, as well as pens and two big bags with the hobby crafts. I also ensured that the room had three to four flip-charts

I played some music as they came into the room, as well as in the background when they worked in their groups.

2.4.4 After the Hack

Immediately after the Hack I sent out a Thank you –message with the link to the feedback form I had created in SurveyMonkey (surveymonkey.com). Later, the following week, I sent out a modified copy of the introduction slides I had gone through in the Hack as well as the photos I had taken of them as well as the filled in work canvases and created solutions.

I discussed with some participants one to two months after the Hack to hear about their learnings in the Hack, and also how they had taken the solutions or the method forward in their work and organisation.

2.5 Areas of concern

Regarding the creation of the Hacks I must say that I felt a bit unsure about how the Hacks would work practically, time and content wise and in addition, would the participants feel they receive added value through the solutions as well as through the methodology.

I knew that if I would have had even a day to go through the topic I would have been in safe hands. However, knowing that four hours would be the maximum, I was worried about how much we could accomplish in that short time. As the overall topic and concept of design thinking would be new to most and then in addition to that, designing creative, new solutions out of the blue with participants that would not know from before, seemed to me to be a somewhat worrying task.

Areas of biggest concern were:

- a) time: would four hours be enough?
- b) time management: how to make sure that participants would have enough time to both understand and contribute in the given time for each step?
- c) introduction: would one hour be enough to cover the overall theme of transformation within HR as well as introduce design thinking?
- d) fun factor: how to ensure that participants would enjoy the Hack?

2.6 Themes of the HR Design thinking Hacks

2.6.1 What are HR areas and what are not? Defining the scope.

Traditionally HR areas are called functional areas of HR and they include: recruiting and staffing, benefits, compensation, employee relations, HR compliance, organizational design, training and development, human resource information systems and payroll. (Deutsch, 2015) These areas are usually handles by HR generalists, and as said, are extremely traditional and, many times, process oriented.

HRs themselves usually define the areas by using the employee life cycle model:



Figure 29: Cox, 2018

As referred to in the introduction, HR's work, role and areas are in tremendous transformation due to the changes happening in the world and in business. As to that, new HR areas, or combination of areas and ways of working are being introduced in addition to new agile behaviors and mindsets. Employee experience, New Ways of working, Talent acquisition, 'Leading you' are some of the newest areas and have taken a huge role in modern HR.

What are then not defined as HR areas? A tricky question but perhaps in short it could be said that areas that do not cover personnel issues or do not affect the employees are not seen as HR led areas.

2.6.2 Choice of themes for the Hack Events

I chose the themes for the Hacks mostly based on my own interests and my strengths in HR areas. Two of the areas, Talent attraction and Talent development, are from the more traditional side, Tools and Apps has its flavors from both the traditional HR related tools side as well as the more modern applications, and then Creating company culture as well as New Ways of Working are from the newest, more unknown areas of HR.

I started the Hack with the more traditional themes as I felt it would be easier to try out the overall Hack concept on areas that are more familiar to the participants, and I would not need to worry too much about explaining the areas themselves or to help groups to create new ideas of areas that are not that known to them. Especially in the first step it is much more difficult for participants to jump into the shoes of the users if the area itself is not familiar to them, or they have not worked within that area. The more they know, the better they can free themselves from the conventional thinking and create new.

The themes and their dates were as follows:

Talent attraction 23.3.2018

Talent management 13.4.2018

Creating company culture 18.5.2018

Tools & Apps 25.5.2018

New Ways of Working 1.6.2018

3. The HR Design Thinking Hacks

3.1 Talent attraction 23.3.2018

3.1.1 Question and Participants

There were 9 participants present in the session. Six of them have an HR manager background, one works as a recruitment consultant, one was an expert in design thinking and service design and one person has his own firm in creating an application for HR. The participants formed three groups: two + three + four participants.

The participants were asked to think about a challenge that could be solved in candidate attraction or building an attractive employer brand.

3.1.2 Definition

Talent attraction as an HR area consists of both the actual “attraction” part, in practice meaning all employer branding related actions and activities, as well as the entire recruitment process which starts from deciding on a recruitment need to the actual decision of offering the most suitable candidate the open position. It is a wide, and many-sided area that very much leans on the recruitment process, which many times is quite traditional.

In short, the talent attraction area includes the following parts:

- Attracting talent via various branding means and channels as well as events, activities and forums
- Talent acquisition which consists of the various parts of candidate recruitment
- Talent integration which is then more known as the on-boarding part of the process which usually starts already before the candidate has actually started in the firm.

3.1. 3 The Hack process

Here you can see the different steps of this Hack as well as the challenges, photos of the ideas of the groups and also the three solutions:

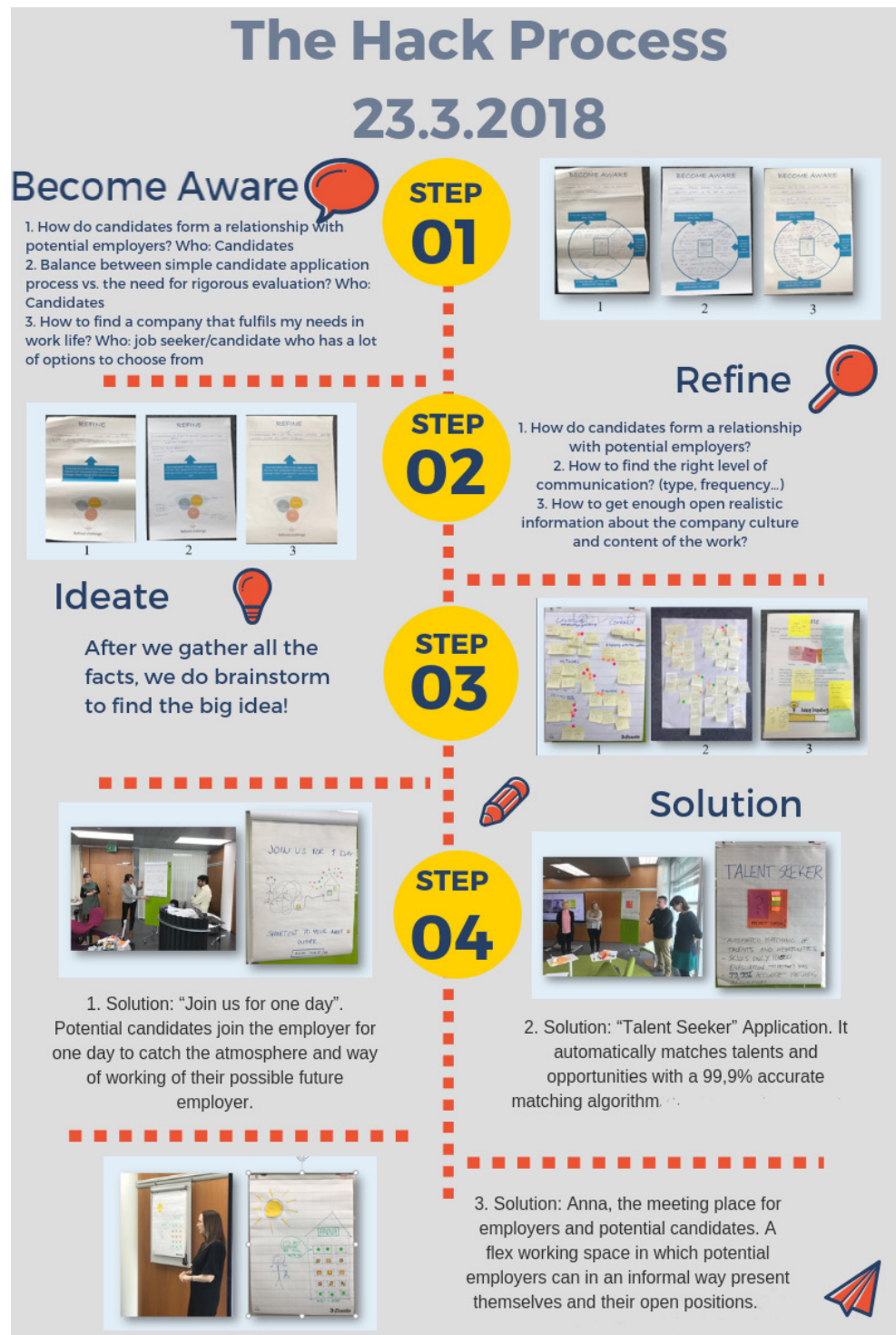


Figure 30: The Hack Process 6.1. 4 Feedback and next steps

The link to the feedback form was sent a couple of days after the Hack and six people

out of nine responded which gives an excellent response rate. They apparently really enjoyed the session as 5 of them gave a score of 9 or 10 to the NPS question, "How likely would you recommend the event to a friend or colleague?". One person had a passive vote of 7 or 8. Half of them rated the event as excellent and half of them as very good, which gives further indication that the session went very well from their perspective and fulfilled their expectations. When asked what they liked best they answered:

- Exchanging ideas with others and that it was only 4 hours
- the atmosphere, networking, unconventional style in terms of approaching challenges
- It was well organized, the atmosphere was great and having people from different backgrounds we were able to create new and fresh ideas.
- Working with professionals of a discipline I know little about
- Interesting topic and pushed me outside comfort zone. On a practical level I liked passing the post notes as a tool to build on ideas and will use that. Finally, on a very simple level it was extremely well organized so a pleasure to take part!
- The group work, I liked that you could change your point of view in different questions.

I am extremely happy about two things in these comments. One, that they felt they were able to create new ideas, which tells that the method and how it was conducted, even if we only had 4 hours, gives the opportunity to create new. Also, that it worked as pushing the participants out of their comfort zone and they felt it was an unconventional style and way of working.

One participant commented that for the Hack he/she would perhaps save time in the beginning to give more time for the group work and one person felt that more clarification on each task was needed. The latter I took into use in the further sessions: giving more concrete advice on what to do as well as how to do it. Especially in the first part people tended to get stuck on their own views instead of the views of the "customer" or "who" as I called it.

Then on the actual success regarding the methodology. Participants gave their views on how they would take new ideas into use at work or if they are able to test any of the prototypes in their organization:

- Yes, at least the fact that there seems to be big interest for HR professionals for innovation within TA (talent acquisition) space
- I want to use the methodology of design thinking in my own work/team. It is important that the session and all materials are well prepared.

- Apart from the fact that I am in no organization at the moment, as a designer, I am generally not working with recruitment and I don't think it'd be in my hands to test anything. I'd be happy to give a hand though.
- There were some elements such as "open house" and "visit us for the day" that could be adapted
- Just overall I will use design thinking whenever it's possible, especially now when it's more clear what it really is.

From these comments it is evident that the Hack did promote design thinking and that the participants find it as a useful and useable tool for their work. The further comments on the probability of using design thinking as a methodology strongly backs that assumption as well:

- Yes, it is a formulated, yet relaxed way of designing processes. I also liked the fact it engages participants in a completely new way compared to traditional meetings.
- Since I'm a designer, chances are I will. It was good to see that it's possible to get so far in such a short time so I will keep the methodology at hand because I might need to drive such workshops, at some point!
- Yes. I can see how it helps to generate ideas
- Absolutely when it's possible. I liked it when you really sat down with a group and together scaled things and had discussions and tried to think in a new design thinking way.

3.1. 5 The NPS score

How likely is it that you would recommend the event to a friend or colleague?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0

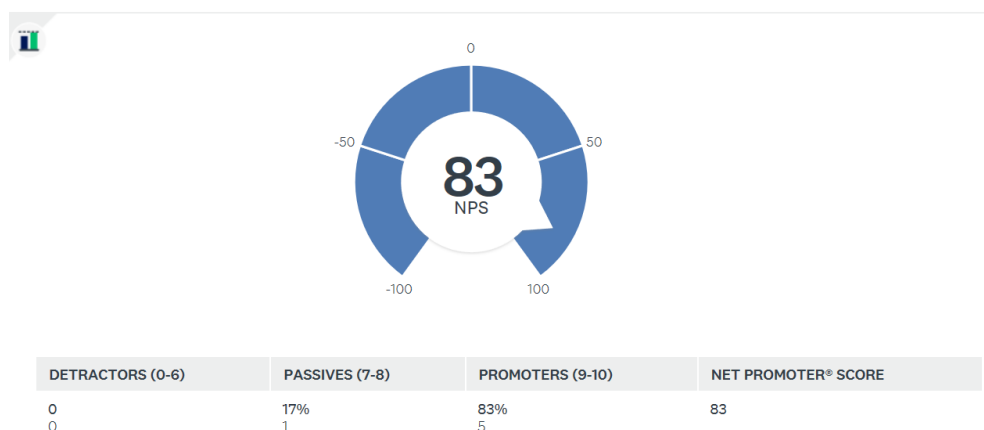


Figure 31: The NPS Score

3.1.6 Observations and conclusions

As this was the first Hack, it worked as the trial for the overall Hack idea and concept. It was extremely exciting as I did not know beforehand

- whether the participants would actually show up and show up in time –and how I would manage if many would show up late.
- if the timing would work out at all (would there be enough time for each part of the Hack).
- if the participants would find the introduction interesting and whether I would be able to inspire them for some dialogue.
- if the participants find the Hack process and way of working interesting and fun.
- if the groups would actually be able to create concrete solutions.

Fortunately, all those fears and concerns I had beforehand turned out to be totally unnecessary. The timing worked, we had interesting discussion on HR transformation, the participants found the process and design thinking interesting and helpful for themselves –and they created really cool solutions.

I noticed that in my introduction I had a couple of too many slides regarding the company I work at and I took them out for the next sessions. As well, I asked the groups to name one person to be in charge of the timing –but in this session as well as then in the following session that turned out to be unnecessary. Timing was not an issue at all, and groups did not have to move to the next parts at the same time, but they could move forward at their own pace. This I managed to facilitate then in the next sessions.

One of the key findings in this session was that as there was one group with only two members, it was clear that they had quite some difficulties in all of the different steps, from deciding on the challenge, to ideation and in the end, creating the solution. It became clear that to work out, it is mandatory to have at least three members in each group. The preference would be to have four members as with more members the more dominant ones would overrule the quieter ones.

Overall I was extremely happy that the session worked out as well as it did and that the participants found it useful for them as can be read from the feedback.

3.2. Talent Management, 13.4.2018

3.2.1 Question and Participants

This session had 9 participants of which eight of them work in different HR roles, two of them within talent management topics. One person did not have any HR background, but was working as a freelance consultant. The participants formed three groups of three participants.

The question I sent to the participants beforehand was: "What do you see as a challenge, from the employee/stakeholder experience perspective, in talent management? You can think of it from a general perspective or from a single concept/process perspective."

3.2.2 Definition

Wikipedia defines talent management as "the anticipation of required human capital for an organization and the planning to meet those needs." (Talent management)
According to HRZone it can be defined as the following : "Talent management is a unified strategy designed to help organizations make the best possible use of their human capital now and in the future, to use their human capital to help meet the organization's vision, and to ensure the maximum return from their talent by creating an attractive organizational culture that encourages happiness and commitment." (What is Talent Management?)

What does that actually mean? In practice it is all about ensuring that all the expertise, talent, knowledge (be it then explicit or tacit) in an organization is utilized and managed to its maximum in a strategic and systematic way. However, that is not the end to it. As said in an article in Harvard Business Review: "It is not about developing employees or creating succession plans, nor is it about achieving specific turnover rates or any other tactical outcome. It exists to support the organization's overall objectives, which in business essentially amount to making money." (Cappelli, 2008)

Talent Management is becoming one of the most critical areas in HR as cited in chapter: Digitalization and disruptions in Human resources (HR). The talent needs of organizations is changing rapidly, needed talent is scarce, and on the other hand organizations have talent that need to be re-trained. A very vast and multi-layered area that you can find challenges to Hack very easily. The challenge is to refine the challenge so that you are able to create a concrete solution for it.

3.2.3 The Hack process

Here you can see the different steps of this Hack as well as the challenges, photos of the ideas of the groups and also the three solutions:



Figure 32: The Hack Process

3.2.4 Feedback and next steps

The event received a NPS score of 75 and of four answers, two participants rated it as “excellent” and two as “very good”, and answering that it was “very organised”. All participants felt that the length was “about right”. When asked about what they like most, they answered:

- Venue, participants, method and topic.
- The tasks were well prepared and it was easy to follow the instructions but we still got to challenge ourselves and truly came up with innovative ideas.
- Activity level.
- Great atmosphere, learning by doing, having fun.

They gave some good ideas too if they would facilitate the session: give more time to challenge other groups ideas and refine them. This gives me an idea that if there were more time, it would make sense to continue the development and ideation work so that another group would start further developing the prototype of another group. That would have worked in all Hacks very well. Also, one person commented that it would be interesting to hear from other sessions as well. That is true that sessions, if organized in this way as a series, could include findings from other Hacks as well to increase learning and sharing opportunities.

For question 8, “Did you get any new ideas that you could take into use at work/are you able to test any of the prototypes in your organization?”, the participants answered:

- New ideas for high potential approach and the method itself.
- Yes, a more concrete model of how to enable people to take more responsibility themselves for using and developing their talent.
- Yes! I will build on what we came up with and take as much as possible to our processes.
- Yes, I did - ideas for improving our exit process and talent development process

And they answered that would be using the design thinking methodology in the future in leadership teams, to think differently and in coming workshops.

3.2.5 The NPS score

How likely is it that you would recommend the event to a friend or colleague?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0

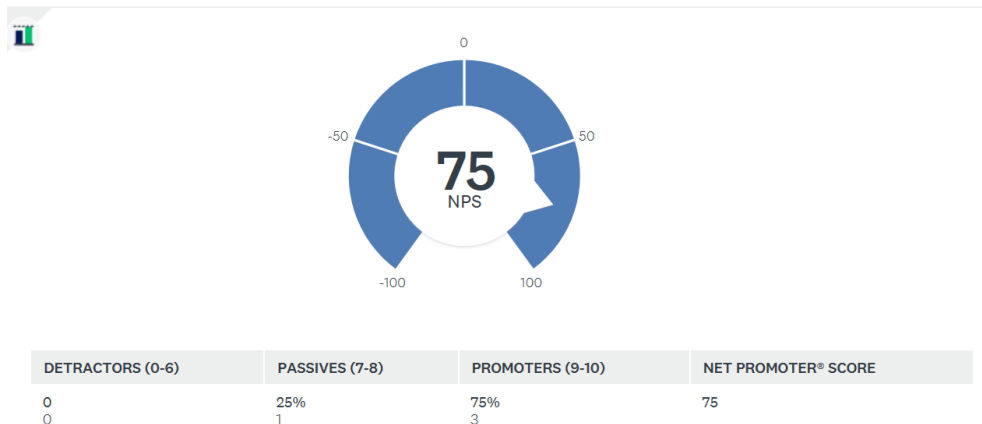


Figure 33: The NPS Score

3.2.6 Observations and conclusions

In this event it was clear that those participants whose key role in their organisation evolves around Talent management, were quick to adapt to the subject and their discussions were lively and multi-sided. Also, their solution, “Match made in Cloud” was complex and very concrete. They also had a lot of time and fun in developing a very creative ad. This solution has also been actually taken into use as such in a big corporation in Finland. Then, on the other hand the team with no experts in talent management created a detailed solution, “We give feedback that seeds your next steps”, that was not that unique or new, and the creativity of the ad was lacking too. The difference can also easily be seen through the quantity of ideas. One could say that the closer you are to the topic, the more creative you are in pushing your boundaries and thinking out-of-the-box. Perhaps, you are also more courageous. On the other hand, the facilitator has a big role in pushing those groups forward to open up, be more courageous and feeling empowered to building new solutions to topics they are not that knowledgeable about.

3.3 Creating Company Culture, 18.5.2018

3.3.1 Question and Participants

The question I sent to the participants was: “What do you see as a challenge, from the employee/manager/management team/ stakeholder experience perspective, in building or renewing company culture? You can think of it from a general perspective or from a single concept perspective.”

This Hack had nine participants of which 8 were at the moment working in HR roles and one person had been previously working in an HR administrative role abroad before moving to Finland and was now working in a totally different area.

They formed three groups of three people. As there were two late comers, I then rearranged the groups that they would be equal. Initially they had a group of three and one group with four.

3.3.2 Definition

The interest around creating and developing company culture has grown tremendously during the last years. However, awareness of the subject can be dated back to the '60s and the focus slowly grew within in the '80s as the term "corporate culture" was presented and later on in the '90s symbols like logos and trademarks would become part of the overall concept. (Corporate Culture) Now company culture is seen as the mixture of both internal culture as well as inheriting the culture of countries, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of employees. Google, being probably one of the most famous company referred to when talking about company culture, has created a very intrinsic culture of its own, embedding its values globally throughout the organisation. An excellent example of how, in its best, a strong company culture, can help the company succeed.

The area is vast and the difficulty lies in its abstractness – of what really is the core of company culture. Is it people, values, ways of working, countries, history? Then how to really "create" company culture? Are there concrete actions that can be taken for creating company culture and can these solutions be created in a 4-hour Hack?

3.3.3 The Hack process

Here you can see the different steps of this Hack as well as the challenges, photos of the ideas of the groups and also the three solutions:

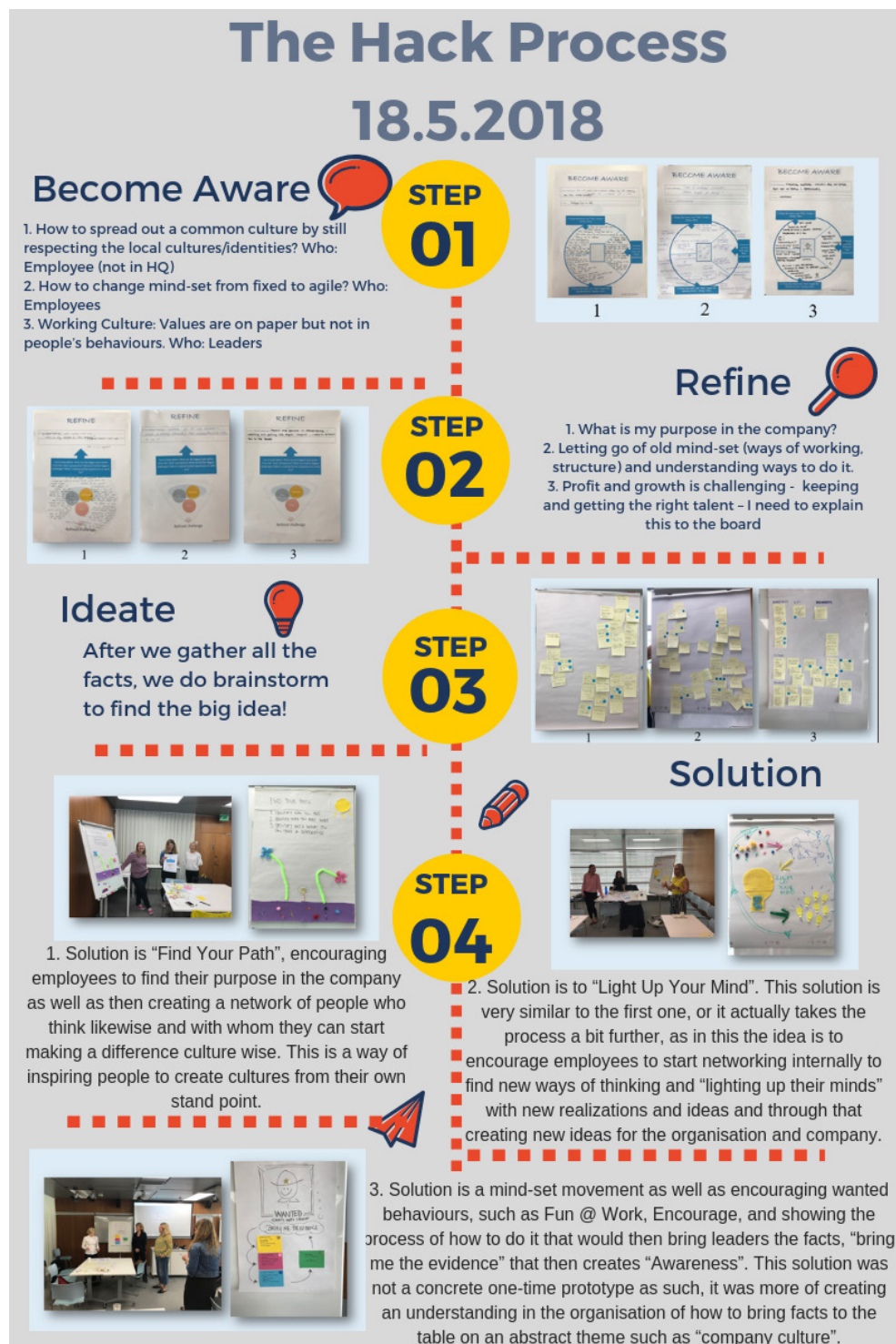


Figure 34: The Hack Process

3.3.4 Feedback and next steps

The feedback questionnaire was answered by 4 participants and the event received a NPS score of 75. All rated the event as very good. When asked about what was interesting of the event they answered:

- Very interesting topic, networking with HR colleagues, new approach to problem solving
- Overall very good way to familiarize with the topic - would of course be great if the challenge would be specifically from your organization. I do understand that it's not possible due to participants being from many different organizations.
- HR Hackathon provided good platform for learn by doing to capture the design sprint basics. Atmosphere in the event was very open and collaborative which created excellent "learning platform".
- Good introduction and discussion about actual, relevant and real HR challenges that we are facing right now. Good with participants from different backgrounds. The actual HACK was a very opening experience and I will try to use this method when there is a opening for it.

The participants hoped that the facilitator would have had real life cases to show and that in the end there would have been a wrap up on how the groups did their job and if it went as according to the process and plan – in other words some kind of a feedback session.

Three of the participants felt that it was very organised and one that it was extremely well organised, and half of them felt they received most of the information and half felt they received all of the information. For the length they felt that it was about right.

On gaining ideas for themselves and their work the participants answered:

- Yes - the whole process and way of working is something we can implement in our organization. Or somewhat it is in place but great that as HR I can support and encourage towards it more.
- I am at the moment implementing the method and concept of the design sprint into one of the HR process concepts I am working with related to performance and rewards. I am planning to use the design sprint method as a backbone for the analysis and agile project planning for reviewing and renewing the performance and rewards process.
- Yes! I will try to use this method and I also got good ideas and assurance when it comes to developing our concept of employer experience and culture.

The participants felt that they would take the methodology in use in similar workshops for managers, and for using it as check list for capturing the crucial customer point of view to ensure the design starts from the customer need i.e. to focus on solving the right challenge”.

They thanked for a professional but relaxed Hack, an excellent platform to learn and test design thinking, and that they were inspired and motivated.

3.3.5 The NPS score

How likely is it that you would recommend the event to a friend or colleague?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0

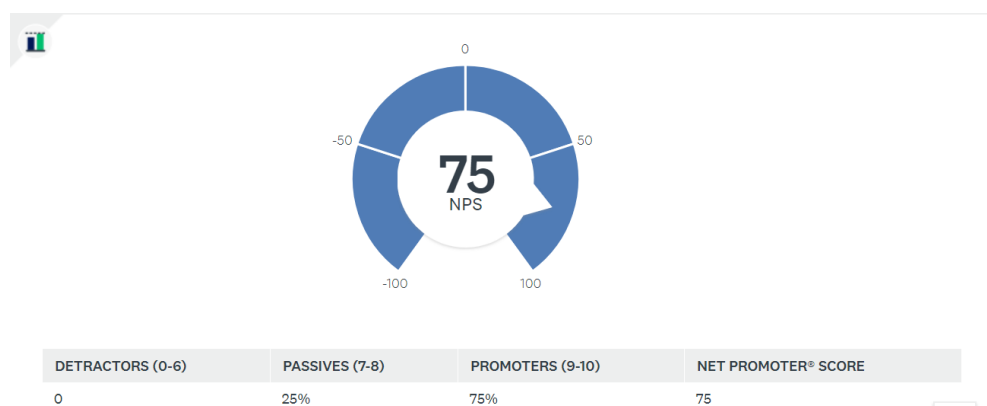


Figure 35: The NPS Score

3.3.6 Observations and conclusions

This events theme was one of the two abstract ones, the other being New Ways of Working. Company culture being such a vast theme and on the other hand still unknown, I was a bit unsure on how the Hack would work out –especially regarding ideating the concrete solutions and would there be enough time for discussions in the first part, “Become Aware” so that the group members would get a common understanding of what company culture means from their perspective and what kind of challenge they would then like to hack.

According to the feedback, timing did not seem to be a problem, so one might conclude that the concepts works also with themes that are more abstract and more unknown. The key lies with facilitating the session so that participants do not get stuck in their discussions, as at times these groups did. Every now and then I reminded them to concentrate on simplifying and concretizing and to keep their focus on the “Who” and not think from and HR manager perspective.

3.4. Tools and Apps, 25.5.2018

3.4.1 Question and Participants

In this Hack we had seven participants, three of them directly in HR positions, three working in HR consultancy, one in a non-HR project organisation. The participants divided themselves into two groups, one with four and one with three members.

The question that was sent to them beforehand was: “What do you see as a challenge, from the employee/manager/management team/ stakeholder experience perspective, in creating/ implementing HR tools and apps? You can think of it from a general perspective or from a single concept/tool/process perspective.”

3.4.2 Definition

Going back to the ‘70s HR was very much still a paper functioning organisation. It wasn’t until ERP systems, like SAP, were introduced around 1979 that HR data became a part of company data management. First, HR data was on the client server, later on, shifted to web which meant more agility with line manager led processes. At the same time companies started to introduce specialized platforms for example for recruitment, instead of pushing for a “one size fits all” ideology. (Batyski, 2017) Coming to the more recent innovations, we have HR tools that are mobile and work via applications, integrated with various functions such as photo-taking, WhatsApp and social media channels.

As a theme for the Hack this requires both knowledge of IT systems, HR and employee needs as well as courage to really push out of current boundaries. HRs are not IT experts so a lot of wild, creative ideas help to think how current challenges can be fixed with something totally new and to really jump out of the constraints of reality. Perhaps a situation in which there would not be any IT experts to help would help create non-realistic solutions that actually could work at the end of the day—or at least could actually be employee experience driven.

3.4.3 The Hack process

Here you can see the different steps of this Hack as well as the challenges, photos of the ideas of the groups and also the two solutions:



Figure 36: The Hack Process

3.4.4 Feedback and next steps

For this session unfortunately only 2 participants gave their feedback. However, they both seemed very pleased as they gave as the NPS score 9 or 10. One of them rated the event as “excellent”, the other as “very good”.

When asked what they enjoyed most, they answered: “networking, learning new method of innovating. Meeting new interesting people and new ideas, co-creating together.” Both of them had some constructive feedback on what they would do perhaps differently. The other person said that “sharing best practices” would have been nice, although she/he then commented that it might not have been the idea of the workshop to do so. I agree, that the main idea of the workshop was not to really dig deep into the topics themselves. The topics worked more as platforms and examples for the usage of the methodology. The other person commented that perhaps an icebreaker in the beginning would have helped the teams to build trust more swiftly. Agree on this. Definitely worthwhile, and I would add that in the beginning of any possible future Hacks.

Both felt that the length was about right and that the event was organized very well or extremely well, and that they had received all, or most of the information beforehand.

Then on gaining new ideas they answered that “yes, new ideas on how to mix already know knowledge together” as well as received new ideas on the actual theme. Both also were sure they will start using this methodology in their work in the future, however, they did not elaborate on how they will do it.

3.4.5 The NPS score

How likely is it that you would recommend the event to a friend or colleague?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 0

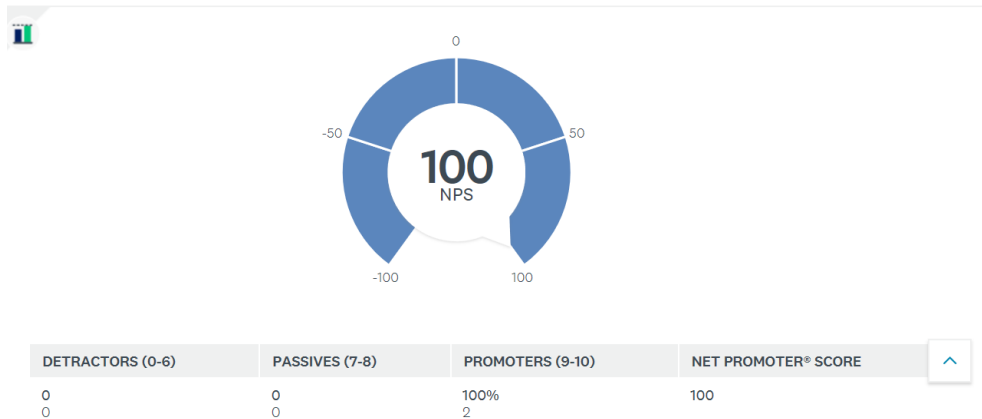


Figure 37: The NPS Score

3.4.6 Observations and conclusions

This event received the least of registrations and I interpreted so that it was seen as the least interesting from the topic perspective. This time we only had two groups and we were able to go through the process fairly swiftly and there was nicely time in the end for discussions and wrap up. As in the earlier event there was feedback to go through the overall hack and process, and have a dialogue on how people about design thinking and how they could take it further in use in their own work. I felt the end discussion was beneficial and I strongly recommend that for similar hacks.

In this event, the other group, with the solution “Together Forever” actually got a bit out of track from the initial theme and ended up creating a solution more on developing company culture. The other group on the other had stuck to theme and ended up creating a futuristic chat pot tool. I do not see this as a problem, more of an observation. The learning curve regarding the process is nevertheless the same and it may be the solution, if further developed, would end up become a tool and application related.

3.5. New Ways of Working, 1.6.2018

3.5.1 Participants and Question

In the final Hack we had 12 participants of which 10 worked as HR managers/HR Business partners and two in HR consultancy. The participants formed three groups of four participants each.

The question I sent to the participants was: "What do you see as a challenge, from the employee/manager/management team/ stakeholder experience perspective, in creating/implementing new ways of working? You can think of it from a general perspective or from a single concept/tool/process perspective."

3.5.2 Definition

New Ways of Working is one of the newest themes in HR, and of the also less-known. For this reason, I left it as last in this series of Hacks. Very few HRs have had the chance to work on this subject yet and I was aware that the topic may be a bit difficult to concretize.

New Ways of working is a fascinating subject as it combines company culture, employee experience, facility management and many times also customer experience. It is the result of the vast variety of choices that employees have now through the usage of new technology that allow people to work when and where they choose, may it be a coffee shop, their home terrace or their customers hot seat. As Tom Declercq, Managing Partner Talent Deloitte, says it well: " Increasingly, work is no longer about where you go, but about what you do and the impact you make." (New ways of working) The value of what you get done is much greater than the value of being present. You are no longer paid for being at work, but truly accomplishing things, and your employer is responsible for ensuring that you have the proper tools and space to meet your targets, and at the same time increase your well-being, network and happiness.

3.5.3 The Hack process

Here you can see the different steps of this Hack as well as the challenges, photos of the ideas of the groups and also the three solutions:

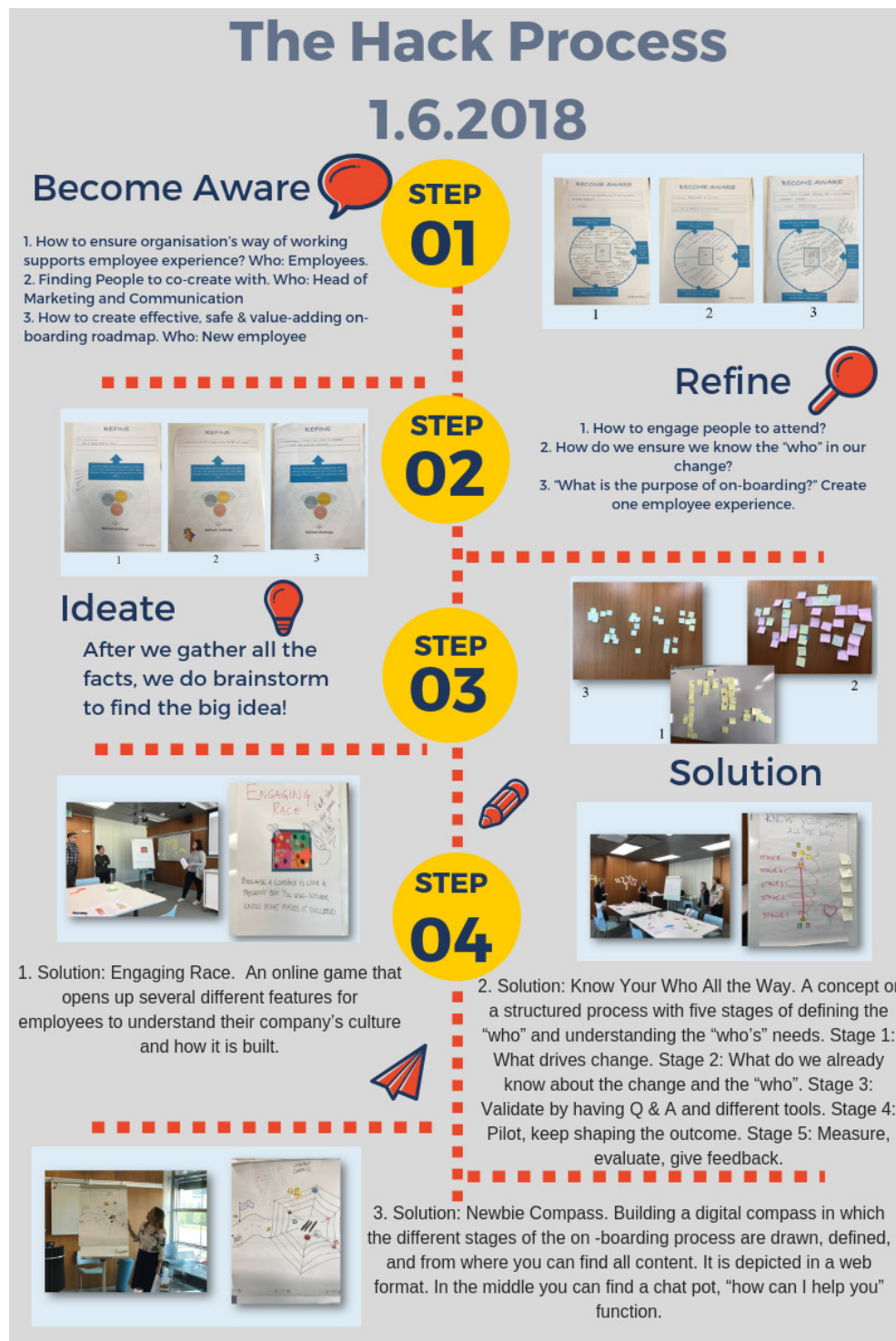


Figure 38: The Hack Process

3.5.4 Feedback and next steps

Unfortunately for this event I had the possibility to send out the feedbacks only after a couple of weeks and then most of the participants were on summer holiday already. For this reason, I only received two feedbacks back.

Both of the participants felt that the event was very good. They commented what they liked about the event like this: “New way of working for me, quick introduction, lots of action.” and the other, “Meeting new people and having new kind of perspectives”.

They both gave really good hints on what could be done even better: “With some persons the way to workshop (design thinking) was not easy - so maybe go around even more and really help people to overcome the normal way of working”. “I would mix people in the event so that everyone has to meet new people. Nothing really new comes up if work colleagues sit next to each other”.

They both felt that the event was very organized and that they received most of the information beforehand and the length was about right.

Regarding the ideas, the other participant felt that she received a good insight on design thinking as such and the other commented that their team worked on an app that she will definitely take forward. Both of them really believed that the method will help them and they will take it into use in their work.

3.5.5 The NPS score

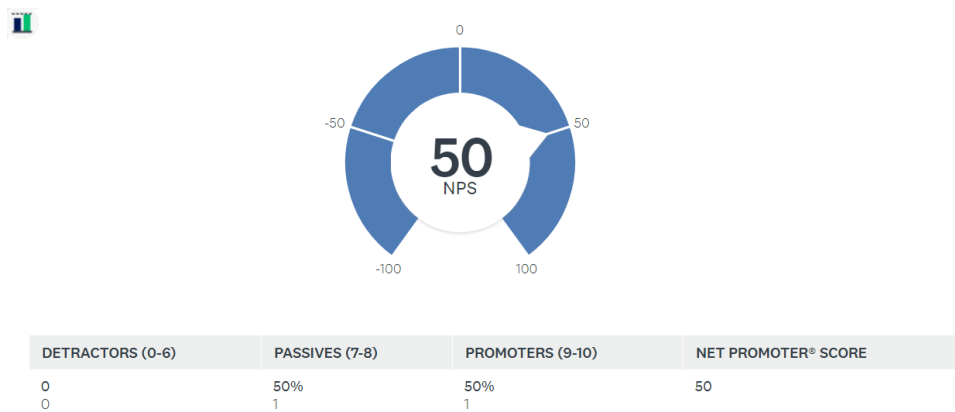


Figure 39: The NPS Score

3.5.6 Observations and conclusions

This being the last Hack with, from my perspective, the most challenging theme, it was not a surprise that the participants needed a lot of support and help with getting into speed with the topics. In addition, they interpreted the subject more from a culture perspective that really from a new way of working perspective, not taking into consideration for example changes in how, when and where people will work in the future. However, as my interests did not really lie on the content itself I did not try to steer their thoughts or discussions on this aspect. However, if the outcomes would have been more meaningful then I would have put more effort in the introduction part on new ways of working.

As I had gained already some experience in leading the Hack, my part flowed easily and I was able to put my time more into joining in discussions with the groups as well as co-creating together with the participants.

4. Analysis and Conclusion

There are a few points that I learnt myself through the Hacks and which I would take into consideration if utilising this concept in the future. First of all, the role of the facilitator as an inspirer and keeping both the perspectives as well as discussions “on track” is absolutely crucial.

I learnt from the first Hack that you really must push the participants in the first step, “Become Aware” to remember the “Who” (and not fall into the trap of thinking from the HR perspective) as well as have the courage to create totally wild ideas (and not ready solutions) in step 3 (Ideate). The crazier the ideas, the easier it was for the participants to develop their solution as well as make a creative ad. Although there is absolutely no need for content expertise in the ideation step, and I did promote people to just really think out of the box, it seems to be difficult to do so without the expertise backing you up. I realized after the first Hack that I need to push people more to really create wild ideas, not content specific ideas, to increase ideation, creativity and not to be too stuck with conventional knowledge and thoughts. Thus, the number of ideas does not directly indicate a more creative solution or vice versa, but it does help group members to produce larger quantity of ideas all together which could result in more creative solutions.

I also learnt that a group of only two participants does not work in this concept as their ability to discuss the subject and challenge from different angles as well as ideate suffered tremendously. The ideal in this type of Hack concept is a group of four as in

that setup there is good proportion of different insights and minimum risk of someone less talkative to be left outside the discussion. There were also differences in speed in the different-sized groups. The larger groups being slower in the first step, but then caught up in the last step. In other words, the more discussion and the more ideas you have, the easier it is to create your final solution. Timing as such was not a problem to any group and all solutions were completed in time. Some groups, that had less ideas created within the ideation step had some trouble in creating and deciding upon their final solution, even if they were unanimous when voting about the best ideas or group of ideas.

It also became clear throughout the different Hacks that the more abstract, or new, the theme was the more the participants needed facilitation help to really grasp on something tangible and to create something concrete. In these sessions it would have been helpful to have more time or to take into use an excellent idea shared by one of the participants, i.e. taking the next step and creating new solutions from already created solutions.

The overall structure of the Hacks worked very well. The participants valued the first introduction part as given them insights not only on design thinking but also on HR transformation and to have interesting dialogues on how and why HR's role needs to change in the future. What I would include in possible future Hacks would be a separate conclusion discussion in the end on topics such as:

- What did we learn? What were the learnings in previous Hacks?
- How will I take the methodology into use?
- What are my next steps as an HR?
- What will I change: in my organisation/in my own way of working?

So, what is my conclusion? My aims for this thesis were two-fold:

- 1) To draw conclusion whether HRs would feel that design thinking, as a methodology, would work for them as a way to create dialogue, to build understanding of employee experience and its importance, co-create new within their organisations, work as a facilitating method.
- 2) I wanted to test if the Hacks would actually produce concrete solutions that organizations could take into use, either directly or in-directly.

For the first aim I think I was successful in creating understanding of design thinking as a methodology to be used by HR as well as provoked HRs to see beyond their current ways of working, to become change agents in their organizations. In all Hacks I felt that it was a real eye-opener for the participants to turn around the perspective to the user, instead of thinking from an HR expert point of view what would make sense. With

some pushing people really became courageous in thinking out of the box and even come up with totally silly ideas that actually created very sensible solutions. According to the feedback all participants felt that the methodology would be useful in their work and that they look forward to taking it to use. They also truly enjoyed the simple but effective ideation step, that awakened their creativity.

For the second aim, I did ask participants a few weeks after the Hacks on how they had actually taken the concrete solutions into use, and there was only a couple of HR that took the created solutions into further development within their organizations but several said that they had used the Hack materials and methodology in different workshops for managers and management teams, and that their usage had been easy and effective.

I would thus conclude that creating this concept was successful as through it I was able to fairly effectively train approximately 50 participants to become agile change agents in their organisations. The Hacks were inspiring, eye-opening, fun and built new networks. Participants were able to create solutions that provoked their thinking and ability to courageously think out of the box. They understood the need for change and their roles in driving this change. I would summarize that design thinking as a methodology fits perfectly for HR, to be used in day-to-day tasks, workshop facilitations, employee experience driven concept creations, and leading talent and line managers.

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Appendix 1: Feedback questionnaire in SurveyMonkey

Q1: How likely is it that you would recommend the event to a friend or colleague?

Scoring: 0-6 Detractors, 7-8 Passives, 9-10 Promoters

Q2: Overall, how would you rate the event?

Scoring: Poor, Fair, Good, Very good, Excellent

Q3: What did you like about the event?

Scoring: Open text answers

Q4: What would you change if you were facilitating the Hack yourself?

Scoring: Open text answers

Q5: How organized was the event?

Scoring: Not at all, Not so, Somewhat, Very, Extremely

Q6: Prior to the event, how much of the information that you needed did you get?

Scoring: None, Little, Some, Most, All

Q7: Was the event length too long too short or about right?

Scoring: Much too short, Too short, About right, Too long, Much too long

Q8: Did you get any new ideas that you could take into use at work/are you able to test any of the prototypes in your organization? Please elaborate.

Scoring: Open text answers

Q9: Do you believe you will be using the Design thinking method in the future based on this experience? Please elaborate.

Scoring: Open text answers

Q10: Is there anything else you'd like to share about the event?

Scoring: Open text answers

Appendix 2: Canvas

Figure 25

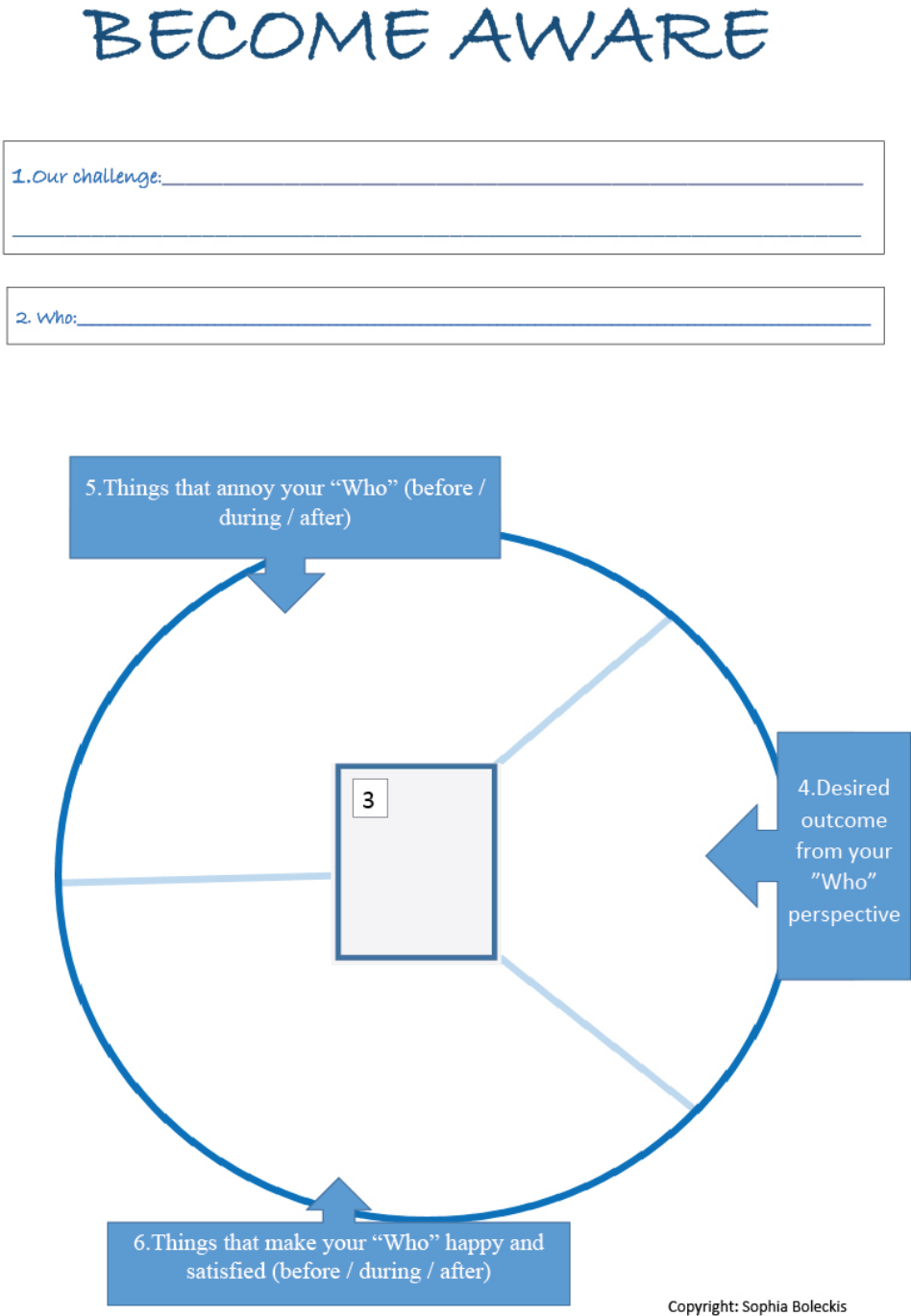


Figure 26

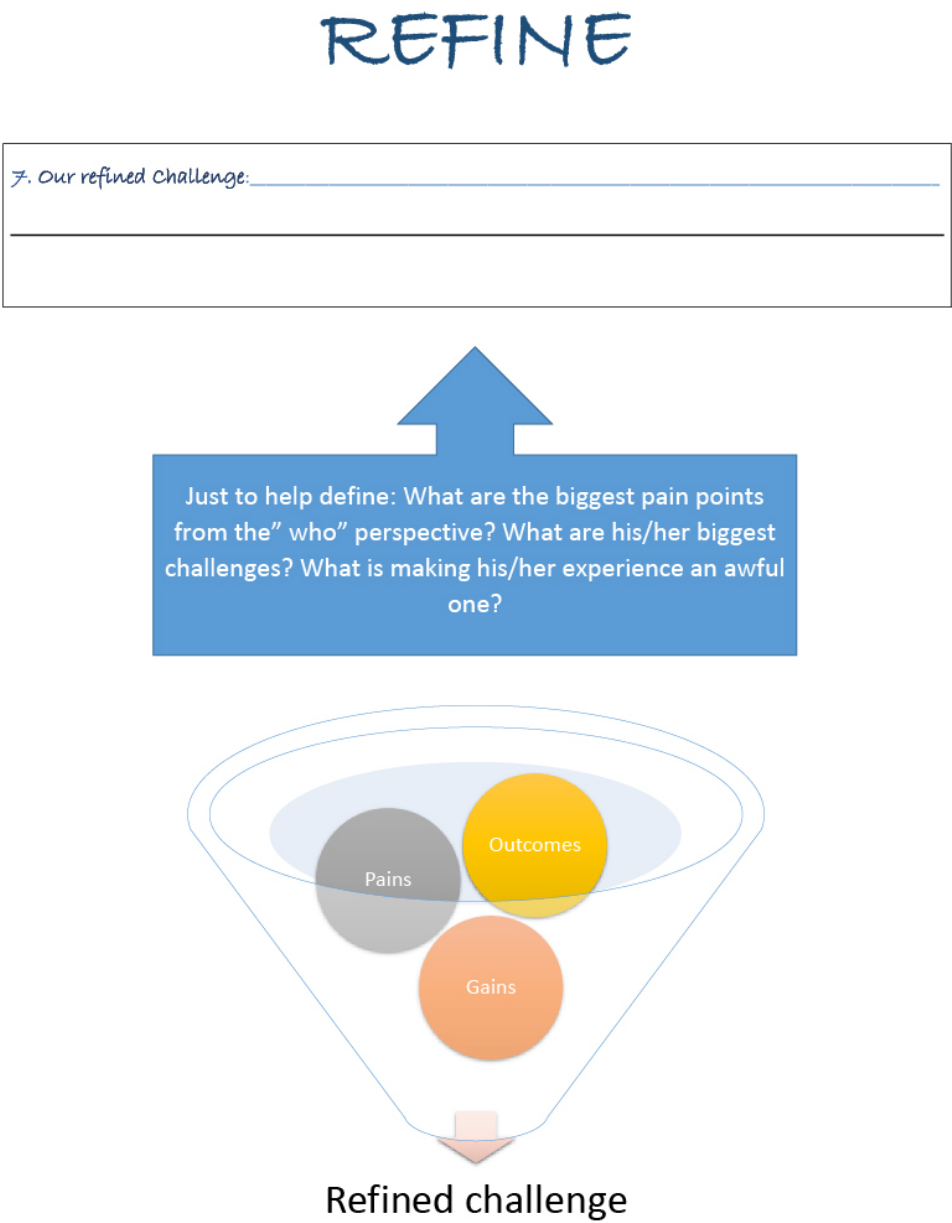


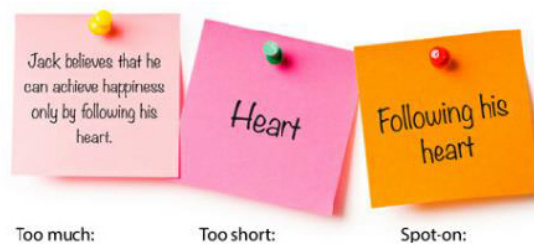
Figure 27

Ideate

8. Start by creating as many ideas as you can that are linked to your refined challenge

- a) Individually, come up with as many ideas that will relief pains and increase gains as you can and write them down. One idea per post-it.

5 mins



- b) After 5 mins, give your ideas to the person on your left side.
 c) On the set of ideas you receive, think of new ideas based on the former ideas, or create new ideas. 5 min per set of ideas
 d) When everyone has commented on all ideas, start grouping the ideas. Everyone has 5 votes, give your vote for the group of ideas you think are the best (give your vote to the group, not single ideas)

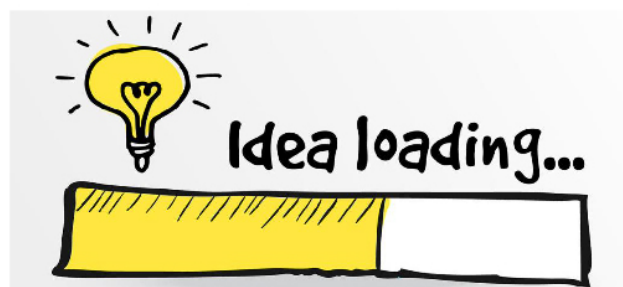


Figure 28

Your Solution

9. Decide on your solution based on 1 to 2 groups of ideas that won the most votes and write it down here:

10. Create an advertisement of your solution. Please make sure the ad is:

- Quick and easy to understand
- Very visual, use images (draw them!) and very few words
- Focus on core messages
- Create a catchy name/brand for it