



Designing remote employee experience in knowledge work to attract talent

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Organizations are currently struggling with a major shift from mostly office-based to remote and hybrid work. At the same time, competition for talent is tough, and employees expect enjoyable and engaging work experiences. It is important for organizations to have a holistic perception of the effects of both the office and remote environment on the productivity and wellbeing of employees and knowledge on designing the remote employee experience. Little knowledge exists on the topic of the remote employee experience and its relationship to building a strong employer brand.

The purpose of the thesis is to help employers to develop an attractive employer brand in the remote work context, based on the learnings from remote employee experience. Hence, the objective is to describe the driving forces and premises that create a positive employee experience in remote knowledge work. The case company is Duunitori, Finland's largest job search engine and a modern recruitment platform with over 500 000 weekly visits on their portal. Additionally, they offer consulting services in employer branding and data on employee experience. The development task was to explore the link between employee experience and employer branding in knowledge work and to generate insights to create value for Duunitori as content in their media and as a potential new business opportunity in the future.

The knowledge base consists of New Ways of Working in knowledge work, employee experience and employer branding. The research is conducted with a qualitative research approach, and following the service design process phases of *discover*, *define* and *develop*. The final phase (*delivery*) is outside the scope of this thesis. The main body of the data comes from 16 semi-structured expert interviews with employers, represented by HR, staff leasing and future work experts as well as employees. In addition to the interviews, two workshops were organized to further explore topics that arose from the interviews and to develop solutions, as well as test the remote employee experience canvas that was created as a result of the interviews. Results from all phases of the research were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Four factors affecting the knowledge work landscape were identified: technology embedded in everything, the complex and systemic nature of problems, meaningful work and making a positive impact, and trust as the enabler of work. Meta-skills and skills in human interaction are becoming increasingly important, especially in remote knowledge work. Results highlighted seven main factors that affect the remote employee experience: technology, space and ergonomics, practices and routines, psychological safety and a sense of belonging, learning and development, knowledge sharing and collaboration, and leadership and culture. Building a strong employer brand starts from the inside out, by first focusing on the employee experience. The results of the entire research project were gathered in a playbook prototype, and communicated to the case company.

Keywords: Employee experience, employer branding, knowledge work, remote work, NWoW

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1 Introduction

The spring of 2020 might well have changed the world of work forever. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work increased substantially, especially in knowledge work. Naturally during this time, discussions of the impacts of remote work was one of the most popular topics covered by the media, as over a million Finns moved to work from home during March-April 2020. In a survey conducted by Taloustutkimus market research company, 50 % of interviewed employees said that they want to work remotely when it is possible, even after the pandemic, whilst 32 % said that they do not like remote work. This implies that work life will change significantly if 300 000 Finns will continue to work remotely also in the future (Pantsu, 2020). Another survey found that about 90 % of Finns believe that the share of remote work will increase, especially in the Helsinki region. This could be enabled by the reported positive change in attitudes of management and leadership towards remote work due to the good experiences during the forced remote work in 2020 (Helsingin Sanomat 2020). At the same time, it is interesting that the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) stated in an article that the decision to end the recommendation for remote work by the government is important for the economy as e.g., ideation, commerce and sales negotiations all require physical presence for collaboration (Grönholm 2020), raising the discussion about whether remote work is suitable for all knowledge work.

Even prior to the changes brought on by the pandemic, workplaces have been transforming as we move to an information and cognitive age, where knowledge and interaction of employees becomes central to the operation and success of organizations (IBM & Globoforce 2017). At the same time, the wants and needs of consumers and employees are changing, with more demands for interaction with brands and companies, and a growing emphasis on experiences (Whitter 2019, 5). In fact, three out of four Millennials reported preferring experiences over things (Eventbrite 2017). As competition in the marketplace remains tough, attracting the correct type of employees becomes increasingly important to employers, whilst employees expect productive, engaging and enjoyable work experiences (Deloitte 2017). This is especially true in knowledge driven professions. In general terms, knowledge work could be defined as a cognitive effort to use, produce and extract value from knowledge (El-Farr 2009). Digital development and its deep integration into all aspects of our society places an increased emphasis on knowledge work.

Because of the major leap in remote work in 2020 the use of digital tools, which enable collaboration are beginning to be a standard. This includes having meetings or workshops remotely when just a year ago this would have been mentally and technologically impossible for many. At this very early phase of mass remote work, organizations and teams are defining

new ways of working - how they should and could work to keep the engine running. Most likely due to this early phase there is currently very much emphasis on remote work practices and routines in the organizations.

The forerunners in remote work, mostly in the technological industry, state that success is dependent on employees feeling that they are an integral part of collaborative work and the community. This means that remote work must be designed. These companies have established cultural practices to enhance these prerequisites, including virtual celebrations and video call etiquette. Software company Trello has 200 employees of whom 80 % work remotely and follow the principle that work must be equal whether it is performed from the office or remotely. In practice, this means that even if one meeting participant joins the meeting remotely, all are remote and call in from their own computers. (Chen & Raivio 2020.) As another example, Google wanted to understand remote work better. Based on their research consisting of a survey sent to over 5000 Googlers and internal focus groups with hundreds of people around the globe, remote work can be as effective as working in the office, but it can feel harder if remote work supporting practices are not in place. Google identified three focus areas: 1) the place including physical space, time zones, and technology, 2) the people and relationships and 3) the practices including communication structures and norms (Google 2019).

In Finland, Ilmarinen Mutual Pension Insurance Company conducted a survey in August 2020 to see what effects remote work has had on the Finnish workforce. The results show that the value of interaction and skillful and active leadership is increasing. When building new remote work models, it is important to secure sufficient and high-quality interaction, as it builds the feeling of social belonging and commitment towards common goals and enhances ability to work (Ilmarinen, 2020). Although it is unlikely that work will take on a fully remote nature soon, it is safe to say that remote work will increase and there will be more freedom in choosing whether to work from the office or another location, leading to a hybrid model of work. In this case, it is important for organizations to have a holistic perception of the effects of both the office and remote environment, on the productivity and wellbeing of employees as the remote employee experience is applicable to the hybrid model of work as well.

In addition to the challenges brought on by the evolution of work life, the world of employment faces another challenge, namely that of engagement. The staggering results from the report State of the Global Workforce (Gallup 2017) show that only 15 % of employees worldwide are engaged in their work. Employee engagement is defined as a high level of involvement in the workplace, psychological ownership in the organizations as well as moving the organization forward by driving change and innovation (22). In Finland the engagement rates are according to the Western-European averages with a reported 12 % of employees being engaged, 76 % not engaged and 12 % actively disengaged. Notable is that the

engagement rates for knowledge workers are better than the averages worldwide and 28 % of managers and professionals in knowledge work are engaged, although the number is still low. Pandita and Ray (2018) see that the everyday employee experiences at a workplace drive engagement, which in turn strengthens the relationship between the employer and employee, thus positively effecting the employer brand.

The global “war for talent” was first described in 1998 (McKinsey) as the challenge that the business world was facing with growing difficulties in attracting and retaining talent. This challenge is still valid today, with a multitude of companies especially in the field of technology, finding it hard to attract knowledge workers with superior skills, to match the demands of the business environment and provide a competitive advantage. In fact, talent management has become a top priority for HR professionals, as the power has shifted from employers to the employees and the focus from creating a workplace that is *needed* to one that is *wanted*. Money is no longer the primary motivator for many and thus focusing on the employee experience is one of the best ways to gain competitive advantage. (Morgan 2015.)

Companies around the world are now reviewing their remote work policies. Twitter has announced that employees can continue remote work “forever”. Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Slack and Salesforce have followed the suit and extended the work from home policies (Kelly 2020). However, the trend is not only limited to these technology companies from the Silicon Valley. In the summer of 2020, Siemens, Europe’s largest industrial manufacturing company, announced their new remote work policy stating that 140 000 of their employees in 43 countries can work from wherever they see best for 2-3 days per week. Siemens stated that they trust their employees and want to establish a new leadership style with a focus on results as opposed to time spent at the office. Furthermore, the wish is to sharpen Siemens’ profile “*as a flexible and attractive employer*”. (Siemens 2020.) These examples show two things - companies across industries acknowledge the permanent change in the knowledge work model and see the opportunities that come with it in terms of talent retention and attraction.

An interest in employee experience, combined with the events of the spring, provided an excellent opportunity to explore the future of knowledge work and how employers and employees could be helped in this new situation to create a better working life. Focusing on the employee experience provides a qualitative and human-centric perspective on the development of work life, and through this, employers gain a rich picture of how workplace culture and practices can be built to keep the organization interesting even this new era of increased remote work. With this said, it should be noted that as the work for this thesis was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic, this has implications. One of them is that in the interviews workshops and journals remote work is mostly synonymous to working from home.

Naturally post pandemic this will not be the case to the same extent, even if the home office will be the set up for many on remote days.

1.1 Case company and development task

The case company for this thesis is Duunitori, Finland's largest job search engine and a modern recruitment media that was established in 2009. It gathers all the available open job ads and directs them to their own portal as well as hundreds of social media sites that they maintain. The Duunitori portal provides a range of useful information for job seekers about work life, trends and recruitment. Their website is visited by over 500 000 people per week and their social media accounts have over 600 000 followers. In addition to this, Duunitori offers consulting services around employer branding and data on employee experience. The dataset on employee experience that Duunitori work with is one of the largest in Finland (compiled from data gathered by Taloustutkimus), comprising of a total of 4800 respondents (all employed adults) from 14 different industries. The respondents have evaluated 67 different variables from the 7 main areas of employee experience. The data is unique in both the quality and scope. Currently Duunitori does not have a business model around EX design. Their data driven approach to employee experience and their business around employer branding, however, is gaining traction and their mindset is open and creative.

The authors of this thesis are not employed by the case company. In the initial desk research around stakeholders in the employee experience sphere in Finland, Duunitori stood out in their modern and holistic approach. The authors contacted Duunitori due to this innovative thinking to discuss whether mutual interests of building better work life could have synergies. After several discussions and brainstorming, the development task agreed upon was to explore the link between employee experience and employer brand in the knowledge work context and to generate insights to create value for Duunitori as 1) content in their media and channels and 2) as a potential new business opportunity in the future. The development task was to be done using a qualitative, user-centric and co-creative approach, differing from the data driven approach that Duunitori currently uses. During the research and development process, Duunitori would have a sparring role to constantly evaluate the direction of the research and evaluate the usability of the research from their point of view. The development task framework is presented in Figure 1.

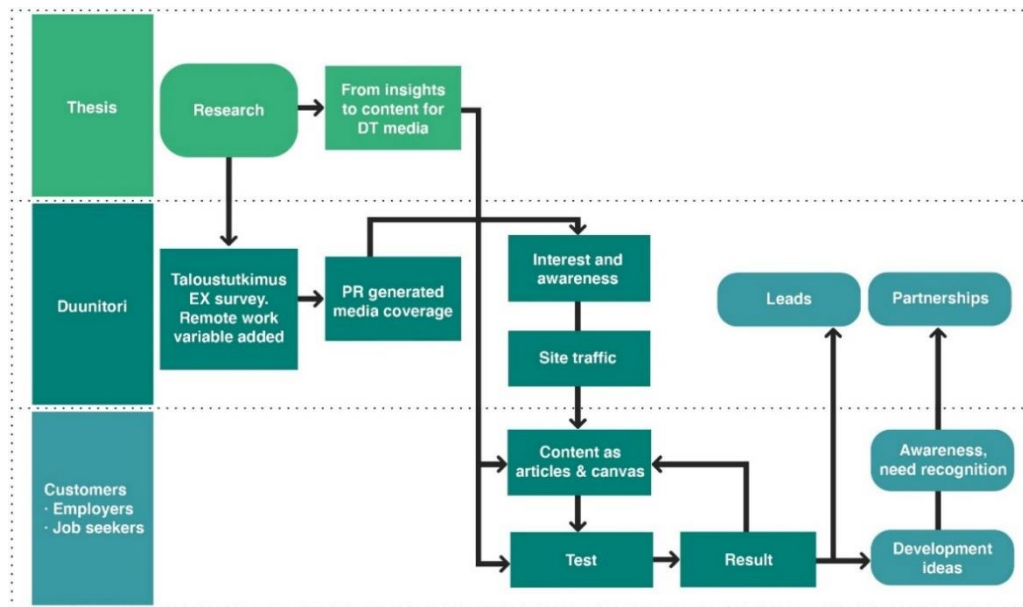


Figure 1: Development task

1.2 Purpose, objective and approach

Organizations are struggling with the change from mostly office-based work to remote and hybrid work and there is a need to understand what kind of remote work practices create and enable good remote employee experience and strengthen the employer brand. Given this, the purpose of the thesis is to help employers to develop an attractive employer brand in the remote work context and based on the learnings from remote employee experience. Hence, the objective is to describe the driving forces and premises that create a positive employee experience in remote knowledge work. The research questions guiding the work are:

1. What are the trends and characteristics in knowledge work?
2. What are the skills and practices needed in remote knowledge work?
3. What are the wants and needs of knowledge workers?
4. What is the role of employee experience in employer branding?

The thinking in the thesis is based on the foundations of service dominant logic (S-DL) where services are the basis of all exchange in societies and value is co-created between the actors i.e., between the service provider and customer. Value is not automatically embedded in service outputs however but *experienced* by the customer when using the service (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). This means that value is defined by the customer. This approach is a perfect premise when studying the concept of employee experience. Simply put, in this thesis the organization is the service provider, employment is the value offer and the employee is the customer who defines the value of the offer through daily experiences at a workplace.

In this thesis knowledge work, and more specifically remote knowledge work, is studied in the “previously office-based context” and in the business sector. This means that the public and third sector, including health care and education, have been excluded from this study. Furthermore, the findings of this study are valid in Finland and can be applicable in regions, where remote knowledge work has a similar position as an already established way of working.

The structure of this this research-oriented development task follows the order of literature review, methods and process, results, conclusions and discussion. The development task is to create content for the case company media and channels with a wide audience. This content will help organizations to understand and approach the remote employee experience and develop their employer brand accordingly. The content is presented in the format of a playbook prototype. The knowledge base of this thesis consists of three main components: 1) the evolution of knowledge work, including insights into the future of knowledge work and especially remote work, 2) employee experience, and 3) employer branding. The aim of reviewing the available literature is to examine and clarify the link between employee experience and employer brand strength in the remote knowledge work context, which is seen as an essential part of future knowledge work.

2 Evolving knowledge work

It is generally thought that independently from each other, the economists Peter F. Drucker and Fritz Machlup first introduced the concepts of knowledge work and knowledge workers in 1960. The first professions to be considered knowledge workers were doctors, lawyers, scientists and academics, whilst later this group was extended to include “knowledge technologists” i.e., those working with knowledge, but whose tasks still required elements of process work (computer technicians, laboratory analysts, designers etc.). (Greene and Myerson 2011.)

According to Aaltonen et al. (2012, 10), the core of knowledge work today is non-routine problem-solving and knowledge workers are characterized by the ability to handle abstract knowledge and continually take in new knowledge. However, to this day no clear definition for knowledge work and knowledge workers exists. Pyöriä (2005) has reviewed the literature on key elements for defining such work and concludes that knowledge workers cannot be seen as one homogenous group, but rather knowledge work should be seen as consisting of certain necessary attributes. Amongst these characteristics are: 1) the requirement of extensive formal education and constant learning in work life, 2) transferable skills, 3) work with abstract knowledge and symbols, 4) can work in many types of organizations, traditional or self-managing with the circulation of jobs and tasks and knowledge as the primary production

factor. Generally speaking, knowledge work could be defined as a cognitive effort to use, produce and extract value from knowledge (El-Farr 2009, 4).

Business, economy and work life is experiencing a fundamental change, where increasing emphasis is placed on knowledge work and information driven economy instead of physical labor. Customers and employees are becoming more valuable and the communication and information technologies are developing rapidly, resulting in the constant availability of information. This has made possible the collaboration of employees from different locations and is greatly contributing to the shaping of the knowledge work landscape in the future. (Blok et al. 2011.)

2.1 The future of knowledge work

The business world is changing at a pace more rapidly than ever before, in part due to the development of digital possibilities and the deep integration of these possibilities in all aspects of our society. However, it is not only technology that has rapidly advanced over the past decades. There have also been shifts in society, amongst these the changing attitudes towards work life. Work is no longer the central element of life and expectations of work life and of employers have changed (Jousilahti et al. 2017). Instead of looking for life-long employment with one employer, flexibility, fair rewards and engaging work are more important (Maitland & Thomson 2014). The future success of societies depends largely on how the ability to understand and redefine what work is (Jousilahti et al. 2017).

Morgan (2014) describes five trends, which are most impactful for the future of work: 1) new behaviors shaped by social media and the internet, 2) development of collaborative and cloud technologies and big data, 3) the new attitudes and expectations of the millennial workforce, 4) mobility enabling work regardless of time and place, and 5) globalization eliminating boundaries. Dufva et al. (2016) add that the contents of work will change from production to meaningful interaction as digitalization and automation will replace routine tasks. This gives space to concentrate on problem-solving and human interaction. Work will move from hierarchies to networked communities as daily job tasks are no longer necessary to complete from one place or employer but rather from varying spaces independent of time. Productivity and constant economic growth will be replaced by sustainability and global problem-solving. Work will remain an important means of connecting with society, but it will be enhanced by other forms of community. Continuous learning will become increasingly important especially concerning meta-skills, i.e., the ability to take in new information, time management, critical thinking. In addition, income will be made up from many streams. (Dufva et al. 2016.)

Lifelong learning is, in fact, acknowledged as the key to employment and professional development both on individual and societal levels. According to the Finnish Prime Minister's Office publication "Long-term Policymaking as a Tool through Transformation - Aspirations for

the Future of Work” (Anttila et al. 2018, 58-59) Finland needs a high-quality system of lifelong learning that covers the entire population. This means that in the future, company investments in employees' learning and development will be equally important, if not more important, than investments in equipment and technology. Learning in the work environment is becoming increasingly important to many, meaning that lifelong learning is a fundamental success factor to both individuals and organizations. Recently, the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra (2020) conducted a survey on lifelong learning. Results show that 73 % of respondents report that they have learned very important or important skills at work. 76 % reported that developing their own skills at the workplace has taken place by means of peer learning, either by working with others or by observation. The main reason for the willingness to learn is to manage in the changing world as 68 % believe that the next five years will bring changes in work life and learning will enable employment.

According to Maitland and Thomson (2014), the success of future work requires a change in organizational culture and a heightened level of trust between manager and employee, with an idea that clear goals and a supportive work environment will lead to high levels of motivation. The freedom to individually manage work will increase productivity and reward with the extra availability of time to use as one pleases. Therefore, future work is not simply flexible or remote work, but rather a whole new model of work with re-evaluation of the role of management to thoroughly understand what motivates people and how to empower them to perform at their best. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through autonomous work, despite the fact that the world will always require jobs that are fixed to a certain place or at least to a certain time frame. In these cases, the future work results-based models cannot replace these more traditional ways of working. However, the work can still be measured and rewarded based on output, perhaps creating a new model of mixed compensation. This model of future work has the possibility of eventually making part-time work or fixed-term contracts unnecessary, allowing for better opportunities and access to leadership roles and career development, simultaneously helping people to combine work and personal responsibilities. (Maitland & Thomson 2014.)

Maitland and Thomson (2014) go on to describe future work as a process of high productivity work, which gives all parties increased satisfaction whilst simultaneously supporting the organization's goals and thus improving output and enabling more manageable lives. Future work will focus on results-based working by concentrating on output instead of input, rewarding shorter hours and higher productivity and encouraging people to work where and when they are most productive, instead of predetermined times and places.

Future organizations must adapt to both the future employees as well as the future managers, as well as the distributed workforce, which is increasingly scattered and completing tasks, innovating and leading teams from various locations. This is all made possible by collaborative

and cloud technologies. Despite these new ways of working, the future organization must be able to create a feeling of connection, innovation ecosystems and operating like a small company, with agile methods, fast adaptation, low hierarchy and a culture of experimentation. More women will be seen in senior management roles and the workplace will be based on a "want" to work instead of a "need" to work. (Morgan, 2014.) Future organizations will use an approach of purpose, transparency and reputation to ensure a culture of freedom and responsibility with a mindset of expecting the best of everyone and perceiving performance as a result of collective intelligence, development and self-regulation. (Dignan 2019.)

2.2 Remote work as new way of working

The term New ways of working (NWoW) refers to the transformation of business to accommodate more flexible work arrangements. Knowledge workers, i.e. white-collar workers, have historically completed their work from offices. Globalization and the rapid advancements in technologies are now enabling virtual communications and the scope and content of work is changing, leading to an increasing number of employees working and collaborating from different workspaces. (Lönblad & Vartiainen 2012.) NWoW can be a way for companies to improve their staff retention and attract highly skilled talent, who value flexible working schedules (Messenger et al. 2017). The term NWoW is used interchangeably with terms such as telework, multi-locational work, mobile work, remote work, distributed work, virtual work and global work (Lönblad & Vartiainen 2012; Blok et al. 2011). Although there exists no one definition for NWoW, most definitions combine the elements of freedom of physical workspace and time with a strong information technology component (Leede 2016; Nijp et al. 2016). According to the title of this thesis, NWoW will henceforth be referred to as remote work.

Changes as a result of remote work, take place in the physical workspace, technologies used, organizations and management, as well as work culture. The remote work changes related to the physical workspace refer to the increased flexibility in where and when employees complete their work tasks, as well as more flexible office spaces. Technologies related to remote work allow for colleagues to stay connected and collaborate regardless of location. Organization and management become increasingly important as managing employees' changes when they, and what they are working on, cannot be seen on a daily basis. Trust in employees, managerial style and focus on autonomy become vital as well as a work culture that fosters openness and collaboration. In addition, attracting skilled professionals to operate in this distinctly different work environment will become increasingly difficult as we face an aging work force. (Blok, Groenesteijn, van den Berg, Vink 2012.)

In Europe, the top trends identified to be drivers of this new, more flexible way of working are workplace digitalization and an increased demand for work life balance. The main barriers identified were related to technical problems and the reluctance of managers to support these new ways of working. Implications of remote work include a tendency to work longer hours, mixed results on work life balance, occupational health and wellbeing as well as questions regarding the effect on individual and organizational performance (Gschwind & Vargas 2019.). These topics will be reviewed in the following sections 2.3 and 2.4.

Prior to the pandemic in the spring of 2020, remote work in the EU was already quite prevalent across different sectors and occupations. Key factors in determining the level of remote work were the technical feasibility as well as worker's levels of autonomy, which were highly affected by employers' trust. Other factors contributing to the prevalence of remote work across the member states were work culture and management styles, country specific policies of work, firm size, rate of self-employment and the digital skills of employees. Moving forward, the spread of remote work will depend on many factors including effects on work productivity and working conditions as well as various EU policies. (European Union, 2020.)

The International Labor Organization (ILO) states that the new era of remote work, and new ways of working, will require a new style of management, which is based on trust and has more emphasis on results. Higher levels of autonomy, flexibility as well as a better consideration for the individual circumstances and preferences of employees. In their recent remote work report, eight key areas of focus have been identified to ensure the wellbeing of workers and their continued productivity: 1) working time and organization, 2) performance management, 3) digitalization, 4) communication, 5) occupational safety and health, 6) legal and contractual implications, 7) training and 8) work life balance. (ILO 2020.)

2.3 Effects of remote work

Effects of remote work have been studied for some time now and studies show that it offers many benefits to employees and employers. These benefits include better work life balance, improvements in employee retention (as employees consider this an important advantage), increased size and type of talent pool where the locations of employees can be greater as well as access to non-traditional workers. Productivity is also reported to be increased. Productivity in remote work is discussed further in section 2.4. On the other hand, remote work can also present challenges in some of these exact same themes as productivity and job satisfaction can also decrease for some individuals and thus negatively affect the commitment to the organization. These factors are most affected by lack of appropriate management. (Sorensen 2016.)

Blok et al. (2012) have completed one of the first comprehensive reviews of literature and proposed a framework on the relationships between remote work and business objectives. They studied the interactions of three measures of remote work and three business measures. The measures of remote work were: 1) the flexibility of working remotely, 2) use of social ICT tools (collaboration, video, networking), and 3) people/culture management. The three business measures were: 1) productivity, 2) vigor (knowledge sharing, engagement, work life balance etc.), and 3) environmental impact. From the study results they could see that all three measures of remote working had a relationship with all three measures of business objectives. Lacking from the proposed framework are the interaction effects between the measures of remote work, e.g. interaction between proper implementation of IT, physical environment and management style, and the ways in which the different ways of remote work are implemented in different organizations. The author's also note that the great variety in definitions and the existing research caused difficulty in the comparison and interpretation of results.

In another study, Brummelhuis, Bakker, Hetland & Keulemans (2012, 118) found that remote work had a positive effect on work engagement on a daily basis, due to bettered communication and reduced exhaustion. Connectivity in remote work also affected work engagement as employees were more available for colleagues and could better control their availability. Interestingly, as employees felt more connected when working remotely, they were also interrupted more due to incoming email and phone calls leading to feelings of exhaustion. In other words, it was not so much the technology used as it was the interruptions that it caused that affected exhaustion. Whilst the interruptions were draining, they were also a means on connecting, which balances the overall state of exhaustion. Gerards, Grip, and Baudewijns (2018) experienced similar positive findings when studying the effects of remote work on work engagement, where the relationship was partially mediated by social interaction and transformational leadership. Furthermore, management of output, access to organizational knowledge and a freely accessible workplace (i.e. open plan) positively affected engagement. Time and location independent work and flexibility did not significantly affect engagement. Similarly, in a study to explore remote working on employee's control over work hours and location, the psychosocial environment, their health and wellbeing and job-related outcomes, Nijp Beckers, de Voorde, Geurts and Kompier (2016) found that remote work enabled employees to control their time well. Essential elements to the psychosocial work environment did not suffer and there was no significant change to work life balance.

A recent study of over 800 US employees working remotely during the spring of 2020, found positive effects on daily tasks, with more engagement and increased feeling of wellbeing (Emmett, Schrah, Schrimper & Wood 2020). In their report, the authors highlight that in the future, companies need to rethink their EX further respect individual differences when working remotely. It is especially important for leaders to understand and address this by

building trust and being present and transparent, taking action and showing empathy. The study found four themes that are crucial for EX: 1) stable and secure work, 2) trusting relationships, 3) social cohesion and inclusion and 4) individual purpose and contribution. Emphasizing improvements in these areas can have a positive effect on the motivation and behavior, and thus the efficiency and wellbeing of employees. (Emmett et al. 2020.)

In Finland, preliminary results from a nation-wide study also confirm the slight positive effects of remote work on employee wellbeing during the pandemic in the spring of 2020. The study found that the support received from both colleagues and managers was associated with a positive workflow and a decreased risk of burnout. It is worth noting, however, that this study was not limited to knowledge workers, but rather aimed at gathering population-based evidence on the effects of the pandemic on work life in Finland. (Hakanen & Kaltiainen 2020.)

2.4 Productivity in remote work

It is evident, that in the business environment the question of productivity is of great interest. Productivity in knowledge work has traditionally been a challenge to measure as much of the results of knowledge work are intangible and qualitative by nature (Laihonon et al. 2012, 103). When the remote factor is added to the equation, the situation becomes even more complex.

Despite this combination, studies suggest that in “normal times” (i.e., not during times of crises), remote work can help employees to sustain or even enhance their productivity as well as their work life balance (European Union 2020, ILO 2020). As mentioned above, measuring productivity in knowledge work has always been difficult due to the product of knowledge work being, for the most part, intangible. Traditional productivity measures are usually based on the ratio of output and input that is quantifiable. In knowledge work however, a direct relationship between these two does not necessarily exist due to various moderating factors. (Bosch-Sijtsema, Fruchter, Vartiainen & Ruohonmäki 2011.) There also seems to exist substantial differences in productivity due to 1) the variability of tasks included under the knowledge work umbrella, 2) organizational and social factors effecting the possibility to complete tasks (e.g., culture, physical environment, virtual environment, available technologies) and 3) the individual skills and competences of knowledge workers (Bosch-Sijtsema, Ruohomäki, Vartiainen 2009). In addition, the measurement of knowledge work productivity is further complicated when individuals are working in remote, collaborative teams. In these cases, productivity cannot be solely measured on an individual level, but rather needs to include measurement indicators of this collaboration, where work is done and how employees and tasks are supported by the organization. This in turn requires as holistic understanding of the nature of the work, work processes and work environment (locations

where work is done). Five key factors that affect the productivity of knowledge work in these remote and new working contexts are task, team structure, work process, workplace and organization. (Bosch-Sijtsema et al. 2011.)

In reviewing the available literature, van der Voordt (2003, 135) reports that in knowledge dominant work environments, productivity has traditionally been measured by 1) actual labor productivity, e.g. number of phone calls or completed documents per month, 2) perceived productivity, where employees rate various aspects of their productivity themselves, 3) time spent performing tasks, or time gained due to process efficiency, 4) absence from work due to illness and 5) indirect indicators including speed of problem-solving, concentration ability etc. The author points out that perceived productivity could be a reasonable indicator of productivity, though the reliability and validity of this measurement is questionable, as social desirability of an answer most probably plays a role at an individual level.

In an attempt to bring clarity to the existing research on knowledge work and productivity, Palvalin (2018) conducted a study which aimed at collecting empirical data to test the conceptual model of knowledge work productivity in practice and the effects that various drivers of knowledge work have on productivity. The factors that had the greatest influence on productivity were identified with various methods of statistical analysis. Of the five drivers studied, wellbeing at work had the greatest impact on knowledge work productivity. This was followed by individual work practices and social environment. To the author's surprise, physical and virtual environment did not express a significant effect on work productivity, although there was a positive relationship. This could be due to these two drivers being more of hygiene factors, which only become significant when they fall below a certain level, but as long as they work adequately, they are not as important as the other drivers. (Palvalin 2018.)

The question is then, do new ways of working in knowledge work, which includes remote work, increase or decrease employee productivity? The first randomized study from Stanford University (Bloom, Liang, Roberts & Ying 2012) on a company of 16,000 employees revealed that remote work from home increased employee performance by 13%, whilst also increasing their job satisfaction and mental health. Employees were randomly chosen and assigned to either a group working from home or to a group working from the office for nine months.

In a recent research article Birkinshaw, Cohen and Stach (2020), replicated a 2013 study on the productivity of knowledge workers during the spring 2020 pandemic, and the subsequent forced remote work, to compare the findings. Data was collected through telephone interviews with the same questions asked as in 2013. The key findings reveal that compared to 2013, during forced remote work of the pandemic lockdown, 12 % less time was spent in large meetings and 9 % more time in interaction with external stakeholders and clients. More responsibility was taken for own schedules, 50 % of activities were done because they were

regarded as important and out of own choice. Work was also perceived as more worthwhile, with the rate of tasks considered tiresome dropping by 15 % and tasks that could gladly be passed on to others dropped by 14 %. The author's note that in the short term, it looks like the forced remote work of the lockdown has improved productivity as measured by their set of questions. The question will be how these findings work in the long run.

In another large study on the effects of the forced remote work of the spring 2020 pandemic, Boston Consulting Group surveyed over 12.000 knowledge workers in the US, Germany and India that had been employed both before and during the pandemic. Attitudes towards many factors were explored including productivity, wellbeing, social connectivity culture, tools etc. Especially interesting were the results on productivity, which surprised the authors despite the rapid disruption to work. Many were moved to remote work but even those who remained onsite experienced a change in the workplace experience as social distancing affected collaboration. Despite these changes, about 75 % of employees reported being able to maintain or even improve their productivity on individual tasks and 51% reported being able to maintain or improve productivity in collaborative tasks. With further analysis of these collaborative tasks, the study found four factors that correlate with employees own perceptions on productivity: social connection, mental health, physical health and tools provided. The first factor, social connection or connectivity, is what is concluded to be the top enabling factor for collaborative productivity. Mental and physical health have long been acknowledged as contributing to productivity and this study highlights the necessity of routines and time to enable them. Employee satisfaction with the tools provided was associated with the ability to maintain or even improve performance. A hybrid approach to work is seen as the future of work with those organizations excelling that put focus on the hybrid experience making transitions between offsite and onsite as smooth as possible with clever design. Considering employee's growing desire for flexibility at work, this will highly impact how companies can attract and retain the best talent. (Dahik et al. 2020.)

The recent studies reported here indeed show promising results with regards to the productivity question in remote work. This further supports the development towards increased or even mass remote working.

2.5 Enablers of remote work

Remote work is still a new way of working and requires new tools and skills. Hence, it is important to explore the competences that successful remote knowledge work requires. Lönnblad and Vartiainen (2012) conducted interviews about collaboration and work in a global setting with 103 employees and leaders from global companies with operations in Finland. The questions asked were centered on three main themes: 1) special competences and

characteristics of self and team members required, 2) leadership competences, and 3) ideas for the improvement of leadership. Interestingly the results show that there are general competences needed by both employees and leaders, with additional leadership specific competence areas.

Competences identified for both included: 1) communication (language, oral, written), 2) understanding cultural differences in ways of communication, expressions used, and behaviors displayed, 3) open-mindedness and the ability to think globally, show interest or take different perspectives, 4) flexibility in working hours, 5) proactivity in engagement between team members and getting to know each other. In addition, there were themes that came up less often, but that the authors felt were worth highlighting, these being an outgoing and systematic approach to work. Communication was a top competency as the remote environment raises issues such as how to effectively communicate virtually given the available tools and how to actively participate in discussion. In addition, the ability to express opinions about complex issues concisely yet understandably is important. Lacking language skills (both oral and written) was a barrier to communication as this clearly affects the ability to engage in fruitful discussion. (Lönblad & Vartiainen 2012.)

Competences identified for leadership included: 1) focusing on the bigger picture and strategy, with the ability to communicate about the necessary aspects of these, 2) management style and the need to have a strong grip and structured style without the micromanagement of employees, 3) people skills and the ability to motivate, communicate and handle various people, 4) being present and available both virtually but also face-to-face (travelling to meet employees), and 5) the ability to use different approaches with different people and in different situations. Collective competences included common goals, common processes and operational models as well as open communication and transparency. (Lönblad & Vartiainen 2012.)

In the modern VUCA world, a competence, or almost prerequisite, is the ability to build an organizational culture of psychological safety and especially so for leaders. With over 20 years of research on the topic, Edmondson (2019) argues that for knowledge work to truly thrive, the environment must be one where it feels safe to share knowledge without fear of failure. This is especially important as much of knowledge work is team-based collaboration, and even more so with the gradual shift to increasing remote work. Leaders should foster psychological safety by setting the stage with common goals and shared appreciation, inviting participation by lowering the bar for participation and proactively asking questions as well as responding productively by expressing appreciation, destigmatizing failure and disapproving violations. This should all be done in ways, which promote learning. (Edmondson, 2019.)

In a different type of research, Petriglieri, Ashford and Wrzesniewski (2018) interviewed 65 gig workers to find out the strategies that they utilize for success. They found four common types of connections that were encouraged: 1) to place, by finding places to work that minimize distraction and pressure and allow access to their tools, 2) to routines that enhance workflow and incorporate personal care and wellbeing into work, 3) to purpose by choosing projects that connect to a bigger purpose and 4) to people by avoiding social isolation. Although the participants were all gig workers, the authors state that these strategies could also prove to be helpful to employees working remotely or more autonomously.

In moving to a work environment where remote work is more prevalent, a holistic understanding of the changes that this brings to both the employer and the employee in each individual team and organization must be found. New competences and models and tools are required from both sides in order to ensure the wellbeing and productivity of employees, resulting in success for the organization.

3 Employee Experience

Employee experience, which will henceforth be referred to as EX, can roughly be defined as the total sum of what is and happens during the entire journey of employment, including the recruitment process. EX is a new term, which seems to have made its first appearance in the media around 2013 (Lazenby 2013). In the same year, Airbnb paved the way for other companies and hired the first known Head of Employee Experience, Mark Levy (Bersin 2019; Coopacademy 2018; Maylett and Wride 2017). Mark Levy's idea was that as there is a customer experience team, there should be an employee experience team and by 2015 the EX-team had replaced the Airbnb's HR team (Coopacademy 2018). One of the leading HR publications in the consultancy field, Deloitte Human Capital Trend Report (Pelster & Schwartz 2016), mentions the term EX for the first time in 2016, dedicating several pages to the topic together with design thinking. Overall, it seems that EX is viewed from mostly from two different perspectives. First, through the link of EX and customer experience (CX) where the thought is that positive EX leads to positive CX resulting in companies winning in the marketplace (Morgan 2017; Maylett & Wride 2017). Second, through the HR perspective where positive EX is seen as the prerequisite of content and satisfied employees, which in turn contributes to productivity as processes, practices and tools support meaningful and efficient ways of working (Bersin et al. 2016). Both these views aim at the same outcome, which is making the organizations stronger in the marketplace. In this thesis, the main interest is in how organizations can leverage good EX in employer branding to attract talent.

In order to better understand the holistic nature of the concept of EX, it is valuable and interesting to first briefly examine the concept of experience.

3.1 Experience as the starting point

“Experience is a story, emerging from the dialogue of a person with his or her world through actions... (It is) interpreted, packaged, labeled, integrated with our knowledge of the world, and stored away. Both, experiencing and a particular experience, thus, exhibit an immense complexity, resulting in perpetual novelty” (Hassenzahl 2010).

Based on the literature, the term experience is hard to generalize as it is very subjective and context bound (Wright et al. 2003; Sanders 2001). The basic essence of it is that the past, present and future are interconnected in experiences. Sanders (2001) describes experience as lasting for only a moment and as a meeting point of memories and dreams, where memories are past experiences and dreams are things that are anticipated but not yet lived. Because of the interconnectedness of time, experiences are constructed through an active sense making process where the experience is viewed through a person as a relationship between subject and object (Wright et al. 2003). The other essence of experience is that many subjective factors influence the experience. An example of this is Sleeswijk Visser’s (2009) concept of rich experience information, which encompasses all factors that have an impact on a person’s experience at a given moment. These include physical (such as location, objects and daylight), social (people around), cultural factors (values, background) and time. Hassenzahl (2010) describes experiences as both unique but at the same time emerging from distinct elements and processes with four key properties: subjective, holistic, situated and dynamic in nature.

The subjective nature of an experience means that it arises from situations, objects, people, relationships and the connection of these to the one who is experiencing. Thus, the experience created, remains in the imagination and heads of the one experiencing and is uniquely his or hers. The holistic nature of experiences refers to the consideration of all levels of an experience of why, what and how? This means that experience is made up of perception, action, motivation and cognition. The situation of an experience refers to the strong dependence on context. It combines the subjective and holistic natures, however always being unique to a particular time and place. Experiences are dynamic in nature, in constant motion and stream. Regardless of this quality of experiences, they can be categorized as although each experience runs a different course, the essence of it and the patterns in it, remain the same. (Hassenzahl 2010.)

In the German language experience is described using two different words - “Erfahrung” and “Erlebnis”. Erfahrung refers to continuous events in everyday life with no clear beginning and end, e.g. All the different moments in work life, which affect your experience of a good workplace. Erlebnis on the other hand, is more limited and refers to one individual experience, e.g., the first promotion in your career (Sleeswijk Visser, 2009). The famous

philosopher John Dewey is often referred to when discussing experience (Forlizzi and Ford, 2000; Wright et al, 2003; Sleeswijk Visser, 2007) as he made a distinction between “experience” and “an experience”, which resemble the distinction between Erfahrung (experience) and Erlebnis (an experience).

Forlizzi and Ford (2000) look at experience from a designer point of view and point out that an experience is constructed not only by a person's prior experiences, emotions, values and cognitive models, but also by products. Their definition for products is Victor Margolin's “array of objects, activities, services and environments that fill the life-world” (as cited in Forlizzi and Ford 2000, 420). In other words, “product” is the outer world, including e.g., space.

Looking at experience from an economic standpoint, Pine and Gilmore dive into the characteristics of an experience in a HBR article from 1998. The work of this article arose from a shift or development in economic offerings and expectations of consumers towards the buying of experiences. In the article the authors describe the characteristics of experiences as lying across two dimensions (customer participation and connection) and four categories depending on where they fall on this two-dimensional spectrum: educational, escapist, esthetic and entertainment. The richest experiences for consumers are formed in a “sweet spot” of these four categories and on the two dimensions. They also state that experiences must answer to a customer need, they must work, and they must be deliverable (Pine & Gilmore 1998).

It can be concluded that experiences are a complex entity as they are subjective, context bound and tied to past experiences but also to future expectations. Understanding experience, the holistic and individual nature of it, is crucial to be able to fully leverage the potential of EX design. The next section presents various models of EX available in the literature.

3.2 Employee experience defined

From the literature it is apparent that there has been a shift in recent years from the idea of employee engagement to EX (Morgan 2017). Whilst employee engagement focuses on the endpoint, EX emphasizes the entire journey of the employment starting from the recruitment process. Thus, understanding the key factors that make up EX is crucial. EX is not about “Taco Tuesdays” or other such perks, but rather about building a winning culture, which translates to winning in the marketplace. Again, this is not a novel idea, but it requires organizations to see the world through the employee's eyes, understand their pain points (of getting a job done) and to design a better workplace either with these insights or by involving the employees (Lesser et al. 2017; Plaskoff, 2017).

Although the definitions and entry points to EX vary, there are common elements in the definitions as the theme of experience is well researched and discussed. As described earlier, experience is always subjective and context bound, so this must naturally apply to EX also. The other commonality is that even if EX is a subjective experience, it happens in interaction with something or somebody. In the work context this refers to people and structures, processes and practices. Table 1 presents some of the existing definitions for and key components of EX, as well as the field and industry in which each has been derived.

| Author | Field | Definition/Key components of EX | Summary |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| Plaskoff, 2017 | HR management | Employee's holistic perceptions of the relationship with his/her employing organization derived from all the encounters at touchpoints along the employee's journey (137). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic perceptions of interactions with the organization • Connection of employees and organizational purpose |
| Maylett & Wride, 2017 | HR management | The sum of perceptions employees have about their interactions with the organization in which they work. EX is everything that the employees believe about the company (189). | |
| Young & Kulesa, 2019 | HR consulting | Connecting with people and organizational purpose. Contributing to work and being awarded accordingly (2). | |
| Dery et al., 2018 | Information systems research | The extent to which employees of an organization are enabled or constrained by its adaptive work environment and collective work habits to do their jobs today and reimagine their jobs of tomorrow (1). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling employees to perform their tasks • Enabling employees to create value • Employees interaction with the organization |
| Lesser et al, 2016 | IT and business consulting | The close connection between employee's physical, social and cultural environments as well as the tools and relationships they need to accomplish work on a daily basis (1). | |
| IBM & Globoforce, 2017 | IT & Consulting | A set of perceptions that employees have about their experiences at work in response to their interactions with the organization (3). | |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Dery et al., 2017 | Information systems research | The work complexity and behavioral norms that influence employee's ability to create value (1). | |
| Lariviere et al., 2017 | Service business research | The totality of cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial and social responses that result from interactions with other parties (e.g. customers and technology) (242). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic human responses to interactions |
| Morgan, 2017 | Business, psychology, futurist | The intersection of employee expectations, needs and wants and the organizational design of those expectations, needs and wants (8). Designing an organization where people want to show up by focusing on the cultural, technological and physical environments (9). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational design which considers employee needs and wants by focusing on cultural, technological and physical environments |

Table 1: EX definitions

When grouping the definitions and key elements by industry, HR has a holistic perception of EX and the interaction and connection of the employee and the organization. IT and business consulting, on other hand, views EX as a tool to enable performance and value creation by employees. Service business research quite naturally focuses on the holistic human responses to interactions, whilst the final business/psychology/futurist considers organizational design and employee wants and needs with three dimensions.

Based on this sample, the forerunners in EX seem to be the fields of HR and management consulting. Yet there is a clear technological aspect to EX, which is less visible in the discussion. This is exemplified easily by searching for the term “employee experience” on Google. Many of the first hits concern the measuring of EX with a technological tool like a platform or an application (e.g. Peakon or Qualtrics). However, a clear definition of EX is lacking from these companies, maybe hiding their contribution from the general discussion. The use of these digital tools contribute to and shape the understanding of EX and raise the question of which functions should be responsible for EX and its development in the organizations.

In addition to the different definitions of EX, the available literature also presents several models, or proposed structures of EX, which share many similarities. Their differences come mostly from the extent of the research that the models are based on and thus the depth of the resulting factors of EX.

Many of the authors or research groups have divided EX into consisting of three different themes. These themes are named differently but describe similar environments: the cultural environment of a workplace, the physical environment of a workplace and a

technological/work tools related environment. Morgan (2017) depicts these environments as: culture, technology and the physical environment. The cultural environment refers to all aspects of an organization that can be felt, technology to all the tools that enable employees to get their work done and the physical environment to everything that can be seen, touched, tasted etc.

Morgan's way of approaching EX through these three spheres is not unique and makes perfect sense when organizations are multilayered ecosystems. Lesser et al. (2016) at the IBM Institute for Business Value has also studied EX and have made a similar divide. Their model too, consists of three main spheres: social sphere, physical sphere and work sphere. In practice, these spheres overlap to create six facets of EX: community, physical workspace, environment, tools, activities, social platforms (Lesser et al. 2016).

Dery and Sebastian (2018) look at EX through business value creation and separate the work complexity and behavioral norms (i.e. culture) as the dimensions. They describe EX as consisting of two essential factors: work complexity and behavioral norms. Work complexity refers to how hard it is to get work done (status of technology and processes), whilst behavioral norms refer to expectations around how people work in an organization, particularly collaboration, creativity and empowerment. Digital capabilities and leadership behaviors enable the behavioral norms. In yet another interpretation, which is based on quite a large amount of data, IBM & Globoforce (2017) take a different approach to EX and define the factors to be belonging, purpose, achievement, happiness and vigor.

Maylett & Wride (2017) provide an interesting aspect to EX and link it to corporate brands. In their model, employees are an important part of the corporate brand and thus investing in EX makes business sense. The underlying idea is that the EX will match the delivered CX, as happy and engaged employees produce a superior CX. When customers are satisfied, financial transactions will follow. Maylett & Wride define EX as "the sum of perceptions employees have about their interactions with the organization in which they work" (12) and present a model where the brand, transactional and psychological contracts between the employee and employer affect these perceptions. This model and the contracts are discussed in section 4.5.

3.3 Designing for employee experience

As experience is both unique and simultaneously emerging from distinct elements and processes, it is possible, and wise, to study and influence these by design (Hassenzahl 2010).

The word "design" is used very often with EX but the viewpoints to design vary. Based on the literature, two different approaches to design are presented. Lesser et al. (2016) of IBM found that organizations can design for better EX by understanding the factors that either promote or keep from getting work done. Given that IBM operates in the field of management

consulting and technology, they approach design based on data that is retrieved mostly quantitatively measuring how people perform and act. They also present the idea that in the future, EX might be the responsibility of Chief Digital Officers.

With a background in HR, Plaskoff (2017) sees that only by involving employees in EX design, can organizations understand the needs and wants of the employees. He proposes a design thinking methodology for this which treat work not only as employment, but as a lifelong journey, with the employee as the hero. This view on design is very different to what Lesser et al (2017) present, which shows how the chosen entry point to EX produces very different ideas and takes it in very different possible future directions.

Even if experience design is a widely used term, based on the literature there is an argument that experiences themselves, cannot be designed. However, with the knowledge of the customer and user experiences or experiencing can be designed for (Forlizzi and Ford, 2000; Wright et al. 2003; Sanders 2001). As Forlizzi and Ford (2000) put it, designers can only design situations or touchpoints for people to interact with versus pre-defined experiences. Hassenzahl (2010) shares similar thoughts and writes that (desired) experiences can be made more likely by affecting single touchpoints or elements in order to construct an experience. Although each experience runs a different course, the essence of it and the patterns in it, remain the same. The awareness of this is crucial to experience design. He also discusses the importance of experience and experience design in creating value, as generating something worthwhile for the one experiencing. Positive experiences, those that create value, play an important role in the formation of human personalities, fulfilling psychological needs that humans have. These universal psychological needs such as competence, stimulation, relatedness, autonomy, popularity, meaning, security and physical striving. In fact, he states that “we are what we’ve experienced”. These experiences make us happy and energize our behavior, becoming a source of motivation. Humans are by nature active and seek development and sense of purpose. They seek to integrate their feelings and thoughts and actions into a cohesive sense of self and further integration into larger social structures. (Hassenzahl, 2010.)

It seems that the user centric approach where the primary focus is on understanding how the employees experience daily work at an organization makes sense as opposed to top-down talent management practices that are linked with employee engagement (Morgan 2017). According to the Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends 2016 Report, companies which had a yearly growth of 10 percent or more were two times more likely to incorporate design thinking in their operations vs competition. The success factor lies in the HR focus on the employee’s personal experience and jointly designing and developing such processes, practices and tools that help the employees to get their work done in a simple and meaningful way. This in turn contributes to employee satisfaction and productivity together

with work feeling enjoyable (Bersin et al. 2016). Plaskoff (2017) notes that the employee journey and all its touchpoints directly influence employee satisfaction, engagement, commitment and performance. When employees are invited to co-create these touchpoints by using service design methodologies and tools, organizations can understand the wants and needs employees have and then design better work life. Yohn (2016) encourages organizations to step away from old demographics and groupings based on job title, rank, age, business unit or department and geography and instead approach employees from need-based segmentation to understand their drivers and desires. This allows for new understanding and experience design as not all employees want the same career opportunities and rewards especially as four generations with different aspirations are working side by side at the workplaces currently.

Although there are many approaches to EX, the visible agreement in the literature is that it is something that should be understood and designed for as it makes organizations stronger.

4 Employer Brand

Employer Brand (EB) is a relatively new concept and was first introduced by the marketers Tim Ambler and Simon Barrow in 1996 (Backhaus, 2016). The idea was to combine Human Resource (HR) practices with Brand marketing techniques to attract and retain talent, and by doing this grow the business. The reasoning was that as companies stated people and brands to be their most important assets, by combining the two disciplines of HR (people) and marketing (brands) into one framework of employer branding, this would drive better financial results (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). In employer branding the talent is to be understood as the current and prospective employees, which means that the actions come down to attracting and recruiting prospective employees, retaining the current employees and engaging with the current and prospective employees (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). For the clarity of terminology, EB is to be distinguished from the process of building an employer brand, employer branding, which is not abbreviated in the text.

A second approach to the EB comes from occupational psychology and psychological contracts, and the idea of bonding, or engaging, with the purpose of the organization (Rosethorn et al. 2009, 4). The basis for employees' beliefs and behaviors at a workplace is the psychological contract that is a combination of the written contract of employment and the unwritten messages and promises made by the employer. The psychological contract defines the terms and conditions for the employment (Rosethorn et al. 2009, 9). In the past, psychological contracts were formed in the exchange of employers offering job security and employees offering loyalty. Now, as the job market is unpredictable and job security cannot be offered, the new psychological contract is based on employers offering training and career

opportunities, which are the basis for marketable or transferrable skills in exchange for effort and flexibility (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004; Mascarenhas 2020). As employer branding is the basis for the psychological contract between the employer and employee, the brand messages should be based on reality and provide a full picture of the company. False messages will lead to employee dissatisfaction and turnover (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). The concept of psychological contract has been less visible in the HR community and the concept of engagement has taken its role. This is most likely due to the prevalent association of engagement and improved productivity with organizational success. However, the theory of psychological contracts includes the thought that psychological contracts drive productive behavior, and these two concepts are very close to each other (Rosethorn et al. 2009, 9-10).

As stated above, the premise for the EB is economic growth by gaining competitive advantage with a talented workforce. The term “war for talent” is much used in the EB literature and originally refers to the now classic report by McKinsey & Company management consultants Chambers, Foulton, Handfield-Jones, Hankin and Michaels in 1998. The finding was that as companies had not made finding and retaining talent their priority, negative business effects would follow. Reasons listed were the decreasing supply of workforce due to an aging population, the more complex business environment requiring the hard to find and better abled business minds, start-ups competing with the same talent as traditional corporations, and finally that job mobility i.e., switching jobs, is the new normal. All this still sounds very relevant today. In the global Manpower Talent Shortage survey from 2018, 45 % of 40 000 employers say that they are struggling to find the right talent. This is especially difficult in the IT field, where it is estimated, that 30 % of global IT jobs will not be filled by 2022 due to lack of skilled workers (Universum, 2020). It can be concluded that the concepts of employer branding and employer brands are very relevant in the context of this reality.

4.1 Employer brand definitions

Before examining the concept of the EB further, it is useful to first look at different approaches to brands. One of the classic brand definitions in marketing literature is by Aaker and according to it “a brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol such as logo, trademark, or package design intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of the competitors” (1991, 188). Holt (2004, 3) looks at brands from a cultural perspective where “names, logos, and designs are the material markers of the brand” but notes that without a history these markers have no story to tell. The markers of famous brands are filled with meaning through customer experiences and brands become strong through collective experiences in regular and everyday interactions. From a cultural perspective the symbolic brand identity value is also important and especially so in high-involvement categories (4). This could be summarized to “see what brand I interact with - this is who I am”. Ind, Fuller and Trevail (2005, 2) look at brands

through the lenses of innovation and co-creation and see brand as a “set of ideas that define why an organization (or product or service) exists, how it does things and what it produces”. Brands transform through interactive brand experiences with internal and external stakeholders and these experiences influence how the brand is developed internally or used and talked about externally. The role of the company is not to “own” the brand but rather define the brand ideology, which guides how the brand evolves through innovation of products or services. In this sense, brand is a framework for innovation and co-creation (Ind et al. 2005, 22-27). All these views are interesting and relevant when moving into the concept of the EB, which is multifaceted and contains elements of culture, co-creation and brand marketing.

Ambler and Barrow defined EB to be “the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company” (Ambler and Barrow, 1996, 187). In its early stages, the definition was a value neutral concept (Backhaus, 2016). Later, the concept has evolved to the direction of a unique brand promise and value proposition to its target group i.e., the talent (Backhaus, 2016; Benraïss-Noailles and Viot, 2020). An example of this is the definition by Martin et al. (2011, 3618) where EB is “a generalized recognition for being known among key stakeholders for providing a high-quality employment experience, and a distinctive organizational identity which employees value, engage with and feel confident and happy to promote to others”. (2011, 3618-3619) where EB is “a generalized recognition for being known among key stakeholders for providing a high-quality employment experience, and a distinctive organizational identity which employees value, engage with and feel confident and happy to promote to others”. As the main interest in this thesis is in how employer brands and EX relate to each other, Rosethorn et al. (2009, 19) bring a valuable view where employer brand management is at its best when both an employee value proposition i.e., the official definition of the employment, and EX i.e., the employment in practice, are in the equation. Aside from academic definitions, practitioners Mosley and Schmidt simply state that EB is “the company reputation as an employer inside and outside the organization” (2017, 12).

It is worth noting that the concept of EB is best applicable to high value service business where talent is harder to find and thus every relationship between employees and employers matter (Ambler & Barrow 1996, 186). For the same reason the ability to build an employer brand that is associated with symbolic value like innovativeness is especially useful in highly competed job markets as these brands attract more talent (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004).

4.2 Employer branding as a process and framework

The process of employer branding is “an effort by the organization to market its employment value proposition in order to improve recruitment and retention and increase the value of

human capital" (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 510). Mosley and Schmidt describe employer branding as the creation of "a distinctively great place to work and then promoting it to the talent whose knowledge and skills are needed by the organization to meet its business goals and objectives" (2017, 8). From these definitions, we can see that employer branding has two distinct dimensions: external and internal.

External branding

The foundational thought in external branding is to attract the target audience, i.e., future employees, as well as to boost the corporate or product brands in order to present a consistent external message (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 502-503). When the employer brand positively stands out from the crowd based on the job seeker wants, needs and perceptions the employer brand "feels right" and encourages the job seeker to apply (Backhaus 2016).

Internal branding

In internal branding (or internal marketing) the premise is that an organization's employees are its first market (Berthon et al. 2005, 151). The thinking is that employees are internal customers and available jobs are the products sold to these internal customers. This means that the jobs must satisfy the wants and needs employees have for them to remain loyal to the firm (Berthon et al 2005, 152). Internal branding consists of three areas, which are: effective communication of the brand internally, assuring of the brand relevance and worth and binding every job in the organization in delivering the brand essence (Bergstrom et al. 2002, as cited in Berthon et al. 2005, 153). Internal marketing of the EB aims at developing the commitment of the employees in an organization to the set values and goals of the company (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 502-503) i.e., keeping the skillful workforce the company has.

Employer branding framework

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004, 505) created the employer branding framework where the external and internal branding are combined to form one employer branding context with the aim of building strong EB equity. Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as "a set of assets and liabilities linked to the brand name and/or logo that add or subtract from the brand value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers". The top-level brand equity elements are brand awareness and loyalty, brand associations and the perceived brand quality. Brand equity presents value for both the company e.g., steady income stream through brand loyalty, and to customers e.g., as the ease of buying and enhanced user experience. Notable is that the value perception is always dependent on the individual. (Aaker 1991, 15-18.) In employer branding the concept is equally valid. Berthon, Ewing and Hah argue that a strong employer brand equity is dependent on the perception of employer

brand attractiveness by the potential employees. This means that employer attractiveness is the “envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for an organization” (Berthon et al. 2005, 156). Backhaus and Tikoo (2004, 504) following on the footsteps of Ambler and Barrow (1996, 188) have defined employer brand equity to be the desired outcome of employer branding as it has a direct effect on the talent attraction power both for the existing and the potential talent and present their framework for employer branding. Assets are intangible resources like brand awareness and loyalty and are a part of company’s competitive advantage (Aaker 1991, 14; Kapferer 2004, 14). According to the framework there are two principal assets that employer branding creates, and these are employer brand associations externally and employer brand loyalty internally. These assets mediate employer attraction and employee productivity, which in turn contribute to employer brand equity and the success of the firm (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 504). The framework is presented in figure 2 and it is explained in the following sections.

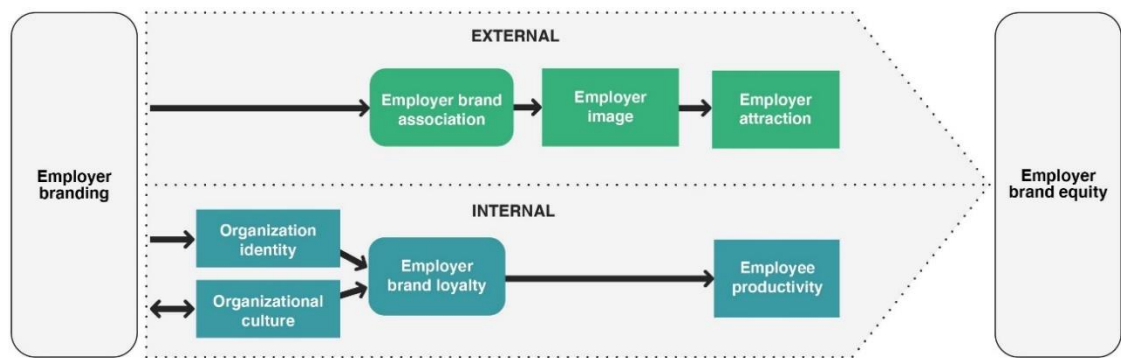


Figure 2: The employer branding framework (modified from Backhaus & Tikoo 2004)

As established previously, employer branding has two dimensions - the external and the internal, and the framework operates on both dimensions. Let us start with the external. Brand associations are everything linked to a brand in memory (Aaker 1991, 109). In the context of employer branding the more positive the employer brand associations, the stronger the employer brand image (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 505). Brand image is a mental collection of brand attribute and benefit perceptions, which form the brand associations. Brand benefits linked to brand associations can be product or non-product related. The product-related benefits are functional expectations when the non-product-related benefits are symbolic expectations. In the context of employer brands, the functional benefits are e.g., salary and symbolic e.g., the prestige of the firm. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 505). In short, the framework suggests that prospective employees form a brand image through employer brand associations, which are a result of employer branding. The image in turn influences the employer attractiveness. This means that companies wishing to attract talent need to identify and develop associations meaningful to the target group they wish to attract. A proactive approach is needed as potential employees establish brand associations on all information

sources and not just the ones employers manage (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 506). In the Employer brand definitions chapter of this thesis, the identity value of brands was referred to as “see what brand I interact with, this is who I am”. In the same way there is link between social identity theory and employer branding (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 506). In the employer brand context, the sentence could be “See where I work, this is who I am”.

Next, the internal dimension is explored. Here the employer branding messages act as the starting point for the psychological contract formation during the recruitment process. These messages typically include promises like career development opportunities and these promises influence the expectations that the employee has towards the organization. Clear, honest and coherent brand messages help to bridge the gap between expectations and reality. Notable is that expectations also stem from prior perceptions of the organization. It is relevant to communicate a realistic job preview, which consists of both the positives and negatives of the job (Meglino and Ravlin 1999 as cited in Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 507). This realistic view on the employment increases organizational trust in the longer run (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 508). A perceived breach of psychological contract is many times the reason behind employee turnover, intentions to change job, reduced organizational trust and job satisfaction together with decreased productivity (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 507). Loyalty tells how attached the customer is to a brand and is an indicator of brand equity as loyalty strongly influences future sales (Aaker 1991, 39). In employer branding, loyalty is equal to the commitment that the employee makes to the employer. This commitment has two dimensions: behavioral and attitudinal. The behavioral dimension refers to organizational culture and the attitudinal to organizational identity. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 508). Backhaus and Tikoo define organizational commitment to be the feeling of attachment the employee has towards the organization as it is presented in the employer brand. Furthermore, organizational commitment relates to organizational culture and culture can increase commitment and loyalty (2004, 509). Organizational culture is a set of ideas, values and behaviors i.e., the way the organization is and does things. These ideas and ways of being and doing are passed on to the new employees and evidenced in daily behavior at a workplace (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 509). Organizational identity is the image or “collective attitude” of the company as a group. Employees seek to identify with the company when they find it attractive or unique, and especially so if the identity of the company contributes to self-esteem. Furthermore, the sense of identification translates to organizational commitment. The link between loyalty and productivity is that content, and thus loyal employees, usually have higher performance levels and contribute excessively to customer satisfaction (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 510). To summarize, the internal employer branding has a dual effect on employees as it influences the organizational identity (attitudes) and culture (behaviors). Organizational culture and employer brand messages must tell the same story and thus these

entities influence each other. Organizational identity and culture create loyalty, which in turn is a determinant for productivity (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Backhaus and Tikoo present that employer branding could serve as a HR strategy to coordinate the so far separate processes of recruitment, training and development together with activities in career management to increase the quality and effect of these processes (2004 p. 513).

4.3 Managing the employer brand experience

The brand management aspect comes from the marketing side of employer branding and is practical in its approach. It could be defined as the skillful management of all the everyday touchpoints employees have with the brand together with coherent messaging of the brand promise both internally and externally (Mosley 2017, 161). This is no easy task as Mosley brings forth and presents the employer brand mix that shapes the employment experience. These mix elements can be divided into two groups. First is the broader organizational context like values, senior leadership and external reputation. Second is the local context and practices like team management, learning and development together with reward and recognition (2017, 150). There is no one size fits all mentality in employer branding, but rather each company should assess what mix of practices will bring the best value in talent attraction (Ambler & Barrow 1996).

To ensure successful employer brand management: 1) the brand must correspond to the needs the company has in terms of reaching its business goals, 2) an effective brand positioning must be created and establish senior leadership support to have the resources needed and the approval to drive cultural change, 3) all internal and external communication must be managed skillfully, 4) establish good collaboration with all the internal stakeholders working with the brand mix, 5) follow the right metrics for the employer brand experience and lead the discussions within the organization when goals are not met (Mosley 2017, 160-161). Employer brands are always strongly connected to product and corporate brands if these brands carry a different name. Ensuring integrity and coherence of all the internal and external brand ecosystem messages is the key to successful employer branding (Mosley 2017, 113).

Employer brand positioning is a compass in developing and managing the brand experience. Brand identity is the internal key belief of the brand and its core values. Brand identity determines what the brand does and how it does it. For established brands, identity is the basis for positioning. Brand positioning is the starting point in building strong brands and it shows how the brand stands against competition and what the competitive advantage is. The key is differentiation. (Aaker 1991, 110; Kapferer 2012, 149). Positioning naturally has an equally important role in employer branding as in product or service branding, and the same

principles apply. Mosley presents eight common positioning premises in employer branding which are: status, purpose, teamwork, autonomy, innovation, learning, career progression and performance (Mosley 2017, 121).

The question, who should own employer brand management is company specific, but HR is many times the leading function, in collaboration with marketing and communications functions. Yet as presented in this chapter, successful employer brand management requires senior leadership support and active collaboration with all internal stakeholders.

4.4 Value propositions

As established in the previous chapters, the purpose of employer branding is to attract and retain talent. To manage the task of doing just that, employers need to understand what benefits and values employees are seeking for in employment. Ambler and Barrow (1996, 187) bring forth three benefits provided by the employment. These are the functional benefits like development opportunities, economic benefits like pay and psychological benefits like meaningful work. Berthon, Ewing and Hah (2005) assessed employer attractiveness based on Ambler and Barrow's work and discovered that the three benefit dimensions were valid and presented five value propositions that attract employees: 1) social value like good relationships at a workplace, 2) developmental value like career opportunities, 3) economic value like pay and job security, 4) interest value like innovative spirit and 5) application value like knowledge sharing. In the age of digital and social media, there is further research in the field. Dabirian, Kietzmann and Diba (2016) found in their study with over 38 000 analyzed Glassdoor reviews, that on top of these five value propositions there are two more, namely management value and work life balance. Benraïss-Noailles and Viot (2020) replicated the Berthon et al. (2005) study to see if the value propositions are still valid given the developments in the job market since 2005. Their finding was that all the value propositions are valid, with the addition that EB equity positively affects employee wellbeing and therefore loyalty. Wellbeing and loyalty increase if an employee experiences that the job offered by the company is interesting (interest value), the colleagues are supportive (social value) and own knowledge can be shared (application value).

Based on the above, the current outlook on employer branding value propositions is presented in Figure 3 with descriptions that capture the core elements of the five value propositions.

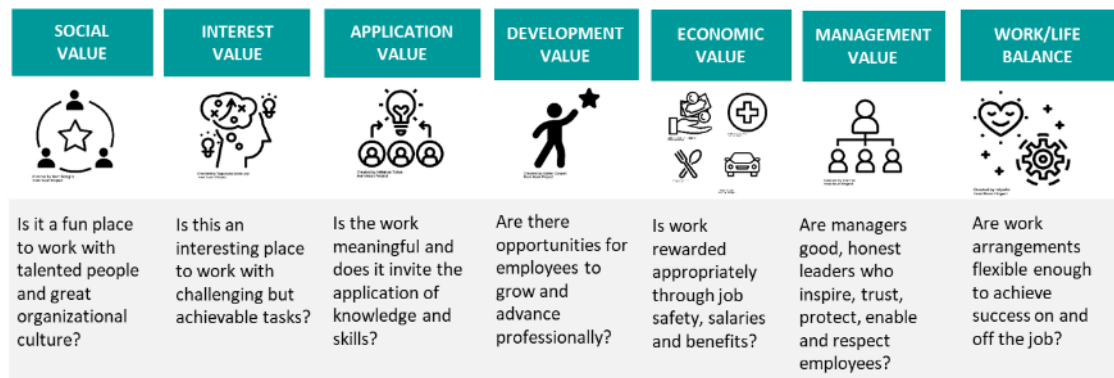


Figure 3: The seven employer branding value propositions (Dabirian et al. 2016, 200; symbols the noun project)

It is notable that not all value propositions are equal in value. Following Herzberg's two factor theory (Herzberg et al. 2007), employers should collect data relevant to their specific field and even on a company level in order to understand what factors raise job satisfaction (and motivation) and what are merely hygiene factors, which will lead to dissatisfaction if absent, but will not increase job satisfaction (Dabirian et al. 2016).

Employee value proposition

Now that we are familiar with the employer branding value propositions and can look at the more specific employee value proposition also known as EVP. In employer branding, there are two different approaches to the term EVP, either looking at it from the employer perspective as "Employer Value Proposition" or the employee perspective as the "Employee Value Proposition". Both these EVP's seem to describe the same thing, but employee value proposition is used in academia and employer value proposition in consultancy (see e.g. Universum 2019). The interpretation by the authors is that the employer value proposition is an easier sell to companies as it concentrates on what the company has to offer as the sender of brand messages. Then again, the bulk of the literature in employer branding is from the discipline of HR and thus the natural focus is on the employee and on the broader context of employer branding. For clarity, EVP in this thesis refers to the employee value proposition.

Simply put, EVP is a promise that employers make to current and prospective employees with the intention of retaining and attracting talent. Rosethorn et al. define EVP as the unique and differentiating promise a business makes to its employees and potential candidates (2009, 20). Pandita and Ray state that a strong EVP should include both tangible and non-tangible benefits such as workplace policies and atmosphere supporting performance, nature of the work itself, opportunities for learning and development and social wellbeing (2018, 190). According to Mosley, it provides a consistent platform for brand communication and employer brand experience management (2017, 123). Furthermore, Mosley and Schmidt (2017) describe

EVP as the “give and get of the employment deal” meaning that in exchange for employee’s desired knowledge and skills the company offers what they know employees’ value (15). We can see that Rosethorn et al. (2009) and Pandita and Ray (2017) look at EVP from the more theoretical value proposition perspective when Mosley and Schmidt as practitioners approach it from a more practical brand management perspective. Both views are naturally relevant. In this thesis, the focus is on the connection of EVP and EX.

4.5 Employee experience and Employer brands are strong together

As shown in the previous chapters, employer branding is not only about recruitment campaigns but a companywide framework and HR strategy (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). This means that the focus is more on the whole employee life cycle and the most important experiences or moments during that journey. This places the daily employee experiences in the equation of strong employer brands (Rosethorn et al. 2009, 24) and present the Employer brand in action model (20). Employer branding lays the foundation for psychological contracts and EVP is one of the tools in employer branding. In the model, EB strength is the outcome of EVP promises resonating in everyday experiences of the employees during the moments of truth (MOTs). The model is presented in figure 4

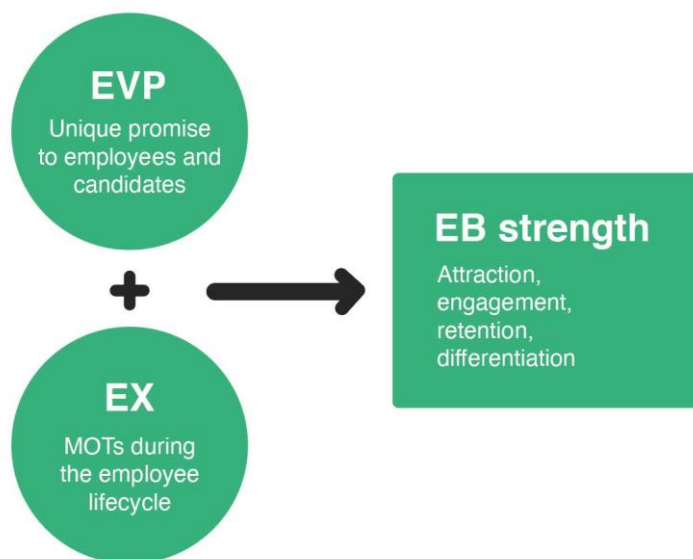


Figure 4: The employer brand in action (Modified from Rosethorn et al. 2009)

It is important to note that when the psychological contract is perceived to be honored, EX is positive and when the contract is perceived to be breached the experience is negative. Hence, strong employer brands are the outcome of positive employee experiences when negative EX has a weakening effect on the EB. When going back to brand definitions earlier on in the thesis Holt (2004) defined strong brands to have the brand markers like name and logo filled with (positive) meaning through collective and frequent interactive experiences. In

the context of EB we can conclude the same to be true and that strong employer brands need to be collectively given a positive meaning through daily employee experiences.

Another approach to uniting EVP and EX is by Pandita and Ray (2018, 195) and their 4E framework for improved talent retention. The four E's stand for 1) EVP to attract talent, 2) enhancing employee capabilities and experience, 3) employee engagement and 4) enduring relationships. This process is cyclical where EVP attracts talent with targeted but truthful messages. Next everyday experiences at a workplace drive employee engagement, which in turn strengthens the relationship between the employer and employee thus positively effecting that employee value proposition and EB. Then the cycle starts again. This model highlights the evolving relationship between the employer and the employee and that it is the everyday experiences of the employees that determine the loyalty of the current employees and talent attraction power.

Maylett & Wride (2017) suggest that EX is formed by experiences, expectations and perceptions, which are the outcome of 1) expectation alignment, 2) the three contracts of brand, transaction and psychological expectations and 3) trust. Expectation alignment looks at how well the employees' expectations line up with their actual experience when working for the company. The three contracts establish expectations through promises, both intentionally and unintentionally. The brand contract is mostly based on perceptions and is the primary reason to be attracted to any given organization. The transactional contract is mutually accepted, explicit, reciprocal and compliance based. It is formed upon the start of the relationship and provide a point of reference if problems occur. The psychological contract is the unwritten set of expectations and obligations that form the employer-employee relationship. It is mainly implicit in nature and usually the most important of the three contracts, powered by expectations. Honoring the psychological contract results in a high level of engagement. The three contracts define the quality of the EX and build the last component of trust, which is the oxygen of EX. Trust is tested daily in MOTs, which can be expected or unexpected, but the handling of them by the company and leadership directly affects the organizational trust (Maylett & Wride 2017). When looking at this from the EB perspective, expectations and perceptions are largely affected by the promises presented to current and prospective employees in the three contracts, which determine the level of loyalty and engagement of the employees. If expectations and reality i.e. the EB promises and EX, continuously fail to meet, employees will make the choice to leave (Maylett & Wride 2017, 14). This highlights the importance of truthful EB messages, understanding of EX and the intentional design of it.

5 Methods and process

The methods and processes used in this thesis are those of research-based development, which entails the systematic collection of information from literature and from practice by using a variety of different methods and aims at solving problems or updating practices. Furthermore, the thesis uses the service design process and methods, which offer a qualitative, holistic and user-centric approach with tools designed to aid in the communication and testing of services and concepts. (Ojasalo, Moilanen, Ritalahti 2014.) Most of the current approaches and studies in the field of EX consist of quantitative data in the forms of answered surveys or measuring Employee Net Promoter Score (ENPS) but seem to lack the qualitative aspect, which focuses on describing and gaining a deeper understanding of the research subject (Kananen 2017). Since the focus of the thesis is to study the experiences of users (i.e., employees), service design provides a natural framework and methodology (Tuulaniemi 2016; Design Council 2007; Stickdorn Lawrence, Hormess, Schneider 2018; Curedale 2013).

5.1 Research design and process of the thesis

Research design is the action plan of the research (Yin 1994). This includes the purpose and objectives of the study, formulation of the research questions, choice of methods for data collection and analysis and choices made when recruiting participants or deciding on the case company (Saunders et al. 2009). The purpose of the research defines whether the study is exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. The approach in this thesis is exploratory due to the research design following the inherently exploratory nature of the service design process. Additionally, as the purpose of the thesis is to help employers to develop an attractive EB through understanding what drives good EX in remote knowledge work, we conclude that the thesis is seeking new insights and looking at a new concept of EX in a specific setting of remote work. According to Robson (as cited in Saunders et al. 2009, 139) in this case the exploratory study is a valuable way to conduct research. Exploratory research is flexible in nature and typically the focus in the beginning is broad, but the scope narrows down during the research (Saunders et al. 2009). The process of this thesis followed this description very much as in the beginning the authors wanted to explore the topic of EX broadly to see what angle proved most interesting and useful. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting shift to mass remote work, the scope was narrowed to EX in remote knowledge work and talent attraction based on that. This design problem was defined in the summer 2020 after the two rounds of interviews when the thesis work started in February 2020.

Inductive and deductive research methods are the most described methods in literature. Deductive research is about testing theory and starts with a hypothesis, which guides and provides a framework for the research. Inductive research is about building theory and starts

with observations, which are generalized to form a hypothesis which are then tested (Perri & Bellamy 2012; Saunders et al. 2009). It was clear that neither of these approaches were suitable in the thesis, which is about exploring and not forming or testing theory. It is a common practice in design to conduct abductive research (Stickdorn et al. 2018; Faljic 2020). Abductive research offers the best premise for research when issues are complex, and information is limited (Chipchase & Philips 2017; Faljic 2020). Abductive research is about “what could be” or the “closest explanation” by recognizing patterns in observations and data and making sense of it by combining intuition and experience to data (Stickdorn et al. 2018) but it is also called a “leap of faith” due to its uncertain nature (Chipchase & Philips 2017, 467). This thesis looks into the always uncertain future and explores human experience in the times of a pandemic, which has caused an unforeseen shift to mass remote work over a very short period and the bulk of the data is from 16 interviews. It can be concluded that with this setting the abductive approach is natural.

Research questions were formed early in the process to give a framework with clear boundaries and focus and therefore guide the way through data collection and analysis (Silverman 2010). The research questions possess the three qualities of answerability, interconnectedness and relevance of the substance that Silverman (2010) proposes for workable research questions. The research questions in this thesis were evaluated vs Silverman’s criteria and concluded to be workable. This is presented in Table 2 below:

| Thesis: Designing remote EX in knowledge work to attract talent | |
|--|--|
| Purpose: To help employers to develop an attractive employer brand | |
| Objective: To describe the driving forces and premises that create a positive employee experience in remote knowledge work | |
| Theme | RQ |
| Knowledge work context | 1: What are the trends and characteristics in knowledge work? |
| Knowledge work context and employer branding | 2: What are the skills and practices needed in knowledge work? |
| Employee experience | 3: What are the wants and needs of knowledge workers? |
| Employee experience and employer branding as a combination | 4: What is the role of employee experience in employer brand(ing)? |
| Criteria for valid RQ's (Silverman 2010) | Reasoning |
| Answerability: Clear understanding of what data will answer the question and how data is collected. | Data: Semi-structured expert interviews, journals and workshops following the service design process. Stakeholders: Employers (HR), employees, future of work specialists, case company. |
| Interconnectedness: Research questions form a meaningful whole. | The RQ's form a coherent whole vs the scope of the thesis. Scope: EX, EB, the landscape of knowledge work. |
| Substantively relevant: The research questions are interesting to wider public and thus makes sense to invest the time in research. | EX is a new concept and made its appearance to public knowledge around 2013 and research is limited. The role of EX in EB has not been identified clearly. The concept of remote EX has not been studied and is of high interest for organizations due to rapid shift to mass remote work. |

Table 2: Research question quality evaluation in the thesis (based on Silverman, 2010)

The six principles of service design (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 27) help service designers and other practitioners to stay true to the ideals and practices of service design including the authors of this thesis. Table 3 below describes the practical application of the principles in the thesis:

| The six principles of service design (Stickdorn et al. 2018) | Application of the principles in this thesis |
|---|--|
| 1. Human centered: Focus on the ones affected by the service. | Qualitative data was collected from both employers and employees, focusing on their experiences, wants and needs. Employees were engaged in the co-creative workshops. |
| 2. Collaborative: Actively engage and work with all stakeholder groups. | Employers and employees and the case company were integrated in the process. |
| 3. Iterative: Iterate ideas and solutions before implementation. | The process of content creation including the remote EX canvas went through testing and prototyping rounds. |
| 4. Sequential: Understand and visualize the service moments, which form the service to make it functionally and emotionally relevant for the user. | The thesis output was mapped out as a flow chart to visualize the sequence of actions taken by the case company clients to use the developed content. |
| 5. Real: Develop the service by doing it in the real world vs. thinking and theory. | The thesis data is a broad set of qualitative real life data collected from knowledge employees and employers. |
| 6. Holistic: Take all stakeholders and needs into consideration during the process. | The needs of the service users i.e. employees and employers together with the needs of the case company were considered during the process. |

Table 3: The practical application of service design principles in the thesis

Service design projects typically follow the double diamond process developed by the Design council in 2005 (Design council 2007). The two diamonds visualize a process, where the purpose of the divergent exploratory phases of discovery and development is to ideate different approaches and opportunities based on multiple data sources. In the convergent phases of definition and delivery the focus is on formulating key insights, choosing ideas and making decisions (Design council 2007; Stickdorn et al. 2018). However, the process is never straight forward “decide-plan-do” but an evolving and learning process, where iteration is central to achieving the best solution (Stickdorn et al. 2018). The research process of this thesis is visualized in the double diamond Figure 5 below:

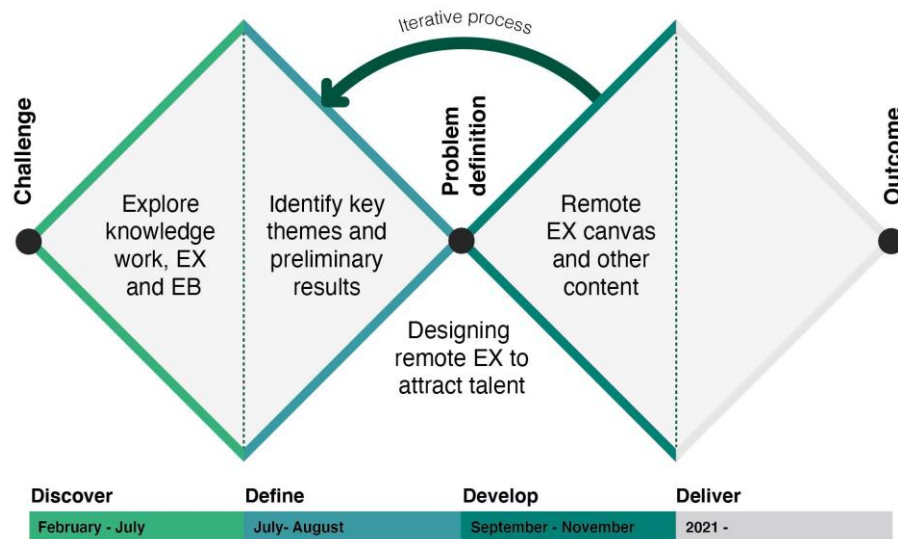


Figure 5: The service design process in this thesis

Table 4 expands the process phases showing why and what methods were used together with the outcome of each method and process phase. Furthermore, all the phases are described in more depth in the following sections.

| Process phase | Methods used | Purpose | Outcome |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| Discover | Exploratory interviews (3) Experts | Insights on EX, CX and remote work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation of the relevance of the general topic |
| | Desk research | Understand the topic and organizations working with EX | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of Duunitori as the case company |
| | Brainstroming and interview Case company | Ideate and define a jointly fruitful development task | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of the thesis with the inclusion of EB |
| | Expert interviews (8) HR and future of work experts | Understand the current landscape of knowledge work from the employer and future of work perspective. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends and characteristics in knowledge work • Needed skills and practices in knowledge work • The interpreted needs and wants of the employees • The definition and role of EB |
| | Expert interviews (8) Knowledge workers | Understand the needs and wants of employees in knowledge work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EX factors |
| | Digital journals (3) Knowledge workers | | |

| | | | |
|---------|--|--|--|
| Define | Thematic analysis Interviews and digital journals | Identify key themes and preliminary results for RQ's as the starting point for co-creation phase with employees. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the four driving forces and premises in knowledge work. • Identification of the rise of meta-skills and practices enhancing EX and EB. • EX factors in knowledge and remote work • Empathy map visualizing EX during a remote work day. |
| | Problem definition | Understand what most impacts EX in knowledge work currently. Based on interview, journal and desk research findings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis concept: Designing remote EX in knowledge work to attract talent |
| Develop | Method selection | Capture the key elements of remote EX and choose how to 1) best communicate them as boundary object and 2) create a simple tool to test the thinking in collaborative workshops with employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote EX canvas prototype v. 1 |
| | Workshop 1 Knowledge workers (7) | Remote EX content and canvas development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote EX ecosystem map • Remote meeting journey map • Remote social presence and inclusion touchpoints |
| | Workshop 2 Knowledge workers (9) | Test Remote EX canvas v. 1 as a tool and workflow including best practice identification per canvas field. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote EX canvas prototype v. 2 • 21 best practice draft ideas that enhance the remote EX |
| | Insight generation and prototype development | Ideas on how thesis generated content could best serve case company needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindmap • Playbook prototype to visualize content possibilities |
| | Content prototyping Group discussion with case company stakeholders | Present content ideas with mindmap and playbook prototype including the remote EX canvas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment on content, mechanism and delivery. • Remote EX canvas prototype v. 3 |
| Deliver | Content delivery to case company and implementation in case company operations is outside the scope of the thesis. | | |

Table 4: Thesis process by phase

5.2 Discover: the insights through research

The purpose of the discovery phase is to understand what the design challenge is versus assuming what it might be. This requires divergent thinking and that is why multiple data collection methods are the key (Design council 2007; Stickdorn et al. 2018).

The discovery phase was formed of two parts. The first part consisted of desk research and short exploratory interviews. The aim of this phase was to gain a deep understanding of thesis topics. According to Stickdorn et al. (2018) in addition to reviewing the literature, desk research or other preparatory research should be conducted to learn about the subject matter. For this purpose, four short and exploratory interviews were conducted to get a holistic understanding of EX, ways of working in knowledge work (co-working spaces), customer experience and employer branding. Desk research consisted of online searches to gain an understanding of the various stakeholders in the field and articles and surveys on remote work and how that effects knowledge work. The outcome of this phase was the selection of the case company Duunitori and the narrowing of the scope of the thesis to the

purpose, objective and research questions together with a viable thesis topic ideated together with the case company. The case company was first contacted by email introducing the idea for collaboration around the thesis and then the discussions continued face to face and virtually.

The second part in the discovery phase was interviews and digital journals as cultural probes. To increase the reliability of the results different data collections methods were used and the topic was approached from different perspectives following the method triangulation principle (Ojasalo et al. 2014). Hence the interviews with both the employers and experts together with employees as well as culture probes in the form of employee remote work journals.

Expert interviews

The most abundant data in this thesis originates from two separate rounds of interviews with 16 interviewees altogether. Interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection as they allow for individuals to discuss the topic freely and in depth. It also allows particularly well for the exploration of new perspectives (Ojasalo et al. 2014). Interviews are used widely in service design as a classic qualitative research method and can help researchers to gain insights about experiences, challenges, concerns, needs and wants (Stickdorn et al. 2018). One typology for interviews is to categorize them as structured, semi-structured or unstructured (in-depth) interviews. Semi-structured interviews are based on themes and questions (Saunders et al. 2009). Based on the clear themes stemming from the thesis objective and the four research questions, semi-structured interviews were the best suited interview method. Field guides with themes and questions for both interview rounds were prepared (Portigal 2013). Detailed guides were especially important for alignment as both authors of the thesis conducted interviews (Portigal 2013).

The field guides are in Appendices 5-8 and below in Table 5 presents a short summary of the themes and questions together with interviewee groups on both rounds. There was variation in the interview flow and order of questions as the depth and width of the answers differed between the interviewees. There was also variation in the questions asked based on the role of the interviewee. This is typical for semi-structured interviews (Saunders et al. 2009).

| Interviewees | Themes | Questions |
|--|---|--|
| EMPLOYERS 1. HR managers, EB experts 2. Future work experts 3. Staff leasing expert | Background questions | Interviewee's background and current role (all) |
| | | Current approach to and own definition of future knowledge work? (all) |
| | | Current approach to and own definition of employer branding? (1, 3) |
| | Characteristic of future knowledge work | View on external (industry) change within 5-10 years (all) |
| | | View on internal (company) change within 5-10 years (all) |
| | | View on external (industry) change within 5-10 years (all) |
| | | Evolution of employment 5-10 years from now (all) |
| | Characteristics of a desired future knowledge worker | Current winning competences and skills of a knowledge worker (all) |
| | | Evolution of employment 5-10 years from now (all) |
| | | Current winning competences and skills of a knowledge worker (all) |
| | Characteristics of a future desired workplace | Strategic and tactical role of EB (1, 2) |
| | | Elements that affect EB (1, 2) |
| | | Link of EB to attracting the future knowledge worker (all) |
| | | Types of EB projects and initiatives (1, 2) |
| | | The role of internal collaboration and co-creation of EB (1, 2) |
| EMPLOYEES 1. Typical employee: Permanent contract of employment 2. Atypical employee: Self-employed | Background questions | Interviewee's background and current role (all) |
| | | Reasons for choosing atypical way of working (2) |
| | Trends and characteristics in knowledge work | View on changes in work tasks during the past 5 years, view on development in the future and requirements from the employer (typical) or organizations (atypical) (all) |
| | | Effects of pandemic on work, if remote work implemented and effects on tasks and practices (1) |
| | | View on whether the pandemic driven remote work is a first step in a bigger change (all) |
| | Skills, practices, tools needed in digital knowledge work incl. remote work | Attitudes in organization towards remote work pre and post pandemic (1) |
| | | How remote work has effected co-operation with clients/networks. Positives and negatives (2) |
| | | Skills and practices required in successful remote work (both) |
| | Wants and needs of knowledge workers | Satisfaction towards employer during the pandemic i.e. remote work readiness in leadership and cultural practices (all) |
| | | Values of employees (all) |
| | The expectations towards the employer and the workplace | Expectations towards employer/clients (all) |
| | | Importance of employer brand and channels used for evaluation (all) |
| | | Factors that enable or hinder the completion of good work (all) |

Table 5: The interview field guide summary

To ease the interviews, all the interviewees received information about the scope of the thesis and topics of the interview beforehand. These included the term definition (knowledge work, EX and EB) and a boundary object picture of seven employer value propositions (Figure 3, 35) around which one question around EX factors in the interviews was formed. The interviewees were asked to keep the picture at hand during the interview if for technical reasons sharing of the picture would not be possible. This proved to be a good starting point in the interviews around value propositions.

All participants were informed about the full anonymity and that sessions were to be recorded and that all information is stored in Google Drive cloud storage with access limited to the authors only. Interviews were mostly conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams but some face-to-face. All interviews went well when measuring the success with 1) all questions were answered, 2) atmosphere was collaborative and friendly and 3) recordings could be transcribed without difficulties and needed data was retrieved for analysis.

The recorded interviews were transcribed by the authors. As the chosen method for analysis was thematic analysis, interview transcriptions were close to the actual interview but at times repetitions and non-interview related story telling were removed. In addition, some sections were moved within the transcribed interviews to form a coherent whole for the analysis. Example of this could be when interviewee returned to the previous question in the middle of answering the following question. Additionally, coughs, laughter and the like were not transcribed. Transcribing this way took three times the interview length meaning that a 90-minute interview took 4.5 hours to transcribe.

The first round of interviews was conducted with future of work experts and experts working in HR and with EB who represented employers in the study. The experts were recruited from different companies operating in the field of knowledge work. Five interviewees were recruited based on desk research with a profile and company match to what the authors had identified as good candidates given the scope of the thesis. Three interviewees were recruited through author's own networks with the same criteria. Furthermore, the authors preferred organizations, which could be labelled as "forerunners" based on their reputation in media and in their own industry. These organizations are ahead of the curve in knowledge work and can provide a more future oriented view. Table 6 presents the details of the experts in the first round of the interviews:

| Group and expertise | Industry | Type of organization | Position |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1: HR and EB experts to provide insights on the current and future states of knowledge work from a hands-on perspective, as well as thoughts on the role of employer branding and employee experience. | Research and development | Established corporation | Talent Acquisition |
| | Legal services | Forerunner | HR Coordinator |
| | Technology | Forerunner | HR, finance and community management |
| | Technology, strategy, design | Forerunner | Head of HR |
| | Technology, strategy, design | Forerunner | Recruitment and Employer Branding |
| 2: Future of work experts to provide a broader view of the development and trends of knowledge work. | Change consulting | Forerunner | Consultant |
| | Communications | Forerunner | Consultant, partner |
| 3: Staff leasing expert to provide insights on current and future state employment types in knowledge work. | Staff leasing | Established corporation | Marketing director |

Table 6: The interview participants group employers

Although the backgrounds and job descriptions of the interviewees differed, they all shared a common interest either in the topics of EX and employer branding or the future of knowledge work. The various backgrounds of the interviewees were thought to bring a rich perspective to the interviews but given the before mentioned commonalities similar enough to form a coherent look on the thesis topic.

The recruitment took place in late May by email or phone. 10 potential candidates were contacted of whom eight came back with an answer and interviewees were booked. All interviews were conducted by 29 June 2020.

The second round of interviews was conducted with employees in knowledge work. The interviewees were recruited to form two groups according to employment types. The division to two employment types was based on the results of the first interview round and literature review indicating that there will be many different types of employment in knowledge work going forward. The assumption being that organizations must know how to attract knowledge workers regardless of the employment type based on their needs for expertise in different areas. Three of the employees had a team lead role, which was thought to bring valuable insights on leadership in remote work. The two groups are presented in Table 7:

| Group | Industry | Position |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1: Typical employment, permanent contract of employment | Consumer goods / electronics | Marketing Director, team lead |
| | Creative agency | Business Director, team lead |
| | Tech and consultancy | Consultant |
| | Research | Research scientist |
| | Legal | Senior legal counsel, team lead |
| 2: Atypical employment, self-employed in project and freelance type work | Digital UX | Project work, freelancer |
| | Consultancy | Consultant |
| | Tech | Sales |

Table 7: The interview participants group employees

The recruitment took place in July-August and the interviewees were recruited through author's own networks and contacted mostly by LinkedIn messages but by phone also. All contacted candidates agreed to the interview and all interviews were conducted by 20 August 2020. The common motive to participate in the research was the acknowledgment of remote work pains and gains and the high relevance of the thesis topic.

Digital journals as cultural probes

The aim of cultural probes of employee journals was to add richness to the data as well as empathize with the employees. Cultural probes are tasks of self-documentation given to participants in the form of diaries, journals, videos, pictures etc. They help researchers to bring diverse approaches to the design process and to gain an even better understanding of the topic being studied with data that is collected without the researcher being present (Stickdorn et al. 2018).

Three participants recruited from a service design Facebook group were instructed to keep a journal of their remote work experiences during three working days. They were provided the opportunity to use an online application Day One or simply document their experiences in a written document. Participants were asked to make 3-5 journal entries per day of positive and negative experiences as well as anything else during the workday that they found meaningful.

5.3 Define: design problem through thematic analysis

The purpose of the define phase is to formulate key insights based on the data collected in the previous discovery phase. The thinking required is convergent, which aims to decision

making and design problem definition before entering the development phase (Design council 2007; Stickdorn et al. 2018). In this thesis the aim of this phase was to identify and define recurring themes in the data in order to gain an understanding of the research objective by means of thematic analysis. After this phase the design problem was also clarified, and the decision was to focus on EX in *remote* knowledge work as opposed to the initial thought of EX in knowledge work.

Analyzing the interviews

Thematic content analysis refers to the sense-making of qualitative data and attempts to find core meanings and relevant categories of themes that are common in several interviews (Ojasalo et al. 2014). The Nielsen Norman group framework for thematic analysis was followed as it suited the service design approach of visualizing data (Rosala 2019). First the most interesting quotations in the transcribed printed interviews were highlighted with different colors based on the four research questions. After this, the highlighted quotations (preliminary codes) were manually cut out and placed on the research wall by color sections. These preliminary codes were then further worked into codes and grouped to themes. The process was iterated several times until the final themes were discovered using the central organizing concept method. The central organizing concept describes the theme in a coherent way and embodies the data pattern of the theme (Auckland University 2019). Below, in Table 8 an extract of the thematic analysis process.

| RQ | Code | Central organizing concept | Theme |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| RQ1: Trends in knowledge work | Work-life balance | Leading through culture in the age of digital knowledge work. When teams work fully remotely or in a hybrid model, culture is the foundation for behaviors and attitudes when direct management by team leads in not possible. Self-managing teams are dependent on strong cultural leadership and requires self-leadership. | Culture and leadership |
| RQ1: Characteristics of knowledge work | Importance of community and culture | | |
| RQ3: Employee wants and needs | Virtual social gatherings | | |

Table 8: Extract of the thematic analysis process in the thesis

Analyzing the digital journals

The digital journals were analyzed by using empathy map (Figure 6) as the framework for analysis. Empathy map helps to synthesize observations from the research and helps in insight generation (Friis Dam & Yu Siang 2020). The basic idea is to identify needs by mapping what

the person or group in question says, does, thinks and feels at a certain situation (Bootcamp bootleg toolkit 2010).

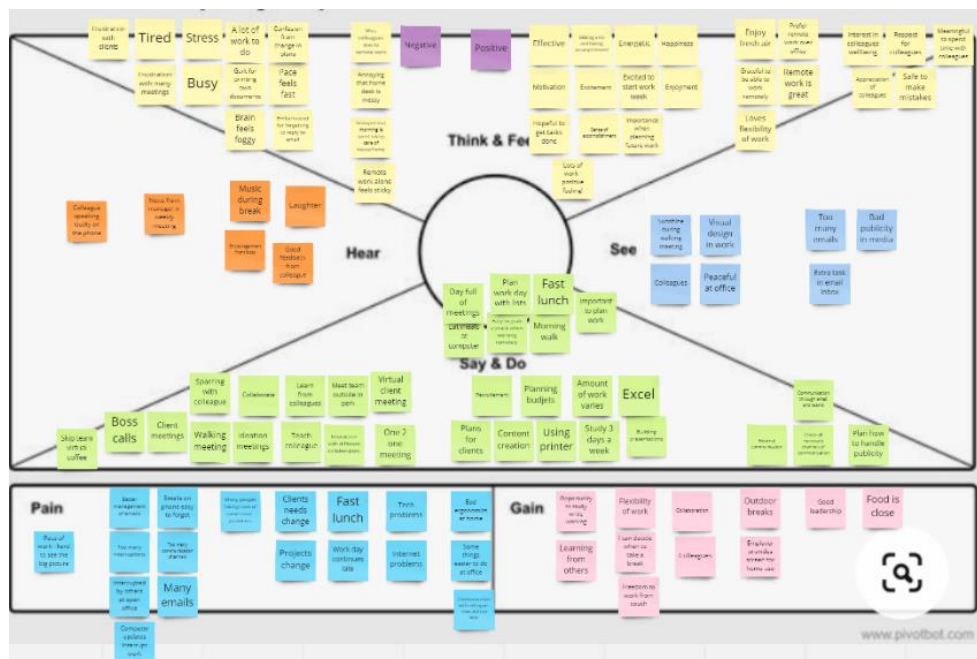


Figure 6: Digital Journal empathy map

5.4 Develop: the content solution to case company

The purpose of the divergent develop phase is to create, prototype and test solutions and through these iterations identify feasible, viable and desirable solutions based on the clearly defined design problem (Design council 2007; Stickdorn et al. 2018). In this thesis the aim was to first create content ideas based on the findings of the study and second develop those ideas further in co-creative workshops together with the knowledge workers. Finally, the aim was to prototype and iterate the content and concept further together with the case company. This to enable the case company customers to get a starting point to understanding remote EX in knowledge work and how this knowledge can be utilized in talent attraction and employer branding together with the help of the case company.

The develop phase contains many intertwined phases. First, we go through the complete development of the remote EX canvas, which summarizes the remote EX findings in this study. This is followed by workshop and prototype chapters.

5.4.1 The Remote EX Canvas

The outcome of the thematic analysis was a holistic understanding of the employee needs and wants together with knowledge work landscape and. The seven identified areas of remote EX are based on the thesis findings and literature and explained in Table 9.

| Identified Driving force / premise | Canvas field name | From literature | From research & development |
|---|---|--|---|
| Technology embedded in everything | Technology: Tools and channels | Dery & Sebastian, 2017 Morgan, 2017 Whitter, 2019 | Our interviews repeated this finding very clearly. There is no remote work without technology and it strongly drives remote EX. |
| Characteristics and practices Leadership and culture | Practices and routines | Dery & Sebastian, 2017 | Good EX is possible only if employees are happy with their daily work. One of the pain points based on the interviews is that most of the practices and routines are based on working from the office. This includes meeting practices and mostly all social and cultural practices. |
| Changing structures and models Models and ways of knowledge work | Space and ergonomics | Morgan, 2017 Lesser et al., 2016 | Based on the data, work space in general including ergonomics came up repeatedly. Space enables productive work and mood and supports wellbeing. |
| Leadership and culture Changing structures and models | Leadership and culture | Dery & Sebastian, 2017 Maylett & Wride, 2017 Morgan, 2017 Whitter, 2019 | Cultural leadership came across strongly in all of the interviews. There is a clear need and tendency towards cultural leadership in remote work and a need for leadership and cultural community building practices. |
| Learning and transformation Changing structures and models | Knowledge and development | Anttila et al., 2018 Pyörä, 2005 | Based on our expert interview round 1, learning and professional development is the corner stone of employment. In our interview round 2 this came up strongly from the self employed. Conclusion: learning at a workplace is connected to knowledge sharing in the company and that peer learning is one of the factors that contribute to good EX together with formal investments by the company. |
| Leadership and culture Characteristics and practices | Collaboration | Blok et al, 2012 Dery & Sebastian, 2018 Lönnblad & Vartiainen, 2012 | Collaboration and knowledge sharing are integral parts of knowledge work but it got difficult with mass remote work. Sharing knowledge through documents can be difficult if practices and tools do not support this in virtual meetings. Body language is not visible on small screens in a video call and spontaneous comments and questions by participants are rare. |
| Leadership and culture | Psychological safety and sense of belonging | Bersin, 2020 Edmondson & Daley, 2020 Sarkkinen, 2019 | Remote work restricts physical presence and ways and channels of social interaction must be designed on a company level. Results can only be achieved when employees feel safe to express their opinions, feel trusted and a valued part of a work community. |

Table 9: The remote EX canvas development: combining theory and practice

The author's wanted to find a simple way to communicate the identified key elements of remote EX as a boundary object to the case company and to create a simple tool to test and develop the remote EX thinking in co-creative workshops with knowledge workers. Canvases are the signature way of working in service design and given the service design framework for the study, canvas was the natural choice of a tool. The design was simply a seven-field canvas with field names and descriptions, which were meant to guide the way when working with the canvas. The guiding question for the canvas is "What kind of leadership, culture and practices enable good remote EX?". Version 1 of the canvas prototype is visualized below in figure 7.

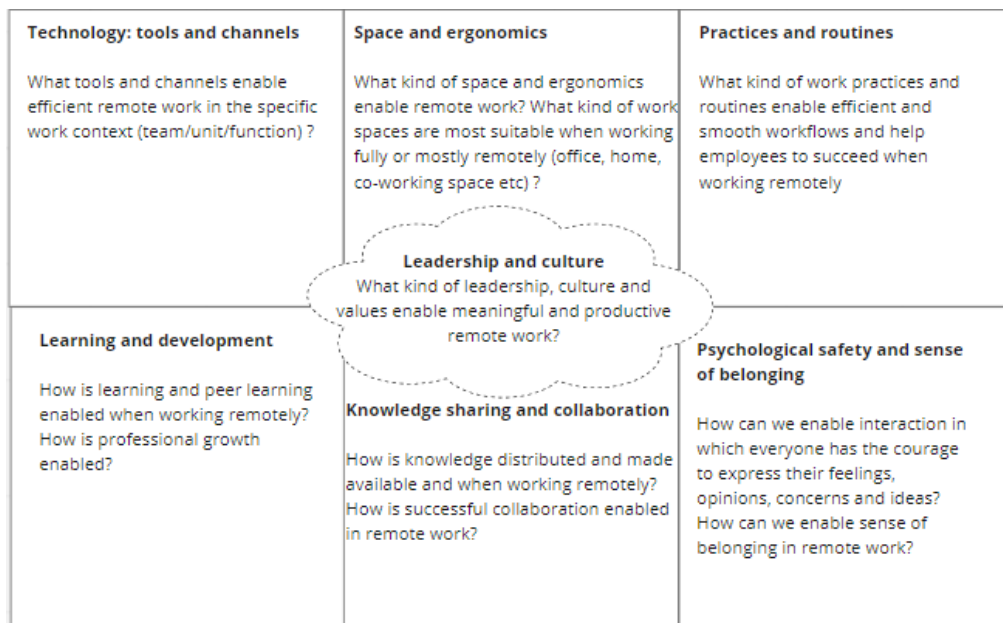


Figure 7: Canvas prototype v. 1

The upper fields are about “practices with things” and lower fields are about “people practices”. Leadership and culture field is in the middle to visualize that culture and leadership is the enabler for remote work practices that enhance EX and talent attraction. The idea is, however, that the other fields would be worked through first to understand what needs to happen in practice from the user perspective (i.e., the employee perspective) that enables successful remote work and consequently a good remote EX. When this reality is mapped and visualized only then would the values, culture and leadership be described. The reason for this order is that starting from the daily experiences and then building bottom up to leadership and culture, the reality of remote work would be better captured in the culture and leadership practices making the organization more remote work ready on all levels.

To develop the canvas prototype further and to see how it works in the real world it was tested in the second workshop. Overall, the canvas resonated well with the participants. There were no observations or comments on something important missing or that something would have been irrelevant. The comments and observations from the workshop (WS) were

mainly about the people practice fields of knowledge and development, collaboration and psychological safety and community as described in Table 10 below:

| Field name and description v.1 | WS Comments and observations on the canvas |
|---|--|
| Knowledge and development How can we make sure that knowledge is available and distributed when working remotely? How is peer learning enabled? How is professional growth enabled? | Observation: Repetition in different fields. In the WS the team started naturally and unanimously to discuss meetings and forms of collaboration in this section. Make better distinction between the fields "knowledge and development" and "collaboration". Observation: Learning was not discussed at all. More focus on that in v. 2. |
| Collaboration How is value co-creation and value adding work enabled when "value" is described as agile problem solving, strategic work or innovation? | Observation: The group mostly looked at the field name "collaboration" only and outcome is about ways of communicating. Field description noticed only at the end. Participant comment: "agile problem solving, strategic work and innovation are wide topics in themselves and now they are listed in one field". Field description or facilitation change for v. 2. Organization to decide what to work on and not all worked on? |
| Psychological safety and community How is social interaction and sense of belonging (communality) enabled in remote work? What enables transparent interaction/conversations and that everyone has the courage to express their opinions? | Comments: The field is about collaboration between people when field "Collaboration" is about moving things forward like finalizing a project. Separate these fields more to avoid repetition and to allow focus. |
| Practices and routines What kind of practices and routines are needed? | Observation: Own remote work routines at home very important based on thesis results as enable work-life balance. These did not come up at all in the WS. Add to practices and routines description. |

Table 10: Feedback and observations on the canvas v.1 in workshop 2

Based on the comments and observations, the canvas prototype was iterated to v. 2 as shown in Table 11. The purpose of the iteration was to separate the fields more from each other and capture all the remote EX factors clearly.

| Canvas field name v.1 | Canvas field name v.2 | Canvas field description v.1 | Canvas field description v.2 |
|---|--|--|---|
| Tools ja channels (technology) | Technology: Tools and channels | What tools and channels are needed? | What tools and channels enable efficient remote work in the specific work context (team/unit/function)? |
| Space and ergonomics | Space and ergonomics | What kind of space and ergonomics enable remote work? What kind of office space would best serve when work is fully or mostly done remotely? | What kind of space and ergonomics enable remote work? What kind of work spaces are most suitable when working fully or mostly remotely (office, home, co-working space etc)? |
| Practices and routines | Practices and routines | What kind of practices and routines are needed? | What kind of work practices and routines enable 1) efficient and smooth workflows and 2) help employees to succeed when working remotely? |
| Leadership and culture | Leadership and culture | What kind of leadership and culture enable meaningful and productive remote work? | What kind of leadership, culture and values enable meaningful and productive remote work? |
| Knowledge and development | Learning and development | How can we make sure that knowledge is available and distributed when working remotely? How is peer learning enabled? How is professional growth enabled? | How is learning and peer learning enabled when working remotely? How is professional growth enabled? |
| Collaboration | Knowledge sharing and collaboration | How is value co-creation and value adding work enabled when "value" is described as agile problem solving, strategic work or innovation? | How is knowledge distributed made available and when working remotely? How is successful collaboration enabled in remote work? |
| Psychological safety and community | Psychological safety and sense of belonging | How is social interaction and sense of belonging (communality) enabled in remote work? What enables transparent interaction/conversations and that everyone has the courage to express their opinions? | How to enable such environment where everyone has the courage to express their feelings, opinions, concerns and ideas? How is sense of belonging enabled when working remotely? |

Table 11: Remote EX canvas prototype iteration v. 2

The Remote EX canvas was part of playbook prototype tested with the case company. In this iteration it became clear that the link between EX and EB should be clearly visible for this canvas to be an interesting starting point for the case company. Hence the canvas was developed further to prototype v. 3. The inspiration coming from the Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder, Clark & Pigneur, 2010). The canvas prototype v.3 includes investments and rewards fields. The reason being that by visualizing developing costs prioritizations can be made together with the employees and that organization can evaluate the financial feasibility. Rewards field visualizes the gains by the organization. As in this thesis the focus is on the link between EX and EB the rewards field examples are typical metrics companies use when measuring the success of employee engagement and employer branding. Also, the canvas fields of technology and psychological safety were made bigger. The reason is that remote work is only possible through technological means hence making it the first and foremost enabler for remote work. Psychological safety has the same power and role on the human side of things. Finally, the numbers for working order were added. Should this canvas be a real tool, the rewards field should be paired with the investment field for the workshop sessions. It is the employees who work with this canvas when the rewards field is what HR and management would be looking at outside the canvas session. But as the purpose is now to visualize the connection between EX and EB the fields serve the right purpose.

The remote EX canvas prototype v. 3 is visualized in Figure 8 and in Appendix 16. It is notable that this still is a boundary object and serves as content summary for the case company media and channels. The possible development of the canvas prototype to a tool for remote EX development will take place outside the thesis.

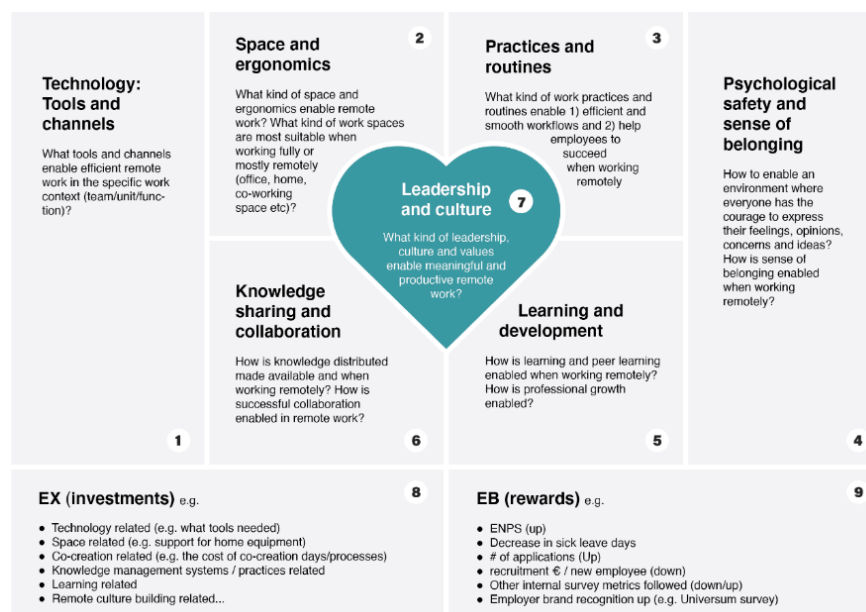


Figure 8: The remote EX canvas v. 3

5.4.2 Co-creative workshops

Workshops are the most common way of working in service design due to their collaborative and visual nature. The aim of the workshops was to validate our conclusions from the interviews and further explore the remote EX by 1) addressing key pain points that arose from the analysis of the interviews: remote meetings and social inclusion and presence using a journey and touchpoint map and 2) the ideation of practices that would positively affect the remote EX using a canvas that was created from the results of the interviews. Due to the pandemic the two workshops in the thesis process were arranged virtually. Workshop 1 (WS 1) took place on Sunday the 4th of October and workshop 2 (WS 2) on Tuesday the 6th of October. The workshops were 3 hours long with a prior 15-minute technical check to minimize the risk of problems during the workshops.

The result of any co-creative workshop depends on the participants' knowledge of the topics to be co-created (Stickdorn et al. 2018). For this reason, the recruited knowledge workers were currently employed, and had been employed during the spring 2020 for all participants to have experience on remote work. The participants were recruited through Facebook events that were shared on the author's Facebook feed but also in two service design groups. In WS 1 there were seven participants and in WS 2 there were nine participants. Most of the participants came from the authors' own networks but four participants were from Facebook service design groups.

The participants were sent a technical instruction and pre-assignment prior to the workshops. The technical instruction included a request to try out the tools used in the workshops prior to the workshops the instruction included links to Miro test board (WS 1 & 2) and Google Drive folder (WS 1).

The pre-assignment was to think through and take notes on what factors contribute to:

1. a good EX and successful work in remote or hybrid setting (e.g., technologies, workplace practices and attitudes, processes, ways of working, stakeholder readiness for remote work etc.)?
2. the experience of being a respected and an integral team member vs feeling lonely?

These notes were used as material in the exercises and allowed for a rapid start in the workshops as all had ideas of what remote EX is made of.

Both workshops were held using Microsoft Teams for video and audio and Miro virtual whiteboard for collaborative exercises. Additionally, in WS 1 a shared excel document was used for tools that required more written and synchronous collaboration. Both workshops began with introductions, rules of engagement and warm-ups to ensure add to the experience

of psychological safety of the participants. The atmosphere in the workshops was friendly and collaborative. Some technical problems did occur but nothing that would have affected the results. As these workshops were the first virtual workshops for the authors who also facilitated the workshops, it took a lot of preparation to plan and facilitate the workshops. This included learning the use of Miro whiteboard, Sli.do feedback application and Microsoft Teams for parallel groups in one workshop. Due to this inexperience WS 1 plan was too complicated (switching between tools and channels) and ambitious. Therefore, the main exercises were hurried through and insights were limited. Based on this experience the plan for WS 2 was revisited and the whole workshop structure changed to allow time for the most important i.e. the discussions and collaboration. WS 2 proved to be successful and insightful.

WS 1

The objective for the workshop was to identify factors that enhance remote EX together with ideating for best practices in remote meetings and practices that positively influence the feeling of social belonging and psychological safety. The workshop outline is presented in Table 12.

| WS 1 Sun 4 Oct 2020 (at 10-13) | Participants | Purpose | Tools and methods |
|---|--------------|---|--|
| Welcome and introduction of the topic and day | All | Understanding of the context and rules of engagement. | Slide deck |
| Introductions and warm-ups | All | Establish rules of engagement and create safe space by getting to know each other and working together. | Miro whiteboard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team presentations photo and check-in • Four quadrant picture collage e.g. emoji that describes remote work experiences |
| The remote EX ecosystem map | All | Pre-assignment notes as the basis of remote EX ecosystem canvas to visualize the factors and their importance in remote EX. | Miro whiteboard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainwriting and braindump on a board • Bulls-eye canvas with essential / important / nice to have spheres |

| | | | |
|--|---------|--|--|
| The remote meeting journey map | Group 1 | To collect insights on remote meetings. | Google Drive; Google sheets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote meeting journey map • Remote social presence and inclusion touchpoint map |
| Social presence touchpoints exercise | Group 2 | To collect insights on the social environment. | Google Drive; Google sheets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote social presence and inclusion touchpoints |
| Presentations of groupwork, summary and feedback | All | To release the cognitive load from the participants by summarizing the work and allowing for feedback. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google sheets presented • Sli-do application for feedback |

Table 12: WS 1 outline

The remote EX ecosystem map

An ecosystem map is an effective tool to visualize an entire system of involved actors including humans, machines, services, devices, platforms etc. (Stickdorn et al. 2018). The remote EX ecosystem was mapped using a bulls-eye format to place factors that affect remote EX in three concentric spheres that were:

- Essential - things that form the basis for remote EX
- Important - things that are hard to be without
- Bonus - nice to have

This was the first exercise after warm-ups. The objective was to summarize the pre-assignments into the ecosystem map to form joint understanding of the topic remote EX before the group exercises, which required a deeper joint understanding of EX. The participants wrote ca. 5 sticky notes each based on their pre-assignment notes after which they independently placed the sticky notes on the ecosystem map on any sphere, they thought was most suitable. After this the result was examined as a group and the key points were shortly discussed. Next, group color coded the sticky notes with the following codes: technology (yellow), social environment (blue), practices (pink) and space (green). The codes were first shortly described by the facilitators. In the end we summarized the visual representation which e.g. clearly showed that most essentials were technology related topics but also that ergonomics can be coded as essential or bonus depending on individual experience and expectation. The ecosystem map is shown below in Figure 9.

For group 2 the aim was to see what kind of remote work practices would increase the feeling or social belonging at a workplace on the individual, team and organizational levels. The map was drafted on these three dimensions on the X-axis.

Then, both groups were asked to summarize their discussions to top 3 practices per touchpoint and these practices were then presented to the others. Last, the workshop was summarized, and feedback collected from the participants using the Sli-do application.

As stated, before the WS 1 results were partly suboptimal. The remote EX exercise yielded a good understanding of the remote EX ecosystem and insights that can be used in content creation and which validated the remote EX canvas v.1. The group works were hurried through and results were consequently partial. Due to this a preliminary idea of creating “how to” content about remote meetings was put aside but then again, some interesting insights can be reported in the results.

WS 2

The focus of WS 2 was the testing of the remote EX canvas and with the process to identify best practices that enable a good remote EX. The development of the remote EX canvas is described in more detail in the chapter 5.5.1. The workshop outline is presented in Table 13.

| WS 2 Tue 6 Oct 2020 (at 16.30-19.30) | Participants | Purpose | Tools and methods |
|---|---------------------|---|---|
| Welcome and introduction of the topic and day | All | Understanding of the context and rules of engagement. | Slide deck |
| Introductions and warm-ups | All | Establish rules of engagement and create safe space by getting to know each other and working together. | Miro whiteboard • Two field picture collage e.g. emoji that describes remote work experiences |
| EX factors visualized pre-phase to remote EX canvas | All | Pre-assignment notes as the basis for remote EX canvas. | Miro whiteboard • Brainwriting and braindump on a board • All stickies moved to remote EX canvas fields |

| | | | |
|--|---------|--|---|
| The remote EX canvas | Group 1 | "Practices with things". Summarize with 3 best practices / field (9 practices in total). | Miro whiteboard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work through all fields on canvas with iteration and discussion • All groups with their own Teams call to allow for discussion • Group 3 was recruited from Group 1 and 2 members during the WS so that knowledge from all the fields in this group • 3 best practices as a summary / field in a different board |
| The remote EX canvas | Group 2 | "People practices". Summarize with 3 best practices / field (9 practices in total). | |
| The remote EX canvas | Group 3 | "Leadership and culture practices" based on the understanding from practices with things and people. Summarize with 3 best practice. | |
| Presentations of groupwork, summary and feedback | All | To release the cognitive load from the participants by summarizing the work and allowing for feedback. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Best practices/field presented (total 21 practices) • Sli-do application for feedback |

Table 13: WS 2 outline

Remote EX canvas and best practices to enhance remote EX

The remote EX canvas followed directly after the introductions and warm-ups and in this workshop all the time was devoted to this exercise due to the rich canvas structure. First the pre-assignment notes were summarized on a separate board by brainwriting and brain dump to form a joint understanding of remote EX before the group exercises, which required a deeper joint understanding of EX. After the canvas was introduced by facilitation, the participants moved the sticky notes to the canvas fields. Then two groups were formed, and these groups joined their own Microsoft Teams calls to allow for discussion while working on the canvas. Group 1 worked with the upper part of the canvas i.e., the “practices with things” and group 2 worked with the lower part of the canvas i.e., the “people practices”. Leadership and culture was a joined responsibility with the idea that when important factors in e.g., collaboration are identified, the needed cultural leadership element would be added to leadership and culture field. Halfway through the workshop three volunteers formed a third group and work only with Leadership and culture field based on their knowledge of the talks in group 1 and 2 so far. They also joined their own Microsoft Teams call to allow for discussion. Towards the end of the workshop groups were asked to summarize the most important findings from each field to top 3 best practices, which were presented to the other

groups as the summary for the canvas work. In total the outcome was 21 best practices, which provide for good content creation for the case company.

The group talks were recorded, and group work was facilitated throughout for the researchers to have a good understanding on the talks, problems, ideas and the like that to allow for further canvas iteration after the workshop. All in all, the canvas resonated well with the participants but a need for iteration was apparent. This is described in more detail in subsection 6.4.1.

5.4.3 The content prototype for case company

Prototypes are a visual and tangible way to communicate and present a concept to the stakeholders and see how feasible the idea is and to create joint understanding for people from different backgrounds. The purpose is to understand the best ideas by presenting the idea shortly, get the comments on the strengths and areas for further development (Warfel 2009). Prototyping services is a holistic undertaking as it encompasses both the wider context of how the service is being used and the traditional key asset testing (Stickdorn et al. 2018). The aim with the prototyping session was to understand how to integrate thesis generated insights and content into case company service offering to create value for the case company and its customers alike. The Microsoft Teams session was 60 minutes long and Miro whiteboard was used as the presentation platform. The participants from the case company were Principal Consultant strategy & employer brand, Key Account Manager and partner and Content Manager - all of whom work directly with customers and employer branding making them the right audience, which is an important part of the setting to get knowledgeable input (Stickdorn et al. 2018).

Stickdorn et al. (2018) have established the framework for prototyping in service design. Prototyping is a small study in itself and a starting point for learning. Thus, it is important to be clear on the objectives, form research questions and choose the prototype fidelity according to the audience and purpose and collect the comments for analysis to be able to iterate the best ideas. The decision was to package the research results and new knowledge of remote work and EX as playbook pages to serve as a boundary object for presentation together with a mind map presenting the whole context of the purpose (why), idea (what), target group (who) and the idea and content of the playbook (how).

The presentation of the mind map started the session followed by comments and discussion on the who (target group definition) and the how (the content description) parts. After this playbook prototype pages were presented following a similar round of comments and discussion. Below both visualizations are shown. Figure 10 presents the prototyping materials used.

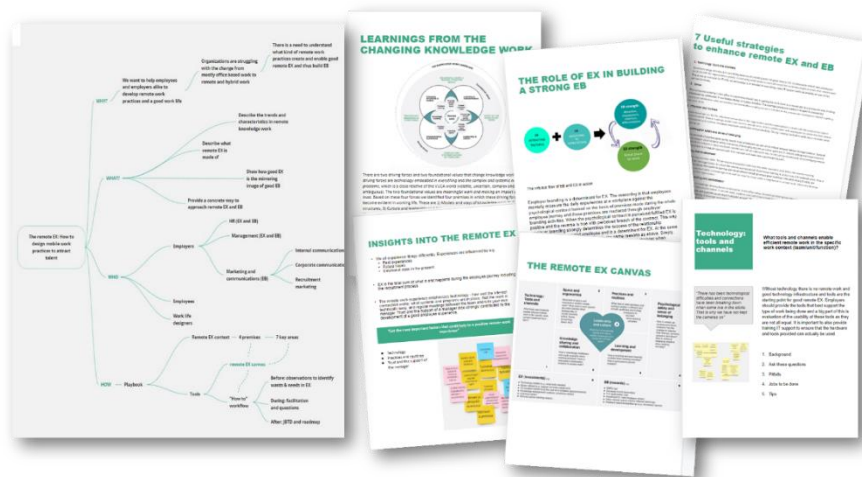


Figure 10: The prototype visualizations: mind map and playbook content pages

Stickdorn et al. (2018) present four perspectives for prototyping that should be tested for during a design project. These are value, look & feel, feasibility and integration. In this case the decision was to exclude the fourth perspective of look & feel as the playbook prototype was merely a boundary object for content presentation and comments on its visual merits were not needed. The research questions were formed as presented in Table 13.

| Prototyping perspective | Research question | Outcome / Decisions |
|--|---|---|
| Value: How do we create value? | Is the content valid to help employees and employers alike to develop remote work practices and a good work life? | Case company: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility through PR generated media interest driving traffic to website and different channels • Integration to service offering ideated |
| Feasibility: How do we make it work? | How do the identified remote EX factors and the link between EX and EB create value for the case company? | Employers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content ideas are valid and relevant • Developed further: 10 test questions on remote work readiness • Develop further: the link between EX and EB (incl. the remote EX canvas) |
| Integration: How does it all work together? | What is the best strategy and format to successfully communicate the content for the two customer segments? | Job seekers (employees): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content ideas are valid and relevant • Content on website sections ura & työnhaku and työelämäuutiset |

Table 14: Prototype framework and outcome with case company

As a result of the prototyping session, the following content suggestions were created both for employers and for employees:

For employees/ job seekers

Test: Are you future ready? (Questions based on the study and Taloustutkimus results)

Articles e.g.:

- These are the skills of a top candidate
- How to navigate the change in knowledge work
- Routines are the key to well-being at work

For employers

Test: Is your company remote work ready? (Questions based on the study and Taloustutkimus results)

Articles e.g.

- The 4 premises of knowledge work
 - Changing structures and models
 - Characteristics and practices
 - Learning and development
 - Leadership and culture
- The building blocks of remote EX to attract talent
 - The remote EX canvas fields as content
- Want to know about remote EX and how to make your EB stronger?

6 The driving forces and premises in knowledge work

This chapter describes the knowledge work landscape as found out from the interviews and from the interviews with the future work experts. Four trends in knowledge work were identified, containing two driving forces and two foundational values. In addition, the

available data described four knowledge work premises, the starting point in getting a more concrete view on current knowledge work. These trends and premises are summarized in Table 15 below. It is worth noting, that all the driving forces and premises are strongly interlinked and thus overlapping at times. However, as results show, this is exactly the nature of knowledge work. Its elements are interlinked and constantly evolving. The next subsections briefly describe the main themes that arose in each trend and premise. This paints a picture of the larger context of knowledge work to act as a background for results in chapters 7, 8 and 9. In citing quotations from the interviews, the experts of future work, HR and staff-leasing will henceforth be referred to as “employers” and knowledge workers in typical or atypical employments as “employees”.

| Driving forces and values: What drives the transformation of knowledge work | |
|---|---|
| Force: Technology embedded in everything | Technology is in the core of knowledge work and its rapid development strongly shapes knowledge work. Themes include remote work, remote practices, tools, remote ways of socialising, remote leading and building culture. |
| Force: Complex and systemic nature of problems | Volatility and complexity fundamentally change what we work with but also how we work and the mental models needed to accomplish results. Everything is interlinked and cosystems are complex with links to cyber threats, world politics, business models etc. |
| Value: Trust | Trust is the enabler of knowledge work when moving from the offices to remote work. Trust encompasses themes like psychological safety which is paramount in remote work in the absence of physical interaction. |
| Value: Meaningfulness | Meaningfulness is much about value matching between the employee and employer, making a positive social impact but also includes values like fairness, sustainability and holistic well-being. |

Table 15: The driving forces in knowledge work

| Premises: Through which the transformation in knowledge work shows | |
|--|---|
| Changing structures and models | Worklife still follows the "factory work model" with predefined coffee breaks, strict working hours, office based culture and management models based on those. This premise describes how remote work shakes these old structures as they do not support meaningful and productive work or work-life balance in knowledge and remote work. |
| Characteristics and practices | Knowledge work requires deep thought processes and therefore days can vary in length and productivity. Knowledge work is completed by individuals collaborating and bringing together expertise. This premise describes new macro and micro level models, practices and tools. |
| Culture and leadership | In remote work, productive and healthy behaviors and attitudes require a strong cultural foundation. This premise describes "remote proof" leadership and cultural practices where remote work is appreciated and taken into account. |
| Learning and transformation | As knowledge work continuously transform, acquisition and use of knowledge, skills or experience relates to successful participation in knowledge work. This premise describes approaches to learning as an organizational culture and personal development. Continuous development is getting synonymous to career development. |

Table 16: The premises of knowledge work

Force: Technology embedded in everything

"The more that knowledge work increases, the more technology increases, bringing with it cyber threats at a fast pace" Employer

The first driving force is technology embedded in everything. Technology speeds up processes, which has a direct effect on how we work and changes the organizational and power structures, how processes and communication flow and how culture is built and lived. With the increasing use of technology not only in knowledge work, but also in societies, cyber threats increase, which has direct impacts on the business environment. AI and data will disrupt knowledge work and first signals are seen already. These are e.g., AI aided recruiting. One of the interviewees raised the question of ethics in AI, where the developers intentionally and unintentionally embed their value sets as the basis on how AI works and makes choices. In the big picture this will influence world politics and power balance between the continents but also will have a strong influence on knowledge work regarding the problems organizations need to solve going forward.

Technology and cloud-based services providing remote work tools are the foundation for remote work. The rapid development and vast prevalence of technology affects the skill sets needed by knowledge workers. As technology evolves fast, new skills are needed all the time

and new professions like stack developers and growth hackers are born at the same time as old professions cease to exist. The lack of skilled workers especially in the technology industry has been true for 5-10 years already. In Finland, the realization in the industry is, that unless companies train and educate skilled workers themselves, they will have an even greater lack of skilled workers in the future. Due to technological evolution lifelong learning both in the job and as an individual is a crucial success factor. Degrees and skill sets get old so more important is learning agility and capability, collaborative knowledge forming and sharing on the job and overall an interest in learning and development. The ideal knowledge worker has a broad knowledge base but also deep knowledge on some specific area together with relevant meta-skills like being able to communicate both orally and in writing about complex issues. Generally speaking, this skillset was referred to as “multi-talent”. Skills are discussed further in chapter 7.

Force: Complex and systemic nature of problems

“Complexity increases and problems cannot be solved. That is, how do we act when things are so big that they cannot be resolved but should be designed forward all the time. That, too, is sure to change work when the contents of the work moves in that direction” Employer

Volatility and complexity fundamentally change what we work with but also how we work and most of all - the mental models needed to accomplish results. Everything is interlinked and ecosystems are complex with links to e.g. cyber threats, world politics and business models. The element of increasing speed came across the interviews as something that adds on the difficulty in knowledge work. The dilemma of knowledge work is that thinking, essentially what knowledge work is about, takes time but in reality, there is less time at many workplaces also given the technological advancements, which make it hard to predict what will be in 3 months or 2 years' time. Indeed, this is a description of a volatile and complex business environment, which require a radically different mindset and skillset to what used to exist. The notion of expanding norms and models were well present in the interviews meaning that organizations should not count on a model or strategy that worked just a year ago as it might well prove the wrong strategy now. Also, the tendency to set “one size fits all” models in the organizations most likely is not a winning setup as the realities between the different units can be significant.

Value: Trust

“...for example, we have a very low hierarchy and employees have a lot of freedom, but also a lot of responsibility and it requires trust and honesty and to be trusted to ask for help and nurture that atmosphere of trust” Employer

Trust is the enabler of knowledge work, both on an organizational and individual level. Trust as the basis of culture enables respect, inspiration and influencing and should be apparent both internally within the organization and externally towards customers and stakeholders. Trust and taking responsibility are inseparable. In organizations built on trust, employees are expected to be capable of making decisions regarding their own work and projects. Everyone can and are expected to take responsibility over their work and contribute to the success of the organization. Trust also means that people can ask for help and offer help and have the freedom to choose what works best for them in a given situation. Trust emerges in organizational behavior and attitudes when allowing remote work as described by an employer *"we do not care where you work from or how you work as long as you carry the responsibilities and get the jobs done"*. The required skills in this environment are self-knowledge and interest in own development.

Trust is essential in remote work and it feeds the motivation to work. Until the forced "mass remote work" during the pandemic, trust has been one of the barriers for remote work. Although remote work practices have been in place, there is still a trust issue that was described as the feeling of employer valuing work done from the office more - as if working would manifest itself in physical presence at the office. This shows that leadership has an important role in building trust as a culture. Remote work forces to look into job descriptions and metrics on how to evaluate work to enable trust. Trust encompasses themes like psychological safety, which is paramount in remote work in the absence of physical interaction.

Value: Meaningfulness

"One trend may be that the growth of consumption and thus the growth of income may no longer be the only driving factor and instead, ecological values will start to guide more choices. In the mindsets of many young people, we can see that they value leisure time more than salary or the amount of holiday more than salary. So, the values start to guide people more" Employer

"A business that puts an individual or other companies in a bad situation in some way, then I wouldn't join (no matter the salary) because my own values don't agree." Employee

As can be seen from the two quotes above from an employer and employee, meaningfulness is about a value match between the two and making a positive social impact. It encompasses values like fairness, sustainability and holistic wellbeing that includes work life balance.

The knowledge worker's mind is always on and work cannot be left at the workplace when shutting down the computer after a workday. This means that in order to have a meaningful life, one should appreciate all parts of life including work. Thus, meaningful work and a

match between one's own and company values is becoming increasingly important. The holistic human experience and life experience will matter more in the future. Hence, the choice of industries and specific companies has more focus for the employees. If burning fossil fuels or quick money lending is not what an employee wants to advance, positions in these companies are not considered even if salary would be high.

According to the employers, the search for a meaningful work life is a rising trend and especially younger generations bring this up actively in work interviews. However, what meaningful work entails is abstract and subjective and young people can find it hard to define, but generally it is about having positive social impact on a larger scale. Having a positive impact is true for older generations also, but meaningfulness is less abstract, and it entails the contents of workdays including not just what is worked with but also how and with whom the work is done. To work with skillful colleagues in a way that best supports the work being done is a motivator and influences how meaningful the work feels.

Changing structures and models

"Knowledge work cannot be left at the workplace. This means that the 8 + 8 + 8 model does not work, and you have to think differently about knowledge work" Employer

Work life still follows the "factory work model" with predefined coffee breaks, strict working hours, office-based culture and management models based on those. This premise describes how remote work shakes these old structures as they do not support meaningful and productive work or work life balance in knowledge and remote work.

The theme of structural change is wide and ranges from the power balance in world politics and the future of compensation to more closely knowledge work related topics of status and power in the organizations and models of knowledge work. The development of technology is one of the driving forces behind the structural change and during 2020, COVID-19 has influenced the way of working more than anyone could have imagined just a year before. If we look at the proliferation of remote work, which is the direct consequence of the pandemic, technology is clearly the enabler of it. Additionally, the way we work, now many remotely, has an effect on the processes, how we communicate, how teams are managed, how knowledge workers manage themselves and what kind of problems companies face when the world of work is not made for knowledge or remote work. Knowledge work also requires a new mental model and the ability to take responsibility as job demands increase and teams are already becoming more distributed. The winning organizations understand that there is no one size fits all model in anything as the employees represent four different generations and have different wants and needs.

Characteristics and practices

"Knowledge work is in fact always collaboration" Employee

The experts interviewed noted that knowledge work is largely about individuals collaborating and bringing expertise together. Knowledge work was described as requiring deep thought processes and therefore days can vary in length and productivity. Due to these thought processes, knowledge work can affect leisure as thinking cannot always be shut down on command when leaving the office or shutting down the laptop at home. At the same time the linear straight forward thinking is changing to rolling and on-going processes due to increased complexity and speed. When both of these things happen, self-management skills are vital as no one else can tell you to stop thinking and working. The pace of knowledge work is increasing due to demands from clients but also due to technological advances that accelerate many processes. The importance of wellbeing, resilience and recovery is growing due to this.

Remote work will increase in the future. Experts presented benefits and challenges with this. Remote work should be a natural part of knowledge work as results are key, not physical presence. Creativity is and should be an essential part of knowledge work. Increasing knowledge work (and remote knowledge work) will demand changes in employment legislation. The benefits include efficiency as less time is spent on traffic and equality as anyone with the right skills can be employed regardless of where they live. Challenges mentioned were the sense of belonging in a community and trust. As collaboration is an integral part of knowledge work appropriate digital tools are needed to establish the connection. Knowledge work will require a deep know-how and big picture understanding from the employees together with a variety of skills including many meta-skills.

Knowledge work is also characterized by different types of opportunities for employment and the types of contracts that will be present in the future will be more diverse. Networked model with experts from different fields working in a freelance model or staff leasing provides options for knowledge work, which can benefit both the employees and employers.

Culture and leadership

"...they are independent teams of independent people who decide for themselves how they do things. The work is lead, but really differently from what we perceive as leadership because the leadership happens through culture" Employee

Leading through culture in knowledge work came up clearly in the interviews and within all the topics discussed either directly or indirectly. The theme of culture and leadership overlaps frequently with the theme of trust and is evident in many places, even if not

mentioned directly. In remote work, productive and healthy behaviors and attitudes require a strong cultural foundation. This premise describes "remote proof" leadership and cultural practices where remote work is appreciated and acknowledged as a valuable way of working. The style of leadership is changing when hierarchies are broken down and teams become more self-managing. The success of the rising self-managing teams is also strongly dependent on strong cultural leadership with no managers. The topic of Culture and leadership is discussed further in chapter 8.

Learning and transformation

"I came across one study that says skills become obsolete in three years. That is what we must work with. I no longer believe in education or training only, the focus should be more on how we build knowledge and learn all the time in an organization or network" Employer

As knowledge work continuously transforms, acquisition and use of knowledge, skills or experience relates to successful participation. This premise describes approaches to learning as an organizational culture and personal development. Continuous development is getting synonymous to career development.

Topics around learning, developing and training came up frequently in the interviews. This theme contains learning as an organizational culture and personal development together with a focus on transformation at the same time when the world around is transforming quickly. This also refers to the psychological contracts as described in chapter 4 and how as the result of the employment employees gain transferrable skills through training and development and in turn employers get knowledgeable employees. Multitalented employees were frequently mentioned as something companies need. One of the foundational ideas is that to work as a knowledge worker learning is a lifelong mission and it should happen organically at work but also through training at a workplace and own efforts. The notion is that it is not about what individual know but how new knowledge is built in networks.

The landscape of knowledge work and remote work, as depicted by the interviews is visualized in Figure 11.

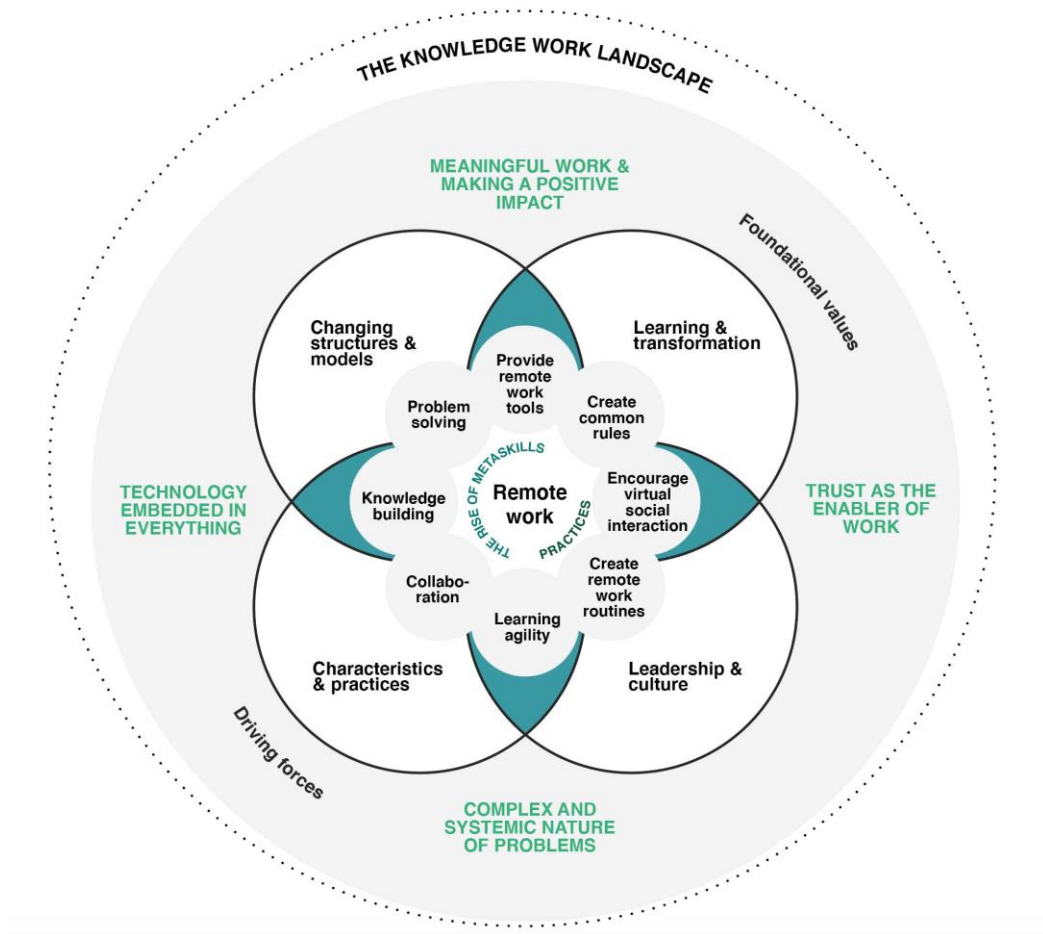


Figure 11: The knowledge work landscape

7 The rise of the meta-skills and soft skills in the age of remote work

The results presented in this section are mostly from the two interview rounds. Two skill types, namely meta-skills and soft skills were the ones most talked about in the interviews when hard skills were in a minor role and referring to the skillful use of different technologies. Knowledge work, and especially remote knowledge work, emphasizes skills, which enable other skills. These are referred to as meta-skills and include skills like learning agility and time management (Jousilahti et al. 2017, 11). People's abilities to communicate with each other and work well together are referred to as soft skills (Cambridge dictionary). Included in soft skills are skills in human interaction, which are becoming even more important at the same time when human interaction is often mediated with the help of technology. This finding echoes the landscape of knowledge work described in chapter 7 and the idea that the things we work with are complex and technology bound. At the same time there is a need for meaningful work life, which does not only mean that the things we work with should be meaningful but also how we work in collaboration with others. The following

quote by an employer summarizes this “*Work life skills, social skills, emotional skills, communication skills, empathy skills are all absolutely essential*”.

The identified skill types, along with their different themes and descriptive examples from both the employer and employee perspectives are shown in Table 17 below. A full list of the skills can be found in Appendix 15. In the following sections we look closer at the themes of identified skill sets.

| Skill type | Theme | Employer | Employee |
|------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | Learning agility | Peer learning |
| Meta-skill | Maintaining work life balance | Knowing your boundaries | Mentally separate work life and free time |
| Meta-skill | Skills related to self | Problem solving | Self management |
| Meta-skill | Entrepreneurship | Commercial skills and attitude | Networking and commercializing own skills |
| Meta-skill | Systems understanding | Systems thinking skills/knowledge | |
| Meta-skill | Communication skills | Ability to explain complex issues | Collaborative communication |
| Soft skill | Human interaction | Empathy skills | Remote meeting facilitation |
| Hard skill | Technology | Multiple technologies in use at the same time | Managing different co-working and collaboration tools |

Table 17: The identified knowledge work skills

Communication skills

Experts in all groups interviewed, emphasized the ability to explain complex issues, both verbally and in writing. Writing skills were mentioned especially with remote work increasing and much of communication being moved to emails and other written messaging systems.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship and the ability to see and unleash opportunities becomes increasingly important as knowledge work becomes more independent and demanding, both from the perspective of complexity and customers' wishes. An important part of entrepreneurship are commercial abilities and the knowledge and an ability to commercialize one's own knowledge. This came across especially in the two interviews with knowledge workers in atypical employments.

Learning and transformation

As learning and transformation are crucial elements of knowledge work, there is a clear emphasis on the ability to lead, drive change and positively influence others. Based on the interviews, leading, coaching and facilitation form one group of skills. It is also important to be able to find the needed knowledge by yourself or asking for help from colleagues or in networks. Other skills mentioned were learning agility, intellectual flexibility, application of knowledge, knowledge building through interaction with others and the ability to reflect and learn as a team and individual.

Maintaining work life balance

The ability to separate work time from "own" time, and thus maintain work life balance and wellbeing, increases in importance when moving to remote and hybrid knowledge work as knowledge worker's mind is always on. Many of the employees interviewed, mentioned the importance of establishing routines in managing the workdays. From the employee interviews the skill "knowing own boundaries" came up.

Skills related to self

Amongst the skills related to self were self-knowledge and the ability to motivate and lead oneself, as well as resilience and recovery and self-reflection in social interaction. Many mentioned that the complexity of the work environment also emphasizes problem-solving, critical thinking and an ability to handle multiple projects during one day as well as the fluent application of knowledge. Skills related to self also include self-management and the ability lead one's own life and make choices that promote an efficient and healthy work life. In addition, the employees mentioned skills such as the ability to take and influence decisions as an employee and team member, without an official manager or director title.

Systems understanding

A systems approach and understanding, broad knowledge of the big picture and organizational skills are required from knowledge workers. As societies and organizations increasingly form rich ecosystems, networking skills are key at all levels in the organizations.

Human interaction

"Human skills become a strategic core competency when it comes to interaction or building collaboration or trust". Employer

Skills in human interaction was the second biggest group of skills mentioned. These skills are clearly becoming a strategic competence, as collaboration and teamwork increases and social and emotional skills as well as empathy become central.

Technology

"Technically, you have to keep yourself up to dated more than before. There is no alternative" Employee

The only hard skill identified was technological skills. As technology drives the change in knowledge work, it means that the ability to understand, manage and skillfully use different technologies like systems and tools is part of basic skill set for everyone.

In addition to skills, desired behaviors, knowledge and values of knowledge workers were identified. Desired knowledge workers display behaviors of genuine interest and passion for the work that they are doing. They are easy to approach; they take initiative and demonstrate responsibility. They value diversity, have experience in problem-solving and an abundance mentality, working actively away from silos and networking efficiently. They have a wide knowledge base, which combines a strong substance knowledge with knowledge of the business environment and an ability to collaborate with other experts. Naturally, the same requirements go for the organizations as e.g. employees cannot work away from the silos as individuals but that requires an organization wide movement and capability together with a culture that appreciates diversity. Finally, it is worth mentioning that several interviewees mentioned that the juniors entering the job market are generally lacking basic work life skills and teaching these skills require time and effort.

8 The ingredients of remote employee experience

Based on the study it can be concluded that remote and hybrid work is here to stay. In this chapter we examine the ingredients of remote EX. What makes remote EX different from EX are the heightened aspects of technology, psychological safety and the need for social belonging. As the hybrid model is a mix between working from the office and other locations, the ingredients of remote EX can be equally applied. As a result of our literature review, interviews, digital journals and workshops, seven main factors that affect the remote EX were identified. These are: 1) technology 2) space and ergonomics, 3) practices and routines, 4)

psychological safety and a sense of belonging, 5) learning and development, 6) knowledge sharing and collaboration and 7) leadership and culture. These seven main factors are explained in more depth in the following sections and are visualized in the remote EX canvas in Appendix 16.

Technology: tools and channels

Without technology there is no remote work, and a good technology infrastructure and tools are the starting point for good remote EX. Employers should provide the tools that best support the type of work being done and a big part of this is the evaluation of the usability of these tools as they are not all equal. It is important to also provide IT training to support and ensure that the hardware and tools provided can actually be used. Also, the availability and speed of IT support increases in importance.

Good remote EX starts with technology. This became very evident from the interviews, digital journals and the remote EX ecosystem canvas exercise in WS 2, where employees listed remote EX factors in spheres according to the level of their importance: essential, important and bonus i.e., nice to have's (see also subsection 5.4.2., 61). Most of the topics in the essential field were technology related. This is understandable as even human connection is mediated through technology in remote work. The interesting finding is that very many of the difficulties experienced in remote work were due to poor connections e.g., the internet connection breaking down or connection not being strong enough to enable video connection in group video calls, resulting in nothing but audio and black boxes with initials on them on the screen. Many had either experienced problems personally or in a wider setting (team, organization, stakeholders), as all remote work tools like joint documents on cloud or video meeting platforms like Teams and Zooms require a reliable internet connection. The following quote by an employee summarizes the problem *"There has been technological difficulties and connections have been breaking down when some live in the sticks. That is why we have not kept the cameras on"*. In the remote EX ecosystem exercise, the topics in the essential field included "functioning connections", "well-functioning tools" and "suitable apps and tools". The interpretation is that employees have had many experiences of a reversed setting where technology is not well-functioning or suitable to allow for productive work.

One employee raised the topic of the increased investments needed to promote efficient remote work. Without functional workspace and modern tools like those at the office, productive and longer-term remote work is difficult. Since remote work relies heavily on a good internet connection, it was suggested that those employers who do not yet participate in home internet costs of a fast internet connection should do so. The same notion came strongly across in WS 2 when working with the remote EX canvas. The best practices

identified for the technology field were providing suitable and location independent work tools. All in all, good quality computers, fast enough internet connection and access to systems and databases is seen as crucial in productive remote knowledge work.

Too many tools in use prevent productive knowledge work, but on the other hand lack of them also prevents it. It takes time and effort to master the use of tools, and on the other hand, multiple tools usually means that things are not only done once in one system but twice or more when using many systems. Also, it is beneficial to keep the tools and channels in work and private life separate. One interviewee had thought this through in her team, and the conclusion was that in remote work an internal communication channel like Slack would be useful in order to not use private life channels like WhatsApp for work. When channels are kept separate, it is easier to end the workday and maintain work life balance when working remotely from home.

One thing that came across strongly in the interviews and workshops was that remote times require new ways of working and new tools that enable technology mediated productive and meaningful collaboration. Cloud services were mentioned as enablers to synchronous work when working remotely. One interviewee pointed out that the barrier for using remote work suitable tools can be the IT department making the decisions, and the cemented view on using certain office tools. Different cyber security standards and threats can play a role here too. This is a challenge for remote work as the best tools to support collaboration and co-creation are not the tools which have been used so far in the office context. One employee remarked that *“...there are many very good tools, which are not used because the company uses Microsoft and IT department who forces everyone to use the same (tools) and Sharepoint”*. Another employee noted that *“Miro has been an absolute deal breaker in this context as an online whiteboard. It is vital as is video conferencing software”*. Indeed, video meeting platform Teams together with Miro virtual whiteboard and Slack were mentioned as the top tools to enabling collaboration and productive work within an organization, but also in customer projects. Other tools mentioned were WhatsApp, email, phone calls, Padlet, Skype, Teams chat and Upwork internal communication platform.

A strong experience in tools is important in productive virtual knowledge work. Technology evolves all the time and new tools appear when at the same time the existing ones go through updates - this makes strong experience difficult. From the interviews two different angles could be identified. One employer pointed out that evolving technology strongly influences the daily work of the employees, as the platform they work with goes through three updates annually and each time the employees must learn the specifics of the updates. Another point of view came from a self-employed, who remarked that the plethora of tools is a difficulty as *“... the hard part is that there are so many tools and as an entrepreneur I can't commit to a certain tool because a client could demand the use of another tool”*.

Space and ergonomics

In the interviews, space and ergonomics were usually not mentioned spontaneously when asking what makes a good workday, or what the success factors are in remote EX. But when probed, it became clear that these matter. The topic came up on a few occasions in the digital journals, with similar comments as those heard in the interviews and described below.

Employees value the benefits of office spaces and furniture due to ergonomics, as many do not have proper office equipment at home. At the same time working remotely has its benefits like having an influence on how the workspace looks like. Overall to think of space as an enabler for productive work seems like good starting point for workspace design, whatever the location might be. As remote work will increase, companies need to think how to best support employees in their home offices and design office spaces to be multi-functional to support and enable the hybrid work model which is seen to be the near future of knowledge work. This will have a direct influence on remote EX.

The needs for office space will change due to increased remote work. The questions are what kind of spaces companies need, do they need physical space at all, where the office space should be located and how many employees are expected to be in the office at the same time. One employee speculated that *“physical office spaces will probably experience a big change as companies must assess what kind of premises, locations and costs they want to commit to in the future”*. One of the interviewed companies was in the middle of a move and due to the increased remote work in the foreseeable future, they have already taken action. They will cut the number of seats and move from own seating to free seating. These thoughts are on the surface in other companies too. A consulting agency where many consultants already work from customer’s offices an employer pointed out that *“if in three years’ time 30 % (of employees) will work four days remotely and one day at the office and another 30 % will work four days from the client’s office and one day from the office, then the concept of office will change significantly”* and continued that when the practices and routines both on the individual and company level are now developed to support productive remote work there is no turning back to what was before the pandemic. These practices and routines in themselves establish remote work as a natural way of working and then space must support that.

The workspace should help in getting the work done in a meaningful and productive way and inviting employees to collaborate in workspace design also makes sense from the EX point of view. As one employer described the effect of workspace design in the office *“Work environment means the office, how it helps to get work done, serves different needs... When the workspace was designed together with the employees, (employee survey) scores increased radically”*. It was clear from WS 2 that office space should support different kinds

of work, from collaboration to silent spaces with no interaction, to enabling informal meets and greets with colleagues. The preferred option is the ability to choose the environment that best supports one's daily tasks (free seating) and the freedom to either go to the office or work from home. Many also appreciate workplace food services and this is a motivation to go to the office.

Based on WS 2 discussions, certain aspects of the current office setting provide benefits for productive knowledge work, as opposed to working from home. Office furniture such as desks, chairs and monitors were appreciated, and one comment was that working is a lot easier with an electric table and double screens. In addition, smaller equipment was noted to be important to some like a special mouse. Then again, one workshop participant remarked that good ergonomics are a bonus, but not a must *"I have come so far with bad ergonomics. That is why good ergonomics is a bonus"*. However, many companies have acted on the need for home office equipment already during the spring and summer. One employee reported that *"We got to know this week that everyone will receive a wireless mouse and keyboard for home office use. If someone needs a screen, it can be borrowed from the office"*. During the pandemic, another company arranged for employees to get any office furniture they wanted from the office and the company arranged a van that delivered the furniture to the doorsteps of the employees. Based on the employee interviews and workshop findings the conclusion is that these companies are in the forefront of superior remote EX and attractive as employers.

Attractive space is also about adaptability to suit individual wants and needs. Here too, the results show that the attitude of "one size fits all" is not a success formula in EX. In WS 2 the discussion was that at home the workstation can be designed based on own taste and there was a similar wish for in the offices. In the interviews and WS 2, coziness and aesthetics were mentioned as attractive space creates an atmosphere for productive work and mood. A quote from an employee tells the same story *"We have such beautiful office space in the HQ. I am used to space being beautiful, full of light and design furniture and then suddenly I am here at home... workspace makes a big difference both for ergonomics and coziness"*. Another employee expressed how space has a very big influence on work mode and productivity *"when you need to start doing thought intense work in your bedroom, it feels really hard"*.

Lastly, a look at how the self-employed experience space based on two interviews. Home office was the primary workspace, but both had also worked from co-working spaces to get away from home and to get social. The other self-employed remarked that *"There of course needs to be a space that supports working. I work often from cafes or a co-working space where I can meet with like-minded people"*

It is interesting, that even if the concept of workspace changed overnight during the pandemic and people started to work from their kitchens and living room couches, space was

not in the first line of thoughts even if its importance is acknowledged in remote EX when probed.

Practices and routines

Practices and routines are a key element to successful remote work, and this came across strongly in the interviews and workshops. These are the spine of the workdays and provide clarity and predictability. But these are no simple matter, as culture and technology play a role too. Cultural practices are much about trust and acknowledgment when e.g., meeting practices are about predictability and managing workload. Routines include daily check-ins with team members and individual workday routines to maintain work life balance and wellbeing. From the remote EX point of view it is beneficial to design the practices and routines together with the employees so that they support mental wellbeing and productive work.

When moving to remote and hybrid work, teams should co-create rules and guidelines as to how to operate and work most efficiently, whilst being respectful of each other. This same approach could be extended to physical office spaces to ensure that they are used equally. These rules and guidelines could also be called practices. As noted in WS 2 “*clearly agreed practices*” are needed. Co-creation is the best way to gain commitment and acceptance for the practices, as opposed to a top-down approach from managers that can seem more like orders despite the good intentions. Three employees reported how the lack of team level practices prolonged workdays. During the remote work of the pandemic everyone had their own rhythm in the team (e.g., due to children at home) and emails and messages were sent from morning to late evening diminishing the ability to keep normal work hours, as this quote by an employee summarizes “*in this situation, keeping office hours was simply impossible*”. Participants in the second workshop expressed that employees should be able to have the freedom to choose where they work from, but also when they work and when they complete their daily tasks i.e., create the kind of practices and routines that support their own work and work life balance. This would lead to greater satisfaction and the ability to better maintain work life balance and accommodate different situations in life. Practices allowing wellbeing were also mentioned by several interviewees, both by employers and employees. The pace of knowledge work is increasing due to demands from clients but also due to technological advances that accelerate many processes. This was apparent in the digital journals as well. The importance of wellbeing and recovery is growing due to this. One employer commented that “*the occupational wellbeing days that happened once a year are already somewhere in the past for me, we need to think about how we do it (wellbeing) every day*”. This highlights that knowledge work and especially remote knowledge work is a holistic undertaking by the employees and wellbeing should happen daily.

Based on the findings, routines on both individual and team levels make or break productive work. Individual daily routines give structure and clarity to the day. Based on the interviews, routines included e.g., getting ready for the workday as if going to the office (make-up and clothing) or going for a walk to replace commuting. One employee stated that this routine of a short walk in the morning *“replaces something which I hadn’t even realized was an important part of my workday, which is the commute. It’s a mental transition”*. Without routines the workdays easily become very long with no food, exercise or breaks. This in turn creates unhappiness, exhaustion and decreases productivity. As one employee reported *“...many have complained that working days are getting longer and that people follow emails in the evening... when that laptop is easily available on that dining table and you can continue working without noticing the time”* Another employee stated that without routines, *“the workday becomes totally reckless”* and explained that without routines she either works the whole day without breaks or food or cannot get the day started. In WS 2 it was noted that “workday routines” including lunch breaks and breaks in general, for instance during a long meeting, are needed to enable productive and meaningful work.

Remote meeting practices proved to be a topic that excited many discussions and comments in the interviews, digital journals and workshops and seems to strongly contribute to remote EX. Well planned daily meetings give structure to the day and are a channel for collaboration, sharing information, asking questions and a place to get affirmation for own work plans. In one organization where daily check-in meetings were implemented, an interviewed team leader said that the team *“felt good that we had these daily meetings even though they took time. Everyone knew what was going on and was up to date”*. Yet, based on the interviews, digital journals and workshops, remote meetings are the source of pains for many. Some of the comments were that there are too many meetings, which hints that organizations and teams have not clearly set out meeting practices and routines that would provide clarity and considered daily, weekly and monthly rhythms. The outcome is *“teams or zoom meeting fatigue”*. In WS 1 this was clearly noted with a comment *“not too many remote meetings per day planning!”*.

Another pain point is the lack of proper facilitation, which results in feelings of inequality and loneliness and links to communication in remote meetings, which was experienced by most as difficult without appropriate remote meeting practices. Even if the daily meetings could be in use, remote work feels more solitary. From WS 2 it was noted that active communication should be encouraged, and the appropriate channels agreed upon. Communication should be both formal and informal and the channels chosen appropriately. A point to also consider is the perceived efficiency of remote meetings. Remote meetings frequently start by jumping straight to the topic but allow for little casual talk about non-work related or non-subject related topics, which usually happens with office-based meetings. This makes the meetings efficient but can negatively impact psychological safety and the sense of belonging.

This problem has already been identified in some companies and an example in WS 1 was that an organization had added 5 minutes of free talk as an agenda point to all meetings. This had been perceived as a good practice in the organization. This shows that good remote EX requires an active approach not only in routines, but also in practices, including leadership practices. When working remotely employees can easily feel alone and well-orchestrated team level routines build a sense of belonging and team spirit. It seems that a low hanging fruit in enhancing remote EX is to carefully consider the meeting practices from both these above-mentioned perspectives, especially as meetings can be the only “direct” connection to the organization when working remotely.

Remote meeting practices were discussed at length in WS 1. In comparison to physical meetings, it was identified that remote meetings have more stages to consider. Before the meeting an agenda should be sent out asking for comments to allow for joint understanding, even when the meeting starts. Both the organizer and participants should be prepared and be present with a positive vibe, ready for collaboration. As the meeting is starting, proper facilitation that considers both physically present and remote participants is needed, including the joint understanding of clear roles for all the participants. At the beginning, introductions enabling active participation is a needed practice. Also, clear information on practical issues (e.g. how and when to ask questions) and wishes for the meeting in order to make it as fruitful as possible for all. During the meeting it is crucial that the roles are clear and that all participants are acknowledged. Proper facilitation is essential for participants to engage and feel valued and equal. When important decisions are made in a meeting, group talks could be facilitated before the decision making to allow for exchanging thoughts about the positives and negatives before expressing individual opinions. This also helps with the feeling of being heard and active participation. A useful tool in video meetings is also the chat function, where everyone can tell what they think even if not everyone would have the chance to talk. At the end of the meeting, a clear plan on how to move forward is needed and the closing of the meeting for all at the same time. Some small routine or gesture could help with this, i.e. waving goodbye. It is important for participants to have clarity on next steps and feel equal and heard. In WS 2, the notion was that *“keeping mics and cameras on in meetings”* is a good practice that enables richer communication and builds trust. With remote EX in mind, it can be fruitful to compare the topline differences between the office based and remote meetings as is visualized in Table 17 below based on the WS 1 discussions.

| Timeline office based meeting | Before | | During | After | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| | Set expectations by invitation, agenda, preparation needs. | | Run the meeting. | Communicate memo and other agreed actionpoints. | |
| Timeline remote meeting | Before | Start | During | End | After |
| | Set expectations by invitation, agenda, preparation needs. | Clearly acknowledge all participants when starting the meeting. If a hybrid meeting, important to treat all participants equally and not unintentionally promote the ones in the same meeting room. | Skillful facilitation of the meeting. Allow for collaboration and interaction in some way. If a hybrid meeting, important to treat all participants equally. | Clearly acknowledge all participants when ending the meeting. Rituals like waving goodbye can enhance the feeling of belonging. | Communicate memo and other agreed actionpoints. |

Table 18: The differences between office based and remote meetings

The understanding from the interviews and workshops is that meeting practices vary between organizations. In some, the cameras are kept on in video calls as a default when in others this does not take place for technical or other reasons. Based on the findings, cloud-based collaboration tools were used in the companies that operated in consultancy (5 organizations), but other interviewees did not report the use of any, aside from video conferencing platforms. It seems that the knowledge and understanding of what benefits these cloud-based collaboration tools in remote work is very limited. An interviewee mentioned that the meeting practices at their company included keeping the cameras on and a set agenda where the team lead opens the meeting, but everyone has the chance to take up their work and what help they might need from team members. This team used Teams but not collaboration tools like Google docs or Miro. This seems a standard approach in organizations based on the study.

The full list of remote EX canvas related practices that were developed in WS 2 are found in the playbook prototype in the Appendix 17. The cultural and leadership practices are discussed later in this chapter under psychological safety and sense of belonging and leadership and culture.

Psychological safety and sense of belonging

As explained in the methods chapter, the reason why the field of psychological safety and sense of belonging was highlighted in the canvas by making it visually bigger is due to the importance of it on the human side of remote EX. Psychological safety is a perception of trust, based on which employees have the courage to express their opinions and ideas at a workplace without fear. In this way, it is a prerequisite to collaboration, productivity and

wellbeing and for the sense of belonging. As remote work restricts physical presence, new practices for social interaction must be designed to enable psychological safety and sense of belonging. Based on the interviews and workshops, it is important to enable rich collaboration, show full appreciation for remote work as a way of working in the organization, and transparency with feelings, like the feeling of loneliness, around remote work. On team level, roles, responsibilities and mandates must be clear to enable fluent remote work and trust within the team.

Psychological safety as an enabler of productivity was addressed in the interviews both directly and indirectly. An employer interviewed in the first round explained well that *“once upon a time work efficiency was perhaps more in focus but now, we the importance of importance of psychological safety and wellbeing have been understood. Especially when it comes to expert work, it (psychological safety) supports the most intelligent way of working”* Results can only be achieved when employees feel safe to express their opinions, feel trusted and a valued part of a work community.

In WS 1 the participants were asked to write down the wants and needs of a knowledge worker in remote work in the context of psychological safety and sense of belonging. The wants are: the support from a manager and team, sense of belonging and team spirit and regular communication and keeping in touch with the team. The needs are to be heard and common ways of working and instructions for remote work. What the participants in WS 1 highlighted was that everyone needs to be active in building psychological safety as well as enabling the sense of belonging by reaching out to their own line manager or team members, not only in work related topics but also just reaching out and asking how things are going.

Participants from WS 2 added that thanking and showing appreciation is an important part of psychological safety. This was summarized as an idea of *“my work is meaningful for the team and it is communicated”*. The ways of communication are *“I am listened to”, “My views are being reacted to”, “I am noticed”* and *“I am thought of”*. Acknowledgement as an active approach was also named as an enabler for psychological safety and the comments were *“noticing everybody in meetings”* and *“asking the silent ones also”*. It would be important to thank others as it makes “doing” visible. Everyone should pay attention to this, not just team leads.

A pain in remote work was mentioned to be the lack of sense of belonging and sense of community. In an organization with multisite teams, an employer mentioned *“this brings an additional burden to teamwork, confidence building, giving feedback and learning, project management, not impossible but requires extra thought and doing”*. Another employer stated that *“What people are missing now is the traditional communality and meeting in person and exchanging news in the canteen or next to a coffee machine and all that interaction.”* Yet

remote way of working will increase, and physical presence no longer builds communality, one employer reported that *“employees search for other channels to fulfill these needs”*. In remote work social interactions must be enabled in a way that suits the organizational culture and the needs of the employees. What works for one company may not for another. The need and frequency of virtual interaction can also vary between employees. A feeling of belonging to the social community at work is important regardless of the fact that much of knowledge work is done independently. The social aspect of work empowers and motivates to give one's best effort. As one employee put it *“the best is if you are in a company that has a good mood and believes in the product and everyone works together to do something cool”*.

In WS 1 the roles of self, team members and managers were discussed. Managers have an important role in forming a positive remote work culture and they should show that remote work has many opportunities with their own example. Participants also wished that there would be management level training on remote leadership as otherwise it is difficult to see a change happen in the organizations. In WS 2 the notes mentioned *“regular meetings with the team and own manager”* and that trust came across in the form of *“support from manager”*. As an individual, being active towards others feeds an active way of working in the team and all should carry the responsibility for this. The note describing this was *“regular contact with team members”*. Colleagues should be able to ventilate together to have joint reflection moments, which helps in gaining a broader perspective and allows for joint laughter, which was mentioned as something that is missed during remote work. This was apparent in the digital journals as well. Furthermore, the participants in WS 1 discussed their experiences in terms of social relationships and a sense of security with a touchpoint map. The touchpoints included: thoughts and attitudes, practices, and virtual touchpoints. The virtual touchpoints for managers can be regular phone calls to see how team members are doing as individuals and not just as employees. An idea of a mini development discussion was talked about e.g., monthly to see how people are doing and achieving their goals. Individual remote work plans could be created based on these discussions with clear remote work fit goals. Coffee breaks were described as social glue and when asking the group to think about how to replace social touchpoints it mostly came down to virtual coffee breaks, which include informal chit chat. A daily morning meet-up as a team, virtual after work and joint team video lunches were also mentioned. Here the non-meeting related form of collaboration came up with the idea of sending *“How are you?”* chat messages occasionally but not too often.

The clear finding is that good remote EX requires an active approach to remote work challenges on an organization, team and individual levels. Important attitudes are respect and making an effort for everyone to be heard.

Learning and transformation

Lifelong learning is the key to employability and success in knowledge work as the skillsets needed change in time. Those employers who prioritize learning and development for individual employees and teams, also in remote times, will enhance EX. The question in remote work is how learning can be orchestrated when e.g., peer learning is a much-used method in organizations, but usually dependent on physical presence.

The foundational thought from all the employers interviewed was that as a knowledge worker, learning is a lifelong mission, and it should happen organically at work but also through training at a workplace and through one's own efforts. Learning was strongly present when interviewing the self-employed, who need to sell their expertise and skills project by project. A bit surprisingly, this did not come up strongly when interviewing the employees.

The themes identified from the interviews were learning as a culture and personal development, where learning as culture looks at how organizations will transform through learning. These insights mostly came from the employer interviews. Personal development insights arose from the interviews with the employees and gives the perspective of an individual, although it is naturally at the core of organizational development as well.

The notion is that the role of formal education, like degrees, can depreciate with time and there is more emphasis on learning agility and knowledge building in everyday situations with colleagues and other stakeholders. As one employer said, *"I don't believe education only anymore but more how we build knowledge and constantly learn in organizations and networks"*. This quote emphasizes that the existing knowledge a person has is not the main point, but rather what is learned and formed through interaction with others when knowledge bases are combined.

An employee described continuous learning as having a central role in their business by stating that *"we select projects that are interesting, take the company forward and develop the individual consultants"*. An employee emphasized the role of learning *"we always get a project-specific briefing but learning and development happens through the actual work"*. Peer learning was emphasized in three of the interviews and one employer remarked that *"there is a lot of training, but we see that learning through work and learning from other people is key"*. Development is crucial to productive knowledge work and also a significant motivator for employees. It should be supported by managers and made possible in workplace design. One of the self-employed interviewed stated that choosing projects was largely based on what they offer in terms of learning and development because *"self-development and learning something new is one of the biggest motivators of work in general. When a job starts to feel like you are not moving forward, it gets boring very rapidly"* Another self-

employed pointed out that *"Taking into consideration my (young) age what I do is really hard to find anywhere given the responsibility, interesting tasks and the learning opportunities"*.

Another interesting perspective on continuous development that arose from the interviews, is that it is getting synonymous to career development. Career development in this context does not mean that everyone would climb up the corporate ladder, but rather become better in what they do and broaden their knowledge base to be able to manage complex problems and tasks. One employer reported that in their company when employees are allocated to projects *"we talk about the members of the project team or see who would fit where for their skills then we discuss with that person how the project would fit the learning objectives. That it is relevant to the employee in terms of gaining skills"*. A truly holistic view on development was at the heart of one company where an employer remarked that *"We (organization) want to be the "Ultimate learning platform"... Our development discussions are based on career dreams, i.e. what you would like to do in the future if there are no restrictions"*.

Knowledge sharing and collaboration

An employer described the essence of contemporary knowledge work to the point and said that *"very few things in today's work are things that happen in one's own head but between heads"*. What we heard in the interviews and workshops repeated this description and it can be said that by nature, knowledge work is collaborative and to be collaborative, knowledge must be shared between people, teams and organizations but also on a systems level. However, when remote work became the norm, collaboration went through transformation and at times it became difficult. This has a direct effect on how easy or hard it feels to get the work done. The influence on remote EX is evident. Previously, knowledge sharing has been possible with spontaneous and informal meetings at the office, and thus easy for both individuals and organizations. Now with the increased remote work, these possibilities for spontaneous interactions have been eliminated and informal knowledge sharing has become completely technology dependent and revealed that systems might not be up-to-date.

The following quote by an employee summarizes how many felt after some months of forced remote work when the practices and systems were not in place or in full use. There had been a casual interaction between him and a colleague by the coffee machine and they had spontaneously exchanged ideas on a topic they had individually been thinking of *"The value of spontaneous interaction is very high and if we were to be 100 % remote, we will lose a lot"*. This did not only refer to human interaction but to effortless exchange of knowledge.

To efficiently collaborate and share knowledge, systems and tools must support this. It seems that this is not the reality many face. One interviewee told that in his current workplace

there are many ideas and projects on how to manage and store knowledge in a better way, but also remarked that the issues were on the agenda in his previous place. Yet it seems that despite trying to limit the number of systems and tools, they seem to accumulate during the years. Another employee touched on the same issue by saying “... *this (finding the right tools) has a lot to do with our other tools and how these don't communicate between them so pretty quickly we end up in a mess of different systems*”. Organizations can develop quickly and the use of Microsoft Teams and its operating system on top of SharePoint had made knowledge sharing and collaboration easier at one organization. This serves as a good example of how systems and collective practices are counted on more in remote work as spontaneous face to face meetings or spontaneous comments in meetings are missing or are rare. An example of a knowledge sharing practice was described by an employee as follows: “*What I have heard from stakeholder organizations is that they follow a practice where everyone needs to contribute to the meeting whether one has something to say or not. I hear it is working pretty well*”. Another employee remarked that cloud-based tools enable synchronous collaboration, regardless of the location and the use of these tools is a deal breaker in collaboration and knowledge sharing in remote work.

Knowledge work is collaborative. To enable fruitful collaboration and organizational success this needs to be consciously designed for. One interviewee said that in their organization a lot of effort is placed on forming the kind of customer teams, where the experience of the team members serves the customer best, but also to develop different skillsets these team members have or should have. Based on one interview, in the field of consultancy, it is already common practice to work side by side with competitors in bigger customer projects, which requires not just sharing knowledge within the organization but also with external stakeholders.

To succeed in knowledge work, the ability to find knowledge and ask for help is essential. No one can know all the things that are needed in today's work life, but rather networking is a strategic skill as one employer put it. Collaboration is the enabler of synchrony and achieving the common goals in organizations “*In my mind self-direction and coordinating together are counterparts*”. One employee was positively surprised how easy in the end it was to collaborate virtually with a big team at customer project and stated “*I would have thought that building trust and to collaborate would have been harder. To my surprise it was not that hard*”. Naturally, enabling this kind of trust and collaboration virtually requires skills and tools, which are discussed in depth in the previous subsection of technology: tools and channels.

Leadership and culture

Remote work requires a new model of leadership which is supportive, clear, empathetic and based on trust. Leadership in remote times is also based on an active approach as spontaneous meetings in the office are rare and contacts must be mediated actively through technology. Leadership includes the leading of self as a knowledge worker and a team member. Employees have high expectations towards leadership and culture as through these the foundational values of trust and meaningfulness in knowledge work become evident. Hence, the effect on remote EX is direct.

According to an employer, organizational knowledge in how to lead remote work proved to be quite low during the spring of 2020. She had witnessed how in many organizations' employees spent all their time in meetings without time for reflection or social interaction outside the subject matter meetings. This does not support productive knowledge work or wellbeing as becomes apparent in the following *“that much we know of remote work that the meaning of reflective and social time is very important”*. In addition, an employee remarked that *“The biggest problem in organizations is that knowledge workers have 7 meetings during an 8-hour workday and then there are excels and PowerPoints on top. Who then takes time for thinking?”*

The foundation for behaviors and attitudes lays in culture and thus culture must be led. As an employee put it *“... (leadership will move) away from control and towards trust but at the same time this requires new kind of control and limits. This is cultural, wellbeing oriented and maybe even ethical leadership”*. When people work remotely, the sense of direction and purpose also become topics, which need to be built actively. As one employee stated, *“Inconsistent leadership and decisions and frequent change in direction diminishes the confidence in their (leaders') professionalism.”*

In building a successful culture, inviting employees to co-create culture shaping projects is seen as one of the cornerstones. In 4/8 companies interviewed, co-creation was at the core of the culture. The view is that big changes and processes should not be dictated top down, but co-created to make them viable, understandable and acceptable. Workspace design was one of the most mentioned examples. Organizational culture also needs attention. In effect, remote times require emphasis on culture as many cultural practices have been tied to physical and synchronous presence at the office. One employer told that *“We have a very strong culture, and it is the core of everything... We have many mechanisms to maintain it but very many of these mechanisms require physical presence in the same room”*. She continues that they have now worked hard to establish virtual cultural practices to make their culture remote work proof.

Trust is the basis for remote work. For example, the participants of the WS 2 discussed that trust and a trustful approach to remote work are the key elements in ideal remote work environment. Leaders must trust that knowledge workers have the skills and knowledge to lead their own work and to know how to best get the work done. They also should have an overall positive approach to remote work when no one in the organization gets the feeling that remote work is less valuable, or less preferred and "real work" happens in the office. As this quote by an employee highlights *"Trust, or the lack of it is the one thing that has slowed down remote work... going forward there must be trust and it requires clarity on metrics and job descriptions and what the expectations are"* and leaders must carry the responsibility for this clarity. In WS 2 the participants brought up a valuable aspect to remote leadership and trust. Many companies state that trust is their value but in how many companies was this manifested by showing trust towards remote work? The question to be asked is if attitudes like not trusting employees to work fully remotely are according to values.

Success in knowledge work must be enabled through supportive leadership. Leadership plays a major role in EX as described in this quote by an employee *"I have learned the hard way that it does not matter what kind of social environment or what kind of a job or if have development opportunities or what the pay is if the manager is shit"*. Managers will move to roles of coaching, sparring and motivating instead of decision making and power. As one expert put it, *"managers are in roles of support and connection services that help employees to succeed"*. Employees too, recognize that remote knowledge work requires new forms of leadership. Old, traditional and hierarchical models no longer work and should be replaced with coaching leadership and cultural leadership. Employees want active leadership, which is supportive and clear and based on trust without micromanagement and control. One employee described this well *"in managing knowledge work, the traditional hierarchical structure with a lot of levels that control what everyone does is no longer needed today and it is certainly not needed tomorrow"*.

Remote leadership requires new practices and empathy. In remote work leaders need to be more active in being in touch with the team members as random daily physical touchpoints like meeting in the kitchen whilst getting coffee are missing. One employee who is also a manager stated that *"apparently it makes a big difference if you call the team members through in the middle of the day and ask that what they are doing and how they are doing"*. He continued that it would have been very beneficial for managers to receive training on virtual leadership during the forced remote work of the pandemic that would have emphasized the active approach of being present and being in regular contact with the team members.

The freedom to choose the projects that one works on or the place where work is done is important to employees. Only one of the interviewees expressed her preference to be

working from the office only or mostly. Others expressed certain pains they had experienced when working remotely like the lack of practices, unfit tools and needs for social belonging but appreciated remote work as a way of working and saw the hybrid model as a preferred way of working going forward. With freedom also comes responsibility and in remote work it means heightened self-management skills, but also skillful leaders to manage workload. One employee pondered *“I think that the current stress and burnouts are partly due to people having more freedom to work as they wish but then work follows all the time and this is not prepared for... one of the main future tasks of people leaders is to define important from less important because not everything can be done”*. An employer remarked that everyone is responsible for getting the work done and this requires collaboration.

In WS 1, the participants discussed that employees would appreciate to see their own manager wanting to develop in remote leadership. There is a thin line between micromanagement and active leadership of which the latter is what remote work requires when spontaneous office meets and greets do not exist. As an example, the WS 1 participants stated that a trust building practice is positive personal feedback and trust-depreciating activity is to call and check if tasks are done. Managers need to know the team members and take their personality and needs into consideration together with the joint ways of working. When leadership is mediated through technology, the role of individual leadership increases. This means that leaders must know and remember what motivates whom and how messages are best conveyed to keep the team moving into the right direction.

In WS 2 the two words that describe the desired leadership and culture in remote work were *“transparent”* and *“equal”*. Transparency is important as silent messages are harder to detect. This means open discussions about the difficulties of remote work in teams and units. On an individual level, to mentally take the role as an active remote team member makes sense. That way an individual builds the team with their own efforts and feels strongly an active part of it. Simple practices include being in touch with team members on a regular basis or talking to managers about their own experiences in remote work.

9 Employer brands that attract talent

“Building an employer brand is about being a really good employer for our own people and that then shows to the outside world. So we start from the inside and through our own employees” Employer. This quote summarizes the view of all the expert’s that EB was discussed with - only what is true internally can be true externally and that the satisfaction and wellbeing of current employees is what makes or breaks a desired EB. Current employees show what the company is like through their behavior and word of mouth. This shows that for these companies, EB is about culture and not about marketing communications.

There is an interesting example in the interviews where three companies, in the same industry, followed different approaches during the spring 2020 when remote work took over. The two companies who had an active approach and listened to their employees, were transparent in their communication and offered help and resources (e.g. office furniture and child care support) to their employees improved their employee net promoter scores (ENPS). Reversely, in the company whose communication was transparent but more employer centric with less attention and support to the employees the ENPS score decreased. When ENPS is one of the metrics companies use to follow EB attractiveness this hints into the direction that recognizing and clarifying the EX is a useful strategy. The three companies in the above example follow EX weekly or bi-weekly through structured employee surveys. What this shows is how measuring with the ability to react fast facilitate a good EX. One of the interviewed HR experts said that the reason for investing in bi-weekly surveys was to gain a holistic and up to date understanding on how the employees are feeling and doing and what the pain and gain creators are. This allows for a quick response on identified problems, which, as shown above is appreciated by the employees and leads into a good EX even during the time of crises.

To understand how employees' value and assess employers the question in the interviews was *"what would you pay attention to if you would consider changing jobs?"*. The collective and rather unanimous answers were that the future prospects of an industry and company are the first things employees find out about. Value match between employer and employee is another factor, which reflects the search for a meaningful work relationship. Personal and career development opportunities also play a key role in this evaluation. As one employee stated *"all the needed background information, what the job is, all that you get to do, what kind of colleagues you will have. All of this I want to find out"*. Work atmosphere was mentioned directly or indirectly in many of the employee interviews. A good work atmosphere was described as respectful and trusting whereas a bad atmosphere could be described as non-genuine, stressful and controlling. The following quote by an employee tells this story of a bad experience *"I did go to one product manager interview and they offered me the position, but I got a shitty feeling of what was going on there. The atmosphere was really tense and when walking into the office you could smell the stress in the air... and the feeling was that this is just not going to work"*. Overall employees are very attentive to different signals from how people are in the corridors when going for an interview to if the social media stories of the employees feel authentic or not as described in this quote by an employee *"For me, a certain kind of brand ambassadorship is really impactful when it's authentic"*.

When discussing where employees look for information when thinking about changing jobs or when they are evaluating their current position, employer and employment, employees report that their own networks and word of mouth are the most reliable sources of information.

Employees try to get into direct contact with someone who works at the organization or otherwise is close to it. The company websites were mentioned as one of the basic sources for information and also company culture related sites were mentioned. LinkedIn was mentioned as one of the first sources when looking for company information in terms of how employees communicate (authentic or incentivized), who works there, what is told about the company etc. However, an element of self-promotion is also connected with LinkedIn, which makes it somewhat unreliable as a source for information. Glassdoor or similar services are not seen as a relevant source for information as employees expect negative bias in the reviews. Yet it is viewed by some to see what the story the reviews tell. Other sources for information were job advertisements, interviews and communication by the leadership in press releases and media. Based on the interviews, employees want responsibility for getting the job done and contributing to the company's and customer's success and accept the accountability that comes with it. But for an individual to accept the responsibility-accountability-package the wider context around industry-company-own job must be understandable and expectations transparent.

The role of EB is significant in highly competed industries like in the technology industry and in listed companies in the big cities. In the technology industry competition for skilled workers is fierce and employees get to choose from good and well above average companies only. The mentality is not the traditional where employers dictate the rules, benefits and pay but the opposite. Overall attracting talent gets harder when employees have a lot to choose from. However, as knowledge work is now changing rapidly due to COVID-19 and remote work is increasing, it can change this setting. When suddenly knowledge workers can continue living where they live but still have an option to work for a company anywhere in the country (or beyond) this opens up many opportunities to employees and employers alike as remarked in this comment by an employer *"Technology makes it possible to bring knowledge and skills to any project from anywhere"*.

10 Conclusions

This chapter synthesizes the results of the research and development task and examines the main findings in relation to the literature. In addition, this chapter provides answers to the four research questions.

The purpose of the thesis is to help employers to develop an attractive EB in the remote work context and based on insights from remote EX. Experiences are subjective in nature and they arise from situations, objects, people, relationships and the connection of these to the one who is experiencing (Hassenzahl 2010). This same is true with EX, which can be defined as the total sum of what is and happens during employment, including, the recruitment process,

with a focus on the holistic experience and touchpoints within as Hassenzahl describes above. Practitioners Mosley and Schmidt define EB as “the company reputation as an employer inside and outside the organization” (2017, 12). Rosethorn et al. (2009, 19-20) have a holistic view and propose that “an EB is in essence the two-way deal between an organization and its people - the reasons they choose to join and the reasons they choose - and are permitted to stay” and continue that employer branding should be attractive and relevant to the employee and that EB should be delivered through all the touchpoints and throughout the whole employee journey. Companies with a strong EB, attract and retain talent through value propositions. These propositions are what employees base their expectations on when they join a company. When looking at how EX and EB are defined we can see a close connection. Building a strong EB should start with designing EX to attract the right talent, meet their expectations and provide an environment where employees want to give their best performance, resulting in the financial success of the company and wellbeing of the employees.

Remote knowledge work has already been a growing trend (European Union 2020) and the pandemic of the spring 2020 is likely to continue driving this development. Studies show promising results in productivity and engagement in remote work (Brummelhuis et al. 2012; Emmett et al. 2020; Bloom et al. 2012; Birkinshaw et al. 2020; Dahik et al. 2020). However, remote work requires new skills and routines from employees and leaders (Lönnblad & Vartiainen 2012), and leaders have an especially important role in ensuring psychological safety, which is a prerequisite for collaboration (Edmondson 2019). Practices, routines and wellbeing are essential elements that contribute to the success of remote work (Palvalin 2018). From the research, it was clear that many of the pain points in remote work result from the lack of these routines and practices, which in turn affects wellbeing.

The research-oriented development task was conducted using a qualitative approach with service design process and methods, following the double diamond model (Design council 2007). The service design process and methods, holistic and user-centric approach and is especially valuable for the communication and testing of services and concepts (Ojasalo et.al 2014).

The premise for this thesis is S-DL, where services are the basis of all exchange in societies and value is co-created between the actors i.e., between the service provider and customer. Value is not automatically embedded in service outputs but *experienced* by the customer when using the service (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). In the context of the research, the organization is the service provider, employment is the service, or value offer, and the employee is the customer who defines the value of the offer through daily experiences at a workplace. The validity of this S-DL premise is evident in literature where EB value offer, the EVP, serves as the benchmark for EX and defines the strength and nature of the EB (Rosethorn et al. 2009;

Maylett & Wride 2017; Pandita & Ray 2018). The same finding is echoed in the research results.

Trends and characteristics in knowledge work

Key take-away: Understand what shapes knowledge work

Trends are changes in situations and behaviors. Trends show the development of the past but at the same time are practical tools for futures thinking as they last for years and will not fade away suddenly. Trends are the everyday manifestations of megatrends (Hiltunen, 2017). The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra's Mega trends 2020 (Dufva 2020) were used as a starting point for data analysis, and the results show that similar topics are apparent in the context of knowledge work and remote knowledge work. From the interviews, four trends shaping the knowledge work landscape were identified.

Results show that technology embedded in everything, the complex and systemic nature of problems, meaningful work and making a positive impact and trust as the enabler of work are shaping the landscape of knowledge work. Knowledge work is characterized by the ongoing changing structures or work models as we move from the ridged and presence-based factory work model to a more flexible, remote and results-based model. Knowledge work requires deep thought processes with a high level of collaboration. Due to the increase in autonomous work and remote work, knowledge work requires new models of culture and leadership. Learning and transformation are essential elements of knowledge work, both due to the demands of the evolving business environment and the employee's desire for development.

These identified trends and characteristics are in line with the findings from the literature, which also highlight the effects of technology, globalization and remote work, as well as the new attitudes and expectations of employees (Morgan 2014; Dufva et al. 2016; Jousilahti et al. 2017). In addition, meaningful work and making a positive impact are also clearly gaining traction. Employees emphasize work life balance and wellbeing, which echoes the findings from the literature. The work environment is changing from a focus on production to meaningful interaction (Dufva et al. 2016) and work is no longer the central element of life (Jousilahti et al. 2017). Instead of looking for life-long employment with one employer, flexibility, fair rewards and engaging work are more important (Maitland & Thomson 2014).

This is the context for all the research questions answered.

Skills and practices needed in remote knowledge work

Key take-away: Appreciate and develop meta-skills and soft skills, which facilitate productive knowledge work. Co-create remote work practices.

Dufva et al. (2016) highlight the importance of meta-skills in knowledge work, like the ability to take in new information, time management and critical thinking. Although not referred to as “meta-skills”, Lönnblad & Vartiainen (2012) had similar findings in their study of competences required for remote knowledge work. Communication, people skills, ability to motivate and be present, were amongst the skills mentioned for enabling fruitful and productive remote work. Results from the interviews also emphasize the growing importance of meta-skills and skills in human interaction, especially in remote and hybrid work. Knowledge work is highly autonomous but requires rich collaboration and building knowledge “between heads” as described in an interview. In this context, it is evident that the aforementioned skills are growing in importance and thus need to be acknowledged, appreciated and developed by both employers and employees. Traditional “hard skills” still seem to be valued more and effort put into their development, whilst the attention given to these “soft” meta-skills remain secondary. Understanding their importance and the effects of leveraging these skills on business performance, is crucial.

The knowledge base in the thesis provides little input for practices in remote work. On the other hand, the literature on EX highlights the importance of factors, which affect the employee’s ability to get the job done (Dery & Sebastian 2018; Morgan 2015). Based on the research of this thesis, practices and routines were a major pain point for many employees. Employers from the forerunner companies interviewed, reported paying special attention to exactly this topic right from the beginning of the pandemic forced remote work and based on their results in employee surveys they had succeeded in enhancing remote EX during this difficult time. However, there is no one size fits all approach to this. Practices and routines must be developed in each organization separately to fit the culture. Well-designed remote routines and practices are also important from the perspective of MOTs, where the EVP is measured, and which form the EX and the perception of the EB.

The wants and needs of knowledge workers

Key take-away: Recognize the wants and needs of employees and design for remote EX

Based on the interviews, employees want freedom in choosing where to do their work from, whether it be from the office, another location or a combination of these (the hybrid model). In developing the remote work experience, and thereby in enhancing the remote EX, the seven identified themes of the remote EX canvas serve as a good starting point for the organizations. Knowledge workers want 1) reliable and functional technology and tools to

support the nature of their work, 2) functional work spaces to support productive work and collaboration whether in the office or elsewhere 3) remote work supporting practices and routines that are agreed upon together and clear for all, 4) to feel safe to express their opinions and feel a sense of social belonging, 5) support in ongoing learning and development, both on individual and organizational level, 6) practices and tools which specifically support the sharing of knowledge and collaboration, and 7) remote work proof leadership and culture. These findings are similar to those validated by Dabirian et al. in their study where they established seven employer value propositions attractive to employees. These are: social value, interest value, application value, development value, economic value, management value and work life balance. (2017) Other literature supports these findings as well, and the priority roles of technology and tools as well as psychological safety and social belonging are confirmed by the literature (Gschwing & Vargas 2019; Edmondson 2019; European Union 2020). The role of collaboration in remote knowledge work is widely acknowledged (Blok et al. 2012; Bosch-Sijtsema et al. 2011; Dahik et al. 2020; Lönnblad & Vartiainen 2012).

Notable is, that due the nature of experiences being unique to the experiencer, the widely used term experience design is not valid. Only situations or interaction touchpoints can be designed to enhance the possibilities of positive experiences. (Forlizzi & Ford 2000; Hassenzahl 2010). This means that designing *for* EX is what should be paid attention to, and this requires a holistic and qualitative understanding of the organization's own workforce as well as the broader context that is shaping the expectations and wants of the people as employees in knowledge work (Morgan 2015). The outcome of EX design is higher employee satisfaction, engagement, commitment and performance as presented by Plaskoff (2017) and the intentional EX design is as a good strategy in employer branding especially in the highly competitive and high value service industries, where employer brands have an important role in talent retention and attraction (Ambler & Barrow 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo 2004).

At the moment, work life is more diverse than ever before, with four generations working side by side and remote work adding to this diversity with e.g., opening the global job market to skilled knowledge workers. In this sense, the holistic and qualitative service design process and methods offer a fitting platform for organizations on their journey to understand EX and the collaborative design of it with employees. The remote EX canvas could well serve as a good starting point in these efforts. Based on the study, results can be achieved even with small changes that are based on co-creation and intentional design, as seen from the examples presented in the results of two companies that actively addressed their remote EX during the pandemic, and as a result improved their ENPS (93).

The role of EX in employer branding

Key take-away: Strong EB and efficient employer branding are the result of intentional EX design

Based on the study, all the interviewed employers who worked with EB, agreed that employer branding must begin internally with the current employees as the first audience. This is also presented in literature (Berthon et al. 2005). Furthermore, in the interviews employer branding was understood as a holistic, cultural and managerial undertaking and not a recruitment marketing campaign or perks for the current employees and there was a strong emphasis on that only what is true internally can be true externally. Based on the literature, EX and EB determine each other's success when employer branding is understood in the broad sense as defined e.g., by Backhaus & Tikoo and Mosley & Schmidt in chapter 4.2 (32) as opposed to understanding it as recruitment marketing campaigns. First, employer branding is a determinant for EX. The reasoning is that employees mentally measure the daily experiences at a workplace against the psychological contract formed on the basis of promises made during the whole employee journey and these promises are mediated through employer branding. When the perception of the psychological contract is fulfilled, EX is positive. The reverse is true with a perceived breach of this contract. This way, employer branding strongly determines the success of the relationship between the employer and employee and is a determinant for EX. At the time same EX is the determinant for EB for the same reasons. Simply, when EX is positive the EB becomes more attractive and stronger when negative EX effects the EB reversely. The internal view of the company as a workplace an employer is an important factor in talent attraction. Based on the study, knowledge workers are very active when assessing a potential new workplace. Word of mouth and a direct contact through own networks to the organization is thought of as the most reliable source of information. This emphasizes the importance of EX as again as what is true internally is communicated externally in all interactions, also in situations where the employer does not control the messages. Taking this thinking forward and following on the footsteps of Pandita & Ray (2018) we can see that the relationship is not linear but evolving where EX and EB are in constant interaction. Similarly, in their employer branding framework, Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) show the dynamic relationship of organizational culture and employer branding where one influences the other and so organizational culture and EB evolves.

To summarize, strong EB and efficient employer branding are the result of intentional EX design. EX design naturally strengthens the EX, which is the enabler for a strong EB and the virtuous dynamic of the two. This is visualized in Figure 12.

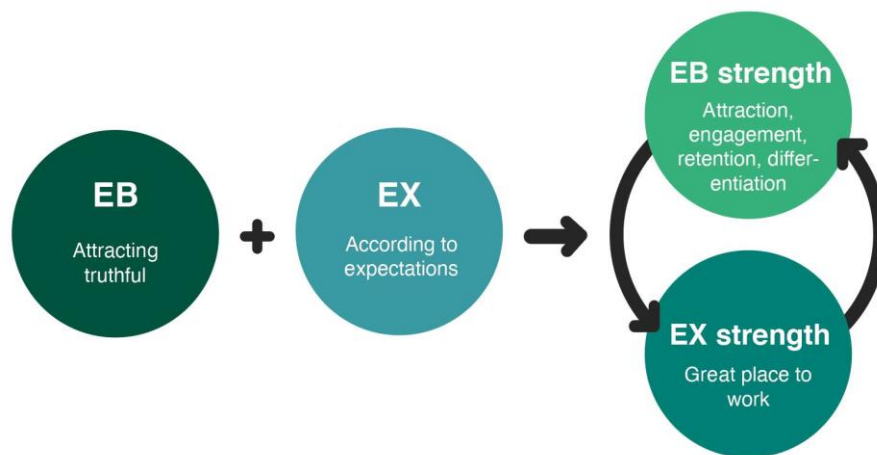


Figure 12: The virtuous interaction of EB and EX

To conclude the answers to RQ 2 and RQ 3, the authors propose seven useful strategies in enhancing remote EX and efficient employer branding. These strategies follow the seven identified factors affecting remote EX (the remote EX canvas). These are presented as tips for organizations and employers, due to the nature of the development task of creating content for the case company's media.

1. **Technology: tools and channels:** Good technology infrastructure and fitting tools are the starting point for good remote EX. Collaboration with IT and employees would benefit the organizations greatly in assessing what systems and tools would be most meaningful in productive remote work. This is not an exercise for IT only. As technology is embedded in everything make IT support easily accessible as one of key service functions.
2. **Space:** The workspace whether in the office or elsewhere should help in getting the work done in a meaningful and productive way. Inviting employees to collaborate in workspace design is a good practice. The example presented earlier in chapter 8 showed the employee satisfaction rates immediately increased when employees were included in the process and workspace helped in getting the work done.
3. **Practices and routines:** Remote meetings can be the only direct connection to the organization and the expectations include both the productivity aspect and social needs. Hence meetings matter even more in remote work. Active collaboration with employees to create the best remote work practices and routines increases employee satisfaction and productivity. Strong meeting facilitation skills are a valuable asset to have for all.
4. **Psychological safety and sense of belonging:** First, the concept of psychological safety needs to be understood as one of the critical success factors in organizations. Second, the way to support psychological safety and sense of belonging require an active approach in remote setting and these inherent needs should be nurtured in daily employee experiences. What employees say, is that just by intentionally acknowledging remote

meeting participants or regular contacts with line manager and team are a good starting point.

5. **Learning and development:** Remote work requires new skills. These include managerial skills but also skills needed in daily tasks like remote meeting facilitation. Train the organization to unlock the remote work potential! Continuous learning is at the core of knowledge work, thus a winning culture values time spent in learning and development including remote peer learning meta-skills and soft skills are becoming the new hard skills in knowledge work and the need for these skills is heightened in remote work. Value and develop these skill sets in the organization.
6. **Knowledge sharing and collaboration:** Knowledge work is knowledge sharing based collaboration. In the office setup, knowledge sharing has many times been mediated through people in informal encounters. In remote work, systems and tools have a heightened role. Make work easy, not hard and understand what tools and systems cause most frustration or relief. This serves as a good action list for enhancing remote EX, productivity and wellbeing. Encourage and reward collaboration and share experiences of successful cases to show what can be achieved as an organization.
7. **Culture and leadership:** The culture and leadership practices that worked in the office set up will most likely not deliver same results in remote times. The recommendation is to first work through the six strategies presented above in collaboration with employees to understand the reality of the employees and the employer. Then decide what path to take with EX and EB in mind. A tip from the employees: check values and fit to remote times. If trust is one of the organizational values, is this shown in the daily practices by managers in their attitude, behavior and communication towards remote work? Are development goals remote work fit? Is success possible in remote work based on the KPI's? Remember - knowledge workers have high expectations.

11 Discussion

This chapter presents an evaluation of the thesis, followed by ideas for future research. The case company did not have a specific development need, but rather were interested in gaining insights on EX, how it links to EB and media content ideas based on these. In other words, the development task was an abstract quest for knowledge. The nature of an exploratory research approach is that it is very broad in the beginning, and the scope narrows down towards the end (Saunders et al. 2009). Given our interest in exploring the phenomena of knowledge work and EX and the abstract development task, our process was very exploratory, and it proved to bring advantages and disadvantages. The advantage was that the collected data set was broad, due method triangulation, and this allowed us to really study the knowledge work landscape and the relationship between EX and EB. Given this

exploration the thesis concept evolved from a broad future scenario thinking to remote EX, which in our minds is exactly what organizations currently need and serves the latent needs of the case company. The disadvantage was that as we are inexperienced in qualitative research and thematic analysis, the phases of discovery and define were extremely laborious and it was hard to see the forest for the trees at times. In the end, we feel rather confident that our process and analysis reliably present the studied phenomena based on the sample at hand. However, a more restricted approach would have yielded even more concrete results. The use of qualitative analysis software could have made data analysis more manageable; now the focus was on the visualization of the data and thus the manual analysis and grouping of the themes. The pragmatic and structured service design process and methods was a good combination with the research approach used and served as a compass during the thesis. In hindsight, the remote EX canvas idea, that emerged during the define phase, could have been a thesis topic in itself. In this case the canvas would have been the concrete focus of development. This just highlights how broad the thesis is.

The workshops took place in October, just as the second wave of the pandemic was affecting the country. The original plan was to conduct live workshops, but the early autumn proved this to be impossible. This resulted in moving the workshop experience to a virtual platform and gathering the knowledge on virtual facilitation techniques and tools. Our expectation at that point was that the outcome of the workshops would be more practical, e.g., easy to apply practices to enhance the remote EX. This proved to be a wrong expectation as the outcome provided top level practices albeit many of them. Regardless of this fact, the workshops worked well, and the feedback collected from the participants was very positive (4,3/5 and 4,4/5).

Combining EX with employer branding is a less researched and talked about topic as opposed to the combination of EX and CX. In this sense, we provide valuable new insights for companies wishing to retain and attract talent. Furthermore, the remote EX canvas is a concise summary of EX in remote knowledge work and can serve as useful first step in exploring the status of EX in the organization.

During the research and development process, the case company was to have a sparring role to evaluate the direction of the research and evaluate the usability of the research from their point of view. The sponsor at the case company was easy to approach and available for sparring. There were 5 meetings with the sponsor and one prototyping session including him and two other team members working with employer branding. The atmosphere in the meetings was collaborative and the meetings were useful in regard to the direction of the thesis and usability for the case company. In hindsight, an even closer collaboration with the case company and a wider involvement of their employees could have been very beneficial in terms of the content being used as there would be a broader understanding of the generated

insights and content. However, as remote work and remote EX are on top of mind for many organizations currently, this seems like a minor risk. In the event that the content, or any part of it, is used, the reach is substantial as the case company reports a website audience of 500.000. This clearly adds to the value of the development task. In addition, based on the insights from the interviews, the case company approached Taloustutkimus to add remote work as one of the variables in the annual work life study. The study has a sample size of 4800 employees and covers 14 different industries. When the results of the study are published and combined with the findings from our thesis, PR will be generated to attract visitors to their website, who will gain exposure to the content which in turn will potentially lead to business leads and partnerships.

Collaboration between the authors worked well and our view is that in service design-related theses, this should be a recommended approach due to the collaborative and multidisciplinary nature of service design.

Ideas for future research were identified from both the literature and the insights from the research and development task. The topics of remote work as well as EX are still fairly new. It is only after the forced remote work as a result of the pandemic that these topics have been lifted to the forefront of discussions in business life. It is clear that these topics combined require more knowledge and understanding in general. Organizations should take an active role in gaining a better understanding of e.g., productivity within their teams and the factors affecting the ability of employees to complete their tasks. In addition to organization-specific development, three topics for further research have been identified.

First, the role of space and ergonomics when hybrid model seems the likely way of working going forward and changing the concept of workspace. It is interesting, that during the pandemic when workspace changed completely overnight and people started to work from their kitchens and living room couches, wants and needs around space only came to the discussion after probing in the interviews. This seems to insinuate that space is a secondary concern when the environment for technology and social belonging have changed so dramatically. This would be an interesting topic to explore further given the passion people tend to talk about e.g., open office space and its problems. Yet working with a computer on an ironing board, or spending days working from the couch does not evoke negativity. Space and ergonomics do affect wellbeing and productivity and therefore have a direct effect on EX.

Second, the element of psychological safety and creating a sense of belonging in remote work require future research. The question is how to enhance these in practice through empathy and facilitation skills. Companies and individuals need a better understanding of what psychological safety is and the implications of it on productivity, collaboration and wellbeing.

Here service design has a lot to offer and this could prove an interesting topic for the service design community to explore.

Last, more information is needed on how to close the gap between what is known in theory about remote EX to what is done in practice. Design tools and the power of co-creation offer valuable strategies to identify and implement practices in the new normal.

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Appendix 1: Interview round one invitation

Hei

Olemme kaksi opiskelijaa Laurea AMK Service Innovation and Design YAMK -opinto-ohjelmasta. Teemme opinnäytetyötä työnimellä "How to attract the future knowledge worker. In the crossroads of employee experience and employer branding". Tutkimme työntekijäkokemusta ja työnantajakuva tulevaisuuden tietotyön kontekstissa ja haluaisimme tähän liittyen haastatella tulevaisuuden työn asiantuntijoita. Haastattelut on tarkoitus tehdä viikkojen 26-28 aikana. Ne voidaan toteuttaa joko videopalaverina tai kasvotusten. Haastattelut tehdään suomeksi ja niiden arvioitu kesto on 90 min. Haastatteluajat voidaan sopia joustavasti esim. klo 8-20 välillä minä viikonpäivänä tahansa. Haastattelut ovat anonyymejä, eikä vastauksia voida missään vaiheessa yhdistää henkilöihin tai yrityksiin. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan.

Olisitko sinä kiinnostunut antamaan haastattelun? Mikäli olet kiinnostunut, voit ehdottaa sinulle sopivia aikoja. Vastaan mielelläni kysymyksiin tai lähetän lisätietoja tutkimuksestamme. Teemme tätä yhteistyössä Duunitorin kanssa (duunitori.fi), joka on Suomen suurin työnhakukone ja uudenaikainen rekrytointimedia.

Appendix 2: Background information for interviews / Future work experts

Hei,

tapaamme pian haastattelun merkeissä. Tässä muutama käyttämämme määrittely jo etukäteen tiedoksi.

Tietotyö






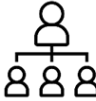

Tietotyö on kognitiivista työtä, jonka tarkoituksena/seurauksena tuotetaan, hyödynnetään ja luodaan arvoa tiedosta. Keskitymme tässä opinnäytetyössä ns. ”toimistotyöhön”. Emme kuitenkaan ota kantaa siihen, missä tietotyön raja menee nyt tai tulevaisuudessa (se on oma opinnäytetyön aiheensa).

Työn tulevaisuus

Tässä työssä käsitämme työn tulevaisuuden uusina työn tekemisen tapoina. Esimerkkinä uudentyypiset työsuhteet, joissa työtä tehdään ajasta ja paikasta riippumatta, palkitaan työn tuloksista (ei ajasta) ja hyödynnetään virtuaalisia ympäristöjä yhteistyössä ja arvon tuottamisessa.

Asioita joita työntekijät arvostavat (ja joiden varaan voi esimerkiksi rakentaa työnantajakuva)

- käymme tätä kuvaa läpi haastattelussa. Mikäli kuvan jakaminen ei onnistu, pidäthän tämän esillä itse.

| SOSIAALINEN YMPÄRISTÖ | MIELEN- KIINTOINEN TYÖ (PAIKKA) | TIEDON & TAIDON SOVELTAMINEN | KEHITYMINEN | PALKKA & EDUT | JOHTAMINEN | ELÄMÄN TASAPAINO |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Osaava organisaatio, hauska paikka olla töissä, tiimityö, hyvä työkuiluuri. | Sopivan vaativa työ, luova työympäristö, uudet työkäytännöt. | Kokemus työn merkityksellisyydestä tiedon & taidon soveltamisen kautta. | Ammatillinen kehittyminen ja eteneminen, työpaikan soveltuvuus uraan. | Palkkaus ja edut odotetulla tasolla (vs. työnkuva) ja turvattu työpaikka. | Reilu & osaava johto: luottamus, kunnioitus, innostaminen, mahdollistaminen | Työn järjestäminen niin että ihmiset voivat onnistua työssä & kotona |

Appendix 3: Background information for interviews / HR experts

Hei,

tapaamme pian haastattelun merkeissä. Tässä muutama käyttämämme määrittely jo etukäteen tiedoksi.

Tietotyö

Tietotyö on kognitiivista työtä, jonka tarkoituksena/seurauksena tuotetaan, hyödynnetään ja luodaan arvoa tiedosta. Keskitymme tässä opinnäytetyössä ns. ”toimistotyöhön”. Emme kuitenkaan ota kantaa siihen, missä tietotyön raja menee nyt tai tulevaisuudessa (se on oma opinnäytetyön aiheensa).

Työn tulevaisuus

Tässä työssä käsitämme työn tulevaisuuden uusina työn tekemisen tapoina.

Esimerkkinä uudentyyppiset työsuhteet, joissa työtä tehdään ajasta ja paikasta riippumatta, palkitaan työn tuloksista (ei ajasta) ja hyödynnetään virtuaalisia ympäristöjä yhteistyössä ja arvon tuottamisessa.

Työnantajakuva ja brändääminen







Työnantajakuvalle on monia määritelmiä. Tällä hetkellä opinnäytetyötä tehdessämme yksi parhaita määritelmiä on mielestämme Martinin ja kumppaneiden (2011) määritelmä vapaasti suomennettuna: *Työnantajakuva on keskeisten sidosryhmien yleinen käsitys siitä, että yritys tarjoaa korkealaatuisen henkilöstökokemuksen ja omaa erottuvan organisaatioidentiteetin, jota työntekijät arvostavat, johon he sitoutuvat ja suosittelevat työnantajaa muille mielellään ja luottavaisin mielin.*

Martin, G., Gollan, P. J. & Grigg, K. 2011. Is there a bigger and better future for employer branding? Facing up to innovation, corporate reputations and wicked problems in SHRM. The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 22(17), pp. 3618-3637. doi:10.1080/09585192.2011.560880

- Haastattelun aikana kuulemme mielellämme yrityksenne tai oman määritelmännen työnantajakuvasta.

Asioita joita työntekijät arvostavat (ja joiden varaan voi esimerkiksi rakentaa työnantajakuva)

- käymme tätä kuvaa läpi haastattelussa. Mikäli kuvan jakaminen ei onnistu, pidäthän tämän esillä itse.

| SOSIAALINEN YMPÄRISTÖ | MIELIENKIINTOINEN TYÖ (PAIKKA) | TIEDON & TAIDON SOVELTAMINEN | KEHITTYMINEN | PALKKA & EDUT | JOHTAMINEN | ELÄMÄN TASAPAINO |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Osaava organisaatio, hauska paikka olla töissä, tiimityö, hyvä työkuultuuri. | Sopivan vaativa työ, luova työympäristö, uudet työkäytännöt. | Kokemus työn merkityksellisyydestä tiedon & taidon soveltamisen kautta. | Ammatillinen kehittyminen ja eteneminen, työpaikan soveltuvuus uraan. | Palkkaus ja edut odotetulla tasolla (vs. työnkuva) ja turvattu työpaikka. | Reilu & osaava johto: luottamus, kunnioitus, innostaminen, mahdollistaminen. | Työn järjestäminen niin että ihmiset voivat onnistua työssä & kotona. |

Appendix 4: Background information for interviews / Employees (typical)

Hei,

tapaamme pian haastattelun merkeissä. Tässä muutama käyttämämme määrittely jo etukäteen tiedoksi.

Tietotyö






Tietotyö on kognitiivista työtä, jonka tarkoituksena/seurauksena tuotetaan, hyödynnetään ja luodaan arvoa tiedosta. Keskitymme tässä opinnäytetyössä ns. ”toimistotyöhön”. Emme kuitenkaan ota kantaa siihen, missä tietotyön raja menee nyt tai tulevaisuudessa (se on oma opinnäytetyön aiheensa). Nyt määrittelyksi riittää, että sitä voi myös tehdä eri lokaatioista kuin toimistosta teknologian avulla.

Työntekijäkokemus

Työntekijäkokemus muodostuu kaikesta siitä, mitä työssä on ja tapahtuu työsuhteen aikana. Englanniksi termi on employee experience (EX). Suomeksi näkee myös käännoystä henkilöstökokemus.

Alla vielä kuva, jota käymme haastattelussa läpi.

Kuvassa on 7 asiaa, jotka tutkimusten mukaan nousevat esiin työntekijöillä ja vaikuttavat työssä viihtymiseen. Käymme tätä kuvaa läpi haastattelussa. Mikäli kuvan jakaminen ei onnistu, pidäthän tämän esillä itse.

| SOSIAALINEN YMPÄRISTÖ | MIELEN- KIINTOINEN TYÖ (PAIKKA) | TIEDON & TAIDON SOVELTAMINEN | KEHITYMINEN | PALKKA & EDUT | JOHTAMINEN | ELÄMÄN TASAPAINO |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Osaava organisaatio, hauska paikka olla töissä, tiimityö, hyvä työkuultuuri. | Sopivan vaativa työ, luova työympäristö, uudet työkäytännöt. | Kokemus työn merkityksellisyydestä tiedon & taidon soveltamisen kautta. | Ammatillinen kehittyminen ja eteneminen, työpaikan soveltuvuus uraan. | Palkkaus ja edut odotetulla tasolla (vs. työnkuva) ja turvattu työpaikka. | Reilu & osaava johto: luottamus, kunnioitus, innostaminen, mahdollistaminen | Työn järjestäminen niin että ihmiset voivat onnistua työssä & kotona |

Appendix 5: Round 1 interview field guide: HR

Haastattelut ovat anonyymejä, eikä vastauksia voida missään vaiheessa yhdistää henkilöihin tai yrityksiin. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan ja äänitteet tuhotaan työn valmistumisen jälkeen. Aineistoon ei ole pääsyä muilla kuin meillä. Oliko sulla kysymyksiä tähän liittyen?

Tutkimme opinnäytetyössä tietotyön tulevaisuuden näkymiä, sitä millaisia tulevaisuuden halutut tietotyöntekijät ovat ja miten työntekijäkokemus ja onnistuneen työnantajakuva rakennus voisivat kohdata matkalla tulevaisuuteen. Työnimenä kulkee tällä hetkellä *"How to attract the future knowledge worker. In the crossroads of employee experience and employer branding"*. Koska opiskelemme palvelumuotoilua, lähestymme aihetta käyttäjälähtöisesti. Tutkimuksen kontekstissa käyttäjä on työntekijä, yritys on palveluntuottaja ja arvo syntyy vuorovaikutuksessa. Tutkimuksessa on kaksi datankeruuvaihtoa, joista tämä on ensimmäinen. Kartoitamme nyt tulevaisuuden tietotyön ja yritysten edustajien näkemyksiä ja toiveita. Seuraavassa vaiheessa haastattelemme tietotyöntekijöitä. Synteesivaiheessa yhdistämme nämä kaksi näkökulmaa palvelumuotoilua hyödyntäen. Lopputuloksena on paitsi opinnäytetyö myös joko playbook tai vaikka podcast-sarja työn nimen mukaisesti. Tämä toinen tuotos tehdään Duunitorille, jonka kanssa teemme tätä yhteistyössä. Oppilaitos Laurea AMK ja tutkinto-ohjelma in SID.

Aloitetaanko? Laitan nyt äänityksen pyörimään.

1. Kuvaile lyhyesti yritystä ja toimialaa jossa olet töissä. Kerro lisäksi mitä teet työksesi ja millaisista tehtävistä työviikkosi koostuu?
2. Me ollaan tässä tutkimuksessa kiinnostuttu erityisesti tietotyöntekijöistä. Tietotyö on kognitiivista työtä, jonka seurauksena tuotetaan, hyödynnetään ja luodaan arvoa tiedosta ja monesti tähän yhdistetään mahdollisuus tehdä työtä paikasta riippumatta. Vihjeet: Mitä suuria trendejä näet teidän liiketoimintaympäristössä, jotka muuttavat tietotyötä? esim. 5-10 vuotta? Mitkä asiat kehittyvät tai muuttuu tulevaisuuden tietotyössä? Miksi? Mitä muutoksia se vaatii organisaatioilta? esim. teknologia ja kulttuuri?
3. Mennään vähän konkreettiseen tietotyön muutokseen. Jos ajattelet teillä tämän hetkisiä yleisiä työnkuvia (pyydä mainitsemaan mitä työnkuvaa ajattelee). Vihjeet: Onko näissä työnkuissa tapahtunut muutosta viimeisen 5 vuoden aikana? Toisaalta millaista muutosta näet tulevaisuuteen seuraavan 5 vuoden aikana? YRITYSKOHTAISESTI: valitse yksi toimenkuva ja kysy siitä: Mitä heidän päivittäiseen työhönsä kuuluu nyt ja tulevaisuudessa? Mitä ongelmia he ratkovat nyt ja tulevaisuudessa?
4. Puhutaan hetki koronasta jota voisi myös ajatella pienenä tulevaisuussimulaationa. Ensinnäkin mitä muutoksia se toi organisaatiolenne? Vihjeet: uusia työkaluja? Tapoja tehdä töitä? Uusia tarpeita ja esim. esimieskoulutuksen tarpeen? Työaikapolitiikka? Mikä on yllättänyt eniten?
5. Näetkö että nämä muutokset ovat alkua jollekin suuremmalle muutokselle organisaatiossanne ja yleensäkin?
6. Miten näet että työsuhteiden tulevaisuuden ja muutoksen? (keikkatyö, freelance, projektitiimit jne.) ns. gig-economy tai vaikka alustatalous. Vihjeet: Onko jo nyt myös muita kuin "tyypillisiä" työsuhteita? Millaisia tehtäviä? Mitä mahdollisuuksia näet? Mitä uhkia näet? Mihin yksilöiden, yritysten ja yhteiskuntien kannattaisi kiinnittää huomiota?
7. Siirrytään sitten työnantajakuvaan. Onko se tuttu konsepti? Miten sinä määrittelet työnantajakuva ja sen roolin lyhyesti? (tässä kohtaa voidaan myös käydä läpi ennakkoon laitettu määritelmä). Vihjeet: Kattaako vain rekrytoinnit vai nykyiset työntekijät ja rekrytoinnit vai vielä laajempi? (esim. alumni, asiakkaat...)
8. Onko teidän työnantaja-arvolupaus määritelty (EVP)? Arvolupauksella tarkoitetaan työnantajan lupaus siitä, miksi työpaikka on paras paikka olla töissä. Jos ei tietoisesti määritelty niin mitä rakennuspalikoita se voisi teillä sisältää?
9. Mainitsit... (viittaa arvolupauksessa maihittuihin asioihin), millä perusteilla olette päätyneet noihin (EVP-) rakennuspalikoihin? Sisäisesti kehityskeskustelut, työterveyden kautta esim. kasvaneet sairauspoissaolot ja sitä kautta työ- ja vapaa-ajan tasapainottaminen, työhaastattelut, exit-haastattelut, palautelaatikat, tiimipäivät. Ulkoisesti: Jonkun kumppanin toimesta tehdyt tutkimukset kuten henkilöstökyselyt? Esim.

Glassdoor tai tuntopalvelu -arvostelut, somen keskustelut yleensä aihealueesta tms?
Yleinen toimialakeskustelu ja trendit... ?

10. LINKITÄ EDELLISEEN: Teettekö säännöllisesti henkilöstökyselyitä? (eli mittaatte työnantajakuva) Vihje: Kuinka usein? Mistä aihealueet ja kysymykset nousevat? Miten toimitte kyselyn jälkeen? Mitä teette tuloksilla ja millaisella aikataululla? Oletteko muuttaneet toimintatapaanne viimeisten vuosien aikana tai onko teillä suunnitteilla muutoksia? Mitä muuttaisit nykyisessä tavassa toimia jos voisit? Miksi? Miten teillä suhtaudutaan näihin kyselyihin - esim. vastaus-% ja avointen vastausten määrä & laatu?
11. Jos sitten mietitään maailmaa työntekijän kannalta, tutkimuksessa nousee esiin 7 arvoa, jotka työntekijät nostavat esiin työssä viihtymisen kannalta (henkilöstökokemus). Näitä ovat... (pyydä katsomaan kuvaa) Miltä kuulostaa/tuttuja/itsestään selviä? Mitkä asiat näet nousussa tai muuttavan muotoaan? Miksi?
12. Kun tänä päivänä rekrytoitte, käyttekö läpi yrityksenne ja kandin arvopohjia ja arvioitte palkkausta myös sitä kautta?
13. Rakennatteko tietoisesti työnantajakuva? Vihjeet: Miten? Ketkä siinä ovat mukana? Millainen budjetti? Mittaatteko tuloksia? (Miten mittaatte)
14. Kerrotko vielä tarkemmin miten käytännön tekoina olette rakentaneet työnantajakuva? Vihjeet: Kampanjat, tarkenna: kanavat (esim. some?), viestinnän sisältö esim. nettisivut, esitykset, kk-palaverit, työntekijöiden edut (esim. lastenhoitopalvelu, jumppasetelit, autoetu, teknologia, työskentelytavat, esim. etätyö tai teknologiat, toimitilan sijainti, sistustus, yhteinen tekeminen työn ulkopuolella tai työaikana, kehittymismahdollisuuksista kertominen ja siihen panostaminen, työntekijöiden mukaan ottaminen sisäiseen kehittämiseen?
15. Miksi olette päätyneet mainitsemiisi toimenpiteisiin? (viittaa ylempään kysymykseen)
16. Haluaisitko loppuun vielä tiivistää kolme tärkeintä omaa havaintoasi, jotka nousivat esiin tämän haastattelun aikana ja joihin tiivistäisit kertomasi. Onko jotain mihin minun kannattaisi kiinnittää enemmän huomiota ja syventyä opinnäytetyössä?

Appendix 6: Round 1 interview field guide: Future work experts

Haastattelut ovat anonyymejä, eikä vastauksia voida missään vaiheessa yhdistää henkilöihin tai yrityksiin. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan ja äänitteet tuhotaan työn valmistumisen jälkeen. Aineistoon ei ole pääsyä muilla kuin meillä. Oliko sulla kysymyksiä tähän liittyen?

Tutkimme opinnäytetyössä tietotyön tulevaisuuden näkymiä, sitä millaisia tulevaisuuden halutut tietotyöntekijät ovat ja miten työntekijäkokemus ja onnistuneen työnantajakuvan rakennus voisivat kohdata matkalla tulevaisuuteen. Työnimenä kulkee tällä hetkellä *"How to attract the future knowledge worker. In the crossroads of employee experience and employer branding"*. Koska opiskelemme palvelumuotoilua, lähestymme aihetta käyttäjälähtöisesti. Tutkimuksen kontekstissa käyttäjä on työntekijä, yritys on palveluntuottaja ja arvo syntyy vuorovaikutuksessa. Tutkimuksessa on kaksi datankeruuvaihetta, joista tämä on ensimmäinen. Kartoitamme nyt tulevaisuuden tietotyön ja yritysten edustajien näkemyksiä ja toiveita. Seuraavassa vaiheessa haastattelemme tietotyöntekijöitä. Synteesivaiheessa yhdistämme nämä kaksi näkökulmaa palvelumuotoilua hyödyntäen. Lopputuloksena on paitsi opinnäytetyö myös joko playbook tai vaikka podcast-sarja työn nimen mukaisesti. Tämä toinen tuotos tehdään Duunitorille, jonka kanssa teemme tätä yhteistyössä. Oppilaitos Laurea AMK ja tutkinto-ohjelma in SID.

Aloitetaanko? Laitan nyt äänityksen pyörimään.

1. Mitä teet työkseesi ja millaisista tehtävistä työviikkosi koostuu? Mistä pidät eniten työssäsi?
2. Jos mietit nykyistä rooliasi/työtäsi, miten näet että se kehittyy tulevaisuudessa - linkittäen tämän siihen miten ajattelet työn roolin ja tekemisen olevan erilaista esim. 5-10 vuoden päästä?
3. Jos mietitään yleisesti työn tulevaisuutta niin mikä muuttuu?
4. Me ollaan tässä tutkimuksessa kiinnostuttu erityisesti tietotyöntekijöistä. Tietotyö on kognitiivista työtä, jonka seurauksena tuotetaan, hyödynnetään ja luodaan arvoa tiedosta ja monesti tähän yhdistetään mahdollisuus tehdä työtä paikasta riippumatta. Vihjeet: Mitä suuria trendejä näet liiketoimintaympäristössä, jotka muuttavat tietotyötä? Mitkä asiat kehittyvät tai muuttuu tulevaisuuden tietotyössä? Miksi? Mitä muutoksia se vaatii organisaatioilta?
5. Kun ollaan eletty tulevaisuussimulaattorissa nimeltä korona viimeisten kuukausien aikana, mitä sellaista olet huomannut, joka voisi muuttaa työelämää pidemmällä aikavälillä? Vihjeet: tapa tehdä töitä, työkalut, teknologia, etätyö, mikä on yllättänyt eniten?
6. Miten näet että työsuhteiden tulevaisuuden ja muutoksen? (keikkatyö, freelance, projektitiimit jne.) ns. gig-economy tai vaikka alustatalous? Vihjeet: Mitä mahdollisuuksia näet? Mitä uhkia näet? Mihin yksilöiden, yritysten ja yhteiskuntien kannattaisi kiinnittää huomiota?
7. Mitkä tiedot ja taidot ovat tärkeitä tietotyöläiselle tänä päivänä? Entä henkilöominaisuudet? Vihjeet: Ketkä ovat haluttua tietotyövoimaa tulevaisuudessa oman näkemyksesi mukaan? (Korostuuko esim. ikä, paikka, koulutus... □ hae attribuutteja)
8. Minkälaista muutosta näet työnkuviissa tällä hetkellä vai näetkö? Jos muutosta, miten näet että työnkuvat jatkavat muutostaan? Mitä ongelmia ratkotaan nyt ja tulevaisuudessa?
9. Jos sitten mietitään maailmaa työntekijän kannalta, tutkimuksessa nousee esiin 7 arvoa, jotka työntekijät nostavat esiin työssä viihtymisen kannalta (henkilöstökokemus). Näitä ovat... (pyydä katsomaan kuvaa) Miltä kuulostaa/tuttuja/itsestään selviä? Mitkä asiat näet nousussa tai muuttavan muotoaan? Miksi?
10. Haluaisitko loppuun vielä tiivistää kolme tärkeintä omaa havaintoasi, jotka nousivat esiin tämän haastattelun aikana ja joihin tiivistäisit sanomasi. Onko jotain mihin minun kannattaisi kiinnittää enemmän huomiota ja syventyä opinnäytetyössä?

Appendix 7: Round 2 interview field guide: Employees (typical)

Haastattelut ovat anonyymejä, eikä vastauksia voida missään vaiheessa yhdistää henkilöihin tai yrityksiin. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan ja äänitteet tuhotaan työn valmistumisen jälkeen. Aineistoon ei ole pääsyä muilla kuin meillä. Oliko sulla kysymyksiä tähän liittyen?

Tutkimme opinnäytetyössä tietotyön tulevaisuuden näkymiä, sitä millaisia tulevaisuuden halutut tietotyöntekijät ovat, mitä työntekijät itse toivovat ja arvostavat arvostavat (erityisesti etätö ja digitaalisen työn ympäristössä) ja miten työntekijäkokemus ja onnistuneen työnantajakuvan rakennus voisivat kohdata. Työnimenä kulkee tällä hetkellä "Perspectives on how to design for digital work practices. From employee experience to employer branding". Koska opiskelemme palvelumuotoilua, lähestymme aihetta käyttäjälähtöisesti. Tutkimuksen kontekstissa käyttäjä on työntekijä, yritys on palveluntuottaja ja arvo syntyy vuorovaikutuksessa. Tutkimuksessa on kaksi datankeruuvaihetta, joista tämä on toinen. Ensimmäisessä vaiheessa haastattelimme yritysten edustajia ja nyt kartoitamme tulevaisuuden tietotyöntekijöiden näkemyksiä ja toiveita. Synteesivaiheessa yhdistämme nämä kaksi näkökulmaa palvelumuotoilua hyödyntäen. Lopputuloksena on paitsi opinnäytetyö myös joko playbook tai vaikka podcast-sarja työn nimen mukaisesti. Tämä toinen tuotos tehdään Duunitorille, jonka kanssa teemme tätä yhteistyössä. Oppilaitos Laurea AMK ja tutkinto-ohjelma in SID.

Aloitetaanko? Laitan nyt äänityksen pyörimään.

1. Kertoisitko alkuun mitä teet ja millaisista tehtävistä työviikkosi koostuu? Mistä pidät eniten työssäsi?
2. Jos mietit omaa työn tekemistä niin miten näet että se on kehittynyt viimeisen 5 vuoden aikana? (probes: työkalut, työmäärä, tehtävät, työympäristö)
3. No mietitään sitten vaikka 5 vuotta eteenpäin, niin miten näet että oma työn tekeminen tai työelämä tulee kehittymään tästä eteenpäin? Mitä muutoksia se vaatii organisaatioilta? Mitä muutoksia se vaatii sinulta?
4. Puhutaan hetki koronasta, jota voisi myös ajatella pienenä tulevaisuussimulaationa siinä mielessä, että monet siirtyivät etätöihin ja sitä kautta tekemään töitä digitaalisten työkalujen kautta. Korona varmasti sekoitti meidän kaikkien elämät monella tavalla, esim. että lapset olivatkin kotona, mutta osaisitko kertoa miten akuutti korona-aika teillä muutti itse työn tekemistä? Siirryittekö etätöihin ja mitä se tarkoitti päivittäisessä työssä? (Pyri minimoimaan lapset kotona -problematiikka pois)
5. Näetkö että nämä muutokset ovat alkua jollekin suuremmalle muutokselle organisaatiossanne?
6. Miten yrityksessäsi suhtauduttiin etätöihin ja millainen käytäntö teillä oli ennen koronaa?
7. Näetkö että koronan myötä asenne etätöitä kohtaan muuttui? Miten? Miksi?
8. Kun seuraa julkista keskustelua etätöistä, välittyy kuva siitä, että monessa työpaikassa ja monen johtajan mielestä se soveltuu paremmin operatiiviseen työhön kuin esimerkiksi innovointiin. Mitä ajattelet tästä? Vihjeet: Mitä sinun mielestä vaatii, että etänä voi tehdä myös luovaa työtä työyhteisönä? Oletteko muuttaneet työkäytänteitä että voitte tehdä kaikenlaista työtä kuten ennen etätöitä? Mikä sun mielestä olisi paras tapa tehdä töitä?
9. Jos mietitään sitä työn tekemistä etänä, niin mitkä taidot on sellaisia, jotka auttavat sinua etätöissä? Tarkoitan välttämättömiä taitoja hyvän etätöiden kannalta - voit vaikka verrata korona-aikaan ja kokemuksiin siltä ajalta.
10. Onko jotain tietoa/taitoja, joita olisit toivonut että sinulla olisi ollut nyt koronan aikana (etätöihin liittyen)?

11. Olitko tyytyväinen työnantajan toimintaan kriisin aikana? Miksi? (probes: miten kommunikointi, miten yhteydenpito, yhteiset tapaamiset, huolenpito, tuki esimiestyölle)
12. Jos sitten mietitään maailmaa työntekijäkokemuksen kautta, tutkimuksissa nousee esiin 7 arvoa, jotka työntekijät nostavat esiin työssä viihtymisen kannalta. Työntekijäkokemus muodostuu kaikesta siitä mitä työssä on ja tapahtuu työsuhteen aikana. 7 tärkeintä arvoa ovat... (pyydä katsomaan kuvaa). Miltä kuulostaa/ovatko tuttuja/itsestään selviä? Mitkä ovat tärkeimmät tekijät? Miksi?
13. Mitkä on sellaisia asioita joita eniten odotat työnantajalta? (Priorisointi arvoille, jos ei tullut jo esiin).
14. Jos olisit vaihtamassa työpaikkaa, mihin asioihin kiinnittäisit huomiota päätöksenteossa ja miten selvittäisit uudesta yrityksestä sinulle tärkeitä asioita?
15. Tähän loppuun, haluaisitko vielä kertoa ja kiteyttää mitkä asiat on niitä jotka mahdollistavat tai vaikeuttavat hyvän työn tekemistä? Vihjeet: JOS esimiesroolissa, kysy sama myös tiimin vetämisen/johtamisen näkökulmasta, ergonomia (mitä muutoksia viim 6 kk aikana), työtila (millainen pitää olla), työkalut (kysy mitkä), työskentelytavat (projektien fasilitointiin liittyen)

Appendix 8: Round 2 interview field guide: Employees (atypical)

Haastattelut ovat anonyymejä, eikä vastauksia voida missään vaiheessa yhdistää henkilöihin tai yrityksiin. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan ja äänitteet tuhotaan työn valmistumisen jälkeen. Aineistoon ei ole pääsyä muilla kuin meillä. Oliko sulla kysymyksiä tähän liittyen?

Tutkimme opinnäytetyössä tietotyön tulevaisuuden näkymiä, sitä millaisia tulevaisuuden halutut tietotyöntekijät ovat, mitä työntekijät itse toivovat ja arvostavat arvostavat (erityisesti etätö ja digitaalisen työn ympäristössä) ja miten työntekijäkokemus ja onnistuneen työnantajakuvan rakennus voisivat kohdata. Työnimenä kulkee tällä hetkellä "Perspectives on how to design for digital work practices. From employee experience to employer branding". Koska opiskelemme palvelumuotoilua, lähestymme aihetta käyttäjälähtöisesti. Tutkimuksen kontekstissa käyttäjä on työntekijä, yritys on palveluntuottaja ja arvo syntyy vuorovaikutuksessa. Tutkimuksessa on kaksi datankeruuvaihetta, joista tämä on toinen. Ensimmäisessä vaiheessa haastattelimme yritysten edustajia ja nyt kartoitamme tulevaisuuden tietotyöntekijöiden näkemyksiä ja toiveita. Synteesivaiheessa yhdistämme nämä kaksi näkökulmaa palvelumuotoilua hyödyntäen. Lopputuloksena on paitsi opinnäytetyö myös joko playbook tai vaikka podcast-sarja työn nimen mukaisesti. Tämä toinen tuotos tehdään Duunitorille, jonka kanssa teemme tätä yhteistyössä. Oppilaitos Laurea AMK ja tutkinto-ohjelma in SID.

Aloitetaanko? Laitan nyt äänityksen pyörimään.

1. Mitä teet ja millaisista tehtävistä työviikkosi koostuu? Missä tyypillisesti teet töitä (kotoa käsin, asiakkaalta, co.working tila)? Mistä pidät eniten työssäsi?
2. Miksi olet valinnut tämän tavan tehdä töitä? (selvennä myös työntekemisen malli jos ei tullut selväksi aikaisemmassa kysymyksessä - friikku/kevytyrittäjä etc)
3. Jos mietit työn tekemistä niin miten näet että se on kehittynyt viimeisen 5 vuoden aikana? Vihjeet: työkalut, työmäärä, tehtävät, työympäristö
4. Jos mietitään sitten vaikka 5 vuotta eteenpäin, niin miten näet että oma työn tekeminen tai työelämä tulee kehittymään tästä eteenpäin? Mitä muutoksia se vaatii organisaatioilta?
5. Puhutaan hetki koronasta, jota voisi myös ajatella pienenä tulevaisuussimulaationa siinä mielessä, että monet siirtyivät etätöihin ja sitä kautta tekemään töitä digitaalisten työkalujen kautta. Korona varmasti sekoitti meidän kaikkien elämät monella tavalla, esim. että lapset olivatkin kotona, mutta osaisitko kertoa miten akuutti korona-aika teillä muutti itse työn tekemistä? Siirryttekö etätöihin ja mitä se tarkoitti päivittäisessä työssä? (Pyri minimoimaan lapset kotona -problematiikka pois). Miten yhteistyö asiakkaiden/verkostojen kanssa onnistui? Mistä puhutaan nyt? Mikä yllätti eniten?
6. Näetkö että nämä muutokset ovat alkua jollekin suuremmalle muutokselle?
7. Kun seuraa julkista keskustelua etätöistä, välittyy kuva siitä että monessa työpaikassa ja monen johtajan mielestä se soveltuu paremmin operatiiviseen työhön kuin esimerkiksi innovointiin. Oletko käynyt keskusteluita tästä ja mitä sinun mielestä vaatii että etänä voi tehdä myös luovaa työtä työyhteisönä?
8. Jos mietitään sitä työn tekemistä etänä, niin mitkä taidot on sellaisia, jotka auttavat sinua etätöissä? Tarkoitan välttämättömiä taitoja hyvän etätöiden kannalta - voit vaikka verrata korona-aikaan ja kokemuksiin siltä ajalta.
9. Jos sitten mietitään maailmaa työntekijäkokemuksen kautta, tutkimuksissa nousee esiin 7 arvoa, jotka työntekijät nostavat esiin työssä viihtymisen kannalta. Työntekijäkokemus muodostuu kaikesta siitä mitä työssä on ja tapahtuu työsuhteen aikana. 7 tärkeintä arvoa ovat... (pyydä katsomaan kuvaa). Miltä kuulostaa/ovatko tuttuja/itsestään selviä? Mitkä ovat tärkeimmät tekijät? Miksi?

10. Mitkä on sellaisia asioita joita eniten odotat yhteistyökumppaneilta? (Priorisointi arvoille, jos ei tullut jo esiin).
11. Tähän loppuun, haluisitko vielä kertoa ja kiteyttää mitkä asiat on niitä jotka mahdollistavat tai vaikeuttavat hyvän työn tekemistä? Vihjeet: JOS esimiesroolissa, kysy sama myös tiimin vetämisen/johtamisen näkökulmasta.

Appendix 9: Workshop invitation



Haluaisitko työstää etätöön työkalupakkia kanssamme ja samalla tutkailla omaa työntekijäkokemustasi?

Korona-kevään ja kesän aikana tietotyössä siirryttiin vauhdilla etätööhön. Samaan aikaan työn tekemisen tavat muuttuivat ja uusia työkaluja tuli käyttöön. Aina ei ole ollut helppoa. Olemme kaksi innovaatioiden ja palvelumuotoilun MBA-opiskelijaa Laurea AMK:sta ja teemme opinnäytetyötä, jonka aiheena on "The remote employee experience: how to design mobile knowledge work practices".

Järjestämme lokakuussa kaksi työpajaa, joihin toivomme osallistujia eri aloilta ja erilaisista positioista tietotyössä. Työpajan tavoitteena on kartoittaa ja kehittää etä- ja hybridityökäytänteitä, jotka vaikuttavat positiivisesti työntekijäkokemukseen*. Metodit ja työkalut ovat osallistavia, luovia ja palvelumuotoilussa yleisesti käytettyjä, ja voit hyödyntää niitä myös omassa organisaatiossasi. Sinun ei tarvitse valmistautua mitenkään muutoin kuin olemalla valmis jakamaan ajatuksiasi.

Tervetuloa mukaan, jos olet:

- tietotyössä
- tehnyt/teet etätöitä
- käyttänyt jotain etätööhön soveltuvia työkaluja kuten Teams, Zoom tai Miro
- työsuhteessa tai olet kevään aikana ollut vakituisesti töissä
- työyhteisössä tai
- yksinyrittäjä ja tehnyt kevään aikana töitä erilaisissa verkostoissa.

Ylläoleva on oleellista siksi, että työskentelyyn tarvitaan kokemuspohjaa.

Työpajat järjestetään virtuaalisesti. Osallistumiseen tarvitset ainoastaan tietokoneen ja kuvayhteyden kestävän internetyhteyden. Työkaluina tulemme käyttämään Teamsia ja Miroa. Työkalujen käyttö ei vaadi aikaisempaa kokemusta ja aloitamme teknisellä opastuksella. Työpajoissa työskennellään pienryhmissä ja jokainen osallistuja saa pienen ennakkotehtävän, joka auttaa orientoitumiseen.

Olethan paikalla jo klo 9:45, jotta voimme testata tekniikan toimivuuden ja pääsemme aloittamaan ajoissa. Taukoja pidämme säännöllisesti, jotta jaksetaan tehdä hommia.

Huom! Järjestämme toisen työpajan ti 6.10. klo 16.15-19.00. Voit osallistua myös molempina päivinä koska työstämme eri asioita. Linkki kutsuun:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/362660538094335>

Ilmoittaudu viimeistään pe 25.9.

Lisätietoa suoraan Jennyltä ja Noralta messengerin kautta.

*Työntekijäkokemus muodostuu kaikesta siitä, mitä työssä on ja tapahtuu työsuhteen aikana

Appendix 10: Employee digital journal instructions

Tutkimme työntekijäkokemusta. Työntekijäkokemus muodostuu kaikesta siitä, mitä työssä on ja tapahtuu työsuhteen aikana. Siksi meitä kiinnostaa miltä asiat työpaikalla tuntuvat ja millaisia kokemuksia päivän aikana syntyy.

Tarkkaile työpäivääsi 2-3 päivän ajan kirjaamalla 3-5 sinulle merkityksellistä asiaa tai tapahtumaa työn tekemisen kokemuksen kannalta. Kirjaa tapahtumat mieluiten aikajärjestyksessä ja kuvaile mitä niissä tapahtui ja miksi olivat sinulle merkityksellisiä. Mikäli mahdollista, voi merkintään liittää kuvan tilanteesta. Havainnointipäivien ei tarvitse olla peräkkäisiä päiviä. Päiväkirjaa voi pitää wordissä tai käsin kirjoittamalla, mutta suosittelemme lämpimästi ilmaista Day One Journal sovellusta (<https://dayoneapp.com/>), jonka avulla kirjaaminen ja kuvan liittäminen onnistuu erittäin helposti kännykältä (ohjeet sovellukseen löytyvät alta).

Tarkkaile päivän aikana erityisesti seuraavia asioita liittyen:

- Millaisia asioita teet päivän aikana? Paljonko ne vievät aikaasi? Miltä tehtävä tuntuu?
- Mitkä asiat tuottivat onnistumisen kokemuksen? Mikä oli innostavaa?
- Vaikeuttaako joku työn tekemistä? Tuntuiko jokin asia vaikealta? Harmittiko joku asia?
- Mitä työkaluja käytät? Ovatko työkalut kunnossa?
- Voit merkata myös hymynaamalla 😊 tai ☹️ oliko jokin merkintä positiivinen vai negatiivinen
- Päivän lopuksi: Mitkä sanat kuvaavat tätä päivää? Mikä olisi voinut tehdä päivästä erityisemmän?

Esimerkkejä:

8:30: Syön aamupalaa yhdessä Annan kanssa ja keskustelemme tulevasta projektista. Kiva nähdä taas kollegoita edes välillä. Hyvä fiilis 😊

10:30: Aamun aikana on tullut jo kaksi huutomerkkimeiliä ja yllättävät asiat pitäisi ehtiä tehdä päivän aikana. En ehdi kuitenkaan nyt tehdä tätä, sillä teams-palaveri alkaa. Harmittaa, etteivät ihmiset osaa ennakoida paremmin koska näyttäisi siltä, että aika helposti olisi voinut.

14:15: Excel-raportti kaatui kolme kertaa ja rivejä oli tullut yhtäkkiä 65000. Meni yli puoli tuntia että sain fiksattua pohjan kuntoon. Sitten en ehtinytkään tehdä itse asiaa loppuun. Onneksi aikaa on viikon loppuun.

16:30: Iso projekti päätökseen ja tunnen oppineeni niin paljon. Siistii!

Päivän lopuksi: hyvä päivä koska projekti saatiin loppuun. Mahtavaa nähdä kokonaisuus.

Day One sovelluksen käyttö

Day One on helppokäyttöinen ja ilmaiseksi ladattava sovellus (Mac, iOS ja Android).

- Avaa tili.
- Hyväksy kuvakirjaston käyttö (tällöin pystyt lisäämään halutessasi valokuvia).
- Jokaiseen merkintään tulee automaattisesti päivämäärä ja kellonaika.
- Halutessasi salli sovellukselle sijainti sitä käytettäessä, josta teet muistiinpanot (nämä voit nimetä uudelleen).
- Pystyt lisäämään myös jokaiseen merkintään tunnetilan emojiilla ja halutessasi valokuvia, jotka kuvaavat tapahtumaa tai ajatuksiasi.
- Valmiin päiväkirjan lähettäminen: Valitse oikealta ylhäältä Asetukset → tuonti ja vienti → vie PDF, jonka jälkeen tiedosto on lähetettävissä.

Päiväkirjamerkintöjä voi tehdä kahdella tavalla:

1. Uuden merkinnän voi tehdä alhaalta + merkistä tai suoraan aloitusnäkyvän kameran tai paperi/kynän kohdasta. Jos valitset tekstin lisäämisen, pääset alhaalta klemmarista lisäämään myös kuvan. Klikkaamalla päiväkirjamerkintää ja sieltä kolme pistettä pääset jälkätehen muokkaamaan merkinnän tietoja.
2. Päiväkirjamerkinnän voi lisätä myös aloitusnäkyvästä alhaalta + merkin kautta. Jatka muuten kuten kohdassa 1.

Perinteinen päiväkirja

Voit pitää päiväkirjaa myös Wordissa (tai käsin) jos et syystä tai toisesta halua ladata appia. Muista siinä tapauksessa lisätä kellonaikoja päiväsi raportointiin.

Palautus

Palauta päiväkirja viimeistään pe 4.9. jenny.kurjenniemi@student.laurea.fi ja nora.u.ryti@student.laurea.fi.

Appendix 11: Recruitment ad for employee digital journals

Hei!

etsimme haastateltavia / päiväkirjanpitäjiä opinnäytetyöhön.

Opinnäytetyön työnimenä on tällä hetkellä ”Perspectives on how to design digital work practices. From employee experience to employer branding” eli esimerkiksi tutkimme sellaisia etätyön käytänteitä, jotka mahdollistavat mielekkään työn tekemisen.

Kohderyhmänä on tietotyöntekijät. Tutkimukseen voi osallistua joko n. 90 min haastatteluna tai pitämällä päiväkirjaa 2-3 työpäivän ajan (Dayoneapp). Haastattelut / päiväkirjat tehdään viikkojen 32-34 aikana.

Nyt etsimme erityisesti niitä, jotka työllistävät itse itsensä joko freelancerina, yksinyrittäjänä, tekevät projekteja monille eri tahoille, ovat mahdollisesti työskennelleet co-working spacessa tai muuten katsoo työskentelevänsä ns. ”epätyypillisessä” työsuhteessa.

Ole yhteydessä ja kerron lisää!

Appendix 12: Remote EX ecosystem map from WS1



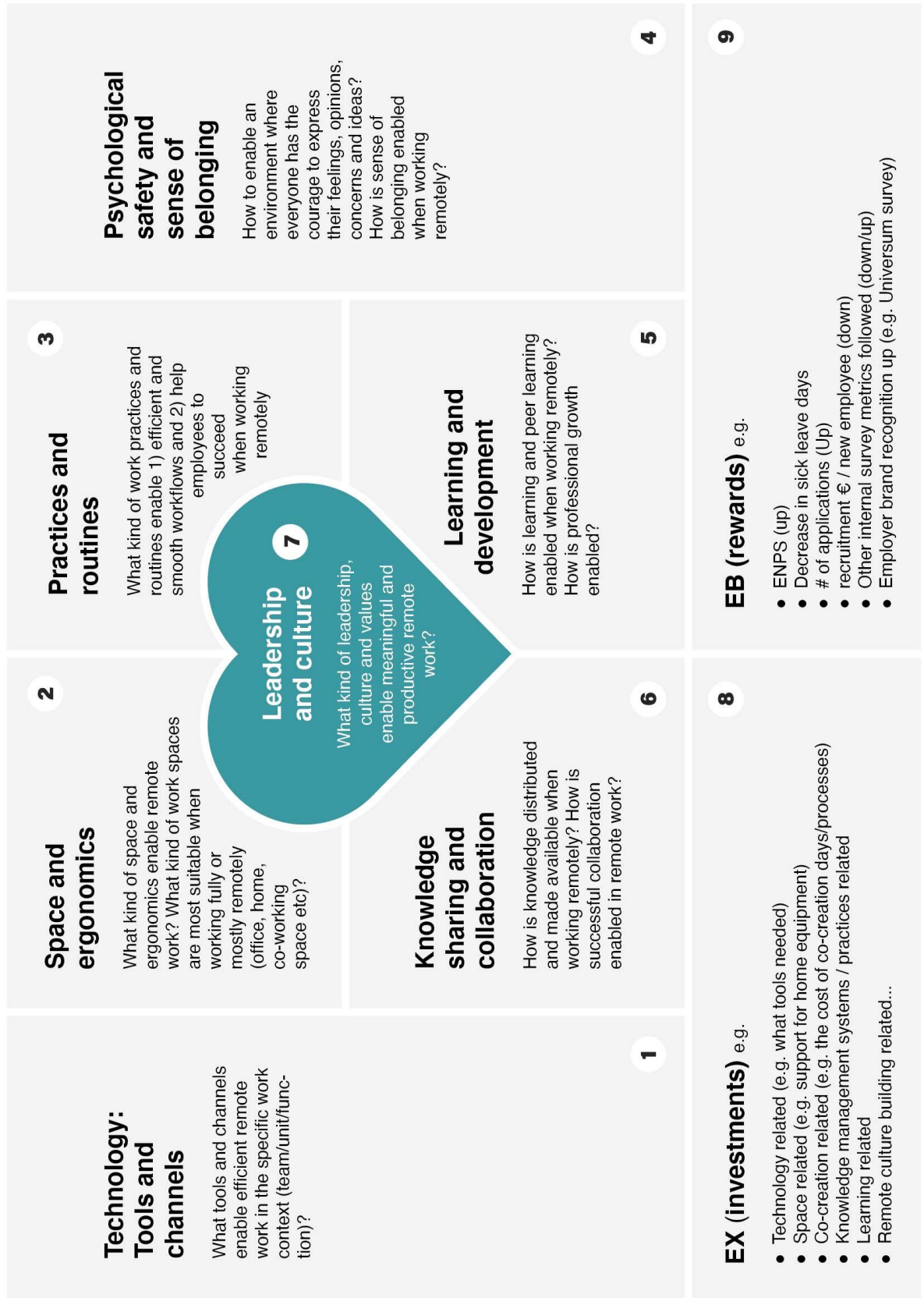
Appendix 13: Remote EX canvas from WS 2

Appendix 15: Identified knowledge work skills

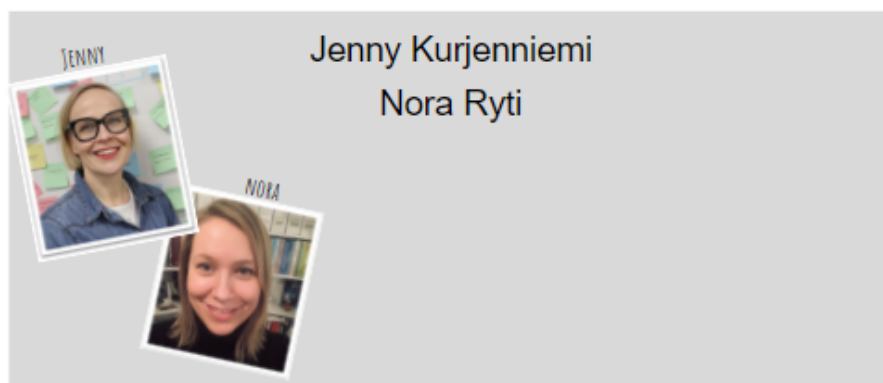
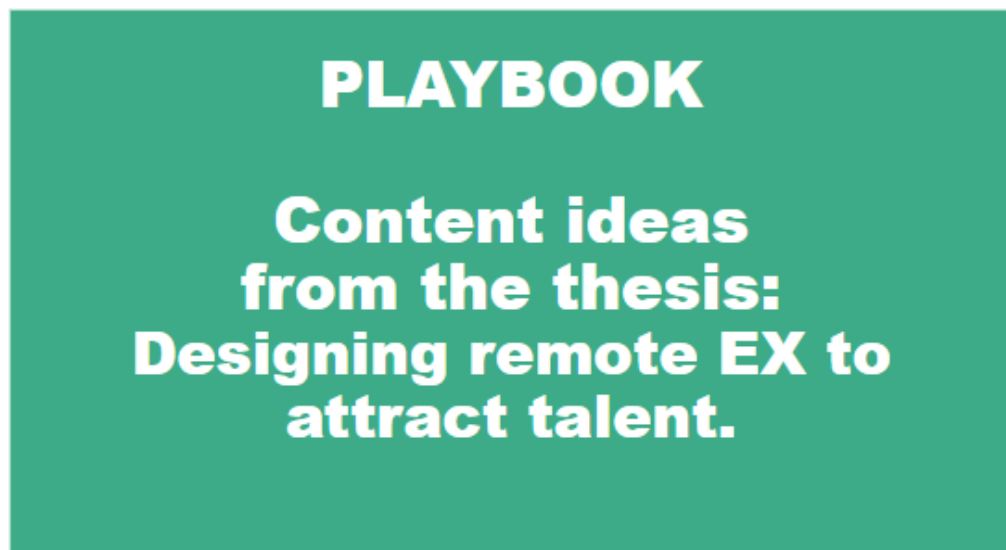
| Interview source | What | Theme | Code |
|------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Employers | Behaviors | Drive | Following interests/passion |
| Employers | Behaviors | Drive | work as a hobby |
| Employers | Behaviors | Drive | curiosity |
| Employers | Behaviors | Personality | Sense of humor |
| Employers | Behaviors | Personality | Easy to approach |
| Employers | Behaviors | Taking responsibility | take and carry responsibility |
| Employers | Behaviors | Taking responsibility | taking initiative |
| Employers | Behaviors | Taking responsibility | trustworthy |
| Employers | Values | Social, accepting, self-knowledge | Embrace diversity |
| Employers | Values | Social, accepting, self-knowledge | own purpose in big picture/purposefulness |
| Employers | Values | Social, accepting, self-knowledge | networking as a motivator and value |
| Employers | Values | Social, accepting, self-knowledge | abundance mentality / away from silos |
| Employers | Values | Social, accepting, self-knowledge | experience as a foundation for problem solving |
| Employers | Knowledge | Wide knowledge base | experienced professionals with t-shaped skills |
| Employers | Knowledge | Wide knowledge base | strong substance knowledge |
| Employers | Knowledge | Wide knowledge base | business environment knowledge |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | self knowledge |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | self reflection in social interaction |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | self motivation |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | self leadership |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | resilience |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | ability to recover |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | adaptability |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | can manage multiple projects during the day |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | problem solving |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | critical thinking |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | organizing skills |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Maintaining work life balance | knowing your boundaries |

| | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | intellectual flexibility |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | agile thinking |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | learning agility |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | self motivated learning |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | constant learning |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | own work development |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | application of knowledge |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | knowledge building through interaction with others |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | ability to drive change |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | positive influence on others |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | leadership skills |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | coaching skills |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | facilitation skills |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | ability to reflect and learn as a team/individual |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Communication skills | ability to explain complex issues |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Communication skills | writing skills |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Entrepreneurship | consulting skills |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Entrepreneurship | customer service skills |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Entrepreneurship | commercial skills and attitude |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Entrepreneurship | commercializing own knowledge |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Entrepreneurship | packaging own knowledge/building portfolio |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Systems understanding | understand complex issues |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Systems understanding | systems thinking skills/knowledge |
| Employers | Meta-skill | Systems understanding | zoom in/out big picture |
| Employers | Meta-skill | work life skills | A skill that juniors lack when entering work life |
| Employers | Soft skill | human interaction | human skills as strategic competence |
| Employers | Soft skill | human interaction | social skills |
| Employers | Soft skill | human interaction | emotional skills |

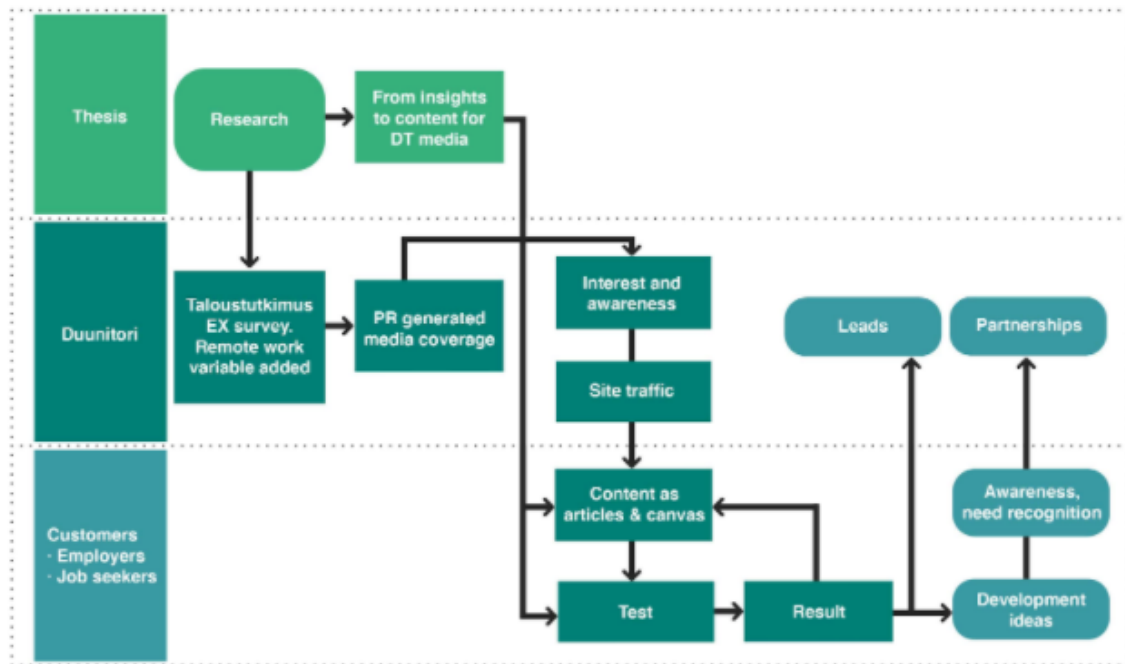
| | | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Employers | Soft skill | human interaction | empathy skills |
| Employers | Soft skill | human interaction | ability to give feedback |
| Employers | Soft skill | human interaction | collaboration |
| Employers | Soft skill | human interaction | Team work skills |
| Employers | Soft skill | human interaction | Remote/ digital working skills (how to communicate, influence, listen) |
| Employers | Hard skill | Technology | Multiple technologies in use at same time |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Maintaining work life balance | Mentally separate work life and free time |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Maintaining work life balance | Create routines for separating work life and free time |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Maintaining work life balance | Scheduling own work and taking breaks (with clear breaks and end times) |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | Self management |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | Productivity |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Skills related to self | Decision making |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Entrepreneurship | Networking and commercializing own skills |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Communication skills | Ability to be understood |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Communication skills | Collaborative communication |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Communication skills | Written communication |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | Find knowledge and ask for help |
| Employees | Meta-skill | Learning and transformation | Peer learning |
| Employees | Soft skill | human interaction | Team leading |
| Employees | Soft skill | human interaction | Active listening & empathy |
| Employees | Soft skill | human interaction | Powerful questions to lead transformation |
| Employees | Soft skill | human interaction | Remote meeting facilitation |
| Employees | Hard skill | Technology | Managing different co-working and collaboration tools |



Appendix 17: The Playbook prototype



How to use the content



PLAYBOOK PROTOTYPE AS INSPIRATION FOR CONTENT CREATION

The following pages summarize the learnings from a study: Designing remote EX in knowledge work to attract talent.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE (EX): The total sum of what is and happens during the employee journey including the recruitment process.

REMOTE WORK (NWoW): No one definition, most definitions combine the elements of freedom of physical workspace and time with a strong technology component

KNOWLEDGE WORK: A cognitive effort to use, produce and extract value from knowledge

EMPLOYER BRAND (EB): "the company reputation as an employer inside and outside the organization"

Content ideas

Content for the job seekers / employees

- Test: Are you future ready?
 - Yes: congratulations, these articles might interest you
 - No: Read these articles and get started with developing the future proof you

Articles e.g.:

- These are the skills of a top candidate
- How to navigate the change in knowledge work
- Routines are the key to well-being at work

Content for the employers

- Test: Is your company remote work ready?
 - Yes: Want to know about remote EX and how to make your EB stronger? read these articles... and we are happy to help
 - No: Can we help you? + link to content

Articles e.g.

- The 4 premises of knowledge work
 - Changing structures and models
 - Characteristics and practices
 - Learning and development
 - Leadership and culture
- The building blocks of remote EX to attract talent
 - The remote EX canvas fields as content
- Want to know about remote EX and how to make your EB stronger?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRO

What this playbook is about and how was it born, structure of the playbook, how to best use it and what can be achieved with it

PART 1

CONTEXT

What have we learned about knowledge work with the sudden increase in remote work in 2020. What needs to be taken into consideration in the remote EX and building a strong EB.

1. Trends and characterstics of knowledge work
2. Insights into the remote EX
3. From EX to EB

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 2

PLAYBOOK

Here we describe the identified building blocks of remote EX through the remote EX canvas and how they affect EB

The remote EX canvas

1. Technology: tools and channels
2. Space and ergonomics
3. Practices and routines
4. Leadership and culture
5. Learning & Development
6. Knowledge sharing and collaboration
7. Psychological safety and sense of belonging

Workflow

1. From observations to working with the canvas
 - Employer: Analysis of the current state (occupational health, surveys, ENPS, industry data. Signals from the organizations)
 - Employees: Diaries
2. From insights to practices - JBTD
3. From practices to action and measuring the results (ENPS...)

PART 1

CONTEXT

Our learnings from

- **Digital knowledge work**
- **EX and especially the remote EX**
- **The role of EX in EB**

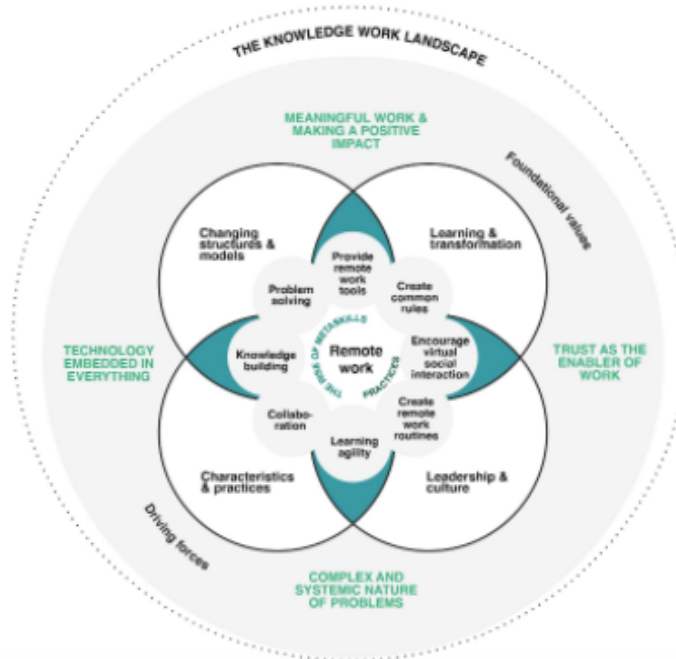
Created on the basis of research

- **16 interviews**
- **2 workshoppia**
- **3 digital journals**
- **Desk research**
- **Literature**

Always design a thing by considering it in its larger context - a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan.

Elieel Saarinen

LEARNINGS FROM THE CHANGING KNOWLEDGE WORK



There are two driving forces and two foundational values that change knowledge work. The driving forces are *technology embedded in everything* and *the complex and systemic nature of problems*, which is a close relative of the VUCA world (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous). The two foundational values are *meaningful work and making an impact* and *trust*. Based on these four forces we identified four premises in which these driving forces become evident in working life. These are 1) Models and ways of knowledge work 2) Changing structures, 3) Culture and leadership and 4) Learning and development. Furthermore we could identify skills and practices needed in knowledge work already today but even more so in the future.

Characteristics & practices : short description

Changing structures & models: short description

Culture and leadership: short description

Learning and Development: short description

Skills: short description

INSIGHTS INTO THE REMOTE EX

- We all experience things differently. Experiences are influenced by e.g.
 - Past experiences
 - Future hopes
 - Emotional state in the present.
- EX is the total sum of what is and happens during the employee journey including the recruitment process
- The remote work experience emphasizes technology - how well the internet connection works, what systems and programs are in place, that the work is technically easy, and regular meetings between the team and with your own manager. Trust and the support of a manager also strongly contributes to the development of a good employee experience.

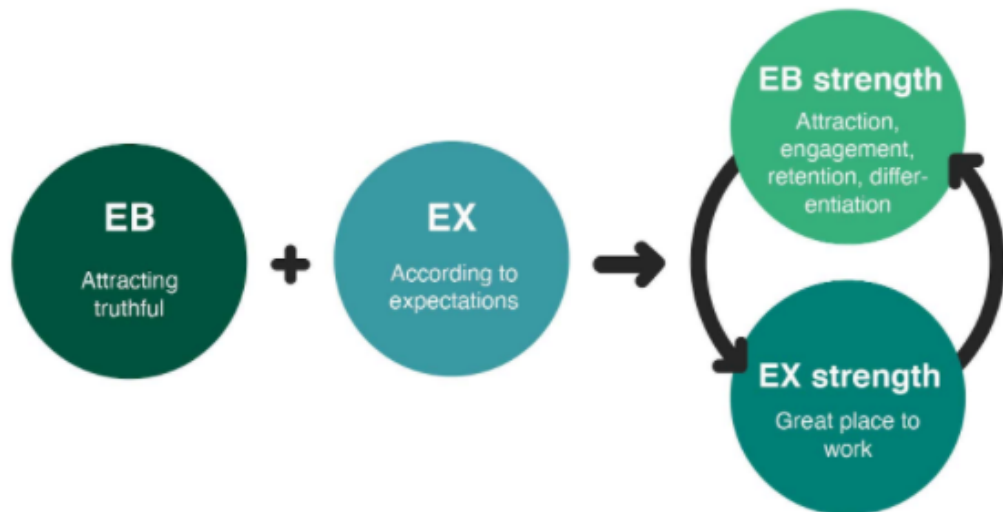
“List the most important factors that contribute to a positive remote work experience”

The themes are:

- ★ Technology
- ★ Practices and routines
- ★ Trust and the support of the manager



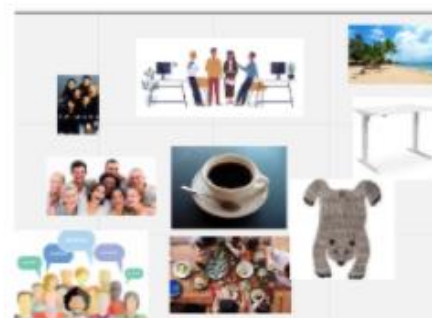
THE ROLE OF EX IN BUILDING A STRONG EB



Employer branding is a determinant for EX. The reasoning is that employees mentally measure the daily experiences at a workplace against the psychological contract formed on the basis of promises made during the whole employee journey and these promises are mediated through employer branding activities. When the psychological contract is perceived fulfilled EX is positive and the reverse is true with perceived breach of the contract. This way employer branding strongly determines the success of the relationship between the employer and employee and is a determinant for EX. At the same EX is the determinant for EB for exactly the same reasons as above. Simply, when EX is positive the EB becomes more attractive and stronger when negative EX effects the EB reversely

PART 2

PLAYBOOK



THE REMOTE EX CANVAS



Technology: tools and channels

What tools and channels enable efficient remote work in the specific work context (team/unit/function)?

"There has been technological difficulties and connections have been breaking down when some live in the sticks. That is why we have not kept the cameras on"

Without technology there is no remote work and good technology infrastructure and tools are the starting point for good remote EX. Employers should provide the tools that best support the type of work being done and a big part of this is evaluation of the usability of these tools as they are not all equal. It is important to also provide training IT support to ensure that the hardware and tools provided can actually be used.



1. Background
2. Ask these questions
3. Pitfalls
4. Jobs to be done
5. Tips

Space and ergonomics

What kind of space and ergonomics enable remote work? What kind of work spaces are most suitable when working fully or mostly remotely (office, home, co-working space etc)?

"When the office space was designed together with the employees, results changed radically"
Expert



Space and ergonomics were usually not mentioned spontaneously when asking what makes a good work day or what the success factors are in remote EX. But when probed, it became clear that these matter. Employees value the benefits of office spaces and furniture especially from the point ergonomics, as many do not have proper office equipment at home. As remote work will increase, companies should think how they best support employees in their home offices and when thinking about the office space it is important to design multi-functional workspaces that support and enable the new nature of work.

1. Background
2. Ask these questions
3. Pitfalls
4. Jobs to be done
5. Tips

Practices and routines

What kind of work practices and routines enable efficient and smooth workflows and help employees to succeed when working remotely?

"Without routines the workday becomes totally reckless"
Employee



Practices and routines are a key element to successful remote work, especially when co-created with the employees. Routines include daily check-ins with team members and individual wellbeing routines (e.g. nutrition and exercise). Important practices include daily wellbeing, communication practices and remote meeting practices.

1. Background
2. Ask these questions
3. Pitfalls
4. Jobs to be done
5. Tips

Learning and development

How is learning and peer learning enabled when working remotely? How is professional growth enabled?

"Self-development and learning something new is one of the biggest motivators of work in general. When a job starts to feel like you are not moving forward, it gets boring very rapidly"
Expert



Employers should recognize and understand the importance of learning and development for individual employees and enable opportunities accordingly. Learning and development is important to employees as it enables them to thrive in the fast-paced and changing knowledge work environment. In addition, providing opportunities for development is highly motivating.

1. Background
2. Ask these questions
3. Pitfalls
4. Jobs to be done
5. Tips

Knowledge sharing and collaboration

How is knowledge distributed made available and when working remotely? How is successful collaboration enabled in remote work?

"Quite few things in today's work are no longer something that happens in one's own head but happens between heads"
Expert



Collaboration and knowledge sharing are integral parts of knowledge work. Sharing knowledge through documents can be difficult if practices and tools do not support this in virtual meetings.

1. Background
2. Ask these questions
3. Pitfalls
4. Jobs to be done
5. Tips

Leadership and culture

What kind of leadership, culture and values enable meaningful and productive remote work?

"Managers are in roles of support and connection services that help employees to succeed"
Expert



Remote work requires a new model of leadership which is supportive, clear, empathetic and based on trust. Employers should focus on cultural leadership as it is vital to ensuring that the work community enables a feeling of safety and belonging. Leading through culture in the age of remote work came up clearly in all the interviews and workshops and within all of the topics discussed either directly or indirectly. Culture is the foundation for behaviors and attitudes when direct management by team leads is not possible in the remote or hybrid setting. The success of the rising self-managing teams is also strongly dependent on strong cultural leadership with no managers. Values should be thought through on a company level but then taken down to individual level.

1. Background
2. Ask these questions
3. Pitfalls
4. Jobs to be done
5. Tips

Psychological safety and belonging

How can we enable interaction in which everyone has the courage to express their feelings, opinions, concerns and ideas? How can we enable sense of belonging in remote work?

"Work efficiency was once upon a time perhaps what more on the surface was but now, we have understood the importance of psychological safety and well-being. Especially when it comes to expert work which supports the fact that people are able to work as much as possible in an intelligent way"
Expert



Psychological safety is a prerequisite to collaboration and enabling performance and wellbeing. The workplace plays an important role in social wellbeing of employees. As remote work restricts physical presence, new ways and channels of social interaction must be designed that suit the particular work environment and its employees.

1. Background
2. Ask these questions
3. Pitfalls
4. Jobs to be done
5. Tips

The remote EX in practice

21 identified practices 1/2

| Canvas field | Tools and channels | Space and ergonomics | Practices and routine |
|--------------|--|--|---|
| Practice 1 | Provide tools (hardware and software) that support the ways of working • Involve employees as they know best what helps them get the job done | Provide appropriate office tools and furniture for remote work from home: monitor, desk, chair etc. | Create common rules for all so that the models and ways of working should be clear (e.g. when and how to best be in touch with colleagues). |
| Practice 2 | Provide tools that work regardless of location (e.g. VPN frequently causes problems) | Design office space which is suitable for different types of work: spaces for collaboration also in hybrid work or concentration/taking calls. • The space should provide a feeling of equality and allow for informal meeting of colleagues. | Incorporate flexibility in affecting individual work rhythms to include both private life and work life based on what has been agreed in the team. |
| Practice 3 | Provide training in usage of the tools and encourage managers and teams in their use by building a culture of knowledge sharing. | Consider individual wants and needs in office space design where employees can choose their own workspace for the day at the office. | Encourage the choosing of own ways of working. • This is a result of practice 1 and 2, when there is a common model for working and a knowledge of when there is a need to be present, the work can be tailored to individual preferences. |

The remote EX in practice

21 identified practices 2/2

| Canvas field | Knowledge and development | Collaboration | Psychological safety and sense of belonging | Leadership and culture |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|
| Practice 1 | Organize joint regular meetings (where knowledge is exchanged). • There should be no difference between "office" and remote meetings when it comes to information flow and exchange of knowledge. | Organize regular internal communication so teams and individuals should know their status on a daily basis. • Organizational (leadership) topics to be communicated separately. | Start each meeting with a short non-work related chit chat (as would happen in "office" meetings) to replace the random meets and greets at the offices to enable a sense of belonging and feeling of community. | Discuss and define values on a regular basis, both on organizational and team levels. |
| Practice 2 | Tailor communication to the needs of the different employee target groups. • This enhances knowledge building and drives wanted action in the organization. | Agree jointly on rules and objectives for collaboration including metrics for objectives. • These should be openly accessible and visible and gone through regularly to see how it works. | Thank people and celebrate successes including showing respect for other people's work. | Involve employees in decision-making of rules, ways of working and processes (+ metrics). • Joint agreements build shared responsibility and buy in so that teams follow the same rules and processes. The metrics should include remote work and be developmental. |
| Practice 3 | Share best practices. • Transparent knowledge sharing and a joint way of working when it comes to sharing learnings and knowledge. | Respect all thoughts and ideas. Starting point is the will to understand what others mean (listen to understand). | Appreciate other's views (a practice where trust is shown). | Regard soft skills as essential skills. Remote communication is difficult: empathy and dialogue should be practiced. |

7 Useful strategies to enhance remote EX and EB

1. Technology: tools and channels

Good technology infrastructure and fitting tools are the starting point for good remote EX. Collaboration with IT and employees would benefit the organizations greatly in assessing what systems and tools would be most meaningful in productive remote work. This is not an exercise for IT only. As technology is embedded in everything make IT support easily accessible as one of key service functions.

2. Space

The workspace whether in the office or elsewhere should help in getting the work done in a meaningful and productive way. Inviting employees to collaborate in workspace design is a good practice. The example presented earlier in chapter 8 showed the employee satisfaction rates immediately increased when employees were included in the process and workspace helped in getting the work done.

3. Practices and routines

Remote meetings can be the only direct connection to the organization and the expectations include both the productivity aspect and social needs. Hence meetings matter even more in remote work. Active collaboration with employees to create the best remote work practices and routines increases employee satisfaction and productivity. Strong meeting facilitation skills are a valuable asset to have for all.

4. Psychological safety and sense of belonging

First, the concept of psychological safety needs to be understood as one of the critical success factors in organizations. Second, the way to support psychological safety and sense of belonging require an active approach in remote setting and these inherent needs should be nurtured in daily employee experiences. What employees say, is that just by intentionally acknowledging remote meeting participants or regular contacts with line manager and team are a good starting point.

5. Learning and development

Remote work requires new skills. These include managerial skills but also skills needed in daily tasks like remote meeting facilitation. Train the organization to unlock the remote work potential! Continuous learning is at the core of knowledge work, thus a winning culture values time spent in learning and development including remote peer learning meta-skills and soft skills are becoming the new hard skills in knowledge work and the need for these skills is heightened in remote work. Value and develop these skill sets in the organization.

6. Knowledge sharing and collaboration:

Knowledge work is knowledge sharing based collaboration. In the office setup, knowledge sharing has many times been mediated through people in informal encounters. In remote work, systems and tools have a heightened role. Make work easy, not hard and understand what tools and systems cause most frustration or relief. This serves as a good action list for enhancing remote EX, productivity and wellbeing. Encourage and reward collaboration and share experiences of successful cases to show what can be achieved as an organization.

7. Culture and leadership

The culture and leadership practices that worked in the office set up will most likely not deliver same results in remote times. The recommendation is to first work through the six strategies presented above in collaboration with employees to understand the reality of the employees and the employer. Then decide what path to take with EX and EB in mind. A tip from the employees: check values and fit to remote times. If trust is one of the organizational values, is this shown in the daily practices by managers in their attitude, behavior and communication towards remote work? Are development goals remote work fit? Is success possible in remote work based on the KPI's? Remember - knowledge workers have high expectations.

