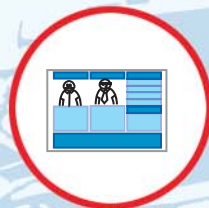


Mentor+

- Incubation, mentoring and project management for young entrepreneurs

II



design report

A masters thesis in Service Systems Design

Aalborg University Copenhagen
Master thesis in Service Systems Design

Group members:
Joel Emil Klagenberg-Jørgensen

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Problem definition

How can a service system be designed to combine mentoring, incubation and project management in a way that supports highly educated entrepreneurs with little experience getting started?

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Vision

Mentor+ is an answer the Danish government's goal of being amongst the countries best at transforming new scientific research into new products and services (Erhvervs- og Byggestyrelsen and REG LAB, 2007). Furthermore the Danish government wants to be amongst the societies with most startups in the world by 2015(ibid.). There is currently a big group of potential young talents, bringing lots of new scientific research from the universities, who have a hard time getting funded by the innovation environments (personal communication, Jakob Stolt , May 20 2014). The purpose of Mentor+ is to help the talents in this group getting a good start, which can hopefully lead to more successful startups.

The goal of Mentor+ is to help inexperienced Entrepreneurs with high educations set a scope for the company early on and follow a red line through the startup process. Through a six month course the entrepreneurs will be facilitated by more experienced entrepreneurs in the roles of Consultants. Mentor+ consists of incubation, mentoring and aid for project managing, which aims at helping the Entrepreneur test central ideas and eventually get marked validation on a concept. Furthermore participants in Mentor+ will get used to planning and evaluating their goals through the use of an advanced project calendar in collaboration with a Consultant. Through the network at Symbion the Entrepreneur will also get lots of inputs on how to deal with everyday tasks such as bookkeeping, marketing etc.

It is the hope that Mentor+ can lead to a better transformation of new scientific research into new products and services as well as leading to a greater pool of successful startups in general.

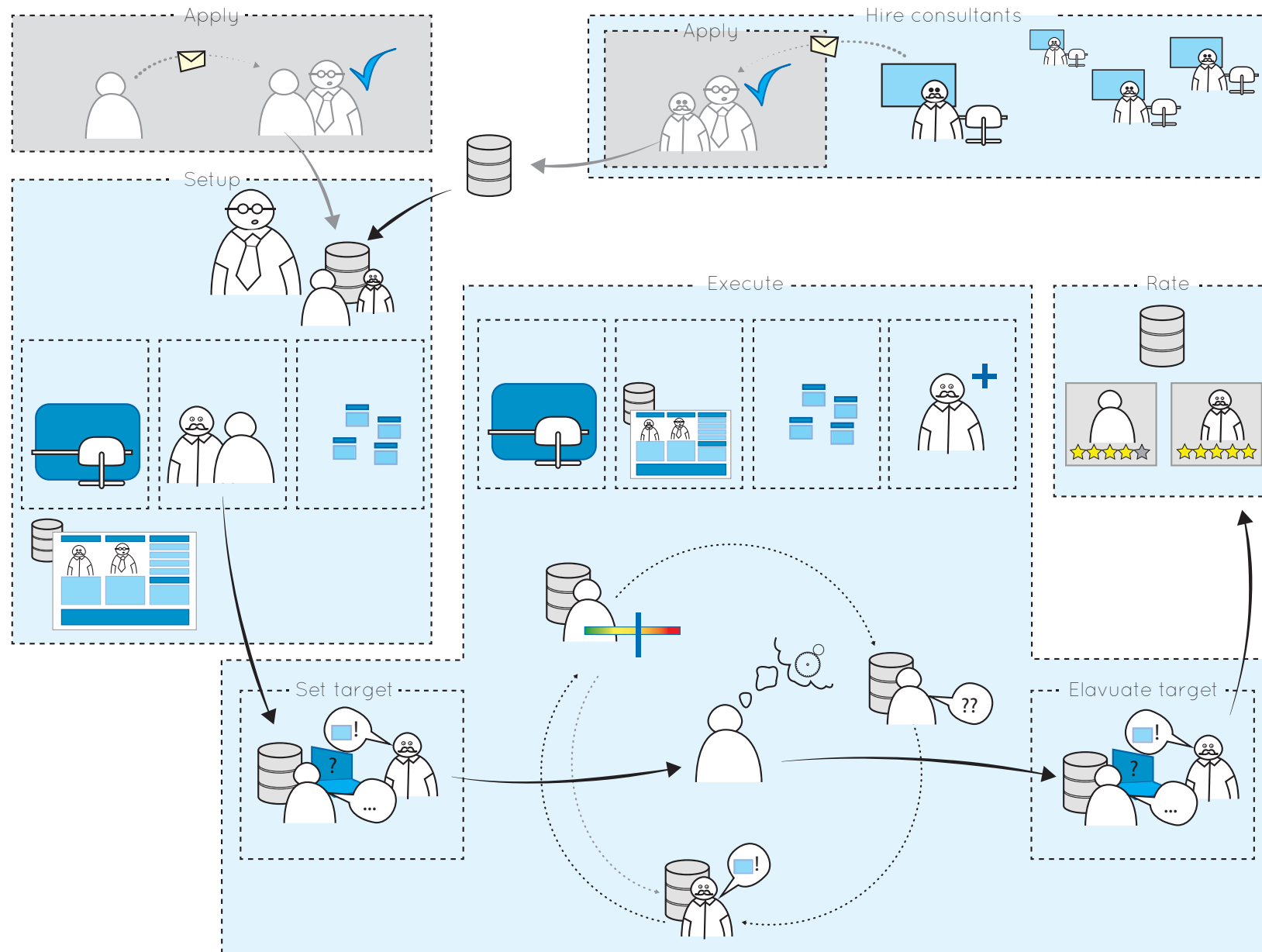


Figure 1. System map inspired by Manzini et al. (2004) showing a diachronic representation of Mentor+. The system map illustrates the different modules that Mentor+ consists of.

Touch points

In this chapter I will describe the different touch points of Mentor+. These are the tangible evidence of the service and thereby defines the way the service will be experienced by the user. The description of the touch points in this chapter is the base for understanding the service blue prints in the following chapter.

The service system is basically designed as a series of interactions between an entrepreneur and a consultant. The goal of these interactions is to help the entrepreneur define and eventually reach a target that can help answer some central questions for the startup, which can eventually lead to a clearer scope and a validated concept for the startup. The interactions primarily take place at Symbion and are supported by Symbions existing services. From beginning to end the interactions are also supported by an IT system, that keeps track of the progress towards reaching the target, based on registrations from all interactions and a continuously updated project calendar. The primary touch point of the IT system is a web page, but it also has a series of analogue touch points in the form of printed templates. When filed out, the printed templates are routinely updated in the system by a human actor, whom I call Coordinator.



Sing up (web page) In order to use any of the features on the web page, the user must create a user account, which makes it possible for the system to collect information about all interactions and link them to specific users.



Application form (web page) The web page contains an application module, which allows Consultants and Entrepreneurs to apply to the program. The application module lets the applicant write or upload an application for the program. Before being able to send the application, the applicant has to sign up with the system, which allows the system to collect all information about all participants from start to end.



Office space in shared office Symbion's primary business is renting out office spaces and they offer private offices as well as office spaces in a shared office. Participants in Mentor+ will automatically be assigned a space in the shared office, which will enable the routines around manually updating the analogue touch points in the system and at the same time encourage networking with other entrepreneurs.



Script for Consultant (web page) For key interactions the consultant will be equipped with a script that can support the interaction with the entrepreneur. The scripts are designed as a guide for the consultant and does not specify specific phrases to use. It is entirely up to the consultant how much he wants to use the script, as the intention is to improve the interaction, not to limit it. In some cases the scripts can also include tools and templates that can be used to improve the quality of the interaction. An example of a script can be seen on page 41.



Script for Consultant (print) The scripts and templates are designed so that they can easily be printed on A4 format. In cases where the script includes templates it will take up more than one page.



Project calendar (web page) Many functions are centered around the project calendar. Target, milestones and specific tasks are all entered in the project calendar. The entrepreneur must routinely update his progress by checking boxes that represent tasks and milestones. This makes it possible to follow the progress of the entrepreneur closely and notify the consultant if he should check up on the entrepreneur. The calendar can either be viewed as a Gant diagram or as a hierarchical structure of milestones and tasks. Examples are illustrated in Figures 18-19.



Project calendar (print) As some may prefer to put the calendar on the wall, the project calendar can also be printed. It is designed so that it can be printed in A4 format, and depending on the settings one paper can show a day, a week, a month or a year. Once a week the coordinator checks in with every participating startup. If they use a printed calendar he registers the updates in the system. (see scenario "Register progress off line")



Meeting room Symbion offers meeting rooms in varying sizes for all their tenants. Mentor+ uses Symbion's existing booking system for booking the meeting rooms.



Phone It is assumed that all participants has their own phone. This both includes entrepreneurs and consultants.



E-mail It is assumed that all participants has their own e-mail. This both includes entrepreneurs and consultants.



On line meeting (web page) The web page has a module for on line meeting, which allows the users to transmit audio, video and text, share their screen etc. This is a standard on line meeting module. The on line meeting module also contains a 'drop box' which allows users to instantly share files with each other but drag'n'drop.



Coordinator The coordinator is employed by Symbion to coordinate Mentor+. He will be the official person the participants can go to whenever they feel the need to do so. He will also be facing the participants in some designed situations, such as the application interview, welcome meeting and weekly check up.



Consultant The consultant is both a participant in the program and a touch point for the entrepreneur. He is an experienced entrepreneur himself, who is paid by Symbion to take on the role of consultant, when helping the entrepreneur defining and reaching a target.

Overview and execution

In this chapter I will describe the overall structure of the service system Mentor+, and start to describe the individual steps through the service system in more detail.

The cycle of Mentor+ can be divided into three phases: Prelude, Execution and Conclusion.

Prelude In the prelude phase the Entrepreneur and the Consultant get knowledge about Mentor+, they apply to the program. After being accepted the entrepreneur goes to an informal meeting with the coordinator, where he is also given a tour around Symbion by the consultant. This gives the entrepreneur and the consultant an opportunity to meet each other before starting the mentoring. This phase ends with a meeting between the entrepreneur and the consultant where they negotiate the target for the following six months and subdivide it into milestones and specific tasks.

Execution The execution phase is when the actual mentoring is taking place. The entrepreneur works on reaching the target he has defined in collaboration with the consultant, who assists the entrepreneur during this phase as the need arises. This can either happen on the entrepreneur's initiative or on the consultant's initiative, who are notified by a project calendar if he needs to interact.

Conclusion In the conclusion phase, the process towards reaching the target, as well as the outcome is evaluated by the consultant and the entrepreneur at a meeting. The goal of this meeting is to help the entrepreneur make an informed decision about his company in relation

to the target that was set in the beginning. After finishing the Mentor+ program the entrepreneur is invited to rent an office at Symbion and finally both consultant and entrepreneur are asked to evaluate and rate each other via the web page

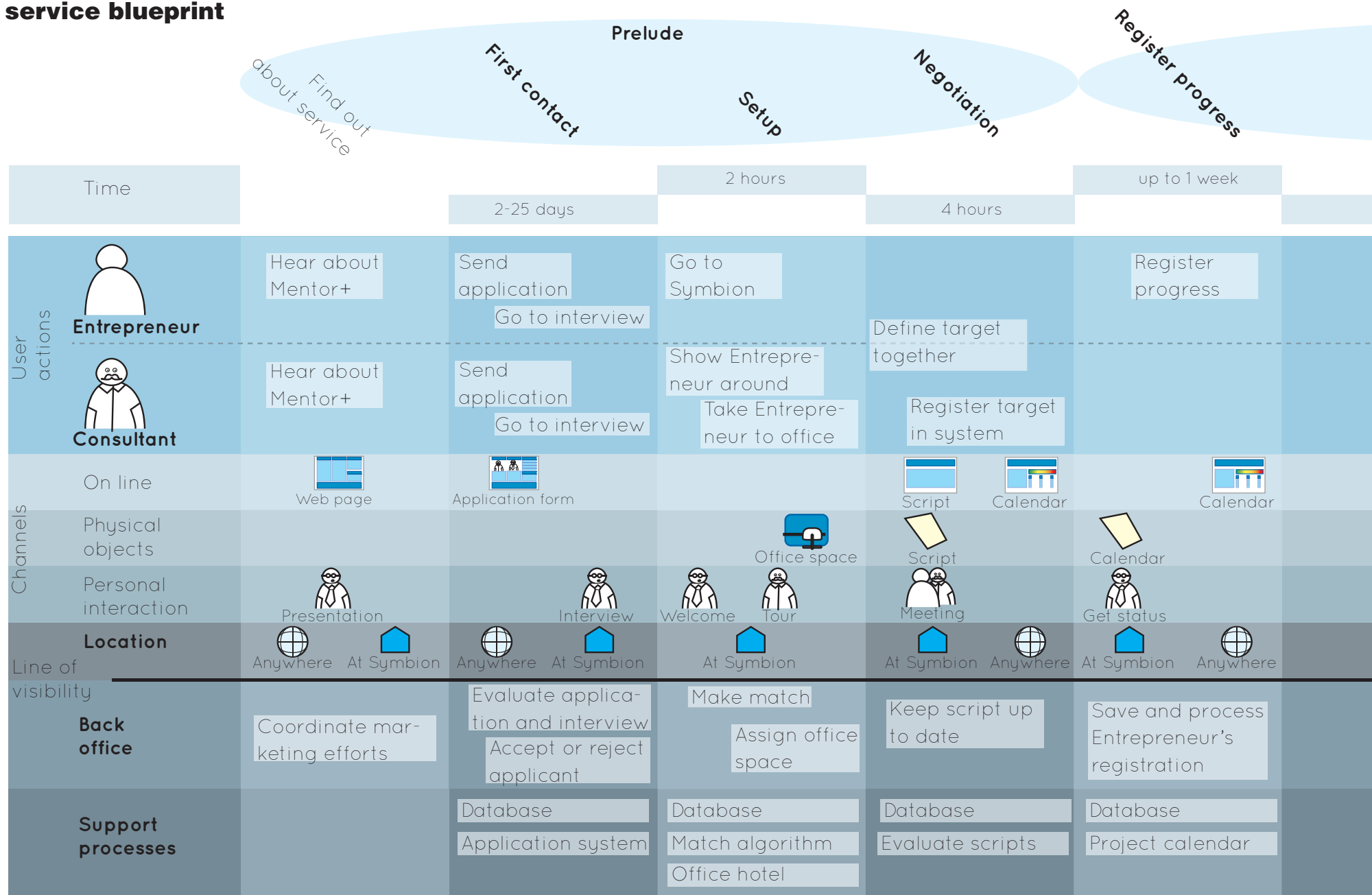
Through all three phases, all interactions are recorded in an online IT system, which is particularly present in the execution phase, where a project calendar helps keeping track of the process. The IT system both helps keeping track of the entrepreneurs' progress and when they need mentoring, but it also allows Symbion to evaluate the program and make continuous improvements.

On the following double page is a high level blueprint that describes all the main steps through the service: who does what and which touch points are present at each step. On the following pages are a series of use cases, inspired by Nicola Morelli's use cases for service design with a graphical representation of the use case on top of a service blueprint (Nicola Morelli, 2009). Each use case describes a step in the high level service blueprint in more detail.



Figure 2. A high level overview of the phases in Mentor+. This diagram forms the base of a high level service blueprint in Figure 3. on the following page.

High level service blueprint



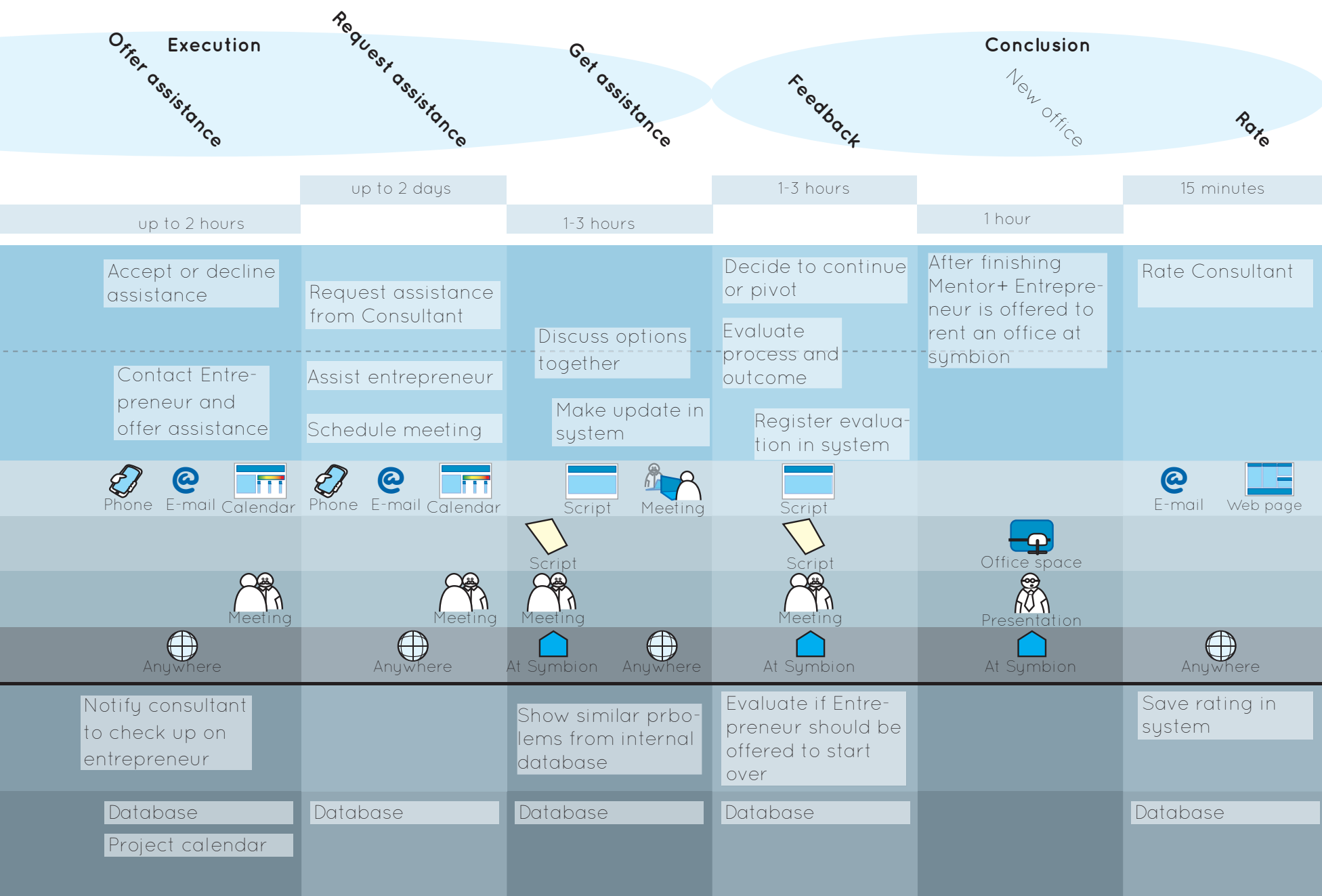


Figure 3. A high level service blueprint inspired by Løvile et al. (2013) showing a synchronic representation of Mentor+. The service blueprint builds on the diagram in Figure 2. at the previous page and shows the actions of each actor as well as touch point channels for each service experience through the service journey. Service experience titles in bold indicates that the episode has a corresponding use case on one of the following pages (Figures 4-13).

Service design use cases

Use Case Name: First contact
Goal: Entrepreneur knows whether or not he/she is enrolled in program
Brief description: Entrepreneur applies for participation in program
Precondition: Entrepreneur knows about the service
Entrepreneur is interested in participating in program
Post condition: Entrepreneur is either enrolled in the program or rejected
Trigger: Entrepreneur decides to apply for enrollment in program

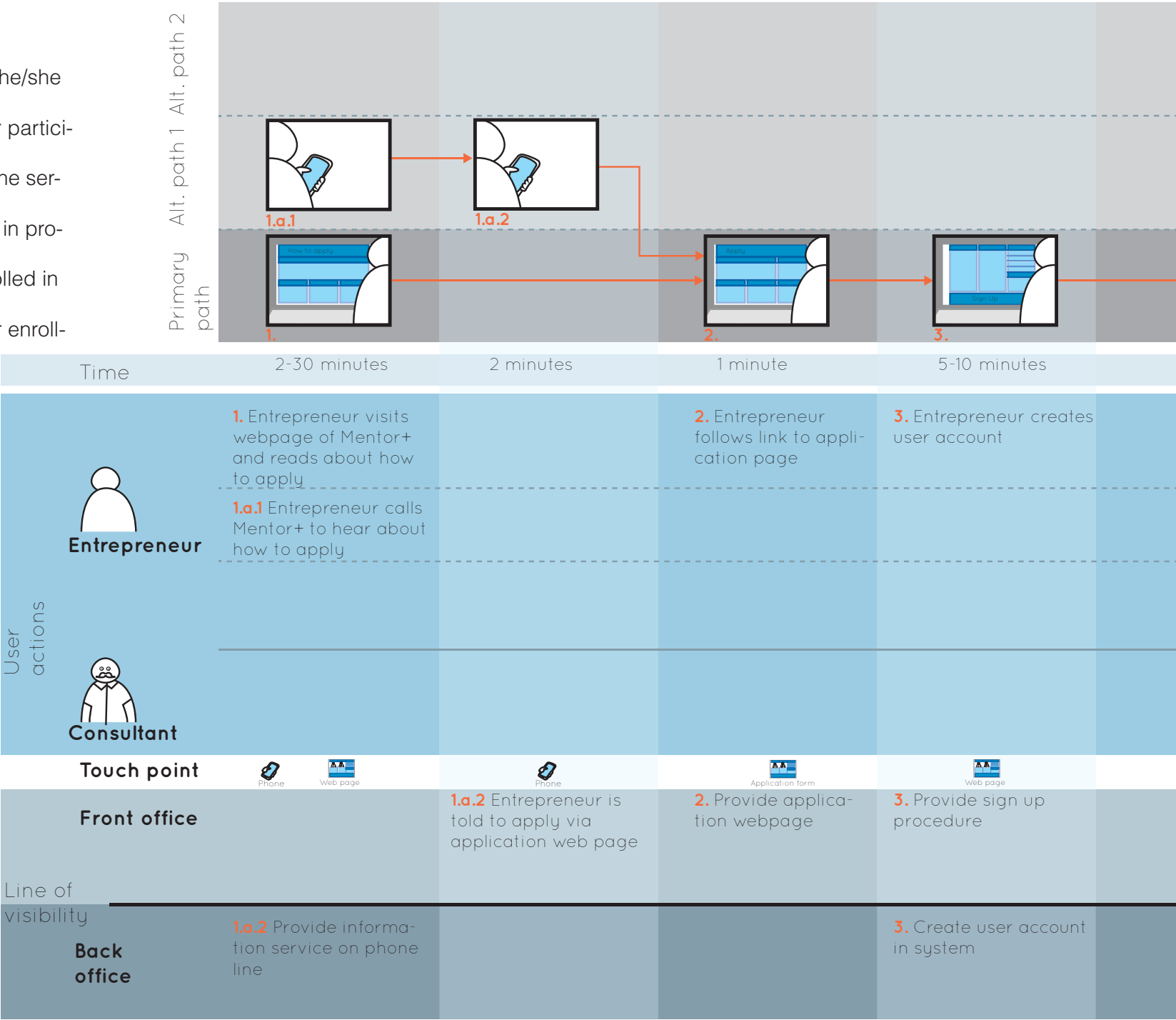
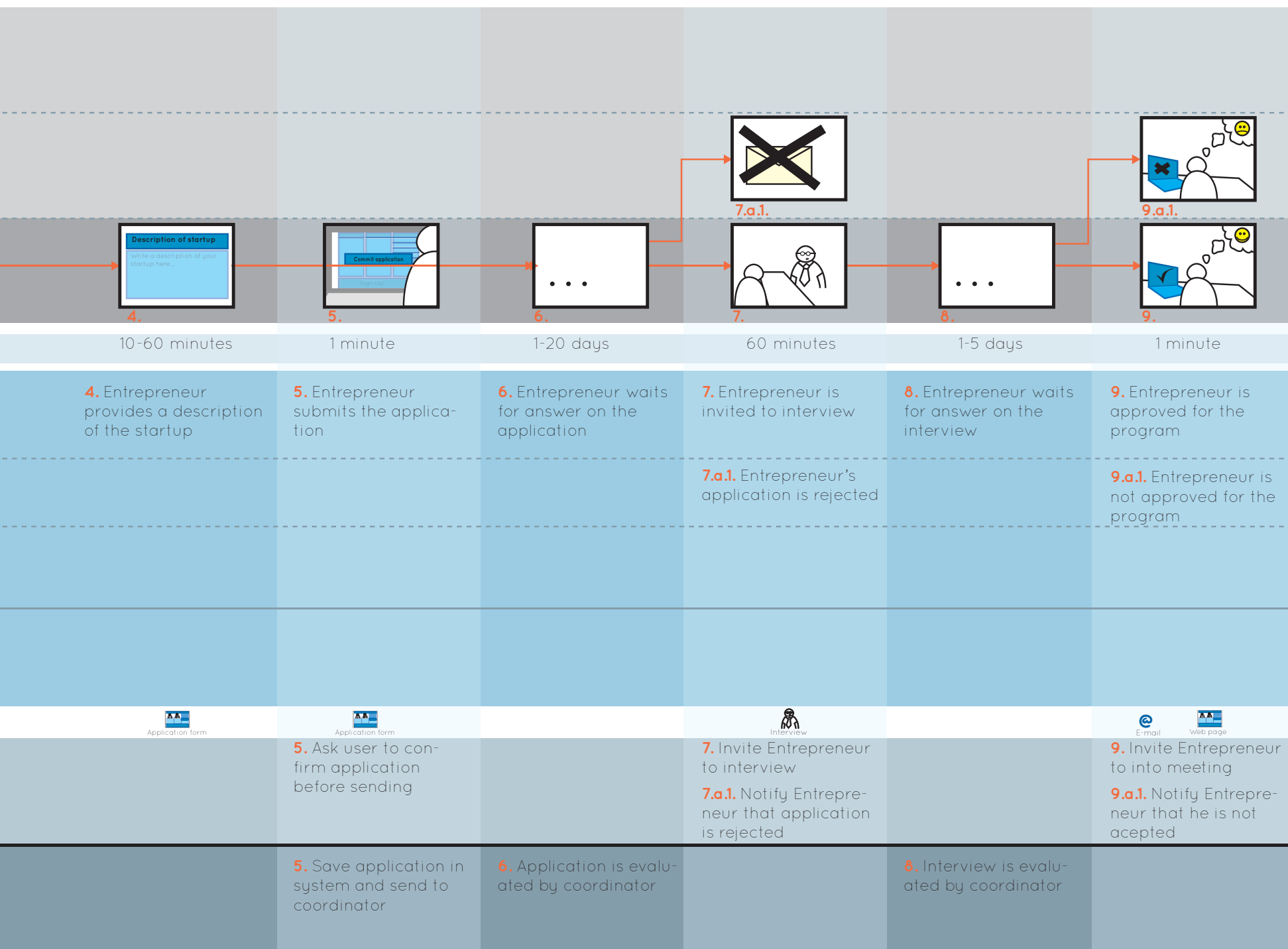


Figure 4. Service design use case inspired by Nicola (2009) detailing the service experience “First contact”.



Use Case Name: Setup

Goal: Entrepreneur is setup at Symbion and ready to start Mentor+

Brief description: Entrepreneur is introduced to services at Symbion, shown around and given an office space

Precondition: Entrepreneur is enrolled in program and has been matched with Consultant by Coordinator

Postcondition: Entrepreneur is ready to start the Mentor+ program

Trigger: Entrepreneur is invited to intro meeting by Coordinator

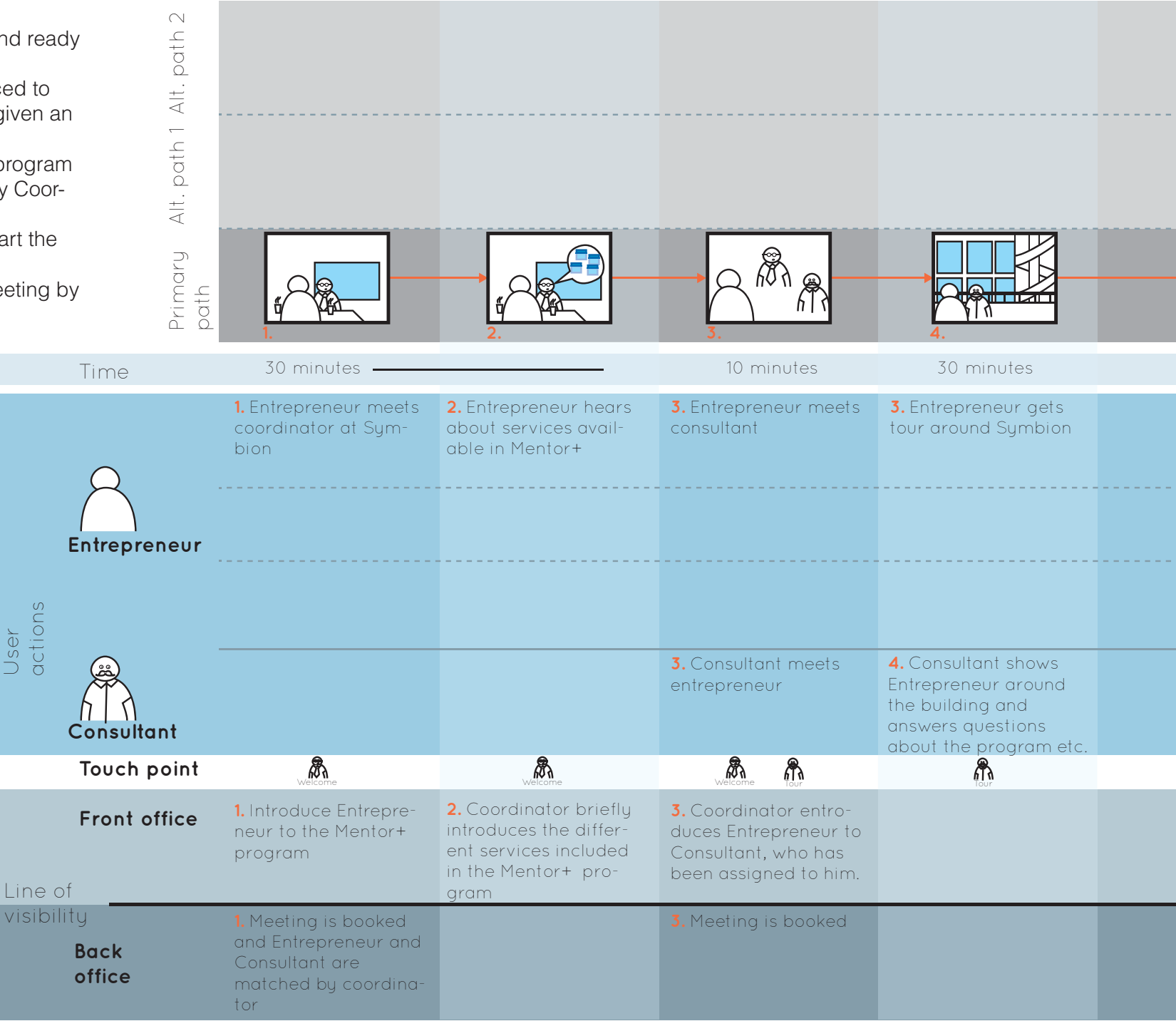
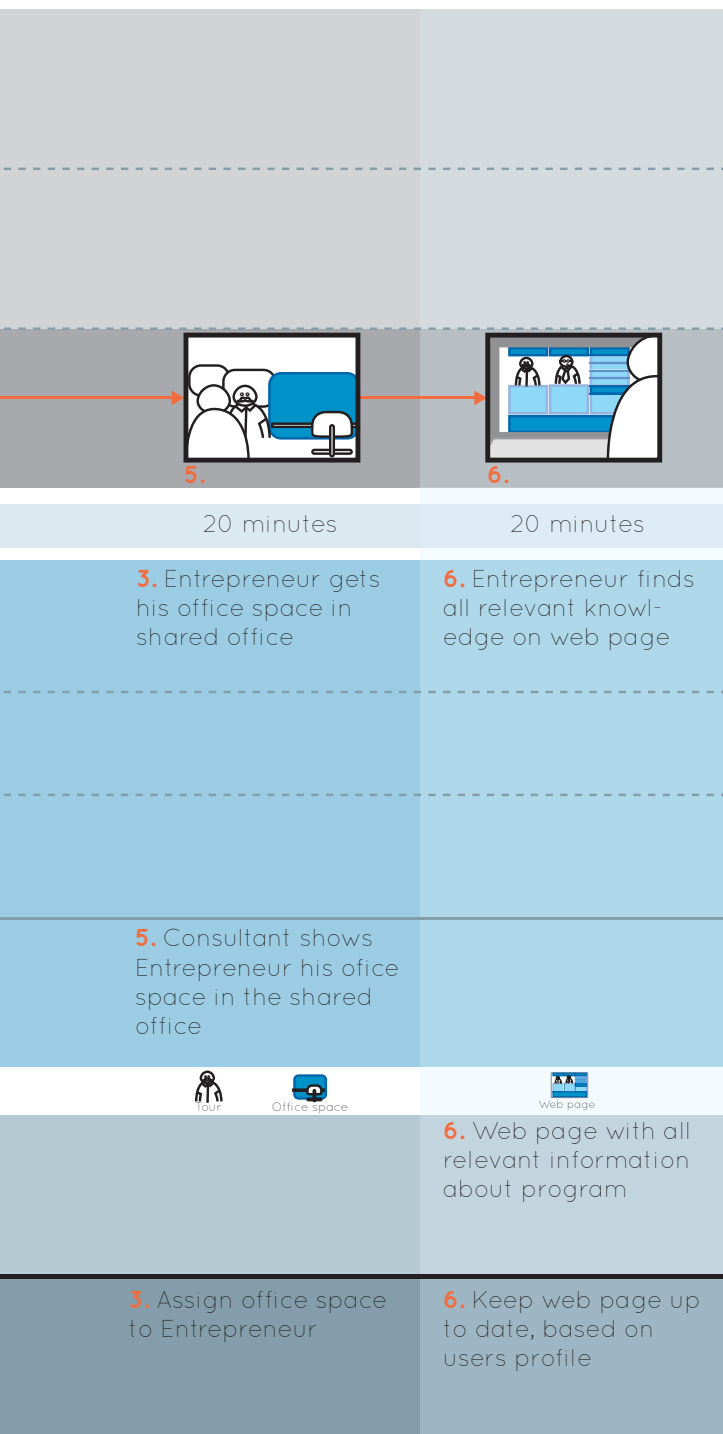


Figure 5. Service design use case inspired by Nicola (2009) detailing the service experience “Setup”.



Use Case Name: Negotiation

Goal: Entrepreneur has a relevant target and a plan for how to reach it

Brief description: A meeting between Entrepreneur and Consultant to identify the startup's problem areas and make a plan for reaching the first target

Precondition: Entrepreneur has been through the scenario "Setup"

Postcondition: Target, milestones and tasks are entered in the system

Trigger: Entrepreneur receives invitation from Consultant

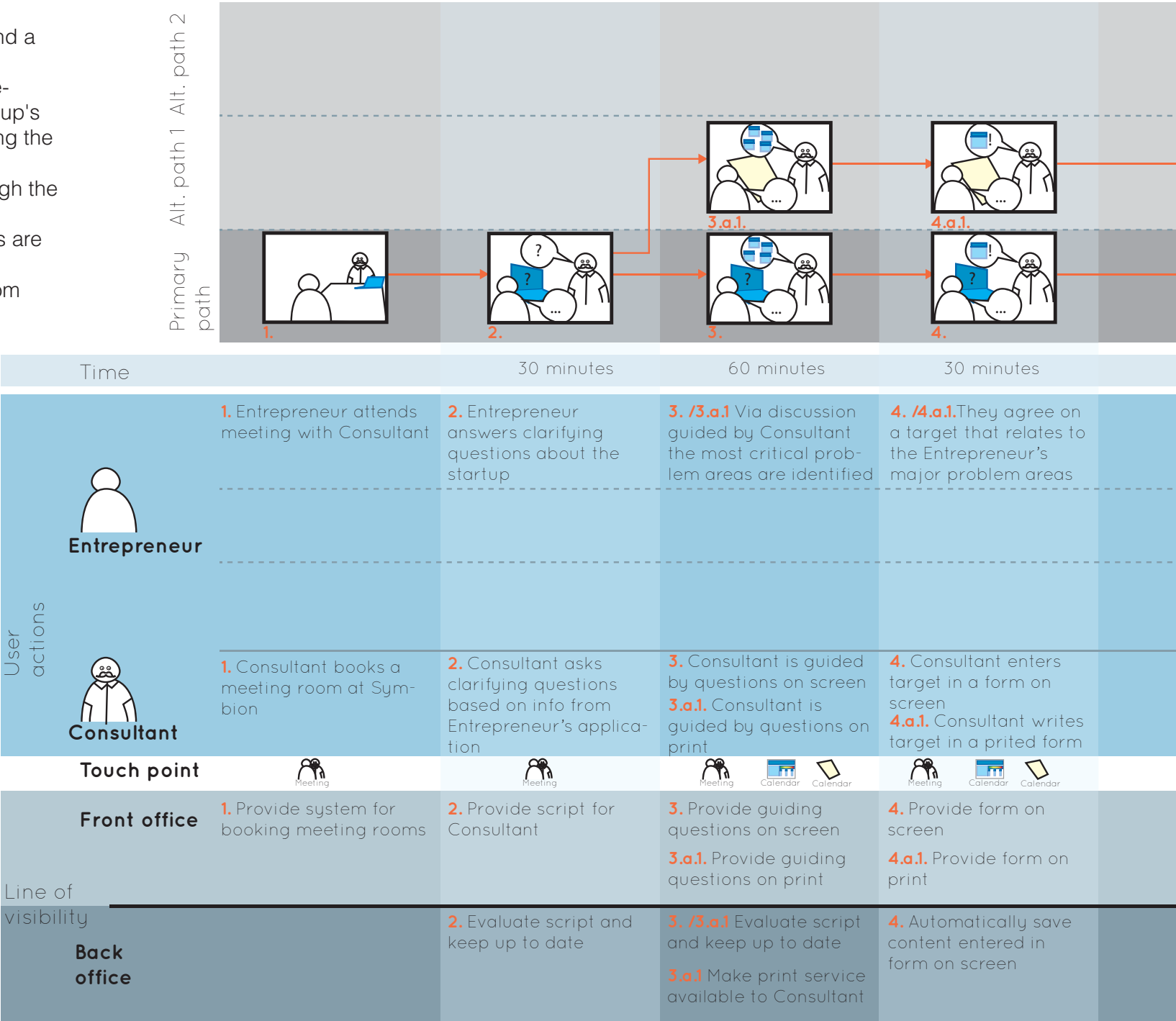
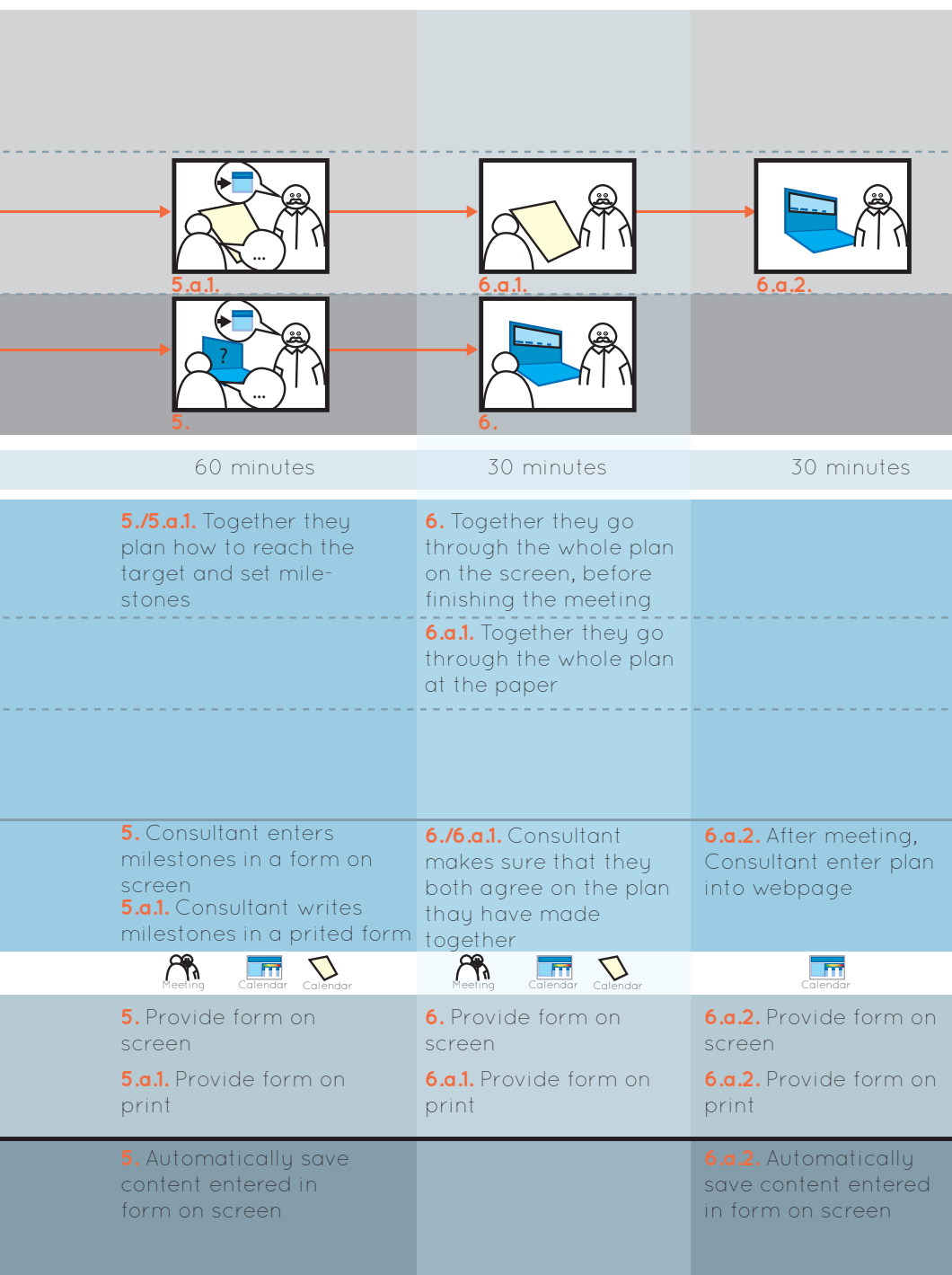


Figure 6. Service design use case inspired by Nicola (2009) detailing the service experience "Negotiation".



Use Case Name: Register progress off line

Goal: Entrepreneur's process of reaching his/her target is registered in the system

Brief description: Entrepreneur updates progress on a printed calendar, which is updated in the system by Coordinator

Precondition: The scenario "Negotiation" has been completed

Postcondition: Entrepreneur's current progress is registered in System

Trigger: Coordinator checks in to update progress in the system

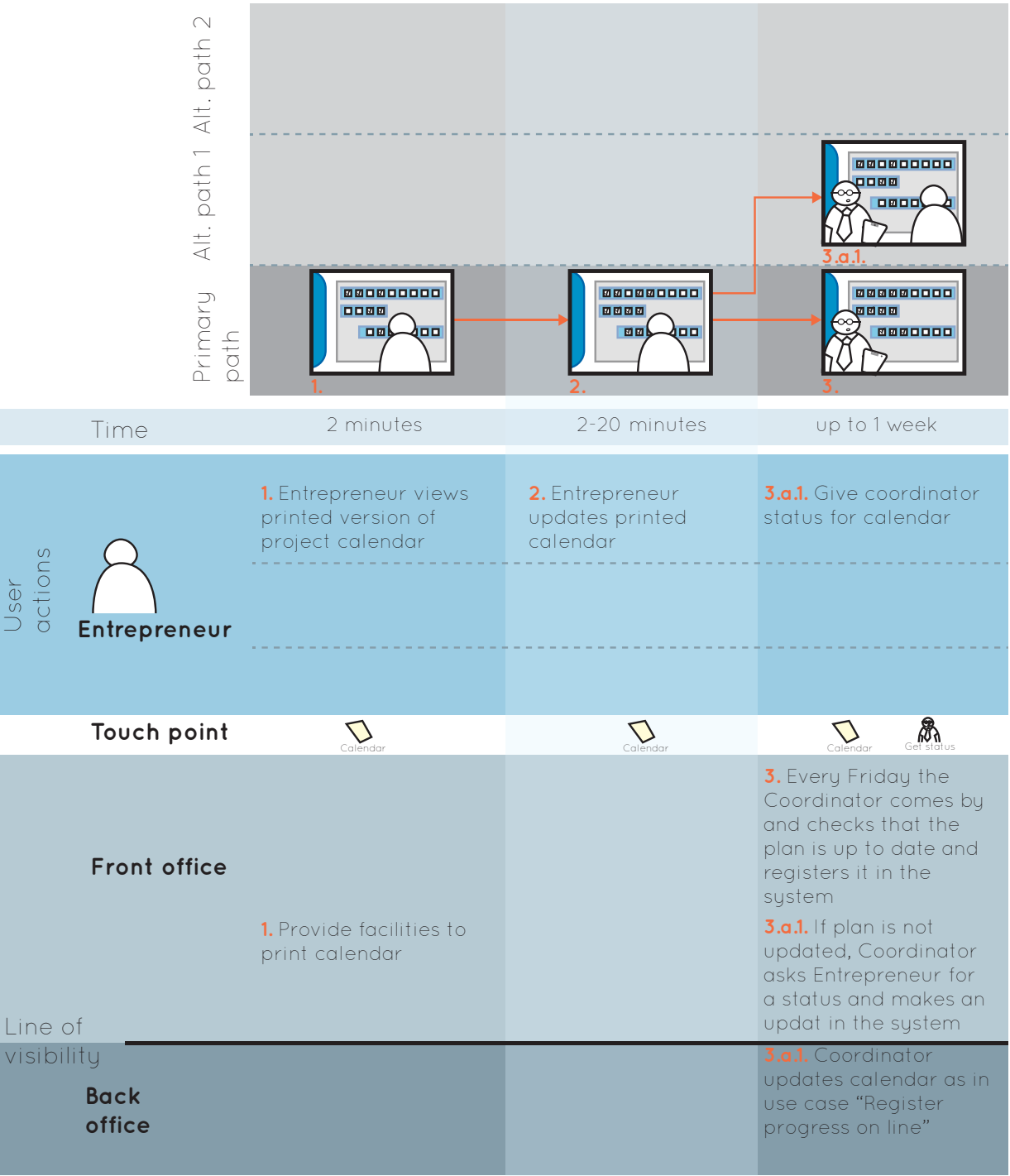


Figure 7. Service design use case inspired by Nicola (2009) detailing the service experience "Register progress" using off line touch points.

Use Case Name: Register progress on line
Goal: Entrepreneur's process of reaching his/her target is registered in the system
Brief description: Entrepreneur updates progress in project calendar on web page
Precondition: The scenario "Negotiation" has been completed
Postcondition: Entrepreneur's current progress is registered in System
Trigger: Entrepreneur receives notification to update progress via web page

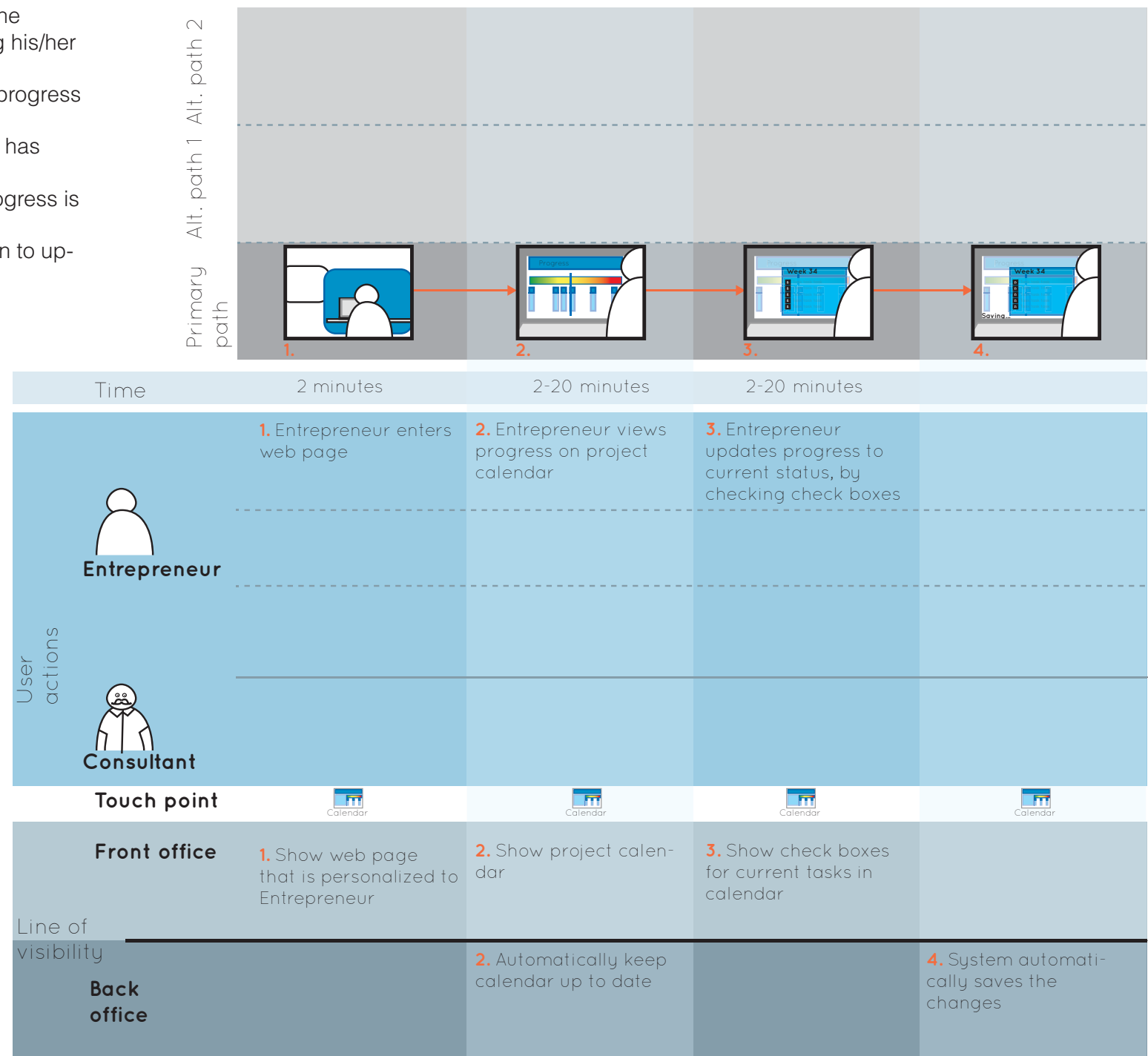


Figure 8. Service design use case inspired by Nicola (2009) detailing the service experience "Register progress" using on line touch points.

Use Case Name: Offer assistance
Goal: Entrepreneur is secured assistance when needed
Brief description: Consultant is notified of Entrepreneur being off schedule and offers assistance
Precondition: The scenario “Negotiation” has been completed
Postcondition: Entrepreneur's current progress is registered in System
Trigger: Entrepreneur did not register progress or he registered a progress that is not according to schedule

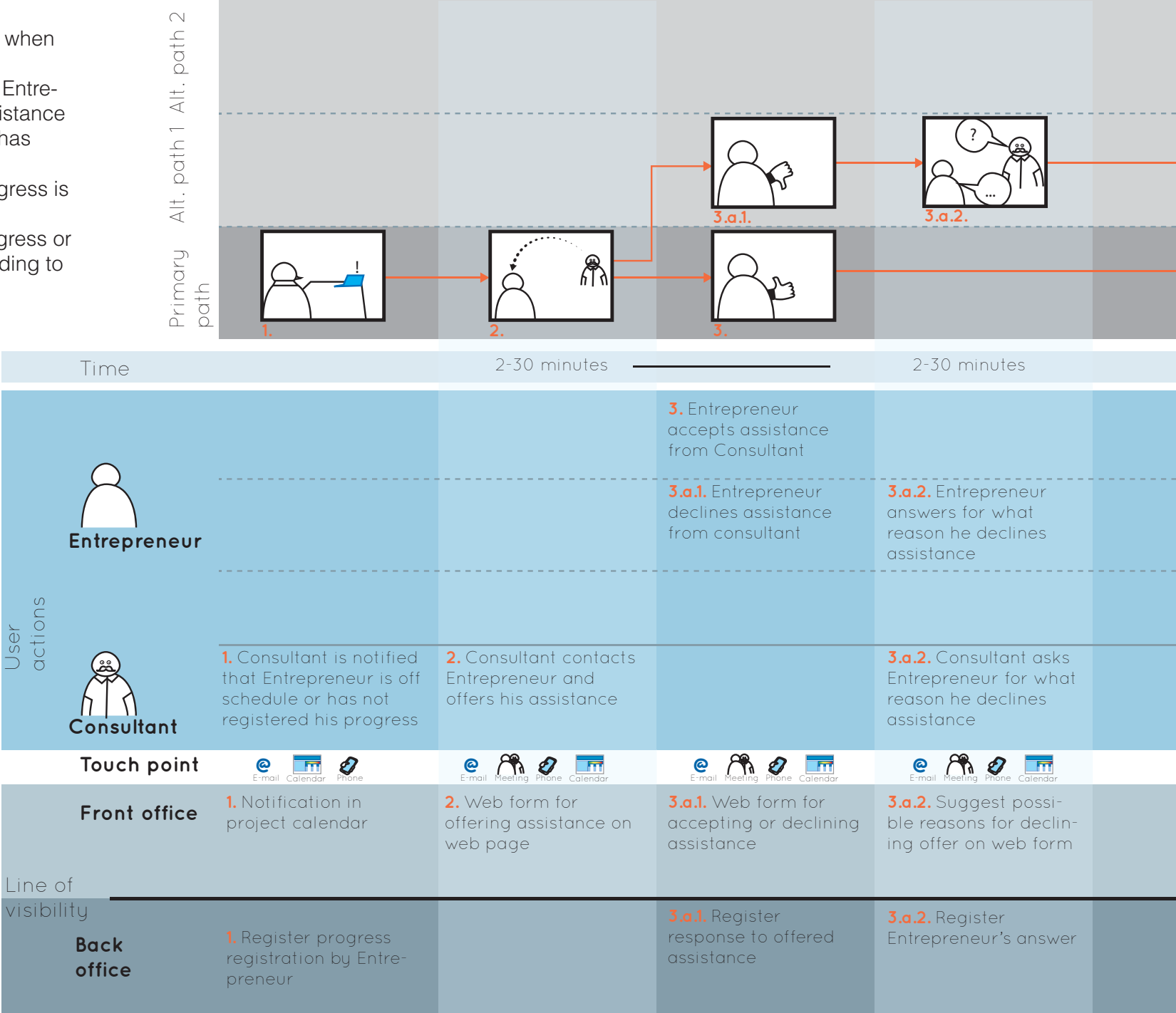
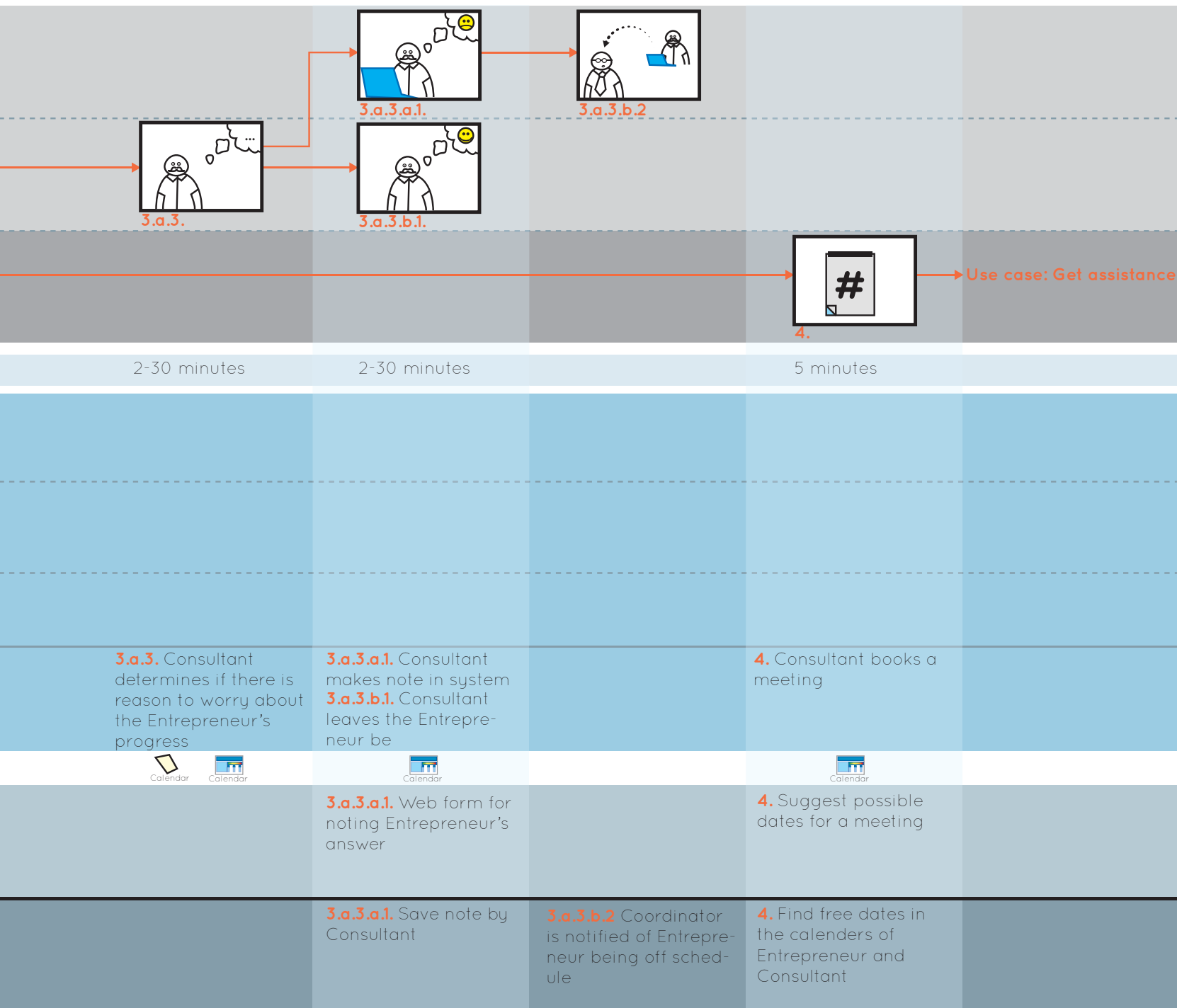
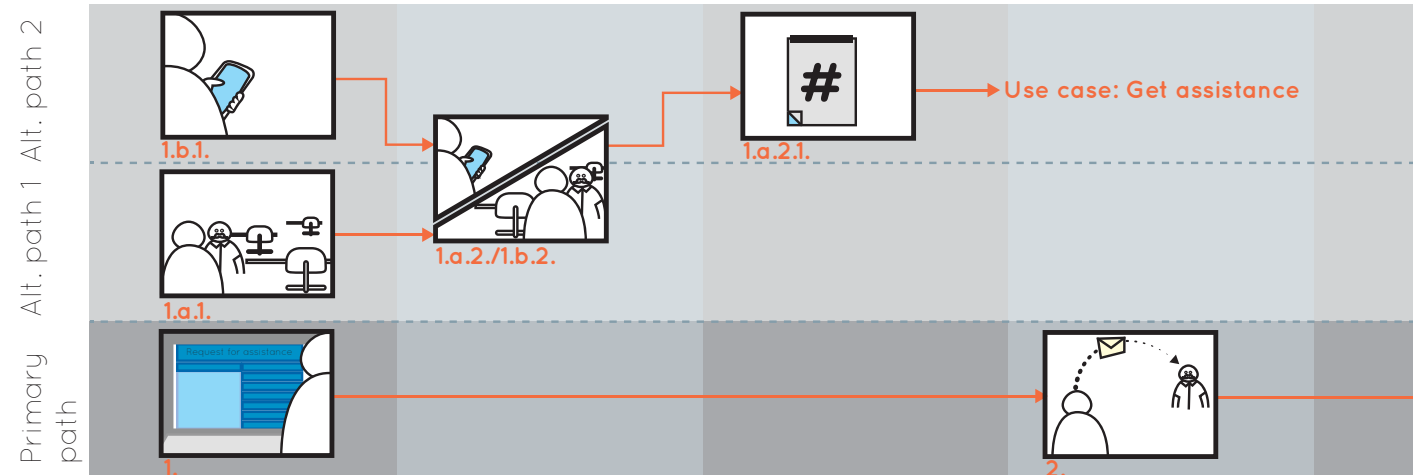


Figure 9. Service design use case inspired by Nicola (2009) detailing the service experience “Offer assistance”.



Trigger: Entrepreneur has a need for assistance








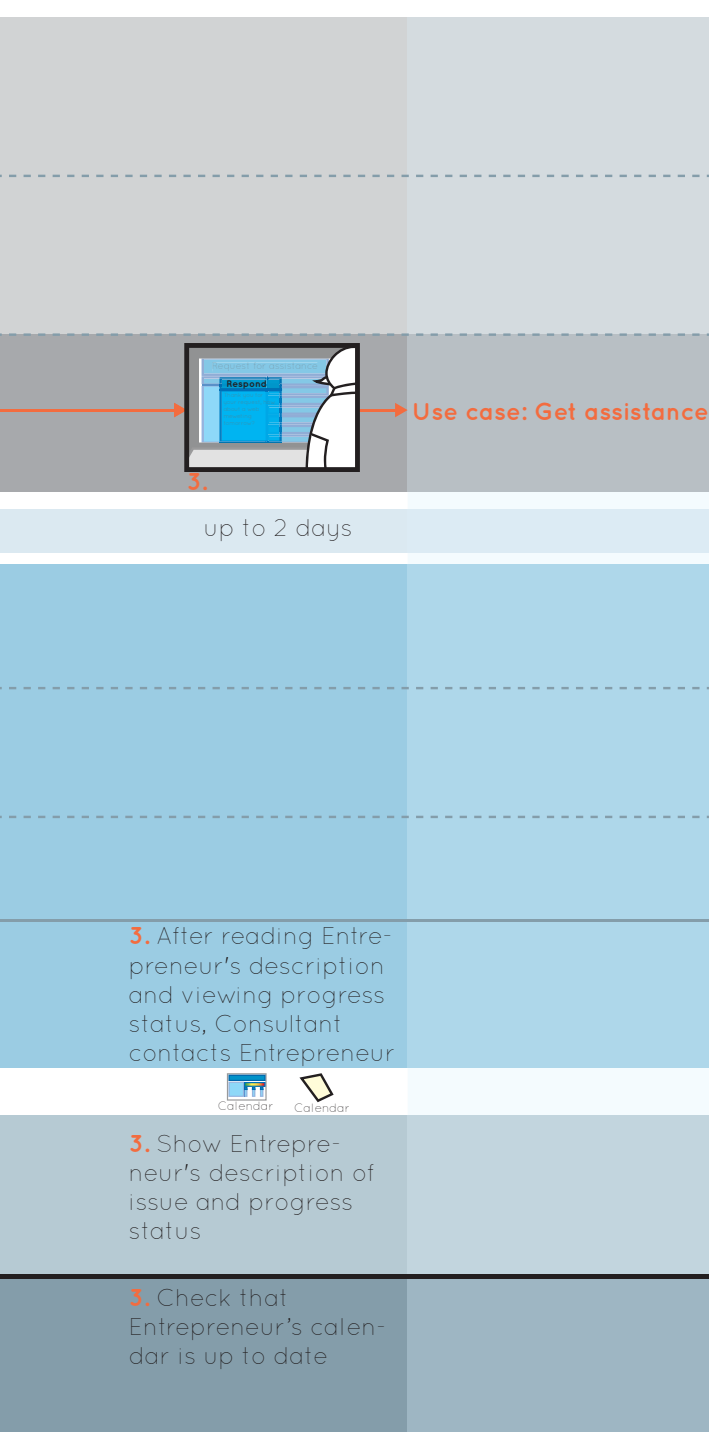
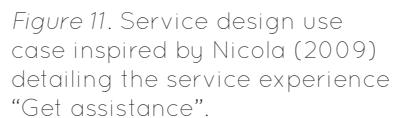
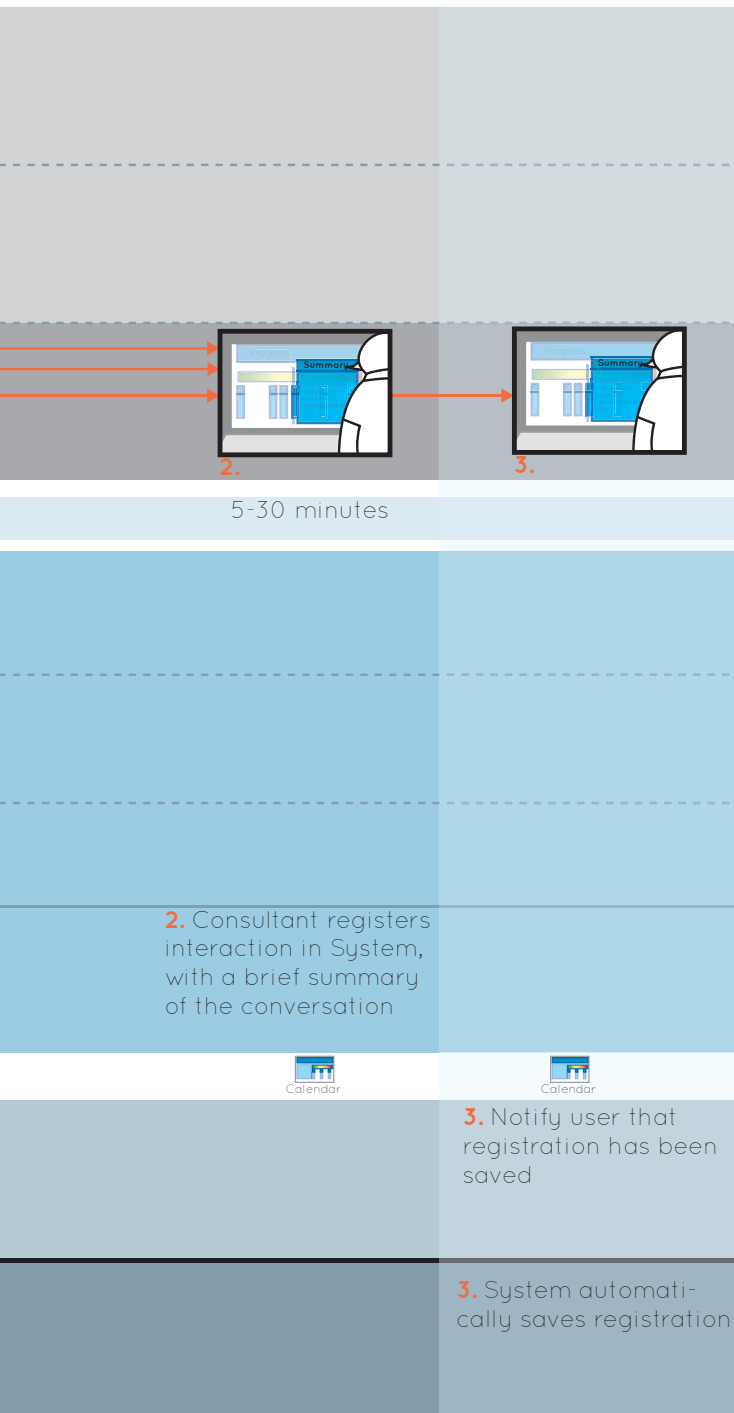
		Time	2-30 minutes	2-30 minutes	5 minutes	
User actions	 Entrepreneur	1. Entrepreneur writes a brief description of the issue on web page 1.a.1. Entrepreneur goes to see Consultant in his office and explains issue 1.b.1. Entrepreneur calls Consultant and explains issue	1.a.2./1.b.2. Entrepreneur explains issue to Consultant			
	 Consultant		1.a.2./1.b.2. Consultant does his best to help solve the issue	1.a.2.1. Problem cannot be solved immediately. Consultant books a meeting		
Touch point						
Line of visibility	Front office	1. Web form for requesting assistance on web page		1.a.2.1. Suggest possible dates for a meeting		
	Back office	1. Save description entered by Entrepreneur		1.a.2.1. Find free dates in the calendars of Entrepreneur and Consultant	2. System sends a request for assistance to Consultant, including Entrepreneur's description	

Figure 10. Service design use case inspired by Nicola (2009) detailing the service experience “Request assistance”.



Trigger: Consultant has arranged meeting for assistance





Use Case Name: Feedback

Goal: Entrepreneur is able to make a qualified decision about how to proceed with his startup in relation to the target that was set in the scenario “Negotiation”

Brief description: Entrepreneur and Consultant evaluates process and outcome together

Precondition: Entrepreneur has participated in Mentor+ for 6 months

Postcondition: Entrepreneur leaves Mentor+ and evaluation is saved in the system by Consultant

Trigger: After 6 months Mentor+ ends and the project calendar on the web page notifies Consultant to arrange meeting

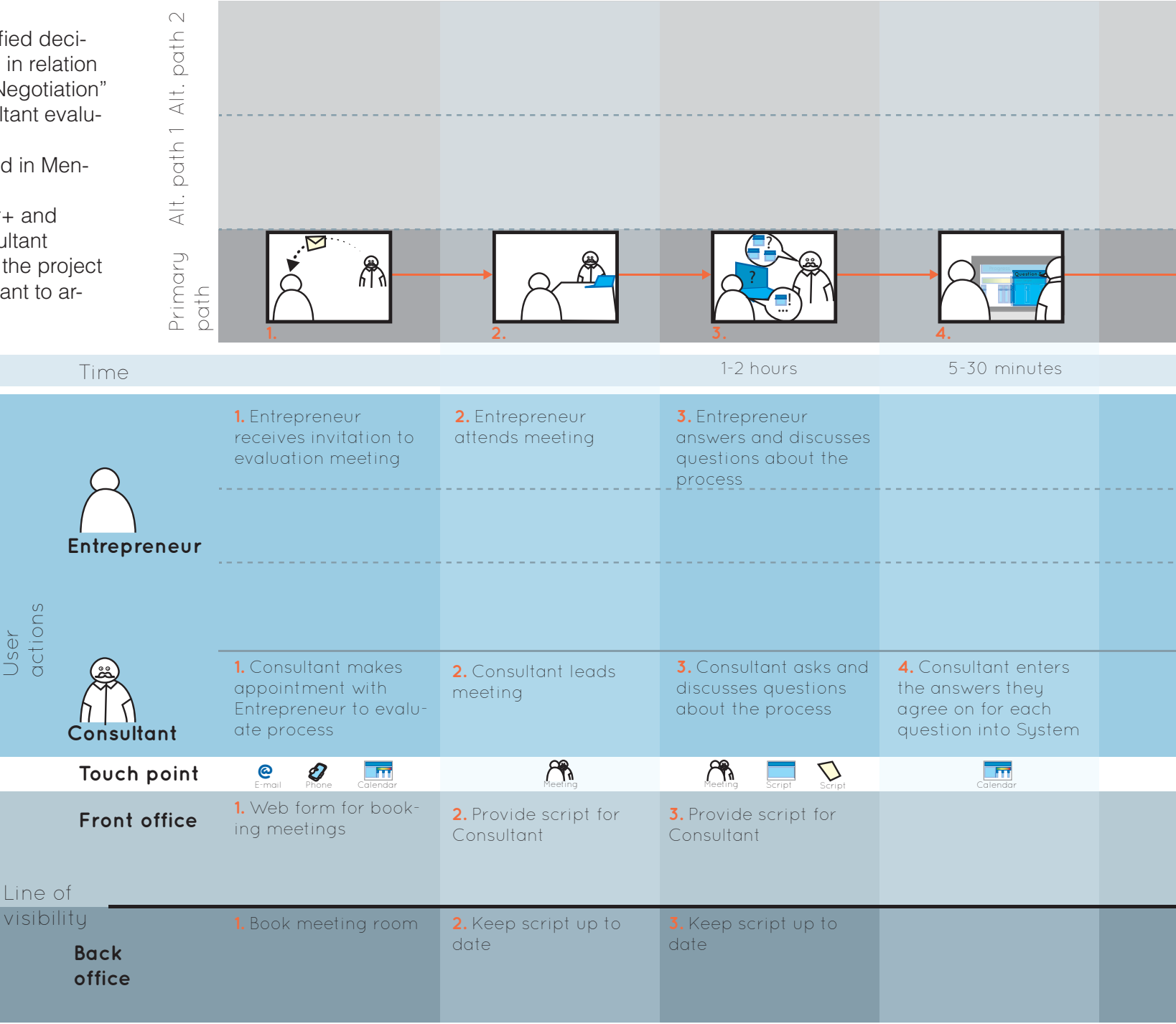


Figure 12. Service design use case inspired by Nicola (2009) detailing the service experience “Feedback”.



5.



Calendar

5. Notify user that rating has been saved

5. System automatically saves evaluation

Use Case Name: Rate
Goal: Ratings are registered in System
Brief description: Entrepreneur and Consultant rates each other
Precondition: Entrepreneur has left Mentor+ after completing the scenario “Feedback”
Postcondition: Rating of Consultant is saved in System
Trigger: Entrepreneur and Consultant are notified to rate each other via web page

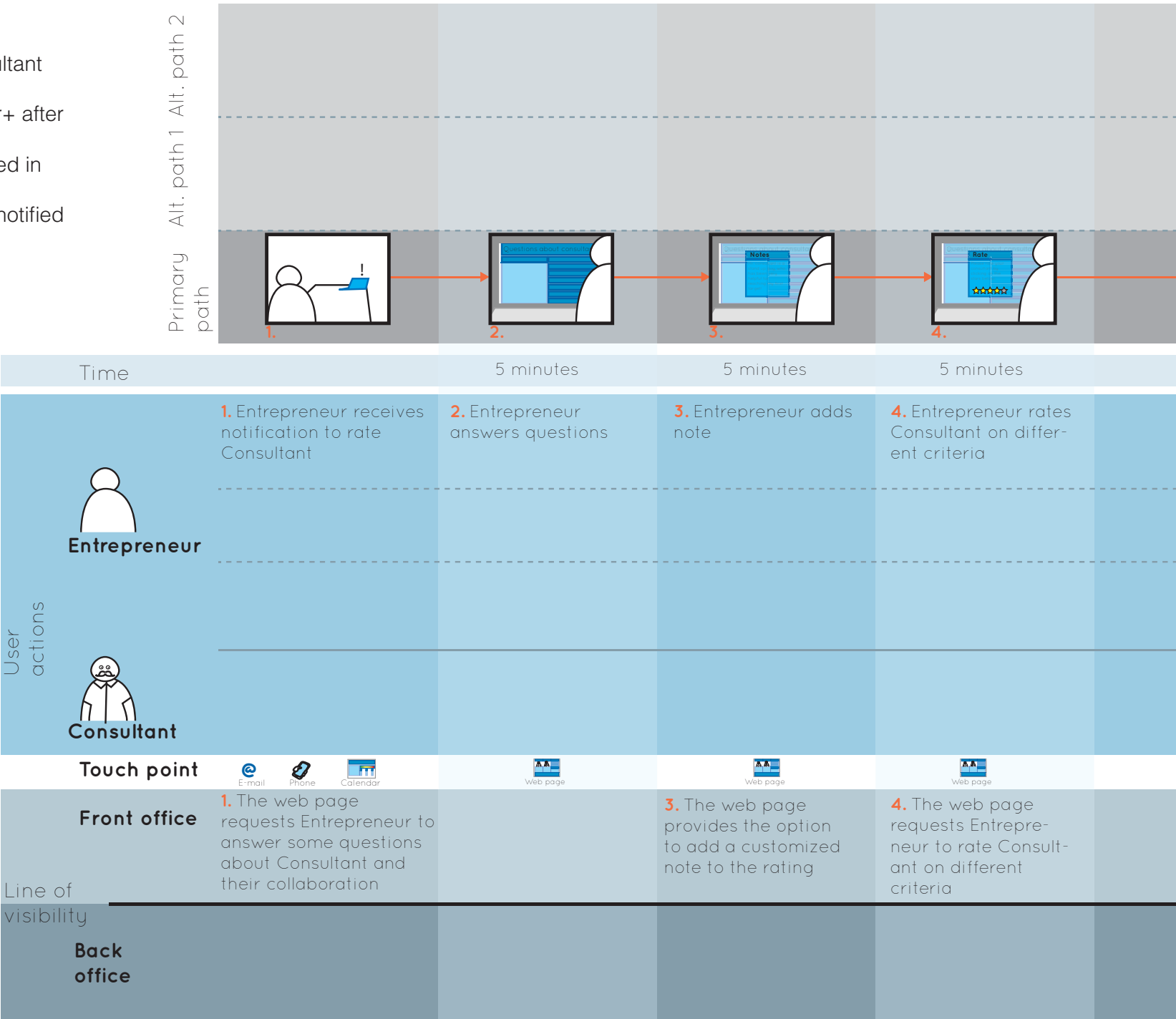
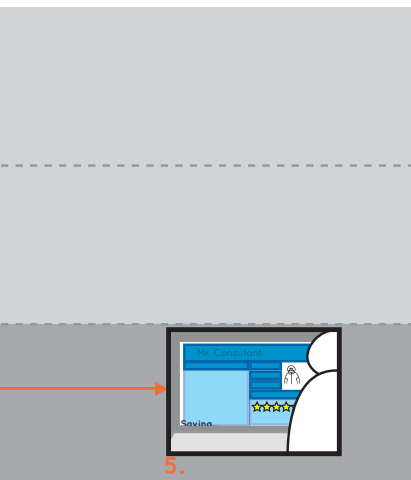


Figure 13. Service design use case inspired by Nicola (2009) detailing the service experience “Rate”.



Web page

5. Notify user that rating has been saved

5. Rating is automatically saved by system

Ownership, services and business model

In this chapter I will describe the context of Mentor+. I will describe who owns the service and what other services are offered along with it.

Mentor+ is designed as a program offered by Symbion and builds upon the facilities they already offer. Symbion is a private company, which is owned by the Symbion Foundation and a number of private investors (“Om symbion”, n.d.). They have a vision of being the Center for Entrepreneurship in Denmark (“Hvem er Symbion?”, n.d.), or as their vice president Brian List puts it, they want to be to entrepreneurs what Team Denmark is for athletes. This includes teaching talents to become better at what they do, train them and finance them (Brian List, personal communication 27/6 2014). This leads me to conclude that Symbion will be the right host for a program such as Mentor+. Their primary offer today is to rent out office spaces, but it is clear that want to be more than that, e.g. by putting huge emphasis on building network around their tenants (“Hvem er Symbion?”, n.d.; Brian List, personal communication 27/6 2014). Symbion offers three different models for renting an office: Private office, shared office space and virtual office. When enrolled in Mentor+, the entrepreneur will automatically be assigned a shared office space, which includes a series of services and facilities which are described in the diagram on the opposite page.

Mentor+ is designed so that the participating startups are rewarded for using the office space they are assigned at Symbion, as this both gives physical proximity to Consultant, Coordinator and other startups. This enables a spontaneous

dialogue, which can solve many issues before they grow into real problems. Working from the office space at Symbion also allows the startups to use a printed project calendar and almost completely omit the using the web page. However the startups are also free to work from other locations, either momentarily or permanently, as both consulting and updating the project calendar are supported on line via the web page.

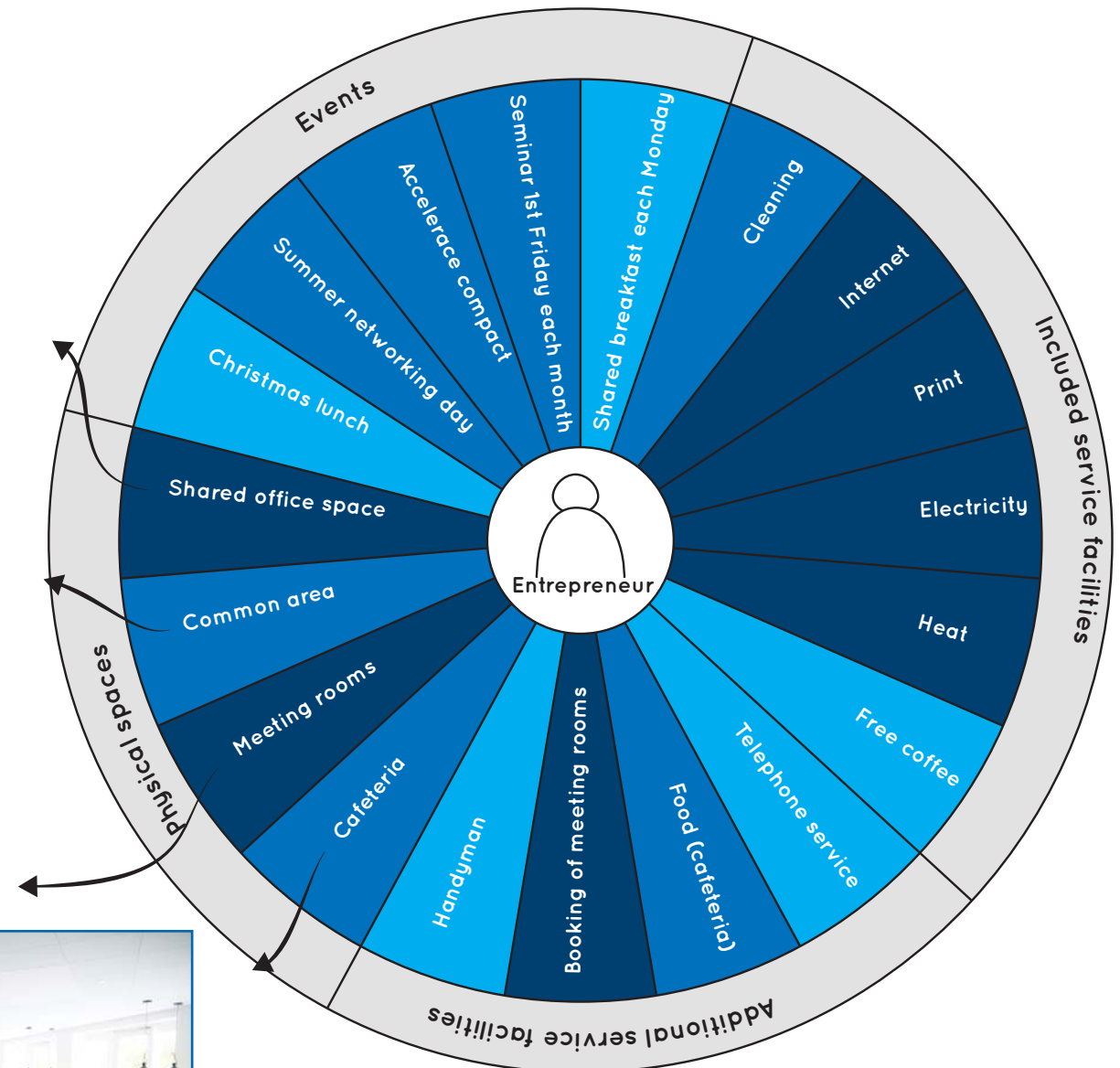


Figure 14. Services available to participants of Mentor+, divided into four groups and rated using background color. Dark blue is essential to the execution of Mentor+, medium blue is creating a satisfying experience with Mentor+ and light blue is all the small things that makes the service experience delighting.

Consultants will primarily be hired from existing tenants at Symbion, who have a certain amount of experience. Exactly how much experience they need to have is decided by the coordinator from case to case, as other factors such as the demand for their specific expertise or background, the number of available consultants etc. also will affect this decision. If necessary consultants can also be hired from Symbion's extend network, but tenants at Symbion are preferred as this enables a physical proximity to the participating startups.

As Symbion has a great network (Brian List, personal communication 27/6 2014), participants for Mentor+ will primary be reached via word of mouth and the web page, but as the target group are university graduates with no or little work experience presentations will also be held at the universities, e.g. in relation to startup events or career seminars.

Symbions expenses related to Mentor+ are approximately 40.000 DKK for a one person startup and additional 18.000 DKK for each employee/office space. The fee for participating will be 50.000 DKK for each startup, assuming that most participating startups will have 1-3 employees. A fee at this size is affordable for most people, while at the same time forcing the participants to commit to the program. Any expenses that are not covered by the fee will be covered by the income from regular tenants at Symbion. According to Brian List they actually plan to make a program for young talents at Symbion, which will be financed by the income from their regular tenants, which justifies this strategy (Brian List, personal communication 27/6 2014). If the participants are not able to pay 50.000 DKK up front, they will be offered a loan on 100.000 DKK, where half of it covers participation

and the other half will be for the startup to use. This approach is also used in Accelerace, which is a high profiled startup program owned by Symbion for businesses who have already proved their worth (Brian List, personal communication 27/6 2014).

Expenses

Office rent: 2000/month for 6 months

18.000 DKK

Consultant: approximately 20 hrs/600 DKK

12.000 DKK

Coordinator: approximately 10hrs/600 DKK

6.000 DKK

IT System: approximately 4.000 DKK

4.000 DKK

Total: 40.000 DKK

Business Model Canvas

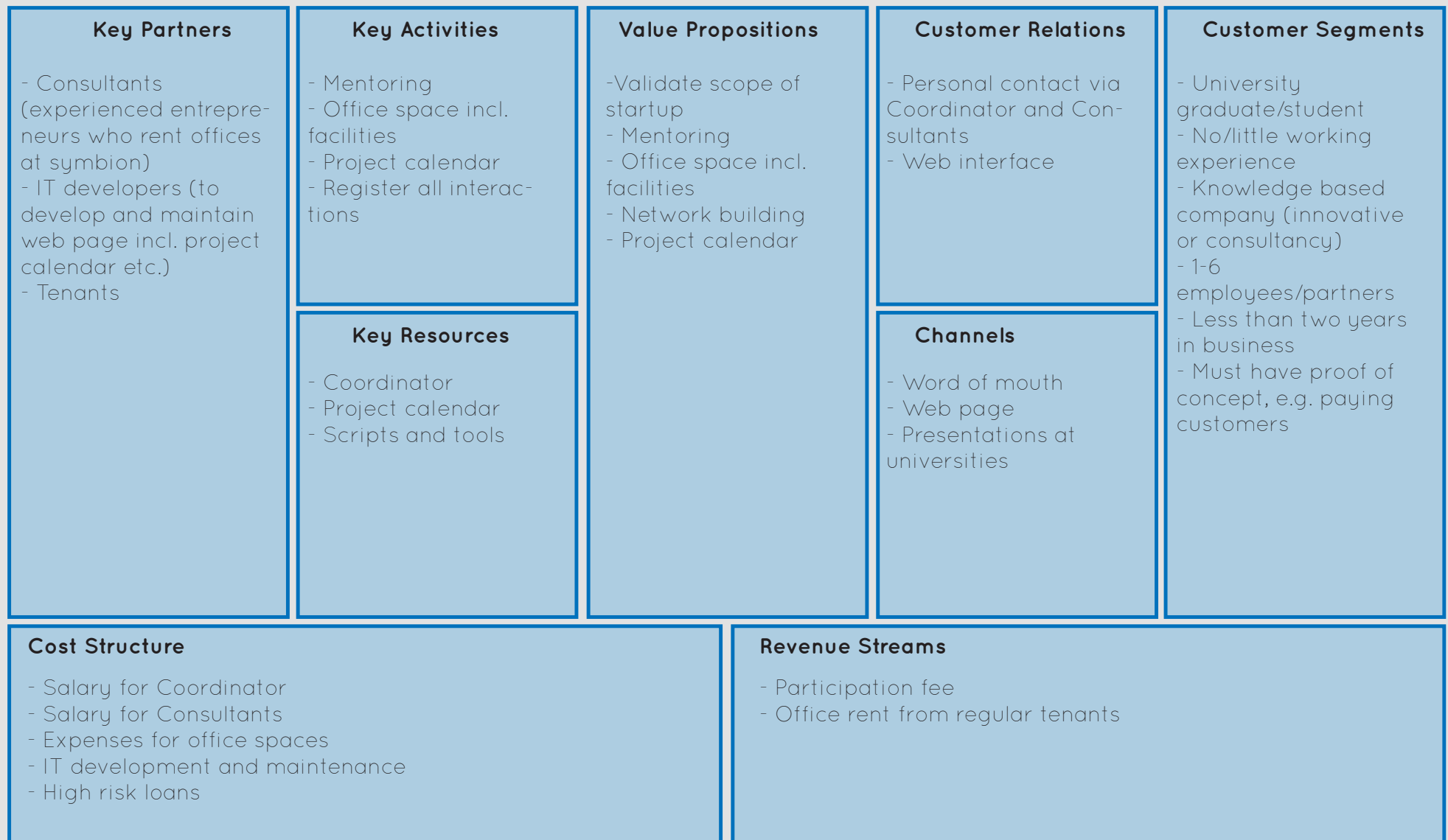


Figure 15. Business Model Canvas inspired by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) illustrating the business plan of Mentor+.

Detailing and examples

In this chapter I will detail the the use case of getting assistance further. I will present a script for the Consultant to follow as well as some tools to use during the meeting.

When the Consultant has judged that a meeting is necessary in order to solve the Entrepreneur's problem, he should follow the script presented on the opposite page. After registering in the project calendar that a meeting has to be planned, the script will automatically show up on the screen. From the web page showing the script there will be links to the tools offered for the meeting, which can either be printed or used on line. These include a template for a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to evaluate different options and a project calendar which can be viewed and printed in different formats. In this chapter the project calendar is illustrated as a Gantt chart with weekly view and a hierarchical structure for planning tasks and milestones, but it should also be available in other formats, e.g. daily and monthly views as well as an agenda for the day or week. These are considered normal functionalities, why only selected views are presented in this report. All the examples in this chapter represent the printed versions of the tools, which is considered sufficient at this stage, as the design is very conceptual and the on line versions of the tools will look rather similar, with the biggest difference being that the digital version does not have to follow the A4 format and the text fields will be dynamic.

Figure 16. Template for SWOT analysis and risk analysis, developed for Mentor+ to support conversation when discussing different options. This template is a sketch that should be developed for both print and screen use.

Option: Write name of option here...	
Risk factor: Rate risk from 1-10	Consequence factor: Rate consequence from 1-10
Strenghts	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Script for Consultant for use case “Get assistance” (Figure 11.)

Precondition:

Consultant has talked to entrepreneur about issue and has concluded that a meeting is necessary.

Goal:

Solve issue in order to allow entrepreneur to continue the planned progress.

Script:

1. Consultant books meeting room.
2. Consultant prepares for meeting by reading Entrepreneur's progress on the web page.
3. Depending on the problem Consultant does some additional research on the problem prior to the meeting. This may include getting some more information from Entrepreneur, talking to other consultants etc.
4. Consultant and Entrepreneur meet in the meeting room.
5. The meeting begins with Consultant summing up the problem and Entrepreneur either confirms or adds to it.
6. Consultant encourages Entrepreneur to list the possible options.
7. Consultant then adds more options if possible.
8. Together they discuss the different options. 3-5 Relevant options are evaluated with a SWOT model and rated on risk and consequence (risk analysis).
9. They agree on one option to follow. If a desirable option can not be found, the meeting is stopped and a panel discussion is arranged by Consultant.
10. Together they detail the chosen option, by filling out goals, sub goals and executable tasks as when the original target is set. Consultant takes responsibility for entering the information into the system.
11. The meeting ends.

Support to Consultant	
1	Booking system for meeting room
2	Access to Entrepreneur's project calendar
6-7	Blank paper or whiteboard
8	Template for SWOT analysis
10	Template with hierarchical structure of tasks and milestones

Figure 17. Checklist for Consultant as part of the detailing of use case “Get assistance”

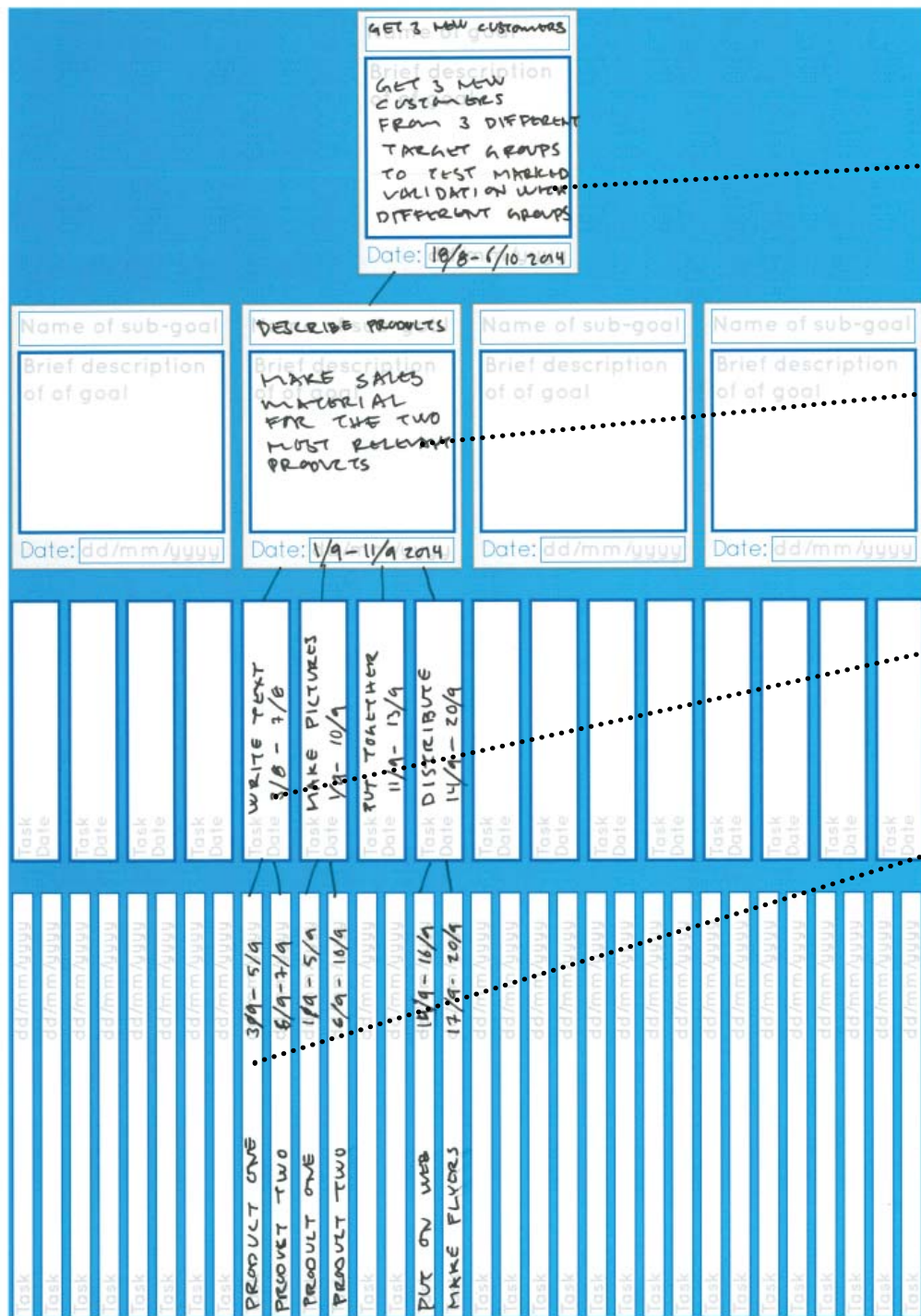


Figure 18. Example of filled out template for arranging goal, milestones and tasks in a hierarchical structure, developed for Mentor+. This template is a sketch that should be developed for both print and screen use. It is part of the project calendar, which can be viewed/edited in this format or as a Gantt chart as illustrated in Figure 19.

Overall target: Get 3 new customers

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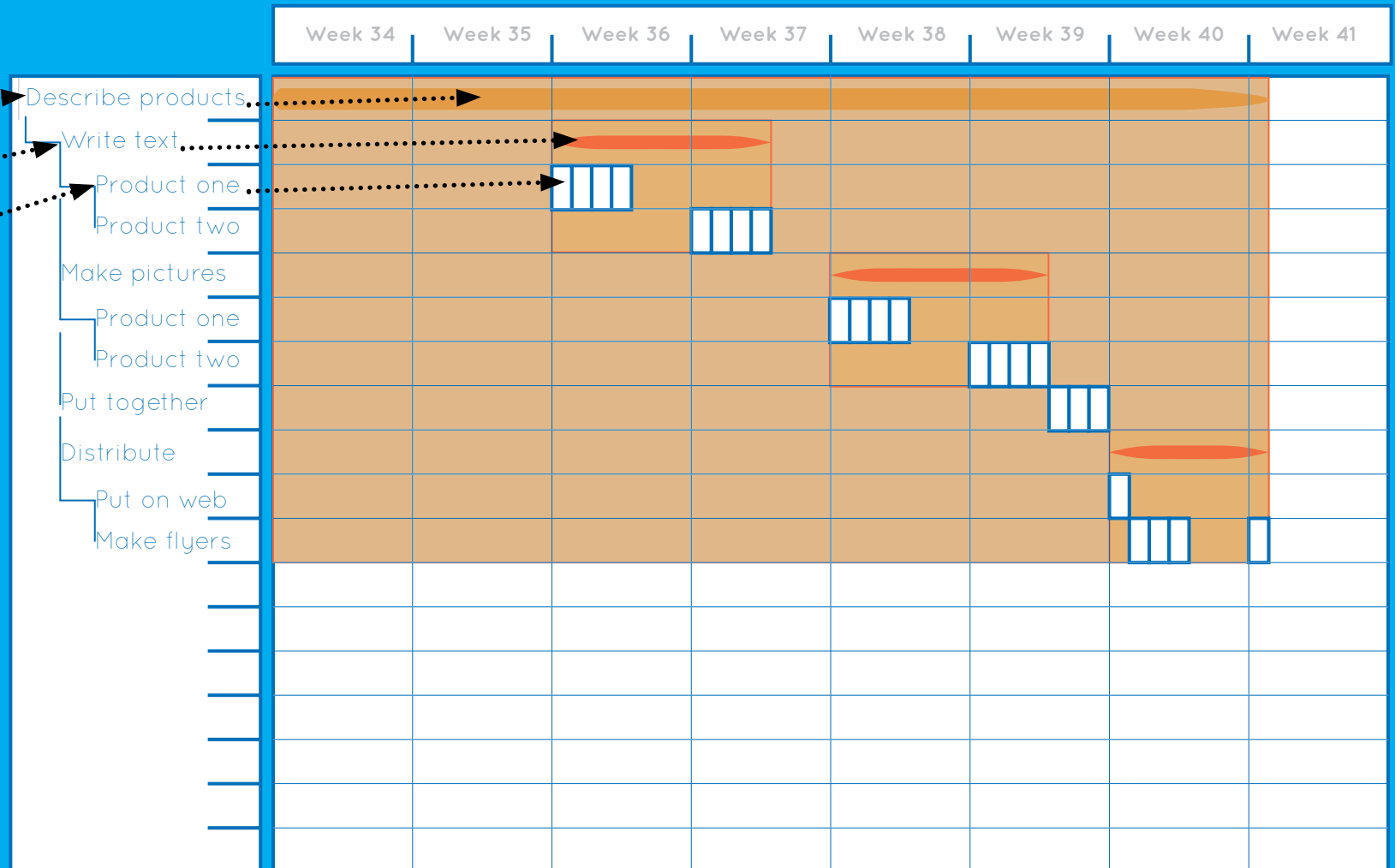


Figure 19. Example of filled out template for viewing/editing project calendar as a Gantt chart, developed for Mentor+. This template is a sketch that should be developed for both print and screen use. It is part of the project calendar, which can be viewed/edited in this format or as a hierarchical structure as illustrated in Figure 18.

Perspectives

In this chapter I will discuss the future perspectives and potentials of Mentor+. I will discuss the scalability of Mentor+ from a business perspective, trying to categorize as I suggest startups are categorized in this project. I will also discuss the implementation of Mentor+ as if it was a business concept and consider how it can be implemented over time.

Scalability of Mentor+

In this project I suggest that startups can be categorized as either consultants or innovative/growth oriented. Mentor+ is an example of a concept that has elements of both, but as it is a package that consists of much more than consulting I would argue that it is closer to being an innovative product than a consulting service. According to Michael Bak (personal communication, June 25 2014), the breaking point is if selling more products require an equal scaling of the expenses. Based on this parameter I would rate the scalability factor of Mentor+ as medium to low. The project calendar is the most scalable part, and it is an option that it is sold or leased separate from the Mentor+ program, either to former participants, to tenants at Symbion or to everybody interested. This could create some extra revenue to finance the development of the system as it is the part of Mentor+ that is most different from Symbion's current offers and thereby also has the highest development cost and risk.

As Symbion pays the Consultants and the Coordinator, this part is not really scalable, measured with Michael Bak's parameter (personal communication, June 25 2014). One way to

make Mentor+ more scalable would be to sell the concept to other service providers once it has been tested and the effects have been documented at Symbion.

Implementation of Mentor+

Before implementing Mentor+ at full scale I think it would make sense to implement a test version of the concept, that omits the most risky parts (i.e. the project calendar). This is what Rise (2011) describes as a minimum viable product, which is also the core of the Mentor+ program. To help the Entrepreneurs evaluate a version of their product or service that is viable enough to get proper feedback on central issues, while keeping expenses and thereby also risk at a minimum. In the case of Mentor+ this could be done by implementing the program with only the analogue calendar, as they already have access to the other resources needed for the program. They have potential Consultants in the form of current tenants, they already have office spaces and the Coordinator could be one of the consultants from Accelerace, which they have already planned to use in the program they are launching for young talents in September (Brian List, personal communication, June 27 2014). Without knowing the details of the program Symbion is launching for young talents in September, I think that with slight modifications to either Mentor+ or to their program it can become a minimum viable product for Mentor+, which could then be implemented at full scale later once the concept is tested.

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