Service Design: A Holistic and Contextual Approach to Enhancing Cross-functional Team Collaboration in Startups

A Project Roadmap Framework as a tool to establish a common communication ground and foster internal alignment

Master thesis by Tereza Brejchova and Sarah Hierstätter

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Authors | Tereza Brejchova, 20211780 & Sarah Hierstätter, 20182757

ABSTRACT

This master's thesis explores the potential of the service design approach in facilitating common communication, internal alignment, and collaboration among cross-functional teams within mature startups. The research focuses on a corporate travel startup that has been actively involved as both a collaboration partner and a client. To address the challenge of alignment within cross-functional teams at the onset of new projects, we have developed a solution called the 'Project Roadmap Framework'. Throughout the study, various service design methods and tools are employed to facilitate the exploration and implementation of service design principles. Drawing upon existing literature in service design, startups, cross-functional team collaboration, communication, and organizational change, the research establishes a strong theoretical foundation and gains valuable insights into the factors influencing effective internal alignment and collaboration within a startup context. Following a mixed-method approach and leveraging the five stages of the design thinking framework, this study systematically addresses the research question and ensures the credibility and accuracy of the findings. The research employs diverse data collection methods, including workshops, interviews, prototyping, desk research, and surveys. The research results in the development of the Project Roadmap Framework, specifically tailored to meet the collaboration partner's requirements and offer them a more holistic approach to their project management. This framework provides cross-functional teams with actionable steps, guidelines, and resources to establish a common communication ground and enhance collaboration at the beginning of projects. This thesis significantly contributes to both the theoretical understanding and practical application of service design in startup environments. It serves as an inspirational resource for individuals working in the field, offering insights and strategies to overcome common internal challenges faced in startup settings. By emphasizing the importance of service design, this research aims to foster improved collaboration and alignment within startups.

Keywords: service design, startup, internal alignment, cross-functional collaboration, project management

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as an introduction to our thesis, where we will dig into the topic of collaboration and alignment within startups. We will begin by sharing our motivations for exploring this subject, highlighting the importance of understanding effective collaboration in startup environments. Additionally, we will outline our learning objectives that we aim to achieve through our research. To provide context, we will introduce our collaboration partner, a key participant in our research journey. This partnership will allow us to gain valuable insights and practical perspectives on the topic at hand. Finally, we will present the research question that will guide our investigation and serve as a guiding thread throughout this thesis, providing clarity and focus to our study.

The chapter is divided into the following sections:

01

1.1 Introduction and Motivation

Service design has been gaining increased awareness and popularity in recent years. Service design is a holistic approach that empathizes both with user and employee experiences. It involves designing, aligning, and optimizing an organization's operations to better support user journeys. However, this approach is not broadly explored in the startup world. Although there is limited academic literature on how service design can be incorporated into specifically startup settings, some service design practitioners argue that service designers can bring considerable value to this type of work environment. Our shared interest and previous experience in startup companies have motivated us to explore the incorporation of a service design perspective.

As part of this project, a design case study was conducted, involving collaboration with a startup in the maturity stage to explore the application of service design principles and methodologies. The research analysis indicated that startups frequently encounter common challenges when engaging in collaborative work, project structuring, and approaches. Additionally, close collaboration with the organization revealed similar issues identified during the primary research, including misalignment across teams and communication gaps.

The objective of this thesis is to investigate the potential impact of implementing the service design approach within a startup in the maturity stage. Specifically, it aims to explore how this approach can establish a shared communication foundation to foster internal alignment and collaboration among cross-functional teams at the project's beginning phase. The primary research supplemented with secondary research, as well as the client collaboration, resulted in a service proposal called 'Project Roadmap Framework'. The solution is providing a flexible framework for startups to use at the beginning of a project, having a focus on improving alignment and collaboration within cross-functional teams. This solution was created specifically for the specific organization but serves as an inspiration to other service design professionals who are trying to tackle a similar problem area.

1.2 Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for this thesis are composed of the official learning objectives specified by Aalborg University, as well as our personal learning goals. The thesis demonstrates how we over time have gained the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to call ourselves service designers.

1.2.1 Official Learning Objectives

The official learning objectives from Aalborg University are the following (Universitet, 2022):

Knowledge

Students who complete the module will obtain the following qualifications:

- Must have knowledge about the possibilities to apply appropriate methodological approaches to specific study areas.
- Must have knowledge of design theories and methods that focus on the design of advanced and complex product-service systems.
- Account for the scientific foundation, and scientific problem areas, of the specialization.
- Describe the state of the art of relevant research in the specialization.

Skills

Students who complete the module will obtain the following qualifications:

- Must be able to work independently, identify major problem areas (analysis), and adequately address problems and opportunities (synthesis).
- Must demonstrate the capability of analyzing, designing, and representing innovative solutions.
- Must demonstrate the ability to evaluate and address (synthesize) major organizational and business issues emerging in the design of a product-service system.
- Master the scientific methods and general skills associated with the specialization.
- Produce a project report according to norms of the area, apply correct terminology, document extensive command over relevant literature, and communicate and discuss the research-based foundation, problem, and results of the project orally, graphically, and in writing in a coherent manner.
- Critically evaluate the results of the project in relation to relevant literature and established scientific methods and models and evaluate and discuss the project's problem area in a relevant scientific context.
- Evaluate and discuss the project's potential for further development.

Competences

Students who complete the module will obtain the following qualifications:

- Must be able to master design and development work in situations that are complex, unpredictable, and require new solutions (synthesis).
- Must be able to independently initiate and implement discipline-specific and interdisciplinary cooperation and assume professional responsibility (synthesis)
- Must have the capability to independently take responsibility for own professional development and specialization (synthesis).
- Participate in, and independently carry out, technological development and research, and apply scientific methods in solving complex problems.
- Plan, execute, and manage complex research and/or development tasks, and assume a professional responsibility for independently carrying out potentially cross-disciplinary, collaborations.
- Independently assume responsibility for own scientific development and specialization.

1.2.2 Personal Learning Objectives

The following personal learning objectives reflect our personal interests and highlight the areas and methods through which we aspire to make contributions in the field of service design:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of how service design can be applied effectively within a startup environment.
- Collect valuable insights and conduct research that contributes to the knowledge and growth of the service design community.
- Utilize the thesis project to generate a practical and feasible solution that specifically addresses the needs and challenges of the collaboration company.
- Explore the application of service design in new environments where it is not currently utilized.

1.3 Collaboration Partner

Due to privacy concerns, we are unable to disclose the specific name of the company. Therefore, throughout this paper, we will use the pseudonym 'TravelStartup' to refer to our main collaboration partner and client for this thesis. It is important to note that TravelStartup operates as a part of a larger organization, which we will refer to as 'TravelOrg'. The overview is represented in Figure 1. Further, for privacy reasons, we will not disclaim specific background information about the company.

We had the opportunity to collaborate with TravelOrg, a large online travel agency and metasearch engine. TravelOrg has a global presence with many international offices. Since its establishment TravelOrg has been helping millions of travelers make informed travel decisions by searching hundreds of travel sites to present the best available options for flights, hotels, cars, and holiday packages within seconds, and without any additional fees.

Fortunately, due to Sarah's part-time role as a UX Researcher at TravelOrg since September 2022, we were lucky to agree to collaborate with the company for our thesis. There are five different departments in TravelOrg as visualized in Figure 1; Meta, Growth, Business, Hotels, and Brand & Systems. In this thesis, our collaboration will be with the Business department which introduced a new product called TravelStartup, which is a corporate travel management tool. Specifically, our focus will be on collaborating closely with the TravelStartup team, which consists of 20 employees. Since its launch a couple of years ago, the TravelStartup team has been running with a rapid trial-and-error approach to project planning, typically without testing before implementing new designs. The team primarily tackles problems based on customer feedback, rather than considering the bigger picture or long-term vision. Our thesis seeks to explore and evaluate TravelStartup's current practices and identify how service design practices can enhance their workflow. We will go more in-depth on TravelStartup's structure and approach in the Empathize stage [4.1. Empathize].

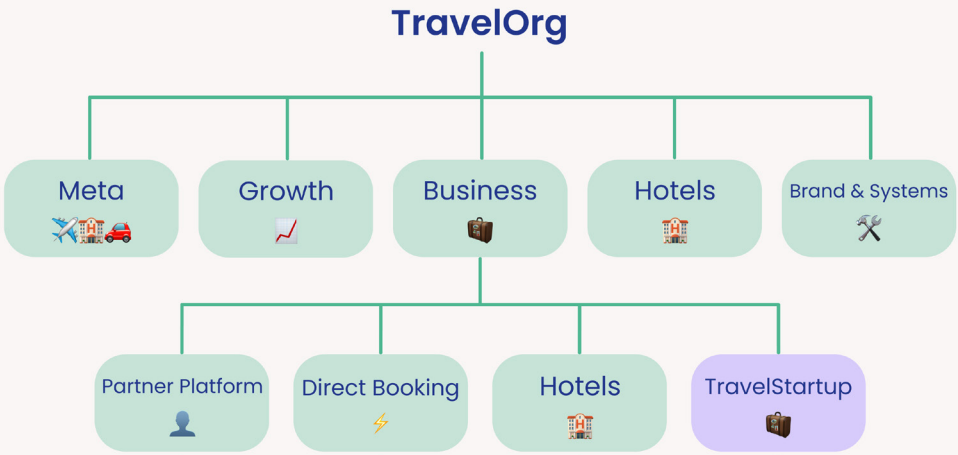


Figure 1. *Overview of TravelOrg's structure and different teams*

1.4 Focus Area

The objective of this thesis is to investigate the service design approach within startup contexts, specifically in terms of its ability to establish a communication foundation that promotes internal alignment and collaboration across functional teams during the early stages of a project. This research interest arose during a design case conducted in collaboration with the collaboration partner TravelStartup. Hence, the Design case section [4. Design case] will detail the process and iterations involved in defining the research question, which states as follows:

"How can the service design approach create a common communication ground to foster internal alignment and collaboration between cross-functional teams at the beginning of a project within a startup in the maturity stage?"

Common communication ground = The teams have a shared understanding of methods, tools, and channels of communication to be used by all stakeholders involved in a project.

Internal alignment = The team is alignment on the scope of a project, its boundaries, and its goals. The team has an overview of each other's responsibilities and ownership of tasks.

Collaboration = The different teams are forming relationships and starting to work more together and share their knowledge (customer insights, expert knowledge) across teams.

Cross-functional teams = Cross-functional teams are individuals from different departments with relevant knowledge and diverse competencies to complete a project. This would be product managers, engineers, and designers in the TravelStartup team.

1.5 Reading Guide

This reading guide offers a brief overview of the thesis and its chapters. Following the introduction section, the thesis is structured in accordance with the following outline.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter establishes the theoretical foundation of the thesis, covering various aspects of service design. It explores design principles, necessary skills, and practices for effective service design. The responsibilities and roles of service designers within organizations are examined, along with the collaborative potential of service design in the business context. A study on service design implementation in technology startups over an 11-month period is presented, along with insights into startup structures, operational methods, and common challenges. The chapter also discusses cross-functional team collaboration, addressing challenges and factors contributing to success. Additionally, the significance of communication within organizations and its relationship with organizational change are explored. The chapter concludes by summarizing the key insights from the literature review, which guide the research question addressed in the thesis.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Chapter 3 provides an introduction and overview of the diverse methodologies employed in this project. It begins by presenting an overview of the overarching approach adopted for the design case, namely the five stages of the design thinking framework. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the various techniques employed to gather data, classifying them into qualitative and quantitative data, along with a brief summary of the different approaches used for conducting user testing. Additionally, the chapter explains the procedures employed for analyzing the obtained data and ends with providing an overview of the overall research process undertaken for this thesis.

Chapter 4. Design Case

In Chapter 4, the case study process is documented as a means to investigate the academic research question of the thesis. The chapter is structured into sections corresponding to the five stages of the Design Thinking methodology: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. It provides a thorough and comprehensive overview of the collaborative activities conducted during the design process, both within the startup company and with external stakeholders. The chapter also reflects on the methods employed and presents the insights and outcomes derived from addressing the problem statement of the case.

Chapter 5. Discussion

Chapter 5 discusses the impact of our approach on the overall process and reflects on specific tools and methods employed during the design process. Additionally, the chapter presents a thoughtful analysis of the collaboration with the company, addressing the challenges and limitations encountered during this partnership. Furthermore, it evaluates the extent to which we have achieved the official and personal learning objectives set for the thesis. Finally, the chapter includes future considerations and proposes an implementation plan.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The final chapter summarizes the key findings and contributions of the research of this thesis. This chapter also revisits the research objectives and evaluates the extent to which they have been achieved, reflecting on how effectively the research question was addressed. Additionally, it suggests areas for future research.

Abbreviations

The following list offers a short overview of the abbreviations used throughout this thesis.

- PM – Product Manager
- ENG/Eng – Engineer
- DES/Des - Designer
- SD – Service Design

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of existing literature on the topic of our thesis, which serves as the basis for building a strong theoretical foundation for developing a relevant service. Our exploration of service design will cover various perspectives, including the general definition of service design, the role of service designers in organizations, and how service design is currently used in a business context. Given that our collaboration company is a startup, we will also investigate the definitions, internal structures, struggles, and lifecycles of startups to gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities they face. In addition, we will examine cross-functional teams within organizations to identify differences and pain points in working together, as well as ways to overcome working in silos. We will also research the interrelation between communication and organizational change, including ways to facilitate change in organizations. Finally, we will explore a relevant case study to investigate how service design can be incorporated into startups. Developing this more complete understanding of the theoretical and conceptual framework will allow us to lay the foundations for this service.

The chapter is divided into the following sections:

02

2.1 Service Design

Given our service design approach to this thesis project, it is important to dedicate a portion of the thesis to exploring the service design practice. This will help us identify best practices that can be applied to our work and thereby improve the quality of the service and ensure that it meets the needs of the end-users. Furthermore, service design involves a wide range of techniques, tools, and methodologies and we found it important to establish a common language and shared understanding of the different concepts and terminologies used in the field. In addition, by exploring the current application of service design in businesses, we will gain a better understanding of the potential impact that our work could have. Lastly, as service design is a rapidly evolving field, it is important to stay up to date with the latest trends and developments.

2.1.1 What is Service Design?

Service design is a practice that first appeared in the twenty-first century, and it is a practice that builds on different arts such as industrial design, branding, as well as service marketing (Reason, Lovlie, & Flu, 2015, p. 1). Nielsen Norman Group describes the service design practice in the following way (Gibbons, 2017):

> ***"Service design improves the experiences of both the user and employee by designing, aligning, and optimizing an organization's operations to better support customer journeys."***

Over the years, numerous larger organizations have dedicated their efforts to enhancing service experiences. In recent times, there has been a growing recognition among large organizations regarding the importance of service design. This shift has led to a transition from one-time operational projects to an ongoing strategic initiative. As a result, organizations have an increasing ambition to understand the significance of incorporating service design capabilities within their company (Service Design Network, 2019).

In today's world, most companies do not have a clear distinction between services and goods anymore, and usually, their offering lies somewhere in the middle. As services grow in maturity and refinement, so does the need to support them. User experiences often fail due to a broken link within the organization, and this is where service design comes into play. Most companies are focused on the delivery of their products, and they spend most of their resources on the final outputs visible to the user, neglecting the important factor of considering internal processes for an optimized user experience (Gibbons, 2017).

To create a good user experience, Nielsen Norman Group states that the following three components need to be integrated and designed for people, props, and processes. The people component includes everybody who is creating or using the service, as well as other indirectly involved stakeholders. Props refer to digital or physical artifacts needed for the service. Lastly, the last component processes include workflows, procedures, rituals, etc. performed by the people involved in the service (Gibbons, 2017). To build a solid foundation for service design, it is crucial to have a good understanding of the underlying principles that guide effective design processes. By examining Karpen et al.'s six foundational design principles for service design, we can gain insights into best practices and strategies for designing services that meet user needs and drive positive outcomes. The following overview of the six foundational design principles is based on an extensive literature review of well-established authors and literature (Karpen, Gemser, & Calabretta, 2016):

1. Creating meaningful solutions satisfying human needs
2. Leveraging Collaboration and inclusion
3. Transforming extant conditions for the better
4. Experimenting and iterating potential solutions continuously
5. Communicating in a tangible and experienceable manner
6. Reasoning holistically and contextually

Design principle 5, '*Communicating in a tangible and experience-able manner*' is particularly relevant to the topic of this thesis, as it highlights the importance of effective communication in service design. According to Karpen et al., designing effective services requires designers to communicate ideas and concepts in a range of techniques, including verbal, visual, and tactile. This principle emphasizes the need for us as designers to create tangible and experienceable prototypes and visualizations.

To gain a better understanding of the skills and techniques required to design and deliver successful services, we have investigated Karpen et al.'s capability-practice portfolio for service design. This portfolio offers a comprehensive overview of the various abilities and practices required for successful service design. The following list presents the constellations, as well as the specific service design abilities associated with each (Karpen, Gemser, & Calabretta, 2016):

1. ***Human- and meaning-centered*** – A service designer's ability to meaningfully inspire a stakeholder's behavioral, sensorial, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual engagement when experiencing a service design.
2. ***Co-creative and inclusive*** – A service designer's ability to empathize, which is the ability to sense and share thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and to enclose these into design processes and solutions.
3. ***Transformative and betterment-oriented*** – A service designer's ability to handle the unknown and complex by working on projects that are explorative and uncertain.
4. ***Emergent and experiential*** – A service designer's ability to experiment, which builds on the designer's mindset to continuously learn and adjust based on tests and iterations. A service designer is not afraid of failure.
5. ***Explicative and experientially explicit*** – A service designer's ability to facilitate story building concerning both existing as well as new brands and to communicate them across contexts and stakeholders.
6. ***Holistic and contextual*** – A service designer's ability to think through systems, to focus on improving the whole service system, including all stakeholders and resources.

Given that the aim of this thesis is to improve team collaboration in a startup, we have paid particular focus on the second constellation '*Co-creative and inclusive*', which highlights an organization's capability to collaborate with internal and external stakeholders. Bringing customers and other stakeholders into the process of service innovation is a collaborative competence necessary to create an optimized service offering. Service designers include these diverse stakeholders through participation and involvement to generate meaningful insights and ideas. This can be achieved by creating a safe, comfortable, and trusted environment with users or clients, where they can feel comfortable in sharing emotions, thoughts, and experiences. This practice is referred to as bonding, and it plays a crucial role in service design (Karpen, Gemser, & Calabretta, 2016).

It becomes apparent that service design plays a crucial role in improving user experiences and optimizing an organization's operations. As services continue to grow in importance, service designers are needed to create solutions that meet user needs and drive positive outcomes. In the following section, we will further explore the responsibilities and functions of a service designer in an organizational setup.

2.1.2 Role of Service Designers within an Organization

As we will function as service designers within TravelStartup for the time of the thesis, it was important for us to explore what it means exactly to be employed as a service designer in an organization. Service designers are designing a service's end-to-end journey and helping users achieve their goals in a digital or offline channel. There are several skills that a service designer should have such as the ability to work agile, communicate effectively, collaborate with the community, be a great leader and guide, manage decisions and risks, prototype ideas, think strategically, and work within constraints. To summarize, a service designer should be able to use user insights and organizational outcomes to create relevant designs (Central Digital and Data Office, 2022).

There has not been much research on the role of in-house service designers working in a non-academic context within an organization, what Blomkvist (Blomkvist, 2015) is explaining by saying that service design is a new discipline, and a lot of organizations are hiring external service designers as a part of a research project. However, those hired designers are not part of the organization and might miss out on important aspects. Blomkvist did a study with nine in-house service designers in six different companies to discover the impact and responsibilities a service designer has within an organization. He was focusing on what service designers do, when and how they are involved in projects, as well as how they fit within the overall structure of the organization's. He discovered that many service designers are occupying positions that are not explicitly labeled as service designers, which can be showcased by the fact that only three of the nine participants were officially hired as service designers in his research. His research showed that service designers are usually working within one out of four roles outlined in the table (Blomkvist, 2015).

Role	Description	Job Responsibilities
The in-house consultant	Working as an internal consultant within the organization, assisting various teams and departments with their innovation and design processes.	• Collaborate in designing new services for customers. • Teach service design thinking to different departments. • Participate in projects across different departments.
The design strategist	Assisting an organization in developing strategies to deliver consistent and high-quality services.	• Define guidelines for design, customer research and analysis. • Streamline work processes across teams and offices. • Identify potential projects and opportunities that can benefit the organization. • Usually, lack decision-making authority in initiating projects or implementing services.
The B2C designer	Acting as a mediator between product development and business owners and advising them to prioritize customer experience.	• Generate requirements for development. • Take part in ideation, experience, and post-launch evaluations.
The B2B designer	Functioning as a product manager/facilitator for different projects within an organization, with a focus on meeting the specific business requirements.	• Identify commonalities and shared values among different businesses and design solutions based on them. • Introduce service design approaches into innovation processes. • Collaborate with both strategy and marketing teams.

To distinguish the unique skills of service designers from other professionals, Rossi identified three main factors that need to be examined (Rossi, 2016):

Facilitating

Service designers take the role of facilitator during participatory activities. Through education and career development, designers acquire a set of soft skills to meet the demand and be able to fulfill the role of a facilitator in the group. Designers are better equipped than other professionals to lead a group of people due to their use of practices such as team working, collective brainstorming, and multi-disciplinary approaches. There is a need to identify and acknowledge these skills both in education, including some training to develop these facilitation abilities, and in a professional context (Rossi, 2016).

1. Co-designing

Service designers are different from other more general facilitators as they have a bigger focus on the design process and are competent in context analysis, and idea generation. In general, they have the capacity to integrate and visually communicate varied and comprehensive insights to draw conclusions based on evidence (Rossi, 2016).

2. Innovating

Consultancies suggest various concepts to foster innovation within organizations, such as two-day non-stop 'Hackathons' with specific briefs, or 'Design thinking bootcamps' for rapid training. However, there is a lack of clarity regarding the contribution of service designers to these activities and the evaluation of the innovation's success. Thus, further in-depth investigation is necessary to address these issues (Rossi, 2016).

It becomes clear that service designers can occupy different positions within an organization, and it is typically their responsibility to design or improve end-to-end services for users using insights and organizational outcomes. Service designers possess unique skills such as facilitating, co-designing, and innovating. The following section will assess the impact of service designers in the context of innovative businesses.

2.1.3 Service Design in Business – A Way to Foster Collaboration

This section aims to explore why service design is a relevant discipline for businesses and how service design can contribute to the success of a business. This will provide us with insights on how to approach our collaboration with TravelStartup in a more beneficial way. In Figure 2, Reason et al. is highlighting three trends that make service design a trending and relevant discipline in the business industry nowadays (Reason, Lovlie, & Flu, 2015, pp. 2-4).

Figure 2. *Three trends for service design in Business*

Service design offers businesses an approach to deal with challenges and initiatives by asking the following three questions '*What does this do for our current and future customers?*', '*How will our business be impacted?*', and '*Which capabilities are needed*

by the organization to respond or to drive the initiative?' (Reason, Lovlie, & Flu, 2015, p. 4). However, organizations often overlook internal processes while focusing on the final product outcome for customers, and thereby creating a gap that can be solved by embedding service design into their processes. Service design can surface conflicts by aligning business models with the delivered service, facilitating cross-functional solutions, reducing redundant work, and forming relationships by aligning internal processes (Gibbons, 2017; Reason, Lovlie, & Flu, 2015).

Service design has a promising potential to foster internal alignment and collaboration within organizations. Oftentimes, organizations have a siloed approach that prioritizes internally focused discussions over customer-oriented ones. Reason et al. discovered that using creative and design-oriented processes can stimulate collaboration and creates alignment between departments. However, implementing this new way of working requires involvement from all teams and adapting to new practices and processes (Reason, Lovlie, & Flu, 2015, pp. 125-127).

The authors have found several factors of how service design can facilitate communication and collaboration within a business. For one, they emphasize that visual representations of experiences that tell a story can help to engage a team in a vision and enhance their involvement and contribution. They also found that involving the back-office team in the customer experience can be extremely valuable. If teams are engaged in service design, they can contribute with a wealth of insights and ideas to improve concepts and help inspire development. Lastly, using good facilitation and design tools, collaboration and alignment can quickly be achieved (Reason, Lovlie, & Flu, 2015, pp. 125-127).

Reason et al. observed that there is often a lack of collaboration and alignment between teams and highlighted that products are more likely to be successful in having an aligned team. When different departments are having different opinions and directions, meeting a customer's need can quickly become a problem. Each department must understand the role they play in the creation of customer value. The book points out that customers and the value the organization is creating for them are often the only shared ground across departments (Reason, Lovlie, & Flu, 2015, p. 128).

There are several approaches that positively impact the creation of a cross-functional team dynamic (Reason, Lovlie, & Flu, 2015, pp. 129-130):

- Having a relaxed traditional hierarchy.
- Promoting and encouraging a collaborative working style.
- Always keeping the customer at the center of your focus, as this is often the only shared ground across departments.
- Beginning a project by bringing the whole team together and then dividing into smaller teams for specific tasks. Regularly bring the entire team back together to discuss key points.
- Using visualizations to create a shared understanding of the customer experience and value.
- Engaging different departments in joint sessions and asking them for their contributions towards achieving the desired outcome.

2.1.4 Service Design in Startups – An explorative longitudinal case study with 5 startups

To gain a comprehensive understanding of our research field and explore the latest advancements, we conducted a brief state-of-the-art research focusing on a relevant study. This research allows us to identify key theories, concepts, and frameworks that are relevant to our research area, thereby establishing a solid foundation for our research design, analysis, and interpretation of findings. In particular, we will explore a study conducted by Korper et al. (Korper, Patricio, Holmlid, & Witell, 2020), in which they explored how service design can facilitate service innovation in technology startups by incorporating service design in five different technology startups for 11 months. These startups did not have any prior service design experience, had around 2-14 employees, and have gone through the basic incubation process. The study's goal was to get an in-depth understanding of how service design can facilitate the development of value propositions during a project within a startup. Their goal was to investigate if the companies will see and recognize the value of the service design approach.

For each case, data has been collected following the same three stages. In stage one, contextual information about the company was collected before kicking off the project. This data was collected through archival data and semi-structured interviews. The second stage lasted for four months and mainly consisted of observations of the innovation process. Data was collected through researcher field notes from meetings, observations, group discussions, creation of visual representations, presentations, etc. Lastly, follow-up semi-structured interviews helped to reflect on the solution in stage three.

The authors observed how service design was able to facilitate change in several ways (Korper, Patricio, Holmlid, & Witell, 2020). They were able to observe how service design enabled the companies to have a more human-centered approach and a greater focus on how technology could be used to enable value co-creation. Incorporating service design enabled the organizations to explore a more widespread set of actors compared to solely focusing on single market actors. Following the service design approach (exploration, ideation, concept development, and prototyping) was found to be engaging and relevant, and following this process, startups have found value proposition opportunities outside of their initially defined scope. It was discovered that visualization tools are relevant to share knowledge within the team and serve as an overview of the status of the project. The full overview of the four different phases, including its goals and tools used is visualized in Figure 3.

Korper et al. (Korper, Patricio, Holmlid, & Witell, 2020) found that startups tend to embed service design on two different levels:

1. Application of 'principles'
2. Provision of a 'toolbox'

Application of principles

Two of the startups saw the value of service design in its human-centered, co-creative, and systemic perspective that can guide the development of potential solutions. They especially valued how service design was able to provide customer insights that differed from their initial assumptions (Korper, Patricio, Holmlid, & Witell, 2020).

Provision of toolbox

Even though some companies saw the value of developing value propositions, they found them too risky to implement as the proposition does not align with the existing market. Instead, they rather used service design as a checklist approach as they most valued the quality-of-service design to conduct an in-depth analysis of the market (Korper, Patricio, Holmlid, & Witell, 2020).

They have worked with startups in stages 1-3 of the life cycle [Figure 3], and they concluded that the life cycle stage influenced how the value propositions were developed within a startup. For example, a startup in the second stage, stabilization, benefited from learning more about the 'principles' of service design and could discover opportunities that they have previously overlooked (Korper, Patricio, Holmlid, & Witell, 2020).

Service design process phase	Explorations	Ideation	Prototyping	Delivery
Goals	• Defining the mission statement • Establishing the goals of service design • Actor and stakeholder exploration using research through design • Focus on the customer experience	• Developing value propositions from the findings from the exploration • Understanding the multilevel service design • Proposing the service concept	• Prototyping the service concept using representation tools and techniques • Testing the service concept features	• Project hand-off (final reports)
Tools	• Company mission statement • Ethnographic and qualitative research methods incl. contextual interviews • Benchmarking • Customer experience modeling • Personas	• Service concept design • Service system design • Service encounter design • Service blueprint • Customer value constellation • Service system architecture	• Storyboards • Mockups • Videos	• N/D

Figure 3. *Overview of goals and tools in the service design project phases (Korper, Patricio, Holmlid, & Witell, 2020)*

2.2 Startups

As our collaboration partner for this thesis is a startup, it was necessary to gain a better understanding of how startups typically operate, what stages they go through before being fully established, how they differ from corporate companies, and what their typical struggles are, as well as their relation to service design.

Upon investigation of different ways to define startups, it has become evident that a universal definition cannot be applied. Nevertheless, we have identified several frequently employed definitions in the field. One broadly accepted definition by business schools is defined by Steve Blank, a renowned Silicon Valley entrepreneur startup expert, and professor at Stanford University. He defines a startup as '*a temporary organization designed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model*' (Blank, 2010). In Steve Blank's definition of a startup, the emphasis is on the experimental and iterative nature of these companies. Mitchell Grant refers to a startup as '*a company in the first stages of operations. Startups are founded by one or more entrepreneurs who want to develop a product or service for which they believe there is demand. These companies generally start with high costs and limited revenue, which is why they look for capital from a variety of sources such as venture capitalists.*' (Grant, 2022). According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a startup can be referred to as '*a small business that has just been started*' (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.), while the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a startup as a '*fledgling business enterprise*' (Merriam webster, 2023). To summarize, a startup is a temporary organization that aims to find a repeatable and scalable business model. They are usually founded by one or more entrepreneurs, and they begin with high costs and limited revenue. Startups typically go through multiple rounds of testing, pivoting, and refinement in their search for a sustainable and profitable business model.

To understand the differences between the TravelStartup team and the main TravelOrg team, we looked into how startups and established corporate organizations differ. Our research showed that large corporations face greater challenges than ever before due to increasingly demanding customers and the difficulty of meeting their constantly evolving needs for innovative products and services. In contrast, startups are nimble and agile enough to adjust to these changes and fulfill customer demands more effectively. Several factors make it easier for startups to penetrate the market and become competitive with established corporations in a relatively short period. The barriers to entry are relatively low, and with a solid idea, pitch deck, and plan, there are numerous opportunities to secure venture capital. Some larger corporations are adopting a startup mentality to remain competitive and flexible. Although Amazon is a multinational company and not a startup, it maintains an agile Day 1 startup mindset that prioritizes customer needs and fosters innovation (Grimes, 2019). Many large organizations have recognized that their conventional business models, traditional research, and development approaches are no longer adequate. To keep up, many large organizations have initiated new accelerator programs to speed up product and service development and may establish new business lines. Service designers can benefit from the design mindset emphasized in Design Thinking, which prioritizes end-users throughout the process (Grimes, 2019).

To gain insight into the current stage of the TravelStartup company, we conducted an analysis of the typical life cycle stages that startups go through. While there are many attempts to define the life cycle of startups, Klotins et al. found that existing frameworks were too generic and developed their own based on prior research and guides [Figure 4]. According to their model, startups typically go through the following four stages (Klotins, et al., 2014):

1. ***Inception*** - Build the initial version of the product.
2. ***Stabilization*** - Ensure further development and prepare to scale.

3. ***Growth*** - Grow through the planned market share acquisition.
4. ***Maturity*** - Start a transition toward an established company.

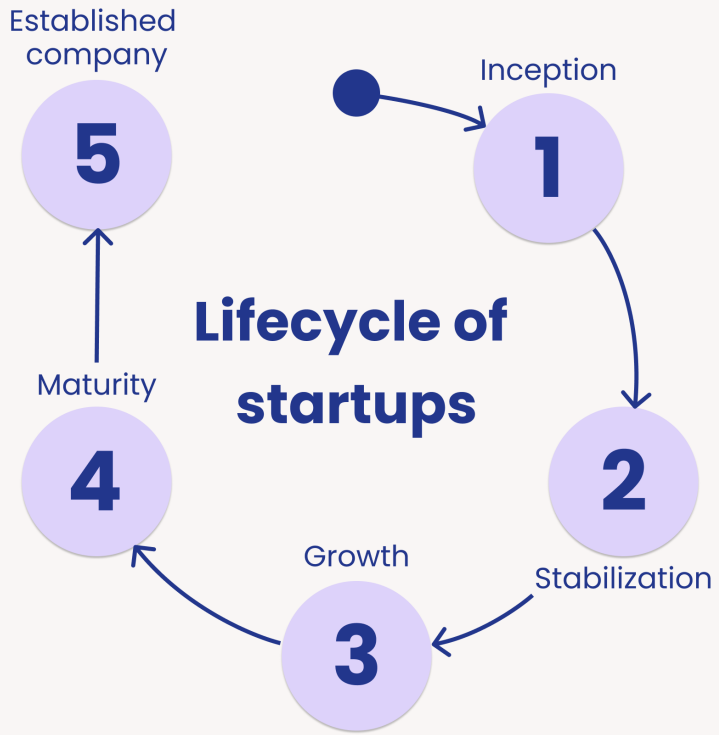


Figure 4. *The typical lifecycle of startups (Klotins, et al., 2014)*

In the initial stages, startups focus on identifying relevant problems and finding feasible solutions. As they progress, their focus shifts toward marketing and improving efficiency. Throughout these stages, startups aim to remain active, advance to the next stage, and be acquired by another company (Klotins, et al., 2014). Klotins et al. also classify startups into four states, namely active, paused, acquired, or closed. An active startup is actively developing its product, while a paused startup has temporarily stopped work but plans to resume in the future. In the acquired state, the startup has been acquired by another company, and the team may either split up or merge with another company. Finally, a startup in the closed state has parted its ways or shifted its focus to something new (Klotins, et al., 2014).

It is important to understand the challenges that startups face as they are working under a different set of circumstances than established companies. As discussed earlier, startups are typically in the process of developing their business model and are often under-resourced and lack experience. Understanding their struggles will help us to better tailor our service to meet their specific needs and goals. Research showed that startups tend to be quite focused on developing and improving their technology, which can hinder the development of value propositions. The successful implementation of service design is heavily reliant on an organization's resources, practices, and capabilities. This can be a challenge for startups as they may lack process maturity and tend to encounter conflicts among stakeholders with differing visions for the business. As startups are commonly very focused on technological innovation, they tend to have less systematic processes, which can easily lead to failure (Korper, Patricio, Holmlid, & Witell, 2020).

Service design practices can help startups to overcome this lack of process maturity by providing a structured approach to addressing these issues, as well as streamlining and optimizing internal processes. Although the literature on incorporating service design in the startup world is relatively new and limited, service designers can bring significant value to this type of working environment, according to Grimes' personal experience (Grimes, 2019). By incorporating service design practices, a startup can enhance its innovation process by focusing on a multilevel understanding of different actors, activities, and touchpoints contributing to value creation. Service design allows a startup to enhance its collaboration with stakeholders, conceptualize and prototype new concepts and take a more human-centered design approach. The switch to a more iterative and collaborative approach can result in more creative and user-relevant solutions (Korper, Patricio, Holmlid,

& Witell, 2020). Service designers also find it intriguing to observe the differences in how startups and larger organizations perceive and utilize their practice, and to what extent they acknowledge its value and incorporate it into their structures and methodologies (Grimes, 2019).

2.3 Cross-functional Team Collaboration

Having understood the nature of startups and their life cycle, it is important to recognize the significance of cross-functional team collaboration for their success. As mentioned earlier [2.2 Startups], startups operate under different circumstances than established companies, and they usually lack resources and experience, which makes effective use of the existing team even more important. This section focuses on the importance of cross-functional team collaboration and how it can benefit startups in achieving their goals.

Cross-functional project teams are made up of individuals from different departments that have the needed and relevant knowledge and competencies to complete a project (Ghobadi & D'Ambra, 2011). The teams can realize their full potential when the different teams are using their expertise combined with the expertise of other teams. A common factor limiting the effectiveness of cross-functional collaboration is the fact that departments often identify themselves more closely within their department, both socially and psychologically, which can hinder effective knowledge sharing across teams. Having this feeling of loyalty and belonging to one's team can create the need of treating knowledge as a private good, rather than a public good accessible by all teams (Ghobadi & D'Ambra, 2011). An article by Ghobadi and D'Ambra found that having a particular knowledge can be a competitive advantage and therefore a source of power within an organization. Sharing this kind of knowledge could potentially lead to losing this unique position of power, which is why some people will keep their knowledge to themselves or share it incompletely (Ghobadi & D'Ambra, 2011). The article is proposing a model that aims to provide researchers and people in the field explanation of how knowledge can be effectively shared in cross-functional projects. The authors initially had five hypotheses, from which they were able to confirm some of them. The hypotheses confirmed that cooperating between cross-functional teams leads to a higher quality of shared knowledge across teams. They also found that competing for intangible resources among cross-functional teams negatively affects the cooperative nature of teams, including their communication and task orientation (Ghobadi & D'Ambra, 2011).

It is logical to think that every team in an organization is in some way unique, however, Menz et al. (Menz, Bogner, & Littig, 2009, pp. 235-236) found a way to identify the key qualities of a team that apply broadly across teams. These qualities are not meant to be limiting but rather serve as a general framework that can be adapted depending on a situation The authors categorized teams into the following three broad objectives: problem resolution, creative, and tactical. Teams focused on problem resolution need to trust the process and their team members, and generally focus more on the issues at hand instead of who's taking credit for what. Creative teams require a degree of autonomy and not having a strict set of guidelines to follow, while tactical teams are well-organized and have clear procedures and defined roles for all members (Menz, Bogner, & Littig, 2009, pp. 235-236).

While many companies have recognized the importance of cross-functional teams and have already implemented them, many of the new product development projects are facing challenges in ensuring that these teams are effectively accomplishing the tasks related to the development of new products (McDonough III, 2000).

2.3.1 Factors Contributing to the Success of Cross-functional Teams

Edward F. McDonough conducted a study to investigate the factors that lead to the success of cross-functional teams (McDonough III, 2000). The study involved an extensive literature review and a case study that surveyed 112 new product development professionals. The research aimed to explore and answer the following two main questions: 'What is the impetus for companies to use cross-functional teams?' and 'What factors are perceived as being associated with cross-functional team success?'. The literature review focused on three primary areas: stage-setting elements, enablers, and team behaviors (McDonough III, 2000).

Stage-setting elements

McDonough identified four stage-setting elements as the first area of focus in his study, which are critical in shaping the product development process. These elements demonstrate the management's initial steps to provide direction to the development efforts and establish the foundation for the following product development activities. The following list covers the key factors that contribute to a successful cross-functional team collaboration (McDonough III, 2000).

- ***Goals*** - provide a common frame of reference, structure tasks, and establish boundaries, clearly scope the project and its boundaries, direct attention towards a common task, clearly defined project direction.
- ***Empowerment*** - project leader to grant decision-making responsibility to team members, increase dedication towards achieving objectives, and clear distribution of ownership.
- ***Climate*** - establish a positive environment by instilling a sense of urgency, emphasizing the project's significance, selecting appropriate team members, and empowering team members.
- ***Human Resource*** - select skilled and diverse team members to gather relevant information, gain a holistic perspective of the design process, and prevent issues before they appear.

Enablers

The concept of enablers refers to the roles of individual employees in promoting cross-functional team success. Research has identified three hierarchical levels within an organization (McDonough III, 2000).

- ***Team Leadership*** - define project limitations and boundaries, carry out participatory leadership style, explore, engage, discuss with others, challenge ideas, give team members control over the project, and share information and knowledge with the team.
- ***Senior Management Support*** - demonstrate commitment, support the team to overcome obstacles, and encourage the team.
- ***Champions*** - someone with a particular interest in the project's success, can enable the team to see opportunities and overcome strongly opinionated and resistant management, the impact on project result is rather indirect.

Team behavior

The final area of research focused on team behavior, particularly how the previously discussed stage setters and enablers can affect it. The study explored three aspects of team behavior: cooperation, commitment, and respect (McDonough III, 2000).

***Cooperation*:**

- Collaboration, teamwork, interaction, communication, and integration are all aspects of cooperation.
- Goals can encourage cooperation, by focusing on individual efforts and common objectives.

- Enablers can influence cooperation, and higher management roles with great interpersonal skills can encourage cross-functional relationships.

Commitment:

- The feeling of dedication to achieve the project objectives and enthusiasm to do what is necessary to make the project successful.
- Selecting skilled and expert human resources during the stage-setting phase can boost the team's confidence in one another and facilitate their effective contributions to the project.

Ownership:

- A feeling of urgency to make a difference and responsibility for the project.
- The right goals can have the biggest impact on the feeling of ownership.
- Involving the project team to interpret those goals into detailed statements can help guide their work.

Respect:

- Mutual respect between the team members can help open communication and create a feeling of trust.
- Trust in co-workers and their judgment together with honest interaction shows a form of respect.
- Team leaders can model their own behavior and interpersonal skill to foster respect within the team.

McDonough's empirical study indicates that cross-functional teams are widely spread across different organizations, with no correlation found between team usage and company size, age, or revenue. Organizations implement cross-functional teams to improve performance outcomes, such as quality, customer satisfaction, and success rate, as well as to speed up development and lower costs. They also hope to enhance cross-functional interaction, give functions more power and ownership, and better utilize human resources, among other process-related improvements. The study found that utilizing cross-functional teams has a positive impact on project performance, with three key success factors identified: stage-setters, enablers, and team behavior (McDonough III, 2000).

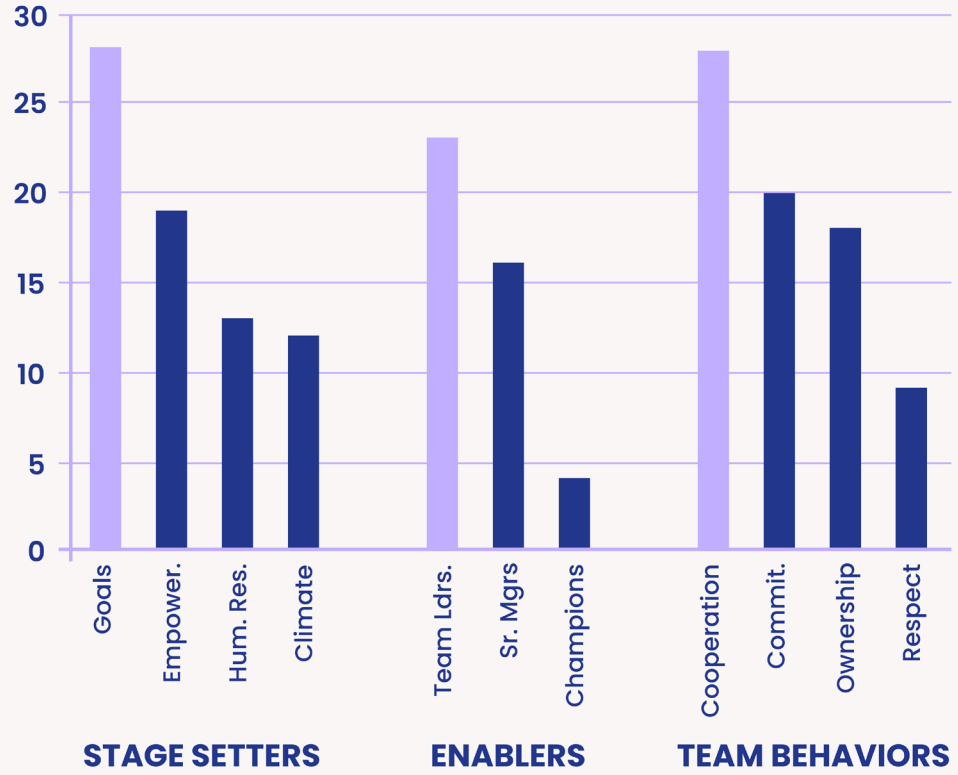


Figure 5. *Bar chart illustrating the four success elements categorized by the percentage of respondents (n=112) (McDonough III, 2000)*

According to Figure 5, the key factors for successful cross-functional team collaboration are defining clear project goals, strong leadership, and enhanced cooperation. It is quite interesting to see that these three highest-rated success elements are in three different categories. The fact that these factors belong to different

categories highlights the complexity of utilizing cross-functional teams and the need for a combination of elements to achieve a successful project development. Champions have minimal impact on the success of cross-functional teams. Respect among team members has a smaller impact compared to commitment or ownership towards the project, which we found quite surprising (McDonough III, 2000).

2.3.2 Working in Silos

When researching cross-functional team collaboration, it is crucial to examine the negative impact of working in silos. Silos refer to organizational entities that lack coordination and communication with other entities within the same organization (Serrat, 2017). This issue is relevant because it hinders effective collaboration between teams. Working in silos can lead to several consequences. Firstly, teams tend to focus solely on their own objectives, structures, and measures of success, neglecting important aspects of the user journey that can have a negative impact on the user experience. This limited perspective can result in missed opportunities for enhancing the overall value provided to users (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018).

Furthermore, silos cause misalignment of goals and responsibilities, confusion regarding authority, and inefficient resource allocation. They foster an environment focused on individual performance rather than the collective success of the organization (Serrat, 2017). Stones (Stone, 2004) highlights that organizational structure plays a significant role in creating and retaining silos, particularly when departments are designed around functional areas. This structure creates barriers to collaboration and fosters territorial thinking, where departments compete against each other instead of working together. Breaking these silos requires coordination and essential communication across departments (Stone, 2004). To overcome siloed thinking, organizations need to shift from managing silos to managing systems. This includes connecting and integrating different functions and departments to enhance their collective contributions. By fostering coordination and effective communication, organizations can break down silos, promote cross-functional collaboration, and create a more cohesive and successful working environment (Serrat, 2017).

When it comes to overcoming the challenges of working in silos, numerous approaches and guides have been proposed by various authors. In this context, we will explore two approaches from different authors to provide a deeper understanding. To accomplish the goal of breaking silos and promoting cross-functional collaboration, Lencioni offers a framework with four actions that address siloed thinking effectively (Lencioni, 2006).

- ***Establish a Thematic Goal*** - This involves defining a single, qualitative, and time-limited goal that resonates with the entire organization. The purpose of this thematic goal is to inspire collaboration and align everyone toward a shared objective.
- ***Articulate Defining Objectives for the Thematic Goal*** - To provide context and guidance for the thematic goal, specific objectives are created. These objectives outline actionable steps that need to be taken to achieve the overall goal. By clearly defining the objectives, employees gain a clear understanding of what needs to be done.
- ***Specify a Set of Ongoing Standard Operating Objectives*** - In addition to the thematic goal and defining objectives, there should be a set of standard operating objectives that remain in place regardless of short-term focuses. These objectives, such as productivity or customer satisfaction, ensure the organization maintains essential aspects of its operations while being consistent with the thematic goals.
- ***Select Metrics*** - Once the goals, objectives, and standard operating objectives are established, it is crucial to monitor and evaluate their progress. Metrics are selected to measure

success and track the organization's progress toward achieving its goals.

Stone introduces a set of five questions, originally proposed by Angela Drummond, that can assist management or executives in identifying and breaking silos within organizations (Stone, 2004). These questions are as follows:

"Does your organizational structure promote collaboration, or do silos exist?"

This question examines whether the existing structure of the organization encourages collaboration or if it fosters the presence of silos. It prompts an assessment of the structural barriers that may hinder cross-functional cooperation.

"Do you have collaboration in your culture and as part of your value system?"

This question focuses on the cultural aspects of the organization. It explores whether collaboration is embedded in the organizational culture and valued as a fundamental principle.

"Do you have the IT infrastructure for effective collaboration?"

This question addresses the technological infrastructure supporting collaboration. It examines whether the organization possesses the necessary tools and systems to facilitate effective communication and collaboration among different teams and departments.

"Do you believe in collaboration? Do you model that belief?"

This question highlights the importance of leadership and management in promoting collaboration. It evaluates whether leaders genuinely believe in the value of collaboration and actively demonstrate and model collaborative behavior.

"Do you have a reward system for collaboration?"

This question examines the presence of incentives and rewards that encourage and recognize collaborative efforts. It assesses whether the organization has mechanisms in place to acknowledge and reinforce collaboration as a desirable behavior.

Based on the American Management Association's research and interviews conducted by Stone, several actions are recommended to minimize or dismantle silos within organizations. These actions include rewarding cooperative behavior, fostering a culture of collaboration, encouraging innovation, clarifying responsibilities, identifying opportunities for cross-functional initiatives, approaching white spaces cautiously, and organizing retreats to cultivate camaraderie among employees (Stone, 2004).

Throughout our collaboration with the startup company, we will bear in mind the practices and questions related to cross-functional collaboration and the breaking of silos. Considering the existing communication and collaboration gaps within TravelStartup [4.2.1 Workshop], these practices should guide us in developing solutions that address the identified challenges effectively.

2.4 Communication and Organizational Change

In the fast-paced world of startups, with limited resources and rapid market demands, effective communication is a vital ingredient for success. In the upcoming section, we will explore the significance of communication within organizations and the advantages that come from enhancing communication practices. Additionally, we will examine the relationship between communication and organizational change, introducing a model that illustrates this relationship. Lastly, we will provide a set of recommended practices for effectively managing and communicating change within an organizational setting.

2.4.1 Communication in Organizations

According to Cheney et al. (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011), the concept of an '*organization*' is closely intertwined with communication. Their analysis reveals that organizations can be understood as a pattern or network of interactions and relationships. An organization is a complex mixture of symbols, messages, efforts, and activities, all working towards a specific objective, such as selling flights to customers (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011, pp. 7-8). However, the authors emphasize that organizational communication extends beyond mere channels and relationships within the workplace. It encompasses a wide range of elements, including symbols (e.g., logos, technologies, uniforms), structures, relationships (e.g., between managers and subordinates), narratives (e.g., stories about the company's founder), and more. To conclude, communication arises from the sum of interactions that shape our understanding of the organizational context (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011, p. 464).

Enhancing communication within an organization comes with several benefits, as highlighted by the authors. Improved communication fosters a stronger connection between employees and the business, enabling a clearer understanding of how individual actions contribute to organizational goals. It also facilitates a smoother integration for new employees, helping them align with the company's culture more quickly. Additionally, effective communication enables employees to stay connected with evolving business challenges, allowing for a quicker adaptation to changing market conditions. Lastly, strong communication enables effective leadership during times of organizational change, as management can connect and engage with employees more efficiently. By recognizing the value of communication, organizations can gain from these advantages and create a more agile working environment (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011, pp. 5-6).

2.4.2 Communication for Organizational Change

Organizational change is a key focus for many smaller and larger organizations as they navigate a rapidly evolving and unpredictable business environment. With advancements in technology and increasing customer demands, organizations recognize the need for continuous change to remain flexible and adaptable. A study involving 1430 executives revealed that 76% of them prioritize innovation over cost reduction for long-term organizational success (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011, pp. 323-324). The concept of 'change' carries different meanings and perceptions among individuals. Some perceive change as something within their control, actively driving and steering it. For instance, they may organize wrap-up meetings at the end of a project to discuss process improvements and enhance future effectiveness. On the other hand, some view change as inevitable and beyond their control, referring to it as a 'wave of the future' that you can either ride along or get swamped by (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011, p. 325).

This research showed that the connection between communication and organizational change lies in the recognition that effective communication plays an important role in managing and navigating change successfully. An organization that is fostering clear and open channels of communication can communicate the purpose and goals of change initiatives, address concerns, and engage employees in the change process. We believe that by emphasizing the importance of effective communication during organizational change, TravelStartup can enhance its ability to adapt, thrive, and remain competitive in a dynamic startup environment.

Cheney et al. have developed a model that illustrates the intertwined relationship between communication and change [Figure 6]. According to the authors, communication is not merely a tool for facilitating change; it constitutes change itself (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011, p. 329).

The model recognizes that change occurs within a social-historical context, meaning that the organizational environment and surrounding factors play a significant role in shaping and influencing change processes. It emphasizes that change is not a straightforward, linear progression but rather a dynamic and iterative process. The feedback loop shown in the model highlights the need to pause, reevaluate, and adapt before moving forward. This acknowledges that change often involves revisiting previous steps, reinterpreting information, reframing perspectives, or even abandoning certain aspects of the planned change (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011, pp. 329-323).

When applying this model to the context of our collaboration with a startup, we have discovered several valuable insights. Firstly, the model's emphasis on the social-historical context of change holds particular relevance for startups. Given that startups operate within dynamic and rapidly evolving environments, it becomes crucial to understand the external factors and industry trends that shape the startup ecosystem. By being aware of the broader context in which they operate, startups can adapt their communication strategies accordingly. Furthermore, the feedback loop becomes essential for startups as they navigate the uncertainties and complexities of the change process.

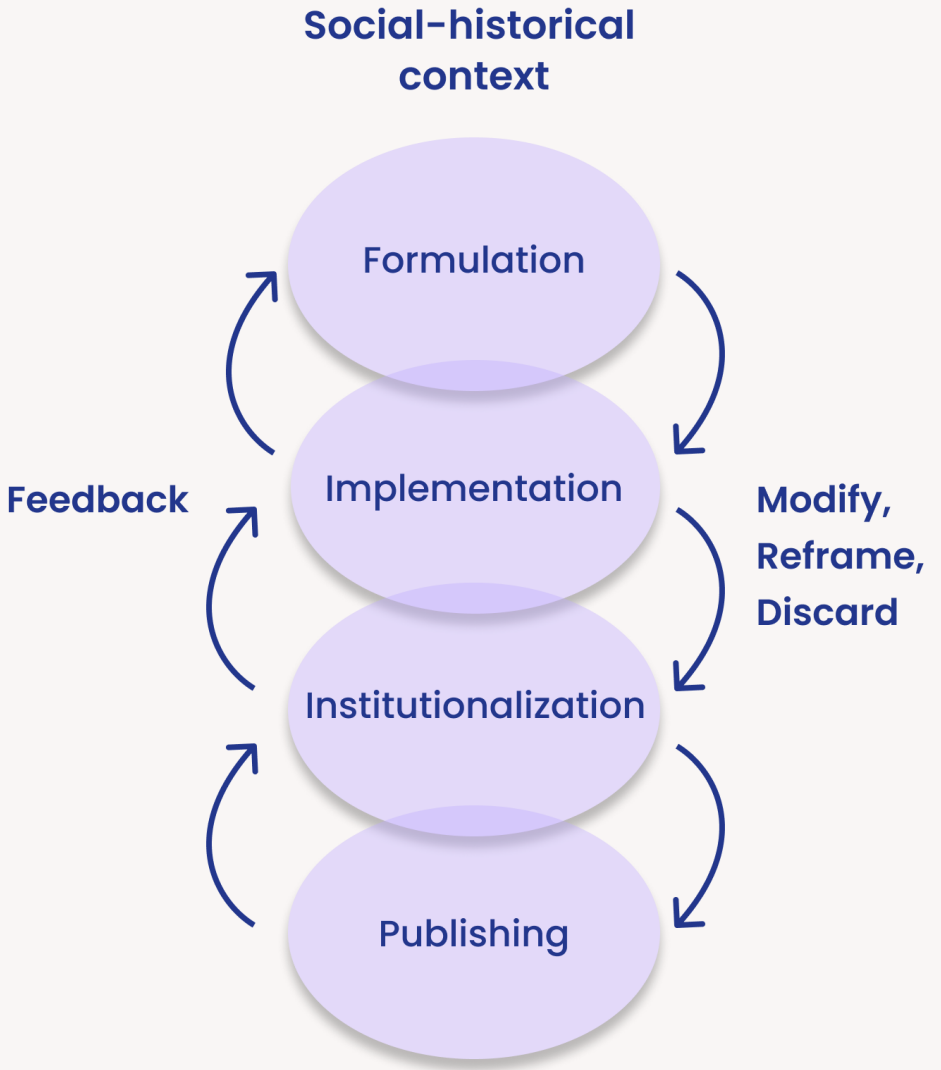


Figure 6. *A model representing the relationship between communication and change (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011)*

Through our collaboration, we observed that startups often operate in an iterative and agile manner, constantly learning from feedback and making necessary adjustments to their strategies and offerings. This feedback-driven approach allows startups to refine their business models, pivot when needed, and make well-informed decisions that contribute to their growth and success. Effective management and communication of change in an organization are key factors in ensuring its success. Research in the field has identified recurring themes and guidelines that change agents can follow to navigate and communicate change effectively.

The following list gives an overview of some good practices to manage and communicate change in an organization (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011, p. 340):

- Promote communication about and participation in the change.
- Facilitate participation in the change process.
- Create a clear purpose and vision for the change process.
- Emphasize participation and empowerment.
- Create a change-ready culture.
- Communicate frequently to inform employees about the change process.

To effectively implement change, communication tactics should include spreading information to stakeholders early on and involving them throughout the process. Creating and communicating a shared vision with stakeholders helps align everyone toward the desired outcomes. In addition to effective communication, certain organizational characteristics foster innovation. These include providing support for innovation by allocating time and resources for exploring new ideas, ensuring employees understand the importance of organizational goals through shared vision and objectives, and fostering creative leadership that encourages and supports creativity within the organization (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011, p. 348).

2.5 Summary of Literature Review

In the following section, we will summarize the key insights gained through the literature review that led us toward the research question of this thesis. This summary has proven valuable in guiding our design case and has served as the foundation to which we have frequently returned back to in order to maintain the relevance of our research focus. The full summary can be found in Appendix B.

Service Design

The literature review section explored various aspects of service design and its relevance to organizations. It highlighted that service design principles have the potential to foster collaboration, communication, and inclusive practices within organizations. Service design tools can serve as a checklist for guiding the development of solutions and improving project processes. In terms of the role of service designers, they were found to possess co-creative and inclusive abilities, emphasizing sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences. They take a holistic and contextual approach, focusing on improving the entire system and involving all stakeholders. Service designers excel in communication, collaboration, and strategic thinking, often functioning as facilitators during participatory activities. They can play different roles within an organization, such as an in-house consultant, and utilize soft skills, teamwork, and multi-disciplinary approaches. The inclusion of service design in businesses offers several benefits, including fostering internal alignment and collaboration, forming relationships, and reducing redundant work. Creative and design-oriented processes stimulate collaboration, align departments, and engage team involvement. Visual representations of experiences help create shared understanding, and taking a holistic view can map out the entire ecosystem.

Creating a cross-functional team dynamic involves relaxed hierarchies and a collaborative working style. Maintaining a customer focus is crucial, and bringing different departments together to contribute to the overall goal is good practice. Visualizations aid in understanding customer experiences and value. The key takeaway from this section is that service design tools can effectively align different teams, enabling them to work independently once alignment is achieved. Involving the back-office team in the customer experience is valuable, and service design principles offer guidance for creating a customer-centric organizational culture.

Startups

As the collaboration company is a startup, we have looked into typical startup definitions, their struggles and structures. Startups are typically agile and therefore have an easy time adjusting to changes. The typical pain points of startups are that they often lack process maturity, they can lack collaboration and alignment, and the involved actors often have opposing needs and ideas. It was found that startups can be in different life cycles, and the collaboration startup was identified to be in the maturity stage.

Cross-functional Team Collaboration

Both desktop research and several conversions with TravelStartup pointed us in the direction of investigating pain points and opportunities when it comes to cross-functional team collaboration. Cross-functional teams are defined as individuals from different departments with the relevant knowledge and competencies to complete a project. The investigation into cross-functional team collaboration highlighted the importance of addressing pain points and opportunities in this area. Organizations utilize cross-functional teams to enhance performance outcomes and product development processes. Key factors for success include setting clear project goals, strong leadership, and fostering cooperation. Improving collaboration and communication within these teams requires overcoming departmental identification, establishing a positive climate, defining clear goals, promoting cross-functional integration through skilled management, and implementing structured tasks. It was also observed that many organizations operate in silos, hindering collaboration and the user experience. Breaking down silos involves shifting to a systemic approach, fostering coordination, effective communication, and a collaborative culture. Strategies such as establishing thematic goals, defining objectives, selecting metrics, and addressing critical questions about organizational structure and values can help overcome silos. Additionally, actions like rewarding cooperation, clarifying responsibilities, and organizing retreats can support cross-functional collaboration, aiming to eliminate barriers and promote a cohesive working environment. When developing our solution, it is crucial to incorporate these considerations and best practices to ensure its value for the organization and to promote effective cross-functional team collaboration.

Communication and Organizational Change

While exploring the nature of startups and their areas of struggles, we found that effective communication is crucial for startups to succeed in a fast-paced and resource-constrained environment. It fosters a stronger connection between employees and the business, facilitates integration for new employees, enables quick adaptation to changing market conditions, and supports effective leadership during organizational change. To manage change successfully, organizations need to recognize the intertwined relationship between communication and change. Recommended practices for managing and communicating change include promoting communication and participation, creating a clear purpose and vision, emphasizing participation and empowerment, fostering a change-ready culture, and communicating frequently to inform employees. Effective change management also involves spreading information early, involving stakeholders, creating a shared vision, and fostering innovation-supportive organizational characteristics. By embracing effective communication practices

and managing change well, startups can adapt, thrive, and remain competitive in a dynamic environment. When aiming to enhance the communication practices within our collaboration company, it is crucial for us to remember and implement these recommended practices and guidelines. By incorporating these practices, we can improve our communication processes and effectively manage change within our organization.

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, we will present the different frameworks and methodologies used to conduct the research and address the research question of this thesis. Specifically, we will describe the five stages of the design thinking framework that guided our approach to the design case, and our mixed-methods data collection approach. We will also detail the methods we used to analyze the data obtained. Finally, this chapter will provide a summary of the overall research process. Through this overview, readers will gain an understanding of the methodology used to ensure the credibility and accuracy of our research findings.

The chapter is divided into the following sections:

03

3.1 Five Stages of Design Thinking

Design thinking is a great methodology for approaching complex problems, as it is an iterative, non-linear process that allows designers to gain a deep understanding of the users, question theories, redefine problems, and come up with creative solutions. There are different models that can have in-between three to seven stages. The one thing that all models have in common is the non-linear process of going back and forth between the stages as often as needed (Dam, 2022). The design case will be structured around the five stages of design thinking framework, which according to Plattner (Plattner, 2010) consists of five stages [Figure 7].

Empathize

The first stage of the design thinking framework is Empathize. It involves actively seeking to understand the perspectives of others, developing empathy, and comprehending their priorities. During this stage, it is essential to observe users, engage in meaningful interactions, and attentively listen to their thoughts. The primary objective is to gain a deep understanding of users, their behaviors, needs, and challenges. To progress to the next stage, it is crucial to process and comprehend all the insights gathered, considering the bigger picture (Plattner, 2010).

Define

The Define stage aims to bring clarity by defining the problem that needs to be addressed. Designers analyze patterns emerging from their observations and interactions with users, and by the end of this stage, designers should have a clear understanding of the user's identity, their needs, and a synthesis of the insights obtained so far. The outcome should be a well-defined problem statement that is based on the learnings and insights gained during the Empathize stage. Having this clearly formulated problem statement, designers can proceed to the Ideate stage (Plattner, 2010).

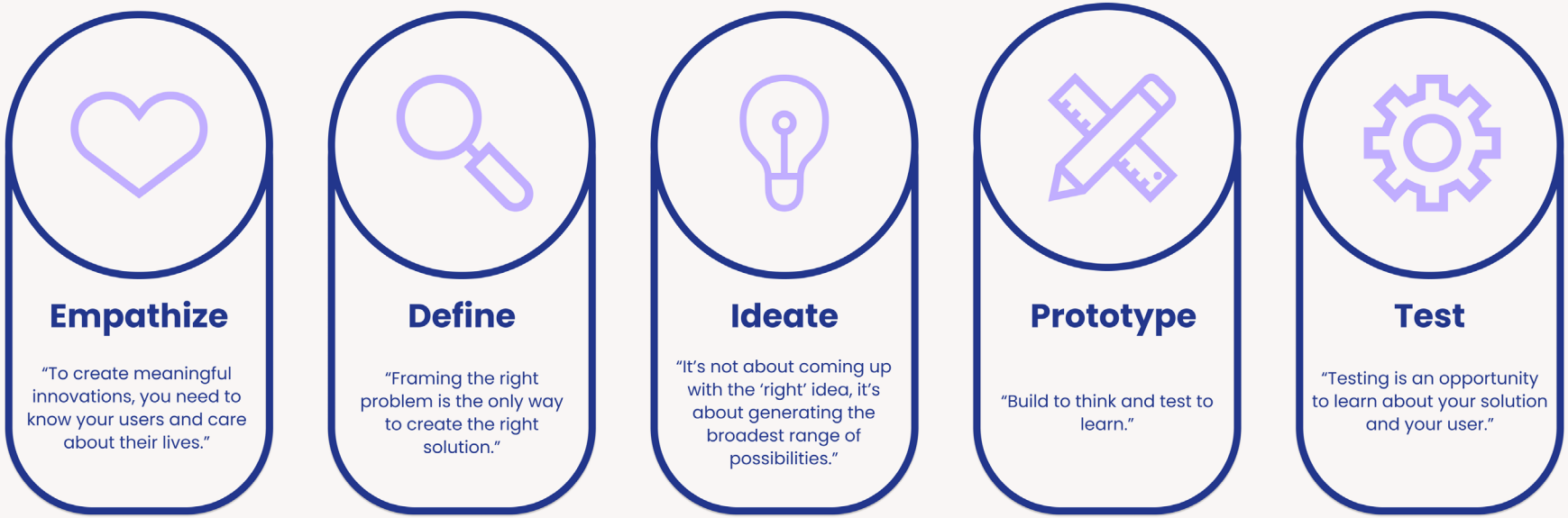


Figure 7. *The 5 stages of the design thinking framework*

Ideate

The Ideate stage focuses on generating as many solutions as possible for the identified problem. This stage encourages a 'going wide' mindset, exploring the problem from various perspectives to discover unexpected areas for exploration. Several ideation techniques facilitate the free-thinking and exploratory process. Some techniques are suitable for expanding the problem space, while others are more appropriate for testing ideas and selecting the most viable ones (Plattner, 2010) (Dam, 2022).

Prototype

During the Prototype stage, designers create scaled-down versions of the product to collect valuable feedback from colleagues, clients, and users. Prototypes can take various forms, such as storyboards, role-playing activities, or even simple post-it notes arranged on a wall. These prototypes aid in ideation, idea testing, and effective communication with stakeholders. The Prototype stage and the Test stage are closely intertwined, as careful consideration must be given to how prototypes will be tested to gather the most valuable and honest results (Plattner, 2010) (Dam, 2022).

Test

In this stage, user feedback is collected through the presentation of prototypes, creating prototype-based experiences, or asking users to compare different versions of prototypes. Testing prototypes provides valuable insights into user preferences and helps refine the solution based on user needs and feedback (Plattner, 2010).

3.2 Data Collection

Accurately analyzing the data was crucial for writing this thesis as it is an academic document that requires accuracy and credibility when presenting research findings. Data collection is the important process of gathering information to answer the research question. The quality and reliability of the data collected have a significant impact on the results of the study. It is therefore essential to approach data collection in a reflective and systematic way. It is crucial to gather data honestly and precisely describe the data collection method while reporting the findings (Bjørner, 2015, p. 57).

For this thesis, a mixed method approach has been used, which is the practice of combining both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection. While qualitative methods are more explorative and typically focus on asking open-ended questions, quantitative methods are focused on the number of responses and are typically of closed-ended nature. Both methods have their weaknesses and biases, which is where the mixed method approach comes into play. Through collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, the mixed method approach is aiming to neutralize the weaknesses of each method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 56).

There are three approaches to using mixed methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 57):

- ***Convergent mixed methods*** – Collecting both types of data at the same time
- **Explanatory sequential mixed methods** – Collecting first quantitative data, then qualitative
- **Exploratory sequential mixed methods** – Collecting first qualitative data, then quantitative

The convergent mixed method approach was chosen as the most suitable for this thesis due to its ability to simultaneously collect both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach allows for a comprehensive and integrated analysis of multiple data sources, enhancing the depth and extent of our findings. By collecting quantitative data alongside qualitative data at the same time, we can gain a more holistic understanding of the research topic. The convergent mixed method approach enables triangulation, which is the practice of using different research methods to get a richer and more comprehensive dataset. Different methods result in different outputs such as text, photos, videos, artifacts, statistics, etc. For example, supplementing the text-written findings of an interview with a photo from the scene can help the reader to better understand the context of the interview. Furthermore, building on the knowledge of secondary data is a great way to have more focused primary research (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018, pp. 108-109).

3.2.1 Qualitative Data Collection

As previously discussed, qualitative data collection methods are characterized by their exploratory nature, enabling researchers to dig deeply into the subject and ask follow-up questions during sessions. This section will outline the specific qualitative data collection methods used in this thesis.

Workshop

Workshops play a crucial role in service design as they provide a collaborative and interactive environment for stakeholders to actively participate in the design process. Service design workshops are structured sessions that bring together individuals with diverse perspectives to facilitate co-creation, ideation, problem-solving, and decision-making. Workshops offer a platform for stakeholders to share their knowledge, insights, and ideas, which is facilitated using a variety of methods and techniques. These can include brainstorming sessions, group discussions, role-playing exercises, visualizations, prototyping activities, and more (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011, pp. 187-189). There are various elements that contribute to the success of a workshop session (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018, pp. 397-406):

- ***Building the team*** - It is advisable to include representatives of those who may be impacted by the workshop or project, individuals responsible for implementing the solution, and potential blockers. This ensures diverse perspectives and involvement of key stakeholders.
- ***Purpose and expectation*** - Clearly defining the purpose of the workshop and outlining the expected outcomes is essential. As a facilitator, it is important to communicate what can realistically be achieved during the session and establish boundaries.
- ***Planning the work*** - This involves designing different activities, allocating resources, and determining the scale of the session. It is crucial to allow room for exploration, as design by nature involves discovering new possibilities. Having backup plans or alternative methods in place can help adapt to unexpected situations.
- ***Creating a safe space*** - Participants who are unfamiliar with service design tools may initially feel uncomfortable. To address this, it is important to create a 'safe space' where failure is accepted and even embraced. This can be achieved by providing a private environment without external observers, starting in a familiar setting, and providing participants with clear orientation, such as sharing the agenda for the workshop.

Expert Interview

Talking to experts in the exploratory phase of a project is found to be an efficient way of gathering practical insider knowledge. An expert can provide technical knowledge, process knowledge, as well as interpretive knowledge, understanding why something is the

way it is. Research shows that the level of motivation to participate in the expert interview can be increased if the researcher and the interviewee share a common relevant background, as the expert might be internally motivated to 'make a difference' and could be professionally curious about the field of research (Menz, Bogner, & Littig, 2009). When conducting an expert interview, it is important to not take the spoken as a main source of truth, as the insights could be quite biased on that person's experience and beliefs. It is therefore important to have a solid theoretical base to triangulate the data (Menz, Bogner, & Littig, 2009).

According to Menz et al., there are three different types of expert interviews (Menz, Bogner, & Littig, 2009):

- ***Exploratory expert interview*** - This type of interview serves as an orientation tool, helping to gain a broad understanding of a topic. It allows researchers to explore various perspectives and gather preliminary insights.
- ***Systematizing expert interview*** - The primary objective of a systematizing expert interview is to systematically retrieve specific information. Researchers focus on gathering structured and targeted data to address specific research questions or themes.
- ***Theory-generating expert interview*** - Theory-generating interviews aim to reconstruct social interpretive patterns and subjective action orientation criteria. These interviews are commonly used in qualitative social research to dig deeper into the underlying meanings, motivations, and patterns of social phenomena.

According to Bjørner, interviews can be structured in the following way (Bjørner, 2015, p. 87):

- ***Structured interviews*** - In structured interviews, the researcher follows a schedule and script throughout the entire interview. This approach ensures that all participants are asked the same set of questions, allowing for easy comparison of answers.
- ***Semi-structured interviews*** - In semi-structured interviews, the pre-defined questions can be rearranged, and the wording is flexible. While there is a loose plan or guideline for the interview, researchers have the freedom to ask additional questions and adapt to the participant's responses. This type of interview allows for direct interaction and exploration of specific topics or themes.
- ***Unstructured interviews*** - Unstructured interviews are more like open-ended conversations. There are no specific questions prepared in advance, and the focus is on encouraging participants to share their thoughts and experiences freely. Typically, a loose set of topics related to the research question is defined as a guide for the conversation. Unstructured interviews are particularly useful in situations where flexibility is needed, such as when working with children or in dynamic and unpredictable contexts.

By understanding and selecting the appropriate interview structure, we will be able to adjust our approach to gather the desired information and meet the specific requirements of our design case.

Prototyping

Service prototypes replicate any chosen part of a service and are a crucial way for testing ideas. The main objectives of prototype testing are refinement, communication, and exploration, with refinement being the most often cited objective. There are different components that play a role when thinking about how and when to incorporate prototyping in a design process. Firstly, testing should have a specific and measurable goal. Early prototyping is crucial for success, as it allows for the development of practical ideas during the ideation phase. Rapid prototyping can help prevent fixation on a particular solution, and feedback from users can identify errors and improve performance assessment. High-fidelity prototypes facilitate an accurate interpretation of the design (Camburn, et al., 2017).

When constructing a prototype, it is advisable to follow guidelines such as creating a minimum viable prototype to limit unnecessary effort (Camburn, et al., 2017). Various methods and techniques can be employed to test a service process and experience, including 'Use-it-yourself' (autoethnography), participant observation, and co-creative workshops. These techniques generate new insights and ideas that are documented in relation to the experienced context (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018). Prototyping enables fast and cost-effective testing of ideas, even if they are not fully developed or thoroughly thought through yet.

3.2.2 Quantitative Data Collection

To gather data from a diverse range of users, this research incorporates quantitative data collection methods. These methods provide the means to systematically measure, analyze, and draw statistically supported conclusions regarding the research topic. This section will outline the specific quantitative methods employed in this thesis, which include desk research and a survey.

Desk Research

Desk research, also referred to as secondary research, is research solely focusing on already existing data. Looking at existing research conducted by others prevents us from trying to reinvent the wheel and guides the process of formulating a relevant research question. It is also a great way to get inspired to use different ways of data collection, methods, visualizations, etc. Desk research can include both qualitative and quantitative data and the typical output will be text, statistics, or mind maps (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018, p. 119).

Survey

A survey is a quantitative data collection method aiming at discovering trends, attitudes, and opinions of a selected part of the population, called a sample. Surveys can answer different types of questions such as descriptive questions, such as 'How much?', 'How regularly?', 'What percentage?', etc. They can also help uncover the relationships between variables, including associations, dependent behaviors, etc. Lastly, surveys can uncover predictive relationships between variables over time by asking for a specific behavior and the type of outcome (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 236).

3.2.3 User Testing

In the design process, user testing plays a critical role in understanding the user experience and service usability. This section will focus on the two primary types of testing that have been fundamental in this thesis: prototype testing and moderated and unmoderated testing sessions. By examining these testing methods, we can gain a deeper understanding of how to effectively gather user feedback and insights to inform the design process.

Prototype Testing

Prototype testing is beneficial as it allows us to evaluate and refine a design idea before investing too much time and resources into the development of a final service. By testing prototypes, designers can uncover potential issues, identify areas for improvement, and make informed design decisions based on user feedback. Stickdorn et al. suggest that there are three main types of prototyping: explorative, evaluative, and communicative (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018). Explorative prototyping involves getting feedback on an initial service concept to generate new ideas and solutions. This type of prototyping is similar to ideation. Evaluative prototyping aims to understand how people will experience the future of the suggested concept. It is used to narrow down the scope and start reducing the number of options. Finally, communicative prototyping is used to communicate important aspects of the suggested concept to the team, organization, or other stakeholders.

When testing a prototype, the researcher can decide whether they

want to address their questions around the whole service, parts of the service or focus on the experience a user has when interacting with the prototype. When choosing the participants for the test, it is beneficial to test with the actual target users of the service (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018).

Moderated vs. Unmoderated Testing

There are commonly two approaches used in the field of user testing: moderated testing and unmoderated testing. Each approach offers different advantages and considerations. This section explores the characteristics and implications of these two testing methods, covering their strengths and limitations. Moderated testing provides the richest and most detailed type of data. For this method, the researcher must be present either in person or through a remote live connection and will read the tasks out loud to the participants. This allows a researcher to be flexible as they can easily follow up and ask additional questions whenever needed. Moderated tests are typically recorded to allow researchers to refer to the session whenever needed. Tomlin suggests that having tested with five to ten participants should be enough to discover all key issues. One of the disadvantages of moderated testing is that they are more time-consuming, as they require a moderator to be present for each session (Tomlin, 2018, pp. 100-102).

The key difference to moderated testing is that in unmoderated testing, as the name suggests, the moderator is not present in the actual testing session. Given that the moderator does not have to be present, these tests can be conducted much faster and require less effort and cost as several sessions can run simultaneously. However, the careful planning of these tests is crucial for their success, which can be achieved by having clearly formulated task-based questions and by constantly reminding the participants to think out loud throughout the session. The biggest downside to unmoderated tests is that there is no way for a researcher to ask follow-up questions (Tomlin, 2018, pp. 103-105).

3.3 Data Analysis

Bjørner emphasizes the importance of carefully considering the analytical method to use when analyzing data, as the interpretation and conclusion heavily rely on this decision. One widely used method for qualitative data analysis is traditional coding, which involves four steps. Firstly, the data is prepared and organized for analysis. Secondly, the researcher reads through the data multiple times to identify concepts and themes. Thirdly, the data is categorized and labeled according to these themes. Finally, the researcher can begin to analyze the categories and draw conclusions, asking questions such as 'What lessons have we learned?' (Bjørner, 2015, pp. 98-99).

Affinity diagramming is a method to sort through large amounts of collected data, discover important insights and themes, and find connections between different data points. The process involves writing each data point on a sticky note, sorting and clustering them, giving titles and short descriptions to the clusters, and grouping different clusters together to find common themes. The resulting visualization can be used to understand the stakeholders involved in the design process, find patterns, and come up with concept ideas for the project (Malpe, 2020).

Customer journey maps are a method used to understand a customer's interactions and overall experience with a product or service and to identify pain points and opportunities for improvement. The process involves identifying a customer persona, touchpoints, and interactions, connecting these touchpoints to build a visual story of their experience, and displaying the details in an easily understandable journey. Analyzing the map can help to identify positive or negative reactions, as well as areas for improvement (Malpe, 2020).

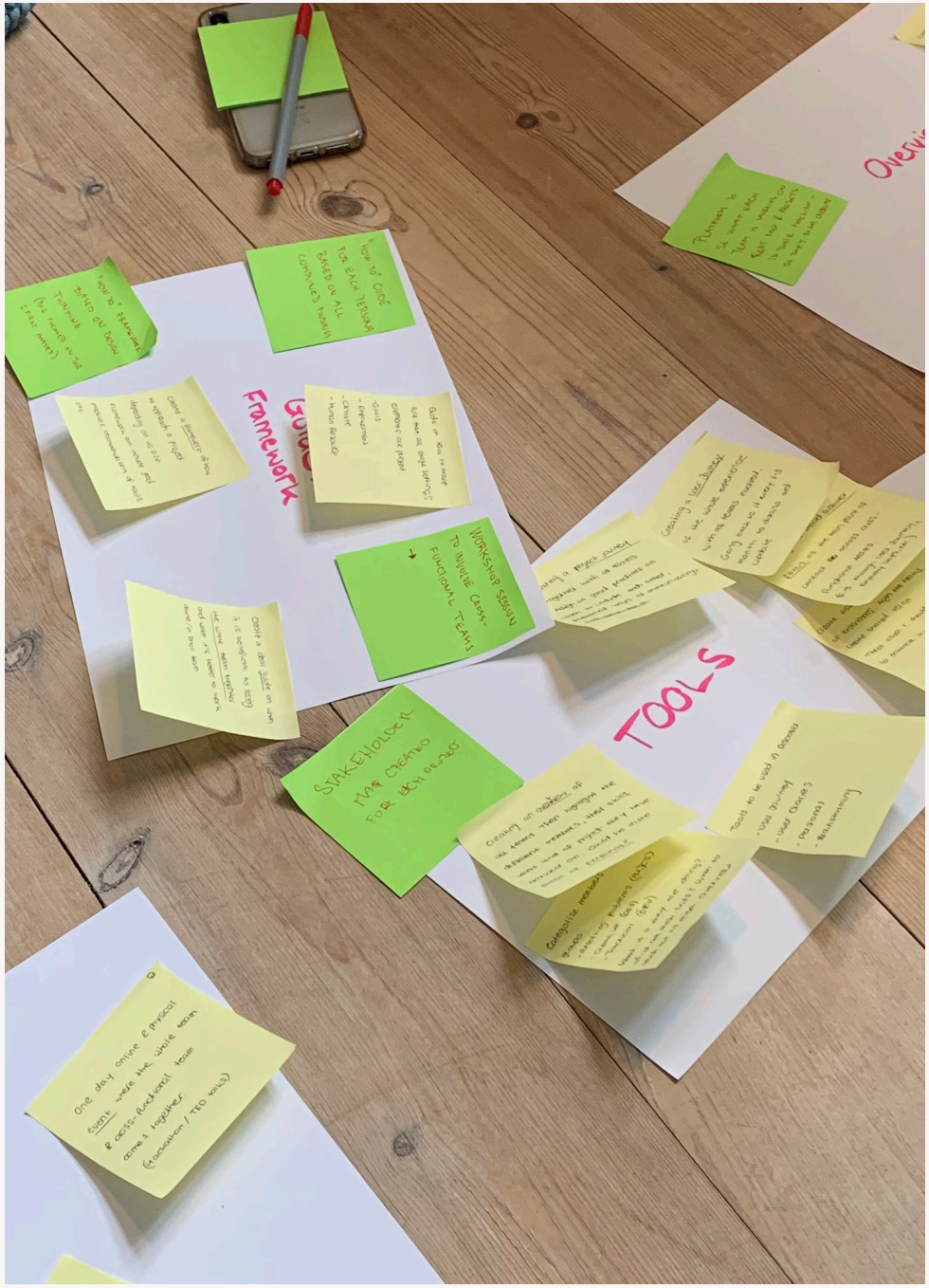


Figure 8. *Affinity diagramming during the Ideation day*

3.4 Overall Research Process

Figure 9 visualizes the overall research process of this thesis, giving a quick overview of the overall timeline this project followed and the methods utilized.

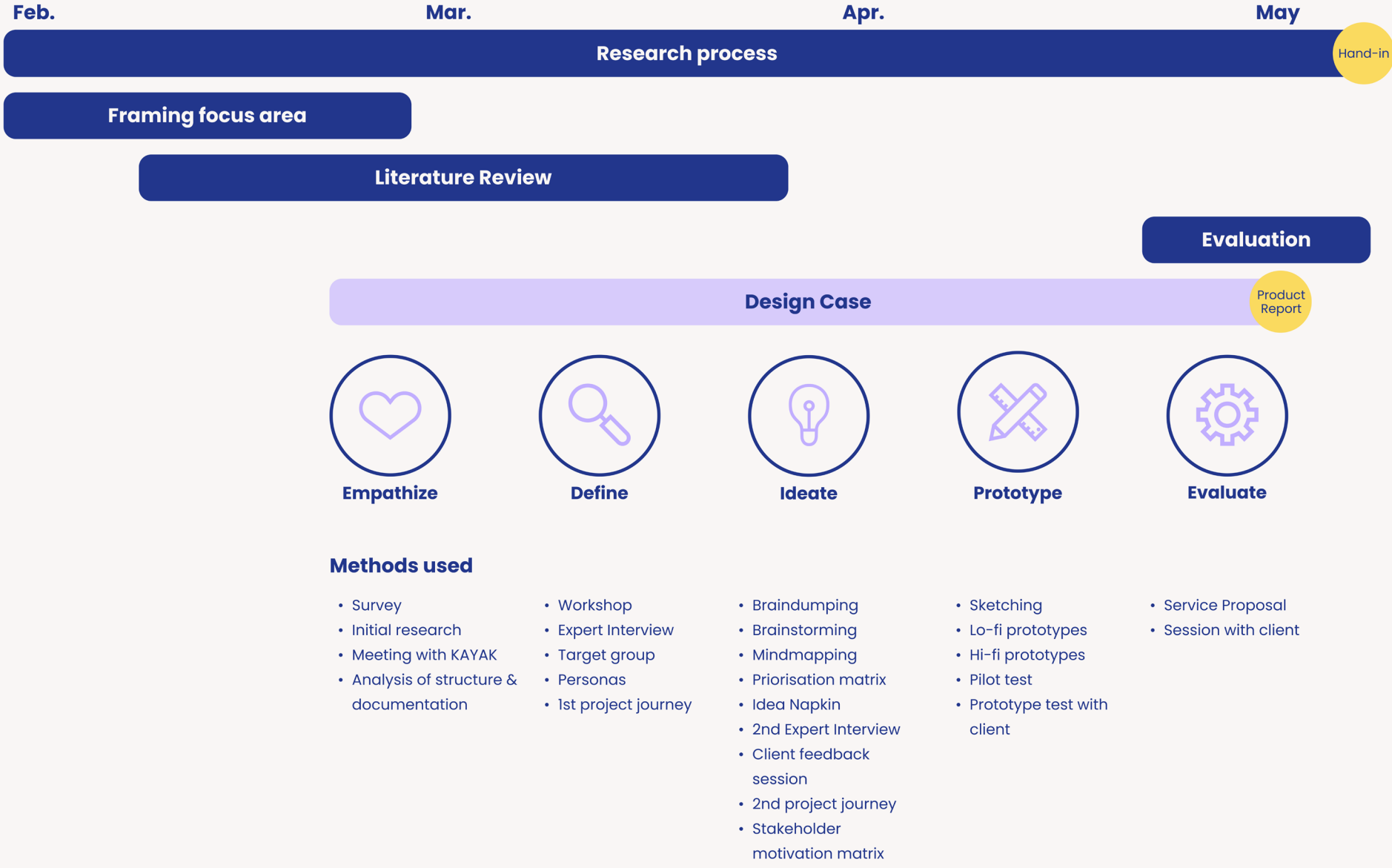


Figure 9. The overall research process

DESIGN CASE

In this chapter, the design process used to explore our academic research question is documented and reflected upon. The process will involve conducting user research methods in the Empathize stage to understand the internal structure of TravelStartup, its collaboration practices, struggles, and pain points. In the Define stage, the findings will be used to narrow down the project's scope toward improving collaboration in cross-functional teams. Personas, target groups, and an initial project journey will be created to better understand the problem. In the Ideate stage, a range of ideas will be generated, and an ideation session will help us narrow down to one final idea. The project journey will be revisited, and a stakeholder motivation matrix will be created to map out how the solution would be relevant to target users. Some of these ideas will be prototyped and tested in the Prototype stage, and the user findings will be combined into a final concept. During the Test stage, we will develop a service proposal in the form of a product report, presenting details about the solutions and the corresponding findings that led to its creation, along with an implementation plan.

This chapter is divided into the following subchapters:

04

4.1 EMPATHIZE

At the start of the design case, we did not have an established brief from the collaboration company, and neither did we have a specific focus area. Therefore, we conducted desk research to build a foundation of knowledge about startup structures and operations, service design in startup environments, and the responsibilities of service designers in organizations [2.5 Summary of Literature Review]. During the Empathize stage, our next steps involve conducting a survey to gather additional data that complements our research and formulating an initial problem statement. With this information as a solid foundation, we will engage in a brainstorming session and hold discussions with TravelStartup to gain a deeper understanding of their long-term goals. This collaboration will aid us in identifying potential areas where a service design approach can be beneficial and assist us in narrowing down our project's focus. Furthermore, Sarah's role as a UX Researcher within the company will provide us with valuable insights into the internal structure and processes of the TravelStartup team.

The subchapter is divided into the following sections:

4.1.1 Survey

At the beginning of the Empathize stage, the focus area was very broad as there was no specific brief defined between us and the collaboration company. Therefore, the initial steps were exploring academic literature focusing on service design and startup topics. There was a lack of academic literature specifically addressing the combination of service design within startup environments, which is why we decided to conduct an online survey with an exploratory approach, focusing broadly on the topic, to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter. The purpose of the survey was to investigate the extent to which service design practices are known and utilized in startups. To achieve this, the initial question posed to participants was whether they were employed in a startup, in order to eliminate those who were not. Subsequently, the survey aimed to determine whether common service design tools were being used in startups, and to determine whether startup employees were familiar with and using design processes in their work. The goal of this survey was to reveal fresh perspectives and highlight intriguing areas that could guide us in formulating our primary research question.

The survey was shared within our network on LinkedIn, Slack, and various startup groups on Facebook. The survey received 27 responses from employees working in startups, with over half of the respondents being from smaller startups that have 1-10 employees. The IT and computer industry represented 30% of the respondents, while engineering was the second largest sector with 15%. As the survey was shared publicly on LinkedIn, Facebook, and in a Slack channel, we cannot determine the exact nationality of the participants, but we assume that the majority of participants work in Denmark, considering the platforms used for distribution. Nonetheless, we did not specifically ask about participants' nationality nor the country of employment in our survey questions as this did not seem relevant at the time. The remaining respondents came from a variety of other industries such as business, architecture, and arts and design. When looking into the organizational departments the participants work in, we had to consider that it is common for employees in startups to work in more than one position as in these environments' resources are usually tight and employees might have to take on various responsibilities to achieve the company's goal. Therefore, the participants were allowed to multiple answers. Nearly 50% of employees held roles in the marketing and communication department, followed by the design department, and customer service as the second and third most common choices, respectively.

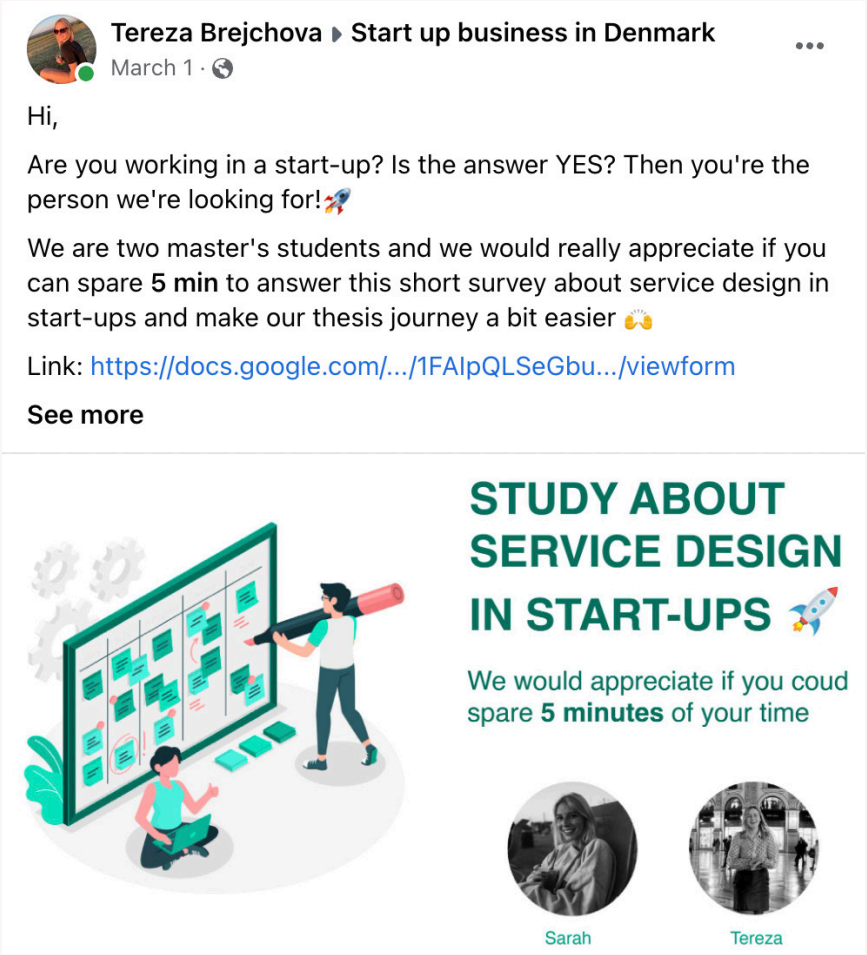


Figure 10. Recruitment message sent on Facebook

More than half of the respondents either lacked knowledge or were uncertain about what service design is, leading to 44.4% of the participants being aware of the concept of service design. Despite the survey being distributed through various channels, including general startup Facebook groups, it was also shared within our network, which may have led to biased responses as individuals within our network may be more familiar with the topic of service design.

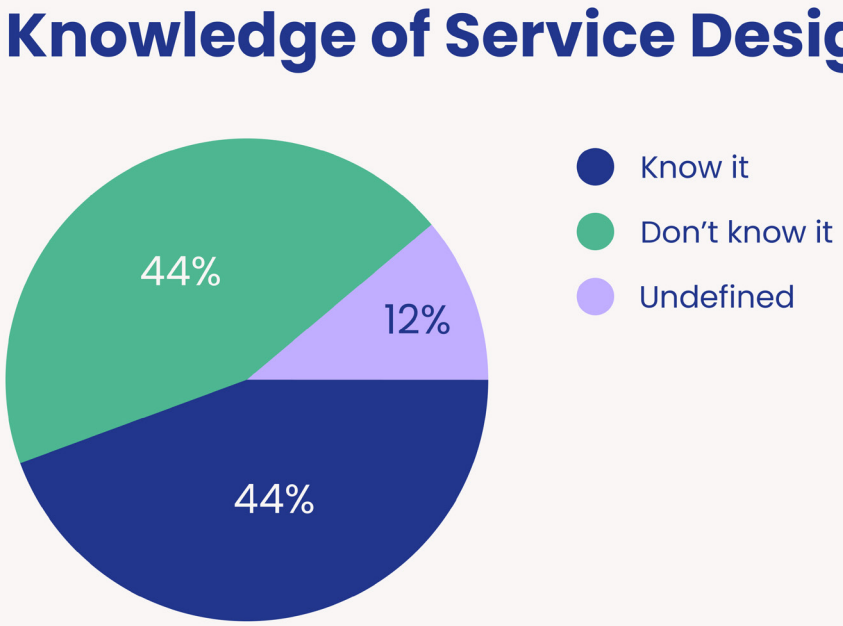


Figure 11. *Pie chart depicting the participants' familiarity with service design*

Participants were questioned if they have ever used any of the commonly used tools or models from the service design practice. It was discovered that the most frequently utilized tool in a startup is the user journey, with 67% of respondents having prior experience with it. According to 52% of the respondents, storyboarding, personas, and workshops are also commonly used in startups. Furthermore, nearly half of the respondents reported working with the business model canvas.

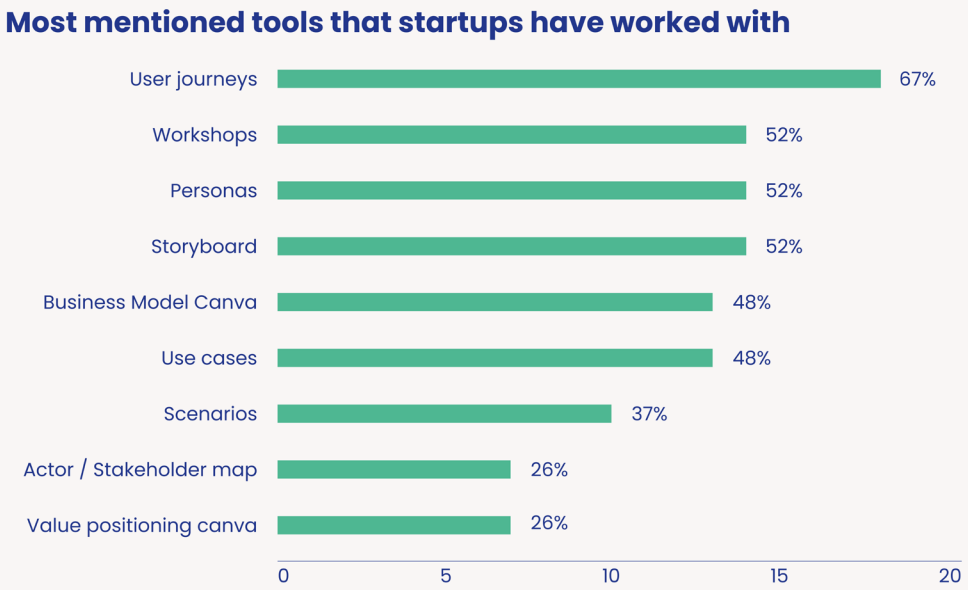


Figure 12. *Most frequently cited tools utilized by startups*

Participants were asked if they have ever worked with the Double Diamond or the Design Thinking design process. Surprisingly, 77% of the respondents had prior experience with the Design Thinking process, while 33% had worked with the Double Diamond method. 30% have never used any of them.

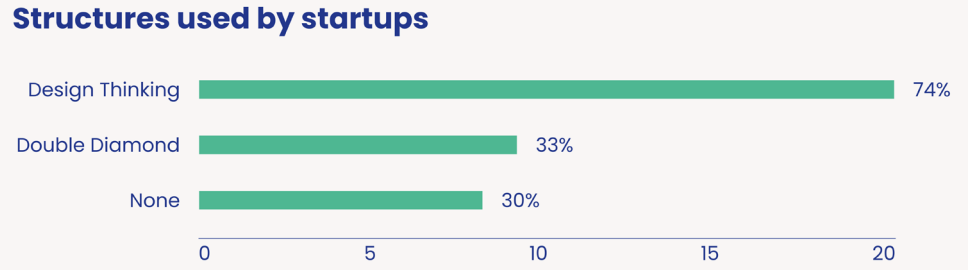


Figure 13. *Structures known and adopted by startups*

The complete survey can be found in Appendix J.

When looking into how projects are being structured in startups, it was discovered that almost half of the participants implement some form of structure in their projects, while the other half do not follow any. Based on the ones who follow some kind of structure, the answers were quite diverse. Some reported using Gantt charts to track their project progress, while others follow the design thinking process. Some utilized Design/Scrum sprints to work on their projects. Additionally, some participants used online tools like Notion to organize their tasks or Podio, a tool to bring content, discussions, and processes into a single collaborative platform.

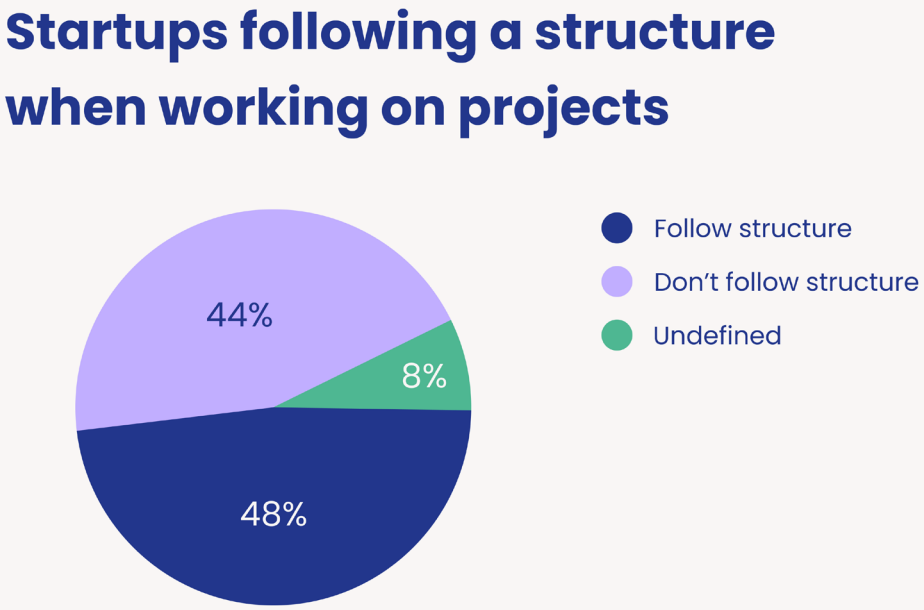


Figure 14. *Overview of startups adopting a structured project approach*

As previously mentioned, the survey was conducted with an exploratory approach, focusing broadly on service design in the startup environment. Despite this, the survey brought valuable insights into the level of awareness of service design in the startup world, the utilization of common service design tools, and the diverse approaches to projects.

4.1.2 Initial Research Question

Prior to the meeting with TravelStartup, we believed it was important to establish an initial research question that we could keep in mind during the meeting. This would ensure that we maintain a service design perspective and not stray from our thesis objectives. Combining the insights gained from the literature research and conducted survey led to a small brainstorming session which resulted in the following first preliminary research question:

"How can startups in the maturity stage benefit from incorporating the service design practice during various phases of a project?"

As explored in the primary research, TravelStartup is a startup established under the TravelOrg organization. Based on Kloten's research on startups specific lifecycles, TravelStartup can be identified to be in the Maturity stage, on the verge of starting a transition toward an established company [2.2 Startups]. TravelStartup is already operating in the market but is still being financed by the TravelOrg organization, which means that they are currently in the process of becoming an established and self-sustaining company. Further, startups often lack process maturity and tend to have less systematic processes [2.2 Startups]. Therefore, focusing on the different phases of projects seemed relevant and interesting.

4.1.3. First Official Meeting with TravelStartup

After a month of obtaining some suitable knowledge about startups and the use of service design in that area, we felt the foundation we have built was appropriate preparation before meeting with the organization. We were part of an initial meeting with TravelStartup, where they were discussing long-term goals for the organization, and we were mainly observing their discussion. Different ideas

were brainstormed and discussed, which finally resulted in a long list of goals. The following shows some of the objectives that were found to be relevant to this project:

Centralize and align on
- documentation processes
- the design process for new projects

Create guidelines for
- customer feature requests
- recruitment of participants
- visual examples of shared UX patterns in TravelStartup products

Guide with best practices for
- communication throughout the design process
- collecting stakeholder feedback
- user research process

Improve collaboration with TravelStartup Designers
- Take a more holistic and x-collab approach to projects

After listing a lot of different goals, a survey was launched where each employee could vote for their three most valuable goals to narrow down the focus. One of the goals that the business team wants to focus on is 'Improve collaboration with TravelStartup Designers' and the target outcome of this goal is defined to be a regular collaboration as a crew, becoming more familiar with each other as people, and more familiar with each other's products. To achieve this, the team discussed doing more 1:1 catch-ups about projects and things outside of work, scheduling more regular team meetings, posting regular updates in the Slack channel, and introducing the different product areas to the wider crew to create a shared understanding of commonalities in design patterns.

Another one of the goals was 'Take a more holistic and cross-collab approach to projects', where the target outcome is defined to be taking a more holistic and user-centered approach to projects and including the wider crew in larger projects for more feedback and perspective. When thinking about how to achieve this goal, they thought about creating a checklist of questions to ask managers and stakeholders when kicking off a project, doing workshops to discuss projects and go through designs as a team, and including managers and engineers early on.

Finally, another relevant goal defined by the TravelStartup team is the 'Definition of best practices for communication throughout the design process' with the target outcome to have a consistent way of communicating, asking questions, and documenting questions, logic, and feedback throughout the design process. They aim to achieve this by defining a guideline for how to communicate with product managers and engineers on a design project throughout different phases of the process.

4.1.4 Iteration of the Research Question

Having these goals defined and prioritized within the TravelStartup team, we held a brainstorming session to get an understanding of what goals could be relevant for us to address. As several of their goals are addressing problems concerning communication and collaboration within the team, we conducted wide literature research in that area which showed the importance of communication, which has a positive impact on collaboration in organizations. The findings indicated that service design practices can enhance communication and collaboration within a business and provided recommendations on how to improve these aspects within organizations [2.3 Cross-functional Team Collaboration]. Hence, we believed that it was an informed decision to limit the scope of our project to improve internal communication and collaboration in a startup through service design. As revealed during the meeting, TravelStartup encounters challenges in fostering communication and collaboration across different departments.

Therefore, the result is the following research question:

"How can service design improve communication across different departments leading to better collaboration within startups in the maturity phase?"

Although not final, formulating more defined research questions helped us establish new steps for our research.

4.1.5 Analysis of Current TravelStartup Practices

Once the newly adjusted research question was defined, the focus of the project became clearer. Since the focus of the thesis was on internal processes, including ways of communicating and structuring work, it was important to gain a better understanding of how TravelStartup operates. To achieve this, we conducted a thorough analysis of the current structure and documentation processes within the TravelStartup team. This was done through observations and personal experience of taking part in those processes, as well as looking at existing documentation that the company and different teams have.

The stakeholder map was useful in this part of the process to understand the stakeholders involved who could be potentially directly or indirectly influencing this research process. A stakeholder map is a tool that illustrates the various stakeholders involved, asking *"Who are the most important people and organizations involved in an experience?"* (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018, pp. 58-63). It helps to understand which stakeholders are involved, reveals existing relationships between stakeholders and informal networks or conflicts that could be present between stakeholders as well as discovers previously unseen business opportunities (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018, pp. 58-63). The stakeholder map includes information such as different customer groups, fronstage and backstage employees and departments, partner organizations, and other stakeholders with direct or indirect impact on the experience (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018, pp. 58-63). The utilization of the stakeholder map tool enabled us to recognize the core product team, who has a direct impact on the product. We have identified the three primary stakeholders of any design project as the product manager, designer, and engineer. Additionally, we have identified the marketing, sales, and customer success team as the primary point of contact with the user, which means that they are responsible for acquiring relevant knowledge and feedback from customers. Other internal and external stakeholders have been mapped out to understand the holistic picture of the system.

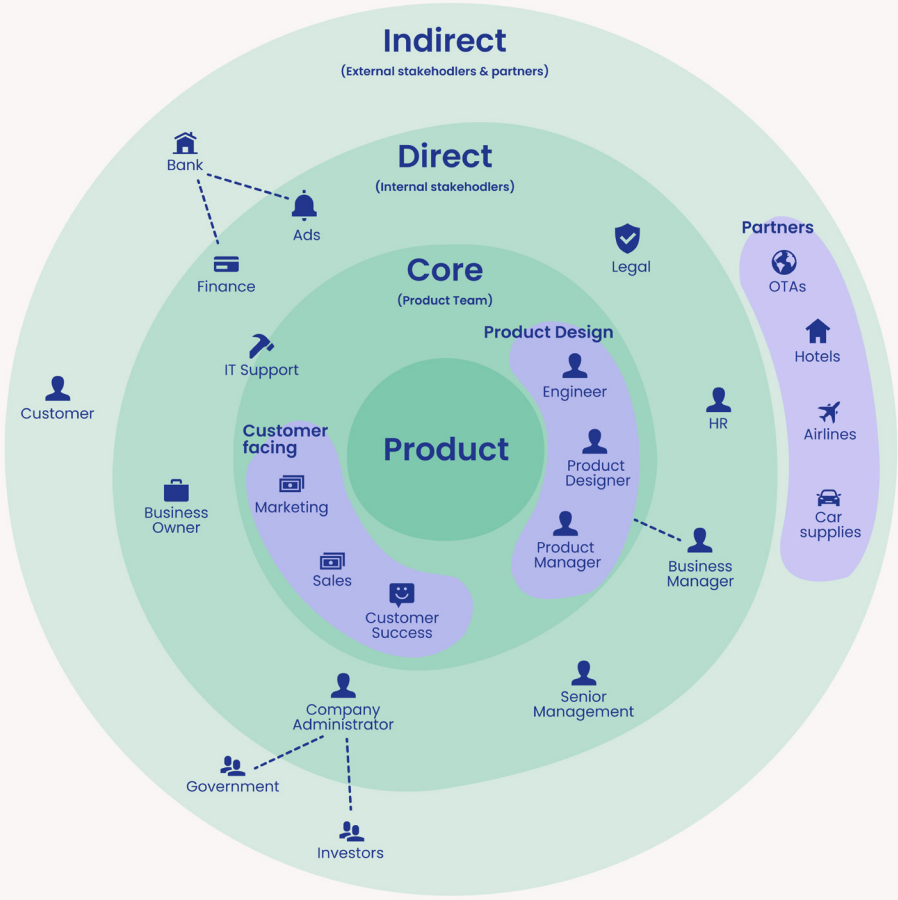


Figure 15. *The stakeholder map*

To get a better overview of the of TravelOrg's Business team under which TravelStartup operates and depict all possible stakeholders individually, an organization chart was created, which can be a great way to paint a picture of an organization's structure, at least in terms of the different positions of the members, as well as the different departments and lines of authority.

These charts do by far not cover all aspects and interactions of an organization, but they are a great starting point for getting a sense of who is involved and what kind of responsibilities they have (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2011, p. 18).

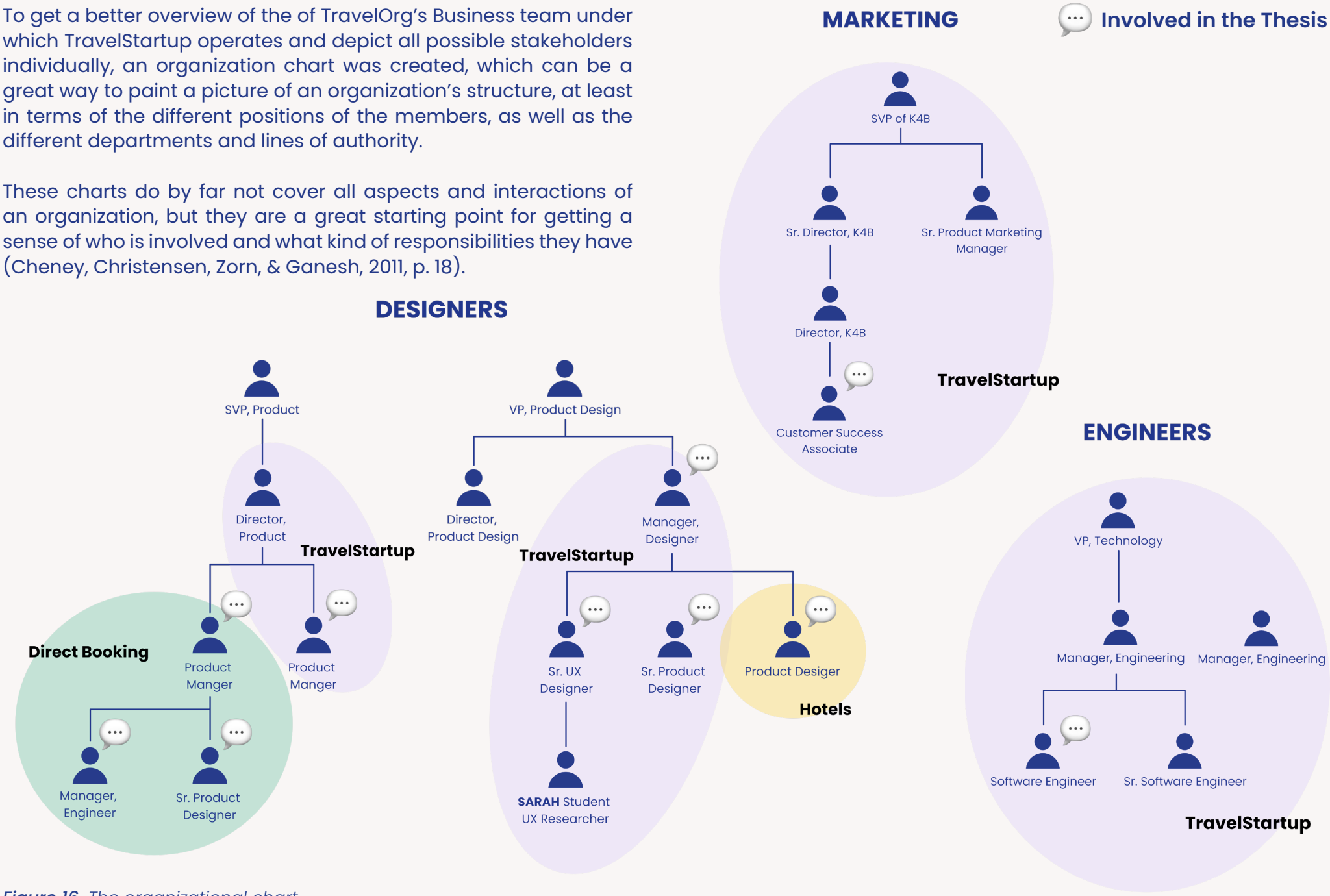


Figure 16. *The organizational chart*

To gain a deeper understanding of project handling and structure within the company, we conducted a thorough examination of the organizational structure and mapped out stakeholder involvement. Our primary objective was to improve communication and collaboration within the organization. To achieve this, it was crucial to explore the existing channels used within the TravelStartup team. Sarah, who has been with the company for several months, provided valuable insights into the team's communication dynamics, which are illustrated in Figure 17.

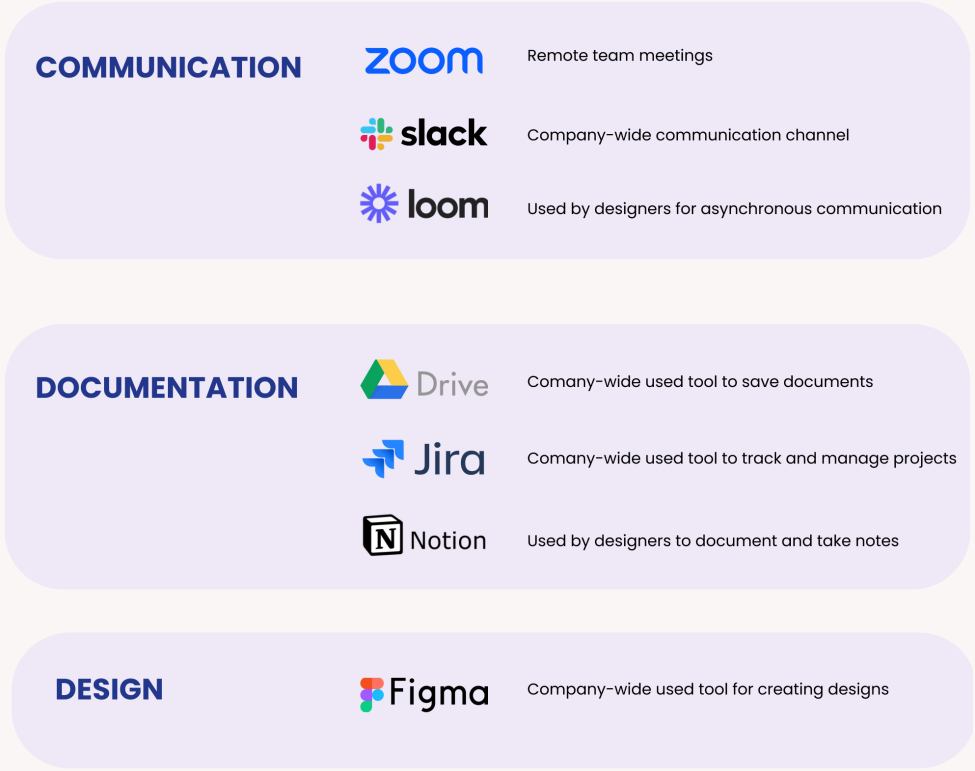


Figure 17. *Various channels used within TravelStartup*

In contrast to TravelOrg, TravelStartup does not have extensive documentation of its design processes. Their documentation is more focused on how to organize and structure the teams' design work within Figma folders. When looking deeper into their current project structure, projects start with a sprint meeting, where the PM creates a Jira ticket, and the task is assigned to a designer. The designated designer then starts working in the TravelStartup Figma Domain. When starting a task, the designer is advised to read the description well and ask as many questions as possible to get a clear understanding of the task at hand. Once the designer has created a few initial designs, the designs will be shared and discussed during one of the weekly scheduled meetings with the TravelStartup crew. After finalizing the designs, there is a kick-off meeting with engineers to share and discuss the designs, followed by a potential new round of designing.

The TravelStartup Figma working files are split into the following two domains:

1. Local TravelStartup Domain

In the local TravelStartup domain, the team is documenting ongoing and past design projects. The domain is split up into the following six pages:

1. *Documentation*: brainstorming, user research, Figjam boards
2. *Definition*: early stage of design tasks to discuss & iterate
3. *Design*: approved ideas, the start of more detailed designs and flows
4. *Development*: after the development kick-off meeting
5. *XP*: Designs that are tested with experiments
6. *Archived*: not approved designs, no longer needed

2. Published Domain

In the published domain, TravelStartup is saving mocks for all designs that are currently in production. These files can be accessed internally within the TravelStartup team as well as from everybody else at TravelOrg who might want to get a better understanding of TravelStartup. These files are referred to as the source of truth or production files.

To summarize, TravelStartup is working in a fast-paced environment, and its approach to new projects is mostly problem-based or short-term oriented. The team feels like there is no time to have a more holistic approach when working on a new project and trying to see the bigger picture. This working structure also reflects on their design guidelines, which are focused on design documentation rather than best practices or full-on design processes. If we look at it from the service design perspective using the double diamond, the first diamond (Discover, Explore/Define phase) is almost skipped or very limited. Designers usually get the problem definition and immediately jump into the development and delivery phase. This could indicate that some of the solutions do not consider the whole service and overall improvement rather than quick changes, which might have to be redone later when discovering new issues.

4.1.6 Conclusion on the Empathize Stage

The Empathize stage was an outgoing obtaining of new knowledge and learning about the environment of the design case. By conducting secondary research and a survey, we established a knowledge base that gave us the confidence to proceed with the next steps. The survey validated our assumptions based on the previous literature research, that service design is not widely recognized in the startup world. Nonetheless, many service design practices and tools are utilized by startup employees. We also created a strong understanding of how TravelStartup operates, its structures, and its approach to new projects. It showed that their approach shares many characteristics with typical startup methodologies, emphasizing speed and agility while potentially sacrificing a holistic perspective and having a greater overview. The implementation of the stakeholder map together with the organization chart, enables us the recognized the key stakeholder, who will be involved in the Define stage through more participatory activities.

4.2 DEFINE

With a great level of understanding of our focus area, we moved to the Define stage with a focus on exploring how communication can be improved to enhance collaboration across teams. The main objective is to define the final research question and acquire a comprehensive understanding of the problem area, while also gaining insights into the target group impacted by the identified problem. We will achieve this through the utilization of workshops and expert interviews, aimed at identifying pain points and opportunities to enhance communication and collaboration across teams. The new knowledge obtained through qualitative research will help us to formulate the final research question, enabling us to define the target group and personas for this project. This understanding is necessary to identify the user that will be in focus during the ideation of potential solutions in the next stage. In addition, as the final research question is specific to a particular project phase, obtaining a thorough comprehension of the TravelStartup project flow is crucial. This will be depicted visually through a project journey.

The subchapter is divided into the following sections:

4.2.1 Workshop

Following the meeting with TravelStartup and a small brainstorming session that aided in refining the project's scope, it became an ideal moment to incorporate the insights of TravelStartup's employees regarding the subject of team collaboration across departments. Therefore, we decided to hold a two-hour workshop session centered on enhancing collaboration across the TravelOrg Business teams.

Objectives

The primary objective of this workshop is to investigate how to improve collaboration and communication between and within teams. As highlighted in the 3.2 Data Collection section, Stickdorn et al. emphasize the significance of workshops in service design practice, as they offer a platform for stakeholders to actively participate and share their knowledge, insights, and ideas (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). This closely corresponds with the objectives of our workshop session. During the workshop, the goal was to identify the obstacles and difficulties that we are currently facing when working together, as well as the strengths and effective practices already in place. We aimed to gather perspectives from different departments to gain a deeper understanding of how we could improve collaboration within the Business team and identify potential next steps toward achieving this goal.

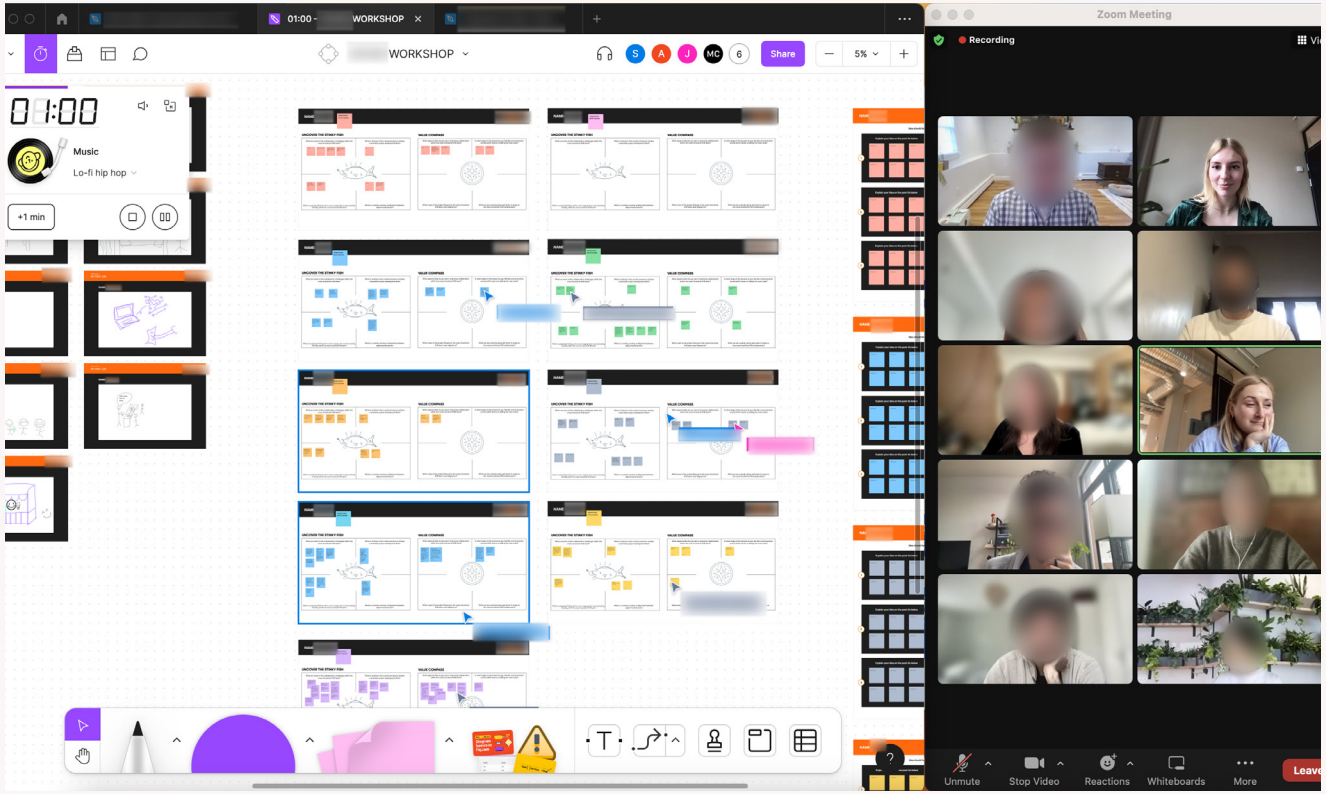


Figure 18. *The workshop with TravelOrg's Business team*

Setup and Participants

The workshop was carried out on Wednesday, 22.03.2023 through an online Zoom call with 12 participants. The template for the workshop was created in Figma [Appendix A] and the workshop lasted for around two hours, including three different activities. As it was our goal to gather insights from different departments and teams involved in design projects, as well as those excluded but having valuable knowledge, we carefully selected a list of participants representing the management, designers, and engineers from various Business teams, including some outside the TravelStartup team. The questions asked, can be found in Appendix A.

The workshop was structured into four stages:

1. ***Introduction*** – Set the stage for the workshops and get participants excited, show the agenda, and explain the aim of the session.
2. ***Warm-up activity*** – Ease the mood and get participants engaged through a quick and fun activity.
3. ***Analyze phase*** – Look into the negatives and positives when it comes to collaboration on design projects.
4. ***Brainstorm phase*** – Brainstorm some of the potential solutions.

The goal was to connect with participants through channels already used by TravelOrg to ensure an easy and trouble-free flow of the workshop [Figure 17]. The meeting was held through Zoom and the online workshop templates were created on Figma, a collaborative web application tool. To ensure everyone is capable to work with Figma, a brief how-to guide and a minor task were prepared for the participants to enable them to work with Figma easily and utilize the essential tools like sticky notes and markers necessary for the workshop session. In the stinky fish activity, the participants had 16 minutes to reflect on four questions focusing on collaboration, communication, and alignment within the cross-functional TravelStartup team. The aim was to identify pain points and weaknesses to identify areas for improvement. In the value compass exercise, the participants had 16 minutes to reflect on four questions revolving around collaboration and communication within the cross-functional TravelStartup team, opportunities for how it could be improved as well as current alignment within and across teams.

Findings

The following section will summarize the main findings from the analysis phase of the workshop, including identified pain points, areas for improvement as well as identified strengths in current processes. An overview of the key findings can be seen in Figure 19 and the full list of findings can be found in Appendix A.

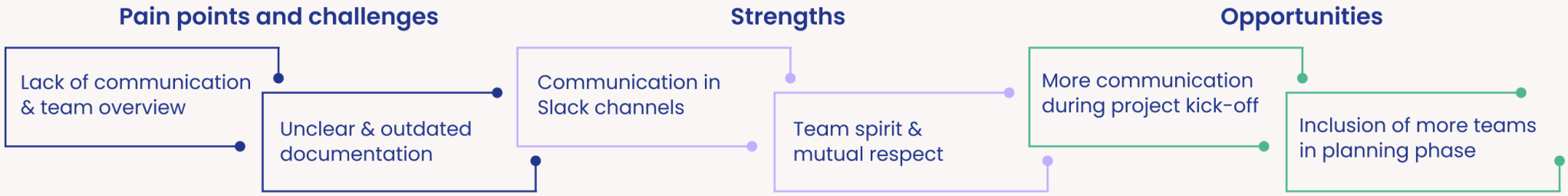


Figure 19. *Key takeaways from the workshop*

Pain points and challenges

In the workshop, the different teams identified several pain points related to communication and collaboration. They agreed on the importance of clear communication and recognized room for improvement. One major issue was the lack of up-to-date sources of truth documents, causing unalignment and extra work. Clear and organized documentation was seen as crucial for tracking tasks and decisions. There was no set process for communication, and a lack of communication between departments was preventing issues from being caught early on. Designers often struggled with a lack of clarity regarding the team's overview and inconsistent project management. Due to a lack of alignment among teams, there is a shortage of understanding regarding the tasks that other teams are working on. This may result in duplicated efforts, and it is not always evident which team is accountable for specific tasks when multiple teams are involved. The pipeline of TravelStartup projects was unclear, and there was a lack of alignment across teams. Collaboration across teams was challenging due to differences in communication styles, processes, and product goals. Working remotely created various communication challenges, especially the difference in time zones.

Strengths

During the workshop session, participants were asked about what is currently working well in terms of communication and collaboration within the cross-functional teams. Some teams were happy with their use of Slack channels for sharing knowledge and communication between engineers and the product team. Some participants also recognized their individual project flow, design review sessions, and the process of handing over projects from designers to engineers as well planned. Lastly, the participants highlighted team spirit, mutual respect, and that there is willingness to collaborate within the cross-functional TravelStartup team as a strength.

Opportunities

The participants identified three opportunities for improving communication and collaboration practices within the cross-functional teams: sharing knowledge, including other teams in the project flow, and improving efficiency and innovation. Participants suggested sharing ideas more frequently to foster innovation, having bi-weekly meetings, and sharing processes, goals, and updates across teams to improve knowledge sharing. It was also noted that the overall project flow could benefit from including other teams, especially in the planning phase, to increase visibility, and synchronization and have a faster and smoother delivery process. Finally, the participants identified an opportunity to improve efficiency and innovation by making everyday tasks more efficient and creating more innovative solutions for customers. Further, participants were asked about the stage in the process where communication across and within teams adds the most value. They seemed to be quite aligned as all answers could be grouped into two categories: project kick-off and design phase. The definition phase where the project kick-off is happening was mentioned by most participants. They all feel like grooming sessions, sprint planning meetings and kick-off meetings are beneficial to gather enough context and figure out where team collaboration is needed. Good communication across and within teams was mentioned to be important in the designing phase where the team is trying to find solutions and reviews the designs, including the managers, designers, and engineers.

Idea brainstorming session

This section will summarize findings from the brainstorming session, where each of the participants was asked to brainstorm up to three ideas of potential solutions to improve the collaboration within the cross-functional TravelStartup team. After writing their ideas, they each had one vote to give to their favorite idea. This resulted in a total of 13 ideas, which could be grouped into the categories of project planning, documentation, and sync/alignment.

Idea 1 – Project planning

Within the category of project planning, one idea was to restructure the team's approach to how to go about and update their tasks. Changing that could positively affect alignment within the team, as well as ownership of projects. It was suggested to specifically update the setup of specific tickets as well as the assignment to these tickets. Another idea suggests including more teams in planning meetings, which was also voted for by one person. Lastly, it was proposed to set a specific deadline for having to decide to ensure that projects will not get stuck.

Idea 2 – Documentation

One idea that was independently mentioned by two users and got three votes was to update production files that everybody can easily find and that will close gaps between teams. One participant had the thought to improve the way how the team is currently tracking the status of tasks by having more detailed documentation on even smaller tasks. Another participant mentioned that having interactive dev storybooks of flows and sections that are challenging to reproduce could be an easy way to better align. Lastly, it was proposed to add an AI meeting note taker to meetings to take notes and automatically send them on Slack afterwards.

Idea 3 – Sync & Alignment

The last category sync/alignment includes the idea to set up better communication between designers and engineers through e.g., a shared doc, Slack status updates, etc. That idea received one vote. Furthermore, it was suggested to create a shared task board across teams that can be accessed by everybody and serves as an overview of what each team is working on and what the priorities are. This idea is like another one that proposed to create a centralized planning document where teams can outline their roadmaps. The last idea describes the incorporation of the Slackbot to send daily summaries as well as remind the team of unshared updates.

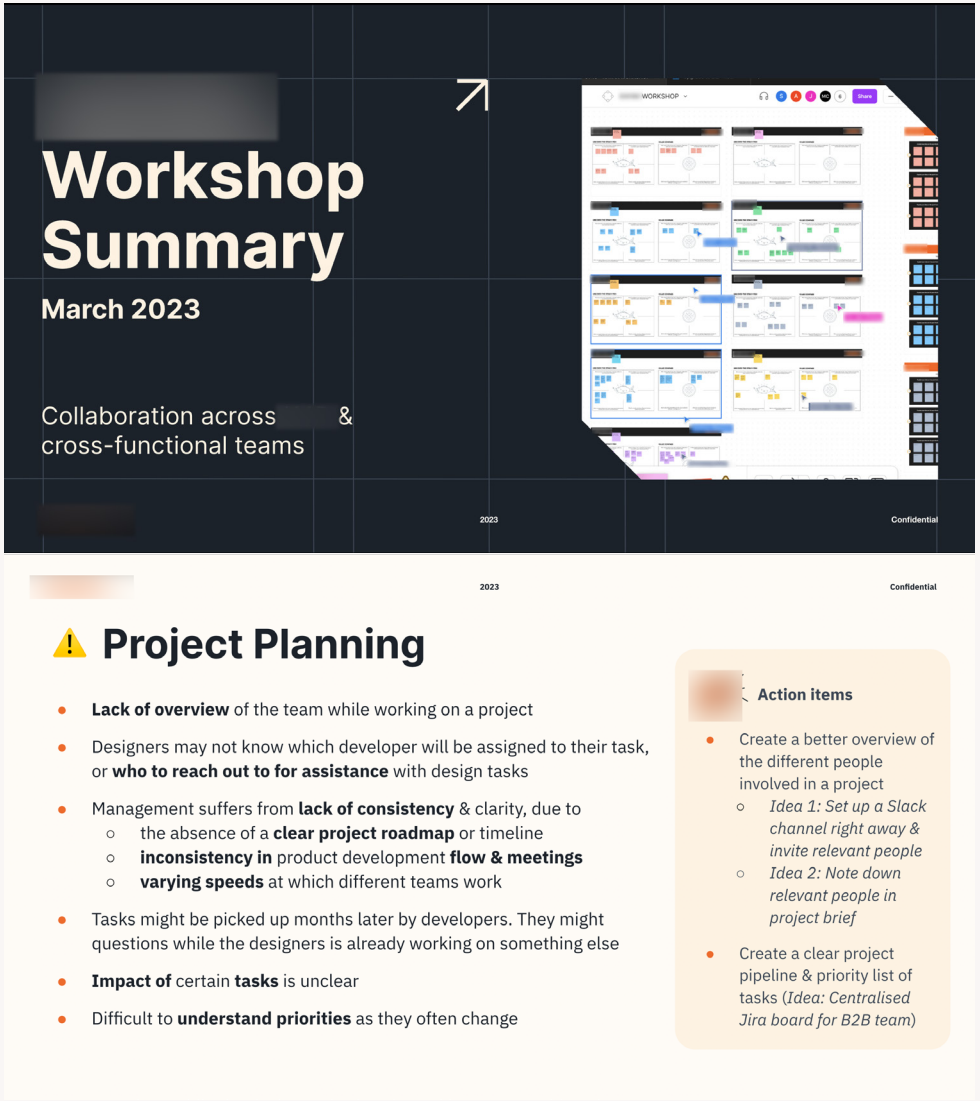


Figure 20. Workshop summary deck

Reflections

The workshop session proved to be a great way for bringing together diverse stakeholders and gathering multiple perspectives on the topic of communication and collaboration. We dedicated two days to planning the workshop session and testing some of the activities. This effort paid off as the workshop session went smoothly and generated numerous interesting findings and ideas. Missing internal aliment was one of the biggest paint points. More specifically, employees are lacking a clear overview of other team's goals and know what they are working on, leading them to not seeing the holistic picture. Further not having a clear process on how to approach projects and especially documentations create communication issues and misalignment. The project kick-off phase was highlighted as a significant part of the project flow, and a point where communication and collaboration can improve alignment. These insights helped us to shape the focus of our interview and asked questions not only about communication and collaboration topics but also about alignment and using some part of the workshop findings to build up a conversation and understand how the expert is tackling some of the identified challenges.

After the workshop, a slide deck with a summary of key findings was created and shared with the organizations [Figure 20]. It highlighted the biggest areas for improvement together with suggestions on how to tackle these challenges.

4.2.2 Expert Interview with a Service Designer

The literature review equipped us with a good initial understanding of the different responsibilities and skills that a service designer needs to have. As a next step to apply this knowledge in context and deepen our understanding of the role of a service designer in an organization, we conducted an expert interview with Frederico F., who has been working in the service design field for 14+ years as a service designer and service design consultant [Figure 21]. Additionally, we aimed to initiate a discussion centered on our latest research question [4.1.4 Iteration of the Research Question], together with new findings from the workshop, and address questions relevant to this topic.

The interview was structured into three sections: the role of a service designer, collaboration and alignment, and communication within an organization. At the beginning of the interview, we briefly introduced the topic of our thesis and the focus of today's interview. The interview lasted 45 minutes when one of us was conducting the interview and the other one was taking notes. This interview can be characterized as an exploratory expert interview [3.2.2 Quantitative Data Collection], as our objective was not to achieve a specific outcome or solution, but rather to improve our understanding of the subject of communication, collaboration, and alignment within an organization from a service design standpoint.

Data Evaluation

During the interview, notes were taken by one of the interviewers and the meeting was recorded after getting oral permission from the interviewee. Subsequently, a transcript of the recording was created and organized. Label tags were used as a method to visually and colorfully identify some of the most relevant areas and break done the text into sections and get an easy overview for further analysis [3.3 Data Analysis]. The label tags resulted in the following:

- Role as Service Designer
- Pain points of collaboration, alignment, and communication
- Team collaboration
- Alignment
- Communication
- Project Flow
- Tools

The findings of the interview will be structured based on the identified labels. The full transcript can be found in Appendix C.

Figure 21. *Expert interview with Frederico F*

Insights from the Expert Interview

The role of a service designer - Federico's working experience:
Federico has been practicing service design since around 2006, without realizing it at the time. He has always had a people-centric approach to problem-solving, constantly seeking new opportunities and solutions. Currently, he serves as a senior service designer in the research and development department of a hearing aid company, where his team facilitates exploration and collaboration between different teams. Federico also acts as a service design consultant for various departments within the company.

The following describes his approach to projects to ensure clear communication, collaboration, and alignment:

- Understand colleagues' needs
- Facilitate a platform for easy access to information
- Continuously learn and adapt
- Determine the value you bring as a service designer
- Continuously test communication to ensure understanding
- Identify gaps in team efforts
- Coach project owners in service design approach
- Plan to maximize stakeholder value with minimum input
- Think ahead
- Be able to answer "*Why did we do this?*"
- Use a generative and co-creation approach
- Empathize with people and manage relationships
- Focus on people over departments to remove biases

Pain points of collaboration, alignment, and communication
Federico's experience highlights that alignment issues are common in cross-functional teams and there is no one solution to align people, as it requires constant adaptation. Different time zones and cultures in larger organizations can make alignment more difficult. It is not possible that everyone knows everything, sometimes there is more data than can be handled and there is not enough time to go through all of it. It is important to be honest

and aware that incorrect decisions can be made due to a lack of information. Sometimes, some information can first appear in a later stage. Clear communication and alignment are time-consuming but highly important. Unstructured meetings can lead to some people dominating the conversation, and not everyone being able to participate. Service designers should be aware that every change brings challenges, and it is not always necessary to solve everything with design.

In Figure 22, we present our approach to analyzing interview findings, specifically the utilization of affinity diagramming to group similar content together. This method was extensively employed when examining insights throughout this thesis.

Team collaboration

Federico's responsibility as a service designer is to make information available to the team, and he focuses on creating rituals that facilitate information sharing. He suggests that talks should be more of a conversation with the possibility of feedback, and exploring different formats and events can create synergies and break silos. Check-in meetings are important for alignment, and if a meeting is longer than 30 minutes, it should have a clear structure. Knowing who has the information is more important than actually having it. Service designers should understand the value they bring to the company and motivate others to collaborate.

Alignment

Alignment should be the first step in every project. "Speaking the same language" and understanding each other are especially vital at the beginning of a project. It is suggested to ask who is responsible and who owns the task at the beginning of a project to ensure a smooth kick-off and clear alignment from the start. He believes the more touchpoints of alignment, the smoother it will go. Based on his experience, alignment works best when being co-created.

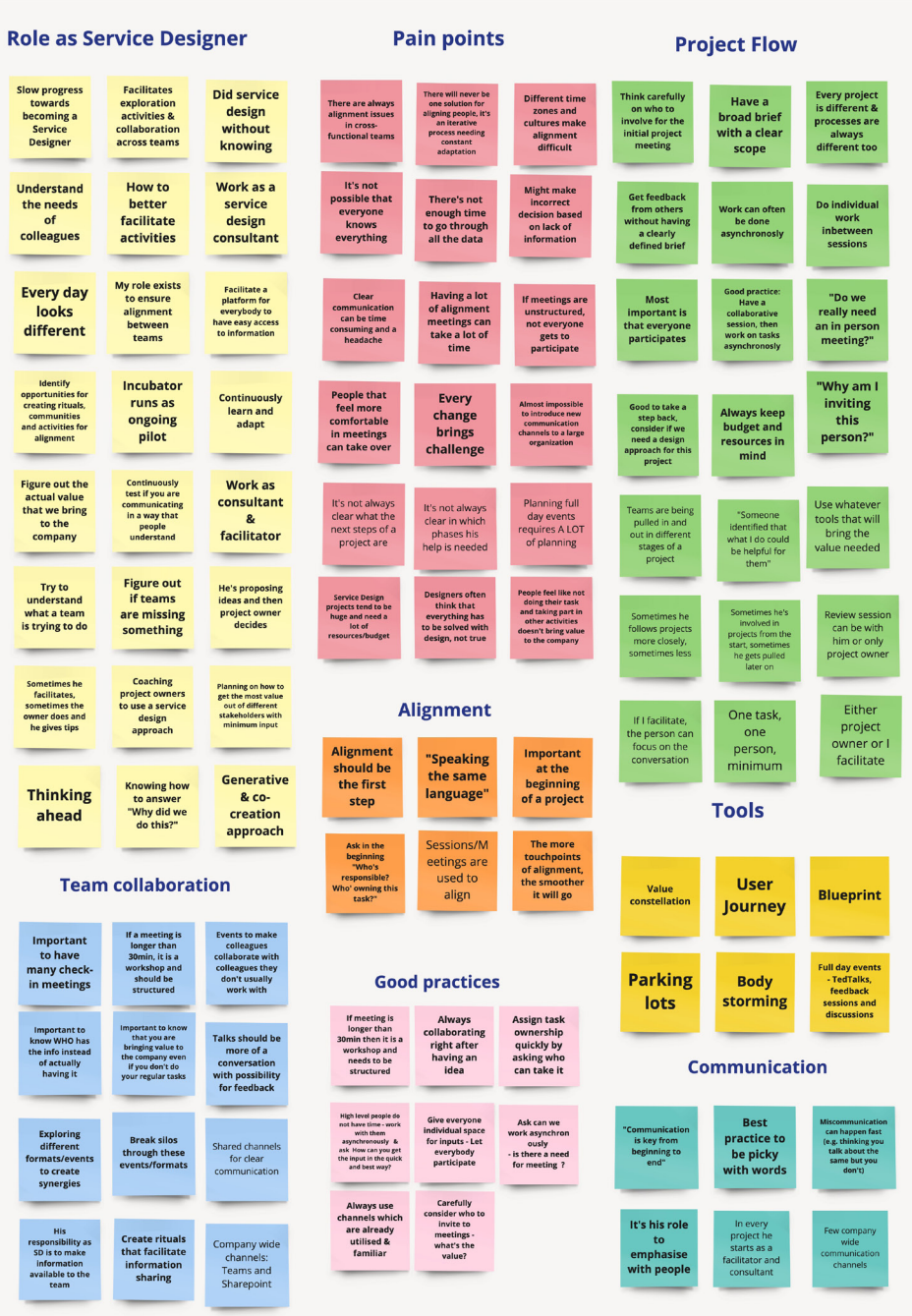


Figure 22. *An example of affinity diagramming findings*

Collaboration

Federico stresses the importance of clear communication from the beginning to the end of the design process. He highlights the potential negative impact of miscommunication on project timelines and emphasizes the need for using clear language and asking for clarification when needed. Federico also suggests that service designers should empathize with stakeholders during communication to build strong working relationships.

Project flow

Federico suggests having a broad brief with a clear scope at the beginning of a project, involving key people to align on the project and define it further. However, it is good to keep in mind that every project is different, and processes are diverse. Federico often suggests a common approach for group collaborative sessions during a project where each person works individually beforehand, and then they bring their work together. This approach allows for asynchronous work, but it is vital that everyone participates. Overall, he advises taking a step back during projects and considering whether a design approach is needed for a project, keeping budgets and resources in mind. When inviting people for a meeting or session, it is important to ask if it is necessary and not waste others' time and resources.

Tools

Federico believes in a co-creation approach to design and uses various tools to collaborate with stakeholders during the design process. He chooses tools that will bring the most value to each project and his team often facilitates workshops. Federico also uses tools such as user journeys, blueprints, value constellation, body storming, parking lot, and business origami. Additionally, his team organizes events like TedTalks to receive feedback and create discussions among employees.

Good practices

Some of the good service design practices Federico highlighted during the interview are the following:

- Meetings longer than 30 minutes should be structured.
- Collaboration should start right after having an idea.
- Quickly assign task ownership by asking who can take it.
- Work asynchronously with high-level people.
- Consider having a meeting or working asynchronously.
- Allow everyone to participate and give individual input space.
- Use familiar communication channels.
- Carefully consider whom to invite to meetings based on their value to the project.

Reflection on the interview

It became apparent early in the interview that Federico's role as a service designer in the organization would be valuable due to his relevant work experience related to the thesis topic. The interview helped us to understand the role of a service designer within an organization and the pain points a service designer is facing while working in larger organizations. Frederico has unknowingly been practicing service design for many years without holding an official position as a service designer. This observation is intriguing as it aligns with the findings of the Blomkvist study, which uncovered that many individuals practicing service design occupy positions that are not explicitly labeled as such [2.1.2 Role of Service Designers within an Organization]. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that the practice of service design is still relatively new, leading companies to avoid using the specific term "service designer." Additionally, some employees may be unaware that their work actually falls under the umbrella of service design. Further, it was valuable to see how service designers are involved in project flow and the possible roles they could have within projects. The challenges he faces in his organization regarding alignment and collaboration were similar to those encountered by TravelStartup, making his insights on how to address these issues particularly

valuable. Moreover, Federico shared effective techniques, tools, and methods, which he uses at his work. All this information will serve as valuable insights, particularly during the Ideate stage.

4.2.3. Final Research Question

New and relevant knowledge was acquired, which prompted us to reflect on the research question and make some final adjustments. The latest version of the research question has been narrowed down to focus on the beginning of a project. According to the literature, the stage-setting factors have a significant impact on team behavior, resulting in the successful implementation of cross-functional teams in projects, with improved collaboration and communication [2.3.1 Factors Contributing to the Success of Cross-functional Teams]. Based on the workshop feedback, most participants believe that functional collaboration is required during the early stages of a project [4.2.1 Workshop]. Additionally, the expert interview revealed that project an efficient kick-off is critical because it establishes the foundation for the entire project, and good communication is essential from beginning to end. As identified through the workshop, the lack of internal alignment is one of TravelStartup's major challenges, which can be addressed by improving communication. This resulted in the following final research question:

"How can the service design approach create a common communication ground to foster internal alignment and collaboration between cross-functional teams at the beginning of a project within a startup in the maturity stage?"

Defining the terms used in the research questions is crucial as they serve as guiding principles for the future steps of this process.

Common communication ground = The teams have a shared understanding of methods, tools, and channels of communication to be used by all stakeholders involved in a project.

Internal alignment = The team is alignment on the scope of a project, its boundaries, and its goals. The team has an overview of each other's responsibilities and ownership of tasks.

Collaboration = The different teams are forming relationships with each other and are starting to work more together and share their knowledge (customer insights, expert knowledge) across teams.

Cross-functional team = Cross-functional teams* are individuals from different departments with relevant knowledge and diverse competencies to complete a project.
**This would be product managers, engineers & designers in the TravelStartup team*

4.2.4 Target Group

Defining the target group is a crucial step in the design thinking process and it was important for us to revisit this definition throughout the design process as it changed several times as we gained new insights and refined our solution. When defining the target group, it was important to keep the research question, and the problem area in mind.

Furthermore, conducting market research and talking to TravelOrg Business employees in the workshop session helped us to get a clearer understanding of the demographics, interests, and behaviors of our target users, which was also the starting point for creating the below-mentioned persona. In preparation for the next stage, Ideation, we finalized the definition of our target group to assure that the ideas we will come up with are focused and specifically designed for our target users. During the workshop, it was discovered that the cross-functional TravelStartup teams have problems in communication and alignment during their project kick-off phases, which is what we are aiming to solve with our solution. It was therefore decided to keep the focus on the core TravelStartup cross-functional teams and exclude teams

that occasionally cooperate with the core team. Our solution will be made specifically for the following three target users: product designer, product manager, and engineer [Figure 23].

Given that product designers are accountable for the majority of project stages, as highlighted in section 4.2.6 Initial Project Journey, it is only natural that they should receive the utmost attention. Regardless of the nature of the solution, product designers will have the most significant interaction with it. Product managers continue to hold a significant role in the solution as they bear the responsibility for the initial stages of every project. They not only present the future solution to the team but also should embrace the methodology themselves. Engineers undoubtedly contribute to our solutions as crucial stakeholders in every project. However, their involvement at the beginning of a new project is relatively limited compared to the other two target users. The TravelStartup team currently has one product manager, four product designers, and five engineers. To better understand the roles and responsibilities of our target group, as well as their motivations and frustrations, the next section will create personas for our three target users.

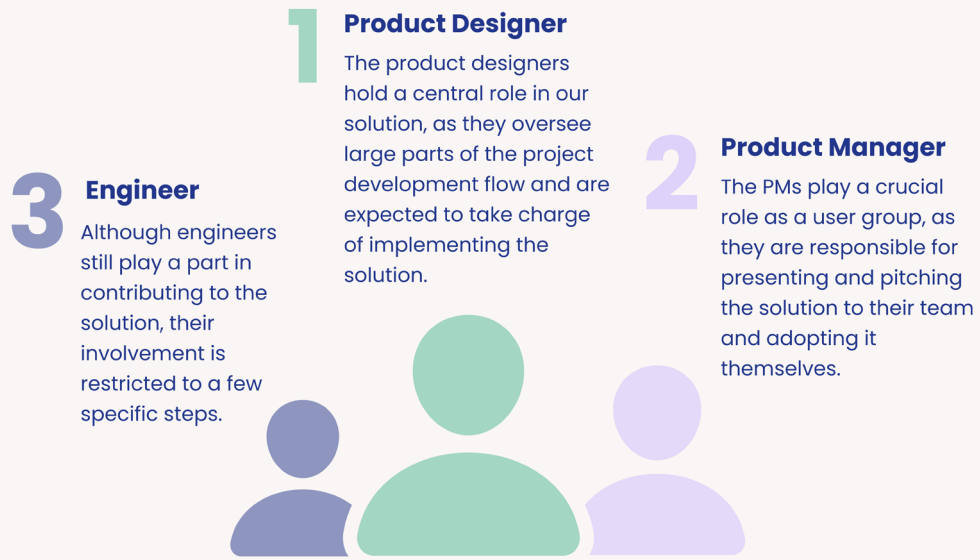


Figure 23. *The target group*

4.2.5 Personas

Once the target group had been identified [4.2.4 Target Group], it was important to gain a more profound understanding of the users we were designing for, and their needs and challenges, which we were able to investigate by creating personas. In this case, personas refer to a profile that portrays a specific group of employees. This profile is not based on a stereotype, but rather an archetype supported by thorough research. Personas aid in comprehending groups with similar requirements. Ideally, personas should be grounded on research and describe a cluster of individuals with similar needs or typical behavioral traits (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess, & Schneider, 2018, str. 41). In this case, personas depict employees who hold the same positions across the organization. The implementation of the personas was important to indicate different cross-functional roles which are usually involved in the project process. These personas were created based on combined research from literature, workshop findings, Sarah's current knowledge of the TravelStartup roles, and desktop research. The following three personas are necessary roles that are involved in any design project:

- Product manager
- Product designer
- Engineer

The personas portray the responsibilities, required skills, and expertise of each role, along with their communication and collaboration challenges and their motivations and aspirations for change. Creating personas was helpful in thoroughly examining each role and understanding their influence on the design process. The personas were reviewed with the company to ensure accuracy and eliminate any assumptions made. The personas are demonstrated on the following three figures [Figure 24, 25, 26].

Role

PRODUCT MANAGER

Age

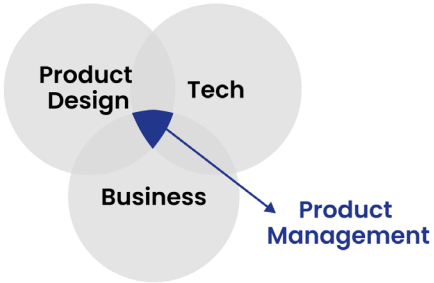
42

Chicago, USA

Married, 2 kids

Master's degree

Area of expertise



Role & Responsibilities

- Extensive knowledge of the market and product area.
- In charge of connecting business strategy, design and technical knowledge with customer needs to define larger business objectives and goals.
- Responsible for creating new projects and tasks which are relevant, feasible and valuable based on the organisational strategy.
- Great leadership skills and able to guide and support their team.
- Main point of contact for external partners.

Skills

Goal-setting | Empower the team | Leadership

Support collaboration | Ensure commitment | Assign ownership

Frustrations & Challenges

Priorities can change rapidly, it can easily get the team out of sync

There is no clear structure to identify which team owns which work

Prioritising tasks can be challenging if there is a lack of overview of others teams' work

Some projects have a lot of teams involved. It can be difficult to coordinate their work & involvement

Motivations & Aspirations

Deliver more innovative solution to the customer

Have a common process for tracking smaller requests across teams

Have accurate production files across teams that employees can easily locate & use

Enhance task efficiency to prioritize important activities and process improvements

Figure 24. Persona of a product manager in a startup

Role

PRODUCT DESIGNER

Age

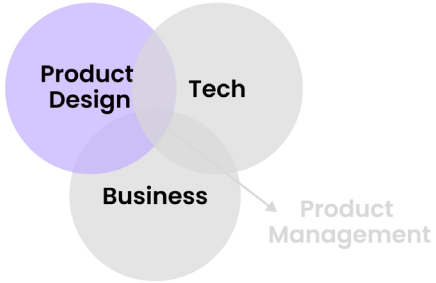
36

Copenhagen, Denmark

Single

Bachelor's degree

Area of expertise



Role & Responsibilities

- Creates a positive user experience that encourages customers to use their service.
- The majority of tasks revolve around enhancing the user interface of both the website and app.
- Proficient in a wide range of design tools, with a particular emphasis on utilizing the company-wide tool Figma.
- Possesses extensive design expertise, enabling the creation of interactive prototypes and the collection of valuable user feedback through testing.

Skills

Creativity | Problem-solving | Research

Wireframing | Prototyping | User testing

Frustrations & Challenges

Out of date production files are frustrating & slow down the process

No clear overview of the team & the individual responsibilities are often undefined

User insights are not always easily accessbile and often not shared

It is challenging to work on a project without a clear product roadmap & timeline

Motivations & Aspirations

More kickoff meetings to gather context from PMs, designers & engineers across teams

Utilize a shared task board to provide an overview of team activities and priorities

Create interactive, user-centered designs to create a positive user experience

Share more knowledge across teams, so that projects will solve actual customer needs

Figure 25. Persona of a product designer in a startup

Role

ENGINEER

Age

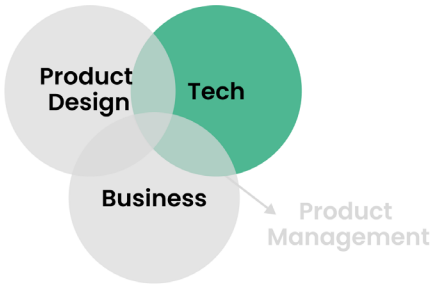
32

Berlin, Germany

In relationship

Master's degree

Area of expertise



Role & Responsibilities

- Development, coding, installation, and maintenance of software systems.
- Troubleshoots, debugs and upgrades existing software.
- Produce specifications and determine operational feasibility.
- Perform software testing and address any arising issues.
- Documents application process for future maintenance and upgrades.

Skills

Mathematical aptitude | Problem-solving | Programming | Responsive design | Attention to detail | Agile working

Frustrations & Challenges

- Defining boundaries and responsibilities between various teams can be challenging
- Differing team speeds can complicate implementation due to context switching
- A lack of process results in difficulties when prioritizing a projects' work, as the impact is not clear
- There is an inconsistency in product development flows / meetings

Motivations & Aspirations

- Have a more aligned overview of different tasks and ownership of tasks
- To improve the development process, it would be beneficial to add a short description to shared components
- Have a faster & smoother delivery process through improved communication across teams
- Improving time to market and having more market transparency

Figure 26. Persona of an engineer in a startup

4.2.6 Initial Project Journey

Once the target users were identified and it was established that the TravelStartup team faced the greatest opportunity for improvement in the initial project phase, it became essential to examine the team's current approach to their projects. As Sarah was working in the company, she had a good initial understanding of the TravelStartup workflow and began to map out a project flow journey. This journey was then step-by-step revised with a Sr. product designer who has been part of the company for over nine years. This session took around 30 minutes and was held in a face-to-face meeting in a relaxed setting. This allowed for valuable feedback on each step and a comprehensive understanding of the overall flow.

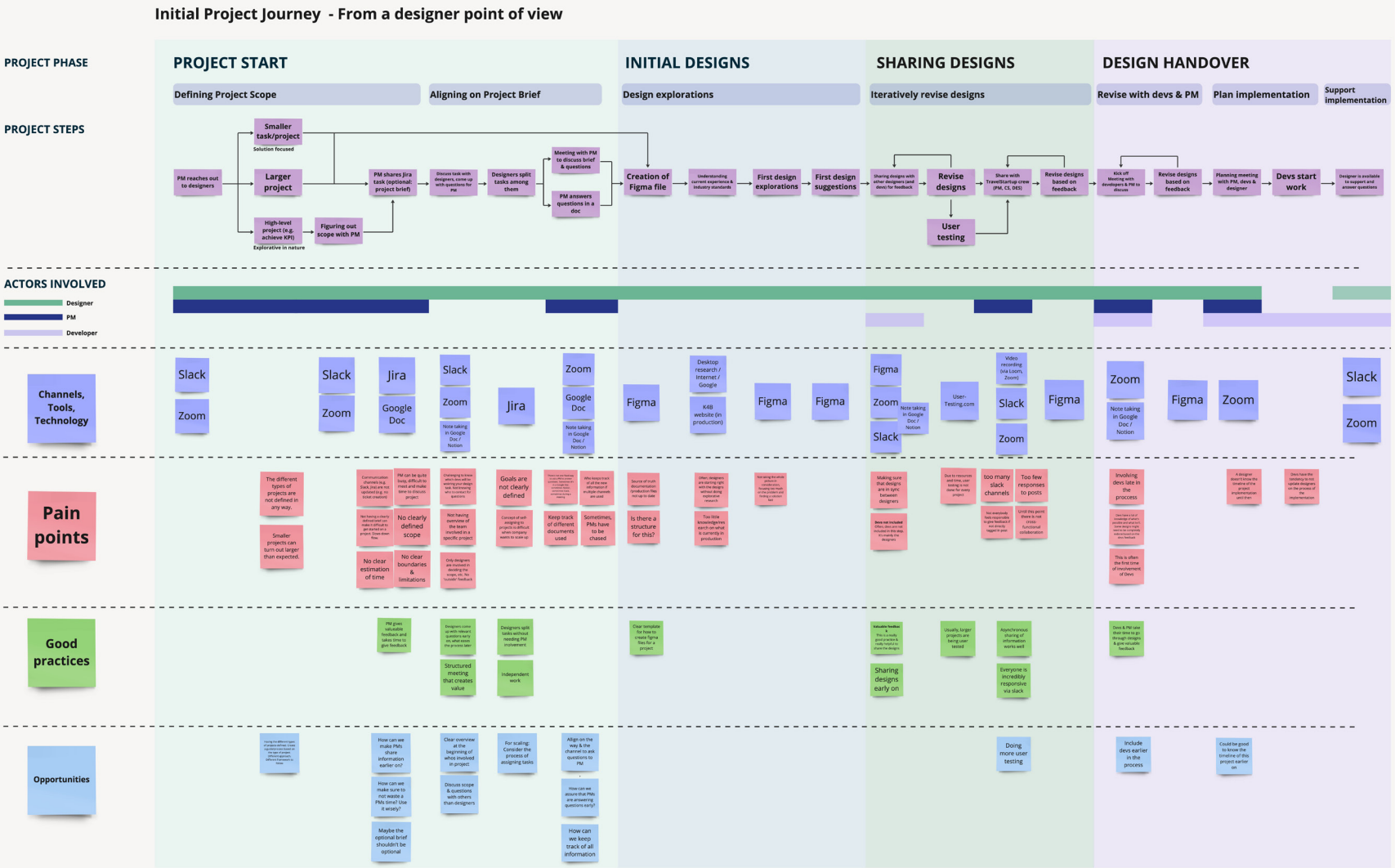


Figure 27. Initial project flow journey

The designer's feedback was useful as it provided us with a clear overview and classification of the current project flow process.
Through the interview, we gained several key insights that influenced our journey and deepened our understanding of the process. Firstly, we discovered that projects can generally be categorized into three types: smaller task-oriented projects, larger projects, and high-level exploratory projects. We also realized that not all projects come with a predefined brief, and early task establishment proved advantageous for saving time and enabling the product manager to kickstart the project. Additionally, we learned that smaller tasks often do not require a formal kick-off meeting, while designers typically initiate their work by conducting competitor research and gaining an understanding of the current user experience. Although involving engineers in the design process can be beneficial, it presents challenges in terms of time management. Consequently, the kick-off meeting with engineers often serves as their first active involvement in the project flow.

4.2.7 Conclusion on the Define Stage

During the Define stage, we leveraged the insights gathered in the Empathize stage and narrowed down the scope of this thesis focus by conducting a workshop concentrated on investigating the specific user needs and current problems on an individual level. The results of the workshop made us reflect on how communication and collaboration impact the internal alignment and vice versa, which was then further explored in the expert interview. We gained a deeper understanding of the problem area and were provided with ideas on approaches to how to work with these issues. The outcomes were used to inform decision-making and formulate the challenge into the final research question [4.2.3. Final Research Question], which will serve as a foundation for our Ideate stage. To move into the Ideate stage with confidence and inspiration, it was crucial to outline the users of our solution by defining the target group and personas. We will be focusing on the TravelStartup team and specifically target the solution to three main functions, which are the product manager, product designer, and engineer. Given that the scope of the problem formulation centers around the initial phases of a project, it was important to delve into the project flow and utilize all the pain points and opportunities that were identified from primary research conducted in collaboration with the company. We believe that all these insights will provide a solid foundation for the Ideate stage to generate relevant and user-centered solutions.

4.3 IDEATE

Having the core problem to be solved defined in our final research question, we were ready to move on to the next stage, Ideate. The aim of the Ideate stage will be to address the problem area of creating a strong communication foundation to improve internal alignment and collaboration, particularly in the early stages of a project. This will involve an ideation session, consisting of brainstorming and mind-mapping exercises, as well as a prioritization matrix, and idea napkins. The three most desired ideas will then be shown in a pitch presentation, including all relevant information, and supporting findings explaining the concept. To make an informed decision, we want to have a third-party perspective to help us evaluate the three ideas. Therefore, we will present the pitches to a service designer in a second expert interview and conduct an evaluation session with TravelStartup. It will be important for us to thoroughly examine and discuss the ideas, which will ultimately lead us to select a single solution concept that can then be prototyped in the next stage. As part of the Ideate stage, we will revisit the project flow journey and create a stakeholder motivation matrix to fully comprehend the advantages of the solution and determine the potential motivations that users might have to use it.

The subchapter is divided into the following sections:

4.3.1 Ideation Day

The kick-off to the Ideate stage was the 'Ideation Day', a session focused on exploring all our findings and research discoveries so far and identifying key pain points that could be addressed through brainstorming activities.

The research question for the Ideation Day was the following:

"How can the service design approach create a common communication ground to foster internal alignment and collaboration between cross-functional teams at the beginning of a project within a startup in the maturity stage?"

To start the day, research on best ideation practices was conducted, looking into ways to how to facilitate an ideation session, and what kind of tools and methods could be used to guide the Ideate stage. To start the day, research on best ideation practices was conducted, looking into ways on how to facilitate an ideation session, and what kind of tools and methods could be used to guide the Ideate stage. The research showed that it is important to not get stuck on an idea early on but rather iterate and come up with as many ideas as possible. Examples of potential approaches to overcome the feeling of being stuck include drawing inspiration from unrelated industries or engaging in imaginative thinking that defies conventional boundaries, even if it means breaking the established norms or rules. Research by Nielsen Norman Group showed that most people, 50%, found it most effective to work in a pair or a small group to come up with design ideas (Harley, 2017). There are countless methods that could be used to ensure an effective and structured ideate session such as brainstorming, mind mapping, sketch storming, storyboarding, SCAMPER, etc. After briefly looking into a few different methods, the Ideation Day plan as visualized in Figure 28 was identified.

To prepare for the Ideation Day, we decided to summarize and print all findings, which included:

- Key takeaways from the literature review
- User insights from the survey, the workshop, and the expert interview
- Journey map of TravelStartup's project flow
- Stakeholder map
- Personas

Figure 28. Ideation session plan

These findings were printed out and hung on a wall which felt convenient and made the information easily accessible throughout the whole ideation session [Figure 29].

1. Findings Review

The first activity of the Ideation Day was to explore all the user research findings and the conducted research to refresh our knowledge about identified pain points, areas of opportunities, the current market situation, as well as current practices and structures in place at TravelStartup. This process of taking a step

back and looking at the whole picture turned out to be a helpful and important exercise that took around 45 min. The prints were revisited several times during the Ideation Day.

Figure 29. *Key findings on a wall for visualization*

2. Brain dumping

Brain dumping is one of the brainstorming activities, where each participant writes down their ideas individually, which is a great way to come up with many ideas fast (Interaction Design Foundation, n.d.). In this activity, the quantity of ideas was more important than the quality. This resulted in around 30 ideas, with some being more precise concepts and some being more brief ideas.

3. Brain walking & Mind mapping

After coming up with a lot of different ideas in the previous exercise, the next step was to collectively review and discuss the ideas while adding to them. This process is called brain walking, a method where participants are typically physically walking around in a room and adding to each other's ideas (Interaction Design Foundation, n.d.). This process turned out to last longer than initially estimated, as there were a lot of new ideas, opportunities, and constraints coming to mind while going through the ideas. In retrospect, this activity demonstrated to be one of the most useful ones, as we took our time and thoroughly examined each individual idea while being critical and explorative at the same time.

Next up was mind mapping, an activity where all ideas can be organized and categorized in a colorful and memorable way (Interaction Design Foundation, n.d.). It proved to be a great approach to group the various ideas into clusters and demonstrate their connections and relationships with each other [Figure 30]. This mind mapping activity resulted in five clusters of different ideas for potential solutions: workshop, overview, guide/framework, meeting/sessions, and tools.

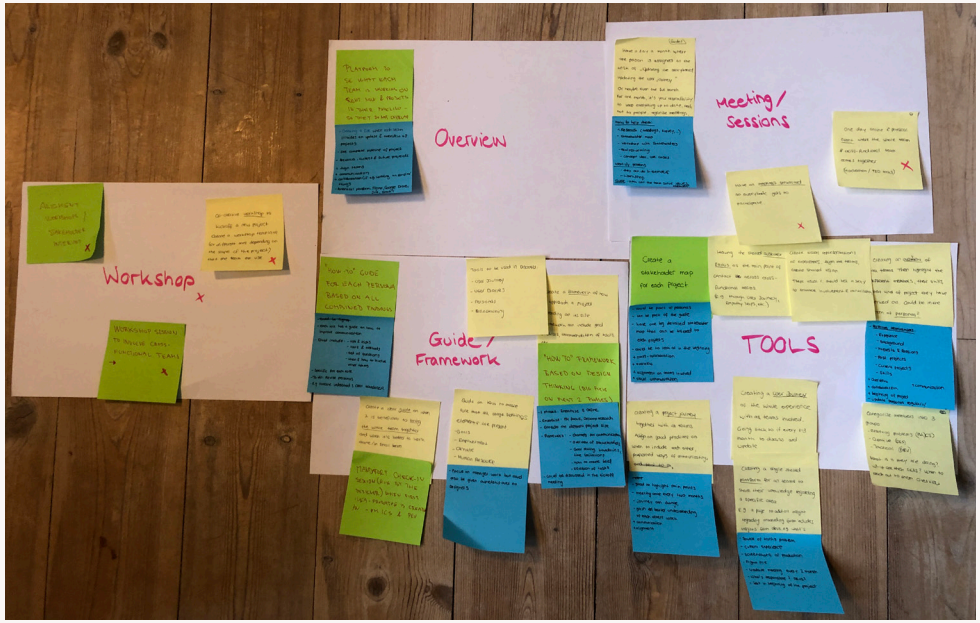


Figure 30. *The grouped clusters*

After having these clusters defined, the next step was to group and define the different ideas within a cluster. This finally resulted in seven different ideas:

- ***User Journey*** – A shared user journey to align cross-functional teams on the current user experience and ease the knowledge-sharing process.
- ***Project Journey*** – A shared journey across teams that shows the current flow of a project. This will be good to align good practices and preferred ways of communicating as well as identifying pain points and opportunities to improve, and gain a better understanding of each other's work.
- ***Monthly problem task*** – Each month, one person is assigned a problem task that is focused on improving collaboration and communication in cross-functional teams. We will guide this by providing them with help, examples, and guides.
- ***'How to' Framework*** – A framework of how to approach a project, focused on the Empathize and Define stage. This can include different tools, methods, questions, etc.
- ***Employees' profiles inspired by persona*** – An overview of team members to improve communication and cross-functional collaboration. The profiles could include content such as experience, skills, interests, and current/past projects.
- ***Overview of Projects*** – A platform that shows what each team is currently working on and what projects they have in their pipeline to align the different teams, and to improve communication and collaboration across teams.
- ***Stakeholder Map*** – Creating a stakeholder map for each project. This could be part of a guide and help to start a project, improve cross-collaboration, and have an overview of different teams.

4. Prioritization matrix

Having identified these seven different ideas, the next step was to categorize the ideas based on user value and effort by the organization to implement and utilize them [Figure 31]. The user in this case refers to employees at TravelStartup. The placement for each idea was carefully discussed and considered, which is why this exercise took around one hour to complete. In the end, the ideas that were found to be of the highest user value and the lowest effort by the organization were 'Employees' profiles inspired by personas' and 'Overview of projects', and 'How to Framework'. The 'User Journey' was found to be of high user value but is potentially quite effortful to maintain for the organization/team. The ideas of a 'Project Journey' and 'Monthly problem task' were categorized to be of medium user value and high effort for the organization, which is why they were discarded after this exercise.

Figure 31. *The prioritization matrix*

The overview of the different ideas and their usefulness based on effort and user value gave us a good ground to start discussing which ideas we would like to move forward with. In the end, the following three ideas continued to be explored based on the placement on the prioritization matrix, as well as our personal preferences and area of interest:

- User Journey
- Employees' profiles inspired by personas'
- 'How to' Framework

5. Idea Napkin

The idea napkin method was a helpful tool to explore the three ideas further and to ensure that each idea has been thought about equally. This process of enhancing and adding more content to the idea will later help guide the decision-making process.

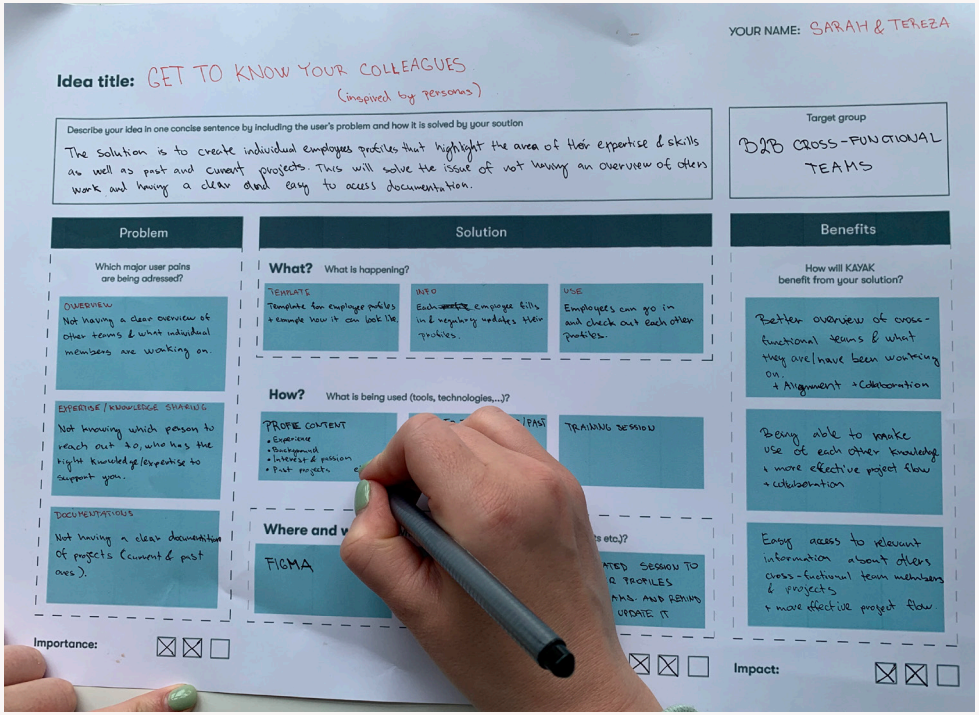


Figure 32. One of the three idea napkins

The napkin is built of six different parts: a title, an elevator pitch, a definition of the target group, a description of the problem, a description of the solution, and a list of benefits that the idea entails (Weinzierl, n.d.). All three idea napkins can be found in Appendix E.

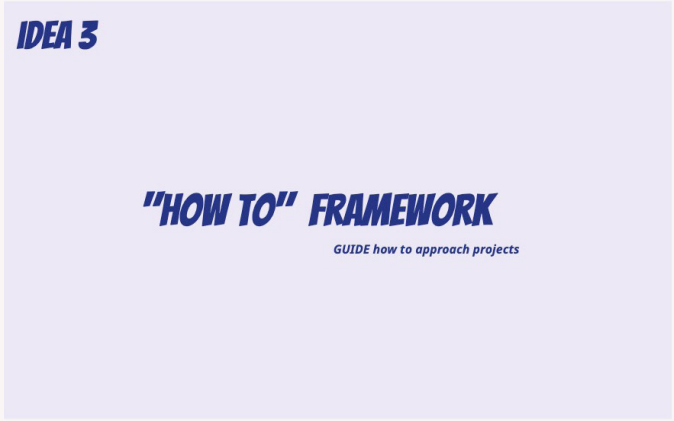
As mentioned above, the ideation session resulted in three different directions of potential solutions, which were all relevant and addressed the research question. To gain a better understanding of the feasibility and practicality of these ideas a brief desktop research was conducted. The research included a review of relevant literature resources available related to the three solutions as well as online sources of inspiration for creating employee profiles, user journeys, or frameworks. This research helped us to gain clarity on the practical and visual aspects of the ideas before evaluating the concept ideas.

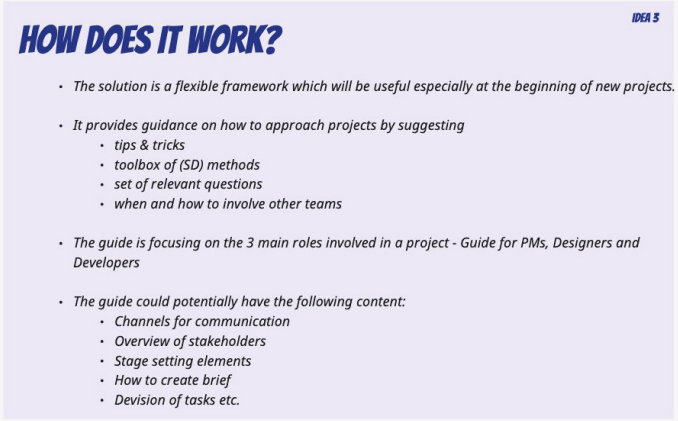
4.3.2 Idea Evaluation

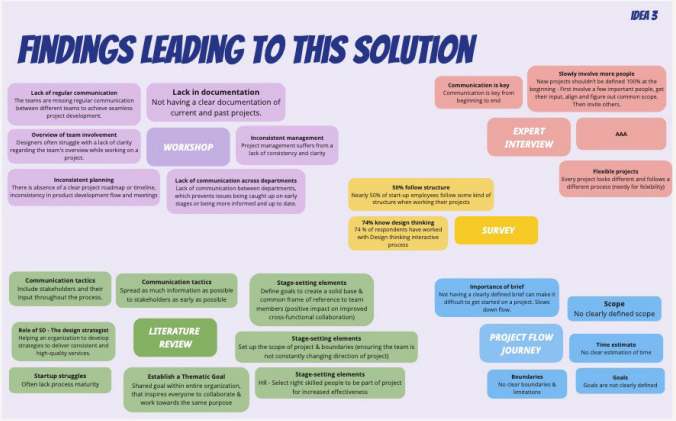
The ideation session resulted in three different directions of potential solutions, which were all relevant to help solve the research question. At this stage of the project, the ideas were mainly conceptual and there was a need for more concrete representation to facilitate evaluation later in the process. It was important to clarify the solution concepts and understand their relevance, and benefits as well as visually represent the idea.

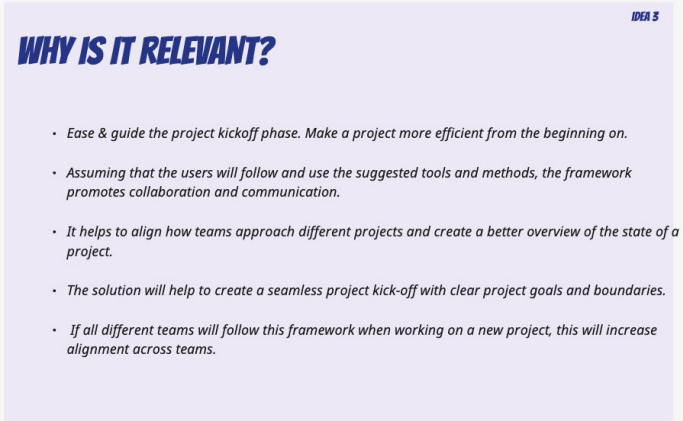
Therefore, we have created a pitch for each of the three ideas, which can all be found in Appendix D. The pitches consisted of the following information [Figure 33]:

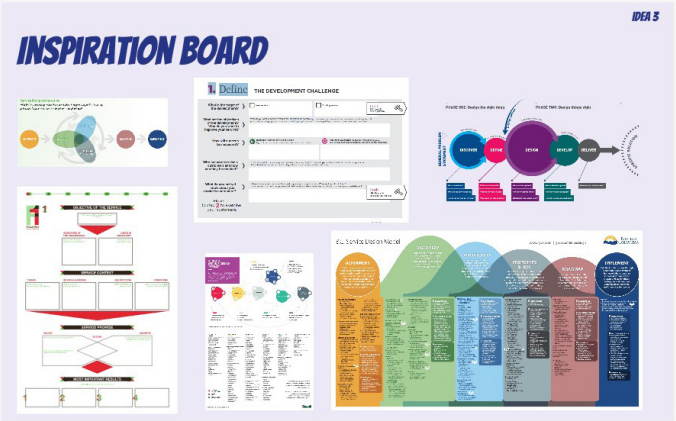
- Concept of the solution
- Benefits of the concept
- Findings that led to this solution
- Inspiration board
- Lo-Fi prototype











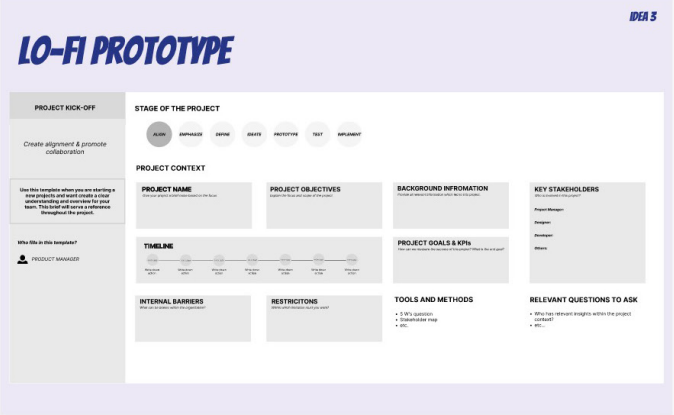


Figure 33. *The pitch deck for idea 3*

Evaluation with a Service Design Expert

In order to make informed decisions that are not solely based on our own interpretation, we decided to bring in a third-party perspective from a professional, who has practical experience in service design, to provide feedback on the three brainstormed solutions.

The aim of this interview was to receive honest feedback on the potential solutions. The interview was semi-structured, whereby the three pitches were presented to provide an explanation of the solution. As we were uncertain whether the interviewee had prior experience within the area of our solutions, a semi-structured interview was the most appropriate approach as it allowed us to ask follow-up questions whenever needed. A pre-determined set of open-ended questions was prepared in advance, allowing us to ask general questions to evaluate the solution, followed by more probing questions to further explore the ideas. In contrast to the first expert interview, this interview had a greater emphasis on systematically gathering specific information, precisely feedback on our three ideas. Hence, this interview can be classified as a systematizing expert interview.

The pre-determined question:

- Have you ever done something similar?
- Challenges when implementing the ideas?
- Benefits for the organization?
- Suggestions to improve the idea?

The interview lasted around 50 minutes and with the approval of the interviewee, the session was recorded for transcript and further analysis purposes. The interview was conducted with Alessandra M.E., who has been working as a service designer for over 6 years and is currently employed at a creative digital agency located in Germany. During the research phase of this thesis, an article by Alessandra was discovered mentioning her master's research project, called *'Service design as an approach for collaboration'* (Enriconi, 2015). Hence, we were convinced that her experience in a topic close to the topic of our thesis will be highly relevant for us. The test plan and the full transcript can be found in Appendix F.

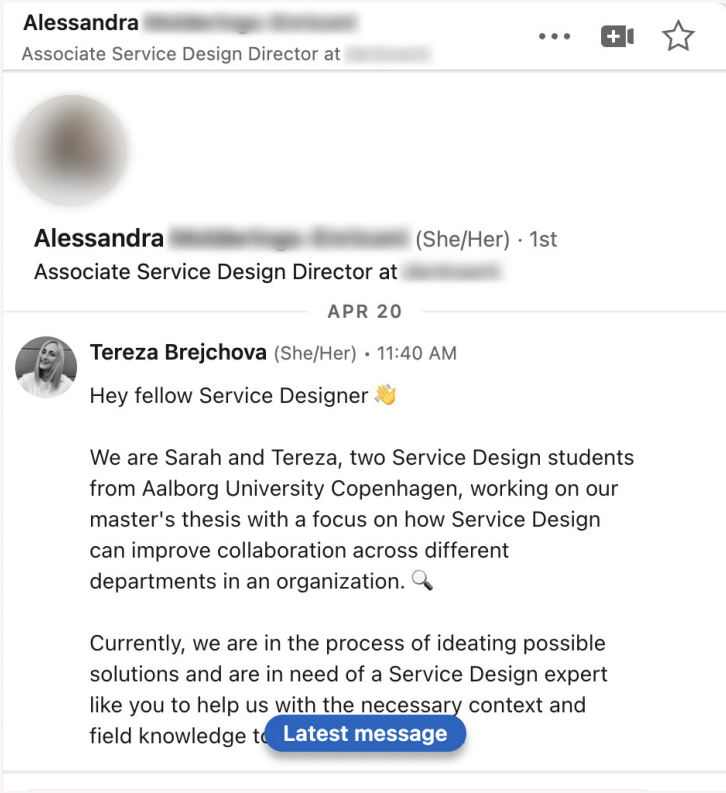


Figure 34. *LinkedIn message to a Service Designer*

After the interview was conducted, a transcript of the recording was created and organized. Similar to the first expert interview [4.2.2 Expert Interview with a Service Designer], label tags were used as a method to visually and colorfully identify some of the most relevant areas and break down the text into sections to get an easy overview for further analysis. The label tags resulted in the following categories: Alessandra's work experience, values, pain points, and ideas/improvements for each of the three ideas. The findings of the interview will be structured based on the identified labels.

Insights from the Expert Interview

Misalignment, lack of communication and collaboration in organizations is something Alessandra often sees in practice. Clients of the agency she works for frequently encounter situations where they either work on the same project twice or do not progress due to poor communication and lack of cross-collaboration within their silos. This subject has been very close to her for a long time since it was the topic of her master's thesis in 2016. During the thesis, she covered a lot of theory research and mapping inside the company, including stakeholder interviews to understand why communication and collaboration were failing. It was hard for her to proceed further due to internal communication and cooperation problems with her thesis. Her solution resulted in a framework focusing on how to unify service design methods and their processes. The framework promoted the use of classical methods such as blueprinting or user journeys to create a shared understanding and utilize them as a communication tool. However, her proposed solution was never implemented within the company and the thesis has not been published.

Alessandra shared valuable practices for effective project management. A successful kick-off involving stakeholders from relevant departments is crucial to establish a shared objective. Oftentimes, miscommunication arises from using different terminology for the same concept, and documentation tools and discussions can help in creating a common foundation. Additionally, aligning with the company's structure, strategy, and business goals is important, while at the same time always keeping the customer's experience in mind.

Idea 1 - Employees' profiles

One potential value of the solution is its usefulness at the beginning of a new project, serving as a helpful resource prior to project initiation. However, a significant pain point lies in determining responsibility for creating and maintaining profiles. In Alessandra's organization, motivating employees to update their profiles annually has proven challenging, as higher-priority projects often take priority over this 'extra' task. Additionally, the likelihood of people actively searching for others' profiles is low, as they tend to prefer asking these questions in chats directly. Alessandra suggests that the solution requires high effort and maintenance, with uncertain impact. Nonetheless, implementing profiles could address the issue of teams working in isolation and enhance understanding of capabilities and contributions across teams, promoting collaboration and knowledge exchange. Alessandra proposes incorporating filtering options or tags to enable targeted searches for specific projects or skill sets, while emphasizing the importance of integrating profile updates seamlessly into existing workflows, potentially exploring automation to streamline the process.

Idea 2 – User Journeys

User journeys hold great value as they keep the user at the center and offer the flexibility to zoom in or out, providing designers with a holistic view or detailed insights. They are instrumental in creating roadmaps and aligning company strategy, potentially making a significant impact on organizational alignment and collaboration. However, Alessandra highlights a potential issue with user journeys being easily corrupted if product owners prioritize their preferences over the user's perspective, compromising the integrity of the journeys. To address this, Alessandra emphasizes the importance of a well-defined plan outlining future focus and steps for clarity and alignment. She suggests visually appealing and easily understandable user journeys that require minimal maintenance and updates. By creating lo-fidelity representations of the entire journey, teams can focus on specific parts in-depth. Leveraging existing tools reduces effort and workload, fostering efficiency in the process.

Idea 3 – Framework

This solution offers value, particularly during project briefings at the project's outset, as it provides a shared framework that serves as a reliable reference for team members and clients to revisit and review project definitions. However, one potential challenge is the risk of these frameworks going unused, as Alessandra experienced with her thesis solution. Providing numerous materials and tools often leads to non-utilization. Developing a comprehensive end-to-end solution, like a full project framework, can be overly ambitious as projects evolve and teams may diverge. Bringing teams back together to ensure alignment and ongoing communication is crucial. While the framework can foster alignment and communication, it may not automatically promote internal collaboration. To effectively implement the solution, practical training, and methodology should be provided to employees, ideally through hands-on sessions that integrate the solution into their project workflow. Identifying key individuals within teams to support and guide others in adopting the methodology is advisable. Seamless integration with the project flow is essential to avoid additional work. It is recommended to start with manageable amounts of information and gradually increase complexity over time to prevent overwhelming employees with excessive information all at once, which can be counterproductive.

Her company currently utilizes a vision board template at the start of each project, which is similar to our idea. This board is completed collaboratively with all relevant client stakeholders during a kick-off meeting, and these sessions are led by the experienced design team. The vision board includes important elements such as identifying stakeholders and end users, determining the project's target audience, defining the project's scope, outlining desired achievements, considering the client's business goals, assessing previous work on the topic, and identifying key individuals to communicate with and allocate project responsibilities. The vision board serves as a single source of truth that everyone can refer back to throughout the project.

Reflections

The interview helped the thesis to get a fresh service design perspective on the subject from a professional, who had a great amount of experience in a similar problem area. We received a detailed evaluation of each idea, which offered valuable insights for improvement and identified potential pain points that may occur with the proposed solution. Further, we obtained feedback on how the concepts could be put into practice in real-world settings, based on the respondents' professional expertise, in contrast to our more theoretical approach. These insights will be further used when narrowing down the scope.

Evaluation with TravelStartup

Following the feedback received during the expert interview and our internal group discussion, we proceed to include TravelStartup in the Ideate stage to gather their perspectives on the three potential solutions. After receiving positive feedback from Alessandra on the three pitches, we decided we will use the same structure and content during the meeting with TravelStartup. Two designers we available to attend the meeting to review the idea concepts. The test plan and the full transcript can be found in Appendix I.

Idea 1 - Employees' profiles

This idea offers value primarily for onboarding new employees, providing a means to gather more information about unfamiliar colleagues. However, it presents a high maintenance challenge as previous initiatives failed due to the lack of ongoing updates. TravelStartup mentioned that they have a simple corporate intranet tool in place, but it is very simple and does not cover enough information. Considerations for the solution include leveraging existing tools like their intranet, Slack, or the company-wide used Wiki pages, incorporating an overview of ongoing projects, and implementing tags for specific team searches. Automation such as smart search functionality that connects individuals to relevant contacts could prove highly beneficial.

Idea 2 – User Journeys

The idea was recognized as highly valuable, particularly for redesign projects, as it provides an overview of relevant concepts and facilitates insights and communication with key individuals. However, TravelStartup already faces challenges in updating its primary production files, which contain outdated UI flows. When the participants thought about combining user journeys with production files, they raised concerns about design duplications and the potential heaviness of the files. Suggestions include using production files as a table of contents, dedicating space for insights, and utilizing a physical board for feedback. TravelStartup sees the value in integrating feedback from various channels, visualizing areas for improvement, and breaking down the user journey by project. Furthermore, when these journeys would be discussed in meetings, it will be important to establish rules to maintain the focus and prevent unrelated discussions.

Idea 3 – Framework

The idea presented during the session received positive feedback and was considered valuable, particularly for project kick-offs at TravelStartup. It aligns with the existing structure of TravelStartup, which currently lacks a clear setup role, making it an area of interest for individuals within the organization. While some progress has been made in this regard, mainly on smaller, specific aspects, there is room for further development. In terms of considerations, the proposed solution has the potential to evolve into a milestone checklist for the collaboration process, specifying when designers, engineers, or project managers should be involved. Previous initiatives from higher management, such as the creation of PM briefs and the mapping of the project flow could be useful material for the thesis. It was suggested to explore how the proposed idea could integrate with existing practices at TravelStartup, rather than implementing something entirely disruptive. Toward the end of the session, we were running out of time therefore there were no pain points identified.

Reflections

Engaging TravelStartup at this stage of the process proved to be highly beneficial. Initially, there were concerns that the feedback session might be biased based on individual needs and preferences. However, the feedback received was quite objective, as the participants took into account the impact of these solutions not only on themselves but also on different functions within the team. Moreover, during the session, several practical constraints emerged since both participants had been with the company for a long time and had hands-on experience with similar initiatives attempted previously. Unfortunately, the time allocated for the session was insufficient, so we had to rush through the end of the meeting. We have learned from this and will ensure that the time allocated for the prototyping session is more realistic, with some buffer time included.

Final Idea Selection

After evaluating the proposed ideas with the service designer and the employees of TravelStartup all the findings have been analyzed, summarized, and discussed.

The '*Employees' profiles*' idea is beneficial for onboarding and fostering team connections. However, it duplicates the existing TravelStartup intranet, which already serves as a comprehensive resource for learning more about colleagues. Although the current tools have limitations as it is divided into departments and lacks interconnectivity among teams, there is potential for improvement. Creating cross-team search tags on TravelStartup's intranet could be challenging due to potential engineer changes within TravelStartup. Our perception is that it would be difficult to introduce this solution in a startup given their fast-paced working environment, as it sounded like updating these profiles would not be their primary focus, causing the solution to be losing its effectiveness. Furthermore, it was discovered that this solution had the lowest impact on promoting internal alignment and

collaboration among cross-functional teams, which is why this idea has been discarded.

Based on the feedback, the user journeys seem to be highly valued by both the service design expert as well as TravelStartup. During the meeting, it was proposed that the journeys could be integrated into the existing production files, and relevant research could be linked to the corresponding pages, along with a summary provided by a designer. This was a good proposal for trying to implement a new solution within their current processes. However, we are concerned about the practicality of keeping this solution up-to-date due to the product's complexity and employees' workload. Despite some excellent ideas for enhancing this solution, we have determined that implementing it would be challenging and demand significant time and resources to make it practical and useful for daily operations. Additionally, since this solution would not have immediate results, it would be challenging to promote it within the company. As this solution was identified to require significant effort both for us to develop and for employees to utilize, we have decided not to pursue this idea.

Lastly, the third idea received the most positive feedback from both TravelStartup as well as the service design expert. It was recognized as a solution that could be extremely useful at the beginning of a project, aligning different stakeholders and providing them with a frame, which will guide the whole process. Based on our findings, we believe that the impact on alignment, communication, and collaboration among both own and cross-functional teams would be substantial if the solution is correctly implemented within the project workflow. However, we need to find a way to fit his solution into the employees' daily processes and train them on how to use the suggested methodology. Based on the evaluation, we decided to proceed with this solution as the impact on the organization is high and the feasibility is much more realistic compared to the user journeys.

4.3.3 Revisited Project Journey

After narrowing down the project to its final concept, it became evident that the focus of the solution will center around the project management workflow, thus a thorough understanding of the workflow of a project was crucial. As a result, the initial project journey [4.2.6 Initial Project Journey] was revisited. During the evaluation session with TravelStartup, new information was uncovered, including a new document outlining their 'Ideal Project Development Workflow'.

For privacy reasons, this document cannot be shared but Figure 35 is providing an overview of the general project development steps presented in the document. This document was created by TravelOrg's B2C department in collaboration with various cross-functional teams. It was a management initiative to improve project management and create a more efficient and coherent workflow. We were advised to follow the structure of this document as good practice inspiration for our solution, and therefore we thoroughly analyzed the materials provided.

Figure 35. *The ideal project development workflow*

The document included a comprehensive project plan mapped out from the problem discovery until the implementation and evaluation of the project. It consists of detailly explained steps, recommended meetings, objectives, and deliverables for each stage. It also included a responsibility assignment matrix (RACI) showcasing ownership of responsibilities. We analyzed the whole document showcasing their ideal project development workflow. The complete workflow is organized into six distinct stages, encompassing a total of eleven steps [Figure 35].

We decided to only focus on the three initial steps of the workflow [Figure 36], as our solution is focusing on improving the beginning stage of a project. The three initial stages are:

- Problem Discovery and Definition
- Requirements and Scoping
- Solution Discovery and Design

After looking through the new information and having a better understating of the internal processes and practices, the initial project flow journey was revisited and changed according to the new insights gained [Figure 37]. The project flow journey will provide the foundation for our solution, as it offers a clear overview of the project's phases and steps, the involved actors, communication channels, goals, and deliverables. This understanding was beneficial when creating the final solution guide. Furthermore, by understanding the challenges and opportunities that had been previously identified, we were able to develop a solution that addresses these pain points and converts opportunities into value.

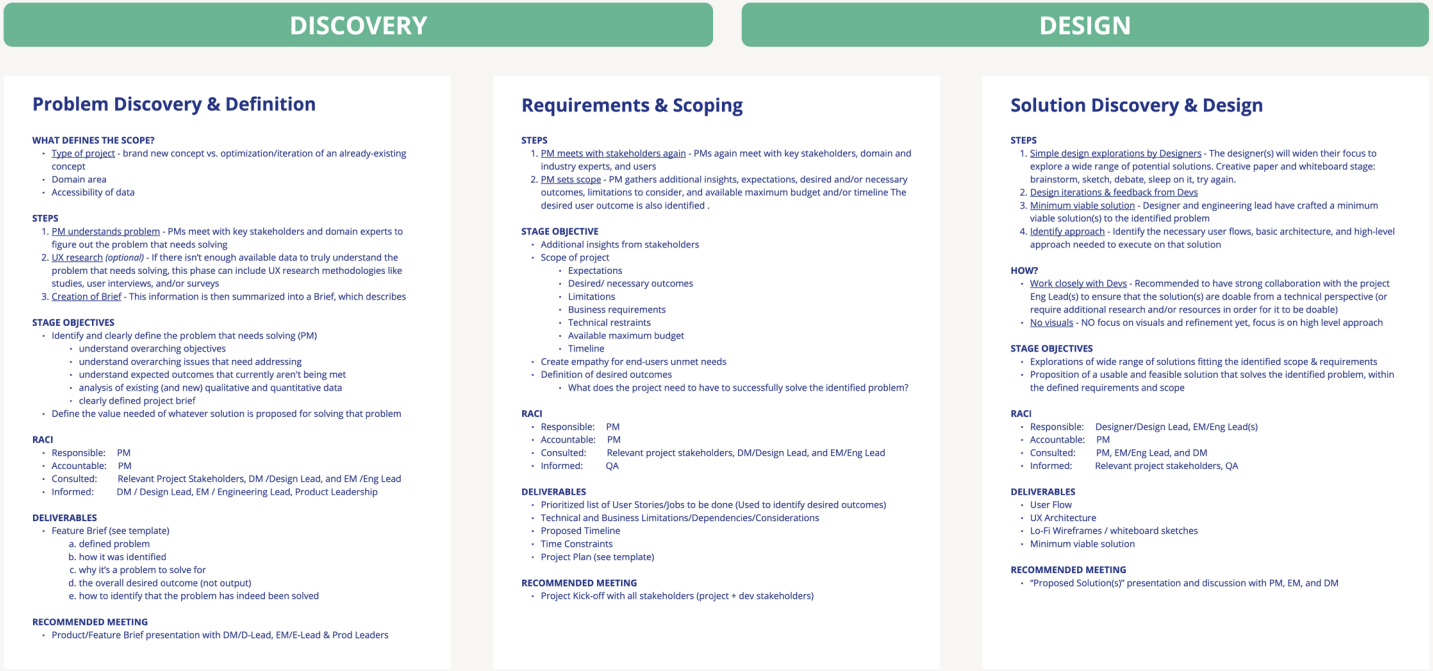


Figure 36. *The three stages of the ideal project development workflow*

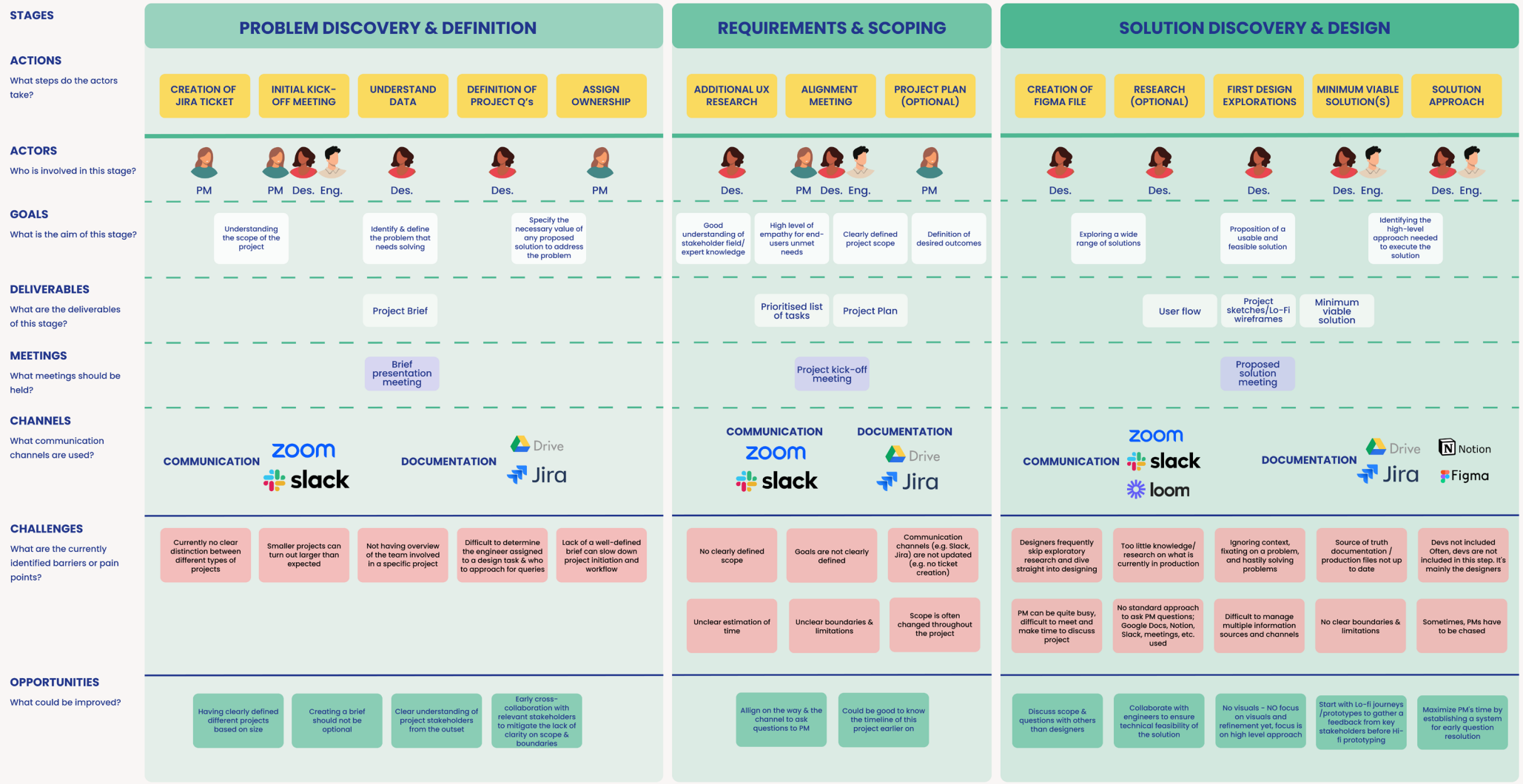


Figure 37. *The project flow journey*

4.3.4 Stakeholder Motivation Matrix

Applying the stakeholder motivation matrix [Figure 38] helped us to identify and reflect on each actor's particular role and motivation to be involved in the system. The motivation matrix encouraged us to reflect on every individual involved in a project and consider their specific roles and responsibilities. It served as a prompt to think about what motivates and drives each person in the project, helping to ensure a clear understanding of everyone's distinct contributions and expectations. Its purpose is to provide a structural foundation for the actors to engage in cooperation and negotiation (Vezzoli, Delfino, & Ambole, 2014) (Morelli & Tollestrup, 2007). The motivation matrix will aid us in identifying the motivation of each actor to use and follow the proposed framework, as well as outline how each actor benefits from one another during its use.

Gives to →	PM	Designer	Engineer
PM	• Efficient & eased project kick-off phase • Clear overview of each project • Better alignment in the team • Overview of the teams/people involved in a specific project • Having a clear understanding of the current stage of all projects	• Clearly defined brief • Clearly defined project scope • More detailed context and information about the task • Defined channels to find project information	• Possibility to have an influence throughout the design process • A platform and chance to share their knowledge & constraints about feasibility of a development project • Being invited and included in a project from the start • Defined channels to find project information
Designer	• Create relevant designs fulfilling the project goals • Better alignment & less misunderstandings during the design process • Clear overview of the current stage of the design • A faster overall design process as information was available from the start	• Better overview of projects • Work on well-defined projects • Guide that promotes to do explorative research • Create designs that are feasible to be developed • Overview of the teams/people involved in a specific project • Having a clear understanding of the current stage of all projects	• Inviting Engineers to 'Design review' sessions early on • Delivering designs that are feasible to implement
Engineer	• More efficient & faster development process • Provide feedback on the viability and estimated timeline for development. • More time - Engineers will reach out directly to relevant Designers instead of PM	• Less iterations & back-and-forth on detailed designs as the feasible & relevant design has been agreed in conjunction • Providing input on what is feasible and how long it will take to develop	• Work on well-defined projects • Being more involved in the design process early on • Eased development process as solutions are more likely to be feasible • Knowing exactly in what stage the project is in

Figure 38. *The motivation matrix*

4.3.5 Conclusion on the Ideate Stage

The Ideate stage enabled us to thoroughly evaluate our findings and generate numerous potential directions aimed at addressing our research question. We employed various ideation practices and appropriate tools during this stage to generate well-described and relevant ideas. The utilization of these different techniques and tools, such as mind mapping and the prioritization matrix, proved highly beneficial, ensuring our focus remained clear and aligned with our planned session. Originally, the plan was to allocate a single day for ideation; however, due to extensive discussions and continual reevaluation of our findings, the activities ended up taking longer than anticipated. As a result, the ideation session spanned two days. These two days brought up a lot of diverse ideas, which were subsequently discussed with a service design professional and the collaboration company. This approach provided us with different perspectives on the proposed solutions, and these sessions also surfaced potential challenges that could arise during implementation. Having these discussions helped us in our decision-making process and we were able to narrow down our focus to one idea; a framework that eases and guides the project kick-off phase, aiming to make a project more efficient from the beginning. Despite the primary focus of this stage, which was generating solutions and obtaining feedback, we uncovered newly available and relevant data within the company, leading us to redefine certain aspects of our previously employed project journey. Understanding and revisiting the project journey was extremely important, as our chosen idea is focusing on improving the organization's approach to a project kick-off. Furthermore, the stakeholder motivation matrix confirmed that the selected idea would be relevant to our target group, reaffirming the direction of our solution idea. With these steps completed, we felt confident to proceed to the Prototype stage.

4.4 PROTOTYPE

At the end of the Ideate stage, we had a clear understanding of the direction that this solution will go into. As explained in the pitch [Figure 33], the solution should be a framework that will be especially useful at the beginning of new projects and could include different tips and tricks, service design and UX methods, different templates, and links. This framework will be created for our target users being product managers, product designers, and engineers in the TravelStartup team [4.2.4 Target Group]. In the Prototype stage, the process of creating the initial prototype will be explained together with the prototype testing conducted with our collaboration partner. Lastly, the findings of the prototype sessions will be summarized leading to final improvements.

The subchapter is divided into the following sections:

4.4.1 Prototype Creation

As a first step in the prototype creation process, we once again revisited all our findings gathered throughout the whole design process, including findings from the literature review, two expert interviews, different feedback sessions with TravelStartup, the workshop, the survey, and the use of different service design tools like the project journey and the motivation matrix. Revisiting these findings helped us to clearly determine the scope and the focus of the prototype. Having a good idea of the prototype's focus, we started to sketch out a wide range of different ideas and solutions to visualize and share our ideas with each other. These sketches were mainly done on paper, as well as on Miro. During this sketching phase, we conducted desk research to get a better understanding of similar tools and services available on the market, as well as to get inspiration on potential solutions. These explorations included looking into different existing guides and frameworks, ways to visually present project journeys, and ideas for the content of the framework. After each of us has come up with several ideas, these ideas were shared, discussed, and merged into one sketch [Figure 39].

The decision to have a roadmap as the central part of the solution was based on several factors, such as their quality to easily communicate the timeline of a project to stakeholders and team members. Roadmaps are also a great way to facilitate communication, as they provide a clear representation of the project journey and allow for easy communication of the current state of a project to stakeholders or team members. Furthermore, roadmaps are great for enabling alignment as everyone who is involved in a project can easily align their efforts around the shared timeline. Having the different steps clearly defined in the roadmap can also support the process of prioritizing different tasks and activities based on the current state of the project (Strauss & Radnor, 2004).

After having this lo-fidelity sketch of a Project Roadmap Framework, the next step was to start with the creation of a high-fidelity prototype in Figma. As a first step, all non-interactive parts from the Lo-Fi prototype sketch were created and added to Figma, such as the roadmap, the three main phases of the roadmap, as well as the different project development steps which were identified during the creation of the project journey [4.3.3 Revisited Project Journey]. Afterward, details and other sections were added, which are explained in Figure 40. Instead of linking the user to the actual Google Drive, or Notion page, we decided that it would be easier if we would simply take screenshots of the actual site and add them as a frame to Figma. In that way, we could assure smooth testing as we were sure that all 'links' would be accessible to the test participants if they would use their own computers for testing. The final step was to add functionality to the prototype by linking the different screens. The following figure provides a comprehensive breakdown of various components of the prototype [Figure 40]. The figure closely resembles the actual prototype; however, certain adjustments needed to be made to maintain our client's anonymity.

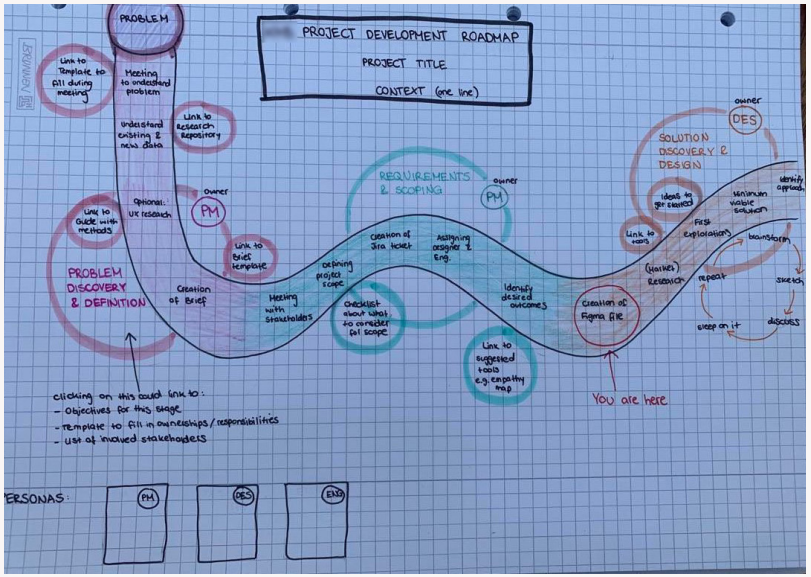


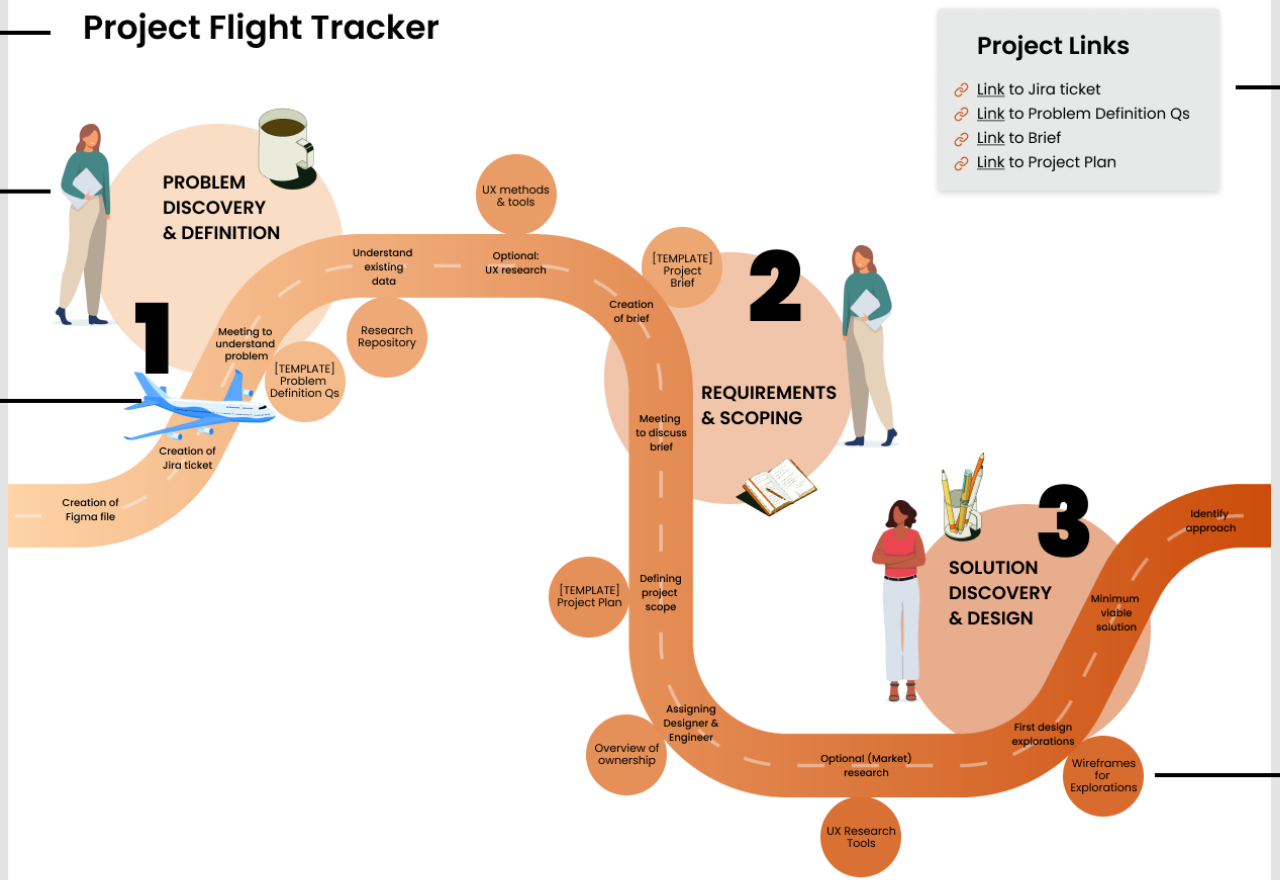
Figure 39. *Hand-drawn sketch of the Lo-Fi prototype*

Title
The title of the concept is 'Project Flight Tracker'. This was chosen as TravelStartup is a corporate travel management tool and it therefore made sense to come up with a title that reflects their passion and area of work.

Persona showing ownership
To visually demonstrate the main responsible person for each phase, a vector figure of the persona was added to each of the three phases.

Plane to indicate stage of project
The plane is an interactive element that can be moved along the roadmap to visually indicate the current state of the project.

Personas (collapsed)
This section gives a brief overview over who is involved in this project and allows a user to fill in the responsible person for each project. This allows others to easily identify the ownership of a project.



Place for links to projects
The previously created personas of a project manager, a product designer and an engineer were added to the prototype in a cut down version to give the user an overview over the different roles and responsibilities of their colleagues.

Small bubbles
The small bubbles linking to different guides, templates and links were added, which content was based on what has been found in our research as well as what was already available and created by TravelStartup.

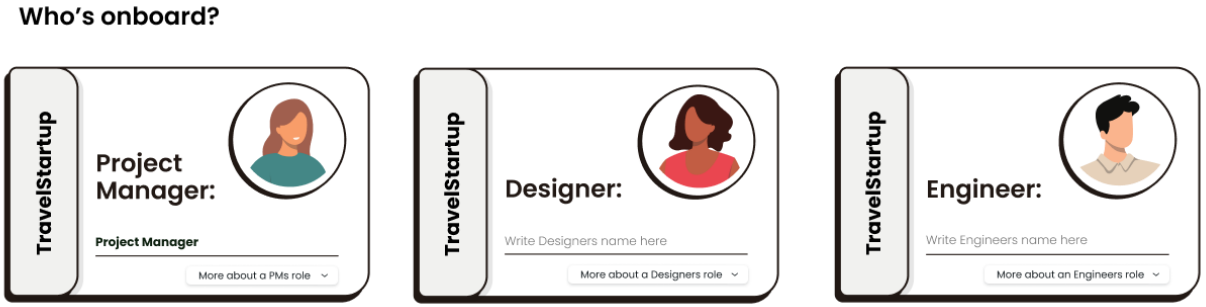


Figure 40. Prototype 1/3 - Roadmap and collapsed personas

Project phases overview

This section is meant for when the user wants to learn more about each of the three phases. Each section contains of four parts:

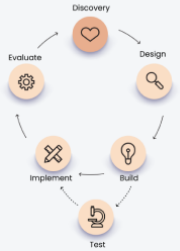
- Travel destinations: A list with the different goals for this phase.
- Who's onboard?: An overview over who should be the main responsible person in this phase, who should be accountable, who should be consulted and who should be informed.
- The graphic: A visual representation of the current stage the project is in.
- Ready to move on?: An interactive checklist that let's the user tick a field off whenever it has been completed.

Project phases

1 PROBLEM DISCOVERY & DEFINITION

Travel destinations

- Understanding the scope of the project
- Define the value needed to solve the problem
- Identify & define the problem that needs solving
  - understand overarching issues that need addressing
  - understand overarching objectives
  - understand expected outcomes that currently aren't being met



Who's onboard?

Responsible
- PM

Accountable
- PM

Consulted
- Relevant Project Stakeholders
- DM /Design Lead
- EM /Eng Lead

Informed
- DM / Design Lead
- EM / Engineering Lead
- Product Leadership

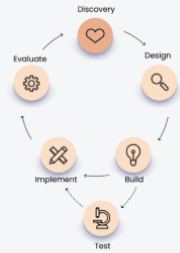
Ready to move on?

- [x] ~~Created Figma file~~
- [x] ~~Created Jira ticket~~
- [ ] Had initial kickoff meeting
- [ ] Filled out Brief Template
- [ ] Filled out Brief Template

2 REQUIREMENTS & SCOPING

Travel destinations

- Good understanding of stakeholder field/expert knowledge
- High level of empathy for end-users unmet needs
- Definition of desired outcomes
- Clearly defined project scope
  - Business requirements
  - Expectations
  - Technical restraints
  - Desired / necessary outcomes
  - Available maximum budget
  - Limitations
  - Timeline



Who's onboard? / RACI

Responsible
- PM

Accountable
- PM

Consulted
- Relevant Project Stakeholders
- DM /Design Lead
- EM /Eng Lead

Informed
- QA

Ready to move on?

- [ ] Had 2nd stakeholder meeting
- [ ] Filled out Project Plan Template
- [ ] Assigned task to Designer
- [ ] Assigned task to Engineer

Project steps overview

Step 1 — Creation of a Figma file
As a first step, the PM creates a Figma file for the new task. The Jira ticket number can be added if the ticket has already been created.

Step 2 — Creation of Jira ticket
The PM creates a Jira ticket for the project, adds a short context description to the ticket and links all relevant ressources (Brief, Figma file, etc.).

Step 3 — Meeting to understand the problem
The PM organizes a meeting with key stakeholders (designers, engineers, domain & industry expert) to fully understand the entirety of the issue.

Step 5 — Understand existing data
The PM and the designer make an effort to understand the already existing qualitative and quantitative data relevant for this project.

Step 5 — Optional: UX research
If there isn't enough available data to truly understand the problem that needs solving, this phase can include UX research methodologies like studies, user interviews, and/or surveys.

Step 6 — Meeting with stakeholders to go over brief
The PM meets again with key stakeholders (designers, engineers, domain & industry expert) to go over the initial brief.

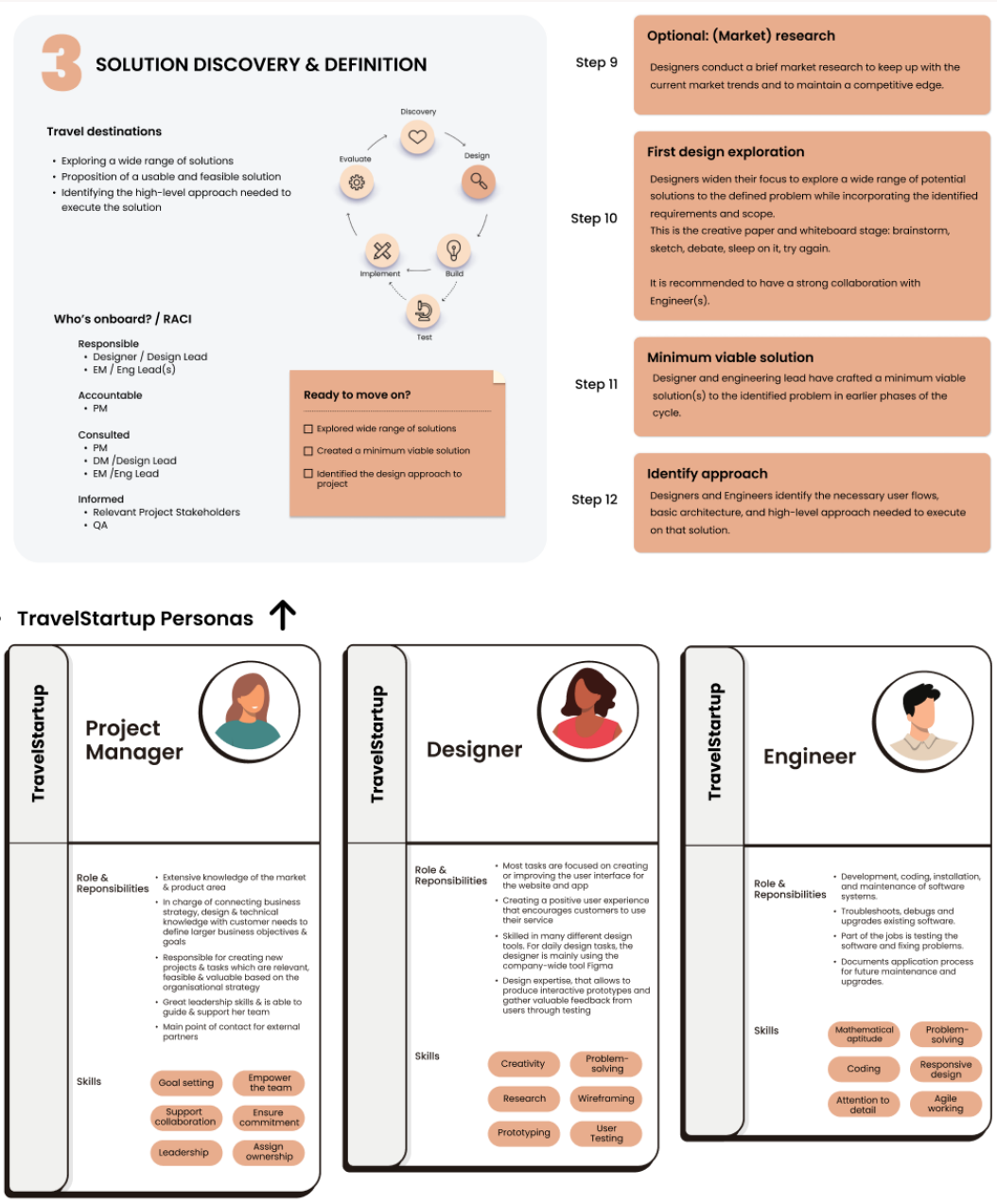
Step 7 — Defining the project scope
The PM gathers additional insights, expectations, desired and/or necessary outcomes, limitations to consider, and available maximum budget and/or timeline.

Step 8 — Assigning Designer & Engineer
Designers and Engineers split the tasks created by the PM among themself and assign themself to the ticket in Jira.

Detailed overview of project steps

These steps follow the ones used in the roadmap above, but offer a detailed description of what to expect from each step. This is something that the users can look at whenever they are unsure about what a specific step entails.

Figure 41. Prototype 2/3 - Detailed phases and steps



Personas (expanded)

The previously created personas of a project manager, a product designer and an engineer were added to the prototype in a cut down version to give the user an overview over the different roles and responsibilities of their colleagues.

Figure 42. Prototype 3/3 – Expanded personas

4.4.2 Prototype Test

For this first round of prototype testing, we decided to conduct an evaluative prototype test, which will allow us to understand how TravelStartup's employees will experience the future of our suggested solution of incorporating the 'Project Flight Tracker' in their project development flow. The goal of this test is to get feedback on the idea and narrow down the scope based on the insights gathered. To plan a relevant and useful testing session, we started to put together a prototype test plan [Appendix G] to align the objectives and the techniques used. The prototype will address and test the following four areas: feasibility, usefulness, content, and overall design.

As discovered in the Methodology [3.2.3 User Testing], it is most beneficial to test a prototype on the actual target users, which is why we wanted to test the prototype on the users of the target group, which are designers, product managers, and engineers in the TravelStartup team. However, due to time constraints and employees' availability, we have decided to test the solution on two senior designers, that should have a great overview and knowledge of the current project flow in the TravelStartup team given their level of seniority in the organization. Additionally, as indicated in section 4.2.4 Target Group, the designers are the primary focus among the three targeted users. Hence, we believed that incorporating designers into the testing process would be the most appropriate choice. Due to the existing constraints of testing only with two users, we decided to go with a moderated testing session to get the most valuable and qualitative data out of these two sessions.

The test itself is structured in the following way:

1. ***Introduction:*** A short introduction to the session, giving the participant an overview of the scope, timing, and procedure of this session.
2. ***Scenario:*** The scenario provides the participants with the necessary context to interact with the prototype.
3. ***Set of tasks:*** The different tasks are asking the participants to navigate through and interact with the prototype.
4. ***Follow-up questions:*** The follow-up questions are used to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experience when interacting with the prototype.

The interactive prototype can be accessed in Figma (Link).

Pilot testing

To ensure that the prototype testing will run smoothly, two quick pilot testing sessions were carried out. We conducted a pilot test on a UX designer, and an information security manager found in our own network to identify and resolve any issues with the prototype's functionality. The test also aimed to evaluate if the participants comprehended the prepared scenario and tasks. Through the pilot testing, we were able to uncover certain aspects of the prototype that did not function as expected and adjust the scenario and tasks accordingly.

Findings

The following section will present the summarized key takeaways from the prototype testing sessions with TravelStartup:

Strengths

- Provides a clear overview of the project and its phases, with sub-steps and checklists.
- Includes general persona information helpful for especially new team members.
- Provides Lo-Fi wireframes explorations in a Figma file from the beginning, which is a helpful reminder for designers.
- The solution has been identified as useful for providing a clear overview, and the user is motivated to use it, believing that the rest of the team would also find it helpful.

- Provides links to templates, project briefs, and project links.
- Streamlines the current process, has a lot of information, and links to resources and tools.
- Provides a roadmap, which is a great way to refresh the process for the team.

Weaknesses

- Locating certain files, like the Problem Q's file or the accurate location of the project link, proved somewhat challenging.
- Experienced designers may find the overall persona information unnecessary.
- There is some uncertainty regarding the information provided in the checklist for the third phase.
- The implementation of the solution may be complex, and it might be more beneficial to initially use Notion alone.
- Certain aspects lack clarity, such as distinguishing between templates and filled-out links or understanding the meaning of 'Travel destinations' in the journey.
- Some users are already familiar with the information provided in the personas and would prefer a comprehensive overview of all engineers and teams or clear roles and responsibilities related to their specific product area.
- The name might cause confusion since it closely resembles another project with a similar name.

Ideas for Improvement

- Clarify certain aspects of the solution, such as the distinction between templates and filled-out links or the meaning of 'Travel destinations' in the journey.
- Make the solution more linear and straightforward to use in projects.
- Include more general actions to help people understand what is missing on a global level.
- Some suggestions for improvement include making the solution more linear and user-friendly for project usage.
- Automate and eliminate non-critical steps to avoid extra work.
- Provide an overview of suggested approaches for gathering information and conducting research, along with guidance on which methodology to use for which case.
- Include templates that are easy to follow and a guide showing which particular approach would be relevant for obtaining specific information.
- Provide information on the resources required when selecting a particular approach or methodology.
- Include meeting notes to encourage utilization and provide insight into the next steps.

Consideration for improvements

The prototype testing not only helped us evaluate the proposed solution but also gain new information about the current processes which should be considered and implemented in the prototype design. The overall feedback was quite positive, and the solution received a lot of acknowledgments. However, it was suggested that certain steps may result in duplicated efforts, and therefore, it would be more beneficial to focus on optimizing the usage of existing channels and workflows. Initially, the plan was to monitor the project's progress as a component of the solutions. However, due to the feedback received, it is unlikely this would work. The product manager relies on Jira for tracking the project's progress, which is presently ineffective as individuals fail to update it regularly. Additionally, it is important to differentiate between project links to relevant sources and templates of those sources. Lastly the name 'Project Flight Tracker' was found intriguing, but it could potentially lead to confusion as it does not clearly indicate its content or purpose. It was recommended to consider a name that references a project roadmap, framework, or something similar to provide a clearer representation. All the adjustments made to the solutions will be described in the following section [4.4.3 Updated Prototype].

4.4.3 Updated Prototype

Following the prototype testing, a brainstorming session was conducted to organize our ideas and develop a plan for implementing changes to the solution. It became evident that the Project Roadmap Framework should provide general information and resources while serving as a non-interactive guide for approaching and structuring the project. Additionally, improvements were identified for enhancing the use of Jira through a revised ticket structure that complements the roadmap [Figure 46].

Therefore, to create a clearer overview for employees, a more linear structure and streamlined appearance are implemented, as the tested roadmap was visually appealing but impractical to follow. The Project Roadmap Framework acts as a general guiding framework for organizing projects and is providing relevant resources, which leads to efficient project alignment by having a clear project workflow. Furthermore, Jira tickets will serve as a centralized source of truth for specific projects, allowing for tracking project progress effectively as well as link to all necessary documents such as project brief, project definition Q's, or project plan. Also, minor adjustments are made to the personas, incorporating more specific information about an employees position and team. Lastly, to ensure the solution name is self-explanatory and clear to the users, we chose to refer to the it as 'Project Roadmap Framework'. These changes aim to enhance the solution's functionality and provide a more comprehensive and efficient project management approach. The specific sections of the framework will be elaborated on in greater detail in the following figures [Figure 43 , 44, 45, 46].

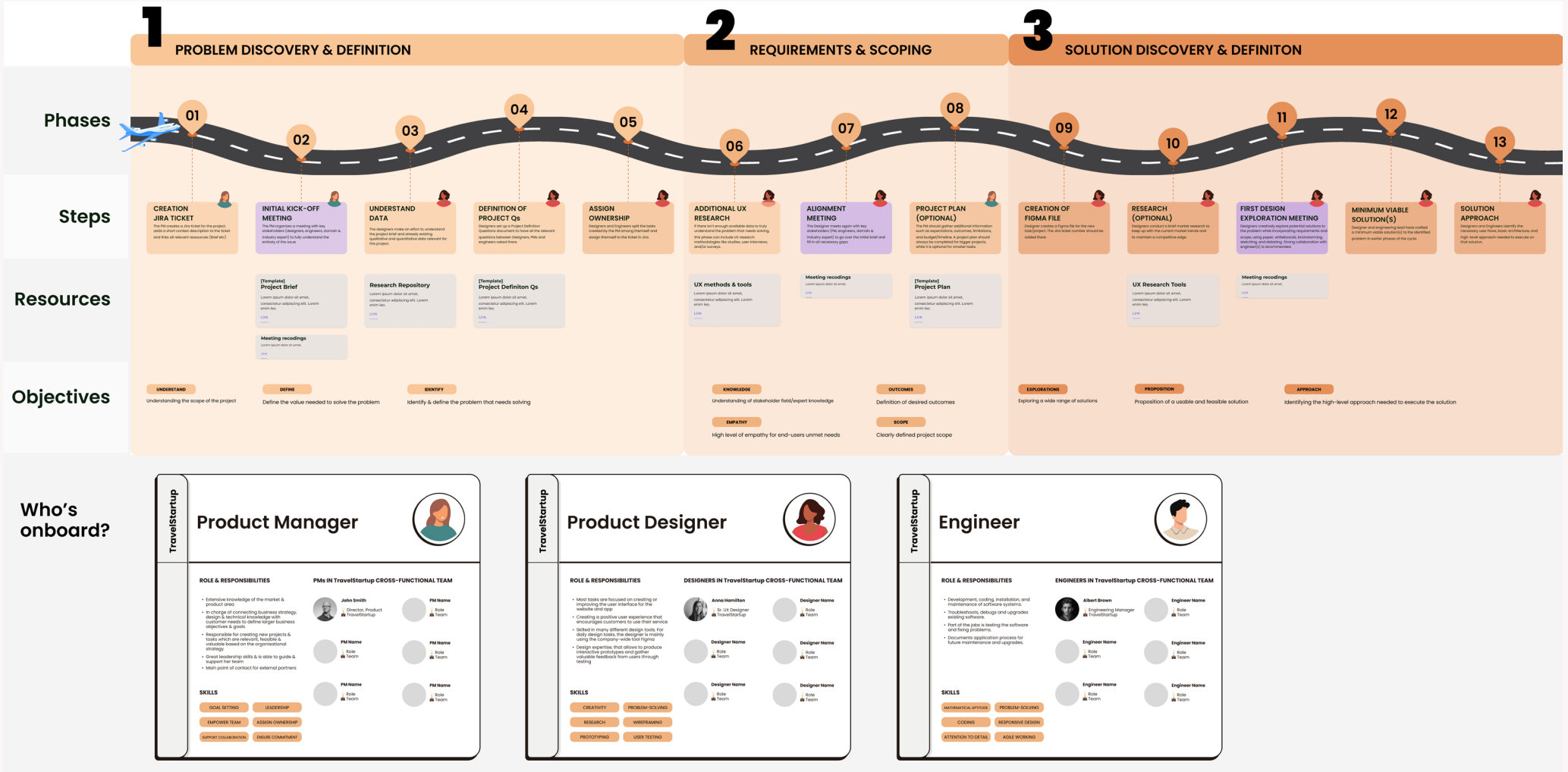


Figure 43. *The 'Project Roadmap Framework' (Link to PDF) (Link to Figma)*

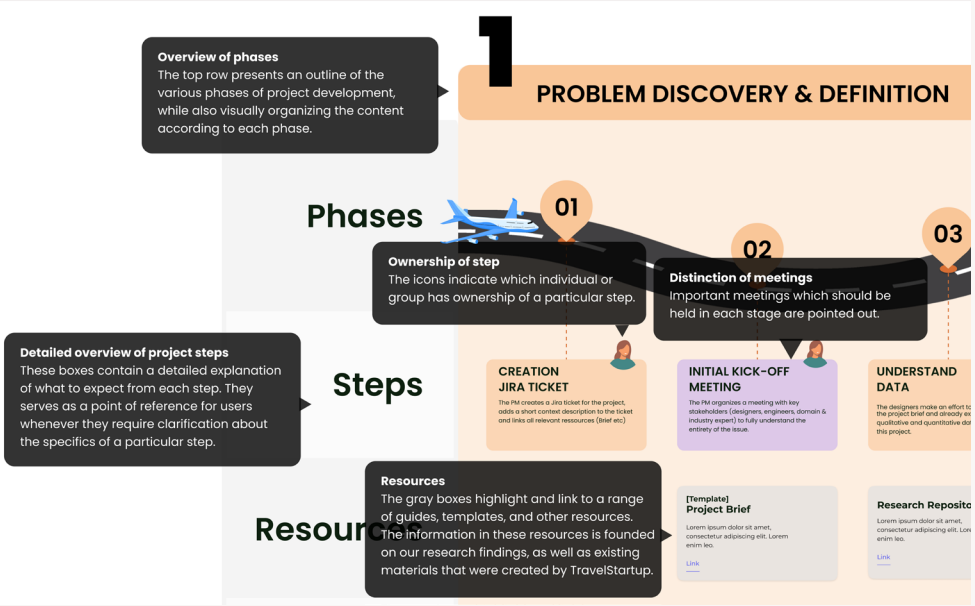


Figure 44. An overview of the different parts of the roadmap

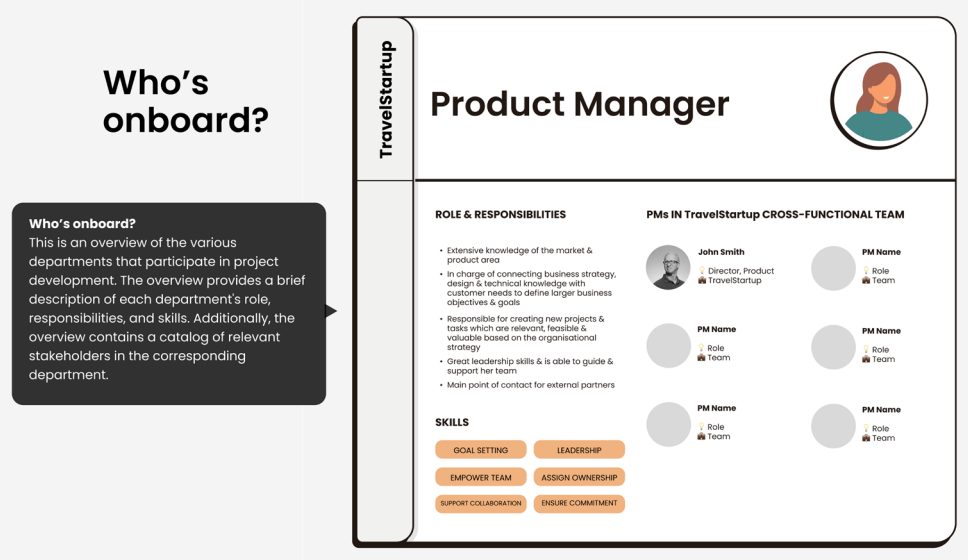


Figure 45. The persona section

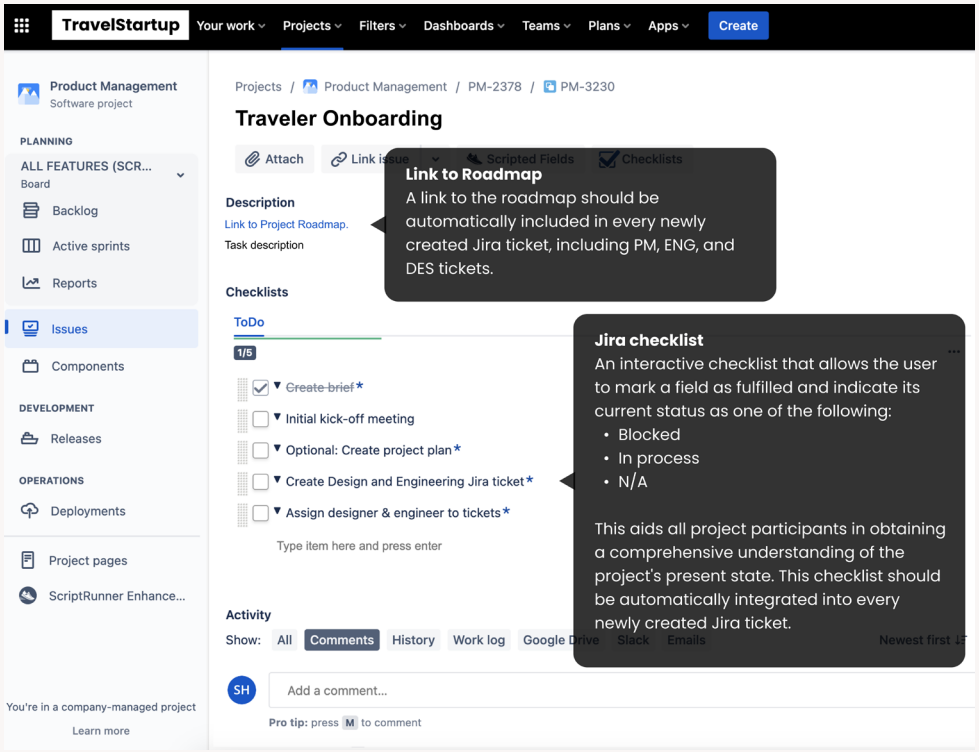


Figure 46. *The proposed Jira ticket structure (Link to Figma)*

4.4.4 Conclusion on the Prototype Stage

During the Prototype stage, a small-scale research effort was undertaken to gather inspiration from existing solutions in the service design field as well as other areas like project management. This exploration generated numerous ideas for the visual appearance and content of the framework. Multiple sketches were produced, with one being our favorite - a roadmap infographic concept that proved advantageous in fostering alignment by aligning efforts around a shared plan. Subsequently, an initial high-fidelity and interactive prototype was developed and tested with actual users of the solution. This testing phase generated practical feedback on the feasibility and usability of the solution when considering its application in actual project settings. The realization that the designers did not perceive the solution as a means for tracking project stages, but rather as a comprehensive guide for advancing projects, prompted a reevaluation of our approach. As a result, a new version of the prototype was developed [4.4.3 Updated Prototype], transforming it into a general framework that offers stakeholders relevant information and serves as a centralized resource place. Additionally, this shift led us to place greater emphasis on Jira and enhance its utilization by integrating the checklist from the framework into this project tracking tool. This approach allows us to leverage existing widely used tools within the company while also incorporating our solution into employees' daily routines.

4.5 TEST

After identifying the best solution in the Prototype stage, the final stage of the design thinking model involves testing the complete product. Following the design thinking approach, this stage is typically iterative, leading to the redefinition and adjustment of the proposed solution based on newly gathered insights and observations. The first part of this section focuses on the preparation of the solution concept for evaluation. Afterward, it will be explained how the solution is evaluated by two representatives from the collaborating company, followed by displaying the findings and insights derived from that evaluation session. The subchapter ends with a conclusion regarding the entire evaluation process.

The subchapter is divided into the following sections:

4.5.1 Evaluation Process

The last stage of the design thinking process is about testing and evaluating the solution concept, which will be explained in this section. Through testing and evaluation, we gain insights into the feasibility of implementing the created service or concept within the organization. It allows us to assess the effectiveness of the solution in achieving the desired outcomes and determine if it delivers sufficient value to the company. Additionally, this stage helps us understand the resources required for successful implementation and provides an opportunity to identify potential areas of improvement and iteration for future enhancements.

When considering and brainstorming various approaches to test our concept, we have identified the importance of aligning it with the goals and objectives of our client, TravelStartup, and assessing the feasibility of the proposed solution. Exploring different methods to test a concept with a client, we have found that presenting them with the service proposal (academically referred to as a product report) and asking relevant questions can be an effective means of evaluating whether our concept addresses our research question and if the proposed solution is practical and valuable to the client.

The first step in evaluating our concept involved creating the service proposal, which was structured as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Team
3. Vision and Mission
4. The concept
5. Our approach
6. Our design process
7. Learnings
8. Deliverables
9. Implementation Plan
10. Contact

Figure 47. Screenshots from the product report

With this document prepared, we continued to plan the evaluation session by developing a test plan that included various questions to assess our research question and evaluate the usefulness, feasibility, and comprehensiveness of the service proposal document. The complete set of questions can be found in Appendix H. We invited two participants for the testing: a Senior UX Designer who had also participated in the workshop and prototype testing, and a Design Manager who had only attended the workshop and therefore had no prior knowledge of the proposed solution. One day before the testing, we shared the service proposal document with them and asked them to skim through it prior to the session. This approach was adopted to optimize time during the evaluation session and equip participants with the essential context required to offer comprehensive and relevant feedback. Given that the service proposal document solely consists of static images and text, the complete prototype was presented in Figma at the beginning of the session.

Feedback

The following section covers the feedback received on the service proposal.

Feedback on the proposal document

When the participants were asked about the general structure and content of the service proposal document, they expressed appreciation for the proposal, acknowledging that the information presented was highly logical and offered a comprehensive analysis of pain points, problems, and challenges.

> *"I think it is a really holistic analysis, an overview of the pain points and problems and challenges."*

Feedback on the overall concept

Participants showed positive feedback towards the overall concept of implementing a Project Roadmap Framework and introducing changes to the structure of Jira tickets. They particularly appreciated the idea of centralizing tasks within Jira and utilizing a checklist for efficient project management. The integration into Jira was considered useful, and the roadmap was seen as a tool that makes sense to use. The solution was praised for connecting existing elements and filling in the gaps.

> *"This roadmap makes sense as a tool."*

Perceived target users of this solution

Both participants are expecting this solution to be most valuable for designers and are also seeing them as the main leaders in implementing this concept into their process. However, they believe that many people, including members of the product and design team, would benefit from this solution, as the solution was expressed to be helping with alignment and providing clarity on the process. It was mentioned that the solution would help engineers to better understand the process in the beginning, as they are currently usually involved towards the end of a project.

> *"There are so many people that would benefit from seeing it."*

Perceived benefits and values of this solution

The perceived benefits and values of the solution included early identification of client requirements and scope, streamlining the development workflow, and preventing overcomplicated designs. Participants found the checklist in the Jira ticket useful for task management and maintaining clarity throughout the process. The solution was described as bringing everyone together and reducing miscommunication by demonstrating the steps involved.

One participant was eager to use the solution immediately, and described it as “awesome, amazing, and super valuable”. There are currently very similar discussions in recent retrospectives in the TravelStartup team, which is why the participants found this concept to be relevant and expect it to reduce scope changes while involving engineers earlier on. The centralized nature of the solution, with quick access to necessary resources, was also commented positively on.

A participant repeatedly highlighted the value of the structured meetings proposed in our solution. They specifically emphasized the importance of allocating more time to the kick-off meeting and ensuring the attendance of relevant team members. The current practice of conducting multiple kick-off meetings was identified as an area that could be streamlined for improved efficiency. The participant recognized the three types of meetings as a means to facilitate in-depth discussions, with the added benefit of valuable input from the client. They recommended assessing and selecting the appropriate participants for each project and customizing the meeting invitations accordingly.

> *“I would use it right now in my work.”*

Perceived areas our solution might not address

The participants mentioned a few areas where our solution might not fully address their needs as an organization. One aspect is the challenge of aligning different teams in structuring their processes in a similar way. As engineers are not a huge part of this roadmap and their work usually starts later, the roadmap will not align the approach to projects from their side. While our solution offers a roadmap for design, it may not provide the same level of guidance for engineering, which is not necessarily problematic but worth considering. Maintaining up-to-date Jira tickets can be difficult, and there is a potential that our suggestion of having the checklists in Jira might not be used at all times. Furthermore, balancing the involvement of engineers, who play a crucial role in implementing designs, can be challenging due to limited availability on their side. This is something our solution does not account for.

> *“... it ends when the designs are finished. So, it is not necessarily providing a roadmap for engineering.”*

Ideas for improvement

Regarding ideas for improvement, involving clients in co-creation workshops at an early stage and incorporating important meetings in the project journey were suggested. Recording and documenting the design process were seen as valuable, and this could potentially be integrated into templates and links of the roadmap. It was noted that the primary use case of the solution may not be explicitly clear in the current documentation, and creating specific use cases to illustrate its application was proposed. Educating and training individuals on the solution was seen as essential since people tend to resist change and prefer familiar approaches. Ultimately, these suggestions aim to enhance the solution’s effectiveness and overcome any limitations identified.

The final set of questions asked the participants to rate a question on a scale from 1-5. These rating questions specifically aimed to assess the proposal’s effectiveness in addressing business needs comprehensively and providing valuable guidelines for future implementation. The results are demonstrated in Figure 48.

> *“I think it is doing a great job at cross-functional collaboration but it definitely requires training.”*

Based on the ratings, it is evident that the overall feedback for our service proposal was highly positive, indicating that it was easily comprehensible and valuable to the participants. The usefulness

of the information presented received the highest rating, indicating that the participants found the information presented to be highly valuable and relevant to their needs. A high rating for usefulness suggests that the proposal effectively addresses the business needs and provides practical guidelines that can be applied in practice. This feedback shows that the service proposal has the potential to deliver tangible benefits and make a meaningful impact in the context of the participants' work or organization. The feedback regarding the feasibility of implementing the solution within the TravelStartup team, with an average rating of 3.5, highlights an area that requires attention and further consideration. While the overall ratings were generally high, this specific feedback suggests that there may be challenges or concerns regarding the practicality or viability of implementing the proposed solution within the team. However, this was also something we anticipated based on our knowledge of the organization and knowing that organizational change is never easy and takes time. To address this feedback, it would be beneficial to dig deeper into the reasons behind the lower rating through for example follow-up meetings.

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Average
1. On a scale of 1-5, how well did the proposal address your business needs and requirements?	**4**	**4**	**4**
2. On a scale of 1-5, how clear and easy to understand was the proposal?	**4**	**4**	**4**
3. On a scale of 1-5, how detailed and comprehensive was the proposed plan for implementing the proposal?	**4.5**	**4**	**4.25**
4. On a scale of 1-5, how useful were the solutions proposed in the proposal?	**5**	**5**	**5**
5. On a scale of 1-5, how feasible would it be to implement this solution within the K4B team?	**4**	**3**	**3**

Total: 4.05

Figure 48. *Analysis of the rating results*

4.5.2 Conclusion on the Test Stage

In conclusion, the final evaluation with the collaboration partner resulted in highly optimistic feedback, indicating a successful and engaging process. The participants demonstrated a high level of involvement by thoroughly reading the entire service proposal document prior to the session and coming prepared with notes and comments. This smooth process allowed for valuable suggestions to improve certain aspects of the prototype and service proposal. Although larger suggestions such as providing a guide on how to approach training employees on the new methodology of the solution could not be incorporated due to the timing of the evaluation session being close to the hand-in deadline, smaller changes were made to enhance the deliverables. These changes included adding more links to the Project Roadmap Framework and providing additional content and explanations in the product report. The product report has been updated to reflect the suggested changes, and the final prototype is showcased and explained within it.

DISCUSSION

In this section, we will conduct a reflective analysis of the overall process undertaken in this thesis. We will critically evaluate our collaboration with the TravelStartup team, examining the strengths and areas for improvement in our working relationship. Furthermore, we will assess the extent to which we have achieved and fulfilled our learning goals [1.2 Learning Objectives]. This reflection will provide valuable insights into our journey, allowing us to identify lessons learned and areas of growth. Additionally, we will explore future considerations, reflecting on how our solution concept could be further enhanced with additional time and resources. We will dig into the implementation aspect, discussing strategies for effectively implementing the solution within the context of TravelStartup. By considering these future perspectives, we aim to provide a comprehensive outlook on the ongoing development and potential improvements of our solution concept.

The chapter is divided into the following sections:

05

5.1 Reflections on the Process

The initial phase of this thesis project had a slow start, as the only certain aspect was the company we would be collaborating with, yet there was no clear direction for the thesis topic. As a result, we placed significant emphasis on the Empathize stage to gain a solid understanding of the limited information available at the beginning. We were aware that we would be collaborating with a startup company and taking on a role of a service designer, aiming to introduce the service design approach to a project that was still undefined. While TravelStartup expressed an interest in providing us with a project, the suggestions primarily focused on design tasks dedicated to enhancing the user experience of their travel booking tool. We thoroughly examined the proposed suggestions; however, they had limitations as they primarily focused on UX / UI design and offered limited potential for implementing the holistic approach of service design. Exploring these various possibilities for potential projects slowed down our progress. Nevertheless, conducting these small investigations was crucial to identify a project focus that not only captivated our interest but was also relevant to our studies and beneficial for our collaboration partner.

Literature research equipped us with a strong foundation for understanding the startup structures and the challenges newly established companies are facing [2.5 Summary of Literature Review]. By conducting research on service design and the roles of service designers in organizations, we were convinced that we had valuable contributions to offer our collaborative partner. The first initial meeting with the TravelStartup team centered around defining long-term goals, resulting in the project's focus shifting towards enhancing internal collaboration, and communication, and addressing the challenges the team currently encounters. This meeting played an important role in establishing the project's direction and was a crucial step in its progression as it guided our further primary and secondary research. The fact that Sarah was working in the company helped us to easily understand the structure and the way the teams operate as well as have easy access to relevant information. However, this approach could potentially introduce biases since some of the information relied heavily on Sarah's personal understanding and interpretation of the data. It is important to note that her perspective may differ from others. For instance, while examining various teams and functions, we relied on Sarah's knowledge of them, despite her lack of direct experience working in some of those teams or positions.

During the Define stage, we conducted a workshop [4.2.1 Workshop], which provided valuable insights from various teams, although it is worth noting that there may have been an uneven representation of employees. Nevertheless, it was a great way to efficiently gather as much information as possible while not taking too much time from the employees. It also helped us to bring different functions and teams together to receive rich and diverse points of view on the topic. The initial session of the workshop, which analyzed the current collaboration and communication situation, proved to be extremely valuable, and the insights gathered guided the entire process. However, the second part of the workshop, which focused on brainstorming solutions for the identified opportunities and pain points, was overly generalized and lacked significance for the project and it would have been better to use a different activity. Conducting a more explorative activity that analyzes the previously identified pain points and opportunities more in-depth might have been a better approach. Considering the early stage of the process and our limited understanding of the current situation, it was too early to begin generating solutions. Instead, our focus should have been directed towards having activities focusing on gaining a deeper understanding of the current situation. Additionally, the workshop primarily focused on the whole Business team rather than the TravelStartup team [Figure 1], which means that certain aspects discussed may not be directly applicable or relevant to TravelStartup. However, the significant efforts invested in preparing the workshop proved positive results, as the session

unfolded smoothly, with a well-structured and timely execution.

Engaging a service designer [4.2.2 Expert Interview with a Service Designer] brought extremely valuable insights and provided diverse perspectives on how to work with misalignment, lack of collaboration, or miscommunication drawing from their expertise in other organizations. However, it is essential to acknowledge that their opinion and perspective represent only one individual's viewpoint and are based on the experience from the companies they have been working in. We believe that it is important for us as service designers to recognize that not every approach is suitable for all organizations, and each problem needs to be addressed differently based on its unique context. As previously mentioned, TravelStartup is a startup division operating within the TravelOrg organization [1.3 Collaboration Partner]. This special positioning shields them from the typical challenges faced by startups, such as financial resource constraints and the need to establish brand awareness, as TravelStartup already had those advantages from the very beginning. On the other hand, in terms of implementing major changes, TravelStartup lacks the conventional level of autonomy that startups typically lack. All proposed major changes must undergo approval within the corporate structure and align with the overarching vision of the organization, rather than being limited to the TravelStartup division alone. As service designers, it is crucial for us to recognize that we cannot apply a one-size-fits-all approach. We must actively empathize and gain a deep understanding of the unique environments in which we operate, as each startup possesses its own distinct culture and structure. Hence, we consistently compared the information obtained from the expert interview with the findings from the literature research and insights gathered from TravelStartup. This approach aimed to prevent any excessive influence on the project solely based on one opinion.

The Ideate stage took longer than initially anticipated. However, as we progressed, we recognized the importance of conducting well-planned ideation sessions. To reduce potential biases and ensure a thorough evaluation, we decided to involve an external perspective through another interview with a service designer [4.3.2 Idea Evaluation]. Additionally, we sought feedback from the company to make informed decisions. This approach proved to be valuable as it provided us with constructive criticism and new ideas to consider during the development of the solution. It helped us to adopt a more realistic and practical approach when selecting which idea to proceed with. Based on our opinion, it was important for the project not to rush through the Ideate stage and quickly start prototyping the first idea which evolved but rather take a step back and really see the benefits and potential of the ideated solution. We believe having this approach added credibility to the relevance of our solutions.

During the Prototype stage, we started off with a short exercise of sketching the potential idea, however, we quickly moved on to developing a high-fidelity prototype, which proved to be time-consuming. In retrospect, it might have been more beneficial, to begin with a lo-fidelity prototype for the testing session, as the visual appearance of the prototype underwent significant changes based on the testing. This slightly delayed our progress. Overall, due to time constraints, we had limited time for the Prototype stage, which resulted in a somewhat rushed process.

Our initial intention for evaluating the solution concept was to test the idea in a real-life setting, where the solution would be utilized by the targeted users at the project's beginning phase, allowing us to gather feedback. However, due to time constraints and the recent resignation of the main product manager, we were unable to carry out the desired testing with the necessary stakeholders. Consequently, we had to proceed with an alternative solution, where we used the product report as a service proposal to evaluate our project effectively. Using this method proved effective in presenting the company with both the proposed solution and the process that led to its development. To ensure that the

feedback we received was not solely based on the visual aspects of the solution, we took the time to carefully prepare evaluation questions that addressed the usefulness and feasibility of the solution based on our research. Through this session, we were able to assess the effectiveness of our concept and its potential to assist the TravelStartup team in adopting a more holistic and long-term perspective in their project development workflow. Based on the results and insights gained from the evaluation, we are optimistic about the value our concept can bring to the TravelStartup team. However, to enhance the credibility of our findings, it would have been preferable to include more representatives from the target group in the evaluation session. Unfortunately, due to employees' availability constraints within our time frame, this was not possible. Despite the limitation, we have confidence in the credibility of our solution. The diverse range of primary and secondary research, together with our active involvement and close collaboration with the company, has resulted in a solution that has received positive feedback and holds the potential to be integrated into the teams' project workflow.

5.2 Reflections on the Research Question

While reflecting on the research question, *"How can the service design approach create a common communication ground to foster internal alignment and collaboration between cross-functional teams at the beginning of a project within a startup in the maturity stage?"*, the main focus revolves around the area of service design in startups [1.4 Focus Area]. When we approached the company for potential collaboration, we were aware that they had never worked with a service designer before, making it uncertain how receptive they would be to the service design practice. Some product designers within the company already employed certain practices commonly used in service design, such as user testing and empathizing with users. We were pleasantly surprised by the genuine interest shown by the company, particularly from the designers.

Throughout our collaboration, our goal was to employ a participatory approach and demonstrate the value of service design, showcasing our methods and approaches. We aimed to emphasize agile working, effective communication, community collaboration, leadership and guidance, decision and risk management, prototyping ideas, strategic thinking, and working within constraints - the key skills that service designers should possess as found in the Literature review [2.1.2 Role of Service Designers within an Organization]. During our collaboration with the company, we believe that we were able to showcase most of the skills, with the exception of leadership and guidance, as well as decision-making and risk management. It is important to note that our level of involvement was still somewhat limited, which impacted our ability to fully demonstrate these particular skills. However, we are unable to say if our collaboration fully conveyed the benefits of having a service designer in a startup. Hopefully, our overall approach, and the work we carried out throughout the collaboration, together with the final solution, which considers the holistic perspective, represent the value of service design in this context.

5.3 Reflections on the Collaboration

Overall, TravelOrg, and especially the TravelStartup branch, was a great collaboration partner who showed interest in our findings and actively participated in various sessions. These sessions included workshops, feedback sessions, prototype tests, and evaluations of the final concept. We are generally very content with their level of involvement in our thesis and believe that their participation contributed to the development of a valuable and relevant solution concept.

However, there were a few challenges we encountered during the collaboration. One of these challenges was the fast-paced nature of TravelStartup as a startup, which often made them change priorities and tasks along the way. The team members were often occupied with their ongoing tasks, making it difficult to secure their time for thesis-related discussions and feedback. We had hoped for greater involvement from the engineers and managers of TravelStartup, but we acknowledge that we did not reach out to them as effectively as we could have. Additionally, the unexpected resignation of the product manager midway through the thesis affected our ability to gather feedback from that particular part of our target group.

Lastly, the majority of the TravelStartup team works remotely, with only two designers based in Copenhagen. The rest of the team is spread across the United States and Germany. Working across these location differences and time zones sometimes created challenges in terms of obtaining fast feedback and affected the human interaction aspect of service design that we consider as being quite important. We could clearly see the difference in involvement and willingness to participate between the employees located in Copenhagen, which we were able to meet with in person, compared to the ones working remotely.

Overall, we consider the collaboration with the TravelStartup branch to be successful, even though we encountered difficulties related to time constraints, limited involvement from certain team members, documentation gaps, and remote working dynamics.

5.4 Reflections on the Learning Objectives

Official Learning Objectives

The thesis project provided us with an excellent opportunity to apply and enhance our service design skills, which we gained through our study program [1.2.1 Official Learning Objectives]. Throughout the project, we had the chance to put our skills into practice, apply suitable methodological approaches, and acquire new skills while addressing the internal processes of communication, collaboration, and alignment within a startup environment. This experience was particularly exciting for us as we worked in a setting that closely aligned with our interests. The service design approach allowed us to use relevant design methods and tools which support us to identify major problem areas based on primary research and the obtained comprehensive understanding of the relevant literature. Due to the project's length and complexity, it was important for us to have a well-structured approach to the project. It was necessary to analyze and document the various sources of data in a clear and coherent manner, whether in written form or through visual representations. Through this collaboration, we had the opportunity to facilitate both small meeting sessions and larger workshops. These experiences taught us valuable lessons about the role of facilitators and highlighted the importance of clear communication and guidance that service designers should provide.

Personal Learning Objectives

Our main objective of the thesis was to explore how the service design practice can be utilized in startup environments and help these companies in improving user experiences or optimizing their organization's operations [1.2.2 Personal Learning Objectives]. This was achieved by obtaining relevant knowledge based on previous academic research as well as applying our service design approach throughout the whole process of the collaboration. Further, we aimed to explore and gather relevant insights into the chosen topic and conduct research that will be beneficial to the service design community. We believe it was partly accomplished as we were able to apply the academic research in a real-life scenario. Our investigation of startup companies and extensive gathering of primary data could offer valuable insights for service designers engaged in similar project topics. Although the thesis remained an academic project, our intention was to engage in our collaboration

with TravelStartup as professionals who can closely work with the business and create a solution that aligns with the organization's needs, addresses current challenges, and is feasible to implement. Based on the evaluation session, this objective can be considered accomplished. Despite our desire to involve TravelStartup employees more extensively in the process, we successfully managed to present a service proposal that addresses one of the company's long-term objectives 'Take a more holistic and x-collab approach to projects' [4.1.3. First Official Meeting with TravelStartup]. Our solution adds value to the organization's project processes and has the potential to be effectively implemented. Throughout the whole project, we were able to showcase the service design practice to the organization and hopefully also show the benefit of applying some of the service design practices within the company.

5.5 Future Considerations

In terms of future considerations for this project and potential improvements, there are several steps that could be taken if more time were available for solution delivery.

Firstly, it would be beneficial to conduct a more detailed follow up after the last evaluation session with TravelStartup. While the service proposal (product report) was shared and evaluated by a designer and a design manager from the TravelStartup team, involving individuals from various roles would provide a broader perspective and richer feedback. Incorporating this additional input would likely lead to multiple rounds of iteration to further enhance the concept.

Since the concept has not yet been tested in a real-life setting, conducting a pilot test would be the next logical step. The Project Roadmap Framework and checklist would be added to the Jira ticket, and the product manager, designers, and engineers would be encouraged to utilize the roadmap throughout their project development process. A huge part of the implementation process would focus on educating the employees on how to utilize the new proposed structure of organizing projects in their daily work and encouraging the teams to follow it. As service designers, we would provide guidance and be readily available to address any questions that might arise. Regular feedback requests would be incorporated to assess usability and identify potential obstacles. Once the team has reached the end of the roadmap, a workshop would be conducted to assess successes and areas for improvement.

Moreover, during the handover of the service proposal to the TravelStartup team, it was crucial to provide them with a comprehensive implementation guide that outlines the necessary steps to integrate this new concept into their existing processes. We have developed a detailed implementation plan that clearly defines the different phases involved, outlines the specific steps to be taken within each phase, and estimates the time required for each phase [Figure 49]. By providing a well-defined roadmap, TravelStartup can minimize disruptions, avoid delays, and enhance the effectiveness of their efforts in achieving the desired outcomes. This detailed plan encompasses the essential steps for successful implementation, maintenance, and potential expansion of the solution.

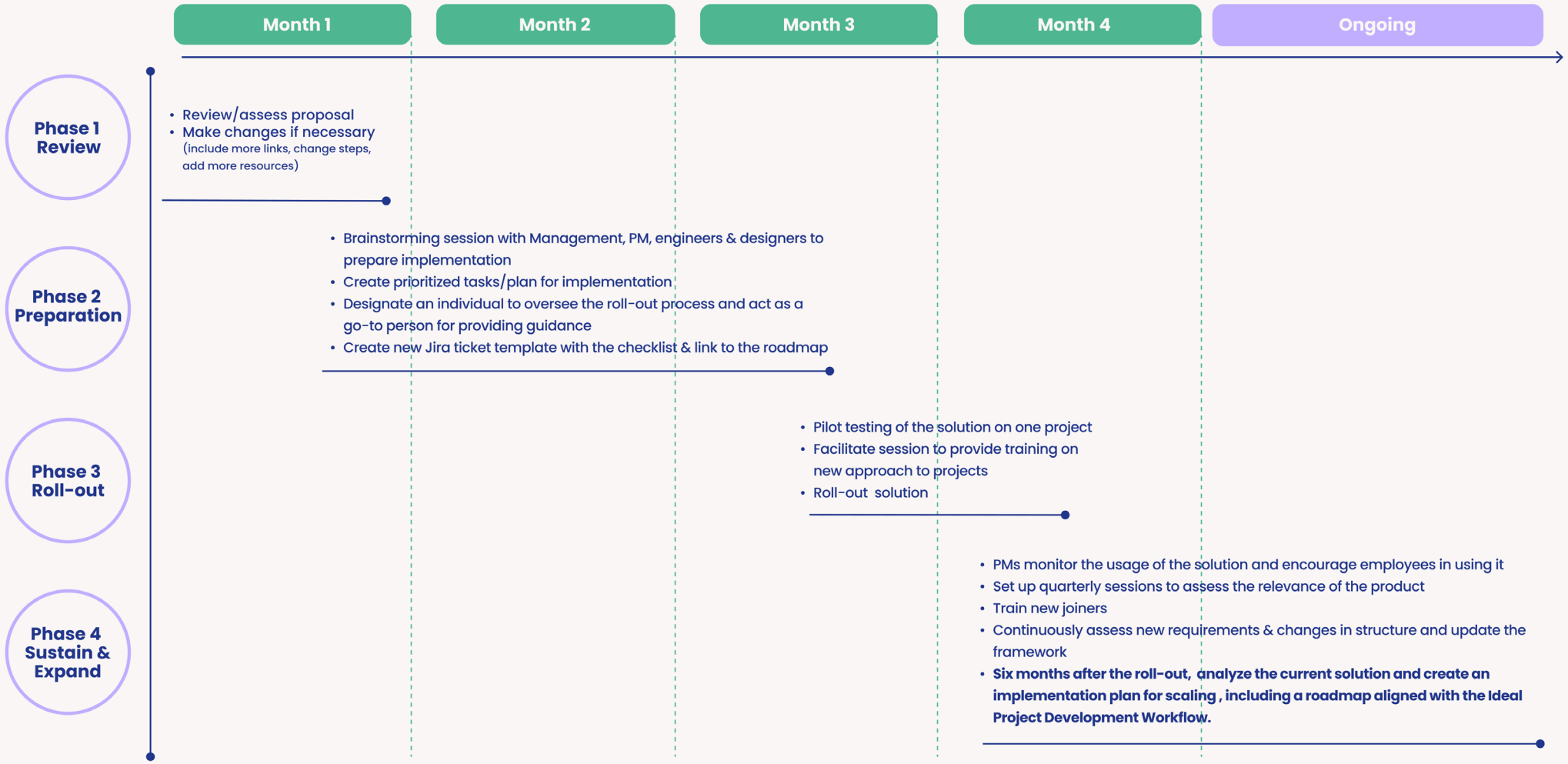


Figure 49. The implementation guide

CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, we will revisit the research question and evaluate the extent to which it has been addressed. Additionally, we will summarize the key findings gathered from our research and provide recommendations for areas that require further exploration or that could benefit from additional investigation based on the knowledge acquired in this thesis. Finally, we will highlight the contributions our research has made to the field of service design and discuss how other service designers can gain value from our work.

06

Through an in-depth analysis of how the service design approach can enhance alignment and collaboration among cross-functional teams in startups, this thesis has highlighted the diverse qualities of service design that can significantly improve workflow and overall organizational structure in a startup setting. The final research question addressed in this thesis is as follows:

"How can the service design approach create a common communication ground to foster internal alignment and collaboration between cross-functional teams at the beginning of a project within a startup in the maturity stage?"

As a result of addressing the research question, we have developed a solution concept that involves implementing a shared Project Roadmap Framework and adopting a more structured approach to project management through Jira tickets. The primary aim of this solution concept is to establish a unified framework for project execution within TravelStartup, fostering greater alignment and collaboration among cross-functional teams. While our solution concept has not been fully tested within an actual project setting, we cannot claim with certainty that it will effectively create the desired common communication ground that promotes internal alignment and collaboration. However, the feedback received during the evaluation session [4.5.1 Evaluation Process] was overly positive, indicating that if successfully implemented, our solution has the potential to address the research question and achieve the desired outcomes.

Service design emerged as a practice with the potential to foster collaboration and communication within organizations. We recognized the value of taking a holistic approach, particularly considering that startups often lack process maturity and established procedures for approaching new projects. Our collaboration with TravelStartup highlighted instances of misalignments and communication gaps across teams, an issue they were already aware of prior to our collaboration. This led us to explore effective practices for promoting cross-functional team collaboration, which is crucial for enhancing performance outcomes and product development processes. Research, along with our collaboration with the client, revealed that organizations often operate in silos. To address this, we looked into strategies for overcoming silos, including setting clear goals, establishing skilled management, implementing structured tasks, and clarifying responsibilities within cross-functional teams. Additionally, as communication emerged as a significant pain point within the organization, we conducted research on effective communication practices. We discovered that these practices are especially critical for startups operating in fast-paced environments. Considering that our solution concept will require changes from the organization's side, we explored best practices for communicating such changes. This investigation highlighted the intertwined relationship between communication and change management. To facilitate successful implementation, organizations should establish a clear purpose and vision, share information early on, involve diverse stakeholders, and promote open communication and participation throughout the change process. With these findings in mind, we developed our final solution concept, ensuring that it aligns with the identified needs and challenges of the organization. As a result, we are confident that the solution we have delivered will bring significant benefits to the organization, which was also confirmed by TravelStartup in the final evaluation session.

Based on these conclusions, practitioners should consider further investigating the impact of having a service designer within the startups, specifically in terms of facilitating change and implementing new solutions. The qualities possessed by service designers, such as their holistic approach and ability to empathize and share thoughts, feelings, and experiences, can be a valuable asset in driving successful organizational change. Further investigation is needed to fully understand the specific role and contributions of service designers in this context. Alternatively, it is also worth considering whether providing effective training for

other designers, who are already part of the organization, could be a sufficient means to implement changes within the organization. This approach could equip designers with the necessary skills and knowledge to drive and manage change initiatives effectively. Evaluating the effectiveness of training programs for designers in facilitating change could provide valuable insights for practitioners seeking to enhance their change management capabilities.
Our thesis work contributes to the field in several ways. Firstly, we addressed a gap in the existing literature by providing additional research on the relevance of service design in startups. This makes our findings a valuable asset and source of information for other practitioners working in similar areas.

Moreover, our collaborative approach with the startup proved to be quite successful. Despite the busy nature of startups and their initial skepticism towards a holistic perspective, they actively participated in workshops, prototyping, and evaluation sessions. This indicates that they value our holistic and contextual approach as service designers and may simply lack exposure and training in this approach.

While we acknowledge that our solution concept may not be disruptive or entirely novel, we believe it can serve as inspiration, particularly for young professionals new to the field of service design. Our solution is tailored to the specific needs of our client and incorporates various elements, such as a Project Roadmap Framework, links to templates, persona overviews, clear goals for each project phase, ownership of tasks, and a checklist of tasks. Overall, it can be said that our solution adopts a holistic approach to project management, addressing common challenges observed in many organizations, especially startups. Although designed specifically for our client, the solution can be easily adapted to suit the needs of other organizations as well.

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07

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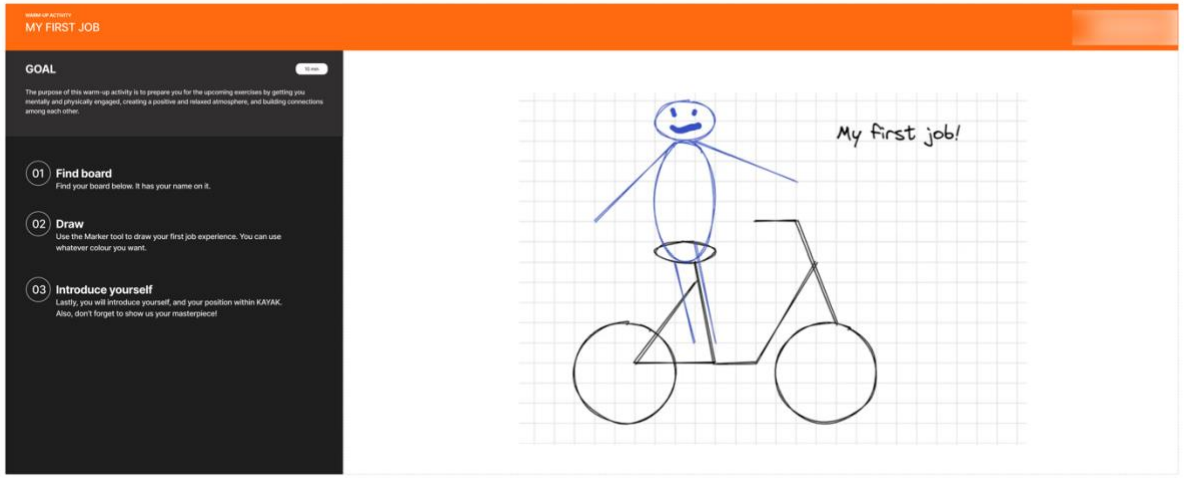
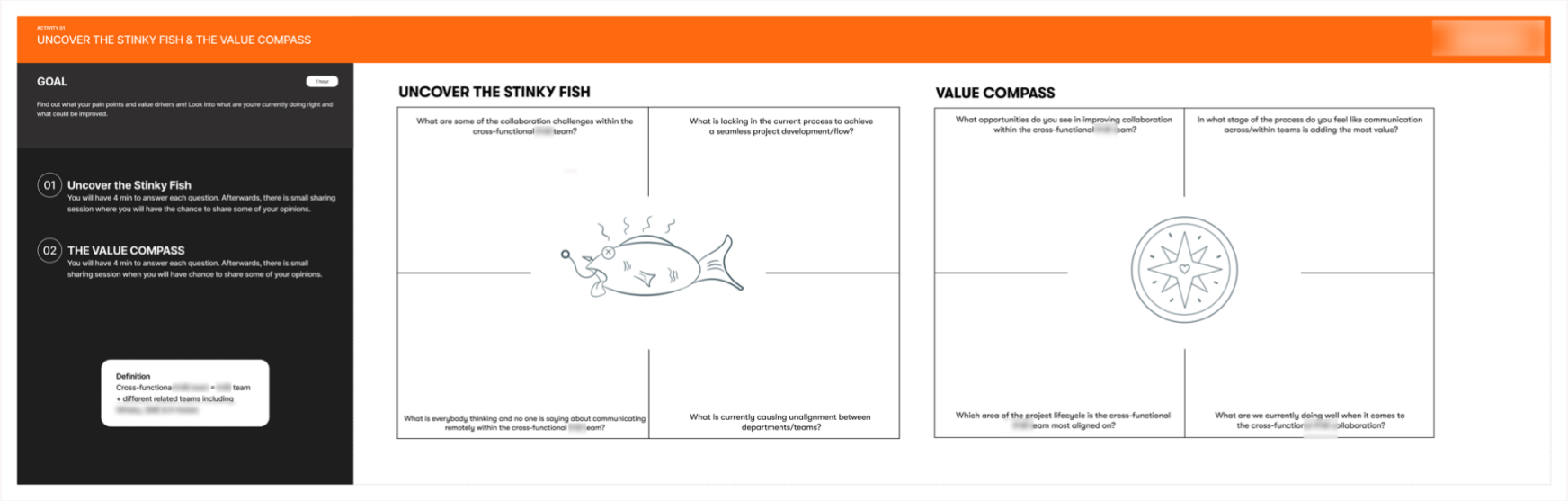
APPENDICES

08

Appendix A - Workshop 22.03.2023





Pain points

Documentation	The team generally agreed on the importance of having a clear communication setup and they can see the room for improvement. *Source of truth - Production files* The team identified one of the main pain points in documentation, especially the source of truth documents not being up to date. Source of truth documents refers to production Figma files with the latest updated design, meaning what is currently on the website visible to the user. However, the issue is that designers work on their project files and when a new solution is implemented on the website, they do not update the source of truth files with the latest changes. That causes a lot of unalignment and extra work for other designers as they might be basing their new design project on outdated versions. Importance of good documentation The participants identified that clear and organized documentation is important to keep track of small tasks and to trace back decisions that have been made in meetings.
Communication	Communication tools

	There is no set process in place on the best way to communicate with others. Slack is a common tool to use, but there can be challenges in navigating the various channels, which can lead to increased complexity. However, the channels are always not updated, and questions are asked outside of these channels. Lack in communication Based on the many responses there is a lack of communication between departments, which prevents issues from being caught up in the early stages as well as being more informed and up to date.
Project planning	*Project team - Not knowing the team well enough* Designers often struggle with a lack of clarity regarding the team's overview while working on a project. They may not know which developer will be assigned to their task, or whom to reach out to for assistance with design tasks. *Consistent & foreseeing project planning* Project management suffers from a lack of consistency and clarity, with pain points including the absence of a clear project roadmap or timeline, inconsistency in product development flow and meetings, and varying speeds at which different teams work. Therefore, some tasks from designers are only picked up a month later by developers, which have questions regarding the task while the designers are already working on something else. *Prioritizing projects/tasks* The pipeline of the TravelStartup projects is unclear which comes from not having clear the impact of certain tasks. For the team, it is very hard to understand the priorities as they are often changing and there is no set process to help employees balance priorities.
Sync / Alignment	*Allocations: Who's Working on What* One of the identified areas of struggle by many participants is not being aligned across teams, having a lack of insights into what other teams are working on can result in working on a similar thing. Also, it is hard to understand the responsibilities of different teams, it is *"Not always 100% clear what teams own which work when there are multiple teams involved".* *Alignment between teams* Two participants mentioned unalignment between various teams, which each have a different focus of the website. The 3 main teams of TravelOrg Leisure, TravelStartup and Direct booking are currently not aligned.

	Differences in teams Furthermore, there are differences in communication styles and processes between teams, which can make collaboration challenging. *Team coordination & dependencies* Projects frequently depend on multiple teams, which requires coordination between multiple PMs, engineers, and designers, making cross-functional communication in TravelStartup a challenge.
Differences in focus and dynamics	Based on the participant's answers it can be difficult to collaborate and unite across TravelStartup teams, as there are different team dynamics, product development processes, and different product goals and KPIs.
Remote work	*Different time zones* Working remotely can create various challenges in terms of communication and collaboration with others. Especially the time zone difference makes it difficult to get shift responses which creates lag time in projects. Also, there are small hours overlapping across time zones to have face-to-face meetings. *"You need to think ahead a lot to ensure that you are coming up with enough questions to ask ahead to avoid as much 'lag time' or a missed opportunity for a response due to time difference"* *Human touch* Naturally, there is a lack of human interaction, not being able to have physical meetings or have lunch together.

When the participants were asked about what's currently working well when it comes to communication and collaboration within the cross-functional, the answers can be grouped into the following four categories: Communication, Teamwork and Project Flow.

Strengths

Communication	When it comes to communication, the team is content about their usage of Slack channels as a main source to share knowledge, especially across teams. Some participants also mentioned that the communication between developers and products is going well, and meetings are being when needed.
Project flow	Looking at the bigger picture, some participants acknowledged their individual approach to projects, including the general flow of projects being aligned and well planned out. Other great practices in place are the design review

	sessions, documentation of projects, and the process of handing over the project from the designer to the developer.
Teamwork	Lastly, some participants highlighted the team spirit, mutual respect, and willingness to collaborate within the cross-functional TravelStartup team.

One of the questions asked the participants to reflect on communication and collaboration practices that could be improved in the future, which resulted in answers that fit into the following three categories: Sharing knowledge, Project flow, Efficiency & innovation.

Opportunities

Sharing knowledge	The participants felt like it would be beneficial to improve their practice of sharing knowledge, which was further explained by sharing ideas for more innovation, having bi-weekly meetings, and sharing processes, goals, and updates across teams.
Include other teams in the project flow	The most mentioned area for improvement is the overall project flow in place and including other teams in that flow. Especially the planning phase could benefit from including other teams to increase visibility, be more in sync and have a faster and smoother delivery process. The team feels like they are usually quite aligned on larger tasks but fail to track smaller tasks across teams.
Improve efficiency & innovation	The team sees the opportunity to be more efficient in everyday tasks and create more innovative solutions for their customers by making what's good even better.

For the question 'In what stage of the process do you feel like communication across/within teams is adding the most value?', participants seemed to be quite aligned as all answers could be grouped into two categories: Project kickoff and Design phase.

Communication adds most value

Project kickoff	The project kickoff / Definition phase was mentioned by most participants. They all feel like grooming sessions, sprint planning meetings and kickoff meetings are beneficial to gather enough context and figure out where team collaboration is needed.

Design phase	Good communication across/within teams was mentioned to be important in the designing phase where the team is trying to find solutions and reviews the designs, including the managers, designers, and developers.

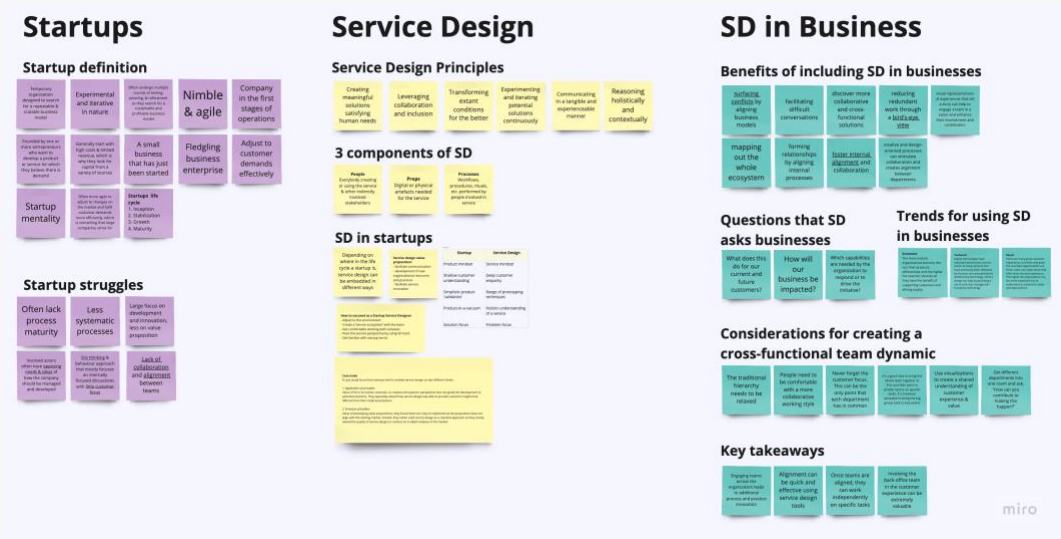
Brainstorm findings

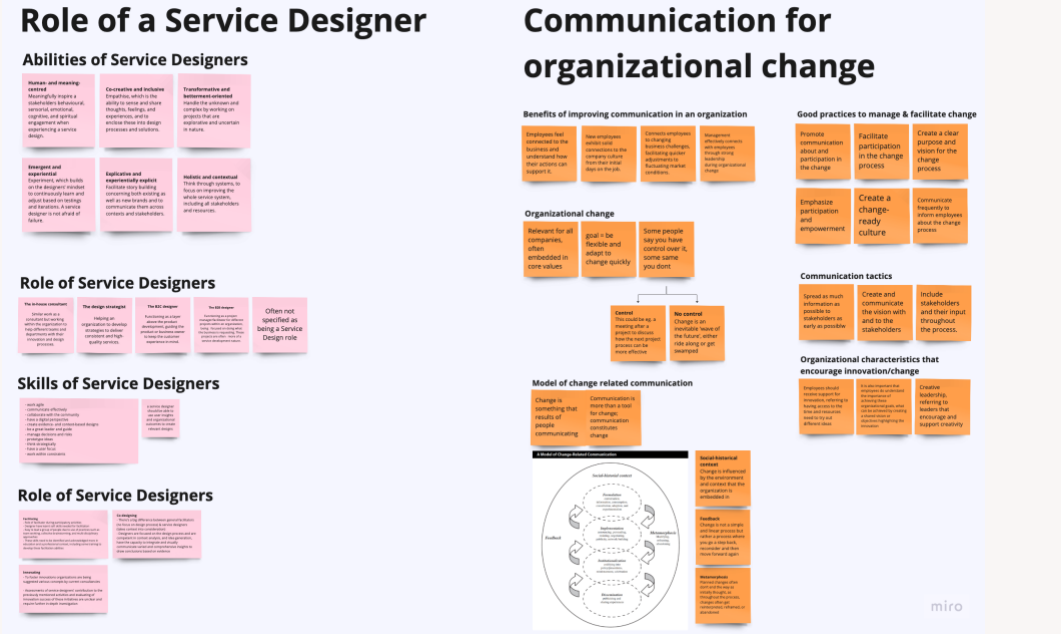
Each of the participants was asked to brainstorm up to three ideas of potential solutions to improve the collaboration within the cross-functional TravelStartup team. The participants were then also asked to give one vote to the idea they liked the best, resulting in 5 votes as not everybody ended up voting for their favourite. The brainstorming session resulted in a total of 13 ideas, which could be grouped into the categories of project planning, documentation, and sync/alignment.

Idea brainstorm

Idea 1 – Project planning	Within the category of project planning, one idea was to restructure the team's approach to how to go ab Changing that could positively affect alignment within the team, as well as ownership of projects. Like that to specifically update the setup of specific tickets as well as the assignment to these tickets. Another idea teams in planning meetings, which was also voted for by one person. Lastly, it was proposed to set a speci decide to ensure that projects won't get stuck.
Idea 2 - Documentation	One idea that was independently mentioned by two users and got 3 votes was to update production files that everybody can easily find and that will close gaps between teams. One participant had the thought to improve the way how the team is currently tracking the status of tasks by having more detailed documentation on even smaller tasks. Another participant mentioned that having interactive dev storybooks of flows and sections that are challenging to reproduce could be an easy way to better align. Lastly, it was proposed to add an AI meeting note taker to meetings to take notes and automatically send them on Slack afterwards.
Idea 3 – Sync & Alignment	The last category Sync/alignment includes the idea to set up better communication between designers and developers through eg. a shared doc, Slack status updates, etc. That idea received one vote. Furthermore, it was suggested to create a shared task board across teams that can be accessed by everybody and serves as an overview of what each team is working on and what the priorities are. This idea is like another one that proposed to create a centralized planning document where teams can outline their roadmaps. The last idea describes the incorporation of the Slackbot to send daily summaries as well as remind the team of unshared updates.

Appendix B – Literature Review Findings





Cross-team collaboration

Definition of cross-functional teams

Cross-functional teams = individuals from different departments with relevant knowledge & competences to complete a project

Cross-functional teams can realize full potential when the different teams are using their individual expertise combined with the expertise of other teams

Knowledge sharing in cross-functional teams

Knowledge as competitive advantage
Having a particular knowledge can be a competitive advantage and therefore a source of power within an organization.

Sharing this kind of knowledge could potentially lead to loosing this unique position of power.

Proven hypothesis

Cooperation among cross-functional team members is positively associated with the quality of the shared knowledge among them.

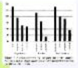
Competition for intangible resources among cross-functional team members is negatively associated with cooperative task orientation among them.

Competition for intangible resources among cross-functional team members is negatively associated with cooperative communication among them.

Success in cross-functional teams

Effective team work
Product development projects are facing challenges in ensuring that cross-functional teams are effectively accomplishing the tasks related to the development of new products.

Most important factors for project's success
- Defining clear project goals
- Having strong leadership
- Enhancing cooperation



Stage-setting elements

Enablers

Team behavior

Differences among Teams

Results-Driven Structures[62]

Broad Objective	*Dominant Feature*	*Process Emphasis*	*Examples*
Problem resolution (solving problems)	Trust	Focus on issues (versus personalities, or who gets credit)	Consultants who specialize in analyzing and improving organizational processes
Creative (developing new ideas, products, or services)	Autonomy	Explore possibilities and alternatives	Advertising agency; research and development team
Tactical (implementing a plan or set of structured procedures)	Clarity	Directive; highly focused tasks; role clarity; well-defined operating procedures; accuracy	Firefighting team; engine assembly team (e.g., in a Volvo factory).

Working in Silos

Working in silos has negative impact on collaboration across teams

Working too much within own team, own KPIs, etc. can lead to negative impact on user experience as some parts of the user journey might be missed

Coordination and essential communication is essential to break silos

Ways to break Silos

Establish a Thematic Goal
Shared goal within entire organization, that inspires everyone to collaborate & work towards the same purpose

Articulate Defining Objectives for the Thematic Goal
Specify the context of the goals & provide action-oriented objectives so the employees are aware of what needs to be done to achieve the overall goal

Specify a Set of Ongoing Standard Operating Objectives
Focus on standard operating objectives, such as productivity or customer satisfaction. They are always relevant, no matter the short-term focus (ensure consistency with goals)

Select Metrics
After all previous goals & objectives have been established & specified, their success of them should be monitored and evaluated (e.g. use colour schemes to illustrate progress)

Questions for breaking Silos

Does your organisation structure promote collaboration, or do silos exist?

Do you have collaboration in your culture and as part of your value system?

Do you have the IT infrastructure for effective collaboration?

Do you believe in collaboration? Do you model that belief?

Do you have a reward system for collaboration?

Actions to minimize silos

Reward cooperative behaviour

Encourage innovation

Create a culture of collaboration

Clarify responsibilities

Enter white spaces cautiously

Holds retreats to build camaraderie

Find opportunities for cross-functional initiatives

miro

Appendix C – First Expert Interview 31.03.2023

Interview Plan

Focus of interview

- Service design tools & methods to create a common ground for communication
- Foster internal alignment and collaboration in cross-functional teams

Our intro (2 min)

- Introduce ourselves, what we are studying
- The Focus of the thesis is to research how service design can foster internal alignment and collaboration in cross-functional teams
- This is not just about the current company you work in, this is about your general experience working as a Service Designer

Intro (5 min)

1. Can you tell us a bit more about yourself? How did you get into service design?
2. Can you tell us a bit more about your role as a Service Designer in your organization? What does your typical day look like? What are some of your main responsibilities?

Team collaboration & alignment (20 min)

1. Team coordination - In a typical project, how many different teams/departments are typically involved? Are there ever any coordination problems when working with several teams? If yes, have you taken any steps to overcome this?
2. Alignment - In your work, have you ever observed any alignment problems between cross-functional teams? If yes, how do you/your team ensure that different teams are aligned when working on a project?
3. Insights - Do you feel like you have enough insights and feedback from other departments when working on projects? Do you have good practices in place to share insights across teams?
4. Ownership - When working on a project, is it clear who has ownership of tasks? What do you do to ensure that this is clearly communicated across teams?
5. Awareness - How do you ensure that different departments are aware of each other's project work and ensure alignment?
6. Overview - Do your colleagues have a good overview of the different roles and responsibilities that their colleagues have?
7. Dynamic - Do you have any tips on how to create a good cross-functional team dynamic?

Communication (20 min)

1. Current communication - How do you currently communicate across teams when working on a project? Do you tend to follow the same structure/approach?
2. Problem in communication - Did you ever observe the need for having more or better communication across

departments at your work? If yes, did you/your team take any action to solve this?
3. Tools - Do you use Service Design tools/methods/approaches/frameworks to facilitate communication between departments?
4. Value - Based on your experience, where do you see communication across teams adding the greatest value to a project?
5. Communication styles - Do you observe different communication styles or processes across other teams? How do you feel about that? How does it impact the project development?
6. New ways - Do you feel like your colleagues are open to new ways of approaching projects from a more service design perspective? Do you see them getting inspired and using some of these practices in their work?
7. Channels - What kind of communication channels have you worked with? Which ones are working? Which ones are not?
8. Visuals - Do you think that visual representations help with team communication?

Transcript

Can you tell us a bit more about yourself? How did you get into service design?

I got into service design many many years ago around 2006/2007, not really knowing that I was doing service design. I was working as a sound designer and at the same time I was an assistant manager for a sound studio. Within that assistant manager role, I have a lot of responsibility related to how we manage the studio. That included a lot of different stakeholders and actors and certain complexity on how we interact with technology and how we basically deal with different clients and which type of opportunities we identify in order to provide a better service and so on.

I was always in this kind of like people approach every problem. Every time I identified an opportunity or a challenge I was involved in pretty much everything that was related to solving this problem and then trying to create a solution.

I am explaining it like that right now. In those days, I thought ok, you're part of the problem so you will be part of creating the solution. That was just the given approach but that was also how I realized that it was more interesting for me to solve those challenges and work creatively in that way rather than as a sound designer.

Then from 2008 onwards, I went through a transition where I took the opportunities I had of working with these approaches and I was also to identify what it actually was that I was trying to do. Trying to work with new tools and some actual methodologies, slowly adapting to the design thinking approach and moving towards a systemic approach. That's how I transitioned at some point.

Can you tell us a bit more about your role as a Service Designer in your organization? What does your typical day look like? What are some of your main responsibilities? (2:58)

My role in my current company is a senior service designer and I'm part of the R&D department of our hearing aid company. The R&D department is quite big, I'm within software and within software, I'm in B2C. Within there, there are different teams and I'm part of the team that is called the digital incubator. What we do, is

facilitate exploration activities and collaborations between the different teams in B2C and also with other teams outside of B2C.

What does a typical day look like? It really changes. I really don't have one day that is similar to the other one. I think it's a good thing I like that. It's definitely not monotonous. The digital incubator is kind of like a service for the whole B2C and other teams. We are kind of like a platform to facilitate these explorations and collaboration between teams. We are trying to implement this as a continuous discovery to better understand the needs of our colleagues and how we can better facilitate these activities. So my first big role is to design and run the incubator

My secondary role at the same level is to work as a kind of service design consultant in the company. So they pull me in and out of different projects from different departments based on what is needed.

In a typical project, how many different teams/departments are typically involved? (5:00)
I have a little bit of a clue but most of the time I really don't know. I focus more on the people and their role within the project rather than what department they come from. I think that that removes a lot of biases. But in one of the projects that I'm involved in, there are people from marketing from two different compacts because my organization is a merge of two companies so there's still some legacy split. There are engineers and designers from both sides and marketing from different brands. That's about it. But then within marketing, you have different teams. For instance the engineering part, we have some teams that are more like product owners or product managers and then some are not developers but maybe architects. They might be involved and pulled out in different stages of the project.

Are there ever any alignment problems when these cross-functional teams are involved? (7:03)
[laughter] All the time. I think that it is a huge part of the work when you have a collaboration even within the same team, alignment is kind of the first step. Make sure that we are speaking the same language basically.

It's important at the beginning of the project, at the beginning of sessions. I see alignment working best when it's co-created. So for example, if I need to kick start a project, there is of course someone that has an idea as a project needs to come from somewhere.
If I come up with a project, the first thing I do is to ask "Who do I think might make sense to start involving so we can figure out what's next?". I don't try to define the project 100%. I just book a meeting with a very broad brief, with a clear scope but a broad brief. Then the first conversation is about "I have this idea I think that we should target this topic. I thought it would be good to start with the three of us. I want to hear your input." Try to see if we are aligned or not. Where do we have alignment? Where can we find a common scope? Then we have that base and then agree on what will be the next step.

As a team if we wanted to pursue that and if there's an agreement, we can see who else needs to be involved or not. We can move to the next session and before the next session, we should always do some work in between. The sessions are then used to align the team every once in a while.

So you are calling in for check-in meetings or sessions during the project to bring the people together? (9:33)
Yeah yeah, all the time. I think the more touchpoints of alignment you have, the smoother it goes. Sometimes takes a little bit longer than expected but once it gets rolling, it normally goes well.

Do you think it's going to slow down the process when a lot of people are involved and there are different opinions at the same time? (10:05)
My rule of thumb is that if a meeting is more than half an hour, it's a workshop. If the workshop needs to be planned as a workshop and if we are more than five people, it needs to be structured almost like a workshop. Otherwise, not everyone can participate and we are just wasting people's time. I think those are my true rule of thumb even though I cannot apply them all the time. Usually, there's someone that owns the project or is steering the project so that's normally the person that decides how they want to approach this session.

Do you feel like you have enough insights and feedback from other departments when working on projects? Do you have good practices in place to share insights across teams? (11:20)
I think that to a certain degree, you are always working in the blind in an organization. You don't have time to go through all the data. Actually, the challenge is normally that you have a lot more data than you can actually handle. Sometimes it's more important to identify who has the data that is more relevant for you to make a decision and then be very conscious that you're making decisions based on what is available at that point for you. Being honest with yourself and knowing that you might make an incorrect decision because of a lack of information that exists in the company and might appear in a later stage.

So when we're working on a project, is it usually clear who has the ownership of tasks?
It depends. It really depends on the team. If it's not clear who has a task or something or no one really takes the lead, the first question will be "Who's gonna be responsible? Who's gonna take this task?". That's a quite natural behaviour in the environment that I am in.

Are you making sure that the tasks are clear and divided at the beginning of a project?
I wouldn't say that it's me. If I'm running a session, if it's my session, I will definitely do that. One task one person, minimum.

How do you ensure that different departments are aware of each other's project work and ensure alignment? Ensure that there is no overlap. Good practices? (13:59)
Well, that's kind of one of the reasons why we exist. But this team is also really new, it will be one year in May. I joined last October.

What I'm learning is that it's really hard. Only B2C, we are about 200 people and we are located in a minimum of 5 locations in the world with very different time zones and cultures.

I think it might not even be possible to get to the point where everyone knows everything. There are different reasons for that. If everyone takes all the time just to identify that, they wouldn't be doing their task. What we are trying to identify this "How can we facilitate a platform that when someone is in doubt about something or requires some information, it's as simple as possible for them to find the information and also they have their behaviour that demonstrates to the place that we are still here". That's one way.

The other way is trying to identify opportunities on creating some rituals and communities and activities that facilitate this kind of interaction.

Do you already have something specific helping to create that or is it still in the research phase? Are you already using some tools or processes?
We run basically as an ongoing pilot. That's how we treat what we are doing in the design incubator. I don't believe that we all ever have something like “OK, this is working”. It's the complexity so we need to kind of think about the platform and we need to continuously learn and adapt to whatever needs.

We have some shared channels and then we try to make clear communication try to understand what we actually do, and what is the actual value that we bring to the company. Trying to see how that aligns with the strategy of the company so then in that way we can communicate that if you are doing if you're taking part in these activities, you are also bringing value to the company even though you are not doing your regular task. Because that's also a little bit of a conflict.

And then how does this align with your objectives? That's really important because that is gonna affect your bonuses or other things. And then working on trying to have clarity on that. Trying to communicate it continually. Test if you are communicating in a way that people understand.

We are exploring different types of formats of events. They give the opportunity to not only explore things but create synergies. Colleagues can collaborate with colleagues that they don't normally collaborate with. Slowly we try to break some silos and see which aspects are working and which ones are not. That's the approach that we have.

What channels or platforms are you using?
Normally we're using Teams and SharePoint as our main tools but not because we chose them but basically because those are the two that the company uses as regular tools. Also, those are the ones that everyone is using. If we would decide to use Slack, no one will be in Slack.

What kind of events are you running?
We run some sort of a Hackathon. We did something like that one week ago. Sounds kind of simple but in an organization like this one, you're talking about people that are working and taking a full day off is almost impossible. It requires A LOT of planning. Coordinating that in a medium-sized company that has 200 employees is a piece of cake. In an organization like mine, it's really complex and only choosing the days to do it is a headache. You're always gonna miss something.

We are exploring different kinds of setups for example TED talks kind of thing but trying to bring more of the interactive part in the sense of feedback. The sessions are not one person talking but it becomes a little bit of a conversation and the feedback becomes a little bit more tangible, so the things we can do better become more clear.

How do you currently communicate across teams? (20:37)
It’s basically all Microsoft

Do you tend to follow the same structure/approach across teams when working on a project? Same structure, same sharing practices? (21:04)

Our communication is very simple. Either people are in B2C or they are outside of B2C.

I never know what I'm gonna do. Normally when I'm part of a project, I'm working more as a consultant or some facilitator. My role is more like trying to understand what they're trying to do and which aspects they would like help with. Figure out if there's something that they are not seeing or something like "I could bring value here and there". If I see this gap here maybe we can explore that. It's me proposing and then somebody else is saying like "Yeah I think this is a good idea" or "No we try to go there". So it's kind of like a conversation.

Then when something is agreed upon, we identify if it's something that I should do or something that maybe I'm gonna coach someone to do. Maybe I'll help someone create a framework or a setup. Then I let somebody else facilitate it or we do it asynchronously. We create a template or something and ask a lot of people involved whenever they have time to do their part.

The review session can be with the project owner and me or only the project owner and then we create a session with everybody else in order to review. A key part of this is the resources and the budget. What I think all the time is "Why am I inviting someone to this meeting? Why it's important that this person is here? Who am I gonna show to that person? Why it's important that that person gives me permission about that and it is something that we really need to do in person or we can do it asynchronously?".

Do you feel like sometimes you're passing the role of the facilitator to someone else? Like you are working as a kind of strategist when they pull you into a project and then you guide them but you're not the one actually performing it yourself?

It's kind of like a mix. It depends on the topic of what we are doing. Sometimes it makes sense for me to facilitate or mediate because I have this kind of more neutral role. In certain conversations, it's better if I play that role and I take care of time and so on. And then test with whoever owns the project, so that person can focus on the conversation. In some other topics, it's better if somebody else facilitates. Maybe I help them to figure out how to do it to get tangible outcomes but I don't take the role unless necessary.

When you get pulled into these projects, are you part of all phases? Do you follow projects from the beginning to the end?
It depends. I recently joined the company. There are two projects where I can see that I've been plugged in directly.

One I follow weekly, we have workshops and I've been very involved. Now it's going into a transition towards the next phase and I'm not sure if I'm needed in that phase. But it's ok. I don't know what will happen. But in this case, I've been plugged into that project relatively at the beginning, but that's because I just started and the project started a little bit before I joined the company. So that was the reason I wouldn't know what happened in a different project.

I was plugging in a different project that is a bit smaller at the moment and also has a complete different scope. The way that it happened is that someone identified that what I could do might be helpful for them. So I started having meetings and kind of coached the owner of the project on what is the service design approach to it. It's kind of like consulting and coaching. It's like 'Why do we do this?". We grab the things that make sense based on an understanding of what they're trying to do.

And then the owner was kind of following up. So we have collaborative sessions together and then people were working asynchronously. The main reason for that is because the stakeholders of that project are a bit higher up and those people really really don't have time.

A lot of the planning is about how we get the most value out of different stakeholders with the minimum input. And when we are doing something, what are we gonna do with the outcome of what we're doing? I try to think a few steps ahead because at some point they're gonna ask you “Why did we do that?”

Do you use service design tools/methods/approaches/frameworks to facilitate communication and if yes, can you give some examples? (27:58)
I use whatever I think is gonna bring the value that we need for whatever activity we are doing. What I've been using very constantly are value constellations and experiences. Sometimes it’s really good just to draft a broad idea of what we're doing compared to user journeys, as they sometimes become too technical especially if you're trying to work on a strategic level.

Blueprints as well. Then empathy maps of course.

One of my favourites is parking lots, especially for sessions with more than three people. Parking lot allows you to focus on what you are meeting for and as soon as something else comes up, you put it there and then you review if you wanna do a follow-up or if it makes sense to do something like that later on.

Then people used body storming in two workshops to bring people to understand the user a little bit better and get a little idea of context. And then also Origami.

Whatever fits and allows us to explore what we need.

And I guess you are doing these workshop sessions and co-creative workshops quite often?
Yeah, I like a very generative design approach, a co-creation approach, have everyone involved. A very common approach to sessions is that everyone does something individually and then we put it together.

The most important thing is to make sure that everyone participates. Else like normally you have two or three people that feel more comfortable in the environment so they take over.

And then based on your experience where do you see communication across teams adding the greatest value in the project phases?
Communication is key from beginning to end. But I could be very biased because my first master's is in audio-visual communication so it's like a topic that I a very very biased in. But yet I would say that time over time it proves that it’s best to be picky with words. That can really pay off even though it could be a headache. Many times we are talking about different things, thinking that we're talking about the same thing. So I think that communication should be clear. It's good to make sure that people are actually saying the same thing. Sometimes it's annoying because you might be like “Oh you see we mean the same” “Yeah fair enough, but now we know for sure”.

The biggest reason is when you think that you're talking about the same thing but you're not. As long as you agree with what you mean with a word, you're good.

Do you feel like your colleagues are open to new ways of approaching projects from a more service design perspective and do you maybe see them also getting inspired and using some of these practices in their work?
There's a little bit of everything, right? Every change brings its challenges. I don't believe that service design is 100% the right thing to do. And I think that's really important to remember as designers. I think that as designers sometimes we think all design is the only thing but it really depends on the challenge we are trying to solve.

So first I think it's a good point to take a step back and understand what are we trying to solve here. Will a design approach actually make sense in the context of what we're trying to do? Sometimes not and I've been like "Yeah if you want we can do this. It's going to be a lot of fun. You're gonna waste a lot of time. Maybe you can just go straight to this step and then we can take the design approach after you do this.

That I think is very important to reflect on. Otherwise, it's really easy to come up with a huge project that is going to be amazing but someone is going to be really annoyed with the budget that you use.

There are challenges in how people perceive new approaches, but I think that we need to be aware of that. I think that we as designers can learn a lot about that. A huge part of our role is managing people and empathizing with people and that means empathizing with the people that we are trying to involve in our approach and the way that we want to solve some challenges.

Appendix D – Pitch Decks of three ideas

IDEA 1

EMPLOYEES PROFILES

GET TO KNOW YOUR COLLEAGUES inspired by personas

IDEA 1

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- *A database of all B2B employees profiles, which is accessible by every team member*
- *Each employee has a unique employee profile (own persona)*
- *The profile consists of relevant information, especially focusing on skills, knowledge, motivation, experience, interests, and list of past and current projects etc.*
- *These profiles will create a better overview of cross-functional teams & what each member has been working on*
- *There could potentially also be a link to the different projects (Figma, Slide Deck, other sources)*

IDEA 1

FINDINGS LEADING TO THIS SOLUTION

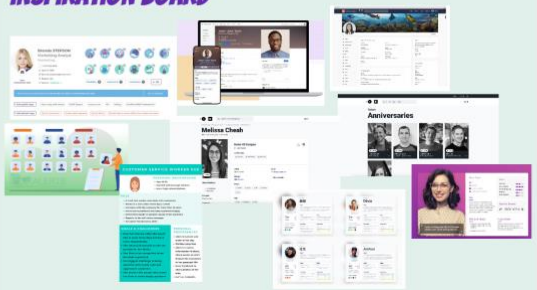
IDEA 1

WHY IS IT RELEVANT?

- *The overview of cross-functional teams and its members represented through a visual tool will have a positive impact on alignment, as team members are more informed about others projects and experience.*
- *This solution could encourage collaboration and allow teams to have a more effective project flow as team members will see others experiences, relevant knowledge and previous project experiences. This will help individuals to find the relevant person to reach out to when needed.*
- *Improves communication as information is openly and easily accessible by everyone.*
- *Create a change-ready culture - an environment where employees have a better knowledge of their own and other teams to support cross-functional collaboration.*

IDEA 1

INSPIRATION BOARD



IDEA 2

USER JOURNEYS

ALIGN TEAMS AROUND THE USER EXPERIENCE

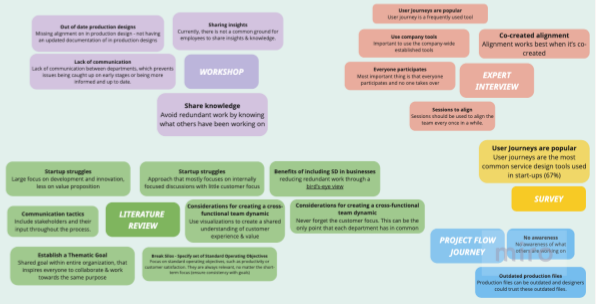
IDEA 2

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- *A user journey is created based on the current user experience on the website. This could be done through taking screenshots of the different pages a user goes through and annotating them with*
  - *user insights*
  - *pain points*
  - *user data*
  - *areas of opportunities*
- *The user journey will serve the teams as a space to share knowledge across teams.*
- *It will be somebody's responsibility to keep the user journey up to date. An idea could be to split the user journey in several sections and assign each section to somebody with the task to keep the screenshots up to date.*
- *The cross-functional teams will meet up regularly to go through the journey for alignment.*

IDEA 2

FINDINGS LEADING TO THIS SOLUTION



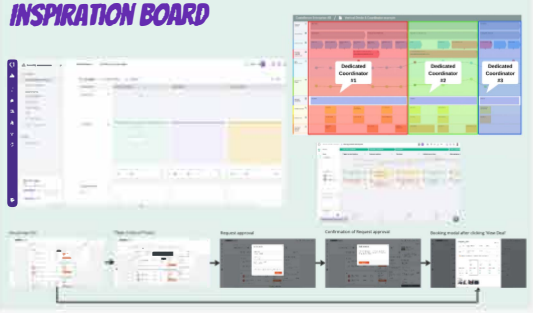
IDEA 2

WHY IS IT RELEVANT?

- *This solution creates a common ground for the cross-functional teams to align on the current user experience.*
- *The journey will be a common space for sharing knowledge and insights as different teams will know where to go to when they want to have more knowledge and insights about past projects, user testings & user data.*
- *It facilitates communication and collaboration between cross-functional teams, by using a visual tool and having regular meetings with the different teams.*
- *The user is the centre piece in all cross-functional departments. Therefore, using it as a focus point and aligning around the user experience will bring valuable insights and promote relevant knowledge sharing.*

IDEA 2

INSPIRATION BOARD



IDEA 3

"HOW TO" FRAMEWORK

GUIDE how to approach projects

IDEA 3

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- *The solution is a flexible framework which will be useful especially at the beginning of new projects.*
- *It provides guidance on how to approach projects by suggesting*
  - *tips & tricks*
  - *toolbox of (SD) methods*
  - *set of relevant questions*
  - *when and how to involve other teams*
- *The guide is focusing on the 3 main roles involved in a project - Guide for PMs, Designers and Developers*
- *The guide could potentially have the following content:*
  - *Channels for communication*
  - *Overview of stakeholders*
  - *Stage setting elements*
  - *How to create brief*
  - *Devision of tasks etc.*

IDEA 5

FINDINGS LEADING TO THIS SOLUTION

IDEA 5

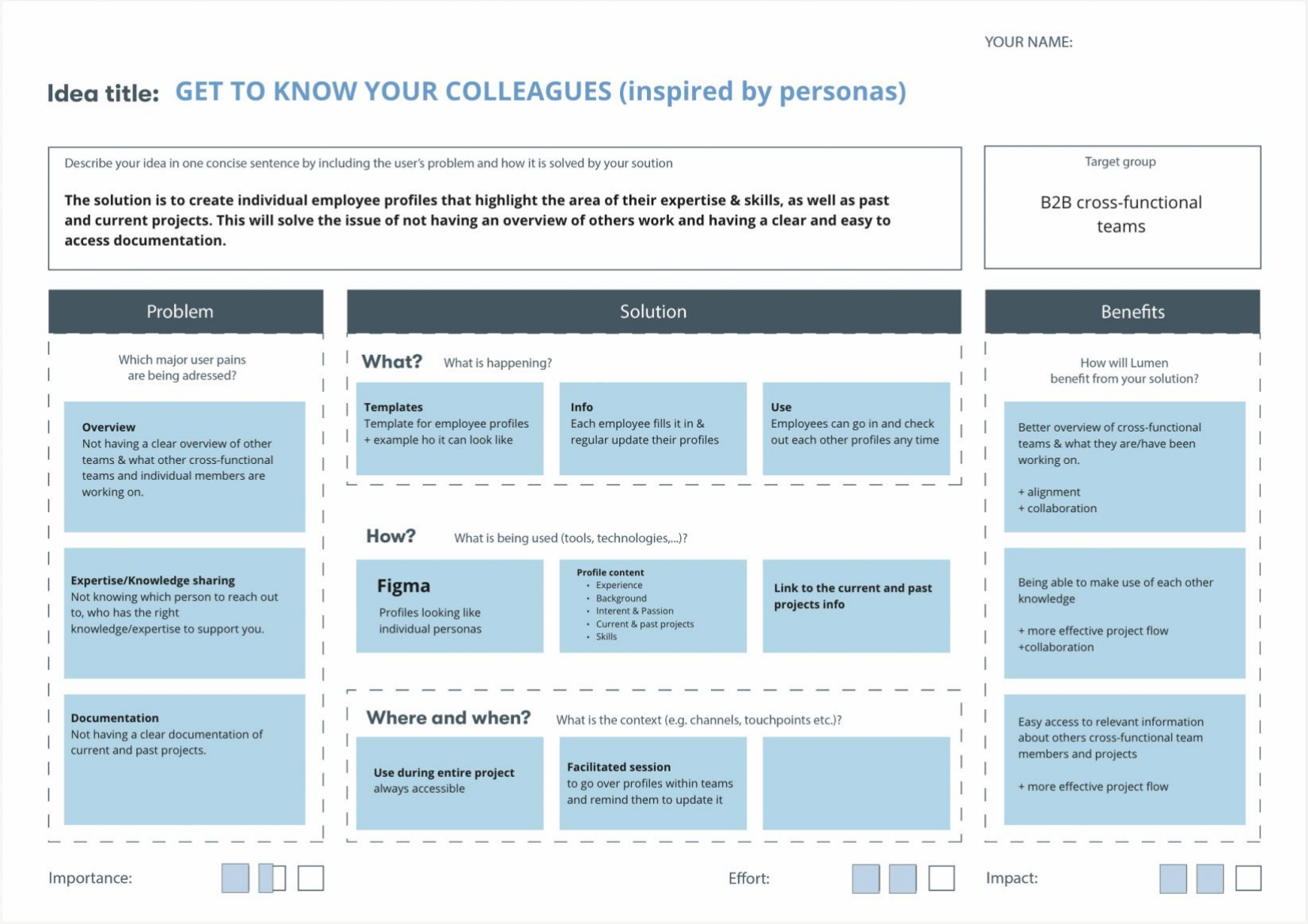
WHY IS IT RELEVANT?

- *Ease & guide the project kickoff phase. Make a project more efficient from the beginning on.*
- *Assuming that the users will follow and use the suggested tools and methods, the framework promotes collaboration and communication.*
- *It helps to align how teams approach different projects and create a better overview of the state of a project.*
- *The solution will help to create a seamless project kick-off with clear project goals and boundaries.*
- *If all different teams will follow this framework when working on a new project, this will increase alignment across teams.*

IDEA 5

INSPIRATION BOARD

Appendix E – Idea Napkins



YOUR NAME:

Idea title: GET TO KNOW YOUR COLLEAGUES (inspired by personas)

Describe your idea in one concise sentence by including the user's problem and how it is solved by your soution

The solution is to create individual employee profiles that highlight the area of their expertise & skills, as well as past and current projects. This will solve the issue of not having an overview of others work and having a clear and easy to access documentation.

Target group

B2B cross-functional teams

Problem

Which major user pains are being adressed?

Overview
Not having a clear overview of other teams & what other cross-functional teams and individual members are working on.

Expertise/Knowledge sharing
Not knowing which person to reach out to, who has the right knowledge/expertise to support you.

Documentation
Not having a clear documentation of current and past projects.

Solution

What? What is happening?

Templates
Template for employee profiles + example ho it can look like

Info
Each employee fills it in & regular update their profiles

Use
Employees can go in and check out each other profiles any time

How? What is being used (tools, technologies,...)?

Figma
Profiles looking like individual personas

Profile content
- Experience
- Background
- Interent & Passion
- Current & past projects
- Skills

Link to the current and past projects info

Where and when? What is the context (e.g. channels, touchpoints etc.)?

Use during entire project
always accessible

Facilitated session
to go over profiles within teams and remind them to update it

Benefits

How will Lumen benefit from your solution?

Better overview of cross-functional teams & what they are/have been working on.

+ alignment
+ collaboration

Being able to make use of each other knowledge

+ more effective project flow
+collaboration

Easy access to relevant information about others cross-functional team members and projects

+ more effective project flow

Importance: ■ ■ □

Effort: ■ ■ □

Impact: ■ ■ □

YOUR NAME:

Idea title: USER JOURNEY

Describe your idea in one concise sentence by including the user's problem and how it is solved by your soution

The solution is to create and maintain a user journey showing the current user experience on the site. The journey should be regularly supplemented with discovered pain points & user insights, as well as areas of opportunity.

Target group

B2B cross-functional teams

Problem

Which major user pains are being adressed?

Alignment on in production designs
Not having an updated documentation of in production designs

No common ground to share knowledge & insights
Currently, there is no one way for employees to share insights & knowledge.

Lack of communication
No regular communication between different teams to achieve seamless project development.

Solution

What? What is happening?

Digital user journey
Screenshots that show the current user experience.

Space to share knowledge
Sharing knowledge across teams such as user insights, pain points, user data.

Space to share ideas
A space to note down areas of opportunities.

How? What is being used (tools, technologies,...)?

Figma
One Figma board that can be accessed by all team members.

Screenshots of user journey
It will be somebody's responsibility to keep the user journey up to date.

Meetings
The cross-functional teams will meet up regularly to go through the journey for alignment.

Where and when? What is the context (e.g. channels, touchpoints etc.)?

Kick off session
Used to align the team on the user journey & explain importance of updating the journey regularly.

Regular meetings
Meeting every 2-3 months to discuss and update the user journey

Ownership
Employee responsible for updating the user journey based on recent changes

Benefits

How will Lumen benefit from your solution?

Common space to align on user experience
The cross-functional teams will have a common ground to align on the current user experience.

Common space for sharing knowledge and insights
The different teams will know where to go to when they want to have more knowledge and insights about past projects, user testings & user data.

Facilitate communication and collaboration between cross-functional teams
Having a common space and regular meetings will facilitate communication across the different teams.

Importance: ☐☐☐ Effort: ☐☐☐ Impact: ☐☐☐

YOUR NAME:

Idea title: "HOW TO" FRAMEWORK / GUIDE

Describe your idea in one concise sentence by including the user's problem and how it is solved by your soution

The solution is a structured framework which will be useful especially at the beginning of new projects and will provide guidance how to approach each project and suggest tips & tricks, toolbox of methods, set of relevant questions, when and how to involve other teams. The solution will help seamless project kick-off with clear project goals and boundaries and help to facilitate communication and collaboration across teams which will help better alignment.

Target group

B2B cross-functional teams

Problem

Which major user pains are being adressed?

No shared practice for approaching projects
Different teams have a different approach to projects.

Weak project kickoff
Current project kickoff is not as efficient as it could be. The projects are often not clearly defined.

Teams working in Silos
Teams are often not communicating and collaborating, which results in insights being lost and projects being less efficient.

Solution

What? What is happening?

Flexible framework
Guide which support the whole project process of various sizes and helps to ease collaboration across teams

Guide for all functions
1. Guide for PM
2. Guide for Designers
3. Guide for Devs

Framework content
- Channels for communication
- Overview of stakeholders
- Stage setting elements
- How to create brief
- Devision of tasks

How? What is being used (tools, technologies,...)?

Framework content

Digital solution
- PDF
- Platform (website)
- Interactive guide
- Figma / Figma Jam

SD tools
- Stakeholder map
- Personas
- User Journey
- Workshops
- Use cases

Using service design perspective:
- Holistic
- Contextual
- Communication and Empathy
- Support Collaboration

Where and when? What is the context (e.g. channels, touchpoints etc.)?

Framework that can be applied to every project

First two phases of design thinking
- Empathize
- Define

Benefits

How will Lumen benefit from your solution?

Ease & guide the project kickoff phase, make it more efficient.

Helps to facilitate collaboration by using suggested tools and methods

Helps to align how teams approach different projects and creates a better overview of the state of a project

Importance: ■ ◧ □

Effort: ■ □ □

Impact: ■ ■ ■

Appendix F – Second Expert Interview 25.04.2023

Interview Plan

Introduction to project (5 min)

- Collaboration with a startup in the maturity stage. Their product is an online corporate travel management tool.
- What we have identified:
  - They struggle with communication & alignment across teams (designers, PMs, developers, customer success)
  - Teams are not aligned on processes
  - Lack of overview between departments (who's working on what, who has responsibilities, who's involved in projects)
  - Lack of documentation (No common practice on how, where & when to share insights, lack of documentation of current/past projects)
  - Figma mocks are often outdated and do not match what's in production

Research question:

"How can service design (tools and methods) create a common communication ground to foster internal alignment and collaboration between cross-functional teams (at the beginning of a project) within a startup in the maturity stage?"

Her experience (10 min)

- We saw that you have worked on something similar for your thesis.
  - Can you tell us a bit more about it?
  - What kind of solution did you come up with?
  - Did you actually implement your solution? Any challenges? What worked well?

Idea pitches (30 min)

- We will present you 3 pitches of potential ideas we came up with in our first ideation round.
- We would love your honest feedback on each idea.
- When looking at the different ideas, please always consider how likely this could be implemented in an organization.
  - Challenges when implementing the idea?
  - Benefits for the organization?
  - Suggestions to improve the idea?
  - Have you ever done something similar?

QUESTIONS FOR EVERY IDEA

- SIMILAR - Have you ever done something similar? How did it go?
- VALUE - Can you see that this idea will add value to an organization? If yes, how? If not, why not?
- CHALLENGES - What could be the challenges/pain points of this idea?
- FEASIBLE - Do you feel like the idea is feasible to implement in an organization? How long do you think it will take to implement?

QUESTIONS FOR IDEA 1 – PROFILES

- Do you think that people will check out the profiles of others and reach out to people they might not normally reach out to?

- Could Micro managing become an issue?

QUESTIONS FOR IDEA 2 - USER JOURNEY

- Do you think that people will regularly update the user journey?
- How detailed would you suggest creating the user journey?

QUESTIONS FOR IDEA 3 - SERVICE DESIGN GUIDE

- How likely do you think it is that people will follow a guide to approach projects?
- Do you feel like this could be considered as 'extra work' by the organization?

Involve stakeholders (10 min)

- How would you involve the company in this ideation phase?

Transcript

[Intro]

Tereza 0:00
We collected a lot of data when it comes to literature workshops, we had other service designer interviews and just came up with some concepts. How could we, with service design solve this issue? So we're at this point in collaboration with them and would like to ask you if that's something you have been working with. To see if you also have come across this as an issue in other organisations.

Sarah 0:28
Is it ok if we record the meeting?

Alessandra 0:36
Yes, of course.
That's actually something you will always find. It's funny because it's exactly the same thing I had in my thesis. So I was working for the director of Telecom at the time. Their situation was even worse because they had multiple design departments that were not communicating.

But it's something that you see also in practice. So I work in an agency and in the agency, we always have clients who are doing two times the same project, or who never move forward from things because they don't communicate, or don't cross-collaborate in the silos they have.

Tereza 1:11
Okay, so very common issue as well.

Sarah 1:22
Can you tell us a bit more about the thesis and what kind of research you did and what kind of solution you came up with?

Alessandra 1:31
So for the thesis, I did a lot of theory research and a lot of mapping inside the company. So as I said, stakeholder interviews, and trying to understand why the communication and collaboration were failing. But then I could not really go further, because they had an internal communication cooperation problem with my thesis as well. And then I just developed a framework of how they could unify service design methods and their processes. How they could use very classical methods like blueprinting, or user journey mapping to create shared understanding and use this as communication tools.

Sarah 2:16
And has this ever been applied to the company?

Alessandra
No, no.

Tereza 2:27
For us, it's a startup, so they really only implement the stuff that is needed now. So let's see how much we can sell the service design perspective to them. I do get it, it's probably a common issue as well.

And then later when you actually got to work in the professional field, did you have some good practices or experience with how you work with your client? Are there some different tools, or something different compared to the thesis, which actually works or you felt could be useful?

Alessandra 3:03
I think it's really important to have a good kickoff in the project so that you really bring stakeholders from all necessary departments to spend a couple of hours together and discuss what their goals are. Because often you find out that they're talking about the same things, but using different words.
I think it's also important to have these tools where you really document and discuss with a common base. Where are the opportunities? Where are the problems, to bring in this user perspective, that's usually not there, right? So it's important, I think, to take into consideration the company structure and their strategy and their business goals. But also show them that none of these exists or works if the customers or if the end-user is not having a good experience. If the user is not being able to profit from it.

Tereza 4:04
Okay, let's move to where we are right now. I will just share my screen.

Tereza 4:22
So just to explain, we have been through an ideation phase, looking into all the insights we have and trying to come up with a solution, which could actually have a potential impact on alignment within the company. Our research question or the thing we're trying to solve is: How can service design or service design tools and methods create a common communication ground to foster internal alignment and collaboration between cross-functional teams within a startup environment? That's the company we're collaborating with. So just for you to know that these ideas should reflect the research question. We have come up with three solutions.

IDEA 1 - Profiles

Sarah 5:26
I'll just quickly go through all the different solutions we have, which are three. The first one is creating employee profiles. Basically have one database where all employees will put their profile, which is easily accessible by every team member. And then every profile contains information about the person such as their skills, knowledge, what kind of motivation they have, interests they have, what are experiences. That can be pre-work experience, but also experience within the job, as well as a list of past and current projects. And then potentially also have a link to past projects and insights. Everybody should have easy access to what the person has done and what kind of insights they have collected.

This will be relevant because we hope this would improve the alignment in between the teams because you would have a better overview of all the teams and the team members. We

found that visual tools are usually really good at creating alignment between teams. It would also increase transparency because you would see what the projects are that a person has worked on, as well as their experiences. It would also hopefully encourage collaboration because you might reach out to somebody who you wouldn't normally reach out to. You can see that they have the knowledge that you need right now. It could create a more effective project flow because you will have the overview right away. So it's easier to know who you need to reach out to right away. Everything is openly available, and this could thereby create a change-ready culture, which is an environment where everybody has an easy overview, and everybody has knowledge and access to the knowledge.

Alessandra 7:23
From my experience working on Agile projects, in the agency, for instance, I think that you might need something before that. Because sometimes, people work in silos. So it's not really clear what skills other departments have or what they can bring to the table. So from my experience, it's also important to create this understanding of what the work of other teams is.
One difficulty we have sometimes when it comes to collaboration is that when you are a designer, and you're working with developers, they don't really know what a designer does, besides making things look pretty. Or you're working and they're gonna say like “Oh, I'm a developer, I'm not gonna go further. I'm not going to take part in co-creation or something like this, because this is not my area.”
So think that you need to create this understanding of the skill sets and the areas, not only on the personal level but on the team level. And maybe make people understand better how they can contribute. So that they don't think only like “If I'm a designer, I'm only gonna be working on design tests” or “If I'm a developer and only be coding”. That's how you can create a synergy of exchanging knowledge.

Tereza 8:54
So something broader before actually diving in into specific people? Having something like “What is this team responsible for? What's their focus?”.

Alessandra 9:06
Yes, something like “What value do they deliver to the process? What tasks can they take on?”.

Sarah 9:13
And then these are just some inspirations. We thought about how these profiles could look like. Just different inspirations. Also, how it is currently done by TravelStartup. They have this tool where you can see every colleague, but it's not as detailed as we would like it to be.

Tereza 9:35
It's more like an organisational chart.

Alessandra 9:42
This a piece of advice because that’s something we also work with internally. How can you work for instance, with filters or tags because maybe you don't know that you're looking for that person, but you're looking for something that person worked on? So you could for instance say that AI is a tech. So if you click AI, you can see everyone who's worked on an AI project before.

Tereza 10:08
That's a good point. We did create a super low-fidelity design, just like what was on our minds. And it's kind of similar to persona. But now it's on the personal level. So we don't want to call it personas

because it's actually for one specific person. But then we were also thinking to add skills or areas of expertise. So that could be something as you mentioned, to search people by.

Alessandra 10:51
Yes, I think it's a nice idea to think of reverse ideation. So think of not what information I want to find, but through which information I will search. What am I looking for? Am I looking for a person? Or am I looking for a project? Am I looking for a skill? Just take into consideration what people can search for. That could help you build the structure of the profile.

Sarah 11:21
We will now just ask you a few more questions about this idea. Have you ever done something similar? Do you have something similar in your company right now?

Alessandra 11:36
[laughter] In theory, but I can tell you that the biggest difficulty with this kind of profile is knowing who's responsible for creating and updating them. Because usually, we all have a profile somewhere on the Intranet, but no one updates them.

Sarah 11:54
Have you ever tried to motivate people to update them?

Alessandra 12:01
We tried but it's usually something that you do it once a year, and then it disappears again, and then you do it again. You need to consider a process that makes it easy to update them. Usually, the point is that you have a lot of projects and other things that are a higher priority than doing this kind of internal task. You need to consider how you can integrate these into the workflow of people without disrupting other work.

Sarah 12:37
We were considering having regular meetings to go through them or having a meeting where everybody should check up on their profile. For example have one update day, where everybody needs to update their profiles. Or also just to show the value of the profiles, and how the teams can benefit from them. Explain that in a meeting,

Tereza 12:57
Or have some common deadlines. For example have it every two months, because obviously, you're not going to update them weekly. In startups, projects are usually a couple of weeks long. So maybe having the timeframe around 2-3 months, so basically everybody has that set deadline. And then the manager is responsible to check within the team if it's updated. Something like creating a structure for how to do it. But we do understand that when the managers get busy, these internal tasks are never put as the highest priority.

Alessandra 13:35
What you could consider is how you could automate parts of it. Because for instance, I don't know how they're working internally. But for us, we have a lot of tools where people are tracking or booking people for projects. It could be an idea to have some connection to other processes that feed information directly to the profile. So you don't have to manually go there and say "I'm currently working on this project." If you're booked in one project, it's already automatically there.

Sarah 14:03
In the case that people actually do update their profiles, do you think they will find it valuable? Do you think people will go in and

check it out? And do you think it will be helpful for them to improve the collaboration across the teams?

Alessandra 14:21
I think it can be helpful. I don't really know when people would search for it. Because I'm thinking internally, usually, if I'm looking for someone, I'm just trying to figure out who has experience with a certain thing or who has worked with a certain method. It could be helpful if you're starting a new project so that everyone gets a link to the profile of the team. Before we get started.

Tereza 14:57
Or if you're new to the company, and let's say you're a designer who has some questions for developers, you have no overview of what the other developers work on. Maybe through this, you actually know the relevant person to reach out to. Or do you think people would rather just text through chats?

Alessandra 15:23
Probably texting in the chat. One thing that could be interesting is to think about if you can create room for interpersonal exchange? So how could this profile lead to for example grabbing a coffee together or having lunch together? So that people move from just researching the profile to an exchange in person.

IDEA 2 – User Journey

Sarah 16:04
The second idea is user journeys, so basically aligning the team around a user experience. How this would work is: We would create a user journey based on the current experience on the website, because it's a digital product. That will be screenshots of the different pages a user goes through. Should be very low fidelity. You don't actually use mocks, it's just screenshots. And then the idea is that the different cross-functional teams could annotate those user journeys with insights they've collected through various projects, pain points they've observed, etc. For example, from a developer's side, this could be that nobody's clicking on a button or from a customer interview "this doesn't work". And also areas of opportunity. So whenever you have an idea, but it's not part of this project, or it's out of scope, people could annotate it. This journey should serve the team as a space to share knowledge across teams. It needs to be kept up to date. We thought it could be the responsibility of somebody to always keep part of the journey up to date. So it could be either that somebody has the responsibility for a month to keep it up to date, or the user journey is split into different parts. Then one person is always required to update the onboarding screens for example. And then the teams will also meet regularly to go through the journey to align and to talk about the new insights and pain points that have been collected.

Alessandra 17:45
I love working with user journeys. Usually, what we do here internally is when we have a project, we have the current journey, and we already started in the future journey, so that we can compare them. What works really well in this kind of project is to have it visible somewhere. In the past few years, we had them printed somewhere really big. Some clients have them hanging in the corridors. So every time someone goes grab a coffee, they can take a look at the journey and maybe put a post-it on it. So yes, I think it's definitely a good tool for that.

Sarah 18:24
Yes. Just to explain it a bit more, user journeys serve as a good common ground for cross-functional teams to align on how the current journey is. And it's a common space to share knowledge

and insights. And it will hopefully facilitate communication and collaboration between the teams because they will meet, and they will have this shared point of contact, which is the user, and that is across all departments.

Tereza 18:48
Also sometimes, there's so much input from the customer success team and this can get lost because, at this point, it's not the priority. This idea could also be a bit of a database, with pain points and opportunities, which might not be in the pipeline right now. This could be useful future-wise, to review it. "We have already fixed or looked into these opportunities, and these are in the list that we should plan to look into or they're not relevant". So kind of having an open conversation around it, but also a set of data and inputs from all the relevant departments which are involved in the design process.

Alessandra 19:42
Yeah, I also think it's a good way of creating roadmaps and aligning the strategy. If you have an end-to-end journey, you could give them the opportunity to zoom in and out. So look at the bigger process or go into detail. Define for instance that for the next three months, we'll be working on this part. And then we already know that in the following months, we're gonna work on the next part. Everyone has a better view of what's going to happen.

Sarah 20:16
We looked into different tools that exist right now. So there are some online tools for creating user journeys. We found that it's good to have something like a coordinator for part of the journey. So this person is required to update this part or get everybody on the same page about this part of the journey. And then again, a very simple mock that we created. We created these mocks to be implemented in Figma, because TravelStartup, the company we work with, mainly uses Figma. So we were thinking that it could be a good idea to do it in Figma as well, and then potentially have different pages for the different parts of the journey.

Alessandra 21:04
I think the efforts to maintain and update should be low. In my experience with journeys, they should be visually interesting. If you look at it, it should be easy enough to understand and you should be able to follow it. But it should also interest you, so it should have something that catches your eye.

Sarah 21:31
So you are saying you currently have something similar, you have it printed out in a physical location, and people just add stuff to it to it

Alessandra 21:40
We used to have it. Nowadays, we normally are working with Miro, sometimes also with Figma. But for the journeys, it's mostly Miro. Clients also have it. But we had clients that really collated them big and put them on the corridor. Always like a nice conversation, too. And that's also why I think it should be visually interesting, because we realise like, if you have like really beautiful journeys with like images or colours, and nice graphics, people feel proud of having them hanging somewhere. It's more than just a working document.

Tereza 22:19
This is a bit different for us because TravelStartup works remotely. So almost nobody is at the same location. So if they need to align, it needs to be online. Therefore the journey it's not going to be physical. Also, they have a lot of parts of the website, like when it comes to booking flights, hotels etc., so the journey gets so

extensive. We were also thinking maybe it doesn't make sense to go all over it every two months, because it would be a meeting for many hours. After all, they have a lot of parts. So maybe like actually dividing it into sections like this month, we focus on the flights or this month, we focus on that. If that makes sense. I don't know. It's just a consideration instead of having people five hours on one user journey. Could be too much.

Alessandra 23:11
I think it would be interesting, at least for the alignment, to create maybe a low-fidelity whole journey. Maybe you don't have to have all the lines or all the details. And then let the teams go into detail in smaller parts of the journey. Also If they're using Figma, I think it's awesome to use the tool they already have, which reduces the effort and workload for them.

Sarah 23:44
Do you see any other challenges with this kind of idea of user journeys?

Alessandra 23:53
The good thing about user journeys is that it makes you focus on the user. But it's also really easy to corrupt. Easy for a product owner to say this would be better. So I think it's important to have something that keeps them focused on the user. So maybe pair it with personas or archetypes or something like that. But pairing them with something that makes it focused on the user and not on only the company's strategy or the desires of the product owner.

Sarah 24:36
It's about updating the user journey. It's always kind of like giving them something new to do. And we were just thinking, like, if it's feasible that they will actually update and go in. Do you think they will see the value as well? What is your experience with that?

Alessandra 24:54
I think they do not have to update it so frequently, what they have to have is a future vision. So they have to know how it is now and how they want it to be as they go, what they're working towards. And if they achieved that goal, they can decide if they need to keep updating it or if they just leave it as it is for some time.

Sarah 25:17
So you would have regular meetings to maybe talk about the future vision?

Alessandra 25:23
Yes, or at least have one meeting where they set a future vision and regular meetings where they check how far away they are from it.

IDEA 3 - Guide

Sarah 25:33
The next concept is kind of similar to what you did. We thinking to create a kind of how-to framework, like a guide on how to approach projects. It will be a flexible framework, that is especially useful at the beginning of new projects because we also found that people find it most relevant in the kick-off and the beginning phase of a project to collaborate with different teams. And that will guide how to approach different projects. And it would suggest different tips and tricks, maybe like a toolbox of different service design methods or methods in general, some set of following questions that could be asked at different stages of a project. And also like a guide on how and when to involve other

teams. What we're focusing on is the three main roles, which are product manager, designer and developer. So it could be like a guide for those three main roles of a project. And then potential content could be channels for communication, so when to use which channel am an overview of the different stakeholders, stage setting elements, how to create a brief, so like a guide on how brief should look like, and also like how to divide tasks. So it can be like a lot of different things, we haven't figured out the exact content yet. But like, the overall idea is to create this guide on how to approach your project.

Alessandra 27:09
I think it's nice, I think it just has a big chance of landing somewhere in the drawer. Because that was also been my experience with my master's thesis work. So if you give people a lot of things, they will say nice, but they will probably not use it. I think it helps if you maybe create some specific formats and work with them. So for instance, give them some training on how to use the methodology or on how to combine these tools. And if you say you have an approach for different problems or approaches for different stages of processes just do a session with them where they can hands-on learn it before you deliver them the framework.

Sarah 27:59
That is a good point. Further, this solution is relevant to ease and guide the project kickoff face and increase efficiency from the start. Also, it promotes collaboration and communication across teams, because all methods that we would suggest, would promote collaboration and communication, and also helps to align the teams as all teams will follow the same approach when they work with a new project. So it's also creating this better overview of like, what, what kind of process teams are following. And it also creates a seamless project kickoff and has a clear set of project goals and boundaries.

Tereza 28:40
I believe it was suggested a lot in the literature research, we found out that alignment and collaboration all come back to the foundation of the project kickoff or how the project starts, because it's a frame to refer to throughout the project. So that is why we would like to do a framework which focuses on also different parts, but the big focus is on aligning at the beginning of the project as well.

Alessandra 29:10
I think something you could consider here for this idea is maybe having champions for our methodology because I think until everyone learns how to work with it, and how to apply it, you have a reference person. So if the two of you are not the reference person internally, find a couple of people within the teams that you could train to foster this methodology and to be like the go-to people if needed.

Sarah 29:38
So just our inspirations we looked into, like, how it could look like this kind of framework. What kind of platform could be used, like, what kind of format could this guide take? We haven't defined anything super specific yet. We just created this mock so we can have a starting point to talk about something. We don't know yet which platform we will use, it might be Figma if it will be kind of something more interactive, maybe could be integrated into kind of their communication channels.

Alessandra 29:56
One thing that could be nice here in the project context, is having blocks focused on research as one of the hardest parts and such

projects is research. So we already know and what we need to figure out would be like two interesting blocks here, because then you can map if they've already done the research, or if they already have data on something, and still need to look for before starting the project.

Sarah 30:27
Do you also have something similar in your organisation right now?

Alessandra 30:35
Yes, we have something that we call the project vision board. And it's really similar to what you have. So usually, we have like, the stakeholders who are the end users for whom is this project. What is in scope and what is out of scope? What do they want you to achieve? So like their business goals? And what has already been done? Regarding this topic, and what has not been done been done? Select to whom should be talked to. So your select responsibilities, not only for the key stakeholders but who's gonna take over responsibility for what part of the project?

Sarah 31:15
Who is filling that out? Is it the designer or the manager?

Alessandra 31:19
Usually, we have a kickoff which is moderated by the experienced design team. So either a service designer or UX designer, and then you will have from the client side stakeholders from different departments, but also from us, usually you have one developer, one project manager, and whoever else you need. And it's all filled out in a meeting. We try to already have some information so that it's not like so hard to start. Usually, two or three posts, so people overcome this block of saying the first thing, and then you just let them discuss and together.

Sarah 32:09
And you think it's a valuable thing to do? Like you do it for your project.?

Alessandra 32:15
Yeah, definitely. So we use this for briefing, and usually, we go back to it whenever we are evaluating the project, or if there's something not working, You can always go back to it and say, like, but this is what we defined? Like, should we redefine this? Or should we follow this?

Sarah 32:37
Do you have any challenges or pain points with this idea Is there anything that is difficult or do you think could be improved?

Alessandra 32:49
I think you always have difficulties if the client's strategy changes, or if the client buys into the project and then decides to change it midway. But it's something that doesn't have to do with the methodology so much as people.

Sarah 33:06
Yeah, it's more like if the goal changes. So the vision changes of the whole project changes. Then we had another question if you feel it's feasible to implement in an organisation?

Alessandra 33:25
Yes. I think what is difficult if you're working with an organisation that has multiple teams, it's just to keep this alignment ongoing. Because one thing is like you create like this overarching vision and you have like a journey and you have a strategy and everyone's following it. But as things develop, teams tend to go different ways. So it is important to find ways where they can

come back to and update each other and keep the conversation going so that they are still aligned, not just each one working for themselves.

Sarah 34:05
What kind of platform do you use, such as a PDF?

Alessandra 34:12
No, what we usually do is if we have various teams working for a similar strategy that you have some retro in between, or that you have some alignment meetings. You have to have some touch points where people are coming back together from time to time to discuss what's going on.

Tereza 34:38
When you use these templates, is it more like a physical or digital thing?

Alessandra 34:50
Both. Today, we have a lot of things on Miro. So we have a lot of templates that we're filling in and the clients also have access to it. So they can also just work on it and visit it. If we're doing something here in the office, then we usually print stuff out, fill it up with the clients and have someone digitalize it afterwards. So it's important to have always this one source of truth that everyone can go back to.

Sarah 35:19
Now if you think of it as more of a guide you don't just put it at the beginning of the project but guide you through the emphasise defined stage. Do you think this is feasible for our company to implement? Do you think they could consider it as extra work or do you think they could use this guide and see the value in it?

Alessandra 35:48
I think it should not be extra work, it should be just integrated into the process. So that if you're adopting this kind of off method, and strategy is something that changes the way you work on a project, it should not be an extra step, it should just be naturally the way you organise work around it.

Tereza 36:12
When you worked on your thesis was your framework focused on the whole design process or was it more focused just on the project kickoff? What was your scope?

Alessandra 36:31
I tried to do something end to end. But it was too ambitious, I think it's important to start somewhere and then evolve it over time. It's better than just giving them too much at once. And they don't know how to work with it. And I think that was valuable for my thesis I realize t is important to let people work with it. Just give it to their hands and explain how it works and let them do the work. Because it's it's how they learn it, and then they should evaluate on it.

Sarah 37:09
Maybe now we can have like a step back and look at all three ideas.

Tereza 37:18
If you could rate the concepts considering the organisation's effort, how much effort do you think they will have to put into it? And then the biggest and the lowest value, if it makes sense to you.

Alessandra 37:39

I think everything that you have to align with a lot of people or were to be updated constantly is a high-effort task so for instance journeys, are a very high-effort thing, but it has a very big impact. It's not something that, you know, should be discarded. I think the easiest one to implement is definitely your project board, so the third idea, as it's something you can just do at the beginning of the project, and it's there and you just go back to it. So relatively low effort could also have a big impact in aligning the communication, but it's not necessarily creating collaboration internally. I think I think you should also consider what goal are you trying to achieve. I think they're complementary. Definitely. I think that the profiles are definitely high effort and high maintenance. I don't know how much they will impact the work because it all depends if people are really using them or not.

Sarah 37:54
What we will probably do next is to figure out which idea we want to go with, improve it, create some different prototypes, and then show it to the organisation. We were just wondering if you have, some tips and tricks as a service designer on how to best involve a company in this phase, how to work with them and how to show them the idea the best way.

Alessandra 18:24
I think you really should before you present anything to them, and you probably did this part, I am sure. They're setting their goals and their current process, and selling them the value this could have for their goals and improving the process. So what you want to sell them as a better way of working, but when you consider a better way of working isn't necessarily what they understand as a better way of working? So I think it's really about bringing them in and making them understand what value this could have for them based on their goals and needs, and so on. So you get a better buy-in.

Tereza 33:09
Make sense. Basically, having a very strong base and foundation of why we feel this is relevant.

Sarah 33:15
And showing them how they could benefit from it, and how they will use the goals and their way of working.

Alessandra 33:21
Yes. It's showing them you understand who they are, and what is relevant for them. And not just like in general. Yeah.

Tereza 33:30
We were considering doing something similar like this and going with them through this, but we felt they might be too critical ad they see everything is so much effort. As they are like a startup environment maybe we just didn't want them to discard some ideas just because maybe they feel like is too much or it will be harder to update. Because then maybe we can actually come up with ideas like how it can be useful and how it could be done. But if we made the ideate with them too early, it could end up too negative. Therefore we wanted to wait maybe to get like third-party perspective and involve them a bit later when we were more clear and able to answer some critical questions. We were actually considering just bringing up one idea to them. Do you think it makes more sense? Or do you think it would be better to maybe pick two, we're leaning toward and get their feedback?

Alessandra 34:33
I can tell you how we do it with clients easily we have a mix of this project vision board and a journey. Because that's how you can also unite the vision internally and externally. So clearly, what we will do is create this vision board, and we already tried to

document and we discuss it with them. And then we say like, look, we did some study on your current journey and here are some pain points and opportunities we identified. I know it's probably very big, but maybe you can just do it. Yeah, zoom in and say like, this is something we found. And usually what we show them is also something of like the competitors or inspirations to like, look, this is like a super good journey from a competitor or difficulty they might also face because I think that then you really show them you understand who they are, you understand their product or their service. And you understand the market they're working on. This makes them interested.

Tereza 34:42
makes sense. No, I think it's a big issue that we thought about at the beginning of the thesis, we more focus on the product itself. But we ended up focusing fully on internal processes. We're not involved in anything regarding the user as much as the product. We are not changing anything, actually, regarding the product itself more like the structure, how do they work? So I think maybe it is a bit harder to showcase this way.

Alessandra 35:16 The question is, how are they working? Like, how are they organising the project, right now? Are they organising it based on a journey? Are they organising it based on features? Try using the way they organise themselves to apply your method. If the teams are usually working on features, let's say, then try to think what this journey for this feature looks like. So you show them why it's valuable to like collaborate and to talk to other teams who are maybe working on other features because maybe it's about also showing them the connections that their internal work has to other teams.

Sarah 36:15
Great, I think we asked all questions wanted to ask.

Tereza 36:20
I think we just wanted to kind of bring some third-party perspective. So that was very useful for us and also very good feedback. Thank you so much.

Alessandra 36:37
Nice. Yeah. I'm, I'm impressed with the work. So if you want to have further input later, you can just write to me.

Appendix G – Ideation Feedback TravelStartup 27.04.2023

IDEA 1 – Profiles

[Pitch of Idea 1]

Sr. Product Designer 0:00
So this improvement, do you see it only as just bringing in this tool or maybe this included with some sort of workshops? Why I'm saying this is because what if we're thinking maybe adding something like the 16 personalities? Including something like this, which tells you a little bit about the person. And I guess that's kind of similar to personal work preference, maybe.

Sr. UX Designer 0:43
I think TravelStartup has been investing in Gallup's strengths for some time now.

Sr. Product Designer 0:52
Which I think is more interesting, and it's more useful for the work context.

Sr. UX Designer 1:01
I can send you a link. I can send you my strengths. Gallup strengths.
https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252137/home.aspx

Sr. UX Designer 1:24
So some of the designers have done Gallup strengths. And I know that they were investing in some of the people and culture team to be Gallup strength coaches. I'm not sure if any of the engineers have done that.

And then your question. So it was like, Have you ever done anything similar? So some of the things that popped into my mind when you were showing me were, could we utilise any existing tools that we have? The things that popped into my mind were Inside TravelStartup, Slack and the Wiki. But there are obviously clear downsides to it. I think what you're trying to tackle here is the cross-functional team.

I know that the Wiki is at a higher level split by department, which is unfortunate because we have three departments that work together on a daily basis, which are product, design and technology. So I can see that there's a gap there in having an overview of cross-functional teams.

The other thing that, and I don't have a clear answer for you on that, in Inside TravelStartup, I know that you can have tags, and you can potentially search “mobile”, or a tag or UX or something like that. So there could be the potential to get a tag built in that is per team and search that but the interface is not really there. It's a side project. There are some people within TravelOrg that build it, but it's a side kind of project. So that could be something interesting. And something that if you see that there's value, we

would save X amount of time, by doing X, Y, and Z, therefore, we think this is a new feature improvement inside TravelStartup. We think it would be valuable, because that's kind of the place where you go, where you're like, “Oh, someone slacked me, who are they? What team do they work on.” But there's a missing element to that.

Then my next train of thought in relation to that, I don't know if you wanted to speak to anyone else. But there is a key stakeholder in technology, the VP of Technology. He sets up all the new processes for the engineering team. He's got a bit of an overview of the structure, how things are working, and how designers and developers should be collaborating together. So it could be interesting to meet with him to ask and say, “Hey, I can see there's a gap with seeing an overview with cross-functional teams. Do you have any ideas of like, what sort of existing tools we could use for that?” He's quite an imaginative kind of guy and could come up with ideas or even in a way that he usually likes to get things done. So he might come up with a concept that would be feasible to put forward. I'm happy to be in those meetings and things like that and facilitate that if that is something that you are interested in.

Sarah 5:00
Thank you. What kind of other challenges can you see with that idea? Or opportunities?

Sr. UX Designer 5:12
I think the challenge in general that I have seen for various things, is keeping things up to date. We had a notion page for designers to see which designers were on that team. But that gets out of date very quickly. And I think we might even still have some designers that went before us there. The notion pages have some, like a little bit of cross-functional names there. But yeah, it's up to people within the team to keep that up to date. So I think that would be my main concern.

Sarah 6:01
That's also something, we talked about, and we thought maybe there could be a way to kind of automate it. Maybe there's some kind of integration. So whenever you're working on a new project, your name is tagged somewhere and does it ultimately that's automatically integrated?

Sr. UX Designer 6:19
I guess JIRA is the source of truth to see what ticket somebody is working on. Who's the PM and who are the engineers? And with the wiki, as beautiful as it is, there are potentially some integrations. I don't know what the extent of that would be.

Sr. Product Designer 6:44
On the part of integrating it with JIRA, and getting the projects out there. Maybe another thing that you can get out of this is to know which projects you're working on. Maybe this could sort of push you to relevant people so that it doesn't rely on you going in and actively searching for the people. Because the tool knows what kind of projects you're working on and is going to suggest to you “Maybe this person will be good to talk to because they worked on something similar or related to this”.

IDEA 2 - User Journeys

[Pitch of Idea 2]

Sr. UX Designer 9:58
I like that idea. I know Sr. Product Designer has been wanting this for years.

Sr. Product Designer 10:03
And we could combine that with all the feedback from the feedback channels. Would be great if that could go right into the journey. So then you can kind of visually see that like there are so many red dots here on this part of the journey. It's really terrible here. Well, I think this is a super cool idea.

In the old office, we used to have this giant board with printed screens of the app when we were redesigning it. And there's always people talking about it. When somebody passes, they will always tell you something about some of the screens. So one note for the meetings and talking about this. I guess there need to be very strict rules for the meetings because this can easily end up in going into all kinds of conversations that are all over the place.

Sr. UX Designer 11:09
I can see you have B2B here but I guess it would be more for TravelStartup? Hotels is a little separate. It's more the backend. I think that would be useful. We attempted something similar with the Admin onboarding. I think at that point, we ended up with like four versions of the journey for various reasons. Like, what are the pain points? Maybe that could have been addressed differently as well. And we were kind of playing around with things.

Steven, which doesn't mean much to you, but he was in the UX team, he created this travel framework that had different layers. So I think, with the Admin onboarding, we had, "What are the pain points? What are the insights from the research? And then what are the data insights?" So there were lots of different points as well. It could be that you can switch them on and off with layers or something like that.

Maybe it could even be part of the production files in some way. Or, I don't know, if it's possible to have like previews in Figma. It can get very heavy if you have the actual designs in there. Maybe there could be links to different areas. But it can also get very complex because you have different user types with TravelStartup, like the admin, which is slightly different to the Travel Manager, plus the traveller. So you have a couple. But I think it's really beneficial to have that overview, especially when you're doing a redesign.

Maybe that's something that we're missing a little bit for the new product tier within the TravelStartup because it is kind of like a new onboarding flow in some ways. There are some new features and changes and we're working on individual features, but sometimes it can be hard for me to link how does lockdown approvals works with centralised payments and things like that. The product Director probably has it all visualised in his head, but it can be hard for me. And again, the challenge is to keep it up to date. So much information.

Sarah 14:06
[Assigning responsibilities to part of the journey]

Sr. Product Designer 14:48
Or maybe we will hire one journey person. Their job will be to keep this journey up to date [laughter].

Sr. UX Designer 14:55
Like I just said, then I think about production files. It's so hard to keep the production files up to date itself. And in some ways, it is a little bit like you have multiple flows within the production files. So it is a little bit like a broken-up journey, but it's not a holistic thing.

Sr. Product Designer 15:22
Maybe, if it is part of the production files? So this is kind of like a link through this journey. If it's kind of like a table of contents, so you can see the relationships, but this is actually going to be linking you to the production files. Then you don't need to have things repeated into places. But that obviously means that we need to have perfect production files, where everything is there.

Sr. UX Designer 15:53
Or a disclaimer "Out of date. Needs to be updated."

Sr. Product Designer 15:59
But probably still better than not having it.

Sr. UX Designer 16:01
Yeah. I think that could work. I mean, there are many different solutions, right? So if you had a journey overview, which should link you through the production files? I don't know. I wouldn't want to get into a scenario where you have a duplication of a design or a duplication of information. I'm not sure how the design systems designers would feel about having insights in the production files. But maybe that's what you meant Sr. Product Designer, having a production file, and then having a section beneath, which is insights on those screens.

Or if you're a designer, maybe you have some ideas on "This needs to be this can be improved, or this can be changed" In the grooming meetings, or planning meetings with the developers, sometimes they're like "This password link should be updated to like a magic link."

Usually, when you start a project, you should be going to a production file, right? Looking at the screen, if it is up to date, and saying "Okay, here's where I'm going from. Developers had this idea to improve the magic Password link. I should check in with the VP of Product Design before I start this task. Here's the heuristic analysis from this signup flow from the Admin onboarding from one year ago. Okay, good to know that there are some insights here."

What would make it a little bit more lightweight could be to add links to research, to the relevant sections. I don't know if that would work out. Also, we have three different product tiers. So for the new product tier within the TravelStartup, there was the Admin onboarding. And there was a lot of research on that. So you could potentially link to a notion page, which holds everything to the drive. As opposed to copying all the Post-its on there.

Sr. Product Designer 18:34
Yes so linking to these, but also giving a very short summary. So you kind of get the idea about what you will learn.

IDEA 3 - Guide

[Pitch of Idea 3]

Sr. Product Designer 20:47
Sort of like a pre-flight checklist.

Sr. UX Designer 21:23
I love this. So far is feeling like my favourite. I was just thinking about the VP of Product Design and VP of Technology. So they might be interested in this one. There are also existing things like PM briefs. VP of Technology or someone was involved in creating a document that PMs should follow.

We have a design process. So maybe we can spend some time talking about what we already have? How could this work together? But I feel like this one is very cross-functional. You could collaborate and get some ideas from the VP of Product Design.

I think that each of the ideas is valuable.
I wonder if there are a few bullet points of success criteria that compare to the original goals to help make a decision. Eg. what would help the most members of the cross-functional team? Or what would provide the most instant valsue to the team?

Feedback from Sr. UX Designer after the session

Idea 1
#1 is a good onboarding idea which helps people get to know each other. As mentioned in the meeting earlier, we do have Inside TravelStartup which is the main source of truth when finding out more about colleagues. The downside to the Wiki & Inside TravelStartup is that they are split by the department and not interrelated Teams. It could be possible to create tags on Inside TravelStartup to search cross-team, however, this could be tricky since developers working on TravelStartup can change. It could be possible to create 'cross-functional team pages' on the Wiki and link from the relevant department. Layla could be a good point of contact to bounce ideas on how this idea could be refined and brought to life.

Idea 2
#2 I think that the journey is also extremely valuable. We discussed in the meeting that the journeys could be part of the existing production files. We also noted that we could link to the research from the relevant pages. Sr. Product Designer noted that it would be good to include a short summary there. I do have concerns as to how this could realistically be kept up to date with the complexity of the product and considering everyone's workloads. This is not to say that it is not possible! My further thoughts on the journey are that it could be broken down & relevant on a project basis to start with which would be a 'manageable chunk' to deal with. A journey for a relevant project is also more instantly valuable to the team.

Idea 3
The benefit of option #3 seems to be relevant per project and would be useful to those involved when starting to collaborate on the project. This could be an added benefit with the nature of the TravelStartup team as we don't necessarily have 'dedicated' developers the TravelStartup features could also be built by the trips team or the flight team or the hotel's team depending on the feature. When you pitched this idea I thought this is something that VP of Technology or VP of Product Design may be interested in. There are some existing artefacts that overlap which would need to be assessed and see how this adds extra value. For example, there is the project brief Google doc that PMs are supposed to fill in when starting, designers have the project overview on the thumbnail in Figma (which has stopped being used so much). The design team also has the design process which briefly covers how designers should interact with developers, however, I feel that it is high-level and has gaps. I think that the PMs will continue to fill in their project brief which covers similar points to the mock-up that you created to the right. I wonder if this could morph into something along the lines of having checklists at milestones in the collaboration process to note when the designers, developers or PMS should be involved and a potential checklist of questions that could be answered throughout the process of collaboration.

Appendix H – Prototype Test Plan 04.05.2023

Intro

Welcome! The session should last between 30-40 minutes.
Today's testing will focus on testing our solution concept which is called the 'Project flight tracker'. This tracker serves as a project roadmap and framework with the purpose of helping ease and guide the project kickoff phase and making a project more efficient from the beginning on. Please note that the prototype is semi-functional and not all areas will be clickable. The roadmap is static while the bubbles and other links are clickable.
You will find a black arrow on some sites that will allow you to return to the previous screen. Please share your thoughts out loud while interacting with the prototype.

Scenario

Please imagine that you are a Designer in the TravelStartup team and you have been invited by the PM to join the kickoff of a new project. It's a high-level project that focuses on improving the onboarding experience for a traveler.

Disclaimer: The steps might not match how you currently approach projects in TravelStartup. Please put yourself in the position as if a project would actually follow these steps.

Tasks

Task 1 - Initial reaction
Please open the prototype. Without clicking on anything, please take a few minutes to explore the prototype. What is your initial reaction when seeing this concept? Can you tell me about what you are seeing?

Task 2 - Problem Discovery & Definition
The project is currently in the first phase called 'Problem Discovery & Definition'. You would like to learn more about this phase. Please navigate to the relevant section to learn more about it and take some time to explore the page and its content.

After navigating there:
What are you seeing? Was this what you were expecting to find? Do you find the information useful? Please scroll up to the roadmap.

Task 3 - Template for Problem Definition Qs
The next step is to have an initial kickoff meeting with the PM, engineers and other designers. You would like to note down the questions that arise during this meeting. Where would you go to do that? Please navigate to the relevant section.

After navigating there:
Was this what you were expecting to find? Is this useful information? Please go back to the roadmap.

Task 4 - UX methods & tools
The PM asked you to conduct some additional research before defining the project scope and creating the brief. You would like to explore some new methods and tools to conduct user research and would like to see some suggestions. Where would you navigate to find that?

After navigating there:

Was this what you were expecting to find? Is this useful information? Could you see yourself using something like this? Please go back to the roadmap.

Task 5 - Brief (NOT the template)
The PM has created the project brief. Where would you navigate to look at the created brief for this project? Please navigate to the relevant section.

After navigating there:
Was it clear to you where to navigate to? Please go back to the roadmap.

Task 6 - Assigned Engineer
You, as well as an engineer, have been assigned to the project. You would like to check which engineer has been assigned, where would you go to check that?

After navigating there:
Do you find this information relevant to be part of the roadmap? Do you like how the information is presented?

Task 7 - Personas
You would like to learn more about an engineer's general role to understand their responsibilities better. Please navigate to the detailed Persona section.

After navigating there:
Is this information useful for you to have? Can you see yourself navigating there for information? Please go back to the roadmap.

Task 8 - Figma Exploration File
The project is now in phase 3 'Solution Discovery & Design' and the PM handed over the project responsibility to you. Your next step will be to explore a wide range of solutions before starting detailed designs. You are ready to start the explorations, please navigate to the relevant section.

After navigating there:
Is this what you were expecting to find? Will this help you to be more creative in your design explorations? Please go back to the roadmap.

Task 9 - Checklist
You feel like you have completed all steps in phase 3 but would like to make sure that everything has been covered. Where would you go to check that?

After navigating there:
Is it helpful for you to have this checklist of steps to take in each phase? Why/ Why not? Can you see yourself using this?

Follow up questions

I will now ask you some questions to evaluate the concept you have just gone through.

- Do you think the project flight tracker would be useful to guide a project workflow in the TravelStartup team? Why/ Why not?
- What are the strengths of this solution?
- What are its weaknesses/pain points?
- Would you be interested and/or motivated to use the solution?
- Can you imagine that this solution would be implemented and used by the TravelStartup team?
- Do you have any feedback / opinion on the naming of the concept? Do you prefer 'Roadmap' or 'Flight tracker'?

Appendix I – Evaluation Session 16.05.2023

Test Plan

1. Presentation of the product report
   a. Send proposal beforehand
   b. Presentation should be short and to the point
2. Questions to compare prototypes
   a. This will help us to evaluate the improvements made in the 2nd iteration of the prototype based on the feedback received in the first session
   b. The main feedback from 1st session:
      - Too complex, not streamlined enough
      - The order of steps in the journey has to be rearranged
      - Using their existing tools more
      - Suggestions for additional content like QA persona, best practices checklist, more detailed personas

2. Research question
   - Questions that will let the participants reflect on the solutions

4. Rating questions
   - Results in numeric data
   - This can help us to quantify TravelStartup's opinions and prioritize their feedback when evaluating our proposal

Research question

"How can the service design approach create a common communication ground to foster internal alignment and collaboration between cross-functional teams at the beginning of a project within a startup in the maturity stage?"

- OVERAL FEEDBACK - Any first initial feedback on the proposal?
- PROJECT KICKOFF - How does the solution address cross-functional team alignment and collaboration at the beginning of a project?
- PROJECT OUTCOMES - How does the solution improve internal alignment among cross-functional teams to enhance project outcomes?
- USE OF TOOLS - How does the solution utilize existing tools or resources to foster internal alignment and collaboration?
- COMMUNICATION GAPS - How does the solution address potential communication gaps or misunderstandings between cross-functional teams?
- STRUCTURE - How does the solution align different teams in structuring their processes in a similar way?

Rating questions

1. On a scale of 1-5, how well did the proposal address your business needs and requirements?
2. On a scale of 1-5, how clear and easy to understand was the proposal?
3. On a scale of 1-5, how detailed and comprehensive was the proposed plan for implementing the proposal?
4. On a scale of 1-5, how useful were the solutions proposed in the proposal?

5. On a scale of 1-5, how feasible would it be to implement this solution within the TravelStartup team?

Transcript - Participant 1

Sarah 0:03
[Introduction to the session]

Sarah 0:32
[Presentation of Service Proposal]

Sarah 7:34
[Presentation of Prototype]
Research question

Tereza 9:56
Now, we have some evaluation questions for you. They focus primarily on evaluating the proposal because we won't have time to do another iteration. These questions are based on your personal feeling because you actually never implemented the solution.

How does the solution address cross-functional team alignment and collaboration at the beginning of a project?

Overall Feedback

Sr. UX Designer 10:19
Want to say that it's a very thorough analysis. And I think it's a really holistic analysis, an overview of the pain points and problems and challenges. And it's very eloquently written. I think, you know, dealing with alignment at the beginning of the process, I very much agree with the fact that spending more time on the kickoff meeting, making sure that we are inviting the people that we need, not just the TravelStartup engineering managers, but other outside teams, and getting them in one place, maybe someone that can deal with engineering aspects. The special thing about TravelStartup is that we actually do have a client, potentially involving the client in those early discussions, which would avoid back and forth in scope later in the process.

I like the naming and the distinction between the three types of meetings, which were like the brief presentations to have an initial discussion, a project kickoff, with the wider team. And then this was also just talked about in the retro with the engineers yesterday, they're having another meeting because the engineering managers don't always want to involve the engineers doing the groundwork, because they need that time to be developing things. They would probably need the proposed solution meeting, that you suggested. I think that is super valuable, and having a distinction between those in the process will help. Because, at the moment, we're calling multiple kickoff meetings, like at least three kickoff meetings. And I think that's confusing, but they have each their own goal and purpose. Having them divided makes so much sense. And I think it's gonna be very valuable, at least for the designers. I can see them probably mainly leading this as opposed to the engineers or the PMs. We can book a meeting and say, "Let's do the brief presentation". We can decide on who to involve. And in the retrospective, we also discussed, that we can assess per project on who we're going to invite, but we'll try and invite the wider team. So I think that's such helpful.

I personally like the idea of having things in Jira and having a checklist. I think, as a designer, that's going to be useful to move

you through the tasks. Sometimes, you are working on five different tasks, and it's hard to keep track of where you are in the process. But that's great. Let's see, is this going to be used? I'm not sceptical that it will not work. But Jira should be the source of truth. But it's always hard to keep the tickets up to date. But I think that at a concept level, there's a lot of potential for that.

Tereza 14:16
How does the solution improve internal alignment among cross-functional teams to enhance project outcomes?

Sr. UX Designer 15:01
So this is about how alignment affects the outcome of projects. So I think I mentioned the multiple meeting types. Making sure that the client requirements and the scope is identified at a very early stage, and potentially involving them in co-creation workshops. Like most startups,TravelStartup is working with another client, and the conversations are very separate. Designers are not necessarily involved in that. Hopefully, that will reduce scope changes in a project. Involving engineers earlier on should potentially reduce the number of edge cases that are found later in the design. Having the engineers involved in the concept design, we could ask "Okay, we have two weeks to build this. How will you approach this from a development perspective? That is not going to take three months to develop?" I think that can be very beneficial in streamlining the development workflow and prohibit designers from designing something that's overcomplicated and developers asking to scope it down. So I think we need the engineers that will be building the design to be involved. There's a little bit of contradiction there because we need them but we can't always have their time.

To conclude

- Reduced scope changes
- Increased efficiency in design and development

Tereza 17:31
How does the solution utilize existing tools or resources to foster internal alignment and collaboration?

Sr. UX Designer 17:41
At the moment, we have things existing, but you need to find them on Google Drive, the process for product development hasn't been published to the wider team get. So I think the benefit of this Project Roadmap is that it keeps everything in one place. So you have quick links to different documents that you need. I think the integration into Jira is useful. As designers, everything we design should be attached to a Jira ticket to the process. The progress of that ticket should be trackable by a PM or engineering or anyone at TravelStartup. So I think it's really helpful. Maybe the PM could attach the brief to that ticket, which could be created from the template and then a checklist of what you need. So I think it's useful to have an overview and utilize the tools that we already use.

Tereza 19:04
How does the solution address potential communication gaps or misunderstandings between cross-functional teams?

Sr. UX Designer 19:35
Well, I think the most important things that stand out to me are the three types of meetings. The brief presentation, the project kickoff and the proposed solutions. To have the best success, we need to invite the correct people. Even then, there's still potential for miscommunication to happen, even if you have those meetings. For example, if you have a brief presentation but don't

have time to work on it for a month? Then you might wonder later, what was talked about in that meeting. Yesterday in the retrospective, we actually discussed with the engineer manager to record those meetings. And then even if the scope has changed since then, we have a recording that we can fall back on. It's not uncommon to have a design and then a year later it's developed. So the person might have left or gone on some holiday and your brain cells have left. So it's really good to have a recording and documentation of that. I think that's something that would probably go in the templates. The meeting notes might go into the templates. It needs to be in a central place to get a good understanding of what was discussed

Idea: Link to a folder for meeting recordings & notes

Tereza 21:22
How does the solution align different teams in structuring their processes in a similar way?

Sr. UX Designer 21:31
I think the meetings. Bringing everyone together for a project kickoff meeting or a proposed solution meeting is very important for the engineers. I'm not sure if any engineer should be involved in the brief presentation meeting. But those series of meetings are crucial to have. The high-level discussions around scope and especially with the client as well. A part of it is to keep the designs low fidelity. But you might have multiple meetings. For some projects, there can be a lot of back and forth with the client in separate meetings. Sometimes, there is a kickoff meeting, but you don't really know the different pathways and edge cases yet. So there might even be another meeting in between the project kickoff and the proposed solution which is a solution discussion with the client and engineer, and PM and designer in the same room. What happens now is that people talk in silos and don't have open communication. Sometimes, it's unavoidable that you have to talk with multiple clients.

Sarah
Final feedback

Sr. UX Designer 24:20
But I think it's awesome. I think it's really amazing. I think it's super valuable. We are discussing a lot of these things in TravelStartup retros lately. I find what you are working on to be very inspiring. I would use it right now in my work.

Rating questions

1. On a scale of 1-5, how well did the proposal address your business needs and requirements?
4 - I think this was a very thorough analysis & provided a valuable holistic overview of the issues. The proposed solution provides structure, clarity & significantly streamlines the process. I rated it a 4 as I think there are additional things that could be added to the process that come up through regular discussion in the TravelStartup Des / Dev retrospectives.

2. On a scale of 1-5, how clear and easy to understand was the proposal?
4.5 - Initial reaction is a 5! The proposal was very professionally presented, clear & easy to understand.
I ranked a 4 when I re-read, there were some small sections that were a little unclear
Page 19 - "To explain green will go over the content presented in the framework in the form the high-level parts of the framework,

the two sections highlighted in of tooltips. The other parts of the framework follow the same principle."
Is this explaining how it will work in the Figma File?

Jira tickets
I thought it would be valuable to see a snapshot of the different PM, Des & Dev jira tickets to see that the checklist for each is different - I found that quite valuable!
I think the proposal ends quite abruptly - it could be good to include the 'how to get there' roadmap at the end. Or another sort of summary for the sake of 'wrapping up'.

3. On a scale of 1-5, how detailed and comprehensive was the proposed plan for implementing the proposal?
4.5
I assume that the Figma, Jira template structure etc will be provided. Should they be submitted as links or attachments with the proposed plan?
Could there be a suggestion in the rollout plan to either
track progress during team retrospectives & iterate the process.
have a survey sent out to all team members at different intervals to track success (similar to this one)

4. On a scale of 1-5, how useful were the solutions proposed in the proposal?
5 - I think that the solutions are very well thought out & would work well being integrated into the process. I think that the TravelStartup team (and wider design team) can benefit from having clear definitions of the process, clear steps to complete & clarity about what is required at each step - with an easy-to-access reference in a relevant place.

5. On a scale of 1-5, how feasible would it be to implement this solution within the TravelStartup team?
4 - Rating of 4 since there are a lot of constraints & moving parts - it may be difficult to get everyone on board at once.
I think the solution ties in with TravelStartup's existing resources & practices as best as possible. It's hard to predict if the entire team would be on board with the change & maybe some elements of the plan will be taken on quicker than others.
I think designers will be on board with these changes. I feel that devs & PMs will follow a long. It may take some time to get it working properly.

I think even if the team starts to have more structured Discovery Meetings with cross-collaborative representation (PM, Des, Dev & Client) then it will hopefully start to see improvements in the efficiency of the des/dev process

In terms of convincing teams & stakeholders - it could be beneficial to highlight "problems" vs "desired future". Not saying you should change the report, but this could be done at the start of the change management process, that we are less focussed on problems and more focussed on what our "Desired future is" if we make some of these changes.

Other comments

Feedback Page 7
Challenges: Requirements / Scoping
"Only designers are involved in scope.."
This is not entirely true - often designers would ask questions on the brief at the start to clarify scope or when questions arise, go to a PM to ask about scope & they can clarify that answer.

Communication has been sparse since we are down a PM but the Product Director is there to answer the Qs quickly when needed.

"No clear" —> "Unclear"
We have some idea of launch dates, versions are documented by the client but we don't always have visibility over that.
One pain point I have experienced is - changing in scope throughout a project that is in design or development due to Client / TravelStartup discussing changes to the feature once it has been designed/started development. Partly due to a change in PM & incorrect scoping at the start.

Requirements & Scoping Opportunities:
I think collaboration with TravelStartup / Client / Engineers early on can help to mitigate this lack of clarity on scope & boundaries for future projects.
Involve them in the "Project kick-off meeting" to ensure that we are understanding the client requirements & save time on back & forth discussions between PM/client & PM/designer. Start low-fidelity journeys/visuals to help with communication & enable PM / Client to clarify requirements and steer the design in the right direction before high fidelity designs start.

Feedback page 15
#03 Skilled or limited discovery phase
"TravelStartup team usually jump into development/delivery phase" - do you mean "Design phase?" - jumping into development/delivery would mean it goes straight to developers?
Ongoing
Sprint Retros

Transcript - Participant 2

Sarah 0:02
[Introduction to the session]

Sarah 1:00
[Presentation of Prototype]

Research question

Tereza 6:09
Do you have some overall comments or any first initial feedback on the proposal? Something that came to your mind when you were reading through?

Design Manager 6:29
I think you did a great job with the workshop and the other surveys and conversations that you had. Sarah, you said the focus for this conversation is on pages 18 to 22. But I think everything leading up to page 18 in the service proposal made a lot of sense. And I think this roadmap makes sense as a tool. So you suggesting that the experience can be improved with a combination of this roadmap tool and changing structures of Jira tickets. And I think that makes sense. I can't give you as much feedback on each of those thirteen steps I did not have enough time to read those.

It's not completely clear, from your doc, to know what you think is the primary use case of this solution. So for example, the persona, as you just mentioned, is maybe more for someone who's new and learning about their roles. But at the same time, we're linking this whole document at the top of every Jira ticket, which is very prominent. At first, I thought that meant that it was something I had to fill out every time. So I do believe it can be multiple ways. I think it is helpful for different types of people. But I think that if I

wasn’t speaking with you guys as the creators of it, and if I was just given precisely what you put on paper, I wouldn't necessarily know what you thought was the primary use case. So for example, the use case could be to open up the roadmap at the start of a new project, take a look through to remind yourself of the steps and check if something might be missing. Or another one would be that every time a new team member is added to the team, send them the roadmap, and schedule a meeting to walk through it. Something like that can give a little bit more summary on how to use it, that could be really good. You do a good job explaining why it matters and that it might have to be edited at some point. But just adding a little bit more to that would be useful.

Sarah 9:20
Yes, that makes a lot of sense to include.

Design Manager 9:35
The other thing that comes out is you are interchanging the words project and Product Manager.

Sarah 9:43
I just realised that while I was talking. We will change that.

Tereza 10:18
And now we will just have some evaluation questions focusing on the solution. Obviously, you haven't implemented the concept but what would you say if it was implemented? Just try to put yourself into the scenario if you could actually use it.

How does the solution address cross-functional team alignment and collaboration at the beginning of a project?

Design Manager 10:40
I think that it provides members of the design and product team more clarity on their own process, which is always good, because sometimes when things get busy, you can start to skip parts of your own process. I think it also, more importantly, gives everyone else in the product and design team clarity on our process. I know you list the engineers as a persona, but the Senior Product Marketing Manager, on the commercial team, and the Senior Vice President of Product, as a stakeholder in the product team who doesn’t pay attention to everyday tasks. In general, there are so many people, that would benefit from seeing it. So I think it helps with alignment.

This might be an answer to multiple questions that you are going to ask. The service design and the solution doesn't work until you educate people on it. If this was not just the thesis, the other half of this is to think about how we can show this to people so they understand why they're doing something different. Everyone dislikes doing things differently. You have a group of designers that really understand this and they are really advocating for it. Then you can help the engineers and PMs understand it. So essentially providing training. I think it’s doing a great job at cross-functional collaboration but it definitely requires training.

Tereza 12:53
You are very right. It is something which was part of the implementation plan, but out of scope for the thesis delivery.

Design Manager 13:03
Yeah, I don't know what your thesis advisor would want you to do regarding that. If it's okay to say that we acknowledge that this requires training but not have it in your document.

Sarah 13:16

We need to show that we have considered it and then describe it shortly in our future considerations.

Tereza 13:33
How does the solution utilize existing tools or resources to foster internal alignment and collaboration?

Design Manager 13:52
I like that you are connecting the dots between things that already exist. It's always important to build on what we already have. It's rare that completely starting something over is the most efficient. So, you are defining a service design that creates better connections between things that already exist. And you are filling in the gaps.

Tereza 14:22
How does the solution address potential communication gaps or misunderstandings between cross-functional teams?

Design Manager 14:49
I guess it is. The step where somebody is in a project is important to see. As an example, if you are an engineer, and you see a design of mine, and you think you're seeing it, because tomorrow, you will have to start building it, your reaction to that will be very different than if you see a design and realise that they did that for early user testing and scoping. Being able to have that context is easier with a map like yours. For any given point, it reduces the chance of miscommunication, because it shows you that you are one of their steps. Puts you in context.

Tereza 16:06
How does the solution align different teams in structuring their processes in a similar way?

Design Manager 16:19
I'm not sure that it does that because it ends when the designs are finished. So it's not necessarily providing a roadmap for engineering. I think you are helping them to better understand the process in the beginning, but it's not necessarily solving their side. I don't think that's a problem. I think that they will always have things to worry about that are different from what designers and PMs worry about. But I think you created a good definition around a piece of the overall product development process. And it's an important piece, and it needs more structure. But there is this other part that is not part of your structure.

Sarah 17:34
Lastly, we have some rating questions, where we are asking you to rate something from one to five. And that is more about how we structured our service proposal and how the information was presented.

Rating questions

On a scale of 1-5, how well did the proposal address your business needs and requirements?

Design Manager 18:24
I just want to make sure that I am looking at your description of our business needs because that is how you should read this question. I think that you're specifically referring to collaboration in cross-functional teams at the beginning of a project. So I would say 4 out of 5.

Sarah 19:02

On a scale of 1-5, how clear and easy to understand was the proposal?

Design Manager 19:10
I would say 4 out of 5.

Tereza 19:16
What was missing to reach a 5? What do you think was the biggest gap or something you would appreciate having?

Design Manager 19:35
The use cases. I also have to say that I'm hesitant to give out perfect scores. If you would have done it on a scale of 10, you might have gotten a 9.

Sarah 19:47
On a scale of 1-5, how detailed and comprehensive was the proposed plan for implementing the proposal?

Design Manager 20:05
I would say that the process is very understandable. This is where my previous feedback about training matches. I think that it's mentioned, but there is a lot more involved in that. But I think it's very understandable. So overall, 4 out of 5 again.

Sarah 20:40
On a scale of 1-5, how useful were the solutions proposed in the proposal?

Design Manager 20:45
5 out of 5. I think they are very useful.

Sarah 20:54
On a scale of 1-5, how feasible would it be to implement this solution within the TravelStartup team?

Design Manager 21:06
Feasibility is a difficult question in this context because there is no cost associated with your proposal. And the cost doesn't always mean dollars, but it's usually time. So it is always feasible but it would not happen quickly. If we call somebody the owner or champion of this, this would probably be a big part of their job for a few months. Making sure that everyone was getting trained on it, making sure that it will be used when a new project gets started, and finding things to update and adjust the solution. So I would split it in the middle and would give a 3 for feasibility. But that is still optimistic. That's not a judgement of your work. Change is very hard within a group that is under pressure to deliver something. So I think if we said that you could really dedicate somebody to spending the time on it, then it's pretty feasible, but that is significant work. For context, this is the type of stuff is basically [Name]'s full-time job on the team. Trying to keep moving towards improving the process. It all starts with a good idea. There are real issues, you document, and you propose the solutions, the solution makes sense. But I'd say three. Work begins when you start trying to implement it.

Sarah 23:37
Yes of course. If we had more time, we would also iterate on it more.

Tereza 23:51
It's designed for a scenario where a service designer is within the company and will take care of it.

Sarah 24:02

And I think we're right on time. Thanks a lot for providing the feedback.

Design Manager 24:13
You guys have done a great job on this. You can be very proud. It's a very professional doc and we can have pretty deep conversations about feedback, feasibility and stuff. You're earning this degree.

Tereza 24:33
Thank you so much.

Sarah: 24:37
We will share the final document in the end

Appendix J – Survey 01.03.2023

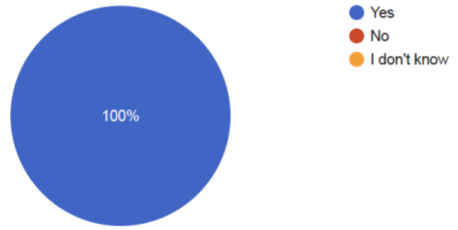
Service Design in start-up environments

27 responses

Are you working in a start-up?

Copy

27 responses



How many people work in your company?

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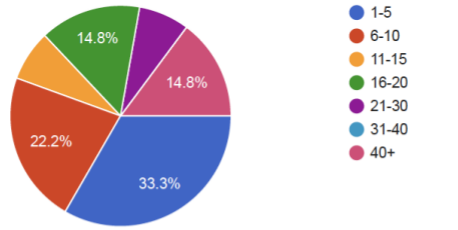
27 responses



What industry is your company working in?

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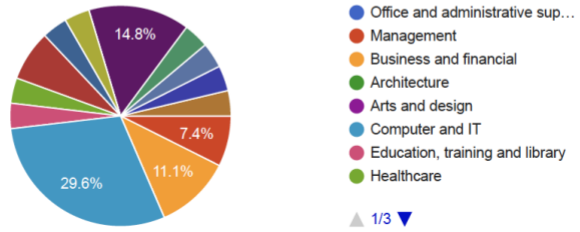
27 responses



What department are you working in? (You can select more than one option)

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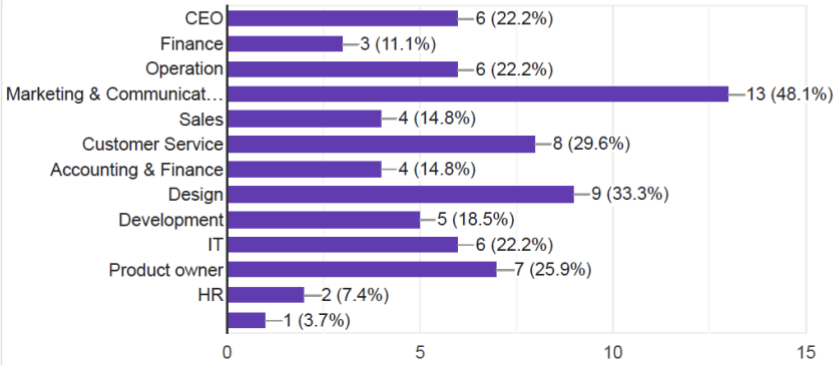
27 responses



Do you know what Service Design is?

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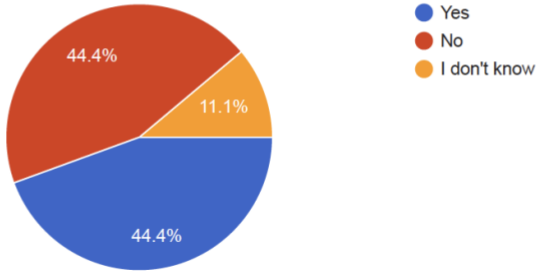
27 responses



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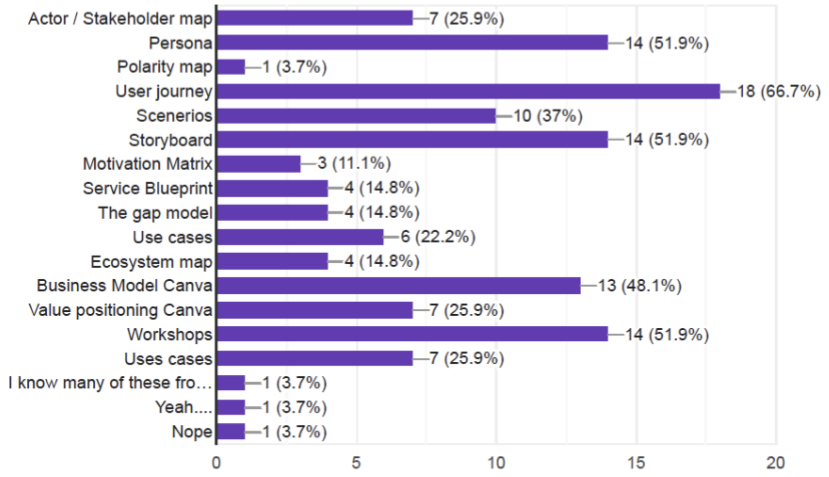
"Service design improves the experiences of both the user and employee by designing, aligning, and optimizing an organization's operations to better support customer journeys."

The tools listed below are commonly used in service design. Have you used any of these tools while working in a start-up? Please select the ones you have worked with.

27 responses



If yes, could you elaborate on the structure you are using?

11 responses

a bit random, we have a designer that does the job I am implementing what he says. ps in the following question you should allow selecting none

1 week to 2 week sprints

we work in scrum sprints of 2-3 weeks, where tasks are added to a jira board, assigned to different people and moved across from to do- in progress - for review - ready for testing and finally done. for each done task we gather points, and at the end of the sprint we see how we managed compared to how we thought we would

We are using a canban structure in Notion for planning tasks. We also have a GANTT matrix for hardware development, software development and one for business development.

Own structures, online systems like Podio

Don't follow anything specific, just dividing processes into different boxes for overview

Scrum inspired but with tailored features

We have made a gannt chart

Most often design thinking

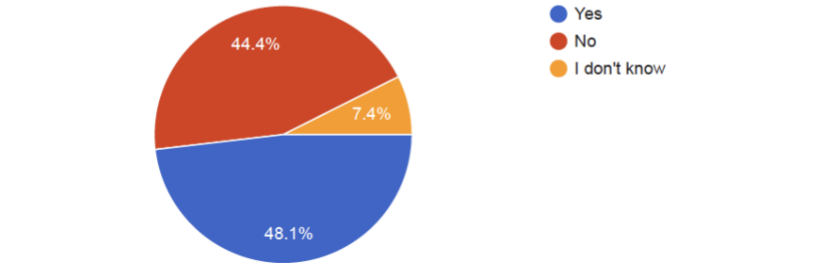
Qual/Quant Research, DT, Stakeholder Maps, then usually Workshops, Buy-Ins, Explorations, then DoubleDiamond and calving out Work

24 steps to a successful startup

Copy

Do you follow a structure or project planning template when working on a project?

27 responses



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Have you worked with any of the following structures? Please select the ones you have worked with, if any.

27 responses