

# Re-design of Novo Nordisk's application form

*Improving candidate  
experience through service  
design practices*

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## Abstract

In an era of heightened competition for top talent at organizations, this thesis aims to explore and understand the process and inherent challenges of candidate experience from a service design perspective. It is focused on enhancing the job application process for candidates within the context of Novo Nordisk's Human Resources department (People & Organization). The application process is investigated from the moment candidates start seeking a job until they submit their application. The conducted research emphasizes the use of service design practices, such as design thinking, customer journey mapping and interviews to analyze the needs, pains, and thoughts which candidates experience throughout the application process. In this sense, a collaboration with the target group is crucial for ideation purposes, in order to identify opportunity areas for improvement. The case study results in a re-designed application form, including a process overview and guidance throughout each step of the application. The proposed improved solution alleviates candidates pain points concerning communication, process transparency and expectations management. Finally, a comprehensive plan for implementing and testing the proposed solution with the target group and relevant stakeholder is presented.

## Key words

Service Design, Double Diamond, Candidate Experience, Job application process, User Experience, Hiring process, Human Resources

# Abbreviations

Novo Nordisk – NN  
Global People & Organization – GPO  
People & Organization – P&O  
Digital Development & Analytics – DD&A  
Design Thinking – DT  
Service Design – SD  
Human Resources – HR  
User Experience – UX  
Human-Computer Interaction – HCI  
Transparency on the General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR  
User Interface - UI  
Hiring Managers – HM  
Curriculum Vitae – CV  
Program Increments – PI  
Customer Experience – CX  
Product Owner – PO  
Minimum Viable Product – MVP  
Artificial Intelligence – AI  
Information Technology - IT

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# Introduction

In an ever-increasing competitive environment, the attraction and retention of a talented workforce have emerged as key strategic priorities for many organizations (Maheshwari et al., 2017). Concepts such as employer branding, candidate experience, and talent management have become pertinent areas for further exploration. Within the domain of Human Resources (HR), it is crucial to ensure that organizations' HR processes and services align with the needs of employees, enhancing their experience.

Nowadays, there are many organizations having specialized teams dedicated to research and evaluating on ways to improve experiences that customers have with their products or services. The enhancement of employee experience, as users of HR processes, products, and services, can also be applied to the candidate experience, considering that any employee has once also been a candidate (Claus, 2019). This shift in perspective underscores a strategic focus on not only attracting the best possible talent but also ensuring their experience throughout the application and hiring process is positive and aligns with the organization's overall employer brand and values.

This present work is a collaboration with the People & Organization department at Novo Nordisk, in Denmark, in order to explore the candidate experience from a service design perspective. Emphasizing the enhancement of candidate experience as a topic of Novo Nordisk interest, it is outlined as one of their Growth mid-term strategy goals (NN internal documents, 2024). Given the significant volume of recruitment and expected expansion, P&O's capacity to attract and involve candidates is viewed as essential in ensuring the most fitting talent for each position. It is recognized that the quality of their service and product experiences carries substantial weight and can be enhanced through thoughtful design solutions.

The research topic focuses on candidate experience during the job application process, emphasizing its relevance within the service design field and its practical implications. In this sense, the research question is: How can service design practices help HR departments navigate and improve candidate experience? Therefore, the main goal of the present work is to identify areas for improvement within the candidate journey, and to develop a service solution which will alleviate some of the candidates' pain points.

The utilization of the design thinking mindset, tools, and approach ensures that HR professionals address the right problem area and consider candidates' needs. However, it is important to keep in mind that candidates are not the only relevant actors shaping the application experience. Hiring managers and recruiters also play a crucial role in this process, thus, their participation will be considered.

Through this thesis, acquired competencies throughout the Master's in Service Systems Design are applied in order to make a meaningful impact by collaborating with an organization on a topic of mutual interest. This collaboration enables the practical application of these skills into a corporate environment. The Double Diamond methodology was the chosen approach to navigate this project. Firstly, a comprehensive review of existing literature and best practices related to candidate experience, service design, and user experience was carried out to identify key challenges and opportunities within the application process. Then, interviews, surveys, and co-creative activities were performed in order to gather relevant insights and gain a deeper understanding of the current candidate experience. Simultaneously, a detailed journey map was created to visually represent the candidate experience and identify potential areas for improvement and innovation. Subsequently, a prototype for the proposed improved solution was developed. Finally, a comprehensive plan for implementing the proposed solution was defined, encompassing stakeholder involvement, timeline, allocation, and testing. Engaging relevant stakeholders, collaborating with HR



professionals and hiring managers, and ideating with candidates to develop potential solutions which can enhance candidate experience was crucial throughout the whole process.

## Learning goals

The learning goals for this thesis project follow the official objectives defined by the Service Systems Design curriculum from Aalborg University. One is expected to showcase the acquisition of competencies, skills, and knowledge for expertise in Service Design (SD). The following objectives were taken from the official objectives (Aalborg University, 2023). Thus, after completing this project, one would obtain knowledge about:

- The appropriate methodological approaches to specific study areas;
- Design theories and methods that focus on the design of advanced and complex product-service systems;
- The relevant literature in the SD field.

Regarding skills, after completing this project, one would be able to:

- Work independently, to identify major problem areas and adequately address problems and opportunities;
- Analyse, design and represent innovative solutions;
- Evaluate and address major organizational and business issues emerging in the design of a product-service system.

Concerning competencies, after completing this project, one would be able to:

- Master design and development work in situations that are complex, unpredictable, and require new solutions;
- Independently initiate and implement discipline-specific and interdisciplinary cooperation and assume professional responsibility.

## Supporting Literature

In this section, the body knowledge from an academic perspective, the service design principles, and tools, as well as several aspects related to the scope of the thesis were explored in detail. All the phases throughout the process were informed by the literature review, serving as the basis for the already explored knowledge and insights for the case study in question.

### Service Design applied to business

***“The challenge for service designers is to design for the intertwined networked society we live in, and design for flexible services operating in a constantly evolving environment” (Polaine et al., 2013).***

It is still challenging for some organizations and businesses to perceive what service designers can contribute to their activity. Following Reason et al. (2015) book, SD provides organizations with a perspective, method, and toolset that can help them achieve their business ambitions and navigate internal and external challenges. It addresses customer-related challenges while balancing business drivers and organizational capabilities. Regardless of the situation, service design begins by taking an outside-in perspective and driving it through significant business objectives while considering the organization's capabilities. According to Luis Alt, Founding Partner Director at Livework Brazil (Livework, 2023) it is a field that offers a comprehensive view. It presents a holistic perspective on customer relationships, encompassing both their current state and the potential for improvement. By exploring hypotheses and ideas beyond the

product, it provides insights that could potentially change the configuration and development of products.

Highlighting Reason et al. (2015), service designers have the capability to utilize tools that help businesses align their organizations around people. Given this, the primary connection between SD and business lies in the development of ecosystems that ensure value for both the company and its customers. Service design introduces a human-centric perspective, while business evaluates the company's viability, enabling organizations to address individual needs and expectations effectively. It is referred by Morelli et al. (2021) that the core SD capabilities are addressing the context, controlling experiential aspects, modeling, vision building, engaging stakeholders, working across levels, building logical architecture, and open problem-solving. Briefly, service designers ensure that organizations have an internal understanding and alignment of their customers and employees when designing or improving services.

### Customer-centric approach

Adopting a customer-centric approach can provide valuable insights into customers' expectations, experiences, and behavior when interacting with a business. This perspective can reveal pain points and emotions that customers encounter throughout their journey, helping organizations identify specific intervention points to enhance the customer experience (CX) and address challenges. SD can help identify which actions will have the most significant impact on customers and execute improvements that create tangible value for them (Reason et al., 2015).

Increasingly, there is a growing focus on customer centricity as an important transformation for organizations to establish and ensure relevance in the market. SD helps in this transformation, as it can integrate the customer's perspective within the organization, ensuring

that decisions made are valuable for customers and, as a result, for the business (Morelli et al., 2021).

## User Experience

User experience (UX) has emerged as a critical concept in the realm of design, human-computer interaction (HCI), engineering, and psychology. Over the past few decades, the significance of UX has grown exponentially, bringing it from an afterthought to a crucial consideration when developing products and services. According to Stull (2018), there are two hands of UX: UX research and UX design which should be combined to leverage the end experience. Stull (2018) states that it is required to do UX research that involves original primary research, like interviewing customers and relevant stakeholders in addition to reviewing existing secondary data, such as reports on customer behavior. This might include qualitative and quantitative methods. After design research comes the tangible part (UX design), resulting in the “design of a thing” based on previous research findings around the customer and its ecosystem.

As a definition given by Chapman and Rodden (2023), UX refers to how users perceive, learn, interact, and complete tasks with a service or product. As also mentioned by Stull (2018), this term is commonly associated with technology products (HCI), but it extends to different fields, including finance, healthcare, retail, hospitality, and more. Across different industries, some organizations in the previously mentioned sectors have teams dedicated to understanding and improving UX. However, UX is not limited to technology interactions as it includes all human-made services and environments, all involving learning, interaction, and potential success and frustration (Chapman & Rodden, 2023).

In this thesis, the concept of UX will be explored considering the above-mentioned definitions, while also considering the key service

design principles outlined by Reason et al. (2015), including movement, structure, and behavior, which will be further explored in this thesis. As a result, it is crucial to underscore that UX is an integral part of the entire user journey, comprising a necessity rather than an optional feature when designing a service (represented in Fig. 4).

Moreover, when discussing UX, a specific user is not specified, leading to the assumption that it could be the end customer, a stakeholder involved in the organization, or an employee. It refers to the individual or individuals who interact with a product, service, or system within a specific context. Additionally, projects with a similar scope to this thesis do not strictly differentiate between purely qualitative or quantitative research (Chapman & Rodden, 2023). Many projects are adaptable to either a qualitative, quantitative, or combined approach which explains the choice of doing both interviews and online surveys.

Improving a service involves changes in systems, developing new processes, training employees, and implementing changes in touchpoints (physical or digital), among other factors that influence the experience. As these changes begin to unfold, service designers need to gather current information that allows them to adjust the research into ways to improve UX throughout the journey. Therefore, an initial plan for the service requires further improvement, given the complexity of designing adaptable and consistent services for the interconnected society operating within a continuously evolving world (Polaine et al., 2013).

## Candidate Experience

Previous literature covered UX in a general context, without specifying the user being considered. Thus, the current analysis shifts focus to the candidate's early job application experience, existing reviews, and the importance of candidate experience for organizations.

Gong (2021) and (Arias-Lopez, 2019) suggest that an applicant's experience ideally starts from the moment individuals start looking for jobs until their successful hiring as a new employee. From another perspective, this also means that this journey may end with either a disappointed non-selected candidate or a satisfied non-selected candidate. This outcome is significantly impacted by the applicant's experience, which, in turn, is influenced by the progression of the process, communication, and the overall expectations that candidates value throughout the journey (Gong, 2021).

Furthermore, digitalization has become one of the factors that organizations need to consider for applicant experiences, as it has brought new ways of communicating (Gong, 2021). According to Onishuk (2023), the experience encompasses four key elements: the job announcement, application phase, scheduling, and communication. The job description needs to be clear, providing essential information about the job and truthfully communicating the nature of the task. Regarding the application phase, it should be streamlined and straightforward for the candidate. In terms of scheduling, it needs to ensure that the process is thoroughly scheduled, allowing the candidate to understand the next steps. Finally, clear communication is of the utmost importance, even if the result is negative, the candidate is informed and possibly provided with feedback. The scope of this thesis will encompass the experience candidates have from when they first start seeking a job until they submit their application. In line with this, it is not relevant to explore how getting rejected or accepted for the job impacts on their journey as a candidate.

As mentioned by Childs (2019) and Onishuk (2023) it is crucial to remember that a positive candidate experience serves as a strong employer brand message for organizations. The employer brand significantly influences an organization's ability to attract top talent, requiring intentional management to ensure consistency. Candidates are not the only relevant actors in shaping the application experience, hiring managers and recruiters also play a crucial role in this manner. In

fact, they are the facilitators of a comprehensive hiring process and are present throughout the journey. To enhance the talent acquisition organization, it is important to consider hiring managers as users as well, prioritizing their experience when designing the overall hiring approach (Ben-Cohen, 2018 and Claus, 2019).

It is relevant to introduce HR employees to the design thinking (DT) mindset, so it can be used for implementing further changes to the hiring process. Incorporating DT into talent management can enhance the employee experience, as users of HR processes, products, and services can also be applied to candidate experience considering that any employee has once also been a candidate. When DT is applied to talent management, it centers on three key principles: "empathize" — understanding the relevant stakeholders and the challenges they encounter; "envision" — generating a range of options and shaping them into solutions; and "experiment" — testing potential solutions with the target audience, refining them based on feedback (Claus, 2019).

Gong (2021) highlights that the primary function of Talent Relationship Management (TRM) lies in establishing and nurturing relationships with potential candidates, aiming to consider them for future job openings. This emphasizes the necessity of considering individuals' experience before becoming an employee at an organization, highlighting the relevance of the design brief, that will be further explored.

Juntunen (2018) defends that the candidate's experience should be a key consideration in every recruitment process, but unfortunately, recruiters often fall short in this area (Childs, 2019 Onishuk, 2023). In the worst cases, a negative candidate experience could potentially set back highly skilled candidates from reapplying in the future. Conversely, a candidate with a positive experience is more likely to consider reapplying in the future, even if they had received a negative response (Juntunen, 2018).

## Connection with P&O

In recent years, strategic HR scholars have increasingly focused on exploring employees' experience and behavioral responses, such as job satisfaction and turnover, in relation to HR practices. This shift aims to identify variations between an organization's planned HR operations and the actual experiences of employees. It is crucial to understand their responses to HR and ensure superior HR management and performance (Batat, 2022). Some authors highlight the broad nature of the employee's experience, which involves the inclusive reasoning that shapes the entire employee's encounter experience. This comprehensive encounter can be influenced, either positively or negatively, by a range of factors, whether they are personal or related to the organization (Plaskoff, 2017; Bersin et al., 2017; Itam & Ghosh, 2020).

This thesis process thoroughly examines the emotions, viewpoints, anticipations, requirements, and behaviors encountered by candidates as they navigate the job-seeking journey up to the point of submission. Using qualitative and quantitative research methods, the project aims to uncover the different stages and interactions experienced by candidates throughout this journey and their perspectives on the most critical aspects of their process.

The evident connection between candidate experience and the P&O department is reliant on the fact they are the ones in charge of people and culture within NN. When the SD process is applied to the employees, something like what CX does for NN customers is being carried out in practice. A better environment and improved working conditions are becoming more and more a priority for P&O in their employee teams. Therefore, just as SD is relevant for CX, it is also relevant for employee experience projects. Furthermore, the adoption of SD practices in the daily operations of an organization helps promote a more innovative and human-centric culture. This culture can learn quicker and collaborate more efficiently to achieve better results. The

following Fig. 1 represents P&O's approach to UX and the connection between different user experiences.

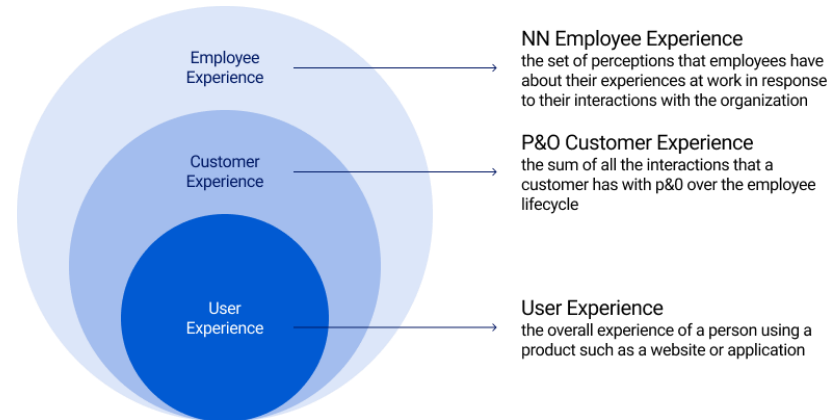


Fig.1 - NN P&O view on employee experience overcharging employee and user experience

## Steps on the candidate experience

As previously mentioned, the journey mapping performed in this project exclusively focuses on the journey undergone by a candidate from searching to applying for a job at NN. Further in the document (Define chapter), the insights gained from the in-depth interviews with employees regarding this journey mapping will be explained in detail. Considering the previously studied literature regarding steps of the candidate experience, some generic steps proposed by Gong (2021) include career search, job search, application, evaluation and decision. In such steps, the journey expands until applicants are (or not) offered the job. However, in this thesis, the focus is on the candidates' journey until their application submission, whether the candidate gets the job or not does not affect this specific journey under study.

A linear forward process is valued by candidates in the hiring process. It is important for them to establish a clear process timeline,

that consistently progresses and to receive timely feedback from the organization (Gong, 2021). A personal approach to customer journey mapping was created based on experience from previous semester projects as well as the internship completed last semester. The relevant aspects of a customer journey map, based on previous projects as well as the methodology by Stickdorn, (2018), are illustrated in Fig. 2. As the project progresses, these foundational aspects will form the basis for the designed candidate journey. Leaning on Claus (2019) perspective about the value of touchpoint management emphasizes that a seamless set of services can be provided by HR to enhance work productivity and improve the overall employee experience. All touchpoints with individuals, tools, systems, policies, and procedures are managed from the employee's perspective (customer-centric approach) rather than solely from the talent management process and delivery perspective.

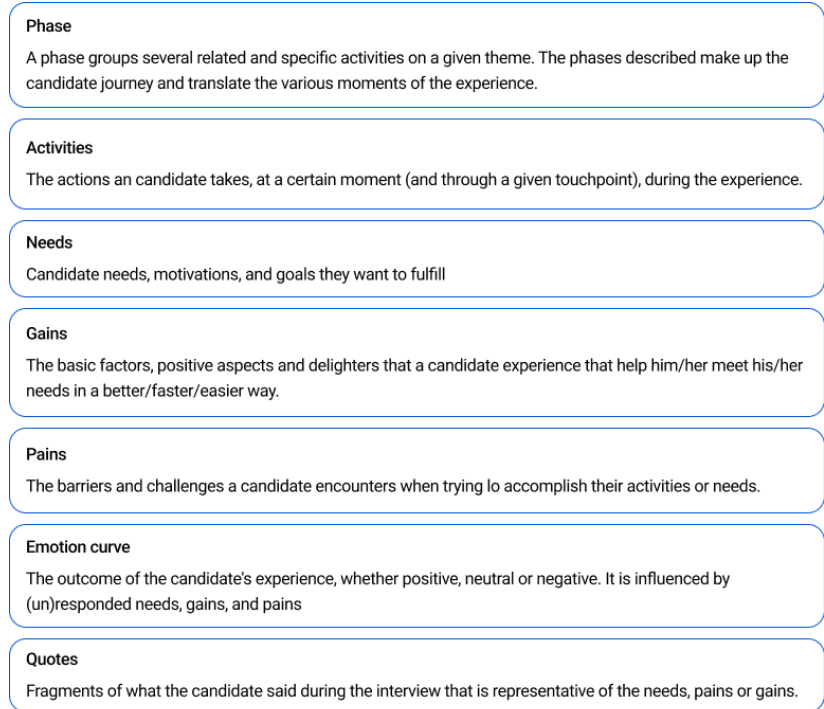


Fig. 2 – Aspects of the customer journey with a short description

# Methodological Approach

## Double Diamond

The Double Diamond model, created by the Design Council (n.d), is an effective tool for both designers and non-designers to understand and navigate the design process. In collaboration with NN, ensuring that the process was clear and easily comprehensible to all relevant stakeholders was crucial. This was aimed at reducing communication barriers between the involved team and other NN employees from different disciplines who are familiar with the model. The model comprises two diamonds, one for divergent thinking and the other for convergent thinking. It is also worth mentioning that the design process is not always a linear path as Fig. 3 might illustrate, there are often moments of realization that can prompt a revisit to earlier stages of the process.

The process aimed to incorporate IDEO's approach to DT, along with the Double Diamond methodology. Adopting a designer's mindset can revolutionize the way organizations develop products, services, processes, and strategies. DT aligns human desirability, technological feasibility, and economic viability to create effective solutions (IDEO Design Thinking, n.d). It can be seen as the process of creating meaning and understanding of complex concepts. Effective decision making and communication are reliant on the selection of appropriate tools to support the process. These tools can also help teams approach design tasks from a distinct perspective, visualize complex systems, and reflect either a convergent or divergent view of design depending on the stage of the project (Chasanidou et al., 2015).

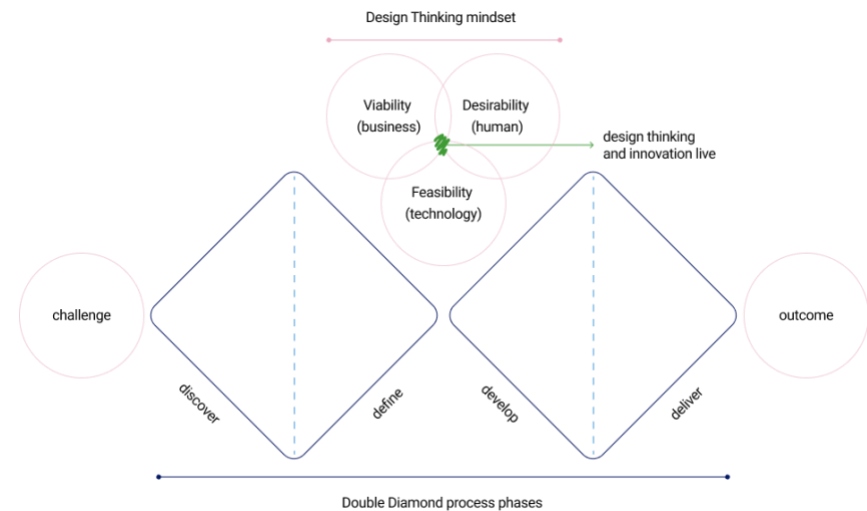


Fig.3 - Double Diamond process (British Council, n.d) + Design Mindset (IDEO Design Thinking, n.d)

In short, the first diamond involves gaining a deeper understanding of the problem by spending time with those who are affected by it – Discover phase. The insights gathered during this phase can help to redefine the challenge – Define phase. The second diamond encourages diverse thinking and co-designing with a range of people to generate different solutions to the previously defined problem – Develop phase. The final phase involves testing and refining the solutions at a small-scale before implementing them – Deliver (British Council, n.d). This methodology was primarily chosen for its simplicity, visual appeal, and structured approach to the design process. Design activities and tools can be planned in each project phase from the start. Additionally, the model is widely recognized in the design field, not just in SD, as it has been utilized in previous semester projects.



# Underlying Methodology

## Service Design

As Reason et al. (2015) states, SD revolves around three essential elements: movement, structure, and behavior. In the context of this thesis, these elements serve as the foundational components that highlight how SD can elevate different elements of business operations within an organization. In his book, Reason et al. (2015) exposes the connection of SD and CX and how he envisions its optimization within organizations. The project will be guided by this framework, as it is strongly believed to offer the key consideration for service designers when developing services, given that this framework is tailored for services. While it may not be the most updated literature about SD elements, it was found to be particularly interesting because it effectively connects UX and business operations. A clear connection between these three essential aspects for the case study is established.

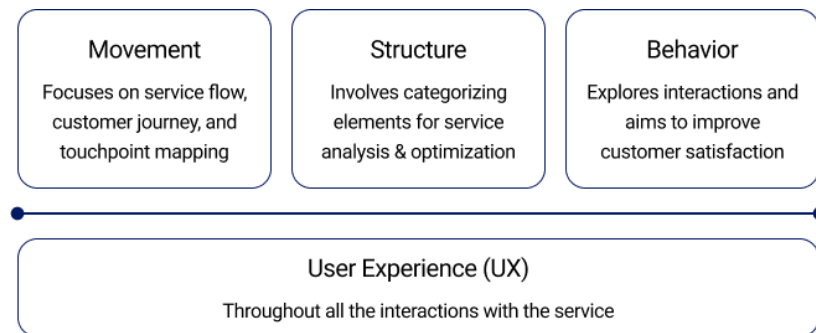


Fig.4 - SD essential elements (Reason et al., 2015)

**Movement**: focuses on the flow within a service, including customer's journey, tasks conclusion, and management of large customer numbers. It is crucial for achieving customer-oriented goals

and desired outcomes in services and service evolution. Movement is also represented as a horizontal line (before, begin, during and after), crucial for understanding and achieving customer objectives. Therefore, it is important to understand how different touchpoints appear within a timeline and map them throughout the customer's journey – getting the full picture. **Structure**: involves all the various elements that come together at various stages in service delivery – service blueprint or journey map. The focus is on categorizing these elements to understand complex steps and be able to analyze them separately and in parallel. This understanding is valuable for better organization and resource optimization, leading to more effective services and enhanced experiences. Moreover, consideration is given to how front-stage and back-stage align to service redesign or improvement. **Behavior**: explores how customers, staff, and technologies interact within the framework of movement and structure. Understanding current behaviors and designing for new ones and delivering experiences that result in customer satisfaction, are essential within this framework. With an incorporation of an understanding of customer behavior, an improved way of how an organization interacts with its customers is offered, along with an effortless way to further adapt if necessary. When going through the design process, as well as the UX that follows, these essential elements are crucial to be considered.

## Human-centered design

Human-centered Design provides an opportunity for all problem-solvers to design with communities, gain a deep understanding of the individuals they aim to serve, generate multiple ideas, and develop innovative solutions based on the genuine needs of people (IDEO, 2015). Furthermore, the adoption of a designer's mindset can enhance how products and services are created by organizations. All three aspects of DT illustrated in Fig.1 are crucial for fostering innovation and guiding



service development. The implementation of human-centered and business-oriented approaches, such as stakeholder maps, can spark creativity while considering technological feasibility. However, solely relying on business and technical tools may not facilitate the best decision-making, especially since users may prefer different approaches.

Therefore, it is considered crucial to incorporate the user's perspective and integrate both convergent and divergent DT methodologies and tools (Chasanidou et al., 2015).

## Organization collaboration

### Novo Nordisk

Novo Nordisk (NN) is a global healthcare company specialized in the development, manufacturing, and distribution of pharmaceutical products and medical devices. Its primary focus lies in the treatment of diabetes, obesity, and other serious chronic conditions. Operating in more than 80 countries worldwide, it has over 45 000 employees and it is continuously growing. Committed to improving the lives of patients, conducting business ethically, and reducing its environmental impact is a key part of its mission (Novo Nordisk, n.d).

## People & Organization, Digital Development & Analytics, and Service Development

The People & Organization (P&O), Digital Development & Analytics (DD&A), and Service Development team at NN is responsible for the development and implementation of digital solutions. This team is accountable for driving the Global P&O's (GPO) Digital Ambition and overseeing the end-to-end experience of GPO's core operational

services as well as analytics. The team focuses on optimizing customer journeys, with a primary emphasis on delivering the best experience for NN employees. Staying up to date with the latest digital trends and innovation is a priority, and the team continuously explores innovative solutions that leverage automation and digitalization. Additionally, data analytics and insights are utilized to inform decision-making in the development of digital tools for recruitment, onboarding, performance management, and employee engagement.

### P&O mid-term strategy

Within the context of this thesis, it is important to address specific aspects of P&O's mid-term strategy for the next 3 years, as the proposed solution should be aligned with the defined strategy. This strategy is categorized into three main areas: People, Purpose, and Growth. "People" encompasses talent nurturing and leadership evolution. The focus of "Purpose" is to strive to be the best workplace possible. "Growth" involves growth ambitions and the enhancement of employee experience. This thesis aligns with NN strategic goals within this last area. The focus has shifted towards employee experience, integrating it into the overall strategy and actions within the department, among other areas. The two objectives for improving employee experience and the associated initiatives are illustrated in the following Fig.5 (NN internal documents, 2024).

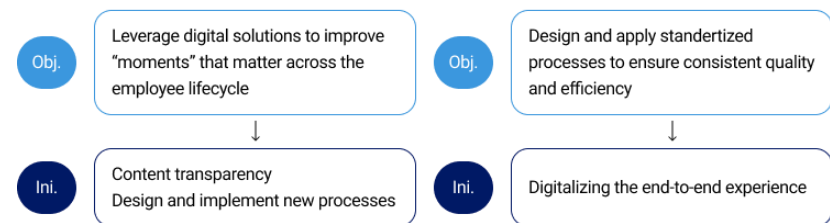


Fig.5 -Objectives and initiatives for P&O strategy

## Service Design approach applied to P&O

Considering the literature discussed and aligning it with the topic under analysis, the adoption of a SD approach could be beneficial for NN to engage in projects. Leveraging their existent expertise, P&O is already responsible for managing individuals and optimizing the organization's goals. The question that arises is how P&O could be made aware of SD tools throughout their projects and how the value of SD practices can be understood in their daily activity.

The responsibility for empowering the GPO Digital Ambition, which involves leveraging digital tools, platforms, and strategies to enhance several aspects of the P&O's operation within NN, lies on the P&O and DD&A, Service Development department. This may include projects aimed at improving the overall employee experience, optimizing HR processes, and leveraging digital technologies to drive organizational effectiveness. Managing the end-to-end experience of GPO's core operational services is also part of their activity, suggesting that the entire lifecycle of existing services within the GPO is analyzed. This could involve everything from the initial stages of design and development to their delivery and continuous improvement.

Furthermore, the Analytics side involves the user data-driven insights and decision-making within the P&O function by utilizing analytics to gain deeper insights into employee experiences, organizational performance, and HR operations. The integration of SD tools such as service blueprints, customer journeys, and interviews could empower the department, enabling a comprehensive understanding and enhancement of the employee experience, optimization of HR processes, and the utilization of digital technologies to improve organizational effectiveness. These tools are utilized by service designers to navigate project challenges, meaning that a range of tools that can be used to approach the challenge based on the project

phase. Considering this information, the connection between SD practices and the P&O becomes easier to understand.

## Contextualization

Given the high volume of recruitment and the expectation for continued growth, the ability of P&O to attract and engage with candidates is critical in ensuring the identification of the best possible talent for each role. Previously, the organization only hired traditional pharmaceutical profiles, while nowadays, roles are diversifying in multiple directions, and their competitors now come from different markets and industries. There is much to be done in terms of employer branding initiatives that distinguish NN and position them as an employer of choice. However, even if the right candidates are successfully attracted, there is a risk of losing them if the hiring experience does not reflect the principles of a company that has evolved to NN size. Therefore, the creation of a positive hiring experience is essential for retaining the talent they have attracted. Organizations increasingly recognize that the quality of their service experiences is a matter of high importance and can be enhanced through thoughtful design solutions.

While some progress has been made to improve and optimize processes and employee experiences during the hiring process, the candidate's experience in the initial stages of applying for a job at NN has yet to be fully explored by P&O. At DD&A, some initial research has been conducted on how design mindset could guide service, the process development, and the areas it could affect. However, concrete opportunities and guidance for utilizing SD practices to enhance candidate experience are still lacking (NN internal documents, 2024). In the supporting literature section, different perspectives on topics related to SD, Human Resources (HR), P&O, and SD approaches in connection with the case study are presented. These perspectives are

explored and utilized during different stages of the double diamond design process.

## Focus Area

Before a collaboration was agreed upon by the interested stakeholders from NN, a focus area and clear problem statement needed to be agreed upon. This focus area and problem statement would be in line with the vision and future strategy of P&O at NN as well as the learning goals for the thesis. During several exploratory meetings, different topics were pitched to start the discussion about potential directions for this thesis. The themes 'candidate experience', 'application process', and 'hiring process' were included. By considering both NN's interest and the author's personal interest, the topic was refined and iterated upon, leading to a common ground on a case study. Interest in understanding and proving that SD practices could be utilized in this department was demonstrated by the P&O team members involved.

The integration of service designers has been initiated to help improve the digital solutions that support the NN hiring experience - for candidates, managers, and HR professionals. There is still a lack of understanding in their multidisciplinary team on how SD practices could be incorporated in their activity and support the creation of innovative experiences. The focus of this thesis scope is on the candidate's experience, which is explored through a real case study. The entire experience that candidates undergo when applying for a job at NN, from the moment they decide that they want a job to when they submit their application, will be the primary focus.

## Discover

The first stage of the Double Diamond design methodology, Discover, is focused on understanding the problem by conducting research and identifying insights to frame the project challenge (British Council, n.d).

For this phase, a combination of field research involving both qualitative and quantitative methods was utilized. This includes utilizing various tools such as interviews, surveys, and meeting groups, depending on employees' availability. Additionally, existing work related to the challenge is explored in the supporting literature chapter on page 9.

Once the scope is defined and the ecosystem is understood, the goal is to establish a concrete problem statement, comprehend the stakeholders involved, and map out any riskiest assumptions regarding the topic. In design, creativity and subjectivity merge with introspection and discourse about its decisions. This holds equally true for research through design, with the added layer that the knowledge created must be explicit, open to discussion, transferable, and able to be built upon (Manzini, 2015).

## Understanding the case study: Mind Map

Following the initial meeting with the thesis supervisor, it was recommended that the knowledge and understanding around the case should be deepened. This would include understanding the stakeholders involved, the department area under focus, and any other topics that may be relevant for supporting the literature throughout the project. A visualization was created to help navigate and cluster some topics related to the case, as represented in Fig.6. The decision was made to utilize a mind map as it is a helpful tool to encourage broad

thinking and helps discover interesting connections within the case study (Service Design Tools, n.d.).

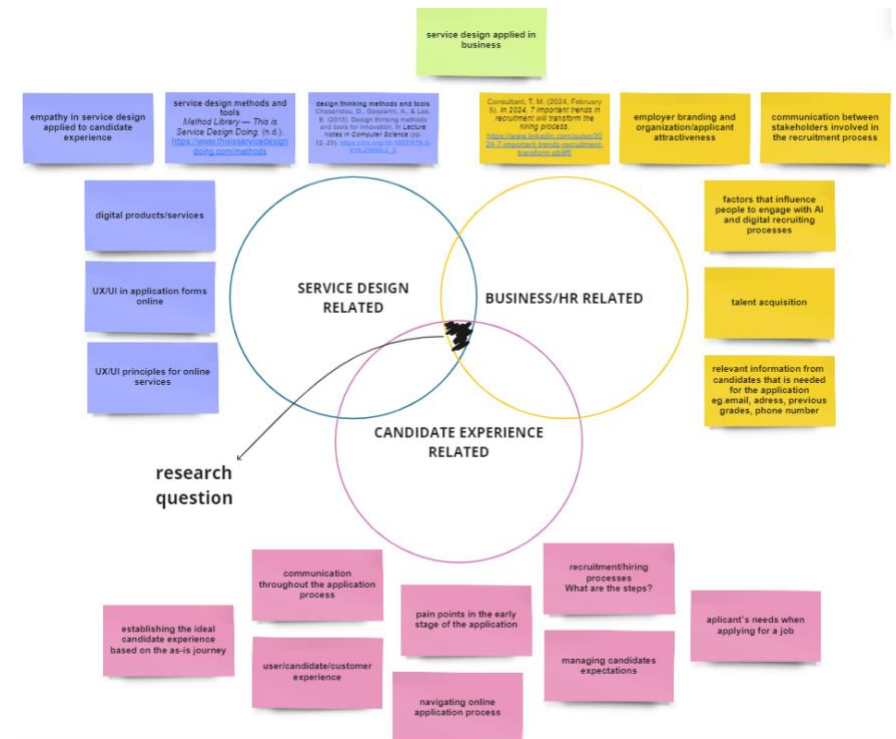


Fig.6 - Mind Map (Appendix B)

The case study represents 3 main aspects: service design, business and/or HR, and candidate experience. The creation of this visualization allowed the supporting literature to be structured and relevant topics to be identified for desk research. The objective was to align personal interests with NN's expectations for the project and define the research question accordingly. At this point, the project's scope and design brief were defined. By the end of the qualitative

research in form of interviews, it would be easier to inform the research question.



Fig.7 - Scope and design brief

## Qualitative research: in-depth interviews

This phase serves as a starting point for identifying the pain points and frustrations experienced by the target group during the job application process. One of the main principles of human-centered design is engaging directly with the communities being served, in this case, candidates. These target people involve individuals who have applied or are being considered for a job, typically through a hiring process. According to IDEO (2015), interviews are the most effective way to gain insight into a person's desires, fears, and opinions about a particular subject. This qualitative method allows researchers to explore complex topics and understand interviewees' perspectives, experiences, and attitudes in their own words (Share and Engage With the Design Sprint Community, n.d.). This methodological type of research provides a contextual insight and clarification on the as-is journey that current employee went through when applying for a job.

At this stage of the process, the aim was to understand the step-by-step journey that candidates undertake from the moment they decide to look for a job to when they submit their application. It was also valuable to gain insight into how candidates felt throughout this process, allowing for the capture of their full experience. The main goal of this activity was to create an accurate "as-is" journey map of the candidates'

experience. For this initial round of interviews, the opportunity arose to speak with 10 candidates who had recently gone through the process as they were employed at NN in February 2024.

The interview script (Appendix A) was crafted to obtain the most comprehensive insights into their experiences and emotions throughout the application process. By designing the interview this way, questions could be easily navigated and adapted based on the information shared (Wernke, 2022). As the aim was to map out the candidate's journey, an activity Miro board was created (Appendix C) to help participants visualize the timeline and suggest steps they might have undergone. Originally, the intention was to make the interview more interactive to foster engagement during the conversation. However, it became clear that the initiative was not the most effective, as it proved to be challenging for participants to read the steps and place them correctly in the timeline. They felt more at ease with verbally guiding through their experiences rather than actively using the prepared canvas, whilst keeping the timeline in mind.

As a result, 9 different interviews were conducted with 9 different individuals, at various stages of their careers, each with different career perspectives and roles, emphasizing several aspects of their experience throughout the hiring processes. After gathering all the information, several questions arose: How should these diverse journeys be interpreted? How does the absence of a standardized approach affect candidate experience? Should a particular career stage be segmented and focused on? The aim was to address these concerns with the Manager of Service Development to ensure a relevant path is pursued and to consider feasibility aspects for further research.

As shown on Fig.8 and 9, the insights and relevant information acquired from employee interviews was shared with the Manager of Service Development. The questions mentioned above were discussed, and it was validated that the insights provided a valuable guide towards establishing a focus point, and it was deemed too soon in the process to consider those questions. However, it was mentioned that it was

[illegible]

All the information gathered from interviews is organized into different clusters, as shown on Fig.8. The aim was to separate the information according to the many steps or phases that interviewees typically encounter when applying for a job. It was divided into main

*“We need to understand what a good candidate experience looks like to ensure we get the best people on board” (NN internal documents, 2024).*



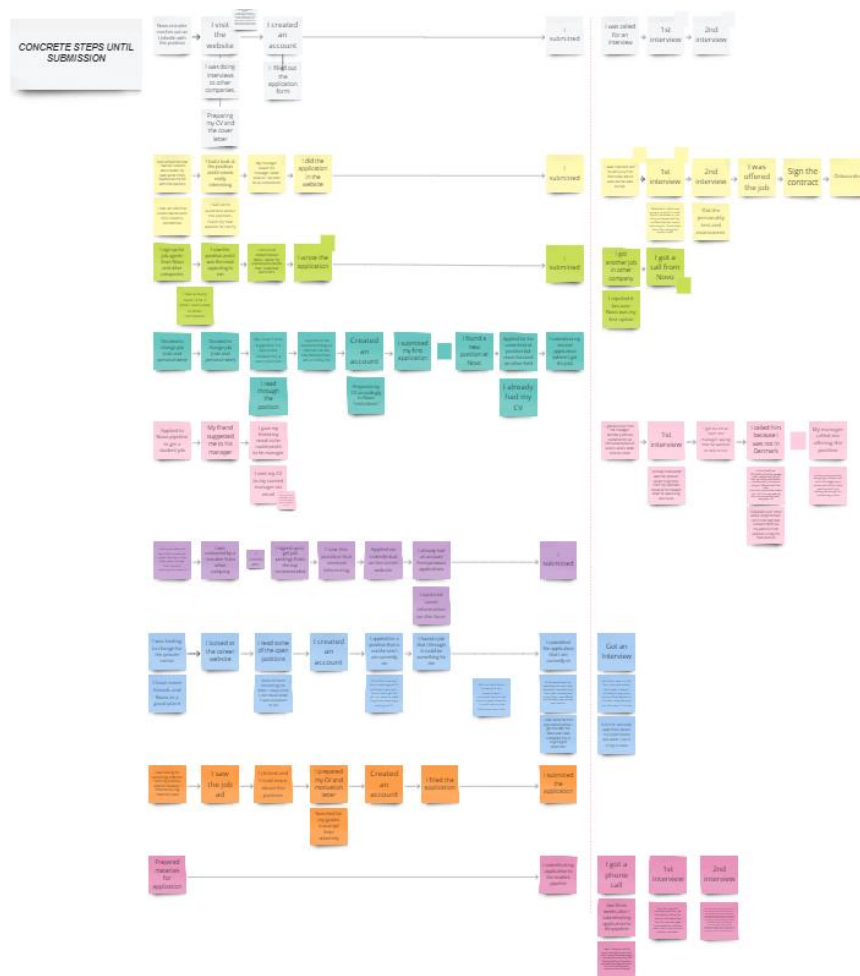


Fig.9 - Draft of candidate experience applying for NN job, based on interviews (Appendix B)

In Fig. 9, an initial draft of the candidate's journey based on the steps described in the interviews begun be outlined, already focusing on NN application uniquely. This initial draft will inform the final candidate journey map. The final map will be developed based on these insights, and it will be an adaptation of the steps outlined in Gong (2021) on the

candidate process and the foundational aspects mentioned in the chapter steps on candidate experience on page X. The final journey map represented in Fig.17 shows the aspects mentioned in Fig.2, considering the journey candidates take from searching for a job to their application submission.

## Quantitative research: online survey

A survey was chosen as it represents an effective SD tool for gathering data. It facilitates easy data collection and ensures a higher level of representation from the chosen target group for analysis. Surveys are efficient for collecting quantitative data and statistical analysis, providing numerical insights into patterns and clusters. Specifically, the goal was to capture candidates' perspectives regarding the most valued aspects within their experience. The survey will enable testing and analysis, determining which of the aspects across the 4 categories hold the highest value for candidates and if some connections and patterns can be seen between them. The 4 categories encompass the stages of job search, application process, job posting, and the overall candidate experience, capturing the full experience of candidates from the initial job search to the application submission. Within each category, two aspects that hold the greatest significance will be selected by employees. Subsequently, the most frequently chosen aspects from each category will be gathered, and this information will be used to converge towards a more specific focus of the project.

The survey was open to everyone who could apply for a job at NN. It was sent out to the Student Network and Digital Development & Analytics (DD&A) and the Service Development Team at NN, as well as SD master colleagues and personal network. The objective was to get at least 100 answers from candidates and employed individuals either at NN or in other companies. In the case of research and considering the

research goals, 100 answers can provide an adequate basis for initial analysis and insights.

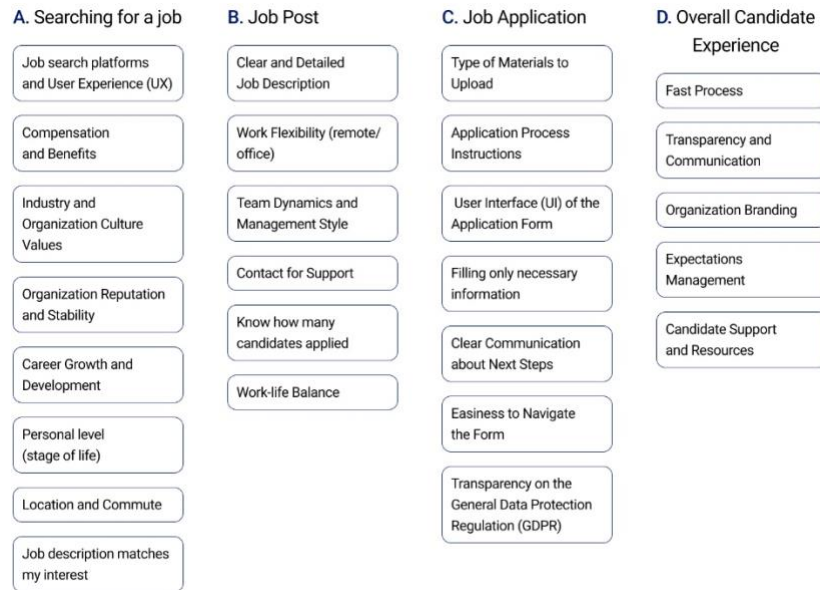


Fig.10 - Four categories for the online survey

The online survey provided valuable insights into the aspects within the 4 categories that candidates prioritize throughout their application process. It was also interesting to see how individuals were engaged and willing to help with the project, which was not expected – considering 136 answers were gathered. This provided a better understanding of the key decision-making factors and priorities, including elements such as role descriptions, communication, and the overall application experience. Additionally, the survey shed light on the challenges candidates face and contributed to a deeper understanding of what contributes to a positive candidate experience.

Regarding results for the first category of searching for a job, the aspect that most individuals value is "Career growth and Development," with 74 votes, accounting for 54.4%. The second most valued aspect is "Job description matches my interest/skills," with 65 votes, making up 47.8% of the answers. "Compensation and Benefits" is valued by 38 individuals, making up 27.9%. The aspects "Organization Reputation and Stability" and "Industry and Organization Culture" both hold an equal level of importance with 30 votes each, representing 22.1% of the responses. "Location and Commute" demonstrates to be less significant, with 24 respondents choosing it, which corresponds to 17.6% of the total. It is worth mentioning that "Personal level (stage of life)" received relatively low importance with 8 votes, translating into just 5.9%. The least prioritized aspect appears to be "Job search platform and UX," with just 7 votes, making up a small fraction of 5.1%.

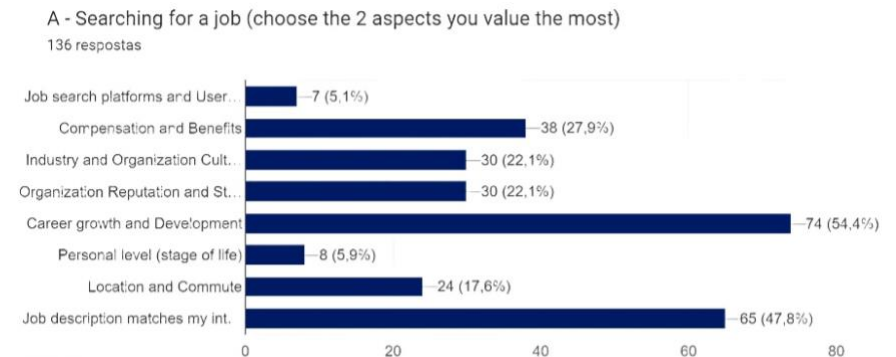


Fig.11 - Category A results

Moving on to the second category concerning the job post, the aspect "Clear and detailed job description" is by far the highest valued aspect, with 98 votes, representing 72.1% of responses. "Team dynamics and management follow as the second most valued aspect, with 57 votes, representing 41.9%. The aspect "Work flexibility



(remote/office)”, is interestingly the third most valued aspect, chosen by 56 respondents, representing 41.2%. The factor “Contact for support” is not an aspect that is much valued by individuals, representing 5.1%, with 7 votes. “Work-life balance” is something that candidates value in the process, with 49 votes and representing 36% of the total. Other mentioned aspects have a relatively lower representation in the total (between 0.7-1.5%). These include: transparency in salary; knowledge about the number of candidates applying for the same role; the language used by organizations when sharing the vacancy; individuals’ own skill expectations; and getting the manager’s name and team to seek further information about the role.

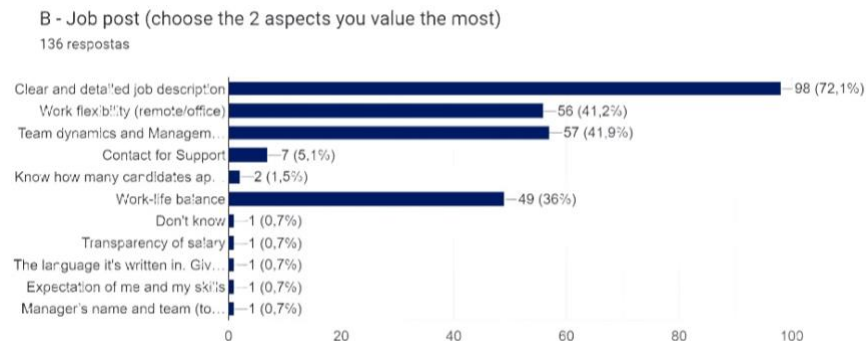


Fig.12 - Category B results

Regarding the job application process, having a “Clear communication about next steps” is valued by 61% of the total, which represents 83 individuals. The second most valued aspect is “Application process instructions” with 55 with 40.4% representativity indicating it as important. The “Type of materials to upload” is an aspect that is important for individuals, gathering 38 votes, meaning 27.9% of the total. “User Interface (UI) of the application form” and “Filling only necessary information” stand as the mid-range priorities, chosen by 30 (22.1%) and 33 (24.3%) respondents, respectively. The following aspect with 20.6% is related to the “Easiness to navigate” and represents 28

votes. Fewer respondents place importance on “Transparency on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)” with 2.9% of representativity of the total. Also, a valued aspect is “Flexibility to upload documentation (eg. recommendations)” as it was mentioned by one individual.

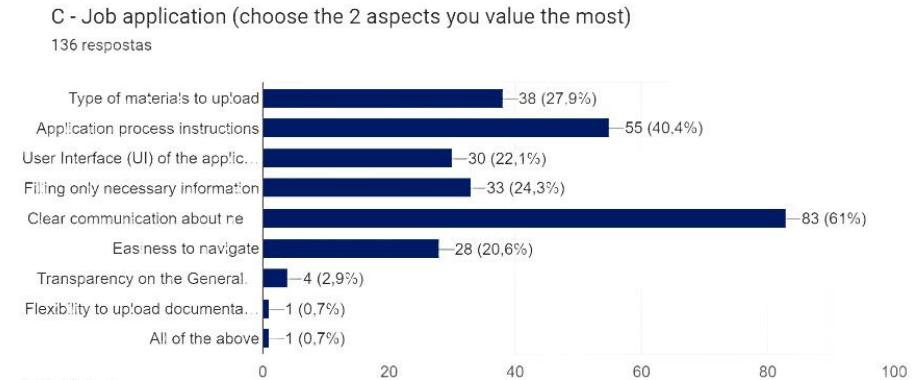


Fig.13 - Category C results

For the last category that explores the overall candidate experience’s most valued aspects, the results pointed out for “Transparency and communication” with the highest representation of 105 votes referring to 77.2% of the total. Having a “Fast process” is the second most valued aspect with 75 responses, being 55.1% of the total votes. With 41.9% representativeness, the aspect “Expectations management” demonstrated to be important for 57 individuals. With only 25 votes, “Candidate support and resources” represented only 18.4% of the totals. The remaining suggested as important aspects for candidates had a representativity between 0.7%-3.7%. With 0.7%, the written aspects were “Company culture (measure what they say with what they do)”, “Feedback if you do not get the job”, and a similar aspect “Always receiving an email if you got or not the job”. As of “Organization

branding” is only voted by 5 individuals out of 136, representing the abovementioned 3.7%.

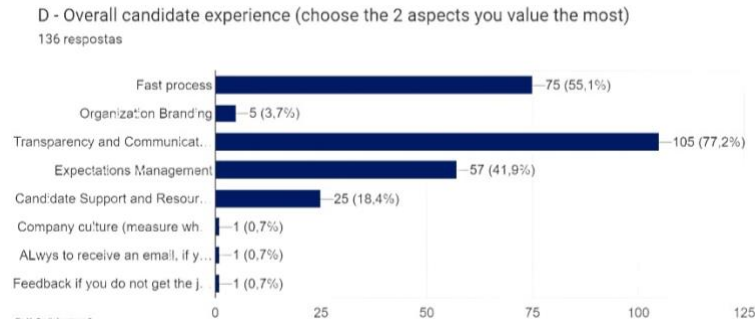


Fig.14 - Category D results

## Semi-structured interview with the Hiring Manager

As previously mentioned, to bridge the gap between the supporting literature and the upcoming phase of the process, it was crucial to comprehend the necessity of bringing service designers into the P&O team. As a result, a short semi-structured interview (Appendix D) was conducted, aiming at gaining a thorough understanding of where service designers could effectively be needed and in what kind of projects. Perspectives of the team managers on the capabilities and skills that service designers possess, and how these could be leveraged within P&O, were sought to be gathered. This type of interviews followed a pre-defined set of questions and topics outlined in an interview guide, with flexibility to adapt questions based on the information provided by the interviewee. Defining the interview questions was straightforward, as the objective was clear, so it made the process easier to approach.

During discussions regarding the P&O's and DD&A's strategic approach to CX, the Manager of Service Development revealed that the biggest challenges lay on educating the organization, and underlining

the importance of collaboration with process experts. She believes in SD as a comprehensive approach where design is about function, not about form. The importance of ensuring that services are purposeful, efficient, and meet user's needs is emphasized. It focuses more on the overall experience and outcomes rather than just the appearance or superficial elements.

Moreover, the iterative nature of service design and the need to involve employees and leaders in the design process are highlighted by her, not as an afterthought, but as a strategic part of an organization's operations. Her manager, the Vice President of Service development, also believes in design the same way, as he has witnessed the kind of input that comes with it over the past couple of years. Overall, progress is being made within the organization in adopting design thinking principles, but there is still work to be done.

## Discover phase reflections

During the Discover phase, valuable information was obtained through various research methods, including mind mapping, in-depth interviews, meetings with students at NN working on their theses, and expert interviews. Supporting literature was also conducted to explore specific topics of interest within the case study. As the project moves on to the "Define" phase, the data and information will be translated into insights that will be crucial in shaping the focus of the further work on the opportunity areas and guiding the translation of findings into SD tools. This phase has set a solid foundation for the next stages of the thesis project, seeking a deep understanding of the topic under focus.

Despite the challenges in scoping the research question, the process of gathering input from candidates and conducting interviews has been engaging and valuable, providing a deeper understanding of their experiences, needs, and emotions throughout their experience. The support and attention provided by the supervisors from NN during

every meeting, ensuring that all the necessary resources were available to carry out the work, must be acknowledged. As it was a diverging phase of the process, gathering various information types and mixing research methods was the best way to get different and valuable insights. This approach will undoubtedly enrich the "Define" phase of the project as all will translate into insights and actionable strategies, narrowing them down into a concrete area of improvement.

## Define

The second stage of the Double Diamond design methodology, Define, focuses on gathering all the insights from the previous phases and defining the core issues in connection to the user needs (British Council, n.d).

## Data Analysis

The Define phase kicked off with a series of questions regarding how data analysis should be approached, how the learnings could be leveraged, and how to interpret findings effectively. Central to this phase is the consolidation of information and insights gathered during the research and supporting literature conducted for the Discover phase, with the current focus sense-making and result analysis. To achieve this, a variety of SD tools were utilized to visually present the results. The research involved a use of mixed methods to gather data from multiple sources, thereby avoiding potential biases and enhancing accuracy (Stickdorn, 2018). The end goal was to determine which SD tools would be most effective in visualizing the data in a comprehensible and shareable format. Additionally, the objective was to frame and define the core opportunity based on the information collected.

At this point, it was important to maintain a unique focus on the candidates' perspective throughout the application process journey. It was acceptable to set aside specific actions. These actions might need to be addressed by the HM or other relevant stakeholders involved in the process to ensure they are accounted for with the candidates' best interest in heart. NN's perspective on feasibility and viability of the solution, the effort estimated for it and the actions to be developed and implemented must be considered. This is a secondary consideration worth keeping in mind.

## Insights from interviews

The primary goal of the interviews was to delineate the clear steps of the candidate's journey. Valuable insights from candidates about their experiences throughout the application process were sought. The main insights from interviews are highlighted in Fig. 15. These insights provided an overall view on the concrete perception of what is relevant for candidates during their journey.

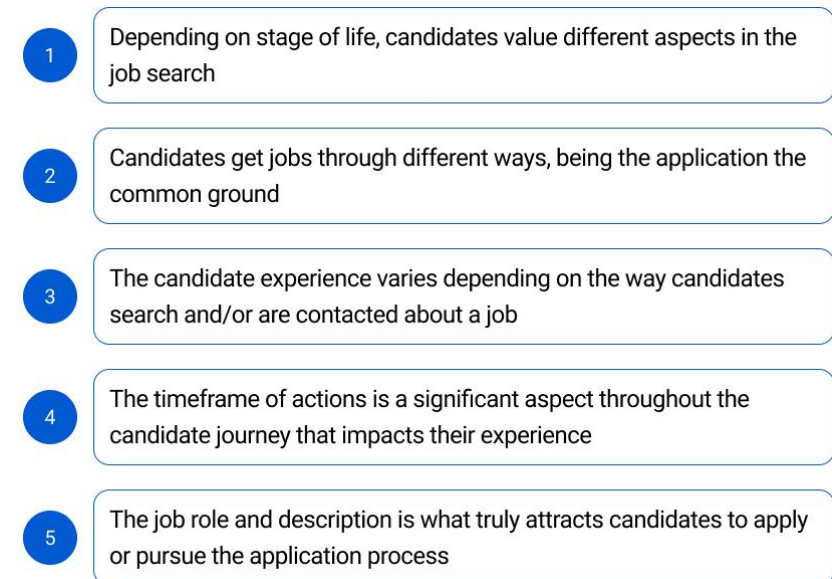
- 
- 1 Depending on stage of life, candidates value different aspects in the job search
  - 2 Candidates get jobs through different ways, being the application the common ground
  - 3 The candidate experience varies depending on the way candidates search and/or are contacted about a job
  - 4 The timeframe of actions is a significant aspect throughout the candidate journey that impacts their experience
  - 5 The job role and description is what truly attracts candidates to apply or pursue the application process

Fig.15 - Overall insights from in-depth interviews

During the expert interview with the CX Manager to understand the necessity and value of SD at P&O, particularly in the Service Development area, 3 key insights were highlighted. These insights essentially summarize CX Manager's interest in SD applications in NN projects, represented in Fig.16.

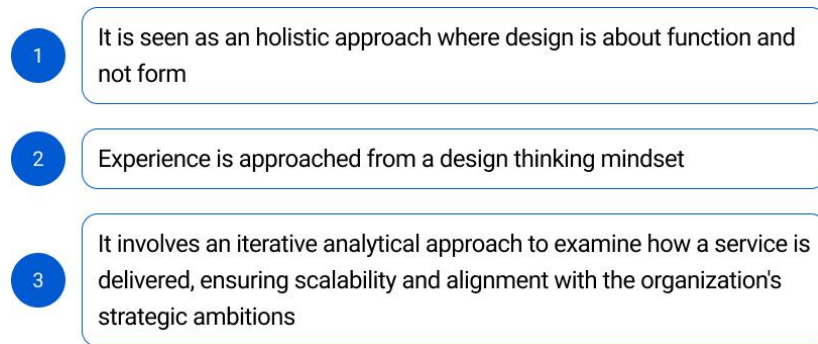


Fig.16 - Overall insights from the expert interview

***“Service design as a comprehensive approach where design is about function, not about form” (CX Manager at P&O, 2024)***

## Candidate Journey Map – candidate ´s perspective

When creating an employee/candidate experience map, HR's perception of its product and services offers, particularly in terms of delivery processes, can be compared with what employees encounter during different touchpoints in talent management processes (Claus, 2019).

Based on the in-depth interviews, a candidate journey map was created and is represented in Fig. 17. According to Chassanidou et al. (2015), it is a map with rich information about candidate experiences, indicating areas for further improvement. Blomkvist et al. (2016) mentions that this tool depicts the candidate's journey through a service being used, with a special focus on experience. The combined perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of the importance and use of the journey map tool, shedding light on areas that reflect a lower emotional curve and uncover some pain points. In these scenarios, this tool aids in understanding what customers are feeling,

thinking, and doing at any given point in time while interacting with a service, as well as recognizing how those interactions evolve over time (Polaine et al., 2013).

The phase "I do my application for NN" appears to be the one with the most painful points and demonstrates potential for improvement. Although candidates' experiences are effectively represented by this tool, it alone cannot precisely direct towards a more defined area of focus. It is also highlighted by Juntunen (2018) that the application phase is one of the factors that influence candidates' experience the most.

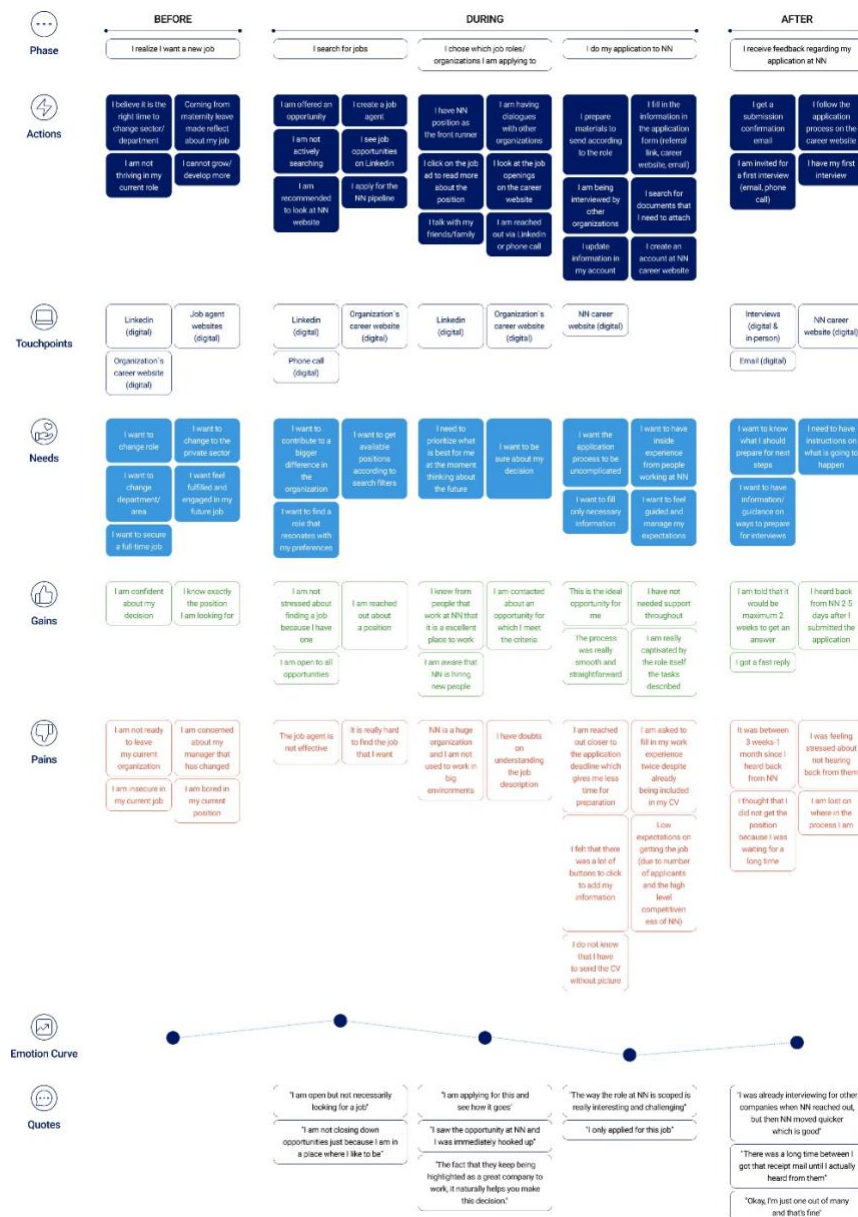


Fig. 17 - Candidate Journey Map based on interviews (Appendix B)

Before and during the journey, the candidate is initially optimistic and confident about finding new job opportunities. Change is sought for several reasons: to be challenged, to change the role, to learn new things, or due to dissatisfaction with their current position. Touchpoints at this stage involve LinkedIn, job agents, organization's website, or referrals. Gains include the anticipation for new opportunities and confidence in their abilities. Pains include the time-consuming nature of job-seeking and uncertainty about finding a suitable position.

During this phase, active job searching is done by the candidate, which involves updating their CV (Curriculum Vitae), applying to jobs, preparing for interviews, and waiting for responses. Being convinced by the company's potential, getting clarity on their role, and seeing the possibility for personal growth are the candidate's needs. Job agents, LinkedIn, company websites, and digital platforms serve as the main touchpoints. Positive gains include satisfaction from being invited to interviews and the excitement of new possibilities. Pains at this stage involve the frustration with automated responses, uncertainty during waiting periods, and the stress of multiple interviews.

After the candidate submits their application, anxiety and continued uncertainty are often experienced while waiting for an outcome. Process transparency is needed, and closure is sought, whether the result is acceptance or rejection. Email tends to be the primary touchpoint post-application. Gains at this stage include the relief of completing the process and the potential joy from a job offer. Pains feature anxiety about the outcome, confusion due to lack of communication, and disappointment if not selected.

The emotion curve at the bottom of the map suggests fluctuating feelings throughout the journey, with notable dips in the NN application. A personal view is provided by quotes from the candidate, emphasizing the emotional highs and lows of the job application process.



After reviewing the pain points mentioned in each phase of the candidate journey mapped in Fig.17, there was a perceived need to pinpoint the key areas that could lead to potential areas for improvement.

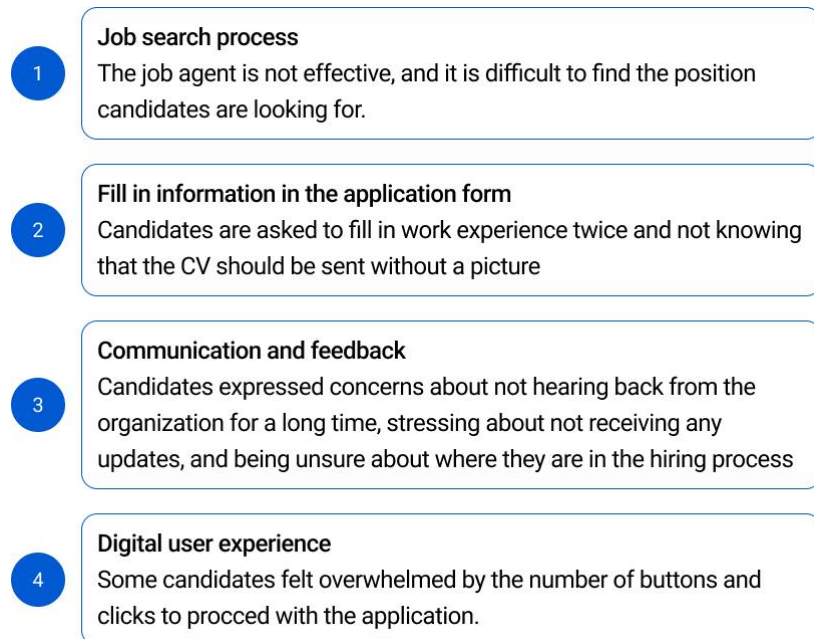


Fig.18 - Key insights based on the candidate 's journey pain points

## Personal perspective on the Candidate Journey Map

Upon listening to the different experiences of these candidates, a reconsideration of a thought had during the Discover phase was prompted. The lack of a standardized approach to the hiring process from the hiring manager's perspective could be a potential issue.

Alternatively, consideration was given to whether it is more critical to ensure that the experience delivered to candidates is consistently exceptional, regardless of the specific approach of each hiring manager. This prompted a questioning of how feasible it would be to create a positive experience for each candidate when every hiring manager has their own approach to the process. It became evident that establishing a standardized process is essential to maintain consistency and coherence throughout the journey, benefiting not only candidates but also hiring managers. Establishing clear steps as a guide ensures that every candidate follows the same process, consequently minimizing variations in their experience. This alignment between candidates and hiring managers throughout the hiring process ensures clarity regarding the necessary steps from each actor (Ben-Cohen, 2018).

## Ideal Candidate Experience

Throughout the in-depth interviews, there was an opportunity to explore with the interviewees what they would consider the perfect candidate experience and how they envisioned it. Based on their experiences within this process, as well as the aspects they felt were lacking, some of the ideal experience they envisioned would need to address various aspects.

**Clear and transparent communication:** Candidates value clear and timely communication throughout the recruitment process, including feedback on their application status. They would appreciate knowing the estimated response time and having a contact person for any questions. **Detailed job information:** Candidates prefer to have a clear understanding of the job position, including responsibilities and requirements, before applying. They appreciate less use of abbreviations and more explanation of the role. **Optimized application process:** Candidates desire a smooth and user-friendly application process with minimal unnecessary actions and clicks. They suggest

reducing the amount of information they need to provide manually if it can be extracted from their CV or LinkedIn profile. Personalized and interactive elements: Candidates appreciate personalized experiences, such as being able to choose between a call, motivational letter, or video submission. They also suggest incorporating interactive elements like videos or virtual office tours to make the application process more engaging. Candidate support and resources: Candidates value access to resources that help them prepare for the recruitment process, such as information about the company, evaluation criteria, and the overall process. They suggest having a central hub or portal where it is possible to find this information and ask questions through a recruitment chatbot or AI (Artificial Intelligence) bot. Feedback and expectations: Candidates appreciate receiving feedback on their application, even if they were not selected for the position. They also value knowing what factors influenced the decision-making process. A timeline for when they can expect to hear back or information about future opportunities is also important for candidates to have. When candidates were asked “What would be, for you, the best possible candidate experience? How would that look like?”, the 6 aspects depicted in Fig.X, are the ones highlighted by them (Appendix A).



Fig. 19 – 6 aspects that need to be present for an ideal candidate experience

## Insights from the online survey

Upon analyzing the survey data collected in the Discover phase, it is notable that the most voted areas are those which candidates care about the most. In conclusion, the two most popular aspects in each category will be prioritized, as featured in Fig. 19. The visualization demonstrates that “Career growth and development” and “Job description matches my interest” were the two highest rated aspects by candidates in relation to job search. In terms of the job post, it is evident that a “Clear and detailed job description” is the most favored, followed by “Work flexibility”. This is closely followed by “Team dynamics and management”, all of which hold significant importance for candidates. When it comes to the job application process, “Application process instructions” and “Clear communication about next steps” are clearly essential for candidates.

Finally, regarding the candidate's experience, the importance of a “Fast process” and “Transparency and communication” is emphasized by candidates.



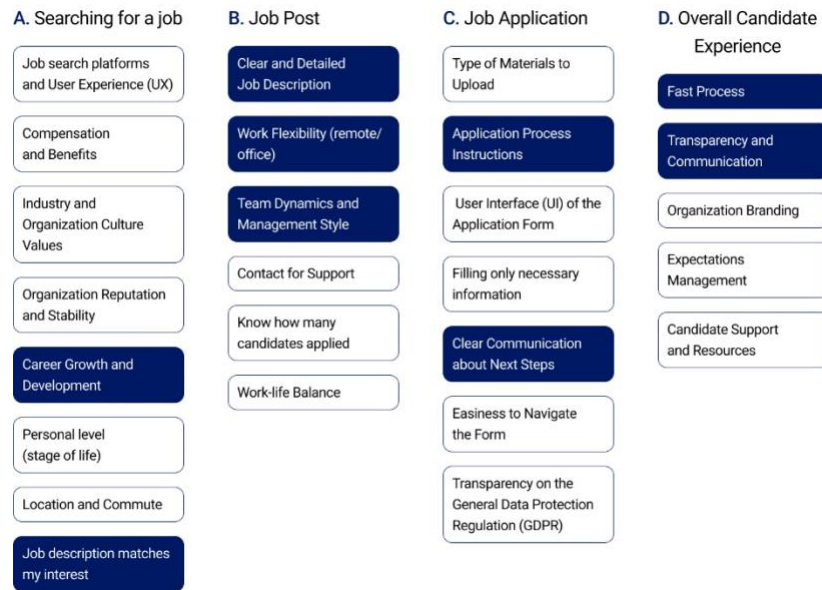


Fig. 20 - The most highly valued aspects of candidate experience perceived by candidates

In addition to the online survey results, an analysis of a questionnaire was conducted during an online webinar by Juntunen (2018). Participants were asked about the most important factors affecting a positive candidate experience. Results from this questionnaire, answered by 136 participants, showed that “communication in different phases of the recruitment process” received 75% of the votes, indicating that it is the most influential factor. These results highlight the importance and the impact that communication for candidates and its substantial effect on their experience throughout the application process.

## Persona - based on survey results

At this point of the research, there was a lack of focus on a specific target group. Candidates applying for jobs at NN are already focused on a specific user, but the experience also varies from candidate to candidate, depending on their stage of life, represented in Fig. 15, the first insight. It was important to ensure that for the next phase, a more focused target is defined so their needs and expectations can be addressed when ideating possible solutions. To achieve this, the persona tool will be used to map out the main characteristics of their personality, interests, and challenges. As defined by Chassanidou, (2015), a persona is “*a user representation intending to simplify communication and project decision making by selecting project rules that suit the real propositions*”.

Considering that most of participants in the online survey were between the age group of 18-25, the decision was made to focus on that demographic group as they provided the most insights, represented on Fig.21. Upon reviewing the participants, it was understood that this group encompasses individuals who are pursuing their bachelor's degree or master's thesis, working as student assistants (at NN or outside) and are likely to soon be seeking full-time employment on their area of studies.

How old are you?

136 respostas

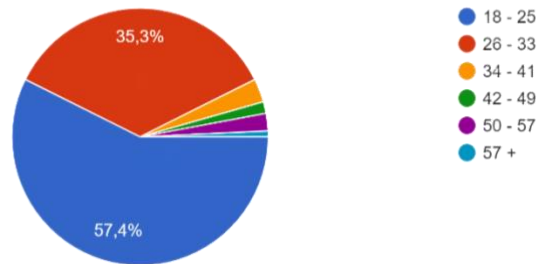


Fig.21 - Demographic data from online survey participants

The main aspects that are important for this target group, in addition to their demographic data, were developed based on surveys, interviews and personal experiences. Some students from the NN Student Network were included to co-create a persona that could represent themselves, aiming to avoid bias and assumptions. To achieve this, an activity on a Miro board was created where they were invited to write down their interests, goals, challenges, personality traits, interests, pains and gains. The survey participants were contacted via email to inquire if they wished to engage in further project activities, and 19 responses were received from the target group. A Miro board link (Appendix E) containing instructions and a canvas with a simple question-answer format for the activity was shared with them. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with a focus on maintaining brevity and simplicity, respecting their time constraints. The aim was to gather a diverse range of perspectives to build a data-driven persona. The fictional character created to represent the chosen target is depicted in the following Fig.22.

## Mike

Mike, 25 years old, living in Copenhagen. He recently submitted his master's thesis and has been working as a student assistant. He is motivated to find a full-time job and is enthusiastic about the opportunities that await him after finishing his studies. However, he is a bit concerned about how to effectively present himself in the job market and navigate the applications process.

### Personality

Extrovert  
Driven  
Problem-solver  
Eager to learn  
Insecure

### Challenges

Difficulties in finding a full-time job  
Balancing studies and working  
Understanding what kind of skills do organizations look for in junior positions  
Knowing how to prepare job applications

### Gains

Having a Danish master degree  
Feeling motivated when going to work  
Feeling grateful for having experience in the field with his student position

### Pains

Navigate the application process  
Worried about finding a full-time job  
Not having that much social activities  
Lost motivation

### Goals

Find a job that uses my strenghts  
Work in a friendly and efficient team  
Have a work-life balance

Fig.22 - Candidate Persona

## Data Synthesis

Having obtained a comprehensive understanding of the topic and the candidates, including their needs and challenges derived from many analysis techniques and SD tools, the next phase, “Develop” is now being prepared. It has become evident that a common concern for candidates is the lack of communication and transparency throughout their journey. From their perspective, it is necessary for them to comprehend the entire process, including the steps involved, what each step entails, and how to prepare for the next stages. Candidates notably express a clear desire for career growth and development, as well as a position that aligns with their professional interests when seeking a job. Additionally, when evaluating a job post, candidates prioritize a clear, detailed job description, insights into future team dynamics and management, and information about work flexibility, whether at the office or remote.

During the application phase, they consider clear instructions and transparent communication about upcoming steps as critical. Efficiency, expectations management, and accurate feedback are valued throughout the entire process. Upon considering this collection of insights, it becomes clear that the primary focus for designing a solution lies in communication throughout the process. This emphasis is further supported by literature, as noted by Gong (2021), where the progression of the process, communication, and the general expectations of the candidates are highlighted as crucial aspects that significantly influence their experience throughout the journey.

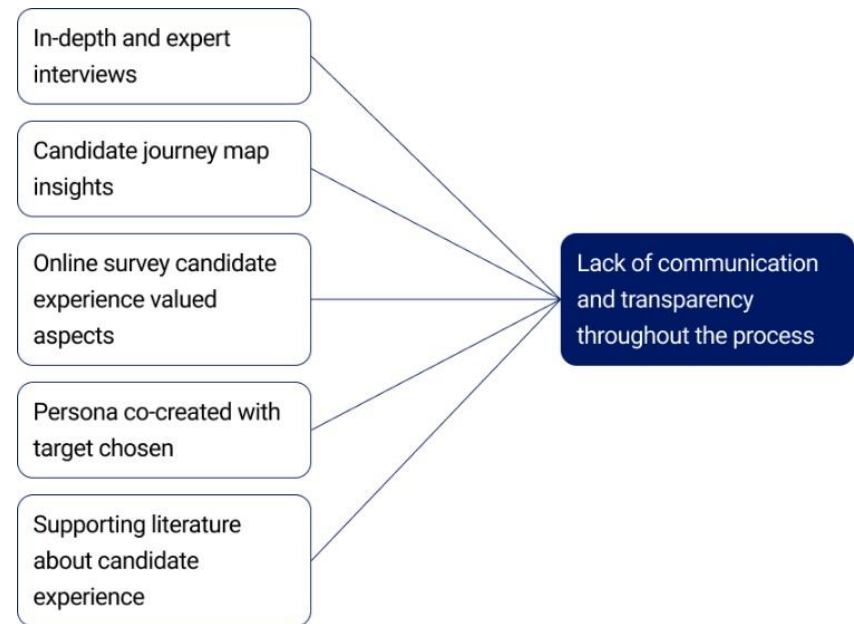


Fig.23 - Insight sources leading to a common opportunity area

## Define phase reflections

Towards the conclusion of this chapter, a thorough examination of insights from each activity carried out in the previous phase (Discover) is aligned for decision-making on next steps. Ultimately, the project's focus is determined and supported by evidence, and readiness to move on to the Develop has therefore been achieved. This phase has been the most challenging so far in the process. It has been a constantly evolving and iterative journey, counting with many meetings with NN stakeholders to align focuses and structure the next steps. The encountered challenges arose to the anticipated concerns and questions related to the specific perspective (candidates).

Throughout the data synthesis, it was realized that the hiring managers perspective was lacking, which further complicated the process. It was understood that the design process is far from linear, and these concerns are a natural part of the process. Multiple stops were made to ensure that these concerns were documented and considered, even if they may not ultimately be utilized in the project.

For this phase, it may be acceptable for the hiring managers' perspective not to be addressed directly, but it is important to ensure that it is considered in terms of feasibility of the proposed solution. The absence of a standardized approach for hiring managers in the hiring process could potentially influence the communication aspect highlighted by candidates. Simultaneously, the insights have highlighted that communication stands out as the primary area requiring improvement in the application process from the candidates' perspective.

As a result, the goal for the next phase is to enhance the candidate's experience through improved communication by ideating on possible ideas or concepts. Consequently, the following research question, presented in Fig.24, has been formulated to guide the two last phases of the design process.



Fig.24 - Scope, Design Brief and research question

## Develop

The third stage of the Double Diamond design methodology, Develop, involves translating ideas into concrete solutions encouraging people to co-create possible solutions, and seeking inspiration from different sources (British Council, n.d).

## Opening up

As the initial phase began, the focus was on gathering thoughts and determining the most effective approach, considering the methods required to accomplish the outlined objectives. Through the Deliver phase, after clustering all the findings, it became apparent that transparency and communication emerged as the most significant challenges for the target group. This encompassed the need for transparency throughout the application process, comprehension of subsequent steps in the hiring process, and the maintenance of clear and continuous communication between hiring managers and candidates to ensure that candidates are well-informed at each stage of the hiring process.

With this insight in mind, potential solutions were contemplated. After organizing some thoughts in the Miro board, it was concluded that any ideation to enhance transparency and communication would naturally expand the focus of the thesis. This implies that by addressing this aspect within the candidate journey, phases that highlight the most pain points during the entire application process, from the moment people start looking for a job until they are offered employment, would automatically become the focal point. However, the scope of this thesis is limited, concentrating only on the period up until candidates submit their applications to NN. If elaborated, the focus would likely involve ideating on process improvements that

would uniquely benefit candidates until one is finally offered the job. Such guidance, timelines and knowledge of the steps in the hiring process would only be required by candidates if they were invited for the first interview. Or if they were to become involved in the hiring process after submitting their application. Currently, there is no stage in the process where NN can communicate the hiring process steps to candidates or provide guidance and instructions on the application itself. Thus, the focus is on identifying areas in the current journey that could be improved for the created persona and determining their specific needs and pains.

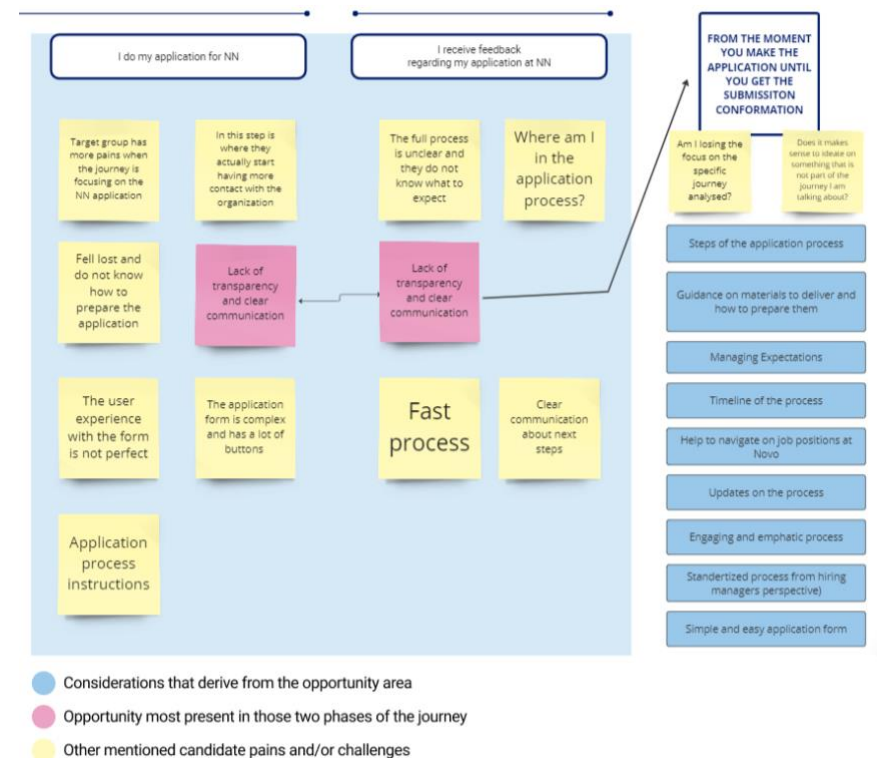


Fig.25 - Understanding the solution area (Appendix B)

After organizing and contemplating these thoughts and considerations, a decision was made to share and discuss the current focus point with the two service designers from the P&O team. It became clear that there was a lack of a clear understanding of the next steps and the tools that could be used to further the process and guide it. Consequently, a brainstorming session was held with them to facilitate an insightful conversation, enabling the sharing of insights and learning from their perspectives.

## Brainstorm session

Following the preparation of all insights in a Miro board for the purpose of facilitating the sharing and visualization of the research sources, a one-hour meeting was conducted. Subsequently, a clearer perspective on the subsequent steps was gained. It was discussed that the focus on creating something specifically for NN should be less in focus, considering this is a thesis project, allowing for a more innovative approach. At the same time, it was considered more practical to concentrate efforts on developing solutions or concepts that would benefit NN in some capacity. The preference was expressed for a pragmatic approach addressing candidate needs, rather than an exploratory or futuristic approach, reflecting a preference towards useful outcomes.

During the session, a concern was raised that all findings seemed to lead to an idea that might not align with the narrowed scope of the focused journey. Reassurance was provided, emphasizing that if one approach did not work, being open to exploring other paths is also part of the service designers' natural process, involving iterative steps and revisiting the process as necessary (Chasanidou et al., 2015). Additionally, the suggestion was made to leverage tools as a practical way to address challenges when feeling lost, prompting a discussion on tools that could support refining the path for ideation.

Moreover, the possibility of incorporating the hiring manager's perspective (which had been considered in the previous phase) was proposed at this point, aligning it with their needs and challenges. Moreover, including the perspective of hiring managers aligns with the research question and underscores the proposed solution's focus on the research question. Subsequently, a brainstorming session was conducted to compile a list of previously utilized tools and evaluate their effectiveness in specific situations. Following this, a plan was developed to connect the pain points of hiring managers in the process with the challenges highlighted for the persona in Fig. 22. Future intentions include the utilization of some of the previously mentioned tools to generate additional ideas.

## Hiring Manager (HM) persona

Throughout the thesis, consistent effort has been made to seek input from this thesis' NN supervisor and stakeholders, gathering relevant information about HM profiles, despite the primary focus on the candidates. Considering all the research conducted, it became evident that hiring managers and candidates are interconnected in the application process as key actors, as they depend on each other in specific steps of the journey. At this point, the pursuit of a deeper understanding of both actors and how they can gain from an improved candidate experience is crucial. The objective of creating a HM persona is to establish a more robust link related to challenges and needs with the previously established candidate persona. The same criteria (personality, challenges, interests, pains, gains, and goals) as with the candidate persona have been utilized to ensure clear alignment.

Initially, some rapid, assumption-based traits were outlined, and these were subsequently refined based on discussions with NN stakeholders to ensure the factual accuracy of the persona. The HM persona is presented in the following Fig. 26.



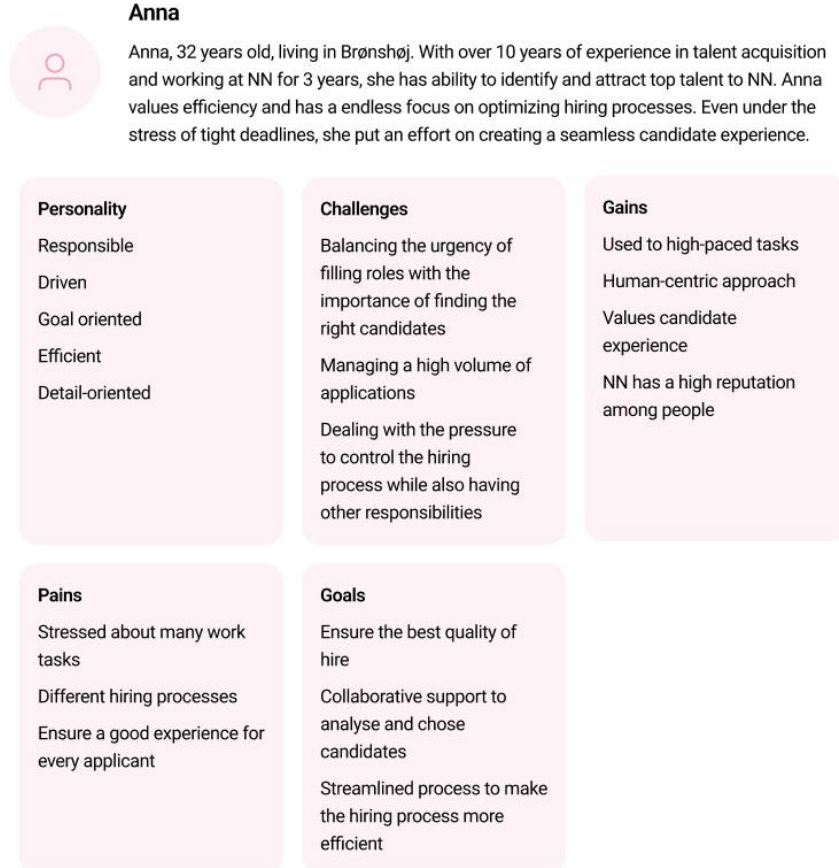


Fig.26 - Hiring Manager persona

## Connecting dots with Moscow Prioritization

During the brainstorming session, a comparison was made between the challenges and goals of both personas, identifying areas where specific aspects could connect and be mutually beneficial. At this

point, a new tool was introduced, which had not been previously utilized, but was found to be an intriguing method of categorizing solution requirements into one of the 4 categories, determined by their importance and urgency. The tool, known as Moscow Prioritization and developed by Dai Clegg (MOSCOW Prioritization, 2022), is an acronym for must have, should have, could have, and won't have, focusing on the alignment of challenges and needs of candidates and hiring managers.

The Moscow prioritization tool is designed to address the most critical requirements that would contribute to project success (Pavel, 2023). Its simplicity enabled the readiness to categorize priorities and support more effective decision-making. Furthermore, it aids in managing the scope and expectations, ensuring that stakeholders are aligned on project priorities.

As concluded, to enhance the candidate's experience, the focus should be on prioritizing the clarification of the job's expectations, streamlining the hiring process, helping in preparing applications, and emphasizing quality hires. While other considerations could enhance the process, these may be either less impactful or have a broader scope than this thesis project. The Moscow model is presented in the following Fig. 27.

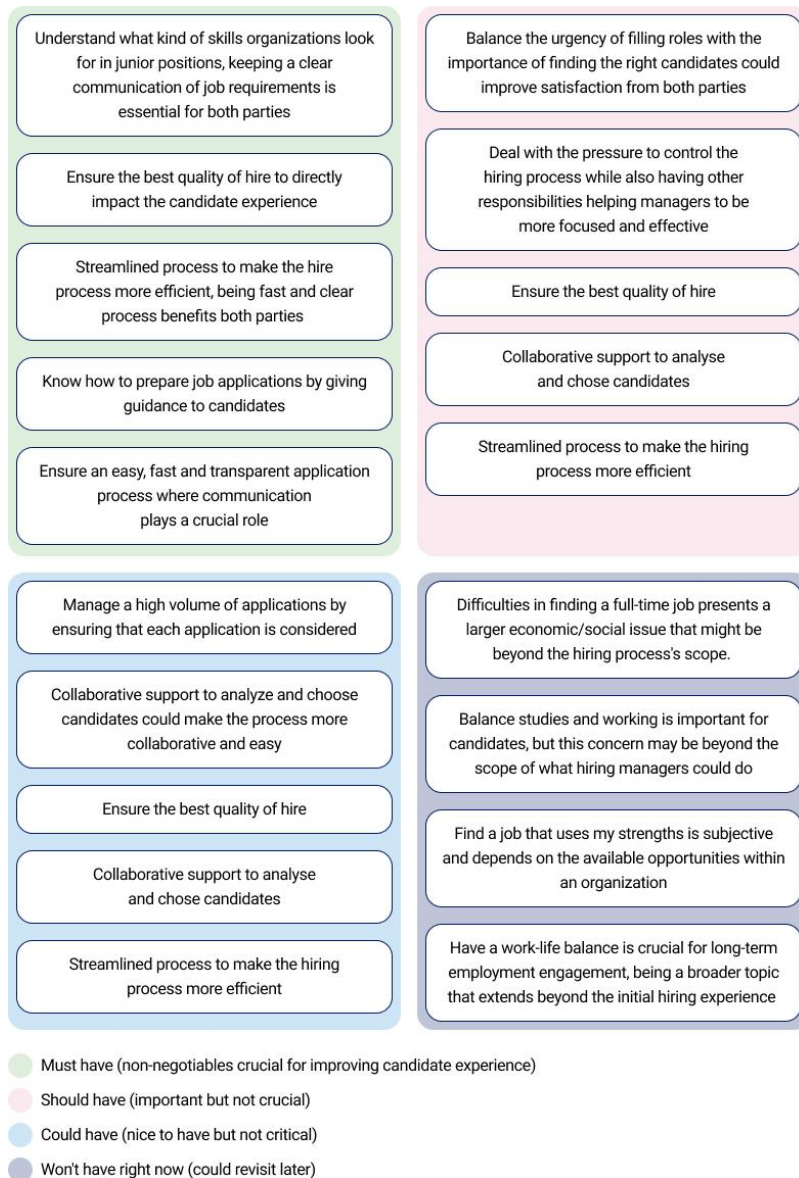


Fig.27 - Moscow Prioritization

Additionally, the perspectives of both personas are being considered for the proposed solution, with a continued focus on enhancing the candidate's experience. This approach allows the development of a solution that not only improves the candidate's experience but also addresses some of the challenges faced by hiring managers, ultimately contributing to the overall experience delivered to candidates. Revisiting the research question, it is imperative to highlight that the proposed solution should be a product/service designed to assist HR professionals in managing candidate experience, which justifies the decision to integrate the needs and challenges of HM in connection to candidates. Upon completing the prioritization, the significance of having a clear visualization to illustrate where there might be opportunities for improvement in both actors' journeys in the process is recognized, considering Moscow must-haves.



Fig.28 - Opportunity areas for improvement



It is essential to note that the phases of the journey do not occur simultaneously, as represented in Fig. 28, owing to the lack of insights into the timeframes of both journeys. The creation of Fig.28 has supported in identifying opportunity areas for improvement, enabling ideation for possible solutions. Furthermore, it also underscores where value could be generated for both actors, while maintaining the focus on enhancing the candidate's experience.

The area for improvement in both Mike's application process journey and Anna's hiring process journey appears to be in the stage where Mike applies for a job at NN ("Apply for NN" under Mike's journey) and the corresponding stage for Anna is when she gets to know the candidates ("I get to know the candidates" under Anna's journey). Enhancing interaction and communication during this stage could improve the experience and outcome for the candidate and the hiring manager. This enhancement may involve improving the clarity and efficiency of the application process.

## Design sprint – Crazy 4 ´s

Transitioning to the ideation phase, a sprint was chosen to expedite the process, driven by a sense of creativity as the requisite mindset for this activity. Moreover, at that stage of the process, it was determined that by the end of April, the goal was to complete the ideation phase and redirect focus towards testing the concept or idea created. The Design Sprint methodology, developed by Google, was utilized to fortify UX culture and design leadership across the organization. Various Google teams experimented with these approaches, leveraging a range of activities, including traditional UX methods, IDEO methods, business strategy, and psychology, to promote a design mindset. The framework and methods are flexible, enabling teams to adapt them to specific goals and project scope (Share and Engage with the Design Sprint Community, n.d.).

Given the aforementioned information, the decision was made to utilize the Crazy 8 ´s method and adapt it to 4 ´s instead. This decision was primarily driven by the already narrowed scope and the challenge of generating 8 distinct ideas, leading to the decision to shorten them down. This method involved a rapid sketching exercise, challenging participants to create four distinct ideas within four minutes. The goal was to move beyond the initial idea and generate a broad spectrum of solutions to the identified opportunity areas in Fig. 28.

For this exercise, four participants were involved. According to Manzini (2015), active involvement is an essential prerequisite for effecting change and empowering individuals to shape their desired future. Most solutions developed by these innovative individuals are rooted in collaboration. A brief overview of the task was provided, the current project status was explained, and the primary insights gained from the project so far were highlighted to maintain the focus on the scope. Emphasizing the must-haves determined through Moscow prioritization, as well as the challenges and pains of both personas, the participants were guided to sketch potential solutions addressing these elements and the areas for improvement illustrated in Fig. 28. It was also requested that they complete the task at their convenience and subsequently elaborate on the solutions they envisioned.

Moreover, to avoid biased ideas, each participant performed the activity individually. The fascinating influence of participants' diverse backgrounds and interests on their thought process was evident in the way they expressed themselves on paper. Additionally, it was interesting to observe that many of the ideas were interconnected or could complement each other in different ways (also coming from different participants). Overall, an effective facilitation process was mandatory to ensure participants had the necessary information to engage in the activity.

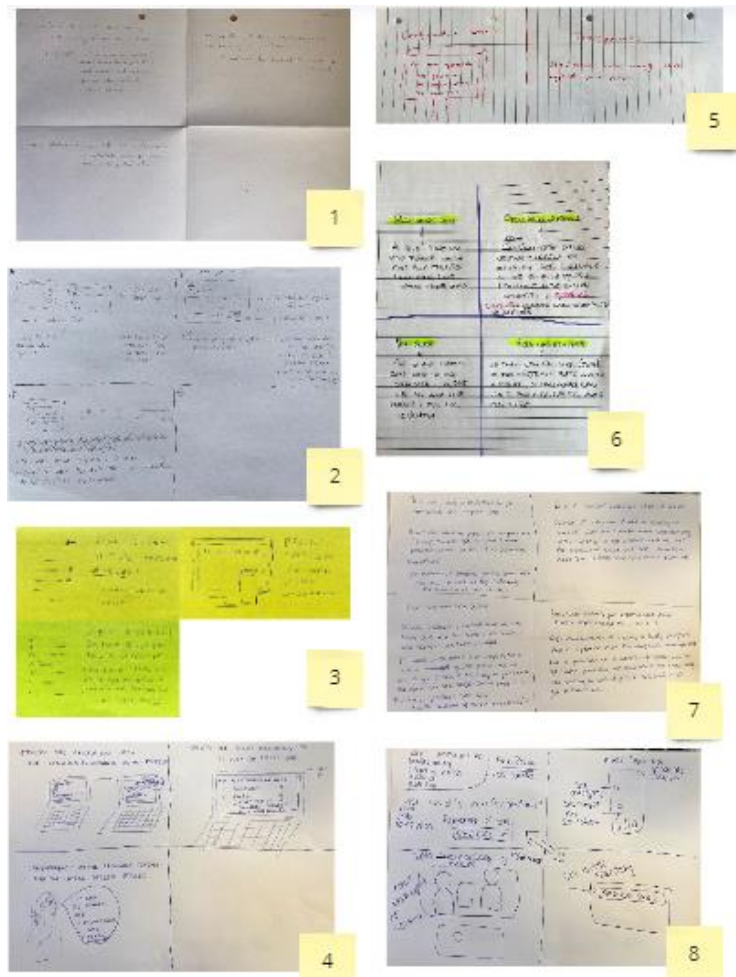


Fig.29 - Crazy 4 's participants' drawings (Appendix B)

## Idea selection

Following the collection of participants' ideas for solutions, the aim was to share them with relevant members from P&O, including the NN supervisor, to gather their opinions and feedback. To achieve this, a meeting was organized to present the suggested ideas respective descriptions/explanations. The results of the Crazy 4's sketch activity, showcasing visualizations of different ideas, some in written form, others as sketches, are represented in Fig. 29. In preparation for the online meeting, the participants' ideas were analyzed and further detailed for a more informed prioritization. Subsequently, the decision was made to cluster the ideas and utilize color coding to specify concepts related to the candidate's application process experience, aiming to facilitate navigation through the different ideas.

The NN supervisor, the CX Manager, and the two service designers from the P&O team were invited to participate in this online meeting. Each participant was tasked with voting on the two ideas they found most interesting or relevant. To facilitate this, the dot voting tool suggested by Service Design Tools, (n.d.) was utilized, providing a simple method for participants to highlight their choices with a dot. Although typically conducted in a physical environment, the digital experience is believed to be equivalent. Ultimately, this method enabled the most appreciated idea to be easily identified. It was intriguing to learn that some proposed ideas were already under development or consideration by NN teams, and some already existed. Furthermore, the discussion around fewer interesting ideas provided valuable insights, enriching the final approach to the selected idea. Thus, the focus will solely be on the ideas chosen during the meeting, as these will be the ones proceeded with for idea development.

Following dot voting, it became evident that the idea that got more votes belonged to the "Process overview" cluster. Essentially, the chosen idea involves an inclusion of a process overview in the

application form, presenting all the necessary information for candidates to fill in, along with a timeline indicating their progress and identifying relevant details to mention in each step. Furthermore, the idea entails the inclusion of specific tips within each step to ensure only relevant information. For example, this could involve clearly communicating NN's requirement for a CV without a picture.

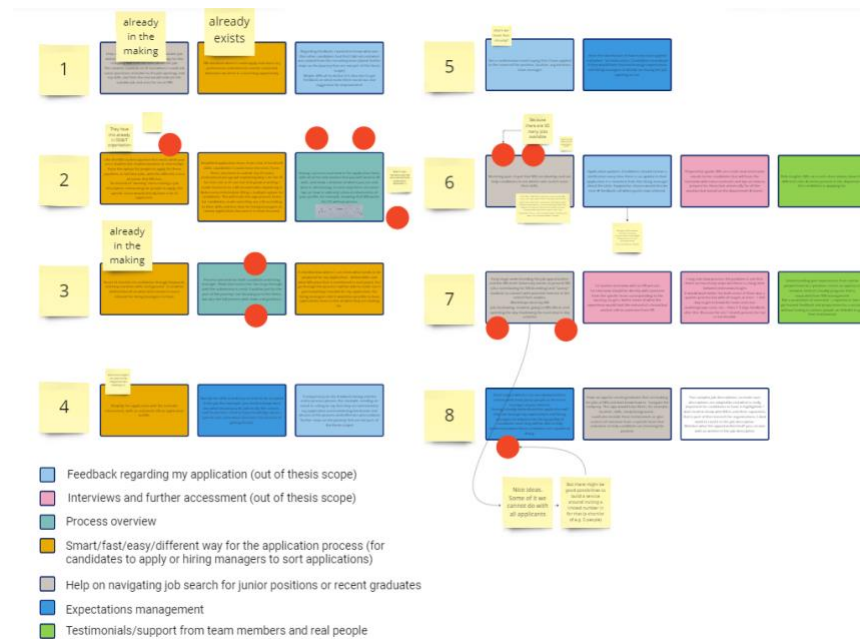


Fig.30 - Idea clusters with votes and notes from NN (Appendix B)

In the following section, the focus will be on enhancing the significance of the chosen idea for candidates and how it delivers value to them.

## Value Proposition Canvas

The Value Proposition Canvas, commonly utilized by marketing experts, product owners, and designers, is a relevant tool for comprehending customer needs and crafting products and services that effectively fulfill those needs (Strategyzer, n.d and Service Design Tools, n.d.). This tool was selected due to its relevance in the SD field and its capacity to offer a meaningful way to illustrate the value of the chosen idea. As depicted in Fig. 31 by the canvas, it involves an analysis of the candidate's gains, pains, and needs/jobs.

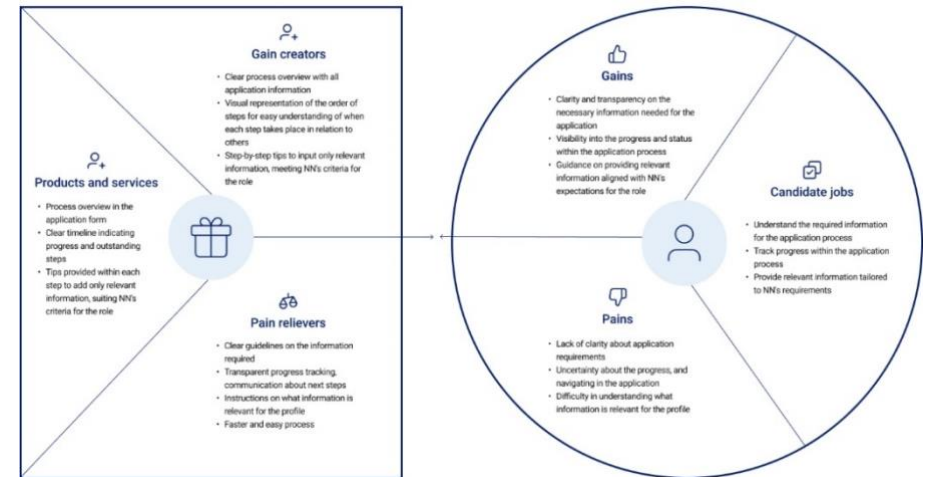


Fig.31 - Value Proposition Canvas for chosen concept

On the left side, the intended relationship with the idea solution is observed, aligning with the candidate's gains, pains, and needs. Moreover, this model is familiar to multidisciplinary teams and provides a simple means of showcasing the essence of the idea and its benefits to candidates.

The proposed solution also relates to the must-haves defined on the Moscow Prioritization, as can be observed in Fig.27. The solution aims to provide guidance to candidates at each step of the process, where clear communication and transparency about requirements are essential. Additionally, the creation of an overview of the full application process will ensure a streamlined process for candidates. Upon reflection, it becomes evident that the most affected actor by this solution would be the candidates, aligning with the ultimate goal of improving their experience. It is worth noting that hiring managers would also be impacted by this solution, although in a different manner and not as directly as candidates. Improving the process for candidates would consequently simplify the process for hiring managers, considering their role in screening and reviewing candidates' applications. With a clearer and more guided process aligned to the specific requirements of the role candidates apply for, hiring managers would experience fewer challenges when reviewing applications (shortlisting and reviewing actions in the hiring managers' journey). Consequently, the process would be faster and more streamlined for them. This adjustment would prompt candidates to tailor their applications according to NN guidelines and tips provided throughout their application journey.

In relation to the must-haves identified in the Moscow Prioritization in Fig.27, it is believed that several aspects addressed there align with the proposed solution. The solution aims to provide guidance to candidates at each step of the process, emphasizing clear communication and transparency about requirements - essential elements highlighted in the must-haves.

## Idea Development

In this phase, the preparation to start the development of the selected idea is underway. With a clear understanding of the chosen idea and wealth of insights regarding what the candidates desire in the

application form, there is a strong position to move forward with the development process. It is important to ensure that if the employer has a well-defined job description, the company's forms or questionnaires should be crafted to help the candidate know how their skills and experience align with the organization during the application phase (Gong, 2021).

In order to effectively articulate the idea, it is essential to consider the movement, structure, and behavior, outlined by Reason et al., (2015) as the three essential elements of service design. The proposed solution involves a redesign of the application form process on the NN career website, incorporating a guided overview of the process for candidates throughout their journey. This approach ensures a cohesive flow of actions that guides candidates through the necessary steps to complete the application. The structure will be delineated through the specific designed steps and the information required for each, enabling a deeper analysis and optimization of the service parts. Lastly, the behavior element will be integrated into the interactions candidates have with the form interface, aiming to enhance their overall satisfaction. It is important to note that the solution aligns, to a certain extent, with the objectives and related initiatives outlined in Fig.5, referring to the P&O mid-term strategy.

To develop this idea, it is crucial to incorporate features mentioned by candidates during research and to consider hiring managers' perspectives on this matter. It is important to establish limits for the idea development in advance, as these limits will guide the redesign process. When the reference is made to re-designing the application form, it alludes to improving features, clicks, design visualizations, or communications that could be enhanced, always based on the research findings.

The focus is on the interface and determining the information and communication that should be included in the form to enhance candidates' experience in the application process step. This idea solution is centered on creating a new experience for candidates

applying for jobs at NN. However, as service designers, the physical re-design of the layout, the people, and web interfaces of actual services is typically not conducted directly. Instead, representations of these elements are worked with, and touchpoints of services are not directly influenced or modified; rather, customer experiences are shaped (Blomkvist et al., 2016).

## Development Guidelines

From the outset of my thesis, the aim is to integrate insights from the book "How to Design Services That Work" (Downe, 2020), which was an internship completion gift from last semester, with this thesis. Although the inclusion of these insights in this thesis were certain, the most suitable point to into the process was initially uncertain. The author's clear and relevant explanation of the 15 principles of good SD (The Principles — Good Services, n.d.) was found highly engaging and applicable to this thesis project. Following a brief brainstorming session with the NN supervisor, 7 key principles were identified to serve as design guidelines for developing the solution, as represented in Fig.32. These guidelines are intended to be tested in the next phase using the "Good Service Scale" methodology (Downe, 2020), a tool that will be further detailed in this document.

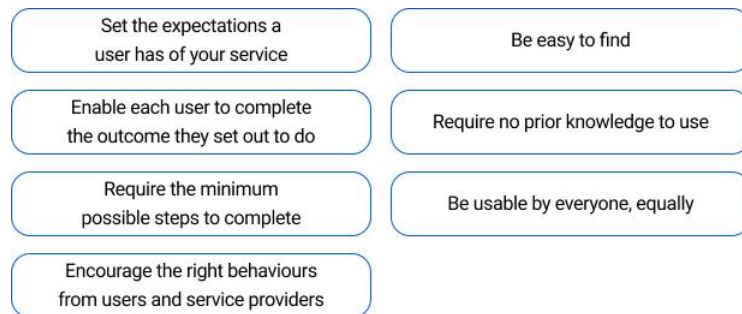


Fig.32 - 7 SD principles that will be considered for development (Downe, 2020)

## Benchmark

For every design project involving the redesign of an existing service that is not entirely new in the market, benchmarking is a crucial tool in creating effective solutions. According to Service Design Tools and Methods (n.d), benchmarking optimizes the process of learning from peers by evaluating other service solutions based on specific context or goals. It is important to note that benchmarking should be purposeful, with comparisons aligned with the goals of the developed service – in this case following other phases findings about candidate's pains and needs. This tool will enable learning from others' mistakes, adopt best practices, and align the proposed service interface with industry standards.

There is limited literature on benchmarking and its benefits for the design process. Nonetheless, it is important to consider the value that benchmarking other organizations can bring, particularly if a similar solution already exists. Furthermore, it is a valuable tool, especially when the idea is not being built from scratch (Polaine et al., 2013), as it allows the comparison of the existing service being redesigning, enabling improvements based on research findings and insights from other services.

Regarding the activity itself, the first thought was to benchmark NN competitors to see how their approach to the application process is. Some of them have already described this linear process with steps as candidates progress through the application. For example, companies such as Jonhson & Jonhson, Eli Lilly, and Merk have such processes in place. As mentioned earlier, NN application process is lengthy and requests duplicate information from candidates. Additionally, it was discovered that the application form link redirects to a form that does not align with the look and feel of the main pages of the NN website. From a visual consistency perspective, it appears outdated and is not in line with the design of other main pages on the website.



The main goal was to develop an overview of the process for applicants, along with providing them with insider tips on optimizing their applications and demonstrating skills. Based on the insights gathered during the idea ideation activity, it became evident that the redesign of the application form should not only be simplified and aligned with the preferences of hiring managers, but also optimized to facilitate a faster and more efficient screening and reviewing process.

Drawing from this, an investigation was conducted on application forms from globally recognized organizations such as Spotify, Pandora, HBO, and Netflix to gain insight into how organizations from different fields structure their application forms. Upon review, it was observed that HBO, Netflix, and Spotify feature concise and straightforward spaces for candidates to input their information, similar to the process overview found at Merck. Additionally, Pandora's application form mirrors the standardized structure employed at NN. Particularly, Spotify's form stood out for its innovative approach in presenting and soliciting candidate information. By looking beyond the traditional scope, while ensuring a clear process overview and support information, the aim was to draw innovative inspiration for the re-design.


proposed solution, involving the creation of an overview of the application process, would be influenced by these insights.

Moreover, decisions and choices regarding what to include and how to rearrange the form would be informed by these considerations. Moreover, the must-haves of the solution and benchmarking how other organizations are approaching their online application forms have also played a key role in these decisions.

## As-is application form

Fig.33 presents the current application form utilized for job applications at NN on their career website. This figure offers an overview of the existing features and the information requested from candidates during the application process.

In response to feedback from candidates regarding the current application process, frustration was expressed due to the form requiring doubled information, its excessive length, which asked non-job-relevant data, and the numerous clicks necessary to complete and submit the application. Taking this feedback into account, the primary aspect of the



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## Senior UX/UI Designer (301079)

Thank you for your interest in Novo Nordisk.

In this section you may add additional details about your experience and background. This will allow our recruiters to search you in the database as you have defined within your profile. In the event we have a vacancy that aligns with your skills and background we might contact you. You must directly apply to any position(s) that you are interested in pursuing to be considered for the role.

If you are applying to a specific position you must complete the fields within the job/country section to finalize your application. If you are a **candidate applying to a US position**, the information provided in the Previous Employment, Education and Certifications/Licenses sections will be used to complete your background check in the event you accept an offer of employment. Therefore, please ensure you complete these sections in their entirety.

[Expand all sections](#) [Collapse all sections](#)

My Documents

Accepted file types: DOCX, PDF, Image and Text (MSG, PPT and XLS file types are not accepted for CVs or cover letters)

\* Resume

CV\_2024.pdf  
(29/02/2024)

Cover Letter

Attach a Cover Letter

Diploma

20120641 - Ana Silva.pdf

Add a Document

Personal Information

Please complete your personal information.

**For Israeli applicants:** Please do not provide your private address. State Israel in all required fields.

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Margarida

\* Legal Middle Name

\* Legal Last Name

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\* Address Line 2

\* City

Copenhagen

State/Province

Postal Code

\* Country

Denmark

Please select the area of expertise where you have most experience

No Selection

Previous Employment

Required for US, please provide at least seven years of work history starting with the most recent first. For all other countries this data is optional.

\* Start Date

01/02/2023

End Date

13/04/2023

\* Company Name

Hotel The Socialist

Type of Business

Others

\* Title

Marketing Manager

Present Employer?

No

\* Country

Denmark

State/Province

No Selection

\* City

Copenhagen

Remove

Add

Formal Education

Optional: Please provide all completed formal education.

\* From Date

01/09/2018

End Date

27/05/2021

\* School

IADE - Creative University

\* Degree

Bachelor's Degree or Equivale

\* Country

Portugal

State/Province

No Selection

\* City

Lisbon

\* Did you graduate?

Yes

Remove

\* From Date

01/09/2022

End Date

23/06/2024

\* School

Aalborg University

\* Degree

Master's Degree or Equivalent

\* Country

Denmark

State/Province

No Selection

\* City

Copenhagen

\* Did you graduate?

No

Remove

**Fig. 33 - As-is application form**

Fig. 33 - As-is application form

## Proposed improved solution

Based on all the information gathered, there is now a solid foundation to redesign the form, creating a clear and simple overview with supporting information throughout to guide candidates through the process, indicating their progress and any specific requirements. To kick start this process, some paper drafts were made as a first attempt to visualize the wireframes and interface with respect to features and information. Since it can be quite challenging to anticipate the specific needs of every role at NN, the solution example focuses on a junior service design position. This approach may strongly resonate with Mike, the created persona, as he was created to represent a broad area of studies. Additionally, knowing what the hiring managers seek in candidates for such a position, and it's easier to conceptualize a role when having a deeper understanding of its requirements in terms of capabilities and skills.

## Solution development plan

In the next phase of the process, the paper sketches of the process overview will be translated into wireframes in Figma. The solution will be built by determining relevant categories and their order in the form, defining the information/topic requested in each category, drafting supporting information/tips for each category, and developing the visual design of the page to ensure consistency with the rest of the career website and NN visual guidelines.

Before starting the development of the solution, several crucial points were considered. It is essential to consider the relevant information that hiring managers require from candidates. Simultaneously, the process should be streamlined and effectively communicate the necessary information required for each specific



position applicants are seeking. The primary focus should be on clear communication and guidance at each stage of the application process, alongside creating a comprehensive process overview to improve navigation from the candidates' perspective. Furthermore, valuable insights were gathered by benchmarking relevant competitors' application forms on their career websites, enabling the enhancement of the NN application form.

Fig.34 depicts the paper sketch of the wireframes for the new application process, illustrating the main features and the placement of information on the webpage. Concrete guidance and tips on application steps will be included in the delivery phase. The sketch focuses on determining the display and format of the text on the webpage.

The wireframe sketch consists of six numbered sections, each representing a step in the application process. Each section includes a progress bar at the top with five steps: BASICS, MY EXPERIENCE, LINKS, APPLICATION QUESTIONS, and REVIEW & SUBMIT. The current step is highlighted with a blue dot.

- Section 1:** Features a 'Non Academic Logo' and 'JOB ROLE' section with a 'Role description' field. A sidebar menu contains 'Home', 'Search jobs', 'Careers', 'My profile' (with sub-items: 'job alerts', 'applications', 'settings'), and a 'Logout' button. The main content area has a 'BASICS' section with a tip: 'Explanation of what is being asked to fill \*' and a 'Requirements/Tip:' field.
- Section 2:** Includes 'Phone number' and 'Country of residence' fields. The 'BASICS' section continues with 'Personal information' (Email, Nationality) and a 'MY EXPERIENCE' section with a tip: 'Tip/Requirement:'. It also includes a 'Years of experience in the field' dropdown menu.
- Section 3:** Features a 'LINKS' section with 'LinkedIn', 'Portfolio', and 'Other' fields. The 'APPLICATION QUESTIONS' section includes 'Education level', 'Area of studies', 'Language level', and 'Salary expectations'.
- Section 4:** Includes a 'REVIEW & SUBMIT' section showing a summary of submitted information.
- Section 5:** Includes 'SAVE AS DRAFT' and 'SUBMIT' buttons.

Fig.34 - Paper sketch of the re-designed application form

## Develop phase reflections

During this phase, there is a deep need to have someone to bounce ideas off and discuss project topics. This stage is favored as it allows for the understanding that choosing a specific path over others leads to entirely different solutions – which in one's perspective is seen as the beauty of SD (Bækkeli, 2016). Upon starting the development stage, a point in time was encountered where it was necessary to pause and comprehend the direction highlighted by all the findings from previous phases. After a discussion with the NN supervisor and two service designers at P&O, this concern was presented, highlighting that all findings were leading the project path out of the thesis scope.

The main extracted insight - the lack of clear communication and transparency - relates to the application process after the candidates submit their application, rather than the journey before. For this, the Moscow prioritization supported in organizing these findings and prioritizing them according to the thesis scope, selecting the relevant features that the solution must include. Regarding the ideation activity, the input from the target group was found crucial, as it was a significant part of the design process where the participation of the target was essential for the solution ideation.

Reflecting on the most voted idea, it can be asserted that it is a strong proposal, fully aligned and supported by insights. It resonates with feedback obtained from the target audience, findings from the research, and seems to be of interest to P&O and their mid-term strategy, particularly as some stakeholders participated in the idea voting. Throughout this phase, the opportunity arose to present key findings about candidate experience and share aspects of the SD process in a monthly meeting with P&O team members. In this session, the tools utilized to obtain specific outcomes were showcased, aiming to subsequently develop an improved solution. The feedback received from team members reassured the chosen path, supported by all data

collected. Additionally, it was mentioned by P&O members present in the session that they had received feedback from candidates that aligned with these findings.

Looking forward to the delivery phase, the challenge was building the proposed wireframes of the application process. Throughout one's experience as a service designer and university projects, Figma (chosen platform to build the solution) has never been utilized to build a "working digital prototype". There is a genuine interest in learning how to navigate Figma tools for wireframes and for building a final prototype for testing.

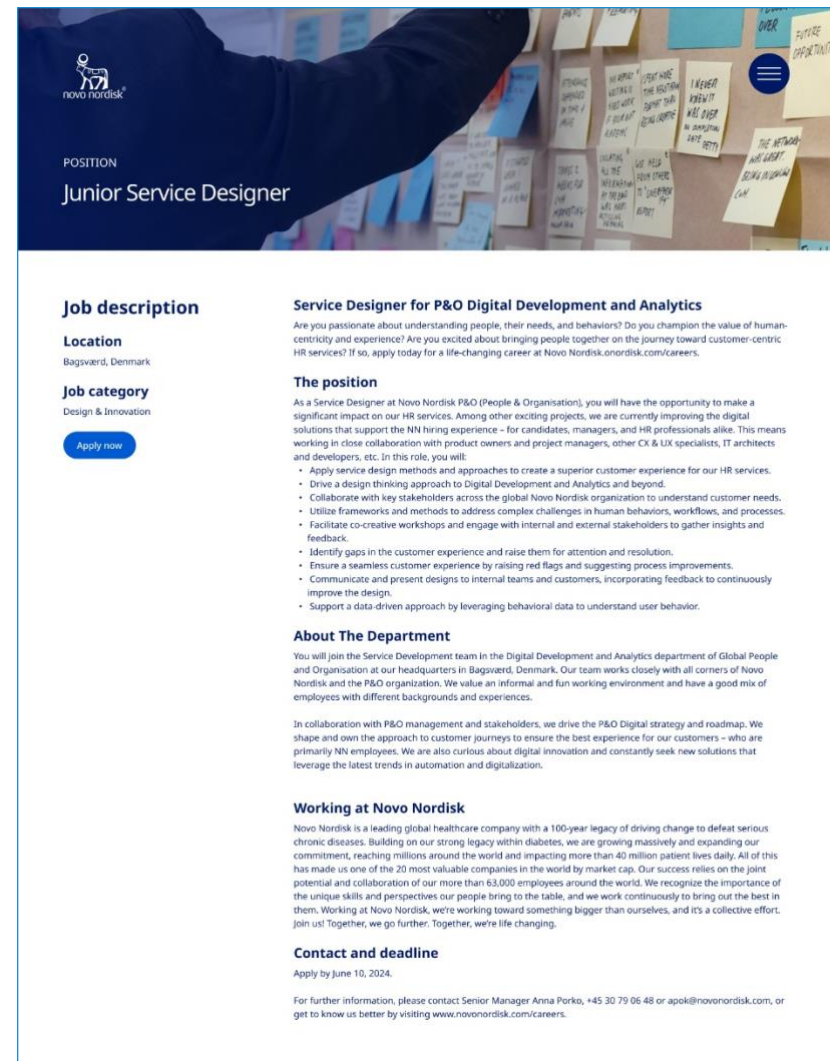
## Deliver

The fourth and last stage of the Double Diamond design methodology, Deliver focuses on implementing and executing the improved solution for the design brief. It emphasizes translating ideas and concepts into tangible solutions, reaching a final proposal. This involves not only building prototypes but also testing the solution with relevant stakeholders (British Council, n.d).

## Solution development

Tangible prototypes are crucial in helping employees and decision makers comprehend both the rational and emotional aspects of the opportunities and risks associated with a new SD concept. In practice, these prototypes must represent the concept of the idea applicable to the organization, thereby reducing uncertainties on the implementation (Bækkelie, 2016). The full interactive prototype (Appendix F), created in Figma, can be seen and played with via the link. As mentioned by Manzini (2015), among the six components that enable solutions, digital platforms are identified as a particularly crucial component. These are designed to connect people and facilitate smooth operations. Such platforms incorporate customized and intelligent booking and ordering systems, tracking and tracing technologies, as well as fluid payment systems. In this thesis, the digital platform is presented in the format of an improved application form, incorporating a process overview and guidance for candidates.

The focus was to build a smooth and effortless process for candidates to go through, so that it would subsequently be easier for HM to review the applicants. In the following Fig.35 all the redesigned wireframes of the application are depicted.



The image shows a screenshot of the Novo Nordisk job advertisement for a Junior Service Designer. The header features the Novo Nordisk logo and the job title 'Junior Service Designer'. Below this, the 'Job description' section includes the location 'Bagsvaerd, Denmark' and the category 'Design & Innovation'. A blue 'Apply now' button is visible. The 'Service Designer for P&O Digital Development and Analytics' section describes the role, emphasizing a focus on understanding people and improving digital solutions. It lists key responsibilities such as applying service design methods, driving a design thinking approach, collaborating with stakeholders, utilizing frameworks, facilitating co-creative workshops, identifying gaps, ensuring seamless customer experience, communicating designs, and supporting a data-driven approach. The 'About The Department' section mentions the team's focus on digital development and analytics. The 'Working at Novo Nordisk' section highlights the company's legacy and commitment to innovation. Finally, the 'Contact and deadline' section provides the application deadline of June 10, 2024, and contact information for Anna Porka.

**Job description**

**Location**  
Bagsvaerd, Denmark

**Job category**  
Design & Innovation

[Apply now](#)

**Service Designer for P&O Digital Development and Analytics**

Are you passionate about understanding people, their needs, and behaviors? Do you champion the value of human-centricity and experience? Are you excited about bringing people together on the journey toward customer-centric HR services? If so, apply today for a life-changing career at Novo Nordisk. [novonordisk.com/careers](https://www.novonordisk.com/careers).

**The position**

As a Service Designer at Novo Nordisk P&O (People & Organisation), you will have the opportunity to make a significant impact on our HR services. Among other exciting projects, we are currently improving the digital solutions that support the NN hiring experience - for candidates, managers, and HR professionals alike. This means working in close collaboration with product owners and project managers, other CX & UX specialists, IT architects and developers, etc. In this role, you will:

- Apply service design methods and approaches to create a superior customer experience for our HR services.
- Drive a design thinking approach to Digital Development and Analytics and beyond.
- Collaborate with key stakeholders across the global Novo Nordisk organization to understand customer needs.
- Utilize frameworks and methods to address complex challenges in human behaviors, workflows, and processes.
- Facilitate co-creative workshops and engage with internal and external stakeholders to gather insights and feedback.
- Identify gaps in the customer experience and raise them for attention and resolution.
- Ensure a seamless customer experience by raising red flags and suggesting process improvements.
- Communicate and present designs to internal teams and customers, incorporating feedback to continuously improve the design.
- Support a data-driven approach by leveraging behavioral data to understand user behavior.

**About The Department**

You will join the Service Development team in the Digital Development and Analytics department of Global People and Organisation at our headquarters in Bagsvaerd, Denmark. Our team works closely with all corners of Novo Nordisk and the P&O organization. We value an informal and fun working environment and have a good mix of employees with different backgrounds and experiences.

In collaboration with P&O management and stakeholders, we drive the P&O Digital strategy and roadmap. We shape and own the approach to customer journeys to ensure the best experience for our customers - who are primarily NN employees. We are also curious about digital innovation and constantly seek new solutions that leverage the latest trends in automation and digitalization.



**Working at Novo Nordisk**

Novo Nordisk is a leading global healthcare company with a 100-year legacy of driving change to defeat serious chronic diseases. Building on our strong legacy within diabetes, we are growing massively and expanding our commitment, reaching millions around the world and impacting more than 40 million patient lives daily. All of this has made us one of the 20 most valuable companies in the world by market cap. Our success relies on the joint potential and collaboration of our more than 63,000 employees around the world. We recognize the importance of the unique skills and perspectives our people bring to the table, and we work continuously to bring out the best in them. Working at Novo Nordisk, we're working toward something bigger than ourselves, and it's a collective effort. Join us! Together, we go further. Together, we're life changing.

**Contact and deadline**

Apply by June 10, 2024.

For further information, please contact Senior Manager Anna Porka, +45 30 79 06 48 or [aporka@novonordisk.com](mailto:aporka@novonordisk.com), or get to know us better by visiting [www.novonordisk.com/careers](https://www.novonordisk.com/careers).

APPLYING FOR

Junior Service Designer

job description

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02

03

04

05

My information

My Experience

Links

Application Questions

Review & Submit

Thank you for your interest in Novo Nordisk.

In this section you may add additional details about your experience and background. This information will assist Talent Acquisition in identifying prospective applicants for current and future opportunities. In the event we have a vacancy that aligns with your skills and background we might contact you.

Please ensure that we have the most up-to-date information available in your Candidate Profile. You must directly apply to any position(s) that you are interested in pursuing to be considered for the role.

The application process will take place in five steps where will also be provided some information tips on how to enhance your application and ensure that the Talent Acquisition team has the relevant information to choose the best candidates for the role.

My Information

Application tips

In this section, you'll provide your personal and professional details. This information helps us understand your background and why you're interested in joining our team. Personal information is only requested so we can get in touch with you regarding your application for this position. We look forward to learning more about you.

CV and motivation

In this section you need to upload your CV and write a few sentences showing your interest on applying for this position.

Upload CV

Upload

Motivation to apply

0/300

Write more about why are you applying for this role...

Personal information

Email



Nationality

Country of residence

- Select -

Phone number

Next

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My information

My Experience

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Application Questions

Review & Submit

My Experience

Application tips

In this step, we'd like you to select the skills, capabilities, and competencies that you excel in. For this job role, we are looking for specific attributes that will be given priority as we consider your application. Additionally, we're interested in understanding your level of experience in this field. If you don't have prior experience, don't worry - this is a junior position, and we do not expect you to have it.

Attributes

In this section you need to select the boxes that contain skills, capabilities and competencies that you believe you master and that you gained a deeper understanding throughout your experience.

Workshop facilitation

Data-driven mindset

Stakeholder mapping

Process oriented

Process improvement

Enhancing user experience

Design thinking mindset



User research

Years of experience

- Select -

Next

45



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Links

Application tips



In this step, we would like you to include links that provide insight into your journey and demonstrated experience in various projects.

LinkedIn

Portfolio

Other

Next



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Links

04

Application Questions

05

Review & Submit

Application questions

Application tips

In this step, we would like you answer some questions that would help the Talent Acquisition team better align your profile with the role you are applying for. Area of studies, language proficiency and education level are included to assess the candidate's academic background and expertise, ensuring that they meet the educational requirements for the job role.

Education Level

Select -

Area of studies

Select -



Language Level

Select -

Salary expectations

+

Next

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Review & Submit

My Information

Upload CV

CV.pdf

Switch

Motivation to apply

I am excited to apply for the junior service design position at Novo Nordisk. Through my academic background and practical experiences, I have developed a passion for creating meaningful and impactful user experiences. I am eager to contribute to a dynamic team and apply my skills to drive positive change within the organization. I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to learn and grow within a company renowned for its commitment to innovation and excellence.

Personal information

Email: callmemargarida@gmail.com

Country of residence: Denmark

Nationality: Portuguese

Phone number: +351 962542345

My Experience

Attributes

Workshop facilitation

Data-driven mindset

Process oriented

Process improvement

User research

Years of experience

0-2 years of experience in the field

Links

Links filled

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/margarida-silva/>

Portfolio: [https://www.behance.net/margaridasilva\\_](https://www.behance.net/margaridasilva_)

Application questions

Education level

Master Degree

Language level

Portuguese Native

English Fluent

Spanish Beginner

Area of studies

Service Systems Design



Salary expectations

35 000 DKK

\*Your personal data will be stored securely and processed in accordance with data protection regulations. This information will be used solely for the purpose of the application process and will not be shared with any third parties. We will retain your data for [specified time period] and ensure that it is handled with the utmost confidentiality. You have the right to access, correct, and request the deletion of your personal data as per data protection regulations.

Save as draft

Submit





Thank for applying for

Junior Service Designer

Submission confirmed!

Thank you for submitting your application. Your details have been received, and we appreciate your interest in joining our team! We will review your application and contact you if your qualifications match our current requirements. Please note that due to the high volume of applications, we may not be able to respond to each applicant individually. We appreciate your patience and understanding.



Back to career page

Fig. 35 – Wireframes of the proposed application form



## Solution delivery challenges

It is important to acknowledge that there are various challenges in building the solution that need to be considered. These include understanding and addressing user needs for each target group, or the creation of a service that suits candidates as a collective entity, while predominantly considering a target persona like Mike, as represented in Fig.22. The UX/UI aspects when creating webpages – designing them to be user-friendly and intuitive, and allowing candidates to navigate and complete the process with ease. It is also important to balance information to provide necessary guidance for candidates to fill in relevant information, while avoiding overwhelming them with unnecessary details. Additionally, an alignment with NN's brand image on the rest of the website is imperative to reflect the organization's visual consistency, creating a cohesive and positive experience for candidates. Moreover, addressing technological considerations related to the functionality of the form and the backend processes required for its proper operation, such as information technology (IT) operations, is significant. Lastly, testing the new job application form with internal stakeholders and allowing feedback on the design and functionality for iteration is also a challenge.

There are several reasons for failure, which can be varied and different. Obstacles may arise on the NN side as well as on the service designers' side. For example, these may include lack of experience and implementation maturity of SD approach, internal resistance or decision-making concerns from the top management team, lack of user acceptance, or a superior offer from competitor organizations (SDN | Successfully Implementing Service Design Projects, 2021). This highlights the critical need to ensure full engagement of relevant stakeholders with the proposed solution for its successful implementation and comprehension across the organization (Bækkelie, 2016).

## Impact of the solution on P&O

According to Stickdorn (2015), maintaining a general overview of the processes and improved results throughout the development and delivery of the service is important. Therefore, the implementation of new SD concept idea is suggested to be carried forward to the employees who will execute the selection process, in this case, the HM. This underscores the importance of stakeholder participation in co-creation, gaining practical insights into the concept throughout the process and the results obtained during the design phases. Therefore, it was deemed crucial to maintain contact with the NN supervisor and relevant stakeholders who could provide valuable expertise navigating the challenge. This approach was characterized by collaboration and insight sharing, allowing for continuous feedback and guidance from their side, enabling ongoing iteration.

This thesis, and specifically the research and service solution result, provided valuable insights for the P&O department to initiate the major project planned for the second half of the year. These insights are crucial for better understanding the candidates, their pains, gains and needs when talking about applying for a job at NN. This project serves as a starting point, already focused on the mid-term strategy objectives represented in Fig.5. Also, it can serve as inspiration regarding tools and processes used throughout the project, highlighting their relevance for specific stages of data collection and analysis. As a thesis project, it has its limitations and cannot address every aspect of candidate experience. However, in this case, it is specifically focused on the design brief given, the opportunity area found, and data supported throughout.

The ecosystem map, depicted in Fig.36, has enabled the identification of relevant stakeholders related to the proposed solution. This tool provides a synchronic representation, analyzing the system at a specific point in time, and depicts the interactions between various actors within the ecosystem, as outlined by Morelli et al (2021). The

project's focus is on the specific journey time related to the application process. The interaction flows identified can include different flows of resources such as information, human, social and technological or details about the actors' roles, skills, and contributions to the ecosystem. Insights and information gathered from NN, along with one's understanding of how the system operates, were used in the development of this map.

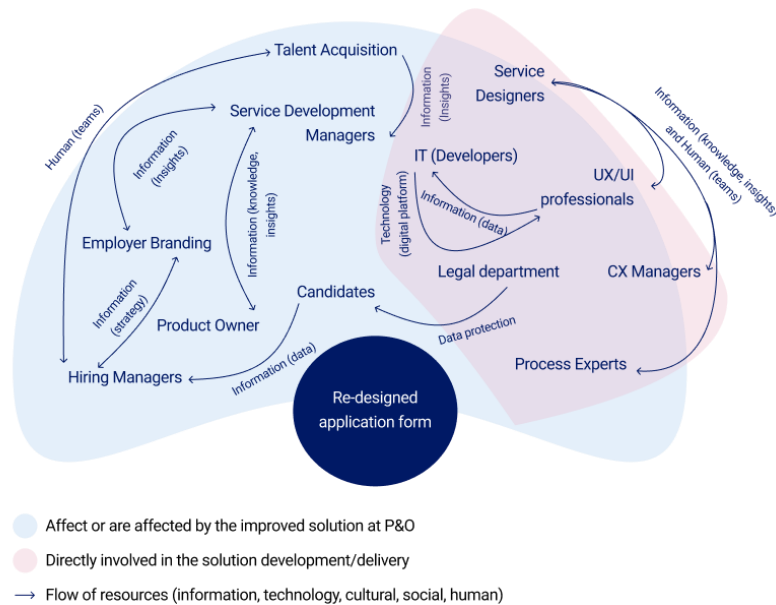


Fig. 36 – Ecosystem map

## Requirements and considerations

The improved version of the application form can have significant implications on desirability, feasibility, and viability. To address these aspects, some user experience enhancements were made to make the form more appealing and user-friendly (desirability).

Technical and resource capabilities to implement the improvements (feasibility) were also considered. Additionally, the overall impact and sustainability of the enhancements (viability) were considered (Orton, 2017). These are included in Fig.3 (the methodology) as the three aspects of DT where innovation is met in the middle, making them a requirement for the implementation stage in this thesis.

In terms of desirability, confidence is held that the solution addresses the "must-have" criteria, as indicated in Fig.27, for the candidates, effectively targeting their key pain points and guidance throughout the application process. Concerning feasibility, comprehensive internal analysis is required to assess P&O strengths and capacity to implement the proposed improvements. Information that would provide a "green light" for implementation is currently unavailable. This aspect involves stakeholder collaboration and an analysis of whether the proposed solution strengthens the business and enhances its competitive advantage. In this case, testing viability is challenging because it involves determining if the business model matches both current and future needs. Predicting the precise future requirements can be challenging, given that user needs continually evolve. However, by maintaining a user-centric approach and remaining adaptable, his solution can be better positioned to evolve according to user needs and market dynamics.

In the execution plan, it is important to recognize that this solution would only be implemented if a dedicated team is established for this project by the Service Development Manager. This emphasizes the need for collaboration among various areas of expertise within NN to bring this solution to life.

It is important to note that, in addition to the team's perspective, gathering feedback at the end of the candidate selection process becomes crucial for future process improvements - after the application process. This stage is necessary to understand the actual perception of the candidates' experience with the proposed solution (Wernke, 2022). As the project is focused on enhancing candidates' experience,



continuous assessment and refinement based on feedback and ongoing improvements becomes essential. In our rapidly evolving world, organizations must be aware of these changes and respond swiftly, especially in topics such as UX. This is essential for keeping users, employees, customers, and candidates engaged and ensuring they have the best experience with the organization. By doing so, organizations can enhance workforce productivity, ultimately contributing to the organization's profitability.

## Testing plan

The proposed solution will be tested within the time constraints, and testing is aimed to be conducted between the hand-in date and the thesis defense. The results and feedback would be shared in the defense presentation. A 1-week period has been allocated for the testing, during which the solution will be tested with relevant stakeholders from NN, who are represented in the ecosystem map in Fig.36. A feedback session with the NN stakeholders will primarily focus on the overall experience provided by the improved solution, given their involvement in the process from the beginning. Additionally, contact has been made with some UX professionals from NN who will be part of this feedback session, possibly offering usability insights, although the primary focus is to gather high-level feedback on the form and relevance of the service. Having UX experts provide their opinions about the improved solution is always an encouraging sign and a valuable opportunity.

Moreover, to ensure the solution's relevance to the defined target, a presentation of the interactive prototype to between 5-10 candidates is planned. To gather valuable feedback, the development guidelines outlined in the Development Guidelines chapter (page 44) will be utilized. The "Good Service Scale" (Appendix G) is a scale designed to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of services, particularly focusing on their user-centered design and delivery. It aims to assess

various facets of service provision, including UX, accessibility, and overall quality. Through this scale (Appendix G), organizations can better understand and improve the services they offer, ensuring they align with user needs and expectations.

The service is typically accessed across 15 principles (The Principles — Good Services, n.d.), allowing individuals to rate the service based on these criteria. The plan for this test is to focus on the 7 principles defined in the development guidelines and test them. Since it would be demanding for users to test all 15 principles, the testing will concentrate on the 7 principles depicted in Fig.32. The scale will be used to test the prototype with the target group. Alongside rating the service design principles, the aim is to understand if the new improved solution effectively alleviates the pain points found in the application journey. To achieve this, candidates will be asked about their experience navigating the new form, the relevance of the content, and the impact of the overview on their process through engaging in a conversation with them.

Through user testing, the goal is to comprehend how individuals assess the service based on defined principles and to analyze potential areas for iteration or improvement. Additionally, the aim is to comprehend applicants' perception of the process overview created, including defined steps and guidance tips throughout. It would be ideal to understand how they perceive the navigational aspects of the application, whether it feels less time-consuming, and if it provides adequate guidance and communication support. Ultimately, the goal is to evaluate if the solution aligns with candidates' needs and addresses what they consider important when completing a job application.

## Execution plan

For the redesign of the job application form to take place, an execution plan should be prepared. Based on experience and some knowledge of NN's project management approaches, this project is

likely to span around six months. Furthermore, there is a larger project focusing on candidate experience planned for the second half of 2024. It is proposed that the planning for this 6-month project should outline its structure within the P&O team and identify the Program Increments (PI) that should be undertaken to improve the candidate experience. A brief discussion was held with the NN supervisor, who envisions the process unfolding with consideration and involvement of the relevant stakeholders at P&O.

It is expected that the research and ideation phase should take about one month, with a likely pace of 2-3 days per week. The development phase is planned to be carried out in an agile delivery set-up, structured with 10-week increments, segmented into 5 times 2-week sprints. Throughout this phase, emphasis will be placed on iterative development, collaboration, flexibility, and customer feedback. The timing and iterations are contingent upon the solution, with the goal of releasing the first Minimum Viable Product (MVP) within one Program Increment (PI), allowing for continuous improvement and adaptation throughout the development process. The project team is envisioned to ideally consist of a Product Owner (PO), a UX professional, a CX expert, a Process Expert, and, from the IT department, an architect and one or two developers. The research phase is anticipated to be led by a CX professional, such as one of the service designers present in the team. The ideation and co-creation process will involve collaboration with relevant stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive process.

To fulfil this execution plan, it is essential for employees to have a clear understanding of their tasks and to not feel coerced into change. One effective approach is to involve them from the beginning of the SD process and utilize co-design workshops to empower frontline employees and establish collective ownership across all stakeholders. This approach also eases the change process, ensuring that key stakeholders have their needs addressed, while simultaneously considering the needs of the candidates right from the start, ultimately optimizing the implementation process (Bækkeli, 2016).

## Deliver phase reflections

This phase, although brief, proved to be engaging and rewarding. Crafting the solution was particularly interesting as it allowed exploration of Figma for the first time, enabling the creation of the interactive prototype. It was essential for the deliverable that focus was maintained on the main area for improvement found and attempts to solve secondary problems were avoided.

Additionally, it was ensured that the testing planned after the hand-in was well organized to extract the most valuable insights and effectively assess the new improved solution. The aim was to thoroughly understand how individuals would respond to having an overview and guidance throughout their application journey. The feedback and insights gathered during testing will be presented at the thesis presentation on June 10<sup>th</sup>, where the process and key insights that shaped the creation of this specific solution will be highlighted.

While navigating Figma proved to be complex, it was found to be a valuable tool for this project. Ultimately, the process culminated in a solution believed to solve the challenge. The process fully supported the decision-making, and the necessary tools were selected for analyzing and prioritizing data and insights. For the testing plan, it is essential to ensure that the testing goals are aligned with the activity and questions prepared. The goal is to truly make candidates reflect on the impact of this improved solution on relieving their pains in the application process.

# Conclusion

## Key findings related to the research question

In this thesis, it has been explored how service design practices can help HR departments navigate or improve candidate experience. The research has been carried out through conducting a case study, which addressed the context of the People & Organization department at Novo Nordisk. In the case study the challenges of being a candidate seeking a job have been examined and conclusions about areas for improvement that would better support them in their application process role have been derived. To structure the design process, and address the problem statements of the case study, the Double Diamond methodology has been utilized. In addition, elements of the Design Thinking mindset were integrated throughout the design process, to foster innovative solutions and problem-solving.

The most significant findings center around the phase "I do my application for NN," which emerges as the most challenging step for candidates, signifying potential for improvement. The full journey undertaken by candidates during their application process was visualized by utilizing the journey map tool. It provides HR departments with a visual representation of the candidate's interactions, experiences, and emotions throughout the application process. It allows P&O department to gain insights into the various touchpoints, pain points, and positive experiences of candidates to identify areas for improvement, enhance communication strategies, and develop solutions to alleviate the pains and challenges faced by candidates.

From conducting in-depth interviews, a clearer understanding of the candidate's experiences, challenges, and perspectives throughout the application journey was gained. This feedback allows P&O to identify pain points, areas for improvement, and positive aspects of the application process from the candidates' viewpoint.

Learning about candidates' experiences firsthand enables the P&O team to tailor and refine the application process experience to be more empathetic, efficient, and candidate-centric. Interviewing candidates about their application process also fosters a sense of transparency and open communication, that is demonstrated by research as one of the aspects that candidates value, and demonstrates to candidates that their experiences and opinions are valued. This, in turn, contributes to a positive employer brand and can positively impact Novo Nordisk's reputation among applicants and potential future candidates.

From sending surveys, its responses can shed light on specific aspects of the application process that are most valued by candidates, such as clear communication, timely feedback, or transparency in the hiring process. "Career growth and development" and "Job description matches my interest" were the top-rated aspects related to job search. In terms of the job post, "Clear and detailed job description" emerged as the most favored, closely followed by "Work flexibility" and "Team dynamics and management," all of which are important to candidates. Additionally, for the job application process, "Application process instructions" and "Clear communication about next steps" were identified as essential for candidates. Furthermore, the survey emphasized the importance of a "Fast process" and "Transparency and communication" in shaping the candidate's experience. Armed with this knowledge, HR departments can tailor their processes to align more closely with candidate expectations, ultimately enhancing the overall experience for applicants.

Throughout the research process, critical moments were marked by brainstorming, ideation, and co-creation sessions, which were utilized in various phases of the project for distinct purposes. These tools foster collaboration and idea generation, allowing diverse perspectives and insights to be shared across and with the organization. This process uncovers innovative solutions and approaches to enhance candidate experience, as input from various stakeholders which

identifies pain points and areas for improvement throughout the application process.

Moreover, these tools enable stakeholders to collectively identify and prioritize candidate needs, challenges, and expectations, providing HR departments with a comprehensive understanding of the candidate journey. They are also crucial for continuous improvement within the organization, highlighting HR professionals' commitment to enhance the candidate experience. In addition, other tools such as the Moscow prioritization, the design sprint, and the value proposition canvas were employed to narrow the scope, ideate on potential solutions, and demonstrate the value brought by the chosen solution, respectively. The Moscow prioritization tool allowed HR to focus on the most critical aspects of the improved solution, ensuring that key pain points were effectively addressed. The design sprint facilitated collaboration with the target group to rapidly ideate solutions aimed at improving their own candidate experience. Moreover, the value proposition canvas functioned as a strategic tool, facilitating in enhanced comprehension, communication, and delivery of value. It serves as a simple yet comprehensive visual representation of the value that the chosen solution provides to the target candidates under study.

In general, the use of these tools can help HR departments in identifying areas of opportunity for improving candidate experience. As these tools are employed, their focus transitions to converting data into valuable insights, serving to narrow down the focus. It is part of service design to select the most appropriate tool based on the specific goal for each phase. Moreover, if Novo Nordisk has already identified a problem area before the process, these tools can be interconnected and wield greater influence. In cases where the P&O department lacks familiarity with general design thinking, it is recommended to involve service designers to introduce a human-centric perspective. This approach highlights the candidate's viewpoint and fosters insights through service design practices. Given the nature of candidate experience, adopting

this approach is critical, as the design process must ensure that candidate needs and challenges are effectively addressed.

## Implications of this thesis in the context of service design and candidate experience

The research findings hold relevant implications within the realm of service design and candidate experience. Through an exploration of the candidate journey on the application process (through a case study in collaboration with Novo Nordisk) and the subsequent redesign of their application form, this thesis offers valuable insights into the application of service design practices to enhance the overall candidate experience.

Firstly, the thesis findings and insights can highlight the role of service design in shaping a positive candidate experience. By uncovering candidates' key pain points, preferences, and needs, the research done can inform the development of service design processes that prioritize and enhance the candidate journey.

Moreover, the improved solution proposed and fully supported by the design process serves as a practical example of the application of service design tools, mindset, capabilities and approach to alleviate candidates pain points in their job application process. This case study can serve as a valuable inspiration within the service design field, showcasing how the application of user-centric design principles through the Double Diamond methodology design process can lead to tangible improvements in candidate experience. However, while this thesis focused on a specific segment of the job application journey, the process-oriented approach remains valuable for projects beyond this scope.

## Limitations and future work recommendations

The limitations of this project encompass some key aspects. Firstly, as the project is in its early stages, the long-term impact of the solution and the quality may not yet be fully realized, presenting a challenge in evaluating its sustained effectiveness. The full impact and outcomes are yet to be fully assessed over an extended period, the user testing that will be done will not be enough to ensure a long-term impact for candidates. Additionally, external factors such as changes in the job market, shifts in candidate expectations, or advancements in technology or AI use in application processes could influence the form's long-term success and usage. Moreover, considering UX/UI aspects of the re-designed application form, while this thesis may have focused primarily on the enhancing of candidate experience, it's important to underscore the importance of these aspects for solutions like this. A friendly and intuitive UI can enhance the overall application process by making it easier for candidates to navigate, input information, and complete the application effectively. Finally, in terms of priorities, it is important that Novo Nordisk ensures the commitment to ongoing user experience testing, candidate feedback, and iterative enhancements. These will be crucial in ensuring that the redesigned application form remains aligned with candidate needs and expectations for the long term.

Although the chosen path, guided by insights, led to a specific solution, the beauty of service design lies in the non-linear nature of the process. Even with identical briefs, the unique process undertaken by each person results in entirely distinct solutions. This doesn't imply that some are more correct than others, but rather that each decision and prioritization throughout the process leads to a unique solution area. It is acknowledged that if other tools had been used throughout the process, the solution area would also have been different than the one presented. Moreover, there is no information on if research for this case

study would be the same in other organizations, or organizations the same size as Novo Nordisk or working in the same industry.

Therefore, it is suggested that future research focuses on further exploring how the non-standardized approach to the hiring process would affect hiring managers' approach to candidates. How would only involving the hiring managers' perspective have influenced the design process? Would the involvement have encouraged awareness and reflections that could make a difference on a higher level of the solution designed? The research showed that having an overview of the process and feeling guided throughout the application process is something that candidates need. It is wondered if the approach could be used to other parts of the hiring process, such as the interview stage or even the onboarding.

Therefore, a great potential in investigating whether the approach can aid to improve candidate experience in the full hiring process from seeking a job until getting offered a position. Another interesting research area could be to conduct such a process in a different organizational setting to compare the findings.

## Contribution to the service design field

The contribution of this thesis research and findings to the service design field lies in its practical application of service design practices to improve the candidates' experience within the context of the job application process. By focusing on the Novo Nordisk case study about enhancing candidate experience, this research demonstrates the importance of utilizing service design tools and mindset to address corporate challenges related to user experience. It provides valuable insights and findings on process related tools such as customer journey maps, interviews, surveys and ecosystem maps and their specific outcomes. It also highlights the identification of steps that candidates undergo in their application process, including touchpoints. It gives

valuable information on pain points and challenges faced throughout the application journey, areas for improvement found and a focused perspective on a big size organization candidate experience approach. Moreover, it shows a prototype of an improved solution, based on candidate research and fully supported by service design practices.

In essence, this thesis research contributes to the service design field by providing a practical application of how service design principles can be setting a direction in how to address and enhance user experiences within the context of job applications, ultimately contributing to the broader discussion on the importance of service design practices in user-centered solutions.

## Data availability

Due to a collaborative agreement with Novo Nordisk, certain information and data crucial to this thesis are restricted. As a result, specific details will not be accessible nor listed in the references section in accordance with the Non-Disclosure Agreement signed. However, any utilization of this information will be indicated as follows: (NN internal documents, 2024).

Readers may encounter figures where it is not entirely feasible to read the content presented on the post-its. In such instances, the Miro board link will be provided for those who wish to fully access the content of the figure. It is important to note that the inability to fully discern the content in these figures does not impact the understanding of the thesis context and the work developed.

## Notes on grammar & vocabulary review

The author acknowledges the use of AI to enhance the correctness and clarity of the text, ensuring it is written in an academic tone and that communication is clear.



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# Appendix

## Appendix A

### Interview script for candidates

**Interviewees information:** Talent Partner (R&ED Research and Early Development - DSI Digital Science & Innovation, HR Business Partner (P&O Supply Chain & Finance), Talent Acquisition Consultant Digital (Data & IT), Training Project Manager (Training and Capability Building)

#### Introduction [2 min]

- Thank you for your time.
- My name is Margarida, and I am doing my Service Design Master Thesis in collaboration with Novo Nordisk, in the P&O Digital Development and Analytics, Service Development
- I am working on a topic related to candidate's experience during the initial phases of applying for a job at Novo Nordisk and the goal of today is to explore your own experience.
- The interview will last about 30 min and I am very interested in listening to your experience! There are no right or wrong answers.
- I might ask several times "why" to really try to go deeper at specific things you mention during our interview
- Before we start: Do you want to ask me any questions before you start?
- Perfect, I will just record our interview so I can go back to it for analysis purposes

#### Background [4 min]

- Could you tell me a bit about yourself?
- Where do you come from?

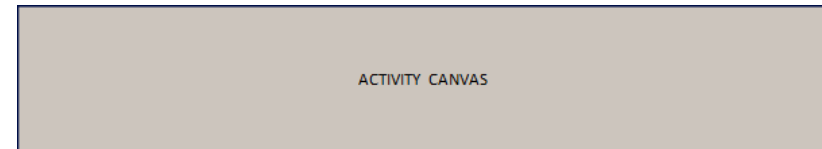
- What do you enjoy doing? hobbies, other interests?
- And what about your work? How would you describe your role?

#### About Novo Nordisk [2 min]

- For how long have you been working at Novo?
- How has your experience been so far? project, colleagues, with Novo systems and facilities
- How would you describe your role?

#### Application process [15-20 min]

For this next part of our session, I will send you the link for the Miro board where I would like to have your input. I will send it here on the Teams chat, let me know when you have access to it.



- This canvas shows a timeline of the journey you had from deciding to apply for a job/jobs until you click in the submission button
- Please feel free to add any step that might be missing, this is totally regarding the experience you had.
- In yellow you can see the steps of the journey and you can drag them to the timeline according to what you did and where was it located in the time
- There is a moment in the middle of the timeline where I want you to just focus on the application you did for Novo and from there on (excluding other applications you might have prepared to other companies)

- After you filled the timeline with the steps you went through, I'll just ask some questions about the experience you encountered along the journey
- Did you finish your studies and want to get a job? Did you want to change the role you had before/company?
- How did you find out about the job opening?
- Do you think that the previous thoughts or knowledge you had regarding Novo affected your choice to apply?
- Was this your only application? Did you apply for other job positions? How did you prioritize your decisions?
- What materials do you need to submit as part of the job application?
- Did you have any questions or concerns during the application process? If so, how were they addressed?
- Was the form easy to navigate? Was it clear to you what you had to fill in?
- How would you describe your experience of finding a job?
- Did you feel supported throughout the application process? If so, how?
- What was the most challenging part of the application process for you focusing on the moment 1? What about moment 2? Managing expectations about the position, navigating the online form, finding the right position according to your skills and capabilities

- If you could change something for tomorrow, what would be the first and most urgent thing to change? Why?

#### **Ideal application process [5 min]**

- Moving on to the last part of our session....
- Let's talk a bit about the future... Can you imagine yourself being CEO of Novo Nordisk – You have the power to change everything.
- In an ideal world how would the candidate's experience be like? Why?
- What kind of support would you have? From whom?

## Appendix B

### **Miro link with the design process overview**

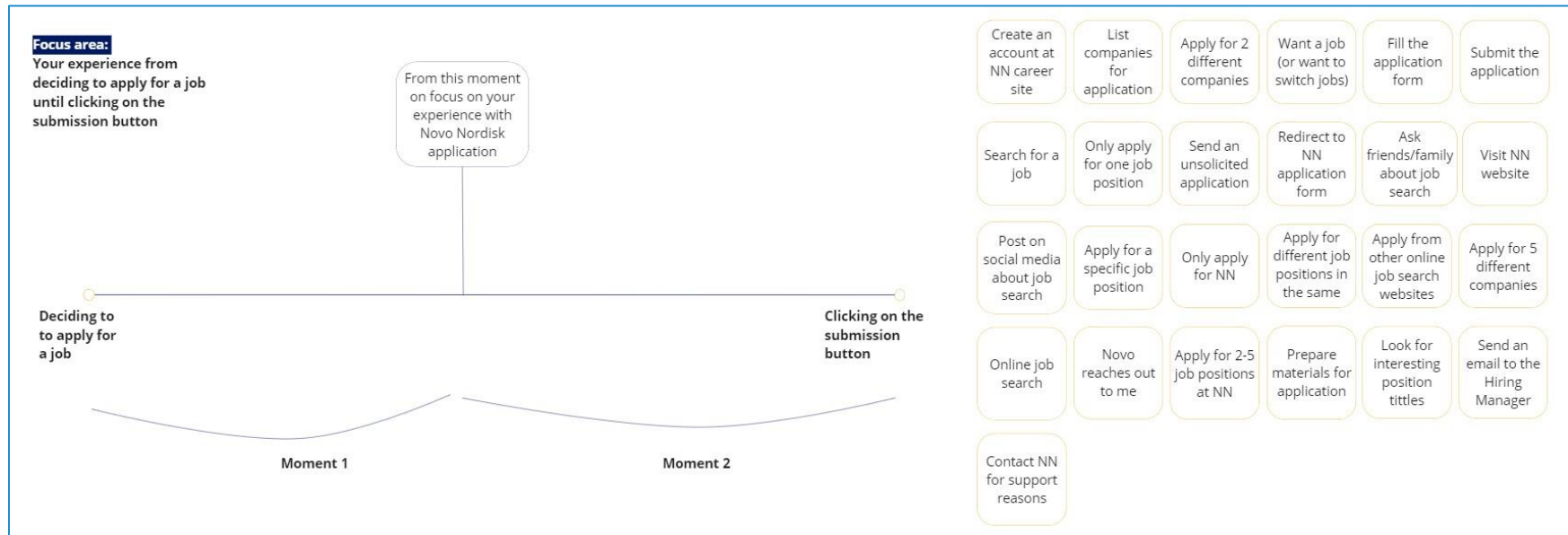
As referenced in the Data Availability chapter, access to the Miro board, where the Double Diamond process was developed, is provided here. Several figures are depicted, and detailed analysis requires zooming in after clicking on the link. To facilitate navigation through the phases, the Miro board is divided into the four stages of the Double Diamond process. This division allows for the identification of the visualizations presented in the master thesis.

Here is the link to access the Miro file:

[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVNYigLxA=?share\\_link\\_id=903673901641](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVNYigLxA=?share_link_id=903673901641)

## Appendix C

### Interactive activity done in the in-depth interviews



## Appendix D

### Interview script for NN supervisor

**Goal:** Understanding the need of service design in P&O

**Questions:**

- Can you tell me about your role and responsibilities as a Manager in Service Development?
- What are the biggest challenges you face in your role?
- How do you currently approach improving the customer experience within P&O?
- When did you feel the need to hire a service designer for P&O?
- How do you believe a service designer could help address the challenges in P&O projects?
- What specific skills or expertise do you think a service designer should bring to the team?
- What do you think is the most important insight or learning from our discussion today?



## Appendix E

### Co-creation activity canvas

#### Co-creation of a persona based on you

##### Activity description

In the blue boxes in the canvas you can see specific topics that would help me create a persona. In every box there are many post its where I would ask you to fill your own information. Remember that is no right or wrong answer and feel free to share whatever you think makes sense in each box.

On the top right corner of the canvas there is some information about you that I gathered from other research methods.

To edit the post its you just need to click on them twice and start typing.

##### What is a persona?

It is a detailed and realistic representation of your target audience (still fictional because it is not related to just one individual), that in this case is you!

##### Why do I need your help?

By co-creating this persona together I can make sure I deeply understand my target and end up designing a solution that truly resonates with this fictional profile we are together co-creating.

#### PERSONALITY

Extrovert	Animal person	Introvert	Driven	Creative	Problem-solving
extrovert	people pleaser	ambitious	insecure	want to prove myself	Relaxed
Eager to learn	open-minded	meeting new people, that achieved a lot inspires me			

#### INTERESTS

Documentaries	Going for walks in nature	Finance applied in AI	Dinner with friends	Make up	Kids
playing tennis, meeting friends	running, cycling, visiting bakeries	Playing board games	Cocktail making	yoga	surfing
Reading	Jogging	backpacking	music and film festivals		

#### GOALS

I want to be CEO of a company	I want to manage teams	I want to have 4 children	I want to have a stable work-life balance	I want to travel in relation to work	Find a full-time position after studies
I want a job that uses my strengths	I want to work in a friendly and efficient team	Own a house	I want to do something valuable to the world with my job	Easy and stressless job seeking process	I want to satisfy my expectations and stop to always want something more

#### CHALLENGES

Difficult to find a full-time job	Having time to social life	Feeling stressed about exams	Balancing studying and working	manage time related to do my thesis, find a full-time job and work	Knowing where to apply for full-time
networking as an introvert	not being taken and then struggling to get the same connections	wanting to work in something that I love, but that often being underpaid	scared of 5 days a week 9-4 lifestyle	too many schools and ambitions and only one life	Not having that much experience in the field
new period of life					

#### PAINS

I don't know if I want to keep a full-time at NN	My role is not interesting anymore	Don't have enough time to spend with my friends	Stressed about studies	Adult life	Not finding a job afterwards
Not knowing what skills I need to focus on, to improve the CV	being motivated because don't get replies to my job applications	What my unique selling points are	networking being key for getting many jobs	if any company would be interested in me	nothing serious

#### GAINS

I am happy at Novo	I look forward living a full-time employee	I like working big organizations	Other job openings when you already are in the company	Be motivated when you go to work	Motivated to look for a full-time job
just submitted my thesis and am grateful for already having NPI on my CV	Really positive and professional department to be in	very excited with my thesis	excited about what comes after studies	just submitted my thesis and am grateful for already having a lot in my team at Novo	

#### What I know so far...

Individuals between 18-25 years old (57.4%)	Having clear communication about next steps is crucial
Student workers at Novo Nordisk that seek for a full-time position in the future	Transparency and communication impacts my experience
Knowing how flexible my work will be in terms of location is important for me	Want a fast application process
Application process instructions need to exist for guidance	Getting to know about my future team dynamics and management is relevant for me
I am focused on career growth and development	Clear and detailed job description is what I value the most in the job post
I want the job description to match my interests	

## Appendix F

### **Figma file link for the interactive prototype**

This interactive prototype was utilized for user testing.

How to use: The Figma file preview needs to be changed for prototype, on the top right of the screen. To run the prototype, use the play button in the toolbar is used for playing the prototype.

Link to access to the Figma file: [Prototype\\_Application Form Re-design](#)

## Appendix G

### “Good Service Scale” by (Downe, 2020)

For this thesis, only the first column of the scale being used for user testing.

## Good Service Scale

A good service should		Good Services Score 0-4	What is your service failing to do for users?	What does good look like for your service?	What's stopping your service doing this now?	What could you do to change it?
1	<b>Be easy to find</b> Your users can find your service unaided by looking to complete the task they set out to do					
2	<b>Clearly explain its purpose</b> Your users can understand what your service is, who its for and can quickly understand whether the service is what they're looking for					
3	<b>Set the expectations a user has of it</b> At every point in your user's journey, it is clear to the them what they can expect from your service and can plan accordingly					
4	<b>Enable each user to complete the outcome they set out to do</b> Your users can achieve the outcome they set out to do without having to use multiple disjointed services and interactions to do so					
5	<b>Work in a way that is familiar</b> Your users can use your service without having to learn new rules and ways of working that are different to the other services like yours that they might use					

**6** **Require no prior knowledge to use**  
Users with no knowledge of your service can use your service as well as someone who has used it before

**7** **Be agnostic of organisational structures**  
Your users can achieve the outcome they set out to do without having to become aware of or negotiate the links between separate organisations, data or structures themselves

**8** **Require the minimum possible steps to complete**  
Your users complete your service with as little effort and steps as possible, and at a pace that enables them to make decisions properly

**9** **Be consistent throughout**  
Your users can trust your service because it looks, feels and acts as one constant service

**10** **Have no dead ends**  
Your users can stray off the desired path of your service and return to their journey without being stranded. At no point will they find themselves in a situation where they are unable to continue without being given a way to resolve their issue

**11** **Be usable by everyone, equally**  
Regardless of who your user's are, and the resources they have at hand, they can use your service equally as well as anyone else


**12 Encourage the right behaviours from users and service providers**

Your users can use your service in a way that does not encourage them to put themselves, your staff, your organisation's sustainability and the world in danger

**13 Respond to change quickly**

A user can experience massive or minor changes in their life and their experience of your service responds promptly and proportionally

**14 Clearly explain why a decision has been made**

Your users can understand the decisions that have been made about them and why those decisions have been made. They have a way to dispute that decision if they need to

**15 Make it easy to get human assistance**

Users with complex or difficult to serve needs can contact a human decision maker quickly and easily to resolve their issue. The person they speak to is empowered to help


**Total score:**

**Scoring scale:**

- 0 points - It is not possible for users to do this
- 1 point - A small minority of users can do this with extreme difficulty or effort
- 2 points - Some users can do this, but it still requires difficulty or effort for most
- 3 points - Most users can do this, but it requires difficulty or effort for some
- 4 points - All users can do this easily and consistently