

Freshly Roasted Stories

.....
Business development was extraordinarily difficult. We discovered that some customer service basics desperately needed to be put back on track.
.....

This ambitious rail cargo company needed a much stronger business development. In their traditional org chart they were well staffed, however performance was low. Poor knowledge sharing on the accounts side. Poor customer service attitude. And thus: poor business development. Beanmachine declined their first request to organise a training on customer service attitude. Instead we suggested a service design project. Action-learning with the whole customer service department, their stakeholders and definitely with their clients. We promised the result would show far better effects than just another training.

Instantly we've put everyone together in small workgroups, to revitalize contact and sharing of knowledge between all those concerned. Their assignment: Plotting out the full course from customer enquiries over fulfillment to invoicing. This approach showed very successful. Flowcharts, procedures, scripts... On the fly, every little step was mapped out. Pretty extraordinary, but one player was being left out: the client.

Everyone was constantly talking about, but never with the client. Beanmachine grasped the nettle! Now, the members were asked to literally approach the customer. At the start this felt very uncomfortable, but gradually spontaneity took over. Moreover this approach led to some crucial nuances regarding to the value chain.

Equipped with the market-analyses and customer empathy findings, we were able to focus on the organisation and it's service delivery. Based on Beanmachine's customer journey map, the task force drew a vast visual reproduction of every single step during the client's process. With every touch point, the client's emotional perception was mapped out.

RESULT

In a wink of the eye, all members were able to witness the entire path which their clients are going down. They put 'flashlights' at the strongest and weakest links in their current service delivery (already the next day some quick win operations were being established).

.....
Within this particular B2B environment, it's utterly interesting to see the personal perception of the client and to find out how crucial personal contact is in this matter.
.....





From this point onwards, the project accelerated rapidly. The closer you get to your customer, the easier solutions and choices are found. The taskforce called in two client-representatives to extend their team. They helped the team to turn all their ideas into specific proposals.

To make things even more exciting, we invited a client deputation and held a presentation about the output. This resulted in enthusiastic and less enthusiastic reactions, but more important, all reactions were honest. The client's direct input gave the business developers a strong foundation to really create new values.

DESIGN CAPACITY: MIND THE GAP!

Alongside our Service Design interventions, we tend to run an additional intervention. Beanmachine offers a corporate development plan, focussing on the right mindset & muscles of the broad organisation.

This intervention emphasises on outside-in thinking, empathy, exploratory behaviour, observing abilities, dialogue techniques, experimental behaviour, playfully creating, ... These new techniques push the Service Design Process forward, but they also help to dismantle the organisational barriers when implementing new services.

.....
Too many times, we've encountered the loss of very valuable ideas, just because 'the organisation wasn't ready for them'.

BEANMACHINE HAS LEFT THE BUILDING?

Naturally, at the end of the Service Design process, Beanmachine will leave the building. The organisation has now control over the knowledge, skills and tools. They're ready to accept full ownership and to live up to their new ideas. Still, we're not completely out of sight. Service Design is an iterative process, with short loops. Sometimes it'll be tempting

to get stuck in one single loop. It's also possible that teams keep on fine-tuning that one particular service/solution, whilst maybe the opportunity is long gone. Beanmachine won't carry out a single but a dooble-loop follow-up. We won't be asking if the organisation is doing the right thing? We'll be asking if they're (still) dealing with the right thing.

Freshly Roasted Stories

BEANMACHINE

.....

A lot of HR-strategies are like relabelling old wine in new bottles. Only by breaking out of the cocoon and by enabling the principles of service design, a real HR Value Proposition will see the light.

.....

A major retailer and a giant telecom provider. Both of them constantly need to re-invent and innovate to maintain their strong position on the Belgian market. But both of them also experience that their HR-departments have stalled. Over the years they've thought of solutions and processes though afterwards these are bluntly ignored by the business. Beanmachine got called in to thoroughly re-plot this matter. For us the key was ... the customer.

.....

Value is what the fool is prepared to pay.

.....

An old Flemish idiom with a lot of truth in it.

In both projects we implemented 'service design': a pathway towards but above all together with the customer. The same goes for Beanmachine so every single step we took in this project, we took in consultation with the HR-department. Easy? Not always. For too long HR was comfortably settled into it's own microcosmos. Some effort was needed to take them behind their safe boundaries. Still, our co-design approach produced a nice collateral benefit: during the process, the HR-department gradually learned the skills of 'design thinking'. Something they're still using nowadays when dealing with other projects.

WHAT NEXT?

Get out in the open! A few of the retailer's MT-members had already visited some of their branches to listen and observe. This way they'd discovered the changing behaviour of the current customers and the actual challenges their branch managers had to deal with nowadays. Our telecom provider had run a different market analysis. Recently their team was enforced by new members with a fresh look upon client viewpoints. Some of the other MT-members already had the natural urge to break out of the cocoon. After having put together all the pieces of this jigsaw, a brand new inventory was created: market, society, technology... . When defining new value propositions, one shouldn't ignore these valuables.

"Value is what the fool is prepared to pay." An old Flemish idiom with a lot of truth in it. HR (doubtfully) benefits from the fact that few have to pay immediately and that they are in the position to be prescriptive. Luckily our team's ambitions were larger, so they really tried to understand what their customer's goals were. In 'service design language': customer empathy.



.....
The HR-team really poured its weapons during the customer empathy workshop. Our silhouettes received hypocorisms and almost got embraced: customer empathy turned into customer intimacy.
.....

During a half-day workshop we placed life-sized silhouettes in the room. Each of them received a name and a position. We used familiar people, prototypes for certain business segments. During the next step we gathered as much info as possible about that client. What strikes his mind? What are his everyday's occupations? What are typical expressions? What are his 'jobs to be done'? Pains and gains? At the end of the day our silhouettes transformed into real customers. All with their predictable but also surprising amount of wishes.

TIME TO DELIVER!

Placing yourself close to your customer with your boots in the same puddle of (business-)mud, really puts things into new perspectives.

It's like hitting the fast-forward button. In both projects, Beanmachine introduced its customized value proposition maps. Only after a couple of hours there was a blueprint of the solution where both organisations had been looking for: value propositions differing so strongly from their own old-fashioned HR-strategies they'd been pursuing for way too long. Suddenly they found palpable solutions for different kinds of customers. No more vague roles or ideological slogans!



THE LAST WORD IS THE CUSTOMER'S.

Naturally the last word in the designing process is the customer's with whom the dialogue does not just stop once the design seems finished. So Beanmachine always urges organisations to get out into the field to confront their clients with the new value propositions.

Not only it obliges the designers to turn the rather visionary value propositions into tangible and realistic prototypes, it leads to direct dialogue and priceless client input to make the original proposals even more custom-fit.

Freshly Roasted Stories

.....

Our Learning & Development policy suddenly rose from the grey zone to a pioneering position in our organisation.

.....

The HR-department of a successful Belgian energy supplier was promoting a new heading towards more entrepreneurship and autonomy within the company. However, they noticed that their L&D policies were trapped within outdated and opposite paradigms. That's where Beanmachine came in.

The kick-off had to call the tune straight away. Beanmachine insisted on a 'deep dialogue' with the entire HR-team: not just the HR-director or the three HR-managers. We also pulled the Learning Architects and the support staff on board. Getting everyone involved from scratch, will make a huge difference during the implementation process. Moreover, when Beanmachine preaches that any department is to be build around the customer, than our TALK too needs to be changed into WALK from the very start. So we started co-designing and the medium immediately became the message.

Okay, let's focus on the client now! Beanmachine likes to take this very literally by observing client-behaviour or even by involving that very client in the service design process. Though in this particular project, the latter was practically impossible. So we agreed that Beanmachine would run customer empathy workshops in which their famous silhouettes were placed into the room. The participants got the chance to look through the eyes of their costumers (the silhouettes), discovering all kinds of different aspects, needs and real customers, revealing all kinds of new needs and desires. Although they were only dealing with cardboard characters, the participants really felt they invited their clients into the process.

.....

A design isn't finished until somebody is using it.

.....

Brenda Laurel, designer at MIT.



Only when you realise what your clients try to achieve, you're fully able to design solutions. The company was now ready for acting. Guided by some nifty tools, the HR-team designed a clear value proposition for every customer. Beanmachine pointed to the crux of the matter: Do we really fulfill the client's needs? Will this help us to give the client what he really wants? The result was smashing: one general proposal turned into seven specific client offers. And in every single value proposition, autonomy, entrepreneurship and support played key roles. The satisfaction was enormous!

Naturally the last word in the designing process is the customer's. Some members of the workgroup got out into the field to confront their clients with the new value proposals. They had a thorough dialogue giving them a sneak preview of their possible new L&D-policy. We asked the clients not to judge the new value proposals, but rather to think along and to improve where possible. This resulted in plenty of beautiful conversations. You could sense a wider support was being created and moreover, the client's input was used to improve the proposals and to make them even more custom-fit.



.....

Beanmachine pointed
to the crux of the matter:
Do we really fulfill the client's needs?
Will this help us to give the
client what he really wants?

.....

**DESIGN
CAPACITY:
MIND THE GAP!**

Alongside our Service Design interventions, we tend to run an additional intervention. Beanmachine offers a corporate development plan, focussing on the right mindset & muscles of the broad organisation. This intervention emphasises on outside-in thinking, empathy, exploratory behaviour, observing abilities, dialogue techniques, experimental behaviour, playful creating, ... These new techniques push the Service Design Process forward, but they also help to dismantle the organisational barriers when implementing new services. Too many times, we've encountered the loss of very valuable ideas, just because 'the organisation wasn't ready for them'.