FINAL PUBLICATION

PROCESSES OF CHANGE

HONOURS PROGRAMME

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

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THE TEAM

PROCESSES OF CHANGE 2018/19

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FROM THE TEACHERS

"*How do you feel now that the third cohort of students has finalized the Bachelor Honours Processes of Change track?"* one of you asked just before my opening of your final seminar on the 2nd of July 2019. This question illustrates how, in the past 1.5 years, you have grown into being emotionally intelligent learners, well-equipped to lead yourself and others in change.

During the Honours programme you have encountered and worked with a variety of experienced teachers and coaches. Together we have taught you about the key factors that instigate change at the individual, group, organizational and, even, the societal level. As part of this process, you have learned to design, acquire and realize changes and innovations in all sorts of contexts. In order to make this happen and support a psychologically safe learning climate, we have done our best to create a cohesive team that is able to openly discuss and honestly reflect upon personal strengths and challenges in realizing change.

We are proud to see how your group has indeed gradually opened up, thereby providing a safe space for sharing personal reflections while at the same time – hopefully – building friendships for life. This is because being a change leader also requires yourself to be adaptive to and deal effectively with change. All good theories and high-tech change tools aside, in the end, you are the one-and-only instrument to change. Wherever you end up in your (professional) life, we hope you will be able to find each other in case you are looking for some genuine peer feedback and learning when you feel somehow 'stuck' in change.

It was a pleasure to work with you during the past 1.5 years. From the moment of being selected for this programme until finalizing it, we hope you have enjoyed the ride. Although this may be and feel like a goodbye, we would like to invite you to keep us updated about your progress. We love to keep in contact with inspirational change agents like yourselves!

On behalf of the Processes of Change teachers, all the best of luck,

Dr. Desirée van Dun

Baby steps help. Making them as well.

You need others to grow. Yes, in both ways. Helping in growth imparts one of the most fulfilling feelings on Earth. Growing together shapes a bond.

Dare to:

- Challenge status quo. Always. But not all the time.

- Challenge who you have become. And the why-question.

- Looking back, respectfully disagree, and go on.

- Decide and work on your own transformation.

- Dare your greatness to be an inspiration to others. Would you follow you?

- Dare their fears and growth.

To dare to develop, is what separates us from animals and makes us human.

And, ultimately, TOUCH makes a difference. When did you really touch, lately?

Don’t forget: Pay it forward.

Wouter A. Keijser MD

FOREWORD FROM THE STUDENTS

As we are writing this foreword, the end of the Honours Programme is in sight. Our feelings are mixed; on one hand we are excited, proud, and happy to have been part of such a great and enriching programme. We are also looking forward to being able to take up new projects with the time we will now have available. But on the other hand, we are wistful and nostalgic. The Honours Programme has been such a large part of our student lives, spending many hours over the last year and a half together. We started as strangers, but quickly grew into a group of close friends. There is no denying that we will miss our weekly sessions together, guided by Tsjalle, Desirée or Wouter. Although their endless flow of information and knowledge will stop, we will not stop learning, we will not stop being curious.

In these past one and a half year we acquired knowledge, experiences, and friendships that will stick with us and we will continue to cherish. Through the guidance and coaching this programme has offered us, we have not only aged, but also matured. We have taken small steps into becoming professional adults, developing our skill sets, and honing our minds. We covered a variety of topics than required us to think creatively, abstract, and to develop ourselves. We were pushed out of our comfort zones and into the unknown, searching for answers This ultimately lead to an enriching experience and a desire to keep moving forward - even if the honor's programme ended. We know we are speaking for everyone in this group when we say that we are extremely thankful for having been able to participate in this programme, receive the best knowledge possible, and meeting some of the most interesting and kind people on this campus.

We would like to give thanks to Tsjalle, Desirée, and Wouter for their work and dedication, as well as all the other staff involved with making the Honours Programme possible. It has been an incredible experience and will greatly increase the contributions we can make to society in the future.

In our last module, "Learning By Doing", we accepted the challenge of undertaking a change project of our own choosing. The goal was to use the theoretical knowledge and insights gained over the previous modules and bring them into practice. The following booklet offers a collection of all reports written by the students about their change projects, discussing their change goals, approaches, results and some personal reflection. We hope you enjoy reading it, and perhaps learn something new.

Signed,

The students from the Processes of Change track

FINAL PROJECTS

BECOMING ASSERTIVE – A SELF-DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Processes of Change – Learning by Doing

20.06.2019

Bieselt, H.E. (Helena, Student B-PSY)
(S1928759)

Introduction

As part of an assignment in this past Psychology module, I had to perform a series of personality tests to be able to reflect on myself and how I operate in my environment. When I saw the results, it was not surprising for me that I scored high on agreeableness (see Appendix A). Agreeableness is a personality factor which encompasses motives of the maintenance of positive relations (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). More specifically, agreeableness encompasses attitudes of goodness and trustworthiness of behaviours concerned with respect and empathy and of others (Groth-Marnat & Wright, 2016). Accordingly, individuals scoring low on measures of agreeableness often display scepticism of the intentions of others, competitive behaviour paired with challenge expectations, and aggressive, sarcastic, or manipulative manners to achieve what they want. On the other hand, individuals who score high on agreeableness, like me, are helping, sympathetic, and cooperative. They consider the feelings of others while believing in honesty and kindness in the other. Having learned the concept and characteristics of agreeableness during my studies I did realised that I, indeed, display agreeable behaviour in my private life. Accepting this characteristic as part of my self-concept was further facilitated by the positive connotations that agreeableness has. Appearing helpful and sympathetic seems to be more desirable than appearing pushy and aggressive. In addition, agreeableness is related to other concepts and consequences that could be considered positive and desirable, like prosocial motivation (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007), higher job performance ratings (Witt, Burke, Barrick, & Mount, 2002), or tolerance (Butrus & Witenberg, 2013).

However, even though agreeableness can be considered as a positive characteristic, I have encountered intrapersonal problems because of it in the past, especially in regard to my friendships and productivity. Apart from being a highly agreeable person, I am also highly focused on being productive and effective in my work. Consequently, I have high standards for myself and those around me in regard to being productive that often clash with those of my environment. This often happened in my circle of friends who I would not describe as lazy but who do not always work in a way that I would like them to, which often causes me stress and trouble. Nonetheless, I do not address them in these issues due to being too agreeable, meaning that instead of speaking about what troubles me I keep silent, which ends up causing me more trouble in the long run, because I do not want to critique them and potentially harm our relationships.

While there are several examples, I only want to mention one specific one. In module 5 of my studies as Psychology student, we were able to choose our project groups ourselves, which led everyone including me to choose their close circles of friends. Working with friends had the advantage of knowing that everyone would do their part and give their best in regard to the project work and that everyone actually liked each other. On the other hand, liking the others also served as a disadvantage – my friends often started to talk about private matters during the meetings, drifting away from the work and eventually ended up wasting our time, which was scarce to begin with. I remember that one meeting we got feedback for our last deliverable, which was very critical. There were a lot of revisions that had to be done in addition to working on the next deliverable, meaning that we had a huge workload for a small amount of time. I remember feeling overwhelmed but determined to get work done, so I tried to enlighten my friends about what exactly had to be done in addition to motivating them. After some time of working my friends started to talk about personal matters again and disregarded the tasks on hand. I became stressed seeing them waste time because I kept thinking about all the tasks that still needed to be done. However, instead of reminding them of working and taking initiative to lead them to a more appropriate work ethic I sat there in silence and kept doing the work myself. In the end, I did most of the work while having to deal with an arrangement of negative and strong emotions – stress, anger, panic, and desperation. In retrospect, I know that I should have told my friends about my feelings and my desire to work effectively. A concept that would have helped me in this regard is that of assertiveness, which means that one acts according to one's interest and stands up for oneself and one's rights without anxiety and without diminishing the rights of others (Galassi, Delo, Galassi, & Bastien, 1974). Using assertiveness would have saved me a lot of energy and stress. Nonetheless, to this day I am still not able to stand up for my opinions and rights in front of my friends. I fear conflict with them, so I would rather suffer in silence than addressing what troubles me in their behaviour. What especially strikes me is that during the course of the honour's programme I have worked on my confidence and assertiveness in my contact to other people. I noticed that I am able to now present my standpoint and be confident in defending it in regard to acquaintances or 'strangers'. Here, I am not afraid to address issues that bother me or cause me stress or discomfort. Especially in the module about leadership I learned and trained my own type of leadership and embraced the aspect of being a leader into my self-concept. I remember one particular guest lecture during that module where we mentioned and gathered different qualities of a leader that we thought of. I was surprised about the variety of qualities that indicated good leadership and of the different perspectives that were displayed. Since I always had a stern, harsh, and unemotional view of a 'leader', I could not identify myself with that title and thought that the act of directing and instructing a group, addressing issues, and being a spokesperson was just something I was not able to do. However, through considering the various qualities on the whiteboard I saw that leadership is not a one size fits all, but to some extent a part of every person. I learned that even though I am focused on harmony and kindness, I can still be strict and instruct a group of people without being harsh. When in contact with strangers or acquaintances in a professional setting I am now fully able to embrace my own leadership, to step up and guide and structure a group in addition to being strict. However, I have problems with incorporating this learned lesson into the contact with my friends and people that I hold close and dearly because here I am afraid that my leadership and assertiveness will be met with dislike and an end of the friendships. This is why I perceive the need to work on myself in this area. I already experienced that it is possible to change, and I want to further broaden the benefit that I gained from it.

Change goals

The observation of these patterns in my everyday life inspired this personal development project. Being high on one end of the spectrum led me to wonder what the other end looks like. More specifically, are there behaviours that I can adapt to my everyday contact with my friends to improve our productivity and to decrease my personal stress and discomfort? Therefore, my change goals for this project are to get to know concrete and observable behaviours that are perceived as assertive and to adapt them into contact with friends where a result has to be achieved and a lack of productivity is perceived by me. I want to be able to employ several of these behaviours and be proficient with it, meaning that I plan to have a repertoire of behaviours that I can rely on since they make me appear assertive, are efficient in that they help me reach my goal, and are comfortable for me to use. Naturally, my ultimate goal during this project is to acquire generalisable behaviour that I can use not only in contact with my friend but also in other contexts. Consequently, the goal of this development project is to ‘become assertive’.

Design and Procedure

In order to train myself in becoming more assertive there were several methods used. Generally, this project consisted out of a literature review, an approach similar to systematic desensitisation, and a diary that was evaluated at the end.

<u>Literature review</u>

This method was used to conceptualise what the concept assertiveness actually incorporates. It was used to make it more concrete to be able to train oneself through the use of concrete, and observable behaviours that could be adapted. ‘Being assertive’ is a vague statement that does not entail any information on what actually counts as assertiveness. Accordingly, I searched in literature for actual and utilisable behaviours that I was able to adapt in my everyday life. I figured that having concrete examples that I could perform would facilitate actually adapting and using the behaviours since I would exactly know what was expected and needed from me. Consequently, inclusion criteria for my list were that the behaviour was 1) specific, 2) observable, and 3) concrete.

Apart from making assertiveness more concrete, I also searched for similar concepts to increase insight and the list of behaviours that I could use to train myself. Next to searching for assertive behaviours to adapt and agreeable behaviours to avoid, I also searched for behaviours that convey a successful approach to conflicts and persuasiveness that I could acquire. Similarly, I researched behaviours that were found to be unsuccessful for conflicts so that I knew what I should avoid and that I would recognize cases in which I displayed undesirable behaviour. Since I already display these behaviours and just want to have noted down what I should avoid for a complete overview, the inclusion criteria did not apply to the behaviours I should avoid. For them, I just noted behaviours I found in the literature.

Systematic Desensitization

In actuality, systematic desensitization is a method used in therapy to treat phobias and anxieties (Goldfried, 1971). However, this personal development project does not aim at working on current fears or phobias but in training a certain characteristic or to be specific – to train behaviours that can be ascribed to a certain characteristic. Accordingly, I am not using the exact method of systematic desensitization, but I adopt the philosophy behind it to use an approach to my training that is similar to systematic desensitization.

To be able to understand my approach I am first going to explain the method of systematic desensitization. Generally, it is first inferred what the fear or phobia is to be able to gain insight into what stimuli create the specific reactions (Lazarus, 1957). The identified stimuli are then ranked by the person with the phobia themselves in order of what is the easiest stimulus to encounter what is the most difficult stimulus to encounter. According to the ranks, the stimuli are then encountered in order while the person with the fear or phobia is relaxed. The goal is to encounter the frightening stimuli without the actual feelings of fear or anxiety so that the fear and anxiety can be removed. Systematic desensitization had been extensively researched in the past as treatment method and was found to have more effect than those methods used in nonspecific control groups that removed aspects of the treatment package (Kazdin & Wilcoxon, 1976). Therefore, I decided to incorporate aspects of it in my personal development project.

As mentioned above, I do not suffer from a phobia or from anxiety that is addressed in this paper. However, I have a stark tendency to use behaviours that could be considered to be agreeable. When reflecting on my past behaviour, I noticed a certain inner blocking in regard to being assertive. Even though I know in theory that defending my standpoint is not going to make my friends despise me, I still find it almost impossible for me to address issues that are bothering me. This is making my avoidance of assertiveness similar to a phobia. A phobia is a fear that is triggered by situation or object and that is unreasonable, excessive, and persistent in its nature (Davey, 2014). Similarly, my worries that lead me to avoid assertiveness – my worries that I will be perceived as unlikeable by my friends when I display assertiveness – are also unreasonable, excessive, and persistent in its design. Therefore, I found the approach to be quite fitting.

Moreover, as mentioned before, my priorities lie in adapting the philosophy of systematic desensitization. I do not plan on ordering stimuli that spark my worries and to encounter them in that order, but to rank the to be adopted behaviours that I find through the literature review in order to make the adaption easier for me. Accordingly, I will first filter out behaviours that would not be suitable for the situations I will encounter. Then, I will rank them from easiest to adapt to hardest to adapt. Ranking them from 'easiest for me to perform' to 'hardest for me to perform' allows me to facilitate the beginning of the training while enabling me to build confidence as I move through the behaviours. I will start adopting the easiest order to have a reminder of the concrete behaviours and their ranking I am keeping the list on my phone to be able to look them up discretely. An important aspect about this approach was addressed during the mid-term peer feedback session where one student addressed his concern that the rating from 'easiest to adapt' to 'hardest to adapt' would impede me from the entire learning experience. In his opinion, I could find a range of behaviours I feel comfortable with and then stop approaching behaviour that I perceive as harder or not as fitting with my own preferences or personality. Yet, this approach was chosen in respect of challenging myself and seeing behaviours that I may find scary or uncomfortable as a challenge. I plan to use all of the behaviours but to facilitate this journey by building my confidence along the way and starting with small challenges. Nonetheless, my goal is to train all behaviours.

<u>Diary</u>

To have an overview of my progress and to be able to evaluate my efforts, the situations, and the consequences of my training to make adaptions and to evaluate the most effective behaviours for me in the end, I developed a diary scheme. Accordingly, I registered every situation I encountered with my friends where I displayed an assertive behaviour to share and defend my standpoint. In order to know, when to use assertive behaviour, I was attentive to myself and my own needs and wishes in regard to productivity when I was together with my friends in a situation where a task had to be done. Accordingly, when I was feeling unhappy with the progress, I analysed if it had something to do with the work ethic of my friends to be able to infer when assertive behaviour was to be used. The criteria were as followed: I used assertive behaviour when 1) I was together with my friends, 2) a task had to be performed, 3) we were not as productive as I wished we were, and 4) the lack of productivity was due to the work attitude or work ethic of my friends. I chose these criteria since I knew that these were also fulfilled by past situations where I later encountered negative consequences for myself due to being agreeable and therefore should have been assertive. Furthermore, I knew that I would be then able to detect that I should share my feelings and thoughts with my friends or be assertive since I also was aware of the need to address my issues with my friends in the past even though I never did.

The diary scheme consists of a table with several columns. This way, I was able to easily note down the information of each situation I encountered without having to spend too much time on it. This way, I was able to register the situations immediately after I encountered them without it being too noticeable – this way I prevented important information to be forgotten while also not attracting the attention of my friends. I wanted to see their genuine and honest reactions. The reason for this is that my friend group values mutual support and kindness. If they would have known about my project, they would have altered their behaviour in a way that supports me, meaning that their reactions to my assertiveness would have been biased and altered to raise my confidence and feelings of success. This would have prevented me from having the most effective insights and learning opportunity.

The columns of the table are as follows: Context, My reaction, New Context, Consequences, Productivity, and My feelings (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Diary Scheme.

Date	Context	My Reaction	New Context	Consequences	Productivity	My feelings
	What happened?	What behaviour did I use?	What changed due to my behaviour?	Consequences at the end	Increase/ Decrease?	How did I feel?

The first column 'Context' refers to the general situation. There, I quickly noted what was the goal of the situation, who was present, and what exactly was happening. The second column 'My reaction' addressed my reactions to the context at that moment, meaning what concrete behaviour from my list I displayed. The column 'New Context' refers to how the context then reacted to my behaviour. More precisely, I wanted to capture how the context adapted to the behaviour that I displayed, meaning what change my behaviour induced. Here, I also wanted to capture how my friends reacted to my behaviour, meaning if they reacted positively or if they reacted negatively. This way, I was able to gain insights if my worries would actually come true – that is, if my friends would really dislike me if I use assertive behaviour. Next, the column ‘Consequences’ tackles the consequences of my behaviour. I wanted a column to register any notable consequences that occurred through my behaviour. It is possible that my situation may be improved through being assertive while the situation for one of my friends actually worsens. I wanted to note if my behaviour results in conflict or future problems, like hurt feelings of a friend. Next, since the situations of me being unhappy with my tendency for agreeableness were often related to the productivity of my friends and me, I decided to also be able to note how my behaviour affected the productivity, so if the assertive behaviour actually improved or decreased the productivity. This also created more of objective measurement. Accordingly, to the meetings where one or several tasks had to be completed, I prepared an inner to-do list of what I wanted to have accomplished at the end of the meeting. This way, I was able to compare what I wanted to be done and what was actually achieved to gain insight into our productivity. Lastly, the column ‘My feelings’ was designed to be a place for me to note my overall impression and feelings. Here, I could make use of my emotional intelligence, which is an ability that incorporates one’s perception, management, and utilisation of one’s own emotions (Salovey & Mayer, as cited in Paik, Seo, & Jin, 2019). Emotional intelligence affects an individual’s performance in “directing and coordinating collective efforts in self-managing teams” (Paik, Seo, & Jin, 2019), meaning that it is beneficial for leading a team that falls in this category. In this regard, being emotionally intelligent adds benefits to the groups that I and my friends work in together – project groups and the dance group – since they are indeed self-managed. Being able to recognize my own feelings and use them in the right manner will improve my ability to act as a leader and be assertive in directing my friends. being aware of my feelings in the whole process will enable me to make better decisions when directing a group due to emotional intelligence. Accordingly, I will not only pay attention to my feelings during the performance of assertive behaviour, but throughout the entirety of the situation, to use and manage my feelings accordingly, which will improve my effectiveness in directing my friends. I will be aware of my feelings during the context and then utilise them to use assertive behaviour to improve group productivity. However, in this column, I wanted to answer questions like ‘Was it comfortable to use that behaviour?’, ‘Would I do it again?’, and ‘Is that behaviour possibly generalisable for me?’. I figured that even though a certain behaviour might be very effective, it may be very uncomfortable to perform on a personal level. This way, using my emotional intelligence when evaluating, I would also consider how I personally felt with the specific behaviours, since I believe that a behaviour that feels wrong and incompatible with oneself is not sustainable and adaptable, no matter how useful or effective it might be.

To create more of an impression of a learning process and to create more of an observable development I decided to fill in the first two slots of the table with situations where I used agreeableness instead of assertiveness (see Table 2).

Table 2.

First two rows filled out with memories.

Date	Context	My Reaction	New Context	Consequences	Productivity	My feelings
Memory 1	• Project meeting: got feedback that had to be improved in addition to new tasks • Friends kept talking about personal stuff instead of working	• Felt really stressed and worried • Softly said "Can we get back to work" once or twice	• Upon my request started working again • Immediately got distracted again after a few minutes	• I stopped requesting them to work again since I did not get any results • To relieve stress and finish tasks I continued working alone • Caused a lot of extra work, extra time	• Inhibited in the beginning • Continued to be inhibited	• stress • anger → not only at my friends but also at myself for not saying anything • frustration
Memory 2	• Dance practice • Friends started making jokes and reporting personal stories • Stopped actually figuring out steps and dancing • Instead sat down after a while	• Commented on their stories to appear interested • After a while stopped dancing myself but sat down with them → set aside my personal interest for the interest of the group	• Stopped practicing but continued talking until the time was over	• In the next dance practice we had to make up for the time that we lost → extra work and effort	• Productivity stopped since we completely stopped dancing • Wanted to get another 30 seconds of the dance done, but in the end we were maybe able to do 12 seconds	• Annoyed at the moment • Stressed at the next meeting • BUT: actually also had fun just talking with my friends during the practice

I used one memory of both of the contexts where I encounter my dissatisfaction with the productivity of me and my friends the most – university and our dance groups – to have an example of both my professional and personal context. As visible in the table, up until now, I tended to first softly try to steer my friend towards more productive behaviour again. However, if my efforts were not met with results, I dropped this behaviour and conformed to my group (also sitting down and talking) or did not bother them again and tried to get work done myself. Through these two memories, I had a suitable basis to ground and start my personal development.

Time scheme

The first week of my development project was used for the literature review. The week after that was used to rank the found behaviours. The five weeks after that were used to fill in and then evaluate the diary.

Results

Literature review

During the literature review, I found several behaviours to the concepts that I decided on beforehand. In regard to behaviours that I should avoid, I found behaviours related to agreeableness and being unsuccessful in a conflict in three scientific articles. A common behaviour for agreeable individuals seems to be the suspension of personal interests (Jensen-Campbell, Gleason, Adams, & Malcolm, 2003; Lee & Ohtake, 2018) in order to conform to the 'collective interest' (Lee & Ohtake, 2018). In other words, they tend to make sacrifices in dismissing their own success to please others. Furthermore, individuals high in agreeableness seem to often participate in cooperation, while generally acting unselfishly. They prioritise the act of helping others even in the face of possible costs for said helping. Lastly, they tend to avoid environments with competition. Behaviours that appear to be unsuccessful during conflicts seem to generally be the use of 'hostile humour', which are negative jokes that a made about the other party (Ramachandran, 2012). Apart from hostile humour, denying the conflict, changing the topic, or making statements that are contradictory also seem to be unsuccessful. Moreover, using a language that is vague in form of statements that are indirect or abstract also does not serve success in a conflict, as does complaining and talking about relational themes instead of the themes of the conflict; meaning that instead of discussing the conflict the relationship to the other person is discussed. Carli, LaFleur, and Loeber (1995) furthermore found behaviours that appear to decrease the persuasiveness of an individual. These include three nonverbal styles: dominant, submissive, and incompetent. A dominant nonverbal style is perceived as stress-inducing, threatening, and controlling. It includes hand gestures that are intrusive like pointing, a loud and angry voice, constant eye-contact, a tense posture and tense facial expressions, a body posture that is oriented away from the listener, and a lowered voice. A submissive nonverbal style, which was found to create perceptions of helplessness, fear, and being appeasing, includes hand gestures that are nervous like clasping or shaking, a soft voice that trembles, a small amount of eye-contact, a body posture that is slumped, and verbal stumbles or hesitation. Lastly and similarly, an incompetent nonverbal style includes a slow speech rate, a body posture that is slumped, a little amount of eye-contact paired with a soft voice, and many vocal hesitations or stumbles.

After assessing behaviours that should be avoided, behaviours that should be adapted were researched in six scientific articles. There are several concrete, specific, and observable behaviours for assertiveness. Generally, assertiveness seems to be indicated by a quick response to interpersonal problems (Eisler, Miller, & Hersen, 1973). Moreover, when talking, a strong voice that is easy to understand and hear is used with an intonation that can be described as marked. Instead of immediately complying to the requests of others, an assertive person seems to request the other person to change their behaviour. Similarly, in their research, Hersen, Eisler, Miller, Johnson, and Pinkston (1973) found a response latency that is shorter, speaking louder and longer, a pronounced affect, and a larger number of requests for the other party to change their behaviour to imply assertiveness. Other behaviour was described in a questionnaire that apparently measures assertiveness (Rathus, 1973). According to the questionnaire, assertiveness if shown by organising dates, saying ‘no’ when people ask if they did something right and it is not to your liking, and seemingly looking for an argument. Furthermore, an assertive person asks for the reason upon being asked to do something, starts conversations with strangers, makes phone calls with no hesitation, generally asks questions, generally uses the word ‘no’ more often, shares their own opinion when the expressed one is perceived to be incorrect, argues about prices, complains when something is not to their liking, quickly confronts someone who behaves in a way that is perceived to be bothersome and quickly shares their opinion.

Behaviours that apparently prove to be successful in a conflict are rephrasing comments that are negative into comments that are positive, confronting openly, using a precise instead of a vague language, talking about the content of the conflict instead of one's relationship to the other person, and making compliments (Ramachandran, 2012). Lastly, behaviours that are perceived to increase persuasion smiling, nodding to display agreement, holding eye contact, and leaning the body forward (LaCrosse, 1975). Similarly, Carli, LaFleur, and Loeber (1995) found an upright body posture, a rapid speech rate, a moderate level of eye-contact, less vocal stumbles or hesitations, and hand gestures that are calm and restrained to be persuasive. Furthermore, they described so-called ‘high status cues’ that increase persuasion. These include a louder volume when speaking in addition to a faster rate and holding eye-contact. Additionally, there are behaviours that seem to be especially persuasive when used by women. These include behaviours that display social cues with competence. This takes form in a body that is oriented towards the listener, smiling, eye-contact that is moderately high but not constant, and nonintrusive gestures.

A complete overview of the behaviours found during the literature review is given in Appendix B.

Systematic Desensitization

The behaviours that were to be adapted and that seemed to be useful during a conflict were filtered out of the list.

Louder volume when speaking
Speaking longer
Rapid speech rate
Response latency that is shorter
Less vocal stumbles or hesitations
Pronounced affect
Intonation that can be described as marked
Precise instead of a vague language
Talking about the content of the conflict instead of the relationship to the other person
Making compliments
Requesting the other person to change their behaviour
Saying ‘no’
Asking questions
Sharing own opinion
Complaining when something is not to liking
Quick to confront someone who behaves in a way that is perceived to be bothersome

Rephrasing comments that are negative into comments that are positive
Smiling
Upright body posture
Body that is oriented towards the listener
Moderate level of eye-contact
Hand gestures that are calm and restrained

Next, the twenty-two behaviours were ranked according to my personal preferences from ‘easy for me to perform’ to ‘hardest for me to perform’.

1. Smiling
2. Making compliments
3. Upright body posture
4. Body that is oriented towards the listener
5. Hand gestures that are calm and restrained
6. Speaking longer
7. Pronounced affect
8. Intonation that can be described as marked
9. Rapid speech rate
10. Talking about the content of the conflict instead of the relationship to the other person
11. Rephrasing comments that are negative into comments that are positive
12. Precise instead of a vague language
13. Response latency that is shorter
14. Less vocal stumbles or hesitations
15. Louder volume when speaking
16. Moderate level of eye-contact
17. Sharing own opinion
18. Asking questions
19. Complaining when something is not to liking
20. Quick to confront someone who behaves in a way that is perceived to be bothersome
21. Requesting the other person to change their behaviour
22. Saying ‘no’

According to the shown order above, the behaviours were incorporated in situations where my friend group had to work on one or several tasks, I perceived a lack of productivity, and I perceived the lack of productivity to be caused by the work attitude of my friends.

Diary

The collection of information was done for five weeks from the 13.05. to the 16.06. In this section, I am going to mention the situations that had the most effect or that were the most noteworthy or striking for me. For a full display of the diary feel free to consult Appendix C.

Generally, I noticed that having a list on hand where I was able to look up certain behaviour I could use helped me to actually act and not just contemplate what to do. Even though the behaviours are rather simple, they served as a guide for me and as a starting point to set myself into action. Of course, there were instances where I failed to use any of the behaviours and encountered a moral setback. One instance was on the 17.05., the birthday of one of my friends. I and another friend agreed on helping her with her party preparations. I arrived early and helped her in preparing several salads when my other friend arrived. Since he had never been at her place he was really interested and excited, so she gave him a tour while I continued making the salads. I was feeling a bit annoyed on having to do it alone and recognized it as a learning opportunity, however, I also had in mind that it was my friend's birthday. She was supposed to be happy and have fun, which she was having at that moment, and I did not want to spoil it. I was only mildly annoyed and was the one who offered to help, so I continued helping her with making the salads. In the end, I continued what I was doing and did not continue my training in becoming assertive. In the end, I almost finished the salads on my own, which impressed my friends. I felt a bit disappointed afterwards that I did not use the learning opportunity that presented itself, but I also respect and stand for my decision. Sometimes, the overall context also has to be considered, and it was my friend's birthday. I wanted her to enjoy her day and I did not find it valuable to exploit this day for my personal gain and cause a scene over salads. In this situation, I did not train myself due to the circumstances of the situation.

Another example of a setback was on the 28th of May. The week before that date, my project group that consists out of friends displayed unprofessional behaviour in not handing in their project to the supervisor for feedback and not showing up to the meeting with our supervisor without notice. Since they did not hand anything in they were provided with my report and my feedback that encompassed the feedback on the joined methods part that we had to write as a group. However, the whole week, I got no messages regarding the project. I did not receive a 'Thank you' for getting us feedback and did not hear anything on how and when we should together work on the feedback of our method section. Since the deadline for handing it in and again receiving feedback was approaching, I just did it myself. I recognised that it was an opportunity to train assertive behaviour, but I was affected by my emotions of anger and pettiness that I decided not to do it. Instead of being the person to approach the others, I also wrote nothing into the group chat, worked on the feedback and just handed it in without notifying the others. Naturally, the productivity of our group did not increase in return but stayed at a halt. Furthermore, this instance lead to a larger conflict that happened the week after and that could have been prevented if I had actually decided to be assertive. I decided not to use assertive behaviour since I was overwhelmed with negative feelings, felt treated unfairly by my friends, and wanted some form of revenge. My thought process was that I wanted them to experience the consequences that their behaviours created. However, after reflecting on it, I realised that I lost a learning opportunity and fuelled a conflict that could have been avoided. Now, I am disappointed that I let my emotions affect me in that way. However, I also realise that setbacks are part of a learning journey, which is why it is important for me to forgive myself for making mistakes. In learning this lesson, the meetings with my UT coach were a huge support. As a personal development plan goal, I wanted to improve the acceptance of myself, my efforts, and my results. Together with my coach, I identified two strategies to improve my acceptance ability. First, when a situation was going to occur where I would get results, I mentally prepared for it. This means I reflected back on the situation where I performed the tasks that were getting assessed and result in a grade or something alike. I looked at the circumstances under which I did my performance. How did I prepare for the situation? What were my efforts? What were the circumstances? Maybe the material for a test was really hard or confusing, or maybe I was sick or not feeling well during preparations or the performance. An important aspect of this strategy was the conclusion that if I gave it my all and my best efforts than that the result – no matter what it actually is – is perfect because I could have not been better. This way, I was able to accept the result. The second strategy was to look at my preparation and my results from an outside perspective as if I was an actor in a play. From this outside perspective, I have a less biased view and am more able to objectively assess the results. When I experienced setbacks in my training, I used the strategies that I discussed with my coach to accept that progress and learning is not linear, but that there are sometimes setbacks that, too, offer valuable insights.

The before mentioned setback actually also lead to one of my biggest victories that happened during a conflict that I in part created. One week after again handing in my project with the joined method section of my group for feedback without notifying my group about my actions, my group started to discuss when and how to work on the feedback of the method section. I remember finding it amusing that they started with this discussion one week after the deadline. Nevertheless, one friend somehow got to know about my actions of working alone on the feedback and handing it in without notifying the group, and he wrote me a very long message on WhatsApp. During that time I was travelling to my family's home by train, so I could not pick up the phone when he called me using WhatsApp, which lead him to believe I avoided him, which is why he wrote me a message. In the said message, he used a very angry tone, expressed his disappointment with me, and accused me of unprofessional behaviour and not working as part of the group. I remember feeling extremely angry while reading the said message, that was filled with shifts of the blame and accusations. I was close to answering with a lengthy and angry response in which I wanted to aggressively address all the things that bothered me in regard to our group. Especially in this situation I used my emotional intelligence – I perceived the intense anger that I felt and noticed that it would not be beneficial and effective to use that emotion. I knew that using my anger to formulate an answer would end in a crisis and escalation of the conflict. Accordingly, I waited a few minutes and calmed down, to make use of an emotion that was more calm but serious, before looking up on my list on my phone which behaviours I could use. Accordingly, instead of talking about our personal matters and our relationship in the message, I simply talked about the topic: our group work, the method section, and the feedback. Furthermore, I refrained from writing accusations myself and instead rewrote them into positive statements – changing "I am angry with your message" into "Thank you for your feedback" and "No one communicated in the group chat" into "If desired I can remind the group of upcoming deadlines in the group chat" for example, to spread positivity and show my willingness to also change my behaviour. I noticed that this was facilitated by feeling calmer. If I had written an answer in my agitated and angered state, I would have probably not been able to react in this assertive way but would have been more dominant and intimidating. I also used lengthy descriptions and precise language to further prevent miscommunications from happening. In summary, I answered that I did feel disappointed in the group before, but that I want to improve our communication and that I am willing to take more of a lead to ensure actual group work. In turn, my friend answered me with a message that sounded apologetic for his tone he used before, in which he stated that he understood my point. As a consequence, after this conflict, we worked better as a group. To this day we have met every deadline and supported each other more in the chat since we now remind each other of deadlines and help each other out. In turn, I perceive our productivity as increased since we work faster, achieve our tasks, and we work together. After reflecting, I find it astounding how different my feelings are. The week before, when I did not use assertive behaviour and wanted to avenge myself, the negative feelings I felt – anger, frustration, and annoyance – did not disappear. In fact, I still feel them when thinking back to that moment. They still bug me and are still present. My behaviour during that time eased my feelings at that moment, but it did not make them disappear. In the situation, however, in which I then used assertive behaviour, the conflict was actually resolved, and I felt really proud of myself. The negative feelings vanished and were replaced by positive ones – especially pride – which still exist today. I remember feeling really happy with the results that the assertive behaviour brought. Moreover, my emotional intelligence probably increased here since I really perceived my emotions and utilised them correctly. In turn, I am able to still use emotions from that situation today to get beneficial effects. I am more motivated to continue my training and to further instruct my friends when I remember the pride and happiness that I felt during that moment. Accordingly, I utilise my positive feelings to increase the effectiveness of my leadership in regard to my training and my friends.

Another memorable situation for me was when I used assertive behaviour on the 21.05. during a dance practice. We met up on that date to only learn the next 15 seconds of our dance since the moves were quite complicated and difficult. After trying to figure out the exact movements that were required a lot of friends in our group started to ask for a break even though we did not do any physical exercise to that point. Since I was keen on getting the 15 seconds done, I felt really annoyed with their wish for a break even though we had not accomplished anything so far. I recognised this as a learning experience and decided to use a marked intonation and to speak with more pronounced enthusiasm to motivate my friends. Furthermore, I spoke a bit faster than normal, which created excitement and illustrated my motivated further. I basically told them that we could do it, even though it seemed complicated, and that we should at least try the first few steps before taking a break. The reaction from my friends was positive: they pulled themselves together and tried to figure out and perform the first few steps. At first, the effort was a bit low, probably because they were still a bit wary of the difficulty and overwhelmed by it, but after trying the first few steps and gaining insight and understanding they became more motivated. They started to have fun and danced with more enthusiasm after the first few successes. In the end, we danced even longer than just going through the first few steps. We took the first break after feeling physically exhausted and not because we did not want to continue anymore. Our productivity increased since we almost learned the whole 15 seconds we set as a target. I felt like a motivational speaker that animated a group. I did not only give my friends the confidence to try out the steps, but I realized that the way I behaved also affected my own confidence levels since I was also overwhelmed by the difficulty level in the beginning. In the end, my behaviour lead to an increase in confidence and willingness to do what we came to do in everyone.

The last instance that really stuck out to me during my development happened on the 08.06. The next day we had to hand in an assignment. I had finished and handed mine in early. On that day, a friend that I have only got to know recently wrote me a message on WhatsApp and asked me if I could send him my assignment as an orientation since he did not understand the instructions. The assignment was about 15 pages long and required a lot of time and effort. Therefore, I felt quite unwilling to send him my results. I have not known the person for a long time, but I do know that he does not put a lot of effort, not university and he has a lot of free time. I perceived his request as a form of freeriding which I have encountered before in the past. After looking at the list of behaviours, I wanted to say 'no' to his request. However, I could not bring myself to it, even though I perceived it to be the most suited behaviour in the context. 'Saying no' was actually still further down on my list, which is probably why I was not able to perform it – I did not build enough confidence for it. Therefore, I relied on behaviour that I felt a lot surer in. I recorded a voice message to explain my point and used precise language to get across how I perceived the situation. I also made use of a short response latency. As a reaction, he also sent a voice message in which he sounded understanding and explained that he could see my point of view. He also expressed his wish of a mutual relationship and his willingness to send me help in the future when I ask for it and that it would be okay if I did not send the assignment to him. He did not sound angry for indirectly declining is request. In the end, I still sent him my assignment. I was finished with it and I was able to express my point and got to arrive at a complete and mutual understanding, which is why I felt confident in sharing my assignment. Therefore, I guess productivity stayed the same, but we clarified our friendship. Even though I was not able to simply state 'no', I was able to rely on another behaviour to display assertiveness. I was able to share my point of view, which makes me content with the results. However, an important lesson for me in this encounter was the fact that there are always behaviours that I feel confident in. Even though I want to arrive at the end of my list eventually, it is not dramatic if I feel unable to perform a certain behaviour since there is a variety of behaviour that displays assertiveness. This eases my conscience and makes me feel able to give myself more time on my journey. This lesson released the pressure I felt to make more progress and instead made me appreciative of the progress I already made. This ties back into the lessons I learned with my coach – perfection in this context is met through giving my best, not receiving the best results. As long as I gave it my all I can be proud of every progress I make, no matter what it exactly is or how long I took for it.

Evaluation and discussion

After gathering information for five weeks, I am able to evaluate my progress and the behaviours that I was able to perform. For this, I am looking at my diary to infer my progress. Overall, I notice that all the assertive behaviour that I used actually ended in more productivity. This is probably due to the fact that I did something instead of nothing, which naturally results in a change. However, in regard to what increased productivity the least, it was probably smiling and the use of compliments. I am a person who tends to smile a lot and make a lot of compliments during conversations. My friends are probably used to that behaviour in me, which is why it did not have the same impact as behaviour that is uncharacteristic for me. In return, talking about the content of a situation instead of about the personal relationship resulted in the most effectiveness for me. It gave me a possibility to stay professional instead of becoming personal with helped in resolving the conflict and increasing productivity. I also found precise instead of vague language to be particularly useful. Even when I sometimes had to use more time to respond since I had to find a way to precisely state what was bothering me or what I wanted from the other person, it increased understanding in the other person which made them more able to act in the way I wanted them to.

Accordingly, I probably used smiling and making compliments the most. However, this is an estimation since this behaviour comes naturally to me and I did not pay attention to if I did it or not. The behaviour I used the most consciously is precise language since it resulted in increased effectiveness and more understanding while feeling comfortable and not too difficult. The hardest behaviour for me was the rephrasing of negative statements into positive ones. Somehow, this way a big challenge for me. I found it difficult to state something that I thought of in a negative phrasing in a positive one. Next, I find it the most difficult to talk with a loud voice. I am scared that my friends will think of me as dramatic or that I sound too weird while doing it. However, I only used this behaviour once and probably need to have more practice with it before being able to evaluate it. For now, I feel the most comfortable with the use of precise language and using the more marked intonation. I felt really proud afterwards, it produced good results, and it fits my personality the most, meaning I feel really comfortable while doing it. The is a pattern that I noticed. That is, I become more confident with practice. Even though I felt nervous when performing some behaviours at first, I felt more comfortable after seeing results and with more practice. Therefore, I am confident that I will increase my repertoire of assertive behaviours that I am comfortable displaying with more practice and time.

In regard to the change goals that I wanted to achieve with this project, I am content with my progress. I succeeded in getting to know specific, concrete, and observable behaviours that are perceived as assertive, and I was able to train myself in several of them. As of right now, I have a list of behaviours that I feel comfortable using and that resulted in an increase in productivity without creating unwanted side-effects. These behaviours include smiling, making compliments, an upright body posture, orienting the body towards the listener, the use of hand gestures that are calm and restrained, speaking longer, using pronounced affect and a marked intonation when speaking and using precise language. Behaviours that I perceived as effective but that I still want to train to feel more confident in their use include a rapid speech rate, content talk, and rephrasing of negative statements. However, I did not fully reach my change goal since I did not train myself in all behaviours at this point in time. Nevertheless, I am making progress in it. In return, I did not reach my ultimate goal of acquiring generalisable behaviour since I am still working on the main context of my friends before moving to the next. In this regard, I am planning to become sure and confident in the use of at least twenty of the twenty-two behaviours before moving to the next context.

Admittedly, some implications about this personal development project have to be made. For once, at this point, I cannot answer if I actually achieved my goal of becoming more assertive. I tried out several behaviours and felt comfortable with a lot of them, but I did not manage to reach the end of my list. Respectively, I still need more time to explore the list and train the behaviours. Therefore, I plan on continuing my training beyond this project. Next, this project is an individual and personal learning process. It is experiential learning through mainly trying out behaviours and reflecting on it. Maybe there were aspects in certain situations that I was unaware of but that are responsible for the productivity change I later experienced. Social situations depend on several aspects which are hard to control. Therefore, I cannot verify that everything happened the way it did due to my behaviour that I tried out. I did not conduct a real experiment, meaning that I did not control a lot of factors. I cannot further verify that my learning progress is scientifically solid and replicable. This project can therefore not be used as a guide on how to train assertiveness since everything mentioned in this paper is affected by my own abilities, perceptions, and characteristics. Lastly, it has to be admitted that the fact just the philosophy of systematic desensitization was used and not the complete method leads to a lack of credibility for the method approach that I chose. As for advice regarding the next steps of this project, there should be more time used in the training. Another possibility for improvement is the inclusion of a coach in the training. This way, more than just the philosophy of systematic desensitization would be followed, but the person in training would have a guide and support (Lazarus, 1957). Moreover, the whole approach of systematic desensitization could be followed in also training and teaching relaxation exercises that are supposed to make the person in training calm down when approaching a feared situation. In this particular project, the relaxation exercises could be used before doing a behaviour that is perceived as particularly challenging and difficult to calm down the person and training. This way, the training process could also be a little more structured instead of being a more or less spontaneous exercise. In addition, since systematic desensitization is generally seen as effective (Kazdin & Wilcoxon, 1976), a complete adaption could also be seen as potentially beneficial.

A Strategy for Self-Management

After taking part in this project that too form in a self-management and self-development program, I am able to give some conclusions in regard to training oneself in a specific ability or behaviour. At first, one has to completely pinpoint what has to be improved or what one wants to train exactly. The easiest approach to this for me was to think about what causes me trouble in my behaviour and what I want to change, to label that, and to then find the opposite to it. In my case, I was able to conceptualise my behaviour I wanted to change as behaviour that belonged to being agreeable. In turn, I looked for an opposite concept and found assertiveness to fit the behaviour that I wanted to adopt instead. After analysing what the target of the training is going to be, it is helpful to become more familiar with it to grasp what it exactly means. After that, a literature review can be done to find concrete, observable, and specific behaviour that indicate the chosen training target. The behaviours should be immediately adoptable, meaning that from reading their description or label one should know what has to be performed and in what way. This creates more clearness and confidence in performing the behaviours. If the description are vague and abstract one will probably not be able to perform them due to missing clarity. After gathering a number of behaviours that allows exploration, preferably ten to twenty-five, the behaviours can be ordered from ‘easiest to adapt’ to ‘hardest to adapt’ to make the actual adoption of all behaviours easier. As structural guide and possibility for evaluation, a diary can be filled out or a coach can be consulted and updated about the progress to find new strategies or address issues that may hinder the progress. Generally, the training process should not be seen as a one-time project; it is an ongoing training. This means that the process has to be regularly observed and evaluated, even after all behaviours from the list have been trained. This ensures that the behaviours are still part of the behaviour reservoir of the person and do not become extinguished by a lack of practice or replaced by the old behaviours again.

Learning experience during the project and the rest of the track

If I could do something different in my change approach, I would as mentioned above try to adopt a coach into the whole approach. I mainly worked alone during the project, and while it was manageable it felt not as serious and structured as it probably would have felt together with a coach. I had one coach available; however, I worked with her on my personal development plan that focused on something else than my project. It is possible that I could have used the coaching sessions as support to my project since both my personal development plan and my project focused on myself as a person and were therefore compatible.

Accordingly, I am a change agent that is focused on individual processes. I enjoy improving and working on what is already existing within an individual, not building something from scratch. For this, I have a problem-solving focused approach – I assess what needs improvement and then choose fitting methods and approaches. It is important for me, as a change agent, to see how I myself but also the others around me feel. Just as I learned in the leadership module that I am a leader that wants to address everyone’s thoughts and feelings, I am also a change agent that is concerned with what consequences the brought change has for the environment. For me, an improvement should lead to an overall and desirable improvement for the whole environment and not just benefit one small group of individuals or one individual alone. Support is an important aspect for me. I noticed that both as a leader and in being assertive I find it comfortable and helpful to serve as motivational and emotional support. I like to inspire people to do their best and change their behaviour instead of strictly instructing or demanding change since I want the other person to also agree with the change and the change to come from within. Similarly, support is what helped me in this project through my UT coach. Acceptance of mistakes, consideration of different perspectives, and strengthening the motivation to keep going and try again are what I experienced as extremely uplifting and what I see myself incorporating in my own approach.

This change agent description also fits my Insights profile of the ‘Helping Inspirer’.

Here, I have a strong people-orientation and am a team builder that is approachable and able to accept other views. I offer support to others and am willing to listen to concerns while bringing energy. The fit between my change approach and my Insights profile can also be seen as my strengths mentioned in my profile, especially my adaptive and versatile people skills and my interactive and inspirational approach. In the end, this is what I want to do. Just like others inspire me to improve myself, I want to give this aspect back – I want to inspire other people to change for the better.

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Co-Creating a movement for sustainability at the University of Twente

A project by Cradle Consulting

Janik Gerlach, Wytze Haan, Marie Klotz, Jordan Raß

1. Introduction

Sustainability is an increasingly important topic in today's world. Movements like Fridays for Future show that more and more younger generations are showing an initiative to ensure sustainability. This also currently happens in the landscape of the University of Twente. The management has noticed the need for sustainability, having introduced infographics showing energy consumption of certain buildings and for example encouraging the use of stairs instead of the elevator. In addition to this, the UT has taken action in the direction of negotiating more sustainable contracts with the universities suppliers.

It is however not only the management that is engaging in sustainability efforts at the university, there are also individual initiatives started by students and faculty.

Despite these efforts, the University of Twente is not considered one of the front runners when it comes to sustainability in the Netherlands. This is also indicated by its lack of a green office which is something every other research university in the Netherlands has (with the exception of Tilburg where however the green office has already been approved). This report explains the project with the mission to have a green office approved for the University of Twente. The proposal for the green office was worked out by Cradle consulting, a group of four students from the honours track. The group consists of Marie Klotz, Jordan Raß, Wytze Haan and Janik Gerlach. The proposal was written in close collaboration with Brechje Maréchal.

2. Current Situation

Cradle conducted an investigation into the sustainability of the University of Twente, by looking at measures already in place and how students and staff view the UT's sustainability. A short overview of the findings is given below.

On the student side, many initiatives are being launched, meeting some small scale success. Sustain was recently founded, a student association about sustainability, attempting to make more large scale changes. Students want to see the UT take more initiative and implement larger measures in all aspects, including purchasing and operations management. Individual faculties and offices have also made some attempts, but top-down solutions tend to fail due to back-lash.

The UT offers many courses or programmes on a variety of aspects of sustainability. Although present in many Master's or Bachelor's programmes, proper integration throughout the programmes has been lacking. Much of the research being done at the UT regarding sustainability is not kept track of centrally and can be difficult to access.

Overall, sustainability is not embedded within the core of the university. Initiatives, education and research struggle to have an impact due to them being isolated and not being able to build off each other. Sharing information, supporting actions, and just in general combining all these efforts would cause them to become far more effective in achieving change. This would also increase the visibility of these change efforts and draw more students and staff to contribute.

3. Change Goals

The overall change goal was to make sustainability the norm at the University of Twente. Whenever research is being done, new projects started, purchases made, plans written, etc., they are evaluated on their sustainability and impacts. In order to achieve this overall goal, Cradle suggested creating a spin-off of the Green Office model under the name Green Hub Twente. This change initiative would have multiple smaller goals as its core functions:

1. Facilitating the collaboration between the different initiatives to ensure greater impacts as well as a diffusion of best practices. This includes initiatives started by student organizations, the research departments of the university, the operations departments and external partners.

2. Establishing a network of sustainable entrepreneurs to advance sustainable entrepreneurship, allowing them to build off each other's ideas and experiences.

3. To act as a central access point for information regarding sustainability. GHT will create an accessible database to collect all research, ideas, and efforts, to enable building-up upon previous results.

4. Informing and advising students and staff regarding sustainability to ensure greater success in the development and implementation of sustainability efforts.

5. Facilitating sustainability projects through expert knowledge, connections and understanding of the UT landscape. The Green Hub network consists of partners like Sustain, NovelT and the DesignLab.

6. The Green Hub of the university will be involved in the organisation of events in regard to sustainability with the aim to create awareness and offer networking opportunities. This will include the organisation of conferences, networking opportunities and activities such as a Sustainability Week.

7. Reflecting on the university's sustainability efforts by offering constructive feedback, as well as taking an active role in implementing recommendations.

However, for the Green Hub Twente to realize these change goals, the Green Hub Twente must first come into existence. The Green Hub requires funding and a mandate from the university, which would only be possible if approved by the university's executive board. To get this approval, a proposal needs to be submitted to them and voted on. If it passes their vote, the proposal moves to the University Council, where they will also vote on it. If they also pass the proposal, funding will be made available and the mandate made real.

Given the time frame of the project and the schedule in which the executive board and University Council meet, the very concrete change goal was to get a proposal submitted to, and passed by, the executive board.

4. Approach

In order to write the proposal for the Green Hub Twente, the support and ideas of all relevant stakeholders needed to be taken into account. The existing proposal then needed to be updated and presented to the CvB. The approach to make this happen, as specified in the bid's project plan, consisted of five steps:

1. Start communicating with stakeholders
2. Giving the Green Office proposal a UT-touch
3. Present draft to stakeholders
4. Stakeholder hackathon
5. Inform and persuade potential gatekeepers

These were to be done according to the following schedule:

Timeline of consulting activities

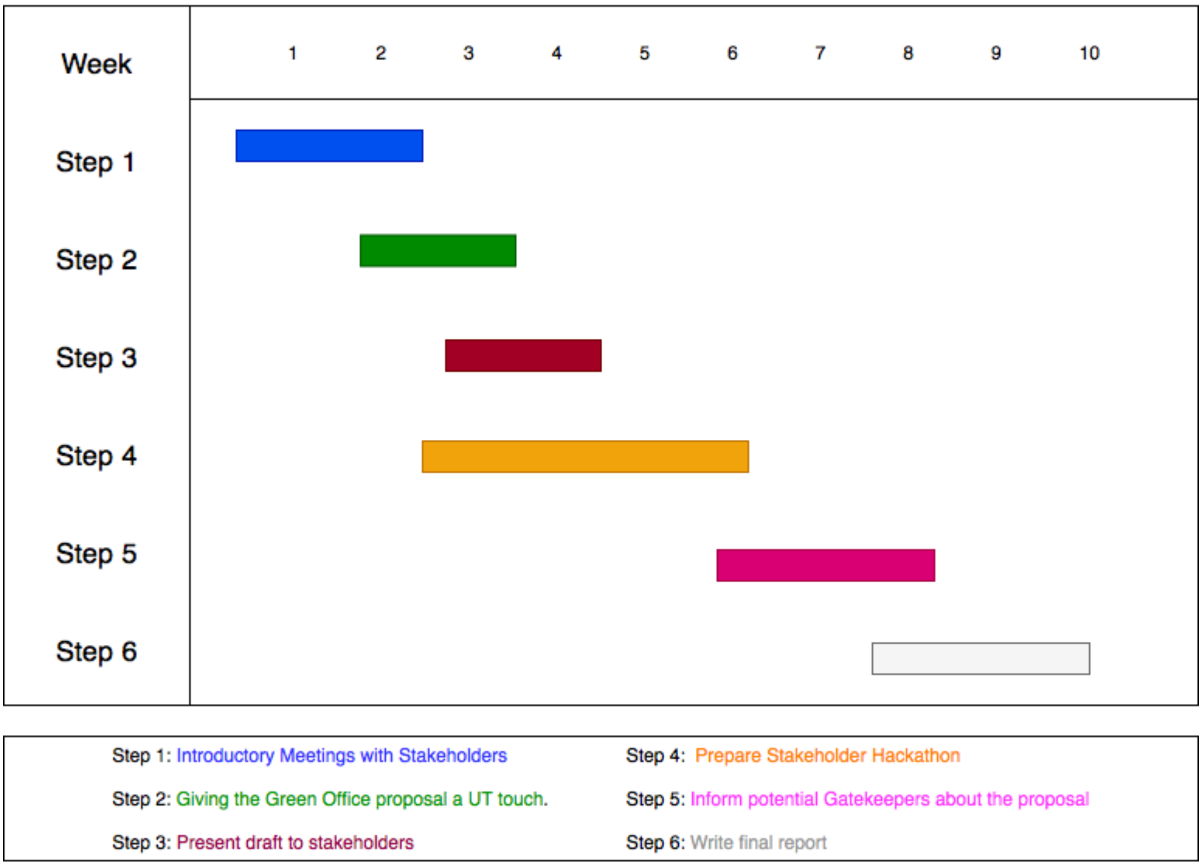

Figure 1: Original Schedule

Once work started, however, it was quickly concluded that the schedule was not realistic to execute. Reaching out to stakeholders and scheduling meetings took much longer than expected, sometimes due to long response durations or low availability. Stakeholders also pointed out new people to approach. This resulted in the stakeholder meetings taking almost six weeks to complete, instead of the planned two to three weeks, but many more stakeholders were approached than planned as well.

That deviation should nevertheless not be seen as a failure, effective communication of goals and reasons of the change project is highly important. Literature stresses that if thereby stakeholders understand the urgency to change this positively impacts the success of the change project (Stouten, 2018).

This did not delay the start step 2, however, as incorporating feedback and ideas could be done in between meeting. Quite quickly a large center point of the proposal came forward that needed attention; the scope of the proposal regarding sustainability. Would the focus be on environmental sustainability, or would the Green Hub also be concerned with social and economic sustainability? This was discussed with most stakeholders, as well as with Brechje Maréchal and the project supervisor Dr. Desirée van Dun. Based on these discussions, it was concluded that the best option would be to initially limit the scope to environmental sustainability. The Green Hub would need time to establish itself as an organization, which is difficult to do when there is a broad scope to work on. Environmental sustainability was chosen over social and economic sustainability due to it being the most pressing one, as well as the one with highest visibility and priority at local, national and global level (Hansmann, 2012).

During these talks, it also became clear that especially the staff of the UT place a high importance on the university's entrepreneurial spirit, and this was something that needed to be incorporated in the Green Hub. As such, NovelT also entered the discussions to talk about potential collaborations and how the Green Hub could facilitate sustainable entrepreneurship.

With decisions such as the scope and sustainable entrepreneurship being made as talks were happening, the team re-evaluated step 3: sharing the proposal. The initial goal was to gather feedback. However, both Brechje Maréchal and Dr. Desirée van Dun advised caution with sharing the proposal in its current state, as it can become difficult to control how people respond to it as well as share it with others. As a result, the proposal was shared in very limited capacity, in the form of a short summary sent along with the invite for the planned hackathon.

Due to steps 1 and 2 taking longer, time for step 4 was limited and the team was not properly able to prepare for the hackathon. It was difficult to get enough people to confirm their attendance. The main goal was to function as a creative brainstorm, where people shared ideas and built upon them. A secondary goal was to get more people involved with, and talking about, the Green Hub Twente. Making the change project known and integrating stakeholder feedback is an important step in making the change successful (Kotter, 1999). When deciding on the topics for discussion, Dr. Desirée van Dun suggested looking at potential pitfalls and solutions to them, as these could be used to further strengthen the proposal. The team took up the suggestion, and some valuable insights were gained during the hackathon due to it, even though attendance was low.

Following the hackathon, we had only a few days to incorporate all the feedback into the proposal. Together with Brechje Maréchal, the team spent a day working on further developing and finalizing the proposal. It was then sent to Dr. Mirjam Bult, a member of the CvB, so the team could discuss it with her the following week and hopefully get the proposal to be voted on by the CvB one or two weeks later. This constituted steps 5 and 6 and finalized the agreed upon change project.

5. Results and Future Plans

During the meeting with Dr. Mirjam Bult it became clear very quickly that the timing for the Green Hub Twente was a little early. The UT recently launched a sustainability working group for the UT strategy for 2030. A larger focus on sustainability is expected, which was also taken into account when writing the proposal, increasing support for the Green Hub. However, the budget only becomes available once this strategy in made up and published, which is expected to happen in October or November. Due to this, she suggested to delay bringing the proposal to a vote until this time, as she did not expect it to pass currently. This would also give the opportunity to further improve the proposal, pushing the deadline to the end of 2019. The chances of the Green Hub Twente to get approved by the end of the year seem to be good because Cradle already ensured that the strategy working group on sustainability is aware of the efforts to set up the Green Hub Twente. Moreover, Brechje Maréchal leads that working group and will be able to ensure the topic stays on the agenda.

Finally, Cradle decided that setting up a Green Hub Twente has become more than an assignment or university project but rather a passionate goal. Therefore, Cradle will continue to work closely with Brechje Maréchal and the involved stakeholders during the next couple of months to create an even stronger proposal. Some further preparations will also be made to ensure a smooth launch once the GHT has received approval.

6. Co-Creation as Consultants

In its company philosophy Cradle writes that its aim is to "co-create sustainable solutions together" with its customers. We therefore tried to not only find the problem and provide the best solution but co-construct both of them together with the client. That is why we started by analysing Brechje Maréchal's starting situation from different angles. From a neutral viewpoint, all of her current tasks like policy writing, events organisation, permit handling etc. were collected. The next step was to look at her goals and compare what she is busy with at the moment with how her optimal future situation would look like. During the initial case description and the first interview, she especially pointed out how she wants to create a movement for sustainability and motivate and engage actors all over the UT. Her goals were ambitious and multifarious. She wanted to aim at different types of stakeholders and not only execute her job but she really aimed at changing the entire community and system of the university towards more sustainability. It also quickly became clear how much work all of this was and how she was struggling to reach her ambitious goals due to a lack of time.

That is were the co-constructing consulting approach came to use. It aims at not only finding the gap between reality and the optimal scenario but believes that those are both not clearly defined. Instead, the reality and the solution are just constructed views and therefore can be also designed by the spectator. Co-constructing means designing a problem and solution in a way that motivates you, allows you to use your strengths and reach a solution that is within your reach (Hicks, 2010).

That is why Cradle then started to look at the situation by defining what it could add to the table. It was important to look at the strengths of the four individual Cradle members, the strengths and abilities of the group as a whole and at Brechje's abilities.

This showed that Cradle could contribute more than just manpower to this project. The individual team members had a lot of expertise on e.g. how to motivate and organise students but also previous experience with the topic of sustainability. Besides that, Cradle as a team had experience with Change management after following the Process of Change Honours Programme for a year. It could also provide connections to a lot of different actors like student associations but also students from other universities that Brechje could not get a hold of so easily. Brechje on the other hand had reached a lot within her first year of being a

Sustainability Coordinator but really needed to hand off some tasks and get a stable support system that helps her reach her goals in the long run.

That is where Cradle started to realize what the co-construction of a solution could look like. Brechje kept mentioning that other universities had Green Offices and how she thought the University of Twente could also profit from having its own Green Office. This idea stood out from other possible solutions since it would provide not only a long term support system for Brechje and could help her reach the goal of making the UT community and organisation more sustainable but it also provided the optimal way for Cradle to help.

Designing a UT Green office together and advocating it enabled Cradle to use all of its strengths. Setting up the Green Office would take plenty of manpower since a large number of stakeholders are involved and talking to everyone to collect ideas and interests would take a lot of time. Besides that, the experience of the consultants with associations at the university, environmental associations and the expertise about the functionality of a Green Office can add a lot of value.

After that solution was designed, the actual co-constructing process of it started.

Cradle tried from the beginning to always stay co-constructive and not fall into the pattern of an expert consulting approach (Trottier, 2018).

In the beginning, the main effort was put into understanding the client's view of the situation. This meant analysing which steps Brechje already took towards the solution and which hurdles she encountered. Thereby, it was important to check whether every assumption that was made and conclusion that was drawn conformed with Brechje's view.

This required a lot of communication because Cradle tried to take workload off the client's shoulders and therefore often acted independently when meeting stakeholders or making design choices for the Green Hub. It was necessary to ensure that the solution Cradle was designing was in line with Brechje's design at all points during the process.

This did not always prove itself to be easy especially when Cradle gained new insights that did not match with her current assumptions. In those situations, it was important to find a middle-way between informing Brechje neutrally about the gained information and giving an opinion or advice on how to deal with it. Especially when making a decision that did not conform with what Brechje had in mind, special care was needed not to lose the co-constructive approach and force a solution upon her. This is also where the lean mindset Cradle describes in its company philosophy came in. There was a need for continuous reflection and reevaluation of the situation to create the most valuable solution for everyone.

During one of the final evaluation sessions, Brechje was asked on how she experienced this process and whether she felt like the project had actually been a co-constructive process or whether she sometimes felt like decisions were made too much without her. Brechje gave extremely positive feedback and said that she thought there was a good balance between taking work off her shoulders and incorporating her in the process. That is why all in all the co-constructive approach can be considered to have worked extremely well for this project; not only for the client but also for Cradle which could make optimal use of its abilities.

7. Lessons learnt from the project

Throughout the execution of this project cradle also encountered a lot of difficult situations. In the following, lessons which were learned from those shall be highlighted more in detail.

The first one is about the challenge of dealing with "too many" recommendations (from the first phase of the project the initial stakeholder meetings). During those meetings which usually included two consultants from Cradle and one or more of the stakeholders, a lot of situations appeared where the stakeholder mentioned a third party e.g. another employee of the university or another association. This was done with the intention, of recommending to Cradle who else could be important and could contribute to the project. Nevertheless, we were often confronted with surprise on how it could be possible that a certain person has not been included in the project yet. After a lot of meetings and also following a few recommendations on who and what should also be taken into consideration for this project, it was decided that if one would continue that way the project could never stay within its set time frame. It was necessary to focus back on the most important stakeholders who were initially identified and the most relevant aspects of the Green Hub design. This really showed that every stakeholder has a different perception of what is important and relevant and as consultants, it is important to listen to them without being influenced too much and thereby losing track of the initial plan and priorities.

The second lesson learned is one that literature often stresses as one of the critical success factors for project management: The communication within a team (Odusami 2002). It is not easy for a group of four people to balance a consulting project on the side next to a full-time study while not regularly seeing each other. It requires extremely effective communication in order to organise the team, keep a shared mental model of the goals and actions that need to be pursued and deliver satisfying work. If problems occurred during the execution of this project or situations were handled suboptimally, this could most of the time be traced back to a communication problem. For example, the invitations for the organised hackathon were not sent out in time because the communication within the team as well as with external parties did not work smoothly. That led to a time delay and insecurity about the actions that need to be taken. Cradle took a few measures to ensure good communication throughout the project like using a shared mail account so that everyone could access all emails at any time, working on documents in a cloud and having regular weekly meetings with the project supervisor and the client. Nevertheless, the communication could have been improved by pre-defining responsibilities for certain tasks more in detail. One example of this is to define a person responsible for the answering of all emails to ensure that no mail gets left unanswered.

The third lesson is the importance of adequate expectation management, in regard to acquiring meetings with busy stakeholders. Throughout this project, a lot of meetings had to be held with stakeholders who were in a relative high hierarchical position within the university structure or who are extremely busy with their job. Those actors do not have a lot of time available to meet with you and therefore often schedule meetings weeks ahead which causes a lot of waiting time. In those situations, it proved itself to be very effective to stress from the beginning that only a short amount of time was needed from that actor. Cradle therefore often included in meeting requests that half an hour would be enough. This shortened the waiting times for meetings a lot and also increased the efficiency of the meetings as it was set from the beginning that the meeting had to be held within a certain time frame. That technique also helped a lot in the communication with the client Brechje Maréchal who managed to always make half an hour free for a weekly update.

The fourth lesson learnt is the importance of celebrating successes. Since the project was rather time intensive and running in parallel with the regular studies, it was difficult to be highly motivated all the time. At one point, the team recognized a "motivational hole" so to say. The group motivation was not as high as in the beginning of the project anymore although there was satisfying progress. Just before one of the last big activities, two members of the team decided to raise the group motivation through doing something as simple as baking a cake. In hindsight it became clear that throughout the whole project, actively celebrating accomplishments and successes did not take place. For the future, it likely makes sense to consciously think of ways to raise the group's motivation. This holds especially for projects like this where the main drive is intrinsic motivation. Additionally, spending "soft" time with each group also contributes significantly to trust which in turn leads to better performance and satisfaction (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Dieter, 2013). Actively integrating success celebration into the group's schedule is thus the last main lesson learnt from this project.

There were also several practical lessons learned during the project, especially regarding the hierarchy of the universities. First and foremost, it can be difficult to reach high-management for discussions or meetings. Especially when no personal connection exists and you have to go through a secretary, getting a response can take a while. Approaching someone who knows the high-management personally to introduce you can work well here, as well as only asking for a very short meeting initially. This way, you are more likely to get a response.

Second, academics are very critical and independent thinkers. Achieving change in this sector can be quite difficult, as scientists like to know all the facts before agreeing on something and highly value their own opinion. (van den Brink, Haan, & Klotz, 2019). It is important here to enter all debates with facts to back up thoughts and be prepared for some resistance. This resistance is not an unwillingness, but a critical approach that ensures quality. Using their critique and listening carefully will strengthen the end product.

Finally, there are a huge amount of people willing to support your change initiative, but do want to see their thoughts reflected in them. You cannot make everyone happy, and you cannot make a perfect proposal. Sometimes you have to be tough on stakeholders, although staying mindful to keep them on board, in what is and what is not possible. You can also not keep everything in a proposal flexible, some tough decisions need to be made without being fully fleshed out. This is necessary to keep progress going and not get stuck.

Cradle looks back on an extremely rewarding and educational experience; we hope to make the Green Hub Twente a reality in the future and that it can make a

positive impact on the UT environment. We would like to thank Brechje Maréchal for the opportunity to get involved and all her contributions to the project. We would also like to thank our supervisor Dr. Desirée van Dun, for guiding us during the project and offering invaluable advice. Finally a thank you to Dr. Tsjalle van der Burg and Dr. Wouter Keijser, as well as all coaches, guest lecturers and other staff that make the Honours Programme possible.

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Stimulating commitment to a team

Anja Dömer

Target Group

During my change project in the module "Learning-by-doing" of the Honours Track Processes of Change I worked on increasing the commitment of team members to a team and to the purpose of the team. The team is a voluntary student initiative at the University of Twente in this report referred to as initiative X. The initiative X consists of students from the University of Twente that all followed the XY Programme.

Current Situation

The students started several initiatives on campus. The students work together in dynamic teams and meet once a week to update each other about the process that has been done. The meetings are led by the current chairman of initiative X, while the treasure, keeps track of the finances. However, the entire group is involved in every decision process related to the entire team.

Problem Description

Due to the fact that the group is very small, it is important that every member is committed to the team and willing to take on tasks or to initiate new projects. However, after the XY Programme only odd members stay motivated and participate in a project. Moreover, only odd members are attending the weekly meetings to stay up to date. Consequently, no one or rarely someone is initiating new projects. Next to that, a low attendance during meetings is demotivating for the other attending team members. Without doing projects initiative X loses its purpose and has no added value to the university anymore.

Intended Outcome

During my change project I investigated why students become inactive members, do not attend meetings and most importantly do not initiate new projects. Based on the results I came up with a solution that will keep team members committed to initiative X and motivated to take on projects or to initiate new ones.

Change Approach

To find out why team members become inactive or active I interviewed 6 team members. 2 of them are inactive already, 3 of them are active but will become inactive after project Y and 1 of them is very active.

I asked all of them the following questions:

Why did you join initiative X?
What were your expectations?
What did you hope to achieve with initiative X?
If there was something, why did you not achieve what you wanted to achieve?
What do you value within initiative X?
What do you think are the “values’’ of initiative X?
What do you think are the goals of Initiative X?
What do you think is the concrete mission of Initiative X?
Where do you (hope) to see Initiative X in 5 years?
How many hours do you invest in Initiative X per week and what do you expect from others?

During the interviews it became clear that there are several reasons for team members to become inactive. I recognized that Initiative X members realize the same problems and align in the core of their statements. However, the members never thought about changing the direction and just went on working on projects or tasks that were given to them or became an inactive member.

The goal setting theory by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham claims that to work towards a goal is the main source of motivation (Robbins & Judge, 2012). The interviews showed clearly that Initiative X members perceive current goals as too vague. By sharpening the goals of Initiative X I hope to increase the motivation of the members. Next to that I was inspired by the theory of Simon Sinek about the golden circle. The golden circle asks questions about what an organization is doing, how an organization is doing it and most importantly why an organization is doing it. By providing a common purpose, cause or belief you inspire the members but also others to act (Sinek, 2011). Therefore, I created a new mission statement as well as values for Initiative X to answer the question: Why is Initiative X doing what they are doing? With a concrete mission statement that includes specific goals it can easily be explained what Initiative X is about and what the initiative is doing.

Groen, Wouters and Wilderom claim in their paper that if employees participate in developing their own performance measures their motivation to take initiative increases (Groen et al., 2012). Therefore, I created the mission statement and the goals based on the answers of Initiative X members that they gave during the interviews to give the members the feeling of being part of the development process.

Based on the interviews I created a new mission statement. After I created that mission statement, I presented it together with my findings of the interviews during a team meeting to the team as well as to the inactive team members during a separate meeting. During the presentation I used the method that Victor de Coninck taught us during module 2 “heart, head, hand’’. I began with explaining the current situation that more and more team members are becoming inactive. After that I explained the results of the interviews I did and that the answers of several team members are aligning in a lot of things. Finally, I presented my solution, the new mission statement, goal formulation as well as next steps.

During the presentation I tried to use as many inspiring and motivating vocabulary as possible such as: working towards one goal, team effort, mission, innovation, changing the university, empowering students. Robert Cialdini claims that by using dominantly certain vocabulary the listeners link the conversation or in this case the presentation to their associations with this vocabulary (Cialdini, 2016). I aimed to link the presentation with a positive association of a mission that Initiative X should pursue and that we can reach our goals.

After that I let them fill in a short survey to analyze their responses to the new mission statement and to find out if it would change their commitment to Initiative X and therefore, their motivation to initiate projects.

The survey was filled in by the six interviewed participants. However, the data is anonymized and due to a low number of participants no data that could identify the members has been taken.

The survey had the following outcome:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

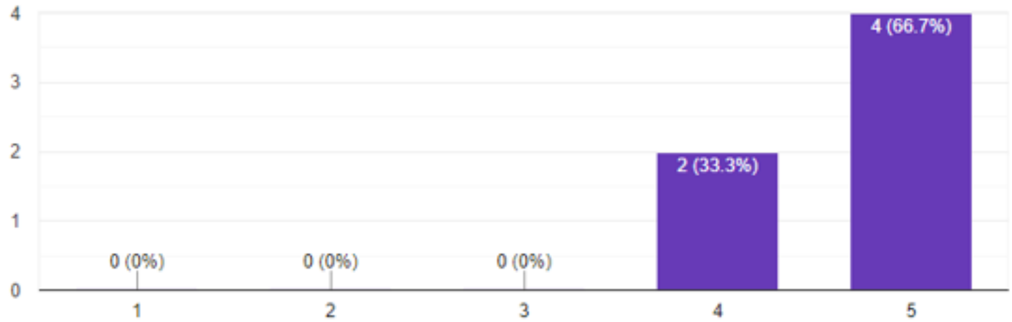
3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

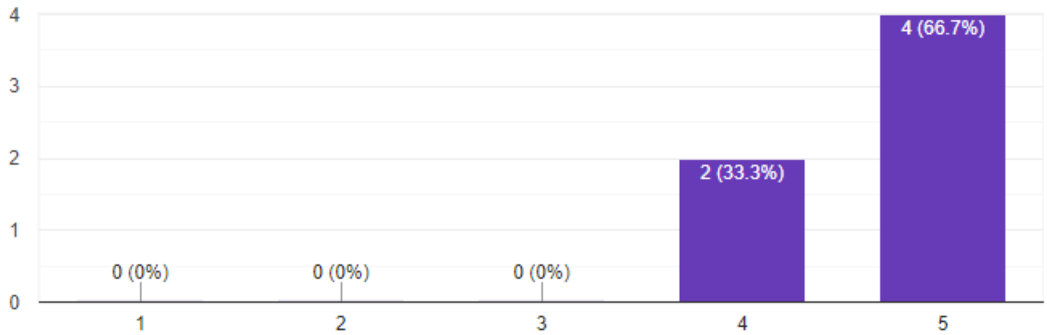
The new mission statement aligns with my ideas of Initiative X

6 responses



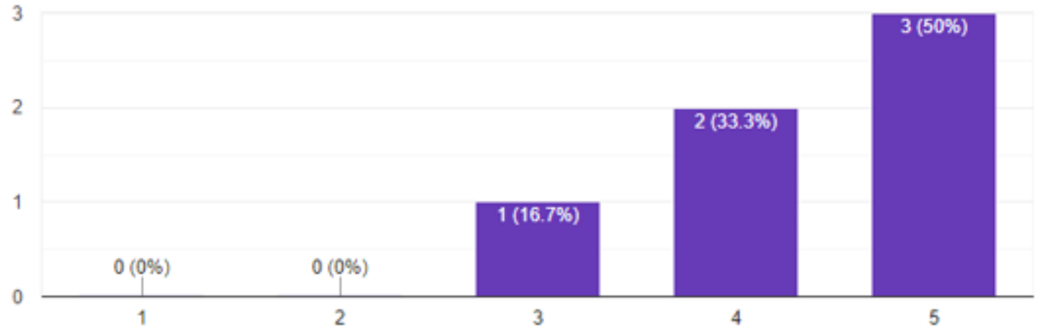
The new mission statement makes me feel enthusiastic to initiate projects.

6 responses



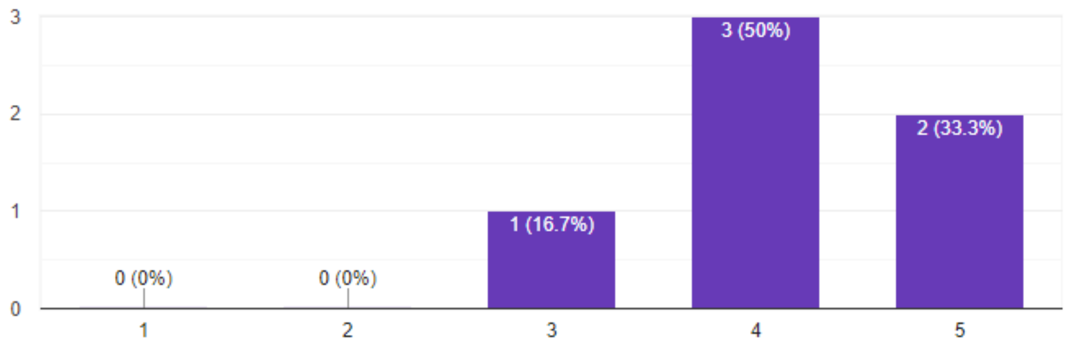
The new goals are aligning with my idea of Initiative X

6 responses



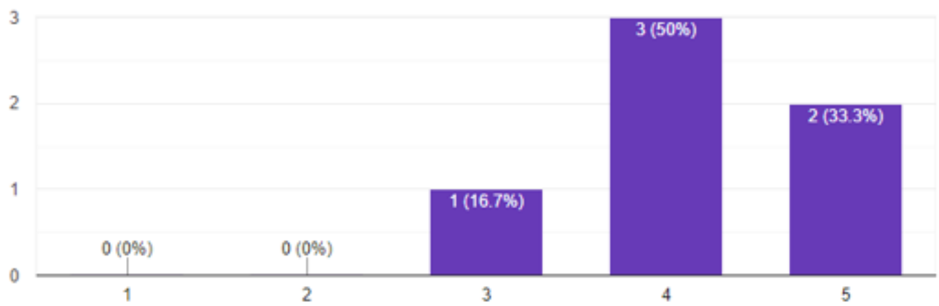
The new goals make me enthusiastic to work towards them.

6 responses



With the new mission statement and goals, it is more clear to me what Initiative X is doing.

6 responses



The survey shows that the new mission statement makes it more clear to the team members what Initiative X is about. Moreover, the new goals align with the goals that the members had in mind during the interviews. Furthermore, the survey shows that with the new mission statement and goal formulation students will be more enthusiastic to initiate projects than they have been before.

The survey also included a comment section to provide specific feedback. The feedback of the members included:

- Having regular meetings to reflect on the mission statement of Initiative X to check if still everyone agrees with it

Advice

After the first version of the mission statement, the team should have another meeting to shape the mission statement more in detail to also figure out i.e. how Initiative X differentiates from the other initiatives. Moreover, there should be a meeting planned to discuss in detail how the new mission can be sustainably implemented. Moreover, the goals should be made SMART to be able to keep track of the process in reaching them.

Next to the mission statement, members should also think about a way how to improve the other problems that were mentioned during the interviews such as inefficient meetings.

Personal Development

My expectations about commitment towards Initiative X do not meet the expectations of all the other team members of Initiative X. However, in the beginning I just assumed they are the same instead of communicating my expectations towards the other members which led to disappointment and anger. That is why I decided to have an interview with as many team members as possible to talk about their idea of Initiative X and their expectations. During the interviews I was quite surprised how different the opinions are about certain fields and how they align again in other ones. Moreover, I really enjoyed listening to their visions as I have never thought about Initiative X in the way the other members did. It changed my idea about it fundamentally and helped a lot in forming the new mission statement.

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DECIDING TOWARDS CHANGE

The entrepreneurs’ go/no decision-making process

ABSTRACT

This change project looks at how entrepreneurs undertake a decision-making process to (dis)continue a business. I find that the decision-making process is determined by emotional investment and human response to change, which is can be visualized with a 10-stage cycle. Two interviews have been done to change the way the entrepreneur looks and reflects on this process. This project includes personal aspects as well, such as my own decision-making process for my company.

Chris Sleurink - BSc International Business Administration

1. Introduction

Place yourself in the shoes of someone who has devoted time and energy into his or her business, organization or project for the last five years. The venture of this entrepreneur 'lives' in his head; he wakes up and goes to sleep pondering about the next steps to be made. Some worrying will be done for sure, and stressful events happen. But all the time the venture, project or business is growing, steps are made, and profit can be generated. A successful business can arise, and if it doesn't, more time and energy will be devoted so it turns out to a successful flow. The rewards for developing a running business are financial security, but also prestige and recognition (Wittmer, 1991). Another reward can be autonomy, something that may be hard to give up for someone. An interesting topic much written about today, modern media and literature are zoomed in on companies and entrepreneurs that have 'made it'. In business administration studies, companies are up and running and we are always interested in how to keep them running

The time, energy and money invested into such projects can be substantial if you consider you can work for an employer instead. Now consider this: change catches up with the entrepreneur and his/her venture is threatened. This change can come from many directions, like changing demand, increasing competition or personal circumstances. This change can be so serious that it may force a business owner to rethink his ideas and consider whether he should shut it down. A quick search on business shutdown statistics is telling. According to the United States Small Business Administration, 7-9% percent of small businesses close every year. That's impressive considering there are around 22 million small businesses in the United States only. 6% of the closures were related to entrepreneurs starting another business. Among the most seen reasons were low sales, retirement, selling the firm, and starting another project (Small Business Administration, May 2018).

In this change project, I want to focus two on groups of entrepreneurs. I want to find entrepreneurs who are at pivotal point, posing themselves the question: 'should I cease my project and focus on something else, or should I continue with all best effort?' Another group of entrepreneurs I seek are people who have made these crucial, life-changing decisions before. I will not look at why someone chooses to close a business but *how*, if the entrepreneur decides to close at all. A decision like this can be life-determining, as illustrated by the path-dependence theory. Path dependence is the dependence of current outcomes, which can translate into life-changing outcomes economically speaking, based on historical outcomes or decisions. Path dependent outcomes can be generated personally by an entrepreneur and are hard to reverse (Antonelli, 1997).

I was unable to find much research about this topic, which in my view argues for two things. First, more urgency to delve into this topic by looking for applicable research and knowledge that helps explain this process and whether I can influence it to some extent. I am fortunate enough to have access to a wide range of knowledge applied during my honours track 'Processes of Change'. Second, it motivates me to seek and assist actual entrepreneurs (including myself) and make them more aware of this thought process.

1. Change goals and approach

After literature review, I want to discuss with the entrepreneurs that are currently in or have carried out go/no go decision making for their own business.

After gaining more understanding of their situation, I want to follow up with the persons and gauge to what extent I made them aware of their (future) decisions, and whether I made them reflect on their decision process. I also want to reflect upon myself and take a final decision regarding my own venture. In doing so, I will make full use of 'respectful inquiry', a discussion technique that states a good leader uses open questions frequently to engage someone (Van Quaquebeke, Niels & Felps, Will. (2016). According to Felps, 'These communication behaviors combine to signal the degree to which someone is encouraged to continue to share his/her thoughts on a subject during a conversation'. By employing this tactic, I to some extent entice the entrepreneur to share experiences and more importantly, consciously reflect on the decision process while doing so.

Because I have found no research on the topic 'deciding whether to (dis)continue a business' I realize I can only use literature to support my statements and approach. Combine this with the fact that I take two entrepreneurs and myself as change subjects, this project will not meet full academic research requirements. However, it may provide me an interesting subject for further research.

The results of the change goals mentioned will be hard to quantify. To measure whether I met the goals, I will seek qualitative evaluation from the entrepreneurs.

2. Theoretical basis

3.1 Introduction

Hereafter, I will always refer to the entrepreneur as the person who oversees the direction of his or her business. I assume this person as the owner, and I shall treat the decision the entrepreneur has to make as a strategic decision. In our case, the strategic decision that must be made is whether to (dis)continue the venture, from now on referred to as the 'go/no go decision'.

The goal of this project is to implement a change in the entrepreneurs' behavior. Specifically, I want the entrepreneur to reflect on his go/no go decision and judge the rationality of said decision by looking at his decision process. Beforehand, a theoretical basis needs to be established that helps the entrepreneur in reflecting on his go/no go decision. Whether the decision is being made or already has been made is not relevant. In both cases the theoretical framework I establish is intended to support the entrepreneur in future and current decisions.

Simply speaking, I find two components to making a go/no go decision in business: the decision itself and the decision process that precedes it. I will now look at both components separately. First, the decision itself is something I cannot judge for these reasons:

- There is not enough literature and time available to me to establish what is a sound strategic business decision.
- The decision may be based on information I do not have at hand, and therefore I am unable to judge it.
- The decision may turn out to be a good move after the fact. We do not know yet what will happen after the decision is made. Perhaps the decision was poor rationally, but it turns out to be a positive one due to unforeseen circumstances, or vice versa.

What I can do, however, is carefully look at what precedes the decision made by the entrepreneur, and more importantly, what influences this decision process.

2.2 What can we learn from literature?

In order to understand what influences the decision-making process, I conduct literature research and relate to my own experience. In doing literature research I find two influences that affect how someone makes a major decision: emotional investment and human response to change. I discuss these two factors and my own experience hereafter.

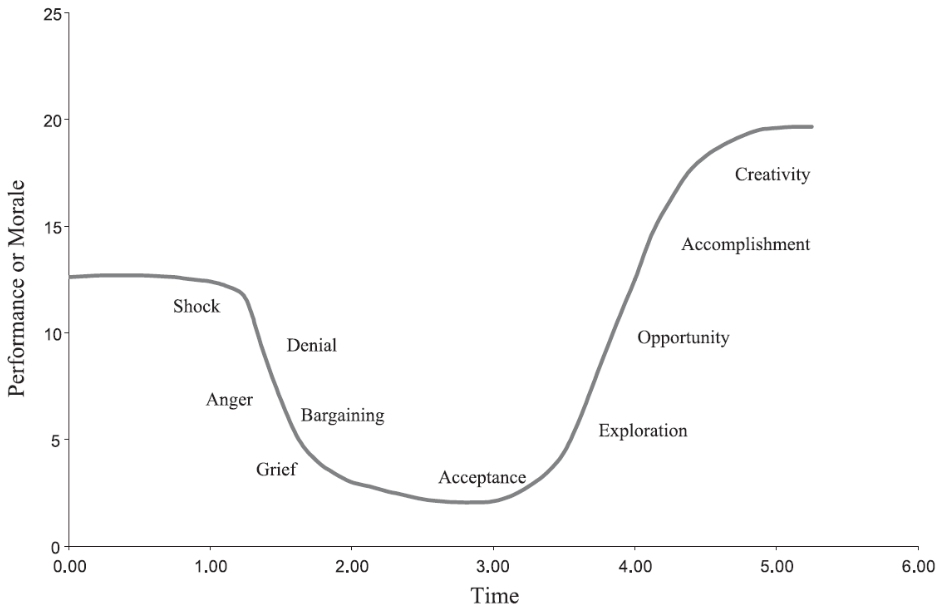
3.2.1 Emotional Investment

When an entrepreneur is being pushed to decide to cease or continue his venture, we may safely assume that this is not a place the entrepreneur likes to be in. Even if a person already lives comfortably with no financial stress, it is not pleasant for someone to be forced to decide. Take in account not only the investment of time and financial means, but also emotional investment of a business owner. The emotional investment of the entrepreneur can be an important factor. Astrachan & Jaskiewicz (2008) define this 'other than financial stake' as follows: 'Apart from financial goals, which include increases in equity value, dividends, and financial private benefits, a privately held business owner's utility from a business can also comprise nonfinancial goals, which can relate to the business (e.g., to offer the highest-quality products), to the family (e.g., to employ family members regardless of their qualifications), or to himself or herself (to have a positive and favorable reputation within the community).' This emotional investment will be present in the entrepreneur, because it is his or her own venture.

This will have implications for a strategic decision-making process. Consider a business manager that is tasked to decide whether to liquidate or continue someone else's business; the manager is unlikely to be emotionally vested as much as private business owner. It is likely that the private business owner is much more emotionally invested. Similarly, in other research it is shown that it is not business owners but managers that are willing to take more risk, contrary to popular wisdom that the entrepreneur is less risk averse than the manager (Koudstaal, Martin & Sloof, Randolph & van Praag, Mirjam C., 2014). In the context of this project, this shows there is a clear decision-making difference between managers and entrepreneurs. This means the decision process to (dis)continue a business is likely to be influenced by emotional investment.

3.2.2 Human response to change

Following up on an article provided to me by one of my honours class supervisors, I reason that during the process of deciding whether to (dis)continue a business, motivation loss occurs. Organizational or personal change involves a human response. Interestingly, this human response is similar to that experienced during life experiences such as death or unexpected loss (P. David Elrod II, Donald D. Tippett, 2002). There is similarity between the human response to loss and that of change or transition. The following citation explains this well: 'it is crucial to remember that for every change proposed or achieved, someone loses something'. The authors present and reflect on several models of change, of which one the most extensive is a 10-stage model introduced earlier by Perlman and Tacaks (1990), subsequently graphically represented by Bupp (1996) for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers training curriculum. It places the stages of 'loss', or change in our case, against morale/performance (figure 1). The representation by Bupp shows how a period of transition or change in organizations goes along with a loss in (organizational) performance or morale. This change can take on any form, e.g. from transitioning to a new manager, selling part of the company, or transitioning to new techniques.



(*Figure 1: International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers change model*)

Most interesting however, is the fact that the organizational change model discussed above is an extension of several models introduced in the 70's and 80's of the last century, also discussed in the article of P. David Elrod II, Donald D. and Tippett. These models were all related to periods of transitions for the individual and could be applied to any type of transition: from puberty to adulthood, from high school to university, from job to joblessness, and so forth. The researchers presenting these models all describe the process as a cycle like that seen in figure 1, albeit not as elaborate. For this reason, I argue the model presented in figure 1 can be used to represent how an *individual* goes through the separate stages as time progresses during his go/no go decision process. The entrepreneur's performance or morale 'highs and lows' will follow a similar pattern.

Independent of the entrepreneur having mostly optimistic or pessimistic traits, the forced go/no decision process will likely push the entrepreneur through this 10-stage process. I reason that the motivation to perform will be less and may also influence critical decision processes.

3.3 Personal experience

During the last weeks of the semester I experienced a loss of motivation and performance for my own venture due to the realization that I had to decide on continuity. Only after a positive event (a sale) and discussing with peers I planned to continue. More on this in my personal reflection later.

Based on my own experience, I see motivation loss resulting in either one of two results:

1. The entrepreneur is even more inclined to make a fast decision and either shuts down the venture, early on in the decision-making process; or decides to keep going.
2. The entrepreneur takes no decision and waits for things to improve.

I therefore reason that a decision should be made rather sooner than later, as during this period of low motivation, productivity is low, and one could better spend time on something else. From a financial viewpoint, this also relates to the concept of opportunity costs: cash-on-hand should not be sitting idle but be invested in profitable undertakings.

3.4 Conclusion on theoretical basis

To summarize my two main findings to the question what influences the go/no go decision process:

1. The entrepreneur is emotionally attached (invested) to his/her business and this will likely influence the decision process.
2. There will be a human response during the decision process depending on which stage of change the entrepreneur is in. I argue a loss of motivation might occur and influence the process.

3. Implementation of change discussion

I set up a semi-structured interview to undertake the discussions with the entrepreneurs. During the final weeks of the semester, I was able to talk with two acquainted entrepreneurs. The interview and answers to the questions I posed are presented in appendix A and appendix B. Using feedback from my supervisor, literature research and my own experience, I set up the questions I wished to ask the entrepreneurs. Additionally, I made use of the theoretical basis I described above. I would like to address that the theoretical base and literature research served as vehicle for me to reflect on the decision processes of the entrepreneurs. It does not serve the purpose of fully dissecting the entrepreneurs' decision process and that of myself. A descriptive research would be better suited for the purpose of investigating what is a 'good or bad' decision process in the context of an entrepreneurs' go/no go decision. That is outside the scope of this project: the goal of this project is to make an entrepreneur think and reflect on his decision process.

This discussion will be in the form of a semi-structured interview where I ask open questions and engage in a discussion. During the conversation I use the 'co-creation' technique as explained by Cialdini (2016). By introducing the subject as 'our' problem I can motivate the entrepreneur to contribute more to the conversation. This concept is called psychological ownership. As such I introduce myself as a fellow entrepreneur who holds a similar issue as the person I discuss with.

I made sure to start each conversation with an explanation of topic of this change project, following with an explanation of my own experiences with the go/no go decision process. Following up on that I would give the word to the person in front of me, starting a free discussion about the questions I asked. Both interviews took around half an hour.

4.1 Results and conclusions

The results of both interviews are added in the appendixes. Based on requests by both interviewees I anonymized their names and made no reference to their businesses.

Both encounters resulted in interesting feedback from both participants. First off, both stated that they found the topic of discussion highly interesting. W. even stated he had not really considered it before. I now take two main change goals separately and discuss to what extent I achieved the goal.

'made them aware of their (future) decisions'

Both entrepreneurs were highly conscious about their final decision. J. specifically (Appendix B) reflected positively on his decision, stating it was his goal to switch to a job relatively early in the decision process. For W. (Appendix A) I perceived the decision as impactful for him as he had to greatly decrease the size of his employee base. Therefore, I made the entrepreneurs aware of and reflect on the decision itself, which helps to reflect on the process that precedes it.

'made them reflect on their decision process'

This is the most important change goal of this project. Although hard to measure, based on verbal feedback received by the interviewees I can conclude this goal to be well met. I was able to discuss the topics of emotional investment and motivation/performance loss with both entrepreneurs in depth. Their own experiences were interesting and differed from each other. Part of the goal of making the entrepreneurs reflect on their decision process was to engage them with the topic. Considering the interviewee from Appendix A sent me an additional take on risk-averseness between managers and entrepreneurs several days after the interview, I consider the engagement to be successful. W. sent me a newspaper article that included research about this risk-averseness topic. I was subsequently able to include this paper in this project. The engagement with the interviewee from Appendix B was such that during the interview, he started asking me questions about my own experience in the go/no go decision process. An engaging discussion was started about the subject of change. I therefore consider the engagement with the second interviewee to be successful as well.

When discussing the content of the answers provided, it is interesting to note some similarities in the answers provided:

- Both interviewees explained how they were at some point demotivated to continue with their current venture prior to making the decision, consistent with research described under 'What influences the go/no go decision? – human response to change'.
- Both interviewees explained they would have like to make the decision faster, consistent with research described 'What influences the go/no go decision?'. Especially W. (Appendix A) explained how his emotional investment in his company made him decide quick, because his very own company depended on it. This influential factor on decision making was discussed under 'What influences the go/no go decision? - emotional investment'.

Within the context of this project, this serves as a validation for the research I have undertaken prior to the interviews. Overall, I conclude that I made both interviewees reflect on their decision process. I also explained my intention to deliver my findings about the decision-making process after finalization of this project. I expect this will make them more aware of their future decision-making processes.

4. Proposal for further research & limitations

This project had a duration of 10 weeks total, which I found to be short for how complex this topic was. I found no literature about the decision process of an entrepreneur deciding whether to cease or continue a business. Therefore, more time should be spent to find literature that adds to our understanding of this process. Also, more creative thinking and brainstorming, with and without other entrepreneurs, could add more weight to the theoretical basis of this paper. Lastly, in-depth interviews with (preferably many) entrepreneurs will help us understand influencing factors better. The goal of these depth-interviews should to be to understand how influencing factors such as the ones described in the theoretical basis influenced their decision-making process, plus attempting to find additional influencing factors.

When it comes to the factor emotional investment, I was unable to find out *how* emotional investment influences the decision-making process. The question then is, how does a decision-making process differ between someone not as emotionally invested to someone who is? Answering this question could help us in influencing the decision-making process for the better.

The factor 'human response to change' is something that can also be researched extensively. For example, we can question ourselves how motivation or performance loss affects the entrepreneur's decision-making. Another influence here will be personality: different personality types will behave differently in a similar situation. Perhaps someone who is more impulsive and outspoken by nature will move through the 10-stage cycle (figure 1) faster than someone who is more reserved and soft spoken, or vice versa.

There will be more factors that influence the decision-making process than just the two I found. Perhaps the sum of the entrepreneur's life experience and knowledge will influence how the entrepreneur decides. Undoubtedly a young entrepreneur decides differently than an older, more experienced entrepreneur in a similar situation. A comparative study could be done between two groups of entrepreneurs: one group young and relatively inexperienced compared to the older, more experienced entrepreneurs.

Another area of research that can contribute to this topic is that of decision making. Much literature is available about decision making, both personal and organizational. One could argue that crisis decision making is very applicable to this topic, considering the timespan is relatively short-term and the decision is made under stress.

A limiting factor in research about this topic is that every entrepreneurial go/no go decision process will be different based on surrounding circumstances, personality, time and so forth. Every case will be different from the other. It will therefore be difficult to draw conclusions from the entrepreneur's experiences alone, even if many were to be interviewed. Generalizations will have to be made based on a combination of literature research and in-depth interviews, and we may have to accept that for the influencing factors found, some may have no influence at all on some entrepreneurs.

5. My own change goal & personal reflection

In this component of the project I will reflect on my personal experience. I am an entrepreneur myself and in the months prior to this project I was in doubt about whether to continue or cease my own business. Hence my personal goal in this project: I want to reflect upon myself and take a final decision regarding my own venture. At the start of the quartile in which this project was made, I got help from an unexpected source: I was assigned a personal development coach with whom I met weekly. She provocatively questioned me: what do I really want for myself? She posed this question in the context of my personal development, but I automatically started questioning this for my venture as well. This helped me become aware of my own decision-making process, and eventually made me select this as the topic for this project. Because I am a highly rational thinker who prefers thought out decisions over quick, intuitive decisions, the personal development project that went alongside this greatly helped me.

When it comes to a final decision regarding my own venture, I have decided to let it depend on one factor only, which is whether I can find a partner overseas to help me push the sales of my product. If this happens to be unattainable, I will do something else. This idea gives me peace of mind and more confidence towards the future. I should note that I have seen similar effects I describe under 'What influences the go/no go decision?' in myself. The need to decide pushed me to some emotional discomfort but I became rational relatively soon after. Again, this was the result of my personal coach (Tanja Gerrits) and that of my project supervisor, Tsjalle van der Burg. For both persons I am thankful for their help.

When it comes to the type of change leader I am, I would like to refer to the '6 Thinking Hats' of the De Bono Group LLC. In this case, I can say with certainty that I belong to the 'blue hat' type of change leaders. According to De Bono, 'The Blue Hat is used to manage the thinking process. It's the control mechanism that ensures the Six Thinking Hats® guidelines are observed.' (The De Bono Group LLC website, n.d) This is in line with my personal Insights Discovery profile, which defines me as an 'observing coordinator'.

If I were to redo this project, I would ensure to have more time to conduct research and interview more entrepreneurs. Because I found the topic of this project highly interesting, I am considering to further research it when I get the chance, for example as a bachelor thesis.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A (interview with W.)

I did a semi structured interview with W., who has run a successful online webstore since 2009, but who had to change the course of business radically when faced with a fast-developing competitive market. As a result, he had to fire most of his employees which was a hard thing to do. Motivation is still low amongst his current employees because of that. After W. took over the role of his General Manager, quite a few problems were uncovered that he did not expect to find. Currently, he is remodeling his web shop into a more specialized one focused on certain markets. Asked what he thinks what was most influential during his decision-making process, he states 'intuition'.

Intro: since when, why and how long did you run or do you run your business?
I started my business in 2009 while I was still working for another company. After 3 years I quit my job because the start-up was becoming profitable. My co-workers called me crazy for leaving my job.

Why did you come to realize you were at a crossroad? Did you realize it in time, or not? If not, why not?
When competitors started failing around me and times were getting increasingly tough due to competition. I had to change direction or the whole business would fail.

Were there emotions or other things presented that prevented a good decision process?

Yes, I am emotionally invested in my business and that has influenced me to take different decisions for sure. I was quite tired of it but at the same time I had even more motivation to continue going.

Did your emotions cost you time?

No, I acted quick because otherwise it would have cost me dearly. Being emotionally vested helped me there.

Were you able to disengage yourself from your emotions enough?

Yes, although I was stressed/tired I started thinking rationally at some point, e.g looking at the business with my accountant doing calculations.

Was there anything present that improved your decision making process?

The sense of urgency.

(De)motivation to continue during your decision making process?

Yes, I was certainly demotivated, but I had to keep going or it would cost me my own business. I didn't want that.

How did close relatives, outsiders etc. help you out? Just with content or also with emotions?

I was mainly engaged by the situation myself, but I sparred with other entrepreneurs at my local business club. At some point I also turned to more rational means e.g my accountant .

What do you think went right or wrong during your decision making process?

I should've acted even quicker.

Appendix B (interview with J.)

I did a semi-structured interview with J. who ran his own marketing company for two years. He did web design projects and delivered overall company designs. It was quite a profitable venture, but he states it was purely to develop himself personally and gather skills. Eventually, he had gathered a substantial customer base, and as time moved on he became 'bored'. He also did not want to undertake serious acquisition of new customers. He quit with his company and solicited for a job at a larger marketing company. He states he is very satisfied with that decision.

Intro: since when, why and how long did you run or do you run your business? Why did you come to realize you were at a crossroad? Did you realize it in time, or not? If not, why not? Etc.

Sinds Dec. 2015 als 'zzp'er. Ik wilde zelf mijn weg uitstippelen en liever geen vast bureauwerk gewenst. Logische stap was dus om als zelfstandige concepten uit te denken, en ik wilde meer naar webdesign en aan de hand van opdrachten mezelf ontwikkelen. Dat heb ik twee jaar gedaan, daarna ben ik nog verhuist naar grotere werkplek. Ik heb best een steady inkomen en kon 25% van de tijd zelf invullen (bijvoorbeeld met meer leren). Op een gegeven moment kreeg ik een beetje een vaste klantenkring. Dat begon te vervelen. Ik kon twee dingen doen 1. Investeren in meer opdrachten en klantenwerving, dus meer opdrachten en uitdaging. 2. Een *baan pakken, waar ik kon werken voor een baas. Ik had geen zin meer in sales en netwerken. Ik wiilde aan de slag aan als developer. Dat was in november 2017.*

Ik heb nooit spijt van die zet gehad. Eigen ondernemer zijn was een tool om te ontwikkelen, en met mijn baan als developer kon ik mezelf verder uitbouwen.

Were there emotions or other things presented that prevented a good decision process?

Ik ben nooit echt gehecht aan m'n eigen ding geweest, ik was bezig met het bouwen er van. Ik ben het (mijn bedrijf) nooit echt gaan zien als mijn 'kindje'.

Een college van me had dat wel, die is nog steeds met zijn eigen zaak en daar heel geengageerd in.

Zo sta ik ook wel in mn schoenen: werk = werk. Tijdens mn werktijd en ook 's avonds lees en programmeer, maar ik wil niet mijn werk teveel meenemen naar huis. In die zin was het voor mij een makkelijke keuze.

Did your emotions cost you time?

Toch wel, want ik vond het wel het een ding om me op de arbeidsmarkt te begeven.

Als zzp'er kun je toch een beetje verschuilen achter je product, op de arbeidsmarkt moet je solliceteren en wordt je 'doorgezaagd'. Dit vond ik best spannend en weerhield me wellicht van mijn keuze.

Were you able to disengage yourself from your emotions enough?

Ik bleef altijd rationeel in mijn keuzeprocess.

Was there anything present that improved your decision making process?

--

(De)motivation to continue during your decision making process?

Het was gunstig omdat ik een steady inkomen had, maar mijn bedrijfje werd op een gegeven moment een sleur. Ik had niet zoveel zin om verder te gaan ermee. Dat bevorderde mijn keuzeprocess wel denk ik.

How did close relatives, outsiders etc. help you out? Just with content or also with emotions?

Ik zat in het begin bij een collectief, dus ik huurde een deel van het kantoorpand waar ervaren ondernemers zaten die beginners coachten. Na een half jaar had ik het daar wel gezien. In een nieuw pand zat ik met iemand anders op kamer. Daar sparde ik wel mee, en een collega van me die hetzelfde deed als ik. Ik sparde niet met ze op emotioneel vlak, meer op het rationele. Het emotionele vlak deelde ik met mijn vrouw.

What do you think went right or wrong during your decision making process?

Ik had iets eerder kunnen switchen, maar voor de rest heb ik totaal geen spijt van mijn keuzes.

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University of Twente

‘Am I good enough?’

A case for my own consultancy

Claßen, C.C.

6-19-2019

Final honours project report

“Am I good enough?” A case for my own consultancy

The entrepreneurial spirit is something many students share at the University of Twente, making the university the “most entrepreneurial university in Europe” with an average of 50 new start-ups founded each year (van den Elshout, 2017) . These start-ups are further supported by a multitude of start-up accelerators and support functions provided by the university – such as NovelT – giving students the chance of early funding and support in developing their businesses. During the Process of Change Honours course, 10 weeks are dedicated to the topic of Consulting and Coaching, where all students can explore what consultancy work encompasses and experience guest lectures from established consultants.

In my own study of International Business Administration, the prospect of working as a consultant is something the University advertises as potential career path for graduates. The idea of working as a business consultant after my degree is something, I started to pursue due to my positive experiences within the Honours course. Furthermore, my intrinsic motivation to make any process more effective and efficient in any work position I have previously carried out manifested itself in a desire to direct my degree towards the possibility to join one of the big business consultancies like McKinsey, Bain & Company or PWC. After attending guest lectures by multiple consultants running their own business, the idea of pursuing the challenge of founding my own consultancy was planted in the back of my mind. So far, the major factor preventing me from founding my own consultancy was my inherent believe that I would not be “good enough” to warrant my own company and therefore no one would want to hire me for their business problems. Secondly, the market of consultancies is saturated with many well-established companies competing for customers, each providing similar services.

This final project of the Process of Change Honours track gave me the chance to challenge myself and change my attitude towards owning my own business by pursuing the development of a business case for my own consultancy over the course of 10 weeks. Given my own business administration background, the obvious methodology to follow to sketch my business idea was the use of the business model canvas developed by Alexander Osterwalder. Due to time constraints within this module, the focus is on selected parts of the business model canvas, namely in developing a revenue model, finding a specific type of client to offer my consultancy services to and to explore the effects of having limited experience as a new consultancy firm.

1. Initial design of the company

The starting point for building my own company originated from an experience during my time working with the digital marketing quality assurance team in an insurance company:

The financial industry is currently occupied with updating and integrating their old information technology software towards new modern core architecture (Plumpton & Deutsche Bank, 2017). During this process, the implementation of agile working methodology is often considered to reap the benefits of an agile working environment.

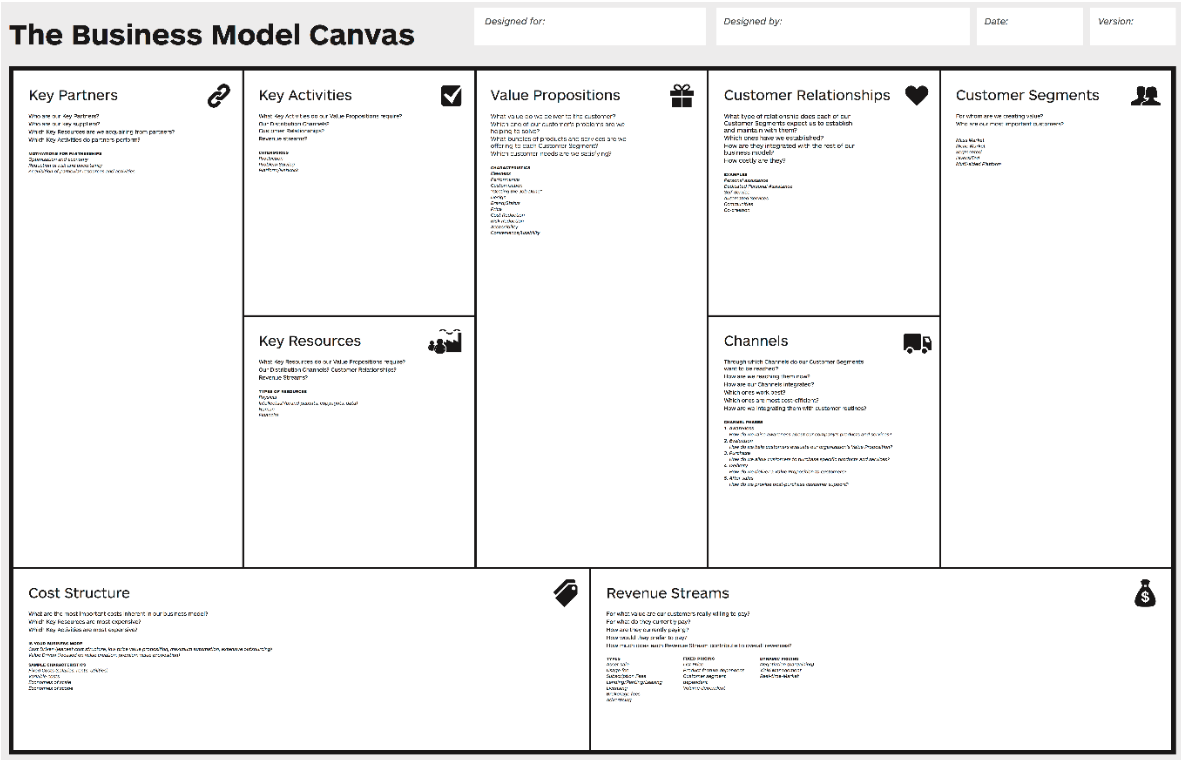
The focus of agile work methodology is (Fowler & Highsmith, 2001):

1. Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
2. Working software over comprehensive documentation
3. Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
4. Responding to change over following a plan

This methodology was pursued during my time at the company and, to my big dismay, it became clear that it was difficult to implement, even when applying only the most basic principles during regular projects. While people often worked only part time within an agile environment, it clashed with the traditional workflow and resulted in employees being left frustrated and projects running over budget and time even when the core deliverables seem simple during the project kick off. After a year's distance from this company I noticed that within all failed and challenging projects that were running under an agile development roof, none of the simple principles of the agile methodology were used.

This is an opportunity I want to exploit for my own consultancy business. Offering the service of an "agile clean-up crew" that helps companies struggling with the implementation of the agile methodology into already existing projects. To better understand my own value proposition and to create a visual, the Business model canvas model by A. Osterwalder is applied to provide an initial overview of the company. It is a model that allows for the description of an organisational business model based on nine building blocks which show how a company can create, deliver and capture value (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). It is divided into four main areas of business: customers, offer, infrastructure and financial viability.

Figure 1: Business model canvas by A. Osterwalder



The complete business model canvas (Strategyzer, 2019) fills the roles Customer Segments, Value Proposition, Channels, Customer Relationships, Revenue Streams, Key Resources, Key Activities, Key Partnerships and Cost Structure. For this business case I focused on developing a value proposition and revenue model for my own business, covering both the offer and the financial viability dimension.

1.1 Value Proposition

The value proposition describes the mix of products that are offered to the customer, which are designed to cater to their needs and create value for them.

The primary product offered by the consultancy is the service of an advisor within the agile methodology workspace. The role of the consultant is to work in the role of process consultation, working with the client in diagnosing the problem and pursuing the goal of knowledge transfer towards the client in agile methodology and the identification of barriers to it (Hicks, 2010).

The consultancy offers the reduction of stress and frustration felt by employees through identification of key barriers for the agile workflow. Furthermore, it offers the continuous measuring of the current agile status of the project based on the 12 principles of agile methodology (Kern, Beck, & Cunningham, 2001), giving the company the possibility for benchmarking and comparing multiple project with each other. In addition, training in the base methodology of agile workflow will be offered to employees on a base level, increasing the understanding of agile methodology for the whole company.

1.2 Revenue Model

Revenue streams represent the cash flows that are generated by the product offered. This consultancy offers a different approach to revenue generation compared to the bulk of other consultancy companies. The idea is based on the freemium model and a subscription base as an innovative payment solution for the client. A freemium describes a revenue model that is based around a free base version of the product which can be used without the need of any payment. To access a more extensive version of the product or service the user must pay a premium. Key here is the conversion rate from free to premium users (Gassmann, Frankenberger, & Csik, 2017). This would allow companies to try out the services for free and, if interested, they can pay for premium features. While being a popular revenue model for mobile apps and services, the goal for this consultancy is to introduce it to a different market. The subscription base describes a revenue stream where the client has a regular payment towards the company to use the services (Gassmann et al., 2017).

2. Change goals

The change goals set up for this project is divided into different dimensions. The first dimension is to develop a value proposition which is both innovative in the respective field and offers an advantage over the competition. Furthermore, the exploration of a revenue model, which is different to the industry and offers an advantage over project fixed or hourly compensation per consultant traditionally utilized within the consultancy industry, will be a goal for this project. Moreover, the effect of experience required as a barrier for this company will be explored. Lastly, the influence of personality on the likelihood of acquiring the job will be discussed.

Table 1: Change goals

Value proposition:	**1.** The value proposition if this company has an added value to the client **2.** Hiring the consultancy would be beneficial to the client **3.** 50% of all clients would consider hiring the consultancy if a new project arises
Revenue stream:	**1.** The client is interested in a freemium based revenue model for future projects **2.** The consultancy offers an advantage with their revenue model over traditional consultancies.
Experience:	**1.** The required experience level by the client is clearly defined for the consultancy

Personal:

1. I progressed towards a feasible business case to be executed in the future
2. I developed myself towards a better version through the process of this module and the coach meetings.

2.1 Change approach: Customer involvement

The key to identifying the change goals and assess the business case of my own consultancy was to involve potential clients into the process of designing my revenue model and value proposition. This was based on the principles of the lean start-up methodology (Ries, 2019). The lean start-up process involves testing new ideas directly with the customer. This can be done by building a minimal viable product and then test this against the potential customer base. The next step is to adjust the product based on data gathered (see Appendix I for a visualisation of the methodology).

As such, I involved my clients in the process of designing my business case and adapted it based on their feedback. This process is described throughout this report, from the initial idea over feedback and the resulting changes made to the company model.

To gather feedback from potential clients, two different ways of early customer involvement were used. First, a small survey containing the initial idea of the company under the constraints of feasibility and added value to the customer was conducted with managers in middle management positions of financial service industry companies. Secondly, multiple two-hour interviews were conducted with top level managers and project leaders within the financial industry and the telecommunications industry in order to gather feedback on the initial company plan and develop an alternative value propositions based on customers' needs and ailments. During these interviews the focus was on the dimensions of change to the company followed by a more open-ended discussion aimed at collecting data about the clients on a broader level.

2.2 My role as a change agent

During this project my role as change agent is a dichotomy. As a change agent I help and develop the value proposition and revenue model of a company with the help of customer feedback as a business case. This company is at the same time my own company making part of the change process about myself as an employee. The customer involvement is done under the light of an external consultant for my own company not factoring in personality of myself or potential barriers to it. After identifying required changes to the value proposition, my role as change agent and owner of this company will also require implementing these changes into the business case of the company. The effect of personality on the consultancy company is discussed in section 5 .

3. Results

The results mentioned below are collected from three interviews and surveys. For an outline of the interviewees, refer to Appendix II.

3.1 Value proposition

The initial value proposition of an agile clean-up crew offering scored high as an interesting opportunity for managers that have experience with agile project that did not fulfil expectations of the management. During the interview, participant A mentioned that the problems of non-performing projects are often blamed on the lack of experience with the new methodology amongst employees. The offering of training people to become more accustomed to the agile methodology was also mentioned as positive by participants.

All interview participants remarked that they would want to hire an expert consultant to gain access to knowledge not currently residing within the company to start off a project but would then demand a knowledge transfer from the same consultants after they come close to completing their projects. The idea of a consultant offering only knowledge transfer was not attractive to them. Participant B stated that he would only consider pure knowledge transfer if the project would require only implementation of processes which the company currently is not able to properly perform. The idea of integrating all employees in the knowledge transfer of agile methodology was marked as an interesting offering.

Participant A added that the required skill for many of their projects is a project management background to be able to steer the whole project better than the company can do it.

3.2 Revenue stream

Participant B stated being interested in a freemium based revenue model for future projects when they are implemented throughout the whole company in terms of training offered to employees to give them the opportunity to develop themselves. A subscription based freemium model would allow the company to purchase the premium access only up if there is a demand for training. The idea of a multi-tiered subscription system was mentioned as an example from companies buying software access by Participant C.

Otherwise the opportunity of having a different revenue system just for the sake of it was not welcomed by participants. The existing revenue models of billed hours per person provided or fixed sum per project was deemed as enough to cover all eventualities. Custom contracts were mentioned as an alternative if the traditional revenue models would not be fitting for the project.

3.3 Experience

All participants agreed that experience is one of the key attributes a company must possess in order to be attractive to the client. Participant B mentioned that the existence of reference projects that worked well is the minimum criterion to be considered and that this project had to be in a similar industry to their own in order to have comparable results. Additionally, purely academic experience is not enough, and all participants required practical experience from their consultants.

Furthermore, the importance of seniority was mentioned as a necessary requirement for managers in consultancies. This is required for discussions with upper management where a young consultant on their own will not be taken seriously. Participants B pointed out that, while traditional consultancies also make use of young consultants, they are always accompanied by older partners who deal mainly with upper management in the client company.

4. Changes to the company

Based on the results of the customer involvement and feedback, the initial change goal can be evaluated to see if the initial value proposition was attractive to the potential clients and if it can possibly be changed to better fit the needs of the customer.

"The value proposition if this company has an added value to the client"

The initial value proposition was interesting and attractive to most participants, showing that the pain relief offering is resonating with the clients and that they can gain value from this. Therefore, while not being changed after the customer involvement, it was confirmed to be an attractive offering from my own company. The focus of the initial offering will be changed towards developing a training for the employees of the client to better fit with the needs of the customer.

"Hiring the consultancy would be beneficial to the client"

The participants noted that they would hire expert consultants to gain access to knowledge not within the firm and that hiring the company right now would not give them a benefit over hiring another consultancy. This is something that I cannot currently change within my consultancy and consider this change goal failed. The development or acquisition of experts in the agile field will take time and consideration.

"50% of all clients would consider hiring the consultancy if a new project arises"

After the initial pass on what could be improved to better fit the needs of the client none of the clients would consider hiring my consultancy for a new upcoming project, citing the lack of reference projects. This change goal considered failed and is main takeaway from this report. While many participants were intrigued by the offering of the consultancy, there is a lack of interest in hiring the consultancy. To change this, the acquisition of potential reference projects needs to be pursued. This highlights that lacking such reference is a major barrier to the development of my own consultancy.

"The client is interested in a freemium based revenue model for future projects"

This is a change goal that was reached with one client who citing the opportunity for the company to save on costs if the demand is fluctuating. Furthermore, having a similar model compared to software licenses gives the client the option to limit their expenses. While I consider this a success as a goal, this is only one participant who was interested in a freemium model. Therefore, more data on the interest in this revenue model will need to be collected.

“The consultancy offers an advantage with their revenue model over traditional consultancies”

I consider this change goal to not be achieved since the advantages of the freemium revenue model were not considered substantial by the participants over the traditional revenue models. Therefore, I consider offering also the bill per hour and fixed price per project as revenue models. These models are in line with the industry standard and thus offer the clients a well-known and accountable way of calculating their payments for projects.

“The required experience level by the client is clearly defined for the consultancy”

This change goal was a success even though it puts a barrier of requiring the addition of another individual in front of the potential for my own consultancy. Seniority and the experience in projects of similar industries was mentioned as an important criterion by all participants when hiring a consultant. Having these expectations expressed so clearly allows the addition of a second partner within my company that can bring in the seniority and experience. The development of the company to be attractive for senior consultants to join is to be assessed in the future.

“I progress towards a feasible business case to be executed in the future”

Involving the potential clients allowed me to adapt the initial ideas for value proposition and revenue model with direct feedback and therefore making the company a more interesting opportunity. This change goal is a success for me, even though the way towards a complete business case for my own company that can be founded with the option to return a profit is still quite some time out.

5. Effect of personality on my consultancy

During the feedback session organized by the module coordinator, feedback was given on how my personality could influence the value proposition of the company in a positive way. To measure my own personality in a reliable way the OCEAN framework (Truity, 2019) based on the big five personality traits was used to first evaluate my personality on my own and compare the results to the Insights Discovery report (Insights, 2018) provided by the Honours track to all members of the Process of Change track. Within the OCEAN framework, my personal ranking gives to most weight towards Conscientiousness followed by Extraversion and Openness. During the interviews with potential clients, another dimension data was gathered. They were asked what they perceived to be the optimal personality for a consultant.

All participants argued that the most important trait a consultant must have is to be able to listen to their clients (Participant A, B, C) and really understand the client’s perspective. Furthermore, the ability to give a strong position against the clients wishes if it is for the best of the project. Moreover, the ability to be very accurate within any planning and organizing activities to not miss details (Participant B). Additionally, the ability to work in a partnership together with the client and not try to push something onto the client which he does not want was mentioned multiple times (Participant A and C).

Comparing this to the OCEAN framework, my personality with a high degree of Extraversion and Consciousness goes well with the ability to keep a clear overview during the organisation of a project and engage with the client in open communication. Furthermore, my personality seems to lack in the area of agreeableness, giving doubt to having a natural tendency to put the interests of the client before my own and making working together in a collaborative way more difficult. The Insight's Discovery report identifies my key strengths as outgoing and direct with rapid reasoning skill and the ability to organize in an effective fashion. In the same light the report emphasizes my lack of agreeableness through the identification of a lack of empathy and difficulties actively listening to others whenever I disagree with the other party.

Overall, I exhibit desirable traits for a consultant in my day to day work life, which would give my own company an added value to their value proposition, since I am the only consultant within this company. At the same time the lack of empathy and the missing ability to listen to my counterpart will hinder the performance of my own company significantly. In turn this gives an opportunity to develop myself to excel in actively listening and to increase the chances of success of my own company, while improving myself as well.

6. My personal development

During this project I was confronted with a new type of uncertainty when designing a company with a value proposition and revenue stream and test this against real clients who could very well hire me in the future. While the planning and designing part of a company can be very engaging being confronted with real world limitations and problems the clients have shown that the engagement on a personal level is a lot more important than I was giving it credit beforehand. This realisation is one of many that was integrated into my coaching throughout this module. With help of my coach I was able to be more empathetic towards other people and stop myself from dismissing answers from people I am perhaps not taking serious enough. In addition, I improved in taking the motivation and feelings of my counterpart into account when I am not satisfied with their actions or performance in terms of a group work and keep actively listening to their point of view.

During the project the workload sometimes became a lot more than I initially expected and this would take a toll on myself while balancing my own study with this project. Especially through multiple setbacks in terms of participation for my surveys and interviews, my planning abilities were tested. The coach work allowed me to develop a more refined version of my own planning system based on a mix of the key ideas of "7 habits for highly effective people" by Steve Covey (Covey, 2004) in developing an agenda and adhering to it in a systematic way. This is the successful completion of one of my change goals in the personal dimension I set out at the start and achieving this is something I can benefit from for the future.

If I were to repeat this project, I would not change my initial process of the lean start up methodology but would develop a minimal viable product to be presented to potential clients that is a lot more specific. This project, due to its scope, was limited to only testing the idea of value proposition in general to clients and not go into specifics on how such training or advice would look like.

Returning to the question I set out with this project: “Am I good enough? “. This a difficult question to answer, since the answers of all the interviewees to the question whether they would hire me was a decisive no. Implementing their feedback into my company and then repeating the customer involvement aspect with different participants will bring me closer to finding a niche in the market for opening my own consultancy, with the opportunity to gather more experience in the process. The desire to develop my own company has been reinforced throughout this project, with this being something I want to achieve in the future. This project gave me a directory to know which parts of my own company I must develop to be considered by potential clients. The lack of experience of reference projects is something I want to tackle first and hope I can achieve this by joining a larger organisation. This could allow me to gain practical experience and the ability to develop my skillset as a consultant. While owning my own business might be a goal for the future, all actions I can take until then should be in line of gaining as much experience and knowledge on the way in order to offer a better proposition to customers of my own firm. Overall, I might not be “good enough” yet, but that is just more reason to push towards being the best version of myself that I can possibly be.

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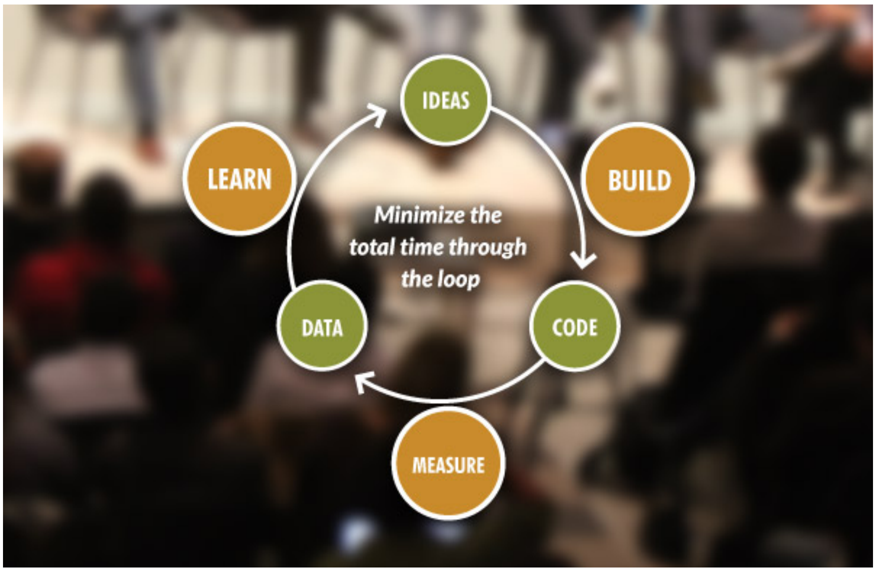
Appendix

Appendix I: The Lean start-up process by Eric Ries



Appendix II: Interview participants

Participant	Gender	Age group	Education	Occupation	Industry
A	*male*	*30-44*	*BA*	*Management*	*telecom*
B	*female*	*45-59*	*PhD*	*Project lead*	*insurance*
C	*male*	*15-29*	*MSc.*	*Project work*	*insurance*

Appendix III: Survey & Interview questions

Age group: ☐ 15 – 29

☐ 30 – 44

☐ 45 – 59

☐ 60+

Gender: ☐ male

☐ female

☐ other

What is your highest educational degree?

____

What is your current occupation?

____

Which industry are you working in?

____

Were you ever in a position to hire a consultant?

____

What were the key reasons to decide between different candidates?

____

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (Strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree)

1. *I have had experience with the agile methodology in a project setting*
2. *The Agile methodology is successful in my organisation*
3. *Cleaning up problems due to agile methods would improve performance within my organisation*
4. *I would hire a consultant to clean up a failed agile project*
5. *I would hire a consultant/advisor to help me understand agile methodology.*
6. *I am satisfied with the current payment model for consultants.*
7. *A freemium model (mobile apps) would be interesting when hiring a consultant.*
8. *I am looking for expertise when hiring a consultant*
9. *I am looking for knowledge transfer to my own company when hiring a consultant*
10. *Experience is an important factor when hiring a consultant*
11. *I would not hire an inexperienced consultant*

Accelerating a pre-startup

Honours Programme: Processes of Change - Koen van den Brink (s1932195) - 19.06.2019

Introduction

At the start of the academic year 2018/2019 I joined a pre-seed startup-acceleration program, where I decided I wanted to found a high-tech company that was doing something with music and AI. The company would follow the megatrend of personalization of content. I rapidly concluded that my company would make an artificial DJ: a computer program that would mix personal playlists of music both seamlessly and creatively. With this in mind, Awaves was founded. I did this together with three others. With a high-tech startup comes a certain need for quick decision-making and high ability to change. This is sometimes a difficult culture to establish, with this project I wanted to establish more of this culture and accelerate the establishment of (at this point) our company.

Situation

As stated, Awaves was founded with four people. However, the team first consisted of five people. Unfortunately, one member had to discontinue their work, as they were too busy with their thesis. Hence, the company was founded by four co-founders. The team now still consists of these four people. However, some freelancers are frequently called upon for specific tasks. The company is currently dealing with a deadline of getting a good prototype running. Since I have a good overview of the technicalities of the prototype, it will be my job to manage the team to have this prototype running before the deadline. Management-wise the company is running into two major difficulties: a lack of legal expertise within the team and a lack of funding. The former needed on a more short-term notice than the latter. To solve these two issues something has to be done by the team: to acquire consistent legal expertise which is still affordable for the company. The team would need a legal expert to work for the company - preferably for shares, like the four of us do. The second issue, lack of funds, is something that is also urgently needed in order for the company to start growing. Lastly, the team of the company has recently started doing reflection sessions after every meeting. The person currently enforcing this good habit will be leaving soon, after which I want to make sure to continue this habit .

The demand for change

Within the startup, the need for legal expertise as well as an investment is greatly needed. All members of the team believe the team should be enriched on the short term with a specialist. The members of the team are positive the team needs a person to take care of legal issues, as this is now handled by the team itself. This has multiple consequences. Firstly, the members of the team researching legal issues are spending a lot of time with this, as they are not experienced. Reading documents takes longer than someone who were to be experienced or already an expert in the field. Secondly, their time could be much better used elsewhere at the same time. They are much more valuable for the company while thinking about a strategy and revenue model. Therefore, it is not desirable to even become experienced at researching legal issues. Lastly, these members are more likely to make a mistake with reading- or writing legal documents. Because they are not experienced, they might not see common mistakes made in legal documents and are prone to making these mistakes themselves. Obviously, this side-effect is least wanted, as this effectively makes some of their time spent in vain. In conclusion, a new member is needed in the team to take care of these issues. This demands change readiness in order to accept others in the team.

Next to legal expertise, the company also needs funding. The company mostly needs this funding to be able to outsource some tasks to other companies. Think of designs, legal documents and some simpler programming. If the company is able to outsource these tasks, members in the team can focus more on their core tasks and the team can most likely expect more quality. The company also needs funding to be able to start providing its service and creating cash flow. For example, the company needs to pay for servers and domain names. Therefore, an initial budget needs to be acquired in order to start running the servers for the company, which it can then use to get users. In conclusion, the company needs funding to accelerate the development of the product and business strategy, but also to start testing its prototypes and getting users.

Change goals and definitions

A startup has to start right. What continues to go wrong in startups is that co-founders are often misaligned about the goal, or the means to get there. This is not their mistake. The mistake lies in management, which is usually the task of all co-founders in a (pre-)startup (Camtamessa et al, 2018). Co-founders could have different backgrounds or qualifications, which make them think differently about ways to accomplish a goal. This can lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding on a fundamental level later on, when the culture of the company should define an action taken. However, usually at this point people in a team start to realize they think very differently of what the company should be or become. It is very hard to solve this issue, as the founders are usually very invested in their own vision of the company. The issue of view misalignment should be prevented more than anything. Prevention is simple: the founding team of a company should thoroughly discuss what the company should be or become. The culture and image of the company should be defined as early as possible, which will require good management and, moreover, impeccable leadership.

What can be concluded from this literature is that not only funding needs to be acquired, as stated in the situation. The literature states that the way in which to retrieve funding needs to be aligned with the views of all co-founders in the team. An example of this would be where to get the funding. This could be friends and family or an investment organization like a bank. If these aims and goals are aligned it creates a lot more understanding and coherence in the team while working towards these goals, instead of just working towards a vague goal of 'getting funding'.

In addition to the previous point, it can be argued that a permanent addition to the team at this stage of the company's life cycle is like adding a fifth co-founder. Therefore, great care should be taken with making sure views and aims are aligned. Examples could be the means of getting funding or exit strategies. A prevalent mistake that is made in (pre-)startups is having an undisciplined project strategy (Livingston, 2008). An example of this would be different departments working on different parts of the project, after which some inconsistencies could arise. This can lead to inefficiencies within the company.

Goal statements

The main goal of the effort put into the project within the scope of this thesis is to create an acceleration for the startup. However, this goal is quite unmeasurable. Therefore, some measurable goals need to be defined which directly (or indirectly) contribute towards creating an acceleration.

Adhering to these guidelines, a suitable and measurable goal can be constructed.

Firstly, the team should acquire an extra member and an appropriate way to pay this person (a team member working for shares or an employee working for money) will be decided. How difficult it will be to accomplish this has to be observed. Some co-founders think differently about handing out shares than others, which is why it will be important and interesting to get this sorted with the team. It is also important to mention that this new member will have legal expertise and can therefore bring some good advice on the issue of acquiring shareholders. If this goal is met, the team will most likely experience a substantial acceleration in the maturing of the company, as most bottlenecks currently rely on reading and writing legal documents.

In addition to this, funding may or may not be acquired during this change process. However, there should at least be consensus within the team for the means with which to acquire this funding. Having consensus is important, as it keeps unity within the team members' visions of the company. If this consensus were to be created, the team will be able to work towards getting funding more efficiently, which will bring the company a great acceleration in product development. In addition to this, it keeps views aligned within the team, which will most likely prevent some friction within the team in the future.

Lastly, the team should be more aware of their situation and is able to reflect on this. The members are open to change and there will be a regular moment for reflection. This could be after every meeting the team has weekly. If this goal were to be met, the team will continue being able to improve quickly and the current atmosphere in which all members can be critical on one another. This is very important for the company, as such an atmosphere will create an improvement-oriented style of working instead of a performance-oriented style of working, the former of which is believed to be more effective in the long term in the team.

In conclusion, the change process focuses on three goals: recruiting a member and accepting this member within the team; aligning the views of the different team members on the funding issues and finally upholding the ability to self-reflect of the team.

Change approach

The approach to change in this case focuses most on solving the issues, and meeting the change goals, as efficiently as possible. Usually change processes are focussing most on creating change readiness, while this one is mostly focussed on initializing the change. As stated, all members of the team are progressive and innovative thinkers. This lowers the difficulty of starting a change. However, also opens possibilities for (and expectations of) the results of the change. The change goals are aimed towards creating a supportive and accepting environment for team expansion; creating unity between the visions of the members and reinforcing the current reflective atmosphere within the team. These three processes require some form of leadership to perform well. For this, a leadership framework (or rather leadership style) can be kept in mind in order to hopefully smoothen the process.

Leadership framework

Choosing between different leadership frameworks is an important choice in any change management process. For this change process, the choice of leadership style was specifically made not to be transactional, as this is known to often negatively affect innovative thinking in the team that is being lead (Bass, 1999; Yukl, 1999). In contrast to this, transformational leadership is known to create understanding and engagement with employees and, in this case, team members (Bass, 1999; Yukl, 1999; Buil & Martinez, 2019). This would most likely work better in this change process, as the team is quite small and there is nobody who has been assigned the position or privilege to take a leading role (in this context, leading role is meant as the ability to ask others to do things for you purely because of the fact you are the leader). Therefore, a shared leadership approach will most likely yield better change results. Shared and distributed leadership strategies have been shown to be effective in creating innovative support and change readiness (Peter, Braun & Frey, 2017). In conclusion, a more transformational leadership style in this case would most likely prove most effective.

Results

During the change process, the team talked to multiple legal experts who would like to join the team, where one clearly came out as the best addition to the team. It can be argued that, with this addition to the team, the change goal of acquiring a new person in the team has been fulfilled. They were very capable and knowledgeable in their field, but also in the field of the (pre-)startup (the music industry). This makes them an extra helpful addition to the team, as it saves the other members time, which they can invest in tasks they are more proficient in. Additionally, the member is a good addition as they realized our current situation and agreed with our views of the company. The company currently pays the four main team members in a small amount of shares monthly, which the new member was absolutely fine with. This makes the financial situation easier, as the new member can start working regularly in our company. In conclusion, the member brings good legal expertise, specifically in music intellectual property. They also agree with our views of the company, which makes it quite safe to hand them some responsibility.

The new member of the team will also be handed responsibility for their field within the team. This connects to the shared leadership style that the team currently enforces. Every member of the team is currently responsible for a specific task of the company. For example, the programmers are responsible for developing the product, but also making sure the website is running at all times. All members of the team holds the rest accountable for their actions and makes sure they complete their tasks in full. Handing the legal team member responsibility for tasks within their field of expertise will also increase team efficiency and efficacy. This responsibility will take away responsibility from other members, which saves them time. Handing responsibility to the new member will not only allow other members to spend more time on other tasks, but also ensure the tasks are completed more fully. This as someone with expertise in a certain field is the perfect person to judge whether a task is fully completed. To conclude, giving the new member some responsibility will increase efficiency in other areas of the team and ensure the quality of the work within their responsibility.

The team decided to make a (informal) prospectus mostly aimed at friends and family. It can be argued this prospectus is an accomplishment of the alignment of the members' views. The team decided this was a better option for funding at the moment, as the full business strategy is not known yet. For example, the channels and specific target audience are not well-defined yet. Therefore, the decision that made that it was better to get a little less funding from friends and family, as this funding can be acquired more quickly. It is important at the current point in time that the team focusses as much as possible on developing both the product and the business strategy. With a better product and strategy, bigger investors can be acquired more easily later. This aligns with the main goal of this project: to accelerate the (pre-)startup as much as possible.

The process of this project went quite smoothly. The team already had high change-readiness for recruitment of a new member and a different way of retrieving funds. For example, aiming the prospectus towards friends and family was quickly accepted by the team and the document for it was prepared rather quickly. All members of the team have done (or are doing) an academic study. This means all members are very open for change, as long as it is supported by some literature. Therefore, some research was done and a proposal was made to the team, which was quickly accepted. The team's vision for the company was already very coherent at the beginning of this project. Hence, the team has easily come to the conclusion that this form of getting funds was the best for the current situation. However, some shared leadership values have still been brought in during the project, like giving responsibility to the new member as quickly as possible. In conclusion, the process of this project was smooth, but acceleration has definitely still been applied to the progressing of the (pre-)startup.

Something which needs to be done next is the actual recruitment of the member. It should be made sure that the new member does fully agree with the vision of the team. For this, an extra interview could be arranged. If this is successfully done, some issues later in the development of the company could be prevented.

Lastly, the prospectus has been written, but the funding still has to be acquired. This is where the process still can see some expansion, as getting this funding is what will truly accelerate the company. In addition to this, in the future a bigger investor will surely need to acquired. This could be an investment fund or an angel investor would become clear later. With this bigger investment the company would be able to hire people for money rather than shares. When this would happen, the company would be able to make some big steps. However, for the moment, the aimed amount of funds that would be acquired with the prospectus that was made will be enough to accelerate development of the company for the short term.

Learning experience

I believe I contributed positively to creating readiness for the change goals. I made sure the views of the team were aligned. This proved to be very helpful when doing the interviews. The interviewee (the new member being recruited) admitted they also thought it was a very important subject, which is in line with the literature. I also asked what we wanted to do with the business and what our final vision was for the company while preparing the investment prospectus. As a result of this, the team is aware of this and, moreover, has talked about the vision for the company and come to a consensus. In addition to this, I believe I did apply an acceleration to the (pre-)startup. The interview with the new member went very smoothly, which I mostly facilitated. As stated above, having this new member will free up time for others, so the business can progress much faster. In conclusion, I believe I contributed to both working towards the funding and a new member for the team, which both will help accelerate the business's development.

During the period of this change process, I have also tried a personal change. I wanted to start managing my time, and planning my days, better. This way, I thought, would I not only achieve better results, but also create a sense of security in my rather stressful pattern of working. However, during this module I learnt this is a very restrictive way of thinking: living this way made me less agile and, moreover, less ready for change. Therefore, I decided it would be better if I fundamentally altered my way of thinking slightly. I would stop seeing performance and achievement as a full measurement of an action's usefulness. I could recognize the pattern of thinking, where one would mostly (or only) be performance-driven: my Insights Discovery profile. My profile profile stated I was mostly a director. These people usually are mostly performance driven. It was interesting to see this parallel in practice and be aware of it on such a fundamental level. This was also apparent in the way I decided to define my change goals: they were oriented towards optimizing some fitness or measurement. After some sessions with my personal coach, I decided to change these goals to be more focussed on team effectiveness and creating a sustainable working environment, since optimizing parameters is something I do naturally.

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Improving a Start-Up's Business Model

Individual Honours Project – Leon Wächtler
Processes of Change
Supervisor: Desirée van Dun

Introduction

For my final project of the Honours Program Processes of Change, I was looking for a challenge that would require me to apply both the acquired knowledge from the Honours track as well as my new expertise in business-related matters from my main study IBA. Coincidentally, such an opportunity arose only days after we were introduced to the requirements for our last individual project, when a friend and housemate of mine approached me to ask whether I could help him and his team with some business model related questions they had while working on his start-up company Picobelly. As he further explained their challenges concerning Picobelly's revenue streams and their doubts concerning the validity of their past growth prospects and the connected uncertainty of whether or not the company will be profitable in the near future, we quickly concluded, that answering such complex questions will not be done in a day, but rather a matter of multiple weeks if not months. Therefore, the topic and the scope of their challenges were a perfect fit for my final project of this Honours Program, so I agreed on supporting them as good as I can in the next ten weeks of the last module of this academic year.

My friend and housemate (Wesley) approached me because of my expertise in business administration. Therefore, I would have initially described my role in this project as an expert consultant, as my job would be applying "standardized bodies of knowledge to diagnose client problems, and plan 'solutions'" (Hicks, 2010). However, as I quickly noticed, theory and practice are two different things and even more so with an innovative platform business that differs in many aspects from traditional businesses. Additionally, my specific platform business knowledge was only very basic. I had platform business models briefly in my main study, but that merely gave me a basic understanding of the concept of platform businesses. Hence, my specific knowledge about platforms and my practical experience in applying the theoretical concepts in the real world were very limited. Accordingly, I was not an expert of their specific challenges. Instead of an expert consultant, I would therefore rather describe me as a process consultant, who works in a collaborative team with the client to jointly diagnose the client's problems and develop suitable plans for improvement (Hicks, 2010).

Introducing Picobelly

Picobelly is a multi-sided platform business that brings together people that like cooking and sharing their home-cooked meals with people that want the convenience of a takeaway dish and the quality and personality of a homecooked meal. The idea for Picobelly first arose, when Wesley and Floris (the second co-founder) traveled together in Athens. For the first time, they experienced the great convenience of the high-quality infrastructure of multi-sided business platforms in metropoles such as Athens nowadays. Using Airbnb for accommodation and Uber to get around was not only convenient; it was fast, it was cheap and it was a win-win situation for both the provider as well as the customer of the service, both being private individuals without the need for employment contracts on the provider side. Both Wesley and Floris realized the great potential of such mutually beneficial transactions between private people, being enabled by smart and easy to use platforms that connect the demand with the supply of goods or services. In the plane on the way back to the Netherlands, the idea was created: Connecting the concept of modern platform businesses with the co-founders' love for good authentic home cooked food.

After a process of clarifying the idea, the two co-founders started planning the technical development of the website which eventually led to the first expansion of the team to compensate for their lack of website development expertise. However, the team of three did not have an easy start. With no experience in starting up a company, a long process of ideation began, entailing many situations of 'being stuck in the head' and not knowing what to do. The team dynamic did not contribute to improving the situation. Everybody had the same say (which is good), but nobody took the lead to give the team a direction. In this stage, the whole focus was on the technical development of the website.

With the fourth team member who joined, the team diversified even more. Now somebody with marketing knowledge was able to bring important business-related matters to the attention of the team to shape a brand with a vision in mind. A general challenge for all team members was the combination of working on Picobelly and pursuing their study at the UT. For the fourth team member to join, this balancing act was, at some point, not doable anymore; he had to leave the team again.

Every change in the team composition brought about substantial change to the company. This was especially true for the next team member who joined; a hard-working front-end developer and designer. While that is his main area of expertise, every team member is constantly involved in the big picture of the company. With the development of the team, Wesley grew more and more in the leadership position, where he focused on incorporating everybody's opinions and reaching a consensus as a group, rather than stressing a hierarchical top-down approach. With the latest new member Maksym, the business side of Picobelly was further strengthened. While he was initially 'recruited' with a focus on the back-end development, his skills in organizing and structuring the business and the team found better utilization in an organizing function within the company. Now, the current team of five people is therefore roughly split in two sub-teams, the technical development team (consisting of three people) and the organizing team (consisting of two people). However, it has to be stressed, that this division intentionally has very blurred lines. Each and every one of the team members is involved in all parts of the company as well as every decision-making process.

To enable this intense team collaboration, the team developed a certain working methodology. The development team works mostly according to agile principles which focus on "short development iterations, feedback loops, [and] continuous (as opposed to up-front) planning" (Dönmez et al., 2016). They work in sprints (development iterations) of two weeks, starting with a meeting with the whole team, where all targets and tasks for the next sprint are discussed and planned. After the completion of a sprint, another plenary meeting is organized where the team reflects on the past sprint and the achieved learnings. While it is the aim to always adhere to this general two-weeks-sprint structure, deviations occur frequently. The difficulty of managing a team of students that are already kept busy by their main study often leads to irregularities in the execution. Furthermore, oftentimes team members are dispersed all over the world for study abroad periods or normal travels, which does not make it easier. As Wesley stated, 'it is a bit of a messy process'.

In contrast to the technical development team of Picobelly, the organizing team does not work with sprints. They decided to implement a more flexible working method that copes with the high diversity and uncertainty connected with the tasks carried out. However, there are always two regular meetings with the whole team at least twice a week including one intensive 'work day', where the whole team meets for the entire day to collectively work on their tasks. If it is occasionally not possible to meet in person, there is a substitute online-meeting with the whole team. All other communication is handled by the extensive use of project management tools such as Slack.

With these iterative changes in the team composition as well as the changes to the applied methodology according to which the work and the team is organized, major milestones could be reached during the last two years. One very important step in the process of validating the idea by stepping out into the public was the UT challenge, where Picobelly reached the semifinal. However, the probably most important milestone of the last two years was the introduction of the first MVP of the platform in form of a Facebook group, where members can post meal offerings as well as request a meal for a certain day after which chefs within the Facebook group can respond. This first MVP has enabled Picobelly to test their ideas and gather feedback as fast as possible. Looking at the recent start-up literature, this behavior of "experimentation over elaborate planning" and "iterative design over traditional 'big design up front' development" (Blank, 2013, p. 1) is well supported and encouraged.

Moreover, Picobelly was offered an investment of 15 thousand euros by a student investment fund. However, after a period of careful consideration of the expected implications of such an investment, Picobelly declined the offer.

Need for change

Besides all the good things that have happened in the last 2 years, Picobelly is facing some major challenges. Picobelly was created with the basic business model of charging users of the platform a certain fee for every transaction. Since the Picobelly team has mostly concentrated on the technical development of the website, refining the business model and finding suitable monetization strategies has not been subject to elaborate consideration. As I have learned in my conversations with Wesley and Maksym, there have been moments where doubts about the monetization strategy have been addressed, however, it was not clear how to approach this problem and no serious attempts had been made to improve the monetization of the platform business.

The basic problem of the transaction fee model is the scale that is required to break even if expenses such as employee wages are taken into account, since eventually it is the plan for some of the team members to work full time on Picobelly.

Literature shows that having a viable business case is one of the key determinants of success. Therefore, it is crucial, that a change process is initiated that enables Picobelly to cope with the monetization challenge.

Change goals

Determining change goals beforehand was not as easy as it seems. The project was filled with ambiguity and uncertainty with many possible ways it could develop.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the co-founders (Wesley) approached me and asked if I could help them with their monetization strategy. Therefore, a certain level of awareness, that there is a problem that needs to be solved, already existed prior to the start of the project. However, I think the severity and the priority of the problem were not completely clear to the team. Therefore, one change goal was to create an appropriate level of awareness towards the severity of having no working business model, hence working without having a goal in mind.

A second change goal addresses the need to enable the Picobelly team to work on such a process without external help in the future. Being a process consultant not only means executing a certain task for the client independently, but it also includes integrating the client in the whole process and transferring process knowledge and abilities that enable the client to cope with similar challenges independently in the future.

The most important change goal for me, however, was to enable the Picobelly team to come to a state with more clarity about the possibilities that exist in the current situation, to enable them to make an informed decision that leads to a clear direction for the company. Optimally, the organizing team of Picobelly should be able to set realistic long-term goals for the future.

Change goals in brief:

1. Create appropriate awareness towards the importance of solving their business model problems.
2. Enable the Picobelly team to independently work on similar challenges in the future.
3. Create a state with more clarity about the business model possibilities available to Picobelly.

Approach

As mentioned before, my role in this change project could best be described as a process consultant. This consulting approach is characterized by a collaborative relationship between the client and the consultant, where both “work jointly to diagnose client problems, and develop plans for improvement" (Hicks, 2010). Furthermore, with this consulting approach the client takes the crucial role of being the "Expert on 'content' and company- or organization-specific knowledge" (Hicks, 2010). I deliberately chose this approach for various reasons. The first and most obvious reason is my lack of specific knowledge about Picobelly as a company. Especially internal information, such as the monetization problem this project attempts to tackle, was something I did not have specific knowledge about before. Therefore, I had to rely on collaborative meetings where Wesley and Maksym provided me with detailed descriptions of the company and its internal processes and challenges. A second very important reason to choose for the process consulting approach is my general approach to initiating change in this small organization. As we all know, change can be a very hard process, especially if the client is emotionally very invested in the company. In the case of Picobelly, the whole team had invested many hours of hard work into shaping the platform business into what it is today. Being confronted with criticism in the wrong way can therefore have a very destructive and demotivating effect on the team, which should be avoided at all cost. So instead of bluntly confronting the team with criticism, it was important to create an environment where all involved parties feel secure. People who act in an environment where they feel safe and secure tend to stop focusing on the dangers of change and start looking for its benefits (Kohlrieser, 2007). The most important requirement of creating such a secure base for the client is building a relationship of trust (Kohlrieser, 2007). And even though I was already friends with Wesley and Maksym before the project, such trust needs to be developed on the 'professional' level as well. To build this trusting relationship in such a difficult project, it is very important to give the client the feeling of being heard and understood. Similar to how Wesley describes his leadership style within Picobelly, I was trying to work with consensus in the team. Where an aspect of Picobelly's business model needed to be critically evaluated or a decision needed to be made, it was very important to me that everybody is on the same page and agrees to the evaluation or decision.

Another reason for my choice of the process consulting approach is linked to my second change goal for this project. I want to enable Picobelly's team to develop all necessary process-related skills to be able to cope with similar future challenges without the need for external assistance. In the collaborative setting of this project, I was oftentimes mostly facilitating and structuring the process which helped them to find solutions and draw conclusions themselves, giving them an increased sense of ownership of the change process.

Practical application:

To practically apply the chosen change management approach, I organized multiple intensive collaborative meetings with my main contact persons at Picobelly, Wesley and Maksym, who are both responsible for the business management aspects within the company. Since I was friends with both Wesley and Maksym beforehand, I intentionally kept the meetings informal and fostered open and honest communication. During the first two meetings (both lasting between three and four hours) I was introduced to the company, its processes and its challenges and I received much valuable information and had the chance to ask many detailed questions to make myself familiar with Picobelly's situation.

With the questionable transaction-fee monetization strategy in mind, we started to explore different options in two intensive brainstorming sessions (again roughly three to four hours). I deliberately chose the informal brainstorming setting to enable us three to be as creative and unrestricted as possible. Therefore, the meetings were very loosely structured with me being a fully integrated member in the discussion and only sometimes giving direction to ensure progress during the sessions. This way I could give Wesley and Maksym a maximum level of ownership and involvement in the discussions without overpowering them and their normal working behavior by forcing them into a work structure they are not comfortable with.

The two extensive brainstorming sessions resulted in many new ideas on how to create new revenue streams with the platform business. To name a few examples, we discussed different variations of premium access models, a home delivery option and a cooking workshop implementation (and multiple more). With this list of possible monetization methods equipped, Maksym and I collaboratively created an extensive spreadsheet calculation evaluating the financial viability of every idea we came up with.

After this financial analysis of the situation, we started shaping different possible scenarios. This was probably the most important part of the whole project, since, for the first time, we were able to form concrete long-term visions for Picobelly that realize a profitable future.

Results

An important problem that the Picobelly team was facing was the missing knowledge to initiate and execute a change process for the business model of Picobelly. However, the further we got into the meetings, a change was already perceivable. The beginning state of not knowing what to

do and where to start faded away and was replaced by more and more visions of how the future could look like.
There was especially one critical moment that determined the direction Picobelly will take on in the future. When I presented the results from the financial analysis to Wesley, there were multiple very different options that could be chosen. In the brainstorming process, we came up with an idea that involved a total pivot of the company but showed to have good monetary potential. But it would have probably meant the end of Picobelly as it is now. To support Wesley in finding a good solution in this dilemma, I used the concept of Sinek's Golden Circle. Sinek created the Golden Circle to determine one's core motivation (the "why") to running a certain company or selling a certain product (Sinek, 2010). He argues, that everybody should think, act and communicate by starting with the why at the beginning before moving to the two outer layers of the circle ("how" and "what")(Sinek, 2010). Answering this question for Wesley was not very difficult. He liked the new idea we came up with, but it would be a radical change of his company for the pure sake of monetary potential. In contrast, Picobelly is a company with values that the whole team stands for, that tries to contribute to society. Not only chasing monetary profits. This realization was crucial for further shaping the vision for Picobelly. Looking back at the change goals for this project, I am very satisfied with the result. I am confident, that the need to increasingly shift the focus to the business management related matters was realized by everybody involved. Secondly, it did not take a long time for Wesley and Maksym to adopt a more progressive opportunity-seeking behavior, which will be very important when coping with similar challenges in the future. Lastly, with the creation of the extensive financial analysis spreadsheet, we were able to get a good overview over all possible directions the company could head to (at least with the ideas we could come up with) in the future. As a process consultant, I therewith facilitated the process of analyzing the company's current situation as well as exploring the possible changes that can be made to the business model, and supported the decision-making process of choosing the right business model for Picobelly and the team.

Final interview with Wesley:

Besides my own post-analysis of the project, I was very interested to hear how Wesley perceived the process and the achieved changes. When I asked him to look back to the time right before the project and to tell what he thinks has changed, he emphasized the general difficulty of talking about the business model. Emotions had a big role especially for him and Floris and questioning the business model took a lot of emotional effort. And still then, they mostly only discussed the number of chefs they need on the platform and what prices they have to ask to make a profit someday. But they did realize, that if the core is flawed and no working business model exists, everything would be in vain. Reflecting on the effects of the change project Wesley stressed, that it helped him and the team a lot to see all the different possibilities and their financial potential of which some can be implemented at a later stage. Furthermore, this whole process has helped shaping Picobelly's vision and how the brand should be presented to the public, resulting in a refined and clearer personality of Picobelly. One idea for example, that was evaluated during the change project, will already be tested in the coming weeks to collect feedback as soon as possible.

Future outlook

As described earlier, this project was filled with ambiguity and uncertainty, which led to multiple changes to its scope, to account for new insights obtained while executing the project. Therefore, there are still many things to be done to finalize the desired business model.
An important change will, however, occur in the very near future. Wesley, who is one of the co-founders and the main organizer of Picobelly will go abroad for the next semester, which will present the next major challenge for the company. Even though the team is used to being geographically dispersed temporarily, communication and collaboration will not get easier. Both the geographical dispersion and the extensive use of online communication tools, which the Picobelly team is already accustomed to, show a negative relationship with innovative behavior (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006, p. 484). Gibson and Gibbs have identified, that the one significant factor that can reduce the negative effects of virtuality (geographic dispersion, electronic dependence, structural dynamism, and national diversity) is a psychologically safe communication climate (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006, p. 451). Therefore, I recommend concentrating future work on investigating team interaction and collaboration processes that enable an organizational culture that stresses a psychologically safe work environment.

Learning experience

During the planning and execution of this project, I learned many things. So many things, that it sometimes felt more like a self-development project than the consulting project that it was. As I have mentioned before, I had to notice quite quickly, that there is a big gap between knowing the theory from your study and actually applying it in the real world. My biggest realization while working on this project was that even though I knew about the high uncertainty and ambiguity connected to working on a start-up, I was far from being prepared for it. Not only once I had moments, where I just didn't know what to do and how to make the best decision. I have a very blue Insights Discovery profile and I like to rationally analyze situations and to make an informed decision. During this project, however, I was often at the point, where the amount of information available was so limited, that it was impossible to come to the one best conclusion. While I had troubles with that at the beginning, I certainly grew with the task and learned to cope with it better.

In general, being the process consultant in such a project was not always easy. There is always a certain expectation from the client, that the consultant needs to know what to do at all times. Since I did not have any experience in such a role before, this was quite a challenge. Frankly, I had moments where I had no idea what needed to be done next. It always took some structuring of my thoughts in a quiet moment to get me and my plan back on track.
Looking back, I would try to give a clearer structure for the whole process next time. This would help me better separate the different stages of the project and constantly keep an overview of what needs to be done. Nevertheless, I very much enjoyed the work and gained many valuable insights and experiences.

Next to my individual project, I simultaneously worked on my personal development with my coach (David Charles van der Griend). We had many very interesting and inspiring sessions where we tackled challenges that I wanted to master for a long time. Especially working on my "red" qualities (from Insights Discovery) and learning to handle emotions and emotional people better was very interesting and extremely valuable!

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RAISING AWARENESS OF ONLINE TRACKING AND DATA COLLECTION

Individual Project Report

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Honours Programme – Process of Change

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June 2019

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Introduction

Subject

The Dutch regulation was never very clear about cookies, mainly because of the differentiation between different kinds of cookies. Different regulations have been active, resulting in so-called cookie-banners, -walls, and notifications. On the 25th of May 2018, the European GDPR became active (Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens, 2018), resulting in stricter regulations for cookies. Many sites followed this regulation, but on the other hand, a lot of sites do not comply.

If the regulation is so unclear for website owners, every website owner implements the regulation in line with their own understanding, resulting in a proliferation of cookie-banners, -walls, and notifications. Many website users don't read the notifications and just accept the cookies. But a lot of people will not realise what they accept and what information they give away to the website owner and very often, also Google.

Cookies are very small information packages, that are placed on the device when a website is visited. Cookies can be classified in roughly three categories: functional cookies; analytical cookies and tracking cookies. Functional cookies do not track information and are used to make the website work. Analytical cookies are used to measure for example traffic on a website, but most often this is done on a larger scale and not traceable to one individual. Tracking cookies are used to track individuals, a lot of information is gathered and used to influence the individual. This can, for example, be done by selling the data to marketing companies or setting advertisements.

Apart from cookies on websites, there are a number of other ways in which data can be collected from an individual. For example by tracking locations, analysing social media and processing information from messages. All this information can be put together to target an individual. This whole industry is worth a lot of money, Google being the company that has flourished in this world.

Sense of Urgency

"The best minds of my generation are thinking about how to make people click ads. That sucks."

Jeff Hammerbacher - Former employee of Facebook (Quote Investigator, 2017)

Privacy has always been a point of discussion, new technologies also raise new issues. Online tracking is one of these issues. Recently the Algemene Verodering Gegevensbescherming (AVG) was introduced. The goal of these regulations is to secure the privacy of European Citizens. But companies also have to handle in accordance with these regulations, it is not always clear if this is also the case. Companies such as Google and Facebook have enormous privacy statements, that most if not all people do not read. Therefore it is important to make people aware of their privacy and the fact that people can protect themselves by making certain choices in the settings and using tools.

Cookies and other tracking techniques have been in the news a lot recently, some examples are a YouTube video of NOS[1], a Volkskrant article[2] and a Consumentenbond article[3]. Furthermore, some articles have been written about the legislation (of cookies): an article about the Cookies Directive in the EU and cases in the Netherlands and the UK[4] and an article about the Dutch implementation of all the regulation[5].

Target group

The target group of the intervention is mainly (university) students. People in the age category of students (18-25) use a lot of social media. Many people have an account on, for example, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Older people will have this as well, but for an intervention, it is best to focus on one specific group. The age category of 18-25 will work best in this case. The educational level is set on the university (of applied sciences) since some theoretical background will be given about how cookies work. The participants need to be interested in, and willing to understand, these concepts. The intervention will not be useless for other target groups, but possibly less effective.

change goals

The goal of the intervention is to make people aware of the fact that their privacy is affected by online tracking and to let them take action against tracking. Before you can make someone take actions, they first need to have knowledge about the subject. Therefore, the intervention will explain how cookies work, what is collected when they accept (tracking) cookies and give them some useful tips to protect their privacy.

To give more background information to the participants, more will be explained about what is done with the data and how the individual is influenced by this. This is something that many people will recognize, but most people will not realise what it is doing to them. Examples of concepts that play a role are the confirmation bias and the frequency effect. The confirmation bias is the tendency to search for confirmation that has been heard or thought of earlier (Wikipedia, 2019). The frequency effect, which shows that you will like something more if you see it more often (Chih-Chung, Chang, Lin, & Yau-Nang, 2012).

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[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRGJXjQz6TA

[2] https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/overheidssites-scheppen-verwarring-met-cookies-van-google-analytics~bfb26054/

[3] https://www.consumentenbond.nl/internet-privacy/wat-zijn-cookies

[4] https://academic.oup.com/ijlit/article/25/1/38/2567087

[5] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0267364915000059

After all the (conceptual) knowledge it is, of course, important to actually change someone's behaviour. To reach this goal, tools that can be used to increase privacy protections are discussed. In addition to this, some settings are shown to enable the participant to take action and change their behaviour.

"Arguing that you don't care about the right to privacy because you have nothing to hide is no different than saying you don't care about free speech because you have nothing to say."

Edward Snowden – Former employee of the NSA ("A quote by Edward Snowden", 2015)

A great tool to analyse which beliefs and motivations lead to what behaviour is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The model for this intervention looks as follows:

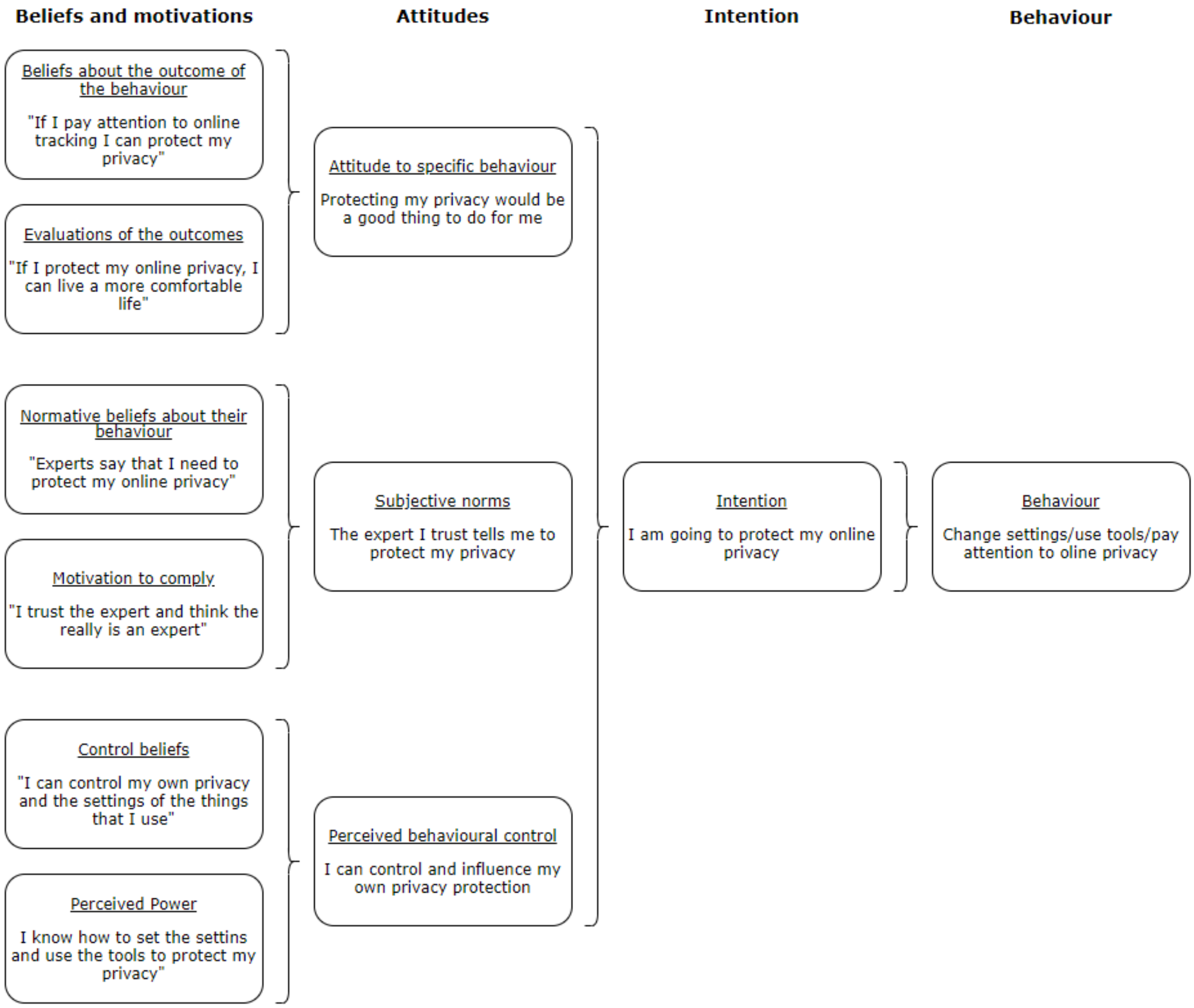


FIG. 1 FILLED IN MODEL THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR, BASED ON AJZEN (1991)

The model has four categories that lead from beliefs and motivations to attitudes, which lead to an intention that results in certain behaviour. The line of thought of a person who is aware of his/her privacy is followed in the diagram. The goal of the intervention is to alter the beliefs and motivations to change their intention and alter their behaviour.

Change approach

Knowledge

Online tracking is a technical subject, to understand all concepts, knowledge of this field is required. Given the fact that I study Business & IT, I already have some knowledge in this field. Furthermore, I am very interested in these technologies. I also read more about the technologies etc. of online tracking on the internet.

Another source of information was the book *Je hebt wel iets te verbergen* written by Maurits Martijn and Dimitri Tokmetzis of the Correspondent (Martijn & Tokmetzis, 2018). This book gives a good overview of multiple tracking technologies, as well as what the interest is of all companies that are actively tracking people. The third source of information was a field expert, he is the owner of a software start-up. He knows a lot about the technical details of cookies, he also uses them in the product that he makes.

FIG. 2 BOOKCOVER JE HEBT WÉL IETS TE VERBERGEN (MARTIJN & TOKMETZIS.

Knowledge for the psychological concepts for an intervention mainly comes from the book Pre-Suasion of Robert Cialdini (Cialdini, 2017). Furthermore, literature and presentations from earlier PoC modules are used. The Theory of Planned Behaviour is also used in the intervention, the theory is used to structure the intervention and stress certain moments to influence the beliefs and motivations of the participants and to change the intention of the participants.

Structure of the Intervention

For an intervention, it is important to use techniques to make people actually change their behaviour. An intervention should not be a boring summary of facts, but interactive and balance between listening and doing things. Therefore the intervention is based on the hands, heart, head idea of Victor DeConinck, discussed in the module Change at the Individual Level. The idea is that three categories of persons exist, people who want to do something (hands), people who want facts (head) and people who act based on feeling (heart). All three categories regularly need attention, so within the intervention, it is important to switch the focus between these three types.

The intervention starts with two abstract questions, these questions put the focus of the participants on the presentation. They are challenged to think about the topic, even before the topic is introduced. This gets the attention of the participants, it is something mysterious that the participants want to know more about (Cialdini, 2017 - CH6). The next part of the presentation is an introduction using a small story, this is targeted on the feeling people. By using the story a smooth introduction is given to the more complex matter. Using the story it is shown where tracking techniques are used, showing in a relatable way to everyone how it also influences them. This is the first clear introduction with the tracking techniques discussed in the presentation. The participants start associating their daily behaviour with online tracking (Cialdini, 2107 – CH7).

The ninth slide is an explicit realisation moment. This slide summarizes what people should realise in this presentation. This message is short and strong, for people to remember. It is based on the threatening concept of Cialdini (Cialdini, 2017 - CH5), online tracking is a threat and the participants get instruction on how to protect themselves. The following four slides are about cookies (see Fig. 3). First of an example is given about an advertisement, again for people to relate. After the example, some theory is explained, focussed on the head people. This part is based on the authority and expert knowledge, I, the presenter am the expert in this field, influencing the Normative Beliefs and Motivation to Comply of the participants (see Fig.1). This is also a technique of changing the participant's behaviour (Cialdini, 2017 - CH 10).

Fig 3 Slide of the intervention

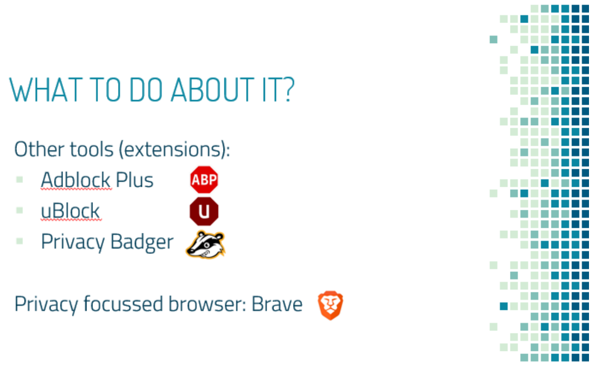


Fig. 4 Slide 20 of the intervention

The following three slides are about the auction of advertisement space, again with information focussed on the head people. Then some explanation is given about why tracking cookies are bad, explaining some phycological concepts. This influences the Beliefs about the Outcome of the Behaviour and the Evaluation of the Outcomes (see Fig. 1). Slides 18 till 20 are targeted at the hands people. They show settings and tools that participants can use to improve their protection (see Fig. 4). The following three slides are about a different topic, namely GPS and WIFI tracking. An introduction to this topic is given by asking a question about the GPS settings of the participants. This enables a smooth change to this new subject, as people first get some time to think about it for themselves. Then a small story is told about a personal tracking history. This is something that also raises questions for the participants, it is something mysterious, they start to wonder what their tracking history entails (Cialdini, 2017 - CH6).

The next step is to show how the participants can see their own tracking history, targeted at the heart people. At the same time, the participants get a link to find their settings, to check them and possibly change them. This is targeted more at the hands people. Here we act together and help each other finding the tracking history and changing the settings (Cialdini, 2017 - CH12). This also influences the Controlled Belief & Perceived Power (see Fig. 1). The intervention is ended with a quote to give another short moment of realisation. The last slide is a small list of to-dos.

Result evaluation

The intervention will be successful if there is a measurable improvement in the privacy awareness of the participants. This improvement will be measured using two questionnaires, one before the intervention and one after the intervention. The participants do not know that the workshop is actually an intervention to change their behaviour. This is also taken into account in the questionnaires. Both questionnaires ask for some basic information, but the rest is focussed on different things. Both questionnaires are added in Appendix 1 & 2.

The questionnaire before the intervention (Appendix 1) is focussed on measuring the starting knowledge level and the overall feeling about privacy and cookies. The participants estimate their own overall knowledge level of online tracking, they answer questions about their awareness of tracking and their knowledge about the different techniques. Furthermore, their feeling about tracking, privacy and cookies is requested. Another question asks the participants to name the technologies that they already use.

The evaluation questionnaire (Appendix 2) is more focussed on finding out what the participant learned and which actions he/she is going to take. They are asked what they thought about the workshop, they are asked a second to estimate their knowledge level. There is an open question to let the participant indicate what he/she learned. The following two questions ask about the intervention direct effects and the actions that the participant is going to take. The last open question is completely open and gives the participant the option to share any other thoughts, comments or other things.

A questionnaire is a good way of identifying results. However, if the questionnaire is filled out immediately after the intervention the permanent effect might not be identified. A questionnaire one or two weeks might be more suitable to measure the ‘long-term’ effects and the real actions taken. However, this is not possible in the timeframe for this module.

Therefore a questionnaire directly after the intervention was chosen, to make sure that data of all participants are gathered.

"All human beings have three lives: public, private and secret."

Gabriel García Márquez – Colombian novelist (Goodreads, n.d.)

Results

Starting Questionnaire

In total, fifteen participants joined the workshop. One of them joined the intervention approximately halfway. A number of participants were aware of the fact that the workshop was actually an intervention. These participants also filled in the questionnaires. Since the questionnaires were anonymous it is not possible to filter out the questionnaires of the participants that were aware of the fact that it was an intervention. However, the intervention might still have an effect on the participants, thus the results are not negatively impacted, therefore all questionnaires are used.

The following participants joined the workshop:

Age	Gender	Occupation
18-24	Male	A Bachelor Student
18-24	Male	A Bachelor Student
18-24	Male	A Bachelor Student
18-24	Male	A Bachelor Student
18-24	Male	A Bachelor Student
18-24	Male	A (pre-)Master Student
18-24	Male	A (pre-)Master Student
18-24	Female	A Bachelor Student
25-35	Male	A Bachelor Student
18-24	Female	A Bachelor Student
>45	Female	Working for the UT
18-24	Male	Working for company
25-35	Female	Working for the UT

25-35	Female	Working for the UT
>45	Male	Working for the UT

TABLE 1 PARTICIPANT DATA EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The average knowledge level was 6,7 (n=12). Except for one participant, all were at least moderately aware of the fact that they are tracked online. All participants, except for two agree that they know what online tracking is and how it works. No one disagrees with the statement that they know what online tracking is used for. No participants disagree with the fact that online tracking is useful. Nine out of the fourteen participants that answered the question agree or strongly agree with the statement "I value my privacy".

Ten out of the fourteen people often or always accept cookies without reading what they accept. Nine participants already use tools to protect themselves. No one is not aware of the fact they can be tracked using GPS or WIFI. More detailed information about the data of the questionnaire before the intervention can be found in Appendix 3.

Evaluation Questionnaire

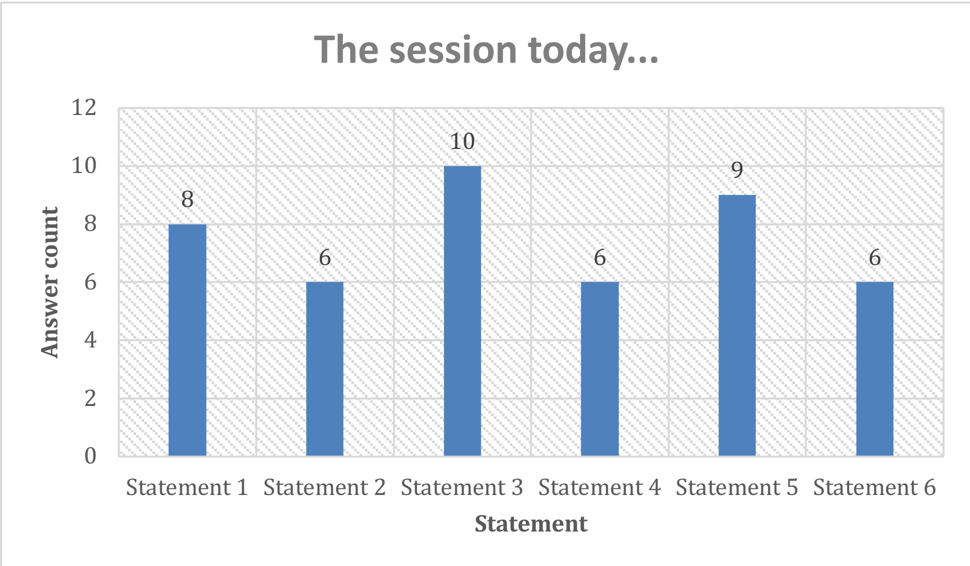
The quality of the workshop was graded with an 8.0. The average knowledge level increased to 6,9 (n=15). Three participants named that they learned that Brave exists, five participants got more insight into adblockers. Two participants learned more about the bidding process for advertisement space, two other participants learned more about GPS tracking.

Question seven asked the participants about what the session today did with them, a participant could select multiple answers from a list of six statements. The statements can be found in Table 2, the graph with the processed data in Graph 1. Question eight asked the participants about what they are going to do and how they feel. A participant could select multiple answers from a list of six statements, three about actions and three about feelings. The statements can be found in Table 3, the graph with the processed data in Graph 2. The rest of the data of the Evaluation Questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4.

Statement #	Statement
Statement 1	Increased my awareness of online tracking
Statement 2	Increased my awareness of other tracking methods (GPS/WIFI)
Statement 3	Increased my overall knowledge about online tracking

Statement 4	Made me understand how online tracking works
Statement 5	Enabled me to start/continue protecting myself against online privacy
Statement 6	Made me aware that my privacy is affected by online tracking

TABLE 2 STATEMENTS EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION 7

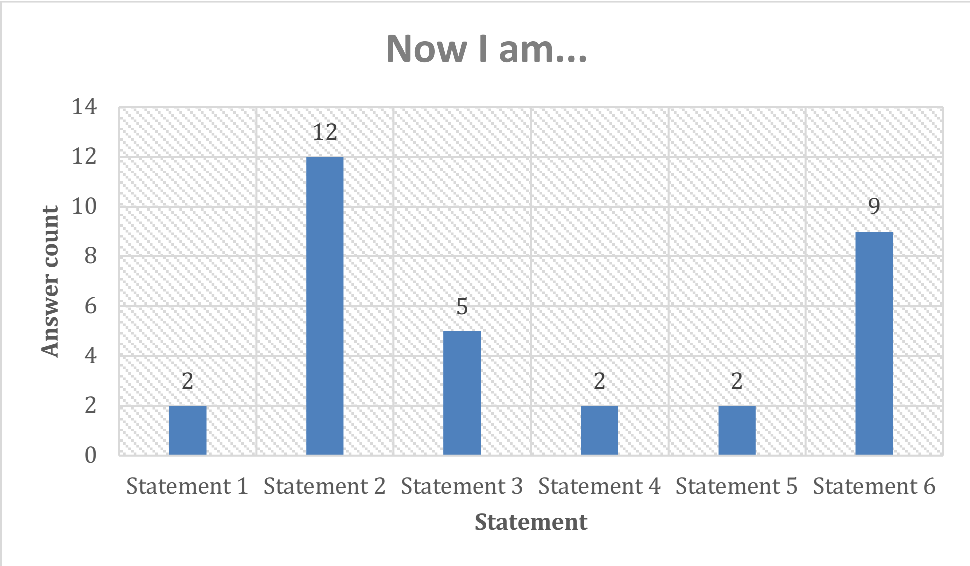


GRAPH 1 PROCESSED ANSWERS QUESTION 7

STATEMENT #	STATEMENT
Statement 1	Going to start using tools to protect myself against online tracking
Statement 2	Going to continue using tools to protect myself against online tracking
Statement 3	Going to make myself more aware of other ways of tracking (GPS/WIFI)
Statement 4	Feeling that my privacy is affected by online tracking

Statement 5	Feeling that my privacy is affected by other ways of tracking (GPS/WIFI)
Statement 6	Feeling more informed about how I can protect my online privacy

TABLE 3 STATEMENTS EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION 8



GRAPH 2 PROCESSED ANSWERS QUESTION 8

Data interpretation

As mentioned before, the average knowledge level increased from a 6,7 to a 6,9. However, this is not a significant result. Therefore it cannot be said that the intervention had a positive or negative influence on the estimated knowledge level of the participants. All participants indicated that they learned something, ranging from little things to completely new insights. So it can be said that the intervention was informative and enabled the participants to gain some knowledge.

Ten participants (66%) indicated that their overall awareness of online tracking has increased. This is a significant result, although it is not known how much the awareness increased. If this value is compared to the knowledge level increase, it could also be a small increase in awareness. To the statement “the session today made me understand how online tracking works”, six participants (40%) agreed. It could be the case that the rest already understood how online tracking worked, or they did not learn enough to understand how it works. The last statement about their awareness of privacy being affected by online tracking was selected by six participants (40%). This number is also relatively low, possibly because the effect of the intervention for raising awareness was too little.

Only two participants (13%) are going to start using tools to protect themselves against online tracking. However, twelve participants (80%) are going to continue using tools. This means that the overall gain is very little, however, the intervention did not have a negative impact as many participants (80%) indicated that they are going to continue using tools. This minor gain could be caused by the fact the participants were already privacy aware and using tools to protect their privacy. Nine participants (60%) indicated they felt more informed about how they could protect their online privacy. This coincides with a high percentage of participants starting to use/using tools to protect their online privacy. The effect of the intervention concerning GPS/WIFI tracking was smaller than the effect of online tracking, only five participants (33%) is going to take action to increase awareness and only two participants (17%) indicated that they felt their privacy is affected by these ways of tracking.

Altogether it can be said that the intervention did not have a negative impact, however, the results do not indicate a significant improvement in the awareness of and/or actions taken by the participants. There could be multiple reasons to explain this result. The first possible reason is that most of the participants already were quite a bit aware of their privacy and online tracking. Ten participants (71%) indicated that they already use tools to protect their privacy. If participants are already aware of their privacy and online tracking, the possible gain becomes less because the entry level is higher.

Another reason is the fact that there might be a bias in the group of participants. People who are already more privacy-aware are more interested in getting to know more about online privacy. Therefore, they might come to such a workshop. People who do not pay attention to privacy are harder to convince to come to a workshop. If they do not care about their privacy, they also do not care about going to a workshop about privacy.

With these two possible reasons, the small and not significant gain can be explained. Both reasons seem to have an influence, the entry level was relatively high, as the number of participants that already use tools shows (71%). Furthermore, nine participants value or strongly value their privacy (64%), so the group of participants consisted of already privacy aware participants.

Advice

First of all, it was fun to organise the intervention. The participants were enthusiastic about the subject and indicated they enjoyed the workshop. Unfortunately, there is no proof that the intervention had an effect. However, I think that no time was wasted, most participants indicated they learned something. Hopefully, this also increased the awareness of the participants, resulting in more conscious (online) behaviour.

By focussing more on the group of participants with a low entry level and no privacy awareness, the gain could have been more. However, this group is more difficult to attract. Furthermore, the danger is that the workshop is not interesting anymore for participants that are already very privacy aware. Therefore, it is important to make a clear choice about the group of participants that is focussed on. Once the choice is made, it should be implemented in all parts of the intervention, so from inviting participants to the intervention itself.

I value my privacy and I keep trying to improve this, by trying out new tools and reading about privacy. I hope that with my intervention I conveyed this message to the participants as well. I do not want to say that online tracking is a bad thing, but people should realise what the influence is on them. Every increase in awareness is progress, which I am very pleased with.

Learning Experience

"It's only after you've stepped outside your comfort zone that you begin to change, grow and transform."

Roy T. Bennett – Former Zimbabwean politician (Goodreads, n.d.)

To start, the project was challenging for me to do, but I also really enjoyed it. I organised the whole project on my own, with some help of my supervisor, my coach and an expert. From start to end I had the lead, starting with a conceptual idea and now finishing this report. I had to dive into the (technical) world of online tracking, use the change concepts that we learned during the Honours Programme and make and give a workshop for a group of people. Overall I am satisfied with the result, it gives a contented feeling.

Although it is the final project of the Honours Programme I still learned a lot. Previous projects always involved a group of students, where everyone uses their own strengths. Now I had to do everything alone. I really liked the idea that I started with and I also think it was a suitable subject and execution for the final project of the Process of Change Honours Programme. I communicated well with my supervisor, we had regular meetings to discuss my progress, the issues I came across and some possible extensions.

During the development of the intervention, I really kept in mind that I tend to communicate using facts. This a strength, but also a weakness, as an intervention requires a broader approach. I tried to implement this in my intervention and also discussed this with my supervisor. However, I think that I still used too much fact-based information in the intervention. Furthermore, the participants felt relatively negative about online tracking after my workshop. This was not the goal of the intervention, the goal was to raise awareness.

I am a little disappointed by the fact that there is no measurable result, however, I think I can explain this by the fact that I used too little techniques from for example Pre-Suasion of Cialdini. I tried to implement them in the intervention, but it was a bit overshadowed by the factual information that I provided. This is also my strongest point as a change leader, I provide clear facts to change people. However, I often forget the feeling aspect of change.

With my coach, I also worked on the emotional and feeling level during the coaching session. From my Insights Discovery report, it is clear that I am very blue and I have a bit of green and red. But this is often hidden by the blue part. For my intervention, but also for my personal life, it would be better if I could use this red and green more explicit. A first step was made in the coaching sessions, but I can always continue developing myself.

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Learning By Doing: Motivating Change In A Team

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE

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Bachelor Honours: Processes of Change

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Personal Coach: Niels Jansen

1 Introduction

During my time in the Processes of Change Honours track I have learned a lot of different things and gained new perspectives on otherwise familiar situations. Even though I thought that all of the modules in this track were valuable, there were a couple of modules that really stuck with me. These modules are 'Change at the Individual Level' and 'Effective Leadership in Organizations'. They really inspired me to develop my own skills as a leader, which is why I want to base my final project around the things I have picked up during these modules.

1.1 Situation

Currently, I am doing a board year in the study association of my Bachelor, Mechanical Engineering. In this year, I have the opportunity to develop skills outside of the regular curriculum of a Bachelor study. One of these opportunities is organizing a big event at the university. Because I want to develop and improve my leadership skills, I decided to take up the role of main coordinator within our board to organize this activity. The activity we would be organizing is a Beach Party on the campus for students across the whole university on the 18th of June. However, sometimes during the organization of this event, I notice that not everything always runs smoothly. My team members can have difficulties with the tasks that are given to them, or disagree with decisions that are made by the rest of the team. This can lead to my team members, combined with their already busy schedule, pushing back the work that has to be done for the organization of this event. Fortunately, this situation aligns perfectly with my goals of developing my own leadership and motivator skills. That is why I want to execute my final project of the Processes of Change program to improve my leadership skills by motivating and increasing the performance of my fellow board members in organizing this event

Figure 1: My current board

The big question is now: How do I approach this project? There are so many different ways of influencing people in increasing their performance, but what will be the right way to do it in this group? I want to research valuable information from both mentioned modules and their materials to determine the approach I want to use.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Previous Lectures

I have looked at a couple of different lectures I have had in the modules that I mentioned previously in this paper. One of the lectures that stuck out to me was the one given by Martian Slagter in the module: 'Change at the Individual level'. Her lecture was called 'Individual Change or Personal Development: An Introduction to Coaching'. I feel that the topics discussed in this lecture are directly linked to the subject of my own project, which is why I want to incorporate this lecture and its contents into my own project.

For this lecture we had to read an article written by Professor George Kohlrieser, called: 'How to Take the Pain out of Change' (Kohlrieser, 2007). In this article it is explained that change can only happen effectively if people feel secure. It is then the task of the leader to make his employees/colleagues feel secure. Additionally, it is important for a leader to be able to provide a sense of protection and help communicate why the change is necessary. If these things are done well, it will increase engagement of the 'employees' making sure that they look for opportunities in the change rather than see only the negative sides of it. I feel that there is a lot that can be gained in my own board from this article as well. I often notice that a lot of my fellow board members are busy with other tasks and sometimes procrastinate the work that has to be done to organize the event. Increasing the engagement of my fellow board members might in this case be done by being very open and communicative with everyone and trying to improve their motivation in this way. The article mentions that a positive emotional bond is very important. I do however feel that this is already largely the case with my fellow board members, but building up this connection even more will likely give even more positive results.

Aside from this lecture, there was another lecture given in this module which I would like to use as an inspiration. This was the lecture given by Ilse Boontje, Jonne Tillema and Dr. Julia Wijnmaalen. In the lecture they gave us, we had to read and discuss two articles. One of these articles was called 'Change: the art of connecting' (Van Noort and Gillert, 2006). This article shares some commonalities with my own change project, because this article talks about incorporating change by connecting employees more to the change itself. Rather than telling employees what to do, it is important that they are enabled to work on the change themselves and that through mutual influence, a common goal can be reached. For my own project, it is important for me to realize that the event created is not of my own making, but it is an effort which is created by my whole board. That is why we have to work towards a common goal where everyone's different interests can be utilized to reach this common goal. This means that it is important for everyone involved to give input on the goal of the event, and to work on a specific part of the project which suits their personal interests. It is important for me in this situation to pay attention to each team members' personal interests in the organizational process. This is because a lot of times decisions can be made in the name of 'team interests', which are barely supported by any team members at all. It is important to bring individuals' interests to light and as a team work on how to weave these interests into various

new solutions. In order to recognize and understand someone's interests, it is essential for me as the leader to let my own interests temporarily take second place.

Another aspect of incorporating change that is mentioned in the article is informing employees. Informing in this case meaning: "This is what we want. Let's see what this means for you, and then I would very much like to know whether you want to get to work with it?" (Van Noort and Gillert, 2006). This relates back to the point of making sure everyone can share their personal interests in the team itself and finding a way to align their personal interests with a common goal of the project.

One point of attention that the article mentions is that when people are not given any room to influence the change, they will make room for themselves in a negative way. The thing to avoid here is the pocket veto phenomenon (Hanson, 1996), where a leader can get into a discussion with an employee where there is no definitive outcome. Both think they have explained their story well to each other but no change in behavior will take place. An organization which has healthy open communication and room for dialogue can overcome this phenomenon. The importance here is to understand people's motives. Motives explain why people do what they do and additionally determine how they influence changes. These motives are rooted in people's very identity, which makes it important to create an image of the motives of the stakeholders involved in the change. It is important for employees to have tangible experiences of the change available because the change that will be implemented can not be experienced yet. What is often forgotten in a change project, but what is still very important is that actions speak louder than words. Showing employees a here-and-now example will better help them understand the change goal be- cause people will often not changed based on arguments alone. Relating this to my project might be more difficult with my own project, but a possibility might be to experience situations together which are similar to our own goal.

Lastly, in the module 'Effective Leadership in Organizations' there was a lecture given by Huub Schulte Fischedick, which was very inspirational and which I feel is something I can use in my project. His lecture was about what makes an effective leader, and really gave us an opportunity to discover together with the whole honours group what qualities we think are required for a good leader. In this lecture a lot of things became clear to me on how other people view leaders and all of the different qualities that people find important. Something to note here is that a lot of the qualities coincide with what is mentioned in the articles I've mentioned previously. So trust, communication and listening skills are some important factors that people mentioned which have to be considered. I feel that I can use these qualities that people associate with a good leader to my advantage, and try my best to adopt these skills during my final project.

2.2 Additional Material

Aside from material that was handled in the lectures of previous modules, there is some additional material I would like to incorporate in my literature review.

One of which is an article titled: ‘High job performance through co-developing performance measures with employees’ (Groen, Wilderom and Wouters, 2015). This article focuses on giving employees at lower level a voice within an organization. It is true that in my case speaking of an ’organization’ is maybe not necessarily the best description, but there is a lot to be learned from this article. The article stresses the importance of *performance measures* which can quantitavely express job performance, including both individual and group measures. In essence, these performance measures can be used by employees as a quantitative indicator of the quality of the work performed. I find it difficult in my own scenario to apply a form of these performance measures for the reason that the work performed is not repetitive and therefore difficult to quantitatively analyze. One way of measuring performance among my colleagues could be my own personal perception of the work that has been done. Every team member has wildly varying tasks, making it difficult to determine quantitative performance measurements for all cases. Unfortunately, this does mean that I will not be able to easily alter the quality of the performance measurements to help motivate my colleagues.

’Perceived measurement quality is positively related to employee attitude toward, perceived norms for and perceived control over performing well.’ (Groen, Wilderom and Wouters, 2015). This is what is hypothesized in the article, stressing again the importance of quality measurements. A way for my colleagues to perceive the ’quality measurements’ would in my case be to discuss the work that has been done in an open discussion and tell them what I have noticed is going well. These practices might help increase the motivation of my colleagues as well. This is very important because this is another article that mentions the positive effect of motivated employees on their job performance. Additionally, in these discussions a perceived control over performing well can be discussed. Because a ’...perceived control over performing well may influence an employee’s effort and perseverance to overcome difficulties.’ (Groen, Wilderom and Wouters, 2015).

Lastly, this article mentions the importance of employee participation in developing performance measures. With the open discussions that I mentioned previously, I aim to simulate this participation in my own environment. I hope to increase my colleagues’ performance by allowing them to openly discuss their work and give them a feeling of control over their own performance.

The last article I want to incorporate in my report is an article called ’Lean Teams’ (Van Dun and Wilderom, 2016). This article defines ’lean teams’ as a ’...more-or-less permanent work floor unit within a larger organizing context, which subscribes to lean’s philosophy and uses tools to improve its own processes through the implementation of workers’ ideas’. This definition suits my own scenario quite well, as we are organizing an event as a board of a Study Association which could be considered as the larger organizing context. The committee we have established within the board to organize this event could be considered a ’permanent’ work floor unit. What is important about lean teams, is that continuous improvement very important. This continuous improvement will restructure the lean teams multiple times, which is something that could be beneficial in my team. By continuously improving the functionality of my team as a lean team, we can work more efficiently.

To bring this into practice, there are four affective dynamics and four behavioral dynamics to be considered. *Psychological safety* is mentioned first, this safety is required for employees to confidently share their own opinions. This correlates with the earlier articles where the importance of an open setting is specified as well to increase the engagement of the employees. *Team cohe- sion* is mentioned next, which aims to strengthen a safe climate for effective improvements. *Supporting colleagues* has to be continuously considered and is something I can set an example for as the leader of my team. *Manage conflicts* is the last of the affective dynamics, it stresses the importance of solving conflicts when they occur to prevent damaging the team's cohesion. *Share ideas and information* is the first of the behavioral dynamics, it directly relates back to psychological safety which is required for this dynamic. *Performance monitoring* will help the team improve their individual as well as team performance by discussing work that has been done. *Innovating* is achieved by incorporating the information, ideas and data from the performance monitoring. *Supportive team leadership* is the last of the behavioral dynamics and is something I can have direct influence over in my own situation. Supportive leadership can be achieved by guiding the improvement processes and helping to maintain the psychological safety of team members. One final lean team dynamic which the article mentions is the *cognitive commitment*, team members must be willing to engage in the continuous process improvements. For my own role, this relates more to motivating my colleagues to organize the event in question. By having motivated team members that want to achieve the best outcome, they will be more willing to continuously improve their efforts.

The article mentions a couple of enabling factors, which can be used to 'fuel' lean teams. These enabling factors are similar to what I've discovered in earlier articles, they stress the importance of frequently visiting the workplace, aiming for a deeper understanding of employees' problems and actively listening and agreeing. These are some factors I can actively work on incorporating in my own situation, how this will be done is discussed in the next section.

2.3 Personal Interventions

Now that I have obtained some more information through my literature research, I will be able to determine a strategy that can best incorporate the different aspects that I have discovered in my research. To be open and hon- est is something that comes up frequently in the articles. As a leader, it is important for my fellow team members to be able to trust in me and tell me when they are not enjoying their part of the job. Just like the article ‘Change: The Art of Connecting’ mentions, I want my team members to feel connected to the project and make sure that they can work in areas that suit their own interests. An example that is mentioned is this article, notes that working on personal interests was accomplished by putting one team member in a spotlight at a time. This is what I want to do in my own project as well. By holding a conversation with all of my team members individually, I hope to gain insight into their ambitions in the project and discover what they might rather work on and help motivate them to accomplish our common goal. In these conversations, I will work towards putting my own interests aside, because it is essential that I really understand and recognize the other team members’ interests.

Creating an open setting is very important for the psychological safety of my colleagues, which will allow them to openly express their feelings about the project and enter an honest discussion. It is my personal task to create this open setting in a couple of different ways. Firstly, I want to isolate the conversation with every team member so it can be heard by anyone else. This will create a more secure atmosphere wherein they can share whatever they want without it being heard by anyone else. Secondly, I want to explicitly tell them that I want to hear their opinion on how everything is going so far and how they feel about the process. I want to keep my own interests aside as much as possible and listen attentively to what my colleagues have to say. The goal of these interventions with my team members is that I want to use the results to adjust the process of organizing this event to suit everyone’s interests and arrive at a mutual goal. Additionally, I hope that this will motivate my team members to work on their part of the process in a more efficient way, because it will be adjusted more to their personal interests.

2.4 General Intervention

To achieve a more efficient and motivated workflow amongst my colleagues, I want to organize a more general intervention with all of my team members together to discuss everyone’s position in the team and how their tasks are going. The same elements apply in this case of creating an open setting. Not only do I want my colleagues to feel comfortable around me when doing their tasks, I want them to feel comfortable as a team. I will aim towards creating a similar open atmosphere during this general intervention, by again making sure that none of the comments can be heard by anyone outside of the team. Additionally, I want to talk about some of the things that my peers have mentioned about me in our personal interventions to put myself in a more vulnerable position. Setting this vulnerable example will allow my colleagues to share their comments and feedback about each other openly without judgment. I want to use the information that I gathered in the personal interventions here to steer everyone into functions that suit their interests better. Besides the information about what functions people are interested in, I will use any information available about what people want to create at the event to create a common goal. After this intervention, I hope everyone will feel more comfortable in their functions and feel more motivated to achieve this great common goal that we set together.

2.5 Final Evaluation

Finally, after the event itself has taken place, I want to organize a general evaluation session with all of my colleagues to discuss everything that happened leading up to that point. Not only will this be an opportunity to learn about organizing in a more practical way, which is what I want to focus on in this session at the start, but it can provide a great insight into the effects of my efforts into creating a more motivated team. Just like the interventions before this, an open setting has to be created to give my colleagues a feeling of comfort and trust in which they can share whatever they want to say. In this evaluation I want to focus on the changes that I made in my leadership, but give everyone the opportunity to give each other feedback about their work as well. There is still a long time to go with my board, so this will give everyone the oppor- tunity to learn from our feedback and grow together as a more effective team. However, because the evaluation can only take place after this report has to be handed in, it will not be able to be incorporated in this paper

3 Results

3.1 Results of the Personal Interventions

I work together with six other board members, so it was difficult to decide where to start with the personal interventions and find the time for us to sit together and talk about the work that we have been doing. I started planning in some moments in our shared calendar and telling my colleagues that I wanted to have a short conversation about the event we are organizing. The first conversation was held with one of my colleagues who I work together well with and with who I feel that I can easily share my opinions. As expected, this went over pretty smoothly and he shared some of his concerns with me about the event as well as mentioning that he wanted to work more on the promotion of the event instead of the catering which he had been doing. After this first conversation went by as well as it did, I became confident that this method was working well on creating a trusting atmosphere.

Although this was true for most of the personal interventions that I organized, there was one colleague that I clash with a bit more often in our opinions. We are both very opinionated, which can result in long arguments without any real conclusion. This is where I really felt the theory of the articles being brought into practice, as I felt some resentment towards him because of these inconclusive arguments. That is why this is how I approached him during our intervention. I mentioned that I wanted to have an honest and open discussion with him as I did with all of my other colleagues but told him that I felt like we tend to argue a lot. He agreed with me on this, and told me that he dislikes it when I ask him about how his work is going too often. I thanked him for telling me that that is how he feels and told him that I want to work towards improving that aspect about myself so we can work together more comfortably and efficiently.

This was the intervention I looked up to doing the most, because it is very confrontational having this conversation together when you are already feeling resentment towards each other. But that is why I look back at this conversation the most fondly as well, because even though this resentment might have been present at the beginning, we were able to talk about it together and overcome our differences at least at that moment. The interventions with my other colleagues luckily went by pretty smoothly, I assume because everyone wants to work in the most efficient way together and is open to new ideas on how to do so.

After having done these personal interventions I felt that a lot had been improved. I had the feeling that we could discuss everything more easily without passing judgment. This meant that most of the tasks and meeting could go over a lot smoother. Because of the success of these personal interventions I decided to hold them more continuously over the next couple of weeks where every week I wanted to set my colleagues aside for a short conversation about how everything has been going in their tasks and how they feel about it. This meant that the open setting could be maintained and very noticeable increased the psychological safety of my group member.

3.2 Result of the General Intervention

All of the personal interventions had been done and only the general intervention with all of my colleagues remained before the big event. Before I organized this intervention, I consulted with my personal coach on what the best approach would be. I wanted to do this intervention right, and create a setting in which everyone would feel comfortable because it would be difficult to do this over again another time. During one of our regular board meetings, I mentioned to everyone that I wanted to organize a short intervention about the event we have been organizing and we planned about an hour to do this intervention.

At this general intervention, I wanted to clarify to everyone what I had discussed with everyone at their personal interventions and share some of their uncertainties about the event we have been planning. Thankfully, everyone was very open and honest in this general intervention and some changes could even be made according to the input that had been given at the personal interventions. This allowed the whole team to be aware of each others fears and feelings about the organization. Additionally, as a tip from Celeste Wilderom during the peer feedback session, I took this opportunity at the general intervention to motivate everyone for the event we have been organizing and how great it would turn out. This was a great opportunity for me to practice my skills as a motivator.

3.3 Conclusion

One of the things I was struggling with during this project was the fact that it is very hard to monitor the actual progress and effect of my actions as a leader in this group. There are no continuous, repeated tasks that had to be completed which could be quantitatively analyzed to measure an impact on my own actions. Consequently, the only way to indicate any results from my actions would be to give an indication of my own experience of the difference after the interventions had taken place. In the introduction I mentioned that a lot of times, my colleagues were very busy with other tasks during their time in the day. So busy even, that sometimes tasks would be forgotten completely when the next meeting would take place and no progress was made whatsoever. Additionally, I really experienced a lack of information from my colleagues on the work that they were doing. Not only on tasks that had been completed successfully, but also on tasks that they did not have enough time to complete.

At the moment of writing this final part in my report the event has taken place on the 18th of June and I am happy to say that after the interventions had taken place and leading up to the event itself, I saw a lot of improvements with respect to the information that was given to me by my colleagues. Not only did they continuously inform me about tasks that had been completed, but there was more information being passed on about tasks that they were too busy to complete. The event that we organized was a great success and we were able to host a small festival with over 400 guests that visited and had a great time there. Everyone was positive about the organization of the event, which I believe is for a large part due to the time we took to function effectively as a team.

Figure 2: An image of the event we organized

4 Reflection on me as a Change Leader

To conclude my change project in this module, I have learned a lot of different aspects about effectively leading a group of people with a limited amount of time to do so. This project gave me a great opportunity to put the theory that I was able to find into practice and see the effects it can have on the efficiency of a team. Giving everyone some personal attention and developing a mutual goal to work towards as a team is so much more beneficial than setting out a plan myself and telling everyone they should comply. This already improved the motivation of my team members so much that they were willing to do as much as possible to make this a memorable event.

I want to mention something about my personal change in this project as well. When I started having conversations with my personal coach, Niels Jansen, about what I wanted to improve I was very uncertain at first. He was able to help me a lot in defining different aspects of what I wanted to improve about my own leadership style. It really helped me visualize how I wanted to be seen as a leader and how I wanted others to perceive me as their leader in a project. I was able to keep this vision in mind when holding all of the different interventions which helped me achieve the positive results of this change project.

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“Gaming Skills in Real Life” Coaching Project

An Honours project

- By -

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Abstract. As a student I have been bad at school and played too many video games which made me feel bad in general. Once I started acting and University however, I had other purposes in my life as well which gave me confidence and made me enjoy playing video games as well. This has motivated me for my final project for the Honours program of the Processes of Change track at the University of Twente. In this project, I will individually coach a person, including three meetings. In the first meeting, I show the participant which cognitive skills he acquired through gaming and based on a personal development plan how he can utilize this to reach his goal of becoming a better student. In the second meeting, I show my participant what motivates people to play video games and also himself and how he can use this knowledge in order to motivate himself for studying. These two meetings are further accompanied with a WhatsApp coaching where the participant gave an indication how well these exercises worked out. And in the last meeting, it was tried to increase psychological capital with micro-interventions for my participants to enhance his self-development capacities. Resulting, the first two meetings helped my participant to gain insights into himself and his (qualitative and quantitative) responses were positive. However, the study failed to enhance and even decreased psychological capital as measured with a pre-post-test with the 24 item Psychological Capital Questionnaire. The implication of this is that the gaming-related exercises worked out, however the study was unsuccessful at increasing psychological capital, which may have been to the rushed preparation of the last meeting. When asking my client for feedback, the major point of criticism was that I should use less PowerPoint slides with theoretical frameworks, but instead provide a summary of them after each meeting. Finally, what I learned is that I should not get distracted with other interesting ideas when I am already working on a project, but keep them in mind for later. Further, I should always keep the time in mind and try to follow my set time-plan as closely as possible.

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1 Background

Have you ever felt miserable because you were gaming? Do you feel like gaming is often interfering with your studies? Have you ever wanted to start a new hobby besides gaming but just did not do it?

I am Simon, a German honours student at the University of Twente. I study Psychology, and I would say I am quite good at it. But this was not always that way. Back in my high-school days I was one of the worst students in my classes, and I even had to re-take a whole year. I barely graduated from high school. That was due to an unhealthy relationship with my Computer because it was so extreme at some point that I played about 10 hours every day. I was aware of this and also felt bad about it, but I did not feel like stopping. During the year I have re-taken I have met great friends, and one of them opened up and encouraged me a lot to get active in a new area of my life. This area is theatre and I am grateful for the self-confidence, as well as communication and presentation skills I have acquired through this.

With my newly gained confidence and sense of worth, I noticed an amazing effect: Although I did play Video Games less often, at the same time I started getting better at, feeling less guilt about it, and actually getting better at Video Games. Next, starting my studies, I thought to myself: “Fuck it, I will try to just give it all I have and do not play any Games in the first module. I can do this!” What I noticed during that time is that I could concentrate for a long time a day and could connect dots very well. I suspect this to be because of my ability to concentrate a long time during the day since I literally played up to 8 hours without taking a break (except for the small breaks between Finishing a Game and waiting for Champ Select in League of Legends for example). And finally, I did it and soon became one of the best in my studies and was able to go into the honours program. Now, I am entirely satisfied with my life, and I am not basing my self-confidence only on the grades I have achieved, but a lot of small and bigger achievements, like the friends I gained, the skills I acquired, the plays I acted in and so on. And when I want to cool off, or have a challenge I play some video games and feel amazing at it.

By now you might be thinking “Who is this dude and why does he tell me all of this?” Well, I am just a dude who just wants to pass this major change in his own life because I feel grateful for this and want others to experience this as well. Now I do not want to dictate to you what you will do because what theatre was to me could perhaps be playing the Trumpet, Chess, or becoming better at your studies themselves to you. However, it is important to find multiple area in one’s life as a foundation of your self-worth and sense of life.

I decided that this would be an appropriate project for my final module in the honours track “Processes of Change”, since it is essentially a change I want to make. The main problem is that the scope is very limited in terms of time, and therefore I can only conduct three meetings. I will make the best out of each one though. But to expand the time, I will use an individual coaching through chat. My payment is just with getting an official honours degree and potential gratitude of everyone who wants to participate (which is a legit form of payment in my opinion because it is proven by research that this contributes to positive Mental Health!)

2 Introduction

The described background story shows my motivation to be involved with this project. But this motivation is not only based on my personal interests, but there is also a need to address this problem in general. For example, Liu and Peng (2009) for example established a positive relationship between hours of gaming and personal life problems. Also, in general gaming can improve and train cognitive skills, however these skills will be lost and even turn into deficits once a video game dependency sets in (Yuan et al., 2013). My target group for the project have therefore be "*Students who barely made or almost failed their past module(s) due to gaming too much, but who desire to make a change in their behaviour"* as an indication of that there really is a problem for the students. However, the target group should not show signs of an addiction yet because I do not have the competence to deal with addictions. And what is of importance is that the students already have the desire to change something, because evoking the desire to change can be difficult and would exceed the time scope (one module) of this course.

Therefore, my idea for the final module of the Processes of Change track of the honours program, is that I want to enable Gamers to become active in a (new) part of life where they want to be active in. Self-development is important in achieving this since this essentially would be the process involved because the participants are not forced to do what they want to do, but want to do it for themselves. A framework fitting of this would be Psychological Capital (PsyCap) since it has shown to improve the self-development capabilities of students (Luthans et al., 2006). Accompanying this, I want to give them awareness about the skills they have acquired through gaming and how to utilize them. Research has already established that there is a multitude of cognitive skills which can be acquired through gaming (Nuyens et al., 2019), which shows that it is possible to train that. In order to sustain this change after the coaching finally, I will also assess which ways are used in video games to motivate players to play more. All these themes of my project will be integrated into a coaching framework. In the following sections, these theoretical frameworks and how they could be utilized in this project will be discussed. And at the end, research questions will be posed in order to assess the success of this intervention.

2.1 Psychological Capital

As I mentioned in my background for this project, I have felt rather purposeless and like my life did not have much of a meaning. But when I started theatre, I found immense joy in this and felt both better about my life as well as gaming afterwards. I want to give the experience of doing something one had always wanted to do, and optimally enjoying the experience and finding joy in it to other gamers as well.

In order to achieve this, I will utilize research of the concept of Psychological capital, which is important for unleashing someone's potential (Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Because PsyCap is conceptualized as state-like and susceptible to development, it is changeable by interventions which focus on this concept (Demerouti et al., 2011; Luthans, Luthans, & Jensen, 2012), which justifies the inclusion of exercises to improve this in this intervention. Further, increased PsyCap has shown to be related with lower cholesterol levels (Luthans et al., 2013) and optimism particularly seems to be associated with higher responses to stress in their immune system (Cohen et al., 1999). More specifically, PsyCap as a framework has already been useful in increasing engagement in students with a high media use (Noviati, 2018). This purpose is very similar to what I want to achieve with this project, which is more engagement of students particularly involved with the medium of video games. PsyCap also is capable of improving positive mental health in students (Selvaraj, 2018), which is important for them to not only enjoy their life more, but in turn also gaming. PsyCap is characterized by high self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience (Newman, Ucbasaran, Zhu & Hirst, 2014). Having a psychological capital helps to develop a person's potential as mentioned and can therefore help people to improve their situation, and I also think it will enable them to pursue the dreams they want to follow.

Self-efficacy is based on a person's confidence to approach task and their ability to ulilize their motivation and cognitive resources to achieve higher levels of performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). When individuals are high in self-efficacy, they feel like they control outcomes of their actions better and can succeed in tasks they want to pursue (Bandura, 1997). In these ways, increasing self-efficacy in my participants will enable these students to believe more in their own capabilities and feel like they can tackle the challenges I want to confront them with. Self-efficacy can be improved by setting goals, modeling success (showing how to be successful) and giving feedback (Luthans et al., 2006).

Next, optimism refers to a positive expectancy of outcomes of certain actions, which motivates the optimistic persons more than others to find motivation for pursuing their goal (Seligmann, 1998). In this way, fostering an optimistic mindset in students could provide them with a powerful source of motivation by feeling like the outcomes of their actions are positive (which can never be known for certain before). In order to bring this change, one can use self-efficacy and hope exercises so the person feels capable of doing something and feels like the outcomes of an action will be good (Luthans et al., 2006). Further, facilitating this process of developing optimism, one can engage in optimistic self-talks, meaning that the person talks good to him/herself in order to boost positive expectations (Luthans et al., 2006).

Hope is composed of three main components. First, "agency" refers to the energy one can use in order to work towards a goal (Snyder et al., 1996). This is heightened when a person is hopeful, so this person would be better able to work towards a goal. Second, what is also increased with hope is a concept called "pathways", which refers to the means which a person can find by which a goal is accomplished (Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008). And lastly, goals are what the person is actually working towards (Snyder, 2000). In order to foster both agency and pathways, one first needs to define a goal, and then can brainstorm what the person is motivated on doing to acquire the goal and also which different pathways are available to reach the goal (Luthans et al., 2006). After this, one can also look at obstacles which might be in the way of a pathway, and also try to think of ways how to overcome these (Luthans et al., 2006). In these ways, I can increase the energy the students have available for taking action in what they want to accomplish, which is different from the motivation mentioned before.

Lastly, resilience is a characteristic which allows people to come back from hard times and aids in dealing with uncertainty, risk of failure and becoming more flexible with ever increasing, stressful demands (Masten & Reed, 2002; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). This will increase students' ability to pursue the goal they set themselves despite set-backs and failures, and also will increase their capabilities to engage in the area they want to become better at despite being anxious of participating. A way this can be trained is by thinking about a situation in which one may feel unmotivated to work towards the goal. Then one can think about what is in their control in this situation as well as assets of that situation and which the person can enhance and risks which one can avoid (Luthans et al., 2006).

Based on PsyCap as a whole concept, the study of Ghosh et al. (2019) identifies three ways which I can integrate in the project in order to increase PsyCap in a mentoring process. Now I do engage in coaching, and not in mentoring which is usually more long-term process, but I will still try to apply these principles in this project. First, "shadowing" is an activity which can be used by participants in order to make them apprehense their goal and feel more capable of working towards a goal. Shadowing means that a person follows their mentors to meetings, gatherings and such to see what the person has to do and if it would be suitable for the person engaging in shadowing as well. Now this could be used by encouraging participants in the coaching experience to shadow another person who is already in the position they want to be at. For example, if they would want to go breakdancing, they could go to a breakdance lesson and observe the people who already do breakdancing, and perhaps even participate in the lesson a bit to get an apprehension if this is enjoyable for them or they feel like they can do it. A second theme to increase PsyCap is to create an atmosphere of mutual communication and respect. The first meeting between client(s) and coach will be most crucial in establishing this relationship which will continue to exist throughout the sessions most probably. And third, the theme of facilitative learning is important to implement in my coaching sessions. Facilitative learning essentially means that I will not tell participants what they should do, but rather let them come up with their own plans and ideas, but I can facilitate their process of achieving these goals and help them with implementing their ideas.

In order to effectively facilitate PsyCap, I will need to keep these aspects in mind and can implement the mentioned exercises to increase hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism. In one meeting, participants could be informed about the concept of PsyCap and engage in these exercises. Special focus is laid on the exercise of shadowing which could be implemented outside of regular coaching sessions.

2.2 Gaming skills

As I mentioned, in my high school years I was a Gamer who played too long each day. I do think that being a gamer before has given me a very valuable skillset though which I could then utilize in University. More specifically: The reason why I was able to learn for so much time in the first place was because due to gaming I have already been used to concentrating over a long time. And indeed, this is confirmed by research, which supports the idea that video gaming can increase sustained attention among others (Bavelier et al., 2012a). In general, top-down attention, meaning the "internal guidance of attention based on prior knowledge, willful plans and current goals" seems to be trained by video gaming (Cain & Mitroff, 2011; Chisholm & Kingstone, 2012). I have utilized this general gaming skill by for example looking at assessment criteria for a test and then based on these directing my attention very specifically for the relevant cues in the material that has to be studied. Nuyens et al.'s (2019) systematic review shows that top-down attention is just one skill among a multitude of skills which are acquired through gaming (Nuyens et al., 2019), and not all will be mentioned here.

Further, the cognitive skills gained through gaming can be split up into general skills acquired throughout all games, like top-down processing, but also genre-dependent skills which are only trained by specific types of video games. For these individual skills, I will use my own gaming-background as an example, but of course there are other skills that can be utilized for very different gamers like First Person Shooter (FPS) players. I used to play a lot of "League of Legends", which is classified as a Real Time Strategy (RTS) game. These types of games have been proposed to increase reaction time (Miyake et al., 2000), which is a skill I utilize in Theatre a lot since I need to react to other actors and actresses rather quickly. Further, so-called multiple-object tracking (MOT) is improved by playing more RTS games (Trick, Jaspers-Fayer & Sethi, 2005). This means that I, in theory, should be better able to keep multiple objects that can change as well in mind at the same time. I am not sure if I am better able to keep changing stimuli in mind, although I can do this quite well while playing video games. But I can definitely keep a lot of data in mind at the same time when I need to input these in a matrix or such for example. And at last, cognitive flexibility has been shown to be improved more for RTS players such as myself (Dobrowolski et al. 2015).

An individual skill which differs among video gamers as well is also cognitive flexibility. For gamers who played video games before the age of 12, cognitive flexibility is more improved than for other gamers, and is a good predictor for this skill (Hartanto et al., 2016). I see this reflected in myself since I am quite good at switching from one task to another, then making a break and being able to come back from that break and being immersed in the task again. There is a diverse background of research which shows these differences, but some genres (namely RTS and FPS games) are better researched than others.

I want to connect this aspect of recognizing and utilizing skills due to gaming (but also strengths they already possess) to the first goal of enabling the participants to take action in a (new) field of their life. Therefore, I will coach the participants individually how they can utilize their unique skillset, based on individual and general gaming skills in what they want to achieve in this project. However, it is important to keep in mind that not every skill can be used in every context. One meeting will be used for this, and since the utilization of gaming skills makes this project special, it should be the introductory meeting. Also, to be better able to practice these skills in another context.

2.3 Motivation and reinforcement in gaming

Further, I will research more about reinforcements in video game environments and especially how to connect them to other life areas in order to not only introduce a change, but also make it last for a longer time. A good reinforcement environment is important in maintaining a habit, and in the case of gaming, people have this environment in the games so they are reinforced constantly for fulfilling quests, or gaining points, et cetera. So, I want to help them extend it to the real world as well. And what is a very real phenomenon a lot of students seem to struggle with is procrastination. I will also try to reduce this type of behaviour.

Procrastination is defined as "delaying responsibilities, decisions, or tasks that need to be done" (Haycock, McCarthy & Skay, 1998). Based on an integrative review on procrastination by Steel (2007), four predictors of procrastinating behaviour emerged which are examined in the current study as well. The first is task delay. Based on the temporal motivation theory (TMT), motivation decreases the further the outcome of a task is delayed (Steel & König, 2006). Now when goals are closer in temporal proximity though, one would be more motivated to work towards that goal and less prone to procrastination because one could not think "I still have so much time". For this, breaking down a big goal which may be delayed in the future into smaller, temporally more proximal goals could help because achieving these closer goals could provide gratification and enhance motivation. Second, task aversiveness is examined. When a task is not interesting, one will be less motivated to work towards it and therefore be more likely to engage in procrastination (Steel, 2007). However, if one tries to artificially enhance the interest of the task at hand, it is possible to increase motivation for aversive tasks in this way (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Another way to do this is by reframing tasks so they are personally more relevant, because once something becomes personally relevant, it is more important and we are more motivated to work for it (Green-Demers et al., 1998). Next, when a person is impulsive, it is harder to resist temptations like procrastination behaviour (Steel, 2007). It is possible however to train a cognitive capability which inhibits temptations called "self-control" like a muscle (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). One example how self-control capacity can be built would be by training one's own posture, which is also a healthy thing to do (Muraven, Baumeister & Tice, 1999). And lastly, self-efficacy has also shown to reduce procrastination (Steel, 2007), but this concept will be covered more under the framework of PsyCap.

Here, as for the gaming skills mentioned before, some general approaches towards motivation in games can be derived, but what matters is what an individual feels like motivates them to play video games. One theory that conveys factors which work towards video game enjoyment to play is the Pervasive GameFlow (PGF) model, and it has been proposed to be a framework to make player experience and enjoyment more understandable (Jegers, 2009). This framework compromises eight factors which are important for player enjoyment: concentration, challenge, player skills, control, clear goals, feedback, immersion, and social interaction (Jegers, 2009). The three most important elements emerging from this study are: Concentration in the sense that players should be able to concentrate on the games and that the games themselves should require concentration. Concentration could be utilized by providing skills for concentration and designing the tasks they want to achieve in a way so they require concentration. Next, challenge is important for motivation in games, which means that a video game should provide the right amount of stimulation for the player. This can be directly translated to the tasks the participants in this study want to tackle, since they should be able to achieve their goals but do not feel like it was too easy or feel overwhelmed with the task. And lastly, immersion is a driving force of making players involved with video games. If there are ways in which people can become immersed in the world of the (new) area of life they want to be engaged in, this would provide a huge benefit for them.

Other motivating factors are that players want to engage socially, escape into another world, compete with other players, cope with difficulties in their life, develop skills (which would be preferable for the purposes of this study), fantasize, and recreate experiences (Demetrovics et al., 2011).

A third framework which is noteworthy to mention is one which assesses game flow in a context of neural validation (Palaus et al., 2017). Based on this, sustained attention, balance between skill and difficulty, clear goals and control over the activity are factors which create a flow-like state in video gamers. Perhaps, these principles can be used to train participants how they can evoke the state of flow for the activities they want to engage in to fulfill their goal. Further, the study warns that gamers should not be bored, which would demotivate them. Instead, one can engage in planning activities for future actions to stimulate oneself during these times (Palaus et al., 2017).

In this project, these motivating or engaging factors will be used for each participant individually in order to make the goal they want to pursue more appealing. Using principles of gaming and how to make something more interactive has been shown to improve student motivation in the studying context (Richter, Raban & Rafaeli, 2015). For using these principles in this project though, there will be no one way to do this since participants might come up with different goals. Therefore, this will be a rather creative process. It could be good to let students choose themselves what they like in games. All in all, for constructing this motivation environment one meeting will also be used, which makes a total of three meetings for each of the frameworks explained.

2.4 Coaching

Finally, in order to be able to increase PsyCap, to utilize gaming skills, to create a reinforcement environment and at last reach (or at least come closer to) their ultimate goal, effective coaching is needed. Three aspects of coaching will be included in the project. Using a personal development plan (PDP), using online chat coaching and finally general characteristics of good and bad coaching.

Using a personal development plan has been shown to work very well or goal oriented-behaviour, but only for the goal at stake, since such a plan does not motivate further use of it (Beausaert et al., 2013). For the personal development plan, essentially the client should write down what s/he wants to accomplish (goal) and how s/he wants to achieve this. To stay in the framework of this project, it should be implemented into this plan, how gaming skills can be utilized in order to achieve these goals. Further, in order to derive a measurement criterion, one should also ask the clients when a success is achieved, and what would motivate one to achieve goals, which scratches the surface of the motivation environments I described.

Next, coaching continually and giving continual feedback is very important in any coaching project (Etkina et al., 2010). This can be achieved with online chat coaching, which can be used successfully as a complementary method to normal coaching during the scheduled meetings (Nilsson & Lodestad, 2014). Online coaching has been successful for self-development and can encourage maximum participation by motivating the client consistently and providing a convenient base for coaching (Noonan, 2007). A framework used for this online coaching style is one Dr. Greif lectured us about in one of our honours classes. Basically, his so-called WhatsApp coaching approach (obviously conducted in WhatsApp) compromises five steps to provide for effective coaching:

1. Goal Clarification:
   Reflect motivation and clarify the goals

2. Planning and Contrasting:
   Overcome barriers, resources, transfer and implementation in planning
3. Implementation Intention:
   Formulate implementation intention
4. Accompany Implementation (and starting again after that):
   Result-oriented reflection and solution of the implementation problems - Remotivation
5. Fading out (after goals are reached): Implementation competencies and realistic self-efficacy

The first three steps will be included in the personal development plan, in order to set a goal and means on how to achieve it based on the context of this project about gaming skills and game reinforcements. In order to accompany implementation, I will ask clients to use the exercises and skills they learned about outside of the ordinary coaching sessions. Then the clients should talk about their experience through WhatsApp messages. For each message, Dr. Greif said, that it is useful to provide a number of how well the client felt like s/he achieved what s/he wanted to achieve, which will give a clear, measurable criterion to assess. These messages will be answered with a very timely response by me in order to provide them with feedback. Giving immediate feedback is very important to motivate participants, which can be easily provided via WhatsApp (Denton et al., 2008). There are more considerations needed to keep in mind when giving feedback. For example, feedback should not be too abstract, but provided "specific, simple, descriptive and focused on the task" (Fluckiger et al., 2010). Also, in general the structure of feedback should include what the client did well, and what their misconceptions might be accompanied by a follow-up with what they would need in order to further progress in achieving their goal (Denton et al., 2008).

Last, in general a good coach is characterized by his listening skills. When he is capable of listening well to his clients, he can facilitate and engage in the coaching process with more sophistication (Mollaret & Claudepierre, 2016). Further, complete acceptance of the client is needed and once this is established, it is necessary to find just the right amount of stimulation for the client to provide a challenge for them they can overcome (Cranmer, Brann & Weber, 2018). Since it is quite hard to find out what an appropriate amount of stimulation is for each client, I will have to ask the client him/herself for their input on this matter. Further, some factors have been identified which reduce coaching effectiveness (Carter et al., 2017). To overcome them, I once again need to build rapport with my client and be understanding of them which will counteract difficulties that could arise in the client-coach relationship. Also, I need to convey a sense of professionalism and provide the client with a welcoming atmosphere (for example by giving them coffee). And according to Dr. Greif, coherence in my frameworks and way of working is also needed in order to not confuse the clients with the information I provide them with. Dr. Greif also mentioned that training phases should not be too long so clients do not get bored, and should also not be too stressful, but once again provide an optimal amount of stimulation.

2.5 Research questions and hypotheses

Based on the three conceptual frameworks, each being addressed in one meeting each, three research questions and corresponding hypotheses can be derived, all contributing towards reaching the final goal of taking action in a (new) field of the client's life:

First, I try to accumulate Psychological capital by providing participants with exercises to increase their PsyCap. This will improve their goal-oriented actions and facilitate their action towards their goal. Hence, is the program able to increase psychological capital of the participants?

Hypothesis 1: *The program increases perceived psychological capital of the participants*

Second, gamers are educated about their own potential cognitive skillset acquired through gaming. To assess if this has been done successfully, one could ask if the program actually improves the utilization of these cognitive skills also used in gaming towards the goal the participants want to accomplish?

Hypothesis 2: *The program improves utilization of the participants gaming skills*

Third and last, in order to sustain the change even after my project, it is necessary for my participants to be motivated to do this. I propose that implementing reinforcers and engaging factors used in video games can be applied to other context to motivate oneself to engage in these other tasks. Since this is not a longitudinal study however, I will not be able to assess this over a longer time. But still I could ask during the project, if the students are successful in reinforcing themselves by means of implementing the reinforcement environment?

Hypothesis 3: *The program enables the participants to reinforce/motivate themselves in achieving their goal*

3 Methods

3.1 Design

Originally, this study was designed by me to be a within-group coaching study with multiple participants each participating in the group meetings and receiving individual coaching through online chats as well. I wanted to use a pilot participant, to pilot test each meeting before actually implementing it for the group. However, complications have arisen. I wanted to gain access to my target group by asking board members of associations which are related to video gaming in a way (namely Blueshell and Fanaat at the University of Twente) to send their members a message (Appendix A) which also includes a link to a first questionnaire and a consent form I will talk about later. However, I was distracted by another idea I could use as a honours project and thought too much about this which resulted in me sending the mentioned message too late (one week before the first meeting). After conducting the first meeting with my pilot, the board answered my request positively, but then it was already too late for me. Now I will do the study as an individual coaching of one person and also refer to that throughout the rest of the module. What I learn from that is first, that I should focus on one idea and collect other ideas that come up which I could possibly implement later, and second, that I should plan everything timely.

Coming back to the design of this study though, the first hypothesis, if PsyCap is increased with the coaching will be assessed by a pre-post measurement with the psychological capital questionnaire mentioned later in the methods section.

The second hypothesis will be assessed with the quantitative and qualitative indicators which will be used in the WhatsApp coaching about how well one was able to contribute to the goal using their cognitive skills acquired by gaming.

And lastly, if the program was successful at letting participants construct their own motivation environment based on Game Theory, qualitative indicators derived from the WhatsApp "diary", meaning the comments the participants provide about this are used as an assessment. But also, once again the quantitative indicators will also be used.

3.2 Participant

As I mentioned now, this project has turned into an individual coaching. The participant I have been coaching is a 25 years old male person and studies mechanical engineering. For purpose of this report, this participant is referred to as Peter (name changed). He received informed consent about the study and that his data will be stored safely and anonymized in the report (see Appendix B). Especially in the coaching environment such an agreement on terms like these is important (Mollaret & Claudepierre, 2016). Further, Peter indicated that he plays about four to six hours each day which arguably can be a lot. Before participating in the first meeting, he mentioned that his goals are to become better in learning and completing tasks. And the games he plays are Kerbal Space Program (a simulation about building and letting rockets fly into orbit), Destiny 2 and Rainbow Six Siege (both First Person Shooter).

3.3 Materials

Personal development plan

The personal development plan which Peter has filled out has five areas. First, he should conceptualize his goal. Second, he should answer the openly interpretable question "Where are you now in relation to this goal? Third, Peter shall give an indication of two gaming skills for each goal he wants to focus on, which are based on his research-informed cognitive skillset he developed with gaming. Fourth, already going into motivating factors, the participant should give an indication about what would motivate him to achieve his goals. And lastly, to operationalize the goal more clearly for Peter, he shall indicate when he successfully reached his goals.

This plan laid the foundation of the WhatsApp coaching as well since his gaming skill utilization and construction of reinforcement environment should be related directly towards the goal he wanted to achieve which therefore needs some form of clarification at first and ways of achieving it, which is also in line with what Dr. Greif said in a lecture in the honours program.

Psychological capital questionnaire

The Psychological capital questionnaire has shown to have good reliability and validity in published literature according to the creators of the questionnaire (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007). Therefore, this questionnaire was used to assess overall PsyCap. The questionnaire provides 24 items, out of which three are reverse scored. Example questions are: "I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution." or "Right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work.". The instructions given to the participants as used in the original questionnaire are: "*Below are statements that describe how you may think about right now. Use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.*" (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007). Adapted to fit this study, I wrote the instructions that since my participant is a student, he should relate to questions which are originally work-related towards his studies. After this, the Questionnaire is provided which can be seen in its complete form in Appendix C. For each question, a six-type Likert scale was used, specifically with the categories "Strongly disagree", "Disagree", "Somewhat disagree", "Somewhat agree", "Agree", and "Strongly agree".

WhatsApp coaching & diary

For both the WhatsApp coaching and diary, the participant received following instructions through WhatsApp by me after the first introductory meeting about gaming skills: "Before the next meeting, I would like you to send me at least 4 WhatsApp messages. In each message, you write about how you implemented what we found out in the last meeting, so what you utilize of your self-development plan. So, you can tell a short story about it and indicate how it went, what you felt was good and what can be improved. And at the end of the message you give a number from 0-10, about how well you feel like this contributed to reaching your goal. 0 is not at all, 10 is totally a lot." After the first meeting, about gaming skills and how to utilize them, these instructions related to how well the participant implemented his insights into using his skills to become better at learning. After the second meeting, these indicators were about reinforcement in video gaming.

3.4 Procedure

First meeting

Before the first meeting, the document with my personal background for conducting this study in the first place (Appendix A) has been sent to my participant. There, a link is sent to the participant to a consent form and the pre-measurement PsyCap questionnaire as well as additional questions. Qualtrics was the website of choice for me to present and obtain data about Peter. Specifically, besides asking for agreement of the consent form, I asked about name, age, study, hours of playing games, games played (ranked after which is more often played), what the person likes in computer games, and what he wants to become better at and finally the PsyCap questionnaire. This has been filled out and used as a basis for the first meeting.

Now, in the first meeting, I started by introducing myself and the project. The slides I used during this meeting can be seen in Appendix D1. I stated the problem this project wants to address about video gaming and that once one plays too many video games, that person can feel guilty about it. Then I introduced the purpose of this coaching intervention, to help the student utilize his gaming skills to become better in an area of life so the person will feel more purpose and also become more satisfied with gaming. I stated that the study consists of three components (Gaming skills, motivation in gaming and psychological capital) with one meeting addressing each.

Next, I first introduced my background story (which I also mentioned in the background section of this report). I then gave an example of the video game I play a lot and which cognitive skills I may have acquired through this. Further, I mentioned ways in which I have utilized these skills in the past. Then I mentioned that researchers stated that these cognitive skills are actually generalizable to the extend they share common cognitive demands with the task of concern (Oei & Patterson, 2014). I also said that there are many cognitive skills emphasized in gaming and that there are actual brain-changes in gamers (Nuyens et al., 2019; Palaus et al., 2017). Finally, I listed and referred to Peters theoretically proposed skillset based on the games he plays. This was individually deduced from research based on general cognitive gaming skills and specific skills based on genres he plays (First person shooter and a flight and construction simulation).

Lastly, I introduced the idea of a personal development plan (PDP) and provided the research base that these actually help for goal-oriented behaviour. For this, my participant had to focus on two skills which he has got according to gaming research, and how he wants to utilize them for becoming better at what he wants to become better at. He was provided with a PDP to fill out.

At the end of the presentation, I introduced WhatsApp coaching, diary and shadowing. Then I gave instructions to my participant that he should try to do the shadowing until next meeting. Also, throughout the week until the second meeting, Peter should try to apply his PDP and give me four indications of how it went (quantitative from 0-10, and qualitative statements). And lastly, we recapped shortly what we learned throughout this meeting and which of the meetings my client wants to have next. He chose the one about motivational factors in gaming.

After the meeting, I sent my client the specific instructions about the WhatsApp coaching again and encouraged him to send me messages. Also, I would give him feedback if he sent me a message.

Second meeting

In the second meeting, I presented the PowerPoint slides which can be viewed in Appendix D2. In this session, I first greeted my participant again and then asked for a recap of last session and a general comment about how the exercises went through the week. Then I introduced the topic of this session about motivation and reinforcement in video games, starting to get the participant into an emotionally aroused mood by showing a motivational video. I explained that I like watch these types of video when I want to motivate myself.

Next, I provided a theoretical framework about procrastination, what it is, giving a definition by Haycock, McCarthy and Skay (1998) and then describing the four predictors of procrastination (Steel, 2007). For each of these four predictors (except self-efficacy because this concept will be introduced in the meeting about psychological capital) I showed how they can be inhibited/increased to reduce procrastination and provided clear exercises the participant could do. I first started with "task delay" and explained the Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT) (Steel & König, 2006) and related this to procrastination and the exercise of breaking down goals to reduce procrastination. Next was the predictor "task aversiveness" for which interest enhancement can be used to reduce procrastination (Ryan & Deci, 2000) as well as reframing tasks more relevant (Green-Demers et al., 1998), and avoiding situations with low energy. These exercises were concretely explained to the participant then. After this, "impulsiveness" was explained as the last of the predictors and that it can be inhibited by exerting self-control, which is trainable (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

Following, the individual motivating factors were listed, meaning what motivates Peter to play video games as he indicated in the first questionnaire. For each of these motivating factors, I constructed an example exercise, which peter could do to become more motivated in working on his goal to become better at learning. I did the same then for gaming motivation factors which were identified by Demetrovics et al. (2011). Afterwards, I gave my participant a list of factors which create the feeling of flow in video games (Jegers, 2009; Palaus et al., 2017), but do not provide exercises how to apply these to a non-video game context.

At last, I presented a second personal development plan to my participant. In this one, Peter should choose two exercises against procrastination and either construct or use two of the example-exercises how game flow/motivation principles could be used for his goal. After this meeting, Peter was once again instructed and encouraged to send me four messages at least with a quantitative and qualitative indication about how he could implement and practice his personal development plan.

Third meeting

Meeting number three focused on fostering psychological capital with mini-interventions/exercises that could be done during the meeting. Presentation slides of this meeting can be seen in Appendix D3. First, I once again started by asking for an indication of how the implementation of the PDP went and summarized the last meeting. Then I talked about a mildly emotional story about how I set goals for myself in the past and still work towards them and how that fulfills me. Then I introduced the concept of psychological capital (Luthans & Youssef, 2004) and its (psychological) implications based on research. After this, I introduced the "HERO" acronym and the four components of PsyCap. For each of these concepts, I also mentioned a micro-intervention exercise which, based on research can increase each dimension of PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2006). Each of the exercises is applied into practice with the participant after explaining them then, but since the exercise outcomes are not important for the results section later in this report, these will not be included.

Next, I told my participant that I will send him all the material gathered throughout this project and that I hope he will work on his goal in the future with all this information as well. Finally, I gave him the post-measurement of the psychological capital questionnaire (Appendix C). And at last, before I wished my participant farewell, I asked him for feedback about me and the project in order to learn from this and personally develop.

3.5 Data Analysis

Pre-post measure of PsyCap

In order to measure whether PsyCap has increased in my participant, a simple comparison between the mean outcome of the questionnaire before and after the treatment (meaning the whole project) was calculated. It was expected, that after the last meeting of this project, the total score of the questionnaire would be higher.

WhatsApp coaching outcomes

For both the utilization of gaming skills as well as implementation of a constructed reinforcement environment, the WhatsApp coaching method was used to assess whether implementing the PDP was a success or not. Because the participant should give an indication of how well he could contribute to achieving his goal in a particular situation where he should try to use what he learned during the coaching, the progress of this indication was analyzed. This means that the change in the numbers (from 0-10) which indicate how well the participants' approach of using his skills went, was looked at. Therefore, by coaching the student, as an outcome, a pattern has been expected indicating a positive relation between the times the person is coached (through feedback after each WhatsApp message) and the score provided by the student. These quantitative measures were backed up further by using qualitative statements of the participant where he talks about his experience with the exercises, et cetera.

4 Results

4.1 Meeting 1 & Cognitive gaming skills

During the first meeting, my participant has filled out a Personal Development Plan which layed the foundation of what he wants to achieve in this study. In Table 1, the PDP of my participant can be seen, as well as the results of what we discussed how he can utilize the gaming skills he chose to achieve his goal(s).

Table 1.

Personal Development Plan 1 of Peter

Personal development plan
Goal
Get better at focused learning (2nd), get better at focused completion of tasks, get better at directing and sustaining attention (1st), stop self-distraction
Where are you now in relation to this goal?
1. If something does not interest me, my train of thought tends to focus in other directions 2. I cant really stay at a task of learning for longer periods of time (get distracted)
Utilizing gaming skills
1. a: Selective attention by active suppression of other distractors (Krishnang et al.) b: Cognitive flexibility (when attention slips,get back easily to task) 2. a: Selective attention by active suppression of other distractors (Krishnang et al.) b: Cognitive flexibility (when attention slips,get back easily to task)
What would motivate me to achieve the goals?
Small successes Thinking about the purpose of learning Immersion
It has been a success when:
1. I can direct attention at stuff that doesn't interest me 2. Being able to properly and attentively learn longer (one hour periods at a time)

First step:

1. Consciously attend to how you supress other distractors in games and then try to do this consciously in learning
2. Try to not feel bad about being distracted but let yourself be distracted, and consciously think: okay I let myself be distracted and that is okay since I can come back to my original task easily again

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For the WhatsApp coaching, my participant had somewhat disregarded my instructions, or perhaps I did not make them clear enough. Either way, he only sent me one indication about the progress of his goal based on the PDP which summarizes his experiences throughout the week. As a result of trying to follow these actions on the PDP, my participant wrote me:

"I've noticed that I became more aware of distractions a bit more, which in turn helps me stop getting distracted a bit better, so I'd say selective attention is kicking in. I'd say on a 5/10 or 6/10. Switching back to the task at hand also has become a bit easier now that I'm more aware of distraction."

Before, Peter told me, he had a real problem with concentrating and told me he had a number of 0/10 on this scale: *"Before, distractions kind of lured me in and made me forget about the task."*

4.2 Meeting 2 & Gaming motivators

In the second meeting, Peter filled out yet another a Personal Development Plan about exercises he can do to procrastinate less and to motivate himself more towards studying. Table 2 displays this PDP.

Table 2.

Personal Development Plan 2 of Peter

Personal development plan
Goal:
Getting better at learning (focused and sustained learning)
Exercises: *Choose 2 of the Exercises against procrastination*

1. Goal setting/task breakdown 2. Task reframing

Gaming Motivation/Flow: *Construct 2 Exercises how you could apply this theoretical background for your goal*

1. Creativity → Brain storming 2. Smooth gameplay → Searching good explanation videos (for information which was not well presented in lectures

Based on this PDP, Peter actually gave me four WhatsApp messages, but he collected them until the last meeting and sent them to me afterwards, so I could not give him proper coaching. These four messages are:

"Brainstorming works well for relieving mental energy and for getting your mind going. 8/10"

"Goal Setting helped breaking tasks and projects down into smaller bits, thus makes the task seem more manageable. 7/10"

"Task Reframing made me put boring tasks into a new light and see the sense behind them and the more interesting context of them. 8/10"

"Searching for explanation videos also is nice, because the audiovisual component and another view on the subject matter really helps with comprehension and learning. 8/10"

Overall, the quantitative measures Peter provided based on his experiences would compose a mean of 7.75.

4.3 Meeting 3 & PsyCap measurement

Before the first meeting and after the first meeting, the client filled out the psychological capital questionnaire (Appendix C). Before the first meeting, the total score on this questionnaire of my participant was -16 (M=-0.66). After the last meeting however the score on the same questionnaire resulted in -21 (M=-0.875). This shows a decrease of 5 points of a possible -72 in the negative range in PsyCap throughout the coaching based on the measurement of the psychological capital questionnaire.

4.4 Client feedback

During the very last meeting, I asked the client for an evaluation of me and the project. His response was:

“The meetings helped me get another perspective on my current struggles and provided some reasonable possible solutions while making me aware of my bad habits. I’d probably put less emphasis on the PowerPoint presentation though, since those were basically just notes that you read off of. I’d have those notes for yourself and maybe hand out a sheet with a summary for the “patient”.”

5 Discussion

5.1 Study outcomes

Summarizing the results, the first two meetings seemed to be successful in accomplishing their goal, while the coaching project overall was not increasing, but instead decreasing psychological capital. It is questionable however how well the results of the first meeting are an actual indication of quality of the program since my participant only send me one WhatsApp message contrary to the instructions. This criticism can be somewhat applied to the results of the Game flow and motivation WhatsApp coaching outcomes as well since Peter only sent me his results after the last meeting. Therefore, I could not provide direct feedback to him, which is one crucial aspect of engaging in coaching through chat though (Etkina et al., 2010). Peters qualitative responses made a stronger point though. First off, what we discussed during the first session, and the first PDP made Peter become especially more aware of the skill he acquired through gaming in theory and how he may practice to implement this. And awareness is the first step to change. He also indicated that he also practically has become better at using his “task switching” skill he acquired through gaming. And for the content of the second lesson and PDP, Peter made even further progress. He found that the exercises he could use indeed had the effect they were proposed to have and thus gave him more motivation to study. All of this means that Hypotheses two and three are somewhat supported.

The major downside of this study is that it was not possible in increasing PsyCap in my participant, and instead even decreased it which refutes Hypothesis one. Since this is a questionnaire administered to one person on two occasions however, this result may have been affected by a negative state in the participant. Indeed, he was in a haste during the last meeting and in a less calm environment than in the first two meetings. It was also the meeting I could prepare least for due to time pressure. These circumstances may have affected the results.

Further limitations of the study about coaching skills are that a coach should be independent from the environment of the coachee (Mollaret & Claudepierre, 2016). However, I have a personal relationship with my participant which may have altered our way of working and interacting. Next, it has been found to be important to define one’s concept of coaching and communicate this to the coaches (Mollaret & Claudepierre, 2016) which I have nor done. And further, Mollaret and Claudepierre (2016) indicate that a coach should be trained to be a coach before, however I have never learned such a skill and only had one Module to develop these capabilities. Lastly, doubt can be raised if I am interpreting and generalizing the cognitive gaming skills to freely to adapt them towards a situation, since they are studies just in very particular contexts.

5.2 Personal development

Since this project is part of the honours program module “Learning by doing”, I will also give an indication of my experience and what I gained and learned. First off, I gained self-efficacy myself since I worried about if I would be capable as a coach. But due to my proper theoretical preparation (at least for the first two meetings) and explaining these frameworks understandably to my participants, I could have some impact. It was a wonderful and very rewarding experience when my client told me that he actually gained something through my project. He also found this approach of using cognitive skills acquired through gaming very innovative. Therefore, I was not as bad as I thought in helping a person in self-development. Besides from my role as a coach, I also acquired more insights into my own skillset as a gamer and interesting knowledge about game theory which may be useful in my future studies.

I made two major experiences with my project which stuck in my head and helped me to develop myself. First, once I made all the research for my project, I actually had an idea for another project: An innovative noodle soup bar. Since I also like entrepreneurship and would like to someday start a business, I got stuck up in that idea making me research a lot about nutrition. However, after a talk with my supervisor, I decided that proceeding with this idea would probably not be a good idea since I already put my (and my supervisor’s) effort into the project. What I took away from this project is that innovative ideas can boost my energy quite a lot and the knowledge I took away from this “distraction” about healthy nutrition will always be relevant and worthwhile for my life. However, there is a time for innovative ideas and I should take a step back and rationally decide which course of action would make most sense than letting my emotional energy drag me into decisions I might regret. I can then still write these ideas down and if I feel like they are really worthwhile, I can pick up on them after having reached my next big goal I was working towards.

The second experience is related to the first one. Due to being too involved into another idea, I was behind my time plan then and had time pressure to catch up. However, I could not do that and was busy with my normal studies and activities of the associations I was in. This led me to send an invitation to participate in my program to my target group way too late so I ended up with only my “pilot participant” as a coachee. Therefore, I had to adapt the program to an individual coaching which required more flexibility, but also gave me more freedom. What I learned through this though is that I first, should not set goals which are too ambitious for me or the participant (I strongly assume that too much information was involved and too many exercises tried out to make a longer lasting change through these three meetings) and second, I should plan even more error into my time plans and distribute my time well across my hobbies, social life, normal studies and extra-curricular activities like honours.

Based on the feedback of my participant, I was able to make a change by providing insights for my coachee. However, improvement points are that I should use the PowerPoint presentations less since Peter felt like I did know and understood the theoretical frameworks, but with the slides, I just read the information on them. He told me that I should have had these notes for myself and hand out a summary to my participant then. My intention behind providing all the included information is that I wanted to be completely open about what we do in this project and therefore also mention the major theories of concern and how I want to work with my client. However, I do see the value of making these information optional to access for the client which can reduce the time spent in the meeting and make more space for further practicing the exercises, or doing them more thoroughly.

And lastly, I tried to be non-directive, which was difficult though for my client because he even told me at some point that he was not certain of what to do and my questions were a little bit too vague. Also, he would have liked clear action points to work with, but in the end liked what we both came up with. Here I noticed that although it is (and also for this client was) important to gain insights first without the coach giving a lot of direction, that at some point I have to take more initiative for this type of client.

All in all, I learned through this module that if I want to make a change, I should just do it and if it does not work out, or if I make mistakes, this is completely okay and I can learn from and/or adapt to them. But I feel more capable to make a positive change in someone's life which is incredibly rewarding for me.

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I want to thank my tutors during this honours program who all taught me valuable lessons even outside of the content (which was very interesting and educating). Tsjalle has taught me that creativity cannot be forced and I can dare to think about a topic I do not know much about. In fact, this might even provide a new and innovative perspective. Further, Tsjalle could spark my interest into economy (and a little bit into football as well). Wouter contributed a lot to my self-confidence by giving me the ability and confidence to be a leader (which was almost non-existent before). I gained a lot of insights about me as a leader and already applied them in my normal studies successfully. And I want to thank Desireé especially for supervising me during this last project, and her patience with me despite me just wanting to switch to a completely different project. Desireé also helped me in her modules in developing a skill of immense value which I always wanted to gain (which my project is also about): *Helping another person properly.* Doing so is harder than it may seem and provides a good challenge for me. However, once successful the immense joy and meaning I feel for myself, as well as the gratitude received from the other person are worth so much. I want to develop this, as well as the other mentioned capabilities further in my future career in order to make a change for myself, people around me, as well as organizations and society. Further, thanks to Helena and Jordan for providing me with mental support during stressful times, of which I had more than enough this module. I also want to thank everyone else who contributed into making this honours program possible. It was so much more than just a degree.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Invitation letter

"Gaming Skills in Real Life" Coaching

Background

Have you ever felt miserable because you were gaming? Do you feel like gaming is often interfering with your studies? Have you ever wanted to start a new hobby besides gaming but just did not do it?

I am Simon, a German honours student at the University of Twente. I study Psychology, and I would say I am quite good at it. But this was not always that way. Back in my high-school days I was one of the worst students in my classes, and I even had to re-take a whole year. I barely graduated from high school. That was due to an unhealthy relationship with my Computer because it was so extreme at some point that I played about 10 hours every day. I was aware of this and also felt bad about it, but I did not feel like stopping. During the year I have re-taken I have met great friends, and one of them opened up and encouraged me a lot to get active in a new area of my life. This area is theatre and I am grateful for the self-confidence, as well as communication and presentation skills I have acquired through this.

With my newly gained confidence and sense of worth, I noticed an amazing effect: Although I did play Video Games less often, at the same time I started getting better at, feeling less guilt about it, and actually getting better at Video Games. Next, starting my studies, I thought to myself: “Fuck it, I will try to just give it all I have and do not play any Games in the first module. I can do this!” What I noticed during that time is that I could concentrate for a long time a day and could connect dots very well. I suspect this to be because of my ability to concentrate a long time during the day since I literally played up to 8 hours without taking a break (except for the small breaks between Finishing a Game and waiting for Champ Select in League of Legends for example). And finally, I did it and soon became one of the best in my studies and was able to go into the honours program. Now, I am entirely satisfied with my life, and I am not basing my self-confidence only on the grades I have achieved, but a lot of small and bigger achievements, like the friends I gained, the skills I acquired, the plays I acted in and so on. And when I want to cool off, or have a challenge I play some video games and feel amazing at it.

By now you might be thinking “Who is this dude and why does he tell me all of this?” Well, I am just a dude who just wants to pass this major change in his own life because I feel grateful for this and want others to experience this as well. Now I do not want to dictate to you what you will do because what theatre was to me could perhaps be playing the Trumpet, Chess, or becoming better at your studies themselves to you. However, it is important to find multiple area in one’s life as a foundation of your self-worth and sense of life.

I decided that this would be an appropriate project for my final module in the honours track “Processes of Change”, since it is essentially a change I want to make. The main problem is that the scope is very limited in terms of time, and therefore I can only conduct three meetings. I will make the best out of each one though. But to expand the time, I will use an individual coaching through chat. My payment is just with getting an official honours degree and potential gratitude of everyone who wants to participate (which is a legit form of payment in my opinion because it is proven by research that this contributes to positive Mental Health!)

The project will consist of four parts, all to fulfill your own personal goal in the scope of becoming better or active in an area of your life besides gaming:

1. Utilizing gaming skills outside of gaming
    - I show you general and genre-based skills that are trained through video-games based on scientific evidence
    - You create your own skill profile based on the games you play, and what you feel like you can do well
    - You use these skills in the area of life which you want to tackle and give me feedback, then I can give you feedback
2. Exercises to increase Psychological Capital
    - I introduce you into the concept of HERO and PsyCap
    - We practice easy exercises to facilitate PsyCap
    - You do "shadowing" with a person who is in the field where you want to be in
    - We do pre- and post-measurements of your PsyCap
3. Creating your gaming-based motivation environment
    - I introduce you to Game Theories like the Game Flow model
    - I show you how I developed my Game environment
    - We construct your own motivation environment
    - You apply this motivation environment to yourself
4. Individual WhatsApp Coaching and Diary
    - You write information which you are willing to disclose to me about the exercises you individually do to achieve your goal
    - You give a numeric indication every three days how much you feel you contributed during these days to the goals
    - You write whatever you feel you want to give me as input related to this project
    - I motivate you and give feedback about what went well and what you can improve
    - I can assist you with any psychological questions you might have to the best of my ability

The 3 meetings will start from the 12th of June onwards and we will meet every following Wednesday somewhere between 14-19 o'clock for two hours, when it fits best for the participants. The location will be sent to each of you by e-mail at least 2 days in advance, but it will always be somewhere on Campus. Each meeting will have one of the topics described above as a theme.

Since I am quite busy with my normal studies and hobbies though, I think I will only be able to fit 4-7 people into the program.

If you feel like this is appealing to you and you want to give it a shot, I owe you my gratitude. In that case, please fill out the following link (with consent form, but you can also choose to fill it out during the first meeting):

https://utwentebs.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6mKdsH6F5hyKfSB

And if you do not feel like participating, but perhaps you know a friend of yours who might be interested, please send him or her this document you are reading right now.

Thank you for your attention :)

Appendix B – consent form

The Project “Gaming Skills in Real Life” is about fostering Psychological Capital to take more action to improve one’s life and utilizing cognitive capabilities acquired through gaming in Gamers to take action in an area of life of the participants choice. The creation of one’s own motivation environment based on game theory has its purpose in sustaining this change. This project is carried out for the final module of the Bachelor’s Processes of Change track.
All the data that are acquired in this project will be handled confidentially and not be given to any third parties. The data will be included in the report for the purpose of showing if the project has helped or not. All data will be anonymized in the report.
If you participate, you can attend the three meetings which will each take approximately one to two hours. Note that you can, at any given point, withdraw from this project. Then your data will not be included in the report as well.
If you have any concerns or questions, you can write an e-mail to: s.e.nagel@student.utwente.nl

Appendix C – Psychological Capital Questionnaire

Below are statements that describe how you may think about right now. Use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution.						
2. I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management						
3. I feel confident contributing to discussions about the company's strategy.						
4. I feel confident helping to set targets/goals in my work area.						
5. I feel confident contacting people outside the company (e.g., suppliers, customers) to discuss problems.						
6. I feel confident presenting information to a group of colleagues.						
7. If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it.						

8. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals.						
9. There are lots of ways around any problem.						
10. Right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work.						
11. I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals.						
12. At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself.						
13. When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on. (R)						
14. I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work.						
15. I can be “on my own,” so to speak, at work if I have to.						
16. I usually take stressful things at work in stride.						
17. I can get through difficult times at work because I’ve experienced difficulty before.						
18. I feel I can handle many things at a time at this job.						
19. When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best.						

20. If something can go wrong for me work-wise, it will. (R)						
21. I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job.						
22. I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work.						
23. In this job, things never work out the way I want them to. (R)						
24. I approach this job as if "every cloud has a silver lining."						

Creation of a 2-days kick-off workshop for culture change

Internship Honours 2019

Quentin Cheret

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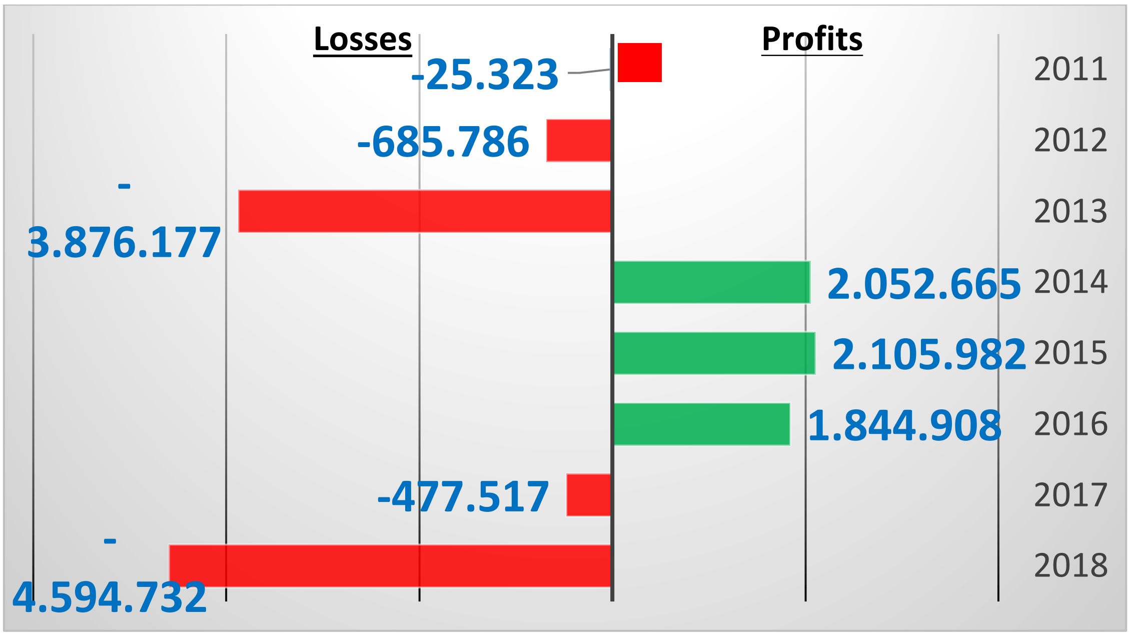
The context

HRD Antwerp nv is a company established in 2006 in Antwerp, Belgium. In the meantime, the company has subsidiaries in 8 countries worldwide (outside Europe), counts 250 employees and realises €20 million per year turnover.

The company's playground is the diamond sector where it is present within the whole supply chain, from rough diamonds until final jewelleries through three activities:

- The certification and classification of diamonds (based on the 4C's parameters)
- The education of basic diamond theory until jewellery design
- The development and commercialisation of equipment used in the diamond supply chain (from polishing of diamonds until their analysis)

Over the past 10 years, the company suffered from a very unstable strategy resulting in poor financial results that generated a €9,7 Million net loss from 2008 on.



On top of that, the sector is facing today a "tsunami": the arrival of laboratory-grown diamonds. The technology to build diamond in laboratory is existing already for a long time (earliest one being James Ballantyne Hannay[6]in 1879, but mainly made popular by General Electric in 1941). Today, the technology is mature enough to grow diamonds big enough and from a good enough quality to be used as a Gem stone, and then compete with natural ones.

Recently, the single shareholder Antwerp World Diamond Centre foundation – a foundation with as objective to promote and develop the diamond business in Antwerp) decided to change the way the company should be managed with as objective to turn it into a sustainable profit making company.

In order to achieve this profound modification, the board of directors of HRD Antwerp has been dismissed and a new temporary “crisis management board” has been put in place. The first decision the board took was to look for external expertise in changing a company. This is how the company URfuture came in the picture and has been appointed to lead this transformation.

URfuture is a consulting company with as core competency:

- the strategic review and definition of a company,
- the creation of recommendations and action plan to translate strategy in actions
- the culture change and people coaching

HRD Antwerp decided to partner with URfuture to analyse the current situation, define recommendation, and implement them. In first quarter of 2019, a set of recommendations has been presented to the board of directors and decisions to implement them has been taken. The set of recommendations comprised, in a nutshell, of:

- a new corporate governance: a new board of independent directors (composed of 5 fully independent directors, not issued from the diamond industry, but with expertise in strategy, marketing, sales, human resources and finance) and an advisory committee (composed of 8 customers from the different regions worldwide). In the past, the directors were representatives of the industry itself, creating conflicts of interest.
- a new organisational structure: with clearly defined roles & responsibilities and expectations. In the past, no clear goals and responsibilities were defined, so that people didn’t really feel accountable for their tasks
- a new financial reporting principal: with among others a separation between activities from the Head Quarter and the operations in Antwerp, and transparent transfer pricing agreement with all subsidiaries. The general costs of running the operation worldwide were supported by the operations in Antwerp. As a consequence, there was no possible financial comparison between the different entities of the group.
- a new culture: new values, change of people mindset and motivations. Based principally on 3 main axes: Innovation, Ownership and Entrepreneurship. So far, the company has been very strongly internally focused, with no real business mindset.

My internship is fully concentrated on this last point – culture change – and more specifically in the creation of a 2-days workshop, to be used as a “kick-off” point in the long journey (expected to last at least 2 years) of changing the company culture. The internship will take place in the form of a contractual relationship with the company URfuture based on a 3-days a week at 4 hours per day, and 1 full day a week (Saturday). During the internship, many one-to-one discussions are planned with the consultant in charge of the change, as well as some more sporadic visits to HRD to better feel what the company is like. The 2-days kick-off is planned to take place between the second half of June and first half of July.

In a nutshell, my contribution to the whole project was:

- **define together with the consultant the way the kick-off will be structured**
- **look for and chose an easy-to-read book which can be used as a support and pre-homework by the participants**

- **create the power point that will support the workshop**
- **create self-assessment tools (who am I? how do I react to change? what type of leader am I ?)**
- **create a tool to collect and summarise the colleague's perception survey (to be compiled at the end of the first day, to be distributed to each workshop participant)**
- **take notes during the workshop**

The workshop itself will be led by the consultant himself.

The basic principle of this workshop is to make them think both alone and in groups. That's why we will also make sure that there is enough time between two subjects so that each participant has the opportunity either to think for him/herself, or to take part of the discussion in his/her group, or also to take part of the plenary discussions. This is also an important objective to create a team spirit by creating "trust" and "transparency"

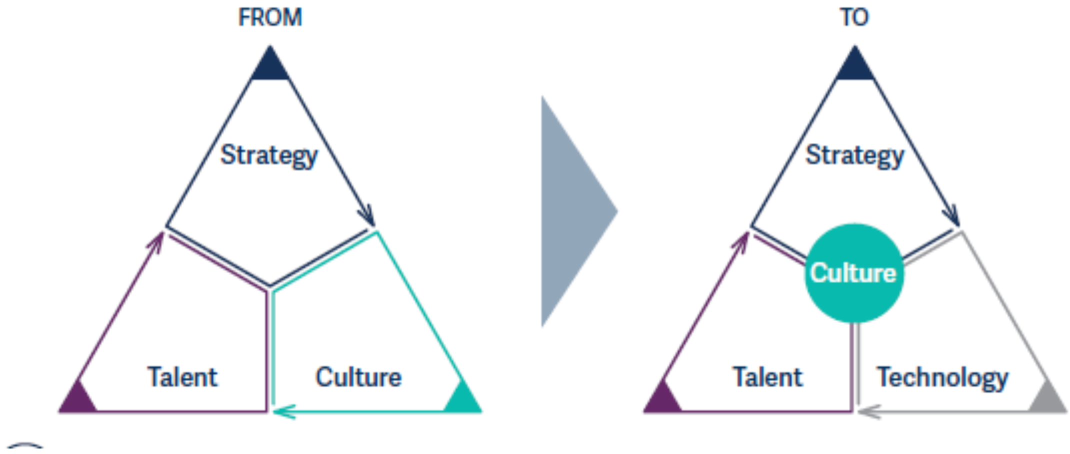
Literature survey

Culture eats strategy for breakfast is a famous quote from legendary management consultant and writer Peter Drucker. Also relevant are the writings of MIT psychology professor Edgar Schein, notably his book "Organizational Culture & Leadership." This book has been published in various editions since 1985. In it, he writes: "culture determines and limits strategy," which is not so snappy but does articulate the basic message quite clearly.

To be successful, companies need to have a strong, unambiguous culture in place. Typically, companies with a strong culture tend to produce superior results as compared to those with weaker cultures. When a culture is strong plus unambiguous, it leads to motivated employees and high performing managers. Over the past few decades, both academics and practitioners have spent time focusing on the issue of corporate culture and whether a company's culture does in fact impact its overall performance and effectiveness[i].

Company culture and people are influencing eachother very strongly. In that purpose, strategic awareness can be enhanced by developing mindfulness and positive psychology in employees as described by Dr. Juan Humberto Young (Jon Kotter, 2008)[7]. Dr Young even developed a method he calls Mindfulness-Based Strategic Awareness Training or MBSAT, which demonstrates how mindfulness training can enhance the prospective ability to perceive, create and capitalize on business and personal opportunities. This training utilizes positive psychology and a mindfulness-based approach to help leaders and managers make wiser decisions and therefore, lead more fulfilling lives. MBSAT draws on research from management, secular mindfulness, positive psychology, neuroscience, behavioral finance and behavioral strategyto make a compelling argument: prospering in today's complex and uncertain world requires specific personal resources in the form of cognitive flexibility, resiliency and the ability to master new challenges. Another well known advocate of positive technology is Dr David Cooperrider[ii]

Strong culture leads to ongoing involvement and participation by a company's employees, and can predict current and future financial performance. A recent study shows that culture can be an integral part of the ongoing change process (all companies are in a constant state of change due to competitive market and other pressures), and that certain cultural traits may be utilized as predictors of an organization's performance and effectiveness[iii].



So placing culture in the centre of a strategy is critical for the success of a company[iv]. But how can we switch from one to another culture within a company? This is the role of change management.

In the simplest term, change management is a systematic approach towards dealing with change. It's a structured way of applying tools, knowledge and resources to effectively drive organisational success.

There are multiple stages in a change management process and tools to support positive change in organisations[v]- [vi]- [vii] . A comprehensive review may be found in the article from Verandermanagement: een plan van aanpak voor integrale organisatieverandering en innovatie. modellen en technieken from H. Kadhim F. Rahbar[viii].

The two main used tools to implement change are the ADKAR model[ix] : (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement), and the Culture mapping[x]: helping to define a culture by reviewing values, norms, employee behaviour, … all written or unwritten.

Finally, ***John Kotter's*** highly regarded books 'Leading Change'[xi] (1995) describes a helpful model for understanding and managing change. Each stage acknowledges a key principle identified by Kotter relating to people's response and approach to change, in which people see, feel and then change: Kotter's eight step change model goes along the lines of:

1. Increase urgency – Inspire people to move, make objectives real and relevant.
2. Build the guiding team – Get the right people in place with the right emotional commitment, and the right mix of skills and levels.
3. Get the vision right – Get the team to establish a simple vision and strategy focus on emotional and creative aspects necessary to drive service and efficiency.
4. Communicate for buy-in – Involve as many people as possible, communicate the essentials, simply, and to appeal and respond to people's needs. De-clutter communications – make technology work for you rather than against.
5. Empower action – Remove obstacles, enable constructive feedback and lots of support from leaders – reward and recognise progress and achievements.
6. Create short-term wins – Set aims that are easy to achieve – in bite-size chunks. Manageable numbers of initiatives. Finish current stages before starting new ones.
7. Don't let up – Foster and encourage determination and persistence – ongoing change – encourage ongoing progress reporting – highlight achieved and future milestones.
8. Make change stick – Reinforce the value of successful change via recruitment, promotion, new change leaders. Weave change into culture.

There are a number of useful models that it helps Managers to be aware of and understand, including the Kubler Ross model of human response to change (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance), and Lewin's force field analysis, with the driving forces (positive forces for change) and the restraining forces (negative impact on change) xii has a very good overview of change theory.

The main conclusions one systematically can find back is that:

- People (and culture) are at the centre of change
- People may react differently in front of change, depending on their degree of openness, willingness and awareness. They should also clearly understand the "why changing?" and the "what's in it for me?"
- People may easier change if looked from their "positive/strength" side. Positive psychology, participation, inclusiveness and mindfulness are key
- Inclusive communication is a very key element throughout a change process

Structure of the 2-days workshop

Based on the literature survey we decided to structure the workshop as follow

- The needs for change
- The "me" versus the "they":
    - I - as an employee – can have an impact on the future of "my" company. Don't wait for others
    - we are all different, and this is good
- "Me & myself": understanding who am I as a person, to make it clear to me where am I today. Also think about my reaction towards changes
- "Me & others": understanding how others perceive me
- Feeling and aspirations for today and tomorrow: where do we want to go ?

Finally, the objective is to let everyone reflect on:

- In what type of environment (read “culture”) would I like to work ?
- And start implementing a first step in defining a new set of common values which could evaluate later on into new company values

The whole traject will be supported by and based on an easy-to-read book for change management (Who Moved my Cheese[xiii]).

Main support & homework for participants

To prepare this workshop, the intention was to let first participants think about their work situation and who they are. To do that the objective was to find a support to help them think.

Several books [xiv]have been found and the one “Who Moved My Cheese” from Johnson Spencer[xv] has finally been chosen. The 4 main types of characters will be used during the presentation in the first day to highlight the diversity in people. Based on that simple story, we will navigate through the different (very simplified) types of characters and develop a bit more on personalities.

Introduction: Need for change

The objective is to focus on the first and most important aspect when people have to change: people absolutely need to understand the WHY ? do they have to change ?

The strategy which has been chosen here is to “frighten” them (cold shower) coming from the Chairman of the Board. It would be the first time they hear directly from his mouth, that the shareholder doesn’t want to support the company anymore, so that the company should become self-sufficient (at least) in cash.

To do that, we proposed to start the program with three interventions:

An intervention from the Chairman of the board of directors of AWDC, the company’s shareholder. The objective here is to highlight the fact that the shareholder cannot be satisfied with the past and current results, is expecting return on investment and will not financially support the company anymore as it has been the case in the past. The real objective here is to create a sense of FEAR to let everybody understand the company can no longer survive like that Key messages:

AWDC does not need HRDAntwerp as such to fulfill its mission

But AWDC would welcome HRD as a new source of income: this is even mandatory !

AWDC will not support HRD in its transformation, and HRD should be financially viable by 2020. AWDC will not support financially HRD any longer

We understand the issues in changing the company for the last years (political issues on governance level) and the perception that nothing can change. It is already different and will be different this time.

We empower our top management to do that (Michel and Daniel, together with the steering committee), and that for the long run.

An intervention from the Chairman of the board of director of the company. The objective is here to confirm he get a clear message and objective from his shareholders to do whatever is necessary to turn the company into a profit making company on short term

A presentation from the CEO of the company. Here, the same type of message will be given, but based on facts & figures. The company is losing money for years, and continues to lose money.

After this introduction which is expected to last for roughly 45 minutes, the participants will be invited to reflect during 15 minutes in small groups of 5 persons about the messages they just heard in their own words.

Their assignment is to put on a flip chart their top 5 messages they get and to explain them to their colleagues.

FINAL OBJECTIVE of this part:A consensus will be found but eventually clustering the different messages to get a clear and easy-to-remember TOP 5 messages from the board. They will form the basis of a clear awareness of the fact that the company has to change.

Changing a company, means changing ME

At this point of time, it should be clear that the company has to change. In order to achieve it, we've seen in the literature survey that the key catalyst was the culture and the people themselves. To let everyone understand that, we propose to let them first think about the reason why the company is doing bad.

Most of them will find *external reasons* for that as it is very common in human being : *I am fully responsible for successes, and somebody else or external factors are responsible for under performances*. This is also called self-enhancing attribution[xvi]

Our main objective will be to let them come back on the fact that *THEY* are the leaders within the company, that they have been already leaders for some time, so that *THEY* are making the company how it is.

Let be very clear here: we are working towards a POSITIVE coaching. So we will not blame them. We will just let them realise that the ones who will be in position to change the company, is themselves, each of them by starting changing as an individual and as a team.

The first step in this journey will be to look backwards and see what the reasons are why the company is in such a bad shape. Participants will be invited to discuss within their team, find and present what according to them is the reason for the bad shape. The presentation will generate a long list of (probably more of less true) external reasons/factors explaining why the company is doing bad. We do not expect lot of them will come back putting their own contribution in question.

After the presentation of factors by each group, we intend to take the necessary time to think about that and cluster the reasons. The debate which will follow will have as objective to let people realise that these reasons will be able to be classified in 2 categories, based on the The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People[xvii]:

- The external ones for which we do not have any influence (market moves, external conditions, etc): they are all parts of our *circle of concern* and, as we cannot influence them, we best "forget" them, and focus on the second type
- The second family regroups the factors depending on internal aspect and/or human aspects : they are all parts of our *circle of influence* and, as we do and can influence them, we best "focus" on them

FINAL OBJECTIVE:

Based on this principle, we give 2 messages:

- **Focus on what *YOU* can influence and don't lose time, energy and positive spirit in focusing on things you do not have under control and cannot influence (by the way, this will also have a positive impact on your general mood)**
- ***YOU* can make the difference as a person *WITHIN* the organisation: forget the "*THEY*" and focus on the "*I*". This is the only to start the movement, if each of us would start changing for themselves, and can help eachothers to get in the moving train.**

We are all different. Me too

Attendees will from now on have to focus on who they are. It is clear that the company will not change alone, they will each of them make it change. However, the understanding and perception of changes is different from people to people, from characters to characters. And this is good as it creates diversity in a team, which increases creativity and openness.

The first fundamental aspect is not to bring any "value" on the who am I. There are no good or wrong personalities & characters. We are just all different and complementary. This is also something needed in a team as highlighted in many articles[xviii]

From now on, we will start moving into the 4 main categories of people/characters and will be able to make a transition with the book they read as homework for the workshop (who moved my cheese). We will help them to enter the world of people type in a very simplistic way, based on the 2 categories (plotted in a XY graph)

- X- Shaping versus implementing things
- Y- Big pictures versus detailed oriented

Here again very simplistic questions will be used:

Compared to others, you tends to think, speak and/or act more

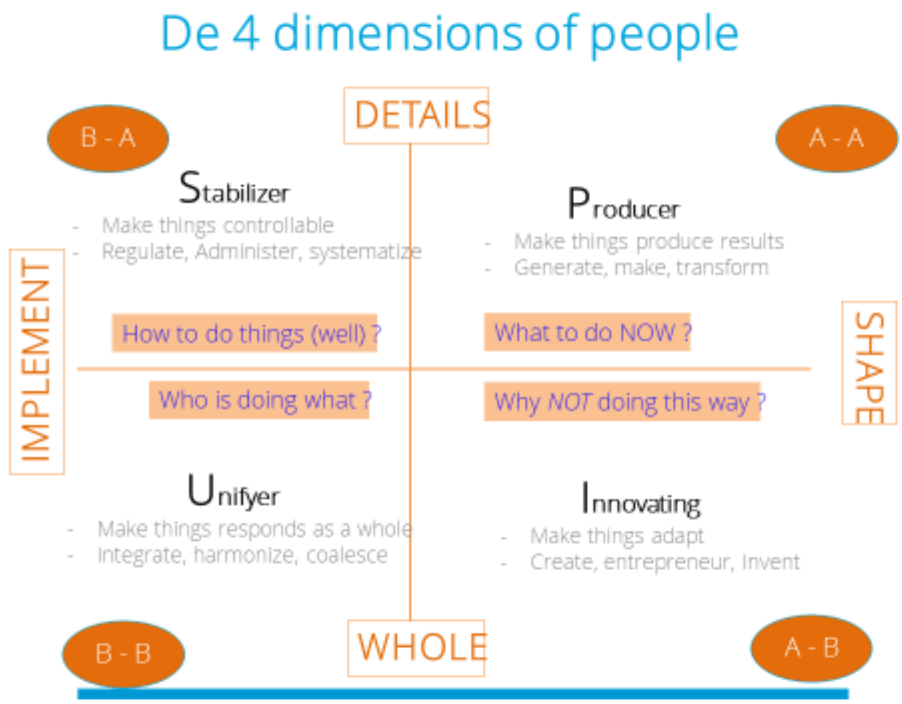
A- quickly or energetically

B- methodically or appropriately to the setting

When under stress or workload, you are often tend to get

A- frustrated that things aren't happening as fast as you want them to

B- mentally stuck in between multiple creative option/ideas/opportunities



The objective is for them to write down on a piece of paper what their answer is on these 2 questions, and then explain them more into details this simplistic model of personalities.

In order to complement this first rough analysis, a set of questionnaires (self-assessment) will be distributed. These self-assessment questionnaires (reported in appendix 1) are strictly personal (results will not be shared) and have as objective to let them think about themselves, who they are, in a slightly deeper way

FINAL OBJECTIVE

Get a first understanding of the main types of personalities, without judgement (good or bad) and give each participant a first idea on where they could be positioned so that they will be better able to understand their reaction to change and the perception they have about others, and others get about them.

Who am I ?

The objective is now to dive a bit deeper in the "who am I?" with as objective to let them understand why they are reacting this way and why their colleagues may react another way to the same event.

To achieve that we will invite them to think about themselves and answer some questions like :

How do I react when something new is proposed? No, yes but? Youpee, a new opportunity ! …
How many new improvements did I accept/implement spontaneously ?

How often do I help colleagues even if it will not bring anything for me ?

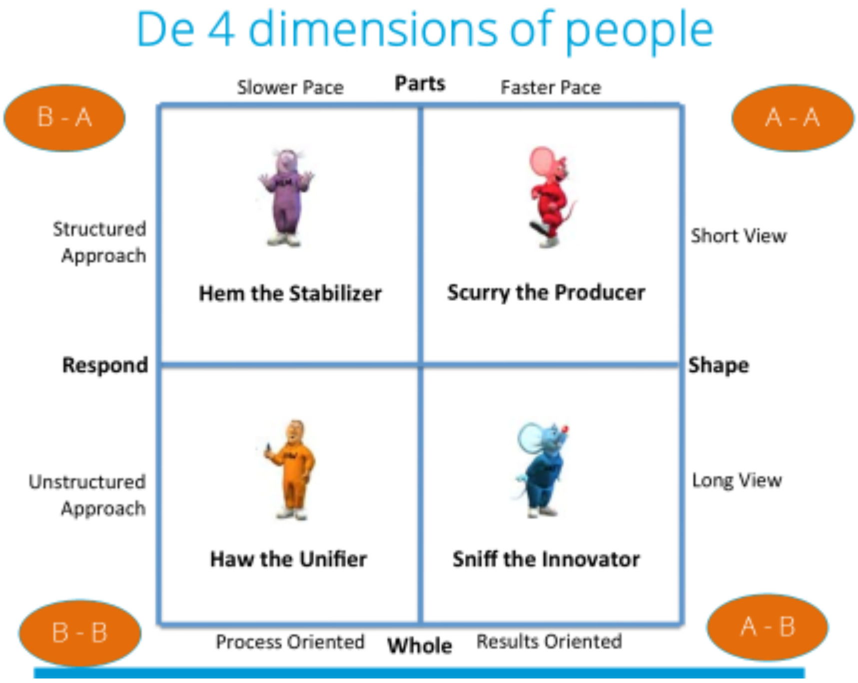
- I reflect positivism/negativism
- I have and show a lot of energy

- I am fully respectful to my colleagues, all of them
- i am fully respectful to all « my » people

If I look at the way I am working today, it is totally different than the way I was working 5 years ago !

I hear and understand the new demands/needs from my customers

We will here also deep dive in the theory supporting or derivated from the book "who moved my cheese"xix. An right balance between theory and practice will be proposed with a critical eye on people attention. The consultant will have here to really take care to explain participants sufficient amount of theory so that they can follow and understand, but not lose them in too many details and too theoretical stuff. Depending on their level of attention, this part may vary in duration.



FINAL OBJECTIVE

Get a better understanding of who they are so that they can better understand their own reaction and perception of things. They will also have to deep dive in themselves and question themselves about who they are.

how do others perceive me?

Knowing and understanding who you are is already a very big achievement.

However, it is not abnormal to be surprised about what people are telling about you, or thinking who you are. This is all about "perception"

Perception is the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the presented information, or the environmentxx. So perception may very well be different from reality. The objective of this part is to let them understand others may perceive them differently from who they are really.

Concretely, all attendants will be invited to fill in a table indicating – in a fully anonymous way- the type of character they think their colleagues are (based on the 4 dimensions previously presented).

All data will be collected anonymously and gathered per person, and given back to each individual at the end of the day.

FINAL OBJECTIVE

By this way everybody will be able to see:

- **How they are perceived by their colleagues**

- **Is this in line with who they think they are**
- **How diverse is the perception within the colleagues**

Me and my company

In addition to the 4 characters, the objective is also to make them think about their position and their real role within the organisation. To get an optimised work balance, it is crucial to get the right person in the right position.

So it is crucial to let everyone think about what is their role within the organisation (and so what is expected from them) versus who they really are by letting them reflect on the 3 simple questions:

- What do I like to do ?
- What do I have to do?
- What do I do well?

And then plot it in a Venn diagramxxi, to get a good view on how balanced are you. This is a first step into a self-reflection based on the book what colour is my parachutexxii.

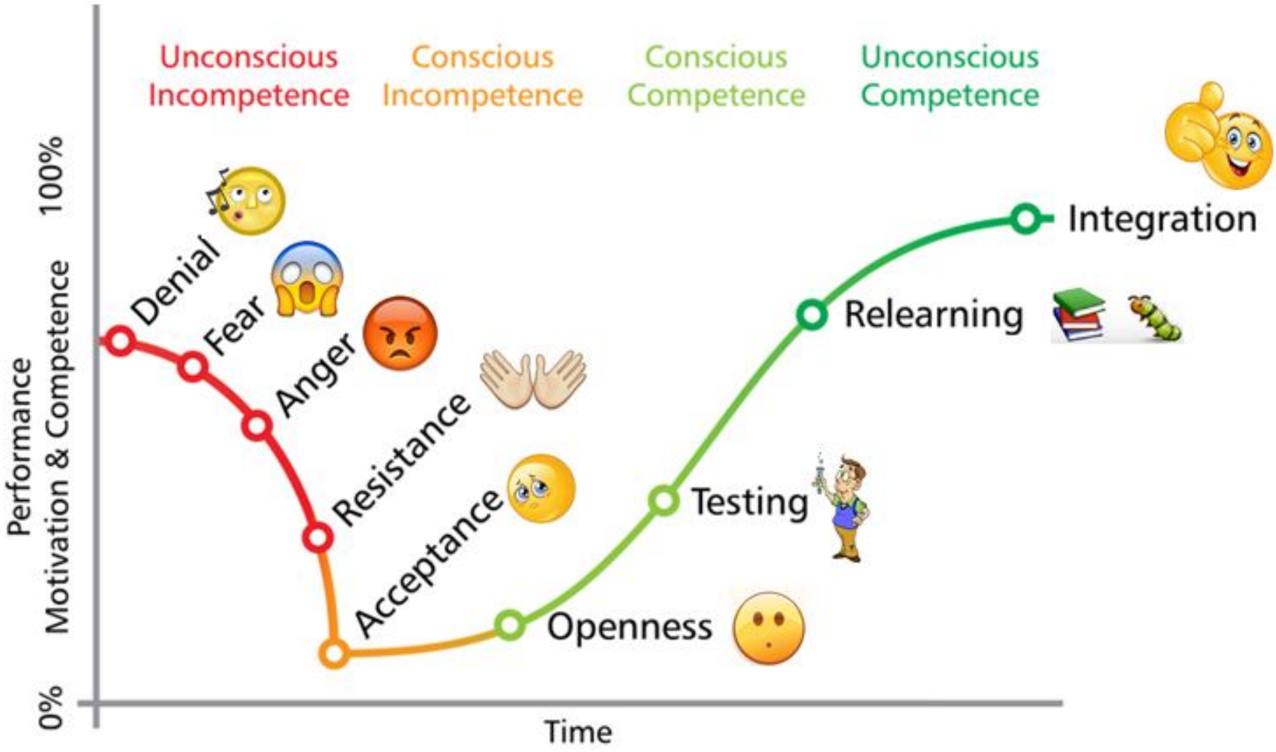
FINAL OBJECTIVE

After the reflection about who they are and who other can perceive them, it is now the time to position themselves in their environment and look for a match, or not. Changing the company will imply changes in the organisation, which represents an opportunity for them to reflect clearly on what they would like to do in the future. It is the time for them to tell what they want to do, to give themselves – and the consultant – a change to think about it and take it into account in the new organisation and/or challenges which will erase.

Me and change

The objective of this workshop is not to frighten people, but the exact opposite. We want to confort tghem and give them confidence that they will have a role to play in the change of the company from now on, wherever they are today.

To illustrate that we will go through the classical steps in mood during a change process.



FINAL OBJECTIVE

Let every single participant reflect for themselves on where they are today in this curve. Let them understand that this is normal. And let them realise the way they still have to go to reach a successful change process.

The environment I would like to work in

Depending on the spirit, energy and environment, a first exercice will be made to define in groups the environment they would like to work in.

FINAL OBJECTIVE

It is here the objective to make the first draft of what will become the company values.

Conclusion of my internship

This deep dive exercise in the "real life" was for me – so far - a real eye opener and confrontation with culture consulting reality. It was a nice balance between theory and practice and I got a lot of new views on what change management is – or could be – in a company.

At this present time, the supporting preparation for the workshop are nearly finished. A final review from the consultant should still be done for the last fine tuning exercise.

I am really looking forward to the real stuff: being present at the 2-days kick-off workshop and the way the consultant may conduct this very impressive amount of information to be delivered and listened to.

A wonderful learning experience!

Appendix 1: self-assessment questionnaires: who am I ?

SELF ASSESMENT 1	FALSE		neutral		TRUE
If you are not doing everything in the statement you can't circle a 4!	1	2	3	4	5
An expert who doesn't come up with a definite answer probably doesn't know too much.					
I would like to live in a foreign country for a while.					
There is really no such thing as a problem that can't be solved.					
People who fit their lives into a schedule probably miss most of the joy of living.					
A good job is one where it is always clear what is to be done and how it is to be done.					
It is more fun to tackle a complicated problem than to solve a simple one.					
In the long run, it is possible to get more done by tackling small, simple problems rather than large, complicated ones.					
Often the most interesting and stimulating people are those who don't mind being different and original.					
What we are used to is always preferable to what is unfamiliar.					
People who insist on a yes or no answer just don't know how complicated things really are.					
A person who leads an even, regular life in which few surprises or unexpected happenings arise really has a lot to be grateful for.					
Many of our most important decisions are based on insufficient information.					
I like parties where I know most of the people more than ones where all or most of the people are complete strangers.					
Teachers or supervisors who hand out vague assignments give one a chance to show initiative and originality.					
The sooner everyone acquires similar values and ideals, the better.					
A good teacher is one who makes you wonder about your way of looking at things.					
			0		
low tolerence to change	16-44				
moderate tolerence to change	45-57				
strong tolerence to change	57-80				
This measurement instrument is formally known as the "tolerance of ambiguity" scale. Although it was developed over 40 years ago, the instrument is still used today in research. People with a high tolerance of ambiguity are comfortable with uncertainty, sudden change, and new situations. These are characteristics of the hyperfast changes occurring in many organizations today. The graph compares your score on this scale to results for a sample of MBA students. Scores on this scale range from 16 to 112. A higher score indicates a higher tolerance of change.					

SELF ASSESMENT 2	FALSE			TRUE
If you are not doing everything in the statement you can't circle a 4!	1	2	3	4
If you are not doing everything in the statement you can't circle a 4!	1	2	3	4
I feel overwhelmed by too many tasks and responsibilities-juggling priorities.	x			
I am very busy and impatient.				x
The closer the deadlines, the harder I work.				x
I have to cope with too many organizational or job task changes.		x		
I am drowning in an overload of information from mail, faxes, E-mail, the Internet.		x		
I feel pressured by too many demands from clients/customers /boss.	x			
I dislike turning over responsibility to others.				x
I find it difficult to stay agile, flexible, and resilient and focus on what is important.	x			
Worry robs me of time and energy.	x			
I have difficulty making decisions affecting my work and the work of associates.	x			
I'm frequently late for appointments or meetings.	x			
My "B" and "C" priorities take so much time that I rarely get to the "A's".	x			
I put things off until it's too late, or no longer matters.	x			
I look at projects as a whole, rather than breaking them up into smaller units.			x	
I am sleep deprived and do not feel rested in the morning.		x		
I feel that my work does not reflect my vision, mission, and values.		x		
My behavior is incongruent with what I truly believe.	x			
Planning my day-every day is difficult for me.	x			
I am unable to establish a clear direction and develop personal and career goals.	x			
I find it difficult to create a health work and life balance.	x			
	12	**4**	**1**	**3**
	35			

•TIME MASTER	**1-30**			
You are doing a great job managing your time and life. Congratulations! Coaching may help you achieve even higher levels of performance.				
•LEARNING				
You are managing yourself and time to a considerable extent. There is still room for improvement. You will benefit from taking a Time/Self-Management workshop. Consider coaching to help you further develop your self-management skills and learn new strategies.	**31-50**			
• RED ALERT!				
Things may be spinning out of control. You need to change certain behaviors and learn new skills. Don't walk...RUN to a Time/Self-Management workshop. Strongly consider coaching.	**51-100**			

SELF ASSESMENT 8	FALSE			TRUE	
If you are not doing everything in the statement you can't circle a 4!	1	2	3	4	5
I can place myself in someone's shoes (empathy) when trying to understand their thought processes when facing a problem and choosing a solution.					
I can predict how my team will react to change, as I understand what is important to them and what motivates them.					
When faced with situational changes, I adapt my performance by being flexible, rather than being locked into my impulses.					
If there is resistance or conflict, I'm a mediator and coach, rather than someone who gives orders.					
I enjoy discussions with others whose point of view differs from mine because I'm able to empathize with them.					
When I hear an organizational change is coming, I am thoughtful about the discussion I need to have with my team members so that it lessens their concerns.					
I stay true to my values and passions when I adapt or change my behavior to a situational change.			x		
When organizational change or challenges are about to occur, I help my team understand the full details of it, and what they can expect from me to meet the challenge.					
One of the reasons I enjoy learning about a person's ideas and dreams is so I can better serve them.					
Having insight into my team member's values and passions allows me to help them draw out their ideas on how we can best react to new challenges or problems.					
It is important that I change and adapt my behavior to new situations so that I not only help my team members from failing, but more importantly to help them develop themselves.					
A vision will only be a dream if I cajole my team, rather than coach, mentor, and train them so they fully understand the reason to achieve the vision.					
It is important to empathize with people if you want to understand their attitude in achieving a goal.					
I can readily tell my manager how my team members will react to a change because I understand what is important to them and what motivates them.					
Although my instincts often tell me how to react to a new situation, I know it is better to think the problem through as a more flexible solution may hit the sweet spot.					
I listen closely to my team member's concern when discussing a vision, and try to incorporate their ideas into the plan so that it becomes our vision, rather than mine.					
	0	0	1	0	0
			3		

1. Sum the responses for items 1, 5, 9, and 13 (Perspective Taking) - Score _____	0
2. Sum the responses for items 2, 6, 10, and 14 (Social Perceptiveness) - Score __	0
3. Sum the responses for items 3, 7, 11, and 15 (Behavior Flexibility) - Score ____	3
4. Sum the responses for items 4, 8, 12, and 16 (Social Performance) - Score ____	0

More information of the four categories (Perspective Taking, Social Perceptiveness, Behavior Flexibility, and Social Performance) can be found at Social Judgme

Interpreting Your Score

This self-assessment questionnaire is designed to measure your social skills by assessing the four Social Judgment Skills of Perspective Taking, Social Perceptiven

- Perspective Taking - Using empathy to understand other's attitudes towards goals, problem solving, solutions offered, and their points of view.
- Social Perceptiveness - Having insight and awareness to how employees will react to organizational change by understanding what is important to them and what motivates them.
- Behavior Flexibility - The ability to change and adapt one's behavior to situational changes by being flexible rather then locked in to one's impulses.
- Social Performance - Understanding the employees' perspectives in order to communicate a vision to them. If there is resistance or conflict, be a mediator and/or coach, rather than a boss who gives orders.

By reflecting upon your scores for each of these dimensions, you can determine your stronger and weaker skills. The maximum score you can receive for each dimension is 20, while the lowest you can receive is 4. Scores in the upper range indicate stronger social leadership skills, while scores in the lower range indicate weaker attributes.

You should reflect upon the weaker score, identify opportunities to improve them, and create an action plan that will help you implement your plan.

Reliability and Validity

Since this survey is a learning tool used in training programs such as leadership development, rather than a research tool, it has not been formally checked for reliability or validity. Unlike most of the other questionnaires on this site, this is a fairly new one and I have trialed it only a couple of times, thus I have received very little feedback about it. Please email me is

SELF ASSESMENT 4	FALSE			TRUE
If you are not doing everything in the statement you can't circle a 4!	1	2	3	4
I have created and communicated a vision and a direction for my team/group.			x	
I give my staff meaningful assignments and honour their achievements.				x
I am careful not to create overly optimistic or overly pessimistic expectations			x	
I frequently ask my people for help and make sure they know that they matter and that their contribution carries weight.				x
I work closely with like-minded people who are eager to change				x
I pull all my people together, include everyone in the communication loop, and make each person feel accepted.			x	
I create a sense of urgency, push for daily progress in achieving 'hard results' and celebrate accomplishments.				x
I set high standards for admission into my team/group, making sure people with low commitment never get inside.				x
I encourage people to speak their minds openly & to air their concerns				x
I ensure that my people who really produce get 'psychological payments' like recognition, glory and prestige.				x
I have clearly communicated my expectations regarding job commitment, and I weed out the uncommitted staff.				x
I make every effort to see that all my staff are cast in roles/positions that let them do what they like or love.			x	
I invest in my people by providing support, resources, training and encouragement.			x	
I am honest and above board in my dealings with the group/team.				x
	0	0	5	9
	51			

SELF ASSESMENT 6	FALSE			TRUE
If you are not doing everything in the statement you can't circle a 4!	1	2	3	4
I focus on things I can do something about.				
I seek out the support of people.				
I have discovered a sense of meaning and purpose in life.				
I engage in optimistic Self Talk.				
I live in the present appreciating the past and focused on my desired future.				
I am imaginative and brainstorm possibilities.				
I leverage personal strengths and resources.				
I have a deep awareness and compassion for others.				
I actively listen and seek to understand.				
I partner with others for mutual success.				
I ask questions because I am curious to know how things work, and am open to experiment.				
I am constantly learning from my experiences.				
I expect to have things work out well for myself and others.				
I play with new developments and find the humor in situations.				
I adapt quickly to change, and am highly flexible.				
I am emotionally intelligent managing my emotions well.				
I listen well and read others with empathy.				
I think up creative solutions to challenges, and invent ways to solve difficult problems.				
I manage the emotional side of transition.				
I convert misfortune into good fortune.				
	0	0	0	0
	0			

•CHANGE MASTER	**71-80**
You are doing a great job staying resilient in times of unrelenting change. Congratulations! Executive coaching may help you achieve even higher levels of performance.	
•LEARNING	**48-70**
You are somewhat change hardy. However, there is still room for improvement. You may benefit from taking a Realizing the Potential of Change workshop. Consider executive coaching to help you further develop your personal change management skills.	
• RED ALERT!	**40-47**
Your change resiliency skills need some considerable attention. You need to change certain behaviors and learn new skills. It is strongly advised that you sign up for a Realizing the Potential of Change workshop. Strongly consider Executive Coaching.	

Appendix 2: self-assessment questionnaires : How do I deal with change ?

SELF ASSESMENT 3	FALSE			TRUE
If you are not doing everything in the statement you can't circle a 4!	1	2	3	4
1 I usually receive good support from senior executives for changes that I want to implement.				x
2 I create a plan for change for my department and team, and I let other departments deal with the impacts as they choose.			x	
3 I communicate successes throughout the organization, so that everyone understands the positive impact of a change project.			x	
4 If the change makes financial and operational sense, then it will work.				x
5 If the team is dissatisfied with how something is working or operating right now, change is more likely to be successful.				x
6 I try to understand my organization's culture and values as important elements of a change project.				x
7 When change is happening, I expect people to continue to perform at 100 percent.				x
8 Once I'm successful with a change project, I declare victory and move onto the next project.				x
9 I consider things like the impact on people and organizational structure when planning a change project.				x
10 If I think something must be changed, I start right away and make it happen.				x
11 To get backing and support from my team, I talk with team members about what is causing the need for change.				x
12 I let people get comfortable with changes before I decide if any training is necessary.			x	
13 If key individuals are convinced that change is needed, the rest of the stakeholders will usually come on board.			x	
14 It's harder to manage change effectively when the organization has previously managed change projects badly.				x
15 When implementing a change project, I set achievable, short-term targets that, once accomplished, will motivate people to persist and keep trying.				x
16 Change is as good as a rest, so even though it might not be necessary, it often helps to "mix things up a bit."				x
	0	0	4	12
	60			

Understanding change.	16
Planning Change	15
Managing Resistance to Change	15
Implementing Change	14

You tend to look at the end result and forget to focus on the immediate planning needs. To be successful with change, you must find a way to communicate and share the excitement of the end goal with your team, as a way of creating the necessary support. Take time to work through the sections below in detail to learn how to do this.	13-29
You understand many of the elements required for change, but putting them into practice doesn't always work well. Concentrate on developing a process that allows you to work on each of the elements of change one after the other. The ideas and resources below will help you do this.	30-46
You have a very good understanding of what makes change successful, and you have a good knowledge of managing, planning, and implementing change. Skim the sections below to see if there are any ideas that you can use to get even better.	47-64

SELF ASSESMENT 5

If you are not doing everything in the statement you can't circle a 4!	FALSE 1	2	3	TRUE 4	5
1. History of Change (We have a good track record in handling change)					
2. Direction (People throughout the organization understand corporate values and vision)					
3. Cooperation and Trust (People share information and work well together)					
4. Culture (This organization supports risk taking and change)					
5. Resilience (People handle continuous change well)					
6. Rewards (People believe most changes will benefit them)					
7. Respect, Control, and Saving Face (The organization has worked hard to allow people to maintain dignity and self-respect during change)					
8. Status Quo (Change is generally disruptive to the work environment and employees alike)					
9. Skilled at Managing Change (This organization has shown great skill in managing past changes)					
	0	0	0	0	0
	0				

Interpretation

Here are a few things to consider when interpreting the results of the questionnaire.

Numbers Need Explanation

Even though 1 and 2 should be considered low scores, 3 a mid-range score, 4 and 5 high, these are just numbers. One person's 4 is another's 3. The value of this exercise is the discussion and understanding the meanings people give to their scores. However, low to mid-range scores should be cause for concern. We will need to consider those scores while developing the program and in developing the Communication Plan.

Look for Patterns

While you are doing this individually, this tool is invaluable to use as an assessment that you would give to people who will be affected by the Workforce/Succession Plan. When reviewing responses from groups you will want to look for patterns. Are scores clustered together on particular items? If so, this probably indicates that most people agree about support for change on that scale.

There is no right or wrong answers. Scores merely reflect people's perceptions. You will need to discuss low scores and consider them in the development of the program.

This is an effective tool to use with the Workforce/Succession Planning Design Team and your senior leadership team to determine how each of those groups views the change readiness of the organization.

SELF ASSESMENT 7	FALSE			TRUE
If you are not doing everything in the statement you can't circle a 4!	1	2	3	4
I try to anticipate and lead change within my organisation				
I make full use of the latest worthwhile IT developments				
I take any competitive, technological, & market changes very seriously				
I look for opportunities for transformational as well as incremental change				
change				
I take an open-minded approach toward new ideas & possibilities				
I link change to any known needs of the customers/patients				
I keep my change philosophy simple & concise.				
I involve customers & patients in my plans for change				
I make a full & careful business case for changes & change projects				
I break change projects down into manageable components				
I consult widely in the process of deciding on strategy & action				
I obtain people's input and commitment to the actions required of them.				
I use & develop teams as the basic units of change management				
I use quick-fix changes for instant results early in the change programme.				
I plan well ahead for the long-term payoffs of change.				
I am careful not to create overly optimistic or overly pessimistic expectations				
I seize opportunities to reward, celebrate, & encourage successful change.				
I ensure that everyone knows the answer to 'What's in it for me?'				
I have effective adaptable contingency plans available.				
I anticipate adverse reactions & plan how to deal with them				
I use well-designed pilots & experiments to test my change plans				
I share relevant information with colleagues & staff as soon as possible				
I work closely with like-minded people who are eager to change				
My own behaviour is flexible & highly adaptable to changing needs				
I encourage people to speak their minds openly & to air their concerns				
I tackle resistance to change promptly, fairly, & vigorously				
I use quantitative measurement to obtain the results that I want.				
I review & revise the assumptions that underly the change plan				
I ensure that thorough training keeps people up-to-date with change.				
I start the next change project as another draws to a close.				
I use self-appraisal to check on myself & the organisation				
	0	0	0	0
	0			

32-64 – You tend to resist change or are unsure of its potential benefits.

Actions to take:

1. Overcome your fears (Ask 'What would I do if I were not afraid?'
2. Develop initial change plan for one thing that you would like to change in your life that would involve no more than 20 minutes/week

65-95 – You understand the need for change

Actions to take:

1. Develop your skills to achieve change successfully by identifying 2-3 aspects to change in your work habits that will have the biggest pay-off for the coming 3 months.

96-128 – You tend to be a skilled agent of change.

Actions to take:

1. Develop your skills to inculcate change with other change agents. Develop programmes to 'demystify' change with your team.

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