HOW TO "MAKE IT POP"

Introducing a tool to receive more effective client feedback on strategy and design in a creative agency.

Master Thesis
Msc. Strategic Product Design
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DENTSU CREATIVE

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Msc. Strategic Product Design
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IN COLLABORATION WITH
Dentsu Creative Amsterdam

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PREFACE

Dear reader, in front of you is my graduation report for the Master of Strategic Product Design. This report is the final chapter of 8 years of studying at the TU Delft and will take you along the last seven months of this journey.

While my name might be on the report, it does not mean I did everything alone. Therefore I would like to thank some people who were closely involved in the process.

First, I would like to thank Dentsu Creative Amsterdam for providing me with a graduation internship opportunity and taking me in as an actual employee. I got to join all company events and even finished my time at Dentsu by coming along on the ski trip. In particular, I would like to thank Gerben and Jack, who coached me throughout the whole project, connected me with all the necessary resources, and helped me decide on the next steps every week.

Furthermore, I can not forget about my coach and chair, EJ and Pinar. Thank you for being so positive and taking away my nerves when needed. It was great to have you along with this project and see you being so interested and enthusiastic about the topic. This gave me new energy to continue again after each meeting.

And lastly, my parents, roommates and girlfriend who helped me through some stressful moments and listened to my random and unstructured braindumps.

So buckle up, and enjoy the read!

Bram

SUMMARY

Imagine you show something that you made to a client, and all they give you is the following feedback:

"Just make it pop!"

So.. what do you do with this? Nobody really knows. and it may surprise you, but this is not a made-up example. This is existing feedback from real clients.

The main focus of this project, therefore, lies in improving this kind of client feedback. In particular, feedback in a brand identity creation proces.

A brand identity is a unique and recognisable set of associations about a company that sets you apart from the competition. It is a complex combination of elements and needs a structured creation process. The result needs to resonate with its customers, differentiate the brand from competitors, and at the same time, represent what an organisation can and will do over time. To make sure all these different elements are appropriately incorporated, good communication between a client and an agency is essential.

The agency involved in this project is Dentsu Creative Amsterdam, a creative agency that aims to craft forward-thinking brands. Within DCA, communication concerning creating brand identities is established through the client providing feedback on the presented work. However, to understand what the client means, this communication needs to be very clear, which, as demonstrated above, is currently not the case.

Therefore, this graduation project aims to create an approach that makes the feedback given on the brand identity creation process more effective. This should result in a more structured and efficient feedback process, saving time while ensuring the same quality of work and preventing any unneeded frustrations between the client and the agency.

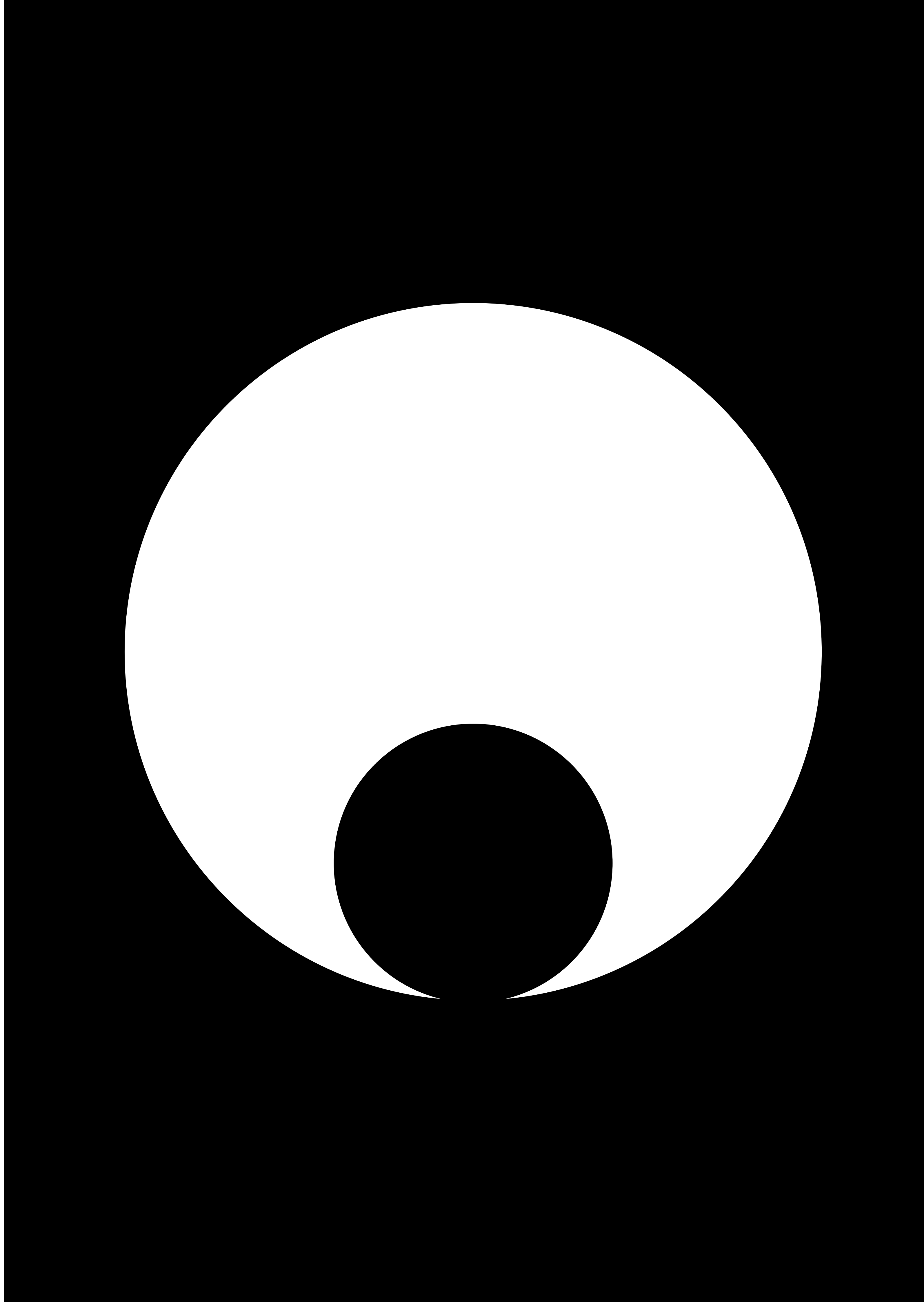
The company's context was mapped to achieve this goal, and a literature review was conducted to understand which components of effective feedback in the creative context exist. This research resulted in a theoretical framework that forms the foundation for the data analysis on old-feedback cases between DCA and their clients. The nine bottlenecks found in this analysis are narrowed down to 4 potential avenues, each with its focus points. By applying an impact/feasibility matrix, it is decided to with which avenue to continue. As result, the project is scoped down to a more concise design goal.

Design an approach to receive aligned and structured feedback that is justified and not negatively influenced by the used medium.

Supporting this design goal are seven design principles. The feedback must be justified, actionable, understandable, aligned, complete, specific and written. These seven principles were used to start the ideation phase and formed the foundation for the first concept. Next, an iterative phase followed where the concept was constantly improved based on feedback from students, strategists, experienced employees of Dentsu and client marketeers

The final design is a tool in the shape of an interactive feedback form that guides the user through the feedback process. The flow of the form is dependent on the decisions made by the client as they get different follow-up questions based on the choices they make. To make the process as easy and effective as possible, the client is educated on effective feedback and guided through the whole process, so their focus lies purely on writing the feedback. The final design consists of 6 different segments: An introduction, an example of effective feedback, design guidelines, giving the feedback, reflecting and submitting the feedback.

In the last phase, the design is validated by implementing the tool in a brand identity creation process. The output was evaluated based on the design principles together with a strategist. It was perceived as effective and as good guidance to make the next iteration of the strategy. Overall contributing to a better brand identity creation process for Dentsu Creative Amsterdam.



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GLOSSARY

DCA = Dentsu Creative Amsterdam

DC = Dentsu Creative

P&I = Positioning & Identity

P&E = Products & Experience

A&C = Activations & Campaigns

CX = Customer Experience

BICP = Brand identity creation process

Avenue = Pathway of the design-space

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

In this chapter, an introduction is given to the project and its objective. This is supported by including relevant context and an introduction to the company: Dentsu Creative Amsterdam. It zooms in on how the project brief has been developed and why it is relevant to creative agencies. To conclude, it elaborates on the project approach and the course of the process to get a clear overview of this graduation project.

01

1.1 THE COMPANY

This project will be executed in cooperation with Dentsu Creative Amsterdam (referred to as DCA). DCA is formerly known as DentsuAchtung and once started as an independent agency called Achtung. DCA calls themselves a family of over 100 entrepreneurial doers and zeitgeist-hunting magic makers from many lands and areas of expertise. This mix of cultures, credentials, and languages helps to create work that speaks the language of international culture. This is important when considering the number of international clients in their brand portfolio.

Dentsu Creative Amsterdam works with clients worldwide in all different phases and sizes, from making first identities for start-ups and ventures to creating activations and international campaigns for big multinationals. A handful of these clients are Porsche, KLM, Nike, Crisp, KPN, Check, and GLS.

DCA is part of the global network Dentsu Creative. This network operates over the entire world and connects 9000 creatives. Dentsu Creative is, in turn, part of the mother organisation Dentsu International, which joins another 34.000 media and CX experts in this network of creatives. DC believes it can transform brands and businesses with the power of modern creativity. According to DC, modern creativity is horizontal creativity, and it is everywhere. It creates culture, changes society, and eventually invents the future.

“We apply creativity across every corner of our clients businesses - from creative, media, CXM, commerce and data” - Dentsu Creative.

DCA is a creative agency based on a one-stop-shop model. They craft forward-thinking brands, experiences, campaigns, and social content. Which means they have all the expertise in-house to deliver a complete marketing solution. To operate like this, the company is split into four different pillars. Brand Positioning & Identity, Digital Products & Experiences, Campaigns & Activations, and Entertainment & Socials. However, all pillars are horizontally integrated and work together when it benefits a project. This offers the full potential and powerhouse of the agency to a client and allows DCA to cross-sell their different services to one client. Therefore every pillar has the advantage of good project results and strong relationships with the client, as it might bring along new work.

DENTSU CREATIVE

Figure 1. Logo of Dentsu Creative Amsterdam

1.2 THE CONTEXT

For the context of this graduation project, I will be focusing on and working with the strategists and designers of the Positioning & Identity pillar of DCA. Whose main focus is creating strategic brand positionings and visual & verbal brand identities. This creative process is, by standard, executed as a design sprint, which consists of several phases. This is what we call the: “brand identity creation process”.

A brand identity is a unique and recognisable set of associations about a company that sets you apart from the competition. It is a collection of elements created to imply a specific promise to the consumer (Ghodeswar, 2008). These elements can be visual, like colours and graphic style, verbal, like the brand name and slogan but also include more overarching elements, like the tone of voice. It is a complex combination of elements and demands a solid strategic foundation and structured creation process. The result needs to resonate with its customers, differentiate the brand from competitors, and at the same time, represent what an organisation can and will do over time and in the future. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). To make sure all these different elements are correctly incorporated into one brand identity, good communication between client and agency is essential.

To create a context for my project objective, I will briefly describe the brand identity creation process within DCA. The process, visualized in figure 2, usually starts with creating strategic routes (brand positioning). These are based on a research & discovery phase and workshops with the client. During this research phase, DCA gets a deeper understanding of the client's current company, customers, competitors, and cultural landscape, which is necessary to lay a strong foundation (Phase-1). Through a combination of co-creative workshops and autonomous ideation and copywriting, the client is involved in the creation and ideation for the new strategy of their company (Phase 2). Once the client has signed off on this strategy, it is translated into the brand identity. This process usually consists of several rounds, creating a visual and verbal identity (Phases 3&4). The last phase is the identity roll-out of a new and finished brand identity (Phase 5).

In each phase, the client and different members of the P&I team will be involved, including designers, strategists, project managers, marketers and business owners. This amount and combination of stakeholders, disciplines, expertise, rounds, and phases don't come without hurdles. One main challenge is aligning all stakeholders and getting everyone on the same page. DCA is hired by companies and does not contain the knowledge of how a brand eventually has to turn out as they can't look into the marketeer's head. Therefore, the communication about what a client wants or likes must be very clear.

This is relevant from a business perspective as all stakeholders benefit from an efficient BICP. More efficiency gives faster results while keeping the same quality without needing costly extra creative rounds and fewer frustrations, establishing a better relationship with the client.

Within DCA, communication concerning the creative work is established through the client providing feedback on the presented work. However, as mentioned earlier, to understand what the client means, this feedback message needs to be very clear. According to DCA, this is currently not the case. The provided feedback is often vague, unaligned, and ineffective, creating inefficiency in the brand identity creation process. This feedback issue is a known phenomenon within the creative world.

“Just make it pop”

A famous vague saying from the client: "Just make it pop" is on top of the list (Duke, 2018). The question of why ineffective feedback is such a common problem in the BICP of DCA and how it could be solved provides the opportunity and context for this graduation project.

Figure 2. Phases in the brand identity creation process

1.3 THE PROJECT OBJECTIVE

As Dentsu Creative is a business revolving around creativity, they aim to be as efficient as possible while simultaneously maintaining the highest possible standard of creative output.

The purpose of this thesis will therefore be to contribute to a more effective and efficient brand identity creation process without losing any creative quality. By identifying the problems that exist in the current way of providing feedback. This study tries to answer the following research question:

How can feedback given during the brand identity creation process of Dentsu Creative Amsterdam become more effective?

The discovery phase is split into two sub-questions to answer this research question. One focuses on how and when feedback is perceived as effective in the existing literature. The other one is focused on the current problems within the feedback process of DCA.

1. How is effective feedback given according to the literature?

2. What problems can be identified in the current feedback process of DCA

Based on the research question, a project goal is defined: create an approach that makes the feedback given on the brand identity creation process more effective.

This project's scope will lie within past and future identity projects delivered by the P&I department of DCA. Fortunately, DCA has over 20 old feedback processes documented and available for qualitative research.

To gain a more holistic perspective of the problem within the company, creatives and strategists from other departments will also be included in the study. This feedback problem is not only seen within P&I. Rather, it comes back within every creative department of Dentsu Creative Amsterdam (and supposedly every agency worldwide). Making the research relevant for the whole company.

1.4 THE PROJECT APPROACH

To answer the stated research question, the structure of this project will be based on the Double Diamond Model as shown in figure 3. (Design Council, 2019). This model separates the design project into two phases: a research phase and a design phase. The end deliverable of the research phase is the design brief, which marks the beginning of the design phase. A more detailed visualisation of what to expect in this report and all the steps taken in the process will be shown later in this chapter.

Research phase

The research phase is about uncovering the right problem in the defined context. Dentsu might have provided me with a problem and some assumptions, but it is key in this phase to figure out the most relevant problem. I will do literature research on effective feedback in the creative context to create a feedback framework that will function as a foundation for my qualitative data analysis.

The outcomes of this analysis are the major issues in the current feedback process and form the basis of my design space. This graduation project is not extensive enough to tackle all encountered issues. Therefore I will scope down to one direction to continue with and create a narrowed-down design brief.

Design phase

This phase will start with the design brief, which functions as a guide for the entire creative process. This process consists of several brainstorms and a (co)-creative session with the strategists. Once enough ideas are generated, they will be narrowed down to one concept. This concept is tested internally with several experienced employees of Dentsu to optimise the design constantly. The final design is then validated and delivered through a working prototype. Once finished, the tool will be delivered with the next steps and further recommendations.

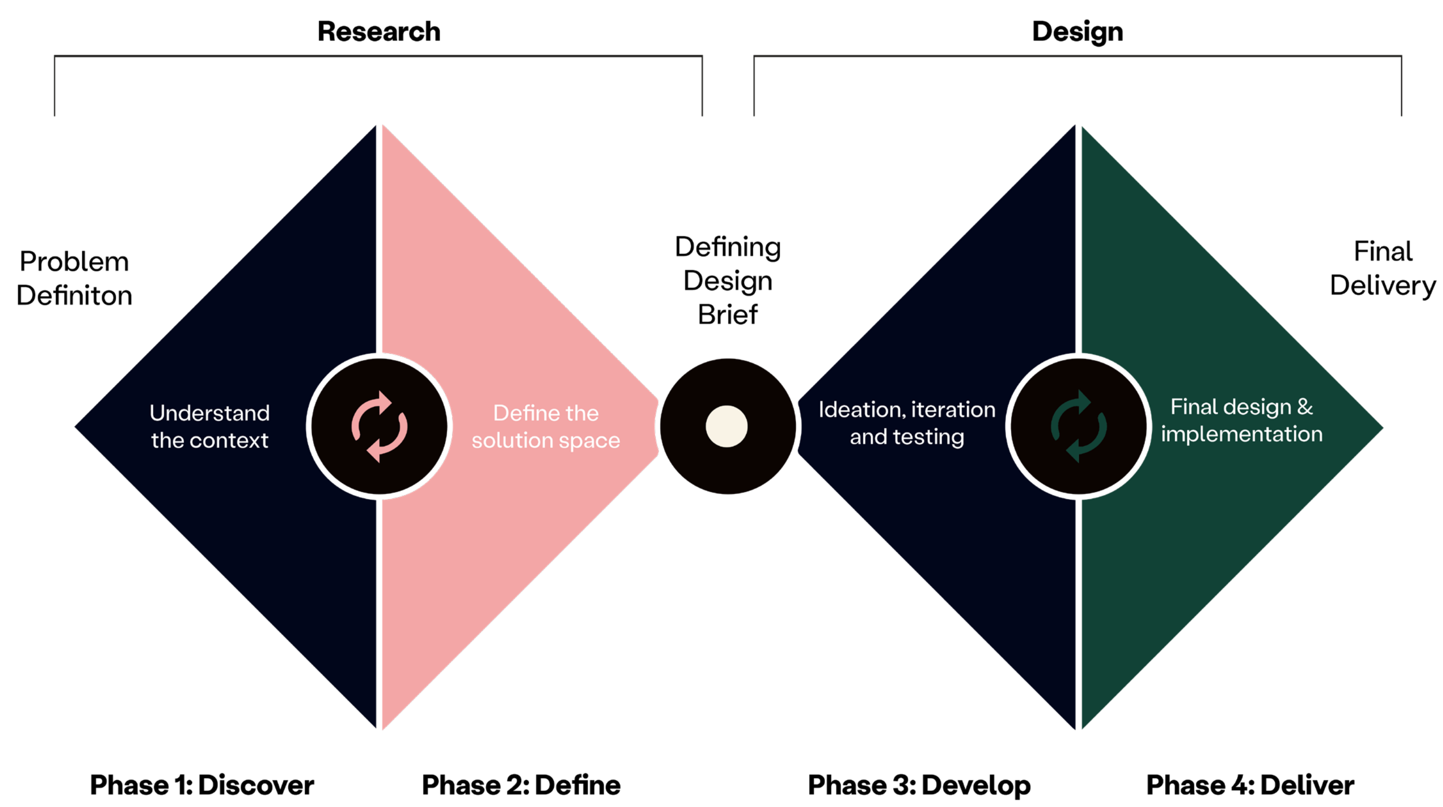


Figure 3. Visual overview of the project approach, structured using the Double Diamond

1.5 CONTENT OF THE REPORT

With the double diamond model (shown on the previous page) as a leading structure, every step made during this graduation is combined and visualised in figure 4. This gives a more detailed overview of all the steps you can expect to read about and how they are interconnected. It also shows where the step belongs relative to the double diamond (top of figure) and in which chapter (bottom of figure). Accordingly, the double diamond, the report's content is divided into four stages: Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver.

Discover (chapter 2/3)

This first phase is all about diverging. The context of the project is being discovered, and a lot of different information is gathered and analysed. This phase exists out of three main parts.

- **Company context:** Internal interviews and coaching sessions lead to a holistic view of the company. This is essential to integrate the literature with the current company situation.

- **Literature review:** This review is conducted to understand what 'effective feedback' looks like in the creative context and out of its existing components. The literature review is concluded with a theoretical framework. This framework will function as a foundation for the data analysis.

- **Data-Analysis:** All old feedback cases are being collected for the qualitative data analysis. This analysis discovers nineteen patterns that will be clustered into the nine major bottlenecks found in the old feedback cases.

Define (chapter 4/5)

In this phase, the found data is converged again. The nine bottlenecks are narrowed down to four potential avenues with their own focus points and are guided by a rationale. Then, a feasibility vs impact matrix is applied to scope down to one specific avenue. For this avenue, the final design brief is written. This brief consists of a design goal, design statement and design principles.

Develop (chapter 6)

This third phase describes the development of the tool and delivers the final concept. During this phase, ideation took place, and several iterations were made in collaboration with students, employees of Dentsu and actual clients. The final concept is delivered through a concept blueprint. Furthermore, the segments of which it is composed and several characteristics of the tool are explained.

Deliver (chapter 7/8/9)

In this last phase, the final design is presented as a user scenario, explaining how a client would use the tool, a process flow scheme and a working prototype. Besides, the tool is validated in an actual brand identity creation process. To conclude the project, there is an overall conclusion, a set of future recommendations, and additional limitations.

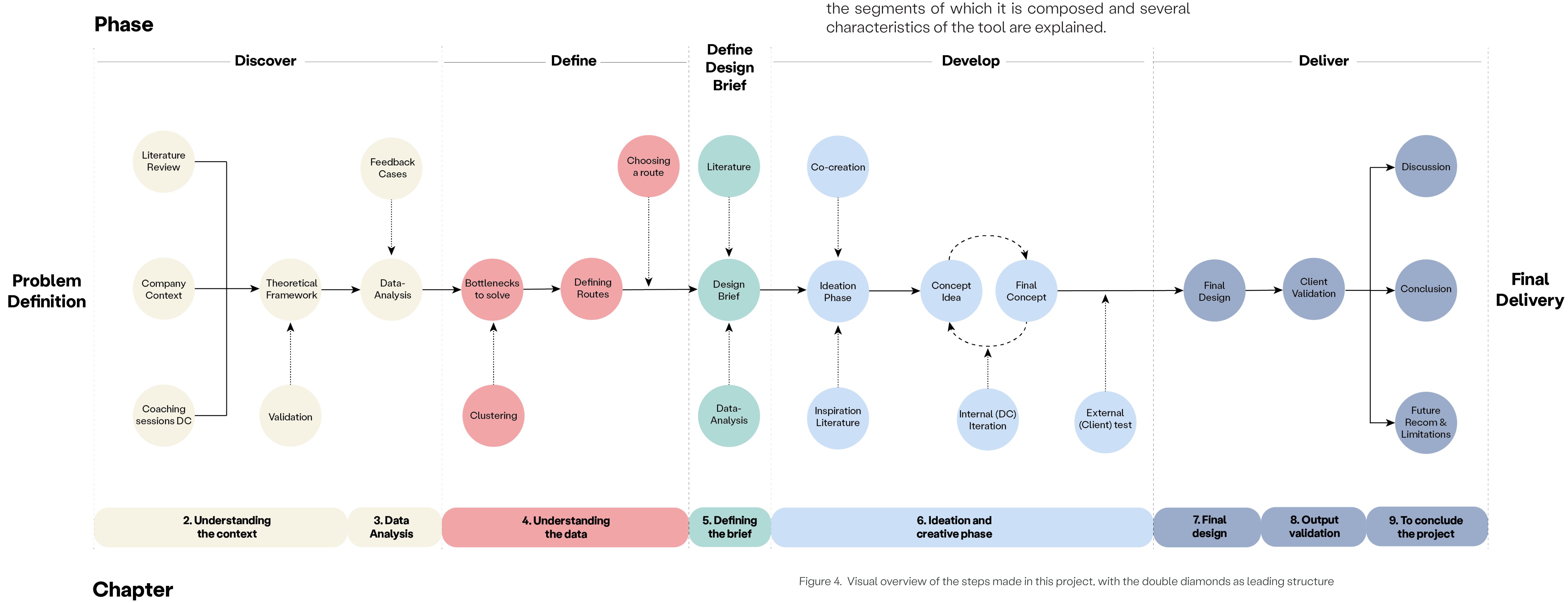


Figure 4. Visual overview of the steps made in this project, with the double diamonds as leading structure

1.6 KEY INSIGHTS OF THE CHAPTER

The outcome of a brand identity process must resonate with its customers, differentiate the brand from competitors, and at the same time, represent what an organisation can and will do over time and in the future. To make sure all these different elements are properly incorporated into one brand identity, good communication between client and agency is essential.

Within Dentsu Creative Amsterdam, communication concerning the creative work is established through the client providing feedback on the presented work. However, this feedback is usually quite unclear. Making the feedback ineffective and the feedback process inefficient.

Therefore, this graduation project aims to develop an approach that helps the client give more effective feedback during the brand identity creation process.

To make the first steps in achieving this goal, the following chapter looks at the current brand identity creation process within DCA and how effective feedback in the creative context is given according to the literature.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

The first chapter introduced the project and its context. This chapter aims to dive deeper into this context. It will zoom in on how the current brand identity process of Dentsu Creative works, what stakeholders are present, and how relevant literature defines feedback as ‘effective’. Based on this literature review, a theoretical framework for effective feedback on creative work will be created as a foundation for the rest of the project. Additionally, the framework will be compared with existing frameworks found in traditional communication literature to validate its functioning. This framework will, later on, be used during the data analysis and design phase.

02

2.1 THE CURRENT PROCESS

To understand how feedback is currently provided within the brand identity creation process, it is essential to have a complete picture of the BICP and who is involved. Chapter 1 already briefly touched upon a simplified version of the standard brand identity creation process of DCA.

However, as shown in figure 5, the brand identity creation process is more elaborated and each step has its specific deliverables. At the beginning of the process, there is a session with the client to decide which phases will be touched upon and which are unnecessary. For example, some clients come in with a clear positioning or strategic foundation. This means they would skip Phases 1-3 and only come in for a verbal and visual Identity.

In creating a visual identity, the following key players are involved. A detailed description can be found in appendix B.

Dentsu Creative	**Client**
Brand strategist	Client marketing team
Brand Designer	Client contact person
Project Manager	Owner/founder
Account manager	
MT member	

Everyone has a different role in the process Dependent on the phase the project is in, other disciplines work along.

From the client side, this will mainly depend on what kind of organisation they are. Smaller ventures will often not only work with marketers but also their owner or founder will participate in the identity process. The inclusion of a founder is an important factor as they can be visionary and have concrete ideas about the direction the company should go or what the identity should look like. Bigger companies often function from within a marketing team, with one dedicated contact person linked to DCA. Multinational clients might even have several marketing teams from all over the world working along, making it an extra challenge to align everyone.

As it is now clarified what the identity creation process looks like and who is involved. The feedback process concerning the BICP is introduced.

Within the project phases, there are several presentation rounds and iterations until the client is happy with the strategy or identity. The client gives feedback on these different presentations to articulate their opinion and vision. Currently, there is no communal way of asking and providing this feedback. It is up to the client to choose.

PHASE 1 **RESEARCH & DISCOVERY**	PHASE 2 **BRAND POSITIONING & ARCHITECTURE**	PHASE 3 **BRAND JOURNEY MAPPING**	PHASE 4 **VERBAL IDENTITY & NAMING**	PHASE 5 **VISUAL IDENTITY DESIGN**	PHASE 6 **BRAND IDENTITY ROLL-OUT**
Summary Alignment upon the detailed approach and immersion into the landscape, ambitions and goals to create a strong foundation for the collaboration.	**Summary** Through a combination of workshops and autonomous ideation and copywriting we create the new brand strategy and architecture for NewCo.	**Summary** Creation of a high level journey map to create the design brief, plan the roll out of the brand and identify key win area's to focus on. On those area's we will run an opportunity workshop and ideate around concepts presented in one pagers.	**Summary** Building further on the brand positioning we will develop NewCo's verbal identity encompassing three key components: naming, voice and messaging.	**Summary** Next we develop NewCo's visual identity, which is a system of visual expressions working together across broad touchpoints to excite and delight, reinforcing the brand's positioning and value proposition.	**Summary** Rolling out the new brand across touchpoints in the full journey.
Deliverables Project Charter document Findings Presentation Debrief	**Deliverables** Final Brand Strategy Brand Architecture Manifesto	**Deliverables** Brand Journey Map Onepager concepts Design brief	**Deliverables** Brand Name Nomenclature Verbal identity guidelines with example executions	**Deliverables** Visual identity with example executions Visual identity Guidelines	**Deliverables** Production of assets to make the brand come alive.
Timing 3 weeks	**Timing** 5 weeks	**Timing** 3 weeks	**Timing** 5 weeks	**Timing** 8 weeks	**Timing** TBD

Figure 5. A detailed overview of all phases in the brand identity creation process

The most commonly used feedback methods:
- Direct comments within the presentation slides from individual feedback givers
- Direct comments within the presentation slides with summarised feedback
- E-mails sent to the PM with individual feedback from different stakeholders
- E-mails sent to the PM with summarised feedback
- Summarized feedback sent to the PM within a PDF or other text-processing tools

In general, DCA gives no "debrief" on the received feedback to check whether there is a mutual understanding of the interpretation. Only when feedback is unclear a call is scheduled. Usually, the received feedback is accepted and considered by the dedicated designer or strategist. Whereafter they implement it into the presented work and make an iteration. This repeats until the work is signed off (accepted). Figure 6 shows a process including a strategy and visual identity phase.

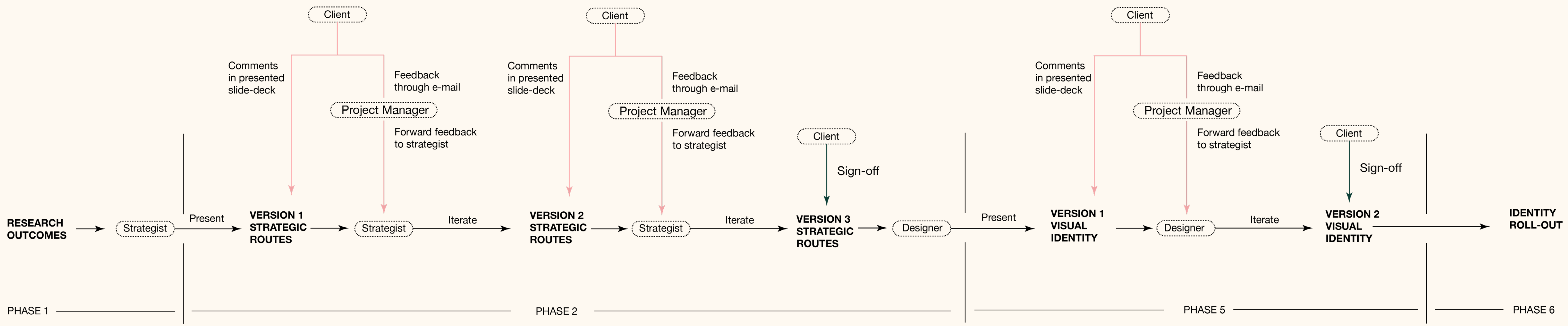


Figure 6. Visual overview of all steps taken in a brand identity creation process

2.2 EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK IN LITERATURE

This section of the report reviews the existing literature on feedback. It will cover when different kinds of feedback are effective, to be more specific: feedback in education, feedback in organisations, and feedback explicitly given on creative work. This review is done to see what aspects are deemed important in feedback literature to create a theoretical framework for effective feedback in a creative process. This theoretical framework will function as the foundation for the qualitative research showcased in Chapter 3.

When talking about feedback, there is no clear definition in Literature. Within the last 50 years, a large body of research has been done on the topic of feedback without a consistent pattern of results and many conflicting findings (Shute, 2007). Therefore, it is relevant for this graduation project to define what kind of feedback we are talking about, as it is important to have a common understanding.

How feedback is defined has a lot to do with the context it is given in. Feedback is often either given on an organisational level (Lechermeier & Fassnacht, 2018) or at an educational level (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Secondly, we can split up feedback given on personal performance: information provided to individuals about the quantity or quality of their past performances (Balcazar et al.,1985), and feedback given on content: information that is communicated with the intent of improving the prototype under review (Harrison & Rouse, 2014).

For the purpose of this review, educational and organisational feedback will be covered briefly. This is what the majority of traditional research focuses on, making it interesting to see what factors are deemed important from their perspective of effective feedback. However, the main focus and final segment is a more elaborate review of effective feedback given on work specifically in a creative context.

What makes feedback effective at the educational level?

In literature, feedback at the educational level is often described as formative feedback, which is defined as "information communicated to the learner's thinking or behaviour for the purpose of improving learning" (Shute, 2007). It aims to reduce the difference between a student's current performance or understanding and the desired goal. This can be achieved in a few ways; It can note a gap between a current level of performance and the desired level of performance, it can reduce the cognitive load of students, and finally, it can provide information that can be useful for fixing mistakes in the way tasks are done, wrong approaches used, or misunderstandings. However, for this kind of corrective feedback to be effective, it is emphasised that the feedback always has to be specific (Shute, 2007).

To dive deeper into the effectiveness of feedback in education, it is interesting to look at a theoretical model in figure 7 created by (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In their article, they claim that effective feedback from teacher to student has to give an answer to the following three questions: Where am I going, how am I going, and where to next? These questions can be asked on four different levels. Dependent on which level the feedback is focussed.

- Feedback about a task or product: This feedback aims to provide information on whether work is correct or incorrect. This might include feedback on acquiring more, different, or correct information.

- **Feedback aimed at the process used to create a product or complete a task**: This is more specific to the processes underlying a task. This feedback concerns information about relations in the environment or between people.

- **Feedback to students can be focused at the self-regulation level:** Self-regulation is when students can use their commitment, control, and confidence to monitor their plan of action or make changes to it to help themselves learn better.

- **Feedback can be personal in the sense that it is directed to the self:** This feedback can be described as praise addressing. For example, good girl or good boy. This is not seen- as effective but is added because it is often present in a classroom. It usually contains little task-related information.

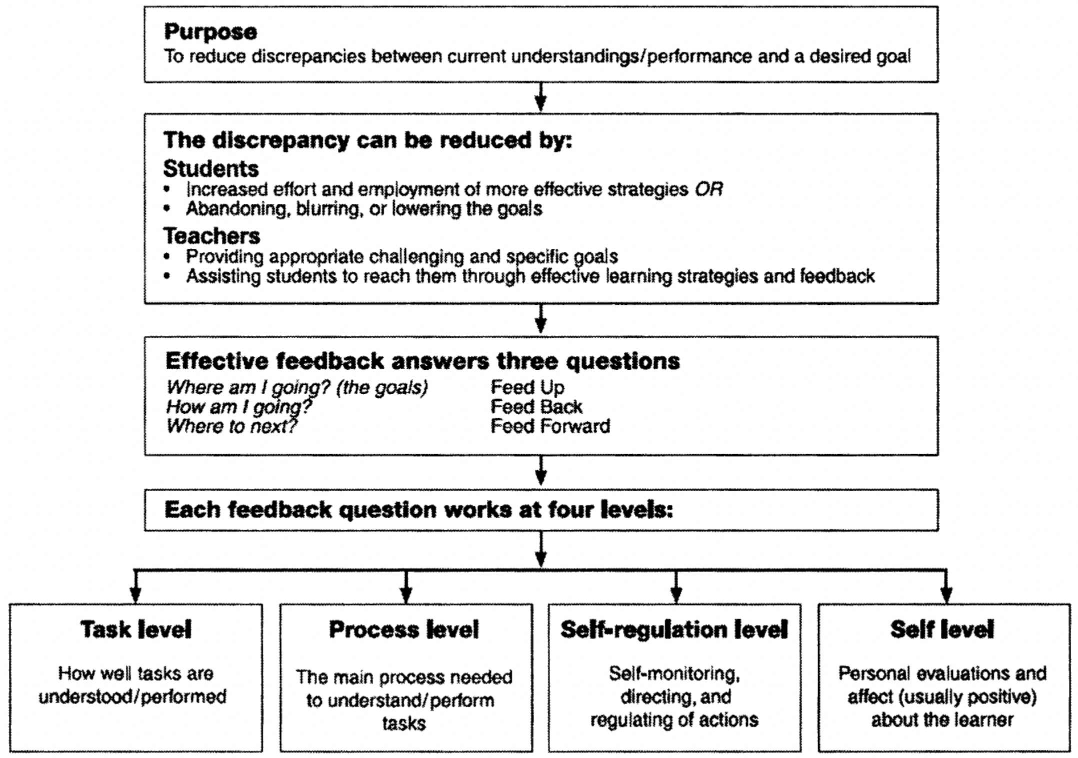


Figure 7. Theoretical model on effective feedback in the educational context

It is valuable for this project to include these different levels as it proves that these three questions are not only relevant for effective feedback given on an underlying task or self-regulating level. But also in different aspects, like feedback on a task. Which is relatable to the researched data of this project.

To underline the relevance of this model. In a revisit of the article: the power of Feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) by (Zierer et al, 2020). They conclude that providing feedback in the classroom is more effective the more information it contains, just like answering the three questions provided in the model (fig 1). Other research underlines this conclusion, reporting that feedback is significantly more effective when it gives details on how to improve an answer than when just stating something is wrong or right (Shute, 2007). This is more commonly referred to as actionability in feedback.

As a conclusion of the literature review Shute (2007) created general guidelines for providing effective feedback in an educational context:

1. Focus feedback on the task, not the learner
2. Provide elaborated feedback to enhance learning
3. Present elaborated feedback in manageable units
4. Be specific and clear with feedback messages
5. Keep feedback as simple as possible
6. Reduce uncertainty between performance and goals
7. Give feedback, preferably written or via computer

Feedback given to students is relevant as we can make a parallel between students and a design team trying to perform a task given by the teacher or client. However, there are some contradicting limitations. As the role of the feedback giver: the novice and expert is switched. The designer is the expert, and the client is the novice in terms of expertise in design. But the novice is the one giving the feedback. You could therefore argue that the client should not be commenting on how to design "better" but instead only give feedback on how to align with the client's vision. For that sake, it is essential that they can articulate their preference in the expert's language as it is otherwise hard to explain what they mean.

What makes feedback effective at the organisational level?

Due to the relevance of performance feedback in effective performance management, traditionally, performance feedback has attracted much attention from scholars in many different disciplines (Lechermeier & Fassnacht, 2018). Most literature on feedback, therefore, emphasises feedback based on individual performance in organisations. Generally, research on this type of feedback focussed on three components: the feedback message, the receiver, and the feedback giver.

In a review of performance feedback in an organisational context by Lechermeier & Fassnacht (2018), figure 8 shows a theoretical framework that was made to summarise the effects of performance feedback characteristics on feedback recipient reactions. All three before-mentioned components are treated as important actors in this model.

Furthermore, in this model, three factors are considered to give the main effect regarding feedback effectiveness. These are feedback source characteristics (how credible is the source and how much expertise do they have), feedback timing (when is the feedback given), and feedback valence (is it a positive or negative message).

- The feedback source: Feedback from a credible source is perceived as the most effective feedback. "As it positively affected the receivers perception of feedback accuracy and feedback satisfaction" (Lechermeier & Fassnacht 2018).

- Feedback valence: Positive feedback had a significant positive effect on the perceived effectiveness of the feedback. And the opposite was the case for negative feedback (Lechermeier & Fassnacht, 2018).

- Feedback timing: For feedback timing, Lechermeier & Fassnacht (2018) conclude that delayed feedback led to students remembering the feedback better and performing better in the educational context. In an organisational context, immediate feedback led to better results than delayed feedback. Unfortunately, for this project, no literature has been found considering whether the variable of timing influences the effectiveness and content of the feedback message itself.

Although performance feedback is not the same as feedback on creative work, there is certainly overlap in the actors involved and the perceived effectiveness of the message. And since most research has been done on this type of feedback, the conceptual framework in figure 8 is interesting to consider when building the theoretical framework for effective feedback on creative work.

What makes feedback effective in the creative context?

With the most common types of feedback covered, we move on to effective feedback, specifically in the creative scene. Recently, more research has been done on the importance of creative feedback. To be more specific in this term, feedback given by a client/teacher to a firm/student as an evaluation of the creative work to improve the novelty and usefulness.

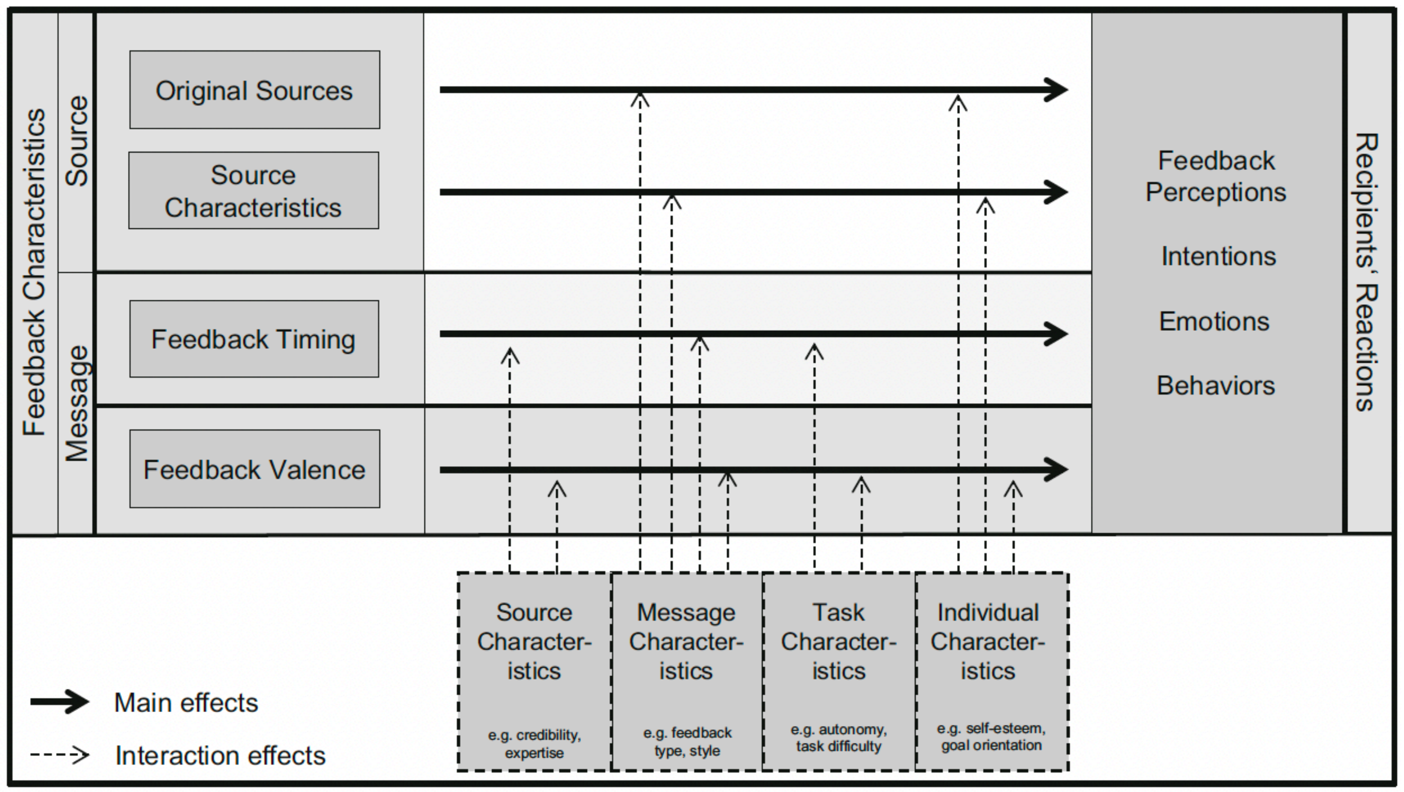


Figure 8. Theoretical framework of feedback in an organisational context

This is also called the creative revision process (Grimes, 2018). In more recent feedback research Tzeng (2022) has shown that client feedback is helpful for the alignment of creative work and the volatile and uncertain market demands, especially in creative industries. In design specifically, feedback plays a big role as it is the hold-on for a designer to work toward the next iteration (Yuan et al, 2016).

However, It is essential to do a specific review of the literature for this kind of feedback because creative work differs from regular learning or performance tasks. It is non-linear and ambiguous (Harrison & Rouse, 2014), and the assessment of creative work like design is intrinsically subjective (Ngoon et al, 2018). Wrongly given feedback on this process can disturb the creative process (Tzeng, 2022). It, therefore, asks for a tailored approach.

This section of the literature review will be about effective feedback and its barriers specific to a creative context. This section aims to produce a holistic view of the topic. This way, the theoretical framework will be as complete as possible. And gives a solid foundation to test the data. Several relevant actors and feedback mediums with according elements have been identified in the review. These will now be elaborated on.

The feedback message

The first and most obvious medium is the feedback message. The feedback message is the content of the actual feedback being given. According to Ngoon et al (2018), the feedback message deems to be actionable, specific and justified to be effective.

Specific feedback is direct and related to a particular part of the work rather than vaguely referent. It also helps if the specific feedback is positive by highlighting the work's strengths. As this encourages the creative (Ngoon et al, 2018), the positive and negative load of the feedback message is also called feedback valence and will be treated in more detail later.

Actionable feedback offers the creative a concrete step forward instead of just pointing out something is wrong or a problem. Actionable feedback is most effective early on in the creative process, as it prompts more revision for improvement (Ngoon et al, 2018).

Justifying feedback is important as it explains and substantiates a suggested change, which gives the creative a handle to understand why the feedback was given (Ngoon et al, 2018).

Feedback is like a bi-directional conversation.

Traditional literature often illustrates the feedback process as a one-way stream of information. It focuses on two individual actors, either feedback givers or feedback receivers. However, more recent literature appreciates the interactive nature of feedback. Where the feedback provider and feedback receiver mutually shape the feedback experience. Putting the responsibility of the feedback message not only in the hands of the giver but also to the receiver, as they have an active role in shaping the feedback they receive. They need to help each other to succeed (Harrison & Rouse, 2014).

Feedback receivers can do this by helping feedback providers understand the nature of the prototype by (1) presenting what they have already done and (2) what they plan to do based on the received feedback. This makes it possible for the feedback giver to deliver more specific, aligned, and, therefore, effective feedback (Harrison & Rouse, 2014).

An interactive feedback process also enables the feedback receiver to touch upon old ideas and potentially incorporate them into the prototype (Deininger et al, 2019). This gives the feedback giver a better understanding of what the design space looked like, how the prototype evolved, and where it originally came from. This is based on the research results that feedback receivers pick particular ideas and abandon others (Harrison & Rouse, 2014).

Harrison & Rouse (2014) also suggest that seeing feedback as an interaction shines new light on the common assumption about the preference to use informative over controlling feedback styles. And rather seeing them as complimenting styles than contradicting. This means the most effective feedback is often from a mix of the two. This gives more freedom and allows feedback providers to give positive, informative feedback and more controlling feedback by acknowledging external standards and expertise and advising creative workers about specific elements they could improve on in their prototypes. The latter only applies if the feedback giver has expertise on the particular comment he provides as an expert background gives more credibility and, therefore, feedback acceptance (Christofferson, 2021). This will later be elaborated on.

As mentioned before, feedback valence is about the positive or negative load of the feedback message. The feedback message should be positive for the highest chance of acceptance. In general feedback, receivers have more difficulties accepting negative and more controlling feedback (Tzeng, 2022). Controlling and negative feedback are expected to meet a considerable amount of resistance from the receiver and can disturb the creative process (Tzeng, 2022). However, as mentioned above, controlling feedback is needed to shine a light on all angles and see the whole feedback picture. But if possible, the feedback is preferably written in a positive tone of voice, as this encourages feedback acceptance as much as possible.

The feedback object
We have considered effective feedback based on the feedback message. But it is also interesting to analyse the characteristics of the object that the feedback is given on. As discussed in the previous paragraph. It is easy to argue that ineffective feedback only comes from the inabilities of the feedback giver. However, effective conversations are bidirectional, and so is an effective feedback session (Jug et al, 2019)

In literature, it is often a student or novice who gets feedback on his performance or task, which might imply why the characteristic of the feedback object is not touched upon so much. But as this interaction of power is switched in the case of a creative revision process. The expert has the influence to add a substantial difference in the way they present the feedback object.

Within Dentsu Creative, the feedback object is mostly shown through prototypes. Prototypes serve the function of showing a designer's thoughts to their clients in a tangible way (Deininger et al, 2019). There is no clear line in the literature on how high the fidelity of the feedback should be to get the most "effective feedback". Deininger et al (2019) conclude that a greater level of detail in a prototype leads to smaller variations, more focused feedback, and a higher rating of the concepts, giving more desirable results. However, the idea that a prototype should be highly detailed/have high fidelity to get the best feedback is sometimes challenged. Low-fidelity prototypes would invite more to contribute to the design. Too high-fidelity prototypes could convey the idea that input is unnecessary or impossible anymore because of the time and money invested (Viswanathan & Linsey, 2011). Deininger et al, (2019) also mention that in some studies, no significant difference is found between high and low-fidelity prototypes. These studies focussed on feedback specifically for usability issues in non-tangible, 2D prototypes like user interfaces and websites (Lim et al, 2006).

Besides the fidelity of the prototype. Research has also shown that developing various prototypes in parallel instead of only one to receive better feedback is useful (Holger et al, 2012). This is a common practice seen among designers. And also connects with Harrison & Rouse's (2014) conclusion that you should show the feedback provider what the design space looks like. By presenting multiple paths, the clients get a more holistic idea of the design space and what decisions have been made in the past.

The feedback debrief
The second influence the feedback receiver can have on the bidirectional nature of feedback is presenting what the agency will do with the received feedback & why. Perception and interpretation of the received feedback are key factors for the after that made iteration. As mentioned two paragraphs ago, Harrison & Rouse (2014) note that a way to do so is to let the feedback provider know what you plan to do based on the received feedback, as this gives confirmation and alignment on the feedback. In the context of Dentsu Creative, a way to ensure this perception is right is by implementing a debrief or confirmation of the feedback received in the feedback process. This can be done in a written document or over the phone.

The account or project manager: "a feedback mediator".
In recent research on feedback provided by clients to an advertising agency, another actor is being introduced to the feedback model. This research implies that earlier mentioned resistance in the feedback process created by negative or controlling feedback can be reduced by the 'feedback mediator'. This actor is introduced because they noticed that, in this case, the feedback receiver and feedback giver don't directly communicate with each other. In the feedback revision process at Dentsu Creative, this actor is also attending; the account or project manager. This actor serves as a bridge between the receiver and the giver. He can therefore fulfil an important and effective role in streamlining the feedback process if specified boundaries are met (Tzeng, 2022).

Three boundaries for the proper functioning of this feedback mediator are suggested:

- First, the account/project manager who plays the role of a feedback mediator should be actively engaged in the process to make sure the creative work created matches the needs of the client (Tzeng, 2022)

- Second, the feedback mediator must have strong communication skills so they can help to make an agreement between commercially oriented clients and creativity-oriented agency members. This also includes empathy for a client's negative feedback to show clear acceptance of external information. (Tzeng, 2022).

- Finally, In the study of Tzeng (2022), central to their role as feedback mediators, the account manager's intervention is most needed when the project is getting problems due to creative workers' resistance to client feedback. This means the feedback mediator will not play a big role when the creatives are open to external ideas. A big factor in this can be the previous relationship creatives have with the client. As also touched upon in the organisational feedback literature, past good results create credibility, which creates trust for feedback received and highers the feedback acceptance in future projects.

Adding to the importance of a good relationship with your client. In a recent report, Aprais & Warc, (2023) concluded after an extensive study on 1800 winners of creative effectiveness awards that the strength between an agency and client correlates with the effectiveness of the produced work. This does not only prove the importance of a good account manager but also the importance of having good communication in general. Or, in this case, effective feedback.

Influence of the idea-owner
Not only the acceptance of the agency is relevant. The creative work we make must, in the end, always comply with the ideas and acceptance of the client. It is therefore important to take a closer look at the characteristics of a client and if they are involved with the idea they give feedback on. This will greatly depend on the idea owner's actual involvement in the creative ideas' revision process. And their willingness to "pivot". Because research on entrepreneurs' psychological ownership of an idea shows, this restricts the revision of ideas as long as they identify with the thought of being this owner (Grimes, 2018). Although this parameter can't be changed, it is important to consider as Dentsu Creative has much to do with identities made for new ventures or entrepreneurs.

Influence of novices or experts giving feedback
Often, literature gives the insight that effective feedback should be specific. However, to be able to be specific, a feedback giver must know what they are talking about.

An issue seen in giving feedback to design work by the client is the difference between experts and novices. This is especially in my research of importance, as the feedback giver is potentially a novice in strategy or design. This is an interesting insight to consider, as in most reviewed literature, feedback is given by the 'expert'. Because of this, I took insights from an article by Marbouti et al (2016) about the difference in feedback between teachers and students. As this is a good example of the difference between novices and experts.

Several frameworks have been created to bridge the gap between these two and provide insights into the differences. Expert feedback contains more details, examples, and alternative ideas (Marbouti, et al, 2016), while novices give direct recommendations on how to improve the specific problem. Experts also use feedback space as dialogue to express and elaborate on their confusion (when not agreeing). This is done by giving indirect feedback in the form of asking thought-provoking questions rather than just grading the work by pointing out positive and negative points (Marbouti et al, 2016). The latter can result from a lack of confidence, preventing the novice from admitting they need clarification about a certain part of the work. Also, due to a lack of time, critical thinking ability, domain knowledge, and real-world experience, novices can start to focus on the domain they are most familiar with or notice at first. Which are often surface details (Ngoon et al, 2018). This means they give less attention to the other problems, creating an incomplete and unbalanced feedback process because they don't know what to look for and focus on.

Specifically, in the 'art' and thus visual domain, the experience of novice stakeholders influences their ability to give feedback as they have a greater tendency to provide emotional feedback based on personal taste (Deininger et al, 2019).

However, having the ability to focus on the right problem is not as black & white as being a novice or not. It is also important to note the context of the clients. They can hugely vary in their backgrounds and experiences, influencing the type and depth of feedback they give. Some clients might be focused on visuals, while others may be focused on function or the underlying idea of the prototype/creative work (Deininger et al, 2019). This difference In background and expertise may not only affect the quality of the feedback. It can also give ambiguity in the feedback and create contradictions (Yen Yu-Chun et al, 2017). This can give designers a hard time interpreting and effectively acting on the feedback (Anbang Xu et al, 2014). Showing the importance of the earlier described feedback debrief and feedback mediator.

The information described in this literature review is the foundation for the theoretical feedback model visualised in the next sub-chapter, which can be seen as a summary.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To conclude the literature review, three feedback actors and three message mediums were identified as present in an effective feedback process. These variables are presented in figure 9 and are all combined with the specific characteristics that literature stated as required for effective feedback. These characteristics are all connected to the according literature.

To understand the feedback system and how the actors and message mediums are connected two different models were created, see figure 10 & 11.

The difference between the models is the amount of actors. The first model in figure 10 is straightforward as only two actors are involved. The second model, shown in figure 11, includes an additional project/ account manager who acts as a feedback mediator.

This feedback mediator has two responsibilities:

- Check whether the send feedback by the client is interpreted correctly by sending a feedback debrief.
- Check if the iteration made by the designer/ strategist is in line with the previously received feedback.

This mediation task gives a more fluent process for arriving at an agreement between creatives and clients.

The link for a feedback debrief between the feedback receiver and the feedback giver remains. Because the feedback receiver can also still send a feedback debrief to ensure they interpreted the feedback right.

A theoretical framework for effective feedback in the creative process			
What?	**Actor/Medium**	**In context of DCA**	**Characteristics for effective feedback**
1 .Feedback receiver	**Actor**	- This is the strategist or designer who made the creative work/presentation.	- Has to accept the feedback *(Tzeng, 2022, Christofferson, 2021)*. - Has to interpret the feedback in the correct way *(Harrison & Rouse, 2014)*.
2. Feedback giver	**Actor**	- This is the client giving the feedback on the creative work/presentation.	- Shouldn't have too much psychological ownership over the idea *(Grimes, 2018)*. - Has to be percieved as credible, in particular when giving negative or controlling feedback *(Lechermeier & Fassnacht 2018)*. - Has to be internally aligned when concerning a feedback 'team' *(Yen Yu-Chun et al, 2017, Anbang Xu et al, 2014)*
3. Feedback mediator (when present)	**Actor**	- This is the account or project manager of the concerning project	- Has to actively align the creative outcome with the clients brief/feedback (feedback object alignment) *(Tzeng, 2022)*. - Has to mediate an agreement between commercialy-oriented clients and creative-oriented team-members *(Tzeng, 2022)*. ▪ These 2 conditions apply when there is resistance to client feedback` by the creatives
4. Feedback object	**Medium**	- This is the creative work. Which can be strategy, visual or verbal identity.	- Has to contain several parralel prototypes / concepts *(Holger et al, 2012)* - Has to give efficient understanding about the design space *(Harrison & Rouse, 2014)*
5. Feedback message	**Medium**	- This is the actual feedback given by the client	- Has to be justified *(Ngoon et al, 2018)* - Has to be specific *(Ngoon et al, 2018, Hattie & Timperley, 2007, Zierer et al, 2020)*. - Has to be actionable *(Ngoon et al, 2018, Shute, 2007, Marbouti et al, 2016)*. - Has to cover the whole feedback object *(Deininger et al, 2019)* - Has to combine controlling & informative feedback *(Harrison & Rouse, 2014)*. - Allows for thought provoking questions to show confusion *(Marbouti et al, 2016)*. - Preferably written (*Shute, 2007)*
6. Feedback debrief	**Medium**	- This is the confirmation send by DCA to the client to check wheter they interpreted the feedback right	- Has to confirm that the message was received and interpreted as intended *(Harrison & Rouse, 2014)*.

Figure 9. Theoretical framework

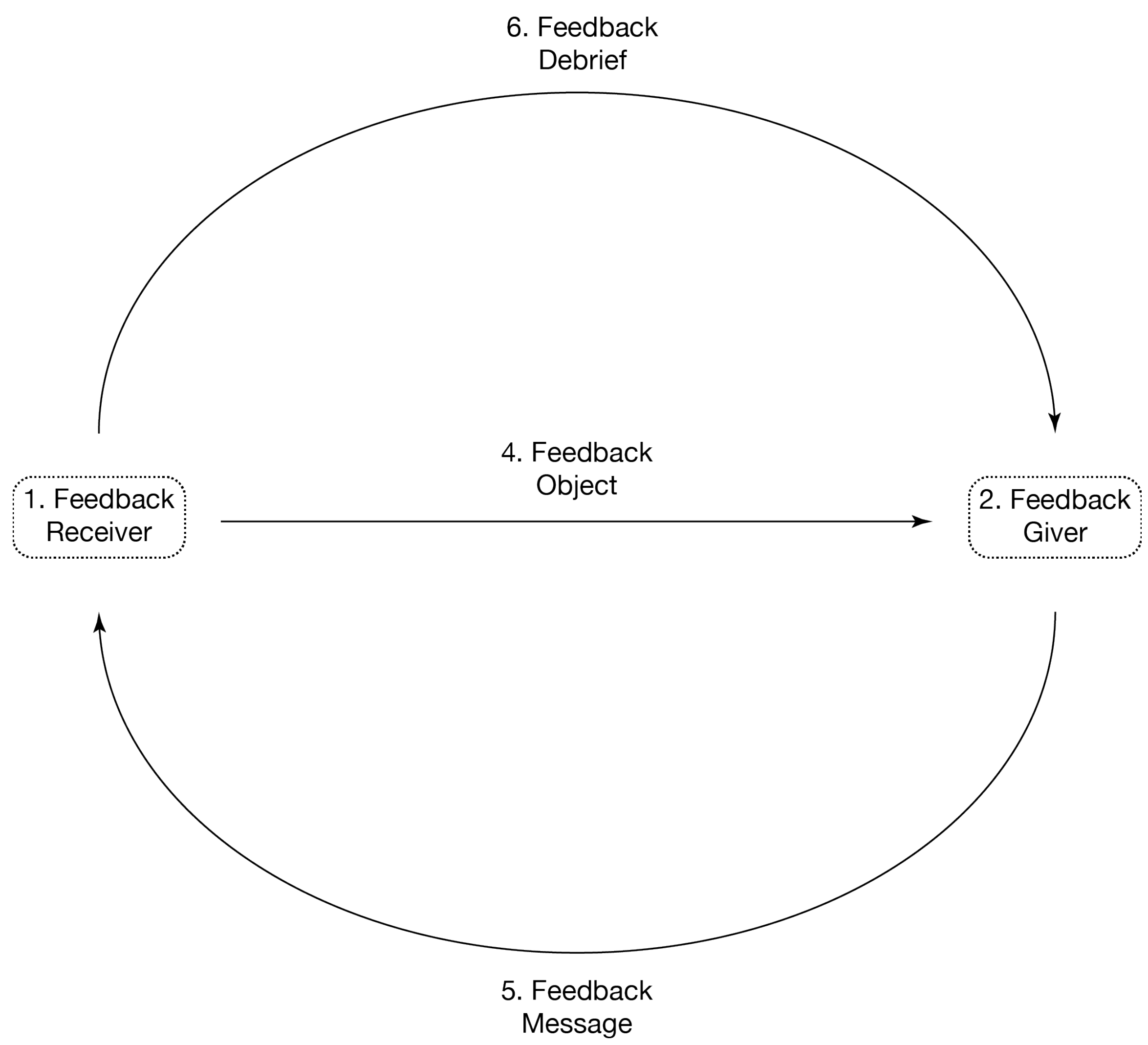


Figure 10. Feedback model based on literature review without mediator

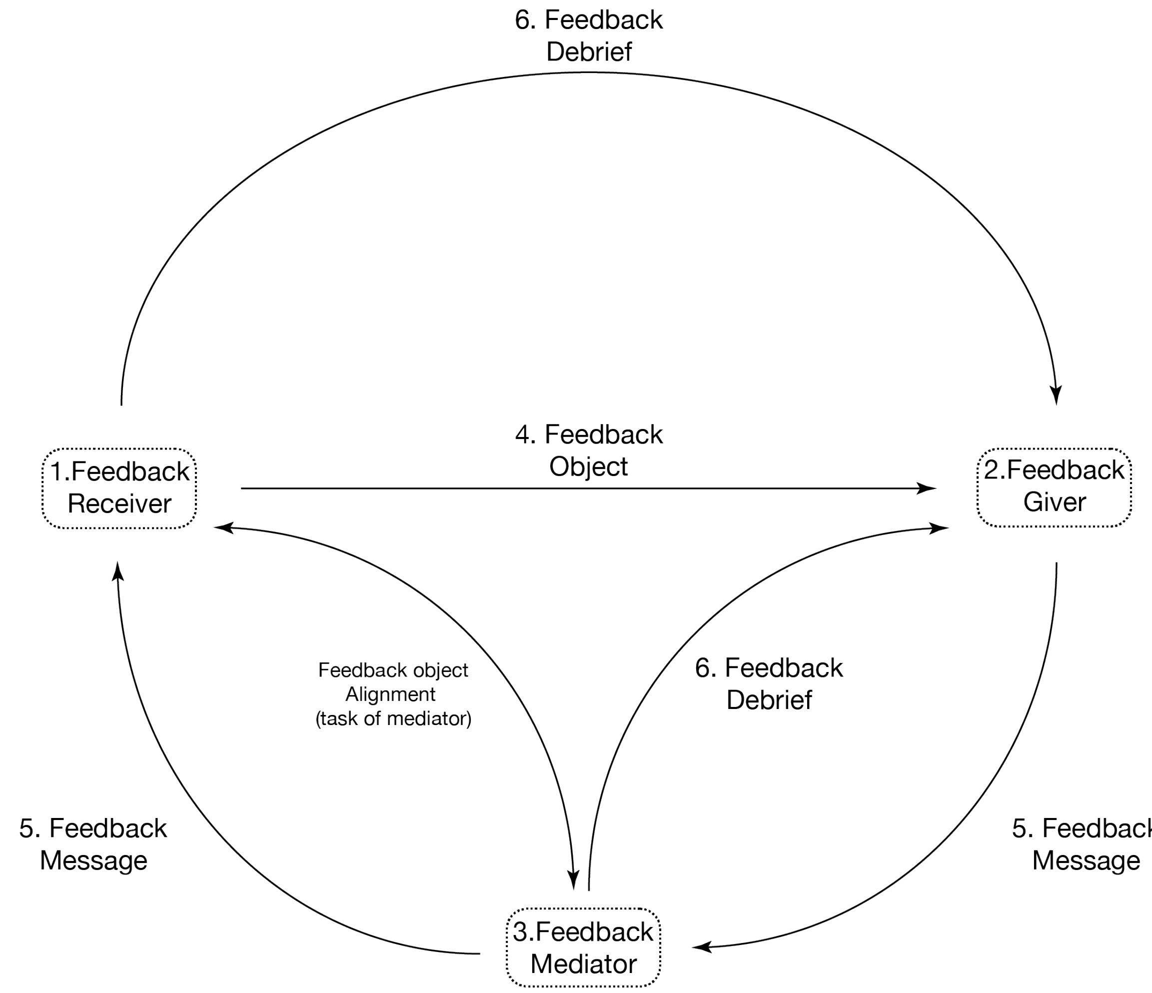


Figure 11. Feedback model based on literature review without mediator

2.4 FRAMEWORK VALIDATION

To validate the interactive feedback system shown in the previous section. Communication systems found in traditional communication literature are addressed. The distinction between linear one-way and non-linear interactive and transactional communication models is a commonly treated subject (Uma Narula, 2006).

Of these three models, it is interesting to take a closer look at the interactive model. The interactive communication model describes communication as a process in which participants alternate positions as sender and receiver and generate meaning by sending messages and receiving feedback (Schramm, 1997). This means that, rather than seeing communication as a linear, one-way process, the interactive model incorporates feedback, making communication more interactive and a two-way process. As you can see in figure 12 this model has many similarities with the created feedback model of figure 10.

Compared to figure 10, figure 11 creates a unique and novel communication scenario because it adds an extra variable to the regular communication model.

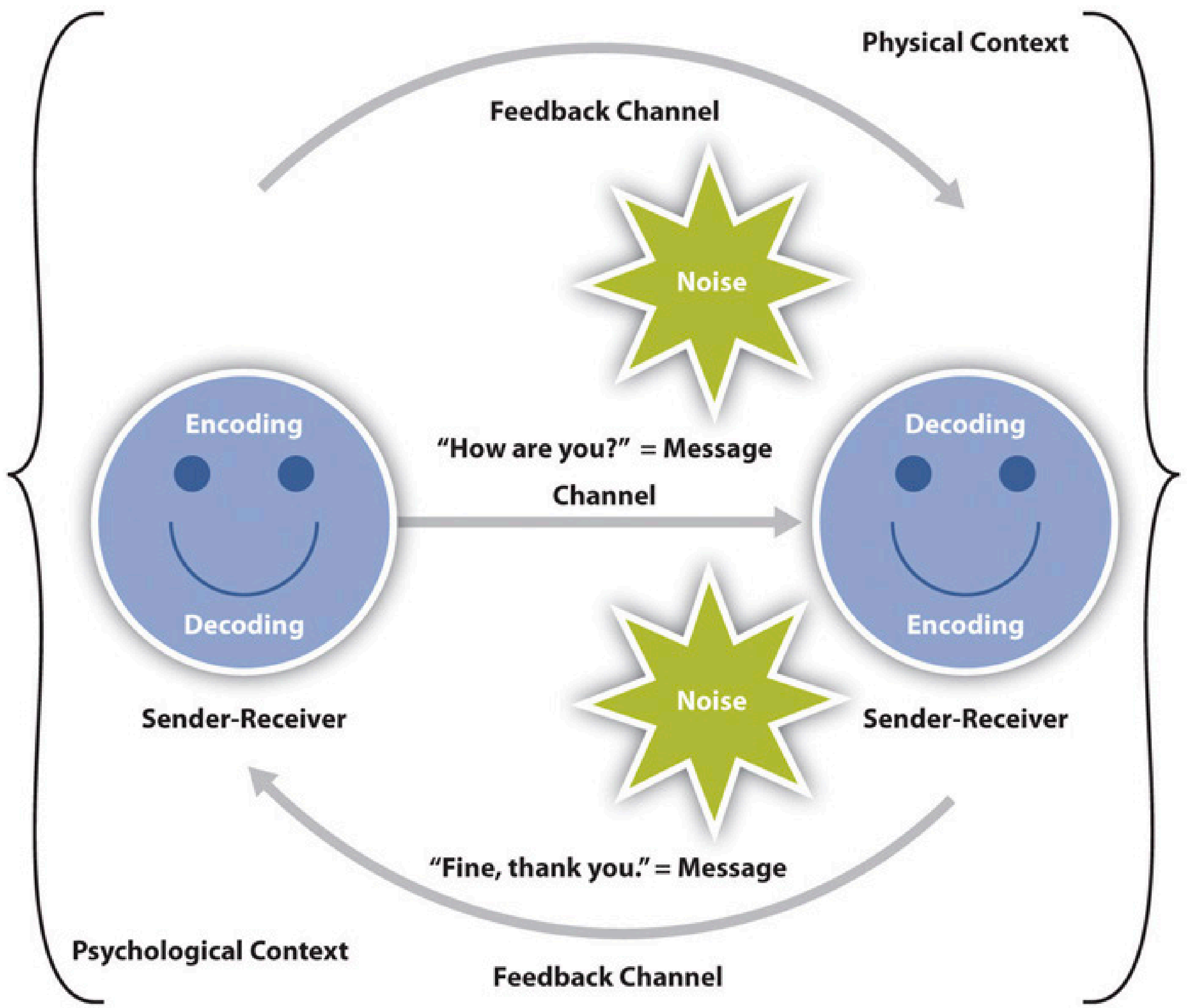


Figure 12. interactive communication model (Communication Models | Communication for Professionals)

2.5 KEY INSIGHTS OF THE CHAPTER

The visual identity process consists of 6 phases. In each phase, different disciplines are working along. Each relevant phase consists of several rounds of feedback (dependent on how well the process develops).

Currently, there is no communal way of asking and giving this feedback. It is up to the client to choose what medium they use. This current approach of 'no approach' is possibly the main driver behind the ineffectiveness of the feedback. But what is effective feedback?

Based on the conducted literature review, a theoretical framework for effective feedback in the creative process was developed. This framework emphasises the importance of 3 essential actors and mediums for the generation of effective feedback. To function at their full potential, these six factors must comply with a set of characteristics.

This framework is the foundation for the data analysis on old feedback conducted in the next chapter. It functions as guidance to spot bottlenecks in the feedback and patterns between the different feedback cases.

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter gives an overview of all the insights found in the analysed data. This data exists from old feedback cases between Dentsu Creative and its clients. The data is analysed with the theoretical framework found in Chapter 2 as a foundation. This resulted in the majority of discovered patterns. However, new insights were also retrieved during the analysis, adding to the existing literature. The insights are presented in 9 clusters that consist of the found patterns. Each pattern is accompanied by an illustrative quote or visual. These clusters are labelled as the main 'bottlenecks' for effectiveness in feedback found during the data analysis.

03

3.1 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Collecting the data

The data concerning this analysis are nine old brand identity creation projects from the P&I department of DCA. To give this process a solid structure, a directory was made for each project linked to a project template (appendix C). This template gave space for each relevant project phase. A phase is considered relevant for the analysis when there is feedback delivered by the client.

- Phase 2: Strategic routes
- Phase 4: Visual identity
- Phase 5: Verbal identity

The data was differentiated per feedback round into:

- The feedback object: The work that has been presented to the client.
- The feedback message: The actual feedback regarding the feedback object.

All feedback objects were delivered as presentations of the creative work in the form of Google slides. The feedback messages were delivered in various mediums, from PDFs, E-mails, google slides, and EXCL sheets to notion documents.

Conducting the analysis

After collecting the data, the feedback comments were structured and visualized per project to enable a clear analysis.

The next step was to reduce the data from each project by clustering the different feedback comments and statements. The majority of the clusters align with the insights from the framework created in the previous chapter. However, some detected clusters are novel and were not found in any literature before. The clusters of the individual projects were then one after the other compared throughout each project to find if they showed patterns of ineffective feedback between the data. Only then were they seen as a relevant insight (19 patterns). Appendix D gives a more elaborated overview of which pattern was found in what feedback case.

These patterns were then again clustered into tangible groups, clarifying the main reasons why the feedback within the data was ineffective. These groups are labelled as the major "bottlenecks". In figure 13 you can see these nine major bottlenecks and their corresponding patterns. They form the basis for the design space framed in the next chapter.

In the remaining of this chapter, a brief explanation per bottleneck will be provided. Additionally, It will be linked to literature or when relevant to the theoretical framework.

To provide a deeper overview of the recovered insights appendix E elaborates on all nine different clusters that were found. The conclusions of the clusters are visualised in a table, and dependent if the insight comes from a feedback comment, it is accompanied by an illustrative quote or visual (pratt, 2009). Furthermore, the tables include how the quote or visual illustrates the pattern.

Figure 13. Nine major bottlenecks and their corresponding patterns

Bottleneck 1: The client doesn't tell us why

Clients might give feedback on what they like or don't like but seem to miss the essential part about telling why this is the case. Any form of justification is often absent in the feedback. This happens with positive feedback, negative feedback, controlling feedback and even whole lines of copy are sometimes changed. This entire cluster can be connected to the theoretical feedback model in figure 9 as it aligns with the guideline for the feedback message to be justified.

Bottleneck 2: We dont't speak the same language

The data analysis showed two patterns concerning feedback givers having trouble articulating their opinion into feedback. This makes it hard for them to write what they mean and for DCA hard to understand. In theory, the agency and the client speak a different language. This language barrier becomes apparent when a feedback giver clearly moves out of his expertise. And when they use subjective buzzwords. This cluster links closely to the literature about novices who don't know how to properly articulate their opinion due to a lack of expertise (Ngoon et al, 2018), which can also explain why some clients start using buzzwords. The different use of vocabulary can be due to the different backgrounds the clients have as opposed to the agency (Deininger et al, 2019).

Bottleneck 3: The client is not internally algned

Feedback comments are not often not aligned with each other. This might be the case because feedback givers have different opinions. Unaligned feedback can be contradicting comments, or multiple feedback givers giving feedback with a slightly different nuance on the same element. This cluster links to the feedback characteristic of the theoretical framework in figure 9 that feedback has to be aligned to be effective.

Cluster 4: Owners pushing their opinion

Ownership of the problem can produce difficulties and biases, whether you are the contact person or the company founder. The feeling of ownership might put you in the position you push through your own opinion instead of contributing to a team effort. This cluster focuses on the company owner and contact owner. The cluster links to the second part of the theoretical framework in fugure 9. Which is about the feedback giver who should not have too much psychological ownership of the idea.

Bottleneck 5: The used medium has an influence

The medium used influences the effectiveness of the feedback. As different mediums show patterns of specific characteristics. The main differences are seen between long summarized texts and individual comments directly given on slides. Long texts can become messy and unspecific. Direct comments are often not justified and have the urge to prime the feedback of others. Each have their pros and cons.

Bottleneck 6: Clients don't know where to go

Clients sometimes don't know what they want, and they might change their minds during the process. However, knowing where you want to go is essential to work towards one final identity. As you otherwise end up with different feedback and opinions every session. This can make the BICP very inefficient.

Bottleneck 7: Poorly written feedback

To be able to give proper and understandable feedback. It is essential to structure your sentences and ensure the grammar and language use is correct. This is certainly not always the case. The feedback is, therefore, confusing to the reader and takes extra time to encode.

3.2 ANALYSIS OF 2 MODELS

Besides analysing the textual data in the feedback comments. A holistic feedback model was made based on the patterns found in the feedback process of DCA during the data analysis, see figure 14. This model was compared with the earlier created model (based on the theoretical framework) in figure 15. This comparison, resulted in the discovery of two more relevant patterns.

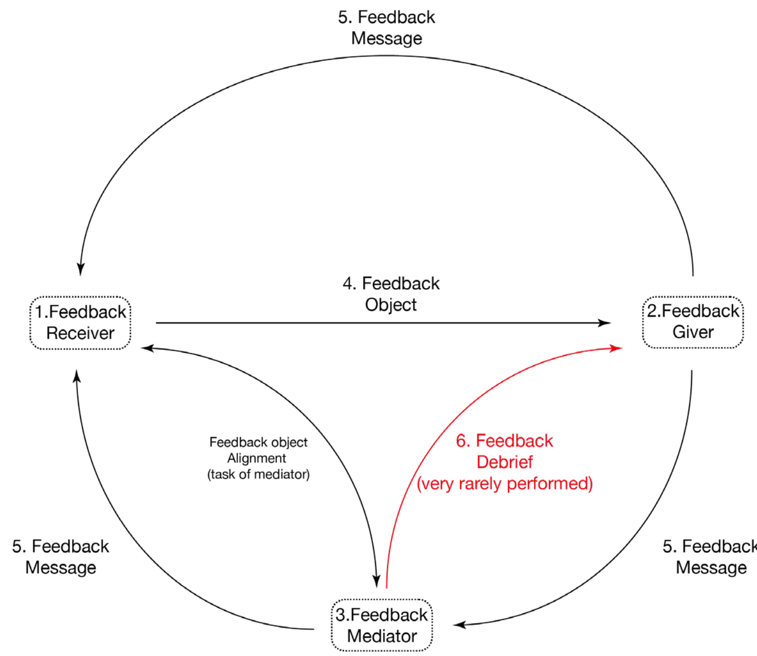


Figure 14. Feedback model based on the data analysis & company context

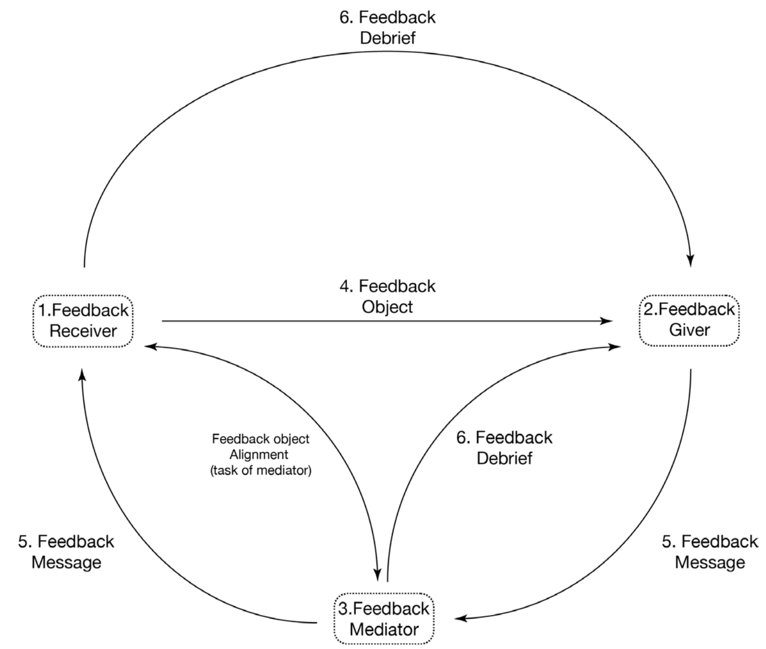


Figure 15. Feedback model based on literature review with mediator

Bottleneck 8: The mediator's role is partially skipped.

Firstly, striking about the current feedback situation is the inefficient use of the feedback mediator. As an account/project manager is present, they could play an essential role in the feedback process. However, by giving feedback directly accessible to the feedback receiver (designer/strategist), this potential role is often skipped.

Bottleneck 9: The debrief is skipped.

The feedback debrief is not by standard present in the DCA feedback process. Only rarely is this step performed. As seen in the feedback data, this was only done when there was a big misalignment of understanding between the client and the agency. Only on this occasion would a call be scheduled, while this is an essential link in the feedback system based on the literature.

3.3 KEY INSIGHTS OF THE CHAPTER

In the data analysis of the old feedback cases, 19 patterns regarding ineffective feedback were uncovered. The majority of them were found as a result of the theoretical framework. However, some identified patterns are new findings not previously found in the literature research.

These 19 patterns are clustered into nine tangible groups, giving various reasons why the feedback within the data was ineffective. For the rest of this graduation project, these groups will be labelled as the nine major bottlenecks:

- Feedback is poorly written
- Client don't know what they want
- Owners push their opinion
- Received feedback is not aligned
- The client does not speak the same language
- The feedback is not justified
- The used medium influences the feedback
- The mediators role is skipped
- The feedback debrief is often not executed

As there is some overlap between the bottlenecks and not every single one can be solved within this project's scope, the next chapter clusters the different bottlenecks into more concise and solvable avenues. The chosen avenue will help to decide what the final design space will look like.

UNDERSTANDING THE DATA

With chapter 3 introducing the nine bottlenecks. This chapter clusters the bottlenecks into potential avenues the project can take during the design phase. Each avenue is written out in a rationale to explain what it should solve, its content, and its relevance to the project. Solving all avenues would go out of the time scope of this project. Therefore, a decision has to be made about which direction to go. This is done by creating a solution hierarchy to clarify the most impactful bottlenecks. As a final step, a feasibility x impact matrix is created to decide which avenue to move on with.

04

4.1 CORRELATION & HIERARCHY

For the coming steps, the nine bottlenecks are converged even more. To identify if there are any common themes, correlations, and/ or causalities between them. This way, several problems can potentially be solved within one approach. To do so, all bottlenecks are characterised and structured under an actor of the theoretical framework, see figure 16. This helps to give more clarity and see if bottlenecks can be clustered or if there are any overlying themes.

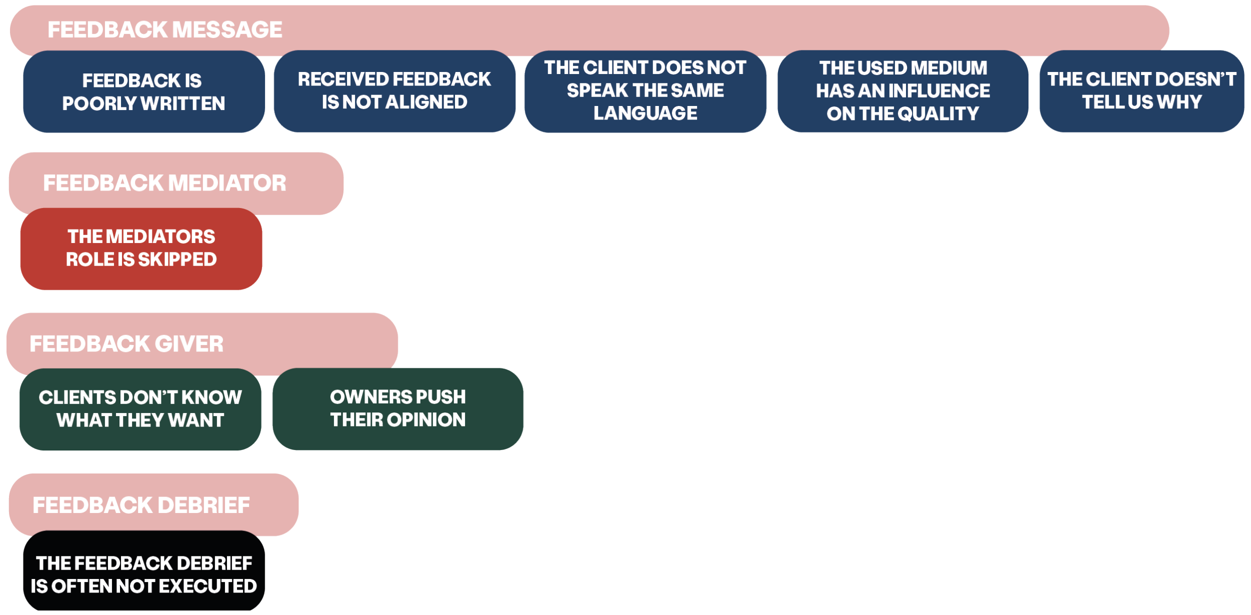


Figure 16. Clusters connected to the actors/medium in the theoretical framework

After structuring and analysing the different bottlenecks, they are formed into the four clusters shown in figure 17. These clusters will be the basis for the potential avenues that form the design space of this graduation project. From left to right: one is about helping clients explain themselves. The second one is about creating internal alignment within the client's team. The third one is about the execution of the feedback debrief. And the final avenue is about helping the clients understand what they want. In the next paragraph, a more elaborate description of the four different avenues will be provided.

Figure 17. The bottlenecks with overlying themes clustered into 4 clusters

When taking a closer look at the different avenues, one overarching theme has been identified that stands out. Namely the need for a common language for clients and agencies. This theme was originally a separately identified bottleneck and part of the cluster "explaining why". But has connections with almost every other bottleneck. This theme, therefore, acts like an umbrella over three approaches. This is visualised in figure 18. Besides the correlation of this overarching theme, there is also overlap within the different approaches. More specifically: The choice of a medium affects not only the justification but also the alignment of the client.

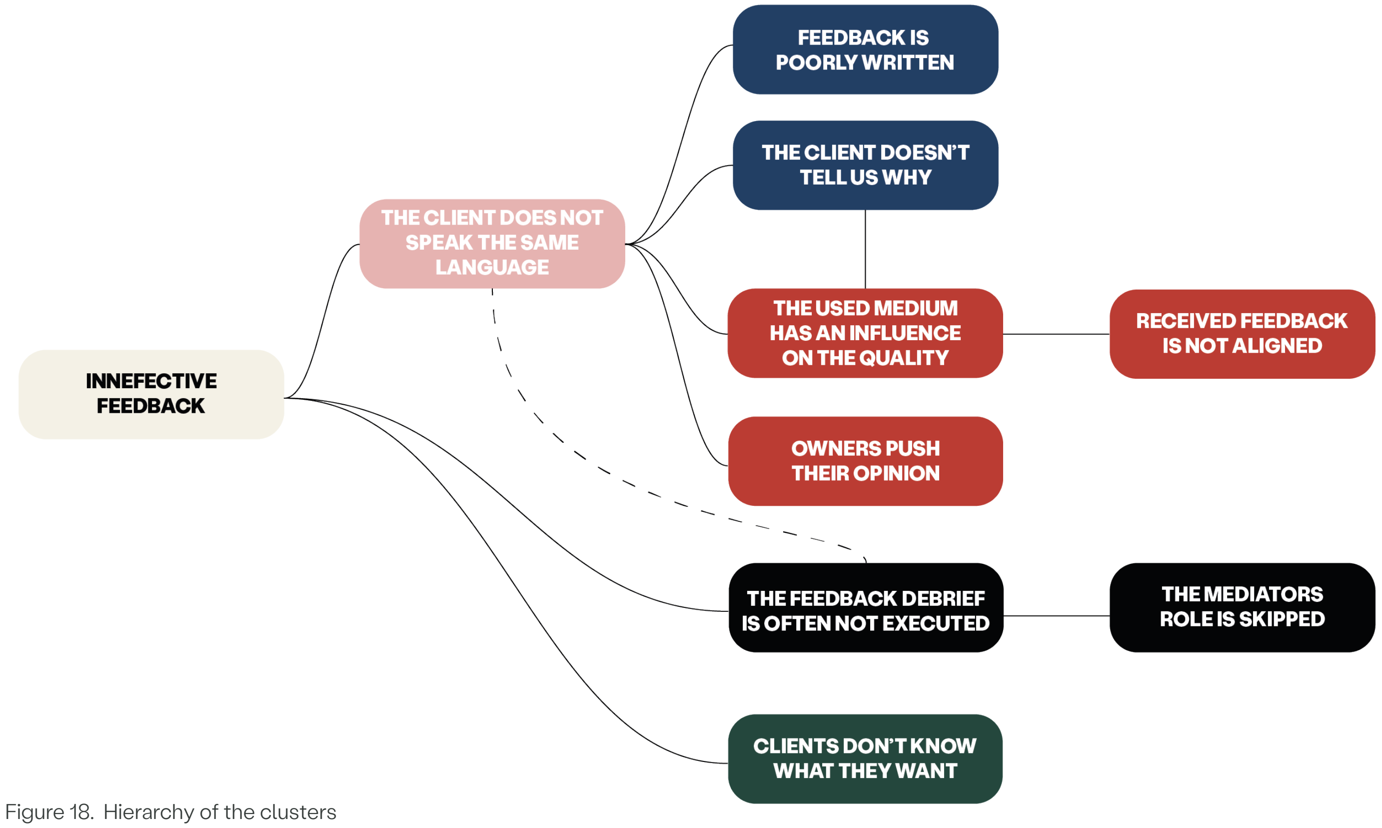


Figure 18. Hierarchy of the clusters

In addition to this overarching theme, figure 18 also shows a hierarchy within the different approaches. The approaches are placed in this hierarchy from top to bottom. This is relevant as the solution for one approach might solve several other bottlenecks or make others less relevant or happen less frequently.

- Speaking the same language is an overarching bottleneck. Poorly written feedback, not telling why, and unaligned feedback are part of the same problem. It hinders understanding what others mean or say. Solving these bottlenecks solves the majority of the problems.
- If the client speaks the same language as the agency, the debrief is no longer necessary as this would mean a clear understanding between both parties.
- When feedback is structurally justified and qualitatively written, the used medium is not of much influence anymore. Furthermore, aligning internally should become an easier and more streamlined process if a client can tell why they think something.
- Aligned client feedback with clear justification is a good step to help the client realise where they want to go with their venture/identity/strategy. This is, therefore, at the bottom of the hierarchy.

This hierarchy will be considered when deciding on the final design space.

4.2 THE 4 AVENUES

The clusters identified in the previous paragraph are elaborated on and written into four potential avenues the design space can move into. Every avenue is shortly described based on the different bottlenecks. In Appendix F, a more detailed rationale can be found for each avenue.

Avenue 1: (How to tell us why)
In this approach, the design space is focused on creating a way to help and motivate the client to explain themselves and tell why they have a specific opinion towards strategy or design work. In addition, as it is important to explain yourself clearly, it needs to focus on ways to provide guidance on writing the feedback in a structured and clear way.

"People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it" - Simon Sinek

Avenue 3: (structural debrief of the feedback)
In this approach, the focus lies on creating a structure and canvas for the debriefing of feedback in the brand identity process and proposing a plan to integrate this process in a structural way. This includes changing/deleting the current status quo of delivering feedback directly to the strategists and therefore making (more) use of the full potential of the mediator. This is relevant as everyone has different interpretations of the received feedback.

"All meanings, we know, depend on the key of interpretation" - George Eliot

Avenue 2: (Aligning the feedback message)
In this avenue, the design space is around the internal alignment of the feedback given by the client. This eventually has to result in single-minded feedback everyone agrees on. This is influenced by the client's opinion and the format in which they give feedback. As long summarised texts are more justified but less specific. And short comments directly on a presentation are more specific but less justified. Additionally, this route should tackle (product) owners who misuse their position in the hierarchy and push their opinion. This can result in later backlashes because not everyone is on board with the feedback.

"If everyone is moving forward together, then succes takes care of itself" - Henry Ford

Avenue 4: (What does the client want?)
This approach focuses on how to help the client get more grip on specifying where they want to go with the brand identity. Many clients have yet to learn what they are looking for or are constantly changing their minds. Clients sometimes change their opinion from one day to the other. They like an idea on Monday, dislike it on Tuesday and switch back on Wednesday

4.3 CHOOSING AN AVENUE

Considering all four avenues takes too much time for this graduation project and is possibly unnecessary. Solving one might have a positive or diminishing effect on the other bottlenecks. The last step is, therefore, to define the final design space. To do so, one of the four avenues is chosen. This is based on a feasibility x impact matrix. As part of the outcome of this matrix, the previously defined hierarchy will be considered. Based on this analysis, a discussion is held with DCA, in which a final direction will be chosen by mutual agreement.

However, as described in the previous paragraph, there is an overlap in the different avenues. This means the final avenue on which the design space will be based potentially consists of a combination of different routes. This approach can potentially solve several problems within one design without making big changes or overly complex solutions.

Feasibility x Impact matrix

To choose which direction to go in, a feasibility-impact matrix (The Action Priority Matrix - Making the Most of Your Opportunities) will be used.

In this matrix, all patterns will be plotted individually. On the X-axis, the feasibility of solving the bottleneck is shown. On the Y-axis, the impact of solving the bottleneck is shown.

To justify the decision for where each bottleneck is placed on the matrix. The impact factor's grading is split up into :
1. frequency of the bottleneck occurrence and
2. How much more effective will the feedback be when solved?

Secondly, the feasibility factor is defined as follows: How much ownership/influence can the designer have on the problem? Every factor is graded between 1-10; for the impact factor, the average is taken of the two factors (appendix G).

Figure 19 shows the placement of all the different bottlenecks on the matrix. Each colour resembles one of the avenues.

Blue = Avenue 1   Red = Avenue 2
Black = Avenue 3   Green = Avenue 4

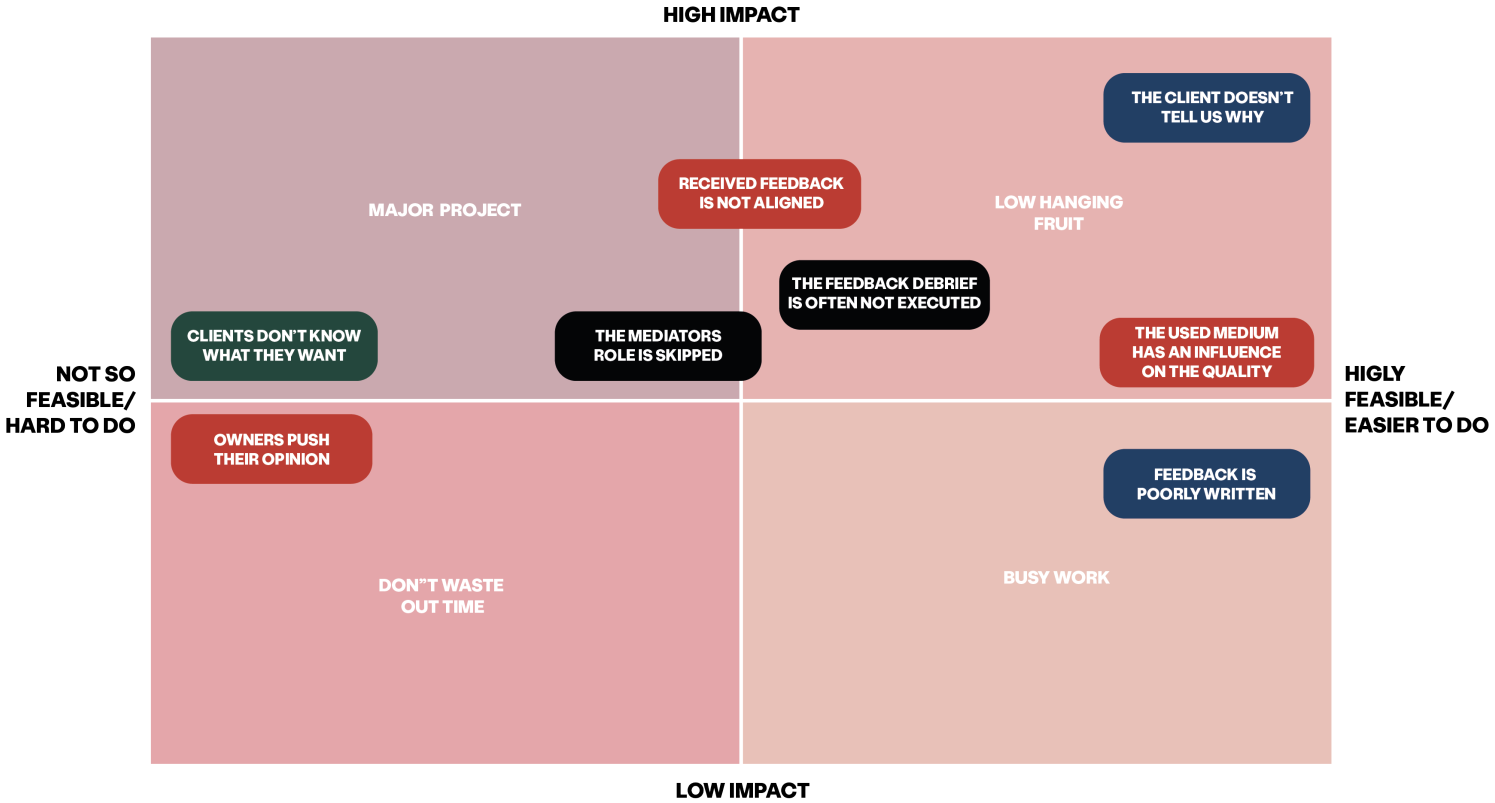


Figure 19. Filled in Feasibility x Impact matrix

Avenue 1
Stands out as it has the bottleneck with the highest impact and feasibility. Besides, both bottlenecks are highly feasible.

Avenue 2
Is very evenly distributed. It has bottlenecks that are hard, medium, and easy to achieve. It has the bottleneck with the second-highest impact, while at the same time the bottleneck with the second-lowest impact that is also hard to achieve, as it lies far away from the designer's power. It is wise to consider solving this avenue but focusing less on the bottleneck of owners pushing their opinion.

Avenue 3
Has quite a high impact but is not easy to achieve. Besides, based on the hierarchy, the importance of this avenue diminishes if avenues 1 and 2 are solved.

Avenue 4
Is a major project and has a medium impact. This Makes it less interesting to solve. However, just like avenue 3, when avenues 1, 2 and 3 are solved, the first steps are taken in this major project.

4.4 FINAL DIRECTION

As a result of the impact matrix, hierarchy and discussion with DC, the final choice is made to continue with avenue one with some overlap to avenue two. Although avenue one deserves the main focus. The overlap concerns the used medium that influences justification and the alignment of the client. This could potentially make it possible to solve two avenues without the need for considerable adjustments in the solution. It would therefore be a missed opportunity to exclude this from the design space. But, as mentioned in the analysis of the impact matrix. There will be no focus on the bottleneck of owners pushing their opinion, as there is a relatively small potential influence on this bottleneck from within the design space.

4.5 KEY INSIGHTS OF THE CHAPTER

4 Avenues are defined based on overlying themes and correlations in the nine bottlenecks:

- Design an approach to guide the client to tell us why they like something in the strategy.
- Design an approach to align the content of the feedback message.
- Design an approach to integrate a feedback debrief in a structural way.
- Design an approach to help the client discover what they want.

The agency and client not speaking the same language is an overarching issue that touches upon the first three avenues.

A debrief is no longer relevant if the client speaks the same language as the agency. And aligned client feedback with clear justification helps the client realise where they want to go with their venture/identity/strategy.

Solving all avenues goes outside the scope of this project. It is decided to focus mainly on the first avenue with a link to the second one.

In Chapter 5, a design brief will be developed based on the chosen avenues. This design brief will frame a design space by introducing an analogy, the design goal, the design statement and several design principles.

DEFINING THE BRIEF

This chapter connects the research phase to the design phase. With the avenue chosen in Chapter 4. The direction of the project and the design space to work in have been defined. To solve the bottlenecks connected to the chosen avenue, a design brief will be delivered in this chapter. This brief consists of a design goal, a design statement, the design principles, and a desired outcome. The design principles are partly related to the data analysis and the literature review. To spark inspiration for the desired outcome of the tool. Giving feedback on creative work is described by using an analogy. Overall, this chapter functions as the foundation for the to-be-developed tool.

05

5.1 THE DESIGN SPACE

The overarching question to solve in this graduation project is how the feedback given during the brand identity creation process of Dentsu Creative Amsterdam can become more effective. As a result of the executed literature review and data analysis, several avenues have been identified to answer this question.

As described in the previous chapter, avenue one has been chosen to continue with and forms the design space to work in. However, avenue two will also partly be taken into account. This means that within this space, the solution has to make feedback more effective by mainly focusing on guiding the client to motivate and help justify their opinion. And as a secondary task, consider the alignment of the client's feedback.

Using an analogy

I extracted several insights from an analogy to make the problem definition more tangible and spark inspiration for the design by offering a fresh perspective on the issue (Boeijen et al, 2013).

GIVING FEEDBACK IS LIKE A WINE TASTING

Imagine the experience of a first wine tasting (if you ever had one). Three glasses of wine are placed in front of you. One after the other, you taste the wines and carefully replicate the sommelier's movement. After tasting all three wines, the sommelier asks you which one you like most. Easy question, wine 2 was the best. Now comes the tricky part, as the sommelier asks you why this is the case. You probably find this a rather tricky question, as you just like it more. This might have to do with a lack of knowledge about wine, making it hard to articulate your opinion.

The sommelier has a solution. He will guide you through the process using a tasting guide. The guide exists out of different questions, what does it taste like? How does it smell? Because maybe you smell tones of wood or rather fruits. It might still be hard to grasp it, but a more justified answer starts to appear one by one. This way, the sommelier knows what to advise you in the future and potential mistakes can be prevented.

Just like inexperienced wine tasters have tasted wine before, the clients of Dentsu might have given feedback. But as seen in the data analysis, this does not mean they always know what they are doing or why they are doing it. Like in wine-tasting, it is therefore important that the tool educates the client and, most importantly, takes them by hand. Walking them through the entire process and making articulating their opinion as easy as possible for them. Besides, everyone's taste is subjective when tasting wine or looking at designs or texts. It is necessary to find out why someone likes something or not. But in the end, it can also be a sense of taste, which is a factor that should be taken into consideration in the design.

Design goal

The initially stated goal for this project was

To create an approach that makes the feedback on the brand identity creation process more effective.

However, in reality, more problems occur during the feedback process, making the feedback less effective. As one avenue is chosen to focus on during the design process, the design goal can be re-phrased as follows.

The goal of the design is to receive aligned and structured feedback that is justified and not negatively influenced by the used medium.

Design statement

So how will this goal be reached? The design goal is translated into a design statement to answer this question. The design statement in figure 20 tells what the design will be (1), what it should be able to do (2), and why it should be able to do this (3).

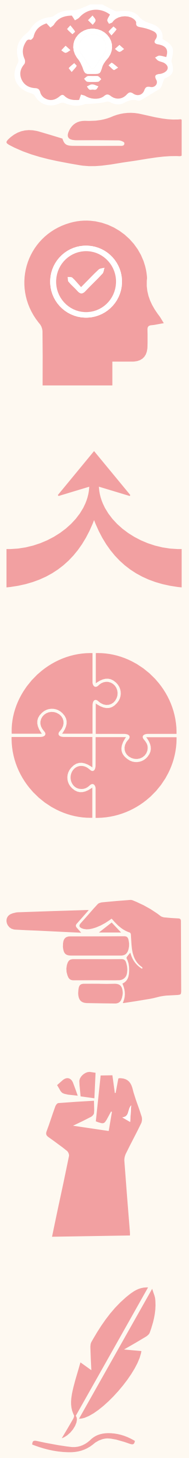
(1) DESIGN A TOOL FOR DCA THAT (2) GUIDES & EDUCATES THE CLIENT TO GIVE STRUCTURED AND ALIGNED FEEDBACK IN THE BRAND IDENTITY CREATION PROCESS AND MOTIVATES THEM TO EXPLAIN WHY THEY GIVE THIS FEEDBACK (3) SO A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING ARISES BETWEEN THE AGENCY AND CLIENT FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE DESIGN AND STRATEGY STEPS, RESULTING IN A MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK PROCESS

Figure 20. Design statement

5.2 THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Several design principles have been established as a result of the data analysis and literature review. These principles form the foundation or skeleton for the feedback tool. Every choice made in the tool can be referred back to these principles.

Besides these principles, there is a desired outcome for the tool, and the content that it produces. This outcome is based on company insights, data analysis, written analogy, and the literature review and can be found in appendix H.



1. JUSTIFY
The feedback does not only describe what they like but why they like it. The design has to guide the client to help justify their feedback. Furthermore, there must be a possibility for the explanation of your opinion to be based on gut feeling.

2. UNDERSTAND
The written feedback wording and structure are correct and understandable. The design has to guide or prompt the client to check the feedback they have given.

3. ALIGN
The received feedback is single-minded, and the client is internally aligned. There are no contradictions to be found in the feedback.

4. COMPLETE
Cover the whole feedback object to get as holistic feedback as possible, not only small pieces. Furthermore, in the data analysis, it is discovered that clients are primed or influenced by what others give feedback on, the design should prevent this.

5. SPECIFY
feedback is directed at a specific element rather than giving general feedback. While the final output still covers every element in the presentation.

6. ACTIONABLE
Received negative feedback should not only be about whether a client dislikes something but also give ideas or advice on what to do differently. A way of doing this is by asking questions.

7. WRITTEN
The feedback should be written. This archives the feedback, and gives the best way to sign off on the feedback. This way It is easy for the agency to show later why certain choices were made.

Figure 21. Design principles

5.3 KEY INSIGHTS OF THE CHAPTER

The goal of the design is to receive aligned and structured feedback that is justified and not negatively influenced by the used medium.

To achieve this goal, the design has to comply with the following design principles:

- It has to justify the feedback
- It has to make the feedback understandable
- It has to align the feedback
- It has to ensure the feedback is as complete
- It has to specify the feedback
- It has to make the feedback actionable
- The feedback should be written

Furthermore, an analogy was formed to see the project from another perspective: giving feedback is strikingly similar to participating in your first wine tasting. The clients of Dentsu might have given feedback before. But this does not mean they know what they are doing or why they are doing it. Just like in wine-tasting, it is therefore essential the tool educates the client and, most importantly, takes them by hand.

This design brief is used as a foundation to deliver the final concept in the next chapter. Each design principle is elaborated on, and a brief description of the ideation and creative process is given.

IDEATION AND CREATIVE PHASE

This chapter describes the concept's ideation, inspiration, and creation phase based on the design brief presented in the previous chapter. It also describes the purpose of the concept, its tone of voice, out of what segments the concept is built up, and what it looks like, supported by a conceptual blueprint that ties all components together. To move on, two clients (Porsche & Crisp) test the final concept on comprehensibility and usability, giving input for the final tool, which is presented in Chapter 7.

06

6.1 DESIGN APPROACH

A creative process consisting of an ideation and iterative creation phase was gone through to develop the final concept. The ideation process mainly revolved around how to implement the seven design principles. To give a starting point and structure to the ideation phase. The design principles stated in the design brief were translated into questions using the 'how to' format. 'How-Tos are problem statements written as questions that support idea generation' (Boeijen et al 2013).

- How to justify feedback?
- How to make feedback Understandable
- How to make feedback Specific?
- How to make feedback actionable
- How to align the client on their given feedback?
- How to cover the complete feedback object?
- How to give feedback in a written format?

This evolved into the first concept of a 'feedback canvas/rubric'. This concept design functioned as the theoretical foundation for the final concept.

After establishing this first rough outline a concept creation process followed with constant iterations as shown in figure 22. This was in close collaboration with IDE students and Strategists of Dentsu Creative to design the final concept. Simultaneously, during the whole creative process, research continued to gain more knowledge and inspiration on existing solutions regarding effective feedback (appendix I) and dive deeper into the details of the design principles I defined in the previous chapter. This helped to justify decisions made in the creative process. The full ideation and iterative process is elaborated on in appendix J.

To make sure the concept fits the company's needs. The tools concepts were evaluated several times within DC during the process. In these evaluations, there was a focus on how the tool works and if there are no places in the tool where the client could potentially encounter problems. The last round of feedback was a survey conducted with 6 experienced employees of DCA coming from different disciplines (appendix L) . With this feedback implemented, the concept was finalised and sent out to two actual clients (Crisp & Porsche) for a final feedback round (appendix K) on the usability to create the final design delivered in Chapter 7.

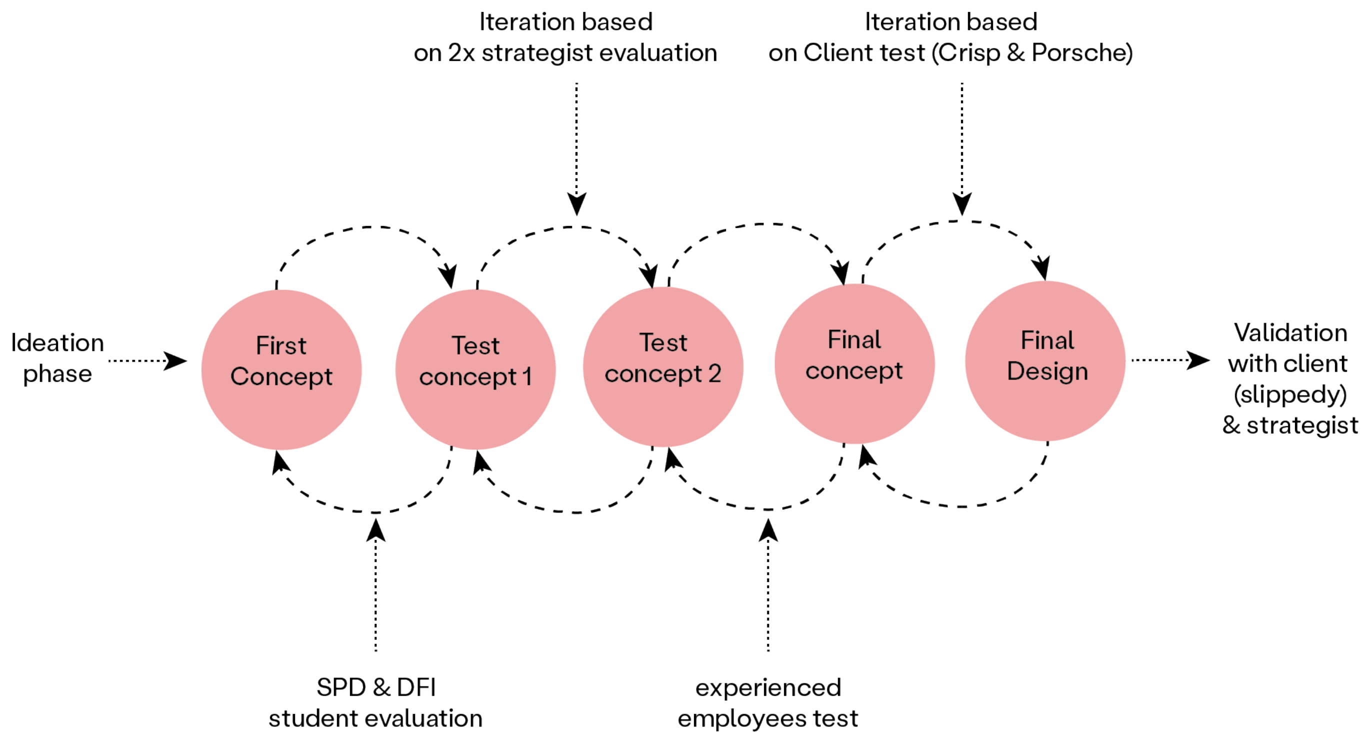


Figure 22. Iterative process

6.2 THE CONCEPT

The final concept is a tool in the shape of a modular and interactive form that guides the user through the feedback process. Modular because the tool's content depends on the presentation given by Dentsu Creative. And interactive because the flow of the form is dependent on the decisions made by the client. As they get different follow-up questions based on the choices they make. To make the process as easy and effective as possible, the client is guided through the whole process, so their focus lies purely on writing the feedback.

The following paragraph introduces the full concept by explaining its context of use, the process of use, purpose, tone of voice, and visual identity. After this introduction, the concept's structure (elements) is described in more detail, supported by a concept blueprint.

Context of use

The tool is designed to gather effective client feedback on work presented during the brand identity creation process. This should result in a more efficient brand identity process and better mutual understanding between the client and agency.

Using the tool takes more time than a client is generally used to. The tool will initially only be used in every first feedback round of a new stage. This means; the first time after presenting a strategy deck or the first time after presenting a design deck. Using it after this round gives a good initial idea of what the client wants and has in mind, laying a strong foundation for future iterations.

Process of use

The tool will be sent to the client after a presentation round by the project manager. Once it has been filled in and sent back to Dentsu, the project manager will look into the received feedback and call the client when any clarifications are needed. If everything is clear, the tool's output will be considered by the strategists or designer to make the next iteration. If there are still any questions from the designer or strategist, there should be room for an extra debrief. The process of use is visualised in figure 23. The numbers correspond to the order in which the steps are taken. Starting with presenting the feedback object to the client.

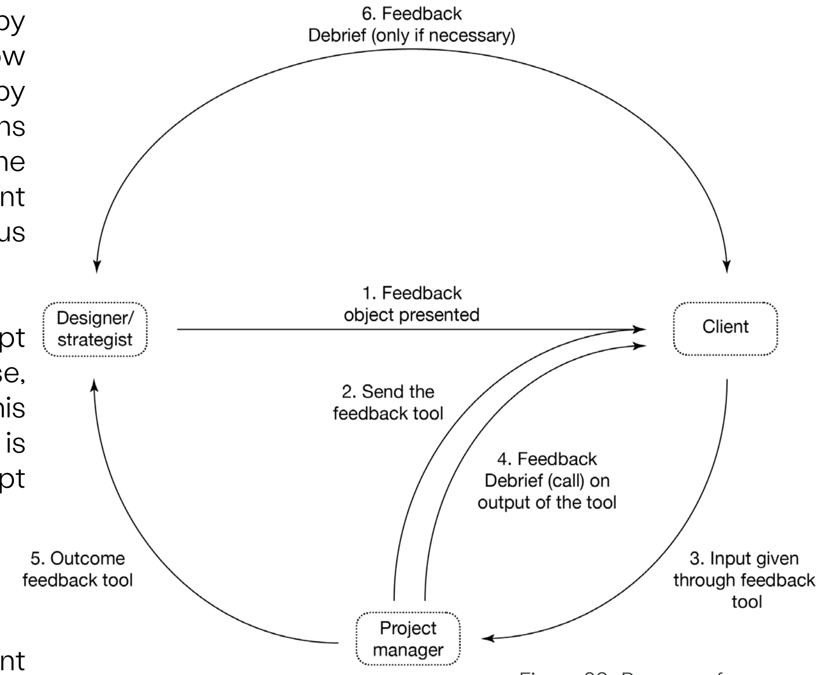


Figure 23. Process of use

Purpose of the tool

The tool's purpose is to guide the user through the full feedback process. A client can feel overwhelmed by the process and often does not know how to give sufficient and effective feedback. Metaphorically taking the team that gives feedback by hand, the tool gives them a clear and easy-to-follow structure—handing them all elements you need to be able to write effective feedback. The purpose functioned as the driver behind the interactive approach of the creative concept.

The tool's purpose supports the design statement as it binds everything together by providing structure, resulting in single-minded feedback, and giving the client all relevant elements to explain why.

Design a feedback tool for DCA that guides & educates the client to give structured and aligned feedback in the brand identity creation process, and motivates them to explain why they give this feedback

Tone of voice

The tone of voice can be defined as the subtle verbal cues that leave a customer, a friend, or a colleague feeling emotionally sensitised and engaged (Koller, 2007). Therefore, the tone of voice can greatly influence how readers perceive a message. (Barcelos et al, 2018). Especially for a design that has to help with communication, the used tone of voice is of significant importance. Multiple aspects influence the tone of voice of this tool.

First of all, the tool will be an extension of the brand identity process of Dentsu Creative. This means it has to convey the standard Dentsu tone of voice. According to these guidelines, the tone of voice should be " simple, clean, and memorable. Excluding any world of jargon and buzzwords. Uplifting and optimistic that modern creativity can change the world".

Secondly, the tool has an educational side. It explains why feedback is needed, how Dentsu Creative sees the tool's value, and what is seen as good and bad feedback. This means the tone should not feel patronising to the client. The tool is there to help them, not to tell them they have always been doing everything wrong, and we will now tell them how it is done better. It has to feel like Dentsu and the Agency are in it together. And using the tool will be beneficial for both parties.

Thirdly, it should not feel like the client is forced into the tool. They should know that, if they want to, they can also give feedback without the tool. It is there as guidance, not as an obligation.

And finally, the purpose of the tool is to guide the client through the feedback. The tone of voice should be clear and helpful without the client encountering trouble. But it should avoid feeling childish as this might convey wrong intentions or emotions to the client.

Visual Identity

The visual identity of the final concept is according to the visual identity guidelines of Dentsu Creative. Using primarily black & white colours and a font of Helvetica Neue for external documents. Besides, most visuals included are made by Dentsu Creative themselves.

The output of the tool

The tool's output will be a text document with consolidated feedback from the client concerning each element of the content they have presented. Per element, this document will state clearly:

- How the client feels about the element.
- What aspect the client likes about the element.
- Why they like this aspect.
- What aspect they would keep, change or remove about the element.
- Any other questions or comments about the content.

Tool structure

The concept is structured around six segments. The origin of these segments lies in the 3 fundamental parts of the initial concept described earlier in this chapter. These parts have been explored and broadened in the iterative process. Each segment contributes to implementing the seven design principles in their own way. Some principles come back multiple times. To give a clear and structured representation of the structure a concept blueprint has been developed, which will be presented next.

6.3 A CONCEPT BLUEPRINT

"A service blueprint gives a complete picture of how the service or product and related experience is delivered, end to end" - (Nilsson, 2021).

The concept blueprint shown in figure 24 combines elements found in a service blueprint and a customer journey map. It takes the user goals, actions, emotions, and feelings of a customer journey map (Kaplan, 2016), and combines them with the visualisation of relationships between different components — people, props (physical or digital evidence), processes, and in the case of this blueprint the design principles - which are directly tied to touchpoints in a specific customer journey (Gibbons, 2017). This combination gives a holistic view of the customer experience and a comprehensive understanding of the concept and its underlying processes. Which overall provides the reader with a complete picture of how the concept is delivered.

The blueprint is horizontally separated into the six segments of the feedback tool. And to give a quick overview starts by showing each segment's goal. It then shows which design principles the segment is based on and how they are applied in the tool. The next layer shows the journey a client goes through and describes the actions a user/client undertakes in the journey accordingly to the segment. To make the process of the tool as clear as possible, a flow is then added to show all the different individual elements of the tool, how they interact with each other, and what touchpoints link to them. This flow is a simplified version of the actual logic of the prototype which can be seen appendix M. The last layer differentiates the emotions the tool and its tone of voice should evoke for the client when using the feedback tool versus how they felt in the old scenario.

To support the blueprint, each segment and its corresponding design principles will be more elaborated on.

Segment 1: Intro & Relevance

The first segment is an introduction to the feedback tool. The client is welcomed and gets a brief intro about the tool they have in front of them.

To make it more personal and for organisational/practical reasons, the client is asked to fill in their name. However, in this step, there is an emphasis on filling in the form on behalf of your whole marketing team. To motivate the client to give aligned feedback (principle 3).

The segment moves on to give a deeper explanation of why Dentsu Creative wants to use the tool and how this feedback tool helps the client and agency better understand each other. This comes down to explaining the tool's strategic relevance and emphasising the important role good communication has (principle 2).

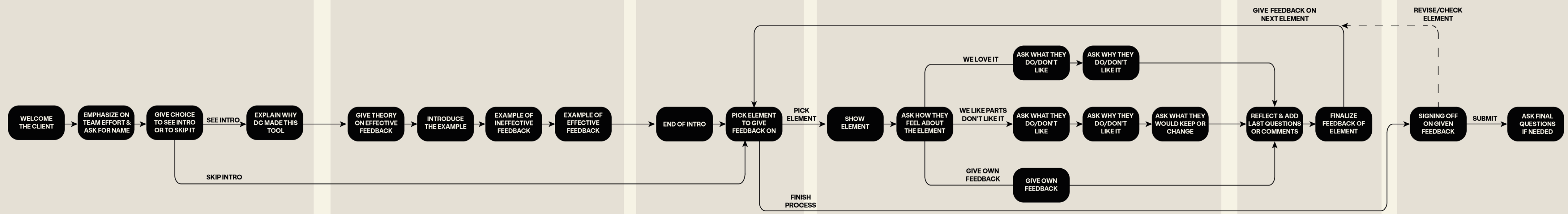
Segment 2: The example

The second segment is developed from an educational point of view. It introduces what 'effective feedback' is and out of what components it exists. To make it more tangible, this part also includes an example of how feedback is given on a visual made by Dentsu Creative Amsterdam.

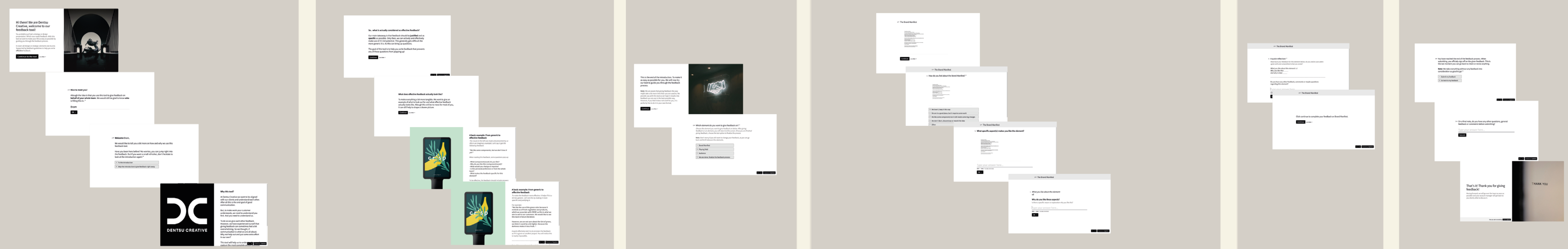
This example is included to underline the tool's purpose and to give the clearest picture possible of the bottlenecks often encountered when giving feedback. The example is based on a combination of the principles. It gives an example of ineffective feedback that is turned into effective feedback. This showcases and integrates the relevance of alignment (principle 3), specificity (principle 5), and justification (principle 1) of the feedback. The underlying principle here is understandability (principle 2) from the point of view of what effective feedback looks like.

SEGMENT	INTRODUCTION	EXAMPLE	DESIGN GUIDELINES	THE FEEDBACK	REFLECTING	SUBMITTING
GOAL	Introduce the client to the feedback tool, and make a first personal connection	Educate the client on what effective feedback consists out of, and looks like	Make the client known with all the elements that need feedback	Guide the client through the process of writing the actual feedback as effective as possible	Reflect on the written feedback	Sign off on the feedback & finalize the process
PURPOSE BY PRINCIPLE	ALIGN, UNDERSTAND	ALIGN, SPECIFY, JUSTIFY, UNDERSTAND	COMPLETE, SPECIFY, JUSTIFY	ALIGN, SPECIFY, JUSTIFY, ACTIONABLE	UNDERSTAND	COMPLETE
PURPOSE APPLIED	Client is emphasized on the fact that they should fill in the form on behalf of their whole team. Motivating them to be **aligned** Client gets an explanation on the importance of good & **understandable** communication, and how effective feedback makes this possible.	The example shows the relevance of feedback being **understandable, aligned, specific and justified.** And gives examples of the questions that can pop-up if this is not the case. Giving a proof of concept to the client.	By providing all elements the client can give feedback on. The feedback becomes **complete**. While on the same time being **specific** on each item. And **justified** because of the next steps.	The client is motivated to be **aligned** by asking them about their feelings regarding a specific element. The follow-up questions guide the client with questions regarding **justification** and **actionability.** The feedback will be **specific,** as it is given specifically on the choosen element.	The client has to check if their feedback is **understandable** by readin back their feedback in the form of a small reflection.	To make sure the feedback is **complete**. The tool motivates the client to check if they have filled in everything they wanted. As everything without feedback will be signed off as good-to-go.
ACTIONS/ JOURNEY	• Clients writes their name and continues to the introduction of the tool. • Returning clients can skip directly to choosing which element they want to give feedback on.	• Read examples of what effective feedback looks like so the client can implement it theirselves later on in the process.	• Pick the element the client wants to give feedback on or choose to finish the feedback process.	• Pick the answer most applicable to the clients feelings regarding the chosen element. • Answer the follow up questions to write effective feedback.	• Check if you wrote everything you wanted and if it is understandable	• Deliver your feedback to Dentsu Creative. Or choose to revise anything if necessary.

FLOW (simplified)



TOUCHPOINT



(Desired) FEELING	INTRODUCTION	EXAMPLE	DESIGN GUIDELINES	THE FEEDBACK	REFLECTING	SUBMITTING
FEELING	WHAT A NICE INITIATIVE!	AHA! THAT MAKES A LOT OF SENSE!	THIS IS A CLEAR OVERVIEW	THIS WAY IT IS NOT SO HARD TO WRITE EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK	WE JUST GAVE GOOD AND CONSOLIDATED FEEDBACK!	WE WONDER WHAT THE NEXT ITERATION WILL LOOK LIKE!
WHY DESIRED?	THERE IS NO STANDARD FORMAT FOR GIVING FEEDBACK	THERE IS NOT ENOUGH KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WHAT GOOD FEEDBACK LOOKS LIKE	FEEDBACK IS OFTEN NOT COMPLETE	THE WRITTEN FEEDBACK OFTEN LACKS IN QUALITY	THE WRITTEN FEEDBACK IS OFTEN NOT UNDERSTANDABLE	CLIENT SHOULD BE CURIOUS AND EXCITED FOR NEXT ROUND

Segment 3: Design Guidelines

After segment 2, the introduction of the tool is finished. Segment 3 revolves around choosing which design or strategy element the client wants to give feedback on.

This means the content of segment three depends on the client and the phase they are in, as every client is presented with a different set elements. One client might get options to give feedback on design elements like fonts, colours, and visuals. While another client gives feedback on strategic elements like the competitive landscape, manifest, and brand naming. By including each design guideline, the feedback will become as complete as possible (principle 4). Without losing specificity (principle 5) and justification (principle 1).

The data analysis pointed out that the choice of feedback format negatively influenced the quality of the feedback specifty, completeness and justification. This segments aims to solve this issue.

Segment 4: Giving the feedback

In segment 4, the client is guided in writing the actual feedback, which is the moment the tool has been working up to. The way the client is asked to give feedback is dependent on their answers. The segment is divided into two parts.

In the first part, the client has to answer a multiple choice question on how they feel about the specific element they give feedback on. The five choices are:

- We love it, keep it this way
- We are in a good place, but it still requires some work
- We like some components, but it still needs some big changes
- We don't like it, discontinue or rework the idea
- Other

This multiple-choice question aims to align the client to make a clear decision with their whole team about what they think of the element, and is therefore asked in the 'we' form (principle 3).

After making this choice, the client enters the second part, a flow of questions dependent on their answer to the above question. However, the core behind the subsequent questions is similar to each other.

They are as follows:

- What specific aspect do/don't you like about the element?
- Why do you / don't you like these aspects?
- And why is that?

These follow-up questions are based on the design principles to justify the feedback (principle 1), and make it specific (principle 5). The questions about justification are based on how to uncover deeper knowledge of a client. According to the theory of design for empathy, the array of questions concerning: how, what and why can help as a guide to uncover a deeper meaning behind someone's thoughts (Dam & Siang, 2021). This is combined with a contained application of the theory of asking 5x Why, to explore the cause behind an effect (Serrat, 2017). In this case, the cause behind the given feedback or opinion of the client.

Finally, the client is asked if there is anything they would keep or change about the element for the next step?

This is asked to make the feedback more actionable (principle 6). By referring to future steps and asking what they would change, keep or remove for a further iteration.

Segment 5: Reflecting

This segment is about writing understandable feedback (principle 6). A summary of the feedback is provided and the tool motivates the user to reflect on it to check if it is understandable, and decide if it complies with the shown standards of effective feedback.

To nudge the feedback giver to reflect and to give them the space to show any left confusion (Marbouti et al, 2016), a final question is asked whether there is anything the feedback giver would like to add or if they have any other questions.

Segment 6: Submitting

In this final segment, the written feedback is submitted. The client will end up in this segment after they have given feedback on every single element they want to give feedback on.

Before submitting, the feedback giver is notified that everything without feedback will be considered good to go for the next round. This approach is taken to do a final check whether the feedback is complete (principle 4).

6.4 KEY INSIGHTS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter illustrated the final concept of the feedback tool.

To achieve this result, several iterations were made with TU Delft students, strategists and experienced employees of Dentsu Creative Amsterdam.

The tool guides the user through the feedback process, educates them on effective feedback and helps them eventually give more effective feedback.

This whole process consists of 6 segments. Each segment has its own function and link to the design principles.

1. Introduction to the tool & relevance to the client.
2. Giving an example of effective feedback.
3. Introducing all different elements
4. Giving the feedback.
5. Reflecting on the feedback.
6. Submitting the feedback.

This final concept is tested with two clients to make the final iteration and develop the concept into a working prototype using the software of Typeform. This final design is shown in the next chapter.

FINAL DESIGN

In this chapter, the final design is presented. This final iteration is based on input given by Crisp and Porsche on the final concept shown in the previous chapter. To give a clear representation of the tool. The final design is presented with a user scenario, a process flow scheme, and a link to a working prototype. The only step left is validation by the client and Dentsu Creatives designers and strategists.

07

7.1 USER -SCENARIO

A user scenario is written to describe the use of the feedback tool. This format is chosen because it helps describe a user's engagement with a new or future product or service.

"A user scenario uses a story-based format or narrative to explore the future use of a product or service from a user's perspective" - Hughes, Research Methods: User Scenarios and User Stories

Important features are elaborated on throughout the user scenario, and major changes between the final concept and the final design are pointed out.

The user-scenario

The scenario will be divided into the six segments described in the previous chapter. It is a visual and textual narrative of how the user walks through each of segments. Throughout the narrative, the screen that belong to a step is labelled with the corresponding number.

The persona walking through the user scenario is based on the client used to validate the concept.

- The client is an entrepreneur supported by a team of product developers.
- He has no prior experience working together with an Agency.
- He is looking for a position & identity for his new venture.

Before the tool
When a new client has accepted to work with Dentsu Creative on a new Positioning & Identity, the strategy works starts. After the research phase and sensitising workshop, the first three strategic routes are presented to the client, and he can give his first feedback. At the end of this meeting, the presentation will be sent to the client in an e-mail, together with the feedback tool. The feedback tool is developed to the client in the feedback process. And should, for the rest, be self-explanatory. After using the tooll, there will be an aligning call with the agency to go over the feedback and discuss any content or problems if necessary.

Segment 1: Introduction
Let's start! The client opens the tool on his computer and is welcomed. Here he gets a brief introduction to what he has in front of him (1). Next, he has to fill in his name while being emphasised on giving feedback on behalf of his whole team (2). In the third step, there is a possibility to skip the intro for returning clients. This would bring you to step (10). But since Bram has never used this tool before, he clicks on: to the introduction (3). Bringing him to step (4), which gives him a more elaborated explanation of why the tool is relevant for clients and agencies.

- **A team effort**

Multiple rounds of feedback emphasised that this segment should highlight the feedback tool is not created because the client lacks the skill of giving feedback. The tool should instead be presented as a team effort between the agency and the client. DCA helps the client to create the best possible work together.

- **Tone Of Voice: Guiding but not childish**

The tool should guide the user. So there is no moment they get stuck in the process. I, therefore, deliberately choose a tone of voice that is very clear and easy to follow. In the last feedback round with Porsche, it was noted that it almost felt like an elementary school teacher talking. Although exaggerated, based on this comment, the tone of voice was toned down a bit to a more professional tone.

Segment 2: Example
Moving on to the second segment, the client gets educated on what effective feedback is (5), what it should look like (6), and what components it should contain. As the client is a novice, this should make 'effective feedback' more tangible for him. To do this, the client is shown a visual example with bad feedback (7) and then an example with good feedback (8).

- **Strategy VS Design**

Brand strategy and brand design are different. Although the principles for effective feedback should apply equally, the feedback itself does not look exactly the same. The example is therefore, dependent If you are in the strategy or the design phase which feedback examples you see because they have their own nuance in the way of giving feedback.

Segment 3: Design guidelines
In the third segment, the feedback example & introduction are finished (9). Hereafter, the client moves to a menu where he can choose what route he wants to give feedback on because, usually, a strategy consists of multiple 'routes' or directions (10). This step is integrated so he can easily navigate between the different steps when he wants to read or double-check something he wrote. In the next step, a similar menu appears, but this one shows all the different elements of the chosen route (12). Once finished with giving feedback to all elements, the client can click on the bottom button and move on to finalising the feedback. But for now, this is not the case, and the client continues to give feedback on route one and the playing field.

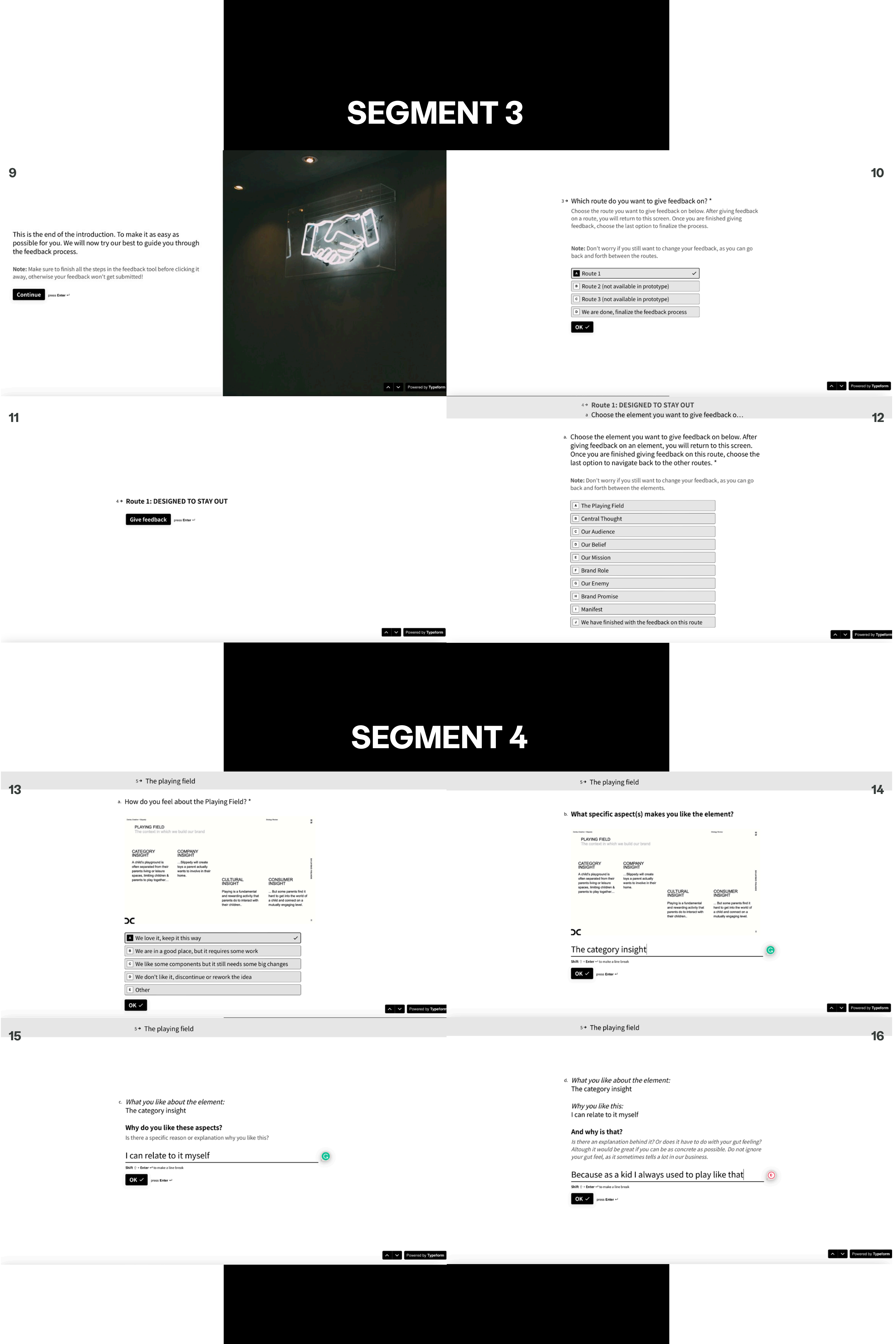
- **Choose your route**

One of the significant differences between the final concept and the final design is the addition of the option to choose which route the client wants to give feedback on. This decision was made when building the prototype for the actual client. Because usually, a design or strategy presentation consists of different routes. And by including this step, all elements are neatly tied together within those routes.

Segment 4: The feedback
Finally, it is time to give actual feedback. The client first gets an overview of the element he chose in the previous screen. In this case, "The Playing Field". Next, he is asked how he feels about the element overall (13). Do you love it? Are we in a good place? Do you like some components? Or do you not like anything? Here, the client must align with his team and fill in their consolidated answer. Dependent on the answer, they get different follow-up questions regarding what aspects they do/don't like about the element (14) and why this is the case (15,16).

- **Question-flow**

Dependent on the answer they choose in the multiple choice (13). The client gets different follow-up questions. When the feedback is negative, it is relevant to know what the client does not like, and when it is positive, it is relevant to understand what the client does like. All different question flows can be found in appendix N.



- **Summary of previous answers**

After each question in the flow, a summary (15,16) of the answers you gave before is provided. Because the: why do you like it, question builds on the: what do you like, question, the client needs to read back their previous answer so they can elaborate on it.

- **Justified by 'gut feeling.'**

Assessing creative work like design and strategy is partially subjective (Ngoon et al, 2018). It can sometimes be the case that a client can not justify their choices with full facts. Although the tool tries its best to structure the client's thoughts and justify its choices, the last question of the flow emphasised that it is also okay to justify your answer based on your gut feeling.

This is an essential step because pressuring for factual justification can otherwise hinder someone's personal opinion, limiting someone's subjectivity and creativity. This would not benefit a creative process. Because sometimes choices are just based on feelings, as Ogilvy (one of the world's biggest advertisement agencies) chairman Rory Sutherland wrote in his book Alchemy. "Not everything that makes sense works, and not everything that works makes sense."

- **How do you feel?**

Building on the last paragraph, the question: how do you feel about..? (14) is deliberately stated over: how do you "think" about ..? Because the word-choice 'feel' should motivate the emotional thought process of the client (Cialdini, 2016). This is relevant as the tool tries to uncover the client's feedback but wants to leave room for their gut feeling. In the end, before signing off on any strategy or design decision. The biggest thing that counts is that the client has to feel good about it.

Segment 5: Reflecting
After filling in all the feedback on an element, the client must perform a small reflective exercise (17). This is a moment for the client to double-check what they wrote. This is also the moment to write relevant feedback or questions on the element not yet covered by the tool. After completing this step, the client gets a message to show he completed the feedback on this specific element (18).

Segment 6: Submitting
In segment 6, the client submits the feedback. This segment consists of several steps. Because before submitting the feedback, the client has to confirm that they have given feedback to all elements (9). This step ties up the specific route. Therefore a question follows about their overall conclusion regarding the route they just finished (19). Next, they either continue with a second route or complete the feedback process (20). To conclude the entire process, one final conclusion is asked regarding the client's favourite route (21).

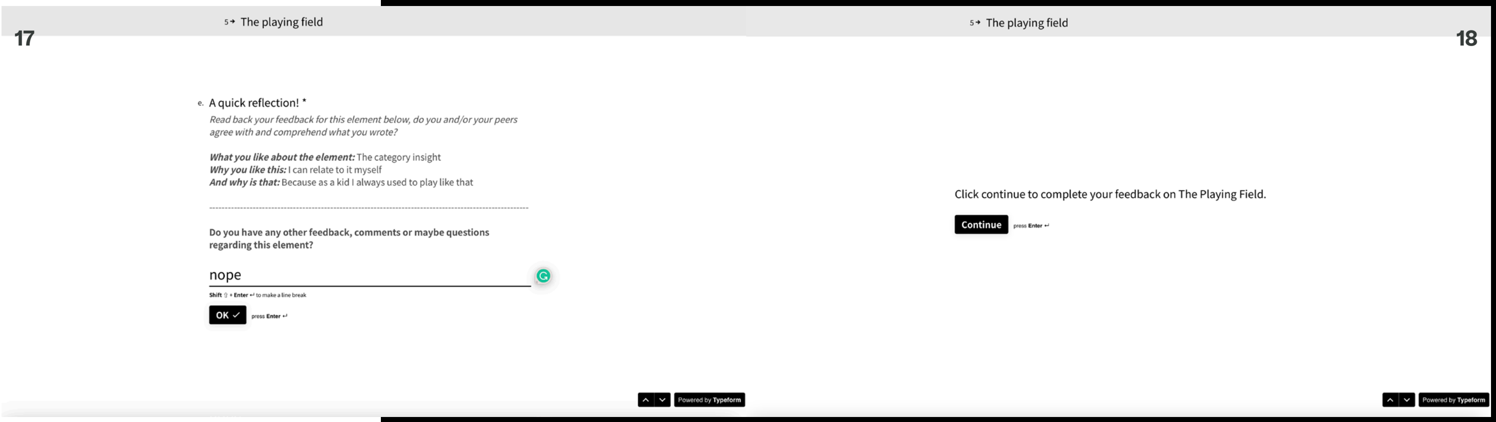
Before the final submission, step (22) emphasises the sign-off. This means that any elements without feedback will be considered good to go. This is also the last moment the client can still return to the feedback before submitting. If chosen to submit, there is one more question about any other questions or comments regarding the given feedback or presentation (23). After this step, the client submits the feedback, and the use of the tool is finalised (24)

- **Overall conclusion of the feedback**

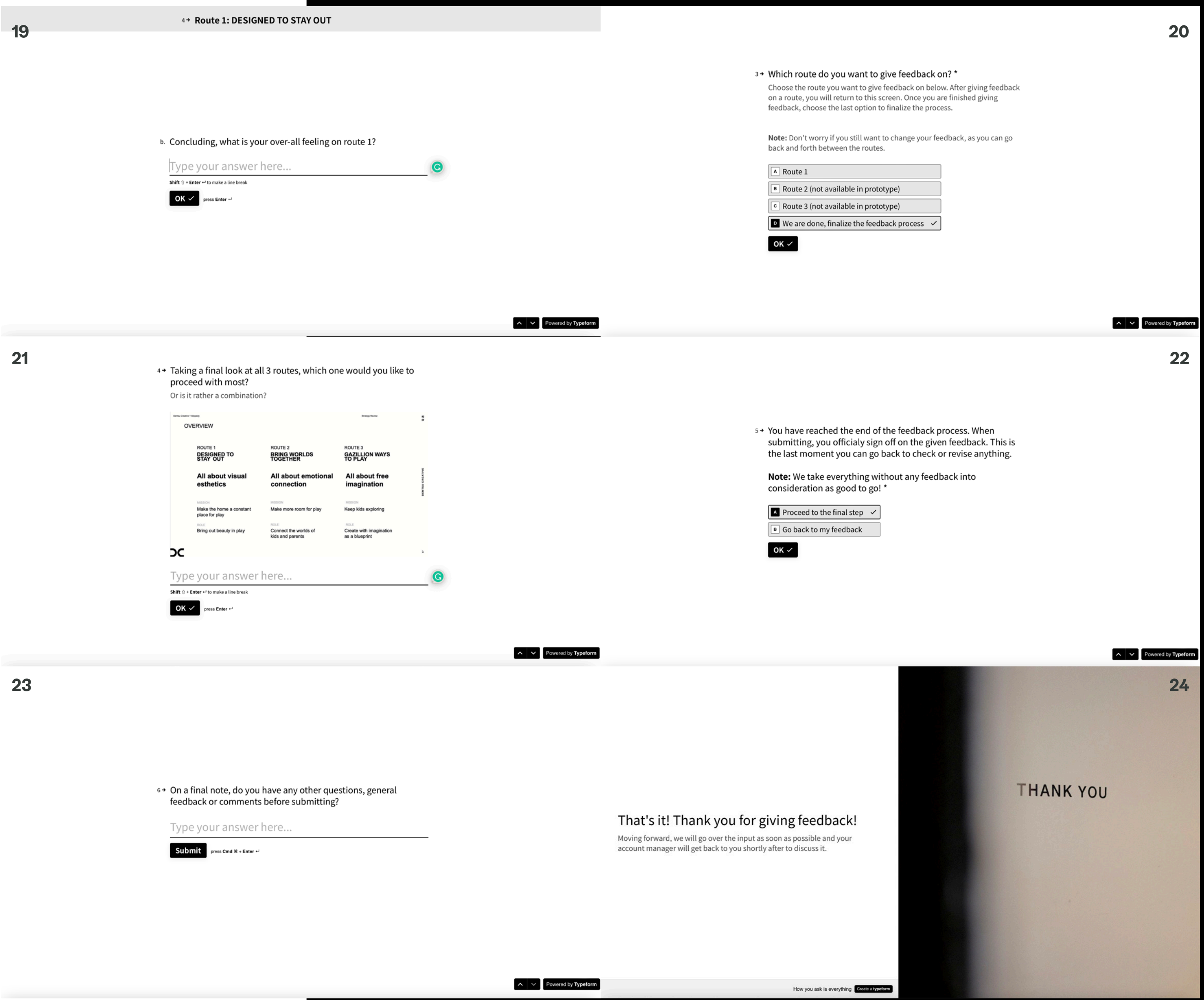
As most clients get presented with several routes, it is relevant to know what route they prefer and would like to proceed with most. This is a good conclusion and ties up the overall feedback process. Using the tool, the client must have overthought every element. They should now be able to give a good and final direction about the strategy or design. From that angle, the tool can also be seen as an exercise to structure the client's thoughts.

After the tool
Once the feedback has been submitted, the project manager will review the output and call the client to align on the final outcome. If this is all clear, the feedback is given to the strategist or designer to start implementing the feedback and make the next iteration of the identity or design..

SEGMENT 5



SEGMENT 6



7.2 WORKING PROTOTYPE

As the concept had to be validated. It was made into a working prototype using the software of Typeform. One route of this working prototype can be seen and used by clicking on the following link or scanning the QR code in figure 25 : https://1qbash4zu7b.typeform.com/to/torOy1Eq

Figure 25. QR-code to working prototype

7.3 PROCESS FLOW SCHEME

Figure 26 shows a process flow scheme to give a clear overview of the structure of the tool. This scheme shows every step in the process and how they are connected.

For a full back-end view of the full UX design & flow scheme of the prototype, see appendix M.

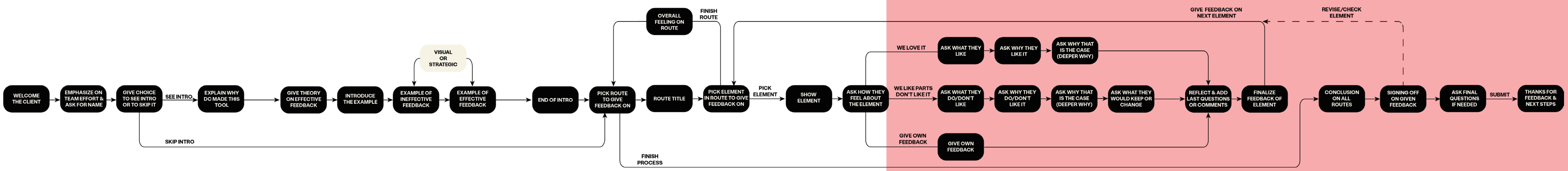


Figure 26. Process flow scheme

7.4 KEY INSIGHTS OF THE CHAPTER

The final design of the feedback tool was presented in the form of:

- A user scenario shows how a client walks through the tool and zooms in on what specific steps they make in the process and what decisions must be made.
- A process flow of the tool shows the back-end overview of all the steps in the process.
- A working prototype of the tool made using the software of Typeform, essential to test the design and validate its actual output.

In Chapter 8, this final design will be validated by implementing the feedback tool into a brand identity creation process without the client having any prior knowledge. The output will be evaluated together with a strategist based on the six design principles set in the design brief.

VALIDATION OF THE OUTPUT

With the final design presented in the previous chapter. A final round of validation was executed. This validation is done to test the actual effectiveness of the tool's output. To validate, the tool was sent to a client without him knowing it was a test. The output was then analysed using several criteria based on the design principles. Furthermore, it was tested with a strategist to see whether he found the received feedback effective. This means the strategist thinks he/she can use the received feedback as a useful tool contributing to the next iteration of a strategy or design. The results of this phase lead to future recommendations and next steps.

08

8.1 THE VALIDATION

Until this point, only validation has been done on the usability and comprehensibility of the concept. This last chapter will focus on validating the actual output and, thus, the effectiveness of the feedback tool. Because without a user test, it is impossible to evaluate the final design and check whether it has the desired outcome. The tool's output was validated based on the six criteria linked to the design principles in the design brief. Throughout the project, it has been clarified where the different design principles were applied and in what way.

Besides, an evaluation was done together with a strategist to see if the feedback output was experienced more effectively than before. This step is included to benchmark the outcome of a regular feedback session and compare this with the output of the feedback tool.

The outcome of this validation process will not only be valuable to see if the design is effective. But with the actual implementation of the tool in mind also provides valuable new insights for future iterations of the tool and future recommendations for Dentsu Creative.

The test

The tool was tested in a real identity-creation process to make the test as realistic as possible. It was sent to the client after the first strategy round, while the client had no prior knowledge of the project beforehand. The output that came back through the feedback tool was evaluated based on six criteria. These criteria are based on the design principles stated in the design brief. This choice is made because the design principles were originally formulated to establish the design goal. Based on the theory and data analysis, this means that if the received feedback complies with these criteria, it can be validated as effective.

The involved client in this test is a new client with no prior experience working with Dentsu Creative. He came to DC for the positioning & Identity of his new company. This is a start-up that will produce slides & other toys.

8.2 VALIDATING THE OUTPUT

After physically presenting the three strategic routes, an e-mail was sent to the client with the presentation and access to the feedback-tool prototype. The client got one day to complete the tool and give feedback.

After receiving the client's feedback through the tool, the output was compiled into a clear document (appendix O). The effectiveness of the feedback is validated using the earlier-mentioned set of 6 criteria. Each criterion is stated below, and a small explanation is provided on why the feedback is validated as it is.

The theoretical criteria are also supported by an evaluation of the feedback from the strategist working on this identity process to give the validation more reliability. This gives actual insights into what impact it had during implementation. The foundation of the strategist's evaluation lay in the same six criteria and was supported by a set of complementary questions. The involved strategist has not been involved in the entire process so far. He saw the feedback tool for the first time when it was presented to the client. Some of his quotes are used to support the validation process shown below. He also mentioned some recommendations and limitations, which will be discussed in the final chapter. The full interview can be found in appendix P.

The feedback is Complete when

The output covers every relevant element presented to the client and has received feedback.

Validated, the received feedback touched upon each strategic element in both routes presented to the client. This gave a complete picture and made the feedback easily implementable.

"Yes I think so, complete but not too specific, specific enough to guide him but not strict enough to hinder his own opinion"

The feedback is Aligned when

The feedback is single-minded, and there are no contradictions found in the feedback.

Partially validated, by motivating the client to make a specific choice, all the feedback was given from a one-person perspective. The overall feedback is single-minded and shows no contradicting opinions. However, the client was on his own when giving the feedback. So there was no conflicting opinion present.

"It was only him, what happens with a bigger team? But the tool seems to really help him to align his own thoughts because it forces the person to be really specific and align with themselves"

The feedback is Justified when

It is clear why the client has made specific choices and why they like something or not. This criterion also involves the space to mention their gut feeling.

Validated, the feedback was generally deepened by the follow-up questions asking the client why, and why. In some cases, he also announced that his choices were based on his gut feeling. However, his writing style was sometimes very emotional, showing extreme subjectivity.

"The tool forces that justification is more important than just an opinion, so that is really nice, but he did not always take it serious enough, but that is also Roderik"

The feedback is Actionable when

The output not only says if the client likes something but also what they like and what aspects of the element they would keep or remove.

Validated, on several occasions, the client wrote what he would want to see back and what he would want to remove from the strategy—making the overall feedback very actionable. This was especially present during the round-up feedback for each route.

"It was in some cases quite actionable. Because he was putting cases and stuff together, which was super nice"

The feedback is Specific when

The output is easily identified to what element it belongs.

Validated, by using the feedback tool, there is no possible discussion about what element or route the received feedback belongs to.

"The feedback is specific, linking the pdf slides to the comments would make it even more specific for the output. To have the output side by side, then it is even easier to follow"

The feedback is Understandable when

The written feedback makes grammatical sense and is easy to read.

Partially validated, there were still quite some grammar mistakes in the feedback. And on a special occasion, it was hard to understand what the client meant.

"Hard for the tool to get this done, if someone writes in a weird way, it is really hard to put that on the tool. Clarify even more in the beginning that the words that we use are very fundamental in strategy"

These inconsistencies were solved during a phone call with the client. This is exactly what this check-up is planned for.

"The phone call should not be to gather any additional feedback, but just for some clarification of word-use."

8.3 CONCLUDING THE VALIDATION

Based on the validated criteria, it can be concluded that the output of the feedback tool aligns with what the design should be able to do: guide & educate the client to give structured and aligned feedback in the brand identity creation process and motivate them to explain why they give this feedback.

Besides, the strategist was overall very positive about the tool and believed the produced feedback could be seen as effective, an improvement on the efficiency of the status quo, and a very good way to help a client structure their thoughts to get a clear picture of what they want. He sees value in the feedback tool and thinks it can function as a good handhold to improve strategy or design.

However, he also sees a lot of value for the whole team of Dentsu Creative. It makes internal alignment within Dentsu itself much more straightforward because the feedback is more structured and can be interpreted similarly. This makes for a much more efficient feedback process. Which is something everyone benefits from.

“So you do not have to do 3 rounds before you find out what they actually want”

This is exactly why the tool was created in the first place: to create a mutual understanding between agency and client for current and future design and strategy steps, resulting in a more efficient and effective feedback process.

8.4 KEY INSIGHTS OF THE CHAPTER

The feedback tool was validated with an actual client who had no prior knowledge of the feedback tool or graduation project.

The tool’s output was validated based on six criteria linked to the design principles stated in the design brief. The evaluation was conducted together with a strategist to benchmark the outcome of a regular feedback session and compare this with the outcome of the feedback tool.

Based on the validation, the tool’s output can be identified as specific, actionable, justified and complete and partially as understandable and aligned. The strategist was overall very positive. He sees value in the feedback tool and thinks it can be effective when making future iterations on strategy or design.

However, some issues were found in the validation, and the strategist also made some future recommendations for when the tool would be

TO CONCLUDE THE PROJECT

This chapter will state the overall conclusion and discuss the project's final results. Additionally, it will give final recommendations & limitations for Dentsu regarding the developed feedback tool. The validated feedback tool meets a big part of the set design goals, but there are several points for improvement and opportunities for extra testing. This is relevant to point out because Dentsu Creative might plan on developing the tool into a real product, and building the tool yourself gives additional possibilities for the way the tool can be applied or used. On a final note, the project will be wrapped up with a personal reflection on the set learning goals, the project outcome, and my overall experience of this graduation

09

9.1 CONCLUSION

The initial goal of this graduation project was to create an approach that makes the feedback given on the brand identity creation process more effective. This has to result in a more structured and efficient feedback process, saving time while ensuring the same quality of work and preventing any unneeded frustrations between the client and the agency. In the current situation, Dentsu Creative doesn't provide its clients with a tool or guidance on giving effective feedback.

According to the literature research, 'effective' feedback can be derived from six factors that each need to meet a set of characteristics. These factors served as a basis for the data analysis of the old feedback cases that Dentsu received from their clients. Several major bottlenecks were encountered in these cases. Some of them were bundled into a strategic avenue that formed the basis for the design goal.

When reviewing the validation of the final design, it can be concluded that the feedback tool achieves the design goal. Because the tool takes the client by the hand and educates them about what good and bad feedback is. The received output contained specific, aligned, actionable, and justified feedback. The tool functions as a way for the client to structure their thoughts to clarify what they want with the brand, and the output is a clear document for the whole creative team of DCA to interpret the received feedback similarly. This means that the design reaches further than the design goal, as it naturally helps to solve avenue four as well: what does the client want? An avenue that resembled a 'major project' on the feasibility x impact matrix.

Furthermore, the strategist who used the output gained through the feedback tool perceived it as good guidance to make the strategy's next iteration—making life not only easier for the client but also for the Dentsu Creative team. Therefore, if I look back on the graduation project and the initial goal, I can conclude that this has also been achieved.

As result of this research project, Dentsu Creative Amsterdam is considering to develop the prototype into an actual tool. The output that came out of the test was received very positively. If the tool makes the whole feedback process more efficient by preventing several unneeded iteration rounds, it can positively impact the current way of working.

Besides, feedback comes back in every agency, school, and business. This means the created tool is relevant for a very broad spectrum of organisations and has the potential to inspire or help not only Dentsu but many more.

9.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This graduation project has uncovered several problems and insights regarding the feedback process in a creative agency. However, only a part of them has been solved or applied because an avenue was chosen to scope down the project and specifically solve in the design phase. This leaves room for suggestions on further research and testing on some untreated topics. Secondly, if Dentsu Creative decides to develop the final prototype into a product, there are some final recommendations to consider for improvement and validation. These recommendations are based on feedback gathered during the final validation phase.

Exploit the mediator's role
One of the main untouched avenues concerned the role of the mediator. In future identity processes, I would advise preparing a standard briefing on how the account/project manager can get the full potential out of their role as a mediator. This could concern taking prior time to check the feedback and prepare the strategist or designer for it so they have more feedback acceptance. It would also involve performing a feedback debrief with the client.

Incorporate the consumer
During the interactive session with all the strategists, it was mentioned that the client often portrays they know their target group better than the target group knows themselves. This was especially the case in creating a strategy for social media, where a younger consumer (Gen-Z) is being targeted. To make the feedback process more reliable, it would be interesting to explore if it is possible to incorporate the consumer to justify the feedback. This could be done by showing a small focus group the strategy or design and asking for their feedback.

Building the tool
If the prototype will be built into an actual tool, I would first suggest including AI software to check grammar in the tool. This already solves a big part of the spelling and grammar mistakes in the feedback.

Secondly, the output can be optimised by having the received feedback side by side with the element it is given to. This means the feedback is not delivered in a separate document but on the slides directly. For practical reasons, this could imply the tool should be built as an extension of Google Slides. In which all presentations of Dentsu Creative Amsterdam are made.

More validation
Although it was very useful to validate the tool in a real case where the user had no pre-knowledge, the client was on his own. This means the 'alignment' principle was not tested to its full potential. It would be valuable for further development of the tool to test it with bigger teams to see if it helps to align them internally. Furthermore, doing a zero measurement on the given feedback beforehand would be interesting. This way, it is possible to check how big the quality improvement of the feedback is from the client's initial way of giving feedback.

Novice vs Expert
The client used in the validation was a complete novice in giving feedback on creative work. A test with a more experienced marketeer would be needed to validate the product from an expert point of view. Experts and novices can react very differently to a tone of voice and the amount of guidance the tool provides. As a result of this validation, it would be interesting to explore if having a separate version for experts and novices would be beneficial.

Design vs Strategy
Design and strategy are not the same things. However, the validation of the tool was only done with a strategy round and a strategist. For future steps, there should also be a validation of a design round with a designer. I suspect the tool will also work for design because giving feedback on strategy is experienced as more difficult. Feedback on design generally comes down to commenting on colours and fonts. In contrast, feedback on strategy comes down to more complex constructions regarding the used insights and refined differences in wording.

Feeling vs Thinking?
In this project, I asked the client in the feedback tool: How do you feel about the ...? This was a deliberate choice, as it steers the client to a more emotional and personal answer. However, it could be reasoned that strategy is a more functional asset and design is a more emotional asset. I would suggest doing A/B tests to check if using the word "think" instead of "feel" would steer the feedback in a more functional direction.

Limitations

The final prototype was made using the software of Typeform. Although this worked well, and a fully functioning prototype was delivered. It limited the use of some features (not the pro version) and limited giving feedback within the environment of Typeform. Preparing the Typeform for a client had to be done manually, which took relatively long. It would not be suitable for presentations that consist of over 50 slides. The form also consisted of so many links that it tended to crash while making changes. This means the tool has to be properly programmed to work to its full potential.

Lastly, collecting all the data from the account managers was not the easiest task and limited the number of cases. Some account managers no longer worked at Dentsu Creative, making it hard to dig up the old documents. However, the amount of old data sets was more than efficient for the data analysis.

9.1 PERSONAL REFLECTION

As a final piece of the puzzle, I will be writing a reflection on the past seven months. It may not have always been as easy, but I have learned a lot. About research and (strategic) design, about company dynamics, but mostly about myself.

Research as foundation
The research part was definitely the part that I was most excited about. This is striking, as I would have thought the exact opposite. I have never seen myself as a great academic reader, but I enjoyed finding insights in the literature and making sense of them. The main driver behind this was my need for a solid foundation for the design process, as I didn't want to walk into any unknown surprises. In hindsight, I am very happy I put in some extra energy for a structured literature review, as it helped me greatly in the design phase.

Design is about choices
Designing actual products has never been my strongest point. This is one of the reasons I chose for Strategic Product Design. And once again, I found myself in a metaphorical ocean of design swimming around. Initially, I didn't dare to make the hard choices because this would mean other doors would close. But my biggest learning from this design process is that design is all about making these choices and giving yourself several approaches. To eventually choose the one that feels the most fitting. Here my research phase comes back, which gave me a very good base to make these choices. However, I was delighted I could make these choices myself. This is something else I enjoyed a lot during the whole project. To have the freedom of choice without convincing anyone else in my project group. However, I have to say that after seven months of individual freewheeling, I look forward to working in a team again.

Strategic design?
What is strategic design, and what makes my project strategic? This is a question I have asked myself several times during this master's and even more in the last seven months. I have made a product for the strategy team of Dentsu Creative to make more consolidated changes in future iterations of a brand identity. As mentioned, a brand identity is a unique and recognisable set of associations about a company which sets you apart from the competition. Therefore, If I ask Google, I would dare to conclude that I designed a strategic product: Strategic design is the application of future-oriented design principles to increase an organisation's innovative and competitive qualities.

Dentsu Creative Amsterdam
I wanted to do my graduation project at an advertising agency because I had such a good experience during my internship in my elective space. This was for the agency of Selmore, which focuses mostly on Dutch advertising campaigns. Although Dentsu Creative has a campaign & activations pillar, I ended up at the positioning & identity pillar. It was valuable to see the difference between these two disciplines as it clearly showed me that I prefer the first one. This shows the value it had for me to do my graduation project for a company. I did not only learn a lot on a project level but also for next steps in my future career.

My learning ambitions
In the last paragraph of this report, I will reflect on one of the first things I wrote in my brief: my personal learning ambitions.

- Getting better at preparing interviews: Unfortunately, I did not conduct so many interviews. However, the ones that I did conduct worked out well, and the fact that I set the ambition to get better at preparing interviews also put an extra emphasis on this.

- Getting in-depth knowledge on the brand identity creation process: Because I also worked along the actual brand identity creation process, I definitely gained good in-depth knowledge about it. As discussed in the previous paragraph, this provided me with a valuable lesson, which I will take into consideration when searching for a job after this project.

- Getting better at scoping down the problem: In my opinion, I scoped down very efficiently and with a good outcome. The project started super broad as an approach to design a better transition between strategy and design..., already after the first week, it was scoped down to an approach to giving better feedback on strategy and design. This radical way of scoping down forced me to make choices. This made my design space a lot clearer and helped me end up with quite a tangible product.

- Getting better at taking notes: Taking notes is still not my strongest point, and till the midterm, I had not improved on it. However, from that moment, I really put myself into it and forced myself to take notes in every meeting and feedback session. I can really reflect on how valuable this is with my preparation for the green light and final report. It really is a pity I never did this so much before because it strongly improves your work.

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