

Designing New Concepts for IKEA's Omni-Channel Co-Worker Experience

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Preface

This thesis marks the bittersweet end of my time as a student at the TU Delft. Looking back at the past few months, I've experienced challenging and enriching moments, that I undoubtedly in the future will look back on as a highlight of my student time, one that revealed a lot about myself as an individual and as a strategic designer.

Firstly, I want to thank my supervisory team for their guidance during my graduation. They continuously made sure I delivered my very best during this project and maintained their trust in me as a strategic designer when it wasn't always smooth sailing.

Giulia, thank you for your honest and sharp feedback. You made the typical fuzzy feedback moments more concise. Maaïke, thank you for your clarity and critical view. I could always count on your feedback to be direct and fair, which encouraged me to continue improving my work. Ino, whom I hope to have met in person by the time I actually graduate, thank you for replying to the email of a design student looking for a graduation opportunity in such strange times. During our weekly meetings I never had to worry about you not following my steam-train of thought; you were always on board and that made it so much easier to navigate through the assignment. Your mentorship helped me tremendously and I've truly enjoyed working with you.

To all the CBF and IKEA Delft co-workers, thank you for having digital get-to-know-you coffees with me, taking part in my interviews and brainstorming sessions. Your input contributed so much to my work and creative process. You've shown me the real IKEA spirit that is all about the many people!

To my family and especially my parents, thank you for your endless support, interest and words of encouragement. It would have been a long process without you! Ernst and Lindsey, thank you for your spare key and hospitality. Jappie, thank you for being my shelter from the wind and bringing calmness during this hectic period. I'm sure you're just as glad it's over as I am. To my roommates and friends, thank you for your support and distractions! Finally, a special shout out to Dita, Annemartijne, Ghislaine and Manon who made graduating in the summer break somewhat fun!

You have all contributed to this achievement for which I am extremely grateful and proud of. I hope you enjoy the reading!

Eleonor

Executive Summary

Inter IKEA Systems B.V. (also known as Core Business Franchise or CBF) is the franchisor and the owner of the IKEA Concept. By means of this franchising system, IKEA's vision of creating a better everyday life for the many people is upheld through the collaboration, feedback, sharing and joint development between the franchisor (CBF) and the IKEA franchisees.

IKEA Culture & Learning is responsible for strengthening the IKEA culture and empowering IKEA co-workers through their own abilities. However, the current tools provided to enhance co-workers' competences, gather their feedback and discover potential business improvements lack in cohesion, ease of use, relevance and active dialogue. Therefore, this project focused on designing new concepts for bi-directional information sharing between the franchisor and customer-facing IKEA co-workers. The final concept ensures the development of IKEA co-workers by presenting IKEA Concept Knowledge, Learning Solutions and IKEA Product Information given by CBF and Range & Supply.

I started the project with a literature review about the modern-day Employee Experience and based on three literature studies I established the theoretical parameters of my thesis' design context to create a theoretical framework. The literature framework consisted of the following research findings that acted as the guiding principles for the design process:

- **Daniel Pink's Intrinsic Drivers of Motivation: Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose (Pink, 2009)**
- **Joseph Pine's Drivers of Experience Value: Time well spent & Time well invested (Pine, 2020)**
- **Bi-directional Information Sharing via a Digital Infrastructure (Koenders et al., 2018)**

In parallel to the literature review, I conducted interviews with CBF employees and IKEA Delft co-workers. This was to contextualize the theoretical findings with real-life, IKEA

stories and experiences from both stakeholders. From these interviews came the following core insights:

CBF Core Insights

- **CBF wants to be more accommodating and foreseeing in terms of IKEA co-worker learning needs and overall learning experience**
- **CBF wants to create more points of involvement and interaction with IKEA co-workers to get their feedback on the IKEA Learning Offer**
- **CBF wants to add more tangibility and guidance to the IKEA Learning Experience.**

Co-worker Core Insights

- **Co-workers want a relevant and personalized IKEA Learning Experience**
- **Co-workers want to be more involved in CBF projects and be kept up to date on the status of their feedback**
- **Co-workers' autonomy in their learning experience is strong and that should not change.**

These insights guide the implementation of the concept idea because they're based on more detailed and subjective findings and therefore, they contribute to a more specific level of what the concept should achieve as opposed to the literary findings.

Additionally, L&D managers from external companies were also interviewed and to bring more meaning to the findings of my research and design context. These findings are presented as 'advice' within this assignment because even though the findings were valuable, they represent a different company or industry than IKEA. Therefore, these findings were more suggestive than imperative to include.



External Companies' Advice

- **Provide guidance and learning support to employees so that they can learn while doing their job**
- **Include, communicate, and reflect with employees as much as possible throughout the process of creating the company L&D offer**
- **Learning is an employee's choice**

With these findings, I went through an iterative process to define the design statement of this assignment. First, I created user stories, which I then clustered into design opportunities, and conducted collaborative brainstorming sessions with IKEA people to gather content for my individual ideation cycle. It then became clear that the design process was sprawling and didn't have a clear design goal. So, based on an initial design statement, I created three concept idea directions that each had a digital infrastructure as a facilitator of their goals. These directions proved to show a disconnect with the initial design statement as they contained design decisions about the manifestation of the concept idea that weren't reflected in the initial design statement. So, by conducting user feedback sessions with IKEA Delft co-workers, I gathered their feedback on the relation of the design qualities in the initial design statement to the concept idea directions and finalized the design statement to eliminate the disconnect that had established itself during the design process. The final design statement is:

*The concept should enable Inter IKEA Systems B.V. to **facilitate promptive learning of the IKEA Concept** so that customer-facing co-workers **feel autonomous, purposeful, and heard**. This should be achieved through **customizable layers, visualization of co-worker growth and omni-channel feedback**.*

From these user feedback sessions, I gathered feedback on the three concept idea directions and evaluated them

based on their fulfillment of the overall goal of facilitating promptive learning of the IKEA Concept, as well as the goals to make co-workers feel autonomous through customizable layers, feel purposeful through visualization of co-worker growth, and feel heard through omni-channel feedback tools. The same was done for an iterated version of the concept idea direction based on the feedback gathered during the user sessions.

This potential fulfillment of the design statement was the deciding factor for the final chosen concept idea direction which was a combination of Direction 1 and Direction 3, and ultimately led to my final concept idea, Ändamål.

For IKEA co-workers, Ändamål is a social performance support platform that presents a personalized experience of the IKEA Learning Offer with relevant learning content and personal development tools. By providing a digital space for IKEA co-workers to come together, share their experiences and feedback with all IKEA people, Ändamål gives IKEA co-workers the drive to continue their purposeful learning journey and improve the IKEA Concept.

The platform is introduced at the beginning of someone's IKEA career during their onboarding process. It has been designed with customer-facing co-workers in mind but can be used for IKEA co-workers from all departments since they all have their own experiential expertise. The platform is then used throughout the co-worker's entire time at IKEA as it helps them to document their professional growth.

Ändamål centers its features around the co-worker's needs of **autonomy, mastery** and **purpose**. Co-workers are encouraged to choose their own development path at IKEA (**autonomy**) and by offering learning content that specifically aligns with their (team's) goals, Ändamål makes every IKEA learning moment **time well spent**. The additional personal development tools that enable co-workers to document their learning goals and visualize their growth, prompt their need for intellectual challenge (**mastery**), thus

creating **time well invested**. To create the feeling of **purpose** and togetherness, Ändamål's digital communities connect IKEA co-workers to colleagues with shared interests, goals, or experiences, but also facilitates active omni-channel feedback loops between CBF and co-workers. Ändamål essentially removes the disconnect in communication and collaboration between CBF and IKEA co-workers in a way that puts the co-workers' needs first and makes both stakeholders equal partners in their relationship.

This thesis presents my design process in developing Ändamål, concluding with some final recommendations and limitations, as well as a personal reflection.

Abbreviations & Meaning of Words

Meaning of Words

The IKEA Concept: The IKEA Concept is what makes the IKEA vision and IKEA business idea come to life. It is built on three components: the IKEA product range, the IKEA retail system and the IKEA trademarks, trade dress and other distinctive features. The IKEA Concept evolves steadily and develops to meet both today's market and the market of the future, as the world, retail, consumer behaviour and IKEA change over time.

The IKEA Mandatories: The IKEA mandatories are closely connected to the IKEA commitments and support them with more concrete, measurable statements of what to achieve. All mandatories are equally important. They are all interconnected and they complement each other. It is the totality of the mandatories that build the strength and uniqueness of the IKEA Brand.

Abbreviations

CBF - Core Business Franchise

ICL - IKEA Culture & Learning

EX - Employee Experience

CX - Customer Experience

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Thesis Introduction

0.1 Project Introduction

Inter IKEA Systems B.V. (also known as Core Business Franchise or CBF) is the franchisor and the owner of the IKEA Concept, including the IKEA trademarks. The IKEA vision has always been to create a better everyday life for the many people, by offering a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them. By means of this franchising system, this vision is upheld through the collaboration, feedback, sharing and joint development between the franchisor (CBF) and the IKEA franchisees.

CBF owns, develops, and protects the IKEA Concept, and assures the relevance of the IKEA Franchise Offer. Franchisees establish, operate, and expand IKEA Retailing activities in new and existing markets. CBF is responsible for the IKEA strategic framework and upholding it through an IKEA Concept which is updated, relevant, implemented and followed-up together with all IKEA trademark users. IKEA people are enabled in the value chain by developing new ways of working supported by processes, methods, tools, and services. CBF supports franchisees and their employees in their business, by providing them with IKEA Concept Knowledge, Learning Solutions and IKEA Product Information amongst other services. These can be seen as information silos. This is developed by IKEA Culture and Learning (ICL), one of the units within CBF. Each IKEA unit has their own global assignment, that of ICL is to strengthen the IKEA culture and enable IKEA people to develop their competence to meet customer and business needs. The IKEA brand is strengthened, and customer satisfaction is increased by enabling the development of competent and confident co-workers. Another goal within ICL that derives from investing in the competences of IKEA co-workers, is gathering their experiences and point of view on sales, logistics, interior design etc. Sales employees can be seen as crucial customer meeting points and are good sources for potential business development ideas as they are in frequent contact with the customer.

Currently, the presenting of information silos is fragmented. There is no structural, integrated way of working which leads to various opportunities being missed (ranging from business development ideas to ways co-workers can feel more valued by the company). Instead, an overarching

structure of information is created through various collaborating knowledge sources from IKEA business units and franchisees, and opportunities to improve IKEA depend on co-workers' own professional network. Processes like onboarding a new co-worker are still somewhat disorganized and lack cohesion throughout the company. The current form of communication between franchisor and franchisee is more like a franchisee giving *reactive* feedback to the franchisor rather than *an active dialogue between two equals*.

Franchisees and their co-workers need to be empowered to share their experiences and point of view to CBF because it is valuable to all stakeholders that the ways of working are adjusted when necessary. With the digital transformation that is taking place at IKEA, an opportunity has arisen to reevaluate the ongoing way of working and create a solution and long-term vision that is co-worker centric. Within this opportunity lies the chance to:

Create an active dialogue between the stakeholders rather than continue in an ongoing reactive feedback loop.

Investment in co-worker wellbeing and self-development.

Collect (qualitative) data from co-workers and use this as the basis of (part of) the design process.

Integrate formal and informal layers of information to prevent confusion or lack of trust between parties.

Create a new way of working that combines digital and non-digital tools to improve the IKEA co-worker experience.

Enhance employer branding attractiveness.

0.2 Problem Definition

IKEA Culture & Learning is responsible for strengthening the IKEA culture and empowering IKEA co-workers through their own abilities. However, the current tools provided to enhance co-workers' competences, gather their feedback and discover potential business improvements lack in cohesion, ease of use, relevance and active dialogue. Therefore, this project will focus on designing new concepts for bi-directional information sharing between franchisor and co-workers that are in direct or indirect contact with customers (indirect: one step between customer and co-worker). Co-workers' experiences are of great value to IKEA and that is why this must be the foundation of the entire design process. These aspects have led to the main research question:

What concept can be designed to improve the relationship between franchisor Inter IKEA Systems B.V. and customer-associated co-workers that enables competence building through bi-directional information sharing?

Sub-Questions:

- 1. How can the relationship between franchisor and co-worker be improved to add value to the overall co-worker experience and identify business development opportunities?*
- 2. How should bi-directional information sharing occur to facilitate and stimulate co-worker competence building?*

0.3 The Assignment

The assignment is to design a product, service or method that ensures the development of IKEA co-workers by presenting IKEA Concept Knowledge, Learning Solutions and IKEA Product Information given by CBF and Range & Supply. Furthermore, an active dialogue between franchisor and franchisee/co-worker will be incorporated for further knowledge development to strategically enhance CBF's offer. The end result(s) should uphold the IKEA vision and values.

I expect to design a concept that enables CBF and ICL to empower IKEA co-workers through their own abilities in a way that is modern, cohesive, and personal. Looking at the bigger picture, I expect to create a future vision of this concept for CBF and ICL that could be done in the format of a roadmap or through concept combination ideas. To prove the concept's functionality, I will conduct user tests and gather as much feedback from co-workers* as possible. Integrating the various layers of formal and informal information will also be part of the final solution as is facilitating an active dialogue between franchisor and franchisee/co-worker.

**Over time CBF has stepped away from using framed profiles to categorize their co-workers. People are multi-faceted, as are their jobs, so making specific content for fixed positions/labels has become outdated. Though every ICL product, service or learning solution must be applicable to all IKEA people, some are less relevant in certain business units, for example, IKEA Concept Knowledge is of greater importance to a store salesclerk than a factory worker (but both should still be able to access and understand the information). Therefore, in the scope of my assignment, I will be paying more attention to co-workers that are in direct or indirect (with one step between) contact with customers while maintaining a level of generality.*

0.4 Theoretical Approach

For this thesis, I adapted my own interpretation of the Double Diamond method (Design Council, 2017) and combined it with the sprint set-up of the Agile Scrum method (Jongerius et al., 2013). This allowed me to quickly gather feedback and keep stakeholders in the loop of my design process. Furthermore, the pace set by 2-week sprints prompted swift decision making and focus for the issue at hand. In hindsight, the sprint set-up did not apply well to the Discover phase of my research but that was easily adjusted. The overall process followed the structure of the Double Diamond: Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver, each phase alternating in divergent and convergent activities. Throughout each phase, I performed various iteration cycles using feedback and insights gathered during the entire design process. The overall approach to this thesis can be seen in Figure 1.

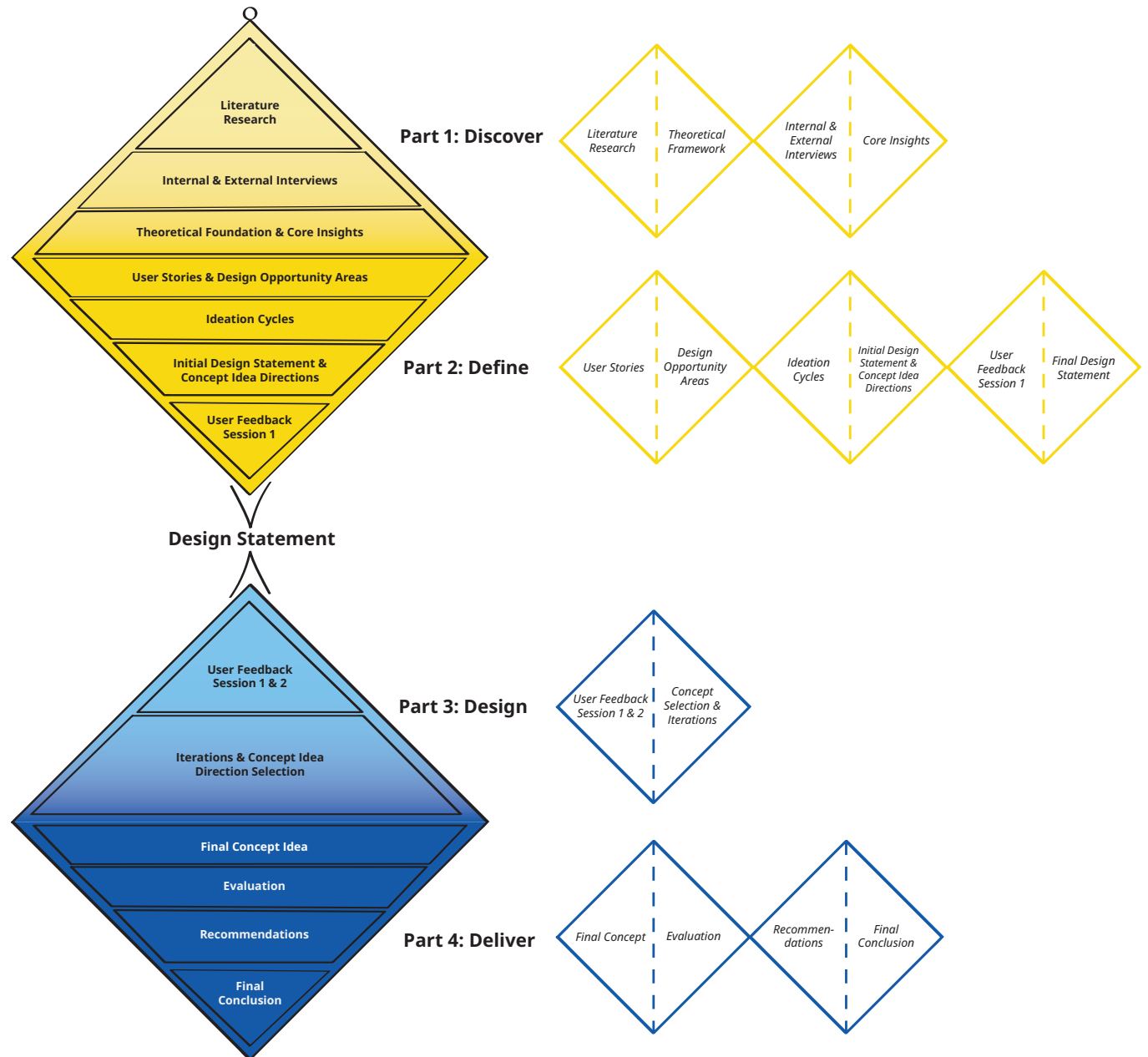


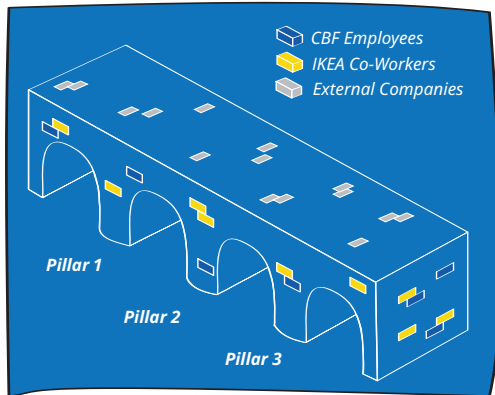
Figure 1: Double Diamond Approach

0.5 Metaphorical Approach

During this project I found that the best way for my to understand and explain my process was through a metaphor about building a bridge that connects the 'islands' of CBF and IKEA co-workers. Throughout this project I will refer to this metaphor to create more of a story around my design process and to help illustrate the steps I took in the different parts of the report. Below Figure 2 illustrates the metaphorical approach and the connection to the Double Diamond approach explained in the previous paragraph.

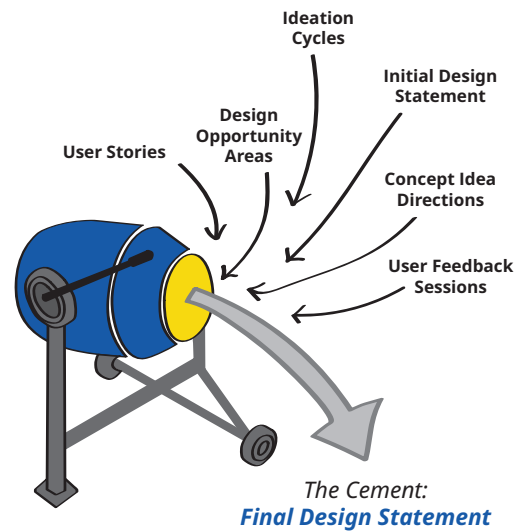
1. Scouting the Terrain

Through theoretical research studies and interviews with experts or the target group, the landscape of the design challenge is scouted and the initial parameters of the context are put in place.



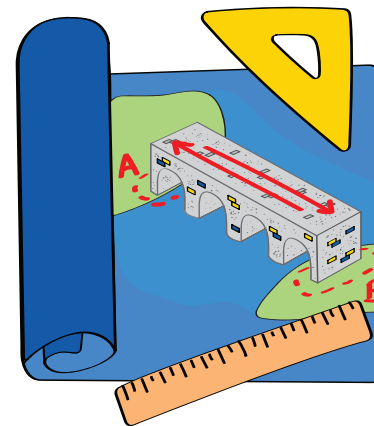
2. Creating Cement

Finding alignment in the stakeholders' needs to create the final design statement that contains the concept idea's goal and manifestation thereof.



3. Construction Planning

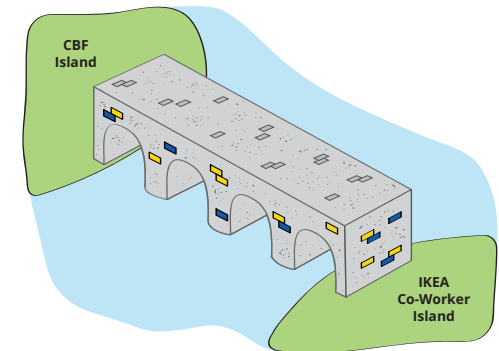
The user feedback sessions about the concept idea directions discussed the different designs for the bridge and how to best execute the goals set in the design statement. Ultimately, a plan is chosen which is represented by the final chosen concept idea direction(s).



4. Completed Bridge

The final concept can be seen as the definitive construction plan of the bridge. It is made of the best materials, and allows for effective, efficient and hassle-free traffic between both islands.

The limitations can be seen as road signs on the bridge and the recommendations represent possibilities for future construction or expansion plans.



Part 1: Discover

Part 2: Define

Part 3: Design

Part 4: Develop

Figure 2: Metaphorical Approach

IKEA

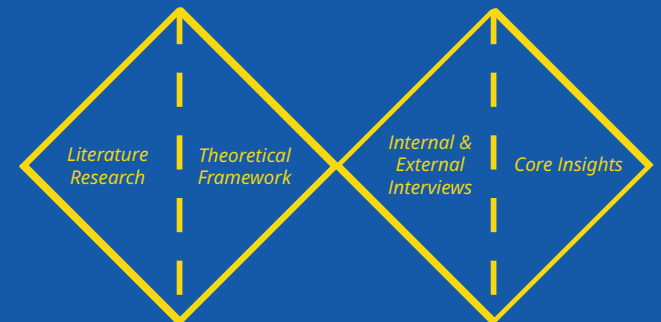


***Time is your most important resource.
You can do so much in ten minutes. Ten
minutes; once gone is gone for good.***

- Ingvar Kamprad, Founder of IKEA



Part 1: Discover



1.1 Introduction

IKEA co-workers that work in the IKEA stores and are in daily contact with customers, have valuable experiences that, if crowdsourced correctly, could help ICL improve the IKEA Learning Offer they present to their franchisees. However, the current lines of communication between ICL and co-workers is very inefficient and outdated. It's like they're each on their own island where they can see each other, but can't clearly hear each other. The only way for ICL to communicate with co-workers directly is through a long road over the franchisee's island. With the current digital transition that is taking place, the company wants to create an active dialogue with the co-workers that directly connects them to ICL so that the IKEA Learning Offer can be continuously improved based on feedback from the target group. The approach to this project can be compared to the many steps and materials needed to build the bridge that will connect the CBF and Co-Worker islands, but before construction can begin, we need to explore both islands and the current infrastructure that connects them.

Part 1 of this report focuses creating a better understanding of this design challenge, both in theory and practice. As the starting point of Part 1, a literature review was conducted to map out the theoretical context of the design challenge and set its parameters in the form of a theoretical framework. The main research topics explored in the literature review are about the modern-day *Customer Experience (CX)*, *Employee Experience (EX)* and the forms of bi-directional information sharing that take place within those two fields between organisations and customers, and employers and employees. The studies presented, provide the first guidelines for the creative process. The framework, presented in Figure 5, aims to understand the theory behind an EX landscape and use the core insights to build the load-bearing pillars of the bridge that will connect CBF and IKEA co-workers. The literature review is complemented with articles published by companies such as McKinsey, Accenture, Forbes, and the Josh Bersin Company who have done their own research in these areas.

The questions driving the literature review were:

- *What does the modern-day Employee Experience look like and why is it important for companies to consider?*
- *Who are the EX-stakeholders and what is their relation towards each other?*

- *What are the stakeholders' needs and how are those characterized?*
- *What is bi-directional information sharing and how does it occur?*

In parallel to this activity, empirical data was gathered by interviewing various people both in- and outside of IKEA to understand the real-life EX landscape of today. The goal of the interviews with IKEA employees (CBF and Delft Store Co-workers) was to gather first-hand experiences regarding,

- *How do both parties communicate and collaborate with each other? (e.g., the presentation of learning content, testing out assumptions together)*
- *What is their perception of the IKEA learning experience? (bottom-up point of view versus top-down point of view)*
- *What would they want to see be improved or changed in the IKEA learning experience? (to uncover any latent needs they might have).*

Subsequently, interviews were held with L&D managers from different organizations to further establish the picture of the current EX landscape, focusing on

- *How do their feedback loops operate?*
- *How do they uncover employee learning needs?*
- *What kind of support and guidance do they provide to their employees in their learning journey?*

This chapter concludes with an overview of the answers to the research questions from the literature review, and the key insights from the interviews.

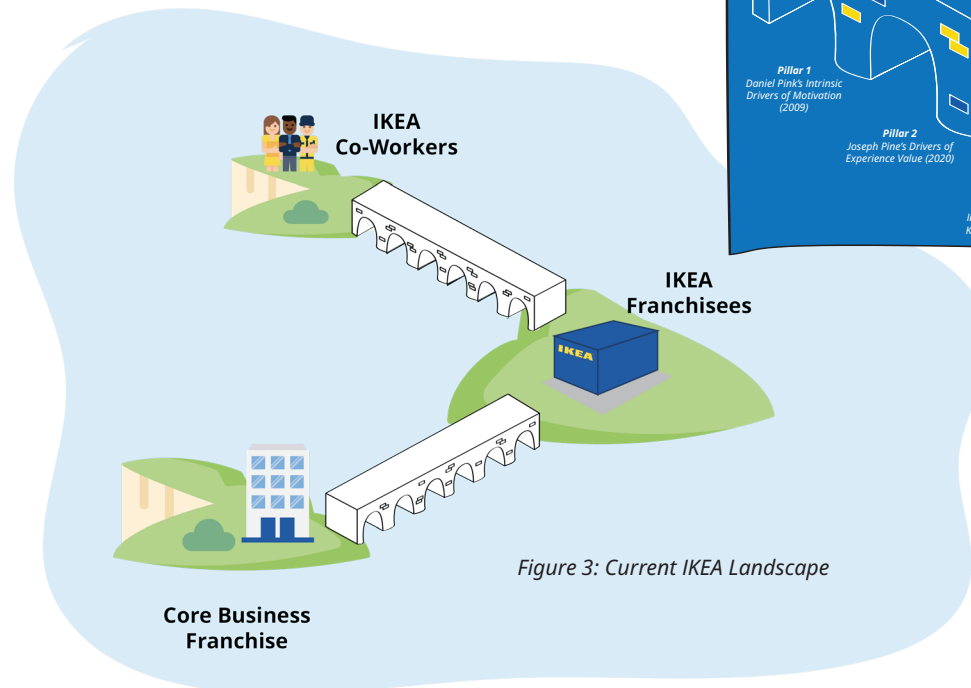
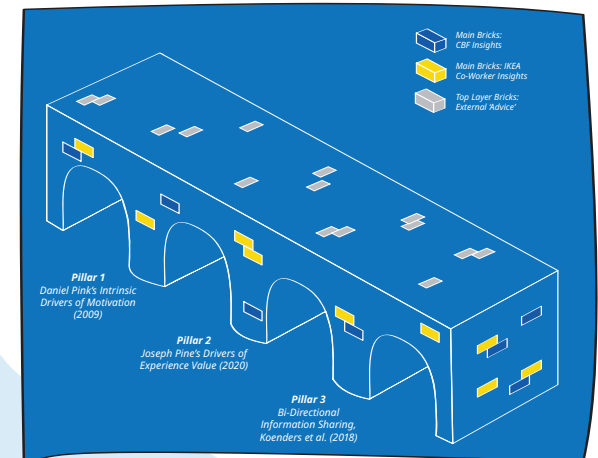


Figure 3: Current IKEA Landscape



1.2 Literature Review

The literature review provides an academic foundation for this thesis and the means to create a theoretical framework for the design challenge. The main studies focus primarily on the Employee Experience (EX), the stakeholders that are involved and what is needed to ensure their success. This information has been complemented with articles published by organizations such as McKinsey, Accenture, Forbes, and the Josh Bersin Company, who have done their own research in these areas. The literature review was curated based on these explorative questions:

- What is the Employee Experience (EX) and what influences it?
- Who are the EX-stakeholders and what is their relation towards each other?
- What are the stakeholders' needs and how are those characterized?
- What is bi-directional information sharing and how does it occur?

Customer Experience, Employee Experience and Engagement

The immense integration of technology and the internet into our daily lives has allowed for our economy to evolve from a service-based economy to an *experience-economy* (Pine, 2009). In the experience economy, satisfaction is created through engaging experiences. The *Customer Experience (CX)* for example, consists of all the interactive moments a customer has with a company and the cumulative impact those moments have over time on their relationship with that company (Zwilling, 2015). Customer satisfaction that is generated through those interactive moments is called *experience value* and is created over time by memorable events that engage each individual on a personal level, thus *creating customer satisfaction through engagement* (Reilly, 2018).

Companies that provide an engaging CX, can increase customer satisfaction and improve their financial performance (Liley et al., 2017). However, a customer experience would not exist without the company employees. Like customers, the interactive moments between an employee and employer, also have a cumulative impact on their relationship. This end-to-end journey is called the *Employee Experience (EX)* and relies on creating moments that elicit *employee engagement*: an employee's emotional commitment to an organization and its goals (Kruse, 2015). Research is continuously proving the link and likeness between CX and EX. A satisfying CX boosts sales and loyalty,

and an optimized EX increases employee productivity, engagement, retention, and talent acquisition, which in turn improves the company's financial performance (Liley et al., 2017) (Pine II, 2020, p. 21).

*What this information tells us is that **the customer experience, and thus a company's financial performance, is dependent on and improved by a positive employee experience.** See Figure 4 for how these factors are reliant on and reinforced by each other.*

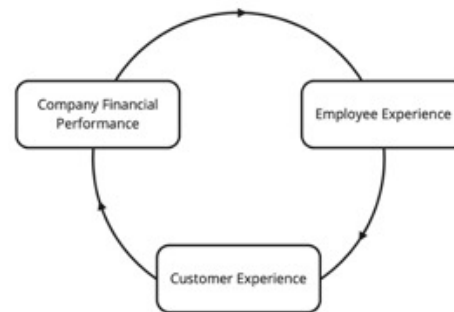


Figure 4: Interdependency of three factors

The employee experience starts at recruitment and ends at retirement. Issues like company culture, and learning and development need to be integrated to create a holistic, end-

to-end employee experience and no longer be perceived as individual silos with separate senior leaders and ways of working. People are considering the effects a job may have on their professional, emotional, physical, and financial well-being, and the prioritization of these factors differ per generation (Flynn & Mazor, 2017). So, before companies can assess their potential new employees, they must pass an assessment of their own.

Theoretical Framework

Figure 5 presents the theoretical framework of this thesis that was established by the core literary findings of this literature review. It shows that there are two main stakeholders in the Employee Experience context: the employee and the employer. The employer has to deliver experience value to the employee and in return the employee delivers motivation and engagement. This figure has been presented before the research substantiating it, to help explain the complexity of the EX landscape. Whereas the components in the framework remain impartial, the core insights presented throughout the literature review are already put into the IKEA context to ensure a better understanding of the design challenge.

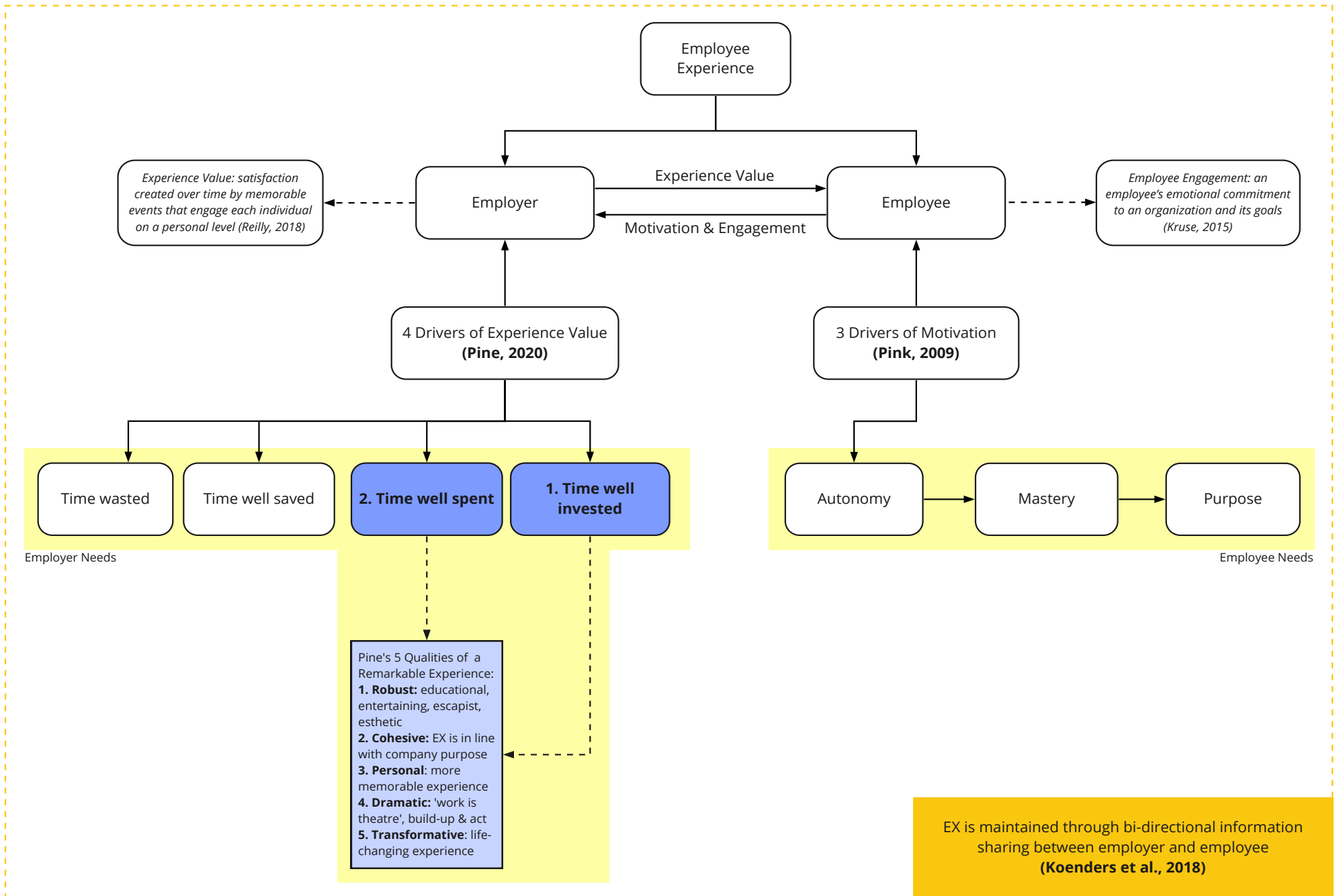


Figure 5: Theoretical Framework

The Employer as an EX-Stakeholder and Their Needs

A study by Accenture showed that highly engaged workforces are 21% more profitable than those with poor engagement (Liley et al., 2017). Joseph Pine derives multiple aspects from CX research to establish the characteristics of a remarkable experience. He states that although the service-based economy may be somewhat over, experiences cannot be created without services, and presents a fundamental design principle within the experience economy: *services provide time well saved while experiences offer time well spent* (Pine II, 2020). Additionally, he explains **how time can be a driver for experience value within the EX.**

Time as a Driver for Experience Value (Pine II, 2020)

Time well saved

When employees can access their (non-)digital tools, do their work quickly and efficiently, and have hassle-free interdepartmental communication, they can fully engage in their work. Bureaucratic red tape is a major time consumer in this regard and needs to be considered by the employer, because saving employees time and eliminating time wasted, frees up more employee time and company resources to offer experience value to customers. Time well saved is essentially about having access to what is needed when it's needed seamlessly and instantly (Pine II, 2020, p.22).

Time wasted

Performing certain activities or sharing resources may seemingly promote efficiency, but in some cases it actually wastes customer or employee time which in turn could have been spent on creating (experience) value.

Time well spent

According to Pine, experiences should be time well spent and the five qualities that make a remarkable CX are just as important to the creation of a remarkable EX.

Time well invested

Both stakeholders are prepared to invest time together to create transformative experiences that will benefit them in the short and long run. A big contributor to transformative experiences is Learning & Development. Employees who are coached, gain the knowledge and skillset to create valuable customer experiences, benefiting all stakeholders.

Pine's 5 Qualities for a Remarkable Experience

Robust: *Encompassing entertainment, educational, escapist, and aesthetic arenas of experiences. For example, educational experiences from L&D departments would be more robust if the other three qualities were included. Adult learning remains abstract until it can be put into practice so, incorporating entertaining elements and appropriate aesthetics can greatly influence knowledge retention.*

Cohesive: *The organizing principle of an experience that aligns all sensory cues and worker behavior with a fascinating theme. This applies to the entire employee experience, not just for e.g., learning solutions and trainings. It provides a way for the company to create unity amongst their employees and align them with the company purpose.*

Personal: *Customizing certain elements of an experience will allow for authentic and personal engagement. The more personalized elements there are, the more engaging the overarching experience will be.*

Dramatic: *'Work is theatre' can be interpreted as an operational model where employees are given roles to characterize and act out on the business stage. Furthermore, theatre can be used as an inspiration for experience staging by designing time to rise to a high point and end at a lower point with an enjoyable yet modest grand finale. When companies take employees away from their daily operations, e.g., for training, justifying it as time well spent can be done through theatre.*

Transformative: *Some experiences can be designed to guide people to achieve their aspirations. They are so impactful, that they can ignite meaningful change for self-improvement e.g., change their lifestyle, learn a new skill, and career development.*

Relating the Core Insights of the Framework to the IKEA Context

This information tells us that within the IKEA EX landscape, **Core Business Franchise is the employer-stakeholder** and therefore **must provide experience value to their employees**.

Core Business Franchise's needs as a stakeholder are translated into Pine's four drivers of experience value: *time wasted, time well saved, time well spent, and time well invested* (Pine, 2020). These drivers can also be used as underlying purposes for creating IKEA's Learning Offer.

Furthermore, ***time well spent can be seen as part of time well invested***. *Time well invested* focuses on delivering experiences that help employees to grow. Those experiences must be designed as *time well spent* which in turn is created by Pine's five qualities of a remarkable experience.

Finally, **ICL is largely responsible for *time well invested* and with that, *time well spent*** (the blue boxes in Figure 5). They create and develop learning experiences for IKEA co-workers (*time well invested*) and need to ensure that the learning solutions and the means to experience them, possess Pine's five remarkable experience qualities.

These findings are shown in Figure 5 as the relation between employer and employee, the needs of the employer as an EX-stakeholder, and the corresponding characteristics of those needs.

The Employee as an EX-Stakeholder and Their Needs

The work of Daniel Pink is used to understand the employee needs within the EX. He distinguishes two types of imperative employees and their main motivators: Type-X (does predominantly algorithmic tasks that have a set way of working and is driven by extrinsic desires and rewards) and Type-I (does predominantly heuristic tasks that require experimentation and creative problem solving which don't have set instructions and is driven by intrinsic (i.e., non-materialistic) desires). For a Type-X employee, incentive plans and reward programs work very well, but Pink highlights that companies who have outsourced the majority of their algorithmic work to other countries or external parties, should reevaluate their business approach for their Type-I employees and *close the gap between what science knows and what business does* (Pink, 2009). The Type-I employee as a stakeholder has three drivers of motivation to elicit employee engagement (Pink, 2009): *Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose*. This employee is self-directed, wants to become better at what they're doing and connect that need for intellectual challenge to something bigger than themselves.

Autonomy

Autonomy means to act freely but with choice. People can be autonomous in their actions while also being happily interdependent with others (Pink, 2009). Allowing for employees to self-direct, will create autonomous motivation that increases conceptual understanding, productivity, and psychological well-being. Pink presents four detailed forms of *autonomy* (Pink, 2009) (Panneman, 2015):

Autonomy in Tasks; as an employee, deciding what tasks you are going to work on in a time given by the employer for you to do so.

Autonomy in Time; deciding how much time you feel is needed for you to complete certain tasks and do your job well.

Autonomy in terms of Technique; increasing the ways in how to do your work, for instance by providing equipment for employees to work from home.

Autonomy in Teams; choosing who you want to work with.

Instead of micro-managing employees to a level of compliance, self-direction will create more engagement because it establishes a sense of trust and responsibility with employees. It forms an emotional connection (*engagement*) between both stakeholders thus positively impacting the EX. A common practice used by companies is the '15%-time' rule (*autonomy in tasks*), where employees are allowed to spend 15% of their working hours on personal development and other projects. Determining how autonomous an organization is, can be done by conducting an 'autonomy-audit', Pink suggests (for further explanation, see Appendix 1).

Mastery

Enabling autonomy when solving complex problems, requires an inquiring mind and the willingness to experience one's way to a fresh solution. In other words, by enabling autonomy, the second driver of intrinsic motivation is triggered: *Mastery*. *Mastery* is the *desire for intellectual challenge, the urge to master something new and engaging*. The environment in which mastery is built, is of great importance and lays for a large part in the hands of managers (representatives of the employer). Slowly building up the complexity levels of tasks that (new) employees are given and preventing the mismatch between what employees must do and what they can do. When a task is beyond their capabilities, an employee experiences anxiety, whereas when they feel overqualified, they experience boredom. Furthermore, managers need to be exchange feedback with employees to monitor and acknowledge their progress. Showing people how their work is progressing and impacting the business is of great importance in maintaining the need for intellectual challenge as it triggers the third and final intrinsic motivator (TED Talks, 2009).

Pink describes three laws of Mastery:

Mastery is a mindset of improvement goals. *Type-I people look for improvement goals that require increasing effort, e.g., 'learn how to cook', whereas Type-X people look for performance-goals, e.g., 'cook a medium-rare steak', that don't necessarily have that requirement.*

Mastery is developed over time, with frustration and failure as its byproducts. *People can experience satisfaction in life when they are willing to work and put effort into something that is important to them.*

Mastery is asymptotic, meaning it can only be approached and never fully achieved as there is always room for improvement. *(Pink, 2009), (Panneman, 2015).*

Purpose

People have always been purpose-led and want to see the bigger picture of their actions: *why am I doing this?* Encouraging employees to find their purpose in their jobs e.g., by connecting their personal goals to organizational targets, can establish a strong sense of purpose (Mind Tools, 2019). Purpose-maximization will take place alongside profit-maximization as a guiding principle, and Pink identifies three ways in which purpose motive is conveyed: in goals that use profit to reach purpose, in words that emphasize more than self-interest and in policies that allow people to pursue purpose on their own terms. Like the autonomy audit, Pink suggests companies ask their employees if they truly feel as if they have a purpose. Simply having them answer the question *'What is our company's purpose?'* will show employee (mis-)alignment. Companies that succeed in communicating their broader purpose and mission, have a clear competitive advantage now and in the future.

Relating the Core Insights of the Framework to the IKEA Context

This information tells us that within the IKEA EX landscape, **IKEA co-workers are the employee-stakeholder** and therefore, **must provide motivation and engagement to their employer.**

IKEA co-workers' needs as a stakeholder are translated into Pink's three intrinsic drivers of motivation for the Type-I employee: *Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose* (Pink, 2009).

Giving *autonomy* to IKEA co-workers will make them feel engaged, because they (help) choose their approach to complex problems at work. This sense of trust will build their emotional connection to CBF and with that, create *engagement* and *experience value*.

Mastery* is triggered by *autonomy because to solve complex problems, a curious and inquisitive mindset is needed. This will lead to IKEA co-workers seeking out ICL learning content to achieve personal growth.

Furthermore, **creating an active feedback loop for IKEA co-workers with their employer that maps out their personal development, also increases *mastery***. IKEA co-workers are motivated when they see they're improving at a skill or getting closer towards achieving their goals. **Showing this progress and the potential business impact, maintains their need for intellectual challenge and activates the last intrinsic driver for motivation.**

***Purpose* is reached when an IKEA co-worker can connect their goals to a greater cause.** This could be on an individual level, but also on a collective level. By relating individual goals to e.g. the IKEA Mandatories or specific tasks to e.g., team targets, IKEA co-workers can see what their actions are contributing towards. (Pink, 2009).

These findings are shown in Figure 5 as the relation between employee and employer, and the needs of the employee as an EX-stakeholder.

Bi-Directional Information Sharing

In research from Koenders et al. (2018), it is shown how bi-directional information sharing can play a great role in creating experience value. Before the advent of social media, interaction and information sharing between companies and customers was a one-way street in which mass marketing broadcasting tools like mailing lists and loyalty-programs were the only traffic. Then came the social media era, in which the endless possibilities in gathering online data made people's behavior become more accessible, even tradable. With blogs, review systems and discussion groups, customers are now interacting with companies on their own. A two-way street was built that enabled customers to actively play a role in creating relationships with companies and their own customer experience (Koenders et al., 2018).

Connecting the Research Studies

Koenders et al. (2018) states that customers who are involved in creating their CX, feel like an equal in their relationship with an organization. The same should stand for employees with their employers. When both take the time to communicate what is needed to improve the overall EX and help employees reach

their goals, it is *time well invested* (Pine II, 2020). When employees' experiences and needs are communicated during *time well invested*, *time well spent* can be created. Customer-facing employees have valuable feedback based on their work experiences. They know what is needed for their unit to flourish. When employers involve employees by crowdsourcing this information, seeking out the most important topics, and implementing change, the relationship between employer and employee strengthens.

Moreover, all three of Pink's drivers rely on clear communication and feedback between employer and employee. *Autonomy* is only granted when both parties are in agreement of what is expected of each other. The feeling of *mastery* is best created when an employee sees the tangible results of their hard work. Finally, *purpose* is a result of acknowledgement in which employer and employee respect and consider each other's needs. In the EX, this comes down to organizations creating a quick and frequently used feedback loop between employer and employee. This helps sketch out the big picture to employees, but also ensures the employer can take 'redesigns' into consideration based on what employees have experienced. Employee feedback can show the

internal (mis-)alignment with the company purpose and improvements areas in operations, policies, and L&D to maintain the three intrinsic drivers of employee motivation.

Relating the Core Insights of the Framework to the IKEA Context

From this information we know that **bi-directional information sharing between CBF and IKEA co-workers can strengthen their relationship and make both stakeholders equal partners.**

The best way to enable bi-directional information sharing is through a digital infrastructure (Koenders et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the research presented by Pink and Pine, is only successful when both stakeholders are frequently communicating and collaborating with each other.

These findings are shown in Figure 5 as the overall mechanism that enables the previous research findings successfully operate within the established EX framework.

In addition to creating the theoretical framework presented in Figure 5, when explored further, the core insights of the literature research also provide the first answers to the research questions. These research questions have been deconstructed and the following parts have been extracted as the main components that are answered by the core insights of the literature research:

Q1: How to improve the Employee Experience?

Q2: How to enable bi-directional information sharing?

Q3: How to identify business development opportunities?

Q4: How to facilitate competence building?

Q5: How to stimulate competence building?

Q1: How to improve the Employee Experience?

Joseph Pine's Drivers for Experience Value

Pine (2020) states that in the experience economy, people are looking for experience value. In the case of an employee, that experience value has to come from their employer and can be achieved by 'designing' time in four different ways: time wasted, time well saved, time well spent and time well invested. Pine indicates the five characteristics that create remarkable experiences, also known as time well spent. Establishing the four drivers for experience value as the employer's needs will improve their company's EX.

Daniel Pink's Intrinsic Drivers for Motivation

Pink (2009) implies that employees with predominantly heuristic based tasks, have different motivators than their equally important colleagues with predominantly algorithmic based tasks. This requires a different approach in eliciting their motivation and engagement, namely through the non-materialistic desires autonomy, mastery and purpose. Starting at autonomy, the drivers are activated by each other but can also be separately triggered to improve the EX.

Bi-Directional Information Sharing, (Koenders et al., 2018)

Research by Koenders et al. (2018) showed that a CX significantly improves when customers actively play a role in creating their CX and can give their input or receive feedback through digital infrastructures. This would also apply for the EX. Not only can employees give their employer suggestions for operational improvements based on their professional experiences (customer-facing employees in particular), they remain engaged and motivated to do their job when they are kept in the loop on company decisions or are made aware of their own personal growth.

Q2: How to enable bi-directional information sharing?

Bi-Directional Information Sharing, Koenders et al., (2018)

In research from Koenders et al. (2018), it clearly states how the rise of social and other new media, led to consumers' buying behavior becoming accessible and tradable for companies. With this came a new form of consumer engagement that allowed for customers to talk to companies through blogs, review systems, forums etc., rebuilding the 'one-way street' of communication to an infrastructure that allowed for more interactivity and engagement from both parties. This principle would also apply to the EX-context.

Q3: How to identify business development opportunities?

Daniel Pink's Intrinsic Driver for Motivation: Autonomy

Pink's first driver for intrinsic motivation is autonomy, which is the need to self-direct. He states that removing conforming rules at the workplace will stimulate creativity and encourage employees to take new approaches to complex problems. Many companies allocate a percentage of an employee's time to let them focus on their own projects or interests, during which they can develop new ideas and test them out. This can lead to improvement of daily operations or new business solutions. One famous example of a product that was invented during an employee's time for autonomous tasks, was the yellow Post-It note created by two 3M scientists, Dr. Spencer Silver and Art Fry (Post-it® Brand, 2021).

Bi-Directional Information Sharing, Koenders et al., (2018)

To know what improvements are needed on a product or service, one needs to test it and gather feedback from the end-users. Koenders' research on the impact of bi-directional information sharing between consumer and company on the overall CX, provides solid evidence that business development opportunities can be discovered by actively seeking out the feedback of the end-user.

Q4: How to facilitate competence building?

Joseph Pine's Driver for Experience Value: Time Well Invested

According to Pine, a company cannot truly transform itself without investing the time to do so. This means investing time with and for employees to develop their skills and capabilities that will benefit both parties in the short and long term. L&D departments are responsible for tending to employee learning needs and providing learning material so that employees can continue to grow and create value for customers. In the context of IKEA, time well invested can be seen as the IKEA Learning Offer created by ICL.

Q5: How to stimulate competence building?

Joseph Pine's Driver for Experience Value: Time Well Spent

If time well invested is seen as a company's L&D offer to their employees, then time well spent represents the actual experiences that make up the L&D offer. If those moments contain Pine's five qualities of remarkable experiences (Robust, Personal, Cohesive, Dramatic and Transformative), the employee will feel genuinely engaged and label them as valuable memories, which will prompt them to seek out those learning experiences more often.

Daniel Pink's Intrinsic Drivers for Motivation

Pink (2009) implies that employees with predominantly heuristic based tasks, have different motivators than their equally important colleagues with predominantly algorithmic based tasks. This requires a different approach in eliciting their motivation and engagement, namely through the non-materialistic desires autonomy, mastery and purpose. Starting at autonomy, the drivers are activated by each other but can also be separately triggered to improve the Employee Experience.

1.3 Interviews

1.3.1 Company Research

In parallel to the literature study, interviews were conducted with various employees to gather empirical data to complement the theoretical findings presented in Paragraph 1.2. Employees from CBF and the IKEA Delft store were interviewed to ensure that both stakeholders were considered. The purpose of the interviews was to uncover their perspectives, experiences, and desires regarding:

- *How both parties communicate and collaborate with each other (e.g., the presentation of learning content, testing out assumptions together, working with feedback),*
- *What their personal perceptions are of the IKEA learning experience (bottom-up point of view versus the top-down point of view)*
- *What they want to see improve or change in the IKEA learning experience (uncover latent needs).*

Method: From Findings to Insights

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three CBF co-workers and two Delft Store co-workers (Adams, 2015). This is a flexible set-up with topics and questions prepared beforehand in an interview guide, while allowing the interviewer to improvise during the session if that brings new insights and a more fluid conversation. The main topics discussed were the moments and manners in which CBF collaborates and communicates with IKEA co-workers during their projects, what their role is within the entire learning solution development process, how they work with and perceive ICL's chosen approach to competence development (called Learning in the Business), and what they feel is needed to improve the IKEA Learning Offer.

For the interviews both purposeful and selective sampling techniques were applied (Davis, 2021). Co-workers who could provide in-depth, detailed information about the IKEA EX and Learning Offer, and who were easily accessible to the researcher via their professional network, were recruited for the interviews. The purposeful sampling technique is quite subjective as the researcher determines the interviewees based on certain criteria. In this case, the criteria were that participants worked at ICL within the researcher's BSA unit, or they were customer-facing co-workers from the IKEA Delft Store. Naturally, the researcher was aware of the subjectivity of the sampling techniques and considered any biases (Davis, 2021).

Each meeting was recorded and transcribed. To analyze the raw, qualitative data of the interviews, a general inductive approach was applied (Thomas, 2006). This approach primarily turns raw data into a more comprehensive, summary format, allowing theory to arise from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The detailed analyses of the data uncover themes or a concept based on a researcher's interpretations of that data (Thomas, 2006).

The transcripts were read multiple times to discover recurring themes and their possible meanings. The first round of analysis was to extract the interviewees' answers to the questions and delivered a broad range of categories for each transcript. These extracted answers were then categorized again based on the various research question components to initially allocate the various needs of the stakeholder that the interviewee represented. In the final round, also through inductive reasoning, the core insights, presented at the end of this chapter, were determined based on the most prominent and recurring topics from the interviews. The core insights represent an overarching theme that was established from interviewees' responses that varied in their level of detail. Some of the quotes that were extracted to synthesize those core insights are presented alongside the insights' explanations.

In addition to the official interviews, a store visit was conducted with three IKEA Delft Com&In co-workers (Communication & Interior Design) where informal conversations and observations took place that contributed

to the overall findings from the interviews. The results presented in the following paragraph, are the most relevant findings that will be considered in the next stages of this thesis. For the interview guides and analyses, see Appendices 7 and 8.

Examples of how findings from the interviews were turned into 'insights'

Here a CBF employee discusses how she uses data visualization to create alignment and purpose within her role as an Experience Lead. It also applies to a higher level for how visualization of data can lead to more internal alignment, and helps co-workers to think about what they consider a good result and how to consider performance?

<p>(TS) 14:34 So, and I think that is, is quite an important job because I think we should have a common view. And not, you know, of course, we have specific needs, but I think it's really good if we can have a common way also on how we look at data, what data we are looking at, because if we want to, because the dashboard is also to compare. So, if we're not comparing the same things, we will never have an alignment in how we, you know, consider performance how do we consider a good result? What's a good result, and so on.</p>	<p>Eleonor Dencher (External) May 15, 2021</p> <p>Creating Purpose & Alignment</p>
	<p>Eleonor Dencher (External)</p> <p>Visualizing Progress/Growth/Data</p>

This extract was then categorized to two research question components: *How to improve the EX?* because it refers to how an employer can create more purpose within their organization, and *How to identify business development opportunities?* since it mentions how they could determine a good performance or result for IKEA, indicating possible areas of improvement.

The category of *Creating togetherness* was applied to both research question components and *Creating tangibility* only to the first research question component. In the end, this finding resulted in the discovery of Core Insights 2 and 3 from the CBF perspective.

CBF Core Insight 2: CBF wants to create more points of involvement and interaction with IKEA co-workers to get their feedback on the IKEA Learning Offer

CBF Core Insight 3: CBF wants to add more tangibility and guidance to the IKEA Learning Experience.

Here a Delft Store Sales Manager discusses what he would like to see change within their relationship with CBF, specifically noting how he would love to be more in the loop of what CBF is brainstorming about in terms of the future IKEA store. He talks about how being kept up to date on CBF's work is important for their business, especially considering that Delft is the Reference Store for all other stores around the world, meaning other retailers look to Delft as the example of how the IKEA Concept should be carried out (this is not explicitly mentioned in this extract, but is explained in the broader context of the interview).

<p>ED 35:49 Is that something that you feel like would improve the way of working in general? If you had a more of a direct connection with them?</p> <p>JL 36:14 But it depends, it depends. would love to have more connections when it comes to what they are developing for other countries, like omni channel, like topics really related with the store. Like the store in the future? How will this look like? I would love to have more info where it goes, because then it will help me to really, when we are thinking in to improve the store, I already can see what the future is there. So far, I don't have a very good connection</p>	<p>Eleonor Dencher (External) May 15, 2021</p> <p>Employee desires for collaboration with CBF</p>

This extract was categorized to *How to stimulate competence building?* because he talks about how a better relationship with CBF could help him improve the IKEA store and that could lead to co-workers being motivated to develop their competences because they can see what the bigger picture is that they are working towards.

Then the category of *Involvement/relation with CBF* was applied to this extract and ultimately resulted in the discovery of Core Insight 2 of the IKEA Co-Worker perspective.

IKEA Co-Worker Core Insight 2: Co-workers want to be more involved in CBF projects and be kept up to date on the status of their feedback/input.

CBF has a relatively positive outlook on their collaborations with IKEA co-workers

All in all, the ICL employees seemed to have a more optimistic perception of the overall IKEA learning experience, citing their interactions with IKEA co-workers as enthusiastic and positive during the interviews. However, they all stated that the form and frequency of collaboration and communication between the two needs to be improved for IKEA to continue growing.

For instance, during meetings concerning the development of the IKEA Learning Offer, they're usually in contact with representatives of the co-workers (franchisees) rather than the actual co-workers themselves. ICL employees are very aware that the store co-workers' time to learn is limited because they have to be on the shopfloor. This makes it harder for them to reach out to co-workers directly and gather feedback on the learning offer, even though they are the end-users of ICL's products.

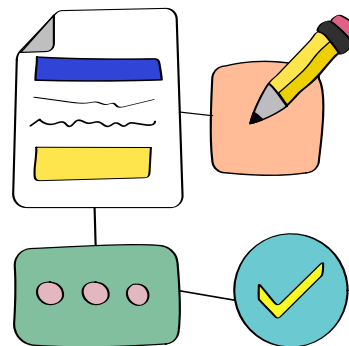
They believe that learning and learning together is a key part of the IKEA DNA and makes the company unique. That is what they aim for when creating learning solutions and the overall IKEA Learning Offer, but they're missing a direct link to the co-workers to extend this sense of togetherness further into the development process.

CBF co-workers want to increase co-worker involvement by creating more feedback touchpoints and being more foreseeing in their learning needs. They want to create a digital infrastructure that enables more bi-directional information sharing and create better learning experiences (*time well spent*) by stepping towards the learner with relevant and remarkable learning content (*time well invested*).

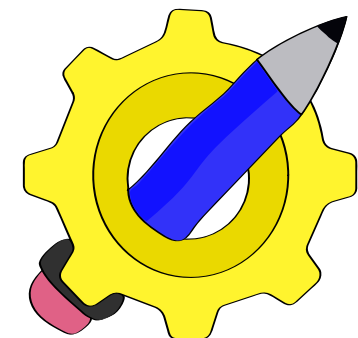
CBF Interviewees & Initials



ICL Culture & Experience Lead - OK



ICL Experience Lead & Planner - TS



ICL Solution Developer - AJ

I think now, actually, in my world, we're lacking some tech to take the next step. Because to me, the next step would also be having things available where you are, and MyLearning is, like a couple of clicks away ... it does not have that peer-to-peer learning, which I think is very important - AJ

CBF Core Insight 1

CBF wants to be more accommodating and foreseeing in terms of the IKEA co-worker learning needs and overall learning experience.

During the interviews with the CBF employees, each interviewee said that CBF/ICL could and should be doing more to innovate the IKEA learning experience in terms of content, format, and way of working. The Covid-19 pandemic forced ICL to go completely digital with their learning content, however employees believe this should have been the case beforehand considering the competences and resources that are at the company's disposal. The online and virtual learning experiences still use somewhat outdated learning formats and lack the peer-to-peer interaction that physical learning experiences have. The interviewees want to have improvements made to the digital infrastructure that facilitates the IKEA learning offer and see a need for learning formats that are flexible in terms of duration, personalization, and localization. Furthermore, they believe that the company is not being proactive enough with bringing the learning content to the learners: learning at IKEA still 'has too many clicks' and the information co-workers need, is hard to find. Learning at IKEA must be targeted so that learners can easily find the solutions that are relevant for them.

So, I think we need to be more flexible, and maybe more also foreseeing in terms of future need and technology and how fast we adapt to reality. And for me, feedback then is very important. Both content as well, as well as format - TS

In the learning experience, I think we are not innovative enough for such a huge company as IKEA. And such a competent set up ... But when I look on our online learning solutions, some of them are PDFs for reading or a very not advanced online tool - OK

"And the time which could be spent on the learning is not really there. Then, if our coworkers have to meet customer's eight hours of their working day, they have very little time to learn or they need to do it in front of the customers, which is stressful"- OK

Because that has been a weak point that we have maybe sometimes talked in the beginning and end, but not having them with us in the journey. So, I think that will improve the solutions further, if we actually involve them in a number of steps along the way. - AJ

CBF Core Insight 2

CBF wants to create more points of involvement and interaction with IKEA co-workers to get their feedback on the IKEA Learning Offer

To improve the learning offer at IKEA, CBF gathers feedback from the franchisees and tries to match the learning solutions with the real-life situation of the co-worker as much as possible. However, based on the interviews with CBF employees, too little is being done to directly involve the co-workers during these meetings or testing sessions. They all know how valuable co-worker input can be to improve the learning solutions because the feedback is coming directly from the user, but they're limited in actually doing this because of the co-workers' time scarcity. This creates a distance between the CBF employee and store co-worker but can be removed with a digital feedback concept. Therefore, they want to incorporate more digital points of interaction and involvement with the co-worker directly, throughout the entire process of creating the IKEA Learning Offer. This means involving co-workers more and frequently during the learning solution development process, incorporating learning formats that allow for more learner interaction and feedback crowdsourcing, and providing ways for learners to give targeted feedback quickly and efficiently. Not only will this match the learning solutions better to the co-worker's real work environment, but it also allows for CBF employees to learn from co-workers about how learning solutions are put into practice, understand how co-workers would prioritize learning needs and strengthen the employer-employee relationship by engaging with them.

We're in those MOOC and SPOOC courses, you have access to the expert, videos, content, your own class, you can upload your work and get feedback. That's what we had in the face-to-face training in the past. Today, our online learning mostly thinks, on the level of what and why, not how. - OK

I think we could do more, and I think in terms of sharing the end product [the learning solutions] I think we still are not fully reaching them because we communicate when it's ready, with the different franchisees, but we don't communicate to those who actually have a need of those solutions - AJ

I think it's 'what' and 'how'. I think there is even more to this ... because it's very easy to understand IKEA and learning in the business, ... but when you work in the online setup ... how can I reach out, where are my possibilities for interacting more? Saving this 'togetherness' online. - OK

CBF Core Insight 3

CBF wants to add more tangibility and guidance to the IKEA Learning Experience

From the CBF interviews, it was evident that part of what makes the IKEA learning experience so effective are the elements that help guide new learners through the learning process and make intangible knowledge tangible through experiences. On the shopfloor this is done through mentoring or shadowing, where new co-workers learn the daily operations by following experienced co-workers in their activities. But in a digital environment it becomes more difficult to closely engage with co-workers because of the lack of physical togetherness, which in turn can make the learning experience more difficult. With the digital transformation that is taking place at IKEA, CBF employees would like to incorporate more elements of tangibility and guidance in the digital IKEA learning offer so that they can maintain a sense of togetherness in the learning experiences of co-workers.

Tangibility can be created for instance, by visualizing and presenting data in a way that is comparable and comprehensive to all co-workers. It can create a sense of alignment and purpose because everyone is on the same wavelength. Tangibility can also be created by providing (learning) content from outside of IKEA to help illustrate what's happening inside of IKEA.

Guidance can be created, for example, by immediately showing co-workers the relevance of certain learning tools or information when they access it, so that they can choose (part of) the solution that fits their needs at that moment. It can also be created with performance support tools that allow for co-workers to get real-time support during their shifts on the shop floor. Lastly, co-workers can receive more guidance if the digital learning experience of IKEA allows for a more targeting approach to learner's needs. The element of guidance is also applicable to the way feedback is crowdsourced from co-workers to CBF. CBF gets a lot of feedback which then needs to be filtered through to extract the relevant parts, so this could be guided beforehand by having co-workers give targeted feedback to help ICL determine the learning priorities.

When learning in the business on the shop floor can be very tangible, you shadow someone, have a buddy, you are getting onboarded in your job. Working in an office can be a bit different ... we also work with a buddy system but sometimes you're also very much left on your own- TS

And of course, we have specific needs, but I think it's good if we can have a common way also on how we look at data, ... if we're not comparing the same things, we will never have an alignment in how we consider performance, what we consider as a good result. - TS

So, standing in front of the customer, receiving questions they don't know the answer to ... being able to find the right answer when they're working. It needs to be short .. explain to the point, almost like those YouTube videos, that teach how to do makeup. - OK

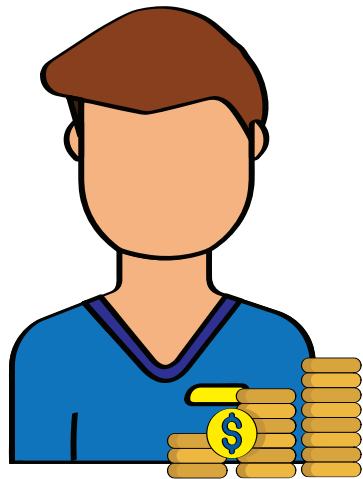
I would say tools outside of IKEA. Because there is plenty, you can go to the TED Talks, you can go to YouTube. And we use many of those stories to illustrate what's happening in IKEA and to understand what we are doing. - OK, on the learning tools she uses to make Learning at IKEA better for herself

IKEA Delft store co-workers do not have a positive outlook on their collaborations and communication with CBF

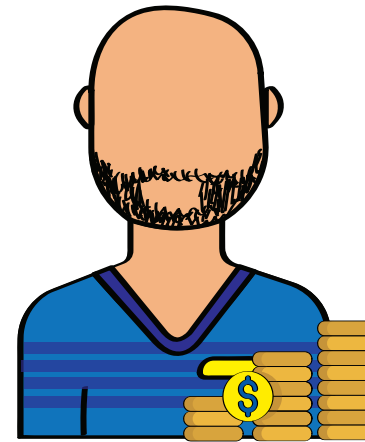
From the interviews with the Sales Managers and Com&In co-workers at the IKEA Delft store, it became clear very quickly that their perception of their relationship with CBF was that it is practically non-existent. This feeling is extra strong since the CBF office is in the same building as the Delft store, and still the co-workers feel no connection to or experience any engagement with CBF. They feel that this is a real shame because of the endless opportunities that are being missed to test out assumptions and solutions that CBF may have. Not only would the store co-workers enjoy working with CBF, but they also already operate in an agile environment that allows for rapid testing.

They feel that more feedback and interaction is also necessary because of their somewhat 'awkward' positioning within the organizational structure of IKEA: the Delft store is, unlike the other stores in the Netherlands, not part of the largest franchisee INGKA, but is owned by CBF. However, they still feel like they're in a vacuum when it comes to receiving certain information because they're not part of INGKA and they don't get much interaction from CBF. On store level, sales is one of the most important stakeholders to include and inform, because without sales there would be no store: everything is connected to sales. Therefore, it seems only logical that sales departments would be involved more in certain CBF development processes.

IKEA Delft Store Interviewees & Initials



IKEA Delft Sales Manager - *RI*



IKEA Delft Sales Manager - *JL*

Because all those employees always say, why? This is no longer relevant at all? I can tell you what should have been in it, but we don't have that option. That's a shame, because then sometimes, yes, you deliver something that is just not accurate anymore. - RI

But indicating topics or things that you run into or that you want to know more about, or that you can't find the content of, where can I indicate that? Without clicking through twice, that should actually be number one - RI on what should be improved in the IKEA Learning Experience

Co-Worker Core Insight 1

Co-Workers want a personalized and relevant IKEA Learning Experience

For co-workers to have a continuous thirst for knowledge and learning (*mastery*), they need to see in a glance what the relevance is of certain learning content or activities (*time well invested*) and what's in it for them (*time well spent*). This means having a learning offer that is up to date with their personal learning needs, receiving suggestions of learning content that accommodate to those needs and picking out parts of learning content that are relevant to them as a learner.

It also includes getting help in overcoming learning obstacles in a quick and easy way, without wasting time on searching for the right person to contact and building up a feeling of frustration and demotivation within the learner. Being able to get some personal assistance or guidance in topics that you as learner find difficult, will make you feel more at ease to learn again and motivate you to continue your personal development. This contact could be with a designated ICL employee or with a fellow co-worker from another store in the same or a different country. The possibilities are endless with a digital infrastructure.

One manager compared how being kept up to date on feedback they give, should be like the digital ticketing system when they're talking with the IT department: they chat with an IT employee and get continuous status updates about their reported issue. Finally, this insight can also apply to learning formats, that allow for example, facilitators, to add in layers of personalization and localization to their learning material (just like IKEA stores do for their customers, by e.g., placing local scenery in the 'windows' in the showrooms).

So, if you go to the showroom in the room settings, and you see the windows for instance, you see Delft views. You feel that you are in Delft. You have to feel that you are there, and who is living there are people who represent that. That's my job, making sure that this is happening. - JL on the importance of a personalized CX at IKEA

...because I don't really need the whole context, I only need a piece of the content ... like sushi, I only need to add this part of the content, I don't need the whole fish - JL on why the IKEA Learning Solutions aren't always hassle-free

Co-Worker Core Insight 2

Co-workers want to be more involved in CBF projects and be kept up to date on the status of their feedback

Co-workers have noticed that there is a major gap between the learning content that they are provided and their actual learning needs at that moment. They are aware that due to the size of the organization, it's hard for CBF to continuously be in touch with all the learners' needs, but they feel that this gap can be closed with better communication and feedback loops. The sales managers already have experience in maintaining close feedback loops with their own co-workers and know the benefits of having access to that input directly and frequently. On store level, it is already known that Sales is at the core of the business and therefore they're included throughout many different operations. The overall co-worker consensus, based on the interviews, is that this should also apply to CBF level to some extent. The store co-workers know that their insights are valuable and want CBF to sometimes acknowledge that, and the fact that that isn't being done even while they share the same building is frustrating for them. They want to help test CBF's assumptions: they test out minimal viable products/concepts all the time because the retail world is the perfect environment for working agile and receiving real-time feedback from customers. Finally, co-workers want to give their feedback and be kept in the loop about what is being done with their feedback, so that they feel a sense of purpose and motivation to continue doing it.

...but we've never been part of the development from scratch. Say, they [CBF] wants to put this in the concept. Let's take some stakeholders from the store. We are here, no? Just here [in the same building]. You just book a slot, give us the background and then we can start working together. - JL

So, knowing where to go [with your feedback] is already difficult. And if you're where you need to be, to then hear another status update about what is being done with your feedback [would be helpful]. Because if nothing happens, then you no longer have the motivation to give feedback again and you don't know how the process will continue. - RI

...because with sales, we are the core business, everything is connected to us. For instance, if we want to reduce the number of returns in the store. Sales has impact there, because it's how we show things, what are the most frequent questions from customers, etc. ... everything is around us - JL on why it's important to include sales in the discussions

People have passion and energy. They want to do something, but they don't know where to go. Then if they try to reach out to someone about it and they never hear back, they might try again once more and then they don't do anything with it. That passion and motivation, it turns into irritation and frustration.- RI

Co-Worker Core Insight 3

Co-workers' autonomy in their learning experience is strong and that should not change

Both sales managers talked about how they lead their team, what their relation is towards their co-workers as sales managers, and both emphasized the importance of autonomy in the workplace (without any knowledge of the theoretical framework). They want to stimulate their co-workers to think and act for themselves, and they provide resources or guidance when necessary. The managers actively challenge their co-workers to come up with their own solutions for problems they experience, encourage them to make their own plans or business cases to back up their proposal, and by doing so, build a level of trust and purpose within the co-workers. They stay away from micro-management so that their team can grow and develop their competences, but also because they enjoy being surprised by their co-workers' ideas and initiatives.

But the way that I lead, is that I'm not going to tell them what to do in full detail ... and they need to grow themselves so I try to delegate and support as much as I can and challenge them. And the best part of my job is when I just don't know what they are doing, and they surprise me. - RI

So, we have these 1:1's every month, and really catch up: What are you wishing or envisioning now? What is your next step? What do you want to develop or implement for the coming month? And we follow up on how the person is handling it - JL on how he communicates with his co-workers and indirectly implements a sense of autonomy and purpose in his team.

But actually, to stimulate their entrepreneurship in every department. They are mini sales managers ... that's more how I see it. The way I do that is by giving them information and resources that they need. They must make their own plans, their own business cases, be innovative... they must be able to justify them. I challenge them in that, then if they want to do something, they can do it. - RI

Or sometimes I put it back as well. I say, do you have an idea for the feedback? Do you have an idea how to solve it, and then we can work on that together? ... You also share responsibility there ... And if they come up with a nice solution, we implement it, we don't discuss it. - JL

1.3.2 External Research

L&D managers from different organizations were interviewed to further establish the picture of the current EX landscape. In these interviews, the topics that were discussed, focused on:

- How the company's L&D feedback loops operate?
- How the L&D managers uncover employee learning needs?
- What changes they would like to see within their company's L&D offer that may be applicable to IKEA?

Method

The interview set-up, sampling method and results-analysis used in the internal interviews, were also applied to the external interviews. For a detailed description, see Paragraph 1.3.1. Interviews were conducted with four L&D managers from three other companies: a large European airline company, a large tech manufacturing company and a Dutch variety chain store. This was to get a better understanding of how certain organizations approach the EX-challenges that come with being a large company or a company operating in the same sector as IKEA (these two factors acted as the criteria for the purposeful sampling technique that was applied). Essentially, they provided inspiration for this thesis as to how CBF can improve the IKEA learning experience by talking about how their company maneuvered or is maneuvering through their own (digital) learning transition. Some of the topics covered in the interviews were how the L&D managers gather feedback from the company employees, how they discover the true learning needs and transform them into solutions, how they provide a personal learning experience to the employees, and in what ways are the employees directly involved in creating the overall EX.

Results

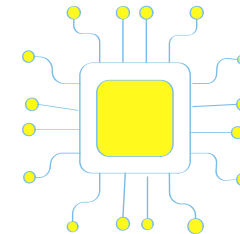
During all the external interviews, the L&D representatives (without knowledge of the literature framework) implied that autonomy, mastery and purpose ensure that their employees are continuously motivated to learn and engaged with their jobs. These companies all have short feedback loops in place, so that they can gather (targeted) feedback from their employees and better understand their learning needs. They actively involve and guide employees in any changes of the overall learning experience, for instance, through change management or via a performance support app. Furthermore, their experience has taught them that learning is a choice that you as an employer cannot force upon your employees. The only way to prompt them to learn, is by showing why and how the learning experience will be relevant to them, mentioning certain characteristics of the employer driver *time well spent* (also without knowledge of the literature framework).

The results presented in the following paragraph, represent the core insights from the external interviews, which will be interpreted as 'advice' the companies would give to CBF for improving the overall employee experience. Even though their contributions were very valuable for this assignment, they do not represent IKEA people and therefore their input is considered more suggestive than imperative to include in the design process. In the context of the bridge analogy, these companies can be seen as passing ships or other construction companies that have extra bricks or material that they're willing to give to IKEA for their project.

Interviewees & Initials



European Airline Company
Learning & Talent Manager - PH



Tech Manufacturing Company
Change Specialist - RO
Configuration Management Expert - ER



Dutch Variety Chain Store
International Talent & Learning Lead - LW

External Advice 1

Provide guidance and learning support to employees so that they can learn while doing their job

I'm kind of like an account manager for line managers whenever they have performance challenges and they contact me directly when they think the issue could, in some way, be solved through learning - PH

In your role within this company as a change specialist, you experience that if you change a product that you are also changing the culture, how we work together, but all those changes affect the 'I' [the individual].- ER

During the interviews with the European airline company and the variety chain store, the L&D managers both stated that they have some direct form of communication in place for employees to report any issues concerning their learning needs or obstacles they may have during work activities. Both companies provide their employees/cabin crew with personal digital devices with which they can report any issues they may have experienced while on the job. Furthermore, the airline company has a team in place that analyses these reported issues and if they notice a recurring topic, pass this on to the management team that is responsible for that specific issue. Then together with the airline L&D manager, if they feel that a learning solution of some kind is necessary, they put together a team and start the process of creating a fitting learning solution.

Pre-Covid, the airline company ran trials with a new form of employee support while on the job. Their cabin crew could use a performance support app while attending to passengers during a flight in a 'Q&A-like' format. For instance, when cooking a meal on the plane for a business class passenger, cabin crew could consult or ask questions in the app concerning the steps to create the dish.

If that weren't enough, the airline's employees are avid users of the informal, internal communication platform Yammer. They can ask questions to representatives of specific departments and interact with their fellow colleagues about their (common) experiences. All these tools allow for the cabin crew of this airline company to learn in the business while feeling supported and empowered by their employer.

One of the interviewees from the tech manufacturing company, was a Project Change Leader, and talked about how the company supports their employees by actively guiding them through the changes that come with new implementations. He emphasized that when an employer implements drastic changes to e.g., a product, they need to realize that the changes don't just start and end there, it affects the whole working culture and has influence on the individual employee. So, as the employer you have a responsibility to guide your employees through that change because it ultimately will affect your business if employees don't know how to work with those changes.

When you have to make a hamburger for a passenger, you could ask in the app how long the burger had to go in the oven? It was a really fun, interactive way to learn on the job, while working ... you learn most by doing, and you can be supported by technical means. - PH on the performance support app for the cabin crew

In my role as a competence manager, the 'what' must be well explained. How you approach that culture is also an important part, 'how does it affect you [as an employee]?' The last two are very much on the soft side.- ER

External Advice 2

Include, communicate, and reflect with employees as much as possible while creating the company L&D offer

In the previous insight, the European airline company explained that based on the recurring issues they see that are being reported by cabin crew, they intervene and set up a team to solve this problem. The L&D manager explained the company's unique approach to how those teams are set up and how important it is for them to include people from the target group. They create teams that consist of line managers, end-users and cabin crew members who have additional functions next to their job as a flight attendant, for instance as HR-recruiters, trainers, or product managers. These employees are brought into the project as subject matter experts (SMEs) but also as someone representing the target group. This way they make sure that they stay as close to the end-user as possible. However, developing a new training or learning solution isn't always the answer and during the interviews with the European airline and the tech manufacturing company, the interviewees clearly showed that they were aware of this.

In the case of the airline company, when smaller issues occur that don't require a large approach, they use internal communication tools like Yammer as a resource for information. The employees are very interactive on the digital platform and have created a huge Yammer community where they can find answers, inspiration or ask their colleagues questions. They can also interact with Yammer moderators, who represent certain departments on the platform and can answer questions within 48 hours. Additionally, the L&D manager organizes sounding board sessions with various employees who volunteer to evaluate e.g., a new product.

As for the tech manufacturing company, the interviewees described how they encourage employees to come with their own solutions to problems that occur, but acknowledge the risks that come with that approach in a large company. It's important to keep employees involved in the conversation and gather their feedback concerning business operations because as a line manager or change specialist, you want to be solving the *right* problem. The pitfall of having many employees taking matters into their own hands is that it could cause symptom relief, sub-optimization, and proliferation, which in turn, could lead to misalignment in teams, units or within the whole company. That's why they create time to gather employee feedback and measure the alignment or discrepancies in the organization through mirroring activities (asking the employees questions about their experiences or personal development in a way that it would show their alignment with the team goals or company values).

Then there is the pitfall that you immediately jump into the 'training reflex', that you immediately start training again and that isn't always necessary. That's something that senior management in particular says often, 'we have a problem, let's make a training for it and then the problem will be solved'. It doesn't always work that way; you have to see it from a bigger perspective. - PH

We have three to four hundred employees working both in the sky as cabin attendants and on the ground as subject matter experts, who have a great deal of understanding of what goes on board and can therefore provide input for that content. I will never develop a program without the input of an SME, that is impossible, certainly in such a unique world. - PH
on how cabin crew are consulted as SMEs in his projects.

...when there is a problem, we discuss it, and the team will do something about it ... The line manager empowers the people in their team to come up with the solution themselves, which is quite good from an idealistic point of view, you want to empower people, you want them to grow. Only there is a pitfall to that, because if you have 20 teams that do this, then there will be a very large sprawl of local solutions. How are you going to put that together and align all those initiatives? - ER

External Advice 3

Learning is an employee's choice that you as an employer can only influence and not enforce.

The choice to develop your competencies is your own choice, so you can offer something. You can then push it to them as a line manager. **But if the people themselves are not open to it or are not concerned with it, or if they miss the chance to seize that learning opportunity, you can't control that. Those are choices.** - ER

The final insight reflects the attitude the interviewees know to be necessary when working in L&D. Employees are self-directed adults who make their own choices regarding their personal development. Not everyone is concerned with competence development, so as an employer you should not expect to have control over those decisions. What you can do to prompt employees to learn, is show them the relevance of the learning experience and make clear what's in it for them. Focus on creating engaging learning moments with employees by triggering them with entertaining activities or questions so that they continue to learn, and don't just stick to the mandatory learnings that all employees have to do.

You have to focus on creating engaging moments with them: how can we keep the cabin crew close to our company? Because those employees don't work in an office, they're either in the air or have a day off. - PH

Most of our learning content is not compulsory, only some of it, **because it's up to the employee to learn.** - LW

But I also try to trigger you and what I do is just give a little entertainment, where I don't tell you what to do. I'm not telling you how to do it either, but I'm going to make you think you should do something. What that is, you have to fill in yourself with your project and your line manager. - ER

Conclusion Part 1

Looking back at Part 1, the first building blocks and the load-bearing pillars for the bridge to connect CBF employees and IKEA Co-workers have been made. From the literature research came the findings that make the three main pillars of the bridge and are **the guiding principles for the overall creative process**. In other words, the concept must achieve on a conceptual level:

1. Daniel Pink's *Intrinsic Drivers of Motivation: Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose* (Pink, 2009)
2. Joseph Pine's *Drivers of Experience Value: Time well spent & Time well invested* (Pine, 2020)
3. *Bi-directional Information Sharing via a Digital Infrastructure* (Koenders et al., 2018)

These studies helped establish the parameters of the design context and act as the theoretical foundation of this project. They indicate what values and principles are needed to consider throughout the design process so that the design challenge is approached in the right way. Furthermore, the studies provided initial answers to the research question components and throughout the interviews with (non-) IKEA employees, interviewees unconsciously and indirectly referred to various elements of the theoretical framework proving its relevance in the modern-day workplace.

The interviews with CBF employees and IKEA co-workers were done to contextualise the theoretical findings with real-life, IKEA stories and experiences from both stakeholders. The interview answers were first categorized into findings per research question component and then cross-referenced to bring the main insights of both parties to light. These insights represent the main bricks of the bridge as they indicate CBF's and store co-workers' most important needs. They are equally important for the structure of the bridge, and although they are different, they are compatible. These insights **guide the implementation of the concept idea** because they're based on more detailed and subjective findings and therefore, they contribute to a more **specific level of what the concept should achieve** as opposed to the literary findings.

CBF Core Insights

1. CBF wants to be more **accommodating and foreseeing in terms of IKEA co-worker learning needs** and overall learning experience
2. CBF wants to **create more points of involvement and interaction with IKEA co-workers** to get their feedback on the IKEA Learning Offer
3. CBF wants to **add more tangibility and guidance to the IKEA Learning Experience**.

Co-worker Core Insights

1. Co-workers want a **relevant and personalized IKEA Learning Experience**
2. Co-workers want to **be more involved in CBF projects** and be kept up to date on the **status of their feedback**
3. Co-workers' **autonomy in their learning experience is strong and that should not change**.

These bricks lay on top of the pillars. The 'advice' given by various L&D experts during the external interviews, are shown in the top layer of the bridge walls and are 'made of' the extra building material given by the passing ships. These findings have been presented as 'advice' within this assignment because even though the findings are valuable, they represent a different company or industry that has different values than IKEA. Therefore, these findings are more suggestive than imperative to include.

External Companies' 'Advice'

1. *Provide guidance and learning support to employees so that they can learn while doing their job*
2. *Include, communicate, and reflect with employees as much as possible throughout the process of creating the company L&D offer*
3. *Learning is an employee's choice*

With the main components of the bridge ready, they still need to be joined together. Additionally, the construction of the bridge needs to be planned and executed. This next part of the design process is described in Part 2, *Define*.



Bridge Construction Phase Completed

1. Scouting the Terrain

Through theoretical research studies and interviews with experts or the target group, the landscape of the design challenge is scouted and the initial parameters of the context are put in place.

After Part 1, the first blueprint of the bridge could be drawn. With the literature research studies providing solid theoretical parameters for this design challenge, these were used to create the three load-bearing pillars that will carry the structure.

The core insights extracted from the various expert interviews make up the key components of the bridge and have to be considered in the final concept design.

In the following chapters of this report, the remaining materials needed to create the cement that will join the bricks, along with other processes and construction plans will be presented to ultimately deliver the final plan of the bridge that will connect the CBF and IKEA Co-worker islands from Figure 3.

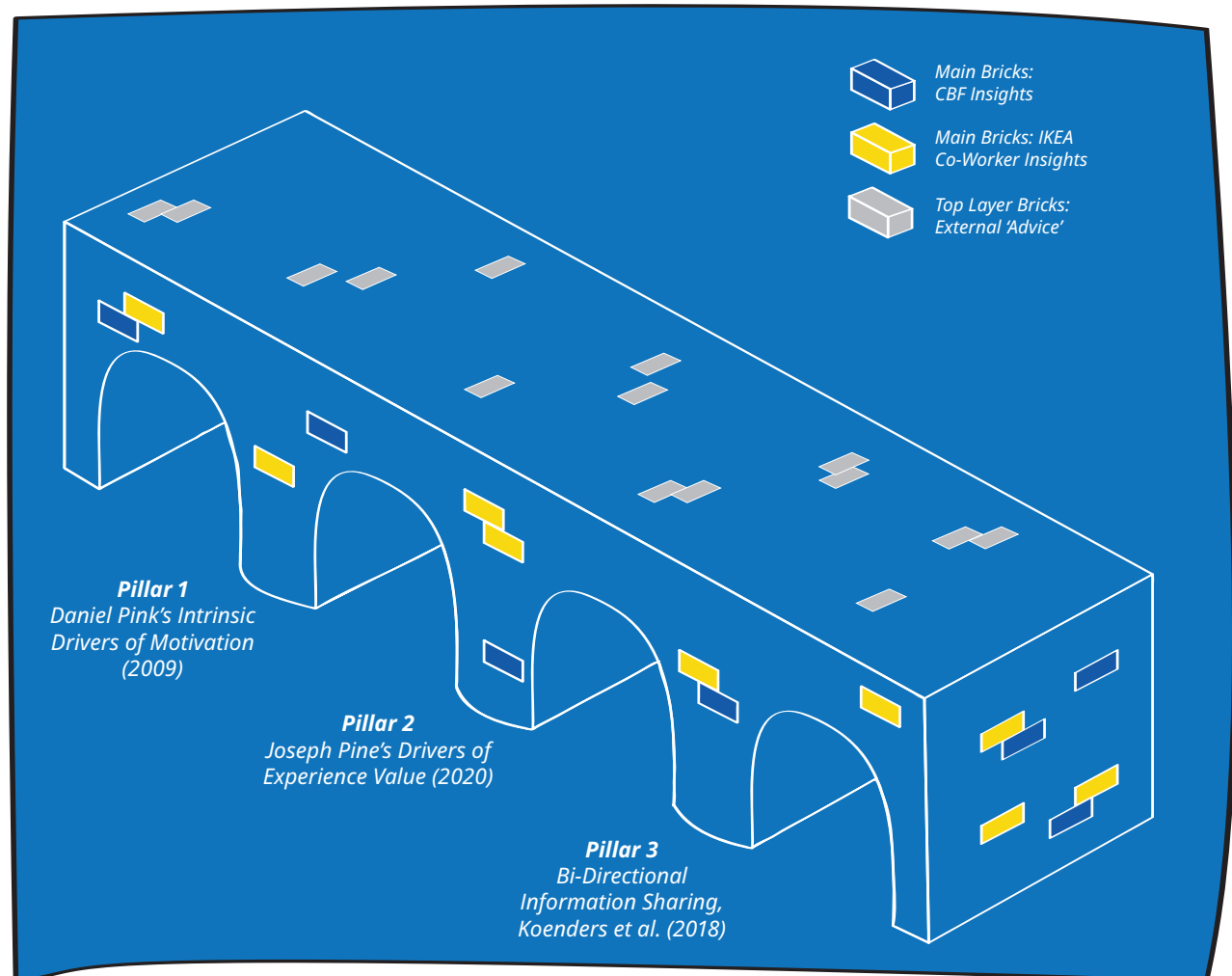


Figure 6: Blueprint of Metaphorical Bridge with Key Research and Interview Findings.

BILLY



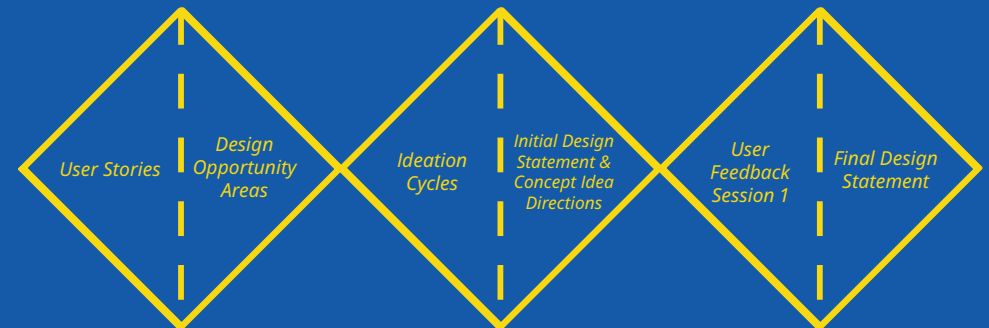
Design and Quality
IKEA of Sweden

Making mistakes is the privilege of the active - of those who can correct their mistakes and put them right.

From *The Testament of a Furniture Dealer*, 1976,
by Ingvar Kamprad, Founder of IKEA



Part 2: Define



2.1 Introduction

The course of Part 2

Part 2 aims to bring together the needs and perspectives of both EX-stakeholders by converging the research from Part 1 into a design statement. A design statement can be seen as a designer's self-asserted positioning within the design challenge and presents **what** the concept idea should achieve and **how** it's going to achieve it (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2016). The design process of Part 2 started as a methodic process but ended up being done rather intuitively. At one point the ideation phase had become a sprawl of ideas without any clear design goal or vision. This moment indicated the necessity of a design statement, and that's why it is introduced **after** the initial ideation as opposed to before it. Although it was important to take this step back in the design process, at the time it was not evident how the activities that had already taken place, would contribute to the final design statement. In hindsight, the core insights from the literature review and various interviews delivered the **what**-element of the design statement, and the chosen ideation method and sprawl of ideas ended up providing inspiration for the **how**-element.

Constructing the bridge

The three main studies from the literature research can be seen as the guiding, creative principles to follow and fall back on for this project. They are the three load-bearing pillars of the bridge between the CBF and IKEA co-worker islands. The various core insights from (non-)IKEA employees make up the bricks that are to be used to build the bridge because they represent the stakeholders' needs in practice rather than theory. The information gathered from these activities helped to establish the **what**-element of the design statement, meaning that without the **how**-element, the bricks just lay loose on top of each other without any stability. They needed to be connected, and the only way to do that was by creating cement. Part 2 of this thesis presents the various design steps taken to align both stakeholders' perspectives and solidify the bridge.

Cement consists of several components, as does the process described in Part 2. In fact, within the first diamond of the Double Diamond approach (see Figure 1), there are three, smaller diamonds. Part 1 started by diverging in research and converging into the various core insights, the first diamond. In Part 2, the second diamond diverges from the core insights through user stories, design opportunity

areas and ideation cycles to converge into an initial design statement. The ideation cycles brought more tangibility to the core insights so that it would be easier to create concept ideas, because the core insights were based on interview findings that varied in their level of detail. The third diamond diverged from the initial design statement into three concept idea directions, which then through the first user feedback session, converged into the final version of the design statement.

These diamonds can be seen as the various materials and trials needed to create the ideal consistency of cement that connects the bricks of both CBF and IKEA co-workers. Once the cement has solidified, it represents the final design statement that aligns both stakeholders' needs and perspectives. Moreover, the final design statement indicates the goal and manifestation of the final concept idea, essentially providing the location of the bridge on both islands, as well as the basic construction plan for how it will be built.

This chapter describes the iterative process leading to a completed bridge, presented in Part 3, that represents the final concept that enables engagement and bi-directional information sharing between CBF employees and IKEA co-workers.

Creating Cement

Finding alignment in the stakeholders' needs to create the final design statement that contains the concept idea's goal and manifestation thereof.

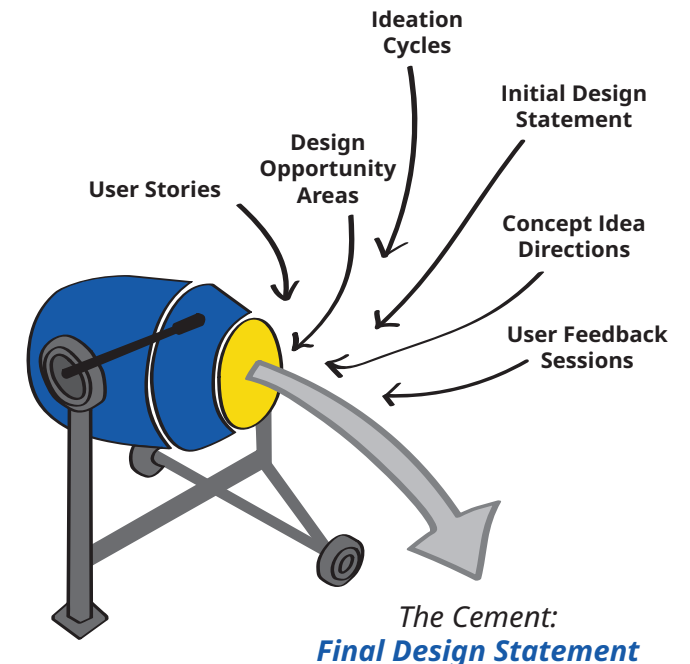


Figure 7: Metaphorical Activities of Part 2

2.2 User Stories

To make the findings from the previous chapter more concrete and concise, an element of the Agile Scrum method, known as user stories, was used. These short stories represent the minimum the end user should be able to do and are made with a template. This method helps the designer think in terms of end-user value and build empathy (Jongerius et al., 2013). Moreover, ICL has successfully been using this method over the past year in their own projects thus making the decision to incorporate user stories more substantiated.

Method

The user stories for this assignment were based on the various research findings (not yet core insights) from previously stated literature and expert interviews. The user stories have to be detailed therefore the research findings were explored first rather than the final core insights presented in the conclusion of Part 1 because these contain more details. It was also at this moment during the process that the researcher had in-depth knowledge and recollection about the (details of) the various research findings. Through trial and error, these findings were written into user stories until they captured the entire need of the stakeholder. The stories were created with a template, as shown below. See Appendix 10 for documentation of this process.

User Story Template (Agile Alliance, 2021):

As a ... (**who** wants to accomplish something)
I want to ... (**what** they want to accomplish)
so that/I can (**why** the want to accomplish that thing)

For example, a user story from the employee's perspective was:

As an employee I want to see my professional (learning) progress so that I feel motivated to achieve the professional goals I set myself

This user story was based on these research findings:

- Employee need represented by Daniel Pink's Intrinsic Driver for Motivation, *Mastery*
- IKEA Delft Store Sales Managers' feedback on the importance of personal feedback moments with their co-workers
- CBF employee feedback on comparable and comprehensive data visualization to create a sense of alignment and purpose

This user story connects to the following core insights:

- **Literature Research:** Daniel Pink's Intrinsic Drivers for Motivation (2009)
- **Co-worker Insight 1:** Co-workers want a relevant and personalized IKEA Learning Experience
- **Co-worker Insight 2:** Co-workers want to be more involved in CBF projects and be kept up to date on the status of their feedback/input.
- **CBF Insight 3:** CBF wants to add more tangibility and guidance to the IKEA Learning Experience.

An example from the employer's point of view was:

As an employer I want to suggest learning content and solutions to my employees so that they can develop themselves and reach their goals by discovering new content

This user story was based on these research findings:

- Employer need represented by Joseph Pine's Driver for Experience Value, *time well invested* (and also *time well saved*)
- CBF employee feedback on being more innovative, foreseeing and wanting to show the next step in a co-worker's learning journey
- IKEA Delft Store Sales Managers' feedback on the difficulty of finding the right information within the large company

This user story connects to the following core insights:

- **Literature Research:** Joseph Pine's Experience Economy (2020)
- **CBF Insight 1:** CBF wants be more accommodating and foreseeing in terms of the IKEA co-worker learning needs and overall learning experience
- **CBF Insight 3:** CBF wants to add more tangibility and guidance to the IKEA Learning Experience.
- **Co-worker Insight 1:** Co-workers want a relevant and personalized IKEA Learning Experience

Results

Listed below are the various user stories that were created for both employee and employer, based on the findings from the literature research and interviews. After creating the user stories, overlapping needs and themes became evident from both stakeholders' perspectives. The next step in the design process was the clustering of the user stories to discover design opportunities.

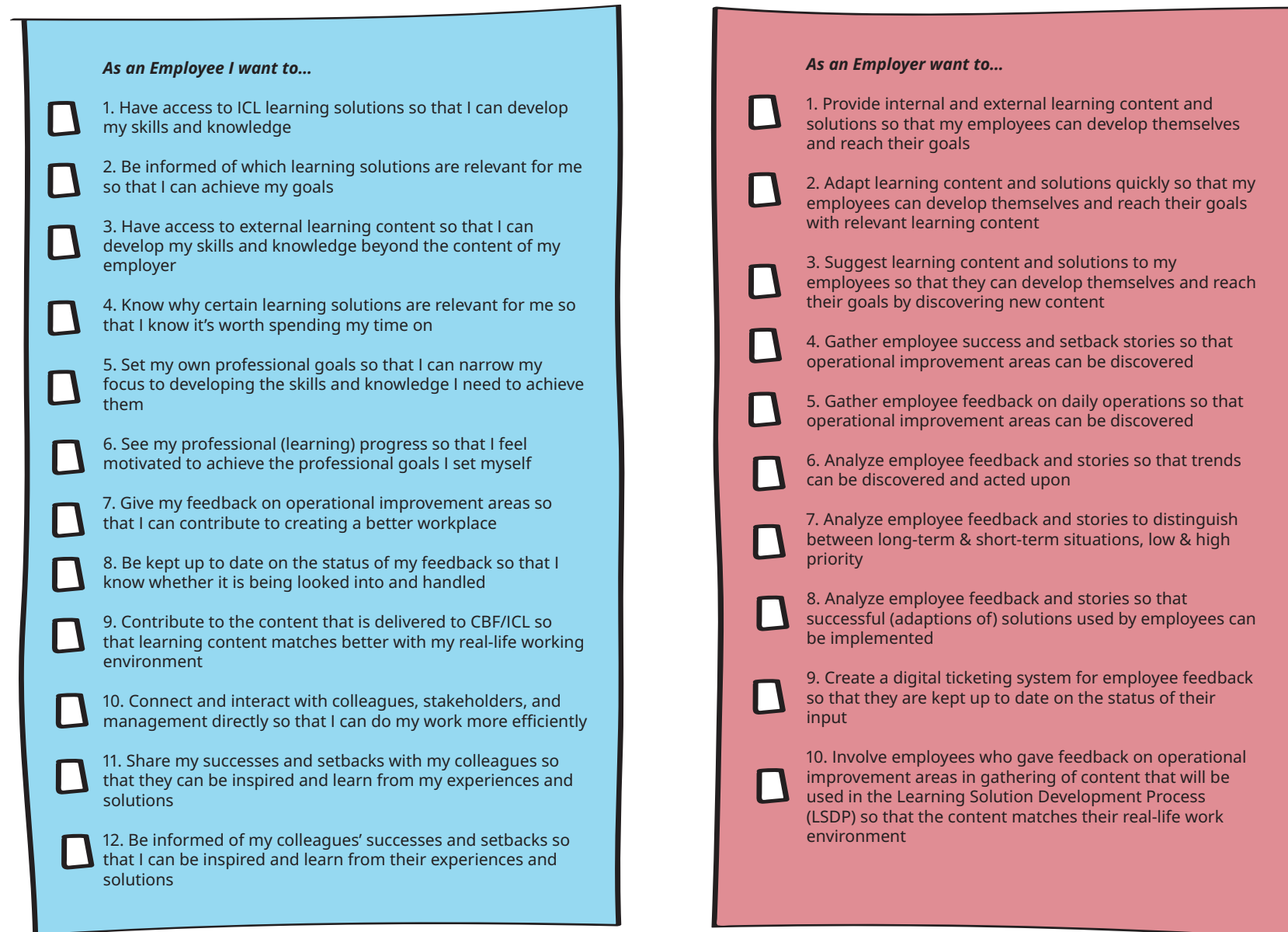


Figure 8: Employee & Employer User Stories

2.3 Design Opportunity Areas

The purpose of the user stories in Paragraph 2.2, was to make the research findings more concrete and concise. While doing so, it became clear that there were overlapping stories between the employee and employer. This prompted an in-depth analysis of any recurring design themes and eventually led to the discovery of eleven design opportunities. These are opportunities within the context of the project that either or both stakeholders could benefit from if solved, and are considered during the next steps of the design process.

Method

By clustering the overlapping stories into logical combinations over and over again, common themes were uncovered and with that, potential design opportunities (see Appendix 11). Some clusters of user stories were given titles based on the various (sub-) research question components; others were given new titles. In total there are eleven design opportunities (DOs) of which four have user stories from both stakeholders' perspectives, and the remaining seven are user specific.

Results

Presented next are eleven design opportunities. Each user story number corresponds with the number it was listed as in Paragraph 2.2. There are two user stories that contribute to two separate design opportunities as they can be interpreted in different ways.

The immense span and novelty of this thesis' topic requires a clearly framed scope for it to be successfully carried out, in other words the location and direction of the bridge that connects the employer and employee islands need to be accurate. So, to get a grasp on the wide variety of research findings, analytical methods like user stories and clustering, provided rational and logical guidance to the complex problem. These eleven design opportunities (seemingly) gave enough robustness to the direction and location of the metaphorical bridge to kick off the ideation phase. The overarching design themes showed *what* needed to be designed for, prompting the first round of brainstorming sessions and ideation. It would later become evident that the *how* element of the design challenge was still unclear.

DO 1: Discover Opportunities

(these user stories contribute to a RQ component)

As an **employer** I want to...

- 4. Gather employee success and setback stories so that operational improvement areas can be discovered
- 5. Gather employee feedback on daily operations so that operational improvement areas can be discovered

DO 2: Giving & Receiving Feedback

(these user stories contribute to a RQ component)

As an **employee** I want to...

- 7. Give my feedback on operational improvement areas so that I can contribute to creating a better workplace

As an **employer** I want to...

- 4. Gather employee success and setback stories so that operational improvement areas can be discovered
- 5. Gather employee feedback on daily operations so that operational improvement areas can be discovered

DO 3: Facilitate Learning & Development

(these user stories contribute to a RQ component)

As an **employer** I want to...

- 1. Provide internal and external learning content and solutions so that my employees can develop themselves and reach their goals
- 2. Adapt learning content and solutions quickly so that my employees can develop themselves and reach their goals with relevant learning content

DO 7: Being Kept Up To Date on Issues *(these user stories have uncovered a new DO)*

As an **employee** I want to...

- 8. Be kept up to date on the status of my feedback so that I know whether it is being looked into and handled

DO 4: Stimulate Learning & Development

(these user stories contribute to a RQ component)

As an **employee** I want to...

- 1. Have access to ICL learning solutions so that I can develop my skills and knowledge
- 2. Be informed of learning solutions that are relevant for me so that I can achieve my goals
- 3. Have access to external learning content so that I can develop my skills and knowledge beyond the content of my employer

As an **employer** I want to...

- 3. Suggest learning solutions to my employees so that they can develop themselves and reach their goals by discovering new content

DO 5: Uncover Relevance of (Learning) Content

(this story has uncovered a new DO)

As an **employee** I want to...

- 4. Know why certain learning solutions are relevant for me so that I know it's worth spending my time on

DO 6: Visualize Personal Growth

(these stories have uncovered a new DO)

As an **employee** I want to...

- 5. Set my own professional goals so that I can narrow my focus to developing the skills and knowledge I need to achieve them
- 6. See my professional (learning) progress so that I feel motivated to achieve the professional goals I set myself

As an **employer** I want to...

- 9. Create a digital ticketing system for employee feedback so that they are kept up to date on the status of their input

DO 8: Match Delivered Content to Real Life Situations

these user stories have uncovered a new DO)

As an **employee** I want to...

- 9. Contribute to the content that is delivered to CBF/ICL so that learning content matches better with my real-life working environment

As an **employer** I want to...

- 10. Involve employees who gave feedback on operational improvement areas in gathering of content that will be used in the Learning Solution Development Process (LSDP) so that the content matches their real-life work environment

DO 9: Directly Interact and Connect with Others

(this story has uncovered a new DO)

As an **employee** I want to...

- 10. Connect and interact with colleagues, stakeholders, and management directly so that I can do my work more efficiently

DO 10: Share Successes and Setbacks with Others

(this story has uncovered a new DO)

As an **employee** I want to...

- 11. Share my successes and setbacks with my colleagues so that they can be inspired and learn from my experiences and solutions
- 12. Be informed of my colleagues' successes and setbacks so that I can be inspired and learn from their experiences and solutions

DO 11: Facilitate Learning & Development

(these user stories uncovered a new DO)

As an **employer** I want to...

- 6. Analyse employee feedback and stories so that trends can be discovered and acted upon
- 7. Analyse employee feedback and stories to distinguish between long-term & short-term situations, low & high priority
- 8. Analyse employee feedback and stories so that successful (adaptions of) solutions used by employees can be implemented

Figure 9: The 11 Design Opportunities Discovered By Clustering Employee and Employer User Stories

2.4 Initial Ideation

With eleven opportunities to design for, the first round of ideation started. The (unnamed) method chosen for this phase was previously created by the author and fellow design students, and successfully implemented in other large projects for companies with complex design problems. This method was chosen foremost to bring tangibility to the multiple drivers in the literature framework, as these drivers were to be incorporated into the design process but were still too abstract to design for/with. Moreover, this method ensured the IKEA perspective would be included in the final concept design, as it involved collaborative brainstorming sessions with the target group, both CBF and IKEA Delft store co-workers. The participants delivered new insights that would not have been foreseen by the author alone and served as input for the scenario mapping exercise in the individual ideation session that followed. This second session – the individual ideation – aimed to stimulate out of the box thinking by the author, unlock new combinations of user interactions and provide sources of inspiration for concept ideas.

Method Collaborative Sessions

The method used in this stage of the design process aimed to make sense of abstract values by having participants think of tangible examples they associate to that value in a certain amount of time. The goal is to gather as many tangible examples as possible and then create scenarios in the individual ideation session in which the examples are combined with the eleven discovered design opportunities.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was applied during these collaborative sessions as participants were selected based on their unique professional background and the fact that they worked for CBF or an IKEA Store (Davis, 2021). All participants had already become acquainted with the author through informal, introductory meetings at the beginning of the graduation project. Every person therefore was aware, some more than others, of the overall topic of the design project.

Value Drivers as Brainstorming Content

Two types of collaborative sessions were held: one with value drivers and participants that represented the employer, and one with the drivers and participants representing the employee. The participants brainstormed about the value drivers that represented their needs to ensure the results contained their frames of reference.

From the employer's perspective Pine's 5 characteristics of *Time Well Spent* were chosen as the content for the collaborative sessions because ICL co-workers have a direct

influence on *Time well spent* since they create the IKEA Learning Offer. The characteristic *Robust* consists of four sub-characteristics so these were included as individual topics to ensure its complete consideration.

From the employee's point of view, Pink's three drivers for intrinsic motivation *Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose*, were used as the content for the collaborative sessions because they represent what needs to be triggered within an employee to create engagement and motivation. For more detailed information on how the session was conducted, see Appendix 13.

Results Collaborative Sessions

During three brainstorming sessions with a total of 10 participants, 320 answers were collected which were then filtered down to 182 usable answers (56% of original amount). Since the output of these exercises acted as input for the next part of the ideation method, any incorrect wordings were removed and answers that overlapped with each other were merged into one or more overarching examples, e.g., common answers like *Movies, TV shows, and Series* were grouped into one topic: *Movies & TV*. Figure 10 shows some examples of answers participants gave. During the exercises it was clear to see that the employee drivers, *Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose*, were the most difficult to brainstorm about. Since these drivers are intrinsic, they elicited more feelings and notions from the participants rather than concrete examples. Nevertheless, they were able to provide good results. For a full overview of the final selection of answers, see Appendix 13.

The Association Game - Instructions

During this brainstorming exercise, the goal is to find out what kind of associations you have with 9 different topics.

How it works:

1. You will be presented with a topic and a short description
2. You then have 2 minutes to type on the sticky-notes as many concrete examples that you can think of that you associate with that topic
3. After 2 minutes, I will present the next topic and the exercise is repeated.
4. Last clarifying questions

Tips:

- Examples can also be digital/virtual, not just physically tangible and visible
- Look for examples in:
 - Your everyday life
 - Your partner's/family's/friend's lives
 - Nature
 - Other cultures
 - Use all 5 senses
- Can you think of an opposite example?
- Try to stay away from intangible things like feelings and values

Examples of 'Love'

Yes!

- Loveseat
- Matching outfits
- Online relationship status
- Turtle doves
- Wedding ring
- Registered partnership

No!

- Caring for each other
- Being respectful
- Shared interests
- Being supportive

Below are the answers CBF employees gave during the round for 'Aesthetics'. They were shown examples of correct and incorrect answers, and were then given 2 minutes to think of as many concrete examples as they could. Below on the right are the usable answers from this round that were used in the next ideation cycle to create user scenarios.

Figure 10: Example of Brainstorming Session Set-Up and Results

Concrete examples of: Aesthetics

Aesthetics is the field of philosophy that studies the ways in which humans experience the world through their senses, the world that surrounds them in their day-to-day existence and thus constitutes the everyday environment. It is especially concerned with the appreciation of particular objects when they strike the senses in a pleasing manner.

- Fine arts
- Typography
- Organised for me
- Home environment
- All senses
- Visual
- Proportions
- Culture
- Smell
- Taste
- Photo filters
- Beauty
- Individual
- Subjective
- Stress-free
- Perfume
- Light
- Softness
- Minimalism vs Maximalism
- Repetition
- Goosebumps

Usable Answers

- Fine arts
- Proportions
- Photo filters
- Light
- Typography
- Minimalism vs Maximalism
- Home environment
- Repetition
- All senses
- Smell
- Goosebumps
- Taste
- Perfume

Method Individual Session

The second stage of the ideation method consisted of the author/designer creating scenarios with multiple tangible and intangible elements of the thesis' scope. The goal was to create as many unique and inspiring user interactions as possible to broaden the design-horizons. For more detailed information on how the session was conducted, see Appendices 14 and 15.

Results Individual Session

The results gathered during this part of the ideation method were as follows:

1. **136 scenarios were created**, see full list in Appendix 14.
2. **These 136 scenarios were then narrowed down to 3-5 per design opportunity, 45 in total.** These were visualized and can be seen in Appendix 15.
3. **The final 20 scenarios were selected through deductive reasoning** to keep the most relevant and interesting scenarios and user interactions. These 20 scenarios have been highlighted with yellow frames in Appendix 15.

The purpose of this method was foremost to bring more tangibility to the drivers from the theoretical framework in Figure 5, and with that, help solidify the direction for concept ideas. However, after some reflection and discussions with the project supervisors, it was decided that the direction in which the project was going was still too broad to tackle within the timeframe and scope of a graduation thesis.

As inspiring and valuable as the previously stated steps were, the results did not yet deliver a focus point of the project nor the means to substantiate a definitive concept idea. Nowhere throughout the design process was it clear what the essence of the concept idea should be, what it was going to promise its users and how. Therefore, a step needed to be taken back so that the goal and delivery of the concept idea could be set and the first diamond in the Double Diamond Method could be closed. The results from the scenario mapping would be used later in as inspiration for the concept idea directions discussed in Paragraph 2.6.

Examples of Scenarios Created & Explanation

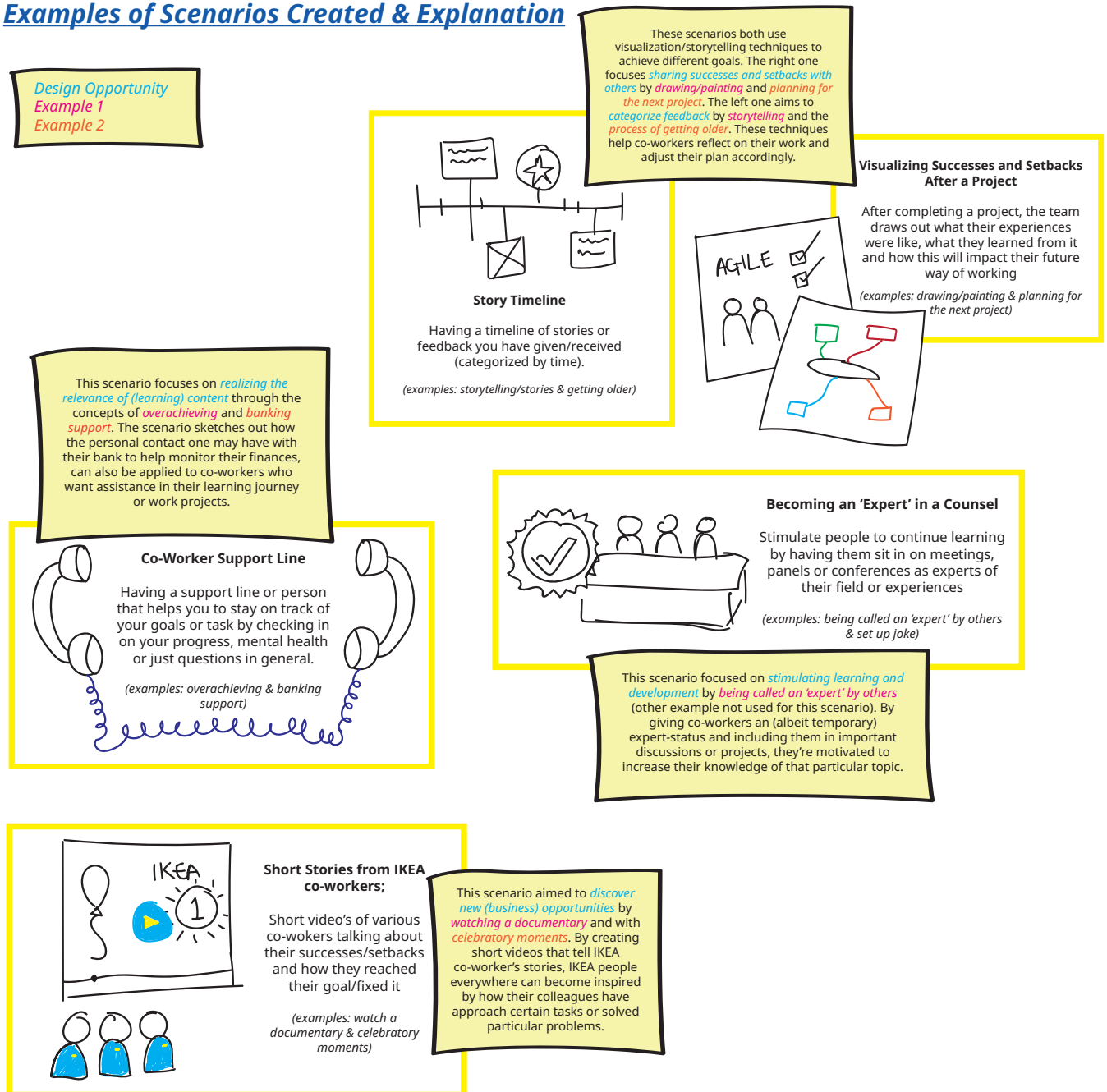


Figure 11: Examples of Scenarios Created

More Examples of Scenarios

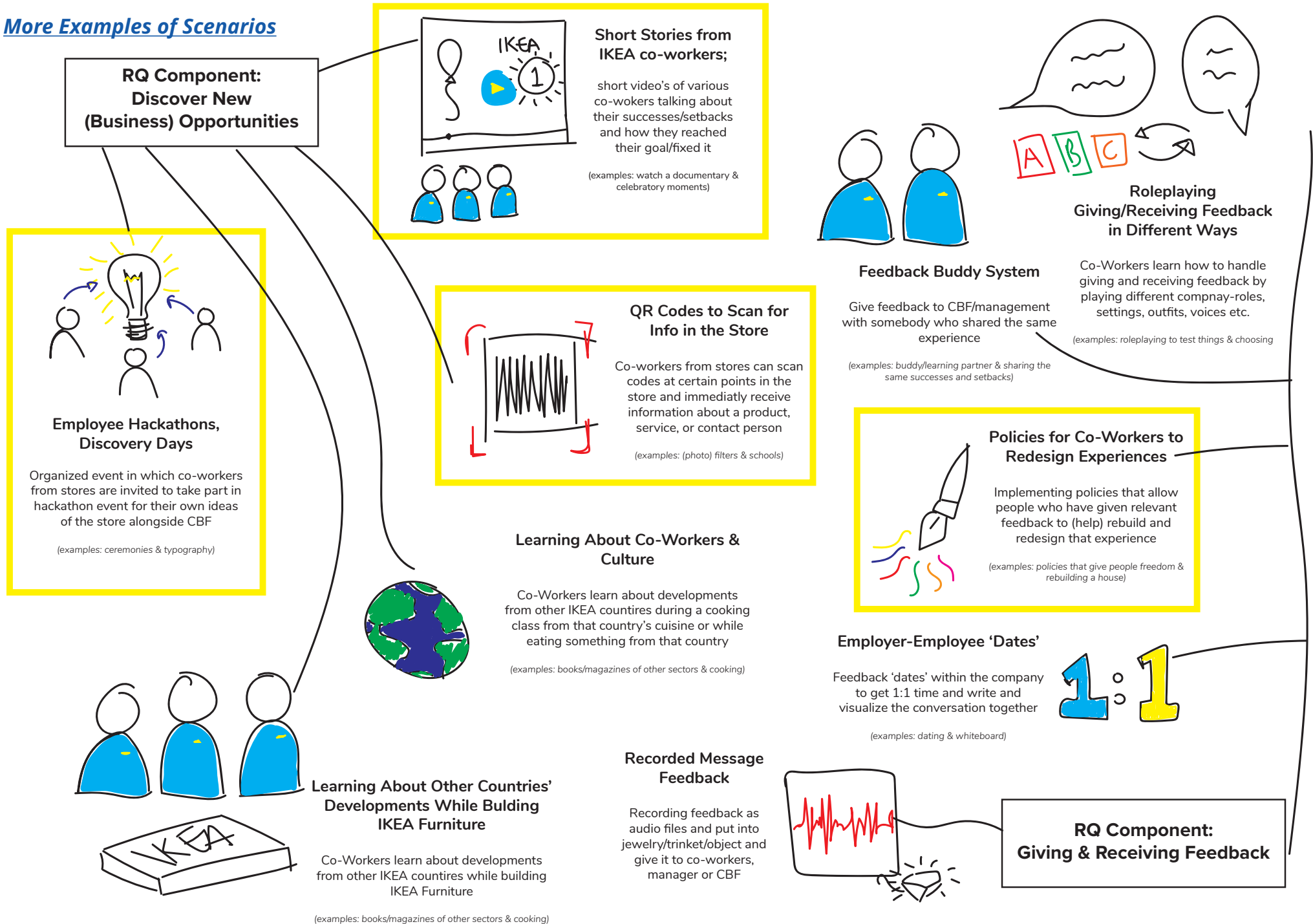


Figure 12: Examples of Scenarios Created

2.5 Design Statement

After the previous ideation cycles had taken place, the next step **would** have been to combine the small user scenarios created in Paragraph 2.4 and create more extensive user scenarios for potential concept ideas. However, during this part of the project it became clear that the process was sprawling because there wasn't a clear design goal leading the ideation process. When it would come down to choosing which combinations of scenarios would make real concept idea contenders, there wasn't anything to substantiate those decisions with. Therefore, it was decided that to sufficiently close off the first big diamond of this project's Double Diamond approach, a design statement should be created. A design statement shows the positioning taken in relation to the design challenge, based on the analyses done of the project scope (Hekkert & van Dijk, 2016). It properly indicates what the final concept idea should achieve and how it will manifest itself.

Method & Results

Creating the design statement was an iterative process. Part 1 of this project contributed towards establishing the *what*-element of the design statement. The guiding principles from the literature research indicated what the concept should achieve per stakeholder on a higher, conceptual level whereas the core insights from the interviews were more specific to the stakeholder's real-life environment.

To determine the *how*-element of the statement, first concept visions were created from the perspectives of both EX-stakeholders and aimed to summarize what CBF employees and IKEA co-workers would envision the concept to accomplish. These visions contain a *what* and a *why* element and are based on the literature and interview insights.

Reminder of Research Findings & Core Insights

What must the concept achieve *conceptually* and *specifically*?

For the IKEA Co-Workers: Autonomy, Mastery & Purpose
(Pink, 2009)

Co-worker Insight 1: Co-workers want a relevant and personalized IKEA Learning Experience

Co-worker Insight 2: Co-workers want to be more involved in CBF projects and be kept up to date on the status of their feedback/input.

Co-worker Insight 3: Co-workers' autonomy in their learning experience is strong and that should not change.

For the CBF Employees: Time well invested, and Time well spent
(Pine, 2020)

CBF Insight 1: CBF wants to be more accommodating and foreseeing in terms of the IKEA co-worker learning needs and overall learning experience.

CBF Insight 2: CBF wants to create more points of involvement and interaction with IKEA co-workers to get their feedback on the IKEA Learning Offer.

CBF Insight 3: CBF wants to add more tangibility and guidance to the IKEA Learning Experience.

Overall: Bi-directional information sharing (Koenders et al., 2018)

Concept Vision IKEA Co-Worker Point of View

The concept should be **personalized, navigable and communicative** so that co-workers **feel supported, eager to learn and involved** in creating the(ir) IKEA learning journey.

Concept Vision CBF Point of View

The concept should be **layered, prompting, and foreseeing** [in terms of learners' needs], with a **low user-threshold** so that co-workers **feel in control of their personal development** and experience learning as an integrated part of their daily work.

The IKEA co-worker vision reflects the co-worker's need for a personalized learning experience that will stimulate their desire for intellectual challenge (**Co-worker Insight 1 & Mastery**) as well as their need for autonomy by being able to quickly find the right learning solution or contact information of someone with certain expertise (**Co-worker Insight 3 & Autonomy**). They also want to communicate with other IKEA people when using the concept (**Co-worker Insight 2 & Bi-directional information sharing**). These elements are important to be included for co-workers because by making them feel supported in their learning journey, challenging them intellectually and hearing their feedback, co-workers will feel a sense of purpose since they're being motivated by their employer to help improve the business by improving themselves (**Purpose**).

Looking at the CBF core insights and literature findings, CBF's vision represents their goal of becoming more accommodating and attentive of co-workers' learning needs by providing options within the learning content to create a more personalized and tangible learning experience (**CBF Insight 1 & 3, and Time well spent**). Lowering the user-threshold by prompting co-workers to learn and give feedback through the concept, shows CBF also aims to involve and interact more with co-workers so that they can adjust the IKEA Learning Offer based on co-worker feedback (**CBF Insight 2, Time well invested & Bi-directional information sharing**). Ultimately, this will help CBF create *time well invested* (the IKEA Learning Offer) as the co-workers feel more in control because their feedback is being used to create *time well spent* (IKEA learning solutions).

Then based on these concept visions, a first version of the design statement was created:

First Version of Design Statement

The concept should enable IKEA to **facilitate promptive learning** by creating **customizable layers** that enables co-workers to **feel autonomous, purposeful, and heard**.

Once the first version of the design statement was made, three concept idea directions were created. However, after discussing and reflecting upon them with project supervisors, it became clear that the design statement lacked in qualities of manifestation and IKEA-ness. The only reference to a *how*-element was *customizable layers*. Furthermore, when comparing the concept idea directions with the qualities in the initial design statement, there was a clear disconnect. By exploring the concept idea directions, it became evident that they contained certain design decisions regarding the concept manifestation that weren't mirrored in the design statement. These revelations led to part of the chosen set-up for the first user feedback session, which aimed at:

Understanding the participants' interpretations of the design qualities of the first design statement in relation to their own IKEA learning experience.

Presenting the concept idea directions to the participants and determining the manifestation elements through their feedback.

Gathering feedback on the concept idea directions in general.

Uncovering any latent needs of the participants.

Based on the feedback gathered from the first exercise of the first user feedback session, the values that needed to be considered for the final version of the design statement were (for the full explanation of these insights and set-up of the user feedback session, see Paragraph 2.7 & 3.2):

Feeling Purposeful and Togetherness

Customizable Layers and Flexibility

Visualizing Goals and Progress

Being Results-Oriented

Omni-Channel Feedback Tools

Then the design statement was rewritten and this version was tested once more in the second user feedback session to ensure it matched with the concept idea directions, explained further in Paragraph 2.6.

Final Design Statement

*The concept should enable Inter IKEA Systems B.V. to **facilitate promptive learning of the IKEA Concept** so that **customer-facing co-workers feel autonomous, purposeful, and heard**. This should be achieved through **customizable layers, visualization of co-worker growth and omni-channel feedback**.*

The statement includes goals of both stakeholders and the means to achieve them:

*Employer Inter IKEA Systems B.V. wants to **facilitate promptive learning of the IKEA Concept** to their customer-facing co-workers.*

- *This reflects **CBF Insights 2 & 3, Time well invested** and **bi-directional information sharing**.*

*Employees want to **feel autonomous, purposeful, and heard while learning about the IKEA concept** (and during the whole IKEA learning journey in general).*

- *This reflects **Co-Worker Insights 2 & 3, Autonomy and Purpose**, as well as **bi-directional information sharing**.*

*Personalization and localization through **customizable layers, visualizing co-worker growth** and **bi-directional information sharing** through **omni-channel feedback**, are the concept's means to achieve the stakeholders' goals.*

- *This reflects **CBF Insight 1, Co-Worker Insight 1, Mastery** and **Time well spent**.*

2.6 Concept Idea Directions

The first version of the design statement together with the newly discovered combinations of user interactions from the scenario mapping exercises (see Paragraph 2.4) helped to create three concept idea directions. These directions each aim to achieve a different goal while still incorporating the key insights from Part 1, along with a digital platform or service as the backbone of the concept idea direction.

Though IKEA is transitioning to the omni-channel reality, the company's mission has always been to serve the many people. Research by Koenders et al., (2018) states that a digital infrastructure can successfully enable bi-directional information sharing and this was further validated in every expert interview. The interviewees stated that, indeed, a digital infrastructure for employee L&D is important for reachability, scalability, and gathering feedback, but face-to-face moments are not to be underestimated. Face-to-face moments allow for people to engage with one another and experience an emotional connection, that cannot be replicated through technology (at the moment). That emotional connection is what creates engagement and experience value (what the employer must deliver the employee according to the theoretical framework, see Figure 2). Therefore, each concept idea direction aims to use a digital service or platform as a facilitator of an activity that combines digital and face-to-face interaction moments.

Method

The three concept idea directions were designed by merging the knowledge obtained during the research phase and some of the user interaction combinations created in the scenario mapping exercise. They're considered concept idea directions because they're too developed to be considered just ideas but not developed enough to be considered concept ideas. They showcase possible options for the use and implementation of a digital IKEA platform/service but still are open for interpretation.

Results

The three concept directions are presented, along with their overall goal, visuals of the actual idea created to achieve this goal and extra information explaining how it would work with visuals and text.

Direction 1: Embedding Learning into the IKEA Work Life

A Fixed Process for Self Development with IKEA

Reaching organisational goals while achieving your own along the way. Starting at their onboarding, new IKEA co-workers are introduced to the IKEA way of learning. They are encouraged to think about their personal growth and development as a Rally Race.

The Team

- **Employee:** driver of the vehicle, they are in control of the speed and direction;
- **Passenger Seat/Team:** Line/HR/Competence manager, who give directions when necessary to stay on the designated route or in case of roadblocks or deviations.
- **Sponsor:** CBF; they determine point A and B but also provide the vehicle e.g. learning solutions, trainings, hard-/software etc.

The "Race" & Route

- All participants of the "race" need to activate the hours already allocated to co-worker development. This concept would set that in stone with scheduled moments and certain templates to use.

- Point A & B are determined by CBF/Store/Department and are the overarching goals.

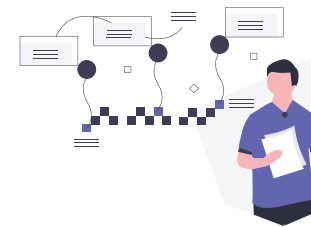
- Together with their Line/HR/Competence manager, employees can determine the route they want to take to achieve those overarching goals, by adding checkpoints that relate to their own personal goals.

- Checkpoints are also reflective/feedback moments between driver, team and sponsor e.g. progress review moments, feedback & testing sessions.

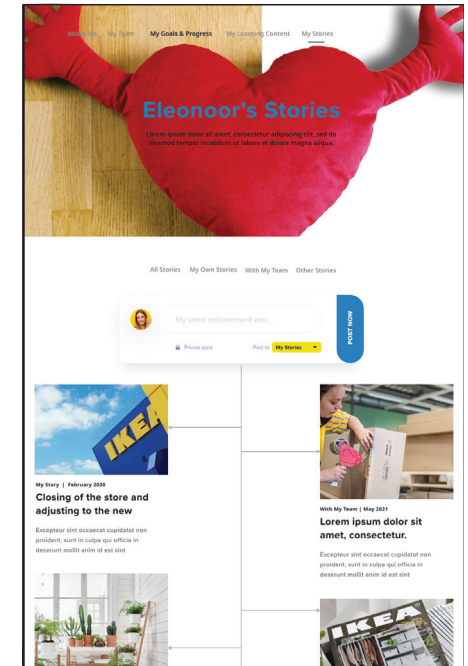
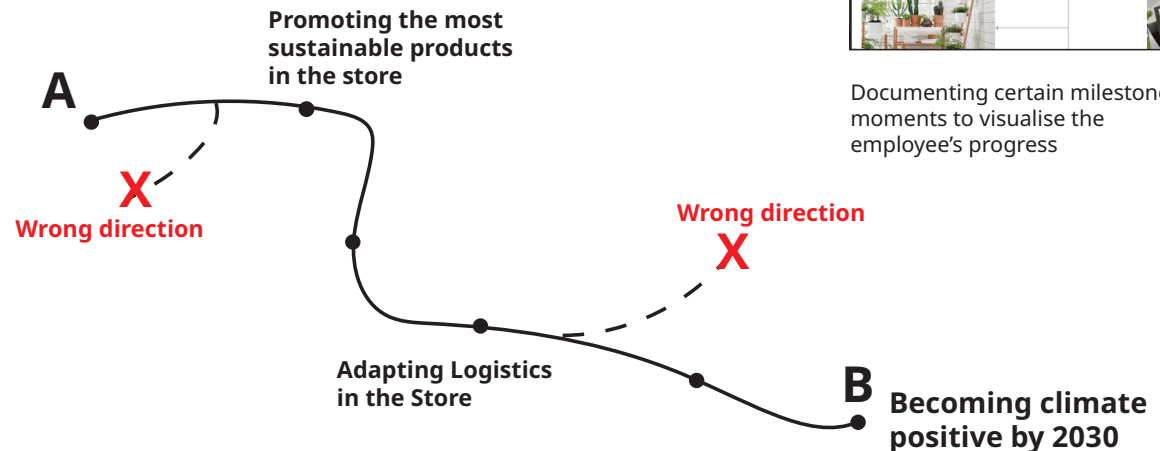
- Online platform would be used to document the goals, progress and success/setback stories of the team.



Employee at the forefront of their own personal development, with their team on the background ready to guide them when necessary



Reflective moments with the team to analyse journey, but also the 'vehicle' and brainstorm about improvements and adjustments.

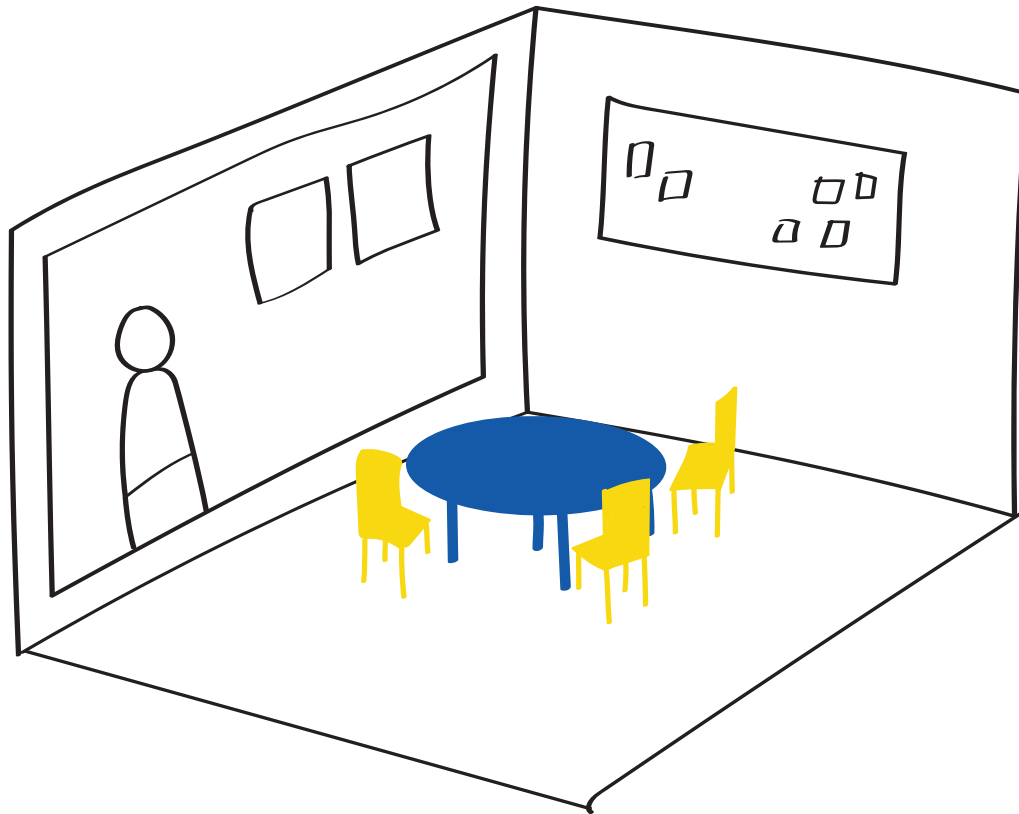


Documenting certain milestone moments to visualise the employee's progress

Direction 2: Making Learning Available for the Many People

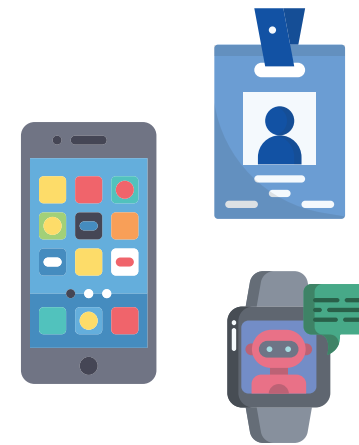
CBF x IKEA Delft Store Collaboration

Utilizing the unique location of the CBF office and the IKEA Delft Store to collaborate together on developing, testing and innovating the IKEA learning experience.



Different purposes for the learning and collaboration “area” in the IKEA Delft Store and CBF Office

- Interactive learning hub for employees
- Testing session with CBF and Delft Store Co-Workers
- Brainstorming sessions with CBF and Delft store co-workers



Personal Devices & Accounts

Attaching personal learning profiles to smart devices or employee passes for easy and quick access to their personal learning content and goals.

Location scans your profile when you walk in the room/area.

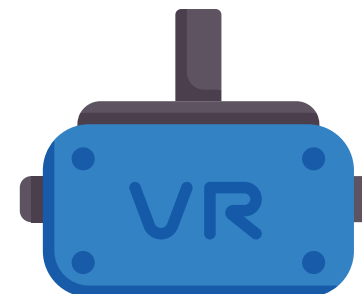
User Testing & Brainstorming Sessions

Multiple scheduled moments throughout the entire year for both parties to brainstorm, test and give feedback on ideas and initiatives.



Innovative & Interactive Tools

Using innovative learning formats and digital tools to create immersive learning experiences, facilitate positive collaboration and interactive engagement.



Direction 3: Bringing Togetherness to the Omni-Channel Learning Experience

Social Intranet for All IKEA Employees

An informal social media like platform where all IKEA employees can connect with each other in an informal way. The platform could contain features like:

- Personal profile and progress dashboard
- Groups (e.g. your team but also based on own interests)
- Sharing your stories in a timeline to document and visualise your important moments
- Co-Worker Support Portal/Page
- Planning sessions with team
- Platform suggests learning content based on your interests or from other colleagues
- Interactive content to learn about stories from others, e.g., IKEA Short Stories
- Learning & Inspiration Events

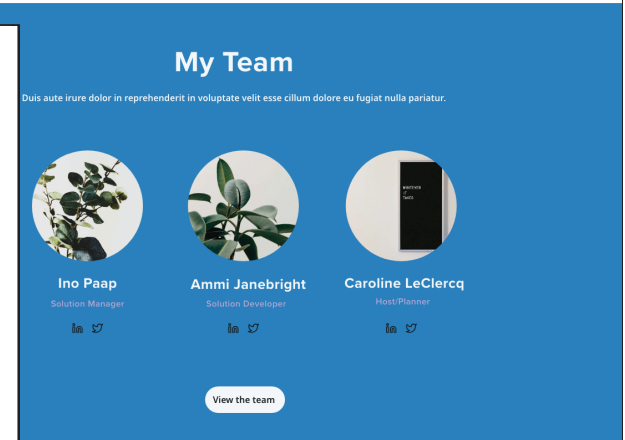
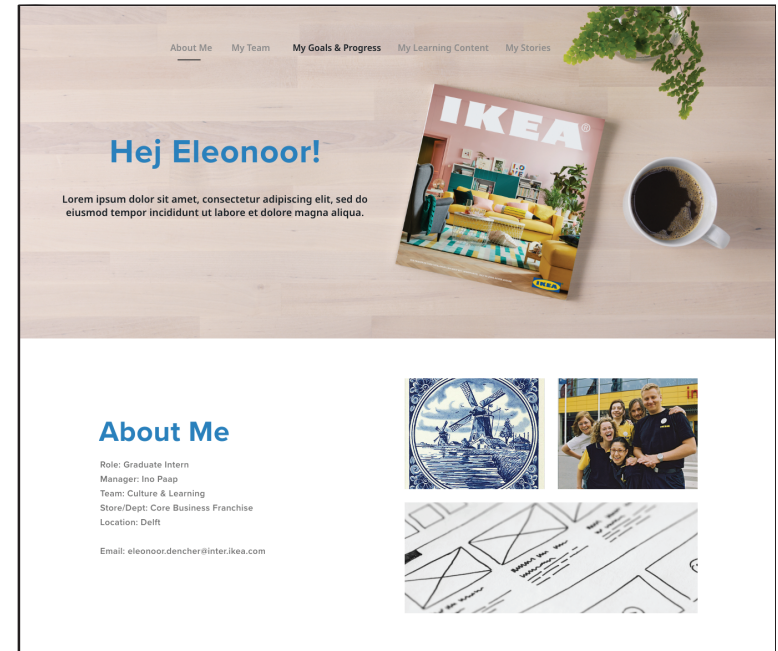


Figure 15: Concept Idea Direction 3

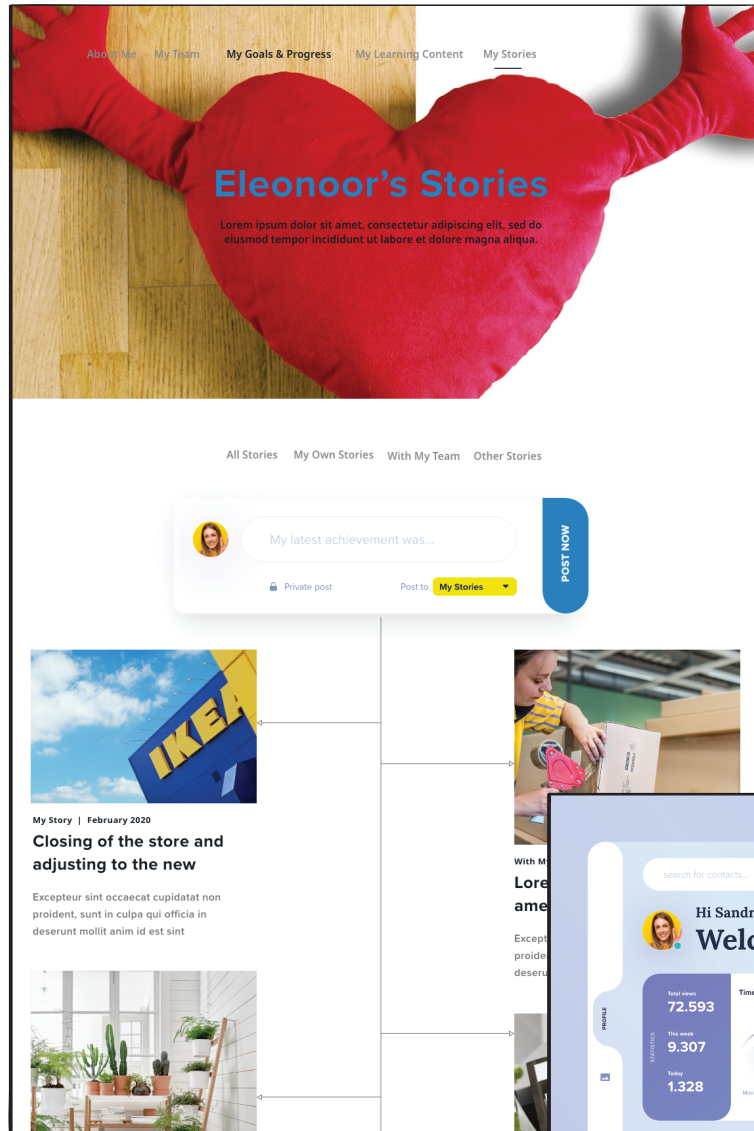
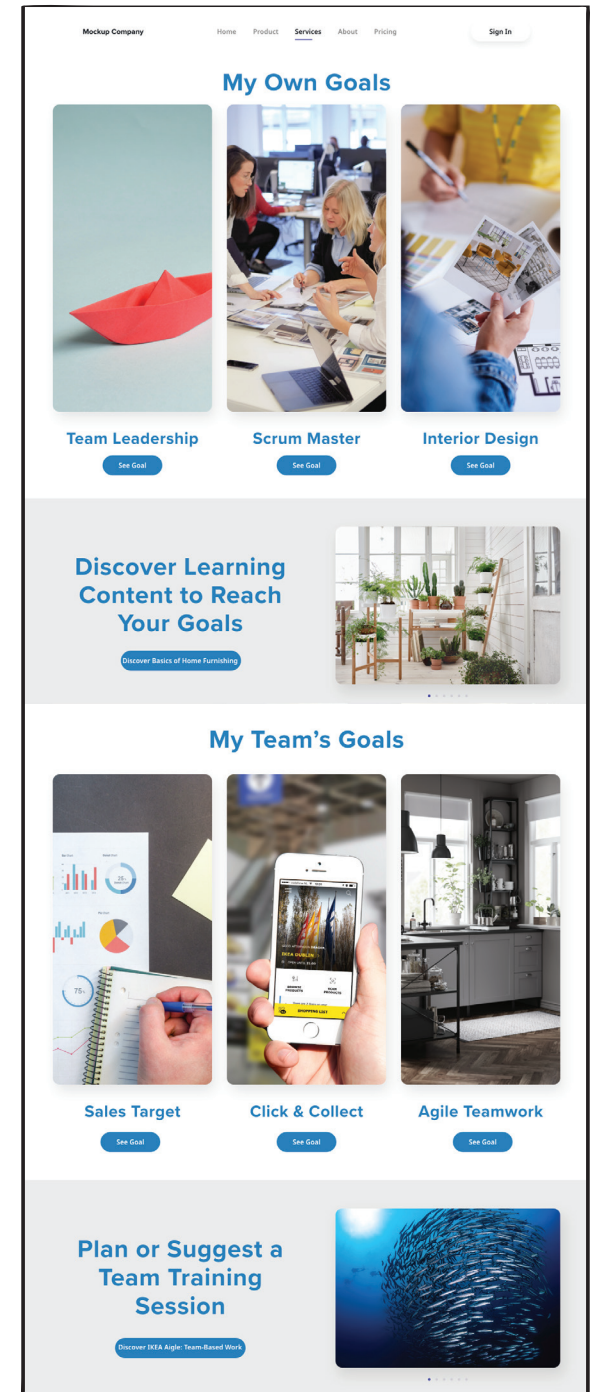
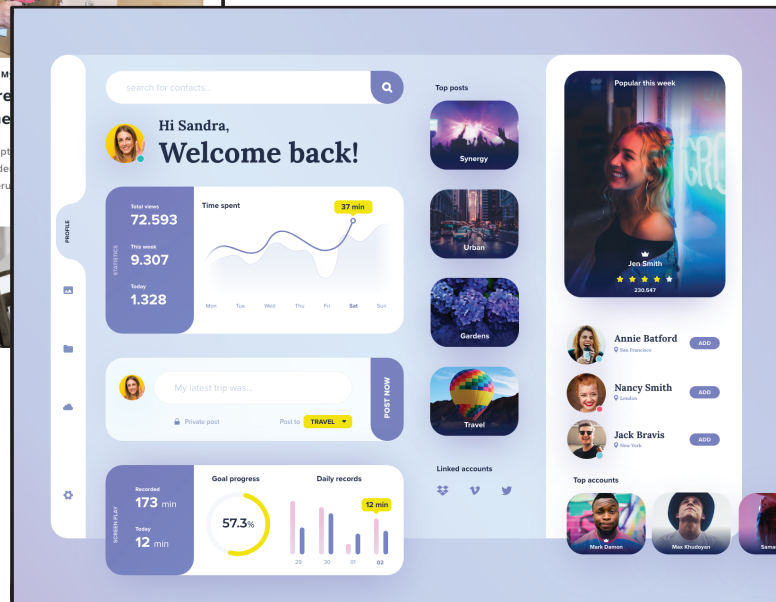


Figure 16: Concept Idea Direction 3



2.7 User Feedback Sessions - Design Statement Part

Of the two user feedback sessions that were held, the first one contributed directly to the formulation of the final design statement, whereas the second session validated the alignment of the final design statement with the concept idea directions. This paragraph will only present the results that have to do with the process of creating the final design statement. Other information concerning the concept idea directions are further explained in Paragraph 3.2 of Part 3.

The purpose of the first user feedback session, was threefold. Firstly, to get an understanding of the IKEA sales managers' perceptions of the various qualities in the design statement and how they relate those to their IKEA learning experience. Secondly, to get feedback on the three concept idea directions (described in Part 3). Finally, based on the previous two goals, uncover any latent qualities to help establish the manifestation element of the design statement to rectify the disconnect with the concept idea directions. The concept idea directions overlapped each other in various design qualities and features so, by seeking out the participants' preferences, the manifestation elements of the design statement could be added to finalize it.

The second user feedback session also had three goals. Firstly, to test out the alignment of the new design statement with the concept idea directions. Secondly, to get general user feedback on the concept idea directions, and lastly to get inspiration for incorporating the IKEA Concept more into the final concept idea. The feedback on the concept idea directions is presented in Paragraph 3.2.

Set-Up Session 1

Both sessions used purposeful and selective sampling techniques for the participants (Davis, 2021). The first session was conducted with the two same IKEA Delft sales managers who had been interviewed in Paragraph 1.3.1. In the first short exercise, they were presented with the various qualities of the initial design statement, and were asked to explain and write down on paper how they related those qualities to their overall learning experience at IKEA.

They were then shown the three concept idea directions as shown in Figures 13-16, and given extra explanations as to what the concept idea direction entailed. Then they discussed and gave feedback on the various elements of each direction that spoke to them as sales managers and as IKEA co-workers. A level of abstractness in the visualization and elaboration of the concept idea directions was maintained so that the participants could interpret the ideas in their own way and envision using particular elements in their daily work. It also allowed for them to feel more open in giving constructive criticism and genuine feedback. This would have been more difficult to elicit if the participants were presented with highly developed designs or prototypes.

The first session ended with the participants discussing which of the five qualities from the design statement (did not) come forward clearly in each concept idea direction and if they could suggest any other qualities that were important to consider.

Results & Conclusions for the Design Statement

Through writing and dialogue, the participants gave their feedback on elements of the initial design statement.

Session 1 allowed for insights concerning the relation of each quality of the design statement to the overall IKEA Learning Experience to be discovered. This information showed the current presence of the separate qualities in the IKEA learning experience. The results from the second exercise in Session 1, aimed to uncover latent learning needs. By analyzing these results, it was possible to extract the most important topics for the design statement and the elements that needed to be taken into consideration for the final concept idea. The main conclusions for the design statement have been summarized into keywords which represent the apparent and latent needs of the participants. For the full documentation of the results, see Appendix 16.

The first user feedback session uncovered new qualities,

and some that overlapped with the qualities that were already present in the initial design statement (e.g., *feeling purposeful* and *togetherness*). For further explanation as to how these qualities overlap each other, see Appendix 16). Based on the participants' feedback, the following qualities need to be taken into consideration when finalizing the design statement:

Feeling Purposeful and Togetherness

It's important to enable co-workers to connect and interact with their team members, and set team goals together, because then it's easier for them to answer the question 'Why am I doing this?'. They feel a sense of responsibility and unity by working together, and that helps to make co-workers feel purposeful because they're contributing to something bigger than just themselves.

Customizable Layers and Flexibility

By CBF already facilitating the customizable layers in learning content, managers can add local examples and direct the content to their co-workers (localization and personalization). With personal learning profiles, content suggestions and possibly a personal dashboard, the IKEA learning experience can be made into a personal and adaptable one.

Visualizing Goals and Progress

By being able to map out and track a co-worker's or team's goals and progress in a numerical and empirical way (combining stats and experiences), IKEA co-workers can give feedback easier and feel motivated to continue their learning journey.

Being Results-Oriented

For the co-workers, being results-oriented is about seeing the relevance of certain learning activities and how it will impact their daily work life. For the employer (representatives), it's about the final learning mile, when they reflect with co-workers and learn about how they actually implement the learning content for improvement purposes.

Omni-Channel Feedback Tools

It's important to have tools that facilitate both digital and physical feedback sessions. The size of the company calls for a digital infrastructure that allows for swift interaction and communication with colleagues or experts online, but the IKEA culture calls for face-to-face moments of reflection and feedback that elicit employee engagement.

With these insights, the final design statement was made:

Final Design Statement

*The concept should enable Inter IKEA Systems B.V. to **facilitate promptive learning of the IKEA Concept** so that customer-facing co-workers **feel autonomous, purposeful, and heard**. This should be achieved through **customizable layers, visualization of co-worker growth and omni-channel feedback**.*

Conclusion Part 2

Looking back at Part 2, creating the right cement consistency to connect the bricks and pillars of the bridge was a back-and-forth process. As a designer, I struggled with finding the right balance in the knowledge obtained from Part 1 and using (and trusting) my designer's intuition. The biggest struggle of Part 2 was trying to uncover the impact and influence of the user stories, design opportunity areas and ideation cycles on the overall design process because of their seemed redundancy after the ideation cycles of Part 2. At this point it was evident that the process was sprawling. Since there was no clear design goal leading the ideation phase, combining the small scenarios to create concept ideas could go on forever and any decisions regarding the design of the final concept would feel unsubstantiated. What followed from there was a lot of backward engineering, trying to find the essence of the research from Part 1 and using that to help set the direction of the design process by creating a design statement.

The combination of theoretical and interview results from Part 1 differed in their level of abstractness. So, like the shape of a diamond, creating the user stories enabled me to diverge from that content and bring the stakeholders' needs to same level of detail. The design opportunities that were found by clustering the user stories converged the content into overlapping, thematic stakeholder needs. The design opportunities initially seemed to become unnecessary once the realization moment after the ideation sprawl occurred, but in hindsight it was these design opportunities and user stories that provided concrete design criteria when the concept idea directions were being designed (that drew upon the created user scenarios for inspiration). Therefore, the contributions of the user stories, design opportunities and ideation cycles may not be directly linkable to the contents of the final design statement, but absolutely were of imperative value to its creation and that of the final concept idea.

The user feedback sessions had impact on both Part 2 and 3 of this thesis. They helped to finalize the design statement and provided user feedback to base the design iterations

and selection process of the concept idea directions on. Relating back to the metaphorical bridge of this design challenge, the goal of the various activities described in this chapter, was to find a way to connect the different bricks of the bridge (finding alignment in the stakeholders' needs) and the pillars that would hold the structure (the theoretical framework) to keep it from collapsing. In a 'solid' state, the design statement provides the location of where the bridge is to be built on both islands (the what-element) and the initial construction plan that will accompany it (the how-element). Although they were essential in completing the design statement, the concept idea directions represent the possible designs of the bridge and were 'consulted on by experts' (IKEA co-workers) to improve its desirability. Their feedback ushered in Part 3 of this thesis which aims to answer the main research question by selecting a final, iterated concept idea direction to complete the construction plan of the bridge in Part 4.



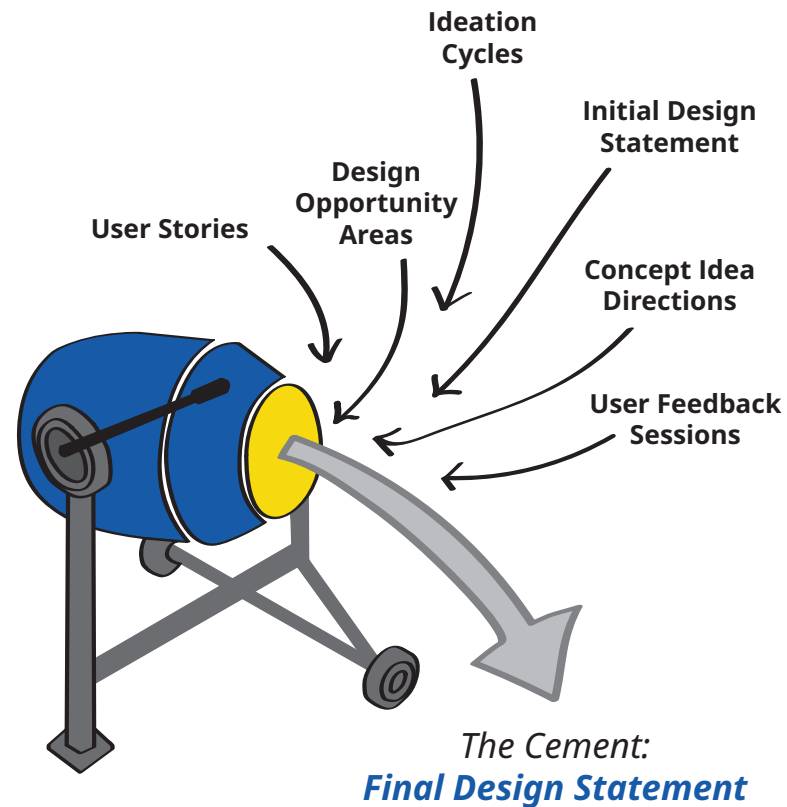
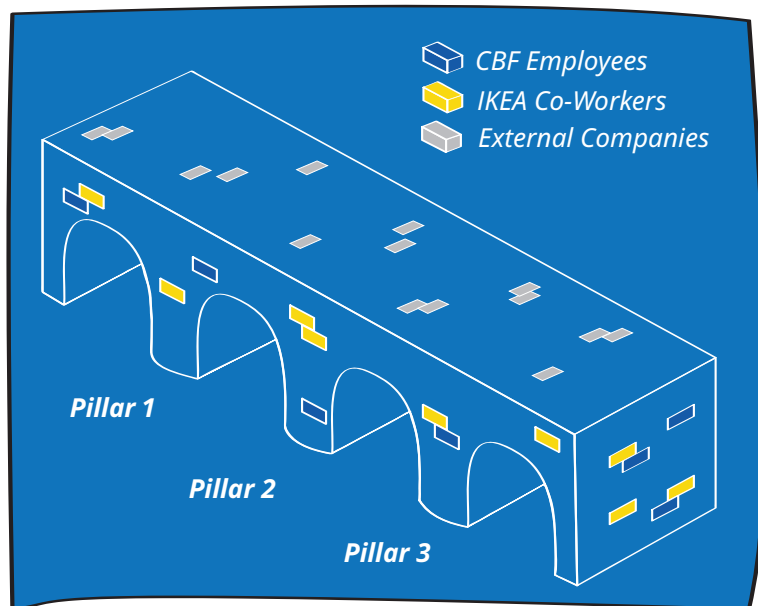
Bridge Construction Phases Completed

1. Scouting the Terrain

Through theoretical research studies and interviews with experts or the target group, the landscape of the design challenge is scouted and the initial parameters of the context are put in place.

2. Creating Cement

Finding alignment in the stakeholders' needs to create the final design statement that contains the concept idea's goal and manifestation thereof.



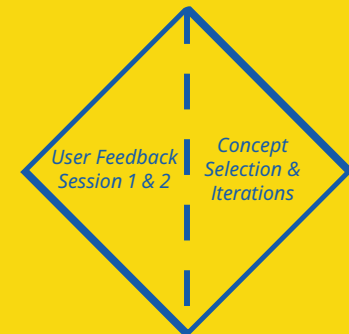


***To design a desk which may cost \$1,000
is easy for a furniture designer, but
to design a functional and good desk
which shall cost only \$50 can only be
done by the very best.***

- Ingvar Kamprad, Founder of IKEA



Part 3: Design



3.1 Introduction

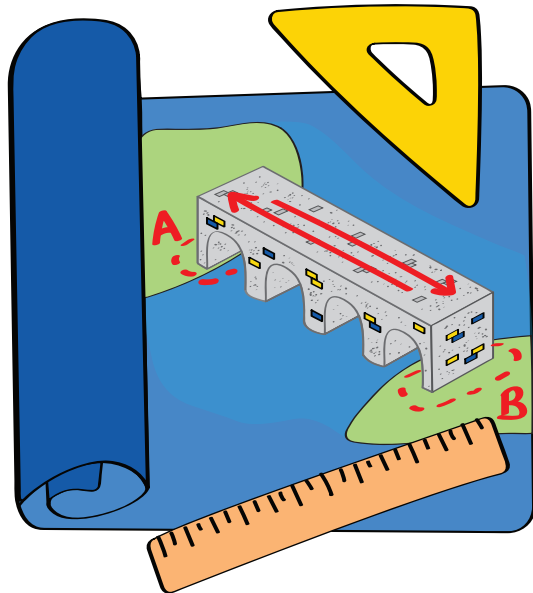
This chapter aims to answer the main research question of this thesis:

What concept can be designed to improve the relationship between franchisor Inter IKEA Systems B.V. and customer-associated co-workers that enables competence building through bi-directional information sharing?

But looking back at the previous chapter, the answer to this question was already being (partially) formed in Paragraphs 2.4 and 2.6, during the ideation cycles and when the concept idea directions were designed. Since the concept idea directions helped to determine the final version of the design statement, they have already been presented in this report. Their role in the design process however does not apply only to Part 2 of this thesis.

They represent the various, possible construction plans for the bridge connecting the CBF and IKEA Delft Store islands. In Part 3, the design process continues with the feedback gathered from IKEA co-workers on the concept idea directions during the two user feedback sessions.

During these sessions end-users validated whether the various concept idea directions would fit in the IKEA EX, describing their perceived pain points and interests. This feedback contributed towards evaluation and selection of the final concept idea direction, and thus the final concept idea itself.



Construction Planning

The user feedback sessions about the concept idea directions discussed the different designs for the bridge and how to best execute the goals set in the design statement. Ultimately, a plan is chosen which is represented by the final chosen concept idea direction(s).

Figure 17: Metaphorical Activities of Part 3

3.2 User Feedback Sessions - Concept Idea Directions Part

Continuing from Paragraph 2.7, the two user feedback sessions with customer-facing IKEA co-workers sought out their feedback on the various concept idea directions created in Part 2. The three concept idea directions presented different approaches to the design challenge, and each used a digital platform or infrastructure to facilitate its operation. This paragraph will present the set-up of Session 2 and the results from both sessions that concern the designs of the concept idea directions as these contributed towards to the design of the final concept idea. See Paragraph 2.6 for the visualizations of the concept idea directions, and for more information on Session 1 see Paragraph 2.7.

Set-Up Session 2

The second session was with the three Com&In co-workers from the store visit mentioned in Paragraph 1.3.1 and the collaborative sessions in Paragraph 2.4. It started with the participants being introduced to the new design statement (after it was rewritten based on the findings from the first user feedback session). The purpose and various qualities of the design statement were explained and any clarifying questions the participants had, answered. Then, the three concept idea directions were presented exactly like in Session 1, still open to the participants' interpretation. Afterwards, the participants indicated which of the qualities from the final design statement did (not) come forward in the concept idea directions and why. To conclude the session, they were asked to suggest how the IKEA Mandatories could best be incorporated in the concept design directions as these were not yet included.

For a more detailed explanation of the set-ups of both user feedback sessions and the gathered feedback, see Appendices 16 and 17.

Results (Sessions 1 & 2)

Based on the feedback on the concept idea directions during the user sessions, it was clear that Direction 1 and 3 had the most desired elements. Users ideally would see the two be merged into one concept: the platform of Direction 3 facilitating the idea of Direction 1. Elements of Direction 2 like smaller scale testing would be a great addition to the final concept idea, but most likely not in a physical space.

Direction 1

Direction 1's main principle of autonomy is very appealing and important to continue with in the concept idea because it gives co-workers and managers/teams development tools that complement the already very autonomous learning environment at IKEA. It can however become constrictive if overdeveloped and requiring co-workers to 'set in stone' their personal development plans with scheduled moments and targets. The final concept idea would need to facilitate the prompts or nudges that entice co-workers to think about their personal development, and in that way act more as a facilitator of that process but also for the discussions with their managers (employer representatives).

Direction 1: Embedding Learning into the IKEA Work Life

A Fixed Process for Self Development with IKEA

Reaching organisational goals while achieving your own along the way. Starting at their onboarding, new IKEA co-workers are introduced to the IKEA way of learning. They are encouraged to think about their personal growth and development as a Rally Race.

The Team

- **Employee:** driver of the vehicle, they are in control of the speed and direction;
- **Passenger Seat/Team:** Line/HR/Competence manager, who give directions when necessary to stay on the designated route or in case of roadblocks or deviations.
- **Sponsor:** CBF; they determine point A and B but also provide the vehicle e.g. learning solutions, trainings, hard-/software etc.

The "Race" & Route

- All participants of the "race" need to activate the hours already allocated to co-worker development. This concept would set that in stone with scheduled moments and certain templates to use.

- Point A & B are determined by CBF/Store/Department and are the overarching goals.

- Together with their Line/HR/Competence manager, employees can determine the route they want to take to achieve those overarching goals, by adding checkpoints that relate to their own personal goals.

- Checkpoints are also reflective/feedback moments between driver, team and sponsor e.g. progress review moments, feedback & testing sessions.

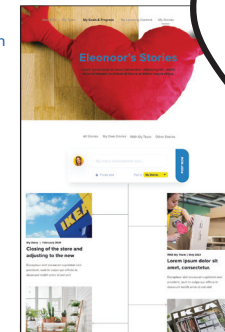
- Online platform would be used to document the goals, progress and success/setback stories of the team.



Employee at the forefront of their own personal development, with their team on the background ready to guide them when necessary



Reflective moments with the team to analyse journey, but also the 'vehicle' and brainstorm about improvements and adjustments.



Documenting certain milestone moments to visualise the employee's progress

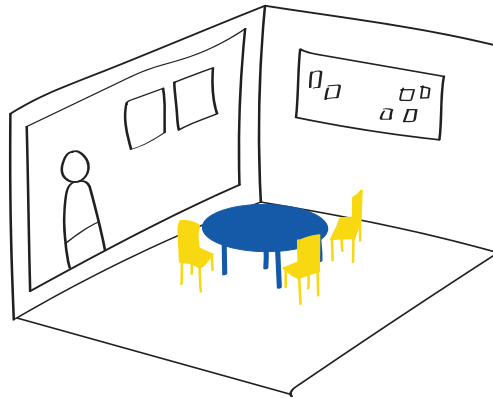
Everyone at IKEA is in charge of their career path without (big) interference from managers etc., so it's important to keep that visible in this concept - RH

Direction 2

With Direction 2, the principle of testing assumptions on a smaller scale to create a more agile IKEA was the most interesting element of this direction and something both stakeholders are very eager to improve. There were however doubts if a physical space would be the most efficient way to do this (regarding pulling co-workers off the shopfloor), so for the final concept design it is advised that this is done in a digital space. Overall, Direction 2 gathered the least amount of attention by the participants. The idea of utilizing a physical space to break away from the daily routine was received well but failed to gather as much excitement and intrigue compared to the main design elements in Directions 1 and 3.

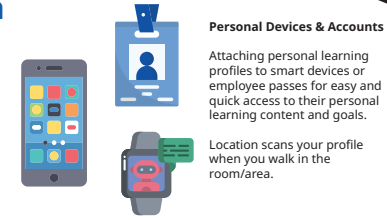
Direction 2: Making Learning Available for the Many People CBF x IKEA Delft Store Collaboration

Utilizing the unique location of the CBF office and the IKEA Delft Store to collaborate together on developing, testing and innovating the IKEA learning experience.



Different purposes for the learning and collaboration "area" in the IKEA Delft Store and CBF Office

- Interactive learning hub for employees
- Testing session with CBF and Delft Store Co-Workers
- Brainstorming sessions with CBF and Delft store co-workers



Personal Devices & Accounts

Attaching personal learning profiles to smart devices or employee passes for easy and quick access to their personal learning content and goals.

Location scans your profile when you walk in the room/area.



User Testing & Brainstorming Sessions

Multiple scheduled moments throughout the entire year for both parties to brainstorm, test and give feedback on ideas and initiatives.



Innovative & Interactive

Using innovative learning formats and digital tools to create immersive learning experiences, facilitate post-collaboration and interact engagement.

Business has to keep on going, it's important that operations are still the main priority, so a testing environment or forum on a smaller scale would be very interesting. - JL

It's also tough to find learnings that support you to reach your goals, so the 'Discover Learning Content' button that gives you suggestions for learning content would really help us as managers and the co-workers - RI

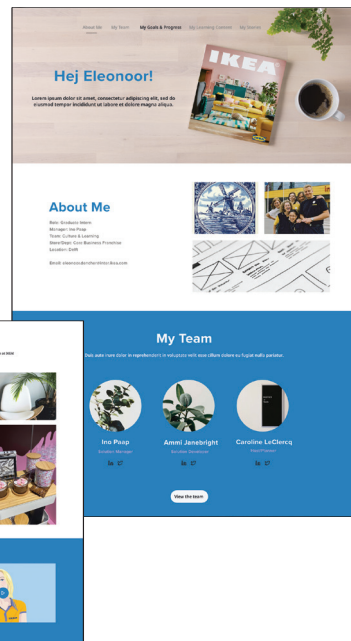
A digital space would be better in terms of reachability. The store has its own activity and the co-workers' focus is on the shopfloor and their job. - EZ

Direction 3: Bringing Togetherness to the Omni-Channel Learning Experience

Social Intranet for All IKEA Employees

An informal social media like platform where all IKEA employees can connect with each other in an informal way. The platform could contain features like:

- Personal profile and progress dashboard
- Groups (e.g. your team but also based on own interests)
- Sharing your stories in a timeline to document and visualise your important moments
- Co-Worker Support Portal/Page
- Planning sessions with team
- Platform suggests learning content based on your interests or from other colleagues
- Interactive content to learn about stories from others, e.g., IKEA Short Stories
- Learning & Inspiration Events



Direction 3

Direction 3's overall visualization techniques would benefit both employee and employer, because visualizing goals and progress not only increases the co-workers' motivation, but also helps managers in guiding co-workers in their learning journey. Furthermore, combining numerical data (e.g., completed trainings by an individual/a team, sales targets, customer store ratings) and empirical data (online sharing of successes and setbacks publicly or privately through images or writing) on a personal dashboard or profile page, taps into all three of the intrinsic drivers of motivation: you as a co-worker are free to choose your goals and the means to achieve them (*autonomy*), you're provided with learning content to reach the goals that you chose and want to achieve (*mastery*), and visualizing the steps taken towards your personal or group accomplishments gives you a sense of meaning (*purpose*) and thus motivation. Finally, the digital infrastructure would facilitate and stimulate learning by offering the vast collection of IKEA learning material whilst also suggesting relative learning content based on the goals and interests of the learner.

Being able to chat with 'experts' about any questions you as a learner may have. Learning content owners or facilitators could be considered as official experts in that field and interact with learners in a 'YouTube comment section' kind of way. - JL

3.3 Concept Selection & Iterations

The three concept idea directions each to some extent fulfill the design statement that was created in Paragraph 2.5. However, further evaluation is necessary to choose, what will become, the final concept idea. The concept idea directions will be evaluated on their fulfillment of the design statement foremost. The feedback gathered during the user sessions for the concept idea directions will also be considered strongly because the participants, being the target group, are able to give an indication of the internal desirability for the proposed directions. Additionally, their knowledge of how IKEA retail stores operate and the overall IKEA way of working also bring more validity to their input.

Evaluation

The concept idea directions are evaluated by analyzing the versions presented to the participants during the feedback sessions (Figures 13-16) and scoring their fulfillment of the various design statement components. They're scored on their fulfillment of the overall goal of *facilitating promptive learning of the IKEA Concept*, as well as the goals to make *co-workers feel autonomous through customizable layers, feel purposeful through visualization of co-worker growth, and feel heard through omni-channel feedback tools*. The same is done for an iterated version of the concept idea direction based on the feedback gathered during the user sessions. This potential fulfillment of the design statement will be the deciding factor for the final chosen concept idea direction.

Selection

When looking at the evaluations of the concept idea directions, Direction 1 and 3 have the most potential. Both concepts focus on triggering the feeling of autonomy by empowering co-workers in self-directing their learning journey. This is done by tailoring the IKEA Learning Offer to their competence development goals and providing them with tools to log and achieve those goals.

Direction 1 has a stronger autonomy-presence because of the responsibility that the co-worker is given when they onboard at IKEA to think about their personal growth and development. The potential of this specific design element is increased if the concept idea direction is less of a fixed process with predetermined checkpoints, to maintain the feeling of freedom that already exists in the IKEA learning experience (co-workers don't get a lot of interference from

management in terms of their personal development). The autonomous behavior will prompt the co-worker to learn about the IKEA Concept so that they achieve their learning goals, however the potential of Direction 1 in this aspect fails to beat the other two with digital nudges to prompt the co-worker even more.



















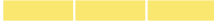





Overall, Direction 3 scores higher mainly due to the multiple personalization possibilities on the digital platform. The co-worker is approached with learning content that's relevant for their learning goals as well as suggestions for other social learning content that may interest them. The potential of Direction 3 lies primarily in the targeted crowdsourcing of co-worker feedback by CBF, which could allow for CBF to gather input based on e.g., the IKEA Mandatories or specific learning solutions. Furthermore, integrating other social media-like aspects to Direction 3 would make it more inviting for co-workers to use the platform because it resembles how they already interact with people, outside of IKEA.

Both Directions 1 and 3 create a sense of purpose by visualizing the personal development goals and paths co-workers have set themselves. The difference is that Direction 1 focuses on the individual whereas Direction 3 also includes the team context. This was one of the deciding factors for the participants to choose Direction 3 over Direction 1 during the user feedback sessions. As a manager, being able to show co-workers that they're doing certain activities or aiming for targets for the sake of their team, makes it easier for them to answer the question *"Why am I doing this?"*. The potential that comes with Direction 1 would increase if the concept would allow for managers to also assign or distribute tasks/targets to co-workers so that they can keep track of their co-workers' progress and use

that during their appraisal talks with them (thus reinforcing the co-worker's sense of autonomy, mastery and purpose).

Direction 2's overall lacking potential has to do with its manifestation: the consensus from the user feedback sessions was that although a physical space would elicit more engaging interactions between CBF and IKEA Delft co-workers, a digital space would work better with store co-workers' schedule and create more reachability. When store co-workers are on the shopfloor, they can't, nor do they want to, be pulled off their shift while they're attending to customers and by making the 'space' digitally accessible, more co-workers could use it. However, this would eliminate the uniqueness of Direction 2 and resemble the other two concept idea directions.

In conclusion, the final choice is a combination of Direction 1 and Direction 3. By incorporating the potential autonomy element of Direction 1 in the potential complete version of Direction 3, the IKEA co-worker will feel autonomous in creating their learning path while still feeling purposeful through the feeling of togetherness that is created with the visualization techniques of Direction 3. The customizable layers of Direction 3 will make co-workers feel engaged on a personal level as well as allow for CBF to gather targeted feedback. Lastly, the platform also facilitates face-to-face and digital feedback moments between all IKEA people.

		Concept Idea Direction 1	Concept Idea Direction 2	Concept Idea Direction 3
Promptive Learning of the IKEA Concept	Current Design	 <p>Co-workers are prompted to learn by putting their development path in their hands</p>	 <p>Co-workers are busy working in the store, and can't just be pulled off the shopfloor</p>	 <p>Co-workers get suggested learning content based on their personal development goals</p>
	Iterated Design	 <p>Concept would need to entice learners with digital nudges and show them why certain learning content is relevant for them</p>	 <p>Having a digital space for CBF and IKEA Delft co-workers to share and create together.</p>	 <p>Discover learning content or connect with co-workers by having pages categorized in topics e.g., per IKEA Mandatory or IKEA Value</p>
Feeling Autonomous through Customizable Layers	Current Design	 <p>User determines and sets the route and stops to get from point A to point B</p>	 <p>Personal digital devices allow for the co-workers to choose when they learn</p>	 <p>User sets their profile with their job, team, interests and personal development goals</p>
	Iterated Design	 <p>Would be increased if the process is less fixed in terms of check-points and the route can be easily adapted without permission</p> <p>Include Design Element</p>	 <p>If the concept were digital, more layers to customize the collaboration experience could be added.</p>	 <p>Improve it more with social media-like customization options as it resembles how people interact with other outside of IKEA e.g., hashtags, tagging, sharing, liking etc.</p>
Feeling Purposeful through Visualization of Co-Worker Growth	Current Design	 <p>User thinks about long term ambitions, sets and tracks the steps to achieve their goals</p>	 <p>Growth visualization when assumptions/new ideas are tested out by CBF & Delft together</p>	 <p>Showing team goals helps co-workers & managers to answer "Why should I do this?"</p>
	Iterated Design	 <p>Important to show how the route relates to the IKEA Concept, IKEA Product Information and IKEA Learning Solutions</p>	 <p>The collaborations could be scaled if the concept was expressed digitally, since it reaches more people and gathers more data</p>	 <p>Being able to assign & distribute goals to people would help managers; Allow for flexible documentation of co-workers' experiences</p>
Feeling Heard through Omni-Channel Feedback	Current Design	 <p>Multiple check-points and reflection moments planned in the learning journey</p>	 <p>Direct communication between CBF and IKEA Delft in a physical space with digital tools</p>	 <p>Connecting IKEA People F2F and digitally through their learning journey</p>
	Iterated Design	 <p>Allowing for spontaneous/F2F feedback moments that aren't always digitally facilitated would improve it</p>	 <p>Growth visualization when assumptions/new ideas are tested out by CBF & Delft together</p>	 <p>Allow for more targeted feedback to be gathered through the platform by CBF to include co-workers in improving the IKEA Concept;</p>

**CHOSEN CONCEPT
IDEA DIRECTION**

Conclusion Part 3

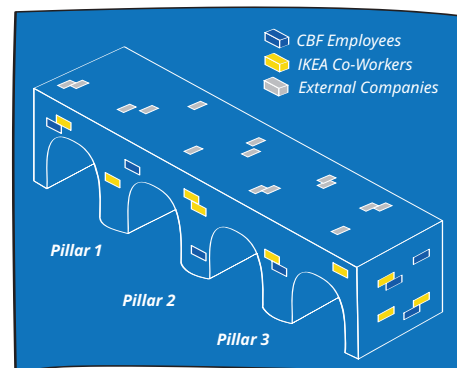
With the feedback from the user sessions on the desirability of the concept idea directions, the evaluations and selection process for the final concept idea could be made. The concept idea directions overlapped with each other in design qualities, but in the end, it became clear that the combination of Direction 1 and Direction 3 would encapsulate the stakeholders' needs the most and the best. Direction 2 was very much appreciated though by the co-workers, as it took into consideration their struggle of miscommunication with CBF while they share the same building.

The autonomy element of Direction 1 resonated very strongly with the participants and their feedback on its potential constrictiveness was very valuable for the selection process, as it was critical but usable. The iterated version of this element can be less constrictive by incorporating fewer fixed moments of accountability and more ways to document a co-worker's important learning experiences. The personalized approach in Direction 3 showed the engaging learning moments that IKEA co-workers are longing for. Additionally, the feeling of purpose that would be created with the visualization techniques of co-worker growth came forward very clearly to the participants.

With the users' feedback the final iterations to the metaphorical construction plan can be made and the definitive plan for the bridge is presented in Chapter 4. The image on the right page shows the final outcome of the construction plan to complete the bridge between the CBF and Co-worker islands.

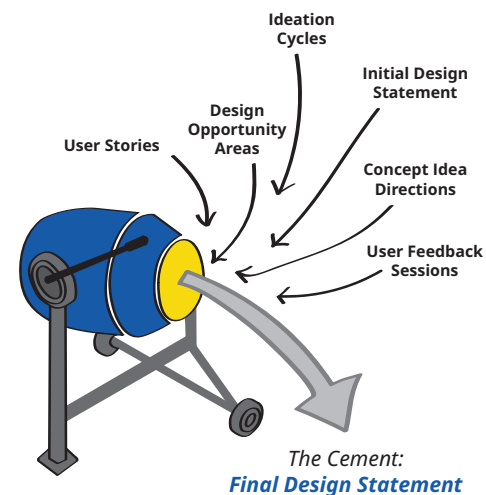
1. Scouting the Terrain

Through theoretical research studies and interviews with experts or the target group, the landscape of the design challenge is scouted and the initial parameters of the context are put in place.



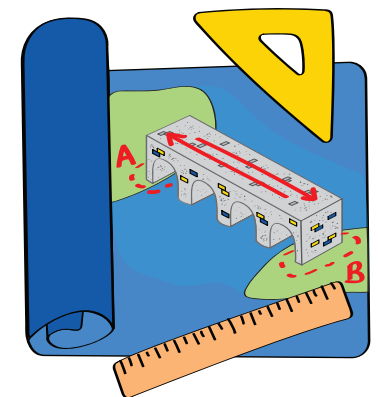
2. Creating Cement

Finding alignment in the stakeholders' needs to create the final design statement that contains the concept idea's goal and manifestation thereof.







3. Construction Planning

The user feedback sessions about the concept idea directions discussed the different designs for the bridge and how to best execute the goals set in the design statement. Ultimately, a plan is chosen which is represented by the final chosen concept idea direction(s).



CBF Island

-  *Main Bricks: CBF Insights*
-  *Main Bricks: IKEA Co-Worker Insights*
-  *Top Layer Bricks: External 'Advice'*
-  *Solidified Cement: Final Design Statement*

Pillar 1
Daniel Pink's Intrinsic Drivers of Motivation (2009)

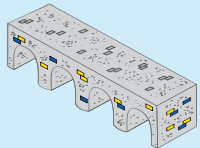
Pillar 2
Joseph Pine's Drivers of Experience Value (2020)

Pillar 3
Bi-Directional Information Sharing, Koenders et al. (2018)

IKEA Co-Worker Island



Bridge Location & Construction Plan: Goal & Manifestation of Concept Idea



Direction of Bridge: Chosen Concept Idea Direction

Complete Bridge: Concept Idea

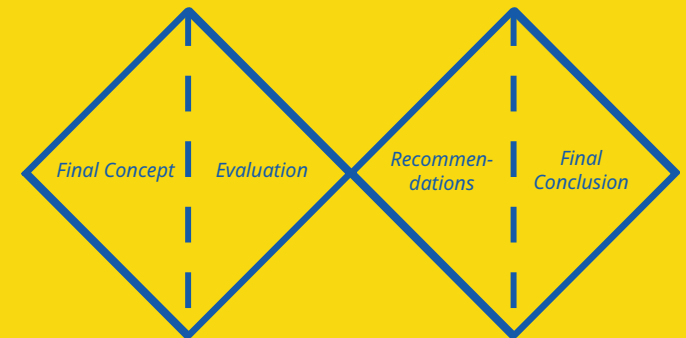


***What is good for our customers is also
in the long run good for us.***

- Ingvar Kamprad, Founder of IKEA



Part 4: Deliver



4.1 The Final Concept

This paragraph presents the final concept design for this thesis, Ändamål. Ändamål (which means 'Purpose' in Swedish) is a social performance support platform that tailors the IKEA Learning Offer to co-workers' needs and encourages them to reach their personal development goals, while also crowdsourcing co-worker feedback for CBF to continuously improve the IKEA Learning Offer. Co-workers have an engaging learning experience and to illustrate the various interactions a co-worker has with Ändamål, a user journey has been created that showcases the emotional aspects of the performance support platform.

IKEA Ändamål

For IKEA co-workers, Ändamål is a social performance support platform that presents a personalised experience of the IKEA Learning Offer with relevant learning content and personal development tools. By providing a digital space for IKEA co-workers to come together, share their experiences and feedback with all IKEA people, Ändamål gives IKEA co-workers the drive to continue their purposeful learning journey and improve the IKEA Concept.

Ändamål's Purpose

The main purpose of the platform is to host a personalized, digital experience of the IKEA Learning Offer and provide performance support tools to (the franchisee for their) co-workers. Ändamål facilitates personal development dialogues between franchisees/managers and co-workers, enables informal digital interaction between co-workers, and facilitates bi-directional information sharing between IKEA co-workers and CBF so that the IKEA Concept and the IKEA EX is continuously improved.

Ändamål's Characteristics

Ändamål is where co-workers can find all the learning material created by ICL. Users indicate on their profiles what their learning interests are, can log and track their personal development goals, and get personalized suggestions of ICL created content regarding IKEA Concept Knowledge, IKEA Product Information, and learning solutions. The digital platform enables co-workers to feel connected to their team members and other IKEA co-workers who share their IKEA/learning interests through informal ways of communication and interaction, like social media networks. Co-workers can choose to what extent they use the flexible documentation tool on the platform to log and monitor their personal development goals. The performance support platform is a digital experience of the IKEA Learning Offer that facilitates multiple feedback-dialogues:

Between franchisee/manager & IKEA co-worker:

this dialogue is mainly for personal development and competence building purposes. On the platform, co-workers have a personal page where they indicate their learning interests and can log and track their personal development goals. This feature allows for the co-worker

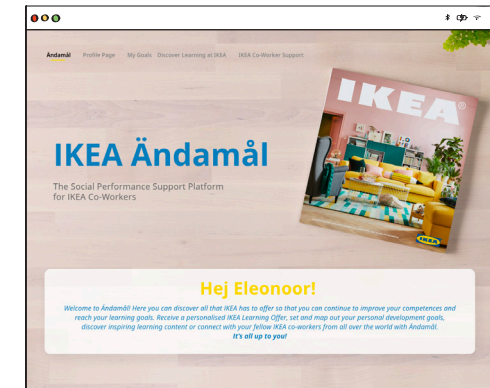
to have an engaging moment with their manager when discussing their goals or tasks because of the visualization of their progress and easy goal-logging/tracking format. These one-one-one meetings already take place at IKEA.

Between CBF and IKEA co-worker: the digital platform enables CBF and IKEA co-workers to work with each other without losing momentum by having to go through the multiple franchisee filters. The social media-like features (forums, like/comment/share, discovery pages etc.) lets CBF gather targeted feedback directly from the end-user to then improve the IKEA Concept and Learning Offer that is offered to their franchisees.

Amongst (other) IKEA co-workers: the platform facilitates social media-like interactions between all IKEA co-workers through forum-like pages. Based on, for example, the IKEA Mandatories or the IKEA Values, co-workers can give and find information from their colleagues to help improve their business. Co-workers also have a team page on their profile where they see what activities and targets they're a part of within their team or department and can connect and interact with those colleagues online.

Ändamål's Context

The platform is introduced at the beginning of someone's IKEA career during their onboarding process. It has been designed with customer-facing co-workers in mind, but can be used for IKEA co-workers from all departments since they all have their own experiential expertise. The platform is then used throughout the co-worker's entire time at IKEA as it helps them to document their professional growth.



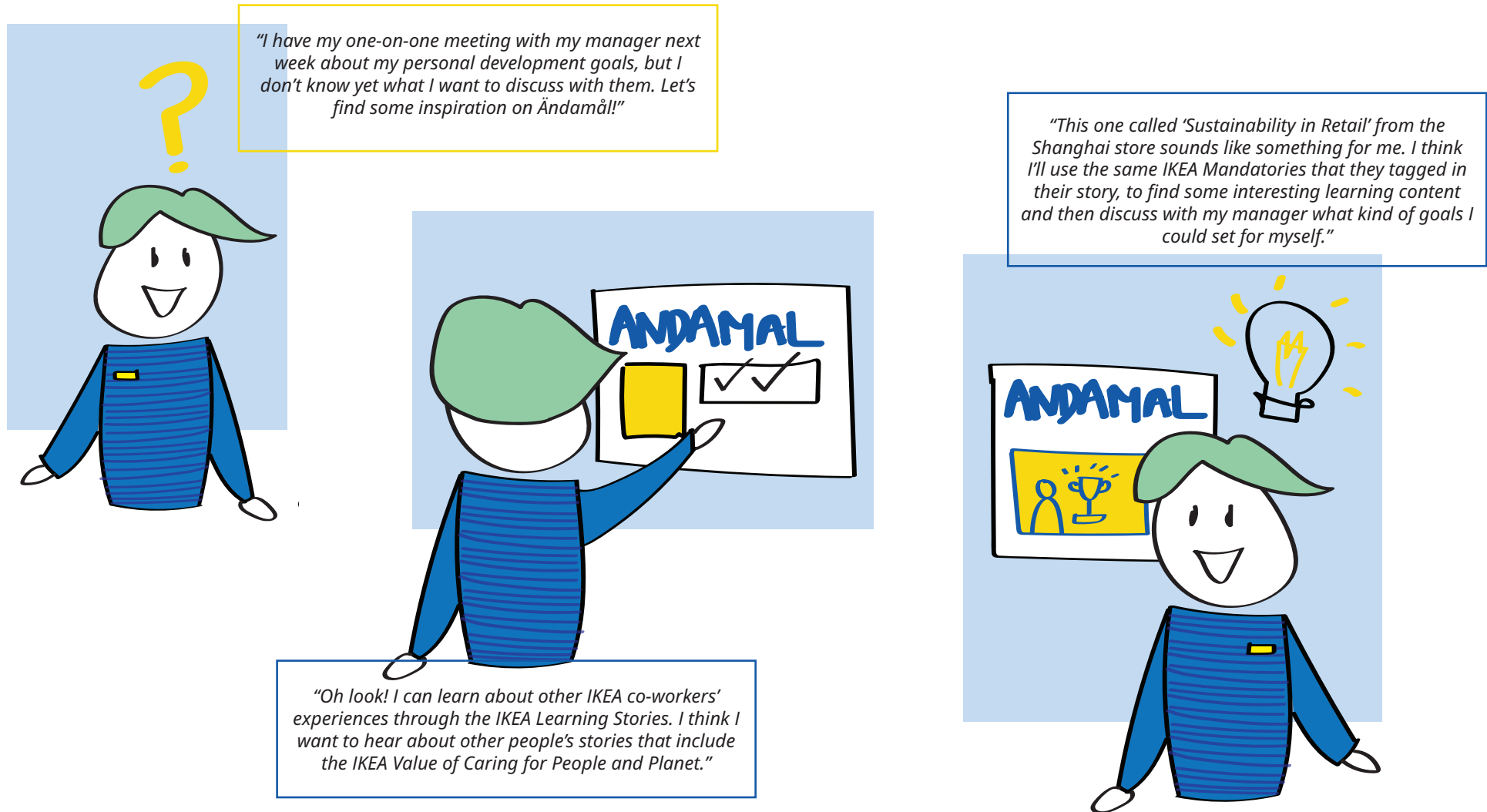
Ändamål's Added Value

Ändamål is a powerful learning platform that centers its features around the co-worker's needs of autonomy, mastery and purpose, rather than those of IKEA Franchisees or Core Business Franchise, to create a positive IKEA co-worker experience. Research has shown that store co-workers are IKEA Concept experts, but CBF's current way of working doesn't include them in the Learning Solution Development Process thus making the IKEA Learning Offer irrelevant and outdated at times. Tackling this problem at the core, **Ändamål actively crowdsources co-worker feedback and embraces co-worker autonomy, because these factors are the starting points for keeping IKEA co-workers motivated to continue their learning journey and engage with CBF to improve the IKEA Concept.**

Co-workers are encouraged to choose their own development path at IKEA (**autonomy**) and by offering learning content that specifically aligns with their (team's) goals, Ändamål makes every IKEA learning moment **time well spent**. The additional personal development tools that enable co-workers to document their learning goals and visualize their growth, prompt their need for intellectual challenge (**mastery**), thus creating **time well invested**. To create the feeling of **purpose** and togetherness, Ändamål's digital communities connect IKEA co-workers to colleagues with shared interests, goals or experiences, but also facilitates active omni-channel feedback loops between CBF and co-workers. Ändamål essentially removes the disconnect in communication and collaboration between CBF and IKEA co-workers in a way that puts the co-workers' needs first and makes both stakeholders equal partners in their relationship.

User Interaction Journey of Example Scenario

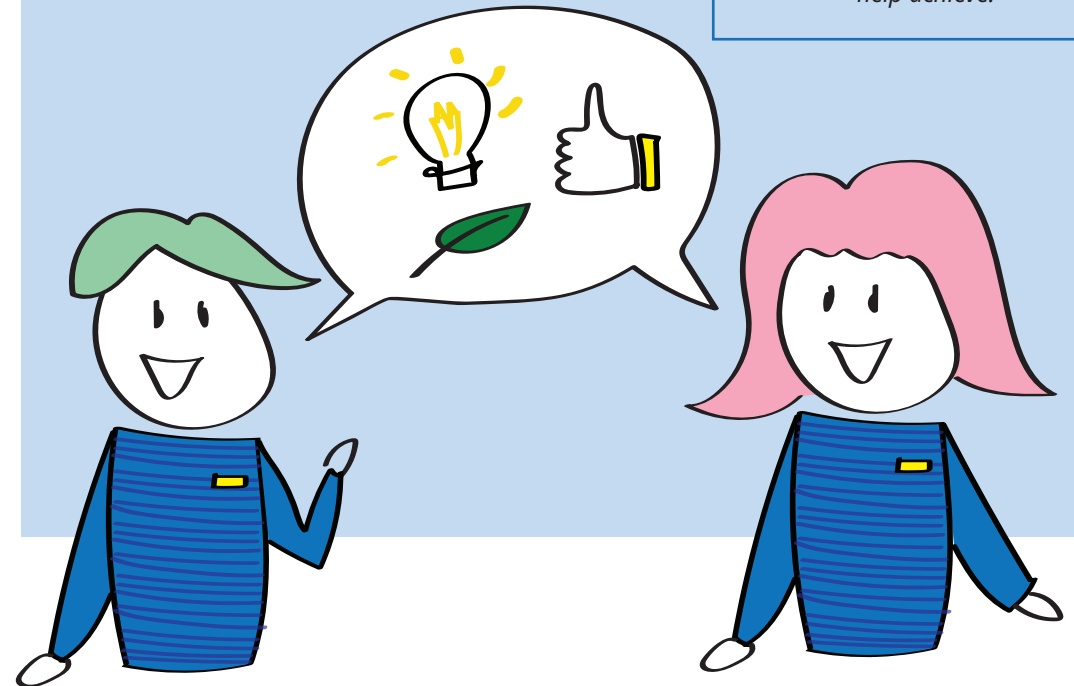
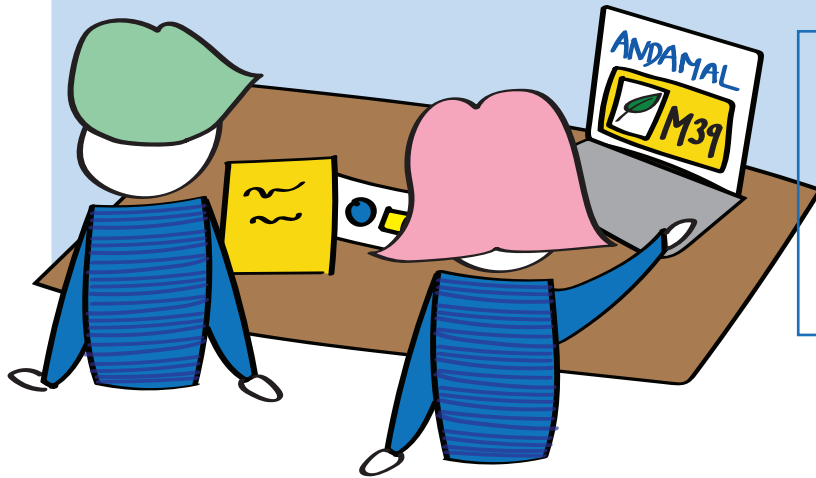
The user scenario below illustrates an example scenario of a co-worker using *Ändamål* to think about their personal development and discover relevant learning content.



"I had a great meeting with my line manager! I already started setting some goals so I could present this during our meeting and my manager was impressed with my assertiveness! We adjusted a few things to make them fit with the IKEA Mandatories and went through my tasks within my team."

"We browsed through the platform, wrote down and brainstormed about the IKEA Mandatories and IKEA Values that would be of relevance to me, so that when I set my goal on Ändamål, I'll get suggestions of Learning Solutions and Learning Stories that can help me to achieve my goal."

"We also discussed my interest in sustainability and how IKEA wants to become climate positive by 2030. We talked about what the store was doing to contribute towards that goal and found one that I want to help achieve!"



"After the meeting I set my goal in Åndamål in 5 easy steps. I thought it would be a hassle to log everything, but I can just upload pictures of the notes from my meeting with my manager to document the timeline of my goal."

"The 5-step set-up really helped me to make the goal as concrete as possible so that I would achieve it within the two-month timeframe."

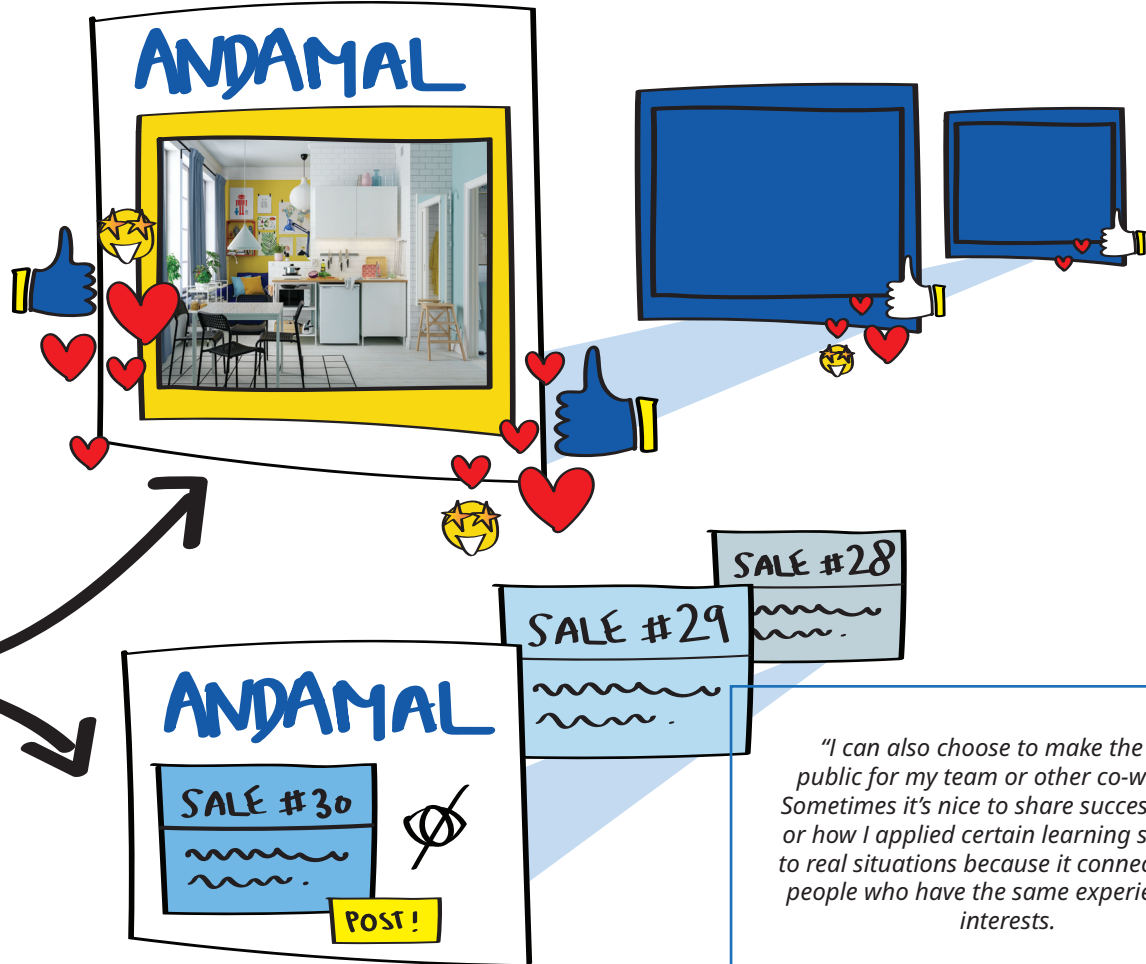
"I can tag IKEA Mandatories as topics for the learning content I want to receive. It used to be such a hassle to find the right learning material. There's so much information available at IKEA, sometimes you get lost in it, so this really helps."



"Time is precious when I'm on the shopfloor. By connecting the platform to Outlook my reflection moments and meetings are synced to my calendar, so I don't waste time figuring out my appointments and I can do what I enjoy most: helping IKEA customers."

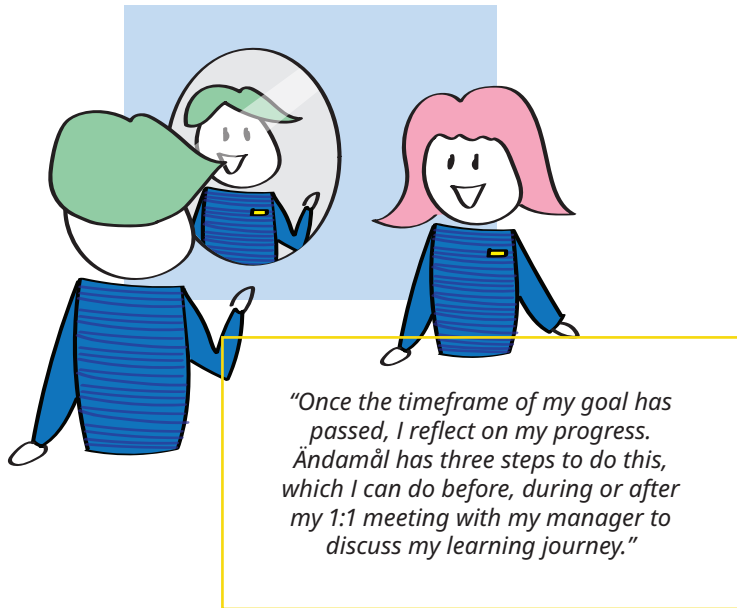
"The final step is setting my definition of done. It really makes you think about how you're going to make your goal achievable. This was something my manager and I brainstormed about during our meeting, so I just uploaded the pictures and now it's up to me to do the hard work!"

"What's great about working at IKEA, is that you learn in the business. And with Ändamål you can see how moments like these contribute to you achieving your goal because you can document them in your own timeline."



"I can also choose to make the post public for my team or other co-workers. Sometimes it's nice to share success stories or how I applied certain learning solutions to real situations because it connects me to people who have the same experiences or interests.

But, I can also choose to keep it private for my next meeting with my manager if I don't feel like sharing it."



"Once the timeframe of my goal has passed, I reflect on my progress. Ändamål has three steps to do this, which I can do before, during or after my 1:1 meeting with my manager to discuss my learning journey."



"I select the goal I want to reflect on and rate & review the learning solutions I did. It's interesting to think about how I applied the content, because it makes me realize how I've applied knowledge to practice.

Sometimes based on my feedback, I'm asked to join CBF workshops to share my input: it's good to know that IKEA values my experiences and feedback as a co-worker."



Most things remain undone. Glorious future!

"Finally, I can check off my goal or reflect on what held me back. I like to discuss this with my manager because it gives me an opportunity to show them how I've grown and that I enjoy learning in my job. It also motivates me to think about my next goal!"

4.2 Concept Detailing

This paragraph presents the details of the social performance support platform. Additionally, a flowchart of the information/data streams that would take place in order for CBF to crowdsource the co-worker feedback, is presented.

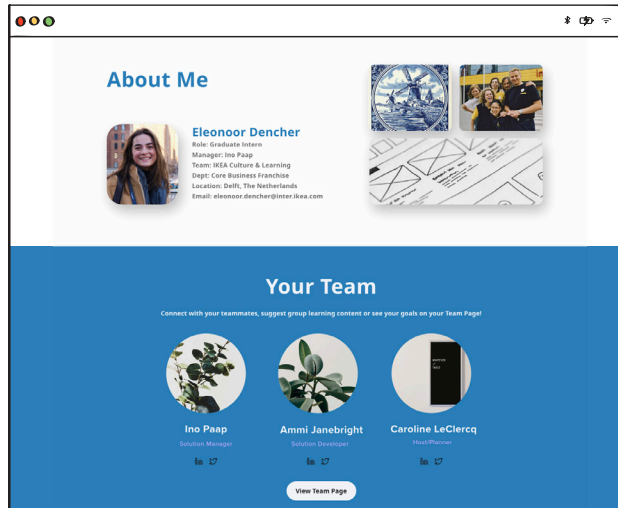
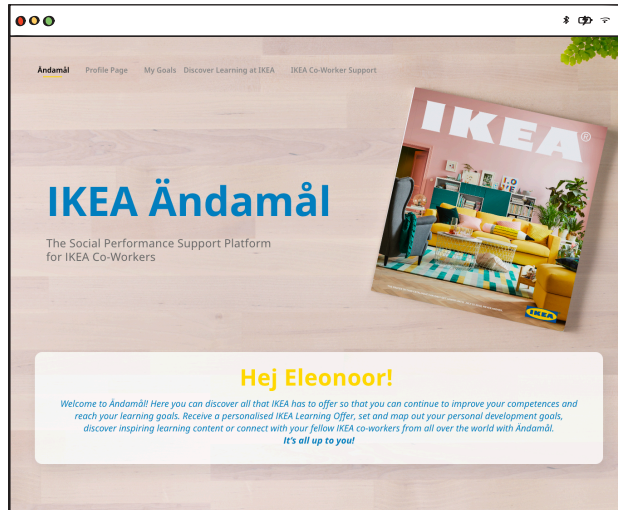


Figure 18: Ändamål Homescreen and Profile Page

1. Co-workers can access Ändamål whenever they want through their digital device. An example of when they would use it is for a meeting with their line manager to discuss their goals and ambitions at the workplace. They reflect about their previous projects and tasks, thinking about how they want to improve themselves and want to get some inspiration from other IKEA co-workers.

> *It's not necessary for all meetings to be facilitated by the platform. Sometimes face-to-face interactions are much more valuable and are encouraged by Ändamål's set-up.*

2. By selecting the IKEA Mandatories or Values as filters, they receive learning stories from other co-workers that describe real experiences and goals in the context of the IKEA Concept. This makes it easier for co-workers to imagine what kind of goals they could set themselves that are linked to organizational targets or values.

3. By selecting the IKEA Mandatories or Values as filters, they receive learning stories from other co-workers that describe real experiences and goals in the context of the IKEA Concept. This makes it easier for co-workers to imagine what kind of goals they could set themselves that are linked to organizational targets or their own interests.

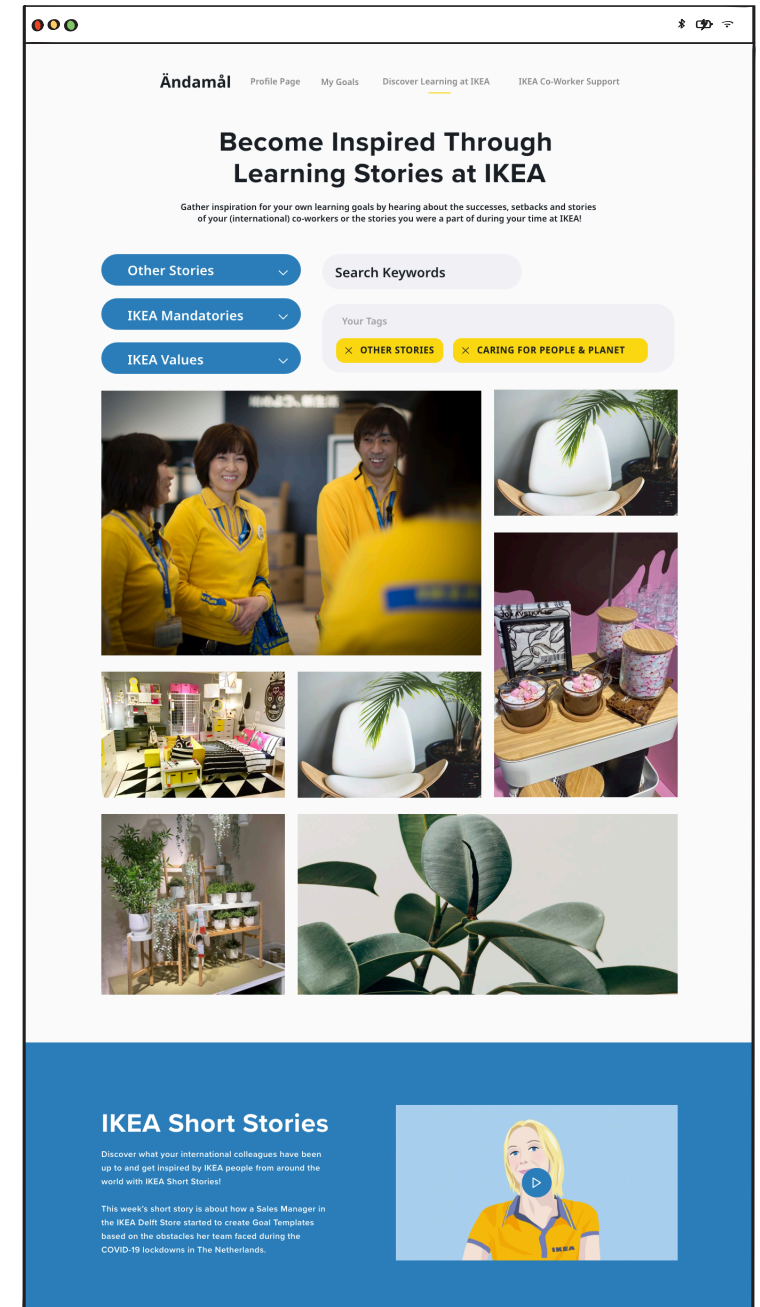


Figure 19: Ändamål Learning Discovery Page

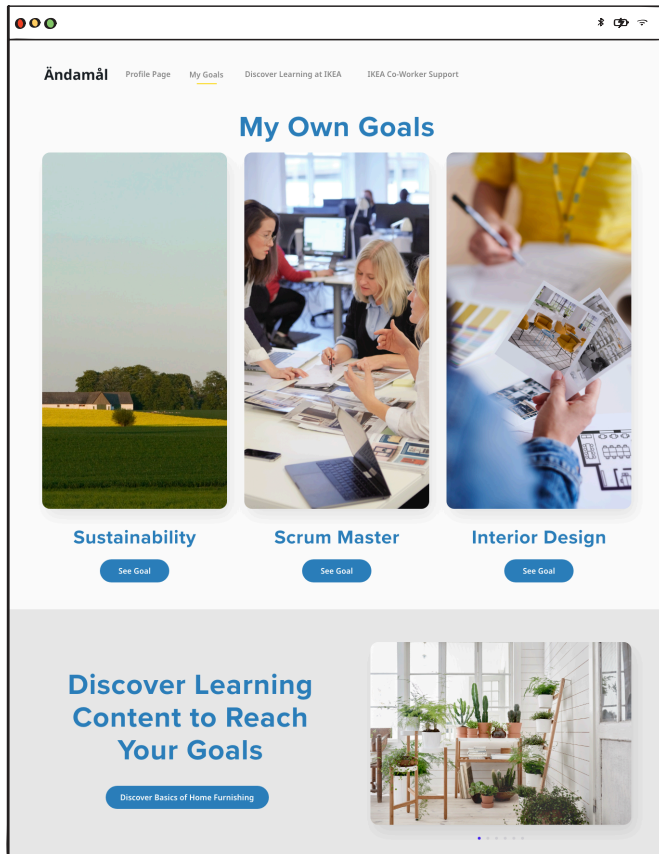


Figure 20: Ädamål Individual Goals Overview & Content Discovery Page

4. Co-workers see their individual goals and team goals in an overview page. The strong use of visuals helps co-workers to quickly see what their goals are. By linking co-workers to their team goals, it helps them (but also managers) to answer the question “Why am I doing this?”. They immediately see that other people are counting on them and that stimulates the feeling of purpose and motivation.

5. Co-workers have full control over their development path and are encouraged to come with ideas by their manager, which they then adapt together to the store’s context if necessary.

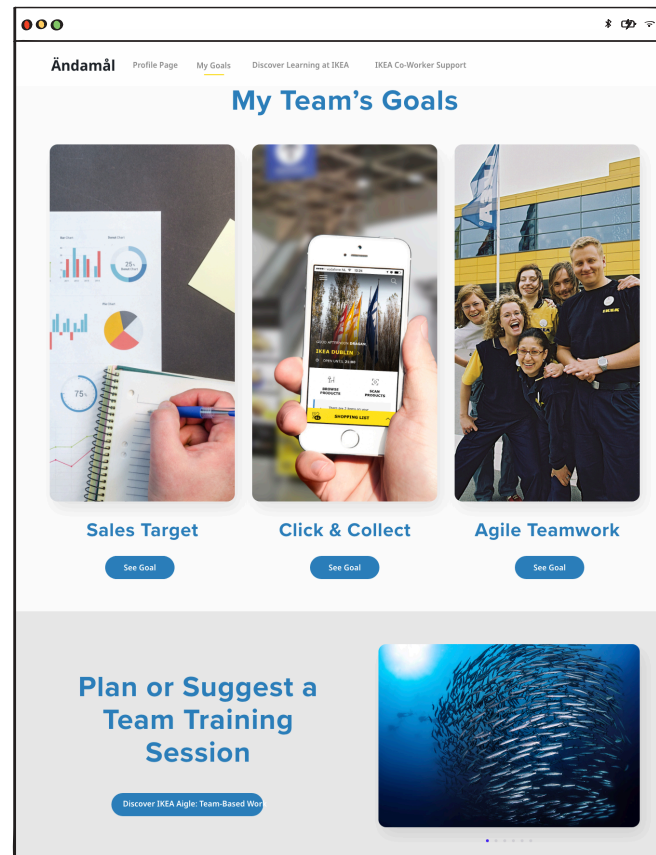
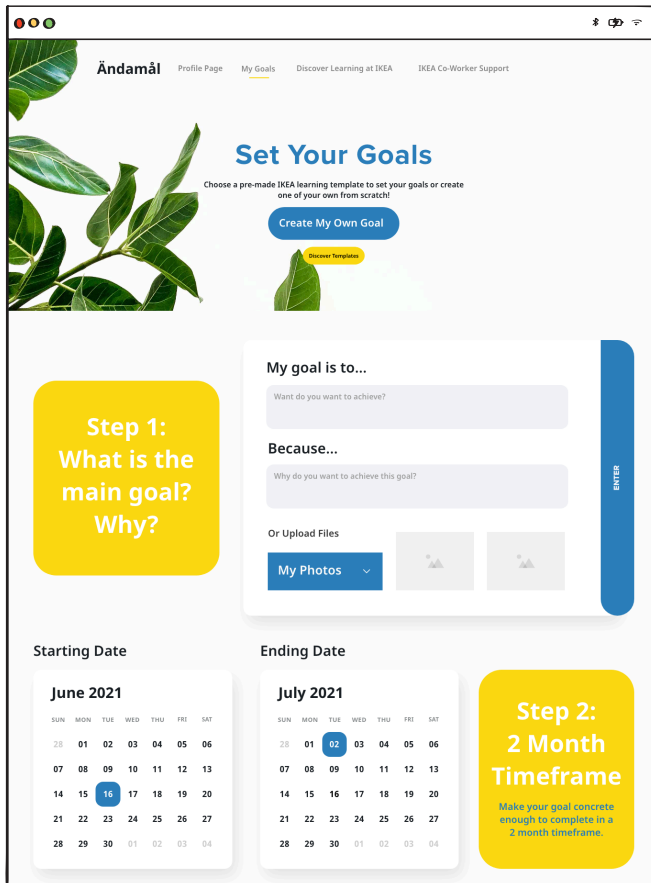


Figure 21: Ädamål Team Goals Overview & Training Discovery Page

Figure 22: Ändamål Goal Setting Feature Steps 1 & 2



6. These 5 steps aim to make the co-worker feel autonomous in their learning journey.

The first step ensures that the co-worker formulates their goal as simple and concrete as possible.

The second step is setting the two-month timeframe. This timeframe is to make goal achievable for the co-worker and doesn't become a neverending journey.

The third step is tagging the learning topics. Co-workers can tag any of the 44 IKEA Mandatories and the 8 IKEA Values that they deem relevant for their goal, along with other keywords tagged in the system.

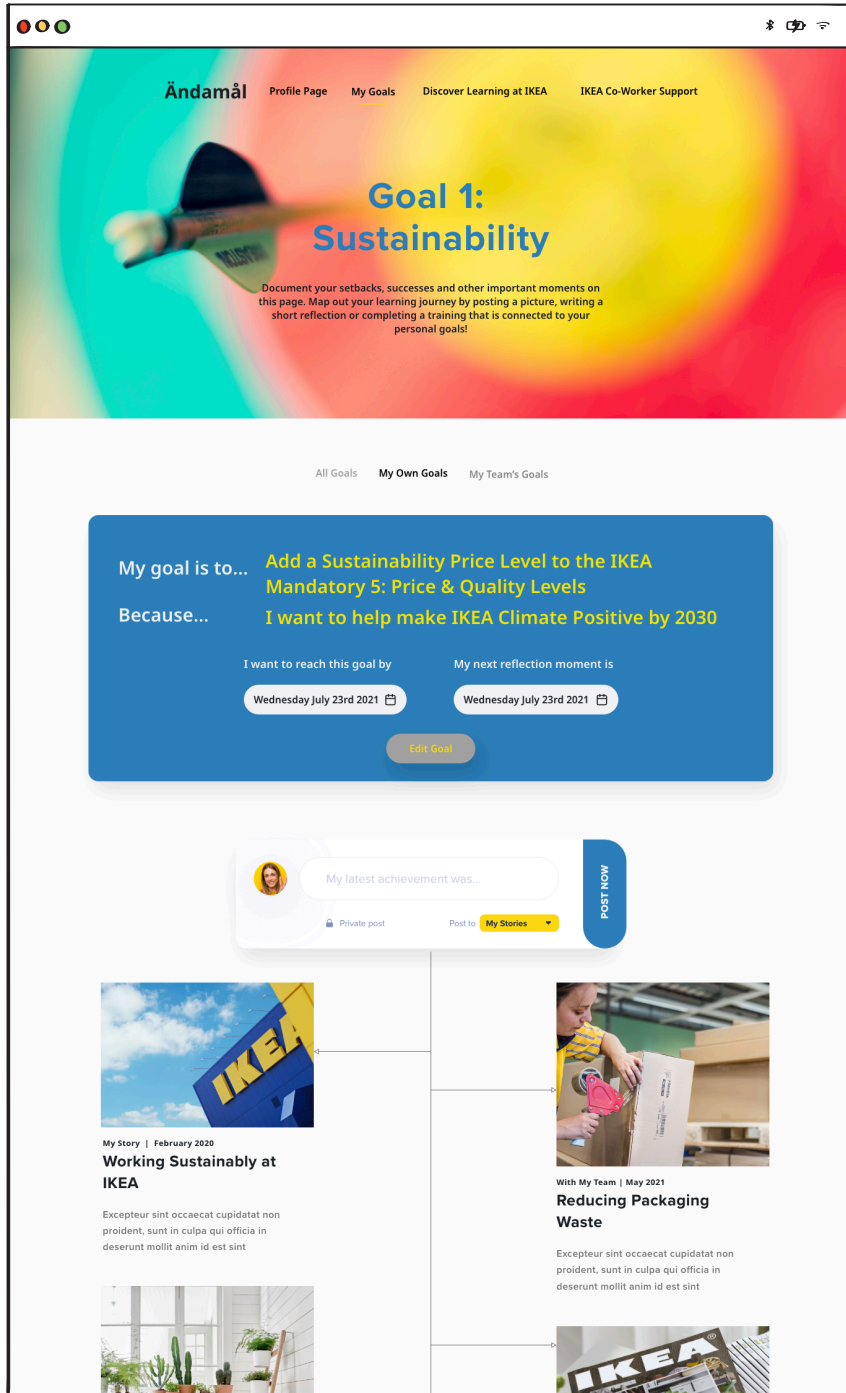
Step four is connecting the platform to the co-worker's digital device so that they receive notifications for reflection moments, learning reminders and other meetings.

The final step is to make the co-worker think about when they consider they've achieved their goal in a positive manner.

All steps can be done by typing in text, but also by uploading images or voice memos if that suits the co-worker's way of working better.

Figure 23: Ändamål Goal Setting Feature Steps 3, 4 & 5





7. *Ändamål* has a personal development timeline feature that aims to visualise co-workers' progress by offering them flexible documentation methods. This way they decide which moments are or were important for their learning journey.

For example, co-workers can upload a picture of a room they designed or post a short memo about a sale they made with a customer. They can do it immediately or a while after the event. As long as they know what that post represents, co-workers determine how they want to document it.

> Documenting wouldn't be mandatory but it would be highly encouraged because not only does it help co-workers in realizing their purpose, it also helps managers to keep track of their co-workers' progress which they can then use during 1:1 meetings or appraisal talks.

Figure 24: *Ändamål* Personal Development Timeline Feature

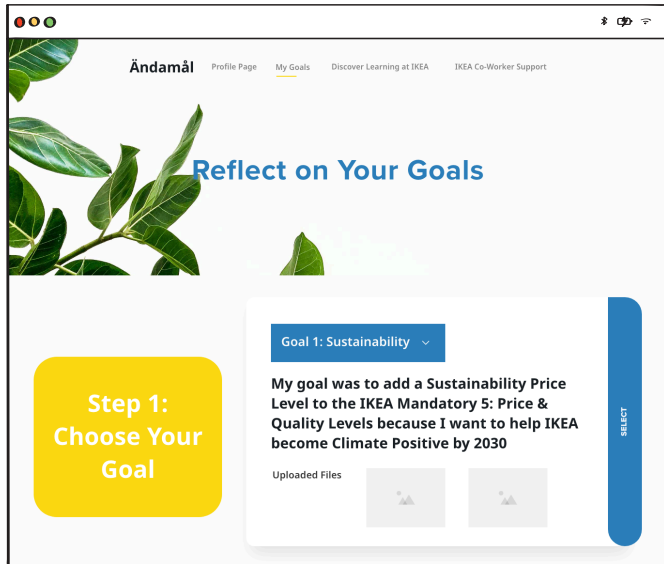


Figure 25: Ädamål Goal Reflection Feature Step 1

8. Completing the goal can be seen as the final mile of Ädamål's goal setting feature. Reflection is important to help co-workers realize their achievement and growth, and also presents a moment for CBF to gather feedback on the learning solutions that were done.

9. Co-workers experience the relevance of learning content first-hand by applying it to real situations in the IKEA store. Gathering this feedback will help CBF to tailor the IKEA Learning Offer to the store environment, thus improving the IKEA Concept with the expertise of co-workers.

10. Standing still by their achievement will make the co-worker feel purposeful and encouraged to continue developing their competences. But it also works as a catalyst for setting the next goal.

Figure 26: Ädamål Goal Reflection Feature Steps 2 & 3

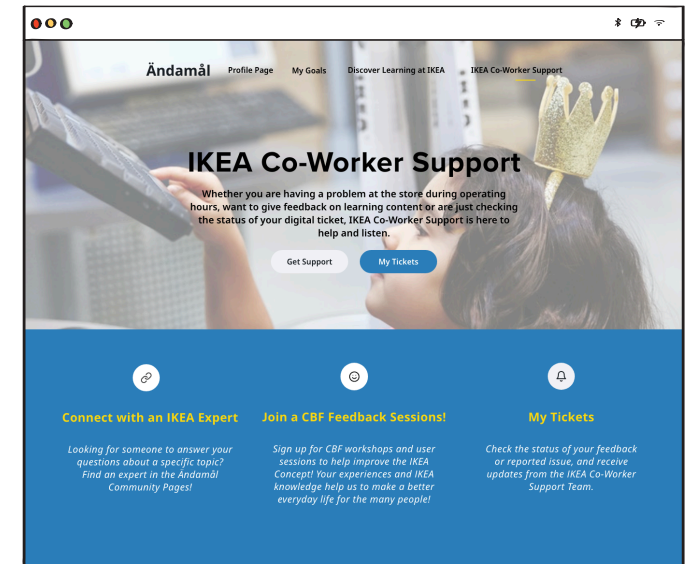


Figure 27: Ädamål IKEA Co-Worker Support Page

11. Gathering targeted feedback from IKEA co-workers and actively including them in the Learning Solution Development Process will ensure that CBF continues to improve the IKEA Concept in the best way possible: by listening to those who use it the most and apply it to real-life situations. This strengthens the relationship between CBF and IKEA co-workers.

> Feedback can be gathered in various ways e.g., in face-to-face workshops, online polls and forums.

> Co-workers can also receive advice from other IKEA co-workers who are considered 'experiential experts' in a certain department. Any co-worker can become an expert, usually they tend to give good feedback on a regular basis and that way become familiar to CBF.

12. Furthermore, co-workers will be motivated to keep on giving feedback to CBF when they see that their input is being appreciated by keeping them in the loop. Digital tickets and status updates on feedback ensure that co-workers feel valued and don't get frustrated by the lack of communication and acknowledgement by CBF.

4.3 Concept Evaluation

The final concept is evaluated based on the pillars and main bricks that create the blueprint structure of the metaphorical bridge in Figure 6.

The Three Pillars

1. Daniel Pink's Intrinsic Drivers for Motivation (Pink, 2009)

Ändamål incorporates all of Pink's intrinsic drivers for motivation. The *autonomy* that already exists at IKEA is increased by Ändamål through the tailored feed of ICL learning content that it offers. The personal development tools enable co-workers to document their learning goals and visualize their growth, which trigger their need for intellectual challenge, *mastery*. Finally, the feeling of *purpose* is created with Ändamål's digital communities that connect IKEA co-workers to each other, but also in how it facilitates active omni-channel feedback loops between CBF and co-workers, removing the feeling of frustration co-workers previously experienced due to the lack of appreciation by CBF.

2. Joseph Pine's Drivers for Experience Value: Time well spent & Time well invested (Pine, 2020)

Co-workers are encouraged to choose their development path at IKEA and by creating experiences that are especially personalized, Ändamål creates *time well spent*. The personal development tools that drive their need for intellectual challenges, makes co-workers scout out learning material from the IKEA Learning Offer thus creating *time well invested*.

3. Bi-directional Information Sharing via a Digital Infrastructure (Koenders et al., 2018)

Ändamål facilitates multiple bi-directional feedback channels. Co-workers can give extensive feedback in the forum-like community pages, the goal-reflection feature, and the co-worker support page where they can ask IKEA experts questions, receive status updates on their given input and take part in CBF testing sessions and workshops. Furthermore, with the social media-like interaction features of Ändamål, co-workers connect with each other in more instant ways such as liking, sharing, tagging, and commenting on posts.

The Main Bricks: CBF Insights

Insight 1: CBF wants to be more accommodating and foreseeing in terms of the IKEA co-worker learning needs and overall learning experience

This insight is incorporated by Ändamål's customization features that are already built into the platform and that users can indicate themselves. Offering a relevant selection of the learning offer is done with digital cookie settings, in Ändamål's back-end feedback is categorized by digital labels/tags and data analyses are performed. Based on these analyses, CBF can spot and predict learning trends and adjust the Learning Offer accordingly to satisfy co-workers' needs.

Insight 2: CBF wants to create more points of involvement and interaction with IKEA co-workers to get their feedback on the IKEA Learning Offer

Co-worker involvement is sought all throughout Ändamål: their feedback is asked after completing learning solutions, as well as in the digital community pages where input is gathered per theme or experience. Moreover, co-workers can sign up for CBF user testing sessions or be asked to join one if CBF moderators consider their feedback to be valuable and representative of the co-worker experience.

Insight 3: CBF wants to add more tangibility and guidance to the IKEA Learning Experience

The IKEA Commitments and Mandatories are, essentially, guidelines to implementing the IKEA Concept. By creating spaces for co-workers to share their interpretations and implementations of the IKEA Mandatories or other aspects of the IKEA Concept, Ändamål gives access to real-life examples that could make the IKEA Concept (and learning thereof) more tangible. Additionally, the IKEA Co-Worker Support page provides guidance with IKEA Experts who can be consulted by co-workers when they have questions related to, for example, a specific IKEA room or product.

The Main Bricks: Co-worker Insights

Insight 1: Co-workers want a relevant and personalized IKEA Learning Experience

Co-workers no longer have to struggle with finding the right learning solutions or contact person, as Ändamål uses various customization features to ensure content that is relevant to their goals, interests or activities is pushed to them. Moreover, by seeking out co-worker feedback Ändamål ensures that CBF is continuously receiving data that is representative of the co-workers' learning needs and actions.

Insight 2: Co-workers want to be more involved in CBF projects and be kept up to date on the status of their feedback/input

The feedback and reflection tools of Ändamål allow for co-workers to give their input on the IKEA Learning Offer to CBF and feel included in creating the IKEA Concept. Also, the IKEA Co-Worker Support page enables co-workers to sign up for CBF workshops, contact IKEA experts and stay updated on the feedback they may have given on learning solutions or other targeted feedback inquiries.

Insight 3: Co-workers' autonomy in their learning experience is strong and that should not change.

Ändamål provides IKEA co-workers the means to document and track their development goals to build further on the already existing feeling of autonomy at the workplace. The flexible documentation format lets learners decide how they want to document their progress, and doesn't obligate them to stick to a certain method or routine.

4.4 Limitations & Recommendations

This paragraph presents the final recommendations for the future of the concept idea Ändamål, as well as some of the limitations of the project. The first point of action would be to start prototyping and testing (elements of) the platform, particularly the goal-setting feature. Involving IKEA co-workers in this process but throughout the IKEA Learning Solution Development Process in general is another strong recommendation for CBF, especially considering their unique situation with the Delft store. Finally, some reflection upon the theoretical foundation used during this project presents some limitations and recommendations as well.

Test, Prototype, and Keep The Ball Rolling

The first and foremost recommendation for the future of Ändamål is to start testing out elements of the platform in an MVP manner (minimal viable product). Looking back at what one of the IKEA Delft Store Sales Managers mentioned during their interview, in retail and especially within IKEA stores, co-workers already work very agile and test out their assumptions and ideas for a better IKEA CX all the time. It's especially important to get co-worker feedback on the goal-setting feature of Ändamål. The underlying concept to give the co-worker a sense of autonomy and purpose, reflects a lot of the IKEA working culture that came forward in the interviews and other informal conversations with IKEA employees. However, it's plausible that adjustments are needed to make it fit better with the IKEA co-worker reality, for example finding out what the best number of steps to set or reflect on a goal are, what forms of documentation do or don't appeal to the IKEA co-worker, and how to categorize the feedback crowdsourced from co-workers. These are more specific details that can only be uncovered through testing with the end-users.

CBF: GO DOWNSTAIRS!

Another recommendation that should be implemented regardless of Ändamål, is the collaboration between CBF and the IKEA Delft Store. Based on the number of interviews conducted during this project it would be somewhat premature to immediately start a development process, but enough was said during those interviews with both CBF and IKEA Delft co-workers that should prompt CBF to take more initiative and involve co-workers in the Learning Solution Development Process. The 'living-arrangement' in Delft is so unique and it was startling to hear how little collaboration there is between the two "tenants". Not only are they both eager to work with each other, but they're both aware of the opportunities that are not being taken advantage of. It's become clear during this project that IKEA co-workers are IKEA Concept experts, and it's time CBF started consulting with them like it.

Time Well Saved & Time Wasted

The final recommendation that can be taken from this graduation project relates to a limitation of the implementation of the theoretical framework. Two of the experience value drivers presented by Joseph Pine (2020) were not considered during the design process. *Time Well Saved* and *Time Wasted* have a lot to do with implementing (automation) services that free up employee time and company resources that can then be spent on creating more experience value (for the IKEA co-worker but also for the IKEA customer). The overall impression of the IKEA Learning Experience based on the company interviews, was that for a company as renowned and successful as IKEA, the digital learning platform it currently has, is outdated and a hassle to use. The fact that co-workers are sometimes hesitant to use the MyLearning platform because of the time they'll lose trying to find relevant learning content, is a recipe for frustration and should be solvable for an organization like CBF.

Personal Reflection

In true Eleonor-fashion, I'm writing the personal reflection of my Master thesis the night before I have to hand it in. The past few months have been quite a whirlwind and (for the 1000th time) a learning journey for me, one that I anticipated but could not predict. This graduation project tested my skills and confidence as a designer and to stay true to the project, I'll try to reflect on it according to Daniel Pink's three intrinsic drivers of motivation:

Autonomy

Looking back at the very beginning of my graduation, I knew that my biggest challenge was going to be that I would be flying this project solo. Throughout my entire time at IDE I've always enjoyed the dynamics of a group of designers bouncing ideas off each other and the excitement that came from discussing and ideating together. So, my ability to self-direct was tremendously tested over the past months. Starting with the timing of the project: I've never been a good planner, or at least good at sticking to one and the two-sprint approach to this graduation that initially was to keep the momentum going and encourage swift decision making, was eventually let go because it brought me more stress than the feeling of autonomy. I am however extremely proud of how I've handled this project with its ups and downs: I truly surprised myself.

Mastery

You're doing something wrong if your Master thesis doesn't play into your need for intellectual challenge. This thesis' topic, though not necessarily difficult to understand, was very complex and took a lot of time, going back and forth for me to fully grasp it. Safe to say that this design process brought out my inner strategic design master. I can now say, after concluding the project, that I enjoyed the challenges it brought me as it taught me a lot about my abilities and drive as a designer.

Purpose

The bigger picture. This project definitely looked at the bigger picture in terms of future impact for the IKEA co-worker experience and IKEA Concept. For me personally, the bigger picture is still undefined, but it has become a bit clearer. I know that the field strategic design is where I'm supposed to be, as my time at CBF has shown me what kind of positive impact instructional design can have on people who want to thrive and develop themselves for the greater good. Luckily, I have many years ahead to figure out my exact place, so maybe ask about this in a few years.

All in all, I can say that I was very motivated during my graduation project. Sure, there were moments that felt like setbacks or things didn't go as I would have liked them to, but it's shown me that I can bounce back from these setbacks and carry on doing what I enjoy. It's been an absolute privilege to work on this assignment with CBF and I wouldn't have changed the experience in any way. For the future me, I would tell her to quit doubting and hesitating, and just do it. You learn by doing.



When you see it...

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Appendices

Literature Research

Appendix 1: Autonomy audit

Interview Guides

Appendix 2: Olga

Appendix 3: Ammi

Appendix 4: Therese

Appendix 5: Jose Lopez & Riccardo Idilli

Appendix 6: External Companies

Interview Findings Summaries

Appendix 7: CBF Co-workers

Appendix 8: Store Co-workers

Appendix 9: External companies

User stories & Clustering

Appendix 10: Miro Board user stories

Appendix 11: Miro board clustering

Collaborative sessions

Appendix 12: Miro boards set-up

Appendix 13: Results excel file

Individual session

Appendix 14: Scenario mapping list

Appendix 15: Scenario illustrator files

User feedback sessions

Appendix 16: Session 1

Appendix 17: Session 2