

# The employee initiative toolkit; An approach to increase the effectiveness of employee initiatives for new service development

Master thesis  
Strategic Product Design  
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*Image front page, Anna Deinek for @kit8 (See Chapter 10: References)*

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## The employee initiative toolkit

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# Executive summary

Companies understand the importance of employees' engagement in its innovation capability. The contact between employees and customers is a great way to spark new opportunities for ideas relevant for customers (Kelly & Storey, 2000), they have in-depth and highly context-dependent operational knowledge and have creative potential. They make an interesting often unused source for innovation potential. In the case a single employee or a small team or employees that are not assigned to the task are indeed the source of the generation and implementation of such new ideas, products and processes, it can be called employee-driven innovation (EDI). Many organisations therefore try to engage employees and facilitate employee-driven innovation to increase its innovation capability.

With the current global trend of servitization, which is the process to extend the customer relationship by bringing value also after a product purchase, companies will invest in the development of services.

When companies would like to increase their innovation capability through employee-driven innovation, employees will therefore likely be expected to create ideas for services in which they are often not educated or trained.

One of the challenges for a company in employee-driven innovation is to create and sustain a company culture and environment that generates the right conditions for this. Especially if this should be supportive of new service development, as services have intangible qualities that make it harder to test the actual value for the customer even with educated staff.

Hence, the first aim of this thesis is to understand the challenges and effective ways of organising employee-driven innovation for new service development. Through a literature review and participatory design sessions with employees from a service solution provider, I created an approach that displays what the managerial, organisational and employee roles can do to facilitate employee-driven innovation in three parallel steps.

In addition, TOPdesk, a ESM service solution provider, was also interested in increasing its innovation capability through employee-driven innovation. They captured their interest in a company objective that aims to create profit from a new market, coming from employee initiatives. I found that TOPdesk employees need guidance and support

in their employee initiatives, to enable them to create and develop new service ideas. Therefore, the second part of this thesis is about creating a design toolkit that fulfills these needs and an implementation design roadmap in order to facilitate employee-driven innovation at TOPdesk.

The employee initiative toolkit is a structured approach that guides and enables employees with new service ideas to effectively explore its value with the goal to convince the management team it should become a new service for TOPdesk. Through covering idea selection criteria, aspects of a business plan and pitch canvas, employees are able to do this. The purpose of this toolkit is to increase the effectiveness of employee initiatives for new services and therefore contribute to implementing employee-driven innovation for new service development and reaching their company objective to increase its innovation capability.

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# Chapter 1

## Project context and approach

# 1. Project context and approach

## 1.1 Project context

### Increasing a company's innovation potential through employee-driven innovation

There is not a day the word 'innovation' does not come by in the media or during conversations at work and this happens for a reason. Stimulating innovation in an organisation has shown to create a big impact increasing business performance by being able to react quickly to changes and creating competitive advantages. Known ways of trying to implement innovation into an organisation is by investing in an R&D department or creating innovation teams (Høyrup, 2010). However, these departments or teams can only work on so many ideas or initiatives at the same time and chances are that none of these ideas make it to success. However, by empowering the whole organisation to innovate and create ideas and implementing innovative thinking, the amount of ideas will increase generously and consequently increase the chance that one of them will be successful (Mehta, 2019).

This way of empowering the employees throughout the whole organisation, where ideas only initiate from a few employees, can also be called employee-driven innovation (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010).

This way employee-driven innovation sounds like a great way to increase innovation in the company, but it is not easy to organise employee-driven innovation. Pisano (2019) said in Harvard Business review "despite the fact that innovative cultures are desirable and that most leaders claim to understand what they entail, they are hard to create and sustain". There are important considerations to make for it to be successful, for example creating a tolerance for failure, a willingness to experiment involving high discipline and creating an environment of feeling safe to do all this, while keeping space for constructive feedback (Pisano, 2019).

Employee-driven innovation can be an important strategy in order to improve the exploitation of a company's innovation potential (Aasen et al., 2012), but to be successful there are many considerations to make in order for it to be successful. In this thesis, I am going to explore how companies can organise employee-driven innovation

to increase the company's innovation potential.

### Company collaboration with TOPdesk

This idea of increasing a company's innovation potential was also interesting to TOPdesk. For this thesis, I collaborated with TOPdesk to explore employee-driven innovation and find out how this can be part of their organisation.

TOPdesk is an Enterprise Service Management (ESM) solutions provider. The company itself currently has over 750 employees in 15 branches worldwide. Their software helps other companies achieve a higher internal efficiency and as a result help them deliver better service to their customers (B2B). The software enables this by letting the different supporting departments of a company (e.g. HR, Finance and facility management) work together better while being more efficient. It allows for an improved and streamlined productivity of inboxes and to-do lists, causing more control and overview of activities. The software also includes a knowledge centered system that displays frequently asked questions, enabling more people to find solutions themselves (efficiency).

### Enterprise service management

The goal of ESM is to create a more pleasant work environment, a higher productivity of the departments, reducing costs and possibly its competitive position ("What is ESM?", 2019). In return, it improves value, increased agility, better customer engagement and sustainable business performance ("Enterprise Service Management: Unlocking the Value of Global Business Services", 2017).

### Finding my graduation assignment

However, when I came to TOPdesk to discuss my graduation topic, it was not clear that it would involve employee-driven innovation yet. We started the discussion with my interest in improving the internal operations of a company for increased company performance and the value of culture in this topic. TOPdesk saw opportunity in this combination, but we could not find alignment with the company's strategy or decide on

an assignment until their annual meeting. During this annual meeting they presented a new company objective, which asked for a different way of organising the way employees work with the goal to increase innovation in the company. After exploring literature, and talking to managers and employees at TOPdesk, we came to the conclusion that employee-driven innovation is an interesting opportunity to explore in my graduation thesis.

In 2018, TOPdesk set the company objective: create a profit of 'X' million in 2023 from non-ESM sources. This means that TOPdesk would like to make profit in other ways than they do now, preferably with services that compete in another market. With non-ESM sources, the company refers to the services that cannot be put under the definition of Enterprise Service Management. With this newly introduced company objective, the management of TOPdesk uses a top-down approach to implement a product growth strategy, called the **diversification strategy** from the Ansoff matrix (Fahy & Dobber, 2012), like shown in figure 1. This means that TOPdesk wants to use new or products for a new market, and is also the most challenging product growth strategy of all four.

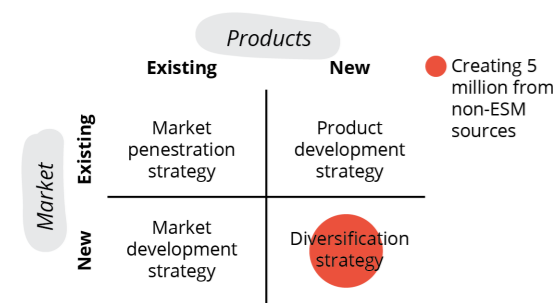


Figure 1. showing how TOPdesk applies a diversification strategy with their new company objective, rather than choosing another product growth strategy.

### Employee initiatives for employee-driven innovation

The management also communicated that they want to achieve this goal through employee initiatives, meaning that they motivate all employees to be involved in innovation and should come with new ideas for a new market. Although it is a top-down push for innovation, they ask for a bottom-up interpretation to come with these new ideas. In a conversation with the managing director, he confirms this by saying: "... Get better together, it is not just from the side of the management, it should also come from down. Maybe even more, because the employees are TOPdesk eventually."

The bottom-up approach suggests a form of employee-driven innovation, where the

innovations are originated by a few employees that are not specifically assigned to the task (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010).

Since TOPdesk is a service solutions provider, the management mainly expects ideas for new services for employees. As a result, the goal for TOPdesk is to improve their new service development but through some kind of employee-driven approach.

In summary, TOPdesk provided a top-down push for innovation at TOPdesk with company objective, but would like to see an bottom-up solution to fulfill the company objective.

## 1.2 Design problem

The aim to create profit from creating new services in a new market through employee initiatives comes with two problems in this company. First, the undefined market makes it difficult for employees to create ideas in the right direction.

Second, it is unclear for employees how they should fulfill these employee initiatives, where to start and what the management expects of them in the work environment to reach this goal.

The managing director sees potential in employee initiative, because they are part of the culture already, but he thinks the effectiveness of initiatives should improve: "Sometimes a lot of initiatives are taken, but a lot of time gets lost. Effectiveness is then also important." (Sander). Lots of time is wasted in unorganised initiatives or lessons learned get lost, as they are also valuable.)

### Unclear market direction

Entering a new market and investing in new opportunities while being successful is dependent on determining a product or service and market direction, choosing a strategic objective, and creating a competitive strategy (Fahy & Dobber, 2012).

One of these conditions, in the case of TOPdesk, is not fulfilled. Management purposely did not communicate a market direction, since they want employees to have the freedom and choice to explore and determine the market themselves and allow them freedom and creativity for the solution. Despite the freedom, it also creates a lack of focus, which can make it difficult for employees to create new ideas. The balance between freedom and constraints is complex, but when done right can stimulate creativity (Caniëls & Rietzschel, 2015). By being aware of the external environment,

it can be used to validate whether there is a market for this idea, and evaluate future validity (Fahy & Dobber, 2012). Having a market direction is also said to be a prerequisite for creating new services.

And just like Høyrup (2010) indicated, employees are now finding it challenging to get started in that process, and need support, recognition and organised activities to fulfill this aim.

### Managing expectations of employees

Lastly, a competitive strategy is the way to approach a new market, compared to your current services (Fahy & Jobber, 2012). First of all, there is no organised process for TOPdesk employees to support or guide them in the employee initiative process to approach a new market. Employees do not know where and how to start, either in structure or guidelines. So, although there might be ideas in the organisation, they get lost.

The missing process creates barriers that hold employees from even approaching the employee initiative process. Employees were immediately wondering how they are expected to be involved when they do not get extra time to do this. Besides this barrier, assumingly others barriers hold them from even considering to initiate.

*"With the current way of working and level of performance, these goals will not be reached in 5 years. Something needs to change." - CFO.*

In this case, increasing the boundaries or constraints of the company objective is a way to take this unclarity away and can be a way to even stimulate creativity. It can help the initiatives to be perceived as a challenge and reduce task complexity, resulting in employees finding a creative new way of working around obstacles. In this situation, it can even spark creativity (Caniëls & Rietzschel, 2015). There should come a solution with a balance between freedom and structure to achieve successful product or service innovation (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997).

## 1.3 Design assignment

The design assignment consists of two parts. First, I will create an approach on how TOPdesk can organise employee initiatives for new service development.

In this approach, it should become clear what TOPdesk can do to further implement initiatives as part of the company's culture with the goal them reach their company objective through employee initiatives. To achieve this, it is first important to create an

understanding of what is already known of employee initiatives and how this can be added to new service development.

The first part of the design assignment is therefore creating an approach for TOPdesk that answers the question:

**What does TOPdesk need to organise to increase employee initiatives for new service development?**

The second part of the assignment is about creating a bottom-up solution into a design that guides, supports and enables employees in the process of employee initiatives for TOPdesk.

The shape of this approach will be the final deliverable of this thesis and includes a toolkit and a roadmap. These will consequently serve the enablement of employees to create new services through employee initiatives for new service development and advise TOPdesk on what to do to contribute to the implementation of the toolkit.

## 1.4 Design approach

This section explains the methodologies that are used during this thesis to fulfill the design assignment.

### Double diamond approach

During this thesis, I have followed a double diamond approach (Council, D., 2005), like shown in figure 2.

The process is divided in four phases called Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver and help me fulfill the design assignment as follows.

#### Discover

During this phase, I explore the project context of this thesis. By doing literature review on employee-driven innovation and new service development an understanding is created on how organisations can organise employee initiatives for new service development (chapter 2). With interviews, participatory sessions with employees, I explain how I will explore the context of TOPdesk and its relation to my findings in the literature review (chapter 3).



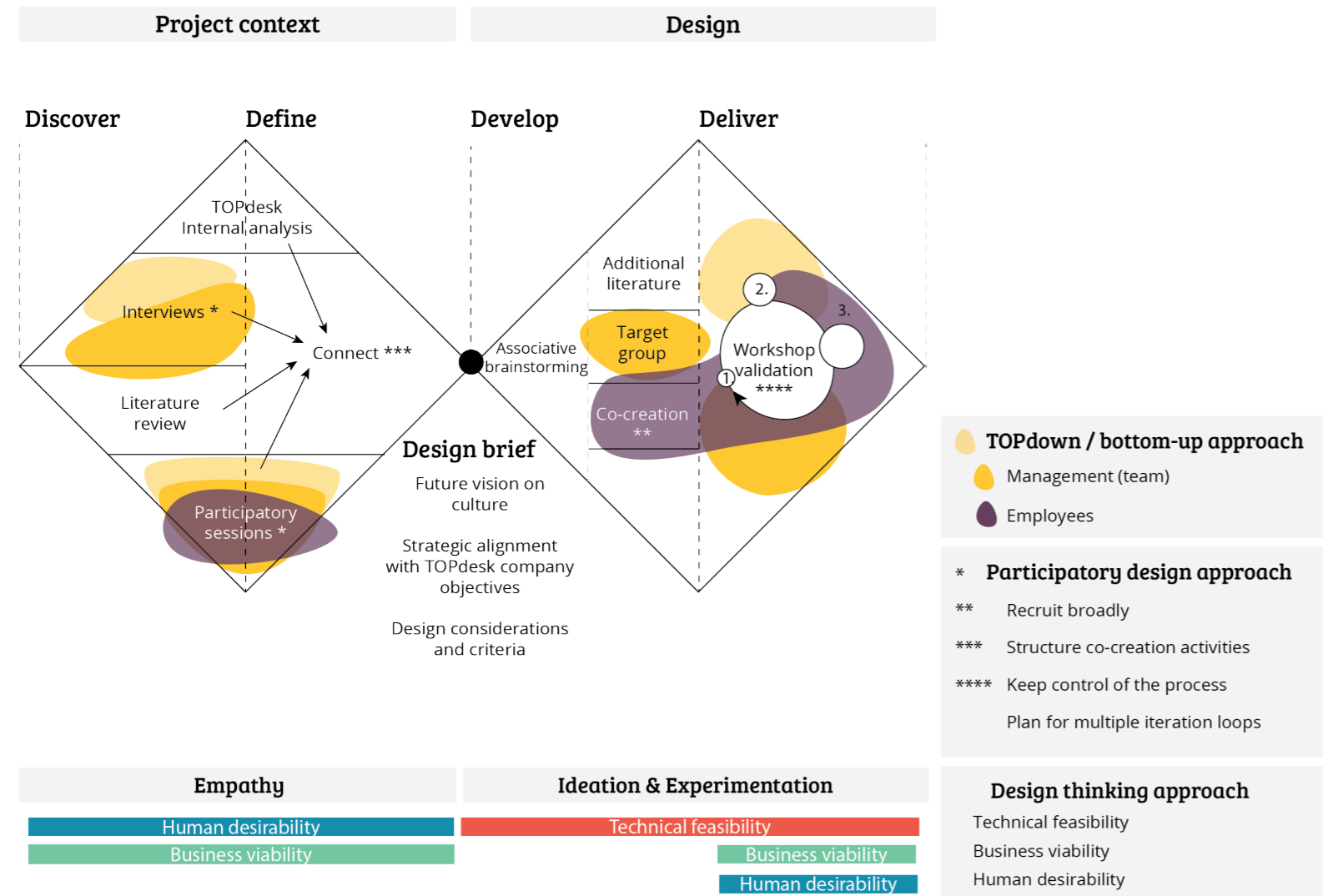


Figure 2. How Design Thinking and Participatory Design are applied on this graduation project.

### Define

During this phase, I used the insights from the design research and created an approach for TOPdesk that explains how it should organise employee initiatives for new service development (chapter 4), and answers the assignment:

What does TOPdesk need to organise to increase employee initiatives for new service development?

This phase ends with the design goal of the final design: the toolkit, and describes its design requirements based on the insights of the design research results (chapter 4.5).

### Develop

The 'Develop' phase focuses on the concept development of the final design of this thesis (chapter 5): the design toolkit. It starts with more research needed to fulfill the design requirements and is followed by the first concept and ends with a first iteration on the final concept.

### Deliver

The phase 'Deliver' focuses on the final design of this thesis: the employee initiative toolkit. The final deliverables include a design toolkit and a design roadmap. The employee initiative toolkit answers the second part of the assignment and is a design that guides, supports and enables employees in the process of employee initiatives for TOPdesk. The design roadmap describes the recommendations for (international) implementation.

otherwise.

- » Structure co-creation activities, by making sure to define deliverables of specific performance outcomes, that can translate the creative efforts of the participants into actionable and potentially measurable outcomes. This helps the stakeholders to trust the process and strategic designer.
- » Keep control of the process. It is important to balance co-creative moments with independent decision-making and to assign responsibility for independent decision-making to the most appropriate stakeholder for the task.
- » Plan for multiple iteration loops. Try to get as much user feedback on possible solutions as soon and often as possible.

## Participatory design

Next to the double diamond approach, the participatory design approach is used. Participatory design (PD), is a research and design method which actively involves the participation of users and stakeholders, who do not need to be trained in design (thinking) (Sanders & Stappers, 2008).

Applying this method, it empowers users and stakeholders in making their own decisions during the design process (Spinuzzi, 2005). The designer becomes more of a facilitator than a decision maker and results in decisions supported by the user. In this thesis, it should prevent misconceptions about the guidance and support that is needed in employee initiatives among other things.

For the design process, it meant that the following principles (based on Spinuzzi (2005)) are followed:

- » Recruit broadly, meaning to involve a variety of stakeholders, possibly internal and external, to spark insights because of connections that are usually not made

# Chapter 2

## Literature review

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Employee-driven innovation

Companies are looking for ways to increase their innovation capability in new ways. Employees seem to be an interesting source of innovation inside the organisation, because employees have in-depth and highly context-dependent operational knowledge, have creative potential, are with larger numbers compared to managers, and have relevant networks outside the organization (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010).

In addition, when talking about the impact of employee-driven innovation, radical innovations are often not user-driven in contrast to incremental innovations; rather, they are employee-driven." (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010). Employee-driven innovation can be the source of both incremental or radical innovation (Høyrup, 2010). When market success is a goal, employee-driven innovations can be a way to success.

Furthermore, innovation does not always have to come from a determined R&D department or from interaction with users (user-driven innovation) or based on a new technology (Høyrup, 2010). Employee-driven innovation can be a way to do increase a company' innovation capability.

#### Definition

According to Kesting & Parm Ulhøi (2010), employee-driven innovation (EDI) refers to the generation and implementation of significant new ideas, products, and processes originating from a single employee or the

joint efforts of two or more employees who are not assigned to this task.

It therefore suggests that the implementation of EDI suggests that innovative activities should be part of the everyday working responsibilities (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010).

Høyrup (2010) says that employee-driven innovation is usually a bottom-up process, but it needs to be supported, recognized and organized in company. This is also this thesis' assignment, as TOPdesk aims for innovation from a bottom-up approach. And just like

Høyrup (2010) indicated, employees are now finding it challenging to get started in that process, and need support, recognition and organised activities to fulfil this aim.

However, employees at TOPdesk are asked to come up with ideas with new services in a similar or new market.

### 2.2 New Service Development

New service development is the end-to-end process of developing and launching a new service to be sold to customers (Spacey, 2017). It is even said that companies that are most successful in launching new services use some kind of organised new service development and prevent it from being ad hoc (de Jong & Vermeulen, 2003). However, not all companies tend to do this, because it can include longer development times and increased costs (de Jong & Vermeulen, 2003). Also, the risk of failing in NSD project and service introduction can mean a loss of resources and a negative impact on the brand image as well as the missed opportunity for the development of another service (Kelly & Storey, 2000).

Next to the loss of it is quite hard to design a successful new service. The inherent characteristics of services, intangible and perishable (Dolfsma, 2004), it becomes easier to imitate or replicate by other companies, where intellectual property rights can not always protect copying (Dolfsma, 2004). It is also important to involve expert opinion on similar services you are designing as, the quality of a service is subjective and different to everyone. That is why it is recommended to involve external parties in the NSD process that help determine the quality of the new service (Dolfsma, W., 2004). When a brand has a 'good' or established reputation this might not be necessary (Dolfsma, W., 2004) .

Despite these challenges, an NSD process can help to make a service unique and it is therefore important to organise this well.

## New service development process

A general new service development process can contribute to this success. Although a process like displayed in table 1 looks linear in practice, the process is often more organic.

## Discussion

Although employee-driven innovation is based on the creation of ideas from employees, and NSD is based on the creation of ideas through a process, I think both approaches can comprehend each other. In the next section, I will research how they should be organised in combination.

• New Product/Service Strategy	Where does the firm want to/need to be in the longer term?
• Idea Generation	Generating full fledged ideas within the firm that fit the strategy
• Screening & Evaluation	Do the ideas have merit - preliminary market, technology assessment
• Business Analysis	Financial & business assessment
• Development	Developing projects from ideas
• Testing	Putting the product, the delivery system as well as the marketing of the product to a controlled test
• Commercialization	Full commercialization; feedback

Table 1. Showing the new service development model by Dolfma (2004)

## 2.3 Drivers and barriers for organising employee-driven innovation for new service development

To get an understanding of the challenges that organisations face, I identified several

drivers and barriers that a company should take into account when wanting to organise employee-driven innovation.

## Drivers

### Create a climate for creativity and continuous innovation.

A rather large driver is the corporate culture and climate of an organisation. The structure of an organisation and innovation activities are important, but the 'ordinary' employees should first be valued as a source for innovation and seen as partners whose opinion is respected (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010) . It should be prevented that they are seen as a challenge of management's power and consequently suppressing innovative talents.

Next to this, it is important to have a culture where failure can be seen as steps towards success, rather than where mistakes can be used as material for misuse later. Lowering the power distance between management and employees will drive employee initiatives.

However, in order to know for companies to know whether employee-driven innovation is something they should choose to integrate, it is important to know if the cultural characteristics are right for it. Aasen et al. (2012) (table 2) describe what cultural characteristics a company should have before employee-driven innovation can become a success. Companies can use this basis to evaluate whether employee-driven innovation has potential as a source to increase innovation capability, based on these values. Underlying cultural characteristics are however difficult to change. So, if a company is looking into the opportunity of integrating employee-driven innovation and many cultural characteristics do not match, they might need to reconsider.

The physical environment also plays a part in a climate for creativity which organisations can influence. It can influence creative behaviour, because of how it enables the need for engagement and disengagement in the creative process (Groves & Marlow, 2016), which is why the physical environment should not be forgotten.

In order to increase the creation of services specifically, managers can stimulate employees to have regular contact with suppliers, customers or e.g. go to conferences or workshops. Also, external contact can be a way for employees to find opportunities or gain customer feedback, which can also cause the creation of ideas (Kelly & Storey, 2000).

To improve the continuous stream of ideas, organisations should create ways to generate new ideas (de Jong & Vermeulen, 2003) and provide a strategic focus, vision, training and education, internal organisation (including task rotation) and investments in Information technology to strengthen the environment of the initiation of new

services (Kelly & Storey, 2000).

Cultural characteristic	Description
Commitment	High commitment towards innovation among employees
Cooperative orientation	Basic assumption that there is 'agreement to cooperate' between management and employees
Pride	Pride in working for this particular enterprise
Trust	Enterprises characterized by trustful relationships
Tolerance	Assumption that 'diversity is valuable', and that errors must be tolerated
Feeling of security	Feeling that 'thinking aloud is permitted' and that suggested improvements will be followed up by education, training, or opportunities of new job situations
Development orientation	Employees see improvement and innovation as an <i>integral</i> part of their jobs
Openness	Openness in communication, internally and externally
Autonomy	Employees have a high degree of influence in relation to the execution of various tasks

Table 2. The nine cultural characteristics that organisations should in order for employee-driven innovation to work, based on Aasen et al. (2012).

### Clear company vision

Another driver for setting up employee-driven innovation is having a clear vision. Independent on the motivation of employee-driven innovation, a vision can help employees directly describe why their proposal can be considered valuable by creating alignment management expectations (Voxted, 2018). A common vision can cause a spark among employees to create new solutions for the same vision.

### Management support

Management support is an important driver for employees' initiatives, because offering a new proposal can suggest a certain improvement needed for the current organizational routines. This can be perceived as a critical note to the organization. The managerial support will help to soften the critical note, suggesting openness for employees' ideas (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010). Desouza et al. (2009) reinforces this by saying that managers should recognize, encourage and support employees to explore new ideas, which also means to help find people and resources to enable these processes. However, there are more roles for management. They should also

be clear about how ideas are evaluated and selected in the innovation process and closely observe how the experimentation process can be optimized. Next to the internal organisation responsibility, managers should also pay attention to key customers to keep an eye on the changing market that might influence the selection for ideas.

(Voxted, 2018) adds besides defining idea selection criteria, the continuation of support after getting permission is also important. Next to managers displaying trust in employees, he/she can also directly contribute in the process bringing the from idea to implementation. If employees lose trust in management in the innovation process, when e.g. expectations between both parties went wrong, it could negatively influence the current and future collaboration between both parties. The consequence could be a decreased number of new proposals in general, which should be prevented.

### Idea selection criteria

To help managers decide which ideas to support and in which to invest, it can help to set criteria for ideas. This set of criteria can be called an idea screening framework. Next to helping managers, having an idea screening framework can help the 'innovators' to develop their idea according to these criteria. This increases the chance of support and getting investment for further development. For such an idea screening framework to work for both employees in this case and managers or decision makers, it should give enough structure for decision makers to make an informed decision, but give enough flexibility and space for interpretation for employees to match their creative ideas (Ciriello, Richter & Schwabe, 2016).

Strategic	Purpose		Value Proposition	
	Risk of Adopting		Risk of Rejecting	
Tactical	Scope	Type	Stage	
	Communication Strategy			
Operational	Resources		Participant Roles	

Table 3. Showing the dimensions in the idea screening framework by Ciriello, Richter & Schwabe (2016)

Table 3 shows what Ciriello, Richter & Schwabe (2016) proposes to be in the idea selection framework.

Kesting & Parm Ulhøi (2010) describes that a framework can be improved by including current company activities (competing projects), insights of the general company strategy, targets and future plans and knowledge of the company environment (e.g.

markets, technological developments and regulations), just like incorporating new service project characteristics will do as well (Johnson, 2000). Project characteristics should take into account market attractiveness, effective NSD management, service newness to the firm, product synergy, formal and detailed development process and the ability to receive feedback during process on new service idea.

### Provide time and resources

Time and resources are important in the development of NSD processes. The time is needed for the actual development of the idea. Also, when employees are assigned to a project and get dedicated time, it goes much faster than without the assignment, because there is no responsibility of taking time from other daily responsibilities (Kelly & Storey, 2000). For the development of the idea itself, money is needed, and particularly in service development this might be an issue, since it is harder for financial departments to invest money in a service without tangible assets (Kelly & Storey, 2000).

Putting effort in creating an idea selection framework with additional context-based information can be a way to create an idea screening framework for a company.

### Incentives

It was said that incentives play a key role in motivating employees to develop ideas and participate in employee initiatives (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010). It is therefore beneficial to have incentive rewards in the organisation. It is although difficult to reward employee initiatives, because when do you reward? Only when there is success or when there is initiative already, since success might not happen, despite important lessons learned. Incentives also have a negative consequence, when employees use it to neglect their core duties and drown management in useless initiatives (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010). This should therefore be prevented.

### Information sharing platform

Also, platforms for inspiration and information sharing will help employees in idea generation. When an idea is created, strategized and ready for development, the next step is implementation. What is important during the implementation of (incremental) innovations on the work floor is the transfer of ideas or proposals between each level. A company conference, on future goals, an example of direct employee influence, may create ideas relevant for processes, groups or departments or tasks, but need to make a transfer from company level to group/department level. The idea needs a follow-up for actual implementation or will otherwise be wasted (Tonnessen, 2005). The implementations are often done by employees on an operational level, who often have in-depth and highly context-dependent knowledge that managers do not possess

(Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010).

During the process it might happen that ideas get lost in the process, for example because employees do not have the time to work on it anymore. To prevent this from happening, some sort of transmission and absorptive mechanism could help (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010), although it was described that it is not clear how these can be designed yet.

A specification of the frame of management decisions is a driver for employees to contribute, although the balance between a broad and narrow window is important. A narrow window will limit the number of employees able to contribute, while the broader window will question the relevance to the company. (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010) Knowledge sharing has a significant effect on employees' innovation capability which in turn can boost overall organizational innovation capabilities (Ologbo, Md Nor & Okyere-Kwakye, 2015).

Voxted (2018) supports this by saying that there is a need for documentation in spreading employee-driven innovation. (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010) says that ideas come from interactions between people, and should thus get the time and resources to develop ideas. Also, platforms for inspiration and information sharing will help employees in idea generation.

### Formalised development process

Edvarsson et al. (2013) found that adopting a new service development strategy was a factor with a large effect on new service development performance. This strategy should fit the business context of existing services (/and or products) including value in use in the customer's context, the internal resources and the capabilities in the service system and the image and overall business strategy of the firm. Besides, the available delivery systems for existing services should fit with the firm's other resources and offerings (Edvarsson et al. 2013). Where the creation of new services is based on idea during an employee's daily responsibilities, a new service strategy is valuable. Perhaps this could be of value for employee initiatives.

This can include a product champion can play an important role in the implementation phase of a NSD, because he/she helps getting the idea further into the organisation, by e.g. finding the right resources for the project (Kelly & Storey, 2000) .

Organising a pre-launch test, before the actual launch can also help in gaining customer feedback and improving the idea once more before the actual launch, improving the chance of launch success. Some companies consciously do not do this, when e.g. a

service is similar to a competitor and has proven its product qualities.

Market research is important to understand the customer needs and preferences to be able to design services that actually have value. When the market launch comes, the organisation should also be ready for market response, by e.g. having a sufficient customer service department (Kelly & Storey, 2000).

### Working in multifunctional teams

Working with multifunctional teams benefits the NSD process as well. The knowledge of different backgrounds can increase the problem-solving ability during the process (Edvarsson et al. 2013) . A representation of the involved departments can help with this. It is also important to have the required resources and expertise for this service (Edvarsson et al. 2013).

### Integrated development teams

Integrated development teams are also a factor for new service development success. This is a team that is assigned and has the responsibility for a development project is assigned from multiple functional areas, with individuals representing a diverse set of skills (Edvarsson et al. 2013). It helps to improve communication and the ability to view an opportunity or a challenge from several different perspectives (Edvarsson et al. 2013 and bring a variety of resources and knowledge to the development project (Edvarsson et al. 2013). However, this does not fit the definition of employee initiatives, as employees creating new service ideas are not dedicated full time to a service development project. Integrated development teams can however become relevant if the development of a new service becomes too complicated to be solved by an employee team. Then an integrated development team should be assigned to the task.

### Customer co-creation

Another important factor to the success of a new service is how well the new service addresses customer needs and creates value in use as perceived by customers (Edvarsson et al. 2013). The quality of a service is subjective and different to everyone, so that is why it is recommended to involve external parties in the NSD process that help determine the quality of the new service (Dolfsma, W., 2004). Customer co-creation is therefore also a contributing factor, because it is a way to collect knowledge about the customer (Edvarsson et al. 2013). It often includes a strategy for how to interact with the customer during different stages of the development process (Edvarsson et al. 2013). When a brand has a 'good' or established reputation inviting external parties to test the perception of new services, might not always be necessary (Dolfsma, W., 2004).

## Barriers

### Misperception of actual complexity of NSD

Managers can underestimate the role of having a NSD strategy. It challenging to also align NSD projects with internal resources and capabilities, while at the same time focusing on value creation with the new service (Edvarsson et al. 2013). Managers often have a wrong image of their responsibility and performance in managing NSD, and their knowledge on creating and using customer knowledge (Edvarsson et al. 2013).

### Lack of internal skills

Kelly & Storey (2000) describes that the lack of internal skills in service organisations is one of the main barriers for innovation. To change this, internal skills can be either developed through training or experience or gained through by actively hiring people with the necessary skills.

### Lack of resources

The lack of resources is also a common barrier in NSD, which creates the risk of not being able to invest enough in one project, making it set to fail. This goes together with the idea that resources are spread out too much over different projects (Kelly & Storey, 2000). Kelly & Storey (2000) therefore advises organisations to only invest in projects when there are enough resources available.

### Writing and documentation

An interesting finding from Voxted (2018) was that the documentation of ideas and having a way to communicate with management in a way that connects with management presenting their idea to the management created a feeling of pride for employees. On the opposite, it is possible that the thought of documentation and writing, because of their skills, can hold employees from documenting it in the first place. Helping employees to document their ideas can stimulate initiatives.

### Slow increase in number of initiatives

Despite the fact that employee-driven innovation is based on the idea that all employees get opportunity to contribute, not all employees will indeed do so (Voxted, 2018). Differences in intrinsic motivation will cause this difference. Organisations should consider that this difference will be there and thus not expect employees to contribute immediately. It might take a while before this becomes part of daily activities. This increase will also depend on other drivers as well.

## 2.4 Discussion

Based on the literature review, I have discussed the topics employee-driven innovation and new service development and found a list of drivers and barriers that companies should consider when an organisation would like to consider taking an employee-driven approach for new service development.

However, these insights are general and not applied to a specific context. In the assignment, I describe how I would like to create an approach for TOPdesk. That is why in the next chapter, I will research how these drivers and barriers apply to the TOPdesk context and how I can create recommendations for TOPdesk to organise employee initiatives for new service development.

## 3. Design research approach

The goal of this design research chapter aims to answer the first part of the assignment: How to create an approach to increase employee initiatives for new service development.

### 3.1 Exploring the drivers and barriers in the design context

First, I want to create a better understanding of what drivers and barriers employees experience in the employee initiative process for new service development at TOPdesk.

To understand how employees would like to see the organisation for employee initiatives for new service development, I organised a participatory session. It is a good way to understand how employees would solve this challenge directly and collect new insights that might differ in other contexts like TOPdesk, that I described in the literature review ("Participatory Design in Practice | UX Magazine", 2017) (table 4). Based on the insights, I will be able to create an approach specifically for TOPdesk.

In this chapter I explain how I aim to do this.

Method	Goal
Participatory session with employees	Explore drivers and barriers in the employee initiative process for new service development in the TOPdesk context

Table 4. Showing the method to explore drivers and barriers in the employee initiative process

### Set-up of participatory session

I organised three participatory sessions each taking 2 hours. During these sessions, employees ideated for solutions that would enable themselves to create new service ideas through employee initiatives by answering the question (Buijs & Meer, 2013): "How to let employees create ideas that are only successful and are linked to the 3rd organizational goal?". This question was framed this way to explore drivers and barriers that arise from ideation to concept development all the way to working towards the launch of a new service. The ideas that came out of this session were direct input for identifying drivers of employee initiatives for new service development. Secondly, through a method called, inverted brainstorm (Tassoul, 2009), employees created examples that would prevent idea development from happening, resulting in potential barriers.

	Employees with job title
Session 1	Service designer Product manager Finance specialist PreSales ICT professional
Session 2	HR advisor HR advisor Facility coordinator PreSales
Session 3	Project Coordinator Presales Intern Facility Management HR Advisor

Table 5. Describes the participant selection for creative sessions with employees.

# Chapter 3

## Design research approach

This method was used to understand barriers that prevent employees from reaching successful initiatives.

### Selection of participants

With employee-driven innovation it is the goal to get all employees motivated to work on initiatives, so to create a solution that all employees understand, it is important to get different disciplines involved to hear their opinions (Tassoul, 2009). For the participatory session, I selected participants from different functions in the organisation (table 5).

### Data analysis

The ideas describing solutions for employee initiatives from the three sessions; I took all together and clustered into themes. These themes represent similar steps that are needed for them to create new service ideas and are directly used as drivers or barriers in the process. These were compared with the literature review to understand if these were new drivers and barriers. The participants did not cluster the ideas during their session, as they needed time to continue with inverted brainstorming, I did that later.

After inverted brainstorming the participants clustered their ideas (Image 1 & Image 2) based on similarities to create an overview. They each selected three ideas, using ‘hits and dots’ (Buijs & Meer, 2013), based on what they thought are the ideas that would hold them back the most from creating new service ideas. From these few selected ideas, each group created and presented one concept that is their worst situation to create new service ideas. Each of these barriers they used in their concepts were the based for finding new barriers in this context. These barriers were also compared with literature to understand if there are others specific for this context.

## 3.2 Exploring the context of TOPdesk for toolkit design requirements

Based on the literature review, employee-driven innovation for new service development needs management support and the organisation of innovation activities. So different methods were used to understand the management perspective, and organisational perspective on these points (Table 6).

Also, the company culture should be ready and supportive of employee initiatives, regardless of which part in the process one is designing for. This means the company culture of TOPdesk is also analysed on readiness for employee-driven innovation. To get a better understanding of what the target group actually needs most in this process and target a specific problem, the target group is interviewed as well.



Image 1. Participants are selecting barriers for them in creating new service ideas.



Image 2. Another group of participants who is deciding on the biggest barriers in creating new service ideas.

Perspective	Employees with job title	Goal
Company	Company desk research	Determine elements in the culture of TOPdesk contribute or should be improved to match an employee-driven innovation culture for new service development for a recommendation
Employee	Interview with employee for new service idea	Determine the most important struggles in the process between idea and support from management.
Company & management	Interview with employees involved in organisational changes and culture management	Determine how TOPdesk has dealt with organisational changes before to understand considerations for implementation

Table 6. Describing the methods that were used to get an understanding of the company context.

### Interview with employee with new service idea

#### Goal

The goal of this interview is to find out what problems employees experience at TOPdesk in the employee initiative process from the moment of idea to support from the management. This helped to decide what specific problems tackle the design of this thesis.

Also I was curious to know whether employees know what is expected of them in the process to get permission already, because possibly alignment between management and employees was needed.

#### Set-up

In an open-ended interview of one hour, I tried to find the answers to these points. I chose to do an open-ended interview, because I needed explicit knowledge from employees on these questions, and it allowed me to ask further on obstacles in the process if I needed to.

I started with describing the context of this thesis, explaining why I invited the interviewee again and the overall goal of the interview. I asked the following questions as a structure:

- » What are obstacles/barriers in the process between idea and having a sponsor from the management?
- » What is the level of detail of the concept when presenting it to the management?
- » What did you do to get this far into the process?
- » How did you find the criteria expected by the management?
- » What are factors in the employee initiative process that demotivate you?

#### Selection participants

It was difficult to find employees with new service ideas. After posting a request on the information sharing platforms, asking around with colleagues and sending emails to people personally, I could only find one person. Luckily this person responded and wanted to participate. No other suggestions for employees with new service ideas could be found at the time either. This demonstrated the need for support around employee initiatives again.

#### Analysis

The interview was audio-recorded and I transcribed the parts that answered the questions described above. Based on his responses, I tried to find specific obstacles that employees with new service ideas struggle with at TOPdesk.

### Company culture research

In order to design an employee initiative approach for TOPdesk, it is important to understand whether its company culture has the right values to support this and what is recommended for TOPdesk to increase the success for employee initiatives. These recommendations directly contribute to the viability of this thesis.

#### Set up

Based on what Aasen et al. (2012) (Table 7)described as nine cultural characteristics that make companies successfully aligned with principles of Employee-driven innovation, I did desk research to understand to what level the culture of TOPdesk is aligned with these characteristics and what should be considered as a recommendation.

### Selection information

These cultural characteristics are searched for through going through the annual report of TOPdesk of both 2017 and 2018 to get an image of the company and how they work. Next this I analysed their 'culture report 2018' that describes what cultural values they hold with explanations.

Besides reading about how TOPdesk presents their culture, I also complement information with my personal experiences at TOPdesk. The understanding of a culture goes further than just the report, so with this information I tried to create a clearer picture.

Cultural characteristic	Description
Commitment	High commitment towards innovation among employees
Cooperative orientation	Basic assumption that there is 'agreement to cooperate' between management and employees
Pride	Pride in working for this particular enterprise
Trust	Enterprises characterized by trustful relationships
Tolerance	Assumption that 'diversity is valuable', and that errors must be tolerated
Feeling of security	Feeling that 'thinking aloud is permitted' and that suggested improvements will be followed up by education, training, or opportunities of new job situations
Development orientation	Employees see improvement and innovation as an <i>integral</i> part of their jobs
Openness	Openness in communication, internally and externally
Autonomy	Employees have a high degree of influence in relation to the execution of various tasks

Table 7. These nine cultural characteristics that employee-driven organisations have Aasen et al. (2012), are used to compare the current situation at TOPdesk.

### Analysis

Based on what I found during the desk research, I compared the nine cultural characteristics based on principles of employee-driven innovation (Aasen et al.,2012) with cultural characteristics of TOPdesk and compared them with examples. Based on the comparison, I can also create recommendations of where TOPdesk can improve their culture to organise employee initiatives.



# Chapter 4

## Design research results

## 4. Design research results

In this chapter, I will explain the design research results. First, I will explain what context-specific information I found in comparison to the drivers or barriers in organising employee initiatives for new service development (4.1), compared to my literature research (chapter 2).

Second, I evaluate TOPdesk on its readiness to organise employee initiatives and create recommendations in order to do so (chapter 4.1), based on previous insights.

Third, I use all the precious insights and create an approach for TOPdesk that answers the question: “What does TOPdesk need to organise to increase employee initiatives for new service development?” by explaining this through

At the end of the chapter, I discuss and evaluate the approach (chapter 4.3) and make design requirements for the final design of this thesis (chapter 4.5).

### 4.1 Comparing drivers and barriers in the context of TOPdesk

To show you how I explored the drivers and barriers in the employee initiatives for new service development in the TOPdesk context, I made a comparison between the drivers that I found in the literature review and if and how they are in the TOPdesk context. In appendix B, you can find the full image of how TOPdesk employees mentioned them during the participatory sessions. In appendix C, there is full comparison with drivers and barriers in employee initiatives in tables.

I will describe the most interesting insights and how they create the base for the approach for employee initiative for new service development.

#### Evaluation drivers

I found that many important drivers found in the literature review were also important to employees. The drivers that they mentioned that were very similar to literature were

a clear communication vision and/or market direction, management support, idea screening criteria, organising innovation activities for idea generation, the availability of time and resources and incentives for employee initiatives. The similarity indicates that these drivers are indeed found important for the organisation of organising employee initiatives for NSD. These drivers should be emphasized as basic conditions for the approach for organising employee initiatives.

Drivers that they did not mention were a platform for inspiration and information sharing, and a formalised or organised NSD process, and customer co-creation.

A driver that employees did not mention was a platform for inspiration and information sharing. Employees only mentioned ideas that spark creativity offline, like organising brainstorming. Despite this, such a platform can really benefit employees, because it could even be an important connection where information on e.g. company vision, management support, idea screening criteria and organised innovation activities could be collected. I cannot say this was not mentioned, but it should at least become aware for employees and thus be included in the framework.

Employees also did not mention formalised or organised NSD processes to help them. When looking at the innovation process Desouza et al. (2009) describes, employees only speak of the separate elements for idea generation and idea screening. Like ‘brainstorms’ and ‘success criteria’. They did not mention other stages in the innovation process, like business analysis, development, testing or commercialization. I think the focus on the first stages in the innovation process might indicate that there might be a higher need in their organisation for this at the moment. It might also be hard for them to imagine what would help them later in the process, when they are not in that process now.

I also know from experience that in their company culture that they prefer freedom and responsibility over formalised procedures, so the lack of a procedure for development might be a reason for the absence of this as well. Since they do not prefer to ‘formalize’ processes and keep their freedom to do things how they think is best, I need to find a balance between giving structure for support and allowing some freedom in the way they should organise employee initiatives.

I would have expected them to talk about customer co-creation, which they did not.

Especially since the case company, TOPdesk, itself uses this method for product development through their innovation platform. I will suggest actively using customer co-creation in the approach for organisation employee initiatives during idea generation, and later in the NSD strategy.

Employees did mention a product champion or something related multiple times (shown in image 3). They would really like the idea that someone or a team would be responsible for organising innovation activities or provide guidance in reaching the company objective. Despite the lack of definition for what reason they would like a product champion exactly, I will make a recommendation for a product champion to help employees through the process.

## Evaluation barriers

The barrier that I both found in the literature review and from employees, was the lack of expertise / internal skills. It was interesting that employees proposed many different solutions for this as well, mostly focusing on sparking creativity. This might indicate that there is a lack of expertise of this now at TOPdesk, but it could also suggest that they perceive skills for creativity as what is holding them back now. I will use this insight to advise this in the approach.

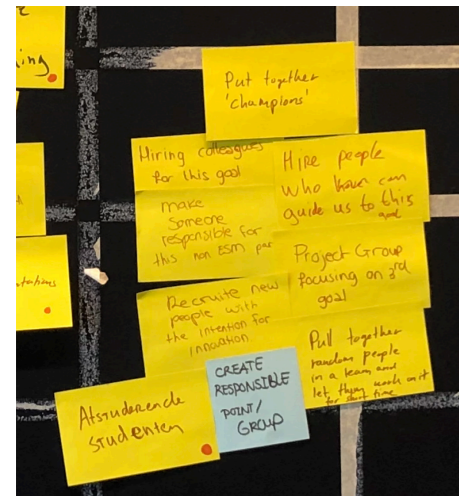


Image 3. Showing how a 'product champion' reoccurs in the participatory design sessions.

There were also many examples of how employees described barriers that were actually described like the absence of drivers. I therefore do not count as new barriers. This was the case for 'terrible leadership skills', 'no company vision and direction' and the 'implementation of strict rules'. These are consecutively the negative versions of

'management support', 'vision and market direction' and 'freedom and autonomy', which I did not further use as different from drivers. Next to this, employees also identified barriers that actually describe different versions of how the culture of creativity can be discouraged. They called these barriers 'a bad physical work environment', 'discouragement from colleagues on ideas', 'limited communication', and 'a strong hierarchy'. As these do not refer to something new, these are further not used as barriers either.

A barrier that was not named by employees was 'Writing and documentation'. It's hard to say why they did not mention this. I think it would have to do more with the lack of experience in NSD initiatives and not experiencing this problem now, than they do not experience this as a barrier. The 'slow increase of initiatives' is probably not mentioned by employees, because it is not directly related to their individual experience in an initiative. The impact is clearer from a management perspective, although the low frequency of initiatives might negatively influence the mindset around pursuing initiatives.

Employees also did not mention misperception of complexity in NSD. This is often a barrier for managers, not so much for employees, as they should influence the success factors for NSD which is often underestimated, so I leave this barrier as it is. This should therefore be a focus point for managers only.

## Discussion

It was interesting to see that employees mentioned a large number of drivers and barriers that I found in the literature review as well. These were a clear communication vision and/or market direction, management support, idea screening criteria, organising innovation activities for idea generation, the availability of time and resources and incentives for employee initiatives of the drivers, and lack of expertise / internal skills from the barriers. This shows that employees are quite aware of these drivers and barriers and I suggest that these drivers and barriers are the strong base that organisations should start with organising for employee initiatives for NSD.

However, employees were not able to mention all the drivers and barriers that I identified in the literature review. Some of missing drivers or barriers are probably related to some tasks being the responsibility of the organisation and managers of these and does not directly impact employees. Employees might not be aware of these options, so I recommend making it the role of the management to create awareness about these options and to make sure they can benefit the employee initiative process.

Next to the role of employees and management, there is the need for certain organisational activities, resources and people that directly support employees in their

*"People should be able to feel like they are allowed to make mistakes. And not just to make mistakes, but to give them freedom to take interesting initiatives, because they feel it can bring value."*

- Managing director TOPdesk Delft.

process, which suggests that there is another; the one of the organisation. These roles should come back in the approach for organising employee initiatives for new service development.

## 4.2 Is TOPdesk ready for employee initiatives for new service development?

In this section, I describe how I evaluate TOPdesk on its readiness to organise employee initiatives and create recommendations in order to do so based on previous insights. These insights will later become the base for the approach for TOPdesk.

### Evaluate cultural characteristics

Based on nine cultural characteristics distinctive for companies that are successfully aligned with principles of EDI, TOPdesk shows a high promise that their culture is supporting their aim for employee initiatives. I found that 7 out of 9 characteristics back in the TOPdesk culture, which I display in table 8.

TOPdesk does really well on **Trust and autonomy**. First of all, the values come back in their core company values: 'Trust, Freedom and Responsibility' (TOPdesk, 2017).

Besides that they have these values, they show their trust in you by motivating a new employee to talk about their own ideas from the first day you arrive, despite knowing the risk of failure there.

Besides being able to speak freely about ideas, I also heard multiple times about employees taking the option to switch jobs internally, because they prefer something else. Also they created roles in the organisation that help with your development or issues outside your project manager, so that employees can speak openly without affecting the content of their work, enabling a **feeling of security**.

TOPdesk employees do show **pride** towards TOPdesk. They manage this by first hiring employees to fit the company and by searching for employees that have affinity to the company in the first place. Also, employees are not afraid to present their company to others, because of the growing number of employees coming from hiring new employees from mouth-to-mouth advertisements. Also, employees use and wear TOPdesk merchandise outside the office; not being afraid to show where they work.

**Openness to communication** comes back in different ways. First, being 'open' is one of the characteristics that TOPdesk is looking for in employees, so they hire people on this quality (TOPdesk, 2017). To guarantee the openness throughout the organisation, they recently moved to a building with less walls, to make more and open communication possible. Lastly, they are also quite open to the outside world, as they share their through different social media and invite other companies to experience their way of working.

Although their openness to communication rates high, the level to which employees can easily approach management could use improvement (**cooperative orientation**). Employees have some doubts if management is always available for their ideas. Also

*“Setting up a new project (initiative) is challenging. You have to arrange everything yourself, from asking for a budget, making a (business) plan, collecting a team and all other resources needed.”*

- CFO

management indicated that they would like to see better approachability towards them, like shown in the quotes below.

*“People should be able to feel like they are allowed to make mistakes, not just to make mistakes, but to give them freedom to take interesting initiatives, because they feel it can bring value.” - Managing director TOPdesk Delft.*

*“Just taking the step to do it, we just go to the branch manager. I know these people and they know me. But if you just start here, then that step might be too big.” - (ICT professional, employee with new service idea)*

Despite that the cooperation between manager and employees should improve, it is clearly communicated and part of the organisation that employees have the freedom to take initiatives and make mistakes. This directly shows the overall tolerance for errors already present in the organisation and should continue to be guaranteed.

On the other hand, TOPdesk should improve on ‘the high commitment of employees towards innovation. Employees do recognize the need for the organisation to innovate, and do innovate inside their job, but not outside their job, as the CFO and a product owner explain below. One reason for this is the lack of clear connection between their daily job and NSD. This probably has to do with lack of guidance and support in innovation in their daily job. Ideas that might arise likely get lost because of it. Also, there is no dedicated time or resources for employees to work on NSD initiatives, so it becomes hard to work on it in the first place and is not part of their daily job.

*“Many people do not feel connected to the goal of creating revenue outside the non-ESM market” - CFO*

*“Innovation and new ideas are appreciated, but outside ESM seems outside our ‘sweetspot’.” - Product owner*

Although employees experiment and take initiatives in their job, the lack of new market definition or future vision is not yet accomplished, which makes experimentation for NSD difficult and not part of their job. So, the development orientation should improve and be integrated in their daily job for NSD development, otherwise this will become

difficult.

Cultural characteristics For employee-driven innovation	TOPdesk cultural characteristics for EDI	Ready? Yes/No/Somewhat
Commitment	Engagement (culture report), but not oriented towards NSD.	?
Cooperative orientation	Engagement (culture report) - Interview with Sander	✓
Pride	Proud	✓
Trust	Trust	✓
Tolerance	Meaningful work	✓
Feeling of security	Freedom to experiment and make mistakes	✓
Development orientation	Experimenting and initiatives in their job, but not really NSD oriented	?
Openness	Open and honest (culture report)	✓
Autonomy	Freedom, Responsibility	✓

Table 8. Showing how TOPdesk rates on cultural characteristics for employee-driven innovation (Aasen et al., 2012).

*“We should get more guidance on experimenting and being more innovative.” - Product manager*

*“No one, says that you cannot spend a day on it, but there is a piece of loyalty and trust towards your other colleagues.” - ICT professional*

*“Setting up a new project (initiative) is challenging. You have to arrange everything yourself, from asking for a budget, making a (business) plan, collecting a team and all other resources needed.” - CFO*

### Discussion

Based on the evaluation of the cultural characteristics, I saw that TOPdesk already includes 7 out of 9. This is a good start on which the other steps can be built. However, it appeared that the characteristics of ‘commitment to innovation’ and ‘development orientation’ towards new service development were not fully integrated in employees’ daily jobs. Since I consider these cultural characteristics the base for organising employee initiatives for NSD, these values should come back in the approach and the toolkit. I also recommend increasing the open and cooperative communication between management and employees. I think in this case the management could communicate more openly about their willingness to hear about new service ideas and to collaborate, which should come back in the toolkit. This way the toolkit becomes the first embodiment of these values. These values will come back in the approach (chapter 3.5) design requirements for the final toolkit (Chapter 3.7).

## Evaluate company readiness for organising employee initiatives

Next to needing the right cultural characteristics in a company, the management, employees and the organisation have important roles to fulfill in the process of the employee initiative process to make employee initiatives a success. Based on various interviews, I describe what TOPdesk currently does to organise the different tasks for employee initiatives for new service development.

### Creating a culture of creativity

One of the points that TOPdesk could improve in is the **lack of organised time and resources** for employees that want to be involved in employee initiatives. Although there is the inherent freedom to experiment in your work, there is little freedom to do this outside your responsibility. This shows through how employees experience this by feeling the responsibility towards their colleagues to not burden them with more work.

The interview with a product manager confirmed this by saying: “I think a lot of people think they can experiment, but that a lot of people get stopped, because of their daily work.”. Also the CFO confirms that there is no dedicated time or resources for this by saying: “TOPdesk does not really have budgets or time or something like that, for this, which on the one hand is nice, because you can create time for someone, on the other hand it is unclear, because what does this space then mean?”. However, this quote also includes something important which is the potential for time and resources. Also, they do want employees to experiment, but apparently, the management does not make this clear enough to employees. This might create the barrier for employees to invest time in initiatives.

*“People should be able to feel like they are allowed to make mistakes, not just to make mistakes, but to give them freedom to take interesting initiatives, because they feel it can bring value. Effectiveness should stay a little.” - Managing director.*

The consequence is that employee initiatives do not perceive employee initiatives as part of their daily work responsibilities. The **absence of concrete incentives** for

*“Setting up a new project (initiative) is challenging. You have to arrange everything yourself, from asking for a budget, making a (business) plan, collecting a team and all other resources needed.”*

- CFO

employees could also contribute to feeling less motivated and involved. Even in the situation that employees want to spend time on ideating for new service ideas, there are **little organised activities in the organisation** that employees can join that directly contribute to the idea generation for new service ideas. This makes it harder, because they are only dependent on themselves. What also makes it challenging for employees is that the management team expects new ideas for a new market direction from bottom-up, without examples or boundaries. It creates a doubt with employees whether an initiative worth investing time in, like experienced by the ICT professional (quote).

*“I am not going to work on it, if there is a chance that it can be denied, because that would be a shame.” Then my own time gets lost. I think others think the same about this.*  
- ICT professional

On a positive note, TOPdesk already uses **front-line employees (from sales, consultancy and support) and customer co-creation on their innovation platform to improve their current service**. Also, I know that there are days where employees can experience each other's work. These are however not used for new service development for a new market yet, which causes unused potential.

Without going into details for the physical work environment, TOPdesk did invest in this. There is an overall balance between rooms for open communication, closed meeting rooms, spaces for relaxation or disengagement and spaces for productivity, which creates a solid base for driving creativity (Groves & Marlow, 2016).

The online environment, however, is not ideal for sharing ideas. There is currently no public place on the **general information sharing platform** at TOPdesk, that supports employees in sharing their ideas, gaining feedback or finding information that are important in idea generation in an organised way. The platform also does not allow to find others with relevant knowledge on certain topics, or employees that might be interested to join an initiative. This way it is also hard for employees and managers to find and help each other, which is unfortunate: *“Because you also have lots of people without ideas, but have lots of knowledge on how to do something or contribute to it.”* (the ICT professional).

### Guidance and support for new service value exploration

The management team and middle managers should become more active in ‘being there’ for employees in this process. I did not find examples that mentioned if or how managers connect people to others, or are involved in creative behaviour yet. However, TOPdesk management is involved in the decision making process from idea to a project. The managing director even said that he would like to be more involved in the initiative process in the future.

Also, while searching on their information platform, there is **no place nor an overview where ideas for non-ESM are shared or discussed**. This might happen inside departments or teams, or are in people's minds, but there is no general awareness of progress happening. The ICT professional confirms this in the interview by saying: *“..that is a thing within TOPdesk. We are working on all kinds of things, in all sorts of stadiums.”* *“It is an idea from people that they already have for 10 years and never executed.”*

This creates a lack of awareness of what is happening, which also holds management from having overview and giving support early in the process.

There is also a **lack of general knowledge of idea selection criteria for new service ideas at TOPdesk**. From the interview with the ICT professional (employee with new service), it became clear that he was however aware of some guidelines, but only because of earlier experience with discussing an idea for the management. The lack of these criteria could also contribute to a confusion of expectations between the initiators of ideas and decision makers, like the CFO mentions: *“Expectations between different initiators of the project and people who are giving permission, are not always aligned or clear”*. The differences within the organisation itself on criteria could be a challenge too: *“The requirements are very different per department, I haven't experienced something asked like a business plan, inside ‘Development’, it is more approached like, what can I do with this this, is it feasible?”* (CFO).

The organisation also does **not provide general funnel tools** for the ‘average’ employee, although I assume that the product development department uses some. However, these are not available to the ‘average’ employee. I do know that TOPdesk provides workshops and uses design tools, like the customer journey map, which does indicate that the company could be open to integrating to tools suitable for employee

initiatives. However, TOPdesk is not a fan of formalised structures, because they put the freedom and trust in employees to present something that is well considered. However, the combination of the lack of guidance and too much freedom has shown to be a challenge for employees, like the product owner said: *“With the freedom quality, people sometimes get lost. We still miss some guidance here.”* (CFO). I think the balance between giving employees the freedom for creativity, but guiding them with boundaries will help them in their initiatives.

People do not know where to find people, the information sharing platform could play a role here. Employees. Nothing known of other ideas that are going around in the organisation. No idea of status of other projects that might be working on the same project.

### Transfer from initiative to NSD process

Currently I am not aware how management shares successes and failures. I did not really research on this, so this should be further researched. However, in order to make it beneficial for the organisation of employee initiatives, these successes and failures should be focused on initiatives and not keep a general note. I do know that the managing director does value learning: *“.. it is more that people who want to keep learning and growing are the most important element.”* I also know little about how management currently contributes to building project team. It might be beneficial to look at how the product development department at TOPdesk organises this and adapt their approach to employee initiatives. This needs further research. TOPdesk does however already work in multidisciplinary teams, because for different service sectors, they have teams for e.g. healthcare including different expertises like consultants, supporters and designers. This way of working will not be new for TOPdesk employees, making this way of working easier between other employees as well.

There is a need for employees to know about how their project will transfer to the next team. I am not aware of how the transfer from ideas to supported initiative projects go now, but the Agile method and scrum masters could make a great base for going through this transfer. Also there is a product development department, which probably would like to be involved in the transfer. It is important that both initiators and the

product development department find a way to transfer the value, ownership towards the product development department.

### Discussion

In this section, I evaluated what TOPdesk currently provides for the right guidance and support for employee initiatives for new service development. These provided insights in how TOPdesk differs from previously recommended activities for organising employee initiatives, and what should be specifically adapted to TOPdesk. In the next section, I describe how I used these insights into an approach for TOPdesk to organise employee initiatives for new service development.

## 4.3 An approach to organising employee initiatives for new service development

Based on the previous insights (chapter 4.1 & 4.2), I created an approach for TOPdesk that describes how TOPdesk should organise employee initiatives for new service development (Table 9).

The approach gives an overview of proposed steps that helps companies facilitate employee initiatives for new service development. It describes three main steps. The order of the steps is based on the idea process that employees go through from finding inspiration to idea generation to the development of the idea. Based on this order, the steps explain how different roles in the organisation can contribute to what employees need to generate ideas for new service development in their work environment. These roles include the (higher and middle) management, employees and the organisation itself (providing resources).

The order of the steps does not necessarily mean that a company cannot start with step 2 if step 1 is not complete yet. All three steps can be organised simultaneously. However, it can be expected that when step 1 is not sufficiently organised, the number of ideas that will be generated is limited. This means that there are little ideas to further explore in step 2. This is a balance that organisations need to find.

### Step 1. Create an environment for creativity

This step focuses on creating an environment that will support and enable employees to come with new service initiatives.

The first condition that organisations should fulfil is to have the cultural characteristics that enable innovation (Aasen et al., 2012). The first step is thus to assess and possibly revise the cultural characteristics of the organisation. This should not be mistaken as an easy task. Making changes in cultural characteristics will be a challenge, but without the right culture, employee-driven innovation will not thrive.

The higher management has an essential role in communicating the company vision and the NSD strategy. Both are needed to create a general direction for employees to put their efforts towards. Next to this, managers should display their support of initiatives by actively encouraging creative behaviour e.g. by being an example. They should also communicate incentives for taking initiatives and connect people with

similar ideas. To get employees engaged, it is important that employees understand that there are time and resources to find inspiration and experiment with it. The incentives make it clear that initiatives are expected and are part of their daily job. Employees will feel it is worth investing time and energy in.

It is the role of the organisation to facilitate a supportive physical environment, organise innovation activities and provide an information-sharing platform with relevant information to embody the culture of employee initiatives.

Lastly, employees should be encouraged and allowed to use customer co-creation, experience other people's jobs to find this inspiration themselves or as a supportive colleague. After the environment is supportive it becomes logical for employees to learn these creative skills and be involved in idea generation.

### Step 2. Guidance and support of idea exploration

Step 2 is focused on helping employees explore and develop their new service idea into a concept that can be discussed with management based on information and resources that the organisation and management should provide.

In order to do this, management should keep their idea selection criteria for new service ideas up to date and communicate it to the organisation to make employee's efforts in idea exploration more effective. The definition of management here are the ones responsible to make decisions about which idea will be further developed, which could be higher management or the department heads in charge of new service development. Second, management should be available for questions and support, as they usually have a good overview of internal expertise and resources and should be approachable for this information during this process, to help employees in their process already. They should also be involved in creative behaviour themselves to set the right example for other managers and employees. They will perceive this behaviour as inherent, which is beneficial for the general experimentation mindset of the company.

Thirdly, it is the management's role to be well informed on other projects to make a well-informed decision on whether an idea should go into further development.

The organisation should also provide resources to support employees in the initiative process. They should provide funnel tools and making product champions available. Product champions are people who play an important role in transferring the idea through the organisation because they e.g. find the right resources for the right projects. They are helpful in this step with the provision of information.

When employees explore their new service, it is recommended that they do this in multidisciplinary teams, while trying to share their ideas with people in the organisation.

By connecting with others through an information-sharing platform, it provides quick and easy ways to validate new service ideas.

### Step 3. Transfer from initiative to NSD process

When a new service idea is selected as a potentially viable service for the company, the initiative will become an NSD project. This means that the idea will now go through a more elaborate development process. From this point on there will be a change in the project composition because the project needs to be transferred onto a multifunctional team with more full-time responsibility. This is needed, because often only a limited number of employees want and can take this new responsibility, next to the probability that new expertise is needed in the team, e.g. new developers and marketeers. By transferring the 'new service idea' towards a team with the needed expertise, there is an increased chance that the project will not get lost in translation and is transferred to a team with the right skills and time for further new service development.

It is the role of management to keep an overview of these projects. Product champions will help management to be informed of the status of different projects. Next to this, the role of management is also to keep informing the organisation of successes and failures to reinforce the innovative mindset and take the learned lessons from earlier initiatives into motivation for future initiatives (step 1).

The product champion will help to make the transfer of the 'new service idea' to a new project team, find a budget for the project and watch over the ownership of the NSD project.

The organisation can support this process of transfer by making communicating general tips and information on the information-sharing platform.

For employees, this is an interesting moment because they can decide to join or leave a project. This is up to them and their managers to make the right decision.

At the end of this step, the new service idea has transformed into a project ready to go into new service development. It up to the company how this is organised, as this is outside the scope of this thesis.

## An approach to organising employee initiatives for new service development

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	New Service Development process
<b>Design scope</b>	<b>Create creative environment</b>	<b>Guidance and support of idea exploration</b>	<b>Transfer from initiative to NSD process</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Work environment that enables creativity for new service initiatives</b>	<b>Provide guidance and support for employees with new service ideas; from idea to project support</b>	<b>Provide guidance and support in transferring project to new service development process</b>	
<b>Management role</b>	Inform, support and encourage employee initiatives for NSD	Actively inform and support to get project support	Support project and NSD process	
decision making role	Share company vision (in NSD) Communicate incentives Communicate creative behaviour Communicate NSD strategy	Engage in creative behaviour Decide on projects to invest in Keep idea selection criteria up-to-date	Invest in project Learn and share successes and failures Share new service vision Kickstart NSD process	
executive role	Communicate incentives Connect people with time and people	Connect people with time and ideas	Build project team Kickstart NSD process	
<b>Employee process</b>	Integrate employee initiatives in daily job	Explore new service idea, fulfill idea screening criteria & get project support	Transfer initiative from idea to NSD project	
with new service idea	Involve front-line employees Customer co-creation Experience colleague's jobs Learn creativity skills Idea generation First idea	Create multifunctional teams Explore idea selection criteria Create project proposal Gain internal feedback Management pitch	Transfer / join project Multidisciplinary team Involve in customer co-creation	
without new service idea	Open discussions with colleagues	Share expertise, join team, support colleagues		
<b>Organising time and resources</b>	Organise work environment for creativity	Organise and support employee initiatives	Provide guidance and support through organisational resources (time, contact)	
	Determine goals for NSD Educate internal skills / expertise Assess/revise cultural characteristics Supportive physical work environment Determine policy for taking time Set incentives Provide platform for information sharing Organise innovation activities	Make product champions available Available expertise Provide funnel tools Encourage sharing and interaction on platform Inform about NSD process	Build project team Transfer from team to new team Product champion part of team Start NSD process Document and share lessons learned	

## 4.4 Discussion

### Research limitations of design research

When I looked back at the design research process, I could have made better use of the participatory design sessions I did with employees. I used these sessions to find context-specific insights for drivers and barriers in organising employee initiatives for new service development. However, I could have gotten more in-depth information out of the sessions if I would have asked them about their needs in a more specific situation throughout the employees initiative process, like with a customer journey instead of asking them about their general needs for creating ideas. It would have been easier for them to come up with drivers and barriers for all these phases. Although I used the company objective to make it somewhat context specific, I could not reach the deeper level of knowledge that employees could have had. The result was that the information was not that specific, which made it difficult to translate the information from the session back into usable drivers, barriers and principles for the approach. If the answers would have been more detailed, it would have been easier to compare insights with the literature and could have provided more context-specific and more in-depth knowledge for the approach.

Next to this, the employees that joined the participatory sessions were all employees without new service ideas. In the ideal situation, it would have been better if employees joined that were involved in different stages of idea development, including employees with service ideas or people who had developed some ideas before. This would have included more insights for the different three 'phases' that I described in the approach. At that time, it was really hard to find employees that were even involved in employee initiatives for new service development, so that is why I decided to work with employees that were interested in the topic, did not have ideas, but let them imagine they were in that process.

Furthermore, I did not research the managerial or organisational role in the specific context of TOPdesk extensively. I interviewed some people that were involved in organisational changes and the process behind it, but I did not explore their perspective

on how they would organise or influence employee initiatives. Despite the focus of the employee role in the second part of the assignment, the other perspectives would create a more complete picture of how they influence or work together in facilitating employee initiatives. Besides that I would make the approach more complete with context-information, it could have added another layer of interaction between the different roles. Exploring these roles could be an improvement for the usefulness of the approach, as a more detailed description of the management role would be valuable as it is often up to them to facilitate such organisational changes.

Lastly, the validation of the approach was done after it was used in the design, meaning that the insights were fully not included in the final result. The result of this is that valuable feedback from managers and people responsible for change could not be included in the approach. This could have also greatly improved the usefulness of the approach being able to adapt it to the target group. The recommendations that would improve the approach are described in the next paragraph. Not very specific on a certain sector.

### Validation of the employee initiative process approach

To test the validity of the approach, I created a questionnaire for people at TOPdesk that are or will be directly involved in the teams that are responsible for the organisation of employee initiatives at TOPdesk.

I started the questionnaire by introducing the employee initiative approach, including the explanation for each of the three steps involved. Then, I asked the stakeholders the following questions:

- » What is your first impression of the approach?
- » How understandable is the approach without further explanation? (rating between 1-5)
- » How understandable is the approach after further explanation? (rating between

- 1-5)
- » How useful is the approach to your daily work?
- » What are your suggestions to improve the approach? If you have more than one, please elaborate.

The results show that the approach was indeed interesting to the stakeholders. However, it needs some improvements as a few aspects were not clear for the stakeholders and would have liked to see more details on certain aspects. Some of their first impressions were like this:

*“Wondering if we could use parts of it to get bottom-up initiatives aligned with our high-level product vision” - Stakeholder 1*

*“I like the attention for both the employee and management and I understand the different phases to come to an innovation.” - Stakeholder 2*

*“It makes sense. There are a lot of aspects to facilitate. It has a logical build up.” - Stakeholder 3*

## Recommendations

The stakeholders rated the usefulness of the approach to their daily job somewhat as useful (2,75/5). They were already working on steps to organise employee initiatives in the organisation and say many similarities, which could explain that it would not add a lot to their daily work: “Pretty logical and looks like we already took a lot of steps in the right direction” (stakeholder 3). The approach felt too general as well. Stakeholders thought it could be more adapted to the culture of TOPdesk: “It feels a lot like a general way of innovating, in which a couple of the ideas don’t apply to our way of doing things” (stakeholder 3). The approach does indeed follow a somewhat general approach in the sense that it does not include specific cultural characteristics of TOPdesk. To make the approach more useful, it should be emphasized that the approach can be adapted to the specific company, but should in addition explain how the approach can be adapted to make it more useful. One example to change this is to include more possible examples of roles, a company might better identify with the approach.

The approach is divided into responsibilities for three different roles. One of these I framed as the manager role. However, the stakeholders agreed it would be more suited to TOPdesk if the responsibilities of this role would have a more decentralized structure: “As long as someone / the group (innovation team) is appointed to and accountable for facilitating a step.” I think that a typical manager role at TOPdesk indeed does not really exist and would therefore be better arranged like this. Since it came to my attention that TOPdesk has a responsible team for organising employee initiatives, they should keep the overview, but from here these responsibilities can be divided.

Currently, the ‘last’ step in the approach describes the transfer of ownership from the initiators of the idea to a new team composition that will continue the development process. Stakeholders acknowledged the need for this transportation of ownership. “Perhaps the model can focus more on how an idea can be implemented in the run and how ownership is distributed through the self organizing teams.” However, they would like to see the transfer of ownership in more detail. As this is out of scope for this thesis, I think this could be a future opportunity to look further into the process after the moment this transfer of ownership happened.

These improvements should be taken into account for the improvement of the approach, to make it more useful for TOPdesk.

## Implications for TOPdesk

In chapter 1, I explained that besides the understanding on how companies can organise employee-driven innovation for new service development, I also aim to create a toolkit that guides, supports and enables employees of TOPdesk in their employee initiative process.

From the design research results, and like I described in the approach (chapter 3.5), I was able to describe what would help employees in this employee initiative process. In the approach, I describe in three steps what employees and their new services need to go through in the employee initiative process. It starts with “Integrating employee initiative in your daily job” which is followed by “Exploring the new service idea, fulfilling idea selection criteria & getting project support” to the “Transfer initiative from idea to

NSD project”.

Based on the design research results, I decided to design a toolkit that enables, guides and supports employees through the second process: “Explore new service idea, fulfill idea selection criteria & get project support” (Figure 3). This part of the process starts with employees that have an idea for a new service for TOPdesk and ends with the moment where employees have to pitch their idea to a management team member or other decision maker, who is able to ‘decide’ whether this idea from an initiative may be further explored and developed. This is the phase before deciding whether a new service idea will become a project with an assigned budget and a dedicated development team among other things.

I decided to design for this phase for the following reasons. First, I found that new service ideas already exist in the heads of TOPdesk employees, but often do not get developed, because employees need guidance and support in the process. Second, the development of new service ideas could positively influence other employees to start exploring or contributing as well and stimulate the general creative mindset of the company. Third, when TOPdesk is able to communicate and share examples of new service ideas being developed, it will demonstrate to employees that there is actually time, resources available and management encouragement for initiatives. This is now not generally perceived this way and also contributes to other stages in the approach, which is beneficial.

In summary, to fulfill the second part of the assignment and enable, support and guide employees with employee initiatives new service ideas, I will design an employee initiative toolkit for TOPdesk employees with new service ideas until the moment they need to pitch their idea to a decision maker to get project support.

In the next section, I elaborate on the design requirements for the toolkit that I have extracted from the design research results.

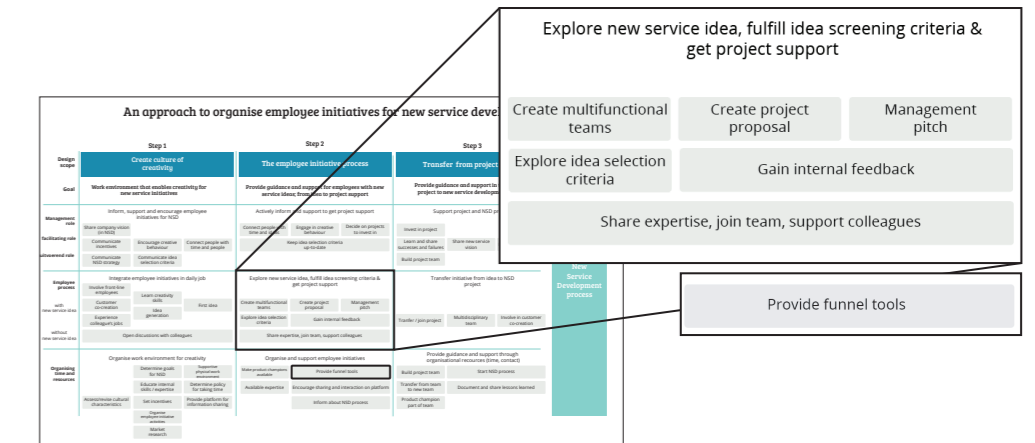


Figure 3. Showing that I will design for the problems that employees experience in the phase from idea to management support, and fulfilling one of the roles of the organisation in this phase.

## 4.5 Design requirements

After the design research and the development of the approach for organising employee initiatives for new service development, I defined a set of design requirements for the employee initiative toolkit to help me in the design process. The requirements are derived from the previously described chapter and approach, and are described as follows:

### Integrate idea selection criteria and new service characteristics

Idea selection criteria and new service characteristics for new service development are specific for each company. To increase the chance that TOPdesk employees get project support for their new service idea, it is important that the process of the toolkit is designed to fulfill these criteria.

### Build towards project proposal

The toolkit should include funnel and design tools that enable employees to explore the value of their new service idea and fulfill idea selection criteria for new services at TOPdesk. Next to exploring the value of an idea, the toolkit should also stimulate the continuation of the development process. In addition, the toolkit should help employees to structure these arguments into a project proposal, as pitching for project support is an important moment in deciding whether a new service idea may be further developed.

### Integrate management encouragement and support

Management encouragement and support has a big influence on employees' creative

behaviour. Their encouragement will increase the employees that are experimenting and indirectly increase the number of employees using the toolkit. To make the toolkit a success, it should be clear that the management supports the use of it and supports the criteria that it helps to fulfill with.

### Integration of initiatives in daily work

Another important driver for success of employee initiative is the availability of time for experimentation. That is why I recommend making it part of the daily job. It will depend on the interest of the employee and his/her team, but experimentation should be generally accepted as part of the job. It will help to make the toolkit independent in use to make implementation in a daily job even easier. Therefore, the toolkit should be easy to implement in daily work.

### Accessible for all employees

Part of the idea behind the employee initiatives is that every employee in the company could have new service ideas. This also means that not everyone has knowledge on new service development. This is why the final design should maintain a level of definitions, tools and processes that non-designers and non-developers should understand without further explanation.

### Adaptable to the need of the new service idea

It is in the culture of TOPdesk that they value freedom in their way of working. This shows in the many guidelines they use instead of strict rules. It will benefit the success of the toolkit if employees experience a balance between freedom and structure during the use of the toolkit. To maintain the freedom, the toolkit should be adaptable to the need for guidance of employees, depending on the content of the idea, expertise or time available.

### A process of 6 hours

The toolkit should allow employees to explore the value of a new service idea within 6 hours. Usually, this means about 6 meetings, but it means that the management or other decision makers get to hear about ideas early on in the process contributing to their ability to give and show support early on. It is also the moment that employees do not want to spend more time on it before they know if it is worth investing more time in. Aiming to explore the new service idea in this time makes the experimentation manageable for employees and perceived as effective for management.

*"Not that many hours, I spend 5 or 6 hours on it." "...I am not going to work on that if there is a chance that it (the idea) gets turned down, because that is a waste. Then my own time gets lost." - ICT professional*



# Chapter 5

## Concept development

This chapter describes the process from translating the design brief into the final design. First, I explain the development steps that I followed after which each step is further explained in corresponding sections.

## 5. Concept development

### 5.1 Concept development set-up

Table 10 gives you an overview of the different methods I used to develop the final concept of this thesis.

Goal	Method	Chapter
Defining idea selection criteria for new service ideas for TOPdesk	Interview with CFO, part of management team	5.2
Defining new service characteristics for TOPdesk non-ESM ideas	Participatory session with Management team	5.3
Searching for design requirements in best practice toolkits	Research on existing toolkits	5.4
Find tools as base for new service development process and idea selection criteria	Desk research on design tools and methods	5.5
First concept idea	Brainstorm	5.5
Testing paper toolkit with employees	Evaluating with interested employees	5.6
Feedback on toolkit from target group	Evaluating with employees on preliminary concept	5.7

Table 10. Shows the steps in the concept development process.

## 5.2 Define idea selection criteria for new service ideas at TOPdesk

In order to help employees make their time spent on an initiative as effective as possible, they should know what their ideas are being selected on. That is why I conducted an open-ended interview with a management team member to find the idea selection criteria for new service ideas.

The CFO explained that the management team together makes decisions on ideas for this new market. The CFO was available to discuss these criteria, with the assumption he speaks for the whole management team. During the interview of one hour, I first explained the scope of this project followed with these questions I prepared:

- » What are the minimal criteria that are expected from employees that they present during this 'permission' meeting?
- » What would be beneficial for employees to describe these criteria as well?
- » What would be the convincing factor for you (the MT) to support a new service idea?
- » To what extent do you expect a business plan?

During the interview I made notes that lead to the answers to these questions. These notes were implemented into the structure of proposed idea selection criteria by Ciriello, Richter & Schwabe (2016) and Kesting & Parm Ulhøi (2010).

Below I describe what I found during the interview. Next to this, I created an overview that includes the idea selection that I will use in the design of the toolkit (Figure 5).

### Idea selection criteria at TOPdesk

The **value proposition** is indeed a criteria that the management of TOPdesk would like to see, although it is open for employees to decide and define how this value is expressed specifically. When employees should communicate the value I think it is

helpful to give examples of value propositions, that include e.g. newness, risk reduction or customization (Ciriello, Richter & Schwabe, 2016) to help them in the process.

**Risk of adoption** takes into account how the adoption of the innovation could negatively influence the organisation and its environment (Ciriello, Richter & Schwabe, 2016). The CFO did not phrase it like risk adoption directly, but did ask for resources needed and estimated profit over time. As a result I will include risk adoption as a point, as it also includes risks that do not involve money, like a potential negative impact on stakeholders.

Besides the risk of investing in an innovation, there might also be risks that come with deciding not to try a new service idea, like falling behind competitors. This **risk of rejection** was not directly included in the conversation with the CFO, but will be included in the idea selection criteria.

For TOPdesk, the **scope** of employee initiatives evolve around innovations for new products or services. The scope should also include a certain target group that you are designing for, which is dependent on the market. In the case of TOPdesk this market is not defined, but there are some boundaries to service characteristics to what the management will support. These are described in the next section (section 5.3), and will be included in the design.

There is also some uncertainty on the **type of innovation** that TOPdesk wants to go for. At this point, TOPdesk goes for incremental innovation, as was said in the annual report of 2018 (TOPdesk, 2018): "With this in mind, we want to make sure we generate many ideas for effectively using our software.". Although the aim to enter a new market, which is the goal of the new company objective also suggests radical innovation, because of being open for an additional successful business model. In this case, I suggest TOPdesk to indeed start with incremental innovation, but slowly build towards more radical innovation ideas.

The idea screening framework (Ciriello, Richter & Schwabe, 2016) also suggests to include a **communication strategy**, because it has a significant impact on the way a service will be a success. However, I will not consider this for the design, because it is outside the exploration of value of the concept. It will become relevant when the

concept is taken to another level into the development process.

The CFO considered it important to include the **different roles and resources** that are important in the development and execution of the new service idea. When employees can tell what variation of expertise is needed in the development process and the fit with the expertise that is present at TOPdesk, this criteria is fulfilled. However, without specification of the kinds of people that are needed in an innovation process, I doubt employees will know who they should include to make it complete. That is why I will include the following roles for idea selection criteria (Ciriello, Richter & Schwabe, 2016): customers, effectuators, business advisors, technical advisors, external partners, sponsors.

Next to the comparison of the criteria framework, he also mentioned other points. An estimation for the **required resources** for the development of the new service is also preferred, although he would not expect accurate estimations. It would help with the decision to support and invest in the idea compared to other possible competing projects, which I think I will then include in the criteria. Another factor that contributes to a positive judgement of the idea comes from employees who make suggestions for a proof of concept. It contributes to evaluating the feasibility of the service in the TOPdesk context. I will include this as a criteria as well.

Another very important criteria is that employees think well about how it would **fit with TOPdesk**. Often the ideas can be great, but the CFO mentioned that sometimes ideas turn out not fitting the company culture or way of working, which is then also a deal breaker preventing project support. I think it is therefore good to include this as a criteria.

Lastly, he emphasized that the MT does not expect a business plan that is fully worked out, because the management would like to be involved before a worked out business plan is made. Based on this, I think the process and result of the toolkit should contribute to a level of detail where conversation and discussion is still possible.

### Discussion

It can be said that TOPdesk does not have formal selection criteria, because the CFO mentioned the criteria are dependent on the idea and the level of detail that is preferred was hard to get from the interview. During this section, I created idea selection criteria for new service ideas for TOPdesk. The CFO did include many points that overlap with the idea selection framework by Ciriello, Richter & Schwabe (2016), but also excluded some points. To decide which criteria should be in the list, I included decision criteria that management named as criteria and additional criteria from the framework that are relevant for a decision in getting support.

These idea selection criteria are essential to help employees to develop new service ideas and create a chance to convince the management of their idea. These criteria are therefore the base for the content that employees should be able to produce with the toolkit. In section 5.4, I search for ways how employees can fulfill these criteria in an easy to understand way, where the level of detail should leave space for discussion and conversation.

Also, the level of detail to what the management team expects to fulfill these criteria is quite unclear. It was said to be dependent on the situation. However, based on the assignment and need from employees to provide more concrete guidelines, I will make these criteria concrete and integrate them in the design toolkit.

Before I come to this, I will first go into defining the new service characteristics for this new service, as this will also be part of the criteria.

## 5.3 Defining new service characteristics

An important condition for the development and selection of new service ideas, is that management communicates the market direction (Fahy & Jobber, 2012) or company vision (Voxted, 2018). However, since the management wants a bottom-up approach for determining this new market, it is the job of employees to come up with new directions. Where the market direction is open, I heard on the internal sharing platform and workforce about certain new service characteristics that were not preferred in new services for TOPdesk despite the freedom that is given. Since constraints can help with creativity (Caniëls & Rietzschel, 2015), I decided to find out where the management team crosses a line with new service characteristics, to give employees a more determined space to create these ideas.

Through a participatory session with the complete management team, I was able to let them create the constraints for new service characteristics. To make the 30 minute session as effective as possible, I prepared a set of boundaries and conditions beforehand. I prepared 17 conditions that represented a general coverage of different marketing aspects of a new product or service and some previously found conditions

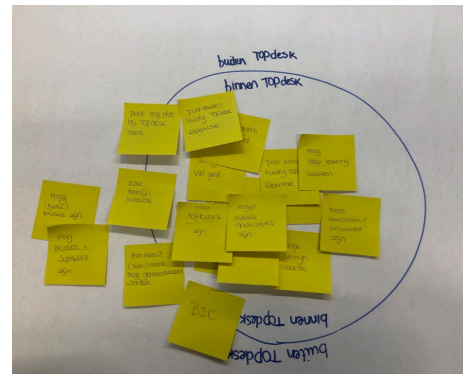


Image 4. Shows the folder that includes the different toolkit components.

in conversations at TOPdesk before. They included aspects on economy, social/cultural issues, technological changes, ecological concerns (Fahy & Jobber, 2012) and some trends from Fjord trend technological research ("Fjord Trends 2018", 2019)(Appendix B).

To mimic boundaries for the new service characteristics, the management team placed the conditions on a paper sheet deciding whether new service ideas with these conditions include or exclude the boundaries of a new service for TOPdesk, like shown in image 4.

The post-its were directly used as boundaries for new service ideas, and made a list of recommendations for the TOPdesk new service ideas that will be implemented in the idea screening criteria for TOPdesk.

In Figure 4, I show what new service characteristics the TOPdesk management team I gained from the discussion.

### Discussion

In this section, I explored the boundaries on new service characteristics at TOPdesk. I was able to complement the list of new service idea selection criteria from the previous section 5.2. These new constraints will help employees in their decision to take the time and effort to explore the idea they have for new services. If it does not fit in with these constraints, employees can either save time trying, or ask a management team member if there it is still interesting to explore. It adds to the effectiveness of the employee initiatives preventing time spent on ideas that are not really interesting, because of inherent new service characteristics. It is important for TOPdesk to keep these new service characteristics up to date to prevent valuable ideas not being included in the selection procedure of providing support. To be able to include these criteria in the toolkit, I will research existing design tools that can help employees to fulfill these criteria in steps in the next section (5.4).

### Service characteristics for new services ideas at TOPdesk

What characteristics does the new service idea include and what does management think about this?

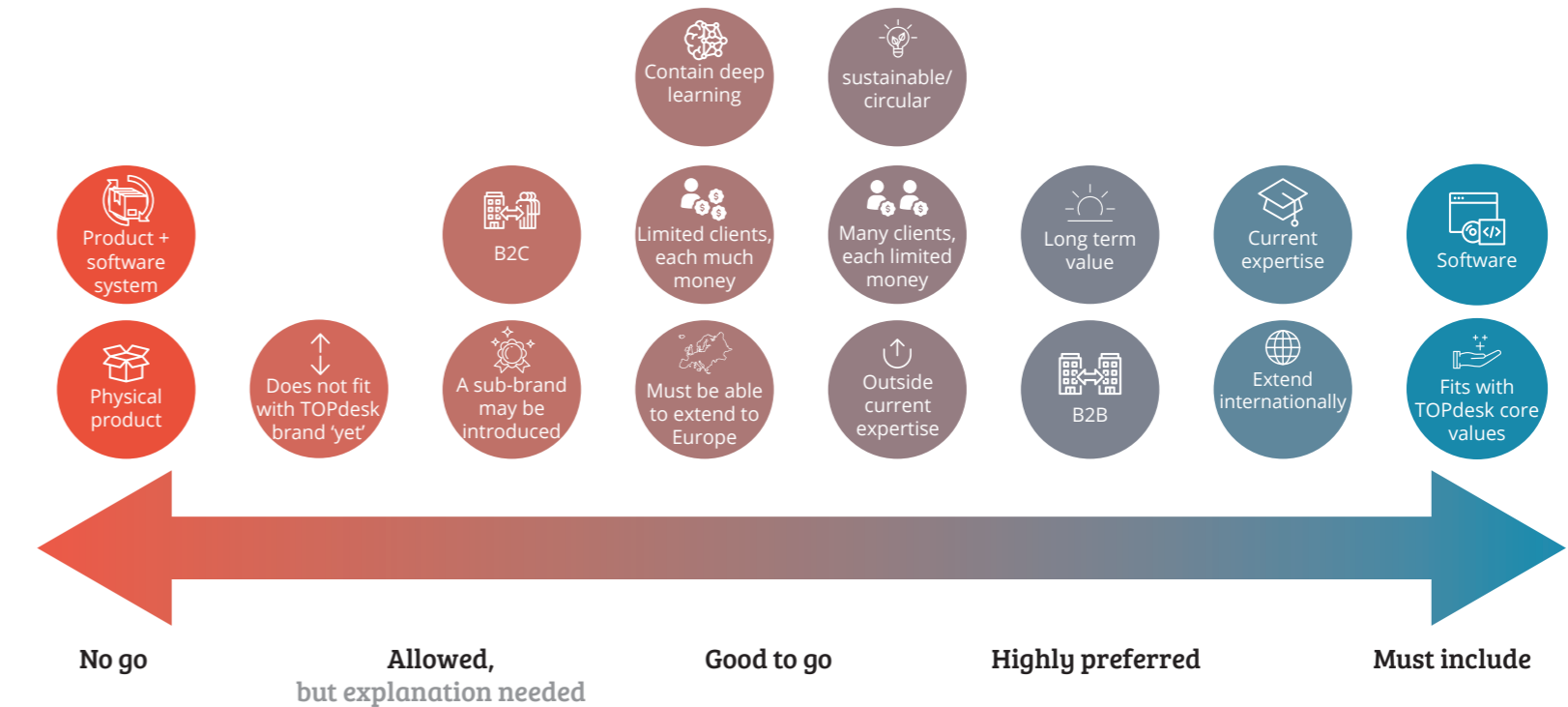


Figure 4. Shows the new service characteristics the TOPdesk management team currently agrees on.

## 5.4 Research on existing toolkits

Concerning the creation of a toolkit, there have been different companies that have created innovation toolkits before. Instead of designing the toolkit from scratch, it is valuable to look at existing innovation toolkits and companies designing customised innovation toolkits.

Based on the design requirements (4.2), I searched for existing solutions to evaluate what fits best in this toolkit.

Two examples were used to find inspiration for the toolkit on these points. These are clear and open source examples of toolkits or companies that have been successful with introducing their toolkits to the market or have shown to be valuable for their clients with their toolkit services. The first example is the Adobe Kickbox (Kickbox Open Source, 2019). It is built for individual innovators, as well as for organisations and has an additional 'ultimate' handbook for intrapreneurs called the SWISSCOM KICKBOOK (Kickbox Open Source, 2019), including a process with steps, methods and tips on how to get to the implementation of your idea. Both these tools have matching goals with the aim for the toolkit at TOPdesk. It is however different, because the Adobe kickbox process is aimed to take longer than the requirement of 6 hours for the TOPdesk toolkit. Also, it is designed to help individuals with the implementation of the idea as well, where the toolkit for TOPdesk employees does not need to do this. This influences some of the considerations later.

The second example, the Board of innovation has a large customer base and has a large collection of innovation templates next to their innovation toolkit service. The information is collected from how they build the content of their customised toolkits by gaining inspiration from the structure of their toolkit content online.

It was the goal find inspiration on the following points:

- » Include management encouragement
- » Include openness to communication
- » Communication of structure of the process
- » Create process overview, readable in 1 minute

- » Improve understanding of how to start using the toolkit
- » Clarify order of use of elements
- » Translate elaborate design tools into easy to understand questions and assignments

### Insights

First, the structure of the building process described by the Board of Innovation is very interesting. They follow a **strategy-fit, problem-fit, solution-fit and market-fit** process. The strategy fit describes the innovation strategy of the company. In relation to designing a toolkit, it means that it should be clear how the toolkit contributes to designing for new service ideas from a new market. For the design of the toolkit I will emphasize the company objective in the toolkit. Next, the Board of Innovation describes how important it is for the participants of the toolkit to know their customer, their needs, and pain points. They mention a few design tools, among customer journey mapping which could help to achieve this. However, to use such a tool usually takes quite some time and the design requirement for the execution of the toolkit is 6 hours. This means that I will try to include the problem-fit, but with another tool that better fits the design requirement.

The solution-fit describes how the solution actually fulfills the need of a customer. They recommend tools that are based on ideation and are therefore in that aspect not so relevant for the design of the toolkit as it is meant for employees with ideas. Despite this, I will include a short element in the toolkit that discusses the core functionalities of the service to allow for a short solution-fit evaluation. The last one in this process is about the market-fit, which includes how the company creates and maintains the value of a service. This connects with previous selection criteria for the CFO, making this a relevant addition as well.

By **asking the CEO to write a short message** for employees when they start an initiative, it becomes an easy introduction for employees to work out their new service idea. It also directly includes management encouragement, which is an important driver for employee initiatives as it can soften the

The **use of a box or folder** containing elements in the Adobe Kickbox (figure..) improves overview and decreases the complexity of the many elements, which is something that can prevent an overwhelmed feeling for toolkit users. To create a process overview, the kickbook uses two pages in the beginning of the booklet explaining the whole process in short steps. I will use this as a way to make the toolkit independent in use, as the process will be self-explanatory.

Another interesting functionality is a way to **make shortcuts** in the development process. When participants already made steps in the development of their idea before using a toolkit, the shortcuts direct the participant to the step in the process that fits their process best. This function can be a valuable addition to the employee initiative toolkit to give the employees the freedom to use the toolkit to their needs.

A functionality that will help employees understand the experimentation mindset is naming the use of principles in the toolkit. In this case for TOPdesk, it is e.g. important to mention that the level of detail for each criteria is less important rather than exploring them all. Naming these could help employees better understand the intent and use of the toolkit, making it more independent in use as is desired.

There was also a clear example of how a short and simple overview of the process can be displayed. In two pages, with references to other elements in the toolkit, participants can see the process in a glance. This will be used in the toolkit as well to make the process easy to understand and low key for participants to start with.

### Discussion

In this section, I found interesting structural and visual ways to fulfill some design criteria in the toolkit. The toolkit will include tools to create a strategy-fit, problem-fit, solution-fit and market-fit. To make sure the toolkit includes management encouragement, I will integrate a short message from the CEO or management team. In addition I will design the toolkit as one whole, to decrease the complexity of many toolkit elements. The process will include shortcuts to help employees go through the initiative process more effectively and I will use a process overview to create an

understanding of the process. Lastly, the use of the principles will help employees to understand the experimentation mindset of the toolkit. All these functionalities will be part of the final design.

## 5.5 Finding existing tools to integrate in the toolkit

In previous sections 5.2, 5.3 and 3.4, I collected insights on how to structure the toolkit process and which idea selection criteria are important to include for the final design. Both elements are important to enable employees to successfully explore the value of their initiative.

The goal of this section is to explore how I can integrate these criteria and structure into a process that employees can follow with the toolkit. To do this, I first need to find out how anyone can fulfill these criteria. At the same time, I need to find a way to translate these ways into a toolkit that employees without any prior design or development knowledge can follow as the toolkit should fit all background knowledge.

Based on my own design experience, I have worked with several design tools before that can help me fulfill some of the criteria that should be included. Since design tools usually only use the essential information needed to fulfill the goal of which one is pursuing, design tools seem fit to use as a base for this toolkit's criteria. It is important to find a way to get the essence from these design tools and sources into the toolkit, because one design requirement for the toolkit is that employees have to be able to finish the process in 6 hours. To make sure I tried to integrate only the most needed questions and topics that will now help to explore the value and validity of the new service idea. If it is not vital to answer the criteria, it is left out.

To find the fitting design tools for my design requirement, I used my own knowledge of design tools combined with the help of an online search engine and some design books. I searched for design tools that can fulfill the criteria that I would like to see in the toolkit.

Figure 5 demonstrates what design criteria should be included in the toolkit (based on previous sections 5.2, 5.3 and 3.4), what design tools or sources are used to fulfill these criteria and what elements from these tools I will use in the toolkit. The figure also shows the order in which employees will go through the process. Since, learning is also a design requirement, I tried to organise the process in that way to help employees

evaluate the value of their new service idea in between steps. For example, a Proof of Concept becomes relevant only when employees have decided customer value and the fit with the company are convincing enough to create value for the company. I tried to make this evaluation for all the steps in the process.

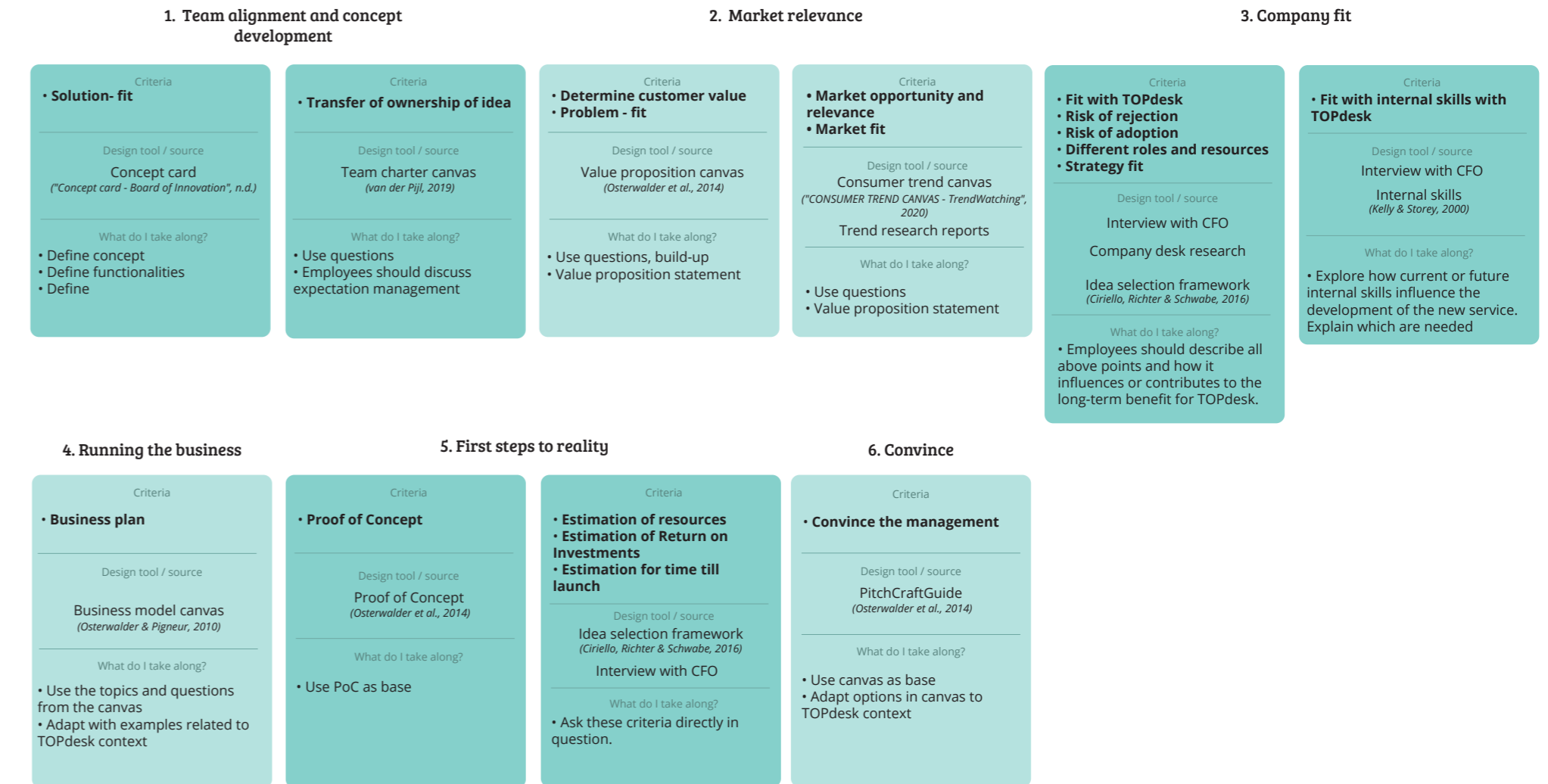


Figure 5. Shows what criteria will be included in the toolkit, based on content from which tools and how it will be used in the toolkit.

## 5.6 First concept idea

Based on the employee initiative process (described in 3.3), a short free associative thinking exercise was organized with a fellow student to come up with a way to fulfil the design goal, defining in what way or shape employees will be helped in the employee initiative process for new services. Starting with writing down the structure of the new initiative process a board, the following questions were answered:

- » How to enable employees to use it during their meeting in a flexible way, enabling them to choose how to use it based on their needs and time available? What should be the shape of this structure?
- » How to make the 'design toolkit' easy to understand?

### Visualising the employee initiative process

As it appeared that the content of the 6-step approach is quite elaborate, it would make sense to take the structure itself as a base or guide through the meetings (figure). As the participants go through a few meetings in the process, it makes sense to take parts of the content structure and guide them directly through these stages. By visualising this structure and content directly on a sheet of material e.g. paper the structure and more content is directly available to the employees in their meetings, making a physical toolkit interesting.

A process overview would also allow for them to choose how they use it based on their needs and time available, as they could refer or look at the process overview during the meeting however they want. By creating something tangible, it helps employees to physically and easily talk to each other and know what they are talking about. Also, by showing smaller steps onto the way towards the end goal, it can be decided how to divide these steps over their meetings. These smaller steps could be made physical by different templates.

Image 5 shows how the structure of the new initiative process is a physical asset in their meetings.

### An online platform

An additional idea was to create a platform where employees can upload their deliverables and follow their process online, making an online place for the documentation of ideas as well. This platform also creates the opportunity to look back at their process for reflection, but also sharing ideas with the rest of the company and adding features like finding a team for your project, when it is allowed to go to the next development phase.

However, for the scope of my thesis I will leave the online platform as a recommendation. The online platform is not essential as part of the toolkit, as the toolkit could help explore the value of the toolkit on its own. The ability to share ideas with the rest of the company is a step that is valuable after exploring the value of an idea.

### Discussion

In this section, I created the first idea of how I would like the interaction with the toolkit. It will be a physical toolkit including a visual overview of the process that makes interaction between team members focused on one point at the time. The online platform will however be a design recommendation, which you can find in the design roadmap (chapter 6.5).



Image 5. Shows what the first concept idea looks like, with a large visual process overview as the center of interaction.

## 5.7 Testing draft paper toolkit version with employees

To find out the first response from employees towards a physical toolkit with templates, a conversation prototype was built (Image 6) and discussed with different interested employees with expertise. It was discussed with a HR advisor, Product manager, Marketeer, Service Designer, Finance specialist and Office Sales in an informal conversation, where the only questions prepared were about their opinion on the concept and what they do or do not understand in this concept.

Although employees pointed out during previous design research, that some sort of support and guidance would be appreciated in the process of setting up employee initiatives, what do they think when this would come in the shape of a 'design tool'? I explained to them that the prototype in front of them only represents a small part in the 'to be developed toolkit' and process of idea development, to let them focus on the content rather than the shape already. The prototype contained two templates, a concept form (describing the concept) and a building a prototype template (describing the shape of the concept to be tested), including a place to set up a test, and evaluation of the prototype test (documentation of the learning process). The templates described questions that guide employees through these steps, within a certain time. In this case, both templates suggested a time together of 50 min, to demonstrate the time limitations for this. The additional 'prototyping method' cards are there to help participants when inspiration is needed for quick prototype methods.

### Insights

As this was a first conversation and quite unstructured, the feedback was mostly about the understanding and clarity of the templates, as they were trying to understand the concept, context during the conversation.

The participants had feedback on many details regarding the 'methods' in the toolkit and suggestions to make it clearer. The participants thought it would be quite an investment to go through this process, so if there would be a way for people to know

they are 'allowed' to go into this process, it would help with their own return on investment in time. In this case an emphasis should be made on the flexibility in use for the toolkit. Also, the expected time was estimated way longer than was suggested on the sheets, which means that either the actual content should be shorter or their expectation should be consciously guided on a more 'pressure cooker' mindset.

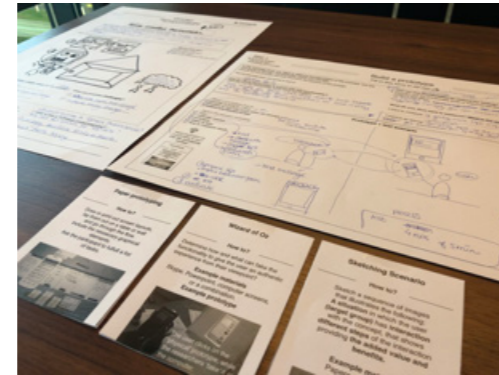


Image 6. Showing the conversation prototype.

### Discussion

In summary, guided process through different steps was perceived as pleasant, but the amount of expected time that templates take can negatively influence the experience of these templates. Maybe a dedicated time for each template is not ideal, which I will take out. Next to this, it could be improved by adding some kind of checklist or introduction that describes when the toolkit is valuable to them and what they can expect. This corresponds with the principles that could help explain the experimentation mindset (chapter 5.4). These principles could explain how this toolkit could help them and in a flexible way.

## 5.8 Test preliminary concept with employees

Based on the previous, I design a preliminary concept for an employee initiative toolkit. I designed it to be easy to understand and accessible for all employees, it was important to understand whether employees perceive these requirements in their first impression. The first impression is important to validate as it might already have people lost before using the toolkit. I organised two discussions with a total 6 employees that could be potential users of the toolkit in the future.

After explaining the context of this graduation project and the different components in the toolkit (Image 7), the participants were asked to explain their first thoughts on the toolkit. While the toolkit was displayed on the table, they were asked next to imagine what they would think of the toolkit when it would be in front of them during a meeting with fellow employees with a new service idea for TOPdesk. I also asked them for feedback on the design and implementation of the toolkit.



Image 7. Showing the setting of the feedback discussion with employees.

### Decrease complexity of toolkit elements

The biggest critical response was based on the complexity in the first impression of the toolkit. When the toolkit was spread out on the table, the participants found the starting point of the toolkit unclear, it felt overwhelming, like a time investment and triggers a feeling of resistance and stress, which are exactly barriers and problems that should have been prevented by the toolkit. Spoon feeding the content to the target group as a step-by-step approach was suggested to solve this problem. Also, the idea of using the toolkit as a funnel, to evaluate the concept during the process, was not clear for participants, so this should be clarified.

*"It is a lot. It seems a bit the chicken and egg situation. It seems like I have to think about it beforehand, like oh, quite somewhat and more, only because I see this already. But what exactly is the beginning?" – [Application manager]*

### Management is not always involved

There were also quite some critical points on the phrasing of 'pitching to the management'. From experience, it was said that 'a good story' is often good enough; these many steps for a meeting like that is not needed. To clarify the participant's argument, it might be worth emphasising that going through all the steps is not required, but represents the points that are desired by the MT and will only help them. Something else interesting is that the management layer that is now supposed to be involved during the last phase in the pitch might not even be involved in the permission of ideas after all. Within development, there is the role of a product owner that often approves or disapproves an idea into a project, both for ESM and non-ESM projects. Team leaders also function for this purpose. So, pitching for the management might include different layers of management or roles.

The involvement of management also seems to scare away people from using the toolkit, as they might think their idea, is not 'big enough' to bother the management with it. But taking the suggestion of getting support, instead of a go/no go from management and adding different 'management layers', might be more accurate and less scary.

*“It is apparently such a big idea, that you have to propose it to the management. A lot of ideas don’t go to that level. That seems a lot smaller, and people just do it, and then it happens.” – [Product manager]*

## Easier to be critical

The participants were positive about the critical questions on the templates. It would really help them be critical on their own idea, as well as guiding them through these topics, while building on their idea, and ‘transform worries into something you can work with.’ The questions will therefore continue to be a part of the next design solution.

*“When I read through this, then these are also questions which I like that I get to ask critical questions, and not always have to sit with someone, so that I could ask myself these questions now. I like that.” – [HR advisor]*

*“But I think that guides or handles, to translate worries into something that you can work with, is cool. This is something that TOPdesk is not very good at, because TOPdesk is like, you gooo..” – [Technical Product Consultant]*

## Discussion

To understand if employees perceive this version of the toolkit as easy to use, a discussion was organised that focused on understanding the first impression of the toolkit. Three interesting insights were found. First, the toolkit is still perceived to look complex as employees had difficulties understanding where to begin. A way of showing a step-by-step approach would help in going through the process. Second, getting support from management does not always mean the same level of management. Apparently, not all ideas have to go through to this level to go further into idea development. Third, the templates with questions were perceived as valuable, as these helped employees to be critical on levels that they might not have thought of. These insights showed that although the content of the design works, the first impression and introduction of the toolkit is not independent enough yet. To make sure the toolkit lowers the idea of resistance stepping into the employee initiative process, improvement is needed on these points which I will include in the next chapter.



# Chapter 6

## The employee initiative toolkit

## 6. The employee initiative toolkit

### 6.1 What is it?

The employee initiative toolkit is a structured approach to guide and enable employees with new service ideas to effectively explore its value with the goal to convince the management team it should become a new service for TOPdesk. The toolkit contains different elements that together help employees in this process (Image 8 & 10). First, it helps employees understand what is required to convince the management team of their new service idea. By giving an overview on what criteria new service ideas are being selected, employees can see step-by-step what is expected of them. Second, the tools in the toolkit help them fulfill these criteria with questions and tips on how to get the required information.

Employees can use the toolkit whenever they want, because it is present in the office for everyone to take. They only have to send an email to confirm they have taken a toolkit. This way, it is easy to get an overview of people trying out ideas and the stock can be supplemented when needed.

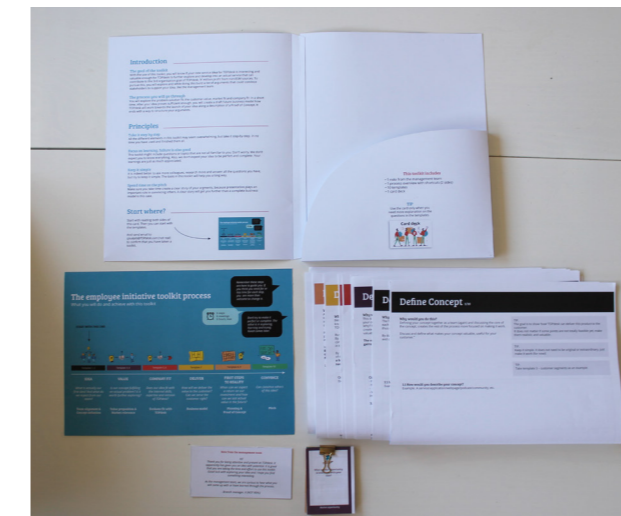


Image 8. Showing what the toolkit looks like when opened.

### 6.2 Value of the toolkit

The toolkit takes away the questions that employees have around being asked to invest their time in employee initiatives, without having clarity what this means for them. This includes the question on what selection criteria decision makers use and what guidance the organisation provides to support them. The toolkit provides answers to this, which lowers some of the barriers that employees experience that hold them from putting effort in their ideas in the first place. With the toolkit, the organisation demonstrates the availability of time, resources, management encouragement and organisational support for employees to put effort in initiatives. The likelihood that employees will now actually do something with their idea is much higher, because employees will feel like it is appreciated that they experiment.

The toolkit is also designed to enable employees in a small team to explore their idea within 6 hours. This means that employees have a clear idea of how much of their own time they have to invest in an idea. They are now also able to communicate this to their colleagues and managers, which makes the initiative have clear boundaries. This way, employees can implement their initiative in their own work schedule, while being able to take into account the responsibilities of the team, increasing the chance that employees will explore their idea.

Next to this, the toolkit deliberately explores and not defines the value of the new service idea. In only 6 hours, you cannot expect a fully researched and grounded value proposition. The goal is to have a concrete proposition that is somewhat grounded, but can also explain the gaps in knowledge that are not defined in the value yet. This combination will open up the communication between management and employees, because they know what risks are involved. The inclusion of risks will make it easier for management to make a decision, while employees do not have to worry about it being complete.

By motivating and enabling employees to take initiatives for new service development, the number of initiatives will go up, while the initiatives itself will exist of shorter iterations. This will increase the mindset of experimentation in the organisation, but more directly increase the chance that new service ideas will actually be developed and

## 6.3 The toolkit components

### Toolkit folder

The toolkit includes 4 different elements, which are all held together by one folder. This way the participants can easily take the toolkit to their meetings, like shown in Image 9.

After opening the folder you see an encouraging message from the management team to create a more personal connection between management and employees. It reinforces the motivation of employees to experiment and use the toolkit. The left inside of the folder also shortly describes the purpose and process of the toolkit reassuring employees why they are using the toolkit. Below, I described some general principles that emphasize the experimentation mindset of the toolkit. Then I ask them to send an email to a spokesperson telling them they have taken a toolkit. The last point on this page describes their first step. They should start with reading through the process overview card. All the toolkit components can also be found in appendix A.

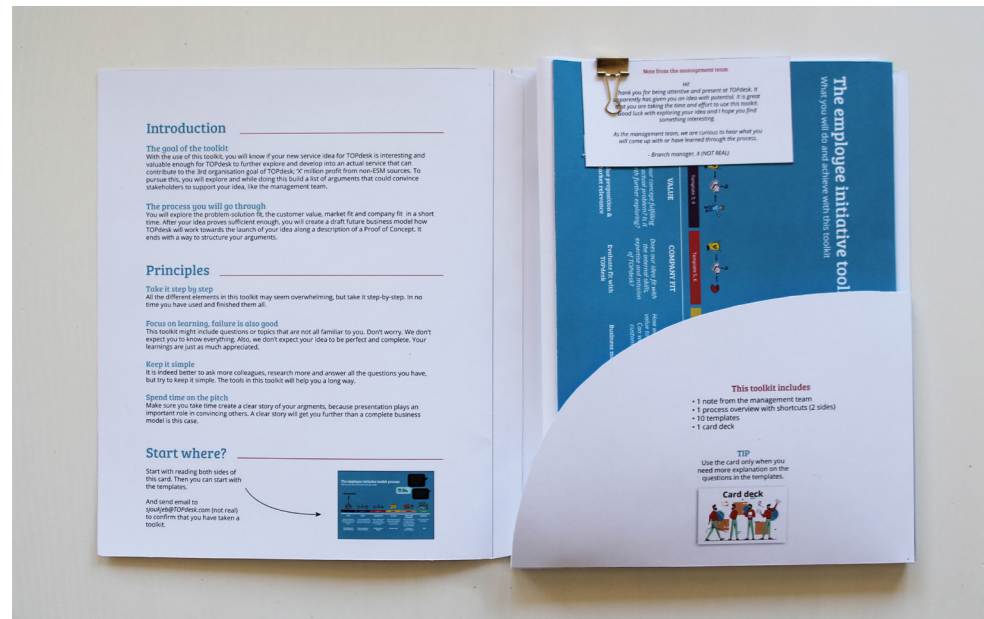


Image 9. Shows the folder that includes the different toolkit components.

### Process overview card

This card (Figure 6) creates an overview for employees of the six steps they will follow with the toolkit to explore the value of their new service idea. It also shortly explained what they are going to do in these steps. By introducing the colour scheme of the toolkit in this overview, employees will understand that each colour is related to a certain step. The other elements in the toolkit will also use this colour scheme, creating an easy way of overview for employees to understand the overall process.

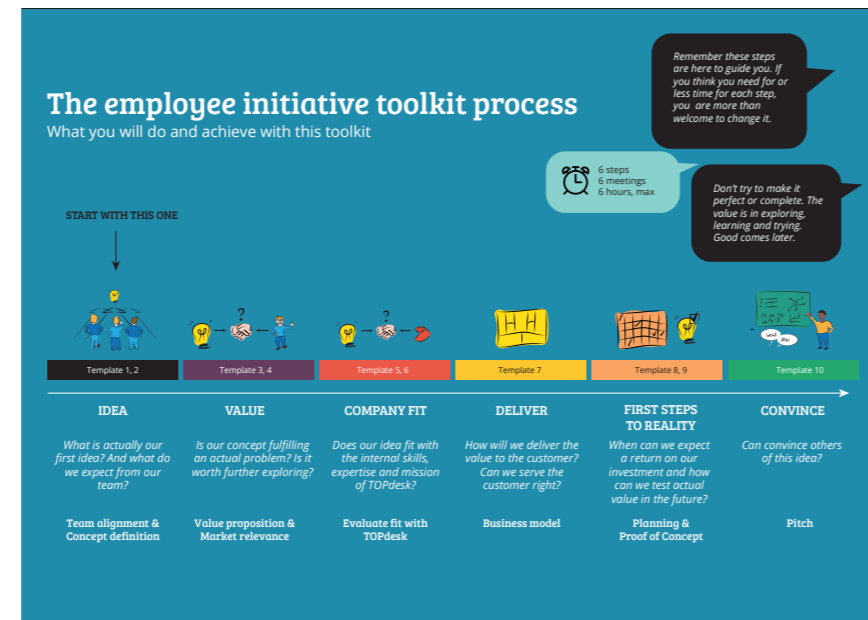


Figure 6. Shows the process overview card.

### Shortcut list

On the other side of the process overview, there is the shortcut list (Figure 7). It might happen that employees get introduced to this toolkit when they are further in the process after defining their idea, or have used the toolkit before. This shortcut list presents questions that help employees decide what template is most useful for them to use at that moment. Each question on the cards is phrased to challenge the team on their actual knowledge around these topics. This card gives employees the freedom to choose how they want to use the toolkit. Maybe even more important, it can make their

process more efficient, rather than just filling in templates, because they have to. To make it easy to see which template to use, I used the colours of the colour scheme here as well.

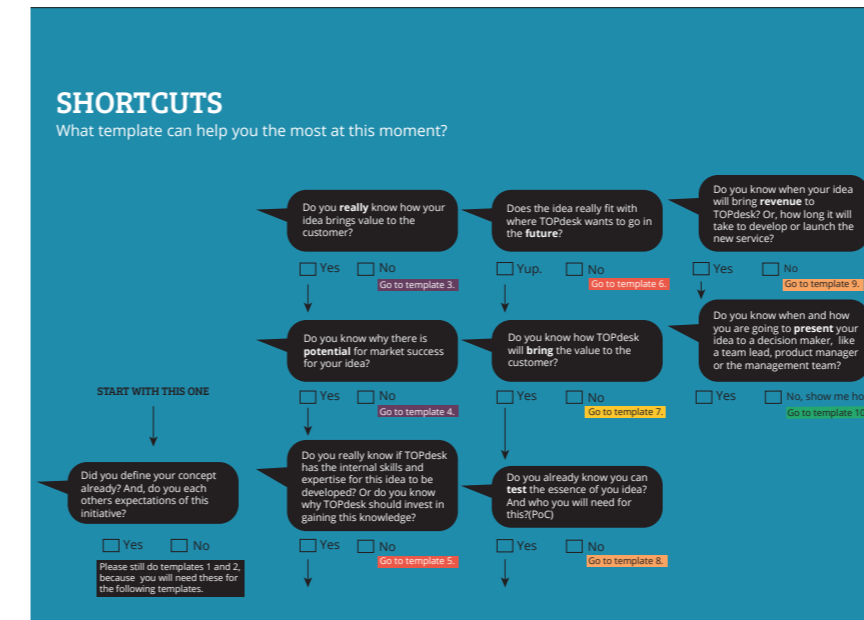


Figure 7. Shows the shortcuts employees can take in their process.

### Templates

The templates are the most important part of the toolkit, because these elements enable and guide employees through a quick new service development process that will make 'taking an initiative' manageable. Through a step-by-step approach, employees discuss topics from exploring the customer to the fit with their company and the probability of market success. These steps are all needed to explore the value of their idea for TOPdesk and eventually convince decision makers. Through the list of questions that are displayed on the templates, employees can effectively think about these questions step by step in a short amount of time (Figure 8). They don't have to come up with these questions themselves.

Since the templates are tailored to the idea selection criteria and new service characteristics of the management team, employees can effectively build arguments

that matter to the decision makers. The alignment that is created this way between management and employees lowers the barrier of approaching the management, which will hopefully increase ideas to get to next stages of development.

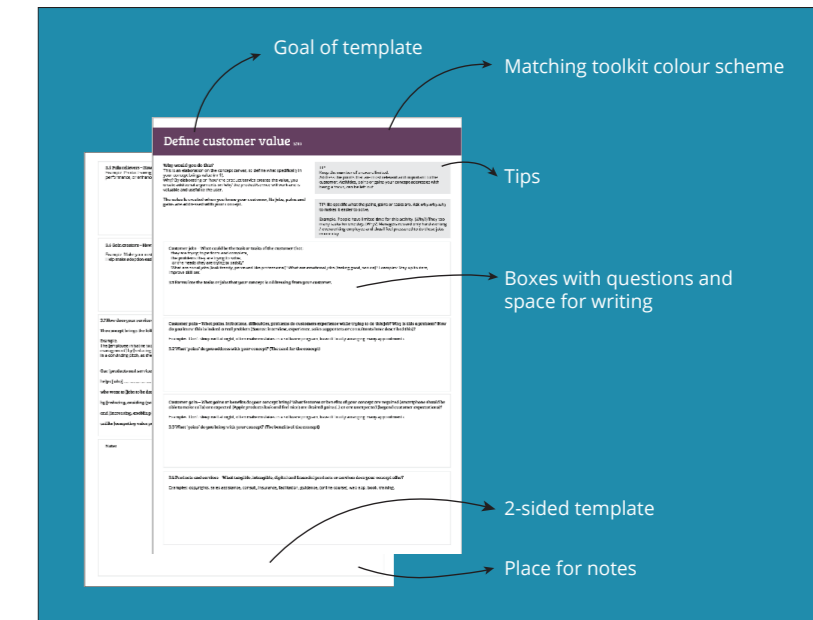


Figure 8. Explaining how the template works.

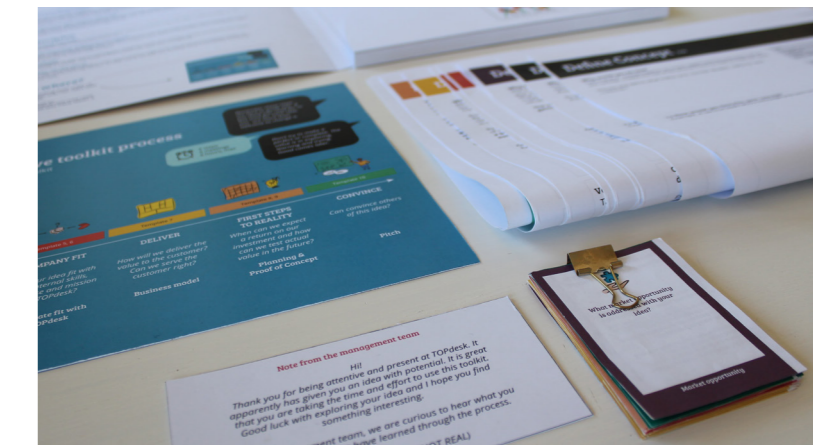


Image 10. Shows the components in the toolkit together.

## Cards

The cards are an optional element in the toolkit, that help employees when they want or need more elaboration on questions that they come across in the templates. For example, when employees want to emphasize how their idea fills a gap in a large market, additional questions might help them phrase their argument better. What the cards do is, they break down one question from the template into even smaller questions and elaborate further on topics, like shown in figure 9.

The questions itself on the cards are based on the questions from the many original tools on which the toolkit is also based, like the value proposition canvas (Osterwalder et al., 2014) and the business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). To still keep it easy to understand for all background knowledge, I adapted some 'design language' without changing the meaning of it.

The layout of the cards is based on the colour scheme that is used in the whole toolkit (Image 13), which makes it easy to find the corresponding cards when employees need them. Since the use of the cards does extend the time in the meeting room, it is up to the team to decide whether they use these or not. In the cover of the toolkit folder, it is explained that it is only an optional function.



Image 12. Front side of the toolkit folder



Image 13. How the cards match the colour

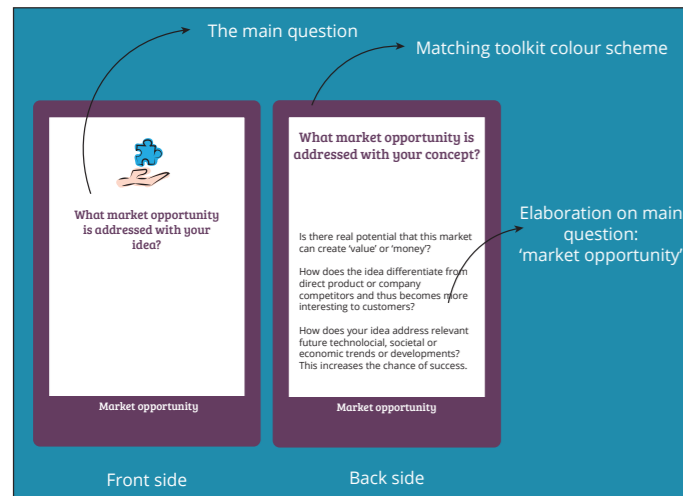


Figure 9. How Design Thinking and Participatory Design are applied on this graduation project.

## 6.4 The toolkit process

With the use of the toolkit, employees go through a process to explore the value of new service ideas by finding out if this idea has actual customer value and if TOPdesk is the right company to develop and deliver this new service. Furthermore, this process helps employees build arguments that will convince the management to support and invest in their idea, based on exploring desirability, feasibility and viability. To achieve this, employees go through 6 steps that are shown in Figure 10 and is further explained in each step below.

Before employees come to the decision to use the toolkit, they have first been introduced to the toolkit. This is shortly explained in the next section (chapter 6.5). Assuming that employees are aware of the toolkit, they are able to find more information about the toolkit on an online internal platform. On this page, employees can find the central location in the company to get their toolkit. Employees are recommended to gather a small team between 2-4 people with different expertise to work together on the toolkit. This way it is more likely they have most of the knowledge present to fill in the templates.

### Step 1. Team alignment and concept definition

In the first template, employees define the first elements of their idea including service characteristics, functionalities and the customer they are targeting. The team will also shortly discuss how they see their idea as a service for TOPdesk and how it contributes to the long term value for the company. By writing the idea on paper, it makes sure everyone is working on the same idea, preventing unnecessary discussions further in the process.

The second template starts with understanding knowledge and expertise in the team needed for the initiative. By questioning the knowledge in the team at this point, it is possible to invite experts along the employee toolkit process beforehand. The second part of the template discusses the expertise needed for further development if the initiative will get supported. The lack of internal skills is a factor that inhibits new service development success (de Jong & Vermeulen, 2003), so if the skills are not present in the company, it is important to evaluate the continuation of the initiative now.

Besides this, the employees think about their project approach in communication and frequency of meeting to further align the team and make this process more effective. This also includes the team to tell about their commitment to this initiative and afterwards. Employees can now contribute in a way they are comfortable, preventing a lack of knowledge or skills in the team and miscommunication on commitment.

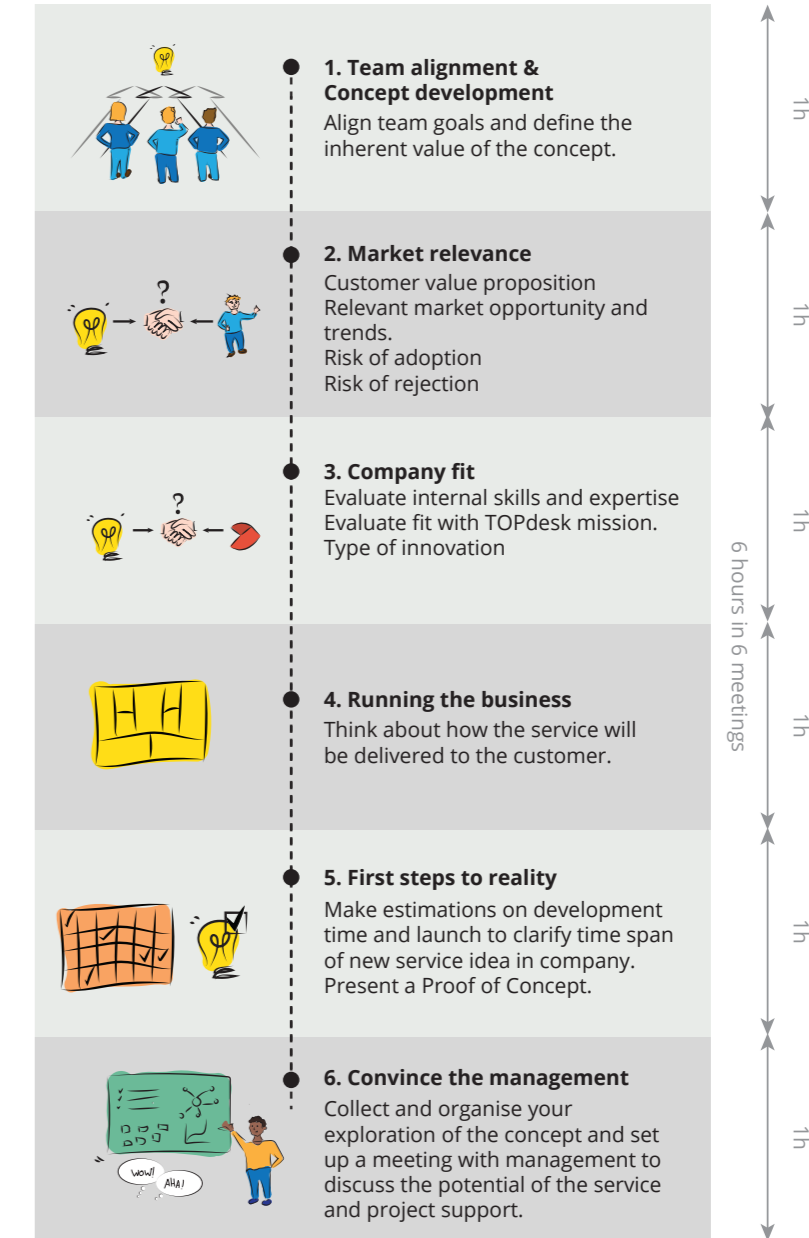


Figure 10. How Design Thinking and Participatory Design are applied on this graduation project.

If the team is complete and on the same level, they can continue to further explore their new service idea.

## Step 2. Value and market exploration

The goal of this step is to explore and define the value proposition for the new service idea and define its market relevance by defining relevant trends, developments and competitors. Despite the large amount of time, even weeks or months, that one could spend on defining a value proposition and doing market research, I chose to make employees try it within 2 hours. The goal is to create a draft value proposition (template 3) and define 2 arguments that indicate market relevance (template 4) for their idea making it a manageable task in 2 hours. Employees should use the meetings to work on the assignment, and search for this information as well. Some 'homework' might be needed after the meetings to clarify what they found. 2 somewhat grounded arguments are sufficient enough to be interesting for decision makers.

In case this initiative will be further developed and tested, it is however important that customer value and market relevance are further explored into depth.

When there is a lack of proof for market relevance and/or clear customer value, the team might choose to stop the initiative or dive deeper in these topics one more. In both cases, it teaches them something about this idea.

These templates contribute to exploring the desirability of the new service idea.

## Step 3. Company fit

When employees decide there is enough indication of customer value and market potential, they continue to explore the company fit. This company fit is achieved when TOPdesk has the right internal skills for developing and launching the new service and it fits with the company values and mission of TOPdesk. All these criteria are important, so the lack of one of them decreases the chance of success. In case of doubt, employees are advised to discuss it with colleagues, product managers or a management team member. Otherwise it is recommended to stop the initiative.

In the first template of this step 'Define fit with TOPdesk current expertise' (nr. 5), employees explore the internal skills needed for the future project. This template builds upon template 1 and now also evaluates the options whether investing in knowledge or skills is needed and wanting to make the service a success.

In the second template "Define TOPdesk fit", employees focus on explaining how their idea fits with TOPdesk core values and its mission. Other points in the templates are explaining the risk of rejection, risk of adoption and the type of innovation (de Jong & Vermeulen, 2003) explaining the relevance of the project from a larger company

perspective.

Employees also get the freedom to explain why it is not generally considered a 'typical' TOPdesk service, but why it should be considered anyway. This way, employees are given the 'power' to go in discussion with the management, despite the management idea selection criteria that are integrated. This is beneficial for the open relationship between management and employees and it stimulates a change from bottom-up that is not expected. For this reason, this option for 'considering anyway' is also integrated in other questions throughout the toolkit. In the last template, employees get reminded about this point of attention, so that they are prepared to discuss this with management.

The template finishes with answering the question: "Why is TOPdesk the company to pursue this project and launch this service in the market?". It challenges them to summarize the previous arguments into one strong argument. It also supports their decision to continue their initiative or not.

## Step 4. Exploring the business model

After employees have described how the new service idea is a fit with the company, the team should think about how TOPdesk can create, deliver and capture the value of the new service. The team has now explored the value of the new service idea, but will now explore if and how TOPdesk will be able to deliver the new service idea in the future. The idea might be a great fit for TOPdesk and its internal skills, but if there are complicated channels involved, or if there are many costs that are hard to keep down, it might not be a very suitable new service for TOPdesk anyway. The revenue model is also important here.

Based on the business model canvas (Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y.,2010), employees discuss new points in the template "Define Business model" that are essential in creating, delivering and capturing the value through key partners, key activities, key resources, customer relationships, channels, revenue streams and costs. Each of these points is discussed with questions that are also used in the business model canvas (Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y.,2010). Other elements from the canvas include, customer segments and value proposition, which were already partly discussed in template 3 and 4. However these are still included here as they are part of the business plan and new insights can be included.

Creating and defining a business model is also in this case generally a challenge, especially in such a short time as one hour. To make it possible in one hour, employees should see this as a 'draft' business model and as a checklist for the future. This template is a great way to understand where they do not have an answer to yet, or what points are interesting opportunities for TOPdesk in the future. The teams' awareness of imperfections or incompletions in the service business model are useful to start the discussion with the management. To come to this point, employees could

decide to continue with some 'homework' and elaborate on this more before pitching it to the management. However, the imperfections of incompletions should not be taken lightly, as these are important to evaluate whether this new service could be viable.

## Step 5. First steps to reality

In the first steps of reality, employees define a Proof of Concept (template 8) and make an estimation of time for development, launch and profit of the new service idea (template 9). With the Proof of Concept, employees explain how TOPdesk can test one or more core functionalities of the new service idea, without e.g. thinking about the layout of the application. By being able to explain how easily or effectively the new service can be tested, the more likely management will be convinced to at least try that. This will help employees get the project idea to the next step.

Since TOPdesk is a commercial company, the promise for profit of a new service is one of the idea selection criteria. In this case definitely, because the objective for TOPdesk was to create 'X' million euro profit from new services in a new market. With the template "Define future and planning" (template 9), employees make estimations on the development time of the service, the time it takes from development till launch and the time till profit. The goal of this specific template is to challenge the revenue model, but also think about the relevance of the service when it e.g. takes 5 years to develop. Is it still relevant then? And will the service cover all the development costs? Employees' estimations will supposedly be inaccurate when made in one hour, but it is a good start for a discussion. To make this manageable in an hour, employees are asked to think about these, based on knowledge from earlier projects, colleagues' advice or from known examples from other companies with similar services.

## Step 6. Convince

This last step, and last template "Define your Story for Pitch" (template 10) helps employees to structure all the arguments that they have created during the use of this toolkit, and make it into one logical story which they can pitch to the decision maker. Therefore, with this template no new information needs to be created.

I do recommend employees to spend some extra time on this step by making the pitch more visible, with e.g. poster or an image. Depending on the people employees are presenting to, I think a digital presentation might suit well as well. These steps for this template are based on the Pitch Craft Guide (Pavlič, 2019), because it is a tool to structure your build to convince an audience. This matches the goal of this toolkit to present a new service idea to a decision maker and convince them it has potential.

After this last template is filled in, it is up to the team to arrange the meeting with the relevant decision makers.

## 6.5 Design roadmap

The employee initiative toolkit is designed to enable employees to develop their new service ideas from the moment they have an idea to getting project support from management. However, to make this toolkit a success, I have made some implementation recommendations. Currently, TOPdesk employees are not used to creating ideas for a new market. Also, the organisation does not provide the right resources to make employees aware of the toolkit. Lastly, to implement the toolkit internationally TOPdesk needs to make some steps. To demonstrate how TOPdesk can work towards international implementation, I created a design roadmap (Figure 8).

### Horizons

#### Horizon 1 - Create support and toolkit awareness

Horizon 1 takes about one year and is mainly about TOPdesk creating awareness and the right circumstances for employees to start taking initiatives using the toolkit. Besides that the toolkit functions as a way to create a future vision for the company bottom-up, it is also up to the management to continue developing their future company vision. This way management is able to keep providing up-to-date idea selection criteria that is included in the toolkit. This includes that TOPdesk should provide some general market direction or interesting trends that the company would like to invest in.

In this horizon, the toolkit is launched to the Dutch branch in Delft, the headquarters and one other small Dutch branch. This way, designers can test and develop the toolkit in a place with lots of employees at the same time, before it is introduced to other branches internationally. During this time, the toolkit is still a physical toolkit. With the launch of the toolkit it is important to also build an appropriate platform where employees can share their initiatives, ask for support and share successes and important lessons. This way the awareness of the toolkit in the branch grows, while the results of the toolkit can be shared with a bigger audience. This allows for a better implementation and value of the toolkit in the organisation, because the results of the initiatives can be better documented and monitored.

At this point, it is not expected that there will be many initiatives (5) for new service development. After the launch of the toolkit at the end of this horizon more initiatives are expected.

#### Horizon 2 - Successful implementation

In the second horizon the toolkit will take a bigger place in the organisation. It is also introduced to another branch in the Netherlands. Next to this, more teams will start to experiment with the toolkit, which should result in an increased number of initiatives. To support this, there will be different internal marketing activities to maintain the interest of the toolkit in the company to get all employees at least know about the toolkit.

The toolkit will now also be provided digitally, to make initiatives even faster and easier to share with colleagues abroad when needed. The digital version also allows to more easily build a database with ideas that have been tried, providing insights on different levels e.g. barriers for employees in the initiative process.

At the end of these two years, designers have built an implementation playbook that can be used to introduce the use of the toolkit worldwide. It includes lessons that are learned from the implementation of the toolkit in the Netherlands. It will also describe how certain implementation decisions might be different in other cultures or smaller branches.

During this horizon, the first initiatives and projects are expected. However, they will probably be somewhat close to the general line of services that TOPdesk provides, as it is difficult to create something totally new. Since in general, only a low percentage of ideas will actually be commercialized, no live services are expected.

#### Horizon 3 - Toolkit Worldwide

The third horizon is about introducing the toolkit worldwide. All branches are expected to include the toolkit in their work environment while using the implementation playbook. To make the implementation worldwide, each branch manager should take responsibility for this.

During these five years, it is expected that many initiatives have been turned into projects. The benefit is that all these initiatives combined give insight in market directions for TOPdesk that were or were not preferable. By using all this data, TOPdesk can gather insights in common ideas or design opportunities, resulting in data-driven ideation.

After all the ideas that were developed before, it is possible to define a better market direction and trend analysis resulting in the launch of services that will contribute to the company objective of 'X' million of profit from non-ESM sources.

## Design roadmap

	Create support and toolkit awareness	Successful implementation	Sustainable worldwide innovation
<b>Timeline</b>	Horizon 1 2020-2021 1 year	Horizon 2 2021 - 2023 2 years	Horizon 3 2023-2026 3 years
<b>Focus</b>	Creating a future vision needed for screening criteria for new service ideas Creating environment for creativity	Integrating employee-driven innovation by launching the toolkit in Europe and an internal innovation platform	Starting a sustainable revenue stream from a range of services in different markets
<b>Toolkit</b>	Implementation Netherlands Market research Vision creation Test toolkit Develop toolkit requirements Physical toolkit	Implementation Europe Launching playbook Update toolkit Expansion (digital) toolkit	Implementation worldwide
<b>Launch strategy</b>	<b>Create awareness</b> Sharing general information through mail, platform, posters + branch wide presentation + assign spokesperson for contact + launch webpage	<b>Maintain interest</b> Share in-depth information on internal platform through display of toolkit, advantages, success stories, marketing stands, workshops	<b>Persuade</b> Add FAQ to platform, more workshops
<b>KPI</b>		<b>Action</b> Toolkit is available and used at all branches	
#initiatives	5	10	90
#projects	0	5	3
#launched services	0	0	1
<b>Resources</b>	Management team builds vision Marketing does market and trend research Designers test and develop toolkit Management sets incentives HR set up innovation & creativity activities Developers build platform	Branch manager promotes and supports Designers give introductory workshops Designers keep developing toolkit Developers build platform	Branch managers promote and support Designers give introductory workshops Designers keep developing toolkit Marketers use data for ideation
<b>Investment</b>	1,5 FTE	1 FTE	0,75 FTE
<b>Technology</b>	Physical toolkit Internal innovation platform building	Digital toolkit Database building Internal innovation platform launch	Starting data-driven ideation using AI Innovation platform international
<b>Location</b>	TOPdesk Netherlands	TOPdesk Europe	TOPdesk worldwide
<b>Type of projects</b>	No expected new service ideas yet	NSD strategy	Diversification strategy

The images in this roadmap are inspired by illustrations from Dribbble (Arianni, 2020), (Pavik, 2020), (Power, 2020), (Rakhtaba, 2019).

Figure 11. Showing the design roadmap with recommendations for toolkit implementation, scaling up internationally

## Toolkit

The toolkit first starts as a physical toolkit, but is expected to develop further into a digital version. This is especially useful with the implementation of the toolkit internationally when team collaboration includes employees that are not located in the same branch. In the second horizon, this digital toolkit should be developed and launched. After connecting it with the internal innovation platform, additional functionalities can be added to the toolkit, like documenting and showing progress digitally, asking questions or feedback from colleagues and keeping an overview of the initiatives in the organisation. It could also be a place to share and apply for ideas. These functionalities should increase the effectiveness of the employee initiative process and toolkit, while an overload of functionalities or input from others should be prevented. To make the transition towards international implementation, an implementation playbook should be created that includes tips and tricks from implementation lessons in the Netherlands and considerations according to a different culture. For example, despite the company culture of having a low perceived hierarchy, the comfortable connection with the branch manager about a new service might not be the same in all countries in Europe, making the pitch with the branch manager there or management team not as easy as it would be in the Netherlands. Tips are given for this. In the last horizon the content of the toolkit should be adaptable to different cultures and be more convergent to the new service vision that TOPdesk is creating over the horizons.

## Launch strategy

To allow employees to benefit from this toolkit, it is important for them to know it exists, how it can be valuable for them and how and where they can find it. To get this information to all employees, I created recommendations for a launch strategy, based on the AIDA model (Figure 12). This stands for Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action, and is a funnel tool that usually helps a user through the process from introduction to buying or consuming. By using this model, the launch strategy will help employees get introduced with the toolkit towards using the toolkit.

### Creating awareness of the toolkit

To create awareness of the toolkit with all employees, an announcement will be made on the general information sharing platform at TOPdesk. This platform is already used for announcements and updates on internal projects and is checked regularly by most employees. Mail will help to communicate more general information of the value of the toolkit, its use, target group and contact point for further questions. Posters will also be placed around the offices describing benefits of the toolkit to address the emotional

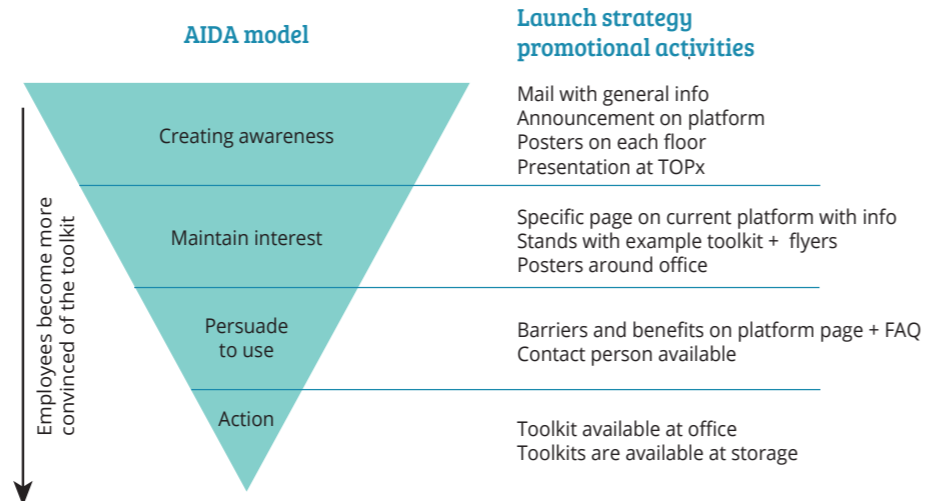


Figure 12. How Design Thinking and Participatory Design are applied on this graduation project.

need for the toolkit. Lastly, it will be useful to present the toolkit at an existing offline channel, called TOPx. This is a returning event used for inspiring stories from in or outside the company and has a large audience worldwide. People can ask questions here and get introduced with the product here in a more personal way.

### Maintain the interest of employees

To maintain interest, more in-depth information should be available for the employee to get further informed on the different elements in the toolkit and its benefits. On the current information sharing platform at TOPdesk, there is no place yet for this kind of information, but it should elaborate on the elements in the toolkit, its advantages, and display employees' experiences. Success stories and experiences from people can add to increase the interest of using the toolkit. By adding 'marketing' stands displaying the toolkit on each Dutch branch floor accompanied by flyers and posters, people can first hand explore the benefits and elements in the toolkit.

### Persuade employees to use the toolkit

After further interest is sparked, it is next to persuade the employee to actually use the toolkit now or in the future. It works to speak to the emotion of the employee by

sharing why and when it is valuable in their working situation. By sharing barriers and benefits of the toolkit in a more personal way, employees can directly relate to the toolkit. At this point, employees might start doubting whether to use the toolkit because of questions they have. That is why besides a FAQ also a spokesperson should be assigned. Further qualities of this spokesperson will be described further below.

### Action - they use the toolkit

After employees have gone through these stages, employees should be able to take action and use the toolkit. It should thus be clear where they can find it and what they should do next in order to experience the benefits. On the platform, all of these questions will be answered. Employees can find the toolkit in a dedicated cupboard at TOPdesk. This is the easiest way to store them, when they are not used digitally at this point. They are asked to send an email to the spokesperson to inform them that a toolkit is taken. This way an overview of running ideas can be created without interfering with their freedom in the employees' jobs.

### Organising the launch strategy

To organise these promotional activities, it is recommended to create a small team from marketing and support employees and designers that together create and communicate the content and marketing materials. They are responsible for creating the stands, content for the information sharing platform, building the stand and printing several toolkits to start with.

After the launch strategy, it is important that some people stay responsible for the toolkit for tasks like keeping the toolkits available, answering questions and updating the content on the webpage or toolkit elements itself when necessary.

To support employees, the spokesperson should have knowledge of the content of the toolkit and accompanying design methodologies, to be able to help where the content of the toolkit might stop. Marketing and communication should be available to support this person.

## KPI

The KPI's in the design roadmap are set to measure the number of initiatives, new service development projects and launched service in the organisation. By setting KPI's management can measure the progress that is made (Guide to key performance indicators, 2006) with the implementation of employees initiatives in the organisation. Management can also act according to the numbers when for examples, not enough

initiatives come to the management for support. The numbers in the roadmap are mostly assumptions. The numbers will probably change according to what is happening in the first years and adapt these numbers according to what is actually feasible. The KPI's might be specified for each branch over different locations to specify and measure progress.

In the first horizon, only 5 serious initiatives are expected, because people need to get used to the experimentation mindset towards exploring new service ideas and the use of the toolkit. In the second horizon, I aimed for 20 initiatives. This is based on the assumption and goal that about 5% of the 400 employees in the Dutch Branches will come with an initiative, including the estimation that some come in small groups. From these 20 initiatives I assume that about 10 will go through, based on the idea that management would like to show how invested they are in developing new services, as well as the need for exploration to learn from these examples. From these projects to live projects, there will be a big loss of ideas. Based on Stevens & Burley (1997) only about 3,2% of ideas get commercial success, which aims for no successful new products yet. Despite the effort, these projects should be seen as important learning experiences to improve e.g. the development processes.

In the last horizon, the whole organisation should participate, which makes for more than 900 employees. If now 10% of 900 employees come with ideas, including people with multiple ideas, there are 90 initiatives of which approximately 2,88 (3,2% of initiatives) ideas turn into projects with further investment into a larger development project (Stevens & Burley, 1997). Hopefully 1 idea will make it to launch (42,5% after large development process)(Stevens & Burley, 1997).

## Resources

For the implementation and development of the toolkit, I specified the resources that are needed in people, investments and technology are needed.

### People

The management team and branch managers have the important role to encourage the use of the toolkit for employee initiatives. Also after the toolkit is launched, they keep responsibility to support the use of the toolkit by employees. When the toolkit goes international, each branch manager should stay responsible for implementation and KPI's. Designers are important in all three horizons to make sure employees become aware and well informed on the toolkit, and stay active in the further development of the toolkit. I expect that the toolkit will need additional elements that either further explain or specify on e.g. trends that might become relevant for TOPdesk. This way the

toolkit remains relevant and effective for employees over the years. It is also up to the marketing department and management together to learn from the larger number of initiatives and either specify the future vision for TOPdesk and share this. Developers will focus on building and developing the information sharing platform for employee initiatives, starting from informing employees with the toolkit information towards being able to gather data from past initiatives. This data could show barriers in the employee initiative process, or projects with overlapping ideas, or expertise that is missing in the organisation on which the organisation can act.

### Investment

The investment that I expect TOPdesk should make for the implementation of the toolkit is expressed in FTE, because calculating the actual salaries of people will differ too much per role and country. Also, almost all costs will be the work of people, and not be physical resources. The toolkit itself is only physical in the first horizon, and will become digital in the others. Next to this, it is made of paper that can be easily printed in their own offices, being only a small cost also in larger numbers.

In the first horizon, I expect 1 FTE for the implementation that is needed in the Dutch branch. This includes management encouragement and support, the work of the marketing department, developers, designers and HR organising some innovation activities. Most of this work uses only a few hours per week or a few weeks in the first year for these groups results in this number. They focus on the preparation and the launch of the toolkit, including the development of the information sharing platform. For the second horizon, I calculated 1 FTE for each of the two years as well. Now more time is spent on the development of the platform working on data collection and the implementation of the toolkit in the organisation.

In the last horizon, the toolkit will be implemented internationally meaning that the most time will be spent on the implementation of the toolkit in other countries. This means that more branch managers need to spend hours per week on promoting the toolkit or helping employees find support with it, taking more FTE. In the first year of the third horizon, this means that designers need to be active internationally (0,75 FTE), either digital or flying to other branches. After the implementation worldwide, designers and developers become less active, since their responsibilities shift to maintenance (0,5 FTE).

### Technology

In the first horizon, technology mainly plays a role through the innovation sharing platform that needs to be built. This will be the base for the coming years, now making information available on the employee initiative toolkit, and collecting the first insights in how the employee initiatives process including the toolkit can be improved. In the

second horizon, the toolkit will be available digitally and the innovation sharing platform expands into a place for online collaboration and sharing the lessons that are learned. It also will be used for data collection. The third horizon starts with making the platform available internationally. Simultaneously, this data collected from the platform before will be designed to extract patterns that show barriers that stop ideas in a certain place in the process or showing recurring ideas that work or do not work. Near the end of the last horizon with the use of AI, employees get suggestions or ideas they can use in the initiative process to make it more effective.

### Location

First, the toolkit will be implemented in the Delft headquarters, because it is easier to test and develop the toolkit with people when they are in the same location. Second, the most marketers and designers are placed together in this place, making collaboration between these teams necessary for the development easier. In the second horizon, the implementation will be expanded to Europe. Here it is important to become aware of the effects of cultural differences that should be built in the implementation playbook. In the last horizon, the physical and digital toolkits are implemented worldwide which should highly increase the number of employee initiatives worldwide.

### Type of projects

Eventually, the aim of the toolkit is to help TOPdesk execute their diversification strategy by entering a new market with new services. It is unlikely that the organisation is able to shift towards this mindset in a short time. That is why in the first and second horizon focus mostly on creating new services for a similar market or creating similar services for a new market. By evaluating the fit of the initiatives that are created and evaluated in horizon 1 and 2 TOPdesk can create a new service vision. This vision is needed to give employees direction that will contribute to making their initiatives more effective. With the new service vision and the likelihood that employee initiatives are part of their daily jobs, employees will be able to generate ideas for new services that are further from the current TOPdesk services (the diversification strategy). The toolkit can be adapted to help employees with the implementation of this new service vision.

***“A lot of things are allowed at TOPdesk, but that does also mean that a lot of things will not happen. The toolkit might change that.”***

- Functional designer

## 6.6 Chapter discussion

### Limitations design

The idea selection and new service characteristics are now tailored to the preferences of the management team. Since I took a somewhat longer period to finish this thesis, this might not be up-to-date anymore. It is expected that these service characteristics and criteria might have changed over time, which has an impact on the content of the toolkit. Since these criteria might keep developing in the future, TOPdesk might think about a way to keep these criteria up to date, while considering its impact on the design. This can be achieved with a reference in the toolkit to an internal company webpage for up-to-date criteria and integrate it in the toolkit process.

The idea selection criteria are only based on one interview with the CFO. These criteria were not further validated with the management team of this person again after I created idea selection criteria for TOPdesk. The consequence is that these criteria might have changed and that it is not a fully representative image of the team. This might have changed the steps in the design.

Lastly, the design roadmap was not validated because of time limitations in this project. Many recommendations were based on assumptions and could not be validated with stakeholders. In case the toolkit should be introduced, the design roadmap can be used as a structure for an implementation plan, but should be discussed with multiple stakeholders and improved based on their feedback. This would improve the feasibility and viability of the implementation strategy, increasing the success of the toolkit at

TOPdesk.

### Validation design

After I designed the toolkit, I validated the toolkit with 3 potential users. It was the goal to understand how well participants are able to use the toolkit independently, what they would recommend to improve this and what recommendations they have regarding implementation.

Due to the situation at the time of the validation, (corona virus and thus everyone working from home), I did the validation through a Skype meeting. To still give the participants a sense of the size and feel of the toolkit, the participants watched a short video of a person showing all the elements in the toolkit. Afterwards they opened a digital version of the toolkit (PDF) of which I asked them to read through it with the goal to explain to me how they think the toolkit works. They got 10 minutes to tell me what they think, do and feel while trying to understand and explain it to me (Think-aloud protocol (Hanington & Martin, 2012)). Based on their thought process I could find difficulties in the process and create design recommendations for the toolkit. The additional questions provided insights on how to improve the toolkit and provided the implementation recommendations.

The validation session showed that employees were able to understand and use the toolkit quite well on their own. Without an introduction of the toolkit before, they could explain the use of the elements within 10 minutes and explain how they would use it during their daily work. Although they told me the right uses for all of the elements, they did have some questions, which I explain in the recommendations below. Most

of their feedback was about the implementation of the toolkit, since this would be the factor determining a big impact on the success of the toolkit.

Something else that was validated was how employees were able to adapt the use of the toolkit to their own needs. Based on this validation, they could use the toolkit in different ways varying from following the process step by step, to the decision to only use the components and templates that were thought valuable. This indicated that it can be adapted to personal use, which was a design requirement.

The toolkit also showed an increase in confidence on how well they know what to do when they would like to develop a new service idea. Their rating before and after the introduction of the toolkit went from an average of 6,5 to 8,2. In the current situation their approach ranged from knowing what to do based on experience to asking colleagues what to do and learn from their feedback. They rated this approach as sufficient (6,5/10). Only, after the instruction of the toolkit, their knowledge increased significantly (8,2/10). Their knowledge on their options improved based on having more structure in the process and a clearer starting point, which was lacking before. However, they still feel like the success of the exploration of their new service idea would depend on their collaboration with colleagues in this process, which partly explains why it is not graded as a 10. However, I do think that this increase indicates that the toolkit could have a positive effect on the number of initiatives in the organisation, preventing some ideas from being developed based on the lack of structure and guidance.

Overall, they were very positive about the idea of such a toolkit being introduced at TOPdesk. The many ideas that go around at TOPdesk would finally have a tangible place to be documented, explored and shared. Even if ideas will not be further developed yet, the documentation would make sure ideas become transferable, instead of lost. It would make it easier to understand and find others working on similar ideas or tackling similar customer groups, which could be a new added value of the toolkit at TOPdesk. They described the toolkit as following:

*“The toolkit invites creativity.” - ICT professional*

*“A lot of things are allowed at TOPdesk, but that does also mean that a lot of things will not happen. The toolkit might change that.” - Functional designer*

## Recommendations

### Design toolkit recommendations

#### General

For the toolkit, I created the promise for employees to explore the value of their idea in 6 meetings taking about 6 hours. Based on the feedback of employees, it is quite an optimistic time frame and would depend on the experience of the people and the definition of the concept before the use of the toolkit. There might therefore be a risk that the result might not be a proper value estimation enough. On the other hand, an estimation was appreciated as it makes an employee initiative planable with other colleagues, and motivates to cover all the points in the template in a certain time. Therefore I would recommend doing multiple pilot tests, and design a process that covers an appropriate level of value estimation that is still perceived as planable for employees. The right balance would be needed here. It would also help to communicate a clearer starting point with a status of idea elaboration. This also counts for the end of the toolkit process. When the toolkit process ends, employees would like to know what comes next. It would improve the toolkit if a follow-up recommendation would be given. Such a recommendation could be really small, like ending the last template with a note that says: “make an appointment with a decision-maker” or “talk to people in the organization about some doubts in your idea”. It would prevent losing ideas at this point and motivate them to continue the process of their initiative. Besides including something like this, I would also recommend for a company to communicate what employees can do after this stage. Communications options or tips would already improve the gap that follows after the toolkit process is finished.

Another improvement for the toolkit would be to better facilitate the learning process. Employees are motivated to try and learn from this experience, but when an employee decides to stop the value exploration process, the toolkit does not include the possibility yet to document the insights and share these with the organisation. Therefore, I recommend including an additional template that structures the learning process. To make these lessons valuable, this information could be shared digitally on a dedicated place for these specific lessons.

At the beginning of the toolkit, the employee reads through text that is written with quite an upbeat spirit. However throughout the rest of the toolkit process e.g. while reading through the templates, this tone lost its spirit. It was mentioned that it was the upbeat spirit that motivated participants to start with the process, but that the serious tone made them feel less motivated. If indeed this tone would prove to be a factor that motivates employees to follow through with the toolkit process, I recommend to include this more into the process itself. This would better implement the ‘guidance’ throughout the process that employees needed in the first place.

Lastly, it was mentioned that the toolkit could have a catchier name that would improve the spark of working with the toolkit. I agree that another name could spark the interest of more employees at TOPdesk, possibly improving the introduction and speed of the implementation of the toolkit.

#### Folder

The goal of the folder is to introduce employees to the process and components in the toolkit and show them where to start it. It also introduced the explorative mindset that employees should follow while using the toolkit. The employees found the introduction clear, informative and could imagine it to be reassuring of their choice to use the toolkit. The explorative mindset made them feel more at ease to explore all these topics, knowing it does not have to be perfect or complete in the first go. This plays an important role in keeping a low threshold for exploring new services, which makes this a useful functionality of the toolkit. To further emphasize the explorative mindset and improve the experience of the toolkit, I would add a small notebook or pen.

#### Process overview (card)

The process overview card creates an overview of the six steps employees can follow with the toolkit to explore the value of their new service idea. It was still somewhat confusing for employees since the process is described as a linear process, where the other side of the card ‘The Shortcuts’ shows the opportunity to skip certain steps. This is however not a contradiction. The process is linear in the sense that elements build on each other and if employees are confident enough to say they fulfilled certain criteria, they may skip a step to adapt the process to their needs. I would recommend emphasizing this option to clarify this for employees. Furthermore, the process overview was perceived as positive. Employees found it clear and an obvious start of the process.

#### Shortcuts (card)

This shortcut list presents questions that help employees decide at what level the development of their idea is, and helps them decide where in the process they are and choose the right template for this. However, shortcuts did not seem to be the most suited choice for this goal. I would recommend making it like a flow chart. This is better suited to display the connection between the steps in the process that is now missing. It would emphasize the importance of all the steps in the process for a successful employee initiative, but remain the options on how to choose the use of the toolkit components.

#### Templates

Generally I found that employees describe the use of the templates well. The structure

was clear and logical, the amount of text was pleasant and informative and the colour coding of the templates made the coherence with the process clear and pleasant to use. Also, the steps for market relevance and TOPdesk fit were appreciated, since these steps are not always discussed well in ideas.

The most comments were focused on improving the readability of the templates. One point I would improve is about the tips included in the templates. Employees thought they were useful, but it should be clearer how useful they are, by making them stand out more through the layout.

Currently, I recommend employees to look at e.g. trend reports to make a claim on the market relevance of their new service in the templates. Employees would like to have the option to look at these sources directly and be able to use them in their meeting. Therefore, I recommend integrating QR-codes that link to relevant sources to make these webpages easy to access, also when the templates are printed.

#### Cards

The cards are an optional element in the toolkit that help employees when they want or need more elaboration on questions that they come across in the templates. The employees agreed that the elaboration on questions was useful and gave the opportunity to elaborate when wanted, but they did not really know where these cards fit in the process. This should be better indicated in the folder. Where I designed them only for elaboration purposes, employees introduced inspiration as a new goal. They saw the cards as a brainstorm tool. During the process, employees need to create e.g. a draft business model. The cards could give more examples of existing business models. By giving employees more options and informing them about possible e.g. value propositions or revenue models, they can make better informed decisions in their process, increasing the value capture of their idea. This could be done for all the different steps in the process. I would recommend further developing this set of cards as a brainstorm/inspirational tool to increase the value capture of their new service during the process of this toolkit.

#### Management card

The management notes were perceived very well, since the mindset of experimentation was not perceived as self-evident in the daily job for everyone. If this note would also be signed by one or more members of the management team, it would change the way people see experimentation as something that is actually encouraged by the management. I would recommend adding another note at the end of the process to further strengthen the message, and motivate employees to continue the process after the use of the toolkit.



### Implementation recommendations

Employees were positive on the idea such a toolkit would be introduced at TOPdesk, but they do think that the introduction of the toolkit is essential for its success. To make the implementation of the toolkit a success, I have a few recommendations. It would first help to regularly and publicly present examples from ideas that were created with the toolkit. When a management member would be involved in presenting the toolkit and showing examples of it, it would confirm and convince people that experimentation is appreciated by the management, opening people up to the idea of the use of this toolkit. Although the design roadmap (Chapter 6.5) does involve introduction of the toolkit through these media, it would help to involve management in the presentation of the toolkit.

Next to this, it would be helpful to introduce the toolkit to new employees. This way the toolkit is introduced to new employees as part of the company culture, where an experimentation mindset is part of their job from the beginning.

Furthermore, I recommended the toolkit to be physical first and introduce the digital toolkit later. However, since a lot of people at TOPdesk prefer to work digitally and not on paper, and people get introduced to the physical toolkit first, they might experience this as a barrier to use the toolkit. Therefore, I recommend providing a digital and physical version of the toolkit from the start, to prevent employees from skipping the toolkit only because of the way it is offered. The digital toolkit can start as simple as an interactive digital document, while it becomes more interactive and connected with other functionalities on an internal sharing platform later.

### Validation improvements

In the case of the validation of the design toolkit, more work should be done to validate the flow and process of the toolkit. Due to the time limitations of this project, and the limited target group that was available, the toolkit was not tested with employees that actually had a new service idea while testing the whole employee initiative toolkit process. One of the first steps before implementation would be to test the toolkit with multiple small teams, go through the toolkit process and pitch to the management to find improvements there. I think a customer journey map could help to achieve this, as it creates an overview of problems and design opportunities all over the process.

Nex to this, the time that I aimed for to go through the toolkit process is 6 hours. This aim is currently only validated based on estimations that employees made during the validation interview while looking at the process. This time estimation can only be really validated when multiple teams have fulfilled the process. A new time frame might be suggested for this.

# Chapter 7

## Overall discussion

## 7. Overall discussion

### 7.1 Connection between the assignment and the final design

In the first part of the assignment, I aimed to answer the question:

*What does TOPdesk need to organise to increase employee initiatives for new service development?*

I started answering this question with a literature review, trying to create an understanding on how employee-driven innovation and new service development connect and what organisations can do to organise employee initiatives for new service development. This followed with participatory design sessions with employees, to understand how literature relates to the TOPdesk context and what I should consider specifically to answer the assignment. I translated the insights into an approach for TOPdesk that includes drivers, barriers and principles and its including roles for management, employees and organisation should pursue to facilitate employee initiatives for new service development.

The second part of the assignment was about creating a way that enables employees to fulfill their role in organising employee initiatives for new service development, by overcoming barriers. To start the design process for the final design, I did more research to fulfill the design requirements, and through a design process, it resulted in the employee initiative toolkit.

The employee initiative toolkit is a structured approach to guide and enable employees with new service ideas to effectively explore its value, to create a project proposal and to convince the management team that this idea has potential as a new TOPdesk service. With this toolkit employees with new service ideas get the guidance and support that they need to overcome their own barriers and are enables to pursue the exploration of their new service idea by themselves.

### 7.2 Impact of the toolkit

The toolkit has already shown to be valuable for TOPdesk. A dedicated team to reach TOPdesk's company objective of profit from new services will use the toolkit as inspiration for their own future steps. Also, the toolkit itself will be used by a small team of employees at TOPdesk to explore a new service idea as a tryout.

## 8. Reflection

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# Chapter 8

## Reflection

# Chapter 9

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