

AHREND PORTRAIT



A design to foster interdisciplinary prosocial behaviors in office environments

Work-life balance is becoming increasingly important in today's job market. Young professionals actively search for jobs that promote their well-being. The concept of well-being encompasses not just physical health. Psychological health, such as social connectedness and engagement, is just as important. Specifically extra-role actions intended to benefit people other than oneself, extra-role prosocial behaviors, are essential for successfully functioning organizations and well-being among employees. This project focused on how office environments can foster these extra-role prosocial behaviors.

Three themes were studied to answer this question. Firstly, a study on **prosocial behavior at work** was executed to define various ways of- and incentives for these behaviors. These studies have shown that, in order for extra-role prosocial behaviors to occur more frequently, the most substantiated strategy is to invest in the improvement of collegial relationships across disciplines. This led to the second theme, **interdisciplinary bonding at work**. Interdisciplinary bonding encounters challenges due to differences in interests and practices. These differences are rooted within the organization's culture. Research on this topic showed that a common ritual can function as a way to enhance interdisciplinary bonding. The aim of fostering prosocial behaviors in office environments requires a sustainable change in routines and behaviors from the people in that environment. Research on the third theme, **behavior change at work**, has shown that for certain target behavior to happen, a person must have sufficient motivation, sufficient ability, and an effective trigger.

Furthermore, the involvement of employees, for instance by allowing environment personalization, can have a positive effect on positive attitudes towards change. As a result of the research on the three themes, the most viable design strategy found was

finding common ground in personal interests through environment personalization

Interventions at office environments led to the design goal for this project

motivating knowledge workers to develop genuine interest in interdisciplinary colleagues

The desired interaction consists of a 'sharing' and a 'caring' part. The design should facilitate employees to share personal interests, and for other employees to care for these interests (figure 1). Ideation resulted in a definition of a product-service-system for Ahrend: the Ahrend Portrait. The Ahrend Portrait allows employees to visually portray their personal interest on the walls of their organization to personalize their work environment. Furthermore, it allows employees to develop interest in the portrayed interests on the wall by interacting with them. The concept was tested during two validation tests. The results of these validation tests suggest that the concept is capable of fostering interdisciplinary bonding and attentive, prosocial, behaviors. Furthermore, the concept inherits the potential to lower communication thresholds and increase mutual understanding and tolerance in organizations.

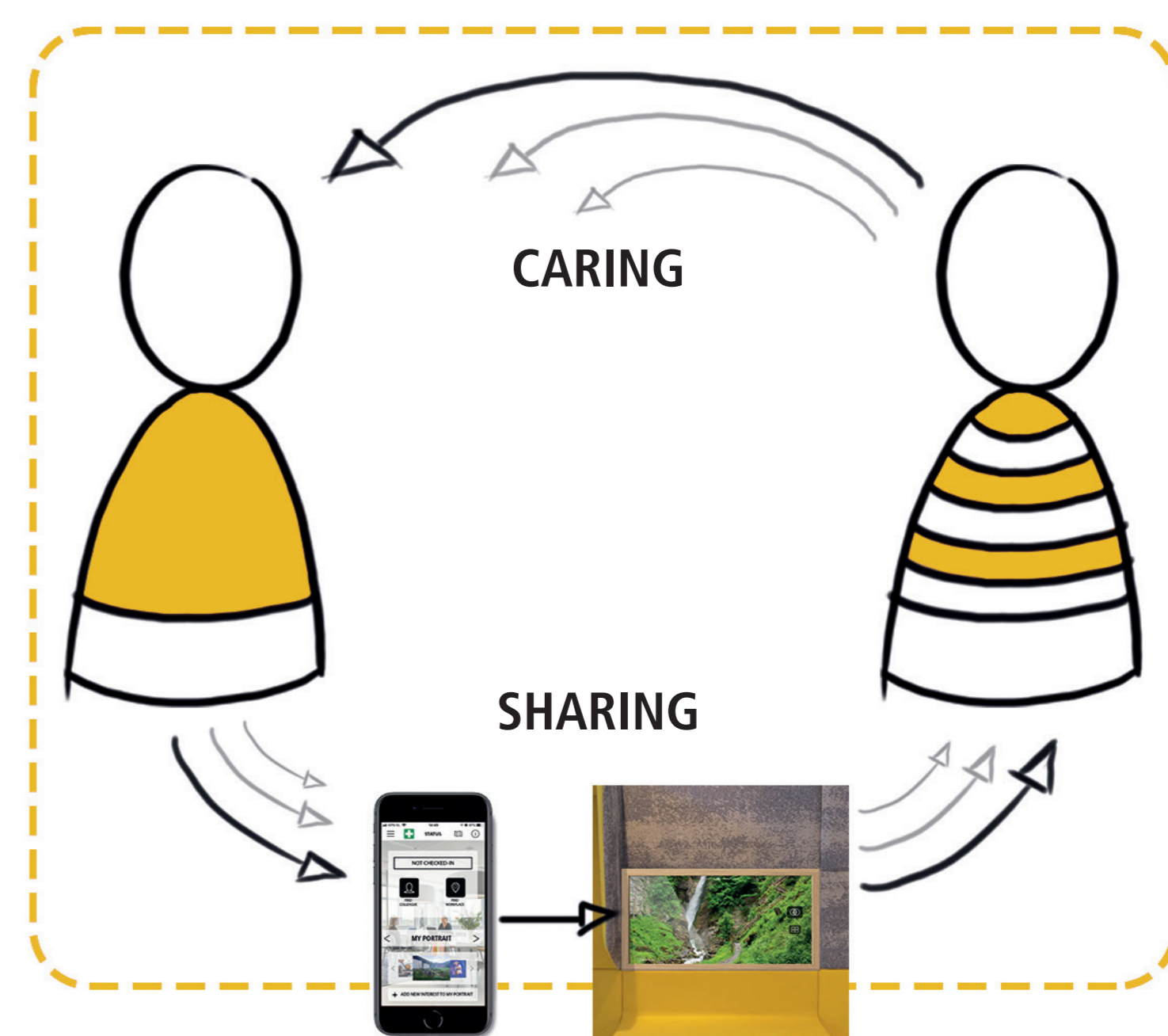
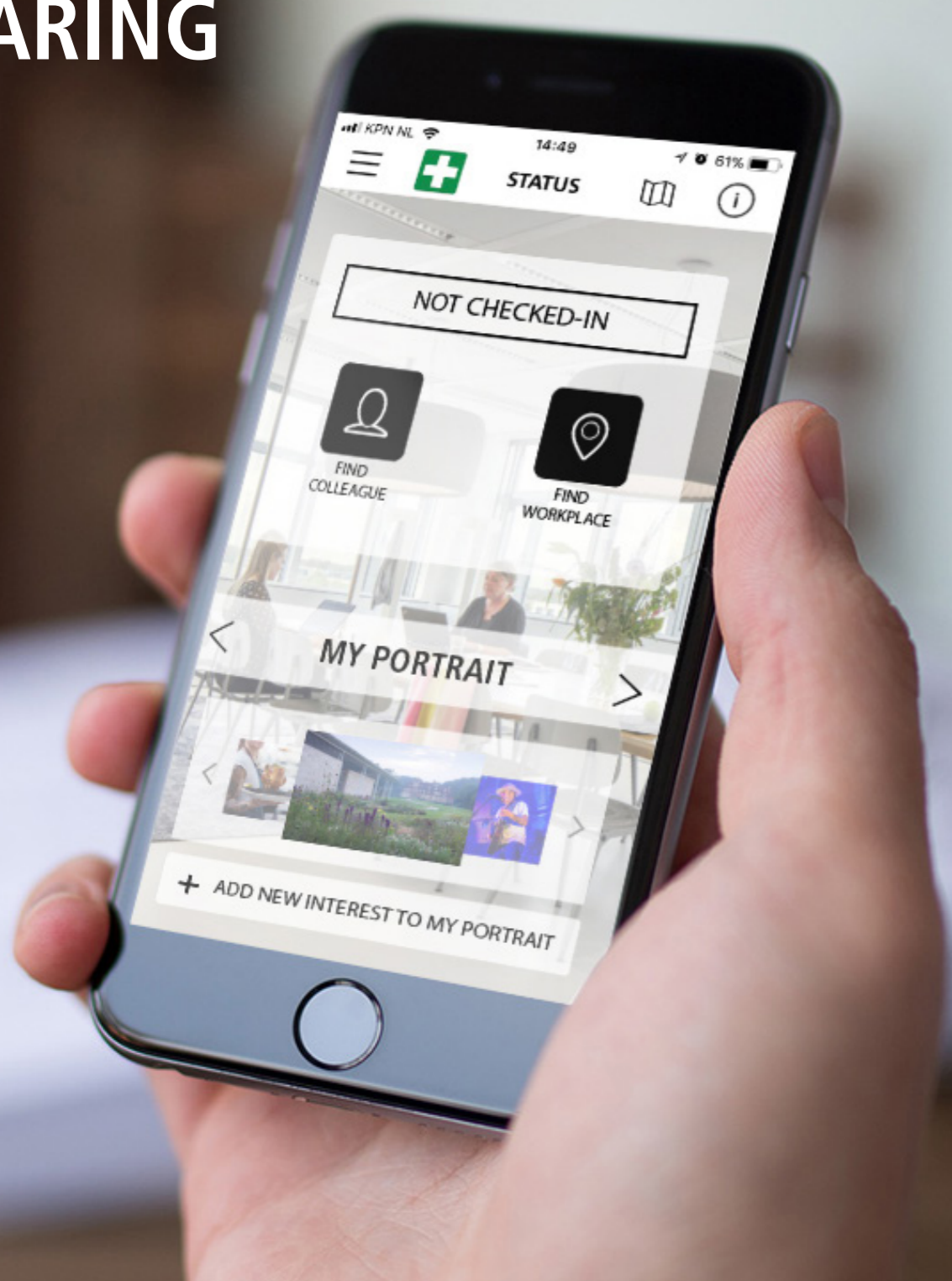


Figure 1 - The desired interaction

SHARING



CARING



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