

Synchronizing juniors with senior consultants: a digital boundary object

The scope of this graduation project was the current organizational design (OD) approach of the X team of a service company (SC). It became clear that approach standardization is a room for improvement within the current OD approach.

After conducting interviews it became clear that due to experience the senior members in the team know what they are doing but they miss the simple tools/documents to bring this across to juniors or people outside the team. It turned out that on the one hand there is a need for simplicity within the team, but on the other hand everything they have should be in there. In other words, juniors need simplicity to understand OD projects, but seniors do not want to lose valuable information and therefore prefer documents that include everything. Therefore, there is an asynchronization between the mindsets of the seniors and juniors within the team. Based on these insights the following design statement was formulated:

Design a tool for the team that brings overview and gives the team the completeness to express their expertise.

Based on all the earlier gathered insights the OD toolbox was designed. The toolbox is a digital tool for internal use that consists of two tools: the OD expertise map and the approach generator. The OD expertise map provides an overview of all the subjects that can come across within OD projects. Next to that, the map consists of an OD narrative which provides a short description of the focus of OD to understand the expertise of the team. The approach generator is a tool that can be used to design the project approach at the start of a project, based on data of previous projects a substantiated approach can be designed.

The toolbox was validated with four senior and two junior team members and seen as valuable. It turned out that the purpose of the OD toolbox is to create a shared understanding among members of the team and in this way synchronization of the different mindsets between the seniors and juniors is facilitated. The tool works as a boundary object, because it is used differently by seniors and juniors. The seniors will use the tool as a quick catch up for information and juniors will mostly use the tool to understand OD projects.

On the right the implementation plan of the OD toolbox is shown.

		H1 - DEVELOP	Jan. 2022	H2 - LAUNCH & MAINTAIN	Sep. 2022	H3 - EVALUATE & IMPROVE	Jan. 2023
TOOL	GOAL	Develop the tool and create urgency and psychological ownership among the tool team		Launch the tool to the whole team and maintain the tool to keep it up to date. Make sure that every new joiner knows and understands the tool		Evaluate whether the tool is fulfilling its purpose and if it is working properly. Discuss whether to further improve the tool or not	
	GENERAL	Define subjects list & project types		Launch tool		Evaluate tool	
				Buddy explains tool to new joiner		Turn into training	
	MAP	Design					
		Write content		Process feedback and check whether tool is up to date		Add to map	
	GENERATOR	Validate content					
Design tool with							
	Create data input form		Add finished projects to database				
	Put previous project data in database						
SENIOR & JUNIOR INTERACTION	Discover each others needs by developing the tool together		Review new tool content together		Review new tool content together		
			Seniors explain the tool to new joiners and check what they understand and what not		Evaluate together if each others needs are still covered		
OWNERSHIP	Assign tool team		Keep tool team up to date		Keep tool team up to date		
	Meet monthly and biweekly		Meet quarterly and monthly		Meet quarterly and monthly		

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