

Welcome Back

Design for dog adoption

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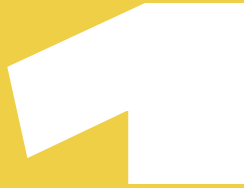
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Introduction



1.1 The background

This project was initiated with the support of the Design for Animal Lab in TU Delft. By concerning the well-being of both animals and human being, this project focused on the inputs from the human side to contribute to an excellent dog-human relationship.

The goal of this project was to facilitate adopters in adopting a shelter dog, to enhance the new human-animal bond which would benefit to the shelter dogs' welfare and enrich the owner-pet relationship. To support the adopters in their adoption process of facing the challenges and enjoying the rewards in rehoming shelter dogs.

1.2 The project

This project focuses on the adoption experience of the adopters who adopted dogs from the shelters, and how to optimize the experience to improve both the adopters' commitment in taking care of the adopted shelter dogs and the shelter dogs' wellbeing.

The adoption experience is rewarding to the adopters

Most of the human-canine relationships

are very fulfilling (Salmon & Salmon, 1983), adopting dogs from the shelters not only saves money spent on buying them but more importantly benefits the adopters both emotionally and psychologically, especially the sense of achievement grows as the re-homing process gains the dogs more freedom and relaxation.

Domestic environment is better for the dogs

A study has shown that long-term kennelled dogs have more chronic stress than dogs housed in domestic environments, which compromises the dog welfare. (Gaines, Samantha A, 2008) Issues such as breeds based expectations before adoption and the lacking of obedience education experience post-adoption could result in a disappointing unsuccessful adoption.

The adopters need tailored guidance

Furthermore, because of the communication barrier between human and canine, the particular needs of the shelter dogs could be misinterpreted. Thus the adoption and the rehoming process is valuable to be investigated for design to mostly promising a positive dog-human relationship and ensure a successful rehoming.

1.3 The research map

Research goal

The overall research goal in the research phase of this project was to map out how do people adopt dogs currently. This overall research question was divided and structured as it is shown in figure 1.

The adopters are defined as people who become the caretaker of the dog later in the dog's life. They might have to accept some compromises when making the choice of adoption. The compromise could be aspects which influence the preference for the dog. The aspects could be the dog's breed, age or other aspects. The people involved in the adoption process are the people who have an impact on the success of the adoption or can be involved in the post-adoption stage.

The approach of getting a new dog is not limited in this research, which means that the dog can come from the shelter or elsewhere. For most of the case, the adopters was This indicates that the limit of the information about the dog's previous experience and personality could add up to the risk of giving up rehoming the dog.

Concerning the adoption process, the research goal was to figure out the most distinguishing moments for the improvements of the dog-adopter relationship.

To get to know the overall image of the people, facilities and their relationship in this adoption process, the following sub research questions were formulated:

1. Who are the people that get an idea of adopting a dog?
2. Where do they search for information about a dog?
3. What are the approaches to adopting a dog?
4. What are people's motivations for adopting a dog?
5. Who are there to offer support for the adopters?
6. How do they offer support to the adopters currently?
7. When are the critical moments of adopting a dog?
8. How do people involved feel about the adoption currently?



figure 1



Desk Research

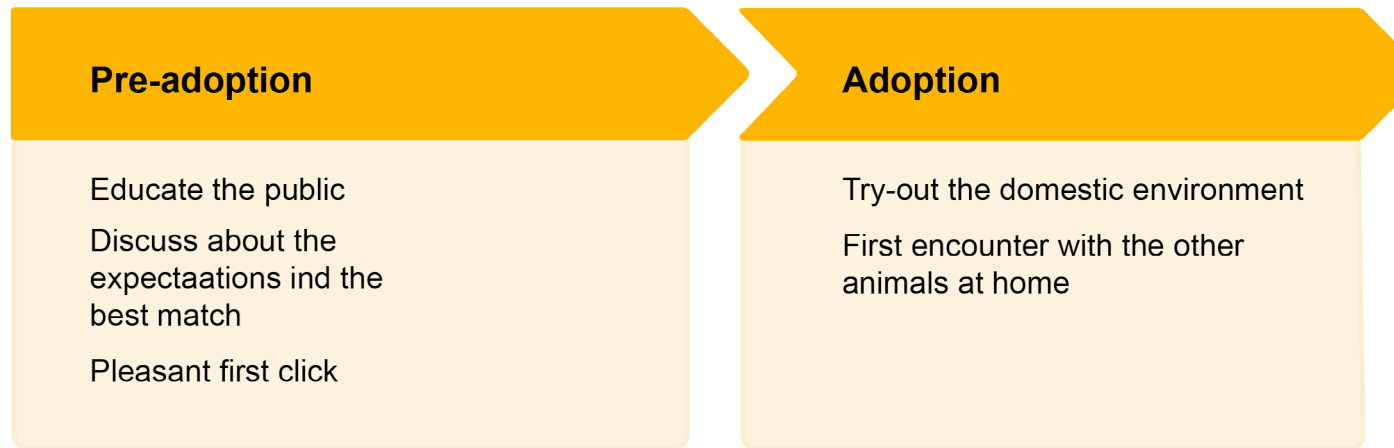
To gain a comprehensive view of the dog adoption, desk research about the issues that influence and related to the dog adoption was done. The results were synthesized into three parts, the general adoption stages, the shelter as an important role in dog adoption. Whats more, in the contextual research part, the dog training method and principles were emphasized by experts. Thus it was added as the third part of the literature research result.

2.1 The adoption stages

The adoption is not a one-moment choice and action but a continuous journey along with many touch points. Regarding the general change of the adoption goal in the adoption journey, it can be divided into three main stages, the pre-adoption stage, the adoption stage, and the post-adoption stage.

(see figure2)

The adoption stages



Stages

Adoption goal
(The shelter's responsibility)

Return to the shelter

Post-adoption

Learn from the adopters' experience
Support the adopters emotionally
Facilitate the adopters in re-homing the dogs

Successfully rehabilitated

Facilitate the adopters in re-homing the dogs
Learn from the adopters' experience
Support the adopters emotionally

Figure 2

The pre-adoption stage

In the pre-adoption stage, the potential adopters get an idea of adopting a dog from the shelter or from someone else rather than buying a dog from the breeder. The motivation might vary, but some main challenges almost all of them might face are the lacking of handy information about the dog and the lacking of dog training knowledge. Both of the reasons mentioned above may increase the difficulty of rehoming an adopted dog. The possible approaches for people to get the information about the dog are through the internet or through the people who are working at a shelter.

The adoption stage

The adoption stage contains the actions of the first encounter with the shelter dog, the interview with the shelter experts and if the potential adopter is considered to be suitable for the dog from the experts' perspective, the adoption also takes place in this stage of the journey. In this stage, there are a lot of unpredictable but essential interactions occur. For example, if the dog's personality matches the potential adopter's personality, the first encounter will go very well, which would give most of the adopter's lots of confidence of successfully rehoming a specific shelter

dog. The personality click would work as a strong motivation for the adopter to invest more time and effort when the human-canine pair is facing some difficulties in the rehoming process. More aspects such as the activeness level of the potential adopter and that of a specific shelter dog, the lifestyle of the potential adopter, the domestic environment would also be considered in this stage. These factors are essential to ensure a promising match

The interaction with the shelter experts also has a substantial impact on the relationship of the adopter and the shelter, which also influence the adopter's autonomy of contacting the shelter, reporting and searching for support from the shelter in the rehoming process.

The post-adoption stage

In the post-adoption stage, the adopters bring the adopted dogs home, because of the change of the environment and the change of the primary caretaker, the dog might behave differently than they would expect, which raises confusions and disappointment among the adopters. However, with an understanding of the dog's behavior and nature, these phenomena are considered to be natural from the animal behavior experts' perspective.

2.2 The shelter's role in the adoption

The shelters are organizations with facilities, animal behavior experts, and volunteers who take care of abandoned animals. The animals usually come from the street, places where hold racing games, or from people have divorced or moved.

The reasons for giving up raising a dog differs, but the shelter then takes over the responsibility and in full charge of the dogs' well-being.

Apart from taking care of the animals, some shelters also take part in research topics, such as the living state of the animals in shelters, the reasons for returning adopted animals and how do the different types of interactions influence the animals' behavior.

Apart from running a website for introducing the animals, some shelters also have annually open days to introduce and educate the public about the animal-related knowledge.

To ensure a promising adoption, the shelters need to take the responsibility of gaining comprehensive information about the potential adopter and his or her housing condition before the actual adoption.

Detailed information such as the domestic environment including whether there are other animals at home, whether there are stairs at home is essential for a specific adoption considering the specific shelter dog's needs.

The strict inspection of the potential adopters' qualities makes the potential adopters feel that the shelter expert is very strict or even picky about the adoption, which makes the relationship between the shelter and the potential adopters feels like an examiner-student relationship. The tension in the relationship is one of the reasons for the adopters not willing contacting the shelter for post-adoption support.

The shelters hope that the relationship between them and the adopters could become an equal relationship after the adoption so that the adopters can feel stress-free when contacting them and report about the rehoming progress. In which case, most behavior problems and other issues could be noticed in an earlier stage thus the adopters can get the knowledge and training skill guidance to their needs in time.

tions influence the animals' behavior.

2.3 Dog training methods

According to the literature, the behavioral problems and intense need of attention from the dog were the most severe issues after adoption (Taylor& Mills,2006). For some of the cases, they even caused the adopters to return the dogs and give up the rehoming journey. A possible reason for the existence of the behavior problems and intense attention is that the dog does not feel secure emotionally. The lacking proper skills of handling the newly adopted dog in unexperienced adopters can be a breach to tackle this issue.

To provide a foundation for further design opportunity identification, the most often used methods of dog training were first studied. They were compared and the advantages and disadvantages were listed at the end of each training method. The brief introduction of the methods and the analysis was concluded based on the reviewing of the following articles and resource.

Hiby, E. F., Rooney, N. J., & Bradshaw, J. W. S. (2004). Dog training methods: their use, effectiveness and interaction with behavior and welfare.

Rooney, N. J., & Cowan, S. (2011). Training methods and owner-dog interactions: Links with dog behavior and learning ability.

Deldalle, S., & Gaunet, F. (2014). Effects of 2 training methods on stress-related behaviors of the dog (*Canis familiaris*) and on the dog-owner relationship.

The disciplined training

This method believes that to keep and reinforce the hierarchy in the dog-human relationship is vital for keeping the dogs to be conforming to the owner's order and rules set. The wolves as the ancestors of dogs, have a strict social hierarchy in a pack, to prevent behavior problems the owner of the dog needs to set clear boundaries about the dog's behavior to keep him or her boss image in the dog's view. Strict punishment is encouraged to be used when the unwanted behavior appears.

Advantages

The core belief of this method is simple and easy for people to learn and act.

It is effective in terms of the dog's reaction to the strict punishments.

Disadvantages

This method left a high possibility that the owner does not think about the motivation and causes of the unwanted behavior of the dog. So that the effect of obeying or respecting might be only simply acting fearful and not feel safe. This may lead to a distrustful dog-human relationship.

The dog would experience over stress when strict punishments are used.

Mirror training

This method relies on the dog's ability in mimicking behavior. The owner needs to provide a good behavior model who acts out the desired behavior and gets the reward. So that the dog gets to know what to do correctly from the model. This method requires a comfortable bond between the dog and the model as well as a calm mind of the dog so that the dog is able to calm down, observe carefully and act out the desired behavior.

Advantages

It is easy to act out the desired behaviors by following a role model from the dog. By applying this method, the owner is likely formulated a mindset to understand how the dog perceives and learns things. No extra knowledge or skills needed before applying this training method.

Disadvantages

It relies on the dog's observation abilities to understand and follow the model's behaviors.

The trainer needs to first find a proper model, most ideally a well-trained dog, for the dog to learn from. This is an obstacle for the inexperienced caregiver who is lacking resource.

Theory-based training

This method relies on the continually improving knowledge gained in the dog training field. It requires a stable knowledge base on the dog's nature, their abilities in diverse situations and the effectiveness of rewards and punishments. Disciplines like dog behavior and dog psychology need to be taken into consideration to understand and thus correct the behavior.

Advantages

This training method is always up-to-date according to the scientific research. The causes of the behavior problem are clearly explained and translated into a proper solution.

Disadvantages

A large amount of knowledge as background needed to be acquired before applying this method.

It requires a large investigation of time and effort in acquiring knowledge and applying in the individual situation.

It may be very boring for caregivers who only want to keep training simple and easy.

Relationship-based training

This method believes that the relationship between dog and human drives everything. It holds a belief that the unwanted behaviors are caused by the unfulfilled needs of the dog or the owner. Thus the problems can be solved by fostered communication and a stronger bond. The result of applying this method and thinking should be mutually beneficial.

It is emphasized that the owner should take the responsibility of understanding and interpret the dog's needs instead of punishing the dog when unwanted behaviors occur.

One example could be the insecurity in the human-canine relationship caused separation anxiety from the dogs. The situation could be improved if the bond between the caregiver and the dog can be strengthened through daily activities.

Advantages

This method requires the owner consciously reacting to the dog's behaviors with a clear understanding of the dog's needs and the human-canine relationship. In this way, the dog got less punished and scared but a chance to correct the unwanted behaviors mildly.

Disadvantages

The constructive thinking of interpreting the dog's needs requires lots of experience and the quality of patience from the owner. The experience is not comfortable to gain, and the quality of patience in training the dog is not easy to acquire.

2.3 Reinforcement in dog training

With a development in the modern dog training field and a growing concern on avoiding punishment when teaching dogs, it is worthwhile to understand and apply the method of reinforcement. In the following paragraph, different reinforcement types will first be introduced and then an example of applying the most suggested method of positive reinforcement will be given to give a concrete idea how to think and act in real life situations.

Positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement means adding positive stimulus to increase the likelihood of the behavior being repeated. That means this method should be used when desired behaviors happen.

Negative reinforcement

Negative reinforcement means taking away negative stimulus to increase the likelihood of the behavior being repeated.

It is more often that the intention of training the dog came out when unwanted behaviors have been noticed, at that moment it is more intuitive to give the dog a punishment to decrease the likelihood of the behavior being

Positive Reinforcement

FREDDY IS HAPPY TO HAVE GOT SOMETHING NICE



primary
reinforcers

friends
attention

A central illustration showing three items: a green carrot, a red heart, and a silver coin.

Negative Punishment

FREDDY IS DISSAPOINTEED TO HAVE LOST SOMETHING HE LIKES



threats

aversive
pressure

scary
stuff

A central illustration showing three symbols: a hand holding a whip, a lightning bolt, and a lightning bolt striking a horse.

FREDDY IS UPSET TO HAVE PERIENCED SOMETHING NASTY

Positive Punishment

FREDDY IS RELIEVED TO HAVE ESCAPED OR AVOIDED SOMETHING NASTY

Negative Reinforcement

Recorce:<https://www.fairhorsemanship.com>

repeated. But a trainer can also keep the method of positive reinforcement in mind and try to transform the unwanted behaviors into proper ones. One example to avoid the dog rush to food is to keep the treat in a fist and move your hand closed to the dog's nose and own to the floor that your dog can only get the treat when he or she followed the movement of the fist to stand back and sit down. In this way, the unwanted behavior of rushing to food is transformed into the behavior of stand back and sit, instead of punishing the unwanted behavior the trainer then can reward the desired ones to increase the likelihood of the behaviors being repeated.

So the shelter experts always have these tips for the new adopters to ignore the unserious unwanted behavior and try to transform the unwanted behaviors into proper ones and give a reward to reinforce the proper behavior.

Reinforcement can occur by accident, for example, if the dog jumped on a sofa and there happened to be a treat on it, then the behavior of jumping on the sofa is reinforced positively by the treat. This means it is important to keep the training environment clean when applying this method that only the desired behaviors are consciously reinforced.



resource:<http://www.weheartpet.com/lie-down/>

2.5 Conclusions

1. The final decision of adoption needed to be seriously considered and evaluated to avoid simple decision caused returns.
2. The domestic environment and the family members also influence the adoption.
3. The adopters who attend dog training classes are less likely to return the adopted dog.
4. The adopters' commitment and willingness to search for support are important in successful adoption.
5. The organization from whom the adopters adopted the dog can also play a role in a successful adoption. The pre-adoption talk, assessing a match and post-adoption advices all influence the adoptions.



Contextual Research

The previous literature research results deepened the understanding of adoption process, the shelter's role, and the dog training methods. Based on that a further contextual research was done to figure out the adopters' experience of the adoption and rehoming the dog. Based on the insights the design goal was formulated for further design exploration.

3.1 Research activities

To gain an overview of the people involved in the adoption journey, the volunteers and experts working at the shelter were interviewed.

Method

The method used in the contextual research phase was context mapping. By mapping out the people, organization, facilities and resource the adopters touched upon in the adoption and rehoming journey, this method helped the designer in stepping into the adopters' shoes and found out the potential design space.



3.1.1 Interviews with the shelter volunteers

Volunteers are the people who working at the shelter in the responsibility of walking and taking care of the shelter dogs. The volunteers need to walk certain dogs that they are familiar with. They are the closest ones to individual shelter dogs that they know a certain dog's preferences, hobbies, and passion. The volunteers at the shelter have a close emotional bond with the shelter dogs and they also have a better understanding of individual dog's needs.

When a potential adopter came to the shelter, the volunteer who was in charge of the intended dog would go out to walk the dog together with the potential adopter. It was a process for the potential adopter to interact with the intended dog and also a chance for the volunteer to observe and give suggestions on whether they match with each other.

The volunteers have their community. They take the dogs for long walks together and give each other support.

Insights

The shelter volunteers can offer individual dog's information such as the dog's personality, preferences, and hobbies. This background information if the dogs could be used by the adopters in quickly initiating a secure and trustful relationship with the newly adopted dog.

3.1.2 Interviews with the shelter experts

To understand the responsibility as the shelter, two shelter experts were interviewed. The questions covered the daily work of the experts at the shelter, the criteria for choosing a proper adopter, the process of adopting out dogs and current supports after adoption.

The experts at the shelter are responsible in adopting in and out animals, getting to know about the animals' previous experience, getting to know the potential adopters' motivation for adoption, interviewing the potential adopters and doing home inspections to check if the domestic environment is suitable for specific shelter dog regarding his or her energy level and body condition.

The experts at the shelter are the representatives of the shelter as a professional organization, so on different stages of the adoption, they have different goals to fulfill. For example, before the adoption, the shelter as an organization is responsible for public education on animal adoption. The case of adopting an animal as a replacement of decayed animal needs to be prevented. Before the actual adoption, a series of activities need to be conducted by the experts to see if the potential adopter and the intended shelter dog matches each other. The most critical factor for a successful match is the

energy level of both sides. Other factors might also need to be taken into consideration according to the experts' experience.

To be responsible for the future well-being of the dog, the pre-adoption interview needs to touch upon a lot of topics even very personal ones such as whether the adopters have a plan to have babies. All of this information would influence the judgment of the suitability of the specific dog and the potential adopter. A home inspection is also important especially for elder shelter dogs who have the joint problems and limiting in mobility.

Adopting out dogs requires patience and communication skills to explain and seek for better solutions for the potential adopters.



Insights

The shelter experts are good at analyzing the situations when the dogs showed some unwanted behavior. They consciously interact with the dogs with training intentions in mind. Thus they are not annoyed by the unwanted behaviors. Instead, they see the unwanted behaviors as signs of applying training methods.

The experts at the shelter are willing to know about the progress of the rehoming

progress and to offer possible support along the journey, but it relies on the adopters to contact the shelter.



Eye contact is one of the important interaction between the adopter and the dog.

The adopters' quotes

Pre-adoption

- "The home inspector was too strict on my house. She was not satisfied with all the details."
- "The person at the shelter was kind of mad with us since we couldn't answer the questions well about raising the animal."

Adoption

- "Oh! I'm going to have a dog!"
- "I only want dogs of that breed....."

Stages

Adopter quotes

Return to the shelter

Post-adoption

“Once my dog bit me when I was playing with him, I think he was just too much in a happy mood, it was not his fault. I would give him a bit more time to learn the manners.”

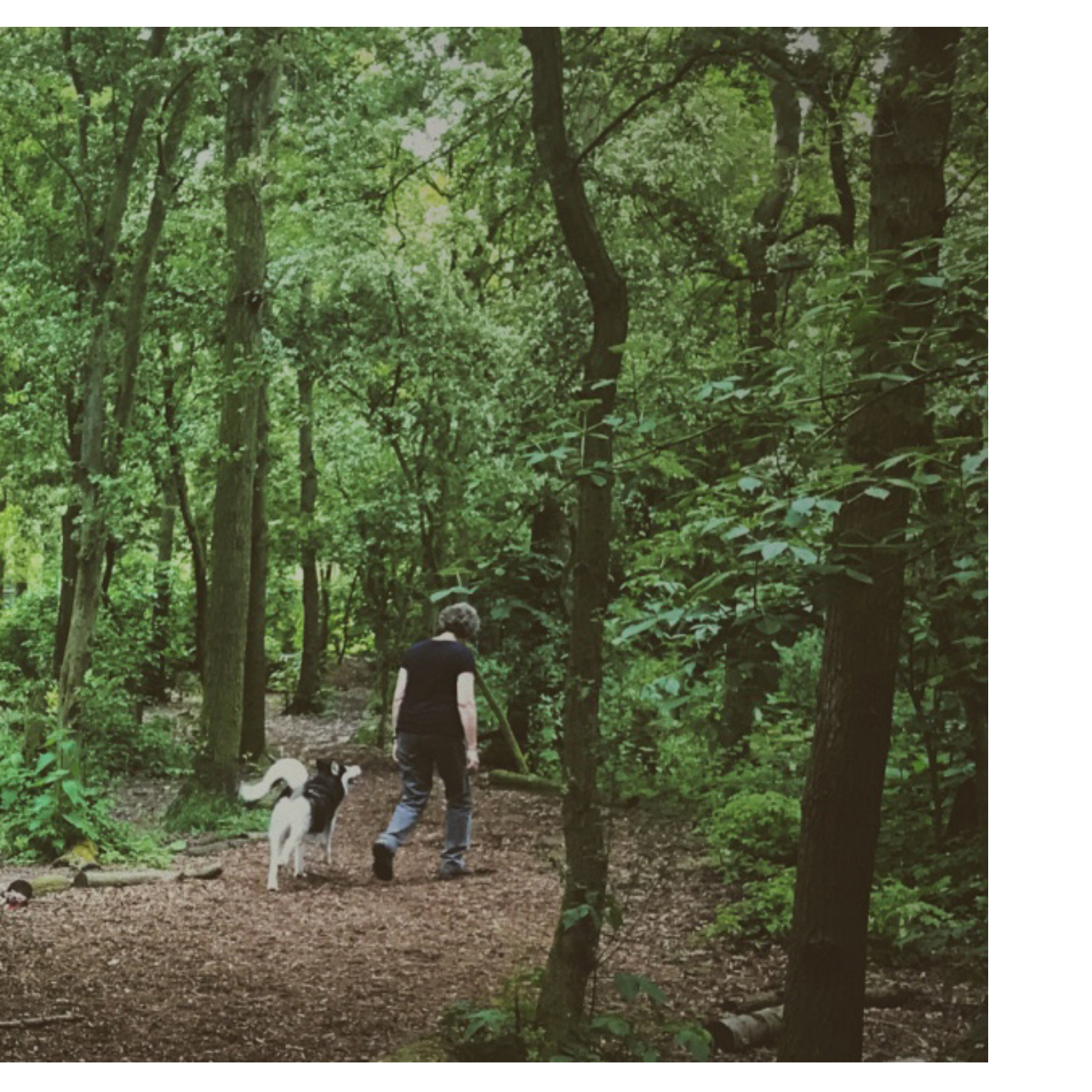
“The hateful dog broke my newly bought perfume and make up.”

Successfully rehabilitated

“I took my dog out for a walk, but it seems that he is still not happy and always laid down near a bench.”

“It was after about one year later I felt that he felt at home.”





3.2 Research result

3.2.1 Main insights

[The adopters]

Rich experience

1. Adopting dogs from the shelter offered adopters with an opportunity of rich experience, which contains of both positive and negative emotions.

(+/-)

[The adopters and the dogs]

Misunderstanding with dogs

2. Due to the lacking of the dog behavior knowledge and the language barrier between the two species, it is often for the adopters to misinterpreted the dog's needs and consider the fearful or even normal reactions to the situations as behavior problems or going against the willingness of the caretaker intentionally.
(not an obeying dog)

Responsibility in dog's unwanted behavior

3. The negative emotions came not only from the unwanted behavior of the adopted dog but also the improper handling of the dog.
(a distraction regard as a reward by the dog)

4. The skills of training the dog and the adopters' general attitude of interacting with the dog influence their relationship.
(harsh, spoil, misunderstanding)

Neglect of progress

5. The positive moments and tiny steps of progress of the dog are often unconsciously ignored considering the tiredness and frustrations in the rehoming journey.

The negative emotions harmed the relationship

6. In the journey of rehoming, there were a lot of positive and negative emotions evoked. But with a final goal of successful rehoming always in mind, the negative influences of having a new member in the home were easier to be recalled and both the adopter in their willingness to contribute to a positive relationship with the dog.

Diverse learning resource

7. The adopters in the successful matches have their own preferred ways of getting trustworthy knowledge about rehoming the dog.

(book, video, from friends through talks etc.)

The necessity to learn and change

8. Every adopter who succeeded in rehoming the dog emphasized their experience of learning and changing in the process. The most eye opening aspects can be the change on their belief or on their way of handling the dog.



"I would really recommend the people who want to adopt dogs to read the book from Cezar Millan, I did learned a lot from that book. It was very inspiring." -- An adopter talked about the suggestions for potential adopters.

[The shelter]

Some tips from the shelter experts were missed

9. Due to the confidence or even over-confidence in the beginning of the rehoming journey, the adopters might unconsciously ignore some of the important suggestions of the shelter experts. Some of the ignorance may cause the dog experience over-stress which probably lead to fearful behaviors like barks and bites.

Qualifying checks from the shelter were unpleasant

10. The home inspection, interviews and other approaches taken by the shelter to figure out whether the potential adopter and the dog are a good match, leaves a strict and even negative shelter impression on the adopters. So the adopters less considering to seek support from the shelter in the rehoming process.

Match of energy level

11. The match of the energy level between the potential adopter and the intended shelter dog is the most important factor that influence the success of the adoption. The energy level is used to roughly describe how active the adopter or how active the dog is.

“They are a kind of too strict, I think they are sometimes even picky. ” -- An adopter talked about the pre-adoption home inspection of a shelter

“Most adopters do not contact us spontaneously, so we email them or call them to get to know their situation. And to see where we could help with.”--Shelter expert talked about post-adoption service

Adoption also means a huge change in lifestyle

12. For some of the adopters their life style also changed a lot after they have adopted the dog. Some of them gave up the traveling tradition to take better care of the dog.

"We used to travel a lot, me and my husband. But ever since we have Tommy we didn't travel very often. You have to give him to the dog hotel, although the people there treated him very well, we still worried about him when we are not around. " -- An adopter talked about the changed life style due to the adoption of the dog.

3.2.2 Experience map of the adopters

(folded page)

To give an overview to the adoption journey of the adopters and identify the design opportunities, the experience map was made based on the insight gained in the interviews.

Conflicts were listed according to the time line.

STAGES

ADOPTION GOAL
(from the shelter's perspective)

ADOPTER ACTION

ADOPTERS' EMOTIONS

Positi
Nega

THINKING (QUOTES)

SHELTER
ADOPTER

ADOPTER NEEDS

ADOPTER SELF
NEEDS FROM THE DOGS
NEEDS FROM THE SHELTER

SHELTER-ADOPTER RELATIONSHIP
From the adopters' perspective in general

CONFLICTS



PRE-ADOPTION
 Educate the public
 Discuss about the expectations in the best match
Pleasant first click

ADOPTION
 Try-out the domestic environment
 First encounter with the other animals at home

POST-ADOPTION (SHORT-TERM)
 Learn from the adopters' experience
 Support the adopters emotionally
 Facilitate the adopters in re-homing the dogs

RE-HOME (LONG-TERM)
 Learn from the adopters' experience
 Support the adopters emotionally
 Facilitate the adopters in re-homing the dogs

RETURN TO THE SHELTER

SUCCESSFULLY REHABILITATED
 Facilitate the adopters in re-homing the dogs
 Learn from the adopters' experience
 Support the adopters emotionally

Check on line
 Go and visit the shelter
 First encounter with the shelter dog
 Think over night

Try-out the domestic environment
 First encounter with the other animals at home

Help the dog get familiar with the domestic environment
 Help the dog get familiar with the dogs in the community
 Ask the shelter for support

Get familiar with the domestic environment
 Get familiar with the dogs in the community



"That the most important to us, that they feel good. Just be who they are."

"The home inspector was too strict on my house. She was not satisfied with all the details."

"The person at the shelter was kind of mad with us since we couldn't answer the questions well about raising the animal."

"Some people don't think enough about the decision of adopting an animal. It's more than twice the money. (when raise one more dog at home)"

"For the first time it enters your house, you need to make sure every thing goes right."

"Once my dog bit me when I was playing with him, I think he was just too much in a happy mood, it was not his fault. I would give him a bit more time to learn the manners."

"I took my dog out for a walk, but it seems that he is still not happy and always laid down near a bench"

"Again my dog pissed on my bed! I've told him a thousand times! It won't help if I didn't catch him on the spot...."

"The hateful dog broke my newly bought perfume and make up."

"Some people will ask you a thousand questions but not the important ones, but some people will not ask questions at all."

"Taking care of the shelter dogs helps the mistreated dogs to gain trust in human again."

"You might biased the word training if you stick to one type of training?"

- Understand the considerations** before adoption.
 - Basic knowledge of raising a dog
 - The importance of finding a good match
 - The importance of preparing the domestic environment
 - The seriousness of possible pet medical cost
- Specific tips**
 Such as individual dog's time limit that could be spent alone.
- Make serious decision** about adopting a certain dog. The shelter need the adopters take good consideration about the decision about adopting an animal, especially about adopting dogs.
- Prepare the domestic environment**
 Dogs are relatively more like a member of the family, and need more attention, so adopters need to know what they are getting into.
- Understand the adopted dog's needs**
- Being able to make decisions** themselves.
- Being proactive in asking for help** once needed.
- Feel confident** about the re-homing process.
- Explore different approaches** of training the dog.
- Help the adopted dog becomes an ordinary happy dog**
- Report regularly** about their progress and difficulties of re-homing the dogs.

Seller-Customer
 Adoption is considered as one of the approaches of getting a dog.

Examiner-Student
 Need to take all the critiques and make changes as required for the dog's good.

Spporter-Explorer
 Need to take all the critiques and make changes as required for the dog's good.

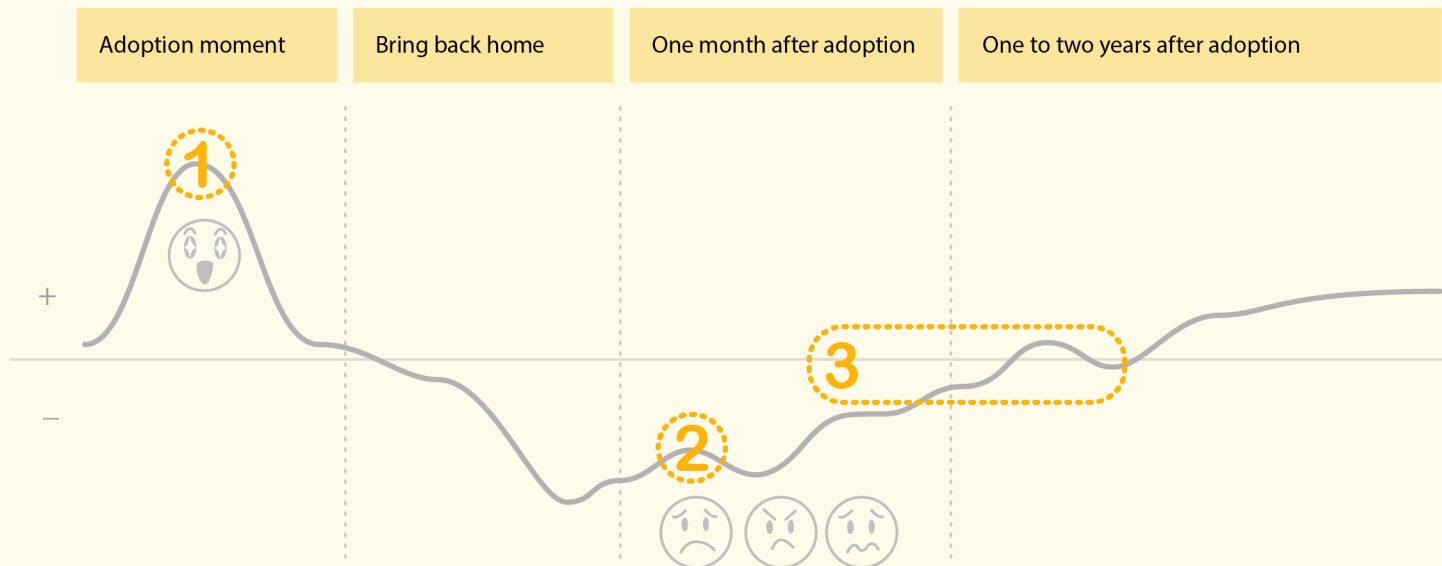
Spporter-Explorer
 As one of the approaches of getting a dog

Serious self reflection
 of the responsibility and reward after adopting a dog.

Examiner-Student
 Need to take all the critiques and make changes as required for the dog's good.

Take a proper educationer attitude
 which is also fit in with the dog's learning type.

Spporter-Explorer
 As one of the approaches of getting a dog



1

Opportunity 1
Design for a realistic envision of the rehoming journey

2

Opportunity 2
Design for a rich rehoming journey

3

Opportunity 3
Design for a better educator

3.2.3 Opportunities

Based on the result from the literature and contextual research, several opportunities were identified for further design exploration.

Design for a realistic envision of the rehoming journey

Less realistic envision caused overconfidence

It takes longer time and more efforts than expected from the adopters to finally reach the goal of successfully rehoming the adopted dog. The reason of the too positive envision are that lacking of rehoming experience and dog training knowledge and the difficulty in itself for the adult dogs to learn new manners and rules in a new environment. In some of the cases the overconfidence in the adopters caused ignorance of important tips from the shelter experts.

It is a crucial moment at the starting point of the rehoming journey that the adopters are both confident in rehoming the dog and are aware of the possible difficulties in the journey. So to design with the intention to facilitate the potential adopters in realistically envision the rehoming journey would help them to have a better rehoming experience.

Design for a rich rehoming journey

Unconscious ignorance of small progress
With a clear final goal of seeing the adopted dog behave as happy and active as an ordinary dog from his or her breed and age, the small progress in the long rehome journey were easily ignored. At the same time, the unwanted behaviors were more easily became the dissatisfaction factors to be left in the adopters' mind.

Not like buying products with guarantees of quality and a clear manual, adopting a dog with possible trauma experience of being mistreated or abandoned before would be of a lot of difference. The unconscious requirements from the adopters of building trust and good relationship fast is of less possibility to come true. In the whole process of putting in effort and time in rehoming the dog need a design to emphasis the positive impacts of adopting the dog as well as improving the patient level of the adopters.

Design for a better educator

Less experience with dog training

No one is a born ideal educator, the lacking of experience and skills in handling the dog caused the adopters focused more on the unwanted behavior from the dog rather than rethink and even change and improve their own skills in dog training. It feels too confronting for the shelter experts to bring up this topic and giving suggestions at the adoption moment since that was the moment when the adopters were still in an anticipation stage and hard to listen and follow the valuable advice.

To support the adopters in becoming a better educator would help them to have a better understanding of the dog, contribute the unwanted behaviors to a proper cause thus benefit to the wellbeing of both species.



Conceptualization



"There is only one heroism in the world, to see the world as it is and to love it."

Romain Rolland

4.1 The design brief

Design goal

Based on the insights gained in the research phase, the design goal was formulated from the adopters' perspective, to be taken as the first step to increase the wellbeing of both species in the rehoming journey.

To create meaningful reflection moments in the rehoming process to support the adopters to be realistically optimistic about rehoming the adopted dog.

Explanation of the design goal

Meaningful

The reasons for adopting a dog might be as simple as bringing more happiness to both the family and the dog. Joyful and active are the expected qualities of the envisioned rehoming journey. But when comes into practice, it is not easy to develop a trustful and loving relationship based on only the best wishes. Efforts from both species are needed. The intuitive reaction and way of handling the dog might not be a proper way from a professional dog trainer's perspective. So it is important for the adopters to get a chance of bringing in conscious thoughts

before they blaming the dog in certain situations and take risky actions on the behavior issues of the dog.

The adjective meaningful in the design goal aims at enabling reflections that are with an expert's view of being an ideal educator to the dog, to provide the adopters with chances and opportunities to be conscious about the ongoing rehoming process.

Reflection moments

In the current situation, reflections are only triggered by really serious situations. For example, when the adopter feels the dog is not educable or they really doubt their ability to rehome the dog, the adopters would consider about returning the dog to the shelter or to their friends in order to save the situation.

With a belief that the adopters can learn and improve their way of handling the dog by reflecting, to design something to put forward the reflection moments so that the adopters are enabled to learn in the process rather than wait unconsciously till it becomes too late to correct the dog or to improve the relationship.

Realistically optimistic

Generally speaking, the obstacles in the rehoming process are less envisioned by the potential adopters than the real process they experienced. This lead them to experience the frustrations in the process and harm their enthusiasm about successfully rehome the dogs.

To facilitate a realistic envisioning about the rehoming process, the design aims at supporting the potential adopters in a comprehensive envisioning of the rehoming journey. So to be aware of the enjoyable moments as well as the troublesome moments before adoption.

Requirement and wishes

Based on the insights gained in the previous stages about the current adoption journey, the requirement and wishes are formulated. With an overall intent of supporting the adopters to reach a conscious and realistically optimistic in the rehoming journey, the three main aspects of gaining support should be highlighted. The more detailed requirement and wishes will be introduced in the following paragraphs according to a chronological sequence of important contexts in the adoption journey.

Emphasis the three main aspects of gaining support

According the theory of mood, the negative moods are caused by the gap between the goal and the resource. In this case, one hypothesis is that the lacking of professional and community support would make the adopters feel less appreciated and less supported.

The shelter as the professional support

The design should make use of the expertise of the shelter as an organization to offer professional support in a way that acceptable or even appealing to the adopters. That means the design should somehow bridge the shelter experts and the adopters, enable them in

communicating the progress, doubts, and difficulties of rehoming.

In this way, to support the adopters in going through the difficulties and frustrations with a firm and stable handrail.

The other adopters and caretakers as the community support

The design should remind the adopter of the community support which they could easily get access to their daily life. In this way, to enable the adopter to feel surrounded by other people who have similar issues of rehoming and taking care of the dogs. So that small questions could be solved in casual situations within the community.

The integrated and patient mindset as the internal support

In the previous study, it shows that an integrated mindset in educating the dog in the rehoming process could support the adopters in becoming patient to a great extent. Here the patient means to have a realistic overview about the rehoming process, to interact properly to the dog according to the dog's needs and the adopter's intention and to attribute the situations to the correct causes.

Context of use

There are two main contexts that the product is supposed to be used.

1.

The first one is at the end of the pre-adoption interview, when the expert at the shelter have already got a rough idea about the potential adopter's willingness to learn dog training knowledge and got a general overview of the potential adopter's personality to make a judgment on whether he or she would make a possible good match with the preferred shelter dog. According to the research, at that moment, the potential adopter would be in an anticipation state and is likely to over positively envision the

post-adoption situation. Which would later result in frustration on the post-adoption phase. To support the potential adopters in realistically envision the post-adoption, the product could be introduced by the shelter expert as real rehome story trigger. Annoying situations would be confronted to trigger the potential adopter to think about the solutions with the support from the shelter expert. This first-time use which is led by the expert could also work as an introduction of how to use the product and an eye opener to encourage a continuous updating of the rehoming process.

2.

The other context is supposed to be the adopter's home context. After the adopter has brought the shelter dog back home and is in the most critical one-month post-adoption phase. The product would work as a buddy to support the adoption of being more conscious about the way they interact, train, showing affection to the adopted dogs. It would provide the adopter with inspirations and triggers to reflect on their ways of understanding the dog and training behaviors.

["I might improve our relationship by...!!"
image]

Pre adoption

The design should support the potential adopters in envisioning the real situation of adopting a dog.

The design should support the adopters in improving the relationship with the adopted dog.

Post adoption

The design should enable users to become more conscious about their emotional reactions to the adopted dog's behavior.

The design should support the users map out the real situation

The design should support the users in coping with the situation when they faced difficulties in re-homing the dog.

The design should act as an inspiration tool for users to understand and accept the situation.



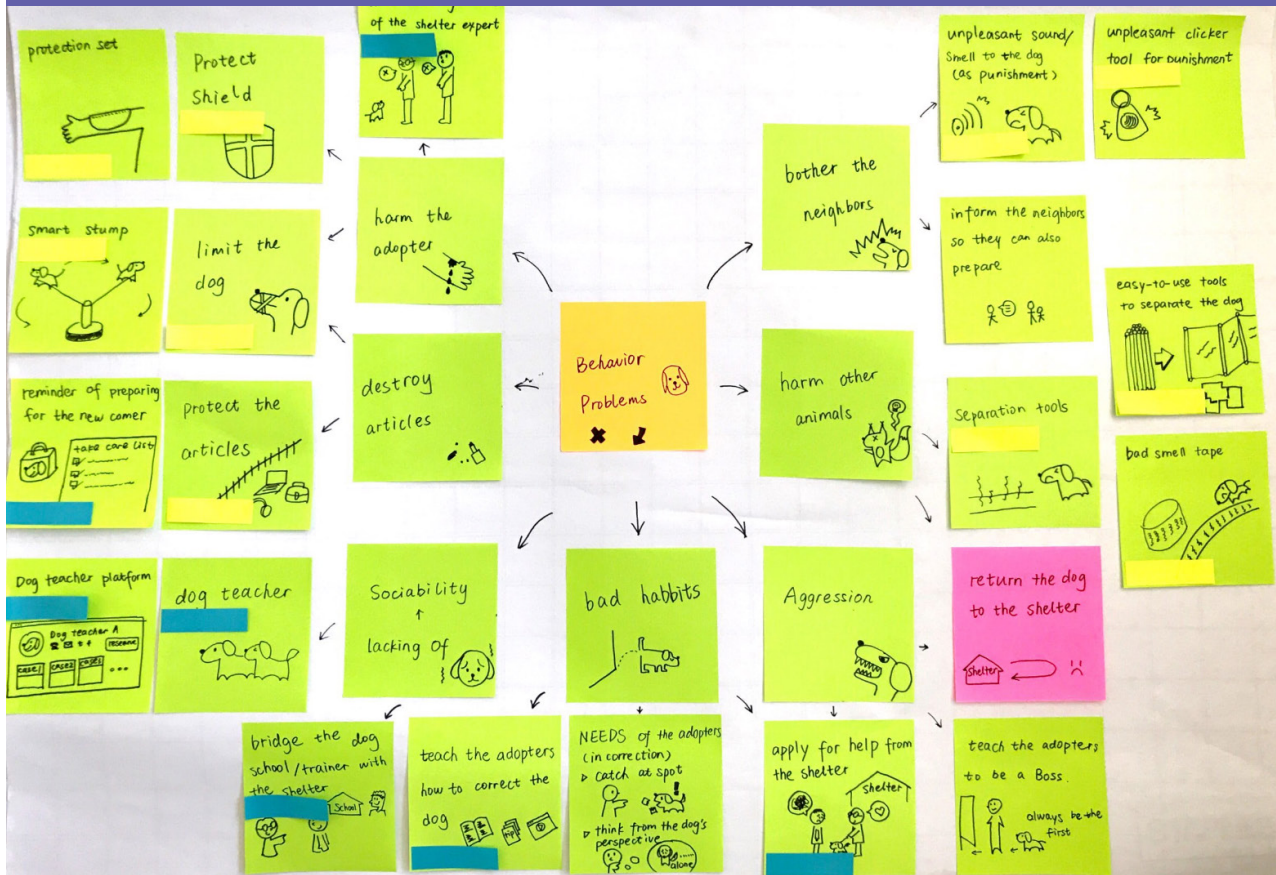
4.2 Interaction vision

The interaction of being triggered by the core of the design should feel like picking up a leaf from the ground and realize that the autumn comes.

Qualities: Effortless, inspiring

Further explanation

The season changes softly without a clear official boundary, people who are not sensitive about the changing of the weather would just follow their daily routine. Picking up a leaf can be a coincident and effortless action motivated by curiosity. The yellow leaf would give people an inspiring prompt of the coming of autumn. Which later on brings people a different perspective of seeing the ordinary and even dull surroundings. Thus to be supported of being able to discover new things with an open eye.



4.3 Ideation

In order to identify the most potential and interesting design directions to go, several rounds of ideation sessions were done. To balance the innovativeness and practicality, both designers and experts in the animal behavior field were involved in the ideation process.

The first ideation session was done alone by the designer focused on the external support of the adopters. Two main approaches of supporting the adopters become realistically optimistic were considered. The first one was to support the adopter become aware of the possible behavior problems and negative impacts of having the dog. The second one was to create platforms or provide channels for the adopters to search for help. These two approaches were both focusing on the external support the adopters were in need of but not currently available.

The second ideation session was done with two shelter experts who were specialized in animal behavior and animal training. They were also familiar with adopting out animals to adopters, which means they are also experienced in communicating with potential adopters and know the core factors of making a successful match between a certain dog and a certain potential adopter. The ideas were mainly focused on improving the internal abilities and skills of the adopters, thus to reach a balance in confidence and necessary practical skills in the rehoming journey.

The first ideation session was done alone by the designer focused on the external support the adopters were in need of but not currently available in order to feel realistically optimistic about the rehoming journey.

Inform the possible behavior problems and negative impacts before adoption

Most adopters found out unexpected unwanted behaviors of the dog after they have brought the dog back home and some damages were impossible to remedy. This group of ideas addressed use a media to inform the adopter with possible behavior problems and hassles that the adoption might bring. In this way to support the adopters in having a realistic balanced envision in a relaxing and non-judgmental way and even take actions to take the important advices from the shelter at the starting point of the rehoming journey.

Encourage the adopters by supporting understanding of individual dog

The lacking of post-adoption services is also a cause of the unconfidence in the inexperienced adopters in the rehome journey. The shelter as an organization not only knows about the dog previous information, the volunteers who were in responsibility in walking and taking care

of the dogs also know more detailed habits and hobby of t individual dog. All of this information could be used by the adopters to initiate a trustful relationship with the dog. For example, the adopters can offer the chances for the dog to fulfill their individual passion as a reward when the dog learned a new manner.

Encourage the adopters by supporting domestic training

Bridge the volunteers and the adopters Apart from the information support, the experienced animal behavior trainers who are working at the shelter could also support in correcting and training the dog when the behavior problems are too serious for the adopters to solve. So that the adopters also have a powerful back support when they run into unexpected knotty situation.

This group of ideas of informing and teaching the adopters can be suggested by the shelter at the adoption moment and be offered in a form of a lasting service in the post-adoption phase.

Boundary products to prevent frustrations and anger

Another common issue of the shelter dogs is that they are not familiar with the domestic environment. The curiosity would lead them to touch the objects. In this situation, may cause some damage which can not be remedied. To support the adopters' responsibility in setting the boundary so that the dog would not get blamed . This group of ideas are focusing on the improvement of a domestic environment or the protection of the adopters and his or her possessions to help the adopters to limit the dog in the allowable area and behaving within boundaries.

The second round of ideation session was done at the shelter with two shelter experts who were expertized in animal training and animal behavior. The aim was to generate more practical ideas to achieve the design goal.

The procedure

An overview of the post-adoption experience was first introduced. Then several common situations of improper handling were presented and discussed to immerse the participants in the topic and coming up with ideas of offering suitable support for the adopters in certain situations. Then the participants first wrote down the core of the idea and then further explained it to the facilitator why it was important. In this way, to give their opinions and wisdom from an expert perspective. The ideas were later sorted according to the different levels of the involvement of the shelter by the designer.

Laddered post adoption service

With different levels of involvement of the shelter, it is possible to offer the adopters with tailored support to enable them to reach the design goal.

Give the adopters practical tips -Just follow as told

The lowest level of involvement of the shelter

There is much practical knowledge to be kept in mind at the starting point of the rehoming journey to lead it to a promising direction. Basic dos and don'ts tips can be simply addressed at the adoption moment by the shelter experts. The key point of informing these tips is that they need to be reminded of since the adopters would be in an anticipation state at the adoption moment so they would easily forget about the tips when they go back home. The reminders should be able to be implemented in the adopter's daily life. Thus to reduce the possibility of triggering of unwanted behaviors so to prevent possible frustrations in the rehoming journey.

Introduce the training mindset to the adopters – need the explanation

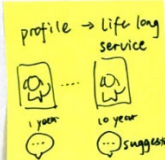
The middle level of involvement of the shelter to gain a trainer's view is not as simple as being informed of the tips, this groups of ideas need the further involvement of the shelter. The form of

offering this level of support could be arranging opening days at the shelter to give the adopters sessions and examples of proper ways of training the dogs. Media like short tutorial videos and illustration booklets could also be used to get the adopters immersed in the training story examples and more easy to see from a trainer's perspective. This support is especially important for those adopters who are lacking of an ideal educator's qualities. In which cases, the misinterpretation of the causes of the unwanted behavior caused the most frustrations.

Support the adopters by training the dog directly– guide the adopter in 'learning together' sessions

High level of involvement of the shelter
For the inexperienced adopters who could not handle serious behavior problems of the dog by themselves, the shelter experts could offer 'learning together' sessions to give training methods to the adopters. Since it is a face-to-face session, it is easier for the adopters to address their personal difficulties, which in return, could also help the shelter to gain knowledge about the detailed needs of the adopters in the post-adoption stage. This group of ideas requires a high level of involvement of the shelter, it could also be realized by cooperation with dog schools.

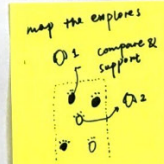
shelter supports



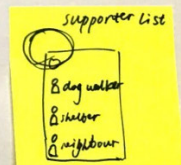
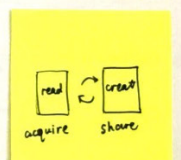
possession



daily reflection



social supports



The second round of ideation session deepened the understanding of the rehoming experience that it was not only influenced by the dog's behavior but more importantly relied on the learned skills and received support of the adopters. Based on this understanding, the external support was extended into a combination of external support and internal growth in three progressive steps: to improve the adopters' knowledge in dog as an animal, to improve the adopters' skills in dog training and to learn and practice together with the dog to finally achieve the design goal of supporting the adopters to be realistically optimistic about rehoming the adopted dog.

Based on the frame above, the ideas generated in the two rounds of ideation sessions were sorted and regrouped by the designer. The categories are listed as followed.

To support the emotional bond between the dog and the adopter

The misunderstanding between the dog and the adopter would harm the relationship between them. The language barrier and different mindsets are the causes of the misunderstanding. These group of ideas is aiming at support the adopters in becoming more conscious about their negative emotions aroused by the dog. First to deal with their negative emotions in a fun way and then to rethink with a peaceful mind about the situation, so that they are able to contribute the cause of improper dog behavior to correct reasons which the adopter could avoid by improving their own training skills rather than blaming the dog of not obeying.

To enhance the shelter's involvement especially in the post-adoption phase

In the current adoption process, the shelter left a strict impression on the adopters since it needs to qualify the adopters in different aspects to make sure that the potential adopters are promising in successfully rehoming certain dogs. These group of ideas aimed at supporting the shelter as an organization in showing love and care to the adopter after the adoption moment. The shelter can offer not only knowledge and tips to adopters, but also facilitate training sessions to gain the adopters' basic skills and

mindset of rehoming the dog. The key of these ideas is not the knowledge or the skills themselves but in this way to make the adopters feel that it is a pleasant and appreciated experience of rehoming a dog from the shelter. So they could feel more relaxed when they are in need of support in the post-adoption phase. In order to keep a realistic thus optimistic view of the rehoming journey even in hard situations.

To support the adopters in daily reflections after the adoption

In the current rehoming journey, only when the adopters were facing really serious situations they would reflect on their rehoming process, their way of interacting with the dog. But since the That was also when they learned new knowledge about educating the dog and improving their own skills, the reflections needed to be triggered at an earlier stage so to support the adopters in becoming realistically optimistic. Medias like stickers and weekly newsletters were addressed to initiate the reflections in the adopters' daily life to keep them learning and improving towards a realistically optimistic rehoming journey.

To enable the adopters with community support

Compared with the support from the shelter, the support of talking and discussing the daily issues of the adopted dog in a relaxing atmosphere is also important to the new adopters. Learning from previous adopters step by step can give both hope and confidence to the new adopters since they can easily envision a promising adoption with the successful examples in real life. Apart from the previous adopter, the other people who can give support in animal raising could also be suggested to the adopters so that they know to whom to search for help when they are in need. And thus to feel the rehoming journey is being kept company of.



The concept



5.1 Design directions

Based on the ideas generated in the previous section, three design directions were formulated focusing on different approaches of realizing the design goal.

Concept1 “See from my dog’s eyes”

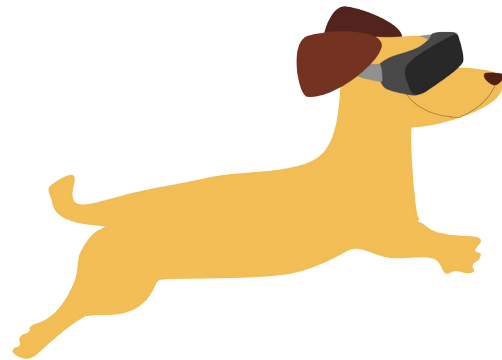
Introduction

This concept is focusing on the changing of perspective. This concept aims at bridging the language barrier between the dog and the adopter by a story. For each step in the adoption journey, there will be a scene which illustrates the situation from the dog’s perspective. So that the adopter could empathies with the newly adopted dog.

When the dog was brought back home for the first time, the scene illustrates a brand new environment with a low viewpoint to address the excitement and also stress the dog would feel at that moment. So to suggest a calm and peaceful welcome for the dog. One scene illustrates the situation when the dog is being punished because acting hyperactive after the adopter went back home. In the environment, some broken pillows could be found. In this scene, it aims at addressing the issue that the adopter punishes a behavior done a long time ago that the dog could not link the bad behavior (tearing the pillow) with

the punishment. One scene illustrates the confusion when the adopter wants to distract the dog but gives the dog a toy or a treat which would be regarded as a reward thus to reinforce that behavior. These scenes can be presented in the form of a low viewpoint video or a series of illustrations.

Based on these detailed situation-based understandings, the concept is supposed to support the adopters in thinking from the dog’s perspective and thus to be able to become realistically optimistic about the rehoming journey and behave properly with certain education intentions.



Concept2 “Rehoming buddy”

Introduction

This concept is a digital platform focusing on a continuous support from the shelter experts to the adopters. So that after the adoption the adopters can rehome the dog step by step by the guidance of the professionals. For the new adopters, there are a lot of things to keep in mind and to practice. Every step could go wrong and that might make the dog feel confused or develop some bad habits. This concept would guide the adopters in managing their own negative emotions, think and learn in a peaceful mind, educate the dog in a proper way and note down the positive emotions. Together to support the adopters to be realistically optimistic about rehoming the adopted dog.

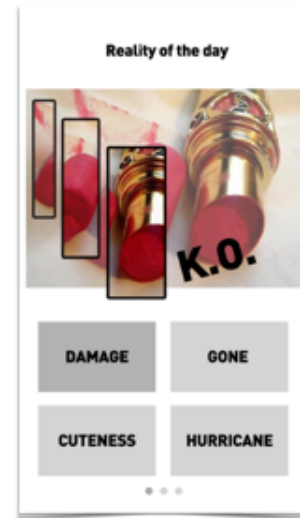
Basic preparation guidance

On the platform, the basic information about the dog facilities in the neighborhood will be first presented.

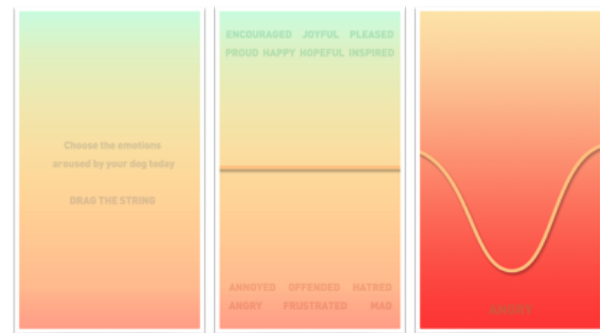
Manage their own negative emotions

To be able to contribute the behavior problems to a correct cause, the platform offers the function to express and ridicule the annoying situation to help the adopters in coping with the frustrations in rehoming process.

Manage their own negative emotions



Use comic styles to exaggerate the situation to be fun to share to friends or to social media

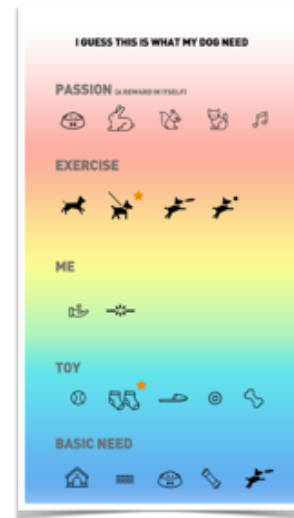


To note down the positive and negative moments in the rehoming journey to have an overview about the rich experience rather than drowning in the frustrations and negative thoughts.

Facilitate the adopter in interpreting the real dog needs

Support the adopters in contributing to the right causes to the unwanted situations, thus to come up with good solutions to coping with them. The solutions can be as easy as taking better care of precious belongings in safe places, it can also be as complicated as sending the dog back to the shelter for one week's behavior correction lessons. Since with this platform the shelter will be able to keep track of the rehoming process without extra bothering the adopter for feedbacks, it would be less stressful for the adopters to take care and struggle in the rehoming process. So they can feel supported, well guided and as a result being realistically optimistic about the rehoming journey.

Facilitate the adopter in interpreting the real dog needs



To be guided to analyse the dog's real needs based on the behavior. Use the passion of the dog as a reward to remove the use of treats.

Concept 3 “Self exploring tour”

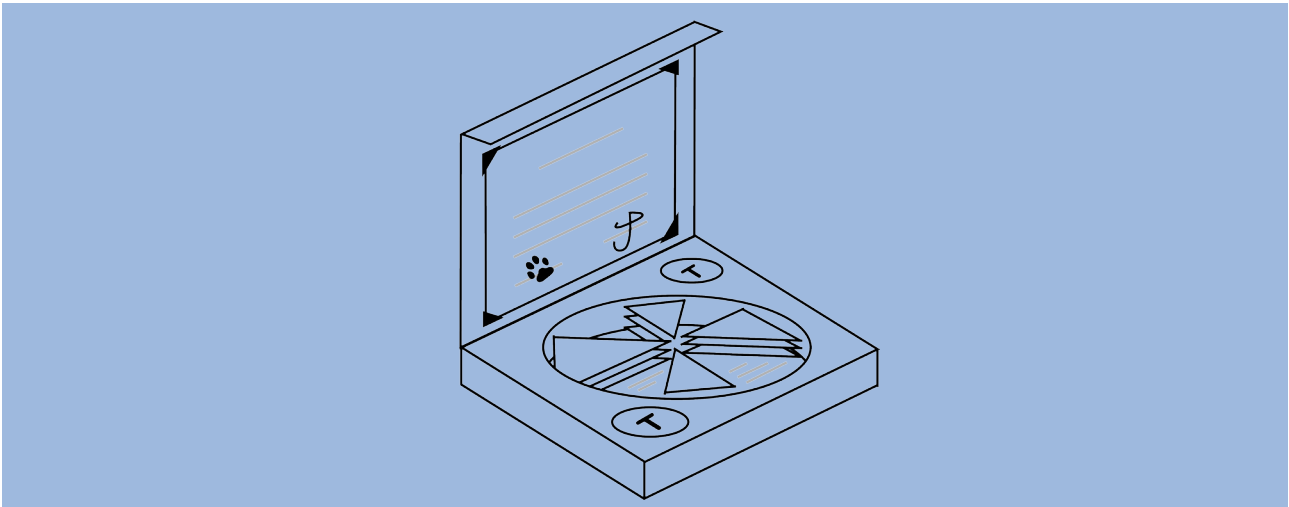
Introduction

This concept is focusing on creating an inspiring toolset for the adopters to be more patient in the rehoming journey. The patient here means not only allowing more time for the adopted dog to get familiar with the new owner, the environment and the rules but also that adopters gain a realistic overview of the journey and be able to give proper react to the dog with an educational intention. This tool can be presented to the adopters by the shelter experts as a gift to express their loving support and sincere to this promising new match.

The form of this tool is a series of flashcard with three different levels of knowledge that the adopter needs to acquire.

The first level contains the basic tips that are easy to be followed, the second level contains the activities that can support the adopters to gain an overview about the rehoming journey (guide them in also remembering the positive moments in the journey and being more focused on the progress of the dog). The third level contains the necessary knowledge and skills to be an ideal educator. Tips like proper gestures used for correcting the dog, dog body languages and general dogs’ mindset will be introduced at this level.

With the guide of these flash cards, most of the common mistakes of rehoming a dog would be avoided. There will be more freedom and fun of exploration be experienced by the adopters comparing with shelter guide concept.



Selection of the concepts

In order to compare the different aspects of the three concepts, the designer used the Harris profile method. Based on the strengths and weaknesses of the design concepts, the most potential concept was select to further develop. The criteria were listed and explained on the left side of the file.

A. Applicable crowd

The potential range of (potential)adopters that can be covered by the design

B. Comprehensive effect

To what extend does the effect of the design influence the adoption as a long-term journey

C. Contribute to a positive dog-human relationship

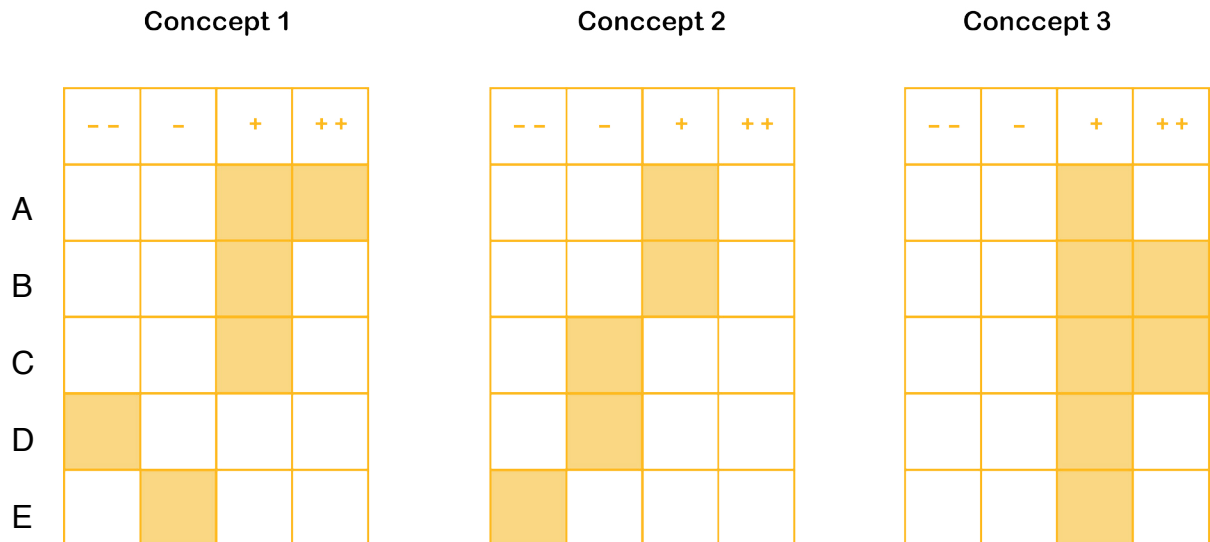
To what extend does the design contribute to the development of a positive relationship

D. Reveal the possible support in context

To what extend does the design make the possible supports in the context available to the adopters

E. Implementation cost

A rough estimate of the required human resource and money investment in implementing the concept



5.2 Combined Concept

The main qualities of the three concepts focusing on different perspectives of supporting the rehoming journey were selected and the core qualities were combined into this final concept. The involvement of the shelter is emphasized in the adoption moment by presenting the reflection toolkit as a thank you box to show the shelter's willingness to help in the post-adoption phase. For the adopters, the concept is aiming at keeping the adoption moment of confidence and hope in their memory as a recharge energy source in the later long and tired rehoming

journey. The series of themes are arranged in a chronological order to guide the adopters step by step with clear requirements and simple actions. When the adopters followed the guidance month by month, the theme cards can be used as a celebration decoration for the one-year anniversary of adoption. The concept will be further explained as follows.

Reflection toolkit

Scenario 1 At the shelter, right after the adoption



Being qualified of adopting a specific dog and sign the certificate together

Design intentions

Emphasize the moment of adoption, support the adopter in remembering the most confident moment and the best wishes.

Emphasize the responsibility of giving care to a dog and be persistent of rehoming him or her.

Scenario2 At the adopter's home, after the adoption in a one year period of rehoming the dog

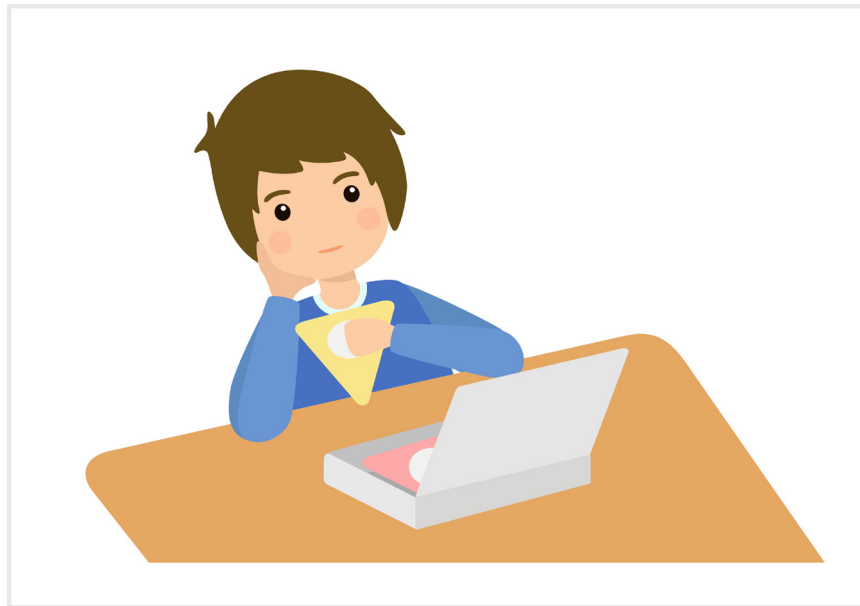
being triggered and supported in thinking, reflecting and practicing the daily activities related to the dog.

Design intentions

To guide the adopter in properly preparing for the adopted dog's first encounter with the new home environment.

To guide the adopters in properly understanding and educating the dog.

To support the adopter in conscious reacting and interacting with the dog rather than only following their untrained intuition which could possibly harm the well-being of both species.



Scenario3 After following the toolkit for 12 months celebrate the one-year anniversary of the adoption

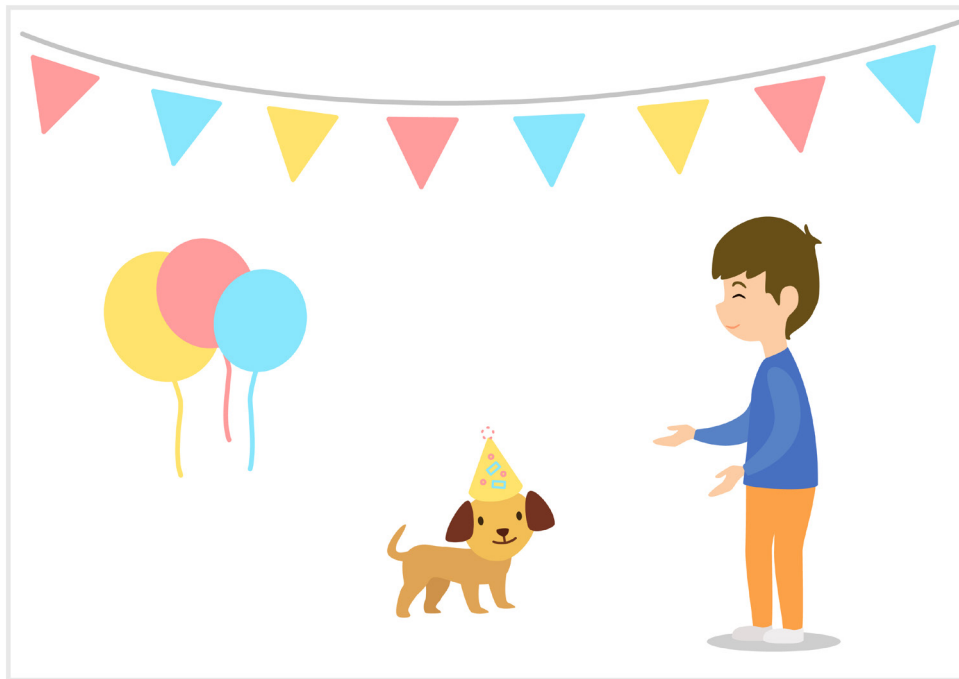
The flag bags worked as a decoration for the one-year adoption anniversary

Design intentions

Support the adopter in developing the toolkit into a personal diary(memory) with the adopted dog.

To serve as a milestone for the rehoming journey.

To encourage and re-motive the adopter.



This toolkit is supposed to act as three roles in the adoption process in a different stage.

Firstly, it acts as a gift for expressing the congratulation and appreciation from the shelter to the adopter. Given by the experts from the shelter face to face to the adopter, the toolkit as a gift can create a moment for relaxing communication about the adopter's feelings and thoughts regarding the rehoming process. This may support the adopters and the shelter experts to start an equal relationship and benefit from future communication about the difficulties and struggles in rehoming the dog.

Secondly, the toolkit supports a rehoming journey for 1 year. In which the adopter is supposed to do a tiny reflection exercise every month. It can create a moment of opening up a new perspective of seeing the adoption, the dog and their relationship. Align the adopters in thinking about the positive influences that adopting the dog brings to their life.

Thirdly, after the monthly reflection exercise, the toolkit will be fulfilled by personal experiences and growth memories with the adopted dog. Both works as a diary and an album, the toolkit can be hanged up as a celebration

decoration for the one-year anniversary after the adoption. As a milestone to bring up a sense of achievement.

The supporting aspects of the concept To ensure the toolkit being used in roughly a monthly frequency, the trigger stickers are provided. They are supposed to be paste at those places where the adopter does their daily activities such as washing dishes, fill the dog's bowl. In these scenarios, the adopter is physically occupied for several minutes, so it causes less stress when they are being triggered in thinking and reflecting.

The tracking box





The design

The design combined the themes that an ideal adopter need to be aware of, learn and get familiar with in a tracking box.

To be able to be put in an ordinary book shelf, the designed size of the tracking box is 210x300x50 mm.

The tracking box

② A frame for keep



① A certificate

CERTIFICATE *of* ADOPTION

Contratulations!
From today on you are going to be the most important and special person in this world to

According to the previous talks and first encounter with our dog, we see precious potential qualities in you to become a good educator to our dog, to lead our dog to join your family, act as a facilitator for our dog to explore and learn new manners and skills. It can be a bit confusing at some moments, but we will be at your side for any kind of support. Enjoy your adventure!

Date _____
Certificate No. _____
Signature _____

_____'s caretaker

_____'s caretaker now



③ A series of theme



ing the certificate



④ Other tools



⑤ Sticker reminders



es to support reflection

The design

The tracking box contained the themes, the certificate, the frame for keeping the certificate, stickers for reminding and other tools.



ALL STARTS WITH A
CALM WELCOME

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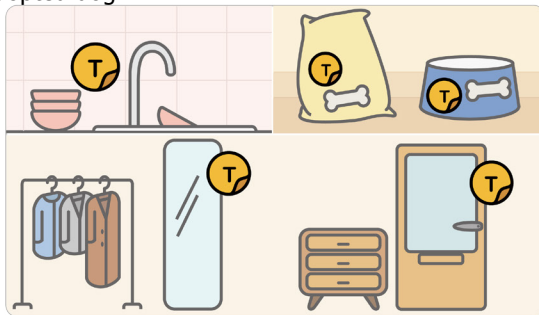
1. Signing the certification together with the newly adopted dog.



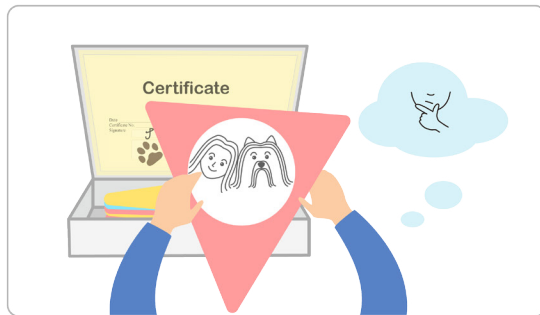
2. Awarding the certificate to the qualified adopter.



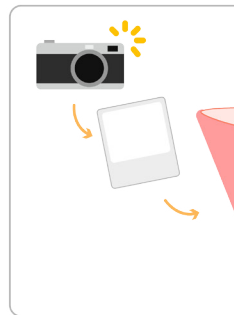
3. Giving the thank you card.



6. Putting the strigger stickers in the domestic environment



7. Reading one theme each month.



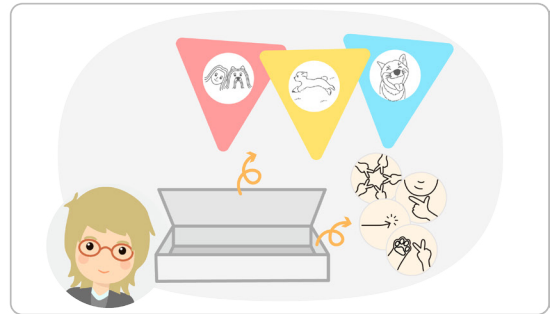
8. Following the theme related or memorable



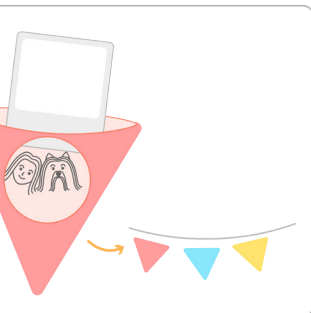
3. Presenting the thank you box to the adopter.



4. Putting in the certificate.



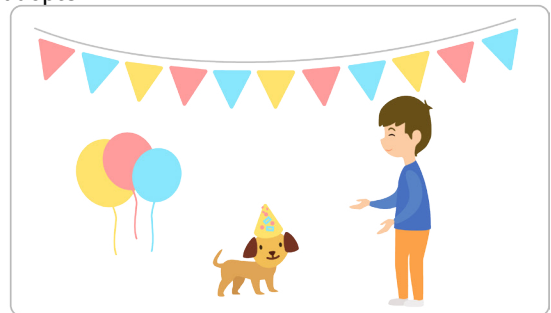
5. Briefly introducing the thank you box to the adopter.



8. Documenting the moments by taking photos of the moments.

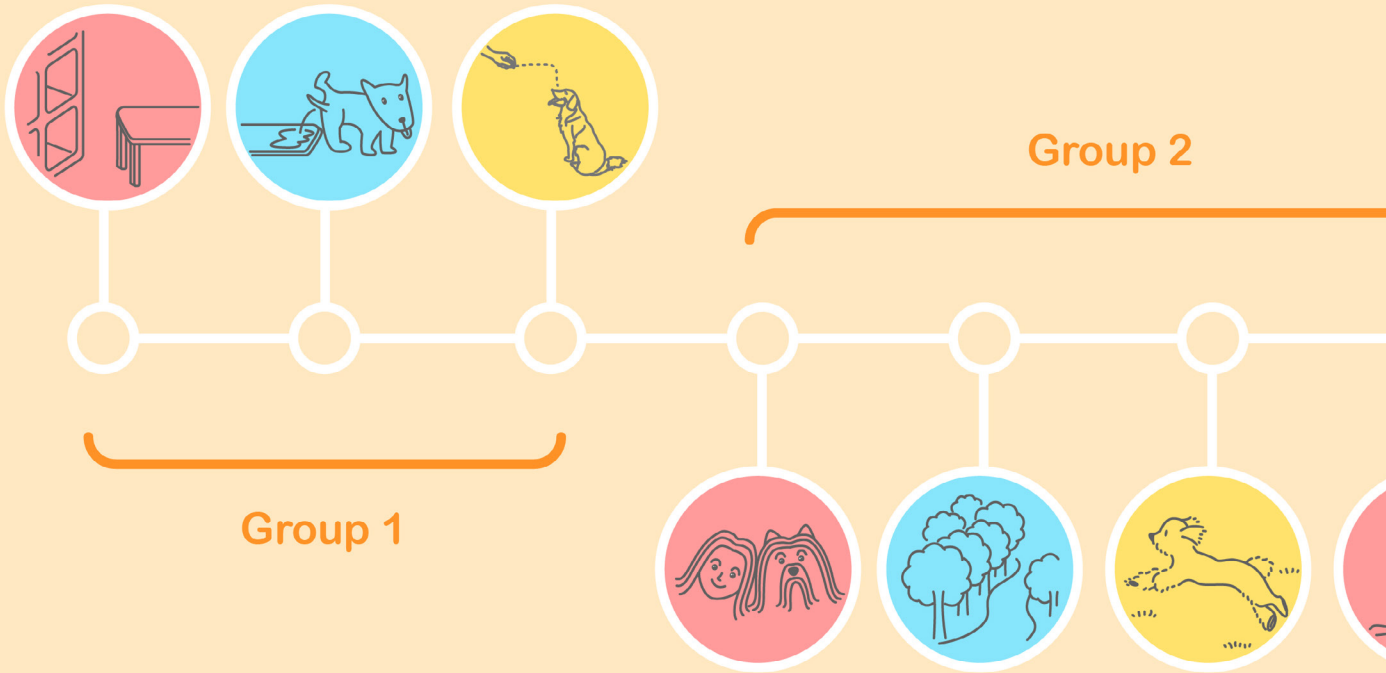


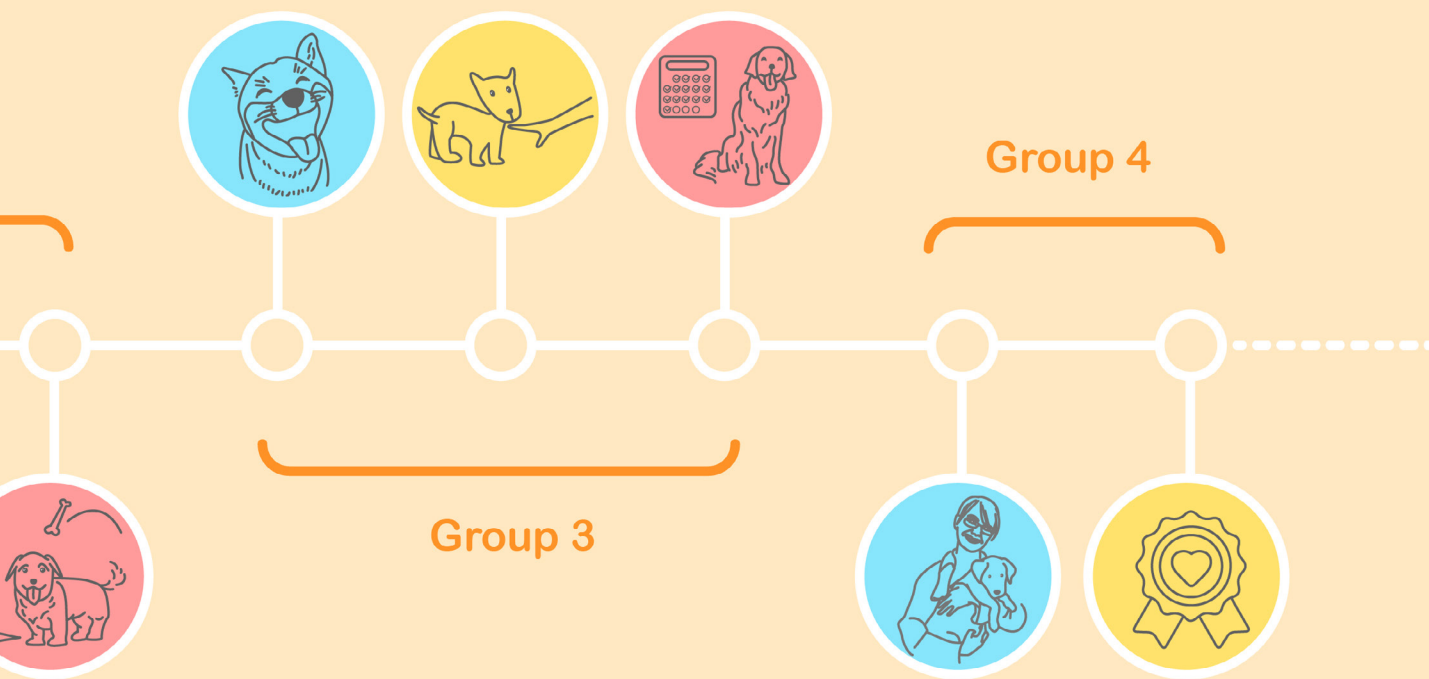
9. Hanging the flags with rehoming photos.



10. Celebrating the one-year anniversary of adoption with the personalized memory decoration.

Theme squence





The flag bags with grouped themes

To guide the adopters in personalizing the reflection themes, they are presented in the form of flag bags.

For each of the themes, the adopter could first read the description and try to note down a moment in practice by taking a photo and put it in the flag bag. After one year's practice, there will be twelve memorable moments replace the illustrations on the flag bag. It as a whole can be an anniversary gift as well as a celebration decoration.

The theme are divided into four groups based on the progress with rehoming. The four groups will be introduced below.

Group 1

Practical tips at the beginning

Group 2

Guide towards a positive view

Group 3

Guide to be a better educator


Group 4

Back supports and time to celebrate

Group 1 Practical tips at the beginning

The themes were arranged to fit in with the progress of the general rehoming process. First things come first, the preparations prevent lots of unexpected damages. The first step can be a pleasurable milestone for the adopted dog. And the mindset, to transfer unwanted behavior to wanted behavior and then reward it, is essential for building up a trustful relationship between the adopter and the dog. So this is also emphasized in the first stage.

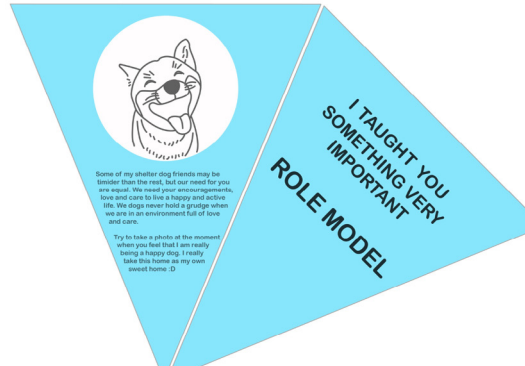




It is not easy to find a good match, after careful considerations, the shelter experts believe that you and I can make a good match both in terms of energy level and personality. Have the confidence they have for us!

What about to treasure this good match by sharing the same fashion style? :D

**WE ARE BOTH
FASHION ICONS**



Some of my shelter dog friends may be kinder than the rest, but our need for you are equal. We need your encouragement, love and care to live a happy and active life. We dogs never hold a grudge when we are in an environment full of love and care.

Try to take a photo of the moment when you feel that I am really being a happy dog. I really like this home as my own sweet home :D

**I TAUGHT YOU
SOMETHING VERY
IMPORTANT
ROLE MODEL**



Rehoming means more than feeding and cleaning. You are also given an opportunity to explore another creature's interests. That might be things and places you never thought to explore when you are with human beings! Why I've got an idea! How about we show each other the places each of us love and take photos together?

Try to take a photo of the nice place that you enjoyed together with me :D

**LET'S EXPLORE
FIRST TRIP
TO THE FOREST**



Life is full of inspirations, some might be brought by me! I and my dog friends act upon our needs and instincts, whenever we need a break we would run and jump without a care in the world. Why not try cutting yourself some slack and joining us in some wild running. I promise its relaxing and rewarding!

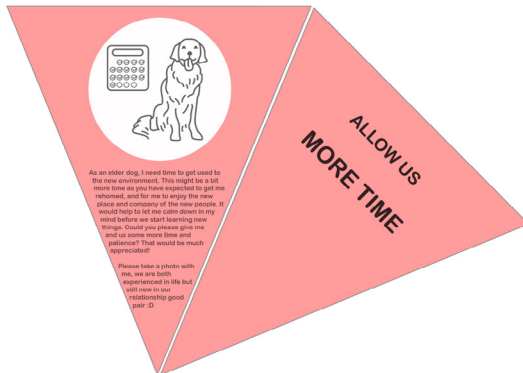
Try to take a photo of me at the moment when you are inspired by my act. :D

**I AM YOUR
INSPIRATION**

Group 2

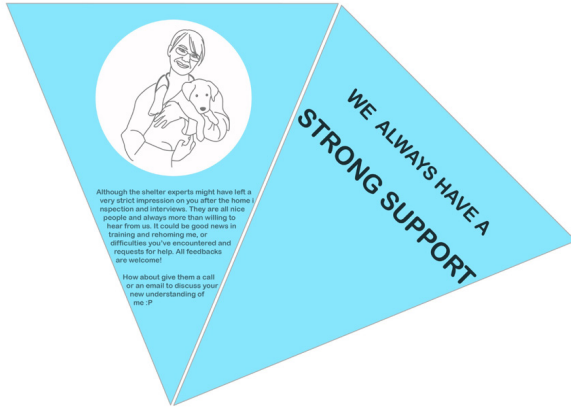
Guide towards a positive view

The second group of themes is focused on the positive impacts of rehoming the dog. Fun and easy activities are also suggested for the adopter and the dog to build up their relationship step by step.



Group 3 Guide to be a better educator

This group of themes is focused on improving the trainers' skills at handling the dog. Understanding the dog's mindset is the first step. Proper gestures used in educating can avoid unexpected self-protect attacks from the dog thus to reduce the chance that the dog behaves problematically. Patience is a precious quality in the adopter that need to be emphasized.

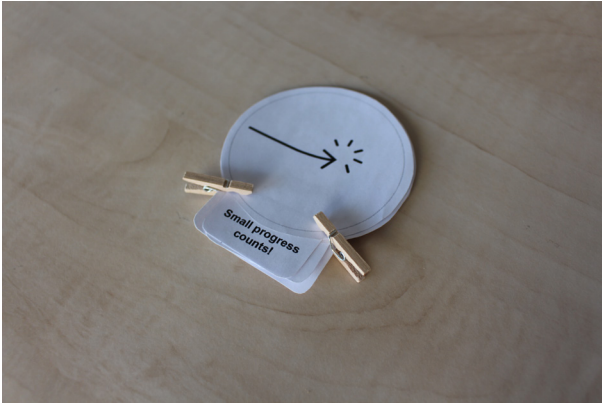


Group 4

Back supports and time to celebrate

The last two themes are aiming at reminding the adopters that they always have a supportive shelter willing to offer a hand and do not forget to appreciate themselves for successfully rehome the dog.





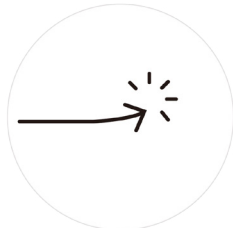
We are our support



I made it!



We made it!



Small progress counts!



We experts are always on call!



Companied exercise everyday!

Stickers that can be put near the places where daily activities take place. Thus to remind the adopter of the tracking box and go back to the theme.



Evaluation

6.1 Evaluation goal

To get to know the overall experience of adoption with the support of the concept, the designed interactions were evaluated with the prototype with four participants who were intended to adopt a dog or have adopted a dog. It was also evaluated with one shelter expert who has a background with dog training.

Research questions

The research questions were formulated as follow:

1. How do the participants feel about the overall experience of adoption enabled by the concept?
2. How do the participants feel about the certification moment?
3. How do the participants perceive the dog's tongue used in the content of the themes?
4. How do the participants think about the frequency of the reflections?
5. How do people feel about the difficulty levels of the themes?
6. To what extent do the participants find the themes inspiring and easy to follow?
7. To what extent do the participants feel being supported regarding the interactions and the information delivered?

6.2 The procedure

1. Briefly introduce the adoption moment when the adopter is going to bring the dog back home.
2. Roleplay the situation of signing the certificate together with the shelter expert and the dog. (The facilitator act as the shelter expert)
3. Roleplay the situation of the shelter expert giving the tracking box to the adopter. The shelter expert briefly introduces the tracking box and let the participant explore it by him or herself.
4. Interview about the participant's experience and related causes of the design.
5. Collecting the further suggestions and recommendations from the participants.

Participants

Together five participants were invited for the evaluation session. One of them has successfully rehomed three dogs. One participant adopted her dog from Spain and did not receive any support from the shelter after the adoption. Two participants are dog lovers who are considering adopting dogs from the shelter. None of them has the experience of dog training and rehoming. One expert with dog training knowledge was also involved in the evaluation session to get more in-depth feedback on the content of the design.

Result

The over-all impression

The overall experience was reported to be positive from all the participants. A gift box given by the shelter created a surprising moment and conveyed a friendly and considerate image of the shelter. Especially the certification moment brought the participant a sense of achievement in passing the shelter's strict investigation. It was perceived as a recognition by the organization officially, which strengthened the confidence in rehoming the newly adopted dog.

Quotes

"It is a formal recognition from the experts, so I love it."

"People would expect to sign some contract, but I think a certificate is really much nicer since it's a recognition. It's a friendly form for putting down your signature."

"It is a surprise because you wouldn't think of it. A lot of shelters will give you a bag of food, especially with pussies and kittens. But nothing like a surprise or guidance(tool). It is a nice surprise and it gives guidance, it definitely very positive addition I think."

The different aspects of the content of the concept were well understood

The themes were easy to be recognized and refer to. One adopter who has had experienced difficulty in building a trustful relationship with the adopted dog immediately found the first theme of providing the dog with a calm welcome helpful for changing perspective and thinking in the dog's view.

The dog tongue used in the design helped the participants feel in understanding the themes in a fun way. It also helped the participants in empathizing the newly adopted dog.

Quotes

"I like the personalization."

"It is very good that you write it as the dog is really a part of the family. You write it as the first person from the dog's point of view, it gives a feeling that he is a family member."

"The way it is voiced is good, it speaks about the dog in the first person, it gives a very close relation."

The opinion about the frequency of the reflections differs

When it came to the later stage of following the theme, the participants had different opinions about the frequency

of the reflections. More curious participants would try to follow as many themes as possible in a short period of time, and they also would like to have more challenges to follow and check driven by a sense of achievement. This gave a hint of placing easy tasks at the beginning to help build not only a positive human-canine relationship but also the strong confidence in the adopters in rehoming.

Other participants would try to do as the design indicated. But it was all reported that it would be hard to keep following it for one year but several months. The causes were that all the themes were delivered at one single time, it was easy to forget about and the curiosity in exploring it would fade.

The difficulty levels of following the themes was depended on the pair

The themes about the change of perspective, be more patient and keep positive memories were easy to follow. The difficulty level of the themes related to training was largely depended on the dog's ability in learning. This provided a hint to provide ladder training tips and exercises that they adopters can follow and gain a rough idea about the dog's ability in learning thus to be more realistic in training the dog.

The basic supports were mapped out clearly but a continual contact would reassure the rehoming journey

The current design supported the adopters openly and flexible. With the design, all the information, tips, opinions in training were well received. Thus participants felt they were guided yet not forced in a self-exploration. However, in a fast communication age, the suggestion of building a platform for success rehoming experience sharing and expert progress checking was addressed.

6.3 Conclusion

By synthesizing the result from the evaluation, the design goal is considered to be fulfilled.

The reflections were successfully triggered easily and inspiringly by presenting themes with illustrations and dog perspective explanations. A proper amount of information was well received by the participants. The themes of changing perspective and reminding the positive moments had an immediate impact on the participants to reflect on their own way of seeing the situation and experience of rehoming the dog. As for the training related themes, they required a longer time period of gaining and practicing the skills, thus it only revealed the proper way of training dogs and situations in which training is needed.

It should also be remarked that the concept was evaluated in a test setting through only one-time use, the long-term experience of following the themes might be different.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the evaluation result, recommendations regarding the design, the involvement of the shelter and future digitalization of the concept were concluded.

The design

Keep the adopters motivated

New elements or interactions need to be introduced to keep the adoptees being actively involved in the themes in the one-year rehoming journey to continue the activity based reflections.

Currently, all the themes are given at once at the adoption moment, though the design motivated the participants in following the themes in the beginning months, it was doubted whether the adopters would keep following them spontaneously with enthusiasm in the later stage of the rehoming journey. It is suggested that some of the themes can be sent through mails by the shelter to the adopters after they have past the beginning months. It can be a way of both showing caring from the shelter and kindly reminding the progress of following the themes. Thus to keep raise the curiosity in the adopters to continue a guided rehoming journey.

The shelter as a hub to connect necessary resource

The current design focused on the self-exploration of the adopters, and take the shelter as a supporting role at the backstage. According to the animal expert, the design is still limiting in terms of intensive practice in the dog training. The design can inspire and remind the importance of training the dog in a proper way which could be the first step of establishing a positive dog-human relationship. But for practicing the actual training skills, a dog training course is still the best option. Thus a further cooperation with dog training schools could be suggested to the shelter to better ensure a high involvement of the adopters in a guided rehoming journey of the adopters.

The digitalization

This project was initiated by the designer, considering the lacking of financial support to bring a concept to a product level, it chose a tangible form of conveying the design intentions. However, in the evaluation, a preference in the digital form of the design was addressed. The reasons are easy to access, a need of getting in-time guidance and enabling an intuitive way of keeping and sharing the memories.

Project reflection

The process

This project offered me with a rich experience to both explore the topic itself and my own experience of initiating and concluding a project alone.

The exploration of the topic itself gave me a deeper understanding of the opportunities as well as difficulties of designing for animal-related projects. A lacking of animal behavior knowledge created the underlying uncertainty in making a design decision. So a constant cooperation and involvement of experts and caregivers are needed.

The exploration of my own graduating experience gave me an objective view of myself as a designer. So that I can list my limitations and weakness in detail according to the design process and have a clear view of where to extend my skills and develop my abilities.

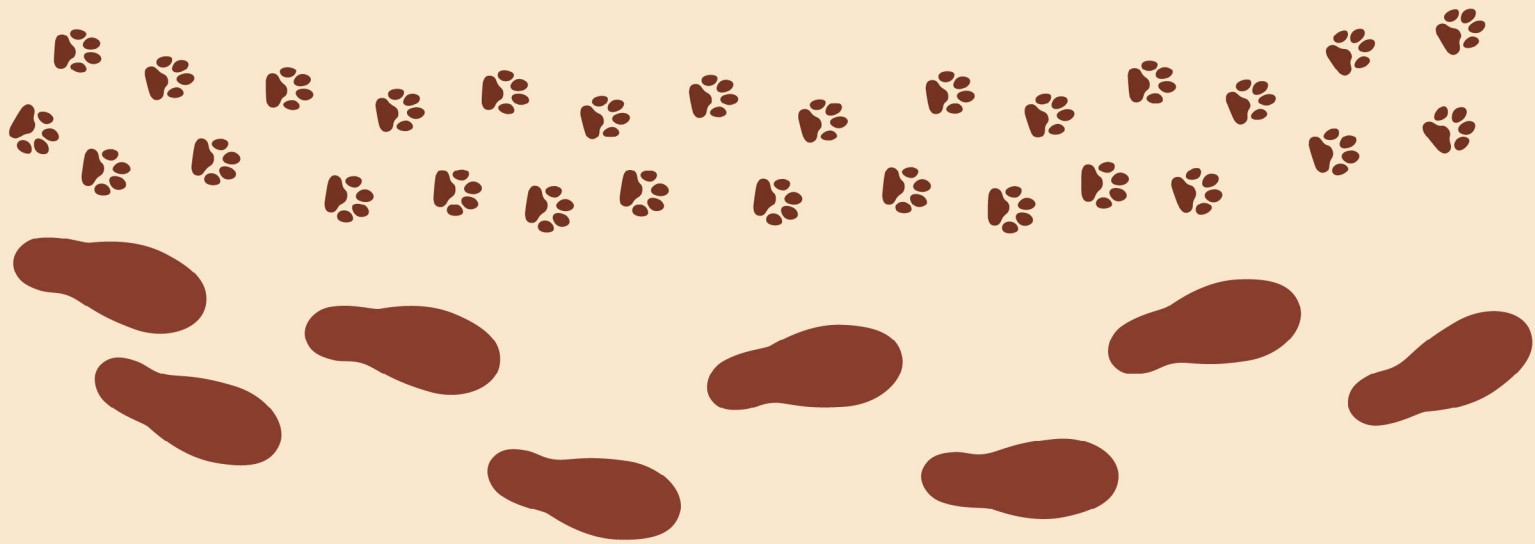
Research with design

I like doing research to gather opinions from people in different parties to map out the context in detail. It's a very inspiring way to bring the initial ideas or design thoughts to start a more in-depth discussion with the participants so to know about their experience and knowledge. More importantly to get to

know their way of thinking and making a decision. By comparing the different thinking and behaving styles of the novice caregivers and the experts, we can distinguish the conflicts in the caregiving process in the context of designing for an animal-related project. Then use that as a starting point for analyzing and designing.

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Thank you for keeping me company!