A collection of tools for

CREATIVITY & WELLBEING AT THINKWISE

Employee Experience DESIGN → Focus on Employee Needs

The topics in this bundle include:

- Shaping Employee Experience (EX)
- Well-being and creativity
- Well-being
- Creativity

To the user,
This bundle contains various tools which can be used to reflect on, evaluate, and design for positive Employee Experience (EX).

Intentionally shaping how an employee experiences an organization happens right at the intersection of HR, Organizational Design and Employee Experience Design.

Employee Experience Design

HR   Org. Design
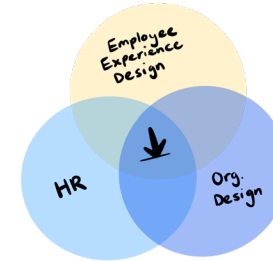
Fundamental to this process, is ensuring that employee's needs are met. The tools in this bundle will support you in that, regardless of whether you work in any of the domains mentioned above, or whether you simply wish to understand and do your part in coordinating how we go about our everyday work.

This document is a companion to a graduation thesis report by Nadia Dalh. It is recommended that that is referenced for more detailed insights and more detailed instructions as to how to use this bundle.
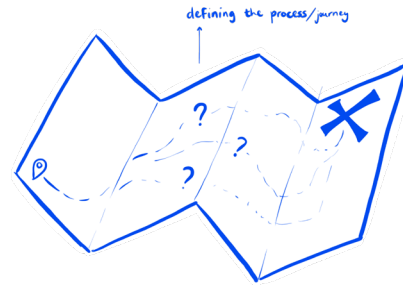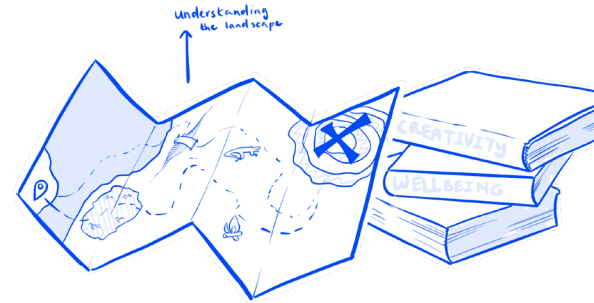
Shaping EX

Storyboard – figuring out the EX-strategy

goal setting

'Let's find out what we want to do in this project!'

defining the process/journey

'We need to figure out how to get there!'

understanding the landscape

CREATIVITY
WELLBEING

'Let's figure out what we might have to deal with on the way!'

investigating the context

'How does this apply to us? What paths can we take?'

course-setting

'What path shall we take?'

overcoming challenges
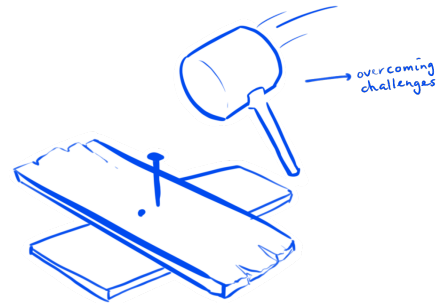
'Let's build some tools!'

embarking on the journey

'What tools can we prepare that can help us on our journey?'

taking the first big steps

'It's time. Let's make the first few steps!'

Shaping EX for Creativity & Psychological Wellbeing

Environment
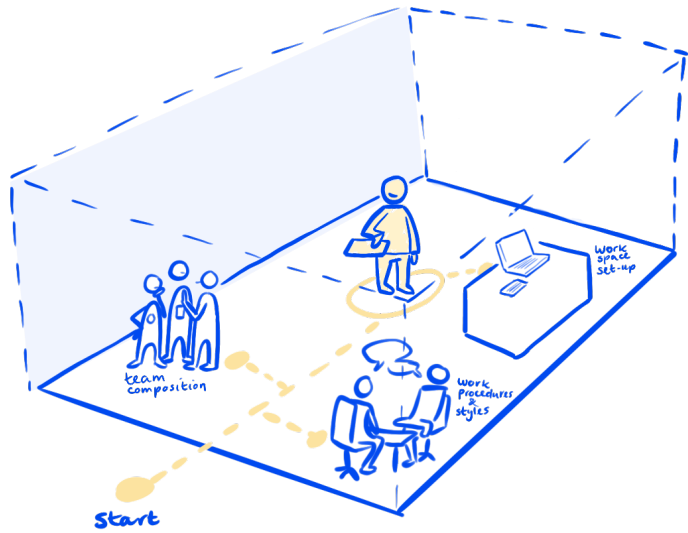
Psychological Well-being

personal goals
functioning well
achievement

Creative ability

domain-relevant skill

creativity relevant processes

motivation

environment high in support for creativity

team composition

work procedures & styles

work space set-up

start
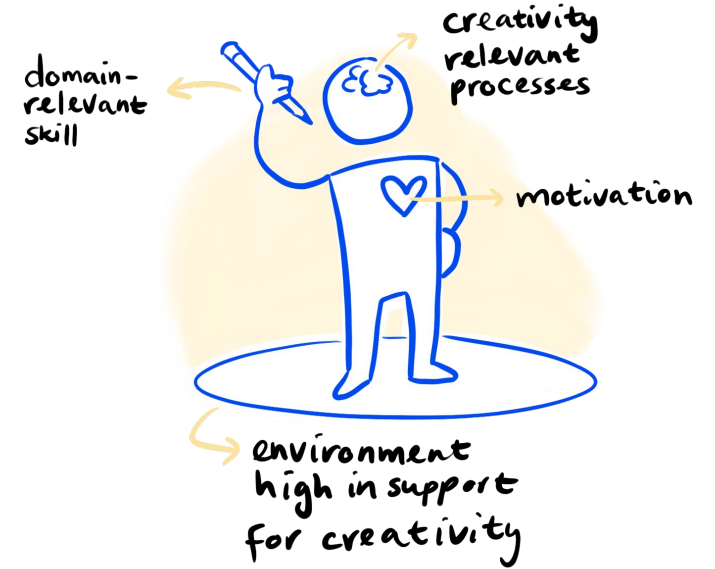
Dimensions of creativity and psychological well-being

CREATIVITY & WELLBEING AT WORK

CREATIVITY & WELLBEING AT WORK

CREATIVITY-RELEVANT PROCESSES

TASK MOTIVATION

1101 0011 110 DOMAIN-RELEVANT SKILLS

PARTNERS

CLIENTS

AUTO-NOMY

SELF-ACCEP-TANCE

POSITIVE RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

PURPOSE IN LIFE

PERSONAL GROWTH

ENVIRON-MENTAL MASTERY

PERSONAL FACTORS
affect an individual's ability to flourish and perform at work

e.g. knowledge and expertise

EXTERNAL FACTORS
Affect the need to innovate and priorities related to investing in, facilitating, and evaluating its employees' abilities, wellbeing, and output

e.g. competition or client relations

ORGANIZATION FACTORS
affect its employees' creative performance and an organization's ability to innovate

e.g. clarity surrounding expectations of creative performance or availability of resources

PERSONAL

interactions & relations

structure & capabilities

goals & mission

Organizational resources

SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL

CREATIVITY & WELLBEING AT WORK

Within Individual Components of Creativity
(Amabile, 2001)

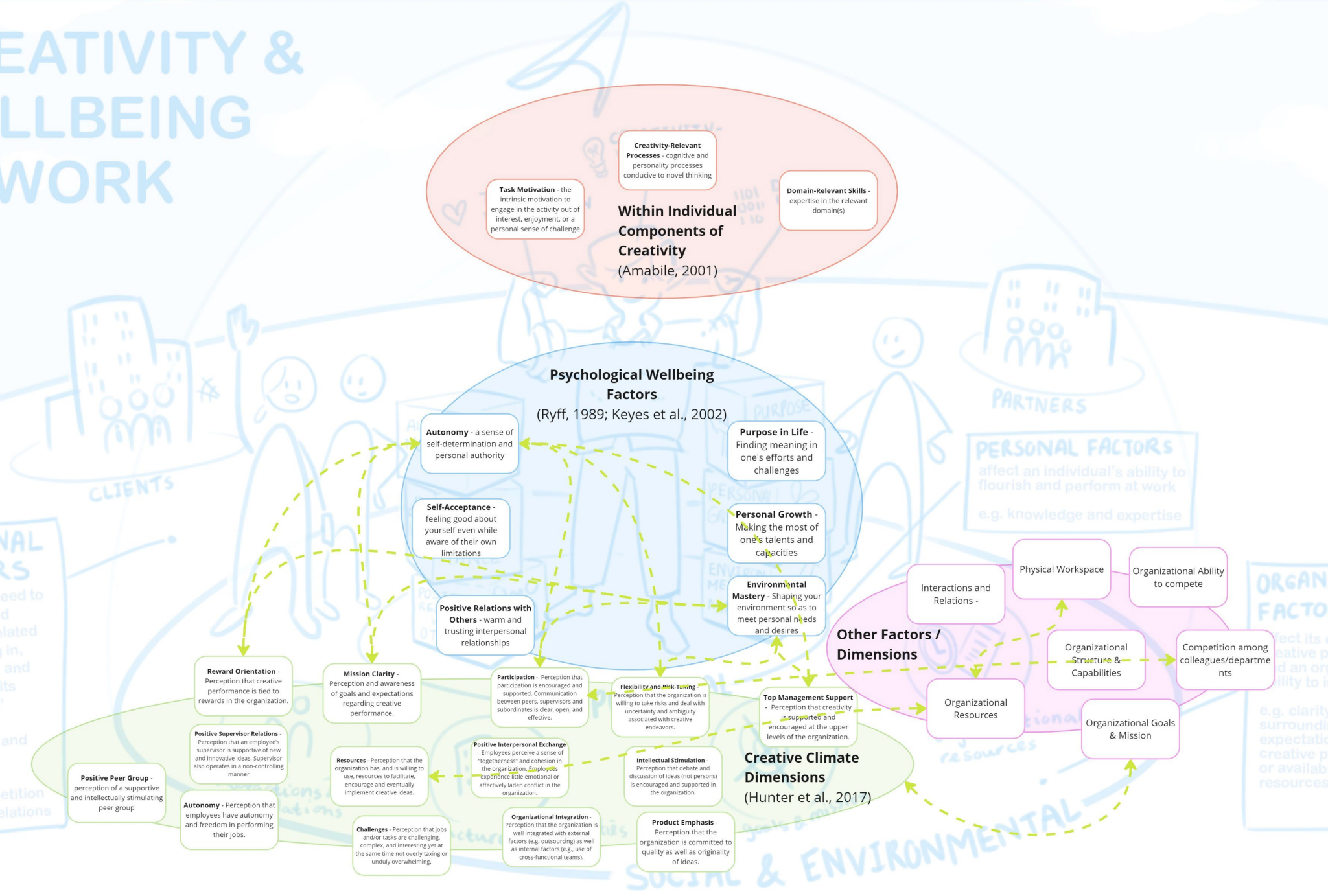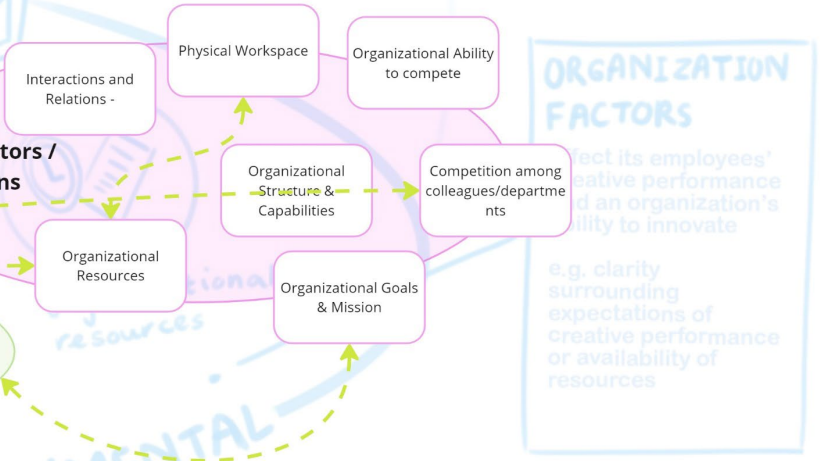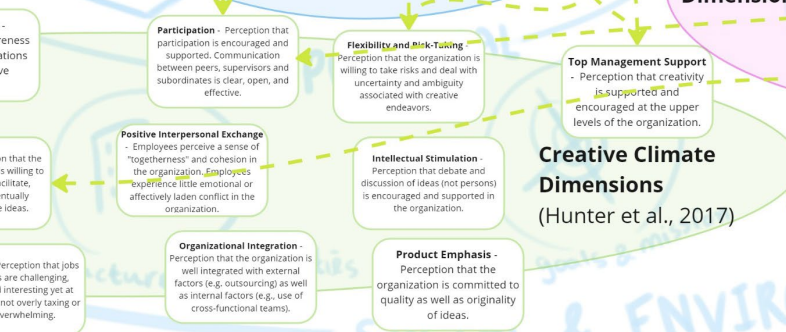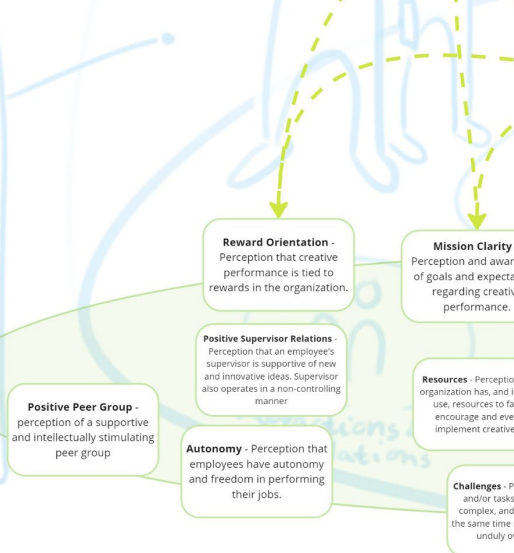**Task Motivation** - the intrinsic motivation to engage in the activity out of interest, enjoyment, or a personal sense of challenge

Creativity-Relevant Processes - cognitive and personality processes conducive to novel thinking

Domain-Relevant Skills - expertise in the relevant domain(s)

Psychological Wellbeing Factors
(Ryff, 1989; Keyes et al., 2002)

Autonomy - a sense of self-determination and personal authority

Purpose in Life - Finding meaning in one's efforts and challenges

Self-Acceptance - feeling good about yourself even while aware of their own limitations

Personal Growth - Making the most of one's talents and capacities

Positive Relations with Others - warm and trusting interpersonal relationships

Environmental Mastery - Shaping your environment so as to meet personal needs and desires

Creative Climate Dimensions
(Hunter et al., 2017)

Reward Orientation - Perception that creative performance is tied to rewards in the organization.

Mission Clarity - Perception and awareness of goals and expectations regarding creative performance.

Participation - Perception that participation is encouraged and supported. Communication between peers, supervisors and subordinates is clear, open, and effective.

Flexibility and Risk-Taking - Perception that the organization is willing to take risks and deal with uncertainty and ambiguity associated with creative endeavors.

Top Management Support - Perception that creativity is supported and encouraged at the upper levels of the organization.

Positive Supervisor Relations - Perception that an employee's supervisor is supportive of new and innovative ideas. Supervisor also operates in a non-controlling manner

Positive Interpersonal Exchange - Employees perceive a sense of "togetherness" and cohesion in the organization. Employees experience little emotional or affectively laden conflict in the organization.

Resources - Perception that the organization has, and is willing to use, resources to facilitate, encourage and eventually implement creative ideas.

Intellectual Stimulation - Perception that debate and discussion of ideas (not persons) is encouraged and supported in the organization.

Positive Peer Group - perception of a supportive and intellectually stimulating peer group

Autonomy - Perception that employees have autonomy and freedom in performing their jobs.

Challenges - Perception that jobs and/or tasks are challenging, complex, and interesting yet at the same time not overly taxing or unduly overwhelming.

Organizational Integration - Perception that the organization is well integrated with external factors (e.g. outsourcing) as well as internal factors (e.g., use of cross-functional teams).

Product Emphasis - Perception that the organization is committed to quality as well as originality of ideas.

Other Factors / Dimensions

Interactions and Relations -

Physical Workspace

Organizational Ability to compete

Organizational Resources

Organizational Structure & Capabilities

Competition among colleagues/departments

Organizational Goals & Mission

Dimension/Challenge	Definition
Self- Acceptance (SA)	People attempt to feel good about themselves even while aware of their own limitations.
Positive Relations with Others (PR)	People seek to develop and maintain warm and trusting interpersonal relationships.
Environmental Mastery (EM)	People attempt to shape their environment so as to meet personal needs and desires.
Autonomy (A)	People seek a sense of self-determination and personal authority.
Purpose in Life (PIL)	People attempt to find meaning in their efforts and challenges.
Personal Growth (PG)	People seek to make the most of their talents and capacities.

	Label	Operational Definition
1	Positive Peer Group	Perception of a supportive and intellectually stimulating peer group. Relationship are characterised by trust, openness, humour, and good communication.
2	Positive Supervisor Relations	Perception that an employee's supervisor is supportive of new and innovative ideas. Supervisor also operates in a non-controlling manner.
3	Resources	Perception that the organization has, and is willing to use, resources to facilitate, encourage and eventually implement creative ideas.
4	Challenge	Perception that jobs and/or tasks are challenging, complex, and interesting-yet at the same time not overly taxing or unduly overwhelming.
5	Mission Clarity	Perception and awareness of goals and expectations regarding creative performance.
6	Autonomy	Perception that employees have autonomy and freedom in performing their jobs.
7	Positive Interpersonal Exchange	Employees perceive a sense of "togetherness" and cohesion in the organization. Employees experience little emotional or affectively laden conflict in the organization.
8	Intellectual Stimulation	Perception that debate and discussion of ideas (not persons) is encouraged and supported in the organization.
9	Top MAnagement Support	Perception that creativity is supported and encouraged at the upper levels of the organization.
10	Reward Orientation	Perception that creative performance is tied to rewards in the organization.
11	Flexibility and Risk-Taking	PErception that the organization is willing to take risks and deal with uncertainty and ambiguity associated with creative endeavours.
12	Product Emphasis	Perception that the organization is committed to quality *as well as* originality of ideas.
13	Participation	Perception that participation is encouraged and supported. Communication between peers, supervisors and subordinates is clear, open, and effective.
14	Organizational Integration	Perception that the organization is well integrated with external factors (e.g. outsourcing) as well as internal factors (e.g. use of cross-functional teams).

Narratives

Narrative 1
Defending the Title of Innovator
Valuing creativity, while leaving little room for it

While priding themselves on a capacity for and a track record of innovation, Thinkwisers get the impression that there is little room for creative activities. Things like 'blame culture' makes employees feel uneasy about pursuing ideas where there is no guarantee that the desired outcome will be achieved or where the value might turn out to be lower than expected. Incentive for experimentation is also low as there is a constant pressure to be billable and little time to spend on such things. New ideas are also often not given a fair shot to be developed before they are evaluated and subsequently dismissed because of 'a lack of potential'. Yet, when Thinkwisers take risks to explore ideas they had in their free time, there is appreciation given by management and peers. It is appreciation for producing a result, but this appreciation or support is often missing before an interesting 'proof of concept' is delivered. Even when ideas are listened to and given space to be further developed, often these ideas are abandoned anyway because of the limited

time and resources that can be spent on things outside of the operational, day-to-day, profit-generating activities. Yet, Thinkwise is aware that a good idea has great value, but the process of getting to a good idea is hardly facilitated. There are also a few traits and behaviors shown by Thinkwisers that can be counterproductive to ensuring a creative climate or climate for innovation. Such traits are risk-aversion, focus on results, and a strong sense of responsibility towards clients. These traits are, at least partially, the result of a sense of pride in their unique and innovative product, and a desire to protect its reputation. There are currently activities and programs in place to nurture the Thinkwise DNA (e.g. by inspiring individual Thinkwisers to see themselves as legends). Evaluations of the creative climate in Thinkwise show that some of the groundwork of a healthy creative climate is present, but as shown above, there are still many things that are holding people back.

"You can't work harder than by having a good idea"
– C-suite manager

"We think it's very important to be creative and to think out of the box, but whether it's encouraged? No."
- Corporate Excellence member

Affected dimensions of creative climate:
Positive Supervisor Relations, Flexibility and Risk-Taking, Resources, Reward Orientation, Mission Clarity, Top Management Support

Affected dimensions of PWB:
Autonomy, Environmental Mastery

Figure 44: *Relevant creative climate and well-being dimensions*

Narrative 2
Seeking an Integrated Organization
People want to feel more connected to each other in their work and relationships

Throughout the organization many people feel disconnected from each other, from other departments, and from the organization. This manifests through a lack of trust in each other, a desire to feel more social connection to each other, a desire to bond more in an emotional sense, and a desire to receive more empathy and understanding from each other when dealing with challenges. While Thinkwisers feel pride for the product they deliver, they feel little pride for the team that works on that product. The lack of connection to each other has historically also resulted in a batch of newer Thinkwisers who have less attachment to the company than those who have been around for a while. This had led to dissatisfaction on both the side of management and these newer Thinkwisers. Additionally, there is a strong awareness of silos within the organization that are making communication and collaboration difficult. Multiple events and behaviors caused these feelings over time, and there is now more effort being poured into changing them. These efforts are largely centered around improving communication among Thinkwisers, with initiatives such as adding communication channels. There are also bottom-up initiatives, such as mini-hackathons, that serve as a beacon of hope in showcasing what happens when connection, collaboration, and good communication align.

"When push comes to shove, every company starts with a good atmosphere amongst their people, right? If you don't have that you won't get anything else done."
– *Professional services manager*

"If you look at Thinkwise as a whole, and at trust, and that people are doing things right, then there's still room for improvement."
- *C-suite manager*

"Supporting other almost feels like it gets punished, you're really making it a whole big deal."
- *Product innovation member*

Affected dimensions of creative climate:
Positive Peer Group, Positive Interpersonal Exchange, Organization Integration, Participation

Affected dimensions of PWB:
Positive Relationships

Figure 45: *Relevant creative climate and well-being dimensions*

Narrative 3
Achieving High Standards and Expectations
The push for excellence clashes with the lack of appreciation

Thinkwise as an organization wants its people to strive for greatness, but there have been instances in the past that made people feel unappreciated. Thinkwise is now putting in efforts to mend that by celebrating people and their achievements. At the same time, they want people to continue challenging themselves, and believe that pushing people could have negative consequences if not done carefully. Ultimately, they want to see more commitment, engagement, and involvement. There is some tension in that people are encouraged to hold themselves to a higher standard, while they already feel that they are reaching a high standard that they are insufficiently being rewarded or recognized for. While people feel like there is still some way to go in the appreciation they receive in general, they feel like appreciation for creative efforts is sorely lacking. The expectations around creative efforts are non-explicit. People realize that while they could pursue new ideas, they will get little appreciation for it before the idea is evaluated as useful or lucrative. This may hold people back. The people who do pursue their new ideas regardless of this, tend to be those who feel like they have little to lose due to seniority or their status.

"Creative achievements, that changes it, I think. That isn't really celebrated."
– *C-suite manager*

"Sometimes I notice a lack of commitment, the commitment to really get it done."
– *C-suite manager*

Affected dimensions of creative climate:
Reward Orientation

Affected dimensions of PWB:
Environmental Mastery

Figure 46: *Relevant creative climate and wellbeing dimensions*

Narrative 4
Dealing with Business-as-usual
Billability reigns supreme in the minds of Thinkwisers

The operations and leadership methods of the bu\\siness created a number of challenges. One such challenge is that Thinkwise is bogged down by operational challenges, so they don't get to spend as much time as they'd like on future-oriented thinking. There is also the desire to have every Thinkwiser understand the bigger picture and have a strong awareness of the need for profitability. While necessary and useful, this has resulted in negative effects on the creative climate within the organization. Many Thinkwisers feel pressured to focus on execution and feel that there is little room for collaboration, experimentation, and pursuing new ideas. They understand that time is of the essence, that you need to strive for being billable nearly 100% of the time, and that mistakes are to be avoided. These sentiments were much stronger in the recent past, but Thinkwise has been taking steps to alleviate them. While profitability and billability are incredibly important, management currently wants to carry out the message that it's okay to not be 100% billable as long as that effort or time is put into something useful.

"[At time] When I wasn't billable. But I had no idea what to register that under. So then I lose both time and it gives you a lot of stress"
– *Professional services manager*

Affected dimensions of creative climate:
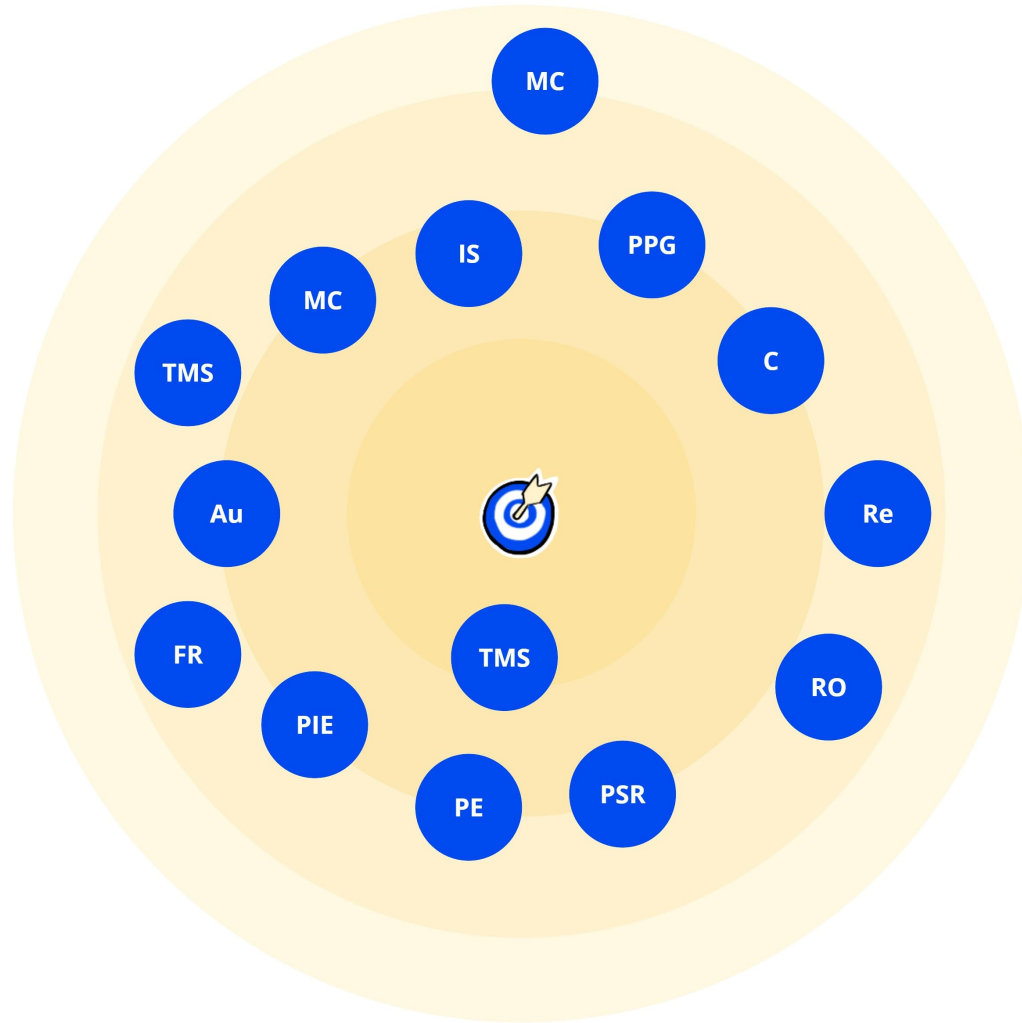Flexibility Risk-Taking, Reward Orientation, Top Management Support, Autonomy

Affected dimensions of PWB:
-

Figure 47: *Relevant creative climate and wellbeing dimensions*

Statements for evaluating creative climate and current score

Stellingen

Voor het inschatten van het creatieve klimaat binnen een organisatie

→ De mensen hier ondersteunen elkaar.

→ De mensen hier hebben vertrouwen, humor, goede communicatie en zijn open met elkaar.

POSITIVE INTERPERSONAL EXCHANGE

POSITIEVE INTERACTIES MET ANDEREN

→ Leidinggevenden hier ondersteunen nieuwe en innovatieve ideeën.

→ Leidinggevenden leiden hier niet op een controlerende manier.

POSITIVE SUPERVISOR RELATIONS

POSITIEVE RELATIES MET LEIDINGGEVENDEN

→ Er zijn hier middelen beschikbaar om innovatieve/creatieve ideeën te implementeren, aan te moedigen, en te faciliteren.

RESOURCES

MIDDELEN

→ Opdrachten en taken zijn hier uitdagend, complex, en interessant.

→ Opdrachten en taken zijn hier niet te zwaar of overweldigend.

CHALLENGE

UITDAGING

→ Doelen en verwachtingen over creatieve prestaties zijn hier duidelijk.
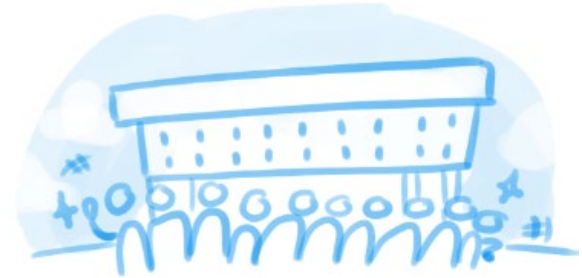

GOALS & EXPECTATJONS

MISSION CLARITY

HELDERE MISSIE

→ Mensen hebben hier
autonomie en vrijheid
in het uitvoeren van
hun taken.

→ Mensen hebben het gevoel dat zij er samen voor staan.

→ Mensen voelen hier weinig emotioneel-geladen conflict.

POSITIVE PEER GROUP

POSITIEVE GROEP COLLEGA'S

→ Debat en discussies over ideeën (niet personen) worden hier ondersteund en aangemoedigd.

INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION

INTELLECTUELE UITDAGING

→ Creativiteit wordt hier ondersteund en aangemoedigd in de management-laag.

TOP MANAGEMENT
SUPPORT

ONDERSTEUNING VANUIT
TOP MANAGEMENT

→ Creativiteit wordt hier beloond.

REWARD ORIENTATION

STREVEN NAAR BELONING

→ Men is hier bereid om risico te ondernemen.

→ Men is hier bereid om onzekerheid en onduidelijkheid aan te pakken.

FLEXIBILITY AND
RISK-TAKING

FLEXIBILITEIT EN
RISICO ONDERNEMEN

→ Er wordt hier gestreefd naar kwaliteit van ideeën

→ Er wordt hier gestreefd naar originaliteit van ideeën

PRODUCT EMPHASIS

NADRUK OP KWALITEITEN

→ Participatie wordt hier aangemoedigd en ondersteund.

→ Communicatie tussen collega's, teamgenoten, en leidinggevenden is helder, open, en effectief.

JOIN US!

PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATIE

→ Externe factoren worden hier goed geïntegreerd (bijv. outsourcing)

→ Interne factoren worden hier goed geïntegreerd (bijv. gebruik van multifunctionele teams)

ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION

INTEGRATIE VAN ORGANISATIE- FACTOREN