DESIGNING THE INFORMATION JOURNEY:

AN ENGAGING APPROACH TO GUIDE AN AIRLINE ORGANISATION IN ADEQUATE INFORMATION TRANSFER TO THEIR CONTACT CENTRE STAFF

MASTER GRADUATION PROJECT

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Designing the Information Journey

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April, 2023

PREFACE

Dear reader,

It's a wrap! This project concludes my time as a student at the TU Delft. What a journey it has been! From designing various small containers in the first days of the bachelor, to managing an organisational design project to complete my master degree. Over the past six months, I have worked on this master thesis project in collaboration with a Dutch airline company. The project was an exciting challenge, and I am proud of what I have achieved.

Before introducing the project, I want to take this moment to express my gratitude to the company for giving me the opportunity to work with them. I have learned a lot from being inside a big organisation. More specifically, I felt very welcome in the Ancillary Team. My colleagues were always happy to help, to take part in my interviews and sessions, or to just have a chat.

There a few people in particular that I would like to thank. Without them, I would not have been able to execute the project like I did. First up is my company mentor Clara. Thank you for being my biggest cheerleader, my brainstorm partner, and my company guide all in one. I could always come to you to exchange thoughts or share my concerns. You were a perfect role model for me, and it was a true pleasure to work together.

Second, my TU Delft supervisors Jo and Willemijn. Thank you for being the best supervisory team I could have asked for. Jo's academic and organisation knowledge, together with Willemijn's creative and practical input turned out to be a great combination for me. Our meetings were always useful, insightful, and fun. You asked me the right questions, gave me fresh perspectives, and supported me all the way through.

Last, my family and friends. Thank you to all the people around me who tried out my sessions, brainstormed along, listened to my struggles, and supported me throughout the project. I would like to especially thank Papa, Mama, Dorien, Sven, Siem, Charmaine, Maud, Yara, Rosan, and Paulien for their great help and support.

Have a good read!

Margriet

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bluebird, a Dutch airline company, was founded over 100 years ago. To this day, they aim to provide memorable experiences to their customers. To do so, Bluebird must service their customers well at every brand touchpoint. Even though digital self-service is becoming the norm, knowledgeable contact centre agents are important to ensure a seamless transition between the online and offline touchpoints. Hence, the customer service agents behind the phone, i.e. the front-line staff, play a crucial role in providing the right support and offers for the customer, and consequently in delivering the Bluebird brand experience.

To provide the customer service, the agents rely on information that comes from Bluebird. This thesis specifically focuses on the information about ancillaries. The ancillaries refer to all additional options that a customer can buy to enrich the flight experience. By offering ancillaries, the airline responds to the upcoming customer demand for personalised travel experiences. Furthermore, the ancillaries present a high revenue potential for Bluebird. Therefore, it is crucial that the information flow works smoothly so the agents are well aware when a new product is introduced and what the product entails. However, Bluebird's provision of timely and complete information currently falls short. Therefore, this thesis aims to investigate how the ancillary information flow to the contact centres can be improved.

This thesis makes use of a design approach. Hence, it consists of a research phase to define the focus for the design intervention, and a design phase to create and deliver the design intervention. By means of qualitative methods, it is investigated how the information currently travels from the source to the agent, and how the involved people experience this information flow. The research reveals that the information passes through a four-step chain: it travels from the Ancillary Team and their colleagues (i.e. ancillary stakeholders), via Bluebird Customer Services and the contact centre Knowledge Management, to the agent. This current flow does not make use of a structured process and highly depends on individual proactivity. As a result, the information flow is found to be unorganised and inefficient.

Furthermore, the research shows that for the ancillary stakeholders it is not clear who, when, what and how they should inform. This results in confusion, misalignment, inconsistent output, and low levels of awareness and engagement in the process of communicating information. Hence, the goal of this thesis is to create an engaging approach to guide the ancillary stakeholders in an adequate information transfer process.

During the design phase, co-creative sessions are used to explore solutions to meet the design goal. This phase results in the Information Journey concept, which consists of a process proposal, a corresponding template, and an explanatory manual. The process consists of clear steps and dedicated meeting moments to ensure early involvement of relevant stakeholders and creates the opportunity to exchange feedback between those stakeholders. The template corresponds to the proposed process steps. It specifies which information is required at which moment, and motivates users to complete the document. The manual contains detailed explanations of the process and its background, as well as tips for the stakeholders to apply during the proposed meeting moments.

The Information Journey provides Bluebird with a set of tools that ensure a well structured and consistent ancillary information flow towards the contact centre. The approach is flexible, reusable, and open for future iterations to make it worthwhile for the organisation. This thesis closes with a set of practical tips to support Bluebird with the implementation of the new approach, as well as some project limitations and recommendations for further research.

GLOSSARY & READING GUIDE

Abbreviations used in this document:

OFMA	=	Offer Management & Ancillaries
BO	=	Business Owner, i.e. an Ancillary Product Manager
DIS	=	Digital Team
DIG	=	Distribution Team
BA	=	Business Analyst
CuSer (K&T)	=	Customer Services (Knowledge & Training)
CC	=	Contact Centre
CC KM	=	Contact Centre Knowledge Management
CoE	=	Centre of Expertise
KM	=	Knowledge management

Frequently used terms in this document:

Bluebird = An airline, and this project's partner organisation

Ancillary = Additional paid options for air transportation to enrich the flight experience

Ancillary stakeholders = A joint term that refers to the Bluebird ancillary Business Owners and Business Analysts that are involved in the development of an ancillary

Ancillary Team = The team that is responsible for managing the ancillaries, which the Business Owners are part of

Ancillary Support = A term used to refer to the Distribution and Digital Business Analysts that support in the development of an ancillary

Contact Centre = The company that provides omnichannel customer service on behalf of the airline

Information = In the context of this project, information refers to all that is explicitly documented or articulated in text or symbols outside of the human mind

Knowledge = In the context of this project, knowledge refers to all that is processed by the individual and tacitly resides inside one's mind

How to read this document?

This document makes use of different titles and headings to enhance the readibility of the report. See an overview of the different styles below. The paragraph titles also function as page breakers. Therefore, if a new paragraph starts in the middle of a page, the text of the previous paragraph finishes in either the left or right text column above the new paragraph title.

0.1 THIS IS A PARAGRAPH TITLE

0.1.1 This is a sub paragraph title

This is an in-text heading

Box for Chapter key take-aways:

- This report consists of four sections that each contain multiple chapters. At the end of each chapter, the key take-aways are summarised in an orange box, just like this one.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Please find the Appendix, the Information Journey Template, and the Information Journey Manual in separate documents in the TU Delft student repository.

01

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the context of the project is introduced and research questions to guide the first phase of the project are proposed. Furthermore, the project's approach, as well as the structure of this report are explained.

In this Chapter:

1.1 SETTING THE SCENE

The airline and customer service

This graduation project investigates internal information flows within a big organisation. The project is executed in collaboration with a Dutch airline organisation that has over 30.000 employees. Founded in 1919, it is the oldest airline in the world that is still operating under its original name. Throughout this project, the airline is referred to as 'Bluebird'. Bluebird has built up a brand image of being a full-service airline that cares hugely for its customers. This is in line with their current ambition as the following is stated on their website: "providing memorable experiences to our customers is in our DNA" (Company Profile, n.d.).

One element of providing such a memorable experience is having good customer service. Even though digital self-service is becoming the norm, knowledgeable contact centre agents are now more important than ever. When customers have a question or request, or encounter an issue that they cannot resolve themselves, they count on the knowledge of an agent for an effective solution that satisfies their needs (Microsoft, 2017). For airlines, having a seamless transition between online and offline service is the ultimate goal (PYMNTS, 2018).

Hence, the customer service agents behind the phone, i.e. the front-line staff, play a crucial role in delivering the brand experience and providing the right offer for the customer. Since Bluebird has a worldwide customer base, they have to be able to serve their customers anytime at any place. To achieve this, they collaborate with several contact centre companies around the world. These contact centres are subsidiary companies of Bluebird and provide omnichannel customer service on behalf of the airline.

The contact centre agents have an important job, since they are in direct contact with the customers and therefore represent the Bluebird brand. Not only do the agents have influence on how the customers experience the brand, they also have the opportunity to sell the airline's products and services to the customer and therefore increase revenue. The agents base their service on the product information that is provided by the airline. However, this is where Bluebird currently falls short. There is a lack of clear communication between the involved parties. Furthermore, a structured information flow between Bluebird and the contact centres is missing. This can lead to unprepared and unaware agents, which in turn influences the customer service can they provide.

There is an opportunity for Bluebird to improve their information supply and communication towards the contact centre, since it is in their big interest that the agents are well-equipped to service the customer with knowledgeable solutions and relevant offers. Ultimately, the agents must be properly informed and empowered to do their job and deliver a great experience to the Bluebird customers.

The airline and ancillary products

Bluebird's core product is selling air transportation from A to B. However, over the past years, the airline has begun to also offer ancillaries. An ancillary refers to all of the additional options that a customer can buy on top of the transportation itself to enrich the flight experience. For instance, access to the airport lounge or a special meal on board.

McKinsey (2019) has estimated that 70% of future value creation for airlines will come from additional revenues like ancillaries. At the same time, customer expectations are changing. Customers are looking for personalised travel experiences. Personalised ancillary offers are an interesting way for airlines to respond to this demand, which is why they are becoming more and more relevant (Datalex, 2022). Therefore, ancillaries are believed to play a major role in the future of the air travel industry. The amount of ancillaries that Bluebird offers is growing. Since the ancillaries present such a high potential for Bluebird, it is crucial that the information flow works smoothly, and that the agents are well aware when a new product is introduced and what the different options entail.

1.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Project aim

On the one hand, there is Bluebird's Ancillary Team which possesses all the knowledge about the ancillaries. On the other hand, there are the contact centre agents who should know the ins and outs of the ancillaries to adequately help the customer with questions and issues, or propose an offer that fits the customer's needs and desires. Sometimes, the agents receive this information too late. Additionally, they struggle to answer questions because they cannot find, or simply do not have the correct information. The process of getting the information from the source at Bluebird to the agent at the contact centre is complex and currently falls short. This results in a big distance between the ones who create the products and the ones who are in the front line to help the customers with those products. Bluebird wants to mitigate this gap and improve their transfer of information and communication toward the contact centre agent. Therefore, this project investigates how the information currently travels from the Ancillary Team to the contact centre. Ultimately, the project aims to develop a design intervention that improves this information flow according to the needs of all stakeholders who are involved in this process.

Research focus

To increase the feasibility of this project, the focus is scoped down to only one of Bluebird's contact centres. Additionally, the project solely focuses on the information about ancillaries since these products show high potential for the future as described in Paragraph 1.1. This project's focus is summarised in the following main research question:

"How can the information flow about ancillary products from the Ancillary Team to the front-line staff in the contact centre be improved?"

This research question is accompanied by several sub-research questions that help to guide the research phase of this project. The sub-research questions are listed below. Figure 1 on the next page shows an overview of the sub-research questions, their purpose and the methods that are used to answer them.

SubRQ1: What do information and knowledge theoretically mean in an organisational context?

SubRQ2: How do information and knowledge about ancillaries travel from the source at Bluebird to the destination at the contact centre?

SubRQ3: What obstructs the current knowledge and information flow from running smoothly at Bluebird?

SubRQ4: What effects does the current information flow have on the recipients at the contact centre?

SubRQ	Purpose	Methods
1. What do information and knowledge theoretically mean in an organisational context?	To define what the concepts of infomation and knowledge mean for this project and explore their functions and processes in organisations.	Literature research
2. How do information and knowledge about ancillaries travel from the source at Bluebird to the destination at the contact centre?	To understand how the organisations are organised and discover how their current process for transferring information and knowledge works.	Internal desk research Qualitative interviews
3. What obstructs the current information flow from running smoothly at Bluebird?	To discover what kind of issues and needs currently play a role at Bluebird and determine what causes the current information flow to fall short.	Qualitative interviews
4. What effects does the current information flow have on the recipients at the contact centre?	To discover how the current flow affects the contact centre people and discover if they have unmet needs.	Generative sessions

Figure 1: Overview of the sub-research questions

1.3 STRATEGIC FIT

In 2022, Bluebird has presented its renewed purpose and strategy. They state that it remains of great importance to them to focus on “being a great airline for our customers” and “keeping our people engaged at all times”. The focus of this project touches upon both of these elements. The current information flow is flawed, which leads to disengagement of the involved employees. Besides, in order for Bluebird to be the great airline they aspire to be, they need to excel in their customer service. This customer service only gets better when the agents are well informed by their parent company so they can provide the most relevant offers and solutions for the customer. Therefore, this project’s topic is in line with the strategic ambitions of the airline.

1.4 PROJECT APPROACH

This project’s approach is based on the Double Diamond process model that was first introduced by the Design Council in 2005 (Design Council, 2019). The model consists of two diamonds. The first diamond focuses on the research part of this project. Here, the current context is explored as a basis for the definition of the intervention focus and formulation of the design goal. The second diamond focuses on the ideation for the solution and the delivery of the final concept. Both diamonds depict the stages of divergence and convergence that a designer goes through during a project. A visual representation of this process is displayed in figure 2. The visualisation might suggest that the process has a linear character. However, the design process is highly iterative and goes back and forth between the different phases when the situation requires so.

The phases of the Double Diamond are briefly elaborated below.

Discover

During the Discover phase, the sub-research questions guide the exploration of the organisational context at Bluebird. First, literature is consulted for clarification of complex terminology and gaining an understanding of relevant theoretical concepts for this project. Second, through the use of ethnographic research methods, the project’s stakeholders are identified and their behaviours, experiences and needs are examined.

Define

In the Define phase, the findings from Discover

are bundled and concluded in order to arrive at the focus for this project’s design intervention. This focus is translated into the design goal. Additionally, requirements for the design are derived from the research insights.

Develop

The previously defined design goal functions as the starting point for the Develop phase. During this phase, a participatory approach is used through organising creative sessions with the stakeholders to generate ideas that achieve the design goal and meet the requirements. The results of the sessions lead to a preliminary concept that is tested with the stakeholders. The test results reveal final iterations that need to be applied to the concept.

Deliver

The Deliver phase focuses on delivering the final concept as well as evaluating it with stakeholders. Next steps for the company to put the concept into practice are defined, as well as project limitations and recommendations for further developments. The phase is finalised with a personal reflection on the project.

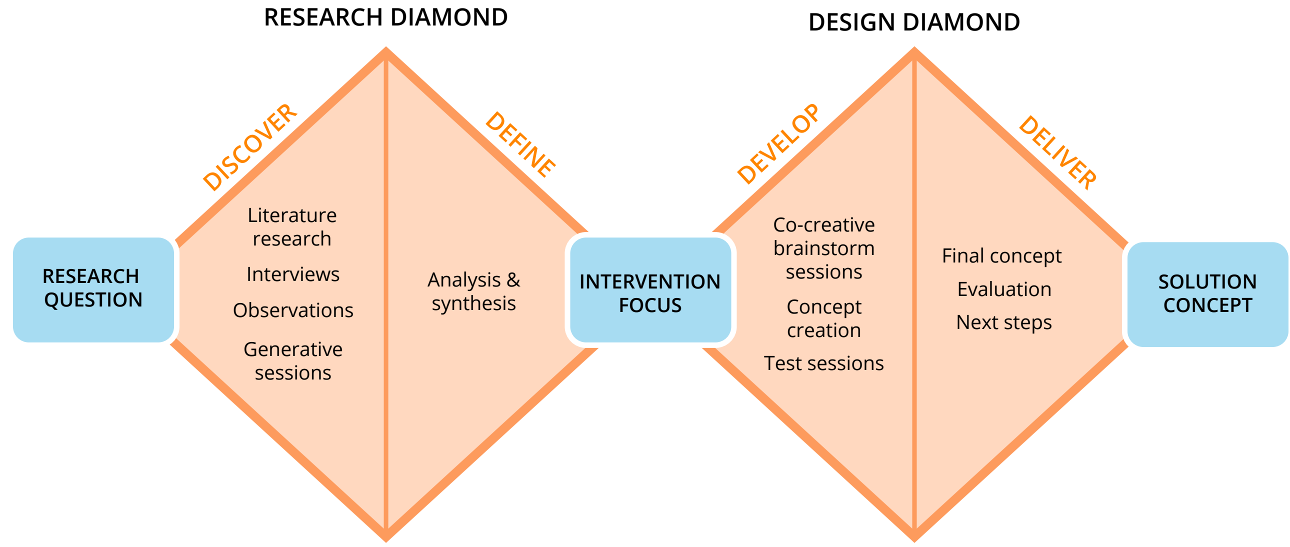


Figure 2: A visualisation of the double diamond approach adapted from the Design Council (2019)

1.5 REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is divided into four sections that correspond to the phases of the Double Diamond. Each section contains multiple chapters.

Figure 3 gives an overview of content that is included in each of the four sections in this report.

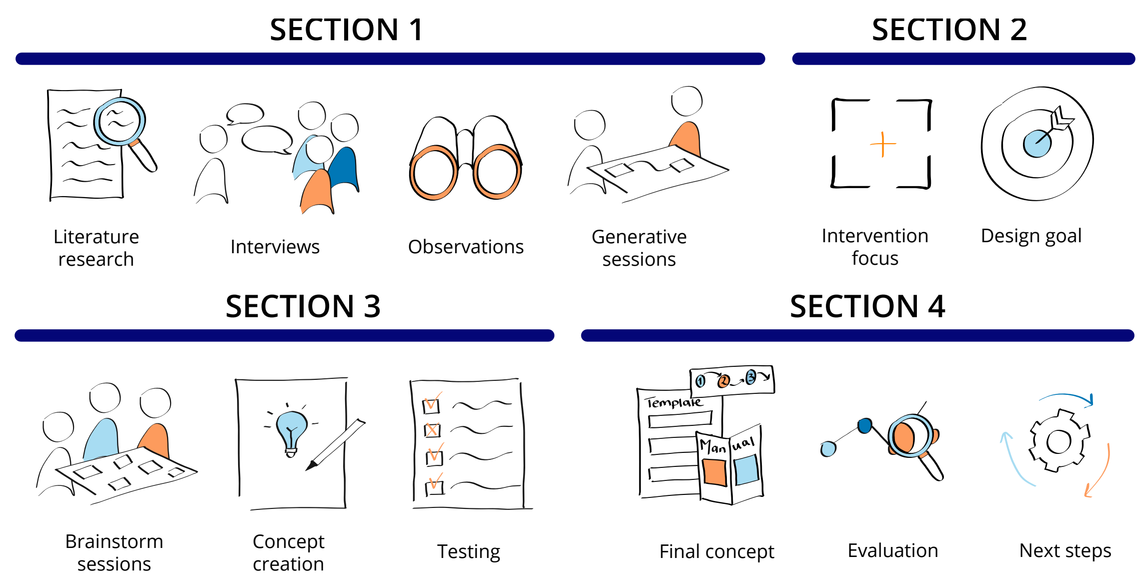


Figure 3: The structure of this graduation report

SECTION 1

DISCOVER

THIS SECTION FOCUSES ON EXPLORING THE CONTEXT OF RESEARCH AND UNDERSTANDING THE BEHAVIOURS, EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS THAT ARE PRESENT IN THE PROJECT'S SCOPE.

In this section:

02

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The concepts of knowledge and information are highly present in this project. These concepts need to be well understood before improvements can be defined. A review of extant literature helps to shed light on these complex concepts. In this chapter, information, knowledge, and related topics are explored, discussed, and defined to serve as a basis for remainder of the project.

In this Chapter:

2.1 LITERATURE APPROACH

This literature review seeks to answer SubRQ1: 'What do information and knowledge theoretically mean in an organisational context?' as posed in Paragraph 1.2. To aid the search for relevant literature, SubRQ1 is split up into two literature research questions.

LRQ1: How do information and knowledge relate to each other?
This question guides the exploration of the similarities and differences between the concepts of knowledge and information.

LRQ2: How is knowledge created and managed within an organisation?
This question builds on the previous findings and explores what knowledge means specifically for an organisational context, as well as how it is created, and how it can be leveraged. The following paragraphs describe the relevant literature findings for this project.

2.2 INFORMATION VERSUS KNOWLEDGE

This graduation project revolves around bringing information from one place to another but also deals with the knowledge that stakeholders possess. The term 'knowledge' is used by two of the project's stakeholders (CuSer Knowledge & Training and CC Knowledge Management, see Chapter 3). Hence, it seems relevant to better understand what the concepts of knowledge and information entail and how they may or may not differ.

A broad literature search reveals a hierarchical relationship between the concepts of 'data', 'information' and 'knowledge'. Data is defined as raw facts or elements that are easy to structure and transfer. Data can become information once it organised, put in context and is endowed with relevance and/or purpose (Davenport & Prusak, 1997; Prabha Singh, 2007). Information becomes knowledge once it has been processed in the human mind and beliefs, truths, judgments, expectations and know-how have been added (Baskerville & Dulipovici, 2006).

However, knowledge and information do not seem so easy to distinguish from each other in practice (Davenport & Prusak, 1997). Over the past decades, knowledge and information have been widely researched under the term 'knowledge management' and ever since the distinction has grown vague (Baskerville & Dulipovici, 2006). Alavi & Leidner (2001) argue that information and knowledge cannot be separated based on content or structure. Rather, they state that knowledge is information possessed in the mind of individuals. In other words, they claim that knowledge is personalised information. According to this view, information is converted into knowledge once it has been processed in the human mind. Consequently, knowledge turns into information once it has been articulated and codified in text, graphics, or symbols. Nazim & Mukherjee (2016) phrase it as follows: "Everything that exists in the 'real world' is either data or information and everything that is embodied within a person is knowledge." From the arguments above, it can be argued that knowledge partly consists of information, but the two concepts coexist at the same time.

Furthermore, the literature identifies two types of knowledge: explicit and tacit. Explicit knowledge is described as the knowledge that is easy to express, codify and communicate to others. Explicit aspects of knowledge can be shared through drawings, patents or manuals. The forms of knowledge that are identified as explicit, are at the same time often referred to as information (Prabha Singh, 2007). Tacit knowledge is embedded in people's minds and is difficult to communicate via words or symbols. Tacit aspects of knowledge are best transmitted through training or experiences (Hu & Randel, 2014).

This taxonomy of knowledge asks for different strategies to manage the knowledge that resides within an organisation: 'codification' and 'personalisation'. As explained by Edvardsson & Oskarsson (2011), during codification, explicit knowledge is expressed in words and symbols to be stored in a database where it can be accessed by anyone in the organisation. The codification of explicit knowledge can increase effectiveness and enhance growth within an organisation. Personalisation is explained as personal development of tacit knowledge grounded in personal skills, intuition and insights for problem-solving. Examples of techniques to facilitate personalisation are dialogues or communities of practice. It is based on the logic of 'expert economics', where tacit knowledge is used to solve unique problems (Edvardsson & Oskarsson, 2011). These two strategies imply that organisations should be well aware of which kind of knowledge they are dealing with in order to choose the best way to manage this knowledge.

2.3 HOW IS KNOWLEDGE CREATED IN AN ORGANISATION?

An organisation is a place where knowledge is created through action and interaction (Nonaka et al. 2000). There has been an ongoing debate about whether explicit or tacit knowledge is most valuable to an organisation. Nonaka et al. (2000) state that the two types are complementary and both essential for the creation of new knowledge within an organisation. More specifically, new knowledge is created through interactions between the two types which is referred to as 'knowledge conversion'. The four modes of conversion by Nonaka et al. (2000) are referred to as the SECI model and are displayed in figure 4.

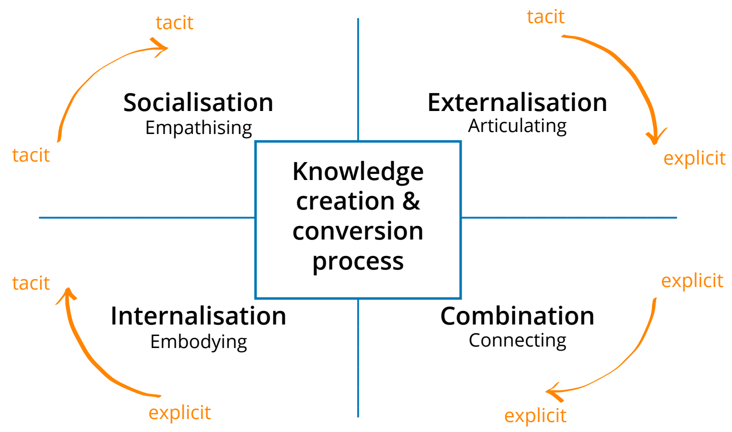


Figure 4: The SECI model by Nonaka et al. (2000)

Nonaka et al. (2000) argue that a shared context is needed to create knowledge. This shared context is what they call a 'ba'. In a ba, knowledge is shared, created and utilised. A ba can exist in many different forms. A ba creates a shared context for a specific step of the SECI process. For instance, one can create a ba that is specifically focused on Socialisation where individuals can share emotions, feelings and experiences. Figure 5 shows the four different types of ba that are linked to the SECI conversion modes. A ba can appear spontaneously but can also be initiated by someone. Either way, building and maintaining the ba is essential to facilitating knowledge creation.

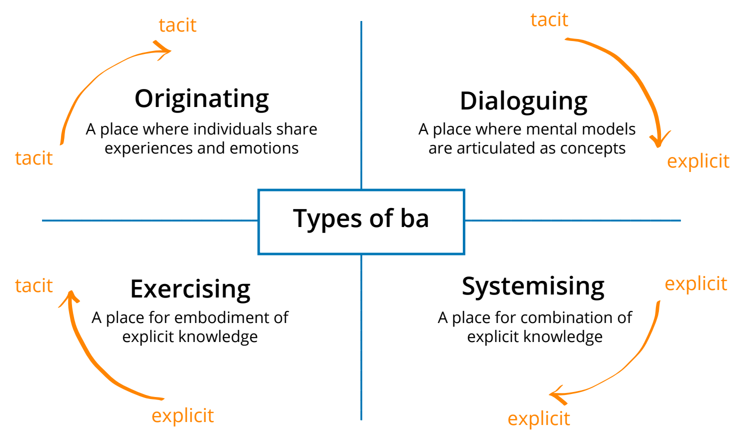


Figure 5: The types of ba by Nonaka et al. (2000)

2.4 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

2.4.1 The concept and its value

As mentioned in Paragraph 2.2, the concepts of knowledge and information in organisational settings have been widely researched under the name of 'knowledge management (KM)'. A straightforward description by Liebowitz & Megbolugbe (2003) states that KM deals with how to best leverage tacit and explicit knowledge internally and externally. This means that KM is concerned with the management of information and knowledge, as well as its processes, systems and enablers (Nazim & Mukherjee, 2016). Prabha Singh (2007) explains that the foundation of KM is based on two things: utilising and exploiting the organisation's information, and the application of people's skills, talents, thoughts, intuitions, motivations and competencies. Hence, the objective of KM is to improve organisational performance through the sharing and creation of organisational knowledge (Nazim & Mukherjee, 2016).

KM can be considered successful when a company is able to capture the right knowledge, get the knowledge to the right user, and apply the knowledge to improve individual performance (Wang & Yang, 2016). Edvardsson & Oskarsson (2011) researched the benefits of applying KM in companies. Their research shows that KM resulted in better customer handling, improved employee skills, innovation, and competitive advantage, amongst others. Martelo-Landroguez & Martin-Ruiz (2016) argue that KM is an excellent tool to improve the knowledge and expertise of employees. Furthermore, they argue that KM can motivate as well as empower employees to solve customer problems.

2.4.2 The main KM components

Nazim & Mukherjee (2016) state that KM is based on three basic pillars: People, Process, and Information Technology (IT). The People pillar addresses the organisational culture and the mindset of the people. The culture should be open and stimulate sharing and interaction, and the people should be willing to take part. The Process pillar refers to processes and strategies that guide the efforts of the employees to capture, transfer and apply the knowledge in the organisation. Lastly, the IT pillar refers to the organisation's IT infrastructure which serves as an important facilitator of the KM initiatives. As mentioned above, KM processes can relate to various knowledge related actions that an organisation wants to achieve. Generally, KM considers five steps that can each be accomplished through different methods and processes (Young, 2020). These general KM steps are displayed in figure 6. The steps are not linear, but dynamic and might happen simultaneously.

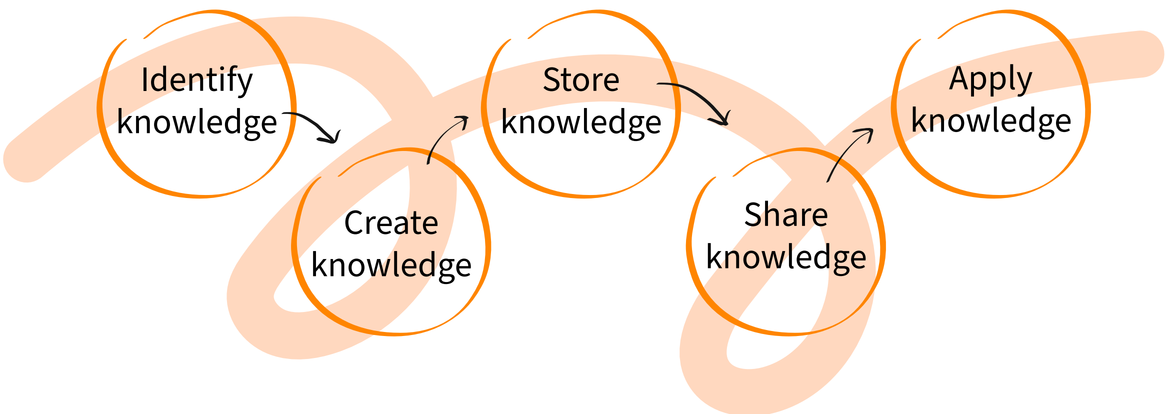


Figure 6: The knowledge management steps based on Young (2020)

2.5 CONCLUSION OF THE LITERATURE INSIGHTS

The literature shows a fluid distinction between knowledge and information. The two are related concepts that can transition back and forth into one another. Knowledge can be seen as the overarching concept which has different forms and shapes that can either be explicit or tacit. Information is part of these explicit forms of knowledge. The aim of this project is to improve the process of getting knowledge or information from one place to another. To achieve this aim, a clear-cut distinction is required. A distinction helps to determine what is currently transmitted from Bluebird towards the CCs. Only then it can be worked out how to improve that situation. Hence, for the purpose of this project, knowledge and information are treated as two related but separate things that each have their own way of transmission. Based on the literature described in this chapter, knowledge is defined as everything that is absorbed, processed and stored in the mind of an individual. Information is defined as everything that is explicitly documented or articulated outside of the mind of an individual. Knowledge can be tacitly transmitted through training and personal development, whereas information is explicitly transmitted through words, symbols and figures.

An organisation stores and creates knowledge (and therefore also stores and creates information). The SECI model shows that new knowledge or information is created through interactions between the tacit and explicit aspects of knowledge. These interactions are referred to as knowledge conversions. To enable such a knowledge conversion, organisations need to facilitate the right shared context – a so-called ba – for their employees.

An organisation can apply knowledge management to best manage and leverage its knowledge and information. KM consists of processes, systems and enablers that use, exploit and apply the right information and knowledge. Generally, KM should include three basic concepts to be successful: people, process, and IT. This means that KM requires a mindset and culture of sharing and interaction, a structured process to guide the KM initiatives, and the exploitation of IT resources to enable this process. Good KM improves organisational performance. It can motivate and empower employees to solve customer problems, improve employee skills and improve customer handling. This substantiates the notion that Bluebird should pay careful attention to the processes and systems they have in place that deal with the creation and sharing of knowledge and information, as this can severely improve their organisational performance and therefore enhance the customer service they provide.

Key take-aways Chapter 2:

- For the purpose of this project, a distinction is made between knowledge and information. Knowledge refers to everything that is processed by the individual and tacitly resides in one's mind. Information refers to everything that is explicitly documented or articulated in words or symbols outside of the human mind.
- Knowledge management (KM) deals with how to exploit and use an organisation's information and knowledge. KM consists of processes, systems and enablers to use and apply knowledge and information within the organisation. KM requires a sharing culture, a process to guide employees' efforts and IT to facilitate these processes.
- Good KM leads to empowered and motivated employees which results in improved organisational performance and enhanced customer service.

03

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT INFORMATION FLOW THROUGH THE ORGANISATION

To understand how the information currently travels from the Ancillary Team to the contact centre agent, it is important to have a clear overview of how the ancillary organisation is set up and how the contact centre is organised. This chapter describes the stakeholders that are involved in the scope of this project. Furthermore, this chapter analyses how the information currently flows between stakeholders when travelling from the source at Bluebird to the destination at the contact centre.

In this Chapter:

3.1 A STAKEHOLDER OVERVIEW

Figure 7 shows an overview of the most important stakeholders that are present in the scope of this project. More specifically, this overview includes the stakeholders that are involved in the creation of an ancillary product as well as the stakeholders involved in communication with the contact centre. These stakeholders were identified based on research into organisational documentation and preliminary discussions with Bluebird and contact centre employees. The following paragraphs elaborate on the different stakeholders. First, it is described who are involved in the ancillary organisation. Second, the Bluebird Customer Services department is introduced. Lastly, the contact centre organisation is described.

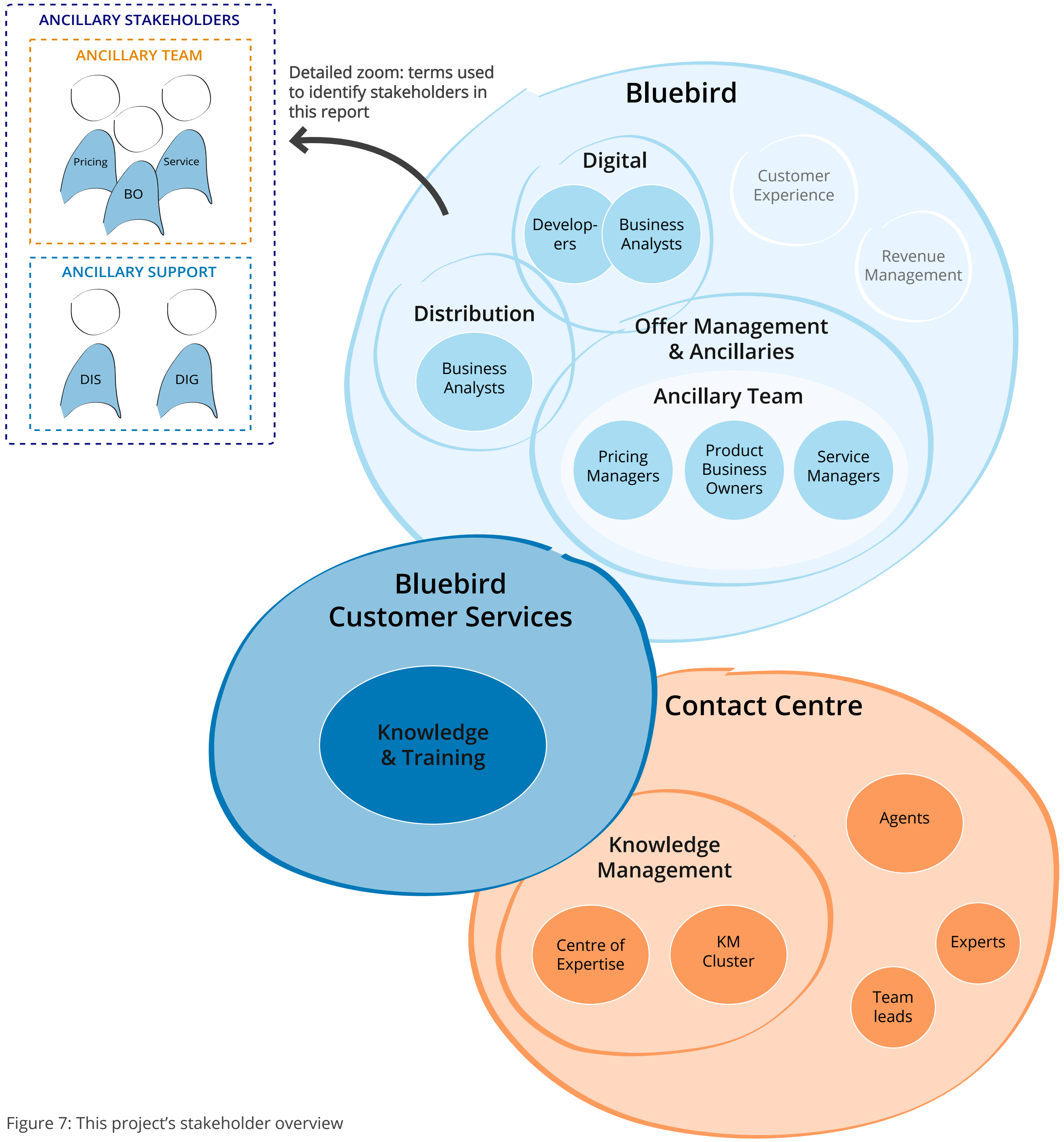


Figure 7: This project's stakeholder overview

3.1.1 The Bluebird ancillary stakeholders

The Ancillary Team

The Ancillary Team is part of the Offer Management & Ancillaries (OFMA) department. The Ancillary Team consists of three sub-teams: the Product Team, the Service team, and the Pricing team. The Product team consists of Product Managers. These Product Managers are referred to as Business Owner (BO). The BOs are the owners of the business propositions, i.e. the ancillary products that the airline has on offer. Besides Bluebird's products, like baggage and the airport lounge, their portfolio also includes partnership products like a rental car or insurance. The BOs are each responsible for a couple of ancillary products. The Product Team looks at customer insights, revenue figures and competition benchmarks to come up with new ancillary ideas. This input may also come from other departments, like Customer Experience or Revenue Management. However, the latter two are not included in the scope of this project.

As said, the Product Team is not alone. Together with the Pricing Team and the Service Team, they manage the different attributes of an ancillary. The Pricing Team manages the prices of an ancillary and looks for ways to gain more revenue potential. The Service Team looks at the "after-sales processes". This includes determining how to handle issues that customers may have after buying an ancillary, handling embargoes, and setting up refund policies. Just like the BOs, the Pricing and Service Managers are each assigned to a couple of ancillary products. Together these three teams manage all essential parts of an ancillary.

The Ancillary Support

Besides the business proposition, the price and the after-sales process of an ancillary, technical aspects come into play before an ancillary can actually be offered to a customer. This requires close collaboration with the Distribution and Digital teams. The people at Distribution are responsible for the distribution of the ancillary products through all channels, except Bluebird's digital channels. Hence, this accounts for direct offline, and indirect offline and online sales. They deal with the different systems and tools that are used on these channels and determine how an ancillary should be offered from a technical perspective. This includes setting up technical procedures and instructions.

At Digital they do a similar thing, but for the airline's website and mobile app. They deal with the design and development of digital features. The website and the mobile app are the main channels for direct online sales to customers.

The Ancillary Team closely collaborates with the Business Analysts (BA) at Distribution and Digital. Both departments have dedicated BAs for each ancillary product. In other words, BAs are assigned to and have specific knowledge about a certain ancillary product. Since both Digital and Distribution play an essential role in the implementation of an ancillary, they are referred to as Ancillary Support. When referring to both the Ancillary Team and the Ancillary Support in this report, they are called 'ancillary stakeholders' (see detailed zoom in figure 7).

3.1.2 Bluebird Customer Services

Customer Services (CuSer) is part of the Bluebird organisation. However, as they form the bridge between the customer support at the contact centres and the Bluebird organisation, they are placed in a separate overlapping bubble. CuSer is responsible for managing all of Bluebird's contact centres around the world. Within CuSer, it is the Knowledge & Training Team (K&T) that is the most important stakeholder for the scope of this project. It is K&T's responsibility to communicate correct information to the contact centres and provide accurate training materials for the agents. K&T do not possess this information themselves. They depend on the Bluebird teams, e.g. the Ancillary Team and Ancillary Support, to receive this information. Subsequently, it is their job to check the impact and the clarity before they pass the information on to the contact centres. Since this project does not concern any other CuSer teams, CuSer K&T is referred to as simply CuSer throughout the remainder of this project.

3.1.3 Contact Centres

As mentioned in paragraph 1.2, this project focuses specifically on one of Bluebird's contact centres (CC). Within the organisation of the CC, the CC Knowledge Management (CC KM) is responsible for providing the agents with the right instructions. These instructions are written by the KM Centre of Expertise (CoE). CuSer provides the CoE with the information that they have received from the Bluebird organisation. The KM Cluster Team is responsible for making sure that the agents understand the processes. They provide support for the different types of agents in their organisation. Appendix 2 contains a detailed overview of how the CC is internally organised.

3.2 APPROACH FOR DETERMINING CURRENT INFORMATION FLOW

A qualitative study

Now that the stakeholders have been introduced, it can be investigated how the current information flow actually runs. This research is done by means of a qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because qualitative research can be used as a means for exploring a situation and understanding the feelings that the participants experience (Creswell, 2014). This aligns with the goal of this research, which was to discover the current ways and behaviours, as well as attitudes and experiences of the different stakeholders related to the knowledge and information transfer about an ancillary. In this chapter, the current ways and behaviours are examined. The attitudes and experiences are further discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Method

For this research, interviews were conducted with the help of an interview guide. The interview guide refers to a list of open-ended questions, however, the interviewer is free to explore these predefined topics. In this way, the same topics are pursued in each interview, but there is room for a more spontaneous conversation (Patton, 2002). Based on the 'path of expression' by Sanders & Stappers (2012), interviewees were first asked about their current experiences. Subsequently, they reflected on their past experiences to reveal needs and values as a basis to explore their aspirations for future experiences (figure 8).

For the examination of the current information flow, only the part of the interviews about the present is used. The interview guides that were used can be found in Appendix 3. The interviews lasted about 30 minutes each and were recorded with the permission of the interviewees.

Sample

Purposive sampling was used to gather the participants for the interviews. With purposive sampling, participants who are knowledgeable about the topic are intentionally selected (Gill, 2020). For this study, a total of 12 interviews were conducted with participants ranging from the Ancillary Team (Product, Pricing, Service), the Ancillary Support, CuSer and CC Knowledge Management.

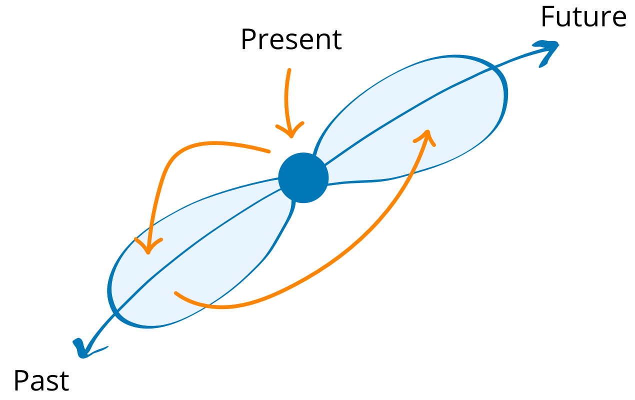


Figure 8: The path of expression based on Sanders & Stappers (2012)

Data analysis

During the interviews, notes were taken of what was said. Afterwards, the recordings were replayed to complement the initial interview notes. These notes were restructured into interview summary overviews, in which the most striking insights were highlighted (Appendix 4). These summary overviews were translated into a preliminary information transfer map that showed all possible flows and exchanges of knowledge and information between the different stakeholders (Appendix 5). Based on this map, visual simulations of a piece of ancillary information on its way to the CC were created (also in Appendix 5). These simulations served as a basis for understanding the current flows.

3.3 THE CURRENT INFORMATION FLOW

3.3.1 General visualisation of the information flow

Figure 9 shows a simplified visualisation of the identified information routes. This figure was based on the detailed information route simulations in Appendix 5.

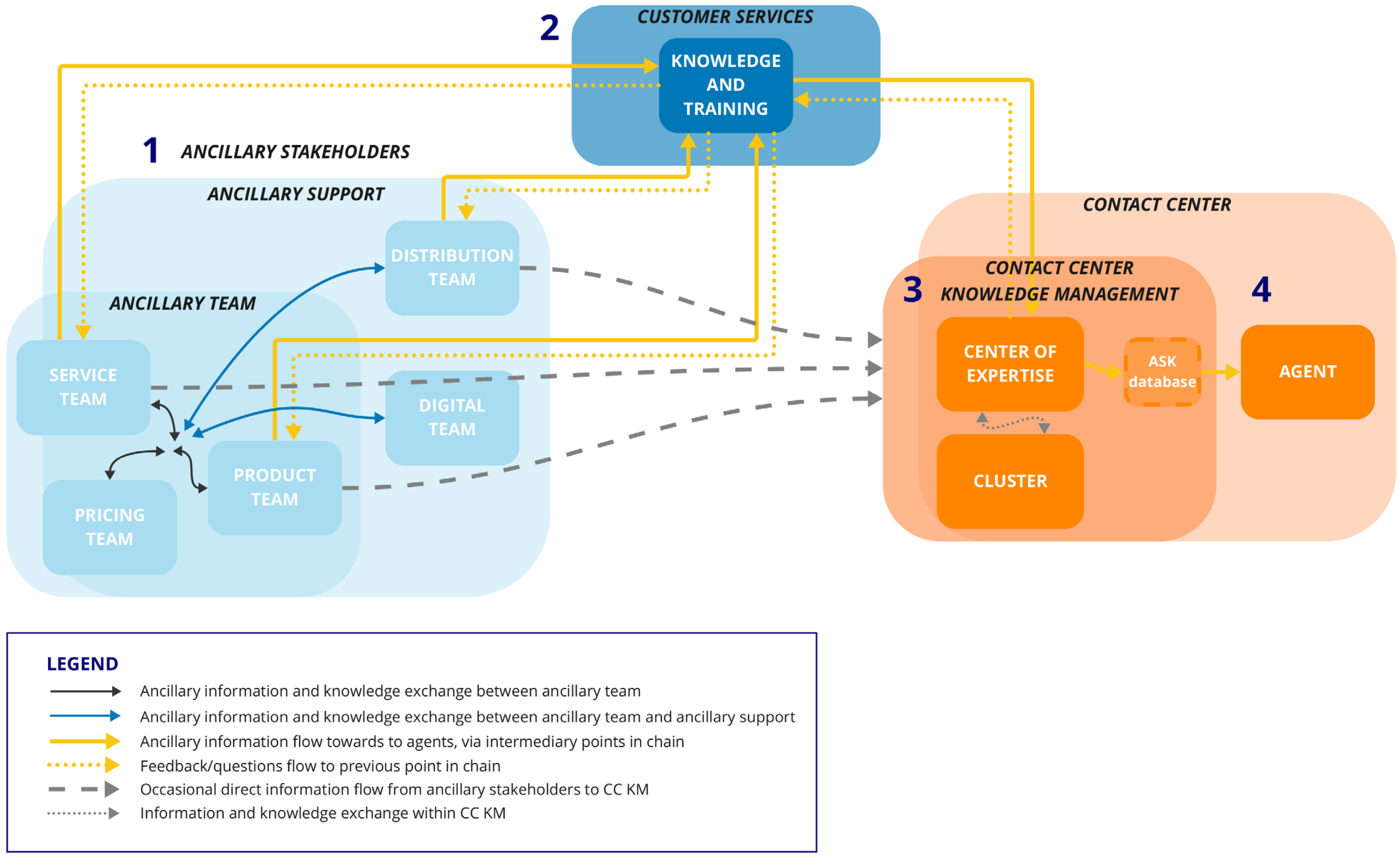


Figure 9: The identified potential information flows between the different stakeholders

The visualisation shows that the information generally travels from the ancillary stakeholders (Ancillary Team + Ancillary Support, i.e. the source of the information) toward the contact centre agent (i.e. the receiver of the information) whilst passing two intermediary points, CuSer and the CC Knowledge Management respectively. At the source, input from all ancillary stakeholders is required to create the ancillary. The interviews showed that the information can travel in various options towards its next point. The Product Team, the Service Team and Distribution currently form the frequent routes towards CuSer. However, for the different products it may differ who share(s) information with CuSer. The degree to which information is shared very much depends on the proactivity of the individuals. There is no structured approach available that the ancillary stakeholders can follow to share the right information with CuSer. Hence, it is often required for the information to go back and forth between the ancillary stakeholders and CuSer for further clarification which results in delay.

Once CuSer has received all of the information, they assess the impact of the ancillary. Thereafter, it is shared and discussed with the Centre of Expertise (part of CC KM) of the contact centre. This may require going back to the ancillary stakeholders again if the information is still not complete for the CoE. Eventually, the CoE transforms the information into a 'solution' that is put into the ASK database. The ASK database is the main source of information for the CC agents. Only information that is relevant for the customer is put in the solution. Hence, not all of the information that is provided by Bluebird ends up at the agent. Once a new solution has been added to ASK, the CC agents receive an announcement in the database to notify them about the new solution, so they can read and process the information.

3.3.2 New ancillary versus adjustment to existing ancillary

During the analysis of the interviews, it became apparent that a distinction can be made between the go-live of a new ancillary or an extension (i.e. a big project) and a small adjustment or fix to an existing ancillary (i.e. a small project). The new go-live includes a new or updated offer which has a visible impact on the Bluebird customer. The product adjustment is about a technical adjustment or fixing an error that is not directly visible to the customer. See Appendix 5 for the detailed simulations of both routes.

For the go-live of a new ancillary, the process is particularly messy between the ancillary stakeholders and CuSer. In the case of a new go-live, the Product Team or the Distribution Team are the main communicators to CuSer. Since something new is being introduced, it is important that all stakeholders along the information flow are updated. However, as there is no structured approach available, individuals decide for themselves – if at all – what to do, instead of having a shared vision regarding how to approach this. Because of this, there is a risk that things are not done correctly straight away. Besides, due to the vague nature of this task, it may lose an individual's attention as there are many other things to be done at the same time.

For the adjustment to an existing ancillary, the idea or request can come from any of the ancillary stakeholders or even from outside this group. Often, it concerns a technical or an after sales issue, which means that the Service Team and Distribution usually are the main communicators. However, it depends on the project which stakeholders are involved and thus have to communicate or share information. This means that not all stakeholders are always updated. This even counts for CuSer, who are sometimes bypassed by the ancillary stakeholders if they have a familiar contact at the CC to save time. Similar to the new go-lives, no structured process was identified here.

3.4 SCOPING DOWN BASED ON INFORMATION FLOW FINDINGS

From the aforementioned stakeholder overview, it can be concluded that – in the scope of this project – an ancillary product requires five teams to be created, managed and implemented (figure 10). Once these ancillary stakeholders want to communicate information about an ancillary to the front-line staff in the contact centre, the information generally travels through a chain of CuSer and CC KM to the ASK database where agents can access it. At every step in the flow, similar to a relay with four runners, one is dependent of the information that comes from the previous point in the chain.

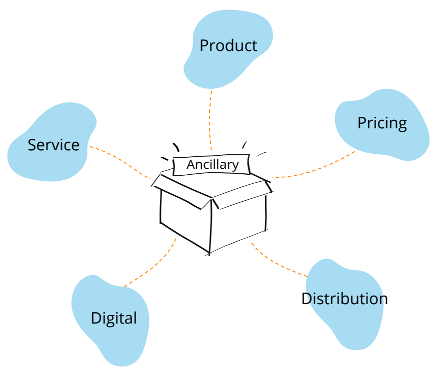


Figure 10: The ancillary stakeholders

The analyses of the information flows for a new go-live and an adjustment to an existing ancillary help to sharpen the scope of this project.

For the new go-live flow, all stakeholders need to be aware of the new ancillary and it needs to be clear what kind of story the CC agents need to tell customers for every new product. Currently, there is no shared approach of how to tackle this task of communicating the right information to the right stakeholders, which leads to a situation where it is left up to the individual what to do. This results in delays and inefficiency which ultimately affects all next players in the chain.
The adjustment flow misses structure, however, the question is if that is a bad thing. The adjustment process is based on problem-solving and adaptation to the situation which usually needs to happen fast. Simply not everyone needs to be involved if the situation does not require it. These flexible processes are hard to regulate. Therefore, even though the process can be chaotic, it achieves its purpose.

The bigger go-live projects impact the company itself, the agents and the customers. They roughly go through the same procedures each time, however there is no approach in place that structurally organises a correct information flow along all stakeholders towards the CC agents. The current new go-live information flow to the contact centre is unorganised and relies too much on individual proactivity which makes it inefficient. This flow is most flawed and benefits most from an improvement. Hence, the remainder of this project focuses on the information flows for new go-lives only.

Key take-aways Chapter 3:

- In the scope of this project, five teams are required to create, manage and implement an ancillary.
- Generally, the information flow passes through a chain with four steps: the information goes from the ancillary stakeholders, via CuSer and CC KM, to the agent. In this chain, all stakeholders depend on their predecessor.
- Due to the lack of a structured appproach, the involvement and the degree to which the information is shared depends too much on individual proactivity. This leads to an unorganised and inefficient process.
- The focus for this project is on the information flow for go-lives of new ancillaries or product extensions. Compared to adjustments or fixes to existing ancillaries, the new go-live flow suffers most from the lack of structure, and therefore has most to gain.

04

THE AIRLINE’S PERSPECTIVES

The research into the current information flow revealed that there is no actual process in place that manages it. The ancillary stakeholders and Customer Services both fulfil essential tasks in the previously identified flow. Hence, it is crucial to understand how they experience the current situation to examine where a design intervention is needed. In this chapter, insights derived from qualitative interviews with the Bluebird stakeholders are discussed and the main pain points are defined.

In this Chapter:

4.1 QUALITATIVE APPROACH

As mentioned in Paragraph 3.1, a qualitative approach was chosen to understand the current context as well as the experiences of the different stakeholders. This chapter is based on the insights derived from the same interviews as the ones in Chapter 3. However, in this chapter, the focus is on the experiences and the feelings of the interviewees. As these insights come from the same interviews, the Method and Sample are identical to what is described in Paragraph 3.1. For the Data analysis, striking comments from the interview summaries were plotted on the preliminary information transfer map and colour coded to find patterns. The clusters that appeared from the colour coding defined the most striking problems from the airline's perspectives. The map with the colour-coded clusters can be found in Appendix 6. The interview guides can be found in Appendix 3 and the interview summaries can be found in Appendix 4. In the following paragraphs, the perspectives from the Ancillary Team, the Ancillary Support, and CuSer are elucidated and concluded.

4.2 THE ANCILLARY TEAM

The most striking outcomes of the interviews with the Ancillary Team are summarised in figure 11. These outcomes are listed per group within the Ancillary Team: Product, Service and Pricing. Thereafter, the main interview findings are summarised.

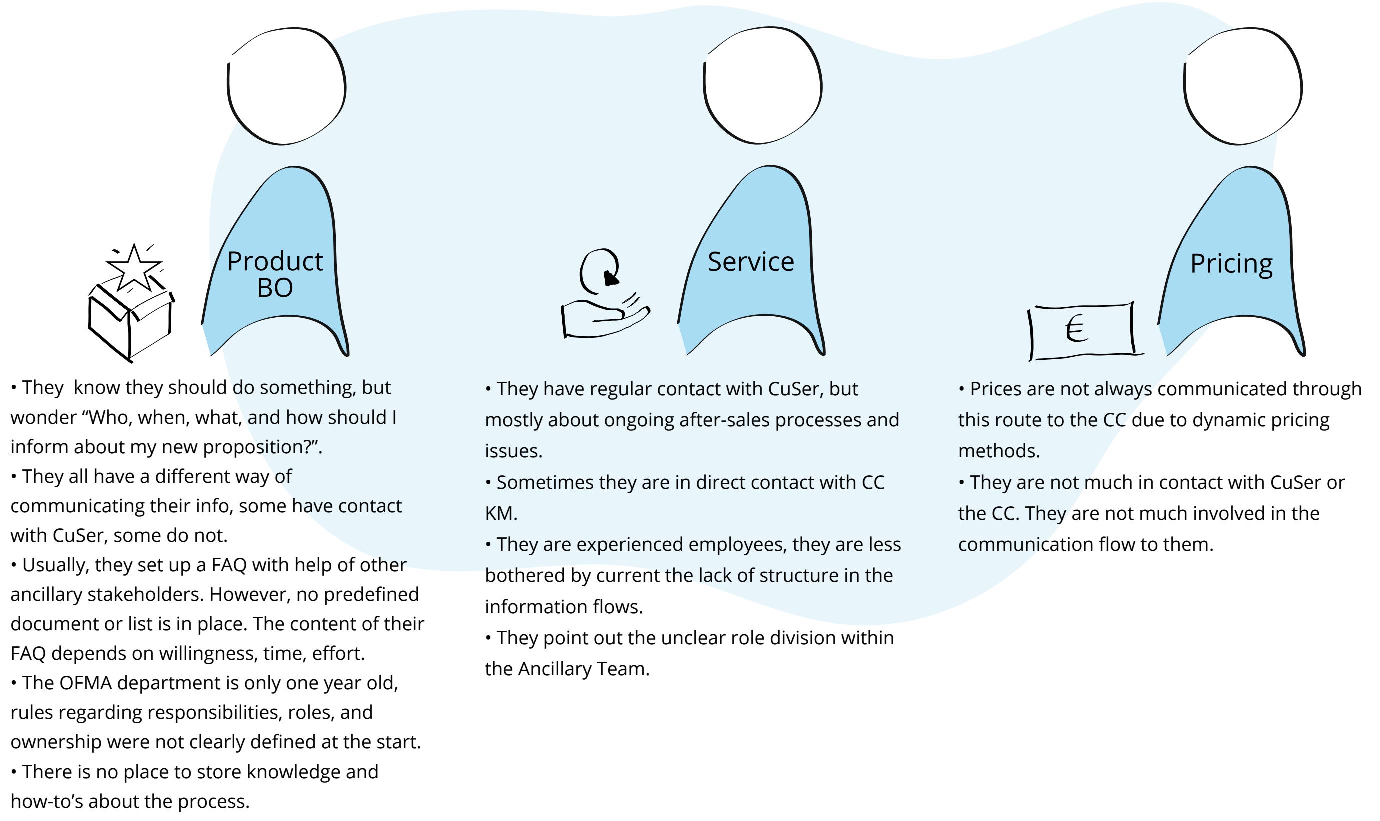


Figure 11: The outcomes of the interviews with the Ancillary Team

"I know I should inform, but not exactly how. Am I doing it right?"

Quote by a Business Owner

"It needs to be clarified within OFMA what the responsibilities are."

Quote by a Service Manager

"I actually don't really know how the callcentres get all the information."

Quote by a Pricing Manager

Findings from the Ancillary Team

From these interviews, a couple of interesting findings are derived. Looking at the occasion of a new go-live, out of the Ancillary Team it is the BO who is most involved in sharing information to the next point in the route. However, some of the input for the new proposition comes from the expertise of the Service and Pricing Teams. Besides, collaboration with Distribution and Digital is required to cover the technical information.

The lack of a clear definition of the required content and the responsibilities per role, as well as a structured process to gather all information, leave the BOs confused about what they should do and how they should do it. Additionally, some BOs do not know why it is important to inform CuSer and the CC in the first place and they do not realise the value they bring. Hence, informing the CuSer or the CC does not receive high priority since the process is considered not engaging and vague. As a result, the outcome of the process depends on the level of awareness and the how-to knowledge of the individual, leading to inconsistent reporting and communication.

Furthermore, the experienced employees in the Ancillary Team have got a better idea of what needs to be done, and how they should do things compared to the newer employees. Over the years, experienced employees have figured out a process that works for them, but their gained knowledge is not often shared with others to learn and benefit from it.

Hence, from the perspective of the Ancillary Team, there is a lot to gain in structuring the process and aligning the corresponding roles for gathering and communicating the information. Furthermore, it is valuable to determine what information is needed by CuSer and the CC to facilitate an efficient flow. Simplifying the jobs to be done helps to take away the confusion among BOs. The structured process can be enhanced with a space where information about people and processes is stored and how-to knowledge is exchanged to spread awareness and ensure constant improvement.

4.3 THE ANCILLARY SUPPORT

Figure 12 summarises the outcomes for the interviews done with Distribution and Digital, i.e. the Ancillary Support. The main findings are summarised below.

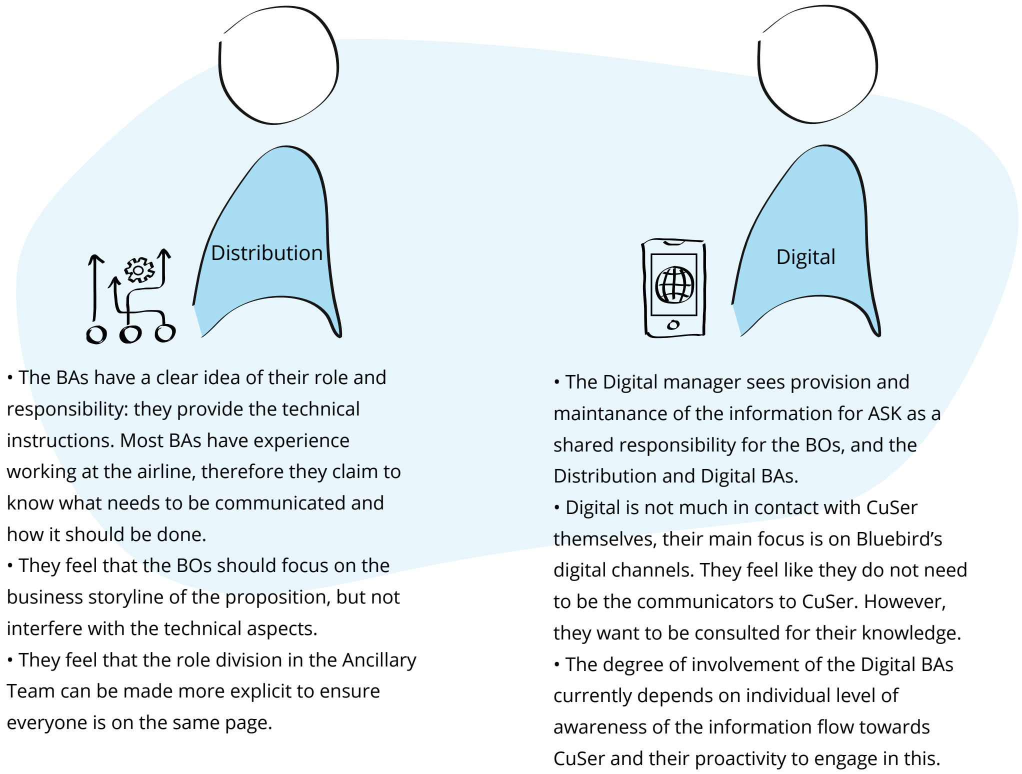


Figure 12: The outcomes of the interviews with the Ancillary Support

Findings from the Ancillary Support

The interviews with Ancillary Support provide clarity on the perspectives of Distribution and Digital. The Distribution BAs are very much involved in the information flow towards CuSer and the CC. They determine the technical instructions for the systems that the agents use during their work. For the Distribution BAs, their part to play is very clear. Besides, they have a clear understanding of which role the BO should play in this process. However, according to them, due to the fuzzy role division at the Ancillary Team, the BO's approach is not always in tune with theirs.

On the other hand, the Digital team is less involved in the information flow towards the CC. Generally, they are not often in contact with CuSer directly. However, they are much in contact with other stakeholders, e.g. the BO, to share their information. Because Digital is not faced with the contact centre topic on a daily basis, their BAs are not much aware of the importance of adequate information sharing with the CC or what the right approach to would be to reach them if it were required.

Hence, from the perspective of the Ancillary Support, it is valuable to specify the role division between the BO, Distribution and Digital in the information flow. More specifically, it is helpful to determine and align which input comes from which role when a new go-live is approaching. This way, everyone plays to their strengths by contributing with their own specific knowledge, and expectations of what others deliver are aligned to ensure a smooth collaboration during the information flow.

"The Business Owner makes the storyline, that is not my job."

Quote by Distribution Business Analyst

"At the moment, updating and checking info depends on proactiveness of individuals."

Quote by Manager of Digital Business Analysts

4.4 CUSTOMER SERVICES

Figure 13 displays the main outcomes of the interview with CuSer, i.e. the bridge between the ancillary stakeholders and the CC. The main findings are summarised below.

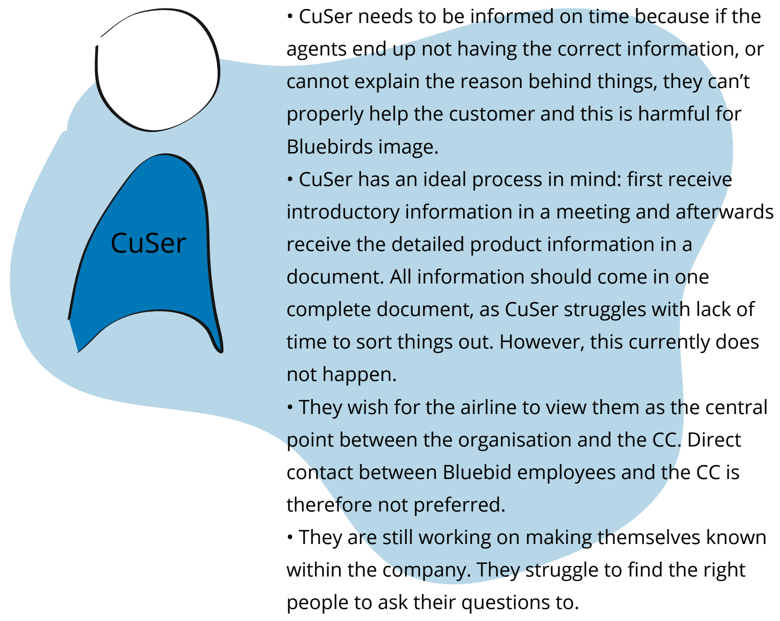


Figure 13: The outcomes of the interviews with Customer Services

Findings from CuSer

CuSer has a clear vision of their role within the company and why timely and adequate information transfer is so important. However, not everyone within the airline's organisation is up to date with that since the other interviews showed that some BOs and BAs are not aware how and why they should involve CuSer and/or what effect their actions have for the CC or the company. CuSer knows what they need and how they can best receive that, but so far they have not been able to make agreements about the information flow with the ancillary stakeholders. This leads to late involvement of CuSer by the ancillary stakeholders and a lot of going back and forth before they have all they need. Besides, similar to the fact that not all ancillary stakeholders know CuSer and/or what they do, CuSer does not know the ancillary organisation well. When more additional information is required from the ancillary stakeholders, it takes CuSer a lot of time to find the right person to give them this information, which also adds to the inefficiency of the current situation.

From the perspective of CuSer, there is a great opportunity to provide BOs and BAs with clear instructions about informing them in terms of content, timing and form. Not only does this provide more structured involvement, it also enhances a more efficient retrieval of information from the source. Eventually, this makes CuSer more known within the ancillary organisation, which in turn also pays off the other way around.

"Still not everyone knows that we exist. This is an issue."

Quote by Customer Services

4.5 CONCLUDING THE AIRLINE'S PERSPECTIVES

Figure 14 shows the main clusters that emerged from the analysis. The analysis of the Bluebird interviews gives a good impression of the perspectives on the current information flow towards the CC and the issues that are currently present.

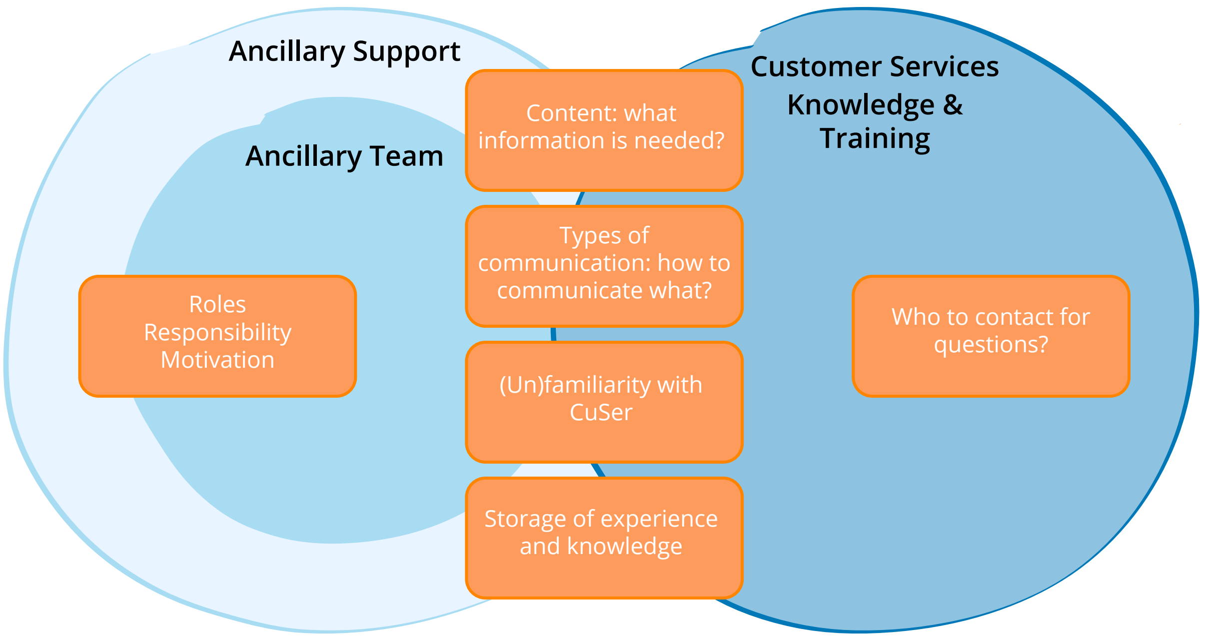


Figure 14: The main clusters that emerged from the research at Bluebird

It has become apparent that within the Ancillary Team, as well as in combination with Ancillary Support, the roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined. This has a major influence on the information flow towards the CC. Currently, it is not explicitly defined who has to take up responsibility to inform CuSer about the different aspects of the new proposition, which leads to a situation where it is potentially no one's priority to do it. Distribution has a sharp view of how to illustrate this division of roles, however, no clear-cut agreements were made with the BOs about how to structurally approach this task when the new OFMA department was introduced. Therefore, the ancillary stakeholders are not aligned about how things should be done. As a result, the degree of engagement in the process comes down to the personal level of awareness regarding the importance of informing the CC on time. Hence, some BOs and BAs put in more time and effort due to different levels of motivation which again contributes to the inefficiency. This unclear division also has an effect at the other end, since it takes CuSer a long time before they find a person who possesses information they need. Therefore, aligning all ancillary stakeholders about the responsibilities and with that increasing the awareness for timely communication of information is essential for a successful and efficient information flow towards the CC.

It is safe to say that these issues are closely related to the issues that play a role at the intersection between the ancillary stakeholders and CuSer. Some ancillary stakeholders do not know if and how they should do the job. In addition, the required content, the mode of delivery, and the people to involve are not specified which makes the process even more complicated. Therefore, to enhance efficiency of the information flow, there is an opportunity to for CuSer to set up structured guidelines regarding required topics and timing to smoothen the information retrieval from the source.

Talking to experienced employees showed that over the years they have created their own workarounds and built up their own networks. They experience less uncertainty in terms of who they should inform and how they should do it, regardless of the lack of actual structure in the process. However, since the newer employees do experience this feeling, it can be concluded that there is currently not much debate going on about the information flow and everyone is just left to do their thing. There is no place where common instructions are stored or where the sharing of experiences regarding information and communication are encouraged. In other words, there is no support that (uncertain) employees can rely on. Therefore, it can be concluded that to ensure long-term impact in the organisation, there is a need for some sort of foundation of the information flow that the ancilllary stakeholders can rely on, learn from and build on. This is related to the need for increased awareness and alignment among the ancillary stakeholders.

Key take-aways Chapter 4:

- The roles within the Ancillary Team are not clearly defined, which makes the responsibilities regarding the information flow fluid as well. This leads to misalignment with the Ancillary Support.
- Some people are not sure if, why, or when they should do something. Hence, the levels of awareness and engagement in the process are low. This results in a dependency on individual motivation of employees and therefore outcomes are inconsistent.
- There is a need to specify 1) what information CuSer requires and 2) at what time they need it, to give guidance to the ancillary stakeholders in the process of transferring their information to CuSer.
- There is a need for a foundation of the information flow, i.e. a structure or place that ensures a base level of awareness about the process, stores process instructions and encourages sharing of learnings to make the information flow worthwhile in the organisation.

05

THE CONTACT CENTRE'S PERSPECTIVES

The information that is provided by Bluebird needs to be retrieved and applied by the CC KM and the agents. To determine where a design intervention is most beneficial, the experiences throughout the complete information flow need to be understood. Hence, the perspective of the users of the information, i.e. the destination of the flow, is crucial. This chapter describes the research methods and concludes the findings from qualitative sessions and observations done with the CC KM and the CC agents.

In this Chapter:

5.1 QUALITATIVE APPROACH CC KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Qualitative study

The research at the CC was split up into two parts. The first part focused on the CC Knowledge Management (consisting of the Cluster and Centre of Expertise). This is the point of entry for information from the airline. A qualitative approach was considered most appropriate for this research because of its explorative nature and the focus on feelings and experiences (Creswell, 2014). The goal of this study was to find out the different ways in which CC KM receives information from the airline and to discover potential needs they have.

Method

The study took place in the form of an (online) interactive session because of the aim to discover potential needs of which people are perhaps not instantly aware. As displayed in figure 15 by Sanders & Stappers (2012), 'making' can trigger tacit or latent needs. During the session, the make techniques were complemented by say techniques to let the participants verbalise what they had just put on the digital whiteboard. The online session consisted of four exercises and lasted for one hour. The session was recorded with the permission of the participants.

Figure 16 shows the session plan. The exercises were built up along the path of expression (see Paragraph 3.2). The warm-up exercise consisted of a set of association flowers adapted from

	Activity	Materials	Time
1	Introduction and goal of session	none	10 min
2	Warm up	Templates for association flowers	7 min
3	Exercise 1: mapping & assessing the current flows	Flow templates, (inspiration) post-its, stickers	20 min
4	Exercise 2: envisioning the ideal situation	(inspiration) post-its, stickers	10 min
5	Wrap up	none	5 min

Figure 16: Session plan for CC KM

Tassoul (2009). The participants got one minute to write down as many associations with the word in the heart of the flower. This way, the participants practiced producing many items in a short amount of time. Besides, it showed their perspective on the words in the flower. The second exercise consisted of mapping the current information flows. The participants were provided with a set of predefined post-its that displayed people or ways of communication. This was done to spark inspiration and ensure a smooth start of the exercise. Other suggestions could be added on empty post-its. The participants were asked to place these post-its

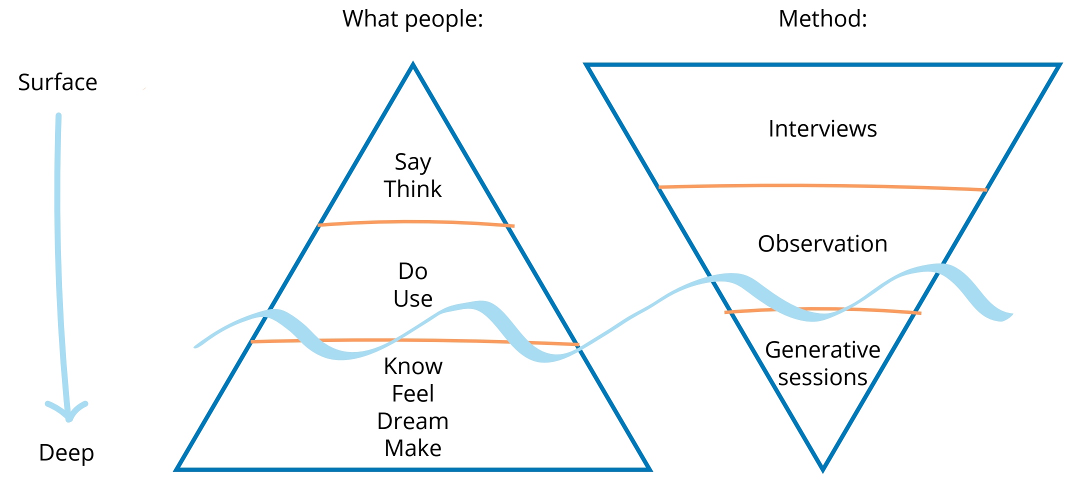


Figure 15: Layering techniques by Sanders & Stappers (2012)

on a template that resembled the information flows from Bluebird toward CC KM. Afterwards, the participants were asked to place red or green dots on the post-its representing a positive or a negative experience, followed by an elaboration on the colour choice. Lastly, the participants were asked to envision the ideal situation. This exercise made use of supporting questions like how they would feel, what they would know, and how they would communicate and collaborate. Props (icons, emotions, previously used post-its) were provided for inspiration. All session templates can be found in Appendix 7.

Sample

Two participants joined the session, one from the CoE and one from the Cluster. Both participants had been working at the CC for several years and started as regular CC agents.

Data analysis

The completed templates from the session can be found in Appendix 7. During the session, notes were taken of the comments made by the participants. These notes were complemented with input from the recording. The work of the participants was translated into one overview that displayed the different flows of information to CC KM, including the assessments and argumentation (see Appendix 7).

5.2 CC KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Incoming information flows

The session confirmed that the information from Bluebird mainly enters through CoE and that Cluster is not much involved in external information flows. To this day, there are various flows that end up at the CoE (see figure 17). Two of these information flows are considered a no-go by the CoE. In other words, this is not how the information should get to them. This counts for information that reaches them through the website or through an employee other than the dedicated BOs and BAs. In both cases, the actual responsible person for communicating the information has not done his/her job and therefore CoE finds the information via an unofficial way. This is especially harmful in the case of the website, as that would mean that customers can call about something that has not

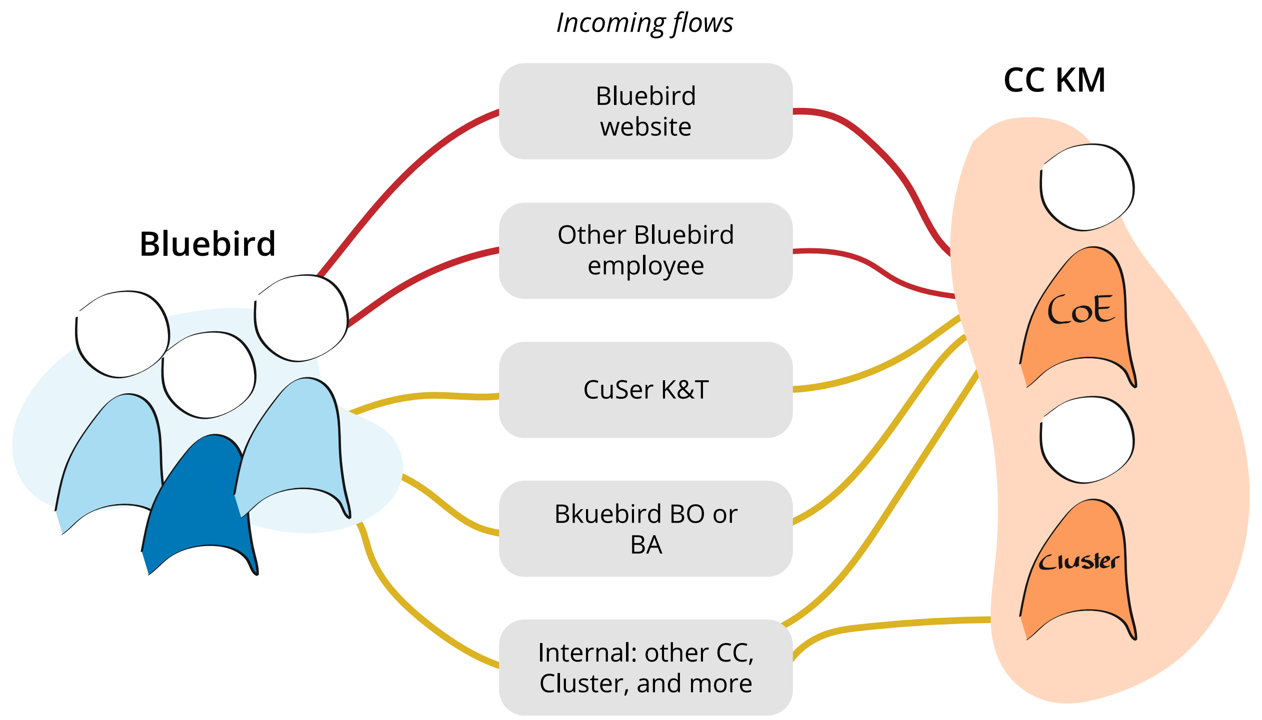


Figure 17: The main incoming flows of information and how they are experienced by CC KM

yet been explained to the agent. As described in Chapter 3, information can also come from CuSer or directly from the BO/BA. Both flows were assessed as 'room for improvement'. It was pointed out that the flows from the BO/BA differ a lot per individual and depend heavily on personal connections. The flow from CuSer has improved over the past year. However, according to CC KM, still more awareness about timing and required content is to be created to make this flow work properly. Nowadays, information often comes in last minute which results in CoE making over hours to try to get the ASK solution done in time. Therefore, late information severely impacts them and hence potentially affects agents and customers.

Ideal situation

According to the CC KM, ideally all information – especially that about a new proposition – comes to them via CuSer. The latter manages all of the contact centres worldwide, so in this way everyone is updated in a centralised manner. Also, it makes the CC less dependent of personal connections at Bluebird. Furthermore, ideally Bluebird starts to involve and inform CuSer, and therefore CC KM, much earlier. Preferably, involvement starts a few months before go-live since for instance a training takes at least two months to arrange. Therefore, CC KM feels that there should be more focus on spreading awareness about the importance of timely sharing information amongst the people that possess it.

5.3 QUALITATIVE APPROACH CC AGENTS

Qualitative study

The second part of the research at the CC focused on the agents who actually operate on the front-line. They rely on the information that is provided to them to answer the customers' questions. The goal of this study was to find out how the agents get informed, how they use information sources during their work and how they experience all this.

Method

A dual approach was chosen to achieve the goal of this study. Firstly, observations were done at the CC to get a grasp of what agents do and how they do it (Sanders & Stappers, 2012). These observations were non-participant. This means that the researcher observes from a distance and sometimes uses informal interviewing to have the observed individuals comment on what they are doing (Schensul & LeCompte, 2012). Secondly, interactive sessions were prepared in which the 'make' and 'say' techniques were combined.

The observations and sessions took place at the CC office in Amsterdam. As part of the observation, 'listening-in sessions' were done with the agents. During a listening-in, one sits next to an agent and listens to the conversations with the customers. These listening-in sessions lasted for one hour each. During the observations, handwritten field notes were taken.

	Activity	Materials	Time
1	Introduction and goal of session	none	3 min
2	Warm up	Templates for association flowers	2 min
3	Exercise 1: identiying & assessing current sources of information	Exercise templates, (inspiration) post-its, stickers	8 min
4	Exercise 2: envisioning the ideal situation	Exercise templates, (inspiration) post-its, stickers	5 min
5	Wrap up	none	1 min

Figure 18: Session plan for CC agents

The individual interactive sessions consisted of three exercises and lasted 20 minutes per participant. Figure 18 shows the session plan. Each exercise was printed on an A3 sheet of paper. A digital version of the exercises was available as backup. The exercises were built up along the path of expression. The first exercise consisted of one association flower as a quick warm-up (see Paragraph 5.1). In the second exercise, the participants were asked to map out how they get informed. A set of post-its including people, means, and topics was prepared for the participants to use. The participants were free to add more post-its. After identifying the information flows, the participant assessed how they experience the flows by using red, orange and green stickers. Subsequently they were asked to explain why they felt that way. In the last exercise, the participants were asked to envision their ideal situation. For inspiration, they were told to think about how to change the red and orange stickers into green. The session templates can be found in Appendix 8.

Sample

The sample was arranged via the planning department of the CC. The sample was random, with some agents working at the CC for two months and others who had been working there for years. One of the agents in the sample worked as an expert. Some participants mentioned to join the session online, which resulted in a final sample of six participants: two listening-ins, two physical sessions and two online sessions.

Data analysis

The filled-in templates, as well as the field notes of the observations can be found in Appendix 8. During the sessions, notes were taken of comments that were made by the agents. These comments were bundled into session summaries (Appendix 8). From the produced session materials and the session summaries, the most striking and frequently repeated elements were defined.

5.4 THE CC AGENTS' PERSPECTIVE

ASK database

Figure 19 displays the agents' main sources of information for ancillary information. As shown in Chapter 3, the ASK database is the main way in which agents receive their information. However, due to the extensive amount of available information, ASK can come across as very overwhelming. Most agents feel like they do not have time to read all the new announcements. Searching for the right solution in ASK is considered difficult and not intuitive. This also showed during the observations. Agents needed to be very specific with their search terms, and it took a long time before they got to the right page. When agents do not directly find something, doubt comes up. This is partly due to the search trouble, but also due to the relatively complex language that is used in the database. Additionally, the agents experience time pressure at times because they have to make their targets. The uncertainty bothers the agents, as they know that it is reflected onto the customer.

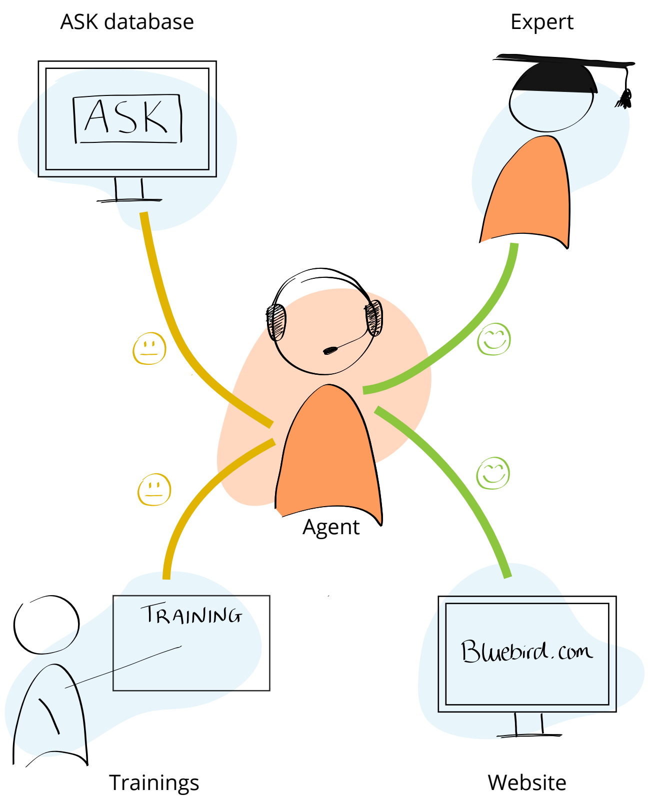


Figure 19: The main sources of information for the CC agents

Other sources

It became apparent that agents often reach out to an expert when they feel unsure. Even though ASK is the most frequently used source, the experts are identified as the most valued source of information since they always take the time to listen and help out.
Interestingly, also Bluebird's website is widely used by the agents because it is usually quite up to date and the language used is generally more accessible than in ASK.
In the basic training that the agents complete before they start, the main focus is on teaching how to use the systems. With only limited time available, not everything can be taught up front. Even though agents understand these limitations, they feel like they are not optimally prepared to face every kind of question. As a result, they sometimes make assumptions about a product or its storyline to a customer.

Ideal situation

The agents wish that searching for specific information in the database would be more user-friendly. Ideally, the pages are not jam-packed with information but are filtered in such a way that it purely shows what they need at that specific moment. One of the agents proposed a general briefing every time a new ancillary is introduced. In this way, the agents do receive some first information about the product that they can start to process, instead of being overloaded with all information in ASK all at once and risking that they miss certain parts. Perhaps, this prevents them from making assumptions. As a result, agents can feel more confident that they can serve the customer with the right information in a swift manner.

5.5 CONCLUDING THE CC PERSPECTIVES

From the perspective of CC KM, it becomes clear that information from the airline should always go via CuSer, especially in the case of new products. This way, no one depends on personal connections and all CCs are informed in a centralised manner. The current situation in which they sometimes receive information (too) late reveals a need for early communication and involvement. Looking at the chain that represents the information flow, this communication and involvement starts with the ancillary stakeholders. Evidently, the issues that cause delay at the start of the chain have a big impact on CC KM and potentially on the agents as well. Therefore, CC KM has an interest in solving the pain points between the ancillary stakeholders and CuSer that were defined in Chapter 4.

Besides the ASK database, the final users of the information – the agents – retrieve their information from mainly their training, the Bluebird website, and the expert agents. The amount of information in ASK, the amount of new announcements, the language used, and the difficulty of navigating through the database feels overwhelming for the agents, especially since they need to operate under time pressure. They simply do not have the time to read everything. Because of this, they risk missing important things. Additionally, the current training does not optimally prepare them for all aspects of the job. This all adds up to a feeling of doubt and insecurity and leads to many expert consultations for confirmation, which in turn extends the duration of a call. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a need for a less overwhelming, but a more intuitive delivery and presentation of the information in the database and/or a more unobtrusive delivery option that facilitates processing the information at their own pace to establish a more user-friendly retrieval of information.

Key take-aways Chapter 5:

- Communication to the CC should always go through one centralised flow via CuSer, to make sure all CCs can be updates simultaneously. Timely involvement of CuSer by the ancillary stakeholders benefits CC KM as well.
- The information database (ASK) is overwhelming for the agents due to the amount of information presented, the difficult language used and the difficulty to search for the right information.
- Agents experience doubt when they have to look up certain information under time pressure: 'Did they find the right information? And did they understand it correctly?' This leads to insecurity.
- Hence, there is a need for a less overwhelming, but more intuitive and unobtrusive delivery and presentation of the information that enables the agents to process the information at their own pace.

SECTION 2

DEFINE

**THIS SECTION CONCLUDES THE RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM THE DISCOVER SECTION.
THIS RESULTS IN THE DEFINITION OF THE INTERVENTION FOCUS FOR THIS PROJECT AND THE CORRESPONDING DESIGN GOAL.**

In this section:

06

THE DEFINITION OF THE INTERVENTION FOCUS

The ethnographic research and the findings in the literature have led to a large number of insights that can be synthesised into a focus for this project's design intervention. In this chapter, the sub-research questions that were posed in the Introduction are briefly answered and the insights are bundled to define the intervention focus.

In this Chapter:

6.1 RECAP OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What do information and knowledge theoretically mean in an organisational context?

Answers are based on the literature described in Chapter 2.

- **Information is documented outside, knowledge resides inside one's mind**

Knowledge and information are related concepts that can transition back and forth into one another. Information can be seen as part of the overarching concept of knowledge that consists of both tacit and explicit aspects. For this project, knowledge refers to all that is processed by the individual and tacitly stored in one's mind, while information refers to everything that is explicitly documented or articulated outside of one's mind in words or symbols. An organisation creates new knowledge or information when tacit and explicit aspects interact, which is known as the SECI model. These interactions, referred to as conversions, are facilitated by shared contexts, the so-called ba's.

- **Knowledge management requires people, a process and IT**

Knowledge management is a term used to describe the systems, processes and enablers that an organisation has in place to manage and leverage knowledge and information. In order for KM to work, there should be an open organisational culture that stimulates interaction, and employees should be willing to take part. Furthermore, the organisation should have strategies or approaches in place that help and facilitate knowledge creation, storage and transfer for its employees. IT is seen as an essential enabler for these processes.

- **Good KM enhances organisational performance**

Successful KM ensures that the right information and knowledge end up at the right location at the right time. These processes can severely enhance an organisation's performance which leads to empowered and motivated employees. More specifically, KM has the benefit of improving customer handling and employee skills.

How do information and knowledge about ancillaries travel from the source at Bluebird to the destination at the contact centre?

Answers are based on the findings in Chapter 3.

- **Four steps in the current information flow**

Analysis into the current information flow has revealed a chain that generally includes four steps from source to destination. This can be compared to a relay with four runners that pass on the information stick. It starts at Bluebird where the ancillary stakeholders come up with a new product. The information then travels past Bluebird CuSer and CC Knowledge Management to eventually end up in the ASK database through which the agents can retrieve the information.

- **There is no structured approach**

The analysis showed that the current information flow is unorganised. Especially at the source of the flow, various routes to the next point in the chain popped up. Currently, there is no shared approach, which leads to a situation where individuals have to figure out how to handle things for themselves. As a result, delays often occur which ultimately affect all stakeholders in the chain.

- **Focus on new go-lives**

Adjustments to existing ancillaries are often based on problem solving, they are dynamic and only require the necessary stakeholders to be involved. New go-lives have a visible impact for the company, the agents, and the customer and therefore require all stakeholders to be structurally involved and updated. The process for a new go-live currently suffers most from the lack of structure, hence the focus of this project is scoped down to new go-lives only.

What obstructs the current knowledge and information flow from running smoothly at Bluebird?

Answers are based on the findings in Chapter 4.

- **Roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined**

Roles and responsibilities within the Ancillary Team were not clearly defined when the team was founded. Hence, also in case of the information flow, not everyone is aware of who is responsible for executing which task. Not only does this lead to different approaches and expectations within the team, it also leads to misalignment with the colleagues from the Ancillary Support teams.

- **Lack of awareness and engagement**

Not all ancillary stakeholders are aware of the importance of timely communication about a new proposition. Furthermore, it is not specified by CuSer what is exactly required and when they should be contacted. Because of the fuzziness of the process, people are not engaged to put in much effort. Therefore, communicating information to CuSer does not always get the priority it deserves and is usually done (too) late.

- **Lack of structured foundation**

There is no foundation in place that prepares the ancillary stakeholders and supports them in an efficient information flow process. There is no place where instructions are stored for someone to rely on in case one does not know what to do, or where sharing of learnings by more experienced employees about the process, communication or the organisation is encouraged.

What effects does the current knowledge and information flow have on the recipients at the contact centre?

Answers are based on the findings in Chapter 5.

- **Need for a centralised and timely flow via CuSer**

CC KM deals with various incoming information streams. However, they prefer to receive the information solely from CuSer, to ensure a centralised update to all contact centres at the same time. Currently, information reaches the CC KM late which has a negative impact for them and therefore potentially for the agents as well. Consequently, a centralised flow requires awareness of the ancillary stakeholders to timely involve CuSer to eventually ensure a smooth publication of the information for the agents.

- **Information in ASK is too overwhelming**

The ASK database is the agent's main source of information. However, the amount of information presented to the agents is too overwhelming, the language used is difficult to understand and searching for the right information is a challenge. Additionally, agents have to operate under time pressure which leaves no room to read everything that is published in ASK. Hence, they risk missing some important or useful information.

- **Agents experience insecurity and doubt**

When agents can't quickly find what they need, struggle to absorb the difficult language in ASK, or simply don't know the answer, they doubt what to do and can get insecure about what they should tell the customer. The current trainings are no optimal preparation. Often agents seek validation from experts, which results in longer calls. Therefore, there is a need for a more unobtrusive and more intuitive delivery of information that enables the agents process the information better at their own pace to make them more confident to work with the information.

6.2 BUNDLING THE RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

To arrive at the focus for the design intervention, the conclusions from the research into the information flow and the stakeholders' perspectives on the current processes are bundled into one overview below (figure 20). The overview displays the relay of information, i.e. the four transfers that the information undertakes from the source at Bluebird toward the agents at the CC. First, the information about a new ancillary needs to be gathered and bundled. Knowledge about the ancillary that is stored in the ancillary stakeholders' heads needs to be articulated and clearly documented as information before it can be explicitly transferred to CuSer. The latter review the information, discuss with their CC KM teams and assess the impact on the contact centres. They go back to Bluebird with questions or requests when necessary. When ready, CuSer pass on the complete information to CC KM CoE. The CoE rewrites the information into an ASK solution and publishes it in the database. Subsequently, the agents receive a notification in the database about the new solution. The agents can read and process the information and practice with it to build knowledge about the new ancillary.

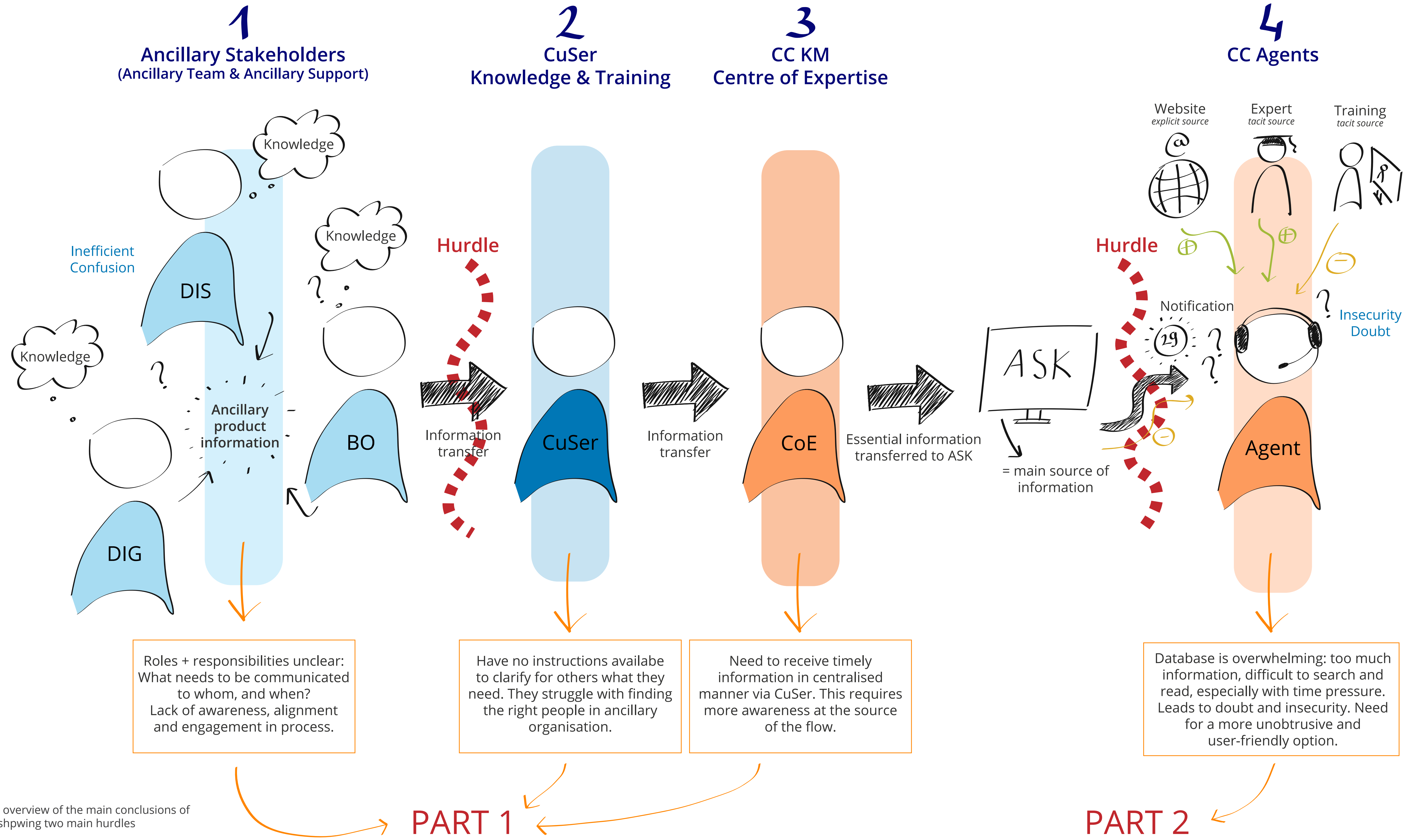


Figure 20: The overview of the main conclusions of the research, shpwing two main hurdles

Hurdle 1

Following the comparison to a relay, the second player is dependent of the first, the third is dependent of the second, and so on. This is also the case in Bluebird's information flow. It all starts with the ancillary stakeholders. Their actions influence all stages that follow. Figure 20 shows that a big hurdle is present between stages 1 and 2. Due to unclear responsibilities, lack of alignment and clear instructions, and low awareness and engagement, the information transfer from 1 to 2 currently causes confusion, delay and hence inefficiency. The insights that popped up at stage 3 concerning the timing, the centralised flow, and the awareness can be traced back to this first hurdle as well, as the issues between 1 and 2 have a direct impact on stage 3. Looking back at Nonaka (2000)'s SECI model and the corresponding ba's, it can be argued that there is no ideal shared place for externalising the ancillary stakeholder's knowledge into information or combining different information into new relevant information. Furthermore, the foundational knowledge management pillars by Nazim & Mukherjee (2016) – People, Process & IT – are not all present in the observed situation. A structured process that provides a foundation for all participants by guiding and enabling them in their knowledge and information efforts, is currently missing. Additionally, the ancillary stakeholders currently do not have the right mindset to engage in such a process since their levels of awareness and motivation are low. IT facilities are available within Bluebird, but are not optimally exploited for this purpose yet.

Hurdle 2

Another big hurdle presents itself at the right side of figure 20 at the receiving end of the flow. Regardless of what happens before stage 4, the information for the agents currently ends up in the ASK database. However, this database is considered overwhelming. The agents receive a lot of announcements but have little time to read, which increases the risk of missing important information. Hence, according to the SECI model, currently there is no good place for the agents to embody the information (Nonaka et al., 2000). Furthermore, the information is difficult to read and hard to find. Besides, the trainings do not optimally prepare them for the various situations they encounter on the job. Both contribute to the insecurity and doubt, and hence the frequent consultation of the experts and the website. Therefore, the information should be delivered to the agents in a more intuitive and user-friendly manner. Furthermore, a more unobtrusive delivery, e.g. a learning experience that facilitates the embodiment of the information, is helpful to make the agents more confident to work with the information during their job.

6.3 THE INTERVENTION FOCUS

As described in the previous paragraph, there are two main hurdles present in the current information flow. To get a feasible and desirable result within the timespan of this graduation project, it is essential to scope the focus for the intervention down to one of the two. Both hurdles were discussed with the involved stakeholders. It became clear that for the main stakeholder of this project, the Ancillary Team, it is most valuable to focus on the first hurdle and explore solutions to the issues that are currently encountered there.

The discussions also showed that (re)designing a learning experience for the agents is not feasible for this project due to high costs. Besides, frequent access to the contact centre target group appeared to be a bottleneck. Additionally, technical redesign of the database is too far out of a strategic designer's expertise. Hence, it is decided to refocus this project to solely the beginning of the information flow.

Intervention focus:

Not all ancillary stakeholders are aware of the importance of timely communication to CuSer and/or which steps need to be undertaken to achieve this. A structured foundation including an approach that aligns and guides the ancillary stakeholders in a smooth information transfer to CuSer and CC KM, as well as one that keeps them engaged in the process, is missing.

Key take-aways Chapter 6:

- Bundling the research conclusions reveals two main hurdles in the current information flow. One hurdle presents itself at the start of the chain between the ancillary stakeholders and CuSer. The other hurdle presents itself at the end of the chain, when the agents have to retrieve and process the information.
- To ensure a feasible and desirable result, this graduation project required to refocus on one of the two hurdles. Considering the discussions with the stakeholders and the personal designer skillset, it was decided to focus the design intervention on the first hurdle. This includes the lack of a structured process and alignment to transfer information to the next point in the chain, as well as the low levels of awareness and engagement for the information flow among the ancillary stakeholders. See the full description of the intervention focus in the blue box above.

07

THE DESIGN GOAL AND REQUIREMENTS

Based on the intervention focus, a design goal is formulated to give direction to the design phase of this project. This goal is accompanied by requirements for the final design outcome that are based on the stakeholders' needs and theory from the research phase of this project. In this chapter, the design goal and the requirements are described.

In this Chapter:

7.1 THE DEFINITION OF THE DESIGN GOAL

The intervention focus as defined in Paragraph 6.3 is twofold. One the one hand, it calls for a new approach that keeps the ancillary stakeholders engaged and motivated for the tasks, creates the right context for required knowledge interactions, and clearly states who should deliver what information and at which time. On the other hand, to make sure that the ancillary stakeholders adopt this new approach, the awareness as to why active participation and sharing of information is important has to be increased. Because of these two elements, the design goal for this project is split up in a goal and a sub-goal which are described below.

Design goal:
To create an approach that **guides** the Bluebird ancillary stakeholders in an **engaging** knowledge transfer process for new product introductions.

Subgoal:
To spread **awareness** about the importance of adequately informing customer services and contact centre staff about new product introductions.

7.2 ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION

One of the aspects of the design goal has to do with the Bluebird employees' lack of motivation to engage in the information transfer process. Motivation and engagement appear to be related concepts. As described by Chans & Portuguez Castro (2021), motivation provides an individual with the energy to take action to satisfy a need, while engagement refers to the manifestation of that motivation. Motivated and engaged employees lead to better performance and higher results (Chans & Portuguez Castro, 2021; Delaney & Royal, 2017). However, keeping employees motivated and engaged to deliver their tasks has shown to be challenging. The literature describes the method of 'gamification' to have a great potential for fostering engagement, enjoyment and motivation. The gamification method refers to the application of game elements to real world situations which aims to motivate users to participate in the process of a given activity (Sailer et al., 2017; Chans & Portuguez Castro, 2021). Krath et al. (2021) describe principles of gamification that guide users to intended behavioural outcomes. These principles can serve as input for the design requirements that are used to guide the solution development. The principles are displayed in figure 21. These principles can be achieved by applying gamification elements in the solution. Gamification elements exist in many shapes and forms. Some typical elements include points, feedback, stories, avatars or performance graphs (Sailer et al., 2017).

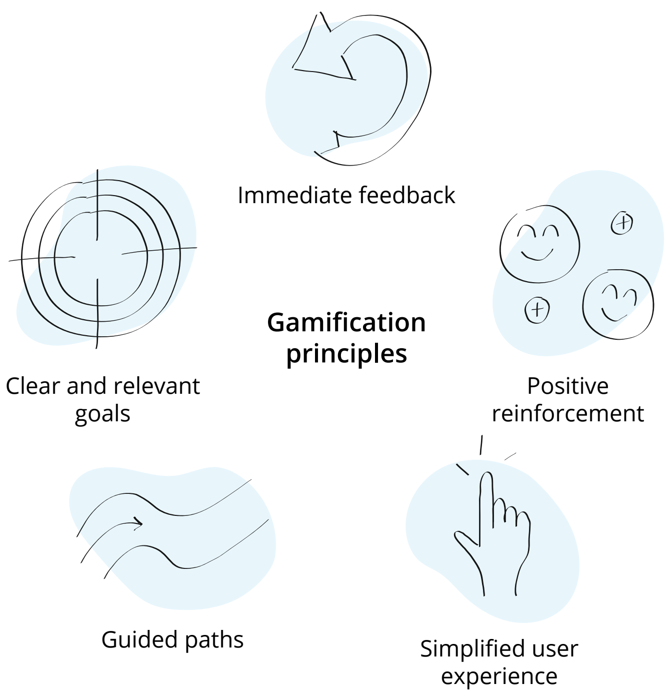


Figure 21: The gamification principles to guide users to an intended behaviour by Krath et al. (2021)

7.3 THE DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

From the research that has been done in the Discover phase, as well as the analyses done in the Define phase, a set of design requirements can be derived that accompany the previously stated design goal(s). These requirements define boundaries for the solution space that is explored during the Develop phase. Furthermore, the requirements serve as guideline for testing concepts with the stakeholders. The table below shows the list of design requirements for this project.

NR	THE DESIGN SHOULD...	SOURCE
1	Clearly define tasks and roles for the involved stakeholders	Bluebird interviews
2	Be reusable for each new go-live	Bluebird interviews
3	Provide an appropriate shared context, a 'ba', for knowledge conversion	Literature
4	Be accessible from everywhere for all stakeholders to be able to use it	Bluebird interviews
5	Exploit (existing) IT resources to facilitate easier knowledge processes	Literature
6	Include timing or deadline moments for when the information is needed by CuSer	Bluebird interviews
7	Be simple in use, it should not further complicate the process	Bluebird interviews, literature
8	Fit in the stakeholders' current way of working	Bluebird interviews
9	Provide a guided path for the stakeholders to follow during use	Literature
10	Show clear and relevant goals to the stakeholders	Literature
11	Provide feedback and positive reinforcement while being used by the stakeholders	Literature
12	Remind employees of the importance of taking part in the process	Bluebird interviews

Table 1: The design requirements

Key take-aways Chapter 7:

- The defined intervention focus is twofold. Hence, this focus was translated into a design goal, and a sub-design goal for this project. The design goal is to create a structured approach to guide and engage the ancillary stakeholders in the information flow. The subgoal is to increase the awareness for participating in the information flow. Based on the literature and ethnographic research, requirements are set up to guide the Develop phase, see table 1.
- Engagement is included in the design goal. Engagement is related to motivation. Literature shows that gamification is a valuable method to foster engagement. Gamification principles like clear goals and positive reinforcement should therefore be included in the design.

SECTION 3

DEVELOP

THIS SECTION CREATES IDEAS THAT ARE DEVELOPED INTO A CONCEPT TO MEET THE DESIGN GOAL.
THIS CONCEPT IS TESTED WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS TO DEFINE REQUIRED ITERATIONS.

In this section:

08

IDEATION

The previously defined design goal and accompanying requirements serve as starting point for the ideation. During this phase, multiple brainstorm sessions are carried out with the involved stakeholders to co-create a solution concept that fits the design goal and the stakeholders' needs. In this chapter, the ideation process is described, and a preliminary solution concept is presented.

In this Chapter:

8.1 THE SET–UP OF THE IDEATION PROCESS

Prior to starting the ideation process, it was decided to make use of a participatory approach. This approach attempts to involve those who are served through the solution in the design process, to guarantee that the solution meets their needs (Sanders & Stappers, 2012). When the solution resonates with the stakeholders, chances of actual implementation increase. Hence, multiple co-creative brainstorm sessions with stakeholders were organised.

Figure 22 shows a visual representation of this project's ideation process. It was decided to set up two parallel brainstorm tracks. One track focused on the ancillary stakeholders i.e. the sources. The other track focused on CuSer, and also involved the CC CoE, i.e. the receivers. Figure 22 also describes the goal for each session. For each session, a set of co-creative exercises was designed. Ultimately, personal design expertise was used to synthesise the output into a solution outline and eventually a preliminary concept. This preliminary concept was tested with the stakeholders.

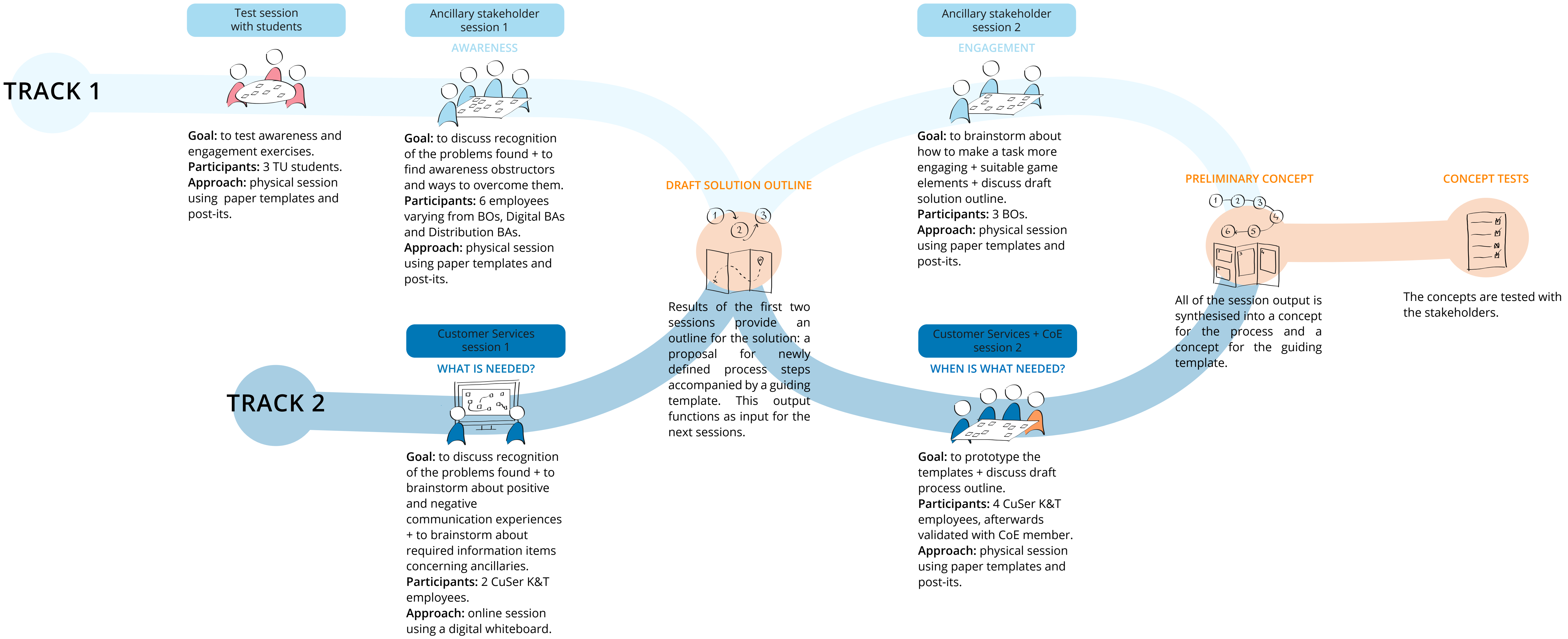


Figure 22: A visualisation of the ideation set-up

8.2 OUTCOMES OF THE BRAINSTORM SESSIONS

8.2.1 Test session

The test session was executed to check if the awareness and engagement exercises – designed for the Bluebird sessions – were clear and had a desirable outcome. Since the participants were not part of the Bluebird organisation, they were asked to imagine to work for a random big organisation instead. This way, the explanations, templates and duration of the exercises could be tested. See Appendix 9 for the session materials and results.

The exercises turned out to be clear, however, as the students lacked knowledge of the specific organisational context, the results of the exercises turned out quite generic. Below the main session take-aways are described.

Main session take-aways:

- Exercises are lengthy, better to split them into two sessions.
- To spread awareness, the target group and the message should be very clear.
- For something to be engaging it should be clear what the goal, the required input and the desired output is.
- Teams and showing achievements are considered suitable game elements to foster engagement in the work environment.

8.2.2 Ancillary stakeholder session 1

The goal of the first session with the ancillary stakeholders was to check if the participants recognised the issues found, explore why there is a lack of awareness about the current information flow, and come up with ideas to increase this awareness. See Appendix 10 for the session materials and results. Figure 23 shows the main clusters that resulted from the exploration exercise. Figure 24 summarises the ideas that came up for increasing awareness about the information flow and its importance.

The main session take-aways are described on the next page.

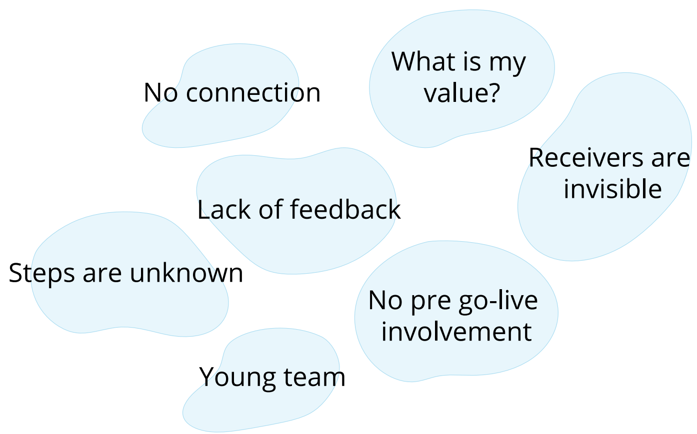


Figure 23: Reasons for lack of awareness among ancillary stakeholders

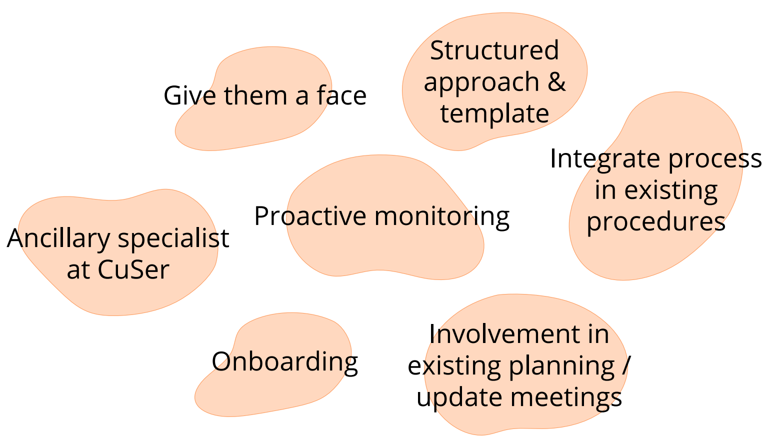


Figure 24: Ways to increase awareness for sharing information with CuSer and CC, according to the ancillary stakeholders

Main session take-aways:

- Currently, the ancillary stakeholders feel **no connection** to the receivers of the information. They need to understand **why** their information is valuable and **for whom** they are doing this to enhance participation in the process.
- The ancillary stakeholders have a great desire for **feedback from CuSer and the CC.** They want to know what CuSer or the CC is missing, what is still unclear, and how they can make things better. Ideally, they don't only get feedback before the go-live, but also after. This helps to further close the loop between both sides and take concrete next actions.
- There are various options to make the information process **part of existing procedures**, which would increase the chance of implementation. The communication task can be included in their 'epics' (a method they use to work agile) and it can be mentioned during their regular stakeholder meeting. Furthermore, CuSer can be invited to existing planning and update moments to keep them more in the loop about ancillary developments. Lastly, an explanation of the information flow can be included in the onboarding process for a new hire.
- The steps to take in the process have to be **clearly defined** to prevent misalignment. It has to be clear which information is required and there needs to be a **deadline.** Ideally, the stakeholders have a **template** to fill in for CuSer.

8.2.3 CuSer session 1

The goal of the first CuSer session was to discuss the issues that were found, brainstorm about preferred and unpreferred ways of communication with the ancillary stakeholders and define which information they require for a new go-live. See Appendix 11 for the session materials and results.

Figure 25 and 26 show the main results from the session. The clusters in figure 25 summarise how CuSer would like the communication to work. The clustes in figure 26 represent the three main topics that cover the information about an ancillary that CuSer wants to know.

The main session take-aways are described on the next page.

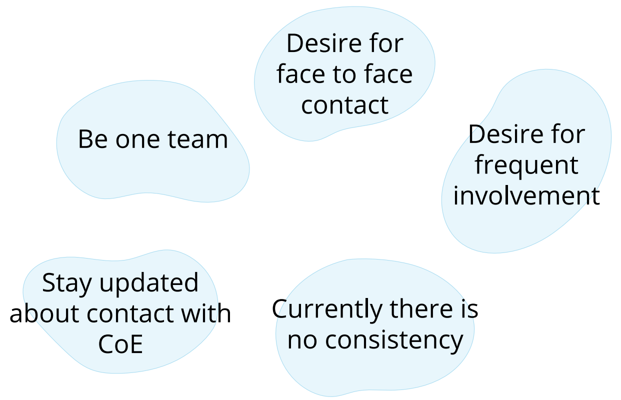


Figure 25: How CuSer would like to communicate with the ancillary stakeholders

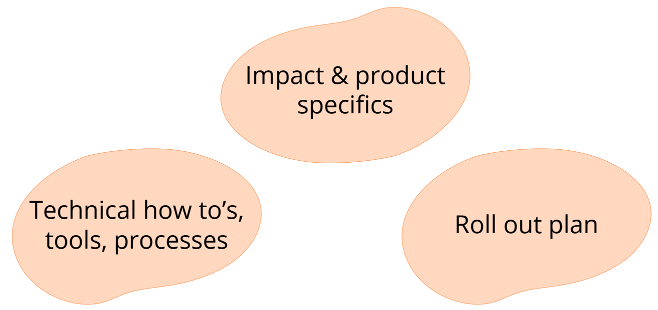


Figure 26: The three main topics of required ancillary information

Main session take-aways:

- The main thing that CuSer dislikes about the current process, is the **inconsistency.** This includes late mails, no clear planning, different kinds of information from different people, and direct contact with the CC CoE without informing them.
- CuSer likes the **face-to-face meetings** with the BOs. According to them, more frequent involvement can lead to a situation where both sides act more as one team and ensure that CuSer is really part of the development of a new proposition.
- CuSer realises that there are currently no clear instructions for the BOs and BAs. Hence, they think it is wise to create a **template** that all teams can use. This way, they ensure consistency among the information they receive. In terms of content, CuSer needs information that helps them to understand the proposition, decide what needs to be developed and determine the impact they can expect.
- Ideally, the process does not only consist of receiving information, but **a two-way interaction** where the BOs or BAs base their information on the questions from CuSer's knowledge teams. Dedicated meeting moments at the beginning, halfway, and at the end of the process help to cater the information to what is required for that specific situation.

8.2.4 Intermediate analysis: the solution outline

The results of the first two sessions were analysed and synthesized, which resulted in an outline for the solution. This outline consists of two elements: process steps as a backbone and a template for specific guidance (see figure 27). The elements are briefly elucidated below.

Interestingly, results from both sessions showed a desire for more involvement and more connection between both sides. This finding suggests a solution that includes structural meeting moments throughout the development of the new proposition. Frequent (face-to-face) interactions throughout the development process offer the opportunity for the ancillary stakeholders to receive more direct and concrete feedback about what they provide and it shows them who is using their information. For CuSer, it offers the opportunity to be updated in an earlier stage and feel more like one team. Hence, one element of the solution is a process proposal that includes structural steps and meetings to provide a timely two-way involvement throughout the development of the ancillary.

Another thing that popped up in both sessions, is the desire for a template. For the ancillary stakeholders, the template guides them in the information they need to provide at specific moments in time. For CuSer, a template ensures a consistent input of information at all times. These benefits of the template could help to increase the efficiency of the process. Therefore, the second element of the solution is a template that is to be used in combination with the first element, i.e. the proposed process steps.

Figure 27: An illustration of the solution elements

Based on output from the first two sessions, a first process proposal is created, see figure 28 below. The goal for the next sessions is twofold. On the one hand, the focus in on how to fill in these process steps in terms of actions and responsibilities, as well as how to make them properly fit within existing procedures. On the other hand, the focus is on how to give shape to the template that is to be used during this process.

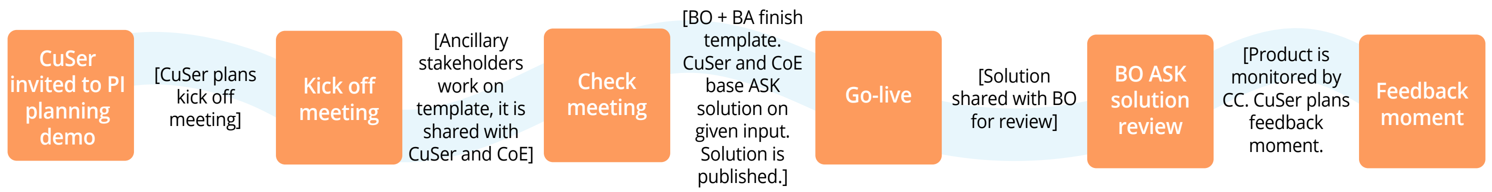


Figure 28: The rough process proposal

8.2.5 Ancillary stakeholder session 2

Part of the design goal is to make the new approach engaging for the ancillary stakeholders. Therefore, the question is how give shape to the template and/or process in such a way that it becomes more engaging to use and to participate. According to the literature, gamification proved to be an effective method for this (see Paragraph 7.2).

The results of the test session and the first ancillary session showed similarities with the gamification principles mentioned in Paragraph 7.2, like the need for feedback and clear goals. Hence, the goal of this session was to brainstorm about suitable game elements to achieve these wishes. Next to that, the session was used to discuss and brainstorm about the preliminary process outline. See Appendix 12 for the session materials and results. Figures 29 and 30 display the main results from the session.

The main session take-aways are described on the next page.

Figure 29: Ways to make solution more engaging for the ancillary stakeholders

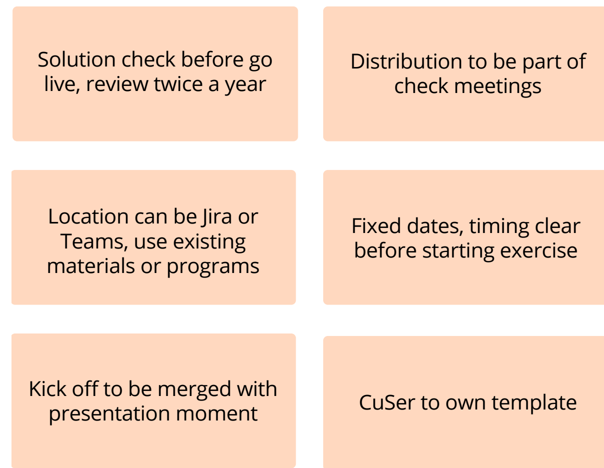


Figure 30: Improvements to the process proposal according to the ancillary stakeholders

Main session take-aways:

- The particpants want to approach the information task as **a joint effort**. Playing as a team, and contributing to a team goal motivates them more than achieving something individually. **Visualising team progress and achievements** is a good way to boost this feeling.
- The participants find it important to **keep on learning and recreate successes**. A points system could be an option, but should be focused on learning from best practices, not on being the best individual. Another option to learn from each other is a more social approach, where learnings are shared with others during feedback sessions.
- For the process, **the halfway deadline moment is good.** Participants say that they need a deadline to deliver. However, the **number of meeting moments should be limited** to what is truly necessary. For instance, the update at the beginning and the kick-off can be merged into one moment. However, this can be a new meeting moment instead of inviting CuSer to an existing one. Also, participants prefer a check meeting before the go-live, so the go-live is the final point of the process.
- During the process, **Distribution should also be part of the meetings** since they possess an important part of the information for the contact centres.

8.2.6 CuSer session 2

The design goal states that the new approach needs to guide the ancillary stakeholders. Results from the ancillary stakeholder sessions showed that it needs to be specified which information is required and what the deadline is. The previous CuSer session revealed what they need to know about a new ancillary. The goal of this session was to prototype the template items and define which topics are required before the Halfway Check and which need to be delivered before the Final Check.
Furthermore, the goal was to discuss the process and gather ideas for improvements. See Appendix 13 for the session materials and results. Figure 31 shows the main topics that belong in each phase. Figure 32 shows the process improvements from CuSer's perspective. After the session, the results were discussed with a CoE representative, to check if anything was missing from their perspective.

The main session take-aways are described on the next page.

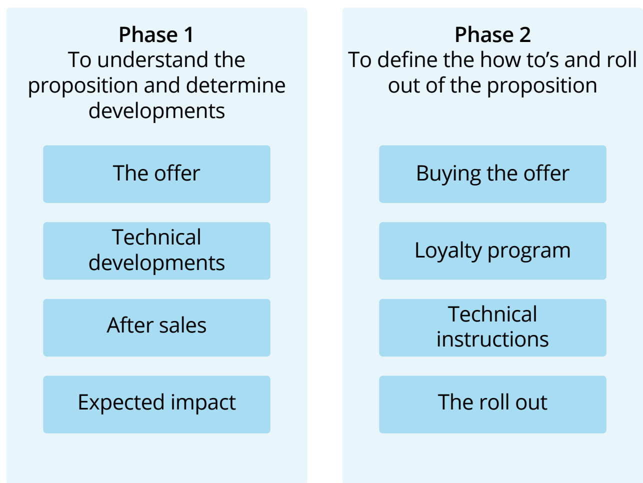


Figure 31: The information topics that CuSer requires from Bluebird per phase

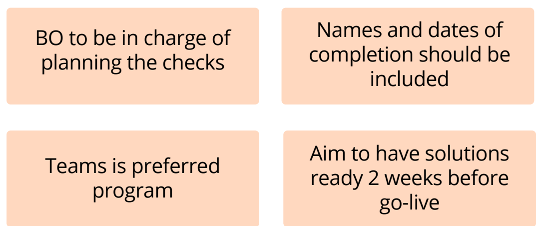


Figure 32: Improvements to the process proposal according to CuSer

Main session take-aways:

- Phase 1 is all about **understanding what the proposition is about**, and determining **what needs to be developed** for the contact centres. This development question is the main reason why CuSer wants to be involved earlier in the process. Now they sometimes find out late and therefore are late with developments. Phase 2 is more about details, like the how to's and the roll out details of a proposition.
- CuSer prefers the **BO to be in charge of planning** the check meeting. In their current – quite understaffed – situation it's hard for them to keep up with everything that is going on.
- **Names and dates** are very important to be included in the template. Also it should be specified when the template is finished by the BO, to prevent any discussions.
- It is hard to say when solutions are ready for a check, but they aim to have the solution ready **two weeks before** the go-live.
- The preferred location to store the templates is the Customer Services **Microsoft Teams folder**.
- **The CoE is on the same page** regarding the template items CuSer prototyped and wants to be involved in the meeting moments as well.

8.3 THE PRELIMINARY CONCEPT

All of the session results were analysed and combined into a preliminary concept called **"the Information Journey"**. This concept consists of a process proposal and a corresponding template.

The process takes into account:

- An existing procedure as starting point, and lets the BO build on existing material
- An expected timeline, and hence deadlines to stimulate delivery
- Meetings to facilitate interaction between all stakeholders and to offer the opportunity for feedback
- Responsibilities for both the senders and receivers to ensure that it is a joint journey

The template takes into account:

- All items that CuSer and eventually the CoE want to know translated into guiding questions
- Emphasis on the value of the information, and a description of who is going to use it.
- Positive reinforcement for the template users and an opportunity for feedback inside the template
- Visualisations of intermediate achievements to boost team motivation

The process

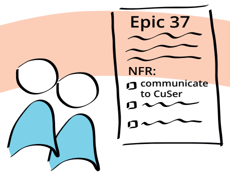
Figure 33 on the next page shows a visualisation of the process concept. Similar to the current situation at Bluebird, the BO and the Distribution BA play the biggest role in the Information Journey on the ancillary stakeholder side. The other ancillary stakeholders are not visualised in the process but may need to be consulted by the BO or Dis BA to gather all of the required information.

The Information Journey consists of multiple steps and is divided into a preparation, a take-off, work phase 1 followed by a check, work phase 2 followed by a check, and eventually the go-live. The preparation taps into Bluebird's current way of working by building on the already existing PI planning process. During the PI planning it is determined what goes in development for the next three months. After this planning has been determined, the Information Journey truly takes off. Figure 33 contains detailed descriptions of every process step. The deadlines are based on input by CuSer and the CC. Since roughly two months are required for development of training materials (see Paragraph 5.2), the Halfway Check is planned two months before the go-live. Because CuSer aims to have the solution material ready two weeks before the go-live (see Paragraph 8.2), the Final Check is planned roughly around that time.

Besides the regular journey steps, an additional moment of feedback in the shape of a bi-yearly update is proposed where CuSer invites the ancillary stakeholders and the CC KM. During this update, the CC KM can share trends or things that have stood out regarding the ancillaries. Also, outdated ASK pages can be reviewed. This structural update moment is also a way to further close the gap between both ends by facilitating a feedback loop back to Bluebird. This way, a better connection can be established between everyone involved in the information flow.

Please find the process visualisation on the next page.

PREPARATION



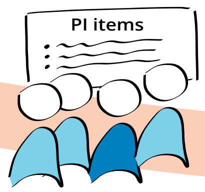
Description:
BOs prepare their projects (called epics) for the next quarter. They collect all required information and put it in the epic template. During the PI planning event it is decided which projects are developed in the coming three months.

Responsibility:
BO, with help of colleagues, is responsible for preparing the epic document for the PI.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

JOURNEY TAKE OFF

DEBRIEF

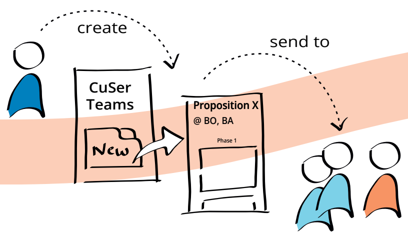


Description:
Items for the coming quarter are presented to CuSer in a short debrief. The high impact projects can already be briefly discussed. The goal is to have everyone aligned about what is to come. Afterwards, the list including the responsible BO and Dis BA is shared with CuSer.

Responsibility:
Head of Ancillary BOs is responsible for organising this meeting, inviting CuSer, and sharing items.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

TEMPLATE CREATION

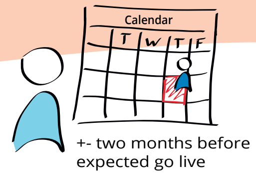


Description:
CuSer now knows what is coming. They create a new folder in their Teams environment for the projects they need more information about. In this folder, they place an empty template. CuSer shares this folder with the responsible BO and Dis BA. CuSer also gives CoE access to the document.

Responsibility:
CuSer is responsible for creating the folder on the right location and sharing it with the involved people.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

SCHEDULE CHECK

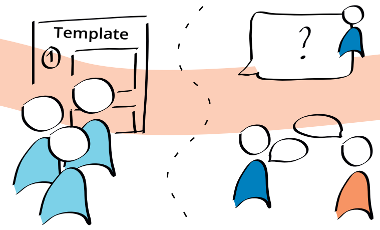


Description:
Once the BO receives the template, they can schedule the Halfway Check with the Dis BA, CuSer and CoE. This Halfway Check is the deadline for completing Phase 1 of the template. BOs are asked to plan the Halfway Check approx. two months before the (expected) go live. They fill in the Halfway Check date in the template.

Responsibility:
BO is responsible for sending out the meeting invite for the Halfway Check to required attendees.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

WORK PHASE 1

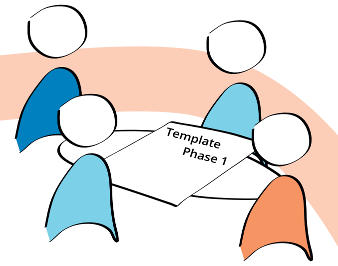


Description:
The responsible BO, Dis BA and colleagues fill in the template. While they work on the template, CuSer and CC CoE have access to the file. CuSer discusses the new proposition idea with their CoE teams. They can put comments with questions or concerns. The BO/BA finish Phase 1 of the template before the Halfway Check.

Responsibility:
BO, BA and team are responsible for completing the template before the Halfway Check. CuSer is responsible for reading the information and discussing with their KM teams.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

HALFWAY CHECK

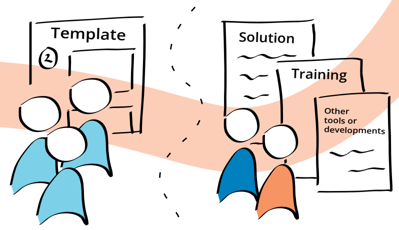


Description:
The Halfway Check is a meeting with BO, BA, CuSer and CoE where concerns are shared. It is decided what kind of development is required on CuSer side based on the answers given in Phase 1. Outcome of this meeting is consensus about what still needs to be investigated and still needs to be developed. Together, participants plan the Final Check +- two weeks before the go live.

Responsibility:
BO, BA and team complete template before deadline. CuSer/CoE has prepared questions. Shared responsibility to plan next meeting.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

WORK PHASE 2

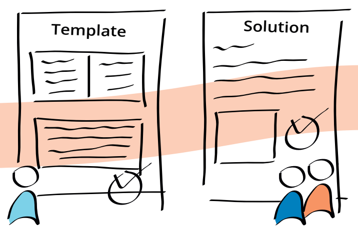


Description:
The BO, Dis BA and team continue with the development of the proposition. Meanwhile, they work on Phase 2 of the template. Based on Phase 1, CuSer and their CoE teams think about what they need to develop and if possible make a start with these developments. The Phase 2 template should be ready before the Final Check.

Responsibility:
BO and team finish template Phase 2. CuSer/CC CoE draft an ASK solution and/or other materials if already possible with the available information.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

FINAL CHECK



Description:
We are approaching the go-live. This meeting moment with the BO, Dis BA, CuSer and CoE is the final deadline to go through all of the information and clarify any remaining questions. Together, they review the draft materials for the agents before they are finalized. At the end, there is an opportunity to share learnings or desired process changes for next time.

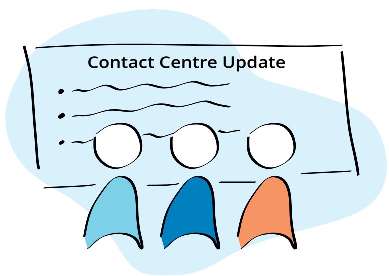
Responsibility:
All stakeholders are responsible to be present, have materials ready and finish the last things before the go-live.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

TOUCH DOWN

Description:
The solution that includes the what, why and how of the proposition is published in the ASK database. The proposition goes live on the designated channels and becomes available for the customers. The agents have access to all the required information to provide adequate customer service.

BI-YEARLY UPDATE



Twice a year, CuSer brings both parties together to discuss feedback from the agents, required ASK adjustments or other ask other questions. The aim is to close the gap between both ends and establish a more enduring connection.

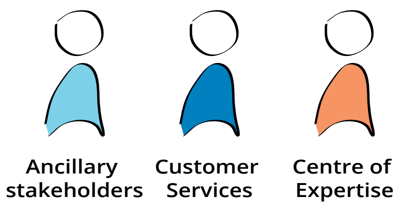
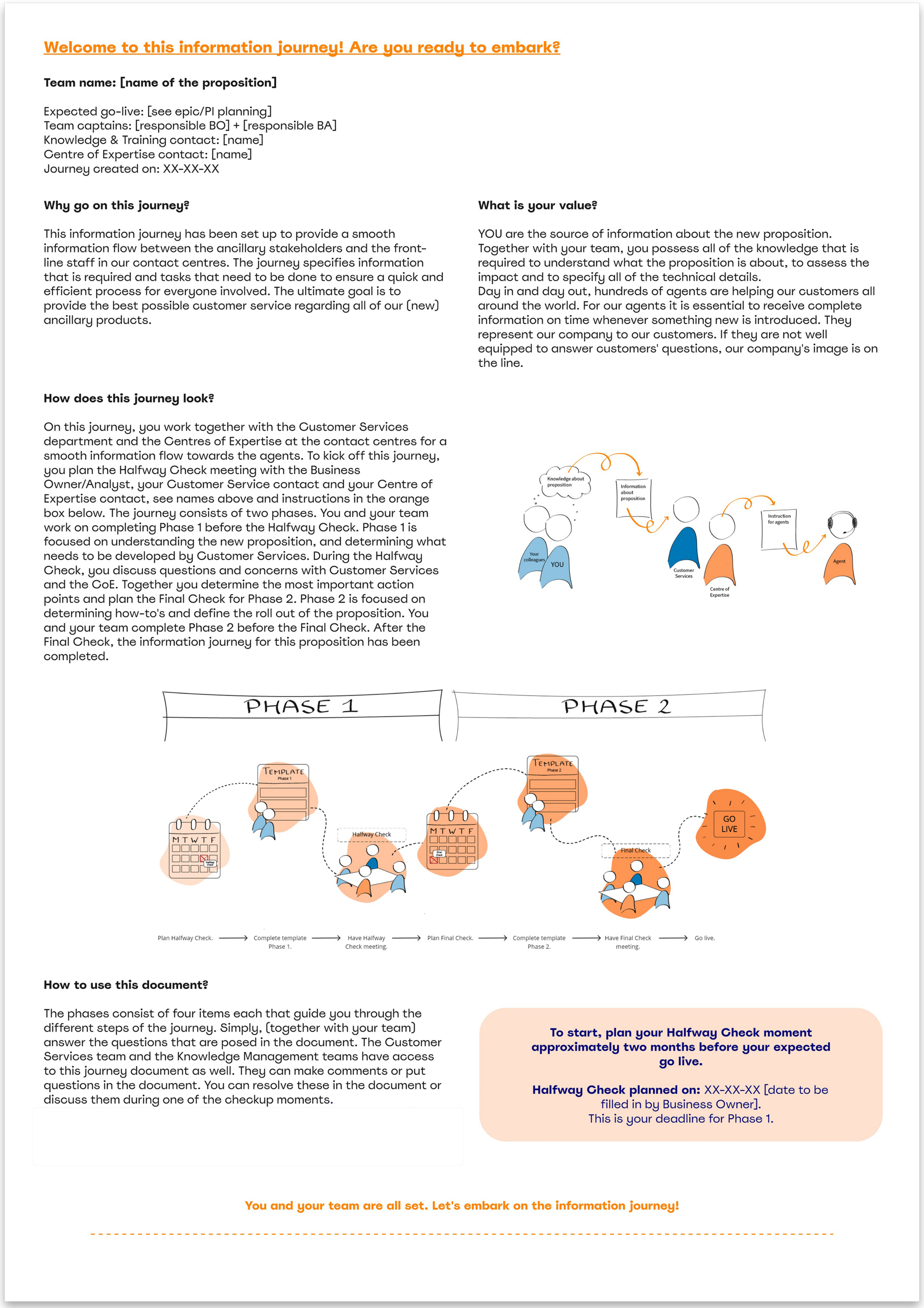


Figure 33: The preliminary process concept

The template

Figures 34, 35 and 36 show the concept of the guiding template for the ancillary stakeholders to use during the Information Journey. The phases in the template correspond to the phases in the Information Journey process. The template consists of an introduction page, Phase 1 questions, the Halfway Check set-up, Phase 2 questions, and the Final Check set-up.

The introduction page contains all contact information. Furthermore, it explains why ancillary stakeholders should go on the journey, what the value of their information is, how the journey looks and how they should use the document. The questions in Phases 1 and 2 are based on the prototyping exercise described in Paragraph 8.2.6. To adhere to the goal of making the new approach more engaging, concise language, colourful images and positive reinforcement comments are used throughout the templates. Progress bars are used to visualise small achievements in the template. Figure 39 shows other options to boost the engagement (points and motivational contribution comments respectively). The meeting set-ups in figures 37 and 38 provide guidance during the Halfway and Final Check.


Welcome to this information journey! Are you ready to embark?

Team name: [name of the proposition]

Expected go-live: [see epic/PI planning]
Team captains: [responsible BO] + [responsible BA]
Knowledge & Training contact: [name]
Centre of Expertise contact: [name]
Journey created on: XX-XX-XX

Why go on this journey?

This information journey has been set up to provide a smooth information flow between the ancillary stakeholders and the front-line staff in our contact centres. The journey specifies information that is required and tasks that need to be done to ensure a quick and efficient process for everyone involved. The ultimate goal is to provide the best possible customer service regarding all of our (new) ancillary products.

What is your value?

YOU are the source of information about the new proposition. Together with your team, you possess all of the knowledge that is required to understand what the proposition is about, to assess the impact and to specify all of the technical details.
Day in and day out, hundreds of agents are helping our customers all around the world. For our agents it is essential to receive complete information on time whenever something new is introduced. They represent our company to our customers. If they are not well equipped to answer customers' questions, our company's image is on the line.

How does this journey look?

On this journey, you work together with the Customer Services department and the Centres of Expertise at the contact centres for a smooth information flow towards the agents. To kick off this journey, you plan the Halfway Check meeting with the Business Owner/Analyst, your Customer Service contact and your Centre of Expertise contact, see names above and instructions in the orange box below. The journey consists of two phases. You and your team work on completing Phase 1 before the Halfway Check. Phase 1 is focused on understanding the new proposition, and determining what needs to be developed by Customer Services. During the Halfway Check, you discuss questions and concerns with Customer Services and the CoE. Together you determine the most important action points and plan the Final Check for Phase 2. Phase 2 is focused on determining how-to's and define the roll out of the proposition. You and your team complete Phase 2 before the Final Check. After the Final Check, the information journey for this proposition has been completed.

How to use this document?

The phases consist of four items each that guide you through the different steps of the journey. Simply, (together with your team) answer the questions that are posed in the document. The Customer Services team and the Knowledge Management teams have access to this journey document as well. They can make comments or put questions in the document. You can resolve these in the document or discuss them during one of the checkup moments.

To start, plan your Halfway Check moment approximately two months before your expected go live.

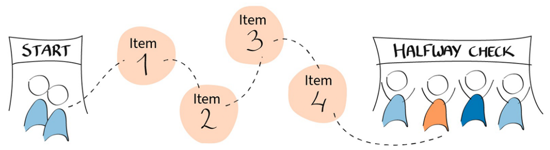
Halfway Check planned on: XX-XX-XX [date to be filled in by Business Owner].
This is your deadline for Phase 1.

You and your team are all set. Let's embark on the information journey!

Figure 34: The template introduction page

PHASE 1

GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE PROPOSITION AND DETERMINE DEVELOPMENTS



Items to be filled in before Halfway Check on XX-XX-XX [date to be filled in by Business Owner]

Phase 1 consists of 4 items and is completed when the when the Halfway Check has been executed.

The goal of this Phase is to understand the proposition and determine what kind of developments are needed from the Customer Service side. The questions are designed to make you think about and discuss the topics with your colleagues, they are not focused on details yet. The questions do not need to be answered in chronological order. If something is not applicable for your proposition, please put n/a.

ITEM 1
THE OFFER
To be answered by Business Owner

1) What is the offer?
[Briefly describe what the offer includes. Please include link to epic.]
2) Which airline(s) does it concern?
[Joint product? Are partner airlines involved?]
3) Which Line of Business does it concern?
[e.g. Sales and Services KL]
4) On which touchpoints is the offer available?
[Please specify **all** online and offline touchpoints]
5) Is the offer available in Miles?

You are at 25%. Keep it up!

ITEM 2
TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT
To be answered by Distribution Business Analyst

1) Is OSCAR development required?
[Also think about CCP development?]
2) Is the offer available in guided and/or cryptic mode?
3) How should the offer be shown in the PNR?
4) Is websupport needed?
5) Are other tools used by our staff impacted?

You are at 50%. Halfway there!

ITEM 3
AFTER SALES
To be determined with team

1) How does the refund policy look?
[Tools and systems impacted? Development needed?]
2) What happens in case of voluntary changes?
3) What happens in case of unvoluntary changes?

You are at 75%. One more to go!

PHASE 1
Find part one of the Phase 1 document here.

PHASE 1
Find part two of the Phase 1 document here.

ITEM 4
EXPECTED IMPACT
To be determined with team

1) Do you expect an impact on our other products and services?
[e.g. a bundle]
2) Do you expect an impact on our operations?

You have reached 100%. Good job!

Please fill the date of completion of the template
PHASE 1 TEMPLATE COMPLETED ON: XX-XX-XX
YOU ARE NOW READY FOR THE HALFWAY CHECK.

HALFWAY CHECK
GOAL: TO DISCUSS PROPOSITION AND ASSESS IMPACT

See the Halfway Check set-up for tips on how to run the meeting. Make sure to state the most important action points or focus points for going into Phase 2. Please insert them below. Close the meeting with planning the Final Check approximately two weeks before the expected go live.

MAIN TAKE-AWAYS FROM HALFWAY CHECK
WHAT SHOULD WE FOCUS ON?

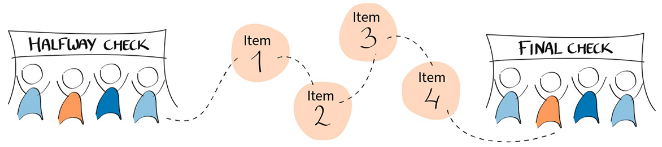
Final Check planned on: XX-XX-XX

PHASE 1 COMPLETED.
KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.

Figure 35: The template Phase 1

PHASE 2

GOAL: TO DEFINE THE HOW TO'S AND ROLL OUT OF PROPOSITION



Items to be filled in before Final Check on XX-XX-XX [date to be filled in by Business Owner]

Phase 2 consists of 4 items and is completed when the when the Final Check has been executed.

The goal of this Phase is to define the how to's and the roll out of the proposition. Keep the main take-aways from the Halfway Check in mind. These help to give priority to your next tasks. The questions require more detailed answers compared to Phase 1. The questions do not need to be answered in chronological order. If something is not applicable for your proposition, please put n/a.

ITEM 1
BUYING THE OFFER
To be answered by Business Owner

1) Who are eligible to buy the offer?
[Please specify when the offer is available to our customers.]

You are at 25%. Keep it up!

ITEM 2
LOYALTY PROGRAM
To be answered by Business Owner

1) Are Flying Blue benefits available for the offer?
[Please specify per tierlevel.]

You are at 50%. Halfway there!

ITEM 3
TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS
To be answered by Distribution Business Analyst

1) Please specify the technical instructions for booking, pricing and managing after sales in OSCAR.
[Please specify differences per airline if applicable.]

You are at 75%. One more to go!

ITEM 4
ROLL OUT
To be determined with team

1) Any country/route/market specifics?
2) Is an embargo applicable?
[If yes, until when?]
3) How does the roll out plan, including pilots/tests, look?
4) How does the communication plan look?
5) How does the offer look for our customers?
[Please insert a screenshot if applicable]

You have reached 100%! Great job.

Please fill the date of completion of the template
PHASE 2 TEMPLATE COMPLETED ON: XX-XX-XX
YOU ARE NOW READY FOR THE FINAL CHECK.

PHASE 2
Find part one of the Phase 2 document here.

PHASE 2
Find part two of the Phase 2 document here.

FINAL CHECK
GOAL: TO GO CLARIFY REMAINING PROPOSITION DETAILS AND CHECK DRAFT SOLUTION

See the Final Check set-up for tips on how to run the meeting. This journey is a learning process for all of us and can be adjusted according to present needs. Please briefly discuss your learnings with each other to make sure we keep on improving this process. Do not hesitate to share with others what you have learned.

LEARNINGS FROM THIS JOURNEY
AS DISCUSSED DURING THE FINAL CHECK

Main learnings as discussed during the Final Check

PHASE 2 COMPLETED.
GREAT JOB, YOU HAVE FINISHED THE INFORMATION JOURNEY FOR YOUR NEW PROPOSITION!
NOW LET'S GO LIVE.

Figure 36: The template Phase 2

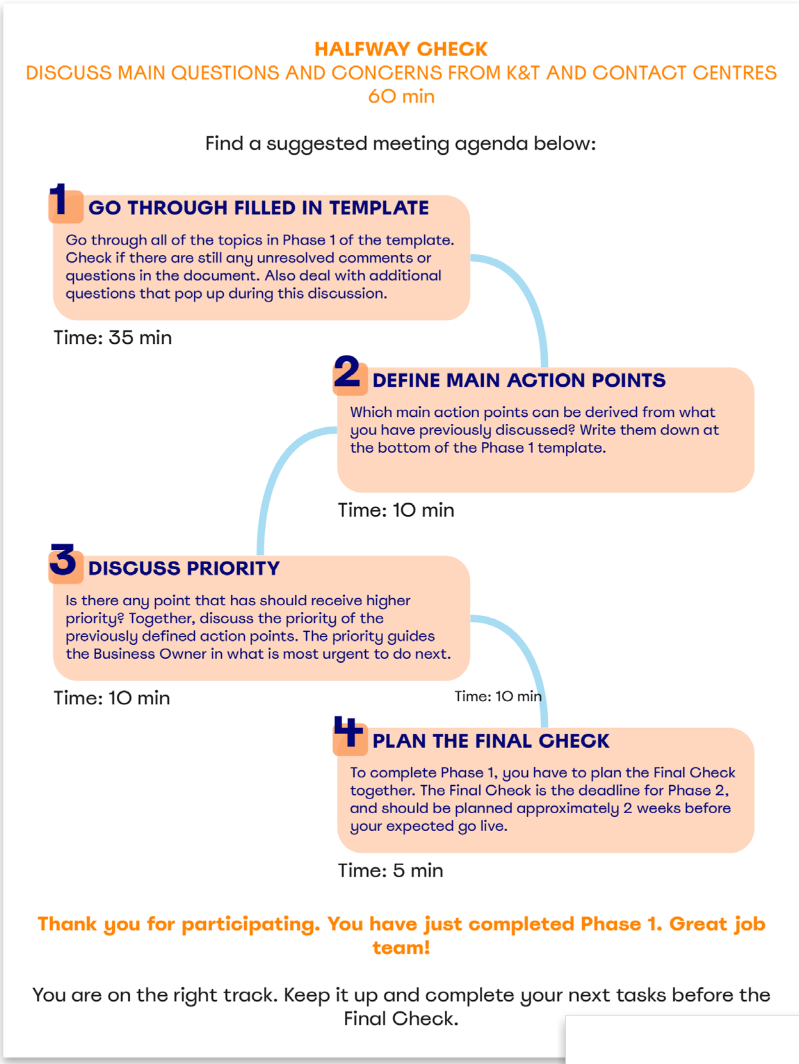
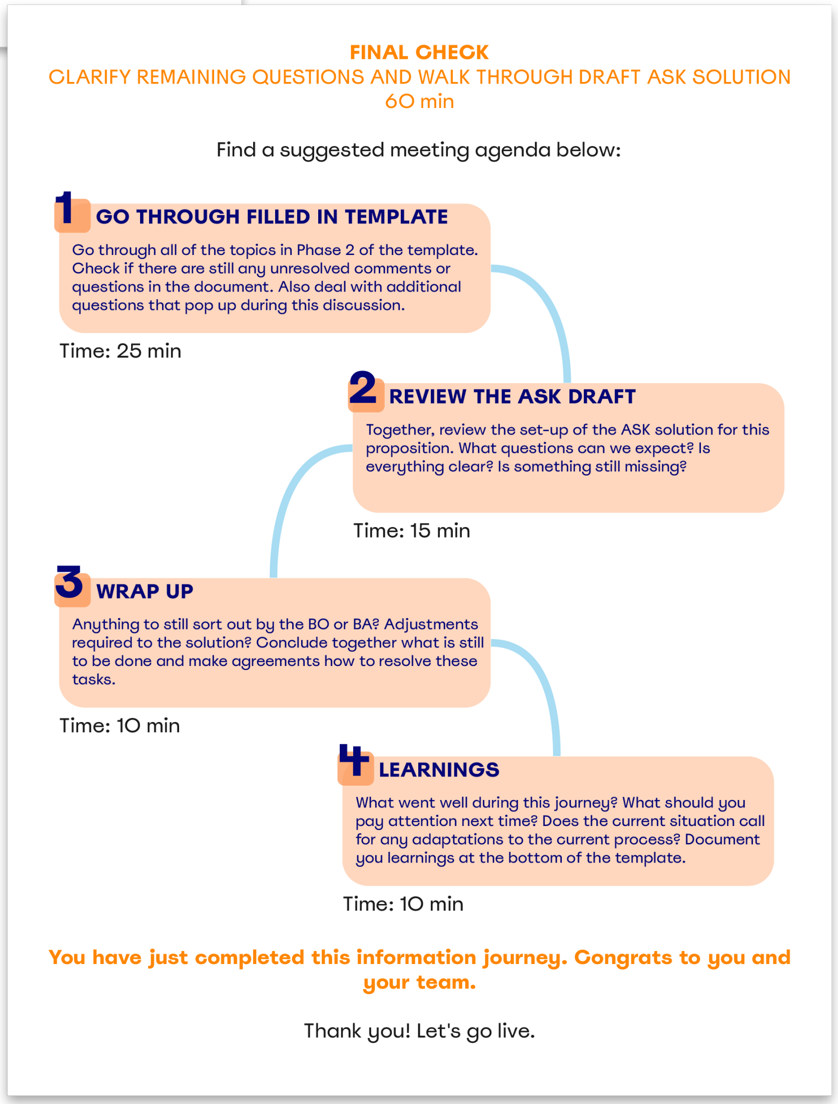


Figure 37: Set-up for the Halfway Check

Figure 38: Set-up for the Final Check



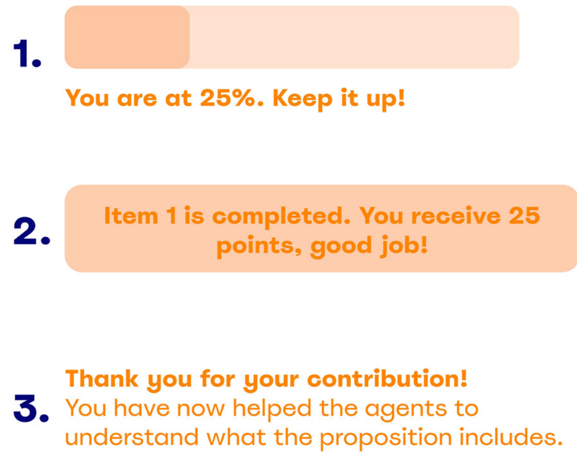


Figure 39: Different options for showing achievements

Key take-aways Chapter 8:

- The ideation phase consisted of a participatory approach: involvement of all stakeholders who are served by the solution in the ideation process. Two brainstorm tracks were set up, one for the ancillary stakeholders (the senders) and one for CuSer and CoE (the receivers). Both tracks consisted of two co-creative sessions.
- Results of all sessions were analysed and combined into a preliminary concept: the Information Journey. The concept consists of a new process proposal and a corresponding template that must be used during the process. See figures 34 until 39 for visualisations of the concept.

09

CONCEPT TESTING

Now that a concept has been created, it is important to test it with the stakeholders and discover if they truly understand it, if it fits in their way of working and to check if it meets the other design requirements. In this chapter, the test approach and its results are described. Furthermore, the next iteration steps for the final concept are defined.

In this Chapter:

9.1 TOPICS OF INTEREST FOR TESTING

As described in Chapter 8, the Information Journey concept consists of a process proposal and a corresponding template. This process is supposed to run over a number of months. Due to the limited timespan of this graduation project, it is impossible to execute every step of the process in a real-life situation and test the effects. However, it is possible to discuss if the concept is likely to meet the previously defined requirements (see Paragraph 7.3) and if the stakeholders deem the concept feasible and workable within their organisation. Hence, these discussions serve as testing method for the concept. The design requirements are input for the testing sessions. The requirements can be translated into corresponding questions of interest, see table 2, that act as a testing guideline during the sessions. The results of the tests are used to define next iteration steps to develop the final version of the concept.

NR	THE DESIGN SHOULD...	QUESTIONS OF INTEREST
1	Clearly define tasks and roles for the involved stakeholders	Do all stakeholders understand their responsibilities? Are the stakeholders willing to execute their roles?
2	Be reusable for each new go-live	Is the concept suitable to use for a broad range of projects?
3	Provide an appropriate shared context, a 'ba', for knowledge conversion	Does the concept offer the opportunity for the required knowledge conversions?
4	Be accessible from everywhere for all stakeholders to be able to use it	Can everyone have access to the Teams folder at all times?
5	Exploit (existing) IT resources to facilitate easier knowledge processes	Is Teams the most appropriate program to use for this concept?
6	Include timing or deadline moments for when the information is needed by CuSer	Does the concept contain sufficient deadlines? Are the proposed deadlines feasible?
7	Be simple in use, it should not further complicate the process	Do the stakeholders understand all process steps? Do the stakeholders think that the concept makes their work easier?
8	Fit in the stakeholders' current way of working	Do all stakeholders think that this process fits within their organization? Are the stakeholders willing to adopt the process?
9	Provide a guided path for the stakeholders to follow during use	Are the template questions clear? Do the questions truly cover all that is required?
10	Show clear and relevant goals to the stakeholders	Do the stakeholders understand the goals of the concept?
11	Provide feedback and positive reinforcement while being used by the stakeholders	Does the concept offer enough opportunities for feedback? Do the stakeholders appreciate the positive reinforcement, and if so which way is best?
12	Remind employees of the importance of taking part in the process	Do the stakeholders understand why they should take part in the process? Do the stakeholders see their value?

Table 2: The questions of interest for the testing of the concept

9.2 TEST APPROACH

Both elements of the concept – the process and the template – need to be tested. As explained in Paragraph 9.1, the process is tested by means of a discussion. The template, as shown in Paragraph 8.3, is physically tested.

The users of the concept can be divided up into two groups. Group 1 is referred to as 'the senders' and includes the ancillary stakeholders. Group 2 is referred to as 'the receivers' and includes CuSer and the CC CoE. Figure 40 visualises the approach for testing the concept

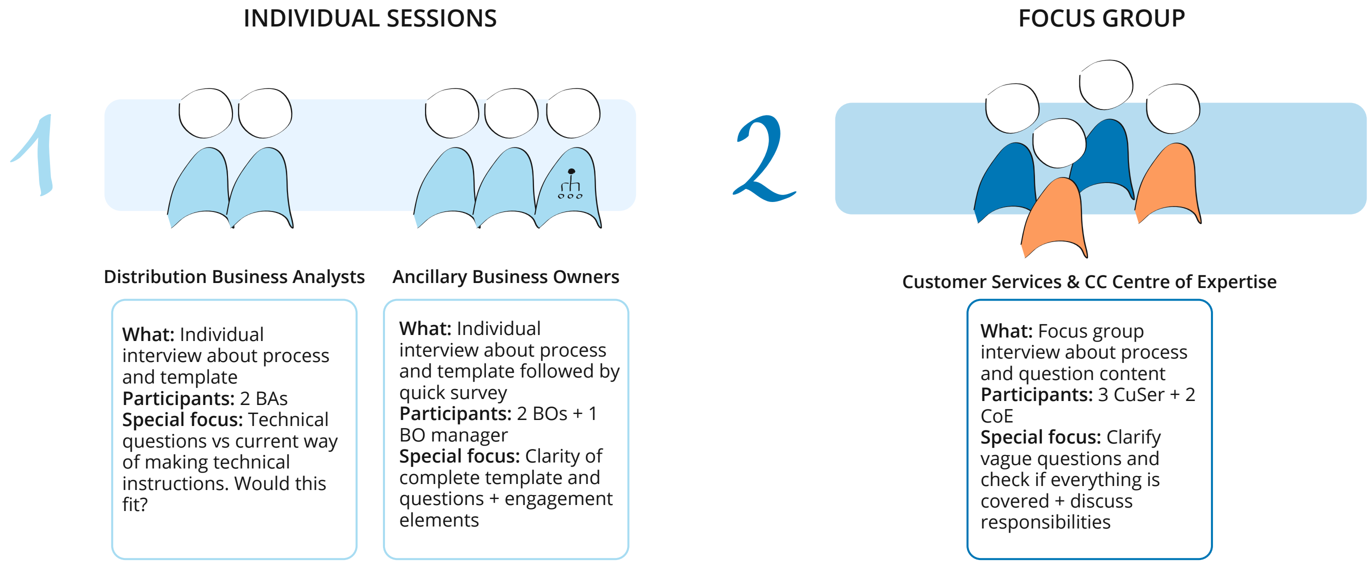


Figure 40: Approach for testing of the concept

For the senders, it was decided to take an individual approach. In the current situation, the senders all have their own way of doing things. By testing individually, it can be checked if the individuals each understand the process, as well as the template and its questions. Furthermore, it can be discovered how the engagement elements work for them and how the concept fits in their personal way of working. Due to their minimal responsibilities in the concept and limited availability, the Digital BAs are left out of the tests.

For the receivers, it was decided to take a group approach and invite CuSer and CC CoE to a focus group session. As part of the concept, they need to work together frequently. Furthermore, they need to be aligned about their expectations regarding the incoming information, the feedback moments and the responsibilities. During the focus group, these matters can be jointly discussed and aligned. The focus group was scheduled after the individual sessions, so the questions from the senders about the content of the template could be instantly answered by the receivers.

9.3 TEST RESULTS

9.3.1 Main results of the individual sessions

Five individual sessions were performed: two with BOs, one with their manager and two with Distribution BAs. The sample consisted of both experienced and relatively new employees. The minutes of the individual sessions can be found in Appendix 14. This paragraph describes the main insights from the test sessions per concept element. The main test results are summarised in figure 41.

The process

The process connects well to the PI structure that is currently in place. The senders understand the steps and consider them feasible. They consider the Debrief meeting a good starting point, since they themselves cannot assess the impact of a new project for CuSer and the CCs. This way, CuSer can immediately notify them of potential high impact projects. The BO manager agrees to be the right person to host the debrief for CuSer. However, ideally a communication manager joins the team who can take up this responsibility.

All of the interviewees like the idea of sticking to a certain form of structure. Especially the less experienced employees think that a structure like this helps them with their communication job, since it clearly tells them which step to take next. The scheduled feedback meetings, as well as the bi-yearly update, are much appreciated and believed to improve the quality of the work and make the process more efficient. Both the Distribution BAs and the BOs see value in adopting the process and are willing to try it. Once the process has been put in practice, it should be evaluated to see how to adapt it to new situations or needs.

The template

The template shows clear goals and provides clear guidance through the process. In general, the interviewees say it looks appealing and gives them a good overview of what needs to be done. The explanations on the introduction page make clear what the sender's value is, however it is not entirely clear who is going to use the information. Additionally, the introduction is too long. Some explanations can be left out and put in an additional manual instead. Furthermore, some text hierarchy should be applied in terms of boldness, bullet points and white space to make it easier to read.

Most of the questions are clear. The interviewees like that the questions are cut up into smaller items, since that makes it seem more achievable. The specification of who is responsible for answering the item gives them even more guidance. Also, the questions seem answerable in the given timeframe. Some questions regarding Line of Business, the impact and the roll-out need further specification because the senders are not sure what kind of answer is expected by CuSer. For the question about the technical instructions, Distribution says that small instructions can be added to the template. However, large instructions are easiest to put in a separate file. Hence, adding a checkbox to this question is a good idea.

The interviewees think the template positively reinforces them and they like to see how much progress they have made. They consider it motivational. However, some icon or illustration might work better than the progress bar. They also like the option with the motivational comments, so ideally the achievement illustration and the motivational comments are combined.
The meeting set-up is nice as this gives direction to the meeting and gives everyone the opportunity to prepare well. However, interviewees say this set-up must be flexible and adaptable to what is required. Furthermore, they suggest to include some tips on how to run an effective meeting.

Lastly, the senders wonder if this document can substitute the current FAQ and storyline documents, or if this is an additional thing they need to make. This question needs to be checked with CuSer and the CoE during the focus group.

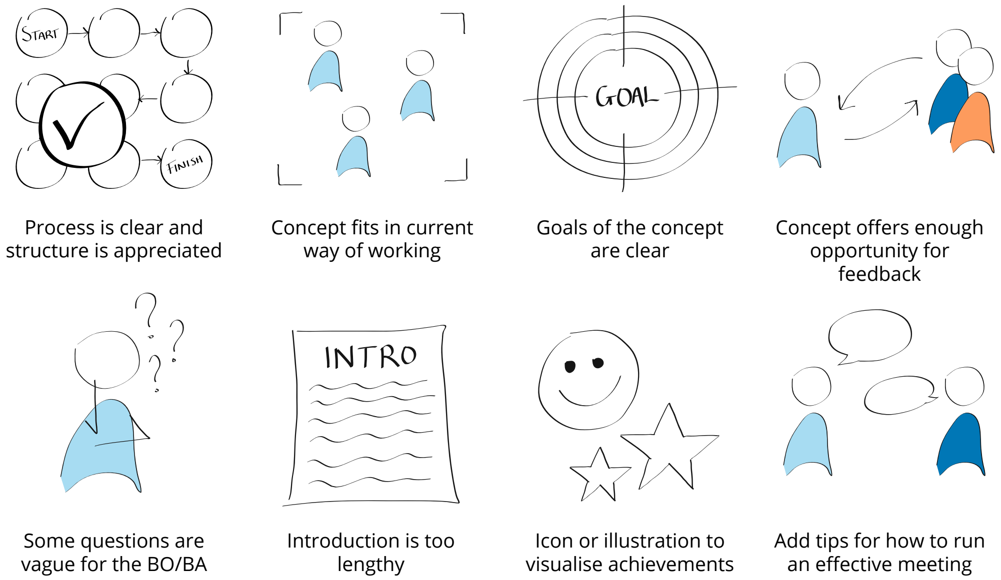


Figure 41: The main test results of the individual sessions with the ancillary stakeholders

9.3.2 Main results of the focus group

The focus group session was joined by three CuSer employees and two CC CoE employees. The minutes of the session can be found in Appendix 15. This paragraph describes the main insights that were derived from the session per concept element. Figure 42 summarises the main results of the focus group.

The process

Both CuSer and the CoE are happy to have a structure in place that gives them proper attention from the ancillary stakeholders. Also, such a process can save them a lot of work and help them to become more efficient. In terms of the timing, a training requires more than 8 weeks before the go-live. However, the decision if a training is needed could potentially already be made during the Debrief. Hence, the chosen timings need to be tested in real life to see if they are actually feasible.

At the moment, the receivers say that Teams is not a realistic program to use in this process since the CC employees do not have access to CuSer's Teams environment. For now, they all prefer to use email. This means that CuSer sends an empty template to the BO and BA after the debrief, with CoE in copy. When the template is complete, the BO/BA or CuSer has to forward it to CoE.

The template

The receivers think that the template looks very appealing. They like the fact that the introduction explains why the senders should take part in the process, however, they also say that the text is too long. They like the idea of a manual that can be shared with everyone to spread word about the process.

The receivers suggest different phrasings or adding examples to the questions that the senders considered vague. In Phase 1, they want to add a question about fees, especially in case of changes since this is an important thing for the CC to know. In Phase 2, they want the loyalty program question to also cover partner programs instead of solely their own. Furthermore, they suggest to change the order of some of the questions to make them follow up on each other in a more logical way.

With the discussed adaptations, the receivers think that the template covers all they need. They see the value of having one document, instead of asking the senders to also prepare storylines and FAQs. Therefore, a 'why' question can be added to Phase 1 to cover for the story behind a new proposition. This way, the FAQ and storyline become redundant. In the case of a special situation, it can be jointly decided that an additional FAQ needs to be created for the CCs.

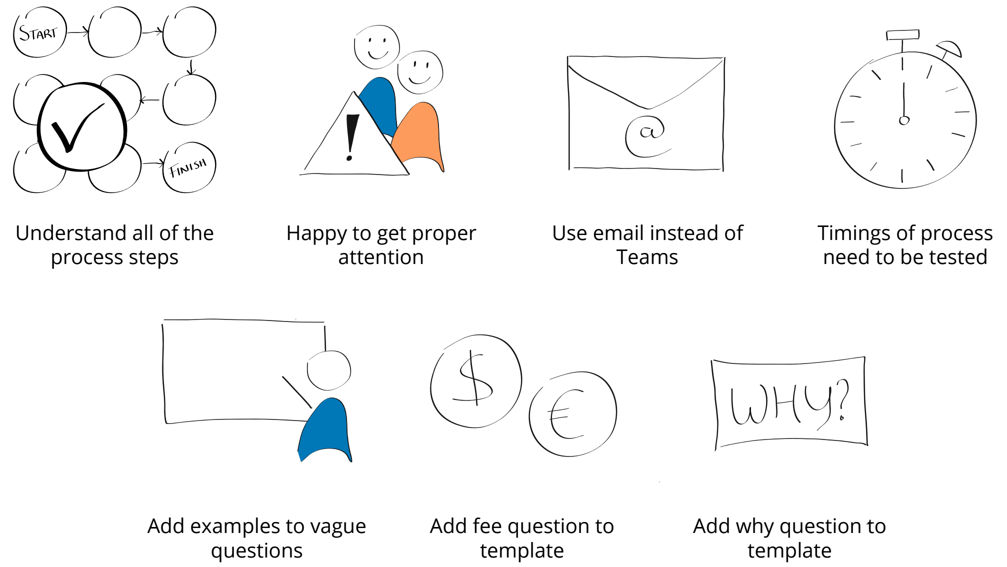


Figure 42: The main test results of the focus group with CuSer and CoE

9.3.3 Assessment of the design requirements

Appendix 16 describes the main take-aways from all test sessions. Based on this output, it was assessed whether this concept meets the design requirements that were set at the start of the ideation phase. The assessment of the requirements helps to determine what to focus on for the final iteration of this concept. Furthermore, it helps to determine what elements of the concept may require further research outside the scope of this project. Table 3 below shows the design requirements and their colour-coded assessment. A table including the detailed assessments can be found in Appendix 17.

NR	THE DESIGN SHOULD...	MET?
1	Clearly define tasks and roles for the involved stakeholders	partly
2	Be reusable for each new go-live	yes
3	Provide an appropriate shared context, a 'ba', for knowledge conversion	yes
4	Be accessible from everywhere for all stakeholders to be able to use it	no
5	Exploit (existing) IT resources to facilitate easier knowledge processes	partly
6	Include timing or deadline moments for when the information is needed by CuSer	yes
7	Be simple in use, it should not further complicate the process	yes
8	Fit in the stakeholders' current way of working	yes
9	Provide a guided path for the stakeholders to follow during use	yes
10	Show clear and relevant goals to the stakeholders	yes
11	Provide feedback and positive reinforcement while being used by the stakeholders	partly
12	Remind employees of the importance of taking part in the process	yes

Table 3: The assessment of the design requirements

9.3.4 Next iteration steps

The test output and the assessment of the design requirements have revealed several iteration points for the final concept. These iterations focus on making the concept as feasible as possible for the current stakeholders in their current situation. However, the tests also revealed interesting points to explore for further development of the concept. The recommendations for further development are discussed in Chapter 12.

The required iterations are summarised in figure 43. The tests showed that the steps are clear for all stakeholders, however some adjustments to the process are required. Due to Teams access restrictions for the CoE, CuSer and CoE prefer to use email to transfer the templates to one another. Therefore, email usage must be integrated in the process. Additionally, considering the Teams limitations, it has to be reassessed how the senders, as well as the receivers, can simultaneously work in one document. The question rises if the CoE needs to be able to simultaneously access the document at all, or if solely CuSer's access is sufficient. Furthermore, it must be reconsidered if Teams is still a preferred option for this, or if a different tool or program should be utilised to facilitate the collaboration. If Teams were to be taken out completely, it should also be defined where else to store the documents.

Following the test output, the template requires some adjustments as well. The introduction page needs to be shortened and the text needs to get more hierarchy to make it easier to read. The questions that were considered unclear need to be rephrased and the order of some questions needs to be changed. Furthermore, a question about the fees and the reasoning behind the proposition needs to be added to ensure that the templates covers all required elements. Lastly, the motivational comments need to be added to the progress visualisations.

One additional element needs to be created for the final concept: a manual. The manual includes an elaborate explanation of the process and the reasoning behind it. This way, the introduction in the template can be shortened. Furthermore, the manual needs to include the meeting set-ups, as well as tips on how to run a meeting effectively. The manual helps to smoothen the implementation of the concept and can be reused for every (new) employee that needs to be aware and learn about the process.

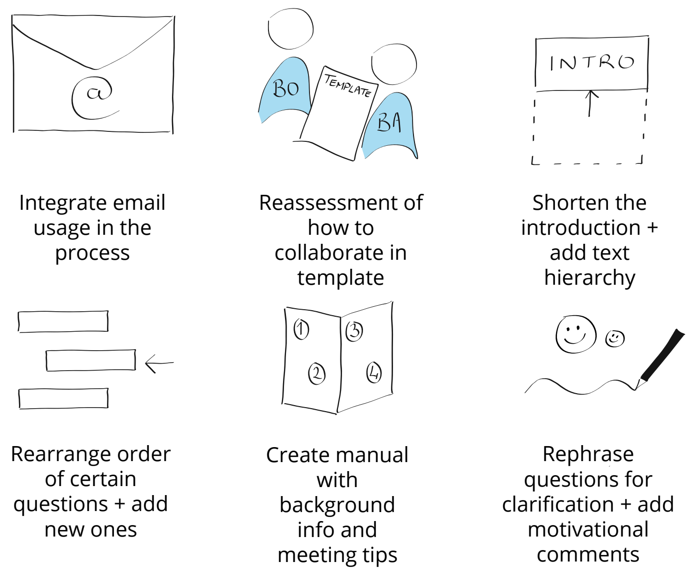


Figure 43: The required iterations for the final concept

Key take-aways Chapter 9:

- To test if the concept met the stakeholders' needs, various test sessions were carried out. Process discussions were used to test the feasibility and workability of the process. The templates were physically tested.
- Overall, the steps of the process are clear for all stakeholders and it fits within their current work activities. The template provides clear guidance as to what is required at which moment in time. See figures 41 and 41 for the main test results.
- Based on the analysis of the results and assessment of the design requirements, several iterations are defined to incorporate in the final concept (see figure 43).

SECTION 4

DELIVER

THIS SECTION PRESENTS AND EVALUATES THE FINAL CONCEPT. FURTHERMORE, IT SUGGESTS SOME PRACTICAL TIPS AND NEXT STEPS FOR THE ORGANISATION. LASTLY, IT CONCLUDES THIS GRADUATION PROJECT.

In this section:

10

THE FINAL CONCEPT

The iterations that were defined after testing the preliminary concept are applied. This results in a final version of the concept, the template, and the newly created manual. This chapter presents the final concept materials and evaluates them based on the principles of desirability, feasibility, and viability.

In this Chapter:

10.1 THE FINAL DELIVERABLES

The final deliverables that are presented to Bluebird are the Information Journey process, template, and manual. These final deliverables are based on the test outcomes as described in Chapter 9 and are presented in the following paragraphs.

10.1.1 The process

See figure 44 on page 96 for a visualisation of the final Information Journey process. The visualisation contains detailed descriptions at each step. Below, the applied iterations are briefly discussed.

Collaboration in Teams

The tests showed that the process steps were clear for all stakeholders. However, it was mentioned that the CoE does not have access to the Bluebird Teams environment. Therefore, CuSer and CoE suggested to not use Teams, but use email for exchanging the template between all stakeholders. Yet, using email means that the template becomes a static offline document. Using an offline version of the template takes away the opportunity to jointly work in the same document at the same time. This possibly increases the risk of people accidentally working in multiple or outdated versions of the document. Besides, the research (Section 1) showed that one document that contains all information is preferred by CuSer. Therefore, when the concept solely makes use of offline templates, things remain messy.

As mentioned above, it is important that the ancillary stakeholders can work in a shared online template. A quick test with the BO's Teams environment showed that the BO can create a shared document and invite the BA, CuSer, and colleagues to view and edit it. Therefore, to facilitate collaboration in one shared document, Teams must remain part of the concept. On the other hand, this means that CoE is not able to view the template while it is in progress. Due to their close contact with CuSer, this is not a big issue. CuSer – as the main point of contact for the contact centres – has to take up the responsibility to share the document via email and/or discuss the content of the template with CoE before the Check moments arrive.

Debrief to identify candidates

As the CoE does not have access to the templates when they are in use, they are invited to the Debrief meeting to ensure involvement in the process from the start. Furthermore, they may have a slightly different perspective than CuSer, which is relevant to represent during the Debrief. With both receivers present in this meeting, the focus is not just on sharing what is coming, but also on exchanging thoughts about how the items impact the contact centres. As a result, the items that require embarkation on an Information Journey are already identified during the Debrief. This way, the BOs immediately know what awaits them, and they can immediately act after the Debrief is done.

Template storage with Ancillary Team

As mentioned above, the Information Journey candidates are identified during the Debrief. For these candidates, a new empty template needs to be created. The BO, BA, and their colleagues are the ones that are mainly working with the template at the beginning of the process. Therefore, it is easiest if one of them creates it their Teams folder and shares it with the other involved people instead of CuSer (as was suggested in the preliminary concept). This way, the BO and BA do not have to wait for CuSer to invite them to start working with the template, since waiting can increase the risk of losing momentum after the Debrief. Since the BOs are the owner of the product, it is their responsibility to create this new template in the Ancillary Teams folder. This way, it is easy for the Ancillary Team to find and update the templates. Additionally, this ensures that all the ancillary information is stored in one dedicated folder, which may also benefit the information provision to other stakeholders outside the scope of this project.

10.1.2 The template

Figure 45 on page 98 gives an impression of what final template looks like. Please find the complete template in the separate Information Journey Template document that comes with this report. This document can be found in the TU Delft student repository, under the title of this thesis. Below, the applied iterations are briefly discussed.

Template as (online) Word document

Since the template is going to be stored in and used in combination with Teams, it should come in a format that is compatible with this program. Therefore, the template is delivered in the form of a Word document. An additional benefit is that all Bluebird employees make use of the Teams program and therefore are familiar with using Word documents. Hence, it is easy for the employees to adopt and use the template in their daily practices.

Refinement of questions

The questions in the template were refined based on the test outcomes. Phase 1 still consists of four items.

- Item 1 – the Offer – now also includes questions about the why behind a product, the eligibility, and the fees.
- Item 2 – Technical Development – now specifies all the tools that may need development to ensure none are forgotten.
- In item 3 – After Sales – some questions were merged to avoid redundancy.
- Item 4 – Expected Impact – now specifies what kind of impact the senders should think about, namely the check-in and transfer processes as well as the effort to sell via the phone.

Phase 2 consists of only three items since the eligibility part has moved to Phase 1.

- The new Item 1 concerns Loyalty Programs. Here it is specified that partner loyalty programs should also be taken into account.
- Item 2 – Technical Instructions – now gives the option to write the instructions in a separate document and insert a link if applicable.
- Lastly, item 3 – the Roll-out – now contains more specific questions regarding the communication and roll-out plan.

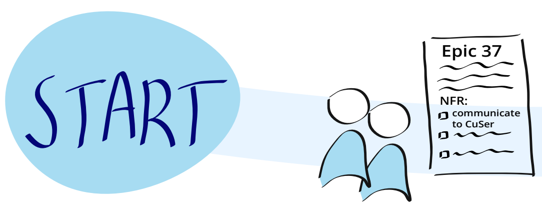
Improved engagement elements

At the end of each item, users of the template find an engagement element. Instead of using progress bars, the users now gain a star when they complete an item. Due to the use of different colours, the stars stand out more than the bars in the previous template. Furthermore, underneath the stars a small thank you message is displayed that shows how the answers to the questions help the contact centres. These messages boost the sense of achievement. Also, this text is displayed in a different font than the regular template text to ensure it stands out.

10.1.3 The manual

The tests showed that the introduction in the template was too lengthy. Part of this introduction text has now moved to the newly created Information Journey Manual. The manual elaborates on the concept's background and step-by-step explains how the process works. Furthermore, the manual includes refined suggested meeting agendas for the Halfway Check and the Final Check. These meeting agendas include sharper goals, more detailed instructions for the attendees, and better alignment with the Information Journey Template. Besides, to help all meeting attendees thrive, the manual contains a several tips for running a smooth meeting based on Forbes (2019), Forbes (2020), and Science of People (2023).

See figures 46, 47 and 48 on page 100 for an impression of the manual and the refined meeting agendas. Please find the complete manual in the separate Information Journey Manual document that comes with this report. This document can be found in the TU Delft student repository, under the title of this thesis.



PREPARATION

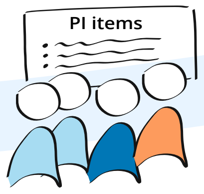
Description:
BOs prepare their projects (called epics) for the next quarter. They collect all required information and put it in the epic template. During the PI planning event it is decided which projects are developed in the coming three months.

Responsibility:
BO, with help of colleagues, is responsible for preparing the epic document for the PI.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

JOURNEY TAKE OFF

DEBRIEF

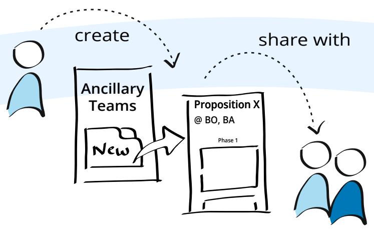


Description:
During the Debrief, the projects for the coming quarter are presented to CuSer and CoE. During the session, it is discussed which items are potentially high impact and require more involvement and information. The goal is to have everyone updated about what is to come and identify the items that need to embark on the Information Journey. Afterwards, the list of topics and names is shared with CuSer and CoE.

Responsibility:
BO manager is responsible for organising this meeting and inviting CuSer and CoE. The BOs each share their projects. CuSer/CoE is responsible for identifying Information Journey items.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

TEMPLATE CREATION

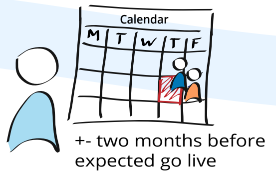


Description:
After the Debrief, the BOs know which items need to embark on the Information Journey. They create a new subfolder in their dedicated Teams folder for every required item. In this subfolder, they place an empty template. The BO shares the subfolder with the responsible Dis BA and CuSer.

Responsibility:
The BO is responsible for creating the folder on the right location and sharing it with the involved people.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

PLAN CHECK

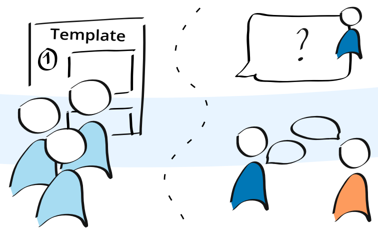


Description:
Before they can start working on the template, the BO plans the Halfway Check with the Dis BA, CuSer and CoE. This Halfway Check is the deadline for completing Phase 1 of the template. BOs are asked to plan the Halfway Check approximately two months before the (expected) go live. They fill in the Halfway Check date in the template.

Responsibility:
BO is responsible for sending out the meeting invite for the Halfway Check to required attendees. The attendees have to accept the meeting.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

WORK PHASE 1

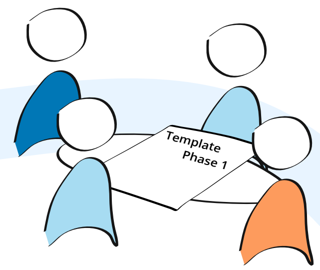


Description:
The responsible BO, Dis BA and colleagues fill in the template. While they work on the template, CuSer has access to the file. CuSer discusses the new proposition idea with their CC CoE teams and can add questions or concerns. The BO/BA finish Phase 1 of the template before the Halfway Check.

Responsibility:
BO, BA and team are responsible for completing the template before the Halfway Check. CuSer is responsible for reading the information and discussing with their CoE teams.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

HALFWAY CHECK

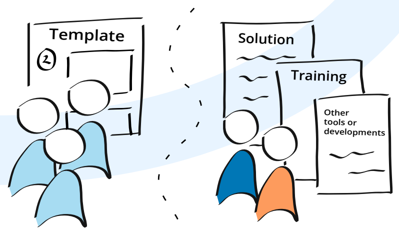


Description:
The Halfway Check is a meeting with BO, BA, CuSer and CoE where concerns are shared and perspectives are aligned. It is decided what kind of development for the agents is required based on the answers given in Phase 1. The outcome of this meeting is consensus about what still needs to be investigated and what needs to be developed. Together, the participants plan the Final Check +- two weeks before the go live.

Responsibility:
BO, BA and team complete template before deadline. CuSer/CoE has read the template prepared questions. Shared responsibility to plan next meeting.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

WORK PHASE 2

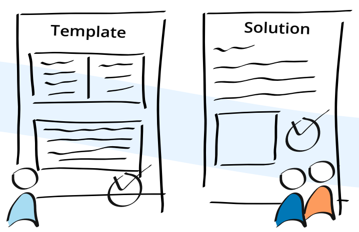


Description:
The BO, Dis BA and team continue with the development of the proposition. Meanwhile, they work on Phase 2 of the template which concerns information about the proposition details. Based on Phase 1, CuSer and their CoE teams make a plan and start drafting the to be developed materials (e.g. ASK solution). The Phase 2 template should be ready before the Final Check.

Responsibility:
BO/BA and team finish template Phase 2. CuSer/CC CoE draft an ASK solution and/or other materials if already possible with the available information.

Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

FINAL CHECK

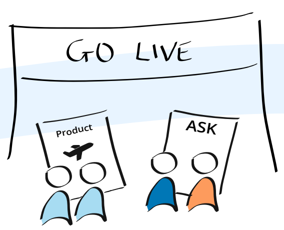


Description:
We are approaching the go-live. The Final Check meeting with the BO, Dis BA, CuSer and CoE is the final moment to jointly go through all information, clarify remaining questions, and agree on last to do's. Together, they review the draft materials (e.g. ASK solution) for the agents before they are finalized. At the end, there is an opportunity to share learnings or desired process changes for next time.

Responsibility:
All stakeholders are responsible to be present, have materials ready and finish the last things before the go-live.

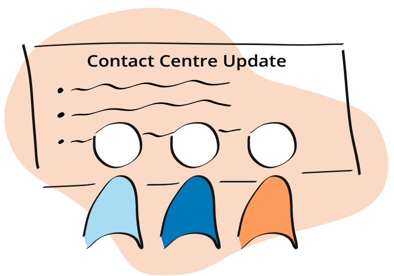
Degree of involvement in task:
BO/BA:
CuSer:
CoE:

TOUCH DOWN



Description:
The proposition goes live on the designated channels and becomes available for the customers. The ASK solution that includes the what, why and how of the proposition is published in the ASK database, and other potential materials are now available. The agents have access to all the necessary information to provide adequate customer service.

BI - YEARLY UPDATE



Twice a year, CuSer brings both parties together to discuss feedback from the agents, desired ASK adjustments or other questions. The aim is to close the gap between both ends and establish a more enduring connection.

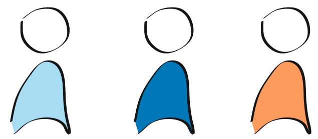


Figure 44: The final version of the Information Journey process

The first page of the final template

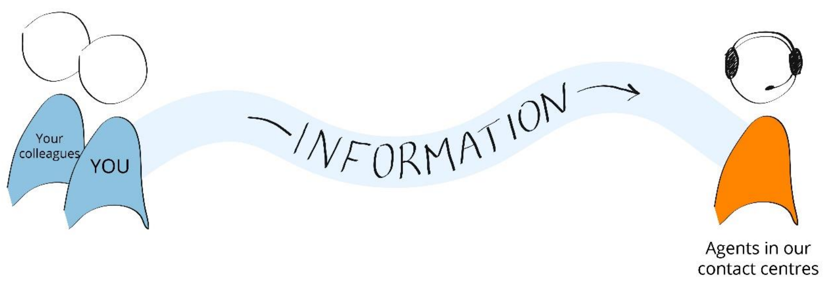
Phase 1 - Item 1 in the final template

Welcome to this Information Journey! Are you ready to embark?

Team name: *[name of the proposition]*

Expected go-live date: [see epic]
Team captain(s): [responsible Business Owner] + [responsible Business Analyst]
Customer Services contact: [to be filled in by Customer Services]
Centre of Expertise contact: [to be filled in by Customer Services]
Journey created on: XX-XX-XX

Below and on the next page you find a brief introduction to the information journey and an explanation of how to use this document. If you are familiar with the concept, please skip to page 3 to plan the Halfway Check and start the journey.



Why go on this journey?

This information journey has been set up **to provide a smooth information flow between the ancillary stakeholders and the front-line staff in our contact centres**. The ultimate goal is to provide the best possible customer service for all of our (new) ancillary products.

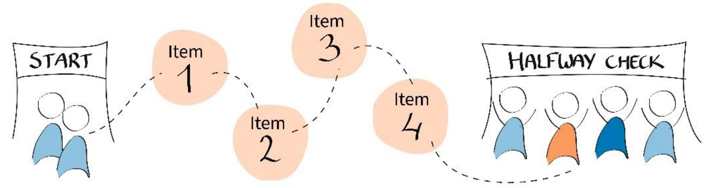
What is your value?

Day in and day out, hundreds of agents are helping our customers all around the world. **For our agents, it is essential to receive complete information on time** whenever something new is introduced. **You and your team possess the information they need.** If our agents are not well equipped with the right information to answer customers' questions, our company's image is on the line.

1

PHASE 1

GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE PROPOSITION AND DETERMINE DEVELOPMENTS



Items to be completed in before Halfway Check on: XX-XX-XX *[date to be planned by Business Owner]*

Phase 1 consists of 4 items and is completed when the when the Halfway Check has been executed (see pages 4 until 9).

The goal of this Phase is to **understand the proposition** and **determine what kind of developments are needed from the side of Customer Services**. The questions are designed to make you think about certain topics and discuss them with your colleagues.
Finish the template by answering all questions and gathering all four stars! The questions do not need to be answered in chronological order. If something is not applicable for your proposition, please put n/a.

ITEM 1
THE OFFER

To be answered by Business Owner and colleagues

1. **What is the offer?**
   [Briefly describe what the offer includes. Please insert link to epic.]

2. **Why is the offer introduced?**

3. **Which airline(s) does the offer concern?**
   [Is it a joint product? Are partner airlines involved?]

4. **Which Service Line does the offer concern?**
   [e.g. Sales and Services, Business to Trade or Flying Blue?]

4

5. **On which touchpoints is the offer going to be available?**
   [Please specify **all** online and offline touchpoints, cross out the ones that are not applicable]
   BW: Search, MyTrip, Check-in
   Mobile: EBT, MyTrip, Check-in
   Customer Service: OSCAR, CCP
   Travel Agents: NDC, GDS
   Airport: OSCAR, Kiosk, A2H, Altea DC (check-in), Lounge portal
   On board: Myflight, Onboard portal
   Additional comments: ....

6. **Who are eligible to buy the offer?**

7. **What is the fee for buying the offer?**
   [Or how is the fee determined?]

8. **Is the offer going to be available in Miles?**

Thank you for your contribution!
You have now helped our agents understand what the offer is about.

5

The engagement element in the final template

Figure 45: An impression of the final Information Journey template

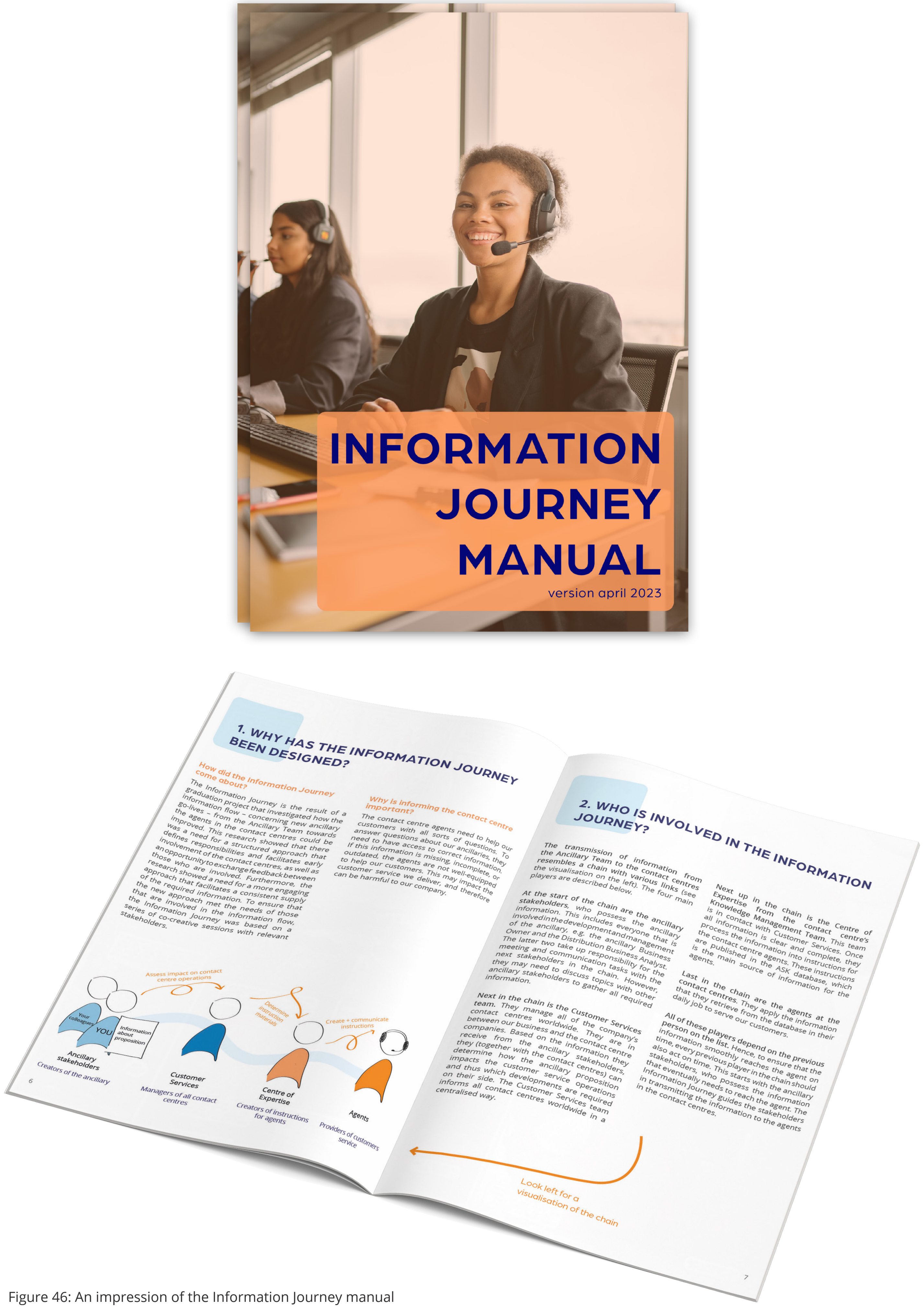
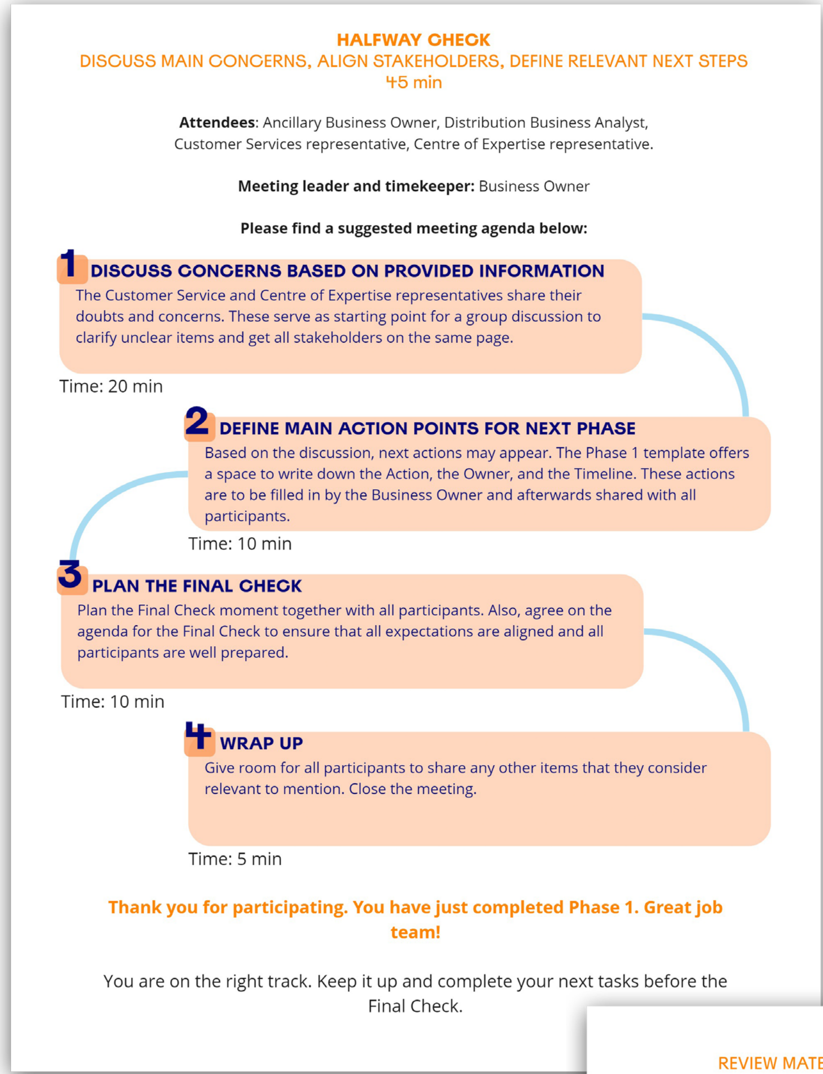


Figure 46: An impression of the Information Journey manual



HALFWAY CHECK
DISCUSS MAIN CONCERNS, ALIGN STAKEHOLDERS, DEFINE RELEVANT NEXT STEPS
45 min

Attendees: Ancillary Business Owner, Distribution Business Analyst, Customer Services representative, Centre of Expertise representative.

Meeting leader and timekeeper: Business Owner

Please find a suggested meeting agenda below:

1 DISCUSS CONCERNS BASED ON PROVIDED INFORMATION
The Customer Service and Centre of Expertise representatives share their doubts and concerns. These serve as starting point for a group discussion to clarify unclear items and get all stakeholders on the same page.
Time: 20 min

2 DEFINE MAIN ACTION POINTS FOR NEXT PHASE
Based on the discussion, next actions may appear. The Phase 1 template offers a space to write down the Action, the Owner, and the Timeline. These actions are to be filled in by the Business Owner and afterwards shared with all participants.
Time: 10 min

3 PLAN THE FINAL CHECK
Plan the Final Check moment together with all participants. Also, agree on the agenda for the Final Check to ensure that all expectations are aligned and all participants are well prepared.
Time: 10 min

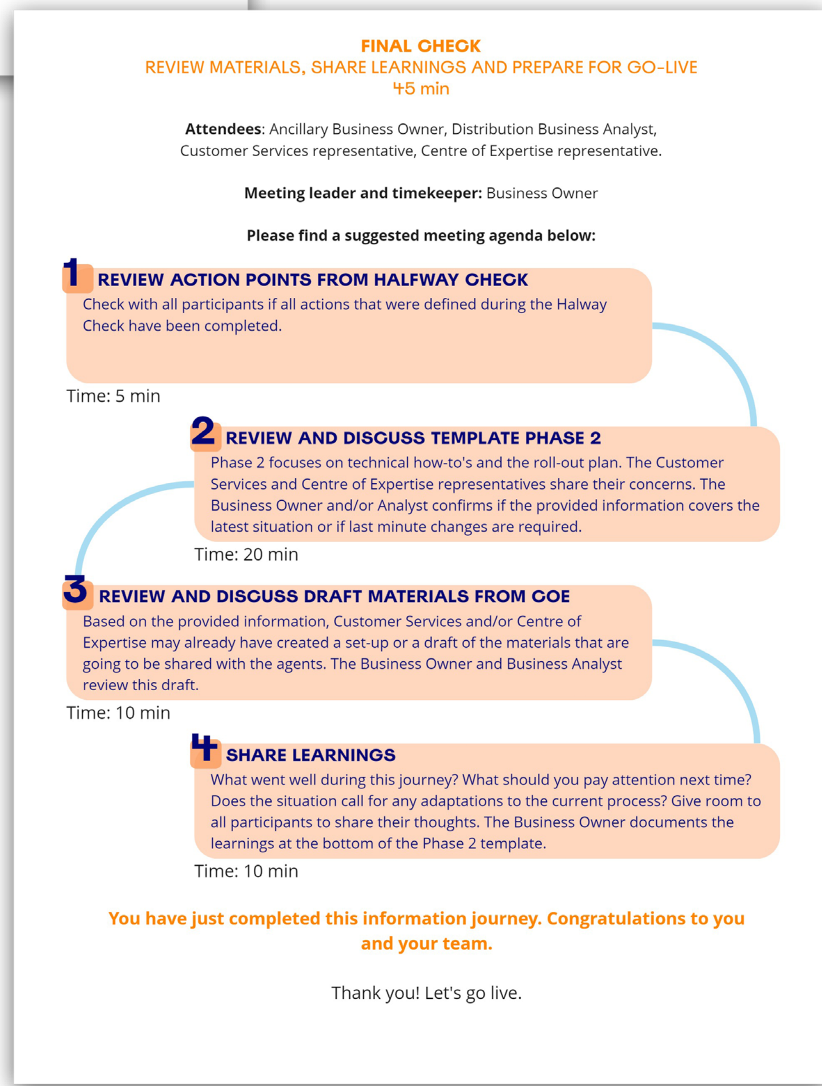
4 WRAP UP
Give room for all participants to share any other items that they consider relevant to mention. Close the meeting.
Time: 5 min

Thank you for participating. You have just completed Phase 1. Great job team!

You are on the right track. Keep it up and complete your next tasks before the Final Check.

Figure 47: The refined meeting agenda for the Halfway Check

Figure 48: The refined meeting agenda for the Final Check



FINAL CHECK
REVIEW MATERIALS, SHARE LEARNINGS AND PREPARE FOR GO-LIVE
45 min

Attendees: Ancillary Business Owner, Distribution Business Analyst, Customer Services representative, Centre of Expertise representative.

Meeting leader and timekeeper: Business Owner

Please find a suggested meeting agenda below:

1 REVIEW ACTION POINTS FROM HALFWAY CHECK
Check with all participants if all actions that were defined during the Halway Check have been completed.
Time: 5 min

2 REVIEW AND DISCUSS TEMPLATE PHASE 2
Phase 2 focuses on technical how-to's and the roll-out plan. The Customer Services and Centre of Expertise representatives share their concerns. The Business Owner and/or Analyst confirms if the provided information covers the latest situation or if last minute changes are required.
Time: 20 min

3 REVIEW AND DISCUSS DRAFT MATERIALS FROM COE
Based on the provided information, Customer Services and/or Centre of Expertise may already have created a set-up or a draft of the materials that are going to be shared with the agents. The Business Owner and Business Analyst review this draft.
Time: 10 min

4 SHARE LEARNINGS
What went well during this journey? What should you pay attention next time? Does the situation call for any adaptations to the current process? Give room to all participants to share their thoughts. The Business Owner documents the learnings at the bottom of the Phase 2 template.
Time: 10 min

You have just completed this information journey. Congratulations to you and your team.

Thank you! Let's go live.

10.2 EVALUATING THE FINAL CONCEPT

This graduation project makes use of a design approach. A design approach generally brings together three principles: desirability, feasibility, and viability (UX Design Institute, 2022). Desirability considers if people want or need to have the outcome of the design project. Viability looks at the profitability of the design outcome. Lastly, feasibility checks if the design outcome can be technically achieved.

The final concept was discussed with a Bluebird representative by means of the three previously mentioned principles. See Appendix 18 for minutes of the discussion. Based on this discussion, an evaluation of the final concept was made. The following paragraphs describe the evaluation for each principle.

Desirability

Generally, the response to the Information Journey concept is positive. The ancillary stakeholders, CuSer, and the contact centres are excited to be in touch more often and grow more of a connection. This connection, as well as the need for smoother collaboration and exchange of information are recognised by all stakeholders. So far, no one took action to solve this need. Therefore, stakeholders see the point of applying the Information Journey approach since it should make their jobs easier and more efficient. They believe that the concept is a good step towards improving the information flow towards the contact centres and are willing to give the approach a try.

Feasibility

The Information Journey seems feasible for Bluebird. The process does not require a special program or new IT development. The proposed tools are already used by everyone in the organisation, so it is easy for them to adopt it in their current way of working. Therefore, it is not only easy but also low cost to implement the approach in the organisation. Furthermore, the concept fits in with the current way of working of the Ancillary Team and their colleagues because of the correlation with the PI planning.

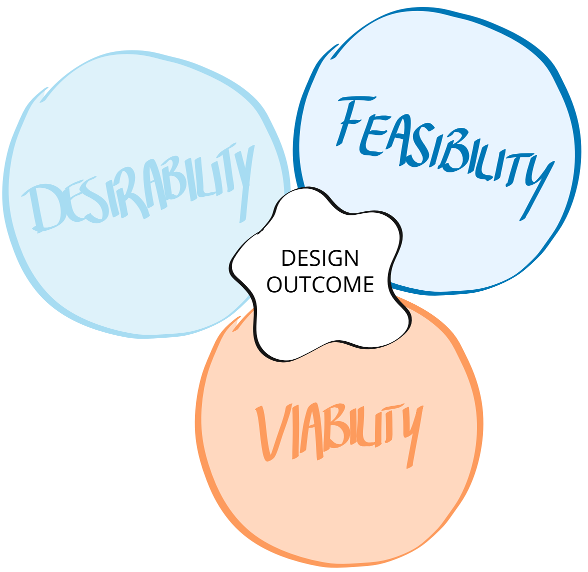


Figure 49: The three principles that are brought together by design

The connection to an existing and well-known procedure makes it easier to remember for them to plan the Debrief after finishing the PI. Additionally, it is appreciated that the concept offers the opportunity – and even stimulates – to be iterated. This is important since the organisation wants to keep on learning, and some things may become redundant or less relevant over time. All in all, the concept is considered highly feasible.

Viability

As described earlier, viability is about the profitability of a concept. In terms of money, this concept is not generating profit for Bluebird. However, looking from the opposite perspective, it has the potential to help them save time and therefore save money. Even though the approach asks for more time from the BOs and colleagues in the beginning of the process compared to the present-day situation, putting in this time is considered a good investment. At the end of the day, a smoother and more structured process leads to less errors and confusion, and more timely and complete information transfers. The Information Journey is a step towards having agents who are properly informed and updated. Ultimately, solving customer problems faster contributes to saving money.

Key take-aways Chapter 10:

- The final concept of the Information Journey consists of a process proposal, a corresponding template, and an instruction manual. Figures 44 until 49 display (an impression of) these materials.
- To avoid messy situations with offline versions of the template, the collaboration between ancillary stakeholders and CuSer remains in Teams. They both have access to a shared folder which enables working in a shared online document. Hence, it is CuSer's responsibility to share and discuss the template content with the CoE before the Halfway Check or the Final Check.
- Based on feedback from the tests, the questions in the template have been refined. Phase 1 still contains four items, whereas Phase 2 now contains just three. Furthermore, the progress bars have been replaced by stars. For each item that has been completed, the user gains a star and gets a thank you message to boost the feeling of achievement.
- Evaluating the final concept shows that the Information Journey is highly desirable and feasible. In terms of viability, the concept is not going to generate profit for Bluebird. However, ultimately, the concept may contribute to cost reductions.

11

THE NEXT STEPS FOR THE INFORMATION JOURNEY

Now that the final deliverables have been created, next steps for Bluebird to start using the Information Journey in real-life can be defined. This chapter includes a try-out of the first steps of the Information Journey with all required stakeholders, as well as tips and tricks for Bluebird to put the rest of the concept into practice.

In this Chapter:

11.1 THE DEBRIEF TRY-OUT

While this graduation project was reaching its final phase, another PI planning event took place at Bluebird. As shown in Chapter 10, the PI is the preparation for the Information Journey process. The next step in the process is for the Ancillary Team to host the Debrief session to update CuSer and the CoE about what is coming up for the next quarter. Hence, to give the Information Journey concept a kick start within the Bluebird organisation, a Debrief try-out was organised one week after the PI planning event. To ensure availability on a short notice, the timeslot of the recurring general ancillary stakeholder meeting (including Digital and Distribution) was used. CuSer and the CoE were also invited to this session. The goal of the Debrief try-out was threefold: to prepare the Debrief session together with the ancillary BOs, to introduce the other stakeholders (Distribution, Digital) to the Information Journey concept and the Debrief session, and to experiment if the set-up of the Debrief would lead to a desired outcome.

Preparation

In preparation of the Debrief session, a meeting with all ancillary BOs was organised. During this meeting, all PI topics were discussed and categorised in one of the following three categories:
1) High impact expected on contact centre: more information/involvement required (red category)
2) Medium to low impact expected: a FYI (yellow category)
3) No impact expected: no information required (green category)
By preparing the Debrief session together, the BOs were triggered to think about how their topics could potentially impact the contact centres. This enhanced their level of awareness regarding informing the contact centres. The categorisation served as guideline for presenting the items and as input for discussion during the Debrief session.

Execution

The try-out session took place online. At the beginning of the session, the graduation project was briefly introduced, and the goal of the session was mentioned. The items were presented by means of the three categories that were set-up during the preparation with the BOs. Each BO briefly described his or her topics. Colleagues were free to add to these descriptions if they felt something was missing. After each category, there was room for the attendees to ask questions and discuss the presented topics. The meeting lasted for 45 minutes. Afterwards, the list of categories – including the topics, people's names and expected go-live dates – was shared with CuSer and CoE.

Evaluation

After the try-out session, it was immediately evaluated with the BOs. They appreciated the session since they thought it was a good initiative to bring all stakeholders together in one meeting. It was not only a good opportunity to meet and update CuSer and the CoE, but it was also a nice moment to update fellow colleagues about upcoming projects. However, as described in the Information Journey process (see Chapter 10), the goal of the Debrief session was to identify potential candidates for the Information Journey. With the categories already prepared by the BOs, during the Debrief session it must be confirmed if the items are in the right category, or if certain topics have to move categories. This was expected to be quite a straightforward task. Though from the perspective of the BOs, CuSer were not concrete about which items required more information or what else they needed. Therefore, the BOs were left feeling unsure about their next steps.

Some days after the try-out, an evaluation with CuSer was planned. They were very enthusiastic about the Debrief meeting. They thought it was nice to see which BO belonged to which topics, and they were very happy to be involved so early in the process. Since the categories had not been discussed with CuSer prior to the try-out, they did not immediately understand what the categories entailed. Besides, it had not been explicitly defined which actions belonged to the yellow and green category. Therefore, it was hard for them to confirm if the topics were in the right category during the session.

Now that they had received the list, things had become clearer. To be able to provide more clarity regarding the next steps for the BOs, CuSer were again asked to confirm the topics per category and to agree about the next actions for each category. As a result, all topics were confirmed. Together with CuSer, it was decided that for the red category more information – and thus an Information Journey – is indeed required. Furthermore, for the yellow category, an update of the final go-live date, some general information and screenshots (if applicable) two weeks prior to the go-live were considered sufficient. Lastly, for the green items, no more actions from the ancillary stakeholders were considered necessary.

Try-out take-aways

All in all, all stakeholders were happy that the Debrief had been initiated and they thought it was a great step towards improved collaboration and communication. Categorising the topics as preparation for the Debrief was a good way to trigger the BOs to think about the impact of their topics. Subsequently, the categorisation helped to facilitate an efficient discussion during the Debrief itself. However, to end up with an unambiguous outcome of the session, agreements about the actions that belong to each category appeared to be essential. Without these agreements, CuSer tended to remain fuzzy about what they wanted for each topic. During the evaluation, these agreements were made for each category. This way, it is easier for CuSer to confirm what needs to happen with a topic. As a result, after the Debrief, the ancillary stakeholders immediately know which next steps need to be taken for their topics and can get started.

11.2 PRACTICAL TIPS AND TRICKS

11.2.1 Next steps for the Take-off phase

The Debrief try-out gave the stakeholders a taste of the Information Journey approach. As described in Paragraph 11.1, evaluating the try-out provided some interesting learnings that Bluebird can take along. For the approach to be successful in the organisation, correct execution of these first steps is crucial. Based on the outcome of the try-out, three other next steps are defined to support Bluebird in starting up the Take-off phase of the Information Journey process (consisting of the Debrief, the template creation, and the planning of the Halfway Check).

Include preparation step in process

First, the Debrief preparation with all BOs (as was done before the try-out) has shown to be a valuable step, and therefore must be added to the Information Journey process. The preparation document that was created for the try-out – with colour-coded tables for each category – was an online Teams file that allows for changes to be made during the session. This file can be duplicated and reused for every new PI. After the Debrief, this document functions as the guideline for all stakeholders to check the next steps for their topics: if they need to embark on an Information Journey, if they need to send an update two weeks prior to the go-live, or if no further actions are required.

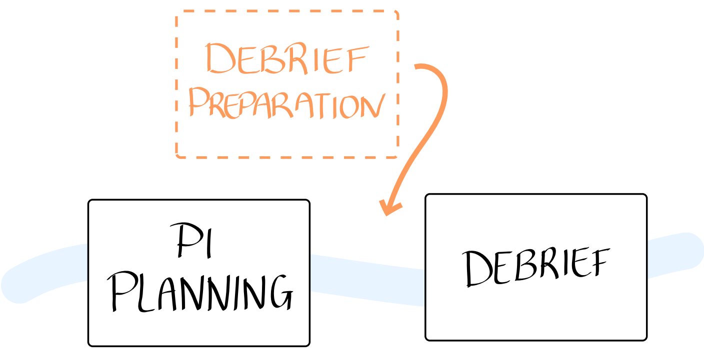


Figure 50: An illustration of including the debrief preparation in the process

Shared folder as storage location

Second, a dedicated storage location for the files must be created and shared with all stakeholders. For this purpose, a Customer Service folder in the Teams environment of the Ancillary Team is created. In this folder, subfolders for each PI quarter can be added. In the PI folders, the templates for the corresponding topics can be uploaded, stored, and edited. This Customer Services folder needs to be shared with CuSer and all other relevant stakeholders who do not have access yet.

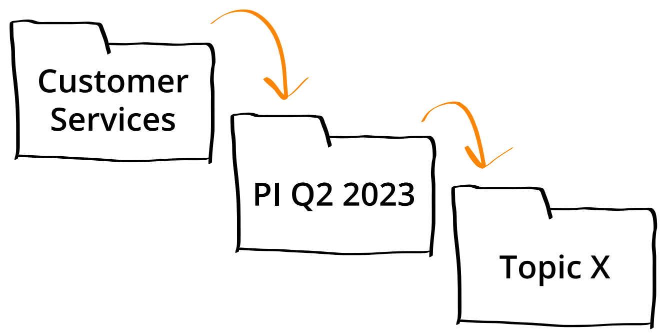


Figure 51: An illustration of the storage folders

CuSer to invite CoE members in early phase

Third, as final step of the Take-off phase, the Halfway Check needs to be planned with the BA, CuSer and the CoE. The CoE consists of multiple people who are responsible for a certain number of topics. When getting started with the Information Journey, not all of these stakeholders are familiar with each other yet. For the BOs, most of the CoE people are new and they do not know who works with their topics. The Information Journey process suggests that the BO plans the meeting with all the other attendees. However, in the early days of applying the approach, it makes sense for the BO to schedule the Halfway Check with just the BA and CuSer. The latter know the CoE people better and can forward the meeting to the right person, until proper contact has been established.

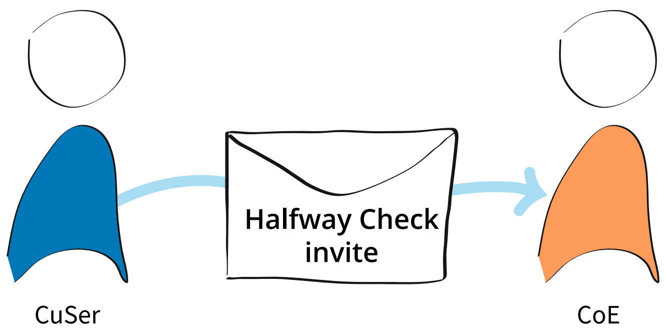


Figure 52: An illustration of CuSer inviting CoE for the Halfway Check

11.2.2 Tips for the other process steps

Putting a whole new process into practice in a big organisation is likely not going to happen overnight. Applying the new approach may come with some (practical) challenges. Previously, Paragraph 11.2.1 described some steps to support Bluebird in starting up the first phase the new approach. This paragraph aims to give Bluebird some additional tips related to the Information Journey concept in general.

Host introduction sessions for all involved colleagues

First, it is recommended for the Ancillary Team to host introduction sessions to the new approach for all other colleagues that are involved in their ancillary topics. Before a topic embarks on an Information Journey, it is essential that all Bluebird colleagues are aware and aligned about the general steps of the process, their tasks, and their expectations. Not all involved colleagues have taken part in this graduation project. By doing the introduction sessions, those colleagues get the opportunity to understand why the new approach has been designed and get an idea of how the general process works.

Scan through template with topic team

Second, since the use of the template is new for everyone, before diving into Work Phase 1 (after completion of the Take-off phase) it is recommended for the BOs to plan a moment to go through the template together with the Distribution BA, Digital BA, and other relevant colleagues that are involved in their topic. This way, everyone sees what kind of questions need to be answered and whose knowledge and expertise is helpful for completing the various items.

BOs to take ownership of approach

Third, during both Work Phases, it takes some proactivity from the BOs, BAs and others who are involved in the topic, to complete the template. Since it is a new thing, it may not be part of everyone's way of working straight away. Since the ancillary BOs, i.e. the owners of the propositions, play such an essential role in the Information Journey approach, it is recommended that they take ownership of it and keep track of the status of the template. In the early days of adopting the approach in the organisation, they can stimulate and support their colleagues to ensure that all template items are completed on time. Ultimately, the goal is that the approach becomes part of everyone's daily practices.

Try, learn, and iterate

As a fourth and final tip, putting the Information Journey into practise is all about trying and learning. As mentioned in the design goal, the approach is meant to guide, engage, and increase awareness. The Information Journey contains tools to meet this design goal, however, the concept is not set in stone. Now it is up to Bluebird to test and learn. Hence, it is recommended for them to view the application of the approach as a continuation of the design project, and to dare to make iterations when it is required. By means of trial, error, and reflection they can reshape the approach in such a way that it works best for their organisation.

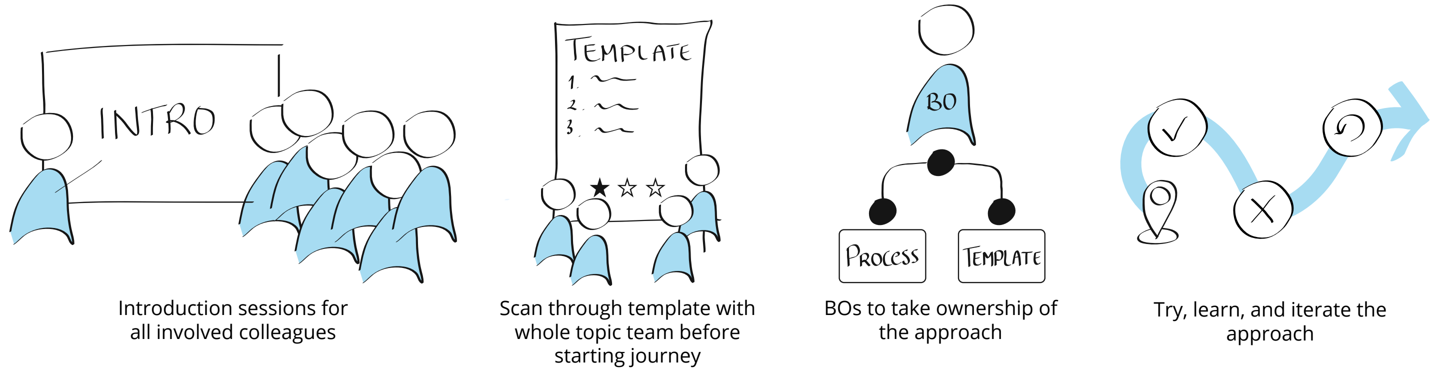


Figure 53: The practical tips for the other process steps

Key take-aways Chapter 11:

- To boost the application of the Information Journey in the Bluebird organisation, a try-out of the Debrief session was organised right after the latest PI planning. To prepare for this try-out, the BOs categorised their PI topics in one of three different categories. This categorisation was made as guideline for the presentation and discussion during the try-out session. The Debrief session showed that it is valuable to add the Debrief preparation step to the proposed process.
- To give the BOs a clear starting point after the Debrief, follow up actions for each category were defined together with CuSer. The three categories are: 1) Red: high impact expected for contact centre, Information Journey is required. 2) Yellow: medium impact expected: an update two weeks prior to go-live is required. 3) Green: low impact expected, no further actions needed.
- Putting the Information Journey into practice may come with some (practical) challenges. This chapter describes tips to support Bluebird in the application of the approach. These tips include introduction sessions with all involved colleagues, the BOs to take ownership of the Information Journey and to stimulate their colleagues to adopt the approach, and continuous trial, learning, and iteration of the Information Journey to shape the approach into its best workable version for the organisation. See figures 50 until 53 for illustrations of the tips.

12

CONCLUDING THE PROJECT

Now that the next steps for Bluebird and the Information Journey have been defined, this project has come to an end. This chapter wraps up this graduation thesis by concluding the design project, specifying the project's limitations, and defining recommendations based on the project's findings and outcomes. The chapter closes with a personal reflection.

In this Chapter:

12.1 PROJECT CONCLUSION

Bluebird – a Dutch airline – provides customer service to their customers through subsidiary contact centres. The agents in these contact centres base their service on information provided by the airline. Among other things, the agents need information about the products that customers can buy on top of their ticket to enrich their experience (i.e. the ancillaries). The provision of this information is where Bluebird falls short. Hence, this project aimed to answer the following research question: ***How can the information flow about ancillary products from the Ancillary Team to the front-line staff in the contact centre be improved?***

The research showed that the current information flow is a four-step chain consisting of the ancillary stakeholders (BOs, BAs), CuSer, the CC CoE, and the agents. To receive the right information, all these stakeholders depend on their predecessor in the chain. It was found that difficulties occurred especially at the beginning of the chain, which caused inefficiency, inconsistency, and confusion in the current information flow. It became apparent that the ancillary stakeholders each do things in their own way, without aligning with others or being truly aware of what is needed and why that is important. In terms of a process, there was no foundation that they could build on, nor regular exchange of feedback with CuSer or the CC CoE. Furthermore, roles and responsibilities regarding transferring the information were not clearly defined, and people lacked engagement in the process. Hence, the following design goal was formulated: ***To create an approach that guides the Bluebird ancillary stakeholders in an engaging knowledge transfer process for new product introductions.*** This design goal was accompanied by the following sub-goal: *To spread awareness about the importance of adequately informing customer services and contact centre staff about new product introductions*.

Co-creative sessions with the various stakeholders were used to explore potential solutions to meet the design goal. The sessions revealed two main desired solution components. On the one hand, the stakeholders needed clearly defined process steps and dedicated meeting moments to enhance the connection between the senders (i.e. the ancillary stakeholders) and the receivers (i.e. CuSer and CoE) of the information, ensure early involvement of CuSer and the CoE, and facilitate the opportunity for feedback. These process steps could be connected to existing procedures at Bluebird to enhance adoption within the organisation. On the other hand, stakeholders needed a template that specifies which information is required at which moment in time to ensure consistent input and motivate the user to deliver.

The outcomes of the co-creative sessions were analysed and combined into one concept. This concept was tested with the stakeholders. After testing, the concept was iterated once more which resulted in the final version of a new approach for information sharing with the contact centre. This new approach is called the Information Journey. This concept consists of a process proposal, a corresponding template, and an instruction manual. The process steps are linked to Bluebird's current way of working with quarterly plannings. After a quarterly planning, the Information Journey process starts, and the planned ancillary topics are shared and discussed with CuSer and CoE during the Debrief. The planned topics that are identified as high impact can embark on the Information Journey approach. The template guides the ancillary stakeholders through all the types of required information, motivates them to complete the items, and gives the opportunity to exchange learnings. Furthermore, the process includes dedicated meeting moments with the involved stakeholders to discuss the template information, assess impact, and review instruction materials for agents. The manual includes suggested agendas and tips for these meeting moments, background information about the approach, and an explanation of all process steps. By applying the Information Journey, the right information is delivered to the right people at the right time to ensure that agents in the front-line are equipped with the latest relevant and correct information to serve the customers.

Looking back at the initial research question, the information flow from the Ancillary Team towards the contact centre staff lacked structure, consistency, engagement, and joint involvement. This resulted in an inconsistent, misaligned, and delayed provision of information. Therefore, this can be improved by introducing a structured approach that aligns the stakeholders about what needs to be done at which time, increases awareness among employees concerning why it is important, and specifies the best and easiest way to do so. The Information Journey concept aims to be a guide towards achieving this improved information flow by providing a set of co-created tools – a step-by-step process, a corresponding template, and an instruction manual – that the Ancillary Team and other stakeholders can apply during their future ancillary projects. By trying, evaluating, and iterating the concept, it can grow into a worthwhile approach for the Bluebird organisation.

12.2 PROJECT LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Looking back at this graduation project, a several project limitations and recommendations for further research can be defined. The limitations are the constraints of this design project, and therefore may have influenced the final outcome. The recommendations are suggestions for next actions that resulted from the research or the design phase of this project. The project's limitations and recommendations are described below.

12.2.1 Project limitations

Small project scope

To increase the feasibility and workability of this graduation project, the considered scope was quite small. Hence, some stakeholders that are also dealing with ancillaries were not represented in the project. Firstly, when it comes to an ancillary, the Ancillary Team also collaborates with colleagues other than Digital and Distribution. For instance, the Customer Experience department or Revenue Management. Their perspectives were not included in the research phase of the project, and therefore they also do not play a significant role in the final concept. Hence, it cannot be guaranteed that the final concept also aligns with their needs. If the concept is further implemented in the organisation, it must be reassessed if and how the concept influences the current collaboration between the Ancillary Team and the Bluebird stakeholders that were not included in this project.

Secondly, as mentioned in the Introduction, Bluebird collaborates with four subsidiary contact centres around the world. As a result, there are also multiple CoEs. This project only considered the contact centre that is located in the Netherlands, and therefore only included the perspective of one CoE. This means that there are three others that may experience the information flow in a different way and therefore have different needs. Additionally, for the contact centres abroad, cultural differences may also come into play. Hence, it cannot be guaranteed that the concept in its current shape and form appeals to all contact centre staff worldwide.

No frequent access to contact centre

As said, the contact centre considered in this project is a subsidiary of the airline. They are located in a different office and they have their own systems and company cards. As a Bluebird intern, it was difficult to access the contact centre. Visits required official appointments and making these appointments often took a long time. Therefore, the contact centre staff were not as easily accessible as the Bluebird employees. The latter could easily be reached by email or be met up with at the Bluebird office. Due to the limited contact moments with the contact centre, their input may not be as rich and diverse as the input from Bluebird. Therefore, the perspective of Bluebird may be more present in the final concept than that of the contact centre.

No full test run of complete process concept

Since the final Information Journey process runs over multiple months, it was not possible to execute and test all steps within the timespan of this graduation project. The process was tested by means of a discussion which resulted in various required iterations. However, most of the comments made during these discussions remain assumptions. Therefore, the applied iterations are also (partly) based on assumptions and it cannot be guaranteed that the final process works in real-life like it is described on paper. To truly test all process steps and define necessary iterations, a full test run of the process must be done.

12.2.2 Recommendations based on project outcomes

Evaluate and iterate the approach once a year

As mentioned earlier, the designed approach is not set in stone. The approach provides guiding tools for Bluebird to try. However, the approach is a "living concept". This means that the concept can and should be adjusted when the situation requires so. Hence, for the approach to be successful in the organisation, it is essential that Bluebird and the contact centre evaluate the approach at least once a year. This way, they ensure that the approach always fits with the dynamic organisational environment.

Further research into a new way of delivering information to the agents

As described in the Define section, the research revealed two main hurdles in the current information flow. The remainder of the design project focused on the hurdle found at the beginning of the flow. However, the other hurdle at the end of the flow is another big opportunity for Bluebird and the contact centres to investigate. The current way of delivering the information through the database is considered overwhelming. Because it is hard to find and hard to read the information, and the lack of time, it is difficult for the agents to process and embody the information. This contributes to insecurity and doubt among agents. Besides, the trainings that the agents get, were not considered ideal. This does not only count for the ancillary information, but for all information that is currently in the database. Therefore, it is a recommendation for Bluebird to – together with the contact centres – further investigate how the information can be delivered to the agents in a more user-friendly and intuitive manner. It must be further researched what the agents' exact needs are, what the possibilities are to meet these needs, and how a potential solution can be implemented in both the Bluebird and the contact centre organisations.

Let (new) employees experience a day at the CC

The research showed that for the people at the beginning of the information chain, the users of their information were invisible. Besides, the level of awareness concerning what the contact centres do and why it is important to inform them was low. The Information Journey contributes to raising awareness about the information flow, and aims to explain who is going to use the information and why this is important. However, an experience says more than words. To really understand what the agents at the front-line go through, one must go there and see it for themselves. Therefore, it is a recommendation for Bluebird to organise experience days at the contact centre for all (new) employees. This way, they can understand how their information is applied in the agents' work and what the agents face daily.

Iterate process for non-PI topics

The Information Journey is based on the PI way of working that is widely used within Bluebird. Most projects that the Ancillary Team works on, are part of the PI. However, it can happen that a project comes along that does not follow the PI structure, but is important for CuSer and the contact centre to know. In the Information Journey, the PI mainly functions as starting point. Hence, it is recommendation for the ancillary stakeholders and CuSer to brainstorm and make agreements about what kind of non-PI projects need to be communicated and how a starting point for these projects can be triggered.

Extend approach to other front-line staff

The contact centres are not Bluebird's only front-line staff. The Bluebird employees that work at the airports and in the airplanes are also the front-line staff that interact with customers. Therefore, they also need to be informed about new ancillary propositions. They have their own knowledge management teams and have their own systems and databases. There is an opportunity for the Ancillary Team to investigate how to improve the information flow to these touchpoints as well. Hence, it is a recommendation for the Ancillary Team to research what needs the airport staff and the inflight crew have regarding receiving the ancillary information. The Information Journey can serve as inspiration, and it can be investigated if and how it can be extended to these touchpoints. For instance, the Debrief moment can become a joint meeting for all types of front-line staff, and the template can be extended with questions that are relevant for the other touchpoints.

12.3 PERSONAL REFLECTION

After executing such a large project, it is valuable to reflect on the process and on myself as a designer. This project was something different than what I was used to so far during my studies. I found myself inside a big company, surrounded by many people that did not have a design background. At the university, you are surrounded with like-minded designers that have a similar way of working and understand the methods that are used. For people from a different background, such methods may be new and uncomfortable. It was nice to see that many of the Bluebird employees were open to cooperate in interviews and participatory (brainstorm) sessions. I tried to make my work very visual to be able to transparently communicate and make it easy to understand the content or exercises for everyone involved. This was well received by the stakeholders. I am happy to say that while the project was still in progress, the topic got more attention and awareness among Bluebird employees definitely increased.

Looking back at this project, I am happy to say that I have grown into a more confident designer. Prior to starting this graduation thesis, I was feeling quite a bit apprehensive. Over the course of the masters, we hardly did individual projects. So, I questioned: am I able to manage and execute all aspects of such a big design project by myself? Well... yes I can! Over the course of this project, I have developed more trust in myself, and I have realised that I should not underestimate my own abilities. I learned that sharing vulnerabilities is not a weakness. On the contrary, openly addressing your challenges is the best way to overcome them (and it feels relieving!).

However, that doesn't mean that it was always easy. For this project, I collaborated with a very big organisation. The organisational structure was quite complex, and many people were potential stakeholders of the project. Hence, it was not always easy to find my way. I learned that when doing such an organisational project, it is crucial to get to know the organisation well and gain people's interest in your project to get them on board. Therefore, I needed to speak with a lot of people to get the full picture. Sometimes, it was hard to meet up, or it took a long time before a meeting could take place. Therefore, sometimes I had to let go of what I initially planned. This project taught me to be flexible, adapt to the situation, and be creative with whatever timeslot and input I got.

The complexity of this project forced me to make choices to increase workability. Usually, I tend to gather a big amount of input and analyse all my options well before deciding. I am hesitant to make choices because I do not want go in the wrong direction and waste my time. For such a big individual project, it was necessary to set boundaries. Limited time does not allow for endless analysis. This project taught me that it is not always necessary either. I can make choices based on my intuition and the knowledge I already possess in my brain. During this project, I sometimes just went for it and executed a task. This approach immediately gave me something to work with, evaluate, and iterate. This has shown me that making choices does not limit you, but provides you with direction to make actual progress in quite a fast pace.

Besides the fact that I learned to trust myself more, I also realised that individual work doesn't mean that you are alone. Over the course of the project, I found that talking to other people was very helpful to organise my own thoughts. This was especially helpful during the fuzzy phases of the project when I was close to feeling lost in all the insights. Hence, I take with me to not hesitate to share my unfinished work with others, exchange thoughts and gather feedback frequently throughout my future projects.

All in all, this project was an exciting journey. Even though it feels a bit strange to say, I am quite proud of myself. I learned a lot about organisations, managing a design project, managing stakeholders, and – of course – about myself.

Master Graduation Thesis
Margriet Klinckhamers
April 2023

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