



1. Appendix

- A. Case Study Descriptions
- B. Observation Case Study

A: Case Study Descriptions

In this section, a detailed description of each of the eight visionary innovator involved in the case study research is provided. A short introduction regarding the context, followed by a brief analysis of each of the four attributes of the visionary innovator is given.

1. Sam, FlyMe

FlyMe is a legacy airline with a longstanding heritage, dating back to almost 100 years ago. The organisation has a strong own culture but also a highly hierarchical and siloed structure. Innovation has been included in the organisation's mission statement in becoming 'The most innovative European network carrier'. As such, the urgency of innovation has been recognised. Sam reports to the Chief Operations Officer, and describes that he was given 'the assignment from the Executive Committee to ensure that continuous improvement and innovation is established in the operational division of the airline'. However, he does not believe in hierarchy and believes innovation should be done with the customer and bottom up.

Self
Thinking and Doing

Sam is described as a fast thinker and able to switch between ideas and roles interchangeably. 'He is incredibly quick at thinking far and fast ahead. I find it fascinating' (Colleague, FlyMe). He also explains that he enjoys to sit and think but by means of experience has learned to be more action orientated. 'What I am trying to do is to think strategically about what is needed to get your company to function differently. And by doing realising that, instead of writing a vision about it' (Sam).

Challenger
He is not afraid of challenging the status quo within FlyMe. He likes to do things his own way, and is not afraid of rebelling against the processes in place: 'One of the senior-VPs said to me [Sam], you're supposed to check such a presentation before you send it to us.' And I told him 'well, that's something I am never going to do.' I think that's such incredible nonsense.' (Sam)
Furthermore, his aims to change the legacy structures and processes that are in place at FlyMe: 'Are you designing or are you being designed? If you think about it, everything that's here, the way we work and feel is determined by decisions other people made.' (Sam)

'Are you designing or are you being designed?' (Sam)

'My mission is to make sure there are no more managers and no more people who give instructions from the office to pilots and gate-agents etc. My mission is to make those positions obsolete so people are enabled to make their own decisions. I like that.'

Inherently I am an introvert boy, who really loves thinking. But what I noticed, I get disappointed when nothing becomes of it. So I taught myself to think, how can I make sure my ideas get realised. Then, at some point I discovered that you need to go do it yourself. So I actually became very good at that, if I may say so. (Sam)

'It's kind of a countermovement [...] You have this old myth from Promoteus who steals the fire from the Gods to give it to the people. I like that. That movement against the culture [...] I enjoy bringing this culture into the business, and knocking out that old- fashioned topdown command and control.' (Sam)



Connector
Sam is described by his colleagues as the connector between various internal departments i.e. the 'Mediator': 'Sam's role is to continuously switch between extinguishing fires, managing our department and being the mediator between various teams inside FlyMe. He brings the teams together and is the representative of our department for the mediation.' (Team member, FlyMe).
Furthermore, he connects with external parties to bring in new knowledge.

Vision:
Sam's vision is to empower people to make their own decisions. Furthermore, he aims to install a culture of experimentation and learning, and a customer-centric mindset: 'We have a lot of fantastic colleagues [...] but they determine from the office what needs to happen. I don't believe in that. [...] How can we turn that around? How can we empower the customer and the operating staff to influence what their future looks like?' (Sam).
Sam is experienced at providing a compelling vision to others: 'You need to sell your story there, so I try to make people dream, dream along with the story I am telling.' (Sam)
Finally, he is described as an inspiring person by many of his colleagues.

Experience
Sam has 10 years of experience inside FlyMe, from which he obtained a lot of business and political know-how: '[Sam] is extremely good at politics. Don't forget that he is one of the youngest directors at FlyMe, ever. There's a reason for that.' (Team member, FlyMe)
He is adept at providing cover for his teams, to enable them to innovate: 'Sam excels at the political game and has the influence to make decisions. He has the credibility to play the highest boss, so when a team is up against something they can't beat, they need Sam.' (Team member, FlyMe)
Furthermore, he is aware of the need to run a business and bring in revenue and investments to keep the innovation team running.

Space
Sam has the full support from the top to bring innovation to FlyMe. It grew organically, but because I report directly to the executive board so there is little choice not to do so. (Sam)
As such the top has openly advocated for the new way of working of Sam's department and Sam has a strong bond with the COO.

Flying to San Francisco and talking to a founder of a start-up, going to a conference for start-ups and going to a bar at night talking to the most interesting people. Just do it. Going to a conference where you know the airline's CEO's will be and then saying, 'I Want to talk to the CEO of Southwest and Jetblue as those are very cool airlines, I just want to ask him his opinion.' Those kind of things. Just do it. (Sam)

I find Sam very inspiring [...]. He really listens to his people, and does not tell them how it must be done. (Team Member, FlyMe)
It's incredible how many times people meet Sam for the first time and afterwards they say to me 'wow, he is such an inspiring man'. (Colleague, FlyMe)

When I am at the table with the CFO [...] I tell him the story I studied or I improvise and bluff myself out of it, because only one thing counts: At the end of the meeting he is going to say yes to investing the money. (Sam)
Go go go, win with everything we've got because we are part of a corporate, and we want to get our way because otherwise we cannot realise our dream. (Sam)

The COO and Sam are close, good friends. (Colleague, Sam).
The managing board now also states that our way of working is they way for change within FlyMe. (Sam)

2. Victor, ShopGo

This year, Victor founded a new innovation team with the goal to embed innovation into the company culture. One of Victor’s missions is to bring innovation and experimentation to his organisation. To realise this, the team organises many innovation workshops with employees. The company structure is siloed, and communication between the departments is lacking. Within each department separate product departments focus on ‘product innovations’. Victor’s second aim is therefore to bring ‘integral’ overarching innovation to the company. Finally, he aims to show the company that innovations can be realised in the short term, in the hope to encourage more short-term innovations within the company.

Self Thinking and Doing

Victor explains that inherently he has analytical thinking skills and tends to spend time thinking: *‘I have to say I am more of a thinker than a doer, but the young team members are extremely focused on doing.’* (Victor) However, he has learned to act quick and to realise changes he has shifted more to doing: *And then I thought, fuck it you can sit and think a lot but in the end you have to just act. So the first quarter I was in thinking mode, and then I thought ‘start now. Just do it.’ So I deflected from lots of strategising and thinking to just doing..* (Victor) Even his motto illustrates his focus on acting now: *So you know, it’s Think big, start small, start now.* (Victor)

Challenger

Victor talks a lot about challenging the status quo and being rebellious: *Really sticking your head above the ground and thinking differently, I find that really cool.* (Victor) He emphasises the need to take risks and challenge the status quo to be able to have an impact in his organisation: *The rebelliousness of such projects.. you have to act on the edge. It will go well most of the time but it may go wrong.* (Victor)

Connector

Victor’s team members describe him as a very social person, his strengths being able to connect with people and bringing them together: *[Victor] is a really good connector. He is always able to connect people or companies of which he knows they could benefit from each other. He is very social and thoughtful. [...] And his strength is being able to switch between all levels, from the executives to us and recruiting interns.* (Team member, ShopGo)

Think Big.
Start small.
Start Now.
(Victor)

‘In the end my dream is that in this organisation we move from powerpoint stories on “this is what we’re going to do” to much more “let’s just do it”. Less of topdown commands “You have to do this”, and much more bottom up “we have an idea, we’re just going to do it.”

It’s sticking your head above the ground. So just try to do things, and also have a vision for the long term but bring that back to little steps. (Victor)

Just go fix things, and we’re really pragmatic about it. I see a lot of very academic people, who just sit and think. But we are much more focused on just getting out there, doing. (Victor)

I said we are going to do this for a year and afterwards we either pull out the plug and I quit my job. So my idea is really sort of ‘No guts no glory’. (Victor)

He has a lot of contact with other people. He call and says ‘hey, how’s it going?’ He really maintains the network well. (Team member, ShopGo)



Vision

Victor strongly believes in empowering his colleagues to innovate, and encouraging them to get rid of their meetings: *‘I believe in the culture change of making your own people more effective. Just get rid of all those meetings and make sure you start thinking yourself, because people are capable of doing that themselves.* (Victor) To encourage his colleagues to change, he gives inspirational talks about his own innovation team and promotes the idea of reducing meetings: *‘If you can contaminate people with a compelling talk in front of 80 category managers, and tell them ‘kill meetings to free up your agenda’s’ then it reflects back in their work and they get time to experiment.’* (Victor)

Experience

Victor has almost eight years of experience inside his company. His experience in his previous roles is what has triggered him to initiate a change: *I worked beside our CCO. I saw how it goes in terms of culture towards her vs. me. Everyone is used to nodding yes. But I like thinking differently.* (Victor) Over the years, he has built up a network of people and now possesses the business and political know-how to enable the innovation team to work. He explains that his role as a ‘connector’ is important: *‘Those connectors, they have to be people who are really immersed in the business and have worked there for many years and gained the trust. And on the one hand they have the the business experience, because if you place someone there who is completely fuzzy, it’s not going to work. So you need someone that is strategically strong but can also think and act.’* (Victor) Moreover, his team members explain how Victor provides protection for them: *In most cases, [Victor] clears the road for us. He is a kind of gatekeeper that literally protects us from all the barriers.* (Team member, ShopGo) Finally, Victor is aware of the importance of delivering value in the short term, for the survival of the team: *In these large-scale corporates you often do not have two years’ time to deliver nothing, so you need to deliver in the short term.* (Victor)

Space

In terms of space, Victor has the support from the Chief Commercial Officer, who gives the team the necessary room to experiment: *Marit is niet altijd de makkelijkste maar anderzijds denk ik ze geeft me wel ruimte en uiteindelijk moet ik weer die ruimte pakken.* Finally, Victor indicates that he values the space provided to him to experiment. By delivering successes, he explains the space will be provided to him: *I always said it depends on whether I stay based on the room they offer me. You see when people know it’s going to be OK, then you can free up that room.*

I increasingly realise that in these type of organisations, a lot of great ideas are located amongst the people. But they have been knocked out by their focus on efficiency. And I really think that if you can get that Commercial Department to brainstorm and say ‘Ok guys, great idea we’re going to do this for you’ then the people become more innovative. (Victor)

My role is very crucial, it makes or breaks it. Momentarily, it is highly important, especially the part of connecting to the top of the organisation which I am the most proficient at because I have been here the longest. (Victor)

In his previous roles [Victor] learned what it is like to have to make profits. And also to collect evidence that something works and will yield profits and not only costs, because he knows then it is not going to last. (Team member, SuperGo)

The commercial director said ‘Ok fine, go ahead and do it. If it costs money, here you have my bank account. Go ahead and do it.’ (Victor)

3. Charlotte, FashForward

FashForward has recently announced that they want to become an organisation that is centred around technology, with a specialty in fashion. Charlotte strongly believes the organisation needs to undergo a digital transformation, and has founded a digital transformation team and established a central digital hub dedicated to all digital company processes and to digital innovation. She receives full support from the executive board and as the team has achieved successful digital innovations, the team is highly visible throughout the entire company. As a result, Charlotte is busy traveling from one office to the next to help build digital hubs at all locations.

Provide a dot on the horizon.
(Charlotte)

'If in two years time, a digital hub is in place together with a digital team that is buzzing and positive, and that every floor you pass by you think "wow these people are doing the coolest things, they have passion and they're proud of their work". I would be really happy.'



Self Thinking and Doing

Charlotte describes herself as a rational thinker but also as a pragmatic person, two qualities she looks for in other people. Charlotte describes how she analyses any decision: *'I always try to think logically and rationally. And always in the long term interest of the company and not my personal aspiration.'* She explains that she acts to realise her vision by starting with the smaller parts: *That's the way to approach it. You first take a small part and start. Then you can take those learnings and use them to tackle a bigger part.* Furthermore, she talks about the necessity of moving quick in digitalisation, and working around the company legacy systems: *'In big corporates, you have to deal with big legacy systems and ERP systems which are extremely cumbersome; it takes months to get anything released. So what do you build so you can move quick, which is a must for digitalisation, without dragging this cumbersome beast behind you. So we built this architecture with modern technology, with which we can deploy at much faster rates.'*

Challenger

Charlotte is not afraid of challenging the status quo. In the interview she explains how she had the courage to approach her CEO with her idea for the digital hub: *I went to the CEO and he asked me; what do you think the future of the digital showroom looks like? I told him we need to set up a separate department for this as the topic is too important. [...] And then he literally said 'Great, do you want to set this up?'* Furthermore, she states that the people she looks to recruit for her digital innovation team need some level of courage, to dare to take ownership for innovations.

Connector

Finally, she explains how she tends to bring people together across the organisation to build a strong, united team.

'I really believe that the people you need are very positive and think in terms of solutions instead of problems and possess the ability to see and understand the bigger picture instead of building a small solution in silo'. (Charlotte)

When something goes wrong with the product, it should really hurt deep down in your heart. That's the type of passion we look to recruit. And the people who dare to take such ownership. (Charlotte)

I started with the leadership team, bringing them together and getting them to operate as a team. Because that's where the silos started, so the first step was to unite them and to talk. (Charlotte)

Vision:

Charlotte believes that innovation involves empowering others to come up with their own ideas: *I strongly believe in respecting people's expertise. So instead of saying 'this is what you should do, build this' more 'how would you solve this, what do you see?' And using everyone's input in that manner. (Charlotte)*

Furthermore, Charlotte believes that the Digital Hub will become the way to help the organisation become adept at change. Thus, in the long term this involves a company-wide change:

How do you set it up in such an organisation, how do you make sure you get all parts of the organisation fully aboard, and as the digital team how do you become a true enabler of the entire company. (Charlotte)

Because the Digital Hub consists of several departments that have been recently merged together, she explains the difficulty of getting everyone aboard. To do so, she stresses the importance of communication and providing a vision for everyone:

You can't expect, especially with bigger teams, for the message to always land. So the more you confirm it, the more moments of communication you create, the better. Because the worst is hearing that teams feel left in the dark. That really hurts when I hear that. So for me, it's a huge focus point to ensure the messages land.

Finally, her team members explain how they find Charlotte inspiring: *I find Charlotte a highly inspiring person. An inspiring person for me is someone who is authentic and autonomous. And she really fought to get where she is now. (Colleague, FashForward)*

Experience

Charlotte has over six years of experience in her organisation, and has been involved in the digital business her entire career. She understands the importance of delivering value in the short-term.

Her business-sense is illustrated by her idea to commercialise a previous successful innovation project, which they are selling as a service to other companies in the fashion industry:

We are even setting up our own startup, so we can sell it to other companies. [...] We hope next year we have our first client. (Charlotte)

Furthermore, she explains the importance of putting the right people in the right places throughout the company, and involving the right people to get the projects realised:

Space

Charlotte explains that her team has been given a lot of space to innovate. Furthermore, the team is fully supported by the top.

'I received a lot of space, but another reason this happened is that the Digital transformation team actually fulfills a huge need in the organisation. So that also helps.'

'Repetition does not spoil the prayer', I better over-communicate than under-communicate. (Charlotte)

A direction is necessary, and vision helps, it enlightens, gives security and purpose. And whether that's 'thought leadership' or not, for me it's pragmatically speaking making sure I provide a dot on the horizon for all of the teams. (Charlotte)

Noticing things such as 'hey, if we do this, we need to talk to this person and keep this other person in the loop to be able to set up this project with success.' That's the type of people you need. (Charlotte)

And that is a big advantage and you will see this in many large companies, you need management support, without that one sponsor in the top who believes 100% in your idea, it is tough. We were in luck with a CEO that really... he believes in it. (Charlotte)

4. George, Electronite

George has initiated a transition of his company towards a company that is more customer-centric and is more adept at fast, short-term innovations because the company is currently very much focused on long-term horizon 3 projects that take months or years of development. To do this, George has founded a team that is focused on embedding design thinking into the company.

‘Look at the world as a designer, and you say “how does this match?”’ (George)

‘We want to move towards a company where everyone is user-centric, and empathic, and can imagine the needs and problems so in the end we can determine and define problems from the bottom-up, and directly solve them.’



Vision:

George believes it could help the company to stay relevant if the employees learn to work in a more customer-centric manner, by bringing a design thinking mindset:
The question is, in an engineering-driven company like Electronite, how I will bring design thinking inside, and focusing on the customer and outcomes instead of engineering.
To do this, he explains the importance of inspiring and showing the value of design thinking:
it's inspiring them and showing them also that other companies are doing it, and they're doing it successfully. So it is providing some inspirations, which is again it's not new in transformation changes, but it's something that you have to be very practical, very concrete at. (George)
Furthermore, he explains the need to coach others in using the tools and methods of design thinking, to help them employ them with the right mindset.

So there you have to coach them there, you have to support them, you have to tell them ok what is expected from them. (George)

Self Thinker

George stresses the importance about a holistic view for innovation, and that this holistic thinking must be embedded in the company:
‘focusing on the why, and then indeed understanding the deeper context [...]... again it's really more a holistic view on what innovation is all about.’

Do-er

To speed up the development of innovations and move to a shorter horizon, George explains how the team must move to act quick:
We want to move as quickly as possible from a business case, move to execution mode. Develop, develop, develop.
Furthermore, to embed design thinking in the company George explains how he organises workshops across the various company offices to give people hands-on experience with the tools and methods of design thinking.

Challenger

George is not afraid of challenging the status quo to change the company. As such, he even challenges his CEO:
‘I challenge my CEO too sometimes, regarding his idea of Horizon 3 projects’ (George).

Connector

He explains how he feels he is able to think differently than others inside the company because he is a designer. As such, he is able to connect information and people for fruitful collaborations:
Yes, we connect everything. Because we see the relevance in everything. (George).

that's what we have to look at in a more holistic way, in a more designerly way to the problems that we have, that we try to solve with our customers. (George)

We do hands-on, workshops. (George)

Because I think one of the learnings I got is that again I think different that most of the other people inside Electronite because I see connections. Even if those connections do not immediately exist. Because you look at the world as a designer, and you say “how does this match?” so also in this context of being curious enough, I have learned that not a lot of people are doing this. (George)

Experience

George has more than 20 years of experience inside the company, and even calls himself ‘the dinosaur’ within Electronite. He explains he has developed business experience over the years: *I know what works and what doesn't work.*
He has also developed business and political know-how needed to realise change, which he uses to involve the right people:
My main focus and my biggest allies, and I'm creating them, will be the business leads [...] because they have the budgets to make things happen, make changes in organisations. (George)

Space

Finally, George explains how he is fully supported in his vision by the new CEO of the company:
It's not my vision alone, luckily our CEO, our brand new CEO is now two years at Barco, also he is helping us with the whole transformation. So there is a movement happening in most of the time about changing the mindsets.
Furthermore, he talks about meeting with several members of the executive board which illustrates the support from the top:
I'm talking to CFO, I'm talking about without a corporate HR, I'm talking with my CTO to be honest, so it's and talking with the sales even, the CSO (Chief Sales Officer), the marketing office, so all those people have to be aligned in this mindset, in this change. (George)

5. Michael, Health+

Michael founded a team set-up to embed their own Design thinking approach throughout Health+. His initial motivation was to develop a new way of working that involved extracting people from their silos and uniting them through quick concept development sessions which involved prototyping and testing. 'We created a new way of working through which people can be more creative, work quicker and easier, together.' Michael helped professionalise their own design thinking approach, and Health+ started promoting it to other companies as one of their key capabilities. Michael described how the focus is now very much of commercialising and promoting the approach.

Self Thinker

Michael talks holistically about design thinking, and the mindset needed to apply design thinking: *'Let's talk thoroughly on the content of Design Thinking, yes it is complex. If you want to impact society you need to dive deeper than four simple steps.'*

Do-er

By introducing Design thinking, Michael aimed to move from talking in meetings to doing: *'We're going to get together, lock ourselves up three quarters of a day in a big workshop room with posters on the table etc. and then by the end of the day we build a prototype and we go outside with it to test how it works with people. That way of working was the goal.'*

Challenger

Michael explains how together with his team, he was completely convinced of their new way of working, and went out to challenge everyone else about it: *We were very much inspired. We thought 'How can you not see that this is the truth?'. So we came to them, to tell them how they should work. (Michael)* Furthermore, they challenged the way of working at the company which included moving from one meeting to the next.

Connector

Michael is very much focused on bringing together people and knowledge from different parts of the organisation: *There are so many very smart people here, and it is very cool to work with them and tie them together, and collaborate like in a beehive. (Michael)*

'Collaborating like in a beehive.'
(Michael)

'My mission was to embed a new way of working in the company, and ensure others work that way. Even in my absence. Even when my team is absent, we want people to work that way. That was the ideal picture.'



So instead of going from one meeting to the next, and alignment meetings between different departments, we wanted to say 'no. let's do it differently'.

My personal conviction behind the programme was that Health+ is a company that hosts a lot of knowledge, but is spread across all these little buildings and rooms which do not come together. My aim was to get the people out of their rooms, bring them together, unite them. (Michael)

Vision

Michael's vision is to unite people throughout the company and to encourage people to experiment. To do this, his mission is to embed Design thinking in the company: *Silos, that's what I literally see here. So my conviction was to encourage people to collaborate more and to create something together. To help them think up solutions and prototype them, so they go out to test them to learn what works. We did that by introducing a new way of working. (Michael)* He explains the importance of telling a compelling story to get people to move along. He compares the act of engaging others to politics: *With politics, it's not what you have achieved but all about the story you have for the future. They pick you for the story for the future and not for the things you did. You will not be rewarded, you will be chosen if people believe in your story for the future. (Michael)* He further explains the importance of a story that is thought out well, and is not too future oriented.

Experience

With the years of experience in his company, Michael explains that he has obtained new knowledge to realise change and to embed a new way of working throughout the company. *At the things involved in change management: how are you going to communicate, the political game, they have nothing to do with Design Thinking and developing the methodology but they come into play. And it took us a while to notice, but then we started treating it as change management. (Michael)* Furthermore, he explains how over time, his role as the leader of the team became increasingly political.

Space

Finally, Michael explains how the new way of working developed by the team received support from the company and received recognition after which it was promoted as the way of working for the Health+ design department: *'Everyone recognised it, when they saw the four steps of the process that we visualised, they knew it was the way of working for Health+ Design.' (Michael)* However, Michael also illustrates how space and the ability to continue spreading the movement is essential for his motivation.

If you tell a completely visionary story that's almost science fiction, people will not follow. You need to tell an interesting story that is thoroughly thought out, is spot on and can be told with much enthusiasm (Michael)

Your responsibility increasingly shifts to telling narratives and internal company politics to keep your growing teams running. (Michael)

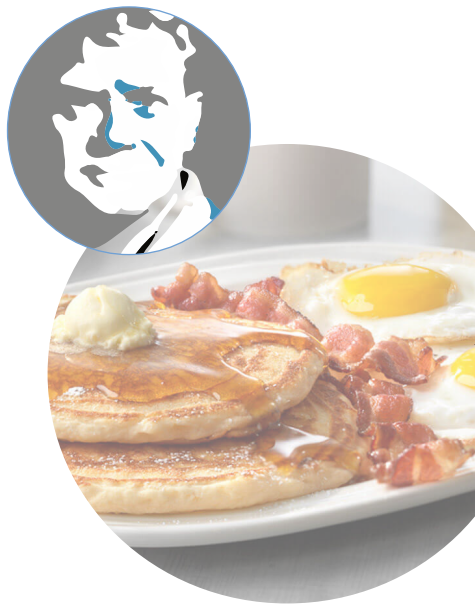
'350 people sounds like a lot, but in a company with 80,000+ people it isn't. So you need to go to the HR manager and say OK we're going to do this for the entire 80,000 people. And then you have the next challenge. Because just coloring and promoting, is not enough of a challenge.' (Michael)

6. Anton, iBank

With the arrival of a new CEO four and a half years ago, innovation was lifted to a higher level within iBank. The new CEO incorporated innovation into the company mission statement, publicly advocated for innovation and has made a great amount of resources available for innovation. Anton has been actively involved in enabling innovation within the wholesale department of the bank for the past three years, through which he coaches and enables multiple innovation teams. During his career at iBank, he has been almost entirely involved in innovation projects. Bringing innovation to the wholesale department of the bank is a whole new challenge.

*‘Innovation eats Strategy for breakfast.’
(Anton)*

‘I realised that I really became an innovation driver for life. I want others to be able to experience that too. So it became my specialty.’



*‘My motto is “Innovation eats strategy for breakfast.” I move much quicker than any strategist can think. For me, innovation is a matter of doing. My vision in short is: Do. That translates to establishing a mindset and method that enables starting many things, quickly setting up a good team, quickly investigating whether the idea is good, and quickly quitting if it isn't good.’
(Anton)*

In that sense I am very opportunistic. I think you need to look at things like; where are the opportunities, what can potentially turn into something successful, try that out and see if you really have something there and then go for it with full conviction. That is my personal vision. (Anton)

Vision:

Anton’s vision is that innovation must be driven throughout the organisation, and sees himself as an innovation driver for the rest of his life through which he aims to enable others to innovate:
I realised I am a true innovation driver for life. I am innovator for life and I want others to experience that too. So it has become my profession. It's sure that I will keep interfering with innovation. If not at iBank, then I will somewhere else. (Anton)

He stresses the importance of teams for the success of innovation:
The success of innovation does not depend on strategy or how well you structure ideas, but 80% on the strength of the team. So I hammer on teams, teams, teams. Which is one of the biggest tasks for me as a coach. (Anton)
Furthermore, to bring an innovation mindset to the Wholesale department of the bank, Anton explains that talks and pitches that include show-casing previous successes is a must:

Experience

Anton started over 40 years ago at the company, and has gained a lot of experience in the business and politics required to enable innovation in a large corporate. He explains how he has created a wide network of people throughout the company.
Every time, you come across the same people who are involved in innovation decisions. I know them all, and I know what triggers them to agree or disagree. This is useful when preparing for an important pitch, and I incorporate it in my advice to the teams. (Anton)

He describes that one of his major roles involves enabling the teams, in the form of coaching in the way of working and removing obstacles:
My role is to coach the teams. To ensure they get started, learn to use the methodology and that I Guide, Support and Challenge their project. Guide involves helping the team go through processes and methodology. My role is to support the teams, to help them when they run into obstacles. And finally, I challenge them to ensure the team brings out the best of themselves and the idea. (Anton)
He further explains that enabling the teams involves protection from his side: *I pay sharp attention for my teams. When the controls for the teams become too big for example. The teams are small, so if you ask too much reporting and control and accounting it becomes too difficult. So for me there's a line there. (Anton)*

Space

The innovation teams are fully recognised by the top management of the organisation: *With the arrival of the new CEO 4,5 years ago, he boosted innovation within the company.*
As a result, Anton explains that they have entered the next phase of transformation which involves legitimising innovation through official structures and methodologies. However, he explains that it is challenging to organise innovation and simultaneously maintain the experimental character required for innovation:

You need to tell and show them consistently [...] Especially make sure that you give them examples and lessons learned. Show them successes, it's the proof of the pudding with which you show them. (Anton)

And then you enter the phase where you need to organise and control. We are currently in that conflict. [...] How can you make room for the disruptive nature of innovation in a company, but ensure you do not over-organise and over-control it? (Anton)

Self
Thinking and Doing

Anton is a holistic thinker, which recurs in the interviews through his extensive knowledge regarding innovation. Furthermore, he has set up a scholarly programme in cooperation with a university to share this knowledge with others. With the extensive innovation knowledge at his disposal. Anton’s colleagues consider him the innovation guru: *Anton is the innovation guru within iBank, he possesses so much knowledge on anything innovation related that everyone knows to find him’ (Colleague, Anton)*
However, he values doing more highly above thinking and in the interview emphasises the importance of acting quickly for innovation, and as such that there is no room for sitting still and cooking up a strategy. Anton further explains the importance of ‘doing’ in innovation and explains that his vision is centred around doing.

Challenger

Anton explains that he occasionally challenges the company processes and putting a stand firm is a requirement to protect innovation:
Being a rebel is a lonely profession. It varies from ‘pinpricks’ to occasionally getting angry. Trying to see where you can influence things. But also safeguarding your own borders; what things you don't mind and what things you decide not to go along with anymore.’ (Anton)

Connector

Furthermore, he indicates that an opportunistic mindset is required for the pursuit of innovation projects, which involves picking out opportunities and connecting them:

7. David, TeleCo

Three years ago, David pitched to his board of directors that TeleCo needed to move from a slow, rigid oil tanker to a flexible organisation able to adapt to customer wants and needs at a faster rate. To do this, together with a group of colleagues David founded a team that initiated the transformation to of TeleCo to a more agile and customer centric company. The transformation of the organisation has gained ground, and is moving towards a company-wide transformation.

Self Thinker

David advocates for a more agile project structure because it yields holistic solutions centred around the customer. He explains that he likes to think holistically about the stakeholders and expertise involved in a problem:

'I try to address the entire context; from customer to technique to output. No one else seems to want to do that, because it touches on a lot of subject from finance, technique, compliance, management to culture.' (David)

Do-er

David further explains that he likes to act quick, and to jump in when he sees an opportunity for improvement:

When I see an opportunity, I just start. In my position I receive information very quickly, to determine where it hurts in the organisation. And then I jump in. (David)

Challenger

As part of his role in transforming the organisation, David challenges the status quo and is not afraid of confronting people:

I am occasionally still tensed to confront people, but it is what I do. But I really believe in TeleCo and the change we need to go through. (David)

Furthermore, he is not afraid of challenging anyone in higher management, as he explains he pitched to the executive board.

Connector

David attends many external gatherings with other companies to discuss the newest trends and developments, and to discuss transformation. He further explains the importance of his role of bringing in new knowledge to the company:

'The peat fire has become a forest fire and everyone is dancing. That's the goal.'
(David)



It was a bold move, but we went to the Executive Board and told them if you don't change now, you will hit that cliff. If you want to remain relevant, you need to move towards a more flexible, flat organisation. (David)

Externally and additionally reading a lot. [...] I always try to be occupied with innovative things that have not yet been explored, which I think could be relevant for TeleCo. (David)

Vision:

David's vision involves an agile, customer-centric organisation where the employees are empowered to make their own decisions:

I try to organise it in such a manner that everyone understands when they work, how they add value to TeleCo and to the customer. And I sacredly believe in bottom-up. Turning around control. Leadership where necessary, and managing to facilitate teams. (David)

To bring company-wide change, David explains that propagating the vision is necessary, for which he holds inspirational talks:

The only thing I do is set bins on fire to get people to start running. And to enthuse them. We did a tour throughout the country to propagate it. (David)

Finally, his colleague describes him as an inspiring leader:

I find David inspiring, because he is really authentic but at the same time he clearly has a passion for what he is doing and brings energy. (Colleague, TeleCo)

Experience

It was David's previous experience in his previous roles inside the organisation through which he was motivated to initiate a change movement:

And the more I noticed, the way we worked was comparable to an oil tanker. If TeleCo wants to keep the right to exist, it must become a more flexible and flatter organisation. (David)

He explains that his main role is to facilitate the project teams in the organisation:

I jump in in the instances where it gets really tough, where people get stuck. Sometimes it's mediation. (David)

In facilitating the teams, he need to take on several roles:

Space

Finally, David explains that as he reports to the executive board of the organisation he has the full support from the top management of the company, which is a requirement for bringing change:

'I need support from the top level. If I don't, I can't do my job. I need protection from the board of advisors. That's why I can do what I do. But I always try to postpone playing the power card to win trust.' (David)

Furthermore, as the transformation has gained ground, he indicates that the support from within the organisation is growing.

'The other day someone said to me "the reason you can't explain what your position is, is because you need to be another person in every situation". One time you're coach, the next consultant, then mediator.' (David)

The spirit is out of the bottle within TeleCo. People have understood it now. There have been many enthusiastic reactions, and initiatives emerge. It's no longer mechanic but organic, it's growing. We see groups are starting up, meet-ups and innovation sessions are being organised. People voluntarily draw people in from other areas. (David)

8. Robin, InsureAll

Robin founded the innovation network for InsureAll more than three years ago. Recently, as part of the network an innovation team was established that takes ideas for innovation initiatives and accelerates them through full-time dedication to innovation. Because of the high amount of competition in the insurance market, the urgency around innovation has been recognised by the executive board of the company. As a result, the innovation team has received the full support from the top. The company CEO publicly advocates for innovation whenever he sees the opportunity to do so.

‘It is my goal to innovate the world of Insurance in such a way that in the end no insurances are necessary anymore.’ (Robin)

‘With our innovation team, I try to show that innovation is possible, that it works and as a result, to bring it to life inside the company.’



Vision:
Robin's vision is that in order to remain relevant as a company, the company must innovate and investigate other business models and services:
‘It is my goal to innovate the world of Insurance in such a way that in the end no insurances are necessary anymore.’ (Robin)
With the innovation team, he aims to bring an innovation mindset to the company:
‘With our innovation team, I try to show that innovation is possible, that it works and as a result, to bring it to life inside the company.’ (Robin)
To inspire the rest of the organisation to engage in innovation, Robin emphasises the importance of inspirational talks, and showcasing interesting successful projects:
‘Innovation needs all the big noise you can create. You need to especially show everyone many cases that get's them to think ‘Wow, how is that possible? Can I do that too?’
And he further explains that his inspirational talks are the way to recruit new ‘believers’ of the innovation movement:
‘I’m not going to try to get people to tag along when they aren’t interested. If people are interested in joining my vision, they will come to me. That’s what I see when I give internal talks, afterwards a new group of people comes over and asks how they can join.’ (Robin)

Self Thinking and Doing

Robin is a strong analytical thinker, and he likes to share his knowledge by giving lectures:
‘I enjoy giving lectures to students on business and innovation on some weekends, which is incredible. To be able to teach others about innovation and inspire them. To get them thinking about innovation.’
Furthermore, he explains the importance of thinking in the long-term and the short-term. He talks about trying to get others to think about the long-term:
‘Most people are with one leg in the present, working on their current tasks. With the other leg you try to get them into the future, but that creates a difficult split. You need to try your hardest to move them with their other leg, to turn the leg such that both legs point in the same direction.’ (Robin)
However, when it comes to doing he sees himself as more of a ‘do-er’ than a thinker:

Challenger

Robin explains that to innovate in a large corporate, it often requires guts to get started and take a different path than initially planned. As such, he had the guts to initiate the innovation network:
‘We thought to ourselves.. what’s the worst that could happen? We could be fired. And we determined it was worth the risk’. (Robin)
He further explains how innovation involves a battle against the company:

Connector

Furthermore, Robin explains that he plays the connector role between the innovation team and the rest of the organisation.

‘In general I am more of a do-er. I did applied sciences and am very practical. I am of the opinion you need to just go ahead and start.’ (Robin)

Innovation is fun, but you initiate a battle with the company. It involves a lot of challenges.

I am in charge of bridging the gap between the team and the rest of the organisation. I also bring ideas from within the organisation to the innovation funnel.

Experience

With the years of experience within the company, Robin was motivated to initiate an internal innovation movement. He explains that enabling innovation involves a lot of politics:
First, it is important that you know what buttons inside the organisation to push and be able to play them. The next question is, how well you play them. (Robin)
He talks about frictions from inside the organisation and middle management which the team needs to be protected from:
The collaboration internally with the company does not always go easily. I make sure the middle management does not get in the way to innovation. They are often counteractive because they have short-term goals and therefore do not feel like cooperating. (Robin)

Space

Finally, mandate from the top is present. During a visit to the innovation centre to interview Robin, the company CEO was there on his occasional visit to the center to show his full support.
‘He comes by every now and then to see what projects we are running. For the rest he makes innovation noises whenever he can. And he provides us with all the resources we need.’ (Robin)

It’s not easy to get people moving when they have been doing the same thing for years. It’s hard to get them out of that. (Robin)

B. Observation Case Study

To dive deeper into the levels of knowledge (sanders & stappers, 2013) regarding the behaviour of the visionary innovator and the interaction with his team, a case study research was done at the office of one of the visionary innovators. During a period of 10 days, the team and the visionary innovator were studied whilst they went about their routines at the office. The key insights from the case study are presented in this section.

Context

The innovation department has been established recently, about 1,5 years ago. Over time, Sam, the visionary innovator, has expanded the team to include more than 6 subteams, each working on an innovative service. Additional people are further being recruited. Currently, the focus is on delivering the first results, to deliver value to the business. At the same time Sam needs expand the customer base and is busy promoting their innovations to international airlines. Because the department has grown quickly over a short time period, an overview of the latest team developments is sometimes missing. Furthermore, the team's processes, way of working and culture are still unsystemic.

Key Insights

- **Through the introduction of the Scrum method, the first foundations for a systemic approach have been laid out. Overarching team approach could be improved.**

In observing the teams at work, it could be observed that each team functions well independently. In comparison to other departments in the organisation, the level of hierarchy is low within this department. Using the scrum tools and methods, the teams determine co-creatively with their end-users what to develop and determine their own schedule for the development of the innovation services. The Product Owner of the teams helps to keep this process going smoothly. When interviewed regarding the level of freedom provided, the team members indicated that they were satisfied with the freedom that comes with the scrum process: 'I like it this way, because it should be up to us as a team to determine what we build, not up Sam'. However, for overarching team processes, the team members indicated a lack of communication and overview: 'For specific things related to the service we are developing, we like to decide individually. However, for overarching

team factors, Sam has a responsibility to fulfill in managing and streamlining things. Like onboarding the new recruits, and explaining the expected way of working as the team setup changes. And that could be improved sometimes.'

- **The overarching vision is not visible, neither are the team-specific visions.**

Physically, around the office no signs of the team's vision or purpose were present. This in due part to the 'Flexible working places', such that the teams have no appointed seats. When the teams were asked individually whether they had a team-specific vision, they explained that they had formulated an official 'team purpose' in the past, but they did not use it. Only one of the teams had physically printed their team purpose and placed it on the wall. In an interview, one of the team members expressed a desire for a more concrete vision: 'It's great to get the freedom to determine our own work and what we develop. However, if the overarching vision would be more concrete it would be more self-evident for us on what direction to go in next.' Another team member further indicated a lack of a concrete vision: 'Sure, an interesting long-term vision has been discussed in an assembly a few months ago, but for me it is still very vague. There is a lot of room for interpretation. I would prefer a clear vision translated to the short-term, so everyone knows what next steps are in line with the vision.'

- **Communication regarding big developments in vision and strategy is missing**

Based on the observations and interviews with several teams, it was found that the biggest need for the team was increased transparency and communication regarding developments of the overarching team strategy and vision. When important developments took place, many team members felt they were not well-communicated to the entire team. As a result, the team members

felt they needed to speculate about developments for the team. As such, one of the team members explained: 'So you see gossip tends to surface. This is especially the case for big developments concerning the department. So one or two people did talk to Sam and know the story, but others didn't. Then people start to speculate on what would be the case, and a story goes around that is between facts and fiction. For these overarching team things it would be much better if they were communicated in a plenary manner.' When the Management Team was questioned regarding this topic, they speculated that the reason for the lack of communication is the lack of ownership for the rest of the managers, and the lack of time from Sam: 'It is really up to Sam to communicate such things. But he does not have the time. For the rest of us, no one really feels responsible'. Overall, top-down communication could be improved.

- **The visionary fulfills 1000 roles at once and is fully engaged in meetings**

The main observation throughout the two-week case study is that the visionary innovator is busy managing many stakeholders at once. For the teams, the result is that it can be hard to meet with Sam. Furthermore, even though the visionary innovator values action and 'doing' highly, the result is that his schedule is largely booked with meetings. Because all the roles need to be fulfilled, the question is whether the meetings could be reduced, or some roles could be fulfilled by others. In terms of engagement, the teams work individually on a daily basis but the visionary innovator stops by at several points during the week. The teams expressed that this helped to keep them inspired. However, the teams also explained that it sometimes leads to conflicts as the visionary innovator does not have time to engage on a daily basis and as a result does not always possess all the background information of the context of decisions that the teams make.

