A lot of office buildings in the Netherlands are currently vacant, about 15% of the total office area. This number is still increasing. This translates to about 50 million square meters of unused empty office space. Not all this office area can be transformed into (student) housing, so a different solution must be found.

In order to tackle this vacancy my goal was to give one of the Marconi towers in Rotterdam, a tower which will be empty in a couple of years, a new life. The method I wanted to use was to design a system that can house multiple smaller start-up companies, collaborating with each other, in the big empty office tower. Together with new public functions, this tower should be ready for the future.

During the design process I found out that the public functions should be playing a much bigger role in the building if the building is going to be a success. So I researched three buildings with mixed functions, public and offices, to see how they work.

My final design is a hybrid building with public boulevard going through the tower, connecting all the start-up companies by a public street. So the chosen method turned out to be not the perfect approach but it gave me a useful direction to start the research with. There was a direct relationship between the research of the three buildings and the design. I started with testing how the solutions for those buildings would fit in the Marconi Tower and I ended up mixing these results into a suitable solution for the tower. The space between the start-up companies and the public boulevard could be more designed, in a climatic point of view. When the design was already done I took a good look at the Commerzbank by Norman Foster, with a big atrium that is used for natural ventilation. In this design they used “sky gardens” every eight floors to naturally ventilate the building. Looking back at my design this is an aspect that could have gotten more attention during the design process.