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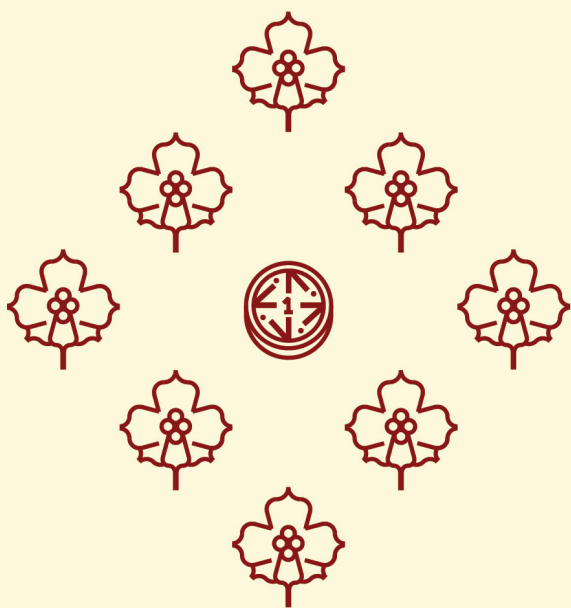
Abstract

During its history, design never ceased to evolve, adapting its scope to the changing needs of society. It first dealt with products and visuals, together with spaces and garments. Then it started to create services, systems, strategies and, today, designers also design businesses. Many designers are in fact deciding to become entrepreneurs, employing their design skills to build companies. At the same time, disciplines like strategic design and business design are involving designers in the creation and development of whole enterprises. In this context, designers have the possibility to make a greater impact on society and the environment, participating more effectively in sustainability transitions.

This thesis investigates how designers design businesses and, when creating enterprises, how they contribute to sustainability. Part of the knowledge in this work was produced through practice-based research. The research questions were in fact answered through the experience of designing a business for a Colombian graphic designer and illustrator who wanted to become entrepreneur.

The study starts with a literature review on the relationship between design, business and systemic transitions, and then continues with an explanation of the research and design methods employed in the project. The same methods were used both to develop the business concept for the client and to answer the research questions. After a detailed description of the concept, the study proceeds presenting the main research findings and ends with the conclusions. By integrating findings from literature review, interviews, observations and case study, this thesis shows how designers have a distinctive way to create and conduct businesses, combining methods and approaches typical of their profession. Additionally, the study explains that - when designing businesses - designers can find solutions to environmental and social problems, they can make sustainable lifestyle attractive and accessible and they can spread new ways to make business.

Keywords strategic design, business design, sustainability transitions, sustainable entrepreneurship





Simone Gaglione

**Designers
Designing
Businesses**

and contributing
to sustainability



Simone Gaglione
*Designers Designing Businesses
and Contributing to Sustainability*

**Master's Thesis in International
Design Business Management.**

Minor in Creative Sustainability

Advisor: Dr. İdil Gaziulusoy

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Designers Designing Businesses

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Abstract

During its history, design never ceased to evolve, adapting its scope to the changing needs of society. It first dealt with products and visuals, together with spaces and garments. Then it started to create services, systems, strategies and, today, designers also design businesses. Many designers are in fact deciding to become entrepreneurs, employing their design skills to build companies. At the same time, disciplines like strategic design and business design are involving designers in the creation and development of whole enterprises. In this context, designers have the possibility to make a greater impact on society and the environment, participating more effectively in sustainability transitions.

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“ *The problems of design
are everywhere.* ”

Bruno Munari, 1981

Introduction



Background

Business and sustainability between the spoon and the city.

“From the spoon to the city”, said Ernesto Nathan Rogers in 1952 to describe the breadth of the architects’ role in creating and defining the human landscape. According to Rogers, architects could and should design everything: from objects to spaces, from buildings to entire cities. As a consequence of this mentality, at that time many architects were also designers; their flexible design methodology allowed them to focus on a wide range of projects with different scales and levels of complexity.

Today design is independent from architecture but, from the latter, it inherited the same flexible method. During its history in fact the scope of design kept on changing, in order to respond to the developing needs of society (De Fusco, 2003; Korvenmaa, 2014). The space between ‘the spoon and the city’ has always been enriched with new subjects: first there were products and visuals, together with spaces and garments. Then came services, systems, strategies and,



today, design is approaching businesses. The relationship between design and business is multifaceted and, depending on the context, it is crystallized in different disciplines. In my thesis, I mainly dealt with two of these disciplines.

First, in design agencies, service designers are starting to be flanked by new professionals: business designers. Even if the role of this figure is not consolidated yet and varies depending on the agency, what is clear is that business designers (as their name suggests) are hybrid figures operating between the fields of design and business (Rodichev, 2016). By combining tools and mentalities of these two apparently distant fields, they are able to participate in the generation of new service ideas and to develop these ideas into viable businesses (Frazer, 2012; Martin, 2009).

The second discipline I dealt with is strategic design. In strategic design, the means of design are used to achieve specific goals that deviate from the traditional scope of our profession and enter the world of business (Keinonen, 2008). Strategic design is indeed based on the fact that design can bring to businesses other benefits beside better products and services, and it can participate in defining the scope and direction of whole enterprises (Stevens and Moultrie, 2011; Liedtka, 2004).

Simultaneously with these two relatively new disciplines, in my thesis I dealt with a third, which is both related to



business design and strategic design: systemic transitions for sustainability. Central belief of this field is that the problems of sustainability should be faced from a wide perspective and the efforts to solve them should aim at a deep change of our society (Twomey and Gaziulusoy, 2014; Haberl, Fischer-Kowalski, Krausmann, Martinez-Alier and Winiwarter, 2011). Design and business can play a central role in these transitions (Twomey and Gaziulusoy, 2014; Gaziulusoy and Ryan, 2017), and this role is part of what I investigated in this thesis.





*Figure 1:
Business and
sustainability 'between
the spoon and the
city'. In my thesis I
investigate how design
methods can be used
to create businesses
and contribute to
sustainability.*



Motivations

Design and business to solve crises of our times.

The relationship between design and business caught my attention for two main reasons.

First, since the start of my master studies I have been interested in the business model of design, that is, the way how designers make money. I had been in fact influenced by a general pessimistic perception of the socio-economic conditions of designers in Italy, my home country. As this pessimistic attitude was in some cases confirmed by facts (Cantiere Per Pratiche Non-Affermative, 2013), I saw in the meeting of design and business the possibility for addressing this problem and improving wealth and status of designers.

Second, designers are attracted by mystery, they are naturally inclined to embrace risks and to search for innovation. If oriented to the right direction, this attitude can contribute decisively in supporting many of the changes that are needed in society for pursuing sustainability. Designers have in fact the 'power of desirability', they can

make sustainable lifestyles attractive (Järvelin, 2012) and, with the help of business, they can spread them in society. “Design has the power to change the world, not only to make it pretty. And businesses [...] are some of the most powerful institutions on earth today” (Liedtka, 2010, p.11).

As I would like myself to be part of the solution of these issues - the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of designers and the spread of sustainable lifestyles in society - I decided to deepen these topics in practice. In particular, I wanted to understand how designers are able to design businesses and, when doing this, how they can contribute to sustainability.



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Research Questions

*Through this thesis
I will answer the following research questions:*

What roles can designers play in designing businesses? In doing this, what are their strengths? Are there any limits?

Research Question I

When designing businesses, what kind of contributions can designers make to sustainability?

Research Question II



25

Objectives

My objectives with this thesis are:

To evaluate whether design mindset, tools and methodologies can be used to design businesses.

To provide insights on how to improve design practice by integrating findings from literature review and undertaking a real-life project for designing a business.

To contribute to the literature on business design, strategic design and sustainability transitions by integrating findings from interviews, observations and a real-life project.

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The Project

Two designers and a businessperson.

Part of the knowledge in this thesis was produced through practice-based research, or, as Frayling defined it (1993), research *through* the practice. According to Frayling, this means “to use actions and sites of practice as a means of discovering something” (as cited by Vaughan, 2017, p. 10). Indeed, I answered my research questions through the experience of conducting a business design project. I was in fact asked by a Colombian graphic designer and illustrator who wanted to become an entrepreneur (from now on I will refer to her as ‘the client’ or ‘my client’) to participate in developing her business. The project team was composed by her, the client, me, the designer-researcher and a businessperson interested in understanding how her knowledge could be put at the service of designers-entrepreneurs.

My task in this project was to generate the concept enterprise. The role of the businessperson was instead to help the client to turn this concept into a business model



and then into a business plan. The business was intended for Manizales, a city with half-million inhabitants in the Colombian Andes, heart of the country's coffee department and hometown of the client. The brief of the project was quite broad: designing a concept for an enterprise that could participate in spreading sustainable and healthy lifestyles in Manizales.

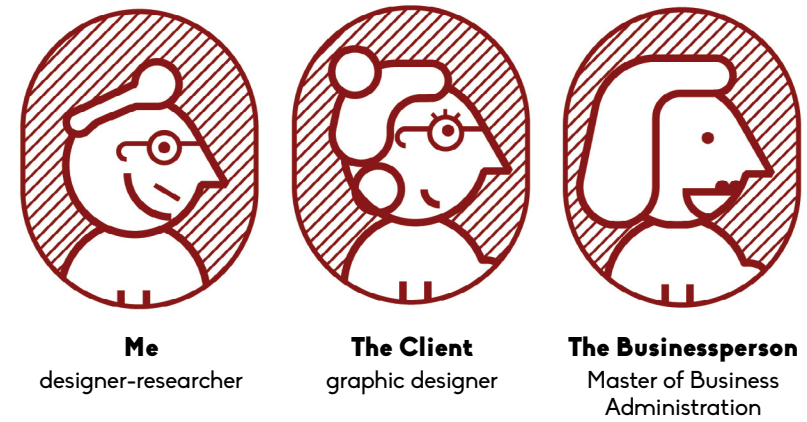


Figure 2: The team.





The streets of Manizales.



Aerial view of Manizales.





Due to the nature of the project and research questions, this thesis is multidisciplinary. Merging what I learned during two years of IDBM and Creative Sustainability, I investigate the relationship between design, business and sustainability. Let's understand how these disciplines are connected through the analysis of the literature.

Literature Review



Design and Business

*Designers searching for business,
business people searching for design.*

At first sight, design and business seems to come from different planets. Mostly emotional and based on intuition the first, analytical and based on facts the second. How is it possible to bring them together? They have two opposite ways to perceive the world and to deal with it. Nevertheless, it is exactly because of this distance that these two disciplines need each other so much.

Business in Design

The lack of business understanding is often seen by design professionals as a problem, an obstacle for their career. This acknowledgment does not happen only in practice but it is also confirmed by literature. Business knowledge is in fact considered of core importance for allowing designers to turn their creativity into *value*; value for them, their clients and society (Liedtka, 2010). Without business, many creative ideas would hardly become profitable (Oswald,



2016) and it would be much more difficult for designers to have an impact on the world. On top of that, knowing the business language is a strategic asset for designers to communicate their value to the corporate world (Snelders, 2012; Gaglione, 2017) and, I would add, to today's society. A difficult task, in light of the differences between design and business language, that can bring important benefits.

Design in business

A designer who is not his own manager is not conceivable, argued Italian artist and designer Riccardo Dalisi and design manager Gino Finizio in 2000. In the same way, for Dalisi and Finizio also managers are creative professionals: they pursue visionary risks and, for this reason, they have to be far-sighted and intuitive as designers (*ibid.*, p. 25).

The relevance of design for business is widely recognized in research and it is today at the basis of the design management literature. While some authors focus on the benefits that design brings to corporations, such as higher profits (Gemser and Leenders, 2001; Gemser, Candi and van den Ende, 2011), improved competitiveness (Noukka, 2012), better products (Borja de Mozota, 2006) and strategic renewal (Ravasi and Lojacono, 2005), some others concentrate on the value it brings to single business professionals (Liedtka, 2010; Gruber, de Leon, George and Thompson, 2015). According to this last

stream of literature, design principles could inspire business people to think and approach challenges in a new way. It has been argued in fact that adopting an open view on problems and relying on intuition more than on analytical thinking could help business people (and non-designers in general) to face the challenges of today's fast-changing world (Liedtka, 2010; Hassi and Laakso, 2011). On top of that, this way of thinking is considered useful for achieving a better working experience and increasing productivity, as it allows empathy and emotions to enter the workplace (Gruber et al., 2015).

It is clear now that design is important for business and business is important for design. As these two fields are so complementary, it is then predictable that aspects of the two worlds would be integrated to create new disciplines. Among those disciplines, I dealt with the more relevant ones for my thesis: business design and strategic design.



Business Design

Business found design.

What is it?

Business design is quite established in practice, with firms like e.g. Hellon, Fjord and 358 having a business design function. However, this discipline is relatively young and the literature hasn't yet systematically dealt with it. For this reason, in 2016 former IDBM student Alexander Rodichev tried in his Master's Thesis to define business design and to clarify who business designers are and how they work. According to Rodichev (2016, p. 80), "business design is a practise that seamlessly combines fundamentals of design disciplines together with strategic business methods [...] a new approach for human-centred business development for healthy balance between business goals and user desires, administration and invention".

What is it about?

Business designers deal basically with business development. That is, they take an idea and turn it into a viable business. They

create strategies, define pricing models, plan organization structures and design business models. However, they do it in a 'designerly' way. What does this mean? It means that business designers use tools and approaches that - traditionally - have been associated with the discipline of design. So, they work in teams, use collaborative methods and visualize and prototype their ideas. Moreover, they base their choices on research, that can also be qualitative, and try to consider both the client's and the user's point of view (Rodichev, 2016; Rohini, 2016). To use the words of Carl Fudge, business designer at IDEO, business designers make "the business as beautiful as the design" (Rohini, 2016).

The Process

Even if business design is approached differently according to the context, there have been some attempts of defining a process for this discipline. One of them was developed by Roger Martin in the book *The Design of Business* (2009). According to Martin, successful businesses should be founded on two complementary attitudes: *exploration* and *exploitation*. The first one, based on intuitive thinking, consists of researching new ideas and market opportunities. A creative attitude that, through a non-linear process, leads companies to build their future. On the other hand, exploitation is based on analytical thinking and consists of repeating established, measured



patterns for obtaining a predicted benefit. According to Martin, when designing (and then running) a business, both attitudes should be employed, and business designers should be able to pass smoothly from exploration to exploitation. According to Martin in fact, if a company focuses only on exploration it will fail in creating value from its ideas. Instead, if it focuses only on exploitation it will become soon obsolete.

Another attempt of creating a business design methodology came from Heather Fraser in his book *Design Works* (2012). Substantially, Fraser identifies the same problem as Martin, calling it the missing link between innovative ideas and business strategy. For solving this problem, Fraser proposes a deep, step-by-step methodology named *the three gears of design*, in which each gear represents a phase of the business design process. These phases are respectively *empathy and deep human understanding*, *concept visualization* and *strategic business design*. However, despite their names, these phases could be identified with the traditional research, concept and (business) development phases typical of many design methods (see Figure 3). Finally, in defining each gear, Fraser proposes different tools and techniques, borrowed from the worlds of design (e.g. visualization, storytelling and collaboration) and business (e.g. strategic and business planning).

To sum up, Martin defines the approach of business design at a more general level, while Fraser dives deeper

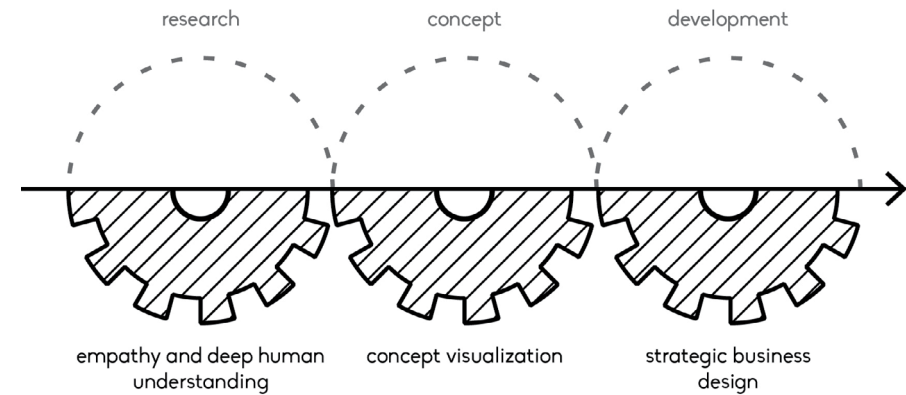


Figure 3:
comparing Fraser's
three gears (2012) with
the research-concept-
development phases.



into the design phase. As I am going to explain later¹, Fraser's process is quite similar to the *brief-research-concept-development* design process I used in the case study. The main difference with this method is however that the strategic business design phase is more business oriented and should produce a strategy and an action plan instead of just a prototype.

Business Designers

Before ending this exploration of business design, let's try to understand who business designers are. Rodichev (2016) affirms that, as one could expect, business designers come mainly from the fields of design and business. Usually, they have not been trained explicitly for this role and they become business designers through practical experience. In fact, as Fjord's business design director John Oswald pointed out, this discipline is not yet an established part of neither design nor business education (Oswald, 2016). Nevertheless, an important issue, useful to answer the research question of this thesis, could not be clarified through the literature: how do business designers collaborate with the traditional designers (i.e. service and product designer) working in their teams? How do they

¹ see Chapter 3, *General Approach*, section *Design Method*.

separate each other's responsibilities? For answering these questions I recurred to empirical knowledge, generated through a semi-structured interview with a business designer, that I will elaborate on later in this thesis².

² see Chapter 4, *Designers Designing Businesses with Business Designers*.



Strategic Design

Design found business.

What is it?

Strategic design is about conferring to social and market bodies a system of rules, beliefs, values and tools to deal with the external environment, thus being able to evolve (and so to survive successfully), as well as maintaining and developing one's own identity.

This is the definition of strategic design by Anna Meroni, Associate Professor in strategic design at Politecnico di Milano (Meroni, 2008, p. 32). Her definition is however a bit complicated. What does it mean exactly? To understand it, I will introduce another definition of strategic design that, on the contrary, may seem too simple. "Design can make significant contributions in many ways beyond those visible to customers" affirm Stevens and Moultrie (2011, p. 2) "successful exploitation of this we term 'strategic design'". Strategic design means using design beyond its traditional scope of product development, entering the area of business

development (Keinonen, 2008). In other words, it means to use design to support a business at the strategic level.

'Strategic level', another quite blurry concept that is worthwhile to clarify. As Zhang Yifan (2016, p. 27) points out in his Master's Thesis, "researchers have demonstrated that design can be managed and utilized on three different levels: operational, tactical, and strategic". At the *operational level*, design contributes to companies through its tangible outcomes, that is, products and services. At the *tactical level*, design is used for finding new market opportunities and predicting future customer needs. Instead, at the *strategic level* design participates in setting the scope and defining the direction for a whole company (Borja de Mozota, 2003; Joziase, 2000; Best, 2006). At this level, design activities can also serve for creating a shared strategic vision (Stevens and Moultrie, 2011) that, as Liedtka pointed out (2004), is about designing an enterprise. Therefore, to answer my first research question it is important to understand what is, according to the literature, the role of strategic designers in business.

Role of strategic designers

In his article *Moving from Design to Strategy* (2000, p. 1), Victor Seidel affirms that there are no specific roles for "designers who seek to provide strategic business advice to clients". Nevertheless, in his research he tries to identify recurring





Figure 4:
Strategic design means to support a
business at the strategic level. Adapted
from Best, 2006.

functions of strategic designers in businesses, defining four of them: strategy visualizer, competence prospector, market exploiter and process provider.

The first one, *strategy visualizer*, according to Seidel is the most recurring one. It consists of making the company's strategy tangible through prototypes, pictures and other visualizations. This process, apart from making the strategy clearer and therefore shareable, allow to test it and lets new ideas emerge. On the other hand, the *core competence prospector* role takes place when the designer is contributing to a new strategy. Here he gives a third-party perspective on the company's competences, identifies its dormant capabilities and, based on these, makes his proposal. Also the third role, *market exploiter*, takes place when designers are participating in the creation of a new strategy. However, instead of looking inside the company, in this case they look outside. They provide valuable market insights and, thanks to their customer knowledge, they spot new market opportunities. Finally, *process provider* is about educating a company on the process of managing and using design. In this way, designers empower corporations and their people to create their own design strategy, helping to set the philosophy and spirit of the company.

Another interesting, more recent point of view is given by Turkka Keinonen in his article *Design in Business* (2008). Here



Keinonen identifies six *links*, “informal ways to communicate, emerging modes of operation, or attitudes that designers have adopted [...] to strengthen their organizational influence and maximize the impact of design” (Keinonen 2008, p. 31). Three of these links come from the analysis of companies that use design as a core competence, respectively design for vision, for competence and for expectations. The other three come instead from companies who use design in their periphery. These are design for control, for meaning and for presence. The links are contributions that designers give to businesses at strategic level, and one could consider them also as roles. It is interesting to notice how some links overlap with Seidel’s roles (see Figure 5), respectively *design for vision* with strategy visualizer, *design for competence* with core competence prospector and *design for meaning* with process provider. Instead, while *design for control* and *design for presence* regard strictly the sphere of design - respectively the control upon products and the affirmation of design inside a company - *design for expectations* is something novel and highlights an important issue for this thesis. This link refers to the capability of design to manage the expectations of users and stakeholders towards a product or a project, and to influence their behaviour through different communication techniques. For example, thanks to prototypes designers could support the acceptance of

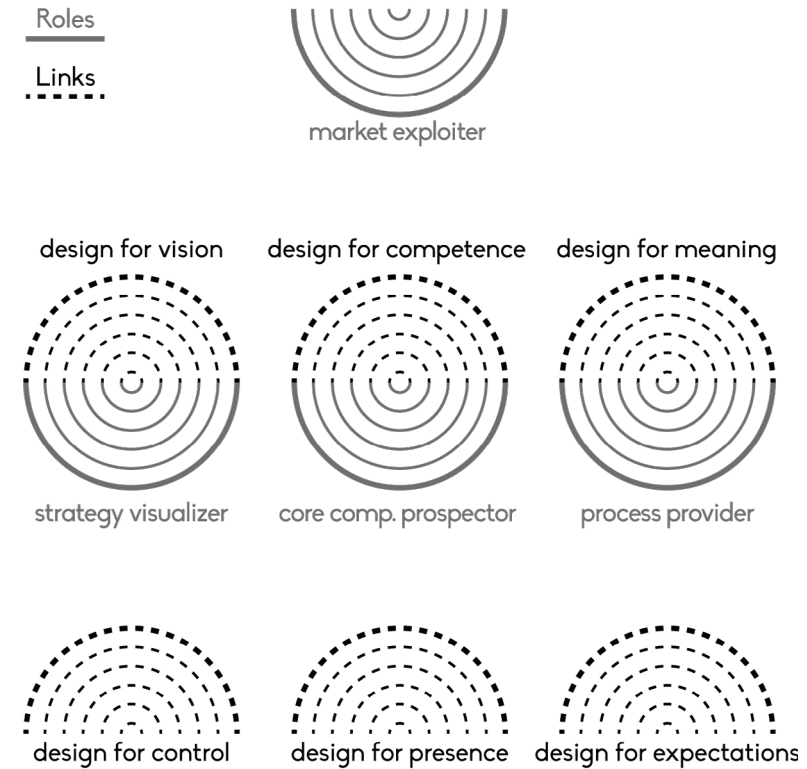


Figure 5:
Comparing Keinonen's
links (2008) with
Seidel's roles (2000).

an innovation or, through brand management, they could make stakeholders more committed to a project.

Summing up what discussed in this section, this thesis can be placed at the intersection of business and strategic design; it belongs to business design because it is about designing a business. Also, it belongs to strategic design because I employed design tools and methodologies to contribute to a business at the strategic level (see Figure 7 at page 57).



Design and Business for Sustainability

How to make them change the world.

Systemic transitions

To solve problems and challenges linked to sustainability, it is generally agreed that a significant reduction in resource use and environmental degradation must be achieved by our societies in the coming years (Lettenmeier, Liedtke and Rohn, 2014; World Wide Fund For Nature [WWF], 2016). However, according to Twomey and Gaziulusoy (2014, p. 3) "there is less agreement as to whether such reductions can be achieved by means of incremental improvements in efficiency and waste reduction", improvements that "keep our lifestyles and physical and social infrastructures relatively unchanged". Instead, the efforts in sustainability should point toward a deeper re-orientation of our lifestyles and socio-technical systems, as well as our way to make business (Twomey and Gaziulusoy, 2014; Gaziulusoy and Brezet, 2015; Haberl et al, 2011; Stroh, 2015). This is relatively easy to say but, how to make these



changes in practice? According to Gaziulusoy and Ryan (2017) systemic transitions are in fact characterized by high complexity and uncertainty. The literature proposed different frameworks on how to manage systemic changes, but the most relevant for this thesis is the one developed by Derk Loorbach, Professor of socio-economic transitions at Erasmus University of Rotterdam, in 2010. According to his framework, in order to achieve societal changes, activities at strategic, tactical and operational level are needed. *Strategic activities* consist of creating goals and visions about the changes to achieve. *Tactical activities* are the actions needed to achieve the envisioned goals, while *operational activities* are experiments, often in search for radical innovations, happening at niche level (Twomey and Gaziulusoy, 2014). Later on, I will use this framework to give context to this thesis and its project.

The contribution of design

If it keeps its traditional focus on single products and services, the design discipline would limit its contribution just to those incremental improvements that from a systemic point of view are seen as quick fixes with only short-term benefits (Twomey and Gaziulusoy, 2014; Scott, Bakker and Quist, 2012; Stroh, 2015). To really make an impact, bamboo tables and cardboard chairs are then not enough. Instead,



if it participates in pursuing systemic changes, design can make a more strategic and long-lasting contribution to sustainability. For this reason, many designers interested in sustainability are today shifting their attention towards strategic design (Meroni, 2008). This discipline allows in fact to approach environmental and social problems from a broader systemic perspective, widening the designers' field of action from single products and services to more complex socio-technical systems. Through this strategic approach, designers can question the course of societal development, test new models for building the future (Fuad-Luke and Hakio, 2012) and, from problem creators, they can become problem solvers (Manzini, 2007).

In this context, growing interest is going towards generative participatory methods. Socio-technical transitions are in fact complex processes that should involve a wide range of actors (Twomey and Gaziulusoy, 2014); co-creation gives the possibility to include their needs and points of view and to successfully address the socio-technical dynamics behind overgrowth and overconsumption (Mont, Neuvonen and Lähteenoja, 2014; Scott et al., 2012; Pawar and Redström, 2016). In this process designers take the role of facilitators, who help participants to deal with uncertainty and complexity while synthesizing, communicating and prototyping different ideas (Gaziulusoy and Ryan, 2017).



Finally, design does not play a central role only in creating future scenarios of a more sustainable society, but also in making them real. As Annikka Järvelin (2012, p. 113) pointed out, designers “can contribute to society by making responsibility more attractive and easier to understand for the consumer. [...] Ecological and ethical thinking can become the model for the masses, as long as it is made sufficiently easy and fun”. In this context, design should focus on the people’s spiritual, emotional, physical and mental well-being, it should be economically and ecologically sustainable while reinforcing cultural and social values (Fuad-Luke, 2007).

The contribution of business

From the business side, a way to pursue sustainability from a systemic perspective is the so-called *corporate responsibility innovation*, as Halme and Laurila (2009) defined it. According to them, this is a level of sustainability-oriented innovation in which the emphasis is put on “developing new business models for solving social and environmental problems. [...] The underlying idea is to cater for the poor or to benefit the environment so that it also makes business sense” (Halme and Laurila, 2009, pp. 329-330). Corporate responsibility innovation can take different forms according to the context in which it is applied. The most relevant

for this thesis, that I considered in my project, is called *sustainable entrepreneurship*. Sustainable entrepreneurship happens when social responsibility innovation is carried out by generally small companies whose sustainability impact derives from their core business operations (Shaltegger and Wagner, 2011). In this context, it will be then more likely to create radical innovations that are able to challenge existing paradigms and create next-practices (Nidumolu, Prahalad and Rangaswami, 2009; Shaltegger and Wagner, 2011). Shaltegger and Wagner (2011) have in fact shown that larger incumbents do not perform well when the innovation is radical. This is partly because of their “rigid routines and higher levels of administration” and partly for the fact that radical innovations “target initially only small niche markets that are unattractive for larger firms” (ibid., pp. 231-232).

Referring to Loorbach’s framework for managing systemic transitions (2010), my project in this thesis can be considered an operational activity. In fact, the business I created with my client is an experiment of social innovation that aims to participate in re-orienting people’s lifestyles towards sustainability and well-being. Due to its experimental nature, it takes place at a niche level. Through the means of design I tried to create solutions for a more sustainable society and to make them attractive. At the same time, I



used business tools to implement these solutions and to try to make them real.

*

As its title suggests, the next chapter is dedicated to the description of my methodology. First, I will explain the general approach I used in my research. Then, I will present the research methods I employed both for conducting the project and for answering the research questions. Also, I will dedicate great space to the description of the case study, that is, the project around which this thesis is built³.

³ see Chapter 1, *The Project*.

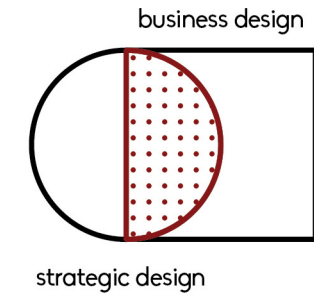


Figure 6:
*My thesis between strategic
and business design.*

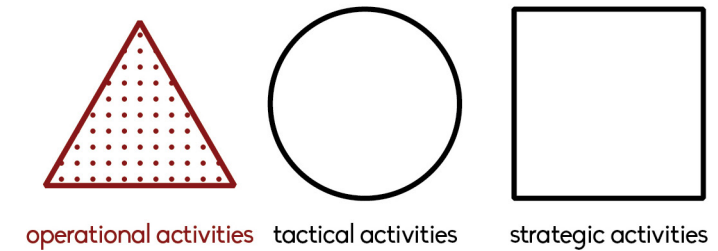


Figure 7:
*My thesis as an operational activity for
systemic transitions (ref Loorbach, 2010)*





After presenting my general approach, in this chapter I explain which methods and techniques I used in my research, showing at the same time how these techniques have been applied in practice. Moreover, I describe in detail how I conducted the case study and I present the business concept. As I used the same research methods both for conducting the case study and for answering the research questions, I will present these methods according to the project phase in which I have employed them (see Figure 10).

Methodology



General Approach

Research approach: Qualitative research

According to John Creswell (2009, p.4), qualitative research “is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” This research approach relies on the information gained by observing people and places in their ‘natural setting’, in a way that is meaningful to the subject under study (Creswell, 2007). This information is collected from multiple sources and, in the form of photographs, interviews, recordings and field notes, it becomes data. The researcher is a fundamental part of this process, not only because he is the one collecting the information but also because he will have to interpret and turn data into general knowledge (Creswell, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Compared to quantitative research, this approach is more subjective and involves data from a smaller amount of people (Anderson, 2006). It aims to build theory by answering a



research question that can be evaluated through different methods like interviews, observation, case study and participatory workshops.

Like in the great part of design projects, also on this occasion I employed a qualitative research approach. This method allowed me to get inspiration, to collect important information for conducting the project and, finally, to answer my research questions.

Methodological framework: Case study

A way to conduct qualitative research is through case study methodology. I used this approach to answer my research questions. According to Robert Yin, case study is a research strategy involving in-depth investigation of single issues in their context, using multiple sources of information (Yin, 2002). Case study is useful in exploratory research to understand existing phenomena for comparison, inspiration or information (Hanington and Bella, 2012). However, while single cases are valuable to explore new issues, they are not enough to build theories. In fact, the case study methodology “welcomes extraordinary cases” more than representative instances (ibid., p. 28). According to Robert and Barbara Sommer, “case studies require the researcher to determine a problem, make initial hypotheses, conduct research through interviews, observations, and other forms



of information gathering, revise hypotheses and theory, and tell a story” (as cited in Hanington and Bella, 2012, p. 28).

Design Method

Designing is easy when you know how to do it, said Bruno Munari, one of the fathers of Italian design; everything becomes easy when you know how to proceed in order to solve a problem (Munari, 1981, p. 8). When the problem is a *design problem*, knowing how to proceed means having a design method. According to Munari a design method is a logical, empirical sequence of necessary actions aimed at achieving the best result with the smallest effort. Cornerstone of his approach is that the solution to a design problem hardly comes from a brilliant idea. Instead, it comes from creativity, fed by research and experimentation.

In his book *Da Cosa Nasce Cosa*, Munari outlines a design process composed by the following ten steps: 1 *definition of the problem*, 2 *dividing the problem in its components*, 3 *collecting data*, 4 *analysing data*, 5 *creativity*, 6 *choice of materials and technologies*, 7 *experimentation*, 8 *mock-ups*, 9 *tests*, 10 *constructive drawings*. For the purposes of this study, I will group these ten steps into the phases I mentioned in the previous chapter and that, under different names, are often present in many design projects: *brief*, *research*, *concept* and *development*. Steps 1 and 2 coinciding with the definition



of the brief, steps 3 and 4 with the research phase, step 5 with the concept generation and steps from 6 to 10 with the concept development (see Figure 8).

According to the British Design Council, even if designers manage the process of design in different ways there are striking similarities in their general approach (British Design Council, 2007). Consequently, the British organization synthesized and represented these similarities in the double diamond process model, composed of four stages: *discover*, *define*, *develop* and *deliver* (Ibid.; See Figure 9). When comparing these stages with the four phases I derived from Munari's method, it can be easily agreed that these two processes follow a very similar flow of activities. In fact, both start from data collection and analysis (discover and research) for generating possible solutions to a design problem (define and concept), solutions that are then refined through tests and prototypes (develop and development). The main difference between these two methods is however that, while Munari's process starts with the problem definition (brief), the double diamond suggests to define the brief after the research phase.

Conscious of similarities and differences between these two design methods, I decided to use in my project a flexible version the brief-research-concept-development process (see Figure 10). This is in fact the method I am

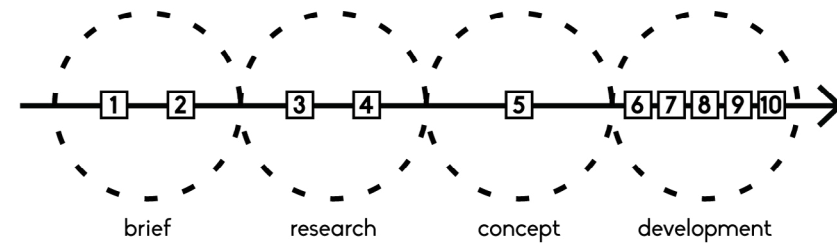


Figure 8:
Grouping Munari's ten steps into four phases.

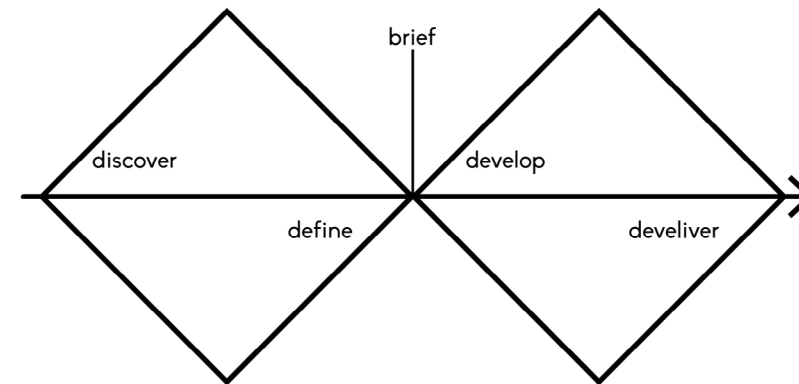
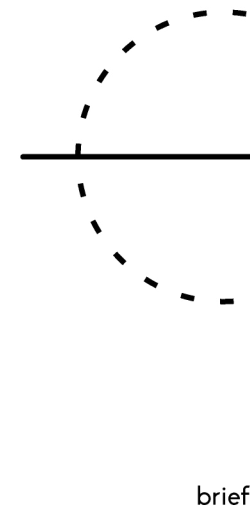


Figure 9:
The double diamond process model.
Adapted from British Design Council, 2007.



more confident with, as I use it since my bachelor studies. To create the concept of the enterprise I have put more emphasis on the research and concept phase, as the businessperson of the team will be in charge of the great part of the development phase.

Let's see if - as Munari used to say (ibid., p. 34) - the problems of design are everywhere and I can use a design method also to create businesses.



*Figure 10:
The design process I used
in my case study, with
the research methods
employed in each phase
and the part of the thesis
they relate to.*

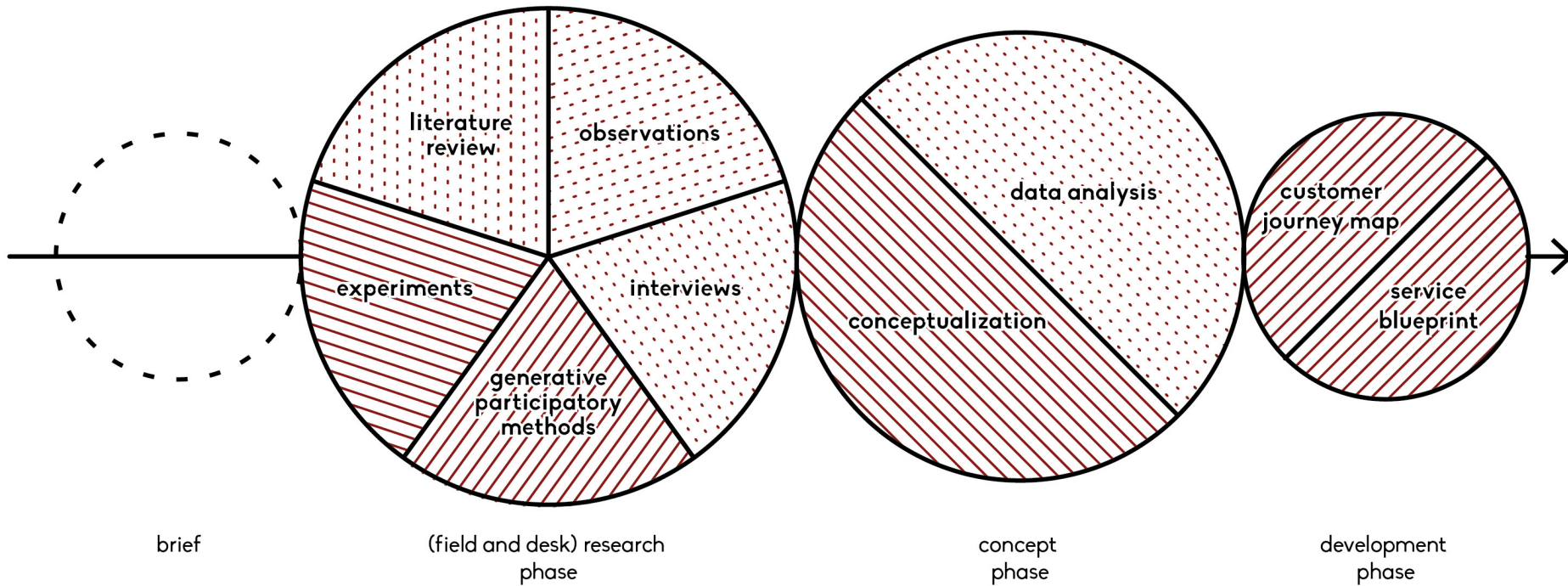


Figure 10:
 The design process I used
 in my case study, with
 the research methods
 employed in each phase
 and the part of the thesis
 they relate to.



Field and Desk Research Phase

This phase of the project was mainly conducted in Barcelona, for the relative similarity of its environment to the one of Manizales. Of course, Spain and Colombia are really different countries: culturally, socially, economically and geographically. Unfortunately however, conducting the research in Colombia was not possible and for this reason I decided to spend some time in the Catalan city. Spain is in fact much more similar to the Latin-American world than Finland. On top of that, Barcelona is a highly innovative city, hosting hundreds of social and sustainable experiments that could be partially exported to Colombia. Moreover, the client was at that time living in Barcelona and in this way I had the possibility to collaborate more closely with her.

In this section I present each method I used during the research phase and I explain how I applied them in practice. The information and data collected during field and desk research were used both to carry out the project

(i.e. to develop the business concept) and to answer the research questions.

Literature review

The first step of my research was undertaking a literature review. Great part of the resources included in the previous chapter, together with other literature, were of core importance for answering my research questions and for conducting the project in practice. The literature about business design, strategic design and sustainability transitions was useful for answering the research question, while the one about sustainable entrepreneurship and well-being for conducting the project.

Observations

Observation is a traditional research method in design and consists of the attentive looking and systematic recording of a specific phenomena (Hanington and Bella, 2012). For Hanington and Bella, observation can take two different forms, according to their degree of formality: structured and semi-structured. In this project I used the latter, as my aim was to gain a first impression and some basic information about the phenomena I was researching. Semi-structured observation is in fact intended to collect “baseline information through immersion, particularly in territory that is new to the designer” (ibid., p. 120). In this

case the researcher observes the environment with an open mind, flexible to greet unexpected happenings. Despite this flexibility, semi-structured observation should be systematic, careful and well documented. The collected information is then elaborated mainly for inspiration purposes (ibid.).

Through observation, my main goal was to gain some baseline information about the sustainability experiments taking place in European cities. These experiments are initiated and run by profit or non-profit organizations and aim to re-orient our lifestyles towards sustainability, therefore participating in systemic changes. They can be considered as operational and tactical activities, referring to Derk Loorbach (Loorbach, 2010). On top of that, I looked for companies in which design played a central role (e.g. owned by a designer or design-led), given that my client is a designer. I tried to observe them critically and to understand their characteristics, assessing to some extent whether they were successful or not. I did this not only in Barcelona, but also in other cities of Europe. I tried to take advantage of travels and activities I did during the period in which I was conducting the project. For these reasons, my observations took place in two different ways.

First, I conducted two days of explicit, more structured observations in the Gracia neighbourhood of Barcelona. Gracia is in fact famous to be the hub of Barcelona’s social



and environmental innovation. Dozens of sustainable enterprises and associations, that I observed systematically, are present in the area. I looked, listened and talked to people and documented my observation through pictures and notes.

Second, I 'kept my eyes open' to everything relevant I could find during my normal life. During trips in Paris, Pamplona and Naples I encountered other sustainability experiments that I observed and documented through pictures and notes in my observation diary. In addition, I collected insights also from my personal environment, in particular from people dealing with sustainability and social innovation.

During my observations I collected pictures and notes in an observation diary. Then, I read the diary in search of themes and insights that I could use to develop the project concept or to answer the research questions. Once I found them, I counted how often they occurred in my observations and, if the result was positive, I turned these themes and insights into findings.

Interviews

Interviews are widely used in design research and practice. Their goal is to get in touch with people's ways of living and to understand the meaning they give to their experiences (Seidman, 2006). According to Hanington and Bella (2012, p. 102), "interviews are best conducted in person so that nuances of personal expression and body language are recognized



An organic greengrocer in Gracia, Barcelona.





La Taconera, an open air farm/zoo between the walls of Pamplona.



in conversation”. In my thesis I decided to employ semi-structured interviews, that differ from structured interviews because they do not follow a specific list of questions and often take the form of a flexible conversation. For this reason, they are the most comfortable for participants and the most suitable for exploratory purposes. Nevertheless, in conducting semi-structured interviews the researcher should still follow a structure; he should have a set of topics to cover and should be able to guide participants towards the intended direction (ibid.).

My goal with the interviews was to understand how designer-entrepreneurs use design mindset, tools and methodologies for creating and running their businesses. Moreover, I wanted to know how they face the challenges of entrepreneurship, what is the contribution of their business to sustainability and, at the same time, I wanted to get some valuable information to use in the project concept.

I conducted in total six interviews, five in Barcelona and one in Naples, to seven entrepreneurs. All interviewees were founders and owners of enterprises I encountered during observations (i.e. the experiments) and each interview corresponded to a different company. I selected small enterprises which used design as their core competence and/or participated in re-orienting people’s lifestyles towards sustainability. Four interviewees out of seven had a creative background (design or architecture) and five businesses out

of six employed design as a core activity. Four businesses out of six directly dealt with sustainability, while the other two did it indirectly¹. All the interviews were conducted in person² and documented through audio recordings and notes.

To analyse the data collected, I used a similar process to the one I employed for the observations. I transcribed the interviews into a diary, that I then read in search of recurring themes and patterns. Every time I discovered a potential theme - useful for answering the research questions or developing the business concept - I listed it in a separate document. Successively, I read again the interview notes and I transcribed relevant quotes under the corresponding theme. The themes that presented quotes from a consistent number of different interviewees became findings and were used to support the generation of the project concept or to answer the research questions.

On top of that, towards the end of the project I conducted a final interview with a business designer to understand more about his profession and the context in which I would have placed my thesis. This interview was conducted via Skype and allowed me to gain valuable information for answering my research questions. I asked him about

¹ for more information see Chapter 4, *Entrepreneurs Contributing to Sustainability*, point 1.

² see the interview questions in the appendix 1.

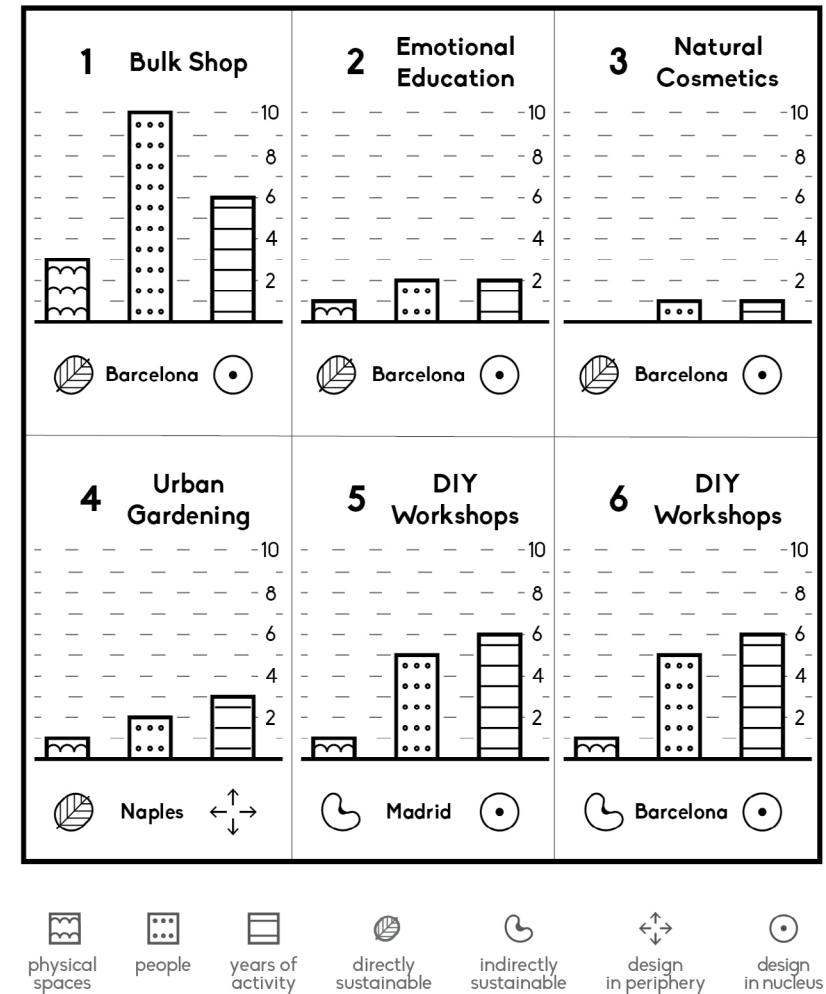


Figure 11: Some data about the interviewees' businesses.

his responsibilities, ways of working and methodology³. Moreover, I tried to understand how he collaborated with the traditional designers working in his firm and how they separated each other's roles.

Generative participatory methods

According to Elizabeth 'Liz' Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers (2013), participatory methods are based on the precondition that creativity is something that all humans, regardless of their social, professional and age condition, own and therefore can employ. By stimulating people's creativity, generative research gives participants a language to express their deeper needs and dreams.

Sanders and Stappers group research methods according to the activities performed by its participants: "what people do, what they say and what they make" (Sanders and Stappers, 2013, p. 66). According to them, generative research methods differ from traditional ones because they rely mainly on *make* tools. Make tools "involve participants by having them perform a creative act with respect to the subject under study" (ibid., p. 70). In this way, they use creative processes to guide our expression and drive participants to take positions and make statements. This research can be particularly useful in the fuzzy front end

³ see the interview questions in appendix 2.

of the design development process and it is employed to generate ideas and insights that can be then used for developing user-centred concepts (ibid.).

I conducted two generative design workshops following the same process, one in Barcelona and one in Naples, both with four participants. My aim was to gather inspiration for the business idea and to get emotionally in touch with 'normal people'⁴, for better understanding what they meant with sustainability and well-being. Running a workshop allowed me to get deeper insights than just through interviews and observations, insights that I then employed to generate the business concept.

According to Sanders and Stappers, in order to stimulate the expression of tacit and latent knowledge, generative research should guide participants through a specific path, the so-called path of expression. The path of expression is "a strategy for taking the participant from observing the present, then back to their memories of earlier experiences, then forward for dreaming desired futures" (Sanders and Stappers, 2013, p. 74). I designed the workshop activities following these suggestions. Each workshop included three

⁴ I refer here to 'normal people' because I am aware that the workshop participants were different from the potential customers of the business. They were in fact from Barcelona and Naples and not from Manizales, the city where the business is going to be founded.



activities plus a set of sensitizing exercises to be conducted at home⁵. The sensitizing exercises had the goal of making participants reflect about their personal idea of well-being and to prepare them for the workshop. On the other hand, the workshop activities asked participants to reflect about their past, present and future perceptions of well-being. Outcome of the workshops were artefacts, collages or books made by participants where they collected the results of the activities. Following the principles of make research tools, one of the goals for the workshops was to let participants use their hands and make something tangible they could take home. Moreover, the workshop was designed as a holistic experience with visually coherent touch points. The same visual language was in fact employed in the artefacts I used for recruiting participants (poster, flyers, banners), in the instructions for the sensitizing exercises, in the workshop material and in the final artefact. Talking about the participants' recruitment, for the workshop in Barcelona this was carried out in collaboration with *La Nau Espacial*, a space dedicated to the emotional education of kids and one of the businesses I encountered in my observations and interviews. Interested in learning more about co-creation, they accepted to make their space and social networks available for a symbolic price. The participants

⁵ see the Workshop Plans, appendix n.3 and 4.

of this workshop were therefore recruited between the parents of the kids who used to go to *La Nau Espacial*. As they all had children of relatively similar ages, I decided to investigate in this workshop also the perception they had, as parents, of their kids' well-being. This allowed me to get a more complete picture of their opinions and feelings, given that children are such an important part in young parents' life.

In contrast, because the workshop in Naples was originally a prototype, its participants were recruited between friends and relatives and the workshop conducted on neutral ground (the home of one relative who did not participate in the workshop). However, after analysing the results of this workshop I realised that they were still relevant for the project. In fact, two workshops in different cities but with similar activities gave me the possibility to compare the perception that people of different age, culture and social extraction have of well-being (see Figure 12 for the comparison of the two workshops).

In both workshops I documented the activities and their outcomes through pictures and audio recordings. To analyse the raw data I referred to Sanders' and Stappers' *analysis on the wall* (2013, p.212-215). I examined visually the collected material in search of patterns and insights. First, I compared the outcomes of different activities in the same workshop and then, the results of Barcelona with the ones of Naples.





Advertising the workshop in Barcelona.



Poster and flyers for the workshop in Barcelona.



Material for the workshops.



Instructions for the sensitizing exercises.





The workshop in Barcelona.



The workshop in Naples.



Finally, I did not employ participatory methods only in the workshops but also throughout my collaboration with the client. I tried in fact to include the client in the design process and I regularly shared with her my ideas and reflections. Moreover, I often presented to her several exploratory concepts in order to grasp which was her preferred direction for the enterprise. My goal was in fact to understand her needs, capabilities and interests. More than just an effective concept, I wanted to design a business that could suit her like a good dress.

Experiments

Along with the aforementioned research activities I conducted another one, more informal, in close collaboration with my client. My client is in fact intolerant to gluten and lactose and, on top of that, she does not eat meat or onions. Therefore, as one of her passions is eating and cooking, she started to experiment with food in order to find a tasty way to eat at home, respectful of her intolerances and beliefs. Eating out has in fact become problematic for her, as finding the right food in restaurants, parties and other events was often too difficult. Her gastronomic experiments finally led to a number of dishes that she documented with pictures, some of which I included in this section.

When I knew about these dishes and I saw the pictures, I got interested about the issue and I collaborated with

	NAPLES	BARCELONA
Participants	4	4
age	55-61	35-43
sex	1M-3F	1M-3F
nationality	Italian	Spanish

Figure 12:
Comparing the
workshop in Naples with
the one in Barcelona.



my client in making the experiments. This collaboration had two main consequences. First, it allowed my client to cross-fertilise her culinary practices, traditionally based on Colombian cuisine, with Italian recipes. Second, it allowed me to discover my client's passions and talents. This was the most important consequence because, as I said earlier, I wanted to design a business that could suit my client like a good dress. Thus, I considered her as the first and main user of my business idea. The concept had to be aligned with her interests, talents, beliefs, and with the way how she framed sustainability and well-being.

In conducting these experiments I have been a *core competence prospector* (Seidel, 2000), as this activity was specifically aimed at discovering and valorising my client's dormant capabilities. On top of that, as I will explain later on in the *Concept Phase* section, the knowledge generated was at the base of the project concept and guided my choice for which market to choose for the enterprise⁶.

⁶ see Chapter 3, *Concept Phase*, section *The business concept*.



Some dishes created by the client.

Concept Phase

Once I gathered sufficient information, the time came to define the business concept. Therefore, I analysed the data collected and I turned it into requirements. After conceptualizing a business idea, I finally presented it to my client and stakeholders in order to receive their feedback.

Data Analysis

My field research produced a considerable amount of data; to analyse it, I referred to Sanders' and Stappers' version of Ackoff's DIKW scheme (Ackoff, 1989; Sanders and Stappers, 2013). This simple scheme, elaborated to guide analysis, distinguishes four levels of sense-making: *data*, *information*, *knowledge* and *wisdom*. By stepping from the lowest level to the highest, it is possible to transform data into information, information into knowledge and eventually knowledge into wisdom and theories. When going through this process the researcher's personal interpretation is needed on several

occasions and will inevitably influence the result.

With this method I generated two kind of findings (see figure 13): the ones I used for developing the project concept - the *concept findings* - and the ones I used to answer the research questions - the *research findings* (some findings were however used for both). While I will present the research findings in the next chapter, the concept findings are listed in *The business concept* section.

Conceptualization

Throughout the project I kept a research book where I collected the concept findings together with my reflections. Each piece of this information was then elaborated and turned into requirements for the new enterprise. On top of that, every time I had an idea I wrote it down on the research book, keeping it as a possible 'ingredient' for the final concept. Not only I wrote these ideas down but I regularly presented them to the client in order to understand which direction she wanted to give to her enterprise. I wanted the client to participate actively to the idea generation, being that this business was supposed to become her life mate for many years. Based on the concept findings, and on the preferences and attitudes of the client, I selected some of these ideas and I finally developed them into a concept.





Figure 13:
Concept findings and
research findings.



The Business Concept



Concept findings

My aim with the concept findings was to get insights and inspiration for the project concept and not necessarily to generate general knowledge. For this reason, in this section I often stopped on the knowledge level of analysis and I did not try to generalize my data in order to get theories. The findings are organized in four different layers: entrepreneurs, enterprises, users and transitions. Each of these layers helped me to define a different aspect of the project concept. The first layer, *entrepreneurs*, helped me to build the business idea around my client. The second one, *enterprises*, gave me practical insights on how to structure the company. The third one, *users*, provided me with information on how to 'sell' sustainability to people. The fourth layer, *transitions*, allowed me to understand how this enterprise could reach its social and environmental goals. The layers are linked and not mutually exclusive; one finding could very well have an effect on two layers. The findings are presented in relation to the research method that produced them: literature review, observation, interviews or generative participatory methods.



Figure 14:
The four layers in which
I grouped the concept
findings.

Findings from literature review

Entrepreneurs. According to Belz and Binder (2015) sustainable entrepreneurs tackle an environmental or social problem they experienced first-hand in their life. Thus, one may think that they are personally involved - and highly motivated - to accomplish the mission of their business. This strong influence of the company leader on the business goals is for Shaltegger and Wagner (2011, p.226) the reason why “sustainable entrepreneurs constitute and shape the ‘face’ of their company”. For these reasons I tried to create a business concept that, while reflecting my client’s personality, could resonate with her experiences and beliefs.

For Belz and Binder then (2015, par. *Sustainable Entrepreneurship Process*) “most sustainable entrepreneurs have little or no business experience”, and this is also the case of my client. Nonetheless, the authors showed that these entrepreneurs are quite structured in creating their business. They often employ a detailed business plan (ibid.), therefore recognizing the importance of having business knowledge and using business tools. This was one of the reasons why I supported the choice of delegating great part of the business development to the businessperson of the team. I believed in fact that, through her education

and experience, she could better support my client in that phase.

Enterprises. Funding is a critical activity for new enterprises (Shane, 2003 as cited in Belz and Binder 2015), including sustainable ones. Nevertheless, “the social and environmental good of sustainable enterprises opens up the door to public funding and new unconventional forms of funding” (Belz and Binder, 2015, par. *Conclusions*). With this in mind, when developing the business concept I tried to always consider the economical side of my ideas, and I kept ‘the eyes open’ for any funding opportunity that could be suitable for my client.

Furthermore, in order to succeed, sustainable enterprises “have to align clearly defined and prioritized sustainability goals with customer benefits” (Keskin et al., 2013 as cited in Belz and Binder, 2015, par. *Sustainable Entrepreneurship Process*). Thus, a positive environmental or social impact can’t be the only motivation for adopting sustainable lifestyles. This issue, central for this project, was confirmed by my interviews and observations⁷ and shaped important aspects of the project concept.

According to Belz and Binder then (2015), sustainable enterprises enter segments in the higher end of the market, targeting niches more than the mass market. In my project I challenged this statement, trying to

⁷ see Chapter 4, section *Entrepreneurs Contributing to Sustainability*,

contribute with this company in making sustainable lifestyles accessible to a relatively wider public.

Users. In the previous paragraph I explained how, in order to ‘sell’ sustainable innovations, it is important to align environmental and social goals with more basic consumers’ needs. At the same time, it is vital to employ an effective communication that, while speaking to people’s emotions, could help them to understand the benefits of making sustainable consumer choices (Belz and Peattie, 2012).

Switching for a moment the focus away from sustainability, according to Hicks et al (2006, p. 38) “well-being is [...] multidimensional [...] and consists of both objective and subjective elements”. As I will explain soon, this issue has been of core importance for interpreting the data collected during the workshops.

Transitions. In order to spread sustainable lifestyles it is vital to make these attractive and accessible to a wide public (Belz and Peattie, 2012). In this context, according to Järvelin, design has the possibility to extend ecological and ethical thinking to the masses “by making sustainability more attractive and easy to understand” (2012, p. 113). However, the motivations behind sustainable consumer behaviours are complex

and do not depend only on making sustainability easy and fun. Instead, according to Belz and Peattie (2012) the process of adopting sustainable lifestyles is influenced by a series of factors such as business practices, institutions, policies, culture and - most importantly for this thesis - society. The latter plays in fact a central role in motivating us to engage in sustainable activities, shaping our perception of what is ‘normal’ and acceptable (ibid.). Social innovations is hence vital to change the way we live and the way we frame quality of life and well-being (Manzini, 2006 as cited in Mont et al., 2014) and this is one of the reasons why, in this project, I preferred to focus on social rather than technological innovation.

Findings from observations

Enterprises. Between the sustainable enterprises I observed, the ones dealing with food were the most popular in terms of public. These kind of businesses were in fact often crowded and - compared to the other sustainable businesses - the most common. These were mainly small and medium enterprises, restaurants and shops selling healthy, organic and local food.

Together with food businesses, also second-hand shops appeared relatively widespread. However, their popularity depended on the geographical context;

there are in fact more second-hand shops in Helsinki than in Barcelona and more in Barcelona than in Naples. In Manizales, while the idea of eating more healthy food is starting to become popular, buying from second-hand shops is still seen with some prejudices, and it is linked by some people to poverty and untidiness. Also this issue influenced me in choosing the main topic of the business.

Users. The biggest sustainable enterprise I encountered during my observations was a chain of supermarkets which sold organic food around Spain. This company managed to make organic food accessible by meeting several of its users' needs. They had in fact a wide variety of good-quality food, their prices were not too high and the shops were well-positioned in the city. Additionally, they had a compelling user experience and used an effective communication. On the contrary, some other organic-food shops sold few products, employed a 'hippie' aesthetic and organized their interiors as chemist shops. In this way they linked their products with the concepts of sickness and rebellion, thus discouraging people who wanted to make sustainable consumer choices and still feel normal.

Simone Gaglione

Transitions. Some sustainability - especially environmental one - is today 'cool', particularly in cities like Helsinki and Barcelona. In these contexts sustainability acquired meanings that go beyond having a positive environmental or social impact. Recycling, buying organic food or wearing second-hand clothes became for some people a way to express their identity and establish their place in society. These sustainability actions acquired therefore the same meaning that consumption has in consumer societies: it participates in making people part of communities, building their identities and communicating their ideas (Baudrillard, 1968; Fiorani, 2001; Strannegård & Dobers 2010). As I will demonstrate later⁸, this phenomenon is helping sustainable lifestyles to spread.

Findings from interviews

Entrepreneurs. All the interviewees with a creative background employed design extensively in their business. "I will never stop being a designer", told me one of them. These designers-entrepreneurs have an empirical way to create, conduct and develop their business. Their choices are often based on intuition and

⁸ see Chapter 4, section *Entrepreneurs Contributing to Sustainability, Discussion through literature.*

Designers Designing Businesses

experimentation. “Creating this business has been very natural and organic” affirmed one of my interviewees “we built it with time, piece after piece”.

On top of that, all the interviewees showed me that, when creating a business, background knowledge about how to run it is important but not fundamental. One interviewee for example, co-owner of a community garden, founded her enterprise without being an expert cultivator. She just wanted to have a life closer to nature, and started to study farming after establishing her business. For many interviewees in fact, one of the most important things when running a business was to express their passions and values.

Transitions. All my interviewees managed a business directly or indirectly linked to sustainability. However, their clients did not always chose them for ecological or environmental reasons. Often in fact, they were more interested in e.g. the company’s products, quality or ‘vibe’ - as one of the interviewees defined it. Still, once customers became loyal they used to get more involved in sustainability and started to adopt sustainable lifestyles.

Findings from generative participatory methods

Users. As I said earlier, well-being is a multidimensional

and nebulous concept. In fact, through the experience of conducting the workshops I managed to understand that is hard to catch and express what influences our well-being deeply. Even though, I still tried to comprehend which were the factors that affected my participants’ well-being more often. Personal relations - with family, friends and people in general - resulted to be the most frequent meaning my participants gave to this concept, both in Naples and Barcelona. After personal relations, the most recurring meaning of well being was good food; a tasty and (sometimes) healthy meal, often shared with friends and relatives. Apart these two factors, the participants of the workshops in Barcelona and Naples had very different perceptions of this concept. Being aware that they came from different cities and they were in different stages of their life, I may thus deduce that the perception of well-being varies with age and culture.

Another important finding from the workshops was that participants did not link sustainable behaviour systematically to their well-being. They did not feel that, by adopting sustainable lifestyles, they would have consequently improved their health or happiness. Nevertheless, they showed me to be happy to contribute to sustainability when this was made easy and fun. They were glad that, by participating to

a workshop that was free, interesting and useful - for themselves and their families - they could contribute to the research about sustainability.

Findings from experiments

Entrepreneurs. A great talent and passion of the client is cooking. She has also good knowledge about food, its properties and how to prepare it for people with special diets. She collected a consistent number of recipes that, while being gluten-, lactose-, onion- and meat-free, are nutritive, tasty and reflect Colombian and Italian food cultures. She is willing to share her diet with her fellow citizens and she wants to show to the people like her how to live special diet positively by eating in a new way.

Simone Gaglione

The Concept

Good food for 'special' people

The general field - or market - of the business had to be something the client liked and was confident with, as this is fundamental in order to enjoy and be successful when running an enterprise. As I discovered through the *experiments*, one of the client's talents and passions is good food. Good food that, for the participants of the workshops, is also one of the most recurring meanings of well-being. "Man is what he eats", used to say Ludwig Feuerbach, German philosopher and anthropologist of the XIX century. Food affects directly our health - mentally and physically, positively and negatively - with consequences on our well-being. On top of that, several studies demonstrated that nutrition is, between all human activities, the one with the higher environmental impact (Lettenmeier et al., 2014; Tukker et al., 2006); for Tukker et al. (2006) it accounts for 20-30% of our total footprint, while housing and transportation account respectively for 20-35% and 15%. For these reasons, I decided the business will deal with food.

Designers Designing Businesses

Once the general field was set I could start to narrow the scope in order to find the specific problem this business had to solve. According to Belz and Binder (2015, par. *Recognizing a Social or Ecological Problem*), “a potential starting point of the SEP (Sustainable Enterprise, A/N) is a particular social (ecological) problem on a local or global scale that prospective sustainable entrepreneurs encounter first-hand in their private or professional lives”. Believing in this, I looked at the client’s range of experiences as a possible source of inspiration. Her skills in cooking and inventing vegetarian, gluten-, lactose- and onion-free dishes seemed a valuable talent and a possible starting point for her enterprise. On top of that, the client often told me she really liked being in Europe because she always could find the right food for her needs. Being vegetarian and intolerant was not a problem when she was in Barcelona. Many supermarkets sold gluten and lactose-free food and she could even find restaurants explicitly catering for intolerants. In Manizales instead, my client’s special diet forced her to cook and eat at home. She did not like anymore eating out (e.g. at parties or events) because she could never find the right food for her needs. In fact, having special eating requirements in Colombia often means

making sacrifices and eating boring food, feeling ‘sick’ and abnormal. In fact, the culture of alternative diets is not common yet in this country and the range of special products is reduced. Assuming that the client was not the only one in her city with a special diet (part of the businessperson’s work will be to confirm this assumption through market research) and that the market of special foods is going to grow in Colombia as it is growing in Europe, I decided to selected this as the problem to solve. This business had to allow people with special diets to eat good food, easily.

A business easy to fund

According to Shane (2003), “funding an entrepreneurial venture is a critical activity in the formation of a new business” (as cited in Belz and Binder, 2015, par. *Funding and Forming a Sustainable Enterprise*). With this in mind, around the previously discussed themes I developed a business idea that could be launched with a minimum investment and then developed according to its economical success. I thought of a home delivery service of warm meals, explicitly for special diets.

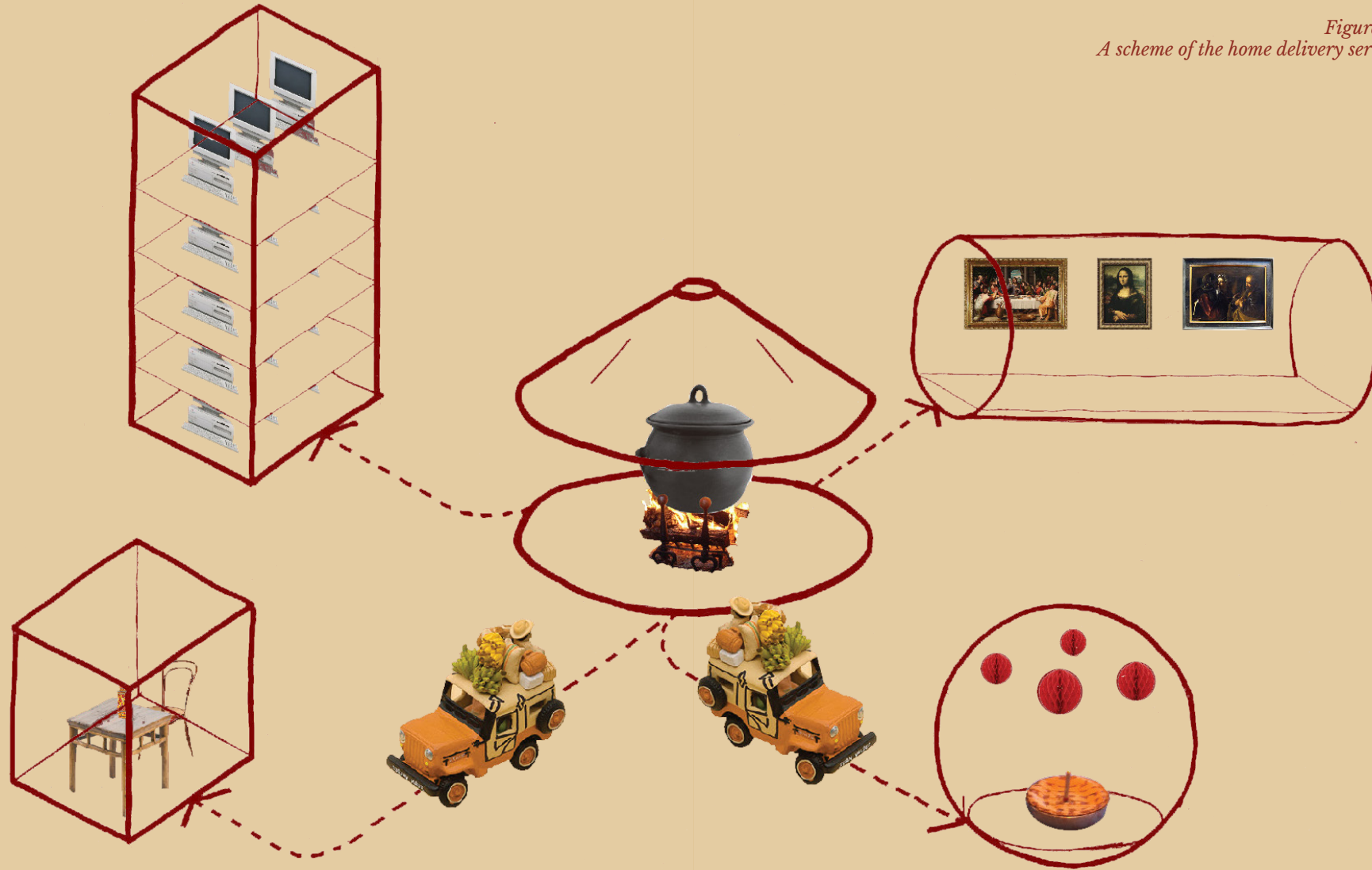


Figure 15:
A scheme of the home delivery service.

No matter if you can't eat sugar, gluten, lactose, eggs or nuts; whatever your needs are we will prepare the right meal for you and we will deliver it to your home, workplace or wherever you need. Our goal is to help people with special food requirements, being these caused by intolerances, diseases or personal beliefs, to enjoy their food wherever they are. Even if they don't want, don't know or don't have the time to cook.

-value proposition of the company

Coming back to the economical issues, being the service just a home delivery I assumed the initial investment for space, labour and permissions to be minimum. Consequently, the risks were reduced and the client could start her company with less worries. However, I said earlier that the business is supposed to develop according to its economical success. The concept included therefore the possibility of turning the home delivery service first into a food stall and then into a restaurant (see Figures 16 and 17).

The food and the service: cool, friendly and accessible.

Another objective of this business is to participate in spreading the idea that having special diets doesn't mean making big sacrifices. The goal is to show that

even without (e.g.) meat, sugar or lactose one can still enjoy food. Clearly, the main tool for reaching this goal will be the meals the company cooks and delivers. It will have to be good food, in every sense. Consequently, the cooks will employ high quality and natural ingredients (possibly organic) combined in healthy, tasty, nutritive and culturally rich recipes. The menu will be a fusion of Italian and Colombian cuisine and it will be based on the culinary experiments conducted by the client⁹. Food however, even if it is going to be the main instrument, cannot be the only one for reaching this goal. "Ecological and ethical thinking can become the model for the masses, as long as it is made sufficiently easy and fun", affirms Annikka Järvelin (2012, p. 113). Thus, the service and the communication will be of core importance. Ordering and eating a meal will have to be a friendly and enjoyable experience. The users won't have to feel 'sick' or 'abnormal' because they choose this service. The company will be happy and will help its customers to feel the same. First step of this communication will be the company's name; I suggested *da Daniela* - 'Daniela's' in Italian - where the latter is the name of the client. This will give personality to the business, associating it to a

⁹ see Chapter 3, *Field and Desk Research*, section *Experiments*.

real person, its owner. Moreover, this name does not refer directly to special diets and allows customers to ‘forget’ them for a second. On top of that, this name will also provide a hint on its multicultural menu. Along with the company’s communication, the service will have to be simple, intuitive and efficient. For the users, ordering a meal will have to be more convenient than cooking. Together with my client, I want in fact to challenge the fact that good (and sustainable) food is for wealthy people. Prices will be a central issue for this enterprise. Even if they will be slightly higher than normal food deliveries, they will stay accessible to a large part of the population and the Colombian middle-class will be the business’ main target.

Two ways to sustainability

Lettenmeier et al. (2014) affirm that the nutrition footprint of Finnish households should be reduced in the next years by 49%. According to their research, this can be achieved by slightly reducing the amount of food consumption, by eating considerably less meat and dairy products and by preventing food waste (ibid.). Even if this number was calculated for a different country, their recommendations are undoubtedly valid worldwide and, I would add, not

only for sustainability purposes. With this in mind, in creating the company’s daily menu the client will not use meat and dairy products, even when this is not explicitly required by her customers. Users will have therefore the possibility to experience not only alternative, but also sustainable diets. “We did thirty, let’s do thirty-one” says a popular Italian adage. By spreading these diets and making them attractive, I hope with my client to participate in reducing the consumption of meat and dairy products. Customers will be the advocates of this change: by choosing *da Daniela* they can show to the people around them that they can eat sustainably while enjoying more.

However, this enterprise will not only challenge people, but also the way to make business. In fact, as stated by Lettenmeier et al. (2014, p. 489) in order to reach a sustainable future “both production and consumption patterns have to be changed”. Thus, the client will use her business as an experimentation platform for sustainably managing practices; from the most traditional - like reducing food waste - to the most experimental ones that can come in her mind while running the business. The enterprise will be managed also through the principles of sustainability, which will inform decision making and inspire innovation.



*Figure 16:
The home delivery service could
eventually develop into a food truck.*



Well-being for everyone

Da Daniela aims at improving the well-being of people with special food requirements both physically and psychologically. Psychologically because, by making this food cool, friendly and accessible it will help them to stop feeling 'sick' because of their diet. Physically because it will make easier for them to respect their food requirements. The final goal is to let them feel lucky to have a special diet because - through *da Daniela* - they discovered a new way to eat: healthy, tasty and also sustainable. However, healthy and tasty food is good for everyone. So, this business is not only targeted at people with special diets; instead, through good food, *da Daniela* can improve everyone's well-being.

Design as a core competitive advantage

One of the most interesting findings from the interviews was that designers who start enterprises still want to feel and work as designers. For this reason, they tend to put this discipline at the core of their business, turning it into a competitive advantage. This was also the case for my client, who explicitly asked me to put design at the centre of her future business. She wanted her enterprise to give extensive possibilities to design at the operational, tactical and strategic level. Design will have to be one



of the main tools for differentiation and it will have to be implemented in every touch point of the company. Design will be therefore employed for making the company and its products cool, friendly and accessible. Service design will be used to create a compelling, intuitive and enjoyable customer experience. Graphic design to create an effective communication that, while speaking to people's emotions, can show them clearly the benefits of choosing *da Daniela*. Product design will materialize the company's identity and core principles while participating in creating the best customer experience. Food design will participate in making the meals unique, helping *da Daniela* to stand apart from competition.





Figure 17:
 Finally, the food truck could become a restaurant/
 market of sustainable food for special diets.



Development Phase

As discussed earlier, in this project I put more emphasis on the research and concept phase. I didn't go deep into the development phase because the businessperson of the team was in charge of this. Her task was to help the client with market research and the development of the business model and business plan. After presenting the concept and making some modifications, my 'last mile' was to deliver it to the businessperson in a detailed and understandable form. For this purpose I chose the *customer journey map* and the *service blueprint* tools, which allowed me to present the concept from different points of view. These tools helped me not only to communicate my ideas but also to define the concept in more detail.

Customer journey map

According to Stickdorn and Schneider, "a customer journey map provides a vivid but structured visualization of a service

user's experience" (Stickdorn and Schneider, 2011 p. 95). This tool helps in fact to identify the touch points where users interact with a service, describing their emotions during this process. By connecting these points of interaction, customer journey maps manage to represent the overall customer experience from the user's point of view in an accessible and detailed manner. In this way it is possible to analyse the experience, breaking it in its components and identifying both problem areas and opportunities for innovation (ibid.).

When creating this map I tried to imagine the experience of a user who is approaching *da Daniela* for the first time. Between all the possibilities in fact, I found this to be the most appropriate to the situation, useful for a service that still has to born. Thus, I carefully thought how to structure the service and which touch points (physical and virtual) to include in it. These had to be coherent with all the requirements set in the concept phase.

To keep the investment minimum and the service close to its users' habits, I suggested the menu of the day to be displayed everyday on the home page of the company's website and the orders to be placed by phone. The latter is in fact still a popular ordering method in Manizales. At the same time, this choice will allow my client to build a simpler website. For the moment I excluded the possibility



Figure 18:
The customer journey map.

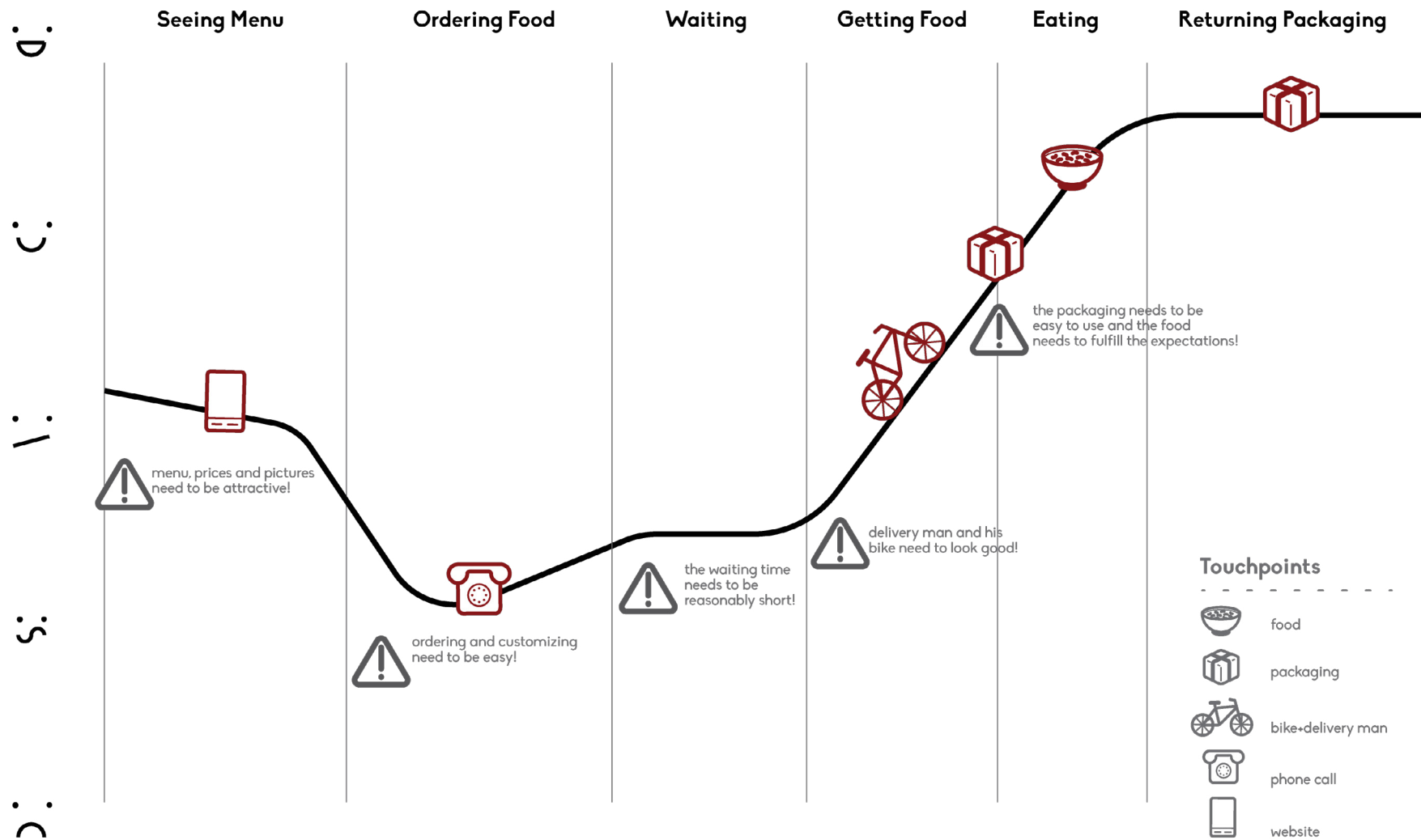


Figure 18:
The customer journey map.

of having a mobile application, as it would increase the initial investment and it would make the service accessible only to some part of the population. To be faithful to the company's principles, to reduce the initial investment but also for a matter of image I suggested to deliver the food through electric bikes. Besides the intuitive convenience in terms of emissions and corporate image, an electric bike is in fact cheaper than a motorbike, it doesn't consume gasoline and it doesn't need any insurance. Finally, one of the most important touch points after the food will be its packaging. The latter will go in the user's hands; it will have to represent the business' identity and core values while protecting the meal. Even if I am aware that this would represent a big challenge, I suggested to make the packaging returnable. This will not only reduce the company's material consumption and improve its image, but will also help to save money while contributing in creating a stronger customer relationship. The customers will be incentivised to return the packaging at the next delivery: a good reason to order another meal from *da Daniela*.

On top of giving these suggestions I tried to identify the most problematic areas of the experience, calling the team's attention on those points. As it is possible to see in the map (see Figure 18), I considered the ordering part as the most tricky one of the experience. Being the service a



food delivery for special diets, the communication of the users' specific eating requirements has to be as smooth as possible. The employee on the phone has to make the users comfortable, being careful to their needs and simplifying their work as much as possible. Finally, I accompanied each point of the journey with some specific suggestions, whereof the most important is undoubtedly that the food has to be good.

Service blueprint

Service blueprints are maps describing a service system so that all the people involved can understand and interact with it. It visualizes the roles that customers, employees and other participants carry out in the service, showing the interactions they have with each other (Stickdorn and Schneider, 2011). These interactions are often classified as visible and invisible and, in the map, they are separated by a line called line of visibility. Differently from the customer journey maps, which show mainly the user's point of view, service blueprints give space to the perspectives of all the people involved in the service: users, employees, service providers and other relevant people. Also the service blueprints pinpoint material and visual touch points of the service and, by "outlining all of the elements contained within a service, the blueprint allows the most crucial areas to be identified" (ibid., p. 125).



client



helper



cook



delivery man

Figure 18b:
The service blueprint.

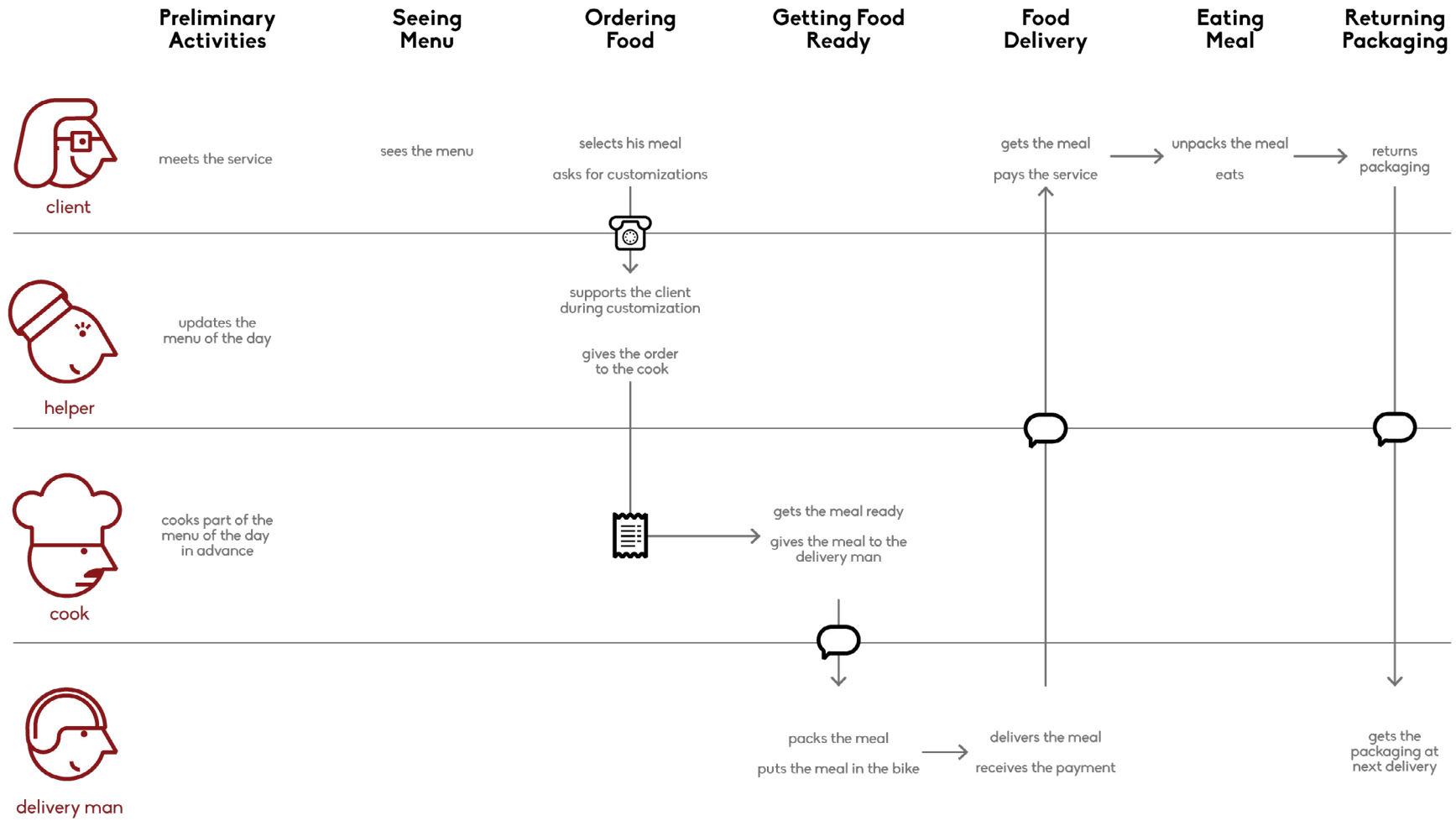


Figure 18b:
The service blueprint.

The first step for building this blueprint was to identify the actors of the service that, beside the users, are the employees of the company. A cook and a manager/helper (one of them will be my client) will be working in the kitchen, the only physical space of the enterprise. Working together will foster collaboration, helping them to control the quality of service and meals. On top of that there will be one (or more, depending on the development of the company) delivery person. Everyone's role within the service is explained in the map, and the way how their interaction happens is highlighted through icons. I decided not to include the line of visibility as I felt that - in this case - it did not add any relevant information to my blueprint. Also on this occasion, making this map helped me to break the service into its components and to highlight some points that needed further development. In particular, how people will get to know about the business needs to be studied carefully. This kind of service is in fact quite specialized and new for Manizales, and the advertisements will have to use the right language for reaching the right people. On top of that, also the payment process can be developed further; there could be for example subscription plans, to enhance customers' loyalty and to serve people who need their meals on a regular basis (e.g. at work).

*

In this chapter I explained how I conducted the case study



and I presented the research approaches and methods I employed during the project. In the next chapter I will present and discuss the findings, derived from the same research methods, that I used to answer my research questions.





In this chapter I dive deeply into the research findings, that I acquired through having undertaken a case study of designing a business and that I used to answer my research questions. These findings are grouped into four themes, and each theme corresponds to a section of the chapter. I present the findings in relation to the research methods that produced them - interviews, observation or case study - and I finally compare them with the literature.

Research Findings and Discussion



Designers Designing their own Business

In this section I explain how, according to my observations and interviews¹, design-entrepreneurs design their businesses. These findings were used to answer the first research question and part of the second.

Findings from interviews

1. Designers² spent more time and efforts than non-designers in defining the concept of their business. For non-designers, it can be enough to take an idea from somewhere - a trip, a friend, the internet etc. - and adapt it to their specific

¹ see interviews questions in the appendix 1.

² In points 1 to 6 of this section, and in Figure 19, with the term designers I will refer to the four interviewees with a creative background (three designers and one architect). With the term non-designers I will refer instead to the interviewees who received a different kind of education (respectively, an actor, an anthropologist and a marketer).



needs. Instead, designers follow a more articulated process, starting from an initial, often personal idea and turning it, after several steps, into their business.

2. Every designer managed his or her business as if it was a design project. They based their choices on benchmarking, creativity, experimentation and, sometimes, on user research. To develop their business they followed a more or less structured *brief-research-concept-development* process³, relying on intuition and using prototypes. Moreover, they used to modify their business while running it; referring to the words of an interviewee, they “went on through a process of trial and error”. Through this intuitive and non-linear approach, they managed to let their business evolve and to adapt it to the challenges they encountered on their way.

3. All interviewees highlighted the importance of enjoying their job. In the case of designers, this always included designing and creating. “I will always be a designer, I cannot quit being so”, said one of the interviewees. For non-designers instead, carrying on their original profession was less important.

4. Designers built their enterprise around design and creativity. When I asked my interviewees about the role of design in their companies, they mentioned communication, visual identity, products, interiors and customer experience,

³ see Chapter 3, *General Approach*, section *Design Method*

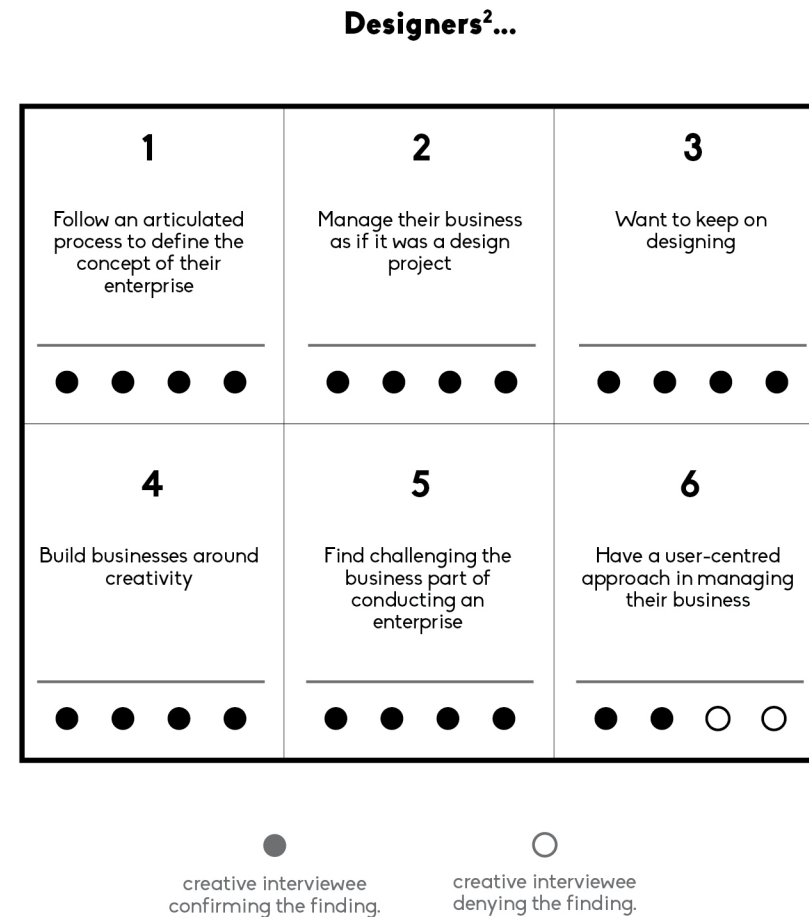


Figure 19: Findings from interviews.



depending on the enterprise. In the interviews however, design was never referred to as a discipline useful to conceptualize a business.

5. For every designer the business part was the most challenging one of running an enterprise. According to one interviewee, “sales, accounting, market research... these are words that designers do not have in their blood”. Money was a secondary motivation for two designers out of four and, for three designers out of four, growing the business was not a main objective. However, all interviewees acknowledge that both, money and growth, are still important; not only to keep their projects going but also as a personal reward. For this reason, they all acknowledged the usefulness of having business knowledge, and two designers out of four asked for business advice either to external services or collaborators.

6. Not all designers had a user-centred approach in managing their business. Only two designers out of four conducted market and user research to develop their products. These ‘user-centred’ designers carried out their research through prototypes, interviews, participatory research and benchmarking, typical techniques of the design practice. Instead, the other designers developed their products according to their interests and capabilities, attracting in this way only people who were similar to them.



Findings from observations

7. Businesses owned only by designers are often small. Designers’ companies I encountered in my observation had usually one to three employees and only one physical space.

8. Designers’ businesses made a relatively wide use of design. One of the most immediate ways to distinguish them was in fact their clean aesthetic and coherent visual identity, applied to spaces, products and visuals. Often than, some of these companies offered compelling user experiences. These aspects highlight that these enterprises.

9. Many designers start their enterprise by selling what they make: clothes, accessories, furniture etc. This is for them a way to design independently and to do what they like. Some of these designers, more than just selling their products, organize workshops teaching to people some of their techniques.

10. The products sold and made by designers are often high-quality and more expensive than average. They are in fact produced in small scales, with care and good materials.

11. Designers often manage to turn what is traditionally boring or obsolete into something cool, happy and enjoyable. They do it thanks to their communication skills and the passion they often have for what they do.



Designers' Businesses...

7 Are often small, with maximum three employees and one physical space	8 Make a relatively wide use of design	9 Often sell what their owners make
10 Sell high quality products	11 Can turn what is usually boring into something attractive	

Figure 20: Findings from observations.

**Discussion through literature***How do designers use design?*

From the analysis of the above-mentioned findings emerged that, in creating and running their businesses, designers make a broad use of design. By comparing the results of the interviews with Keinonen's six links (Keinonen, 2008), I deduced that every designer was conscious of using design for presence, meaning, control and expectations. In fact, as I also explained in points 4 and 8, design was *present* in every company owned by a designer, and each of those enterprises had its own *meaning*, its own way to approach it. Through product, spatial and graphic design, they used this discipline to *control* the quality of their products and to manage the *expectations* of customers and collaborators. Nevertheless, according to Keinonen's research (ibid.) design for presence, control and meaning are associated with companies who employ design from their periphery. How is it possible then that designers use design mainly from the periphery of their businesses? The answer is simple: my interviewees were not conscious of using design from everywhere, periphery and nucleus. Referring to Yifan (2016), they were aware of using it at the tactical and operational level, but they were not conscious of using it also at the strategic one. Indeed, I showed in points 1 and

2 that my creative interviewees used design also to create and manage their business.

How do designers run enterprises?

In creating and running their business, the designers I interviewed followed a more or less structured *brief-research-concept-development* process, based on research and experimentation (see point 2). This process, as I demonstrated in chapter 2⁴, is very similar to Fraser's business design method (Fraser, 2012), except for the *strategic business design* phase. Indeed, the designers I interviewed did not seem to follow a systematic business development. The process they employed in managing and creating their business was mostly non-linear and based on intuition. Using Martin's words (2009) they were champions of *exploration*. *Exploitation* was instead challenging for them, as I showed in point 5. Even though, my interviewees were aware that - as also stated by Liedka (2010) and Oswald (2016) - without business knowledge it would be harder to turn their ideas into value. Nevertheless, money and growth was not a main concern for all, and this was probably the reason why designer's businesses were mostly small (see point 7). In

⁴ see Chapter 2, section *Business Design, The process*.



fact, as discussed in points 3 and 9, for many designers the most important thing is to enjoy their job by doing something they like.



Myself Designing a Business

In this section I describe and analyse the roles I played in designing the concept of donde Daniela. Also these findings, as the ones I presented in the previous section, were used to answer the first research question.

Findings from case study

My roles:

1. Market research through observations and interviews; investigation of trends and business cases. I studied existing businesses dealing with design and sustainability, trying to highlight what was working in these enterprises, what not and for which reasons. In this way I built a frame for the project and I shed light on the general context in which the business would have had to be placed.

2. User study through participatory workshops, which allowed me to get emotionally in touch with ‘normal people’

and to understand their point of view on specific issues, as well as their motivations, needs and dreams.

3. Innovation management, finding a balance between limits and opportunities. I had to create a business concept that, while being innovative, could be accepted by its potential users and implemented by my client in the short term.

4. Identification of my client’s dormant capabilities and facilitation of their expression. As I said earlier, I believed the business concept had to suit my client like a good dress. Therefore, I collaborated with her throughout the project in order to understand her talents, interests and passions. On top of that, I included my client from early on in the generation of the idea and I highlighted her role as owner of the business and ‘mother of the baby’.

5. Ideas conceptualization and communication. When defining the business idea I gave a coherent shape to the ‘bits and pieces’ of information generated from the research phase. After that, I communicated these ideas to my stakeholders, not only with words but also through visuals, stories and examples. I crafted narratives able to present my concept appropriately while allowing the stakeholders to understand its details and implications.

6. Building commitment. Communicating my ideas appropriately was also important to gain the support of my stakeholders. I played this role throughout the project,



formally and informally, taking them ‘onboard’ at different stages of the process.

7. For the purposes of this study it is also important to highlight where my role ended in this project. As I also said earlier, I didn’t go deep into the business development because this was in charge of the businessperson. Her task was in fact to help the client with the market research in Manizales and with the development of the business model and business plan. I supported this choice because I believed that, thanks to her background, she would have managed to give a more complete and specific support to the client in this phase.

Discussion through literature

How did I provide strategic advice?

Also in this section I discussed how a designer (me) designed a business. However, differently from the previous section - where I analysed how designers created and managed their own businesses - I am studying here my contributions in designing someone else’s business. Referring to Seidel’s words (2000, p. 1), I am discussing how I gave “strategic business advice” to a client. For this reason, Seidel’s four roles (ibid.) will provide me with a useful framework to discuss my contributions.

In the first part of the project - where I conducted user and market research (points 1 and 2) - I have been a *market exploiter*. At the same time, I have been a *core competence prospector* in understanding and facilitating the expression of the client’s dormant capabilities (point 4). After that, I used the collected data to formulate a strategy, a business concept for my client. Therefore, I provided her “with [...] strategic directions based on core capability understanding and market insight” (Seidel, 2000, p.9). Around the business concept I created and visualized a story, in order to communicate my ideas and to get the support of different stakeholders (points 5 and 6). In this phase I carried out the *strategy visualizer* role. Nevertheless, Seidel’s roles are four and in this project I just played three of them. In fact, until the businessperson finishes to develop the business concept I won’t be able to be a *process provider*. I will be only able to play this role later, when the business is going to be ready and the time will arrive to design its touch points (website, packaging, visual identity etc.). In this phase, I could for example advice the client on how to build the company’s design vision or design DNA.

Managing innovation (point 3) was my only contribution that didn’t correspond to one of Seidel’s roles. In point 3 I showed how I chose to bring forward exclusively ideas acceptable by its users and implementable by my client in the



short term. In fact, the story is full of innovations that failed to spread because they were launched at the wrong time or in the wrong place. For this reason, when creating the concept I had to be careful in selecting ideas that needed a minimum initial investment and that - according to my knowledge - could best fit the chosen market in a reduced amount of time.

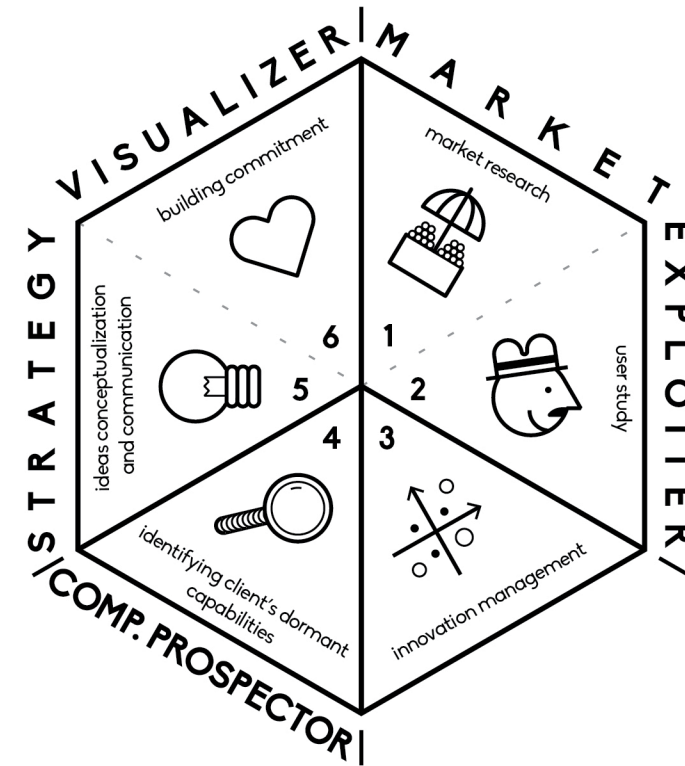


Figure 21: My six roles compared to Seidel's ones.



Designers Designing Businesses with Business Designers

Let's now shift the attention to a third and more formal setting in which designers can design businesses: business design firms. In this section I compare the literature about business design with the results of the interview I conducted with the business designer of a Berlin-based consultancy⁵. Being aware of the limitations of conducting only one interview, I decided to compare the data I collected with Alexander Rodichev's Master's Thesis (2016). In his research in fact, the former IDBM student also investigates - through interviews - the process of business design and the relationship of this discipline with traditional design. Also these findings, together with the ones of the previous sections, were used to answer the first research question.

⁵ see the interviews questions in the appendix 2.



Findings from interview

1. The interviewee worked in a multidisciplinary team, composed by businesspeople, designers and engineers. He was the business designer of his team and had experience in business development.

2. When conducting a project, the interviewee's team used a version of the *brief-research-concept-development* process⁶. The business designer carried out the research phase together with a traditional designer. While the latter focused on user research and benchmarking, the former conducted market research. Successively, they used to brainstorm together for developing a business concept that the designer will test later on through models and mock-ups. In that phase the business designer usually takes care of the business development, designing for example the structure and the business model of the enterprise. The engineer of the team usually comes in the process during the development phase, when the prototype is ready and technical knowledge is needed to e.g. build an app or a website. In this phase the business designer takes care of business planning and implementation.

⁶ see Chapter 3, *General Approach*, section *Design Method*.



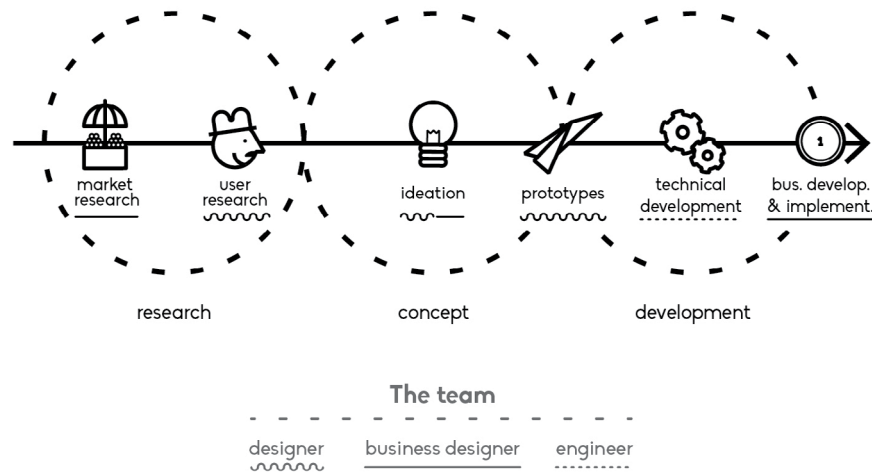


Figure 22: The business design process in my interviewee's agency.

Discussion through literature

How do business designers work?

According to Rodichev (2016) and Rohini (2016) business designers use to work within multidisciplinary environments. This is true also for my interviewee, who used to collaborate every day with designers and engineers. In particular, his role in the team was to integrate user research with business insights, to participate in the concept generation and to carry out the business development. As also highlighted by Oswald (2016), Rohini (2016) and Rodichev (2016), one of the main contribution of business designers is in fact to ensure the viability of a concept through research and business development.

Which method do they employ?

Rodichev affirms that business design is often considered an “expansion of the design work” (2016, p. 62). According to his research, typical phases of the business design process are *research*, *idea generation*, *testing*, *validation* and *implementation*. This process is similar both to Fraser's business design method⁷ (2012) and the process adopted by my interviewee (see point 2). What is more, these

⁷ see Chapter 2, Business Design, section The process.

methods could be both compared to the *brief-research-concept-development* process. Thus, it can be easily agreed that traditional designers and business designers use a very similar process. Of course, this does not mean that they do the same job. Simply, they follow a very similar working procedure. In fact, referring to Martin's (2009) words, by focusing on exploitation business designers complement the explorative work of traditional designers, turning in this way creativity into value.



Entrepreneurs Contributing to Sustainability

These findings, like the ones in the first section of this chapter, originate from my observations and interviews. This time however, I present the results related to sustainability; I explain how the interviewees approached corporate responsibility and which was their social and environmental impact. I used these findings to answer the second research question.

Findings from interviews

1. All the interviewees' businesses had a positive environmental and social impact deriving from their core business operations. However, they approached sustainability in two different ways. Four enterprises out of six had a mission - and therefore a business model - that explicitly addressed a social or an environmental problem: changing the stereotype of feminine beauty



through natural cosmetics, allowing people living in the city to experience nature and farming, teaching kids how to deal with their emotions and personal problems or creating an alternative for a more local, sustainable and responsible grocery shopping. From now on, I will define these four businesses as *directly sustainable*. Instead, the other two businesses were not explicitly founded to address a social or an environmental problem but their core business operations still had a positive social and environmental impact. I will define these businesses as *indirectly sustainable*. These two companies both organized and hosted workshops about art, crafts and creativity. They taught normal people how to use their hands for creating and decorating their own products. In this way, as also demonstrated by Hirscher (2013), they taught to their customers to have a different, non-consumerist relationship with objects. On top of that, through these workshops they often introduced participants, directly and indirectly, to the themes of sustainability. As one interviewee - owner of an indirectly sustainable business - explained, some customers “started with embroidery workshops and ended up drinking soy milk”.

2. The interviewees’ businesses attracted mainly two groups of sustainability-related customers. The first group is composed by people who - not interested in social and

Sustainable Entrepreneurs⁶...

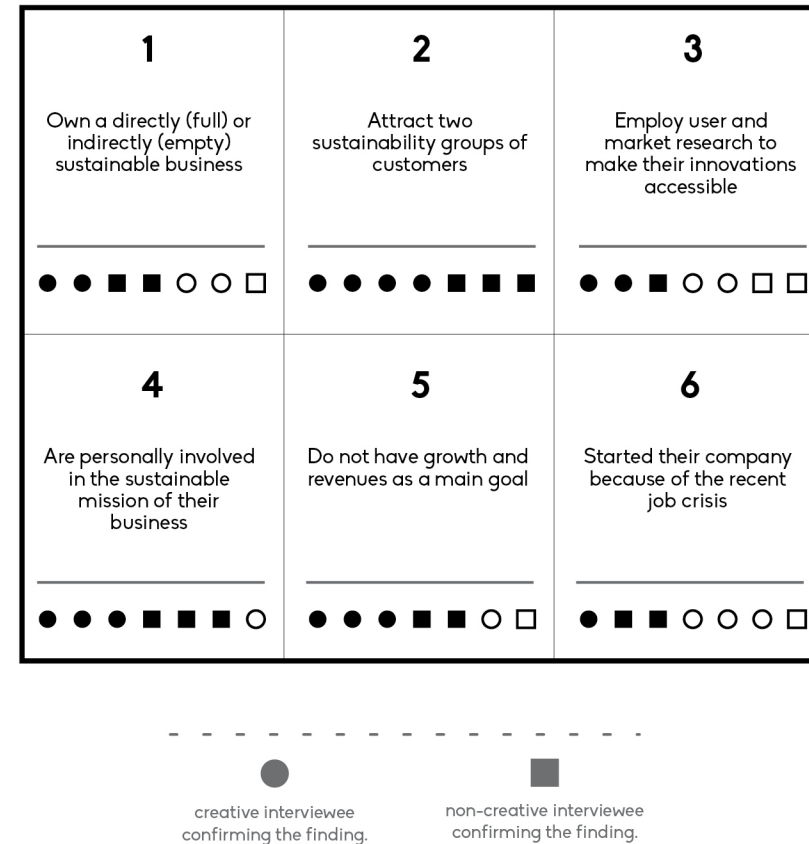


Figure 23: Findings from interviews.



environmental issues - choose the interviewees' companies because of their quality, convenience, customer experience or, as one of the interviewees affirmed, for their 'vibe'. After coming across our enterprises however, these customers often start to get sensitive to the themes of sustainability.

Instead, the second group is composed by people who already have a socially and/or environmentally responsible lifestyle. These customers choose the interviewees' businesses because they help them to get more involved in sustainability. From the interviews resulted that the main target of the indirectly sustainable businesses were customers of the first group. At the same time, two directly sustainable enterprises out of four attracted a great number of customers from the second group.

3. The interviewees who conducted user and market research⁹ used the knowledge acquired to create pleasurable user experiences and to make their products accessible. This helped them to make their sustainable innovations more attractive and convenient.

4. Six interviewees out of seven declared to be personally involved in the sustainable mission of their enterprises.

⁸ With the term 'sustainable entrepreneurs', I refer in Figure 23 to all my interviewees.

⁹ see Chapter 4, section *Designers Designing their own Businesses*, point 6.

Three of these interviewees declared that achieving this mission was their main motivation as entrepreneurs. Three other interviewees, all owners of a directly sustainable business, experienced first-hand the social or environmental problem they are trying to solve with their business.

5. For five interviewees out of seven revenues and growth were not a main goal. Only one interviewee, with a background in marketing, had the explicit intention of growing her business. Even though, as I also discussed in the first section of this chapter¹⁰, money was still important for all of them. Some businesses managed in fact to grow and this was welcomed by the owners with pleasure and satisfaction.

6. Three interviewees started their company because of the recent job crisis. On top of that, two other interviewees (owners of the same company) declared that the recession had a positive influence on their business. They observed that the crisis changed people's conception of pastime, getting them more interested in creativity; the latter is in fact cheaper than other hobbies and helps individuals to escape from alienation.

¹⁰ see *Designers Designing their own Businesses*, point 5.



Findings from observations

7. Aesthetics and customer experience play an important role in making sustainability attractive. The right products, visual language, atmosphere etc. can encourage people to make sustainable choices and to get closer to the themes of sustainability.

8. People have very different perceptions of sustainability. Therefore, sustainable enterprises should communicate clearly the benefits of their products and services. When users are not confident with these benefits, or they miss some key information, education plays an important role in making sustainable innovation accessible and understandable.

9. Not everyone is willing to adopt the same sustainable lifestyle. Because we all have different motivations, each of us wants to get involved in sustainability at a different level. A way for sustainable enterprises to address these differences is to create products and services for every level of sustainable involvement, from the most superficial to the deepest.

10. Today some sustainability is 'cool'. Having the right 'vibe' is important for sustainable enterprises to attract users who are not deeply involved in sustainability yet.

11. The principles of sustainability transitions are not yet common between people, entrepreneurs and designers. Instead, sustainability is today linked mainly to eco-efficiency.

Sustainable Enterprises...

7 Can use aesthetics and customer experience to make sustainability attractive	8 Should convey the benefits of their products clearly	9 Can create products for different levels of involvement in sustainability
10 Should have the right vibe	11 Face the fact that for people sustainability hardly goes beyond eco/efficiency	

Figure 24: Findings from observations.

Discussion through literature

How to motivate people to make sustainable choices?

In point 1 of this section I explained how the interviewees' businesses contributed to society and the environment in two different ways: directly and indirectly. In point 2, I showed that the indirectly sustainable enterprises played an important role in introducing new people to ethical and ecological lifestyles. By giving their customers other benefits than sustainability (relax, enjoyment, knowledge), they sensitised them about social and environmental issues. For this reason, indirectly sustainable businesses could be considered as part of the 'front line' of systemic transitions; they operate at the tactical level of societal changes to achieve tangible goals for sustainability transitions (Loorbach, 2010 as explained by Twomey and Gaziulusoy, 2014). I in fact explained that, in order to motivate new people to adopt sustainable lifestyles, it is important to offer them more benefits than just a positive social or environmental impact. In the book *Sustainability Marketing* (2012), Belz and Peattie highlight the need for sustainable marketers to "increase the perceived net benefits of sustainable solutions as compared to conventional offerings" (p. 83). Sustainable lifestyles should be convenient, accessible and attractive, as I also explained in points 3, 7 and 9. Additionally, it is



important "to help consumers understand the connections between their behaviour as consumers [...] and the resulting social and environmental consequences" (Belz and Peattie, 2012, p. 81). As I could also confirm through my observations (see point 8), communication and education play an important role in motivating consumer choices towards sustainability. The reasons for making sustainable choices should be clear, tangible and easy to internalize. On top of that, also social acceptance plays a central role in the spread of sustainable lifestyles. According to Belz and Peattie in fact, "how 'normal' sustainable consumption activities are perceived to be also has a significant influence on whether or not consumers are willing to engage in them" (2012, p. 85) It is easier for people to adopt sustainable lifestyles when they are cool, trendy and mainstream. People doesn't need to feel 'hippie' (or strange) because they care about the environment and society.

Can designers motivate people to make sustainable choices?

All the aforementioned actions can be very well realized by designers; as stated by Järvelin in fact (2012, p. 113), "design can make responsibility more attractive and easy to understand". However, as I demonstrated in point 3, not every designer do this thoroughly. From my interviews and observations result that many designers manage to give quality and 'vibe' to



their products¹¹, but only the ones who deepen their market and user knowledge through research manage to make their offering accessible and convenient (see point 3).

What motivates sustainable entrepreneurs?

According to Belz and Binder (2015, par. *Recognizing a Social or Ecological Problem*) “a potential starting point of the SEP (sustainable enterprise, N/A) is a particular social (ecological) problem on a local or global scale that prospective sustainable entrepreneurs encounter first-hand in their private or professional lives”. Point 4 of this section confirms this statement, as three interviewees out of seven experienced in their personal life the social or ecological problem tackled by their business. Furthermore, the main concern for all interviewees was to enjoy their work. In the first section of this chapter, I explained that “enjoy their work” meant for designers also to keep on designing. However, in this section I am dealing with sustainable entrepreneurs and three interviewees are not designers. Is there something else that motivates them? From points 4 and 5 I deduced that making something they believed in, contributing with their efforts to society and the world was for my interviewees an important reward. A reward that is often greater than

¹¹ see *Designers Designing their own Businesses*, points 10 and 11.



money and profits, and that helped them to get pleasure from their job. This is interesting especially considering that three interviewees started their business because of the recent employment crisis (see point 6). Thus, the latter encouraged some people to start a sustainable business and to put their skills at the service of the world; one of the positive consequences of the crisis that is starting to become visible.

*

The conclusion of this thesis has finally arrived. In the next chapter I will give an answer to my research questions based on what discussed in this and the previous chapters. Then, I will evaluate my study and I will reflect upon the experience of conducting this thesis.





In this thesis, by undertaking a practice-based research project I tried to understand how designers design businesses and, when creating enterprises, how they contribute to sustainability. Starting from the discussion of the previous chapters, I integrate findings from interviews, observations, case study and literature review to formulate the following answers to my two research questions.

Conclusions



Research Question I

*What roles can designers play in designing businesses?
In doing this, what are their strengths? Are there any limits?*

My main aim with this research question was to evaluate whether design mindset, tools and methodologies can be used to design businesses. According to my research, the answer is decisively positive. Designers can design businesses, and they have a characteristic way to do it. They create and manage businesses as if they were design projects, employing tools, processes and approaches typical of their profession. Their explorative approach (Martin, 2009) is a mix of creativity, intuition and rationality that allows them to create and develop their business 'on the go', adapting it to the challenges they encounter on their way. For this reason, designers' businesses are often an organic result of a trial-and-error process, a combination of their owners' personalities with market requirements and users' needs.

Nevertheless, design does not only mean intuition and experimentation. Instead, designers follow a structured and rational process that, in different contexts and versions, is widely used also to create businesses. From my research resulted in fact that a method similar to the one of design



is also described in the business design literature (Fraser, 2012) and used by independent designers-entrepreneurs and business designers. To describe in more detail the roles that designers play in designing business, I will thus use the design process as a framework. In particular, I will refer to one of its several versions: the *brief-research-concept-development* method I used in the case study. Let's see, for each phase of this process¹, which are these contributions.

Research phase contributions

This is the phase where limits and opportunities are explored and valuable information is collected. From my research resulted that designers contribute at this stage with benchmarking, market and user research. Through methods like interviews, observation and co-creation they search for inspiration, spot market opportunities and highlight unmet user needs. In some cases, they are also able to identify and exploit their clients' dormant capabilities. Moreover, they manage to use experimentation as a tool for research and decision making and as a way to deal with uncertainty and complexity.

Concept phase contributions

The information collected during the research phase is used here to define the business concept. Indeed, one of the

¹ except for the *brief* phase, that I did not analyse in detail in my research.

Figure 25:
The answer to the
Research Question I.

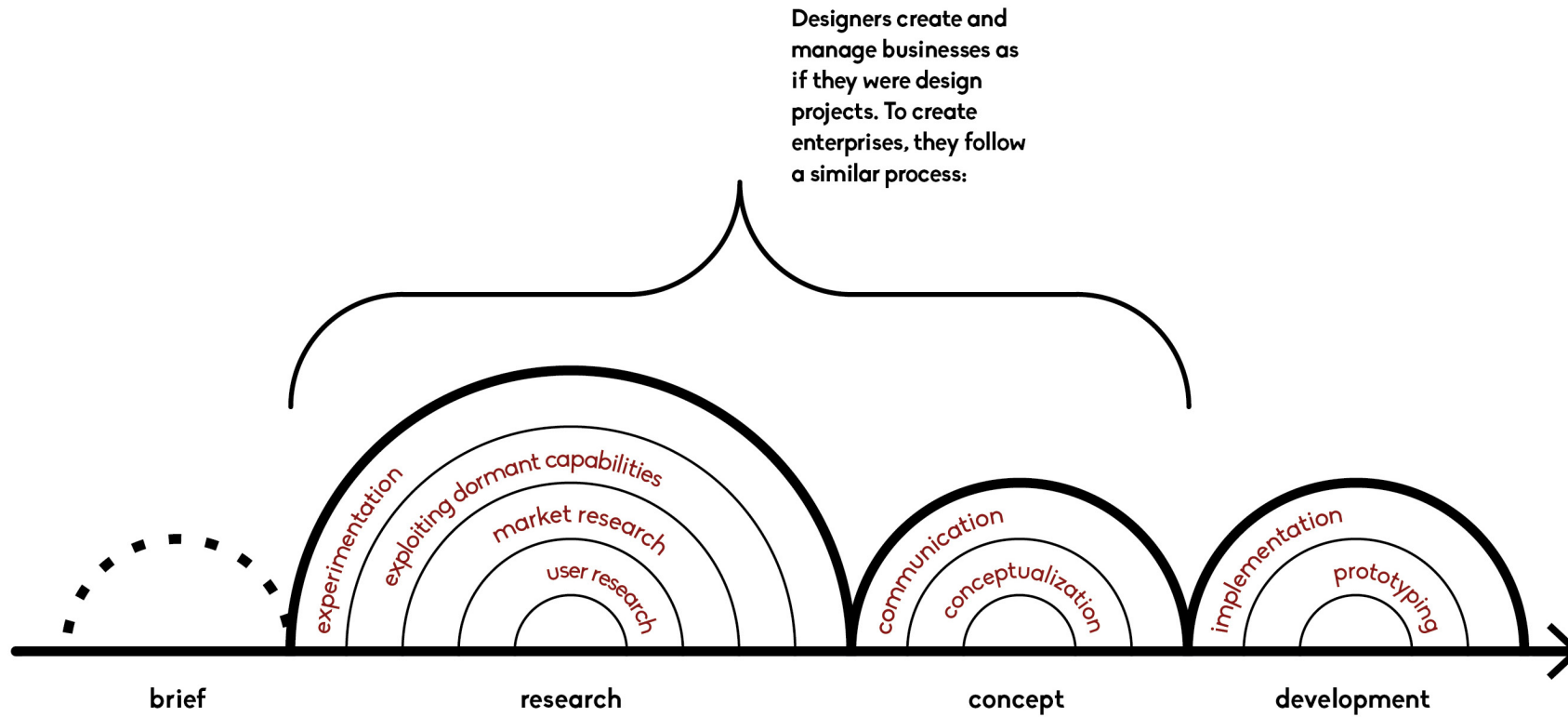


Figure 25:
The answer to the
Research Question I.

most important contributions of designers at this stage is undoubtedly conceptualization. Designers are in fact trained to use creativity to translate pieces of information into coherent and tangible proposals. They are able to develop unique business concepts that answer to precise needs and requirements. On top of that, they have the skills and knowledge needed to visualize and communicate their ideas effectively, not only to let their stakeholders understand but also to manage their expectations and gain their commitment.

Development phase contributions

In this phase, the ideas are defined more in detail; the business concept is usually developed, tested, validated and then launched. However, according to my research this is the most complex phase for designers. They can prototype here the enterprise, or they can use their design skills to develop its touch points. However, developing a product or a service is different from developing a company. Activities like business planning and business modelling need in fact a certain amount of business knowledge that not all designers have. Of course, an enterprise can be also launched without a structured business development. However, from my research resulted that asking for business advice at this stage can help to turn ideas more effectively into value.

Research Question II

In designing businesses, which kind of contributions can designers make to sustainability?

The case study in this thesis showed how a designer, me, created a business concept that could contribute in spreading well-being and sustainable lifestyles. In the same way, through my interviews I explained how designers-entrepreneurs are able to develop unique business ideas for tackling sustainability issues. When creating sustainable businesses, designers use their creative skills to find practical solutions to social and environmental problems, solutions that are often unique and innovative. Referring to Loorbach (2010) these solutions can be considered as operational and tactical activities, as they participate in re-orienting our lifestyles towards sustainability and contribute to the realization of some of the goals needed for systemic transitions.

Another contribution of designers in this context is to make ecological and ethical lifestyles attractive and accessible. According to my research, making sustainability

cool and attractive is quite intuitive for designers - even for the ones who are not directly interested in it. Instead, making sustainable lifestyles accessible does not seem so easy. In fact, as stated by Belz and Peattie (2012) to facilitate sustainable consumer choices one needs appropriate knowledge about people, their needs, lifestyles and ways to think. Designers have the tools to gain this information, but I discovered that not all of them study their users' needs deeply⁴. On top of that, in order to contribute more effectively to sustainability, designers need information that is not always included in basic design education. Disciplines like systemic thinking, sustainability transitions and sustainability marketing have been in fact essential for carrying out my thesis project, but I could only learn about them during a master's program specifically dedicated to sustainability (i.e. Creative Sustainability at Aalto University). Many sustainability courses in design schools focus in fact on eco-efficiency, and this limits greatly designers' perception of what they can do for sustainability.

Finally, also the way how designers do business can be considered a contribution to sustainability. I explained in fact that one of the most important things for designers who become entrepreneurs is to make a job they like. This often

⁴ see Chapter 4, *Designers Designing their own Businesses, Discussion through literature.*



means to keep on designing and - because my interviewees were also sustainable entrepreneurs - to contribute with their efforts to our planet and society. Money and growth came second and, probably because of this, designers' businesses were generally small⁴. At first sight, this seems an obstacle for the spread of sustainable innovations. However, keeping the business small is coherent to Belz's and Peattie's concept of *downshifting* (2012), a phenomenon that sees the voluntary exchange of a highly paid and stressful career associated to a highly consumerist lifestyle, for a less paid and stressful career associated to a less material-intensive lifestyle. On top of that it is generally agreed that, in order to reach systemic transitions, we don't have to change only our lifestyles but also our way to make business (Twomey and Gaziulusoy, 2014; Gaziulusoy and Brezet, 2015; Haberl et al., 2011; Stroh, 2015). The unlimited economic growth we are pursuing today is in fact considered incoherent with ethical and environmental principles (Haberl et al., 2011; Rockström et al., 2009). With their way to make business, designers could promote a horizontal way of spreading innovations, more consistent with sustainability: instead of big companies monopolizing the market, many small enterprises spreading locally their social and environmental solutions.

Some of the contributions designers can make to sustainability when designing businesses:

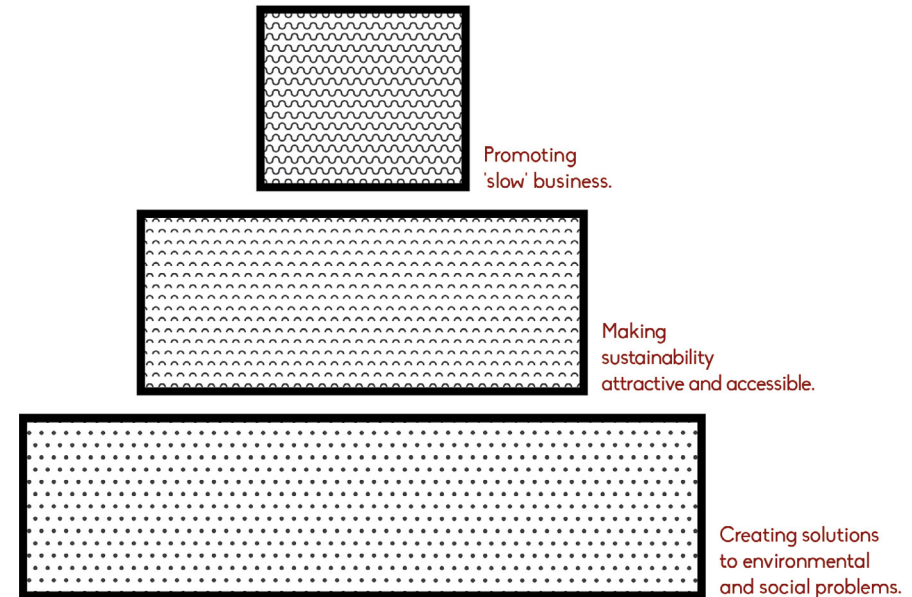


Figure 26:
The answer to the
Research Question II.



Evaluation of the Study

In this study I analysed designers designing businesses in three different ways: as entrepreneurs, in business design firms or as strategic business consultants. The findings I used to answer my research questions were generated through different research methods - interviews, observation and case study - and then compared to the literature. The answers to my research questions were coherent to the reviewed literature and enriched it in some points. Therefore, I consider that my research produced satisfactory results. Nevertheless, my study present several limitations, that could be also seen as research opportunities. I explain them below according to the part of the thesis they relate to.

Limitations

Research Question I: In order to understand whether design mindset, tools and methodologies can be used to design businesses, it would be also beneficial to investigate to which

extent the enterprises created by designers are successful. It could be interesting to compare them to similar companies created by businesspeople or non-designers, taking into account factors such as the satisfaction of the entrepreneur, the company's social and environmental impact and its financial results. I tried to do this in my thesis, but I had to desist for different reasons. First, the scope of my research would have broadened too much. Then, to fully evaluate the success of the business concept I developed during the case study I would have needed to wait for its launch, delaying the conclusion of this thesis excessively. Finally, just few of my interviewees felt comfortable to share financial information about their company.

Research Question II: Great part of the data I used to answer this research question came from my interviews to designers-entrepreneurs. I did not have the possibility to study, for example, the sustainability impact of designers who design businesses in consultancies or bigger firms. To give a more complete answer to this question it may be thus useful to analyse the social and environmental contributions of other kinds of designers. Additionally, four out of the seven entrepreneurs I interviewed lived in Barcelona, and six out of seven were Spanish. It may be thus interesting to consider, in further research, designers coming from a wider range of socio-cultural contexts.

Case study: This was the first time I conducted such a long and deep project for designing a business. To define which



process I had to follow, I relied on previous experience, education and intuition. In hindsight however I recognize that, in order to make this process more effective, I could have changed some activities, their sequence or the time I spent on them. For example, it would have been interesting to spend less time for research and inspiration and to give more space to experimentation. I could have produced several quick concepts and I could have tested them through prototypes and participatory methods. According to Rodichev (2016) however, a coherent and well-established process for business design is still lacking. Therefore, it would be interesting to define a more precise, simple and step-by-step method for creating enterprises. This method could be explicitly targeted to designers, and could help them to exploit their creative potential more effectively also in this field.

Finally, a closing remark. In this thesis I used a qualitative research approach in which, according to Creswell (2007) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005), the researcher has a fundamental role, as he needs to interpret and turn data into general information. This process of interpretation is however subjective, and it is influenced by the researcher's background and beliefs. In the same way, my background, experiences and ideas had an impact on this research and therefore influenced its results.



Reflections

The experience of conducting this thesis has been an important learning experience for me and my client. Personally, I became more familiar with entrepreneurship and academic research and I discovered new potentialities of my profession. I widened my perception of design and I understood how many opportunities its methods can offer. I became then more confident with generative participatory methods and I understood a bit more deeply what user-centred design really means in practice. At the same time, I managed to critically observe some of the limits of my profession, confirming in this way the importance of collaborating with different people with diverse backgrounds. As designers, we can indeed design businesses. However, better when we ask businesspeople for little advice.





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Appendix 1

Interview questions: *sustainable entrepreneurs*

Question 1: Which is your background? Why did you decide to become entrepreneur?

Question 2: How did you create your business? Did you follow some kind of process?

Question 3: Do you use design in your enterprise? If yes, how? (to designers-entrepreneur: Was your design education useful to your experience as entrepreneur?)

Question 4: Which kind of people use to buy your products/ services? Why do you think they choose you?

Question 5: Which is the most important thing you learned as an entrepreneur?

Question 6: Which is for you the biggest challenge of entrepreneurship?

Appendix 2

Interview questions: *business designer*

Question 1: How is the business design process in your agency?

Question 2: Which are your responsibilities and tasks as a business designer?

Question 3: How do you collaborate with traditional designers (service, visual, UX etc.)?

Appendix 3

Co-creation plan: *Barcelona*

Target population:

From four to six participants. Mothers and/or fathers with small children aged between 3 and 9, not necessarily residing in Barcelona.

Goals:

1. Understanding how really important is health, food and well-being, for participants and their children. Understanding what they are willing to do in order to pursue it.
2. Understanding the personal meaning participants give to well-being.
3. Understanding what participants would like to do for their and their children's wellbeing.
4. Gaining unexpected insights and find inspiration.

Format:

Digital sensitizing material (to be conducted at home, a week before the workshop) + 2h workshop.

-Content and Activities-

Digital Sensitizing Material

In this phase participants received as less material as possible; the idea was to use what they already had and were already familiar with, in order to reduce the burden on both the user and the researcher.

First activity, one day in a week:

Participants take pictures with their phone every time they think they are doing something for their - or their kids' - well-being. They then send it to a Whatsapp number with a short title of what it is - plus an emoticon to express their feelings about it. Goal: mainly n.2 but also n.1 and n.3.

Second activity, one day in a week:

Participants make a timeline of their day with their children: where they were, what they did and how they felt. Highlight challenges. Goal: mainly n.3 but also n.1.

Workshop

The workshop took place in the spaces of La Nau Espacial; There was a parallel, free workshop for the kids about painting, in order to make the workshop easier and more attractive for parents.

Introduction and ice breaking, 10 min.

First activity, in couple, around 5 min + 5 minutes sharing: Each participant sits on a chair, touching with his back the back of his/her couple. In turn, each participant describes in 2 minutes a nice memory of their childhood, a small thing that used to make them happy when they were kids. Who is not talking needs to draw on a piece of paper the memory of his/her couple. Goal: building atmosphere, then goal n.4 and eventually n.1.

Second activity, personal and successively in couples, around 35 min + 15 min sharing:

Participants receive apparently random objects, each of them with a label, and then pencils and a big sheet of paper. On some labels are written some of the themes emerged from the first sensitizing activity, on others participants can write a theme that comes to their mind. Participants have to choose or think two themes that give them the most positive feelings and two that give them the most negative feelings. They have to grade their relevance from 1 to 10. Then, in couples, they choose the most positive and negative theme and - through drawings, other objects or just words - they have to explain why. Goal: n.1, n.2 and n.4.

Third activity, personal, around 30 min + 15 minutes sharing: Participants receive a cardboard puppet, their caricature

as super-heroes. They have to think, in case they had unlimited time, power, and energy, what they would do with their children and which would be their superpowers 'over' them. They then customize their own puppet super-hero and present it to other participants. Goal: mainly n.3 and n.4, but also the other two.

Closing, 5 min:

Participants make, with reused materials, a small booklet to collect the outcomes of their sensitizing and workshop activities. Then, juice and an healthy homemade snack are served.

-Collecting Data-

Sensitizing Activities:

The pictures of the sensitizing activity were automatically collected through the Whatsapp number and then stored into an hard-disk. The timelines were printed by participants and then delivered during the workshop.

Workshop:

The workshop was audio recorded and photographed, as well as the outcomes of the activities. Participants were asked to sign a permit for audio recording, photographing, and pictures publication. The permit detailed how I was going to use the data.

-Recruiting Participants-

I produced a poster and several flyers advertising to the target audience the possibility to have a free 2 hours workshops - for them and their kids - with which they could participate in creating solutions for a more sustainable world. Poster and flyers were placed in strategic places of Barcelona and in the social networks of La Nau Espacial. On the poster there were my contacts (mail and Whatsapp number) and other practical information. The people who contacted me received an e-mail or a message explaining the purposes of the research and, in a very detailed and user-friendly way, what they were supposed to do in the workshop. After the minimum number of 4 participants was reached, they received the sensitizing material and the collaboration started.



Second activity of the workshop in Barcelona.



Third activity of the workshop in Barcelona.

Appendix 4

Co-creation plan: *Naples*

Target population:

From four to six participants. Friends and relatives aged between 50 and 60.

Goals:

1. Understanding how really important is for participants health, food and well-being and what they are willing to do in order to pursue it.
2. Understanding the personal meaning participants give to well-being.
3. Understanding what participants would like to do for their wellbeing but that they can't do.
4. Gaining unexpected insights and find inspiration.

Format:

Digital sensitizing material (to be conducted at home, a week before the workshop) + 2h workshop.

-Content and Activities-

Digital Sensitizing Material

In this phase participants received as less material as possible; the idea was to use what they already had and were already familiar with, in order to reduce the burden on both the user and the researcher.

First activity, every day for five days:

Participants take pictures with their phone every time they think they are doing something for their well-being. They then send it to a Whatsapp number with a short title of what it is - plus an emoticon to express their feeling about it.

Goal: mainly n.2 but also n.1 and n.3.

Second activity, two days in a week:

Participants make a timeline of their day: where they were, what they did and how they felt. Highlight challenges. Goal: mainly n.3 but also n.1.

Workshop

The workshop took place on neutral ground, the home of one relative who did not participate in the workshop.

Introduction and ice breaking, 10 min.

First activity, in couple, around 5 min + 5 minutes sharing:

Each participant sits on a chair, touching with his back the back of his/her couple. In turn, each participant describes in 2 minutes their perfect, ideal day. Who is not talking needs to draw on a piece of paper the day of his/her couple. Goal: building atmosphere, then goal n.4 and eventually n.1.

Second activity, personal and successively in couples, around 35 min + 15 min sharing:

Participants receive apparently random objects, each of them with a label, and then pencils and a big sheet of paper. On some labels are written some of the themes emerged from the first sensitizing activity, on others participants can write a theme that comes to their mind. Participants have to choose or think two themes that give them the most positive feelings and two that give them the most negative feelings. They have then to grade their relevance from 1 to 10. Then, in couples, they have to choose the most positive and negative theme and - through drawings, other objects or just words - they have to explain why. Goal: n.1, n.2 and n.4.

Third activity, personal, around 30 min + 15 minutes sharing: Participants receive a cardboard puppet, their caricature as super-heroes. They have to think, in case they had unlimited time, power, and energy, what they would do for their

life. They then customize their own puppet super-hero and present it to other participants. Participants have the possibility to bring the puppet home as a 'memento'. Goal: mainly n.3 and n.4, but also the other two.

Closing, 5 min:

Words of thanks and snack.

-Collecting Data-

Sensitizing Activities:

The pictures of the sensitizing activity was automatically collected through the Whatsapp number and then stored into an hard-disk. The timelines were printed by participants and then delivered during the workshop.

Workshop:

The workshop was audio recorded and photographed. I personally collected the outcomes of the activities, except for the puppet super-hero that was instead just photographed. Because participants were friends and relatives, the permission for for audio recording, photographing, and pictures publication was asked orally.



First activity of the workshop in Naples.



Second activity of the workshop in Naples.

