

Utilizing Co-creation Method in Learning Marketing and Design Skills

Experiences of Made in Maaseutu Project During the Covid-19 Pandemic

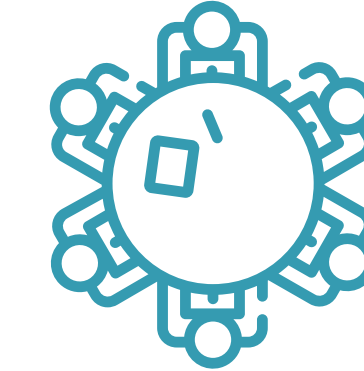
HEIDI ÅLANDER, SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MINNA VIRKKULA, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, OULU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES



The aim of the project was to develop a method combining co-creation and enhanced learning.



We organized eight co-creation workshops based on a user-centric approach



The participants were higher education students, business school students, micro-businesses from different industries



The workshops were held as live events, hybrid events and entirely online.



The themes of the workshops included content production, customer experience and visual design.



Feedback was collected after every workshop which enabled us to develop our workshop model constantly.



76 students and 21 micro-sized case companies participated in the workshops



28 new development ideas, plans, analysis and mockups were developed for the case companies

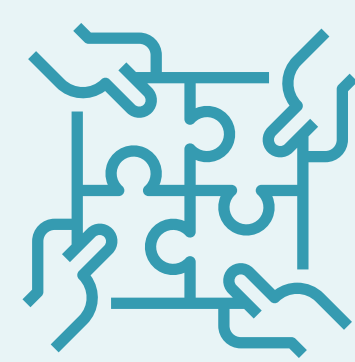
Framework for a co-creation workshop

Kick-off day



- Introduction of case companies and their challenges
- Building small groups of students, (companies and mentors)
- Keynote lecture to give inspiration and more information of the topic

Hands-on day



- Working on the given challenge in small groups
- Mentoring and conducting sessions in small groups
- Contacting or visiting the company

In between



- Small groups working on their own
- Short conduction session to recheck the process

Final day



- Presentations of the small group
- Feedback and conversation with case companies and mentors
- Feedback and conversation of the co-creation process and workshop overall

Experiences of co-creation workshops

Case companies

- Applying was open for micro-businesses in selected themes enabling them to specify their own challenge for students to be developed.
- It was important to clarify why the applicant should be part of the workshop and if they have the resource needed in co-creation.
- Decision of the selected case companies was made by project personnel.

Mentoring

- Project's specialists were acting as mentors in every workshop
- Mentoring was crucial part of the workshop to ensure progress and focus of the development, especially in short term workshops.
- Business school students required more mentoring than higher education students

Facilities for hybrid events

- At hybrid events it was important to have at least two facilitators to make sure conducting was made properly and technical issues were managed.
- Shared communication channel was essential particularly at hybrid events.
- Networking between students and companies was desired to be in more important role.

IPR

- Case companies received full rights to utilize the output of the workshop.
- Students received the rights to use the output as their reference.
- Both parties were informed of the immaterial property rights before workshop.

Conclusions

Based on the experiences and feedback of the workshops, both parties saw co-creation beneficial and efficient. The current co-creation workshop model can be a part of project studies of multidisciplinary students or other studies with development tasks. Considering the experiences of the past two years, it is probable that co-creation workshops will be utilized and developed further as live, online or hybrid events also after the Covid-19 pandemic at our university.

Micro-businesses

The micro-businesses received tangible advice to implement immediately or subsequently as a part of their usual development process. The workshops increased the know-how of substance, customer insight and co-creation method enabling micro-businesses to perceive new service or product opportunities.



Excellent job from students and instructors. You managed to produce genuinely useful output for our company in a quite short time period. (Case company)

I can utilize the output of the workshop almost directly to enhance our online store. (Case company)

Students

For students, the workshops appeared as real worklife reference projects strengthening their marketing and design related skills, confidence and interaction skills. Besides, the workshops enabled micro-businesses to find students to be their possible employees and students to get networked with micro-businesses.



This was very fruitful and instructive workshop for me. I learned a lot in a short time and I can use the new skills especially at real worklife. (Student)

I found the topic of the workshop very interesting. I liked that there were real life companies and their challenges to develop! (Student)