ESSI SALONEN

Designing Collaboration
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MA COMMUNICATION DESIGN
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REFERENCES:


IMAGES:
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How to structure collaborative process in order to understand collaboration better?
Combining the design process with models of collaboration I arrived at a structure for collaboration. Applying the structure through the case studies led me to my findings and recommendations.
The design process was used to structure the case studies.
PHASES OF THE DESIGN PROCESS

1. DISCOVER
- the beginning of the design process
- an idea or a need to do something new or develop existing products or services
- exploring and gathering inspirations
- identifying the problem

2. DEFINE
- filtering and analysing the findings
- brainstorming
- visualisation
- prototyping and testing
- selecting ideas for development

3. DEVELOP
- prototyping and testing
- gathering feedback
- further visualisation, brainstorming
- narrowing down offered concepts

4. DELIVER
- testing and refining
- stakeholder approval / rejection
- presenting or launching the product or looping back to an earlier stage
Collaboration can be measured by its dimensions of openness and governance. In these, the types of collaboration are open or closed, and flat or hierarchical.
THE OPENNESS OF THE COLLABORATION

OPEN
- open for everyone to take part
- can arise when a person or an organization sets the problem and launches a collaboration, or publishes the problem for anyone to contribute to
- can be used when the subject area is not well-defined
- must be easy for participants to contribute ideas, work and resources

CLOSED
- participants chosen by a manager, a group leader
- usually consist of a smaller number of participants than the open model
- can be used for example in inter-company collaborations
- should be used when the subject area is well defined and it is possible to determine the most appropriate contributors for the project

THE GOVERNANCE OF THE COLLABORATION

FLAT
- all the participants can take part in the decision making process
- all the participants share the challenges and make the decisions together
- in order for the collaboration to succeed, all collaborators need to agree on the goals of the project

HIERARCHICAL
- a selected participant or organisation is in charge of the decision making
- level of challenges and tasks of participants can be determined by the decision maker
- participants can have their own goals within the hierarchy

Pisano & Verganti
THE THEORY
THE COLLABORATION MODES

Combining the models offers different modes of structuring collaboration in two dimensions: how open the collaboration is and how hierarchical it is.
OPEN & HIERARCHICAL
Anyone can contribute but the person, company or organisation in charge of the project decides which ideas or solutions to develop.

CLOSED & HIERARCHICAL
The participants have been chosen by the authority who also decides which ideas will be chosen and developed.

OPEN & FLAT
There is not an authority who decides which innovations will be taken further because anyone can contribute in the process and use delivered results.

CLOSED & FLAT
The group of participants chosen by an authority share ideas and make the decisions and contributions together.

Collaborative projects can use more than one of the modes during one project in order to achieve the desired goal.

Pisano & Verganti
Design collaboration structure is formed by bringing together the different stages of the design process and the collaboration modes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process / Mode</th>
<th>Open Hierarchical</th>
<th>Closed Hierarchical</th>
<th>Open Flat</th>
<th>Closed Flat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISCOVER the problem</td>
<td>Problems emerge from motivated parties, leader decides what problem should be solved</td>
<td>Leader decides what the problem is and who should solve it</td>
<td>Problem emerges organically and is experienced in large enough volume or championed by someone</td>
<td>Problem emerges within a certain group and is experienced in large enough volume or strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFINE the problem and solution ideas</td>
<td>Motivated parties define problem and come up with ideas, leader decides what ideas to pursue and prototype</td>
<td>Selected group defines problem and ideas, leader decides what to pursue and who pursues it</td>
<td>Problem is defined by motivated parties and suggestions are discussed or handled openly</td>
<td>Problem is defined by motivated or selected parties within the group and discussed within the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOP and refine the solution ideas</td>
<td>Many develop and refine the ideas, leader decides what to deliver or who delivers</td>
<td>Selected group refines and develops the solution</td>
<td>Motivated parties prototype and solutions are selected openly</td>
<td>The group develops solutions and chooses among them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELIVER the solutions</td>
<td>Leader or owner of project delivers the solutions or chooses who delivers the solutions</td>
<td>Leader or owner of project delivers the solutions or chooses who delivers the solutions</td>
<td>Solutions are free to be delivered by motivated parties</td>
<td>The group members are free to deliver (at least partially) the solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different stages of the design process intersecting with collaboration modes.
Exploring the collaboration modes during the design process.
Depending on the project, the collaboration can move between the modes during the different stages of the design process.
The structure for designing collaboration was applied in practice in the following case studies.
The first TEDxCSM conference was held in March 2012. The event was organised to celebrate the new Central Saint Martins campus in King’s Cross.
TEDxCENTRALSAINTMARTINS

1. DISCOVERING THE OPPORTUNITY

The idea and the opportunity to organise a TEDx event at the college was the beginning of the project. As a fan of TED talks, I suggested that the school should have its own TEDx event. One of the goals for the event was to bring the students, the staff and the people from the industry together. It was decided early on that the MA Communication Design course was in charge of organising the event. The first stage of the process involved gathering TED enthusiastic students to form the core team to plan the project.

TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design. The first TED conference was held in 1984.
TEDx

x = independently organized TED event

TEDx events were created in the spirit of TED’s mission “Ideas worth spreading.” Hundreds of TEDx events are organised every year around the world and it has developed into a global phenomenon.
This stage of the process included a research trip to Berlin in order to get advice from one of the TEDx ambassadors.

TEDxCENTRALSAINSTMARTINS

2. DEFINING THE IDEAS

In the second stage the core team decided on a theme, applied for a licence from TED and received approval to organise the event. We sketched a project plan, decided the teams and the target group and initiated the social media communications. This stage included a lot of brainstorming, planning and defining the challenges ahead. Speaker suggestions were crowdsourced from all the team members.
TEDxCENTRALSAINTMARTINS

3. DEVELOPING THE EVENT CONCEPT

In the third phase the team found sponsors, designed the visual identity for the event and opened ticket sales. The Develop stage included many meetings with the students, staff and partners and communication with the speakers. Both the external and internal sides of the event preparation were developed side by side, requiring coordination and management from the core team.

The event web site.
To get ideas and insights from other organisers on how to plan the event, we attended another TEDx event and connected with the TEDx community by participating in a workshop in Amsterdam.

The TEDxCSM event article on the CSM Time magazine.
The event brought together professionals from a range of disciplines also outside of arts and design to discuss the theme Emergence. The speakers included Tom Hulme (pictured) and Michael Wolff.
The audience of 130 included VP-level participants from blue chip companies, agency businesses and the design profession.

Social enterprise The Honey Club helps honeybees thrive by setting up bee hives on the roofs of London and involving the local communities.
To round up some of the most interesting thoughts of the first half of the day, Wolff Olins hosted a discussion with drawn summaries during the lunch break.
One conference day was spent in the desert participating in different sessions and activities. The regional discussion and ideation session addressed how the teams can better collaborate internationally. My “unconference” discussion was about design collaboration.

SUPPORTIVE CASE STUDY: THE GLOBAL TEDx COMMUNITY
TEDxSUMMIT

The very first global meeting for the TEDx organisers was held in April 2012 in Doha, Qatar. Over 700 organisers from 90 countries got together for one week to brainstorm, discuss and develop the TEDx brand. Participating in the summit gave me a sense of how participants in a large community can learn from each other, share stories and make valuable connections. The summit worked as a starting point for developing the concepts and tools that were created during the week.
TEDxCENTRALSAINTMARTINS
THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS DURING THE PROJECT

1. DISCOVER
The beginning of the TEDxCMSM collaboration was open and hierarchical: the idea was suggested by one person and it was decided that the MA Communication Design course was in charge of the project.

2. DEFINE
In the second stage the project moved to closed model but remained hierarchical since the core team was in charge of the decisions but for example the ideas for speakers were crowdsourced from the whole team.

3. DEVELOP
Since the teams and the tasks had been established and defined the collaboration remained in closed and hierarchical model.

4. DELIVER
The last stage was closed and hierarchical since all the activities were delivered by the team and the day was run and directed by the two core team members.
Rubbish Duck is an environmental sculpture made out of plastic bottles collected from London’s waterways. The project raises awareness of problems that rubbish causes in our waterways.
RUBBISH DUCK

1. DISCOVERING THE PROBLEM

The idea for the project came from the state of many of London’s urban waterways. Living on Regent’s Canal I became frustrated seeing how dirty the canal is: plastic bags, cans, beer bottles and cardboard packages floating around in a never-ending stream of rubbish. I came up with the idea of a large scale version of the iconic rubber duck, called Rubbish Duck. I asked my colleague Ferdinand Povel to join the project since he was doing his final project on plastic recycling. The next step was to research previous rubbish sculptures and structures, and to find environmental organisations to work with.

In many parts of London the canals and rivers are the only quality public spaces. The waterways are also some of the last natural habitats for wildlife in the city but no organisation is in charge of keeping them clean. The waste poses a real threat to birds, fish and other wildlife.
RUBBISH DUCK
2. DEFINING THE IDEA

In the second phase we took part in many clean-up events to collect bottles for the sculpture and partnered with the environmental charity Thames21. During this stage the team built a social media presence for the project by being active on Facebook and Twitter, reaching out to various stakeholders and people with relevant interests. The inter-university platform Swap Shop was used in order to find students to collaborate with in the project. In order to get a bigger picture of attitudes towards recycling, and how recycling in London works, we also visited the recycling company Bywaters.

This rubber duck found from the canal during a clean-up was 3D scanned and used as a model for the sculpture.
Early sketches and prototypes.

Raw material for the sculpture: plastic bottles washed on the shore in Limekiln, East London.
RUBBISH DUCK

3. DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT

In the Develop stage we advertised the project widely within the university. In order to display the sculpture widely we partnered with Regent’s Canal Festival. This three-day event celebrates Regent’s Canal’s history by exhibiting projects that raise awareness of conservation and restoration of the canal.

UK’s leading reprocessor of recyclable materials, ECO Plastics Ltd, is covering part of the cost of the building process. In order to test possible structures and materials, we further prototyped the sculpture and spoke with selected experts.

Visual identity for the project.
Building the sculpture structure.

By exhibiting the idea in the MA Communication Design Work In Progress Show and broadcasting the project video during the Central Saint Martins Green Week the project has gained exposure within the school. This has also served for testing the communications materials prepared for a wider audience.
RUBBISH DUCK

4. DELIVERING THE SCULPTURE

Upon finalising the project, the sculpture will be displayed first during Regent’s Canal Festival and after that in Shoreditch Festival and Angel Canal Festival. The sculpture will also be displayed in the Olympic Village and in the London Wildlife Center. The sculpture will then be recycled by our project partner ECO Plastics Ltd.
1. DISCOVER
I addressed the problem I wanted to solve and then sought out people to join the project. This phase of the project was open and hierarchical.

2. DEFINE
Define stage was open and flat, because the team reached out to gain knowledge about clean-ups, recycling processes and building the structure. We were open about partnering and considered various options for building the sculpture.

3. DEVELOP
In this stage the project maintained an open model in order to tap into the expertise and contacts of the wider community. At the same time, the team has communicated the vision of the project based on the previous work it has done, meaning that this stage has been led more hierarchically than flatly.

4. DELIVER
This phase of the project will most likely fall in the closed hierarchical mode. We will share the intellectual property of the project with our partner, and work with them and according to their needs to deliver the sculpture.
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE DESIGN PROCESS AND THE COLLABORATION MODES

**DISCOVER**
- what is the challenge?
- who are the stakeholders?
- do you know who are the people you want to collaborate with (closed), or do you need to keep the collaboration available for everyone in order to find the right contributors (open)?
- who will be in charge during the first stage; are there selected people in charge (hierarchical) or can anyone participating join the decision making process (flat)?

**DEFINE**
- what do you need to do in order to define the challenge?
- do you need to tap into expertise unfamiliar to you (open), or do you already have the right people in the team who can provide the information needed for the project (closed)?
- are the decisions being made among all the participants (flat), or by selected people (hierarchical)?

**DEVELOP**
- what suggestions / ideas are being developed further?
- are only the team members contributing to the project (closed) or are other people invited to for example help with prototyping, testing or brainstorming (open)?
- is the process being directed by the selected people (hierarchical) or by all the participants (flat)?

**DELIVER**
- outcome of the project is delivered
- is it defined who will deliver the results / solutions? Can anyone take part in delivering the results (open) or is this limited (closed)?
- are all the participants free to select the delivered outcomes (flat), or does the team lead decide which outcomes will be delivered (hierarchical)?
The group must be able to solve problems together. High tolerance for uncertainty is needed when the project changes direction or something does not go as planned.

**Diversity**
Collaboration benefits from a wide range of skills and expertise in the pool of participants. A diverse group of participants is often the best way to ensure that this is achieved.

**Support**
The support of the other collaborators in the process is important, especially at times of crisis or unforeseen difficulties. Even when no hardships are expected, the collaborative group needs to work on the basis of the trust that if someone were to need the support of others in the group, that support would be available.

**Motivate**
The driving force for collaboration is motivation. In order for a collaboration to succeed, everyone involved needs to feel that they gain something from the collaboration or feel that they are doing a meaningful thing and working towards a valuable end result.

**Communicate**
In order to find the right people to collaborate with, the project needs to be communicated clearly. Giving information about the project and its goals helps people decide whether to participate or not.

**Share**
For a successful collaboration it is important to be flexible with the ownership of ideas. This does not mean that a team should not give credit to individuals where credit is due, but any issues of ownership of ideas or concepts need to be agreed at the onset.