BUSINESS LAB LITHUANIA

Concise guide for developing business ideas

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“Business LAB”: The Methodology for business idea generation, selection, and evaluation through training and consulting

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Introduction

The realisation of a business ideation project, called an innovative project solutions (IPS) project, depends on various external factors. They include the framework conditions for entrepreneurship defined by the government. These conditions predefine the industrial structure of the economy, including the markets in a region. The specifics of the socio-economic milieu within which the entrepreneurs (including the founders and the funders) operate are equally important. Also, intermediaries (higher education institutions, vocational training institutions, science and technology parks, business incubators, accelerators, innovation support agencies, private and public financial institutions, and many others) play an essential role.

However, with venture development, the founders and the funders are the main two prerequisites for launching any potential business idea. The founders form a team of dedicated persons with ambition, vision, and a mission-driven business idea on how to change the world, whether it relates to their immediate surroundings, regions, or a more global market. The funders are those who put their faith in their ideas by investing funds but, in the early stage, more often, their time and efforts. The founders and the funders need to find common ground early to bring the business ideas closer to the market. Hence, the need for innovation managers or intermediaries is to facilitate the development of the required skills and competencies of entrepreneurs and funders.

The proposed methodology serves as the guidelines for the innovation managers, consultants, and other intermediaries to increase the efficiencies of the business idea generation with succinctly described methods for a structured approach to entrepreneurial education, including the programme for the business ideation activities, called the IPS competitions. It aims to provide a more structured understanding of the overall process of entrepreneurial opportunity discovery. The methodology outlines the essential aspects that each aspiring entrepreneur should know, starting from the idea generation to launching the start-up, resulting in a unique economic activity in the region to be pursued by the entrepreneur through a physical or legal business entity.

For better orientation, the document consists of two parts. Section 1 ("Defining the generation of entrepreneurial opportunities") presents the key terms and the overall process for generating entrepreneurial opportunities, including the individual steps to

set up a new venture. It can be used as a reference source or as an introduction to the more specific tools and approaches discussed further.

Section 2 ("Methods and tools for entrepreneurial training") explains the process based on the best practices in design thinking, which underpins the proposed entrepreneurial training in this guideline. The methodology briefly describes the individual phases of the process and the methods and tools suitable for the training and the competition of the IPS competitions or similar activities.

Section 1

Defining the Generation of Entrepreneurial Opportunities

1.1 Starting conditions

Creating a business idea or launching a start-up is a dynamic and complicated process. These initial conditions usually characterise the start of this process:

- The founder or team does not know all the essential elements of the process and the impact factors
- Time, money, and skills resources are limited
- Many assumptions must be made about future events
- Decisions are made with substantial uncertainty.

The description of the process for creating a business idea leading to the venture creation is based on the standard of the German Institute of Standardisation of DIN SPEC 91354, entitled "Start-ups - guidelines for technology-based start-ups". It is the only purposefully created standard for guiding the process of business venture formation in a structured way. The standard limits the set-up process to the essential elements used and, when properly managed, increases the start-up's probability of survival.

No specific recipes exist when assessing individual business ideas during the entrepreneurial opportunity process. The standardised approach needs to be applied only broadly. Each business case is different and requires a tailor-made approach based on the general principles outlined here. What approach a team of founders, supported by the funders and the intermediaries, will take to create the necessary foundational elements is left to entrepreneurial freedom.

The following should also be considered to understand and use these guidelines correctly.

- The order of the individual sections should not be understood chronologically, as the business venture process is mainly focused on different aspects

of the business model and its implementation, considering the maturity of the start-up and the individual situation.

- Reviewing the sections several times to consider the changes or information is highly recommended.
- The assumptions made by the founders should always be verified by other external opinions or information.
- The development and implementation of each element or business model interact with the environment and other elements.
- Implementing business venture building occurs in a field of tension between internal and external influencing factors.

1.2 Definitions

Top-down market analysis • Market analysis to calculate the size of the market that a firm can reliably achieve as a percentage of existing market share according to criteria that consider the value of the own product situation chain, market segmentation, market size, and market trends and which include opportunities to drive existing suppliers through product innovation or market price. A comparison between top-down and bottom-up approaches facilitates the market analysis risk assessment.

Bottom-up market analysis • Market analysis to calculate the market size achieved by a company as a percentage of the market becomes clear in terms of the value chain, today's essential market segments, potential future market segments, and the capacity considered realistic. A comparison between top-down and bottom-up approaches facilitates the market analysis risk assessment.

Company Mission • The mission of entrepreneurship stems from the personal values of the founders.

Technology and knowledge-based start-up • A young company with a high level of innovation (measured by indicators such as the use of funds for research and development and the share of workers with higher education) and high growth potential (measured by turnover and number of employees).

Patents • The invention was sovereignly granted industrial property rights.

Trademark • An integral part of the right to a mark protects product names in a business relationship.

Production and business secrets (best practices) • Confidential and documented inside knowledge of companies, technical or operational.

Copyright • The rights to a work of art or other work, including software.

Licenses • Approval or authorisation of a legal person to exercise a right in the economy.

Product • The number of factors provided by the company for which the customer will pay.

1.3 The purpose of business

The founders need to answer three key questions: Why should a business idea should be taken or a company operate? What is a company product? How should the business model work? The answers to these questions are directly related. A response to a question about the reason for founding, which can be understood as the basis of a start-up, is rarely changing. However, there is a need to regularly review the assumptions and information upon which the answers to the above questions are given. The most important sets of assumptions are related to the formation of the business mission and the defined product, customer, or product user if the end-user differs from the customer.

Business mission

The founders must jointly formulate the "why" or mission of the company, which must be agreed upon. A business goal can be, for example, a solution to a problem that

the founder considers important to the company. A business succeeds when the market is looking for a solution to the problem and will pay for its published price. The process should be moderated and documented by a neutral person.

The purpose of the company, or "why", emerges from the values and goals of each founder and the common values and goals of the founding group. Suppose the purpose of the company, or "why", contradicts the personalities of the founders' values or the common values of the group of founders. In that case, this reduces the obligations of the founders and increases the risk of failure.

The purpose of starting a business, or "why", is the foundation of an organisation. This is what companies define as culture and motivation and is a guide to current and future decisions. "What", or product, describes how "why" can be implemented. "How", or the business model, describes how it should be implemented, its purpose, or 'why'.

Product, customer, and user

The customer may differ from the user of the product. A customer is an institution, person, or group of individuals willing to pay for a product or give a corresponding reward. A user is an institution, person, or group of people that uses or applies a product. The product is the sum of the factors provided by the company for which the customer wants to pay. The customer's willingness to pay for the product must be tested in practice. One way to verify that a customer is buying a product is to create a minimally viable product. If customers are not users simultaneously, then the company should also test in practice acceptability to users. Founders can rely on proven survey methods.

Factors may include, for example, the object, the software, the work performed (service), survival, emotion, benefit, or a combination of one or more preceding. The product description must be prepared for each product. Product development must develop new products or adapt the existing strategy. At the earliest possible stage, the internal assumptions must be confirmed externally.

These key aspects need to be considered and documented in the product development program:

- The added value created by customers and users
- Norms
- Social acceptability
- Price sensitivity
- Resource efficiency and effectiveness

A product development plan must be prepared and documented, which includes these criteria:

- Definition of problem-solving
- The latest technologies
- Process definition
- Test criteria
- Implementation
- Technological trends

The product development plan must be regularly reviewed and adjusted during the re-inspection product development plan, depending on progress, considering all decisions and aftermath comparison of customer needs.

Own and external assumptions must be checked regularly. The general and typical market foreclosure factors, such as fire or explosion protection, substances banned under REACH, and occupational safety, are essential to the Machinery Directive health and safety requirements to avoid undesirable changes. Market barriers, such as the CE marking, must be explored early. Additional considerations should be given about the new EU and national policies and regulations related to the increased resilience to climate change and public health.

1.4 Business model

Definition and requirements of a business model

The business model includes all the tools to turn a product into money and sell its business purpose, or 'why'. These eleven questions must be answered for each product in developing a business model program. Separate methods of response are left to the freedom of enterprise.

The following points must be included and adapted to the relevant target group. The level of detail in answering each question is left to entrepreneurial freedom.

1. What problem does the product solve?
2. What added value does the product offer to the customer and the user?
3. Who are the customers, and who are the users of the product?
4. What is provided to the customer and the user, and what do the customer and the user provide for it?

5. What is the market entry strategy?
6. What channels are used to reach customers and product users?
7. What channels do customers and users supply the product with?
8. What are the company's resources, and how much of each resource does the company need to develop the product?
9. What are the company's resources, and how much of each resource does the company need to produce the product? Resources include, for example, capital, time, personnel, production and trade secrets, infrastructure, security rights, hardware, software, etc.
10. What resources, competencies, and activities must be the object of the enterprise, and which can be acquired externally?
11. Which stakeholders and barriers to entry may accelerate or hinder the product distribution (and what are their interests)?

Business model Canvas

A business model can be prepared using the structured business modelling approach. By far, the most popular tool for designing a business model is the "Business Model Generation Canvas" (further referred to simply as a business model canvas), which served for the business modelling standardisation described in DIN SPEC 91354.

BMG canvas consists of nine interrelated building blocks that provide a pre-defined form and structure for inputting the gathered answers to the questions linked to each building block. The building blocks and their descriptions are provided in Figure 1.

A) Value Proposition

The value proposition combines customer needs and products. Customers/users and (market) experts need to be interviewed about their needs (subjective expectations) and challenges (recommendation: the more, the better) and/or needs to research. The proposition of values must flow from that. The establishment's offers for the market must follow the proposal of values (not vice versa).

Each product and service have one purpose: to solve a customer problem or satisfy a need. Every product and service must have this value proposition. Values in the proposal must be treated as a precursor to a specific product, distinguishing it from

the latter. Values in the offer satisfy customers for products or services to meet their values requirements. The value proposition stems from the customer profile, product benefits, problems, and formulation and proposal for a decision.

For example, a company's offered product is a car. Vehicle manufacturers' offer of values corresponds to the desire of customers to satisfy the right to their value "joy of life". With its value proposition, "driving pleasure", the vehicle manufacturer appeals to customers for whom the joy of life is a core value who want to drive a car, and in their daily lives while driving, experiencing stress or worrying about the car driving is not pleasant. The vehicle manufacturer inside this value proposition had integrated individual additional services such as concierge services, no maintenance costs for the first four years, mobility and agility of thought, and exclusive design.

B) Customer segments

The customer types of the business model must be defined according to the value proposition. It is important to get to know your customers and possible. The founder should take every opportunity to connect with and learn from your customers and users. There are different customers: niche, mass, customer segments, business-to-business (B2B), business-to-customer (B2C), business-to-business-to-customer (B2B2C) and others.

C) Relationship with customers

The following step is to define the business model's relationship with customers. A customer and customer group profile must be created. The profile must contain:

- Customer characteristics;
- Identification of the stages of the procurement process;

(F)
Partnerships

1. Who are our strategic partners?
2. Who are our strategic suppliers?
3. Which basic resources we can get from partners?
4. What main tasks performed by us we can outsource to partners?

(G)
Mains Tasks

What are the required main tasks for delivering our value proposition?
For arranging sales channels, relations with customers, sources of income?

(H)
Main Resources

What are the key resources required for delivering our value proposition?
For arranging sales channels, relations with customers, sources of income?

(A)
Value Proposition

1. What benefits we can provide to customers?
2. What kind of customers' problems do we solve?
3. What kind of products we can offer to relevant customers segments?
4. What kind of customers' needs we meet?

(I)
Cost structure

1. Where are the highest costs in our business model?
2. What are the most expensive basic recourses?
3. What are the most expensive tasks?

Figure 1: The structure of a business model canvas

(C)
Relationship with customers

1. What kind of relationship individual customer segments expect?
2. What kind of relationship with clients we created?
3. How it is integrated into the business model?

(B)
Customers segments

1. To whom we provide benefits?
2. Who is ours most important customers?

(D)
Realization channels

1. What kind sales channels we would like to use to reach out to your customers?
2. What channels we use for reaching out to them now?
3. How to integrate our different channels?
4. Which channels work the best?
5. Which are the most favourable in terms of costs?
6. How they are integrated with our customers' processes?

(E)
Revenue structure

1. What benefits are customers willing to pay for?
2. What benefits are they paying for now?
3. Are we paying them now?
4. How would they be willing to pay?
5. What contribution does each source of income make to our total income?

- Identification of participants in the procurement process;
- The relationship of all stakeholders involved in the procurement process

The profile created should be discussed with an independent expert and with established client groups. The customer pays for the product. The user is using the product. Customer and user need not be identical. For example, the Chambers of Commerce or industry associations can use specialised fairs or online analysis to find customers. Customers can be served in person. They may be guided by a voice recorder or question with possible answers through web software. Relationships with customers must be in line with the values. The customer and the proposition of values are closely related to the relationship with customers. A premium product is sold completely differently than a mass-produced product. The same goes for B2B or B2C products.

D) Realization channels

The business model implementation and communication channels must be defined by harmonising them with the previous building blocks of the business model for each type of customer/user relationship and the sales and communication channels. Implementation and communication channels may vary at the regional or national level. The realisation does not end with the offer of a product or service. In addition, there is product delivery, logistics, payment, warranty maintenance, warranty, and customer relationship management.

E) Revenue structure

The business model's income sources must be defined. When planning liquidity, different concepts of income sources need to be developed to assess the effects of different monetisation concepts. There are often several ways to create revenue with the same offer by answering the key question: where does the money come from in this business model?

F) Partnerships

The main business model partners must be defined following the previous aspects. Depending on the business model, (strategic) partnerships can grow the company's efficiency and minimize the risks by spreading them.

G) Main tasks

The key activities required to execute the business model must be defined. Creating a product or providing a service requires some activities. For efficiency, one should consider the protection of production and trade secrets and work economically. Careful consideration should be given to the essential activities to be taken.

H) Main resources

The key resources of the business model must be defined by the requirements for the accomplishment of the main tasks. Depending on the business model, certain enterprises must carry out production or provide certain services. Various factors are important in selecting key resources, such as production and protection of business secrets, cost structure, time to market, brand positioning, customer and user type, competitive position, and sales channel.

I) Cost structure

The cost structure of the business model must be defined following the planned resources and revenue. When planning liquidity, different concepts of cost structures

need to assess the effect of different cost structures. At the beginning of the business, capital is limited, so all costs not related to core activities and resources should be kept to a minimum. It must be checked that all the business model concept dimensions are compatible with each other and correspond to each other. Own and external assumptions must be checked regularly to assess their validity.

Section 2

Methods and Tools for Entrepreneurial Training

2.1 Process of design thinking

Effective business modelling implementation requires adopting a guiding process that could help turn a vague business idea into a concrete solution tailored to the needs of the customer or end-user. Design thinking is the most widely used methodology for helping to answer most questions posed by the business model Canvas. Design thinking is a problem-solving approach focusing on users and their emotional needs while experiencing products and services. It helps identify what adds value to various internal and external stakeholders in the organisational ecosystem. Design thinking practices help designers look beyond functional needs and unearth their emotional needs, thus, designing an experience that adds emotional value. Design problems are complex; delivering solutions for those problems can also be complex. Design thinking helps remove organisational silos, driving a culture of collaboration and experimentation.

Design thinking is a style of thinking. It is generally considered the ability to combine empathy, creativity, and rationality. While design thinking has become part of the popular lexicon in contemporary design and engineering practice and business and management, its broader use in describing a particular style of creative thinking-in-action is having an increasing influence on twenty-first-century education across disciplines.

Therefore, as an approach to learning, it consists of a creative process based on building ideas. There are no judgments early in design thinking. This eliminates the fear of failure and encourages maximum input and participation in the ideation and prototype phases. Outside-the-box thinking is encouraged in these earlier processes since this can often lead to creative solutions. This differs from the scientific method, which starts with defining all the problem parameters to define the solution. Rather, the design way of problem-solving starts with a solution to define enough parameters to optimise the path to the goal. The solution is the starting point. This methodology includes considering real-world problems, research, analysis, conceiving original ideas,

experimentation, and sometimes, building things by hand. It's not part of traditional teacher training programs and has only recently entered the teachers' vernacular.
Design thinking is also a way to make people more effective and increase their innate capabilities. Lecturers must foster each training participant's creativity, helping them think critically about how and where they get their best ideas. For example, one person discovers his best ideas after playing sports. Another individual finds that shutting herself in a closet where she is not affected by anyone else is the most productive.
Teaching and training with design thinking takes specific qualities: a fair amount of flexibility and resourcefulness, open-mindedness, curiosity, the ability to question beyond the facts, a positive attitude, high energy levels, and excitement about interdisciplinary approaches. Some testimonials say that the educator should "firmly believe that, if you tell an answer to a child, you've deprived them of a great learning opportunity".

Design thinking process

The process typically consists of five to six phases, depending on different tools developed for concrete applications; most are available in the public domain. The Design Thinking Toolbox (Wiley, 2020) lists seven phases, adding one on top of the standard six. Those are:

1. Understand
2. Observe
3. Define point of view
4. Ideate
5. Prototype
6. Test
7. Reflect

1. Understand

The first phase of the micro-cycle is used to learn more about the potential user, his/her needs, and the tasks he/she must complete. At the same time, we define the creative framework more exactly for which we want to design solutions. For the definition of the design challenge, we use, for example, "WHY" and "HOW" questions to broaden or limit the scope. Tools such as Interviews for empathy, extreme users, and the 5W+H questions (explained in section 2.2.1.5) support this phase.

2. Observe

The phase used to observe reality to formulate the assumptions. This is why we must go where our potential users are. Tools such as AEIOU (see section 2.2.2.4) help us observe users in their real environment or the context of the problem. Trend analysis also highlights technological and social trends that help us recognise developments. The "observe" phase findings help us develop or improve the persona and the viewpoint in the following phase. When we speak to potential users to learn more about their needs, we should ask questions that are open, working with a question landscape, for example. A structured interview guide can also be helpful. Often, however, it confirms your assumptions.

3. Define point of view

In this phase, we focus on evaluating, interpreting, and weighing the findings we have gathered. The result eventually flows into the resulting synthesis (point of view). Methods such as context mapping, storytelling, or vision cone are used to present the findings. The point of view is usually formulated as a sentence, for example, to make a statement based on the findings according to the following scheme: "Name of the user/persona (who)... needs (what is needed)... to (his/her need)...because (insight/finding)".

4. Ideate

A phase for finding solutions for the problem identified during the previous stage. Usually, different forms of brainstorming and specific creativity techniques, such as working with analogies, are applied. Dot voting and similar tools (see section 2.2.4.2) help select and cluster the ideas.

5. Prototype

A phase to test the proposed ideas or solutions quickly and without risk with our potential users. In particular, digital solutions can be prototyped with simple paper models or mock-ups. The materials are easy: craft materials, paper, aluminium foil, cords, glue, and adhesive tape are often sufficient to make our ideas tangible and come alive. The prototypes range from critical experience prototypes to final prototypes. Ideation, building, and testing must each be seen as one sequence. They cover the solution space.

6. Test

A testing phase should occur after building each prototype, even if individual functions, experiences, or forms were developed. When testing, the most important thing is that interaction with the potential user takes place and that we document the results. The testing sheet comes in handy here. In addition to a traditional test, it is possible to use digital solutions for testing, such as online tools within the scope of A/B tests (see Section 1.6). This way, prototypes or individual functionalities can be tested quickly and with many users. The tests provide us with feedback that helps improve our prototypes. We should learn from these ideas and develop them further until we convince the users of the idea. Otherwise, an idea must be discarded or changed.

7. Reflect

Reflection is a constant companion in design thinking since this is how we learn. Tools such as the "retrospective sailboat" or feedback rules based on "I like, I wish, I wonder" (see Section 1.6) support the mindset.

2.2 Methods and tools for design thinking

The methods and tools are listed according to design thinking phases. The description of each explains the use of the method and other methods that can support the use of this method. The description provides instructions on how to use it and an internet link to the template or any relevant resource for free access.

2.2.1 Methods for Understand Phase

2.2.1.1 Problem Statement

Method description: The problem statement method is used to define the key problem statement coherently and capture it in a simple sentence. It helps to develop a common understanding of a problem, formulate the collected findings from the problem analysis in a design challenge, outline the direction and the framework for ideation, and develop a reference value for the subsequent measurement of success.

Recommended duration: 30-40 min.

Instructions for use: Sketch the structural elements on the sheets of paper or use the template (see the reference to the example of such a template). Take these steps.

Step 1: These questions (problem/actor/context) help with the formulation of the problem statement: What is the problem? Why is it a problem? Who has the problem? Who has a need? When and where does the problem occur? How is it solved today? Write down the questions on several A4 sheets (portrait) and leave enough space for answers underneath. Use different colours for the questions and answers and write legibly and as large as possible. Produce at least 10 of such problem definitions.

Step 2: Attach these papers to the wall and put an A3 sheet in landscape layout underneath them. Then, consolidate the problem definitions or select the most appropriate, such as by using the dot voting method (see below).

Step 3: Start transferring the individual problem definitions systematically into an overarching problem, for example, in the form: "How might we redesign… [what?] … [for whom?] …so that…[his need]…is satisfied?".

Example: a template example available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/problem-statement-en

Alternative methods: *Design Principles* (see 2.2.1.2).
Additional methods to use: *Context Mapping* (see 2.2.3.2), *"How might we…" questions* (see 2.2.3.1), *5W+H questions* (see 2.2.1.5).

2.2.1.2 Design Principles

Method description: The method is used to define guidelines that constitute the framework for the team during a design thinking project. Design principles range from broad and overarching concepts to project-specific requirements that support the decision on the design direction in each case. The method helps to put a clear focus on a specific mindset or the requirements for the product/service as early as the beginning of the project to provide the team with a uniform understanding of the task so everybody is on the same level, provide that decisions of the design team can be made faster, define general characteristics that should be treated with a higher priority, and develop a guideline that ensures that future design challenges are created on the same overarching principles.

Recommended duration: 90-180 min.

Instructions for use: Invite the core team and the relevant stakeholders for a whiteboard session to define the design principles for the task. Take these steps.

Step 1: Sketch a "basket" and a pyramid on the whiteboard. Then, invite all participants to write design principles on post-its and place them on the "basket". Whenever a team member puts a principle on the "basket", he or she is requested to explain why it is a design principle.

Step 2: As soon as the "basket" is full, sort the design principles on the pyramid, for example, by dividing them into three groups. The sorting is carried out according to the rule: the higher on the pyramid, the more project specific the principle is. General design principles are at the bottom of the pyramid.

Step 3: Once the assignment of the design principles is completed, a vote can be carried out (e.g. with glue dots). The aim is to reduce the design principles to a maximum of three per section, a maximum of nine per pyramid.

Step 4: It's best to put the selected and adopted design principles in a place where the team is often confronted with them and to which it has quick access.

Example: examples could be seen on https://www.designprinciplesftw.com

Alternative methods: *Defining Success* (see 2.2.3.3).
Additional methods to use: *Stakeholder Map* (see 2.2.1.6), and *Dot voting* (see 2.2.4.2).

2.2.1.3 Explorative interview

Method description: The method of explorative interview is used to learn more about the user before thinking about new products or services. An "explorative interview" is usually used in the early phase of the design thinking cycle to learn something new about the everyday life of the people for whom a solution is being created. It helps to explore the everyday life of people, obtain a deep understanding of the user and his unspoken needs, get a view of the basic values, beliefs, motivations, and aspirations that influence behaviour, create a mindset that does not put the product but the person and his or her needs in the foreground, explore cultural and social aspects that might affect the satisfaction of needs, to minimize risks, identify opportunities, and test initial conceptual ideas at an early stage.

Recommended duration: 60-120 min.

Instructions for use:

Step 1: First, create an interview guide with the topics and questions to be dealt with. Start with broad questions and zone in on the topic step by step. The interview should take place at the location of typical use or at a location where the participant feels comfortable – the most suitable place may be his or her home. Be prepared to depart from the interview guide if questions and topics come up that are important to the interviewee.

Step 2: Ask open questions, such as "what", "why", and "how" and avoid yes/no questions. Make sure that the questions allow the participant to describe his behaviour or his opinions from his perspective. Ask about concrete examples to avoid standard answers, and search for specific events, for example, "When did you last...." Try to dig deeper, for example, "What does this mean to you..." or "Why did you...." At the same time, try to speak the language of the participant and avoid technical terms. Remember that the interviewee is the expert in his life.

Step 3: Complete the interview with questions such as: "What would happen if you had one wish to make?".

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/explorative-interview-en

Alternative methods: *AEIOU* (see 2.2.2.4).

Additional methods to use: *Customer Journey Map* (see 2.2.2.3), *Persona/User Profile* (see 2.2.2.2).

2.2.1.4 Ask 5x Why

Method description: The method is used to the situation and the true causes of a problem. It helps to discover the true cause of a problem, develop a sustainable solution, dig deeper, and get to know more than exploring the obvious symptoms to gain new insights.

Recommended duration: 30-40 min.

Instructions for use: Use the template or write the answers on a blank sheet of paper. Take these steps.

Step 1: Describe the problem in detail and use photos or sketches to illustrate it.

Step 2: Start with a "root cause" analysis and ask "Why?" as often as possible. Try to counter each answer with a follow-up "why" question. Stop asking "Why?" once it no longer makes sense. Then, explore another problem in this way or get into an in-depth discussion with the interviewee on the answers given.

Integrate simple prototypes and sketches into the solution discussion to obtain the first reactions from the users.

Example: a template example available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/5xwhy-en

Alternative methods: *5W+H questions* (see section 2.2.1.5).

Additional methods to use: *Explorative Interview* (see 2.2.1.3), *Persona/User Profile* (see 2.2.2.2), *5W+H questions* (see 2.2.1.5).

2.2.1.5 5W+H questions

Method description: The 5W+H method is used to gain in-depth insights and new findings and information to grasp the problem or situation holistically or simply to find relevant questions for an interview. The 5W+H questions are question words starting with a W or H: "Who?", "What?", "When?", "Where?", "Why?", and "How?". The method helps to gain new insights and information capturing the problem or situation in a structured manner, infer more abstract, potential emotions and motives from concrete observations in a specific situation, and observe more closely and dig deeper when discovering something new.

Recommended duration: 30-60 min.

Instructions for use: Where there is a need to understand the problem better, take these steps.

Step 1: Try to raise and answer all relevant W+H questions. If a W+H question does not make sense in context, skip it.

Step 2: Look where uncertainties exist or questions crop up. Discover what questions should be raised in the interview.

Where there is a need to learn more about the needs, take these steps.

Step 1: Prepare a list of possible sub-questions (e.g. in a mind map). Vary the questions and "play" with them. Adapt them to the situation.

Step 2: Create the interview questions or a question map from all this.

Step 3: Try to get a lot of information. Ask why, even in the context of other W+H questions.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/wh-questions-en

Alternative methods: *Empathy Map* (see 2.2.2.1), *Explorative Interview* (see 2.2.1.3), *AEIOU* (see 2.2.2.4).

Additional methods to use: *Problem statement* (see 2.2.1.1), *Design principles* (see 2.2.1.2), *Ask 5x Why* (see 2.2.1.4).

2.2.1.6 Stakeholder Map

Method description: The method is used to get an overview of all stakeholders, organisations, and people with a claim or interest in the problem and a potential solution. The stakeholder map helps to clarify the positions of the stakeholders. This tool is part of the stakeholder analysis that aims at identifying the interests, inhibitory and supporting factors, and power structures within the system. It helps to obtain valuable information for strategic and communicative planning and future activities, make assumptions about the influence of certain actors in the project, identify clues that suggest a lack of information regarding actors, for example, which actors have not been sufficiently considered so far (white spots), draw first conclusions about alliances or power structures, and identify potential conflicts between different stakeholders.

Recommended duration: 60-240 min.

Instructions for use:

Step 1: Start by defining the use case. It can be a product, a project, or the collaboration of different departments.

Step 2: List all stakeholders involved. In addition, deepen the understanding of the stakeholders by asking questions. The questions are defined by the use case:

- Who will benefit from the success? Who has an interest in it being a success?
- With whom do we collaborate? Who provides us with valuable ideas?
- How can sales and marketing make a mark?
- Who is blocking the idea and for what reasons? Who benefits from failure?

Step 3: First, create a stakeholder map and enter the stakeholders on the map. Then, enter the connections of the stakeholders to one another. Define and use different symbols for the connections, for example, broken lines for more complex relationships. Reflect on the stakeholder map and determine the next steps, actions, and possible consequences from working with the stakeholder map.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/stakeholder-map-en

Additional methods to use: *5W+H questions* (see 2.2.1.5), *AEIOU* (see 2.2.2.4), *Brainstorming* (see 2.2.4.1).

2.2.2 Methods for Observe Phase

2.2.2.1 Empathy Map

Method description: The method is used to understand the customer/user better, perceive his/her feelings, and empathize with his/her actions. An empathy map is a tool for empathetic target group analysis. It is used to identify the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of existing or potential users and customers and understand their needs. It helps to document the insights from observation or testing with users and capture the user from different perspectives to build empathy, understand better where the user has problems (pains) or potential benefits (gains), and infer his tasks (so-called jobs to be done), collect findings to create a persona, and summarize observations and record unexpected insights.

Recommended duration: 20-30 min.

Instructions for use: Outline the layout on paper or use the empathy map template. Take these steps.

Step 1: Fill in the fields in the template during (or after) the interview by answering these questions:

1. What does the customer/user see?
   - What does his environment look like?
   - Where is the customer? What does he see?
2. What does the customer/user hear?
   - What does the user/customer hear?
   - Who influences him? Who speaks with him?
3. What does the customer/user think and feel?
   - What emotions drive the customer/user?
   - What do the customers/users think?
   - What does it say about them and their attitudes?
4. What does the customer/user say and do?
   - What does the customer/user say?
   - What are all the things the customer/user must do?
   - Where does the user behave in a contradictory way?

Step 2: Also, fill in the fields "Pains" and "Gains".

- What are his/her biggest problems and challenges?
- What are the opportunities and benefits he/she might have?

Example: a template example available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/empathy-map-en

Additional methods to use: *Customer Journey Map* (see 2.2.2.3), *Persona/User Profile* (see 2.2.2.2).

2.2.2.2 Persona/User profile

Method description: The method is used to learn more about the user/customer and a possible solution. A persona (often called user persona, customer persona, or buyer persona) is a fictitious character created to represent a user or customer type. The persona puts a potential new solution (e.g. a website, a brand, a product, or a service) into the context of the respective needs and the jobs to be done. It helps to create a fictional character who is a potential user/customer of a solution, create a picture of the user/customer shared by everybody on the team, visualize the goals, desires, and needs of a typical user/ customer and share them with the design team, come to a consistent understanding of a target group, and document stories and pictures that a typical user/customer experience.

Recommended duration: 20-40 min.

Instructions for use: Collect information on a potential user and discuss with the team which type of persona might represent the problem statement.
In the case of a persona based on the observed user, take these steps.
Step 1: Describe the persona. Give the persona a name, gender, and age. Add additional attributes such as social milieu, family, hobbies, and so on.
Step 2: What is the task (job) the user does? Where can he be helped?
Step 3: Describe all use cases in the problem statement (where? what? how?). Where does the user make use of our proposal? What happens before and after? How does he do it?
Step 4: What are the biggest difficulties and problems the user has? They can be unsolved problems or difficulties the user has with existing products and offers.
Step 5: Determine the gains (possibilities, benefits) and pains (problems, challenges) the user has or might have.
Step 6: Draw a sketch that visualizes the customer (optional) or supplement the user profile with photos or clippings from magazines.
Step 7: Think about who influences the persona (family, children, stakeholders, etc.) and what general trends (e.g. megatrends, market trends, technology trends, etc.) influence the persona.

In the case of a person based on a future user (non-existing yet), take these steps.
Step 1: Describe the target customer.
Step 2: Think about and discuss with the team what lifestyle and values this customer had 12 years ago and the decisions he made then.

- How has all this changed over time?

Step 3: Based on this generational research, describe the future user in the here and now.
Step 4: Compare the two persons when they were of a certain age and try to understand what has changed in their lives and what has stayed the same until they reached the age of a future persona.
Step 5: Extrapolate the future target customer. Our future user is the same age as our current target customer.
Step 6: What insights do you gain from this? What will be more important?

Example: a template example available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/persona-en

Additional methods to use: *Empathy Map* (see 2.2.2.1), *5W+H questions* (see 2.2.1.5).

2.2.2.3 Customer Journey Map

Method description: The method is used to walk in the shoes of my customers to understand in great detail what they experience when they interact with our company, our products, or our services. A customer journey map allows us to build empathy with the customer by visualising his actions, thoughts, emotions, and feelings that emerge in an interaction. It helps to establish a common understanding on the team about the experiences of customers with a company, product, or service, identify "moments of misery" that negatively affect the customer experience, achieve a solid understanding of all the customer's touchpoints, close problematic points and gaps in the customer interaction and realize a unique experience, design a new and improved customer experience, and develop new products and services continuously on a customer-oriented basis.

Recommended duration: 120-240 min.

Instructions for use:

Step 1: Choose a persona to be used in the customer journey map, and share the story of the persona with the design team.

Step 2: Then, choose a scenario or job to be done. What does the persona do and what is the context? It may be an end-to-end experience or a part of it.

Step 3: Define what happens before, during, and after the experience to make sure that the most important steps are included. Mark all experience steps (e.g. using Post-its). It is easier to compile an overview on the meta-level before expanding and elaborating.

Step 4: Decide which interactions should be assigned where and how. The template gives us space for the typical journey and the respective actions.

Step 5: Supplement what the persona thinks.

Step 6: Supplement the emotion he/she feels. Capture the emotional status (positive and negative) of each step with coloured glue dots or emoticons.

Step 7: Define potential areas of improvement.

Step 8: Define the people responsible for the action/ process within the organisation. Once a clear picture of the experience emerges, the design team automatically comes up with questions, new insights, and potential improvements.

Example: a template example available from
https://www.dt-toolbook.com/journey-map-en

Additional methods to use: *Persona/User Profile* (see 2.2.2.2).

2.2.2.4 AEIOU

Method description: The method is used to learn more about the problem, the user/customer, and his environment, used in design thinking as a visualization technique for new insights when conducting field observation. It helps to bring structure to observation and ask the right questions decisive for gaining knowledge, facilitate the evaluation of many findings by larger design teams performing parallel observations, relate the user to the activity, the space, and an object, collect insights not out in the public, and have inexperienced design teams also collect insights.

Recommended duration: minimum 60 min.

Instructions for use:

Step 1: Start with the research and discover where the user can be found, at what times, and how to contact them.

Step 2: Be where the user/customer is in the problem statement.

Step 3: Work with the AEIOU template that provides questions and instructions in the individual areas to be observed. Each team member is handed a questionnaire for the observation, so everybody can take notes. Use a smartphone to take photos and make videos. Collect impressions in notes, photos, videos, interviews, and field observations. Especially in field observation, the AEIOU framework can be an entry point for observing the user in his/her environment. Lend structure to the records after the observation providing the structure with the corresponding headings. Supplement the direct observations with photos or short videos. After completion of the field observation with the AEIOU framework, cluster and sort the findings in thematic blocks with summarizing headings so you can identify a pattern.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/aeiou-en

Additional methods to use: *Explorative Interview* (see 2.2.1.3), *Persona/User Profile* (see 2.2.2.2), *5W+H questions* (see 2.2.1.5), *Ask 5x Why* (see 2.2.1.4).

2.2.2.5 Trend analysis

Method description: The method is used to recognize trends at an early stage and integrate them into the problem definition and find a solution. Trend analysis tries to identify and quantify trends. It helps to explore megatrends, trends, and their points of contact, visualize the greater correlations between trends and discuss with the design thinking team or clients whether and how the trends interact, avoid a viewpoint too simplistic, subjective, and possibly monocausal and find a holistic approach, identify and present overlaps and causal relationships between trends and draw conclusions about the possible significance of a trend, and gather valuable context information about the problem statement or an idea.

Recommended duration: 120-240 min.

Instructions for use: First, take these steps.
Step 1: The focus is on a product, service, or development to be considered, which is written on a post-it.
Step 2: The cords in different colours represent the megatrends such as urbanisation, digitisation, and sustainability. The phenomena or manifestations of the megatrends are hung from the cords. They have been determined beforehand in a workshop or a focus group.
Step 3: Subsequently, connections and any overlaps are searched for, as they can be seen on a subway line map. Then, the team investigates where the product or service is located (ideally at the intersection of several megatrends).
After completing the above, take the following step.
Step 4: An affinity chart is a grouping of matching elements and visualises typical patterns. It is used for the structured output of the trend analysis. For example, the elements at the crossing points are examined more closely, and possible characteristics and directions are searched for (e.g. hiking city hiking). The picture is completed with small cards matching industry, consumer, marketing, and technology trends. Note: Cards can be used in multiple ways simply by duplicating them.

Example: a template example is available from
https://www.dt-toolbook.com/trends-en

Additional methods to use: *Explorative Interview* (see 2.2.1.3), *Ask 5x Why* (see 2.2.1.4).

2.2.3 Methods for Define Point of View

2.2.3.1 "How might we..." question 1

Method description: The method is used to formulate a question that makes it possible "ideate" phase to work in a targeted manner. The "How might we..." question is an essential component in design thinking. The HMW question uses a special language that helps to switch to a different way of thinking. It helps to transform the needs identified into a real design challenge, write down the goal of the later ideation and the goal of the design thinking team in a concrete sentence, and define the extent and scope of the ideation process.

Recommended duration: 5-15 min.

Instructions for use:
Reflect upon the findings from the previous phases of "understand" and "observe". The result is a synthesis of the insights.
Determine what needs the team should address and what qualifying additional information is relevant in this context.
Motivate the design thinking team to come up with several "How might we..." questions that address the identified needs or opportunity field. Each question should adhere to the logic of "How might we..." followed by a verb (e.g. design), a noun (e.g. investment product), and the user (e.g. name of persona).
Read the question aloud, and ask if the team is inspired by the question to find many solutions. If not, the question might be too narrow (e.g. it already anticipates a solution or does not allow for further exploration) or the question is too broad, that is, the question tries to improve the world, and the team feels lost when confronted with the task. To counteract this dilemma, there are two question techniques: "Why" to expand the focus, and "How" to narrow down the focus of consideration. Once the question is rolled out, the ideation phase can begin. Start, for example, with an open brainstorming session that generates initial ideas.

Example: a template example available from
https://www.dt-toolbook.com/hmw-en

2.2.3.1 “How might we...” question 2

Method description: The method used to present my insights, ideas, and solutions to the members of a team and other stakeholders. Storytelling is a helpful tool that can be used in many phases across the design thinking cycle. It helps to do research, talk with people, and have empathy to formulate profound stories, summarise the results from the “understand” and “observe” phases and discuss with the team, highlight unexpected results and generate new perspectives, and share insights, ideas, and results (solutions) with others.

Recommended duration: 10-30 min.

Instructions for use:

Step 1: Print the template or draw the structure on a flip chart or whiteboard. For using storytelling in the communication of results from the “understand” and “observe” phases, the following procedure is especially useful.

Step 2: Encourage every member of the team to complete one line (e.g. per interviewed person), and then summarize the highlights and special features of the person or user (column 1). Add important quotes from the person.

Step 3: Interpret the results of the team and define the meaning.

Step 4: Conclude with the team and summarize the key findings from the interview. This way, you have created a basis and are one step closer to sharing the results of the story with the team and the stakeholders. Formulate the draft of a story in bullet points, create a storyboard, or produce a short video that enacts the story.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/storytelling-en

Alternative methods: *Empathy Map* (see 2.2.2.1), *“I like, I wish, I wonder”* (see 2.2.7.1), *Context Mapping* (see 2.2.3.2), *NABC* (see 2.2.4.3).

Additional methods to use: *Customer Journey* (see 2.2.2.3), *Stakeholder Map* (see 2.2.1.6), and *Trend Analysis* (see 2.2.2.5).

2.2.3.2 Context mapping

Method description: The method is used to deal with the context of a problem. The method of context mapping is a way of getting unexpected insights about the user/customer in his/her everyday experience. It helps to learn from an "expert", namely, the user, who imparts unexpected insights into what they go through in their life, get a better picture of a particular situation, and answer the questions such as what these experiences are like for others, when do they undergo this experience, with whom, and in what context? Follow the principle: "Knowledge is information with additional context".

Recommended duration: 40-60 min.

Instructions for use:
Many findings are necessary to get a good context map, so go outside often to observe and understand. There is no substitute for seeing reality from the viewpoint of the user, seeing it as he sees it. Understand for whom a solution is sought.

- Observe the user and his environment. Typical questions: What do they do? Where do they do it? With whom do they do it? What is the impact of their activities on the environment? Which individuals lend support? Are there shared tools or resources?
- Take pictures of the environment and the user.
- Define areas on which the focus should be. Use your imagination for extensive context or limited context.
- Determine categories of the respective context, for example, trends, the economy, location, or technology fields.
- Rearrange these categories to find new connections and gain new insights.
- Fill in the categories on the template with the insights.
- Deliberately leave one or two fields empty so the team feels encouraged to add new categories that seem important.

Example: a template example is available from
https://www.dt-toolbook.com/context-map-en

Alternative methods: *Customer Journey Map* (see 2.2.2.3).
Additional methods to use: *Empathy Map* (see 2.2.2.1), *5W+H questions* (see 2.2.1.5), *Ask 5x Why* (see 2.2.1.4).

2.2.3.3 Define success

Method description: The method is used to provide support to the team across the entire design cycle, especially regarding the range of options. It helps to vote and come to a consensus on the team as to what success is to be achieved, ensure that requirements of the organization/management/users and other stakeholders are understood, which makes it easier later to get a buy-in from the decision-makers, simplify the list and prioritization of options during the entire project, and create a basis for the measurement of KPIs if they are wanted for the project.

Recommended duration: 60-90 min.

Instructions for use:
Use sticky notes for the "define success" tool so each team member has the possibility of sharing his or her thoughts.

- List relevant issues (e.g. what does internal and external success mean) to ensure that a 360° vision emerges.
- Encourage all participants to write the answers to the questions on post-its. Then, collect all thoughts at once or else individually from the participants.
- It is best to have everybody share their thoughts first; then, discuss and narrow down the elements of success. Then, the core elements of success are selected (e.g. by forming clusters). Based on this, conduct a vote on the main areas, for example, with the dot voting method.
- Ideally, involve important decision makers (e.g. management, founders, and partners) so you ensure already in the run-up that no time and no money will be wasted. Even more important is that no frustration accumulates during the design cycle or at the end of the project.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/define-success-en

Alternative methods: *Design Principles* (see 2.2.1.2).
Additional methods to use: *Stakeholder Map* (see 2.2.1.6), and *Trend Analysis* (see 2.2.2.5).

2.2.4 Methods for Ideate Phase

2.2.4.1 Brainstorming

Method description: The method is used to ideate quickly – quantity is more important than quality. Brainstorming is an ideation technique in which all participants can contribute their knowledge. It helps to generate many ideas that the team spontaneously comes up with, use the entire creative potential of the design thinking team, have a high number of variants at hand in a short period, obtain an interdisciplinary perspective on a problem that represents different skills and knowledge, collect ideas and viewpoints from a heterogeneous group, and inspire enthusiasm and generate momentum.

Recommended duration: 5-15 min.

Instructions for use: To follow the standard procedure for conducting a brainstorming session, take these steps.

Step 1: Prepare a clear question for the brainstorming session, for example, "How might we..." or "What possibilities are there...".

Step 2: Repeat the brainstorming rules before the brainstorming session. Try to motivate the group to give more ideas during the session and build upon the ideas of others. Make sure that all are heard and all ideas are written down. Point out that only one idea is to be written on a sticky note and that it should be clear and legible. Instead of words, small sketches may be drawn on sticky notes.

Step 3: Cluster and assess the ideas with the team at regular intervals.

Step 4: Make a judgment as to whether even more creativity is needed (e.g. to obtain even wilder ideas) or start a brainstorming session in areas where more ideas are sought in general.

To follow the procedure for the structured brainstorming, take these steps.

Step 1: All participants write their ideas on sticky notes. After a certain period, one person sticks his ideas on a flip chart and explains them. If there is already a similar sticky note, another one is glued next to it.

Step 2: During the explanations of the other team members, new ideas are generated (ideation) and written on new sticky notes.

Step 3: The result is a clustered collection of ideas that can be later evaluated.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/brainstorming-en

Additional methods to use: *"How might we..." question* (see 2.2.3.1).

2.2.4.2 Dot voting

Method description: The method is used to clearly decide what options should be pursued in the form of ideas or concepts. It helps to make joint decisions as a team, limit the selection, simplify and prioritize, make quicker decisions and avoid lengthy "analysis paralysis", resolve disagreements on teams and avoid power games, integrate the opinion of all participants in the decision-making process, and, finally, focus on the best ideas and market opportunities.

Recommended duration: 5-20 min.

Instructions for use:
After collecting ideas on sticky notes (e.g. in a brainstorming session), take these steps.

Step 1: Clarify the criteria before the vote. Example of criteria: best suitability for long-term goals; it will delight the customer/user, supports the vision; provides the biggest opportunity for competitive advantages; increases adherence to deadlines; makes the greatest impact on customer satisfaction.

Step 2: Place the sticky notes with ideas on the wall or whiteboard, so everybody can see them. Give each participant some votes (usually between 3-5 dots) and prompt them to choose. In private, each participant casts his vote via dot voting on the post-it that best meets the criteria in his opinion. Have the participants select whether they want to put several votes on one sticky note or distribute their votes to different ideas.

Step 3: Rearrange and regroup the ideas with the most dots. Make a transparent decision based on these priorities, then determine the next steps.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/dot-voting-en

Additional methods to use: *Brainstorming* (see 2.2.4.1), *Design Principles* (see 2.2.1.2).

2.2.4.3 NABC

Method description: The method is used to capture the core of an idea within a short time and share it with others in a targeted way. The NABC is the minimal version of a business idea structuring method. It comprises the first four basic questions (abbreviated from the first letters in the words "need", "approach", "benefit", and "competition") around the context of the idea. It helps to capture the core of an idea, a concept, or a prototype quickly, ensure that the focus is on the user/customer by starting with the question about the customer problem, followed by an intensive examination of the customer's need, look at an idea under four aspects: need (problem); to approach (solution, performance promise), benefit, and competition (alternatives on the market), present an idea in an early phase and obtain important feedback, and compare different ideas/concepts.

Recommended duration: 20-40 min.

Instructions for use: To use the method, take these steps.

Step 1: Draw an NABC cross or use the template.

Step 2: Begin with N as in need (problem) and describe

- the problem that the customer has
- the typical customer with this problem
- the typical everyday situation in which the problem crops up
- the need that results from it

Step 3: Go to A as in approach (to a solution) and explain

- how to solve the problem, what the approach to a solution/the performance
- promise looks like
- the product, service, or process
- how the business model looks or how it earns money

Step 4: Continue with B as in benefit and formulate in terms of both quality and quantity

- the benefit for the customer
- the benefits for you/your company

Step 5: Add C as in competition, the alternatives and competitors existing today. In addition, list the unique selling points of the solution.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/nabc-en

2.2.4.4 Blue Ocean Tool and Buyer Utility Map

Method description: The method is used to differentiate a product or service from the competition and open up new market opportunities. Blue Ocean tool helps in the definition of a unique value proposition, while a Buyer Utility Map focuses on the user/ customer and his/her experience with services and products analysed as a cycle broken down into six phases (purchase, delivery, use, accessories, maintenance, and disposal). Both tools, when used in combination, help to explore untapped market opportunities, provide differentiated and new offers based on the user needs, adapt a strategy to new market needs by understanding the competitive edge, and establish the right vision for the design challenge or a road map for step-by-step implementation and control mechanisms.

Recommended duration: 30-120 min.

Instructions for use: To use the tool take these steps.
Step 1: Begin with the "four actions framework" (raise, reduce, eliminate, and create). The focus is on the definition of strategic factors, which direct or alternative competitors – or the industry– concentrate on about a product or service (e.g. productivity, price, guarantee, etc.).
Step 2: Determine which factor can be raised, reduced, or eliminated or which ones can be newly created. Choose the most critical factors.
Step 3: Arrange these critical factors in the buyer utility matrix. First, define the decision factors critical to the user/customer concerning the offer known today.
Step 4: Think about which factors can be reduced or eliminated. Now comes the creative part. Conduct a brainstorming session with the team to get to the unused factors. To do so, additional value ranges should be identified that a service or product may cover.
Step 5: Define the new "blue ocean value" proposition from the result.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/utility-map-en

Alternative methods: *Lean Canvas* (see 2.2.7.3).
Additional methods to use: *Persona/User Profile* (see 2.2.2.2), *NABC* (see 2.2.4.3).

2.2.5 Methods for Prototype Phase

2.2.5.1 Prototype to test

Method description: The prototype to test is used to assess whether the needs of the user were met with the implemented ideas. The point is to configure an experiment for the user to learn more about a feature or experience. It depends on the context of the problem statement, which prototype is used, how many prototypes are built, or how often a micro-cycle is run through until we have designed a final prototype. The level of detail of the prototypes typically increases from low resolution (low fidelity, lo-fi) to high resolution (high fidelity, hi-fi). The potential user should interact with the prototype and experience it. This way, basic functional requirements for the solution can be identified. The feedback collected during the test is valuable and constitutes the basis for further decisions, for example, determining the most promising ideas or functions.

Recommended duration: minimum 30 min.

Instructions for use:
Step 1: Before prototyping, we should ask ourselves what kinds of insights we want to gain and why we want to make an experiment. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate assumptions to be tested and how the experiment is to be carried out.
Step 2: Think about how interacting with the prototype will become an exciting experience for the user (test person) and how the test will result in new insights.
Step 3: Determine the level of resolution and what is to be done. Define different prototypes to be built. Often, it makes sense to think of alternatives and then choose one.
Step 4: Choose a variant and outline the experiment, if necessary. Low-resolution prototypes focus on insights about needs, practicality and functionality, and are mostly used in the divergent phase. High-resolution prototypes concentrate on feasibility and profitability.

Example: a template example is available from
https://www.dt-toolbook.com/prototype-to-test-en

Additional methods to use: *Empathy Map* (see 2.2.2.1), *"I like, I wish, I wonder"* (see 2.2.7.1), *Solution Interview* (see 2.2.6.2).

2.2.5.2 Exploration Map

Method description: The method is used to know what experiments I have done so far and how I can classify them. The exploration map gives the team an overview of the experiments carried out and shows the areas in which experiments can still be made. It provides information on the expectations regarding an experiment and its effect on the target group. It helps to make visible the experiments that were carried out and the prototypes realised, get a quick overview of the experiments or prototypes that can still be performed, record the delta between the expected and actual outcome of an experiment, and obtain a shared understanding of the experiments carried out so far.

Recommended duration: 10-45 min.

Instructions for use: To use the method, take these steps.
Step 1: Enter the experiments already carried out. They might have to be repositioned. Each experiment is recorded on the exploration map – it is best to do so with a name and an image (e.g. of the prototype and the testing).
Step 2: Discuss the positioning of the experiment on the team. Have we left our comfort zone? Based on the previous exploration and the previous experiments, the goal for a new experiment, for example, can be defined.
Step 3: After the prototype has been built and the expectation regarding the result has been formulated, they are also entered on the exploration map and positioned.
Step 4: After the tests, the reaction of the users and the findings of the tests can also be captured. The critical discussion of the feedback may change the position of the experiment on the exploration map.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/exploration-map-en

Additional methods to use: *Solution Interview* (see 2.2.6.2), *"I like, I wish, I wonder"* (see 2.2.7.1).

2.2.5.3 Minimum viable product

Method description: The method is used to translate user needs into a simple, functional product and test whether the offer will succeed on the market. A minimum viable product (MVP) is a tool for the development of a product, service, or business model. The aim is to discover quickly (and with little effort) in an iterative process whether the solution satisfies the user's needs in any meaningful way. Typically, MVPs are prototypes of an already higher resolution and constitute the basis for launching a product or service on the market on a step-by-step basis. This iterative process is characterized by a permanent alternation between the holistic solution of the problem and the solution of individual details. It helps to discover at an early stage whether the basic need is satisfied and the product attracts interest on the market, discover through iterative testing whether the user need is met with a minimally functional product and how the product should be enhanced, discover through user feedback how much demand there is for the product before developing further details and features, and minimize the risk of investing in a solution for which there is little demand on the market, thus, saving time, money, and energy.

Recommended duration: undefined.

Instructions for use: to use the method take these steps.

Step 1: Always focus on one MVP (not on several simultaneously) and describe the initial situation. Included in this are the persona, the top three problems and challenges, the customer journey, and relevant use cases.

Step 2: Ensure that the design team is clear about the product vision and the functional scope. Prioritize and focus on the core functionality when developing the MVP. Expand the functional width and depth step-by-step (T-shaped MVP).

Step 3: Define the top three features to be tested in the next iterations of the MVP.

Step 4: Plan the building of the MVP. Here, you should keep an eye on the costs and the schedule. If the plan optimizes learning, define the measurement criteria, and then realize the MVP.

Step 5: Test the MVP on potential users/customers in a real context and collect as much feedback as necessary. The results should be measurable.

Step 6: Summarize the learnings together and improve the MVP step by step. One can learn something from every iteration.

Step 7: Summarize the overarching findings from the iterations.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/mvp-en

Additional methods to use: *Persona/User Profile* (see 2.2.2.2), *Exploration Map* (see 2.2.5.2), *Solution Interview* (see 2.2.6.2).

2.2.6 Methods for Test Phase

2.2.6.1 Testing sheet

Method description: The method is used to prepare the test sequence and document the test results. The purpose of testing is to learn as much as possible about the user and his/her needs by having the user interact with the prototype. It helps to plan a test systematically and define the roles, document the test and the results so it's easy to use them for the next activities, consider in advance which are the test criteria and in which cases the hypotheses are verified to validate the needs and to check assumptions, and develop empathy for the user.

Recommended duration: 10-30 min.

Instructions for use: After the completion of the prototype for testing, take these steps.

Step 1: Test planning:

- Think about where the test should take place. It is best to carry out the test in the context of the problem on-site on the user's premises.
- Define the test criteria before the test. What are the criteria for a thesis to be verified?
- Plan the sequence, assignment of roles, and the key questions of the test.
- Define who will ask the questions, who makes notes and documents the test, and who observes.

Step 2: Test procedure:

- Run the test and observe the user keenly during the test. Ask for feedback. It is valuable and constitutes the basis for further decisions on the development of the prototype.
- Write down the most important quotes.

Step 3: Test documentation:

- Document the test with photos or, better yet, short videos of the most important statements.
- Summarize the main findings and learnings.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/testing-sheet-en

Alternative methods: *Solution Interview* (see 2.2.6.2).
Additional methods to use: *Empathy Map* (see 2.2.2.1).

2.2.6.2 Solution Interview

Method description: The method is used to discover whether a solution is accepted by the user. A solution interview is a tool used in the test phase with advanced (high-resolution) prototypes. The goal is to test solutions developed in the project and see whether they are accepted by the user's address. It helps to understand whether an intended solution is valued by users, that is, whether it is convincing in terms of functionality, user-friendliness, and user experience, question the underlying task of the project, examine whether you are focusing on the crucial issues in the project, understand the needs, behaviours, and motivations of users/customers more deeply, and measure the value of the solution for the user.

Recommended duration: 20-30 min.

Instructions for use: to use the method take these steps.
Step 1: First, define the interview goal. Reflect on the task and the persona that the solution should address. Depending on the current phase in the macro-cycle, the goal is to check the impact of the solution or measure the value of the solution.
Step 2: Determine the interview team, including role assignment. When selecting the interview candidates, make sure they resemble the persona for which the solution is intended. Think about what you should take along with you to the interview (e.g. reference points from previous discussions).
Step 3: Plan the interview guide in four phases: warmup, introduction to the context, the experience of the solution, and summary.
These aspects are important for carrying out a solution interview effectively:
Warm-up: Create an atmosphere that allows for uninhibited statements. Check the similarity between interviewee and persona.
Introduction to the context: Define what context information about the usage scenario should be given to the interviewees.
Experience the solution: Let the interviewee work out the solution by himself; ask him to "think aloud".
Summary: Summarize the statements of the conversation partners in your own words. Watch the reaction.

Example: a template example is available from
https://www.dt-toolbook.com/solution-interview-en

Alternative methods: *Testing Sheet* (see 2.2.6.1), *A/B Testing* (see 2.2.6.3).
Additional methods to use: *"How might we..." question* (see 2.2.3.1), *Persona/ User Profile* (see 2.2.2.2).

2.2.6.3 A/B testing

Method description: The method is used to review an assumption or compare two variants (in terms of quantity or quality) to discover what the preferences of the users/ customers are. The A/B test can be a stand-alone test or as an expansion of a prototype test. An A/B test is a simple tool for testing two variants of a prototype simultaneously. The test of the prototype usually answers a question with different characteristics. This test is well suited to advance an existing prototype/MVP or to test a new variant in comparison with a basic prototype. Make it very clear before the test what is to be tested and compared (e.g. using key figures). It helps to perform a true A/B test or several variants of a prototype in a multi-variants test or split testing, do a quantitative evaluation, carry out a qualitative survey and evaluate the number and content of feedback, and compare individual variants of a function or a prototype (e.g. buttons, visuals, arrangement).

Recommended duration: 5-15 min.

Instructions for use: To use the method take these steps.
Step 1: Define the basic prototype and decide who is to be the test group (selection of the target group).
Step 2: Consider variants of the prototype and decide two to be compared with each other. Define key figures for what kind of testing is to be done (whether quantitative or qualitative test).
Step 3: For quantitative tests, assign the users at random and conduct the test.
Step 4: Evaluate the results.
Step 5: Use the preferred variant for improving the prototype.
Step 6: Repeat the tests with new variants or perform another validation test.
Note: Differentiation of the test procedure: Quantitative A/B test: The user group is divided (x% variant A, y% variant B). Qualitative A/B test: The variants are tested against one another (all users see variants A and B).

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/a-b-testing-en

Alternative methods: *Solution Interview* (see 2.2.6.2).

2.2.7 Methods for Reflect Phase

2.2.7.1 I like, I wish, I wonder

Method description: The method is used to provide constructive feedback and keep a positive mood. "I like, I wish" is particularly suitable for sensitive projects. By maintaining a positive mood, a relationship based on partnership evolves between the feedback provider and the feedback recipient. It can be used in the context of reflecting on the collaboration and for a specific result. It helps to receive positive feedback on the results, celebrate small successes achieved with this method in an iteration, with a prototype, or in a test, make it a part of reflection and ideation; it can be expanded by "What if..." and a parking lot for ideas, and give and receive written and spoken feedback.

Recommended duration: 15-90 min.

Instructions for use: To use the method use the following procedure.
Take a large sheet of paper and draw a table with five columns. The column headings are Team/prototype, I like ..., I wish ..., I wonder ..., and What if ...? Enter the names of the teams and their prototypes in the rows.
To obtain feedback on a prototype presented, each participant is given at least three sticky notes. Each participant is encouraged to complete the sentence on the X-axis ("I like", "I wish", "I wonder").
For an interaction to emerge, each participant should read aloud what's written on the sticky notes before sticking them on the grid. Then, everybody places his or her sticky note containing the feedback on the grid.
Once all the sticky notes are stuck to the sheet of paper, the time reflects on the findings and asks whether any insights are important for the next iteration.
Starting a discussion as the recipient of the feedback should be avoided. It would change the mood, and the positive attitude is lost. Applying this tool aims to avoid ad hominem criticism and maintaining a positive mood.
The feedback is a gift to the feedback recipient.

Example: a template example is available from
https://www.dt-toolbook.com/i-like-feedback-en

Additional methods to use: *Brainstorming* (see 2.2.4.1).

2.2.7.2 Create a pitch

Method description: The method is used to share the results and insights with the team at the end of an iteration and at regular intervals with the stakeholders. A pitch describes the presentation of one's business idea in a short time in front of investors or a panel of judges. There are different pitches. They differ in terms of length, for instance. The elevator pitch is the shortest presentation. The point is to convey a summarizing and informative outline of the idea within a short period (often no more than approx. 30 seconds or 1 minute). Usually, only a few PowerPoint slides are used if any. In many pitch presentations, real prototypes are shown, making the presentation more vivid. A pitch helps to show the team and stakeholders the current status of a prototype, a project, or the ultimate solution, structure ideas and highlight core information, obtain feedback on the solution and important functions, the customer needs, or the value proposition, convince the audience or decision-makers of the project, and get approval and resources for further steps or the implementation.

Recommended duration: 60-120 min.

Instructions for use: to prepare a pitch take these steps.

Step 1: Rough planning. Answer these questions for the rough planning: Who are the listeners? What do they know already? Where can I meet them? What do they want to know? What's the framework? How much time do we have? What are the options for the presentation? What is my goal? What is my message? Then, plan the rough sequence (e.g. with sticky notes). Define the content, form, and who does or says what.

Step 2: Break down into details. Break down the pitch into details in several iterations: use stories and arouse emotions, follow KISS (keep it short and simple) with a maximum of 10 slides. Use key figures. Figures say more than words! Pictures say more than words, and videos are more than pictures. Standard is boring! Don't use PowerPoint, if possible. Show the prototype in the pitch, give a demonstration, and show how it works. Repeat the key messages at the end of the pitch. Usually, a listener cannot remember more than two or three facts.

Step 3: Test, practice, and improve. Test the pitch, practice the sequence, and improve it iteratively. After the pitch, the team should be prepared for many questions.

Example: a template example is available from https://www.dt-toolbook.com/pitch-en

Alternative methods: *NABC* (see 2.2.4.3).

Additional methods to use: *Lean Canvas* (see 2.2.7.3), *Stakeholder Map* (see 2.2.1.6).

2.2.7.3 Lean canvas

Method description: The method is used to translate a problem into a solution that considers both the customer's needs and my business context. The canvas supports structuring and visualizing an innovation project. The completed lean canvas documents the ultimate "problem/solution fit". The lean canvas primarily is used to review the "problem/solution fit" and adjust it if necessary. This means that the collected data is compared to the best solution that fits the behaviour and challenges of the customers. It helps to summarize the results of the design thinking iterations so everybody gets a clear picture of the innovation project, visualize and structure the hypotheses to review them afterward and capture the findings in an overview, think and comment about the implementation of the business model to identify risks entailed in the implementation, and compare different variants and business models.

Recommended duration: 60-120 min.

Instructions for use: To use the method, take these steps.
Print the lean canvas on a large sheet of paper (preferably using the A0 format) and provide sticky notes of various sizes.
Step 1: Fill in the lean canvas step by step and supplement it with new findings. In the early phases, the focus is on steps one through five to review the "problem/solution fit" (problem, customer segments, value proposition, solution, and existing alternatives). Tip: First, iterate these five steps until a stable image has emerged.
Step 2: Complete the other steps in any order. Tip: Depending on preferences, use sticky notes of different colours for different customer segments or according to risks (e.g. pink = high risk, must be tested quickly; yellow = medium risk; green = already tested or low risk).
Step 3: Identify the riskiest assumptions and test them in experiments.

Example: a template example is available from
https://www.dt-toolbook.com/lean-canvas-en

Alternative methods: Business Model Canvas. Note: it is advised to work with the lean canvas first since it takes greater account of the validation of the solution as a minimum viable product; once the lean canvas is valid and optimization of the cost structure becomes more important, one can switch to the business model canvas.

Additional methods to use: *NABC* (see 2.2.4.3), *Minimum Viable Product* (see 2.2.5.3), *Persona/User Profile* (see 2.2.2.2).

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“Business LAB”:
The Training and Consulting Programme

02

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Introduction

This document consists of two parts. Chapter 1 ("Training and Consulting Programme") describes the proposed structure of the training and consulting programme and the content of the activities. The description of the programme provides an overall framework for preparing the user-customised training on a case-by-case basis according to the specific needs of the training audience. This framework accounts for the experience of participants and their pre-defined level of knowledge about entrepreneurship and the creation of new businesses.

Chapter 2 ("The Competition for Innovative Project Solutions") describes the organisation of the business ideation competition, referred to as 'innovation project solutions' (IPS). It covers practical matters regarding the implementation of such events, including the structure of the competition, identifying the individual topics to be addressed, the challenges related to the topics, and the corresponding methods and tools, which are explained in a separate document accompanying this programme (see "The Methodology for business idea generation, selection and evaluation through training and consulting").

The proposed programme includes tools to quickly assess a business idea that founders and investor intermediaries can use during similar idea generation events or any other type of business ideation session. It also provides practical examples to help apply specific methods and tools for business idea development with a clearly defined structure.

The annexes include questionnaires for evaluating business ideas at such events (Annex 1) and present examples of identified start-ups from relevant regions (Annex 2) that can be used as real-life cases for training and consultation activities.

Chapter 1
Training and Consulting Programme

1.1 The structure of the programme

The "Business LAB" training and consulting programme consists of two distinct sets of activities. The first set includes four courses covering the essential aspects of the design thinking process (Table 1) from four different angles that are informed by research and development, entrepreneurship, innovation and IT system engineering perspectives (Table 2). The courses provide the foundational knowledge and skills required for participation in the second set of activities, which are grouped around organising IPS competitions or similar events.

The training and consulting programme is broken into ten traversal themes (TT1-TT10), each dedicated to a particular knowledge and practice building block of design thinking. The expected learning outcomes for each building block are described in Table 1. The traversal themes are not meant to be prescriptive. Each lecturer and/or mentor can choose specific sub-topics based on the selected literature (the recommended list of literature is provided at the end of this document), the goals of the teaching defined for each learning session and the audience's experience with entrepreneurship. The learning could be enriched by using practical assignments from real-world cases developed from selected start-up profiles and assigning practical tasks linked to the analysed business cases (Annex 2).

Traversal theme (TT)	Learning outcomes
TT1: *Introduction to design thinking*	Training participants will be able to explain the role of design thinking (DT) in innovation and understand its limitations and benefits when applied in organisations. Training participants will develop skills to use DT within a project.
TT2: *Market assessment*	Training participants will be able to conduct a preliminary market assessment using quantitative and qualitative social science methods.
TT3: *Framing the problem and defining solutions*	Training participants will be able to explain data synthesis and apply their knowledge to frame problems as a basis for further problem-solving.
TT4: *Creativity*	Creativity is essential for coming up with new ideas and potential innovations. Training participants will be able to describe, explain and use idea creation techniques for idea development.
TT5: *Experimentation and learning through failure*	When it comes to design and innovation, it is essential to develop and learn fast. Experimentation is one way to achieve this; it is also necessary to learn from failure. Training participants will experience several iteration cycles, as well as the failures that inevitably accompany them, and they will reflect on how these experiences contributed to their learning.
TT6: *Handling uncertainty and risk*	A design thinking challenge is naturally complicated and typically characterised by high levels of uncertainty and ambiguity. Throughout the projects, training participants will experience tension and ambiguity, and they will reflect on their experiences coping with these situations.
TT7: *Visualisation*	Visual tools such as sketching, building rough mock-ups and role-play are essential in team communication and joint creation within a design thinking project. Training participants will be able to explain and use sketching and various prototyping techniques to conduct experiments.
TT8: *Teamwork*	By working in interdisciplinary teams and teaching appropriate methods, training participants will learn to recognise their role within a team and improve their teamwork skills. Collaborating remotely will be addressed specifically.
TT9: *Reflection and feedback*	The course will enable training participants to explain the importance of reflection in innovation and practice its use through field diaries, reflection sessions and test-taking.
TT10: *Presenting business ideas*	The course will enable training participants to use basic presentation techniques and reflect on their presentations.

Table 1: The overall structure and the learning outcomes of the training programme

The four courses form the backbone of the training and consulting programme. They complement each other not only by addressing different themes but also by tackling several key aspects of design thinking that take different perspectives into consideration. Thus, for instance, the traversal theme of creativity (TT4) is addressed in the course on research and development (Course A) and the course on entrepreneurship (Course B). Course A looks at related research methods and approaches to creativity, while course B explores the more practical application of creativity in an entrepreneurial activity context.

A similar cross-course approach is taken regarding the traversal theme of handling uncertainty, another key aspect of entrepreneurship and innovation. In this case, the theme is explored during the course on entrepreneurship (Course B) and the course on innovation (Course C). While the former explores the process of planning a business model, the latter investigates how uncertainty is handled through the assessment of innovation and commercialisation potential. Finally, the course on IT solutions (Course D) contributes to the three traversal themes of visualisation (TT7), teamwork (TT8), and reflection and feedback (TT9), all of which enhance the practical knowledge participants gain through the more hands-on, transferable IT skills that are covered in Course C.

Table 2: Overlap of training and consulting program elements with individual courses (dark boxes indicate distribution of topics by course, type of knowledge and level of participants' training)

Traversal theme (TT)	**Course A:** Research and development	**Course B:** Entrepreneurship	**Course C:** Innovation	**Course D:** IT solutions for remote collaboration
TT1: *Introduction to design thinking*	Basic knowledge for participants at all levels			
TT2: *Market research*	Knowledge for more advanced participants			
TT3: *Framing the problem and defining solutions*	Basic knowledge for participants at all levels	Practical skills for participants at all levels		
TT4: *Creativity*	Basic knowledge for participants at all levels	Practical skills for participants at all levels		
TT5: *Experimentation and learning through failure*		Practical skills for participants at all levels		
TT6: *Handling uncertainty and risks*		Practical skills for more advanced participants	Practical knowledge for more advanced participants	
TT7: *Visualisation*			Practical knowledge for participants at all levels	Basic skills for participants at all levels
TT8: *Teamwork*			Practical knowledge for participants at all levels	Skills for more advanced participants
TT9: *Reflection and feedback*			Practical knowledge for participants at all levels	Basic skills for participants at all levels
TT10: *Presentation*				Basic skills for participants at all levels

1.2 The content of the courses

Course A: Research and development

The course will cover the design thinking elements that are related to research and development (R&D) methods, including the prototype development phases and background information about the principles for technology evaluation and commercialisation from the science perspective.

The following traversal themes will form the main building blocks for instruction and advice:

- **TT1:** *Introduction to design thinking* – introduces the main elements in the design thinking process. The course will teach participants about the stages of the design process, the methods for working with interaction design, the similarities and differences among different design methods, and considerations for involving users in the design process.
- **TT2:** *Market research* – teaches the research methods and tools that are used in design thinking. Participants will be taught ethnographic methods that they can apply in their projects, enabling them to perform basic user research, such as user observation and interviews.
- **TT3:** *Framing the problem and defining solutions* – explains the definition of research questions and hypotheses. The course will teach participants how to frame and re-frame problems to develop a systematic understanding of problem identification as a basis for further problem-solving.
- **TT4:** *Creativity* – covers creativity and cognitive skills. The course will encourage participants to develop and try new ideas and support them by providing techniques for idea development.

Course B: Entrepreneurship

The course will cover the design thinking elements that are related to the generation of innovative solutions, including the preparation of a business plan, the principles for establishing and developing a company and the elements of handling uncertainty through financial planning and attracting investment.

The following traversal themes will form the main building blocks for instruction and advice:

- **TT3:** *Framing the problem and defining solutions* – covers the principles of defining a problem. This course will build upon the previous course and develop participants' practical knowledge regarding the use of problem framing to employ a problem-solving approach within the context of an entrepreneurial opportunity search.
- **TT4:** *Creativity* – teaches the principles of ideation and customer creation. The course will build upon the previous course and expand on the use of ideation methods by teaching some practical knowledge.
- **TT5:** *Experimentation and learning through failure* – explains the principles of testing the solution-need fit. The course will teach participants how to identify and describe the possibilities and limitations of informal and formal techniques for discovering, analysing and resolving failures.
- **TT6:** *Handling uncertainty and risks* – explores the principles for planning a business model. The course will develop participants' creative potential and enable them to deal with real-world problems when preparing a business case for validation.

Course C: Innovation

The course will cover the design thinking elements that are related to the assessment of innovation potential, including the feasibility and adaptability of innovative

project solutions, as well as estimating the expected innovation impact and creating a prototype model in a team.

The following traversal themes will form the main building blocks for instruction and advice:

- **TT6:** *Handling uncertainty and risks* – identifies the principles for assessing an innovation and its commercialisation potential. Participants will learn how to analyse the novelty of the proposed solution and estimate its potential market value.
- **TT7:** *Visualisation* – defines the principles for preparing and making a pitch. Experimentation through visualisation and prototyping are essential skills for setting up and conducting experiments. Participants will learn how to set up experiments to evaluate and develop their ideas.
- **TT8:** *Teamwork* – explores the principles for building high-performing teams. By asking participants to work in interdisciplinary teams, the course aims to develop their teamwork abilities and self-awareness.
- **TT9:** *Reflection* – practices the principles for validation and assessment. The course requires participants to explain the importance of reflection in innovation and practice its use through field diaries and short reflection sessions.

Course D: IT solutions for remote collaboration

The course will cover the design thinking elements that are related to essential IT solutions for entrepreneurs, including how to identify the IT solutions required for preparing and implementing innovative solution projects and the methods for effectively applying the selected IT solutions.

The following traversal themes will form the main building blocks for instruction and advice:

- **TT7:** *Visualisation* – outlines the IT solutions required for preparing to prototype, such as prototyping apps, including those that turn sketches into animations (Boords, Mockingbird and similar).
- **TT8:** *Teamwork* – introduces the IT solutions required for facilitating team-

work, including tools for creativity (such as Stormboard, Ideaflip and similar) and collaborative online boards for teams (such as Mural, Miro and similar).

- **TT9:** *Reflection and feedback* – explores the IT solutions required for assessment and validation, including those for creating, sharing and presenting customer journey maps, personas and stakeholder maps (e.g., Smaply, Userforge, MakeMyPerson and similar) and online survey tools (e.g., Typeform).
- **TT10:** *Presenting business ideas* – presents the IT solutions for preparing and presenting a pitch, including video conferencing applications (such as Zoom) and social media.

Chapter 2

The Competition for Innovative Project Solutions

2.1 Organising the IPS competition

To increase efficiency, the tournament of innovative design solutions can be organized after the implementation of the training and consultation program presented in Chapter 1. For more advanced participants, the IPS tournament can also be organized as a separate event without introductory training and advice. However, in this case, it is necessary to properly evaluate participants' level of knowledge and entrepreneurial experience. In the case of the less advanced, the tournament should be organized during training, either in a separate activity or by integrating it into the training and consultation process through practical sessions.

It is proposed that the tournament be conducted on a remote learning platform or in a physical space (with an audience and sufficient space for individual and collective learning). The following description presents the structure of the tournament as an additional or separate event. In the case of an IPS tournament conducted during training and consultation, the proposed tournament program in Tables 3 and 4 should be evenly distributed over individual courses at the discretion of the lecturers or mentors, and individual topics and stages of the tournament should be linked to the specific content and practical tasks of the training and consultation as much as possible.

When using online tools, the number of participants is determined by the requirements of the contest organisers and could be virtually unlimited. However, the following recommendations apply.

The participants should be grouped into teams of 5-7 people, and each team should have a separate space where they can gather and discuss their ideas without interference from other teams. If conducted in physical space, it is recommended to maintain two meters of space between teams. In addition, it is preferable to provide teams with a temporary screen to shield them from others. If an online platform is used, the participants should be broken into teams that can work with each other virtually. Each group must have its own mentor. The recommended mentor-to-team ratio 1:2-3.

Team allocation could be assisted by asking participants to take a team role profile test (e.g., Belbin's team role test) before the event and then randomly distributing the participants with different team roles or learning profiles. Examples of such tests are described in the methodology.

Teaching aids include a whiteboard or cleaning board, a written magnetic board with a stand, 3-4 colour markers, leaflets or sticky notes, adhesive tape, a projector, a computer with an online connection and the video conference tool. It is recommended to use posters, boards and other visual means, as well as online versions of similar tools, to enable participants to collaborate, share and validate their business ideas more quickly and with broader reach across the different physical venues where the contest is held or where other participants and mentors are located.

Educational material: The training material can be taken from the prepared document "Methodology for Generating, Selection and Evaluation of Business Ideas through Training and Consulting" (copy 1 per group), as well as from the assessment questionnaires and sample start-ups provided in the annexes (annexes 1-2) to this document.

Types of learning methods: The level of knowledge and experience of the participants in the training presupposes the selection and application of different learning methods. More individual learning methods should be used for participants who have little to no entrepreneurial experience, while more group-based and active learning methods should be used for more advanced participants. Possible learning methods include the following: individual learning, visual learning, group learning, active learning, hands-on learning, competitive learning (using competitiveness to promote teamwork), problem solving, mentoring, performance evaluation and feedback.

Learning outcomes: Participants will acquire and test practical knowledge for developing novel business solutions, referred to as innovative project solutions (IPS), by applying the design thinking method as wander entrepreneurship education methods in practical knowledge-oriented learning and training environments.

Learning outcomes (business ideas) are evaluated by an expert group of lecturers, mentors and practitioners. Experts can assist participants by taking an active role in mentoring and using research questions to verify the feasibility, novelty and relevance of ideas, accuracy of customer identification, to assess how it meets the identified regional problem and customer segment needs, market research and price accuracy, and to assess the pre-market readiness and acceptability. After each stage of the tournament, participants should receive feedback so that they can learn from their idea creation failures.

2.2 The setup of the IPS competition

Tables 3 and 4 present the proposed structure of the IPS competition for two different groups of participants: those without previous experience participating in similar competitions or entrepreneurial initiatives, and those who have already participated in similar events or have entrepreneurial experience. The tables describe the topics and specific issues to be addressed during the tournament. They also show the type of learning, the stage of modelling thinking, the methods (described in a separate document) and the duration. At the request of the participants, it is possible to present individual tools and suggest that the participants choose the most appropriate tool to achieve their goal. The estimated duration of each theme is indicated, but it may be modified if part of the time is devoted to remote activities or a mixed training approach is used. The practical arrangements for individual events must also be taken into consideration.

The competition has two main parts. Part One (see Topics 2-4 in Tables 3 and 4) is designed to quickly involve participants in the creative process of generating business ideas. At this stage, under the leadership of their mentors, result-oriented teams need to be created and quickly brought together, using individual, visual, group and active learning methods (the specific tools that could be used at this stage are described in a separate document that discusses the methodology). Part Two (see Topics 5-7 in Tables 3 and 4) is composed of activities that are designed for active learning and may be partly or fully organized at a distance. When possible, a short video presenting the topics and the tournament's tasks at at each specific stage could be shown for each topic.

Two variants of the tournament program are proposed. The first option (see Table 3) is aimed at those participants who have little or no experience in developing or implementing entrepreneurial ideas. The second option (see Table 4) is intended for those participants who have experience participating in business education events or who are actively involved in the creation of business ideas, whether they are implemented in start-ups or business organizations.

Table 3: The IPS competition programme for participants without previous experience participating in similar contests or business ideation activities

Topics	Issues to be addressed	Type of Learning	Design thinking phase, methods	Learning duration
1. Introduction	Objectives and the structure of the programme. Priorities and personal expectations for events.	PowerPoint (or video) presentation, optionally online	N/A	10 min.
2. Ideas for innovation	Modern approaches to creating innovative ideas/products/services. Foundations of creativity. The structure of the creative process. Methods for stimulating personal and group creativity. Technology or user?	Active learning. Teamwork. Interactive games.	N/A	30 min.
3. Design thinking as a technology for finding innovative solutions	History of the design thinking method. Engineering and design thinking. Examples of design thinking technology applications.	Video presentation. TED talk.	N/A	10 min.
4. Customer insight	Study your users. User path method. Analysis and synthesis: data modelling for revealing insights. Empathy map. Point of view. Hierarchy of needs. Working hypotheses. Stakeholder analysis. Key person. User research of an innovative solution. Portrait creation of the key person.	Teamwork. Active learning.	*Understand Phase:* Problem Statement, Ask5x Why Stakeholder Map *Observe Phase:* Empathy Map, Persona/User Profile	40 min.

5. Focus on the key issue	Focus on the key issue. Clusters of problems. Formulation of the main innovation task. Defining requirements for the solution.	Active learning.	*Define Point of View Phase:* "How we might..." question	30 min.
6. Generation of ideas	Methods of business ideas generation. Problem identification, creative problem-solving. Generate solutions first, and then evaluate them. Lifestyle matrix as a template to help generate ideas. Evaluation and selection of ideas. Formation of a wall of business ideas.	Active learning. Training.	*Ideate Phase:* Brainstorming, Dot voting	45 min.
7. Prototyping and testing	What is a prototype (MVP)? The basics of prototyping. Defining a key scenario. Visualisation of the key scenario. Definition of scenario testing criteria. Testing of the developed prototype/script in the groups. Storyboard.	Teamwork. Active learning.	*Prototype Phase:* MVP *Testing Phase:* Solution Interview	40 min.
8. Designing the business model	Business canvas preparation and visualisation.	Teamwork.	*Reflect Phase:* Create a pitch, Lean canvas.	55 min.
9. Storytelling	Storytelling rules. The main stages of storytelling (pitch style). Preparation of presentation (digital or on-site). Digital stories can be presented as videos, interactive websites, or podcasts that present the business idea concept.	Visualization, video/audio recording.		60 min.

10. Business battle	A question-and-answer round between teams in front of the judges and expert committee.	Active participation. Debate method.		60 min.
11. Assessment of business ideas	Assessment of business concept by experts, analysing the business Canvas presentation and business battle active participation.	–	N/A	60 min.
12. Announcing the win	Award ceremony. Final ranking of best IPS and teams announced: TOP 6 (one 1st place, two 2nd places, three 3rd places). Best individual idea. Best team idea.	–	N/A	30 min.

Table 4: The IPS competition programme for participants with a previous track record of participating in similar contests or business ideation activities

Topics	Issues to be addressed	Type of Learning	Design thinking phase, methods	Learning duration
1. Introduction	Introducing the purpose, aims, structure, and expected outcomes of the event.	Pre-recorded video.	N/A	10 min (online)
2. Understanding the problem or the need	How to learn as much as possible about the needs of a potential user and define the problem that requires a solution.	Individual learning. Visual learning.	*Understand Phase:* Problem Statement, Design Principles, Explorative Interview Ask 5x Why, 5W+H questions, Stakeholder Map	20 min.
3. Analysing the market needs and the user demand	How to analyse the context for identifying the major problems in the market. How to collect and prioritise problems/challenges occurring in the market. How to determine the real needs of the user. How to turn the user's needs (expectations) into the requirements for an innovative business solution. How to assess needs that are not expressed and included in the requirements.	Individual learning. Visual learning.	*Observe Phase:* Empathy Map, Persona/User profile, Customer Journey Map, AEIOU, Trend analysis	30 min (offline)
4. Defining a value proposition	How to find customer segments for a certain idea. How to identify/generate the idea to solve the problem.	Group learning. Active learning.	*Define Point of View Phase:* "How we might..." question, Context mapping, Define success	45 min (offline)

	How to calculate/measure the value of the proposed solution (a would-be product) for a particular customer group (according to customer profiles). How to evaluate individual aspects of the proposed product's value (functional, economic, financial, social). How to use a value curve analysis to compare the product's value with similar offers on the market.			
5. Generating an innovative project solution	Analysis of the uses of existing products (using a user-centric approach) and gap identification. Problem-solving tree. Search and selection of innovative project solutions. Discussion of the most effective innovative project solution.	Active learning. Practical learning.	*Ideate Phase:* Brainstorming, Dot voting, NABC, Blue Ocean Tool, and Buyers Utility Map	45 min (offline)
6. Prototyping	Preparation of the minimum viable prototype (MVP) for testing and running initial tests to validate the solution.	Group learning. Learning-by-doing.	*Prototype Phase:* Prototype to test, Exploration Map, MVP	30 min (offline)
7.1. Testing the idea's feasibility	Testing the solution by putting questions to experts and listening to their responses. Estimating the period for innovative project implementation.	Mentoring.	*Test Phase:* Test sheet Solution interview, A/B testing	1 hour (offline/online)
7.2. Testing the need for the proposed project solution	Testing the prototyped solution with five individual pilot users to understand the feasibility of the idea. Forming a pilot customer group. Getting their feedback. Making changes to the solution.			1 hour (offline/online)

7.3. Validating the business concept in the market	Sharing the innovative business idea on social media by uploading a video pitch.			1 hour (offline/ online)
8. Preparing a video pitch for demonstration	Preparing a high concept-level pitch addressing the user's needs, solution-problem match and potential market. Preparing a business canvas.	Competitive training. Playing.	*Reflect Phase:* "I like, I wish, I wonder", Create a pitch, Lean canvas, or business model Canvas	30 min (offline)
9. Assessing business idea	Getting the business concept assessed by experts based on estimated evaluation criteria (using an online survey tool for expert vote) and/or by users counting "likes" on social media.	–	Criteria of evaluation of IPS (valuing the business idea, the business plan/ or business model generation canvas)	45 min (offline/ online)
10. Wrapping up and announcing the winners (awards)	Using the comments from experts and/or made by the internet users participating in the validation of the business concept (to avoid requiring pre-Announce awards for best IPS and teams: TOP 6 (one 1st place, two 2nd places, three 3rd places).	–	N/A	30 min (offline/ online)

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Annex 1

Evaluation Sheets for IPS Competitions

1. The full version of the evaluation sheet

	Criteria	Possible	Actual	Comments
A. The Business Idea	**A1. Innovation** Is the business idea new and/or innovative?	5		
	A2. Feasibility Is the business idea feasible, and can it be executed?	5		
	A3. Market potential Does the idea have market potential, and did the candidate identify growth opportunities?	5		
	A4. Decent employment If materialised, will the business create decent employment and economic growth?	5		
	A5. Financial sustainability Is the business financially viable, and is there a realistic prospect of generating sufficient revenue to exceed costs?	5		
	A6. Social impact Will the business have a significant social impact, and can this impact be measured?	5		

	A7. Environmental impact Will the business have a significant environmental impact, and can this impact be measured?	5		
	A8. Entrepreneurial spirit Does the candidate have the entrepreneurial spirit and personal drive to make the business work?	5		
Total score (A)		**40**		
B. The Business Plan	**B1. Executive summary** Does the business plan provide a solid and convincing overview of the business proposal?	5		
	B2. Business idea description Is the business idea clearly described?	5		
	B3. Market and competition Have competitors been identified, and is there a clearly articulated strategy for market growth?	5		
	B4. Marketing and sales Is there a convincing marketing plan, and are sales forecasts realistic?	5		
	B5. Staffing and legal requirements Are staffing needs identified, and does the business comply with legal requirements?	5		
	B6. Seed capital and financing sources Have capital needs been carefully assessed, and have potential sources of finance been identified?	5		

	B7. Financial estimates Have financial estimates been carefully calculated?	5		
	B8. Implementation Is the implementation schedule realistic?	5		
	B9. Clarity and formatting Has the business plan been drafted and clearly explicated?	5		
Total score (B)		**45**		
C. The Business Pitch	**C1. Presentation** Was the business plan convincingly presented?	5		
	C2. Motivation Did the candidate demonstrate a real motivation to pursue the business idea?	5		
	C3. Applicability and usefulness of prizes Would the awarded prizes substantially help the business?	5		
Total score (C)		**15**		
Combined total score		**100**		

2. A shortened version of the evaluation sheet

Criteria / assessment options (choose one)	Strongly agree	Agree to some extent	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree to some extent	Strongly disagree	Total score per criterium
A1. Innovation Is the business idea new and/or innovative?	5	4	3	2	1	
A2. Feasibility Is the business idea feasible, and can it be executed?	5	4	3	2	1	
A3. Market potential Does the idea have market potential, and did the candidate identify growth opportunities?	5	4	3	2	1	
A4. Decent employment If materialised, will the business create decent employment and economic growth?	5	4	3	2	1	
A5. Financial sustainability Is the business financially viable, and is there a realistic prospect of generating sufficient revenue to exceed costs?	5	4	3	2	1	
Total score per all criteria, $A_t=A_{1-5}$						
Overall impression rating: If it is a breakthrough idea, multiply the result by two, and the final score, $A_f= A_t*2$.						

Annex 2

Selected Start-Up Cases

Company name, location	Brief description of innovative product	Website
Vinted, Vilnius, Lithuania	An online marketplace start-up for used clothes.	https://www.vinted.com
NanoAvionics, Vilnius, Lithuania	A spin-off from Vilnius University develops a high-performance, low-cost chemical propulsion system for small satellites.	https://nanoavionics.com
CityBee, Vilnius, Lithuania	Operates car-sharing services in Lithuania and Poland.	https://www.citybee.lt/en
GoRamp, Vilnius, Lithuania	A real-time logistics platform connecting supply chain members to cover end-to-end logistics processes and centralise information and documentation exchange.	https://goramp.eu/
CGTrader, Vilnius, Lithuania	A marketplace for licensable stock and custom 3D models.	https://www.cgtrader.com

“Business LAB” participants’ ideas and success stories


03

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“Motivio” – a mobile application for personal improvement

Probably many will agree that the pace of life today is extremely fast. Changes in the pace of life have been noticed by scientists already 30 years ago. This is closely related to the emergence of technological innovations in our daily life.

Stress is one of the most troubling consequences of the fast pace of life. Today, scientists more and more often emphasize negative effects of stress on health. What could help in this case? In some cases, proper time planning and motivation to act could help. Namely motivation.

It turns out that even every fifth person tends to choose less important tasks when he or she should perform much more important ones: to prepare for examination, draw up a report or presentation, etc. The accumulating work not performed on time causes a really big stress. After all, proper prioritization could help solve everything. And there would be no need to be stressed.

Edvinas Radevič participated in training “Idea Development training BUSINESS LAB“ with his idea for personal development courses “Motivio“ and took the 1st place.

“Currently, the social networks, which have a huge influence, are predominated by the cult of productivity. Opinion leaders and short video creators promote a productive and healthy lifestyle. So, there is a great need to increase motivation and productivity”, - tells Edvinas. – Many people want to improve, to be more motivated and disciplined, but they have no one to help them. “Motivio“ are personal development courses on the phone. All you have to do is download the app to your smartphone and can start a journey of personal development“.

We talk with Edvinas Radevič about the idea of “Motivio“ mobile application, plans to develop it and experience gained in Business LAB training.

Did you have a dream of starting your own business? Can you say that you are entrepreneurial?

Since childhood I was attracted to commercial activities. While still a primary school student, I used to sell sweets to students in all classes of the school and that is how I earned money. I used to sell sweets to all the classes at school and that is how I earned my living. I have also been interested in cars since my childhood days and was engaged in their repair and improvement. Thanks to my work and motivation, I have accumulated considerable experience, and today my hobby has become my source of income. I am currently a third-year student at Vilnius Tech and am studying Business Management. I have friends who are developing their own businesses. We often discuss about business with them. I have not created my business so far. But, yes, I have a dream about my own business.

Tell us about your business idea "Motivio". How did you come up with it?

I came up with the idea itself because I (won't hide that), like many students, lack motivation, after waking up in the morning, to write course work and get prepared for a test. I did not find any motivation and discipline course apps useful for me, and, therefore, came up with an idea to create it.

What makes your idea unique compared to competitors?

Competitors do not have such a wide selection of tools on one app. "Motivio" includes the discipline, motivation and productivity courses. Customers can use daily quotes and bucket list (a list of goals, dreams and aspirations that they want to achieve during their lifetime) free of charge. Some courses are also free of charge. After getting people interested in the app in this way, after attracting more customers and after spreading information about the app, it would be possible to cooperate with other companies and integrate advertising. Competition is huge. However, the main competitors are indirect, because similar courses are provided on web pages, and there are no direct analogue competitors.

What future do you envision for your idea "Motivio"? Will you try to make this idea come true?

Not for now. The realization of the idea would take quite a long time and would cost a lot of effort. Today, I cannot devote neither my time nor effort for that, because

studies and work take up all my time. The idea of "Motivio" is promising. But I have another idea too, and I plan to implement it first.

Tell us about your impressions of and experience gained during Business LAB training.

I can honestly say that I really liked the training. First of all, I was interested in information about start-ups and the aspects of a successful business. I was also surprised by the quality of the training and interesting presentations by competent lecturers. During the training, I felt motivated to improve myself and to refine my business idea. The training was very useful and interesting, and I am happy that I took part in it. I would definitely recommend such courses to all my friends.

How did courses help improve the business idea that you came up with?

The original idea behind "Motivio" was that there had to be a paid app. Only later, during the training, I came up with an idea to offer some courses for free.

Which, in your opinion, personal qualities are needed in creating a start-up or other business?

In my opinion, a modern entrepreneur must be flexible. Business must be able to quickly adapt to the needs of customers, to changing environmental conditions. Persistence is also very important, because if you really want something, good results can be achieved with a lot of effort. An interesting fact is that as many as 90 percent of startups fail. Therefore, persistence is probably the most important quality of entrepreneur.

Which your personal qualities can help in creating business?

Flexibility, stoicism, persistence, perseverance, communication, ingenuity, exuberance.

What, in your opinion, can lead to the success of the implementation of the business idea? Is a good idea enough?

I believe that, without hard work, a good idea is doomed to failure. The success of a business idea depends on many factors. It is very important for the idea to be innovative and exclusive. And, I think, it also requires a bit of luck.

Do you have ideals? Which person could be an authority figure for you?

My ideal is Elon Musk. I have read his book and admire his persistence and effort, which led to his success. Reverse thinking and unusual approach are the factors that determine the greatest uniqueness of Elon Musk. The attempt to create a new, completely different, unusual product rather than to improve the existing one. To create something new. My outlook on the world is the same.

How do you see yourself in 5-10 years? As the head of successful start-up? Maybe you have new thoughts and ideas?

It is hard to tell, but I have really huge and a lot of goals and aspirations. I imagine myself in 10 years as an entrepreneur who has completed several undergraduate study courses, who helps young and ambitious people in creating their own businesses. I imagine myself as an energetic person actively participating in public activities, who is trying to improve the economic situation of Lithuania. Such are my ambitions. And I believe that I can achieve them by working hard and being motivated.

The Braille closet – the online store that helps visually impaired to choosing clothing

How often you visit a clothing store? What determines your decision to buy one or another garment? How many sweaters, jackets of different colours there are in your closet? Does it take long for you to decide what to wear today?

Clothes are, certainly, an important part of our image – we want to look beautiful and stylish. And, in some cases, they are also a way of self-expression. But have you ever thought how blind people choose clothes for themselves? How to see a garment without seeing it? You will probably admit that it is difficult enough for visually impaired people to do shopping in a traditional clothing store without assistance. Although technologies evolve rapidly and they are precisely the thing that could help the blind and partially sighted, there is no strong breakthrough in this area yet.

Julius Zaželckis, a sixteen-year-old young man from Kaunas, for some time now has been developing an idea, which could help blind and visually impaired people choose clothes in a simpler, more convenient manner and with fewer challenges. That idea is a "Braille closet", which was evaluated during the pilot training "Idea Development training BUSINESS LAB" and even took 1st place!

A "Braille closet" is the online store, which sells a T-shirt with the colour written in Braille.

"There are approximately 36 million blind people around the world and approximately 150 thousand partially sighted people in Lithuania, who have developed senses and imagination but cannot distinguish colours", - tells Julius Zaželckis, who adds that the idea of "Braille closet" would make it possible for blind people to distinguish colours and dress up in clothes of their favourite colour!

Although Julius is only 16 years old, from early childhood he tried countless extracurricular activities: ballroom dancing, swimming, chess, football, karate and other

martial arts, he has been playing classical guitar since the age of 5, and for the last couple of years, he has been attending business school on Saturdays. So, Julius never lacked activity and ideas. This time we are talking with Julius specifically about the idea of "Braille closet" and about his plans to develop it in reality.

Tell us about the idea of "Braille closet". How did you come up with it? When did you take your first steps in business?

I can say that I took my first steps in business when I still was a primary school student. It was when I had to prepare something for Kaziukas Fair, which was an opportunity to earn money. I made friendship bracelets, baked delicacies together with my mom and even planted herbs! But it was not until attending business school that I became more seriously interested in business opportunities. The subjects I am interested in are various. Like most young people, I am interested in computers, games, YouTube videos about games, I also follow my friends and their activities. The idea of "Braille closet" came to my mind one evening when we were talking with my mom while drinking tea. We discussed of what is relevant today, of problems which I could solve. Our discussion turned to social problems and their solution. My vision is good. But I always see my mom wearing glasses. And after all, there are many people who do not see at all. This is how the idea to help "see" by touch came to my mind.

You are very young. How did your parents view your desire to start a business?

My mom always encouraged me to engage myself in various activities. I had a great opportunity to try my hand at earning money by participating in Kaziukas Fairs organised at school. Later, she didn't let me doubt that I could do even more. She not only always supports me, but also encourages me to do more.

What difficulties did you face in creating the "Braille closet"? Isn't it difficult for you to balance all the activities, including learning?

First of all, in creating the idea, I worked in a team with other young people who are interested in business. When opinions differ, when there is a lack of experience, knowledge, when sometimes you feel lazy, lack responsibility and want to play more than work seriously, then working in a team is not so easy as it may seem. Sometimes I felt myself lazy while creating the "Braille Closet". But mom would grumble and push me towards the goal and I continued to develop my project. Nothing interfered with learning because I devoted Saturdays and time after school to the business idea.

Who else, apart from you, contributes to the activities of "Braille closet"?

I am very grateful to my mom and teacher Saulius Kromalcas for their patience, for the direction they showed and for helping me. Teacher Saulius guided me towards business with his lessons, assignments, extra attention and strict instruction when needed. It was him who told me about Business LAB training when I kept looking for opportunities to publicize my business idea and attract a new buyer.

Please share with us your impressions and experiences about Business LAB training.

I liked the training very much. I was the youngest participant and, therefore, I was a bit shy at the beginning. Anyway, it is very interesting to hear the experiences of older people and see the projects they create. In the evenings at home, mom and I would discuss the notes I took during the training. The training by Artūras Jurgelevičius was what I was impressed with most during the project. Thanks to his training I understood how important is to know your client and that knowing the client allows you to save on advertising. I also remembered advise of Lidija Kraujalienė regarding my project. Thanks to her insights, I adjusted the business plan and the presentation pitch.

What personal qualities, in your opinion, are needed in creating a startup or other business?

In creating a start-up or other business, it is very important to believe in what you are doing, to believe in your idea, to be brave and have a support team. Of course, it is very important to have knowledge.

Do you think a good idea for a business/start-up is what matters most?

My mom says: "Good ideas come from wise people". So, in my opinion, good idea should be accompanied by knowledge and courage to act. Sometimes a good idea can fail simply because you don't have the courage to act.

Do you have any ideals in the business world? Whom you equate yourself to? Or maybe your ideals are not from the business world?

Today I am still in the phase of searching. I observe the social content, learn a lot. I won't hide - there are things that I find interest in at school too. My friends influence some things. But extracurricular activities enable the greatest discoveries.

Do you think it is easier to be an employee or an entrepreneur?

Being an entrepreneur = being very responsible and to know a lot. Being an employee – limited opportunities to express oneself. I cannot tell yet which of the two options is easier.

If it is not a secret, what subject are you going to study? In Lithuania or abroad?

I haven't thought about studies yet. But thank you for your question, maybe it's time think what I will do in the future.

How do you imagine yourself after 10 years? Maybe you have new thoughts and ideas that you will try to implement?

I cannot even imagine how I will look after 10 years. But I imagine myself making much smarter decisions. Today, when I am interested in computer games, I want to talk about that through clothing. But everything offered in the market is not characterized by very high distinctiveness. Maybe I will come up with something unique and comfortable for young people, but in a more eloquent manner. But for now, it's all just in my head.

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