GUIDE FOR CO-CREATION SPACE

WHAT IS CO-CREATION?

Simply put, co-creation is the process of creating something together.[1]

In co-creation, multiple parties bring together their unique knowledge, experience and viewpoints to create something new that likely would not have been possible without the collaboration.

WHY CO-CREATION?

The world is changing ten times faster than it used to be; new technologies are constantly emerging. The challenges of this era are so complex requiring prerequisites of innovation to tackle. As such, collaboration among diverse background groups of expertise, culture and industry entities is vital.

From a corporation perspective, in order to stay relevant in the competitive market, keeping innovating is crucial for the long-term development. Therefore, innovation should play a strategic role to ensures the company keep growing in term of people, revenue and portfolio.

Working together to create something new and useful is what the world always needs. Co-creation should be in the heart of an organization's sustainable growth strategy.

WHY DEDICATED SPACE?

Co-creation can be done in many forms. For example, developer-end user online co-creation platforms have gained a lot of popularity. However, this guide focuses on the case where co-creation happens in a space dedicated for the activity.

Space has much to offer for efficient co-creation. From simply allowing physical proximity to enabling the creation of a tight community, many aspects of organic co-creation are not possible without the environment to build on.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

BACKGROUND

This guide book is the result of a Product Development Project - course organized by Aalto University in collaboration with the Aalto Design Factory. The project has been conducted on behalf of Airbus with the purpose to research and provide **a concept for co-creation** to be used in **industrial landscape** and especially in a **dedicated space.**

The purpose of this book is to explain the **design elements** considered **essential for co-creation** to happen efficiently.

The book will also provide some examples of how these design elements can be implemented into a co-creation space.

The contents are based on the research conducted during this project and studies conducted by Aalto Design Factory, a pioneering co-creation project born in Aalto University.

WORK CULTURE

CHANGE

While many of the design elements highlighted in this guide are possible to implement, and even found today, on many workplaces, successful co-creation requires commitment on a deeper level that clashes with the typical culture employed by many companies.

Knowledge sharing is the highest barrier for companies to take part in co-creation. If information is only shared on very tightly pre-defined ways, the potential of serendipitious encounters is often lost.

Not every company or project is suitable for deep co-creation. Often information is too valuable or even dangerous to share with other parties. For efficient co-creation, willingness to share information, provide the needed freedom and commitment are required. The willingness to **change** is required.

These design elements form an **holistic approach**, the sum of the parts when put together in results in something larger. Many of the elements are highly **synergic**.

Trying to embrace all of them is suggested. However, organizations not ready for this level of commitment can still benefit from implementing single practices they see appropriate for their case.

PEOPLE

Organizations can try to change their culture, but this is usually a slow process. The heart of the culture are the people. Culture is formed as the sum of the participating people.

Choosing the correct people that embrace the culture which supports the desired action will be more effective than choosing people opposed to the culture and trying to change the people.

DESIGN ELEMENTS

SERENDIPITIOUS ENCOUNTERS

Study of 106 companies indicated that a mere **one percent** of **useful ideas** originated in specific creativity sessions.[2]

PHYSICAL PROXIMITY

Close proximity provides opportunity for collaboration and innovation, and brands the environment as a space of activity.[3]
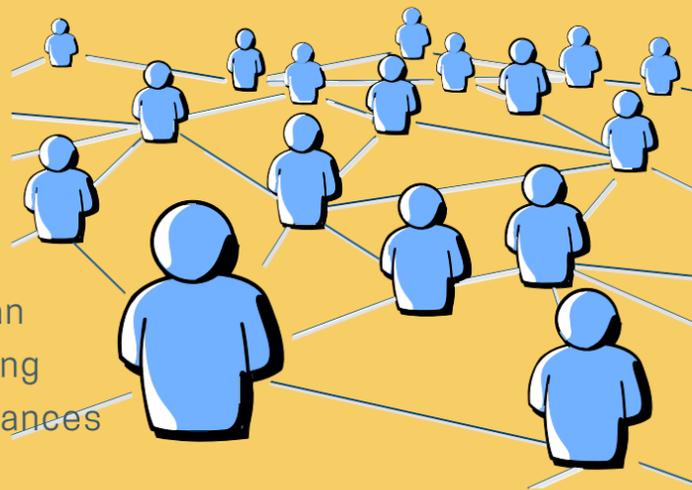
INFORMAL NATURE

As innovations often emerge in unpredictable ways, and informal communication and common practices are essential for tacit knowledge transfer.[4]

TALKING TO STRANGERS

Research shows that creativity is enhanced on an individual level if more time is spent on networking with a diverse group that includes both acquaintances and strangers.[5]

LOW HIERARCHICAL BARRIERS

Organic organizational structures, marked by low levels of hierarchy and bureaucracy, have been found to increase successful collaboration by being more conductive for interdepartmental communication and learning.[6]

DESIGN ELEMENTS
KNOWLEDGE
SHARING

When it comes to innovative projects where the interdisciplinary team needs to be able to solve complex and ill-defined problems, the integration of **each** member's **information** and **expertise** is key. [7]

ELIMINATION OF SHAME

Peter Sheahan, the CEO of ChangeLabs: "The secret killer of innovation is shame." [8]

INFORMATION ON THE EXPERTISE

Individuals may at times falsely assume that certain knowledge is commonly known and be unaware of others lacking some of the knowledge they have. [9]

TRANSPARENT ACTIVITY

Opportunities for eye contact and nonverbal communication have been shown to have an influence on the communication patterns, cooperation, and social interactions in a space. [10]

DIVERSE GROUP OF PEOPLE

When an individual has contact with a diverse group of people, the likelihood for obtaining knowledge about different approaches to the problem at hand is greatly increased. [11]
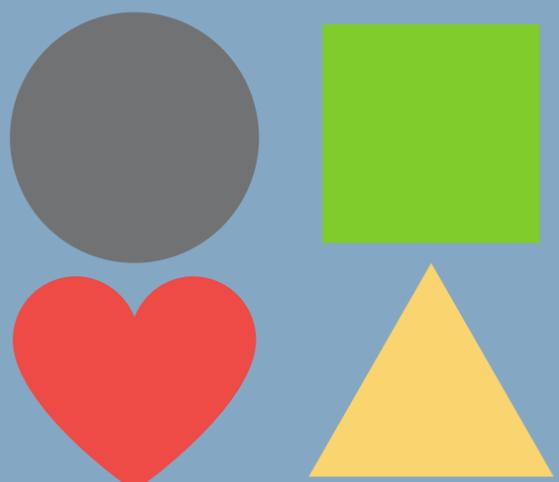
DESIGN ELEMENTS
GETTING PEOPLE
MOTIVATED

The first issue to tackle when supporting co-creating is getting people **motivated** to put in the **required effort**. The aim is to create an environment that makes wanting to co-create as **easy as possible**. [12]

SHARED PURPOSE

A shared identity amongst different contributors increases willingness to voluntarily contribute to the group, and is connected to a range of positive organizational outcomes. [13]

INTEGRATION TO THE COMMUNITY

A "social workplace" is a central space for sharing information and knowledge. It is a place where social, physical, and virtual spaces are in balance. It is built through shared rituals and practices, which increase the feeling of togetherness and belonging to a community. [14]

SMALL WINS

Producing small wins promote commitment, attracts allies, deters opponents, and lowers resistance to subsequent proposals. They scale down what is at stake and mark progress, offering immediacy, tangibility, and controllability, and providing meaning, perceptions of control, and manageable-sized challenges.

[15]

TRUST BUILDING

In creating a shared will to co-create, building trust is one of the most important antecedents. It is a basic prerequisite for successful teamwork and development and has been correlated with a multitude of positive effects, such as increasing knowledge sharing, commitment, innovativeness, and the willingness to take risks. [16]

DESIGN ELEMENTS
MOVEMENT

Co-creation as a concept highlights the dynamic nature of development interaction and is often marked by its informal nature. In addition, co-creation emphasizes **acting over planning**, being an **iterative**, **hands-on** approach to development. Experimentation and the abundance of prototyping and visualizations can be seen as distinctive and essential features of co-creation.[17]

AUTONOMY

Autonomy increases perceived capability to influence the situation. It provides employees with more opportunities to acquire new skills and responsibilities, and may make employees´more receptive to change and feel less threatened by it.[18]
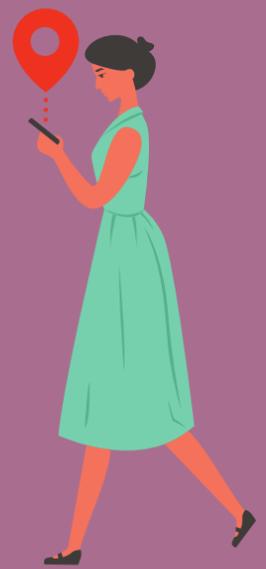
ACTING OVER PLANNING

When the goal is to develop innovative and novel solutions, learning by experimenting is a crucial part of the process.[19]

ITERATIVE DESIGN

Iterative, experimental approach inherent to co-creation can lower the threshold for participating in collaborative development efforts by scaling down the required input and decreasing the level of risk associated with taking part.[20]
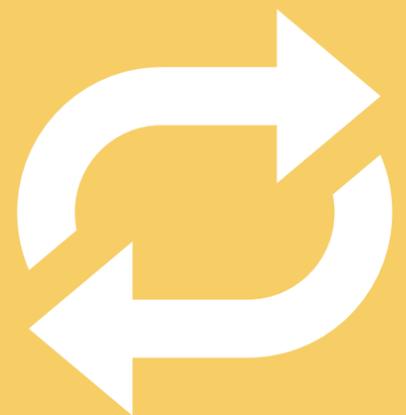
INDICATION OF PROGRESS

The recurring themes are the perceived importance of the goal, perceived capability to reach the goal, and perceived progress towards the goal. In order to sustain development effort, all of these three bases need to be covered.[21]

INTERACTION, SPACIAL DESIGN & SERVICE

IMPLEMENTING THE ELEMENTS

How to practically implement these elements into the co-creation space and it's culture? There are many ways to implement each element and often many elements can be adressed at once. Rest of the guide book will provide some examples for implementation as a starting point in three different solution spaces: interaction, spacial design and services.

THROUGH INTERACTION

Interaction between the people is the core of co-creation. The methods suggested in this category will try to affect the interaction in more direct way.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Spacial design has been proven to affect your mood, well being and thinking. It's an essential tool for enabling and stimulating the interaction required for co-creation.

This category will provide methods from general layout design to simple features that will help to think about the spacial design of a co-creation space.

THROUGH SERVICE

Services and staff running the space can greatly enable co-creation. Often improvement processes are hindered by other daily tasks. Dedicated personnel will allow for continuous improvement and services such as co-creation training will help to reach toward the full potential of co-creation.

PHYSICAL PROXIMITY

WHY?

The smaller the physical distance between people, the more likely they are to interact and especially tacit knowledge is best shared when people are physically in the same space. Such casual interactions build trust, cooperation, and innovation and also increase creativity and the feeling of togetherness. [3]

THROUGH INTERACTION

Shape the culture to discourage isolation. Own space and peace is needed at times to work efficiently, but in a co-creation space, isolation can't be the default working condition.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Dedicated building for co-creation increases the chances of serendipitous encounters and enables many other essential design elements.

Common spaces such as coffee room act as a magnet to pull people of various background into the same location.

THROUGH SERVICE

The co-creation space should provide the services required for the common spaces such as coffee and cafeteria.

The co-creation space itself is the most important service that enables the physical proximity!

INFORMAL NATURE

WHY?

As innovations often emerge in unpredictable ways, and informal communication and common practices are essential for tacit knowledge transfer.[4]

THROUGH INTERACTION

Dress code should be free. Hoodies, shorts and weird holiday season shirts are all welcome!

See also design elements **low hierarchical barriers** and **autonomy.**

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Break the office formality with fun design features and plants.

Avoid hierarchical work station placement and private offices.

THROUGH SERVICE

Staff members are the most important representatives of the culture. They should display the relaxed attitude and always be ready to help or chat.

Lobby reception should be a rotating task involving as many staff members as possible, from the most experienced to the newest one.

TALKING TO STRANGERS

WHY?

Research shows that creativity is enhanced on an individual level if more time is spent on networking with a diverse group that includes both acquaintances and strangers. [5]
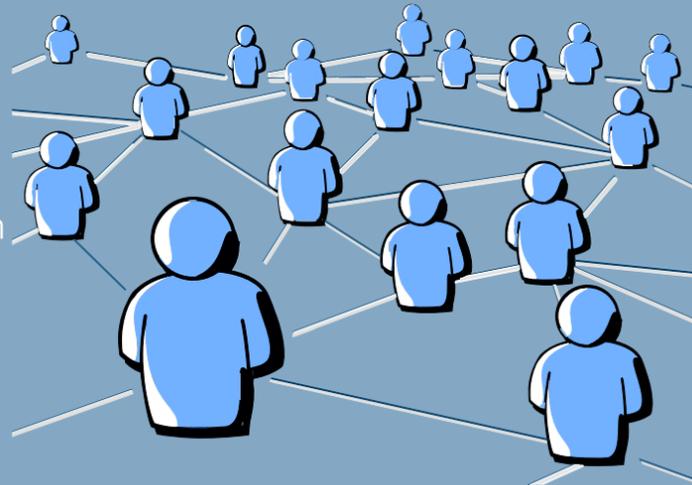
THROUGH INTERACTION

Interfering with other people and projects work for a comment or question should be socially acceptable or even desirable habit.

See also design elements **informal nature** and **integration to the community**!

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Cafeteria and coffee room should have large continuous tables that connect groups and individuals.

THROUGH SERVICE

Staff members should initiate conversations and get to know new people in the work space.

Regular ideation and problem solving sessions that mix the participants between projects. Gaining new viewpoints from outside the projects bubble can help to see the things hidden in plain sight.

LOW HIERARCHICAL BARRIERS

WHY?

Organic organizational structures, marked by low levels of hierarchy and bureaucracy, have been found to increase successful collaboration by being more conductive for interdepartmental communication and learning. [6]

THROUGH INTERACTION

Official titles should not be used in conversational language.

Dress code should be free.

See also design element **informal nature**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Avoid work station placement by rank or title.

THROUGH SERVICE

Staff should act as an example. Everybody is responsible for the space. Manager should pick up forgotten coffee cups just like a trainee should.

ELIMINATION OF SHAME

WHY?

Peter Sheahan, the CEO of ChangeLabs: "The secret killer of innovation is shame." The very basic groundwork for establishing trust lies in perceived goal congruity, or the belief that both parties are working towards shared or complementary goals.[8]

THROUGH INTERACTION

Policy for supportive interaction written in a handbook which introduced to new comers.

See also design element **elimination of shame**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Perfect is the enemy of good! Add supportive aphorisms, art and examples of breakthrough innovations that nobody believed in to the walls.

THROUGH SERVICE

Provide co-creation and team work training in the form of workshops.

INFORMATION ON THE EXPERTISE

WHY?

Individuals may at times falsely assume that certain knowledge is commonly known and be unaware of others lacking some of the knowledge they have.[9]

THROUGH INTERACTION

The participants should be encouraged to share about both their professional background and personal interests. Your colleague can happen to be the expert of your problem during their free time!

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Create a face wall to the common space, displaying the faces and areas of expertise of the active participants of the co-creation space.

THROUGH SERVICE

The staff should get to know the people of co-creation space and use the knowledge to help connect the right expertise to the right need.

The website should have a virtual version of the face wall, an expertise map which helps to connect the people.

TRANSPARENT ACTIVITY

WHY?

Opportunities for eye contact and nonverbal communication have been shown to have an influence on the communication patterns, cooperation, and social interactions in a space.[10]

THROUGH INTERACTION

Clearly state in the playbook of the work space, that co-creation space is not a suitable location for confidential work. Without openness, the chance for unexpected knowledge sharing decreases dramatically!

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Limit the amount of walls, private offices and meeting rooms.

Favor the use of transparent walls and doors in the space.

THROUGH SERVICE

The co-creation management should act as an example and be transparent in their decision making processes.

DIVERSE GROUP OF PEOPLE

WHY?

When an individual has contact with a diverse group of people, the likelihood for obtaining knowledge about different approaches to the problem at hand is greatly increased.[11]
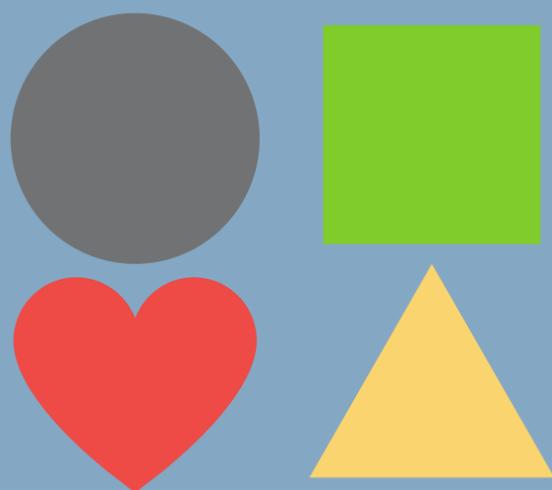
THROUGH INTERACTION

Policy for inclusive interaction written in a handbook which introduced to new comers. People should be comfortable participating regardless of their interaction. See design element elimination of shame.

See also design elements **integration to the community** and **trust building**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Unisex toilets are a visible and practical inclusivity statement. If you want to bring diverse group of people together, your space should try to tell them they are welcome.

THROUGH SERVICE

The staff can influence the locations of separate group activities to increase the chances of meetings.

SHARED PURPOSE

WHY?

A shared identity amongst different contributors increases willingness to voluntarily contribute to the group, and is connected to a range of positive organizational outcomes.[13]

THROUGH INTERACTION

Projects in the space should visibly display their goal and motivation for reaching that goal. Remind your own team why they are doing their work and find shared motivations outside your bubble!

See also design elements **integration to the community** and **transparent activity**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Install wall art consisting of the driving motivations of the parcitipants of the space.

THROUGH SERVICE

Non-work related events provide chances for people to connect on a personal level and building a shared purpose and identity.

INTEGRATION TO THE COMMUNITY

WHY?

A "social workplace" is a central space for sharing information and knowledge. It is a place where social, physical, and virtual spaces are in balance. It is built through shared rituals and practices, which increase the feeling of togetherness and belonging to a community.[14]

THROUGH INTERACTION

New comers should be treated as "one of us" from the beginning, whether they are visiting for one day or planning to stay longer.

See also design element **talking to strangers**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Features such as face walls and motivation art mentioned in other features should be updated to include new participants as soon as possible. Show the visitors that their participation is welcomed with open arms!

THROUGH SERVICE

Staff should act as hosts for new visitors, including accompanying them to the common cafeteria and coffee room to meet the people of the space.

Non-work related events provide chances for people to connect on a personal level and also integrate to the community.

SMALL WINS

WHY?

Producing small wins promote commitment, attracts allies, deters opponents, and lowers
resistance to subsequent proposals. They scale down what is at stake and mark progress, offering
immediacy, tangibility, and controllability, and providing meaning, perceptions of control, and manageable-sized challenges.[15]

THROUGH INTERACTION

Small wins should be celebrated in form of small parties. These could be spontaneous picknic, museum tour or afternoon cake. Give the team some time to digest their accomplishes!

See also design element **indication of progress**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Install bells that teams or individuals can ring to announce a small win to others, increasing the spirits.

THROUGH SERVICE

The co-creation space can offer a service which handles these small win rewards.

TRUST BUILDING

WHY?

In creating a shared will to co-create, building trust is one of the most important antecedents. It is a basic prerequisite for successful teamwork and development and has been correlated with a multitude of positive effects, such as increasing knowledge sharing, commitment, innovativeness, and the willingness to take risks.[16]

THROUGH INTERACTION

In order to participate in the co-creation space, person has to agree to commit to the "playbook" which includes the rules of the space.

See also design element **transparent activity** and **integration to the community**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Spaces should be open and well lit.

Common spaces should be centrally located.

THROUGH SERVICE

Staff should mediate issues between participants as early as possible if they arise.

AUTONOMY

WHY?

Autonomy increases perceived capability to influence the situation. It provides employees with more opportunities to acquire new skills and responsibilities, and may make employees´ more receptive to change and feel less threatened by it. [18]
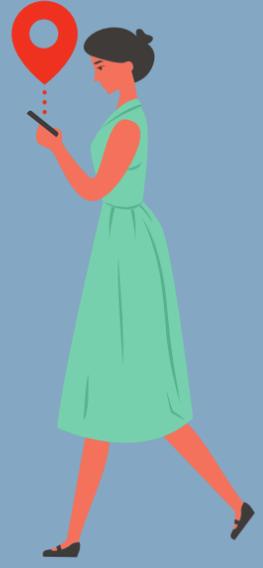
THROUGH INTERACTION

Projects participating to the co-creation space should trust the people they bring to the space and provide them with the autonomy to work freely and innovate.

See also design element **trust building**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Working space layout should allow people to work in many areas of the building, not just in a area dedicated for a specific project.

THROUGH SERVICE

The co-creation space should offer co-creation training for leadership which includes autonomy of the employees.

ACTING OVER PLANNING

WHY?

When the goal is to develop innovative and novel solutions, learning by experimenting is a crucial part of the process.[19]

THROUGH INTERACTION

Testing of ideas should always be encouraged.

See also design element **elimination of shame**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Simple prototyping and ideation equipment should always be available in every part of the building. Make action as easy as possible!
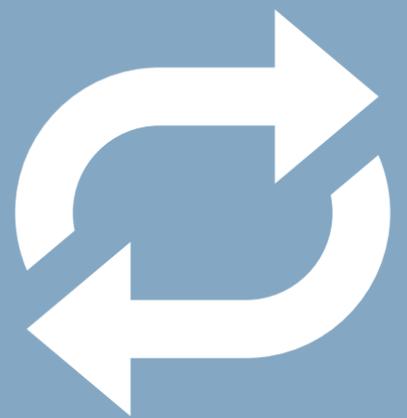
THROUGH SERVICE

Provide prototyping services to lower the barrier for testing ideas.

ITERATIVE DESIGN

WHY?

Iterative, experimental approach inherent to co-creation can lower the threshold for participating in collaborative development efforts by scaling down the required input and decreasing the level of risk associated with taking part.[20]

THROUGH INTERACTION

As in acting over planning, constant experimentation should be encouraged. Learning by doing and making mistakes will result in better products.

See design elements **acting over planning**, **elimination of shame** and **indication of progress**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Wall art that displays the historical development of well known products such as cars, aiplanes or household appliances.

THROUGH SERVICE

Prototyping services lower the barrier for testing current designs and again enables acting over planning.

INDICATION OF PROGRESS

WHY?

The recurring themes are the perceived importance of the goal, perceived capability to reach the goal, and perceived progress towards the goal. In order to sustain development effort, all of these three bases need to be covered.[21]

THROUGH INTERACTION

Hold regular events where different project can present their prototypes, thoughts and lessons learned.

See design **elements acting over planning** and **iterative design**.

THROUGH SPACIAL DESIGN

Create a gallery for displaying prototypes and their evolution cycle. Remind your own team about your progress and inspire others!

THROUGH SERVICE

The staff should follow the progress of the projects taking place in the space and help them remember and see how far they have come.

REFERENCES

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