Summary of Transnational Workshop on Innovation Working Methods

Aim

A3.1.2 Transnational workshop on innovation working methods – building cocreation dialogue is organized for all partners on the 16th of October 2020. In the workshop, a successful transnational innovation process is outlined as a series of best practice innovation working methods to build co-creation dialogue in the steps of the transnational innovation process from 1) Problem definition, 2) Problem solving; to 3) Assessments of a solution.

Introduction

We started off the workshop with presenting ourselves, Truls, Klara and Elin from Krinova Incubator & Science Park as well as introducing Krinovas form of working with innovation in the film that can be found here.

A useful tool called [Menti](#) was presented to ensure interaction and engagement during the workshop. Menti helped us visualize people's instant ideas and thought- visible for everyone.

In order to make our partners comfortable in using the tool we warmed them up with a simple question to answer:

Not only did participants share their different ideas how to spark positive energy and creative minds. It also got us a natural way of introducing "Brain food by Krinova". A shot of nutritious drink for smart thinking. Not only did we try to engage people to make the brain food with us some days before, but we also tried to give a feeling of presence and connection now when the workshop was digital.

Moving along we started the workshop with asking the participants what they think of when they hear the word "innovation"? The idea was to together define a common understanding of what it means when we throughout the workshop later mention "innovation".

Workshop groups were already assigned, and participants got sent into separate zoom rooms – called breakout rooms. In the groups several different participants could together discuss, agree or disagree on the terms meaning and then choose one word to describe their thought. The gathered results can be seen here:

What is "innovation" to you?

Conclusions

An idea based on customer needs

According to the discussion in the groups "Innovation" is not equal into an idea but requires a market and a customer. A customer does not need to be a paying customer but the holder of the interest that drives the innovation. The customer that invests time or resources into the innovation. Another person from the groups pointed out that innovation does not always require demand from the market, but that the inventor push the innovation on the market and that it fills an unknown need. To conclude, there is always a need or a problem driving the innovation process. Either it is a need that the customer is very much aware of and likes to get solved or its something the customer don't know they wanted from the start.

An old idea in a new form

From the group discussion it was also concluded that innovation does not necessarily mean a completely new thing, but rather can derive from something already existing put into a new context, new form or with new functions. A product could for example have the same function but add value and competition because of its light weight or efficient production. Another aspect of innovation that was brought up by a participant was the fact that the innovation can also be a new way of implementing an old innovation.

Human centered design

Similarly to the conclusions drawn from the discussion does Krinova believe in the customers need always being in the center of the innovation. A lot of inspiration can be found in human centered design which you can read about more here.

In short, human centered design looks at three aspects of innovation.

Desirability (user needs)

Feasibility (test if your innovation strengthens your business)

Viability (sustainability- economical, environmental or social)
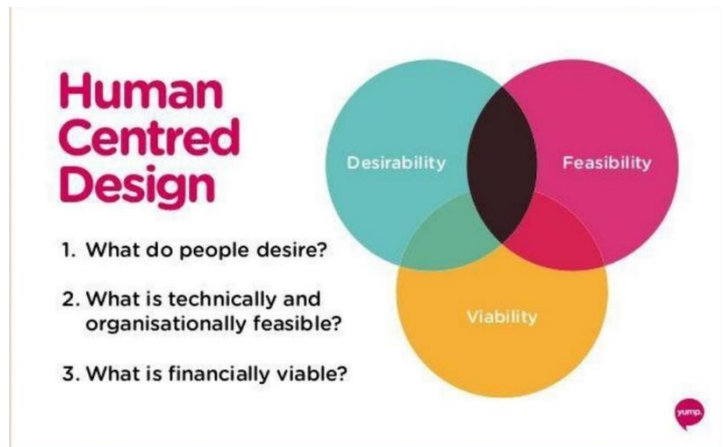
The innovation work process

But then where do we start in our process of innovation? At Krinova we believe in the innovation process always being iterative. Meaning, that it rather than being a linear process, instead being a constant circular process in order to be the most successful.

With the help of the model on the right side, we illustrate the common process of innovation, where you first learn, then design and effectuate. At Krinova we believe that asking people for input and learning from others is an approach for innovation- that is why we add an "co" into each one of the parts:
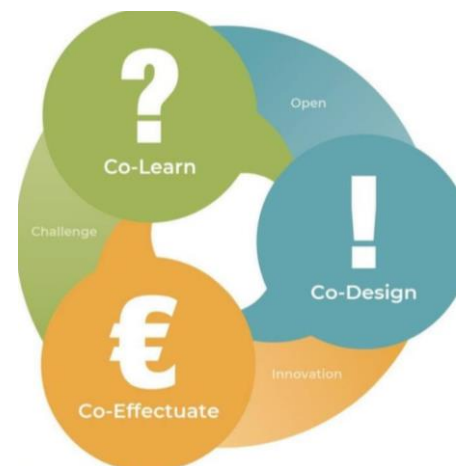
Co-learn

The part of the process when we share knowledge with others, learn and collect information from customers and stakeholders in order to define a challenge, need, problem or job to be done. Once you have learned- its time to try!

Co-design

The part of the process when you try, fail, try again and test your innovation practically. Maybe you need to refine something that you thought from the beginning would work but that you figure out needs more research. Sometimes this leads you back to the co- learn phase. Once you have tried

something and it works- its time to effectuate and make it profitable. This is the time when you design your business model.

Co- effectuate

The part of the process when you try to make your innovation profitable. Maybe you need to scale up, find a cheaper supplier etc. This is the time when you look into how you can make a sustainable business of your innovation. Maybe you realize that your customers aren't ready to pay for your final product- then you need to go back to the co- learn phase and again reevaluate what customer you should target or how you should redesign your innovation to make it more viable.

Co-learn

The co-learn phase is about learning- what are we actually going to do?

The most important part of the learning phase is to connect with other people and get to know what the actual need is. Experts, other stakeholders, colleagues and possible customers. You can do this by for example making interviews with potential customers, observe and research your segment of customer's needs, mingle at events to meet possible partners etc. Your mission is to get as many pieces to solve the puzzle. At Krinova we facilitate those meetings at Food Hack- an open innovation competition where we attack challenges in a learning phase. It is a perfect environment for testing, failing, talk and iterate your idea.

Example: Eslam came to Food Hack by Krinova* with no idea. He meet other people interested in sustainable protein and his team decided to work on the challenge on how to make products from lupin. His team had people with different skills. At the event they meet Lupin farmers which they could interview as well as help from Krinovas business designers. Eslam decided to continue working with what had just become a spark at the Food Hackathon even after the event. He decided to try his idea for real!

*Food Hack by Krinova is a form of event where challenges are presented to a diverse group of people interested in food. Companies and societies presents challenges that needs solutions and provides information for the working groups (hackers). Food Hack facilitate open innovation where a test kitchen is provided for testing as well as chefs, students, business designers and experts share knowledge with each other to spark new ideas!

In the workshop you got to see the film presenting the Food Hack by Krinova in 2019. Check it out here. After the film we opened up the breakout rooms for group discussions regarding how to learn within ConnectedbyBiobord.

How do we learn in ConnectedbyBiobord?

Conclusion

Biobord as the platform of co-learning

Biobord is all about sharing knowledge and learning together. Therefor several people in the groups favored Biobord to be the platform used for learning within the project. As seen in the cloud above, several suggestions on how to learn in ConnectedbyBiobord includes: discussing, listening, talking, webinars, surveys, sharing. It can all be done in Biobord. This means we already have a great foundation for co-learning!

A person from one of the groups also mentioned that the tags within biobord can be used even more in order to make sure the person who might benefit from the shared information gets notified.

Curiosity and generosity

We can also see that all the verbs contained in the cloud expresses the feeling that we should try to build on in the network when co-learning. Curiosity and generosity!

Learning first

Another participants noted the importance for all to try to define the challenges before jumping into fast conclusions or event solutions. Maybe the need/problem to be solved is not what it seems from outside. We need to learn first!

Who owns the challenge?

Added to this came a reflection on that we within the project need to think of who owns the issue and who we are doing all the activities for. Always having the receiver in mind defines the challenge and therefor also the solution.

Co-design

At the second part of the innovation process it's time to start designing. It is an active process with both designer and user co- evaluating the design. It is the part of the innovation process when you try, fail, test, fail and learn by your own mistakes in corresponds with people who help you.

Key steps

1. Engage- learn from each other
2. Understand users' needs
3. Ideate- build prototypes
4. Validate together with stake holders and users

Example: Eslam started working with lupin, he went into the kitchen and worked with developing the product. He tried to launch it in food trucks and got help from chefs that validated his product. He wanted to have a clearer idea of who should be his customers. He asked for feedback and refined his product.

One example of tools that we use for co-design in Krinova is our events called "Food Jam"*.

*Food Jam is an event where people from different backgrounds come together to elaborate with new or unusual ingredients. Chefs, students, scientists as well as enthusiasts come together and form smaller teams where they together cook the different meals from the same ingredients. It is a very hands on approach where we test new methods of cooking in order to find new flavours.
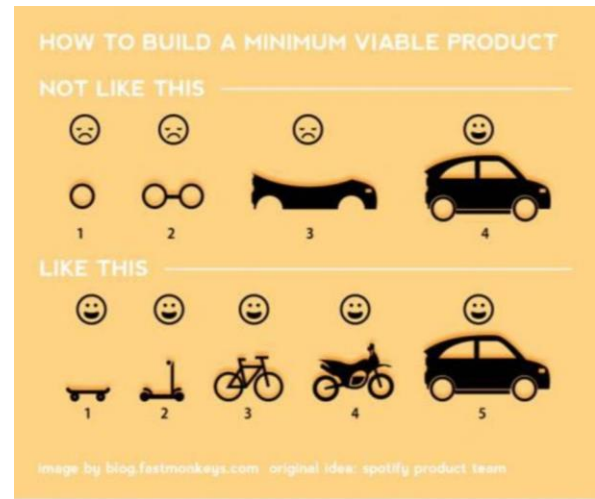
In order to completely understand the concept, we showed Krinovas film from the latest Food Jam at the testbed Balsgård.

Minimum viable product

After giving concrete examples of how to co-design we presented the very useful perspective of the "minimal viable product". With the picture on your left we illustrate the importance of constant feedback. For getting feedback, you need to have something that is possible to give feedback on. The example with the car shows that the actual need on which the innovation is built on is "mobility". For that to be improved and viable we need to have something which the potential customer can try. The two wheels are not enough to understand the idea of the car and the need it will fulfill. With the second example we can see the customer getting its need fulfilled and can therefor give feedback on what can be improved.

We then later gave new groups the chance to share ideas on how to apply the design approach within our work forward in ConnectedbyBiobord:

Conclusion

Tools, methods, prototyping, practical examples etc.

We can here see that several of the groups have agreed on it being a useful way of working as it is the time when we try, do errors and continue learning. As mentioned, it is in a more practical form and with examples. Using existing infrastructure and tools. One participant brings in asking companies about their methods which is a great idea to iterate and build prototypes.

Courage and openminded

To co-design is to feel brave and experiment.

Feedback and co-operation

Several of the words in the cloud stresses the importance of involving users and other people in the process on how to meet user needs. Encourage is also mentioned which relates to the fact that we should try to unlock each other's creativity.

Experts at a start

Experts should be chosen carefully in the co-design process because the co-design phase is more about try and error rather then trying to minimize the mistakes from the start. Experts can be a chef which tries to cook your product or a user that can give feedback on what would improve your innovation. Experts that already have conclusions should be considered as a help but shouldn't stop you from trying.

What is design?

In the cloud of words, we can also see someone asking "what is design". In order to clarify this so everyone could agree on the term. It is not completely clear what design is in the process of innovation since it is an iterative process and we sometimes go back and forth inbetween co-learn, co-design and co-effectuate. But by comparing the different parts we also understand that they all play an important role. Without learning about a need (co-learn/desirability) you would not be able to try (co-design/feasibility) and without knowing if its possible to do it you can not make profit (co-effectuate/viability).

Co- Effectuate

Preferably you came out of the co- design phase with a lot of understanding about your innovation. You have tested, failed, tried and developed. Once its time for the market we first need a business plan in order to commercialize the product.

Example: Eslam had tried the product in the kitchen and insights from the chefs, now he could start building the business model. Today he has a company that is called Lupinta and has a national presence in Sweden. He has succeeded in making his product desirable, feasible and viable.

When you should make your innovation viable, we recommend using the business model canvas (see image below). It is a map over all the different parts that are needed for an innovation to hit the market. If you like to get a further description of all the parts see the film here.

You should use the canvas with sticky notes to map ideas having the potential of becoming a business.
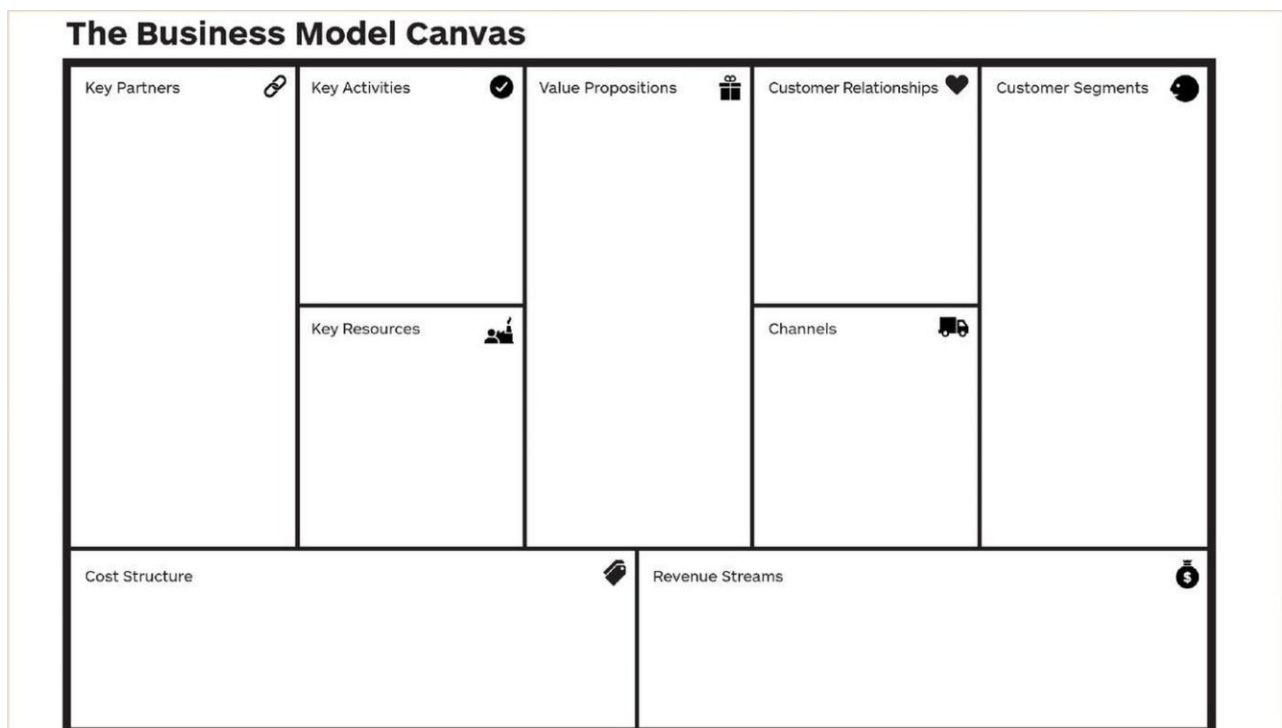
The business model canvas can be applied for both businesses but also for a project. The right side maps the value delivery and the left stands for efficiency – how to scale. The left generate cost and the right revenues. It can also be iterative and refine the business model canvas.

The business model canvas relate to the earlier model of human centered design and the desirability, feasibility and viability as you can see in the picture on the right.

Further on, the groups where divided and people could discuss on how to effectuate within the project ConnectedbyBiobord.

Result

Discussing the cloud and its results we concluded that we are most lightly not going to reach the effectuate phase within the ConnectedbyBiobord project. The goal of the project is to stimulate co-learn and co-design between the different participating organizations. But hopefully the project and the collaborations created will lead to business and profitable innovations as a long-term result of the project. Hopefully leading to new applications and projects that can make the innovations from ConnectedbyBiobord viable.

Effectuate as a perspective

The idea of the innovations being profitable is important as it such a big part of what an innovation is. Without someone profiting from the innovation it will not be sustainable. As mentioned in the cloud its important to involve companies in the project. For the project to be interesting there must be a perspective of viability. When viability is part of the innovation there is a higher possibility to attract companies to involve themselves in the co-learn and co-design phase within ConnectedbyBiobord.

The business model canvas as a tool for the project

The business model canvas should be a tool which do not necessarily need to be used on a business, but also for an article or a project like ConnectedbyBiobord. It is always important to have the receiver in mind if it is feasible and worth the investment of time and resources.

To summarize the workshop, we invited people to share their "take always" from the workshop:

Inspiration, knowledge, tools

In the cloud of words we can see examples of people gaining inspiration and knowledge from the workshop. New tools for everyone to use was presented – Menti, Food Hack, Food Jam as well as Business Model Canvas. But also interviews, sharing infrastructure etc.

Manage expectations and energy

The discussion that followed started with one participant bringing up the challenges with the Covid- 19 pandemic. The restriction of physical meetings as well as problems traveling within the region and what impact it will have on the possibility of knowledge sharing, events and sharing infrastructure. But also how to keep up the interest, manage expectations and energy for people to take part of the project. Being honest and transparent, learning on how to apply all these methods with the Covid-19 was brought up as an answer to the challenge. The transnational dynamic should be ensured when planning those activities.

Validate our project with the help of the Business model canvas

In the end of the discussion one participant brought up the idea that we should try putting the project ConnectedbyBiobord within the Business model canvas. This in order to get a mutual understanding of who our customer is, what needs they have, if we can deliver it and what is it worth? The open question is when we are going to do it within the project.

BIOBORD
PLATFORM

Summary

The goal of the workshop was to create a common understanding of how to work with innovation within ConnectedbyBiobord. The workshop started of with clarifying how we look at "innovation". The common understanding was that the customer and its needs is important for something to be an innovation and that it needs to be profitable. In short, if something should be considered an innovation- it needs desirability, feasibility and viability.

We then went into describing the different parts of an innovation process. Co-learn, co-design and co-effectuate. All being part of an iterative process where the "co" stands for you always having an external perspective feeding your innovation with new information and feedback.

Within ConnectedbyBiobord we :

- Co-learn by sharing knowledge, cooperate and clarify challenges. Biobord is a good platform for these interactions. This phase is marked by curiosity, listening and observing.
- Co- design by being more aware of the user needs, try and are not be scared of failing. This is where we share infrastructure and methods on how to try and error. This phase is marked by courage, feedback and testing.
- Co-effectuate by using the business model canvas and share the perspective of something having to be profitable in order to be worth the investment of time and resources into the project. This phase is marked about being sustainable, transparent and seeing how all parts needs to be connected.

By going through the co-learn, co-design and co-effectuate phases in the innovation process we ensure desirability, feasibility and viability but we also open up for seeing tools such as Food Hack, Food Jam and the business model canvas and their importance in the project. Co-effectuate is hopefully the result of the project and business model canvas a useful tool to evaluate the progress of the project.

We like to thank everyone who participated in the workshop, contributed to the content of this summary and let us know if you have any questions!

Best wishes,

Truls, Klara & Elin

Krinova Incubator & Science Park