

MatchCollab

How can Design Students prepare themselves to stand out on the competitive job market while continuing to upkeep their daily routines?

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Table of Content

Problem Formulation	1
Problem Area.....	2
Introduction and description of the innovative digital service concept	2
Mission, Vision and Values	3
ESP	4
Customer Journey	5
Communication Plan	6
Purpose	6
Effect	6
Message	6
Desired Action.....	6
Target Group	7
Persona	8
Media Elements	8
Facebook.....	8
Instagram	9
LinkedIn	9
Business Model Canvas	10
9 building blocks	10
Appendix	12



Problem area

Freelance work is a key feature in boosting one's portfolio. The problem is, that there are so many professional freelancers and designers out there making it hard to stand out. Moreover, nearly all clients expect the designer to be experienced. Especially students don't have the chance to get these "required" experiences. As a result, graduates, in most cases, must gain experiences besides those provided by their education, before receiving job offers.

A survey from the UK found out that 42% of creative graduates were "undertaking unpaid or voluntary work or work experience since graduating. At the time of the survey, one- quarter (23 per cent) were still in these types of roles, although often as a secondary activity combined with permanent work and/or self- employment. On the whole, these tended to be creative roles and part-time"¹

This survey highlights the fact, that nearly half of the graduates must improve their portfolio after graduating in order to get into their desired careers. Doing voluntary work and taking unpaid internships in order to gain experiences is a hard way for the graduated. However, it also takes its toll on society, due to the fact that they will be receiving unemployment benefits from the State of Denmark.

It is important to remember that building one's portfolio is an ongoing process for a creative graduate, but wouldn't it be ideal to boost one's CV while maintaining the given education? Doing so would increase the possibility of being employed straight out of school.

This ideal solution is not far from reality as it is the result of our App MatchCollab's concept.

Introduction and description of the innovative digital service concept

Match Collab is the future for students who develop into newly born designers. But that is not all. The app is, not only a gain for the creators, but also companies in need of free design work (besides a fee paid to the app). The idea consists of the option to either look for employers or employees. As a freelancer you will be able to build a profile consisting of a personal statement, CV and your previous portfolio. Next up the app will provide the option to choose which creative topics you wish to work with. Once that has been completed the app will calculate possible matches for you as a creator. By doing so the app will only show ads that will interest you. As this finishes, the easy part begins. You will swipe through the adds that companies have posted - swiping right for interest and left for "no interest". When a job that you would

¹ Ball L, Pollard E, Stanley N (Jan 2010) Creative Graduates Creative Futures.
<https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/sites/default/files/471sum.pdf> (12.05.2018)



like to know more about pops up, you are able to swipe up, or click the information button, to read more about the exact needs of the employer. On the other side the companies phone will show those who have showed interest in fulfilling the company's need. They will then be able to view the candidates' profiles and thereby swipe left or right within and choose the right fit for the job. Once you have been matched up and are ready to start completing the job you will be put in contact with each other through the "messages" tab and then the real work begins.

What sets our app apart from competitors such as *Fiverr* or *Upwork* is that it is suited for the less experienced target group. On top of that it is unpaid, where they charge fees not only to the companies but also the designers, making it less likely for the professional freelancer to take over Match Collab. Instead of being paid in currency, one is paid by the most important things in the design industry; recommendations, experiences and connections. This is because the app not only builds on students' CVs it also makes the connections to companies, that aren't just good for them at the moment but may lead to an internship or perhaps a more permanent job position once the student is graduated.

What makes our App stand out the most is that we are implementing the economic system of "barter". "Barter" is an act of exchanging services without money being involved:

"In essence, bartering involves the provision of one good or service by one party in return for another good or service from another party."²

In our case companies are trading their items for the skills and knowledge of the individual designers that are using the app.

We chose bartering as a form of "currency" for the three main reasons explained in the following:

1. Often, the designers who are still in education don't believe that one is capable of being prepared to take orders from companies. Our thought is, that they might dare to take these orders if there is no money involved as putting a price tag on their works can be intimidating.
2. While we are using the system of bartering we are differentiating us from competitors.
3. Companies don't lose money and they even promote their own products. The only money they must spent is the little fee to create the ad on our app.

² Investopedia: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/barter.asp> (13.05.2018)



Mission, Vision & Values

Purpose

Our purpose is to help future designers develop their skill set and their ability to function in the design industry, once they graduate. We also strive to provide a platform that nourishes the designers' skill sets while maintaining an education.

Mission Statement

We aim to provide a platform that builds connections between companies and striving design students. We believe in reaching the unexperienced market through a service whose values lie within tying a knot between successful, iconic brands and aspiring students.

Vision Statement

As a company we envision designers getting into a career fresh out of school or at least at a faster paced than at the moment. We see students across several design educations being developed professionally alongside of their education. Besides speaking to the emerging designers the app is also an easy way for companies to have access to cheaper alternatives to design firms or experienced freelancers. We vision a quick process that matches talent with demand, benefitting both designer and company.

Values

- Equality among the users. Every user has a fair chance to make connection to a company.
- Respect. Since the platform does not have monetization as part of payment plan, it is therefore important that both the company and the user put clear boundaries for what to expect for a non paid project by non professionals.

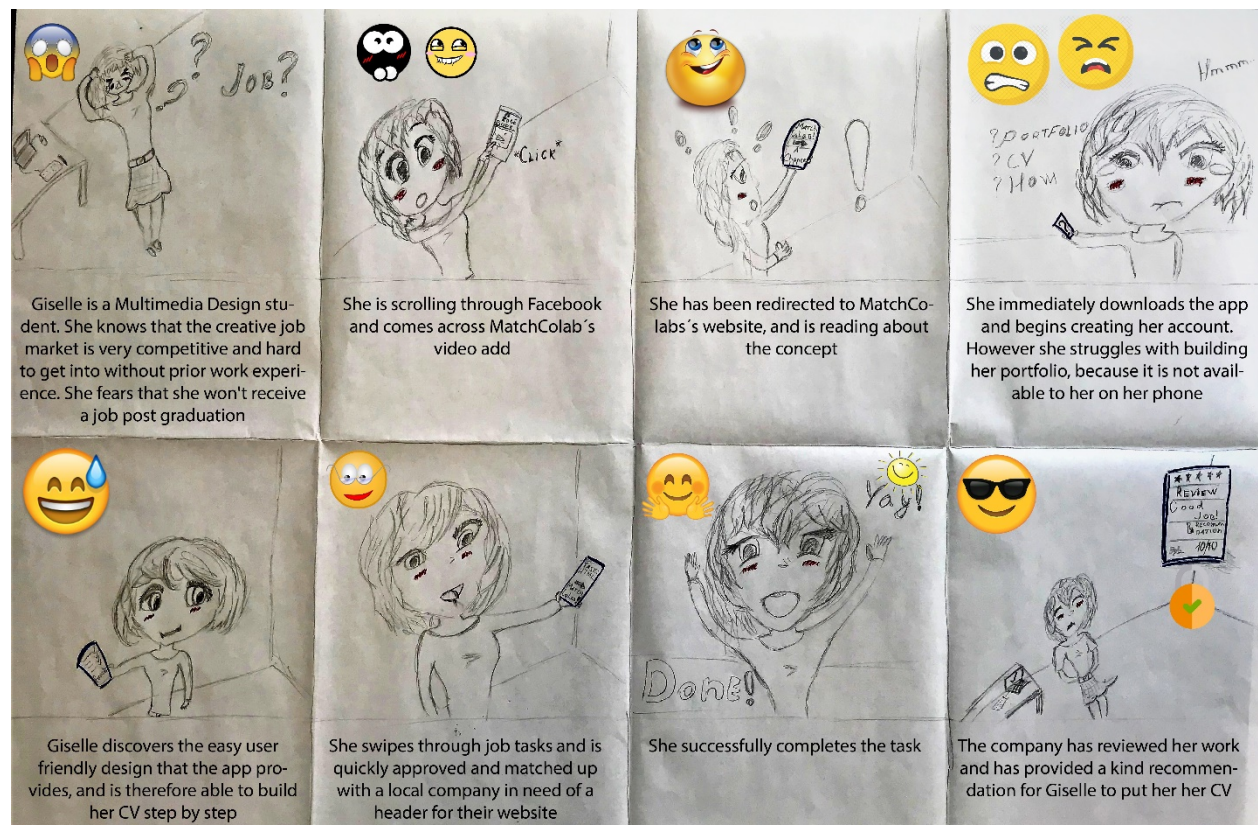
ESP

We chose to create an Emotional Selling Point, as we felt it was more fitted than the Unique Selling point. Because what differentiates us from our competitors is our values of equality.

“Match Collab is about helping aspiring designers build on to their portfolios”



Customer Journey



With this customer journey map we showed the experience of our persona, using the MatchCollab App. With the help of the customer journey map we identified some “pain-points” that the user could struggle with. One example is visible in the 4. Picture where Giselle has a problem with building her portfolio on her phone. One of our solution for this problem is, that we provide an easy design that guides the user step-by-step though the process of building a portfolio. An idea for the future is, that we want to produce a video, that explains how to build a portfolio in the App. The user has the possibility to watch this “tutorial” before creating the portfolio.



Communication Plan

Purpose

The platform we are providing is called “MatchCollab”. “MatchCollab” is creating connections between companies and young designers and helps them collaborating on projects.

By doing so, the App helps designers to gain experiences and boost their CV in a way that is not too time consuming. What makes our App stand out the most is that we are implementing the economic system of “barter”, which is described in the chapter “Introduction and description of the innovative digital service concept” in the beginning of this report.

On the one hand we are trying to reach young designers, who are taking their first education and don’t have any or just a few job experiences in the design field.

On the other hand, we are supporting local companies, but also bigger companies who are in need of a designer who is able to do small design-jobs for them.

The purpose of this communication plan is to build a concept that reaches to both of our target groups and informs them about “MatchCollab”.

Effect

In order to make our App stand out from all the other freelance Apps, we need to create a strong effect to the receiver.

The receiver should be less anxious about getting into carriers after graduating. Moreover, after reading about “MatchCollab” our “designer-target group” should feel relieved. They should realize that there is a possibility of getting valuable job experiences while continuing to upkeep their daily routines.

Message

We believe in reaching the unexperienced market through a service whose values lie within tying a knot between successful, iconic brands and aspiring students.

Desired action

The designers and companies will be able to sign up on the App and create a profile. Our desired action is, that the designers recommend the App with their friends and classmates and share it on social media channels so that more and more people will be aware of the existence of the App.



Target group

With our innovative digital service concept, we are primarily reaching young people living in Denmark and studying a program related to design. Their age range is between 18-24 years and they belong to the gender: male, female or others. They are taking their first education and don't have any or just a few job experiences in the design field. The target group is interested and talented in design and is willing to develop their portfolio. They are using platforms like Tinder and SimplyJob.

In order to find out more about our target audience we sent a survey to multimedia students at KEA, as they are an example of our potential users. The survey consisted of 4 main questions.³ In the following are two answers explained in detail, the other responds can be found in the appendix 3.

During the survey, we figured out, that there are enough potential users within the tested target group, who would be willing to put in the effort to improve their portfolio: 8 of 8 interviewed people responded with "Yes."⁴ This fact was crucial for us in order to find out that there are enough users being interested in the concept of "MatchCollab".

Moreover, the test results showed, that $\frac{1}{4}$ of our target audience thinks, it's not worth it to get paid in recommendations and experiences instead of getting paid with money. $\frac{3}{4}$ is fine with the idea of improving the portfolio without getting paid.⁵ This result shows that at least more than half of our target groups is willing to do small jobs in order to gain experiences and boost their CV.

We also conducted focus group interviews with 9 multimedia students who fit in our target group. After evaluating the results, we found out that all of the interviewed people would also like to improve their portfolio before graduating.

During the interview we asked the question, if they like the "Tinder concept". Again, all of them could relate to it. They stated, that it is user friendly and easy to use. This reply helped us a lot with designing the user interface of "MatchCollab", as our idea is to adapt the concept of Tinder, where you swipe left for "no" and right for "yes".

With the interview we also figured out that our target group would use the App as well after they are graduating, because "you can always evolve".⁶

Another target group of "MatchCollab" are companies who are in need of a designers, who can do small design-jobs for them. It can be a big company like Weekday, Ikea, Nordea or Nokia but we are also reaching local businesses e.g Cloasy, CPH Containers or MateBike.

³ A copy of the full survey can be found in the appendix.

⁴ Appendix 1

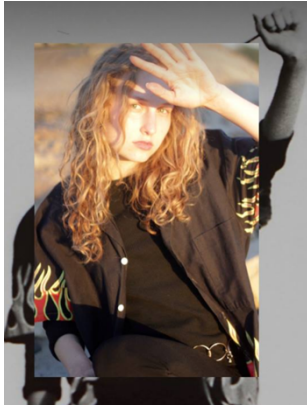
⁵ Appendix 2

⁶ Quotation of a male, 22 year-old Kea student



This target audience is our secondary target group and is a smaller group than the primary target group. In the future we are planning on sending surveys out to some companies to test this target audience.

Persona⁷



Giselle is a 24-year-old multimedia design student in Copenhagen. Her character is a creative plant and her long-time goals are to boost her CV and expand her network in order to get a job in the design industry. Her current frustrations are to build on her resume while attending school. In addition, she has troubles putting a price tag on her work due to the fact that she has yet to finish her education – so she is in search of a platform where she can build on her skills and make new contacts in the business with the little time she has between courses at her education.

Media Elements

We will code a website that promotes the idea of “MatchCollab” and to get the attention of our target audience. In order to do so, the website should contain a short video that explains the concept. It is important that the video is not too long as the attention span our target group is short.

In addition to the website, we will promote our App on the social media channels, explained in the following.

Facebook

Facebook is, with 1,45 billion daily users, one of the biggest platforms used worldwide.⁸ The platform is very competitive when fighting for user attention, but never the less is still one of the most effective platforms in order to connect with users. For that reason, we are going to advertise “MatchCollab” on Facebook.

⁷ Appendix

⁸ Number of daily active Facebook users worldwide as of 1st quarter 2018.
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/346167/facebook-global-dau/> (19.05.2018)



Instagram

Instagram is one of the dominating platforms, used for visual communication and advertisements. The key of using Instagram effectively, is by posting several times a week. Preferably daily, since there are over 500 million active users per day on the platform. On Instagram, it would be beneficial for our brand to share visual work and other creative solutions which have been developed by artists for different companies. That way, since all of the work will differ in style, quality and approach, the platform can generate interest in users: business and creative designers alike.

An example of content, that could catch potential users is diagrams and other simple statistics of the improvements of individual designers.

Another proposition is, to include stories of designers that have developed their skills and got further in the creative industry because of the opportunities they got through the companies, provided by MatchCollab.

LinkedIn

Although the platform is heavily used in the corporate environment, it is still a platform that opens opportunity for young creatives.

LinkedIn is an active platform in the industry for finding job opportunities and following up with company's action and key activities.

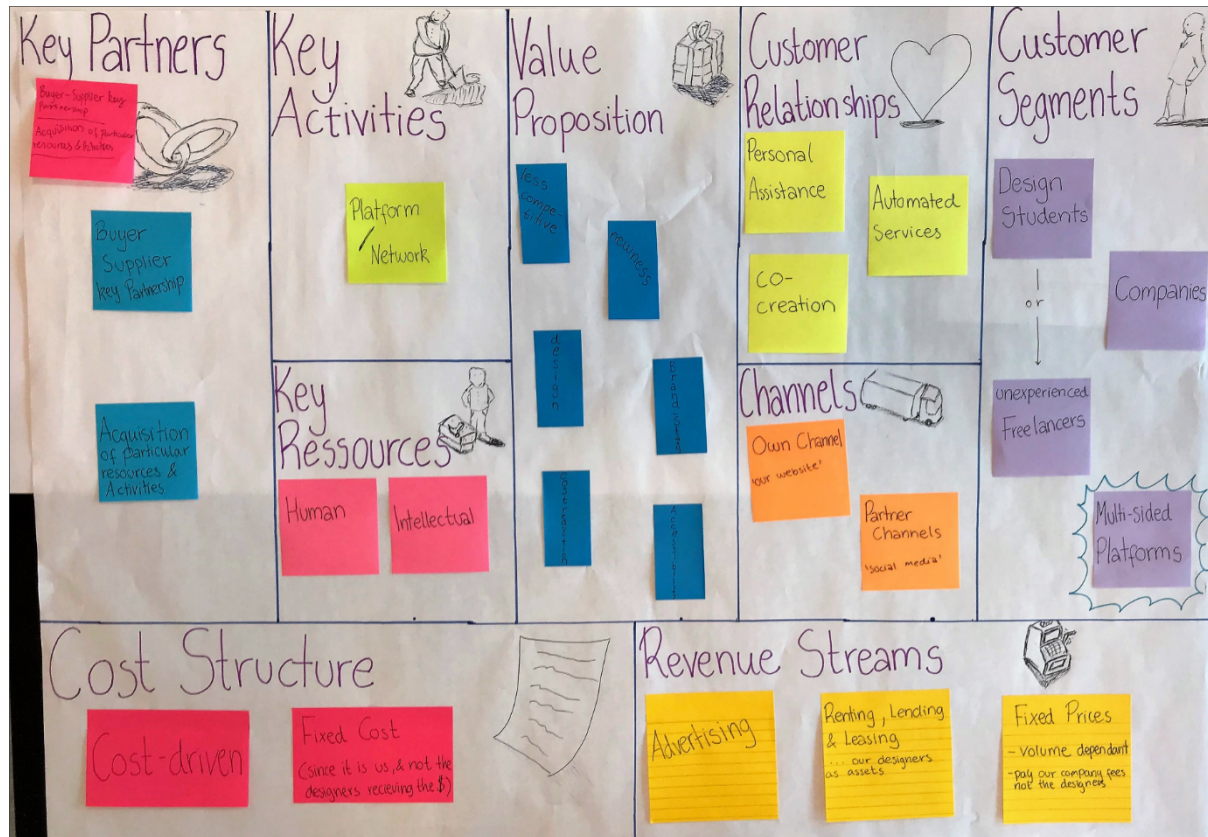
By connecting the user profile in the "MatchCollab" app with LinkedIn, the designers have the opportunity to upload references and update the content of the portfolio through the app.

Since LinkedIn is business oriented, it would be beneficial to share the remarks on growth and positive references from companies that have used the service.

Preferably users should connect their personal LinkedIn profile which will benefit the user by getting references for completed projects and their skillset which will be visible for potential employers and their network. In return, by gaining traffic and effective implementation on LinkedIn, the app will also gain credibility.



Business Model Canvas



Nine Building Blocks

1. Customer Segments

We deal with a multisided platform, since the app serves two independent customer segments; designers and companies. The companies can be a big company like Weekday, Ikea, Nordea or Nokia but we are also reaching local businesses e.g. Cloasy, CPH Containers or MateBike. The designers are still in school and willing to develop their portfolio while doing small design jobs.

2. Value Proposition

People should choose our app over the competitors because of the "less competitive" concept. There is nothing like it on the market and it shines in the following categories:

- **Newness:** There is no App available that provides jobs for "unexperienced" designers. Moreover is the "barter-system" we are offering (trading skills for goods) very unique for a freelance App.



- Design: We focus on an easy design that the user will understand immediately. For example are we making using of the “Tinder-concept” (Swipe – Match – Chat). Our target group is familiar with the design of the Tinder App. They will know that swiping left means not interested in the job and swiping right means interested.
- Brand status: We will advertise the companies who have used the service to attract designers, and other companies.
- Accessibility: “MatchCollab” is accessible for anyone. It is easy to use and the designers don’t have to pay a fee. Only the companies pay a little fee for each post they are uploading.
- Cost reduction:

3. Channels

We communicate with our target group through a mix of partner channels (social media) and our own commercial website. We will focus on social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

4. Customer Relationships

We wish to establish a close relationship to our customers. We plan to do so with personal assistance, and co-creation (rating service) but also an automated service, that matches up designers with companies.

5. Revenue Streams

We will get our revenue from advertisement and the renting, lending and leasing concept. We will “lend” companies “our” designers and they will therefore only pay a one-time fixed price, which is volume dependant, fee, for creating the add.

6. Key Resources

We require Human and Intellectual resources in order for the business to work.

7. Key Activities

The most important thing, we as a company, must do to upkeep our value proposition is uphold our platform and network.

8. Key Partners

We rely on a buyer-supplier principle.

9. Cost Structure

We have a cost driven structure because we aim to make the service as close to ‘free’ as possible. We made the cost fixed, because it is not the designers getting payed, it is us as a company



Appendix

Survey Questions

As multimedia-designer, do you use any online platforms in order to develop ^{*} your skills while getting to work with real clients?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, which ones?

Short answer text

If no, why not?

- ☐ I don't have the time
- ☐ I don't have a portfolio to show
- ☐ I never looked for any
- ☐ Other...

Is it worth it to get paid in recommendations and experiences and improve ^{*} your portfolio instead of getting paid with money?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Would you be willing to put in the effort to improve your portfolio? ^{*}

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Besides educating yourself as MMD-students, what actions do you take to ^{*} boost your CV?

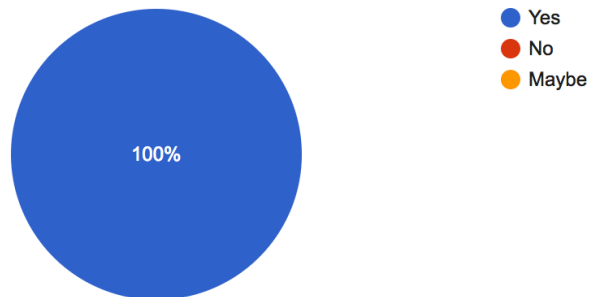
Short answer text



1)

Would you be willing to put in the effort to improve your portfolio?

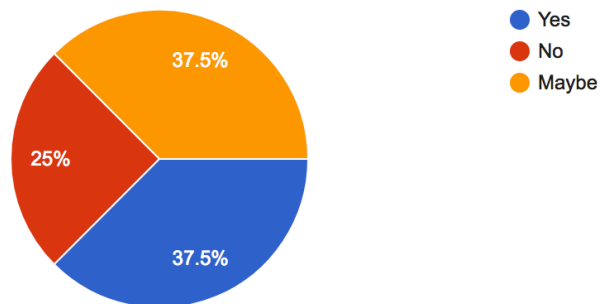
8 responses



2)

Is it worth it to get paid in recommendations and experiences and improve your portfolio instead of getting paid with money?

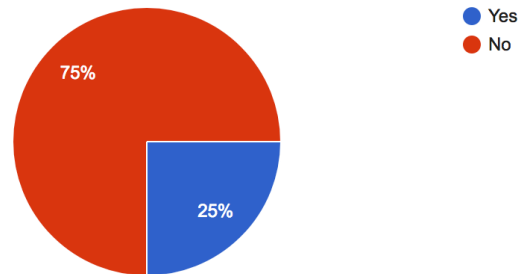
8 responses





As multimedia-designer, do you use any online platforms in order to develop your skills while getting to work with real clients?

8 responses



If yes, which ones?

2 responses

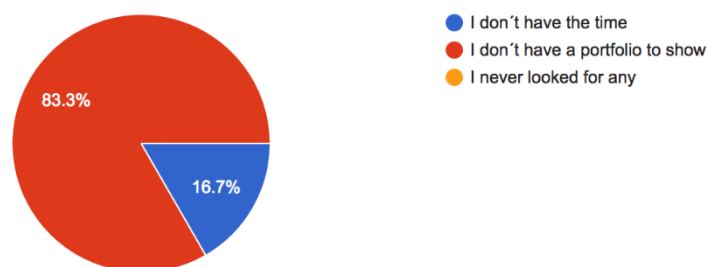
Lynda, learn squared, code academy

behance, instagram, linkedIn

3)

If no, why not?

6 responses





Besides educating yourself as MMD-students, what actions do you take to boost your CV?

8 responses

I work for a digital marketing team

none

linkedIn recommendations

None

Have a semi-relevant student job. Don't have time for more, but if I did, I would read more books, watch more tutorials, practise at home and then look for unpaid projects I could contribute to in order to build my portfolio. I would also participate at relevant events, meetups and conferences

Upgrade my LinkedIn profile and post some of the stuff I do on social media

Attending workshops and do volunteering work

Literally every other job I had past the last 10 years and future jobs will be added to my CV. Everything counts - no matter what it is.

Persona

