

Assessment 2: Critical Reflection – WIL Experience with Stormboy Australia

Introduction

During my Work Integrated Learning (WIL) placement with Stormboy Australia, I had the chance to apply entrepreneurial theory and practice in a small, family-run screen printing and embroidery company. Stormboy has established a solid reputation for providing local Brisbane customers with prompt, individualized service, but like many small businesses, it is coming under more and more pressure from big online rivals. I started my placement with an emphasis on process efficiency, but after some introspection, feedback, and theoretical application, I started to think more about creating opportunities and being innovative. My personal development, the entrepreneurial frameworks used, and the innovation pathways found using the Business Model Canvas (BMC) and the ensuing MVP development are all critically reflected in this essay.

1. The Overall WIL Experience

Personal Lessons and Challenges

I focused on operational efficiency at first, which meant cutting down on equipment downtime and speeding up workflows. These efforts did help with some small problems, but they didn't make Stormboy's business stand out. Both my boss and my teacher told me to go beyond optimization and start thinking like an entrepreneur. This change in focus from "working faster" to "creating new value" was a turning point for me.

One of the biggest problems was finding a balance between what clients wanted and trying new things. I often didn't want to suggest new ideas to a traditional family business. But the Lean Startup principle of "build–measure–learn" (Ries, 2011) taught me that new ideas can start out small and cheap. I lowered the risk and got real insights by introducing testable ideas instead of making big changes.

Looking back, I would test ideas with clients sooner rather than later. Early validation might have shown that customers were interested in subscription services sooner. The experience taught me that being an entrepreneur is a process that changes based on what works and what doesn't, not on perfect plans.

Networks and Value Creation

During my time at Stormboy, I worked with the owner, the operations manager, and local businesses like coffee shops, gyms, and salons. Through them, I learned about the common problems small businesses face, like demand that's hard to predict, cash flow issues, and the growing need to be more sustainable. These

helped me understand that innovation isn't a solo thing, but a group effort. This fits with Chesbrough's (2003) idea that sharing knowledge between companies can improve results.

2. New Knowledge, Insights, and Practical Skills Gained

The Past: Baseline Knowledge and Skills

Before this course, my understanding of business creation was mostly textbook stuff. I knew Schilling's (2023) innovation types and had read about Design Thinking (Brown, 2009), Lean Startup (Ries, 2011), and Effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2008), but I hadn't used them in the real world. I used to think innovation was just about doing things faster, not about being different. I was good at design, but not at testing if my ideas were any good.

Key Learnings and Application of Entrepreneurial Frameworks

1. Design Thinking – Empathy and Reframing

By talking to Stormboy's clients (See Appendix:Interviews 1 - 22), I found out that their biggest problem was the required minimum order. Small businesses often needed just a few uniforms, but they had to buy a lot. Using Design Thinking, I changed the question we were asking from "How can Stormboy be faster?" to "How can Stormboy create ongoing value for small clients?" (Brown, 2009). This led to the idea of Uniform-as-a-Service (UaaS) which is a subscription where small businesses get uniforms regularly without having to buy in bulk.

2. Lean Startup – Build–Measure–Learn

Using the Lean Startup method, I treated the UaaS idea as a minimum viable product. I suggested testing it with five local coffee shops to see if they were interested. They were, because they liked the idea of predictable costs and flexible ordering. I realized that innovation is about testing ideas, not sticking to a plan no matter what. This experience showed me that it's better to learn quickly than to try to do everything perfectly (Ries, 2011).

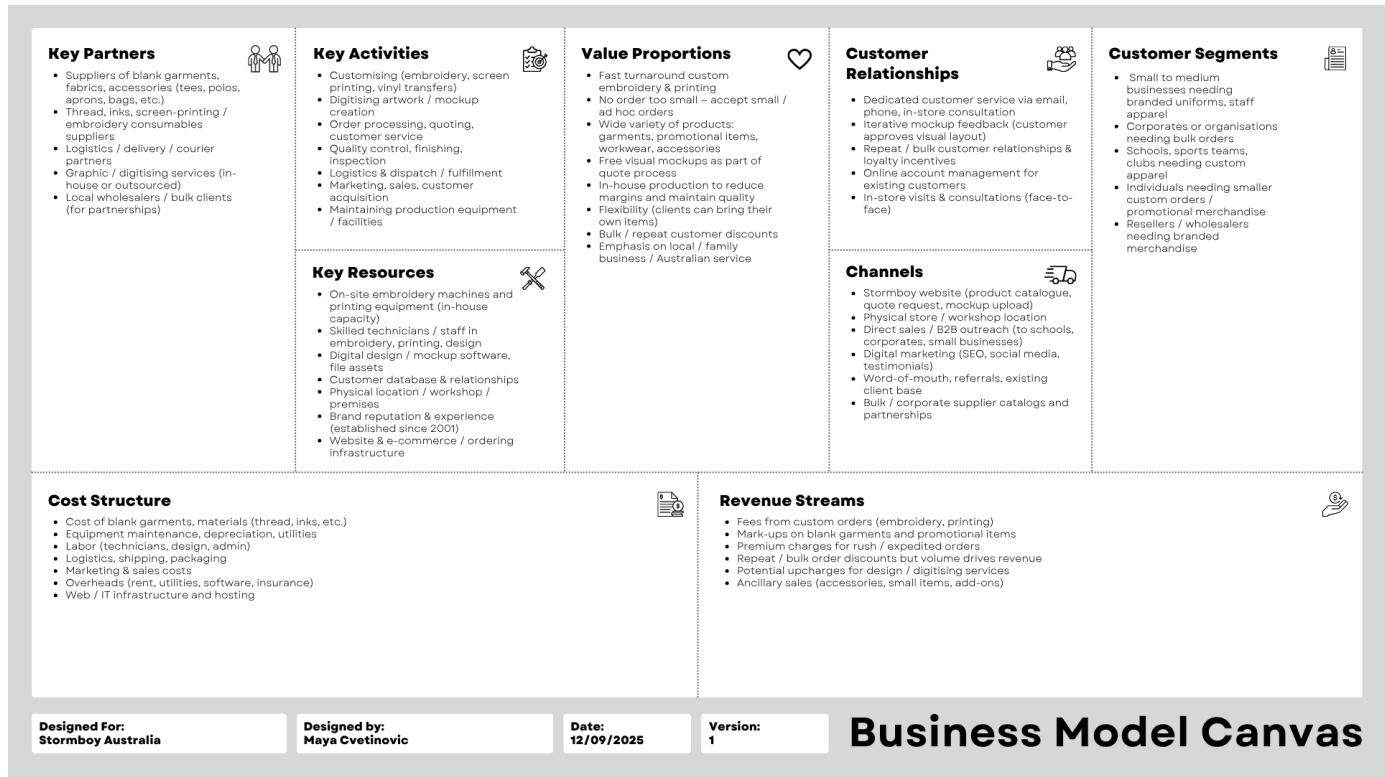
3. Effectuation – Starting with Available Means

Effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2008) changed how I thought about business creation. I learned to see it as using the resources you already have. Stormboy already had machines, skilled workers, and loyal clients. We could use these to innovate without spending a lot of money. We made sure our tests were small, reversible, and cheap. This helped us turn uncertainty into opportunity.

4. Business Model Canvas – Identifying Systemic Gaps

Making a Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) (see Figure 1) showed that Stormboy was good at service but not so good at digital stuff or sustainability. We had gaps in recurring income, CRM systems, and using eco-friendly materials (see Appendix: Table 1). This helped me change my focus from quick fixes to long-term innovation plans.

Figure 1: Stormboy Business model canvas (Larger version in Appendix 1)



Business Model Canvas

New Section: MVP Testing and Visual Prototyping (Feedback Integration)

Based on feedback, I made ads to test customer reactions to Stormboy's new ideas. I created three ads that looked like they were “coming soon” to suggest where the business could go:

1. Uniform-as-a-Service Ad – This ad showed how clients could subscribe monthly (for example, \$30 per employee) to get uniforms regularly (see Appendix: Figure 2).
2. Eco-Materials and Repair-Reuse Ad – This ad talked about using sustainable materials (organic cotton, recycled polyester) and repairing/returning old clothes (see Appendix: Figure 3).
3. Customer Co-Design Ad – This ad invited clients to help create designs through a digital portal with the slogan “*Designed with You.*” (see Appendix: Figure 4)

These ads were meant to make the ideas feel real and start conversations with customers. Early testing showed that people were most interested in the subscription service and eco-friendly materials.

The Future: Career Trajectory and Impact

This experience changed how I see myself. Now, I'm not just a designer, but someone who turns ideas into systems that are good for the economy, society, and the environment. I learned that sustainable innovation requires understanding, testing, and being able to change. I plan to use these lessons in the sustainable fashion sector, focusing on systems like repair, rental, and material tracking.

This experience confirmed my goal of developing sustainable clothing businesses in Australia, combining my design skills with business creation to make a difference.

Course Reflection and Improvement Suggestions

The best part of this course was how it mixed theory with doing. Testing, learning, and changing directions. Feedback from classmates and the instructor helped me open my mind and try new things.

To make the program even better, I suggest:

1. Earlier Business Model Canvas workshops — to identify innovation opportunities before mid-placement.
2. Incorporating circular economy frameworks — encouraging sustainable business model innovation.
3. Facilitating client co-design sessions early — so students can engage real stakeholders sooner and generate richer empathy insights.

These enhancements would help future students experience deeper, system-level learning rather than isolated project tasks.

Conclusion

My Stormboy experience changed my mind about business creation. I learned to see it as a chance to create instead of just a way to be efficient. By using Design Thinking, Lean Startup, and Effectuation with the Business Model Canvas, I learned to create innovation plans that are structured but flexible. I learned that real innovation is about designing new systems, relationships, and experiences that benefit everyone.

Through testing, I went from watching how things are done to designing MVPs that test where the business could go in the future. This has deepened my understanding and shaped my career toward sustainable business creation.

References (APA 7)

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Reflective Diary Entries

Diary Entry 1 – Initial Impressions and Expectations

During my first week at Stormboy Australia, I spent time watching and learning. The company seemed like a tight-knit family business with a strong base of local customers. My first job was to follow the embroidery team to learn their processes and how they handle customers. At first, I equated progress with making things faster and producing more. I looked closely at what was slowing things down: equipment problems, file errors, and delays between approving designs and starting production. I believed fixing these issues would be entrepreneurial.

But as I wrote down what I saw, I realized that Stormboy's greatest strength—being fast and affordable—could also be limiting their capacity to progress. Everyone was so busy trying to complete orders that there wasn't much time to try out new ideas or explore other services. This made me think about Schilling's idea of small improvements versus major changes, and I realized I was only thinking about minor improvements.

When I spoke with the owner, I learned that Stormboy is competing against large online businesses that use automation and offer very low prices. Stormboy stands out because of its personal touch and relationships, which can't be copied by digital services. This suggested that any future progress should build on this human aspect, rather than just trying to be more efficient.

By the end of the first week, I started to jot down some initial thoughts on how progress could support, not clash with, Stormboy's identity. I understood that my original ideas about progress were too limited, which was a very helpful lesson that influenced the rest of my time there.

Diary Entry 2 – Feedback and Reframing

In Week 3, I presented my initial proposal focused on process optimisation. My lecturer's feedback was straightforward: "You're solving efficiency problems, not creating entrepreneurial opportunities." Although challenging to hear, it became a pivotal learning moment. It forced me to confront my tendency to default to fixing, rather than reimagining.

After reflecting, I revisited Chesbrough's (2003) concept of open innovation. I realised that entrepreneurship requires value co-creation, not just internal refinement. I arranged a follow-up meeting with Stormboy's owner to explore whether they had considered new business models. Their answer was honest; they were aware of subscription services and custom portals but hadn't explored them due to limited time and digital infrastructure.

This feedback loop taught me to embrace discomfort as part of the learning process. I redefined my goal from improving processes to exploring new value pathways. Using the "How Might We" framework from Design Thinking, I reframed my challenge: "How might Stormboy engage customers through continuous value rather than one-off transactions?" This question became the anchor for my later Business Model Canvas work.

By the end of Week 3, I recognised that my biggest barrier wasn't lack of ideas but fear of proposing change in a traditional business. This insight became essential in developing confidence to lead innovation conversations in future workplaces.

Diary Entry 3 – Building the Business Model Canvas

Week 4 was when theory met practice. I constructed a Business Model Canvas to visualise how Stormboy currently operates. Mapping each element; from key resources to revenue streams; revealed gaps that were not visible before. The canvas showed Stormboy excels in personal service but lacks digital scalability and formal retention systems.

Through this process, I realised that many of Stormboy's challenges stemmed from its success; the business had grown organically but without structural innovation. For example, customer relationships were based on personal loyalty, not digital tracking or CRM tools. Similarly, marketing relied heavily on word-of-mouth rather than online channels.

As I filled out the "Value Proposition" block, I saw the opportunity for differentiation: integrating sustainability and circular economy elements into uniform design. The idea of a "Uniform-as-a-Service" model emerged; customers could receive uniforms through a subscription, reducing waste and stabilising revenue.

The BMC helped me communicate insights visually to the team. Instead of long reports, the canvas acted as a shared language for discussing change. This week marked a turning point where I stopped thinking like a designer and started thinking like an entrepreneur.

Diary Entry 4 – Customer Insights through Design Thinking

Using Design Thinking, I began conducting empathy interviews with small business clients. I wanted to understand not just what frustrated them, but what they truly valued. Café owners and salon managers expressed frustration with minimum order quantities, delayed restocks, and lack of flexibility.

I mapped these insights through empathy and journey maps, identifying key emotional touchpoints — stress when staff uniforms ran out, satisfaction with personalised service, and anxiety about unpredictable costs. From this emerged the insight that customers didn't just want uniforms; they wanted reliability and control.

This discovery reinforced the “Uniform-as-a-Service” idea. Instead of one-off purchases, businesses could subscribe and receive uniforms as staff numbers changed. The model would reduce upfront costs for clients and provide Stormboy with steady income.

Applying Design Thinking principles reminded me that innovation starts with empathy, not ideas. The process shifted my mindset from being solution-driven to being problem-sensitive.

Diary Entry 5 – MVP Ideation and Lean Startup

By Week 6, I applied Lean Startup principles to move from idea to test. I developed a simple MVP proposal for the subscription service targeting five café clients. The test would involve offering quarterly uniform updates at a fixed monthly fee.

The process taught me the power of the build–measure–learn loop. I built a mock pricing model, measured interest through informal client discussions, and learned that while some were hesitant, others were excited about predictable costs. This data-driven learning validated that small businesses value flexibility over speed alone.

I also learned the importance of “affordable loss.” Stormboy could test this model without major investment by leveraging existing machines and client relationships. The owner appreciated that innovation didn’t necessarily require risk; just structured experimentation.

Through this, I experienced the balance between creativity and practicality that defines entrepreneurship.

Diary Entry 6 – Effectuation in Practice

Week 7 deepened my understanding of Effectuation. Instead of waiting for perfect conditions, I worked with what Stormboy already had; equipment, loyal clients, and skilled staff. This approach emphasised “bird-in-hand” thinking: starting with available means to shape new ends.

We brainstormed how existing systems could support innovation. For instance, Stormboy’s embroidery software could be repurposed for a customer design portal, allowing clients to preview products online. Similarly, unused production time could be offered for small-batch collaborations with local artists.

Effectuation also encouraged adaptability. When one café client postponed their involvement, I reframed it as feedback, not failure. I learned to see obstacles as signals to adjust assumptions; embodying the “lemonade principle” of turning surprises into opportunity.

This mindset shift gave me a sense of entrepreneurial control, transforming uncertainty from fear into fuel.

Diary Entry 7 – Identifying Innovation Gaps

Week 8 involved synthesising findings from the BMC, interviews, and MVP test. I identified recurring innovation gaps: reliance on one-off transactions, limited sustainability integration, and absence of digital tools.

I presented these insights to the owner, highlighting opportunities for innovation: developing a CRM, introducing eco-materials, and formalising client partnerships. The conversation was positive; they acknowledged the value of structured innovation but were concerned about time.

This discussion helped me appreciate that innovation must fit context; proposing small, iterative changes is often more realistic than large overhauls. I also learned the importance of stakeholder alignment: innovation succeeds when framed as mutually beneficial, not disruptive.

Week 8 solidified my role as a bridge between theory and practice; using academic frameworks to create tangible business value.

Diary Entry 8 – Reflection and Integration

The final week was a period of reflection and integration. I compared my Week 1 assumptions with Week 9 insights and saw a transformation; from efficiency-focused to system-oriented thinking. The WIL experience taught me that entrepreneurship is iterative, relational, and reflective.

I refined the Business Model Canvas to include proposed innovations: subscription services, sustainability integration, CRM systems, and artist collaborations. Seeing this future-state canvas beside the original highlighted the potential impact of design-led change.

Writing my final report allowed me to consolidate theory into practice. Design Thinking gave me empathy, Lean Startup gave me method, Effectuation gave me courage, and the Business Model Canvas gave me structure. Together, they shaped a holistic understanding of innovation as both creative and disciplined.

At the end, I felt a sense of ownership; not over outcomes, but over my growth as an entrepreneurial designer.

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Figure 1: Larger Stormboy Business Model Canvas

<h3>Key Partners</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suppliers of blank garments, fabrics, accessories (tees, polos, aprons, bags, etc.) Thread, inks, screen-printing / embroidery consumables suppliers Logistics / delivery / courier partners Graphic / digitising services (in-house or outsourced) Local wholesalers / bulk clients (for partnerships) 	 <h3>Key Activities</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customising (embroidery, screen printing, vinyl transfers) Digitising artwork / mockup creation Order processing, quoting, customer service Quality control, finishing, inspection Logistics & dispatch / fulfillment Marketing, sales, customer acquisition Maintaining production equipment facilities 	 <h3>Value Propositions</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast turnaround custom embroidery & printing No order too small – accept small / ad hoc orders Wide variety of products: garments, promotional items, workwear, accessories Free visual mockups as part of quote process In-house production to reduce margins and maintain quality Flexibility (clients can bring their own items) Bulk / repeat customer discounts Emphasis on local / family business / Australian service 	 <h3>Customer Relationships</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated customer service via email, phone, in-store consultation, iterative mockup feedback (customer approves visual layout) Repeat / bulk customer relationships & loyalty incentives Online account management for existing customers In-store visits & consultations (face-to-face) 	 <h3>Customer Segments</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small to medium businesses needing branded uniforms, staff apparel Corporates or organisations needing bulk orders Schools, sports teams, clubs needing custom apparel Individuals needing smaller custom orders / promotional merchandise Resellers / wholesalers needing branded merchandise
<h3>Cost Structure</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of blank garments, materials (thread, inks, etc.) Equipment maintenance, depreciation, utilities Labor (technicians, design, admin) Logistics, shipping, packaging Overheads (rent, utilities, software, insurance) Web / IT infrastructure and hosting 	 <h3>Key Resources</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-site embroidery machines and printing equipment (in-house capacity) Skilled technicians / staff in embroidery, printing, design, digital design / mockup software, file assets Customer database & relationships Physical location / workshop / premises Brand reputation & experience (established since 2001) Website & e-commerce / ordering infrastructure 	 <h3>Revenue Streams</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fees from custom orders (embroidery, printing) : Mark-ups on blank garments and promotional items Premium charges for rush / expedited orders Repeat / bulk order discounts but volume drives revenue Ancillary sales (accessories, small items, add-ons) 	 <h3>Channels</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormboy website (product catalogue, quote request, mockup upload) Physical store / workshop location Direct sales / B2B outreach (to schools, corporates, small businesses) Digital marketing (SEO, social media, testimonials) Word-of-mouth, referrals, existing client base Bulk / corporate supplier catalogs and partnerships 	 <h3>Customer Segments</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small to medium businesses needing branded uniforms, staff apparel Corporates or organisations needing bulk orders Schools, sports teams, clubs needing custom apparel Individuals needing smaller custom orders / promotional merchandise Resellers / wholesalers needing branded merchandise
<p>Designed For: Stormboy Australia</p>	<p>Designed by: Maya Cvetinovic</p>	<p>Date: 12/09/2025</p>	<p>Version: 1</p>	<h1>Business Model Canvas</h1>

Figure 2: Uniform as a service mock ad



The advertisement features a large red title 'UNIFORM-AS-A-SERVICE' on the left and a yellow 'COMING SOON' graphic on the right. Below the title is a question 'Do you regularly order uniforms?'. A red call-to-action button contains the text 'Try our new uniform subscription!!!' and 'starting at \$30 per employee uniform!!'. To the right, there's a pair of tan work boots, an orange hi-vis shirt with reflective stripes and a logo placeholder 'your logo here', and a blue t-shirt with a similar logo placeholder. A red speech bubble at the bottom left encourages contact with the email 'sales@stormboy.com.au'.

UNIFORM-AS-A-SERVICE

Do you regularly order uniforms?

Try our new uniform subscription!!!

starting at \$30 per employee uniform!!

interested?
contact us at
sales@stormboy.com.au

your logo here

your logo here

Figure 3: Uniform Repair Ad

REPAIR YOUR UNIFORMS

COMING SOON

do you have a hole you need to fix

Try our repair and patch service

starting at \$25+gst per
repair/patch



interested?
contact us at
sales@stormboy.com.au

Figure 3: Co design ad

DESIGNED WITH YOU

COMING
SOON

**Create designs made by you
use our online platform to make your designs**

**starting at \$25+gst per customised
logo**



**interested?
contact us at
sales@stormboy.com.au**

Table 1: Innovation Gaps & Opportunities for Stormboy Australia

Business Model Element	Current State	Gaps/ Opportunities
Customer Segments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Serves a mix of small–medium businesses, corporates, schools, and individuals.Offers custom embroidery and screen-printing to both B2B and B2C clients.	Broad targeting dilutes focus: no dedicated segmentation strategy for recurring vs one-off customers. Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop tiered customer programs (e.g., “Small Biz Loyalty Club,” “Uniform Partner Program”) to secure repeat clients.Introduce subscription or recurring uniform service for small businesses (cafés, gyms, salons).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore niche markets (sustainable brands, local artists, ethical apparel collaborations). Use data segmentation to personalise marketing by frequency, order type, or sector.
Value Proposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on fast turnaround, affordable customisation, and “no job too small.” Offers flexibility and personal service as a local family-owned business. 	<p>Commoditised offering — competitors also claim fast and cheap services.</p> <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add sustainability value (organic cotton, recycled polyester, carbon-neutral garments). Position Stormboy as a local sustainable alternative to global suppliers (e.g., Vistaprint, Redbubble). Introduce “Circular Uniforms” — repair, recycle, or swap options for business clients. Develop design-consultation packages to differentiate on creativity, not just production. Offer express mockup platform or AI-based visualiser to improve digital experience.
Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website used for catalogue and quote requests; relies on email, phone, or in-person orders. Word-of-mouth and referrals drive many sales. 	<p>Limited digital automation and e-commerce integration.</p> <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a self-service ordering platform (upload designs, preview embroidery, pay online). Use social media commerce (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok) to showcase finished projects and generate leads. Develop a B2B client portal with repeat-order templates, predictive reordering, and live tracking. Partner with local marketplaces or Etsy-style platforms for small-batch custom orders.
Customer Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal, local service; repeat clients valued but not formally retained through structured programs. 	<p>Retention relies on goodwill, not systems.</p> <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a CRM system for repeat orders, follow-ups, and loyalty offers. Launch a business subscription with predictable monthly payments and priority service. Introduce co-design workshops (in-person or online). Offer post-purchase engagement — highlight client stories on Stormboy’s socials, creating community ties.
Revenue Streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income mainly from one-off embroidery/printing jobs. Some repeat revenue from bulk clients, but not guaranteed. 	<p>Revenue model is transactional, not recurring.</p> <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce subscription-based or membership models (Uniform-as-a-Service). Add design consultancy fees or tiered service levels (standard vs premium). Sell eco-branded merchandise (caps, totes, aprons) under Stormboy’s label.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create collaboration collections (e.g., Stormboy × Local Artist). • Monetise digital embroidery files or templates for DIY creators.
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production, digitising, order fulfilment, and quality control dominate daily operations. 	<p>Limited innovation or R&D activity.</p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a small innovation/testing unit to prototype new service models or materials. • Implement lean process improvements (track waste, turnaround, idle machine hours). • Train staff in Design Thinking and customer co-creation. • Use data analytics to forecast orders and streamline scheduling.
Key Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house embroidery machines, experienced staff, and a local workshop. 	<p>Resources are fixed and localised; scalability limited.</p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in digital infrastructure (cloud CRM, online order system, automated mockup tools). • Explore mobile embroidery units or on-site event activations (live embroidery at markets). • Develop knowledge IP via digital embroidery templates and reusable designs.
Key Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppliers for blank garments, courier partners, and some B2B collaborations. 	<p>Few strategic alliances for innovation or sustainability.</p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with eco-fabric suppliers or recycled material innovators. • Form collaborations with local artists, designers, or schools for capsule collections. • Build relationships with repair/reuse organisations to enable circular systems. • Engage with universities or design students for innovation projects.
Cost Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor-intensive operations; ongoing maintenance, materials, and overhead costs. 	<p>Costs rise with scale; margins may be thin for small orders.</p> <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt Lean Manufacturing principles to reduce waste and downtime. • Introduce dynamic pricing models (rush-order premiums, loyalty discounts). • Offset costs through digital transformation (online quoting, automated invoicing). • Explore green grants or sustainability certifications to support eco-initiatives and funding.

Interviews:

Interview 1 – Stormboy Operations Manager

Q: What's the biggest day-to-day challenge at Stormboy?

A: Honestly, it's juggling big bulk orders with those tiny one-off jobs. Both are important, but the pace can get overwhelming.

Q: How do you usually think about improving operations?

A: Efficiency first — keeping things moving smoothly. But lately, I've realised that's not always enough.

Q: What do you think about new services, like a subscription model?

A: That could work. It'd give us more predictable work and build stronger client loyalty.

Q: Do staff seem open to new business models?

A: It wouldn't be too difficult of a change as we already have frequent orders that kind of work as a subscription model it may even work better

Interview 2 – Embroidery Technician

Q: What do you enjoy most about your role?

A: Seeing the final product come to life — especially small custom jobs that make customers smile.

Q: What frustrates you most?

A: Rework. Sometimes designs aren't digitised properly, and it slows us down.

Q: How do you feel about expanding services?

A: If it means more variety and less repetition, I'd be excited. Subscriptions sound interesting, but I'd worry about workload.

Q: Do you think efficiency equals innovation?

A: Not always. Sometimes being faster just means we're stuck in the same routine.

Interview 3 – Screen-Printing Staff

Q: How does the work feel day-to-day?

A: Busy! Every order feels urgent. There's rarely time to think about new ideas.

Q: What would make your work easier?

A: Better forecasting — knowing what's coming up rather than constant surprises.

Q: Do you think Stormboy should stick to printing or expand?

A: Expanding is smart. Custom uniforms or recurring contracts would stabilise things.

Q: What's your take on innovation?

A: For us, it's not just speed. It's new ways of working with clients.

Interview 4 – Sales Representative

Q: What do customers complain about most?

A: Minimum order requirements. Smaller businesses hate them because they can't afford bulk.

Q: How do you handle those complaints?

A: We try to be flexible, but our systems aren't built for really small orders.

Q: What's the most exciting client trend you've noticed?

A: Clients want flexibility and customisation — not just speed.

Q: Could a subscription service help?

A: Definitely. It'd build long-term relationships rather than one-off transactions.

Interview 5 – Admin Staff

Q: How do you see your role at Stormboy?

A: Keeping orders, invoices, and schedules on track. It's the behind-the-scenes glue.

Q: What slows things down?

A: Last-minute changes. They throw off the whole workflow.

Q: Do you think about innovation in your work?

A: Honestly, not much. But if innovation reduced admin headaches, I'd be all for it.

Q: What's your reaction to the subscription model idea?

A: It'd simplify admin too — fewer one-off invoices, more predictable billing.

Interview 6 – Stormboy Owner

Q: What do you want most for Stormboy's future?

A: To stay competitive while keeping our personal touch.

Q: What worries you most?

A: Competing with massive online companies. Their scale is impossible for us to match.

Q: How do you see innovation?

A: As survival. We can't just be faster — we have to be different.

Q: Would you back a subscription uniform service?

A: Yes. It'd give us stability and keep clients coming back.

Interview 7 – Café Owner - Coffee Nook (Client)

Q: How do you currently order uniforms?

A: Bulk, because that's the only way. But it's stressful and expensive upfront.

Q: What's your biggest frustration?

A: Minimum orders. We only need five shirts, but we're forced into buying 20.

Q: Would a subscription model appeal to you?

A: Absolutely. Paying monthly for exactly what we need would be a game-changer.

Q: What do you value in a supplier?

A: Flexibility and reliability. Not just speed.

Interview 8 – Retail Shop Owner

Q: What do you look for in uniforms?

A: Consistency. Staff need to look professional all the time.

Q: What makes ordering difficult?

A: Turnaround times. Sometimes we're waiting weeks.

Q: Would a subscription service interest you?

A: Yes, if it guaranteed consistent supply.

Q: What frustrates you about current suppliers?

A: Lack of communication. We never know when things will actually arrive.

Interview 9 – Hair Salon Owner

Q: Do you currently use Stormboy for uniforms?

A: Yes, but only for one-off orders.

Q: Why not more often?

A: Because small orders aren't easy. It feels like we're too small to matter.

Q: Would a flexible subscription help?

A: Definitely. If I could just order new pieces as staff change, I'd be loyal forever.

Q: What do you want most from a supplier?

A: Feeling like a valued customer, not an afterthought.

Interview 10 – Gym Manager

Q: How do uniforms fit into your business?

A: They're essential — staff need to look approachable and consistent.

Q: What's hard about ordering?

A: Sizes. Every new hire needs something different, which messes with bulk orders.

Q: Would you pay for a subscription?

A: For sure. It'd solve size problems because we could just swap as needed.

Q: What do you think of Stormboy?

A: They're great — but they need to adapt to small clients like us.

Interview 11 – Non-Profit Manager

Q: Do you order uniforms often?

A: Only when we can afford them. Bulk orders are tough on our budget.

Q: Would you consider a monthly subscription?

A: Yes, especially if it spreads the cost.

Q: What matters most in choosing a supplier?

A: Affordability and alignment with our values.

Q: How do you see innovation in small businesses?

A: It's about empathy — solving problems that really matter.

Interview 12 – Start-Up Founder

Q: What role do uniforms play for your business?

A: Branding. They make us look professional.

Q: What's your experience with Stormboy?

A: Good quality, but minimum orders are a pain for us.

Q: What's appealing about subscriptions?

A: Predictable costs. Start-ups need that stability.

Q: Do you think small businesses value innovation?

A: Definitely. It's what keeps us competitive.

Interview 13 – Fabric Supplier Representative

Q: What's your experience working with small embroidery businesses like Stormboy?

A: They're some of our most creative clients, but they struggle with predicting fabric demand, which affects our own production planning.

Q: How could a subscription or recurring model help from your side?

A: It would bring consistency. If we knew their monthly fabric needs, we could offer better prices and reduce waste.

Q: What challenges do you see in supply chain innovation?

A: Smaller companies often lack the data to forecast properly — they work week-to-week. Innovation comes from creating that predictability.

Q: Do you think Stormboy could stand out through sustainability?

A: Absolutely. Eco-certified fabrics and transparent sourcing are becoming key differentiators in B2B embroidery.

Q: Any advice for young entrepreneurs?

A: Build long-term supplier relationships. Innovation isn't just what you sell — it's how you collaborate.

Interview 14 – Sustainability Consultant

Q: What's your perspective on sustainability in small creative industries like embroidery?

A: It's often overlooked. People think sustainability is only for big brands, but small businesses can innovate faster.

Q: What would sustainability look like for Stormboy?

A: They could start with waste reduction — collecting leftover threads or using recycled threads for small jobs.

Q: How could a uniform subscription model connect to sustainability?

A: It keeps garments in circulation longer. Repair, reuse, or take-back features could make it circular instead of linear.

Q: How do you see innovation and sustainability working together?

A: They're inseparable now. True innovation creates both profit and purpose.

Q: What advice would you give to a student exploring this?

A: Always link creativity to systems thinking — don't just make better products, make better cycles.

Interview 15 – Returning Stormboy Customer

Q: What keeps you coming back to Stormboy?

A: The personal touch. I can call and talk to someone who actually knows my past orders.

Q: Have you noticed any challenges when reordering?

A: Sometimes old designs or sizes get lost between systems, which slows things down.

Q: Would a digital or subscription system help you?

A: Definitely. I'd love a client portal to reorder or tweak designs easily.

Q: What do you value most in a small supplier?

A: Reliability. If they keep their promises, I stay loyal.

Q: What would make you recommend them more?

A: More consistency and less back-and-forth paperwork — innovation that saves me time.

Interview 16 – Digital Marketing Consultant

Q: How could a small business like Stormboy better use digital tools?

A: Automate client communication — things like reorder reminders or a digital mock-up system could save hours.

Q: How would that tie into innovation?

A: It changes how customers experience the brand. You move from a service provider to a partner.

Q: What's your take on the subscription idea?

A: It's smart. But it needs strong online management — clients expect to manage everything from their phones now.

Q: How do small businesses balance creativity with tech adoption?

A: By starting small — automate what drains time first, then scale up.

Q: What's the biggest missed opportunity you see in Stormboy's industry?

A: Digital storytelling. Showing the "making process" builds emotional value and trust.

Interview 17 – Fashion and Design Student Observer

Q: What drew you to observe Maya's Stormboy project?

A: The blend of design and entrepreneurship. It's a rare mix that goes beyond aesthetics.

Q: What did you learn from watching the process?

A: That innovation isn't just invention — it's reframing. Maya turned a production challenge into a business opportunity.

Q: How do you see the connection between fashion and business model innovation?

A: They're converging. Designers need to think about systems, not just clothes.

Q: What do you admire about the project's approach?

A: It stays grounded in real users — café owners, local clients — instead of chasing abstract sustainability goals.

Q: How has it influenced your own thinking?

A: I now see entrepreneurship as a design practice — iterative, human-centred, and purpose-driven.

Interview 18 – Local Community Partner (Small Business Network Coordinator)

Q: What kind of role does Stormboy play in the Brisbane small business community?

A: They're a go-to for quality uniforms and local collaborations. They represent what small-scale Australian businesses can do — personal, creative, reliable.

Q: What challenges do they face in the current business environment?

A: Competition from overseas suppliers. It's hard to match their prices, but Stormboy wins with service and customisation.

Q: What would help them innovate further?

A: Partnering with other local makers. Imagine combining their embroidery with local textile printing or repair services.

Q: How do you view innovation in small businesses?

A: It's survival. When local businesses share resources or customers, they innovate naturally.

Q: Would a subscription service fit within the local ecosystem?

A: Absolutely. It could tie multiple small businesses together in a steady-value network.

Interview 19 – New Stormboy Employee (Junior Designer)

Q: What was it like joining Stormboy as a new team member?

A: Exciting but a little overwhelming. There's so much tradition here — people know what works, but that can make new ideas hard to introduce.

Q: How do you see innovation inside the company?

A: It's starting to grow. The subscription idea has people talking about what else we could do differently.

Q: What's been the hardest part of learning the job?

A: Balancing speed with creativity. Everything has to move fast, but you still want the designs to stand out.

Q: What's something you'd love to see changed?

A: More digital tools — like design previews clients can see online before production.

Q: How do you feel about sustainability and future directions?

A: It's essential. Every young designer I know wants to create things that last.

Interview 20 – Entrepreneurship Program Mentor

Q: How would you describe Maya's growth through the Stormboy project?

A: Dramatic. She went from seeing innovation as an efficiency upgrade to understanding it as new value creation.

Q: What do you think was her biggest learning moment?

A: The shift when she realised efficiency isn't innovation — that's the classic entrepreneurial turning point.

Q: How does her work align with current entrepreneurship theory?

A: It sits beautifully within Lean Startup and Effectuation frameworks. She applied theory to real-life uncertainty.

Q: What advice did you give her along the way?

A: To talk more with customers — because that's where innovation lives, not in spreadsheets.

Q: What would you say to future students doing WIL placements?

A: Be brave enough to pivot. That's where real learning happens.

Interview 21 – Clothing Recycler (Circular Economy Advocate)

Q: How much textile waste do you see from local businesses?

A: A lot — especially from uniforms and promotional items that change seasonally.

Q: Could a company like Stormboy play a role in reducing that?

A: Definitely. They could set up a take-back or repair system, or work with us to recycle leftover materials.

Q: What do you think about subscription models in fashion or uniforms?

A: They're the future. You keep ownership of materials and control their lifecycle — that's circular thinking.

Q: How hard is it for small businesses to join circular systems?

A: It's not easy, but partnerships make it possible. We love collaborating with creative, proactive companies.

Q: What would you say to a student exploring these issues?

A: Always think beyond the product — ask what happens *before and after* it's used.