

Public summary

The challenge arising from SKEPP concerning their new Officeplanner concept, functioned as the foundation for this research. The problem was that furnished open office spaces were unpleasant to work in, because the atmosphere and acoustics of the spaces were bad. This was caused by the fact that the spaces were too empty. This led to the following research question: *“What is an optimal mobile, easily (re)placeable, sound-absorbing and ambiance improving solution in an office setting that is suitable for at least two people?”*.

To answer this question, the study started off with a market research focusing on examining existing solutions and revealing opportunities. This concluded that most existing products are unexciting and take away most of the view of the surrounding.

A second research has been performed towards the stakeholders by identifying them and their corresponding needs. The stakeholders involved in this research are the users, the target customers and SKEPP. The user wants a product that is easy in use and provides them self-availability and full control of usage. Their most important requirement is that the product works sound-absorbing while simultaneously improving the atmosphere of the workplace.

The target customer, being the businesses that are going to lease or buy the product, require an aesthetically pleasing but not too expensive product that improves the work productivity. The wishes from SKEPP are familiar, the product should not be too expensive, it has to fit in the Cowork area and it should be an eye catcher.

The outcome of this research as mentioned above, is a set of requirements which can be translated in a list of requirements. This functioned as the guidelines for the Ideation. Together with my tutor from SKEPP, Oliver, four concepts were chosen to be further iterated. At the end of this phase, a feedback session was organized with a few employees of SKEPP. From this feedback session resulted that the ‘vertical shutter system’ was chosen as the best solution, as this concept would meet the proposed requirements the most.

The vertical shutter system is further finalized to a final concept. This led to the change of a few minor things, such as: the size of the shutters, improving of the open-and-close functionality of the shutters, and the addition of the bulletin board. From this final concept, it was decided to make an working prototype of the shutter system. This prototype has been developed to test if the design was actually sound-absorbing and able to reduce the sound. Additionally, it was tested if the design, as positioned on the desk of a user, was perceived as aesthetically pleasing.

Unfortunately, due to an unsuitable experiment room and insufficient equipment, the sound- absorbing test did not go well. Therefore, it cannot be concluded whether the vertical system works or not. However, from a technical perspective, the solution should work and function as a sound-absorber. On the other hand, the test to verify the aesthetical aspect of the vertical shutter system was successful. Most employees

of SKEPP thought it was a nice product and believed that this could work. Additionally, they were enthusiastic on having this product on their desk.

To conclude, it hasn't been scientifically proven that the vertical shutter system meets the requirements. However, according to the facts and calculations, it should be able to reduce the sound. Another remark is that even though the product is designed to be flexible and replaceable, it is hard to prove as this has not been tested (properly). The aesthetics of the product are appreciated by a lot of questioned people, amongst other the employees of SKEPP. It can be concluded that the final concept of the vertical shutter system is a good start for a new product for SKEPP but needs to be further refined before it can be released on the market.