

The Selfie Mirror

An attempt to make the youth more culturally active

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Designing a product that makes the youth more culturally active.

The company that the thesis is performed at, specialises in getting the right people to the right place at the right time to create culture. Around 15 years ago, the youth culture in the company's city was large and the youth then, still participate in the culture today. This, however, causes the connection to the youth of today to falter, in which the youth is defined as children between the ages of 12 and 18. Most youth leave the company's city around their 18th year to study and around half of these people come back when they are 30, therefore it is important to instil good memories of the cultural activities before they go away, so they will re-join the community when they return (Oskala et al., 2009).

The arisen problem is that the youth is not aware of the cultural activities that the company has to offer, except for the ones they attend. The client believes that the problems are caused through the pressure on all departments, for example: the marketing department is pressured to connect to all target groups with one type of advertisement. The client believes it lacks the knowledge and resources to provide activities that the youth can relate with. They are however unable to program youth events for the foreseeable future and therefore rely on integrating the youth into the existing program.

The aim of the project is to encourage the youth to play an active role in making culture, by designing a product, that the youth will encounter at events. This will allow the company to include the youth more as a target group. The main research question of this project is therefore: "How can the youth be encouraged to play an active role in making culture with the use of a product?"

To learn more about the youth and stimulators for being culturally active, research was done. This research contains market research, preshow research, and a target group analysis. This research gave information like existing technologies, obstacles for being culturally active, cultural activators and characteristics of the youth. The results of this research were a list of requirements and inspiration for the ideation phase.

Then, with the use of ideation and a Harris profile (Harris, 1961), the first concept, an interactive photobooth, was chosen. This photobooth was then prepared to be tested on two of the company's festivals, with the use of a test plan and further ideation. After the first test it became clear that concept would not work in encouraging the youth to be more culturally active, because the youth abstained from doing the photobooth activity. In order to get more people to use the photobooth, the test plan and the testing activity were changed before the second test. On this testing day, more people used the prototype and information was gathered to improve on the concept.

The photobooth idea was adapted and with further ideation and Harris profiles, the selfie mirror was designed. A prototype of this selfie mirror was made to find possible problems and solutions with the use of this product. This mirror was then detailed to fit the style of the company and to adhere to the requirements that were set after the research and tests.

The final product is the selfie mirror. This mirror adheres to the style of the company and allows them to show the event and the corresponding company location. The mirror has a magnetic strip on the side, to which markers and an eraser attach. These markers can be used by the youth to write personal messages or drawings on the mirror when they take pictures. The mirror is positioned on an easel, which allows it to be easily positioned and moved to all locations. The mirror activates the youth culturally by making the youth their own influencers and allowing them to share their life and experiences on social media. The mirror also allows the youth to express themselves with the use of the markers. The success of this design is however dependent on the ability of the youth to come to the events the company provides and their knowledge of upcoming events ("ACCESS OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO CULTURE Final Report," 2008).



The final product achieves the objective in terms of engaging the youth in a cultural activity. The mirror encourages the youth to be their own influencers and share their experiences on social media, which are cultural stimulators, according to (Schoofs, 2020; van den Berg, 2020). Due to time limitations, it was however not possible to test the effectiveness of the mirror. Therefore, to continue the project, it is advised to test the final prototype on its effectiveness, in terms of optimal location, signage and user engagement. It is also advised to the company to look further into effective marketing strategies for the youth.

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