



Cross Innovation Hub
Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft



Cross now!

Driving Innovation
and Change

The Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft Cross Innovation Hub

We bring



Louisa Steinwälder
Project Lead
Cross Innovation Hub



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Cross Innovation Hub

creativity to businesses

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Dear Readers,

The Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft is the go-to place for creative professionals in Hamburg. Since 2010 we have been providing services to promote and develop the industry. This heterogenous mix of companies covers many segments, ranging from music, literature, visual and performing arts through design, filmmaking and broadcasting to software and games. Our clients can get advice on their marketing or financing strategies including training; help with finding offices, studios or event spaces and participate in special programmes covering all areas of business from initial ideas to the development of successful business models. We strongly believe that the creative industry has enormous potential to drive innovation in trade, commerce, industry and public institutions.

When it comes to new forms of living and working, creative professionals are the trailblazers. They are also in the business of developing new ideas. Our mission? To tap into the creative industry's agile, fluid structures; its working methods and the innovative potential it offers for other industries, so that everyone can benefit. To achieve this goal, in 2016 we set up the Cross Innovation Hub and became a pioneer of interdisciplinary collaboration. This form of innovation is gaining increasing recognition, as demonstrated by the decision of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to fund the Hub.

Our role is to act as a strategic partner for solo self-employed professionals, freelancers and employees working in the creative industry, using a variety of formats to bring them together with industrial companies. There have already been successful collaborations with the aviation, logistics and energy industries among others. We also provide structured processes for the development of innovative solutions to specific challenges. Time spans are predefined and can range from days or weeks to months. Our primary focus is not only to deliver inspiring, thought-provoking impulses and create strong cross-industry networks but also to generate tangible results and solutions. The spectrum of innovations is huge including product innovations; service and process innovations; and business model innovations. Past projects have come up with circular economy-compatible plane cabins; AI-based automatic waste separation systems and an avatar to encourage children to be more physically active.

From pilot project to successful business model

What began six years ago as a pioneering experimental project with a start-up mentality has now become a successful professional model for innovators. We have tried, discarded, improved and restructured formats, methods and framework conditions. In the process we have become experts in cross innovation processes. We have also discovered that putting together a team which gels is just as important as providing goal-oriented facilitation and structures or having suitable premises. We see the Cross Innovation Hub as part of a new, open innovation ecosystem. In addition to conventional approaches such as research and development it draws on creativity, collaboration and speed to generate new ideas and products. This is a holistic philosophy which brings together people from diverse fields to pool their knowledge and come up with new ideas. Going forward creative professionals will be key players in achieving change. This radical shift of perspective in innovation strategies is essential and driven by the unforeseeable dynamics of economic and social challenges; growing market complexity and, of course, the digital revolution.

The Hub has transitioned into a new project era and we have taken this as an opportunity to provide you with an insight into our work and the services we offer. This publication presents our current offering, but it goes without saying that we are continuously adjusting and further developing our formats, processes and methods. Join us on our journey and discover the potential offered by cross innovation. Together we can shape the future – creative professionals, medium-sized businesses and large corporations united as one.



Dr. Carsten Brosda,
Senator and
head of the
City of Hamburg
Authority for
Culture and Media

04

→ The aim of this publication is to provide a signpost to the future.

The Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft's "Cross Innovation Hub" project began in 2016. From the outset it has delivered important insights into how the creative industry's innovative potential can be unlocked and made available to other businesses and public institutions. An informative, stimulating overview of these insights is presented here, in combination with an outlook on what cross-disciplinary collaboration could achieve in future.

Innovation has the capacity to overcome all obstacles, no matter whether political or of any other kind. The pioneering Cross Innovation Hub focuses on finding ways to tap into the creative industry's potential to drive innovation and make it accessible to companies in other sectors. The Hub's activities have been shaped by the realisation that today's innovations are no longer solely the outcome of lengthy R&D processes. Responding to today's innovation expectations and needs requires additional participants, new processes and a different pace. The currently accepted definition of innovation extends far beyond the traditional concept of technical innovation.

The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg has reacted to this new trend, developing a more holistic approach within the scope of its regional innovation strategy. The same is also true of national and EU programmes.

As a result the Cross Innovation Hub has become an important role model - not only for Hamburg and Germany but also for the world. Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft mbH is a trailblazer in the multifaceted innovation field. This is underlined by the decision of a European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) jury to award a grant

to the "ICE – Innovation by Creative Economy" consortium, of which Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft is a member. This ensures that the coming years will continue to produce many forward-looking solutions to the big issues of our era. They will also create new, long-term alliances between partners who may never have even met without the dedicated work of Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft.

I am looking forward to seeing what the Cross Innovation Hub comes up with during its new ERDF funding period and would like to express my thanks to all contributors for their outstanding work!

“The aim
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Innovation

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“To innovate is to believe that another world is possible”

→ To believe that we can radically reimagine any aspect of our everyday lives for the better. This belief is a necessity for any healthy organisation and certainly for society as a whole to progress. Throughout time, the process of reimagining has always started with telling a new story: “I believe we should eat or travel or work or do many things differently.” The “should” here is critical, as innovation is never neutral. How we innovate and what we innovate are functions of, not just a desire to design for, what’s new and what’s next, but more to reveal the values we want to seed to grow the futures we wish to live in.

It is exactly for this reason that innovation needs to be and has always been a collective process. A process that fosters dialogue and reflection on our shared dreams and makes it so patently clear that we can never truly innovate in isolation. This is contrary to the myth of the lone inventor, who in a spark of glory and individual genius, develops a breakthrough invention. Instead, “the new” emerges from the cross-pollination and remixing of ideas over time. These collisions spark even more creativity and open up more possibilities than what we are capable of alone. The most powerful of collisions are the

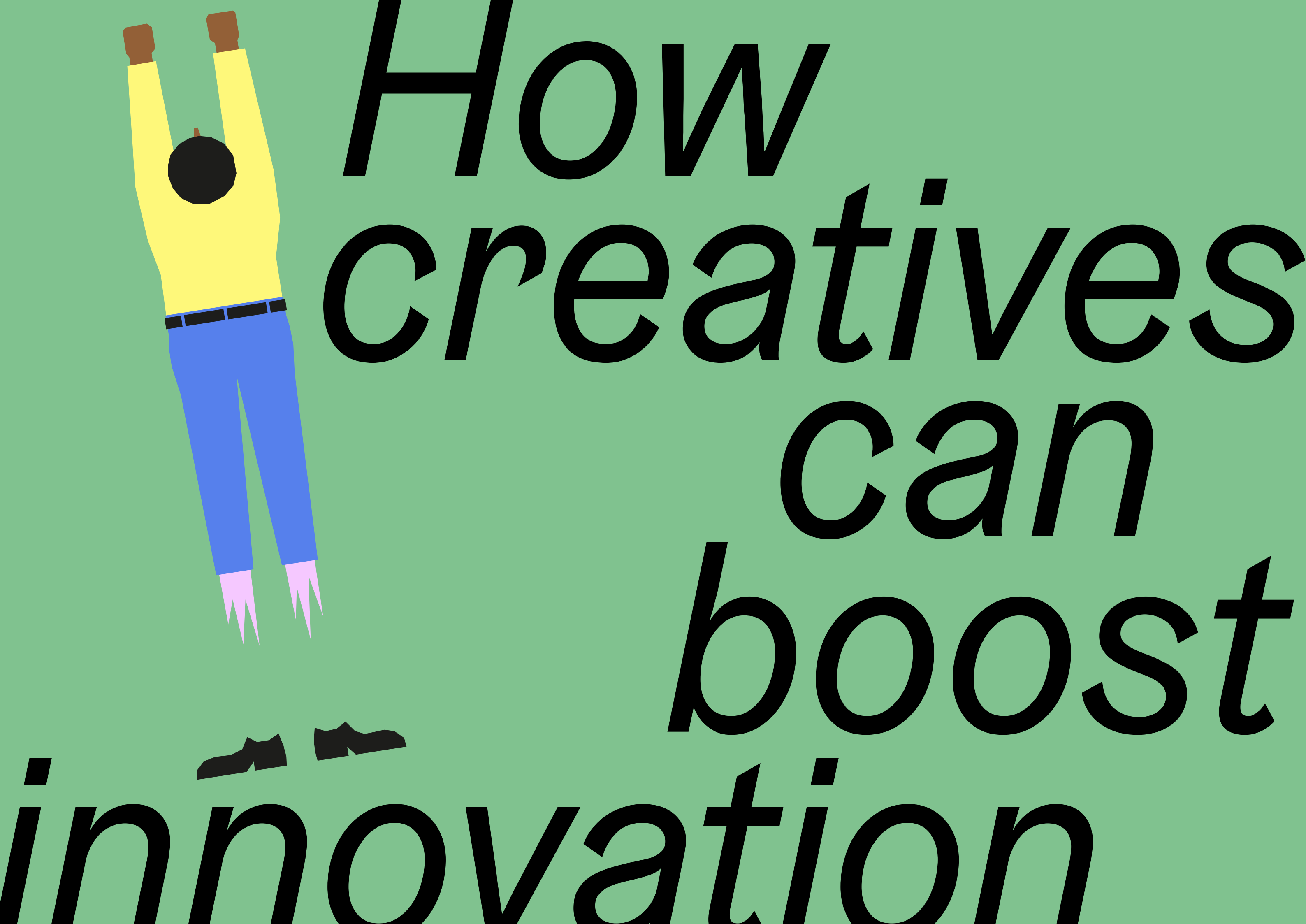
product of small and big experiments that make tangible ideas that would otherwise feel unimaginable. This sheer will and desire to experiment sits at the heart of what it means to innovate.

As such, when we interface with the final form of any innovation, we should remember that behind what’s visible stands a long line of invisible trials, prototypes, debates and experiments that propelled it forward. We should celebrate and make visible this hidden work. This spirit of experimentation is what allows us to act on the future, moving our stories from “what if” speculations to “how could we” challenges. Through experimentation, we also become socialized to not fear uncertainty but instead to see it as a catalyst for creativity, because if the future is not fixed, then we are responsible for actively shaping our versions of a better tomorrow. And that is incredibly exciting!

“We can never truly innovate in isolation”



Angela Oguntala is a founding partner of Greyspace, a foresight and design studio. In 2020 she was a key note speaker at the Cross Innovation Hub’s Cross Innovation Conference, giving a talk entitled “Re-Imagine the Future”. Angela Oguntala is a Salzburg Global Fellow; was named a Future Innovator by the United Nations OICT & Ars Electronica for her work and speaks widely on future-facing themes, having been featured on TED, NPR and various international platforms.



How
creatives
can
boost
innovation

Innovation in

New ideas can be generated systematically.

Cross innovation is all about thinking outside the box and asking for external input

the fast lane

→ The results of cross innovation show that collaboration with creative professionals delivers the traction required for fast-track innovation. It also ensures that the investment for companies is consistently scalable. The cross innovation process is clearly defined and may last several months, enabling participants to create a specific process tailored to their needs. This is particularly beneficial in the early stages of idea development.

For many years business development in Germany was a secretive process which took place behind closed doors and involved carefully guarded ideas and concepts. But times have changed. Seen from an economic perspective, cross-disciplinary collaboration really comes into its own when addressing the wicked problems encountered by businesses facing complex, radical changes. Today's markets are complex; competition is

increasing and digitisation is moving forward quickly. It is thus more important than ever that companies think laterally and, to use a popular buzzword, create synergies. They are often also referred to as spill-over effects.

Cross innovation is the successful model for a new approach to achieve all of the above. Used in combination with classic business consulting and R & D, cross innovation can complement and enrich closed, technology-focused innovation processes.

Innovation does not happen by accident

New ideas can be generated systematically. Cross innovation is all about thinking outside the box; asking for external input and drawing on objective viewpoints to do this. To be successful this process requires a productive setting and experienced creative professionals. Inventiveness, agility, improvisation, customer orientation and wide-ranging networks are integral elements of the creative industry's entrepreneurial DNA.

As a national and European trailblazer the Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft Cross Innovation Hub provides a space for companies and organisations in the trade, commerce and public sectors to collaborate with creative professionals. Its activities are guided by an open innovation strategy which transcends departments, companies and industries. Creative participants focus on competently guiding companies through a development phase, tapping into their fresh outlook to come up with new business ideas.

Many prominent companies and institutions, ranging from SMEs to global players, have already benefitted from the innovative processes which we offer.

“We worked hand in hand to successfully optimise the innovative capabilities of business”

Andreas Popp, digital product and service designer

Creative professionals work differently

→ The creative industry influences every aspect of our daily lives. Starting with the designer coffee mugs we use at breakfast and continuing with the news, podcasts or music we listen to on the way to work. Then there are the games we play on our smartphones at lunchtime or the latest book on sustainability which we discuss in the canteen. Not to forget the dress we buy for a trip to the theatre. And, last but not least, the final episode of *Stranger Things* we stream on Netflix.

A lively imagination and great technology skills are fundamental job requirements for creative professionals. Every one of them draws on their knowledge, emotions and experience during the creative, design, writing or presenting process, enriching our lives in myriad ways.

It is therefore no surprise that the creative industry's economic importance has grown enormously, as clearly demonstrated by the relevant statistics for Germany. In 2020 the country's creative industry generated annual turnover of EUR 160.4 billion and employed 1.8 million people (*source: German Federal Ministry of the Economy and Climate Protection*). This represents a contribution of 2.8 % to Germany's gross domestic product (2020). To put this into perspective, in 2019 the gross value added by the creative industry was significantly higher than that of the chemical sector (*source: statista*).

When it comes to cross innovation *WHAT* creative professionals provide is less important than *HOW* they do it. The popular misconception that the creative process is merely a “stroke of genius” could not be further from the truth. In fact, it is becoming increasingly clear that the process provides all the criteria required to deliver the innovations which are essential for future success.

Creative professionals are used to presenting the world with unique items – such as songs, design objects, advertising slogans, etc. – on a regular basis. These items are tangible proof of their highly professional attitude to generating ideas, which makes them ideal partners for the initial phases of an innovation process. The majority of creative fields are based on teamwork because successful results can only be achieved if many different trades cooperate closely. Whether in the theatre, film or also the creative processes of agencies, end results are the product of many and varied skills, experiences,

backgrounds, abilities and methods. To be successful all contributors must have an open attitude and a positive mindset. Their initial work often involves experimenting with vague concepts and they have to be willing to take a risk as regards the work process and its results. In addition to this, their activities are often interdisciplinary and project-related, involving complex methods such as design thinking. This, in turn, can provide the impulses and ideas which companies in other industries so urgently need to implement changes in their culture.

This means that creative professionals make great rolemodels for other industries, demonstrating how new working cultures can be successfully implemented. It also makes them strong partners for cross innovation with a wide and diverse range of other business sectors.

“Creative experts are often rebels whose wide-ranging skill sets are the outcome of the many and varied jobs they have held. We need people who are networkers, bringing together diverse experiences to generate new solutions”

Mirko Bass, business developer, Cisco Systems

Revitalising

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→ Cross innovation in collaboration with the creative industry is a new method to address the big issues of our era and stimulate innovation. As such it represents a huge opportunity for the innovation management systems of companies. Clients who choose to take this route experience the cross innovation process as a launching pad for a revitalised culture of innovation, characterised by a strong dynamic; totally new perspectives and unexpected solutions.

This is all the more important when consumers are satiated and many of their needs have already been met. We need answers to current global crises and upheavals. In today's world simply providing technical improvements is often not enough. Customers have become more demanding. They want to actively engage with companies and be given information about product USP's; sustainability policies and how they can proactively make a difference. Passive consumption is coming in for increased criticism. Parallel to this, consumers seem to have an unquenchable desire for new experiences.

business



Over the course of six years we have organised more than 200 innovation processes for companies

Responding to change more quickly

Many businesses are increasingly faced with this challenge. How can they keep coming up with new ideas at ever shorter intervals and get products onto the market as quickly as possible? How can they identify which innovations will be successful when THE consumer no longer exists and their wishes are unclear? Addressing these issues requires a high degree of flexibility. In the past most companies focused on avoiding risks. Their goals were to reduce unforeseen events to a minimum; to achieve their targets; to compile reliable forecasts and to plan for the long term. So what now?

Open collaboration beats the closed shop

Theoretical and practical innovation experts all agree that spending years working on ideas behind closed doors is no longer the right way forward. One thing is certain. Lone individuals or highly homogeneous groups rarely come up with innovative concepts. In today's world it is absolutely essential to have diverse teams work on new projects. The more diverse, the better. People with



Our methods are based on collective development work. Individuals take a back seat. We focus on steering participants through an open, protected collaborative space

different genders, ages and cultural backgrounds who have varying roles and functions can contribute a wide range of knowledge and experience to the innovation process. This diversity makes solutions more comprehensive and boosts their market success.

We live in a world which is characterised by globally linked, increasingly digitised economic systems. There has been a radical change in the factors involved business success. As a result companies are much more interested in engaging in dialogue with other industries and market segments to draw on their ideas and expertise. While collective processes with associated industries are already common, cross innovation consciously focuses on bringing participants from completely different sectors together.

The creative industry as a driver of innovation

Open and cross innovation are innovative processes which tear down silos to create solutions where business and scientific disciplines intersect. This strengthens all the participants' innovative power and cultures. In an increasingly complex and uncertain economic and social environment open and cross innovation are becoming ever more relevant.

Creative professionals are experts at dealing with unknown, uncertain and complex issues. This makes them key partners and participants in cross innovation processes. The Cross Innovation Hub is living proof of this. Our teams of business people and creative professionals usually discover that their differing ways of thinking and working have opened doors and created new perspectives just a few process steps after their collaboration begins. Industry outsiders morph into productive, goal-oriented teams working together to come up with new solutions.

It won't be long before collaboration is seen as essential, not brave.

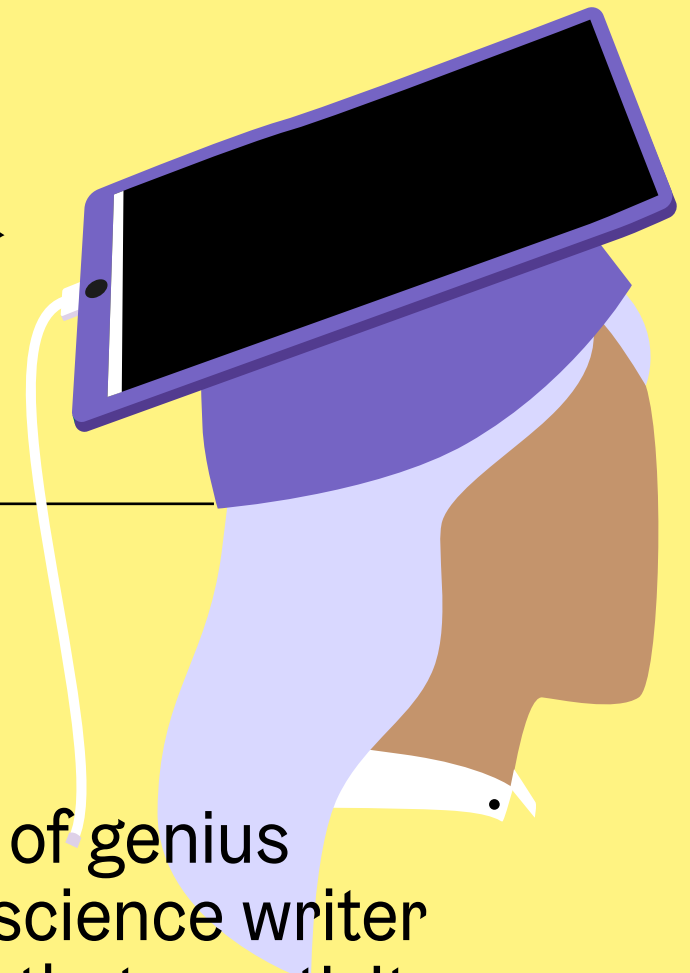
“A great example of how structured methodological diversity and a respectful environment really can produce an innovative result in such a short time. Keep up the good work!”

Immanuel Schipper, dramaturge



Communal creativity. A 2019 Cross Innovation Lab design workshop at the Oberhafenquartier Hamburg location

“Creativity is not a talent, it’s an activity”



Creativity is not a stroke of genius argues philosopher and science writer Stefan Klein. He believes that creativity is not an individual talent but instead the outcome of a collective process. There are many myths and theories about where creativity and strokes of genius come from. We think it’s high time to turn a spotlight on the chaos. An interview with Stefan Klein

→ Mr Klein, you are a physicist and philosopher. The public primarily knows you as a science writer who explores big topics such as happiness, coincidence, time and, most recently, creativity. So it's safe to say that you have a very wide ranging, diverse skillset. What have been your own experiences with this? Do you see it as added value?

I've always been a huge fan of mixing completely different disciplines. I started writing when I was still a student and although it's hard to believe today, I had to work hard to persuade my university to let me do parallel degrees in physics and philosophy. Back then that was almost unheard of.

Looking back, I would say that I had already realised that breakthrough ideas often occur where disciplines intersect. And there's a fairly fundamental reason why this is so. In fact I've devoted a whole book to the topic.

And what is the reason?

My book *"Wie wir die Welt verändern"* (*How we change the world*) (2021) is based on the argument that new ideas don't simply appear out of the blue. Today we know that new ideas are the product of existing ideas.

How does that work?

Well, there are various ways. One of them is exploratory creativity. The concept is based on the premise that an idea is a kind of intellectual tool box. I can open it up, take a look at the contents and then think about what I can do with it. German business has traditionally been very good at this form of creativity. Take our automotive industry as an example. It's been doing the same thing for over a century - building vehicles with combustion engines.

The VW Golf is one of the most successful German cars.

It's virtually perfect precisely because the developers have spent almost 50 years thinking about all the small tweaks they can make to improve it. To be honest I'm not particularly interested in this kind of creativity. Personally, I find combinational creativity far more stimulating. It involves taking concepts and intellectual tools from a variety of fields and mixing them together. If you're lucky, you'll come up with something entirely new.

Such as?

Well, take the iPhone. None of the components of a smartphone are new. Touch screens; iPods; mobile phones and computers all already existed. The creative accomplish-



Dr. Stefan Klein is a physicist, philosopher and the most successful German speaking science writer. His book "Die Glücksformel" (*The recipe for happiness*) (2002) was top of all the German bestseller lists for over a year and gained the author international recognition. His most recent book is entitled "Wie wir die Welt verändern" (*How we change the world*) (2021).

ment of Steve Jobs and his team was to ask themselves what would happen if they put all those elements into one device. This type of creativity requires the interaction of differing mindsets.

Could you explain this in more detail?

What attracted me to philosophy wasn't so much the concepts it dealt with but more the skills it provided. Philosophy is a wonderful way to learn how to think. Its primary focus is on verbal thinking, which is a great supplement to the abstract logical thinking involved in theoretical physics. It's fair to say that I probably wouldn't have been able to write my books if I hadn't learnt this other way of thinking so early on.

What else has influenced the way you think?

I was a lecturer at Berlin University of the Arts for five years and it taught me a lot about how artists work and think. I benefitted enormously from their radically different approach to problems. Even though I still can't play the cello; create sculptures or produce a musical, I have learnt to look at problems in a special way.

Are there limits to this special way of looking at problems?

I think the difficulty is often finding a common language. When you put people from different disciplines in the same room, the best outcome will be that they find each other likeable and interesting. At worst they'll get on each other's nerves. The most likely case is that they will speak totally different languages and have difficulty understanding one another, at least in the beginning. I view achieving this understanding as a key task. For me, the biggest challenge as an author of non-fiction books is finding the right language for each new topic. I'm pretty sure that it's the same in business.

So you don't believe in the myth that creativity is the work of an individual genius. But if that is so, how can we be inventive and think the unthinkable?

That's the million dollar question. Let's start with the theory. A common definition, coined by the British cognitive psychologist Margaret Boden, is that creativity is the ability to come up with ideas or objects which are new, surprising and valuable. There is also a social dimension to this, because creativity is always measured against the backdrop of culture and custom. Something is only valuable if people know what to do with it. Things can only be new and surprising in the context of what is already known in their culture of origin.

"I believe that a creative process is a continuous back and forth between wild fantasies and an extremely rigorous, often very unpleasant reality check."

Is that one of the reasons why you find the idea of the solitary genius so unconvincing?

Creativity is not a talent, it's an activity.

That's a fascinating statement.

At the end of the 19th century the young Einstein identified contradictions in the law of physics on light propagation. The difficulties seemed to be insurmountable. He solved this problem by asking a revolutionary question while talking to a friend. Namely what space

and time actually are. The outcome was that Albert Einstein is not only responsible for a completely new form of physics but also for applications which he could never have imagined. Without the general theory of relativity there would be no GPS mobile phones. Marcel Duchamp did the same thing in the early 20th century. He chose to exhibit a porcelain urinal at the Society of Independent Artists' New York show, shocking both the public and critics in the process. No one before him had posed the question of what can be considered art quite as radically. And today every museum of modern art explores this topic.

Let's try to apply this idea to the process of creativity. We already know that you consider collective thinking to be an essential element. What else do you see as integral to the process? In other words, what are the specific elements of the practical process?

I believe that a creative process is a continuous back and forth between wild fantasies and an extremely rigorous, often very unpleasant reality check. It is this back and forth which leads to new ideas. Assuming that some people really are more creative than others, then the key reason for their ability is that they have learned how to manage this fluctuation. They can cope better with seesawing between two very different states of mind.

How can business benefit from this mindset?

Companies are already aware that ideas are a key competitive factor. However, they neglect to think about the "how could we", and that's where the problems start. Booking creative seminars and providing creative spaces just isn't enough. They're great but what business really needs is a change of culture. It must learn to embrace risk. Starting with the employee selection process. A bunch of conformists are far less likely to come up with radical ideas than a diverse group which includes a few oddballs. Another risk is that you never know if it will actually be possible to implement an innovation. The key thing is that you are willing to make mistakes or lose your way. And I believe that we Germans still have a lot to learn on this subject.

Mr Klein, thank you very much for the great interview!

How we work



with you

Our formats

→ When middle-size companies need to respond to social trends, market changes or their customers' new demands, they often ask themselves the question 'What's the best way to approach this?' In today's world, getting everyone together for a brainstorming session or creating colourful creative spaces with hanging chairs and exotic pot plants is not enough. It takes a lot more to achieve genuine progress. Collaboration with creative professionals in combination with customised formats, structured processes and goal-oriented methods are key factors to generate innovation.

We have been involved in cross innovation for six years now. This experience has allowed us to develop customised formats, each focusing on a different goal. They range from low-threshold one-day workshops through design sprints lasting from two and a half to five days to long-term formats covering weeks or months. We are continuously adjusting, refining and expanding our offering. The following are a selection of our most popular programmes.

Cross Innovation Lab

→ Higher, faster, further – innovation can entail many demands. We believe that cross innovation is a catalyst for new ideas. Our Cross Innovation Lab helps companies kick start new processes, services or production innovations. Its work focuses on the innovation requirements at the outset of a project. During consecutive workshops teams of creative professionals and client employees work together to develop customised solutions to the



We provide a space, and formats, for companies to collaborate with creative professionals, enabling them to think outside the box.

participating companies' challenges. Over the course of several weeks the companies and creatives are able to spend a sustained period of time collaborating on the project. Their objective is to develop innovative concepts and prototypes. The results speak for themselves - the Cross Innovation Lab has produced many innovations and is our flagship cross innovation format.

Attack Your Business

→ In times gone by a business model had an average life cycle of 67 years. Today with some luck it will reach the ripe old age of 10 to 15 years. As we all know, industries and even entire markets can change at lightning

speed. Our "Attack Your Business" format is designed to come up with new business models and fields quickly. It is aimed at companies which are successful in their traditional core segment but are wondering what other opportunities are out there. Exploring current trends, new technologies, platforms or risk factors such as pandemics requires time and resources. Attack Your Business saves time and draws on the know-how of external creative professionals. During the three and a half day event we collaborate with two creatives to guide companies through an innovation process which critically examines and reimagines their business models. Using the 'foresight' method the teams develop dystopian and utopian visions of the company's possible future. These visions are then used to identify relevant fields of action before work begins on developing approaches to finding solutions. When the process ends the teams will have developed three new business models or fields of action which the companies could implement.

Cross Innovation Class

→ Theoretical studies require practical experience to achieve their full potential, while companies need creative young talents. And that's where the Cross Innovation Class comes in. Every year the Hub gives students from a variety of universities and disciplines the opportunity to join interdisciplinary teams which spend one semester coming up with visions of tomorrow's city. These young researchers are drawn from the fields of technology, IT, design and urban planning. Taking economic issues as their starting point, they collaborate with companies to develop ideas and prototypes for subsequent implementation. Process milestones and feedback loops are designed to ensure their results are as market ready as possible. The creativity and boldness of the young people involved in the format never ceases to amaze us. Given enough space and freedom they consistently come up with fantastic product development concepts.

Pop-Up Office

→ How can we influence tomorrow's working world today? By making changes from the inside. To develop a forward-looking working culture we must reimagine internal structures and processes. What sounds simple and straightforward is, in reality, something which

many departments and companies struggle with unless they have specialist assistance. The Cross Innovation Hub's "Pop-Up Office" format is an experimental further training programme which focuses on agile working practices. Over the course of three days we provide companies and their employees with an inspirational environment. We also invite creative professionals along to participate in mixed teams. Stimulated by input from new work experts and guided by facilitators, the teams participate in "culture sprints" covering topics ranging from the definition of relevant issues to the development of solutions. The format's objective is to enable the participants to practically apply the new practices and impulses they have identified at the Pop-Up Office to their own daily working lives.

“During the three-day process we invited creative people to examine our business model and come up with new ideas and opportunities. The format was excellent and extremely well designed. Probably the best workshop concept I have ever been involved with.”

Felix Bäuerle, Sustainability Manager Product Innovation at Beiersdorf

kick start innovation...



...and deliver results!

Aviation

Can a collaborative project come up with ideas for lighter planes?

→ Hamburg is the centre of aircraft cabin manufacturing in Germany. Seven aviation companies formed a unified team to work on the project at the Cross Innovation Lab. This was the first time that manufacturers, OEMs and service providers had made a concerted joint effort to address the issue. Together they focused on meeting the challenge of making aviation more sustainable. Because every time a plane takes to the skies it produces CO₂ emissions - and no matter how low, these emissions are always too much. Many air passengers already make donations to climate protection organisations to compensate for their journeys. Nevertheless, the aviation industry still has a long way to go to find more practical solutions to increase its sustainability. The best way to achieve this goal is to utilise the swarm intelligence generated by cross-disciplinary collaboration. In just a few weeks the team confirmed this, developing the FAIRCRAFT concept for climate-neutral aircraft cabins for the Airbus 320 plane. It envisages passenger seats suspended from the cabin ceiling and covered with textiles made from recycled materials. This should deliver a significant reduction in weight. The aviation team's pioneering idea thus not only provides a way to save fuel but also takes the industry into the circular economy. The concept is based on ideas contributed by the creative professionals participating in the project. Designer Florian Hättich; filmmaker Claudia Rinke and designer Sebastian Mends-Cole all have excellent sustainability credentials. Thanks to a grant from the Hamburg Inno-



— A selection

vation and Development Bank (IFB) plans to exhibit a prototype in the near future are now one step closer to becoming reality. The prototype's objective is not only to prove that the concept is feasible but also to demonstrate that it delivers increased comfort and safety.

“Working together for greener aviation. This innovation process has given our shared mission a big boost.”

Julia Grosser, Manager Marketing and Communications at Hamburg Aviation e. V., the city's aviation cluster.

“The Cross Innovation Lab combines technical and creative thinking. This enriches the process of developing innovative products.”

Kiran Gill, Project Manager Master Data Management,
& Konstantin Buchmann, Development Engineer at GEA

Mobility

How can you make traffic users more aware of risky situations?

→ A team of Cross Innovation Class students worked on answering this question. “We began by identifying typical road traffic risks and thinking about why accidents happen,” remembers design student Nicola. “This showed us that there is one major factor in accidents which we can influence - making people more aware.” The team spent a semester developing a solution with IT company dataport and came up with the “SAFLR”. This is a steering wheel which vibrates as soon as the driver approaches a dangerous area. Parallel to this, an app transmits a warning signal which identifies potential risks along the route. The data used in the app is taken from the accident atlas available on the German national and regional statistics portal. The atlas contains information on all accidents involving personal injuries, including their exact location. The team’s idea is so good that it has won them a grant from the Hamburg “Calls for Transfer” funding programme.



561 events
207 formats
185 companies
12 195 participants
Over 250 results

Want to see
even more
results?
This way!



“The interdisciplinary collaboration breaks down ingrained thought patterns and promotes approaches which result in consistent, innovative prototypes.”

Miriam Schattner, Business Development Mobility at Dataport

Industry

How can Industry 4.0 become reality?

→ GEA is a leading valve and pump system provider. Its products are used to move liquids such as milk, beer or yoghurt. To function reliably on a daily basis, valves must be serviced at regular intervals. And it will be no surprise to learn that this process is complex. Smart product developments offer a way to optimise and simplify it. The valve manufacturer came to the Cross Innovation Lab to explore how its analogue product could be transformed into a digital business model. Working with a large team of creatives – software developer Christian Oeing, product designer Jan Dietrich, dramaturge Immanuel Schipper and industrial designer Aart van Bezooijen – the client developed a digital twin - i.e. an augmented reality prototype for a valve. The twin makes it possible to view real valves in 3D on a tablet. This provides the basis for checking data on the valve’s current condition and identify possible anticipatory servicing requirements or provide virtual servicing manuals.

“We’re not interested in rocket science, our focus is on practical solutions. Our aim now is to implement the action plan by getting all our employees to participate in a weekly collective telephone campaign.”

Logistics

How can you reinvent customer acquisition in challenging times?

→ Trailer Lloyd leases 600 commercial vehicles, making it a relatively small fish in the logistics segment. The upside of this is that the small Hamburg-based company can react quickly when a customer needs a vehicle for 5 days and it must be available in the next half hour. In fact, it can react more quickly than the competition. And that’s something to be proud of, says Thorsten Schroeder, managing director of Trailer Lloyd. In 2020 the logistics service provider was faced with a growing problem. It’s business development and new-customer business wasn’t doing well. The COVID-19 crisis forced Trailer Lloyd to rethink its strategy. Our Emergency Lab, a crisis format to provide small- and medium-sized companies with immediate help, reacted promptly. It provided the company with an entirely new process to acquire and manage new-customer business. The concept was developed by creative professionals Maren Heyn, filmmaker, and designer Sean Loomis. Their process acts as an action plan, precisely defining each employee’s role and tasks. Calling on the Emergency Lab paid off for Trailer Lloyd.

Successful cross innovation projects need...

→ The framework conditions relating to the Cross Innovation Hub's work are consciously organised to facilitate interaction of a diverse range of professions which is characterised by an atmosphere of trust. This promotes transparent, productive collaboration. The framework conditions include legal and financial structures to ensure collaborative work on a equal footing. They also include the provision of spaces with facilities and aesthetics which stimulate shared activities. Making sure that the participants are well matched

is just as important. In other words, the mixed teams put together to deal with differing challenges must harmonise. Achieving this requires a good instinct for identifying what topics are suitable for the companies and the specialities and strengths of the corresponding creative professionals. Not to forget a feel for combinations which may not initially seem to make sense but later prove to be particularly productive. Good facilitation by the moderators guiding the process plays a big role in this. In many ways these individuals function as enablers and their initial task is to turn a group of individuals into a collaborative team which speaks one language. Often, this is not a given, because most professionals use their own specialist language. The differences in this language can be very pronounced, especially between creatives and other industries. The term "prototype", used in the later stages of the development process, is a good illustration of this. Industrial prototypes are often the outcome of many years of development work and closely resemble the final product. In contrast, when creatives talk about prototypes, they mean quick, cheap development using basic means. Many process participants are surprised to learn that the creative method can be a fast and simple way to learn a lot about the issue or product in question.

... a productive setting

... an agile process

→ Our cross innovation processes provide a framework and clear structure for collaboration within the scope of our formats. Parallel to this, we view the role of these over-arching processes as being to open up things up, not to limit them; to provide a focus on the collective goal, not to restrict it. They function as guide rails, simultaneously providing clarity *and* transparency for a process which requires participants to have the courage to try something new.

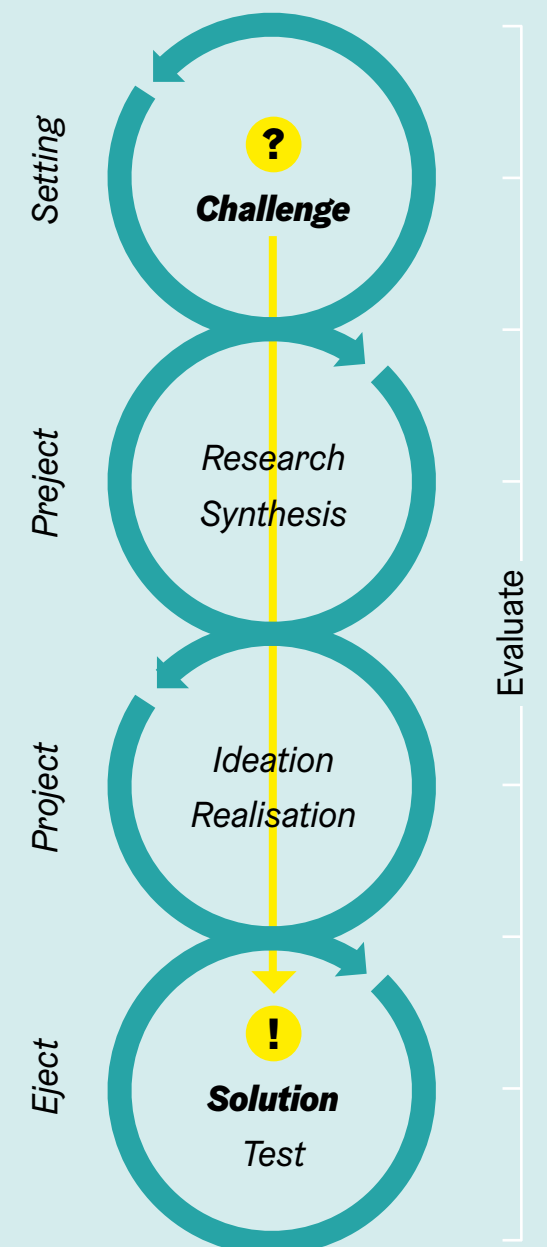
Our processes are inspired by the design thinking methods developed in Silicon Valley. This well-known innovation technique and school of thought is used by large German companies such as Telekom, Deutsche Bank and Bosch. Core elements include observing users closely and moving quickly from generating ideas to turning them into something concrete. Basic prototypes are used to evaluate ideas and the process may loop back through the various steps as these ideas are continuously refined and improved.

Although the working methods used in the design thinking process are open-ended they are also consistently solution-oriented. This allows participants' abilities to flourish and also motivates and inspires company representatives. Everyone involved in the project develops the creative energy to come up with new, strong solutions.

In line with the design thinking philosophy, our cross innovation process spans four phases. *Setting, preject, project and eject*. As an open but systematic approach, the process consciously begins at an early stage. In the past the preparatory aspects of innovation work were often neglected. It is only in recent years that more attention has been paid to them at the planning stage. We have structured these tasks, dividing them into two initial phases: *setting and preject*. Successful matching and the implementation of good framework conditions are the prerequisites required for collaborative development of a new outlook on project plans and the challenges which companies face. To do this, participants dive deep into the company's context; its products and services and the related issues (*Research*).

This phase is followed by collective formulation of a problem and (re-)definition of the challenge (*Synthesis*). At this point options for action begin to emerge, boosting the participants' enjoyment of practical, hands on activities. They realise that the "thinking outside the box" which is typical of creative professionals can be extremely productive for other segments. Taking this as their starting point, the team develops ideas (*Ideation*). These ideas are refined into concepts and then turned into prototypes which make them tangible and concrete (*Realisation*). At the end of the process the team has a solution which can be tested and developed into a marketable commodity. We guide companies through this process, providing implementation plans; links to suitable funders; continuation discussions and regular progress meetings.

The Hub's cross innovation process spans four iterative phases, beginning with formulation of the challenge and ending with a solution which is the outcome of interdisciplinary collaboration.



... proven know-how

→ The world has become a loud place. There seems to be an endless number of methods and oscillating buzzwords for innovative work. But which ones can actually survive the ultimate test of hands-on innovation development work? Which methods are the best for cross-disciplinary collaboration?

At the Cross Innovation Hub we have tried out a number of methods which will be familiar to innovators and found that they are successful. They include the *How might we...?* method (*HMW questions*). Teams use it to define an open-ended question based on their initial challenges, which can be quite vague. This question helps initiate and intensify the thought process, generating a successful jumping-off point for the process.

A *Design Studio* provides a structured process to promote fast, productive development of ideas in interdisciplinary groups. Within the scope of an iterative loop comprising generation, refinement and development of ideas with collaborative feedback, the participants identify the most promising ideas for subsequent conceptual and prototype work. The format has proven successful because the more fluid nature of the idea generation phase produces more ideas and they are not talked down while still at the initial stage.

The *Wise Crowds* method helps individuals tap into the team's collective intelligence and experience. During the course of a compact, low-threshold consultation the client seeking advice can benefit from the other team members' skills. We use *Wise Crowds* during phases which require feedback on ideas to improve and refine them. This method can also be used specifically to make positive or negative decisions on ideas.

& new methods

→ We are Germany's largest funding organisation for the creative industry and have organised over five hundred events at the Cross Innovation Hub. Based on this experience we can confidently say that the creative industry offers a wealth of processes to assist innovation development. To learn more about this we have carried out qualitative interviews with creative professionals on the subject of their methods. And discovered that there is huge potential to be tapped. We have familiarised ourselves with a diverse range of approaches, adapting some to make them a perfect fit to our requirements. And more will follow.

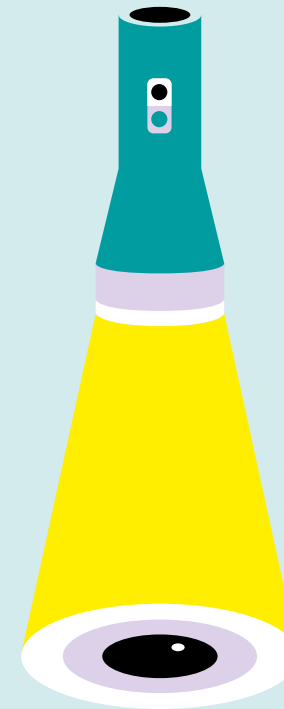
Embodiment

The method originates from the performing arts, such as film and theatre. It is also ideal for team kick-off meetings or individual research in the business context. Why? Because it takes user research to the next level. It focuses on gaining detailed insights into the target group's behaviour (*user research*). Instead of analysing user perspectives from the outside the participants try to put themselves in the users' shoes. This provides them with a complex understanding of the corresponding challenges, potential and blind spots. Within

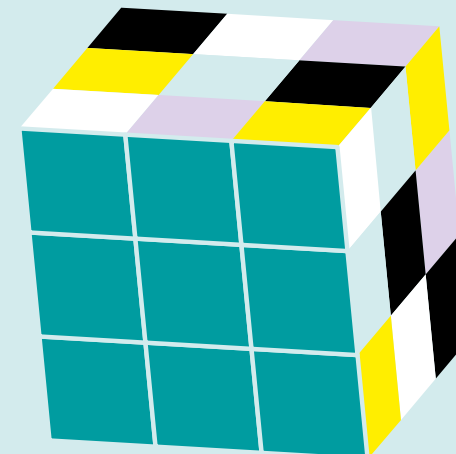
Embodiment



The Core



Vertical Slice



the scope of the process participants create personas (fictional individuals with characteristics which are typical for a certain type of person or group of persons). Each team member is assigned the specific persona of a potential user of the new product or service. Their task is to “embody” the character for a certain period of time. To be successful they must learn to empathise with the character's needs and preferences as well as their knowledge and behavioural patterns. The team members' diverse experiences are valuable indicators for further development of ideas.

The Core

The idea of identifying a core issues originates from the advertising and design segments. We have been able to adapt the method for use at a specific type of workshop. The participating team will already have considered the user perspective and developed a variety of ideas for innovations. The core method enables workshop participants to subject their ideas to rigorous scrutiny. They do this by focusing on the idea's core - in other words its key aspect. Ideally this key aspect, which represents the essence of the promising idea, should differ from competitor offerings. This ensures that it has the greatest chance of succeeding. Basing the development of a product or service on a unique, promising idea increases the likelihood of high demand. A special interview method which starts with big issues and progresses down to small ones is used to identify the idea's essence. The method also makes it possible to compare responses from the interview process with other ideas.

Vertical Slice

The Vertical Slice is a method developed by the gaming industry to present the work and challenges associated with a project. It is based on the idea of a cross-sectional slice which cuts through all component layers. Within the scope of the method a team is tasked with testing specific parts of a product, service or process which are relevant for the overall project. It is a counter-concept to the idea of the ‘minimum viable product’, which focuses on creating a complete version of the product or service with the minimum features required to test whether it functions. In contrast, the aim of the vertical slice is to develop one feature of the product in as much detail as possible. This generates more associative power for the final product than would be the case with multiple immature product components or numerous vague ideas. By using the vertical slice method a greater number of productive user tests can be carried out at an earlier stage of the overall development process.



Join us to shape

What are the ideas which will change the world? the future

collaborating with participating companies and creative professionals to develop forward-looking, resilient solutions for a digital/ecological future. Coming up with ideas, concepts and business models which will change the world or at least make it a little bit better.

We invite you to join us
to shape the future - using
cross innovation!

→ Following six successful years, in 2023 Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft's Cross Innovation Hub will begin its next project term. Funding will once again be provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Going forward the focus will continue to be on consolidating the creative industry's position as a driver of innovation and an essential partner in innovation processes. We will consider the overall innovation process, expanding our methods and formats to cover all the phases of innovation development. Beginning with a strategic outlook for the future, through the development of ideas to their implementation and achieving market readiness. Creative professionals will help bring the results to the public. In addition to product, process and service innovations, in future we would like to focus more on leveraging business model innovations. Within the scope of this we hope to learn the prerequisites for development of disruptive, radical solutions. As is currently the case, multiple companies and creative professionals will be able to participate in each event held for each format. We will, however, also offer customised processes involving creatives for individual companies' specific projects.

Our environment is loud; innovation cries out for attention. In an industry which is highly competitive and allows everyone to have their say, strong results and meaningful alternatives are a must. It is already clear that the next decade will be characterised by fast-growing technologies and a change in thinking on how we treat our planet and its resources. In response to this, the Cross Innovation Hub will devote its activities to

There are many ways to get involved. Are you a creative professional? Would you like to contribute your vision to helping other industries develop new markets and generate orders? Are you a company? Are you faced with urgent challenges which you would like to address with the help of a new viewpoint from the outside? Do you want to kick start change and explore new business fields but lack sufficient resources? We can help with this - and with many more issues. Get in touch! We look forward to hearing from you!

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References

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