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intro

E.ON asked us to gain insights on what entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector find valuable in terms of products or services. Assumptions were that practical issues, such as time pressure, would be paramount. However, it turned out that emotional subjects, like being approached in a personal manner, and the feeling that a conversation goes two ways where both parties need each other, are more important for this target group.

title

Rich Insights! on the meaning of energy for entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector

body

Rich assumptions!

Our main assumption was that entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector are mainly concerned about making money and practical issues. We assumed that entrepreneurs would not want to spend time arranging facilities like energy.

Recruiting

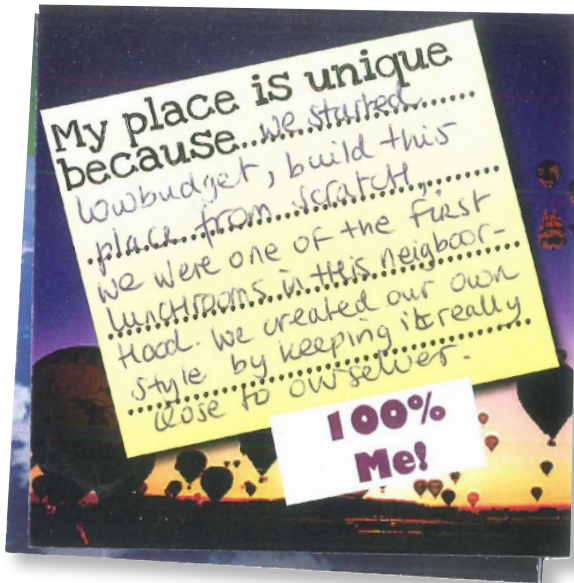
Recruiting participants from the hospitality sector turned out to be quite difficult. First of all, we discovered that it just didn't work to bring them an invitation flyer. This method was too intangible and too far off in terms of time. When we brought the sensitizing packages, named a date (within a week) and asked whether they would be available, the response was much more positive!

Sensitizing

We found it important to make the sensitizing packages fun and exciting to do. Therefore, we made a sensitizing box, painted with blackboard paint and written with white pencil. In this box we put the assignments cards, one for each day. The thought behind this, is that they would have a new surprise each day, like unwrapping a present. We also put stickers and a photo assignment in the box. A special white pencil was added to fill out the last assignment, put outside the box, saying: "*the ingredients for my ideal business*"



The sensitizing box containing various assignments on the subject



A completed assignment

The session

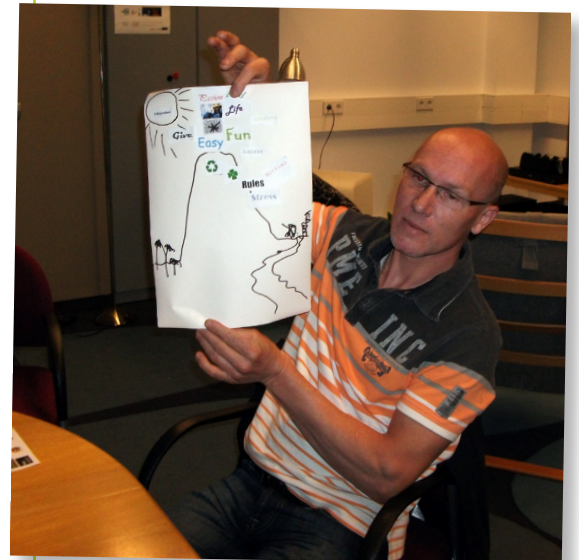
Unfortunately, only three participants showed up for our session, probably because of the ad-hoc nature of their lives. It was quite difficult for us to define what we actually wanted to find out, because of the intangible nature of the products that E.ON delivers, and because energy is of little emotional value for most entrepreneurs. During the session we tried to find out how E.ON could support the entrepreneurs in realizing their ideal business.

Analyzing

The analysis of the data and clustering the insights and information revealed many interesting insights. The data we gathered through the session gained much more value, combining inspiration and information.



Collage created by a participant



Participant showing his collage during the session

"I'm a number to them,
but if you sit down with
someone and you can
make them see the
connection, it's better
and then you can take
them along!"

Communicate!

Also within our communication to E.ON, we felt it was important that the results were interesting and inspiring to read. In the booklet we created, the reader will first see an illustration with a summarizing sentence of the chapter. If more information is desired, the page can be opened to reveal paragraph titles, providing more depth. The final level is reading the text and quotes to get to the deeper, richer insights. This way of layering information enables the reader to choose how deep he wants to dig into the information.

"I'm a cook, 52 years
old. I've been cooking
for about 35 years
and it's still my hobby.
Cooking. But running
a restaurant is quite
a job. Because of all
rules and personnel,
plus all different kinds
of problems you could
do without."



Impression of the session

author(s)

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intro

**My name is David
Vlot, I work as
Manager Business
Support for the
department Business
to Business at E.ON
Benelux N.V.**

title

Company's reflection

body

Expectations?

What I expected from the Rich Insights! elective was:

- A new experience in customer relationships.
- Good interaction and results.
- A representative result, leading to new ideas on how energy products and services fit with which customers.

How I experienced Rich Insights!

I experienced the elective as an opportunity to discuss several ideas on customer involvement in the product and service development process. What I really liked was the personal nature of the resulting work. The involvement of the students seemed quite high.

Most surprising insights!

The most surprising result was that "small" restaurant owners do appreciate personal contact with a representative from the energy company. This insight is so surprising, due to the fact that the energy company connects the care/service a customer gets, to his energy usage. Restaurants use a relatively small amount of energy, so a modus operandi needs to be found, to meet this customer need, versus the revenue normally generated by these types of customers.

How to continue...

We want to increase our insights of this and other segments, by intensively involving customers in our development process. And try and develop a specific offering for different segments, in order to meet specific needs.

"Being an energy company is moving away from the commodity business, towards becoming a service provider. Rich Insights! helped us make that move."