

Innovation in the Design Industry

How to develop a winning innovation process for design companies



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Abstract

This thesis examines what factors that can be highlighted as most important for developing a successful innovation process for design companies producing their own products.

The thesis starts with a theory section going over the literature that the researcher found relevant to use in relation to the subject of innovation and design.

Key people at three major design companies were interviewed to understand exactly how they perform their design process and why they have success. The companies interviewed were Bang & Olufsen, VIPP and Royal Copenhagen.

The analysis of the three cases showed that there were 9 factors that were considered most important in order to achieve a successful innovation process within the design industry. These include teamwork, leadership, passion, courage, motivation, innovative workers, freedom, open innovation and use of the Stage Gate Model.

The researcher furthermore discovered factors which included getting prototypes produced early in the innovation process with for example 3D printing, also quickly adapting to changes in technology, social media, fashion etc. and finally striving for perfection by getting better everyday at innovating and designing.

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Introduction

Many social scientists and authorities argue that in today's world the competition has never been stronger with the increased globalization and emerging economies from all around the world¹.

In Denmark we are not living off our tourism, oil or minerals in our soil, but rather our intellect, creativity and innovation skills². For companies to stay competitive it is essential to look at new ways to innovate and identify new ways of thinking. Innovation should therefore be the most favored element to secure economic wealth for Denmark in terms of increased productivity and competitiveness.

With this mindset this thesis will specifically look into the design industry of Denmark. Denmark has been known for its many successful design companies throughout a substantial amount of years³. The aim of this thesis will therefore be to look into the concept of innovation and new ways of thinking that appear in connection to design industries where unique products are inevitable when striving for success⁴.

1. Problem delimitation

With the described introduction above, the following areas will influence the aim of this thesis.

First of all, the aim is to identify the most important elements for creating a successful innovation process in design companies developing their own products, including what they mean and how they understand innovation.

Additionally, I find it motivating and necessary to research how to develop a winning method for improving innovation based on the approach of the most successful companies within the design industry.

¹ Esther R. Maier & Oana Branzei 2014: On time and on budget: Harnessing creativity in large scale projects

² <https://ufm.dk/ministeriet/ministeren/taler/arkiv/tidligere-minister-morten-ostergaards-taler/2012/vi-skal-konkurrere-pa-viden>

³ <https://danish.tm/article/why-is-danish-design-so-successful/>

⁴ Tim Brown 2008: Design Thinking

Based on this the following research question has been formulated:

Research Question:

- What parts of the innovation process in design industries can be highlighted as important for creating a successful innovation process? What are the requirements for design companies to implement these elements into their process?

Definition of innovation

As explained with the research question the aim is to look into which factors of the innovation process in the design industry that is most important when developing a successful innovation process. For clarification and to avoid any misunderstanding I have below formulated the definition of innovation I will be using, which I feel is important for the overall understanding of the thesis.

The definition of innovation that I will be using is “successful creation and delivery of a new or improved product or service in the marketplace”⁵.

Analytical focus

The aim of this thesis is to examine which parts of the innovation process in the design industries that are most important when looking to use innovation successfully. With the analysis, the goal is to identify the key parts of the innovation process that are underlined as the most vital in order to achieve successful innovation in design companies.

The platform for the analysis is based on theoretical subjects as well as the interviews made with three design companies and the secondary data collected through the internet.

Limitations

This report is limited to Danish companies who are designing and producing their own products. Therefore design companies who solely are external consultants working on designing for others

⁵ Carlson & Wilmo, 2006: Innovation - The five disciplines for creating what customers want.

are not included. The report focuses on companies who have control over the entire development process.

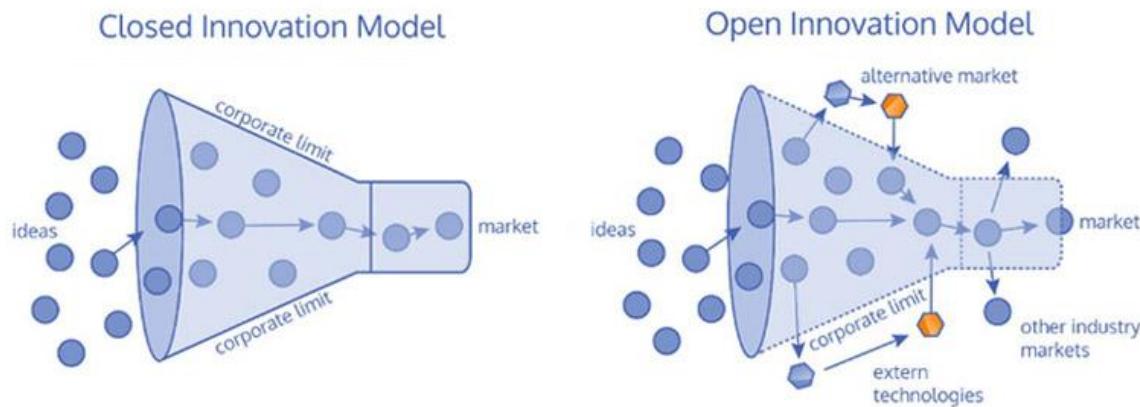
2. Theory

I will present different methods to innovation in the theoretical chapter to be able to fulfill the research question. In order to understand whether the design industry are able to put forward unique ideas on how to create a successful innovation process, traditional ideas of innovation will be presented and also related to the design industry.

Open vs. Closed innovation

The concept of open innovation is presented to clarify whether the creative industries show possible aspects that are different from other industries. In addition it is interesting to clarify how much open and closed innovation link with the design industry.

Open innovation means that the company is not only relying on innovations from within the company, but are also seeking to acquire knowledge outside of the company (see figure). The aim is to shorten the amount of time it takes to bring products to market launch. A criticism concerning the open innovation concept method is that the idea relies heavily on technical



innovation which is different from the innovation in design industries. Ultimately it is quite important when looking for the most important factors for the innovation process whether open and closed innovation is linked with innovation in the design industry.

In todays world it has been suggested that the method for using innovation is evolving. It is argued that the modification can be regarded as a paradigm shift in which the former concept of closed innovation is evolving today into an approach of more open innovation⁶.

A company utilizing closed innovation underlines the importance of using and harnessing ideas coming from within the company to make sure the knowledge and creativity stays within and thereby developing a competitive advantage over others.

Other ideas describes that the concept of closed innovation is to make the findings and creations within the company and have them appear first to the market. The idea is that with the closed innovation method you are more successful if you get your innovations and creations first to the market. By keeping creations internally, you thereby also avoid that others profit from it. The assumption is that with a steady flood of initiatives and creativity internally there is no need to collect data externally and furthermore that no data will depart the company. Through research and development they turn this into products and services and thereby contribute a value to the firm and stay profitable.

In contrast to that it has been argued that some factors will undermine the approach of closed innovation. Companies are more vulnerable to their best and most skillful innovative employees leaving for another job which means that new or existing employees miss out on that knowledge. This creates an over dependency on certain expert and trained individuals who can leave within a short amount of time.

Design driven vs. Human centered innovation

When describing design driven innovation it is about reaching the goal at hand by trusting the judgement and the resources within the company. Ultimately this results in not reaching out and asking customers what they wants or doing field based research. It comes from the idea of creating something that is radically new in terms of product features and design which then creates new meaning for the customer. If you take Apple for example, Steve Jobs philosophy was that “People don’t know what they want, until you show it to them”⁷. In the article by Verganti

⁶ Chesbrough, 2003: Open Innovation, The new imperative for creating and profiting from technology

⁷ <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/1446352>

(2006) it is also explained that with design driven innovation the product usually have an extended period of commercial life than other products⁸.

The flip side to the coin of design driven innovation is human centered innovation in which you go out and ask the customers what they think and do field research with getting feedback on product prototypes and get a feel for what they want.

Importance of innovation in the design industry

In the world we live in today with an increased globalization, advanced technology capabilities, it is a so much more competitive situation for every company. The days are gone when you could focus on price, so that is why it is important to differentiate through design and branding of your company and products. By having a quality product with a strong focus on design and being innovative combined with the emphasis on having a brand that people associate with something good and high quality you are differentiating the company from other competitors and thereby not having to compete on price⁹. By doing this it is more likely that you can increase the prices of your products because it is perceived as a brand with beautiful design. Ultimately you are building an immaterial value asset by focusing on design and innovation. If most individuals associate your company and brand with something luxurious, high end and high quality and they enjoy the feel, look and “vibe” of your product, they are so much more willing to pay a higher price of the product and in the end become loyal paying customers. We are therefore seeing a change from cost-based strategies in the past to a novelty based strategy in the modern world. Furthermore in the article Postrel (2004) the significance of aesthetics is explained. “Aesthetics is the way we communicate through the senses”. Having a beautiful aesthetic product in your home that you look at every day, maybe often use every day and are looking forward to use gives you so much more quality of life.

Co-design

There are both pros and cons of using a co-design process in today's world. Co-design is essentially about developing a process with a user-community in which you take in knowledge, creativity,

⁸ Verganti, 2006: Innovating through design.

⁹ Dorst, 2015: Frame innovation: Create new thinking by design, Chapter 1.

talent and innovation from many different individuals¹⁰. The process here is not to only rely on your own designers to do the work and come up with new ideas, but instead to get input from a multitude of brains, which should create a bigger pool of quantity of ideas to choose from. Another aspect is that you should get insight from the group of people who are going to use it and thereby get a better fit overall. It is also suggested that when people are involved in the process they will be more unlikely to reject the product once it is done. It can furthermore also strengthen the relationship with consumers that the company is thinking about them and are taking their opinion into the creative process and thereby get a better brand loyalty. Finally by utilizing the brain power of more people it can potentially reduce the time it takes for the product to be launched and also the overall costs.

One of the challenges of using consumers and user-community in the design process is that you get less predictable outcomes, because you are sharing the control of the product with the user-community. This means that it could potentially fasten the process of innovation and creativity but reversely it could also slow down the process. Since it is subjective what is aesthetic it could result in conflicts of how the product should look like. Also once you use the opinions of the user-community it can be hard to pull out and ignore the advice without some sort of criticism.

Lastly it would need changes in the organizational processes in terms of routines, management and that your internal designer being fine with having to share the design process and maybe threatened by the knowledge and expertise of the user community. Overall for the designers it is considered less prestigious to be a facilitator rather than the solely creator of innovation and design.

Teamwork

Having a strong ability to work together is incredibly important for a company that wants to have a successful innovation process. Teamwork merges ability and competence to handle potential challenges and resolve issues. Furthermore it is of an overall importance to establish strong

¹⁰ Steen, Manschot, De Koning, 2011: Benefits of Co-design in Service Design Projects

teamwork since employees like to contribute and know that what they have to offer is appreciated¹¹.

Good teamwork and working together as a unit is often the result of good leadership in which you establish a good foundation for this and neutralize potential conflicts before they build up. As you remove possible issues in the teamwork process it can greatly improve the success of your collaboration as nothing can be more disruptive than clashes and conflicts. In the worst situation it can completely end the teamwork or product/innovation development process. Having high emotional intelligence and social skills is therefore extremely important to have alongside your creative competence and ability¹².

Lastly the significance of reciprocated trust in which employees are able to depend on each other with confidence can be highlighted as vital. A deficiency in trust can potentially derail an innovation process and thereby limit the production of new design products.

Leadership

Good leaders will have a major impact on how successful the innovation process is for design companies. Leaders and management that have abilities to organize the process in which you unite both commercial and creative skills is vital. Leaders set the strategy and the framework for the innovation process that result in strong output of winning products.

Leaders in design companies can be both chief designers, heads of product development and concept development and project managers¹³. They often obtain the skills for strong leadership through learning by doing and getting a broader understanding of how to motivate employees.

In a creative company like a design company, disagreements can sometimes occur about the amount of resources that should be allocated to the innovative and creative departments and conversely how much that should be spent on other areas in the company. As a leader you need to tackle potential objections there might be and convince the staff of the company's strategy so that everyone is working in alignment.

¹¹ Esther R. Maier & Oana Branzei 2014: On time and on budget: Harnessing creativity in large scale projects

¹² Carlson & Wilmo, 2006: Innovation, the five disciplines for creating what customers want.

¹³ Austin, Nolan, 2007: Bridging the gap between Stewards and Creators

Overall the leader's task is to make it as easy as possible for the employees to do their jobs¹⁴. The leader combines passion and commitment to focus on the company's strategy and to motivate his employees and team members to work together as a unit¹⁵. A leader also understands that they must take full responsibility and organize the innovation process with his best ability and perseverance. Strong leadership is almost always needed for a successful innovation process. Specifically a person who has the broader understanding of the task at hand and the workers involved, so that the innovation process becomes easier and has greater success.

Stage Gate Model

The Stage Gate Model is a model that gives an overview of innovation process in which all phases are shown from the first stage of idea generation to production and market launch¹⁶. The model functions to improve effectiveness and each phase have its own characteristics. The idea is that each stage has some tasks that need to be completed before receiving approval from the manager before you can move onto the next stage.

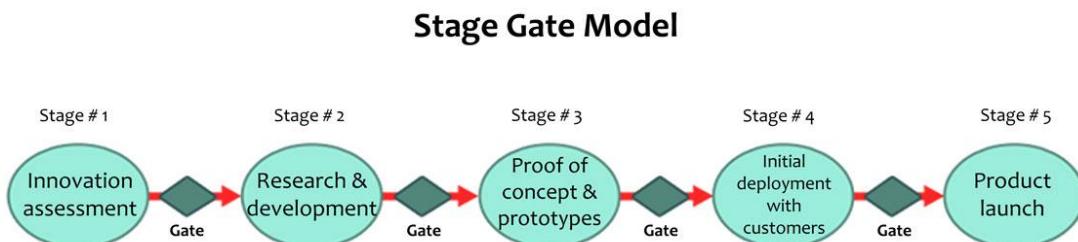


Figure: The 5 stages of the Stage Gate Model

The stages aim to improve the innovation process with actions being carried out to develop higher quality prior to moving to the next stage.

The factors of the model that are characterized as crucial are the function of the approval/disapproval of each stage. This greatly reduces the risk involved and minimizes failure. The function can also aid in you obtaining more understanding of industry, business, and technological advances during the progression. It could also be argued that the model functions to

¹⁴ Hjorth, Austin, O'Donnell, 2010: Learning to Lead Collective Creativity from Miles Davis

¹⁵ Laurent Simon, 2006: Managing creative projects: An empirical synthesis of activities

¹⁶ Scott, J. Edgett: The Stage Gate Model: An Overview

get a better overview of what is going to happen and helps guide the process. It should also be noted that it is the manager of the project who determines whether or not you move to next stage. It is argued that the model works well for innovative projects, technology or industrial production and particularly when there is high risk associated with the product.

Disadvantages of the model includes that it is not flexible with a process that is stopped rather quickly and then just potentially having to abandon the project and innovation process all together.

Using consumers in the innovation process

Every company has customers and it is important to understand them really well. They have the final say of where or not your product is creating value or not to them. In the design industry however there is a fine line between giving the consumers something that is new and never seen before and still making sure they like it and want to buy it¹⁷. The ultimate goal of companies should be to strive for progressively developing higher value to their customers. This can be done through reading and understanding consumer and market needs, ideally at lesser cost than your competition¹⁸. This should apply to both an innovation that is incremental and radical.

A motive for involving consumers and the market is that in today's world the customers have a much larger awareness and knowledge about products. Information about a product will spread both for good or bad and therefore it can be beneficial to involve consumers to avoid harmful situations from occurring.

3. Method

Epistemology

Researching data to answer the problem delimitation, it is firstly important to underline that an innovation process is developed and managed by people. The perspective in this thesis that I will be looking through is of a social constructivist, because I believe that the innovation process is created through social constructions. Communication and dialog between individuals is the

¹⁷ Mike Press, 2011: Working the Crowd: Crowd sourcing as a Strategy for Co-design

¹⁸ Carlson & Wilmo, 2006: Innovation - The five disciplines for creating what customers want.

platform in which creativity and innovation happens, therefore it is required to look at innovation as an outcome of social associations and creations. The main aspect of a social constructivist view of the world is that reality is constructed and that we as individuals create social experiences. Social experiences can be continual and we as individuals are capable of changing social experiences and furthermore they can be seen as an effect of human procedures¹⁹. Having the perspective of a social constructivist influences the view and my job as a researcher gathering and analyzing the empirical material, because I not only gather already existing information but in addition want to reveal new knowledge. The aim of this thesis is to provide new insight on the topic of innovation in the design industry rather than to just confirm previously presented theory.

I understand that every result is subjective and reliant on the circumstances and that ultimately it should not be read as the total truth. However in the perspective of a social constructivist the goal is to develop a general collective understanding of the truth.

To utilize and employ the answers from the interviewed respondents in order to answer the problem delimitation and make a shared understanding it is important to understand that it is not possible to guarantee complete certainty, but the interviews can contribute to a general awareness and insight. Consequently it is also stimulated through a logical approach to evaluate theory, data and to explain new viewpoints and information for innovation research in the future.

Use of case studies & case selection

As part of the gathering of research material I have chosen to use the method of case studies, because it is optimal for obtaining new insight, both in relation to qualitative and quantitative research methods²⁰.

The thoughts behind selecting 3 different design companies were based on that I found it crucial to get valuable insight and discover the essentials of a successful innovation process within the design industry. The 3 design companies were also chosen because I wanted some diversity and be able to reflect on the differences from each company. If I had used 3 identical design companies I

¹⁹ Fuglsang, Bitsch & Rasborg, 2013: Videnskabsteori i samfundsvidenskaberne..

²⁰ Eisenhardt, 1989: Building theories from case study research.

would not have gotten the differences. It is believed that the selected cases will help to develop a general understanding of the truth.

It could also have been a possibility to have chosen more cases with a more quantitative mindset and focused on getting a much wider variety of examples. With the time frame that was given, it was not possible however to work as intensively with many cases as it is to work with 3 cases. As the complexity of a master thesis greatly increases with the analysis and comparison of different cases I have chosen to focus more on quality and in depth analysis of each company interviewed. I am fully aware that this limits me in my ability to find all elements of what a successful innovation process in design companies looks like.

Interview selection

When I was looking at the potential people to interview at the 3 different design companies, I wanted someone who had a leading position and had direct influence on the design process. This was important to ensure that I had substantial knowledge regarding how the innovation process I structured and ultimately what elements of the innovation process that is essential for achieving successful innovative design.

The 3 different interviewed persons will be presented later on in the thesis. There is a small difference in the people interviewed, with the employee of B&O working as the concept developer manager and thereby overseeing all the activity involved with developing new products. The person interviewed at VIPP is the chief designer who works directly with designing every product and finally the person interviewed at Royal Copenhagen is head of product development & IPR. The roles are a little different, but it is still people who know a lot about innovation, creativity, design, leadership and product development. The interviews are all based on the personal interaction and experiences with the interviewee.

The primary data collected is from qualitative interviews made and the reason for choosing qualitative interviews is because that social interaction and talking with someone is ideal to get to know someone and get insight about their skill and practices²¹. With this thesis the method used was a semi structured interview aimed at gaining descriptions of their life world and focus on

²¹ Eike Adams, 2010: The joys and challenges of semi-structured interviewing.

interpreting their situation. Overall the aim was to gather enough data from the interview to establish an understanding of how successful and innovative design companies structure their innovation process and what factors they find most important to achieve a successful process. With the perspective of a social constructivist I believe it is most suited to gather qualitative research data. Since it is narrowed down to only a few possible interview prospects that have the acquired knowledge in regards to innovation, design, branding, marketing, leadership and management it is further advantageous to be using a qualitative interview. The interviewguide (see appendix) was customized for each interview to make sure I gained as much insight as possible. A semi structured interview makes it easier to ask questions along the way and go into depth with some of the answers. Two of the interviews lasted 60 minutes and one lasted 40 minutes and they were all recorded on both laptop and on an iPhone to make sure I had backup. The questions were not provided in advance to the interviewee and they were all conducted in the interviewee's native language Danish. It was a possibility to conduct them in English, but to eliminate any misunderstandings and get as indepth insight as possible they were conducted in Danish. All interviews made at the companies' headquarters were taking place in meeting rooms.

Validity

An important factor is to be aware of when interviewing and doing research in general, that I as a researcher can not entirely remove my own understanding of society. In the interview process I therefore wanted to make sure I had no former experience with the people interviewed. I had a relation to all three companies in terms of that I knew them and had products from 2 of them, and I had also read and done case work with VIPP as a company.

When I was interviewing my aim was to be very uncritical in regards to what they said and how they presented their innovation and design process and their overall product development process. I found this to be important so that the people interviewed could express their true feelings and what they thought was essential when talking about innovation and design processes. Furthermore I aimed for their answers to be as personal and close to their own opinions and ultimately as close to their everyday work as possible. It is a possibility that the people interviewed

did not reveal all significant information and maybe could be influenced by responding to the subject that would conflict with them as a person.

Another aspect that could affect the validity of my research is misunderstanding their answers. An example of this could be how we see innovation and what it means. A universal perception of innovation is important to make sure I get suitable information.

I am also conscious of the person being interviewed having their own personal way of seeing things and their current circumstances and outlook on life may influence their answers. This could be that they would be responding from their own personal view rather than of the overall of the company. The mentioned validity issues influence the complexity in understanding the answers given and creating a valid representation of the design industry as a whole. Finally I am of the conviction that the chosen research method does put me in a situation to create an understanding of what elements of the innovation process in the design industry that is essential for developing successful innovative design.

4. Interviews

Analyzing the collected data gathered from the 3 interviews helps to get a view of how successful and innovative design companies work and is essential to obtain successful design.

As it is not sufficient to rely only on the theory described in the theoretical structure chapter I will be using 3 cases that are an representation of the design industry to better understand the topic of innovation processes in design industries.

This section involves a description of the industry as a whole, each interviewed company and the person being interviewed. It will also include details on the exacts of how the firms go about their innovation process, their working methods and the factors indicated as essential for developing a successful innovation process in the design industry. The idea is to get a better overview and a clear picture of what the industry believes is most essential. This section serves as setting the scene before the analysis part of the thesis takes place in the following chapter.

The three companies interviewed from the design industry are presented in the following and they will represent companies from the design industry.

Bang & Olufsen

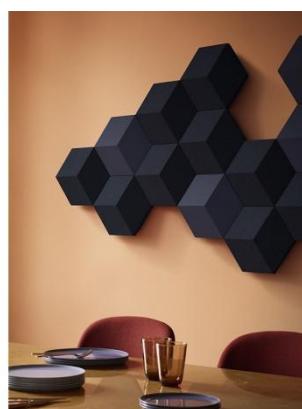
Bang and Olufsen (B&O) was founded in 1925 by Peter Bang and Svend Olufsen. The company is a Danish high-end audio and video manufacturer of consumer electronics.

B&O has been collaborating with prominent and well-known designers from both Denmark and abroad, most noticeably Jacob Jensen and David Lewis as the most famous ones²².

The company originally produced radios in a very mundane and traditional appearance.

Throughout the early 60's the company's sales were dropping and the ownership realized that they had to change their design of the products and they hired Danish designer Jacob Jensen, who revolutionized their designs with great success which kept the company from going bankrupt.

Almost all other companies in Denmark and Sweden within the business of producing radios and televisions went bankrupt in those years, but B&O managed with their innovative design to survive and is today one of the most recognizable designer brands of Denmark. B&O is today known for granting its designers plenty of creative freedom as a result of the success they have had. The company spends a substantial amount on innovation and design and takes pride in providing exceptionally high quality products in terms of materials, sound, design and finish. B&O hired a new CEO in 2016 and their financial result was DKK 85 million in 2017.



²² <https://www.bang-olufsen.com/en/explore>

Interview with Kresten Krab-Bjerre of B&O

The interview with Kresten took place at B&O's headquarters in Struer, Denmark. Kresten is the head of concept development at B&O and oversees all the processes regarding product developing, design and innovation. His job is to be manager of all people involved in the concept developing team including the designers. The role of the concept developing team is to oversee the development of new B&O products, to breed new ideas for products and collaborate and establish the innovation process with external designers on board.

His background is that he is a production engineer and also has an industrial designer education from London. Kresten started working for B&O 25 years ago and started in the production part of the business and has risen in rank ever since he joined and is today one of the key people in overseeing the success of B&O product line.

Kresten was chosen for the interview because of his extensive knowledge of design and innovation combined with his knowledge of what it takes to succeed in a highly competitive market. Results from the interviews will be analyzed in the next chapter of the thesis.

VIPP

VIPP was founded in 1945 by Holger Nielsen, who started the company by making their original trash bin. VIPP is known for their high quality and stylish trash bin, but today VIPP also have many other product categories besides their trash bin²³. They are a company who sees themselves as a brand that creates quality tools with long-term ability that improves the experiences of everyday life. Vipp is family-owned and is run by the daughter of Holger Nielsen, Jette Egelund and her two children Kasper and Sofie along with 45 employees. They are placed at Islands Brygge in Copenhagen where they are continuing to grow their range of products and have expanded to categories such as kitchens, bathrooms, furniture, lighting and even prefabricated shelters/homes. Vipp is in 30 countries and has their flagship stores in Copenhagen and in New York where Sofie is leading that branch of the company. Vipp describes their goal and vision as a world with fewer but better products.

²³ <https://vipp.com/da/stories/vipp-history>



Interview with Morten Bo Jensen of VIPP

The interview with Kresten took place at VIPP's headquarters in Islands Brygge, Copenhagen. Morten is the chief designer at VIPP and has been with them since 2006. He has thereby overseen and been a big part of the processes of launching many new product categories in his time with VIPP with him being in charge and involved with designing all their products. As the chief designer he has a very close working relationship with his engineers as well as the management alongside him of overseeing the innovation process. As chief designer his role is to lead and motivate all employees involved in the innovation process and also oversee the development of the many new product categories VIPP continues to introduce and contributes heavily in the process of coming up with new ideas for products.

His background is that he is an industrial designer from the University of Aalborg. Morten started in 2006 as design consultant, but quickly rose in rank, because the ownership could see his potential for creativity and innovative design. He is considered one of the key people to their major success and exponential growth that they have experienced over the last 10 years.

Morten was chosen for the interview because of his extensive knowledge of design, creativity, leadership and sense of what it takes to be successful in the design industry. Results from the interviews will be analyzed in the next chapter of the thesis.

Royal Copenhagen

Royal Copenhagen (RC) was founded in 1775 and is a Danish manufacturer of lots of different products typically in porcelain. The brand is highly known in Denmark because of their history and

because of their status as purveyor to her majesty the Queen of Denmark. Their logo is recognizable for its three wavy lines that represent Storebælt, Lillebælt and Øresund²⁴.

The company was bought by the industrial company Fiskars in 2012 and has since then been even more financially successful compared to the years before that. Today their products are manufactured in Thailand and they train the local personnel over 2 years on how the production of their products is done.



Interview with Katrine Birger of Royal Copenhagen

Katrine Birger is head of product development at Royal Copenhagen and oversees all details regarding design and development of new products.

Her background is that she has worked with design her whole life and has also been heavily involved with startups and entrepreneurship in Danish companies. Her sister is Malene Birger, who operates the clothing brand By Malene Birger and Katrine was part of the startup of this brand with her sister.

Katrine Birger has been with Royal Copenhagen since 2012, since the purchase by Fiskars and has been an instrumental part of their success and surge within the last couple of years.

²⁴ <https://www.royalcopenhagen.com/dk/da/ourpassion>

The reason for interviewing Katrine Birger is because she knows design, branding, marketing and has very strong insight on what it takes to succeed with a product in the product development phase and beyond. Results from the interviews will be analyzed in the following part of the thesis.

Danish Design Center

The Danish Design Center (DDC) functions as Denmark's national centre for design and their mission is to promote how design can be used in business and industry. Furthermore they work on how to elevate the industry and have more professionals come forth and lastly to promote Danish Design brands abroad.

Their mission is to make Danish design a top 3 competitive factor in the future and key aspect of this is to systematic experiment with design based value creation in companies.

Danish design is rooted into our history and many of the qualities that Danish design stands for comes from our culture and how we are as people²⁵. DDC's job is therefore to work across many different areas in our society including business and industry, education, entrepreneurship along with research and public institutions. Their ambition is to increase companies' use of design by working in open partnerships and having a shared understanding.

Ultimately DDC should be seen as a platform for strategically developing and scaling design initiatives across Denmark.

Danish Design DNA

Danish Design Center created the report on Danish design called Danish Design DNA, in which they elaborate on Danish design and why it is so well known around the world.

The report explains that Danish design can be described as high quality, user-oriented, craftsmanship, simplistic, durable, socially oriented, cocreated and holistic. The report is based on

²⁵ https://issuu.com/kadk/docs/pixi_dk_singlepages

100 interviews made with people involved with design and who work with design on a regular basis²⁶.

The aim of the report was also to create awareness about design and explain the importance and value of design for Denmark in relation to business and our society and the position of strength that design represents for Denmark.

The report elaborates on the fact that the potential for design is much greater if we can utilize our business, research and educational strengths since we can then even further brand ourselves as one of the leading design countries in the world.

If you compare Danish design to other countries the comparison is according to Christian Holmsted Olesen of Designmuseum Danmark that “American design is business, German design is science, Italian design is art and Danish design is craftsmanship”.

Historically Danish design is originated in furnitures and product development practices, which means mainly physical products. This is the area in which Denmark has flourished in the 20th century and which Denmark is most famous for on the international scene.

5. Analysis

I will in the analysis evaluate and analyze on which factors that are most important for developing a successful innovation process in the design industry. Empirical data gathered from interviews along with the theory that have been established earlier, will seek to evaluate the differences and resemblances among the empirical data and the theory. Ultimately this leads to answer the aim of this thesis whether it is achievable to produce an overall framework for developing a successful innovation process in the design industry.

The analysis will touch upon the topics regarding innovation in the design industry: How to do innovation, innovative people, teamwork, Stage Gate Model, motivation, courage, leadership, freedom, passion, open and closed innovation and involving consumers in the innovation process. These themes will work as a structure for the analysis and will include empirical data acquired from the interviews.

²⁶ https://issuu.com/kadk/docs/pixi_dk_singlepages

How to do innovation:

All three companies are part of the design industry, and their look on innovation is described below. Katrine Birger of Royal Copenhagen describes her view on innovation as “Innovation can be a lot of things, it can be the way of working with HR, IT and of course product development as a whole. When people say that they are not creative/innovative, that is usually not the case, because you can be innovative in the way you work that improves a process or an element in our product development”. Kresten of B&O further elaborates on what innovation means for B&O “When we do innovative concepts, then we want a version that is to combine already known things, but in a new way that creates an experience that has never been seen before”²⁷. It should therefore be explained that the managerial focus of the innovation design process will be focused on diverse stages in the process. With that it could influence if the processes will be planned and ultimately the result of the innovation process.

The result of a succesfull innovation process is as pointed out by Danish Desing Center that we among other things get Danish design that is described as high quality, craftsmanship, durable, simplistic and useroriented. The end result of having Danish design is a high demand both domestically and abroad, and this is why it is of high value to point out how the succesfull design companies are creating innovative design products and be able to learn from them.

Data suggests that design companies are more probable of spending time with idea creation stage of the process, because at these companies they are creating products on a regular basis. Kresten of B&O “It takes on average about 6 months to create a new design product. Our Beolap took a little longer, but that was because it had a lot revolutionizing sound qualities, but on average I would say 6 months”²⁸. The stage of developing ideas is very significant for design companies, because at this stage they create the platform for the residual innovation process. When a design company is reliant on people collaborating and working closely together in teams it was heavily indicated by the people interviewed that working from a strong platform and structure is very essential. And the structure for the product being designed is developed in the idea creating stage. A team effort is necessary overall to connect the different aspects of designing with project

²⁷ Interview with Kresten of B&O (Appendix 4, page 61)

²⁸ Interview with Kresten of B&O (Appendix 4, page 64)

management as well as the conceptual creating team. It is an important part for design companies to focus on the production process because this is where the real good is developed with the company and their designer and conceptual manager agreeing on the product. This stage will not contain an interaction of every employee involved. At design companies they identify the needs of each product before the production stage. Because the level of difficulty is fairly high in developing it means there will be special requirements for developing the basis for creation.

Innovative people

It can be underlined that the people employed in the design industry will need ability and an understanding of doing things differently, which makes this industry unique compared to others²⁹. Innovative people are fueled by a vision and by the creative process, hard work, and values that go beyond just working for the benefits of money, but also the passion for art and they want to embrace themselves fully into a project³⁰. This means that often their intrinsic values are higher than their extrinsic values and those intrinsic values are a big part of their motivation³¹. According to the findings at the three case companies, this is also the case. Being passionate about your work and having an inner drive to succeed is a big part of having a successful innovation process in the design industry. Innovative workers and resourceful people should also have a fair amount of courage to go and try new things, which will be further explained later on in the analysis. There is also a call for discovering the newest creations when working with innovation. This is in conjunction with empirical results found while interviewing in the design industry. Morten of VIPP explains “I think a big part of being a designer is that you love to explore new things and get an overview of the different possibilities and considerations there can be for a new product and then try to see if you can find a qualified way through it”³².

Overall innovative employees make their best effort to influence the process to innovate a product in the path that will be best appropriate for the collection of products that company stands for. A factor in the innovation process is the size of the organization in regards to taking

²⁹ Maier and Branzei, 2014: Harnessing creativity in large scale projects.

³⁰ Austin & Devin, 2003: Artfull making, what managers need to know about how artists work.

³¹ Caves, 2000: Creative Industries – contracts between art and commerce.

³² Interview Morten Bo Jensen of VIPP (Appendix 2, page 50)

elements into their structure. The aim here is to optimize the process when wanting to develop a successful innovation process for design companies. Another huge part of making the process work is to understand the importance of human ability and people's ability to work together in teams. Understanding that people have different personalities and being able to work with everyone and seeing things from other peoples perspective was highlighted as probably the most important aspect of a successful innovation process³³.

When Royal Copenhagen and B&O are working with their external designer they want people who are personalities that associate well with what the product, the brand and lifestyle stands for.

Putting together the right team of people in a concept developing group is crucial in order to obtain a successful innovation process. Kresten Krab-Bjerre of B&O explains that team of people needs a shared and joined appreciation for what is important in the project.

Teamwork

Expanding on the topic of teamwork it is underlined as incredibly important part of successful innovation, because it unites together a combined skill set and understanding to overcome difficulties and challenges³⁴. In a group of innovative and artistic people there might begin to be situations where disagreements happen as this is sometimes the case with a business the output and financial situation is reliant on the creativity and motivation of key people in the innovation process. Kresten of B&O speaks about importance of teamwork and having the feeling of teamspirit: "What I really love about working at B&O is the entrepreneurial spirit there is here", "Because it's that attitude of us against the world and proving that it is possible to be placed out here in Struer, in the middle of nowhere and still make the best product in the world. And it is that fightingspirit there is in the whole company and which has proven to work, because if you look around Europe, there are not many audio-video brands that still exist"³⁵.

It is therefore extremely important to establish the groundwork for good teamwork and make the social dynamics work in their favor³⁶. This was confirmed when interviewing VIPP who very much

³³ Robert I. Sutton, 2001: *Weird Rules of Creativity: Know how to manage for efficiency and productivity*.

³⁴ Carlson & Wilmo, 2006: *Innovation, the five disciplines for creating what customers want*.

³⁵ Interview with Kresten Krab-Bjerre (Appendix 4, page 65)

³⁶ Austin, Nolan, 2007: *Bridging the gap between Stewards and Creators*

underlined that a successful innovation process is reliant on good personal relations and interactions. A healthy environment for social interactions with useful relationships is also where discussions are received well. The discussion and feedback you give others should be productive and useful to help the innovation process.

At Royal Copenhagen is also confirmed that certain factors are highlighted for successful teamwork and social interactions including shared reliance on each other, high focus on the effort and the job at hand, and encouraging and proficient atmosphere, a feeling of recognition and loyalty amongst team members combined with a feeling of liberty under accountability.

Strong teamwork was a shared important factor across all the empirical interviews made with small differences in the way they facilitate their groundwork for successful collaboration. At B&O they are only a handful of people in the concept developing team and Kresten explains that this is more than enough and that less people is actually sometimes more favorable as long as you have the ability represented for each area needed. “Working with design, you have to know your materials well and of course you have to create something that looks beautiful. But probably the most important is that you have good collaboration skills. If you do not have interest for engineers and their challenges, then you will not have success as a designer”.³⁷

Finally it appears that the more people that are involved in the innovation process, the more elements of successful teamwork are needed to be incorporated. Whereas a fewer amount of people would not require the same maintenance.

Stage Gate Model

The Stage Gate Model is ideal to use when working with projects that involves high risk and for products that are new to the world. Overall the model works great with a design product and all three companies interviewed agreed to be using some version of model in their innovation process. Katrine Birger says “We use the Stage Gate model for every phase, so that a project needs to be approved at each phase before you can move on”. At Royal Copenhagen the model is used

³⁷ Interview with Kresten Krab-Bjerre (Appendix 4, page 67)

to manage the creation and manufacturing of their design products and ultimately to create a product that is feasible. Each phase has conditions that need to be met and the advancement of the innovation process is determined on this³⁸. It is underlined that completing a stage before continuing is of great importance. Within VIPP they are setting up the costs of marketing and production to have as practical estimate of the total costs and the market possibilities and whether it is sensible to manufacturer the product at all. It might not be achievable to establish final conclusions yet; it gives an idea of the factors that should be done in order for the design product to be financially successful and steer clear of cancellation of the production and the product not being made. The stage gate model is part of the structuring of the innovation process and is created to increase the chances of making a product a hit. The model with its stages ensures that there is a continual progress going on, with the evaluation stage being able to contribute to ideas for new design products and to additional development and thereby setting up a method for future innovative developments.

Royal Copenhagen utilizes the Stage Gate Model to make sure that faults are at a minimal. Katrine Birger explains “We try to make sure that most things are ready before we begin the production in order to reduce costs and time delays.”³⁹ Ultimately the costs of an innovation process and developing a new design product are huge and anything you can do to securing the success of the launch of the product is done. Using the Stage Gate Model with VIPP, Morten Bo explained that stage for evaluation has great value in terms of learning how they as a company can improve and be even better in the process. “We try to strive for very high quality and perfection with our products and with each project, so to go back and ask ourselves, how we could have done even better is something that is part of our culture”. The evaluation phase can also serve as inspiration for other product categories that spring from one product idea and how to further develop new products.

³⁸ Scott J. Edgett: The Stage Gate Model: An Overview

³⁹ Interview with Katrine Birger (Appendix 2, page 57)

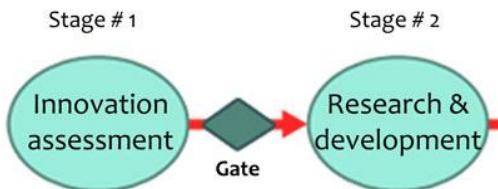


Figure: Stage 1 and 2 of Stage Gate Model

Kresten of B&O explains the specifics on how they use the Stage Gate Model. "We use the Stage Gate Model in which we in the first phase try to describe the product and take a look at the budget and where it needs to be in the market and also in relation to competitors". Kresten says that it is the first gate between the stage 1 and 2 (see figure) that you give your recommendations in which you as a team discuss which type of designer would be best suited. Sometimes they use multiple designers for the same job to compare and to see if one could be better than the other. In gate 2 you get the form, function and materials marked down so that you can brief the designer about it. Kresten says that it roughly takes 6 months to develop a design assignment at B&O.

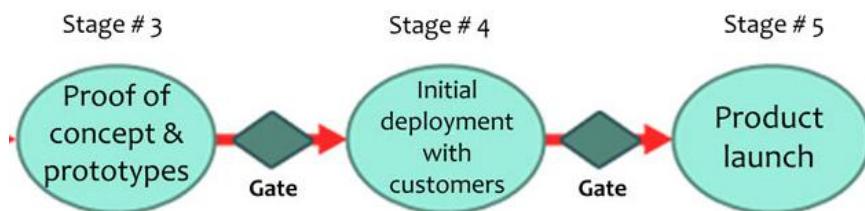


Figure: Stage 3, 4 and 5 of Stage Gate Model

After this comes phase 3, "In phase 3 is where you order the materials and the tools, do the big investment and order all the production tools". In terms of stage 4 and testing on customers Kresten explains that they have an app that collects information from consumers and that since their customers are so loyal they are willing to come in for interviews if needed. "We also do tests with for example styrofoam blocks to see which form they like the best, and then we can test in the design process if they like it and also if there is some new user interface on the product to make sure it makes sense". "After that starts the production and I don't personally have anything

to do with that. That is only if they come to me with questions that I get involved. There is an agreement not to make any changes before you have talked to us at the designapparment.”⁴⁰

Involving users in the innovation process

Consumers are the lifeblood of a company and on paper it would make sense to involve them in the innovation process as they are ultimately the ones who will be buying it. However in regards to the companies interviewed there is a dilemma in regards to this. It is something that has been debated heavily whether a company should use a design driven innovation strategy or a human centered strategy for their innovation process⁴¹. This means how much design companies should focus on views of their designer as opposed to views of their consumers.

When asked Katrine Birger of RC explained “We dont ask consumers about what they think of our product, but we have analytics that look at marked trends and what competitors are doing and what is popular, so that we know that there is a demand for it”⁴². This insight into the customer gives you the groundwork for being creative and having a general understanding of what would trigger interest from the consumer.

An argument against involving consumers is that it eliminates the “wow” and surprise effect of seeing something innovative and different. But even further and maybe even importantly involving the consumer could normalize and tone down the product in order to fit it. The famous quote by Steve Jobs is that “The consumers do not know what they want, untill you show it to them” and is also something that was agreed on when asking the interviewees from the 3 designer companies. It can also somewhat degrade the status and the value of the designer when a lot of other opinions on their design are taken into account. Since design companies’ products are similar to that of art it can also be argued that the focus should be on the aesthetics⁴³. Involving the consumer could compromise the designer as his job and role is comparable to that of an artist. Designers supposedly have skills that the “normal” individual does not possess, so that with involvement would cause the product to be more trivialized. Morten Bo Jensen of VIPP explains

⁴⁰ Interview with Kresten Krab-Bjerre (Appendix 4, page 63)

⁴¹ Verganti, 2006: Innovating through design

⁴² Interview with Katrine Birger of RC (Appendix 2 page 59)

⁴³ Sanders, Stappers, 2008: Co-creation and the new landscapes of design.

that “User involvement should be about having an idea and understanding of the market and what’s already out there and what is selling and what is already working and then putting your mark on it and something that is a little bit different but looks really good”. Morten further elaborates “One of our challenges when we are innovating new products is about obtaining knowledge and understanding of that particular field. If you have done kitchens for 30 years, then you have an idea about you should be aware of. And when you don’t have that, it takes effort to obtain that knowledge. The more you as a designer can look at the bigger perspective the better”⁴⁴. From this point it makes sense to understand the market and see what is selling, but not just blindly asking the consumers what they want when it comes to design products. A big part for the consumer is to have the “wow” feeling and surprise element of showing something unique, different and innovative. And furthermore the aesthetics of the design is extremely important and takes skill and ability of a professional designer in order to create something that is long lasting. Even if the aesthetics of a designer product initially takes some time to get used to, we have seen that products that have been developed thoroughly will be loved and appreciated over time⁴⁵.

However in the case of B&O, when asked if they tested their products on users he said “Yes we do, we have a department that collects information about the users”. “We also do tests with styrofoam blocks too see which shapes and forms they like best and then we can also test in the design process if they understand for example a new user interface and see if it makes sense”.

Kresten elaborates further by saying that it is a balance between taking the consumers opinions into account, but certainly not following it blindly, since you have to create something that is new, different and exciting and give people the “wow” effect. It seems as likely that both aspects are recognized and that an understanding of both strategies is optimal for the best result.

Motivation & ownership

It can be argued that resourceful and innovative people can be characterized as being driven by the creation of an artistic development and the fact that something unique is being created.

⁴⁴ Interview with Morten of VIPP (Appendix 2 page 54)

⁴⁵ Verganti, 2006: Innovating through design

Morten of VIPP says “The people I work with and I think it’s incredibly exciting to go from an idea/vision or even just words and then to it becoming a physical object. There is something very satisfying with that process, because you have the possibility to directly influence something that becomes physical and is part of the company”⁴⁶. This plays an important part in their motivation along with the feeling of being part of the overall process and the end product. An ownership feeling elevates the feeling of motivation⁴⁷.

In terms of motivation at Royal Copenhagen Katrine Birger explains “I motivate my employees by giving them conditions in which they can have responsibility and feel that they are valued and being listened to. I also try to delegate the specific assignments to the people that are best qualified and I think that it is motivating for the employees to work with something that they are good at. We also continually try to make it easier for our employees to work with their projects and see how we can get better every day at improving our innovation processes”⁴⁸

At B&O Kresten explains that as company you are relying so much on your staff in the whole product development phase that it is essential that they feel at certain level of ownership of the production in order to keep them involved, committed and productive. High motivation and ownership feeling substantial increases a worker’s ability to perform at their best⁴⁹.

At VIPP Morten further explains the importance by saying that a big part of his role as the chief designer is to make the people around him feel involved and that the new project and product is almost their “little baby”. The aim is to make them invested into the process so that they are very aware of how they can do everything better and perform at their highest level.

Courage

A big part of innovation is to have courage and to have the guts to make decisions and furthermore to have the authority to follow through on ideas and projects with no backing down⁵⁰. When talking about innovation, Kresten of B&O said this “I strongly believe, that if you want to make successful innovative design, you cannot be afraid to make mistakes. You need to

⁴⁶ Interview with Morten Bo Jensen (Appendix 2 page 52)

⁴⁷ Ed Catmull, 2008. How Pixar Fosters Collective Creativity

⁴⁸ Interview Katrine Birger (Appendix 3 page 59)

⁴⁹ Eikhof & Haunschild 2006: Lifestyle Meets Market: Bohemian Entrepreneurs in Creative Industries

⁵⁰ Austin & Lee. 2003: Artfull Making, what managers need to know about how artists work.

have courage to do things. Of course, you shouldn't make the same mistakes again. But here at B&O there is a strong sense of openness and understanding that we take chances and a part of that is failing some times"⁵¹.

At VIPP courage is defined as being willing to take chances with exploring new product categories. "There were a lot of people who said that since we were a company that focuses on trashcans that we should just concentrate on making them instead of creating new products and let others do kitchens. So having a fair amount of courage to do new things and having a desire to do them I believe is important and to have respect for it"⁵². As Morten explains, it takes a fair amount of courage to begin building shelters when people know you for your trashcans. Furthermore being bold at VIPP is giving your opinions while not being shot down by others. When a new product category at VIPP is introduced, it gives the people involved in the innovation process a chance to voice their opinion to the management which is accepted. Courage is usually a trait that can be displayed by managers, but research suggested that this trait is equally as important to have among other workers.

When talking about being bold and having this trait amongst employees it means that they are not afraid to take part in the innovation process and let their opinion and thoughts heard⁵³. Having courage in the innovations process and giving your suggestions will promote innovation even higher and when the staff is not afraid of potential backlash from other people in the process including the management, then innovation and creativity is enhanced. If courage is not present, innovative ideas, new product categories and products that are different from what the standard is will never be introduced to the market. Therefore, companies should embrace innovative workers that are bold and give them encouragement to share their ideas. Kresten of B&O again also underlines the ability to overcome fear and being okay with working in the unknown where you are not certain how a product is perceived as an important trait for an innovative person and the team involved in the concept developing at B&O. He explains that he feels his role as a facilitator is to make people feel safe and comfortable and eliminate as many complications as he can.

⁵¹ Interview with Kresten Krab-Bjerre (Appendix 4 page 67)

⁵² Interview with Morten Bo Jensen (Appendix 2 page 55)

⁵³ Austin & Lee, 2003: Artfull Making, what managers need to know about how artists work.

Katrine Birger of RC says about courage “In relation to why we are so succesfull it stems from having good ideas that you are then courages enough to execute on and it doesn’t have to be coming up with something radical. Sometimes it is about seeing the possibilties and having skillful employees that are able to succeed with the chances taken”⁵⁴.

Freedom

Having the ability to work freely without someone constantly looking over your shoulder can be defined as freedom⁵⁵. Freedom lets innovative workers work in a way where their personality and creativity is shown in the product and gets embedded into the style. When asked about work environment Morten of VIPP explained “There is a lot of freedom and the ability to take on a project and put your creativity into work and try to create as much value as possible” “We are not very rigid at that we all have very defined roles that we can only do what lies within that particular work field”. “Perhaps that has something to do with our size and that you have to wear multiple hats and you might have to share the different areas”.

In relation to freedom it also seems that the more freedom they have to getting a prototype made early, greatly improves the innovation process according to Morten. “We have become aware how important it is to get mock-ups done, because it makes the product a lot more concrete”. “It can take a lot to imagine how something would look like in real life, so I would rather just have it made early in the process and have a physical 3D prototype in the somewhat real materials”.

However working with external designers as the case with Royal Copenhagen and Bang & Olufsen, the designer needs to adapt to the situation of that company. It is very difficult to get to work with Royal Copenhagen and B&O and if the external designer does not recognize the characteristics and visual style of the brand, then it is not the right match. This is why the groundwork has to be done before hand and then once you have found the right people, you can then give them the creative freedom to express themselves. In the end with RC and B&O, the manager of the concept developing team has final say over the designer, which means the freedom is granted, but not

⁵⁴ Interview with Morten Bo Jensen (Appendix 2 page 52)

⁵⁵ Ed Catmull, 2008: How Pixar Fosters Collective Creativity.

complete, if the management feels something is not the right design. As Katrine Birger of Royal Copenhagen explains, it is necessary for them to have a say on the final product, because it needs to be appropriate for production levels and the overall design collection of Royal Copenhagen to make sure they uphold their brand image. And the way to do this is by having a process where Royal Copenhagen is able to make changes if they feel that is needed and steer clear of potential designs being withdrawn⁵⁶.

Innovative workers are implicated in the innovation process and the significance of freedom was highlighted by all three companies interviewed. Artistic freedom must be established to create ideas and function as a platform in which collaboration can thrive. It is the job of the management to facilitate this platform where strong collaboration can occur with no restriction of creative freedom.

Passion

Enthusiasm and passion amongst a group of innovative workers can further enhance their creativity and ultimately achieve more as people⁵⁷. Passion is good at fueling innovative workers and is an important part when attempting to achieve a winning innovation process⁵⁸. Facilitating and achieving passionate people in companies is often based on understanding the individual's personality. In conjunction with this the feedback and appraisal should always feel encouraging and helpful to strengthen the progression.

Ultimately a central part of a successful innovation process is to have passionate employees and if it is not present it should be encouraged through good management. It is an essential part for both the staff as well as the management to have in order to release their innovative capabilities and thereby increase their creativity to new heights.

⁵⁶ Austin & Devin, 2003: Artfull making, what managers need to know about how artists work.

⁵⁷ Austin & Devin, 2003: Artfull making, what managers need to know about how artists work.

⁵⁸ Teresa Amabile 1998: How to Kill Creativity

Leadership

The backbone of a company is strong leadership and management who can make their employees perform at their best and get the best out of them⁵⁹. There are several factors that set the platform for a group of people to collaborate well and be innovative, but if a capable leader and manager are not present, it could mean the potential will not be fulfilled. A good leader can prevent arguments and clashes amongst his teammembers by quickly addressing difficulties that may arise to prevent it from influencing the overall innovation process⁶⁰.

An observation made while visiting the three interviewed design companies, was that all three leaders interviewed had a high level of both social and emotional intelligence. They were really good socially and called everybody by their first name. Even the kitchen staff and the people who were cleaning up after lunch I noticed that when I spoke with Kresten of B&O that he was very social, open and friendly towards everyone in the organization. Kresten says "My job as a leader is to make everyone involved feel like it is fun to work here and that what we are doing is fun and to get these people to work as well together as humanly possible. So that we feel that we help each other and that we together as a group create the best concepts"⁶¹. The person who is in charge of the innovation process at a design company will have to lead and direct his workers, but not in a way that holds down their creativity⁶². Rather a strategy should be implemented in order to establish shared trust and understanding of how to develop a strong innovation process in their innovative efforts⁶³.

Furthermore a good manager should comprehend the importance of both the designing, innovative and creative work, but also the significance of being successful commercially and finally as a design company. Royal Copenhagens head of product development Katrine Birger argues this is an important ability as a manager in order for them to be successful. "I believe that those brands that are succesfull are those who understand the importance of both the creative and commercial. It is often the creative people who get attention, because it is those people who create and that is

⁵⁹ Laurent Simon, 2006: Managing creative projects: An empirical synthesis of activities

⁶⁰ Tushman, Smith, and Binns, 2011: The Ambidextrous CEO.

⁶¹ Interview with Kresten Krab-Bjerre (Appendix 4 page 63)

⁶² Hjorth, Austin, O'Donnell, 2010: Learning to Lead Collective Creativity from Miles Davis

⁶³ Austin, Nolan, 2007: Bridging the gap between Stewards and Creators

important. But in order for them to be successful, you need a strong operational foundation. So it is a balance that is very important and that there is really good teamwork”.

Understanding both viewpoints will significantly increase a person’s ability to collaborate and see the viewpoints of for example engineers or people who are in charge of the budget and finances.

Morten of VIPP explains that he understands that his role as the leader at Vipp is incredibly important for their success. Morten explains that he embeds a lot of trust into his employees and that he respects them greatly. His job is to create the possible groundwork for the people in his design team to succeed. By doing this you establish a situation where people can perform at their best and enjoy the process with fewer troublesome factors.

Passion for a leader also plays an important role. An enthusiastic leader who is passionate about his employees when engaging and supporting them will boost those employees own passion as well as their overall work rate, efficiency and ultimately the workers become really happy to work under that leader. In contrast a leader who loves to control others and who loves the position they are in with their power and who does not embrace his employees will see a drop in contribution and overall happiness amongst the workers⁶⁴.

Securing a successful leadership style that makes your workers want to run through a wall for you will greatly help the overall innovation process in so many ways and assists in triumphing over any obstacle and limitations that you may face.

Open vs. Closed innovation

The aspect of open vs. closed innovation in relation to the 3 interviewed design companies will be presented here. As presented in the theory section we are today’s world seeing a change from practicing closed innovation to a more open innovation mindset⁶⁵.

In relation to VIPP, their designer Morten explained that in terms of open innovation that they engage with others who have the expert knowledge needed if they are moving into a product category they have not done before. “It’s unrealistic to think that we know the same as someone

⁶⁴ Tushman, Smith, and Binns, 2011: The Ambidextrous CEO

⁶⁵ Chesbrough, 2003: Open Innovation, The new imperative for creating and profiting from technology

who has been producing kitchens for 30 years, so that is our job to explore and learn as much as we can from others in terms of which complaints that are most common etc.” “I think we are rather humble when it comes to the development of new products. We seek out experts, people who have many years of experience. Beyond that we study a lot ourselves, for example with the new electric kettle we just launched. We used a lot of time researching the electric kettle market to figure out what is working and what is not, and where we should position ourselves in relation to competitors”⁶⁶. VIPP mainly uses open innovation in relation to the functionality and technology of their products and not with the design process and the aesthetics. The design process therefore stays internally with their designers and their engineers.

With B&O it seems as they are reliant on open innovation as well. They have an extensive collaboration with many universities on sound and acoustics for their products. “We have some big apartments that work on the technology of our sound, probably one of the biggest here in Denmark and maybe even in the world, because of the collaboration we have with universities around the world. So in relation to innovation there are really people who sit and uses all their time on innovation for sound and makes it possible for us to have knowledge that is really unique”⁶⁷. B&O has an open innovation mindset and are of the understanding that in order to be in the elite they need to utilize the knowledge outside of their organization in terms of universities helping them with their sound technology.

Additional factors from case studies

Apart from the described factors above, there were additional factors discovered from the case studies and interviews. One of these things was that all three companies mentioned the importance of prototypes and getting them done early in the innovation process. This could either be from 3D printing which was the preferred method of B&O and Royal Copenhagen or by getting a supplier to make it for them as VIPP did. Getting a prototype done early greatly accelerates the innovation process, because it is so much easier to give feedback as it can be hard to see something on a computer screen in 2D and 3D and then imagining how it looks like in real life⁶⁸.

Morten of VIPP explains “It can only go too slow in terms of getting prototypes done. And that is in

⁶⁶ Interview with Morten Bo Jensen (Appendix 2 page 50)

⁶⁷ Interview with Kresten Krab-Bjerre (Appendix 4 page 64)

⁶⁸ <https://markedsforsing.dk/artikler/kampagner/de-tre-t-er-succesfuldt-design>

relation too all aspects of the process” “It unites the whole company that you have a prototype to work with budgeting, marketing etc. Prototypes are extremely important, as you avoid many misunderstandings”⁶⁹. Katrine Birger of RC further elaborates on this: “In relation to prototypes we use 3D printing, where we first use a program to draw it up. Prototypes are an essential part of our development fase, because we can then look at the form and curves and maybe the proportions are not the way they are supposed to be. When you get it in physical form, it can look so much different than on a computer screen”⁷⁰.

Secondly, the observation was made that these companies are constantly striving for perfection and trying to get better every single day. Kresten of B&O explains “I personally am interested in everything about design and innovation, and I am constantly thinking about if there is something we can do better and if there is something we can put into form”. The mindset is that if they can become 1% better every day, or even just every week that is going to add up and benefit them massively long term. Kresten explains that the result: “When our designers have a dream, it is always the situation that we create something even more beautiful than what the designer had imagined, because we are constantly thinking about how we can do it even better. So that is pretty neat and designers really love to work with us, because what they suggest always becomes even better”⁷¹.

Furthermore it was highlighted that you need to be willing to adapt to change. Throughout the years we have seen so many companies be reluctant to adapt to change, Nokia, Kodak etc. Kresten explains “Sometimes you go crazy because of it, because you think that it is going so well. But then things get shaken up and we understand that we have to adapt to change. This is something that is important all the time that we need to adapt to change. You learn to accept it with time, and we also know that if we didnt do it, that we could potentially close down”. “So even if something is working today, then it is not sure it will work in the future, and that is something you have to embrace if you work here at B&O”.

⁶⁹ Interview with Morten Bo Jensen (Appendix 2 page 52)

⁷⁰ Interview with Katrine Birger (Appendix 3 page 59)

⁷¹ Interview with Kresten Krab-Bjerre (Appendix 4 page 66)

6. Conclusion

The overall purpose of this paper was to look into which factors in the design industries that can be underlined as most important for a successful innovation process. In relation to this the thesis wanted to investigate which requirements that are needed to have in place for implementing a successful innovation process into a company.

Understanding that it is unrealistic to guarantee a successful innovation all the time, but you can create a platform in which innovation is much more likely to happen and thereby lay the foundation for succesfull product development.

From analyzing 3 major design companies and interviewing key people in the innovation and design department the following overall factors were underlined as being essential for creating a successful innovation process in design industries. First of all it starts with hiring competent and innovative people and making sure that they have strong teamwork skills and thereby are willing to collaborate well with others. Good teamwork is the foundation for having a succesfull innovation process in the design industry. It was then underlined that giving your employees creative freedom to work with innovation and coming up with new ideas further enhances a strong innovation process.

All three companies used the Stage Gate Model to get a better overview of their product development and innovation process and it served as good tool for quality control and minimizing risk. Furthermore it was confirmed that you need a fair amount of courage to do things and not be afraid of failure, but rather learn from your mistakes and that part of having success is taking chances and sometimes failing, but that is part of the process.

Another important aspect is that you need to have good leadership and management. This means that the management gets the best out of its employees by creating an environment in which they can succeed and perform at their best. Good leadership is also about understanding that your most important resource is your employees and that if you have a lot of empathi for them, then

the more they are going to like you back. If your employees like their boss, they are more likely to go out of their way to perform well, perhaps even do more than expected.

In addition to this it is important to have motivated and passionate employees. Again this comes from having good leadership that understands how to treat their employees in order for them to feel motivated and having them feel valued, important and part of the process from start to finish. It was typical that design companies uses an open innovation mindset and utilizes knowledge outside of their organization with experts and universities helping with their expertise and research.

Apart from these factors that are described above, there were also additional factors that were observed to be important. This was first of all the importance of creating a prototype early in the process. This greatly accelerates the whole innovation process and was expressed as one of the most important aspects for a successful and effective development of a new product.

Additionally it was expressed that design companies who are on top of their game are always trying to get better and improve. They understand that if they can just get 1 % better every day or maybe every week, it adds up over a year. They are constantly striving for perfection and improvement. As company they are not resting on their laurels, but know they have to stay on top of their game constantly, if they want to continue to be successful. Finally they understand the importance of adapting to change. We live in a world where things are constantly changing with the internet, social media, technology and so forth. You must quickly adapt to changes and do things a new way if it is necessary.

A table below is presented to get a better overview of the results from the thesis with succesfull innovation factors and additional factors.

Succesfull innovation factors	Additional factors
Teamwork	Creating prototypes early in the process
Freedom	Striving for perfection (always trying to get a little better)
Leadership	
Stage Gate Model	Ability to adapt to change
Innovative people	
Courage	
Motivation	
Passion	
Open Innovation	

Tabel: Overview of results from thesis with succesfull innovation factors and the additional factors discovered.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Vil du kort præsentere dig selv, din baggrund og din rolle hos VIPP?

Hvordan forstår du innovation?

Hvad betyder innovation for Vipp?

Kan du forklare hvordan at organiseringen af innovation er struktureret hos Vipp?

Hvad er de vigtigste egenskaber man skal have for at være en succesfuld designer i dine øjne?

Hvad inspirerer dig/jer som designere her hos Vipp?

Hvordan er jeres arbejdsmiljø her hos Vipp?

Kan du beskrive om miljøet/kulturen i virksomheden fordrer innovation hos Vipp?

Hvordan føler du at du motiverer dine medarbejdere bedst og får det bedste ud af dem?

Hvilke elementer mener du at der skal være til stede hos en designvirksomhed for at skabe innovativt design?

Kan du beskrive hvordan en typisk proces for udvikling af et nyt produkt fungerer?

Hvor lang er sådan en periode?

Kan du beskrive hvilke elementer af programudviklingsforløb der er essentielle for at gøre forløbet godt?

Kan du beskrive hvilke elementer i innovationsprocessen som kan være med til at hæmme/ødelægge forløbet?

Kan du beskrive om VIPP's tilgang til innovation adskiller sig fra andre virksomheder?

Tester i jeres produkter på brugere? Hvis ja, hvornår i forløbet?

Hvor stor betydning har branding og markedsføring i dine øjne når man sælger designerprodukter?

- Hvad er det vigtigste element i branding for VIPP?

Appendix 2: Interview with Morten Bo Jensen, Chief Designer at VIPP

Vil du kort præsentere dig selv, din baggrund og din rolle hos VIPP?

Ja, jamen jeg hedder Morten og er lige rundet de 41 år og har været her hos VIPP i 12 år.

Og har på den måde været i den her process vi har taget fra at være et firma der kun har lavet skraldespande til nu at være en designvirksomhed som laver forskellige produktkategorier. Det er specielt inden for produktkategorierne vi har taget nogle spring væk fra skraldespanden.

Jeg er uddannet designingeniør fra Aalborg Universitet, hvor det faktisk var en hybrid mellem ingeniørfagene og så det kreative. Jeg har altid været meget interesseret i den værdibaseret del af designprocessen. Altså der hvor det handler om branding og marketingdelen og det med at man prøver at tage udgangspunkt i et eller andet afsæt værdimæssigt hver gang man laver et nyt produkt. Sådan så at når der kommer nye produkter ud, jamen så deler de den samme grundfilosofi. Det har jeg altid synes var super spændende, for på den måde kan man som brand lige som stå for noget. Det synes jeg er enormt vigtigt i dag. Især i dag nu hvor markedet er blevet så globalt at alle ligesom kan byde ind, er det blevet endnu mere vigtigt. Jeg husker da jeg blev introduceret for Vipp historien, så blev jeg fascineret fordi der lå nogle kvaliteter og noget historier som man kunne bygge videre på. Altså jeg begyndte at tænke på, hvordan ville en lampe eller stol eller køkken se ud fra den her virksomhed. Og på den måde lave den kobling på det originale produkt i form af Vipp skraldespanden, der allerede på det tidspunkt var 70 år gammelt.

Folk forventer at vi sidder 10 mand i designafdelingen, men det er kun mig og så er der selvfølgelig et meget tæt samarbejde med produktudviklingen hvor der sidder 5-6 ingeniører med hver deres kerneområde. Men det at vi holder vores design og produktudvikling inhouse, gør at vi har en enormt god følelse for projekterne og kan forstå de ubekendte der opstår under vejs i arbejdsprocessen. Vi har et tæt samarbejde og det gør at modningsprocessen for et projekt hjælper til at kanterne bliver slebet af undervejs. Ved at have et tæt samarbejde, så kan vi bruge design til at finde den rigtige vej igennem den der modningsproces. Sådan at vi i sidste ende får et produkt som er pænt, som er relativt nemt at producere, som er så billigt som overhovedet

muligt, og som skaber så meget værdi for kunden som overhovedet muligt. Så det med at have hele processen inhouse, betyder enormt meget.

Det er jo en familieejet virksomhed, med Kasper, Sofie og Jette som jeg sidder og har et tæt samarbejde med, hvor vi har det som vi kalder en bruttoliste af nye potentielle produkter. Og der kigger vi på, er det er ved at være tid til det ene eller andet af den nye slags. Og hvis vi gør det her, så får vi det ud af det, og hvis vi gør sådan, så får vi det her. Og det kunne så for eksempel være en elkedel, som er det vi sidder og arbejder på lige nu.

Hvordan opstod ideen til VIPP Shelter?

Jeg har tror egentlig ret tidligt at vi kaldte det et VIPP Shelter - det havde vi simpelthen lyst til at prøve at udvikle. Og hvor det så endte henne, det var svært at sige. Men det havde sådan flere formål, dels var det et konkret ønske fra folk der boede i byen, hvor Kasper vores CEO som boede i Manhatten så. Og der var ikke så meget i den kategori i forvejen på det tidspunkt. Prefabrikation har man set i mange år. Men det har mere været sådan arkitektens ønske om at rationalisere byggeriet. Det har ikke sådan været tanken om at lave en meget nem bygningsløsning på et højt niveau. Det fandtes ikke rigtig på det tidspunkt. Så det han stod overfor var enten at bygge sådan et traditionelt sommerhus eller også et som der er en anden der har designet. Der følte han lidt der manglede det der med som når man køber en bil, hvor man går rundt til nogle forskellige og så siger den der vil jeg gerne have og jeg kan godt lide hvad det brand står for og så kører jeg afsted. Der manglede lidt det i husmarkedet.

Og så selvfølgelig at frame alle de produkter vi har lavet igennem årene. Så der var ligesom flere ting der sagde, det skal vi gøre det her.

Kan du fortælle lidt om hvordan I organiserer innovation her hos VIPP?

Det er egentlig ret simpelt, hvor jeg sidder og har et tæt samarbejde med de andre fra produktudviklingen og 5 ingeniører med hvert sit fokusområde. Det er meget "soft" innovation vi laver, og det foregår helt konkret ved at vi sidder i designafdelingen og egentlig laver konceptet til og så har vi nogle samarbejdspartnere i Kina som er rigtig rigtig dygtige. De laver også modeller til os. Men før vi når der til, transformerer vi vores 3D tegninger til en mock up der illustrerer

produktet. Når vi så har en prototype hjemme, så får vi både interne og eksterne personer til at skyde på det med feedback og så bruger vi alle de informationer i det videre forløb. Men ellers kører vi rimelig hurtigt over til en produktmodnings process hvor der bliver sat en producent på og så har vi en projektleder her internt der så driver projektet frem.

I forhold til design, hvem er det så helt konkret der designer produkterne? Og har du på noget tidspunkt eksterne designere inde over desingprocessen?

Jamen det er mig, jeg har selvfølgelig en dialog med Kasper og Sofie, men I sidste ende er det mig som står for design.

Jeg synes vi er meget ydmyge i forhold til udviklingen af nye produkter. Og der opsøger vi eksperter, altså folk der har rigtig mange års erfaring. Og derudover studerer vi meget, f. eks har vi lige udviklet en elkedel, der lige er blevet lanceret. Der bruger vi rigtig meget tid på at kigge på elkedler på markedet. Og prøver at finde ud hvad der er godt og skidt, og hvor skal vi lægge os henne i forhold til dem. Hvor kan vi lægge os så vi differentierer os fra de andre. Det bruger vi rigtig meget tid på. Hvis en forhandler har solgt elkedler i 20 år, jamen så ved de jo hvad det er for nogle reklamationer folk de kommer med og hvad det er typisk som man skal være opmærksom på. Så det tænker vi lidt ind.

Nu nævnte jeg det med soft innovation over for hard innovation. Og det synes jeg er ret væsentligt at nævne at vi jo ikke opfinder noget som ikke er der i forvejen. Så vi tager noget som andre har brugt meget tid på at opfinde, og bygger vi videre på det.

Et godt eksempel på det er for eksempel med vores spand, og den måde som låget dæmper på. Det har lige siden Holger lavet den i 1939 været vigtigt for ham at den ikke sagde "klonk" når den lukket i, men at den ligesom lukket på den rigtige måde. Og han brugte så sådan en gummibælg, hvor han fangede lidt luft inde i stål cylinder.

Hvad vil du sige er de vigtigste egenskaber for en succesfuld designer?

Jeg tror at det er at man kan folde det her landskab ud af forskellige muligheder og overvejelser der kan være for et produkt. Og så prøve at se om man kan kvalificere den rigtige vej igennem det. Skal den være rund, firkantet, eller skal det være 12 volt, du ved der er mange sådan detaljer som ligesom kommer på papir og som ligesom former den næste vej. Og jeg tror det vigtigste som designer det er ligesom at få lavet det rigtige koncept som kan bære dig igennem hele processen. Det bliver selvfølgelig utrolig abstrakt, men jeg tror ikke altid det vigtigste det er at man altid sidder og kigger på formen. Fordi så forstår man ikke hvordan produktet er bygget op. F. eks så sidder vi lige i øjeblikket og kigger på en spisebordsstol i træ. Og der har vi været meget bevidste om at prispunktet var nødvendigt for lancering af det her produkt og den ville vi gerne have så langt ned som muligt. For at lave et folkeligt produkt og det der med lige at vide hvad det koster med materialer på sådan en stol, det mener jeg er enormt vigtigt at vide. Og det er selvfølgelig klart at når vi laver shelter, elkedel, træstole og alt muligt andet. Det er jo alle mulige forskellige områder. Og jeg tror ikke nødvendigvis at man skal være ekspert på alle de der forskellige ting, man skal være i stand til at se muligheder og se pros and cons ved de forskellige beslutninger. Og når du så afleverer konceptet så kommer det på papir, og så bliver det meget konkret og det er ligesom det der former den videre vej. Jo bedre man ligesom kan kvalificere det koncept man laver og argumentere for det jo bedre. Og så betyder æstetikken selvfølgelig meget, det kan man ikke komme uden om.

Nu nævner du det med at I har en liste over potentielle produkter som du sidder og snakker og med Kasper og Sofie om. Men når I så vælger et produkt I kunne tænke jer at gå videre med, er det så sådan at du visualiserer det for dig hvordan det skal se ud?

Jo, når vi sidder i møderne og snakker om det så begynder jeg at visualisere det for mig. Og begynder også at skitsere ned i hånd og 3D, hvor jeg lægger det lidt til side og tager det så frem igen, og kigger på markedet. Det er sådan en stor gryde, hvor man kigger på alt muligt. Hvor kan man differentiere, hvor kan vi få vores egen filosofi med.

Hvad vil du sige inspirerer dig som designer?

Det er der mange ting som gør. Jeg er ikke den der type designer som går rundt ude i skoven og lige pludselig ser en måde hvorpå fuglen lander på en gren, hvor det giver mig en form til et produkt. Jeg ved ikke om det er den italienske måde at gøre det på. Altså der hvor det sådan bliver formen for formens skyld, det er ikke så meget mig. Jeg kan rigtig godt lide produkter som er lækkere og som er, man kan sige det sådan at det kunne være design for blinde. Altså der hvor det ikke kun handler om hvordan det ser ud, men når du får det i hænderne så kan du mærke at det er lækkert. Jeg kan godt lide at folk får den der ‘wow’ effekt når de får et produkt i hænderne. Og det er jo også sådan noget med tyngde, tyngden kommer jo af de materialer du bruger og tykkelsen på materialerne og sådan hvordan hele produktet er skruet sammen. Og så også meget gerne hvis det er noget mekanisk at der er noget lyd og bevægelse. Et godt eksempel kunne være vores salt og peber sæt, hvor du får det i hænderne og bruger det, så har det en lækker lyd også når du drejer på det. Så selv en blind person vil kunne føle at det er lækkert og stadigvæk opleve produktet.

Jeg er også altid blevet inspireret af og kan rigtig gode lide produktionssteder f. eks. maskinværksteder, fordi mange af de ting som står der er virkelig kram og det er funktionelt. Og det er samtidig så forfinet, fordi det er værktøjer som de folk der er der skal bruge til at producere noget, så det skal ligesom være ekstra højt niveau.

Hvordan vil du beskrive at det arbejdsmiljø I har hos VIPP fordrer innovation?

Der er enormt meget frihed, og sådan ”den tager jeg” eller ”du får den” og inden for det, er det så bare at stikke af med den og skabe noget værdi. Prøver at gøre noget som skaber værdi for kunden, projektet og produktet eller for virksomheden. Det er ikke sådan at vi har sådan nogle meget defineret roller, hvor folk kun må gøre det som ligger inden for den rolle. Det er måske også et udtryk for den størrelse vi har, at man skal have flere kasketter på. Og på den måde skal man lige som ”bridge” ind over nogle forskellige områder.

Vi er også blevet opmærksom på at få lavet mock-ups, altså simpelthen bare få dem lavet hurtigst muligt, fordi det konkretiserer produkterne. Og det gør at du får taget nogle ting frem, som folk

kan forholde sig meget konkret til, uanset hvordan man vender og drejer det. Med design der har alle en holdning til det, og hvis man f. eks. har 2D tegninger, der skal man passe på med hvem man spørger og hvordan man ligesom formidler det. For det kræver et eller andet at skulle forestille sig hvordan de ser ud 3 dimensionelt og der vil jeg meget hellere så hurtigt som muligt have et fysisk 3 dimensionelt i de noglelunde rigtige materialer, for så får du alle de perceptioner som folk nu må have. For hvis du ser en stol i 2D, så påvirker det os i en eller anden retning og der er det bare at jeg siger at det er meget tit at alle har en holdning og alle kan synes noget, men det er meget tit at det der så er sket fra at den går fra 2D til den 3 dimensionelle, det er ikke alle der har kunnet forestille sig det. Så ændre holdningen sig når det bliver den 3 dimensionelle, for der har du det sprog som alle kan forholde sig til. Det andet kræver bare en helt anden perception og forståelse hvordan det her 2D egentlig ser ud i virkeligheden og hvordan det føles osv. Så jo hurtigere vi kan få 3D fysisk jo bedre.

I forhold til de medarbejdere du har under dig, hvordan føler du at du motiverer dem bedst og får det bedste ud af dem?

Jeg kan mærke at nu Tue som jeg arbejder en hel del sammen med, han synes også at det er sygt spændende at man kan gå fra det her med at have noget som er en ide, eller bare et ord og så til at det bliver fysisk. Jeg tror det er ligesom med arkitekter, det må være noget af det vildeste for en arkitekt at tegne en eller andet bygning, og så lige pludselig så står den der, så er du inde i den. Og der er noget enormt tilfredsstillende ved den proces, fordi man ligesom meget direkte har muligheden for at påvirke noget der står der fysisk og så bliver en del af virksomheden. Det synes jeg personligt er enormt spændende, og det kan jeg mærke at dem tæt på mig også synes er rigtig sjovt. Så kan man så have forskellige tilgange til hvad man synes der er sjovt. Om det er prototyperne der er flot lavet, potentialet i at der kan blive et stort salgsvolume, men det der med at gå fra en abstrakt ide til sådan konkret er rigtig motiverende for os.

Du nævnte i starten at det her med branding og markedsføring, er noget VIPP har meget fokus på, hvad vil du sige er det vigtigste element i branding for jer?

Jeg synes jo at branding skal være iboende, altså det skal være i produktet. Det skal ikke være noget du klæder et produkt i bagefter. Forstået på den måde, at et eller andet reklamebureau

kommer ind og sætter en eller anden historie på og så smider det, hvor de to måske ikke har så meget med hinanden at gøre. Jeg synes jo det der med at når man som brand står for noget, så er det jo faktisk en del af den platform du designer og innovere ud fra. Og så bliver det i produktet. Dvs. det der brand promise du står for som brand, det bliver en integreret del af produkterne fra starten af. Det synes jeg er enormt vigtigt.

Vi har også et ansvar som brand og designer, at man står for et eller andet. Således at man har taget nogle klare valg. Og det er så ligesom det man prøver at få folk til at købe ind i. Og jeg synes kun at det er fair når man tager køkkenet som eksempel, som vi har haft rimelig god succes med. Et køkken koster måske igennemsnit 400.000 kr. At man så også har prøvet med at udvikle et produkt som folk rent faktisk kan have i lang tid og som de har lyst til at have i lang tid. Og ligesom tage nogle valg for dem. Der har lidt været en tendens til at køkkener det er noget af det første man river ud når man køber nyt hus eller lejlighed. Så skal man bare have et nyt køkken. Jamen de der køkkener de holder måske 5 år eller 10 år max. Fordi de er så meget et aftryk af den tid de er bestilt i. Du kan se det køkken vi har heromme, der var det bare det fedeste da det blev lavet for 15 år siden, men det er da altså bare ikke mere. Og der synes jeg at hvis man som brand kan stå for noget, som er tidløst og som du kan have i 30 år. Jeg mener at den stærkeste branding det er at fatte så dybt som muligt.

Kan du beskrive hvilke elementer der gør produktviklingsprocessen god og hvad der er essentielt for et godt forløb?

Ja, prototyper. Det kan kun gå for langsomt, med at få dem. Og i alle ledet og kanter af processen. Hele processen kan køre i mange måneder, på et eller andet grundlag som måske er helt vildt besværligt og slet ikke er nødvendigt hvis man nu lige tog en anden retning. Og det kitter også hele virksomheden sammen at du har prototyper at gå ud fra, med alt lige fra budget, til markedsføring osv. Prototyper er sindsygt vigtigt. Når vi er færdige her kan jeg lige prøve at tage dig forbi vores "lejestue" som vi kalder det, hvor vi har alle vores prototyper. Når du har det fysiske, så undgår du også mange flere misforståelser.

Er der nogen ting som kan hæmme produktudviklingsprocessen?

En udfordring er når vi springer rundt i de forskellige produktkategorier, det er at tilegne sig viden og tilegne sig forståelse. Hvis du f. eks. har lavet køkkener i 30 år, så har du en eller anden ide hvad man skal passe på med. Og når man så ikke har arbejdet med det i 30 år så kræver det noget at få tilegnet sig den viden. Og det igen det der med at få spredt landskabet ud som designer og kunne se det større perspektiv. Det tror jeg at der er mange virksomheder som betaler hårdt for, fordi de igennem nogle processer kommer ud med et produkt som ikke rammer.

Her til sidst, hvis du skulle give dit bud på hvorfor I har haft så stor succes med design her over de sidste 10-15 år?

Jeg håber at det fordi vi har været tro over for det som vi står for og at vi har brugt nye produkter til at løfte de første. Og at man på den måde som brand ligesom er kommet til at stå for noget brandingmæssigt og er kommet ud over rampen. Så folk har bidt mærke i os, men også er købt ind i det vi står for og ikke kun fordi vi har ramt nogle tendenser rent merkantilt og i bladende osv. Men at vi rent faktisk er trådt igennem med et budskab som vi har haft.

Og så selvfølgelig at vi har sprunget ud i nye kategorier. Der var mange der sagde, jamen I er jo et skraldespandsfirma, burde I ikke koncentrere jer om at lave dem i stedet og så lade de andre lave køkkener. Så det at turde gøre tingene, og at have lyst til det tror jeg er super afgørende, men også respekt for det. Når man har lavet skraldespande i 70 år, og så lige pludselig kaster sig over at lave køkkener, så mener jeg at det er alt afgørende at man som designer har en ambitioner om at lave noget som differentierer sig i markedet. Så at man ikke bare kigger ind i køkkenbranchen og ser hvad der sælger og så laver noget magen til, men at man differentierer sig. Og der tror jeg jo at man tager spanden med ind i det, detaljerne, det som spanden står for og tager det med ind og bruger som udgangspunkt og som ingredienser til at føde et nyt design. Og det er det som jeg håber skaber den røde tråd, hvor folk kan ligesom se at køkkenet hænger sammen med sofaen og spanden og lampen osv.

Jeg bliver også rigtig glad når folk siger at vores produkter er lækre. Fordi så giver det folk en hverdagsglæde ved at bruge produkterne. Så det ikke kun bliver design, hvor folk skal kigge på det og synes at du har god smag, men rettere at du nyder at bruge det hver dag og gøre almindelige hverdagsting mere specielle. Det synes jeg er super super vigtigt. Og det jo vores ansvar som designer at ligesom få lagt det ned i produkterne, så kunderne ligesom værdsætter det. Så jeg bliver meget glad hvis vi har nye produkter, og vi viser dem frem og så folk siger "Ej det er lækkert". For så har de modtaget det budskab som der var. Vi har jo også fået nærmest en menighed af folk der bare skal have alle produkterne, og jo større vi kan gøre den menighed jo bedre. Men jeg har det også helt ok med at folk ikke vil have alle vores ting, der vil være nogen som siger den der kan jeg godt lide, men den der kan jeg ikke så godt lide.

Appendix 3: Interview with Katrine Birger, Head of Product Development at Royal Copenhagen

Vil du kort præsentere dig selv, din baggrund og din rolle hos Royal Copenhagen?

Min baggrund er at jeg har arbejdet med design og mode hele min karriere og har været hos Royal Copenhagen siden 2012.

Vi er jo et gammelt brand som rent kulturhistorisk er meget kendt og som brand har vi eksisteret siden 1775, hvor vi startede oprindelig som en porcelænsfabrik, hvilket vi var i rigtig mange år.

Rent kommersielt er det faktisk først inden for de sidste 10-15 år at Royal Copenhagen sådan for alvor er begyndt at tjene mange penge.

I forhold til hvorfor Danmark er så dygtige til design, så kommer det jo af at have nogle gode ideer som tør føre ud i livet. Og det behøver ikke nødvendigvis være at man opfinder den dybe tallerken. Nogen gange er det at man ser mulighederne og har dygtige medarbejdere der kan tage chancen.

Traditionelt set har vi jo været kendt for at være dygtige i Skandinavien til design og er kendt i udlandet med begrebet dansk design, som er meget eftertragtet hvor vi har mange designikoner. Jeg ved ikke hvorfor vi er så dygtige til det, men jeg tror også der er tradition for det her i Danmark.

Royal Copenhagen har jo en anden baggrund end f. eks. VIPP som er en familieejet virksomhed. Der er Royal Copenhagen eget af investeringsfirmaet Fiskars som opkøbte RC i 2014.

Min baggrund er at jeg har arbejdet på min søsters tøjfirma By Malene Birger og har også været involveret i andre start-ups. Så det var egentlig en ny situation at komme til Royal Copenhagen, hvor de er meget etableret og har en meget høj kendskabsgrad i Danmark. Så det er selvfølgelig forskelligt fra at arbejde med start-ups.

Hvordan forstår du innovation?

Man kan sige at de 3 grundpiller i vores forretning er at innovation, teamwork og accountability. Så innovation er noget vi snakker meget om internt, og jeg tror mange forbinder innovation med noget kreativt, og det vil jeg også sige i vores tilfælde at det er noget kreativt i forhold til design. Men derudover er innovation også vores måde at arbejde på med HR, IT og produktudvikling i det hele taget. Så når folk siger at de ikke er kreative/innovative, så er det forkert, fordi man kan sagtens være innovativ i den måde man arbejder på, der forbedrer en proces eller et element i vores produktudvikling.

Personligt har jeg ikke noget kreativ baggrund, men har en kommercial og administrativ baggrund, hvor jeg har arbejdet meget sammen med designere og kreative folk. Jeg føler selv at jeg har en god forståelse for hvordan den kreative proces effektiviseres. Altså hvordan man arbejder hurtigere og kommer i mål med projekterne. Så jeg er god til at skabe balance mellem tingene. Og det føler jeg er en af nøglerne når man arbejder i kreative teams, det er at man også når tingene til tiden.

Vores kreative process kører meget som et tog, hvor vi er meget effektive. Vi har ikke nogen store kreative møder hvor man bare sidder og snakker kreativitet. Men jeg tror også at det hænger sammen med, at efter vi blev opkøbt så er der meget fokus på effektivitet, deadlines og at nå resultater. Vi har en god forståelse for balancen mellem det innovative og det operative. De gode virksomheder forstår vigtigheden af at være innovative og vigtigheden af at være kommercial.

Kan du fortælle lidt om hvordan I strukturerer innovation hos Royal Copenhagen?

Ja, altså vi har jo en kreativ direktør som jeg har et tæt samarbejde med. Vi bruger jo stage gate modellen i forhold til hver fase, så at projektet skal godkendes ved hver stage for at man går videre. Jeg står for at overse projekter og styre dem i mål med fordeling af resourcer og dialog med designere og alle involverede. Så vores kreative direktør styrer den kreative del og han har et samarbejde igen med produktudvikling og har en stor del af ansvaret for design, hvor jeg styre mere toget og hele maskinrummet, hvor budget også er en del af det. Vi har en project management afdeling, de sidder virkelig og har kontakterne til markederne. Så de har en tæt

dialog med markederne, hvad det er de har brug for og hvad der er efterspørgsel på. Efter det bliver der så lavet en vurdering af om man skal følge den efterspørgsel, f. eks. kan det være en kaffekande. Sammenlagt bliver der så udarbejdet en business case, hvis man vælger at gå videre med det.

Vi har fornyeligt lanceret et nyt stel der hedder "Blomst" og det har mange år i udviklingsfasen. Her havde vi en del designere og kunstnere inde som skulle give deres bud på hvordan det skulle laves. Og så er det vores opgave at fortolke deres tanke til at det skal designes, males og produceres. I forhold til produktion så har vi en fabrik i Thailand som er blevet rigtig dygtige til at lave vores produkter. Vi havde en person ude fra min afdeling som skulle undervise dem i det over 2 år, opdelt i 7 gange hvor hun trænede 3 hold i alt.

I forhold til prototyper så bruger vi 3D printning, hvor vi først bruger et program til at tegne det i 3D. Prototyper er en essentiel del for vores udviklingsfase. Fordi så kan vi kigge på formen, og det kan være at proportionerne ikke er helt som de skal være. Når du får det ud i rigtig form kan det se meget anderledes ud end når det er på computeren. Når vi så når til en model som vi synes er som det skal være, så har vi en modelstue her i vores hovedkvarter som så laver en model på ugentlig basis. Derefter bliver den model så sendt til Thailand, og de arbejder videre på den model indtil at vi er tilfredse med kvaliteten.

Efter at vi så er færdige med produktet ryger det i supply chain og bliver godkendt og så kører resten ligesom med produktionen.

Hvad vil du beskrive er de vigtigste egenskaber for en designer?

Det kan være at det er et meget subjektivt svar du får her af mig, og at det ville være anderledes hvis du spurgte en anden. Jeg tror at de brands der er succesfulde, er dem der forstår vigtigheden ved både at have det kreative og det operationelle/kommercielle. Det er ofte de kreative personer der får opmærksomheden, det er dem der skaber og de er enormt vigtige for en virksomhed. Men for at de kan være succesfulde, der skal du have et stærkt operationelt fundament. Så det er en

balance som er enormt vigtigt og at der er et rigtig godt teamwork og man forstår vigtigheden af at have et godt team bag det kreative. Så man skal respektere de kreative kræfter lige så meget som de operative kræfter.

Hvordan vil du beskrive jeres arbejdsmiljø?

Vi har et rigtig godt arbejdsmiljø, og vi har en god forståelse for hinandens roller. Jeg synes vi har et godt teamwork, og vi kan alle sammen noget forskelligt, og sammen kan vi rigtig meget.

Hvordan føler du at du motiverer dine medarbejdere bedst og får det bedste ud af dem?

Jamen det gør jeg ved at vi give dem nogle vilkår, hvor de føler at de får et ansvar og at de bliver hørt. Og det er igen tilbage til det med teamwork og at have en dialog, f. eks. hvem giver det mest mening at give det her projekt til?

Hele tiden vurderet vi sammen, hvordan vi fordeler projekterne ud fra de kompetencer vi har og det tror jeg også gør at vi er motiveret til at gøre vores bedste.

Vi forsøger også at gøre det lettere for vores medarbejdere at arbejde med deres projekter, og prøver at effektivisere deres arbejdsprocesser.

Tester I jeres produkter på forbrugere?

Ikke på den måde ved at gå ud og spørge hvad de synes om et produkt, men vi har en analytiker der sidder og undersøger markedstrends og hvad konkurrenter gør, og hvad der er populært i øjeblikket. Der bliver selvfølgelig også analyseret på hvilke produkter der sælger bedst, altså f.eks. hvilke kopper, er det dem med hank eller ingen? Er det dem der er malet eller hvide? osv. Så det er der vi også afstemmer i forhold til den businesscase vi laver, og sørger for at der er en efterspørgsel efter det.

Hvis du skulle give dit bud på hvorfor at I har været så succesfulde hvad ville det så være?

Royal Copenhagen har jo været succesfulde igennem rigtig mange år, men man kan sige at siden at vi blev opkøbt i 2014 så fik et boost i forhold til vores måde at drive forretning på. Man kan også vælge at diffentiere succes mellem brand-awareness og kommercial succes, hvor vi altid har haft stor succes med vores kendskabsgrad og folks awareness omkring os, og siden vi blev opkøbt er det kommercielt gået endnu bedre.

Den succes vi oplevede var også et udslag af, at vi her på deseneste har haft nogle rigtige succesfulde samarbejde med vores designer, hvor vi har udgivet flere forskellige stel med stor succes. Og dertil ligger også at vi kommunikerer vores brand på en ny måde, og vi er meget opmærksom på at være et brand.

Hvor stor betydning tror du at branding har når man sælger designprodukter?

Jeg tror at det har en kæmpe betydning. Vi er meget opmærksomme på det, og forsøger at bakke vores ting op med marketing. Vi prioterer det meget højt at der er et marketingbudget til lanceringer på alle vores markeder og at det følger en bestemt stil som er i overensstemmelse med det som vores brand står for. Så ja det er alt afgørende at folk ved hvad dit brand står for og at de associerer det med nogle ting som er positive.

Appendix 4: Interview with Kresten Krab-Bjerre, Senior Concept Developer hos B&O

Vil du kort præsentere dig selv og din rolle her hos B&O?

Jamen jeg hedder Kresten Krab-Bjerre, og jeg er senior concept manager og udvikler. Så jeg har ansvaret for designprocessen og alt hvad der hører ind under det. Jeg har faktisk været her i næsten 25 år, så mit billede kommer op og hænger på væggen derover snart. Alle medarbejdere der har været her i 25 år får deres billeder op at hænge der.

Min baggrund er at jeg gik i lære som maskinarbejder efter folkeskolen, og så mens jeg gik der synes jeg det kunne være spændende at finde ud af hvorfor tingene så ud som de gør. Så der tog jeg en maskiningeniøruddannelse, og så mens jeg gik der tænke jeg at det var lidt sjovt at man laver alt de her konstruktioner hvor man har brugeren så meget i fokus, fordi næsten alt man laver, så skal der jo stå et menneske og bruge det, den maskine eller ting man nu laver. Derefter tog jeg så en master uddannelse i England i industriel design, hvor da jeg så var færdig der fik tilbuddet en stilling i Kolding.

Efterfølgende er jeg så havnet hos B&O efter at jeg fik det anbefalet af en god ven jeg havde i min tid i Kolding, som synes at jeg skulle søge ind. Men da jeg startede, var det jo ikke design lige med det samme, så jeg startede med at lave produkterne på maskiner, og siden da er jeg så stegede i gradene stille og roligt kan man sige.

Og i min tid her hos B&O har jeg så været med til at lave deres første fladskærms TV, Beovision og vores automotive samarbejde med Aston Martin, BMW, Lamborghini, Bentley osv. og en masse andet, så det har været rigtig spændende at arbejde med.

I dag har vi 3 forskellige kategorier vi arbejder med: staged, flexible or on the go. Hvor staged er de store dyre ting: højtalere, fjernsyn osv. så dem har jeg ansvaret for, og så laver jeg også flexible. Men vi er to konceptteams, der er et her i Struer, og så er der et team i Lyngby som består af 5 mand, så vi deles om flexible. Og så ”on the go” tager de sig af i Lyngby, de unge mennesker. Men vi mødes hver 14. dag, og snakker om hvordan det går med projekterne. Og det fungerer rigtig godt, hvor vi mødes hver anden gang her i Struer og hver anden gang i Lyngby.

Hvordan forstår du innovation?

Jamen innovation er jo mange ting, det kan jo både være at lave noget som ikke er set før, men det kan også være at kombinere kendte ting på en ny måde. Så det er jo egentlig de to begreber vi arbejder med her hos os.

Hvad vil du sige at innovation betyder for B&O?

Jamen når jeg laver koncepter, så vil jeg gerne have en version som er at kombinere kendte ting på en ny måde, så at man skaber en oplevelse der aldrig er set før. For mig er det utrolig vigtigt at når man laver Bang og Olufsen produkter så skal det ikke bare være smukt at se på, men der skal være rigtig mange historier i dem. Så at der er lidt for alle interesser. Så der skal helst være noget om teknologi, noget omkring design, noget omkring materialer, og noget omkring brugeroplevelsen. Så jeg prøver altid så vidt muligt at skrabe så mange ting som overhovedet muligt sammen. Således at der er så meget dybde i koncepter som overhovedet muligt inden for den tid og budget som vi har til rådighed. Der er 3 måder at kører koncepter på: Der er en hvor vi holder øje med vores salg, og hvis der er nogen som performer dårligt, så udskifter vi det med et nyt. Måske et tilsvarende, men i hvert fald et som erstatter det i produktporteføljen. Så kan der jo være nogen hvor vi laver noget nyt teknologi, som så skaber en ny mulighed. Og så laver vi et nyt produkt ud fra den teknologi. Og den sidste er når designeren kommer med noget som vi har overset og siger, kunne I ikke tænke jer at lave sådan en her. Og man kan sige hvis man skal tage to eksempler på de sidste, så er den Beolap Shape der hænger ude i gangen her, altså den sekskantede højtalер, hvor en designer kom og sagde til os, var det ikke noget? Det fik vi så til at virke og man kan sige, det er sådan en hvor designeren kommer med et forslag.

Men jeg interesserer mig for det hele inden for design og innovation, og tænke hele tiden på om der er noget vi kan gøre bedre og noget vi evt. kan sætte form på. Og det er mit ansvar at sådan sætte form på det og det er min opgave at sikre at vi ikke får ødelagt noget i processen. Så det vi typisk gør er, at vi starter ud med det vi kalder et konceptteam, hvor der sidder de relevante faggrupper og kompetencer. Og typisk hvis det er en højtalér så sidder der selvfølgelig en akustikker, og en mekanikingeniør og en hardwareingeniør, og der kan også sidde en som der har det økonomiske ansvar. I dag arbejder vi også så meget med partnere, så der kan også godt sidde

en med der varetager de her operationsopgaver. Men typisk er det nogle faglige ingeniører. Men min opgave er at få dem som er involveret til at sidde og føle at det er en fest at lave, og få de her mennesker til at arbejde så godt sammen som overhovedet muligt. Så at vi føler at vi hjælper hinanden og at vi sammen laver det allerbedste koncept. Og det der er lidt specielt for Bang og Olufsen, det er selvom at vi laver et stærkt designprodukt, så er vores færdige produkt faktisk endnu smukkere. Så når først at designerens drøm kommer ind, så ender det med at blive endnu flottere, fordi vi hele tiden tænker på hvordan vi kan gøre det endnu bedre. Så det er ret fedt at det er sådan. Så designere elsker at arbejde sammen med os, fordi det de foreslår, altid bliver lidt bedre eller væsentligt bedre.

Kan du fortælle lidt om hvordan I organiserer innovation hos B&O?

Jamen altså der er nogle bestemt ting som vi står for her hos B&O, og som vi vil associeres med. Den første er akustik, den anden er design og den sidste er craftsmanship. Så det er nogen af de ting som vi virkelig bruger energi på. Så vi har nogle store afdelinger herude der arbejder med lyd på teknologisiden, nok en af de største her i Danmark og måske også i verden faktisk på grund af det samarbejde vi har med universiteterne rundt omkring i verden. Så omkring innovation så er der virkelig nogen som sidder og bruger al deres tid, kun på at lave innovation inden for lyd, så det gør jo at vi sidder med en viden som er helt unikt.

Vores samarbejder, indeholder også leverandører som skal sørge for at hvis du har et produkt fra B&O, hvor det ligner aluminium, jamen så er det aluminium. Og hvis det ligner træ, jamen er det lavet af træ osv. osv. Så vi har nogle rigtige dygtige partnere inden for det, som gør at vi kan dyrke det alt det vi kan.

Vi kan godt lide ingeniører som er gode til at gå ud og undersøge nogle ting, og så komme tilbage og sige, du kan gøre sådan her og der er de her fordele og ulemper og vi kan gøre det på de her 3 måder. Så de ingeniører vi har der sidder hos os er nogen som er rigtig gode til den tidlige fase. Men der har vi altså haft personer som bare gerne ville have det lavet så hurtigt som muligt, og det fungerer altså ikke her hos B&O, der tager tingene tid.

Så i stedet for atingeniøren kommer og siger at det her er den bedste løsning for mig, så vil vi hellere have at han kommer med forslag, således at vi sammen kan gennemgå dem og overveje

fordeler og ulemper og til sidst vælge den bedste løsning. Så det er super vigtigt med de teams, at de fungerer godt og der er en god harmoni mellem de forskellige mennesker. Ellers så ender det bare i kaos med råben og skrigen, og det er bare træls.

Hvor mange sidder i typisk i sådan en konceptudvikler gruppe?

Vi sidder typisk en lille håndfuld, altså nogen gange er det bedste at være så få som muligt. Og det er egentlig ret effektivt, det går ret hurtigt fra at vi starter med vores udgangspunkt. Vi kører med en stage gate model, hvor vi den første fase laver en beskrivelse af produktet, og et kig på økonomien og hvor den skal ligge henne i markedet også i forhold til konkurrenterne. Så fra 1 til 2, der prøver vi at komme med vores anbefalinger, så der sidder man og snakker med dem der har lavet gate 1, og så får jeg en ide om at det nok den her designer vi skal have på. Nogen gange har vi også flere designere på for at sammenligne, og se om den ene kunne være bedre end den anden. I gate 2 kommer der også lidt mere beskrivelse på med form, funktion og materialer, så vi kan lave et brief til en designer. Det tager ca. et halvt år at lave sådan en designopgave. Beolap anlægget tog dog lidt længere, for der var rigtig meget lyd der skulle være revolutionerende, men sådan i gennemsnit ca. 6 måneder.

I gate 3 det er så der man bestiller værktøjerne, og laver den store investering, der bestiller man alle produktionsværktøjerne. Men efter stage 3 der er det produktion og, der har jeg ikke noget med det af gøre. Så der er det kun hvis de kommer og spørger om noget at jeg er med ind over. Men der er en aftale om at ikke at lave noget om uden at man har snakket med designafdelingen.

Kan du beskrive hvordan arbejdsmiljøet er hos B&O?

Jamen altså førhen var vi jo spredt ud på mange forskellige locations. Og i dag har vi jo heller ikke noget montage af vores produkter, det foregår alt sammen i udlandet.

Men det der er vigtigt når man laver sådan nogle produkter som vores, det er jo at hvis du skiller vores produkter ad, så kan man se at de hænger sammen fra yderst til inderst. Så de er pæne uden på, men hvis du sådan begynder at skille dem ad, så vil du også finde at de er meget logiske bygget op inden i. Og man vil også finde at vores produkter er meget nemme at skille ad, og hvis du vil

have en anden farve så er det nemt at få skiftet ud, hvis du f. eks får en anden farve hjemme i din stue, så kan du også sagtens få det skiftet til en ny.

Men for at man kan det, så er man nød til at tænke sig godt om, og være nød til at snakke med hinanden. Alle vores produkter er jo solgt igennem B&O butikker, det der hedder B1 stores. Vores Play produkter sælges sådan lidt over det hele, men hvis du går lidt op i de dyre ting, så sælger vi igennem vores egen butikker. For det gør jo at vores forhandlere også helt præcist ved hvordan det fungerer, og kan sælge dem og forklare osv.

Men vores arbejdsmiljø er rigtig godt, og jeg tror ikke at der er nogen hos B&O der ikke føler at de er en del af det de laver, for man er sådan nød til at tænke sine produkter igennem sådan end to end. Men jeg vil også sige at enten så elsker du at arbejde hos B&O eller også så hader du det, fordi synes man at det er fedeste at være grundig og at vi tager også rigtig god tid til at gøre det ordenligt så fungere det rigtig godt. Hvorimod hvis man hellere vil gøre alting i fart og bare have noget ud hurtigt, så kan man ikke lide at være her. Selvom at det selvfølgelig i dag er blevet hurtigere at få udviklet produkterne og få dem på markedet. Men der bliver brugt virkelig meget tid på at gøre produkterne lækre og gennemførte.

Hvordan vil du sige at det arbejdsmiljø i har her hos B&O fordrer innovation?

Det jeg virkelig elsker ved at arbejde hos B&O, det er den entrepreneur ånd der er her. Og det er selvom at vi ligger her in the middle of nowhere tæt på Struer. For der er lidt den der indstilling med at vi skal vise resten af verden at man faktisk godt kan bo på en pløjemark i Vestjylland og stadigvæk lave de fedeste produkter i verden. Og det er den her kampgejst der er i hele virksomheden og som er bevist virker. For hvis du kigger rundt omkring i Europa, så er der ikke andre europæiske audio-video brands der findes mere. Måske Löwe, men tror faktisk at de er købt op af noget asiatisisk også. Men altså Philips, Grundtvig osv. der var her i gamle dage, jamen de findes jo ikke som selvstændige virksomheder mere. De er jo købt op af en kæmpe organisation, som så putter det der stempel på. Hvor vi selvfølgelig er et aktieselskab, men vores fokus og det vi lever af er at lave vores audio og video produkter. Og jeg tror også at det er derfor vi bruger så mange penge på innovation og prøver hele tiden på at være de bedste til at styre de her processer – og det gør vi virkelig. Og nogen gange får man spat af det, fordi nu synes man lige at du kører det

meget godt. Men så bliver posen stadigvæk rystet, fordi vi skal tilpasse os forandringer og blive endnu bedre. Så man kan sige at det der er det samme hele tiden, det er at det blive forandret hele tiden. Men man lærer også at acceptere det med årene. Og vi ved også at hvis vi ikke gjorde sådan, jamen så havde vi lukket med årene. Så det er noget der gennemsyrer virksomheden, vi skal hele tiden udfordre os selv og blive endnu bedre. Så selvom at noget virker i dag, så er det ikke sikkert at det gør i fremtiden. Så det er en udfordring man omfavner her hos B&O.

Hvordan føler du at du motiverer din medarbejdere bedst og får det bedste ud af dem?

Jamen det der virker, fordi de er jo en flok entreprenører alle sammen, det er at man stoler på dem på 100%. Og siger jamen jeg har brug for at du yder dit bedste. Og hvis der er noget du er i tvivl om, som kom til mig. Hvis mit forslag til en person er at de gør sådan her, og hvis det ikke kan så kom tilbage med nogle bedre alternativer. Og der er faktisk noget der virker. Men jeg gør tingene meget intuitivt og virkelig sådan uformelt. Men det er også rigtig meget omkring respekt omkring de andres faglighed og at give dem ansvaret. For dem vi har herude, de er vant til det og de kan godt lide det. Så det bedste for mig er at jeg giver dem en opgave, og så kommer de tilbage med en forbedret version eller et bedre alternativ.

Hvilke elementer mener du at der skal være til stede hos en designvirksomhed for at man kan lave innovativt design?

Jeg tror meget på at hvis du skal lave innovativt design, så skal du ikke være bange for at lave fejl. Man skal have mod til at gøre tingene. Man skal selvfølgelig ikke lave den samme fejl igen. Så der en høj grad af åbenhed og forståelse af at vi går til grænsen og der er en del af det at fejle en gang i mellem. Så det tror jeg meget er det og så selvfølgelig de andre ting vi har snakket om.

Hvad vil du sige inspirerer jeres designere her hos B&O?

Jeg får faktisk tit det spørgsmål, hvad er det der inspirerer jer. Og egentlig er det bare hårdt arbejde. Rollen for vores designere er jo lidt at tage forbrugernes øjne på og tage deres parti. Og spørge sig selv, hvad er det egentlig for nogle ting som folk har brug for i deres hverdag i forhold til at høre musik, se tv, stremme og hvordan gør vi det til en bedre oplevelse. Så der er egentlig ikke så meget romantik i det, det er egentlig bare at fyre den max af og få det hele til at spille max.

Hvilke egenskaber mener du at der vigtige for at man skal være succesfuld designer?

Man skal kende sine materialer ordentligt. Og man skal selvfølgelig kunne lave noget der ser smukt ud. Men det vigtigste er nok at man har rigtig gode samarbejdsevner. Så hvis man ikke interesserer sig for ingeniører og de udfordringer som de har så er man ikke en god designer. Hvis man kommer ind som en prinsesse og siger nu laver jeg et eller andet, og så må de andre bare finde ud af hvordan det skal laves, så tror jeg ikke at det kommer til at fungere.

Hvilke elementer mener du der kan hæmme innovationsprocessen?

Det kan det sociale aspekt, hvis man får nogle personligheder ind som ikke vil. Så det gælder om at få nogle personer som gerne vil og som er samarbejdsvillige. Så det vigtigste er at man god til at arbejde sammen med andre. Du kommer jo ikke igennem det danske uddannelsessystem uden at have en høj faglig kompetence. Og vi har da også nogle af de skarpeste hjerner inden for teknologi. Men det som virkelig er vigtigt, det er at du er god til at samarbejde.

Jeg tror også på at det er stærkt for medarbejderne, hvis de kan føle at de er med hele vejen – det er motiverende. Det gør også at de har en ansvarsfølelse med, fordi at de jo ikke vil have at forbrugerne står med en dårlig oplevelse af vores produkter.

Så nøglen er at man er social, veludviklet, faglig kompetent, har ansvar over for de andre og produktet.

Jeg vil også rigtig gerne have at alt som folk kommer med til mig, det er brugbart, og det bliver brugt. For det gør at folk føler et maximalt engagement.

Kan du beskrive om B&O's tilgang til innovation adskiller sig fra andre virksomheder?

Altså, der er jo i hvert fald nogle ting som vi har sagt at vi vil være blandt verdens bedste i, altså blandt andet lyd bruger vi rigtig meget tid og penge på.

Men nok også vores samarbejdsform, vi er ikke større end at vi sidder i et lokale alle sammen herude. Og hvis jeg skal sammenligne lidt med i gamle dage. Der sad vi over i en anden bygning og lavet designer, og uden på vores dør der stod der "adgang forbudt", så man måtte ikke komme ind uden at man havde lov. I dag, der ligger designafdelingen herude i midten af lokalet, og vi laver de første prototyper så at alle kan se dem. Og det gør jo at alle kan komme hen og sige "Hey har I tænkt over at man også kunne gøre sådan her". For vi bruger faktisk alt den energi og kompetence der er herude, hvor i gamle dage var det de få som skabte innovationen. Men jeg synes at det fungerer rigtig godt i dag. Og vi har stor værdi ved at hurtigt få en prototype som folk kan forholde sig til.

Bruger i eksterne designere i innovationsprocessen?

Ja, vi bruger udelukkende eksterne designere. Og det gør vi for at vi er i stand til at yde max. Vi har fundet ud af at hvis vi har vores egne designer, så kan det nogen gange være svært at nogen kommer hen og kommenterer og andre er mindre tilbøjelige til at komme med forbedringer. Vi gør det også for at sørge for at vi er på forkant med hvad der sker ude i verden. Vi har prøvet at have vores egne designere, og der sker bare det at verden bliver mindre og mindre. Og det går ikke, så lukker man.

Men vi har selvfølgelig nogle designere som vi har arbejdet sammen med i mange år. Vi tager ikke bare nye ind.

Er der en bestemt designer i arbejder meget sammen med i øjeblikket?

Vi arbejdede jo med Jacob Jensen selvfølgelig i mange år, og derefter var det David Lewis, og i dag er det også David Lewises efterfølgere og hans firma vi arbejder sammen med, hvor Torsten som kører det i dag arbejdede meget sammen med Lewis. Og David Lewis arbejde jo med Jacob før det,

og blev oplært. Så hvis man kigger historisk, så har vi faktisk brugt den samme designfilosofi siden 70'erne.

Og med B&O Play, der har vi helt bevidst arbejdet sammen med nogle yngre designere. Fordi hele formålet der var at lave noget der var mere økonomisk for det yngre publikum.

Men vi har faktisk en relativt stor design pool af personer at tage af i dag. Og som jeg sagde før, så nogen gange tager vi flere tegnestuer på én gang, for at sammenligne og se hvad det er bedst.

Tester i jeres produkter på brugere?

Ja det gør vi, vi har en afdelinger som indsamler oplysninger fra forbrugerne inden for de grænser som man nu må selvfølgelig. Men vores kunder er også enormt loyale, så mange er villige til at komme ind til interviews, hvor vi spørg dem om forskellige ting.

Vi har også nogle tests sådan helt konkret med flamingo klodser, hvor vi spørg dem, kan du bedste lide den her form eller den her. Og så kan vi også teste i designprocessen om de kan lide den og hvis der f. eks. er noget nyt userinterface på den. Og se om det giver mening osv.

Men det er jo en balancegang, for som Steve Jobs sagde "Folk ved ikke hvad de ville have før at du viser det til dem". Så med design, der tager vi den input vi får, men følger den ikke fuldstændig og ved at i sidste ende skal vi komme med noget nyt og spændende og hvor folk får den der "wow" følelse.

Hvor stor betydning har branding og markedsføring når man sælger designprodukter?

Der er ingen tvivl om at det skal hænge sammen fra ende til anden. Og at der skal være en kontinueret sammenhæng mellem vores markedsføring og vores produkter.

Og det gælder om at kommunikere nogle gode historier ud til folk. Og vi har et rigtig stærkt brand, man drømmer ikke om hvor mange døre det åbner at arbejde for B&O. Der er ikke nogen som ikke har lyst til at arbejde med os. Så vi har et godt brand, og det er også fordi vi altid gør os umage. Og man kan også se at dem som arbejder sammen med os, de bruger aktivt vores navn på deres

produkter. Så det betyder rigtig meget for os, at vi er et godt navn, og der til kommer selvfølgelig også et pres om at hele tiden at skulle leve op til det og at vi laver de bedste ting.

Men der er jo en grund til at vi kan arbejde sammen med Aston Martin, Bently og BMW osv. Det åbner virkelig nogle døre for os at have det brand vi har.