

MO.Point

Mobility services in front of the door

COLLABORATIVE R&D PROJECTS



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Main actors

- Spirit Design Innovation and Brand GmbH
- raum & kommunikation GmbH
- private Co-founders

This case study represents collaborative innovation best, because from the first ideas until the foundation of a company, best know practices were used. The results led to the foundation of the company MO.Point. During the applied R&D project, phases of open innovation were combined with cocreation and closed innovation. Any research only creates value, if it solves a real-life problem. This implies, that the quality of the R&D can only be measured afterwards, when the research results were transferred and applied to the market. This is, why the use case of MO.Point is worth a best practice case study: The company is planning and operating Mobility Points in buildings and city districts. Residents can rent a wide range of eco-friendly sharing-vehicles such as e-bikes, electric cars or electric cargo-bikes at convenient prices. The vehicles and supplementary services are easily accessible just around the corner and can be used around the clock. The appropriate vehicle can be reserved via app or website. Users have access to the vehicles during the booking period with their digital access card and can lock and unlock the vehicles. The billing of the consumed journeys takes place at the end of the month. Project developers, cities, municipalities and companies benefit from a customized mobility solution, which MO.Point implements as one-stop shop with selected partners. The local mobility services add value to real estates.

Process Main Stages

STAGE 1 – RESEARCH PROJECT WOMO – WOHNEN UND MOBILITÄT

The companies raum & kommunikation GmbH and Spirit Design GmbH got to know each other, wrote a proposal and applied for a grant on the topics of mobility and housing. The proposal was successful and the project was funded by the Austrian Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology (BmVIT) in the scheme "mobility of the future". The companies carried out the project and investigated how to integrate smart mobility services into the planning and construction process of housing. (see: <http://www2.ffg.at/verkehr/projekte.php?id=1154>) During the project, a multi-stakeholder process was conducted, including representatives of municipalities, urban planning, real estate developer, mobility service operator and end consumer. Visualizations of the project results were very helpful to develop a common vision and share the ideas.

STAGE 2 – INCUBATION PHASE

Due to the huge interests of the stakeholder, especially besides real estate developer, the cooperation partner decided to bring the ideas, that were developed in the research project, to the market. In 2015, the companies led preliminary talks with organisations interested in realization of local mobility services. The offer "mobility point" was developed. The consortium decided to hire the project and fund a spin off. During this process, main persons involved remained the same and even decided to engage personally in the spin-off. The consortium got another grant offered by Austrian Wirtschaftsservices. Within this project, the consortium developed a business plan, a clear offer for the market. In parallel talks on the realisation of a first pilot project were conducted.

STAGE 3 – START-UP AND PROTOTYPE PLANNING

Subsequently to the previous phase the transformation from a project organization to a separated organizational entity took place. Design thinking eased the establishment of an own corporate identity. During this stage, the team defined a steering committee and an operational team, and distributed roles and duties.

Besides the corporate design, legal and financial issues played a major role. Processes and tools, needed to start the prototype were developed. Pre-contracts with supplier were arranged. Over all, the contract for the first pilot project was negotiated and budgeting was done.

STAGE 4 – FOUNDATION OF THE COMPANY

MO.Point Mobilitätsservices GmbH was founded in May 2016. Since June 2016, the company has been operating the first pilot project at the residential building Perfektastraße 58, 1230 Vienna. MO.Point was awarded the VCÖ mobility prize Austria 2016 for this pilot project, and attracted attention. (see: <https://www.vcoe.at/projekte/vcoe-mobilitaetspreis>). In 2016 MO.Point started to generate revenues and was already contracted by real estate developers to plan additional mobility points in Vienna. The realisation of further sites in the bigger cities in Austria and Germany is planned.

Touchpoints & Bottlenecks

TOUCHPOINT 1 – STEERING-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

At the beginning of the research project, the project organization, timing, roles and duties were defined. In the steering-committee the manager of the co-operating organizations were present and responsible for strategic decisions.

TOUCHPOINT 2 – TEAM MEETINGS

Team meetings involved 3-6 persons, that elaborated the project content. Amongst them, two project leader were defined, that cared for operational decisions and managed the project on a weekly basis.

TOUCHPOINT 3 – JOUR-FIX MEETINGS

Once the project organization was defined, regular jour-fix meetings helped to structure the project. At the beginning the meetings took place on a monthly basis. Later at a weekly basis. Important was, that the two project leaders were present.

TOUCHPOINT 4 – INTERNAL WORKSHOPS

Selected members amongst the team prepared the workshops and set the agenda. At workshops, it was important that the needed knowledge was represented.

TOUCHPOINT 5 – FTP-SERVER, WIKI, E-MAIL

It was intended to establish a structured knowledge exchange and knowledge management. Although diverse tools such as a wiki and a FTP-server was provided, most information exchange happened spontaneously via E-Mail or telephone.

TOUCHPOINT 6 – STAKEHOLDER-WORKSHOP

One stakeholder workshop was held, where selected experts were invited. The exclusive format led to a strong interest besides all participants. The workshop was announced 2 months earlier, and participants were selected carefully.

TOUCHPOINT 7 – FOCUS GROUPS

As soon as the team came up with solutions, these were visualized and presented to selected people, representing end user. The solutions were discussed in the setting of focus groups. Independent of the setting we recommend in any case to involve user in the project!

Success Factors / Barriers

SUCCESS FACTORS

The success factors of the project were, that the consortium was kept small from the beginning. This is why it was lean and efficient to manage. Processes and knowledge exchange was direct, effective and quick between the two companies. Concerning the competences, the project team had a diverse knowledge background (e.g. urban planning, innovation management, design, mobility, ...), but diversity amongst the team members was not too huge. An important factor during the forming of the project team and even more important for the spin-off was the development of a common vision with all founders. Design thinking and visualization facilitated this process. Important was a multi-stakeholder approach in the early stages of the project; but also a small, closed-innovation approach in the elaboration of solutions. We can recommend a short time to market, to test the solution as early as possible (it could even be shorter!). Helpful was the integration of end-consumers (via focus groups) in this process. Essential was the early spin-off and the foundation of a completely separated organizational entity. In this context it is important, to keep the team tight and do not exchange team members, if the team once works fine.

BARRIERS

Of course, resources were limited during the start-up phase. Although limited resources are helpful to keep projects lean and effective, the search for funding can be time-consuming and slow the processes. Another issue was, that the consortium did not cover all knowledge, especially IT competences. We recommend to thoroughly check the needed competences with those available and cover missing ones.

Conclusion

DO

Form a small team or project consortium. Tackle a real-life problem, instead of writing project proposals according to calls. A diverse team that covers all competences needed is necessary. It is essential to develop a common vision amongst all stakeholders. Therefore design thinking and visualization is a facilitator. A combination of open-innovation in the idea generation phases, followed by close-innovation, for the elaboration is recommended. Most important is to test, as soon as solutions have been elaborated. Once, the team performs, do not change it and let it form a separated organizational unit.

DON'T

Avoid complex consortia, that do not share a common vision. Do not develop projects for the sake of a research call and don't lose the contact to real-life problems.