

Internship Report

Innovation Booster



Maxime Vallentin

Student ID 0956202

Company coach Sjors Lewis

Teacher coach Erik van der Spek

06-01-2020, Eindhoven

The content of this document is confidential.

TU/e

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Summary

The past semester, I worked as an intern at the Amsterdam-based company Innovation Booster (IB). Innovation Booster is a successful consultancy bureau that designs strategies, structures, services and other innovative products for several clients. Their method is very direct and effective; an employee, called a booster, spends four work days a week at the company that hired Innovation Booster and spends one day reflecting, improving and helping fellow boosters at the IB office. For me, this company was a perfect fit to do my internship since my goal was primarily to experience how the practice of being an industrial designer was like at big companies like the ones that IB works for and whether everything I learned at the TUE was actually applicable to the reality. More broadly, this goal included getting to know the function of a business and the approach to and communication with clients. Fortunately, my internship provided me with quite some new skills that fit right into the goals I set beforehand. As an intern I got several jobs that mostly consisted out of assisting boosters. Together with them, I focused on the design processes of the projects for different clients. By doing several different projects I found out how different innovational teams work and thus, I kind of did an internship at a few companies at once. Overall, I learned how big corporates are organized, how they function and how they should be approached.

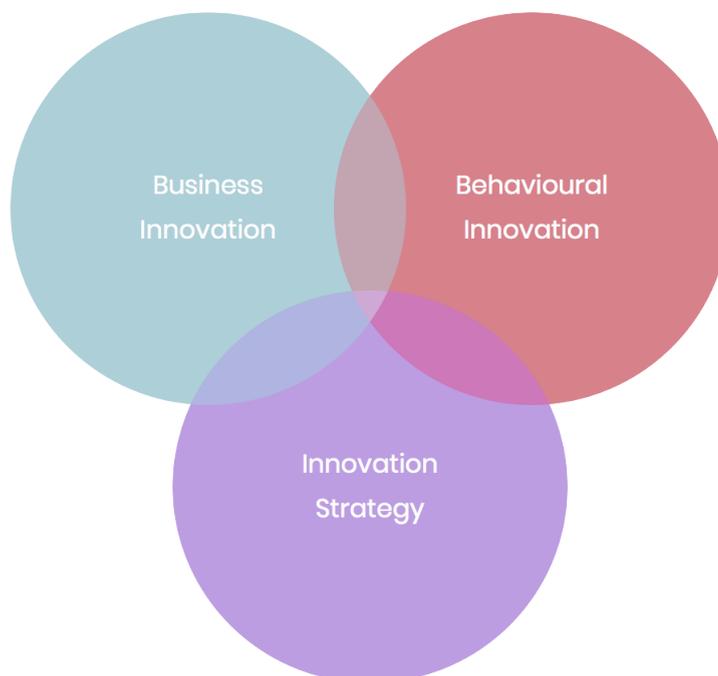
Introduction

In this report, names of the clients of IB are not mentioned because of their privacy and the NDA I signed at the beginning of my internship.

Four months of working at a high functioning Amsterdam-company with very high working pressure is summarized in this report. For me, this period was an eye-opening one. It was the first time having a desk job and experiencing the business world as an employee. The last few years, I wanted to develop my Expertise-Area Business and Entrepreneurship further and that is why I started looking for a design-company that focuses on this area. I participated in a design challenge from Unicef hosted by Innovation Booster. Because I won I got to join a session of IB for Unicef. IB's methodology appealed to me immediately and fortunately for me, they had a spot left for an intern for the first semester of 19-20. Innovation Booster helped me realize what I'm good at and helped me improve my industrial design skills. By being able to see so many companies from the inside and even being a part of innovation teams at these companies from time to time, I worked both on my assisting as on my leading role.

Company description

Innovation Booster (IB) is an Amsterdam-based company that focuses on assisting and stimulating other corporates to renew their business. IB can be called in to innovate in one of the following areas; Business-behaviour, strategy or structure. Firstly, when a company struggles with their organizational structure or culture, a booster can come in to help reflect on these problems and to create a new plan concerning the form or environment of the company. Secondly, IB can also focus more on strategy. Sometimes, when a company exists for quite a while, got rusty and is not as successful on the modern market as it would like to be, it is necessary to revive the business by applying a new strategy. If the employees of the company find it difficult to create this strategy, mostly because they have been using the old one for a while and do not really know how to think differently, it is useful to involve someone from the outside who knows how to create modern strategies. For a lot of companies, a booster is the perfect person for this. Thirdly, companies which create products or deliver services sometimes fall behind on the modern market. In this case, boosters can come in and create, together with the employees, new ideas and concepts. All in all, Innovation Boosters help companies innovating by taking small steps together.



Method of working

Every booster mostly has one client a time. They can be connected to this client for a short time of six weeks or of a year. As soon as a booster is not able to work at the company completely objectively and is being sucked into the company-culture or beliefs, she or he lets the client go and a different booster becomes responsible for this client.

The booster comes in the office of the client four days a week. Here, they mostly have their own desks and can have various tasks. Sometimes, the booster is the supervisor of an innovational team or is responsible for creating a new strategy or structure. One day a week, on Fridays, all the boosters are in the office of IB. On this day, a personal evaluation and the so-called 'project fixer' takes place. The latter consists out of boosters listening to each others work-related issues or problems and trying to solve these. Moreover, a dashboard meeting is held. During this meeting, the boosters reflect on the past week on business level and discuss the upcoming projects. This way, it is made sure that everyone is doing good and whether they need help. It is not possible that a project is not going well without every booster knowing.



Company structure

IB is created seven years ago by three founders. By now, one of these does the back-office and two are partner-boosters. In the Netherlands, there are two more partners. All the partners are concerned with Sales. Moreover, there is one lead in the branch in New York City. Next to the founders and partners, there are about thirty boosters who mainly work for clients as described above. There is also one employee for the financial business and one for HR. Finally, there are always four or five interns working for IB. All together, the employees create the company strategy and make sure the good environment is maintained at all costs.

Company culture

IB is not a strictly individual or communal company. On the one hand, the principle of each person for himself counts since boosters do not normally work together on a project. On the other hand, a big aspect of the fast and easy workflow and the general success of IB is the sharing-and-caring culture. Boosters are never too proud or scared to ask for help and the weekly reflections with everyone force them to keep perfecting their ideas and fix problems fast. Overall, boosters are very friendly, helpful and caring.

{FOTO IB BORREL / FEEST}



Internships

As an intern, one should mostly support the boosters. Sometimes an intern gets connected to one booster for a while and sometimes an intern assist more boosters at once. The jobs of an intern are overall very much relating to content and not superficial at all. For example, they create the content for powerpoint slides and give workshops to clients together with a booster.

{FOTO VAN WORKSHOP}



Goals for my internship

As described in the assignment on my Personal Development Goals, due September the 30th.

Goal 1

At the TUE, I learned how a perfect design process goes in theory. In the field, I expect this to go very differently and want to learn how a professional design company runs through a design process. An important part of this is the ideating-aspect. My creativity and realization skills will improve when I understand how an professional business does this in the field.

I want to learn the usual ways of ideating of Innovation Booster (IB) by going through their design processes. This will be done by accompanying employees of IB when they are working their cases and by asking all the questions I want to the project-leaders.

Goal 2

Next, I want to learn how to communicate with clients. When do you get them involved? When do you listen to them and when do you try to persuade them that your way is better? This will be learned by observing well and by asking colleagues at IB about what kind of contact they have with their clients and in what way they involve the client.

Goal 3

Moreover, the business side of a company like this is something that is quite unknown to me. This never played a big part in my projects at the TUE. I have been trying to enhance my expertise on business and entrepreneurship for quite some time now and I think I will manage to do this by learning about the way IB works in the businessworld. Specifically, I want to learn how IB uses the money from it is client. This will be done by observing and analyzing the way IB spends the money they get.

Goal 4

The company I am going to work at works a lot with graphic designs and prototyping. I will be able to prototype for clients which will help me improve my prototyping skills. Specifically, I want to learn when IB uses their prototypes and how much money and effort they put in prototyping.

Goal 5

Finally, by doing this internship, I want to find out whether working at a company like this one fits me. I know that I like designing and that I am good at it, but I am not sure if the work-field is something I want to make a career in in the future. After this semester I want to know whether I would like to work at a company like this or if I prefer another sector after all.

Activities and projects

Working at IB as an intern, I was involved in a great variety of projects and was assigned to several tasks. The past semester, I either had the job to create supporting material, assist boosters or simply join colleagues who went to their clients.

Fixer sessions

Every Friday, all the colleagues come together and have Fixer-sessions. During these sessions, the other boosters shared the problems that arose for them concerning their project that week. Since every Friday was one big summary of all kinds of problems and solutions, I learned a huge deal out of these days. One example is a problem of priority that occurs quite frequently. When a booster designs something for a company that could solve a problem or lack in an area where that company is working in, the design could be so ideal that the whole problems resolves. Without this problem the company is out of any importance anymore since the product it produces is not necessary anymore. The question here is whether solving a problem or keeping a company profitable is more important. Thus, as a designer one should always bear the interest of the corporate she/he works for in mind.

Websites

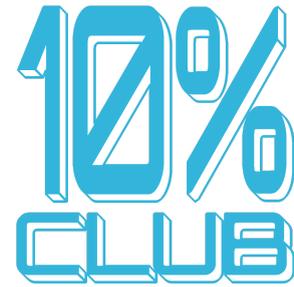
One of IB's most characteristic methods is lean start-up, which we mostly executed by creating a temporary website to test whether start-ups would fit its market. My job was to create these websites from scratch by using the programme Unbounce and doing AB-tests. This concerned both the lay-out as the content. By doing this, I learned more about the different target audiences online, how to do an AB-tests properly, about the structure of a start-up and the criteria for a company or start-up to be successful.

[FOTO VOORBEELD WEBSITE (NAAM GEBLOKKEERD)]



Graphic design

For the websites mentioned above, but also for various different purposes, some logos have regularly to be created at IB. Moreover, the design of some powerpoint slides and other visuals was my job. My producing these graphic design for clients and colleagues, instead of for an assignment or classmates, I really got to know how to produce visuals that can influence their viewers. Firstly, decoration is not a bad thing. People's enthusiasm can be stirred up by colourful, moving or funny images or pictograms. Secondly, clarity can be created by either providing supporting imagery or by converting text or information into symbols, pictograms or other visuals. Moreover, it is important to be able to make choices fast concerning design because products have to be finished quickly.



IB Introduction-week

In the first week of my internship, all the interns enjoyed five days full of information about IB. Here, I learned about all the models and methods IB uses. I got introduced to the company perspective, which sometimes differed greatly from the university perspective that I had internalized.

[FOTO INTRODUCTIEWEEK]



IB workshops

During my internship, I also got to step outside of my position of learner. Both for different clients as for a potential new intern for the next semester, I gave a workshop on the methodology of IB. By combining my experience and the material from IB, I was able to explain how the company works. After this, I immediately noticed that I understood the methods better because I had had to convert my passive knowledge about the company to active knowledge and deepening my knowledge of some of IB'S materials.

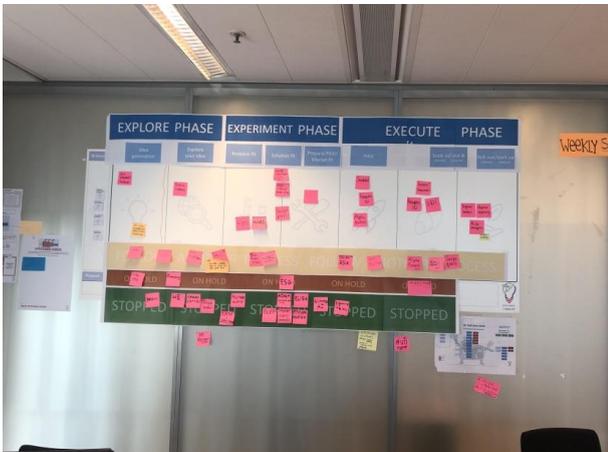
IB Birthday

Every year, IB celebrated its birthday with a big party. I was fortunate enough to intern exactly at the right moment and I even got to organize the seventh birthday-party of IB with some coworkers. This involved fixing various locations, coming up with a fun and inspiring programme en making sure the day was documented properly.



Visiting clients

The biggest part of my internship was joining boosters when they visited clients. I mostly watched them work and host ideation and strategy sessions with the employees of the company. Moreover, I assisted them with organizing sessions, coming up with new strategies for the company and facilitated meetings and ideation sessions. From doing all this, I learned how to run a team as an external employee. Quite some times, companies did not apply the new structure properly because they were not convinced of its effectivity. Moreover, even big corporates with years of experience tend to fail with new products because they did not test the products priorly in the field. It is important to always do a survey amongst potential clients to check the likability and usefulness prior to launching a product. By having to do this a couple of times, I learned what questions to ask and how to process and analyze the results.



Outcome

During this internship, I did not work on one specific product or process. Instead, I learned how to work at a design-oriented consultancy company and with several big corporates with different interests. As a result, I improved my skills as an industrial designer, mostly in three areas of expertise. This chapter references to the goals from chapter 4 the outcomes apply to.

Business and Entrepreneurship

By experiencing first handedly what corporates expect from a company like IB, I learned about the methodologies of these corporates, what their demands are and how to approach them. Most of the time, the clients that hired IB got stuck in an innovational process and were scared of missing the boat because of the rising of new technologies. As the head of one of IB's clients said: 'We need to become the two guys in the garage before they can become us.' The boosters could, after understanding the corporate structure and culture, shine some new lights on the issues present. This was all new to me. I now know the different possible structures of big corporates and the criteria that have to be met in order to launch a successful and profitable product. A product is only a success if a company has the right means to produce it and it is supported enough within the company. Moreover, I acquired more experience with networking with possible clients and communicating with them. I learned that some clients have to be approached more direct and others more friendly. (Goal 2) Finally, I experienced how the business-sides of a company work. I watched and evaluated Boosters work at Sales, Human Resources and the financial department. (Goal 3)



Creativity and Aesthetics

I worked both on my design creativity as on my feel for aesthetics. By having to create websites and logos using InDesign and Illustrator, I got more used to this and having to create a design quickly but qualitatively for a client. (Goal 4) Next, I worked on my own creativity and stimulated others by presenting new perspectives through alternative strategies and methods to clients that got stuck in a process. Finally, joining Boosters helped me form an idea of the way they and their clients go through a design process, from a very conceptual idea or basal issue to the ideation sessions, execution within a big company and the effect. (Goal 1)

User and Society

My favorite pet subject of industrial design is the user-friendliness of a product. As soon as the average user cannot easily work with a product, it is useless to the market. Working at IB, I learned about different target groups and what kind of products they want or need. Next, we involved the user frequently by doing surveys and testing the likability of a design. The latter, we executed by using the programme Unbounce for doing an AB-test, that allows one to produce a platform on which a possible new product gets launched in order to check how many online users would respond to it. Moreover, an industrial design has a societal responsibility. Quite some companies IB works for are active within this framework. Their processes target creating a more sustainable product, service or company in general. By working for the user and on corporal changes in order to achieve something more sustainable, my awareness of the user and its society as one of the most, or maybe the most, important aspect of design grew greatly.

Moreover, I found out that IB is not a company I would want to work at on a short term. Mostly, boosters are not in a position to decide anything within a client's company and can really only do suggestions. Next, all the companies I joined as booster or even as part of the innovation team are not a good fit either, because employees there have to work on the same kind of design too long for my taste. (Goal 5)



Acknowledgements

I would like to thank several people that contributed to a successful course of my internship. Without them, I would not have had any guidelines or projects.

Firstly, Sjors Lewis was my main mentor at IB. He helped me grow in the company and had some midterm talks with me about my progress. Moreover, he took me to his clients which had interesting projects for IB.

Secondly, boosters Lotte Hemel, Daan Snijders, Freek Ampt, Jet van Strijp en Philippe van Belle took me with them on quite some trips to their clients. There, I assisted them with their jobs and got the opportunity to try new things like presenting the IB method in front of a group of employees of a client.

Thirdly, thanks to Erik van der Spek as my teacher-coach for his help.

Finally, I would like to recommend IB as a great and nice company to fellow students who are looking for a place to do an internship since the IB family is very welcoming and experienced in hiring interns and a place where you can learn a lot.



[FOTO HELE IB TEAM]

References

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Appendix 1 PDP

Personal Development Plan

MAXIME VALLENTIN - 06-01-2020 - B3.1

Professional Identity

For me, designing is exploring my creativity and transferring my ideas into a design. Moreover, designing is a form of problem solving as well. If I can solve technical and management problems in a creative designing process and the results have esthetical values, my designing goal is completed. Therefore I believe that designing and problem solving are a strong combination, a combination that is a guideline for working in the designing field.

By nature I constantly observe problems in the social environment and find inconveniences that can be solved with the assistance of a good design. If I am triggered by a problem that I encounter, I often immediately see opportunities, not only to solve the problem, but to add something extra to it.

When designing, one of my strong points is to keep overview over all the developments that are happening in the process. Because of this, I am able to supervise projects and make sure everyone does what they should do in the most effective way.

Details make a good design. I believe that every aspect of a design should be elaborately and thoroughly thought through. Making sure all the details of a design are fully worked out is also one of my strengths.

I feel a very strong social and political involvement and strive to make this world a better place. While designing staying inspired and being involved in a lot of different projects is important for me and my future career.

As a designer I am inspired by all forms of art; music, film, theatre, dance, paintings, sculptures, photography, even stunning landscapes and nature can inspire me.

Vision

Design has to follow important social trends in society or even anticipate future social deficiencies. Design has to be considered as a child of its time. For example, in the current period sustainability is a trend. When possible, design should meet the conditions of this important development. It could be applied as a tool to repair or improve and therefore it should incorporate the newest technologies of its time. At the same time, design should be based on three pillars: beauty, affectivity and efficiency.

In my opinion designing is a way of social expression. First of all a designer should serve the people, the nature and the world. Designing can contribute to make the world a better place. It helps human life develop into a more helpful and friendly form. Important when producing a design are the used materials and the chosen technology. To preserve the earth, these elements should contribute to a sustainable way of producing. Producing in a circular economic way is challenge for a better future. To deal with environmental issues in my designs is inevitable.

All kinds of technology will get intertwined more and more. Robots and other systems communicate more and will take quite a lot of tasks out of the hands of humans. This will make the lives of people easier and will eventually even lead to more self-providing households.

This development will be caused by the introduction of multiple technological products and will ask for even more designs, such as at-home farming systems.

Learning perspectives

Goal 1

At the TUE, I learned how a perfect design process goes in theory. In the field, I expect this to go very differently and want to learn how a professional design company runs through a design process. An important part of this is the ideating-aspect. My creativity and realization skills will improve when I understand how an professional business does this in the field.

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Goal 3

Moreover, the business side of a company like this is something that is quite unknown to me. This never played a big part at my projects at the TUE. I have been trying to enhance my expertise on business and entrepreneurship for quite some time now and I think I will manage to do this by learning about the way IB works in the businessworld. Specifically, I want to learn how IB uses the money from it is client. This will be done by observing and analyzing the way IB spends the money they get.

Goal 4

The company I am going to work at works a lot with graphic designs and prototyping. I will be able to prototype for clients which will help me improve my prototyping skills. Specifically, I want to learn when IB uses their prototypes and how much money and effort they put in prototyping.

Goal 5

Finally, by doing this internship, I want to find out whether working at a company like this one fits me. I know that I like designing and that I am good at it, but I am not sure if the work-field is something I want to make a career in in the future. After this semester I want to know whether I would like to work at a company like this or if I prefer another sector after all.

I am sure this internship will teach me a lot and is an important part of my career.

Appendix 2 Reflection

Personal reflection

Internship TU/e ID B3.1

On a personal level, this internship has helped me develop greatly. By working with professionals, I got to compare my level with them instead of with my co-students whom I normally work with. Because of this, I improved my skills from various areas. Firstly, I got better in talking with and handling clients in a professional way. As my company coach Sjors has written in the company coach evaluation form (ccef), my ability to speak in front of a group of clients and respond to questions grew in quality. Certain clients have to be approached more casually and others more business-like.

Secondly, I came to realize that my proactive state of mind is very helpful at the office, since I learn things quicker and get better jobs. Sjors put it this way in the ccef: I took ownership of my internship by stepping out of my comfort zone.

Thirdly, I got to think about my position as an employee. Although I am still not sure whether I am a real leader or more a follower, a color-personality test and many personal reflections made it clear that I tend more towards leading and having everything under control. This knowledge helped me position myself in each assignment.

Fourthly, IB's method confirmed my vision of working in service of the user. However, the boosters taught me how to adapt on situations; sometimes, one has to be more coaching, leading or cooperating. When you keep thinking about which attitude fits the situation best, you'll work more effectively.

Fifthly, I learned more about IB's user-tests. IB checks whether users like or dislike a product by either asking tactical though welcoming questions or by creating websites to check the online popularity of the product via AB-tests. Sixthly, my visual skills improved as well. I had to design quite some websites, logos and pictograms by using programmes such as InDesign and Illustrator. I had never worked with these programmes before, so I developed new skills concerning producing digital visuals.

Finally, my internship at IB made me realize that working at a consultancy company like this is not a perfect fit for me. Although I realize that I did not get the full experience because of my position as an intern, I feel like I was not able to express the creativity I want and have to express in my work. The only thing a booster can do is do suggestions and not decide things. Moreover, since I got to experience working in innovation teams at various companies, I can state that I am not a fit for these companies for a long period of time either. This is mostly because working at a big company makes one get stuck in a grind and has you making the same kind of product over and over again. This is not for me since I like making various designs and not sticking at a certain subject for too long.

Appendix 3 Formal Approval

Formal approval Internship



Student Maxime Vallentin **Date** 12/07/2019
Teacher coach Erik van der Spek
Period activity September - December February - June

Personal Development Plan for formal approval	Does the choice of the learning activity align with the Professional Identity and Vision development of the student and are his/her choices well-argued?	Yes Although the vision is still somewhat underdeveloped and doesn't give a clear application area, it mentions needing to align to current trends, which should fit well with the consultancy like design cycles of Innovation Booster.
	Does the learning activity contribute to the development of the student?	Yes Learning goals are well described and make sense to develop BE and DRP.
	Does the chosen learning activity contribute to a balanced development in the Bachelor program of Industrial Design?	Yes It's an internship at a design company that goes through design processes, perhaps TR and MDC a bit less.
	Are the goals well formulated?	Yes See above

Complete the aspects only for the chosen learning activity:

Internship (worth 25 ECTS) (requisites: P1, P2, P3)	Does the company profile align with the <u>requirements for internships</u> ?	Okay [Additional feedback.]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Doing an internship at one-man businesses is not allowed; unless the company owner is currently teaching at the Department of Industrial Design, Eindhoven University of Technology.</i> ❖ <i>The company must support development in several expertise areas.</i> 	
	Does the company coach align with the <u>guidelines for internships</u> ?	Okay [Additional feedback.]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>The company coach must hold a MSc. degree in (Industrial) Design or has at least 10 years of professional experience as a designer.</i> 	
Exchange (worth 25 ECTS) (requisites: 100 ECTS when the student leaves on exchange)	Can the student work on a clearly framed design project or tasks?	Okay [Additional feedback.]
	Personal Development Goals (minimum 1 - to include on Assessment form as well)*:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Design process ❖ Communications with clients ❖ Business aspect of a design process <p><i>*Discuss goals and positive and negative points in the coach meeting to guide how the student can develop expertise areas that might not be covered within the internship. The same goals will be included in the assessment form at the end of the internship.</i></p>	Prototyping skills Finding out whether working in a company like this fits me.
Minor (worth 25 ECTS) (requisites: BoE approval for free minor)	Name Exchange University and Department	[Name exchange university and department]
	Minor at Department of Industrial Design at University of Twente; or at the Department Industrial Design Engineering at Delft University of Technology. (No other departments at these Universities or other Universities in the Netherlands are allowed without permission of the BoE.)	[Name University and Department where Minor is done.] [Elective], [Elective], [Elective], [Elective], [Elective]
Electives (worth 25 ECTS)	Minor at a University elsewhere in the Netherlands	[Name University and Department where Minor is done.] [Elective], [Elective], [Elective], [Elective], [Elective]
	What are the chosen electives? <i>In case a student chooses to do more than 15 ECTS worth of electives outside of the Department of Industrial Design, the student needs, next to the formal approval of the coach, to file a <u>request to the Board of Examiners</u>.</i>	[Elective], [Elective], [Elective], [Elective], [Elective] [Generations before 2015-2016 choose 6 electives, later generations choose 5 electives]

More information:

This form needs to be completed and signed by the teacher coach. In case of an internship as activity, the student has to add their personal development plan plus this form signed by the teacher coach to the appendix of their internship report. In case of an exchange, the student needs to deliver (a copy of) this form to the International Office at the Department of ID.

<p style="text-align: center;">Approval</p>	<p>The personal development plan and chosen learning activity are approved by the coach**: <i>**Provided the request is granted/supported by the BoE.</i></p>	<p>Okay Look at the way the DRP of the company resembles or differs your usual DRP. Generally, companies like Innovation Booster start from BE before going through the other expertise areas. Also critically examine their decisionmaking processes and influencing factors. See if this is something you can integrate.</p>
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Please note:

- For exchange and activities that take places abroad it is strongly advised to consult the exchange coordinator for arranging insurance and because there might be opportunities for receiving a scholarship. Please be aware that exchange students need to be nominated by the exchange coordinator.
- For an internships it is strongly advised to contact Annaluisa Franco (Internship Coordinator) for arranging your internship details.
- For all B3.1 options: In total students are allowed to choose a maximum of 45 ECTS of courses outside the Industrial Design Department next to the Industrial Design major. When they would like to choose more than 15 ECTS of electives outside the Industrial Design department, they have to motivate their choices and get approval of the Board of Examiners (next to the formal approval of the coach per this formal approval form).

Teacher Coach: Erik van der Spek

Signature:



More information:

This form needs to be completed and signed by the teacher coach. In case of an internship as activity, the student has to add their personal development plan plus this form signed by the teacher coach to the appendix of their internship report. In case of an exchange, the student needs to deliver (a copy of) this form to the International Office at the Department of ID.