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Case Study: SKAT Mobile Tax Preparation (MindLab, Denmark)

The Danish Ministry of Taxation and the Tax Authority of Denmark were considering developing a mobile SMS version of its 'Self-Key' service to enable individuals to fill in information for their tax returns digitally and while on the move.

To test the viability of the proposed program, the Ministries turned to MindLab, an innovation unit that works across several Ministries in the Danish government.

MindLab included a number of potential users in the process to see how they reacted to the proposed program. In several workshops, MindLab presented the mobile service to the public (along with other proposed services). From their feedback, MindLab determined that few people were interested in trying to file their taxes from a mobile phone while they were out and about. They ultimately convinced the Ministries that their vision was not being eagerly embraced by the public, leading them to abandon that particular strategy and to explore other projects instead.

MindLab's involvement of the public saved the ministries from developing a costly new option that would not be embraced by its target audience. MindLab then brainstormed further and developed a catalogue of ideas for future version of 'Self-Key' service which is quality assured and easily embraced by the citizens.

Source:
http://www.mind-lab.dk/en/cases/when-skat-deferred-mobil-tastselv

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Case Study: Reducing Red Tape and Bureaucratic Burden on Businesses (MindLab, Denmark)
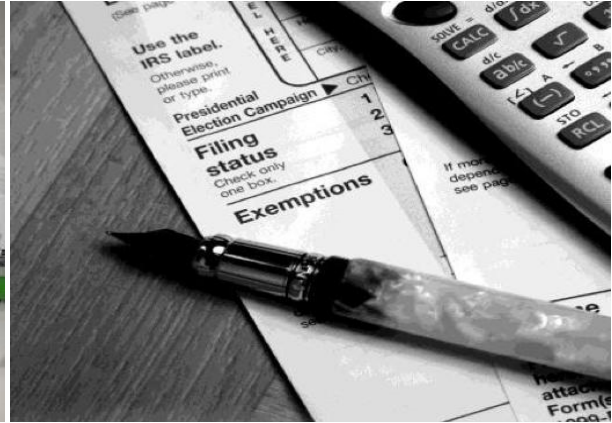
Though often strained, the relationship between private industry and government is vital to a functioning economy. Government provides important regulatory and legal functions that keep businesses running safely and provides the infrastructure necessary to conduct business. In return, business creates economic opportunity, providing for employment and creating the tax base that is the lifeblood of government.

But for many businesses, interacting with the government can seem burdensome and needlessly bureaucratic. Over time, the information or paperwork required by a government can become needlessly duplicated or outdated, and new requirements can be added without being smoothly integrated into the existing system.

With this in mind, the Danish design firm MindLab set out to reduce bureaucratic red tape in the business world. Through interviews with businesses and direct observation of Danish companies, MindLab was able to identify key areas where bureaucratic practices were creating difficulties. Using this information, they were able to brainstorm work-arounds and new solutions. The staff at MindLab presented their findings and suggestions to various government ministries and even took ministry officials out into the field to participate in observing and interviewing Danish companies about their experience dealing with government bureaucracy and red tape.

Furthermore, MindLab developed a method for observers to identify irritant burdens suffered by companies. They trained government employees in the method and made visits to over two dozen companies. MindLab then conducted a test workshop in which the methods for reducing red tape were subject to practical testing.

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The project has successfully changed the way that business and the government interact. Many of the areas of burden that the project identified were later put into law as part of larger "easy administration" legislation. Furthermore, the project has attracted the attention of foreign governments looking to replicate MindLab's success.

Source:
http://www.mind-lab.dk/en/cases/officials-on-the-hunt-for-burdens

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In order to remain relevant to the changing needs of its citizens, the English county of Kent decided to create a social innovation lab that could be incorporated across a variety of county services.

Accordingly, the Kent County Council turned to Engine Service Design to help create the so-called Social Innovation Lab for Kent (or SILK).

Together, Engine and KCC created a structured approach to project innovation that would be able to be modeled to the specific nature of the problem and the organization working to solve it.

The approach emphasized the importance of focusing on people's needs as a starting point, and the importance of engaging citizens to contribute to all stages of the project development process.

Additionally, Engine created a framework that SILK can use to re-work the service design process to suit the needs of the particular challenge. They helped SILK create a toolkit of different design processes and strategies that could be employed depending on the nature of the problem. And they helped SILK create materials that would help them make their services known to the various departments of the county's government. Engine to be involved with SILK as the team continues to grow and expand the reach of their service design projects.

Source:
http://www.enginegroup.co.uk/projects/pcs_page/building_a_social_innovation_lab

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There are roughly 1.8 million people with diabetes in the UK, equivalent to three per cent of the population. Diabetes can be an especially challenging condition since treatment requires consistent and diligent monitoring and care by the patient.

Bolton, a town in Greater Manchester in the UK, was seeking ways to improve the services. Despite a dedicated facility for diabetes patients, many patients in the community found it difficult to make the lifestyle changes necessary to manage their condition.

To help out, the UK-based Design Council (in partnership with other design organizations) aimed to harness the principles of design-led innovation to help transform diabetes care.

The design team found a group of 20 diabetes sufferers who would be willing to participate in the project. Members of the team then spent time with the patients in different aspects of their lives to figure out how managing their diabetes related to the other elements of their daily routines.

After extensive interviews and brainstorming sessions with diabetes sufferers and health care professionals, Design Council began creating prototypes for different health care design models.

One model involved an interactive deck of cards that diabetes patients could use to help articulate their specific needs for support, either to their doctor or to their families.

A second model proposed incorporating life coaches into the patients' lives as someone to help them manage the maintenance of their care. The patient would be given information about different life coaches at their doctor's office, and could select one based on their particular lifestyle or personality. The coach would then help manage their lives in a way that allowed them to better monitor their health and seek support when they needed it.

As a result of the Design Council process, a more refined version of the agenda cards prototype is now in clinical trial and being used (and improved) by over 15 medical practices and 250 patients. Most importantly, the process helped establish that effective treatment of diabetes requires a radical change in the behavior of patients, and that any future attempts to combat the condition would have to focus on helping patients monitor their own health.

Source:
http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/Case-studies/Diabetes-management/

Photo Credit:
Alden Chadwick
http://www.flickr.com/photos/aldenchadwick/4293213857/in/photostream/

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The Borough of Haringey in North London has a significant homeless population, many of whom live in temporary accommodations provided by the local government. The HaringeyBorough Council hoped to reduce the number of people living in temporary accommodations by half and also improve the services the borough offers people while they live in temporary accommodations.

To help address this challenge, the Haringey Borough Council enlisted the help of the service design agencyLive|Workto help out.

Live|Work and the Borough council collaborated to develop new ideas for housing services. They formed an innovation team that included housing staff, managers and policy officers. They worked to establish a method for engaging residents in the process and then used design processes to create over 100 new ideas for housing services. From those ideas, the group boiled the work down into four concepts for new housing services.

Haringey housing services is now using those principles as they continue to improve housing services. The focus has shifted to developing a housing "life plan" for people using housing services. New programs are focused on creating a choice for people on which housing options they prefer so as to reduce the time spent in unsatisfactory housing. Additionally, the programs have incorporated an increased focus on trying to help people improve their chances of finding a longer-term housing situation.

The council reports that going through the service design process has created a significant change of attitude within the housing services team. The council says that staff are much more prepared to listen to people using housing

services and more responsive to the needs that they express. Additionally, the Council has created a dedicated group who are responsible for implementing a new service design approach to ensure that services are more customer centered as the various programs continue to grow and develop.

Source:
http://www.livework.co.uk/our-work/Haringey-Borough-Council

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The Norwegian county of Oppland has nearly 200,000 residents spread across a rural, vast, mountainous area.

Because of the low population density, public transportation in the county is infrequent, inconvenient and under-utilized. The vastness of the area means that, for many people, the nearest bus stop is a lengthy walk. And the lack of ridership means that buses come infrequently.

As a result of all these factors, the county's public transportation does a poor job of serving its residents and is not economically viable for the government.

To combat these issues, Oppland county approached English-based design firm Live|Work. Live|Work traveled to Oppland, riding the transportation system themselves and exploring the way the system functions. They conducted

interviews with residents in their homes and conducted an innovation workshop with a group of local teenagers.

Live|Work has crafted all the insights gathered in the course of interviews and the workshop and has shared it with the Oppland public transport administration. Additionally, Live|Work is now helping to develop new ways that the service could operate, including bus-on-demand via the Internet or mobile phones, and improved price-schemes for rural transportation.

Source:
http://www.livework.co.uk/our-work/Opplandstrafikk