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**GETTING THE  
BEST PEOPLE FOR  
CO-CREATION**

No matter who you are, the smartest people  
always work for someone else.  
So how to get the best people for co-creation?

***fronteer***

White paper # 4

# THE 'ART' OF RECRUITING: WHO ARE THE BEST AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

## DEAR READER,

This is the **first Fronteer white paper about the 'art' of Recruiting the Best** participants for your co-creation challenge. There are various important questions that are always asked about these individuals. This paper will provide you with answers to these questions as well as guidelines on how to make the right selection.

### Who will benefit from reading this

This paper is written for anyone interested in selecting a group of individuals in order to have a solid basis for co-creation; a group of interesting and inspiring individuals willing to co-create.

This white-paper discusses the following topics:

- Who are the best?
- Where to find the very best
- How to select the best
- What's in it for them?

This white-paper was distributed by Fronteer

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Fronteer helps brands, small and big, to grow in a wide range of fields: Communications, FMCG, Financial Services, Consumer Electronics, Internet Services and Consumer Durables.

# EACH CHALLENGE WILL HAVE IT'S OWN SET OF 'THE VERY BEST'

## WHAT IS EXPERT CO-CREATION? WHY DO YOU SELECT THE BEST?

Expert co-creation is a form of open innovation and executed in group sessions both on and offline. Co-creation is used to solve problems or challenges by bringing experts from within and outside a company together in order to generate ideas, improve existing concepts and find new solutions.

For these co-creation sessions you want to select the best. According to Joy's Law\*: "No matter who you are, the smartest people always work for someone else", therefore these are the people you want in your co-creation session.

Each challenge will have it's own set of "the very best" depending on what type of expertise is needed to solve the challenge at hand. However there is a basic set of characteristics that can be used as 'selection criteria' to ease the process.

From the co-creation's 5 Guiding Principles by Martijn Pater, the second of the principles is "Select the very best". The question that now arises is: So how do you select the best?

Our answer to that question can be found in this white-paper, which is based on our years of experience with selecting over 1000 of 'the very best' for our co-creation sessions.

## 1

### WHO ARE THE BEST?

In our experience, an ideal one-day expert co-creation session consist of 15 participants in total. Eight to ten external experts who work together with five to seven internal experts.

In order to get the best combination of participants we have identified five players. A suitable mix of these players (or profiles) will give you the ideal setting for expert co-creation. Depending on the challenge at hand you might need to chose to have more of one profile than the other.

Below, the five players will be illustrated with help of a real-life KLM - Customer Experience - case. One of the outcomes of this expert co-creation session was a concept called Social Seating, that has now evolved into KLM's 'Meet & Seat'. For solving this KLM challenge, 'The Best' consisted of: "Those that are the best in delivering outstanding Customer Experiences".

### THE 5 PLAYERS



#### The Customer

Is passionate about what we are about to make, is beneficiary of value (created).

**KLM example:** Frequent Flyers, both Business Class and Coach



#### The Professional

Has learnt the ropes and is already "doing this"; has practical experience with the topic in question. The professional is entrepreneurial, has created an inspiring product, service or concept.

**KLM example:** The CEO of "Coffee Company", a great local Coffee Chain



### The Professor

Has a vast ocean of knowledge, hardly ever put into practice, a visionary, a thought leader. The professor is all knowing of the topic of your challenge.

**KLM example:** A professor specialised in behavioural patterns in the service industry



### The Connector

Knows the "word on the street", hears a lot, talks a lot and tells the world. The Connector is objective but also subjective, someone who knows about the industry and its important and less important players.

**KLM example:** An airline industry trend watcher



### The Wildcard

Knows nothing but might just know everything, dares to ask questions, brings refreshing perspective and creates energy. The Wildcard positively influence the group, creates a good vibe in a group, out-of-the-box thinker, someone who people look up to

with a "cool" track-record, bubbly image and a little extravagance.

**KLM Example:** Nightclub owner with extensive business experience

## PERSONALITY

Where they differ in background, the five players can all be characterised by three personal qualities: Share, Inspire and Create. The best are those that comply with all of these three qualities.

## Share

Sharing knowledge and expertise is one of the main objectives of experts in a co-creation session. Co-creation is a team-effort, therefore the experts should adhere to the following:

- Be open-minded and willing to **share his or her knowledge**
- Be **willing to co-create**
- Have the **personality to function accordingly** in a group

## Inspire

Inspire is defined as: "to exert a stimulating or beneficial effect upon". The expert should have this effect on both the challenge as well as the other experts, in order to encourage each other to step up to the next level. Experts can be inspiring in two ways, by achievement or by presence.

- **Inspiring by achievement** sums up life achievement(s) and business experience(s).
- **Inspiring by presence** is perceived as an "experience" itself. These people have the ability to "WOW" others just by who they are. Inspiring by presence has to do with charisma, they might not have the most interesting stories to tell, but they can just be the missing piece that completes the puzzle.

## Create

Derived from the earlier mentioned Joy's Law: "No matter who you are the smartest people always work for someone else" we see the mind also plays an important role. Two types of "thinking" have been identified as aspects of "the Best".

- **Constructive and critical thinkers.** Those that can evaluate a challenge, make it transparent, break it into little bits, pick out the essentials and rebuild it into something better.
- **Creative minds.** Those that have a strong use of the right side of the brain and are able to visualise ideas.

# THREE TIERS OF CONNECTIVITY WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH YOUR SEARCH

## 2

### WHERE TO FIND THE VERY BEST

Now that we know who to look for, the next question is where do we find them? This can be done with help of “The Three Tiers of connectivity” (see fig. 1).

### THE THREE TIERS OF CONNECTIVITY

The idea of the Three Tiers of Connectivity is to work from the inside out.

Overall, LinkedIn is the best place to start. It provides you with advanced search options and directly categorises the outcome of the search in the three tiers.

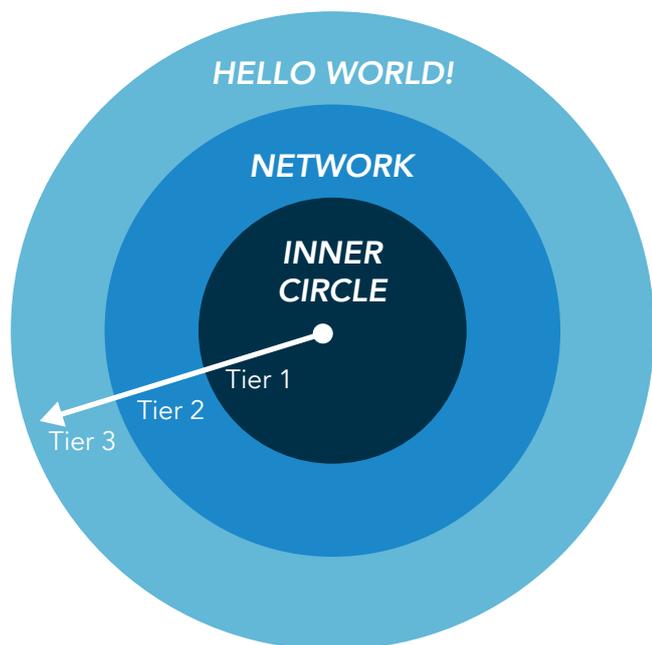


Fig. 1: Three Tiers of Connectivity

### Tier 1: Inner Circle

The first tier can be defined by your own personal and ‘close’ network, a group of people you personally know, not necessarily only your best of friends but anyone you might know from e.g. work, sports or social gatherings. For example this is the Fronteer network of over 1000 people worldwide, who participated in our co-creation sessions.

### Tier 2: Network

The second tier is the group of people that are one step away from you and your inner circle, those you know “via-via”. They define your larger network, but are still quite easy to reach.

Social Media such as Twitter and Facebook can be used to get your message out to the first 2 tiers by posting a search message such as: “looking for wind-turbine specialist”. This can generate participants from both first and second tier.

### Tier 3: Hello world!

Last but not least, the third tier is build up of all random other people you might encounter in the search for great participants. With a bit of good old detective work you can find and reach these people as well.

Written literature such as newspapers, books, fora and blogs are a good place to find third tier participants. They can be used for both passive as well as active recruitment. Physically meeting potential participants at public places or conferences is also an option, e.g. if you are looking for young mothers why not try out the neighbourhood playground or leave a note on the supermarket notice board?

# THE PROCESS: FIVE STEPS LEADING YOU THROUGH YOUR SELECTION

## 3

### HOW TO SELECT THE BEST: THE PROCESS

We have now stated who 'the Best' are and where to find them. So how should you actually go about getting them to participate in your co-creation session? The recruiting process consists of 5 steps you will need to go through to find, reach and convince 'the Best' to participate, see fig 2.



Fig. 2: The 5 steps of the recruitment process

#### STEP 1: LONG-LIST

The first step in the recruitment process is the Long-list. The long-list is created with both the client and the facilitator and is based on the 5 (prior mentioned) players: Customer, Professional, Professor, Connector and Wild-card. By making use of the three tiers, the long-list is then filled with a large number of names and profiles of potential participants.

Filling the long-list is an ongoing process (especially with people from the third tier), but starts with a 'long-list session' - quite similar to a brainstorm session - where for each of the five players a number of names and profiles (such as 'a social media expert') are called out by those attending the session. These suggestions can be in as well as out of the box, the sky is the limit as long as the relevance to the project or challenge is clear. The length of the Long-list will depend on a few factors:

- **The sexyness of the client-company;** recruiting for high-profile, well known and sexy brands such as Heineken, KLM and Bugaboo generally have a high success ratio.

- **The readiness of an industry;** the industry MUST be "ready to co-create", the people in it must be ready and able to Share, Inspire and Create together. E.g. hardcore industrial industries are just not ready yet.
- **The theme dependency of the challenge;** some themes such as social media and social responsibility are easier to recruit for as they are much spoken about.

As the long-list is a working document, new potential participants can be added continuously during the recruiting process.

#### STEP 2: CONNECT

When the long-list has been laid out, the potential participants on it can be approached for participation. When contacting these experts, especially if they are second and third tier, there are a few essentials you should bare in mind:

- **Start with an e-mail,** it makes it easier for the recipient to process the information and think about a response
- **A follow-up phone call** is appreciated and often a deal-maker
- **Introduce yourself** and be very open (e.g. add your LinkedIn), as people can be wary
- **Explain who you work for** and what you do
- **Explain what co-creation is.** Although co-creation is a hot topic, for people who have never heard of it you might as well be speaking Chinese.
- **Keep it simple**

#### STEP 3: SHORTLIST

You have contacted all the people in your long-list and they have responded, it is time to make a selection of 'the Best' for participation in your co-creation session. When doing so make sure the eventual group composition is bal-

# FOCUS ON THE FIVE DRIVERS: EVERYBODY WINS

anced, based on the 5 players as well as gender. The latter is quite important and can be pretty difficult sometimes as some topics are just more male or female oriented. Some challenges might also need a specific balance in age, or location.

## STEP 4: INVITE

The selection has been made, time to notify and invite the experts you have chosen. Call or e-mail them to let them know you have selected them, this will make them feel "special", then send them the official invitation. Make sure it contains the following:

- Basic information e.g. time, location, agenda
- Description of the session and what to expect
- List of the other participants
- Notification of the incentive
- The Non-Disclosure Agreement

## STEP 5: RE-CONNECT

After the session it is important that you keep participants involved. Start by sending them a Thank You-note directly after the session. After a couple of weeks keep them up-to-date by letting them know what has happened with the results of the co-creation session so far.

## 4

### WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM?

There is always one important question that arises when approaching potential experts for co-creation sessions: "what's in it for me?".

The by origin French eYeka has defined the four drivers (F's) of co-creation: Fun, Fulfilment, Fame and Fortune. We would like to add a fifth driver to this list: "For networking".

### THE FIVE DRIVERS OF CO-CREATION

#### Fun

A co-creation session should be fun, people are more likely to participate if there is a certain fun-factor. Furthermore it keeps participants on the ball and creates an atmosphere for inspiring and new ideas.

#### Fulfilment

It is important that participants feel fulfilled, that the session contributes to their state of mind. Be aware that some projects might be more fulfilling than others and adhere to the right participants.

#### Fame

It can be very attractive to be part of something that only a select group of people know about, that could become successful in the near future or no-one else has done before. And when the product or service has been marketed you can say: "I contributed to that!"

#### Fortune

Participants want to be rewarded for their efforts, however this does not necessarily need to be a financial incentive. There is always an ongoing debate about the incentive: dollars or goodies?. If you are able to offer an incentive which is more attractive than cash, don't hesitate to do so. Often this is appreciated more than an envelope of cash.

E.g. Philips supplied the moms of newborns that participated in an online co-creation session for the Philips Avent App with €150 - €200 worth of the newest Philips Avents products rather than € 100 in cash.

### **For Networking**

Co-creation sessions provide an excellent environment for networking. The opportunity arises to get in contact with people you would normally not encounter so easily, often leading to new business or collaborations. You can think of middle or higher management of large firms, experts within your industry or inspiring guru's.

## **FINAL NOTE**

We hope this white-paper has given you some insight on why and how you should recruit the best people for your co-creation session. As your carefully selected participants will greatly influence the outcomes of your session, never settle for less than the best! You will notice that if you take the 5 drivers into account, most people will be enthusiastic and both willing and honoured to participate.

There is one last aspect of selecting the best that we have not yet discussed. There is a secret ingredient involved in the process. This secret ingredient can unfortunately not be described or taught it is a intuitive feeling, a sixth sense that enables certain people to find, probe and choose those participants that will give your session a WOW outcome.

This naturally brings up the question so how do you select the best to select the best? Perhaps we will discuss this in our next white paper.

# 'NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, MOST OF THE SMARTEST PEOPLE WORK FOR SOMEONE ELSE'

## ABOUT FRONTEER

Fronteer is an Amsterdam-based consulting firm. We help brands to innovate. Successfully.

We are one of the global experts in expert & consumer co-creation with a proven track-record and a list of global clients that work with us on a continuous basis.

Our co-creation methodologies are regularly applied for generating breakthrough solutions to complex, urgent and/ or strategic matters.

## ABOUT CO-CREATION

We specialise in expert co-creation. We use co-creation to build competitive advantage and support teams, companies and brands at any moment of the innovation or growth process. We offer various co-creation tools and services:

**Expert co-creation** (Rooftop & Treehouse)

**Consumer validation & co-creation** (online & offline Elevator) Coalition co-creation (Clubhouse)

**Crowd co-creation** (Campsite)

## INFORMATION

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<b>Date</b>	April 2012

The logo for Fronteer, featuring the word "fronteer" in a bold, lowercase, blue sans-serif font.

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