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**TOWARDS A MORE EMPATHIC ORGANIZATION:
AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF A MULTINATIONAL
MANUFACTURING CORPORATION**

by

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13 Towards a more empathic organization

An exploratory case study of a multinational manufacturing corporation

Krista Korpikoski

Introduction

Service design has been a growing trend in the last decade. It serves as a practical and concrete approach towards more customer- and user-centric ways to develop products and services (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). This is natural due to its holism that builds on the philosophy of design thinking, empathy, cocreation, human-centred processes, and customer-centric tools and methods (Sangiorgi & Prendiville, 2017). In this regard, service design serves as an empathic, holistic and multidisciplinary approach and practice (Prestes Joly et al., 2019; Yu & Sangiorgi, 2018) when executing customer-centric outside-in development strategies in the areas of new service and product development. An empathic design approach seeks to focus on the needs of end users by narrowing the gap between the designer and user in ways that are intrinsically user-based (Koskinen & Battarbee, 2007).

There are numerous discussions related to empathy (Heyes, 2018; Kalisch, 1973; Snow, 2000), its relation to design and empathic design (Fulton Suri, 2007; Koskinen & Battarbee, 2007; Koskinen, 2007; Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser, 2009; Leonard & Rayport, 1997; Mattelmäki et al., 2014; Smeenk et al., 2019), empathic leadership (Badea & Pană, 2010; Deliu, 2019; Dewey, 2020; Sanchez, 2018; Tzouramani, 2017), and empathic listening in management (Gearhart & Maben, 2019; Marques et al., 2011; Parks, 2015). Despite this, the nature of an empathic organization and the way in which organizations can become more receptive to empathic development approaches remain to be studied in more detail.

The objective of this paper is to understand what an empathic organization means and how an organization should evolve to be able to use service design as an empathic development approach. In discussing the empathic development approach in this research paper, the author refers to service design as an empathic practice and development methodology that enables one to design with the customer, internal stakeholders and external stakeholders. The research question addressed in this chapter is: How can an organization evolve into being more receptive to service design as an empathic development approach?

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The organization discussed in this case study is a multinational manufacturing corporation with approximately 60,000 employees across the globe. The corporation structure is similar to that of other manufacturing businesses and matrix organizations. Prior to the use of service design, the innovation and development strategies of the corporation had been mostly product-related. In that sense, end users had been the main source of information for designers. In addition, sales staff had given feedback to product development as reactive responses to customer requests from the field. Service design entered the corporation in 2014, and it became officially a part of research and development (R&D) in 2016. Owing to service design, business customers became more systematically involved in the early phases of service development.

The participating corporation is studied through events that occurred during 2005–2014 before the launch of service design in September 2014. The major events are reviewed by means of event listing, which was chronologically assembled based on 12 semi-structured qualitative interviews selected from the code group Organization Readiness for Service Design that consists of 119 codes. In addition, explanation building has been used to get a broader understanding of the phenomenon.

The findings presented in this paper suggest that in order for an organization to become more empathic, the following is required: (a) customer-centric project initiatives and active people enabling a change of mindset from non-customer-centric thinking to designing with customers, (b) organizational learning and strong support from the top-level management, and (c) a top-level vision. When all this is in order, the change can be implemented through management and other practicalities. In addition, societal changes may affect changes within organizations based on the direction where society is headed.

Organizational empathy: An empathic/empathetic organization

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word *empathic* derives from the word *empathy*. The word *empathic* is an adjective referring to sensing or feeling affection or passion. The word *empathetic* is a later form and synonymous with the previous one. The word *empathetic* is used occasionally when referring to situations where a person relates to, involves or is characterized by empathy; demonstrates empathy; or shows empathy towards another (*Oxford English Dictionary*). In this research paper, the word *empathic* is used by the author unless she is referring to a source where the word *empathetic* is used. It should also be noted that the sources used in this study have not made any distinction between the two words.

Empathy in literature is mostly handled as an individual trait of a person. As argued in Chapter 1 of this book, the dimensions of empathy are classified as cognitive, affective, compassionate and kinaesthetic (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004; Brink et al., 2011; Bloom, 2017; Riess & Neporent, 2018; Reynolds & Reason, 2012; Cuykendall et al., 2015). There is not much research on the topics of organizational empathy and empathic/empathetic

organizations. Up to this point, Lei and Greer (2003) have done the most in this regard.

According to Lei and Greer (2003, p. 142), organizational empathy is a process where the organization learns and grows alongside the customer. They highlight that an empathetic organization learns from customers in close, personal interactions, and in that sense discovers or generates new ideas, concepts and designs for future offerings. Thus, every customer is seen as a source of knowledge and insights, and customers are seen as an integral part of value creation (Lei & Greer, 2003).

The author also brings forward knowing organizations and learning organizations. Knowing organizations place high emphasis on consistent, replicable and standardised practices. Customers are distant from development and the offering is dependent on the organization's worldview. Learning organizations, instead, savour knowledge-sharing, experimentation culture and continuous improvement. In these organizations customer involvement and input are encouraged in development activities. Lei and Greer (2003, p. 161) argue that knowing organizations can evolve into learning organizations, but empathetic organizations can only evolve independently due to their sophisticated services or special skills required to create unique experiences (Lei & Greer, 2003).

Nussbaum (2005, para. 5) brings forward "the empathy economy" and argues that we are moving from a knowledge economy to experience economy where understanding, empathy and problem-solving are essential skills. Goleman (1998, p. 3) discusses empathy as part of a leader's emotional leadership skillset among four other components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and social skill. Hence, we can see Nussbaum and Goleman associating empathy with one's emotional leadership skills in the context of organizational work.

New and Kimbell (2013, p. 8) ask an interesting question: "Can the capacity for (different sorts of) empathy be embodied in (different sorts of) organizational 'equipment', which might be reflected at the level of processes, techniques and capabilities?" This idea of empathy as machinery within organizations gets support from Villari (2021, pp. 193–194). She highlights the need for new conceptual spaces for innovation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to her (Villari, 2021, pp. 193–194), designers could play an important role in organizations' personal growth by integrating empathic components so as to break internal and external silos, encourage innovation and bring in new languages, management models and practices.

Empathic maturity of an organization

There is a limited amount of literature on empathic maturity, especially from the organizational point of view. Olsen (2001, p. 37) discusses empathy in the area of nursing as a cognitive structure of an individual: "Empathetic maturity is the basis on which the feeling of empathy, as a perception of mutuality, develops." Silverman (2018, p. 297) brings up empathy in the area of social

work. Practising organizational assessment helps the worker to achieve a better understanding of organizational awareness regarding organizational empathy, which enables the worker to better influence, collaborate and lead work (Silverman, 2018). When assessing an organization, one must focus on the following areas: mission and vision; organizational values; current strategic and operational plan; fiscal challenges; and leadership style of the executives (Silverman, 2018, p. 300).

Design maturity is a common term that has been in use since the Danish Design Centre developed the Design Ladder model in 2001. The Design Ladder model consists of four steps: (1) non-design; (2) design as form giving; (3) design as process; and (4) design as strategy (Danish Design Centre, 2015). The purpose of the model is to work as a tool that enables companies to illustrate and rate their use of design. Hoedemaeckers (2016) has extended the ladder with two stages: (5) Systemic change and (6) Culture. Systemic changes refer to design helping to solve complex social issues and massive industry problems, and to streamline complex ecosystems. Culture is the sixth step, as design in these days is being used to create extensive cultures in organizations while shifting the mindsets of people towards more innovation-centric thinking and leading through design (Hoedemaeckers, 2016).

Sanders (2009) discusses the transition of the organization from designing *for* the customers and users to designing *with* them. She wonders why it is so hard for organizations to accomplish and why it takes so long. To find an answer, she explores co-creation on a large scale in terms of culture, mindsets, methodology, methods, tools and techniques. By culture she refers to learnt beliefs, values and behaviours, while a mindset is more of an attitude held by a person. She argues that mindset is the most critical element, because in an organization, designing with the customer requires people who think it makes sense to do so. Once this mindset is there, processes and culture can start to change (Sanders, 2009).

Junginger and Sangiorgi's (2009) argumentation is in line with that of Sanders (2009). According to Junginger and Sangiorgi (2009), transformative insights are needed in the areas of assumptions, values, norms and behaviours to generate genuine interest and commitment and thereby a link between design efforts and the organization. To achieve this, building trust is required throughout the process of co-creating potential visions based on external rewards and the internal positive traits of an organization. According to the authors, this happens through a reflective process that enables learning as the main result (Junginger & Sangiorgi, 2009, p. 7). In addition, Pruitt and Adlin (2006) argue that an organization is more likely to succeed with empathic design efforts if there is some previous experience of design activities, if the people in the organization are user-focused and if the people think about and communicate with customers and users.

Research design

The author of this chapter has worked as a service designer in the organization under discussion, and the methodology of this research is mainly based on an

exploratory case study. According to Yin (2009), there are exploratory, explanatory and descriptive case studies in addition to comparative, single- and multiple-case studies. A case study is applicable when attempting to answer the research questions *who*, *what*, *where*, *how* and *why* (Yin, 2009, p. 9).

Yin (2009, p. 4) states that case study is a method that allows the researcher to retain the holistic and meaningful features of real-life events, and he does not make any distinction between the phenomenon and its real-life context. Instead, Yin (2009, p. 18) highlights the mutual dependency between the context and the phenomenon: “the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.”

Merriam and Tisdell (2015, p. 37) refer to case study as “an in-depth description of a bounded system”. They argue that the most important feature of a case study is the delimitation of the subject of the study, the case (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 38). The unit of analysis determines if a study is a case study, not the topic under investigation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, pp. 38–39). On the other hand, Stake (2005, p. 443) argues that a case study means choosing what is to be studied instead of making a methodological choice. In a case study the focus is on the individual case, and on the experiential knowledge related to its social context (Stake, 2005, pp. 443–444).

The results of this research follow Yin’s (2009) and Stake’s (2005) descriptions of context dependency, since the topic under study is seen as socially constructed in its context, time and place, and as natural and unique for the participating organization. The study discussed in this paper has no pre-determined outcome, which is why an extensive and in-depth understanding about the topic is needed to build causal links. Thus, the research follows the inductive research approach.

Data collection

Altogether 33 semi-structured interviews were conducted during the summer of 2018: 23 individual interviews, eight pair interviews and two group interviews with three interviewees in each. The interviews involved a total of 45 participants from various departments and from all organizational levels, excluding the company CEO. The aim of the interviews was to get a holistic understanding of the evolvement and impacts of service design in the participating organization. The findings presented in this paper are based on 12 semi-structured interviews. They were selected from the code group Organization Readiness for Service Design, which was examined as the main unit of analysis.

Participants

The 12 interviews had 15 participants. There were ten individual interviews, one group interview with three interviewees and one pair interview. Seven of the participants came from the R&D department: two design directors, three design managers and two design specialists. The rest of the interviewees represented various departments of the organization: two executive board members,

a head of service transformation, two chiefs of business development, an information technology (IT) director and two customer experience specialists. All of the interviewees were chosen based on their involvement in service design-led projects.

Data analysis

The data analysis was carried out in two phases. During the first phase, all 33 interviews went through two coding rounds, Descriptive Coding and Concept Coding. The aim was to use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (Atlas.ti) to find out the conceptual themes that arise from the data. As a result, 24 code groups were formed. In the second phase, the conceptual code theme Organization Readiness for Service Design was chosen as the main unit of analysis for further investigation. Event listing and explanation building were used as analysis techniques to compile the findings.

The first phase: Coding

According to Harding (2013, p. 82), codes are important tools when conducting a thematic analysis. The first round of coding followed the rules of Descriptive Coding. Saldaña (2016, p. 102) notes that “Descriptive Coding summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data.” The aim in this study was to stay open for the empirical data and to see what themes and topics arise, although the interviews were semi-structured. In the end of the first coding round, the number of codes was 1,207. The codes were either words or short phrases representing the topics under discussion.

There also exists critique against Descriptive Coding: “[T]he noun-based codes of this method will not reveal very much insight into participants’ minds” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 102). For this reason, the second coding round followed the rules of Concept Coding. According to Saldaña (2016, p. 119), Concept Coding is “analytic coding”, which assigns meanings at the meso and macro levels. The concepts were described using short phrases or words to denote broader meanings, as is typically done in concept coding (Saldaña, 2016, p. 119).

After the second coding round, altogether 24 code groups emerged based on the concepts that emerged from the Concept Coding. Once the direction of the research became clear, the code group Organization Readiness for Service Design was chosen for further analysis as the main unit of analysis. Thus, the second phase of the analysis could start.

The second phase: Event listing and explanation building

During the second round of analysis, 119 codes from the main unit of analysis, Organization Readiness for Service Design, were reviewed and restructured.

This phase of the coding process is critical when searching for commonalities. “The researcher needs to look for connections between codes which were not initially obvious” (Harding, 2013, p. 92). In doing so, a clear narrative began to take shape. Categories of codes started to emerge as embedded units of analysis.

Myers (2009, p. 211) discusses a narrative analysis: “Traditionally, a narrative requires a plot, as well as some coherence. It has some sort of ordered sequence, often in linear form, with a beginning, middle, and end.” This is what occurred when reviewing the 119 codes. Clear divisions of codes emerged based on how service design as a phenomenon has evolved in the corporation:

- 1 the time before service design was a part of the corporation;
- 2 how the corporation starts to evolve once service design has been introduced (early use of service design);
- 3 how the corporation continues to evolve in terms of leadership practices, management practices and culture after the service design approach has been used for some time (use of service design).

The first code category, *the time before service design was a part of the corporation*, was placed under further analysis. Twelve of the 33 interviews provided data for this category. Event listing was used as an analysis technique to track sequences of the organization’s events. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 111), concrete happenings are arranged chronologically into a series of events in event listing. The chronological order of events took shape based on the narrative of the interview data in the first code category. This was done to form an understanding of the major events of the organization that induced it to choose service design as an empathic development approach.

The explanation building method was used in the second analysis to build a broader understanding of the material. Explanation building is an iterative process where causal links are searched in the empirical data (Yin, 2009, p. 141). The same interview data as was used in the event listing of the first code category provided the basis for explanation building. These two techniques have formed the basis for the findings that are presented next.

Maturing towards an empathic organization

In this chapter, the motivations that led the participating organization to become more empathic and to take service design as an empathic development approach are viewed through events and stages of involvement that the organization has undergone during the period 2005–2014. Figure 13.1 presents the major events and customer-centric actions of the organization during the ten years.

Below, the themes discovered in the narrative of the interview material are discussed in further detail. Explanation building was used as the technique of analysis. The order of the themes correlates with the chronology of the event

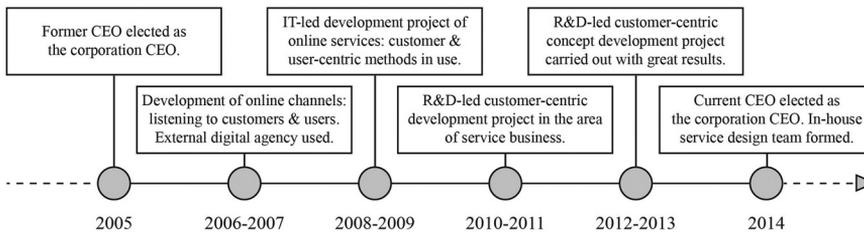


Figure 13.1 Event listing of the major events and customer-centric development actions of the organization during 2005–2014.

listing. In addition, the themes are addressed in relation to the theory that was discussed in Chapter 1. The aim is that the findings provide us a better understanding of the research gap referred to in the research question of this paper: How can an organization evolve into being more receptive to service design as an empathic development approach?

Sanders (2009) argues that in designing with customers, the mindset and attitude of those who support it are the most critical elements. The findings of this study support this notion. **In order for an organisation to become more empathic, a change of mindset is critical**, but before the mindset can be changed, organizational learning and trust building with the top-level management must occur first. Once the attitude and mindset are there, processes and culture can start to change (Sanders, 2009). Next, the stages through which a change of mindset occurs in the organization under study are discussed more closely under the following themes that have emerged from the empirical data.

In order for an organisation to become more empathic, customer-centric project initiatives and active people are required to facilitate learning that enables a change of mindset from non-customer-centric thinking to designing with customers. Sanders (2009) discusses the required change of mindset regarding the transition from a non-customer-centric organization to designing with the customer. This study claims that in order to achieve a change of mindset, organizational learning – especially in top-level management – must be enabled first. This can be done with the help of customer-centric project initiatives made by active personnel and potential partner organizations.

In the participating organization, user-centric development approaches had been applied in product development since the beginning of 2000, but customers had not been systematically involved. The first projects in which customer-centric service development methods were used concerned the development of online channels and services during 2006–2009. These projects were IT-led, and a digital agency brought in customer-centric methods in 2006–2007 when the channels were being developed. At that time, the term *customer experience* (CX) was introduced in the organization in the development of IT services. As a consequence, the digital platform director became a proponent of customer-centric development.

We were working with an external digital agency who brought that approach to us. [...] at that point we were exposed to, [...] what wasn't necessarily called service design but user-centred design, and the idea that you start by listening to [...] users and customers, and then you work back from that. [...] After that I was a true believer.

(n44)

After IT-led projects, an R&D-led service business development project was executed in 2010–2011 by in-house industrial designers, managers and directors. The project did not receive much attention from the top-level management, but the methods were considered valuable.

By that time, we presented with [*name of the former design manager*] the work that was done for the UK market [...] They [*referring to top-level management*] saw the surface of it, as design is often seen as such, that design is the surface. Then we were in that category. Can we [*referring to top-level management*] get these development tools and methods, these are what we want to show for inspiration. Then they [*referring to top-level management*] said goodbye, and that was it.

(n12)

Moving on to the period 2012–2013, a new customer-centric R&D-led project was executed by a design manager and a design director with a *customers and users* team to ideate new concepts based on customer needs. The idea was to test customer-centric development methods more thoroughly in order to see where they can lead. At that time there was no prior knowledge of service design in the organization. The project had to be carried out in secret, and once completed with the results available, permission had to be asked from the unit leaders to show it to the executive board. The project ended up being a huge success.

[*Name of the executive board member*] said that this was not great, this was very great. Then he began to praise it. He had talked about it with [*name of the CEO*], saying that he cannot explain what he saw, and suggested that the CEO go and see it. Well, [*name of the CEO*] rearranged his schedules so that he could come and see it [...] Everybody came. Then we kept 70 presentations of it.

(n12)

In order for an organisation to become more empathic, organizational learning and strong support from the top management are required. As highlighted in connection with the previous theme, organizational learning must be enabled first in order to achieve further support from the top management. Referring to Junginger and Sangiorgi (2009), in developing transformative insights in an organization, learning must occur as the

main output. Especially learning in the top-level management is crucial, and this indeed was the result of the completed R&D-led customer-centric project experiments in the participating organization during 2010–2014.

It stuck in [*name of the executive board member*] mind that when he had to start this new offering, he became acquainted with the matter in complete silence and then said, “This is how we will do it.”

(n12)

It starts with the management. That they understand and internalize that this is the right way to go.

(n27)

[*Name of the executive board member*] was the driving force, and [*name of the CEO*] of course, too, because [*name of the CEO*] wanted differentiation in the area of services, but it concretely came through that [*name of the executive board member*] wanted this. [...] He created those conditions in a certain way.

(n34)

The findings above are in line with those of Pruitt and Adlin (2006), who claimed that an organization is more likely to succeed with empathic design efforts if there is some previous experience of design activities. In addition, the successful projects facilitated the building of trust (Junginger & Sangiorgi, 2009) between the design specialists, managers and top-level management. Top-level organizational learning through project experimentation supported trust building, and hence value- and norm-related insights typically found in the management of knowing organizations started to emerge. Thus, the lessons learnt from the executed customer-centric projects started to strengthen a trust in customer-centric development. This, in turn, increased a readiness for approaching service design from the viewpoint of empathic development.

In order for an organization to become more empathic, a top-level vision is needed, after which the change can be implemented through management and other practicalities. As discussed, trust is needed throughout the process to enable a change of mindset, but co-creating visions based on external rewards and internal positive traits are also needed in the generation of transformative insights (Junginger & Sangiorgi, 2009). The empirical data support this notion. New visions of what can be achieved through service design as an empathic and customer-centric approach had formed in the mind of an executive board member based on the lessons learnt from the executed project experiments. Once the visions had emerged and a change of mindset occurred in the top management, organizational practicalities and decision making came into play in terms of investments, teams, expertise, collaboration and practical facilitation of customer-centric projects.

Changing the operating model must start from the management, but once the willingness has emerged [...], it requires a lot of facilitation. [...] Both are needed, willingness and a direction and then practical facilitation. (n34)

I guess if we want to have it widespread, and not in one single project, it requires leadership, clarity about the direction where we want to go with it. And then, of course, it requires thinking how you build the teams and expertise and [...] how you make them collaborate with the rest of the organization. (n30)

All in all, after ten years and after accruing knowledge from four customer-centric project experiments, the situation reached a point in 2014 where more empathic development approaches started to be favoured within the organization under study: (a) the current CEO had just been elected, and he was driven to differentiate the services from those of other producers; (b) the executive board member had become acquainted with customer-centric ways of working and had the willingness to engage in it; and (c) two leaders of service business had a strong desire to do things differently. The executive board member in question was the leaders' superior, so he was able to clear the path for them.

It happened at that point because [*name of the CEO*] was adamant, [*name of the executive board member*] had the willingness and we were maybe the only few people [...] who had an urge to do things, like in principle, a bit differently. Goddamn it, let's do things differently than what the dinosaurs here have done the last 30 years, [...]. This kind of mentality. (n34)

Looking at the ten-year time span, one might agree with the leader who stated: "As good things always are, it's a sum of many things, sometimes the stars get aligned in history" (n34). Organizational learning had occurred, new visions had been created and a former design manager had thereby been given a mandate to form an in-house service design team that kicked off their pilot project on 1 September 2014. Hence, the people and abilities were in place to start the implementation of customer-centric development.

Then there was [*name of the former design manager*] and all the others there, and that group fit in the picture really well, in my opinion. Maybe that was the key to the solution, really. That the chain went from necessity to hard will, a will to do things differently, and there was a group of people who were capable of starting to play the game with us real fast. (n34)

Still, it was not until the first pilot project was finished that the corporation management was convinced about service design as an empathic development approach.

In our case [*the project name*] was a successful pilot, and there was a board-level sponsor, [*name of the executive board member*], and on account of him, the other board members were convinced that this was the right way to act.

(n27)

In addition to the themes discussed above, the empirical data set shows that **based on the direction where society is headed, societal changes affect the changes taking place in organizations by reforming their business from selling products to selling data.** The market share and significance of digital services have grown. The shift is also visible in the participating organization, since it is evolving into the direction of software business. Instead of selling products, they are starting to sell data. There is a need for customer-centric and holistically empathic development approaches that consider the organization as whole, understand the needs and values of customers, and construe those needs and values as new service opportunities, processes and systems.

The share of the service is growing and its importance is growing and it is also easier to increase profitability.

(n1)

We are becoming more of a software company, and the services are also more abstract. What has been done now, service design has helped us.

(n27)

We started to think in the company about the voice of the customer, how we measure the [...] input and feedback from the customers constantly, and how it flows back into our processes and systems.

(n44)

The societal transformation from product- to service-centricity and, eventually, competition have driven the participating organization to find new growth opportunities in the area of services to reinforce differentiation: “There was a necessity in services to find new growth, new competitiveness and differentiation. [...] We may not have been looking for service design per se, but [...] that’s where it started from” (n34).

Conclusions

A change of mindset is critical in order to enable an organization to evolve towards empathy, especially if the organization is a traditional knowing

organization. This research paper follows the argument of Lei and Greer (2003) that an organization can evolve from a traditional knowing organization to a learning organization. What remains unclear, and needs further research, is whether knowing and learning organizations can evolve into being truly empathic instead of an empathic organization only being able to evolve independently, as Lei and Greer (2003) argue.

A change of attitude and mindset is only the starting point on a path towards an empathic organization. Management and practicalities also need to be addressed in order to implement the change. Overall, more research is required to understand how an organization evolves once empathic development approaches, such as service design, have been adopted. It is also worth studying how an organization-wide alignment can be carried out in a large matrix organization in terms of its culture, management models, practices, operational processes and systems, project management, human resources (HR) and training to enable a transition into an empathic organization.

Summary 1: Lessons learned that can contribute to the organisational or business context

In order for an organization to evolve into an empathic one, it is crucial to effect a change of mindset among the top-level management. This enables a transition to designing *with* customers instead of designing *for* them. These notions are in line with the findings of Sanders (2009). To enable a change of mindset, first, customer-centric project initiatives and active people are required. Second, organizational learning and strong support from the top-level management are needed to advance customer-centric development. Third, a top-level vision is necessary. And finally, management, practicalities and the implementation of customer-centric development must be addressed. In addition to these, societal changes may affect the changes taking place in an organization.

Summary 2: Contribution to organisational or business knowledge or practices

This exploratory case study of a multinational manufacturing corporation increases our understanding of how an organization can evolve into being more receptive to service design as an empathic development approach. The results of the study suggest that in order for an organization to become more empathic, organizational learning of what empathic development approaches mean in terms of internal traits and external rewards (Junginger & Sangiorgi, 2009) must occur first. This enables the creation of potential visions and transformative insights. Once this is understood, a change of mindset into understanding why it is sensible to design with customers can take place.

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