

Jobs-to-be-done

– A new method to learn more about reasons for ticket purchases



Billetcenteret, Det Kongelige Teater

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What happens if we approach customers as they are buying their theatre ticket asking them about their motivation for the purchase? What happens if we apply a method traditionally used in the development of products such as milkshakes and cars to something as complex and personal as a theatre experience? A Suitcase of Methods and the Department of Strategic Analytics at the Royal Danish Theatre have tried out a new method. As part of our exploration of different methods providing insight into audiences' experienced relevance we carried out 15 interviews with customers based on the American method for marketing analysis, *Jobs-to-be-done*.

The interviews took place immediately after the ticket purchase and the aim was partly to investigate what *need* the customers wanted

the ticket to meet for them and partly to test this new method.

The Method

Jobs-to-be-done is developed primarily by Clayton Christensen, Professor at Harvard Business School. The Method has its origin in product design and product development and is also used as a marketing tool. A *Jobs-to-be-done* interview aims to uncover what job or output a customer hires a product to do for him or her.

Clayton Christensen describes the model in these words:

"The jobs-to-be-done framework is a tool for evaluating the circumstances that arise in customers' lives. Customers rarely make buying decisions around what the "average" customer in their category may do – but they often buy things because they find themselves with a problem they would like to solve. With an understanding of the "job" for which customers



find themselves "hiring" a product or service, companies can more accurately develop and market products well-tailored to what customers are already trying to do". (Christensen, Clayton, <http://www.christenseninstitute.org/key-concepts/jobs-to-be-done/>)

Procedure

When using this method we gain knowledge about the customer's needs by focusing on the *timeline* leading up to the purchase. During the interview, we asked a customer what happened in his life that made him buy a ticket for The Royal Danish Theatre. Framing the question this way helped to uncover both the customer's passions and uncertainties.

The method is based on basic interview questions such as *who*, *what* and *when*. However, the interviewer restrains himself from asking *why*, as this question will make the customer rationalize on his behavior, which we want to avoid as we are looking for the his unconscious motivation. A side from these questions and the focus on the timeline we asked: *"What is the purpose of your ticket purchase?"*

Research setup:

- Purpose: To try out the method 'Jobs-to-be-done' and study the motivations for buying a theatre ticket. What job does the audience need the theatre to do, when they buy a ticket?
- Settings: The box office at The Royal Danish Theatre, and over the phone.
- Basic structure: 15 interviews carried out at the box office at The Royal Danish Theatre, Old Stage and over the phone.
- Questions:
 - Questions on the timeline leading up to the purchase. For instance: "What did

you do right before you came here today? "

- "What was your reason for buying a ticket today?"
- Time frame: Three days in february 2016. The box office, Old Stage one day, from 2 pm. – 5 pm. Over the phone from 9 am. – 3.30 pm.
- Participants: The estimated ages of the interviewed were between 20 and 80 years old. Customers buying online were not included in this set up.
- Recruitment: The ticket-buyers at the office were invited for a cup of coffee and a talk. The customers calling in were asked, if the theatre could contact them after the purchase.
- Documentation: Notes.

Working with 'Jobs-to-be-done' we apply a new perspective on the question of relevance in regards to the audience. This perspective provides both new knowledge on the specific reasons for ticket purchases as well as new methodological experiences we can further develop.

Knowledge about our customers

During the conversations we register whether the customers are buying a gift certificate, are cashing in a gift certificate and their frequency level in regards to ticket purchases. I.e. extremely frequent customers (watches the same production several times), very frequent customers (watches approximately one or more productions a month), frequent customers (watches three or more productions each season), familiar customers (watches one or two productions each season), new customers (buying a ticket to Thea Royal Danish Theatre for the first time), or

infrequent customers (watches a production every two or three years).

During the interviews it turns out, that the different customer types have different agendas with their ticket purchase and their visit to the theatre.

The frequent and the familiar customers, who are buying tickets for the outdoor production at 'Ulvedalene' compare their purchase with planning a vacation. They plan it well in advance and it gives them a break from their everyday life – a break they can enjoy together.

- An elder man considers the theatre visits to be an important part of his life with his (now) departed wife. He wants this tradition to continue in his life with his new wife. A visit to 'Ulvedalene' has been a recurring ritual in his life, and he talks passionately about the possibilities of the outdoor stage (the use of fire, battle, horses, choirs, the atmosphere at dusk etc.). Vacation and a visit to 'Ulvedalene' are the two recurring events in his life.
- For an elder couple their subscription to the theatre ensures that they have shared experiences as a couple. *"If we didn't have our subscription I don't know what we would do."* They have had their subscription for 15 years and once again, they compare a theatre visit to a vacation. Furthermore, they state that it is important to stay updated.

For customers buying a gift certificate they chose The Royal Danish Theatre because they wanted an 'extraordinary' present. They feel that an experience in The Royal Danish Theatre compared to smaller theatres has a bit more 'swing' to it.

- A 60-year-old woman wants to buy a gift certificate for her childhood friend. She is looking for something extraordinary. She usually buys expensive lotions or artworks, but this year her friend is turning 60, so the present should have more 'swing' to it. She hopes that they can buy tickets together and share the experience. When they were young, they would often go to the theatre and watch the male actors. Now, they are more drawn to the ballet or the opera. She explains that the national scenes – here and abroad – are guaranties for a high quality experiences. Furthermore, she highlights the architecture at The Royal Danish Theatre's three houses as an important part of the whole experience of going to the theatre.

The customer cashing in a gift certificate has often had the certificate lying in a drawer for a long time. It is generally a question of logistics (babysitting, coordination regarding practical errands etc.) that determines what productions they will buy tickets for.

- A gift certificate to The Royal Danish Theatre was lying untouched in a

drawer for 2 and a half years. A couple with kids from Jutland finally decided to cash in the gift certificate after a weekend of cleaning up. To begin with it was the location of The Playhouse that determined where they bought tickets to. Hereafter the practicalities around babysitting became a factor in regards to what production they chose.

- A 28-year-old woman got her parents' gift certificate when they realized that they would never bring it to use. She had already planned a visit to the theatre with her friend and now they also had the opportunity to go out for dinner as well. The woman is certain that a theatre experience will linger in their memories in the future. *"It doesn't just disappear in the mass of different experiences as it does with film"*. She often hangs out at The Playhouse during summer. However, the ticket prices determine to a great extent what tickets she will purchase. It determines which scenes she is oriented towards and where she chooses to eat to before the show.

Impulsive buyers, who are inspired by the newsletter or encouraged by friends to buy tickets, only make up one fifth of the interview.

- An elder woman is buying a ticket because she was inspired by the newsletter and because she enjoys the architecture at Old Stage. She only wants to visit Old Stage and she goes alone. Since her husband passed away it

is a nostalgic experience to visit the theatre, and it is something she wants to do by herself. Going to the theatre is a social experience in itself. She talks to strangers sitting beside her and at the bar during intermission. She finds it binding and time consuming to coordinate with friends. The theatre represents a heaven for her – a break from her everyday life and choosing between the different art forms is less important.

Finally, the extremely frequent customers. These customers generally have difficulties accounting for their motivations for the purchase.

- An elder couple has a subscription for The Opera. In addition, they purchase tickets to The Playhouse based on reviews. Opera and performance art is a significant part of their life. They bring their eight grandchildren to theatres and circus but not to The Royal Danish Theatre. They don't know it is a possibility. They want to introduce The Royal Danish Theatre and classic culture to the grandchildren.
- A single man compares his consumption of opera to other people's shopping habits. He sees almost every opera alone, and he often travels abroad to experience rare and special 'treats'. It is always the art that motivates

him to buy tickets. He is interested in the music, the art, and the social element is of no importance to him. Watching and hearing it live is important. He doesn't like the transmissions in the cinema. *"You can almost see all the way down the singer's throat".*

Summing up

- what we learned about ticket buyers

This specific methodological study does not give a full and comprehensive explanation for every customer's motivation for purchasing a ticket – of course. Instead, it seems to confirm the notion that experience with performance art is very complex and often means different things to different people. However, this method and the 15 interviews give us a good sense of a few prevalent tendencies. For instance, we saw a relation between the motivation for buying the ticket (the job-to-be-done) and the customer segment (frequent customers, familiar customers, etc.). We learned for instance that different customers spend their time before and after a performance differently. Some prepare themselves thoroughly before going to the theatre and others enjoy discussing the experience afterwards.

The perspective applied by 'Jobs-to-be-done' gave cause for methodological reflections relevant for our future work on audiences' experienced relevance and the further development and examination of methods.

Methodological reflections

Since the audience segments turned out to be important for this study and something that the theatre further develops and employs in other areas it might be relevant to use these segments in future methods or at least relate future results to the segments already established. For other theatres the 'Jobs-to-be-done' method may be a way of beginning working with segmentation or grouping of the different types of audience visiting their scenes. It turned out, for instance, that the extremely frequent customers had a hard time talking about their experience in detail. This makes us wonder whether different audience segments would respond differently to different methodological setups. Perhaps a different set of questions and another interview setting for the extremely frequent customer group would bring forth answers that are richer in detail. However, it is important to mention here, that this particular group hasn't been particularly reluctant with their answers in our other studies. Generally, we see that frequent customers and audiences find it easier to describe their experience than our less frequent customers. Find more information about different audience segments in our [rapport #6. Art Experience and the Focus Group Composition](#).

The essence of timing

During this study we also learned how the timing of questions are essential. Customers who wanted to return a ticket had a hard time recalling why they bought it in the first place. The motivation for a purchase and the 'job' the customer needs done seems to be momentary and elusive. Thus for this method to be relevant

for other theatres and institutions working with an audience, we should stress the importance of asking the audience about their motivation immediately after their purchase.

The importance of context

Furthermore, this study has pointed at several different themes, which could be relevant and interesting to pursue in future studies. For instance, many ticket buyers describe the architecture of the different houses (Old Stage, The Play House, or The Opera) as important factors when it comes to choosing where to go and what to see. From a methodological point of view, these details emphasize why an exploration of performing art experiences must involve a study of the context as well. I.e. an exploration of the setting, the audiences' expectations, the experience after watching the production etc.

Working with a marketing tool

Using the 'Jobs-to-be-done' method in this way also means applying a perspective taken from marketing to the world of art and culture. This may seem like a far stretch, but at the same time, this new point of view is methodologically interesting as it provides us with a different type of knowledge about customers' needs and wants. If we bring this knowledge forward into future qualitative and quantitative studies, this method and this perspective may contribute with a specific clarification of different motivations before ticket purchases, a further understanding of different audience segments, and a different understanding of what the theatre actually means to people.

References:

Clayton Christensen, professor at Harvard Business School and Disruptive Innovation Expert.