



UNPLUQ THE BURNOUT

Client: *Jorn Rigter*

Made possible by: *Technasium Amsterdam - Calandlyceum*

Written on: *25/09/2021 - Amsterdam*

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Information

The writers of this Plan of Approach are Ana Giljaca, Harsimran Singh, Sabri Muller and Shayna van Coblyn.

At the time of writing this Plan of Approach they are all in the final year of highschool on pre-university education (VWO). The client of this project is the company named Unplug and Jorn Rigter, the co-founder of Unplug.

The client Jorn Rigter is available via the following email address: jorn@unplug.com
Our teacher and supervisor during this project is Gerard van Soelen, he is available via the following email address: gvansoelen@calandlyceum.nl

This Plan of Approach was submitted on September 27th, 2021.

Summary

The group's project has been assigned by a growing Delft start-up, named Unpluq. This project will be combined with the profielwerkstuk of the group, in which they will conduct a precise and comprehensive survey, addressing the following key question: *What smartphone-use issues (both at work, but more interestingly outside of work) affect employees' mental health and productivity?*

This team is very excited to start working for Unpluq. This project will be their masterpiece (meesterproef), as the students are in their last year of high school. So this means that the project will last a whole school year and the profielwerkstuk will therefore consist of the (preliminary) research of this project.

After the profielwerkstuk has been completed, and with it the (preliminary) research of this project, the group will actually start designing a realistic concept, in line with the slogan 'Unpluq for business'.

The design will be in line with the results of the research, since the group is going to use this information to put together the right concept - a concept of which the aim is that it can actually contribute to improving the mental health and productivity of employees, within the business community.

Important dates to keep in mind during this project are the following:

(October 13, 2021) PVA presentation (phase 1) and access to the progress of the profielwerkstuk.

(December 1, 2021) Submit the final version of the profielwerkstuk.

(March 14, 2022) Final presentation master's thesis (phase 2)

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Foreword

This project is made possible by Technasium Amsterdam and the fast growing Delft start-up named Unplug.

A special thanks to the client **Jorn Rigter** and his company, **Unplug**, for giving the team such a great opportunity to carry out such a project for their master thesis.

The group is determined and motivated to achieve all set goals, according to the established requirements and within the deadlines. They believe that this project will be a success.

And of course a big thanks to the teachers, Dion Lembekker and Gerard van Soelen, for guiding the team during this project at school.



Introduction

Coming home after a long day of work, snuggling up on the couch and enjoying a look at what is going on in the world. Before you know it, it's been two hours and you've lost all this time on your smartphone.

A typical evening for many. But this has to and will change, according to the company Unpluq.

Unpluq reduces smartphone usage with one simple app: The Unpluq app. This tool disables all "unimportant" apps, preventing you from being distracted by certain notifications. It goes without saying that the important and necessary apps remain in use.

The purpose of the Unpluq is clear; spend less time on unimportant apps and invest this time in the important things that happen outside your smartphone.

At this point Unpluq wants to expand, they want to serve not only for personal use, but also for smartphone use during and for work-related matters. The reason why they want to expand is because they have noticed that many people in the **business world** become overstrained, because they are still busy answering their emails, phone calls and messages via their smartphone outside their working hours, because it is just as easy.

But employees have to get rid of the ideology '*via my smartphone I can answer quickly and effortlessly*', according to Unpluq.

Because of this effortless and easy transaction, many often unconsciously build up burnouts. A phenomenon that is increasingly common among employees.

Reason enough for Unpluq to let this Technasium team investigate everything that is connected to the impact of smartphone usage on developing a burnout. Based on this the team can conclude that the main question of this research will be '*Which smartphone-use issues (both at work, but more interestingly outside of work) affect employees' mental health and productivity?*'

Finally the team will also have to design a concept for the second version of an Unpluq, this time for within the business world, under the possible slogan 'Unpluq The Burnout'. This concept will consist of different aspects that will eventually help to prevent the development of mental health problems and low productivity among employees.

Our client

The faces behind the up and coming company 'Unpluq' are Jorn Rigter and Tim Smits; they co-founded the company together to help people regain their control on their smartphone usage.

The company was founded in the Netherlands in the Delft University of Technology. With their invention they hope that people can focus more on things that are important in their lives instead of wasting away behind a screen.

Using the tech that was created by the company people can 'filter' their phones from unimportant apps such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Adding an 'Unpluq Key' to your phone will make sure that these apps will not cause you any distractions during, for example, your work, causing you to get more things done and use your time more efficiently. An excessive amount of smartphone usage can also increase the chances of social anxiety, depression and a lack of sleep all of which can harm your mental health. All the more reason why a device like 'Unpluq' is needed in our new high tech society.

People that are more prone to have issues with an excessive amount of smartphone usage are business employees; they have lately been suffering from more burnouts due to their smartphones. Unpluq wants to target this specific group of people now and make Unpluq suitable for use in the modern day business world. This is a new challenge for Unpluq and the team to tackle.

Jorn Rigter will guide the group through the project as the founder of the company.



Jorn Rigter



Tim Smits

Pre research:

Burnouts

In this pre-research the goal is to discover the basics of burnouts. The team shall apply the information in a later stage of the project.

What is a burnout?

The term burnout means a state of exhaustion caused by a constant feeling of being overwhelmed. Being under an excessive and prolonged amount of stress due to your job, your responsibilities and your emotional wellbeing. You can't keep up with life anymore, everything is going by too fast, there aren't enough hours in a day and your to-do list is piling up. A burn out is mentally draining and can also harm your physical health. (Burnout: Symptoms and Signs. (2020, 4 december).

There are three types of burnouts;

- Overload burnout
- Under-challenged burnout
- Neglect burnout

An **overload burnout** indicates that you're so driven to work hard towards a goal that you're willing to risk your mental health and physical wellbeing to reach that goal. Constantly striving to do more which your body and mind cannot handle.

An **Under-challenged burnout** is when you don't feel like you're going forward in life or at your job anymore. You don't feel like you can cross another threshold with where you're at in your current stage of life. This can cause you to become uninterested, cynical and unmotivated. Because of this you won't challenge yourself anymore and your responsibilities will pile up until it is too much for you to keep up with.

A **neglect burnout** is caused by a feeling of incompetence and insignificance. You don't feel like you're contributing to anything anymore which makes you not want to do your work anymore. Feeling insecure about your work will lead to not wanting to do any of it anymore. You feel like being stuck at a point in life in which you don't see a meaning of contributing to anything anymore.

Stimuli and overstimulation are a symptom of a burnout. (Meulenberg, R. 2021, 11 augustus). If you are understimulated, you feel dull and inefficient. You drink a cup of coffee or put on music to make you more active or alert. On the other hand, if your nervous system is overloaded, you get upset or confused. If the brain cannot process the amount of stimuli, there is overstimulation. The body experiences overstimulation as a danger and starts to produce stress hormones. If you have too much of the stress hormone cortisol in your blood for a long time, this can lead to a burnout. (Meulenberg, R. 2021, 11 augustus).

Next to your work being a stressor for developing a burnout, your phone can be one too. It can be a very overwhelming device and a constant confrontation of your responsibilities. With a smartphone people can contact you whenever, you're even plugged in during the weekends and holidays, which can lead to a 'digital burnout'. (Markus Hofelich, M.H., 2016, 24 augustus)

Throughout this project the team will research what makes your phone such a huge stressor and how one can reduce this so that you can use your phone without causing yourself any mental and physical harm.

The assignment

The assignment: Unpluq For Business

Electronic device use is weakly associated with adolescent depression and even suicide. In addition, social media use is also weakly associated with depressive symptoms, especially for girls. (*iGen*. z.d.). Furthermore, a systematic review with strong meta-analysis, of about 20 studies, showed consistent evidence that there is an association between exposure to or use of equipment before bedtime and decreased amount of sleep, along with an increased daytime sleepiness. (Carter, B., PhD. 2016, 1 december)

To lay out the assignment, Unpluq has had some internal conversations about using Unpluq for businesses, but a lot is still unknown. The topic here would be the mental health of employees, regarding their burnouts. What smartphone use problems (both at work, but even more interesting outside of work) affect employees' mental health and productivity? A popular term in HR is vitality.

Many companies struggle with burnout complaints of (mainly young) employees. Research within a group of knowledge workers (e.g. the financial sector, consultancy companies, etc.) should reveal what the problems are with smartphones. This research would ideally consist of a combination of interviews and surveys.

For example, for the interviews the Technasium students could do about 3-5 interviews with HR managers and 50-100 surveys with employees between the ages of 25 and 40. The outcome of the research would be used to design a solution to this problem. This could be an updated software-only version of Unpluq, focused on businesses, or it could be a new (innovative) solution. The outcome for the assignment could be a concrete (concept) design, or even a minimum viable product (MVP).

Assumptions and risks

In this chapter, some concrete goals will be established, along with a number of situations that could hinder the project.

What the Technasium students will deliver:

1. The team will deliver the following concrete results:
 - An elaborated research within a group of knowledge workers (e.g. the financial sector, consultancy companies, etc.)
 - 3-5 interviews with HR managers.
 - 50-100 surveys with employees between the ages of 25 and 40.
2. Furthermore, the outcome of the above-mentioned research will be used to design a solution to the burnout problems:
 - A concrete (concept) design or a minimum viable product.
3. The project will be completed on March 14, 2022 and the team will hereby submit a final report and the final product to the client.

Situations where some goals are hindered:

1. One of the goals to achieve is to interview HR managers and employees. However, the team can encounter some problems, since the interviewees can give similar answers. This could hinder the progress of the research.
2. The team could deliver a concept design of an updated version of Unpluq. A risk here would be that the new version could be too similar to the previous version and therefore not be a new, innovative design.

During the whole project, COVID-19 or not, it's important to maintain good communication with the client. Especially in this project, where communication is key.

It's also important that the teamwork within the team is good, so that the team's skills are clearly visible during the project.

Deliverables

Appendix 1 - Deliverables

 => Profielwerkstuk part

 => Master thesis part

Deliverable	Description	Requirements	Responsible	Time
1.1	Plan of Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Front page Includes: The title, company of our client, school, teachers & deadline. - Summary Length: minimum of one A4. - Introduction Sketch a short situation (length: one A4) in which the subject/aim of this project becomes clear. - Foreword Here you can provide informal information. - Information Name the authors, information about the client, the dates and lessons. 	Ana	1,5 hours
1.1	Plan of Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our client Clearly describe the function and background of the company, client and market / playing field in which the company or organization is located. - Pre Research : Burnouts Write a short essay about Burnouts. Length: 1x A4. And remember to note the sources in the sourcelist. 	Shayna	1,5 hours

1.1	Plan of Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The assignment Clearly describe the assignment, the relevance for the company and the desired end result. - Assumptions and risks Write in consultation with your teammates. 	Harsimran	1,5 hours
1.1	Plan of Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Process and completion Describe how the process of the group is supposed to look like during this project. Be precise with the following things; the hours spent on the project and the amount of contact there will be between the group and the client. 	Sabri	1,5 hours
2.1	(Preliminary) Investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The profielwerkstuk During this project the team will have to use their (preliminary) investigations for their Profielwerkstuk. Their PWS is actually everything they have researched during this project. <p>There are a couple of things that have to get done before they can start with this O&O project, and therefore also their PWS.</p> <p>The group has to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up the main research question of the PWS. - Set up sub - questions that will form the different chapters of the PWS. <p>After this the group can actually make their start.</p>	Ana (ultimately responsible) Shayna Harsimran Sabri	80 hours

3.1	Interview set-ups	<p>- Kickstart to information</p> <p>When doing research it is very important that the main question always leads. When setting up Interviews it is very necessary for the group to keep in mind why they are doing this research and what exactly they want to research and find out.</p> <p>On the basis of this outcome, they must create questions with which they can actually obtain this information.</p> <p>The interview (set-ups) will therefore consist of these questions.</p>	Ana Shayna (ultimately responsible) Harsimran Sabri	
3.2	Collecting Interviewee's	<p>- The validity of answers</p> <p>Not only the questions the group decides to put in their interviews have an impact on the validity of the research results. But also on the people they choose to ask these questions (truthfully).</p> <p>That is why the group has to do a preliminary investigation about which people, from which positions they want to ask these certain questions.</p> <p>An example of the suitable persons are HR managers. And the amount of interviews that the group has to do, lay between 3-5.</p>	Ana Shayna Harsimran (ultimately responsible) Sabri	
4.1	Survey set-ups	<p>- Dig deeper</p> <p>After conducting the interviews, it is time to investigate deeper and broader.</p> <p>Instead of only interviewing certain people, who have a certain background.</p> <p>The group can also look at what people on a broader scale think of the problem statement, by means of surveys.</p> <p>For example to employees</p>	Ana Shayna (ultimately responsible) Harsimran Sabri	

		<p>(50-100), between the age from 25 to 40.</p> <p>Just as with the preparation of the interviews, the team will have to reassess what they find important and what they want to investigate. On the basis of this, they draw up surveys, which they will eventually administer (perhaps paid) to a larger group of people.</p>		
4.2	Organised survey outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making conclusions After conducting thorough surveys and realising their results, the team will draw conclusions using the survey outcomes. These results will later be used in the progress of developing a concept for the new Unpluq app. 	Ana Shayna Harsimran <i>(ultimately responsible)</i> Sabri	
5.1	Brainstorming up to the concept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collage of Unpluq for Business The team will use different types of brainstorm techniques to come up with possible ideas for a new version of the Unpluq app. (idea fase) They will also use their preliminary research to conduct the best possible concept. <p>After the idea fase, the group will filter all of their brainstorm outcomes, and melt them together in a few concepts.</p> <p>One of these concepts, or combined, will eventually be the definitive design for Unpluq for Business.</p>	Ana Shayna Harsimran Sabri <i>(ultimately responsible)</i>	

6.1	Definitive design "Unplug for Business"	<p align="center">- Unplug For Business</p> <p>The team will develop a new, innovative design of the Unplug app, called <i>Unplug For Business</i>. This could be a concrete (concept) design, or even a minimum viable product (MVP).</p>	<p>Ana (ultimately responsible) Shayna Harsimran Sabri</p>	
7.1	Definitive final report	<p align="center">- Research and design combined</p> <p>In the definitive final report, the students will present their master thesis. The final report will portray all the research that the team underwent. It will also show the development of the final product and what it ended up being. Furthermore, the process and the completion of the master thesis will be shown.</p>	<p>Ana (ultimately responsible) Shayna Harsimran Sabri</p>	
8.1	Final presentation	<p align="center">- The Technasium Parade</p> <p>In this presentation it becomes clear how the project went. The final product is also presented. This is assessed by the client and the teachers.</p>	<p>Ana (ultimately responsible) Shayna Harsimran Sabri</p>	

Appendix 2 - Planning

1.1 = Plan of Approach 2.1 = Preliminary investigation (Profielwerkstuk) 3.1 = Interview set-ups 3.2 = Collecting Interviewee's 4.1 = Survey set-ups 4.2 = Organised survey outcomes 5.1 = Collection "Concept ideas" 6.1 = Definitive design "Unpluq for Business" 7.1 = Definitive final report 8.1 = Final presentation

Responsible => -----	Ana -----	Harsimran -----	Shayna -----	Sabri -----
Deadline:				
13/10/2021	1.1 - Plan of Approach			
11/10/2021			3.1 - Interview set-ups	
18/10/2021		3.2 - collecting interviewee's		
25/10/2021			4.1 - Survey setups	
01/11/2021				4.2 - Organised survey outcomes
01/12/2021	2.1 - Preliminary investigation			
24/01/2022				5.1 - Collection "concepts ideas"
07/02/2022		6.1 - Definitive design "Unpluq for Business"		
28/02/2022			7.1 - Definitive final report	
14/03/2022	8.1 - Final presentation			

Process and Completion

The group has six hours in total, every week, to spend on the project. Every Monday they have three hours of Technasium class scheduled during school, to work on this project. The other three hours are free working time, this means the group can decide by themselves when (or whether) they want to work on the project from home.

In addition, the group will have a meeting with the client once a week, which takes place via an online meeting or by e-mail. This has to be done in order to aware the client of what is going on and because feedback is an important aspect in order to succeed.

The meetings are also good for the group to understand better what the client expects in this project. It is just an easy tool for both parties.

Moreover, there will often be contact between the group and an expert. That is somebody who will help the group to delve further into the literature of the project.

This expert will also help with checking the validity of the results of the research, this means that this person must have a good understanding of the relevant project topic.

Source list

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