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Orienting people towards new work habits through Service Design

How habit formation can support organisations in adopting new work paradigms after COVID-19: the case of IMI C&IB Intesa Sanpaolo

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To myself,
for all the times
I thought I couldn't do it

Desk research

Field research

Abstract

EN - The COVID-19 pandemic completely changed the world of work. As Microsoft's CEO says, "over the past year, no area has undergone more rapid transformation than the way we work" (Microsoft, 2021). Indeed, organisations had to rethink their work models, accelerating the adoption of remote work, but bringing about a huge disruption due to an unprepared field.
Starting from the analysis about the pandemic's impact on people's work life and routines, this thesis investigates how future work scenarios are evolving towards the New Normal. Research supports hybrid work as new paradigm, whose adoption implies a huge cultural change within organisations. In fact, "culture exerts a profound impact on the [...] way an organisation responds to changes in its environment" (Evans, 1996), deeply affecting people's behaviours through which culture manifests. Thus, a strategic approach to cultural transformations within organisations should support long-lasting behavioural change through the process of new habits formation (Gardner & Rebar, 2019), as suggested in this research.
These considerations represented an opportunity to further investigate how the discipline of Service Design could strategically contribute to this cultural transition, orienting employees in the behavioural change process that the adoption of a new work paradigm requires.
Between the period of March and November 2021, field investigation was conducted in synergy with Human Resources in the hyper-regulated environment of IMI C&IB Intesa Sanpaolo, following a habit formation framework developed from literature review, which allowed to prototype a customised solution for the specific context. Indeed, the design process was synthesised into six main steps, each of them related to incremental design interventions allowing people to incorporate change and build new long-lasting work-related habits. The model attempts to incorporate Service Design with cultural and behavioural change in the organisation, which in this context finds expression in the process of new habits formation.
Starting from data collection through conversations with people living the organisational context, design challenges were identified leading to two pilot projects. The experimentation phase resulted in the prototyping of a design solution: *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo (LSP)*, a service to orient people in the process of shaping new work habits. Specifically, a Service Design approach was applied to recreate the experiential conditions to promote people's thoughtful understanding of their work life during a significant moment of tran-

sition, and to reflect together on new work-life scenarios.
Through a strong communication based on touchpoints properly designed to activate reflections on new hybrid ways of working, and a set of work-life experiences activated by specific spaces interpretable according to people's needs, *LSP* proposes itself as a service activating critical thinking about the meaning of work and raising awareness on new work-life scenarios, essential components to undertake a behavioural change process.

IT - La pandemia COVID-19 ha cambiato completamente il mondo del lavoro. Come dice il CEO di Microsoft, "nell'ultimo anno, nessun settore ha subito trasformazione più rapida che il modo di lavorare" (Microsoft, 2021). Infatti, le organizzazioni hanno dovuto ripensare i loro modelli lavorativi, accelerando l'adozione del lavoro a distanza, ma comportando un enorme sconvolgimento a causa di un terreno del tutto impreparato.
Partendo dall'analisi dell'impatto della pandemia sulla vita lavorativa e sulle routine delle persone, questa tesi indaga come futuri scenari lavorativi stiano evolvendo verso il New Normal. La ricerca sostiene il lavoro ibrido come nuovo paradigma lavorativo, la cui adozione implica un enorme cambiamento culturale all'interno delle organizzazioni. Infatti, "la cultura esercita un profondo impatto sul [...] modo in cui un'organizzazione risponde ai cambiamenti del suo ambiente" (Evans, 1996), influenzando profondamente i comportamenti delle persone attraverso cui la cultura si manifesta. Pertanto, un approccio strategico alle trasformazioni culturali all'interno delle organizzazioni dovrebbe sostenere un cambiamento comportamentale duraturo attraverso il processo di formazione di nuove abitudini (Gardner & Rebar, 2019), come sostenuto in questa tesi.
Queste considerazioni hanno rappresentato un'opportunità per indagare come la disciplina del Service Design potesse contribuire strategicamente a questa transizione culturale, accompagnando le persone nel processo di cambiamento comportamentale che l'adozione di un nuovo paradigma lavorativo richiede.
Tra il periodo di marzo e novembre 2021 è stata condotta un'indagine sul campo in sinergia con le Risorse Umane nell'ambiente iper-regolato di IMI C&IB Intesa Sanpaolo, seguendo un framework di formazione delle abitudini sviluppato a partire dalla letteratura, che ha permesso la prototipazione di una soluzione personalizzata per il contesto specifico. Infatti, il processo progettuale è stato sintetizzato in sei fasi principali, ognuna corrispondente a interventi incrementali con l'obiettivo di orientare le persone nel processo di cambiamento e di costruzione di nuove abitudini lavorative. Il modello cerca di incorporare il Service Design con il cambiamento culturale e comportamentale nell'organizzazione, che in questo contesto trova espressione nel processo di formazione di nuove abitudini.
Partendo dalla raccolta dati attraverso conversazioni con le persone che vivono il contesto organizzativo, sono state identificate delle design challenge che hanno portato a due diversi progetti pilota. La fase di sperimentazione ha

condotto alla prototipazione di una soluzione progettuale: il *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo (LSP)*, un servizio per orientare le persone nel processo di formazione di nuove abitudini lavorative. Nello specifico, la disciplina del Service Design ha permesso di ricreare le condizioni esperienziali per promuovere nelle persone lo sviluppo di un pensiero ponderato sulla propria vita lavorativa durante un significativo momento di transizione, e per riflettere insieme su nuovi scenari di vita lavorativa.
Attraverso la progettazione di una comunicazione mirata, basata su touchpoint opportunamente progettati per attivare riflessioni su nuovi modi di lavorare ibridi, e un insieme di esperienze di vita lavorativa attivate da spazi progettati ad hoc interpretabili secondo le esigenze delle persone, *LSP* si propone come un servizio che attiva un pensiero critico sul significato del lavoro e sensibilizza su nuovi scenari di vita lavorativa, entrambi componenti essenziali per intraprendere un processo di cambiamento comportamentale.

I.

COVID-19 pandemic and the future of work

The COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on many aspects of everyday life, completely changing the way we used to live before. Among all, the world of work was the most affected. As Satya Nadella, CEO at Microsoft says, "Over the past year, no area has undergone more rapid transformation than the way we work" (Microsoft, 2021). Indeed, with the virus outbreak and related lockdowns, all organisations had to rethink their work models, forcing employees to work from their homes and adopting a full remote work model, in most cases improvised.

Indeed, if it is true that the pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote work models that would have taken years to be implemented, it also brought about a huge disruption into organisations due to an unprepared field, in which firms were lacking basic resources to switch to this new paradigm, while employers were lacking knowledge and capabilities to guide employees efficiently (according to Osservatorio Smart Working, 33% of Italian organisations reported unprepared managers, while 50% of small businesses couldn't work from home due to a lack of technological support (Osservatorio Smart Working, 2020)).

A year and a half later, with at least one first attempt by organisations to bring employees back to the office, we can analyse the huge impact that this phenomenon had on work and people all over the world, and to investigate how future work scenarios are evolving towards the so-called New Normal.

1.1. Remote work before and after COVID-19

Before the strike of the pandemic, remote work had been experimented and adopted by many firms all over the world, in particular in the US, though it failed to become the favourable work model before COVID-19.
Going through some data, according to ten survey waves conducted in the US by Barrero et al. (2021) from May 2020 to March 2021, "an average of 48.6% of all paid working days were provided from home, which means 10 times the pre-pandemic share". Again, the results of a survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, indicates that "around 8% of all employees worked from home at least one day a week before the arrival of COVID-19, but only 2.5% worked from home full-time in the 2017-2018 survey period" (Altig, et al., 2020). Moreover, comparing these results with those of the American Time Use Survey, Altig et al. (2020) found that 90% of employees rarely or never worked from home, while "about 5 to 6 % of all working days happened at home before the pandemic hit" (see Fig. 1).

What percentage of your full-time employees...					
(Employment-weighted mean) Share of employees that...					
	rarely or never	1 full day per week	2 to 4 full days per week	5 full days per week	Paid working days at home as a percent of all working days
...Worked from home in 2019?	90.3%	3.4%	2.9%	3.4%	5.5%
...Will work from home after the coronavirus pandemic ?	73.0%	6.9%	9.9%	10.3%	16.6%
BLS' American Time Use Survey (2017-2018)					
	rarely or never	1 full day per week	2 to 4 full days per week	5 full days per week	Paid working days at home as a percent of all working days
Full-Time Workers	89.8%	3.8%	3.8%	2.6%	5.2%

Fig. 1: working from home, pre- and post-COVID. Data from the Survey of Business Uncertainty and the American Time Use Survey. Source: Altig et al., 2020.

As shown in Fig. 2, specifically considering the situation in Italy prior to the pandemic, in 2019 only 4.8% of workers were practising teleworking or homeworking, placing the country among the last ones in Europe, way far from Sweden, which led the chart with 37.8% of remote workers, but also from closer countries like France (23.1%), Spain (8.4%) and Germany (12.8%) (Assolombarda, 2021).

As for the report developed by Assolombarda (2021), based on data by Osservatorio Smart Working of Politecnico di Milano, in the year 2019 the tax of diffusion of remote working in Italy was 65% in large businesses, 30% in small businesses and 23% in the public sector (see Fig. 3); nonetheless, the number of potential remote workers was in strong growth compared to past years (15%) (see Fig. 4).

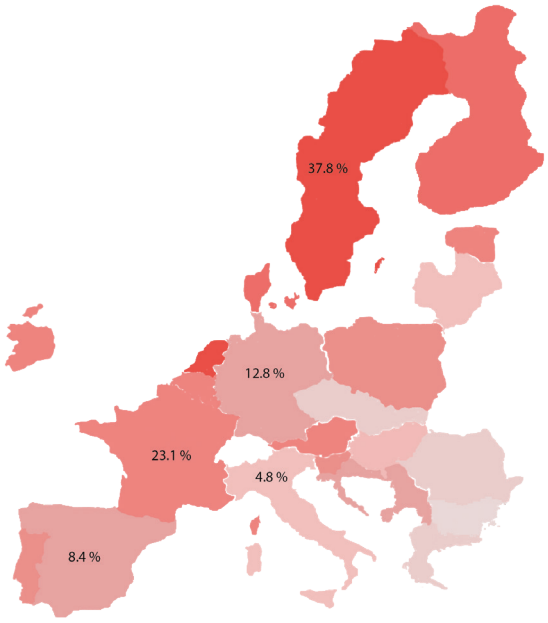

Fig. 2: incidence of home workers on total employment (2019). Source: Assolombarda, 2021.

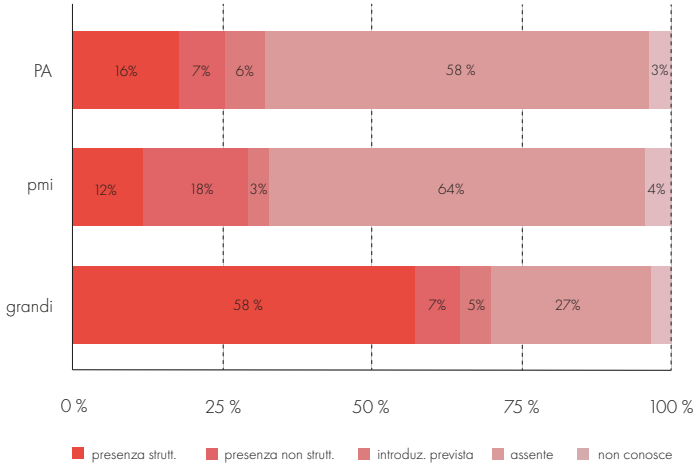

Fig. 3: tax of diffusion of remote working in Italy in 2019. Source: Assolombarda, 2021.

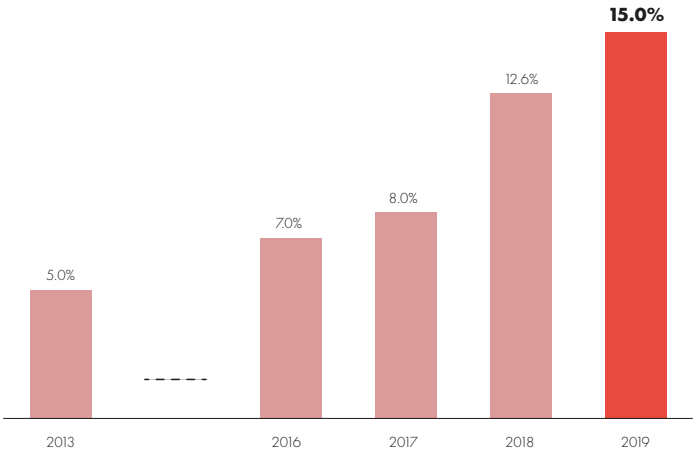

Fig. 4: level of growth of potential remote workers through the years. Source: Assolombarda, 2021.

To sum up, we can state that before COVID-19 crisis, the percentage of remote workers in major advanced countries was around 10% (Morikawa, 2021).

With the strike of COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lockdowns, many organisations all over the world were forced to switch to a remote work model in order to survive the huge economic disruption that the emergency brought about. As Barrero et al. (2021) defined it, a "social mass experiment in working from home" started.
Even though there was no other solution but for people to work remotely, we must consider that not all kinds of jobs can be performed at home, given the pure nature of some industries whose tasks are based on human contact or presence.
As a matter of fact, as Dingel and Neiman (2020) found, the total amount of jobs that can be performed entirely from home in the US is around 37%, with significant variations across cities and industries. What's more, "these jobs typically pay more than jobs that cannot be done at home and account for 46% of all US wages". In fact, information workers like "managers, educators, and those working in computers, finance and law are largely able to work from home, while construction and production workers cannot" (Dingel & Neiman, 2020).
This considered, data about the overall adoption of remote working during COVID-19 lockdowns give a hint of the massive disruption people faced on the way of working. According to Barrero et al. (2021) survey based on US organisations, "in May 2020, 40% of respondents worked from home, while only 26% worked on business premises and 34% were not working". Despite a small inversion in March 2021, "work from home peaked in May at 61% of paid working days and fell back to 43% in late October, before climbing back to 51% in November" (Barrero et al., 2021).

Another survey still conducted in the US reveals that "between February and May 2020 over one third of the labour force switched to remote work, resulting in about half of American workers now working from home" (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). In general, people who continued to commute were 37.1%, while workers who switched to remote work were about 35.2%, with 15% already used to home working pre COVID-19. Specifically, not only the availability to switch from commute to remote work varied across states and industries, but across generations and genders too: "younger people were more likely than older people to switch from commuting to remote work", while men were more likely to continue commuting and women to switch to home working (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020).

In their research, Bick et al. (2020) found that in May 2020 "35.2% of workers in the RPS worked entirely from home, compared to 8.2% in February", while among people who commuted daily in February, 60% continued to commute daily, 12% commuted on some days, and 28% switched to home working. Again, in the increased adoption of home working, a heterogeneous pattern across society and industries was found (see Fig. 5), with the starker difference between education groups (50% of workers with a bachelor's degree or more worked entirely from home, compared to only 15% of people owning a high school degree or less) (Bick et al., 2020). In general, these data suggest that the actual switch to remote work models was in line with Dingel and Neiman (2020) predictions on the potential for home-based work across workers and industries, given that "71.7% of US workers that could work from home actually did so in May" (Bick et al., 2020).

	% Working at Home Every Day		No Longer Employed in May, as % Workers	
	February	May	Commuting Every Day in Feb	Working at Home Every Day in Feb
All	8.2	35.2	27.7	26.5
Male	7.8	32.2	25.6	20.5
Famale	8.7	38.6	30.2	31.4
White	9.7	39.4	22.5	23.5
Black	6.8	24.5	33.9	31.7
Hispanic	5.2	23.4	34.0	26.5
Low Education	8.2	14.6	33.9	40.0
Midi Education	8.4	25.2	33.7	31.7
High Education	8.2	50.2	20.2	14.8
Low Income	7.6	18.4	39.9	41.5
Mid Income	6.8	30.7	28.1	28.2
High Income	9.6	45.5	19.4	17.9
Children	5.6	34.1	27.8	28.6
Youngest < 13y	5.2	33.2	27.9	31.3
No Children	9.7	35.7	27.7	25.8

Fig. 5: work from home by individual characteristics. Real-time population survey, adults aged 18-64. May 2020. Source: Bick et al., 2020.

Concerning the European scenario, more than one third (37%) working people started working from home in April 2020, with Italy recording the highest percentage (40%), despite being furthest behind compared to other countries (Assolombarda, 2021). Indeed, according to Osservatorio Smart Working's data (Assolombarda, 2021), in March 2020 more than 6.6 million workers were engaged in "emergency" remote working, resizing to 5 million in September (33.8% of employees).

This phenomenon could actually be linked to the fact that starting from the emergency outbreak, remote working included much more users than the ordinary target (employees in firms with more than 10 people and the so-called white collars), being extended to all permanent workers (Assolombarda, 2021), also including professions which used to be considered incompatible with this working model (call centres' operators, counter staff, skilled labours) (Osservatorio Smart Working, 2020). As a matter of fact, during the hardest moment of the emergency, 97% of large businesses, 94% of public administrations and 58% of small businesses were adopting remote working (6.58 million Italian employees, ten times more than the 570 000 in 2019), resulting in half employees' working time spent working from home in large private businesses and 1.2 days a week in the public sector. For sure, the adherence to remote working initiatives in firms prior to the pandemic positively affected the number of employees working from home (considering large businesses, 59% employees vs 36% in organisations new to this model) (Osservatorio Smart Working, 2020).

1.2. Remote work impact during COVID-19

Data presented in the previous paragraph give an idea of the great impact COVID-19 had on organisations and the way of working leading to a core question: what will the future of work after the pandemic look like?
This forced experimentation with work from home (WFH) actually helped organisations evaluate this working model, completely changing future directions towards WFH approaches in the New Normal. As James Gorman, CEO of Morgan Stanley, said: "If you'd said three months ago that 90% of our employees will be working from home and the firm would be functioning fine, I'd say that is a test I'm not prepared to take because the downside of being wrong on that is massive" (Barrero et al., 2021).
As a matter of fact, even if WFH has been adopted long before the pandemic by some organisations, many employers were still very much suspicious about possible misuse of flexibility and freedom over assigned tasks, fearing some kind of shirking (Deole et al., 2021).
But, if generalisations from past research on WFH won't be significant considering that most remote work before COVID-19 was mainly voluntary and performed under less dramatic circumstances (Bloom et al., 2015), going through the benefits and challenges which impacted both employers and employees during the pandemic, would help us understand future directions in new ways of working.

1.2.1. Remote work benefits

Among all remote work benefits, which are expected to be larger for "the better educated and highly paid" (Barrero et al., 2021), the most relevant for employees was higher productivity. As Barrero et al. (2021) found out with their survey, the experience working from home during the pandemic has been "better-than-expected" with higher productivity levels compared to before the pandemic working from the office. Indeed, evidence from a 9-month experiment conducted in China by Bloom et al. (2015), reveals that home workers' performance increases by 13%, mainly due to less breaks, time off, and sick days, but also increased number of calls per minute worked.
Even if at the beginning of the pandemic productivity rates were lower, people managed to use their homes as workspaces, while employers

learnt how to use emerging technology in the 2020s (Bloom et al., 2021). As for a survey conducted in the UK, a positive link between WFH and employees' performance exists even when remote work is forced by the government: a relationship which becomes stronger for people who used to commute to work for long distances. On the other hand, the impact WFH has on productivity and work satisfaction varies according to the specific job's feasibility in remote working and one person's previous experience with this working model (Deole et al., 2021; Teevan et al., 2021).
According to research developed by Microsoft about the pandemic's impact on work practices, employees' satisfaction is strictly linked to "their feelings of commitment, motivation, focus and being overworked". Indeed, considering the results of one of their external surveys, 31% of people who reported higher commitment to their team goals preferred working from home (Teevan et al., 2021).
Another great advantage about remote work is flexibility which, as Microsoft research demonstrates, emerged as an important benefit across different geographies. Higher flexibility means better opportunities to interweave private life and work (e.g., making laundry, cooking healthier meals, or exercising), with consequent increased work-life balance and employees' satisfaction (Teevan et al., 2021). More flexibility is also linked to time savings on commuting (ranked as the top benefit by 8 out of 10 countries (Steelcase, 2021)), which Americans during lockdowns dedicated to their primary jobs (35%) and to other activities (60%) including family time, household chores and childcare (Barrero et al., 2021).
In general, remote work flexibility allows organisations to reach a wider range of talents contributing to a more diverse workforce, making jobs more accessible also to people with disabilities; moreover, ensuring an agile agenda would give employees the possibility to customise their work environments, or even to self-select a preferred geographic location to live, leading to a 4.4% productivity enhancement, as Choudhury et al. (2019) affirm.

Considering the Italian scenario (see Fig. 6), Osservatorio Smart Working of Politecnico di Milano (2020) reports that the switch to remote work during COVID-19 pandemic led large businesses to improved employees' digital skills (71%) and helped overcome prejudices about agile work (65%). Moreover, employees registered an overall positive effect on performance (73% believed they had better focus, while 76% reported increased effectiveness).
In particular, the highest numbers regarded employees' autonomy (89%), self-responsibility on goals and results (87%), work effectiveness (85%), trust and communication between leaders and colleagues (84%), leading to a positive impact on teams' performance. The remote work experience has been overall positive and is considered as precious for the future by people who rated it 8.3 out of 10 (Osservatorio Smart Working, 2020).

All the above benefits are significant in terms of future perspectives on remote

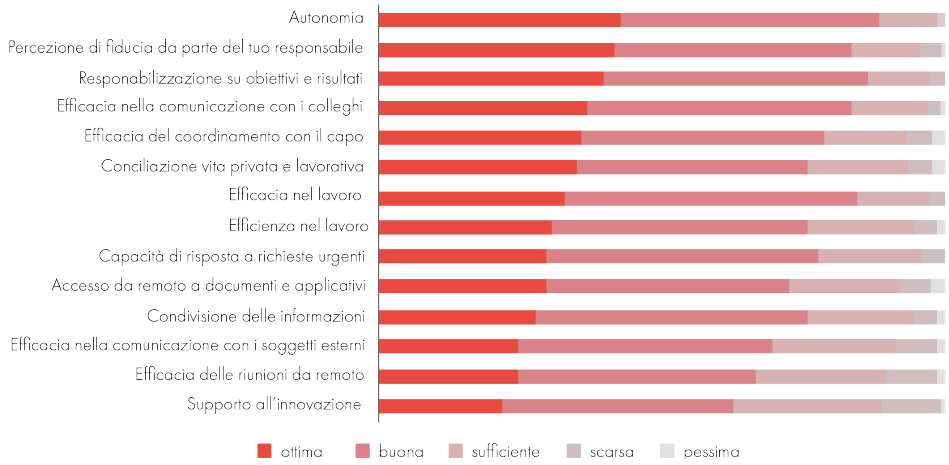

Fig. 6: impact on work performances from remote workers point of view (sample of 8314 employees). Source: Osservatorio Smart Working, 2020.

work models, together with general enablers which support the hypothesis of remote work persistence in new working paradigms. As Tim Cook, Apple CEO, said about WFH: "I don't believe that we'll return to the way we were because we've found that there are some things that actually work really well virtually" (Barrero et al., 2021). As mentioned, before COVID-19 both employers and employees were uncertain about adopting this kind of working model, but the 9-month experiment during lockdowns pushed aside all those constraints that were inhibiting remote work before (Barrero et al., 2021; Bloom et al., 2015). Indeed, as "many modern management practices" (Bloom et al., 2015), it is linked to a learning curve for which experience is essential, as demonstrated by a Microsoft study: people with previous experience in WFH reported better results on productivity and collaboration during the pandemic (Teevan et al., 2021).

Moreover, as Barrero et al. (2021) demonstrates, the switch to remote work forced organisations and people to invest in new technologies and equipment for home working, pushing innovation further. Such persistent investments (physical, human, and organisational capital) support a future adoption of WFH, making it more efficient over time.

Another important remote work enabler regards a change in attitudes after COVID-19. Indeed, 85% of people are doubtful about the efficacy of vaccines, not to mention the habit factor that emerged after a long time of social restrictions. In fact, only 28% of people would fully return to the pre-COVID situation, a number which anticipates significant social and economic changes post-pandemic (Barrero et al., 2021).

Benefits related to reduced commute time and cost savings are strictly linked and will have an important role in determining future WFH stickiness, too. Indeed, less commuting will mean lower expenditures (by 5 to 10% compared to pre-COVID times) related to food and services in big cities or dense urban areas close to business premises, consequently benefitting smaller

communities. Finally, having to WFH more frequently is supposed to boost employees' productivity by about 4.8% in the long term, mainly due to less commuting (Barrero et al., 2021).

1.2.2. Remote work challenges

As everyone could experience, remote working during lockdown wasn't that simple and, as mentioned by Steelcase (2021), "remote work benefits are not evenly distributed among workers, which sets up some employees for greater success, and others for greater struggles". Indeed, alongside many benefits, there also were huge challenges that compromised productivity and work effectiveness. Of course, the pandemic per se contributed to increase people's stress and anxiety, which worsened the overall perception of WFH.

One first challenge has been communication with colleagues, which was replaced by higher numbers of meetings and calls, if not instant messages, consequently leading to the so-called remote work fatigue, due to an excess of communication even beyond regular working hours (e.g., in the evening, on weekends or days off) (DeFilippis et al., 2020). As a matter of fact, given the digitalisation of work during the pandemic, people felt like they were always accessible, making work expansion into free time easier, with negative implications for the private sphere (Thulin et al., 2019). According to Osservatorio Smart Working of Politecnico di Milano (2020), 29% of employees lamented difficulties on keeping the right work-life balance, which also was one of the biggest challenges for organisations in Italy (58%).
If before the pandemic communication easily occurred in the office through planned or spontaneous face-to-face interactions, remote work called for more frequent meetings which, according to a study of Microsoft China, "doubled from 7 to 14 hours a week", short meetings included (e.g., check-ins and 1:1s). Following the same pattern, according to Microsoft's research, instant messages increased by around 70% among teams, with 52% more messages sent after 6 pm, because "If a colleague working flex hours sends a message at 9 pm, I feel like I need to respond" (Teevan et al., 2021). Not to mention the need for social interaction and camaraderie which was also moved to the virtual environment, leading people to even schedule specific calls to maintain social rituals like coffee or happy hours (Teevan et al., 2021).
Speaking of meeting fatigue, the increased number of virtual interactions was not the only cause: limitations linked to technological supports, inability to catch people's nonverbal signs, higher pressure on giving and receiving attention among others, were also significant. Indeed, a study by Microsoft's Human Factors using brainwaves indicators showed that stress levels went higher during video meetings compared to other kinds of activities, leading to burnout more easily (more than 30% employees reported higher burnout feelings in one Microsoft survey dated August 2020) (Teevan et al., 2021). Moreover, the

lack of a physical space to actually transition from one meeting to another, not only led to a more compressed schedule, but it didn't give people the possibility to switch between different conversations, substantially affecting brain fatigue. Collaboration in general suffered from an increased workload pushed forward by video call platforms that allowed participants to also chat and post files, leading to parallel conversations which resulted in overwhelming feelings (Teevan et al., 2021). Going through some data, according to one Microsoft's research, 85% of external US-based employees felt stressed, nervous, and overworked as remote work practices went on, while a study by Qualtrics and SAP across the first two months of the pandemic reported a more stressed (65%), anxious (57%) and emotionally exhausted (53%) workforce (Teevan et al., 2021).

As mentioned before, remote work also brought about many challenges related to work-life balance and gender inequality. If on one hand WFH during the pandemic has allowed for "a more equal distribution of household and childcare between men and women" than before (Del Boca et al., 2020), women had to deal with extra work much more since "mothers bear the brunt of childcare work" (Deole et al., 2021). This is particularly problematic for the female labour market, given that increased male participation in the household would allow women for a more substantial contribution to the economy (Del Boca et al., 2020). Indeed, as Barrero et al. (2021) reported, the results among people who desire most WFH in the future is not casual: it appears that women with children are more likely than men to rather work from home full time, a condition that would inhibit their possibility of promotion on the long term (it had been demonstrated that full time remote work is linked to lower promotion rates of about 50% (Bloom et al., 2015)). This is also particularly relevant since the conditions in which one person lives at home have strong effects on remote productivity and performance, influencing the overall perception of work-life balance. In fact, taking care of children during the pandemic really affected people's ability to focus, at the expense of women who found it more difficult than men with children (26% vs 10%) (Thulin et al., (2019); Teevan et al., 2021). As for a survey by Stanford among US workers, 37% of respondents reported 50% less efficiency in working remotely compared to the 35% who were fully effective, due to some factors such as the layout of their workspace at home, and the presence of co-habitants, whose needs have great influence on individuals' productivity (Teevan et al., 2021).

Another challenge affecting work-life balance is related to the expansion of workdays and workweeks, with work extending much more into weekends, also due to an intensive use of digital platforms (e.g., Teams usage on PC during weekends increased by almost 10%) and enhanced flexibility (Teevan et al., 2021). As for past research on remote work, although flexibility is considered more of a benefit, it can weaken the boundary between the office and home due to a lack of transition between spaces and time (Teevan et al., 2021). Moreover, given that time organisation over WFH is up to the individual, flexibility could easily become a challenge for collaborators since employees work

patterns are interwoven: if one colleague chooses to manage home responsibilities during the day and work in the evening, related work emails would be sent after hours, forcing people to replace their old routines with new rituals to support productivity (Teevan et al., 2021). Finally, the lack of physical presence at the office is usually replaced with online availability by remote employees who feel the need to show some kind of "devotion" to their leaders (Teevan et al., 2021). In sum, as DeFilippis et al., (2020) said, "it is unclear if this increase in average workday span represents a benefit or drawback to employee well-being".

One more significant WFH challenge was related to the lack of social interactions which strongly affected collaboration, innovation, employees' engagement, and satisfaction. As stated by Osservatorio Smart Working (2020), 29% of employees felt the feeling of isolation from the organisation as the biggest challenge, while 10 out of 10 countries believe it is the factor that most increased during forced remote work (Steelcase, 2021).

As mentioned in Microsoft's Annual Report (2021), the switch to remote work led employees to reinforce connections with closer networks, consequently shrinking the overall range of contacts and putting innovation in danger. Indeed, to establish strong networks among colleagues, is more than just a "nice to have", since connections with others are essential to keep productivity levels high and foster innovation (Microsoft, 2021). As a matter of fact, "the ties that spark creative ideas and foster productive collaboration are built through interpersonal connection, informal communication, and spontaneous interaction", which were almost impossible to foster working from home (Teevan et al., 2021). Data from Microsoft's research show that 66% of people lamented a decrease in social connection and cohesion with their team, leading to negative productivity numbers. According to one internal survey, 46% of employees considered all forms of social interactions performed virtually least effective, implying that virtual communication tools are not an efficient substitute of in-person interactions, considering the fatigue factor, too (Teevan et al., 2021). Moreover, since people working from home were proven to be less open to collaboration and keener on performing focused work even before the pandemic, remote workers are more likely to feel isolated from their colleagues, hence long-term full time remote work could have a negative impact on teams and the overall business outcomes. Of course, a significant role is played by the job itself, with creative and collaborative tasks being the most hit: two different Microsoft's research showed that during COVID-19 people suffered a decrease in their ability to brainstorm, participate in workshops or perform any kind of collaborative task effectively (Teevan et al., 2021).

As we can see, even if remote work during the pandemic happened in very specific circumstances, it raised a diverse range of challenges that, if considered in a long-term remote work scenario, could actually become significant risks for a sustainable employee experience. Going forward the New Normal, it will be business leaders and employers' responsibility to shift to a working model which can ensure people's well-being and equitable solutions for everyone's needs.

1.3. Future work scenarios: from remote to hybrid work

After COVID-19 forced experimentation into WFH, data on future work directions suggests a persistence of remote work models, if not even a switch towards a hybrid work paradigm (according to Steelcase (2020), most leaders around the world expect to offer more hybrid work options in the future than prior to the pandemic, as we can see form the chart in Fig. 7), given that employers and employees are willing to keep the best of both in office and remote worlds. Indeed, despite the many challenges that emerged during the pandemic, people could appreciate WFH potential (Osservatorio Smart Working, 2020), proving it beneficial for at least some workers and expecting these benefits to persist even after the health crisis ends (Bick et al., 2021).

Country	Leaders Expecting to Offer More Hybrid Work Policies	Increase From Pre-COVID Expectations
Japan	86%	23%
UK	66%	23%
US	75%	21%
Germany	73%	20%
India	77%	17%
China	61%	16%
France	62%	10%
Australia	54%	1%

Fig. 7: worldwide leaders' expectations on hybrid work adoption in the future. Source: Steelcase, 2020.

Speaking of future directions after the pandemic, as it emerges in Barrero et al. (2021), business managers are willing to support a working model in which three days per week in the office are sufficient to foster innovation and the organisation's culture. This evidence is confirmed by multiple surveys that report an expected adherence of employers and employees to work from home 3-4 times more often than before 2020 (WFH is expected to rise from 5.5% to 16.6% of all working days in the future (Altig et al., 2020)). As a matter of fact, data collected by Barrero et al. (2021) indicates a recurring trend of

employees wanting to work from home at least one day a week (80%), while half of survey respondents (40%) would like to split their workweek between the office and home, suggesting this as the preferred working condition (even in exchange of a sizable pay cut). These results appear to match with those mentioned by Bick et al. (2021), according to whom 37.4% of workers expect to WFH part or full time starting from 2022, a significant amount compared to December 2020 or even February 2021 (see Fig. 8).

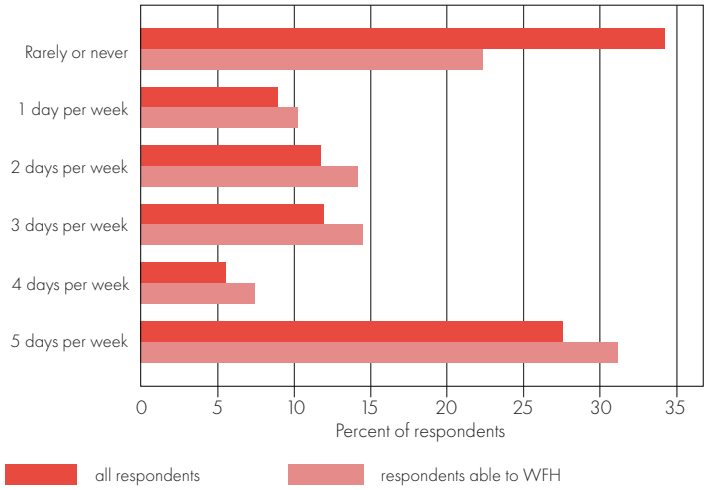

Fig. 8: data collected thorugh several surveys in 2021 indicate that most workers want to work from home two or more days per week in the future. Source: Barrero et al., 2021.

Data from the European scenario reports a similar trend: in the UK, more than 70% of employees express the desire to work from home even more than 2 days a week (Bloom et al., 2021), while in Italy, the expected number of employees working partly from remote will be around 5.35 million after the pandemic (Osservatorio Smart Working, 2020).

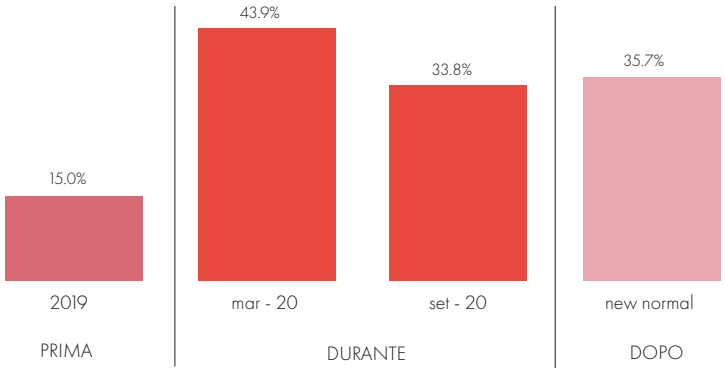

Fig. 9: level of incidence of remote on potential worker in Italy. Source: Assolombarda, 2021.

As mentioned by Osservatorio Smart Working (2020), organisations are adopting new approaches in the way people work, following new employees' habits: for example, 51% of organisations in Italy are thinking of modifying their physical spaces and 38% will change workspaces' aim. Moreover, working remotely will be a more frequent option for 70% of large businesses, switching from one to almost 3 days WFH after COVID-19.

All over the world, employers are taking a variety of approaches in the attempt of bringing employees back to the office at least some days a week: for example, Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan want employees back in the office five days a week (Verlaine & Benoit, 2021), while other firms like Apple and Google, want them on site just part of the week (Tilley, 2021). For sure, business leaders must consider that "remote is going to be the new signing bonus" (Cutter & Dill, 2021), as many employees would consider looking for a different job if not allowed to work remotely at least partially (Robinson, 2021). As a matter of fact, since some employers are willing to offer a remote work model after the pandemic and some are not, people are looking into jobs that better suit their working arrangements' needs, before going back to full-time work on business premises, leading to a quit rate of 2.5% (Barrero et al., 2021).

In sum, a hybrid work model seems like the most plausible future direction, as many surveys conducted by Microsoft demonstrate. Specifically at Microsoft China, 69% of employees would rather work according to a hybrid model, to enjoy both benefits of remote and in office work, while also being more productive. The same was found to be true at Google, where 66% of employees would enjoy a hybrid model, and also outside Microsoft, where a recurring trend reveals a preference for hybrid work (56% of US workers would rather work from home at least some of the time). To be noted that, even before the pandemic outbreak, young people were attracted by flexible work arrangements, since their ability to choose how and when to work determines their work satisfaction, despite relying on the office for socialising (Teevan et al., 2021).

This data overview gives us a picture of possible scenarios in the New Normal, suggesting that "the time has come to rethink work models in order to don't lose the experience of these past months and switch to real agile working, which has to foresee enhanced flexibility and autonomy in work times and locations [...] putting people and their needs, talents and peculiarities at the centre" as stated by Mariano Corso, scientific director of Osservatorio Smart Working of Politecnico di Milano (2020).

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Mariano Corso, 2020

II.

The transition to hybrid work

As data shows, employers and employees are willing to continue working from home for at least part of the week, suggesting a switch from a full remote work model to a hybrid work model. But why does a hybrid model appear so appealing for future work directions? Considering above-mentioned benefits and challenges, it is understandable that employees would like to continue benefiting from the acquired flexibility, while also ensuring connections and team spirit fostered by in-office interactions. Indeed, as Bloom et al. (2021) suggest "the advice to move to a hybrid working week seems appropriate", giving people the possibility to spend half the week at home to accomplish focus work or small meetings, while dedicating the rest of the week to in-office social encounters and informal communication. As a matter of fact, once home flexibility is ensured, it's important to return to the office to run some in person activities and mitigate the difficulties that WFH may entail (collaboration, innovation, socialisation).

But even though it's clear that "extreme flexibility and hybrid work will define the post-pandemic workplace" (Microsoft, 2021), people must pay attention in balancing the two options right (Brower, 2021). In fact, there are some significant concerns, among others, to take into account when dealing with hybrid work: firstly, a hybrid team could generate an "office in-group" and a "home out-group" that could compromise cohesion among colleagues; secondly, the risk of ineffective use of office space, due to people's freedom over the choice on which day coming to the office (Mondays and Fridays are most likely to be taken off); and thirdly, the risk of reduced diversity in the workplace, considered how women would rather work from home more often than men (Bloom, 2021).

Eventually, we must recognize that "the pandemic has started a revolution in how we work making firms more productive and employees happier, but like all revolutions, this is difficult to navigate" (Bloom, 2021). Since the move to hybrid work is going to be just as disruptive as last year's switch to remote work, business leaders must adopt a thoughtful approach, as well as an effective strategy to ensure a smooth transition and to guide employees towards this new way of working (Microsoft, 2021).

2.1. Defining strategies towards the adoption of a hybrid work model

The pandemic has been a life-changing moment in every way, "and a significant part of how leaders will get back to a better work experience will require supporting people through this change", keeping in mind that the way in which organisations plan to transition "will have a long-term impact" (Steelcase, 2021).
As mentioned in Microsoft's report about the impact of remote work during the pandemic, "the infrastructure surrounding work will need to evolve to help people adapt to the challenges of remote and hybrid work" (Teevan et al., 2021). Indeed, to effectively transition to a new hybrid work model, it is crucial to foster people's development of soft skills to support the right behaviours. In this concern, businesses must first develop a certain resilience, starting from organisations' culture and leadership styles, that would allow managers to be more flexible and empathetic towards both employees' and organisation's needs (Osservatorio Smart Working, 2020).

Speaking of strategies to develop new future work models, Lynda Gratton (2021), management practice professor at London Business School, says that "to design hybrid work properly, you have to think about it along two axes: place and time", meaning a model where future organisations are positioned in the "anywhere, anytime" quadrant (see Fig. 10).

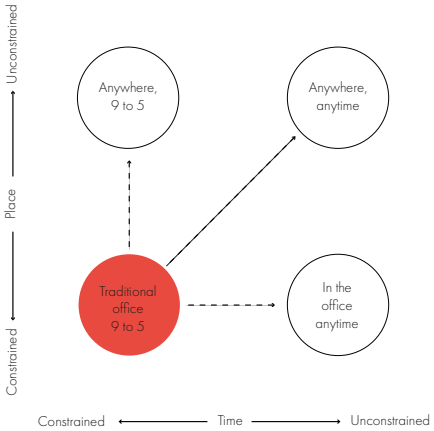

Fig. 10: Gratton's model: future organisations in the top right quadrant. Source: Gratton, 2021.

To transition towards this direction, four different perspectives need to be considered: "jobs and tasks", meaning that to deliver benefits and minimise downsides of hybrid work, employees' roles and drivers of productivity have to be known; "employee preferences", which actually refers to the understanding of specific individual needs and the ability to empathise with them by communicating and engaging people in the process; "projects and workflows", that is linked to the understanding of "how work gets done", in order to don't replicate the same existing bad practises; and "inclusion and fairness", to limit negative feelings among employees (i.e. increased burnout and decreased productivity, collaboration and retention) and ensure an equitable workforce (Gratton, 2021).
In particular, as for Deloitte's research, when trying to re-design future work models it is essential to: "reflect" upon employees and people's desires; "re-invent", keeping the desired future direction in mind; "re-architect", through a plan that, considering both people and the organisation, allows to put reimagination into action by crafting new work outcomes in a way that unlocks human potential and models the way work will be experienced (Sharpley et al., 2020; Deloitte, 2021). In this concern, taking the opportunity opened by COVID-19, human resources (HR) should reorient its mission towards re-architecting work and reimagine work-related challenges, in favour of empowered workers and a more resilient organisation (Deloitte, 2021).
Similarly, to Gratton's idea of future strategies, Deloitte's research points out how the pandemic started questioning work around "when and where" it gets done, as well as "how and what", two "critical degrees of choice" (see Fig. 11) that have a great impact on the development of "re-architectured work models", which will give people complete ownership around flexibility and autonomy on work-related choices (Sharpley et al., 2020).

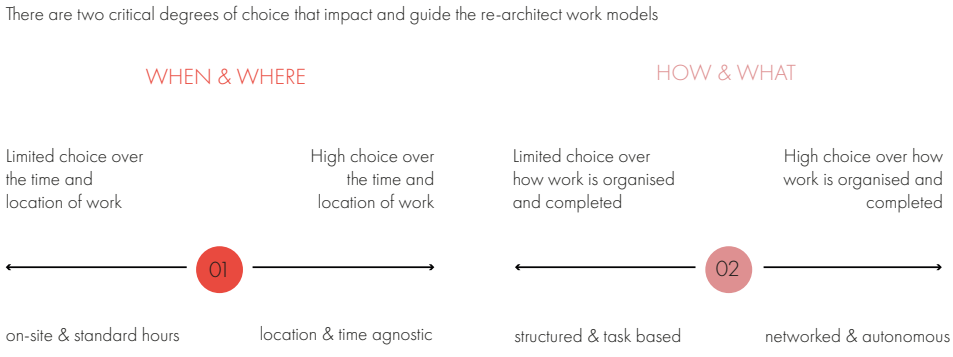

Fig. 11: Deloitte's two critical degrees of choice significantly impacting the development of "re-architectured work models" for the future. Source: Sharpley et al., 2020.

What's interesting about the above-mentioned approaches is organisations' renewed focus on humanity, which leads emerging trends. As pointed out in Deloitte's research, the time has come "to make work better for humans, and humans better at work" starting from five significant switches:
1. from hierarchies to fluid teams;
2. from a command-and-control model to autonomy and trust;
3. from technology as a human substitute, to super teams of people and machines;
4. from focusing on safety, to wellbeing and meaning;
5. from extreme care for profits, to a switch towards social enterprises.

In particular, the fourth point is linked to an increased demand to design work to promote health and wellbeing because of lockdown's declining mental health levels (Sharpley et al., 2020). As a matter of fact, according to a Qualtrics' study, COVID-19 situation, and the switch to remote work, affected work significantly with 48.5% unemployed people having the highest proportion of mental health declines, right before 44.4% of newly remote workers (Qualtrics, 2020). As it emerges in Adecco's report about the future of work, "burnout might be the next worker pandemic", given that although well-being has been a crucial issue for almost 4 in 10 workers, leaders are failing in recognising the signs. Indeed, 67% of employees lament a lack of interest from their leaders about their mental well-being (The Adecco Group, 2021). It is true, though, that managers' actions play a crucial role in determining mental health challenges, being "employees' direct connection to the company": not surprisingly, people reporting a lack of concern from their managers about their well-being, are 69% more likely to have experienced a mental health decline since the pandemic began (Qualtrics, 2020).
In this concern, when dealing with new hybrid work models, companies and leaders are expected to increase their support on well-being by re-evaluating processes, resources and tools that would foster "pro well-being working environments, cultures and skill sets", starting from an open attitude towards employees' needs (The Adecco Group, 2021). As a matter of fact, Microsoft's research points out how leaders will need to "rewire their operating models" and address "a big mental shift": the pandemic underlined how they are "out of touch with employees' needs, since most of them are Gen X or Millennials, male, information workers with a well-established career", in contrast to those who struggled the most, like Gen Z, women or newly employed people (see Fig. 12). Moreover, employers must be aware that "high productivity is masking an exhausted workforce", due to increased urgency of virtual work and digital intensity experienced during COVID-19 (see Fig. 13), and that younger employees "will need to be re-energized" due to a lack of in-person interactions that led newly employed people to feel isolated and unmotivated (Microsoft, 2021).

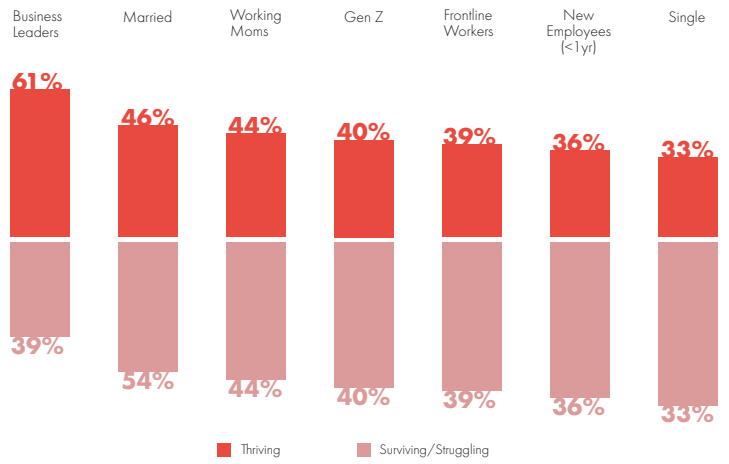

Fig. 12: data showing that business leaders are faring better than their employees. Source: Microsoft, 2021.

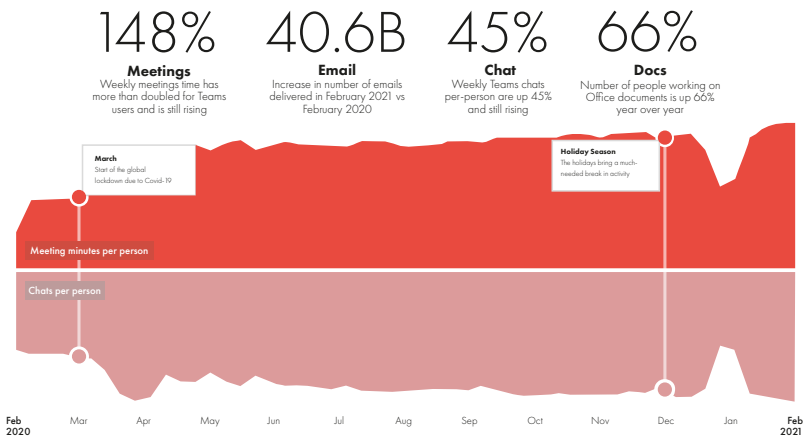

Fig. 13: data showing increased urgency of virtual work and digital intensity experienced during COVID-19. Source: Microsoft, 2021.

Amid different studies, Steelcase also analysed emerging employees' needs to consider in future work reflections. Among others, comfort appears to be one critical element. Indeed, after the pandemic "people are more deeply aware of their physical, cognitive and emotional needs for comfort and well-being, and they expect organisations to address them when they return to the office". This would mean for companies to foster 4 macro shifts involving design for safety (with particular attention on ergonomics), design for productivity (supporting both collaboration and focus work), design to inspire community (changing the office's purpose into a place where to foster social capital and nurture sense of belonging) and design for flexibility (providing employees with control over their work environment) (Steelcase, 2021).

Supporting the idea that "leaders hold the key to reconnecting employees and re-inventing culture", when introducing new hybrid work models, they should be equipped with the right tools to better listen and manage their teams, therefore increasing motivation, supporting well-being, and building a strong culture. Indeed, "nurturing tougher relationships and instilling a stronger sense of culture is key – one that encourages healthy working styles, engagement with company goals and psychological freedom" (The Adecco Group, 2021).
Considering the importance of well-being in future work scenarios and how this aspect became inseparable from work and life during the pandemic, Deloitte 2021 Global Human Capital Trends' research (2021) speaks about the importance of integrating it to the design of work itself, through a process that adapts and develops over time following changes affecting work. Specifically, considering well-being from the point of view of the individual, the team and the organisation, companies should reflect upon five different environments, aiming at a more sustainable future where workers can both feel and perform at their best. These five aspects would include: culture and relations, with a particular focus on integrating well-being into social behaviours and relationships among employees; operations, referring to well-being as a crucial point to consider in the development of policies and processes; physical and virtual spaces, where well-being would guide the use of technologies and the design of workspaces (Deloitte, 2021).
To be noted, the use of words becomes crucial: "in the hybrid work environment of the future, the "workplace" - a specific company-owned location - will shift to a "workspace", meaning a set of locations with different needs and purposes that will impact well-being in the long-term. In fact, the meaning of the so-called "office" will need to evolve and answer to a more valuable experience which highlights its uniqueness: a place worth the commute, where to connect with others and build identity (Gartner, 2021). In this concern, although spatial interventions are essential, a cultural shift considering both human and organisational concerns becomes even more crucial to smoothly transition to hybrid work (Gratton, 2021).
Steelcase gives interesting insights on how to address a cultural shift when designing change management strategies for the New Normal. Given that the introduction of new work models goes along with changes in behaviours, leaders will have to clearly communicate "the why, the context and the connections to the business, since the big picture and the vision are critical for people to understand and get on board". Moreover, they will have to help people adapt over time involving them in the change process, ensuring they better fit in the working environment (Steelcase, 2021). As Alastair Simpson, VP of Design at Dropbox, said: "this is a behaviour change and we are wanting to shift the mindset around how work gets done. That behaviour change will only be possible [...] alongside some high-level top-down guidance" (Farrer, 2021). Indeed, when designing future work plans it is essential to go beyond policies and real estate strategies, establishing principles in tune with the business culture and employee base (Kupp & Lovich, 2021) and guiding people through an

experimental approach. Considering that "people's experience working from home is deeply personal" and there is no one-size-fits-all solution for each organisation (Steelcase, 2021), experimentation would let each company understand how behaviours actually changed and how to best support them (Flynn, 2021), adopting an ongoing learning strategy (Brower, 2021) given that the creation of new habits requires time. For instance, Microsoft is adopting a three-element transition concerning people, places and processes. Specifically, the company believes that "empowering people to thrive in a more flexible work world requires rethinking the entire employee experience", not only in terms of safety, but mainly in the creation of a culture that actually enables hybrid work, hence giving managers the tools to lead this transition, from modelling well-being, to coaching employees in setting priorities, to finally caring and supporting each individual member of their team (Microsoft, 2021). Following the same path is Steelcase that, as a recent McKinsey study suggests, is putting a lot of attention in strategic planning and employee communication, to avoid leaving employees anxious and disoriented in terms of expectations. Indeed, building on the principles of clarity, communication, and employee experience, they are applying a three-phased approach, based on invitation, encouragement, and expectation, through which new habits and routines are established (Flynn, 2021).

Strategically speaking, a specific focus on the design of employee experience is crucial when dealing with organisational change like the introduction of new future work models. As a matter of fact, by its definition "employee experience is an important and complex issue, requiring companies to evaluate the close connection between employees' physical, social and cultural environments" (IBM, 2016), allowing organisations to address all relevant topics involved in the transformation process.
As mentioned in IBM's research (IBM, 2016), even before COVID-19 organisations were looking into new ways to influence employee experience, in an attempt to redesign the entire process to better engage employees and foster productivity. In this concern, IBM proposes a model (see Fig. 14) to guide HR practitioners in re-evaluating the employees' journey, touching upon three macro spheres of interaction: the Social Sphere, regarding relationships with others; the Physical Sphere, meaning the tangible environment; and the Work Sphere, addressing job's related tasks. Eventually, when these conceptual areas overlap, they generate six specific shades of employee experience to be investigated when redesigning the entire process.
Considering that all these areas have great impact on the overall experience people have during their workdays being in the office, at home or in a third place, it is important that all the involved aspects are carefully analysed and addressed, aiming for the best outcomes at both individual and organisational levels. According to the model, community involves relationships created amid the work environment that influence the overall perception of the organisation; physical workspace addresses the importance of flexible arrangements

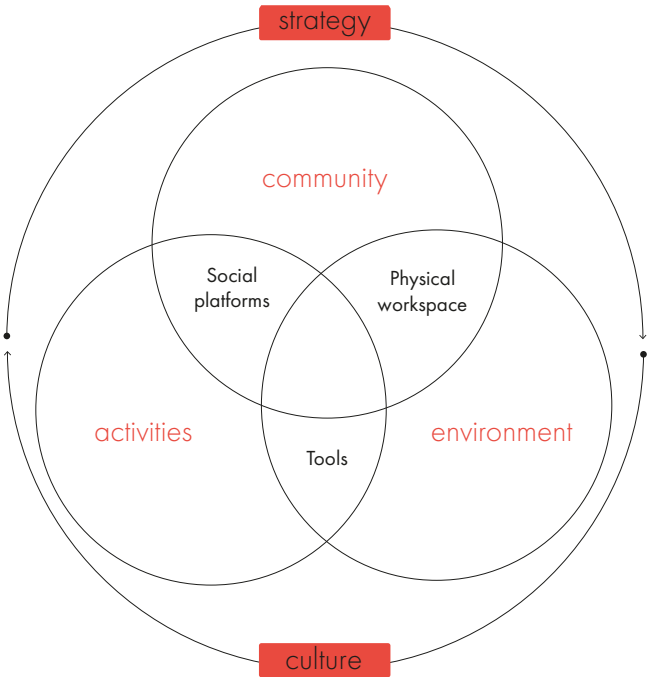

Fig. 14: IBM's model to guide HR practitioners in re-evaluating the employees' journey, touching upon three macro spheres of interaction. Source: IBM, 2016.

facilitating different work modes, individual and collective; environment refers to basic comfort requirements to ensure people perform at their best physical conditions; tools deals with the importance of supporting people with their digital capabilities, considering how new technologies have changed the nature of how work gets accomplished; activities means the perception and understanding employees have of their role and overall purpose of their job, in relation to the team's values and the organisation's mission; social platform concerns "a common environment" where a "critical mass of users" inside the organisation can connect and share knowledge with other employees worldwide. When focusing on these aspects, it is essential to consider them inside the big picture of organisational culture, aiming at a strategy in which leadership style and people behaviours actually support employee experience's development (IBM, 2016).

Needless to say, in the overall transition process managers are required to be good coaches "helping employees maintain performance, develop their skills and stay engaged in their work" (Golden, 2021). In fact, coaching and mentoring are considered as great "gives" by employees who will feel more motivated, especially if "they believe the company has their best interests in mind" (Brower, 2021). For this specific reason, beyond an effective workplace strategy, equalising employee

experiences, delivering transparent information, and instilling an "experiment, test and iterate" kind of mindset (Vaduganathan et al., 2021) would help ensure a smooth transition to hybrid work. As Dropbox is doing, "providing guidance to managers and employees so they can autonomously assess their own behaviours and ensure they are aligning to the organisation's direction" is key to let this behaviour change take place correctly (Farrer, 2021).

All of the above insights, give a clear picture of how organisations should approach the development of new strategies to welcome hybrid work and manage change effectively. Nonetheless, it should be clear that "there is no off-the-shelf solution to finding this new equilibrium that gives people more control over their day, brings people together to build belonging and a sense of purpose, and meets business objectives" (Steelcase, 2020). But by adopting "an ecosystem approach" including different stakeholders (companies, policymakers, educators, etc) (Lund et al., 2021) willing to adopt an "holistic, iterative design approach to change" (IBM, 2016), employees would be open to continuous reinvention, while organisations would be able to follow their own evolving process towards the right hybrid solution.

2.2. Organisational culture

As it emerges from previous paragraphs, the post-pandemic introduction of new work models implies significant changes in terms of organisational culture, which must be considered in the organisational change process. Indeed, to ensure a smooth transition to new ways of working and support employees through the transformation process, we must first understand what organisational culture is and how it affects people and their work environment.

The concept of culture takes its origins in the anthropological field according to which it described characteristics of a group inherited from past generations (Maull et al., 2001). Among others, Tylor defines it as "a complex whole" of habits which humans assume as part of society (Tylor, 1971, as cited in Maull et al., 2001). Considering organisations as groups of people, the term culture associated with the work environment would give a "people-centred" point of view, hence assuming a significant role in managing change, since it gives "some insight into the intangible nature of organisations and their behaviour" (Maull et al., 2001).
In literature studies about the topic, many perspectives arose regarding what organisational culture represents. According to Kilmann et al. (1985, as cited in Owens & Steinhoff, 1989) "culture is to the organisation what personality is to the individual", meaning the "invisible force" underneath the visible surface guiding people's behaviour and providing direction and stability (Owens & Steinhoff, 1989). As many researchers believe, organisational culture is not something acquired from the outside, but it represents the company's inner essence, something the "organisation actually is" (Ghinea & Bratianu, 2012).
As mentioned before, culture emerges as a group product. Edgar Schein, one of the most influencing figures on the topic, connects culture to stability, claiming that an organisation only has a culture if "it has been a stable group for some period of time" (Schein, 1988). Indeed, culture is not something groups own by default; on the contrary, the condition for culture to exist is related to the number of learning experiences people in the same group have had over time, which lead them to shared assumptions at the basis of culture (Flint, 2000; Schein, 1988).

"culture is to the organisation what personality is to the individual"

Kilmann et al., 1985

2.2.1. Schein's model of organisational culture

To better understand the essence of these thoughts, a deeper analysis of Schein's work is necessary. The author defines organisational culture as "the pattern of basic assumptions which a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (Schein, 1983).
According to Schein, organisational culture can be described using a thre-e-layer model (see Fig. 15) of which the most superficial level is represented by artefacts. This layer refers to all those visible elements of an organisation, including its "constructed environment, architecture, technology, office layout, manner of dress, behaviour patterns, public documents, etc." (Schein, 1983), which are easy to observe and perceive with senses, but are difficult to interpret by outsiders. In fact, it's usually hard to decipher the "why" behind this layer, if not with the help of people who are part of that culture (Schein, 1988; Schein, 1983).
The second level is that of values, referring to those hidden elements which explain the "why" people behave certain ways (Schein, 1983). As a matter of fact, values are harder to observe since they address "untestable premises" such as "espoused goals, ideals, norms, standards, moral principles" (Schein, 1988) that guide people's behaviours (Schein, 1983). Not surprisingly, these are usually the things outsiders are puzzled by while observing.
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are usually the things outsiders are puzzled by while observing.
As seen before, considering organisational culture as something acquired over time by members of a group, when these values are seen to be working repeatedly in response to certain situations, in the long term they become unconscious and taken for granted. At this point, we enter the deeper level of assumptions, which are the primary cause of how people "perceive, think and feel about things", consequently determining both values and overt behaviour (Schein, 1983). According to Schein (1983), these basic assumptions are the result of two kinds of experiences people have in different time phases combined: on one hand, past experiences group members have in their own original culture; and on the other hand, new learning experiences they have in the organisation trying to cope with problems arising from both internal and external environments (Schein, 1983). Given their deep nature, these assumptions may then be hard to "unlearn" even in case of changes in the organisation (Schein, 1988).

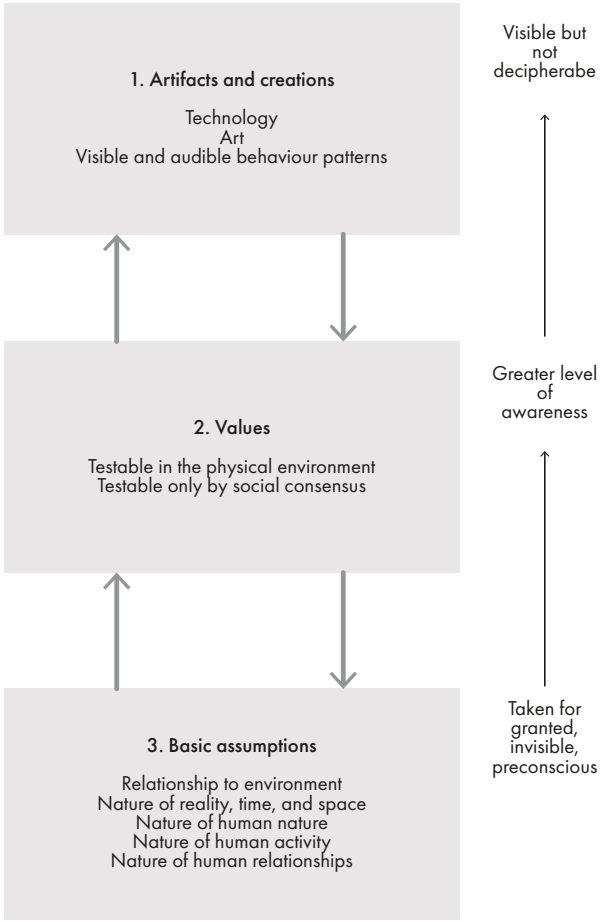


Fig. 15: Schein's three-layer model of organisational culture. Source: Schein,1985, as cited in Owens & Steinhoff, 1989.

When speaking of basic assumptions, Schein also introduces the concept of cultural paradigm, meaning "a set of interrelated assumptions which form a coherent pattern" (Schein, 1983). Indeed, in the process of learning culture, people are more likely to assimilate coherent sets of basic assumptions because of their need for consistency. For this reason, to really get to know a culture it is important to decipher its paradigm and the related pattern of basic assumptions around which it forms. According to the author, these assumptions can belong to different categories: "the organisation's relationship to its environment; the nature of human activity; the nature of reality and truth; the nature of time; the nature of human nature; the nature of human relationships; and homogeneity vs diversity" (Schein, 1983).

As mentioned by Ghinea and Bratianu (2012) "organisational culture is: a) holistic (it represents the result of an integration process); b) connected with the history (it shows the organisation's evolution); c) anthropologically obtained and socially founded (it is created and maintained by the organisation's members)". As a matter of fact, Schein supports the idea that culture is property of a group and it's the result of "learnt solutions to problems" accumulated during its history, eventually passed on to new members (Schein, 1988; Schein, 1983). What's interesting is that this learning process happens as a reaction to either "external survival issues" (related to the group's environment) and "internal integration issues" (referring to the management of the group itself), and involves all kinds of responses (perceptual, cognitive, and emotional) determining culture's ubiquitous nature (Schein, 1988; Schein, 1983). In this concern, the author suggests different tasks to which groups may develop learnt responses and therefore build up their own culture (see Fig. 16) (Schein, 1988).

As seen, concerning the process of culture creation Schein thinks that norms and beliefs arise in relation to how people react to different situations, addressing either "positive problem-solving efforts" or "anxiety avoidance efforts", of which the latter would lead to a more stable culture (Schein, 1983). Another way for culture to take shape would be through members' recognition into leaders' values and assumptions (Schein, 1988). In any case, the author gives socialisation a strategically important role for culture evolution and perpetuation, as it concerns the process of passing on the culture to new members entering the group. Indeed, as new members aren't aware of the cultural paradigm in the organisation, "they need to be trained and acculturated" to perform their roles in the group (Schein, 1988), making this an occasion for culture to be tested and confirmed (Schein, 1983).

In relation to organisational culture evolution, Schein suggests four ways through which culture can cope with environmental changes. To start with, "natural evolution" is the simpler one, according to which "new learning and adaptation" would be physiological once changes or new members' influence occur; "differentiation'' is connected to the presence of different sub-cultures in one

External Adaptation Tasks
Developing consensus on:
1. The core mission, manifest and latent functions, and primary tasks of the organisation vis-a-vis its environments.
2. The specific goals to be pursued by the organisation.
3. The basic means to be used in accomplishing the goals.
4. The criteria to be used for measuring results.
5. The remedial or repair strategies if goals are not achieved.

Internal Integration Tasks
Developing consensus on:
1. The common language and conceptual system to be used, including concepts of time and space.
2. The group boundaries and criteria for inclusion.
3. The criteria for the allocation of status, power, authority.
4. The criteria for intimacy, friendship, and love.
5. Criteria for the allocation of rewards and punishments.
6. Concepts for managing the unmanageable (ideology and religion).

Fig. 16: Schein's external and internal tasks to which groups may develop learnt responses and therefore build up their own culture. Source: Schein, 1988.

group, which overall culture would be a result of their negotiation; "guided evolution'' would involve an outsider helping the organisation through the transformation process; and "managed culture change'' refers to the ability of leaders to recognise "dysfunctional elements'' in their organisation, and decide to undertake a path towards change (Schein, 1988). That said, to keep up with an ever-changing environment, organisations need to find out how to manage this change involving "innovative thrusts'', meaning "new missions, new goals, new products and services, new ways of getting things done, and even new values and assumptions'' (Schein, 1988), and become "self-designing systems'' (Weick, 1977, as cited in Schein, 1988). An interesting point of view is that of Ghinea and Bratianu (2012) who define organisational culture as "a self-referencing and evolving system", that "by its nature is a complex adaptive system". Indeed, given that a system is the result of different elements interacting with each other and leading to a coherent whole, the dynamic interdependencies of cultural elements are at the basis of its structure which evolve over time.
When dealing with environmental changes requiring new responses, leadership's guidance becomes essential: as a matter of fact, leaders don't only

motivate change, but they also provide "enough psychological safety" to support group members in the transformation process (Schein, 1961, as cited in Schein, 1983; Schein & Bennis, 1965, as cited in Schein, 1983).

All in all, we can affirm that without organisational culture it would be hard to "understand change or resistance to change", making culture an extremely important concept for "organisational psychology". Indeed, in the process of supporting organisations building up their renewed strategy, the "organisational psychologist" must help them decipher their own culture acting like a "clinician and ethnographer" (Schein, 1988). As Schein explains, assumptions' patterns at the basis of culture drop out of awareness after a while but can actually be brought back to light through the right questions. In this concern, the author lists different "measurement approaches" related to each cultural level: as for artefacts, he suggests the "clinician" to perform "field work and on-site observation" allowing organisation's members to perceive the help they're receiving and reveal significant insights to pay off (Schein, 1988); as for basic assumptions, instead, Schein refers to an "interactive inquiry process" which combines the efforts of both the insider making the assumptions and the outsider surfacing it through the right questions (Schein, 1983).

2.2.2. Other perspectives on organisational culture

In the field of organisational culture, many authors agree with Schein's vision and model, although starting from his work to expand it afterwards, or even slightly changing perspective. Pedersen and Sorensen (1989, as cited in Flint, 2000), for example, give much more importance to artefacts than to basic assumptions, proposing four significant clusters to decipher culture: "1. physical symbols (architecture, dress codes, decor, office layout, etc); 2. insider's language (jargon, scripts, metaphors, nicknames etc); 3. traditions, meaning a predictable behavioural pattern (rites, rituals, ceremonies, routines etc); and 4. stories (legends, sagas, anecdotes, jokes etc)". Also, Owens and Steinhoff (1989) agree with Schein's definition of culture, but they introduce six elements through which the symbolism of culture is preserved and expressed, which can be compared to Schein's artefacts: "1. history of the organisation; 2. symbolic myths and stories about the organisation; 3. espoused values and beliefs of the organisation; 4. expectations for behaviour in the organisation; 5. rites and rituals which have symbolic value in the organisation; 6. heroes and heroines that symbolise the organisation". Concerning values, instead, Pedersen and Sorensen (1989, as cited in Flint, 2000) take a slightly different approach compared to Schein: if he believes values evolve into basic assumptions once working repeatedly as solutions to a problem, they divide values into "values-in-use" and "espoused values", with the former being conscious guidelines of behaviours, and the latter being "normative statements" defining people's attitudes and beliefs.

Claiming that organisational culture can't be studied but must be inferred, Nerilee Flint (2000) suggests a framework (see Fig. 17) combining all these considerations into Schein's original model, giving a broader view on cultural elements. Again, basic assumptions preserve their unobservable yet deducible nature, being pictured with a non-continuous frame.

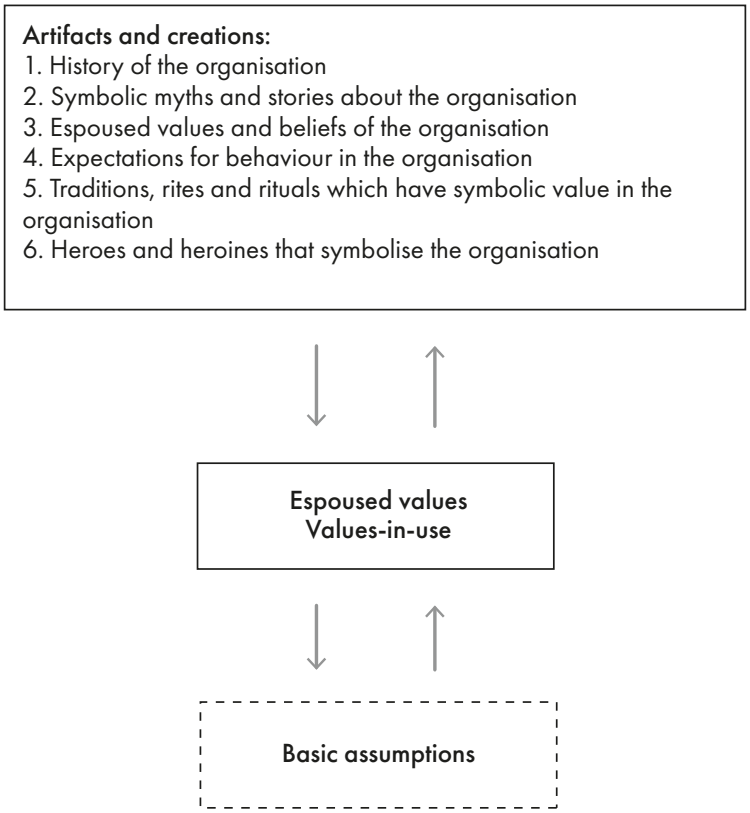


Fig. 17: Flint's framework build on Schein's original model. Source: Flint, 2000.

Moreover, building on Schein's model, Hatch (1993) introduces the domain of symbols, but puts more focus on the processes linking the different domains of culture. In this way she defines the interdependencies between all the elements of the model explaining how observable behaviours emerge through basic assumptions. According to the author, this would happen in two possible ways: "through "manifestation" into values and "realisation" into artefacts or through "interpretation" into symbols and through "symbolization" into artefacts" (Hatch, 1993) as we can see from Fig. 18.

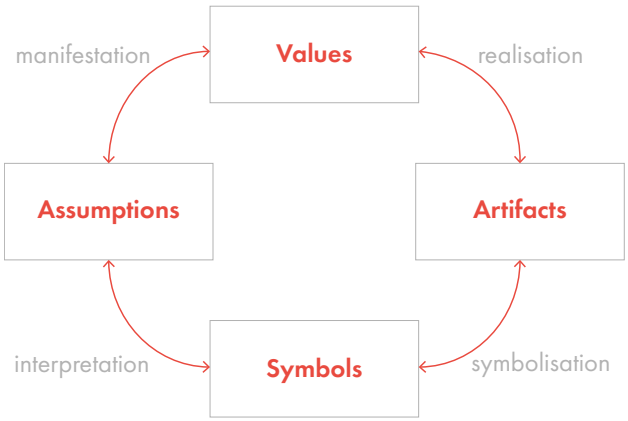


Fig. 18: Hatch's model showing the processes linking the different domains of culture. The model defines the interdependencies between all the elements of the model explaining how observable behaviours emerge through basic assumptions. Source: Hatch, 1993, as cited in Dauber et al., 2012.

In Hatch and Cunliffe's (2006, as cited in Dauber et al., 2012) model (see Fig. 19), five different domains of organisational culture are identified, which can be combined with Schein's model, as demonstrated by Dauber et al. (2012) in Fig. 20. This parallelism shows that "organisational culture" represents hidden assumptions at the basis of the organisation; "organisational strategy" refers to the set of norms that manifest themselves through organisational structures, like the unobservable domain of "espoused values"; and "organisational design and behaviour" belong to the visible layer of artefacts (Dauber et al., 2012).

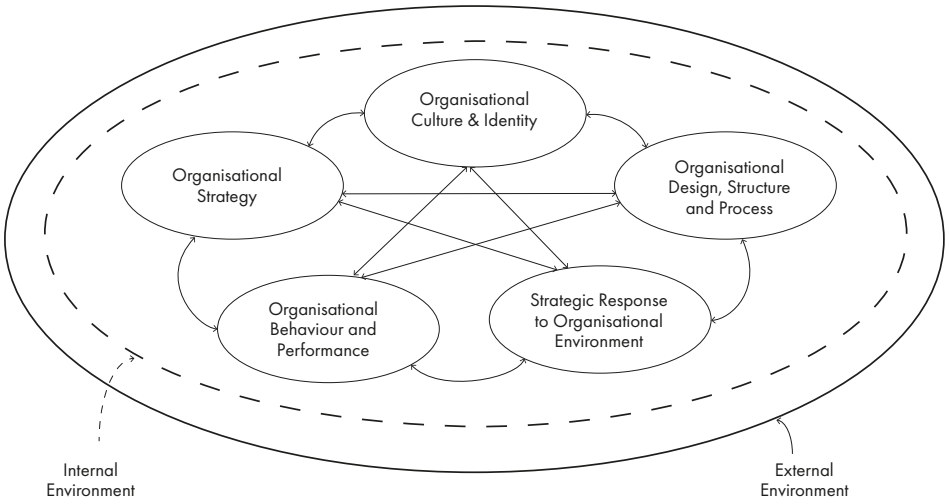


Fig. 19: organisational culture model by Hatch and Cunliffe. Source: Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006, as cited in Dauber et al., 2012.

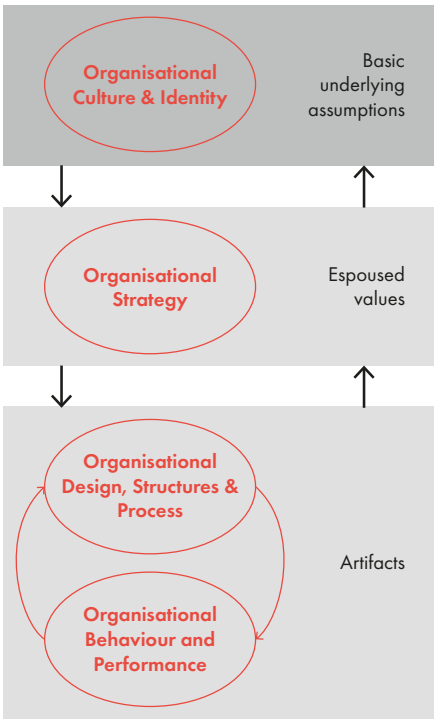


Fig. 20: allocating Hatch and Cunliffe's (2006) domains to Schein's (1985) model of organisational culture. Source: Dauber et al., 2012.

As seen, Schein and Hatch's models are a great basis for explaining the dynamics governing the internal environment of organisational cultures. Taking a different approach is Hofstede, who on one hand gives significant attention to the "external environment" in the process of organisational culture creation; and on the other hand, suggests that the core of culture is represented by "shared perceptions of daily practises" more than values, like most researchers assume (Hofstede et al., 1990).
According to Hofstede (1989), "practises" are "collective habits" which manifest themselves in visible things like "dress, language, status symbols, promotion criteria, tea and coffee rituals, meeting rituals, communication styles, etc.". As we can infer from his model on manifestations of cultures (see Fig. 21), he highlights four categories - symbols, heroes, rituals and values - of which the first three can be collected in the layer of practises considering their visible yet obscure nature. As a matter of fact, symbols ("words, gestures, pictures or objects" that carry a particular cultural meaning), heroes (behavioural role models), and rituals (those useless but "socially essential" activities for the sake of culture) are all visible to outsiders, but only acquire meaning through insiders' perception (Hofstede et al., 1990).
Values, instead, "are profound and unconscious" (Hofstede, 1989) and express themselves through practises. For this reason, even though in the model they

seem to represent the heart of culture, Hofstede claims that values, specifically those of founders, do have a role in shaping organisational culture, but they affect group members through shared practises (Hofstede et al., 1990), making organisational culture a much more "superficial phenomenon" (Hofstede, 1989).

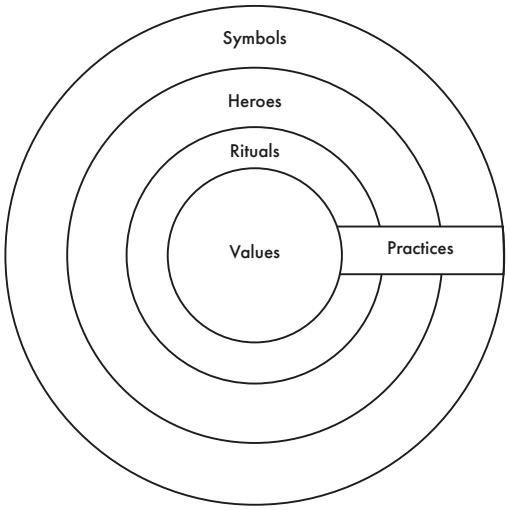


Fig. 21: Hofstede's model on manifestations of organisational culture. Source: Hofstede et al., 1990.

In the attempt to define organisational culture, Hofstede (1989) introduces the concept of subcultures, meaning groups of people inside an organisation that manifest cultural differences. Indeed, he defines organisational culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another". According to the author, these subcultures actually correspond to different "business units" that have to be coordinated for the sake of the organisation, despite their cultural differences (Hofstede, 1989). To better understand how these cultural differences work, Hofstede explains that there are "different places of socialisation for values and practises": values are "programmed" into our minds since our childhood through family and school; organisational practises are learnt once we enter the workplace as adults with our own values already settled and begin the process of socialisation. This dynamic is pictured in Hofstede's model of cultural differences (see Fig. 22), where "national culture" refers to the external environment (society) shaping individuals' values; "occupational culture" represents the school environment, where both values and practises are acquired; and "organisational culture" specifically concerns the learning of practises in the working environment. This theory would explain why Hofstede's research across different organisations in the same country captured more differences in practises than in values (Hofstede et al., 1990; Hofstede, 1989).

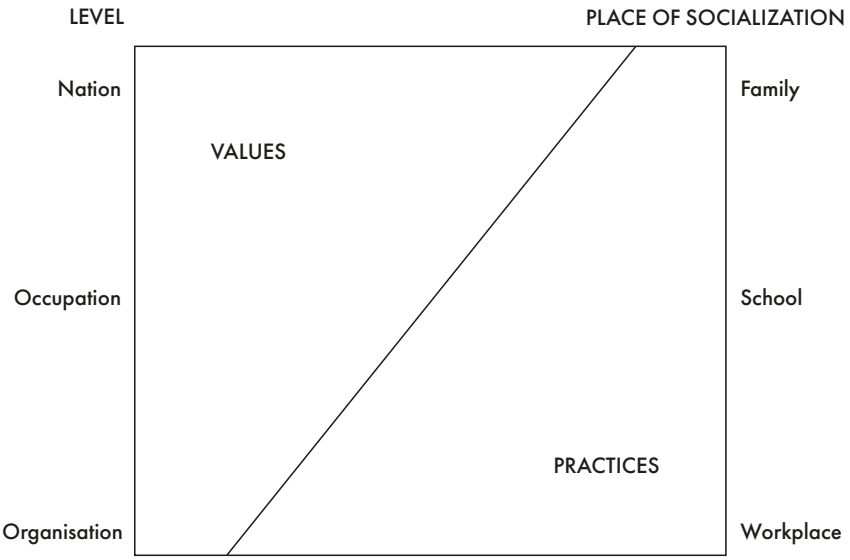


Fig. 22: Hofstede's model of cultural differences: national, occupational and organisational levels. Source: Hofstede et al., 1990.

Supporting Hofstede's idea on the influencing role of the external environment are Sagiv and Schwartz (2007) who believe that, since organisations are part of societies, national values do have an impact on organisational culture. Moreover, they believe that individual value preferences and even tasks to be achieved by an organisation affect organisational values, matching Hofstede's concept of perceived practises (Dauber et al., 2012).
Considering a practice-based approach are also Usoro et al. (2012) who claim that a value-based approach, like that of Schein, doesn't allow any comparison among corporate cultures since it involves a deeper yet organisation-specific analysis. Moreover, if Schein recognises artefacts as the tangible manifestation of values, but considers them insufficient to describe basic assumptions, the authors claim that dimensioning culture from practises doesn't exclude values because, as Hofstede demonstrated, they actually affect work practises (Usoro et al., 2012).

III.

Towards new work habits

As we could understand from the previous chapter, dealing with organisational change, like the introduction of new work models post COVID-19, inevitably involves organisational culture. Specifically, "culture exerts a profound impact on the induction and orientation of organisational members and on the way an organisation responds to changes in its environment" (Evans, 1996, as cited in Flint, 2000), deeply affecting people's behaviours through which culture manifests. Thus, given that behaviour appears as a significant component of organisational culture, a strategic approach to cultural transformations in the working environment should support behavioural change and, therefore, the creation of new habits.

"culture exerts a profound impact on the induction and orientation of organisational members and on the way an organisation responds to changes in its environment"

Evans, 1996

3.1. Behavioural change

To better understand how to approach behavioural change within organisations, a deeper comprehension of the broad topic is needed. Indeed, although this approach has revealed great potential in different fields, it finds its origins in the sphere of health, as a mechanism towards healthier behaviours. In this regard, many researchers conducted studies in the attempt to develop frameworks and models that would serve as a general basis to orient people towards desired outcomes, or even predict people's intentions before actions to identify which elements to address when trying to change habitual behaviours.

As mentioned by Munro et al. (2007) different perspectives on behavioural change are recognised, each of which relates to different theories and models. To start with, the behavioural learning perspective is linked to the Behavioural Learning Theory that deals with the principles of antecedents (thoughts or environmental cues) and consequences (like rewards) as an influence for behaviour and attempts to cope with change through the teaching of new skills. A similar approach is presented by Heimlich and Ardoin (2008) who believe that most behaviours we perform during the day are "post-conscious", meaning that they were once learned in the past and through repetition in stable environments they became unconscious routines. Specifically, they talk about "learned habits sequenced into routines", which must become the target of behaviour change given that "changing behaviours is not about changing one act; it is about altering the routines in which the acts are embedded" (Heimlich & Ardoin, 2008). According to the authors, to change the larger behaviour, we must act upon its components: habits, tasks, and most of all skills. Indeed, if behaviours are "complex combinations of skills", the teaching of individual skills would lead to the cognition supporting the larger behaviour (Heimlich & Ardoin, 2008). The process of skill learning, which would eventually lead to consistent changes in behaviour, has three characteristics: it should be consistent in relation to different occasions and under different conditions; it is an individual process based on the actual use of skills as evidence of learning; it is only possible through experience and practice (Heimlich & Ardoin, 2008). Being a complex process, skills learning requires "affective and cognitive preparation" together with a set of steps that are best summarised by Graeff et al. (1996) into: instruction, demonstration, practice, feedback and reinforcement, homework (meaning continued practice). Interesting to note, this process can be compared to the one proposed by the Transtheoretical Model of Change

and to that of habit formation which will be discussed further on.
Another behavioural change perspective concerns communication, which supports the idea that a stronger communication between provider and client will lead to desired behaviours. Following this perspective, for communication to work, it must be as clear and comprehensible as possible (Munro et al., 2007); in fact, according to the communication/persuasion model, significant aspects to consider include the source, the message, the channel, and finally the desired behavioural output (Heimlich & Ardoin, 2008).
Among all, the cognitive perspective appears to be the most important since it collects renowned theories and models developed in behavioural change literature. As a matter of fact, it includes: the Health Belief Model, the Social-Cognitive Theory, the Theory of Reasoned Action, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour. These theories share the capacity of predicting future behaviours based on cognitive variables, and they analyse elements that would serve as determinants of those behaviours, namely attitudes, beliefs, and future expectations, allowing for a deeper comprehension of how to manage behavioural change (Munro et al., 2007). The Health Belief Model (HBM), as the name suggests, finds its origins among the health field, and considers changes in health behaviours as the result of "a rational appraisal of the balance between the barriers to and benefits of action" (Munro et al., 2007). As a matter of fact, this model assumes that behaviour is the outcome of people's perceived beliefs about threats to their well-being and positive outcomes of certain behaviours (Morris et al., 2012). Its key components are: perceived susceptibility, meaning individual's perceived risk in relation to a condition; perceived severity of that condition; perceived threat, resulting from the combination of susceptibility and severity, that would measure one person's level of motivation towards action; perceived benefits, as a result of an health action and its effectiveness against the threat; perceived barriers, meaning those negative aspects that prevent the behaviour; self-efficacy, a very interesting concept introduced by (Bandura, 1986, as cited in Hardeman, et al., 2002) which refers to one's belief in his own ability to perform a behaviour; general expectations, as a result of benefits, barriers and self-efficacy, which would predict the likelihood of one person's intention to act; and cues to action, which refers to those "prompts" towards the desired behaviour, like advertising or professionals' point of view (Taylor et al., 2007; Morris et al., 2012). Assumed as more of a list of variables than an actual theory, this model is considered less useful in predicting behaviours than other cognition models (Taylor et al., 2007).
The Social-Cognitive Theory (SCT) developed by Bandura (1986, as cited in Hardeman, et al., 2002) and based on self-efficacy, supports the idea that performing one behaviour goes along with people's perceived control over the related results, the absence of barriers, and individuals' trust of their own abilities towards the behaviour (Munro et al., 2007). This theory proposes four behavioural change methods: persuasive communication, successful experience of a behaviour, vicarious experience (meaning the observation of others performing a behaviour), and feedback (Hardeman, et al., 2002).

The SCT represents the evolution of the Social Learning Theory which treats the concept of self-efficacy in relation to the social context within which it is learned. In fact, considering self-efficacy as a social phenomenon, Social Learning Theory views learning as a community process based on people's cooperation (Heimlich & Ardoin, 2008).

Among others, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) represents one of the pillars of behavioural change. It was introduced by Ajzen (1985) pushing forward some aspects of the HBM (Taylor et al., 2007). The TRA develops from the idea that most everyday behaviours are subject to humans' volitional control, considering that people are thought to behave in a "sensible manner" taking into account the implications before performing their actions (Ajzen, 1985). As Ajzen affirms, "consistent with its focus on volitional behaviours, the theory postulates that a person's intention to perform (or not to perform) a behaviour is the immediate determinant of that action", allowing the prediction of future behaviours (Ajzen, 1985). This theory is based on two different belief variables as determinants of intention: "behavioural attitudes" and "subjective norm" (Taylor et al., 2007), with the former referring to people's personal evaluation of behavioural performance; and the latter considering the perceived social pressure to perform a given behaviour. On a general basis, if both determinants are positive, people will most likely perform that behaviour; vice versa, if a person thinks a behaviour will lead to most negative outcomes, a hostile attitude will prevail (Ajzen, 1985). As explained by Ajzen (1985), behaviour prediction is characterised by different levels: to start with, intentions are considered as the first determinant; secondly, intentions themselves appear because of attitudes towards behaviour and subjective norms, which are in turn explained through individual's beliefs on behavioural outcomes and normative expectations of social figures. As a matter of fact, beliefs assume a significant role since they govern people's attitudes towards behaviour. These beliefs are classified into "behavioural beliefs" underlying "behavioural attitudes" (touching upon people's personal sphere), and "normative beliefs" linked to "subjective norm" (touching upon the social sphere).

All in all, we can state that this theory supports intention as the main antecedent of behaviour, which can be predicted if and only if: the "measure of intention" itself reflects one person's immediate intention to act (the more time passes from intention to action, the greater the possibility that intention will change); and the behaviour is subject to volitional control (Ajzen, 1985). Concerning this last point, the TRA was further developed through the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (see Fig. 23) due to the first theory's lack of effectiveness towards those behaviours over which people don't have volitional control. Indeed, starting from the idea that motivation and ability do have an influence on behavioural achievement, the authors added "behavioural control" (directly linked to "control beliefs") as another determinant of people's intention to act, referring to one person's perceived "ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest" (Ajzen, 1991). According to the authors, this third component can be compared to the already mentioned concept of self-efficacy (Bandura,

1986, as cited in Hardeman, et al., 2002) that considers people's confidence in their own ability to perform a behaviour as a strong influence of behaviour performance. The main difference between the TPB and the SCT lies in the fact that the first one considers situations in which intention to change or to act has not been established yet, while the second has mainly been used in contexts where people are already motivated to change their behaviours (Hardeman, et al., 2002). In sum, we can state that through its determinants of behavioural intentions, the TPB can surely predict "successful behavioural attempts", but also reveal different aspects of behaviour, making change interventions easier (Ajzen, 1991).

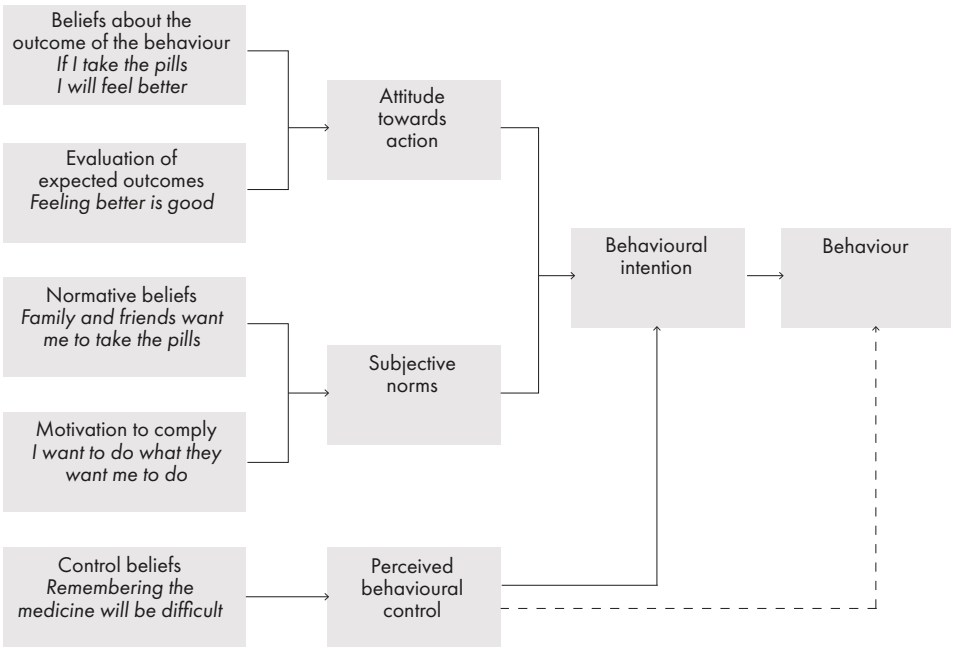


Fig. 23: the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Source: Munro et al., 2007.

Finally, another behavioural change model is worth mentioning: the Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM). This model belongs to what Munro et al. (2007) refers to as the self-regulation perspective, which is based on people's presumed motivation to cope with illness threats, being "active and self-regulating problem solvers". Following this perspective, people's behaviours against health threats are influenced by their own cognitive representations of these threats, which are shaped starting from individuals' past experiences.
The TTM was developed as an integrative model of already existing theories, linked together by the temporal dimension represented by the Stages of Change Model, which serves as a base to support the processes of change. Indeed, this theory's main aim is that of addressing behavioural change directly (Taylor et al., 2007), and its core characteristic is that it can be customised following

individuals' needs (Munro et al., 2007). The TTM is composed of two main dimensions: the actual stages of change, that explain when "shifts in attitudes, intentions, and behaviours occur"; and the processes of change, that give us a picture of how these shifts happen, acting like predictors of change (Prochaska et al., 1992).
As shown in Fig. 24, the model consists of five stages: precontemplation, representing the lack of intention in changing behaviour, if not even a lack of awareness towards the problem; contemplation, which starts when people become aware of their problem even though they still won't commit to take action; preparation, which is characterised by individuals' intention to take action, although lacking of an effective criterion to act; action, the core stage of behavioural change during which people are actually engaged in modifying their behaviour, and for which a high level of overt commitment is required; and maintenance, which aims at consolidating the action phase and requires people to prevent relapses. This stage represents "a continuation, not an absence, of change", thus it is considered as the hardest part of the process (Prochaska et al., 1992).

Fig. 24: the Transtheoretical Model of Change. Source: Munro et al., 2007.

As for the ten processes of change (see Fig. 25), these differ according to the specific transition between stages. In between the first two stages, the most effective would be: consciousness raising about the problem; dramatic relief,

meaning changes affecting emotional expressions; and environmental re-evaluation, related to the individual's context of action. Concerning the shift from contemplation to preparation, self-re-evaluation, meaning one person's acceptance of value change, is viewed as the most effective; while from preparation to action, self-liberation would be essential. Finally, the passage from action to maintenance, other than being governed by self-efficacy, is linked to: counterconditioning, concerning the adoption of alternative behaviours; the involvement in helping relationships; reinforcement management and stimulus control.
On one hand, the processes regarding the stages till action are meant to strengthen awareness about available alternative behaviours, while ensuring people's commitment towards change; on the other hand, the processes related to maintenance are more about "behavioural conditioning" (be it through rewards or negative cues avoidance) to address desired outcomes (Taylor et al., 2007).

Stage	Stage Definition	Process
Pre-contemplation	Individual is unaware of problem; no intention to change behaviour in the foreseeable future	Consciousness raising
		Dramatic relief
		Environmental re-evaluation
Contemplation	Individual is unaware of problem; serious consideration of behaviour change	Self-re-evaluation
Preparation	Individual is intending to take action	Self-liberation
Action	Individuals modify their behaviour, experiences and/or environment in order to overcome problem	Counter-conditioning
		Stimulus control
		Helping relationships
		Reinforcement management
Maintenance	Individual works to prevent relapse and consolidate gains	Social liberation

Fig. 25: stages and processes of change in the Transtheoretical Model of Change. Source: Morris et al., 2012.

Interesting to note, while changing their behaviours via this model, people usually move through the stages in a non-linear evolution toward successful change, facing relapses to earlier stages throughout the process (Munro et al., 2007). As a matter of fact, this progress could be well represented by a "spiral staircase" (see Fig. 26) as shown by Prochaska (Prochaska et al., 1992).
According to this pattern, once relapsed back to an earlier stage, people may feel discouraged to pursue behavioural change. Despite that, it is usually uncommon that people regress back to the start: instead, they

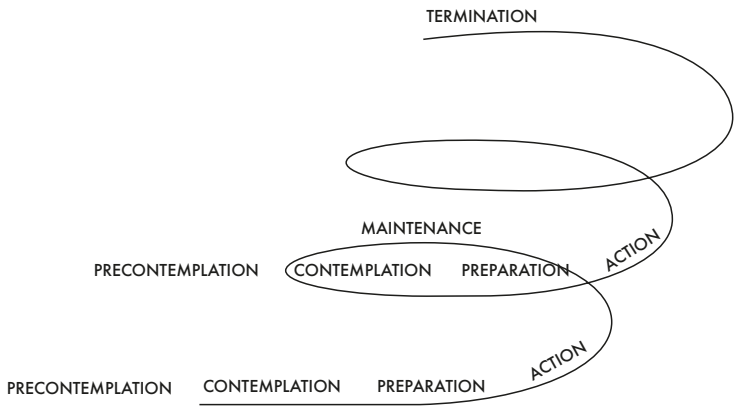


Fig. 26: Prochaska's Spiral Model of the Stages of Change. Source: Prochaska et al., 1992.

usually learn from their path and are able to adjust their approach further on. In any case, we can state that "successful behaviour change is limited to the absolute numbers of individuals who are able to achieve maintenance" (Prochaska et al., 1992). A level of criticality regarding the TTM concerns the capacity of people to select the right process of change in relation to each stage of change, an ability that, if well used, would result in the individuals' "cognitive restructuring", necessary to ensure successful behavioural change in addition to restructured behavioural patterns (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982).

To conclude, we can state that on a general basis the above-mentioned cognitive models share one critical aspect: they are self-centred, thus they lack the broader view upon the economic, environmental, and social factors which are significant components of successful behavioural change (Morris, et al., 2012). Nonetheless, when approaching behavioural change, it is essential to remember that behaviour-wise individuals are all different, showing different levels of motivation and having different abilities in respect to altering routines (Heimlich & Ardoin, 2008).
As we could partially understand, the topic of behavioural change is strictly linked to that of habits and, more precisely, to the habit formation process, with which it shares many aspects. Commonalities can indeed be found not only on the actual stages of habit formation, but also on the general definition of habits as something acquired through repetition in consistent contexts (Lally & Gardner, 2013). Not surprisingly, among literature the habit formation process has been considered as a valuable mechanism through which long-lasting behavioural change can be reached (Gardner & Rebar, 2019). In this concern, in the next paragraph we will dig deeper into this topic.

“changing behaviours is not about changing one act; it is about altering the routines in which the acts are embedded”

Heimlich and Ardoin, 2008

3.2. Habit formation

As we could understand from the previous paragraph, behavioural change is considered as a long-term process which consolidates through maintenance of the new behaviour over time (Prochaska, et al., 1992; Lally & Gardner, 2013). Specifically, as Gardner and Rebar (2019) point out, the distinction between stages of initiation and maintenance is of extreme importance since, even though people may possess all the conditions to start a new behaviour, the hardest part comes with its preservation in the long run. Considering that by "maintenance" we assume that the new behaviour comes to be repeated automatically over time, the process of habit formation has gained attention as a mechanism to reach behavioural change maintenance. Indeed, habits are thought of as "actions done repetitively" so, consequently, making actions habitual will most likely ensure maintenance (Gardner & Rebar, 2019).

3.2.1. Defining habits

In the attempt to define habits, Lally and Gardner (2013) suggest that "habits are automatic behavioural responses to environmental cues, thought to develop through repetition of behaviour in consistent contexts". As pointed out by Neal et al. (2006), the "past" element is a significant component of habits, since "they are triggered by features of the context that have covaried frequently with past performance, including performance locations, preceding actions in a sequence, and particular people" (Wood & Neal, 2007). Indeed, habits become automatic "in response to a situation in which the behaviour has been performed repeatedly and consistently in the past" (Lally & Gardner, 2013). This mechanism follows the logic of "associative learning" according to which whatever happens close in time or space comes to be linked in memory (Wood et al., 2005). As a matter of fact, while performing a new action, this becomes associated in our brain with the situation in which it occurred, so incremental repetition of the action in a stable context boosts and establishes the association in memory. After some period, habits are therefore automatically activated by the related cue, without any deliberate and conscious effort (Wood & Neal, 2007; Wood et al., 2005; Neil et al., 2006; Lally & Gardner, 2013). This definition leads us to three significant aspects concerning habits, which we will analyse further on: their automatic character, their dependence to context and their relation to goals.

Habit's automatic character had been particularly studied by Lally et al. (2010) who conducted experiments to understand how much time it takes for a habit to form. As explained so far, habits are the result of "incremental strengthening" of the situation-action relation coming from behaviour repetition, till this same behaviour turns out automatic (meaning efficient, unaware, and unintentional) (Lally et al., 2010). But as Lally et al. (2010) demonstrated, automaticity actually has a limit. Indeed, "the relationship between repetition and habit strength follows an asymptotic curve in which automaticity increases by a smaller amount with each repetition until it reaches a plateau" (Lally et al., 2010) (see Fig. 27). According to Lally et al. (2010), the average time a person needs to reach the plateau level is 66 days, although the range turned out to swing between 18 and 254 days, depending on behaviour's complexity. Consequently, taking into account that the development of automaticity could take a lot of time and repetitions, constant support to individuals when performing behaviours together with high levels of self-control are essential to acquire effortless automaticity (Lally et al., 2010).

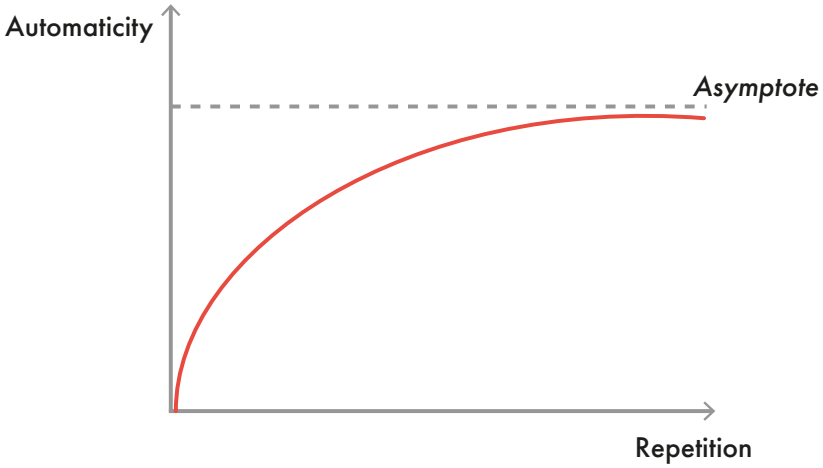


Fig. 27: Habit formation following an asymptotic curve. Source: Lally and Gardner, 2013.

Among literature, many authors spoke about habit's automaticity as the most defining feature in opposition to frequency. More precisely, Verplanken (2006) claims that "habit should be considered as a mental construct involving features of automaticity, such as lack of awareness, difficulty to control and mental efficiency, in addition to the experience of repetition". Gardner (2012) further supports this idea, affirming that habits are "a form of context-dependent automaticity" that, once developed, are only performed frequently if the related cues are frequently encountered in the performance environment. In sum, if automaticity is indeed the very essence of habit, the fact that a behaviour is performed frequently doesn't necessarily end up in habit formation (Gardner, 2012; Verplanken, 2006).

“habits are automatic behavioural responses to environmental cues, thought to develop through repetition of behaviour in consistent contexts”

Lally and Gardner, 2013

The other two features characterising habits (context dependence and relation to goals) are well explained by Wood and Neal's model (Wood & Neal, 2007). As a matter of fact, the two authors start from the idea that habits are activated by context directly, without any goals mediated interference. To sustain their claim, they propose three principles: 1. habits are cued by recurring features of the context that "reliably accompanied past performance"; 2. habits are not mediated by goal-related cognitive constructs (which in turn makes them different from other goal-dependent forms of automaticity); 3. habits do interface with goals, since they provide the initial stimulus for repetition towards the desired outcome (Wood & Neal, 2007). According to the first two principles, habit performance could seem as completely and exclusively dependent on context cues; however, the third principle highlights how habits are in fact acquired through a slow learning process which starts off from specific goal pursuit (Wood & Neal, 2007).

Going deeply into the first principle, it refers to the general characteristic of habit, according to which humans would be inclined to encode recurring patterns into their brains allowing for context cues (as said, elements of the performance environment) to be linked to specific responses, directly activating behaviours. Context cues could assume different forms: direct cueing, a pure cognitive mechanism through which habits are "represented in memory as direct context-response associations" resulting from recurring coactivation; and motivated cueing, through which habit associations come as a result of "motivational influence" from context cues addressing past rewarding responses (i.e., entering the movie theatre is linked to the rewarding experience of eating popcorns) (Wood & Neal, 2007; Neil et al., 2006).

As said, principles two and three touch upon the relation habit has with goals. Principle two suggests that habits' performance is not mediated by goals, although considering goals as the first source of habits, they may address goals' aim. Indeed, "habits may be goal directed in this restrictive sense, even though they are not goal dependent". In fact, the authors suggest that habit performance, characterised by rigid behavioural repetition, differs from automatic goal pursuit which in turn results in variability of response (Wood & Neal, 2007).

On the other hand, principle three (see Fig. 28) sustains that habits actually interface with goals not only by giving the starting "impetus" for habit formation, but also by working "in the service of goals". This means that very often, habits continue to support goals even when behavioural automaticity has been reached. Moreover, habits can be the source of "post hoc inferences" about people's goals, allowing individuals to support self-regulatory processes guiding habits. Furthermore, goals could work together with habits when both components are aligned towards the same performance outcome.

Nevertheless, if goals and habits are in contrast, goals are unlikely to break habits alone, unless contextual cues are disrupted, or individuals demonstrate strong self-control with respect to breaking unwanted habits or supporting the development of new behaviours (Wood & Neal, 2007).

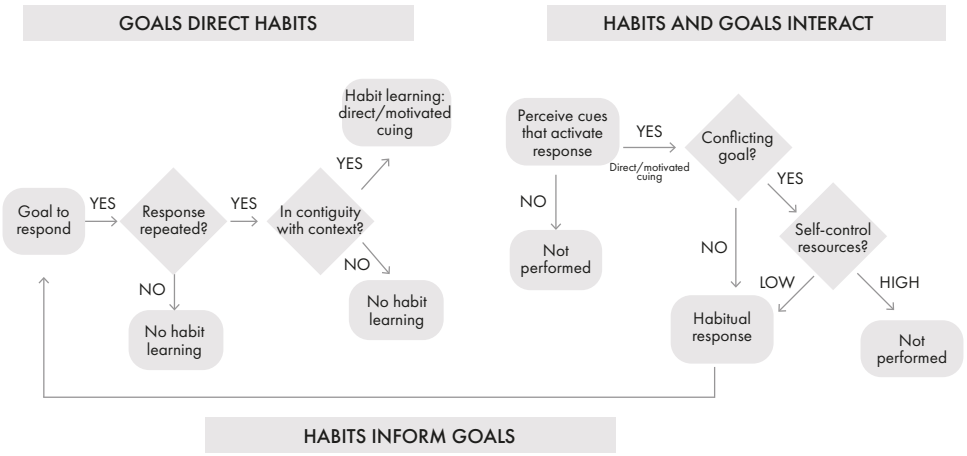


Fig. 28: the interface between habitual and goal-based systems of action control as outlined in the third principle of the Wood and Neal's model. The left panel reflects how goals direct habit formation, the right panel reflects the interaction between goals and habits in guiding performance, and the arrow at the bottom reflects how habits inform goals, as when people infer goals and related dispositions from habit performance. Source: Wood and Neal, 2007.

Once the relation between habits and goals has been clarified, the role of intentions in predicting habits can be briefly analysed. As a matter of fact, considering that habits are goal-independent factors that result from automatic repetitions of actions, the role of intentions in predicting behaviours declines as habits become stronger (Neil et al., 2006). In this regard, Neal et al. (2009) tried to understand why, despite being the result of contextual cues triggering, people perceive habits as intentional motives' outcomes. In fact, as it emerged from behavioural change literature, habits are performed even when in absence or in contrast with intentions; but, because people lack basic knowledge about the mechanisms of habits, they base themselves on pure inferences. Instead, the authors demonstrate that interventions aiming at changing goals or intentions have little if not zero impact on habits, since those "psychological constructs" no longer interfere with habitual behaviours. Now the question rises naturally: how should habit change interventions take place?

3.2.2. Changing habits to change behaviours

From the previous paragraph we can conclude that "the pervasive effect of habits in everyday behaviour is a key to understanding the difficulty people frequently experience in changing their behaviour. [...] Habits keep us doing what we have always done, despite our best intentions to act otherwise" (Neil et al., 2006). For this reason, before touching upon the most promising mechanism to ensure long-term behavioural change, meaning the process of habit formation which would allow us to break unwanted habits through the development

of new ones, a short overview of other existing habit change interventions should be presented.

To start with, Neal et al. (2009) claim that "interventions targeting habits", should focus on rethinking environmental conformation and controlling stimulus by altering or even avoiding people's exposure to contextual cues triggering habits.
In particular, Wood and Neal (2007) propose a model through which people can actually break habits by employing control after the cue has been encountered and a response in memory has been activated. This practice is based on two aspects: "effortful inhibition" of habitual responses triggering habits; and "effortful self-control" towards the recognition and consequent exposure to specific cues. One critical aspect concerning this inhibitory strategy concerns its dependence on people's vulnerability which could compromise any attempts towards change, unless it provides people with alternative responses targeting the development of new desired behaviours.
Another solution would be taking advantage of naturally occurring changes in performance contexts due to life events. As a matter of fact, Wood et al. (2005) explain how, considering habit's nature as something acquired through repetition and associative learning of context cues and actions, "changes in context should reduce the likelihood of the practised response being triggered automatically by associated contextual cues". Consequently, habits would be controlled by different mechanisms, and behaviour performance would go back to individuals' intentional control (Neil et al., 2006). Also, Verplanken and Wood (2006) suggest that to effectively change habits, taking advantage of situations in which people are naturally changing performance contexts would be even more powerful than simply modifying the environment. The already mentioned Transtheoretical Model of Change clearly supports this idea: two of its processes of change (stimulus control and reinforcement management) give evidence of how changing circumstances positively affect behavioural change (Wood et al., 2005).

An interesting term of comparison to the TTM is the habit formation process which we are going to present as a very valuable solution towards behavioural change. Indeed, as Gardner and Rebar (2019) affirm, if it's true that habit formation alone is not enough to break unwanted behaviours, the creation of a new habit in substitution to an old one would facilitate behavioural change much more likely than inhibition strategies.
In proposing this framework, Lally and Gardner (2013) argue that even if repetition in a stable context is necessary for habit to form, "pre- and post-initiation phases" also require supporting techniques. Indeed, habit formation should be considered as a multi-technique approach which, other than promoting repetition, it also: "reinforces motivation; boosts action control capacity, opportunity, or skills; facilitates post-initiation repetition; quickens the learning of associations arising from repetition" (Gardner & Rebar, 2019).

"the pervasive effect of habits in everyday behaviour is a key to understanding the difficulty people frequently experience in changing their behaviour. [...] Habits keep us doing what we have always done, despite our best intentions to act otherwise"

Neil et al., 2006

Through the habit formation process, Lally and Gardner (2013) attempt to collect different habit-promoting techniques depending on the mechanisms they most likely activate: motivation-enhancing techniques in relation to phase one; action control techniques in relation to phase two; over time support techniques in relation to phase three; and association-reinforcing techniques in relation to phase four (Gardner & Rebar, 2019).

As for the second step, the translation of intention into action is characterised by the so-called "intention behaviour gap", according to which people mostly fail to follow their intentions because of "volitional factors" that interfere with one's ability to put plans into action (Lally & Gardner, 2013). In this case, a valuable solution could be the strategy of planning, which collects: action plans, implementation intentions and coping planning.

Action plans consist in identifying a specific behaviour to be performed in relation to a specific situation; while implementation intentions (which derive from action plans) add to the behaviour-situation duo detailed features, following the formula "if situation Y is encountered then I will initiate behaviour Z (in order to reach goal X)". The difference between these two kinds of planning resides in implementation intentions' rigid structure that links a behaviour to a "specific anticipated context". Given that planning could also apply to facing possible obstacles to behaviour, coping planning is worth mentioning. This strategy operates by developing plans to deal with previously identified problems that could inhibit action. All these planning techniques could also benefit from the support of reminders (i.e., text messages) that would help people remember their plans (Lally & Gardner, 2013).

Concerning phase three, the condition for behaviour repetition resides on people's enhanced motivation after the initiation phase. For this reason, strategies that aim at individuals' positive emotions are most likely to increase commitment to change. Among others, satisfaction would be essential in supporting repetition, since if a person feels satisfied with the behaviour, it will mean that the decision to change the behaviour was right from the beginning. Satisfaction-enhancing techniques include showing people positive outcomes they are unaware of, or simply repeating the behaviour making the performance easier (Lally & Gardner, 2013).

Among these self-regulatory techniques, it is also important for behavioural change practitioners to promote people's self-determination. As a matter of fact, individuals must internalise the need and desire to change, to make the whole process easier. It has been proven that "self-directed changes" are more effective than those guided by external obligations, that's why positive feedbacks are more valuable at promoting autonomy and interest than tangible rewards, which in contrast are believed to threaten motivation (Lally & Gardner, 2013).

The last stage of the habit formation process is the most delicate one since it aims at developing automaticity. As explained by Lally and Gardner (2013), even if repetition in a stable context is the basis of habit formation, there exist situations in which frequently performed actions do not turn into habits.

Supporting techniques in this case include extrinsic or intrinsic rewards that act as cue-response association reinforcers. The former, which are mostly tangible, have negative effects on behaviour performance: indeed, getting people used to "instrumental learning" they build the entire process of habit formation around the expectation of some rewards, thus reducing intrinsic motivation levels. For extrinsic rewards to be effective, they should not become the goal of behaviour performance. Nevertheless, when extrinsic rewards are not applied, it is important to support motivation through intrinsic rewards which, as previously said, are best represented by encouragement or mentor support. Other important techniques for automaticity to develop include consistency and salient cues. As extensively told, consistent repetition in stable contexts is essential for a habit to develop, but occasional lapses should not represent a threat to the overall objective, unless the number of repetitions falls too much under the required standard level. Moreover, as explained so far, cues are the very core of habit formation and behavioural change, and basically everything in the performance context could address their purpose. That said, we must recognise that some elements work better than others, since the more salient the cue, the higher the possibility for a behaviour to be performed and thus for a habit to form (Lally & Gardner, 2013). To better explain this concept, the authors made the example of preceding actions: considering that behaviours come to be linked in memory into chunked responses (Neil et al., 2006), inside the same sequence, one specific action could actually serve as a cue to the following one.

"successful behaviour change is limited to the absolute numbers of individuals who are able to achieve maintenance"

Prochaska et al., 1992

In support of the habit formation process, the Hook Model developed by Eyal (2014, as cited in Liu & Meng Li, 2016) in relation to habit-forming products is worth mentioning. This framework can be used as a basis for comparison since it also consists of four interlinked cyclical phases (see Fig. 29), with the aim of "bringing users back over and over again" ensuring "long-term engagement" with the product (Yao, 2018). These stages include: 1. the trigger phase, in which a prompt guides people providing information (either external or internal) about how to behave; 2. the action phase, during which individuals perform behaviours according to the trigger, but only in the presence of enough motivation and ability (the simpler the product, the better); 3. the variable rewards phase, through which people are rewarded after behaviour performance in order to keep their interest in the product high (variability should ensure long-lasting engagement); 4. the investment phase, which relates to individuals' time and effort employed in the use of a product enhancing the value of the product itself (the more the product is used, the higher the possibility of people using it back again) (Liu & Meng Li, 2016; Yao, 2018). What's interesting about this model is that its stages work in a continuous cycle, explaining the process of a habit-forming product (Yao, 2018).

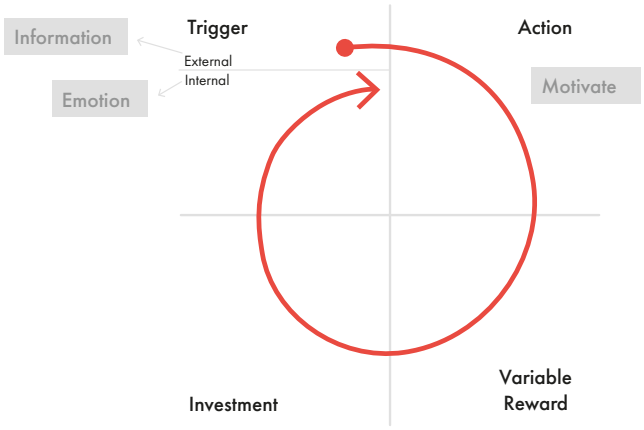


Fig. 29: the Hook Model. Source: Eyal, 2014, as cited in Yao, 2018.

The Hook Model was influenced by the Fogg Behaviour Model (Fogg, 2009), in which behaviour is considered as the result of three elements that must happen simultaneously for the behaviour to occur: motivation, ability and triggers. Motivation is related to one person's desire to perform an action; ability indicates the level of difficulty for the user to perform the action; and triggers serve as reminders for action performance (Liu & Meng Li, 2016). According to Fogg (2009), with increased levels of motivation and ability, the target behaviour is most likely to be performed, but whereas motivation is mostly subjective and hardly modifiable, behaviour practitioners should focus on ability enhancement instead, facilitating people's performance (Liu & Meng Li, 2016).

As portrayed in the graph (see Fig. 30), triggers have a significant role in determining behaviour performance. Indeed, without a successful trigger the action will hardly occur, even if motivation and ability levels are high. The author claims that effective triggers are evident, easily linked to the related behaviour, and associated with high levels of motivation and ability. In this concern, the concept of "behaviour activation threshold" plays a significant role since it indicates a limit underneath which the behaviour can't occur. As a matter of fact, with enough motivation and ability, people are placed above the behaviour activation threshold, hence the trigger can lead them to the target behaviour. Needless to say, if just one element between motivation and ability is low, practitioners should help people increase the lower component in order to cross the threshold level (Fogg, 2009).

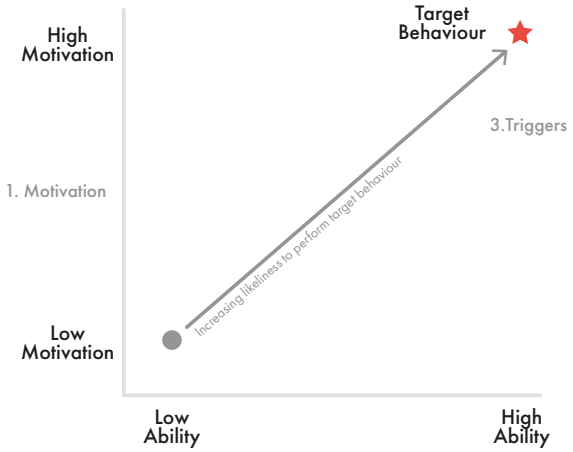


Fig. 30: the Fogg Behaviour Model. Source: Fogg, 2009.

In conclusion, we can infer that when attempting to change behaviours, practitioners should focus both on breaking existing unwanted habits and promoting the formation of most desirable ones. In this concern, we got evidence of how habit formation directly links to the development and, most of all, maintenance of a new behaviour, which is why all kinds of interventions aiming at habit formation also apply to behavioural change in general (Lally & Gardner, 2013).

IV.

Service Design for organisational change

The first part of desk research was dedicated to the collection of data about the worldwide impact COVID-19 had on organisations and specifically on people's work life and routines. As a matter of fact, starting from the one-of-a-kind situation I also found myself in, and the recurring topic of "remote working" which emerged as one of the most critical hence urgent challenges of these difficult times, I understood the importance to find a strategic solution towards more agile work practices, together with the development of a framework to support organisations, but mostly employees, embrace this huge cultural change. Indeed, if on one hand the pandemic accelerated the transition to a renewed employee experience, on the other hand it highlighted the inadequacy of current tools to welcome the change.
These considerations represented for me an opportunity to further investigate the topics of organisational culture and behavioural change and were the initial push towards a deeper understanding of how the discipline of Service Design could strategically contribute to the cultural transition that the adoption of new hybrid work models requires, in the name of a better employee experience.

4.1. The research question

Starting from personal growing curiosity on the broader topic of COVID-19 and the future of work after the pandemic, I conducted theoretical research starting from data collection and evaluation of the crisis' impact on the world of work. As we could understand from the previous theoretical section, future directions in the New Normal are mainly oriented towards the adoption of hybrid work as a new work paradigm, which within the scope of this research has to be intended as the collection of more agile practices that combine the best of both worlds, rather than as the juxtaposition between in presence versus remote work. That said, as explained in previous chapters, the adoption of a hybrid work model implies a shift from the remote work paradigm established during COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the transition to a new work model requires a huge cultural change within organisations, which inevitably disrupts people's established behaviours and routines, affecting not only the professional sphere, but different aspects of life in general. Consequently, a path towards behavioural change is needed, explaining why further investigations on this topic were carried out through literature review.

This theoretical background was the starting point for the development of my research question, which was eventually confirmed by the data collected through field research. Indeed, the core of the field investigation was based on my understanding of people's necessity for a guide inside the broader scenario that the COVID-19 pandemic brought about in terms of organisational transformation. So, considering the final aim of instilling a new hybrid work culture and building new work habits, how can Service Design orient employees in the behavioural change process that the adoption of a new work paradigm requires?

How can Service Design orient employees in the behavioural change process that the adoption of a new work paradigm requires?

4.2. The context of project development

Together with my theoretical research, the internship I carried out during my Master programme was a fruitful occasion to push these investigations further within a specific organisational context, not only in terms of field data collection, but also towards the development of a prototyped solution.
Indeed, as part of the design team at CILAB - Creative Industries Lab (research laboratory at Politecnico di Milano's design department), I had the opportunity to take part to a newborn project with Intesa Sanpaolo, specifically with its internal division IMI C&IB and their Human Resources (HR) team. The project *Working Life Scenarios in Evolution (WLSE)*, to which I took part starting from March 2021, was part of a 2-year-long collaboration between CILAB and IMI C&IB Intesa Sanpaolo, with the aim of creating a design synergy between Human Resource Management (HRM) and Service Design. This long-lasting relationship based on both consulting and formation had the goal of instilling the design culture within HRM and developed through different steps, of which the last one represented by the above-mentioned project, had the aim of designing new employee experience scenarios post COVID-19.

To better understand the context of research, a short presentation of the broader project is necessary. *WLSE* was born in a particular moment of organisational transition: employees found themselves in front of changing routines due to the pandemic's forced switch to remote work, therefore new work-life scenarios to face the change had to be designed. What's more, IMI C&IB specific organisational context was already discussing the introduction of a new work model based on Activity Based Working (ABW), which represented a great starting point to introduce theoretical concepts related to new hybrid ways of working.
The concept of ABW refers to a flexible approach to work based on the idea that people would enhance their productivity if they had dedicated spaces to carry out their tasks. Moreover, this model was born with the aim of providing people with more flexibility and autonomy in deciding where, when and how to perform their jobs: in this way, workspaces adapt to individual's needs, diversifying the offer of available spaces.
As far as the project is concerned, thoughts about the introduction of ABW developed around four pillars, referring to significant work-related macro areas for IMI C&IB's specific context, that were used as filters to ground the model. These pillars, which took the name of *4 Cs*, are: concentration (related to all those activities requiring individual focus); collaboration (meaning tasks that

involve teams or interdepartmental work); communication (referring to all kinds of information sharing and dialogues between colleagues, not exclusively work-specific), and contemplation (mainly concerning individual's need for decompression).

If on one hand, ABW represented the starting point and narrative thread of project development, on the other hand the project's actual aim was that of designing experiential scenarios of new ways of working to be tested in context. Interesting to note, the term "experiential" assumes a significant role since it doesn't just refer to the design of proper experiences for people to be tested, but it also refers to the hypothesis of ABW having evolved into Experienced Based Working (EBW) after COVID-19. As a matter of fact, given people's enhanced desire to rather work in a hybrid way, the reason why they go to the office has to come under a specific purpose: "that purpose will involve curated experiences which deliver real value for both them [the employees] and the business" (COVID is taking us from ABW to experience-based working, 2020). According to this vision, the concept of work in the New Normal assumes a completely renewed meaning as a set of work-life experiences a person lives. Consequently, the office should become a place that delivers value, where the individual is not "just there", but actually "makes something happen". In this concern, the direction given by the concept of EBW better matches with the intention of introducing new hybrid ways of working, suggesting the general design approach at the basis of my field experimentation.

Given people's enhanced desire to rather work in a hybrid way, the reason why they go to the office has to come under a specific purpose: "that purpose will involve curated experiences which deliver real value for both them [the employees] and the business"

COVID is taking us from ABW to experience-based working, 2020

V.

The project

Once the general context of project development is clear, to introduce the design process which brought me to the proposed solution, it is important to remember the aim of the research question, which mainly concerns the understanding of how Service Design can strategically contribute to orient people facing the change brought about by the adoption of a new work paradigm.
In the following chapter the suggested solution will be presented throughout its process, which was developed inside the already mentioned organisational context of IMI C&IB Intesa Sanpaolo, between the period of March 2021 and November 2021. But, before going in depth into the different design phases, from data collection to project testing and prototyping, a brief explanation of how the theoretical background fits into the development of the solution is necessary.

5.1. Orienting people towards new work habits

The desk research on behavioural change and habit formation represents the basis for the development of a framework which became the support behind the proposed solution. As a matter of fact, taking from different theoretical models, but mainly from Lally and Gardner's (2013) model of habit formation, I synthesised the design process into six main steps, each of them related to significant design interventions that would allow people to incorporate change and build new long-lasting work-related habits. Indeed, the resulting curve which emerges from the model serves as a guide for organisations, but most of all employees, towards a new hybrid work paradigm. In this concern, the model attempts to incorporate Service Design with cultural and behavioural change in the organisation, which in this context finds expression in the process of new habits formation.

If on one hand the framework represents the guide to accompany people towards change, on the other hand the different interventions performed inside IMI C&IB are preparatory to the development of a customised solution allowing the actualisation of the model into the specific context. Moreover, every action answers to two parallel aims: collecting valuable insights to implement the following steps, but also communicate and slowly instil the ongoing process of change.

As mentioned before, the framework represented in Fig. 31 is composed of six steps (1. decision to take action; 2. from intention to action; 3. action; 4. action and repetition; 5. habit formation; 6. habit maintenance) that can be divided into two main phases: phase one, collecting interventions from communication to action; and phase two, focusing more on habit formation and maintenance over time. Phase one aims at: communicating the reason why at the basis of change and its positive potential; delivering information about new hybrid ways of working; and guiding people towards the development of automaticity in the performance of new behaviours. Phase two, instead, is specifically dedicated to the development of automaticity at the core of habit formation, till the persistence of the new behaviour over time is guaranteed.

In the context of my project, the design focus specifically concerned phase one, while for the second phase of the model a design direction to be further investigated in the future has been proposed. For this reason, the interventions I am going to present in the next paragraphs are all related to phase one. In particular, "decision to take action" was translated into a first action of listening and communication, to both get to know people's needs and engage them in

the process; "from intention to action" regarded interventions to inform and form people, raising consciousness about the topic and determining their adherence to the next step; "action" was carried out through the performance of a first episode of testing; and "action and repetition" concerned the execution of a second implemented test. As we will see further on, the concept around which the testing was designed, is based on its perpetual character, which addresses the need for action repetition to reach automaticity. In the model this stage is indicated as the climax point of the curve, represented by habit formation.

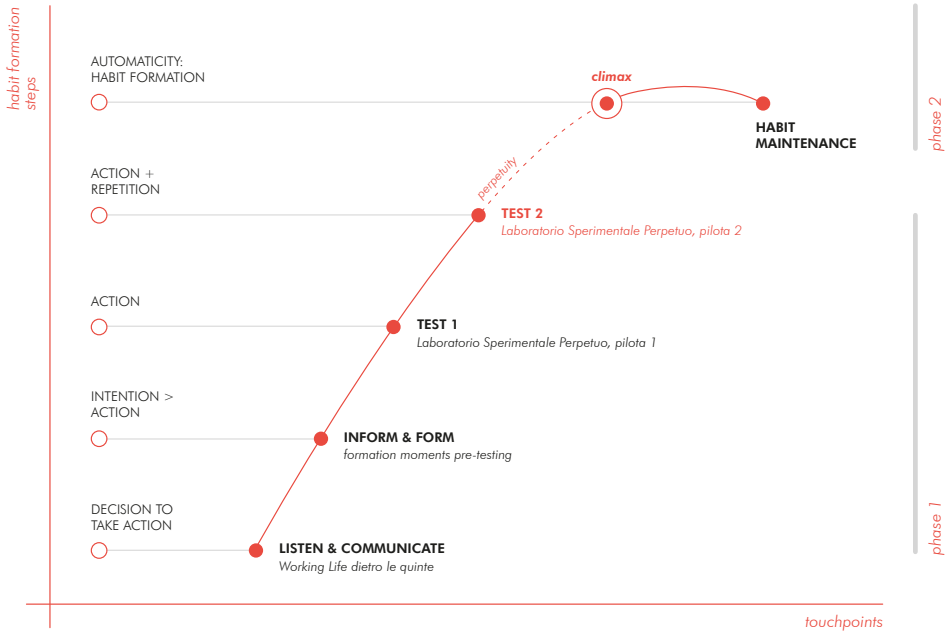


Fig. 31: framework developed starting from desk research about habit formation. On the left, the six steps at the basis of the design process, referring to habit formation; on the right, the related touchpoints over time, which allowed the actualisation of the model into the specific context (IMI C&IB Intesa Sanpaolo). The resulting curve which emerges from the model serves as a guide for organisations, but most of all employees, towards a new hybrid work paradigm.

To understand the interdependent relationships behind the process of project development, Fig. 32 effectively shows the logic governing all the design stages, which work in synergy towards the development of the solution.

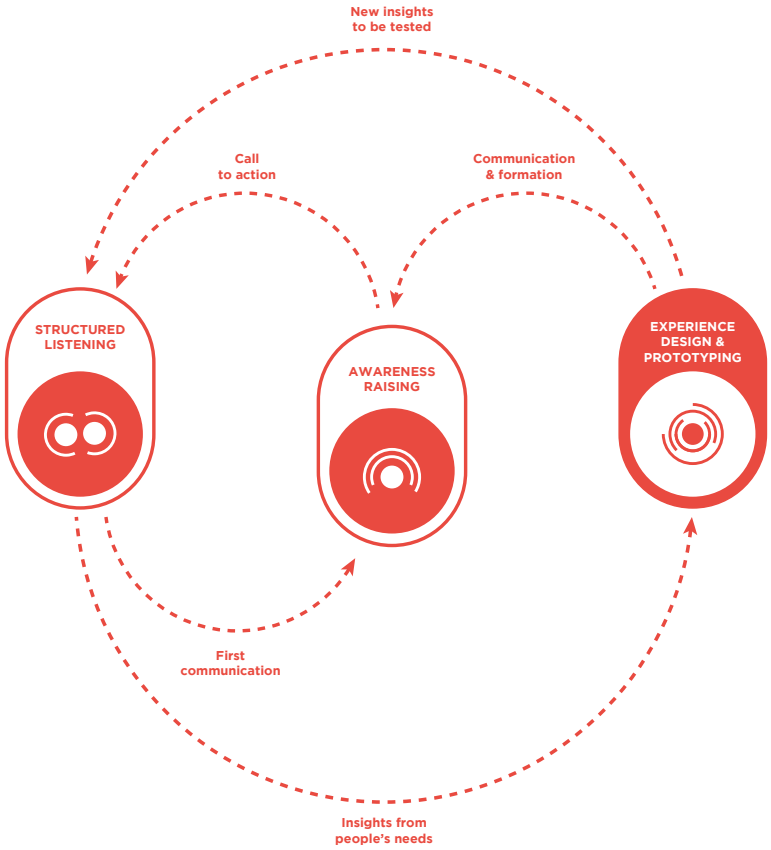


Fig. 32: the logic of interdependent relationships behind the process of project development. All the design stages work in synergy towards the development of the solution.

Another significant reference throughout the design process was Schein's model, which helped frame the entire work with respect to how organisational culture was approached. As a matter of fact, this model not only explains the need for organisations to have an external guide which supports the development of a renewed strategy, but it also highlights the importance of understanding its cultural paradigm. Specifically, the model served as a basis to design the ethnographic research at the beginning of the process, which was carried out through the joint action of service designers and human resource practitioners who acted like "psychologists" (Schein, 1988) with the aim of deciphering organisational culture.
Lastly, worth mentioning is also IBM's model (IBM, 2016) described in chapter 2. As said, the design intervention aimed at proposing a guide for organisations and employees in the transition to a new work paradigm through the testing of work-life experiences, hence entering the field of employee experience. For this reason, the model served as a useful reference in the design of proposed touchpoints, which attempted to touch upon the spheres of employee experience, as shown by the Fig. 33 below.

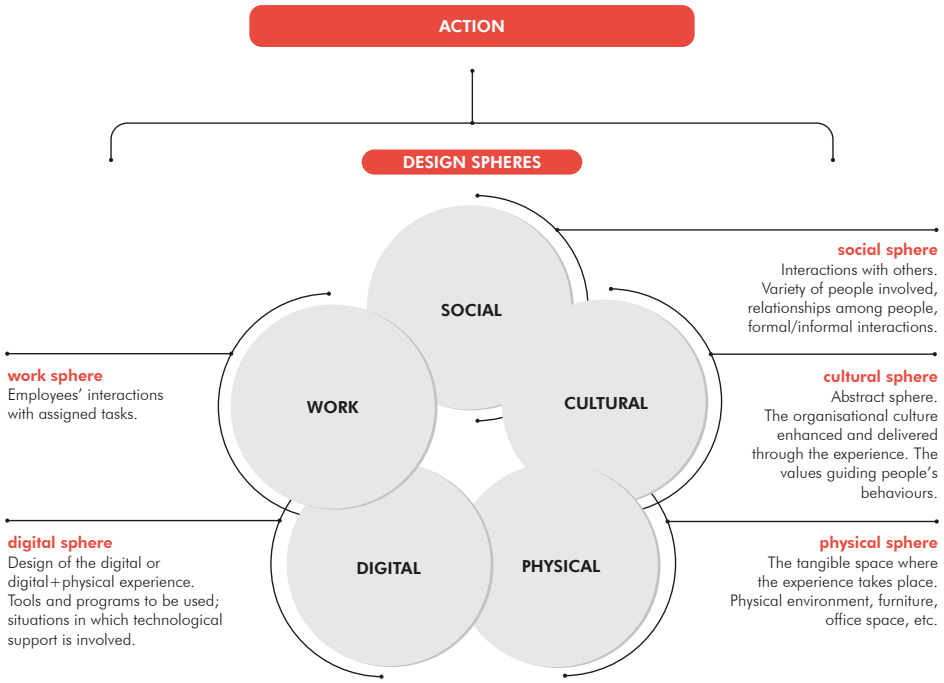


Fig. 33: model describing how each intervention through the testing of work-life experiences was designed upon IBM's shperes of employee experience.

In the following paragraphs, phase 1 of the proposed model is going to be presented in depth, through its main design interventions: *Working Life dietro le quinte: una conversazione; Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo, pilota 1; Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo, pilota 2.*

5.2. Working Life dietro le quinte: una conversazione

This design phase, which corresponds to the "decision to take action" step of the suggested model, was organised in different design moments, each of them addressing a specific purpose. The general aim of this intervention was to get to know (and help people decipher) the organisational culture in depth, while collecting insights about individuals' needs after the pandemic to eventually suggest proper work-life experiences. Moreover, considering IMI C&IB Intesa Sanpaolo's hyper-regulated context, it also represented an occasion to align the design language to that of the organisation, and start communicating to people not only the need for change, but also how their company is actually moving towards it, starting from people.

5.2.1. Personas

First, in order to investigate people's needs, with the support of HR accurate research on the main figures inside the organisation was conducted, which led to the development of six personas (see Fig. 34).

Fig. 34: the six personas developed together with the HR team, using the main job figures in the organisation as reference. They were eventually used as basis for intervieews selection.

These personas were thought of with the aim of elaborating hypothetical hybrid

work-life journeys in the New Normal, from which to identify design opportunities to be investigated. In this concern, each profile was developed trying to cover a broad spectrum of work-life situations, both in terms of private life and professional roles inside the specific context. As shown by the graphs (Fig. 35), for both areas six significant aspects for the development of personas were identified. With respect to private life, important evaluation elements were: family composition; home environment; commuting; lifestyle; remote working; and career position. In relation to the professional sphere, instead: independent work; teamwork; meetings' frequency (either internal or with clients); stress level; required availability level; and job-related ability to work remotely.

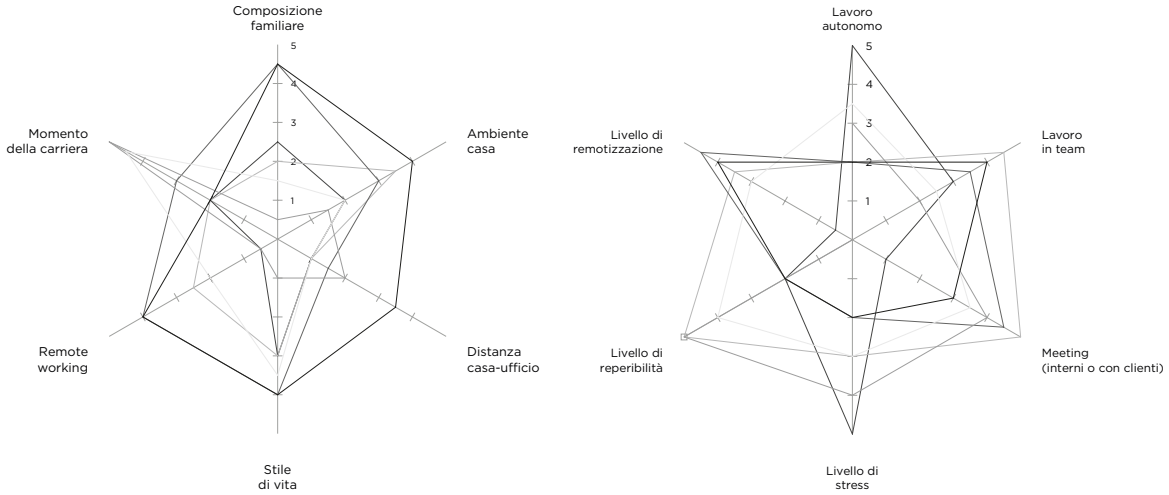


Fig. 35: radar charts combining personas' individual charts about their ***private lives (on the left)*** *and* ***professional lives (on the right)****.*

The first profile is that of **Luca** (Fig. 36), 45 years old, covering a senior position in the field of Global Markets Solutions and Financing. He has two little children, a newborn and one attending nursery school; he lives in an apartment with a dedicated work area, even though he most likely needs an office with proper equipment due to his job tasks. In remote-work situations he rather works from home, so he can save 30 minutes from commuting time and dedicate himself to his children or to his hobbies. Indeed, he uses sports as means of release. Concerning his career and attitude towards work, he doesn't have much growth ambition, and he sure exits hierarchical logics even though he is not a fan of organisational culture.

Veronica (Fig. 37) is a 34-year-old junior employee in Financial Markets Analytics and Digital Solutions. She lives with her partner in an apartment with no office area. In fact, if she happens to work remotely, she rather chooses a coworking space or cafe. Even though she can't gain extra time from commute because she lives in the city, she easily finds ways to decompress by dedicating

herself to self-care activities, leaving the weekend for her hobbies. Career-wise she is trying to understand how much she wants to grow in relation to her private life plans.

Alessandro (Fig. 38) is an almost 30-year-old junior Analyst who lives in a situation of house sharing. Despite having his own private space which serves both as bedroom and work area, he doesn't have where to decompress beyond common spaces, which can be tricky in those situations of remote working. He lives in the city, so commuting to the office is very quick by metro, even though he sometimes goes back to his home region where he also happens to work from. This precarious home condition reinforces his desire to be present in the office as much as possible, where his superior can notice him, too. As a matter of fact, he is characterised by a young ambition which pushes him to learn from others and get in touch with the organisational culture.

Claudia (Fig. 39), 48 years old, is a Relationship Manager fulfilling a medium-high level position with which she's very satisfied. Actually, she's planning to cross the threshold towards a higher position explaining her desire to be more present in the office to both support her team and meet her superior more often. Despite that, she would like to maintain an equilibrium between job and family commitments. Indeed, she has two children around the age of ten who keep her very busy, leaving little time for her own relaxation. A condition which is exacerbated by the housing situation that both lacks a proper space to work and an area to decompress.

Finally, the 61-year-old **Ernesto** (Fig. 40) deals with customer relationships in the field of Financial Institutions. He practises a frontline managerial role that not only keeps him away on frequent business trips, but also requires his presence in the office. In fact, despite his family living in Turin, he owns an apartment in Milan from which he commutes to the office by bike. He is very passionate about his job and doesn't mind working late, also because he found an equilibrium that allows him to take some time off without interfering with job-related tasks. In this concern, also thanks to his position, he engages in leisure activities that he often fits within workdays (when he happens to finish earlier in the afternoon, he dedicates himself to his many passions like cooking classes, sports, art, etc.). Usually, on Fridays he leaves for Turin after lunch and rather works from home during the weekend, so he can spend some time with his wife (his three grown-up children are now independent).

The last profile embodied by the 37-year-old **Anna**, was added last minute to better shape the conversation I conducted with a trader employee, so it was only developed in terms of journey.

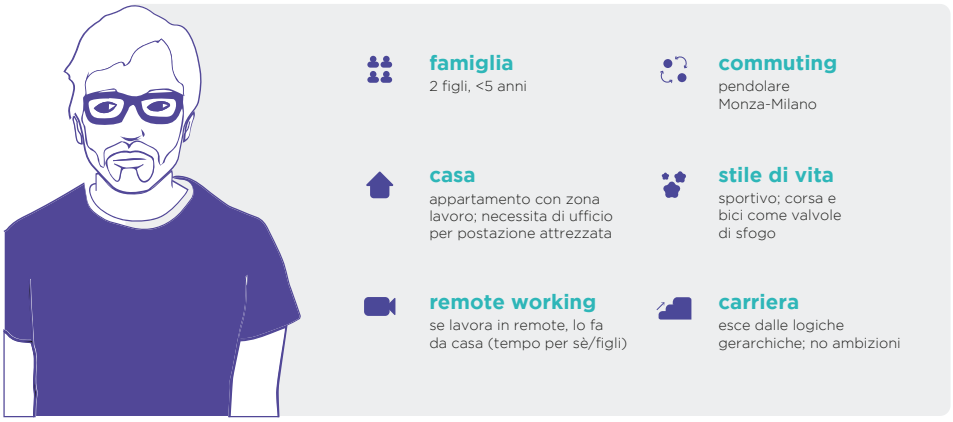


Fig. 36: Luca's profile.

Fig. 37: Veronica's profile.

Fig. 38: Alessandro's profile.

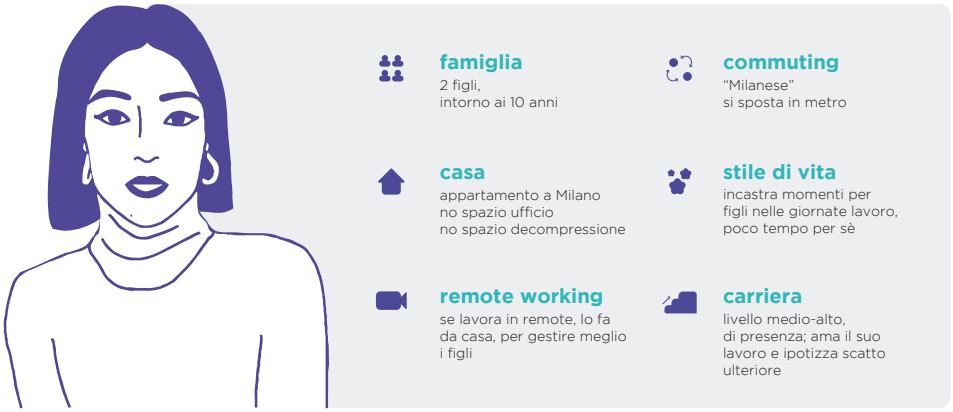


Fig. 39: Claudia's profile.

Fig. 40: Ernesto's profile.

5.2.2. Journeys

As mentioned before, the development of personas led to related journeys which tried to reproduce a condensed version of a hypothetical day in the New Normal, combining both professional and private life. For each profile I tried to include different elements like: remote activities, in-office activities, hybrid activities, free spots in the agenda, commuting, private life commitments, leisure, and self-care. Moreover, a third analytical layer was included, to identify criticalities and support the development of design opportunities. In this case, different shades were considered throughout the journeys: pain points, key moments, accidents, and signals of change. Going further, I am going to present each journey in terms of interesting aspects which emerged from the analysis.

In the case of Luca (Fig. 41), a pain point is determined by the lack in the office for a proper appealing space to perform a remote presentation to an important client. Instead, highlights of the journey are: the coffee break with colleagues,

a clear evidence of the need to support in office informal conversations and exchange of ideas; and the positive impact of an agile agenda which, on one hand lets him decompress while taking care of his children, and on the other hand allows him to make up for the time he lost on family duties, postponing his check out time. Lastly, accidents related to an unexpected task he needs to perform at home are also identified. Because of that, he has to re-plan his day at the office condensing all the individual activities that can be performed remotely in the afternoon.

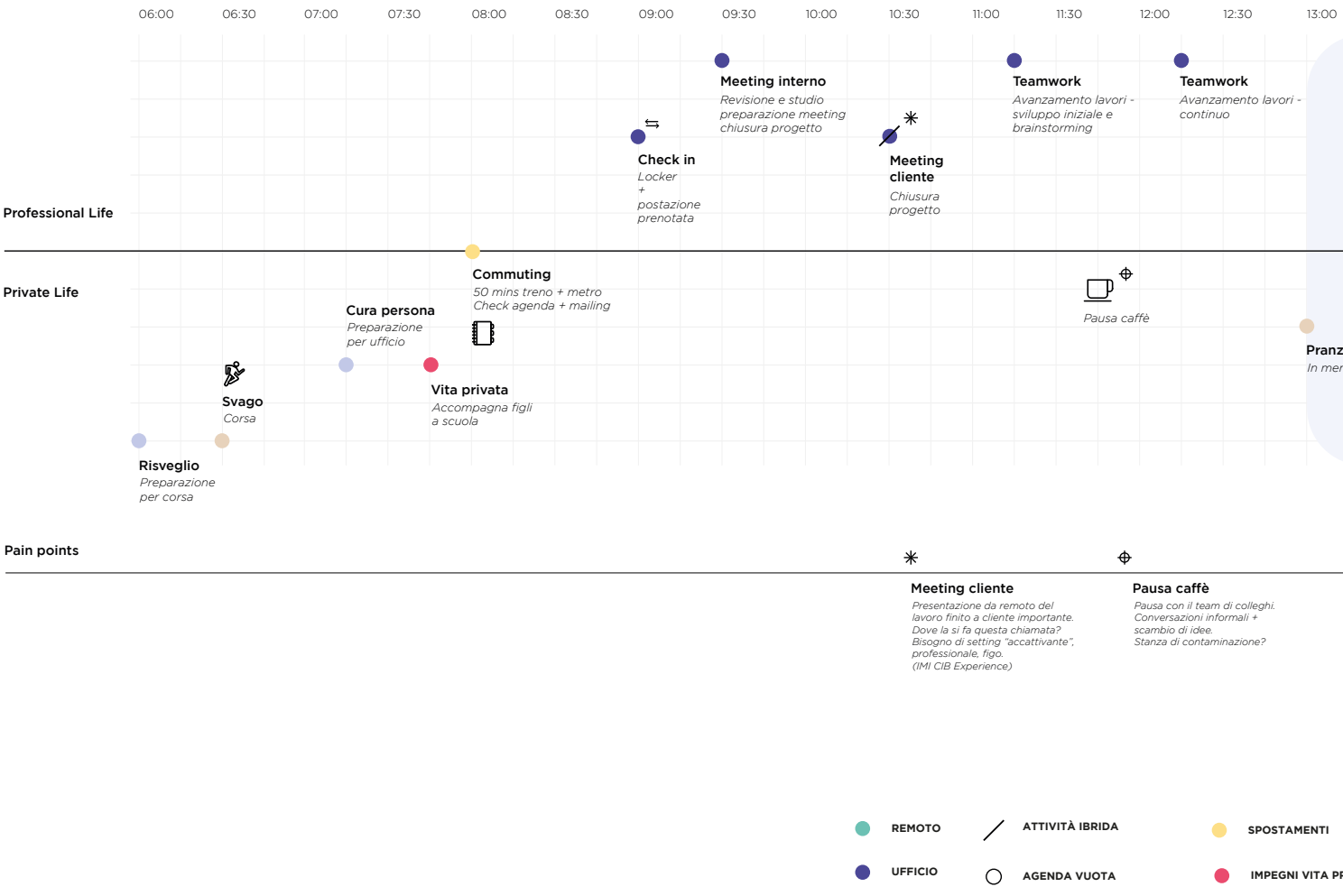
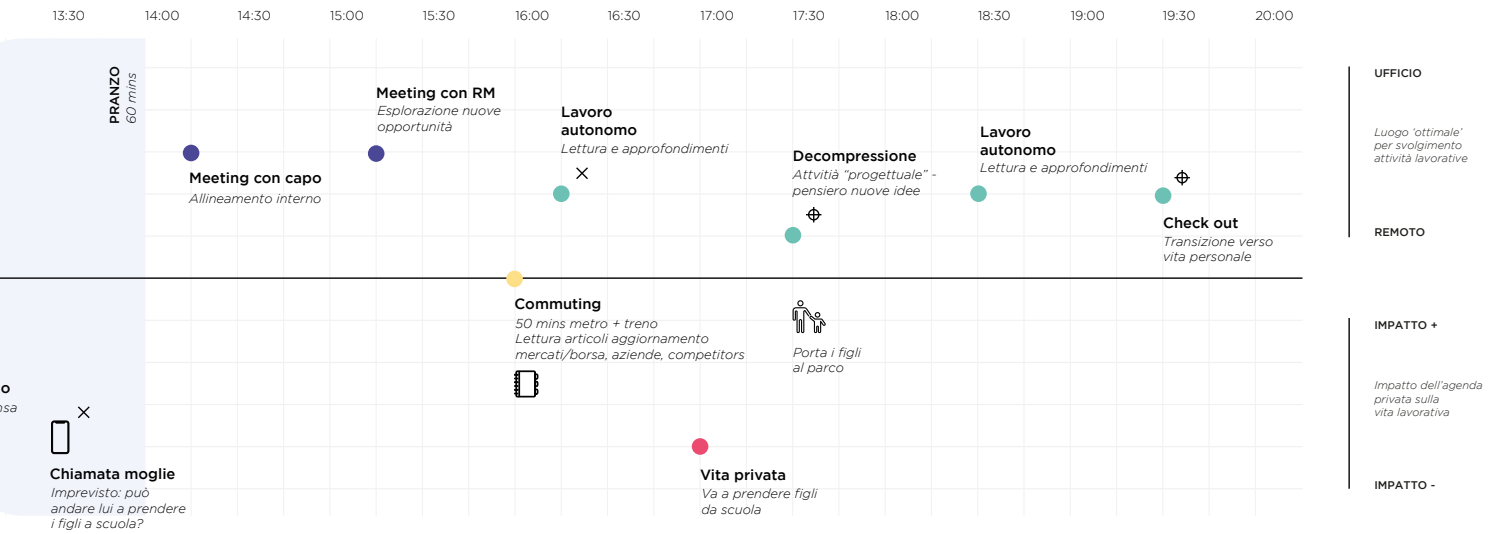


Fig. 41: Luca's journey (Global Markets Solutions & Financing).



Chiamata
Non era previsto il suo rientro nel pomeriggio a casa.
Cerca di condensare l'attività individuale programmata nel pomeriggio, così può rientrare a casa alle 16:00.

Lavoro autonomo
Decide di spostarsi da remoto perchè deve inaspettatamente andare a prende i figli a scuola.

Decompressione
Vita lavorativa e vita privata si sovrappongono in modo positivo! Anche se "impegnato" con i figli, usa questo momento di svago per "far funzionare le rotelle" per nuove idee. Livello di concentrazione non altissimo, necessità di "ispirazione" e aria diversa rispetto all'ufficio.

Check out
Check out un po' più tardi per "recuperare" il tempo di commuting e recupero figli avvenuto nel pomeriggio.

SVAGO
CURA PERSONALE
PAIN POINT
FOCUS / ZOOM
IMPREVISTO
CAMBIAMENTO

As for Veronica (Fig. 42), pain points are related to: the moment of office check in, when she realises that her morning is filled with activities that require different spaces and she is not sure about the best place where to perform all these tasks; the need for a last-minute room where to carry out an hybrid video call; and the mismatch due to how she originally planned her work day (in-office morning and at-home afternoon), because of a last minute team activity for which her presence at the office would have been better. Then, key moments in the journey are: the fact that an agile agenda allows her to retrieve a lesson she was supposed to follow for her continuing education; the need for an area in the office where to decompress after an intense work session; the flexibility provided by an hybrid agenda, that lets her be more autonomous in how she distributes private and job related tasks; a behaviour facilitating the check-out

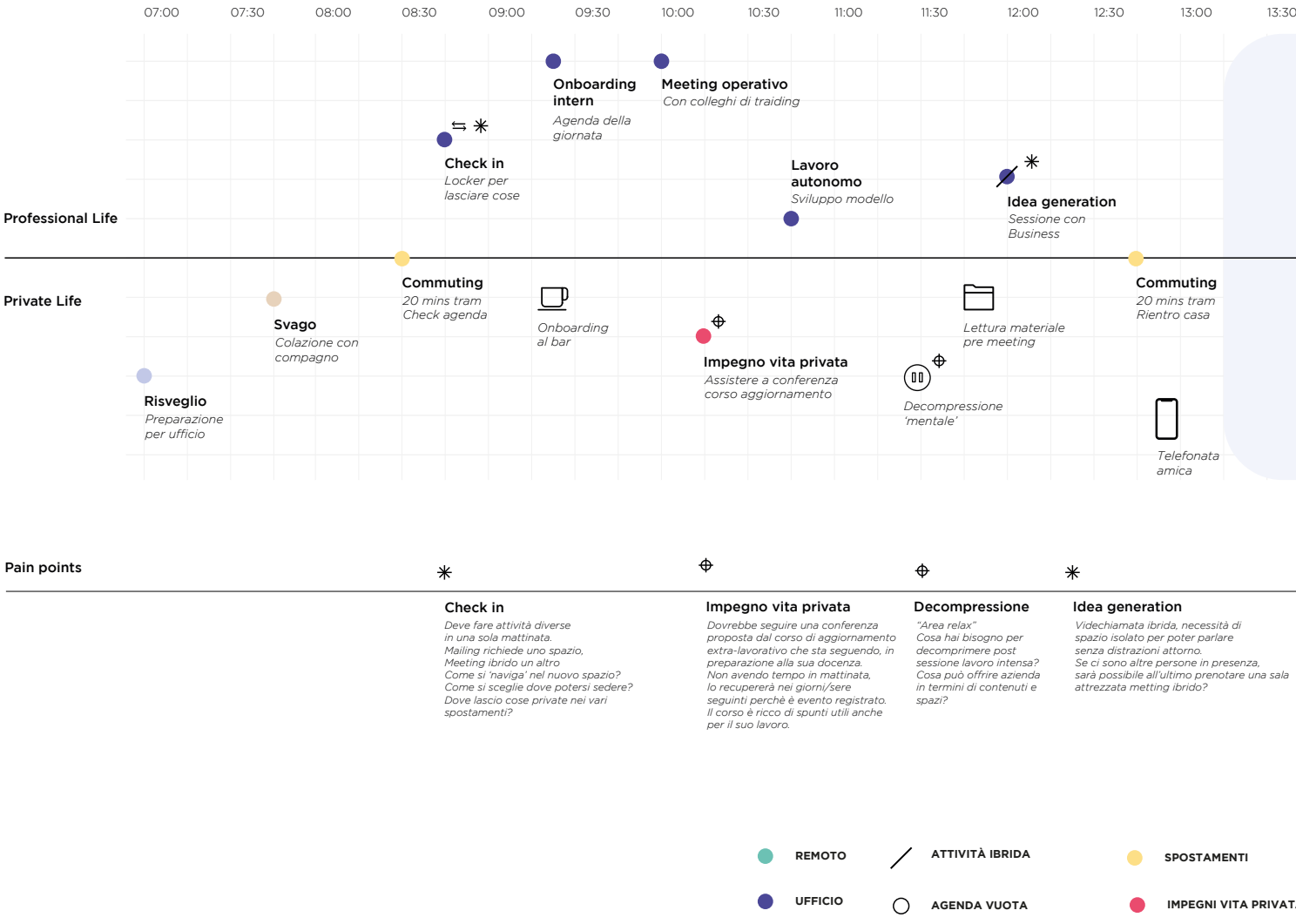
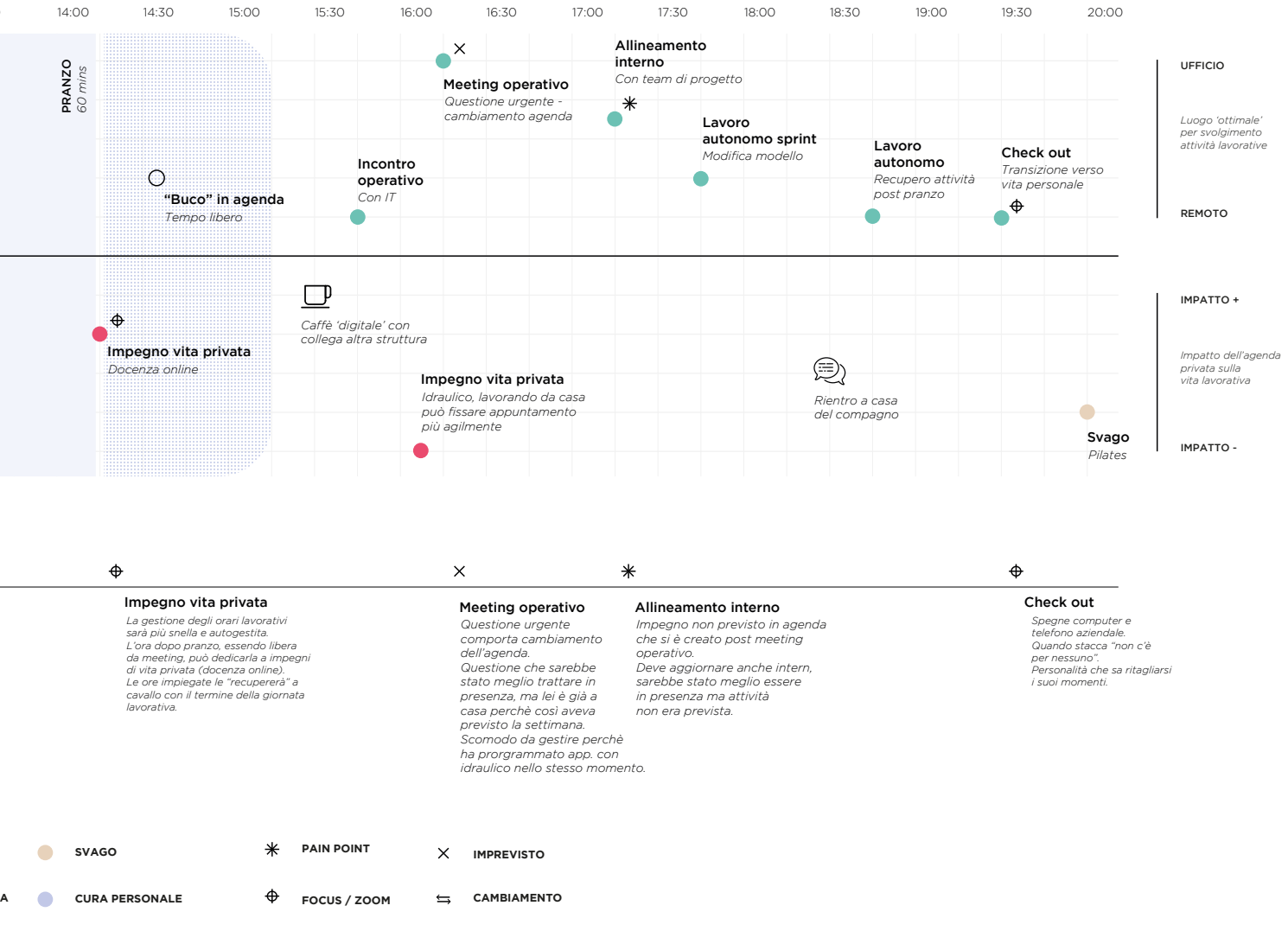


Fig. 42: Veronica's journey (Financial Markets Analytics & Digital Solutions).

phase. In this case, the unexpected event concerns an unplanned meeting in the afternoon to which she has to attend remotely because she already planned an appointment with the plumber, but that would have been easier to face from the office.



Impegno vita privata

La gestione degli orari lavorativi sarà più snella e autogestita.
L'ora dopo pranzo, essendo libera da meeting, può dedicarla a impegni di vita privata (docenza online).
Le ore impiegate le "recupererà" a cavallo con il termine della giornata lavorativa.

Meeting operativo

Questione urgente comporta cambiamento dell'agenda.
Questione che sarebbe stato meglio trattare in presenza, ma lei è già a casa perchè così aveva previsto la settimana.
Scomodo da gestire perchè ha prorgrammato app. con idraulico nello stesso momento.

Allineamento interno

Impegno non previsto in agenda che si è creato post meeting operativo.
Deve aggiornare anche intern, sarebbe stato meglio essere in presenza ma attività non era prevista.

Check out

Spegne computer e telefono aziendale.
Quando stacca "non c'è per nessuno".
Personalità che sa ritagliarsi i suoi momenti.

SVAGO
CURA PERSONALE
PAIN POINT
FOCUS / ZOOM
IMPREVISTO
CAMBIAMENTO

Alessandro (Fig. 43), instead, encounters much more pain points. First of all, due to his home condition he reaches very early the office, where he's forced to perform individual activities that could have been done remotely; secondly, his work agenda is filled with many relocations in a short time, so he can't decide which office position is more adequate; thirdly, he is overwhelmed with work and has no time to decompress, not even during lunch breaks; for the same reason he checks out late and straight goes to bed once home, saving no time for leisure. Interesting highlights are instead: the possibility to often change position in the office that allows him to absorb knowledge from different colleagues; the fact that working in presence makes it easier to interact with co-workers, which is not only a pleasure but almost a need in order to decompress (for this reason, dedicated contamination areas are worth having); the valuable role of the office as a place for young people to team up and support each other.

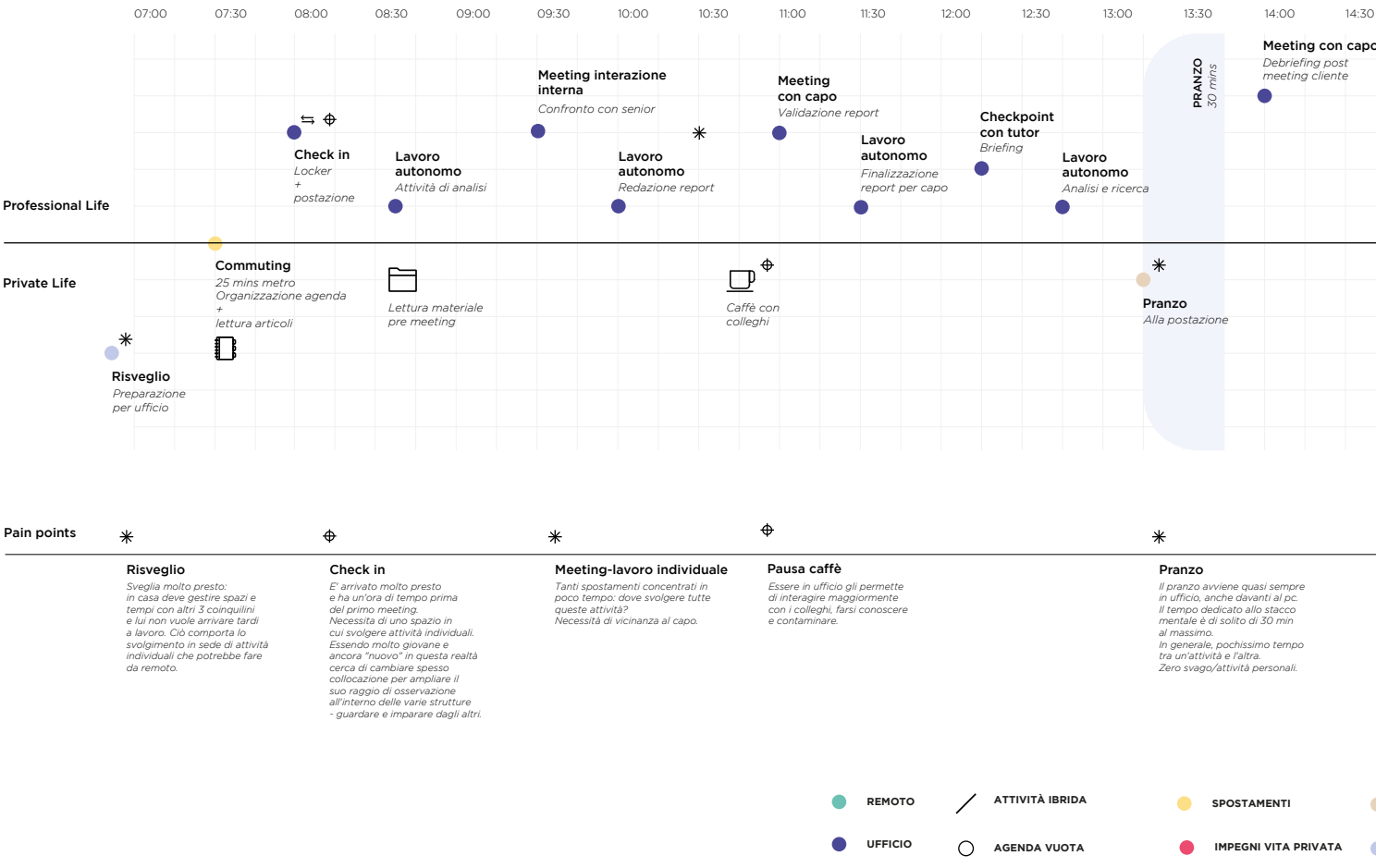
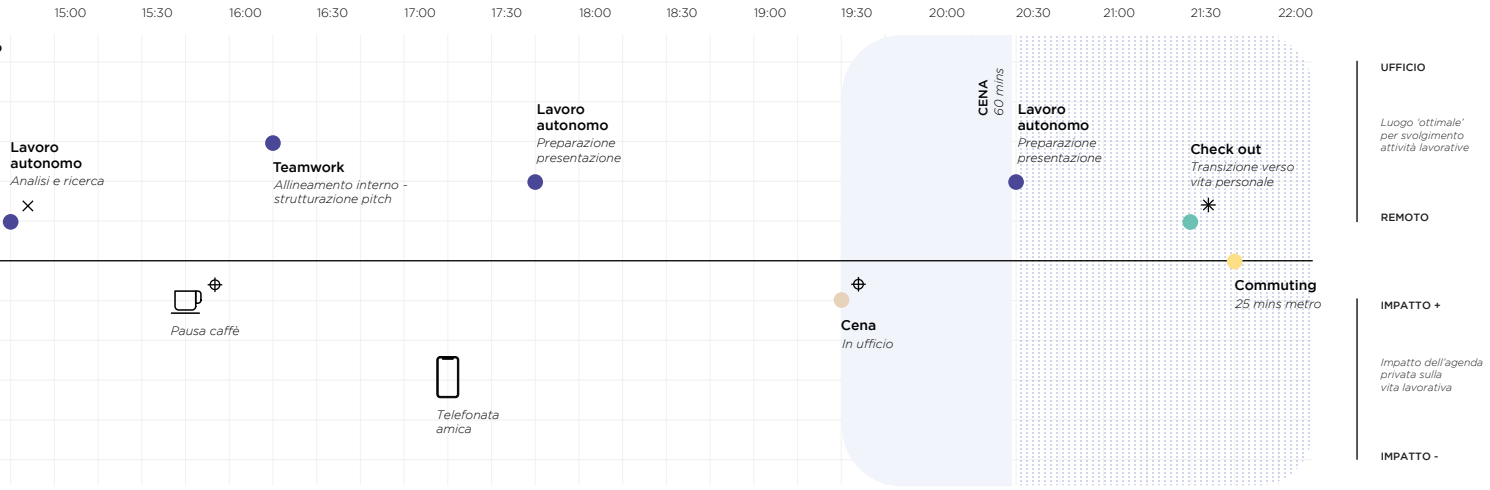


Fig. 43: Alessandro's journey (Analyst).



Lavoro autonomo
Necessaria area di lavoro silenziosa per favorire focus individuale. La postazione che aveva prenotato in precedenza non rispetta questi requisiti perché era stata pensata per svolgere un altro tipo di attività (cambio di programma).

Pausa caffè
Necessita di decomprimere e di interagire con altre persone. Ricerca interazione presso aree relax/contaminazione.

Cena
Necessità di lavorare in ufficio fino a tardi: la cena avviene in ufficio assieme ad altri due colleghi intern con i quali si trova spesso a "fare squadra" in queste situazioni.

Check out
Quando torna a casa non gli rimane del tempo per sè. Va direttamente a dormire.

SVAGO
CURA PERSONALE
PAIN POINT
FOCUS / ZOOM
IMPREVISTO
CAMBIAMENTO

Claudia's journey (Fig. 44) is built around both her need to support relationships with clients and her children's needs. In fact, her day is divided into morning at the office and afternoon from remote. In the morning, she has many meetings even around the city at clients' offices, so if she arrives earlier at business premises she doesn't know where to place herself to cover that spare time before the following meeting, for which she already has a booked room. Moreover, in the case of a hybrid meeting with an important client, she finds it difficult to find the perfect spot, since she would need an isolated and nicely set up area to welcome him, still ensuring a comfortable situation for her to present. In the afternoon, while working remotely, she rather chooses places nearby her children's activities' spots. For this reason, she could use an official map of affiliated "third places" where to work that matches work tasks with proper spots, provided by the organisation.

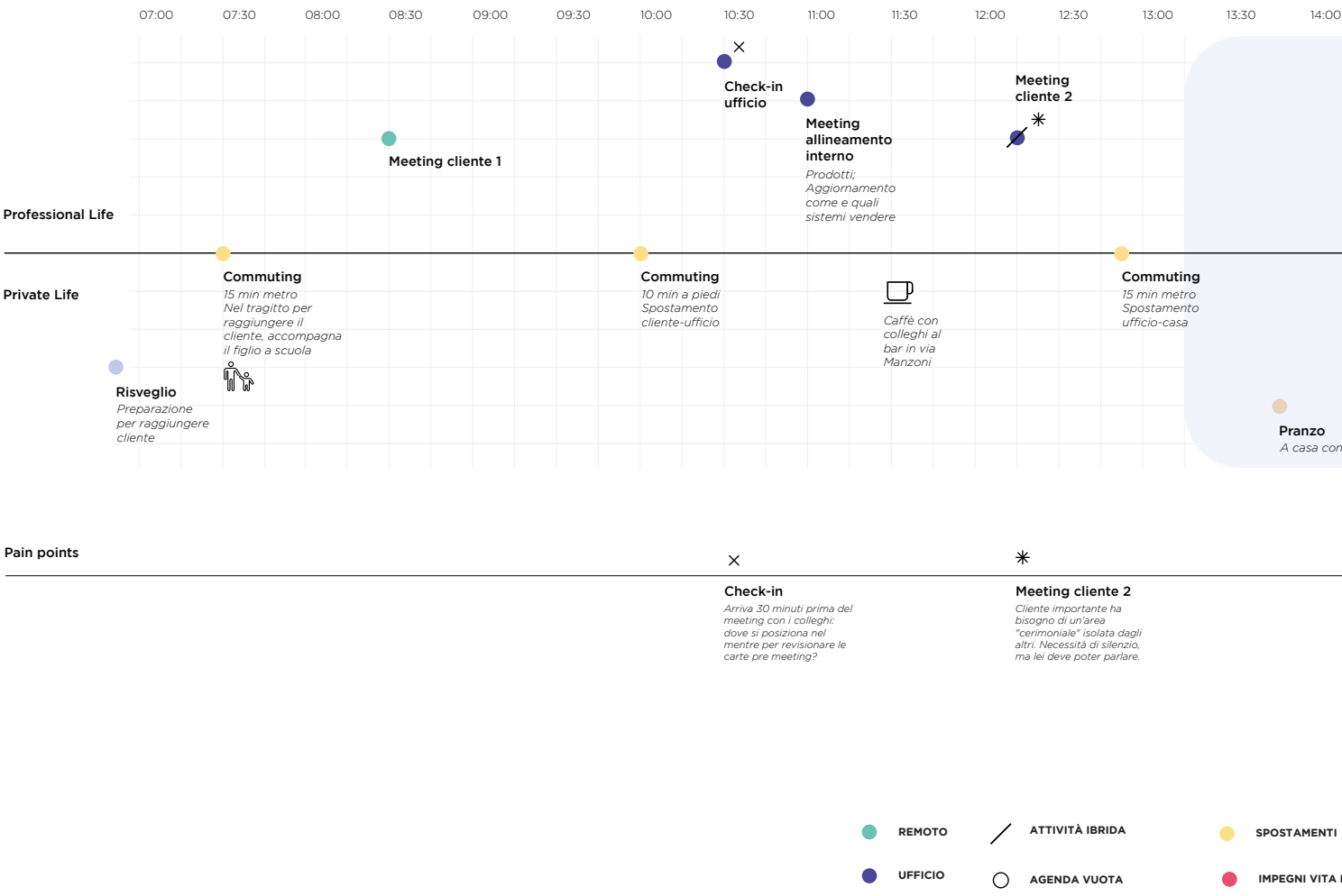
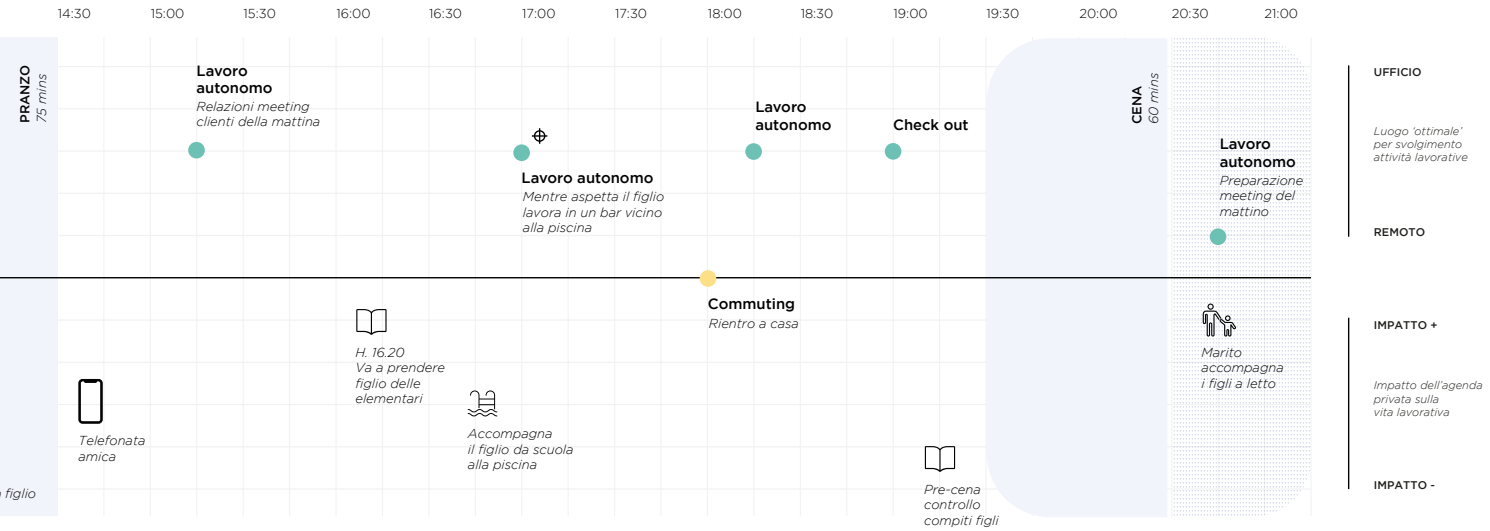


Fig. 44: Claudia's journey (Relationship manager).



Lavoro autonomo

Ipotesi di mappatura di "luoghi altri" dove poter lavorare, preparata da Intesa su Milano e dintorni, per agevolare clienti interni nelle transizioni tra attività in relazione a vita privata (luogo e tipologia di attività da fare).

PRIVATA

SVAGO

CURA PERSONALE

PAIN POINT

FOCUS / ZOOM

IMPREVISTO

CAMBIAMENTO

Among Ernesto's downsides (Fig. 45) there is for sure the difficulty of dealing with repositioning. Indeed, the need to book different locations according to the activity impacts his focus and can be frustrating when unplanned tasks come up and related spaces are not available. The same happens during lunch break, when his desire to attend a conference is hard to be fulfilled due to a lack of a proper quiet area to perform both activities. Concerning key points, worth mentioning are: the easiness with which he can check in for work, since he already booked all his work spots according to the activities; the need to also ensure privacy for unexpected meetings that might need it; the importance of rituals to enhance the value of the experience in office; the use of individual break time to share work-related material with his team.

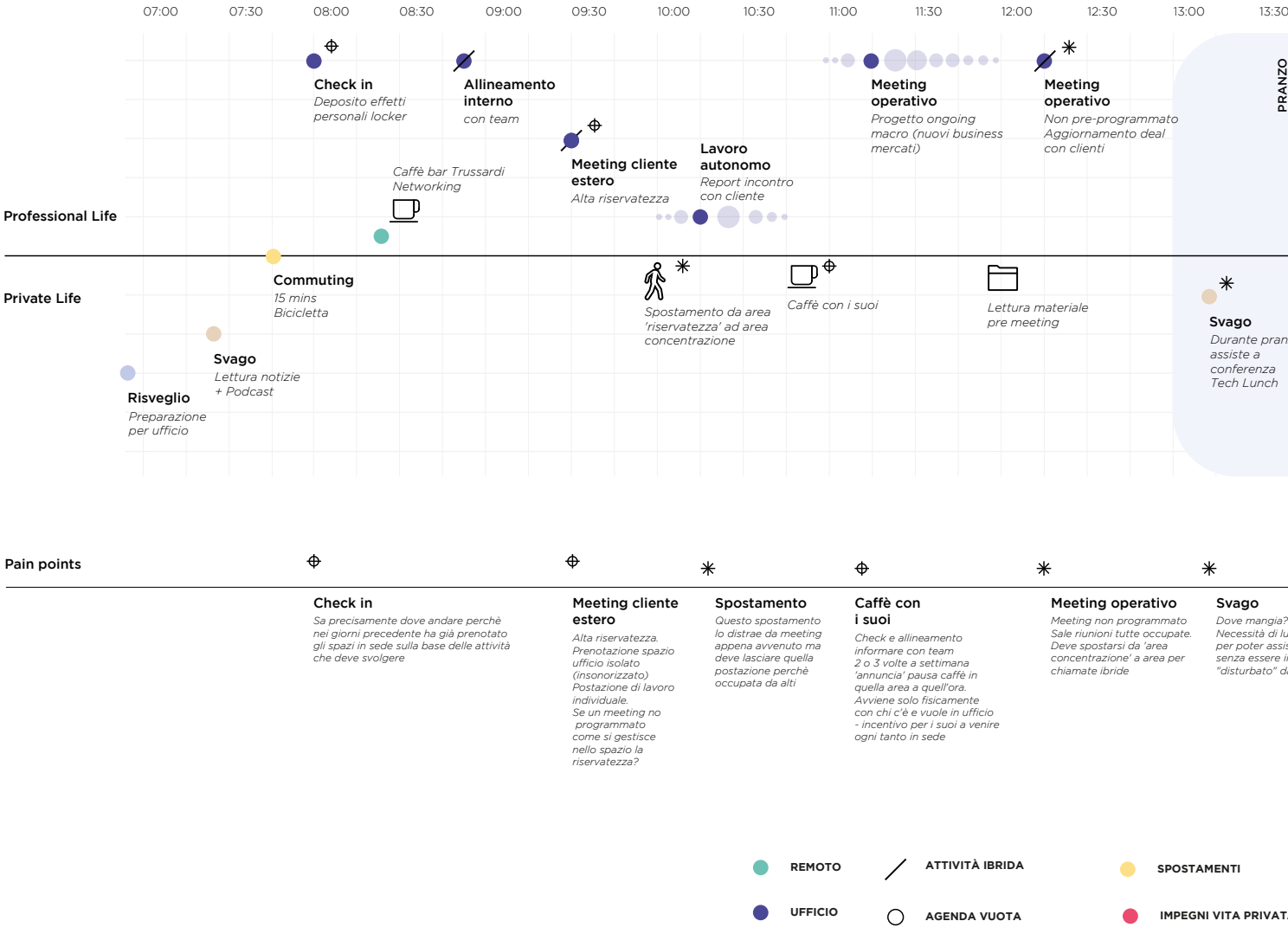
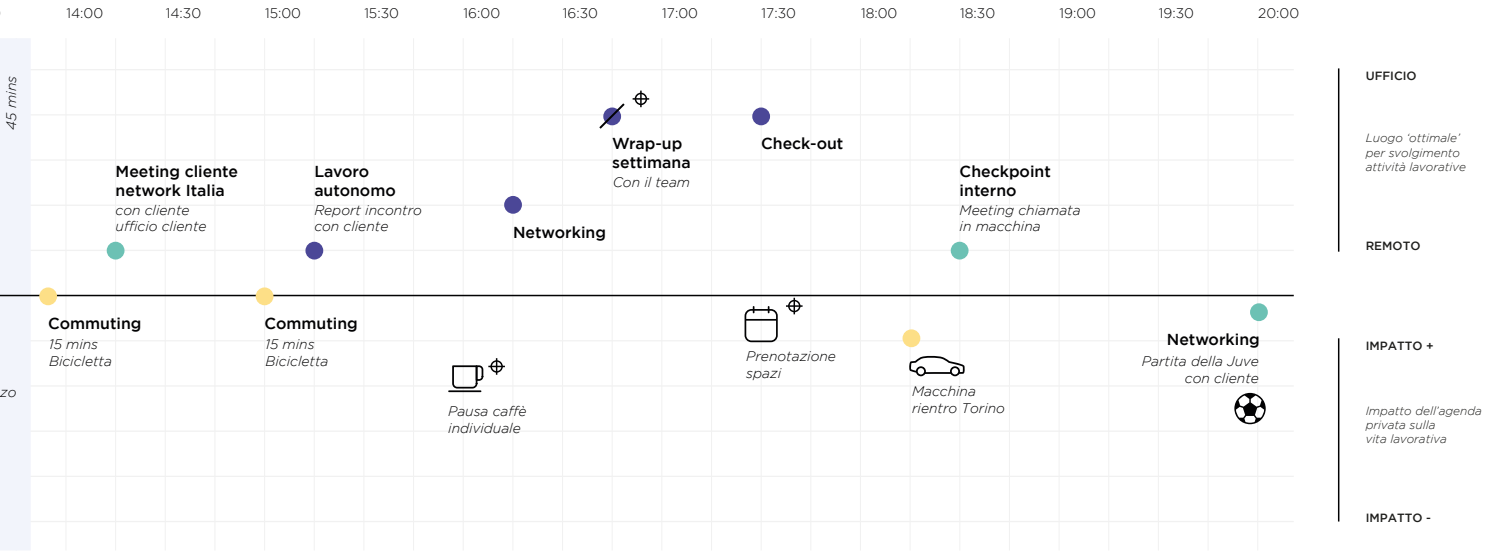


Fig. 45: Ernesto's journey (Relationships with clients financial institutions).



Pausa caffè individuale

Condivisione articoli / suggestioni / spunti progettuali (...) con il suo team in una sezione dedicata (canele teams 'random')

Suoi momenti di 'svago' sono comunque work related, legge articolo aggiornamenti e condivide per conoscenza / ispirazione ai suoi

Wrap-up settimana

prenota in anticipo sala riunioni per chi è in ufficio, altri da remoto

Pausa caffè individuale

Impostazione lavoro suo e del suo team della settimana seguente - prenota spazi per se e spazi condivisi per quando hanno fissato dei meeting di team

ogo tranquillo
stere alla conferenza
nterrotto o
a colleghi

SVAGO
CURA PERSONALE
PAIN POINT
FOCUS / ZOOM
IMPREVISTO
CAMBIAMENTO

Finally, Anna's journey (Fig. 46) didn't offer many insights, it rather pointed out interesting questions. As a matter of fact, in this case there was the necessity to dig deeper on the role of the trader itself (important figure in the specific design context), so question marks about how related job tasks are faced were developed. For example, during coordination meetings with colleagues, how is it the relationship inside the team? In the case of operational meetings, how do these interactions take place? To recreate the conditions for co-creation might be necessary. For individual tasks, instead, how could IT and AI support be enhanced? And also, which are the techniques traders adopt to maintain a high pace? How do they deal with the perk of having little time for essential breaks like lunch? These are all significant elements in a trader's journey which were eventually considered.

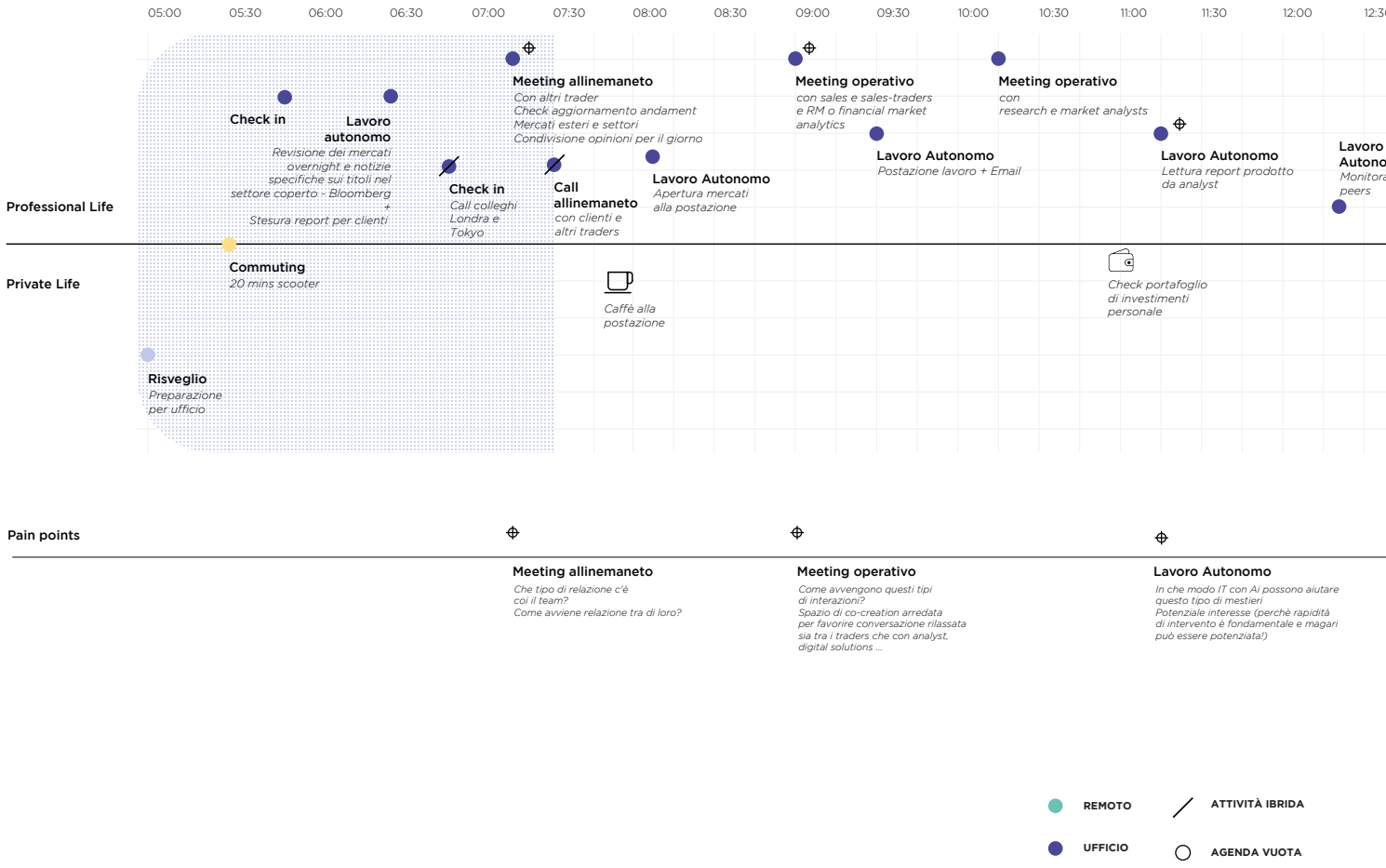
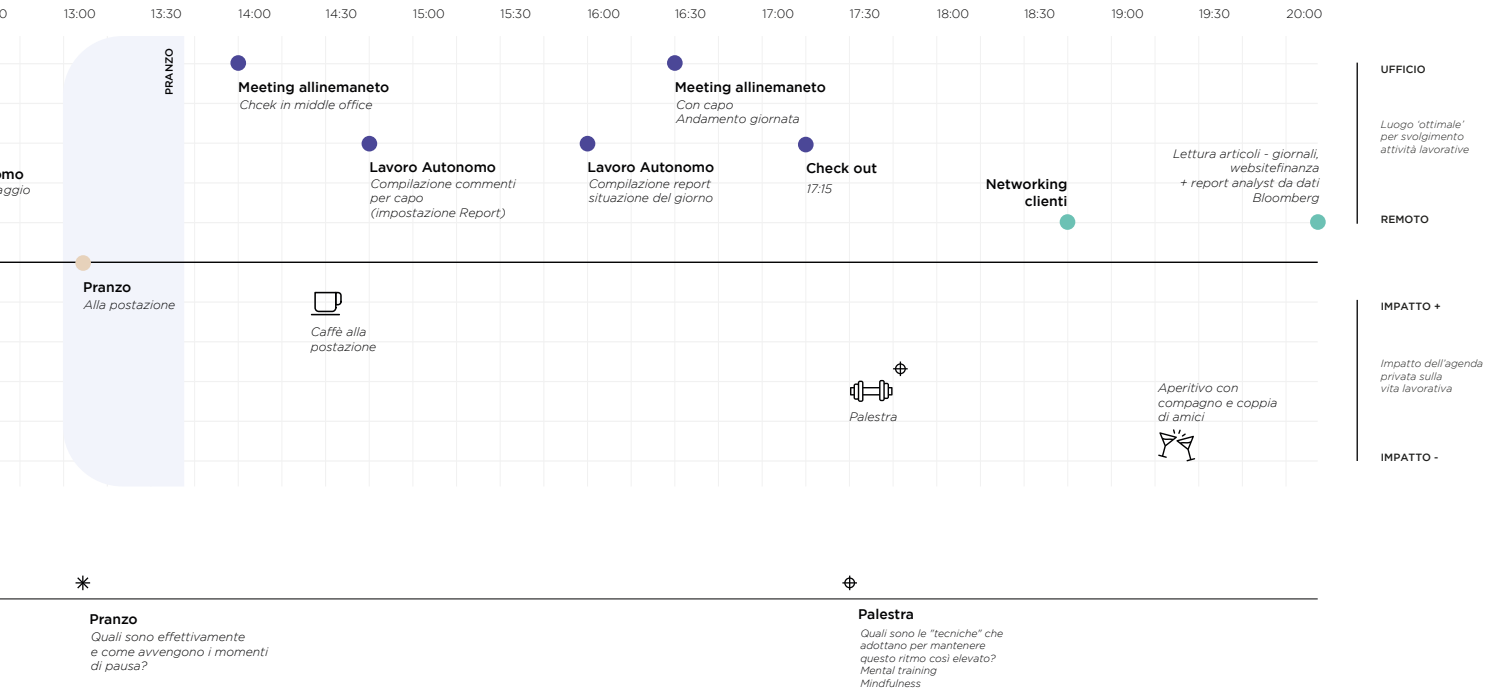


Fig. 46: Anna's journey (Trader).



Pranzo
Quali sono effettivamente e come avvengono i momenti di pausa?

Palestra
Quali sono le "tecniche" che adottano per mantenere questo ritmo così elevato?
Mental training
Mindfulness

SPOSTAMENTI
SVAGO
PAIN POINT
IMPREVISTO
IMPEGNI VITA PRIVATA
CURA PERSONALE
FOCUS / ZOOM
CAMBIAMENTO

5.2.3. Conversations

The journeys were the starting point for the development of proper conversations with the aim of getting to know IMI C&IB's population. As a matter of fact, this tool not only allowed me to identify significant aspects and pain points to consider for project development, but it was also useful to dig deeper into different job roles inside the organisation.
As said, being in a hyper-regulated context it was important to convey the idea of conversations between peers, to collect non-superficial insights about people's everyday life beyond work. In fact, these semi-structured conversations developed through a series of eight meetings designed in such a way to put people in a comfortable position to openly share thoughts and work-life stories. For this reason, one-hour remote video calls were organised, in the absence of any HR member to keep the atmosphere neutral.
Each conversation was accurately designed matching individuals' characteristics, using different stimuli guiding the talk. These stimuli concerned six different work-life areas (see Fig. 47), previously identified starting from recurring topics that emerged from the journeys. Since each area addressed various shades of personal life, it resulted in different artefacts.
These work-life areas touched upon: the individual sphere, like private commitments, self-care and individual job tasks (*io*); the relationship with others, including teamwork, meetings, and family (*io e gli altri*); transitions between daily activities, meaning check-in/check-out moments at work, commuting, and other kinds of transitions (*shifting mode*); break times, referring to decompression and leisure (*on/off mode)*; the social sphere, like positive contamination, socialisation, coffee breaks with colleagues, and networking (*social hub*); and the surrounding environment, including home spaces, office spaces, spatial navigation and fruition, and coworking areas or "third spaces" (*physical hub*).

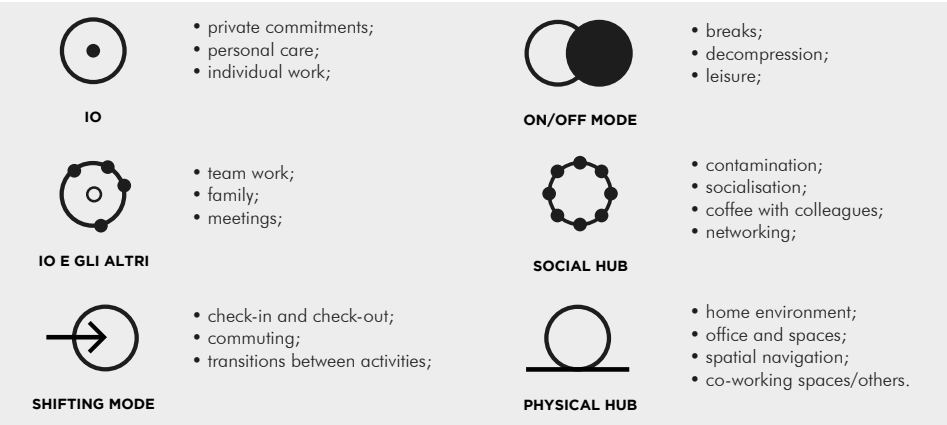


Fig. 47: the six different work-life areas addressing various shades of personal life. They were identified starting from journeys' recurring topics.

Concerning the conversations' structure, different steps were followed with selected people. To start with, five minutes at the beginning (*ingresso*) were dedicated to establishing an atmosphere of empathy. During this moment the following "tour" was presented to the interviewee. The second step (*raccontati)* was devoted to a 5-minute sharing of the person's feelings about his remote work experience, with the aim of bringing people closer to the topic. After that, proper stimuli following an ascending climax were involved to support interviewees sharing their personal work-life experience, while allowing designers to capture interesting shades and hidden needs. As said, stimuli varied for each conversation in both content and number, depending on the person involved. In conclusion, ten minutes were left for a more spontaneous conversation, which was a useful moment to open interesting debates and collect final insights. Examples of proposed stimuli (Fig. 48) include: evocative pictures as reminders of the lockdown situation to investigate emotions; visuals representing future scenarios raising questions in the "what if" formula; hypothetical future situations presented in the form of "mental maps" of options; statements conveying "stress tests" about how one would face unexpected events (eventually followed by hypothetical solutions to guide the interviewee in their thinking).

Fig. 48.1: example of people's invitation to Working Life dietro le quinte.

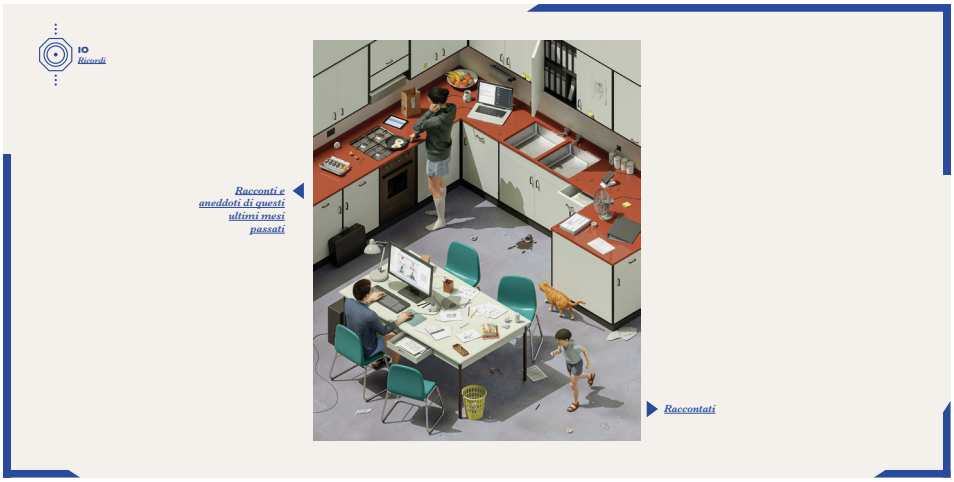


Fig. 48.2: example of stimulus related to the io area of life.

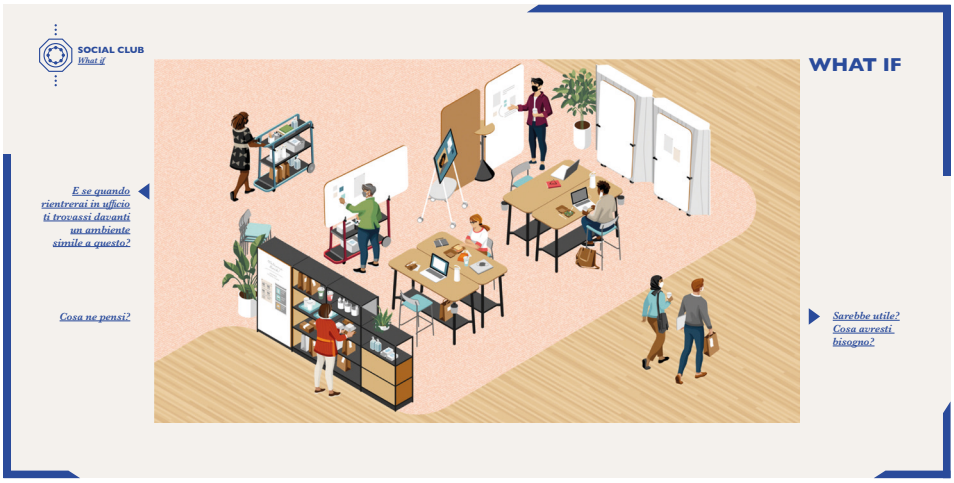


Fig. 48.3: example of stimulus related to the social club area of life.

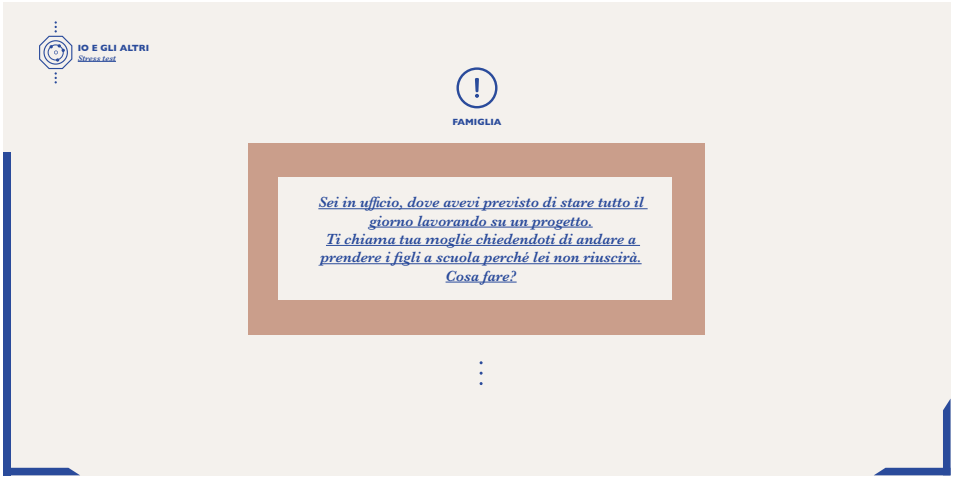


Fig. 48.4: example of stimulus related to the io e gli altri area of life.

Fig. 48.5: example of stimulus related to the io e gli altri area of life.

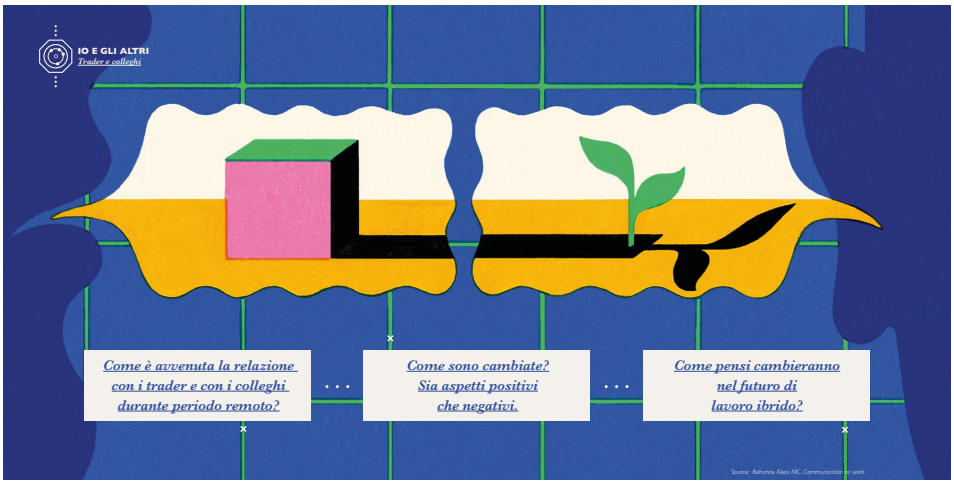
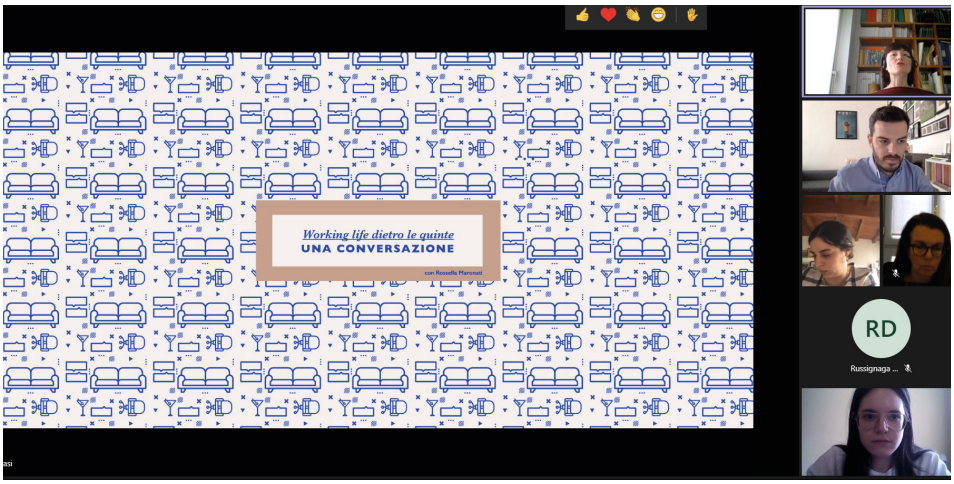
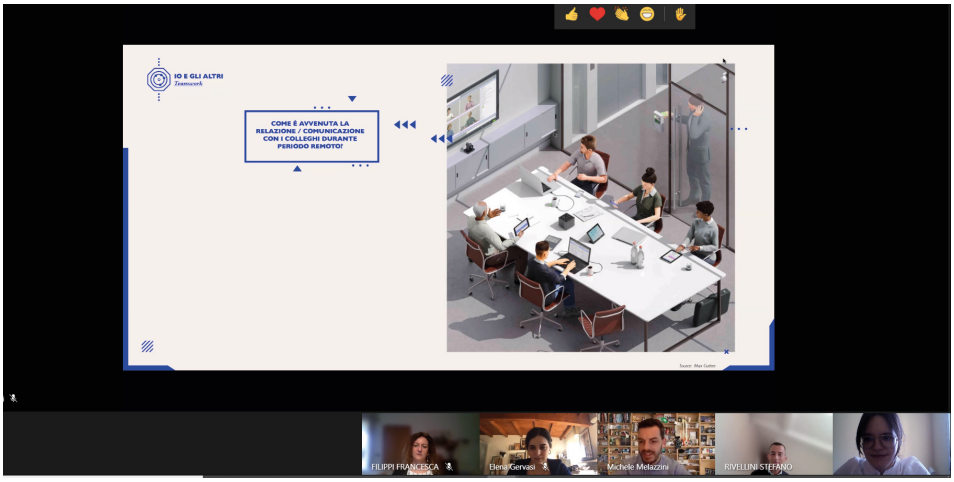


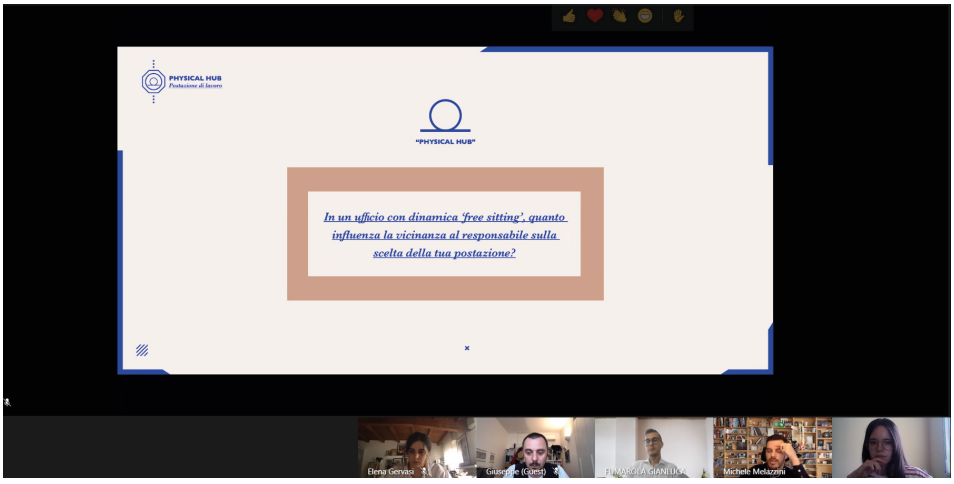
Fig. 48.6: example of stimulus related to the io e gli altri area of life.

Fig. 48.7: example of stimulus related to the social hub area of life.

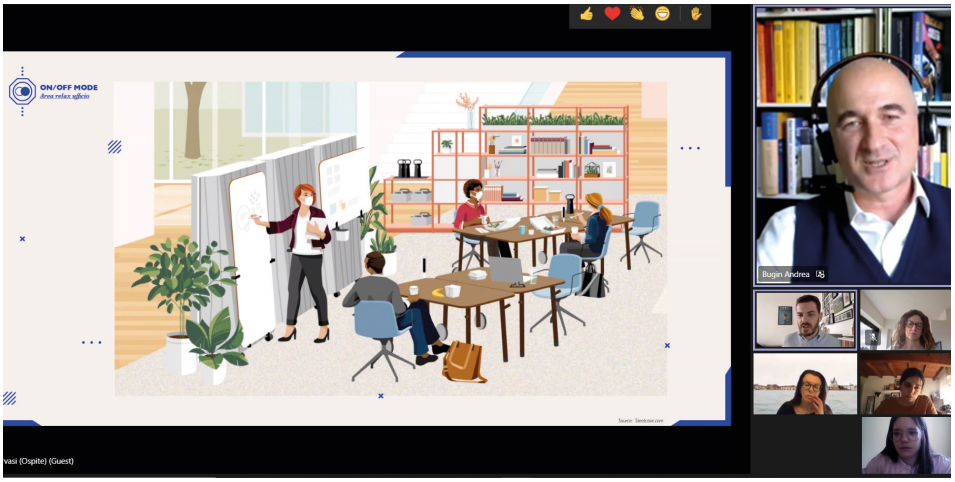
Photos from the conversations

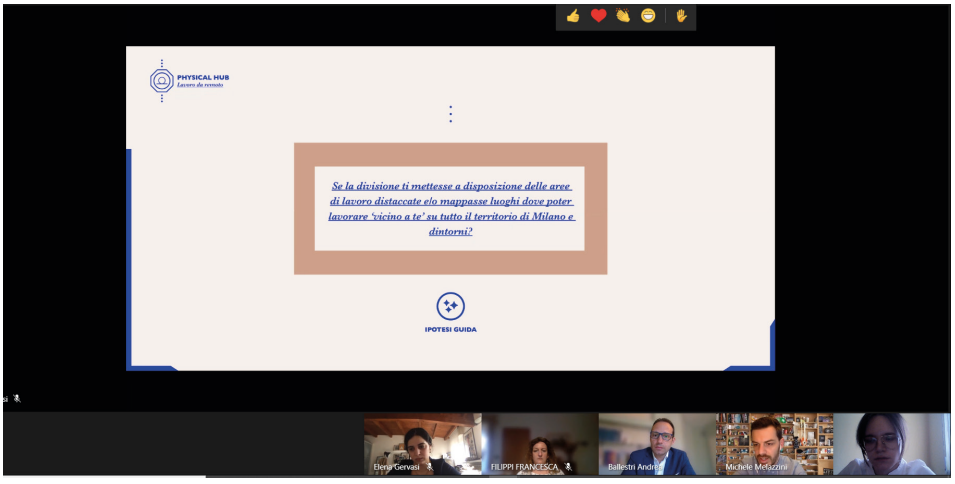







SHIFTING MODE
Zen-Mode
Giuseppe (Guest)
Elena Gervasi
NAIMI IDA
Michele Melazzini
ALOISIO ALESSIA


ON/OFF MODE
Bugin Andrea


PHYSICAL HUB
Se la divisione ti mettesse a disposizione delle aree di lavoro distaccate e/o mappasse luoghi dove poter lavorare 'vicino a te' su tutto il territorio di Milano e dintorni?
IPOTESI GUIDA
Elena Gervasi
FILIPPI FRANCESCA
Ballestri Andrea
Michele Melazzini

5.2.4. Insights and design challenges

This 2-week ethnographic research led to the development of design challenges starting from interesting insights collected during the conversations. The final aim of the suggested challenges was to identify with the HR team relevant topics to be tested through pilot projects inside the context of IMI C&IB.
After a huge work of clustering by crossing insights gathered from interviewees with the different work-life areas, recurring topics were selected and redistributed into the *4 Cs* in order to scale them into the specific organisational context. Through the analysis of these insights, promising issues were eventually translated into design challenges, consequently discussed in terms of relevance according to their incidence during the conversations.

As shown in Fig. 49, concerning concentration, interesting insights were both related to the subject of physical hub, raising the need for a distraction-less focus area and for a space ensuring privacy (which is not always granted in all kinds of home situations). In the case of collaboration, significant themes were mostly around the topics of physical hub, referring to the need for workstation's flexibility and the related difficulty to match this need for certain job roles; and io e gli altri, lamenting a general lack of physical proximity and mutual observation, as well as the absence of team spirit for junior employees. Relating to communication, many work-life areas were mentioned, especially those about the social sphere and work modes' transitions. In particular, the importance of thought contamination due to a lack of contact with distant networks emerged, as well as the relevance of integrating human connections to remote working. Moreover, relationships with others were included as a crucial element: on one hand, the creation of a ritual with clients came up as a fundamental aspect; and on the other hand, the renewed role of digital interactions highlighted increased work efficiency but general emotional sterility that has to be solved. In conclusion, as far as contemplation is concerned, the topic of work-life balance appeared to be the most important for the future. Indeed, the recurring need for a renewed equilibrium in managing time and work pace, raised the question on the importance to re-educate people to a new way of working, reaffirming the need for employees to be oriented towards a new work paradigm.
To better understand how these insights evolved into design challenges, a deeper focus into each of them is necessary. First, to address the questions related to the physical environment two concepts were suggested: ***ufficio fuori dall'ufficio***, related to the development of a map which allows employees to easily find diffused and comfortable workspaces; and ***ambiente comodo***, a format to mostly test ergonomic conditions and ensure psychological safety. Then, in relation to communication issues, ***breakfast with the expert*** gave the idea of introducing a transgenerational mentoring programme; while ***agorà dei junior*** came up as a strategy to support younger employees in

building team spirit. Furthermore, ***officina di pensiero*** has the main goal of experimenting a contamination area to support informal discussions; ***sinergia di team*** aims at sustaining agreement between team members; ***remote buddy*** would give renewed importance to human connections through informal socialisations supporting weak ties; and ***IMI C&IB experience*** focuses on the design of rituals to welcome clients, transforming meetings into proper ceremonies. Finally, the last concepts address cultural issues like the need to introduce people to a new way of working. For this reason, they were kept broader and more open to further developments. Anyway, ***imprenditore del tuo tempo*** refers to a series of disruptive routines to bring people out of their work-related comfort zone; ***portare la casa in ufficio*** concerns the testing of new spaces inside the office where to perform personal activities; and ***ri-educare al nuovo lavoro da casa*** became the leitmotif of the entire design process.

These challenges eventually served as a basis to design phase one's following stages of the suggested model to orient employees in the adoption of a new work paradigm, determining the transition from intention to action itself. In this concern, two episodes of experience testing were performed, allowing me to prototype a proper solution. These pilot projects come under the name of *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo*, implying their recurring nature over time, and they will be further presented in the next paragraphs.

"during these past months, work from home has only been a poor imitation of regular in-office work; for the foreseeable hybrid future I see great potential in terms of building a new work culture"

- interviewee from conversations

“there is an unwritten remote work’s etiquette: I only call you if I have something important and work-related to tell you, because I’m afraid to disturb”

- interviewee from conversations

“the strength of working from the office was the physical closeness to my colleagues“

- interviewee from conversations

“when working remotly the context of «boiling pot» gets lost; before, during open meetings, one could hear people talk and maybe intervene”

- interviewee from conversations

“the opportunity to autonomously organise your time it’s a double edged weapon, but it also has great potential: it allows you to feed on a series of stimuli that the office alone cannot give you“

- interviewee from conversations

“home silence almost becomes a disturbing element: when my husband was working from home he recreated background noise which helped me focus“

- interviewee from conversations

“if going to the office has to be harder than working from home, I don’t think I would go”

- interviewee from conversations

Fig. 49: insights and design challenges after conversations with IMI C&IB population.

Design Challenge

Format per sperimentazione

UFFICIO FUORI DALL'UFFICIO

Format di mappatura spazi di lavoro diffusi e "comodi" (vicini e allestiti).

AMBIENTE COMODO

Format per testare condizioni ergonomiche, ambientali e psicologiche.

BREAKFAST WITH THE EXPERT

Format di mentoring informale tra generazioni, ruoli e strutture diverse (momento codificato).

AGORÀ DEI JUNIOR

Format di condivisione tematica e scambio esperienze tra junior.

OFFICINA DI PENSIERO

Format di sperimentazione di 'sala di contaminazione' per socialità informale con argomenti business oriented tra diverse personalità.

SINERGIA DI TEAM

Format di allineamento di pensiero di team e team esteso.

REMOTE BUDDY

Format di conversazioni e socializzazione informale anche da remoto.

Possibile sperimentazione simultanea.

IMI CIB EXPERIENCE

Format di allestimento e gestione di 'cerimonie' (meeting speciali) con i clienti.

IMPRENDITORE DEL TUO TEMPO

Format di routine disobbedienti.
Da definire nel dettaglio

PORTARE LA CASA IN UFFICIO

Format di sperimentazione luoghi dove svolgere diverse attività personali nella dimensione ufficio.

RI-EDUCARE AL NUOVO LAVORO DA CASA

Format di...
Da definire

5.3. *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo, pilota 1*

Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo (LSP) refers to a single concept which evolved over time assuming slightly different characteristics still addressing the same purpose: **orienting people in the process of shaping new work habits through the experimentation of work-life experiences**. Indeed, together with the HR team, different work-life scenarios were proposed, with the aim of facilitating IMI C&IB Intesa Sanpaolo's organisational transition, in the name of people's wellbeing and work-life quality.
The experiences suggested during the pilot projects had been developed by re-thinking work practices, tools and routines in a more hybrid way, giving a completely different meaning to the role of the office as intended so far. In doing so, the involvement of people living in the context was precious, to broaden the perspective on the topic. Indeed, *LSP*'s concept was developed following four guiding principles: ABW, meaning new ways of working whose rhythm is determined by activities to be carried out; hybrid working, combining the best of both in-office and remote work in terms of positive experiences revealed by people; co-designed experience, which refers to the idea of designing and testing new experiences with people who actually live them; custom-based experience, addressing the idea of designing customisable work experiences starting from people's needs. Specifically, the testing took place in two different episodes (with the idea of being extended over time in implemented versions), of which the first one has to be intended both as an action of field data collection and as a first attempt of solution prototyping. For this reason, it is best defined as a pretotyping intervention.

After the conversations with selected people and the accurate analysis of collected elements, together with the HR team I tried to understand how to evolve towards the following design phase. For this reason, the broader set of intuitions developed so far were narrowed down to four main insights relevant to the specific organisational context: 1. the need to instil a new hybrid work culture which supports a new work-life balance; 2. the necessity to rethink communication in a hybrid way, both promoting osmotic knowledge and a sense of belonging to the team; 3. the need for a flexible work environment which easily adapts to the unpredictability of people's agendas; 4. the necessity for a work environment that adapts to people's needs, mainly ensuring focus and privacy. Therefore, the design process evolved from an occasion to listen and understand working professions and related needs, to an opportunity to test

new work scenarios keeping in mind the above-mentioned guidelines.

5.3.1. Spaces and experiences

The first episode of *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo* proposed itself as the area (physical and conceptual) where to investigate and define with people new ways of working through a set of specific set up spaces. Although on a practical level various limitations prevented the introduction of major spatial changes, the experiential conditions had been designed ad hoc, starting from accurate concept-framing and related labelling of each space. Indeed, each space was specifically thought with the aim of evoking different work experiences, following the already mentioned pillars of ABW, the *4 Cs* (concentration, collaboration, communication, and contemplation), relevant for IMI C&IB's organisational context. Going further, each space will be presented in depth in relation to its category of belonging.

Concentration

Spazio attivo
A space dedicated to mere working activities, which is also set up for quick/last-minute discussion and collaboration with colleagues if necessary. It is composed of different work islands, ensuring both individual focus and proximity to support discussion between co-workers. This space calls for experiences like: work in close proximity with the team; quick information exchange; active discussion; individual tasks.

work in close proximity with the team

quick information exchange

active discussion

individual tasks

Spazio morbido
A space meant for tasks which require high levels of concentration or privacy, but also to help employees regain focus by withdrawing from the rest of the team. In this space the set up includes both a phone booth for private calls, and spots of informal seating where to reacquire focus and work in a more relaxed way. Related experiences are: informal work-related discussion with a colleague; relaxed working; private phone call.

Fig. 50: spatial map of the first LSP scaled in the design context of IMI C&IB. Each space evokes different work experiences following ABW's pillars: the 4 Cs (concentration, collaboration, communication, and contemplation).

Spazio Attivo

sono qui per essere operativo

Concentrazione

Spazio Raccolto

sono qui per prendere decisioni insieme

Comunicazione

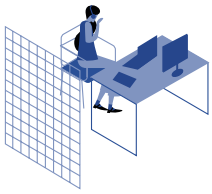
Spazio Espresso

sono qui per cercare confronto e ispirazione

Comunicazione

informal work discussions

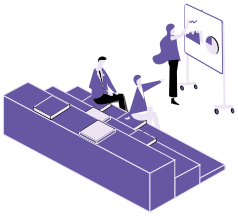
relaxed working



private call

Collaboration

Spazio fluido
This space is specifically thought to support proactive team discussion during intense collaboration sessions. Indeed, its set up includes tools to sustain the development of ideas and solutions, fostering an open and fluid interaction among team members. Agile collaboration among colleagues, proactive discussion, and fluid development of ideas, are all possible experiences to be performed in *Spazio fluido*.



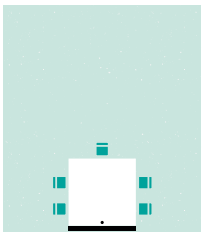
agile collaboration among colleagues

proactive discussion

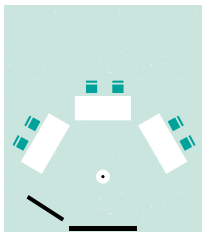
fluid developments of ideas

Communication

Spazio raccolto
It is a space devoted to hybrid communication among both in-presence and remote colleagues, willing to make decisions together despite physical distance. For this reason, it is equipped with all kinds of technological supports to guide hybrid meetings as best as possible, eventually ensuring effective decision making. In this case, emerging experiences are based on the specific nature of the meeting, which can be addressed through different spatial set-ups.



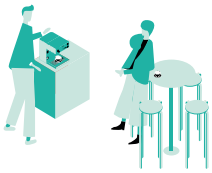
screen at the head of the table



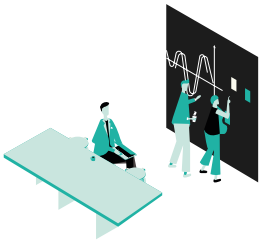
u-shaped arrangement

pyramid arrangement

Spazio espresso
This space aims at supporting weak ties. Here, people can dedicate themselves to serendipitous contamination or quick discussions with colleagues (even from outside their team), from whom they can take inspiration or useful insights for their job. The peculiarity of this space consists in its physical supports, like a large sharable table, an interactive board/wallpaper and most of all the coffee machine, which serves as contextual cue to trigger people. Indeed, the essence of this space resides in the power of positive interruptions to which people should be open while drinking a coffee on their own.



debate between colleagues

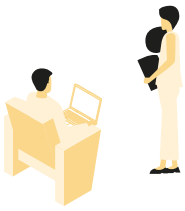


contamination between colleagues

communication between colleagues

Contemplation

Spazio respiro
This space develops around the concept of decompression. Here people are welcomed mainly to take their minds off from work in order to start back re-energised. For this reason, spazio respiro best expresses its potential if paired up with the element of nature. Nevertheless, it also suits individual or team reflection. Indeed, it is a space where people can relax and reconnect with themselves, with colleagues and with nature, through informal discussions with co-workers, individual breaks and small talks with others.



informal discussions with co-workers

individual breaks

small talks with others

5.3.2. Structure and touchpoints

The first pilot project took place in July 2021, over three days of guided experimentation at the IMI C&IB headquarters in Milan, where the above-mentioned spaces were set up in a dedicated area. This first episode of testing only involved the team of Financial Engineering (previously selected by HR) that was supported throughout the experience by different touchpoints, specifically designed to orient participants through new work experiences.
Considering the framework of habit formation which I used as basis for project development, this phase corresponds to the "action" step that must necessarily be preceded by the stage that determines the evolution from intention to action. For this reason, two days before *LSP* started, an onboarding phase was held. The onboarding served to warm-up the atmosphere, letting the two parts (designers and users) get to know each other and inform people on the topic. The first remote meeting was organised with the team leader alone, who had the strategic role of mediating between designers and team members; the second meeting instead helped prepare the ground with the extended team.

Actually, for the performance of the first *LSP* a hybrid modality was chosen: of the three days selected for experimentation, only one took place entirely in person, while the other two also allowed the possibility of participating remotely. In this way, testing hybrid work became more challenging, yet plausible. The structure of each day was similar, except for the first one which included the presence of the design team to better support people. On the first day, after people checked-in at the office, we dedicated a moment to welcome participants and tour them around the spaces. Eventually, the entire day was dedicated to free experimentation during which people were kindly invited to carry out their activities using the set-up spaces to the fullest. Throughout the day, the design team offered constant support when needed to make the experience as smooth as possible. Later in the afternoon, a moment of quick debriefing to collect first impressions with users was scheduled.
The subsequent dates basically followed the same structure: the welcome and check-out parts were performed through Microsoft's Surface Hub, which allowed to mix in-office and remote people (including the design team); while the experimentation part was supported both via an open Team's channel managed by the design team to offer help, and through HR physical support at the office.

As explained in the introduction, if the spatial component had mainly a symbolic role, experiential conditions had been accuratly designed to allow participants the testing of future work-life experiences. In this concern, a Service Design approach had been applied throughout the intervention, specifically in terms of touchpoint development. Indeed, the first *LSP* was the occasion to test a rudimentary version of touchpoints to be navigated for several days, with

the aim of nudging people towards new work experiences. The nature of these touchpoints was mostly physical for which an accurate job of copywriting was carried out. Indeed, specific attention was put in the design of the tone of voice, through which participants were adviced and oriented step-by-step during the experimentation in how to best use spaces and perfom related experiences. For being designed as explanatory tools, they are best categorised as "*Mentoring touchpoints*" including: *The Guide, The Golden Rules, The Snapshots, and The How Tos*. Below, each of them will be shortly described.

The Guide

It is a booklet (Fig. 51) that has the role of providing a broad overview about the *LSP*, orienting people through spaces and related experiences. Indeed, it contains all the information about the spaces, together with suggestions on how to experience them, indicating possible scenarios of use (see Fig. 52-55). It is the most complete and hence important touchpoint, which is delivered before the testing activity starts, ideally during the "welcome" part on the first day of experimentation. During the onboarding phase, the content of the booklet is overviewed and explained to facilitate its fruition. *The Guide* exists in two versions: one for participants and one for facilitators (designers and HR members), with the latter one including a section for monitoring and insights collection.

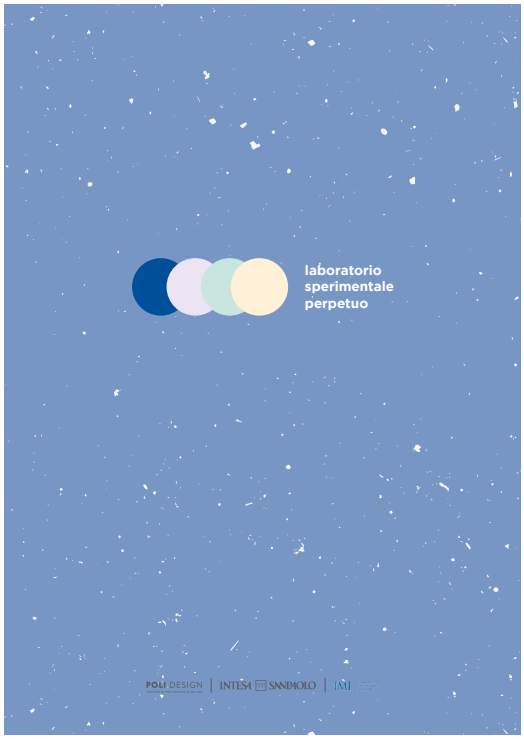
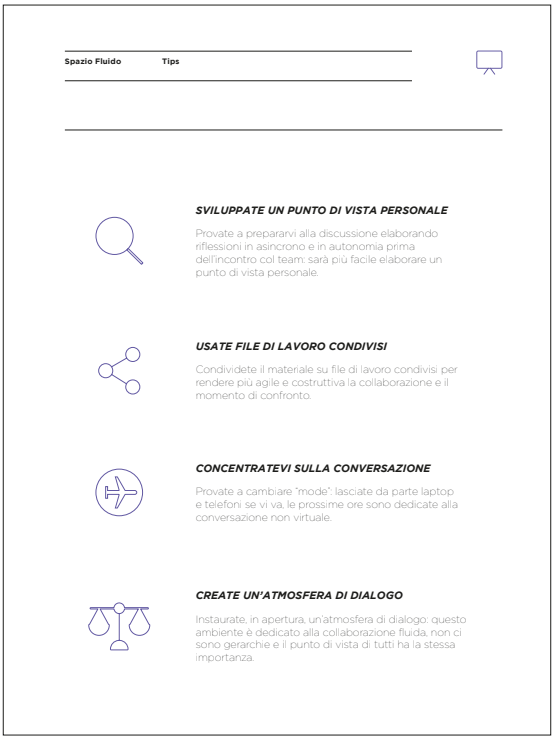


Fig. 51: The Guide's cover.

Fig. 52-53: example of content in the booklet (Spazio fluido).



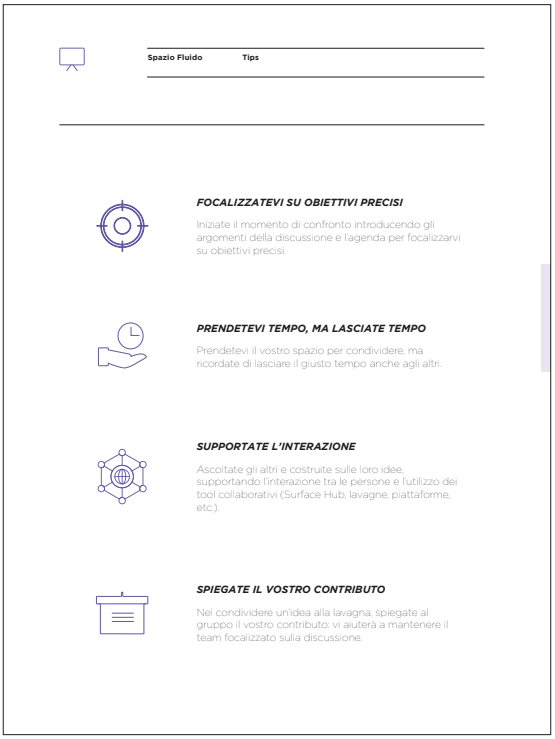


Fig. 54-55: example of content in the booklet (Spazio fluido).

The Golden Rules

It is a manifesto (Fig. 56) highlighting and explaining the pillars upon which *LSP* is built. It is placed in a strategic position at the entrance of the experimentation area to immediately introduce users to key concepts and to give basic suggestions on how to best approach the moment of testing.

Fig. 56: LSP manifesto: The Golden Rules.

The Snapshots

They are posters introducing each space, providing a general description and explaining the related aim (see Fig. 57). Moreover, they illustrate inputs on how to experience the space itself. The content of these posters recall the one of the booklets, allowing people to have an immediate overview on the space, with

no need to go over the pages each time. In addition, the fact that they are spatially distributed contributes to people's engagement even outside the group of participants, enhancing curiosity among the broader organisational population towards which communication is enlarged.

Fig. 57: example of The Snapshots (Spazio Morbido).

The How Tos

The How Tos are tips are delivered through one-page flyers (see Fig. 58), available at the entrance of each space next to the related poster. They consist of short pills about how to best perform different work experiences and live the related spaces to the fullest. The content of the flyers is also part of the booklet, but it is made more accessible thanks to this support.

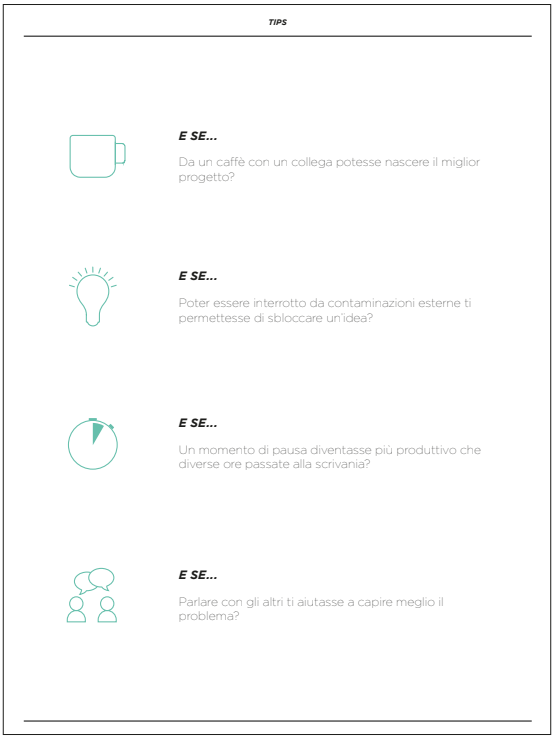
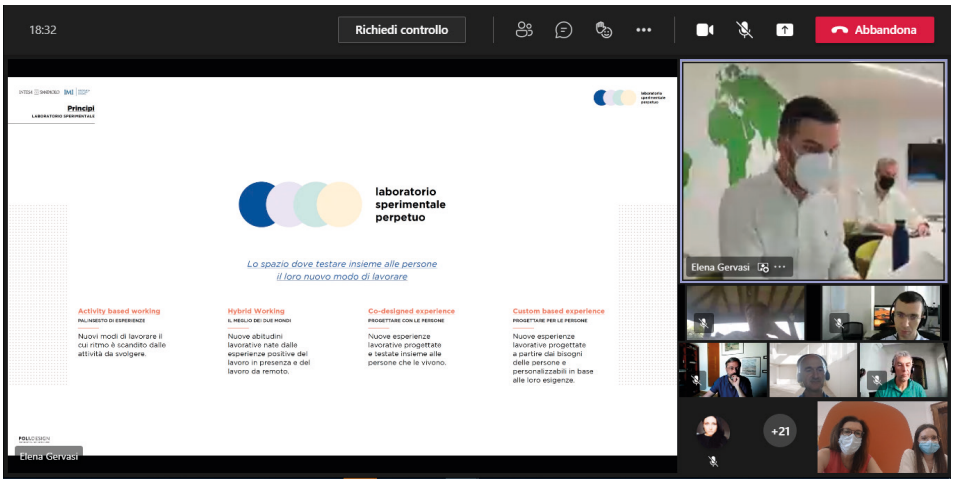


Fig. 58: example of The How Tos (Spazio Espresso).

Photos from *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo, pilota 1*



Onboarding.

Welcome before starting.

The Snapshots outside Spazio espresso.

Participants experiencing Spazio fluido.

Participants experiencing Spazio morbido.

Participants experiencing Spazio raccolto.

5.3.3. Monitoring and insights

In order to carry out an effective field observation and collect interesting insights, different monitoring tools were developed. Considering the hybrid nature of the experimentation, these devices had to support both in-presence and remote data collection. For this reason, three approaches were considered: the crucial role of facilitators (both designers and HR members) at the office, during testing execution; collection of spurs of the moment comments; and collection of thoughtful impressions after some days from the pilot experience. In the first case, the idea was based on a more spontaneous approach by the team of facilitators who, through the support of basic guidelines prepared in advance, could collect insights from both shadowing and quick informal talks with participants throughout the experimentation day. The debriefing sessions organised at the end of the testing were also useful for the same purpose. As said, a proper tool to guide the observation was developed: it consisted in a table, one for each space, containing a list of significant elements to consider in relation to that specific space; and a chart to be filled crossing pain points, benefits and interactions with people, environment, tools, and artefacts. A general comment session was also included, allowing facilitators to openly collect insights (Fig. 59). The second tool addressed the need for participants' immediate feelings about the experiences. In this concern, a series of short polls was designed asking users the utility of the space on a scale from "very useful" to "very useless", and open comments on positive and negative aspects of the space/experience (Fig. 60). To access these polls, people could scan QR codes available inside the booklet or hanging from the wall of the related space. Finally, some days after *LSP* execution, a more substantial survey was prepared and delivered to each of the participants via email. In this case, the aim was collecting more specific feedback since a thoughtful point of view would have provided designers with a broader picture on test execution. The survey was organised in two different sessions: one for participants who joined the experience from the office, and one dedicated to those who had the remote perspective. Questions addressed both general comments on the overall testing experience, but also specific feedback on each space. On a general basis, the approach to observation and data collection took into consideration two points of view: new ways of working, referring to people's approach to the concept at the basis of the experiment; and testing execution, meaning assessment of practical aspects concerning the adopted methodology. These perspectives were also the starting point for the subsequent elaboration of insights.

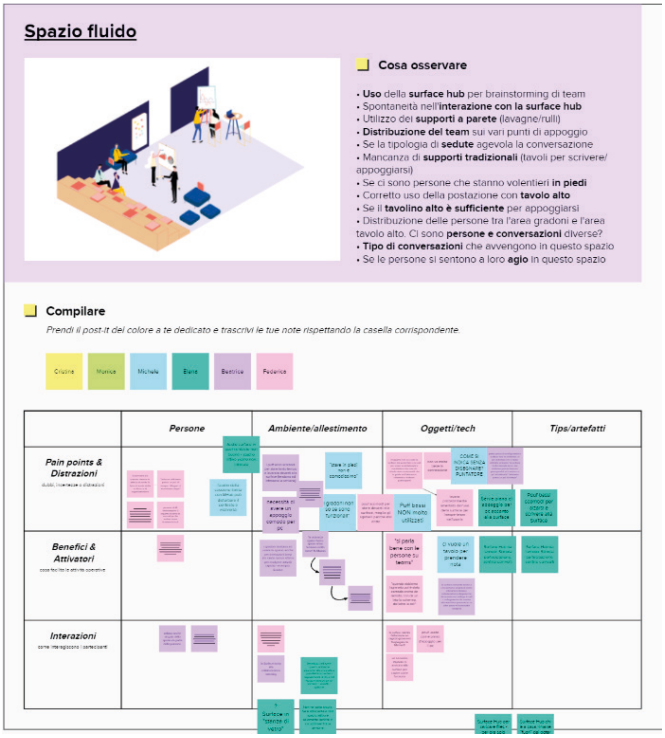


Fig. 59: example of Mural digital board designed for monitoring.

Fig. 60: example of short poll accessible via QR code on personal device.

A first analysis of insights was conducted just after the experimentation, mainly taking into consideration the results of field observation and brief discussions with participants. Consequently, four transversal themes emerged: the first one concerning ABW and the related need to train people to new ways of working; the second one concerning the booking of office spaces, a process that needs to be agile and answer to both early and last minute needs; the third one referring to the transitions between different tasks (either spatial and mental) consequently demanding continuous reinstallation; and lastly, the aspect of spillovers and its ambivalence between positive background sound, allowing cross contamination between co-workers, and negative noise interfering with individual tasks.
In the attempt to deeply investigate these topics, implications concerning three macro areas were identified. Below, each theme will be briefly described through the lenses of space, experience, and culture.

Activity Based Working

Concerning the spatial component, it emerged the need to offer people set up spaces as per catalogue, allowing users to properly perform related experiences. In relation to the testing experience itself, the pilot project emerged as an excellent gym to train people and bring them closer to new ways of working. In fact, it could be further developed and tested by different teams, becoming a consolidated model to support organisational transition.
Finally, culturally speaking, the need to orient people in the process of understanding and adopting a new work paradigm emerged even clearer, to avoid the recurring tendency of performing old habitual behaviours inside new spaces.

"It was hard to understand which space to use in relation to the activity."

- *LSP* participant

Booking

In terms of experience, the possibility for people to book spaces in the office should adapt to their ever-changing agendas.
Concerning the aspect of culture, two implications emerged: firstly, employees should be trained to use spaces according to their job activities, gradually

abandoning the culture of spatial occupation; secondly, people should be guided in planning their workday also thanks to a wise use of technology.

"Our agenda is too unpredictable, it readjusts very quickly according to daily activities. It would be impossible for us to know which spaces we will need in advance, because collaborative needs arise in a spontaneous way."

- *LSP* participant

Transitions

The aspect of transitions should be stressed to recreate the real working condition, which is most likely characterised by more distant spaces. Indeed, the experimentation should be held in a more diffuse way, evaluating the presence of dedicated spots for employees to leave their personal belongings.
Experience-wise, it emerged the need to help people comprehend the actual baggage they need during their transitions between spaces, in order to offer well-equipped workstations. Moreover, technological advances in terms of quick and automated access to personal desktops from any location should be considered. As for culture, people have to be educated about the importance of moving from their work base towards more appropriate spaces according to their needs.

"Moving through spaces hands full, brought me back to university's discomfort."

- *LSP* participant

Spillovers

In relation to the spatial environment, acoustic-spatial solutions should be designed, addressing both employees' needs of focus and cross contamination. Experientially speaking, future testing interventions should suggest collaboration formats mixing different generations and teams. Indeed, a balance between contamination inside the team and amid different professions should be found.
As for the cultural aspect, an open attitude towards in-office contamination should be promoted: in this way, the workplace would become the reference point for direct and indirect sharing of ideas and information.

"Environmental noise can also be fertile: it is a way to keep up with the whole team's activities and learn by osmosis."

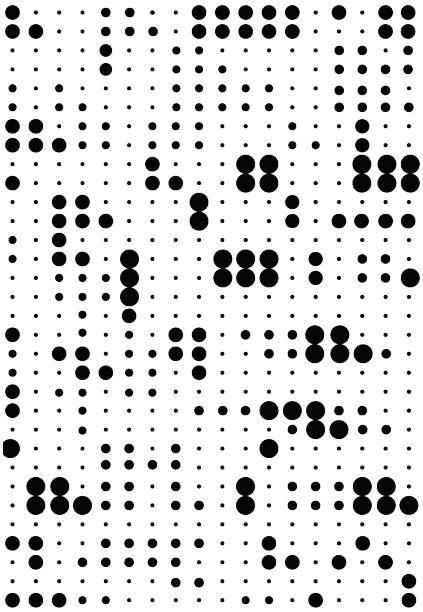
- *LSP* participant

From the point of view of pilot execution, interesting elements were collected both in relation to spatial set up and testing structure, which allowed the implementation of *LSP* episode two also from a methodological perspective.
Concerning spaces, users found it difficult to understand the aim of *Spazio morbido*, whose set-up was considered incoherent. A reason for that could be the reduced size of the space chosen for this purpose, which compromised the spatial output. Due to the team's specific needs, the testing of *Spazio fluido* mainly focused on the use of digital tools (Microsoft's Surface Hub), making the testing of spatial dynamics inside this environment necessary for following pilot projects. Criticalities could be found in terms of acoustics: given the open nature of this space, solutions must be found to ensure positive spillovers while avoiding noise. The experience inside *Spazio raccolto* suggested the need to try different spatial dispositions of seating to improve visual navigation between people. Enhanced engagement of remote participants, however, was considered a positive aspect. The testing of *Spazio espresso* gave the idea of further investigating weak ties dynamics through the engagement on the same day of employees coming from different teams. The large table in the middle of the space, instead, revealed a huge pain point: participants who couldn't find a proper spot where to carry out their activities, used the table as a stable workstation, consequently compromising its original meaning. This dynamic represented a crucial point to be solved in the following episode. The inappropriate use of *Spazio espresso* led to an interesting insight for the design of *Spazio*

respiro. Indeed, despite the informal character of *Spazio espresso*, it is still a work area which needs silence. Hence, the coffee machine emerged more as a disturbing element than a positive trigger to engage people. So, considering the vicinity of the spaces, the break area could be moved into Spazio respiro enhancing its potential, too. Finally, the idea of rather using the team's original office as *Spazio attivo*, represented a problem: people couldn't really split their activities between the two areas (very far from each other), so they often had difficulties finding a proper spot where to carry out their activities, consequently misusing the spaces. For this reason, in the second *LSP*, *Spazio attivo* was properly designed.

Taking all the above-mentioned intuitions into account, a second analysis of insights including feedback coming from the final survey was conducted. In this case, the process led to the definition of four main guidelines suggesting how to evolve towards an implemented version of *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo*. First of all, it will be important to move the focus from spaces to experiences, still addressing a new hybrid way of working; second of all, suggested spaces should be less fragmented in order to facilitate people's spatial understanding and choice; third of all, participants shouldn't be persuaded in using spaces acritically, but they should rather have the freedom to autonomously think how to properly use the space according to their personal needs; and fourth of all, before the experimentation itself, a moment of proper formation should be organised to better help participants internalise the topic, hence developing a self-determined approach.
In the next paragraph, the second episode of *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo* will be described in depth.

**From spaces to experiences:
to leave people autonomous in
interpreting their own work experience.**



Quale forma vorresti dare al tuo lavoro?

È ora il momento di ripensare insieme la nostra vita lavorativa.

5.4. *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo, pilota 2*

Starting from insights collected from the first experimentation, a second implemented version of *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo* was designed, giving me the opportunity to test the prototyped solution. Indeed, as mentioned in the introduction, design interventions performed so far followed a growing model which allowed the development of a customised solution, *LSP pilota 2*, that can be considered the core of the project itself.
The evolution between the two episodes of testing mainly concerned the concept at the basis of the experiment, inevitably affecting the methodology through which the experience was conveyed, keeping the final aim unchanged.
As explained above, it emerged the need to take a step back in relation to how the underlying message of *LSP* was transmitted, moving to a more conceptual level: before acting, participants should be nudged towards the development of a thoughtful understanding of the topic, which is essential to start the process of behavioural change and habit formation. For these reasons, the focus shifted from spaces to experiences, leaving participants free to interpret the suggested spaces according to their work experience.

5.4.1. Communication, spaces and experiences

The second episode of *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo* attempted to recreate the experiential conditions to make people think about their work life during a significant moment of transition, and to reflect together on new work-life scenarios. To achieve this aim, two main approaches had been adopted: a strong communication based on touchpoints properly designed to activate reflections on the topic at the basis of *LSP* (new hybrid ways of working); and a set of work-life experiences activated by specifically designed spaces that could be interpreted by people according to their needs. In this concern, to better understand how these aspects had been approached, **the second *LSP* should be thought of more as a service activating critical thinking, rather than just a catalogue of spaces to be experienced.**
Concerning communication, a Service Design approach had been applied to develop an intervention of internal communication diffused throughout the organisation and divided into three phases: a **pre** phase with the aim of letting everyone know the goal at the basis of the project *Working Life Scenarios in*

Evolution, using existing organisation's digital platforms; a **during** phase referring to the diffusion of posters with provocative questions, with the aim of raising awareness and stimulating the entire community to reflect on new ways of working; and an **after** phase aiming at keeping people engaged with the project providing updates, outcomes and ideas for future developments.
In relation to the spatial component, *4 Cs* were still followed as main conceptual pillars, but improvements had been made in terms of spatial set-up to which the concept of diffused laboratory was extended: instead of focusing in a delimited area, various spots inside the building were considered (see Fig. 61 and 62). This evolution not only allowed participants to test a more realistic future scenario, but gave me the possibility to increase the number of spaces for experimentation and to include more than one team, hence widening the spectrum of related design challenges.

Once again, considering various limitations in terms of spatial intervention, the design action mainly focused on recreating the experiential conditions for users to test future work-life experiences. Following insights collected after the first pilot project, each space had been reinterpreted to allow a freer interpretation and customisable experiences, still keeping the concept and labelling unchainged. Despite that, a distinction was made between delimited spaces to be booked for specific work experiences and diffused open spots adaptable to individual needs. Below, each space will be investigated in detail.

Concentration

Spazio attivo
To prevent spatial misuse, workstations for each participant have to be granted. Indeed, Spazio attivo represents the work base from which people should move to perform other activities in dedicated spaces. In terms of set-up, it is provided with both individual and group spots to allow teamwork, and more informal areas to support quick idea sharing with colleagues.

Punto privacy
To answer the need for isolated spaces ensuring privacy where people can perform individual calls or one-to-one meetings, diffused acoustic-proven spots are designed. The set-up includes existing phone-booths, comfortable seating, sound-absorbing walls to allow spatial modulation, small tables and sockets for digital devices.

Collaboration

Spazio fluido
To provide participants with an open space where to collaborate without disturbing others, a dedicated area with different set-ups is designed. This space addresses a well-defined collaboration, usually planned and with a

specific goal. Small areas allowing different kinds of collaborations are included, each of them isolated with sound-absorbing walls that also allow spatial modulation. Available tools are: whiteboards, digital boards (Microsoft's Surface Hub), high tables with stools, countertops.

Communication

Spazio raccolto
In order to test other kinds of set-up to improve communication during meetings, seating inside the space are distributed following a u-shaped disposition. Moreover, two more spaces of this kind are added, to answer participants' high demand after the previous testing.

Spazio espresso
In this case, the idea of "express communication" had to be enhanced even through spatial expedients. Indeed, Spazio espresso is a space which recalls transition and spontaneous contamination, so waypoints throughout the experimentation area are chosen for its set-up. This space consists of open micro spots where people can break into conversations, consequently fostering weak ties. Among available furniture there are: high tables with stools and analogic wall devices supporting quick discussions.

Contemplation

Spazio respiro
To limit people's perception of inactive spaces, the new version of *Spazio respiro* also incorporates *Spazio morbido*, combining the need for decompression with an area where to perform informal tasks with colleagues in a relaxed environment. It exists in two versions: an internal space and an external space (a terrace) both provided with comfortable chairs, small tables, and soundproofed seatings. This space has free access to foster weak ties.

Punto ricarica
This spot was born after the need to move the coffee machine from *Spazo espresso*, while still maintaining a trigger to direct people towards other spaces and experiences. It is placed in the corridors between *Spazio espresso* and *Spazio respiro* and it has the aim of turning the coffee break into a cue for spontaneous interactions that can eventually be moved to the spaces nearby. Its set-up consists of: coffee machines, water dispensers, snacks and a wayfinding system that orients participants towards *Spazio espresso* or *Spazio respiro* according to their needs.

Punto Ricarica

Punto Privacy
Concentrazione

Spazio Attivo
Comunicazione

Punto Privacy
Concentrazione

Spazio Respiro
Contemplazione

Spazio Attivo
Concentrazione

Fig. 61: spatial map of the second LSP showing how the concept of diffused laboratory was extended even to spatial design: instead of focusing in a delimited area, various spots inside the building were considered.

Spazio Respiro
Contemplazione

Spazio Raccolto
Comunicazione

Spazio Espresso
Comunicazione

Punto Ricarica

Spazio Fluido
Collaborazione

Spazio Attivo
Concentrazione

Punto Privacy
Concentrazione

Punto Privacy
Concentrazione

Fig. 62: spatial map of the second LSP scaled in the specific context of IMI C&IB's headquarters in Milan.

5.4.2. Structure and touchpoints

The second pilot project took place in October 2021, over three days of guided experimentation at the IMI C&IB headquarters in Milan, where the above-mentioned spaces were set up in a dedicated area. This time, two different teams (belonging to the industries of Energy and BM & HC) were directly involved in the experimentation, even though the action of communication addressed the entire population. Moreover, the structure at the basis of *LSP*'s organisation was also implemented: the idea was to divide the process into three moments (training, testing and debriefing) to meet people's need for a deeper understanding of the topics underlying the experimentation. Training concerned the step before the actual experimentation and had the aim of bringing people closer to the topics at the basis of new ways of working; testing referred to the "during" moment, when design hypothesis could be validated on the field, according to specific organisational needs; and debriefing, was related to post-experience group/individual discussions to collect people's immediate feelings and impressions. Specifically, together with a moment of onboarding with team leaders at the beginning of the process (like the one already

performed during *LSP* first episode), the moment of training greatly addresses the shift from intention to action suggested by the second step of the habit formation framework I followed. Indeed, one hour at the beginning of the first day of testing, was dedicated to sharing with people the analysis and process which brought to the proposed solution, delivering information, and consequently training participants on the principles underlying *LSP*. This intervention was crucial to bring everyone on the same level of knowledge and engage participants in the following phases.
In terms of agenda, the overall organisation of the second *LSP* still followed a hybrid modality, spread throughout three days of testing: day one was dedicated to training and guided experimentation, meaning that participants could benefit from the physical presence of the design team at their support, while day two and three were devoted to users' autonomous testing of spaces and experiences. In this case, an exception must be made for the third day, at the end of which designers went back to the laboratory site to conduct a 45-minute live internal check-out. This moment was an occasion to informally discuss with participants their first impressions and collect feedback about the overall experience they had during *LSP*. Moreover, being able to talk with people face-to-face was essential to convey feelings of caring. A week after, a one-hour debriefing moment with team leaders and HR members was scheduled, to wrap up collected insights and plan together future directions, in the name of "action repetition".

Again, despite the spatial component being rather symbolic, a Service Design approach was essential to recreate experiential conditions through specific touchpoints orienting participants during the experiment. Following intuitions emerged from the previous *LSP,* touchpoints were rethought in both quantity and quality, to allow participants a more agile fruition and ensure a simpler overall experience. Indeed, considering the second *LSP* as the prototyping of the first episode, a more sophisticated version of touchpoints was designed. In particular, considering the renewed design focus on activating critical thinking about future work-life experiences, touchpoints became more communication-oriented, and are better categoriesed as *"Raising-awareness touchpoints"*.
In this concern, particular attention on the tone of voice was even more important to nudge participants in the development of a thoughtful understanding about new ways of working.
In this case, both physical and digital channels were considered to engage participants and spread the voice among the entire population. As a matter of fact, for the touchpoint *The News*, IMI C&IB's digital channels (*Atlante* and *People*) were used as main platforms to inform people about the project and related concepts of new work-life scenarios. Then, *The Triggering Questions* replaced explenatory booklets and posters, with the aim of stimulating people's thinking through provocative questions on the topic of new ways of working. Finally, while *The How Tos* suggesting how to experience spaces were completely abandoned to allow people's autonomous interpretation, another useful

touchpoint was added: *The Tell Me More*. It is a customised landing page designed to support the concept of diffused communication and allow everyone inside the organisation to easily access additional in-depth information about the project, after their initial thinking has been stimulated. Below, each artefact will be further presented.

The News

Organisation's digital channels, *Atlante* and *People*, are used to deliver brief information about *LSP* and new work-life scenarios, with the aim of raising curiosity and engaging as many people as possible to the project. In this concern, short sentences in the form of "breaking news" are used as triggers, which provide further information when clicked upon.

The Triggering Questions

Conveyed through spatial posters (see Fig. 63-69), *The Triggering Questions* are the main element of this design intervention: around them, the entire experience is built. They consist of one generic poster presenting the project, and one poster for each space of the *LSP*, for a total amount of seven different posters.
The layout always follows the same grid: a graphic symbol that becomes the logo of the space, for which an accurate visual design job was carried out to develop a unique code of *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo;* a provocative question, accurately thought with the aim of stimulating people's reflections upon specific themes on the macro topic of new ways of working; a caption better explaining the topic addressed by the question; a QR code leading to *The Tell Me More* allowing people to access further information on the project. As we can see, to best achieve the expected goal, an accurate copywriting work is carried out, specifically developed around a provocative tone of voice. Moreover, each poster is related to a colour referring to the code previously designed for the *4 Cs*, to help people's mental and spatial navigation. Indeed, a wayfinding system is also associated with the posters, allowing participants to immediately recognise spaces through visual elements (logos and colours). Posters are printed in various formats according to different levels of importance and are spread throughout the experimentation area in strategic points. To answer participants' specific needs of spatial navigation, each space is introduced by the related poster hanging both outside and inside the room; while to trigger the broader population and generally activate reflections, building's access stairs and halls are used as strategic spots (see Fig. 70-73).

Fig. 63: The Triggering Question introducing Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo as a whole.

Fig. 64: The Triggering Question Spazio attivo.

Fig. 65: The Triggering Question Punto privacy.

Fig. 66: The Triggering Question Spazio raccolto.

Fig. 67: The Triggering Question Spazio espresso.

Fig. 68: The Triggering Question Spazio fluido.

Fig. 69: The Triggering Question Spazio respiro.

Fig. 70: example of diffused communication on strategic waypoints of the building.

Fig. 71: example of diffused communication on strategic waypoints of the building.

Fig. 72: example of diffused communication on strategic waypoints of the building.

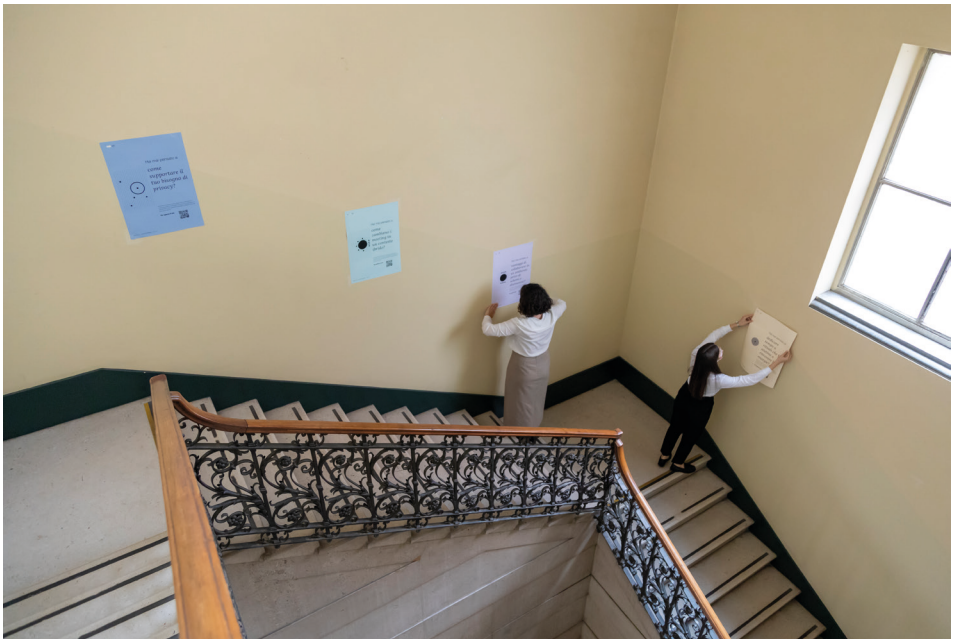


Fig. 73: example of diffused communication on strategic waypoints of the building.

The Tell Me More

To keep the information on *The Triggering Questions* to the minimum but still provide people with more details about the initiative, a digital expedient is designed. As said, people reading the posters but eager to know more about the subject, can scan the QR code (see Fig. 74) on the bottom right and access a dedicated page that they can navigate according to their preferences. This paperless approach not only results in a more agile experience for participants who can have all the information always at hand, but mainly addresses the need to reach as many people as possible inside the organisation.
The graphic layout follows a scrolling modality: swiping up the page starting from the cover, each section (project, principles, experiences, spaces) is briefly presented (see Fig. 75-81), while, by clicking on specific links, more detailed descriptions can be reached (see Fig. 82-86). Moreover, a drop-down menu allows for quicker navigation, too. At the bottom of the page, two sections are added: the first one to collect people's thoughts on the topic, both conveying a feeling of caring to employees and allowing constant monitoring; and the second one for people to ask the HR team for further information (see Fig. 81). Also in this case, the design of the experience focuses mainly on an accurate job of copywriting with the right tone of voice, to best engage people in the process of developing critical thinking on the topic. For this reason, less attention is dedicated to wireframe development.

Fig. 74: QR code to access the digital platform designed to find out more about Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo and enhance communication even more.

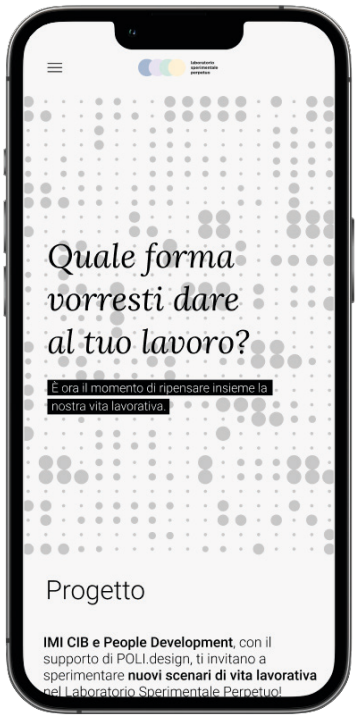


Fig. 75: The Tell Me More main page.

Fig. 76: The Tell Me More main page.

Fig. 77: The Tell Me More main page.

Fig. 78: The Tell Me More main page.

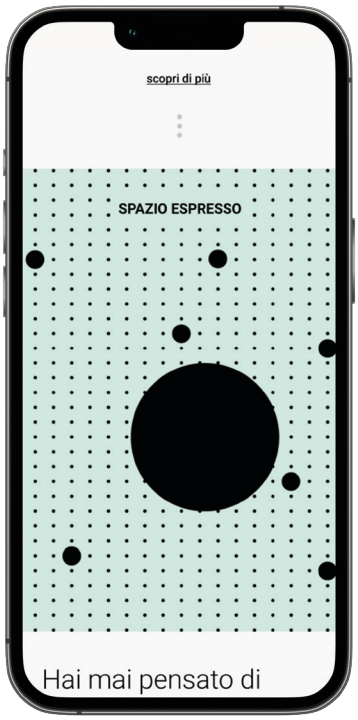


Fig. 79: The Tell Me More main page.

Fig. 80: The Tell Me More main page.

Fig. 81: The Tell Me More main page.

Fig. 82: the Project section.

Fig. 83: the Principles section.

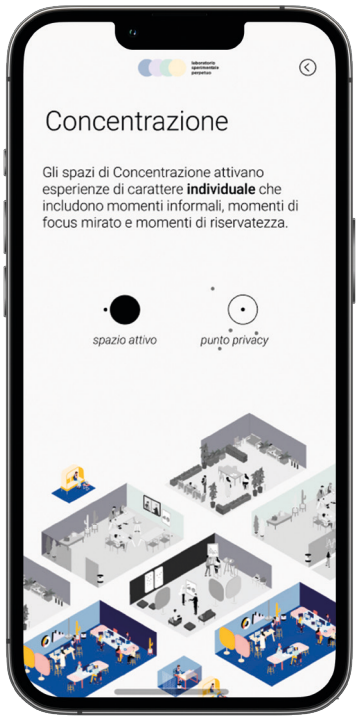


Fig. 84: section dedicated to the 4Cs.

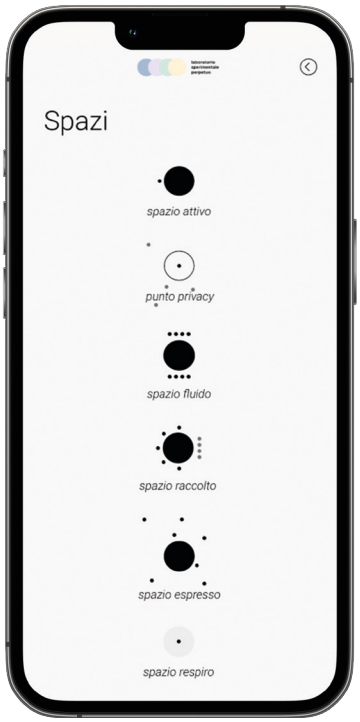


Fig. 85: the Spatial section.

Fig. 86: section dedicated to spaces.

Photos from *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo, pilota 2*

Training before starting Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo, pilota 2.

Participants during training before starting Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo, pilota 2.

Participants experiencing Spazio espresso.

Participants experiencing Spazio raccolto.

Participants experiencing Spazio respiro.

Participants experiencing Punto ricarica.

5.4.3. Monitoring

For the second *LSP*, monitoring mainly focused on shadowing activities during the testing experience. Moreover, feedback collection through live conversations, but specifically in the check-out moment, were essential to develop useful intuition for further steps.
The check-out moment was organised as an informal moment of debriefing with all the participants on the third day of experimentation. To help people share their thoughts and guide them throughout the development of interesting reflections, a digital support was used (Microsoft Surface Hub) to both share a semi-structured Mural page supporting the conversation and also engage people working remotely in this activity of plenary sharing via Teams' video call. The Mural page was previously organised using *The Triggering Questions* as leitmotif, trying to extrapolate concepts in relation to specific topics and avoid general comments about the spaces. Insights collected were useful to develop further intuitions about the evolution of *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo* and sum up conclusions about the overall experience, which will be analysed in the following chapter.

VI.

Further steps and conclusions

Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo as an awareness-raising tool for the entire IMI C&IB population: diffuse communication to orient people in navigating the change.

Insights collected from debriefing moments after the second episode of testing were summarised into two main intuitions: first of all, *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo* can become a consolidated occasion to communicate change inside the organisation and stimulate reflections about new ways of working; second of all, needs, words and perceptions of people living the specific organisational context represent the values of *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo*. For this reason, it is essential to keep listening to people in order to let the experimentation evolve. Starting from these main observations, the mission of *LSP* slightly changes its focus from a set of future spatial experiences to be tested, to an **awareness-raising tool for the entire IMI C&IB population**.
In this concern, the project would naturally evolve into an intervention of diffuse mass communication, to orient people through this moment of transition.
Indeed, further developments which are already being discussed, focus on the idea of broadening communication beyond the limited circle of people involved in the pilot project, and rather reach the entire population, if not even the context outside the organisation. To do so, design interventions are being planned around the development of a format of interviews to be held together with people who took part in the various steps of the project. The aim of these conversations would be collecting reflections that emerged during the testing experience around the topics addressed by *LSP,* and eventually spread out these thoughts in the form of video pills through digital channels (either internal or external) to reach as many people as possible. Therefore, this kind of design action would initiate a broad movement of change, shifting from the small scale of the pilot project to a larger scale of intervention.
Moreover, referring to the habit formation's framework, to proceed towards this direction while keeping the testing alive through implemented versions of *LSP,* would support both the steps of action repetition over time, essential to form automaticity underlying habit formation; and habit maintenance, crucial to ensure long lasting behavioural change. As a matter of fact, this kind of communication based on letting people understand the "reasons why" behind the change, would address founding aspects of organisational culture, those that Schein defines as values and basic assumptions, causing a more significant impact on people.
Furthermore, two more points are worth mentioning. Firstly, the evolution towards this direction was born after the need to enhance people's awareness and self-determination through a deep understanding of the suggested topic, to start an effective process of cultural and behavioural change. Secondly, to engage people in the process of organisational transition and employee experience design, it is crucial to convey a message of "care" on behalf of the organisation, establishing an environment of trust. Both aspects would contribute to weakening people's resistance to change.

Going through general conclusions about the experience of *LSP,* we can wrap up interesting intuitions addressing four main themes to be considered in future format's development: routine and culture; hybrid ways of working; sense of belonging to the team; communication and spillovers.

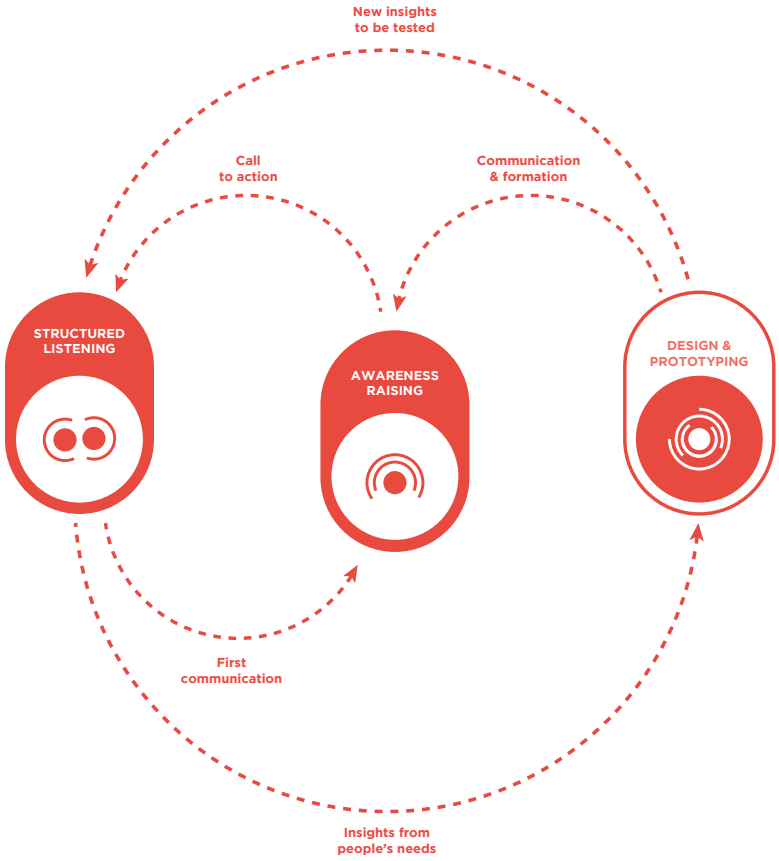


Fig. 00: this picture refers to the already mentioned logic governing the design process. It shows how further steps could go back to listening and awareness-raising, re-affirming the iterative character of the design intervention.

Concerning the first one, we had confirmation about the necessity of orienting and training people towards new ways of working. Despite that, to address this aim just one episode of *LSP* can't be effective. Indeed, it has to short a duration to allow participants to overcome their routines and get used to a new work paradigm. Moreover, in terms of touchpoints, "nudges" should be designed to orient participants to individually interpret spaces and related experiences according to their needs.

Addressing hybrid working, instead, it emerged the importance of supporting people in the organisational change process, even by adopting adequate infrastructures. First, it should be kept in mind that established routines and organisational culture can inhibit the adoption of new work paradigms; moreover, spatial conformation can also represent a limit if it doesn't evolve with changing circumstances. In general, while intervening in the context, the spatial component should be addressed in the name of agile fruition, keeping any fragmentation to the minimum.

Furthermore, we understood that a sense of belonging to the team and, more

broadly, a sense of community are founding elements in a hybrid context, hence they must be supported. In fact, if on one hand, strong ties between colleagues are one of the main reasons people are willing to go back to the office; on the other hand, it is important to support remote communication so that everyone feels equally part of the team.
Finally, partially related to the just mentioned aspect, a new direct communication channel connecting in-presence and remote dimensions would be crucial, allowing people to always be inside the conversations. Indeed, in terms of hybrid communication, we understood the need to support both people in the office and people working remotely, not only to make them all feel on the same level, but to also ensure that "osmotic knowledge" doesn't get lost. Eventually, the aspect of weak ties in a hybrid environment represents an even tougher challenge, which needs to be supported both inside the team and between different units inside the organisation.

Despite the above-mentioned insights to be considered for future developments, final conclusions can be drawn in relation to the overall research. Indeed, the process which brought me from field data collection to the design of a prototyped solution, characterised by the three macro steps of *Working Life dietro le quinte* and both episodes of *Laboratorio Sperimentale Perpetuo*, confirmed the intuitions behind the research question. As a matter of fact, both conversations with people and testing experiences gave clear evidence of employees' absolute need for a guide towards the adoption of a new work model. In fact, considering the disrupting character of organisational transitions, which not only affect established routines but also involve a deeper cultural level, a structured process for organisations to support their population and overcome resistance to change is essential. In this concern, the specific research context (IMI C&IB Intesa Sanpaolo) characterised by a hyper-regulated hierarchical culture, gave me the possibility to test certain aspects to the maximum, making the entire process more challenging. In this regard, the joint experience of both Service Design and Human Resource Management collaborating towards the development of a solution, appeared crucial to best support people's adoption of new work habits, hence to sustain the whole organisation in the process of change. Nevertheless, if the introduction of design thinking in the organisational context has been widely explored and validated as a solid approach to support change and the design of new employee experiences, the suggested topic of habit formation would need further investigations. Indeed, as we could understand from literature review, this research chooses a direction which, starting from organisational culture, interprets organisational change in terms of behavioural change. Specifically, to ensure long-lasting results, the theory of habit formation is involved and used as a base for the development of a framework that, crossing theoretical concepts with Service Design touchpoints, attempts to orient people towards new work habits. Although promising results emerged from the testing experiences accomplished so far, suggested future steps would allow for further investigations.

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