



Ashesi University

An Operational Overhaul Of Mhoseenu Studios

By

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of Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration.

Supervised by Dr Josephine Djan

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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“Nsa baako nkura adesoa”

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ABSTRACT

Mhoseenu Design Studios is a full-service design studio located in Labone, Accra. The company currently has internal struggles with operational management. The problem areas include communication, the alignment of strategic objectives and employee actions, and a lack of an organisational structure. This project details an operational plan aimed at addressing all the problems identified. This project uses a qualitative research methods approach to analyse the problem by considering the stakeholders. These methods include interviews, questionnaires and observations. The data collected was analysed using a service blueprint, tables and word clouds. Analysis of the collected showed that employees of Mhoseenu are generally confused with communication during their first few weeks at Mhoseenu. Furthermore, potential clients are largely influenced by past client reviews and consider customer service a crucial factor in the selection of a creative service firm to work with. The company needs to operate a circular organogram in its structure to facilitate the smooth flow of communication. In addition, a bi-annual Line of Sight analysis should be conducted bi-annually to ensure that the management objectives are aligned with those of the staff. Lastly, an updated service blueprint is recommended to reduce the customer wait times. A quarterly review of the service blueprint is recommended. The sensitive nature of some client information may limit the effectiveness of some proposed changes to the service blueprint.

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CHAPTER 1: COMPANY PROFILE

Mhoseenu, derived from the Hebrew word ‘Hoseenu’, translates into “God Our Maker”. The company is a creative house located in the heart of Labone, Accra-Ghana. Mhoseenu Studios began its operations as a design studio in January 2015. The studio is run by the founder and director, Danielli Ofori-Atta, a strong advocate for the need to invest in Ghanaian creatives, grow the creative industry and promote good design in Ghana. The in-house Mhoseenu team currently consists of an illustrator, a graphic designer, a video designer, three business administrators, an accountant, a studio manager, a project manager and a creative director.

The company centres its creativity on African craftsmanship and amplifies the African Culture through innovation and excellent quality service. Mhoseenu has a vision "...to improve Africa's creative landscape by executing projects and delivering quality products and services that create long term progress and growth for the creative economy"(Mhoseenu Studios, 2020). Mhoseenu focuses on pushing the African creative landscape onto the forefront of the global creative economy by developing African creatives to help position them competitively in the international market. The company is on a mission to foster collaboration among Ghanaian creatives, public and private partners to improve the condition of the industry and educate the stakeholders. The company's efforts motivate this project because Mhoseenu concerns itself with the development of the industry as a whole.

Mhoseenu offers clients branding services, content creation, quality design, strategy, creative consultation, experience curation, print, packaging and production solutions. The service offerings are grouped into content, press, experiences, atelier and creative consultation. The company has an impressive list of clients that include the Royal Commonwealth Society, R&R

Luxury, Nubuke Foundation, the Buka restaurant, the Office of The President, Vlisco, Zeepay, Jumia Food, Madam Butterfly, Ghana airports, Le concierge club, MDS Lancet among others. Regarding experience design, the company has held innovative Afrocentric events like the Christmas Shop, Daily Paper clothing launch and a Vlisco fashion show.

1.1 Market Analysis

This section explores the market that Mhoseenu operates through a SWOT and PESTEL analysis. The majority of the creatives operate without laid out procedures and guidelines, which has contributed to the low level of trust customers place in "made-in-Ghana" products over the years. The creative economy is "an evolving concept which builds on the interplay between human creativity and ideas and intellectual property, knowledge and technology"(United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2020).

The Ghanaian creative industry has seen exponential growth in the past few years. "Creativity is in fact key to all forms of development and progress – economic, technological social – for any country or society"(Addy, 2020). The industry has the potential to contribute mainly to the growth of the country. In recent times, the industry has complemented the tourism sector through significant events like the Year of Return that accounted for \$1.9bn into the economy in 2019 (BBC News, 2020). This project will help Mhoseenu to finetune its operations and generate more revenue to claim a large part of the revenue the industry creates.

1.1.1 PESTEL Analysis

This analysis is an extrinsic analysis of the environment in which Mhoseenu operates is crucial as the company is subject to several political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors.

1.1.1.1 Political factors

Political stability will impact the company as it has a working relationship with the current Office of the President of Ghana. The existing relationship and benefits thereof may be affected by any changes in the presidency because a new company may receive the account.

1.1.1.2 Economic factors

Mhoseenu sources some production materials from foreign suppliers, changes in the foreign exchange policy affect the company. In seasons where the cedi performs poorly against foreign currencies, the company spends more on foreign resources, which drives its cost of production higher. In addition to the foreign exchange policy, the volatility of the exchange rates is a factor that Mhoseenu must consider in its operations with foreign suppliers and clients because it directly influences its revenue. On the other hand, inflation rates influence its domestic operations with suppliers and clients alike. In periods of high inflation, the cost of materials increases and affects the cost of goods sold, salaries, wages and other expenses.

1.1.1.3 Social Factors

Mhoseenu operates in Ghana hence the company will have to acknowledge the Culture and way of life of the country. Although the company has positioned itself as a modern creative house,

it must ensure that its activities incorporate and resonate with the Ghanaian Culture; otherwise, it may risk losing some of its target markets.

Furthermore, although the company runs on Christian foundations and teachings, it will have to operate with tolerance and acceptance of the other religions in Ghana. The attitudes of its stakeholders towards work, customer service, product, and service quality can impact the company's sales and revenue. Changes in the lifestyle of existing and potential clients can also affect the company's sales; hence it will have to study trends and adapt to them as and when necessary.

1.1.1.4 Technological factors

Lastly, as a creative house, the bulk of Mhoseenu's creative and production processes rely on technology. Designs and concepts are visualised on computers using software like Adobe Illustrator, whilst packages, stationery, billboards and plaques require industrial-grade printers. Therefore, the company must be abreast with technological advancements like software updates, new machinery or improved graphic design processes to maintain its competitive position. Furthermore, the company will have to maintain its website and the domain name by paying particular attention to changes in the terms and conditions provided by the service providers.

1.1.1.5 Legal factors

The company is required by law to pay 25% of its income as taxes (PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited, 2020). Also, any changes in the required contributions to the Social Security and National Insurance Trust, which currently stands at 12.5% of an employee's salary per The National Pensions Act, 2008 (ACT 766), will affect the company.

Mhoseenu is subject to provisions made under PART I of ACT 651 of the constitution of Ghana, which is the Labor Act, 2003 and will be affected by amendments made to it.

The company operates in compliance with Health and Safety laws, employment laws, and discrimination laws; hence will be affected by changes in these laws. Intellectual property is an integral aspect of the company's operations. The logos, content, animations and various design ideas and concepts they create are highly susceptible to imitation or reuse without consent. Mhoseenu ensures that the work it puts out is protected through the use of confidentiality and nondisclosure agreements, and copyright laws.

1.1.1.6 Environmental Factors

The changing attitudes of stakeholders to environmental issues is a factor that affects the company directly. In its operations and production processes, the company must consider the policies created by the Environmental Protection Agency of Ghana, which operates under the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation. The company should adopt sustainable processes in line with the sanitation policy, energy strategy and National water policy. Activities like waste segregation and recycling would help ensure that the company adheres to the policies outlined by the EPA. Combined with using updated and eco-friendly devices in the workplace, it will reduce Mhoseenu's carbon footprint. The constantly evolving understanding of environmentally sustainable practices will require the company to remain updated on new developments.

1.1.2 SWOT Analysis

This analysis is an intrinsic analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that affect Mhoseenu. Knowledge of this will help the company work turn its weaknesses into strengths, seize opportunities and mitigate threats to position itself strategically in the market.

1.1.2.1 Strengths

Mhoseenu has good relationships with its suppliers. Maintaining healthy relationships with suppliers is essential to a business's success, as it builds trust. Trust gives way to just in time product delivery, credit purchases and may reduce the probability of product defects. Also, the company is known for its consistency in the provision of high-quality products and service. Mhoseenu ensures that all products that leave its space are in the best condition because it takes quality control very seriously. In addition, Mhoseenu has a creative directory, which is a list of freelance creatives in Ghana that it constantly updates. One of the problems in the creative industry today is the difficulty of identifying and reaching creatives in each sector of the industry. A creative directory helps solve this problem, and by being the innovator of this directory, Mhoseenu has a solid competitive position. The company can benefit from being a middleman between clients and creatives and benefit from the existing relationships it has with a large pool of freelance human resources.

Additionally, the company has a large pool of internal resources that facilitate its daily operations. These include its skilled personnel, novel technology and software, quality materials, a website and active social media accounts. Mhoseenu's website launched in August 2020 and offers clients a virtual walk-through of the event space and a look at its digital portfolio. The video walk-through allows clients to understand the dynamic and layout of the space and plan their events remotely. Clients can book space and consultation services via the website, which makes the

service experience more convenient. The digital portfolio is an excellent way to display its past projects and instil confidence in potential clients. The physical portfolio itself serves as a testament to the quality of print work the company puts out whilst advertising its services and products.

Another strength that Mhoseenu has is its education component, in the form of a virtual teaching series on its Instagram page. Mhoseenu also utilises intellectual property to protect its work. The company goes the extra mile to educate all creatives on intellectual property rights through its social media. This boosts the relationship it has with freelance artists because it shows them that the company is committed to helping them protect their craft and improve the industry.

1.1.2.2 Weaknesses

All companies have areas of weakness where improvements are needed. Mhoseenu's weaknesses include the lack of print and production space. The company currently outsources all its print and production work to established companies. Another weakness is the unclear offering of the company. A straightforward offering exists when the market makes the company name synonymous with its offering. Mhoseenu has a wide range of product and service offerings that the market is not fully educated on yet. Lastly, the company does not have an organogram, a diagram that clearly shows the structure of an organisation and the relationship between the various ranks.

1.1.2.3 Threats

Mhoseenu faces the threat of new competitors entering the market and taking a share of the market. Although the company cannot block new entrants, it can strengthen its position and keep its customer base. Also, there is the constant threat of negative customer experiences and reviews affecting the company's public image. Negative press arising from the clients may reflect on

Mhoseenu, which poses a threat to its public image. Possible changes in the external environment pose a threat to the company because of the uncertainty surrounding them. These threats are not entirely controllable, but their effects can be minimised. The company can also make contingency plans for these eventualities to help quell the damages they may create.

1.1.2.4 Opportunities

Amid threats and weaknesses, opportunities exist for Mhoseenu in the form of client relationships, media coverage, and the growing recognition of the creative industry. Good press about collaborations with its existing clients or projects with high profile clients such as the President's Office reflects positively on the company. It may open up new opportunities within the market whilst boosting the company's image.

1.2 Industry Analysis

The section also analyses the industry in which the company operates using Porters five forces analysis. The company operates in the creative service industry, which does not have a clearly defined structure, and as such, does not have a traditional way of trade. The industry consists of artisans like carpenters, welders, basket and cloth weavers. Mhoseenu's product and service offerings cut across press, experience, art, branding and content, which allows the company to be categorised as a creative Professional Service Firm (PSF). This is a competitive advantage for Mhoseenu because it offers clients a one-stop-shop experience.

1.2.1 Bargaining Power of Suppliers

There are many suppliers within the industry that Mhoseenu. However, Mhoseenu, like other companies, has the opportunity to source resources like stationery, software licenses and equipment from international suppliers, which gives local suppliers limited influence. However, the resources that the company does source locally are available with many suppliers, making switching costs low and significantly reduces the bargaining power of suppliers. On the other hand, product differentiation is high in the industry due to differences in finishing and quality of materials, which may give the suppliers an advantage in bargaining. Overall, the bargaining power of suppliers in the industry is relatively low due to the high industry concentration.

1.2.2 Bargaining Power of Buyers

The switching costs for buyers in the industry is relatively low. There are many accessible substitute services and product suppliers in the industry, which gives buyers an edge in the bargaining process. The availability of many suppliers indicates a low switching cost in the industry, which is advantageous to the buyer. Furthermore, buyers in Ghana are likely to backwards integrate by purchasing from suppliers in other countries, demanding price concessions or producing some aspects of the products or services. On the other hand, the buyer does not have access to complete information such as demand and supply levels and supplier costs, which gives the suppliers an advantage. Overall, the bargaining power of buyers in the industry is high.

1.2.3 The threat of New Entrants

Due to the little regulation in the industry, the threat of new entrants is relatively high. New entrants in any industry compete for profits, which could affect the profit-making potential of Mhoseenu. Also, asymmetries such as capital requirements could limit the number of new entrants into the industry. The cost of press and print equipment like industrial printers, stationery, cameras, and computers makes capital requirements high for new entrants. However, for new entrants that adopt an outsourcing strategy similar to what Mhoseenu adopts, the capital requirements are moderate. Another barrier to entry is the advantages that incumbents enjoy due to their existing relationships with suppliers. Incumbents like Mhoseenu may enjoy discounts, priority treatments or free just in time services, making new entrants nervous about entering the industry.

1.2.4 Threat of substitutes

Mhoseenu's products and services can be easily substituted for others within the industry. A customer is open to a wide range of substitutes that are even more accessible via the internet. The competition in the industry exists through price and performance. The luxury and quality products and services Mhoseenu offers are generally priced higher than its competitors; hence customers may opt to patronise substitute products at a lower price. The switching costs within the industry are relatively low. However, the tradeoff between price and performance is high. Overall, the threat of substitution within the industry is relatively high.

1.2.5 Rivalry

According to the UNCTAD's creative economy report, "Imports of creative goods nearly doubled from \$80.8 million in 2005 to \$175.2 million in 2013, generating a trade deficit of \$123.3

million in 2013" Furthermore, the value of design good imports from 2005-2014 is about 2million USD, whilst the export value is about 29 million USD (see *Figure 1*). The large gap between export and import values suggest that creative service providers within Ghana have the opportunity to capture the attention of customers within the industry with products and services that meet or exceed international standards. Combined with the low switching costs and the high number of substitutes, there is a high level of competition in the industry.

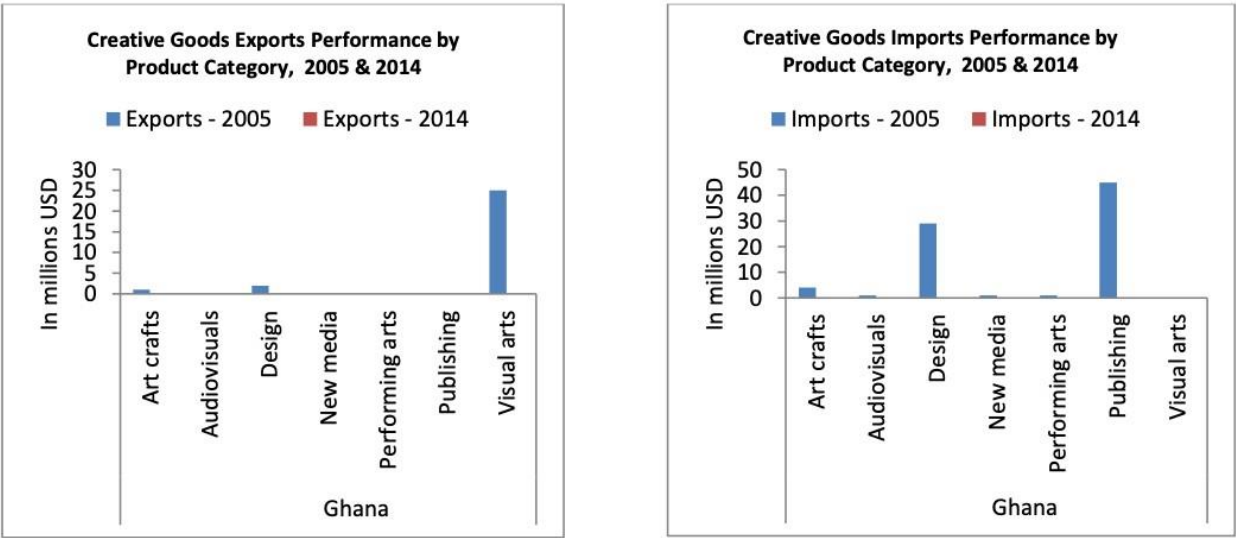


Figure 1. Creative Goods Performance

CHAPTER 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2.1 Chapter Overview

According to Frey (2018), a needs assessment is “ a systematic approach that gathers data by means of established procedures and methods through a defined series of phases”(Frey, 2018). This project employs qualitative research methods; hence this chapter is a needs assessment plan that details the data collection process.

2.2 Methods of Data Collection

2.2.1 Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research methods provide insight and understanding into a phenomenon under study. Nkwi, Nyamongo and Ryan (2001) define qualitative research as “...any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values” (Nkwi, Nyamongo, & Ryan, 2001). This study uses interviews and observation in the collection of the qualitative data required for this project.

2.2.1.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were to collect data, with the employees and management as the sample. According to Adams (2015), a semi-structured interview “...employs a blend of closed -and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow up why or how questions”(Adams, 2015). This interview method facilitates the exploration of topics that arise from the answers that an interviewee provides. An interview guide provides some structure to the interview, as the agenda for this interview type is not fixed. The guide contains a few icebreakers to put the interviewee at ease and establish a rapport. The interview flow moves from positive questions to

controversial questions and closes with a substantial question about the project. Interviewing the employees provided more information about the roles that they play in the company, their respective responsibilities, and their objectives in the company. Likewise, interviewing the management will provide insight into the strategic objectives that management has for Mhoseenu.

2.2.1.2 Observation

According to Kawulich (2012), “Observation is used in the social sciences as method for collecting data about people, processes and cultures” (Kawulich, 2012). It is essential to view the business from the employee, the employer, and the customer. This study uses participant observation to gain insight into how the employees in the setting interact with each other and their approach to tasks. This method facilitates a study of customer behaviour during the service delivery process.

Participant observation occurs in various methods; however, this study uses the observer as a participant method. In utilising the observer as a participant method, the researcher is completely immersed in the role of a client and walks through the servicescape and experiences the service delivery purely as a potential client. During a service walk-through in the company through an appointment booked via the company's website, the observation occurred.

Field notes will in documented the observations made in detail. All notes taken were listed according to date, time and location. The behaviours of the service personnel and their interactions with one another were documented as well.

2.2.2 Quantitative Research Methods

Apuke, 2017 describes quantitative research as "...the utilization and analysis of numerical data using specific statistical techniques to answer questions like who, how much, what, where, when, how many, and how"(Apuke, 2017). This methodology will help in identifying patterns, making predictions and generalizing the results generated to wider populations.

Questionnaires

A list of potential clients in fields like Architecture such as Adjaye and associates, media such as TV3, banking such as Ecobank was compiled for the data collection. The questionnaires employed a mix of Likert scale based questions and ranking questions, to provide a generalized structure for accurate analysis, as well as allowing room for respondents to express themselves. Convenience sampling was used to distribute the questionnaires, with Google Forms as a medium. This is beneficial to the company because it sends the message that client contributions are valued.

2.2.2 Analysis and Presentation of Data

The data collection methods for this project gather both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data gathered from potential and existing clients is represented in a word cloud, generated using WordCloud Generator.

The qualitative data gathered from interviewing management and staff are represented in a table.

2.2.2.1 Key Findings

When asked the question, "What would you look out for the most in selecting a creative service company to work with?" most of the respondents stated that they resonate with the quality of work, reviews, timeliness, Culture and communications (see *Figure 2*). In addition, 20.7% of the 89 respondents would not work with Mhoseenu based on client reviews.



Figure 2. Word Cloud responses for the question ‘What would you lookout for the most in selecting a creative service company to work with?’

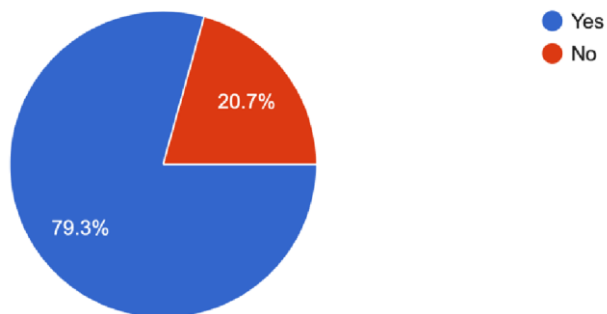


Figure 3. Based on what you have heard, would you consider working with Mhoseenu?



Figure 4. Word Cloud responses for the question ‘Based on what you have heard, would you work with Mhoseenu?’

2.2.2.2 Conclusions

Interviews conducted with seven out of the company’s ten employees showed that the employees in Mhoseenu are not well-versed with the company's strategic objectives and are not sure about what to do to achieve them. Furthermore, five employees quipped that their first few weeks working with the company were not the easiest because they were unsure who to report to and go to with any issues or concerns. Four employees attributed previous losses of projects to poor communication among the staff. 8 out of 12 interviewed existing clients of the company quipped that the long wait time between first contact with the company and a physical meeting was undesirable.

Observing the workflow in the company further showed that the employees do not always know the best channel of communication to take.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter is an empirical review of existing literature that address the structural, efficiency and alignment issues in identified Mhoseenu. Thus, this chapter gives insight into these problem areas and provides some existing tools and structures that will aid in developing a tailored solution for Mhoseenu. This research aims at:

1. Gaining insight into Mhoseenu's strategic objectives and explore the level of understanding employees have of them.
2. Mapping the flow of work and communication.
3. Understanding the service delivery process and identify sources of inefficiency.

3.2 Aligned objectives

All companies strive to improve their employee dependability and reliance on individual talent and motivation. However, most companies have made it a norm to simply display their mission and vision on websites, company grounds, and in handbooks and expect accomplishment. This objective will be better achieved when employees' objectives within a firm and the firm's objectives are aligned. The rationale behind aligned company and employee objectives is supported by Canavan et al. (2013), who investigate the employee's contribution and understanding of an organisation's strategic objectives, also known as 'line of sight'. This understanding varies across individual characteristics and is essential to the outcome of the work.

Furthermore, the authors make a doubtful assertion that although some firms like Mhoseenu encourage townhalls and open-book management, it may only help the employees understand the firm's objectives and not necessarily how they can contribute to it. An employee well briefed on the collective goals of the firm should find it easier to identify specific areas in which he or she can contribute to the realisation of said goals.

3.3 Organisational Structure and Communication

Creative work is often encouraged to flow with as few restrictions as possible, making it difficult for management to oversee and control activities in a creative firm properly. Creative professional service firms need to adopt a structure that alleviates tension between management and creative workers and talents. According to Walton, the organisational structure is the basis for organising, including hierarchical levels and spans of responsibility, roles and positions, and mechanisms for integration and problem solving (Walton,1986). The company can identify what structure it should operate, the channels of communication and the approach that the management should take in communicating with and coordinating the activities of staff.

3.3.1 Circular Organisational Structure

Traditional organisational structures typically illustrate the breakdown of an organisation into different departments. These structures are rigid hierarchies that have long chains of command, which can complicate communication.

On the other hand, a circular organisational structure promotes communication within an organisation as it facilitates the free flow of information between different parts of the organisation.

3.4 Efficiency- The Service Blueprint

Service companies require customer input or participation to fulfil their offerings. A service blueprint is “a map or flowchart (called a process chart in manufacturing) of all transactions constituting the service delivery process” (Shostack, 1984). A service blueprint also facilitates problem-solving and creative thinking by identifying potential points of failure and highlighting opportunities to enhance customers perceptions of the service.

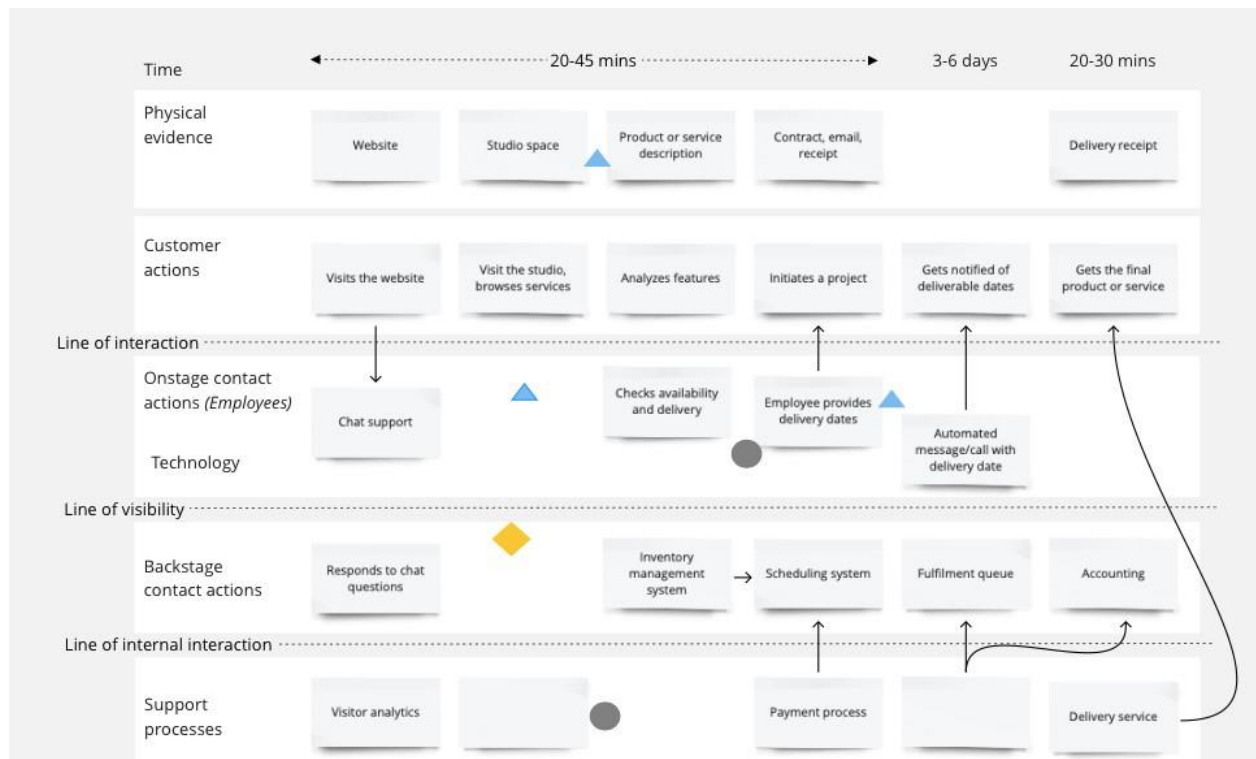





Figure 5. Sample Service Blueprint

3.4.2 Understanding the Service Blueprint components

The table below details the components of a service blueprint and their respective purposes.

Table 1. Components of a service blueprint

| Component of the Service Blueprint | Purpose |
|---|--|
| Physical Evidence | Provides the tangible things that customers come into contact with. |
| Customer Actions | Outlines the activities that customers engage in during the service experience. |
| Line of Interaction | Represents the points of interaction between customers and the employees and service. |
| Frontstage Contact Actions | Outlines all employee activities in service delivery that customers see and whom they interact with. |
| Line of Visibility | This represents the stage where the company's processes become invisible to the customer. |
| Backstage Contact Actions | Outlines all employee activities in service delivery that customers do not see or interact with. |
| Line of Internal Interaction | Represents areas where employees who do not interact with customers directly provide support. |
| Support Processes | Represents internal activities that provide support to employees in the service delivery process. |

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
|  | Potential service fail point. |
|  | Decision-making point |
|  | Potential customer wait point |

CHAPTER 4: SOLUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

4.1 Chapter Overview

A review of the literature and the needs assessment conducted suggest that Mhoseenu needs to review its service delivery process and eliminate the wait points to improve its efficiency. Furthermore, the company needs new systems and structures that help improve its internal communication. The internal cohesion and fluidity of operations in a company are necessary to ensure timely and efficient service delivery.

4.2 Framework needed for the solution to work

Some elements need to be present in the company to make the framework effective. Mhoseenu's framework must consist of a well-structured organogram, clearly defined communication channels and process flow, and in-depth training of employees.

4.2.1 Organogram

Creative service firms require a different management style and company structure that affords employees the space to maximise their creativity whilst providing a balanced structure. Both the organogram and the service blueprint lends clearly defined channels and processes of communication.

The results of a study conducted by Hellweg and Phillips show that participants in communication perform better than isolates. "a communication isolate is associated with an increased use of telephone and written communication, as well as a tendency to withhold information from other employees" (Hellweg & Phillips, 1982).

4.2.1.1 Proposed Organogram

The Creative Director is at the centre of the organogram because she is the final point of communication to finalise projects. The Project Manager, who also doubles as the People and Culture Manager, has direct access to the creative director concerning human resource policies and ongoing projects. The finance manager, Administrator and logistics and sales manager also have direct access to the creative director due to the sensitive nature of the information they are privy to. All employees within the second circle of the organogram communicate with each other to complete work. The finance manager communicates with the logistics and sales manager to gather information needed to prepare financial reports. The Administrator communicates with the finance manager for the disbursement of petty cash funds and processing project payments. Likewise, the Logistics and Sales Manager communicates with the Administrator to procure project contracts and packages. The illustrator has direct contact with the creative director for all projects for quality control purposes. Lastly, the people and culture manager is directly accessible by all employees for all human resource matters.

The outermost circle contains employees that do not have direct access to the Creative Director. The business strategy intern should communicate with the Logistics and Sales Manager, Administrator and Studio Manager on all studio bookings. The social media manager communicates primarily with the project manager as she oversees communications and project schedules. The social media manager can also communicate with the Administrator to forward all jobs received through social media. However, the videography intern has direct access to the creative director as the company does not currently have a videographer amongst its permanent staff. This is also to control the quality of work done to maintain the high-quality standards of Mhoseenu.

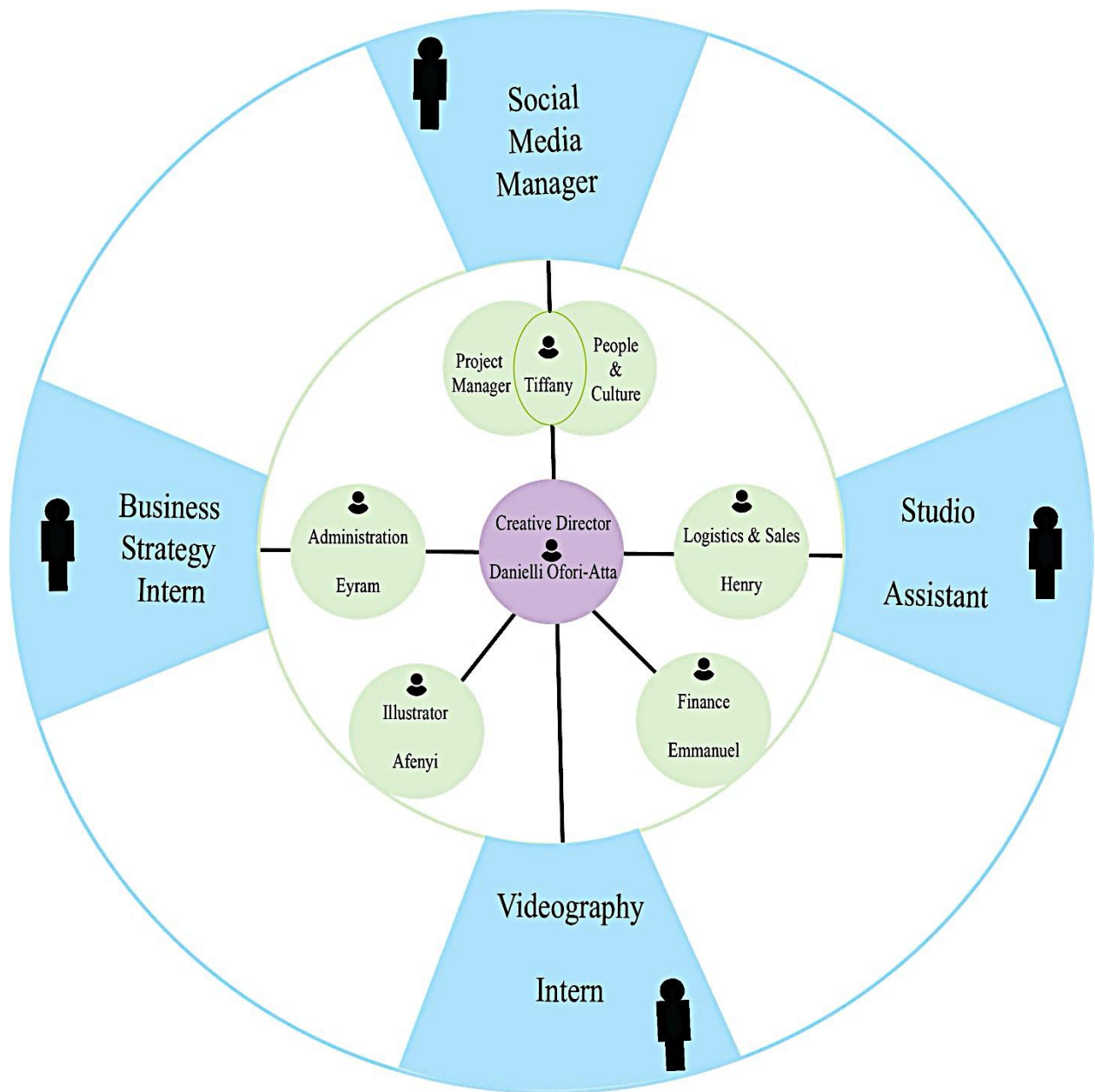


Figure 6. Mhoseenu's proposed organogram

4.2.1.2 Importance

The organogram will assist people and Culture with the onboarding process by providing new employees with a valuable resource for finding the people they need to contact. This solves the communication problems employees face in their first few weeks of working with Mhoseenu. Secondly, the organogram depicts all employees' fit within the organisation and gives direction about whom to communicate with directly. Lastly, the organogram achieves the second objective of this project, which is to map the flow of communication within Mhoseenu.

4.2.2 Line of sight (LOS) method of aligning strategy and employee objectives

To ascertain whether employee actions and strategic objectives are aligned, an ordered list of six potential strategies was developed based on information gathered from the semi-formal interviews conducted and survey filled by potential clients. A generic list of items that employees can act on was generated (*Table 2*). This alignment will also give insight into the extent to which employees understand the behaviours required to realise the strategic objectives of Mhoseenu.

The top management, being the Creative Director and Project Manager, were each sent a survey, which required them to rate the six potential objectives in order of relevance to the mission and vision of the organisation. This is an excellent way to give the respondents a sense of how the strategic objectives could be framed and generate the crucial objectives that have not been listed. Each manager was randomly assigned three objectives from the list and asked to specify employee actions aligned with that strategy. Also, each manager was asked to rate the perceived level of confidence she has that the employees understand the objectives and the actions that contribute to achieving them. Actions where the managers indicated confidence was maintained. Duplicate actions were combined into one action item. After the items were finalised, the managers were sent

the list and asked to rate, on a scale of 1-5, how well they believe their employees understand each objective.

To determine the accuracy of the match of objectives to departments, the same survey was sent to employees to derive the strategic objectives they are working with and their actions or actions they believe should be taken to achieve them.

The table below shows the results of the LOS analysis conducted with Mhoseenu Design Studios. The table includes objectives that have linkages to responses generated from the data collection. Customer service, which was a recurring word in the survey responses (see *Figure 2*), also appears as a firm's strategic objective. In addition, the company aims at providing comprehensive services and products. This is essential because some respondents listed unclear offerings as a reason why they will not want to work with Mhoseenu (see *Figure 4*). By focusing on its customer service and providing comprehensive services and products, the company may be able to convert some of the 20.7% who would not want to work with them (see *Figure 3*) into potential clients.

Table 2. Strategic Objectives and Action Items

Sample Size = 8 employees

| Strategic Objectives | Action Items |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Comprehensive services and products | Be knowledgeable about service processes, specialist terminologies and service offerings. |
| Creative development | Innovate new products and services. |

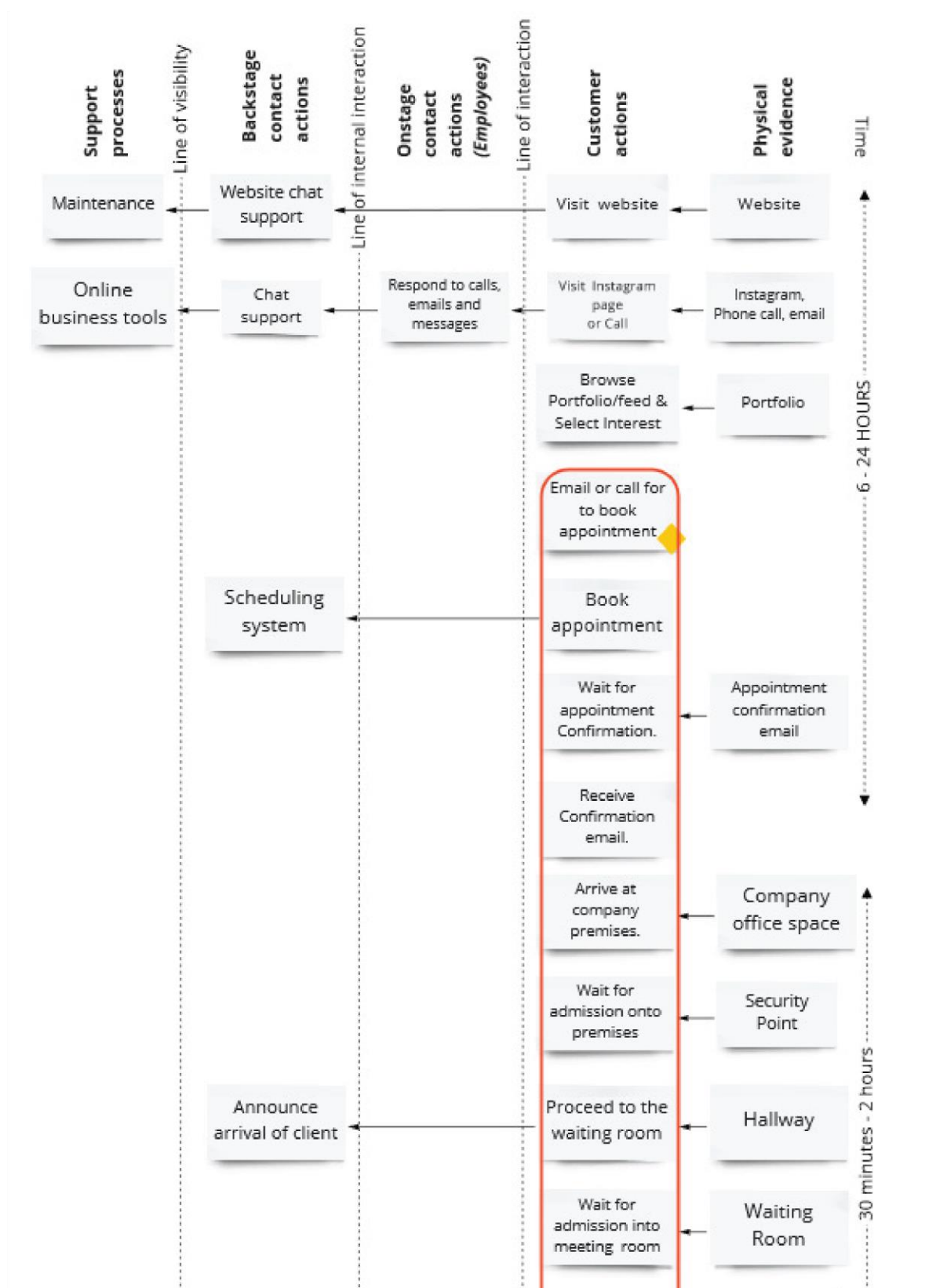
| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| | Creative education through masterclasses |
| Consistent service | Be knowledgeable on design processes, specialist terminology and service offerings from partners. |
| Consistent quality | Carry out quality control checks on designs and tangible products before delivery. |
| Outstanding customer service | <p>Focus solely on customer needs and be receptive.</p> <p>Provide client suggestions and offer alternative solutions for project enquiries not in Mhoseenu's scope of work.</p> |

4.2.2.1 Importance

This analysis achieves the third objective of this project: to gain insight into Mhoseenu's strategic objectives and explore the level of understanding employees have of them. The LOS method of analysis derives strategic objectives and makes them available to employees. Furthermore, it provides clear actions for employees to perform to contribute effectively to the company's objectives. Lastly, it gives employees and employers insight into the level of confidence that employees have in understanding the objectives. This information is helpful to management because it would help them reevaluate their existing management style to facilitate a better understanding between management and their employees.

4.3 *The solution* – Service Blueprint

The service blueprint offers a more flexible look at the processes in an organisation because it considers both the perspectives of the customer and the company. Mhoseenu has two areas of sales and customer interaction, being its design studio and studio space. This solution caters to the design studio and tackles the area highlighted in red in the diagram below.



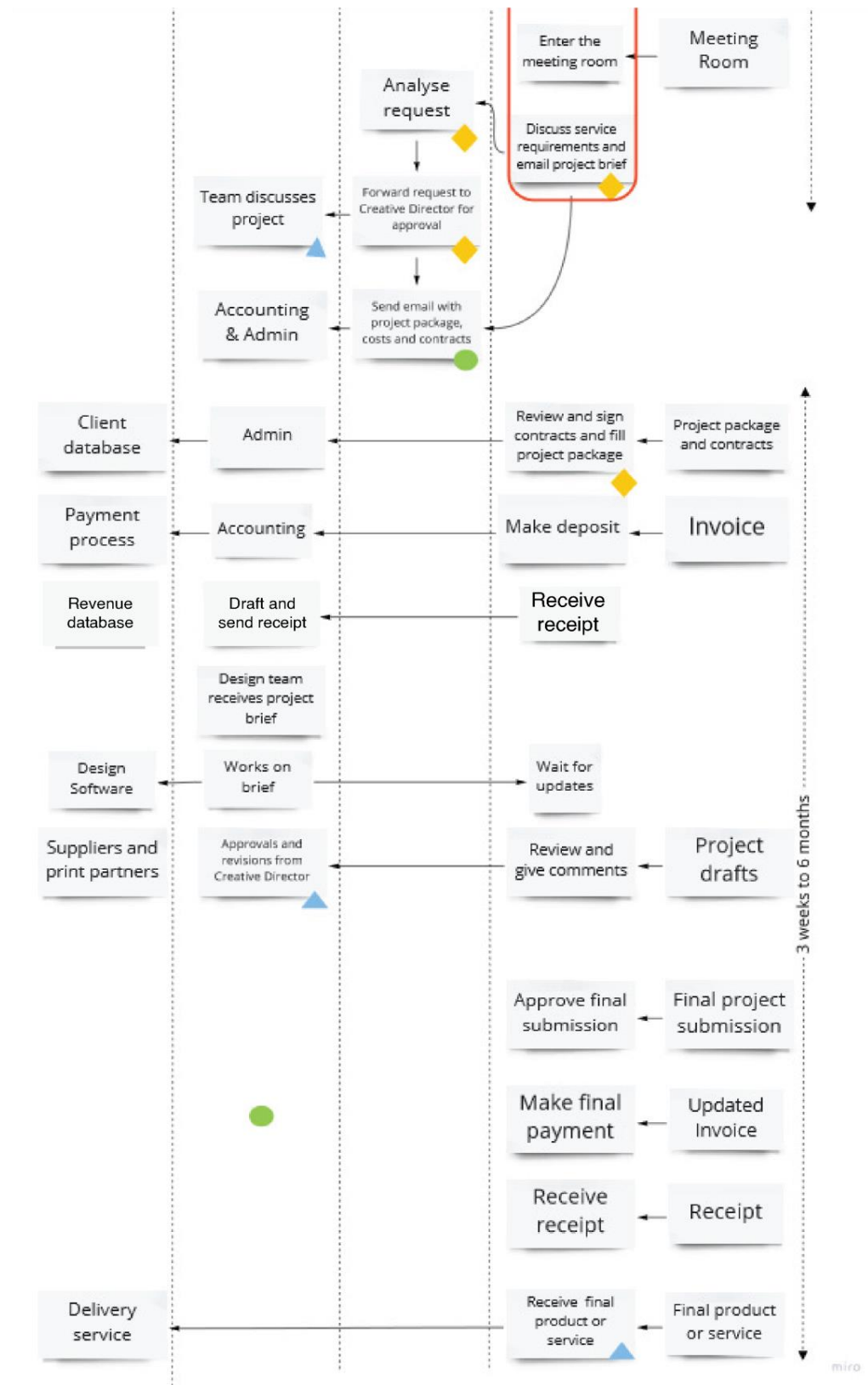


Figure 7. Existing Design Studio Service Blueprint

4.3.1 Importance

Studying the service blueprint could suggest opportunities for improvement and also the need for further definition of certain processes (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons, 2001). The use of the lines of visibility and interaction highlights the need to give special attention to the operations that occur in plain view of customers. This is where customers form their perceptions about the efficiency of service. The lines also help management and staff know and understand their roles better and how they come together as a whole.

Furthermore, service blueprints are a good way for companies to reassess their performance levels by identifying potential wait and fail points that affect their efficiency and cause client dissatisfaction. From the blueprint above, wait and fail points occur in the customer and employee onstage actions.

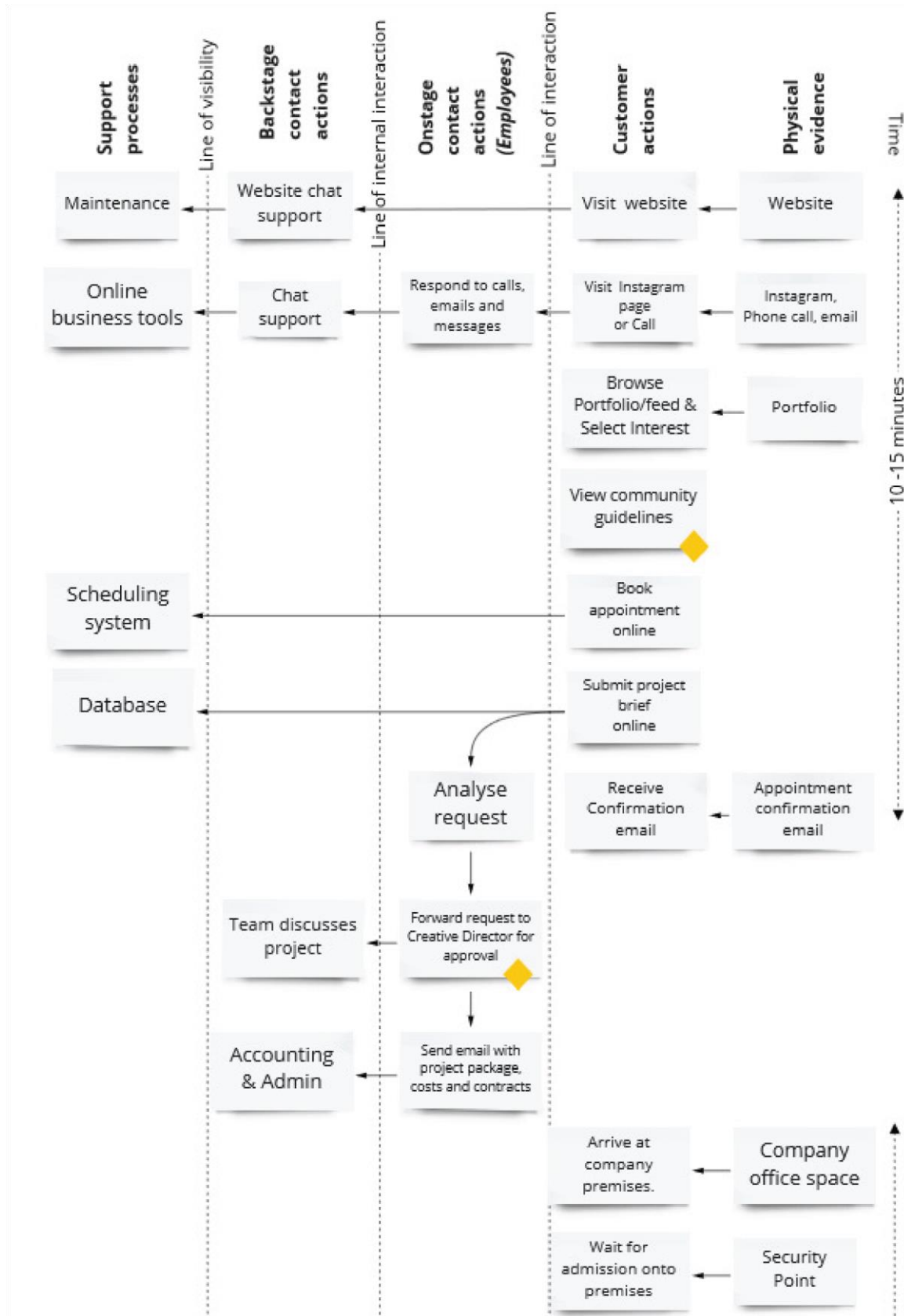
This failure analysis should be implemented every quarter in Mhoseenu's business year. Mhoseenu may also use this blueprint to compare what it envisions its ultimate service and processes to be with a competitor to serve as a benchmark against which refinements are measured.

4.3.2 Proposed Changes

The table below details the proposed changes to the existing service blueprint, as well as the persons or teams tasked with implementing the changes. The updated service blueprint shows the proposed solutions for the inefficiencies identified in the existing blueprint and tasks employees with their implementation.

Table 3. Proposed changes and Implementation Plan

| Solution | Team/Person Responsible | Implementation | Timeline |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---------------------|
| Company Creative Guidelines | People & Culture and website personnel | Publish the community guidelines of Mhoseenu on its website. | One working week |
| Stay Interviews | People & Culture | Clarifying and reinforcing strategic objectives. | Three working weeks |
| Employee Training | People & Culture | Informing and training employees on changes to operations and structure. | One working week |
| Automatic scheduling | Website personnel | Integrate a scheduling system into the website. | Two working weeks |
| Online submissions | Website personnel | Allow for submissions of project briefs on the website. | Two working weeks |



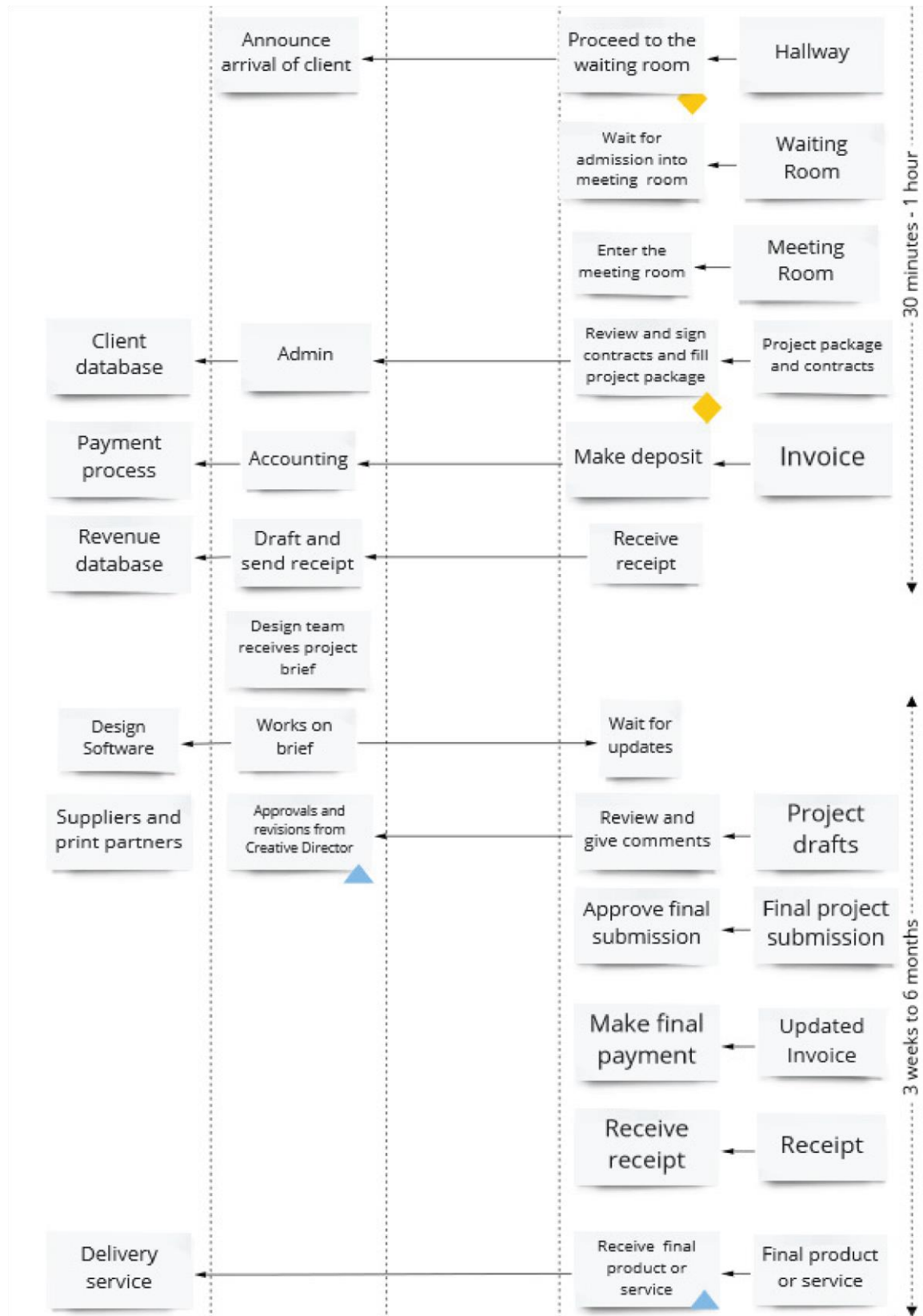


Figure 8. Updated Design Studio Service Blueprint

4.3.3 Effects of changes

4.3.3.1 Website Changes

Publishing the company's project guidelines on its website is essential because it informs potential clients about the kind of projects that Mhoseenu is willing to undertake and the projects it is unwilling to be party to. Furthermore, allowing clients to submit project briefs or proposals via the website eliminates the need for an online or in-person meeting to discuss the brief of a potential project. Also, it reduces the time spent in finalising project details before contracts are signed because the company will have substantial prior knowledge about the nature of the potential project and its requirements. Time is also saved because the company can immediately determine whether the potential project timeline fits within their existing schedule and whether they are equipped for the project. Lastly, combined with an automatic scheduling system and online submission, the time it takes for clients to move from visiting the Mhoseenu website or social media to getting an appointment date and time is reduced from 6-24 hours to 10 minutes-15 minutes.

4.3.3.2 Employee Training

Before implementing any changes in the structure and operations of a company, employees must be adequately informed about the changes and are given the necessary training.

4.3.3.3 Stay Interviews

A stay interview is conducted to understand current employees and their dislike about the current job processes, management styles and decisions. Stay interviews are beneficial because

they help reduce unwanted turnover, discover inefficiencies in communication and areas of disconnect between management and staff. It is essential to incorporate stay interviews into management practices because they bring to light hidden problems before they escalate.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS & LIMITATIONS

Conclusions

The Service blueprint carved out the potential wait points and fail points within Mhoseenu's service delivery system. It also maps out the entire customer journey from the point of contact to the delivery of the final product. The service blueprint highlights opportunities for service improvement and also the need for refinement of specific processes. The company should allow online project brief submissions and appointment scheduling to reduce the wait time for clients.

Based on the feedback from interviews conducted, employees are not well informed about the strategic objectives that management has set for the company, which affects their ability to contribute effectively. To alleviate this, the company's Line Of Sight analysis should be conducted bi-annually to update the employees on changes in the strategic objectives and how to achieve them. It is important for the company to pay particular attention to its customer service objective because majority of its potential clients base their decisions on client reviews. Leaving lasting positive impressions with clients will add to the many strengths the company already has and secure new clients.

The company's need for a structure that alleviates tension between creative work and business is addressed by adopting a circular organisational structure. This structure clearly defines the levels of communication to avoid confusion within the organisation.

Limitations

Although the Line Of Sight analysis results in clearly defined strategic objectives and action items, some employees may misinterpret the information and act contrary to them. In addition, some clients may be unwilling to submit project brief online as they may deem them highly confidential.

Recommendations

In the future, Mhoseenu may review its blueprint by comparing its idea of ultimate service and processes with competitors to serve as a benchmark against which refinements are measured.

The company may also conduct yearly surveys to gain insight into the changing market conditions and buyer behaviours, which will inform its strategic objectives. The company may also have to review its strategic objectives and set timelines for accountability.

The line of sight analysis can be conducted on a bi-annual basis, whilst the service blueprint can be reviewed quarterly. The organogram should be updated per turnover.

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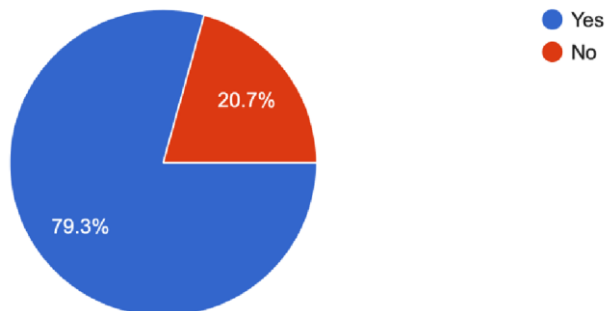
Appendix I

Item 1.

Word Cloud responses for the question ‘What would you look out for the most in selecting a creative service company to work with?’

Item 2.

Based on what you have heard, would you consider working with Mhoseenu?



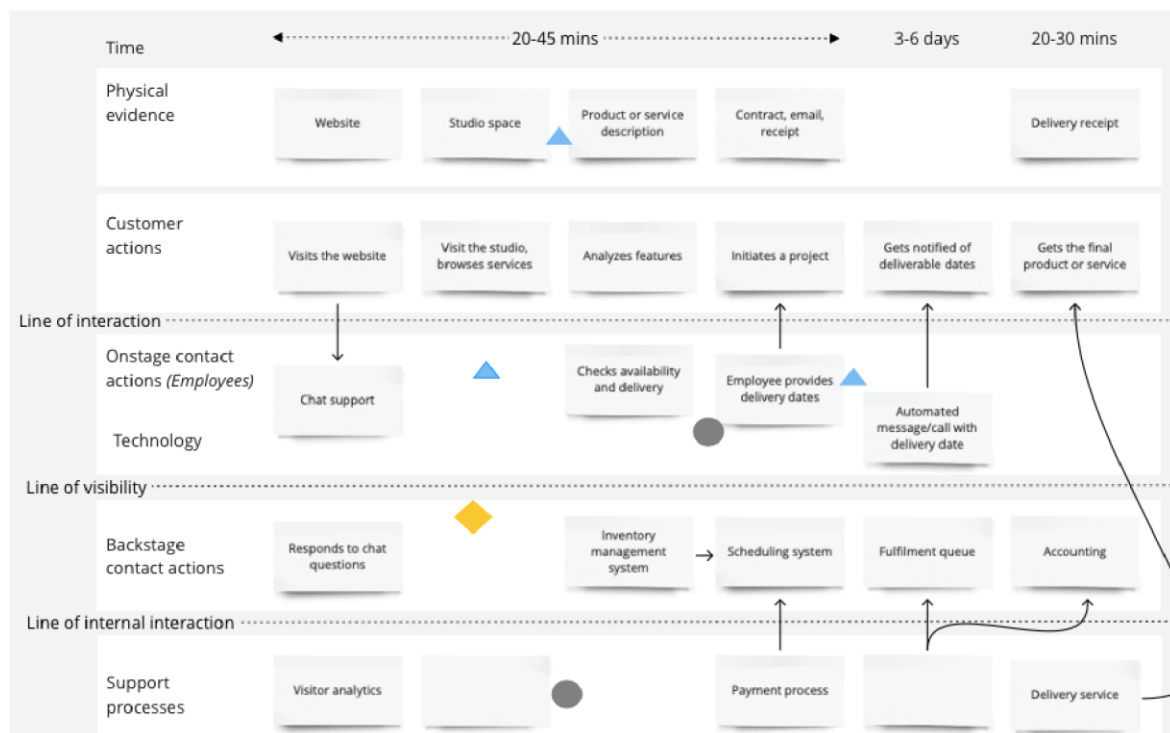
Item 3.

Word Cloud responses for the question ‘Based on what you have heard, would you work with.

Mhoseenu?

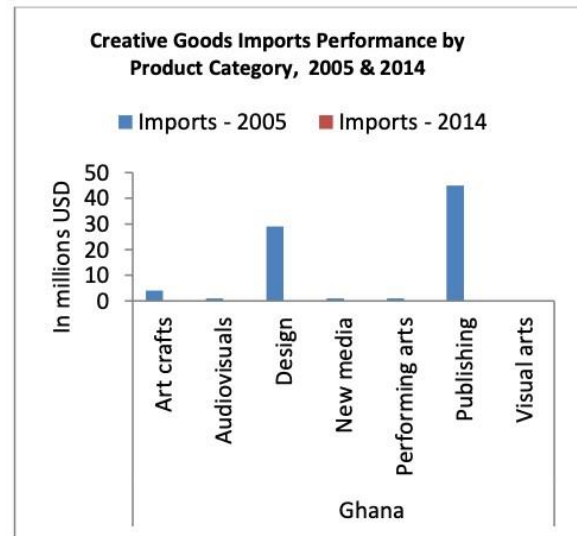
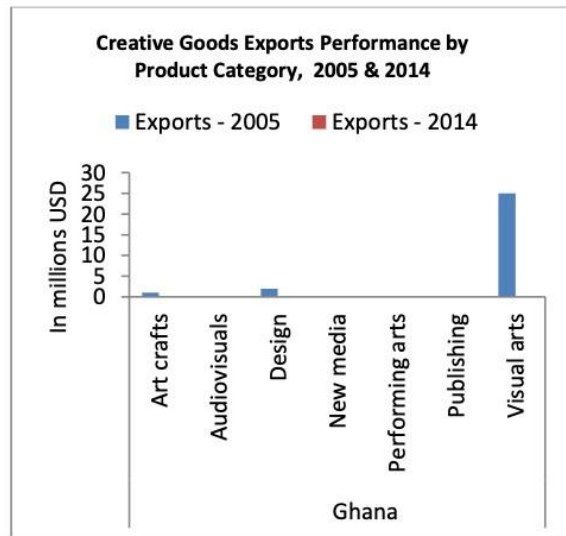
*Item 4.*

Sample Service Blueprint



Item 5.

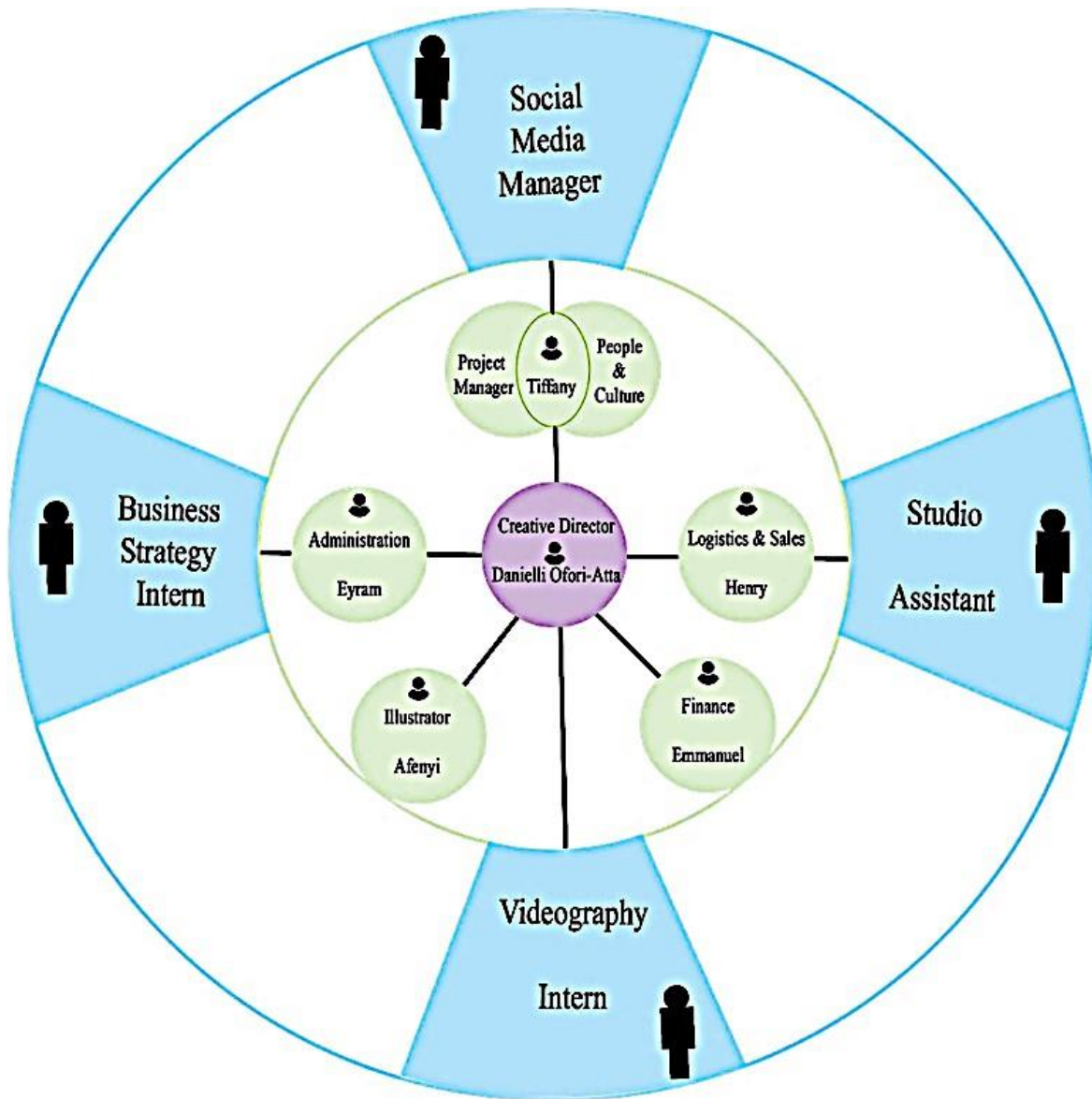
Creative Goods Import and Export Performance



Appendix II

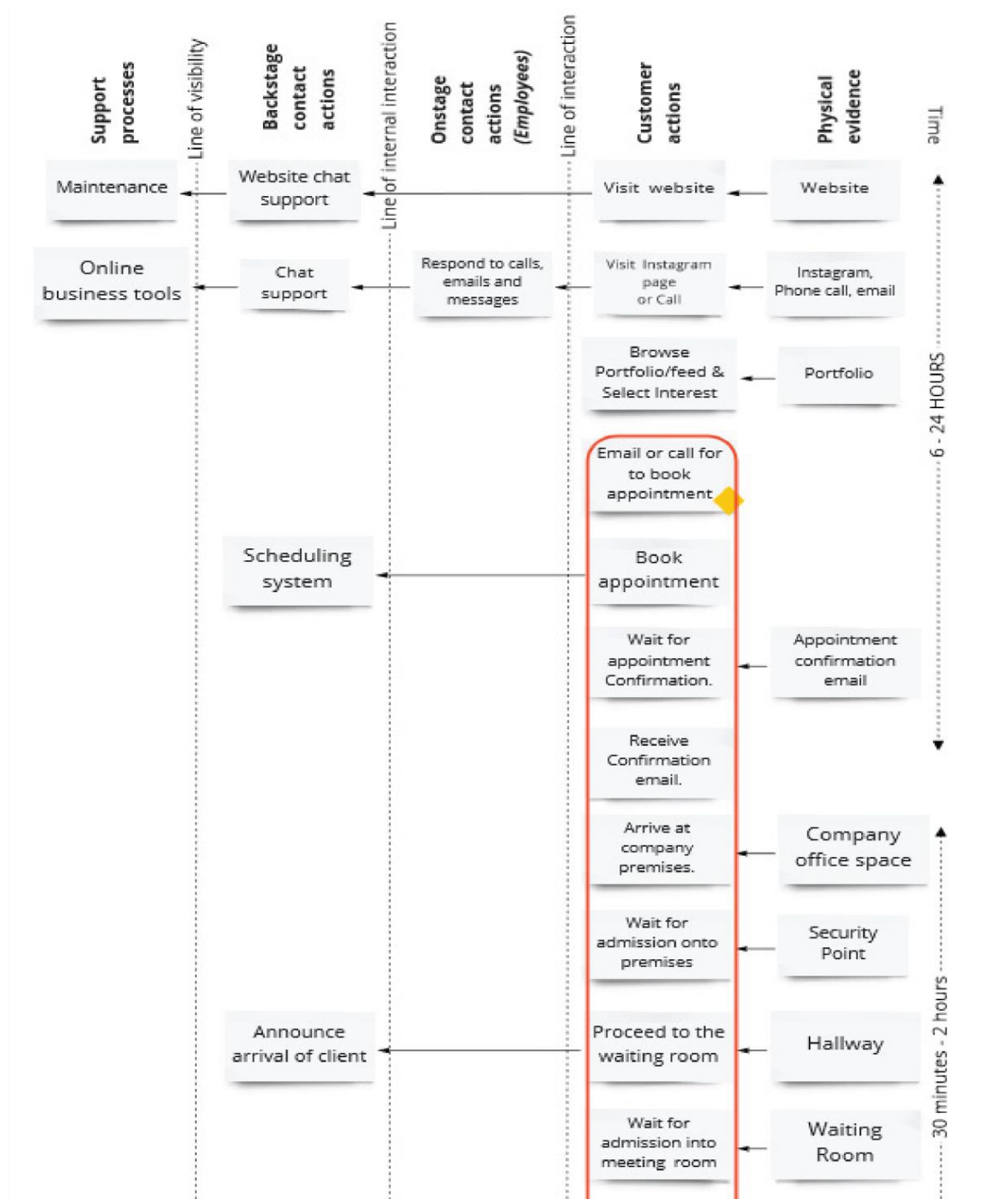
Project Dashboard

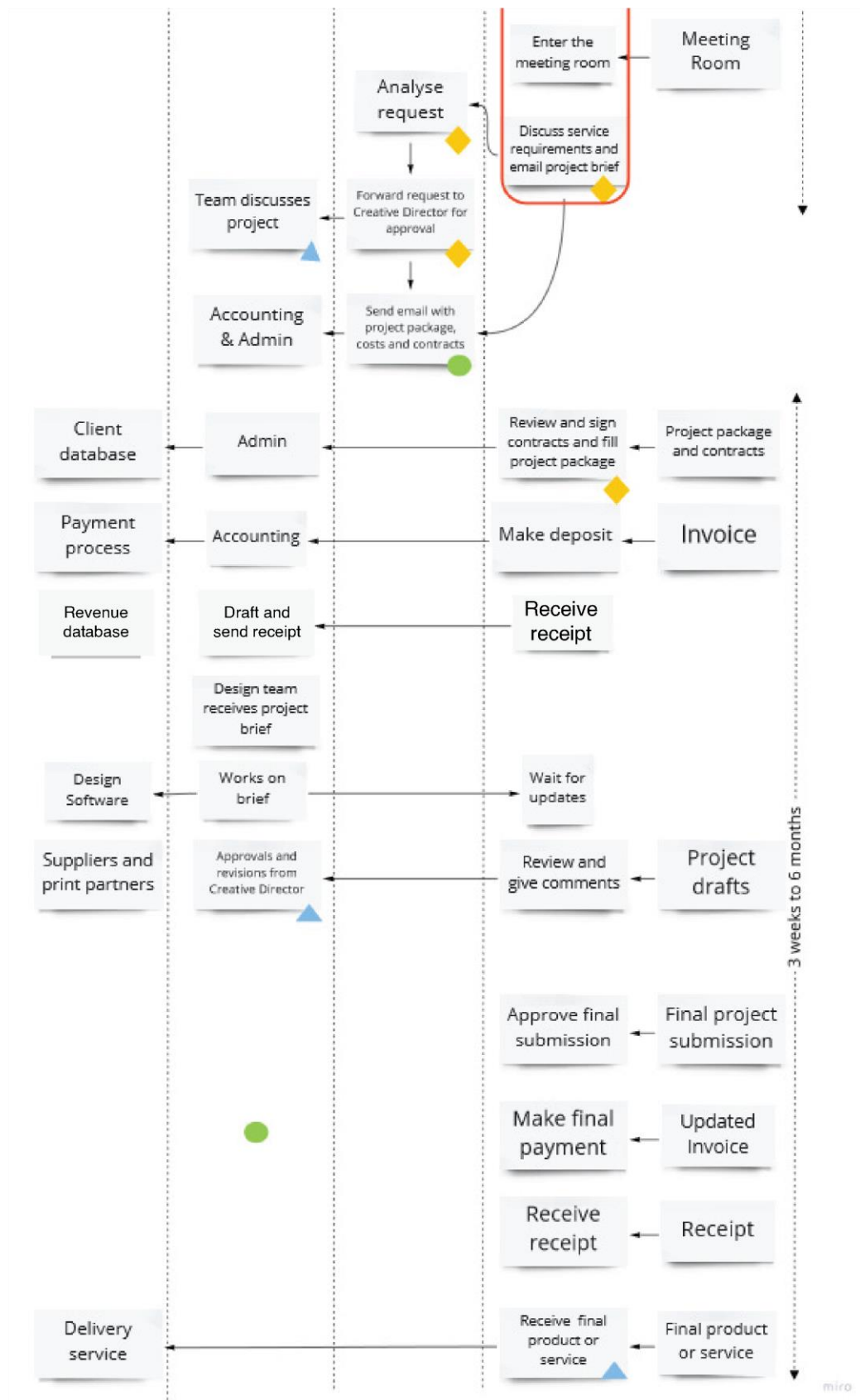
Item 1. Mhoseenu's proposed organogram



Item 2.

Existing Design Studio Service Blueprint





Item 3.

Potential Strategic Objectives and Action Items

| Strategic Objectives | Action Items |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Comprehensive service and products | Be knowledgeable about service processes, specialist terminologies and service offerings. |
| Creative development | Innovate new products and services. Creative education through masterclasses |
| Consistent service | Be knowledgeable on design processes, specialist terminology and service offerings from partners |
| Consistent quality | Carry out quality control checks on designs and tangible products before delivery. |
| Outstanding customer service | Focus solely on customer needs and be receptive. Provide client suggestions and offer alternative solutions for project enquiries not in Mhoseenu's scope of work. |

Item 4.

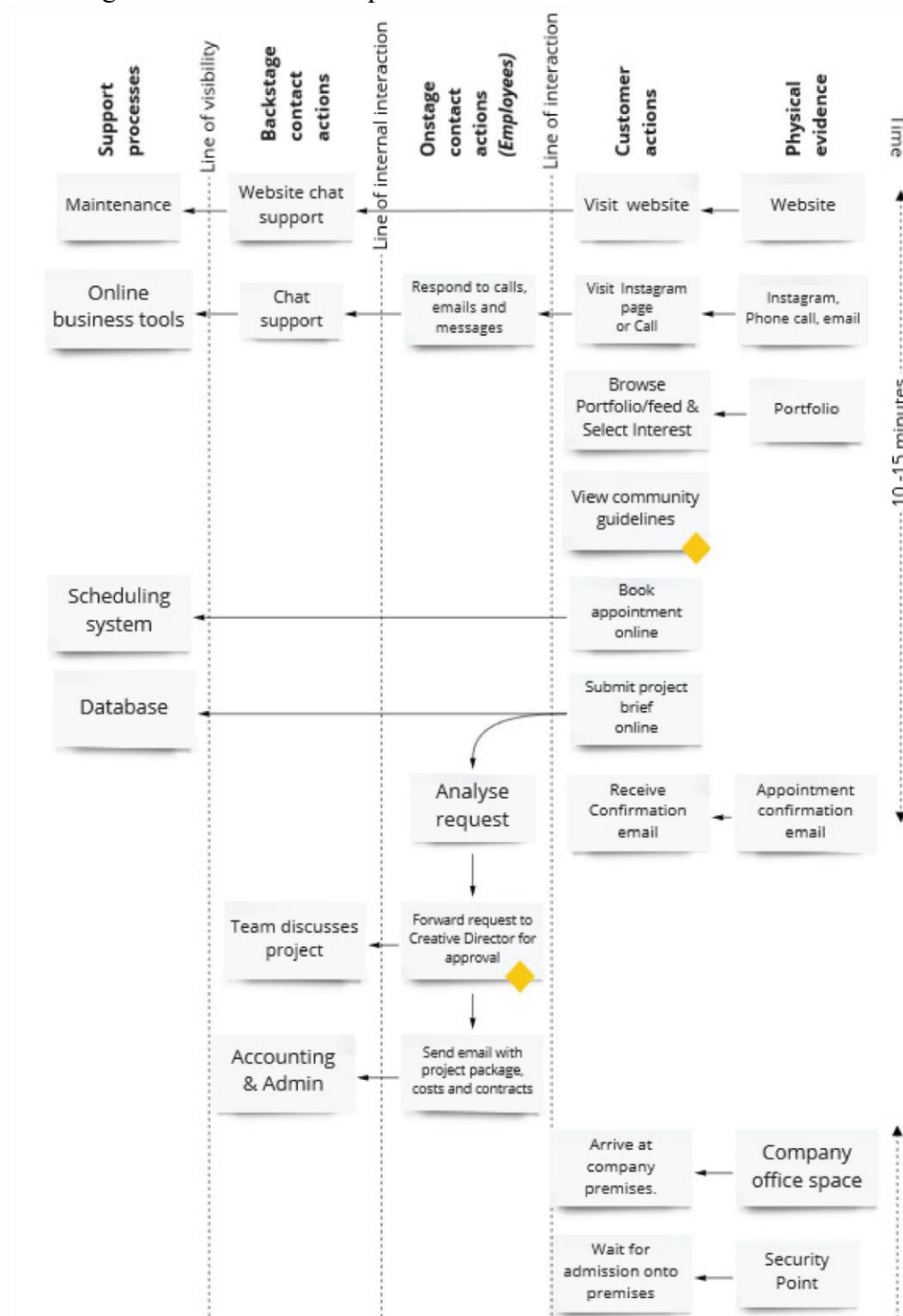
Proposed changes and Implementation Plan

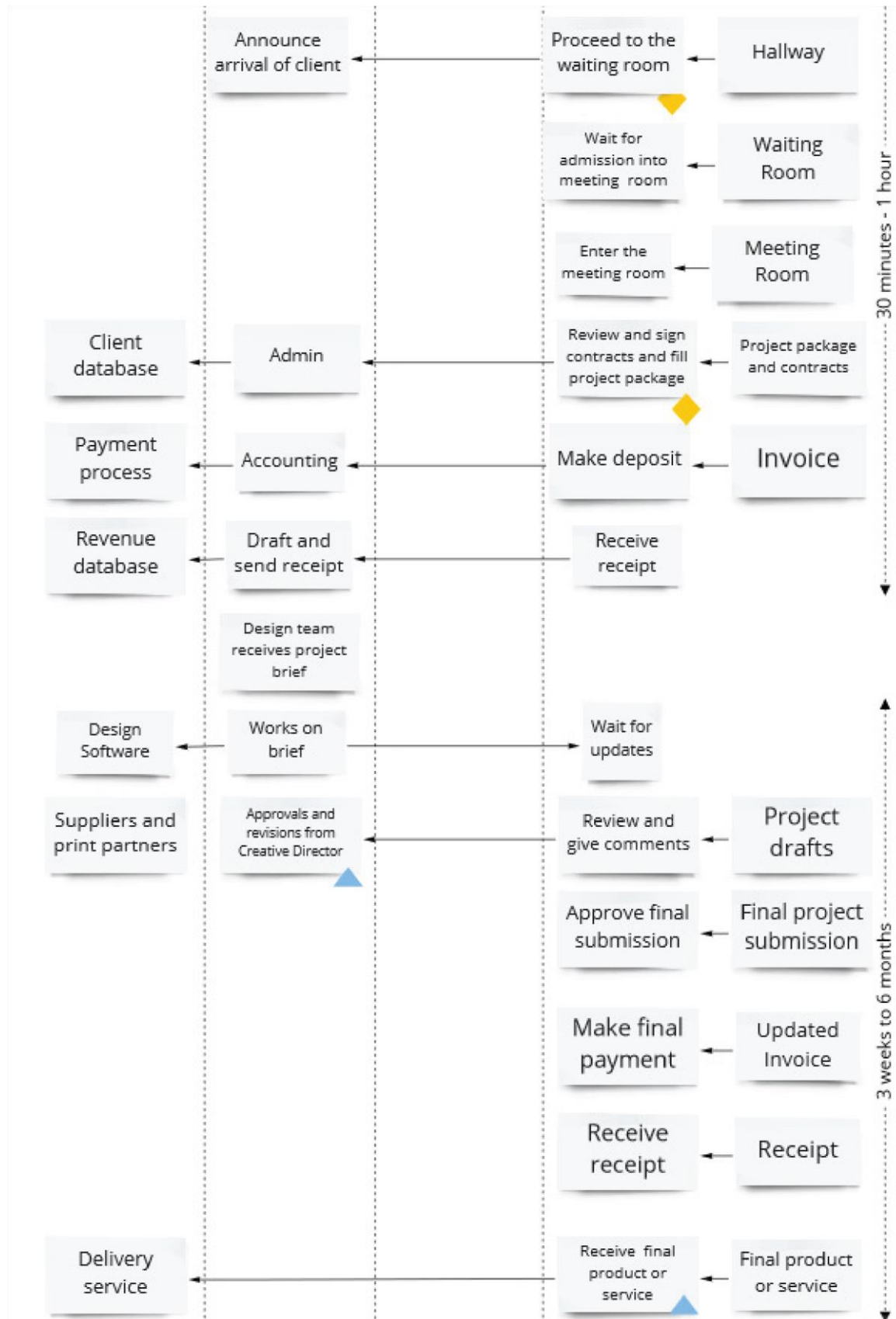
| Solution | Team/Person Responsible | Implementation | Timeline |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---------------------|
| Company Creative Guidelines | People & Culture and website personnel | Publish the community guidelines of Mhoseenu on its website. | One working week |
| Stay Interviews | People & Culture | Clarifying and reinforcing strategic objectives. | Three working weeks |
| Employee Training | People & Culture | Informing and training employees on changes to operations and structure. | One working week |
| Automatic scheduling | Website personnel | Integrate a scheduling system into the website. | Two working weeks |

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|
| Online submissions | Website personnel | Allow for submissions of project briefs on the website. | Two working weeks |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|

Item 5.

Updated Design Studio Service Blueprint





Appendix III

Item 1.

Consent Form

| Consent Form |
|---|
| <p>I, Nana Afua Ladje Anoff, am asking you to participate in a research study to understand the Operational workflow of Mhoseenu <i>better</i>. This research is solely for educational purposes hence will only be shared with Ashesi University and the management of Mhoseenu.</p> <p>This research aims to investigate the roles employees play in the operations at Mhoseenu and their responsibilities, to understand the flow of work and communication in the company and to understand the service delivery process. I will ask you to answer a few questions via zoom about your role in the company, your responsibilities, and questions about your employer/employees.</p> |
| <p>I do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.</p> <p>The most immediate benefit this research brings is the possibility of reform and an overhaul of the workflow in a direction that would benefit both you and the company.</p> <p>There is no planned compensation for participation in this study.</p> <p>Please sign below if you are willing to have this zoom interview audio recorded. You may still participate in this study if you are not willing to have the interview recorded. This audio recording will not be played for any other person in the final study and publication presentation.</p> |

☐ I do not want to have this interview recorded.

☐ I am willing to have this interview recorded:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Your privacy is important, and therefore, all recordings and responses would be kept encrypted using international encryption standards and stored in a drive only to be accessed by authorised personnel.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and if at any point you would like to halt your participation for any reason, you are free to do so. If there is a question you are not comfortable asking, you are free to skip the question or stop participating altogether.

I may contact you again to request your participation in a follow-up study. As always, your participation will be voluntary, and I will ask for your explicit consent to participate in any of the follow-up studies.

May we contact you again to request your participation in a follow-up study?

☐ Yes ☐ No

This research protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Ashesi University Human Subjects Review Committee. If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Chair, Ashesi University HSCR (irb@ashesi.edu.gh)

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

Signature of the person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

The printed name of the person obtaining consent _____

*Item 2.***Questionnaire Guide for Potential Clients**

1.

- Have you ever engaged the services of a creative house?

Yes/No

- Which companies have you used in the past?

.....

- How often do you engage their services?

.....

- How would you rate the speed of the service delivery process? (Scale 1-5 from timely to delayed)

- How would you describe the service delivery process? (Scale 1-5 from cumbersome to easily understood)

- How would you rate the level of communication throughout the delivery process? (Scale 1-5 from minimum to constant)

| |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you rate your satisfaction? (Scale 1-5 from very dissatisfied to very satisfied) |
| <p>2. What would you look out for in selecting a creative house to work with? (Allow short answers)</p> <p>.....</p> |
| <p>3. Have you ever heard of Mhoseenu?</p> <p>Yes/No</p> |
| <p>4. Based on what you have heard, would you work with Mhoseenu?</p> <p>Yes/No</p> |
| <p>5. Why?</p> |

Item 3.

The semi-structured interview guide (Employees)

| |
|---|
| Introduce and explain the project: An operational overhaul of Mhoseenu |
| Inform respondents that the interview is highly confidential. |
| Proceed to seek consent with consent form. |
| Ice breakers (How are you? How was your day?) |
| Gather information: Number of years working in Mhoseenu, previous positions held in the company. |
| <p>How would you describe your role in Mhoseenu?</p> <p>*If customer interaction is mentioned, include the below*</p> |

| |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the interaction you have with clients from the moment they walk into the service space. • How does further communication occur? • How would you describe the process you go through from the start to finish of a project? |
| How is work assigned to you? |
| Which colleagues do you communicate with throughout the lifespan of a project? |
| What kind of challenges, if any, have you encountered in performing your duties? |
| What are the objectives of Mhoseenu? |
| What do you hope to achieve in Mhoseenu? |

Item 4.

The semi-structured interview guide (Management)

| |
|--|
| What are the company's objectives? |
| How does the company boost employee morale? |
| How are project timelines set? |
| How would you describe the process you go through from the start to finish of a project? |
| How does communication occur in Mhoseenu? |
| What kind of challenges, if any, have you encountered with employee's performance? |