

Global Roll-out of Unique Methods and Tools for Co-creation Workshops

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Fujitsu offers spaces where ICT and design are combined to enable people to experience and develop new values, and where co-creation workshops with customers are held. These workshops for co-creation focus on given topics, aiming to identify challenges and solutions. Here, we employ original methods and tools developed by Fujitsu. Since these co-creation workshops have been in great demand at Fujitsu subsidiaries outside Japan in recent years, we evaluated the applicability of the methods and tools currently used at our workshops in Japan. We found that they have uniquely Japanese aspects that are advantageous and appreciated in other countries. This paper describes these methods and tools, which are actually employed at the co-creation space “HAB-YU platform” in the Roppongi district of Tokyo. It goes on to present and discuss cases in which co-creation workshops using these methods and tools were held overseas, as well as challenges and future prospects.

1. Introduction

As digital technologies evolve, consumer needs and values, and the business environment are undergoing significant changes. In order to respond to such diversified and complex market needs, business changes, including the development of new products and services, are required.

Fujitsu provides consulting services centered on co-creation workshops that utilize “design thinking” for customers with change-related needs. The primary goal of co-creation workshops for customers is to help them visualize the desired future course of their business and the actions their companies should take.

The quality of workshops depends on the combination of methods for running workshops and tools for inspiring ideas. The HAB-YU platform established in the Roppongi district of Tokyo in 2014 was born from the systematization of such methods and tools, as well as practical skills and spaces, which are the constituent elements for setting up of co-creation venues.¹⁾ As a venue for the practice of co-creation with customers, the HAB-YU platform conducts various workshops and its effectiveness in Japan has been demonstrated. On the other hand, it is a challenge to roll out co-creation workshops globally through methods and tools

cultivated in Japan.

This paper describes Fujitsu's proprietary methods and tools used in the HAB-YU platform. It introduces also examples of overseas cases based on these domestically developed methods.

2. Proprietary methods and tools

This section introduces the methods and tools used in the co-creation workshops run on the HAB-YU platform.

The term “HAB-YU” consists of “HAB,” which stands for Humans, Areas, and Businesses, among which ties (“YU” in Japanese) are to be forged in a variety of ways by bringing together various issues, ideas, and technologies. The HAB-YU platform aims to create new values through co-creation mainly with designers, and to identify and solve various problems. Besides thinking about matters of vision with designers, those involved are working with partners with expertise to bring visions to life, and to develop products and services that future society truly desires.

The HAB-YU platform supports the functional role of creating opportunities and relationships with customers with the following five elements.

- **Method**
In approaching future-oriented co-creation, we are working on creating human-centered visions and highly sustainable value.
- **Tools**
We are developing many support tools to make the generation of new ideas as part of co-creation more enjoyable and meaningful.
- **Technology**
We are conducting R&D on ICT-based tools and applications. We are also studying the creation of services based on ideas stored in the cloud.
- **Place**
We provide a space for open innovation that stimulates co-creation, based on the concept of "space with a margin" to encourage ideas.
- **Partnership**
We are working to connect fellows who share the same vision and people and companies who wish to





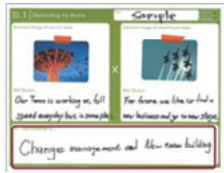
collaborate, in order to bring ideas to life.

The above elements were developed independently by Fujitsu to enhance the quality of ideas at workshops and to support active participation and smooth progress. Of these, this paper introduces distinctive card tools, and slides and worksheets used for the progress of workshops (**Table 1**).

1) Idea and know-how cards

These are cards that express ideas and know-how born at past workshops, to allow their general-purpose use. These cards currently number over 600 in Japanese and 300 in English. On the front side, they feature scenes of things realized through ICT, in the form of illustrations and catch phrases. The back side features a summary of the idea, a detailed explanation of the usage situation, and relationships with other idea cards. These cards are used first by intuitively selecting a card, then getting inspired with an idea from the content on that card, and then further developing

Table 1
Cards, progress slides, and worksheets for workshop.

Idea and know-how cards	Ideas born in past workshops are accumulated and compiled by application situation and content to make them usable for general purposes, so as to promote the generation of new ideas.	
Inspiration cards	These cards consist of various illustrations and keywords gleaned from the analysis of ideas born in past workshops, and are designed to inspire new idea.	
Image cards	These cards are used to use human intuition to elicit potential thoughts from abstract photographic materials.	
Workshop progress slides and worksheets	Frequently using images and animations, these materials present a variety of elements that make the purpose of the workshop easy to understand and generate a sense of excitement.	<div>  <p>Workshop progress slides</p> </div> <div>  <p>Worksheets</p> </div>

the idea by referring to other related cards.

2) Inspiration cards

These cards, created based on the analysis of hundreds of ideas that utilize ICT born at in-house workshops and classified into 30 types, are used to inspire ideas. Each card is composed of a title and illustration designed to stimulate ideas, as well as keywords that supplement the theme of each card. What is unique about these cards is that they were developed as cards to support the generation of new ideas when thinking about service ideas. Besides inspiring new ideas, these cards can also be combined for storytelling (creating stories) based on their illustrations, which can be interpreted variously.

3) Image cards

This is a collection of 100 assembled abstract photographs of different types made into cards for inspiring ideas and promoting communication. They are effective as a tool using a metaphor elicitation method that draws thoughts and ideas from the subconscious by utilizing human intuition.

4) Workshop progress slides and worksheets

These slides and worksheets are designed to support the smooth progress of the workshops, by, for example, focusing participants' thoughts on the themes for discussion, or facilitating the current stage of discussion progress, whether it calls for consensus building or debate. They allow the participants to clearly understand the purpose of the various workshops and participate in them with a high level of awareness. The progress slides use animations to supply the participants with just the right amount of information needed at the time and guide them along. Moreover, using photographs and other images to stimulate the senses makes for exciting elements that cannot be expected in conventional meetings. The worksheets are designed in combination with explanatory slides to assist the natural progression of the workshop.

3. Overseas cases

Like in Japan, there was a rising need for co-creation workshops with customers overseas, and the sharing of workshop know-how and tools was sought. Therefore, in order to spread our know-how across the world, we had to verify whether the co-creation workshops cultivated in Japan would be effective overseas.

This presented us with the opportunity to check

whether our proprietary methods and tools would be accepted and used abroad. We achieved this through a co-creation workshop project having the following three objectives:

- 1) Dissemination of design thinking to overseas employees of the Fujitsu Group to ensure its adoption
- 2) Trials with local corporate customers
- 3) Provision of proprietary tools and methods to overseas project teams

Below are some cases implemented according to these respective objectives.

3.1 Case 1: Implementation of design thinking education for employees at Fujitsu Australia Limited (FAL)

In the Oceania region, we implemented design thinking education mainly for marketing departments, including FAL executives, with a view to deploying co-creation workshop services based on design thinking (Figure 1). This activity consisted in introducing the necessity and characteristics of the design thinking approach in the form of a workshop designed to allow the participants to gain first-hand experience.

The participants were faster than the Japanese to warm up through the use of inspiration cards, and they demonstrated remarkable flexibility of thinking. Further, the conception of ideas using these cards had the same effect as in Japan, as attested by the following feedback obtained from a questionnaire.

- Using inspiration cards triggers new ideas and it was a lot of fun.
- This is an innovative technique that gets rid of the existing framework, and I found it very interesting.



Figure 1
Workshop at FAL.

- It was thrilling to create new ideas by combining my own ideas and cards at random.

The satisfaction level generated by the workshop as a whole was also high, confirming that the design thinking educational program developed in Japan is effective even overseas with different cultures and languages.

3.2 Case 2: Co-creation workshop with FAL customer company T

We conducted a trial workshop with company T, whose main business is network transmission services. The problem the customer wanted to solve was Faster Project Delivery (speeding up project execution). In the workshop, we used image cards as a tool to visualize the realities of the organization. The cards were used to depict the company's current state and desired state and identify the gap between the two with the help of a proprietary worksheet. Then, keywords representing the factors were elicited, challenge themes were set, and the themes were narrowed down to several themes to the liking of the participants.

Sessions for visualizing the gap between the ideal and reality are used in co-creation workshops centering on the theme of work style innovation in Japan as well. The participants acted in largely similar manner to their counterparts in Japan regarding the selection of image cards, the extraction of keywords, the handling of work instructions, and so on, and the workshop progressed smoothly within the allotted time.

The comments of the workshop participants are introduced below.

- A predesigned worksheet served as the guide for the workshop.
- The use of visual stimuli helped us clarify various ideas.
- Processes and templates allowed the smooth progress of the workshop.

3.3 Case 3: Co-creation workshop with Bank B, a leading bank in Spain

This project was a consulting support project led by Fujitsu Spain to help Bank B to change its work style (employee work style reform). The challenge faced by the customer was to determine the ideal state of branches in order to provide a seamless customer experience amidst the current digitalization trend, and

which technologies would help it realize such changes.

Approximately 80 ideas and know-how cards related to work styles that were used in Japan were introduced at the co-creation workshop with the customer. As a result, 25 concept designs were produced, and 15 among these were approved by the CEO of the company as prototypes for work style reform.²⁾

The outcome was a long-term partnership agreement with the customer. The customer cited the following three reasons for selecting Fujitsu:

- They know innovation methods.
- They are capable of comprehensive technology provision.
- They have a methodology that contributes to co-creation.

In this particular case, our know-how of the co-creation process and our ability to provide the necessary tools was the deciding factor for the conclusion of a partnership agreement.

3.4 Observations

Based on the results of the overseas cases described above, we confirmed that the methods and tools of the co-creation workshops cultivated in Japan are accepted abroad and can be expected to produce good results. Characteristics that have come to light in overseas practices are introduced below.

The uniquely Japanese character of the workshop, including its methods and tools, creates a sense of extra-ordinariness among overseas participants. The oriental illustrations depicted in our original workshop tools, the detailed worksheet design, the progress slide presentations, and so on, all contribute to a perception of extraordinariness akin to the feeling of hospitality (*omotenashi* in Japanese) one may get from the refined service at a luxury hotel.

In the Oceania region, the FAL employees who jointly implemented the trial with customers expressed the view that the Japanese workshop methods and tools are strong assets for co-creation workshops abroad as well. In Western culture, a Japanese twist is a more attractive element than the Japanese themselves think, and we found out that this can be exploited to good advantage in the global business environment.³⁾

On the other hand, attention needs to be paid to the size of the paper on which worksheets are printed. Because of the nature of the respective languages,

entry areas in English language worksheets need to be wider compared with Japanese, so overseas it is better to use worksheets of size A3 (297×420 mm), which is a standard size better accommodated there.

4. Challenges and future prospects

This section describes the challenges and prospects for the overseas expansion of co-creation workshops.

As mentioned in the previous section, it has been confirmed that our independently developed methods and tools for co-creation workshops are effective overseas. Further, our independently developed tools also serve to ensure that workshops are of uniform quality when we develop co-creation workshops across the world. In the future, it will be necessary to consider a system for the overseas provision and popularization of our independently developed tools, including in areas where trials have not been conducted.

On the other hand, practical skills for the use of methods and tools are indispensable for effective planning and operation of co-creation workshops. In the cases introduced in this paper, people with practical skills were involved from the planning stage of each workshop, ensuring effective implementation and operation. These practical skills are refined by the accumulation of knowledge and experience, but an issue is the fact that they depend on the aptitude, skills, and minds of the practitioners. Therefore, the provision of human resource development programs for each region is indispensable for the overseas development of co-creation workshops, and it is necessary to incorporate such programs into the system for sharing of proprietary tools.

There are also ways to efficiently procure mastery of practical skills while maintaining uniform quality. For each session (idea elicitation, group work, comprehensive sharing, and so on), progress slides and worksheets should be combined into one package. As the workshop progresses, there are certain rules (making relationship building among participants the top priority, repeating divergence and convergence, and so on), making it possible to design programs efficiently while maintaining uniform quality by combining packages according to those rules. By doing this, it is possible to achieve both quality assurance and human resource development for the operation of workshops.

After learning program design for standard workshops, one can then customize programs according to the needs of each region and customer.

5. Conclusion

This paper described the international acceptability and effectiveness of Fujitsu's proprietary methods and tools for use in co-creation workshops with customers. Regarding the most important practical skills for the planning and operation of co-creation workshops, we will spread the use of standardized tools for education and practical training that reflect Japan's strengths, and promote human resource development at overseas bases. Through these activities, we aim to be a co-creation partner for customers as a global ICT company from Japan.

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