Business Model of a Creative Company and Design Management

Katarzyna Caban-Piaskowska[*]

The aim of the article is to present the creative company's business model in the context of design management. The article is a literature review. The first part outlines reasons for dealing with the issues of the creative sector, including business models. It presents definitions of the creative sector and of a creative organisation/company, as well as the characteristics of the creative company's business model. In the second part, reason for focusing on design management issues, its definitions and features are explored. The third part presents a comparison of business models of creative companies with design management. The author also attempts to establish whether any relationship between these two trends exists and what connects them.

Keywords: creative company, creative sector, business model of a creative company, design management, design management features.

Model biznesu firmy kreatywnej a design management

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie modelu biznesu firmy kreatywnej w kontekście design management. Opracowanie jest krytycznym przeglądem literatury. W części pierwszej opisano przyczynę zajęcia się problematyką przedsiębiorstw kreatywnych w tym modeli biznesowych, przedstawiono definicje przedsiębiorstwa/firmy kreatywnej, a także cechy modelu biznesu firmy kreatywnej. W części drugiej opisano przyczynę zajęcia się problematyką design management, przedstawiono definicje, a także jego cechy. Część trzecia jest zestawieniem porównawczym modeli biznesowych firm kreatywnych z cechami design management i próbą odpowiedzi na pytania: czy istnieje jakaś zależność pomiędzy tymi dwoma tendencjami, czy jest coś co je ze sobą łączy? Na tej podstawie autor stworzył model teoretyczny, który w przyszłości będzie weryfikowany przez badania empiryczne.

Słowa kluczowe: firma kreatywna, przedsiębiorstwo kreatywne, model biznesu firmy kreatywnej, design management, cechy design management.

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[*] **Katarzyna Caban-Piaskowska** – dr, Strzemiński Academy of Art in Łódź, Faculty of Industrial and Interior Design. https://orcid.org 0000-0003-2400-2003.

Correspondence address: Academy of Art in Łódź, Faculty of Industrial and Interior Design, 121 Wojska Polskiego Street, 91-726 Łódź; e-mail: k.caban-piaskowska@o2.pl.

1. Introduction

Many different business models exist; they evolve and change. From time to time, new ones appear, such as the creative company (Johnson, Christensen & Kagermann, 2008, p. 50) that has recently emerged. It originated as an effect of the development of innovative economy, based on knowledge and non-material resources with measurable financial value. On the other hand, however, we observe a trend of using a new management technique i.e. design management.

The research problem explored in the article is the question whether creative companies and businesses using design management have any common features.

2. Methodological solutions

The article is a critical literature review. Results are based on earlier findings presented in literature. On the basis of a literature survey of the development of concepts, supplemented by a selective literature review for the period between 2000 and 2018, this article aims at presenting the creative company´s business model in the context of design management. The framework of this research is an evolutionary theory, and analyses are based on a typical format of theoretical papers published in international journals.

The author conducted a critical literature review relating to strategic management theory and resource-based view, concentrating on publications that explored creative companies business models and their features, as well as the technique of design management, including the characteristic of companies applying design management. On this basis, the author examined the relationship between the two tendencies and attempted to establish whether anything connects them.

The challenge was to avoid being overwhelmed by the existing paradigms and logics that dominate in the field of management research. A research gap was identified in the process: the relationship between creative businesses and the use of design management. or elements common for both theories, have yet to be analysed by scholars.

3. Creative company

Creativity is a component that connects all sectors. It is unquestionably present in all human activities; nevertheless, only in some cases its contribution to the effects of one's work, which is intellectual property, prevails (Howkins, 2005, pp. 117–125).

It is estimated that the creative sector employs approximately 650,000 people in Poland. In 2016, the estimated added value of creative industries

represented 6.0 per cent of the total regional GDP. The sector has been growing at a fast pace against the background of the entire economy, which seems a significant tendency (Creative industries of Małopolskie voivodeship – situation and development conditions, 2016).

The concept of the creative industry was created by the government of Great Britain in the late 1990s, in order to combine cultural and commercial activity. Its aim was to make cultural activity present on the market and let market forces influence it. It coincided with the IT revolution. According to scientists, it affected changes in creation, production, re-production, distribution, commercialisation and consumption of products and services offered by organisations operating in this sector (see Coblence, Normandin & Poisson-de Haro, 2014, pp. 126–144; Moyon & Lecocq, 2013). What is more, new types of products and services were created (Evens, 2010, pp. 41–58; Hunter, Bedell & Mumford, 2007, pp. 69–90; Moyon & Lecocq 2013), while the number of increasingly powerful intermediaries decreased (Searle, 2011).

In the 21st century, the role of creative sectors in the economy has grown significantly, to the extent that the creative sector has been identified as the largest employer in a growing number of reports and analyses focusing on the economic development of individual countries and entire continents. It may, therefore, be concluded that the development of this sector is particularly important from the point of view of economic growth (Creative Economy Report, 2008. p. 4).

3.1. The essence of the creative company

A variety of definitions and classifications of the creative company can be found in literature and published studies. According to the frequently referred to classification of the British Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), activities of the creative company include: advertising, architecture, art and antiques, computer games, handicraft, designing, film and video, fashion design, music, performing arts, publishing, software, radio and television (cf. Martins & Martins, 2002; DCMS, 2009).

Other analyses are based on the definition of Kern European Affairs (KEA), which distinguishes three areas: traditional arts, cultural activity and creative activity. Companies operating in each of these areas create, produce, distribute and publicize creative goods and services (KEA, 2009). However, some researchers looks at the creative company from the perspective of generated and distributed laws of intellectual property (Caves, 2003, pp. 73–78).

Nevertheless, the most general definition of the creative company has been formulated by the subsidiary institution of the United Nations Organisation – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD): the creative industries are the cycles of creation, production and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual

capital as primary inputs (UNCTAD, 2010). Still, the decision which activities are seen as "creative" depends mainly on the arbitrary opinion of researchers or public authorities interested in the development of the creative company (cf. Moultrie & Young, 2009, pp. 300–302).

Creative industries are a holistic concept that changes how we think about art, media and design by combining them with digitisation, creativity and intellectual capital (Howkins, 2001). Definitions of creative industries often accentuate the blending of culture and market (cf. Caves, 2003, pp. 73–78), where economic as well as non-economic values are designed, produced and distributed (cf. Creative Economy Report, 2008. p. 4). The term "creative industries" brings together many different economic activities which initially seem unrelated (Flew & Cunningham, 2010, pp. 113–123), such as:
- companies in which production and distribution are strongly industrialised (e.g. film, television, publishing, music),
- highly labour-intensive companies, including culture and art (e.g. handicraft, design, visual arts),
- highly commercialised companies (e.g. marketing and advertising, software).

For the need of this article, authors adopted the definition that takes into account the fact that the creative industry is created by a group of companies which generate both tangible as well as intangible products or artistic services, which comprise creative content (mainly intellectual property), economic value and marketing purposes. Given their specific character, such companies are often referred to as creative companies/ businesses (cf. Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993, pp. 293–294; Dziurski, 2016, pp. 89–90). In the field of economic activity, as entities subject to competition pressures, obliged to adjust to changes in the market, etc., creative companies use artistic and creative abilities of their employees or other contractors.

3.2. Business model of the creative company

The concept of the business model is an essential and permanent element of marketing (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2009) and an inherent component of each business undertaking (Teece, 2010, pp. 172–194). We can come across numerous interpretations of this concept (cf. Brettel, Strese & Flatten, 2012, pp. 85–98). Business models arouse growing interest of both scientists and business practitioners (Brettel, Strese & Flatten, 2012, p. 87). A popular definition was formulated by D. Teece, who claims that the business model depicts the way the company delivers value to the consumer and turns fees into profit (Teece, 2010, pp. 172–194).

Timmers describes the business model as architecture for products, services and the flow of information, together with descriptions of various

economic entities and their roles, as well as the depiction of potential profits for different business players and the source of their revenue (Timmers, 1998).

For the purpose of this paper, the author has chosen the definition of the business model that depicts the logic of creating and capturing the value for the benefit of a company and supplying it to the customer (cf. Coblence, Normandin & Poisson-de Haro 2014, pp. 126–144; Moyon & Lecocq, 2013; Zott, Amit & Massa, 2011, pp. 1019–1042).

The four models of creative companies/businesses presented in the article were constructed on the basis of Caban-Piaskowska's (2018, pp. 53–65) classification of kinds of business models in creative industries, which was complemented by features of creative companies.

Creative service providers			
Value for the consumer	**Profit formula***	**Key resources**	**Key processes**
Providing services protected by copyright law (B2B segment)	Revenue: fee for service provision Costs: service provision, materials	Knowledge and skills; relations; reputation; strong brand; efficient management system	Creating and designing; selling
Innovativeness of the business model: intellectual input, using artistic skills and knowledge, aesthetics, non-material values of the product.			
Analysed company or creator: advertising agency, design workshop, visual identification studio, exhibition space designer, designing visual communication.			
Creative content producers			
Value for the consumer	**Profit formula***	**Key resources**	**Key processes**
Producing content which is delivered to wide public (B2C segment)	Revenue: selling content, advertising, granting licence, Costs: producing content, marketing	Idea, knowledge and skills; relations; financial resources; machines and devices; reputation; strong brand; efficient management system	Creating and designing; production; marketing
Innovativeness of the business model: intellectual input, awareness of artistic trends, work as art – the aim in itself (art for art's sake), aesthetics, non-material values, effects of work of a large and diversified creative team.			
Analysed company or the creator: film producers, graphic designer, film costumes designing			

Creative experience providers			
Value for the consumer	**Profit formula***	**Key resources**	**Key processes**
Providing products / services in the form of experiences (B2C segment)	Revenue: fee for using, advertising Costs: preparing products / services, marketing	Knowledge and skills; Financial resources; relations; reputation; strong brand; efficient management system	Creating and designing; production; organization; events; marketing
Innovativeness of the business model: intellectual input, using artistic skills and knowledge, aesthetics, non-material values, subjective customer satisfaction, the idea is the product which is supposed to appeal to the customer.			
Analysed company or the creator: theatre producers, theatre costumes designing, scenography, audio-visual effects for concerts designer (VJ), concert and festival organizers			
Creative originals producers			
Value for the consumer	**Profit formula***	**Key resources**	**Key processes**
Creating unique goods (B2C segment)	Revenue: selling Costs: fixed costs, making products	Machines and devices; knowledge and skills; reputation; strong brand	Creating and designing; production; selling
Innovativeness of the business model: added value in the form of original designs, limited amount production, aesthetic input, art as a product, effect of work of a large and diversified creative team, subjective customer satisfaction.			
Analysed company or the creator: artisans, fashion designers, bicycle manufacturers, creative agencies providing complex service for clients in the fashion industry, jewellery designers			

Tab. 1. Business models in the creative company. Source: based on Caban-Piaskowska, 2018, pp. 53–65.

3.3. Features of the creative company business model

In order to situate creative companies on the market, we need to identify their features. Business models of creative companies are known to have the a number of characteristics that we shall outline below (Caban-Piaskowska, 2018, pp. 53–65).

Exceptionally high levels of uncertainty ("nobody knows") regarding the demand for goods is typical of creative industries. Despite detailed market research, entrepreneurs do not know how consumers will react to new products. Many Mornings, a company selling pairs of socks that are different while still being a match, is an example.

The majority of their products (creative products) are experience goods, e.g. stage visual effects or stylists' services. The satisfaction they provide is subjective and, as such, hard to measure.

The work of creative companies is art: the aim in itself (art for art's sake). Workers-artists have enough experience and knowledge to know how to do the work and what tools or techniques to use. Nevertheless, they are not willing to work for a lower salary, because they are aware of the uniqueness of their work and the price it should be sold for. In addition, the creative process itself gives them satisfaction. In the case of many, work is their lifestyle.

The collective process of creation is an attribute of the activity of creative companies. When artists-designers are creating a complex product, they work in very large and diversified teams, whose members have different competencies and knowledge as well as various visions of the final product. An example is the company "Pan tu nie stał".

The workforce of creative companies is diversified. Some people move from job to job, others prefer the security of a large organisation and stable employment. Some contribute small improvements, others undertake huge projects. It is typical of them to place emphasis on mobilising people around an idea, to appreciate their input and the opportunity to use their creativity. This is how they create new things.

Creative companies organize co-operation networks. When creative products, which are the effect of human imagination and the ability to generate original ideas, are made, freelancers are invited to work alongside full-time employees. On the one hand, creative professionals are employed full-time in various organisations, such as fine art academies or other companies; this provides them with a sense of stability. On the other hand, they also do commission work for other companies, which provides an additional motivation and stimulates their creativity.

What is more, creative companies tend to operate in an informal atmosphere and have team-based organisational structure, which is conducive to a free flow of ideas and open communication between employees. Cooperation allows them to quickly react to any changes that may appear.

New ideas form the basis of operation of any creative company. Their innovations are not limited to new or improved products, but encompass new forms of expression, as well as new aesthetic values. In this context, an innovation can be seen as the transformation of an idea into a market product or service, a unique process of creation, or a new form of service provision. The success of an innovation depends on the conditions and technical possibilities of a creative company, as well as the product's market attractiveness.

Creative companies provide very different products: from audio-visual effects at concert, to documentary photographs, to advertising campaigns or educational films. The range of products offered by creative sector is almost unlimited – for this reason, it requires polarised skills.

Creative companies place emphasis on uniqueness, on the adjustment of a product to customers' needs in order to meet certain cultural and aesthetic demands.

Creative companies do not care about standardisation or lowering production costs – concerns typical of traditional sectors; instead, they focus on improving the quality and adding value to a product.

Creative companies differ in size – from one-person business entities (a photographer or a graphic designer), small and medium companies (an advertising agency or a company manufacturing socks), to large organisations (a clothing company or a bicycle manufacturer).

The functioning of creative companies rests on a strong bond between the creator and the entrepreneur – a single person, or two individuals working together.

4. Design management

A market where organisations operate is a consumer market. Apart from very good quality and functionality, customers expect aesthetic sensations, added value. Design management in an organisation may offers it. The concept of design management is gradually becoming more and more significant (Best, 2010, p. 6).

Although the idea of design management first appeared back in the 1960s, the discussion about what it really is has continued since. It still eludes unambiguous definitions and clear-cut classifications. In Great Britain, which is the cradle of design management, it has yet to be resolved whether design management should be categorized as an element of art, design, or business and management. The birthplace of design management is the Royal College of Art in London and London Business School. At the time, Peter Gorb, a seminal figure in the development of this concept, was the head of the Department of Design Management.

Simultaneously, lectures on the subject were held at the College of Art in the US. The most prominent expert in the field was Bill Hannon, who became a fervent advocate of creating the Design Management Institute in Boston.

Around the same time, with the concept's growing popularity, the number of members of the Institute increased by 400%, and the idea of design management began to spread to other continents. Institutions such as Harvard Business School became interested in exploring the field and, together with the DMI, embarked on international research. Since 1989, the Institute has been publishing a quarterly titled *Design Management Journal* – a leading publication exploring design management.

Best (2006) points to four significant reasons for the growing value of design management:
1. Companies are becoming more aware of the innovative role of design. They see design management as an efficient tool for introducing new

solutions that make their products stand out in the market and provide them with permanent competitive advantage. Designers willing to take the opportunity will work for companies ready to employ them.

2. With the expanding offer of the market, consumers aspire to improving their quality of life. Gradually, yet more and more consistently, they expect quality products, which can be manufactured thanks to design management. Projects created by artist-designers may actually be what consumers look for.

3. The attitude to design management itself has been changing. It involves a shift from pattern management to design management. Importantly, in such situation artists-designers are members of project teams where the work alongside specialists from other fields.

4. The role of design management is growing. It becomes a bridge connecting the most important economic and cultural aspects of functioning of particular nations. Thus, design management contributes to building healthy, balanced societies. Consequently, the position of artist-designers strengthens and new possibilities open up for them, e.g. the opportunity to work in large organisations.

4.1. Design management – selected definitions

The idea of design management has numerous interpretations. For years, the idea has evolved, changed its meaning and context (Erichsen & Christensen, 2013, p. 107). It can be noticed especially when analysing the relationship between the concept of design and the idea of management (Bonaccorsi, 2008).

Past publications in the field of design management centred around: definitions (Best, 2006, p. 6–10; 2010, p. 6–8), targets (Farr, 1965, pp. 38–39; Blaich & Blaich, 1993), place and level of organisation (Cooper & Press, 1995; Borja de Mozota, 2006, pp. 44–53), people who introduce a project (Gorb, 1990, pp. 67–80), managing the project, as well as the leadership, duties and teams (Turner & Topalian, 2002), as well as the functioning network (McBride, 2007, p. 2, 20; Erichsen & Christensen, 2013, p.116). Design management has also been analysed as an element that connects various functions (Bruce & Bessant, 2002), departments, and as an integrator of stakeholders (Acklin, 2013, p. 147), as a study of customers' needs (Caban-Piaskowska, 2016; Erichsen & Christensen, 2013, p. 115–118), in order to create products (Acklin, 2013, p. 147), also by artists (Caban-Piaskowska, 2016).

Ramaswamy and Gouillart claim that design management is one of the concepts of management where operationalisation is conducted via implementing methodology in a company or in project teams, together with methods and support techniques. Many worldwide known companies, e.g. Kraft, Samsung and Procter & Gamble, owe their success to using design management (Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010, p. 109).

According to the foregoing, the idea is defined in many ways. However, the term is still not entirely unambiguous and changes depending on the author, place of publication, or the area that it relates to. Factors that determine it are the context in which it is used and the qualifications of people referring to it. It is understood differently in academic circles, among professional designers (Miller & Moultrie, 2013, p. 161), in industry, or public and government institutions (Best, 2006, p. 12). It should be emphasized that its final meaning and definition may still be evolving.

Given of its universal character and completeness, for the purpose of further research in this field, the author has chosen the definition according to which design management is an efficient management of people, projects, processes and procedures while designing everyday products, services, the environment and experiences. It is a general approach to a company both from the perspective of designing and pattern-designing/industrial design, and from the perspective of management – in this case marketing, finances, strategic planning and operational activities (Best, 2010, p. 8; McBride, 2007, p. 18), i.e. it is a management technique.

4.2. Features of design management

On the basis of literature analysis, some characteristic features of companies that resort to design management have been identified.

Design management is a method of supporting the development of networking and building relations through a greater awareness of the need for connections between the worlds of producers, technologists, constructors, as well as artists and designers, with the community of recipients and consumers of art and design (McBride, 2007, p. 20).

One of the key determinants of design management functioning are project teams. It is also a characteristic feature of other contemporary organisations; however, design management is unique, because such teams are multi/interdisciplinary. Within them, high qualifications of different specialists can be used simultaneously, resulting in synergy effects (cf. Miller & Moultrie, 2013, pp. 161–176).

Another characteristic feature of entities that use design management is their structural organisation based on task teams. It is the result of tasks that are completed by the organisation, which are complex and often modified. Members of such teams tend to have a forward-looking approach anchored in project-oriented thinking (cf. Martin, 2009; Cooper & Junginger, 2011).

Customers and their problems are in the centre of interests of companies that apply design management (Acklin, 2013, pp. 147–160).

Organisations using design management take into account the fact that the product's innovative functions do not suffice: consumers expect modern design and functionality. This is there result of the visual and artistic evolution of consumers, who are art-savvy, use the services of

designers, have access to publications and are able to use them, hence their broad perspective (cf. Turner & Topalian, 2002; Muenjohn, Chhetri, Hoare, As-Saber, Suzumura & Ishikawa, 2013).

Consumers need inimitable things that are specially-designed; these can be everyday items, but they have to look differently, be designed for particular types of interiors and be unique. For customers, this represents added value and an answer to their sophisticated needs (Caban-Piaskowska, 2016).

Apart from quality and functionality, design management enables an organisation to fulfil the needs of consumers who expect high aesthetic experiences, i.e. added value in products addressed to them (Best, 2006, p. 6).

In addition to their physical features, these products are based mainly on non-material values (intellectual), which makes them experience goods (McBride, 2007, pp. 17, 22). A music concert together with its audio-visual effects (VJ) can be an example.

Design management can be widely used in many areas including fashion, architecture, media, entertainment, software, computer games and, generally, product design. The way it is perceived in various areas, such as business, engineering, technology or the creative field, is different and depends on the character of a given company (Best, 2006).

Introducing design management in companies offers unlimited work possibilities for artists and designers (Caban-Piaskowska, 2016).

In organisations which make use of design management products are very often created by artists, and their work is art – the aim in itself (cf. Best, 2006: McBride, 2007, pp. 18).

Companies where design management is applied tend to exercise design thinking, which is based on team work and marking an area of co-operation between very different disciplines, such as technology, marketing or handicraft (cf. Miller & Moultrie, 2013, pp. 161–176, Clark & Smith, 2008, pp. 7–15).

5. Creative company business model and design management

On the basis of the critical literature analysis presented above, focused on creative companies and design management, the author has prepared a list comparing features of a creative company and features of a company that uses design management. The results are shown in Table 2.

The results of the comparative analysis show that out of 15 features of the creative company business model and organisations using design management, as many as 11 are typical of both, 3 can be found in the creative company business model only, and 1 has been observed exclusively in organisations that resort to design management. Thus, we can assume that creative companies most probably use design management.

Characteristics	Creative company business model	Design management
Uncertainty of activity	+	–
Products made are experience goods	+	+
Work is art – an aim in itself	+	+
Product uniqueness	+	+
Collective creating process in multi/interdisciplinary teams	+	+
Mobilising resources around an idea	+	–
Co-operation networks	+	+
Team-based organizational structures	+	+
Innovative products	+	+
Unlimited variety of products	+	+
Adjusting the product to the individual needs of a customer	+	+
Products' added value	+	+
Diverse company sizes	+	–
Strong connections between the creator and the entrepreneur	+	+
Design thinking	–	+

Tab. 2. Comparison of characteristic of a creative company with features of design management. Source: own study.

As a result of the above-mentioned research a theoretical model of a creative company using design management was created. The model serves to establish whether a given company uses design management on the basis of certain characteristic features.

Characteristic features
Products made are experience goods
Work is art – aim in itself
Product uniqueness
Collective creating process in multi/interdisciplinary teams
Co-operation networks
Team-based organizational structures
Innovative products
Unlimited variety of products
Adjusting the product to the individual needs of a customer
Products' added value
Strong connections between the creator and the entrepreneur
Design thinking

Tab. 3. Theoretical model of a creative company applying design management techniques. Source: own study.

The proposed theoretical model is to be verified by further empirical research. Research should aim at identifying creative companies using design management in order to understand what design management means in practice.

5. Summary and conclusions

Literature review allowed the author to identify features of the creative company business model, along with the characteristics of organisations using design management. The comparative analysis that performed highlighted similarities between these features – we can assume that creative companies use design management. There is a relation between the creative company business model and design management; this is what connects the two. It is a theoretical assumption which shall be verified in future empirical research.

The author proposes a theoretical model of a creative company using the design management techniques. The model is based on certain characteristic features that help to identify the use of design management by a given company.

In the future, empirical research and the theoretical model of the creative company adopting design management techniques is to allow the author to identify whether given companies use design management.

The author plans to address the following questions in her future studies: Which companies apply design management? Do all creative companies adopt the technique? What is the model of a company/organisation using design management in Poland? In which creative companies is design management used?

The author's aim is to use the theoretical model to carry out a complete study that will show how creative organisations/companies function in the context of using design management.

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