



Beyond Design

MAKING SOCIALLY
RELEVANT PROJECTS
SUCCESSFUL

DESIGNER'S NOVEL +
10-STEP METHOD

Renate Boere

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withdrawal from developing the app, everyone can now poach the app's concept.

Apart from this, for me as a designer it is virtually impossible to find another partner in the financial world that has not already been approached by IFIC for a contribution to this project. I suspect that your warmer partners are not likely to 'steal' the idea from you. This implies that the number of new potential financial partners for this project has been reduced considerably by this crowd-funding effort.

Therefore, I ask you to find your courage and embark on this adventure with Studio Renate Boere. We are so close. Wouldn't it be great to deliver nationally, and later perhaps even internationally, a major contribution to learning children how to handle money in an ever more abstract virtual world?

*Kind regards,
Renate Boere*

Obviously, I did not send this email. I have kept the honor to myself. Despite the many hours I have put into the project, I have no regrets. It is like an exciting drama in which I play the main character. Furthermore, an intrusive, pushy email to IFIC would not have benefited the relationship. It would be great if at a later stage IFIC would still recommend the app on their website. For I still see a number of possibilities to realize the app and I really hope one day it will teach a lot of children how to deal with money.

HOW DO IDEAS EMERGE?

In 2010, near the end of the financial crisis, I wondered why I was incapable of teaching my eight-year-old daughter Inez, how to deal with money.

It didn't seem like a major problem. 'She's still young', I thought. However, I had read once on the website of IFIC that it is best to start giving pocket money when your child is six years old. I was two years overdue, but I figured eight years old is still young so I might as well start right away. For some reason, regularly handing over pocket money still did not happen.

It is November 2012; my daughter is ten and I still give her pocket money irregularly. About once a month, or is it twice? I attempt to remember but really, I have no idea when I last gave it to her. I talked to a number of other mothers and they appeared to share the same challenge. Some have a more self-aware child that asks for money every three weeks. Boys are notably more eager to get their pocket money than girls. They may have plans, for instance, to expand their Lego empire. In my case, Inez doesn't care at all and I am so

forgetful that giving pocket money seems to have become an elusive chore.

Why is it that, like many others, I am incapable of giving pocket money on a regular basis? Sometimes I think it has to do with the fact that I hardly pay anything with cash anymore. Because of this, in the rare moments that I do think of pocket money, I don't have that 1.50 Euro in my wallet. I think it's important to recognize that we are living completely different lives compared to our parents' generation.

My mother, who was perfectly capable of regularly giving pocket money, was a housewife in the traditional sense of the word. We used to live in a village, on a dyke, at a dead-end road with just over two acres of land. My mother had three children, a dog, goats, Russian potbellied pigs, rabbits, guinea pigs and, occasionally, a sick bird that was brought in by the villagers. Her life consisted of caring for others, seven days a week. My mother made sure that we went to school on time, she did the household work, fixed meals and fed the animals. Tea once a day and coffee twice for both granddads.

I am a mother, but also a self-employed

The result was that Dirk, Ernestine, Floor and I celebrated our agreement at café Olivier in Utrecht, on January 6th, 2015.

UI/UX DESIGNER

In the meantime, we had simply continued various types of research around the Pocket Money App. Given the fact that we knew nothing about developing apps when we started off, we learned the hard way that you aren't even close to being finished with only a visualized concept. It may be sufficient for finding prospective clients, but for an app builder, you must have developed and visualized every single action. That seemed like quite a challenging job to me.

There are two ways to go about this:

1. You make a sketch of every action that occurs in the app. These sketches then lead to the so-called 'functional design'. For this functional design, the illustrator/designer draws all the backgrounds, objects, buttons and illustrations. According to experienced app builders, this is a time consuming and old-fashioned method.

2. You have an app architect draw the app's 'skeleton'. This is a complicated, technical map of codes and lines that cross each other and are linked together. With this skeleton, one can determine how many pages the app will require and what kind of buttons will be needed and where.

In the very beginning, one of my interns, Joshua Koomen wanted to start on option 2; the skeleton. We quickly discovered that this method didn't work for us. Too many actions were yet to be defined, and since the skeleton was drawn using abstract language, nobody knew – or rather I didn't know – what worked and what didn't. Therefore, my dear Italian intern Maria Cristina di Termine was given the challenge to draw the app according to the first method.

Many versions followed. With this time consuming but transparent method we were able to add quite a lot of details. Step by step it became clear how the app was going to work, all the way from the description in the App Store, to the installing of the app for parents and children, to swiping money into the piggy banks. Apart from that, we added a number of nice personalization options, such as choosing or photographing your own personal back-

would take more than just a good idea and the right stakeholders. Suppose I would finally take the time to properly describe my work. Behind every design is a story, but I tend to only show the result, often only on my website. What would happen if I would demonstrate the added value of design, the added value of my work and the activities of the studio on different online platforms? Perhaps this would increase my credibility as an expert designer and convince others to invest in my projects.

A SUCCESSFUL INNOVATIVE PROJECT ON DISPLAY

A successful project, which I never took public, is the 'StickerStemWijzer' ('StickerVoteMatch'). This interactive installation informs citizens about politics in an entertaining way. The power of this work is in the accessible manner in which people can assess statements: a green sticker for 'agree' and a red one for 'disagree'. They take one of the preferred colors from a sticker sheet. A series of such physical choices is rewarded with voting advice that you get by pulling the sheet with the remaining stickers through a machine. It is an immensely popular

game at festivals. I got this assignment from ProDemos, an institute that provides information services. This was because years earlier, just before the 2010 municipal elections, I had given a similar assignment to students and had arranged an exhibition outside the academy.

GOOD TIMING IS IMPORTANT FOR SUCCESS

Arranging the exhibition outside the academy began about half a year prior. At an opening in The Hague I had encountered one of my former commissioners, Gerrit Willems, director of the Center for Fine Arts in Dordrecht. He inquired what I was up to, to which I avidly told my story about my action 'against' populists and in favor of offering knowledge through interactive designs that entice citizens in an accessible manner, to immerse themselves in politics. He immediately got excited and promised that he would keep his exhibition space free for an exposition of the 25 best ideas, one-month prior to the municipal elections. That appeared to be the perfect timing. Right before elections the press is in hot pursuit of news about politics and this concept of offering information was new! Newspapers wrote about

us false hope if they reacted too energetically. Renewed with a sense of momentum, we walked outside not knowing what was in store for us.

Summer holidays are over. I knew very well that something had to change in my way of working. If, next to regular design assignments, I wanted to be successful in writing a book, completing my Master's program, realizing the Pocket Money App, and professionalizing and improving the visibility of Studio Renate Boere and DRS22, then I could never achieve this on my own. I needed experienced co-workers. Caroline Langedoen and Evelien Broersen had previously done internships at my studio and they understood well how they could effectively make a valuable contribution. Their dedication, love for the profession and continuing passion for all tasks (including preparation of delicious salads for lunch) is what made me choose this team. And with that, Studio Renate Boere became a real studio with personnel.

RELEVANT FUNDS

We started with writing the application for the Ministry of Social Affairs. We knew from the

conversation with the new staff members that we had to ask for a minimum of 125,000 Euro. This amount, so it says in the rules, should be 75 percent of the total amount required to realize the project. In other words, the Ministry of Social Affairs subsidizes 75 percent of a project. 25 percent therefore should come from your own pocket or be financed by donations from other funds. But which fund is prepared to pay 40,000 Euro to realize the Pocket Money App? This time we didn't look for design related sponsors, but funds that, like the Poverty Reduction Department at the Ministry, focus on specific societal problems.

The first possibility to get money was literally handed through our door. It was a poster advertising a call from the Municipality of The Hague to participate in the project 'Haagse Vernieuwers' ('The Hague Innovators'). The municipality challenged organizations to present innovative ideas around social issues. One of the themes for which you could submit a project was poverty reduction! Bingo! It was a competition in which we could win a sum of 30,000 Euro. This seemed to be on the right track.

The task, therefore, was to sketch an innovative idea on a maximum of three sheets of

to be published in Dutch, an international reach seemed less relevant. The Voordekunst.nl site was less user-friendly, but certainly not unclear and its submission costs were 100 Euro lower than Kickstarter. Voordekunst.nl also offered free crowd-funding tutorials. Because of this, we decided to go with this platform.

Step one: Start with an enthusiastic story explaining why you want to start crowd-funding, and why it is fun for donors to participate.

Step two: make a promotional (short) film that will draw in a potential donor, revealing a bit more about your plans.

Step three: think of various gifts that donors could receive in return for their donation, this book, as an example. It was great fun to think about all that.

In fact, we got totally carried away! For instance, we thought of a hitchhiking contest to Lithuania between those of us at the studio. That is where the book 'Consuming Instinct' that I recently had designed, for the artist Gurt Swanenberg was going to be printed. Normally, I would never have been able to attend its printing since it is simply too expensive to fly to Lithuania. However, now we needed a 'grand finale' and this was a good ending for a fine

story. Furthermore, we could check the print work and meet the printer.

For the hitchhiking contest you could bet on the fastest team. The prize consisted of a special dinner and all the books we had designed in 2016. Because of this, we had reason to include all of the publications we had designed in the crowd-funding campaign, which in turn would create publicity for the books and the artists in them.

Apart from that we had wild ideas of bringing back gifts from Lithuania in a Lada Niva. And of course, the car would also be offered as a possible compensation. This was sure to be a hit on social media! The highest bidder would get a book, and a Lada Niva!

We got started. We wrote promotional texts for the site, e-mails, newsletters, Facebook and Instagram. Also, we designed a book cover for this book to promote it. We worked on a promotional video and researched the rights of use for music to go with it. We needed an updated mailing list, and all knowledge related to importing a Lada Niva into the Netherlands. We needed a place to sleep in Lithuania and, of course, the beautiful Lada Niva itself. There seemed to be no end to it. We even designed the poster signs in order to get a ride quickly, and

'This book is relevant for anyone who dreams of making a difference in the world. Renate's words will spark courage and get you ready to take your first steps.'

Jennifer Kumer

'Just what I needed after finishing my design degree! With this story, Renate knows how to convince, motivate and inspire young designers.'
Caroline Langendoen

'Shines a light on the designer's efforts, which are barely recognised by the outside world.'

Mans van Oosterhout

'Humorous and meaningful'
Lynn van den Berg

The time has come in which graphic designers are playing an important role in rendering ever more complicated information transparent and understandable for a wider audience. To stress this urgency, Renate Boere dove head first in the world of project management lingo, confidentiality statements, copyright, complicated rights contracts, the search for stakeholders and grant applications. This journey has resulted in the journalistic novel *Beyond Design* and *Beyond Design: The Game of Social Solutions*.

This designer's novel provides insights into the contemporary, often hybrid, practice of the multi-talented graphic designers. The story tells how Boere decides to take matters into her own hands by working on socially relevant design projects. An exciting and informative book that gives insights into the designer's do's and don'ts while working on projects from start to finish.



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