



Kaunas University of Technology
School of Economics and Business

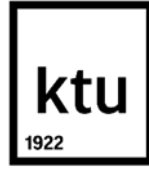
Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development in Fashion SMEs

Master's Final Degree Project

Katerini Maria Tsintsaris
Project author

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jolita Čeičytė-Pranskūnė
Supervisor

Kaunas, 2023



Kaunas University of Technology

School of Economics and Business

Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development in Fashion SMEs

Master's Final Degree Project

Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship (6211LX031)

Katerini Maria Tsintsaris

Project author

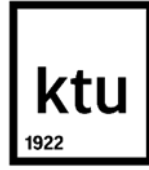
**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jolita Čeičytė-
Pranskūnė**

Supervisor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lina Užienė

Reviewer

Kaunas, 2023



Kaunas University of Technology

School of Economics and Business

Katerini Tsintsaris

Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development in Fashion SMEs

Declaration of Academic Integrity

I confirm the following:

1. I have prepared the final degree project independently and honestly without any violations of the copyrights or other rights of others, following the provisions of the Law on Copyrights and Related Rights of the Republic of Lithuania, the Regulations on the Management and Transfer of Intellectual Property of Kaunas University of Technology (hereinafter – University) and the ethical requirements stipulated by the Code of Academic Ethics of the University;
2. All the data and research results provided in the final degree project are correct and obtained legally; none of the parts of this project are plagiarized from any printed or electronic sources; all the quotations and references provided in the text of the final degree project are indicated in the list of references;
3. I have not paid anyone any monetary funds for the final degree project or the parts thereof unless required by the law;
4. I understand that in the case of any discovery of the fact of dishonesty or violation of any rights of others, the academic penalties will be imposed on me under the procedure applied at the University; I will be expelled from the University and my final degree project can be submitted to the Office of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures in the examination of a possible violation of academic ethics.

Katerini Tsintsaris

Confirmed electronically

Tsintsaris, Katerini Maria. Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development in Fashion SMEs. Master's Final Degree Project / Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jolita Čeičytė-Pranskūnė, School of Economics and Business, Kaunas University of Technology.

Study field and area (study field group): Business and Public Management (Management)

Keywords: Values-Based Innovation, Stakeholder Inclusion, SMEs, Fashion Industry, Innovation Process

Kaunas, 2023. 102 p.

Summary

Current challenges such as climate change, resource scarcity, and social injustice require new approaches. A more sustainable economic structure may be needed that goes beyond familiar economic systems to actively address these issues and shape a more sustainable economy for future generations. The fashion industry in particular faces a complex global problem of poor environmental impact, poor working conditions, or lack of transparency and ethics in the supply chain. A shift towards more sustainable practices in the industry is therefore required. One promising approach is values-based innovation (VBI), which is seen as a prerequisite for more sustainable business models that the fashion industry needs. Values-based innovation focuses on the creation of new products, services, or business models that are based on values and go beyond pure economic benefits. By involving relevant stakeholders, VBI can contribute to the creation of a more sustainable society. However, there is a lack of research on how to effectively involve stakeholders into values-based innovation processes.

In light of this, the **research aim** is to ground a conceptual model for stakeholder inclusion in values-based innovation development in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the fashion industry.

The underlying **research objectives** are as follows to accomplish this aim:

1. To discuss the problematic situation of the values-based innovation implementation in the context of the fashion industry SMEs.
2. To perform a literature analysis in order to:
 - a. lay theoretical foundations for this research by defining values-based innovation and categorizing values in the innovation;
 - b. analyze the stakeholder integration and existing theoretical approaches on the ways how stakeholders can be integrated into the values-based innovation;
 - c. develop a conceptual model for stakeholder inclusion in values-based innovation development in SMEs.
3. To ground a research methodology to explore how stakeholders are included in the values-based innovation in the case of fashion SMEs.
4. To empirically test and validate a conceptual model for stakeholder inclusion in values-based innovation development.

Research method used in this thesis is a comprehensive literature review that substantiates the conceptual model and research indicators used for empirical research. A qualitative research approach was used, which included a multiple case study. European SMEs in the fashion industry were selected

for the case studies using a purposive sampling technique. Data was collected through a combination of primary and secondary data. As part of the primary data generation, five semi-structured interviews were conducted with practitioners from the case firms using a developed interview guideline. Secondary data was generated through desk research. The resulting data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis and MAXQDA software to extract the information.

Key theoretical findings include a definition of values-based innovation management, which could be elaborated in light of the still-emerging research field. Furthermore, different value levers in different management levels, as well as the driving value set of this approach, could be presented. In addition, differentiation of similar innovation approaches was performed to highlight the relevance and uniqueness of the VBI approach and to position it within the research field. Different innovation processes and methods were examined. Additionally, the importance of stakeholder involvement for VBI management was highlighted and the most important stakeholder groups were defined. These researched scientific topics form the basis for the strategic implementation framework for stakeholder inclusion in values-based innovation development in fashion SMEs, which was developed from the theoretical solution.

The **key empirical findings** indicate the practical applicability and adoption of the implementation framework developed here. Based on the empirical data, it was found that firm values are closely linked to the intrinsic values of founders and CEOs and that the implementation of the framework is similar to practical approaches, but communicated to users in a clearer and more methodologically guided way, leading to increased effectiveness. Minor adjustments were made to the framework, which still includes all the elements developed on the basis of the theory (firm diagnostics, stakeholder identification, innovation process, and values-driven stakeholder checkpoints). In addition, the implementation of the values-driven stakeholder checkpoints has been clarified and adapted. This ensures a facilitated and appropriate application for SMEs. Thus, the implementation framework can help SMEs in the fashion industry to strategically implement stakeholder inclusion in values-based innovation development. The proposed systematic model provides an impetus for further potential research avenues. Furthermore, implications for management are derived. All these findings together provide meaningful advice for fashion firms that want to lead the change toward a more conscious and sustainable fashion industry.

Tsintsaris, Katerini Maria. Suinteresuotųjų šalių įtraukimas į vertybėmis grindžiamą inovacijų kūrimo procesą mados sektoriaus MVI. Magistro studijų baigiamasis projektas / Vadovė doc. dr. Jolita Čeičytė-Pranskūnė, Kauno technologijos universitetas, Ekonomikos ir verslo fakultetas.

Studijų kryptis ir sritis (studijų krypčių grupė): Vadyba, Verslas ir viešoji vadyba

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Vertybėmis grįstos inovacijos, Suinteresuotųjų grupių įtraukimas, MVI, mados industrija, inovacijų procesas.

Kaunas, 2023. 102 p.

Santrauka

Dabartiniai iššūkiai, tokie kaip klimato kaita, išteklių trūkumas ir socialinis neteisingumas, reikalauja naujų sprendimo būdų. Reikalinga tvaresnės ekonomikos struktūra, kuri neapsiribotų įprastomis ekonominėmis sistemomis bei formuotų tvaresnę ekosistemą ateities kartoms. Ypač mados pramonė susiduria su kompleksinėmis globaliomis problemomis, susijusiomis su prastu poveikiu aplinkai, prastomis darbo sąlygomis arba skaidrumo ir etikos trūkumu tiekimo grandinėje. Todėl būtina pereiti prie tvaresnių šios pramonės sprendimų ir praktikų. Vienas iš perspektyvių požiūrių yra vertybėmis grindžiamos inovacijos (VBI), kurios laikomos būtina sąlyga tvaresniems verslo modeliams mados pramonėje. Vertybėmis grindžiamos inovacijos orientuotos į naujų produktų, paslaugų ar verslo modelių, kurie grindžiami vertybėmis ir neapsiriboja vien ekonomine nauda, kūrimą. Įtraukiant atitinkamas suinteresuotąsias šalis, VBI gali padėti kurti tvaresnę visuomenę.

Reikalingas tvarios ekonominės struktūros, kuri eitų už įprastinių ekonominių sistemų ribų ir aktyviai spręstų šias problemas, sukūrimas, kad būtų sukurtas tvarus ekonomikos modelis ateities kartoms. Ypač mados pramonei tenka sudėtinga globali problema dėl blogo ekologinio poveikio, prastų darbo sąlygų arba trūkumo skaidrumo ir etikos tiekimo grandinėje. Todėl pramonei reikalingas persitvarkymas link tvarios praktikos. Vienas iš pažadėjusių požiūrių yra vertybių pagrindu grindžiama inovacija (VPI), kuri laikoma būtinu tvaraus verslo modelio, reikalingo mados pramonės atveju, kuriame daugiau dėmesio skiriama vertybėms ir siekiama užtikrinti tvarumą, kūrimo elementu. VPI susitelkia ties naujų produktų, paslaugų ar verslo modelių kūrimu, kurių pagrindą sudaro vertybės, ir siekia pranokti tik ekonomines naudas. Įtraukus atitinkamus suinteresuotus subjektus, VPI gali prisidėti prie tvarios visuomenės kūrimo. Tačiau kol kas trūksta tyrimų, kaip efektyviai įtraukti suinteresuotąsias puses į vertybėmis grįstą inovacijų procesą.

Atsižvelgiant į tai, tyrimo tikslas - pagrįsti suinteresuotųjų grupių įtraukimo į vertybėmis grindžiamą inovacijų procesą konceptualų modelį.

Šiam tikslui pasiekti keliami šie pagrindiniai tyrimo uždaviniai:

1. Išanalizuoti vertybėmis grindžiamų inovacijų įgyvendinimo probleminę situaciją mados pramonės MVI.
2. Atlikti literatūros analizę siekiant:
 - a. nustatyti vertybėmis grindžiamų inovacijų teorinius pagrindus ir apibrėžti bei suskirstyti vertybes į kategorijas.
 - b. ištirti suinteresuotųjų grupių integraciją išskiriant esamus teorinius požiūrius, kaip suinteresuotosios šalys gali būti integruojamos į vertybėmis grindžiamas inovacijas.

- c. sukurti konceptualų suinteresuotųjų grupių įtraukimo į vertybėmis grindžiamų inovacijų kūrimo procesą modelį.
3. Pagrįsti tyrimo metodologiją, skirtą ištirti, kaip vertybėmis grindžiamos inovacijos skatinamos įtraukiant suinteresuotąsias šalis mados MVĮ atveju.
4. Empiriškai ištirti ir validuoti konceptualų suinteresuotųjų grupių įtraukimo į vertybėmis grindžiamų inovacijų kūrimo procesą modelį mados sektoriaus MVĮ.

Šiame moksliniame darbe taikyti **tyrimo metodai** buvo išsami literatūros apžvalga, kuria pagrindžiami empiriniam tyrimui naudojami tyrimo rodikliai. Taikytas kokybinis tyrimo metodas, kuris apėmė kelių atvejų tyrimą. Europos mados pramonės MVĮ atvejo analizei buvo atrinktos taikant tikslinės atrankos metodą. Duomenys buvo renkami derinant pirminius ir antrinius duomenis. Renkant pirminius duomenis buvo atlikti penki pusiau struktūruoti interviu su įmonėmis, naudojantis parengtu interviu gidu. Antriniai duomenys buvo gauti atlikus dokumentinį tyrimą. Gauti duomenys buvo analizuojami naudojant kokybinio turinio analizės programinę įrangą MAXQDA.

Pagrindinės **teorinės išvados** apima vertybėmis grindžiamų inovacijų (VBI) bei jų valdymo apibrėžimus, kurie galėtų būti tobulinami atsižvelgiant į vis dar besiformuojančią mokslinių tyrimų sritį. Be to, išskirti skirtingi vertybiniai svertai įvairiuose valdymo lygmenyse, taip pat šio požiūrio varomoji vertybių visuma. Be to, buvo atliktas panašių inovacijų metodų diferencijavimas, siekiant pabrėžti VBI metodo aktualumą ir unikalumą bei pozicionuoti jį mokslinių tyrimų lauke. Buvo nagrinėjami skirtingi inovacijų procesai ir metodai. Be to, išryškinta suinteresuotųjų šalių dalyvavimo svarba VBI valdymui ir apibrėžtos svarbiausios suinteresuotųjų šalių grupės. Šios ištirtos mokslinės temos sudaro pagrindą suinteresuotųjų šalių įtraukimo į vertybėmis grindžiamą inovacijų plėtrą mados MVĮ įgyvendinimo sistemai, kuri buvo sukurta kaip teorinis sprendimas.

Remiantis **empiriniais rezultatais** nustatyta, kad įmonės vertybės yra glaudžiai susijusios su vidinėmis vadovų vertybėmis. Konceptualus modelis buvo validuotas remiantis empiriniais rezultatais. Buvo atlikti nedideli modelio pakeitimai, tačiau modelis apima visus teorijos pagrindu sukurtus elementus (įmonės diagnostiką, suinteresuotųjų šalių identifikavimą, inovacijų procesą ir vertybėmis grindžiamus suinteresuotųjų šalių patikros taškus). Be to, buvo patikslinti vertybėmis grindžiamų suinteresuotųjų šalių kontrolinių taškų įgyvendinimo principai. Taip užtikrinamas lengvesnis ir tinkamesnis modelio taikymas MVĮ. Taigi validuotas modelis gali padėti mados pramonės MVĮ strategiškai įgyvendinti suinteresuotųjų šalių įtraukimą į vertybėmis grindžiamą inovacijų kūrimą. Pasiūlytas modelis suteikia pagrindą tolesnėms galimoms mokslinių tyrimų kryptims. Be to, suformuluotos vadybinės rekomendacijos.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	9
List of Tables	10
List of Abbreviations and Terms	11
Introduction	12
1. Problem Analysis of Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development in the Case of SMEs in the Fashion Industry	15
1.1. Scientific and Business Relevance to the Research Need of Values-Based Innovation	15
1.2. Barriers for Values-Based Innovation in Fashion SMEs	17
1.3. The Problematic of Values-Based Innovation and Stakeholder Inclusion for SMEs in the Fashion Industry	18
2. Theoretical Solutions for Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development.....	22
2.1. Innovation Management.....	22
2.2. The Innovation Process	23
2.3. The Innovation Process within SMEs	25
2.3.1. The Linear Innovation Process within SMEs	25
2.3.2. The Non-Linear Innovation Process within SMEs.....	26
2.3.3. Design Thinking as an Applicable Innovation Method for SMEs	27
2.4. The Role of Values in (Innovation) Management	28
2.5. Values-Based Innovation Management.....	30
2.5.1. The Values-Based Innovation Framework.....	30
2.5.2. The Different Levers of Values in the Three Management Dimensions.....	32
2.5.3. Driving Values of the Values-Based Innovation Framework	33
2.6. The Value-Sensitive Design Framework.....	36
2.7. Other Values-Oriented Innovation Forms	38
2.8. Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation	40
2.8.1. The Importance of Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation.....	40
2.8.2. Stakeholder Key Groups in Values-Based Innovation	41
2.9. Proposal for a Conceptual Model for Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development.....	44
2.9.1. Firm Diagnostics	47
2.9.2. Analysis of Direct and Indirect Stakeholders	47
2.9.3. Values-Driven Stakeholder Checkpoints	48
2.9.4. Upstream Innovation Process: Design Thinking Inspired Iterative Cycle	49
2.9.5. Second Innovation Process Phase: Combination of Traditional Linear and Non-Linear Innovation Process.....	50
2.9.6. Third Innovation Process Phase: The Market Launch	50
2.9.7. Continuous Improvement Process	51
3. Research Methodology and Design	52
3.1. Context	52
3.2. Research Design	52
3.3. Research Sample and Setting	55
3.4. Data Collection and Analysis	57

3.5. Research Quality and Ethics	59
4. Empirical Results of Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development	61
4.1. Overview of the Case Firms	61
4.2. Single Case Analysis	65
4.2.1. Case Firm A (Torland)	65
4.2.2. Case Firm B (Bausinger)	67
4.2.3. Case Firm C (KUZ Fashion Design Studio).....	69
4.2.4. Case Firm D (North Coast).....	70
4.2.5. Case Firm E (runamics).....	72
4.3. Comparative Analysis of the Cases	74
4.3.1. Firm Values	74
4.3.2. Stakeholder Identification	79
4.3.3. Innovation Process.....	81
4.3.4. Values-Driven Stakeholder Checkpoints	83
4.3.5. Conceptual Model Validation Results	85
5. Discussion	89
5.1. Validation and Adaptation of the Conceptual Model for Stakeholder Inclusion in Values- Based Innovation Development.....	89
5.2. Theoretical Implications	95
5.3. Managerial Implications	96
5.4. Limitations and Further Research Avenues	97
Conclusions.....	99
List of References.....	103
Appendices	112
Appendix 1. Interview Guideline for Semi-Structured Interviews in English	112
Appendix 2. Coding Guide	113
Appendix 3. Transcript Interview Case Firm A Torland.....	116
Appendix 4. Transcript Interview Case Firm B Bausinger	127
Appendix 5. Transcript Interview Case Firm C KUZ	142
Appendix 6. Transcript Interview Case Firm D North Coast.....	157
Appendix 7. Transcript Interview Case Firm E runamics	167

List of Figures

Figure 1: Illustration of the old and new values paradigm and the change in importance within the four criteria presented (adapted from Schleicher & Seitz, 2022)	19
Figure 2: Innovation process (adapted from Herstatt, 1999).....	24
Figure 3: Synthesis of values, innovation, and management (adapted from Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2021).....	30
Figure 4: Values and the functions they accomplish in the three management levels and the respective innovation levers they create at certain levels (adapted from Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017 & Ivanov, 2022).....	32
Figure 5: Proposed conceptual model for stakeholder inclusion in the creation of values-based innovation	46
Figure 6: Sequence of a content-structuring qualitative content analysis in 7 phases (adapted from Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2022)	59
Figure 7: Empirically validated conceptual model for engaging stakeholders in creating values-based innovation	94

List of Tables

Table 1: Explanation of the essential values for a VBI approach with exemplary definitions from the literature	33
Table 2: Definitions of the innovation types sustainability-oriented innovation and responsible innovation with differences from VBI.....	38
Table 3: Definitions and roles of key stakeholders in values-based innovation management	42
Table 4: Indicators used for empirical research with their specific characteristics	54
Table 5: Overview of case firms.....	61
Table 6: Comparison of the ecological, economic, ethical, and social values of the selected case firms surveyed in this case study	75
Table 7: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of firm values with associated subcodes	79
Table 8: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of stakeholder identification with associated subcodes	80
Table 9: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of innovation process with associated subcodes.....	82
Table 10: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of values-driven stakeholder checkpoints with the first two associated subcodes.....	84
Table 11: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of values-driven stakeholder checkpoints with third associated subcode	85
Table 12: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of validation of implementation framework with first two associated subcodes	86
Table 13: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of of validation of implementation with third associated subcode	87

List of Abbreviations and Terms

Abbreviations:

CEO – Chief Executive Officer;

C2C – Cradle to Cradle;

EU – European Union;

GOTS – Global Organic Textile Standard;

GRS – Global Recycle Standard;

IMC – Integrated Management Concept;

MVP – Minimum Viable Product;

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization;

RI – Responsible Innovation;

SMEs – Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises;

SOI – Sustainability-Oriented Innovation;

UN – United Nations;

VBI – Values-Based Innovation;

VSD – Value-Sensitive Design.

Introduction

Relevance. The challenges facing the world, such as climate change, resource scarcity, and social injustice, require novel solutions that go beyond the scope of current methods and systems. It may be required to consider a more sustainable economic structure to address these problems and work towards building a sustainable society for future generations (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022; Lubberink et al., 2017; Lüdeke-Freund, 2020). The fashion industry in particular is thus facing a complex global problem (Buchel et al., 2022). Globally, about 10% of all greenhouse gas emissions are caused by the fashion industry (UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, 2021). As a consequence, a change towards more sustainable practices in the industry is demanded from all sides (Andersen, 2017; Buchel et al., 2022; Jeffreys, 2022; MacArthur & McCartney, 2017; Peters et al., 2021; The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022). The approach of values-based innovation (VBI) is promising and is seen as a prerequisite for sustainable business models, which the fashion industry needs. Values-based innovation focuses on the creation of new products, services, or business models that are developed on the basis of values and go beyond pure economic benefits. By engaging with relevant stakeholders such as customers, employees, and business partners, values-based innovation can consider the social and environmental impacts of innovation and contribute to the creation of a more sustainable society. Values-based innovation can help support the transition to a more equitable and sustainable world through a strong focus on values and the involvement of all stakeholders (Breuer et al., 2021; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017, 2019; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Ivanov, 2022). The successful application in the fashion industry can represent an important and decisive change with regard to the current problems and is accordingly one of the objects of this research.

Problem. There are still gaps in the research and in practice because the framework for values-based innovation is still in its infancy (Breuer et al., 2021, 2022; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017, 2019; Ivanov, 2022). Accordingly, scholars and business practitioners alike need to engage with the framework. There are too few approaches that explain and facilitate integration from the so promising subject of VBI (Breuer et al., 2021). The lack of practical approaches may be the reason why, despite the recognized ability that integrating values and stakeholders lead to compelling innovation success, too few still actually put the framework into practice and pursue it (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2021). Furthermore, in order for a company to develop a values-based, sustainable strategy a company must focus on stakeholder management as an important key factor for positively impacting our environment (Breuer et al., 2022; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Dmytriyev et al., 2021; Freudenreich et al., 2020). There are also gaps in the literature: the importance of different stakeholder values is increasingly considered in current innovation frameworks. Stakeholder involvement in corporate governance is becoming growing in significance and it represents a crucial role. This calls for a change in perspective and a more futuristic approach to business development (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019).

However, this approach could be particularly interesting for SMEs. They account for almost 99% of all companies in Europe and are therefore one of the most important cornerstones of the entire European economy (European Commission, 2023b). Since SMEs are able to react quickly to changes in their industry, they are important for innovations (Auer & Jarmai, 2018; Parker et al., 2009; Verworn et al., 2000). Due to flatter hierarchies and communication channels, they are often more efficient and act more flexibly than large companies and are thus able to adapt more quickly to new market changes (Verworn et al., 2000). Most firms operating in the fashion industry belong to the group of SMEs (Allianz Research, 2020). Due to problems such as climate change and the changing

values of consumers, the industry demands to be reinvented. Customers value aspects like sustainability and transparency more and therefore want businesses to take responsibility in a social and sustainable way (Andersen, 2017; Buchel et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2021; The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022). The fashion industry is conscious of its challenges and the potential actions that may be required to maintain its competitiveness (Berg, 2022; Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). With the help of the fashion firms that are already acting sustainably and values-oriented in their innovation process, framework conditions can be derived for further active players that accelerate a system change in the fashion industry. All this leads to the fundamental research question of this scientific work: *How do SMEs in the fashion industry organize their values-based innovation approach together with stakeholder inclusion during their innovation process?*

The object of the paper is the development of values-based innovation and the involvement of stakeholders of SMEs operating in the fashion industry.

The research aim is to ground a conceptual model for stakeholder inclusion in values-based innovation development in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the fashion industry.

The Objectives of the Study:

1. To discuss the problematic situation of the values-based innovation implementation in the context of the fashion industry SMEs.
2. To perform a literature analysis in order to:
 - a. lay theoretical foundations for this research by defining values-based innovation and categorizing values in the innovation;
 - b. analyze the stakeholder integration and existing theoretical approaches on the ways how stakeholders can be integrated into the values-based innovation;
 - c. develop a conceptual model for stakeholder inclusion in values-based innovation development in SMEs.
3. To ground a research methodology to explore how stakeholders are included in the values-based innovation in the case of fashion SMEs.
4. To empirically test and validate a conceptual model for stakeholder inclusion in values-based innovation development.

Research Methodology and Structure of the Paper. This scientific work follows a deductive qualitative and exploratory research approach due to the novelty of the subject matter of values-based innovation. In this way, new insights are to be gained. The first section of this thesis describes the problem of the treated subject. The relevance of values-based innovation and stakeholder engagement, as well as a more thorough examination of the underlying research problem in SMEs and in the fashion industry under study, will be elaborated. The second section serves as a comprehensive literature review to ensure a common understanding which is necessary for the further course of research. The focus here is on the general innovation literature as well as the specific values-based innovation and stakeholder engagement literature. First, terms of regular innovation such as innovation management are defined and explained, followed by an explanation of the general innovation process and the more specific innovation process in SMEs. Next, the role of values in innovation management is highlighted. After that, values-based innovation is defined and the driving values of the values-based innovation framework are named and other values-based innovation forms are presented. Furthermore, the grounded methodology of the value-sensitive design approach is

defined. Then, the theoretical stakeholder involvement is defined and the key stakeholder groups are named. On the basis of the results of the literature review, a framework for the strategic application of values-based innovation and stakeholder involvement in SMEs is suggested. In order to test the proposed conceptual model for practicality and applicability, the fashion industry in Europe was chosen as a study setting. The reason for this is that the fashion industry has a significant impact on the environment and has been identified as one of the industries with the worst environmental impact. In addition, Europe has already made some initial efforts to improve the status quo in the industry with the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Recycled Textiles. The case study method was chosen as a qualitative research approach and semi-structured interviews were conducted based on the elements of the conceptual model. Empirical data was collected through five interviews with CEOs and founders of European fashion brands which are considered to be SMEs and desk research was also used to collect secondary data on corporate actions and public image. A qualitative content analysis was conducted using MAXQDA software to validate the proposed framework. The findings of the study are presented and then discussed and critically examined. Limitations and possible areas for further research are discussed.

Based on this scientific work, a conference abstract was successfully formulated and accepted for the IEEE TEMS International Conference on Technology and Entrepreneurship 2023.

1. Problem Analysis of Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development in the Case of SMEs in the Fashion Industry

1.1. Scientific and Business Relevance to the Research Need of Values-Based Innovation

Due to the influence of the climate crisis and its risks, which have an impact on both our environment and society (IPCC et al., 2022; UN, 2022), the private economic sector is requested to integrate sustainability practices into their daily operations and innovation management to develop solutions for the environmental and societal problems. In addition, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are pushing firms to consider the environment and their economic actions and to rethink their orientation towards mere profit generation in a more sustainable way (United Nations, 2023). In addition, neo-ecology is a megatrend that, with the concept of "blue ecology," aims to create a new logic of change to solve our climate and ecological problems. Among other things, it focuses on changing consciousness to create real change in the environment and in society (Block et al., 2022). The known research and development (R&D) approaches may no longer be sufficient to remain competitive due to changing customer demands (Breuer et al., 2021, 2022; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022; Lubberink et al., 2017; Lüdeke-Freund, 2020; Manohar & Pandit, 2013; Schaltegger et al., 2016). Besides this, the economy recognized the values of different stakeholders and the threats of sustainability as levers for innovation. Few, however, have successfully embedded in their corporate culture the practice of innovating within the firm with a focus on the values of sustainability for the environment and society, as well as the long-term viability of the firm itself (Breuer et al., 2021; Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2020). What they are doing instead is looking for the so-called "next big thing" (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2021). They do so without regard to whether this is necessary for consumers, society or even the environment. This can lead to undesirable outcomes that are not valuable to the firm, the environment, or society. To enable and facilitate valuable innovation outcomes, firms need to be clear at the beginning of the innovation process about what will create sustainable and competitive value for them while positively impacting the environment. A guiding framework may be required to promote innovation beyond economic objectives (Breuer et al., 2021; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022).

Even though values already have a historical context within economics, the topic of values-based innovation management is a relatively new field of studies and applications that is of increasing importance (Breuer et al., 2022). That being said, the importance of values in innovation management has already been emphasized by various scientific publications (Breuer et al., 2021, 2022; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2014, 2017; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Globocnik et al., 2020; Ivanov, 2022; Lubberink et al., 2017; Lüdeke-Freund & Dembek, 2017; Mejía-Trejo & Rodríguez-Bravo, 2020). The theoretical framework of values-based innovation leverages the potential of values to foster extended value creation for all stakeholders as a premise for business models with an emphasis on sustainability and on socio-ethical and environmental well-being and above this, can lead to a reliable, superior firm performance (Globocnik et al., 2020; Ivanov, 2022; Manohar & Pandit, 2013). Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund (2017) mentioned that to develop the full potential of this theoretical framework, researchers and practitioners must look deeper into possible limitations in corporate practice and the full extent of possible impacts and potentials. This is furthermore highlighted by Breuer et al. (2021), calling attention to the challenge that innovators and educators have to integrate values-based procedures and the sustainability-oriented approach in innovation to meet the needs required by

environmental and social problems. However, they are not yet well enough equipped with useful insights on an organizational level to achieve this successfully. In line with this, learning-by-doing approaches that are pursued, as tested and reliable proposals and methods that could serve as a basis for effective teaching are not available. Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund (2021) further argue that human values as levers of innovation remain unrecognized and underutilized, despite the known ability to enhance the innovation process, accommodate different stakeholders, and bring them together to create compelling innovative success.

Value creation has formerly focused only on the relationship between the firm and its customers, but in the framework of VBI, stakeholders take on an active role in value creation procedures. To develop a sustainable strategy for a positive impact on our environment as a firm, stakeholder management is a key factor that must be carefully considered. However, the importance of different stakeholder values is rarely mentioned in current innovation frameworks. (Breuer et al., 2018; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Dmytriyev et al., 2021). Freudenreich et al. (2020, p.1) pointed out to change the viewpoint “from business models as devices of sheer value creation to business models as devices that organize and facilitate stakeholder relationships and corresponding value exchanges”. Furthermore, there are numerous amounts of open questions concerning the topic just mentioned, such as the following: Is stakeholder value creation a good catalyst for more sustainable business models, and how may stakeholder interactions enhance a firm's viability and growth? Above that, there is no current research that illustrates how to methodically evaluate the values-based exchange between the firm and stakeholders with a general and also values-centered focus (Freudenreich et al., 2020). A similar viewpoint was already stated by Freeman (2011), who proposed to rethink value creation with the help of stakeholder theory, and that means the inclusion of stakeholders in the overall process of value creation. In order to have a more sustainable economy, there should be results which are of value to all stakeholders and therefore have a common purpose (Freudenreich et al., 2020). Also, Breuer et al. (2018) clarify that the interaction between the firm and various stakeholders is crucial to develop sustainable and viable business models. The rising importance of stakeholder inclusion in management and the fundamental role they have gained requires a change in the previous perspective for future-oriented corporate development (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019). According to Freudenreich et al. (2020), new methods and adaptation of existing methods are needed to manage values fairly and appropriately, for example, to adequately address current sustainability issues (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2021).

VBI management together with stakeholder inclusion could therefore be an impactful approach to redirect the private economic sector to a more viable approach in making business and rethink their organizational values and philosophy. Research on values-based innovation and related stakeholder engagement is still in its infancy, and there is little research on its application in specific industries, such as the fashion (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017, 2019; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Ivanov, 2022; Lüdeke-Freund, 2020). Complicating this, smaller firms more specifically small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), face additional complications in integrating these new types of values, such as sustainability, ethical processes, and responsible business practices (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017), into their corporate identities at all levels of innovation (Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022). The reason is that SMEs have limited resources and their external support is also lower, making it difficult for them to understand the new types of innovation (Castka et al., 2004). However, this is in conflict because especially for SMEs, innovation is of great importance to the firm concept, direction, and success (Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022).

Therefore, one of the objectives of this thesis is to extend the existing research on values-based innovation management by including impacted stakeholders with a specific application to SMEs in a specific industry, here the fashion industry.

1.2. Barriers for Values-Based Innovation in Fashion SMEs

The aforementioned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for 99% of all enterprises in Europe and thus represent one of the main pillars of the European economy (European Commission, 2023b). The European Commission (2023) defines SMEs as firms that employ no more than 250 people and have a maximum annual turnover of 50 million euros and a maximum balance sheet total of 43 million euros. As such, they represent an important source for the labor market and the growth of the economy in Europe. SMEs possess the property of being able to adapt quickly to new environmental conditions and thus they are seen as a kind of driver of innovation (Auer & Jarmai, 2018; Parker et al., 2009). At first sight, this sounds predestined for the implementation of the values-based Innovation concept, however, SMEs are affected by scarce access to organizational or even financial resources which complicates it to seek out expensive R&D programs or ensure a smooth integration of the VBI frameworks (Allianz Research, 2020; Castka et al., 2004; Parker et al., 2009).

Therefore, it becomes almost understandable that SMEs focus on the core business of their enterprise in order to operate profitably and stay competitive (Auer & Jarmai, 2018). Nevertheless, nowadays SMEs also have to deal with the current environmental situation and should be committed to working for the improvement of our environment and fight against climate problems (Parker et al., 2009). Problematic again is that there are too few approaches and concepts explaining how firms, especially SMEs, should approach the change towards a values-based, sustainable innovation practice (Breuer et al., 2021; Gonzales-Gemio et al., 2020; Parker et al., 2009).

The research of Parker et al. (2009) describes the barriers SMEs encounter with regard to making environmentally friendly improvements to their businesses: first, it is due to a misconception that SMEs managers think they have minimal impact on the environment and thus see no reason to counteract it. Second, they are very cost-sensitive and are skeptical of the benefits of environmental improvements that obviously entail cost. At this point, the approach and theory of stakeholder inclusion (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Parmar et al., 2010) could be of great relevance for small and medium-sized enterprises. In this way, external knowledge could enter the firm, clarifying the need for action in terms of values-based innovation, sustainable, and responsible values and leading to improvements internally and in the innovation process. Due to the positive and, above all, significant impact that a shift to values-based innovation could have within the process, more attention needs to be paid to the actions of SMEs (Gonzales-Gemio et al., 2020; Hammann et al., 2009). Since there is a research need to further explore the values-based innovation approach together with stakeholder inclusion and for practical applications in the area of SMEs, this paper focuses on the fashion industry, to provide industry-specific research.

1.3. The Problematic of Values-Based Innovation and Stakeholder Inclusion for SMEs in the Fashion Industry

SMEs also dominate the fashion and textile industry (Allianz Research, 2020). Exactly this industry is known for causing highly detrimental environmental impacts as well as social consequences and is thus responsible for approximately 8% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions (UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, 2021). Millions of new clothes are produced in a currently prevailing state of paramount overproduction, consuming an estimated amount of 215 trillion liters of water, and are then thrown away every year. Therefore, the industry is also responsible for about 9% of the plastic microfibers that end up in the oceans, posing a serious threat to the ecosystems (The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022; UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, 2021). Despite the now well-known values of sustainability in mass production, the fashion industry continues to believe that unlimited growth is possible in a world of limited resources. Thus, more and more products continue to be produced for an ever-growing and never-satisfied customer base (Andersen, 2017). Additionally, the fashion industry has a strong impact on society and increases social inequalities, especially seen in the supply chain, where the safety of people is deliberately put behind the profit (Jeffreys, 2022). The industry needs to be reinvented, for the environment and for the fact that consumers' behaviors are changing. Customers care more about sustainability and by implication they want firms to take responsibility in social and sustainable terms (Bianchi et al., 2020). Sustainable business models are needed, that are designed to recycle materials, foster the reuse of products, and use justifiable materials (Andersen, 2017; Buchel et al., 2022; Lüdeke-Freund, 2020; Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2020; Lüdeke-Freund & Dembek, 2017; Schaltegger et al., 2016).

The whole fashion industry has gone through a challenging period in recent years, starting with the COVID-19 pandemic which slowed down the industry, a rising inflation and the outbreak of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has further impacted the industry. Nevertheless, the values of the fashion business have been impacted by these circumstances (Berg, 2022). Even without these momentous events, the fashion system would have reached its limits because the fashion industry is massively influenced by changes in social values. After all, many of the behaviors that have been practiced, tested, and lived for months will continue to shape our consumption patterns and lifestyles in the future. Uncertainty in society, as well as a shrinking economy and rising consumer prices as one result of the war in Ukraine, will only contribute to this shift in values (Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). Consumption decisions are value decisions (Lundblad & Davies, 2015; Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). Consumers define the value of a product or service in terms of the attributes they ascribe to it, depending on changing attitudes, values, and emotions. Retailers, producers, and brands must comprehend changes in the value paradigm in order to make the right decisions for the firms' future course (Berg, 2022; Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). Therefore, it is also important to consider the values of the stakeholders concerned throughout the entire fashion creation process (Freudenreich et al., 2020).

Consumer behavior was mostly based on relatively simple cost-benefit analyses because the old value paradigm was clearly shaped by pragmatic variables such as price, quantity, safety, and convenience. The new value paradigm is more influenced by soft variables. In this way, the quality of a product is defined more holistically. In addition to price, environmental, ethical, and social aspects are taken into account (Davies & Gutsche, 2016; Jägel et al., 2012; Jeffreys, 2022; Lundblad & Davies, 2015; Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). The focus is also on positive or negative experiences with producers and

the visions they pursue with their firms. Consumers are therefore interested in identification with the respective firms, and for this to happen, the values must be in line (Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). Large retailers in particular are being forced to rethink this new value paradigm. Companies need to improve the sustainability, accountability, and responsibility of their business models and demonstrate a positive mindset.

As a result, the fashion industry is undergoing a profound shift in values, driven in part by the aforementioned neo-ecological megatrend and the pursuit of a so-called "sense economy". The megatrend is redefining the values of global society, everyday culture, and the economy, with "environment" in the broadest sense becoming the basis of a new global identity (Block et al., 2022; Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). In addition, climate change is a major driver for changing consumer behavior and values in society (Buchel et al., 2022; Lundblad & Davies, 2015; Peters et al., 2021; Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). The shift from the old to the new value paradigm is illustrated in the following figure:

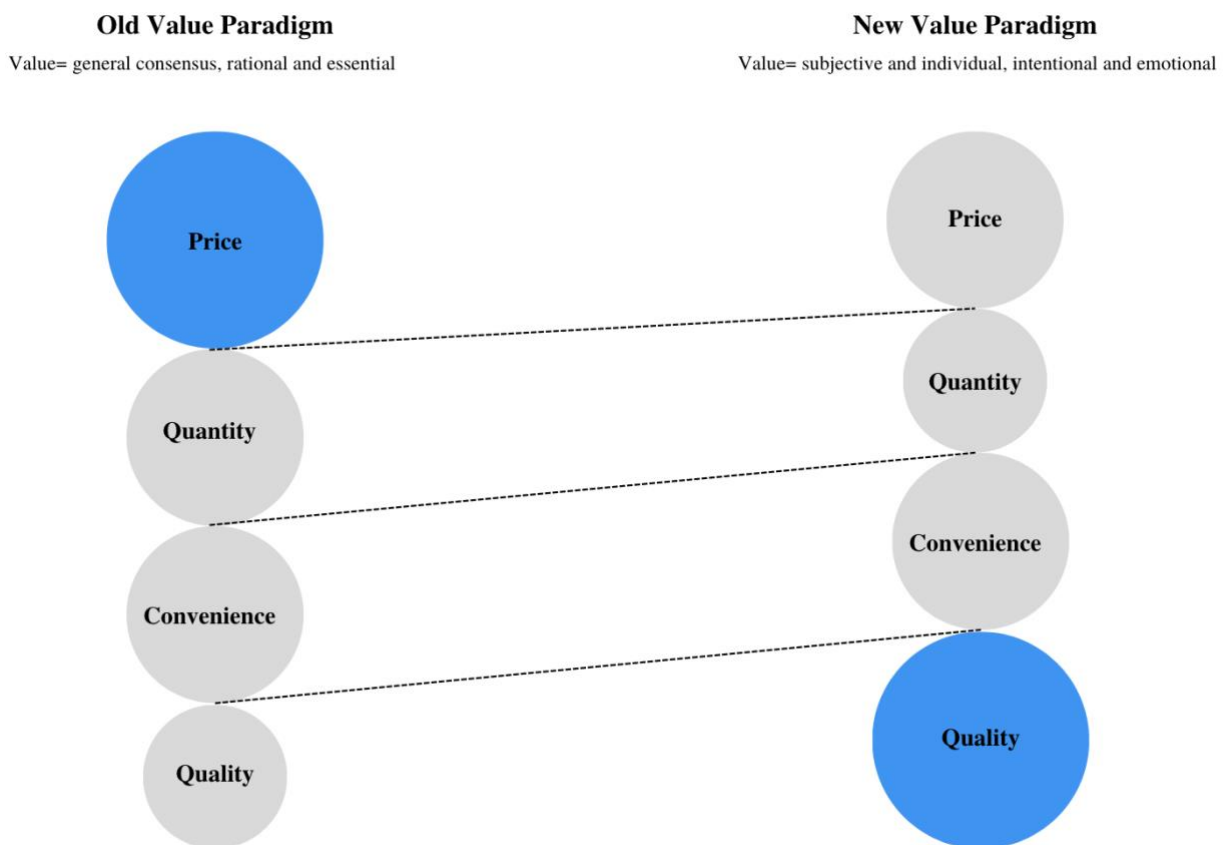


Figure 1: Illustration of the old and new values paradigm and the change in importance within the four criteria presented (adapted from Schleicher & Seitz, 2022)

With the presentation in the Retail Report adapted to the fashion industry, Schleicher & Seitz (2022) make it clear that there has been a significant shift in importance. Price has gone from being a very important criterion in the past, where the focus was on a pragmatic cost-benefit calculation and a functional approach, to a conceptual one. The dominant question is whether the price is fair or reasonable and varies from product to product. Hereby, consumers are interested in pricing that decodes the exact cost of producing fashion (Andersen, 2017). The category of quality, which was rather unimportant in the old paradigm, has become the new dominant criterion. Nowadays, the

origin, materials, sustainability, and longevity of fashion play a more overriding role. A critical shift has also occurred in the area of quantity: The central motive of owning a lot at a cheap price and maximizing ownership has given way to the question of how much you really need. It is about valuing fashion versus fashion as a disposable item. The criteria for convenience are also changing. There is a shift from easy availability to inspiring and supporting values that are adapted to individual life situations (Lundblad & Davies, 2015).

In particular, the new value paradigm in society helps to understand quality more holistically and to consume more consciously provides a valuable push toward fairer, more ecological, circular, and social fashion (Jeffreys, 2022; MacArthur & McCartney, 2017; Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). Sustainability is thus seen as the new differentiator for the fashion industry. This is driving new approaches such as recycling by design, a booming online trade in used fashion, and a shift from slow fashion to convenience and faster availability. Consumers' understanding of premium and luxury has also changed, driven not least by the neo-ecology megatrend (Block et al., 2022). Luxury products are expected to stand up against unfair and environmentally damaging production conditions and contribute to making the world a better place (Li & Leonas, 2018; Schleicher & Seitz, 2022).

With the implementation of VBI management and stakeholder inclusion, the fashion industry could foster the sustainable approaches previously mentioned, such as circular economy, and use the values-based view on their innovation management in terms of designing new, responsible fashion trends and in that way solve current problems (Lüdeke-Freund & Dembek, 2017). While some fashion SMEs already care about sustainability and the integration of stakeholder values in their economic behavior, the question is to what extent they are already working with the levers of VBI management and stakeholder integration in the holistic process to foster the needed system change.

Conducting research on values-based innovation in the application of SMEs in the fashion industry can reveal new insights into the challenges and necessities that have prevented SMEs from implementing such an approach, and also show how these fashion SMEs have made the change to a values-based innovation approach within their processes. Furthermore, it can give impulses for the urgently needed change in the fashion industry, to move away from mass production approaches towards more responsible production processes in textile processing and a more sustainable future.

In summary, research on values-based innovation with stakeholder engagement is still in the nascent stages. However, its expanding scientific importance is reflected in current world issues that present both possibilities and challenges for various firms. The application of this research field represents a promising opportunity for the fashion industry, that is unexplored so far. The fashion industry is under pressure to change due to current issues such as outdated business models, overproduction, environmental damage, the importance of safe workplaces along the supply chain, and changing customer values. Especially for SMEs in the fashion industry, strategic adaptation to new practices is not trivial due to lack of funding and limited human resources, and especially due to lack of implementation guides in a competitive industry like fashion. Because of these constraints, SMEs need clear processes and guidance on how to meet the new values without running into resource conflicts. Nevertheless, the whole industry should increasingly focus on the importance of environmental values, ethics, and social responsibility to continue to meet the needs of the target group. However, as the industry must meet the demands of customers and the needs and expectations of other stakeholders, such as suppliers, producers, employees, environmental organizations, and

other important ones, stakeholder inclusion may also be a valuable approach. By developing innovative products and business models that take into account the values of all affected stakeholders and the firm itself, fashion brands can demonstrate their commitment to a more sustainable and responsible future. In addition, stakeholder engagement can lead to a better understanding of their product's environmental and social impacts. This can help the fashion industry develop products that meet the needs of the target group while reflecting the values and beliefs of all impacted stakeholders. Executing research in the context of fashion SMEs in Europe can provide new insights into the barriers and requirements of values-based innovation and contribute to a more sustainable and responsible fashion industry as a whole.

2. Theoretical Solutions for Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development

This chapter summarizes and defines the theories and topics needed for a better understanding of this paper. First, the term innovation management is defined and explained, followed by an explanation of the innovation process, the specific innovation process in SMEs, and the design thinking approach. The role of values in innovation management is then revealed. Next, values-based innovation is defined, with a look at the VBI framework as well as the different levers of values in the three management dimensions. In addition, the driving values of the values-based innovation framework are named and other values-oriented innovation forms are presented. It then explains the fundamental concept of value-sensitive design. Next, the stakeholder inclusion is defined, and the stakeholder key groups relevant for the values-based innovations are identified. All these points raised serve as a basis to ensure common ground and to prevent misunderstandings. Finally, the conceptual model developed based on the previously elaborated theory is presented.

2.1. Innovation Management

Innovations represent a key position as a driving force for the emergence and failure of firms. Therefore, they are considered to be the origin and dynamics of economic development, but also lead to the instability of economic systems to a high degree (Schuh & Bender, 2012; Schumpeter, 1912).

The concept of innovation was first defined by Schumpeter (1912) in his theory of "creative destruction". He defined innovation as the process of introducing new products, production methods, markets, corporate structures, or types of economic enterprises. He saw innovation as the driving force behind economic growth and emphasized that entrepreneurs are the ones who initiate and implement innovations. Accordingly, creative destruction is a central part of economic growth and is considered a kind of progress that ensures that the economy is evolving and always adapting to changes in society. In contrast, Christensen (2008) describes the idea of disruptive innovation. Disruptive innovation refers to a new business strategy or a new technology that disrupts well-established markets and creates new business opportunities. According to this theory, entire industries and markets are driven, and new vendors emerge to challenge established, well-known firms. In addition, new groups of consumers are emerging who now have access to a product or service that was previously only available at great expense (Christensen, 2008). Innovations are new products or procedures, which differ noticeably concerning the comparison state. This can be described as an invention or the origin of innovation. If the invention is developed, manufactured and marketed, or used in the production process, it must prove itself in the market. Here, the combination of purpose and means, which is perceived as novel, must now prove itself in the market. If it is successfully accepted by the market and is regarded as a novelty, then it is referred to as an innovation (Hauschildt et al., 2023; Jung et al., 2018; Schuh & Bender, 2012). Innovations can furthermore impact the discovery and exploitation of new innovations, respectively. Consequently, product innovations can lead to changes in manufacturing, sales or service areas, but this is not necessarily the case and therefore a distinction between product innovation and innovation in general is useful (Jung et al., 2018; Schuh & Bender, 2012). In addition, the degree of innovation can be defined as either incremental or radical innovation. An incremental innovation occurs when a central demand is created. Radical innovations are caused by autonomous impulses (Schuh & Bender, 2012).

Even though most innovations fail, numerous publications show that innovative firms are more profitable than average (Anderson et al., 2014; Gassmann & Sutter, 2013; Schuh & Bender, 2012; Schumpeter, 1912). Consequently, innovations must also be managed appropriately.

The innovation management is responsible for the leadership, control, and implementation of the entire innovation process (Disselkamp, 2012). Hauschildt et al (2023) define the core task of innovation management with the design of the individual innovation process, thus the dispositive design of innovation processes. This includes the systematic planning, management, and control of the transformation of ideas into innovations in organizations. Innovation management relates to products, services, manufacturing processes, organizational structures, and management processes and represents a certain core process. This core process aims to ensure the future viability of the firm by creating competitive advantages. Furthermore, innovation management is a cross-functional task whose core challenge lies in the generation of economically successful innovations (Disselkamp, 2012; Hauschildt et al., 2023; Schuh & Bender, 2012).

The management level and possible project or innovation managers assume a special function here. They have to motivate and promote employees, sponsor innovative projects, act as a controller, and provide quality assurance. Managers need appropriate control elements for the identification of ideas, selection, preparation, realization, and reflection. Only through consistent and methodical management of the innovation process can ideas be turned into successful innovations. In addition, the management level requires appropriate incentive systems. An incentive system is defined as the totality of all incentives that can be used by an individual or a group toward a recipient. Furthermore, it is important for innovation incentive systems to include both tangible (monetary) and intangible (non-monetary) incentives (Disselkamp, 2012).

It should be emphasized that innovation management does not only refer to individual processes but to the entire innovation system of a firm. This system includes not only the processes for idea generation, development, and implementation but also the institutions within the firm in which these processes take place. Therefore, to be successful, these processes must be embedded in the entire corporate system (Hauschildt et al., 2023).

Innovation management is an important process in the firm in order to keep the firm competitive and successful in the long term (Anderson et al., 2014; Gassmann & Sutter, 2013; Schuh & Bender, 2012). Innovation has the potential to make firms more profitable, but it requires appropriate management, which must be adapted to the entire organizational system by the executive level, the innovation manager or a project manager responsible for it. (Hauschildt et al., 2023). The cross-functional management approach applied here aims to incentivize and motivate employees to make the firm more successful (Disselkamp, 2012).

2.2. The Innovation Process

Now that the term "innovation management" has been clearly defined, the innovation process will be described below to provide more detailed insight.

Process models are an integral part of innovation management (Verworn & Herstatt, 2000). The innovation process comprises the development of new products and processes as well as their

introduction to the market. The individual steps involved in this process can vary greatly in their sequence, characteristics, and duration, and from firm to firm and from innovation to innovation (Herstatt et al., 2007). A large number of different process models in innovation management exist in the literature. For this scientific work, the model of Herstatt (1999) is taken over, in order to ensure a uniform understanding. The innovation process consists of five phases: (1) idea generation and evaluation, (2) concept development, and product planning, (3) development, (4) prototyping, pilot application/testing, (5) production, market introduction, and penetration. The entire innovation process is characterized by closely interlinked phases that flow into each other and include iterative activities. At the end of the process, when all phases have been successfully completed, a new achievement (a product or a new type of service) is created which is then successfully introduced to the market and commercialized. The following figure illustrates this process:



Figure 2: Innovation process (adapted from Herstatt, 1999)

Phase I is about the generation and evaluation of an appropriate idea. For this purpose, an idea must first be found according to criteria such as customer, technology, and cost-relatedness. The idea found is then subjected to an evaluation based on attractiveness and risk. In addition, the idea found is compared to existing projects of the company, and a realignment of the project portfolio may occur. Phase II is about precise concept development and appropriate product planning. For this purpose, market analyses are performed, and a product concept is developed. Product planning is about exact quantities, product costs, the time frame, investments, and project costs. In addition, product specifications and architecture are decided. This is followed by the development of phase III. In this step, the development is carried out according to the specifications from phase II. Interdisciplinary project teams work together and design reviews are carried out until the right industrial design is found. Finally, in Phase IV, prototypes are created and tested. Various market tests follow and the final design is determined. This is followed by the necessary preparation for series production. The final phase V describes the production and the market launch and penetration. After production has started, the market launch is prepared to ensure a successful market entry. After the product or service has been launched, product maintenance follows (Verworn & Herstatt, 2000).

In this thesis, the innovation process is understood as consisting of five interrelated phases involving iterative activities. When all phases have been successfully completed, a new innovation has emerged which is then ready for market launch (Verworn & Herstatt, 2000).

2.3. The Innovation Process within SMEs

2.3.1. The Linear Innovation Process within SMEs

A high level of innovation capability is a requirement for ensuring the competitiveness of firms in our globalized world. However, SMEs in particular lack the resources to keep up in the increasingly accelerated innovation race (Castka et al., 2004; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Herstatt et al., 2007). This leads to the conclusion that most SMEs do not go through standardized, explicitly defined process phases like big corporates (Gulari & Fremantle, 2015). Since SMEs are a special part of this research, the following will apply the innovation process developed by Herstatt (1999) explained in the previous chapter to SMEs to see how an innovation process takes place in such firms.

In the first phase, the generation of ideas, which is a core task of innovation management is to procure information that is as future-oriented as possible. In large firms, the function of information procurement is often institutionalized. There are usually organizational units dedicated exclusively to research and development or market research. This point is different for SMEs: they often do not have their own research and development department and have fewer financial as well as human resources (Verworn et al., 2000). This results in limited technological know-how and limited market knowledge in the individual firm (Herstatt et al., 2007). The procurement of information for idea generation in SMEs is mostly done informally and via personal contacts, thus via external sources. It should be emphasized here that according to the research by Verworn et al. (2000), customers were indicated as the most important sources of information for innovation projects. Structured collection and systematic evaluation of the information do not usually take place in SMEs.

In the second phase of the innovation process, existing ideas must be evaluated to decide whether they should be pursued and turned into products or services (Verworn & Herstatt, 2000). In SMEs, decisions tend to be made intuitively or based on experience, and most do not use specific evaluation methods for this purpose. The reasons given for the low use of methods are again the lack of resources, but also the lack of know-how about the evaluation methods. Decisions on idea evaluation are usually made by the management. They make decisions based on personal experience. Thus, the entire idea evaluation process in SMEs tends to be characterized by intuition. SMEs also frequently do not attach great importance to project planning. The majority of SMEs have no formalized planning processes. In addition, planning activities are only carried out to a limited extent (Herstatt et al., 2007; Verworn et al., 2000).

In the phase of development, the third phase, the previously created plan is implemented (Verworn & Herstatt, 2000). For this purpose, the resources defined in the product planning must be made available in order to start the implementation. Due to the lack of project planning beforehand, the development is also complicated for SMEs (Verworn et al., 2000).

The lack of methodology in the early phases of the innovation process has a negative impact on the design of subsequent process steps and thus makes it more difficult to proceed (Schewe & Becker, 2009; Verworn et al., 2000). It occurs throughout the entire innovation process. Verworn et al. (2000) describe the reasons for the methodological limitations of SMEs and transfer them to the specific situation they often face. Compared to large firms, SMEs have fewer financial and human resources available for projects outside the routine. In addition, there is often a lack of the appropriate

methodological knowledge to support the process through the use of suitable innovation. It can be inferred from this that collaborations in the early phases of the innovation process could be of great importance for small and medium-sized enterprises to solve precisely these problems. The lack of formalization and the deplorable use of methods can be promoted by external requirements. Moreover, cooperation with external partners or stakeholders in the early stages of the innovation process can help to formalize and standardize processes and implement methods (Herstatt et al., 2007; Verworn et al., 2000).

Nevertheless, the strengths of SMEs should not be disregarded. SMEs have greater flexibility in their operations. Flat organizational structures with short decision-making paths and direct communication enable a rapid response to changes and new regulations from the outside world, such as new regulations on environmental protection (Herstatt et al., 2007; Parker et al., 2009; Verworn et al., 2000).

As SMEs have limited resources, the innovation process in these firms is partially different. The main deviations from the process described by Herstatt (1999) occur in the first three phases. These differences may be due to limited human and financial resources (Herstatt et al., 2007; Verworn et al., 2000; Verworn & Herstatt, 2000). In these phases, collaboration would be beneficial to ensure a successful innovation process in SMEs and to take advantage of the benefits that SMEs have, such as greater flexibility and responsiveness to external changes (Herstatt et al., 2007).

2.3.2. The Non-Linear Innovation Process within SMEs

In addition to the linear innovation process, explained previously, there is also the non-linear innovation process, which is often more appropriate for SMEs, due to their lack of methodology in the first phases of the innovation process (Schewe & Becker, 2009; Verworn et al., 2000). Unlike the linear process, which consists of the steps described in the previous chapter (idea generation, concept development and product planning, development, prototyping, and market introduction), the non-linear innovation process is less formalized and leaves more room for creativity and flexibility (Müller, 2013). Iterative loops are also an integral part of the non-linear process. The resulting cycle of learning, creativity, and development supports the ability to offer adaptations and solutions and to continuously improve ongoing change efforts (Buono & Kerber, 2009). Through feedback cycles, information can move easily across the many phases of innovation and is not constrained by defined processes (Müller, 2013). A nonlinear innovation process is presented below:

The Innovation Cycle: The innovation cycle is a non-linear innovation process that emphasizes the iterative and flexible nature of the innovation process (Berkhout et al., 2010; Müller, 2013; Schoen et al., 2005). It integrates technical push and market access forces, has distinct spirals for the invention and innovation processes, and emphasizes the significance of a business model for commercialization (Schoen et al., 2005). The innovation processes here are planned and carried out through interconnected cycles with forward and feedback links rather than being constrained into straightforward one-way pipelines (Berkhout et al., 2010). The cycle model works over an extended time span of decades and market feedback plays an important role in the innovation cycles (Schoen et al., 2005). As a result, the cyclic innovation process ought to be set up through interdisciplinary networks along an innovation circle with enough internal feedback pathways. This allows an

innovation process to be more collaborative and adaptable, resulting in more successful and customer-focused outcomes (Berkhout et al., 2010; Schoen et al., 2005), which can be beneficial for the innovation process of SMEs.

Nonlinear innovation processes integrate iterative steps into the innovation process. In addition, feedback loops and interconnected cycles are seen as a necessity in nonlinear innovation processes (Buono & Kerber, 2009; Müller, 2013). The innovation cycle is a substitute model for the conventional linear innovation process that places an emphasis on the value of adaptability, flexibility, and feedback loops throughout the whole innovation process (Berkhout et al., 2010; Müller, 2013; Schoen et al., 2005).

2.3.3. Design Thinking as an Applicable Innovation Method for SMEs

In addition to traditional and non-linear innovation processes, design thinking is presented as an innovation method for SMEs.

A methodical technique for solving certain challenges from all spheres of life is design thinking. The methodology extends well beyond traditional design disciplines like shaping and design. User desires and requirements, as well as user-oriented invention, are at the heart of the process, in contrast to many approaches in research and practice that approach the task from technical solvability (Hasso-Plattner-Institut, 2023). Design thinking is a progressive and exploratory creative process for developing innovative ideas and solutions that focuses on consumers' unmet needs (Razzouk & Shute, 2012). The idea around design thinking was significantly coined by the CEO of IDEO, a design and innovation agency, who emphasizes that design thinking is a "human-centered process" and moreover "a discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technically feasible and what a viable business strategy can transform into customer value and market opportunities" (Brown, 2008, p.86). Coming up with innovative ideas requires a creative discovery process that focuses on people's needs and is followed by iterative cycles of prototyping, testing, and improvement (Andersen, 2017; Brown, 2008). Furthermore, it is described as an approach based on the fundamental principles of a diverse team, variable space, and the process itself (Hilbrecht & Kempkens, 2013). The procedure, according to Hasso-Plattner-Institut (2023), consists of six steps: understanding, observation, defining a standpoint, idea generation, prototyping, and testing. It should be noted that the process steps are applied quite flexibly in design thinking projects. Almost always, in the context of iterations, phases go through multiple iterations (Brown, 2008; Hasso-Plattner-Institut, 2023; Razzouk & Shute, 2012).

Design thinking as a whole can help to reduce risks and gain as much knowledge as possible from early mistakes with little loss. This method can reduce the number of resources needed for product development because the final product will not be introduced to the market without going through a sufficient number of iterations (McCarthy, 2017). This is precisely what SMEs can benefit from and how it can work well in the context of scarce resources (Berkhout et al., 2010; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Parker et al., 2009). On the other side, design thinking is a human-centered and collaborative method for developing new ideas and solutions to problems, which proceeds in an iterative manner (Brown, 2008; Hasso-Plattner-Institut, 2023; Hilbrecht & Kempkens, 2013). As many SMEs are

reluctant to take risks, strategies such as design thinking that encourage experimentation, deal with uncertainty, and emphasize affordable prototyping are relevant to SMEs (Gulari & Fremantle, 2015).

SMEs often have limited resources and cannot always afford expensive innovation processes or other consulting services (Parker et al., 2009; Verworn et al., 2000). Design thinking provides a method for dealing with the risk associated with innovation while being both affordable and generally safe. Therefore, design thinking is applicable to the innovation processes of SMEs and their specific needs and challenges (Gulari & Fremantle, 2015).

2.4. The Role of Values in (Innovation) Management

The center of focus here is on human values demanded achieving a values-focused approach to innovation. It is important to emphasize that it is not about the added value in general, which can occur in different forms, but more of the result of innovation activities.

Values are an important part of business and individuals in general. They describe what seems important, what is considered desirable and worthwhile for individuals and others, and therefore shape behaviors and actions. In addition to this influence on behavior, values also guide perception and thus form a concept of order. Individuals as well as countries, communities, or work groups can pursue values (Frey, 2015). Values can be mutual among different individuals or shareholders or they can differ from each other (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Schwartz, 2012). Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund (2017, p.7) define values as “strings capable of weaving new meshes rather than gluing together strangers”. From a psychological point of view, human values have different importance in their structure of priorities and according to this vary in importance. Additionally, they serve as a kind of guiding principle in life and play a key role in one's personality (Frey, 2015; Schwartz, 2012). Schwartz (2012) moreover describes six main characteristics in his theory of values:

- (1) Values are associated with feelings and are, accordingly, personal beliefs,
- (2) values motivate action to achieve certain goals,
- (3) they exceed distinct situations and behaviors and, in that way, differentiate values from norms,
- (4) values guide the selection or appraisal of actions, policies, people, and events,
- (5) are organized in a hierarchy according to their importance, which once again separates values from attitudes and norms and
- (6) the significance of the priorities in values leads to a certain action.

These values are the critical drivers in human behavior and are present at all levels of social interaction. Furthermore, it is emphasized that multiple values together are action-guiding and hence are assigned with relative importance. Thus, values are described as associative networks that link fundamental values with distinctive expertise structures, behaviors, ideologies, and different values. (Feather, 1996; Schwartz, 2012).

Firms also began to recognize the fundamental role and the impact of values in connection with their day-to-day operations (Ivanov, 2022). Values are also seen as an essential part of any organizational culture (Schein, 2004). Schein (2004) describes them as one of three essential levels in his triangle of

organizational culture. Alongside the easily identifiable characteristics, artifacts, and deeply held beliefs, the underlying assumptions, and values describe the preferred actions and behaviors in the organization. Indeed, clarifying values within an organization lays the foundation for its corporate culture (Schein, 2015). The founders' influence is key in this context for integrating values into organizational cultures and shaping the decisions the firm makes to flourish in its environment (Schein, 2004). Therefore, values are a major component of corporate management, that represents a significant factor with considerable influence on innovation and management, which is also evidenced by several publications (Bleicher, 2017; Breuer et al., 2021; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022; Manohar & Pandit, 2013; Meißner & Wulf, 2020; Mejía-Trejo & Rodríguez-Bravo, 2020). Values also give support in strategy and selection processes by giving firms a normative orientation that goes beyond financial orientations and has the potential to encourage the development of sustainability-focused business models, products, and services (Ivanov, 2022). They clarify what a firm represents (Manohar & Pandit, 2013). It is the task of a manager to provide visible and clear values to act upon. If these values are emphasized and recorded new normative orientations arise. This usually originates through dedicated management actions (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). These values should be, in the best case, the basis for the creation of strategies to achieve the overall goals of a firm, as well as harmonize the respective needs of various stakeholders (Ivanov, 2022; Mejía-Trejo & Rodríguez-Bravo, 2020).

Furthermore, the underlying values of a firm influence the normative, strategic, and operational management levels depending on their integration. Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund (2017) distinguish between vertical, horizontal, and meta-integration of values based on the Integrated Management Concept (IMC) of Bleicher (2017). The IMC defines the interaction of certain management levels and how they collaborate to accomplish the overall objectives of corporations. First mentioned, the integration of values in a vertical way, addresses directly the normative, strategic, and organizational levels of management and conjointly reconciles all these levels. For a more detailed explanation, the example of corporate management geared to sustainability can be used here. In this case, the mission and vision are aligned with sustainability. These are prosecuted in the strategic goal of the company and this is in turn shared with the customer at the operational level. A values-based integration horizontally wise occurs directly among co-workers. When employees share the same values, their cooperation is enhanced and improved. In addition, boundaries to implementation can be overcome through the mutual values of individuals (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2014). Colleagues share the minimum requirements of certain values, for example, sustainability, and can therefore agree on a shared goal to work towards. In a values-based meta-integration, which takes place inside and outside organizations, firms must adapt to external, for example institutional, civic, or global values. In this way, for instance, political measures to protect the climate by avoiding greenhouse gases and achieving climate neutrality can be included in all levels of the management dimensions.

The types of integrations of values into the different levels of management just explained can be applied to innovation with its associated management. Thus, Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund (2017) identified a certain fusion of values, management, and innovation that composes the values-based perspective on innovation management. While each of these approaches forms a complicated area of research, the values-based innovation approach is a unique synthesis.

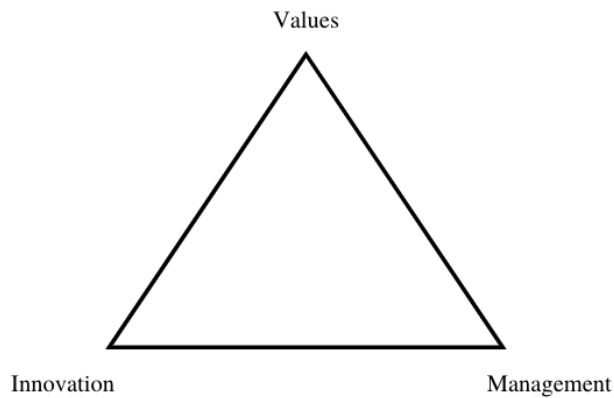


Figure 3: Synthesis of values, innovation, and management (adapted from Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2021)

It becomes clear that values have a dynamic character since they are accessible on all described management levels, but can also disappear (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). Accordingly, it is a general misunderstanding that only the top management is responsible for new values in the entrepreneurial context (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022). Values can be worked on by all employees and play a major role in all management levels (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2021). For example, values can be incorporated from the board level as part of an alignment of the company's missions and visions, thus building them from the top down. On the other hand, new values can also be taken up by employees through for example product planning at the instrumental or organizational level, when customers develop new values that a product or service should include. This example would be an integration of new values from the bottom up, which could also influence the strategic level and thus, in turn, the normative level (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). This illustrates that companies operate with values at all levels of management (normative, strategic, and instrumental or operational) (Mejía-Trejo & Rodríguez-Bravo, 2020). Nevertheless, identifying values should not be underestimated. It is not a common task, but one that requires consistent effort to adequately address the task of eliciting a wide variety of values (Breuer et al., 2022).

In summary, values play an important role in the management context. Schwartz's (2012) priority system makes it clear that human values underlie all actions and guide decisions. Thus, human values can influence organizational values by shaping the values and beliefs of employees and managers. Values also shape the culture of an organization, indicating which beliefs and behaviors are supported and which are not supported (Schein, 2004, 2015). In addition, values appear in all management dimensions of an organization and can be integrated from the top down as well as from the bottom up (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017).

2.5. Values-Based Innovation Management

2.5.1. The Values-Based Innovation Framework

The type of values-based innovation focuses on a set of core values and their ability to drive innovation and the associated management in companies. It aims to achieve a normative objective, which means incorporating the appropriate values and standards to create results from innovation responsibly and to achieve positive contributions to society and the environment (Breuer et al., 2022;

Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022). The core of this approach is the effect of new business models, products, or services on the environment, society, and various stakeholders. Additionally, this approach centers on the values of stakeholders and innovation to integrate them with the company's overall identity and objective, specifically by considering what is desirable and important to all parties involved. According to the VBI framework, innovation can only be effectively achieved by taking the values of all stakeholders into account. These values are then identified as drivers for innovation and not seen as limiting factors (Breuer et al., 2021; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017, 2019, 2021; Ivanov, 2022).

The influence of values along the corporate value chain is highlighted in points of economic, environmental as well as social influence. Above this, it explores whether values can lead to corporate renewal (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2014, 2017; Ivanov, 2022) According to the theoretical framework of VBI management, businesses actively set themselves values-based intentions as goals that go beyond the elementary economic standards and competitive advantages. Furthermore, values-based innovation can be adapted as a framework or business model for coordinating business strategy with environmental goals to drive positive change in society and the environment. (Lüdeke-Freund, 2020). By following this structure, the development of companies that are successful from an economic as well as from an environmental or social point of view is encouraged. This is a crucial point in the definition: because although values are embedded in all companies, not all use them as an explicit central part of their vision, mission, overarching purpose, or value statements. Some place little focus on them and treat them more implicitly concerning their actions and practices (Ivanov, 2022).

The approach of values-based innovation also differs in some respects from the known innovation concept. Unlike traditional innovation, the underlying values serve as a kind of heuristic in the VBI approach. They provide as a methodology to address issues related to the management of the innovation process. The mission and vision, combined with the underlying values, place greater emphasis on creating impactful innovations rather than simply focusing on creating new products or services for the sake of commercial gain. This is not the case in the traditional innovation approach. Furthermore, the long-established innovation approach also focuses on competitive advantage. It is not about whether something is beneficial and valuable for the environment, society, or personal values, but rather that an innovation outperforms the competition, puts the firm in an advantageous position, and generates profit (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2021; Ivanov, 2022; Manohar & Pandit, 2013).

In summary, the values-based approach to innovation uses the strength of values as a heuristic for innovation and business management (Breuer et al., 2021; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022). In this approach, the values of all stakeholders are involved, what is considered desirable in each case, must be integrated into the mission and core business objectives in order to manage innovation appropriately and achieve social, ethical, sustainable, and economic goals as well as business renewal (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2014, 2017; Ivanov, 2022). Thus, the VBI approach goes beyond basic economic norms and competitive advantage and focuses on the definition of values as a lever and guide for innovation activities rather than mere commerce (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Manohar & Pandit, 2013).

2.5.2. The Different Levers of Values in the Three Management Dimensions

As already emphasized in Chapter 2.4. values emerge at all management levels (Bleicher, 2017) and therefore represent different levers for innovation in firms (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). Thus, with a VBI approach, all levels are influenced concerning innovation management, which is shown in the following figure:

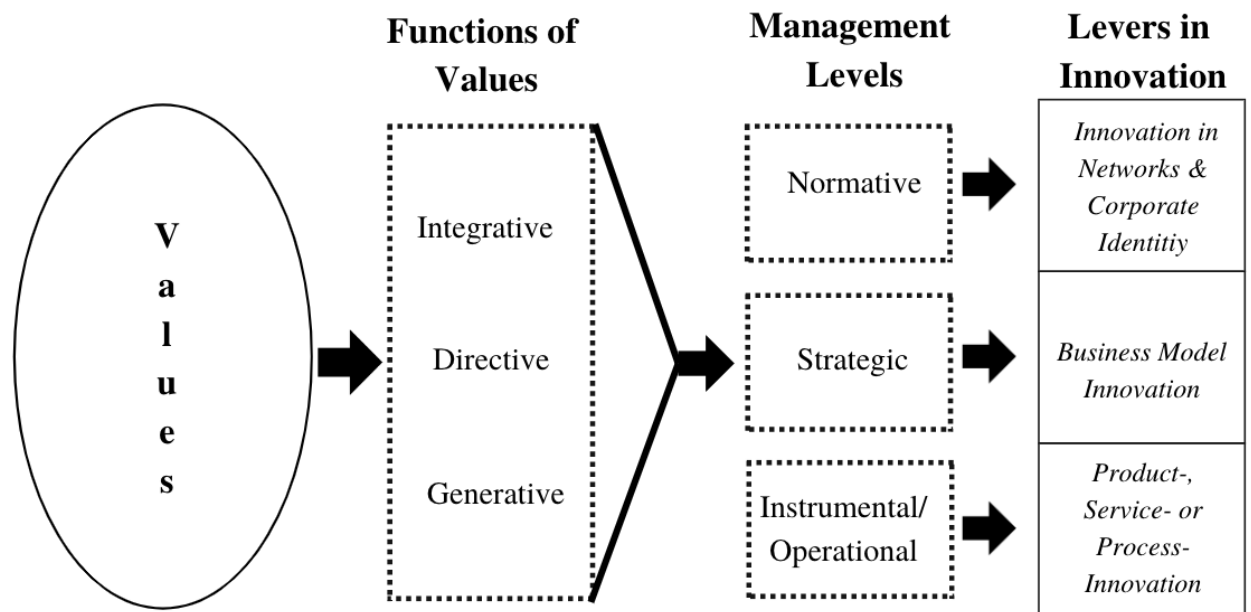


Figure 4: Values and the functions they accomplish in the three management levels and the respective innovation levers they create at certain levels (adapted from Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017 & Ivanov, 2022)

The structure of VBI is derived from the Integrated Management Concept based on the research of Bleicher (2017). As already mentioned in Chapter 2.4, this concerns the normative, strategic, and instrumental/operational levels of management.

As shown in Figure 3, values influence these three management dimensions with three different functions: The integrative, the directive, and the generative function. It is important to note that not only one function occurs on one management level, but all functions can be observed in every single dimension of management. In this context, the integrative function has the task of aligning different stakeholders inside and outside a company and also reconciling conflicting views. Those values are then added to the guiding values of the corporation and are thus highly prioritized. In terms of integration, this can be either top-down or bottom-up. Certain examples of integration can be found in Chapter 2.4. The directive function describes the direction in which a firm will align itself. It is about how it will deal with, for example, risks and ambiguity in the near and distant future. Furthermore, the directive function supports the company in a way to search and identify new trends for innovation with a focus directly on stakeholder values. The generative function of values describes the ability of values to serve as a kind of underlying procedure or more precisely as a kind of heuristic for operations of all kinds (Bleicher, 2017; Ivanov, 2022).

The different management levels, based on Bleicher's (2017) IMC, will now be discussed, as different values emerge at distinctive dimensions and thus represent different levers for innovation. The

normative management dimension makes it its business to focus on corporate identity, vision, mission, and other ground lying corporate goals. Specific guidelines for dealing with internal and external stakeholders are adopted and also embedded in the normative guidelines. As such, this level provides the fundamental foundation and guidance for the firm's actions. To achieve the firm's goals and also its values, it can be helpful to cooperate with other firms and organizations to carry out joint projects or initiatives. This type of collaboration forms a network that supports each other to achieve common goals. It is also a way to integrate new values into a firm's ecosystem. Accordingly, network innovation is an important driver of innovation at this level. In the dimension of strategic management, the focus is on differentiation from competitors and securing competitive advantage. Here, the predefined values from the normative level, mission, and vision, are converted into concrete objectives and action instructions for the instrumental/operational management level. The strategic dimension further focuses on how a firm can find new strategic ways to create value for its customers and other stakeholders. A key aspect of this is changing the business model to better achieve these values, which defines the major innovation lever at this level, the business model innovation. At the instrumental/operational level of management, the focus on innovation is mainly on taking various measures to successfully implement innovations that fit the firm's overarching values. This is in particular reference to the launch of new products and services and the improvement of general processes and synergies with external stakeholders. Values and influences that come directly from the customer represent a driver and the basis for new products, services, or process innovations (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022).

If values are properly managed within the firm on all three management levels just described, namely on the normative, strategic, and instrumental/operational levels, then they act as a significant accelerator for corporate innovation. However, it is important to remember that in order to use values as an effective element of innovation management, it is necessary to work intensively on the elaboration and evaluation of values (Breuer et al., 2022).

2.5.3. Driving Values of the Values-Based Innovation Framework

As described in the previous chapter, values-based innovation focuses on creating products, services, or processes that are not only economically profitable but also meet social, ethical, and environmental goals. According to the literature (Breuer et al., 2022; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Ivanov, 2022; Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2020), the most important values that are taken into account in a values-based innovation approach are presented and explained in the following table:

Table 1: Explanation of the essential values for a VBI approach with exemplary definitions from the literature

Value	Definition	Derived tasks	Authors
Ecological/ Environmental	<u>Ecological/Environmental value</u> “(…) has as its main goal to protect nature in order to maintain its benefits for	Protect nature	(Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2014, 2017; Ceicyte-Pranskune,

	mankind on the one hand and to reduce the harmful consequences of environmental pollution for mankind on the other hand (e.g., increasing the use of renewable energies, reducing CO2 emissions, reducing clearing processes and overexploitation).” (Frey, 2015, p.105)	<p>Reduce harmful consequences of environmental pollution</p> <p>Increase the use of renewable energies and natural resources</p> <p>Reduce CO2 emissions and the overutilization of finite resources</p>	2022; Frey, 2015; Ivanov, 2022)
Economic	“(…) <u>economic value</u> (…) is understood in this thesis as a value (or profits, usually measurable in monetary terms) that organization derives from an asset (product, service etc.)” (Tura, 2018, p.26)	<p>Responsible economic growth</p> <p>Appropriate payment of salary and working conditions</p> <p>Use environmentally friendly & durable materials</p> <p>Ensure adequate price stability</p>	(Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2021; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Tura, 2018)
Ethical	“ <u>Ethical values</u> regulate the means (…) It has been demonstrated that ethical and well-being values drive positive workplace behavior. Therefore, ethical values seem to be the best candidates for the values statement and well-being values should be stated in the manner of attitude or character.” (Mejía-Trejo & Rodríguez-Bravo, 2020, p.15)	<p>Secure appropriate working conditions</p> <p>Enhance positive workplace behavior</p> <p>Guarantee physical well-being at the working place</p> <p>Compliance with moral and ethical standards</p>	(Abbott et al., 2005; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2014; Mejía-Trejo & Rodríguez-Bravo, 2020; Stilgoe et al., 2013)
Social	“(…) explicitly aiming at the creation of <u>social value</u> and thus at positive social change. Hence, in this case, the ‘social’ denotes that the purpose of social innovation is to meet pressing social needs and to improve human and environmental well-being.” (Choi & Majumdar, 2014p. 27)	<p>Emphasize positive social change</p> <p>Meet social needs</p> <p>Starting a social dialog</p> <p>Improve human and environmental well-being</p>	(Adams et al., 2016; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2014; Choi & Majumdar, 2014; Schaltegger et al., 2016; Stilgoe et al., 2013)

The four values defined as, "ecological," "economic," "ethical" and "social," are part of a values-based innovation framework and serve as a promise for sustainable corporate action. This promise is directed at society as a whole and relates to the economic, ecological, and social benefits that the firm delivers with its range of goods for a wide range of stakeholders. Firms should take these values into account in the long and short term (Patala et al., 2016). Due to their similarity, the values "ethical" and "social" can also be combined to produce the value "socio-ethical" (Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022).

Involving a wide range of stakeholders from external sources can be particularly beneficial for SMEs for flourishing values-based innovation, as they potentially have too few resources of their own in these means (Gonzales-Gemio et al., 2020).

In the following, the above identified values will now be integrated into the fashion industry examined in this scientific work, in order to show concrete examples of what can constitute the respective values.

With the ecological value and the tasks assigned to it, an application can be ensured, for example, through the application of technological niche innovation (Buchel et al., 2022). Circular design and design for sustainability aim to reduce waste in the design, sampling, and production processes and to extend the life of garments through direct reuse, repair, and upcycling. Specific examples include 3D knitting, the reuse of leftovers, and laser cutting (Buchel et al., 2022; Earley, R; Goldsworthy, 2015; Kant Hvass & Pedersen, 2019; Sandvik & Stubbs, 2019). There are also specialized techniques that address the developments that lessen the environmental impact of dyeing processes as well as the use of water, energy, and chemical use, for example, with the use of microorganisms, enzymes, and nanotechnology (Buchel et al., 2022). In addition, there are policy guidelines that textile companies should adhere to, such as the EU Sustainable Textiles Strategy, which aims to support a carbon-neutral, circular economy in which products are designed to be more robust, reusable and repairable, recyclable, and energy efficient (European Commission, 2023a). Buchel et al. (2022) propose a state in which the fashion industry stops promoting microplastic contamination and stops using fossil fuels. Instead, companies should actively invest in their ability for radical innovation, sustainable design, and understanding of substitute procedures.

In order to ensure the economic value and profitability of a fashion firm, it is necessary to have a business model that is responsible and driven and does not seek infinite growth (Buchel et al., 2022). Furthermore, firms have to comply with regulations that require the fashion sector to have a sustainable and climate-neutral strategy, just like the ecological value mentioned above (European Commission, 2023a). New business models have emerged to oppose the controlling fashion industry. They focus on persistent customer relationships, and fashion is seen as a service rather than a possession (Pedersen et al., 2018). Examples include fashion platforms that specialize in the exchange and rental of clothing (e.g., unown, a startup from Hamburg). More innovative and conscious choices can also be made in the area of materials, such as new fibers made from recycled plastic. Some startups and designers have already specialized in using or producing new textile fibers from alternative resources, such as fungi or algae (Buchel et al., 2022; Earley, R; Goldsworthy, 2015; Sandvik & Stubbs, 2019). In order to guarantee workers a fair wage, improved working circumstances, opportunities for personal growth, and a healthier environment, Buchel et al. (2022) suggest that collective bargaining should be pursued and that workers' representation be respected. This can be ensured, for example, by the number of specialized jobs in the sector.

The previous point just made about ensuring an appropriate working environment for employees within the framework of economic values is equally relevant to the ethical value of the values-based innovation framework. To that end, working conditions and other important areas should be disclosed to employees so that employers can be held accountable for violations (Buchel et al., 2022). This can be used to promote physical and general well-being in the workplace and counteract the old business model of the fashion industry, which is prone to labor harassment, safety concerns, and the

exploitation of production employees (Taplin, 2014a). Incidents such as the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh in 2013 have helped push the industry to be more ethical (Peters et al., 2021; Taplin, 2014b). The fashion industry is primarily making efforts to improve industry ethics in response to public attention by creating cooperative, sector sustainability platforms, as well as certification and benchmarking programs (e.g., Fashion for Good and the Sustainable Apparel Coalition) (Buchel et al., 2022). One further strategy used by ethical fashion firms to address social injustice, equal rights, and environmental protection is an emphasis on tight collaboration with suppliers and shorter supply chains. Customers can develop a stronger relationship with producers and become aware of working conditions through a more transparent production process. Thus, new value-chain models and alliances with various stakeholders along the supply chain represent a way to operate more ethically (Buchel et al., 2022; Lundblad & Davies, 2015).

Society's changing attitudes towards fashion, due to significant socioeconomic inequalities and far-reaching environmental effects, are leading consumers to question the industry. Society wants fashion brands to take responsibility, become more transparent, and improve their sustainability practices (Buchel et al., 2022; Lundblad & Davies, 2015; Peters et al., 2021). Social justice has long been a growing global trend that has emerged from tragedies such as the aforementioned Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh in 2013 or the Tazreen factory fire in 2012 (Peters et al., 2021; Taplin, 2014b). To address these social needs and improve human and environmental well-being, the private sector, government, and NGOs in European countries are working together to develop new policies. These are designed to combat the exploitation of workers and hazardous working conditions in the supply chain. These agreements can be initiated directly by the fashion industry with NGOs (Buchel et al., 2022). Through international customer movements such as #WhoMadeMyClothes and #WhoMadeMyFabric, fashion brands can actively open a social dialog with their consumers to improve social conditions in the industry. This would also allow certain brands to achieve a kind of pioneer status as the few that lead the way with great transparency (Buchel et al., 2022; Fashion Revolution, 2021).

By actively embracing the four core values of the values-based innovation framework, there are several opportunities for the fashion industry to contribute to change. Even if the industry is characterized by a prevailing style of thinking, the examples mentioned, such as circular design, the use of new innovative materials, transparency in working conditions, or the adoption of social trends can serve as starting grounds for transformational change (Buchel et al., 2022; Earley, R; Goldsworthy, 2015; Fashion Revolution, 2021; Kant Hvass & Pedersen, 2019; Lundblad & Davies, 2015; Sandvik & Stubbs, 2019).

2.6. The Value-Sensitive Design Framework

Another theoretically supported strategy that takes into account human values and focused on ethics and morality in a systematic and extensive manner throughout the design process is the value-sensitive design (VSD) framework (Davis & Nathan, 2014; Friedman et al., 2013; Friedman & Hendry, 2019). The value-sensitive design seeks to incorporate human values into all stages of the design of information technologies and digital products (Friedman et al., 2017) and to demonstrate how computer-based systems affect and are formed by human values (such as human responsibility, well-being, or autonomy) (Le Dantec et al., 2009). This involves developing technologies and

solutions that solve ethical and social concerns while fostering the values and needs of all affected stakeholders. The concept consists of an iterative and “tripartite” methodology that integrates three different parts: conceptual, empirical, and technical investigations (Friedman et al., 2013). In the following, these investigations are explained individually.

Conceptual investigations: Essentially, the conceptual part of the study consists of two parts: First, it should be determined which stakeholder groups are affected by the technology to be researched. To do this, a distinction is made between direct stakeholders, those who will use the technology or product themselves, and indirect stakeholders, who will be influenced by the new technology from others (Friedman et al., 2013). As an illustrative example, Davis & Nathan (2014) describe the case of a building monitoring system. The security staff that run, maintain, and watch over the system are most likely considered direct stakeholders. The tenants of the building and any guests whether they are welcome or not, whose photographs are captured by the camera may be considered indirect stakeholders. The lives of these last individuals are nonetheless impacted by how the system is used even when they don't use it themselves. Second, the conceptual inquiry addresses the values that accrue with the application of technology. These need to be identified and defined to address possible issues that can arise. This may involve dealing with competing values, or whether moral values should carry more weight than other values that are considered non-moral (Davis & Nathan, 2014; Friedman et al., 2013). For example, in the previously mentioned example of the building surveillance system, the values of privacy and general security would be in competition with each other (Davis & Nathan, 2014).

Empirical investigations: In the framework of VSD, empirical investigations seek to document participants' "contexts, experiences, and understandings" of how technologies affect values (Davis & Nathan, 2014). Here, various qualitative and quantitative research techniques (such as interviews, observations, surveys, and more) are utilized to learn more about how values are seen and prioritized (Davis & Nathan, 2014; Friedman & Hendry, 2019). It is important to independently select a method that is suitable for the particular project (Friedman & Hendry, 2019). All kinds of perceptions and actions of the different stakeholders should be explored.

Technical investigations: The VSD approach makes the assumption that technologies are appropriate for specific values that may be deduced from the technology's characteristics (Friedman & Hendry, 2019). Technical research is being done on these specific features (Davis & Nathan, 2014). The investigations, on the one hand, concentrate on how current technologies already include human values. On the other hand, precise design choices are taken to guarantee that the technology is built with the defined values in mind. The objective is to create a technology that satisfies stakeholders' demands and values (Davis & Nathan, 2014; Friedman & Hendry, 2019).

This three-part process is based on an interactive approach. This implies that values influence technology and that values and technology can interact in many ways (Friedman et al., 2013). Furthermore, the methodology is iterative, as the three steps mentioned above are interconnected, complement each other, as well as being carried out in a different order (Davis & Nathan, 2014; Friedman & Hendry, 2019). Every stakeholder impacted by the technology participates significantly in the VSD since their values, as well as those of the project and those of the developers, are clearly incorporated into the process. But nonetheless, there may be conflicts between human values that need to be settled. To achieve this, cooperative action should be prioritized whenever possible, and

the design process should be temporarily suspended if values diverge too much (Friedman & Hendry, 2019; Miller et al., 2007).

Friedman & Hendry (2019) proceed to outline seventeen adaptable techniques that can be used within the framework of values-sensitive design and that prioritize human values throughout the process. In the context of this scientific work, the following method is described in more detail: Direct and indirect stakeholder analysis.

Direct and indirect stakeholder analysis: In the VSD context, stakeholder analysis is about individuals and groups, as well as institutions and societies (Friedman & Hendry, 2019). It focuses on identifying stakeholders and determining how each stakeholder is affected (Davis & Nathan, 2014). Furthermore, it tries to identify possible advantages, restrictions, and conflicts. Again, stakeholders are divided into groups of direct and indirect stakeholders. Identifying direct stakeholders is usually easier while identifying indirect stakeholders can be more diffuse. It is a challenge to identify who is indirectly affected by technology, whether positively or negatively (Friedman & Hendry, 2019). By outlining the roles that should be taken into consideration, the stakeholder analysis aims to iteratively inform subsequent conceptual research focusing on values as well as empirical and/or technological investigations (Davis & Nathan, 2014; Miller et al., 2007).

Human values are taken into account in a structured way across the design process in value-sensitive design. The creation of designs is based on research that is conducted in three stages: conceptual, empirical, and technological. These studies are iterative, allowing the creator to make changes to the design over time. To improve the future, the VSD framework aims to imagine, build, and use technology with an emphasis on morality and ethics (Davis & Nathan, 2014; Friedman et al., 2013; Friedman & Hendry, 2019; Le Dantec et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2007).

2.7. Other Values-Oriented Innovation Forms

Due to the increasingly present values such as sustainability and ethical action in relation to our environment, values-based innovation is a concept that is of ever-increasing importance (Breuer et al., 2021, 2022; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2014, 2017; Ivanov, 2022; Mejía-Trejo & Rodríguez-Bravo, 2020). In order to explore it in more detail, various forms of it are further explored in the current literature. (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). Closely related to it are sustainability-oriented innovation (SOI) (Adams et al., 2016) and responsible innovation (RI) (Lubberink et al., 2017; Stilgoe et al., 2013). The following table provides an overview of definitions from the scientific literature on the innovation forms just mentioned (SOI and RI).

Table 2: Definitions of the innovation types sustainability-oriented innovation and responsible innovation with differences from VBI

Term	Definition	Differences from VBI
Sustainability-oriented innovation (SOI)	“Sustainability-oriented innovation (SOI) involves making intentional changes to an organization’s philosophy and values, as well as to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on constraining and binding norms (e.g., minimizing threats to

	its products, processes or practices, to serve the specific purpose of creating and realizing social and environmental value in addition to economic returns.” (Adams et al., 2016, p.181)	<p>society) (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase firm profit, requirements of an external regulatory framework focused on sustainability are pursued (Franceschini et al., 2016) • Primarily focuses on societal issues that are more complex (Charter & Clark, 2007)
Responsible innovation (RI)	<p>“The main idea behind responsible innovation is to democratise innovation and realise deliberative forms of governance such as stakeholder and public engagement. (...) This upstream inclusion of stakeholders and the public, by deliberative forms of governance, can help to realise a collective responsibility to control and direct innovation into a direction that is ethically acceptable, societally desirable and sustainable.” (Lubberink et al., 2017, p.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on constraining and binding norms (e.g. minimizing threats to society) (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017) • Innovations should have their main focus on social and political objectives (von Schomberg & Blok, 2019) • Their origin lies in the imperatives of society and politics, not in human values (Burget et al., 2016; von Schomberg & Blok, 2019)

Sustainability-oriented innovation, as well as responsible innovation, are both, just like VBI, novel and emerging concepts in the current innovation literature. The implementation of the two forms of innovation raises some questions for the scientific community, such as how exactly SOI or RI can be achieved within a company or how the practical implementation should be carried out (Adams et al., 2016; Gonzales-Gemio et al., 2020; Lubberink et al., 2017; Mejía-Trejo & Rodríguez-Bravo, 2020; Stilgoe et al., 2013).

While both innovation approaches follow the aim of minimizing the impact of innovations on society and the environment and ensuring that these innovations are sustainable and responsible, they differ from values-based innovation in some points. Sustainability-oriented innovation and responsible innovation are based on constraining and binding norms. Values-based innovation, as explained earlier in Chapter 2.5., is about investigating certain (human) values as the origin of innovative corporate actions and developing them further (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). While SOI and RI also emphasize the importance of values, they also see them as a kind of obstacle for the firm to respond to in return. For VBI, intrinsic values as decisive drivers of innovation processes are thus in a different context. Furthermore, the values-based innovation framework describes that the innovation process can only be managed in an appropriate way if the values of all stakeholders involved are included and considered. While the responsible innovation approach also emphasizes the involvement of different stakeholders, they only play a consultative role and are not integrated

with their own values into the innovation process (Lubberink et al., 2017; von Schomberg & Blok, 2019). RI, SOI, and VBI also differ in their respective contributions to innovation (Lubberink et al., 2017). While RI addresses the so-called most important issues, such as the global warming crisis or the increase in diseases among humans (Burget et al., 2016), uncertainty about the potential impacts of progress (Stilgoe et al., 2013), and the integration of innovation into society (von Schomberg & Blok, 2019), SOI focuses on something different. It addresses all climate-related issues, which are more complex problems for society (Charter & Clark, 2007), and also focuses on identifying opportunities for firms to maximize profitability through the development of sustainability-driven innovation (Franceschini et al., 2016). Rather than focusing on mere technological or financial benefits, VBI encourages firms and organizations to build products, services, and business models based on the values and aspirations of the target market (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022). In this way, the values-based approach differs from responsible innovation and sustainability-oriented in its focused goal and innovation input.

Although sustainability-oriented innovation and responsible innovation also share the overarching goal of addressing social and environmental issues and the importance of values in this context, the two frameworks must be distinguished from VBI in the way values are viewed and treated (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022). This is because intrinsic and human values do not play a leading role in the other two frameworks and, unlike VBI, are not actively integrated into the innovation process. However, it is important to be aware of these distinctions in order to understand the specific characteristics and implications of each type of innovation.

2.8. Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation

2.8.1. The Importance of Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation

Stakeholders are individuals or groups who are affected by or have an interest in the decisions of a firm. Accordingly, they play a decisive role in the overall health of the company (Freeman, 2011). As already described in Chapter 2.5.1, stakeholders are important in the context of the values-based innovation framework as they represent and monitor the firm's commitments to the four important values (ecological, economic, ethical, and social). Firms need to consider the needs and expectations of different stakeholders to deliver on a sustainable promise (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Freeman, 2011; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Ivanov, 2022).

Freeman (2011) assumes in his stakeholder theory, that value creation describes a collective task that benefits both the firm values and all of its stakeholders. However, this requires the firm to consider the needs and expectations of all stakeholders: those who can influence the goals and success of an organization, or without whom the particular enterprise would not exist, and factor them into its decisions. For example, if the stakeholders' values are ecological and social, then this must be taken into account in the value-creation processes (Dmytriyev et al., 2021; Freudenreich et al., 2020). Furthermore, it is not only the firms responsible for creating value for the stakeholders, the stakeholders themselves are also responsible for ensuring that a long-term successful firm-stakeholder relationship exists. Thus, these relationships exist on reciprocity and fairness (Dmytriyev et al., 2021).

The successful implementation of business models that promote a sense of social responsibility and care for their environment, under which the values-based innovation framework falls, requires incorporating the values of all stakeholders involved (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Freudenreich et al., 2020). In addition, this involvement is important to seek social, ethical, and environmental goals (Breuer et al., 2018; Freeman, 2011), which the VBI approach pursues.

Therefore, firms should accurately identify the values of their stakeholders to actively work with them on the fundamental value level. Values-based stakeholder management is not only about getting a good deal for both sides but also about including other important factors. It ensures that decisions are made by considering not only short-term desires and interests but also important values such as social responsibility. This, in turn, increases the likelihood that business models will be sustainable and successful, and will also reflect the values and goals that are important to current and future generations in order to remain viable (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019). Furthermore, Breuer et al. (2018) clarify at the point of viability of companies that this is not a trivial task with the following statements:

- The acquisition of resources (money) by stakeholders (as investors) is usually a complicated process in which several people or parties interact with each other.
- Second, the desires and requirements of stakeholders may combat the goals of the company, leading to conflicts.
- The stakeholders themselves may hold different values which can lead to disagreements
- In more complex problems, it may not be directly clear which interests stakeholders pursue.

Accordingly, it is emphasized that the inclusion of various stakeholders and their dependencies and values are accurately considered and responded to (Breuer et al., 2018; Dmytriyev et al., 2021). Moreover, it may be difficult to implement complete transparency in the innovation process with all stakeholders. Additional knowledge that the involved parties gain could identify new entrepreneurial opportunities that can provide an advantage. This could lead to conflicts of interest between different stakeholders (Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022).

The preceding theory makes it clear that stakeholder engagement is an important part of values-based innovation management and should not be seen as a complicating factor. Rather, a firm can gain essential supporters for the good of the environment, society, and least of all the firm itself. In addition, it is a way of promoting and securing the future viability of a company (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019).

2.8.2. Stakeholder Key Groups in Values-Based Innovation

Having described the theoretical basis of stakeholder theory in the context of values-based innovation management, it is now important to identify and explain the most important stakeholder groups.

Firms stand with their stakeholders in pursuit of a common goal, and to that end, they engage in exchanges within activities. Each stakeholder-firm relationship can look different and pursue distinctive values (Freudenreich et al., 2020). Following the research of Parmar et al. (2010) and the

work of Freudenreich et al. (2020), the following key stakeholder groups are named: Customers, business partners (including all kinds of suppliers, logistics partners, consultants, and operations providers), employees (including managers and all other types of employees), financial stakeholders, and societal stakeholders (communities). These groups are explicitly defined in the following table and their role in VBI is explained in more detail.

Table 3: Definitions and roles of key stakeholders in values-based innovation management

Stakeholder Group	Definition	Role in VBI
Customers	Considered a key stakeholder group and also referred to as customer segments, target markets, or users. Any person or organization that buys or uses a firm's products or services (Al-Debei & Avison, 2010; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Teece, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationships center around the goods and services that are provided (Freudenreich et al., 2020) - Customers simply engage in the value exchange by having a professional or personal need met (Al-Debei & Avison, 2010; Freudenreich et al., 2020) - Provide significant values to firms, such as personal data and buyer behavior (Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Freudenreich et al., 2020) - By taking part in open innovation projects with firms, actively contributing to the value generation process (Teece, 2010)
Employees (Managers, employees)	Individuals who are employed by a business or organization. All personnel are included in this, including managers and other executives (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Teece, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directly involved in the implementation of the firm's products (Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022) - Engaged in value creation activities by providing their knowledge and capabilities (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Freudenreich et al., 2020) - Matching appropriate knowledge resources with appropriate jobs in the organization (Freudenreich et al., 2020; Teece, 2010)
Financial Stakeholders (Investors, shareholders and creditors such as banks)	Provide financial resources and are therefore investors, shareholders, or also creditors such as banks, internal and external providers of equity capital and debt capital (Freeman, 2011; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Garriga, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide funding to maintain or expand business operations (Freeman, 2011) - The main relationship is the financial participation and, in this sense, the financial interest in the firm (Freudenreich et al., 2020; Garriga, 2014) - Can still pursue sustainability-oriented values (Freudenreich et al., 2020)
Societal Stakeholder (Roles representing the	Parties that advocate for society's and the environment's needs and wants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appreciating business contribution, the provision and maintenance of a stable operating environment for the business

natural environment, communities, the government, external agencies, media, and academia)	The firm and these stakeholders do not have a written agreement. These social representatives, like NGOs, represent nature and help to create value, especially by taking into account the effects that the firm's operations have on the environment and society (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Parmar et al., 2010; Schaltegger et al., 2016)	through regulations and social norms (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Parmar et al., 2010) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contribution to sustainable solutions in the corporate environment (Freudenreich et al., 2020) - Promote corporate transparency about actions so that the legality and legitimacy of activities can be assessed and tracked (Freudenreich et al., 2020)
Business Partners (Suppliers, logistics partners, consultants, and operations providers)	Performing activities related to the creation of a product or service, such as research and development processes, procurement of resources, and production itself (Al-Debei & Avison, 2010; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Freudenreich et al., 2020; Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supply needs related to production processes (Al-Debei & Avison, 2010) - Fulfillment of requirements is in exchange for payment or through longer-term contracts (Freudenreich et al., 2020; Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) - Find and utilize the connections between sustainability and commercial objectives (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Freudenreich et al., 2020)

As values-based innovation is a prerequisite and equally facilitator for a successful sustainable business model of firms (Breuer et al., 2018; Ivanov, 2022), the stakeholder groups defined here are also oriented in this direction. This is particularly evident in the group of societal stakeholders, who represent all possible roles related to the environment, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or personalities from academia (Freudenreich et al., 2020), who, for example, support research into new sustainable raw materials. Furthermore, Freudenreich et al. (2020) state, that it is not only the societal stakeholders but all stakeholder types equally that can hold sustainable-oriented values.

In addition, the stakeholder groups under consideration can be categorized into internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are the employees of a firm. They are part of the organization per se and perform roles within it (Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022). It is important to inform and incentivize the employees in question about the need and potential benefits. Incentives such as a supportive work environment and work-life balance that ensures the well-being of employees can increase their commitment and willingness to perform, which leads to increased profits for the firm (Gurzawska et al., 2017). According to the research of Parmar et al. (2010), managers should be responsible for this task and secure that all the employees are on the same page to create value. External stakeholders include all other stakeholder groups: customers, societal stakeholders, financial stakeholders, and business partners. They all form an interconnected networked environment of the firm in its innovation process. They can influence the corporation but are also affected by its decisions (Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022). In the case of customers, emerging customer values, such as sustainability and ethical business practices, can drive firms to align their products and services accordingly, so that the customer's decision to buy is a positive one. By additionally educating customers on what kind of

sustainable processes the firm uses, customers can be further persuaded. As a result, it can lead to positive word-of-mouth among customers, which benefits the firm as well (Gurzawska et al., 2017).

The stakeholder groups just mentioned are the key partners for stakeholder engagement. Attention should be paid to them in order to develop an appropriate and mutually beneficial relationship between the firm and its stakeholders (Freudenreich et al., 2020; Parmar et al., 2010). A distinction needs to be made between internal and external stakeholders. On the internal side, there are the employees, who need to be strengthened and motivated by the managers to strive for the same value. The other groups together form the firm's network of external stakeholders (Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022). In the case of values-based innovation, it is important to note that all key stakeholder groups are amplified and focused on sustainable, ethical, and social goals in addition to economic goals (Freudenreich et al., 2020).

2.9. Proposal for a Conceptual Model for Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development

In the following, a framework for stakeholder involvement in values-based innovation development is proposed and explained through the input of the extensive literature review.

The model and the associated methodology consist of six interrelated steps. The process starts with a **diagnosis** of the respective **firm**. The purpose is to identify the fundamental values and determine which mission and vision should be pursued (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). Then, a tool from the value-sensitive design framework is integrated: The **direct and indirect stakeholder analysis** helps to identify all the direct and indirect stakeholders of the firm in order to ensure a consistent overview of the roles that different stakeholders play and how they can be integrated (Davis & Nathan, 2014; Schewe & Becker, 2009). Once the stakeholders have been identified, the next step is to conduct the **first preliminary values-driven stakeholder inclusion checkpoint**. This is done to ensure that their values and beliefs are considered throughout the process. The values and beliefs are checked against those of the firm. At this point of the framework, the various stakeholders are actively informed for the first time about what to expect in the next steps and how the process will proceed (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2021; Freudenreich et al., 2020). After this step has been performed, the **first iterative cycle** follows. Here, the **upstream steps of the design thinking approach**, explained in part 2.3.3. (Understanding, observation, defining a point of view), are embedded (Hasso-Plattner-Institut, 2023) in order to discuss the initial situation in detail and to be able to initiate the innovation process with the developed values and the identified stakeholders. The following iterative cycles are based on the **traditional innovation process** described in Chapter 2.2 (Herstatt, 1999). Thus, innovation runs through the four steps presented there: idea generation, concept development and product planning, development, and prototyping and testing. To offer greater flexibility and agility and to better fulfill the needs of SMEs, the process has been modified based on the **non-linear innovation process**. This iterative, step-by-step development and testing of innovations enable SMEs to lower the likelihood of expensive errors and poor investments, saving money from already limited financial resources (Castka et al., 2004; Parker et al., 2009; Verworn et al., 2000). Moreover, through this method, better flexibility and more creative freedom, which is advantageous for SMEs, can be ensured (Auer & Jarmai, 2018; Parker et al., 2009). The **market launch**, which represents the fifth step and last of the innovation process (Herstatt, 1999), is somewhat detached from the iterations,

which can be repeated as often as desired. It represents the third phase of the innovation process presented here. To ensure the continuous and ongoing integration of the human values of all actors and parties involved in the entire innovation process, **values-based stakeholder checkpoints** are conducted after each step of the innovation process. These serve as feedback loops and emphasize the focus on important values (environmental, ethical, economic, and social) and stakeholder participation in the innovation process. In this way, stakeholder involvement is active throughout the process. After iterating through the innovation process, this stakeholder loop, which emerges after each phase of the innovation process, includes a review of preliminary results, ensuring a continuous assessment of the values of all stakeholders. This enables a collaborative and adaptive innovation process that leads to more successful and customer-focused products (Berkhout et al., 2010; Schoen et al., 2005). As a result, firms can successfully incorporate stakeholder feedback and maintain alignment with their values throughout the innovation process by using the values-based innovation approach. The associated innovation perspective, which looks at how values influence and guide innovation both inside and outside the organization, can also be beneficial. It can also build long-term relationships with customers, employees, and other stakeholders and increase trust within the organization. In addition, a responsible and future-oriented positioning is possible. (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). The below proposed framework can help SMEs to effectively use their limited financial and human resources while reaping the benefits of values-based innovation. By creating clear guidelines and strategies for values-based innovation, SMEs can develop a clear vision for their efforts and ensure that they are heading in the right direction. Additionally, a long-term and valuable relationship can be built through the active involvement of stakeholders (AlQershi et al., 2018; Freudenreich et al., 2020).

The proposed framework is presented in the illustration below:

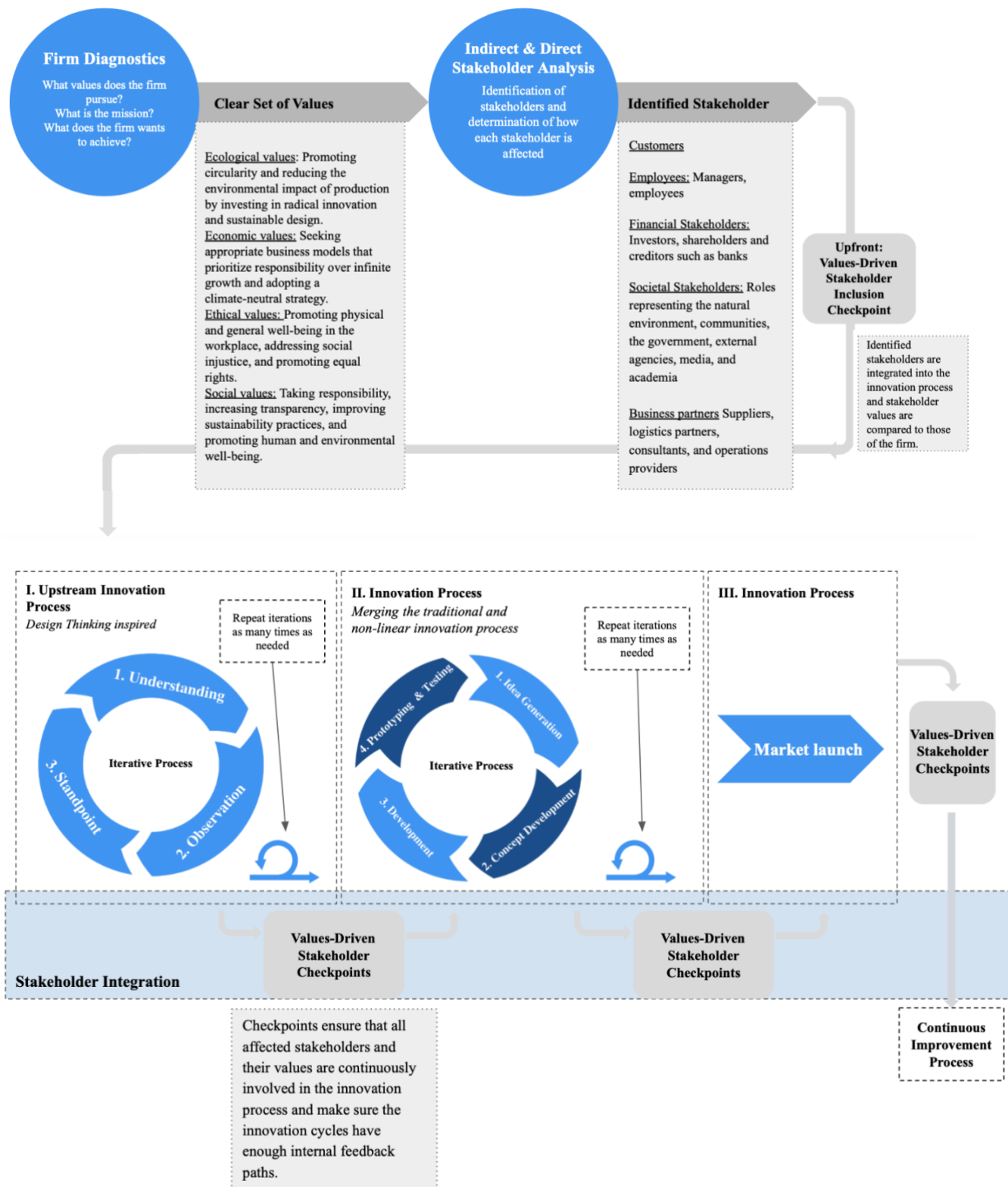


Figure 5: Proposed conceptual model for stakeholder inclusion in the creation of values-based innovation

2.9.1. Firm Diagnostics

Since a firm's values awareness is crucial for the deployment of VBI, the proposed conceptual model begins with a firm diagnosis. The objective of this is to increase overall awareness of the values that underlie the organization's goals and objectives. This is due to the fact that it is significant to understand what values drive a firm's decisions (Frey, 2015). The importance of values is emphasized strongly in Chapter 2.4 since they play a decisive role in any organizational culture (Schein, 2004). In order to clarify the values by which a firm determines its actions, management actions can be initiated by the founders or the management level (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). As Schein (2004) points out, the founders of an organization have a significant influence on the origin of values. Since they originally developed the concept for a particular firm, they usually have a certain idea of what their values are based on their own cultural background and personality. Therefore, a systematic approach to self-reflection on corporate values would be a helpful act to identify and actively align with them. In this context, an internal analysis of existing values can be used to determine which values are currently held in the organization and which influence the mission and vision of a firm (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). The following step is to determine the core values that define the organization. These values usually form the basis for all business practices and strategies (Ivanov, 2022; Mejía-Trejo & Rodríguez-Bravo, 2020). Firms must consider how they innovate in accordance with their values and what is important for them, which is accomplished by fully adopting the approach to values-based innovation (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Earney & Krishnan, 2019). This identification of underlying values is important to know what a firm represents (Manohar & Pandit, 2013) and what normative orientation result from it for the further course of the process (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). By defining the firm's values, it can become easier to make decisions about innovation projects, all firm-related management activities, and other partnerships (Earney & Krishnan, 2019). There are several ways to integrate values into a firm's culture. Firms should ensure that their values are evident in all aspects of the organization. As explained in section 2.5, there is the vertical, horizontal, and meta-integration of values based on the Integrated Management Concept (IMC) (Bleicher, 2017; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). However, the first step is to develop a clear set of values within the respective firm, which should form the basis for the next step of the firm's stakeholder analysis. A firm's values should also be regularly reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of stakeholders and the challenges of the marketplace (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022).

2.9.2. Analysis of Direct and Indirect Stakeholders

Friedman & Hendry (2019) have developed a set of methods and tools to integrate VSD into the design process. VSD provides an approach that fully integrates values into the technology design process through theoretically based research (Friedman et al., 2013). Although this scientific work is about the fashion industry, the method can be well integrated into the process proposed above. The tool incorporated at this point is direct and indirect stakeholder analysis. After proposing a model to support the values-based innovation approach to be promoted through stakeholder integration, the method of direct and indirect stakeholder analysis is carried out after the firm's internal diagnosis. All relevant stakeholders of a firm are identified in order to understand their values and interests (Davis & Nathan, 2014). This step ensures that the interests of all affected individuals and groups are considered in the innovation process. The stakeholder analysis considers both direct and indirect stakeholders. Direct stakeholders in this case are individuals or associations that interact directly with

the fashion creation process. This includes, for example, customers, who consume the products, designers who create the product and manufacturers and factory workers who work in production. Customers, for example, can be identified through user experiences or user studies in an experimental environment. Indirect stakeholders are those who are not directly involved in the production or sale of the product, but who may still be affected by the impact of the design. Examples include environmental and conservation organizations that advocate for sustainable production methods or neighborhoods where manufacturing facilities are located. Identifying indirect stakeholders in the fashion design process can be done in a similar way to analyzing direct stakeholders (Friedman et al., 2006).

In this way, a balanced design process can be achieved, which considers both the needs of the fashion industry under study and the values and interests of the affected stakeholders (Friedman & Hendry, 2019).

2.9.3. Values-Driven Stakeholder Checkpoints

This section explains the values-driven stakeholder checkpoints that occur once before the actual innovation process and then between each of the innovation process phases as well as after market launch, along with their purpose.

Once the stakeholders have been identified, their needs and values should be incorporated into the innovation process and their involvement should be ensured. This is done in particular through the regular values-driven stakeholder checkpoints. The values-driven stakeholder checkpoints are an important part of the conceptual model proposed here, as they ensure that all affected stakeholders and their values are continuously involved in the innovation process (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019) and thus represent a feedback cycle, which is of great importance in the context of non-linear innovation (Müller, 2013). One of these checkpoints appears before the innovation process itself. Its task is to identify the values of the previously identified stakeholders and align them with those of the firm (which are already identified in the firm diagnosis step). In this way, the stakeholders are integrated and briefed even before the actual innovation process begins. The checkpoints proposed here ensure that the innovation cycles are equipped with sufficient internal feedback paths and thus that different values are included (Berkhout et al., 2010). For example, if a certain value is forgotten after one of the innovation process phases, this can be revealed and improved through feedback. Hence, the process ensures that the prototypes and solutions meet the needs and desired values of the stakeholders. The aim is to assure that stakeholder values are successfully incorporated into the business model so that a sense of social, ethical, and environmental responsibility can be built into the business model - and so that firms can remain viable for future generations (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2019; Freudenreich et al., 2020). Therefore, the checkpoint takes place after each of the three phases of the innovation process. This ensures that only products that contain all pursued values, whether from stakeholders or from the firm itself, move to the next step. This measure minimizes the risk that a product will for example go into production and market launch without first being tested for its value. Regular checkpointing allows for the avoidance of unnecessary costs and errors, as well as more effective development planning, which is beneficial to SMEs (Castka et al., 2004; Parker et al., 2009; Verworn et al., 2000). SMEs can also improve their competitiveness by retaining long-term connections with their stakeholders and delivering value to their operations (AlQershi et al., 2018).

These checkpoints play an important role because they make it possible to react to changes in the environment or the market and to adapt the innovation process accordingly. This can be especially beneficial in the fashion industry. Above this, it should also lead to more successful and appropriate products that meet the values of the stakeholders, the firm itself, and, above all, the target group in the market (Berkhout et al., 2010; Schoen et al., 2005).

2.9.4. Upstream Innovation Process: Design Thinking Inspired Iterative Cycle

Once the firm's values have been identified and the affected stakeholders have been involved, the first phase of the innovation process of the proposed framework follows. This is modeled after the first steps of the design thinking methodology by Brown (2008). It is explained in more detail in Chapter 2.3.3 and consists of the first three steps: Understanding, observation, and defining a point of view (Hasso-Plattner-Institut, 2023). The design thinking process is based on the work process that designers intuitively follow.

In the first step, the understanding, the responsible persons within the respective firm together with the identified stakeholders should mark the problem area. The needs, wants, and requirements of all stakeholders should be understood in order to develop a suitable product. In addition, the framework, goals, and constraints of the project or challenge should be captured and understood. It is especially helpful to work with different stakeholders to gain a comprehensive understanding of values and to look at the challenge from different angles to gain a deep understanding of the target audience and the context. This provides a solid foundation for idea generation and solution development in the next phase of the process (Brown, 2008; Hasso-Plattner-Institut, 2023). In the second phase of observation, all participants look outward, observe in a real-world context, and build empathy for users and stakeholders. For example, ethnographic or field research can be used here. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the target group and its environment in order to identify potential problems and needs (Hasso-Plattner-Institut, 2023; McCarthy, 2017). However, it is equally important at this point to internalize and observe the values of the other stakeholders. As discussed in more detail in section 2.8.2, different stakeholder groups may have different values. Empathy and understanding of the values of others must be applied in order to establish an appropriate position for the subsequent innovation process in the next step (Freudenreich et al., 2020). The third stage is to synthesize and condense the knowledge gained in the previous stages and to define a specific point of view. It should include a precise description of the problem or challenge from the perspective of all stakeholders. It is important that the defined viewpoint is neither too broad nor too narrow, because a viewpoint that is too narrow can, for example, limit the solution-finding process and lead to problems. On the other hand, a view that is too broad can make solution development more difficult. In order to avoid limiting innovation and originality in the design process, this viewpoint should be adaptable (Hasso-Plattner-Institut, 2023; McCarthy, 2017). The objective is to develop a reasonable starting point for the further innovation process by understanding, observing, and then embedding the values of all stakeholders and the firm together. As the design thinking process provides a model, it is important to note that the framework is "best described metaphorically as a system of spaces rather than a predefined series of orderly steps" (Brown, 2008, p.4). This means that the design thinking process should not be understood as a linear process or a fixed sequence of steps but as a flexible and creative system of different phases that intertwine and influence each other (Brown, 2008; McCarthy, 2017). This may be an appropriate method for the needs and resources of SMEs. Since SMEs have limited resources

(Castka et al., 2004; Parker et al., 2009), a cost-effective option such as the design thinking process that can quickly respond to customer needs and develop innovative solutions represents a great opportunity. Design thinking, which encourages experimentation, uncertainty management, and low-cost prototyping, represents a useful technique for SMEs because some of them purposefully avoid risk. As result, design innovation methods can assist SMEs in strengthening their capabilities and making better use of their own knowledge (Gulari & Fremantle, 2015).

2.9.5. Second Innovation Process Phase: Combination of Traditional Linear and Non-Linear Innovation Process

In the subsequent innovation process, elements of the traditional linear innovation process (Herstatt, 1999; Verworm & Herstatt, 2000) meet with characteristics of the non-linear process (Müller, 2013) and are combined to create a process suitable for SMEs.

The process is based on the first four phases of the linear model: idea generation, concept development and product planning, development and prototyping and testing (Herstatt, 1999). These steps flow and merge into each other. Due to the lack of resources, especially financial and human, of SMEs (Castka et al., 2004; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Herstatt et al., 2007), the phases, particularly the first three, are less formalized and to a certain degree more flexible than the traditionally structured process, as explained in section 2.3.2. Here, the steps of the above-mentioned linear process are contested in a cycle inspired by the innovation cycle, which allows more room for creativity and flexibility and thus represents a suitable basis for SMEs (Berkhout et al., 2010; Herstatt et al., 2007; Parker et al., 2009; Schoen et al., 2005). The proposed iterative process can also minimize risks. Potential problems can be identified earlier and solved directly without the need for expensive investments (Berkhout et al., 2010). This is especially important for SMEs, which, as mentioned above, usually have limited financial resources (Castka et al., 2004; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022). In addition, the iterative process can be more efficient, prototypes can be created and tested faster, which also saves time and costs. As a result, changes in the innovation process can be adapted and improved repeatedly to meet the needs and values of all stakeholders involved (Buono & Kerber, 2009). It should be emphasized that the steps of the linear innovation process are for orientation and do not imply strict adherence. They are meant to guide the process, but by no means limit creativity. As described above for the design thinking process, a flexible and creative system of different phases that interlock and influence each other should be sought (Brown, 2008). The design process is therefore contested in interconnected loops. The values-driven stakeholder checkpoint, which takes place after the completion of the second phase, serves as a kind of feedback loop so that the whole process becomes more collaborative and involves the affected stakeholders.

2.9.6. Third Innovation Process Phase: The Market Launch

The third phase of the innovation process is the market launch. As already described in Chapter 2.3.1., this is done according to the procedure of the innovation process developed by Herstatt (1999). After the prototype has successfully passed the values-driven stakeholder checkpoint in the previous innovation process phase, in which the firm has ensured in this phase that the product is in line with the firm's values and meets the needs and desires of the impacted stakeholders, the product is

produced and is ready for the market launch. This phase concretizes the firm's innovation output. This is the first time the idea or concept for a future fashion item is transformed into a marketable product.

2.9.7. Continuous Improvement Process

Once the product is on the market, a values-driven stakeholder checkpoint is also completed at this point. This is for the same reason as the previous ones. After the launch, it is equally important to ensure that the product on the market meets the ongoing needs of the firm and its stakeholders and that the values and needs that are perceived to be important are met. This also helps to regularly review the values of the firm and the stakeholders involved and to adjust and revise the values as necessary (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022). This phase guarantees the firm's ongoing process of improvement. Furthermore, this can help to optimize business practices and products to meet the needs of customers and the demands of the marketplace. In this way, the values-based approach can also increase competitiveness (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Manohar & Pandit, 2013).

In summary, the conceptual model proposed in this thesis for stakeholder involvement in the creation of values-based innovation consists of several different parts, which the upstream theory addresses in more detail. First, after an accurate diagnosis of the firm's values to ensure a clear direction for the future, the respective stakeholders are accurately identified. For this purpose, a tool from the theoretically based value-sensitive design framework is integrated and adapted to the process presented here. Subsequently, the first values-driven stakeholder inclusion checkpoint follows, where the previously identified stakeholders are actively engaged for the first time and their values are aligned with those of the firm. The innovation process here consists of three parts. First, there is a preliminary phase of the innovation process in which the initial situation is developed under consideration of all firm and stakeholder values along the lines of design thinking. Then, as the second phase, the synthesis of the traditional and non-linear innovation process, with influencing factors from the cyclic innovation, is applied, in which the traditional steps take place in iterative cycles. The third phase is the market launch. After each of these three phases, the interim result must pass through values-driven stakeholder checkpoints. These serve as a kind of feedback loop and ensure that all important values of the firm itself and of the stakeholders involved are continuously observed in the process. It is important to reiterate that the model should not be understood as a strict, fixed sequence of steps, but rather as a flexible and creative system of phases that interlock and influence each other to produce a values-based outcome. Once a prototype has been successfully validated, a values-driven product (or service) is ready for launch. However, even after launch, another values-driven stakeholder checkpoint is conducted to continue to verify the fulfillment of the values in the marketplace and to ensure continuous improvement potential.

Through the proposed framework and the creation of clear guidelines and policies for values-based innovation, SMEs can develop a clear innovation effort and ensure that their strategy is on the right track. In addition, stakeholder involvement can facilitate access to resources and financial support and create a competitive advantage by adding value and fostering long-term relationships with stakeholders.

3. Research Methodology and Design

After the previous chapter has dealt with the basics of this thesis, this chapter explains the methodical procedure that is to be used to answer the research question to generate well-founded answers. In addition to answering the research question (*How do SMEs in the fashion industry organize their values-based innovation approach together with stakeholder inclusion during their innovation process?*), this thesis aims to pool the knowledge of a suitable group of experts to identify the interrelationships between individual factors. In the following, the steps of the expert interviews and the qualitative content analysis are considered to provide an outlook on further research procedure.

3.1. Context

The fashion industry is known for its negative social, ethical, and environmental impacts (UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, 2021). Every year, millions of new garments are produced in an environment of extreme overproduction, only to be discarded after a short period of time (The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022; UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, 2021). Especially in the case of the environmental crisis, this excessive use of materials must be reduced immediately (Peters et al., 2021). In addition, the fashion industry has a significant impact on society and exacerbates social inequalities, as evidenced by the supply chain where profit is deliberately placed above human safety (Jeffreys, 2022). Thus, the fashion and textile industry is one of the largest global industries that have a significant impact on some environmental, ethical, social, and economic elements (Buchel et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2021). The industry needs to change in order to protect the environment and the fact that consumer desires and behaviors are changing as well. Society is placing more emphasis on sustainability, so firms need to act responsibly and ethically in social and sustainable areas to continue to serve the target market (Bianchi et al., 2020; Lundblad & Davies, 2015). Alternative approaches in the fashion sector, such as design for sustainability or special dyeing processes, have partially developed but have not yet contributed to a successful change toward a more sustainable and responsible industry (Buchel et al., 2022). Some progress has also been made to reduce social and ethical barriers, but an overarching change has not yet taken place (Buchel et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2021; Taplin, 2014b). For SMEs in particular, the challenges at this point should not be underestimated. They are smaller than the big fashion giants, cannot easily invest large sums in sustainability efforts, and therefore have a harder time finding sustainable materials and processes that are also affordable, making the design process of their fashion more environmentally, socially, and ethically responsible (Buchel et al., 2022; Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022).

3.2. Research Design

The topic of values-based innovation management describes a novel field of research (Breuer et al., 2021, 2022; Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Earney & Krishnan, 2019; Ivanov, 2022; Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2020). Accordingly, less literature exists about the phenomenon addressed and empirical studies are infrequent. A **qualitative research (exploratory) approach** seems most appropriate given the untapped potential and rarely explored aspects of the underlying research situation (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007). In order to better comprehend social realities and call

attention to processes, meanings, and structural elements, qualitative research thus tries to explain the perspective of individuals who participate in a still nascent theoretical environment (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007; Flick et al., 2004). The goal of qualitative research here is to further develop the theory of the existing approach to values-based innovation and to enrich the existing theory in a particular application area (Hyde, 2000). Above this, in this relatively unexplored field, an exploratory approach is advantageous to adapt the research process to changes as they can occur (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007).

Furthermore, exploration is a broad and methodical activity to expand the identification of generalizations that add to the description and comprehension of a given topic, in the case being the subject of VBI and stakeholder inclusion in the fashion industry (Stebbins, 2001). A **deductive approach** is used in this research, as a conceptual model was derived from the concepts of the theory first developed before it could be analyzed with empirically collected information (Casula et al., 2021). The research of Casula et al. (2021) found that the research strategy of deductive qualitative and exploratory research has proven to be successful.

Accordingly, a **multiple case study analysis** is now accomplished using the information from semi-structured interviews with the decision-makers of the innovation process of firms in the fashion industry selected for the case study. **Case studies** facilitate the search for the answer to a research question using multiple types of evidence in a practical setting. Especially in exploratory work, the case study method is well suited to address questions that are still maturing (Yin, 2018). In addition to the case study, **triangulation** was applied and conducted. Triangulation in this case means that "...the knowledge possibilities of two approaches are systematically used and mutually complemented or extended" (Flick, 2011, p.49). On the one hand, primary data was collected through **semi-structured interviews**, and on the other hand, secondary data were extracted through previously conducted desk research (Yin, 2018). This **secondary information** was collected prior to the interviews in order to generate and structure existing knowledge on the topic. This information has been gathered from a variety of available sources, including websites, regulatory filings, press releases, and financial records. This allowed for more targeted questions to be asked during the interviews, which in turn can lead to a higher quality of the primary data collected. Secondary data was analyzed in the context of the study through publicly available data from selected case firms, such as information on their websites, press articles, official reports, and financial statements.

A **semi-structured interview** was used to achieve comprehensive coverage of expert knowledge in the industry under investigation. Accordingly, the respective experts represented "(...) the specific role of the interview partner as a source of specialized knowledge about the social issues under investigation" (Gläser & Laudel, 2010, p.12). Experts are therefore individuals who have specific and detailed expertise. In this research, experts who work in the fashion industry and are specifically involved in the process of fashion design and innovation are interviewed to gain new insights. Therefore, a research participant can be anyone who has knowledge that is relevant to answering the research question (Bogner et al., 2014). To create a more personal feel to the interview, the selected individuals were interviewed via video conferencing (Zoom).

The interview was guided by the research **indicators** derived from theoretical analysis. These were taken from the designed conceptual model, which in turn was developed from the previously developed theory to ensure a holistic research approach. The following table shows the research indicators used and their characteristics:

Table 4: Indicators used for empirical research with their specific characteristics

Research Indicator	Characteristics
Firm Values	<p><u>Ecological Values:</u> Promoting circularity and reducing the environmental impact of production by investing in radical innovation and sustainable design.</p> <p><u>Economic Values:</u> Seeking appropriate business models that prioritize responsibility over infinite growth and adopting a climate-neutral strategy.</p> <p><u>Ethical Values:</u> Promoting physical and general well-being in the workplace, addressing social injustice, and promoting equal rights.</p> <p><u>Social Values:</u> Taking responsibility, increasing transparency, improving sustainability practices, and promoting human and environmental well-being.</p>
Stakeholder Identification	<p><u>Customers</u></p> <p><u>Employees:</u> Managers, employees</p> <p><u>Financial Stakeholders:</u> Investors, shareholders and creditors such as banks</p> <p><u>Societal Stakeholder:</u> Roles representing the natural environment, communities, the government, external agencies, media, and academia</p> <p><u>Business Partners</u> Suppliers, logistics partners, consultants, and operations providers</p>
Innovation Process	<p>I. Upstream Innovation Process: Design Thinking inspired</p> <p>II. Innovation Process: Merging traditional and non-linear innovation process</p> <p>III. Market Launch: Final production and launch in the target market</p>
Values-Based Stakeholder Checkpoints	<p>To ensure that all relevant stakeholders and their values, as well as the firm's values, are continuously involved in the innovation process.</p>

All information presented in the table above was taken from the elaborated strategic framework for stakeholder involvement in values-based innovation development developed from the theory (see Figure 5).

The interviews were conducted using a developed **interview guide**, which thus "(...) serves as a checklist and guide for the interview" (Bogner et al., 2014, p.27) and is intended to give it additional structure. The interview guide was modeled after and uses the basic features of the SPSS procedure. SPSS stands for "collect," "examine," "sort," and "subsummarize" (Helfferich, 2011). Since the interview uses open-ended questions, the interview should be as free as possible but focused on a specific question. In this way, a variety of answers from experts can be addressed flexibly at any time

(Gläser & Laudel, 2010). Thus, congruent questions do not necessarily have to be asked in order to be able to compare the interviews with each other (Bogner et al., 2014). The interview guide used here aims to find out how the respective experts assess the usefulness of the previously developed conceptual model for involving stakeholders in values-based innovation development. The second aim is to find out what they see as the barriers to practical implementation and how they themselves involve values and stakeholders in their fashion companies in order to develop new, responsible fashion items. The **interview guide consists** of three main parts and is structured as follows: The first part is an introduction to the topic and a brief introduction of the selected firm and the respective expert. Initial questions should cover overarching information so that more specific questions can be addressed later. In this way, the interviewee's understanding of the topic of the interview can be determined, so that the interviewer can adapt the way the interview is conducted (Kaiser, 2014). Then, in the second part, questions are asked based on the steps of the developed conceptual model in order to test and evaluate the individual elements. This is followed by a summary of the model. In the third and last part, the interview is concluded. Closing questions are asked to ensure that the interviewee has said everything they would like to about the topic and that no crucial information is missing. The questions also give the interviewee an opportunity to express additional thoughts or ideas that were not covered by the previous questions. Appendix 1 contains the interview guidelines in English.

As many interviews are conducted until **theoretical saturation** occurs "...saturation means that no more additional data can be found" (Glaser & Strauss, 1998, p.69). This is in order to ensure that the data collected during the semi-structured interviews will be sufficient to answer the research question that is posed here (Glaser & Strauss, 1998).

3.3. Research Sample and Setting

The research question pursued in this thesis examines stakeholder involvement in values-based innovation development in fashion SMEs. Accordingly, the **fashion industry** is examined here as a specific industry. As already explained in Chapter 3.1, the values-based innovation approach represents a considerable potential for the fashion industry. This is because society's values and demands have changed in recent years (Bianchi et al., 2020; Lundblad & Davies, 2015). Consumers increasingly value sustainability, social responsibility, and ethical business practices (Jägel et al., 2012; Jeffreys, 2022; Lundblad & Davies, 2015; Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). By integrating these values into the innovation process, the fashion industry can ensure its relevance and competitiveness in a changing and more demanding market landscape and still exist for future planned generations (Berg, 2022; Block et al., 2022; Schleicher & Seitz, 2022). Since SMEs represent a dominant part of the overall fashion industry (Allianz Research, 2020), this research focuses on this group of firms. For SMEs in particular, the difficulties at this point should not be underestimated. They struggle to find affordable sustainable materials and processes because they cannot easily invest large sums because of limited capabilities and human resources are also scarce (Castka et al., 2004; Parker et al., 2009). In addition, a specific geographical context was chosen to narrow down the investigation. In this research paper, the European fashion industry was chosen as the focus of the empirical investigation. As SMEs make up a large part of the **European fashion industry** (Allianz Research, 2020), this can help to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the fashion industry in Europe and derive recommendations for SMEs in the industry. The author's experience with the European

market, particularly the German market, is another factor. In order to minimize information loss, interviews can also be conducted in German.

The method of **purposive sampling** is applied in this qualitative investigation. This method selects a purposive sample that is most likely to produce relevant results and aims to gain detailed knowledge about a particular topic (Campbell et al., 2020). It is also the most efficient method of working in a constrained research environment, as is the case in this research (Palinkas et al., 2015). Another justification for this targeted strategy is that certain types of people have distinct and significant options on the theories and problems under investigation, necessitating the inclusion of the sample of these individuals. Clearly stated inclusion criteria and justifications are essential for effective purposive sampling. (Campbell et al., 2020). As a result, the following criteria are considered when choosing the cases:

- 1) The firm is active in the fashion sector.
- 2) The firm is considered to be an SME and therefore falls within the definition of SMEs used here under the European Commission (2023b).
- 3) The firm is headquartered in Europe.
- 4) The firm officially declares social, ethical, ecological and/or economic values in their activity.
- 5) The firm is taking (the first) steps towards a focus on responsible business practices and is sustainable in the production of its fashion and therefore does not create fast fashion.
- 6) The firm should operate profitably to ensure long-term success and have a positive impact on the industry as a whole.

Case firms were selected based on the aforementioned criteria. Using the desk research approach to generate secondary data, suitable companies were identified. In total, 27 firms were found that fit the description. Among them were firms more precisely defined as micro enterprises (less than 10 employees), small enterprises (10-49 employees), and medium-sized enterprises (50-249 employees) according to the European Commission (2023b) definition of SMEs used here. To identify the most suitable interviewees from the selected case firms, specific criteria were again developed to accurately identify the optimal candidates. These are presented in the following:

- 1) The selected interviewee is employed (full-time) by the selected case firm.
- 2) The interviewee is responsible for the internal innovation and design process of the fashion pieces and is familiar with the whole process of the selected firm.
- 3) The interviewee has relevant experience and expertise in the development of sustainable/responsible fashion.
- 4) The interviewee is familiar with the internal values of the firm and the potential stakeholders involved in the process.

These criteria were used to identify suitable interviewees. In particular, LinkedIn was used to search for appropriate skills when selecting interviewees. These individuals were then contacted for an interview. In summary, firm representatives were contacted by all of the firms identified as suitable. They were contacted by mail, contact form, and social media, here LinkedIn and Instagram. Of these,

a large proportion did not respond at all, refusals were due to a lack of capacity or a feeling of not fitting into the research.

In case of a positive response, a research brief, a consent form and the interview questions were handed out before the interview so that the partners could better prepare for the interview and got an idea of the whole research process.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

After the successful collection of secondary data and the selection and contacting of suitable case firms, five interviews were conducted with experts representing the firms. The interviews were conducted via video conferencing, in this case using Zoom. Four of the five interviews were conducted in German, as this was the preferred language of the interviewees. Accordingly, an interview was conducted in English. In order to be able to answer the interview questions adequately, the selected firm representative received a more detailed introduction. A period of 40-75 minutes was required. The interview phase started on 04.04 and ended on 26.04.2023.

The previously developed interview guide was iteratively adapted after each interview. The reason for this is that it provides an opportunity to address new findings and insights gained during a conducted interview in order to improve the questions for the next interviewee. This leads to the continuous development of the guideline (Bogner et al., 2014).

The expert interviews are transcribed after successful recording. The transcriptions should meet scientific requirements; therefore, a tested system of rules is used (Kuckartz et al., 2008). These rules are as follows:

- 1) The interview is transcribed verbatim and the language is aligned with the written language.
- 2) Dialects are translated into High German or written English to ensure better understanding.
- 3) Conspicuous long pauses and trains of thought are marked with spaces "(...)".
- 4) The transcript does not include vocalizations and filler words of any kind such as "um, ah, hm" etc.
- 5) Emotional expressions e.g., sighs or laughter are noted in brackets.
- 6) Speaker changes are indicated by a blank line between the speakers to make it easier for the reader. The interviewer is identified by "Speaker 1" and the interviewee by "Speaker 2".

MAXQDA software was utilized to transcribe the interviews in order to better process large amounts of data. Then, **qualitative content analysis** was used to analyze the transcripts (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2022; Mayring, 2010). MAXQDA software was also used for this purpose, which is also one of the most widely used and reliable tools for qualitative content analysis (Bogner et al., 2014). According to this, the tool has been used for the coding. All transcripts of the interviews can be found in the appendix of the scientific paper.

The aim of the qualitative content analysis is to answer the research question of this scientific work with the help of a systematic processing of the available interviews. The process of content structuring

qualitative content analysis proceeded according to the approach of Kuckartz & Rädiker (2022) in **seven phases**. The first phase describes the initial text work. At this point, the transcripts were carefully read and text passages that seemed particularly important were highlighted in order to initiate the content structuring qualitative analysis. Then the main categories were developed. These main categories, the research indicators, were derived directly from the conceptual model to be reviewed, as the associated themes already guided the data collection and, in that way, served as research indicators. Thus, they were deductively derived from a theoretical frame of reference. In the third phase, the collected data were coded with the main categories. This involved working through the text passages sequentially and assigning text passages to the categories. In content-structuring qualitative content analysis, several main topics and subtopics can be addressed within a text passage. Consequently, several categories can be assigned to a text passage. In the fourth phase, subcategories were formed. More precisely, the initially still relatively general categories were differentiated. The subcategories were created inductively, so directly on the basis of the collected research material. In general, the criterion of parsimony and manageability applies here to avoid creating too many subcategories that could make the analysis unmanageable. A second coding process followed in the fifth step, in which the differentiated categories were assigned to the text passages previously coded with the main category. With the completion of the second coding process, the systematization and structuring of the material were completed for the moment, and the analysis phase could begin. The sixth phase was the analysis. This was classified according to the main categories, as this seemed to make the most sense in the context of reviewing the conceptual model proposed here. The results were presented in a qualitative manner. To conclude the analysis, phase seven consisted of writing up the results found, the insights gained, and the answers to the research questions examined. Since the analysis in this scientific work was theory-oriented, this should be considered in the structure of the following results to ensure an understandable course of results. In general, phases six and seven should be considered together, as they can be run through several times in a row iteratively (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2022; Mayring, 2010). In the following, the course of the qualitative content analysis described here is illustrated:

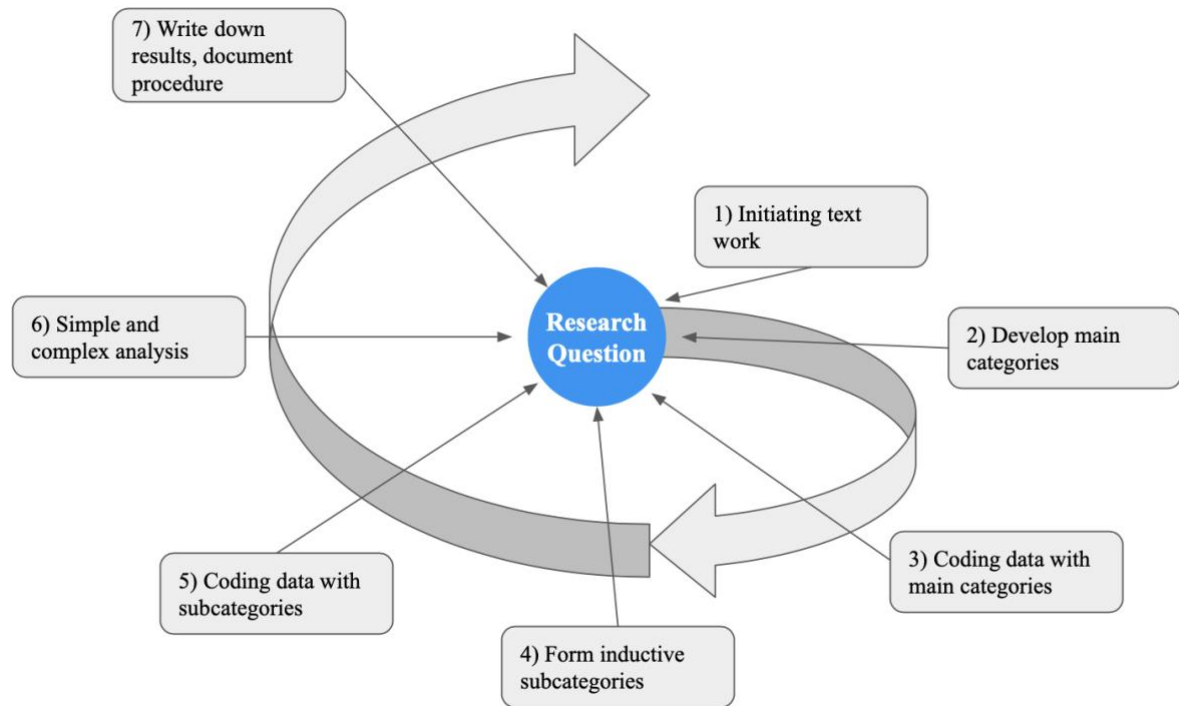


Figure 6: Sequence of a content-structuring qualitative content analysis in 7 phases (adapted from Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2022)

The deductively derived codes that serve as research indicators, as well as the subcodes, can be found in a separate coding guide in Appendix 2. In addition, a definition of the codes and an anchor example with an interview quote are provided to facilitate general understanding.

3.5. Research Quality and Ethics

In order to achieve high-quality research, a number of quality and ethical criteria were considered during the data collection and analysis process.

The entire research was subject to an overarching **procedural rigor** that was drawn throughout the research process. This refers to certain **explicitness and transparency** of the course of the research pursued here. At all times, there was a detailed description of how the research was conducted (Kitto et al., 2008). The purposive sampling approach explained earlier also ensured that the selected participants were truly representative of the research to be studied here (Campbell et al., 2020; Palinkas et al., 2015). The selection was therefore based on clearly defined criteria and was also transparently documented, which also contributes to an accurate description of how this research was conducted. In addition, the **validity** of the samples can be guaranteed.

In addition, according to Kitto et al. (2008), a degree of **clarification and justification** of the research was ensured at all times. Theoretical rigor was used to demonstrate that all research was logical and well-founded. To this end, an appropriate research question was chosen, as well as an appropriate method to properly address this relatively new area of research in a qualitative way (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007).

The conceptual model for values-based innovation development and stakeholder inclusion proposed has been developed explicitly for this research and for application in the fashion industry. However, it is possible to transfer and apply the model to other areas of application. Therefore, general **transferability** has been ensured so that the results of this study can be applied in a different context (Kiegelmann, 2020; Kitto et al., 2008).

In terms of the research **ethics** of this study, the privacy and confidentiality of the participants were respected and ensured at all times, and the associated data was safe and secure continuously. All interviews were voluntary. This included obtaining informed consent and explaining to participants exactly how their data would be used. The attention to research ethics in this empirical work is intended to strengthen the overall research, as ethical considerations have already been built into the research design (Bogner et al., 2014; Kiegelmann, 2020).

4. Empirical Results of Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development

The following chapter presents the empirical results of this research. First, an overview of the selected case firms is given and the responses of the respective interviewees are discussed individually before a comparative analysis of all cases is carried out. From this, recommendations and new ideas for the conceptual model are derived.

4.1. Overview of the Case Firms

The case firms are briefly introduced below. Their respective focus in the fashion industry is described, the year of foundation and the number of employees is given, as well as the position of the company representative interviewed and the duration of the interview. The table below provides an overview:

Table 5: Overview of case firms

Case	Firm	Interviewee's position	Year of foundation	Size (Number of employees)	Interview duration
A	Torland	CEO and Founder	2017	9	52 mins
B	Bausinger	CEO	1977	18	69 mins
C	KUZ Fashion Design Studio	Founder and Fashion Designer	2018	4-6	67 mins
D	North Coast	Managing Director & Co-Founder	2019	5	42 mins
E	runamics	CEO and Founder	2021	4	47 mins

Case Firm A (Torland)

The case company A, Torland, is a jeans brand from Vienna, Austria. It was founded in 2017 as a response to the fast fashion industry, and with the idea of doing something different. The founder, with whom the interview was conducted, entered the fashion industry as a career changer, but with a background in environmental science, which turned out to be a suitable correspondence. It inspired him to take a comprehensive look at the manufacturing process in the fashion industry and ultimately led him to seek an alternative approach (Transcript Torland, Pos. 3). The core product of the company is jeans, which they produce themselves with a friendly firm in Izmir that is Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) certified (Transcript Torland, Pos. 5). The GOTS textile processing standard is a worldwide standard for the processing of textiles made from organically produced natural fibers. It

defines environmental requirements along the entire textile production chain as well as social criteria. In addition to ecological goals, ethical standards and social criteria such as minimum wages and social security for female workers are also monitored and controlled (Global Organic Textile Standard, 2023). For their jeans, they use natural fibers from organic farming and do not use any substances that are harmful to humans or the environment. Only natural fertilizers and pesticides are allowed for this type of cotton cultivation. All substances that are harmful to the environment are prohibited. In organic farming, which Torland supports, cotton is mostly grown in mixed crops that are less susceptible to pests. This protects the soil and allows it to develop a thicker layer of humus, which in turn requires less water for cultivation. Only substances that are safe for humans and the environment are used to dye the dark blue indigo color of the jeans, which is also subject to a strict certification process. In the further processing of the finished jeans, they also take care to use only processes that have a low impact on the environment. Modern alternatives such as laser treatment or ozone whitening are used. By avoiding the use of harmful chemicals, no hazardous substances can be released into the wastewater. Transportation is also reduced to a minimum, which means that all raw materials come from the same country, Turkey. Only the finished jeans are shipped directly from Turkey to Austria (Torland, 2019). In addition, T-shirts, hoodies, jackets, dresses, and accessories are offered as white-label products under the Torland brand (Transcript Torland, Pos. 3). In 2020, Torland was certified according to the GOTS standard. In this way, Torland proves to be a company that focuses on responsible business practices and produces its fashion in a sustainable way. The jeans brand currently employs nine people, of which three are full-time workers (Transcript Torland, Pos. 3). Accordingly, Torland fits the definition of an SME, or more precisely, a micro-enterprise (European Commission, 2023b).

Case Firm B (Bausinger)

Case firm B, Bausinger, is a German firm specializing in the manufacture of high quality yoga and meditation products, founded in 1977 with a mission to operate as sustainably as possible. For this scientific paper, the current CEO, who is the third generation of entrepreneurs working for the yoga manufacturer, was interviewed. He pursues the objective with the firm to produce as regionally and ecologically responsible as possible (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 3). The firm works towards this with the internal core values: “organic, fair, and close”. This is to contribute to a beautiful, dear, sustainable, ecological, healthy, fair, and friendly world, suitable for grandchildren, which will improve the world in the future (Bausinger, 2022b). For more than 25 years they have been working with one of the largest workshops for disabled people in Germany. The focus here is on giving the disabled a regular daily routine, a task, and the opportunity for development and satisfaction within the scope of their individual possibilities in a safe environment. Economic efficiency at this point is subordinated and considered secondary by Bausinger; it is first and foremost about the people and only then about their work (Bausinger, 2022a). In general, 97% of the products offered by Bausinger are produced in the region of its headquarters in Germany in order to remain as regional as possible (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 3). In this way, the firm is already pursuing social and ethical goals. In addition, the firm is GOTS-certified (Bausinger, 2022b; Global Organic Textile Standard, 2023). Bausinger is part of the international movement "Economy for the Common Good" (ECG), where they are one of the pioneering companies in Germany, as the current CEO is also very active in this area (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 3). This means that firms are committed to the ECG and actively work for an economic system that is not geared to profit maximization but to serve the common good.

Thus, the basic idea goes beyond mere profit maximization and calls on companies to include social and environmental aspects in their decisions (Gemeinwohl Ökonomie, 2023).

The firm Bausinger is known for its high quality and ecological products in the yoga scene, a firm that has already done a lot to pursue ecological, social, and ethical production and goals, besides the economic efforts, and is constantly improving these initiatives. These efforts bring the company close to the values-based innovation approach. The company currently employs 17 people, 10 of whom are full-time employees (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 3). Thus, the company belongs to the group of small enterprises according to the definition of the European Commission (2023b).

Case Firm C (KUZ Fashion Design Studio)

Case firm C is KUZ Fashion Design Studio from Vilnius, Lithuania. The firm was founded in 2018, in order to position itself against fast-moving fashion trends and reduce their harmful effects on the world (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 3). KUZ aims to create an environment that is beneficial for new businesses and designers and therefore offers design, product development, and production services (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 17). These services are applicable to all types of business models and illustrate the great flexibility of the design studio. KUZ works with a carefully selected team of professionals - fashion and graphic designers, two pattern makers, a pattern manager, and two seamstresses. Everything is produced in-house to meet the exact needs of the customer (KUZ Fashion Design Studio, 2023). It is possible to order both larger and smaller quantities, but KUZ specializes more in smaller quantities, from 20 pieces per style. This also eliminates the risk of new designers ordering too large a quantity that will not be purchased in the end. By providing detailed information in the quantity calculation of fashion items, KUZ can make an accurate calculation of the material required, thus ensuring the least possible material waste. This approach eliminates a significant amount of material waste. Surplus fabric is donated at the end of production (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 5). They also develop efficient methods to reduce carbon emissions for processing the various materials, which are also certified. These include GOTS-, OEKO Tex- or Global recycled standard-certified materials, which are carefully selected (KUZ Fashion Design Studio, 2023) The GOTS certification, as already described in the other cases, means that a product has been made from organic natural fibers and that strict environmental and social criteria have been met at all stages of production (Global Organic Textile Standard, 2023). An OEKO Tex STANDARD 100 certification also ensures that all components of the article, such as buttons, threads, and others, have been tested for harmful substances and that the fashion article is therefore harmless to health (OEKO-TEX, 2023). The Global Recycle Standard (GRS) certification aims to promote sustainability throughout the textile industry and ensure that materials are reused rather than simply thrown away (Control Union, 2023). It demonstrates a company's commitment to reducing its environmental impact and taking social responsibility. The vision of the Lithuanian-based design studio is to help young fashion entrepreneurs build and succeed in businesses that prioritize human rights and sustainability. Integral components such as environmental and social goals will help create a new environment that will positively impact the entire fashion industry and make it more responsible. By sharing their experience in the fashion industry, KUZ helps its customers to achieve the highest quality standards (KUZ Fashion Design Studio, 2023). The firm currently employs around 6 people and therefore falls under the definition of a micro-enterprise (European Commission, 2023b).

Case Firm D (North Coast)

Only case firm D requested that its data be kept anonymous. Consequently, based on information obtained during the conducted interview, only a broad overview of this firm is given, which is called North Coast here and in the further course of this scientific work. The interview transcript is therefore the main source of information.

The firm interviewed was founded in 2019, is active in the yoga business, and is one of the leading yoga equipment brands in Germany. The case firm is not only committed to protecting the oceans through the sale of sustainable equipment, but also works with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are dedicated to protecting the oceans. In addition, the firm actively participates in beach cleanups and other water conservation efforts. North Coast is committed to using the most sustainable materials available on the market and is engaged in a continuous development process to improve the sustainability of its products (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 3). As part of this, the brand's flagship product, yoga mats, are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified, ensuring that the natural rubber used comes from certified plantations that grow in mixed cultures and maintain the ecological integrity of the forests. In addition, the FSC label ensures that social aspects such as workers' rights and the distribution of benefits to indigenous peoples are taken into account (Forest Stewardship Council, 2023). The construction wool used is also sourced exclusively from organic farms. In this way, production is said to be resource-saving and environmentally friendly. On their website checkout process, they also offer to support NGOs that protect the oceans with donations. North Coast is a company that is committed to responsible business practices and to producing its products in the most sustainable way possible (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 3). The firm now wanted to enter the fashion market with a sustainable yoga apparel line that aligned with the firm's values. However, due to the current difficult economic situation, the launch has been postponed. However, the company has already gone through all the important steps of the innovation process, except for the market launch of its sustainable yoga leggings, making it a suitable partner for this research (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 17).

According to the SME definition, the firm currently employs 5 people and can therefore be described as a micro-enterprise (European Commission, 2023b).

Case Firm E (runamics)

Case firm E is the Hamburg-based startup runamics, which was created by a small group of recreational athletes who found each other in search of eco-friendly running gear. However, sportswear is usually made of conventional plastic (runamics, 2023a). After being unable to find what they were seeking, the team took matters into their own hands and the startup runamics was founded. In 2019, the firm launched a crowdfunding campaign. Shortly after, the team discovered McDonough & Braungarts (2010) holistic model of the cradle to cradle (C2C) approach and has been developing Cradle to Cradle sportswear since 2020 (runamics, 2023b). C2C is based on five pillars. These are material health, recyclability, energy, water, and ethical components (Transcript runamics, Pos. 7). Sportswear is designed for biological material cycles, which means that the materials used are biologically recyclable. They are biodegradable and environmentally safe in terms of material chemistry (Transcript runamics, Pos. 3). In C2C, products must be either biologically or technically recyclable; currently, runamics strives to serve both recycling models. In addition, it is emphasized that energy should come from renewable sources whenever possible and that wet processes with fresh water should be recirculated whenever possible (runamics, 2023a). In November 2021, the company reached a significant milestone by developing the world's first C2C certified running shorts with

biological closed-loop capability (runamics, 2023b). This year, in 2023, runamics will surpass the 50% mark of C2C-certified products (Transcript runamics, Pos. 3). The firm's mission is to produce sportswear from healthy and environmentally friendly materials, with recyclability principles and ethically correct production standards, in order to make a positive contribution to sustainability in the sports industry (runamics, 2023a).

In spring 2021 the runamics GmbH was founded, before that runamics was still running as a single company (Transcript runamics, Pos. 5). Currently, the firm has four employees, which means that runamics can be considered a micro-enterprise according to the SME definition (European Commission, 2023b).

4.2. Single Case Analysis

In the following, all cases are analyzed based on the data collected in the semi-structured interview with the firm representative.

4.2.1. Case Firm A (Torland)

In the case of firm A, the CEO and founder of the jeans brand was interviewed and provided insights into the innovation process and sustainability efforts at Torland.

In terms of **firm values**, the interviewee stated that “when you start as a small firm, the firm is the founder's child. And I have my own values, and logically, you put your values into this company.” (Transcript Torland, Pos. 13). In that way, the founder made it clear that his own intrinsic values were incorporated into the founding process as those of the firm. Since there was no professional approach to identifying the firm's values at this point, Torland's founder reported that they had a strategy review with a branding expert at a later stage. This person was notably interested in the brand values. A strategy workshop was held to critique the entire strategy as well as the firm's values, and by the end of the workshop, it became evident that the values remained consistent throughout the process and the entire founding journey. The interviewee made it clear how valuable these values are for Torland and its operations (Transcript Torland, Pos. 13). When asked if there were any obstacles to identifying the firm's values, he replied that values cannot be quickly and perfunctorily recorded on paper, but are the result of a development process. He also reported that in the search for important values for a brand, other brands in the market are also considered and observed, and an exchange with others can take place. The greatest challenge, however, is to formulate a value statement in a concise and succinct manner (Transcript Torland, Pos. 15).

On the topic of **stakeholder identification** and the presentation of the tool from the value-sensitive design framework, the CEO countered that: "When you start a company and it's doing well, you don't have to worry so much about business models, analysis, and the like" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 17). He pointed out that he initially had little exposure to professional methods. However, he said that he had a professional strategy session with a branding expert who specifically asked him to look at his

stakeholders. That was the point two to three years ago when he began to actively address the issue of stakeholders. However, he also emphasized that he thought it was a natural process in day-to-day business to understand who the relevant stakeholders were, but he also felt that professional methods could help the whole process (Transcript Torland, Pos. 17).

The founder of the jeans brand had the following to say about the **innovation process**: "In everyday business, this does not happen in such a structured way as it is presented here" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 31). He went on to emphasize that the processes as shown in the conceptual model already take place in a certain way, but in practice, there is no sequential order, but rather a simultaneous flow. This is how it works in his firm (Transcript Torland, Pos. 35). He described that innovations often happen in very small steps and are less structured (Transcript Torland, Pos. 31). Especially in smaller enterprises, such as the case firm with 9 employees, the firm's actions are based on a unified vision and value base that was shaped by the founder. Thus, it runs through the whole process. However, as soon as a firm reaches a larger size, more precisely structured processes become more important than in a rather small firm (Transcript Torland, Pos. 31). Finally, he said that the logic behind the proposed model is correct, but in his case, the upstream innovation process and the second part of the innovation process take place in parallel (Transcript Torland, Pos. 45). He illustrated this with a recent example from his day-to-day business on the topic of circular economy, where his team often had to implement improvements retroactively, jumping back and forth between different steps (Transcript Torland, Pos. 47).

When it came to discussing the **values-driven stakeholder checkpoints**, he shared his own experience: "We engage a lot with our stakeholders. (...) What we haven't done is really consciously say okay, we're going to get all the different types of stakeholders together and have a meeting like this" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 21). He also reported that he travels to Izmir once a quarter for face-to-face meetings with his producer. Above this, he also mentioned other feedback methods his firm uses, such as a specific process in the online store where customers can indicate what they found unsatisfactory when they return a product. These reasons are then statistically analyzed to raise awareness. In addition, he reported that he himself is often in the store and therefore tries to interact with customers to stimulate feedback in the daily business. This is how he describes the current stakeholder involvement at Torland (Transcript Torland, Pos. 21). When asked about the usefulness of these checkpoints, the firm representative interviewed was positive. He felt that these checkpoints could be used to structure the feedback process with key stakeholders. A checkpoint is needed when a new product is developed, and only then does the process continue. In terms of implementation, he could imagine several methods, such as organizing a face-to-face meeting with all relevant stakeholders, sending a survey to customers by mail, or conducting a live survey with customers in the course of their daily business. When asked which stakeholder groups should be involved and when he replied that he saw no reason to involve some earlier and others later. The more you involve people from the outside, the more helpful the exchange and the more different perspectives you can see (Transcript Torland, Pos. 51). From a personal point of view, Torland's CEO considered the last checkpoint, after the innovation is on the market, to be the most important, as it initiates the continuous improvement process (Transcript Torland, Pos. 63).

In the course of the **overall validation and evaluation** of the proposed conceptual model, the interviewee expressed himself positively: "Well, I find your model really very useful the longer I look at it and think about it for companies. It's like a map that helps to structure processes and developments. That's what we lack here, where we move around on a daily basis and often get lost. Whenever I go back and take a bird's eye view, then I can keep such a process in mind" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 49). This described the usefulness he sees in the framework for inclusion in everyday business. Furthermore, he emphasized that a model from theory remains a model, but it is useful for orientation, for SMEs to integrate a little more structure into the innovation process (Transcript Torland, Pos. 53). Suggestions for improvement from his side were comments on the upstream steps such as firm diagnosis and stakeholder identification, and that these steps would also be iterative in some way (Transcript Torland, Pos. 55). Furthermore, he emphasized that the proposed process is otherwise logical for him personally: "It makes sense. That the innovation is ultimately subordinated to the values and is oriented to them" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 63).

4.2.2. Case Firm B (Bausinger)

In the interview with case firm B was conducted with the current CEO of the yoga manufacturer, who provided insightful information about Bausinger's innovation and sustainability initiatives.

On the first point of the **firm values** and how they came to be, the CEO of Bausinger reported that the firm's values were initiated by the founder of the manufactory at that time and were shaped and formed in the direction of sustainable management. He also shared how they had hired a sustainability consultant when he was new in the firm. With this consultant, they discussed the reason for doing business in the firm and what drives them. He further reported that it was not about the maximum profitability of the business, but rather about "wanting to contribute to a beautiful, loving, sustainable, ecological, healthy, fair, friendly world that is fit for grandchildren, that improves the world in the future" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 5). In this context, he spoke again later in the conversation about the so-called "grandchildren's fitness", a term from the common good economy. By this, he meant that economic activities should not only be geared to short-term profits but also to the long-term needs of future generations, to which he wants to contribute (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 52). So, with the help of a consultant from a Buddhist center, they defined their basic values. In addition, within the framework of the defined values, they have drawn up a charter of professional ethics to ensure that they deal with clients in a manner that is faithful to their work (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 9). In terms of value definition problems, the only point that came up was that economic efficiency sometimes gets in the way of other sustainability values because of the costs involved: "CO2 offsetting costs money. GOTS certification costs money. Ours is like that, our social commitment costs money (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 9)".

Regarding **stakeholder identification**, the interviewee explained that as the largest shareholder of the yoga manufacturer, he does not have to pay much attention to other stakeholders. The firm has no bank debt, so no bank can really interfere. Nevertheless, he reported that they receive a form of cash flow reserve from private donors, to be more precise, from "four people from the immediate environment of the firm who are personally very close to them", in order to be able to compensate

for a liquidity bottleneck in the summer (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 13). No professional stakeholder identification methods were used here (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 15).

Regarding the **innovation process**, the interviewee replied that they are a small firm and therefore do not have a very regular continuous innovation process as it is shown in the model, but nevertheless, he described it as meaningful. Subsequently, he elaborated on the initial process of observing what their target group is interested in and what is in line with their firm values (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 25). He added that at Bausinger they first pursue values-based thinking and then try to integrate it into the product design, depending on how it is technically feasible. Economic aspects are always taken into account, as the implementation of sustainability is often associated with costs. (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 27) He also described that Bausinger also works in iterative innovation loops, which he considers as very useful (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 24-25).

In the review of the **values-based stakeholder checkpoints**, the CEO of case firm B was convinced of their usefulness (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 21). He was positive about process improvement and supported a more transparent process, but was unsure about the extent to which stakeholders were really involved: "For me, that is first of all the question to what extent stakeholders are really interested in the actual product details" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 29). He also emphasized that a common understanding of values with stakeholders is important for the firm and a prerequisite for successful cooperation (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 25). He reported on discussions with future target groups, the stakeholder group of customers, to find out exactly what is important in product development, for example when it comes to the right materials (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 27). In response to a further question about how he would imagine the checkpoint, he talked about his own experiences, such as feedback rounds with customers, product tests with professional yoga teachers and asking customers for feedback via the firm's own newsletter (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 29). On the question of when to involve which stakeholder groups, his core statement was that those who are involved in the production should always be involved in product development, so in the first step suppliers and production workers should be included. In the second step, customers should test the product and, if necessary, evaluate it. The CEO described this as a kind of "cycle that goes from production via the customers back to production" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 31).

At the end of the interview and during the **validation** of the whole conceptual, the CEO was positive about the values-based approach presented in the framework and also found the checkpoints to be a good approach. He made it clear that, in his view, business leaders must first be aware of their responsibilities to the environment, society, and their own employees in order to act appropriately. He explained that appropriate values-based corporate action must come from within. Otherwise, the following problem could arise: "And here we have to be very careful that all the sustainability efforts do not turn into a corset that restricts and constrains rather than liberates. You cannot force values-oriented work" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 44). He also spoke of a kind of "value guardian" within the company, whose role it is to ensure that value-oriented action, which is good for the environment and society and goes beyond pure profitability, is of great importance and is adhered to (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 44).

4.2.3. Case Firm C (KUZ Fashion Design Studio)

The fashion designer and founder of the Fashion Design Studio was questioned for Case Firm C.

In terms of **firm values**, the CEO talked a lot about efforts to combat overproduction. In this example, she emphasized that they refuse to work with producers who only produce 100 or more units (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 9) and only meet with suppliers if they can order reasonable, environmentally-friendly quantities (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 17). By producing small quantities, quality can be better controlled and waste avoided. The leftover materials are collected and donated to appropriate institutions, thus initiating something good for society (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 5). The founder identified her personal understanding of sustainable and environmentally conscious action as the core of her firm's values. She emphasized that it is a matter of course for her to make conscious business decisions and to ensure transparency in all processes (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 11). She also stressed that she does not know how values can be anything other than an intrinsic attitude (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 23c).

These values also guide the selection of **stakeholders** with whom the KUZ Fashion Design Studio collaborates. Cooperations are only entered into if there is a common understanding of values (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 11). She also described stakeholder identification as intrinsically values-driven. She looks for suitable partners in companies and industry associations. Here, a common understanding of values and common interests of the members is usually given and thus facilitated (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 19). She went on to explain that in her opinion, the most important and first emerging stakeholders must first be convinced of the firm's mission and vision, and then the rest will come naturally (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 29). Professional methods for identifying stakeholders were not used.

Considering the **innovation process**, she answered quite short. She described an iterative process in which it is possible to switch from one stage to another at any time (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 77). She went on to explain that she is familiar with the proposed innovation process from the literature and that she follows it to some extent, but that she works somewhat detached from it. She focuses on collecting ideas and observing the industry. In summary, she described it succinctly as follows: "(...) it would be analyzing ideas, looking for stakeholders and then doing this pilot project" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 13).

In the case of the **values-based stakeholder checkpoints**, the interviewee was initially a little perplexed and not sure how to understand this section (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 37). She described stakeholder integration in her firm as something that takes place continuously and as a matter of course in all processes. Regardless of the project, stakeholder involvement is an integral part of the workflow. Every stakeholder is treated in the same way and with the same care and is included in the process (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 43). Contact is maintained by mail, conversations, or text messages, but no extra meetings are held on different projects by email (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 49). When asked about stakeholder involvement, she emphasized that she would first develop the idea and values herself, without involving stakeholders (Transcript KUZ, Pos.75). First, she would involve the direct stakeholder group of employees in the first checkpoint. Then, in the second and third checkpoints, she would also involve impacted indirect stakeholder groups. Accordingly, she advocated a differentiated involvement of the different stakeholder groups (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 79, 95). She would involve the indirect stakeholders who are not part of her core team if she could present them

with something concrete. The reason for this is that she was not sure that other people can give a proper and informed opinion if they do not understand the whole concept (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 93).

When **evaluating and validating the entire conceptual model** presented, the interviewee responded that she liked the model. For her personally, the initial focus was on defining values, because "with the right idea, I think the right people will come" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 71). She saw the continuous improvement process that takes place at the end as a very important part of the framework: "I think the first half year is all about change" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 83). This is because continuous improvement after the launch of a product is important. In this context, she reported on a program to take back old-fashioned parts in order to recycle materials (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 63).

4.2.4. Case Firm D (North Coast)

The managing director and co-founder of the young firm was interviewed for the case firm D North Coast.

When discussing the **firm's values**, the CEO of North Coast described how, at the beginning of the firm's existence, all values were written down within the founding team. Because they were and still are a very small team, the interviewee described this approach for small firms as "(...) easy to create in daily doing" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 9). Professional methods were not followed, but are described by the founder as useful, especially in larger companies. He further stated that the three brothers who founded the firm aligned their business with their own beliefs and values, thereby integrating environmental and ethical goals into their decisions (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 9). However, he added that the pursuit of sustainable values is in line with current market needs, as it would make little sense to pursue intrinsic values that no one demands (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 11). He describes the pursuit of these values in the further course of the process as problematic in the definition of values, because it requires a kind of discipline not to focus on short-term savings, but to choose truly sustainable producers that can also prove their sustainability and thus correspond to the firm's pursued values (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 13).

Regarding **stakeholder identification**, he replied that they had never used professional models or frameworks from economics. Rather, everything important "emerged in the course of doing business" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 15). Stakeholders are identified and considered in the course of daily work without the need for a complicated process, the whole thing "just happened naturally," the interviewee reported (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 15). He also noted that he would consider a professional and method-driven approach to be appropriate for larger firms. The structuring of the stakeholder identification process could be useful due to a greater variety of products to ensure a systematic identification of relevant stakeholders (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 17).

Regarding the **innovation process** itself, the interviewee answered that the innovation process should fit the current strategy of a firm (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 19), but also that first making the intentional choice to create something new is necessary (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 23). He goes on to describe in the upstream innovation process that as a brand, one should concretely define what the brand core looks like on the basis of the pursued values and principles that are considered essential. These should be documented and serve as guidelines for business activities and decisions in order to develop a clear position prior to the actual innovation process (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 19). In the second part of the innovation process, the co-founder of North Coast described how

they made the decision to enter the fashion industry out of a search for a way to generate more repeat customers. He described how yoga leggings were the best option and so they chose this fashion product. Additionally, the firm recognized the significance of the new product adhering to their values, so they started to look for the right materials, producers, and suppliers that could fulfill the firm's values and provide high quality (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 23). He also described that they had to go much deeper than usual into the value chain because it had not been fully mapped before (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 25). The co-founder said that no professional processes or models were used for orientation (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 26). Rather, the whole process was done as an iterative process in order to be as flexible as possible throughout the process (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 29).

With regard to the usefulness of the **values-based stakeholder checkpoints**, the interviewee certainly saw some sense in them. Especially for larger firms, he believed it is extremely beneficial to define and structure values-driven actions more clearly. North Coast's founding team is heavily involved in all decisions and consistently acts according to the firm's defined values. For this reason, the interviewee was of the opinion that in their specific case they always act in accordance with the values anyway and that the checkpoints are therefore less relevant for them personally, but still seem to make sense (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 31). When asked how he would imagine such a checkpoint, the managing director replied that the corresponding decisions should be made within these checkpoints. The intermediate results should be presented and then run through "decision gates" within the checkpoints, which then determine whether another loop in the previous process must be run or whether one can move on to the next innovation step. He described such a checkpoint as extremely useful, especially in the selection of materials for their yoga leggings. During the development process, they realized that materials that sounded good in terms of sustainability might not work in the final product. A checkpoint in this context can therefore help to avoid unnecessary expenditures (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 33). Regarding the involvement of stakeholders at different checkpoints and phases in the innovation process, the interviewee felt that in principle he would always involve all stakeholders, but to different degrees. In the early stages, he would involve less customers and more stakeholders who are actively involved in the development, such as social and environmental stakeholders and producers. When all these feasibility issues have been resolved, he would involve the customer stakeholder group more in the next step, since the product has to be bought by the customers in the end. However, he stressed the importance of involving customers in the first steps of the process, as important product decisions should not be made without a customer focus (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 35). To summarize, he said, "Yes, look at all stakeholders, but put different emphasis on different stakeholders at different stages" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 37).

Throughout the **evaluation and validation** of the proposed conceptual model, potential barriers were first discussed. The interviewee reflected on the question of the required scope of stakeholder definition and described it as difficult. Furthermore, he also replied that this was a general problem of product development, as it is "insanely difficult to really map the whole value chain and really have a complete overview" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 43). More broadly, he was positive about the framework and offered suggestions for improvement. The usefulness of the upstream innovation process was discussed. The interviewee emphasized the importance of the Upstream Innovation Process as the first step of the whole process, because he believed that it was necessary to narrow the topic field before doing Idea Sprints in order to fully understand the motives and goals of an innovation. In the next step, however, he felt that this phase should have a lower weighting and that iteration may not be necessary at all. He recommended that the second phase of the innovation process

should focus on idea generation using the idea sprint method. This involves generating several ideas and then testing them using qualitative and quantitative methods before moving on to the prototyping phase. In this way, several ideas can be compared at the same time, and only the most promising ideas are taken forward to the next stages of the innovation process. In this way, financial resources can also be saved (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 47). Finally, he emphasized that the innovation and the product must always make economic sense. In his opinion, any sustainability is useless if it is not successful on the market and economically. Accordingly, attention should always be paid to this (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 51).

4.2.5. Case Firm E (runamics)

The founder of the cradle to cradle inspired running brand was interviewed as a corporate representative for Case Company E.

On the topic of defining **values** within the sportswear brand, the interviewee began to report that there was no official meeting or firm workshop dedicated to this. Rather, the team in 2020 realized that "if we are serious about sustainable sportswear, (...) we have to take this cradle to cradle approach" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 13). In this way, the C2C approach became the "guiding star" of runamics (Transcript runamics, Pos. 13). In addition to the C2C approach, other principles of action are pursued. The first is the "different is good" approach, which aims to achieve a balance between the economy and the environment by pursuing different approaches that deviate from standard economic strategies (Transcript runamics, Pos. 15). The next principle is "better together". This is not just about selling clothes, but also about creating awareness within the sporting community. Both are mutually reinforcing, as increased awareness leads to increased sales and vice versa, and can lead to the overall goal of reducing textile waste in the sports industry. He then explained the "impact before profit" approach is an important feature of the Impact Startup. It means always choosing impact over profit (Transcript runamics, Pos. 15). After describing these guiding values and principles, he answered in the affirmative when asked whether they were also a result of his personal attitude and could therefore be considered intrinsic values (Transcript runamics, Pos. 19). He also described the definition of corporate values as a process that takes time to develop and is not a one-time exercise (Transcript runamics, Pos. 17).

On the issue of **stakeholder identification**, he described an ongoing process that the small firm has not yet actively managed (Transcript runamics, Pos. 21). In the interview, he explained the firm's cooperation with stakeholders and emphasized that when selecting stakeholders, attention is paid to a common value base, and he spoke of partners who "fit the mission like a glove" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 21). However, he also said that not all tasks, such as the selection of a freight forwarder, could be decided on the basis of values to the same extent (Transcript runamics, Pos. 21). Accordingly, no professional methods are used to identify stakeholders in this case.

When discussing the **innovation process** of runamics, the founder reported that his company would likely move quickly to the second part of the innovation process when looking at the proposed framework. He based this statement on the fact that the startup uses a limited set of materials to produce products. Nevertheless, he described the first step of the upfront innovation process as essential, especially for larger firms. One should be sure in advance that one's own values correlate with those of the market. Accordingly, he described this point as "absolutely important" for testing

and operating innovations (Transcript runamics, Pos. 27). In practice, the firm follows the steps of the traditional innovation process to some extent in the second step of the framework. However, as the founder pointed out: "So ideas also arise partly because of opportunities" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 33). He described this as an iterative approach based on a process of "trial and error". In this process, the firm searches for suitable opportunities in a targeted way in order to use its resources effectively and quickly achieve a positive response in the market (Transcript runamics, Pos. 33). In the third part of the innovation process, he described how they always have a pre-sale in the launch phase. For this they work with crowdfunding to test demand and interest in new products and at the same time generate liquidity for the first production phase (Transcript runamics, Pos. 33). Regarding the iterative nature of the process, he explained: "As a small company with limited resources, it is essential for us to carry out the iterative process of testing and learning directly in the market in order to get quick feedback from customers and to continuously improve our product" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 35). Accordingly, prototypes are sold as minimum viable products (MVPs) to test market acceptance. If the response is positive, the product is improved accordingly (Transcript runamics, Pos. 27).

For the **values-driven stakeholder checkpoints**, the interviewee told us that as a firm they already consider stakeholders in the process, but it is more operationally focused and less shaped by a structured strategy. During the interview, he gave specific examples of how they had engaged financial stakeholders through a detailed presentation of the business to engage them in their actions and values. By agreeing to collaborate, the stakeholder signaled its approval and thus committed to the business relationship (Transcript runamics, Pos. 25). When asked about the usefulness of the checkpoints, the founder responded as follows: "I think the idea there with these checkpoints is somehow quite smart" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 41). He described the checkpoints as so-called "realness checks", which are well suited to checking the consistency between the firm and stakeholder values and the results of the individual innovation phases. Regularly carrying out one of these "realness checks" would ensure that the value framework did not become diluted with each innovation and that the firm remained true to itself (Transcript runamics, Pos. 29). He would tailor stakeholder involvement as needed. Initially, he would involve more partners at the front end of the value chain. Furthermore, he would only involve customers at a later stage, when something concrete could be presented to them. At the end of the involvement, he would rather see stakeholders such as waste management companies, logistics companies, or fulfillment firms (Transcript runamics, Pos. 39).

In terms of the overall **validation and evaluation** of the conceptual model, he found the continuous improvement process proposed at the end to be correct. With regard to the values-based stakeholder checkpoints, he was unsure about the number of checkpoints, noting that he could imagine that at some point it might be too much for stakeholders and that one should therefore choose carefully how often to actively involve them (Transcript runamics, Pos. 37). The main obstacle, according to the founder of runamics, is the frequent involvement of all different stakeholders, which requires a certain amount of caution to avoid overburdening them. A balance has to be found that also meets the needs of the stakeholders (Transcript runamics, Pos. 43). He also emphasized that after a successful market entry and careful testing in previous phases, it is possible to continue working with this fact without pushing the checkpoints too hard. Instead, he suggested a kind of "company retreat" in which all active products and projects would be evaluated over two days to see if they were in line with the firm's values. If there were any concerns, stakeholders could be actively involved in the dialogue (Transcript runamics, Pos. 37). He went on to suggest the creation of a "code of conduct" for initial stakeholder engagement. It should explain the firm's values-based approach and how it will work

with other parties to ensure that it is values-based. This code should be signed by all stakeholders. Employees involved in the innovation process should be instructed to ensure compliance with the code of conduct and stakeholder involvement. In this way, they could imagine that the firm's actions are in line with the previously defined values (Transcript runamics, Pos. 23). This code could also define the checkpoints and related involvement. He further described the checkpoints themselves as "absolutely useful" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 41). He emphasized that he could well imagine that the developed framework could support firms that have difficulties in defining and implementing sustainability. They might benefit from it for execution. He also described it as "easy to implement" and "that in the end it would really have the desired effect" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 41).

4.3. Comparative Analysis of the Cases

The following chapter provides a comparative analysis of the selected cases along the steps and elements of the strategic implementation framework. In addition, differences, similarities, and unique characteristics of the cases are highlighted and presented in tables with quotes from the semi-structured interviews.

4.3.1. Firm Values

Since the first step in the proposed implementation framework is the firm diagnosis, the statements of the different cases on this topic will now be highlighted and compared.

At the beginning of the interview, all interviewees from the case firms described their sustainability efforts and the extent to which they had previously pursued social and ethical goals in addition to their economic efforts. To provide a more detailed look at the case firms, the following table compares the values tracked by each case firm:

Table 6: Comparison of the ecological, economic, ethical, and social values of the selected case firms surveyed in this case study

Firms	Values:				Sources
	Ecological	Economic	Ethical	Social	
Firm A Torland	<p>High quality efforts through sustainable production and appropriate materials</p> <p>SlowdownFashion: Conserving energy and water, taking care of the planet</p> <p>Repair service and up-cycling of products in pursuit of a circular economy approach</p>	<p>Innovation and differentiation: Developing new ideas for garments</p>	<p>Innovation and differentiation: Developing new ideas for garments</p>	<p>Togetherness with others: collaboration instead of competition</p>	<p>(Transcript Torland) (Torland, 2019, 2023)</p>
Firm B Bausinger	<p>Organic, fair and close: minimizing environmental footprint, conscious use of resources, use of materials from sustainable cultivation focus on sustainable materials, carbon offsetting and compensation, full transparency for real sustainability efforts</p>	<p>Focus on the regional business cycle Community-focused, healthy, responsible entrepreneurship approach</p>	<p>Ethical working conditions: Fair wages and a pleasant, familiar working atmosphere, no intensive price negotiations with partners, appreciative treatment of all suppliers</p>	<p>Social justice: Being socially fair, not exploiting anyone, and treating all people equally.</p>	<p>(Transcript Bausinger) (Bausinger, 2022b, 2023)</p>
Firm C KUZ	<p>Sustainability efforts: Focus on smaller volumes and avoid mass production and overstock</p> <p>Reduce waste and carbon emissions, and the use of sustainable, recycled and end-of-life materials</p>	<p>Fast, smooth, and efficient: Efficient service through an on-demand service that includes all necessary components, focuses on reliability and customer satisfaction and produces small quantities to reduce the risk of overproduction and unsold goods</p>	<p>Focus on a positive work environment: valuing interpersonal relationships and freedom for personal growth in the workplace</p>	<p>Focus on the common good: Donating surplus materials makes a positive contribution to society and demonstrates social responsibility</p>	<p>(Transcript KUZ) (KUZ Fashion Design Studio, 2023)</p>

Firm D North Coast	<p>Environmental protection: Protection of the oceans and cooperation with NGOs working for the protection of the oceans, organization of beach clean-ups and other water protection measures.</p> <p>Use of sustainable materials from recycled or certified sources</p>	<p>Creating economic value through sustainable products that are good for people and the environment, and that are actively demanded by target audiences.</p> <p>Quality management and continuous improvement</p> <p>Aiming for economic success to invest in sustainability and social responsibility</p>	<p>Fair production: Great emphasis is placed on social sustainability in the selection of production partners, such as insurance for each employee and their dependents, education and training opportunities for all, and subsidies for continuing education</p>	<p>Working with NGOs to protect oceans and their inhabitants</p>	(Transcript North Coast)
Firm E runamics	<p>Cradle to Cradle: biological material cycle, materials can biodegrade and are environmentally safe in terms of material chemistry</p> <p>5 pillars of the Cradle to Cradle approach: material health, recyclability, water, energy, and the ethical component</p>	<p>“Impact before profit” principle: In decision-making situations, always choose the more sustainable option and do not make compromises for more favorable alternatives that conflict with the values</p> <p>Investing in sustainability and social responsibility while pursuing economic success</p>	<p>Ethical component of the Cradle to Cradle approach: products in the value chain are produced according to ethically correct standards</p>	<p>Principle of "better together": the ultimate goal is not just to sell clothes, but to create more awareness in the sports community as a whole and to have less textile waste from the sports industry</p>	(Transcript runamics) (runamics, 2023a, 2023b)

This comparison of **ecological values** shows that all five case firms are committed to using sustainable materials in their products. This is to ensure that the planet's resources can continue to be protected in the long term while minimizing environmental impact. Furthermore, the use of sustainable materials can help the places where they are produced by improving social and economic conditions. This is also emphasized by the CEO of case firm B, who works with workshops for the disabled in the Swabian Alb in Germany and can thus contribute to the creation of regional jobs and also promote social justice and the inclusion of people with disabilities in society (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 3). In addition, case firm E actively pursues the cradle-to-cradle approach, which has the overall goal of designing products and processes in a sustainable and environmental way that, at the end of their life cycle, can be recycled or biodegraded (Transcript runamics, Pos. 7). This is also the goal of case firm A, which pursues a circular economy approach with a repair service and the collection of old jeans and the resulting upcycled products (Transcript Torland, Pos. 47).

All of the firms surveyed are also similar in terms of their **ethical values** and reported about similar aspirations. They all attach great importance to ensuring ethically correct working conditions for their own employees or for those employed along their value chain. In this context, the CEO of case firm B emphasizes the fairness of his employees' wages (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 7) and the co-founder of case firm D describes the high importance of ethical sustainability and in the sense of taking moral principles into account when selecting producers (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 3).

In terms of **social values**, all firms pursue the common good in different ways. Case firm A advocates a common spirit both inside and outside the firm, which should counteract aggressive competition (Transcript Torland, Pos. 13). Case firm B describes the equal treatment of all and the avoidance of harm, which they recognize as a principle of action, thus also referring to the yogic values (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 7). Case firm C tries to contribute to the common good by donating materials to the community (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 5). North Coast, case firm D, reports on its commitment to marine conservation, as well as self-organized beach clean-up campaigns and cooperation with NGOs committed to similar goals, demonstrating the firm's social commitment. In the case of case firm E, the goal is to raise awareness within the sports community to promote a healthy and sustainable lifestyle with environmental sustainability (Transcript runamics, Pos. 15).

Economic values were less of a focus in the interviews, so the statements were shorter. None of the firms take a classic profitability and profit maximization approach. Case firm A talks about the focus on innovation and differentiation of their jeans and how they are different from other jeans (Transcript Torland, Pos. 9). Case firm B focuses more on regional value creation and strengthening the regional economy. In this case, it reported on the printing of a new catalog, which it had done despite higher costs domestically and had not gone for the cheaper offer from abroad in order to strengthen the domestic economy (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 9). Firm C, KUZ, described the focus on a beneficial working environment in which each employee also has time and capacity for their own products in order to promote their own further development (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 9). Case firms D and E both described the need to pursue economic values in some way in order to effect change and contribute to a more sustainable world in the long term (Transcript runamics, Pos. 33; Transcript North Coast, Pos. 51).

All the firms interviewed agree that the firm values are based on their intrinsic values as founders. Since all the interviewed case firm representatives are the original founders of the firms, only case B is different in this respect. Regarding firm B, the current CEO is not the original founder, but he reported that the pursued firm values were strongly influenced by the original founder and are still followed today. The co-founder of North Coast, the firm in Case Study D, also described that this approach allows him to justify his economic activities on the basis of his personal values, which he considers appropriate and therefore justifiable for the environment and society. All interviewees also agreed that when a firm is founded, the aspirations and values of the founders have a significant influence on the later direction and character of the firm.

In order to define the firm values and to have a clear vision and mission, only case firm A and B used more professional methods with external help. In the first case, Torland (case firm A) brought in a branding expert to conduct a strategy workshop to properly define and document clear values. However, it is worth mentioning that when the firm was founded, the values were first developed from the founder's own values and feelings, without the use of more professional methods. In case B, Bausinger, a sustainability expert from a Buddhist center, was brought in at the beginning of the current CEO's tenure to ensure a clear development and understanding of pursued values. In case firms C, D, and E, no professional methods were used. However, the CEO of firm D, North Coast, reported that they had initially met with the founding team to document the values and have a written version.

There were two main problems with the firms' values definition: On the one hand, the case firm A Torland stated that value definition is not a one-time task. Rather, it describes a continuous process that involves constant review and adjustment of values to enable values-based operations. This view is shared by the interviewee from case firm E, runamics. He described that firms must first develop an individual self-image as part of the corporate development process in order to define and shape their identity. The second unresolved problem was that the economic goals of a firm are often in conflict with its sustainable goals, resulting in a conflict between profitability and sustainability. This statement was made by three of the five case firms interviewed. Case company B Bausinger described that sustainable and social engagement entails costs that do not generate direct economic value. As a result, many firms take the easy way out and abandon positive engagement with the environment and society. Case firms D North Coast and E runamics also clarified that it is important to prioritize a firm's positive contribution to the environment and society over profit in order to resist the seductive incentives of a more economically efficient approach. While these would encourage a higher return on investment, they are at odds with the firm's own goals. As described by firm E runamics, such decisions are made in the day-to-day business environment and do not make it easy for sustainable and socially oriented firms.

Some of the important quotes from the main code of firm values that relate to the first element of the framework are presented in the following table:

Table 7: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of firm values with associated subcodes

Code	Subcode	Quotes
Firm Values	Intrinsic Values	"When you start as a small firm, the firm is really the founder's child. I have values, my own values and logically you put your values into this firm" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 13)
		"I would like to develop a counter-model, away from the predatory capitalism we originally came from, and towards healthy, responsible entrepreneurship oriented towards the common good" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 9)
		"For me, it's hard to think how it can be different, you know?" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 23)
		"Intrinsic values, on the one hand, and of course, ultimately, it's also a topic that resonates in the marketplace" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 11)
		"Yes. You can certainly say that (intrinsic values) strongly reflect that in many ways. That is given by nature" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 19)
	Use of Professional Methods	"We had a review of our strategy last year (...) with a brand expert, and he was obviously looking at brand values" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 13)
		"When I joined the firm, we even went to the trouble of hiring a sustainability consultant" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 5)
		"The bottom line for us is that we just do business the way we see fit and go about it the way we see fit. We are a super small company, which is why it works" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 9)
		"To be honest, this was not a (professional) "sit-down" for us, where we thought about what values we stand for" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 13)
	Problems with Value Definition	"Well, it's just that values don't just appear on paper so quickly, there's a development process behind it" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 15)
		There were only problems "from an economic point of view" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 11)
		"(...) to have the discipline not to succumb to the temptation to take shortcuts (in terms of sustainability) anywhere" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 13)
		"So that was a development process, because as a firm you have to find yourself first and somehow crystallize a little, a little self-image for yourself" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 17) "This is easier said than done because these trade-offs are actually encountered every day. And we are also aware that if we have to make a trade-off decision and it threatens our economic existence, then we just can't make it" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 15)

4.3.2. Stakeholder Identification

On the point of stakeholder involvement and the value-sensitive design tool proposed here, all the firm representatives interviewed said that they had not used any professional methods for this purpose yet. Rather, they described it as something that happens naturally. Case firm A, Torland, described it very clearly, stating that few actively engage with other economic models at the outset of a firm's formation, but that stakeholder identification would emerge in the day-to-day running of the business. Similar statements were made by Case firms B, C, D, and also E. Here they all seem to be in agreement and describe a similar approach and have not yet proceeded methodologically. Case firm

A, however, described that it became aware of the issue of stakeholder identification, such as inclusion, through a branding expert in a strategy workshop a few years after its foundation, and can therefore understand the benefits of such a tool. The interviewee from North Coast, case firm D, also emphasized the benefits he sees in professional stakeholder identification methods, but more so for larger firms with a wide variety of products. Case firm C KUZ and firm E runamics also described how their stakeholders are increasingly identified by a similar, if not the same, understanding of values. This is because a common set of values, shared by potential business partners when they first meet, is ultimately crucial to successful future cooperation, since cooperation would probably not take place if the understanding of values were too different.

Table 8: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of stakeholder identification with associated subcodes

Code	Subcode	Quotes
Stakeholder Identification	Procedure in Practice	"When you start a business and it's doing well, you don't have to worry so much about business models, analytics, and things like that" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 17)
		"(...) you actually identify those from the day-to-day business?" "Yes, somehow" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 14).
		"You know, at the beginning it's more about convincing others that they would believe in your idea, and then the rest is just coming easier, I would say" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 29)
		"So, that is one thing and from manufacturers, we expect the same (values)" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 11)
		"Never so consciously. We never did stakeholder maps. We never did any frameworks, be it Porter's Five Forces or SWAT analysis, or anything else. But of course, in the end, it comes relatively naturally during the course of management" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 15).
		"It is an ongoing process that we are not yet actively controlling in any way" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 21)
		"(...) we are of course aware that we want to work with people who are somehow like-minded and who believe in the same values" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 21).
	Professional Methods	"Yeah, so in a broader sense, he (branding expert) then actually brought the weight in and said, 'Yeah, look at your stakeholders at all'" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 17). "So two, three years later I started actively looking at stakeholders, and today it's just part of it. Whenever you take a little bit of a bird's eye view, think about your strategy, then you look at the different stakeholders" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 17).
		"So I think if I'm a big company with a super, super complex stakeholder map and I have no idea of the 500 products that I make (...) then I think it's already insanely useful to really show the whole thing in a structured and clearly defined way where the stakeholders are" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 17).
		"To be honest, this was not a (professional) "sit-down" for us, where we thought about what values we stand for" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 13)

4.3.3. Innovation Process

The innovation process proposed in this scientific paper starts with the upstream innovation process, which is based on the characteristics of the design thinking approach and is designed to develop innovative solutions that are truly tailored to the needs of users and thus provide real added value. Four of the five respondents were positive about the upstream innovation process. Case firm A found the structure of the upstream innovation process logical. Case firm B, in its own approach, described this step as quite identical before the actual innovation process starts, thus justifying the legitimacy of the upstream innovation process as it makes a relevant contribution to the overall process. Case firm D, North Coast, also described this process in its own approach to develop an appropriate and clear starting point before innovating. The founder of case firm E runamics defines the first point as important and integral, representing a common procedure for pursuing innovations and thus legitimizing it. He also describes it as important for larger firms, so smaller firms should also think about it and integrate this step. Therefore, four out of five respondents believe that an upstream process is useful in innovation and favors a structured approach (see subcode “Upstream Innovation Process” in Table 7). The interviewee from case firm C (KUZ) did not give any specific answers in this regard.

When describing how they proceed with their innovation process in practice, all interviewees described a similar flow that closely resembles the steps of the traditional process that also appear in the framework proposed here. They described the generation of ideas, then some kind of market analysis and search for suitable materials, and producers, and then the development and testing of prototypes. Furthermore, the case firms A, B, and D describe that the process, in reality, does not proceed exactly step by step in this way and can therefore also deviate. The flexibility of the SMEs should not be restricted in this way, but rather serve as a guideline in the process so that no steps are forgotten.

In addition, four of the five respondents described the iterative nature of the innovation process at their firm. Specifically, case firm A stated, that the whole process is in a sense iterative, that you can go back from one step to the previous one if necessary. Firm D also described that if something is not yet considered acceptable, another, in this sense iterative, process has to be started. The following table illustrates additional valuable expert interview statements describing the main code innovation process and categorized according to subcodes.

Table 9: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of innovation process with associated subcodes

Code	Subcode	Quotes
Innovation Process	Upstream Innovation Process	"So, from a logical point of view, that's what's happening in reality. These circles in the innovation processes" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 43)
		"So, we try to find out with which materials, with which processing steps we can work at all. What is our target group interested in, and what is in line with our corporate values and this, this conformity of values" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 25)
		"But probably yes, one would write down and define exactly the points that are central for the company, in order to take that as an initial point and perhaps to set brackets in which area this innovation actually moves or can move" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 19)
		"I myself come from a consulting background, and it is a necessary procedure that has been common for decades in order to test innovations and to carry out innovation at all. Therefore, the first point (upstream innovation process) is absolutely important" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 27).
		"The first point is certainly very important for larger companies, especially if you are putting more resources into innovation. So, I think it's important to think about that first" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 27)
	Procedure in Practice	"Because it always starts with the idea. Then we develop a concept, then we develop it further. And you do a prototype test. Then you get feedback" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 43)
		"Yes, it is not only first one and then two but in reality, both take place in parallel" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 45).
		"Then, of course, we try to get involved in the product design. How is it technically correct, feasible, and reasonable? How does it work in terms of product design? And, of course, the consideration then determines the economic efficiency" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 27).
		"So, it would be an idea analysis, looking for stakeholders and then doing this pilot project" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 13)
		"So first of all, of course, the decision was made that we should do something new. (...) Then we did some research. What materials are out there that somehow meet sustainability criteria, of course we also looked at the competition, what happens there, what is used there" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 23)
		"We end up faster in (innovation) phase two, which is the second, the middle block, because we have a small set of materials that we can work with. And with that we want to build products" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 27).
		"We end up faster in (innovation) phase two, which is the second, the middle block, because we have a small set of materials that we can work with. And with that we want to build products" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 27).
	Method-Guided Procedure	"In everyday business, this does not take place in such a structured way as shown here" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 31)
		"It is a reasonable process. Yes, of course, although we are of course a small company and do not have such a regular ongoing innovation process" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 25).
		"Did you follow any processes or models there?" "No" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 26-27)
	Iterative Process	"It's always an iterative process, yes" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 41)
		"And if I get some feedback, then again improve. Maybe I come back to the first stage to improve the idea" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 77)

		"(...) or do you maybe have to make another loop and repair something somewhere (in the process)" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 33)
		"Exactly. We can't do it any other way" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 35)

4.3.4. Values-Driven Stakeholder Checkpoints

On the issue of values-based stakeholder checkpoints, four out of five respondents were convinced of the usefulness and applicability of the proposed checkpoints. The checkpoints could well help to make the entire stakeholder engagement process more transparent and could be specifically integrated into the innovation process. The co-founder of North Coast, from case firm D, emphasized that this is particularly useful for firms that are somewhat larger. The interviewee from case firm E, the founder of runamics, emphasized that the implementation of values-based stakeholder checkpoints in the innovation process can ensure that a firm's values aren't diluted in the course of the process. Only the interviewee for case firm D did not fully understand the meaning behind the checkpoints and their use at the beginning. However, this was explained at the end of the interview and she understood the meaning.

When interviewees were asked how they involve stakeholders in their innovation process and how they would envision a stakeholder checkpoint, there were many different approaches. Case firm A reported about online processes on their website, as well as customers' active involvement in their store's day-to-day business. For the values-based stakeholder checkpoint, they felt that either physical meetings, online meetings, or surveys could be organized. The CEO of case firm B talked about test customers and prototype testing by customers, and did not add anything specific to the checkpoints. The founder of case firm C explained her process by first developing and thinking about the idea independently and then being ready to involve external stakeholders in a second step. In case firm D, the co-founder described that he would present the interim results at the checkpoints to see if they were legitimate and if they could be used to move to the next step of the innovation process. In this context, the checkpoint represents a kind of "decision gate" that determines the further course of the process. The founder of case firm E described their current values and behavioral standards as more operational than truly strategic. For the checkpoints, he had in mind a "code of conduct", a written statement defining a firm's values and behavioral standards, which could be compiled in the first inclusion point and thus serve as a value basis for the further checkpoints. In the case of specific value conflicts, the relevant stakeholders could be actively involved.

Case firms A, B, and E agreed on one point: they preferred to use email and newsletter marketing and saw this value as a valuable way to communicate with their customer base. In addition, all three emphasized the importance of the customer stakeholder group in the innovation process.

Table 10: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of values-driven stakeholder checkpoints with the first two associated subcodes

Code	Subcode	Quotes
Values-Driven Stakeholder Checkpoints	Usability	"Yes, and these values-driven stakeholder checkpoints, I think, could be built in very, very specifically, that you say "Hey, okay, now we've developed this product once, but now we need to do checkpoint" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 49)
		"Would you consider such a point useful in principle?" "Sure. Yes, sure" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 20-21)
		"I'm not sure about this term values-driven stakeholder. What is the definition?" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 37)
		"So in principle, of course, it can make sense. But I think, as I said, especially in companies that are maybe a little bit bigger" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 31)
		"I think that's very cool, and I also have to say that I think the idea with these checkpoints is kind of smart" (Transcript Runamics, Pos. 41). "Because I think that the stupidest thing that would fall on your feet as values or, as you say, as a values-based innovation company, is that this value framework is watered down with every further innovation and that you would then be able to leverage this a bit with these realness checks" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 29)
	Inclusion Methods	"Either you invite the stakeholders to a targeted meeting, or you can do it through surveys. You create an online survey, send it to all our registered, newsletter registered customers (...) with the request to give feedback" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 49)
		"But it is already the case that we also involve our customers with whom we are involved in this development process. After all, it's the customers who have to buy the products, and I think it makes sense (...)" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 29)
		"I would be involving them in the second stage and like starting to connect with them and starting to build something together. In the first stage, I would be (...) doing that on my own" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 75)
		"So just get decision gates. The results would be presented for each position gate, and a decision would be made based on the results. If we continue like this, let's go to the next step. Or do we do another round?" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 33)
		(...) if you set up this code of conduct, you could make this a part of it, so to speak, and say that when we work together, we will do realness checks in all phases of the market launch, and then we would arrange a phone call or a meeting with you to see if what we have imagined correlates one-to-one with "what" is compatible (Transcript runamics, Pos. 31)

There were different opinions on which stakeholders should be involved in which checkpoint. While case firm A was in favor of continuous involvement of all stakeholders in order to benefit from all different perspectives, case firms B and C were favorable of a division. They would first involve the stakeholders directly involved in the creation and development process and then, in the second checkpoint, the customers and other indirect stakeholders. The founders of case firms D and E have

a similar view. However, they would decide according to their needs. The co-founder of North Coast, case firm D, described an involvement of all stakeholders, but a focus on different stakeholders who are more decisive in the respective step, and thus his opinion is similar to that of case firms B and C. The following table shows the key quotes from the separate subcode for stakeholder engagement:

Table 11: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of values-driven stakeholder checkpoints with third associated subcode

Code	Subcode	Quotes
Values-Driven Stakeholder Checkpoints	Separate Stakeholder Integration	"I don't see any reason why I should ask customers certain questions and ask employees other questions. It's really the same thing because everyone has different perspectives on the same thing and they can all be valuable" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 51).
		"In product development always those who are also involved during production. (...) But then, in the second step, the customers who are going to buy the product have to verify it, and they ultimately have to say, okay, is this way we want it?"(Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 31)
		First, "(...) you would include the employees, the direct stakeholders. And here you would also include the indirect stakeholders?" "Yes, exactly." (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 98-99)
		Yes, look at everything, but maybe put different emphasis on different stakeholders at different stages. (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 37)
		"Depending on the need. So it may be that in the first phase (...) you are not so much in dialog with customers. You're more in dialog with partners who are at the forefront of value creation" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 39)

4.3.5. Conceptual Model Validation Results

At the end of the interview, respondents were asked for their views on the overall proposed conceptual model. The responses were positive. Five out of five respondents gave positive feedback on the preparation and logic of the process. On the one hand, it was made clear that although the process is not currently structured in this way in day-to-day business, the model as an aid to orientation can help to add the missing structure so that it would not represent a weakness of the framework. Case firms A and E clarified this point by seeing the model as an aid to their own process improvement and thus as a way to ensure a more rule-based approach.

Possible difficulties and barriers that the strategic implementation framework might pose were discussed in the next step.

The CEO of case firm B clarified that a model or framework should not become a kind of constraint. Values-driven action cannot be forced. Therefore, a model should not be seen as a rigid set of rules, but rather as a kind of guide or source of inspiration for making values-based business decisions. Another issue that case firms B, D and E raised and found problematic was that of truly active stakeholder involvement. Full involvement at all the proposed checkpoints could be difficult due to the limited capacity of different stakeholders. There was also a risk of discouraging or overburdening stakeholders by involving them. Furthermore, in line with the previous point, the co-founder of North Coast (case firm D) described the challenge of the scope of stakeholder identification and how deep

it should go into the value chain. However, he also emphasized that he believes this is a common problem in product development.

Table 12: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of validation of implementation framework with first two associated subcodes

Code	Subcode	Quotes
Validation of Conceptual Model	Statements	"I think the process you presented is really very valuable. And I think I'm going to use it. In the future is just as a kind of map" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 75)
		"I like the fact that many sustainability efforts are aimed at using processes, descriptions, checklists, and constraints to steer and control companies so that they are more sustainable" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 44)
		"I think the proposed innovation process looks good to me" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 71)
		"For the most part, it's pretty good the way it is" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 43)
		"I think it's cool, and I can imagine that it would be very well received by companies, especially those that have some difficulty defining for themselves what this ominous word sustainability means to them and how they can implement it in our company? I think a model like this could be very helpful" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 41)
	Barriers	"For me, the first question is to what extent the stakeholders are really interested in the actual product details" and allow themselves to be integrated (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 29) "And here we have to be extremely careful that all the efforts to achieve sustainability don't turn into a corset that restricts and constrains rather than liberates. Values-oriented work cannot be forced" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 44)
		"So, I think fundamentally what could be problematic with stakeholders is how deep you define stakeholders or how broad you define stakeholders. (...) And of course, it's particularly difficult for such a small company to really go very, very, very deep into the value chain. (...) But this is basically a product development problem" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 43)
		"Exactly, I would just try to be careful that you don't annoy them too much with it. So, you have to find a healthy balance somehow" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 43) "And if everybody would come with something like that and say we have to do a values-driven stakeholder checkpoint with you right now, then they would be busy all year just doing checkpoints with us and they wouldn't be able to produce at all" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 43)

After a discussion of potential barriers to the conceptual model, respondents provided their views on perceived improvements to the model.

Here, all the interviewees gave various ideas for improvement, some of which resulted from the challenges identified in the model. Case firm A made it clear that the entire process should be seen as iterative and that, in this sense, one's own values should also be constantly questioned. The CEO

of Bausinger (case firm B) described a so-called value guardian, whose function would be to ensure that the forwarded actions would be guaranteed and to better unify the entire process. The founder of case firm C emphasized that she would focus more on the first part of the model, which identifies values and stakeholders, as this is the foundation for the rest of the process and, if done well, will attract the right partners. In case firm D, the interviewee described an increased focus on the idea generation step in the second phase of the innovation process, where he would work in so-called idea sprints and test several ideas against each other, and then go into prototyping with one or two already confirmed ideas. The founder of runamics (case firm E) described in more detail how he would integrate stakeholders and values: He talked about a code of conduct, a written statement in which all driving and pursued values and goals are written down in order to create a foundation for values-driven behavior. This code of conduct could also be used as a basis for the checkpoints and, in the event of a conflict of values, to actively approach the respective stakeholders so that they are not contacted too often. Finally, he spoke of a firm retreat in which products that are already on the market could be tested for their value conformity at one or two annual meetings and adjusted if necessary.

Table 13: Excerpts from the interviews for the main code of validation of implementation with third associated subcode

Code	Subcode	Quotes
Validation of Conceptual Model	Improvement Ideas	"Values (definition). I think that is also an iterative process" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 55)
		"And that could also be part of it, that you say okay, you are now questioning the values. Yes, I would say that it is very valuable and important for further development to look from the beginning at what the stakeholders want, what they are looking for, what they stand for" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 57)
		"What is important to me is that this development cycle, as I said, is a little better connected through the employees to the customers. The stakeholders, and here I see myself as an entrepreneur, also as a managing director, we have to be the guardians of values (...) There is a need for a guardian of values, I would say, who keeps an eye on this and then brings it into line" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 37)
		"Probably the most attention I would give to the first stage, because that's the most important, where you add all these core values and all the thinking parts. And after that, with the right idea, I think the right people will come" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 71)
		"In idea generation, you tend to work in idea sprints before you go into concept development (...) and test them relatively simple, don't test them with a prototype at all, but simply test them on the basis of initial interviews, initial surveys or simply as stakeholder interviews and then agree on one or two concepts relatively quickly (...) this could also reduce the overall costs a bit and increase the speed in the end because you have to go to the prototypes with fewer ideas" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 45).
		"Then I would explain the issue and I would make this code of conduct available to all potential partners and have them all sign it (...) and I think that way you could reasonably ensure that you have a process that is really dedicated to this previously defined set of values" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 23) "So, and then you would check yourself every year, maybe you do some kind of company retreat where you then commit for two days

	and all active products and projects once against whether this fits what you stand for. And if there are question marks somewhere, then you can start a dialog with the stakeholders" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 37)
--	--

In summary, the values that underpin a firm are increasingly shaped by its founder. Professional stakeholder analysis methods are used less, instead, stakeholders are either found through appropriate value sets or identified in the course of daily business. The proposed three-part innovation process is described by the experts as to some extent similar to their own firms. In practice, the process is less rule-based but is oriented in different strengths to the steps integrated here. The values-based stakeholder checkpoints are considered useful by four of the five respondents. One interviewee did not initially understand the benefit behind them, but it became clear in the course of the interview. Overall, the interviewees were all positive about the conceptual model for stakeholder involvement and described it as a promising way to ensure values-driven action in the innovation process. Challenges were seen mainly in the frequency and nature of stakeholder involvement. Finally, all interviewees added various ideas for improving the framework, such as using a value guardian, developing a specific code of conduct, or focusing on different phases in the model.

5. Discussion

In the following chapter, the adaptation of the validation of the conceptual model is presented. In this course, the most informative empirical results are discussed and compared with theoretical aspects. Business implications of the results are presented, and possible future research areas are addressed. Furthermore, the methodological approach of this scientific work is critically reviewed and reflected upon.

5.1. Validation and Adaptation of the Conceptual Model for Stakeholder Inclusion in Values-Based Innovation Development

Based on the results of the empirical research presented in the previous chapter, the conceptual model presented in this paper can now be adapted.

In the first element, the **firm diagnosis**, all five interviewees described the significant influence of personal values on the firm values and thus the integration of human values into the business approach and the innovation process. Consequently, the actions of the case firms can be categorized with the concept of values-based innovation (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017; Ivanov, 2022). It is their personal values that drive them to make a difference with their business. It is therefore reasonable to assume that important decisions in the business environment and in the management of firms are also made to some extent on the basis of their intrinsic values and beliefs. For example, if "sustainability" is embedded in personal values, then this value will also influence decisions about the selection of materials and processes. This strong commitment to values can make firms more likely to be successful in the long term and to achieve strong customer loyalty. Professional methods were used by two respondents and described as helpful, but due to the limited resources of SMEs, this cannot be included as an integral part of the framework. According to the statements of the interviews, the first point of the model remains unchanged, in order to make it clear to the firms that a step of critical reflection and structuring of the firm values is meaningful and important, and to ensure a structured process in the further course. Here, an internal meeting at the firm level based on the interview responses seems to be a valid method to discuss and clarify the values.

Regarding the second point of the conceptual model, **stakeholder identification**, all firms stated that they do not use professional methods, but that the entire stakeholder engagement process takes place organically in the daily business processes. Based on the statements of the case firms KUZ and runamics, who believe that a common value base is important when selecting and searching for stakeholders, this point is renamed as values-based stakeholder identification. Stakeholders could be identified under consideration of the previously identified corporate values in order to ensure value alignment in advance. On the basis of the statements made in the interviews, only a slight modification was made to the corresponding name of the second step, which can be considered valid. The approach of direct and indirect stakeholder identification based on the model of value-sensitive design (Davis & Nathan, 2014; Friedman & Hendry, 2019) was neither concretely approved nor rejected. This neutral attitude towards the stakeholder identification tool is considered a form of indication of a certain openness and willingness to change among the stakeholders, which might not be present if the tool were clearly rejected. Therefore, for the time being, the tool will remain in the conceptual model with the distinction between direct and indirect stakeholders.

The idea of **checkpoints** was described as useful and helpful by all respondents. As one interviewee did not find the concrete use and intention clear at the beginning, the checkpoints will now be explained in an appropriate way and any ambiguities will be removed (see Figure 6). After the stakeholder identification, the first checkpoint, the **upstream values-based stakeholder inclusion checkpoint**, takes place for the first active integration of the stakeholders. This is the first time that stakeholders are actively involved in the process after they have been identified. This early and ongoing stakeholder engagement can minimize risks and missteps for SMEs in the further course through critical insight and feedback. The values of the stakeholders and those of the firm are considered and are compared and reconciled. If value conflicts are more pronounced or difficult to resolve, it is possible to repeat the first two steps (firm diagnosis and values-based stakeholder identification) to ensure better value alignment in the second run. When values are aligned, a shared values agreement is developed to clearly define all the values to be pursued in the process. The aim is to ensure stable, values-based cooperation and to avoid values conflicts as far as possible. This adaptation results from a statement that emerged in the interviews during the empirical research (see Table 11). In this way, the values-based approach and stakeholder integration can be better structured in the next checkpoints and ensure a more efficient way of working. Since this change enhances the ability to improve the overall process, it is considered valid.

As the innovation process progresses, **checkpoints** are established after each phase to review interim results. Here, the previously developed common values agreement is used to check in a professional and structured way whether the results of the previous innovation phases fulfill all important values. This task can either be performed by a dedicated team within the firm or, ideally, by the founder or CEO of the firm. The person in charge of this task thus assumes the role of a "value guardian" who ensures that the values of all impacted parties are adhered to throughout the process. This change is also the result of empirical research and simplifies the process for SMEs, allowing decisions to be made more quickly as not all the different stakeholders are actively involved at every checkpoint. This change in the integration of various stakeholders is likely to make the process easier for SMEs to implement in terms of scarce human and financial resources, which would be higher if all stakeholders were actively involved in each checkpoint. This was described as problematic by some interviewees, who also pointed to the limited time available to each stakeholder and the concern that checkpoints could be perceived as intrusive by stakeholders due to their frequency in the process (see Table 10). The value guardian only actively engages stakeholders if the intermediate result conflicts with their values. Thus, this amendment seeks to provide an adequate solution to the challenge identified by empirical research. If the interim result is consistent with all values, the next phase can be implemented. If it does not meet all values, a decision must be made whether to return to the previous innovation phase or whether the value conflict is so deep that the firm and stakeholder values need to be reconsidered and the first two steps of the conceptual model (firm diagnosis and values-based stakeholder identification) need to be repeated. In addition, the checkpoints can be used to integrate feedback paths into the innovation process that contribute to higher product quality and efficiency. The result will be innovative solutions that are in line with the values of all stakeholders.

Respondents did not fully agree on which **stakeholders** should be involved when, whether all should be involved equally or to different degrees, and thus the empirical results were not consistent. On the basis of these responses (see Table 9), careful consideration has been given to the extent to which a solution can be found that appears acceptable on the basis of the empirical results. Accordingly, the conceptual model now integrates the involvement of all stakeholders, with a focus on those

stakeholders that appear to be particularly important in the respective steps. This means that the values of all identified groups are taken into account in all checkpoints, but in the first checkpoint, after the upstream innovation process, the focus is on all stakeholders who are directly involved in the development and production process (such as the group of employees, internal firm values, and business partners). In the second checkpoint, on the other hand, the focus is on the stakeholder group of customers, so that their pursued values are placed at the center of the checkpoint after the second phase of the innovation process. At the third checkpoint after the market launch, a holistic focus on all of the values is again applied.

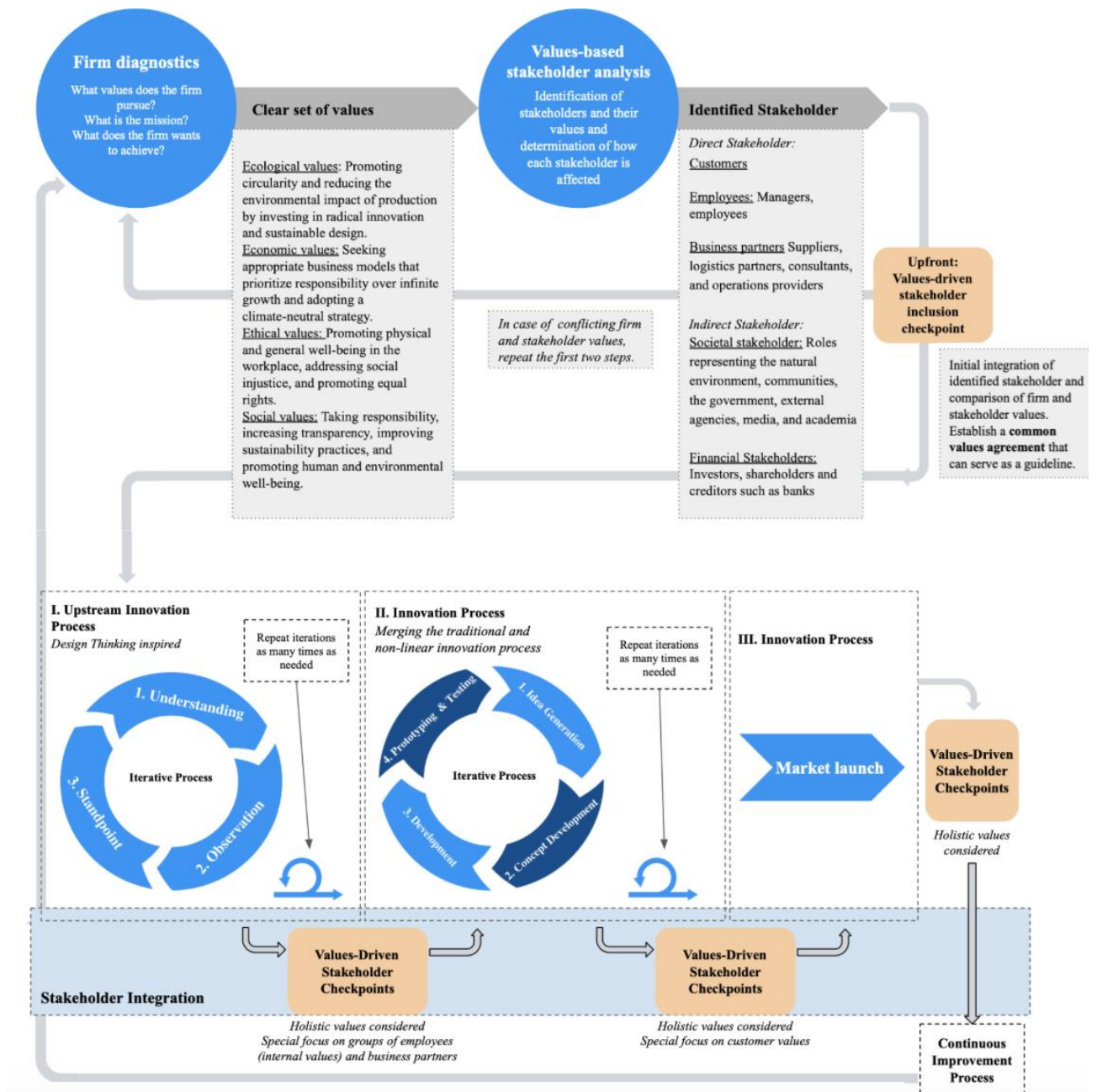
To conclude, the empirical results demonstrate the legitimacy of the purpose of integrated values-based stakeholder checkpoints to ensure values-based innovation and stakeholder engagement in the context of strategy implementation.

The innovation process proposed here consists of three phases. The first phase, the **upstream innovation process**, which is based on the first steps of the design thinking approach, was considered useful by four of the five respondents (see Table 7), as they would follow a similar start in their internal innovation process. Actions for general understanding and observation of the market were explained, and the interviewees' statements correlated with the steps proposed in the conceptual model. Thus, the upstream innovation process proves to be a legitimate phase and remains a component. **The second part of the innovation process**, the convergence of linear and non-linear innovation flows, and the steps of the traditional innovation process were described to some extent by all respondents in the semi-structured interviews. Although it was reported that no methodological models were consciously followed, this could indicate that the traditional approach described was learned informally in the past, as all respondents claimed to know theoretical models, and is now used unconsciously in practice without consciously following a methodological approach. This is also illustrated by the statements of case firms A, B, and D, which emphasized that a process in practice does not exactly follow the steps proposed in theory and was not method-guided. The iterative flow of the innovation process was also considered valid by all interviewees. They described iteration as a natural part of the process. This suggests that the strategic implementation framework should maintain an iterative flow structure of the innovation phases and that the iterative nature of the innovation process is recognized as a legitimate part. Based on the responses of respondents who agree with the approach proposed here (see Table 7), the proposed steps of the traditional innovation process are useful as a guide rather than a strict sequence and are legitimized in the conceptual model and will continue to be part of the framework in this way. The separate fifth step of market launch is also kept separate because the values-driven checkpoint at this point, between prototype and market launch, was considered to be very useful (see Table 8). In summary, after empirical validation, this part remains as it was theoretically derived.

For the overall **validation and evaluation** of the model, empirical case study research was conducted to verify whether the developed conceptual framework is effective as a suitable solution by integrating the values-based innovation approach with stakeholder involvement in the fashion industry. All respondents, including five of the five firm representatives, found the conceptual model to be a useful and helpful way to achieve values-based innovation that also focuses on stakeholder values. It was described as "very valuable" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 75) and "very well received by companies" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 41) (see Table 10). The identified challenge of the conceptual model of too much active stakeholder involvement (see Table 10), was improved with the help of the industry experts' suggestions for improvement to enable effective application. To this end, the

creation of a common values agreement and the role of the values guardian were integrated in order not to actively require all stakeholders at every checkpoint, as explained in more detail in the previous paragraphs. In addition, a specific focus on certain stakeholder values was sometimes added at the respective checkpoints (at the first checkpoint the focus on employees and business partners, and at the second checkpoint the specific focus on customer values) in order to consider all values of all stakeholders, but in case of doubt to know which needs are considered more important at the respective stage.

In summary, the empirical data collected supports the theoretical assumptions that were used to develop the model. The conceptual model has been further developed based on the information collected in the empirical research. This includes the adaptation of the upfront values-driven stakeholder checkpoint and the creation of the common values agreement, as well as the further concretization of the other values-driven stakeholder checkpoints, which now run through a precise grid to ensure values-based innovation and stakeholder involvement. In addition, the role of the value guardian was integrated so that all stakeholders do not need to be actively involved at every checkpoint, but only in the event of a value conflict. By doing so, identified barriers such as over-integrating stakeholders could be minimized. This should lead to an improvement in terms of its applicability and performance. Through the case study conducted within the fashion industry, the refined conceptual model appears to be a valid framework for strategically incorporating the values-based innovation approach as well as the stakeholders. Thus, a sustainable improvement of the current problems (overproduction, lack of resource efficiency, environmental pollution, or poor working conditions) of the fashion industry can be achieved. The advanced conceptual model is presented below:



Checkpoint Application Details:

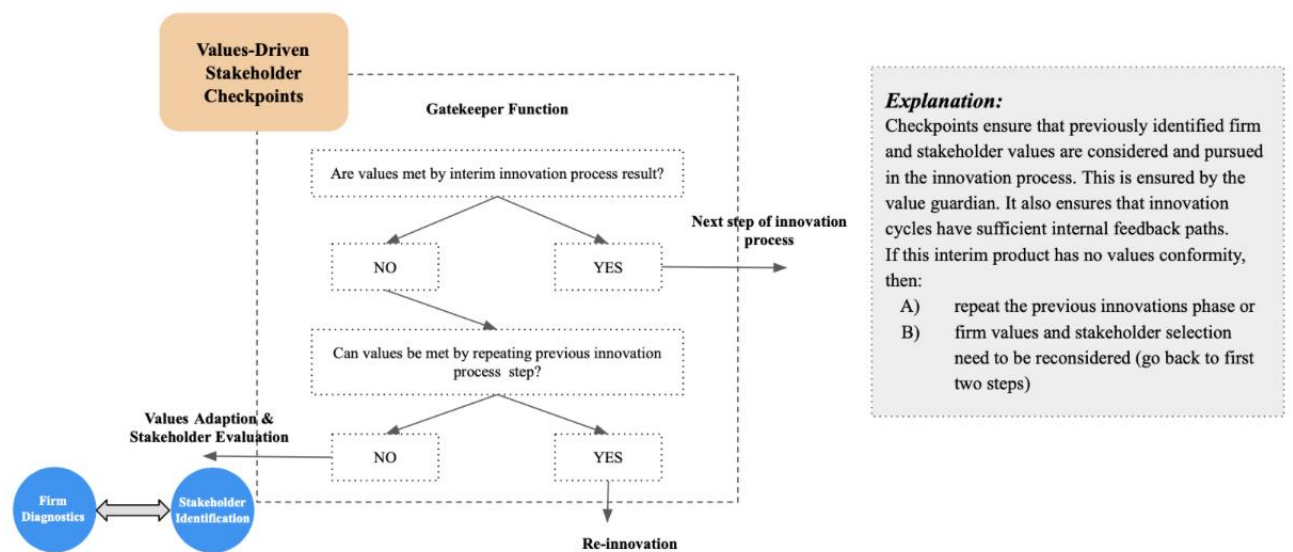


Figure 7: Empirically validated conceptual model for engaging stakeholders in creating values-based innovation

5.2. Theoretical Implications

This scientific work contributes to several open research perspectives as it discusses the concept of values-based innovation approach together with stakeholder involvement within a targeted implementation supported by a strategic framework within SMEs.

First, the case studies show that values influence the specific characteristics of the innovation as a product (or service) and the entire process of creating these products. Thus, the question of the specific impact of values on innovation processes, products, and services can be answered partly on the basis of the collected empirical data (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund, 2017). Based on the data collected through interviews within the case study, it was found that values play a strong formative role and thus influence the manufacturing processes as well as the end products or services. Since values are seen as fundamental beliefs (Frey, 2015; Schwartz, 2012), the subsequent process, which should lead to an appropriate end product, is designed accordingly. Specific processes are selected that are consistent with the firm's values to produce a final result whose characteristics are in line with the values. In this way, values were found to play a formative, guiding, and influencing role for processes, products, and services in the context of innovation.

Furthermore, the developed conceptual model contributes to implementing a methodically guided and structured approach for integrating the values-based innovation approach, including stakeholder involvement. Thus, the problem of the lack of methods and recommendations for the inclusion of values and stakeholders including their pursued values (Breuer et al., 2021, 2022) is directly addressed on the organizational level with the framework developed here to ensure a strategic integration of values into innovation processes. Through empirical research, the model has been tested for meaningfulness and deemed appropriate by fashion industry practitioners to enable a more structured integration of values. Thus, it can be assumed that a gap in the literature has been filled and that research on the VBI approach has been extended, as no concrete methods and suggestions for structured integration were available until now.

In summary, this research has confirmed that values are an essential part of innovation-related tasks in organizations. In addition, empirical data confirm that values, if properly managed, can be a kind of lever for innovation in SMEs (Breuer et al., 2022). The conceptual model designed also illustrates that already existing methods of management science, such as the design think approach (Brown, 2008; Hasso-Plattner-Institut, 2023) or value-sensitive design (Davis & Nathan, 2014; Friedman et al., 2013), can be used to ensure the application of the specific aspects of VBI. More specifically, VSD helps to identify stakeholders without ignoring their social, ethical and environmental values but also to take them into account from the very beginning and thus to make decisions based on values. Design thinking can help to develop a deeper understanding of a firm's starting point at the beginning of the innovation process and thus make the values of different stakeholders more visible. In this way, it can be helpful in the values-based development of products and services. Both approaches thus help to implement the VBI approach, but they should be considered in the context of the developed and comprehensive VBI framework. Integrating different approaches can achieve a holistic and effective approach to values-based innovation and consideration of stakeholder interests.

In addition, the empirical data collected here illustrate that values do not have to be defined once, but must be reviewed, questioned, and elaborated on again and again, so that an appropriate set of values is always available and can drive innovation (see Seiler et al., 2022). The developed values-driven

stakeholder checkpoints support exactly this purpose and thus represent a practical application of previously assumed theories. In addition, the great influence of the founders on the values of the firm was identified, who can shape the entire dedication of the firm with their personal commitment, which shows certain parallels to the research results of Hansen et al. (2022). Parallels exist in identifying the link between personal-level values and corporate-level sustainability exploration and diversification. This result also aims, in a way, to answer the research gap in the literature identified by Ivanov (2022), which is to analyze how corporate decision-makers prioritize values in decision-making situations and how this influences the business model. Although no specific approach to business models was followed, empirical data showed that the SME decision makers in this study showed a high degree of congruence between personal and corporate values, which implies that they also make decisions in everyday business life increasingly guided by their personal value system. The overall business model of each firm was also significantly shaped by these human and personal values. Thus, the prioritization of people's values at the executive level could be based on their personal beliefs.

Overall, this research extends the current state of research and contributes to the confirmation of previously assumed findings (Breuer et al., 2021, 2022; Hansen et al., 2022; Ivanov, 2022; Seiler et al., 2022) through empirical research by systematically testing a conceptual model developed from existing theory through a multi-case study in the chosen fashion industry. Furthermore, the research enables a methodological and practical application of the VBI approach by developing a conceptual model for values-based innovation development. In addition, this study gives insightful theoretical knowledge that can be utilized to suggest future study directions.

5.3. Managerial Implications

In addition to the theoretical contribution, this scientific study also provides concrete management implications for firms. These are ideally applicable to the fashion industry due to the focus of research on the fashion business, but other industries can also benefit from the conceptual model designed here, as a specialization on fashion was not considered necessary in the framework. Thus, the research shows that an application for SMEs was considered useful and promising.

SME practitioners can use the extracted list of values (ecological, economic, ethical, and social) and the list of direct (customers, employees, and business partners) and indirect stakeholders (societal and financial stakeholders) that are attached to the first two steps of the conceptual model. This can bring more clarity and structure to the innovation process. It can also help to identify contradictions and conflicts, improve overall stakeholder management, and make decisions based on values and interests.

After developing a concrete tool for practitioners through this scientific work, the use of this conceptual model for stakeholder involvement in values-based innovation development is recommended. This ensures a rule-based and structured approach in SMEs, which can generate several benefits. In addition, the conceptual model helps to motivate SME practitioners (Ceicyte-Pranskune, 2022; Gonzales-Gemio et al., 2020; Hammann et al., 2009) to actively engage with the VBI approach and stakeholder integration and thus to achieve various benefits and generate added value for their own firm as well as for society and the environment. On the one hand, the framework helps to integrate orientation and structure into the innovation processes of SMEs and thus to make

decisions more systematically and consciously than before. On the other hand, it actively involves both direct and indirect stakeholders, making it easier to overcome various barriers, that may arise in the process for SMEs, through collaboration with stakeholders. In addition, collaboration with external partners and stakeholders can be improved and deepened by innovating in a common direction based on a shared set of values. Thus, the strategic framework provides a new direction for SMEs to actively integrate the VBI approach into their corporate strategy and, through a more structured approach, minimize financial risks and act in a more sustainable and responsible manner.

On the one hand, decisions within the innovation process can lead to faster and more efficient decisions due to a clear tracking of firm and stakeholder values based on the developed common value agreement. In addition, all employees in the firm consciously follow the agreed values, thus avoiding conflicts and coordination problems to a greater extent. This can be an advantage for clear planning and for increasing productivity and effectiveness. The role of the value guardian also makes it clear who can provide redress in case of questions and can lead to more transparent communication. If this role is not performed by the CEO or founder, it can serve as a link between the management level and the rest of the workforce. However, special attention from the founder, CEO, or the management level in general is still important, as they usually shape the corporate values that are being pursued.

Through a successful application of the VBI using the conceptual model, a firm can also achieve a higher customer centricity by actively integrating customer needs and values into its innovation strategies. Due to the current value shift of target groups in the fashion industry towards ecological, social, and ethical values, the VBI approach is an ideal application for firms to actively maintain competitiveness and successfully position the firm for the future.

In addition to these implications, the relevance of stakeholder involvement should also be mentioned. Through the rule-based approach provided by the integration of the conceptual model, a firm can also enhance its external reputation and thus appear more reliable to external stakeholders. This can facilitate new and valuable collaborations with stakeholders.

5.4. Limitations and Further Research Avenues

In the following, possible limitations of the results are discussed and further research directions are suggested.

More cases would have increased the validity of the results and would have led to a stronger generalizability of the results. Overall, the study could have achieved a more comprehensive and meaningful result by using a larger number of case firms. However, five cases studied in this research can be considered a multiple case study and meet the necessary requirements (Yin, 2018). In addition, the use of triangulation of primary and secondary data was used here in an attempt to minimize the limitations just mentioned. It is also worth mentioning here that it is quite a challenge for SMEs to take the time for different research projects due to limited time and human resources. As already mentioned in Chapter 3, Research Methodology and Design, 27 firms were contacted and several contact persons of them were reached out to. Despite the large number of firms contacted, only a relatively small number of interviews could be conducted. In this context, there are difficulties on the part of the SMEs.

Social desirability bias, the distortion of answers due to social desirability, may play a role in the interviews used to collect the primary data. The behavior of the interviewer can also contribute to this. Interviewees can be influenced, which can lead to altered, different answers. Thus, the so-called implementation objectivity could not be guaranteed. Furthermore, the results of the qualitative content analysis were not subjected to a reliability test. The coding was done by one person only. Therefore, it is not possible to compare the results with those of another person in order to check how much the results of the study would deviate in case of replications.

Nevertheless, the methodological elements applied contribute to the current state of scientific knowledge. The limitations mentioned here testify to scientific integrity and can be seen as a kind of chance to open up new fields of research in order to gather further valuable knowledge.

As the VBI approach is a newer and emerging field of research, a longitudinal case study tracking the application of the conceptual model developed here within firms could be valuable. In this way, observations could be used to identify barriers to active application. This could confirm the practical applicability of the conceptual model and increase its acceptance by new users. In addition, concrete improvement possibilities for the identified barriers can be found, which further strengthens the efficiency of the whole. For a more thorough analysis of the practical applicability, a holistic system approach can help to consider the overall impact of the strategic framework on the firm and its environment. This could help to identify further opportunities for improvement, but also to gain a broader perspective on the whole issue of values-based innovation and stakeholder engagement, and to identify possible areas of application outside the original focus.

Conclusions

- 1. Stakeholder inclusion in values-based innovation development is still in the nascent stages. Although the fashion industry is under pressure to change due to current issues such as outdated business models, overproduction, environmental damage, the importance of safe workplaces along the supply chain, and changing customer values. Especially for SMEs in the fashion industry, strategic adaptation to new practices is not trivial due to lack of funding and limited human resources, and especially due to lack of implementation guides in a competitive industry such as fashion. Because of these constraints, SMEs need clear processes and guidance on how to meet the new values without running into resource conflicts.**

The European fashion industry is undergoing a period of change, already slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic and further affected by the aftermath of the war in Ukraine, with insecure supply chains, higher energy and transportation costs, and price increases. But even without these crises, the fashion industry would have reached its limits. Drastically changing customer values are forcing firms to address issues such as unfair labor practices, overproduction, and environmental damage. Values-Based Innovation is a promising approach to improving the industry. Through the VBI approach, new products and services are developed with a focus on environmental, social, and ethical values, and innovations are created that have a positive social impact. This can be further consolidated through the involvement of different stakeholders and achieve a broader societal benefit. This is because the approach is closely related to stakeholder engagement, as VBI refers to the creation of innovations based on the values and needs of the stakeholders concerned. Ensuring that these values and needs are incorporated into the innovation process requires extensive stakeholder involvement throughout the process. Despite these promising features, the approach is still little used. This may be partly due to the novelty of the management approach and the lack of concrete practices for practical implementation. Further research is needed to specify the VBI approach more precisely and to make the practices that are already available easier to apply. In order to bring the VBI approach closer to SMEs in the fashion industry, there is also a lack of guidance on how exactly to implement it in practice. Since SMEs also have limited financial and human resources, this is another barrier that prevents SMEs from integrating new concepts. It is important to explore the current integration of values and stakeholders in innovation management in order to gain insights that can help in the development of an integration guideline. A conceptual model can thus be adapted to the specific context and achieve a higher probability of success.

- 2. A conceptual model for stakeholder inclusion in VBI development of fashion SMEs was proposed, which consists of several elements, starting with a firm diagnostic to develop a clear set of values, followed by stakeholder identification (indirect and direct). This is followed by the first values-driven stakeholder inclusion checkpoint to ensure the active inclusion of firm and stakeholder values into the process. This is followed by the actual innovation process. It consists of the upstream innovation process, inspired by the design thinking approach, and the second part, a fusion of traditional and non-linear innovation processes, followed by the third phase, the market launch. After each of the phases described above, a values-based**

stakeholder checkpoint takes place to ensure values-driven innovation based on firm and stakeholder values. The end result transition into a continuous improvement process.

In this scientific work, values-based innovation is seen as an approach that uses the power of values as a heuristic for innovation and corporate management. This means that the firm's values, as well as the desired values of stakeholders, are integrated into the mission and vision in order to manage innovation appropriately while achieving social, ethical, sustainable, and economic goals, as well as corporate renewal. Thus, the VBI approach goes beyond economic norms and guidelines. It also differs from other similar innovation approaches (RI and SOI) in the literature in terms of guidelines, motivations, and aspirations. The active pursuit and integration of the four core values identified in the VBI approach (environmental, economic, ethical, and social values) provides the fashion industry with an opportunity for much-needed change. Due to the lack of concrete implementation frameworks, related economic approaches were validated through an extensive literature review to address the needs of SMEs and the VBI approach for possible integration into a framework. This resulted in a conceptual model based on different economic elements. The first step is a firm diagnosis, which involves reflection within the firm and a structured presentation of the values pursued. A precise identification of the relevant stakeholders takes place. For this purpose, an instrument from the theoretically founded value-sensitive design framework is incorporated and tailored to the described approach. This is followed by the first values-based stakeholder inclusion checkpoint, where the previously selected stakeholders are actively involved and their values are compared with those of the firm. Then the innovation process begins, which consists of three phases: The first phase, inspired by the design thinking approach, aims to elaborate on the initial situation. This is followed by the second phase, in which the traditional steps of the innovation process are carried out in repeated cycles, if necessary, using a synthesis of linear and non-linear innovation processes, with influences from cyclical innovation. The market launch is the third phase. After each of these three phases, the interim result must pass values-driven stakeholder checkpoints. These act as a kind of feedback loop and ensure that all the key values of the firm and the relevant stakeholders are consistently upheld throughout the process. Even after launch, a values-driven stakeholder checkpoint is conducted to ensure the opportunity for continuous improvement and to continue to assess the market's adherence to the values. With this theory-based conceptual model, fashion SMEs can follow a strategic & values-driven innovation process with clear guidelines and checkpoints to ensure that values-driven development continues. In addition, stakeholder integration can lead to long-term relationships with stakeholders and make it easier to obtain certain resources and financial support, as well as give organizations a competitive edge.

3. A qualitative (explorative) approach that uses a combination of semi-structured expert interviews and multi-case study analysis was adopted to analyze stakeholder inclusion in values-based innovation development in fashion SMEs. The elements of the conceptual model developed on the basis of the elaborated theory (firm values, stakeholder identification, innovation process, and values-driven stakeholder checkpoints) serve as research indicators.

A qualitative, exploratory research design was applied to generate new knowledge and insights about the emerging research field of values-based innovation. This was based on the examination of a multiple-case study analysis using semi-structured expert interviews for gaining primary data and the interpretation of secondary data collected through desk research. For the semi-structured interviews, an interview guide was developed based on previously identified research indicators in order to proceed systematically and purposefully, but without limiting the interview. The case firms were selected through a purposive sampling process to identify suitable firms with characteristics relevant to the research. In total, five interviews were conducted. These were recorded, transcribed, and finally analyzed to gain an understanding of the interviewees' testimonies and insights into the development of the research status. Ethical and qualitative research standards such as procedural rigor, validity, a degree of clarification and justification, and transferability were met and observed.

- 4. Empirical research allowed to validate the proposed conceptual model for stakeholder inclusion in VBI development of fashion SMEs. Among the strengths of the proposed conceptual model, the values-based stakeholder checkpoints were considered as crucial in VBI development. A few elements were added to the model based on empirical results, such as adopting a value guardian, developing a specific code of conduct, and focusing on different phases in the model. In addition, it was found that the values that underpin a firm are increasingly shaped by its founder. Professional stakeholder analysis methods are used less, instead, stakeholders are either found through appropriate value sets or identified in the course of daily business.**

The conceptual model could be validated and enhanced based on the comparative analysis of the empirical research data. The empirical data collected showed that the theoretical assumptions used in the initial development of the framework had a legitimate basis. Interviewees described the framework as a valuable tool for methodologically guided and deliberate engagement of values and affected stakeholders. Through the model, a kind of orientation for firms can be given, which clarifies the importance of steps that previously took place rather unconsciously. Thus, especially the first two steps were considered relevant and found their legitimacy within the considered research context. The proposed three-part innovation process itself found agreement with the statements of the interviewees in terms of process steps, the meaningfulness of the division into three phases, and the iterative nature. Consequently, it will continue to be a component of the framework. The values-based stakeholder checkpoints were presented as a significant component of the overall framework. Through the empirical analysis, the checkpoints could be defined more precisely as well as in more detail, which contributed to an improvement of the overall original conception. The stakeholder inclusion is now actively required only in the first integration checkpoint and is ensured in the following ones by the values guardian and the common values agreement. This strategy is also more time and labor-efficient, making it better suited to the resources of SMEs. In case of a values conflict, respective stakeholders are actively involved.

By further developing the strategic integration framework based on empirical information, the framework could be improved in its applicability and performance. Through the case study conducted in the fashion industry, the refined conceptual model appears to be a valid framework for the strategic engagement of the values-based innovation approach as well as stakeholders. In

this way, the problem of the fashion industry in terms of social and ethical injustices, as well as environmental pollution or wasteful use of resources, as presented at the beginning, can be strategically addressed with the help of the values-based innovation approach.

List of References

1. Abbott, G. N., White, F. A., & Charles, M. A. (2005). Linking values and organizational commitment: A correlational and experimental investigation in two organizations. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 78(4), 531–551. <https://doi.org/10.1348/096317905X26174>
2. Adams, R., Jeanrenaud, S., Bessant, J., Denyer, D., & Overy, P. (2016). Sustainability-oriented Innovation: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 18(2), 180–205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12068>
3. Al-Debei, M. M., & Avison, D. (2010). Developing a unified framework of the business model concept. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 19(3), 359–376. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejis.2010.21>
4. Allianz Research. (2020). *Bruised But Not Beaten , Europe ' S Textile Industry Is a Perfect Candidate for a Greener and Digital Recovery*. July. https://www.eulerhermes.com/en_global/news-insights/economic-insights/Bruised-but-not-beaten-Europe-s-textile-industry-is-a-perfect-candidate-for-a-greener-and-digital-recovery.html
5. AlQershi, N., Abas, Z., & Mohd Mokhtar, S. S. (2018). Strategic Innovationas Driver for Sme Performance in Yemen. *Journal of Technology and Operations Management*, 13(Number 1), 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.32890/jtom2018.13.1.4>
6. Andersen, K. R. (2017). *Stabilizing Sustainability In the Textile and Fashion Industry*.
7. Anderson, N., Potočnik, K., & Zhou, J. (2014). Innovation and Creativity in Organizations: A State-of-the-Science Review, Prospective Commentary, and Guiding Framework. *Journal of Management*, 40(5), 1297–1333. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206314527128>
8. Auer, A., & Jarmai, K. (2018). Implementing responsible research and innovation practices in SMEs: Insights into drivers and barriers from the Austrian medical device sector. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 10(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10010017>
9. Bausinger. (2022a). *Engagement - unser Beitrag für eine nachhaltige Welt*.
10. Bausinger. (2022b). *Wieder GOTS zertifiziert*.
11. Bausinger. (2023). *Transparenz statt Zertifikate*. <https://www.bausinger.de/Transparenz-statt-Zertifikate>
12. Berg, A. (2022). *How current global trends are disrupting the fashion industry*. McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/how-current-global-trends-are-disrupting-the-fashion-industry>
13. Berkhout, G., Hartmann, D., & Trott, P. (2010). Connecting technological capabilities with market needs using a cyclic innovation model. *R and D Management*, 40(5), 474–490. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9310.2010.00618.x>
14. Bianchi, F., Dupreelle, P., Krueger, F., Seara, J., Watten, D., & Willersdorf, S. (2020). *Fashion's Big Reset*. <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/fashion-industry-reset-covid>
15. Bleicher, K. (2017). *Das Konzept Integriertes Management Visionen - Missionen - Programme* (9th editio). Campus.
16. Block, J., Boeing, N., Briegleb, T., Dettling, Dr. D., Gatterer, H., Horx, M., Horx, T., Kibala, Dr. J., Pfuderer, N., Reichel, Prof. Dr. A., Schuldt, C., Tewes, Prof. Dr. S., & Wolf, M. (2022). *Zukunftsreport 2023*. Matthias Horx.

17. Bogner, A., Littig, B., & Menz, W. (2014). Interviews mit Experten Eine praxisorientierte Einführung. In *Soziologische Revue* (Vol. 29, Issue 3). Springer VS. <https://doi.org/10.1524/srsr.2006.29.3.291>
18. Breuer, H., Fichter, K., Lüdeke-Freund, F., & Tiemann, I. (2018). Sustainability-oriented business model development: Principles, criteria and tools. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing*, 10(2), 256–286. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJEV.2018.092715>
19. Breuer, H., Ivanov, K., Abril, C., & Kasz, J. (2021). *Building values-based innovation cultures for sustainable business impact* (Issue June).
20. Breuer, H., & Lüdeke-Freund, F. (2014). Normative Innovation for Sustainable Business Models in Value Networks. *The Proceedings of XXV ISPIM Conference-Innovation for Sustainable Economy and Society*, June, 17.
21. Breuer, H., & Lüdeke-Freund, F. (2017). Values-Based Innovation Framework – Innovating by What We Care About. *XXVI ISPIM Conference – Shaping the Frontiers of Innovation Management*, June.
22. Breuer, H., & Lüdeke-Freund, F. (2019). Values-Based Stakeholder Management: Concepts and Methods. In *Rethinking Strategic Management Sustainable Strategizing for Positive Impact* (Issue September, pp. 215–240).
23. Breuer, H., & Lüdeke-Freund, F. (2021). *Special interest group on values-based innovation. Recent developments & future challenges*. ISPIM Innovation Conference Berlin. https://www.uxberlin.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2021_ISPIM_Values_Based_Innovation_SIG.pdf
24. Breuer, H., Lüdeke-Freund, F., & Bessant, J. (2022). Editorial - Special Issue: Managing Values for Innovation. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 26(5), 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919622010010>
25. Brown, T. (2008). Design Thinking. *Harvard Business Review*, 86(6), 84–92.
26. Buchel, S., Hebinck, A., Lavanga, M., & Loorbach, D. (2022). Disrupting the status quo: a sustainability transitions analysis of the fashion system. *Sustainability: Science, Practice, and Policy*, 18(1), 231–246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2022.2040231>
27. Buono, A. F., & Kerber, K. W. (2009). Creating a Sustainable Approach to Change: Building Organizational Change Capacity. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 75(2), 4. http://www.iff.ac.at/oe/full_papers/Buono_Antony_F._Kerber_Kenneth_W.pdf
28. Burget, M., Bardone, E., & Pedaste, M. (2016). Definitions and Conceptual Dimensions of Responsible Research and Innovation: A Literature Review. *Science and Engineering Ethics*, 23(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-016-9782-1>
29. Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
30. Castka, P., Balzarova, M. A., Bamber, C. J., & Sharp, J. M. (2004). How can SMEs effectively implement the CSR agenda? A UK case study perspective. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 11(3), 140–149.
31. Casula, M., Rangarajan, N., & Shields, P. (2021). The potential of working hypotheses for deductive exploratory research. *Quality and Quantity*, 55(5), 1703–1725. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-020-01072-9>
32. Ceicyte-Pranskune, J. (2022). Enabling Values-based Strategic Innovation via Stakeholder Involvement in SMEs. *Proc. XXXIII ISPIM Conf*, June.

- <https://search.proquest.com/openview/398209f12e77ba0d3816448a61226df9/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=1796422>
33. Charter, M., & Clark, T. (2007). *Sustainable Innovation: Key conclusions from Sustainable Innovation Conferences 2003-2006 organized by The Centre for Sustainable Design*. May, 48.
 34. Choi, N., & Majumdar, S. (2014). Social Innovation: Towards a Conceptualisation. In *Technology and Innovation for Social Change* (pp. 7–34). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-81-322-2071-8>
 35. Christensen, C. M. (2008). *The innovator's dilemma: when new technologies cause great firms to fail* (Rev., upda). Harvard Business School Press.
 36. Control Union. (2023). *GRS - Global Recycle Standard*. <https://certifications.controlunion.com/en/certification-programs/certification-programs/grs-global-recycle-standard>
 37. Davies, I. A., & Gutsche, S. (2016). Consumer motivations for mainstream “ethical” consumption. In *European Journal of Marketing* (Vol. 50, Issues 7–8). <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-11-2015-0795>
 38. Davis, J., & Nathan, L. P. (2014). Value Sensitive Design: Applications, Adaptations, and Critiques. In *Handbook of Ethics, Values, and Technological Design*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-6994-6>
 39. Disselkamp, M. (2012). *Innovationsmanagement Instrumente und Methoden zur Umsetzung in Unternehmen* (2nd ed.). Springer. <https://www.ptonline.com/articles/how-to-get-better-mfi-results>
 40. Dmytriiev, S. D., Freeman, R. E., & Hörisch, J. (2021). The Relationship between Stakeholder Theory and Corporate Social Responsibility: Differences, Similarities, and Implications for Social Issues in Management. *Journal of Management Studies*, 58(6), 1441–1470. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12684>
 41. Earley, R; Goldsworthy, K. (2015). Designing for Fast and Slow Circular Fashion Systems : Exploring Strategies for Multiple and Extended Product Cycles. *Product Lifetimes And The Environment*, 2(June), 1–7.
 42. Earney, C., & Krishnan, A. (2019). The Art of Values-Based Innovation for Humanitarian Action. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 1–7. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_art_of_values_based_innovation_for_humanitarian_action#
 43. Edmondson, A. C., & Mcmanus, S. E. (2007). Methodological fit in management field research. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4), 1155–1179. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2007.26586086>
 44. European Commission. (2023a). *EU strategy for sustainable textiles*. https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12822-EU-Strategie-fur-nachhaltige-Textilien_de
 45. European Commission. (2023b). *Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, SME definition*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/structural-business-statistics/information-on-data/small-and-medium-sized-enterprises>
 46. Fashion Revolution. (2021). *Out of Sight: A call for transparency from field to fabric*.
 47. Feather, N. T. (1996). Values, deservingness, and attitudes toward high achievers: Research on tall poppies. In C. Seligman, J. M. Olson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *The*

- psychology of values: The Ontario symposium* (1st Editio, pp. 215–251). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
48. Flick, U. (2011). *Triangulation - Eine Einführung* (3rd ed.). VS Verlag.
 49. Flick, U., von Kardorff, E., & Steinke, I. (2004). *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications, Inc.
 50. Forest Stewardship Council. (2023). *About FSC*. <https://fsc.org/en>
 51. Franceschini, S., Faria, L. G. D., & Jurowetzki, R. (2016). Unveiling scientific communities about sustainability and innovation. A bibliometric journey around sustainable terms. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 127, 72–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.03.142>
 52. Freeman, R. E. (2011). Managing for Stakeholders: Trade-Offs or Value Creation. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1182862>
 53. Freudenreich, B., Lüdeke-Freund, F., & Schaltegger, S. (2020). A Stakeholder Theory Perspective on Business Models: Value Creation for Sustainability. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 166(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04112-z>
 54. Frey, D. (2015). *Psychologie der Werte Von Achtsamkeit bis Zivilcourage - Basiswissen aus Psychologie und Philosophie*. Springer.
 55. Friedman, B., & Hendry, D. G. (2019). Value Sensitive Design: Shaping Technology with Moral Imagination. In *Nucl. Phys.* (Vol. 13, Issue 1). The MIT Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/7585.001.0001>
 56. Friedman, B., Hendry, D. G., & Borning, A. (2017). A survey of value sensitive design methods. *Foundations and Trends in Human-Computer Interaction*, 11(23), 63–125. <https://doi.org/10.1561/1100000015>
 57. Friedman, B., Kahn, P. H., Borning, A., & Hultdtgren, A. (2013). Value Sensitive Design and Information Systems. In *Early engagement and new technologies: Opening up the laboratory* (pp. 55–95). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315703619-27>
 58. Friedman, B., Kahn, P. H., Hagman, J., Severson, R. L., & Gill, B. (2006). The watcher and the watched: Social judgments about privacy in a public place. *Human-Computer Interaction*, 21(2), 235–272. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327051hci2102_3
 59. Garriga, E. (2014). Beyond Stakeholder Utility Function: Stakeholder Capability in the Value Creation Process. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 120(4), 489–507. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-2001-y>
 60. Gassmann, O., & Sutter, P. (2013). *Praxiswissen Innovationsmanagement: Von der Idee zum Markterfolg* (3th ed.). Carl Hanser Verlag GmbH & Co. KG.
 61. Gemeinwohl Ökonomie. (2023). *Neue Werte für die Wirtschaft*. <https://germany.ecogood.org>
 62. Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1998). *Grounded Theory: Strategien qualitativer Forschung*. Hans Huber.
 63. Gläser, J., & Laudel, G. (2010). *Experteninterviews und qualitative Inhaltsanalyse* (4th ed.). VS Verlag.
 64. Global Organic Textile Standard. (2023). *Der Standard*. <https://global-standard.org/de/der-standard>
 65. Globocnik, D., Rauter, R., & Baumgartner, R. J. (2020). Synergy or conflict? The relationships among organisational culture, sustainability-related innovation performance, and economic innovation performance. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 24(1). <https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919620500048>

66. Gonzales-Gemio, C., Cruz-Cázares, C., & Parmentier, M. J. (2020). Responsible innovation in SMEs: A systematic literature review for a conceptual model. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 12(24), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su122410232>
67. Gulari, M. N., & Fremantle, C. (2015). Are design-led innovation approaches applicable to SMEs? *Proceedings of the 17th International Conference on Engineering and Product Design Education: Great Expectations: Design Teaching, Research and Enterprise, E and PDE 2015, September*, 556–561.
68. Gurzawska, A., Mäkinen, M., & Brey, P. (2017). Implementation of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) practices in industry: Providing the right incentives. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 9(10). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su9101759>
69. Hammann, E.-M., Habisch, A., & Pechlaner, H. (2009). Values that create value: socially responsible business practices in SMEs - empirical evidence from German companies. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 18(1), 37–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8608.2009.01547.x>
70. Hansen, E. G., Wicki, S., & Schaltegger, S. (2022). Sustainability-Oriented Technology Exploration: Managerial Values, Ambidextrous Design, and Separation Drift. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 26(5), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919622400047>
71. Hasso-Plattner-Institut. (2023). *Shape the future with Design Thinking*.
72. Hauschildt, J., Salomo, S., Kock, A., & Schultz, C. (2023). *Innovationsmanagement* (7th ed.). Vahlen.
73. Helfferich, C. (2011). Die Qualität qualitativer Daten. In *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling* (Vol. 4). VS Verlag.
74. Herstatt, C. (1999). Theorie und Praxis der frühen Phasen des Innovationsprozesses. *Io Management*, 72–81.
75. Herstatt, C., Buse, S., & Napp, J. (2007). *Kooperationen in den frühen Phasen des Innovationsprozess*. 135. http://www2.hs-esslingen.de/~langeman/CMI-Recherche/InnovationsdruckBeispiele/Inhalte_08_2012/3.Thema/Innoerfolg-Erfolgshemmnisse/Uni_Hamburg_Herstatt_Kooperationen_in_den_fruehen_Innovationsphasen_2007.pdf
76. Hilbrecht, H., & Kempkens, O. (2013). Design Thinking im Unternehmen – Herausforderung mit Mehrwert. In *Digitalisierung und Innovation* (pp. 1–23). Springer Gabler. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-00371-5_18
77. Hyde, K. F. (2000). Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal Emerald Article: Recognising deductive processes in qualitative research. *An International Journal*, 3(2), 82–90.
78. IPCC, Pörtner, H.-O., Roberts, D. C., Poloczanska, E. S., Mintenbeck, K., Tignor, M., Alegría, A., Craig, M., Langsdorf, S., Löschke, S., Möller, V., & Okem, A. (2022). Summary for policymakers. In *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (Vol. 6th). <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139177245.003>
79. Ivanov, K. (2022). Values-Based Business Model Innovation-the Case of Ecosia and Its Business Model. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 2240002, 1–41. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919622400023>
80. Jägel, T., Keeling, K., Reppel, A., & Gruber, T. (2012). Individual values and motivational complexities in ethical clothing consumption: A means-end approach.

- Journal of Marketing Management*, 28(3–4), 373–396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2012.659280>
81. Jeffreys, C. (2022). *How can fashion value Society?* Ual: London College of Fashion. <https://www.sustainable-fashion.com/post/how-can-fashion-value-society>
 82. Jung, R. H., Heinzen, M., & Quarg, S. (2018). *Allgemeine Managementlehre: Lehrbuch für die angewandte Unternehmens- und Personalführung* (7th ed.). Erich Schmidt Verlag.
 83. Kaiser, R. (2014). *Qualitative Experteninterviews - Konzeptionelle Grundlagen und praktische Durchführung* (1st ed.). Springer VS.
 84. Kant Hvass, K., & Pedersen, E. R. G. (2019). Toward circular economy of fashion: Experiences from a brand's product take-back initiative. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 23(3), 345–365. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-04-2018-0059>
 85. Kiegelmann, M. (2020). Forschungsethik. In *Handbuch Qualitative Forschung in der Psychologie* (pp. 227–246). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26887-9_26
 86. Kitto, S. C., Chesters, J., & Grbich, C. (2008). Quality in qualitative research Criteria for authors and assessors in the submission and assessment of qualitative research articles for the Medical Journal of Australia. *Qualitative Research in Health Care*, 188(4), 211–233. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119410867.ch15>
 87. Kuckartz, U., Dresing, T., Rädiker, S., & Stefer, C. (2008). Qualitative Evaluation. In *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling* (2nd ed., Vol. 53, Issue 9). VS Verlag.
 88. Kuckartz, U., & Rädiker, S. (2022). Die inhaltlich strukturierende qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung*, 129–156.
 89. KUZ Fashion Design Studio. (2023). *Behind KUZ*.
 90. le Dantec, C. A., Poole, E. S., & Wyche, S. P. (2009). Values as lived experience: Evolving value sensitive design in support of value discovery. *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - Proceedings*, 1141–1150. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1518701.1518875>
 91. Li, J., & Leonas, K. K. (2018). Trends of sustainable development among luxury industry. In *Environmental Footprints and Eco-Design of Products and Processes* (pp. 107–126). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0623-5_6
 92. Lubberink, R., Blok, V., Ophem, J. van, & Omta, O. (2017). Lessons for responsible innovation in the business context: A systematic literature review of responsible, social and sustainable innovation practices. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 9(5). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su9050721>
 93. Lüdeke-Freund, F. (2020). Sustainable entrepreneurship, innovation, and business models: Integrative framework and propositions for future research. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 29(2), 665–681. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2396>
 94. Lüdeke-Freund, F., & Dembek, K. (2017). Sustainable business model research and practice: Emerging field or passing fancy? *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 168(December), 1668–1678. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.08.093>
 95. Lüdeke-Freund, F., Rauter, R., Rahbek, E., Pedersen, G., & Nielsen, C. (2020). Sustainable Value Creation Through Business Models: The What, the Who and the How. *Journal of Business Models*, 8(3), 62–90.

96. Lundblad, L., & Davies, I. A. (2015). The values and motivations behind sustainable fashion consumption. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 50(October), 35–50. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb>
97. MacArthur, E., & McCartney, S. (2017). Vision of a circular economy for fashion. *Ellen MacArthur Foundation's*.
98. Manohar, S. S., & Pandit, S. R. (2013). Core Values and Beliefs : A Study of Leading Innovative Organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 125(4). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1926-5>
99. Mayring, P. (2010). Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. In *Handbuch Qualitative Forschung in der Psychologie* (pp. 601–613). VS Verlag.
100. McCarthy, A. P. W. (2017). Spektrum Design Thinking. *Wirtschaftsinformatik & Management*, 84–92.
101. McDonough, W., & Braungart, M. (2010). *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
102. Meißner, P., & Wulf, T. (2020). The Hidden Values Driving Strategy. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 62(2).
103. Mejía-Trejo, J., & Rodríguez-Bravo, A. (2020). *Values-Based Innovation Designing a Model to be applied in Management Sciences*.
104. Miller, J. K., Friedman, B., Jancke, G., & Gill, B. (2007). Value tensions in design: The value sensitive design, development, and appropriation of a corporation's groupware system. *GROUP'07 - Proceedings of the 2007 International ACM Conference on Supporting Group Work*, 281–290. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1316624.1316668>
105. Müller, K. H. (2013). Nonlinear Innovations. In *Encyclopedia of Creativity, Invention, Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3858-8_312
106. OEKO-TEX. (2023). *Was sagt das Label aus?* <https://www.oeko-tex.com/de/unsere-standards/oeko-tex-standard-100>
107. Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y. (2010). *Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers*.
108. Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
109. Parker, C. M., Redmond, J., & Simpson, M. (2009). A review of interventions to encourage SMEs to make environmental improvements. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 27(2), 279–301. <https://doi.org/10.1068/c0859b>
110. Parmar, B. L., Freeman, R. E., Harrison, J. S., Wicks, A. C., Purnell, L., & de Colle, S. (2010). Stakeholder theory: The state of the art. *Academy of Management Annals*, 4(1), 403–445. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2010.495581>
111. Patala, S., Jalkala, A., Keränen, J., Väisänen, S., Tuominen, V., & Soukka, R. (2016). Sustainable value propositions: Framework and implications for technology suppliers. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 59, 144–156. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2016.03.001>
112. Pedersen, E. R. G., Gwozdz, W., & Hvass, K. K. (2018). Exploring the Relationship Between Business Model Innovation, Corporate Sustainability, and Organisational

- Values within the Fashion Industry. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 149(2), 267–284. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3044-7>
113. Peters, G., Li, M., & Lenzen, M. (2021). The need to decelerate fast fashion in a hot climate - A global sustainability perspective on the garment industry. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 295, 126390. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.126390>
 114. Razzouk, R., & Shute, V. (2012). What Is Design Thinking and Why Is It Important? *Review of Educational Research*, 82(3), 330–348. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654312457429>
 115. runamics. (2023a). *Cradle to Cradle*. <https://www.runamics.com/pages/cradle-to-cradle>
 116. runamics. (2023b). *Über uns*. <https://www.runamics.com/pages/about-us>
 117. Sandvik, I. M., & Stubbs, W. (2019). Circular fashion supply chain through textile-to-textile recycling. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 23(3), 366–381. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-04-2018-0058>
 118. Schaltegger, S., Hansen, E. G., & Lüdeke-Freund, F. (2016). Business Models for Sustainability: Origins, Present Research, and Future Avenues. *Organization and Environment*, 29(1), 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026615599806>
 119. Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (Third Edit). Jossey-Bass.
 120. Schein, E. H. (2015). Organizational Psychology Then and Now: Some Observations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 2, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032414-111449>
 121. Schewe, G., & Becker, S. (2009). *Innovationen für den Mittelstand Ein prozessorientierter Leitfaden für KMU*. Gabler.
 122. Schleicher, T., & Seitz, J. (2022). *Retail Report 2023*.
 123. Schoen, J., Mason, T. W., Kline, W. A., & Bunch, R. M. (2005). The innovation cycle: A new model and case study for the invention to innovation process. *EMJ - Engineering Management Journal*, 17(3), 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10429247.2005.11415292>
 124. Schuh, G., & Bender, D. (2012). Grundlagen des Innovationsmanagements. In *Innovationsmanagement : Handbuch Produktion und Management 3* (pp. 21–86). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-8349-6878-4_2
 125. Schumpeter, J. A. (1912). *The Theory Of Economic Development*. Duncker & Humblot.
 126. Schwartz, S. H. (2012). An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1116>
 127. Seiler, M., Cott, A. B., Torres, V., Reir, J. A. M., Kugler, K. G., Gammel, J. H., & Brodbeck, F. C. (2022). How to strengthen a culture of innovation by combining values-based and evidence-based innovation management. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 26(05). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919622400035>
 128. Stebbins, R. A. (2001). *Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences: What Is Exploration?* 2–18.
 129. Stilgoe, J., Owen, R., & Macnaghten, P. (2013). Developing a framework for responsible innovation. *Research Policy*, 42(9), 1568–1580. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2013.05.008>

130. Taplin, I. M. (2014a). Global commodity chains and fast fashion: How the apparel industry continues to re-invent itself. *Competition and Change*, 18(3), 246–264. <https://doi.org/10.1179/1024529414Z.00000000059>
131. Taplin, I. M. (2014b). Who is to blame?: A re-examination of fast fashion after the 2013 factory disaster in Bangladesh. *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 10(1), 72–83. <https://doi.org/10.1108/cpoib-09-2013-0035>
132. Teece, D. J. (2010). Business models, business strategy and innovation. *Long Range Planning*, 43(2–3), 172–194. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2009.07.003>
133. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation. (2022). *Redesigning the future of fashion*. <https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/topics/fashion/overview>
134. Torland. (2019). *Jeansherstellung – umweltschonend und nachhaltig*.
135. Torland. (2023). *Slowdown Fashion*.
136. Tura, N. (2018). *VALUE CREATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY-ORIENTED INNOVATIONS: CHALLENGES AND SUPPORTING METHODS*.
137. UN. (2022). The Sustainable Development Goals Report. *United Nations*. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2017/TheSustainableDevelopmentGoalsReport2017.pdf>
138. UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion. (2021). *What is the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion?* <https://unfashionalliance.org>
139. United Nations. (2023). *The 17 Goals*. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
140. Verworn, B., & Herstatt, C. (2000). Modelle des Innovationsprozesses. *Management*, 201(6), 1–13. http://www.econbiz.de/archiv1/2009/97014_innovation_prozess_modelle.pdf
141. Verworn, B., Lüthje, C., & Herstatt, C. (2000). *Innovationsmanagement in kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen Innovationsmanagement in kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen*. 7.
142. von Schomberg, L., & Blok, V. (2019). Technology in the Age of Innovation: Responsible Innovation as a New Subdomain Within the Philosophy of Technology. *Philosophy and Technology*, 34(2), 309–323. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-019-00386-3>
143. Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications - Design and Methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview Guideline for Semi-Structured Interviews in English

Section	Question	Objective
Introduction	<p><i>The aim and overall theme of the thesis are introduced to ensure general understanding.</i></p> <p><i>A brief introduction to the term and concept of values-based innovation and stakeholder involvement, as well as the introduction and explanation of the conceptual model..</i></p>	To ensure that the expert understand the researched topic and the purpose of the interview
Firm Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you give me a brief description of your firm? - Approximately how many employees does your firm have? - When was your firm founded? - To what extent does your firm already pursue environmental, ethical, and social goals in addition to economic goals? 	To make sure that the firms fall into the SME group under investigation and to get to know the firm better.
Expert Introduction	What is your profession, what experience do you have in it, and how are you involved in the design/innovation process?	To create a broad overview of the expert's professional background
Conceptual Model Introduction of the proposed model		
Firm Diagnostics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - -How does your firm define its values? - Can you describe any challenges or obstacles your firm has faced in identifying its values? 	Gain insight into how the firm understands and implements its values
Direct & Indirect Stakeholder Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you identify and prioritize your stakeholders? - To ensure that the interests of all stakeholders are adequately addressed, how can the results of the stakeholder analysis be integrated? 	Obtain an understanding of the perception and prioritization of stakeholder groups.
Upfront: Values-Driven Stakeholder Inclusion Checkpoint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How would you actively engage stakeholders and their values prior to the innovation process? - How useful do you find this point? 	Explore the utility of an upstream values-driven stakeholder checkpoint for inclusion.
Upstream Innovation Process: Design Thinking Inspired Iterative Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you create a starting point /define an initial situation before the actual innovation process that considers the firm's values and all stakeholders? - <i>If this is not currently the case in the firm:</i> How would you align internal firm values with identified stakeholder values at the beginning of the 	See how the firm sets a starting situation (integration of firm internal values and identified stakeholder needs) to be well-prepared to enter the actual innovation process.

	innovation process to create an ideal starting point?	
Second Innovation Process Phase: Iterative Innovation Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you do idea generation, concept development, development and prototyping for new (sustainable) products? 	Gain insights of how a fashion firm denies the innovation process of new products.
Values-Driven Stakeholder Checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How useful do you find the values-driven stakeholder checkpoints proposed here that occur after each innovation phase? - What exactly do you suggest should happen at these checkpoints and how should they ideally be integrated? 	Generate ideas and opinions on the ideal conceptualization of the values-driven stakeholder checkpoints from an expert perspective.
Wrap-up of the Conceptual Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At what point would they explicitly include which types of stakeholders? - What difficulties could the model be facing? - As an expert, what suggestions do you see for improvement? 	Obtain a general assessment of the proposed model.
Closing of the Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there anything else that you think is important that has not been included in the framework? - In general: Is there anything you would like to add to the topic? 	/
Outlook	<i>Thank the interviewee for his or her time and give a rough outline of the rest of the research.</i>	/

Appendix 2. Coding Guide

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quote
Firm Values	Intrinsic Values	The influence of intrinsic values in the development of firm values is mentioned.	"When you start as a small firm, the firm is really the founder's child. I have values, my own values and logically you put your values into this firm" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 13)
	Use of Professional Methods	Respondents describe the use or non-use of external professional services (e.g., consulting) in defining and developing firm values.	"When I joined the firm, we even went to the trouble of hiring a sustainability consultant" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 5)

	Problems with Value Definition	Problems encountered in defining and developing the values were described.	There were only problems "from an economic point of view" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 11)
Stakeholder Identification	Procedure in Practice	When respondents report on the stakeholder identification process, they have had in place so far.	"It is an ongoing process that we are not yet actively controlling in any way" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 21)
	Professional Methods	Respondents comment on the use or non-use of professional methods (e.g., external consultants) in stakeholder identification.	"Yeah, so in a broader sense, he (branding expert) then actually brought the weight in and said, 'Yeah, look at your stakeholders at all'" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 17).
Innovation Process	Upstream Innovation Process	Respondents describe a process step to get a starting point for the next step in the innovation process and provide feedback on the proposed upstream innovation process.	"But probably yes, one would write down and define exactly the points that are central for the company, in order to take that as an initial point and perhaps to set brackets in which area this innovation actually moves or can move" (Transcript North Coast, Pos. 19)
	Procedure in Practice	Respondents report on their current innovation process.	"Because it always starts with the idea. Then we develop a concept, then we develop it further. And you do a prototype test. Then you get feedback" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 43)
	Method-Guided Procedure	Respondents make statements that describe or deny a methodical approach to the innovation process.	"It is a reasonable process. Yes, of course, although we are of course a small company and do not have such a regular ongoing innovation process" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 25).
	Iterative Process	Firm representatives describe an iterative nature of the innovation process.	"And if I get some feedback, then again improve. Maybe I come back to the first stage to improve the idea" (Transcript KUZ, Pos. 77)
Values-Driven Stakeholder Checkpoints	Usability	Respondents' comments on the usefulness of the checkpoint proposal in their view.	"I think that's very cool, and I also have to say that I think the idea with these checkpoints is kind of smart" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 41).
	Inclusion Methods	Respondents begin by describing the type of stakeholder engagement	"Either you invite the stakeholders to a targeted meeting, or you can do it

		they currently conduct and how they envision using the checkpoints for this task.	through surveys. You create an online survey, send it to all our registered, newsletter registered customers (...) with the request to give feedback" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 49).
	Separate Stakeholder Integration	Respondents indicate whether or not they think it makes sense to involve different stakeholders separately.	"Depending on the need. So it may be that in the first phase (...) you are not so much in dialog with customers. You're more in dialog with partners who are at the forefront of value creation" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 39)
Validation of Conceptual Model	Statements	Respondents provide statements on their overall assessment and evaluation of the proposed conceptual model.	"I think the process you presented is really very valuable. And I think I'm going to use it. In the future is just as a kind of map" (Transcript Torland, Pos. 75)
	Barriers	The interviewees describe the potential barriers and challenges that the framework may have to face.	"Exactly, I would just try to be careful that you don't annoy them too much with it. So, you have to find a healthy balance somehow" (Transcript runamics, Pos. 43)
	Improvement Ideas	Suggestions are made for improving the conceptual model.	"What is important to me is that this development cycle, as I said, is a little better connected through the employees to the customers. The stakeholders, and here I see myself as an entrepreneur, also as a managing director, we have to be the guardians of values (...) There is a need for a guardian of values, I would say, who keeps an eye on this and then brings it into line" (Transcript Bausinger, Pos. 37)

Appendix 3. Transcript Interview Case Firm A Torland

Speaker 1: [00:00:07] Dann fangen wir erst mal an. Und jetzt kommt die erste Frage zur Filmvorstellung. Und da möchte ich dich fragen, ob du eine kurze Beschreibung von Torland geben kannst.

Speaker 2: [00:00:20] Ja, das mache ich gerne. Ja, Torland. Das ist eine Jeansmarke, die ich gegründet habe. Vor etwa sechs Jahren. Standort Wien. Ich bin selber Schweizer, bin nach Wien gekommen und wollte was Eigenes aufbauen. Und zuerst war nicht klar, soll ich das in der Schweiz machen oder in Österreich? Aber ich habe dann schnell festgestellt, dass ich mehr Vorteile habe, wenn ich in der EU bin. Weil du halt im Textilhandel automatisch auch grenzüberschreitenden Geschäftsverkehr hast. Und das ist halt schwierig aus der Schweiz, wenn du die verzogen hast. Außerdem ist das viel teurer, als ob ich jetzt ein Lager hier habe und von hier aus nach Deutschland verschickt oder von der Schweiz. Spielt keine Rolle, aber die Preise sind hier einfach viel günstiger. Und so habe ich mich dann entschieden, eine Firma zu gründen. Ich bin eigentlich ein kompletter Quereinsteiger. Ich hatte ja nix mit Mode zu tun und habe mich dazu erst mal ein bisschen schlau gemacht. Und vielleicht bin ich auch ein bisschen Dadurch, dass ich quasi wie ein Greenhorn in die Modebranche komme, schau ich halt Sachen irgendwie an und hinterfrage vieles. Und ja, da brauchte am Anfang aber auch etwas mehr Zeit, um die Firma aufzubauen, weil ich mich halt zuerst mit der Branche auseinandersetzen musste, natürlich mit den entsprechenden Experten, dann begonnen zusammenzuarbeiten. In der Zwischenzeit sind wir eine mittelgroße Firma, eigentlich noch eine kleine Firma, würde ich jetzt mal sagen. Mit neun Arbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern allerdings viele in Teilzeit, also Fulltimeäquivalent, sind es vielleicht drei, dreieinhalb. Wir haben uns von Anfang an auf bio nachhaltig produzierter Bekleidung konzentriert. Unser Kernprodukt ist Jeans. Wir verkaufen zu 80 %, 70-80 % Jeans, haben dann aber vor drei, drei Jahren andere Basisprodukte dazu genommen, die wir nicht selber produzieren sollen. In einer Kooperation mit Herstellern, was sie übernehmen können und ein White Label machen. Und Produkte sind eigentlich so White Label Produkte, die dann unseren Brand bekommen. Das sind die T-Shirts, Hoodies, Pullover die man auf unserer Webseite findet. Unsere Vertriebskanäle sind einerseits unsere eigenen Shops in Wien. Wir haben zwei Shops und einen Outletstore. Dann verkaufen wir vor allem die Jeans über unsere Händler. Es sind so ungefähr 15 Händler in Deutschland und Österreich. Und online stand, das Geschäft für uns jetzt immer mehr darauf konzentrieren und diesen Bereich auch in Zukunft ausbauen wollen. Im Onlinebereich verkaufen wir über verschiedene Kanäle. Einerseits unser eigener Onlineshop. Aber auch wichtig am Anfang auch Marktplätze wie (...). Aber wir sind auch vertreten auf Amazon und Zalando. Wir sagen nicht die einen sind die Guten, die anderen die Bösen, sondern wir sind eine Branche und alle müssen sich entwickeln. Und auch Zalando tut viel, obwohl sie auch viel in der Kritik sind. Das ist auch richtig so, aber wir sind auch auf dieser Plattform präsent und wollen natürlich unsere nachhaltige Kleidung auch an den 0815 Kunden bringen und nicht nur an die, die das gezielt schon auch automatisch wollen.

Speaker 1: [00:04:07] Okay, du meinst ja schon, eure Jeans ist ein nachhaltig und biologisch produziertes Kleidungsstück. Das heißt, zu einem gewissen Grad verfolgt ihr ja bereits ökologische und auch ethische und soziale Ziele, oder? Wie würdest du daher als ethisch und soziale Ziele mit einbeziehen?

Speaker 2: [00:04:25] Ja, die sind da drin. Und zwar weil wir haben uns 2020 zertifizieren lassen nach GOTS, Global Organic Textile Standard. Und das ist eigentlich das strengste Siegel für Bio Bekleidung international. Und die haben neben den ökologischen auch ethischen Standards und soziale Kriterien drin, wie Mindestlöhne, soziale Absicherung der Mitarbeiterinnen usw. Also beides ist da abgedeckt. Und diese Standards müssen wir einhalten, wie auch alle Teilnehmer in der Wertschöpfungskette. Und das wird auch regelmäßig kontrolliert.

Speaker 1: [00:05:11] Und wann genau wurde ein Unternehmen gegründet?

Speaker 2: [00:05:15] 2017.

Speaker 1: [00:05:18] Gut, dann würde ich sagen, haben wir alle für die Firmen-Vorstellung und gehen rüber zu der Experten Vorstellung von dir. Vielleicht kannst du mir kurz beantworten, welche Erfahrungen du jetzt bereits in der Branche gesammelt hast und wie du selber in den Innovation- oder Designprozess von euren Teams einbezogen wirst.

Speaker 2: [00:05:36] Also, ich. Ich bin selber Naturwissenschaftler. Ich habe mal Umweltnaturwissenschaften studiert in Zürich, bin dann aber eigentlich in verschiedenen anderen Berufszweigen gelandet. Über das Umweltthema dann zuerst zu Versicherungen gekommen, dann eigentlich eher im betriebswirtschaftlichen Bereich Karriere gemacht. Und irgendwann wollte ich aus dem Großkonzern aussteigen, was Eigenes machen und ich wollte eigentlich wieder back to the roots zum Thema Umwelt und Mode ist halt ein Bereich, wo viel Nachholbedarf besteht. Ist auch der zweitgrößte Umweltverschmutzer der Welt. Ich wollte auch irgendwie ein Produkt machen, das ich in den Händen halten kann. Nicht wie Papier und Zahlen bei der Versicherung. Und so wurden es halt dann Jeans und ich habe dann gelernt und wie eingangs gesagt, habe Sachen alle ein bisschen hinterfragt. Und nachdem ich begonnen habe, unsere Geschäftsprozesse, unsere Produkte zu implementieren, hat automatisch ein Innovationsprozess stattgefunden, denn wir haben nicht einfach kopiert, sondern ich hatte immer die Ambition, ich will was Neues machen. Aus Neugier Zum Beispiel hatte ich am Anfang einfach überlegt bei der Jeans. Dieses Produkt gibt es jetzt schon über 100 Jahre, fast unverändert mit dieser Five Pocket Style, mit den Nieten, wie sie halt heute so ausschauen. Und ich habe gesagt, ist es das was, was heute noch gefragt ist? Auf der einen Seite haben wir natürlich die meisten Leute tragen Jeans. Auf der anderen Seite habe ich darüber gedacht, [00:07:25] es gibt schon noch ein paar Sachen, die man vor 100 Jahren nicht gehabt hat. Zum Beispiel ein Handy. Wo stecke ich mein Handy ein? Und diese Frage war bisher zwei, drei Jahre beschäftigt. Wir haben dann Prototypen gemacht, mit Handy-Taschen ausprobiert, verschiedene Positionen vorne, hinten, weiter unten, weiter oben und so, dann quasi Jeans entwickelt mit Handy-Taschen. Das ist unsere Signatur-Jeans und sowieso unsere eigene Entwicklung. Ich habe dann noch andere Sachen probiert, die haben sich dann alle nicht bewährt. Also von etwa fünf, sechs Ideen ist dann diese eine übrig geblieben, die wir heute noch haben. Dann, auf der anderen Seite habe ich mir überlegt, wie produziert man die Jeans? Ist das nachhaltig? Aber da bin ich natürlich angewiesen, auf was es überhaupt schon gibt an Produktionsprozessen und bin dann herumgereist in Europa, in verschiedene Länder, habe kleinere Hersteller besucht, mit denen geredet und habe halt dann einfach die gepickt, wo ich auch dachte, ja, die haben was drauf und die wollen auch in die Richtung, in eine nachhaltigere Mode. So habe ich dann letztlich jemand einen Hersteller, einen kleinen Hersteller in Istanbul gefunden und auch der auch neu war und die wollten eben auch sich entwickeln und so hat das Ganze dann begonnen, dass ich habe ich die Frage beantwortet? (*lacht*)

Speaker 1: [00:08:51] Ja, ich glaube schon. Du bist quasi im gesamten Innovationsprozess beteiligt und federführend?

Speaker2: [00:08:59] Ja, ich bin schon eigentlich der, der das vorantreibt. Wir sind natürlich noch ein mini kleines Unternehmen. Ich denke immer ein bisschen voraus. Ich versuche auch immer die Vogelperspektive einzunehmen und. Überleg halt und beobachte die Modebranche, wie sie tickt. Teilweise auch völlig stupide Sachen passieren. Explodierende Coronakrise also da wurden Bekleidung gelöst. Ich weiß nicht, wie es in Deutschland war, aber in Österreich gab's eine Förderung. Österreich ist ja der „Förderstaat per se“ also die fördern alles. Und da die armen Modehändler, ja, die mussten ja schließen wegen Corona. Wir unterstützen sie. Alles, was die unterhalb des normalen Preises verkaufen. Die Differenz entschädigt den Staat, super. Mit dem Problem, dass du quasi ein „Moral Hazard“ produziert hast, also quasi eine schlechte Intensivierung, negative Intensivierung, dass die begonnen haben, bewusst ganz tief zu rabattieren. Und die haben dann zu 50 % Discount, 60, 70 % verkauft, denn sie wussten ja, der Staat entschädigt unsere Differenz. Völlig stupide! Also dieser Schuss ging voll hinten raus und ich habe das einfach. Sie machen das nicht. Also das ist ja stupid. Ich habe dann ausgerechnet mit einem relativ simplen betriebswirtschaftlichen Verständnis rechnest du aus, dass wenn du die Ware weiterhin zu 100 % verkaufst, machst du viel mehr Marge, weil mit 50 % Rabatt 60 machst du praktisch keine Marge mehr. Also am Schluss haben wir keine Förderung bekommen, aber wir haben trotzdem mehr verdient. Also man muss halt ein bisschen irgendwie, dass die Sachen mal einfach kritisch hinterfragen, was passiert.

Speaker 1: [00:10:59] Ja, das auf jeden Fall, das stimmt. Aber das ist ja dann trotzdem, wo es geklappt hat, auch ohne diese Förderung. Dann würde ich sagen, können wir in den Implementierungsrahmen einsteigen und der erste Schritt ist da, der Punkt der Firma Diagnostics. Bei diesem Punkt werden die firmeneigenen Werte identifiziert und eine Mission und eine Vision der Firma identifiziert und entwickelt. Und da ist meine erste Frage an dich: Wie hast du für Torland oder wie habt ihr die Werte für euer Unternehmen identifiziert?

Speaker 2: [00:11:36] Es ist so, wenn man beginnt als kleines Unternehmen, dann damit ist ja eigentlich das Unternehmen quasi das Kind des Gründers. Und ich habe ja Werte, eigene Werte. Und logisch legst du deine Werte in dieses Unternehmen rein. Ich habe gesagt ja, gut, ich hatte ein betriebswirtschaftliches Verständnis. Ja, ich wusste, man muss Werte definieren usw. wegen der Marke und so. Aber ich habe dann einfach aus dem Bauch heraus, ehrlich gesagt, ja, das ist mir wichtig, das ist mir wichtig. Ich hatte Innovation als einen der Werte formuliert, hohe Qualität, aber auch ein Miteinander innerhalb der Belegschaft, aber auch mit Leuten draußen. Dass wir nicht in Wettbewerb gehen wollen, sondern ein Miteinander mit anderen. Aber es ist nicht alles auswendig. Ich habe fünf Werte formuliert. Und interessanterweise sind haben die mehr oder weniger bis heute überlebt. Wir hatten letztes Jahr eine, wie soll ich sagen, eine Überprüfung unserer Strategie mit einem Markenexperten und der war natürlich auf die Markenwerte aus und fragte habt ihr welche überhaupt so, und wir so ja, hier. Und dann haben wir in einem Strategieworkshop wir die kritisch hinterfragt und am Schluss sind die fast eins zu eins geblieben, weil sie halt einfach offenbar doch (...) Cornerstones sind die wertvoll sind. Und am Schluss, wie soll ich sagen, es ist auch ein interaktiver Prozess letztlich. Es ist immer ein interaktiver Prozess. Du beginnst mit was. Du lebst etwas vor. Die deine Leute übernehmen es vielleicht. Und die Kunden spüren diese Werte und spiegeln dir zurück. Du lernst und vielleicht merkst du okay, du musst vielleicht etwas ein bisschen

anpassen, anders formulieren und dann entwickeln sich die Prozesse. Das ist jetzt so ein Hin und Her, natürlich. Und jetzt mache ich mal einen Punkt. Ich glaube, ich habe es mehr oder weniger beschrieben.

Speaker 1: [00:13:55] Ja. Gab es irgendwelche Herausforderungen am Anfang, die du persönlich gesehen hast, bei dem Prozess, wo du die Gedanken über die Werte gemacht hast? Fällt dir da spontan irgendwas ein?

Speaker 2: [00:14:10] Nun ja, es ist so Werte sind halt nicht einfach so schnell, schnell auf dem Papier, sondern es ist auch ein Entwicklungsprozess dahinter. Am Anfang sucht man auch ein bisschen. Was ist mir wichtig? (...) Man schaut auch was haben andere Marken? Ja, schön, wenn ich nicht schau, was ist auf dem Markt und dann ist mir das auch wichtig? Aber jetzt große Probleme, muss ich sagen, nein. Es stimmt schon. Man tauscht sich aus und fragt andere „was hältst du davon?“ Und irgendwann kommt das dann. Ich glaube, dass die schwierigste, die schwierigste Sache ist immer die Formulierung des Textes, so dass der dann verstanden wird, dass der prägnant und kurz ist. Das ist eine Herausforderung.

Speaker 1: [00:15:13] Okay. Dann können wir auch schon zum nächsten Punkt übergehen. Die Indirect and Direct Stakeholder Analysis. Das ist von einem anderen theoretischen Framework. Und da geht es dabei, dass die Firma sich genau damit auseinandersetzt. Welche Stakeholder sind von unserem Produkt betroffen? Im Indirekten als auch im Direkten natürlich. Da erst mal eine allgemeine Frage Wie identifiziert ihr denn eure Stakeholder? Oder wie ist der Prozess bei euch, in dem ihr euch damit auseinandersetzt?

Speaker 2: [00:15:51] Wenn man ein Unternehmen gründet und es gut läuft, muss man sich nicht so sehr mit betriebswirtschaftlichen Modellen, Analysen und ähnlichem beschäftigen. Oder auch wenn du ein Unternehmen gründen siehst, dann bist du hemdsärmelig und beginnst, aber du musst dir gar keine Gedanken machen. Okay, also Kunden, okay. Kunden wären übrigens nicht meine Produkte, alle Kunden. Und ich muss sagen, ich habe da zum ersten Mal sehr viel gelernt, als ich einen (...), weil ich wusste ich muss jetzt. Ich musste meine Marke irgendwie ausformulieren, als Branding also. Ich habe dann einen Markenexperten kennen gelernt, Amerikaner, der in Mailand lebt und im Fashion Bereich Marken berät und bin dann eine einen Tag lang nach Mailand gefahren und mit ihm einen Tag lang Strategieaustausch gemacht. Und der hat dann gesagt „Branding is all – it’s all about branding, forget your products.“ Das war also ein bisschen plakativ und ich hatte das immer von der anderen Seite angeschaut. Ich habe immer alles an den Produkten aufgehängt. Ich dachte immer, ich muss die Produkte entwickeln und dann verkaufe ich sie. Und erzähl mal, du musst das von der anderen Seite anschauen, Branding und jetzt formulieren mal deine Werte und schau mal, wer sind deine Zielkunden? Und jetzt sind wir schon bei den Stakeholdern. Ja, also im weiteren Sinn hat er eigentlich dann das Gewicht reingebracht und gesagt „Ja, überlegt euch überhaupt mal eure Stakeholder.“ [00:17:31] Es gibt Länder, es gibt Endkunden, es gibt vielleicht noch Freunde, Bekannte, die dich unterstützen, es gibt der Staat, der dich fördert usw. und erst dann hat das mit der Zeit begonnen. So zwei, drei Jahre später habe ich mich begonnen mit Stakeholdern auseinanderzusetzen und heute gehört es halt dazu. Immer wenn man ein bisschen eine Vogelperspektive einnimmt, über die Strategie überlegt, dann schaut man sich die verschiedenen Stakeholder an, aber es ist nicht mehr so, dass man die groß, wie soll ich sagen, suchen müsste, sondern die sind halt einfach da. Es ist klar, dass wir unsere Händler haben. Es ist klar, dass wir

Investoren haben. Wir sind Stakeholder. Es ist klar, dass wir unsere Endkunden im Geschäft haben oder vielleicht Online-Kunden, die etwas anders ticken. Ja, es ist irgendwie. Dadurch, dass du quasi im Business bist und sich das entwickelt, musst du nicht mehr groß analysieren oder eine Stakeholder Analysis machen, sondern es wird sehr konkret über die Zeit. Das heißt nicht, dass man immer richtig liegt, weil manchmal wäre es gut, dass man die Vogelperspektive einnimmt und wieder mal Analyse richtig macht. Das ist wohl wahr. Man wird betriebsblind. Das ist im Business drinnen und ja man glaubt, das ist jetzt alles richtig. Aber das ist manchmal auch nicht ganz richtig so.

Speaker 1: [00:19:08] Okay, ich verstehe. Wenn wir jetzt aber mal weitergehen in dem Prozess, kommen wir zum ersten values-driven Stakeholder Inclusion Checkpoint. Der hat den Nutzen, dass wenn man in der Theorie davor alle identifiziert hat, dass man sie hier zum Ersten Mal auch mit einbezieht und sie darüber in Kenntnis setzt, was haben wir ungefähr vor, was sind unsere Werte, was sind eure Werte? Dann werden die abgeglichen. Ja, und wenn wir uns jetzt mal an deiner Antwort, die gerade gegeben hast, orientieren, wie könntest du dir denn vorstellen, dass man die Stakeholder, die man halt hat, in so einem ersten vorgelagerten Treffen am besten davon in Kenntnis setzt oder wie stellst du dir denn so eine Zusammenarbeit vor, dass man die erst mal auf die Beine stellt?

Speaker 2: [00:20:01] Also wir sind da bei diesem Punkt Inclusion, oder?

Speaker 1: [00:20:07] Ja, genau bei diesem ersten vorgelagerten values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoint, der an der rechten Seite, wo der Pfeil nach unten geht.

Speaker 2: [00:20:18] Genau. Es ist so, wir tauschen uns sehr, sehr viel aus mit unseren Stakeholdern. Aber wie soll ich sagen, was wir bisher noch nicht gemacht haben, ist, dass wir quasi wirklich bewusst sagen okay, wir nehmen alle verschiedenen Typen von Stakeholdern zusammen und machen mal so ein Meeting. Das haben wir nicht gemacht, sondern (...) im Geschäftsalltag bist du sowieso angewiesen auf den Austausch. Also zum Beispiel, wenn es darum geht nachhaltige Produktionsverfahren weiter zu entwickeln, dann tauschst du dich natürlich mit dem Hersteller in der Türkei aus. Ich fliege einmal pro Quartal nach Izmir und dann nehme ich mir meine Fahrten mit und dann diskutieren wir und schauen uns die Sachen an und so findet der Austausch statt. Oder wenn es darum geht, Feedback zu uns einzuholen. Dann, dann findet das über verschiedene Kanäle statt. Einerseits haben wir einen guten Prozess im Online-Geschäft, wo die Kunden angeben, wenn ihnen etwas nicht passt. Und wir sammeln diese Retouren Gründe digital ein und dann wird es statistisch aus statistisch ausgewertet, dass es eine Form von Feedbackschleife eine andere ist, dass wir von der Geschäftsleitung bewusst ab und zu in unseren eigenen Geschäften verkaufen, meistens auch als Ersatz, wenn jetzt jemand krank ist oder so, und so haben wir direkten Kontakt mit Kunden und so lernst du am meisten über deine Produkte, indem du eben siehst, schon wieder die gleiche Jeans, die bei den Leuten oben ein bisschen zu weit ist. Da müssen wir noch was machen, oder? Oder dass Kunden vermehrt einem etwas negatives Feedback geben und zusammen du das. Also im Geschäftsalltag findet eigentlich diese Inklusion automatisch statt.

Speaker 1: [00:22:42] Okay.

Speaker 2: [00:22:44] Was wir bisher nicht gemacht haben, ist ein strukturierter Prozess. Dass wir sagen okay, wir machen ein Meeting und laden die Sekretärinnen zusammen besetzen.

Speaker 1: [00:22:56] Okay, gut, dann würde ich sagen gehen wir erst mal weiter und dann kommt der große Innovationsprozess, der in drei Phasen hier abgebildet ist. Und dann kommen wir zum Upstream Innovation Process. Das ist der erste iterative Zyklus quasi, der vom Design Thinking inspiriert ist und besteht aus drei Schritten, dass man erst mal das Problem versteht, dann kommt es zu einer Observation des Umfeldes und dann definiert man den Standpunkt. Also es ist dann nach dem die Werte der Firma, die Werte der Stakeholder identifiziert worden sind, kommt man in diesen Prozess und der kann natürlich auch so oft wiederholt werden, wie es notwendig ist. Jetzt ist meine erste Frage an dich hier: Wie schaffst du oder wie habt ihr diese Ausgangssituation geschaffen, bevor ihr losgelegt habt? Oder auch: Wie machst du das heute, wenn du weißt, was deine Stakeholder wollen oder was deine Kunden wollen? Wie kann man so eine Ausgangssituation schaffen, dass man sagt, okay, jetzt habe ich erstmal alle Werte drin.

Speaker 2: [00:24:10] Da darf ich nochmal fragen ist der Unterschied zwischen dem Upstream Innovationprozess und dem nächsten Innovationsprozess? Den habe ich noch nicht ganz verstanden. Kannst du das nochmal kurz erklären?

Speaker 1: [00:24:23] Ja, klar. Also der der erste Prozess, der Upstream Innovationprozess hat den Zweck, alles was davor passiert ist nochmal zusammenzufassen, um nochmal ganz klar und deutlichen Standpunkt zu definieren. Das sind unsere Werte, das sind die Werte der Stakeholder und aus all dem wird ein Standpunkt definiert. Mit dem geht man in den zweiten Prozess über, bei dem man dann die Idea Generation hat, zum Beispiel bei euch mit der Handytasche, bei der Jeans. Das könnte eine Idee sein, die da kommt. Dann wird da erst mal ein Konzept aufgestellt, dann wird das entwickelt und dann kommt es zum Prototyping und so weiter.

Speaker 2: [00:24:59] Genau

Speaker 1: [00:25:09] Wir können es aber auch anders angehen, mit dem du einfacher ist.

Speaker 2: [00:25:12] Nein, ich würde gerne etwas generell sagen zu diesem Prozess.

Speaker 1: [00:25:18] Ja, gerne.

Speaker 2: [00:25:19] Im Geschäftsalltag findet das nicht so strukturiert statt, wie das hier dargestellt ist. Weißt du, machst nicht zuerst den ersten Schritt und überleg dir dann die Werte und überlegst dir, stimmen die und jetzt gehen wir weiter und machen aus dem Werten etwas. (...) Die Innovation findet, es ist fast ein bisschen, wie soll ich sagen, wie ein Zufallsprodukt? Das ist oft nicht so gezielt, sondern du hast eine Idee, „oh, wow!“ Okay, und dann machst du was und vielleicht merkst du dann, das ist aber vielleicht nicht ganz in Linie mit unseren Werten. Vielleicht müssen wir das nochmal hinterfragen und dann lässt du es vielleicht wieder los oder sagst du „okay, wir müssen ein bisschen verändern“ und dann machst du wieder was und merkst „Oh, okay, vielleicht (...)“. Also die Innovation findet in ganz kleinen Schritten statt und ist etwas, was ein bisschen so sich automatisch entwickelt, weil du bei dir im Geschäftsalltag nicht den super strukturierten Prozess gehst. Also mit der Theorie sieht das alles so logisch und einfach aus. Aber wir haben nicht erst die Werte formuliert und dann erst die Innovation. Aber es kann auch sein, dass am Anfang die Ideen kommen und dann formuliert man vielleicht bestimmte Werte. Solange ein Unternehmen klein ist und von mir als Gründer geprägt ist, kommt das alles eher als Konsistenz. Die Gefahr ist, wenn ein Unternehmen groß

wird und dann von vielen Leuten gemanagt wird und dann ist es nicht mehr konsistent. Das ist immer die Gefahr bei großen Unternehmen und Konzernen, dass die nicht mehr lesbar sind. Dann machen sie in einem Land, machen sie irgendwas in einem anderen Land komplett das Konträre und dann brauchst du diese Strukturen, Prozesse. Aber als kleines KMU glaube ich, funktioniert es automatisch.

Speaker 1: [00:27:35] Ergibt Sinn.

Speaker 2: [00:27:39] Also diesen Schritt haben wir nie so durchgemacht, eins zu eins.

Speaker 1: [00:27:45] Du meinst jetzt beide Schritte, aber den ersten und den zweiten Innovationsprozess, oder?

Speaker 2: [00:27:49] Also natürlich die Prozesse schon so statt, wie du sie dargestellt hast, aber nicht schön so in Serie oder es findet alles eher so parallel statt.

Speaker 1: [00:28:00] Dass man mal von dem zweiten Schritt wieder zum ersten Schritt springt usw.

Speaker 2: [00:28:04] Genau, so wichtig sind die Chroniken schon bisschen. Und ab und zu alle, alle drei vier Monate nimmst du dir mal die Zeit und schaust mal auf alles. Wo stehen wir eigentlich? Und dann plötzlich merkst du okay, jetzt muss ich die und die Hebel verändern. Und setzt Impulse. Entscheidet vielleicht, welche Projekte wir jetzt angehen. Und dann gehst du wieder zurück ins Business und machst mal und dann ist es wieder ein bisschen chaotischer.

Speaker 1: [00:28:39] Ja.

Speaker 2: [00:28:40] Also das ist so ein bisschen so, wie ich es erlebe. Ich glaube, die meisten Unternehmen machen das auch so ähnlich. Ich habe, ich war ja früher in einem Großkonzern, Auch dort findet das so statt. Das ist kein strukturierter Prozess. Das ist völlig chaotisch oft. Dann nimmst du Distanz und schaust nach dem Richtigen oder nicht? Und dann geht's wieder rein.

Speaker 1: [00:29:04] Ja, da gibt es natürlich schon große Unterschiede, was Theorie und Praxis dann wirklich ansagen. Aber grundsätzlich meinstest du ja schon, dass alles ein iterativer Prozess ist und wir von dem Punkt aus wir weitergehen können.

Speaker 2: [00:29:20] Es ist immer eine iterativer Prozess, ja.

Speaker 1: [00:29:27] Zu deiner Antwort eben: Möchtest du im zweiten Innovationsprozess noch etwas Spezifisches hinzufügen, wie das bei euch abgelaufen ist oder was du dir da gut vorstellen könntest oder wollen wir zum nächsten Punkt übergehen?

Speaker 2: [00:29:44] (...) Also wir von der Logik her ist das schon so, wie es auch in der Realität stattfindet. Diese Kreise in den beiden Innovationsprozessen. Denn es beginnt immer mit der Idee Dann entwickeln wir mal ein Konzept, dann wird weiterentwickeln. Und du machst einen Prototypentest. Dann bekommst du Feedbacks. aber die Installation findet auch zwischen den beiden Prozessen statt, also zwischen dem linken und dem rechten. Springt immer hin und her.

Speaker 1: [00:30:39] Okay.

Speaker 2: [00:30:40] Das ist das, was ich sagen wollte. Ja, es ist nicht nur zuerst eins und dann zwei, sondern es findet beides parallel statt in der Realität.

Speaker 1: [00:30:51] Okay, verstehe. Gut.

Speaker 2: [00:30:54] Und das Interessante ist, dass die Werte sich auch aus dem aus der Invasion heraus und zurückentwickeln können. Also, dass du Sachen merkst, die Werte zum Beispiel sollten wir auch mit reinnehmen. Ich kann dir ein Beispiel machen. Wir haben mit dem Fokus, Bio und nachhaltige Produktion begonnen und haben mit der Zeit gemerkt. Naja, es ist schön und recht, aber Einkommen der Modeindustrie decken wir nicht ab, nämlich die Langlebigkeit und die Verwertung am Schluss, also die Entsorgung. Es ist zwar schön und recht, wenn wir Bio produzieren, aber es ist nicht gut, wenn wir nicht darauf achten, was nachher passiert, wenn die Lebensdauer erreicht ist eines Produkts und haben dann gesagt „Nein, wir müssen einen Schritt weitergehen.“ Wir müssen schauen, dass wir in eine Kreislaufwirtschaft kommen, dass wir aus den alten Jeans wieder was machen, und haben dann begonnen, alte Jeans in unseren Läden zu sammeln, begonnen Upcycling Produkte zu machen und gedacht okay, das ist super, jetzt machen wir etwas draus. Aber die Upcycling Produkte landet am Schluss doch wieder im Müll. Es ist kein geschlossener Materialkreislauf. Dann sind wir wieder über die Bücher gegangen und haben gemerkt, dass man eigentlich nur, wenn man wirklich aus den alten Baumwollstoffen wieder Recyclingfasern macht und dann wieder neue Stoffe herstellen kann, wirkliche Upcycling Produkte herstellen kann. Dann haben wir jetzt, vor zwei, drei Monaten entschieden, dass wir diesen Weg gehen wollen. Wir sammeln jetzt schon länger alte Jeans und wir wollen jetzt immer mehr Jeans einem Textilverwerter zuführen, der sie schreddert und daraus neue Baumwollfasern macht. Das ist die eine Seite. Und auf der anderen Seite wollen wir immer mehr recycelte Baumwolle auch in unsere Jeans implementieren. Und dann beginnt der Kreislauf, sich immer mehr zu schließen. Diese Feststellungen und Entwicklungen haben dann sich wieder niedergeschlagen auf unseren Werten und gesagt, wir müssen das mit der ganzen Verwertung von außen hereinnehmen, dass wir uns auch auf das Thema konzentrieren. Also so entwickelt sich das.

Speaker 1: [00:33:34] Gut, dann würde ich sagen, dass meine nächste Frage zu diesem kleinen values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoints nochmal explizit. die in dem Modell hier nach jeder Phase stattfinden und auch nachdem das Produkt gelauncht worden ist, findet noch mal so ein Checkpoint statt, um halt diesen, wie du eigentlich schon gesagt hast, diesen riesigen iterativen Prozess wieder von vorne zu starten, wenn man dann in die Weiterentwicklung der Produkte geht. Wie würdest du denn diese Punkte einschätzen, dass man also nach jedem Prozesspunkt wird dann das, was rausgekommen ist, einmal mit den Stakeholdern abgeglichen, dass kontrolliert werden kann? Haben wir alle Werte weiterhin drinnen und sind alle mit dem was wir bisher haben glücklich? Findest du das nützlich? Und inwiefern könntest du dir so was in der Praxis vorstellen?

Speaker 2: [00:34:25] Also ich finde dein Modell wirklich sehr nützlich, je länger ich draufschau und mir das überlege für Unternehmen. Es ist wie eine Landkarte, die hilft, eine gewisse Struktur in die Prozesse und Entwicklungen reinzubringen. Das, was eben uns hier, wo wir uns im Alltag bewegen, eigentlich fehlt und uns oft verlieren. Immer dann, wenn ich zurückgehe und Vogelperspektive einnehme, dann könnte ich mir so einen Prozess vor Augen halten. Okay, wo sind wir? Dort? Haben wir das schon gemacht? Usw. Also es ist wie eine Landkarte für mich, die sehr

hilfreich sein kann. In der Realität findet es nur nicht genau exakt immer in dieser Darstellung statt. Ja, und diese values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoints, glaube ich, könnten sehr, sehr gezielt eingebaut werden, dass man sagt „Hey, okay, jetzt haben wir mal dieses Produkt entwickelt, jetzt müssen wir aber mal Checkpoint machen.“ Und ich könnte mir vorstellen, dass das verschiedene Methoden als Checkpoints stattfinden können. Entweder man lädt die Stakeholder ein für eine gezielte Besprechung, oder es kann aber auch über Umfragen passieren. Man kreierte eine Online-Umfrage, verschickt das an alle unsere registrierten, im Newsletter registrierten Kunden, weil die anderen doch so nett anschreiben. Ja, das mit der Bitte Feedback zu geben. Oder man fragt im Geschäftsalltag immer wieder, wenn Kunden ins Geschäft kommen ob sie einem noch Feedback geben können und was sie zu bestimmten Produkten denken. Also ich glaube, da gibt es verschiedene Formen, wo man das machen könnte.

Speaker 1: [00:36:28] Danke schon mal für die Antwort und für die Anregungen. Waren auf jeden Fall gute Punkte. Dann würde ich jetzt sagen, du hast da gerade schon damit angefangen, indem du das als Landkarte beschrieben hast. Wenn wir jetzt mal so eine Zusammenfassung von diesem ganzen Konzept, was ich hier entwickelt habe, machen. Beziehungsweise, das ist nochmal mehr zu den Checkpoints, um ehrlich zu sein. Könntest du dir vorstellen, dass an einer bestimmten Stelle bestimmte Stakeholdergruppen wichtiger sind als andere? Oder dass du zum Beispiel sagen würdest okay, nach dem ersten Innovationsprozess hier werde ich jetzt nur die Kunden und die Mitarbeiter von mir einbeziehen. Im zweiten sind dann zum Beispiel die Financial Stakeholder wieder wichtiger. Und dann kommen die umwelttechnischen Stakeholder rein. Hast du da spontan ein Gefühl für wen du wo einbeziehen würdest?

Speaker 2: [00:37:26] (...) Nein, ich sehe es gleichwertig. Ehrlich gesagt. Ich sehe keinen Grund, warum ich für gewisse Fragen Kunden frage und für andere eher die Mitarbeiter. Es ist wirklich gleich, denn alle haben unterschiedliche Blickwinkel auf dasselbe und diese können alle wertvoll sein. Auch unsere Investoren zum Beispiel. Die sind ja sehr interessiert, was wir machen. Die fühlen sich sogar sehr gewertschätzt, wenn man sie fragt. Und das sind oft Leute, die auch Erfahrung haben, als Unternehmer mit sehr viel reinbringen können. Also ich habe gemerkt, mit unseren Investoren, da lernen wir extrem viel, wenn wir uns mit denen austauschen. Man bedenkt es eigentlich gar nicht dran. Das kann viel wertvoller sein als vielleicht mit den eigenen Mitarbeitern, weil die auch schon im Business drin sind und eigentlich sich nicht mehr so größere Fragen stellen. Je mehr du Leute von außen rein ist, desto hilfreicher ist der Austausch. Wir haben ganz andere Perspektiven.

Speaker 1: [00:38:36] Das stimmt. Okay, dann darfst du ja auch. Ein bisschen schon was. Mit welchen Schwierigkeiten könnte das Modell konfrontiert sein? Das ist, glaube ich, zum einen auf jeden Fall, dass es in der Praxis halt nicht Schritt für Schritt so abläuft. Hast du da noch was hinzuzufügen?

Speaker 2: [00:38:54] Ich glaube, das ist gar nicht negativ, oder? Das ist gar keine Schwierigkeit aus meiner Sicht. Ein Modell ist ein Modell, und das ist für mich wie eine Landkarte, die dir hilft, den Weg zu finden. Entweder verwendest du eine Landkarte oder du suchst einfach ohne Karte. Auch wenn du quasi im Berufsalltag die Karte nicht immer zur Hand hast und das sehr iterativ und manchmal ein bisschen chaotisch sich entwickelt. Die Landkarte ist dazu da, um sich zu orientieren und du nimmst sie einfach wieder. Das ist überhaupt kein Widerspruch oder kein Problem, dass das der Geschäftsalltag nicht so strukturiert stattfindet. Sobald du die Karte mit Sack und drauf schaust

und sagst „Ah, okay, ja, das haben wir jetzt vielleicht nicht hinterfragt oder sollten vielleicht mal Checkpoints machen.“ Dann ist einfach gut zur Orientierung.

Speaker 1: [00:40:00] Ja, hast du sonst spontan noch irgendwelche Verbesserungsvorschläge, was man irgendwo einbauen, integrieren könnte, was du für sinnvoll erachtest?

Speaker 2: [00:40:14] Gibt's nicht. Nochmal draufschaun. (...) Ich glaube, wenn wir den oberen Teil anschauen. Werte. Ich glaube, das ist auch ein iterativer Prozess. Und zwar, dass ich glaube nicht der richtige Weg, wenn wir quasi Werte formulieren. Und dann erst die Stakeholder einbeziehen. Sondern eigentlich sollten die Stakeholder in der Wertentwicklung einbezogen werden.

Speaker 1: [00:41:09] Ja.

Speaker 2: [00:41:11] Ich weiß nicht, ob du an das gedacht hast oder ob das vielleicht auch da drin ist, wenn du sagst Inclusion Checkpoint. Und das könnte ja da drin auch im Inbegriffen sein, dass man sagt okay, man hinterfragt jetzt mal die Werte. Ja, aber ich würd sagen, für die Weiterentwicklung sehr wertvoll und wichtig, dass man schon von Anfang an schaut, was die Stakeholder wollen, was sie suchen, für was sie stehen.

Speaker 1: [00:41:45] Wie du es vorhin bei einem anderen Punkt schon gesagt hast, dass man die beiden ersten Schritte nebeneinander parallel ablaufen lässt?

Speaker 2: [00:41:56] Man muss irgendwo mal beginnen, dass man vielleicht einfach eine Feedbackschleife noch einmal einbaut. Zum Beispiel so Review of Values oder so etwas.

Speaker 1: [00:42:07] Ja, könnte man ja.

Speaker 2: [00:42:09] Der Prozess kann ja trotzdem so bleiben. Ja.

Speaker 1: [00:42:12] Ja.

Speaker 2: [00:42:20] Ich denke vom Ablauf her ist es schon logisch. Es macht Sinn. Dass die Innovation letztlich sich den Werten unterordnet und an denen orientiert. Ich glaube, das ist auch richtig so, dass die Werte zuerst kommen. (...) Was du vielleicht auch einbauen könntest, dort am Market Launch, denn auch da ist die Innovation noch nicht abgeschlossen. Dann kommt das Feedback vom Markt. Also das da findet dann eigentlich die allerwichtigste Feedbackrunde statt, sobald sich ein Markt in der breiten Öffentlichkeit ist.

Speaker 1: [00:43:10] Ja, das ist sozusagen der letzte oder das Ziel dieses letzten values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoints. Und dieses Continuous Improvement. Aber da könnte man noch einen Pfeil einbauen, der wieder zum Start übergeht, weil dann geht es ja, wie du gesagt hast, dann geht's da richtig los.

Speaker 2: [00:43:27] Genau. Und du hast sie eigentlich auch eingebaut mit dem Continuous Process? Ich hatte das ja darauf hin. Es ist nicht abgeschlossen. Es geht immer weiter. Von daher ist es ja eigentlich schon drin in deinem Modell.

Speaker 1: [00:43:50] Gut, dann. Und wie es von mir ist auch die Frage, ob es noch irgendetwas gibt, was du jetzt hier im generellen Fokus für wichtig erachtet, worüber wir es aber noch gar nicht besprochen haben oder noch irgendwelche Gedanken, die du gerne teilen wollen würdest.

Speaker 2: [00:44:05] Ich denke jetzt einfach ein bisschen im Vergleich. (...) Ich meine, letztlich sind es ja nicht nur Werte. Letztlich sind es ja doch auch Unternehmensziele, Businesspläne usw., die ja hier auch ausschlaggebend sind. Das muss man jetzt nicht unbedingt abbilden.

Speaker 1: [00:44:41] Das sind ja quasi die die wirtschaftlichen Werte, die man verfolgt.

Speaker 2: [00:44:45] Ja, genau. Okay, also wir können es ja so machen, wenn wir mir noch was einfällt, dass ich mich dann noch mal melde. Sonst fällt mir jetzt auch nichts spontan ein. Ich werde jetzt einfach ein bisschen über das Projekt nachdenken.

Speaker 1: [00:45:06] Können wir gerne so machen!

Speaker 2: [00:45:10] Super.

Speaker 1: [00:45:11] Ja, dann vielen, vielen Dank für das Interview und für deine Zeit. Es war wirklich super interessant und hat mir auch nochmal ganz viele Ansätze und Punkte gegeben.

Speaker 2: [00:45:24] Sehr gerne. Gut, dann wünsche ich dir viel Erfolg bei deiner Masterarbeit.

Speaker 1: [00:46:26] Danke! Mitte Mai und Ende Mai ist alles Kolloquium und danach kann ich sehr gerne die die Ergebnisse auch nochmal rüberschicken. Dass du dir alles nochmal anschauen kannst.

Speaker 2: [00:46:34] Ja, ich bin interessiert. Auf jeden Fall. Ich muss gestehen, ich habe auch etwas gelernt. Ich finde, der Prozess, den du dargestellt, ist wirklich sehr wertvoll. Und ich glaube, ich werde ihn auch anwenden. In Zukunft ist eben auch Landkarte eine Art Landkarte. Zum Schauen haben wir alles gemacht usw. etc.

Speaker 1: [00:47:00] Wie cool! Dann schicke ich dir auf jeden Fall noch mal den nach den Interviews angepassten und weiterentwickelten Prozess.

Speaker 2: [00:47:06] Der hilft ja sehr gerne. Dankeschön. Alles Gute!

Speaker 1: [00:47:10] Dann machen wir das. Dann wünsche ich dir noch einen schönen Tag und ganz liebe Grüße nach Wien.

Speaker 2: [00:47:13] Danke gleichfalls. Dankeschön! Gruß zurück.

Appendix 4. Transcript Interview Case Firm B Bausinger

Speaker 1: [00:00:00] Dann kann es jetzt losgehen. Begrüßung hatten wir dann erstmal zur Firmenvorstellung. Kannst du mir eine kurze Beschreibung von Bausinger geben?

Speaker 2: [00:00:18] Die Firma Basinger wurde gegründet 1977 vom Friedo Bausinger, der Erfinder der Schurwoll-Yogamatte und Yogalehrer aus Reutlingen. Typisches Startup in den 80er Jahren mit dem Thema so nachhaltig wie möglich zu arbeiten. Das war nämlich damals schon ein Thema, so Frieder Bausinger, hatte aber eigentlich Textilingenieur und hatte da eben einen Bezug zur Technik, zu textilen Technik und als Yogalehrer eben einen guten Bezug in die Yoga Szene rein. Und er hatte die Idee, eine Yogamatte zu entwickeln oder ist aufgefordert worden, eine Yogamatte zu entwickeln, die gegen Bodenkälte gut ist. Will er als Hatha Yogalehrer, weil er die viele Übungen macht, wo man eben am Boden liegen, sitzen, entspannt meditiert. Wie auch immer und da waren die bisherigen Yoga Teppiche einfach zu wenig isolieren und zu wenig angenehm. Fußbodenheizung gab es noch nicht, nicht Flecken flächendeckend. Von daher war die Idee, eine Schurwollauflage zu nehmen, der Schuhwollmatte, die eben so groß zu machen, dass er als Yogamatte taugt und funktioniert und die ganze Rutschfest Zubehör beschichten. Und das hat er eben damals gemacht, hat eben die technischen Möglichkeiten dazu gehabt, hat es dann entwickelt und das ist dann gut angenommen worden. Und als Yogalehrer hat er eben den direkten Vertriebskanal natürlich auch gehabt. Den Kontakt zu den YogalehrerInnen, zu den Yoga Übenden war dann viel auf Messen, Festivals und so ist es ganz, ganz klassisch. In der Doppelgarage ist die Firma entstanden. Er hat sich dann zwei Jahren selbstständig gemacht, hat die GmbH gegründet und hat die Firma aufgebaut. Und ich bin jetzt der Dritte, der die Firma übernommen hat, die dritte Unternehmergeneration. Nach ungefähr 18 Jahren hatte Friedo Bausinger altershalber dann die Firma abgegeben. Seine Kinder hatten da kein Interesse dran. Der zweite Besitzer war ein Indien heimkehrender Zen-Meditierender Elektrotechnik Ingenieur, aber eben auch spirituell sehr veranlagt und sehr ausgerichtet. Und er hat die Firma übernommen und hat sie dann eben modernisiert, digitalisiert. Wir hatten damals eine der ersten schon, die überhaupt einen Onlineshop hatten und unser Warenwirtschaftssystem hat er damals entwickelt gehabt und wir und so ist die Firma dann weitergewachsen. Ich selber bin vor sieben Jahren dazugekommen, vielleicht ein bisschen zu meiner eigenen Vita. Ich glaub, die nächste Frage dann, wer ich bin. Genau, ich komme ja aus der Gegend, bin 55 Jahre alt, bin verheiratet, hat zwei erwachsene Kinder. Meine Frau ist Bekleidungsingenieurin. Mit der bin ich jetzt seit 32 Jahren zusammen, seit 26 Jahren verheiratet. Bin selber eigentlich Informatiker, Technische Informatik also aber auch einen sehr technischen Hintergrund. Hab dann aber gemerkt, dass das mich die Grenzen des Denkens, die Grenzen des Verstehens sehr interessieren. Und das ganze Thema Spiritualität ohne dieses ganze Dogma, wie es mit Kirchen, Sekten, Religionen ausgeht. Aber das interessiert mich nicht, nicht so sehr, bin nicht so sehr dafür offen. Aber das Thema Spiritualität an sich interessiert mich momentan. Ja, genau. Mit meiner Frau war ich 20 Jahre in Asien. Die Frau hat Karriere gemacht in der Textilbranche ausgebildete Bekleidungsingenieurin und ausgebildete Damenschneiderin. Also wirklich im Handwerk gelernt und wirklich mit der Schere, mit der Nadel am Arm, in der Lage, Kleidung herzustellen. Dann ein Ingenieurstudium gemacht. Da habe ich seit dem Studium gelernt. Ja, wir sind dann 20 Jahre nach Asien, meine Frau als Bekleidungsingenieurin, Qualitätssicherung und im ganz großen Bereich Qualitätssicherung für einen großen Konzern der KarstadtQuelle. Da waren wir vier Jahre in Indonesien, da habe ich dann eigenen Zugang zur Bekleidungsbranche bekommen. Ich habe dann nur Großwäscherei gearbeitet. Meine Aufgabe war, eigentlichen Produktionssystem aufzubauen, also ein Datenerfassungssystem für eine

Großwäscherei, um die wesentlichen Produktionsdaten zu erfassen und die Produktionsplanung und Einkaufsplanung zu machen für die zugehörigen Waschmittel. De facto habe ich hinterher aber dann Key Account gemacht. Ich habe dann Jeans gewaschen. Ich habe für die dann Jeans Waschungen entwickelt, für Levi's Strauss. Japan war eine ganz spannende Geschichte. War da vier Jahre in Indonesien unterwegs? In der Zeit haben wir geheiratet und ein Kind bekommen. Wir wollten nach Deutschland wieder zurück. Dann hat meine Frau das Angebot bekommen, nach China zu gehen, nach Shanghai. Das war 1999. Wir sind dann ja mutig wie immer, sind jung und unbedarft wie wir waren, sind gegangen, sind nach China. War eine gute Entscheidung. Wir haben da zwölf Jahre in Shanghai gelebt und gearbeitet. Ich habe mich in dem Bereich dann im Zugang zum Yoga gefunden, bin Yogalehrer worden. Meine Frau hat dann erst die Büroleitung übernommen, dann die Regionalleitung, dann die Gesamtleitung Technik in Asien. Also sehr tief eingestiegen in die ganze Thema Qualitätssicherung in der Produktion von Textilien in Ostasien mit den zugehörigen Randthemen. Randthemen sind es nicht ganz. Es sind für mich wichtige Themen Corporate Social Responsibility, Nachhaltigkeit, soziale Verantwortung, technische Sicherung, Qualitätssicherung, Quality Insurance, Qualitätskontrolle. Wie man sowas überhaupt macht. Ganz, ganz praktisch und pragmatisch und nur so war es auch überprüfbar. Inspektionsunabhängige Prüfinstitute, unabhängige Prüfzentren, Prüfprozesse, statistische Auswertung, Methoden und solche Geschichten. Dann, da war meine Frau sehr tief mit drin. Ich habe es natürlich mitbekommen gehabt, habe es mitgetragen, habe mich dann selbstständig gemacht mit Yoga Kleidung vor 14 Jahren, hat einen eigenen kleinen Betrieb aufgebaut und in dieser Zeit in China ist uns irgendwann bewusst geworden, dass wir auf „Kosten von“ leben, dass alles wirtschaftliche Tun, was wir Menschen machen, im Prinzip ein ausbeuterisches System ist. Also wir leben auf Kosten von Lohnunterschieden, von unterschiedlichen Umweltstandards, von Steuerunterschieden. Und wir haben dann klar gesagt das wollen wir so nicht, wir wollen nicht. Das war eben auch diese Lehre aus dem Yogakurs. Wir wollen eben nicht ausbeuterisch in der Welt unterwegs sein. Und das hat dazu geführt, dass wir gesagt, wir wollen uns nach Möglichkeit selbstständig machen, und zwar so sozial, ethisch verantwortlich wie möglich. Das war auch der Ansatz, wie ich dann Yogakleidung entwickelt habe, eben mit dem Ansatz, so nachhaltig und ökologisch sozialverträglich vertretbar wie möglich zu arbeiten, hab damit anfangs zu arbeiten. War einer der ersten, der Yoga Kleidung nach dem GOTS-Standard produziert hat und hergestellt hat. Ging natürlich bei uns recht gut, weil wir eben vor Ort waren. Wir waren also wirklich vor Ort. Wir wussten wo produziert, wie produziert wird, wir konnten selber hinfahren. Ich habe die Lieferanten selber gesehen. Das ist etwas, was im internationalen Textilhandel eher nicht so ist. Die wenigsten Händler in Europa wissen wirklich, wo und wie vor Ort Produkt produziert wird. Da ist das ganz große Thema diese Nebenproduktionen Subcontracting mit Firmen. Das heißt es wird zwar irgendwo mit zertifizierten Firmen ein schöner Vertrag unterschrieben, aber produziert eigentlich Ruhrpott wo ganz woanders. Das ist so ein typisches Thema, das in der Textilproduktion aktuell ist. Hat uns dazu auch dazu geführt, dass wir nach zwölf Jahren China dann auch nach Bangladesch sind. Wir haben vier Jahre meine Frau und vier Jahre. Ich habe drei Jahre in Bangladesch gelebt und gearbeitet. Das war damals das Thema Rana Plaza. Was schon, was passiert ist, das war die Textilfabrik, die da zusammengebrochen ist, war genau in der Zeit, als wir da waren. Es war genau auch die Aufgabe meiner Frau, so was zu verhindern. Meine Frau hat für die Firma Tchibo in Bangladesch gearbeitet und geholfen das Einkaufsbüro aufzubauen, Lieferanten auszuwählen, Lieferanten Ausbildung zu machen, war auch Mitglied im Akkord, in dem Selbstbündnis, an eben diesem Zusammenschluss von Textilproduzieren Unternehmen in Bangladesch dieses Thema Brandschutz und Arbeit. Arbeitssicherheit sich da angenommen haben und aber meine Frau eben in den Beirat mit drin als größte Bürovertreterin vor Ort das hat auch dazu geführt da wirklich vor Ort

gelebt haben Also ich habe Fabriken gesehen, ich kenne keinen Lieferanten, ich weiß wie so was aussieht. Wir kennen uns also, wir haben einfach einen Zugang dazu gehabt. Dann ja, genau, Ja. Und dann kam ich zurück nach Deutschland. Mit der Firma Bausinger war ich eben als Zulieferer mit Yoga Kleidung in Kontakt. Und da hat mich dann der damalige Inhaber im Strategiemeeting, Kollektionsentwicklung, wie geht es weiter, welche Produkte wollen wir machen, wie, wie, wie, was produzieren wir, wie produzierbar usw. Und hatte mich nie gescheut, Idee, die Firma mitzuübernehmen, also da einzusteigen und dann die Nachfolge der Nachfolger zu machen und dass alles eben macht. Jetzt bin ich seit sieben Jahren wieder hier in Deutschland zurück, meine Frau seit sechs Jahren wieder und so habe ich die Firma übernommen, habe unsere komplette Altersvorsorge auf den Kopf gehauen, wir haben einen ordentlichen Kredit aufgenommen, habe mir eine Firma gekauft und habe jetzt ja 17 Mitarbeiter, also 10 bis 11 Vollzeitäquivalente haben wir eine Firma mit maximal 4000 Quadratmeter Lagerhalle, 300 Quadratmeter eigene Produktion. Wir nähen selber hier bei uns im Haus. Wir haben hier relativ viele kleine Zulieferer. Wir haben in unserer Lieferantenliste 60 verschiedene Namen, also sind es fünf, sechs große Größen mit dem größten Umsatz. Der Rest ist kleine Dienstleister, Firmen, wo man Kleinigkeiten einkaufen oder zu uns zuarbeiten lassen. Aber das Interessante ist wir machen ganz groß, um so ein Gefühl dafür zu kriegen. Im Jahr um die 2.2 Millionen € Umsatz. Wir haben um die 15000 bis 18000 Ver Sendungen im Jahr. Also so ganz, ganz grob, was so an Sendungen rausgeht. Wir bedienen 92 % unserer Kunden sitzen in Deutschland, 97 %. Unsere Produkte werden hier in der Gegend produziert. Also wir haben wirklich den Ansatz, hier so regional und so ökologisch verantwortlich wie möglich zu produzieren. Das hat sie auch noch verstärkt, seit ich hier bin. Wir machen so gut wie keinen Wiederverkauf, weil unsere, wir nennen das Inklusion von sozialen Umwelt kosten, das, was im Onlinehandel normalerweise nicht gemacht wird, das machen wir als GWÖ bilanzierendes Unternehmen. Also wir sind auch GWÖ bilanzierend, wir sind da ein Pionierunternehmen. Ich bin in der Bewegung ziemlich stark aktiv. Wir sind dabei noch CO2 bilanziert. Also wir haben jetzt CO2 Bilanz gemacht und wir waren die letzten sieben Jahre GOTS-Zertifiziert als Unternehmen, Wobei die Zertifizierungskunst bei uns gerade am Auslaufen ist, denn die Zertifizierungshürden Prozess Umstände werden immer, immer bürokratischer, immer aufwendiger und dann immer für unseren Businessfall weniger gerecht, wenn wir eben nicht in Fernost produzieren. Wir produzieren ja hier in Deutschland. Ja, also für uns ist es leider nicht mehr so, so maßgeblich. Wir waren in Vorgesprächen mit dem „Grünen Knopf“-Zertifizierung nach Grüner Knopf Farmer Audit Gespräche gehabt, haben die Audit Vorbereitung gehabt, haben es dann aber abgebrochen. Auch hier, weil da Auflagen da sind, die für große Discounter und große Importeure gültig und richtig sind. Klar, aber für uns als Hersteller, der auf der Schwäbischen Alb in Behindertenwerkstätten produziert, ist einfach Unfug, ein Beschwerdemanagement bei den Lieferstellen ein Einführen zu holen, weil das haben die eh alle selber und da waren die die Auditoren leider wenig, sondern sagen wenig verständnisvoll dieses Jahr die haben ihre Checkliste muss jeder erfüllen. Klar Prozess. Aber wenn ich jetzt zum Beispiel unsere behinderten Leute dort kommen und sage, wir müssen jetzt da Beschwerde Briefkasten aufhängen und müssen Ablauf Pläne machen und bebilderte Fluchtwege, wo die nächsten, wo die wo die schwangeren Frauen sich hinlegen können. Hallo, da haben die Behinderten alle Eins-zu-eins-Betreuung zum Teil. Also das sind alles so Dinge da merkt man, das ist nicht wirklich praxisgerecht und das ist zutreffend für die großen Importeure, die in, in Bangladesch, in Kambodscha, in Vietnam, in China, sonst wo produzieren lassen, in Indien, da macht es Sinn, da ist es auch Verständnis verständlich und führt auch hin. Aber für uns, für unsere deutsche Produktionsumgebung ist das ja leider ein bisschen daneben. Genau da kommen wir her. Genau. Das habe ich schon viel erzählt.

Speaker 1: [00:13:37] Vielen Dank. Auf jeden Fall für die sehr ausführliche Vorstellung. Es war sehr interessant und du hast ja da wirklich sehr viel Erfahrung. Von daher würde ich sagen, wir können direkt ins Implementierungsframework einsteigen. Also das die gesamte Interviewfragen hangeln sich jetzt ja quasi an den einzelnen Stationen ab und wir prüfen das jetzt zusammen einmal ab. Der erste Schritt hier ist die Firmendiagnose. Da geht es darum, dass man die firmeninternen Werte reflektiert, dass die erst mal entwickelt und erstellt werden. Und dass ja die Mission und die Vision geklärt wird und das Manifestiert wird.

Speaker 2: [00:14:20] Das haben wir gemacht. Das war auch schon intrinsisch von der Firmengründung, also auch vom Vorbesitzer geprägt. Als ich in die Firma mit eingestiegen bin, haben wir uns sogar die Mühe gemacht uns einen Nachhaltigkeitsberater zu engagieren. Es war damals ein Leiter von dem Buddhistischen Zentrum in Bali, Zossen. Mit dem wir diskutiert haben. Was ist der Grund unseres Tuns? Also mehr aus der spirituellen Sicht. Warum machen wir, was wir tun und wie wir es tun wollen? Was ist unser Antrieb? Da geht es also nicht darum, einen Businessplan aufzustellen, wo maximale Profitabilität rauskommt, sondern es geht darum, einen Mehrwert für die Welt dazu zu stellen. Und das haben wir uns als Vision Auftrieb. Man muss eine Vision formuliert. Die Vision besagt, dass wir einen Beitrag leisten wollen für eine schöne liebe, nachhaltige, ökologische, gesunde, faire, freundliche Welt, die enkeltauglich ist, die in der Zukunft die Welt verbessert. Dazu haben wir Grundwerte definiert. Die haben wir dann Bio, fair und nah genannt, recht plakativ. Mittlerweile ist das ziemlich abgedroschene Schlagwort, aber das war vor. Vor sechs, sieben Jahren war es noch ziemlich innovativ.

Speaker I: [00:15:29] Ja.

Speaker B: [00:15:30] Bio heißt, Wir versuchen, unseren ökologischen Fußabdruck so klein wie möglich zu halten. Wobei das auch klar sein muss Alles, was wir tun, verbraucht Ressourcen, egal in welcher Form. Egal, was wir machen, wir verbrauchen Ressourcen. Das wird jetzt einen Zoom Call haben verbraucht Energie. Wir brauchen Ressourcen. Das Thema war, wir wollten sozial fair sein, sprich wir wollten niemanden ausbeuten. Das sind eigentlich yogische Werte. Kommt aus dem Yoga raus, dass wir alle Menschen gleichbehandeln, dass wir davon ausgehen, dass in jedem Menschen ein göttlicher Funke drin ist, der uns alle Menschen auch eint und gleichmacht. Das heißt, wir stellen uns nicht über den anderen, wir versuchen auch, den anderen nicht auszubeuten. Das sind auch die logischen Werte. Also wir nennen es Yamas. Und Niyamas ist schon Wertemodell aus dem Yoga raus, der zum Beispiel besagt, dass wir unsere Mitmenschen so behandeln, wie wir behandelt werden wollen. Das heißt ich, ich beute niemanden aus, ich halte niemanden hin, ich belüge niemanden, ich betrüge, niemand übt ich über Vorteile, niemanden, sondern ich versuche leben und leben lassen auf allen Seiten, dem, dem gerecht zu werden. Das ist so, das was in uns drin ist. Und das ist das, was wir mit sozialer Gerechtigkeit sagen. Das heißt, wir zahlen. So wird deutlich mehr als Mindestlohn als Beispiel unsere Mindestlohn 14 € in der Stunde zu bekommen, unsere kleinsten Mitarbeiter. Dann ist es etwas, was bei vielen Unternehmen eben nicht so ist. [00:17:00] Auch so wir machen mit unseren Lieferanten zum Beispiel keine intensiven oder ausufernden Preisverhandlungen. Wenn unser Lieferant und sagt, das war für die Behindertenwerkstatt das der rote Stoff leider Farbstoff teurer werden, Abnahmemenge größer, der Preis steigt jetzt um sieben oder 10 %. Dann ist es halt so, wir müssen es einfach hinnehmen und schlucken. Das machen wir dann auch. Das Nächste was wir machen wir sind. Zum Thema Finanzen versuchen wir so nachhaltig wie möglich zu arbeiten. Sprich wir versuchen, ausstehende Rechnungen nicht bis zum Ende des Zahlungsziels hinauszuzögern,

sondern weil sie eben eine Schuld ist, also aus energetischer Sicht sind wir in der Schuld von jemandem. Wir versuchen, die Schulden sofort zu begleichen. Das ist etwas, wo meine Frau grad sehr darauf aus ist, eben auch Yogalehrerin. Das ist etwas, was in uns auch drin ist. Wir versuchen keine Außenstände zu haben. Wenn wir eine Rechnung bekommen, überprüfen wir die Klar normales Vorgehen in der Buchhaltung. Wir überprüft den Leistungsinhalt, den Leistungsumfang und die zugehörigen Preise. Wenn alles in Ordnung ist, wird die Rechnung freigegeben und nach Möglichkeit am gleichen, spätestens am nächsten Tag überwiesen. Das führt dazu, dass die Lieferanten natürlich auf uns mit uns sehr zufrieden sind als als Kunden, weil sie einfach wissen, sie liefern uns Ware, schicken uns eine Rechnung. Zwei Tage später ist das Geld da. Das ist ein Traum.

Speaker 1: [00:18:26] Ja, okay.

Speaker 2: [00:18:27] Und das ist und das ist. Das ist ein Zusammenleben und Zusammenarbeiten, wie wir uns es eigentlich immer gewünscht haben. Sich selber, auch als ich mich selbstständig gemacht habe. Ich weiß das noch, da geht man in Vorleistung, man schreibt eine Rechnung und wartet wochenlang aufs Geld und bis irgendwann mal bezahlt und dann wieder was abgezogen, weil irgendwas war. Ist immer irgendwie ausgebeutet und es ist genau das, was wir nicht wollen. Wir wollen wertschätzend mit unseren Lieferanten umgehen und es gleich natürlich in die andere Richtung zu den Kunden Berührungsgruppe, der Kunden genauso gleicht. Die wollen wir nicht übervorteilen. Das heißt, wir versuchen, von denen keine Mondpreise einzufordern. Auch wenn wir Produkte haben, die nur wir zum Beispiel haben, versuchen wir einfach marktgerechte, faire Preise zu machen. Und wir haben also auch eine Ethikcharta geschrieben, wir mit unseren Kunden zum Beispiel umgehen. Aber kommen wir zurück zu den drei Grundwerten Bio, fair und nah. Das dritte ist, dass das Thema des Gebot der Regionalität. Ich habe ein paar Semester BWL an der Fernuni studiert und dann einfach über den Blick, wir waren ja in der Globalisierung unterwegs in Asien 20 Jahre lang und dann ist mir klar worden, dass eins der Grundübel im wirtschaftlichen Zusammentun ist, wenn wir Systeme ausbluten lassen, das heißt, wir haben in einem Land und in einer Region haben wir eine Wertschöpfung und eine Wirtschaftskraft und das Geld fließt in andere Regionen ab, um Steuern zu umgehen. Und das ist eigentlich nicht richtig, weil es den Heimatbereich ja schwächt. Also Mittelabfluss, Geldabfluss schwächte den Heimatbereich. Wir wollen versuchen, so regional wie möglich zu arbeiten. Deswegen suchen wir uns auch unsere Dienstleister, unsere Zulieferer in unserem näheren Umfeld raus. Kleines Beispiel Wir haben in der Vergangenheit einen Katalog ausgedruckt. Ein Katalog ist bei uns immer ein ziemlich großer Aufwand. Die Druckereien hier sind in dem ziemlichen Wettbewerb auch zueinander und wir haben gesagt, wir wollen ganz gezielt in Deutschland drucken, auch wenn da die Druckkosten zehn, 15 % höher sind als in Tschechien oder Polen. [00:20:36] Und deswegen haben wir gesagt, wir zahlen diesen Mehrpreis, weil das eben der regionale Wirtschaftskreislauf ist. Also es sind hier Entwicklungen, ein Wirtschaftskreislauf, die natürlich auch zu stärken. Führt natürlich dazu, dass wir auf der anderen Seite unsere Wirtschaftlichkeit natürlich beschädigen. Muss man formal so sehen. Also wer versucht, ethisch so nachhaltig wie möglich zu arbeiten, ist auf der ist fast zwangsläufig auf der wirtschaftlichen Seite, auf der schwächeren Seite. Das ist etwas, das ist so dieses Spiel, in dem wir jetzt als nachhaltiges Unternehmen immer wieder mit zu kämpfen haben. Das heißt, alles was, was dem Thema Nachhaltigkeit dient, beschädigt uns auf der wirtschaftlichen Seite. Co2 Kompensation kostet Geld. GOTS-Zertifizierung kostet Geld. Unsere ist so, unser soziales Engagement kostet Geld. Das sind so Sachen da, da haben wir keinen wirtschaftlichen Mehrwert. Dann können wir Ihnen wirklich vielleicht ein bisschen nutzen, aber eigentlich einen großen Mehrwert auf. Auf der produktiven Seite,

auf der Margen Seite haben wir nichts davon. Und das sind so Dinge. Das setzt ein ganz grundsätzliches Umdenken voraus bei den Unternehmern. Ja, und ist das, was ich bei mir eben auch als Anspruch habe. Ich möchte eben ein Gegenmodell entwickeln, weg von dem, von dem Raubtierkapitalismus, wo wir ja ursprünglich eigentlich herkommen, hin zu einem gemeinwohlorientierten, gesunden, verantwortlichen Unternehmertum. Und in diesem Bereich kommt eben auch rein, was du als Thema hast, mit Nachhaltigkeit in Produktdesign. Da kann man die einzelnen Punkte noch ein bisschen genauer anschauen.

Speaker 1: [00:22:18] Ja. Aber jetzt ganz kurz zu dem Punkt Hast du da jemals irgendwelche Hindernisse vor dir gehabt, als es um die Werte ging oder gerade zum Beispiel auch, als ihr euch diesen Nachhaltigkeitsberater reingeholt habt? Gab es damals irgendwelche Barrieren oder Probleme?

Speaker 2: [00:22:35] Nein, nur aus wirtschaftlicher Sicht. Also von uns internen Mitarbeitern, die finden wir schön, die freuen sich. Also, wir haben auch keine Probleme, Mitarbeiter zu finden, weil die eben auch sagen, wir wollen in dem werteorientierten Unternehmen arbeiten. Wenn auch die Art der Mitarbeiterführung, versuchen wir natürlich anders zu gestalten. Uns ist es sehr familiär, wir haben einen ganz anderen Umgangston als in anderen Firmen. Also, wenn ich es anders schon kennen gelernt habe. Das ist aber auch was, was ich aus meiner Berufserfahrung und meiner Vita mitgebracht habe. Hier ein kleines Beispiel Als ich in Indonesien in der Großwäscherei war, war es ein sehr erfolgreicher deutscher Wäscher, der die Maschine aufgebaut hat. Und er hatte ein Team asiatischer Experten, also Sri Lanker, Filipinos, Inder und eben Indonesier. Und ich war als Deutscher mit dabei und wir hatten ein Management Meeting. Da ging es um meine Produktionsprobleme, nach der der Deutsche einen der Sri Lankanesen vor versammelter Mannschaft zusammenschissen und also einfach das Gesicht genommen. Der stand mit tränenden Augen im Meetingraum und so wollte ich nie, nie, nie mit Menschen umgehen. Ja, einfach diese Würde zu nehmen. Das geht nicht. Das kann ich das auch wenn es in Anführungszeichen nur ein Sri Lankanese ist. Nein, es ist ein Mensch, so wie jeder andere von uns. Das war etwas, was mich nachhaltig dazu bewegt, also das hat mich wirklich so eindringlich bewegt. Das möchte ich nie, nie haben und ich möchte in der Verantwortung sein, als Unternehmer, als Firmenchef, als Geschäftsführer sich solche Situationen eben nicht haben muss. So was gibt es bei uns nicht. Also wir machen Problemlösung auf eine andere Art und Weise. Und es war eines der Dinge, die ich da eben daraus gelernt habe.

Speaker 1: [00:24:31] Ja, ist. Okay, dann würde ich sagen, haben wir den ersten Punkt durch und kommen auch schon zum nächsten Punkt der Stakeholderanalyse. Hier explizit indirect and direct Stakeholderanalyse vorgeschlagen, dass es von value sensitive Design ein Tool und da ist aber meine erste Frage an dich wie identifiziert ihr eure Stakeholder bei Bausinger?

Speaker 2: [00:24:58] Da die die Interessenten an der Firma sind. Wenn es aus wirtschaftlicher Sicht sieht natürlich die Inhaberschaft. Also alle die, die Anteile am Unternehmen haben und das ist bei uns ganz einfach, das bin nämlich ich. (*lacht*) Ja, das Schöne ist, wir haben keine Bankverbindlichkeiten. Also, die Bank ist bei uns, ist nicht in der Lage, dass sie uns als Kreditgeber auf die Füße tritt und uns Einfluss nimmt in die Art und Weise, wie ich die Firma führe. Wir haben private Geldgeber. Also so ein Jahr sind drei, vier Personen aus unserem näheren Umfeld, die uns sehr verbunden sind, persönlich sehr verbunden sind, die uns so eine Art Cashflow Reserve gegeben haben. Wir haben einfach vom Verständnis her, wir haben einen variablen Wirtschaftsverlauf übers

Jahr hinweg. Das heißt, wir haben ein relativ starkes Weihnachts- und Wintergeschäft. Das ist einfach in der Yoga Szene üblich so. Jetzt den Sommer über ist das Geschäft eher abflauen und nachlassend, auch normal. Und zum Saisonanlauf auf den Herbst hin müssen wir dann Ware aufbauen, um eben eine große Warenverfügbarkeit zu haben. Und da kommen wir normalerweise in den Liquiditätseingpass rein. Das ist eigentlich normal. Und um diesen Liquiditätseingpass ein bisschen ausgleichen zu können, haben wir eben private Geldgeber, die bei uns Geld der Firma zur Verfügung gestellt haben. Größenordnung 150.000 €, die wir denen verzinst haben. Aber die haben dabei keinen kein Interesse da einzuwirken in die Art und Weise, wie ich die Firma führe. Das sind also Stakeholder, die hier keinen großen Einfluss haben und der andere Stakeholder, also der Inhaber, in dem Fall bin ich. Und ich habe natürlich schon Interesse, dass die Firma wirtschaftlich gesund dasteht, dass wir also so profitabel arbeiten, dass wir eben nicht die Firma ausbluten, sondern dass wir gewisse Reserven schaffen und gewisse Plagen bilden, um eben investieren und uns weiterentwickeln zu können. [00:27:10] Aber ich bin im Gegensatz zu vielen Investoren nicht daran interessiert, den Profit maximal zu optimieren und um möglichst viel Geld aus dem aus der Maschinerie einer Firma rauszuziehen. Also mir geht es vielmehr darum, ich nenne es wirtschaftliche Resilienz zu haben, dass die Firma an sich wirtschaftlich resilient ist, sprich mit den Veränderungen des Marktes, mit den Veränderungen der Zeit, mit allem, was dazugehört, einfach umgehen kann und da auch veränderungsfähig ist. Das nenne ich wirtschaftliche Resilienz. Wir haben jetzt auch drei Etappen Ukraine Krieg, auch nach Corona Umsatz Rückgang, der für uns auch ziemlich dramatisch war. Ich glaube, dass hat viele Firmen getroffen, hat uns auch ziemlich an die Grenzen gebracht. Aber da eben das auszuhalten, damit umgehen zu können, das ist das, was wirtschaftliche Resilienz ausmacht, da eben nicht gleich Insolvenz anzumelden, nicht gleich die Flinte ins Korn zu werfen, nicht gleich das Geschäftsmodell komplett über den Haufen zu werfen, sondern zu wissen okay, wir müssen uns anpassen, wir müssen uns verändern, aber wir können das. In dem Rahmen dessen, die wir uns selbst gesteckt haben, können wir weiterarbeiten. Und das ist das, was wir eigentlich machen wollen. Und das ist das, was ich auch als zukunftsfähig sehe und was ich, was ich auch in der Zukunft so weiterführen möchte. Also wenn ich sage, mir geht es nicht darum, im Jahresschnitt möglichst großen Profit zu erwirtschaften und mir geht es darum, die Firma dahingehend zu entwickeln, dass das für die ganzen betroffenen Berührungsgruppen, also Lieferanten, Mitarbeiter, Kunden und die Gesellschaft eingebunden sind, dass wir da einen stabilen Mehrwert bieten. Ja, das ist, das ist die Idee dabei.

Speaker 1: [00:28:58] Okay. Das heißt, du identifizierst die eigentlich quasi aus dem Tagesgeschäft, wie es halt bei euch in der Firma abläuft. Und priorisieren ist natürlich, wer wie großen Einfluss hat und natürlich bist du dann irgendwo der größte Stakeholder bei Bausinger.

Speaker 2: [00:29:11] Ja, mehr oder weniger. Da bin ich halt der Größte, Da muss ich einfach mal so sagen. (*lacht*)

Speaker 1: [00:29:16] Okay, dann, wenn wir weiter gehen, jetzt in diesem Schaubild kommen wir zum Ersten von diesen values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoints. Nachdem wir jetzt die Stakeholder analysiert haben und identifiziert haben, werden die da quasi zum Ersten Mal jetzt in diesem Modell mit einbezogen. Das heißt, die firmeninternen Werte werden mit den Werten, die die Stakeholder haben, abgeglichen und das ist dann die angemessene Berücksichtigung der Interessen aller Stakeholdergruppen.

Speaker 2: [00:29:51] Richtig, das ist in meinem Fall natürlich relativ einfach, weil ich natürlich schon als Stakeholder und als Inhaber weiß, dass ich die Werte eben haben will. Das ist bei anderen Firmen, das wird wahrscheinlich für dich dann auch spannend sein. Bei anderen Firmen, wo zum Beispiel das Management oder die Unternehmensführung gegen die Interessen der Stakeholder Nachhaltigkeit umsetzen. Ich habe es so schon angedeutet Nachhaltigkeit kostet Marge, kostet Profitabilität und da einfach höhere Preise bezahlst, weil du eben nicht billigst einkaufst, weil du Verantwortung übernimmst für das, was du machst und wie du es machst. Und das ist im Regelfall gegen das Hauptinteresse der Stakeholder. Die Stakeholder haben im Regelfall Interesse daran, aus einer Firma, wenn sie investieren, als Anteilseigner, als Anteilsinhaber eine Profitabilität oder eine gesunde Margen Situation heraus zu bekommen. Sie wollen auf jeden Fall eine Wertschöpfung haben, die Wertsteigerung haben. Das ist die intrinsisch normale Erwartungshaltung von Inhabern und allen, die den Anteil oder ein Interesse an einem Anteil von Unternehmen haben. Jeder Fondsinhaber der in einen Nachhaltigkeitsfonds investiert oder in Immobilienfonds, möchte natürlich maximal viel Rendite daraus haben. Ganz plakativ, Wenn du auf die Bank gehst, dort Nachhaltigkeit verkauft oder in Immobilienfonds Liste 8 % Profitabilität haben, ist den wenigsten klar, dass es nur geht, indem er die Mieter in den zugehörigen Gebäuden ausbeutet, unter Druck setzt. Aber das sind diese widersprüchlichen Dinge. Damit muss man dann auch klarkommen. Das ist dieser Konflikt Bereich von den Stakeholdern mit der Nachhaltigkeit. Das ist mit das größte Thema. Da einen Ausgleich zu finden ist die ganz große Herausforderung.

Speaker 1: [00:31:40] Und wie gehst du das an? Wie bindest du deine Stakeholder dann aktiv rein in den Prozess?

Speaker 2: [00:31:45] Ich bin ja selber Stakeholder. Ich habe da keine, keine weiteren Personen. Deswegen ist ja relativ leicht in unserem Falle, dass bei anderen Firmen, die fremdfinanziert sind, die mit Investoren zusammenarbeiten, Startups zum Beispiel. Es ist ein ganz anderes Thema. Da ist dann eher die Frage, ob es gesellschaftlich andere Formen des Eigentums gibt, zum Beispiel Verantwortung oder Verantwortungseigentum, genossenschaftliches Arbeiten oder Purpose-orientiertes Arbeiten. Das sind solche, solche Dinge. Da mache ich mir auch gerade ein bisschen Gedanken dazu, wenn ich eben auch denke, dass es Eigentumsformen sind und Strukturen sind, die dazu förderlich sind, nachhaltiger zu agieren, nachhaltig zu agieren, als wenn du das jetzt nur innerhalb der Investoren getriebene Firmen sind. Ja.

Speaker 1: [00:32:39] Okay, verstehe. Aber grundsätzlich so ein Punkt, wie der hier vorgeschlagene values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoint, dass man, wenn man halt noch die anderen Stakeholdergruppen hat, die einbinden muss in sein Innovationsprojekt. Würdest du so einen Punkt grundsätzlich sinnvoll ansehen?

Speaker 2: [00:32:53] Klar. Ja, klar. Der Adler muss auf jeden Fall den Stakeholdern mal so den Interessenten mal klar machen, warum er so was machen sollte. Und wenn es nur um die Überlebensfähigkeit oder die Marktsituation oder die Marktpositionierung des Unternehmens im Markt zu festigen, wissen wir uns ja auch mit dem Thema widmen. Okay, wir geben einen Teil der Profitabilität auf, bewegen uns aber einen Bereich in unserer Szene, wo andere eben nicht nachhalten können oder wollen. Dadurch festigen wir unsere eigene Marktposition durch eine ganz klare Positionierung, die uns auch eindeutig macht. Aber es geht halt zu Kosten der ultimativen Profitabilität. Aber andererseits sichert es auch wieder den Bestand des Unternehmens, weil wir

dadurch eben auch Kunden an uns finden, die dann sagen „Das finden wir toll, das finden wir gut. Das ist so, was möchten wir unterstützen“.

Speaker 1: [00:33:43] Ja, gut, dann können wir auch schon in den nächsten Schritt übergehen. Und hier fängt ja der gesamte Innovationsprozess an, der ist in drei Teile aufgeteilt und der erste ist vom Design Thinking Ansatz inspiriert worden. Und da geht es dann darum, Nachdem man im Checkpoint davor die die Stakeholder schon einbezogen hat, wird dann hier aus allem, was davor passiert ist, firmenintern Werte, Werte der Stakeholder wird dann, nachdem die verstanden werden. Nachdem dann Observation durchgeführt worden ist, wird dann ein Standpunkt definiert. Und das läuft im iterativen Prozess ab, das heißt, der kann so oft wiederholt werden wie gewollt. Genau hier ist meine erste Frage an dich: Wie könntest du dir vorstellen, dass man hier am besten eine Ausgangssituation für den eigentlichen Innovationsprozess erschaffen kann, indem man alle diese wichtigen Werte berücksichtigt? Zum Beispiel können wir jetzt auch, dass der Design Thinking Ansatz hier passend ist. Hast du was anderes im Kopf? Wie schätzt du das ein?

Speaker 2: [00:34:54] Also ich muss erstmal sehen, was dieses Hauptgeschäftsmodell eines Unternehmens ist. In unserem Fall sind das Produkte, keine Dienstleistungen. Wir schaffen Produkte, die unseren Kunden Mehrwert bieten sollen. Diese Produkte haben alle eine Auswirkung auf die Welt. Und hier ist das Mittel das Wesentlichste nach meinem Dafürhalten, dass man ein Wissen, was diese Produkte in ihrer, in ihrem Schaffensprozess, in ihrem Lebensprozess, also über die Lieferkette hinweg, über die Lebensdauer bis zur Entsorgung hinweg, was die für eine gesamte Ökobilanz haben, was sie für einen Fußabdruck haben. Ja, das ist mit dem, was ich sage, wie man mit physischen Sachen umgeht und sich Gedanken machen muss. Das heißt, was ist der Ressourceneinsatz, was ist der Energieeinsatz, was ist der, was ist der Arbeitseinsatz? Wie sieht es aus mit der Wertschöpfung, wie sieht es aus mit den Steuern, wie sieht es aus mit den Transportwegen, wie sieht es aus mit der Lebensdauer, mit der Haltbarkeit? Wie sieht es aus mit der Entsorgung hinterher oder mit der Weiternutzung? Das sind so Dinge, da haben wir für uns grundsätzlich gesagt, wir wollen eben da Verantwortung übernehmen, so ökologisch wie möglich arbeiten, Sprich wir würden am liebsten fossil frei werden. Ja, also einfach sagen können, wir wollen einfach nur noch Ressourcen nutzen, die eben nachwachsen. Also nachwachsende Ressourcen, organische Materialien, nach Möglichkeit Was schwierig ist. Zudem möchten wir gerne kreislauffähig werden. Das heißt, dass wir sagen okay, wir wollen eben nicht mehr. Wir wollen von dieser unidirektionalen Verbrauchssituation, das heißt, dass Ressourcen dann aus dem Boden gegraben, ganz plump werden in der Fabrik unter Energieeinsatz zum Produkt gehämmert, genagelt, gebaut, geschraubt. Wie auch immer, gehen zum Kunden, der es zwei, drei Jahre benutzt. Anschließend fliegen sie auf die Müllhalde oder in die Müllverbrennung und lösen sich im besten Fall in CO2 auf. Das wollen wir eben auflösen Richtung Kreislaufwirtschaft. Das heißt, dass wir eben bezogen auf die auf die Erde als unsere einzige Ressource, die wir ja haben, versuchen wir eben klimaneutral oder umweltneutral zu werden. [00:37:05] Das ist es, was wir brauchen. Erstmal viele Informationen und die meisten Informationen sind den meisten Menschen gar nicht klar. Das heißt, was ist der Energieeinsatz, was sind die Ressourcen, die es brauch. Dem haben wir uns versucht so zu stellen und das hat dann auch eine Auswirkung darauf, wie wir mit neuen Produkten oder mit Weiterentwicklungen umgehen. Wir haben uns da einen sogenannten Einkaufsratgeber geschrieben. Das war so eine Idee daher raus, wo wir sagen, wir wollen basierend auf unseren Firmenwerten „Bio Fair Nah“, haben wir uns einen Einkaufsratgeber geben. Wobei das relativ schwierig ist, da sowas zu quantifizieren zu qualifizieren. Denn was sind die richtigen validen Zahlen? Wir haben dazu, wir machen es eben ein bisschen hemdsärmelig. Wir haben diese drei

Grundwerte Bio fair nah runtergebrochen in 38 Subkriterien und versuchen die dann zu bewerten, je nach Produkt, wie man es entweder ins Sortiment aufnimmt oder selber. Jetzt als Beispiel: Das Thema Regionalität heißt 0 bis 50 Kilometer Entfernung sind so zehn Punkte, 50 bis 150 Kilometer sind so sieben Punkte, 150 bis 400 Kilometer sind fünf Punkte jenseits von 1000 ist null Punkte. Als Beispiel. Da haben wir so ein Punktemodell uns entwickelt und versuchen über diese 38 Subkriterien, die wir für uns selber definiert haben, dann insgesamt gibt es dann 300 Punkte, also 100 Punkte für regional, 100 Punkte für ökologisch, 100 Punkte für soziale Gerechtigkeit, 300 Punkte und in jedem Bereich müssen mindestens 50 Punkte erreicht werden, also mindestens die Hälfte. [00:38:48] Wenn ein Produkt rausfällt, versuchen wir das wieder nachzubessern durch eine bessere Lieferantenauswahl oder besseren Produktionsprozess. Oder wir sagen nein, dieses Produkt hat in unserem Sortiment nichts verloren, weil der gesamte Ökobilanz Schnitt und Fußabdruck von diesem Produkt, was man da so machen hat eher eine negative Auswirkung auf die Welt. Das führt dann dazu, dass wir Produkte von vornherein aus unserem Sortiment rausschmeißen, die andere Mitbewerber mit Unternehmen liebend gerne im Sortiment haben. Klassisches Beispiel Yoga Blöcke aus Schaumstoff, die in Fernost produziert werden. (*lacht*) Da gibt es die tollsten bunten Schaumblöcke, die werden irgendwo in Kambodscha aufgeschäumt, werden mit einem Schiff ums halb um die halbe Welt gefahren sind bei uns dann in Deutschland werden da vier Mal im Jahr verwendet und nach zehn Jahren schmeißen sie weg, weil sie unansehnlich sind. Die für mich so ein klassisches Beispiel dafür, wie es eben nicht machen sollte, die kommen mit guten Margen und werden günstig verkauft. So nein, wir machen nur Korkblöcke. FSC-Anbau werden in werden in Deutschland produziert, in einer kleinen Werkstatt, die Orthopädieprodukte und Kinderspielzeug macht. Der Korkblock ist im Einkauf fünfmal so teuer wie so ein Schaumstoffblock. Verkaufspreis ist ähnlich. Das heißt, da kommt mir das alles zu tragen. Das Wissen um die um die Auswirkung des Produktes mit der Bewertung und der zugehörigen unternehmerischen Entscheidung. Ich will so ein Produkt nicht meinen Kunden anbieten, hat eine Auswirkung auf die Sterblichkeit.

Speaker 1: [00:40:26] Gut. Das heißt, du hast ja auch jetzt schon erzählt, dass ihr euch den Einkaufsratgeber geschrieben habt, ihr seid dann da immer wieder durch, habt dann eure Werte runtergebrochen und somit habt ihr dann diese Ausgangssituation quasi entwickelt. Wenn wir dann jetzt im nächsten Schritt kommen, steht man dann quasi richtig in den Innovationsprozess rein, das heißt Ideenfindung, man entwickelt ein Konzept, man macht einen Prototyp und man testet ihn. Wie geht ihr das an oder wie läuft so was bei euch ab? Und meinst du, das ist so, wie es hier abgebildet ist, sinnvoll für den Prozess?

Speaker 2: [00:41:03] Ist ein sinnvoller Prozess. Ja klar, wobei wir natürlich eine kleine Firma sind und wo wir jetzt nicht so einen regelmäßigen fortlaufenden Innovationsprozess am Laufen haben. Wichtig ist auch immer, dass diejenigen Menschen bei uns die, die in der Produktentwicklung tätig sind, weil sie zum Beispiel unsere Gabi, unsere Brigitte, unser Armin und unsere Christine, dass die diese Grundwerte verstehen, dass die schon gar nicht auf den Gedanken kommen zu sagen „Hey, wir wollen da ne neue Tasche machen und das sollen unbedingt da Aluminiumfolie und Nylon Applikationen drin sein“. Das wissen die von vornherein. Aha, wir arbeiten in einer nachhaltigen Firma. Wir versuchen sogar Baumwolle zu ersetzen durch regional angebauten Hanf als Beispiel oder durch Brennnessel Stoff, den wir hier versuchen zu sourcen. Also wir versuchen schon danach zu gucken, hoppla, mit welchen Materialien, mit welchen Verarbeitungsschritten können wir überhaupt arbeiten? Was interessiert überhaupt unsere Zielgruppe und was ist überhaupt konform mit unseren Firmenwerten und diese, diese Wertekonformität? Es muss den Entwicklern auch klar sein.

Speaker 1: [00:42:11] Wie sicher stellst du diese Wertekonformität sicher bei euch?

Speaker1: [00:42:17] Im Gespräch. Wir diskutieren drüber. Wir haben es jetzt gerade. Wir sind gerade dabei, für Kinder Produkte zu machen. Wir sind relativ stark im Thema Kinder Yoga, machen auch Produkte für viel für Kinder. Und da gucken wir schon, was sind die Bedürfnisse von den Kindern, aber auch von den Eltern, die die Produkte, die ihre Kinder natürlich kaufen sollen nach Möglichkeit. Was ist da gut, was ist davon vernünftig? Und da kommt doch schon einiges über das gemeinsame Vorverständnis. Wir schauen uns Produkte an, zum Beispiel Stillkissen, wer gerade Stillkissen entwickelt, mit denen Frauen ihre Kinder stillen können. Wie so was aussieht, dass es von den Materialien her vernünftig ist, dass es von der Schadstofffreiheit günstig ist, dass es von der Produktionsenergiebilanz, also die gesamte Ökobilanz des Produktes gut funktioniert, dass es Kreislauf fähig ist, dass wir Materialien verwenden, die eben Recycling oder einfach entsorgbar sind, dass es eben keine Probleme gibt. Da machen wir uns einfach Gedanken dazu. Und das hat dann eben Ausdruck auch ins Produktdesign mit rein. So geht es los. Also wir fangen immer an wertebasiert Gedanken zu machen, was passt zu uns von den Werten her. Dann versuchen wir uns natürlich dann ins Produktdesign mit reinbringen zu lassen. Wie ist es produkttechnisch richtig, machbar, sinnvoll? Wie funktioniert es richtig vom Produkt Design her? Und natürlich setzt die Überlegung dann die Wirtschaftlichkeit. [00:43:47] Das heißt, was ist ein marktgerechter Preis für so ein Produkt? Und wenn man merkt, hoppla, mit unseren Produktions- oder Entstehungskosten und dem Marktpreis, da kommen wir Margen mäßig nicht zusammen, da haben wir einfach kein leichtes Spiel. Was kann man dann eben optimieren, aber eben in diesem Parameter ökologisch, sozial, gerecht und umwelt- und kundengerecht, also von der Nutzbarkeit her, dass man eben da keine Kompromisse macht. Okay, da muss man dann versuchen sich anzupassen. Das hat dann Auswirkungen, wie man Beispiel Verarbeitungsschritte macht, welche Verarbeitungsschritte lassen wir weg und was kann man da vereinfachen. Wir haben zum Beispiel bei Kissen, wir machen Kräuterkissen. Bei den bisherigen Kräuterkissen haben wir Hüllen mit dem Reißverschluss gemacht. Es war im Nachgang immer schwierig die zu recyceln und die Reißverschlüsse raus zu trennen. Mittlerweile machen wir ja sogenannte Hotelvorverschlüsse bei denen bei den Kissenhüllen. Das sind dann Verschlüsse, wo eben kein Reißverschluss ist, wenn man so will wird durch eine überlappende Textilfalte, das Innenleben geschützt. Dann kommt es zu Verarbeitungsschritt, der dann einfach der Nachhaltigkeit besser dient und auch von der Produktion her etwas einfacher ist.

Speaker 1: [00:45:05] Okay, verstehe. Dann erkläre ich dir mal kurz was zu diesen values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoints, die da immer wieder auftauchen in den Model. Die haben den Zweck, dass nach jeder von den verschiedenen Innovationsprozess Phasen alle Werte noch mal gegen gecheckt werden von der Firma und von der Stakeholder Seite. Auch ganz am Ende, siehst du gerade nach dem Market Launch gibt es auch nochmal diesen values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoint, um dann auch hier zu sehen, das Produkt ist jetzt am Markt, erfüllt das trotzdem alles, was wir wollten? Und dann geht das quasi in ein kontinuierliches Verbesserungsprozess über. Hier ist jetzt meine Frage an dich, wie nützlich du grundsätzlich diese vorgeschlagenen Checkpoints findest, die nach jeder Prozessphase stattfinden und wie du den generellen Nutzen davon einschätzt?

Speaker 2: [00:46:03] Also die Prozessverbesserung per se ist eine gute Idee. Ich weiß nicht, inwiefern die Stakeholder sich da wirklich involvieren lassen. Das ist erst mal für mich die Frage, inwieweit Stakeholder wirklich daran interessiert sind an den eigentlichen Produktdetails. Also

Bewertung finde ich gut. Finde ich schön, dass das mal transparent zu machen, denn das ist meistens glaube ich gar nicht klar. Da machen sich viele keine Gedanken drüber, weil sie einfach an anderen Aspekten eines Unternehmens Interesse haben, zum Beispiel am Produktdesign und der Nachhaltigkeit im Produktdesign. Das ist etwas, was ich in meiner bisherigen beruflichen Praxis so nicht wirklich als relevant für das für Stakeholder gesehen habe. Also das sind wahrscheinlich wenigste, die es wirklich interessiert, die wirklich darauf draufschauen wollen und es auch beurteilen und bewerten können. An sich finde ich es eine gute Geschichte, mal darüber nachzudenken. Den Produktzyklus das ist bei uns eine einfache Geschichte. Das geht dann meistens so, wenn man Produkt dann einführen kommt dann die erste Feedbackrunde von den Kunden. Wir machen das auch so, wenn wir was Neues entwickeln. Wir haben zum Beispiel vor fünf, sechs Jahren haben wir eine vegane Yogamatte entwickelt, also eine Schurwolle Alternative aus Baumwolle. Da haben wir dann eben 20 Yogalehrer mal angeschrieben aus unserem Bekanntenkreis und unser Umfeld und haben die zum Testen denen gegeben. Ja, also das Thema Kundenfeedback ist ein ganz wichtiges Werkzeug. Auch im Thema Produktdesign haben wir auch mal, das machen wir auch mittlerweile sehr oft, dass wir im Zuge unseres Newsletters, den wir an unsere Kunden schicken, Kunden auch bitten um ein Feedback, dass man wirklich sagt „Okay, wie seht ihr das?“ Ja, wir haben es das mal ganz pragmatisch gemacht. 97 % unsere Produkte werden hier in Europa produziert oder überwiegend in Deutschland. [00:47:54] Wir haben aber noch 3 % unsere Produkte, die in Fernost, Asien produziert werden. Das sind vor allem unsere Nylontaschen. Und die wollte ich aus dem Sortiment nehmen, ganz pragmatisch sagen nein, ich will fossilfrei sein. Wir wollen die Taschen in Deutschland machen. Das ist nicht so schön, wenn man das nicht auch in Deutschland oder in Europa machen kann. Und da sind wir dann an Grenzen stoßen. Die Taschen, die hier machbar sind, sind dann hinterher so teuer, dass sie nicht mehr verkäuflich sind. Wenn ich mir die Materialien anschau, die ganzen organischen Materialien, also wieso Kork oder Canvas oder was auch immer, ohne einen gewissen Anteil von Kunststoff Beschichtung zuzusetzen, komme ich nicht wirklich aus. Das ist das Thema Robustheit, Abrieb, Festigkeit, Regendichtigkeit. Es gibt Dinge, da muss man einfach leider Gottes zu Kunststoffen greifen. Hier haben wir halt die Situation auch die Ausgangsmaterialien kommen fast alle aus Fernost, Asien. Also ich habe hier mit regionalen Taschen Herstellern gesprochen. Wir haben Versuche gemacht, wir haben mit Planenhersteller gearbeitet, wir haben uns Gedanken gemacht zum Recycling von Segeln, von Werbebannern, von weißen Gleitschirmen, von Spin off Sales, also ganze Menge Upcycling, Recycling, Themen, alles mal versucht anzugehen, war alles nicht erfolgreich. Wir sind gerade dabei, wieder in Fernost-Asien zu produzieren. Leider. Aber das haben wir den Kunden auch klar kommuniziert. Wir haben hier die Möglichkeit aus Cord und Wolle Taschen zu machen. Die machen wir selber bei uns im Haus. Sehen wir als vorteilhaft an, also aus ökologischen Gründen, auch aus Gründen der sozialen Gerechtigkeit, aber vor allem viele Kunden sagen, dass sie die Nylontaschen wollen, weil sie eben wasserdicht sind, günstiger sind und länger halten. [00:49:43] Und da haben wir eben eine Umfrage gemacht und da geht dieses Umfrageergebnis halt auch ins Produktdesign mit rein, das sie sagen okay, wir wollen hat zwei Trageriemen⁸ und höhenverstellbar, einen größeren Umfang die Nylontasche Innen drin, wasserabweisend beschichtet und genauso entwickeln wir dann es eben weiter. Wir gehen dann halt hin und machen es nicht mit normalem Nylonstoff, wir machen es eben mit recycelt Polyester und wir versuchen auch da weitere Recyclingstoffe mit zu verwenden. Dann also schon ein gewissen, weiteren Entwicklungsschritt zu machen. Aber es ist schon so, dass das wir auch unsere Kunden involvieren mit denen wir in diesen Entwicklungsprozess machen. Denn letztlich sind es auch die Kunden, die die Produkte ja kaufen müssen und da denke ich, macht es auch Sinn beim bei der Produktentwicklung und auch bei der Dienstleistungsentwicklung in dem zweiten Schritt auf jeden Fall die Kunden mit zu involvieren.

Speaker 1: [00:50:36] Das ist ein guter Punkt. Das bringt uns zur nächsten Frage. Wenn man sich den gesamten Implementierungsrahmen anschaut, an welcher Stelle würde man welche Art von Stakeholdern explizit einsetzen oder einbeziehen? Also Mitarbeiter, Kunden, finanzielle Stakeholder, was auch immer. Siehst du da eine Veränderung oder eine Priorisierung?

Speaker 2: [00:51:04] (...) Bei der bei der Produktentwicklung immer diejenigen, die während der Produktion auch beteiligt sind und das ist es, was am Ehesten ist. Die es produzieren müssen, die es nähen oder schaffen müssen die an den Geräten sind, an Maschinen stehen. Machen wir selber auch mit unseren Zulieferern. Wenn man doch über Produktentwicklungen sprechen darf, dann besprechen wir wo Produktionsprobleme und wo Schwierigkeiten sind. Was kann man da vereinfachen oder verbessern? Das ist der erste Schritt, mit den Menschen zu arbeiten. Die Diskussion darüber muss mit denen geführt werden, die damit arbeiten, also am Prozess beteiligt sind, also mit den Zulieferern oder den Arbeitern. Aber dann im zweiten Schritt von den Kunden vertifizieren lassen, die das Produkt ja kaufen sollen, die müssen ja letztendlich sagen, okay, wollen wir das so haben. Mit diesen Gegebenheiten kommen wir so zurecht. Also das ist schon so ein Kreislauf über die Produktion, über die Kunden und zurück zur Produktion.

Speaker 1: [00:52:02] Okay, und inwiefern würdest du die Kunden da spezifisch einbeziehen? Wie würdest du es angehen?

Speaker 2: [00:52:11] Durch Befragungen, durch Testkäufer. Wir haben relativ viele Kunden und ein paar Leute in unserem Umfeld, denen wir einfach Vertrauen, die aus der Praxis kommen, wo wir auch sagen, die können "ja, mach mal einen Praxistest oder einen Anwendungstest" und die dann sagen okay, funktioniert das so, ist das so in Ordnung. Welche Änderungswünsche gibt es? Und das nehmen wir in der Regel auf.

Speaker 1: [00:52:35] Okay, verstehe.

Speaker 2: [00:52:36] Es ist nicht so, dass man im Elfenbeinturm sitzt und am Schreibtisch etwas Schönes entwickelt und entwirft. Es in die Produktion zu geben und dann zu sagen: „So, jetzt kauft es bitte“. Das funktioniert nicht unbedingt.

Speaker 1: [00:52:49] Okay, jetzt sind wir jetzt schon fast am Ende und deswegen kommen wir zu einer der letzten Fragen. Wenn du dieses Modell jetzt siehst, hast du rein aus deiner Expertise, hast du Verbesserungsvorschläge? Siehst du irgendwo potenzielle Hindernisse oder Schwierigkeiten? Wie würdest du es bewerten?

Speaker 2: [00:53:14] (...) Was mir wichtig ist, dass man diesen Entwicklungskreislauf, wie ich gesagt habe, eben über die Mitarbeiter zu den Kunden, dass das ein bisschen besser verzahnt ist. Die Stakeholder und da sehe ich mich selber als Unternehmer, auch als Geschäftsführer, wir müssen die Werthüter sein. Also wir sind so die Schäferhunde, die auf die Herde aufpassen müssen, weil einfach aus der Erfahrung heraus die Produktion versucht natürlich, Produktionstechnik einfacher zu machen und die Kunden versuchen, Margen von ihrem Produkt, ihre Vorteile zu bekommen. Und wir als Unternehmer, wir als Geschäftstreibende. Wir haben die Verantwortung, die das ein bisschen zu lenken, mehr zu sagen hoppla, wenn wir jetzt wirklich alle Produkte nur noch auf Kunststoff

darstellen, weil sie eben haltbarer sind oder günstiger in der Produktion ist, kommt es vielleicht in den Interessenten der Produktion entgegen und kommt es den Interessen des Kunden entgegen. Aber sich unseren Werten nicht mehr gemäß, da müssen wir schon einfach schauen. Da braucht es dann so einen Werthüter, behaupte ich mal, der das eben ein Auge drauf hat und es dann noch in den Gleichklang bringt.

Speaker 1: [00:54:31] Okay, das heißt, du würdest also vorschlagen, dass gerade bei diesen Checkpoints von diesen Stakeholdern, da gibt es sozusagen einen für, bei euch wärst du derjenige, der wirklich ein Auge drauf hat, haben wir wirklich immer alles mit einbezogen.

Speaker 2: [00:54:45] Dieses „nur ich“ ist mittlerweile auch ein bisschen aufgelöst. Wir versuchen das Verständnis, das ich habe, auch auf die ganzen Mitarbeiter abfärben zu lassen, dass sie eben auch eigenverantwortlich so was entscheiden und kommunizieren können. Das ist also nicht alles über meinen Schreibtisch läuft. Das wäre auf Dauer auch ein bisschen viel. Wir nennen das diese Unternehmensführung. Die Art nennt sich Holacracy. Was du schon mal gehört hast, das ist eine ganzheitliche Unternehmensführung, wo man die Mitarbeiter im Rahmen ihrer Fähigkeiten und ihrer Fähigkeiten, ihre Kompetenzen maximalen Freiraum gibt. Man lässt sie einfach machen. Und wenn sie sich unsicher fühlen oder an Grenzen herankommen, geht man in den Dialog, in die Kommunikation. Hier versuchen wir einfach, konsensorientiert zu arbeiten. Das ist etwas, was ich auch hier bei uns mache. Also ich lasse sehr selten den Chef raushängen, ich hänge sehr selten den Geschäftsführer raus, sondern wir diskutieren gemeinsam, wie was zu tun ist, wo es Probleme gibt, wer was tut, wo Veränderungen notwendig sind. Und dann versuchen wir, das im Konsens gemeinsam anzugehen. Und ich glaube, wenn man eben ein gemeinsames Werteverständnis hat, dann funktioniert das sehr gut. Das war bei uns auch ein Prozess, der nicht ganz unproblematisch war. Wir hatten zwei, drei Mitarbeiterinnen in der Vergangenheit, die mit so einer Arbeitsweise nicht so gut umgehen konnten.

Also ganz konkret, ich hatte eine Mitarbeiterin, die wollte immer nur Anweisungen haben, weil sie wollte ganz genau gesagt bekommen haben wollte, was sie wie zu tun hat und hat den anderen immer gesagt, wo ihre Grenzen sind und du darfst nicht und ich muss das und das geht so nicht. Wo so eine dynamische Prozessentwicklung in so einem nachhaltig orientierten Unternehmen einfach schwierig war. Und das sind so Sachen, wo ich merke, es ist wichtig, dass man die richtigen Leute hat, damit es funktioniert. In modernen kleinen Startups, wo die ganzen jungen, sage ich mal, etwas frecheren, nachhaltigkeitsorientierten Hipster im Großstadtbüro oft auf Augenhöhe miteinander reden, da funktioniert es wahrscheinlich ganz gut. Aber wenn man so einen Produktionsbetrieb hat wie bei uns, wo man eben eine einfache Näherin hat, wo man Lageristen hat, wo man einen Fahrer hat, wo man eine Putzfrau hat, da ist dieses unterschiedliche Arbeitsverständnis nicht immer gegeben, da muss man ein bisschen aufpassen. Also da muss man wirklich ein bisschen aufpassen, dass das dann auch funktioniert. Also das war für mich jetzt auch ein Lernprozess. Es ist immer noch ein Prozess, es ist nicht ganz, nicht völlig problemfrei, aber es geht in die Richtung, dass man über ein gemeinsames Werteverständnis und ein gemeinsames Wertebild versucht, die Mitarbeiter dann auch innerhalb des Unternehmens selbst machen zu lassen, ohne ständig zu kontrollieren und ständig Vorgaben zu machen.

Speaker 1: [00:57:42] Okay, dann werde ich mir Holacracy noch einmal genauer ansehen, was du da erwähnt hast, aber das klingt sehr interessant.

Speaker 2: [00:57:49] Ja, es ist ein spannendes Unternehmensführungsthema. Also das ist eben ein anderer Führungsstil, auch wie man eben anders arbeiten kann. Und ich glaube, das ist es, wo wahrscheinlich auch die Zukunft hingeht, mehr eigenverantwortlich zu arbeiten, mit mehr Eigeninitiative und eben auch mit dem Verständnis an Dingen heranzugehen. Ich bin eingebunden in einen Betrieb, in eine Maschinerie, wo ich mit meiner Aufgabe auch eine Funktion habe, eine Aufgabe, die ich auch erfüllen kann und die ich auch erfüllen will. Ja, das ist etwas, das hat viel mit Selbstmotivation zu tun.

Speaker 1: [00:58:24] Ja, das ist richtig. Okay, was gibt es sonst noch, jetzt zum Abschluss unseres Gesprächs, was ich noch nicht angesprochen habe, was jetzt in unserem Gespräch noch nicht aufgetaucht ist, was du aber für mein Forschungsvorhaben hier als sehr wichtig erachten würdest. Irgendwas, was du noch im Kopf hast?

Speaker1: [00:58:41] Ja, ich habe noch ein paar Gedanken dazu gemacht, weil es mich immer wieder trifft. Ich bin in der Nachhaltigkeitsszene ziemlich aktiv unterwegs und ich mag, dass viele Nachhaltigkeitsbestrebungen danach gehen über Prozesse, über Beschreibungen, über Checklisten, über Randbedingungen, die Unternehmen gehen, zu lenken, zu gängeln, zu steuern, dass sie nachhaltiger sind. Ich denke, in der echten Nachhaltigkeit soll es eigentlich andersrum sein. Es müssen erst die Unternehmensverantwortlichen darüber im Klaren sein, was sie für eine Verantwortung tragen. Wenn die sich darüber im Klaren sind, was wir für eine Verantwortung für die Welt tragen. Nicht nur für uns selber, für unsere Familien, sondern auch für unsere Mitarbeiter, für unsere Umwelt, für unsere Gesellschaft. Wenn die Unternehmer das selber haben, dann brauchen die einen Freiraum, um da entsprechend auch agieren zu können. Und hier müssen wir enorm aufpassen, dass die ganzen Nachhaltigkeitsbestrebungen nicht wieder in ein Korsett sich verwandeln, das eher einengt und gängelt anstatt befreit. Werteorientiertes Arbeiten kann man nicht erzwingen. Man kann zwar eine Konformität erzwingen, man kann es auch abprüfen. Es wird mit Audits auch immer brav gemacht. Aber wirklich ernsthaft nachhaltig sein zu wollen, zu sein und arbeiten zu wollen, muss aus dem Inneren rauskommen. Dazu braucht es etwas, ich nenne das mal spirituelles Unternehmertum missbrauchten Verständnis dafür, dass wir als Unternehmer eine Verantwortung tragen und die Welt nur geliehen haben momentan. [01:00:26] Also, wenn ich von der Welt gehe, dann nehme ich nichts mit. Ich bin nackt auf die Welt gekommen, ich gehe auch wieder nackt. Wir müssen einfach lernen, mit den Dingen, die uns anvertraut sind, verantwortlich umzugehen. Also diesen Werte Hüter habe ich vorhin genannt gehabt und das ist das, was mir eigentlich wichtig ist. Und ich will und das möchte ich auch nachweisen, als Unternehmer mit meiner eigenen Firma, mit unserer eigenen Arbeitsweise, dass es funktionieren kann, dass man als Werte Hüter, mit dem wirtschaftlich halbwegs vernünftigen Arbeiten, werteorientierten Arbeiten, dass man damit ein gutes Leben haben kann für sich selber, aber auch für die Mitarbeiter, für die Menschen um einen rum. Und das ist ein Mehrgewinn für die Welt jenseits der großen Profitabilität. Das ist etwas, was uns antreibt und das müssen die Unternehmer begreifen. Wenn das mal in der Finanzwelt ankommt, in der Investorenwelt ankommt, in dem die eben Besitz haben, weil Besitz hat ja auch Verantwortung, bringt ja auch Verantwortung mit sich. Wenn das bei denen ankommt, dann sind wir auf einem guten Weg. Ich glaube, das ist das, was wirklich notwendig ist.

Speaker 1: [01:01:36] Ja, okay. Vielen, vielen Dank für deine Einschätzungen! Das war super interessant. Mitte Mai wird abgegeben und dann ist Ende Mai das Kolloquium. Also wie gesagt, jetzt ist ja noch die Interviewphase, wo ich das alles noch mal abstimme und verbessere. Und wenn ich

dann fertig bin, kann ich dich gerne über den neuen Stand dieses Modells und des Outputs informieren, wenn du möchtest.

Speaker 2: [01:02:15] Der würde mich interessieren. Genau.

Speaker 1: [01:02:17] Cool.

Speaker 2: [01:02:17] Okay. Wiedersehen. Ciao. Ciao.Gut. Man wünschte Licht und Segen. Viel Erfolg bei dem Studium. Aber auch für dich Verständnis. Du bist die nächste Generation. Wie alt bist du, wenn ich fragen darf?

Speaker 1: [01:02:40] Ich bin 25.

Speaker1: [01:02:43] Ihr seid die nächste Generation. Ihr seid diejenigen, die reinwachsen müssen. Und es ist unsere Aufgabe, unsere Aufgabe für euch, die Türen aufzumachen, euch einen Acker zu bereiten, auf dem wir dann weitermachen könnten. Das ist das, was ich als meine Aufgabe sehe. Dass wir für euch Arbeitsweisen, Unternehmen, Geschäftsmodelle, Prozesse vorbereiten, aufbauen, mit denen ihr dann weitermachen könnt, weil ihr müsst irgendwann übernehmen, müsst ihr Verantwortung tragen. Und das ist etwas, der wünsch ich euch viel Glück und auch viel, Mut. Keine Angst da vorne, da wirklich den Mut, da reinzugehen, Verantwortung zu übernehmen und auch zu tragen. Ich kann aber gleich sagen, es ist nicht immer bequem und einfach. Bequem und einfach ist anders.

Speaker 1: [01:03:28] Das wollen wir einfach nicht. Aber es muss gemacht werden. Es ist notwendig. Und das ist ja auch dieser Ansatz von dem wertebaiserten Innovationsrahmen, dass man die Firmen eben so gestaltet, dass sie auch für die Future Generation noch gut zu übernehmen sind.

Speaker 2: [01:03:43] Wir nennen das Enkeltauglichkeit, aus der Gemeinwohlökonomie, eine enkeltaugliche Zukunft zu gestalten. Und da möchte ich und da möchte ich eben meinen Beitrag dazu beitragen, dass wir eben das auch hinkriegen. Wir sind auch gerade mit Gedanken machen, wie es da weitergehen gehen kann. Man kommt ja mal in Eigentumsübergang wieder als Eigentumsverantwortung oder Fusion oder Genossenschaft oder was auch immer. Das ist aber eben sinnvoll und wertebasiert weiter geht, das ist wo es hingehen soll. Schauen wir mal. Ja. Okay. Dir viel Erfolg.

Appendix 5. Transcript Interview Case Firm C KUZ

Speaker 1: [00:00:02] Alright, then. I think this was it for the introduction from my side. And now I have some questions for you concerning your firm. Yeah, My first question would be, can you give me a brief description of your company?

Speaker 2: Okay, so our company calls KUZ Fashion Design Studio that is based in Vilnius. In Lithuania. It all has started in 2018. I started that. I started to work alone, but in two years I understood that I couldn't cope with the large amount of work. So, in 2020, we opened the company with my colleague and from there we specified our services step by step. In the beginning, we took different kinds of clients and different kinds of gigs. But at the moment everything is quite clear. But what's

what is the process? What do you need from clients? What we can give to them. And from the beginning till the end, everything is like really fast and. Yeah, it's fast and efficient, I would say so. Our company provides design development and product development as well as product production management for bigger quantities and smaller quantities We do in-house. We provide small batch production for our clients, up to 20 units per style. And that's actually one of the values that we propose for our clients to focus on the small quantities and to launch more styles and show brand uniqueness instead of repeating the same styles in bigger quantities and selling and selling. So, our focus is to help brands to reveal their uniqueness and make small quantities, basically.

Speaker 1: [00:02:26] Can I just have a follow-up question? Maybe I didn't hear about sustainability. Maybe you can mention, you know, what is your competitive advantage? What are you what how are you different compared to other similar companies that provide such services, you know?

Speaker 2: [00:02:44] Yeah. So, what makes us different from other agencies that we work with? New brands, small brands. In comparison, big brands have a, I'd say completely separate department of design and product development. And we are this department that you can hire on demand. So, if you are starting a brand, you don't need to hire, I don't know, five specialists like Patternmaker tailor designer. You just come with all your ideas here and we start from the beginning trying to understand your idea, then making a sketch from sketch, we talk with pattern makers, what would be the best approach? So, it's easy for a tailor to make and for. And it's still efficient. I mean, not expensive to make that kind of garment. So, it's all about communication and we do everything in one place. So, for newly established brands, we are just coming and getting everything at one spot. We don't need to go to one tailor or another designer and hire three different stakeholders. They just come to one place and get everything here. And what makes also a difference is that communication is inside. So, there is no miscommunication because we are talking from the beginning till the end. And if you hire three different parties, then it starts that mean misunderstandings actually more from environmental part and fabrics for fashion. [00:04:36] Probably the hottest topic is materials. So as mentioned before, we are focusing on small quantities so we can make, manage, we can manage our risks, so we do small quantities in-house. We can control the quality so we don't have garments with defects that you need to throw out or something, which is a very common problem. Then there are many garments with a defect that clients don't accept and the manufacturer still has this leftover. So, when there are small quantities you can manage those risks and avoid those as much as possible. Another thing is if there are fabric leftovers we are using for new style prototypes, so we are not throwing any of the fabrics, even the smallest scraps we collect in garbage bags and we are giving away to communities they are more than happy to pay for shipping or for us it's like trash, but for them, like they are writing for us, Hey, my daughter is learning, so could you send for me? So, like for them, even they would like to pay. But for us, it's like we are happy that we are giving away our trash. So that's, that's really nice. So, I'm happy that we don't have actually much to throw out.

Speaker 1: [00:06:14] Thank you. Well, thank you for this answer and to that extent, could you answer, how you pursue social and ethical goals in addition to the economical side you just mentioned?

Speaker 2: [00:06:28] Social and ethical. Uh, I don't know about social. Maybe you could specify something because nothing comes to my mind. Actually, yeah.

Speaker 1: [00:06:43] Sure! Like social goals are, for example, that you are. Increasing the transparency in your firm inside or that you are taking responsibility in terms of that you check if all the manufacturers with which you are working together treat their employees good. And this is very deep connected with the ethical point of view that you promote a physical and general wellbeing in the workplace and you are addressing social problems and try to promote an equal working wise, something like that. Maybe in terms of how you choose your manufacturers and not manufacturers, but the like other business partners or logistic partners.

Speaker 2: [00:07:29] Okay, that makes sense. So, we are actually a quite small team. We are working daily in the studio for girls and there are two girls who are working remotely. In my company isn't anyone likes an employee, everyone is basically encouraged to develop their own path in this company. As we have more, more employees with different competencies, we are delegating different projects. So, while we are not busy with that project, they can do their own stuff, meaning don't know the brand or different clients or any of that. So actually, to work in this kind of environment as we work, you need to have a certain mindset. It's definitely not for everyone. It's not always stable, but there are many, many advantages that you can like managing your time as you want. You can make your own projects. So, it's actually a different kind of mindset compared to those who are working in corporates. And regarding manufacturers, it's actually a long way. It isn't like you contact the first manufacturer and you are working immediately. It's a quite long process and it's often that we work on one project and we don't repeat that and it always matters. Communication and also a mindset to production quantities. So, we are refusing to work with manufacturers who start to work at 100 pieces per style. For us, it's not something that we want to work with. About the environment, I have one partner in the second floor. They have a pretty good connection. And all seamstresses also seem that they are happy and they also can work flexibly and also a few women from Ukraine work there. So. I would say it's. It's kind of nice what partners we have currently and those who have different mindsets. We just don't click and after the first project, we just don't repeat it anymore.

Speaker 1: [00:10:27] Okay, if I can follow up a little bit. Yeah, maybe because I'm just thinking about also perspective. What I hear is like, you know, a lot of values that are intrinsic. So, like, I guess as you are CEO and founder of the company, it goes along with your own individual values. So maybe you also see from your individual perspective like what values that are social or ecologic. Do you see as you personally bring into the company and spread it out? Because actually it comes from you, you know, as you here. So, maybe you had an idea that when you established your company that will do in this way. So, for example, transparency, you know maybe you can remember something like this, like personal that you said, okay, in my company, I will do that. And that because this is what I think it's valuable. Yeah.

Speaker 2: [00:11:42] So. I'm probably not mentioning those things that for me it's obvious that I should mention. But transparency, for us, it's like the first thing to do and we always encourage our clients to make pictures of all we are making so they can spread the transparency process to their audience. So, that is one thing and from manufacturers, we expect the same. So, for us, it's not a problem to show working conditions or who is working. I mean, that's a common thing and we are taking this as a normality. I don't know, maybe for others, it's still not a common thing.

Speaker 1: [00:12:35] All right. Then the next question is a bit more about yourself and just a very brief introduction about yourself. What is your profession? And in which way are you involved with the innovation process in your firm?

Speaker 2: [00:12:55] So, about the innovation process, I don't know in the book is one thing, but for me personally, I gather ideas. It's actually how it started with this company. I didn't know what I will do in fashion. I just gathered the ideas, analyzed them, and watched the competitors for some time, and just as time it got clearer. As I said at the beginning, we did everything, all the gigs we took, but later on, we just clarified how it should look and what people need and where we can give value to them, and what additional value we can bring to the industry. So, there is that thing. So, idea analyses and then searching probably stakeholders and thought about who is in my own network I could include in this process. Starting from there. Actually, currently, I'm working on a new idea. So, I can think about how it went for the past few months. So it was, writing down ideas, then thinking about how I could use, our own company strengths to include in that new project. Then also whom I could involve in this process. So, I'm just thinking about the communities and commerce chambers. Different kinds of networks where could include people. As much enthusiasm as me, let's say. So, there wouldn't be a mean that people would be motivated to create something, additional and bring something additional to the fashion industry. So, it would be ideal analyzing, searching for stakeholders, and then doing this pilot project.

Speaker 1: [00:15:24] So sounds pretty, pretty involved in all the steps, which is very good for my research.

Speaker 2: [00:15:32] Yes.

Speaker 1: [00:15:33] Just a short follow-up question. Maybe you could specify what kind of stakeholders, what kind of stakeholder groups are you specifically interested and how they can contribute to those to your processes, not, you know, mentioning your project idea just in general, which parts you look for those stakeholders and maybe how do you choose them, you know, maybe based on some values. Okay. So, motivation, enthusiasm. I heard that. But maybe, you know, you need them somewhere else when you want to do a change towards something better. So, just interested in what kind of stakeholders you're interested.

Speaker 2: [00:16:14] Okay, so we are currently selling services and we understood that it's very variable and we want something we want more stability in our business. So that's why we are creating products. So that product will be optimization of what we have done already and what would be additional is, okay, so the idea is, closing collections, but according to people's needs what would be different for those closing that you can either recycle, repurpose and use certified materials because right now obviously you can go to "Printful" or "Printify", I don't know, t-shirts at your print and that's it for us. Would be different that we would create different designs using recycled, for example, fabrics or certified fabrics, making everything transparent and that would be focused more on the business side. So again, that product would be B2B and our service is also B2B. And regarding stakeholders, one of the stakeholders would be to increase personalization. So, an illustrator would be one of the stakeholders, illustrator could help to bring the message from each brand onto clothing, and then other stakeholders probably would be manufacturers. And obviously fabric supplier, but for fabric suppliers we already chose fabrics that is eco-friendly and we can order in small quantities.

Again, our main goal is not to have waste and stock. That's like the worst nightmare when you have a lot of fabric and stuff and it's and it's more and more coming. So that's like for me, it's the biggest nightmare. So, our goal is to produce as much as people use not overstock.

Speaker 1: [00:18:40] Okay. I'm not sure if I overheard it or something, but my follow-up question to that would be, how do you choose those stakeholders with whom you are collaborating in the end? Do you have some values in your mind where you can say, okay, I want to choose somebody that is doing this and that and is pursuing also those values? How is that for you, this process?

Speaker 2: [00:19:06] I think that those Chamber of Commerce chambers and communities, there are certain people that are they are more like into those new values that for some people it's not important. So, I would say I'm searching those people in communities and then a couple of meetings, I think, answering all of your questions.

Speaker 1: [00:19:35] All right. Good. Yeah. Then I would say we go officially into my implementation framework and the first step of it is the firm diagnostics. Here it's about what values does the firm pursue and what is the mission and vision of the firm. And I think we had it a bit with that. It's a lot of intrinsic values from your side as the founder of the company. But just real quick, how does your firm define your values or the values of the firm?

Speaker 2: [00:20:12] I want to say all my team thinks as me, but I can't say for them, obviously. (...) I don't know. I mean, everyone is aware of the same problem. I mean, overstock and seeing that condition, working conditions in some companies still are very, very bad. So, for me, it's really hard to judge. Then for us, it's completely different, you know?

Speaker 1: [00:20:51] Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So, as I understand it comes from your insight and from the values you believe as a human being.

Speaker 2: [00:21:01] Yeah, definitely. For me, it's hard to think how it can be different, you know?

Speaker 1: [00:21:10] Yeah. But then we talked about the stakeholder point. Yeah, I think you said things about that. And yeah, that would be the second step in my model, first of all, the firm is researching its own values, Then you are doing an analysis for all the stakeholders you need and that are impacted by your firm and but another question to that point, how are you thinking of including stakeholder in this process in your firm? Are you actually including them or are you just having a not-too-deep relationship?

Speaker 2: [00:21:59] It's actually not too deep. I'm trying to figure it out. The process is that everything could be done in-house within a small team and then certain tasks could be passed to stakeholders. Yeah.

Speaker 1: [00:22:16] All right. So, in my innovation framework or implementation framework, then after you have identified those stakeholders, they would be the first values-driven stakeholder. But at this point, inclusion checkpoint and this serves the needs that all those identified stakeholders at this point have to be integrated into your process and you have to check stakeholder values and firm values. Yeah, and this works closely together with the first step of the innovation process where it's

about to define a standpoint of all the values of your firm and the stakeholders. And so, my question would be, how do you create a starting point or how do you define an initial situation before you start with the actual innovation process or design process in your company?

Speaker 2: [00:23:12] How do you start with stakeholders?

Speaker 1: [00:23:17] How do you integrate all those values that you are pursuing and then your stakeholders are pursuing all together to define a common ground for for starting up your innovation?

Speaker 2: [00:23:28] So I think first one or two stakeholders are crucial and then the rest is just it comes with the flow. You know, at the beginning it's more about convincing others that they would believe in your idea, and then the rest is just coming easier, I would say. So, I would say convince by your idea that first stakeholder.

Speaker 1: [00:24:00] Okay, maybe, you know, maybe easier to talk when we have examples in mind. So maybe you can. You said you have a new project, so maybe you can take that as a case. And how do you go through the process? Because if you are in the beginning then it's pretty in relation to what I am explaining about the process and I can share my screen and show that process. So maybe visually then it's easier to see what I am asking. But maybe you can have this new project which hasn't started yet, right? So maybe we can take that as a case and you know, then it's easier to be more specific because you are going through the exact process. Because I understand totally. Rosita, don't get me wrong when you think generally, you know. Everything seems, you know, just embedded, you know?

Speaker 2: [00:25:18] Yeah. It's really hard to explain.

Speaker 1: [00:25:21] Yes. Yes, I totally understand that. So, I was just thinking that maybe it's good to have this specific case where you are in the process for the moment? Can you see my screen now? Yeah. Okay, cool. Just really quick to give you an introduction. This is the firm diagnostics we talked about. Then we went to the indirect and direct stakeholder analysis. And then I told you about the values-driven stakeholder inclusion checkpoint, which is, yeah, the first point where you include all your stakeholders that they are on board of the innovation process. And then we are coming to the first step of our innovation process here. And yeah, to identify a current or a define standpoint with what you can go into the next step. Yeah. And maybe just as Julieta said, we can do it and go through this process with your idea in mind and your example that it's easier to understand.

Speaker 2: [00:26:24] Yeah. So, I think the first stage I have passed understanding and observation. So yeah, it was happening actually for half a year. I was just observing what's happening with competitors. So I was following what they were doing and what could be making different by including my current company values and activities. So that would be mix between competitors and our ability to do this designing and product development and using actually all the contacts that we established in the past years.

Speaker 1: [00:27:20] All right. Good. We'll go a bit down. Good. You said conversation and just convincing them like probably in talks about your idea and then get to know their idea that you perform and get that common standpoint. Right?

Speaker 2: [00:27:40] Yes.

Speaker 1: [00:27:41] Okay. And like here in my implementation framework, it is an iterative process. So, it has as many repetitions as it needs to have. And then after this is done and you have the standpoint you go to into the first values-driven stakeholder checkpoint. This kind of serves the need that all the affected stakeholders, which you just identified before, and their values and obviously the firm values are continuously involved in the innovation process and they also serve as a kind of feedback cycle. So, their need is like if something is on the first side done, then you can check it here and then you can go into the next step. How would you see those values-driven stakeholder checkpoints? Do you think they would make a valuable tool?

Speaker 2: [00:28:35] I'm not sure about this term values-driven stakeholder. How is by definition?

Speaker 1: [00:28:47] You mean those checkpoints?

Speaker 2: [00:28:49] Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 1: [00:28:51] The need of them is that you can, after finishing the first stage of innovation process shown here, that you can have a feedback loop and a checking point that all of the analyzed values and stakeholders are continuously included in your innovation process and then what you are doing. And if that's not the case, then you cannot go to the next stage. Then you have to re redo the cycle in the first step. That's what they are kind of serving for.

Speaker 2: [00:29:25] Okay.

Speaker 1: [00:29:27] I guess that this could be also related to how you chose. A supplier for materials, right? Because maybe from the Internet you saw that they are doing something with eco materials and so on, and then you have a conversation with them and you see that maybe they do this, you know, as a good thing. But maybe there are some other very negative aspects that were not, you know, seen from the Internet side or so on. So, this is like a checkpoint, whether it's really, you know, values-based stakeholder.

Speaker 2: [00:30:03] So for this new project, we are using our previous contacts. So, at some point, we were searching for them. But for us, we know that they are doing great in their field and they could offer the best at our project right now, let's say so. We sorted several contacts that we will involve. So, for them, I don't know. There isn't the direct message, "Hey, we will be working on this project", they just will be doing their own job as usual, but they will be involved in this project. So that's one of the things. There is one more teammate. Uh, that will be involved. So, this project still happening inside and everyone is involved directly, fabric suppliers and all. I don't know manufacturers with whom we are not working daily, directly. We will be involved in the same way. In process-wise, everything will look the same, just will be on a different purpose. So, it's just will be our abilities differentiated in a different product, let's say.

Speaker 1: [00:31:34] Okay. Maybe you could specify. How did you choose that exact material supplier? And because you went through them some time ago through the process, use exactly that one. So, what I heard before was eco materials and small quantities. So where are your main criteria?

Speaker 2: [00:32:01] Yes. Those are the main criteria because many fabric suppliers asking to buy in rolls, which is 50m. But even at the beginning you don't know if you will need those 50m. Maybe it won't match your style. So, that's a big issue between supplying and making a new model because if you will buy one roll, turns out it doesn't work for your model. So, you have to reject that fabric. Roll and order another one. So, that's it's too risky. And other suppliers that we are working on, they are supplying test run meters. We see how it looks in the model. And if we like, then we calculate how much we need and then we order. So yeah, that's pretty much it. And also, important criteria is personalization because for small brands it's important to be unique and different. So. Some of the suppliers also offering custom prints on the fabric. So, that would be another thing. But yeah, mainly small amounts and the yeah, small amounts.

Speaker 1: [00:33:21] Just also very formal aspect about your stakeholders. Are those national stakeholders or international stakeholders like material suppliers?

Speaker 2: [00:33:34] International. Not national. We don't have actually national suppliers just for printing. Yeah, for printing is national suppliers manufacturing. But fabrics come mostly from Europe.

Speaker 1: [00:33:50] Okay. Thank you. And also with those stakeholders. How do you how are you usually communicating with them? Is it just when they are on the turn and when do you need their material, for example?

Speaker 2: [00:34:11] We are communicating through emails, obviously sometimes WhatsApp if needed. There is additional pictures if we are not sure because not everyone wants to do that. So there is a big gap between big companies and small companies. So, we are trying to fit in the middle so we wouldn't be refused by bigger companies and would be wanted by small companies.

Speaker 1: [00:34:38] All right. Okay, if you would imagine now that you would have such a checkpoint after the first phase of your in-company innovation process, how would you use that? Or like just in your imagination, what would happen at those checkpoints in your company?

Speaker 2: [00:35:01] Checkpoints. By. By what?

Speaker 1: [00:35:04] Those checkpoints, which I just explained to you. You know, where you injured all your personal values. The values from your whole firm, the values from stakeholders and everything. That everything is included in the whole process. It's just like a checkpoint. How would you use that? Or would you think you could use it or not at all?

Speaker 2: [00:35:25] I'm not sure I am understanding, to be honest. Maybe you could explain a bit more. I'm not sure I'm getting this.

Speaker 1: [00:35:36] This is. It's basically what is standing here. So, like, it's not a very complicated tool. It's actually very easy. It's just like when I, for example, now writing my thesis, then I have certain checkpoints with Julieta where I deliver to her what I did. And then, for example, we're having a call and she's saying, okay, and my values are this and that, and maybe you should incorporate those points again. And then we are having this conversation about it. And then afterward I'm going to the next stage of my process. And yeah, so with those checkpoints, the thing behind is to be sure that all important factors in terms of values and stakeholders are included continuously. You know, this is basically it. Was that understandable?

Speaker 2: [00:36:28] Probably those values, meaning ethical or ecological?

Speaker 1: [00:36:35] Whatever your company in that term is pursuing. When you say you are focusing on sustainability, then this is one of your values.

Speaker 2: [00:36:44] Yeah. I mean, if they wouldn't match my values, probably wouldn't be working at all.

Speaker 1: [00:36:51] So maybe you can just mention like, what are those values that your stakeholders should match? You know, that you are checking them. So, I know that we are repeating that. Like it was like if suppliers, material suppliers like small quantities and eco materials. But another one again, maybe transparency, maybe something else. I don't know from social aspects like how they are working, how they are treated, you said about bad working conditions in many other firms. So maybe you would know that this is the case in that your stakeholder that you are thinking to collaborate with. Would you work with them even though they have, you know, other values in check?

Speaker 2: [00:37:45] I think those bigger companies that we are, we are working with smaller brands. They definitely have certain values because if we wouldn't have values and transparency and sustainability for fabrics, then probably they wouldn't be serving small brands because for bigger brands doesn't look that as much as important for small brands because it starts from small brands creating this slow fashion movement, let's say. Does that make sense?

Speaker 1: [00:38:23] Yeah, that's true. Okay then. We are now at the second stage where like what you talked about, where you are involved, for example, idea generation, concept development, the development, and then the prototyping is taking place also in an iterative process. And then again, we would go through one of those checkpoints where we talked about and then you come to the last process in the market launch phase. For I think you know what is happening there. And then again, you have one of those checkpoints in the end. And this brings me to my next question. So, after you passed the innovation process, the second phase and everything, and you decided, okay, now we are producing and we are going to the market and we are selling it to our customer. And what is then happening at your company? Are you afterward checking how the product was taken on and how everybody felt about it?

Speaker 2: [00:39:31] Yes, I think in this project we would be also thinking about a and the journey of the garment because that's also really important and we are thinking about that while designing that project. So. It's not ready yet for the process till then. But I'm definitely thinking about returning

afterward. So yeah, I think that would be the main thing after a product is launched. Also, obviously, transparency would be involved and we would be speaking out loud. Who made those clauses? Uh, from what materials are being made? And maybe some kind of program could be created that this, fashion project would be more like. Cool, also not all, not like only politically speaking about the ecological stuff, but more like get more people involved in this.

Speaker 1: [00:40:51] You talked about you would return. What did you mean by that point? Just to clarify it for me.

Speaker 2: [00:41:00] I mean, some returning program, let's say if your company bought, I don't know, 100 hoodies, who was made from 100% cotton? Uh, I don't know. After one year or when you're done with wearing it, you can return it to us and we can arrange recycling or something. So, I would be thinking doing something like that.

Speaker 1: [00:41:25] Yeah. Okay. Then we would be at the end of this implementation framework because we would, like you just said, it goes over continuous improvement, and as everything is basically an iterative process for the next fashion piece, for example, you would start over again. So just in general, when we are looking at this model right now, what would you do with your expertise and working in this fashion field? What do you think? What difficulties could this model be facing when it's about the implementation?

Speaker 2: [00:42:16] Probably. (...) Again, being between small and big parties.

Speaker 1: [00:42:25] In which way?

Speaker 2: [00:42:27] So, you could meet like an ecological and also social aspects because. The environments of small companies and big companies are very different. So, for us to adapt is really hard because we have to meet the big companies' environment as well as the small companies' environment. So, I think that would be the biggest challenge for us.

Speaker 1: [00:43:01] Okay, and what, what kind of suggestion do you would have for improvement for this whole model? Is there something that comes into your mind where some?

Speaker 2: [00:43:13] Suggestion for big companies to be more flexible. (*Laughs*)

Speaker 1: [00:43:18] No, not in that way. It's just now really about what I did with the model here. Like, for example, when you say, okay, I don't know, just by example, the upstream innovation process doesn't make sense. I would do it in that way or we are doing it differently, just in that way. Not out of the eyes of some big companies. Just your own expert eyes.

Speaker 2: [00:43:40] I think that the proposed innovation process looks good to me. Probably the biggest attention I would give to the first stage because that's the most important, where you add all of those core values and all the thinking parts. And after that, with the right idea comes the right people in my opinion. So, I would just focus mostly on the first stage, and in the second stage is the matter of network, I would say yeah.

Speaker 1: [00:44:17] Yeah. It also was what seemed to me a bit difficult when you were commenting on that according to the implementation framework about those checkpoints, they were not pretty clear to you. So maybe this is about improving this framework because it's not instantly clear what was meant. And it seems that maybe we actually need some checkpoints there. Because imagine, we have this framework for new product development and we come with this framework to your company and we say, this is the scheme and these are the steps how we propose to, you know, implement your project like a new product. So, you know, and then in the, in the beginning, suggest that you should do a firm diagnostic where you actually brainstorm and discuss those values again, what are the values that we say, okay, we do this and then, you know, it actually suggests that you expect that from your stakeholders in many cases. Right? And then, okay, so imagine you have this idea about closing collection, reusable, recyclable, and so on. So, if we start with this diagnostic and those values mission, so maybe mostly here we have ecological values, right, about reusability, saving the resources, you know, and so on. So, it pretty fits, I guess. How was the process in your case that you thought about a collection that, okay, we need those ecological values installed? And then what else is suitable? Then transparency. (...) Well-being and so on. So, you've thought about all these values. So, it's pretty how it was. Then we go to the indirect and direct stakeholders. Here maybe you see some groups that are not mentioned here. You know, maybe you lack something. Customers, employees, financial stakeholders, and societal business partners. I think that you didn't mention anyone who is out there. Because material suppliers are the business partners.

Speaker 2: [00:47:22] Yeah. (...) The stakeholder integration probably. I would be, uh, thinking and involving them in the second stage, not in the first stage. Maybe in the first stage I would only think about, uh, stakeholders and their values, but I would start to approach them in the second stage probably.

Speaker 1: [00:48:20] You mean here in the stages of the innovation process?

Speaker 2: [00:48:22] Yeah. I would be involving them in the second stage and like starting to connect with them and starting to build something together. In the first stage, I would be, uh, doing that by my own. I don't know how others would be doing, but I, I need to figure it out and think, uh, uh, and analyze and observe all by myself. Create it in my head, the whole idea and the process. And then I can start doing something. And that would be in the second stage. That's probably personal for me. Maybe others wouldn't do that, but for me, I have to live with that idea and if after some time I'm still good with that idea, then I'm starting to proceed.

Speaker 1: [00:49:16] Okay. But after you define everything like firm in turn with you and your team, would you just also say, okay, then afterward we can include them and then communicate our vision to them, and then they are coming with us into the second process?

Speaker 2: [00:49:36] Yes, I would be like observing and analyzing. And then for idea generation, I would say for my team, "Hey, so this is the idea, what you're thinking. Do you think you could help me to realize that?" And if I get some feedback, then again improve. Maybe I come back to the first stage to improve the idea. And then if I have my whole team believing in my idea, then probably I can already start to contact other stakeholders.

Speaker 1: [00:50:14] Right. So, the stage of where this checkpoint is would be for you. A good stage is to first integrate stakeholders and then go into the second one. (*Speaker 2 nods*) Okay. And then after you pass the second one, would you think it's again useful to integrate them in a way before you are going to market launch?

Speaker 2: [00:50:37] Probably in between the first and second stage, I would include direct stakeholders and from the second and third indirect.

Speaker 1: [00:50:51] Okay. So here. Direct and indirect. Yeah. All right.

Speaker 2: [00:50:56] And how to do.

Speaker 1: [00:50:57] You rate like after you are finished with your project? This idea of having another meeting or another conversation with those, with those stakeholders and seeing how it is. How it was approved at the market and everything and how it went and then. How do you see that? Or would you do that?

Speaker 2: [00:51:18] Yeah, definitely. I think the first half year is all about changing.

Speaker 1: [00:51:24] Okay.

Speaker 2: [00:51:25] So I don't think that it would be perfect at the beginning. It definitely would need to come back to the previous stages.

Speaker 1: [00:51:35] Okay and out of that concept, could you then imagine having like a continuous work-related exchange with those stakeholders? That you would in the next phase integrate them also here like earlier in front of the first when it is with the same.

Speaker 2: [00:51:56] What do you mean?

Speaker 1: [00:51:57] Like when you go in, like, to the continuous improvement process with those same stakeholders. Could you then when you have a longer relationship with them, maybe imagine to include them also in front of this first step?

Speaker 2: [00:52:15] Would go just for direct stakeholders.

Speaker 1: [00:52:20] And this would refer to employees only?

Speaker 2: [00:52:23] Yes.

Speaker 1: [00:52:26] So then I heard that indirect stakeholders you were having in mind only business partners, right? (*Speaker 2 nods*) Because we have also societal stakeholders, you know, someone from associations or whatever, you know, like...

Speaker 2: [00:52:43] But also would involve in the second process only. When I have something clear to show. I don't in my opinion. Obviously, I don't know if people can give a proper opinion

when they don't see the whole picture. I understand that doesn't need to be the end product, but it has to be as clear as possible.

Speaker 1: [00:53:14] And just to also clarify, after the innovation process, third phase market launch, did you mean that you would integrate stakeholders direct and indirect or only direct ones?

Speaker 2: [00:53:31] No, indirect as well. Just in the third and second, no. (...) Yeah, In the third stage would be involved third parties, meaning fabrics, manufacturers, and printing.

Speaker 1: [00:53:47] How would that inclusion look like? Like how? Production? But what would you discuss? Like. What was wrong with the material specifically I don't know what questions, what problems you imagine you are discussing when you launch the product because you know, you tested material for yours. So, I was just thinking what is what are the issues that you can discuss after you launch, actually?

Speaker 2: [00:54:22] The facts, definitely quality wise would be many, many questions. That's the main question, actually. The fabric suppliers regarding the quality terms.

Speaker 1: [00:54:36] Okay. So just again, to sum it up here, you would include the employees, the direct stakeholder. Yeah. Here you would also include the indirect. So direct and indirect. And here again, both parties?

Speaker 2: [00:54:50] Yes, exactly.

Speaker 1: [00:54:54] Good, then. I would say that was all from my questions to this implementation framework. But just a rough thing to sum it up, is there anything that you think would be important for this framework that was not mentioned until now in your perspective?

Speaker 2: [00:55:14] I think not.

Speaker 1: [00:55:16] Okay. It's perfect. That's nice to hear. If you have another few minutes?

Speaker 2: [00:55:26] Yes, sure.

Speaker 1: [00:55:28] What is specific to fashion in this innovation process that is, you know, not general for other companies? You know, can you say there's something specific to fashion SMEs in the innovation process, you know, or some specific challenges in the innovation process or specific values only for fashion SMEs?

Speaker 2: [00:55:58] Think that materials are something specific that everyone should be aware of because definitely there is big overstock and, in my opinion, brands should be focusing on what is already produced not produce even more. So, I think that would be the biggest value that we produce from what we have already. Not to create something new, meaning fabrics, not creating again, like the same color or different for your Pantone code, but just to create from what is created in produced already.

Speaker 1: [00:56:42] But also what I hear is that for fashion, SMEs that want to integrate values is difficult to find right partners. And also, it's a very huge codependency on material suppliers.

Speaker 2: [00:56:56] Yes. So, suppliers and manufacturers, you're actually dependent on everything. And one mistake for fashion SMEs can cost really much, especially when you are small. That one mistake can cost you almost all business, I would say. When for big businesses can be many mistakes and you still can cope with that. And for small businesses, it's very turbulent, I would say.

Speaker 1: [00:57:29] And also, you know, I was just thinking about that, that, about those values that you also try to incorporate, and then you are never sure that your customer will be ready to pay for that.

Speaker 2: [00:57:42] Yeah that's well. I have to find the perfect model in design and values. So, a client could take this as an extra value. Regarding design and adding value and. A probably ecological part would be a bonus for them because I see that people still tend to choose by style. And then this small quantity is transparency. It's like a bonus, but they are still, especially if a girl is a fashionista for them, still important to see the style part. So yeah, I would say that should be a balance between them. Different kinds of values and styles.

Speaker 1: [00:58:43] I would say that it's a double competition, you know, to have a good style and then, you know, do all those value stuff. So, meaning that you know, those who do not have values on their how-to-say system, you know, integrated into the in the close. It's very difficult. That's why you have to communicate a lot about that. And you mentioned that many times. So, I think that communication is also like an activity that is super important.

Speaker 2: [00:59:14] Super important and also involvement from the brand perspective. It's important, for example, these returning programs, loyalty programs that people would get involved in and would spread the. That idea with others.

Speaker 1: [00:59:36] Yeas. That's it from my side. Then I guess we are at the end of this interview and I want to really thank you for your time and for answering all these questions and go through that implementation framework. That was really helpful and I'm very happy that we met.

Speaker 2: [00:59:58] Yeah, me too. I hope it helped at least a little bit.

Speaker 1: [01:00:02] Of course.

Speaker 2: [01:00:04] For me, it's really hard, you know when for us, it's like. So, we are so small, real company. And we started, I would say right at the beginning with those very things. And for other companies, it's like innovation. For us, it's like really daily things that we. When we create some process, we also think upfront about those values. So, it was quite difficult to provide information, you know, because I'm not doing interviews daily. So yeah, I hope it will be helpful.

Speaker 1: [01:00:46] Definitely. No worries. It was very helpful. Thanks so much, Rosita. And I hope that it also brought you, brought you back to how good you are and how advanced you are. So that's really nice. Thank you so much.

Speaker 2: [01:01:06] Thank you too!

Speaker 1: [01:01:09] All right, then. Have a great afternoon. Good evening.

Appendix 6. Transcript Interview Case Firm D North Coast

Speaker 1: [00:00:51]. Ja, dann machen wir das so. Okay. Kannst du mir dann kurz beschreiben, wie dein Unternehmen neben wirtschaftlichen Zielen bereits auch ökologisch, ethische und soziale Ziele verfolgt?

Speaker 2: [00:01:08] Ja, also einmal produktseitig natürlich. Die Idee, die ökologische Nachhaltigkeit. Dadurch, dass wir eben immer nach Möglichkeit darauf bedacht sind, nachhaltige Materialien zu benutzen. Und ja, einfach da halt auch Innovation betreiben und Produkte auch weiterentwickeln, sodass sie immer nachhaltiger werden und auch uns laufend fragen, ob denn das, wie wir es aktuell tun, das Richtige ist und dass dementsprechend dann eben auch, wenn wir dann zum Entschluss kommen, dass es nicht das Richtige ist, wie wir es ja zum Beispiel mal mit recycelten Plastikflaschen in den Yogamatte hatten, wo wir am Anfang dachten, das ist genau das Richtige und das ist cool. Irgendwann dann halt gemerkt haben, nee, also nachhaltig ist das eigentlich gar nicht. Recycelte Plastikflaschen mit natürlichen Produkten wie Naturkautschuk zu mischen, haben wir uns dann eben auch entsprechend weiterentwickelt und dann mit biologischer Baumwolle ersetzt. Außerdem benutzen wir auch FSC-zertifizierten Naturkautschuk in unseren Yogamatten. Damit stellen wir sicher, dass zum einen eine nachhaltige Bewirtschaftung der Regenwälder unterstützen und der lokalen Bevölkerung eine zukunftsfähige, sichere und gut bezahlte Arbeit bieten. Genau und wir entwickeln uns da auch stetig weiter. Genau einmal da die Idee, die ökologische Nachhaltigkeit und dann natürlich soziale Nachhaltigkeit, dass wir schauen, in Betrieben zu produzieren, die auch sozial nachhaltig wirtschaften und faire Arbeitsbedingungen haben. Da arbeiten wir mit, was unsere Matten angeht, mit taiwanesischen Produzenten zusammen. Für die Entwicklung der der Fashion hatten wir ja bis jetzt noch nicht final produziert gehabt, aber haben wir mit portugiesischen Lieferanten zusammengearbeitet und mit türkischem. Nachher aber auch vor allem wegen der sozialen und ethischen Nachhaltigkeit mit den mit dem Portugiesischen und uns dafür entschieden, auch wenn das wie gesagt noch nicht da produziert haben bis jetzt. Genau und dann natürlich darüber hinaus. Aktuell ist ein bisschen weniger möglich, weil's finanziell halt nicht so einfach ist. Aber grundsätzlich haben wir jetzt gerade wie gesagt ein bisschen on Hold gesetzt, aber grundsätzlich spenden wir halt auch 1 % oder Umsätze führen wir und Delfin Shirts. Das haben wir ein paar Jahre gemacht. Wie gesagt, jetzt leider seit einem Jahr nicht mehr. Nicht mehr möglich, weil wir einfach das Geld nicht mehr für die Spenden haben und da in unserem Bewusstsein eben wichtiger ist, dass die Firma überlebt und langfristig dann wieder spenden kann als das genau wir jetzt spenden und damit die dann Firma gefährdet.

Speaker 1: [00:03:26] Ja, alles klar. Dann ist die nächste Frage ein bisschen mehr auf dich bezogen. Welchem Beruf übst du aus und welche Erfahrung hast du dort gesammelt, dass du in diesen Innovationsprozess eingebunden bist?

Speaker 2: [00:03:45] Also mit der Produktentwicklung habe ich eigentlich beruflich und ausbildungstechnisch gar nichts am Hut. Also ursprünglich natürlich BWL studiert und dann eher so in Richtung Unternehmensberatung unterwegs gewesen, also eher von der wirtschaftlichen Seite darauf und alles was Produktentwicklung angeht. Ja, eigentlich habe ich mir alles ziemlich selbst beigebracht. Also dass die Information oder dass das Informieren über wo man produzieren kann,

wie man produzieren sollte, welche Materialien man benutzen kann und und und wie man die Mischung kann eigentlich alles selbst beigebracht natürlich in Zusammenarbeit mit den Produzenten, die dann natürlich da die Profis für sind zusammengearbeitet und genau ich war aber eher von der von der wirtschaftlichen Seite dann der in dem Ganzen.

Speaker 1: [00:04:32] Aber den Innovationsprozess in deinem Unternehmen den oder den Designprozess den gehst du ja an und gestaltest bzw. managst ihn, richtig?

Speaker 2: [00:04:37] Ja, genau.

Speaker 1: [00:04:43] Gut, dann können wir jetzt auch schon quasi zum Implementation Framework kommen. Und du erinnerst dich ja noch an den ersten Punkt. Es war Form der Diagnostics, wo du die Werte der eigenen Firma identifizierst. Und damit wäre meine erste Frage Wie habt ihr bei euch im Unternehmen die Werte identifiziert und wie sind die zustande gekommen?

Speaker 2: [00:05:04] Wir haben, glaube ich, ganz am Anfang wurde die Firma gegründet, wurde mal so, mal so ein paar Sachen aufgeschrieben, so ein paar Werte, ich weiß aber nicht mehr, welche das waren und weiß auch nicht mehr, wo die liegen. Keine Ahnung. Im Endeffekt ist es bei uns so, dass wir halt einfach so wirtschaften und so vorgehen, wie es wie wir es dann als richtig erachten. Wir sind halt eine super kleine Firma, deswegen geht das auch, weil wir halt keine 100 Leute haben, die man mit irgendwelchen klar definierten Values oder auch Frameworks oder so halt in eine Richtung laufen lassen muss, sondern wir sind halt so klein, dass man das auch deutlich besser, einfach im daily doing schaffen kann. Ich meine, als große Firma ist natürlich wichtig, dann gewisse Vorgaben zu haben und Values zu definieren, damit alle wissen, woran man ist. Ich glaube, bei kleineren Firmen ist das. In dem Umfang weniger wichtig. Aber grundsätzlich wirtschaften und arbeiten wir halt so, wie wir es als richtig erachten. So, und das schließt eben soziale, ökologische, ja ökologische Nachhaltigkeit einfach mit ein.

Speaker 1: [00:06:24] Ja. Das heißt, es sind dann vermehrt intrinsische Werte, die euch antreiben?

Speaker 2: [00:06:30] Intrinsische Werte zum einen und natürlich ist es am Ende auch ein Thema, das auch ankommt im Markt. Also ich glaube aktuell ist man ja wahrscheinlich sogar erfolgreicher, wenn man einfach irgendwo billig und nachhaltig produziert und es für 1/3 von unseren Preisen vertreibt. Das wäre wahrscheinlich aktuell erfolgreicher und monetär. Aber das passt dann eben nicht zu unseren eigenen Werten. Aber natürlich innerhalb unserer eigenen Werte ist natürlich dann auch wichtig, dass man nachher was schafft und erschafft was, was dann eben auch am Markt angenommen wird. Es bringt nicht nur was für sich selbst, basierend auf den eigenen, auf den eigenen Werten zu machen und dann will es aber nachher niemand kaufen und dann ist auch niemandem geholfen. Genau.

Speaker 1: [00:07:21] Erinnerst du dich, als ihr die Werte für euch identifiziert habt und festgelegt habt? Erinnerst du dich da an irgendwelche Herausforderungen, die es dabei gab? Oder ging das relativ einfach?

Speaker 2: [00:07:31] Hm? Nee, auf jeden Fall. Vor allem, was die Produktion nachher angeht. Da (...) die Disziplin zu haben oder nicht, ist nicht gewöhnlich wirklich Disziplin, aber nicht der

Versuchung zu erliegen, irgendwo Shortcuts zu nehmen und dann doch mit dem Produzenten zu gehen, der vielleicht 10 € weniger nimmt oder für 10 € weniger produzieren kann, sondern mit dem zu gehen, der wirklich dann auch nachhaltig ist und das nicht nur behauptet, dass es schon eine Schwierigkeit, nachher da wirklich dann rauszufiltern wäre, denn die wirklich guten Produzenten sind, die auch wirklich nachhaltig produzieren und da halt nicht in die Falle zu tappen, dann doch nur auf den auf den Taler zu achten.

Speaker 1: [00:08:15] Ja gut, dann kommen wir zum nächsten Punkt. Die direct und indirect Stakeholder Analysis. Wie habt ihr denn am Anfang eure Stakeholder identifiziert?

Speaker 2: [00:08:30] Nie so bewusst. Wir haben jetzt nie irgendwelche Stakeholder Maps aufgemacht. Wir haben nie irgendwelche Frameworks, sei es Porters Five Forces oder SWAT Analyse oder sonst was gemacht. Aber natürlich am Ende ergibt sich das relativ natürlich während des während des Wirtschaftens. Und dass man halt mit den Stakeholdern denkt, dass man die Stakeholder einfach, einfach laufend, ja definiert, aber nicht bewusst definiert, sondern dann hat man halt die Stakeholder, man hat seine Prozesse, hat man seine Kunde, hat man seine Geschäftspartner, mit der man zusammenarbeitet, dann hat man natürlich die Umwelt im Allgemeinen, also die Menschen, die dort in der Gegend leben oder auch natürlich Kundinnen und Kunden, die die Produkte nachher nutzen. Natürlich auch eine wahnsinnig wichtige Stakeholdergruppe. Aber wir haben die nie bewusst irgendwo hingeschrieben und das sind jetzt unsere Stakeholder und das machen wir für die jeweils. Das hat sich eigentlich so mehr natürlich ergeben einfach.

Speaker 1: [00:09:33] Und denkst du, wenn du jetzt rückblickend darüber nachdenkst, dass da ein bestimmtes Tool oder eine bestimmte Methode hilfreich sein könnte? Oder bist du nach wie vor der Meinung, das ist eher so, das ergibt sich irgendwann im Tagesgeschäft?

Speaker 2: [00:09:49] Also ich glaube, wenn ich eine große Firma bin, mit einem super superkomplexen Stakeholder Map und keine Ahnung von 500 Produkten, die ich produziere, zum Beispiel wie bei Adidas oder Nike oder so und jedes Produkt hat eine entsprechende Wertschöpfungskette noch dahintergelagert oder vorgelagert, dann glaube ich schon, dass es schon wahnsinnig sinnvoll ist, da wirklich das Ganze strukturiert und klar definiert aufzuzeigen, wo dann welche Stakeholder sind. Wahrscheinlich würde ich auch bei kleineren Unternehmen, wenn man eine größere Produktvielfalt hat, wenn man irgendwie ein zu 100% auf Fashion fokussiertes Unternehmen dann auch ist und eine entsprechende Anzahl von Produkten hat, dann kann das glaube ich schon sinnvoll sein. Bei uns war es ja so in der Planung, dass wir nur erst mal mit Yoga Leggings gestartet wären oder starten wollen. Ist ja noch nicht irgendwie aus der Welt. Das kann ja durchaus trotzdem mal passieren. Jeweils halt, aber mit einem Produzenten gefertigt und halt dann mit verschiedenen Farben, so dass es keine Produktvielfalt ist, wo man glaube ich, irgendwo schnell den Überblick verliert, weil man weiß, dass es der Produzent wird, dass es ein Produzent. Wenn man jetzt eine größere Vielfalt hat, dann macht das, glaube ich, schon mehr Sinn, das irgendwo zu strukturieren, dass man auch sieht, wo die Risiken sind, sowohl bei den wirtschaftlichen Risiken, dass man zu abhängig von einem ist, als auch bei den sozialen Risiken.

Speaker 1: [00:11:29] Verstehe, dann zum nächsten Punkt. Dann kommen wir in dem Framework, was ich dir gezeigt habe, zu dem Checkpoint quasi. In dem hast du dann, wenn du die Stakeholder identifiziert, das wären die ganzen erstmal quasi aktiv mit eingebunden. Dann wird da alles

offengelegt. Das sind unsere Werte, das wollt ihr. Bevor man dann zu diesem ersten Innovationspunkt kommt, der Upstream Innovation Process sozusagen, der vom Design Thinking Ansatz inspiriert ist. Und bei dem steigen wir jetzt wieder ein. Und da ist nämlich meine Frage wie schaffst du so eine Ausgangssituation, um klar zu machen okay, das wollen wir, das wollen Stakeholder. Eben das du eine klare Ausgangssituation vor dem eigentlichen Innovationsprozess schaffst. Wie gehst du hier vor?

Speaker 2: [00:12:32] Na also am Ende muss ja dieser Innovationsprozess zur aktuellen Strategie irgendwo passen. Das heißt wahrscheinlich würde man oder würde ich schauen, wie wir aktuell wirtschaften und wie wir aktuell auch von der von der Markenpositionierung und von der Filmpositionierung aufgestellt sind. Und dann muss natürlich das, was wir in der Innovation oder was entwickelt wird, auch dazu passen. Das heißt, wahrscheinlich würde man einfach aufschreiben hier. Dafür stehen wir als Marke. Da ist unser Markenkern, das und das muss gegeben sein, oder das ist bis jetzt gegeben. Also unsere Firma hat zum Beispiel jetzt in unserem Fall keinerlei First Use Plastic, also kein neues Plastik. Wenn Plastik dann nur recycelt, das ist praktisch der Status quo dann, und von da würde man sich dann eben weiterentwickeln. Aber wahrscheinlich ja, würde man da genau die Punkte, die zentral für die Firma sind, runterschreiben und definieren, um das eben als Absprungpunkt zu nehmen und vielleicht dann eben, um damit vielleicht auch Klammern zu setzen, in welchen Bereich sich diese Innovation dann eigentlich bewegt oder bewegen kann. Auch weil andere Dinge vielleicht oder manche Dinge vielleicht dann gar nichts zum Markenkern passen.

Speaker 1: [00:13:56] Okay Ja. Das heißt, du würdest es quasi in einem speziell dafür ausgerufenen Meeting oder Workshop wie auch immer alles runterschreiben?

Speaker 2: [00:14:07] Ja. Zum Beispiel.

Speaker 1: [00:14:11] Dann sind wir beim nächsten Punkt, quasi dem zweiten Schritt des Innovationprozesses. Das ist eine relativ allgemeine Frage: Wie geht ihr beim Innovationsprozess selber vor? Also sprich Ideenfindung, Konzeptentwicklung, Entwicklung und dann Prototyping. Wie läuft das bei euch ab?

Speaker 2: [00:14:32] Da also erst mal natürlich die Entscheidung, dass man was Neues machen sollte. Das kann verschiedene Gründe haben. Im Fall von der Fashion war natürlich einer der Gründe, dass wir ja sehen, dass wir bis jetzt vor allem eben Yoga Hardware produzieren, die eine relativ glücklicherweise lange, lange Haltbarkeit hat und dementsprechend natürlich wir nicht so wahnsinnig viele wiederkehrenden Kunden haben. Natürlich haben wir welche. Dadurch, dass vielleicht dann auch jemand mal noch mal eine Matte verschenkt oder doch noch mal eine andere Mattenart, dann kaufen wir vielleicht nochmal eine Travelmatte oder so, aber anders als in der Fashion kauft man sich oder gibt es eben auch nicht so wahnsinnig viele neue Designs und man kauft sich jetzt nicht einmal im Jahr oder alle zwei Jahre eine neue Yogamatte in der Regel, weil sie halt eben lange hält. Und wenn unsere Matten nicht lange halten würden, würde man wahrscheinlich den nächsten Kauf dann auch nicht unseren Kaufen, sondern eine andere. Und von dem Punkt sind wir ja gekommen, dass wir gesagt haben Ja, lass doch mal schauen. Oder Eigentlich müssten wir mal schauen, dass wir mehr wiederkehrende Kunden haben und den einzelnen Kunden, den wir einmal gewonnen haben, eben besser monetarisieren können, auch und langfristiger monetarisieren können. Und da ist natürlich Fashion ein sehr guter und sehr guter Einstiegspunkt. Einfach, weil man halt deutlich mehr

Touchpoints hat, weil man sich einfach mehr Fashion kauft als eine Yogamatte. Also sind wir gestartet, eigentlich primär aus einer wirtschaftlichen Betrachtung heraus. Und dann sind wir natürlich weitergegangen, in dem er gefragt haben Ja, okay, wenn wir jetzt Fashion machen würden, wie würde das denn aussehen? Im XX Kontext sind wir relativ schnell darauf gekommen, dass muss irgendwas sein, was natürlich nachhaltig erst mal logischerweise ist. Haben dann entsprechend recherchiert. Was für Materialien gibt es denn da draußen so, die irgendwie Nachhaltigkeitskriterien erfüllen natürlich da auch den Wettbewerb angeschaut was passiert da so was wird da benutzt und sind dann ja eigentlich auf so eine wie so eine Art Shortlist gekommen von verschiedenen Materialien, die da irgendwie infrage kommen würden. Das heißt Repreve oder Econyl oder wie heißt das andere? Normal Tran. Ach irgendwann Zeugs aus. Aus Baumfasern. Irgendwas mit Zell am Ende (...)

Speaker 1: [00:16:53] Tencell oder?

Speaker 2: [00:16:56] Ja, genau. Da gab es eine interne entsprechende Shortlist. Habe eben geschaut. Okay, was sind dann die Vorteile? Jeweils von den verschiedenen Materialien relativ schnell draufgekommen. Dieses Repreve ja, kann irgendwie ziehen. Problem ist, Repreve besteht halt vor allem aus Plastikflaschen, die im Zweifel auch ja nicht wirklich recycelt sind, sondern teilweise auch einfach direkt dafür produziert werden, um dann wieder recycelt zu werden. Das ist natürlich dann auch nicht zielführend und außerdem dieses passt nicht wirklich gut zu (...). Ach, das Material ist auch nicht so wirklich angenehm. Das ist relativ hart. Weil PET einfach an sich relativ hartes Plastik ist und dann das nochmal recycelt wird, dann nochmal härter wird. Deswegen sind Repreve. Pants relativ einfache hart gewesen und dick. Dann haben wir eben geschaut. Ja, es gibt eben dieses Econyl noch, da haben wir fertig, wir auch unsere Yogataschen, dass es besteht aus recyceltem Nylon, wo unter anderem auch gefüllte Fischernetzen drin sind. Und das passt natürlich super zu unserem Markenkern mit dem ganzen Thema Ozeanschutz. Das heißt, wir haben dann relativ schnell darauf verständigt, wir gehen mit Econyl, weil es einfach auch am besten passt und gleichzeitig eine ganz gute Nachhaltigkeitsfaktoren hat und sind dann weiter gegangen und haben nach Produzenten gesucht, die aus dem Material die Produkte so bauen können, wie wir sie brauchen oder fertigen können, wie wir und wie wir sie brauchen und haben halt dann erst mal natürlich nach Produzenten gesucht, die das Econyl Fabric herstellen können, weil die Produzenten vor Ort halt diese Wertschöpfungskette nicht komplett abgebildet haben. Also wenn du zu den gehst und sagst, hier macht man mal eine Leggings aus normalem Polyester, dann können wir das sofort machen, Dann haben die auch ihre Lieferanten. Für Econyl hatten die das halt nicht. Das heißt, wir mussten die Lieferanten noch direkt suchen, die, die auch, die die Fabrics halt produzieren und hätten dann halt diese Fabrics wiederum an die Produzenten geschickt. Das heißt, wir mussten in die ganze Wertschöpfungskette deutlich tiefer einsteigen, als man es normalerweise muss, wenn man etwas und nachhaltigere Produkte entwickelt.

Speaker 1: [00:19:17] Okay. Und seid ihr dann bei dem ganzen Prozess? Hast du dich da an irgendwelchen Prozessen oder Modellen orientiert?

Speaker 2: [00:19:23] Nein

Speaker 1: [00:19:24] Okay, aber ihr seid auch relativ iterativ durchgegangen, also relativ frei und flexibel. Also wo auch immer ihr was gebraucht habt, seid ihr dann?

Speaker 2: [00:19:35] Ja, genau, Genau.

Speaker 1: [00:19:40] Gut. Nachdem wir dann diesen Prozess quasi in Modell abgeschlossen hätten, würden wir ja dann zum Markt Launch kommen und dann sind wir quasi schon am Ende. Deswegen ist jetzt meine Frage, die sind values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoints, die da immer mal wieder auftauchen, also quasi nach jeder Phase vom Innovationsprozess und einmal davor und danach kommt ja immer dieses graue Kästchen und dann wird halt der Checkpoint durchgelaufen. Wie nützlich findest du denn so einen Checkpoint? Oder diese Strategie, um sicherzustellen, dass du weiterhin auf dem richtigen Weg von deiner wertorientierten Innovation bist?

Speaker 2: [00:20:18] Also grundsätzlich kann das natürlich Sinn machen. Aber ich glaube, wie gesagt, vor allem in Firmen, die vielleicht noch mal einen Ticken größer sind, weil bei uns eben diese Entwicklung natürlich wir auch selbst die Gründer waren und natürlich deswegen auch genau wussten irgendwie okay, das wollen wir das nicht. Wenn, dann entsprechend vielleicht in der Firma ist, die ein bisschen größer ist die dann vielleicht auch die Produktentwicklung, dann Mitarbeiter machen oder Mitarbeiterinnen, wenn die vielleicht nicht selbst die Gründer sind und vielleicht, da kann es natürlich helfen, dass man da irgendwo dieses Vorgehen etwas klarer definiert, damit es halt auch das Endergebnis am Ende zu dem passt, was man sich vorstellt. Als ob das jetzt ein Gründer oder einfach Geschäftsführer oder was auch immer ist. Ich glaube, da kann das natürlich schon Sinn machen, dass man das ganz klar macht. Jetzt in unserem Fall, wo wir relativ, Gründer inhabergetrieben waren, sind da ja, weiß ich nicht. Also vielleicht bei komplexeren Produkten mag sein. Ich glaube aber Fashion. Ja bis jetzt nicht so wahnsinnig komplex. Jetzt nicht wie irgendwelche Elektronikprodukte zum Beispiel, wo es deutlich mehr Einzelteile einfach gibt und Komponenten, wo man jeweils die Nachhaltigkeit nochmal pro Komponente vielleicht betrachten müsste. Bei Fashion ist das ein bisschen einfacher, finde ich. Ja, also wie gesagt, ich glaube, es kann Sinn machen. Ich glaube, in unserem Fall aber etwas weniger.

Speaker 1: [00:22:08] Genau. Okay, dann stell dir mal vor, du hättest ein bisschen eine größere Firma. Und du hast dann extra auch Mitarbeiter dafür und du würdest dann mit solchen Checkpoints arbeiten. Und was würde da quasi in diesem Checkpoint deiner Meinung nach idealerweise passieren?

Speaker 2: [00:22:28] Und na ja, man würde dann irgendwie sich zusammensetzen und präsentiert bekommen, was da jetzt irgendwie gerade der Plan ist und sehen was wie beeinflusst. Da würde man halt in den Checkpoints entscheiden. Okay, ist das jetzt der Weg, den man weitergehen muss, oder muss man vielleicht noch mal eine Schleife machen und irgendwo noch mal was reparieren oder vielleicht ganz verbinden? Also einfach Decision Gates beschaffen. Pro Position Gate würde man dann eben die die Ergebnisse präsentieren und basierend auf den Ergebnissen eben entscheiden. Geht so weiter, gehen wir im nächsten Schritt. Drehen wir nochmal eine Runde. Muss man nochmal irgendetwas angepasst werden? Genau, und im Idealfall schon mit irgendwas Anfassbaren, dass man schon irgendwie einen Prototypen oder irgendein Muster in einer Hand hat. Was jetzt mal Wir haben es ja bei der Fashion Entwicklung gemerkt, dass manche Materialien sich vielleicht irgendwie gut anfühlen und auch vielleicht eine gute Nachhaltigkeit haben. Aber wenn sie nachher nicht funktionieren, wenn sie nachher nicht gut genug sind von der Form, vom Material, von der Haptik, von der Qualität, dann hilft das auch nicht viel. Denn du kannst noch so nachhaltig sein. Wenn das Produkt nicht gut ist, nützt es niemandem. Also, wenn man trotzdem ein gutes Produkt hat, was auch

angenommen wird und was funktioniert. Denn Nachhaltigkeit nur um des Nachhaltigkeitswillens kann nie ein Ziel sein, weil dann wird es nicht gekauft und dann bringt es auch nichts. Um wirklich einen Unterschied zu machen, muss man ein Produkt haben, das sowohl nachhaltig als auch gut ist. Sonst kann man es gleich lassen.

Speaker 1: [00:24:08] Ja, stimmt. Das kann ja dann gezielt im zweiten Checkpoint, nachdem du halt diesen Prototyp erstellt hast, passieren, bevor man zum Markteintritt übergeht. Und dann noch mal weiterhin zu diesen values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoints. Würdest du in diesen Checkpoints. Wir haben ja einen nach dem ersten Schritt, nachdem du diesen Standpunkt definiert hast. Dann kommt der eine nach dem zweiten Schritt, nach dem Prototyp und dann, nachdem es am Markt ist. Würdest du da unterscheiden und verschiedene Stakeholder einbauen? Das heißt, auf der einen Seite kommen die Kunden rein, auf der anderen Seite nimmst du irgendwelche gesellschaftlichen Stakeholder rein und auf der dritten Seite kommen deine Mitarbeiter rein. Würdest du das trennen, also differenzieren? Oder würdest du sagen, immer mit allen?

Speaker 2: [00:25:00] Ich würde grundsätzlich immer alle inkludieren, aber vielleicht in verschiedenen, in verschiedenen Ausprägungen, also in der frühen Phase wahrscheinlich etwas weniger die Kunden und mehr die die Stakeholder, die dann wirklich in der. In der Entwicklung mehr betroffen sind. Also dann soziale und ökologische und natürlich logischerweise auch die Produzenten. Ob man das überhaupt fertigen kann? Und hinten raus, wenn die ersten Themen soweit geklärt sind, was die Produktion an sich angeht und welche Materialien man wie benutzen kann, ist also überhaupt erst mal die Machbarkeit geklärt ist, dass man danach dann mehr auf die Kunden eingeht, weil man dann natürlich hinten raus dann die Produkte so entwickeln muss, dass sie auch beim Kunden gut ankommen. Aber trotzdem sollte man, glaube ich, auch an den ersten Schritten die Kunden immer mit betrachten, wenn auch vielleicht nicht so ausgiebig, weil natürlich auch wenn man entscheidet, gehen wir jetzt mit Material X oder Material Y und die haben verschiedene Eigenschaften. Natürlich ist am Ende dann da auch natürlich einmal die Machbarkeit entscheidend, aber eben auch, wie kommen dann die verschiedenen Materialien beim Kunden an und wie kann man sie vielleicht auch im Marketing kommunizieren? Wird eben dieses Beispiel Tencel, Repreve oder Econyl oder vielleicht einfach nur ganz normale Baumwolle? Auch das muss natürlich in einer relativ frühen Phase geklärt werden, sollte aber auch nicht ohne Fokus auf den Kunden entschieden werden, weil am Ende der Kunde der ist oder die ist, die das tragen muss.

Speaker 1: [00:26:42] Ja. Okay.

Speaker 2: [00:26:45] Also kurz gefasst: Ja, alle betrachten aber in verschiedenen Phasen vielleicht verschiedene Schwerpunkte auf unterschiedliche Stakeholder legen.

Speaker 1: [00:26:52] Verschiedene Schwerpunkte. Na gut, dann wäre meine nächste Frage, Wenn wir jetzt dieses ganze Modell noch mal hier vor Augen führst, mit welchen Schwierigkeiten könnte das denn generell konfrontiert sein und welche Verbesserungsvorschläge würdest du demnach sehen?

Speaker 2: [00:27:09] Also für das Modell selbst?

Speaker 1: [00:27:11] Ja, also jetzt haben wir ja, wir sind jetzt ja quasi einmal durch die Schritte gegangen. Und wenn du jetzt hier das ganze Ding noch mal vor Augen führst, ich kann es uns auch gleich noch mal teilen, wenn du willst.

Speaker 2: [00:27:20] Ja, gerne.

Speaker 1: [00:27:21] Okay Sekunde. (...) Also, hier ist noch mal so alles gut. Genau deswegen. Wo, meinst du, könnten problematische Stellen auftauchen? Was findest du gut? Was würdest du verbessern? Also jetzt so quasi als Wrap Up zu dem Prozess, den wir zwischen aufgebaut.

Speaker 2: [00:27:55] Im Großen und Ganzen ist das so schon ganz gut. Also ich glaube, was grundsätzlich problematisch sein könnte, ist bei den Stakeholdern wie tief man oder wie weit man die Stakeholder definiert. Also ist Stakeholder auch der Lieferant für die Maschinen, die das Repeve herstellen? So weißt du wie ich meine, wie tief in der gesamten Wertschöpfungskette. Wie tief geht man da rein? Und da ist natürlich für so eine kleine Firma extra schwierig, da wirklich ganz, ganz, ganz tief in die Wertschöpfungskette reinzugehen. Das glaube ich so grundsätzlich. Aber das ist grundsätzlich ein Problem in der Produktentwicklung, nicht nur jetzt von dem Framework, dass es einfach wahnsinnig schwierig ist, wirklich die gesamte Wertschöpfungskette da wirklich komplett den Überblick zu haben. Ja, genau. (...) Ich versuch dann noch mal kurz mich zu erinnern. Dieser, dieser erste Punkt. Da geht es darum, einfach den Innovationsprozess (...) kannst du nochmal ganz kurz erklären, dieses Understanding, Observation, Standpoint, worauf sich das bezieht?

Speaker 1: [00:29:20] Genau. Also das ist quasi der erste Schritt. Das ist ja wie gesagt von vom Design Thinking Ansatz inspiriert und da gehst du dann rein, wenn du jetzt die Firmware und die Stakeholderwerte alle hast, gehst du noch mal rein. Okay, wir sind jetzt zum Beispiel in der Modebranche. Und was, was genau wollen unsere Kunden? Haben bei euch dann jetzt zum Beispiel die Yoga Leggings? Hast du das dann noch mal dieses Problem noch mal komplett aufrollen und verstehst es nochmal? Du observierst quasi, was passiert am Markt, was wollen unsere Kunden, wie können wir das gerade angehen? Und dann definierst du eine Position, wo du dann sagst, okay, das sind jetzt alle Werte, die wir definiert haben, das ist das Produkt, das wir ungefähr haben wollen. Und dann gehst du direkt in diesen Innovationsprozess rein und gehst dann diese ganzen nächsten Schritte wieder durch bis zum Prototyping. Also Schritt für Schritt wirklich die Definition des Standpoints, das ist dann der Output, dass du einen festen Plan hast für den nächsten Schritt.

Speaker 2: [00:30:22] Okay, danke. Die Frage, ob man das überhaupt braucht, weil man danach sowieso das Idea Generation macht. Vielleicht ist es auch einfach Teil der Idee Generation oder? Dass man so Idea Sprints macht. Ja, also ich hatte es tatsächlich eher so gemacht, dass man natürlich am Anfang irgendwie das Problem definiert. Also was, was wenn man überhaupt machen oder auch einfach so ein Opportunity Field oder natürliche Vorfall irgendwie definiert. Also in welchem Bereich möchte man was machen, aber dann eben vielleicht so innerhalb dieses. Aber ich glaube in diesem zweiten Prozess, im ersten Schritt, also in der Idea Generation, dass man da eher in Idea Sprints arbeitet, bevor man in die Konzeptentwicklung geht, dass man also irgendwie mit vier, fünf Ideen in diese Idea Generation geht und die relativ leicht testet, gar nicht mit einem Prototyp testet, Sondern einfach auf Basis von ersten Interviews, ersten Befragungen oder einfach als Stakeholder Interviews testet und sich dann relativ schnell auf ein oder zwei in dem, wie du es nennst, Konzept einigt, mit denen man weitermachen will und die dann hinten nochmal gegeneinander testet. Das kann auch einfach nur eins sein. Also es kann auch sein, dass aus diesen fünf, mit denen man reingeht, nur eine Idee rauskommt, mit der man dann in die Konzeptentwicklung geht. Aber ich glaube, so würde ich das eher machen, dass man eben, wie gesagt, in diesem zweiten Schritt erster Punkt Idea Generation

da mehr mit der Sprints arbeitet weil die große Gefahr ist halt, dass man wenn man immer nur eine Idee nimmt und man die bis zum Prototypen durchgeht weil so ein Prototyp ist halt auch immer teuer da irgendwelche Muster anzufertigen und so, dass es nicht ganz günstig, ja dass man halt davor schon die Konfidenz möglichst so weit erhöht, dass man relativ sicher ist. Okay, das Ding, die Idee, mit der wir jetzt bis in Prototypen gehen, ist mit einer ziemlich hohen Wahrscheinlichkeit die richtige. Dann immer eine Idee nimmt die als Prototyp entwickelt, dann merkt okay, ne, bring doch nichts und dann wieder die nächste Idee nennt und wieder eine, wieder und wieder die nächste, dann kann das ziemlich teuer werden. Wenn man davor schon die Konferenz erhöht und schon mal ein paar Ideen in all das für uns runter berechnen könnte das die Gesamtkosten auch ein bisschen reduzieren und am Ende dann auch Geschwindigkeit erhöhen, weil man halt mit weniger Ideen bis zu den Prototypen gehen muss.

Speaker 1: [00:33:18] Verstehe. Das heißt, du würdest quasi den ersten Schritt eher der Regeneration widmen. Dass man daran diese Idea Sprints hat und die paar Ideen zum Beispiel mit Interviews testet oder anderen Umfragen. Und dann quasi in diesen zweiten Innovationsprozess erst reingeht, wo man sagt okay, dafür entwickeln wir jetzt ein Konzept und dazu bauen wir jetzt unseren Prototyp.

Speaker 2: [00:33:39] Ja bzw. natürlich, also ich finde den ersten Schritt, also dieses Upstream an Innovation Process, vielleicht schon auch sinnvoll, dass man überhaupt erst mal versteht, warum wollen wir eigentlich was machen und was wollen wir konkret machen? Also ich glaube schon, dass man was davor braucht, weil sonst kann man auch Idea Sprints weniger gut machen, weil man natürlich schon irgendwie das Feld auch begrenzen muss, in welchen Bereichen man diese Idea Sprints macht und dann natürlich nichts Idea Sprints zu machen und da ist die eine Idee dann so, wir machen jetzt hier irgendwie eine neue Yoga Leggings und die andere Idee ist so, wir machen jetzt keine Ahnung mehr, wir stellen jetzt Zahnbürsten her. Das muss schon am Anfang auch irgendwo eingegrenzt sein. Und da hilft natürlich vielleicht dieser erste Punkt, der muss aber sollte, glaube ich, aber sehr, sehr leicht gewichtig sein. Und ich weiß auch nicht, ob es da viele Iterationen braucht oder überhaupt Iteration, weil es ja eigentlich eher nachher von der von der Firma definiert sein muss. In dem Bereich wollen wir jetzt was machen, da sehen wir Handlungsbedarf. Und jetzt nehmen wir fünf Ideen auf, von denen wir glauben, dass sie diesen Handlungsbedarf in diesem Bereich aufgreifen und eine Lösung präsentieren. Und jetzt testen wir die ganz, ganz leichtgewichtig und schnell in irgendwie drei vier Idea Sprints. Am Ende kommt einer raus und dann gehen wir halt hier ins Konzept Development und Prototyping. Aber halt eher, dass in diesem ersten Punkt Idea Generation einfach noch mal mehrere Subprozesse drin sind in Form von Idea Sprints zum Beispiel.

Speaker 1: [00:35:17] Okay, ich verstehe. Gut, dann würde ich sagen, noch einmal, wir sind eigentlich durch. Und dann wäre jetzt meine Frage an dich, ob es noch irgendetwas gibt, was du jetzt in dem Zusammenhang noch für wichtig empfindest, was ich jetzt noch nicht angesprochen habe oder worüber wir jetzt noch nicht gesprochen haben?

Speaker 2: [00:35:37] Also ob ich noch irgendwo Punkte sehe, die wir noch nicht angesprochen haben?

Speaker 1: [00:35:55] Ja okay, du jetzt. Also wenn wir jetzt zum Ende des Interviews kommen, noch mal auf das Gespräch zurückkommen, wenn du noch mal sagst, okay, es gibt jetzt noch einen Punkt, den ich in dem Zusammenhang noch ansprechen möchte, den wir noch nicht angesprochen haben. Ob dir noch was Wichtiges eingefallen ist.

Speaker 2: [00:36:10] Nein, eigentlich nicht. Aber am Ende muss es halt immer auch wirtschaftlich Sinn machen. Ich glaube, dass alle Nachhaltigkeit nichts bringt, wenn es nicht auch am Markt und wirtschaftlich erfolgreich sein kann, weil dann sind die Firmen am Ende relativ schnell wieder von der Bildfläche verschwunden und dann ist auch niemandem geholfen, wenn dann wieder die unnachhaltigen Produkte durchkommen. Ich weiß es nicht, inwiefern das Teil ist (...) gut nachher ist vielleicht Teil dieser Stakeholder Map, das natürliche Stakeholder Netz auch irgendwo dann Shareholder sind. Aber ich glaube, dass es das ist auch super wichtig, dass man da eben ein Gleichgewicht aus Nachhaltigkeit, aber auch wirtschaftlichem Erfolg schafft. Um dann wirklich eine nachhaltige Lösung auch langfristig erfolgreich platzieren zu können.

Speaker 1: [00:37:04] Ja. Okay. Dann habe ich an dieser Stelle keine weiteren Fragen mehr an dich. Wenn du noch einmal fragen willst, kannst du es jetzt tun.

Speaker 2: [00:37:16] Nö, alles super. (*lacht*)

Speaker 1: [00:37:19] Super!

Appendix 7. Transcript Interview Case Firm E runamics

Speaker 1: [00:00:03] Okay, da kommen wir schon zur ersten Frage und die ist zu der Firmen Vorstellung. Und da würde ich dich fragen, ob du mir eine kurze Beschreibung von runamics geben kannst.

Speaker 2: [00:00:12] Ja. Runamics entwickelt seit 2020 Cradle to Cradle Sportkleidung. Unsere Sportkleidung ist für den biologischen Materialkreislauf gedacht, das heißt die Materialien, mit denen wir arbeiten, die sind biologisch kreislauffähig. Sie können also sich biologisch abbauen und sind umweltsicher von der Materialchemie her. Nicht alle unsere Produkte sind bereits Cradle to Cradle zertifiziert. Es ist ein Anteil. Dieses Jahr werden wir die 50 % Marke knacken und wir verkaufen unsere Produkte im Internet primär an die Endkonsumenten direkt. Das ist ein D2C, Direct to Consumer Modell, werden aber in diesem Jahr mit einer neuen Produktkollektion, die wir jetzt im Sommer vorstellen, auch im B2B-Bereich aktiv. Da werden wir Sportvereine, Sportevents, Unternehmen direkt, also die als Großabnehmer für Sportveranstaltungen, Betriebssport etc. auftreten und auch den Fachhandel ansprechen, so dass wir uns da ein bisschen breiter aufstellen werden.

Speaker 1: [00:01:15] Wie viele Mitarbeiter habt ihr und wann genau wurde runamics offiziell gegründet?

Speaker 2: [00:01:52] (Technische Schwierigkeiten) Alles klar. Wir sind vier Mitarbeiter. Wir sind in Hamburg und wir sind 2021 als GmbH im Frühjahr gegründet worden. Vorher lief das als Einzelunternehmen.

Speaker 1: [00:02:03] Ah, okay. Gut. Und dann eine nächste Frage noch mal. Du hast das schon ein bisschen angesprochen, aber inwieweit würdest du jetzt explizit sagen, dass ihr mit eurem Unternehmen oder mit deinem Unternehmen schon die ökologischen, ethischen und sozialen Ziele verfolgt?

Speaker 2: [00:02:20] Also Cradle to Cradle ist ein ganzheitliches Modell, was so ein bisschen über das Klassische hinausgeht. Cradle to Cradle basiert auf fünf, fünf betrachteten Säulen. Das eine ist die Materialgesundheit, da geht es um die Materialchemie. Also was ist bis auf Molekül Ebene quasi im Produkt enthalten, damit die Produkte später keinen Schaden anrichten? Die Idee hinter Cradle to Cradle ist, dass man direkt am Anfang einer Wertschöpfung mitdenkt. Ob das mit dem Produkt quasi hinten raus passieren kann, um einen positiven Fortnutzen zu haben. Dass die Materialgesundheit das zweite ist, die Kreislauffähigkeit. Das heißt, sind die Produkte überhaupt in der Lage, auch im Kreislauf geführt zu werden? Rein mechanisch, also von dem Geschäftsmodell her gedacht Ja, das ist, das ist das zweite, Das dritte ist die die Energie. Das heißt, sind die Energien, die im Produktionsprozess oder in der gesamten Wertschöpfungskette anfallen oder verbraucht werden, sind die halt zu einem entsprechenden Anteil aus regenerativer Quelle. Das vierte ist das Wasser. Das heißt, ist das Wasser, was in den Produktionsprozessen anfällt, wird das entsprechend kreislauffähig geführt. Also sind die Abwässer sauber, die entstehen und fließt entsprechend nicht mehr Wasser rein als notwendig. Und das fünfte ist die ethische Komponente, das heißt, werden die Produkte in der Wertschöpfung nach ethisch korrekten Standards produziert. Das sind so die fünf Säulen von Cradle to Cradle und von daher ist das nach unserer Meinung her ein Ansatz, der in allen Industrien

Anwendung finden kann und so ganzheitlich gedacht ist, dass man eigentlich alles abdeckt, um wirklich dann auch die Dinge richtig zu machen.

Speaker 1: [00:04:05] Okay, gut, dann würde ich sagen, können wir quasi ins Implementation Framework einsteigen. Da geht es dann auch mit den Werten weiter. Der erste Punkt da bzw. konntest du dir das schon kurz angucken oder soll ich einmal kurz meinen Bildschirm teilen, dass wir das nochmal.

Speaker 2: [00:04:22] Teil mal gerne deinen Bildschirm ja.

Speaker 1: [00:04:28] Okay Sekunde. (...) Kannst du es jetzt sehen?

Speaker 2: [00:04:37] Yes.

Speaker 1: [00:04:38] Okay. Genau. Hier ist der erste Schritt Firm Diagnostics. Da geht es quasi darum, dass sich die Firma, die das anwendet, erst mal mit sich selber auseinandersetzt. Man reflektiert die Werte. Was ist unsere Mission? Was ist unsere Vision? Was wollen wir eigentlich bewegen? Dass man dann damit mit einem klaren Werteset in den nächsten Schritt weitergehen kann. Deswegen werde ich hier noch mal die vier Werte von values-based Innovation kurz erklärt. Hier ist meine erste Frage an dich, wie habt ihr eure Werte am Anfang definiert und eure Mission oder Vision festgelegt?

Speaker 2: [00:05:18] Also ehrlicherweise war das bei uns jetzt kein „Sit Down“, wo wir uns überlegt haben, was sind so die Werte für die wir stehen? Die haben sich jetzt mehr und mehr so ein bisschen herauskristallisiert und wir sind auch gerade dabei, unsere Positionierung noch so ein bisschen zu schärfen und auch noch mal so ein bisschen nach innen zu schauen. Aber am Ende war es halt oder am Anfang war es dann halt so, dass wir 2020 gesagt haben, nach der ersten Crowdfundingkampagne, dass wir, wenn wir das ernst meinen mit nachhaltiger Sportkleidung, nachhaltiger in Führungszeichen, dann müssen wir auch diesen Cradle to Cradle Ansatz gehen. Von daher ist Cradle to Cradle eigentlich unser Leitstern. Was die, was die Werte angeht und was auch unser unseren kompletten Ansatz angeht. Darunter fallen alle die dort genannten Punkte, die ich dir eben beschrieben habe. Ich habe dir ja im Grunde diese fünf Säulen beschrieben und alle, die werden in diesem Modell, die du da auch aufgeführt hast, halt abgedeckt. Von daher ist das unser Leitstern. Und ja, da brauchen wir im Groben nicht noch weitere Werte, die wir uns selbst auferlegen. Es ist bei uns ein bisschen so, dass wir noch so ein paar zusätzliche, wie soll ich sagen Handlungsprinzipien oder Prämissen formulieren. Warte mal ganz kurz.

Speaker 1: [00:06:49] Ja klar. (...)

Speaker 2: [00:07:15] Also das eine ist: „Anders ist gut“, nennen wir das. Das heißt, im Prinzip ist in der gesamten textilen Welt und auch in allen anderen Industrien, meiner Meinung nach ist es so, dass immer eine Sache genommen wird und die wird dann halt extra durchgezogen und alles drumherum wird ignoriert. Und da wird halt oft die falsche Sau durchs Dorf getrieben. Und deswegen sagen wir, dass man auch andere Ansätze verfolgen muss, um ein gutes Gleichgewicht zu bekommen. Das ist in der Umwelt nicht anders, da brauchen wir auch irgendwie ein gutes Gleichgewicht aus in einer großen Biodiversität. Und das muss in der Wirtschaft eigentlich auch so sein. Deswegen

brauchen wir unterschiedliche Ansätze, die zugelassen werden. Und deswegen sagen wir „anders ist gut“. Das andere was, was wir halt, was, was wir als Leitstern haben, ist das Cradle to Cradle, was ich eben formuliert habe. Das Dritte ist „besser zusammen“. Unser Ziel ist es halt am Ende nicht, dass wir ausschließlich Kleidung verkaufen, sondern dass wir insgesamt auch für mehr Bewusstsein in der Sportlergemeinde sorgen. Das eine füttert quasi das andere. Wenn mehr Bewusstsein da ist, können wir mehr Kleidung verkaufen. Andersrum genauso. Nur dann, wenn wir viel Kleidung verkaufen, können wir auch unser übergreifendes Ziel erreichen. Nämlich, dass wir weniger, weniger Müll Textilmüll aus der Sportindustrie haben. Das letzte ist „Impact before Profit“. Das ist bei uns natürlich ein wichtiges Merkmal unserer als Impact Startup, so wie wir uns selbst bezeichnen. Am Ende hat man immer so Trade Off Situation. Wo man sich für oder gegen eine Sache entscheiden muss. Und oft entscheiden muss man sich für oder gegen zum Beispiel eine bessere Nettomarge entscheiden, weil man zum Beispiel mit anderen Materialien arbeitet oder mit anderen Prozessen, vielleicht mit fairen Prozessen. Dann würden wir uns in dem Fall für den Impact entscheiden und nicht den Profit. Das ist bei uns schon so ein Credo. Das ist leichter gesagt als getan, denn diese Trade Offs begegnen einem tatsächlich jeden Tag. Und wir sind uns auch bewusst darüber, dass wenn wir eine Trade Off Entscheidung zu treffen haben und die unsere ökonomische Existenz bedroht, dann dürfen wir sie halt nicht treffen. Das ist halt immer so ein Balanceakt. Und genau von daher bewegen wir uns immer auch auf dieser, dieser Schneide. Aber diese vier Dinge sind eigentlich so ein bisschen das, wonach wir, wonach wir uns richten.

Speaker 1: [00:10:04] Okay, und wo kommen diese Werte her? Also würdest du jetzt sagen, dass es eigentlich einfach auch als Gründer deine intrinsische Überzeugung oder wie sind diese ganzen Werte zusammengekommen, dass ihr jetzt sagt okay, das ist uns wichtig und das wollen wir verfolgen?

Speaker 2: [00:10:19] Tatsächlich hat sich das, das hat sich so ein bisschen entwickelt. Also das ist, das ist ein Entstehungsprozess gewesen, weil man sich ja auch als Firma erst mal selbst finden muss und auch so ein kleines, so ein kleines Selbstbild für sich selbst irgendwie herauskristallisieren muss. Von daher ist das eher ein Prozess als eine, als eine Übung.

Speaker 1: [00:10:43] Ja das sowieso. Aber ich meinte jetzt von wegen, ob das auch Werte sind, die du in deinem persönlichen Leben verfolgst oder hinter denen du. Persönlich stehst.

Speaker 2: [00:10:53] Ja. Das kann man bestimmt so sagen, dass das das in vielerlei Hinsicht stark reflektiert. Das ist naturgegeben. Bei so einer kleinen Firma dann so, dass ich das da stark mit einfließen lasse.

Speaker1: [00:11:06] Okay, gut. Wenn wir den nächsten Schritt gehen in dem Model, kommen wir zur Indirect and Direct Stakeholder Analysis. Das ist von einem anderen theoretischen Framework ein Tool, um seine Stakeholder zu analysieren. Damit man sich eben bewusst wird okay, wen betreffen wir mit dem, was wir machen? Im Direkten, aber auch im Indirekten? Und dann wurden jetzt ja auch ein paar Stakeholder Gruppen identifiziert, also einmal Kunden Financial Stakeholder. In dem Fall von Value Space Innovation sind das auch immer noch Societal Stakeholder, also mit der Umwelt. Dann natürlich Business, Partner, Lieferanten, Logistikpartner, wie auch immer und auch die Mitarbeiter der Firma. Da ist jetzt meine Frage an dich, inwiefern ihr euch mit euren Stakeholdern aktiv schon auseinandersetzt und wie ihr sie identifiziert.

Speaker 2: [00:11:57] Also ich gehe einfach mal eben durch Kunden. Wir haben eine Kunden Persona, die, die ist auch. Natürlich hatten wir ein Idealbild. Das sind Menschen, die bewusst konsumieren. Und dann hatten wir aufgeteilt und haben gesagt okay, das sind zum einen die SportlerInnen, die auch bewusst konsumieren. Es sind aber auch welche, die sich durch ihren bewussten Lebensstil quasi identifizieren, aber auch Sport machen. Diese beiden Leute sprechen wir im Grunde an. Es hat sich dann aber auch so ein bisschen herauskristallisiert, dass unsere Kunden zum Beispiel älter sind, als wir eigentlich dachten. Also bei den Kunden ist es eher so ein Findungsprozess. Bei den Mitarbeitern ist es bei uns natürlich so, dass A) wir sind ein kleines Team, das heißt, wir haben noch keine großen Recruitingverfahren und B) finden sich natürlich in so einem kleinen Ökosystem wie runamics Leute, die da auch Bock drauf haben auf die Sache per se. Von daher ist es eigentlich am Anfang gerade und in der ersten in den ersten Jahren der der Unternehmensbestehung ist es, finde ich (...) naja, es ist wie so eine angehende Liebesbeziehung irgendwie. Man findet sich halt, weil man sich irgendwie gut findet. Und dann und dann macht man was zusammen. Und ich glaube, das ist, dass es bei uns halt auch so ein fortlaufender Prozess der halt den wir jetzt aktiv noch nicht irgendwie steuern. Financial Stakeholder das sind wir natürlich schon bedacht dass wir da mit Leuten arbeiten wollen, die uns irgendwie gleich gesinnt sind und die auch da an die gleichen Werte glauben. Dass es jetzt zum einen die GLS Bank, zum anderen haben wir jetzt hoffentlich bald einen potenziellen strategischen Investor Partner, was ein Mittelständler aus Baden-Württemberg ist, die auch schon seit anderthalb Jahren mit Cradle to Cradle arbeiten. Wo wir uns halt auch überlegt haben, okay, wir brauchen jemanden, der wirklich langfristig auch ein Verständnis davon hat, was wir überhaupt erreichen wollen. Und da würde uns kein klassischer Business Angel oder etwas dergleichen halt, das würde halt nicht so gut funktionieren. Also da achten wir schon drauf, aber wir arbeiten auch da mit PayPal, zum Beispiel, um mal einen kleinen Business Kredit zu nehmen, was einfach einfach ist und für uns dann irgendwie funktioniert. Also weil bei Financial Stakeholder sind wir jetzt nicht so, dass wir da gewisse Dinge komplett ausschließen. Ich glaube, wir würden jetzt wahrscheinlich nicht mit der Warburg Bank arbeiten, aber, wenn die sich richtig verkaufen, dann wird es wahrscheinlich auch machen. Also, es ist schwierig. Bei Societal Stakeholder, Natural Environment Communities, Government, Excellent Agencies, Media und Academia. Da bin ich so ein bisschen hin und hergerissen. Also wenn du jetzt schreibst, zum Beispiel externe Agencies. Die haben für mich einen Arbeitsauftrag, die eine gewisse Sache sehr gut können. Das kann was Technisches sein. Zum Beispiel. Das kann sein, dass sie Performance Marketing sehr gut können müssen. Und wenn ich ganz ehrlich bin, es ist mir dann egal, was die sonst noch machen, weil mir wichtig ist, dass die ihr Handwerk gut können. Von daher bin ich da so ein bisschen ja wahrscheinlich eher zwiegespalten, ob man da dann so dogmatisch sein muss bei der Auswahl der der Partner. Weil wenn ich an mein Ziel glaube und mein Ziel erreichen will, dann brauche ich halt die richtigen Handwerker dafür. Und das ist dann finde ich, finde ich wichtig zu differenzieren. Natürlich bei allen anderen Partnern, die wir so haben, egal ob das die Cradle to Cradle NGO ist oder das Marketing for Future ist, ob das die IFB Kollegen sind, ob das was haben wir noch für Partner, ob das die Hochschulen sind, da haben wir natürlich Partner, die zu der Mission wie die Faust aufs Auge passen, dass es auch da ein Businessmodell mäßig bedingt und Business Partners, Supplier, Logistik, Partners, Consultants, Operations Providers. Auch da sind wir aufgrund dessen, dass wir mit bestimmten Produkten arbeiten und Materialien natürlich nur mit jenen in Kontakt, die dafür offen sind oder die das halt schon machen. Also dass es da so aber auch da wieder gesagt, wenn ich jetzt zum Beispiel einen Sache von A nach B transportieren muss, dann erfüllt den Job halt eine Spedition. Und da würde ich jetzt nicht noch vier Wochen ins Land gehen lassen, um zu analysieren,

ob die einen jetzt irgendwie näher bei uns sind oder ferner. Von daher finde ich, muss man da auch so ein bisschen die Fünfe gerade sein lassen.

Speaker 1: [00:17:05] Ja. Verstehe. Okay, gut, dann, wenn wir jetzt hier weitergehen in diesem Prozess, und wir hier jetzt alle Stakeholder identifiziert haben, kommt zum ersten Mal so ein Value Driven Stakeholder Check Point, der hier auf Inclusion ausgelegt ist. Also hier werden dann quasi nachdem erstens die Firmenwerte identifiziert worden sind und zweitens die Stakeholder, wird es dann alles einmal zusammen genommen und die Firma integriert zum ersten Mal die eigenen Werte mit den Werten von der von den Stakeholdern. Genau das hat. Das ist quasi der Zweck, den dieser Punkt hier erfüllt. Und da ist meine Frage an dich, wie du das jetzt machen würdest. Also wie würdest du deine Stakeholder und die Werte bereits vor dem Innovationsprozess, der dann hier richtig anfängt, einbeziehen? Und auch wenn du das jetzt nicht so in der Praxis aktiv gemacht hast, was wäre da dein Gefühl?

Speaker 2: [00:18:03] Also, wenn ich in der Lage wäre, dass ich (...). Wenn wir jetzt eine Firma wären mit 150 Mitarbeitern, die Double did it growth und und allseits bekannt ist, dann hätte ich natürlich ein anderes Standing, um so etwas quasi auch zu thematisieren und auch in meinem Partnernetzwerk zu drücken. Dann würde ich, wenn ich in dieser Situation wäre, was wir nicht sind, dann würde ich. Vermutlich eine Art. Na, wie nennt man es nach Code of Conduct? In der Art würde ich es wahrscheinlich aufsetzen, der sich genau diesem Thema widmet Values-driven Innovation. Dann würde ich das Thema erklären und ich würde diesen Code of Conduct allen potenziellen Partnern zur Verfügung stellen und auch alle unterschreiben lassen. Dann würde ich vermutlich irgendwie die Mitarbeiter, die entsprechend an diesem Innovationsprozess direkt mit den Stakeholdern beteiligt sind. Die müssten entsprechend gebrieft werden, sodass sie dann quasi die Aufgabe haben, diesen Code of Conduct zu befolgen und immer wieder mit in den Prozess mit den Stakeholdern einzubeziehen. Und ich glaube, so könnte man halbwegs sicherstellen, dass man irgendwie ein Vorgehen hat, was sich diesem vorher definierten Set of Values dann auch wirklich widmet. Zwischendurch könnte man noch so ein Check Ins s machen. Man könnte das so ein bisschen OKR (Objectives & Key Results) mäßig. Ich weiß nicht, ob du das kennst. Man könnte das ein bisschen wahrscheinlich so gestalten, dass man dann mit allen an dem Prozess Beteiligten immer wieder so eine Review Session macht und guckt, ob dieser Code of Conduct realistisch ist, ob der eingehalten wird. Wenn er nicht realistisch ist, müssen wir vielleicht irgendwo nachschärfen, müssen wir irgendwo Dinge verändern, um ihn näher in die Realität zu bringen? Und ich glaube, so würde ich vorgehen.

Speaker 1: [00:20:13] Okay. Coole Idee. Mit dem Code of Conduct und zu den Checkpoints kommen wir tatsächlich gleich auch noch so ein bisschen. Aber jetzt auch gerade mal, Also verstehe ich natürlich, dass es jetzt bei einem kleineren Unternehmen schwierig ist. Aber sagen wir jetzt mal so, meinst du, da gibt's trotzdem die Möglichkeit, auch jetzt für so ein kleines Unternehmen die irgendwie schon vorher einzubeziehen, auch wenn man nicht gerade die finanziellen Ressourcen zum Beispiel dafür hat.

Speaker 2: [00:20:37] Ja, am Ende beziehen wir ja alle mit ein. Wenn wir jetzt zum Beispiel eine Näherei in Polen haben, die wir zertifiziert haben, dann müssen wir ja, da mussten wir die natürlich voll mit einbeziehen. Dann mussten wir da mit dem Zertifizierungspartner hingehen und mussten denen erklären, was Cradle to Cradle ist, warum uns das wichtig ist. Die mussten da quasi auch

einwilligen, dass die da mitmachen. Also das, natürlich machen wir das und bei der Bank ist es zum Beispiel genauso Wir müssen. Bei der GLS Bank mussten wir uns vorstellen, wir müssen den erklären, was unser Geschäftsmodell ist und was uns, was uns da wichtig ist. Und dann konnten die entweder sagen, ob sie mit uns Geschäfte machen oder nicht. Also es ist ja schon so, dass wir, indem wir unser Geschäftsmodell vorstellen und unsere Idee dahinter beziehen wir ja die Leute automatisch mit ein, weil anders, anders könnten wir dann gar keine Geschäftsbeziehung eingehen. Das ist beim Investment Pitch so gewesen, das ist bei (...) dass ist bei der Auswahl von unserem Fulfillment Partner so gewesen. Wo wir ja auch gesagt haben: „Pass auf, wir arbeiten nicht mit dem Klebeband, Wir arbeiten aber nicht mit Plastiktüten“, denn wir wollen nicht, dass unsere Produkte alle einzeln in Plastik eingeschweißt werden, bevor sie verschickt werden usw. Das sind alles Dinge, die die wir ja schon so berücksichtigen, aber eher operativ und nicht so strukturiert strategisch, wie es jetzt ein größeres Unternehmen machen würde.

Speaker 1: [00:22:06] Ja, verstehe. Okay, dann, wenn wir hier weitergehen, kommen wir dann in den Innovationsprozess. Der ist hier quasi in drei Teile aufgeteilt und der erste ist der Innovation Process. Der ist vom Design Thinking Ansatz so ein bisschen inspiriert, dass man die drei Schritte hier erst mal durchgeht an der Standing Observation und dann Standpoint Definition. Ziel hiervon ist dann, dass du, bevor du wirklich hier in den Innovationprozess, wo du dann auch direkt ein Konzept entwickelst und Prototyping begehst, dass du eine Ausgangssituation erstmal noch mal klar mit allen Werten und ja mit Markt Research, mit allem was dazu gehört kreierst. Und hier wäre meine Frage, wie alles, wie sinnvoll du so einen Vorpunkt zur Standpoint Definition ansiehst. Und wie du das angehen würdest, um diese geeignete Ausgangssituation vor dem Innovationsprozess zu entwickeln.

Speaker 2: [00:23:06] Also ich würde sagen, bei einer kleinen Firma wie uns. Wir landen schneller in Phase zwei, also in dem zweiten, in dem mittleren Block, weil wir haben einen kleinen Baukasten an Materialien, mit denen wir arbeiten können. Und damit wollen wir Produkte bauen. Und deswegen bauen wir Produkte, machen daraus Prototypen verkaufen, die sie als MVP, also Minimum Viable Produkt, schauen, ob die Leute, die kaufen und wenn sie gekauft werden, dann schleifen wir diese Produkte so, dass sie besser werden. Der erste Punkt ist sicherlich extrem wichtig bei größeren Firmen, insbesondere wenn man mehr Ressourcen dann auch dort reinsteckt in die in die Innovation. Von daher ist es finde ich essenziell, dass man erst mal überlegt. Korrelieren unsere oder korrelieren die von uns überlegten Ideen und auch darauf bauen diese Werte, die wir oben formuliert haben? Korreliert das mit dem, was der Markt überhaupt möchte und braucht? Das ist, glaube ich, essenziell wichtig. Und wenn man diese Verständnisphase auslassen würde, würde man natürlich immer Gefahr laufen, Ressourcen zu verbrennen. Von daher ist das, finde ich. Ja, ich. Ich komme ja selbst auch aus der Beratung vorher und es ist ein notwendiges und schon seit Jahrzehnten gängiges Vorgehen, um Innovationen zu erproben und um Innovation überhaupt zu betreiben. Von daher absolut wichtig der erste Punkt.

Speaker 1: [00:24:53] Okay. Gut. Danach würden wir jetzt hier runter gehen. In den ersten Jahren Checkpoint. Das ist dann der Zweck der gesamten Stakeholder Integration. Das hast du ja schon bei dem ersten Inclusion Checkpoint ein bisschen gesagt. Das sind dann diese Checkpoints, die nach jeder Phase des Innovationsprozesses ablaufen und auch am Ende nochmal. Aber dazu kommen wir noch, um halt sicherzustellen, und hier sind alle Werte weiterhin einbezogen. Stehen wir hinter dem, was wir bisher entwickeln und sind auf die Bedürfnisse der Stakeholder integriert. Das ist meine

Frage an dich Wie nützlich findest du das? Und was genau könnte in so einem Checkpoint passieren, wenn du da jetzt mal weiter nachdenkst?

Speaker 2: [00:25:35] Also, ich finde (...) es passiert es passiert ja so oder so! Klar, das kann man jetzt als Checkpoint bezeichnen. Aber wenn wir in der ersten Phase sind, wo wir quasi Marktforschung betreiben, wo wir die Kundenbedürfnisse versuchen zu identifizieren, dann sind ja die Ergebnisse, die wir uns dann anschauen, um das zu übersetzen, in Produkte oder Dienstleistungen oder was auch immer, sind ja dann im Grunde genau der Punkt, wo man sagt wir hatten vorher eine Hypothese, jetzt haben wir es verprobt mit Marktforschung. Und hat sich die jetzt bestätigt oder hat sie sich nicht bestätigt? Und dann passt man entsprechend das geplante Offering hinten raus an. Ich würde sagen, in diesem Konstrukt wäre das wahrscheinlich so eine Art ich sag mal Realness Check. Also sind die Werte, die wir uns quasi aufgelegt haben, sind, können wir diese Werte beibehalten mit dem, was wir jetzt in der ersten Phase rausgefunden haben? Also nehmen wir an, wir möchten Cradle to Cradle Kleidung verkaufen und wir möchten herausfinden, ob die Leute das geil finden und ob die da auch Lust drauf haben. Und dann finden wir raus, nein, die finden eher Plastik Kleidung geil, die aus recycelten PET gemacht wird und das feiern die voll. Wenn wir in dem Markt mitmachen wollen, dann müssen wir das auch so machen und dann würde sich sehr vieles ergeben. Korrelieren jetzt quasi unsere Werte mit dem, was der Markt möchte oder nicht? Und wenn das nicht so ist, dann müssten wir quasi uns überlegen, ob wir vielleicht was anderes mit unserem Cradle to Cradle Materialien machen sollen und keine T-Shirts. Das wäre für mich so ein Realitätscheck in der ersten Phase und in der zweiten Phase tatsächlich auch. Also ich bin jetzt da schon bei von zwei zu drei, wenn es dann Richtung Launch geht, auch da würde es, dann müsste es wieder so ein Realness Check geben, wo man sagt okay, wir haben jetzt vielleicht den MVP schon mal getestet, wir haben Prototypen, wir haben das in einem kleinen Zielmarkt schon mal geprobt. Wenn wir das jetzt groß ausrollen wollen, bleiben wir uns treu? Bleiben wir den Werten treu, die wir eigentlich wofür wir stehen wollen. Damit natürlich auch, wenn man das jetzt dann auf das gesamte Portfolio der Firma sieht, damit man da auch nicht verwässert. Weil ich glaube, dass dümmste, was einem dann als Werte oder wie du sagst als einer values-based Innovation Company dann da auf die Füße fallen würde, ist ja, dass dieses Wertegerüst mit jeder weiteren Innovation verwässert und dass das, würde man mit diesen Realness Checks quasi dann so ein bisschen aushebeln können.

Speaker 1: [00:28:24] Ja genau. Und jetzt im Punkt der Stakeholder Einbeziehung wie würdest du das dann gestalten? Also quasi ich meine bei Kunden kann man ja zum Beispiel immer ganz gut Umfragen machen, die auch schon im Produkt eine Entwicklung mit einbeziehen. Wie würdest du da Stakeholder einbeziehen, dass die auch bei diesem Realness Check dann dabei wären?

Speaker 2: [00:28:47] Hm. (...) Ja, also bei Kunden. Wir sind Fans von E-Mail-Marketing. Da kann man bewusst und unterbewusst Sachen herausfinden, von der eigenen Leserschaft und den eigenen Kunden. Das würde ich da auf jeden Fall anwenden. Bei allen anderen Stakeholdern ist es eher finde ich eine Konsequenz. Also wenn der Realness Check ein gewisses Ergebnis mit sich bringt, dass man sagt okay, an gewissen Stellen passt das jetzt nicht zu dem, was wir eigentlich uns vorstellen, dann würde man sich entweder andere Partner suchen oder man würde halt die Partner mit einbeziehen, um gewisse Änderungen vorzunehmen. Denn das Gesamtprodukt selbst ist, würde man mit der Fertigung halt ins Gespräch gehen, wenn man mit Partnern arbeitet. Und. Und ja, ich denke, das ist auch da dann ein iterativer Prozess. Die könnte man in diesem Realness Check. Wie würde man die einbeziehen? Also ich würde fast sagen, man könnte das so, man könnte das ja auch zu so einer Art,

wenn man diesen Code of Conduct aufsetzt, könnte man das ja quasi schon ein Teil von dem machen und sagen, wenn wir zusammen arbeiten, dann machen wir in allen Phasen der Markteinführung machen wir Realness Checks und da würden wir dann ein Telefonat oder ein Meeting mit euch vereinbaren, um zu gucken, ob das, was wir uns vorgestellt haben, eins zu eins mit dem korreliert, was jetzt auf der Straße ist und dann entsprechend nachzujustieren.

Speaker 1: [00:30:27] Ja, okay. Dann komm in den zweiten Innovationsprozess Teil. Das ist ja dann quasi der klassische Innovationsprozess, der so ein bisschen, also hier quasi der traditionelle und der non lineare Innovationsprozess zusammen, indem man durch eine Art Generation geht, dann Konzept Development, dann kommt man zur Entwicklung und dann kommt man zum Prototyping und Testing und das Ganze läuft als Cycle Innovation ab in einem interaktiven Prozess. Du hast ja vorhin schon erwähnt, dass ihr da auch ganz viel mit MVPs macht und dann die immer vertröstet und dann weitergeht. Könntest du trotzdem noch mal kurz beschreiben, wie ihr bei runamics durch diesen Prozess durchgeht und wie das abläuft?

Speaker 2: [00:31:09] (...) Ja, Es ist also Idea Generation. Wie passiert das bei uns? Gute Frage. Das ist halt sehr, sehr operativ. Also Ideen entstehen teilweise auch aufgrund von Möglichkeiten, Also wenn zum Beispiel, wenn wir merken, jetzt bei dem bei der neuen Kollektion, dass wir von Sportvereinen positive Resonanz bekommen, dann würden wir da eher Teamware Kollektionen draus machen. Und wenn das nicht der Fall sein sollte, würden wir das im Tennis vielleicht verproben das Material, um da eine Kollektion zu starten. Das ist so ein bisschen Trial and Error und da schauen wir halt, wo sind dann auch die Opportunitäten oder die, wo sind die Opportunities für uns im Markt und wo würden wir schnell Traktion bekommen? Das ist, das ist, denke ich bei uns immer so ein bisschen das was sinnvoll ist. Concept und Development Development. Ja, das ist bei uns dann relativ sportlich. Also dann sagen wir halt einer Designerin, dass wir jetzt einen Entwurf für ein Tennisshirt brauchen, dann macht die einen Entwurf, dann geben wir das in den Schnitt und die Näherei und dann wird daraus halt was gebaut. Da wollen wir im Idealfall auch nicht viel Zeit verstreichen lassen. Und bei anderen Sachen, wo wir wirklich noch das gestrickt, zum Beispiel den Stoff fertigen müssen und entwickeln müssen, da ist es dann halt aufwendiger. Da haben wir eine Idee für ein Material und dann heißt es auch da okay, erst mal einen Partner finden, der überhaupt Lust hat, mit so einer kleinen Firma was zu testen. Dann testen, testen, testen, bis der Stoff irgendwann so weit ist, dass er, dass er funktioniert für uns. Dann bauen wir daraus den Prototypen. Dann ist bei uns immer ein Teil der Markt Testphase oder auch der der Launchphase ist immer ein Pre-Sale. Also wir arbeiten mit Crowdfunding jetzt auch wieder, um quasi A) zu erproben ob nur wir daran glauben oder haben auch andere Bock darauf und zücken auch ihre Kreditkarte für und B), um halt Liquidität für die erste Produktionsphase reinzuholen. Das heißt, das ist für uns ein ganz wichtiges Element in diesen Launchprozess, also der der Pre-Sale in Form von einer Crowdfunding Kampagne. Genau. Und dann, wenn wir dann merken, okay, das Crowdfunding war erfolgreich, dann haben wir die Mittel, um die Produkte quasi zu produzieren. Und wenn die nicht erfolgreich wäre, wäre das für uns aber auch so ein bisschen der Beleg dafür. Okay, da haben wir mit dieser Idee ein bisschen ins Klo gegriffen und dann brauchen wir die eigentlich auch nicht weiterverfolgen.

Speaker 1: [00:34:13] Das heißt, es läuft bei euch schon auch mit dieser iterativen Natur ab, dass ihr Trial and Error Sequenz irgendwie nicht weiter geht. Dann wird wieder ein Schritt zurück gegangen und dann geht es wieder von vorne los.

Speaker 2: [00:34:24] Genau. Ja, anders geht das bei uns nicht. Und oft ist es auch so okay, dann merken wir Kunden schicken das zurück. Es geht da kaputt, es geht hier kaputt also müssen wir etwas anders machen. Können wir so nicht. Können wir so nicht machen. Und dann wird es wieder verbessert oder vom Markt genommen ganz anders gemacht. Das ist dann so ein bisschen dieser iterative Prozess. Aber dadurch, dass wir eine sehr kleine Firma sind, können wir uns halt nicht erlauben, dass wir das offen Market machen, also dass wir dieses ganze Testing halt intern irgendwie ablaufen lassen, sondern wir machen das immer direkt im Markt und wenn es, wenn es uns dann, wenn wir damit auf die Schnauze fallen, das ist so ein bisschen wahrscheinlich die Risikoaffinität, die man als kleines Unternehmen braucht.

Speaker 1: [00:35:13] Ja. Okay, gut, dann würde nach dem zweiten Schritt jetzt ja wieder dieser Values-Driven Stakeholder Checkpoint kommen. Da haben wir ja schon drüber gesprochen. Und dann in der dritten Phase kommt es zum Market Launch und danach haben wir auch wieder so einen Checkpoint, um halt ganz am Ende, wenn das Produkt auf dem Markt ist, genau wie du das jetzt eigentlich bei euch schon ein bisschen beschrieben habe hast hier noch mal zu testen. Okay, Produkt ist jetzt am Markt. Funktioniert es wirklich oder funktioniert es nach obwohl wir es davor gecheckt haben doch nicht, um dann in so einen Continuous Improvement Process überzuleiten, der dann theoretisch wieder, wenn du zum nächsten Produkt gehst, wieder ganz vorne anfängt. Wie sinnvoll findest du die Natur hier, das Ganze am Ende nochmal zu machen und in diesem Continuous Improvement Process einzusteigen?

Speaker 2: [00:35:59] Also Continuous Improvement ist immer wichtig, finde ich. Das würde ich so abhaken und dieses immer wieder diesen values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoint zu machen. Joa, also ich würde sagen, wenn man das jetzt so interpretiert, dass man dann immer wieder mit denen ins Gespräch gehen muss, um diesen Realness Check zu machen, dann weiß ich aus eigener Erfahrung, dass die dann irgendwann angepisst sind und sagen: „Hey Leute, nun ist irgendwann mal Schluss“. Wir haben jetzt genug geprüft und uns wieder selbst hinterfragt und lasst uns auch mal loslegen und mal weiter. Ich glaube, wenn man ein Market Launch erfolgreich gemacht hat, wenn man vorher das auch sauber getestet hat und alles in die richtige Richtung zeigt und der Market Launch auch erfolgreich war und die Produkte sich verkaufen, dann muss man auch erst mal mit dieser, mit dieser positiven Tatsache arbeiten, dass das alles geklappt hat. Und dann würde ich nicht sagen, dass man da immer wieder quasi diesen Check braucht. Da würde ich eher sagen, dass es ein internes Prozedere, wo man quasi sagt, dass man intern jedes Jahr vielleicht diese Art Realness Check hat, wo man sich als Organisation immer wieder die einzelnen Projekte und Innovationen dann quasi anschaut oder halt dann ist es ja keine Innovation in dem Sinne mehr. Wenn es schon seit drei Jahren im Markt ist, dann ist es für ein Jahr irgendwie steady daily business. So, und dann würde man sich selbst jedes Jahr vielleicht macht man dann so eine Art Company Retreat, wo man dann sich dem für zwei Tage verschreibt und alle aktiven Produkte und Projekte einmal dagegenhält, ob das zu dem passt, was man wofür man steht. Und wenn es irgendwo dann halt Fragezeichen gibt, dann kann man mit den Stakeholdern in den Dialog gehen. Aber ich würde jetzt nicht nach einem erfolgreichen Launch, wenn man schon diese Checks gemacht hat, das immer wieder forcieren.

Speaker 1: [00:38:02] Verstehe. Sehr gut. Dann kommen wir glaube ich schon zu meinen abschließenden Fragen. Genau. Noch mal zu dem Punkt dieser values-driven Checkpoints. Würdest du hier an verschiedenen Stellen verschiedene Stakeholder einbauen oder sagst du nein, ich würde schon an jeder, an jedem Checkpoint alle einbauen, weil jeder einen anderen Blickwinkel vertritt. Wie würdest du hier reagieren?

Speaker 2: [00:38:29] Abhängig vom Bedarf. Also. Kann ja sein, dass man vielleicht bei dem. Bei der ersten Phase wird man wahrscheinlich noch nicht so sehr mit Kunden irgendwie im Dialog sein. Da wird man noch eher mit den Partnern im Dialog sein, die vorne in der Wertschöpfung stehen. Hinten raus gibt es dann vielleicht wieder andere Partner, die für die Wertschöpfung hinten raus entsprechend wichtig sind. Das können zum Beispiel auch Entsorgungsbetriebe, Logistikbetriebe, Fulfillment Betriebe auch im digitalen Space sein. Also alles mögliche also schon, finde ich. Unterschiedlich kann können durchaus unterschiedliche sein.

Speaker 1: [00:39:11] Okay. Gut, dann wäre jetzt meine Frage, wenn wir jetzt noch mal als Ganzes anschauen, was hast du mit deiner Expertise für Gesamteindrücke von dem Framework jetzt? Oder wie würdest du das jetzt als ein großes bewerten oder beschreiben?

Speaker 2: [00:39:33] Ich finde das sehr cool und ich muss auch sagen, dass ich die Idee da so mit diesen mit diesen Checkpoints irgendwie ganz smart finde. Also einiges davon ist ja jetzt nicht zwangsläufig neu. Ich glaube, die Idee dahinter ist ja, dass man diese Checkpoints halt hat. Das ist, glaube ich, jetzt diese Neuartigkeit an diesem, an diesem Prozess. Und das finde ich super, wie man das halt umsetzen würde. Ich glaube, so eine Art, was wir eben besprochen haben, dass mit dem Code of Conduct und diesen Realness Checks, das ist total sinnvoll, das zu machen, dass man quasi eine Ausgangslage hat und dann immer wieder diese Checks hat. Ich finde das cool und ich kann mir das auch echt gut vorstellen, dass das bei Unternehmen sehr gut ankommt, insbesondere bei Unternehmen, die irgendwie straggeln, für sich festzulegen, Was heißt für uns dieses ominöse Wort Nachhaltigkeit und wie können wir das bei uns implementieren? Ich glaube, da könnte so ein Modell total gut helfen. Also als Unternehmensberatung würde ich jetzt sagen cooles Framework, können wir mal irgendwie einem Kunden verkaufen und kann man mal gucken, ob das funktioniert? Und dann könnte ich mir echt vorstellen, dass das A) einfacher zu implementieren ist und B) dass es am Ende auch echten gewünschten Effekt bringen würde. Also cool. Absolut.

Speaker 1: [00:41:14] Danke. An der Stelle, siehst du da jetzt auch auf den ersten Blick nach oder nachdem wir darüber gesprochen haben irgendwelche Schwierigkeiten? Du hast jetzt ja gerade schon das gesagt, dass es vielleicht schwierig sein könnte, jedes Mal die Stakeholder wieder abzuholen, dass sie dann irgendwann sagen okay, es reicht jetzt aber auch mal.

Speaker 2: [00:41:33] Genau, ich würde halt versuchen, ich will halt aufpassen, dass man die nicht zu sehr damit nervt. Also da muss man halt irgendwie eine gesunde Balance finden. Denn man muss ja wissen, dass die Stakeholder, die für einen ein wichtiger Partner sind, die haben aber vielleicht wiederum immer einen Produktionsbetrieb, die als Dienstleister fungieren und für viele andere Firmen auch produzieren. Dann ist man einer von vielleicht 150 Kunden. Und wenn alle mit so einem Ding ankommen würden und sagen wir müssen mit dir jetzt ein values-driven Stakeholder Checkpoint machen, dann sind die das ganze Jahr nur damit beschäftigt, bei uns drüben Checkpoints zu machen und können aber gar nicht produzieren. Und dann sagen die halt irgendwann so: „Ja, Leute, jetzt ist aber auch mal Schluss“. Von daher finde ich, muss man sich das gut überlegen, an welchem Punkt man wie die Stakeholder mit einbezieht.

Speaker 1: [00:42:18] Ja. Das stimmt. Okay, cool. Dann gibt es sonst noch irgendwas für dich, was wir jetzt nicht besprochen haben, was du aber für sehr wichtig erachten würdest für meine Forschung. Hast du noch irgendwas im Kopf?

Speaker 2: [00:42:32] Nein, fällt mir spontan nichts ein.

Speaker 1: [00:42:34] Okay, cool. Dann würde ich sagen, wir sind am Ende vom Interview angekommen.

Speaker 2: [00:42:40] Cool.

Speaker 1: [00:42:41] Vielen, vielen Dank für deine Zeit. Hat wirklich sehr gut geholfen und es war super spannend, dass mal so aus deiner Perspektive zu hören.

Speaker 2: [00:42:47] Super, das freut mich. Klasse, dann wünsch ich dir ganz viel Erfolg mit deiner, mit deiner Thesis und dann danach hoffentlich bei IFB. Dann haben wir ja vielleicht bald mal wieder ein Touchpoint.

Speaker 1: [00:42:59] Ja. (*lacht*)

Speaker 2: [00:42:59] Also einen values-driven Touchpoint haben wir dann. (*lacht*)

Speaker 1: Auf jeden Fall. Also Mitte Mitte Mai ist Abgabe, dann steht mein neu verbessertes weiteres Modell. Kann ich Ihnen auch sonst gerne noch zukommen lassen, wenn du möchtest.

Speaker 2: [00:43:13] Cool, gerne.