
Engaging stakeholders to co-create memorable city hospitality: residents' motives and personas

Jan Huizing, Hotelschool The Hague, The Netherlands

Josje van der Wielen, Hotelschool The Hague, The Netherlands

Abstract

This paper explores the motives of residents, who on a voluntary basis act as city ambassador, co-creating and delivering memorable city hospitality. What are their individual motives, which different motivation profiles can be distinguished? The exemplary case for this research is the city ambassadors programme 'Ambassade van Den Haag'. This study reveals seven different motives amongst the city ambassadors from which the main four are: city pride, wanting to make a contribution, wanting to be a part of the event(s) and applying individual task related competencies. Quantitative research confirms differences in demographic characteristics between these four motives. For each of the four volunteer profiles a persona is constructed as a practical and effective tool. Understanding the various types of volunteers and their motives can help cities and destinations to design and manage an effective hospitality programme in which residents play a key role.

Key Words *hospitality, motives, stakeholders, engagement, co-creation, personas*

Experience Theme *The Management of Experiences*

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Body

Introduction

Cities can make a difference to visitors by creating memorable experiences. These experiences can be created through hardware and ambiance, but foremost by human encounters. These encounters are not only provided by obvious hosts such as hotel employees, shop personnel and taxi drivers, but also by residents. Engaging residents in a city hospitality programme links hospitality in the public domain with citizen contribution and voluntary work (Huizing *et al.*, 2013).

Inspired by the London Olympics' approach towards visitor hospitality (Dickson, 2012), the municipality of The Hague (Den Haag), The Netherlands, initiated 'Ambassade van Den Haag' (from here also 'Ambassade'), a volunteers based city hospitality programme aimed at providing visitors with a warm welcome and memorable stay (Huizing *et al.*, 2013). More than 300 proud and motivated residents act as city ambassador providing high quality service to the city's visitors at hotspots in the city. The programme started off as a project dedicated to the Hockey World Cup 2014, supposed to develop further into a continuous city hospitality programme, in which a dedicated pool of residents play a structural and key role.

'Ambassade' was officially launched November 2013 matching a long-term objective of the municipality of The Hague to increase the number of residents participating in volunteer work from 18% to 25% between 2009 and 2014 (Honigh, 2014). The initial assignment was to recruit and train 350 volunteer city ambassadors, welcoming the visitors of Hockey World Cup 2014. "My dream was to make this project a showcase for all

volunteer projects. I aimed to recruit and train 350 motivated people to deliver high-quality without viewing it as volunteer work” (Honigh, 2014). The ‘Ambassade’ project proposal (Huizing *et al.*, 2013) assumed as key motives for potential city ambassadors “passion for hospitality and city pride”.

In programmes like ‘Ambassade’ the participation of residents is on a voluntary basis, probably more driven by intrinsic than extrinsic motivational factors. Volunteers form a group with a high motivation and job satisfaction that will positively influence their output (Meijs, 1997 in Vaart, 2010). Many organizations increasingly depend on volunteers and consequently it becomes important to keep these volunteers committed to the organization or project (Harrison, 1995). However, developments over the past few years have threatened to disturb the balance between supply and demand in volunteer work. The aging of the population, limited replacement by the younger generation and changing lifestyle require a new, up-to-date approach in organizing and offering volunteer work (Bussemaker, 2007). It has become harder for organizations to motivate and commit volunteers, a challenge also faced by ‘Ambassade’ and suchlike projects. In line with the Service Profit Chain, thorough understanding of the volunteers will lead to lower ‘volunteer turnover’ with a direct impact on the hospitality of a city (Heskett *et al.*, 1994).

This research aims to find the individual motives of residents/volunteers and to identify different groups of volunteers in terms of main motives, expectations and demographical characteristics. Furthermore, the translation of volunteer profiles into personas provides municipalities with a valuable and practical tool to better motivate, engage and align with their residents/volunteers, which will enable a more effective and sustainable hospitality scheme. This research adds new information to the existing theory on volunteers and volunteer work. Additionally, it provides cities with relevant insights regarding the commitment of volunteers and the (co-) creation of city hospitality.

This research is commissioned by the research chair City Hospitality, Hotelschool The Hague, executed in close cooperation with the municipality of The Hague. The exemplary case ‘Ambassade van Den Haag’ was a joint initiative by Hotelschool The Hague and the municipality of The Hague and showcases close and collaborative relationship between industry, education and research.

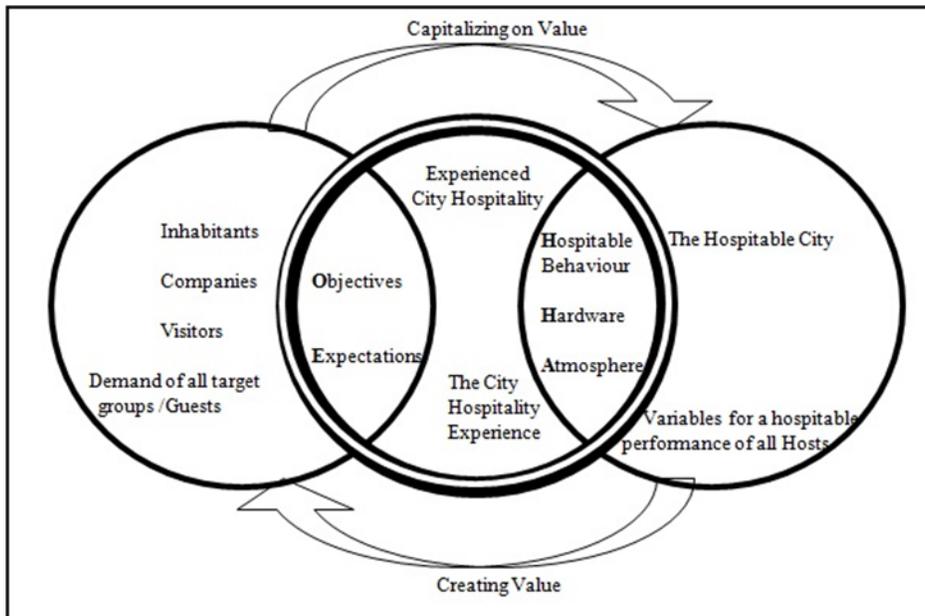
Literature review

City Hospitality

Hospitality is the art of giving somebody the genuine feeling of being welcome. The ‘welcoming’ factor is becoming a major differentiator in many fields and especially in the hospitality and tourism industry (Gunnarson & Blohm, 2002). City hospitality is considered to be a sub-domain of city marketing. In urban competition, the aspect of hospitality is increasingly seen as an added value to differentiate (Wiegerink, 2013). City hospitality is a long-term process focused on the creation, strengthening and retaining of the hospitality experience for the several target groups within a city: all based on a professional, commercial vision of hospitality adding value for the city, supported by a policy plan and use of the appropriate tools (Prooijen & Wiegerink, 2012). The three different target groups are residents, business and visitors (Hospers, 2009). In city hospitality, the large number of different types of guest-host relationships and encounters put their mark on the perception of a guest (Wiegerink, 2013). This research relates to enabling the encounters between the residents (the city ambassadors) and the visitors that will exceed the expectations of the visitors.

The ‘City Hospitality Experience Model’ (Prooijen & Wiegerink, 2012) links the traditional definition of hospitality in the hospitality industry to guests and hosts. An experience is an outcome of: a) the tangible good, physical factors; b) the environment; c) services, including non-physical, intangible attributes.

Figure 1: The City Hospitality Experience Model (Prooijen & Wiegerink, 2012)



Essential is the experience of the hospitality proposition by the different target groups i.e. when the objectives and expectations of residents, businesses and visitors match with the welcoming behaviour, hardware and atmosphere of the welcoming city and its hosts. The nature and intensity of the experience depends on the characteristics of the demand side: the visitors, people with different backgrounds (situation, motives), different relations to the destination (as a resident, employee, visitor, student, expat, etc.) and different goals, wants, requirements and expectations concerning the (hospitality of the) city. The city can be considered as a host, a metaphor for all hosts who create the hospitality experience, consisting of the elements welcoming behaviour, hardware and atmosphere (Wiegerink, 2013). The indicator welcoming behaviour (guest-orientation, friendliness, speed and attitude by employees and residents) influences the visitor's perception of a destination's hospitality more than the indicators atmosphere and hardware (Wielen, 2014).

City ambassadors

An ambassador would commonly be described as “a representative or promoter of a specified activity” (Oxford dictionaries, 2014). In this specific case city ambassadors are best described as enthusiastic volunteers who provide a warm welcome to a city visitor, especially during major events when many visitors are in the city. The city ambassadors are a contact and host on various locations in a city where visitors gather and could be in need for information and assistance (Huizing *et al.*, 2013). They are approachable, friendly and equipped with extensive local knowledge (City of Melbourne, 2013).

(Social) Engagement / Engaging

The concept of engagement emerged in recent years as the key to working effectively and learning. It is increasingly seen as a critical factor for ensuring productivity and a competitive edge in today's global economy. Engagement is closely correlated with organizational productivity, growth, profitability and adaptability. Engagement could also be labelled as involvement, commitment or empowerment (Marcum, 2011).

Motivation and volunteers

“Motivation is what drives people to undertake action” (Bekkers, 2002, in Vaart, 2010) and can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation stems from within, e.g. the motivation to acquire skills for one's future career. Extrinsic motivation depends on external factors, e.g. pressure from the direct social environment to get involved in volunteering (Becker, 2009, in Vaart, 2010).

“Volunteering is an act of free will that results in benefits to others (e.g. individuals, groups, the environment) outside of, or in addition to support given to close family members” (UN, 2000). Although different definitions of volunteering have been considered in the past few years, this has not yet resulted in a new, generally accepted definition (Dekker, 2007).

Why does the motivation of volunteers matter? The developments of the past few years have threatened to disturb the balance between supply and demand in volunteer work, requiring a new, up-to-date approach in organizing volunteer work (Bussemaker, 2007). The ability to appeal to targeted volunteers is crucial in the modern ‘participation society’ in which municipalities need to tap the potential of volunteers and find ways to maintain strong relationships afterwards (Wiegerink, 2014). Thus, the question why people want to be involved in volunteer work is socially relevant. Volunteer resources can be maintained by constantly recruiting new people, but this is costly and inefficient. Retaining volunteers is important to secure the effectiveness and stability of a project (Becker, 2009, in Vaart, 2010). A lot of energy must be invested into keeping the motivation of volunteers alive (Dekker, 2007). When volunteers experience benefits in line with their personal motivation, they tend to be more satisfied and more likely to sustain their job (Clary *et al.*, 1998). Financial rewards not being a key element in volunteer work, it is most important that volunteers find satisfaction in their tasks, matching with their motivation (Becker, 2009, in Vaart, 2010). ‘Volunteer orientation’, i.e. responding to the wishes and needs of the individual volunteer, will ease the process of recruiting and engaging volunteers (Terpstra *et al.*, 2007). Motives for doing volunteer work can differ per person and each person could have multiple motives. Organizations dealing with volunteers will benefit from acknowledging that groups of volunteers could be recruited and motivated with a different, sometimes unique, approach (Meijs, 1997, in Vaart, 2010). Demographics, amongst other factors, determine whether a certain volunteer project has a lasting appeal to people (Bekkers, 2002, in Vaart, 2010).

Intrinsic motivation factors that positively influence performance and personal satisfaction are:

1. Autonomy, self-direction increases engagement.
2. Mastery, people want to use their mastery to contribute and to develop themselves.
3. Purpose, motivation by a clear (shared) purpose
4. Connectedness, the motivating effect of mutual support and acceptance (Pink, 2009) (Smith & Mackie, 1995).

Use of Personas

A persona is an alternative format to present and communicate user (consumer) needs. A persona is an archetype of a target group of users (consumers). It is a fictional individual, representing a group of real consumers with similar characteristics. Personas are beneficial in communicating the needs of the target group to various professional discipline, focusing on needs rather than products used (Miaskiewicz, 2011 in Nino, 2013). Meaningful segmentation should form the basis for the persona creation (Hendriks & Peelen, 2015). New York Cares, the city’s leading volunteer organization, has spent considerable time developing and refining their volunteer recruitment strategies. Their number one advice is to understand that not all volunteers are the same and that you need to get to know each segment well and keep in touch on an ongoing basis. “Crafting personas – in-depth profiles of representative (but imaginary) members of each segment you need to engage – is the proven path to moving from a cursory to a deep understanding of what motivates each segment” (Schwartz, 2010). The concept of personas has been used in business sectors to better understand the target markets and adapt their services to it. Lately, the use of personas in the social sector has been increasing (Sok *et al.*, 2012). Four reasons to why persona creation not only enhances the successfulness of a product and/or service, but delivers mutual satisfaction to both the consumer and the development team are: 1) personas make assumptions about users explicit; 2) personas focus on specific users rather than on everyone; 3) in limiting our choices, personas can help us make better decisions and 4) personas engage the product design and development team (Pruitt & Adlin, 2006 in Leeuw, 2014). Although fictional, personas must be defined with rigor and exactness. They should be based on true understanding of users i.c. volunteers. Demographics and data on habits, interests and motivation will lead to accurate personas. Based on audience research, personas can truly represent the specific audience (Schwartz, 2010).

Research design

'Ambassade' is used as an exemplary case. The data acquired from expert en volunteer interviews were analysed to detect elements of volunteer motivation. These data were complemented by the literature review to ensure extensive analysis. Finally, quantitative analysis of the personal characteristics of 100 city ambassadors generated additional information on motivations and their representation amongst the ambassadors. The primary research methods and its limitations are:

- Qualitative: interviews with experts (project insiders), email interviews with city ambassadors, insights from an expert session with 11 experts and city ambassadors; supported by the literature review and observations during selection and training events with the ambassadors of the 'Ambassade'. Viewing the low response rate for the e-mail-interviews (n=7) the literature review became more important. The qualitative research resulted in the identification of seven main motives for partaking in volunteer projects i.c. 'Ambassade'.
- Quantitative: analysis of 100 application forms, filled out by interested volunteers/residents. The application forms were part of the first stage in the application procedure for 'Ambassade', which took place online and contained the open question 'What is your motivation?'. Only the forms of applicants who actually joined 'Ambassade' were included. The researcher assigned (mostly) two motives out of the previously identified seven to each ambassador. To reduce subjectivity and bias, this was independently checked and confirmed by a project member of 'Ambassade' who could base his judgment both on the application form and on the conversations he had had with most applicants later in the application process, either by phone or face-to-face. This extra check did not lead to major adjustments. Finally, for each of the seven motives the demographic characteristics of these ambassadors were analyzed, which resulted in four distinctive volunteer profiles.
- The characteristics per motive provided a base for developing four personas. Furthermore, the researcher's observations and stories of experts and ambassadors were applied, which made the personas more real-life, but also partly subjective and potentially biased. The personas were 'constructed' to provide the project management with a research-based, practical and inspiring tool.

Results

This research explores the motives of volunteers, residents who act as city host in the 'Ambassade' project. The literature review and primary, qualitative research indicated seven different motives amongst the city ambassadors:

1. City Pride
2. Making a contribution
3. Reciprocity (doing something in return)
4. Personal development
5. Wanting to be a part of the event(s)
6. Meeting new people
7. Using current competencies (I can do this well)

These seven motives were confirmed by the quantitative research amongst 100 city ambassadors. The analysis of their application forms resulted into four types of volunteers, each with a different main motive:

1. City Pride
2. Making a Contribution
3. Using current competencies
4. Wanting to be a part of the event(s).

Per motive the demographic characteristics were analysed, which resulted in four volunteer profiles (figure 2).

Figure 2. Demographical characteristics per motive

	City pride 100%	Making a contribution 100%	Wanting to be part of the event(s) 100%	Using current competencies 100%
Gender	64.7% female 35.3% male	68% female 32% male	75% female 25% male	60% female 40% male
Age	7.8% <25 19.6% 25-40 47.1% 41-60 25.5% >60	10% <25 20% 25-40 40% 41-60 30% >60	20% <25 0% 25-40 40% 41-60 40% >60	8% <25 8% 25-40 44% 41-60 40% >60
Highest degree obtained	13.7% SE* 11.8% MBO 52.9% HBO 21.6% W	10% SE* 18% MBO 52% HBO 20% WO	15% SE* 5% MBO 40% HBO 40% WO	16% SE* 16% MBO 56% HBO 12% WO
Job status (top 3)	31.4% Full-time 25.5% Looking 13.7% Part-time	24% Looking 22% Full-time 20% Retired / Part-time	25% Part-time 25% Student 20% Retired	32% Part-time 24% Looking 16% Full-time / Retired
Other motives (top 3)	45.1% Contributing 21.6% Competencies 9.8% Personal Development	46% City pride 10% Partaking 10% Reciprocity	25% Competencies 25% Contributing 20% City pride	44% City Pride 20% Partaking 20% Contributing

* SE = Secondary Education, **Abbreviations: Contributing = Making a contribution, Competencies = Using current competencies, Partaking = Wanting to be a part of the event(s), Development = Personal development

The quantitative research confirmed that demographic differences occur between the different motives. E.g. relatively more female city ambassadors are motivated more by being part of the event(s) rather than by exploiting their current competencies. For an overview of demographic differences between the motives, see Appendix 1.

For each of the four profiles a persona was constructed (Appendix 2). Not only were the demographical characteristics per motive used to compile the persona, but also personal observations and quotes from experts and ambassadors were added. The primary purpose of the personas was to provide ‘Ambassade’ with a research-based and practical, inspiring tool to better understand and connect with different types of volunteers.

1. Rinus, the skilled, key motive “using current competencies”. His motto: “Knowledge is power, sharing knowledge is powerful.”
2. Willemien, the contributor, “My motto? Be servant!”
3. Harry, the city fan, “Always keep your feet firmly on the ground”
4. Frederieke, the eager participator, “A day without laughter is a day lost living.”

Further research

This research is just a first step in gaining more insight into the different motives of city ambassadors, who voluntarily participate in a city’s hospitality programme. This research is an incentive to discover more on this subject and much more value can be created with the current data. A first suggestion for future research would be to collect data from a heterogeneous group including individuals who are not active city ambassadors. More research can be directed towards testing the personas, exploring other profile characteristics (e.g. life style, values) and exploring how the personas preferably interact. Focus groups would bring more in-depth and

inspiring insights. Since more destinations are developing similar schemes, this will provide a base for researching differences between cultures and geographical regions. Further research will lead to new insights and practical knowledge bringing us another step closer to the hospitable and successful participation society.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of differences in demographical characteristics for different motives

- The motives City Pride and Making a contribution are strongly connected, 45.1% of the City Pride individuals indicate that they are also motivated because they want to make a contribution.
- Those individuals that are motivated by Using current competencies are really more in it for themselves: they score the lowest of all motives on Making a contribution (20%) and on Reciprocity (0%!).
- Overall, the percentage of female city ambassadors is higher than male (66% female). The highest percentage of female ambassadors is amongst those Wanting to be a part of the event (75%). The lowest percentage of female ambassadors is featured in Using current competencies (60%).
- The average age does not show a large deviation. Only amongst the Using current competencies the age is 5 years higher than the average (54 versus 49 years old).
- The age category 25-40 is not at all represented in the Wanting to be part of the event(s) group. This same category is relatively the biggest amongst the Contribution individuals.
- Almost 50% of all individuals has indicated HBO to be their highest degree obtained. With 40% WO education, the Wanting to be part of the event(s) is the highest educated group.
- Overall, most individuals that signed up for the project, work full-time (23%). Closely followed by Part-timers and those Looking for a job. The individuals that are proud of their city relatively represent the most full-timers, 31.4% compared to only 13.7% part-timers.
- Those who want to make a Contribution have the most altruistic combination of motivations. They score relatively the highest on Reciprocity (wanting to do something in return, 10%) and Proud of their city. They are not bothered by their own current competencies or being a part of an exciting event.

Appendix 2: Four Personas

NB: In the motivation-DNA the heading represents the primary motivation, which is always 100%; the bar diagram represents the other (secondary) motivations.



"Always keep your feet firmly on the ground"

City Fan

Name: Harry
Age: 40
Lives in: The Hague, Laakkwartier

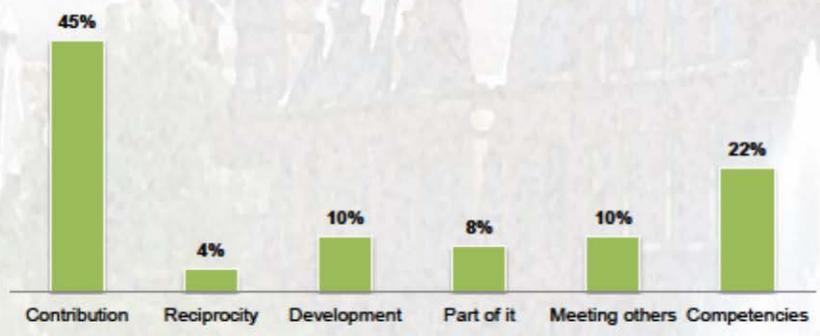
Job status: full-time
Education level: HBO - Logistics
Hobbies: sports, model-railways, making music and walking around the city.



"My name is Harry, born and raised in The Hague. I am married and live with my wife in the Laakkwartier. Two of my three kids have left the house but luckily still live close to us in The Hague. I like doing sports and have been playing football with football club HBS since I was a little boy. I have a challenging full time job as the logistic manager of a local wholesaler. In my free time I like to walk around the city, have a drink with friends or work on my model-railway at home.
I will never leave The Hague, no absolutely not. Where else can you find such an politically important city with a rich history, beaches, a beautiful city center and such a variety of people!?"

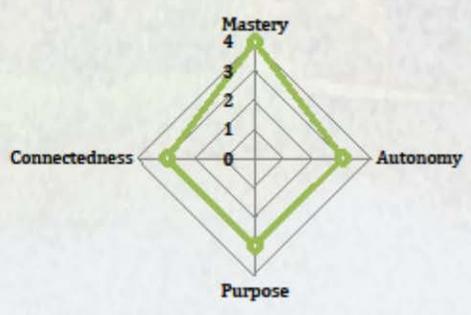
Motivation-DNA City Fan

100% City Fan



"It is such a pity that tourists only know how to find Amsterdam. I want to show them that my city is amazing and I can make their stay worthwhile. Let us put The Hague on the visitor's to-do list."

Drivers



My vision on the project

Top
+ The enthusiasm of the project team
+ We need to expand; let The Hague be a worldwide example!

Tip
- Training and education focused on knowledge of the city. The Hague entails so much more.
- A fixed meeting point for all ambassadors for meeting or having drinks.

"A day without laughter is a day lost living."

The Eager Participant

Name: Frederieke
Age: 45
Lives in: The Hague

Job status: part-time
Education level: WO - Communication
Hobbies: Hockey, baking, Social Media, shopping with friends.



"My name is Frederieke, but you can call me Fre! I live in The Hague, close to Wassenaar. I live with my husband and my three kids of 11, 14 and 18. I work as a Communication & Event manager in a lawyers firm in the center, part-time. In my time off you can find me with my family, driving my kids around and supporting them at the Hockey Field. I love partaking in social activities; organizing dinners for friends, city-trips with my husband. I used to be a very fanatic hockey player too. As a young student I participated in many tournaments. I don't like sitting at home, after all, you do not want to miss out on anything fun, do you?"

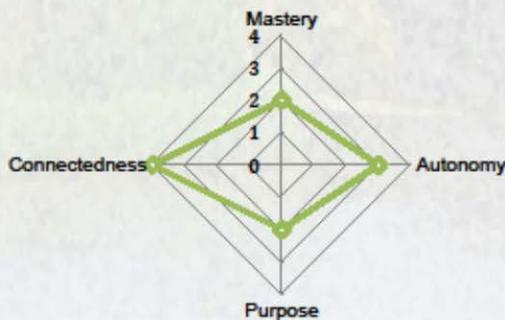
Motivation-DNA Participant

100% Part of it



"All my kids play hockey and they will be so proud of me! And our hockey club VMHC Cartouche hosts the national Belgium Hockey team during the event. Imagine that I am an Ambassador for this same event! Very exciting. And I can image that as an Ambassador you get to participate in so many more events."

Drivers



My vision on the project

Top
 + This project should continue, so many great events!
 + The opening of the Mauritshuis.

Tip
 - We should remain visible and look good; become part of the city's street scene.
 - Keep us involved by regular activities and the little things: a birthday card or be recognized when you are in the city hall.

"Knowledge is power, but sharing knowledge is powerful."



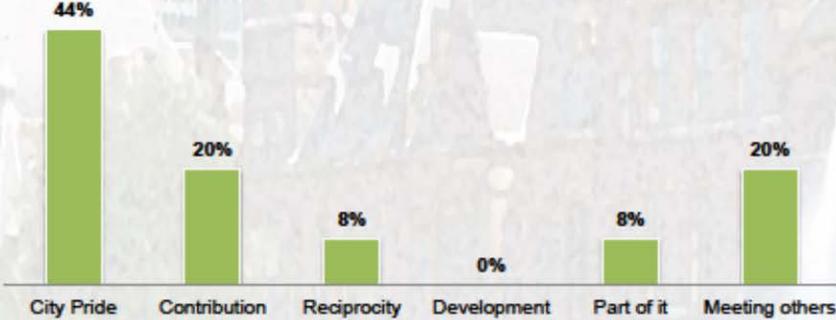
The Skilled

Name: Rinus
Age: 54
Lives in: The Hague

Job status: part-time
Education level: HBO Tourism
Hobbies: Hiking, travelling, organizing trips with friends and cooking vegetarian.

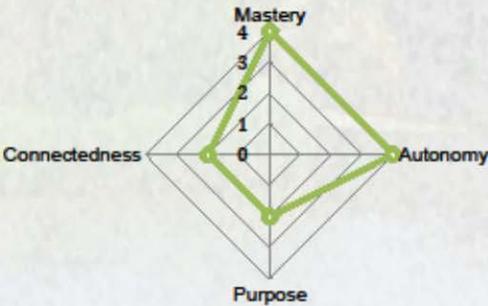
"My name is Rinus and I live in the Vogelwijk, The Hague. I have a girlfriend and we live in an apartment close to the dunes. I am passionate and have been active in the travel-, tourist- and PR -industry. I have served in the military, worked as a receptionist, in a travel agency and so much more. I organized pilgrimage to Lourdes for over 20 years. And currently I am a board member in a resident-platform in the Vogelwijk. Hospitality runs in my blood, I am pro-active and work well in teams.

Motivation-DNA Skilled
 100% Competencies



"Of all the cities I have visited, The Hague is one of my favorites. I believe I am suited for this job and I will make visitors feel more welcome than ever here. I like being a Team manager and teach my team to provide top-class service. Be my guest!"

Drivers



My vision on the project

Top
 + Great initiative!
 + Being a city ambassador is a special experience: being the face of the city.

Tip
 - The visibility could be professionalized (our clothes, the building).
 - Smaller group of competent team managers.
 - Remain transparent and supportive as municipality.



"My motto?
Be servant!"



The Contributor

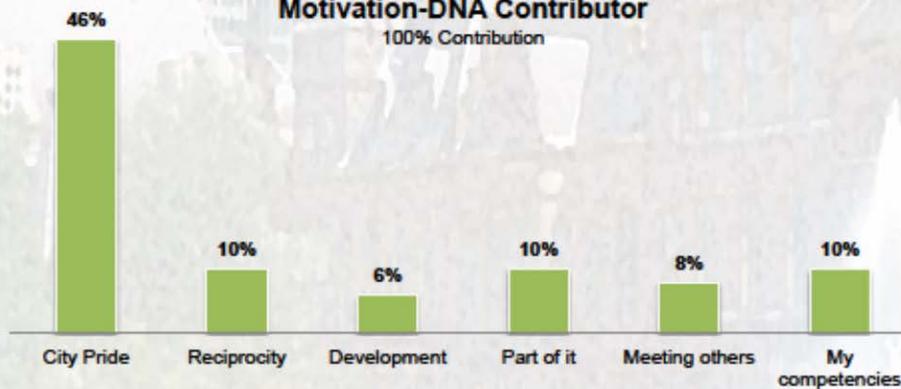
Name: Willemien
Age: 65
Lives in: The Hague

Job status: retired
Education level: MBO - Nursing
Hobbies: Going on holiday with my family, cooking and meeting new people with different backgrounds.

"My name is Willemien and I am 65 years old, still standing firmly on my feet. I have studied Nursing and participated in a lot of volunteer work. Currently I am still active as a volunteer nurse at terminal care foundation. When I was younger, my parents and I travelled the world. I have lived in Pakistan, Belgium, Indonesia and Brazil. I have experienced myself how great it is if the local residents show you around. I have three children and 8 grandchildren who I love to go on holidays with. You can always wake me up for a cup of tea and a slice of lemon cake."

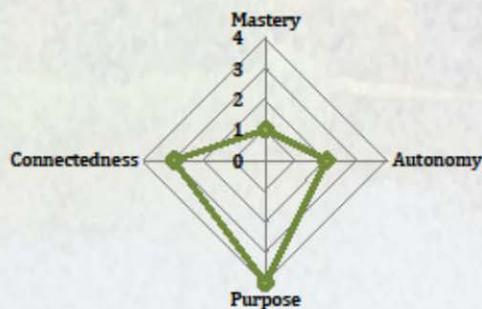
Motivation-DNA Contributor

100% Contribution



"By participating in the society like this and engaging in this project, we can collectively show the world that The Hague is a hospitable city! I love welcoming people and spoiling them. In general, I love people!"

Drivers



My vision on the project

Top

- + At the train station, Spui and Noordeinde, the visitors need our help.
- + All the visitors were so appreciative of our help!

Tip

- Skip some of the locations to avoid bored co-ambassadors.
- Improve our cooperation with public transportation.

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