

“WORKERS’ WELFARE”: TESTING CCI FOR IMPROVING INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENTS

Regional Test Case Documentation

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Contribution to T2.4.3



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PP6, Padova Chamber of Commerce



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0. Abstract

Through the Workers' welfare test cases PP6 demonstrates the innovation value of CCI in 3 industrial companies promoting design interventions for work environment and services. Objective is to increase the welfare of employees. The proposed solutions tackled the safety issue, in the actual pandemic phase, where presented to company managers and workers representatives and evaluated by them. The proposed solutions will be presented during the final event of the CCI project, as an example to other industrial companies.

1. Introduction

The starting point for the test case is the need companies have to ensure safe working conditions for workers during the pandemic phase. Companies understand that infection transmission within a workplace can not only shut them down again, but also damage their brand. Most of today's high-density workplaces, with extensive reliance on shared spaces and production lines, will need to be re-designed. Homeworking will probably continue, but normal working life in the companies will, too. The challenge lies in how to adapt workplaces and shared areas. Several aspects of modern workplaces will have to be re-invented creatively to allow workers to go safely to their workplace. What is needed is a creative contribution from the field of design to devise a combination of short-term fixes aimed at boosting worker confidence, possibly reducing the number of workers in the common areas (like canteens or changing rooms) at any one time and longer-term design upgrades and modifications that put hygiene and safety at the heart of workplace.

2. Objective

The key product of the action is design for "Pandemic-proofing industries" that are made safe, but also more resilient and more adaptive to the changes we can only imagine as competition intensifies in a post-COVID world. The test aimed at promoting a cooperation of young creative professionals of SID, Italian Design School - a department of Galileo Visionary District, Padova, with leading industrial companies to propose different solutions, operating in various dimensions of the design disciplines. Communication designers contribute with creating new behavioural and wayfinding signage as part of the industrial environment. Going beyond the analogue, digital designers could explore a greater use of beacon technology that tracks where workers/staff are congregating. This could be used to alert people when proximity levels in crowds get too high. Understanding what audio or visual feedback can be embedded into the environment to indicate these infractions without causing stress is another important design challenge.

3. Applied approach

The idea was discussed during the regional focus group and, internationally, during the idea phase and concept phase, both with the LP and during the T2 workshops with the InduCCI partners. The concept was then developed and a call for the selection of a technical partner was published.

Padova Chamber of commerce proceeded with the identification, through a call, of an experienced undertaking interested in the co-financing and implementation of the actions.

At the same time a public notice to select target companies was published on the Padova Chamber of Commerce website.

Since no companies answered to the public notice, Galileo Visionary District proposed to partner with the Chamber of Commerce in the realization of the action and proposed to work with three relevant industrial companies of Veneto Region: Arneg, Breton and Euronda. The three companies are leading industries in the following sectors:

Arneg: production of professional fridges and freezers;

Breton: building sector, production of machinery for processing natural stone and marble;

Euronda: production of medical devices;

The idea was, according to the InduCCI work plan, to test the transformative power of design in 3 companies belonging to 3 different industrial value chains, and also 3 different territories.

Galileo Visionary District appointed its department SID, Italian Design School, and within it 3 groups of young designers, who visited the companies, organized design thinking workshops with company representatives and workers, and proposed several solutions.

4. Results

Not only the proposed solution, also the proposed path has been an interesting testing.

The chosen approach has been design thinking.

The following concepts have been developed for the EURONDA company:

Naturally safe: For the first concept, it was decided to use natural elements as a key to the development of different solutions that convey safety, suggesting the behaviors of the “new normal life” without impositions. This concept has been developed in 6 different interventions.

We want it back: The concept uses the square as the protagonist of a physical and visual language to communicate behaviors of the “new normal life”; the square comes as the new safe personal space. The project is developed in interior design interventions that have as the protagonist the square, interpreted in a two-dimensional way and a series of scenarios, to obtain different solutions. This concept has been developed in 9 different interventions.

The following concepts have been developed for the ARNEG company:

- The **Safe Flow**: Imperative signs often make individuals skeptical of following exactly what they indicate. In this period of health emergency, the aim is to convey to workers the concept of being part of a single body, even if spaced out. The rule becomes playful, making it less dramatic but still clear. The indications are made less “bossy”, therefore pleasant and implicit, to entice the user to observe them: interior and visual design interventions are proposed, for a common and distinctive corporate language. This concept has been developed in 8 different interventions.

- **A glimmer of light**: During the period of health emergency everyone found themselves locked up in their own homes. Primary necessities for our well-being have thus disappeared. Among these, sunlight, an extremely important element for the body, regenerates the individual, giving him calm and balance. The proposals in the different areas favor the relaxation of the person, through simulations and installations, which immerse the worker in experiences decontextualized from the environment of his routine, in a lighter and more natural environment. This concept has been developed in 6 different interventions.

The following concepts were presented for the BRETON company:

A shared personal space: The concept aims at taking care of the physical and mental well-being of the worker through a voluntary, momentary removal from the workplace and from the restrictions due to the pandemic. A space where the worker can enter, take off the mask and relax, call or work with a laptop in peace, becomes a recharging point for anyone who feels a little oppressed or stressed.

Light-hearted recharge: The concept essentially aims at maintaining an implicit distancing between people and at the same time puts the worker at ease by trying to convey a sense of security and peace. The creation of some spaces where the workers can relax, make a phone call, take a break or even carry out work practices is proposed in the various areas of pause, rest, passage, without worrying about maintaining the distance and feeling protected in these new ones " safe spaces ".

Safety light: The concept is based on the idea of using light as a natural reminder of safety. More and more studies are associating light and chromotherapy with human mental and physical health; This is precisely the aspect that focuses on this proposal, which combines lighting installations with work environments that guarantee safety and interpersonal distancing in an implicit but immediate way.

Each of the three companies was given the respective "book of ideas" containing the work carried out (see presentations attached) and subsequently the company and workers' representatives were asked to express a feedback on the work carried out, expressing a preference for the solutions identified in the "book of ideas".

EURONDA - Final Review: The company found the methodology used to be fitting and useful. not only for research purposes. but because it made it possible to move from the concept of "beauty" to the theme of "relevance". The use of design thinking methodologies made it possible to change the focus by helping reasoning and contributing to continuous improvement. As for the concepts presented, summarizing by strands, the company reports:

Naturally Safe: Conceptually interesting. Difficult to create in the production area, the idea becomes interesting if used for the canteen and the changing room. In fact, the need for safety should also be explored in an industrial area and therefore necessarily in the workplace and not outside.

We want it back: the artistic installation remains the heart of the idea precisely because protection as immaterial value becomes important to see and represents a theme of primary importance and attention for the company. Therefore, it remembers Euronda's mission and why we must protect and protect ourselves.

ARNEG - Final Review: The company has rediscovered its dimension of well-being in the scenario analysis relating to the primary needs that failed during the pandemic (and the related lockdowns). Among these is sunlight, an extremely important element for the body that regenerates the individual, giving him calm and balance. So the most popular proposals were those under the "A glimmer of light" title, where the use of light in the different areas favors the relaxation of the workers, through simulations and installations, which immerse the workers in experiences decontextualized from the environment of his routine, making them experience a lighter and more natural corporate dimension.

BRETON - Final Review: The company approved particularly the development of the scenario relating to inclusion/isolation in the workplace. Stress is a common issue, also due to the pandemic: fewer moments of pause with colleagues, more shifts for meals and the annoyance, which everyone complains of, constantly wearing a mask. The idea is to create a space where the worker can come in, take off the mask and relax, call or work with a laptop in peace was therefore of great interest.

Below is the summary of the results regarding the satisfaction of the project activities expressed by the managers and workers' representatives

| Questions: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|-------|-------|
| Level of satisfaction of the interaction with the designers | | | | | | 44,3% | 55,6% |
| Consistency between problem and solutions identified | | | | | | 36% | 64% |
| Level of satisfaction with the solutions identified | | | | | | 28% | 72% |
| Level of satisfaction related to the potential adoption of one or more of the solutions identified | | | | | | 12% | 88% |

The final proposals were presented in 3 events to managers and workers' representatives of the companies.

EURONDA: 7 September

ARNEG: 21 September

Officers of Galileo Visionary District and Padova Chamber of Commerce took part in all events.

5. Goal Achievement and Lessons Learned

The goal was achieved with presentation of the results and the collection of the feedback by the managers and workers' representatives.

As the tested measure showed, industrial companies are not often aware of the opportunities coming out from the connection with CCI, and of the potential of new CCI-borne methods, like design thinking, also to foster a re-thinking of spaces and communication ways, as a way to improve the workers' welfare.

The tested measure has been an important learning session for the young designers, who had the opportunity to face a real challenge, working with leading industrial companies of Veneto Region.

6. Outlook, Sustainability and Transferability

The tested measure outputs have been delivered to the companies. At the moment all companies are evaluating whether to finance with their own funds the realization of the proposed ideas.

This action is a good example of interaction between “traditional industries” and CCI that can be replicated in other national and international contexts.

An attention to sustainability has been a shared feature in all cases.

7. Annexes

- a) Final relations (all documents are in Italian language)
 - 1. [final relation](#) by Galileo Visionary District
 - 2. [final review ARNEG company](#)
 - 3. [final review BRETON company](#)
 - 4. [final review EURONDA company](#)

- b) video interview Euronda & SID/Galileo: <https://we.tl/t-lpwkYDU0cA>
- c) [presentation shared in T2 workshop November 2021](#)