“The bottom line is that customers usually aren’t very good at describing solutions. When properly asked, they’re very good at describing their needs - what they like, what they don’t like, what makes their lives hard or easy, what they wish for, and what they’re trying to get done. And after all, it’s not the customer’s job to come up with the solution - that’s the developer’s job. Their job is just to articulate their needs.

Our job is to thoroughly identify sources of dissatisfaction with current products and services. Sometimes we can identify solutions to those issues, but the majority of times the research and development arm of our companies and our clients will need to use those items of dissatisfaction as a source of inspiration.”

Michelle Harris, Marketing Director at Applied
This book is a guide throughout the research of my graduation thesis and the process of bringing the concept idea into its existence.

My graduation project was about creating a retail concept store environment from the scratch.

Having such autonomy, to create something from nothing, proved to be as much as fun as it was a challenge.

The process required a passion, woven into every pore of my self being, my absolute devotion and fidelity to my ideas, and my hard work.

IJ Local is a commercially sustainable and social project that unifies retail and catering solutions in a single new environment.

It is created for the young and up & coming families who long for authenticity who nurture the sense of neighbourhood culture and have a strong awareness of what they buy and how they live.
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starting points
I have an idea...

I had a brief idea that I wanted to create a concept that should combine the retail establishment and the hospitality treatment in a unique environment. Further on, I needed to find a reason of existence for such a concept.

what is out there in the streets of amsterdam?

At first I started with researching on concept stores that exist in the Amsterdam area. Although I have found many of them, namely many of them were self-proclaimed as such, very soon I discovered that only some of them can be called and truly are concept stores. That brought me to the main question of this phase – what is a concept store?

what is a concept store?

“Nowadays only these so called concept stores are being put to business: spaces, just like Colette, where the buying action has a different meaning that retains a philosophical connotation. On sale there are not only physical objects, but also full-on emotional experiences. This retail format is not just a shopping destination; it has become part of city’s cultural environment. The experience has to be rigorously individual, rare, but also deliver a good representation of the city itself.”


“Concept stores are retail models where the buying process has a different meaning and involves philosophical meaning.

The customer has opportunity not only to buy physical products but also is provided with a full emotional and sensory experience.

In practice, those shops offer mix of items of different designers and brands addressed to the particular groups for example ecologically friendly, luxurious or street wear oriented customers.

The variety of products usually includes clothes, shoes, accessories, books, cosmetics, food and gadgets.

It is important that all items must be united around the concept store’s philosophy which is expressed in unusual layout of the store to underline extraordinary character of products that are sold there.

In addition concept stores predestination is to be trend follower. The assumption is that after all the touching and feeling, customers will be willing to spend more money.”


After reading and analysing many of similar explanations on what is actually a concept store, and after examining over one hundred concept stores from all over the world (list to be found in Bibliography), I have found that the latter definition is the most correct one and the most comprehensive one, and that I will use it as a guidance for my concept creation.

On the basis of the criteria I have chosen shops that I will visit in Amsterdam and with whose founders I will speak.

“Concept store” describes a store that is identified by a special mix of brands and products.

“It’s a modern experience of shopping, always in motion and highly innovative.

The store addresses particular groups of customers: e.g. luxury, design or
streetwear customers. They'll find (all) the products, they identify with in one store. A typical mix of products and brands in a concept store would be: fashion, shoes, (home-) accessories, books/cd’s, cosmetics, food, toys, hardware for daily use. The range is wide and some stores even change themselves and the products regularly, to stay flexible and surprising.

A concept store (for us) is NOT: classical department store, mono brand (flagship) store, fashion boutique, furniture store, mall, etc."

At the end of the day, beside products in their shopping bags, customers go home with an experience they undergone in these shops and the pleasant perception that will bring them back in order to experience it now and again.

finding the reason of existence

After setting the guidance in terms of what is the essence of the concept store, my next step was to find the reason of existence for such a shop in the Amsterdam.

I believe that in order to be a good brander or a good concept developer it is essential “to be in the know”. This means that it is fundamental to follow up the world around us through all possible media at our disposal. Only in this way one will be able to, at first, find out what is happening in the world, in the city you live in, in your street, in your neighbour’s yard etc; second of all, to analyse these information, make connection and at the end make conclusions that will help him to create a contemporary yet innovative concepts.

Eye Film museum as an eye opener

Sometime in January this year, I read an article about the grand spring opening of the new film museum in Amsterdam, called the Eye Film Institute in IJ promenade.

Of course, as it happens with loads of other information that we read during the day, I forgot about it.

Still, somewhere at the beginning of my research, during my face-to-face interview with Mrs. Florianne Eshuis, the director of the newly opened concept store Options! in Amsterdam, I received “a sign” while we talked about what is “hot” happening in the city. She mentioned opening of the Eye, in couple of months, and this instantly became an eye opener for me, raising the only logical question – why there, in IJ?

I started researching on why the museum is to be open outside of the city centre. I dug into municipality cites and found out a lot of public data containing information on plans, visions, architectural project, images and reasons behind this. Not having the access to this information on English language, and being forced to translate each and every web page in particular, made the entire research extremely time consuming, and truly real hell. Still, I felt excited because I knew I would be able to find acceptable reasoning for my project that will give this project a deeper meaning.
research methodology
field research

The field research or so called “legwork” included interviews with experts such as retail owners and concept developers, on-the-spot questionnaire with consumers found in the shops I have visited, and an online questionnaire that helped me research my target audience.

desk research

The desk research was conducted via online desk research and Government published data on the research topics. This research was carried out through several different areas such as: on location, on retail market in the Netherlands, on shopping habits in the Netherlands, on trends in the Netherlands and around the World, on retail, on various different concepts around the world, on consumers in the Netherlands and finally on desired target audience.

field research examples

face-to-face interviews

The following interviews are chosen among many others because they were the most helpful in understanding what I was going to encounter during this project and because they present two very different approaches to in terms of concept creation and strategy building.
Interview with Cora Albers and Jonett van Buyten, the owners of MaisonNL

This interview was held at the store location, in Utrechtssestraat, on a beige sofa covered with hessian cushions with a cup of stronger nespresso while Italian opera was playing in the background.

A: How did you come up with an idea for this shop? Did you carry it for a long time period and then just decided to realize it, or you conducted a market researched? What were the trends that you’ve picked up?

J: We had the idea in our heads for a long period of time. I was working for “BOSS” for long time but all that time I carried the idea in my head of having my own shop, actually this type of a shop. I am more the creative engine behind the store and Cora is more technical engine behind.

When both of us left our previous jobs we sat down and wrote a plan for our vision. Soon after that plan, I started visiting interior design fairs, particularly the one in Paris “Maison&Object” and started collecting brands we both liked. Then we came back home, we decide upon them and started ordering their items.

A: Since you opened this shop without the previous research, based on your so-called “gut feeling”, were you concern that the idea will not have a good grip on the retail market?

J: No, not at all! Being many years in sales I have been listening to people saying to me how my taste is so good and how I need to do something with it, so I must say that I trust Cora’s and mine gut feeling in this business. And so far it works! Everybody likes it, like our shop and a lot of newspapers wrote about us. People like that we do what we feel it’s all right.

A: What is a story behind the shop or, so to speak, a concept? Can you please put it in a few sentences?

J: No, its not a story behind, its a feeling, pure feeling and our taste behind it. What is interesting is that when some journalists made photos of both Cora’s and mine home, they told us that our homes both meet in this shop.

A: How did you come up with an idea for this shop? Did you carry it for a long time period and then just decided to realize it, or you conducted a market researched? What were the trends that you’ve picked up?

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A: So can you tell me then what is your shop about? How would you say, what is the thing that translates from your houses to your shop?

J: No, its not a story behind, its a feeling, pure feeling and our taste behind it. What is interesting is that when some journalists made photos of both Cora’s and mine home, they told us that our homes both meet in this shop.

A: So can you tell me then what is your shop about? How would you say, what is the thing that translates from your houses to your shop?

C: Well, I think it’s all about the stuff we like to be surrounded with. It is about interior, small furniture and clothes.

J: Everything that we want in our houses, or everything we want to wear or to give as a present is here, in this shop. It is like a very small department store but without the
time, as you said, it is an experience. Customers get to know the story behind the product, because we always tell them that, we give them time, we give them something to drink, we chat with them and it is becoming more personal. We see that people go out of our shop happy even that they spent more than they planned and this is because we made them feel like that. Maybe we justified with our story their shopping.

A: What is the strongest point of the shopping experience in your shop?

J: Well, we believe that it is the product. A lot of our clients told us that they like to shop here because in here they can buy things that they cannot find anywhere else.

C: We think that we are good in choosing these items. You can probably find these things somewhere else in the city, but not in many places.

J: And the second element is atmosphere. Well, we are both here everyday, we know the clients, we take time with them, shopping becomes then very personal. Some customers sometimes come just for a chat or a cup of coffee. So, I believe, it is the combination of product and service that we give.

C: I am also very active on our Facebook page. I write almost every day what is new in the shop or what is on discount. We keep in touch in that way with our customers and they stay informed and interested.

A: Can you profile you core consumer for me please?

C: Our core customer is a female from 25 years old up to 45 years old. This is because we have a lot of stuff for house decoration and woman in these ages are interested in these things since they are already settled and want to make their home beautiful, or if they are younger, they are settling and they also search for these small home designed furnishing objects.

J: For example, we have a lot of young families as our customers as well. But in general I think that our customers have pretty much defined taste. They are very specific about what they like and don’t like. They definitely have a higher income, they travel a lot so they have an opportunity to get to know different cultures and build their taste in that manner as well.

A: Can you tell me what are others fairs that you visit beside Parisian “Maison&Object”?

J: Yes, we’ve been to Copenhagen at “Formland” and Copenhagen design week. A part from that we have a lot of objects from Africa, Albania, China, actually, from all over the world that we find on the net as well.

A: Thank you for your time Cora and Jonette, it was a pleasure talking to you.
Interview with Mrs. Florianne Eshuis, Director of the concept store OPTIONS!

Interview with Mrs. Eshuis was held at the store location, on Damrak, while we were sitting over coffee and tea in STOCK café, surrounded by gurgle of people, street noise and rustling of coffee machines.

A: How did you come up with the idea for this store?

F: Well, the idea for this store is two years old. It started as a new initiative of Lloyd Hotel here in Amsterdam. The government wanted to do something in this area, I believe to refresh the content of an existing supply, and Lloyd was looking for a new location, so this is how they found each other.

A: What is the concept behind it?

F: The initiators of Lloyd started to build the concept for this project as soon as they had the location and vision of government. The concept consisted of combining the hotel with 61 rooms, hotel The Exchange, with the restaurant Stock that serves breakfast all day, and the shop, Options!.

As you might know, for the first room-setting concept we collaborated with your school, AMFI, where eight fashion students were asked to translate the concept idea given to them, to dress up rooms, as they were models. So concept parameter was given to them. AMFI further on collaborated with textile museum in Tilburg and so on. The project has garnered much praise in and out of Amsterdam. It was a successful collaboration.

A: How were you chosen for this project? Did you background experience helped you and in which way?

F: Well, I knew people from Lloyd from my previous projects. I come from a publisher background; I worked for “ELLE Decoration” and “ELLE” magazine and on one of those projects I collaborated with Lloyd as a designer. So, yes, my business connections and my previous experience brought me here.

A: Can you please explain me a bit that processes of build up the entire idea?

F: We rented the whole Lloyd hotel for four days and we held endless meetings with designers, stylists and other relevant institutes and spots in the city that collaborated as well. Of course, the management of the hotel was always involved and present. Actually, it was like a four days event that people with an interest could visit, participate and offer what they have to offer. This is where I also met the people from Lloyd.

A: How the concept was born? Was it only your creation or as well a collaboration with other designers and industry professionals?

F: I kept the concept pretty much for my self at the beginning. My starting points were quite personal. I thought of what am I missing in the city and what would I like to find in the shop like this. My core idea was to create a shop that will resemble a small warehouse with different categories. I thought of a shop where you will be able to find at the same time a shampoo, a notebook and a pillow, and maybe even something for your kids. This is how the idea of departments was born and this is why we call OPTIONS!, a contemporary department store.

Further on, within these departments I started to think about the range of products that will vary both in price and design, so that you get a good mix of products.

Beside, there was a lot of market research in a sense what is happening in this area, what kind of people are coming here.

A: So the location and the space were set parameters for you?

F: Yes it was set, and because of that we needed to perform more research and discover who is the target group for this location. Probably, it should have been the other way around, first to set the target audience that you want to reach and then to find location but things do not always go in the order in this business.

Also, what is important is that government wanted this location for this project in order to create different streams of people. Therefore, the research was mainly focused on \ what is happening around here and on product selection.

A: Were there any collaboration, in terms of research, with forecasting and trend based agencies, or others?

F: No, we didn’t collaborate with none such agency, we mainly used the facts and figures
from the government, municipalities and Chamber of Commerce. Beside, I made a lot magazine reading and a lot of travelling. This is how I got my sources and how I found products I liked for this shop: and a lot of social contacts.

We organized a small-scale project in Japan, in Tokyo. We made a pop up hotel there for one moth where we met a lot of people like Japanese architects and artist. Some of them we befriended and involved in this project here. It went pretty much organically as you can see and the whole thing wasn’t born form a very strict retail set up.

A: Was there a real market gap for this concept?
F: I think that what we are doing here is something that doesn’t exist yet in Amsterdam, that is definitely new, but I wouldn’t call it a real market gap. This is not how we look at it. The “newness” is in a combination of Dutch and international product but not on ha hi-bro level. Actually, there is something for everyone in this shop.

You know, everyone in this business would like to find “the big gap” but it just doesn’t work like that. Lloyd and Government, they both came from a very personal reasoning’s and likings for this project, myself as well, so no big market gap was found or fulfilled. Maybe we even created one.

A: How did you searched for brands and products you wanted to have in here?
F: I do a lot of research by traveling, by looking a lot in other shops, in museums and museum shops and I go to exhibitions. From every trip I bring around one hundred new ideas. Then I research if these things are feasible and if I can get access to them. I do make choices in set parameters we have for the product but it is also very subjective and personal. I don’t have necessarily all the time on my mind the target group or the concept but just my feeling about something.

A: Who is your core target audience?
F: We have three target groups. The Amsterdam based, more creative consumer that likes certain kind of graphic design and these sorts of things. Then a second group are Dutch citizens who visit Amsterdam for a day, or so to speak Dutch tourists. They come here usually by train and then they walk to Bijenkorf department store and they come by our shop as well. This is why we have a lot of products that say something about Holland and we want to surprise this target group with them.

And then of course, the third group are tourists, an open minded one, interested in our culture.

A: I have notice that many of your stationary and beauty products overlap with one I found in “Friday Next”, “MaisonNL” and even “Tenue de Nîmes”. How can you differentiate yourself then from these shops?
F: I think it is a conciseness that we all have some the same products. I believe we all just picked out from the air and we also probably go to the same fairs. Also I know that with Friday Nest we overlap with some Danish brands, Beside I think that “clean” design appeals to the Dutch market so the owners probably picked it up as I did. But it is a coincidence.

A: A coincidence or a trend?
F: (smiles) Well, it’s both I would say, the trends and the coincidence.

A: What trends are you picking up at the moment?
F: It is going on for a long time but I would say that sustainability is the strongest one I am picking up. Beside, an indie (independent) brands are going pretty strong. In terms of consumer, it is consciousness about buying, or at least they pretend they do (laugh). These are the developments that are going on for a while but I can notice them in my shop as well. We have some products in our shop that are a bit pricey but they are really proper made and when you explain that to the customers they are willing to pay for it, even that they initially hesitated.

A: Why do you have a girl in a basement floor working on a sewing machine? Is it a part of a concept, of collaboration or just rental space?
F: When we collaborated with AMFI we set up downstairs little atelier. It was very nice to have people down working while the normal retail life was happening upstairs. I though that it would be nice to continue the atelier feeling within the shop because people can see how a product is developed. Therefor, I set up a small-scale product line that is specially made for the store. But, rental base could be a nice idea as well.

A: Do you think Amsterdam need more concept stores?
F: No! (laughing) We are set now! Well, I think that it is good to create shops for so
to speak “same mind-sets of people”, to have shops consisted of products from different categories within the same interest feel or something. That can be nice, although I think there is a lot a space for speciality shops. There is a lot of shopping going around and lot of chain brands and I really feel a need for tiny speciality focus shops, like a shop for nuts or something like that, very strict with its product assortment. Maybe concept stores are already seen.

A: What do you think that Amsterdam retail scene is missing?

F: Well, it is funny but I think that you can always create, with your own shop, what Amsterdam is missing even that is not like that. You know what I mean, no? I think that if you have strong idea of what you want to do and it is not yet there you have to try it. If it “opens up” you will find soon enough if there was something missing, no? If a lot of people like then it obviously it was missing.

A: Any advices for my project and me?

F: Maybe it is good to focus on an area. Research desired area trough government data, and try to base your arguments for project existence on them. Further on, conduct other researches that you might need, depending on your findings.

Maybe you can put all the shops that you like on the paper and pinpoint what you like from them and then think about your idea and try to find your USP, your strength and how you can make yourself different than them. Maybe think of different culture, other than Scandinavian, think of contemporary culture of Far East or East European.

I like the educational angle you want to bring with your workshops and you should relate your products to those fields as well. That is quite new on the market.

A: Thank you for your time and your tips Florianne.

F: No problem, it was my pleasure.

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**field research examples**

**on-the-spot questionnaire**

In all the shops whose owners, directors or other persons I have interviewed, I also conducted a five-minute inquiry among consumers I found in the shops.

The inquiry consisted of open and close end questions whose examples can be found on the following pages.

Some of the inquiries were carried out at the very beginning of the research, and some in later stages, and they helped me to understand some general consumer shopping behaviours. I found out about their shopping habits, their likings and expectations, fulfilled or unfulfilled, and what types of consumers like to shop or what attracts certain type of consumer to a certain place.

It is true that my target audience was in a way set by the government’s vision of the entire renewal of Nord project, still obtained information was extremely useful.

Total amount of respondents were 40.
on-the-spot questionnaire examples
field research examples

an online questionnaire

An online questionnaire was sent out by email to 10 couples that initially matched the target description and were found throughout friends or spotted on street on target location, Westerdokseiland and Silodam.

This questionnaire was made in a later stage of my research, when I already had a lot of information on the area where I want to place the shop, the government plans and vision, and the trends.

The questionnaire was consisted of thirty questions that were related to purchasing habits, lifestyle and diet, interests, and personal and other issues of the target audience. These facts helped me to get to know the target group in detail, and to discover their specific character and aspirations that I will translate into the final concept at a later stage of the research.

Questionnaire with a young couple Maya & Jorn, whom I spotted in the area of Silodam, looking for the new apartment (sent by e-mail).

1. Where do you shop your groceries? Please name the shops - also name if you buy your vegetables on one place and your dairy and other products at another place

M: Ekoplaza, Marqt, Landmarkt... also on the market, or local deli's.
J: idem.

2. Why do you shop there? What need of yours is fulfilled by buying your product there?

M: Because of many reasons but mainly I do not want to sponsor big chains and bad products.
J: Because I want to eat good and healthy products.

3. What brand of milk you use and why?

M: None.
J: None.

4. What brand of yogurt you buy and why?

M: Not a specific brand. I buy yoghurt at Ekoplaza or Marqt; brand doesn’t matter.
J: At work I drink Arla yoghurt because it’s bio.

5. What kind of bred you eat? Why?

M: Dark grainy, its healthier.
J: Made out of organic flower.

6. Do you buy organic products? Why?

M: Yes, for many reasons. First, quality of the product and second not wanting to sponsor the mass food industry.
J: Yes, for many reasons/idem.

7. Do you have kids? How many?

M: Not yet, one is coming up soon!
J: idem.
8a. Where do you buy clothes for your kids? Why there?
M: No specific store. We look for quality, eco-friendly and child friendly – made clothes.
J: idem

8b. What is the most important attribute that you search in a product for you child?
M: Safety, no toxins!
J: idem.

9. If you read magazines please name your favourite ones and explain in which way they satisfy your needs?
M: I don’t read magazines (only when I’m at the dentist waiting or in a coffee bar).
J: Monocle, Frame and Fantastic Man.

10. How do you reach most of information you want to know?
M: Internet and newspaper.
J: Internet, various blogs and news sites.

11. Which kind of literature you mainly read?
M: Nonfiction.
J: Nonfiction.

12. What do you read at the moment?
M: Various books on children (birth, child education). Last books were: Bill Bryson, Made in America; Jonathan Franzen, Freedom, Byron Katie: 4 vragen die je leven veranderen.
J: Mindfulness, Thich Naht Hanh

13. What movie moved you recently and why?
M: 5 broken cameras, documentary on a Palestinian farmer’s chronicle.
J: idem

14. Where do you live at the moment?
M: Amsterdam East.

15. Where do you aspire to live?
M: No specific area, we are looking for a bigger place, maybe with a garden or bigger terrace; some options are Nord, where you met me, and Zeeburg.
J: idem.

16. If you drive a car, please state which one and explain why you choose for that brand? It is a synonym of what for you? (example - Volvo - synonym for safety)
M: Toyota Prius, because it’s hybrid.
J: idem.

17. How do you spend your leisure time?
M: With my sweetheart, movies, coffee with friends and hobbies.
J: idem.

18. How would you like to spend it (if you are not sending it as you would wish)?
M: More quality time with my sweetheart or even sometimes doing more of my hobbies.

19. What is your favourite holiday place? Why?
M: One where you can combine culture, leisure and nature.
J: Diverse places, not one in specific.

20. Which phone brand you use and why?
M: I Phone, because it supposed to be the best.
J: idem.

21. What sort of computer you use and why?
M: Sony Vaio laptop, for no specific reason. I have it for years and it’s still working.
J: Apple, its easy to use and its nicely designed.

22. Favourite eating spot in A’dam?
M: There are so many. Still, it is important to serve quality and fresh menus.
J: Wilde Zwijnen, Goudfazant and Rem Eiland.
23. Favourite chilling spot in A’dam?
M: Two for joy cafe, Helena Primakoff and Beter & Leuk.
J: At home, two for joy cafe and Vesper bar.

24. Do you use electric or classic toothbrush? Why?
M: Electric, its brushing better.
J: idem.

25. Song that moves you....?
M: So many... Aretha Franklin’s little prayer, just to name one.
J: Roberta Flack.

26. How often you visit movies and theatre?
M: Varying from once a month to once a week, depending one how much time I have to spend, and on the movie offer. Theatre less, maybe couple of times per year.
J: idem.

27. How do you usually spend your weekends?
M: see q17
J: see q17

28. What’s your hobby?
M: Reading, watching movies and learning drawing and sketching.
J: Reading, writing and learning drums.

29. Do you do sport or other physical activity, please state which one?
   How does this sport/activity makes you feel and what it brings to your life?
J: Yoga and football. idem.

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**Questionnaire from a young couple Ellen & Alrik (sent by e-mail)**

I met Ellen walking her new born on a Westerdokseiland. She and her husband don’t live in this area but would like to find some apartment in the near future in that neighbourhood

1. Where do you shop your groceries? Please name the shops - also name if you buy your vegetables on one place and your dairy and other products at another place
   E: Ekoplaza and other bio shops. Also in Albert Hein and local shops.

2. Why do you shop there? What need of yours is fulfilled by buying your product there?
   E: We eat very healthy and in these shops I can find healthy product.

3. What brand of milk you use and why?
   E: Soya, Goat and Almond. It's healthier.

4. What brand of yogurt you buy and why?
   E: Not much of yogurt fan but my husband is and he likes all fruity ones, low fat.

5. What kind of bread you eat and why?
   E: We love grainy breads. I make some myself as well. I make many things, specially now with the baby. Like this food doesn’t contain preservatives.

6. Do you buy organic products and why?
   E: Yes, mainly. It’s healthier. But I also make jams, juices etc.

7. Do you have kids? How many?
   E: Newborn baby girl, Karin.

8a. Where do you buy clothes for your kids? Why there?
   E: We travel a lot so we buy abroad. We also like some local brands. I like “Humanoid” and “Ontour”. I tend to choose more sustainable products. Not always, if I like something special I buy it even that is not “green”. Alrik is a fan of Converse. I am also sewing so I buy a lot of natural fabrics and make my own stuff – when I have free time!
8b. What is the most important attribute that you search in a product for your child?
E: Welfare and comfortableness. Design also.

9. If you read magazines please name your favourite ones and explain in which way they satisfy your needs?
E: I like nature magazines like New Life. Sometimes I buy Flow and Happiness, Psychology and magazines related to my job. I read a lot over the Internet.

10. How do you reach most of information you want to know
a. Internet b. television c. magazines d. books e. all of the above but mainly I use: __________________
E: All that you named.

11. Which kind of literature do you mainly read?
E: Nonfiction.

12. What do you read at the moment?
E: Baby books.

13. What movie moved you recently, why?

14. Where do you live at the moment?
E: Amsterdam centrum, in Jordan, in a small but cosy apartment. We love our terrace.

15. Where do you aspire to live?
E: We are looking for a bigger place, maybe where you met me. I don’t know, that is though question at the moment.

16. If you drive a car, please state which one and explain why you choose for that brand? It is a synonym of what for you? (example - Volvo - synonym for safety)
E: We drive old Saab. Its old-timer, good and safe car. We drive bicycles more than a car.

17. How do you spend your leisure time?
E: At the moment mainly sleeping, and with friends and family.

18. How would you like to spend it if you are not sending it as you wish?
E: Now with the baby its hard to do things that I like so maybe when she will grow up a bit I can take her to places with me. I take her to my yoga classes and it is going well so far.

19. What is your favourite holiday place? Why?
E: Thailand, Cancun and every exotic and sunny place I’ve visited.

20. Which phone brand do you use and why?
E: We are both Mac fans so everything is “I love Mac” with us.

21. What sort of computer do you use and why?
E: Mac – user friendly and pretty.

22. Favourite eating spot in A’dam?
E: We like parks and picnics. Spending time in nature and in the countryside at our parents’ homes. We sit a lot in de 9 straatjes at friend’s cafes and restaurants. We like Amsterdamse Bos wood.

23. Favourite chilling spot in A’dam?
E: Home at the moment.

24. Do you use electric or classic toothbrush? Why?

25. Song that moves you...?
E: I don’t know now...Bon Iver, Guerre...

26. How often you visit movies? Theatre?

E: Not so often, depending on time. If there is something new and interesting playing in the theatre, we go. We watch more movies, Alrik download a lot.

27. How do you usually spend your weekends?

E: Since the baby came, sleeping. I like sewing for her and I am learning to knit. I want to make her some winter clothes. I read a lot in free time.

28. Do you do sport or other physical activity; please state which one?

E: Yoga is my passion. I also managed to convince Alrik to start practicing. He likes football and skydiving. Yoga changed my life and taught me many things. It helped my back pain also.

desk research examples

government data

The government data I have researched included infrastructure concepts and planning and architectural plans found on various public and private websites.
desk research examples

concept stores

Conducting a research on concept stores helped me discovering more or less inspirational concepts, ideas about the design, about the products and their buying philosophies. Since my concept develops around retail, hospitality and publishing, following examples of concepts I found the most interesting.

(list in Bibliography)

on trends

SOCIAL TRENDS

• Farm of the future •

• Agriculture community is planets “new elite” and it merges urban & rural lifestyle the slow food movement is going strong & shifting towards need for local & seasonal

• brings together house & farm, people and their sources of food and energy, countryside & city its collaboration with nature history of farming combined with design

FOOD TRENDS

• Food future •

• rise of culinary minded generation (strong in nyc!)

• this came from hand made movement -> back to basics old trend

• trend now is that food brings people together & make them share culture and variety

• food trend in Paris are going strong: synesthesia, monochrome food, single product food, sustainable food, interactive food

CONSUMER TRENDS

• spend more on organic & non gmo products

• still attentive on spending

• don’t like to be divide by their age

• • speak to consumer on emotional and personal level regardless their age

• sustainability - still strong and getting bigger

• consumer want to know the story behind the product

OTHER TRENDS

• Sharing economy

• New father

• • he is keen on actually fathering the kids

• • he is naturally slender, paler skin, longer hair, carries beards or variation of moustache, more tender, softer etc.

• • he is fathering: gathering, foraging, gardening and story telling

• • he is consumer with softer and more romantic style

• Family mother

• • she is shifting more towards her family regardless type of job she is doing

• • she is practicing traditional crafts like sewing, knitting, cooking jams and
Following is list of relevant trends that I have taken into account when building the concept. These trends are based on trend research by Ms. Lidewij Edelkoort, one of the world’s most renowned trend forecasters.

Farm of the future

Recognizing at last a truly new time frame in which everything will be different for the years to come, with each aspect of our lives converting to green, inspired by the way nature functions and how life on the farm evolves.

New material trends

Wood, bamboo and pulp continue to be major materials of choice that confirm the sustainable trend going strong. Weaving as a new way of knitting cord and crocheting textile emerge.

Handmade

Craftsmanship will be a very important value in the future. Creating a new thing from old knowledge and crafts is not a retro movement but completely new one.

Shopping

Imagination, improvisation, intelligence and humour are needed to redefine the shopping experiences of tomorrow, to engage in a new dialogue with our clients, to anticipate their every wish, to service their every whim, to satisfy their hidden desires. Bring them together in a social space.

Food future

Food explains how we live, love, take care of the other. Food is a necessity, a pleasure, a choice. Rise of culinary-minded generation (strong in nyc) came from hand made movement.
conclusions
about the location

Although my research primary started with discovering reasons for Amsterdam Nord renewal I have moved towards the West, more specifically to the southern IJover area. The government vision for that area, that is as well going under a massive refurbishment, was closer to the vision of the concept I wanted to create. Beside, target audience I needed to research was more accessible to me.

The location for the store should be between and around Westerdokseiland and Silodam. Both areas are developing into high quality residential and commercial areas that will become more fashionable with the atmosphere of a new downtown.

about the government vision

Government vision is to create an attractive new living environment with a stronger and more intimate connection among adjacent neighbourhoods such as Westerdokseiland, Silodam, Jordan and the western islands.

In this renewed and more fashionable environment, with the upcoming high-quality residential and commercial contents, the spirit of the metropolis must be present but the atmosphere of intimate community life must be preserved, as it comes from the culture of houseboat living.

about the target group

My core target audiences are young creative families with newborns or up and coming families that tend to be responsible consumers. They are living in the city centre and are aspiring a new, bigger home.

They are living healthy life, spend money on healthy hot meals when they don’t make them themselves and are into organic and local food.

They prefer indie sustainable and eco brands over mass production, still they have a confidence in some established brands that they but over years (e.g. converse)

They share a strong moment of togetherness (social), like to spend their leisure time in quality manner and to be outdoors as much as possible.

They have a strong need for information. Important values fro them are a need for

about the trends

Trends that I found important to include in this concept were:

Sharing economy that brings people together and makes them share cultures and varieties

Sustainability and spending more on organic and non-gmo products, that also involves a handmade movement and

The farm of the future trend that merges urban and rural lifestyle brings together countryside and city, house and farm and follows the shift towards the need for local and seasonal.
safety & responsibility, care for others and security.

They tend to practice traditional activities like sewing or knitting, or other crafts.

Things they own should reflect their personality and their home should be an expression of who they are.

They are appreciating simplicity of life and are quite spiritually conscious.

research question

What sort of innovative concept will fit in government vision of southern IJ area?
where from here
what is my concept?

An interactive and multifaceted retail and catering environment for reviving communities devoted to the local, the sustainable, the individual and the simple.

what is IJ Local?

IJ Local is commercially sustainable and social project that unifies retail and catering solutions in a single new environment.

It offers an alternative retail and catering setup by connecting urban communities to each other and to the rural communities.

Interactivity concept

IJ Local will organize inspirational training activities that will allow customers to interact with each other within the shop and spend quality leisure time by doing what they like or what they are curious about.

Workshops will be thematic and related to the product selection. In this manner we will be a training and development resource for the communities around.

IJ Local aims

Our aspiration is to be new kind of retailer.

To offer an alternative retail and catering setup by providing choice and information to our consumers that will help them make healthy and responsible decisions.

To create an environment that meets the needs of the local communities by offering them a high quality and responsibly produced goods at accessible prices.

To provide inspirational training activities from and to the local communities.

To be a training and development resource for our community.

To promote alternative, forward thinking ideas and solutions.

To create a work environment that values everyone’s contribution.

IJ Local philosophy

Promotion of local production and culture, regardless of its origin (Dutch or other).

Favouring of small production.

Promoting a society of artisans and their products.

Being more concerned about preservation of cities, tradition and nature than preoccupied with quantity.

To bring mainly independently produced goods and to offer a more sustainable, communitarian form of shopping and catering to people living and working in the neighbourhood.

It offers an alternative retail and catering setup by connecting urban communities to each other and to the rural communities.

product parameters

Independently produced
Responsible
Handcrafted
Appealing design and aesthetics.
product selection

Apparel and Accessories for women and men

“Aiayu”
a small scale Danish label that produces sustainable knitwear for women and home accessories.

“Fly like a butterfly”
a small-scale Dutch designer that produces unique knitwear.

“Ontour”
a contemporary small scale Dutch label driven by creativity and ethical fashion.

“Toms” shoes
an American shoes label known for their sustainable production policy.

“Y-Knit”
a young Dutch designer devoted to knitting with natural fabrics.

Kids accessories and toys

“Donna Wilson”
a British designer that creates handmade kids toys and small decorations from natural materials.

“Easy Peasy”
a French label for kid’s footwear that uses eco solutions for its product.

“Sophie the Giraffe”
an American label for baby toys and accessories made out of natural rubber and food paint.

Mummy and baby care

“Babybearshop”
an American bodycare label, whose products are 100 % cruelty free, made of pure, organic and nourishing plans and plants extracts.

“Burt’s Bee”
an American home - made label that produces beeswax bodycare.

Stationary and books

“Small caps”
a Berlin based, small scale manufacturer of stationary.

“Sukie”
a British publisher that produces innovative and functional stationary and organic and non-organic printed textiles.

Other selection: cooking books, DIY books, graphic design, architecture and interior design book and kids books.
list of researched concept stores

Australia
Melbourne – Alphaville, 262 Brunswick St,
Pittroy, 3065 Melbourne
Sydney – Dobry Den, 326 Crown St., Surry Hills, 2010 Sydney
Sydney – Fleur Wood, 464 Oxford St., Paddington, Sydney
Sydney – Orson & Blake, 483 Riley St., Surry Hills, 2010 Sydney

Austria
Vienna – Herr und Frau Klein, for kids only, Kirchengasse 7, 1070 Vienna
Vienna – Merchzilla, Zollergasse 2, 1070 Vienna
Vienna – Park, Mondscheingasse 20, 1070 Vienna
Vienna – Pregenzer, Schleifmühlgasse 4, 1040 Vienna
Vienna – Tiberius, ...delicate..., Lindengasse 2, 1070 Vienna

Azerbaijan
Baku – Emporium, Bakı, Z.Tağıyev küç. 2 & Neftçilğr pr-ti 153, Baku

Belgium
Antwerp – Clinic, De Burburestraat 5, 2000 Antwerp
Antwerp – Graanmarkt 13, Graanmarkt 13, 2000 Antwerp
Antwerp – Ra, Kloosterstraat 13, 2000 Antwerp
Brussels – Hunting and Collecting, 17, Rue des Chartreux, 1000 Brussels

Brasil
Sao Paulo – Loja do Bispo, R. Dr. Melo Alves, 278, Sao Paulo
Sao Paulo – Villa Daslu, Avenida Chedid Jafet, 13, Sao Paulo

Bulgaria
Sofia – Farenah Concept, (Saborna) 1a, 1000 Sofia

China
Hong Kong – Shanghai Tang, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central
Shanghai – Three on the Bund, No. 3 The Bund, Huangpu, Shanghai

Emirates
Dubai – 50°C, Souk Al Bahar Mall, Buri Dubai
Dubai – Five Green, Garden Home, Out Metha, Dubai

France
Paris – Auguste, 10 Rue St. Sabin, 75011 Paris
Paris – Colette, 213 Rue Saint-Honoré, 75001 Paris
Paris – Hotel Particulier, 15 Rue Léopold Bellan, 75002 Paris
Paris – Le 66, 66 Champ Elysees, 75008 Paris
Paris – L’Eclaireur, 10 Rue Herold, 75001 Paris
Paris – Merci, 111 Boulevard Beaumarchais, 75011 Paris
Paris – Spree, 16 Rue de la Vieuville – 75018 Paris

Germany
Berlin – Amorph, Savignyplatz, S-Bahnhogen, 591, 10623 Berlin
Berlin – Andreea Murkus, Potsdamer Str. 77-87, Building E, 10785 Berlin
Berlin – Le Gang, Pappelallee 85, 10117 Berlin
Berlin – Quartier 206 Departmentstore, Friedrichstr. 11, 10117 Berlin
Berlin – nung.napa, Kreuzelbeckstraße 27, 10623 Berlin
Berlin – The Corner, Französische Str. 40, 10117 Berlin
Berlin – Villa Harteneck, Douglassstr. 9, 14193 Berlin
Berlin – Voo, Oranienstr. 24, 10999 Berlin
Bochum – Living at more, Haftingerstr. 824, 44879 Bochum
Bochum – Stückerl, Körnerallee 12, 44879 Bochum
Cologne – Apropos Concept Store, Mittelstr. 3, 50672 Köln
Cologne – Clicancier, Brüsselstr. 74, 50672 Köln
Cologne – Desiciary, Goltsteinstrasse 71, 50968 Köln
Cologne – Simon und Renoldi, Maastrichter Str. 17, 50672 Köln
Dortmund – Heimatschmuck, Hoher Wall 15, 44137 Dortmund
Düsseldorf – Apropos Concept Store, Benrather Str. 15, 40213 Düsseldorf
Düsseldorf – Jades, Breite Str. 1, 40213 Düsseldorf
Düsseldorf – Loud!, Benrather Str. 11, 40213 Düsseldorf
Düsseldorf – Uwe van Afferden, Zeilgalerie, Zeil 112-114, 60313 Frankfurt
Frankfurt – Abaci, Junghofstr. 14, 60311 Frankfurt
Frankfurt – Colekt, Brückenstraße 21, 60594 Frankfurt
Frankfurt – designe, kleine!, Wallstr. 26, 60594 Frankfurt
Frankfurt – Expose de Luxe, Schillerstr. 27, 60313 Frankfurt
Frankfurt – Sanftkoer, Zeilgalerie, Zeil 112-114, 60313 Frankfurt
Frankfurt – Uebervart, Kleiner Hirschstrasse 14, 60311 Frankfurt
Frankfurt – Voo, Oranienstr. 24, 10999 Frankfurt
Hamburg – Kubal & Kempe, Alter Fischmarkt 11, 20457 Hamburg
Hamburg – Sleeping Dogs, Grosse Elbstrasse 68, 22767 Hamburg
Hamburg – Urban Outfitters, Gassenmarkt 45, 20354 Hamburg
Heilbronn – Karin Bezan, Schillerstr. 16, 81675 Heilbronn
Jena – Kolibri, Am Heinrichsberg 2, 07743 Jena
München – Demstre, Alter Steinweg 1, 81413 München
München – Gasoline Alley, Corneliusstr. 5, 80469 München
München – Manufactum, Diererstr. 12, 80331 München
München – Pool, Maximilianstr. 11, 80538 München
München – Querstreifen, Boschstr. 3, 80809 München
München – Sankthorst, Zeilgalerie, Zeil 112-114, 60313 Frankfurt
München – Uebervart, Kleiner Hirschstrasse 14, 60311 Frankfurt
München – 888monkey, Obere Webergasse 15, 66185 Wiesbaden
München – Fair-Verkauflich, Moritzstr. 5, 66185 Wiesbaden
Wuppertal – MO16, Spichernstr. 16, 42103 Wuppertal

Greece
Athens – SHOP, 112A Ermou St., 10554 Athens

Hungary
Budapest – World of Luxury, Berkenye u. 13/15, II. Kerület, Budapest
India
Mumbai – Bombay Electric, 1 Reay House, Best Marg, Colaba, 400 001 Mumbai

Italy
Milano – TAD, Via Statuto 14/16, 20123 Milano
Mura – White Gallery, Piazza G. Marconi 15/22, 00144 Roma

Japan
Tokyo – L’éclaireur, 4-21-26 Minami-Aoyama Minato-ku, Tokyo 170-0062

Mexico
Mexico – Common People, Emilio Castelar 149, Col. Polanco, CP11560 México DF

Morocco
Marrakech – 33 Rue Majorelle, 33 Rue Yves Saint Laurent, 40000 Marrakech

Netherlands
Amsterdam – Nukhiva, Haarlemmerstraat 36 – 1013ES Amsterdam
Amsterdam – SPRMRKT, Rozengracht 191/193 – 1016LZ Amsterdam

New Zealand
Auckland – House of Hedone, 5 b High St CBD Auckland

Portugal
Câmara – Miyuki, Rua das Parreiras, no 27, 3000-326 Câmara

Russia
Moscow – Podium, Kuznetskii Most 14, 107033 Moscow

Singapore
Singapore – Blackmarket, 19 Jalan Pisang, 199084 Singapore

Spain
Barcelona – Vincon, Passeig de Gràcia 96, 08008 Barcelona

Sweden
Skand – Carlson Ahnell, Mellangatan 44, 23930 Skanör

Stockholm – Urban Outfitters, Biblioteksgatan 5, 11144 Stockholm

Switzerland
Geneva – Village, Places des Eaux-Vives 9, 1207 Genève
Zurich – Amalgan, Viaduktstrasse 27, 8005 Zurich
Zurich – DeeCee Style, Talacker 21, 8001 Zurich
Zurich – Eclectic Lifestyle, Werdmühlestrasse 7, 8001 Zurich
Zurich – Fashionslave, Im Viadukt 29, 8005 Zurich
Zurich – Graeder, 8001, Bahnhofstrasse 30, 8032 Zurich
Zurich – No. 2, Brotgasse 3, 8008 Zurich
Zurich – Thema Selection, Spiegelgasse 16, 8001 Zurich
Zurich – Townhouse, Weite Gasse 4, 8001 Zurich

Syria
Damascus – Villa Moda, in the spice market, center of old city, Damascus

Thailand
Bangkok – O. Siam Paragon, 3rd Floor, 10110 Bangkok
Bangkok – O. Central World, F Floor, 10110 Bangkok

United Kingdom
Liverpool – Microzone, 65-67 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4EZ
London – DARKROOM, 52 Lamb’s Conduit Street, London WCIN 3LL
London – Dover Street Market, 17/18 Dover Street, London W1S 4LT
London – Microzone, 1,2 Kingly Court, Carnaby Street, London W1F 9PY

USA
Boston – Louis Boston, 234 Berkeley Street, 02116 Boston (MA)

New York – Alife, 158 Rivington St., 10002 New York (NY)
New York – Grand Opening, 139 Norfolk Street, 10002 New York (NY)
New York – Moss, 150 Greene Street, 10012 New York

San Francisco – Harputs Market, 1525 Fillmore Street, 94115
San Francisco (CA) Seattle – Pulp Lab, 5402 22nd Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98107
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