Online learning for SMEs on business model tooling

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Our mission

To train 300,000 European SMEs on how to innovate their business model with ICT-enabled tooling

By developing & delivering 5 MOOCs
What makes this rewarding?

• SMEs need to innovate their business models
  – Globalization, digitization, platformization
• But they hardly do so
  – 18% of European SMEs actively change their business model (Source: ENVISION)

Business model innovation = Changing the core logic of how businesses create and capture value
What makes this challenging?

• SMEs …
  – Are highly heterogeneous
  – Lack time to study
  – May have no university training
  – Are happy to survive day-to-day problems
The opportunity

- H2020 project ENVISION
- 2015-2018, 3 M€
- 30 tools
- www.businessmakeover.eu
- (But no learning package)
- 123 qualitative case studies
- > 50 academic publications
- Reach out to >> 3 million SMEs
Design principles

1. Make it simple
2. Minimize study load
3. Make practical
4. Visual instead of text
5. Immediate value
6. Learn from other SMEs
Course design
What do you want to achieve?
Results

• 5 MOOCs delivered
  – 43,160 participants
  – 459 verified
• 5 languages
• Integration ENVISION
• Re-use in education
• Exploitation foreseen

• Lessons learned
  – Survey (N=105)
  – Feedback forum, email
1. Keep it simple

- Simple enough for secondary education
- Targeting SMEs through >30 member organizations
- But: Edx channel most successful
- < 10% found courses too difficult
- But: Several required more challenge and materials

“The content was just a short overview. I hoped for some more insights. Background lessons were short [...] I was looking for some more instructions – how and why does it work.”
2. Limit the time needed

- 2-4 hours per week study load
- Appears doable overall
- But: SMEs have unpredictable agendas

“I missed out a deadline due to an unplanned business travel. It is totally understandable that the assignment is closed [...] However, for working people it would helpful to get a second chance.”
3. Make it practical

- Relate contents to practical business context
- Cases, examples, tools are valued highly
- But: Participants always want more!

“I like to reflect my learning against practice. Actually working tools and frameworks are a really useful addition for this!”
4. Visual instead of text

• Make tutorial videos, interview videos, tool animations

• Appreciated by participants
• But: Some require / expect more depth

“The instruction videos are very clear, which is important to help us understand the concepts of business models and how to apply it to our own company.”
5. Immediate value

• Learnings should provide value for daily practice from day-1

• Assignments to improve own business model
• But: Some participants aren’t in business yet

“It really stimulated to work on my own business model”
6. Learn from other participants

- Enable learning from others through peer review of assignments
- Participants appreciate comments on each others’ business model innovation ideas
- But: Quality of peer feedback is highly diverse

“The peer review is an excellent idea and helpful to see/read how others view my business idea”
Conclusions

• We were able to bring academic content to practical (small) business setting
  – This is part of `open’ too!

• How to balance between
  – Practical, doable, immediate impact
  – Sophistication, depth, `university’-worthy
Thank you!

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5 free online courses on BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION that will help any small or medium business to improve and grow.