Thanks for joining the matchmaking event "How can we grow & innovate with open data" within the NSR-project COM³ (Building competencies for competitive companies)

Yesterday we listened to three perspectives sharing their experiences in working with data. The panelists Matthijs Bookelmann (JADS), Niels Annema (Provincie Drenthe) and Kris Dekeyzer (Intercommunale Leiedal) gave us an informative hour about how they use data to create value for both companies, intermediaries, and municipalities.

Below is a short summary of the speaker's discussion.

Matthijs Bookelmann

What is data?
- Anything that is recorded and saved somewhere. It could for instance be information that you write down on a piece of paper or information from a cash register.

What is open data?
- Publicly available data. E.g. the weather forecast, or data sets with demographic information provided by municipalities. You can combine your own data with open data. Example: a bakery that uses the weather forecast to foresee how much bread they should bake.

Why is data important and why is it such a buzz around data now?
- There is more data now than ever before, and there is also more computing power, advanced technologies and more opportunities. Now you can get all the valuable information to make better decisions within your company.

How do JADS help companies in their digital journey?
- JADS help them to understand why working with data could be valuable for them. The hardest part for companies is to make the translation from data to something that can be of value for the company. We help them identify the first step and inspire them to see the potential.
- Together with students we help companies with concrete challenges they want to solve.

Niels Annema

What have you been working with within the COM³-project?
- We created a database with information about the companies in the region.

What kind of information are you collecting?
- In regards to open data, most interesting is what people put out there on their own website. We "scrape" websites to collect information about the companies in the region. There are also other sources, not regarded as open data, that we are the owner of but that were never used previously.

What challenges have you faced during the process of building the database?
- After we collected all the data, we ran into some legal issues. As a data science team, we want to create as much values as we can, but we need to find routes that works for all the teams. How can we show companies on the map without showing their personal information? The biggest issues are companies with only one person working in it – cause the company address may as well be their home address. The solution became to only post postal numbers.

What are the ambition with the database?
- The database now is regional, but the best would be to have a national one. We will definitely continue to work with it!

Kris Dekeyzer

How do you work?
- We use design thinking as a process. Most of the times in design process you design a problem or potential solution and work from there on. We want to go deeper and connect dots from all the data that's out there and invite stakeholders in the process.
- It's about bringing all insights together and provide new products and services with the insights from all the data that we gathered together.
- We work in areas such as energy, energy sharing, space neutrality, too good to go.

How do you engage stakeholders?
- It's about finding stakeholders that see potential in doing something with data. Data has value, but only if you translate it into something tangible. When it becomes tangible, more companies understand and engage into the project.
- You need to create economic values. If you can show in a very objective way what kind of value you can create, stakeholders will be interested.
- It's not only about the results, but also about the learning curve with the companies and municipalities. They learn from each other.

Are there any key learning you can share when you have been engaging different kind of stakeholders in the same process?
- If it takes too much time, companies will leave. You have to give them something at every point. Working with governmental organisations, it is a much much lower speed. It can be difficult to match with the speed of the companies.

Thanks for joining us and feel free to join us in the upcoming matchmaking events. Find out more about the upcoming session and register here!

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