

Croqger Pay, exchange or find a volunteer for your job

“In our rapidly changing society, property is becoming less and less important. What matters is that one can get anything at their disposal the moment it is needed, whether it's things, jobs or services. Croqger fills that need. Busy or people in need can get in a job or service done through Croqger with the help of people in their own neighborhood.”

1. Introduction

Croqger is a nationwide and in-the-neighborhood implemented neighbor-to-neighbor network of ‘real people’ who voluntarily help each other either with an exchange of jobs (you do the hedge, I bake a cake) or for a small fee.

Almost everyone spends a significant amount of time online. At the same time, people have an increasing need for social bonding as near to their own area as possible. In neighborhoods and districts, significant assistance and support is available, however, residents often have difficulty locating these resources. Croqger offers a solution with an easy to find digital platform.

2. Principles

Croqger's mission is: "Connecting people together in the neighborhood to create social and economic values." Both values are relevant and important. In March 2015, Croqger became certified as a benefit corporation. To qualify for this, Croqger incorporates People, Planet, and Profit.

In the preparation of the initiative, ‘Croqger’ had to directly make a difference in order to obtain subsidies. Foundation Doen supported them in this. The question “what makes you different from all the others” ensured a specific focus on ‘the neighborhood’. Therefore, 60 pages were added to the norms and values of Croqger with the content: "The neighborhood is our anchor” which is an obvious focus on social values.

In the practice of Croqger, the two primary principles are clearly reflected. A recently conducted survey shows that monetary gain is down to 8th place in these types of platforms. Of the 28 outcomes, the primary focus is, "I like to help people." Second place indicates, "I get satisfaction from the positive reflection that others give me." To the average user, selflessly helping others is more valuable than the euros he or she receives. Other users reported having a 'bare welfare income' and, therefore, enjoy earning something extra. Thus, a double benefit is realized.

Half of all of the jobs in Croqger are paid jobs; the other half comprises an exchange or volunteer jobs. The supply highlights the two principles of social and economic.

3. Design

The development of Croqger is still proceeding vigorously. The initiative went live in 2013. Subsequently, the first business model was ready.

The idea emerged with initiator Rob van de Star who was inspired by the activities of his own family life. Both he and his wife work, the children go to school and, on Saturday, the parents operate a taxi company. Therefore, many chores remain unfinished while a neighbor could happily help solve this which was the motivation for this initiative.

Regarding development, Croqger deliberately adjusted their project by looking at Task Rabbit (www.taskrabbit.com) to refine the original ideas. Because Croqger is currently active in three countries (Netherlands, Belgium, and Italy) and 25 regions, innovating is occurring in just as many places. This provides a strong base for growth.

4. Value Proposition

Croqger distinguishes itself on two points when compared with Task Rabbit.

1. The person who placed the advertisement is the boss who decides whether to pay, trade, or locate a volunteer. In this aspect, Croqger is unique in the Netherlands because it is the only initiative that offers this triad. There are several paid websites (eg., werkspot.nl and marktplaats.nl), websites that focus solely on volunteers (eg., zorgvoorelkaar.nl), and a number of exchange platforms.
2. A job is not complete until a two-way peer review has occurred. For paid jobs, Croqger demands a payment in advance via Ideal, Credit Card, Bitcoin, etc. Croqger acts as a vault that will pay when both parties indicate a 'thumbs up'. Each payment consists of 80% for the handyman and 20% for Croqger. If one of the 'thumbs up' is not indicated, it can be troublesome. That happens approximately once per every one hundred transactions. Croqger then operates as an independent party and can mediate in the event that it is necessary.

Directly involved in the design, development, and realization of Croqger are its shareholders, financiers (eg., Foundation Doen), all of the community managers, and the users. There are many partners who helped Croqger to control for risks, among other things.

5. Community

There are a number of basic principles that govern the relationships between Croqger users:

1. Everyone helps each other and is equal;
2. The person who placed the advertisement is the boss who determines (from the demanding side) whether to pay, trade, or locate a volunteer.
3. The job is not complete until there is mutual consensus.

Everyone who subscribes or is employed by Croqger is a member of the community. There is a macro- and a micro-community.

All of those who register are members of the macro community which is the entire community. All jobs that are taking place in the Netherlands are visible. In principle, a Croqger from Amsterdam can decide to perform a job in Groningen.

One of the objectives of Croqger is to improve social cohesion and connect neighbors to make repairs or perform a service. For each region, there is a community manager who serves as a mediator and contact person and is also responsible for maintaining their individual community. Croqgers can be divided into regions which can be regarded as micro communities.

The composition of the community can be very diverse. Basically, anyone can register with Croqger and begin accepting or requesting jobs. The major groups are: couples (25-40 years) with children residing in a Vinex-neighborhood; expats; people over fifty years old; entrepreneurs; people returning to the labor market; and students and the unemployed.

Communication between the Croqgers primarily occurs through the website. Even when the job is posted and Croqgers have found each other, it is still important to maintain contact via the website. This is important to prevent users from executing (monetary) transactions outside the realm of Croqger whereby Croqger may miss the opportunity for a commission, and the platform can lose its added value.

In the event of a disagreement or a conflict between the 'boss' and 'handyman', Croqger can operate as a mediator. Croqger strives to be involved as little as possible in conflicts.

The parties involved (stakeholders) in the design of Croqger are the Foundation Doen, shareholders, community managers, designers, and partners.

6. Results

Croqger creates different values including social, financial, and material value.

The social value is related to the feeling of satisfaction that people receive when they help their neighbors. Being able to help other people is, for some, enough to perform a task. It can also extract people from their social isolation and make them feel useful again. Accepting jobs can reduce loneliness and strengthen social ties between neighbors.

The financial value is that it can be more beneficial to outsource your tasks and making use of the resources or services nearby can be less expensive. Because not all handymen are only motivated by financial gain, prices may be lower than when it is done by a professional or commercial organization.

Croqger ensures that things that needed to be done are completed. That is the material value of Croqger. The work for those things that were previously neglected can now be easily outsourced. A freshly painted wall or a newly tiled garden is something tangible.

The strength of Croqger is the entire package of different values. The satisfaction the user feels by helping others, offering less expensive (or free) options, the connecting of neighbors with one another, and the use of services close to home form the combined value realization.

7. Conclusion

Croqger has an NBM as indicated by the following points:

Croqger has significant social impact (people) because this initiative increases social cohesion in the neighborhood. In this aspect, Croqger is also innovative because there is no other platform that focuses on the locality of the participants.

In addition, Croqger cares about sustainability (planet). On the website, this is demonstrated as follows:

- local for local: neighbors helping each other who come on foot or by bicycle versus Werkspot ZZP'ers who leave in the morning at 6:30, commute 90 km to the job (read [here](#) and compare Croqger to Werkspot);
- extending durability by repairing equipment instead of throwing it away (also in conjunction with the Repair Café);
- reducing consumption: the Croqger often brings materials and/or tools along for the task so that not everything (often single-use) needs to be purchased;
- with the Croqger Chore Brigade: during a long weekend, refurbishing a neighborhood or a housing association;
- internal arrangements: through maximum use of electronic means such as video conferencing, Whatsapp, and e-mail;
- use of Open Source software components.

A third strong point of Croqger is profits. By collecting only 20% of all transactions, they are on the sidelines. In addition, research has shown (interview) that people on welfare or pensions are very excited to be able to earn something extra in this manner.

Croqger has been certified since March 2015 as a B Corp. B Corps are important initiatives in the transition to a new economy because they inspire other companies to not only be the best in the world but to be the best for the world.

Meanwhile, there are more than 1,200 certified B Corporations dispersed across more than 60 industries in more than 32 countries. Certified B Corporations set high standards in regard to social and environmental impact, transparency, and accountability.

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