Family care for beginners

"Increasingly, people in need of care are taken care of by family, friends, or acquaintances. As a result of the ongoing aging population and changes in the regulatory reforms, the number of informal caregivers is increasing ever more rapidly. The website 'Family Care for Beginners' (www.mantelzorgvoorbeginners.nl) focuses on people who have little or no experience with arranging care and assistance. Autonomy and freedom of choice for care consumers are central to this online platform."

1. Introduction

The website www.mantelzorgvoorbeginners.nl was launched on November 6, 2014, by Anni Tüski. On this online platform, all of the important information that is required for a novice caregiver is available in a convenient overview. Visitors to the website can find information about caregiving or available devices which can assist them in making their own choices for caregivers, devices, resources, and other services. With the help of a search engine, caregivers can quickly locate services, devices, and institutions in their own neighborhood. The initiative began with a database for the provinces of Brabant and Gelderland. Currently, the initiative is working on expanding information from other provinces as well.

2. Principles

The socio-cultural value of this business model is substantial. The website aims to respond to changes in society in which informal care is becoming increasingly important, however, locating that assistance is unnecessarily complex. By providing independent information that is presented in an organized manner, people can make decisions and arrange things in a more rapid manner. This prevents wasting time and reduces the stress on the caregiver.
The ecological value is minimal as the initiative primarily involves the principle that, if you can serve people near to their homes, they are not required to travel by car or public transportation.

The shared value creation has been important in the design, construction, and development of this new business model because information is shared with people via the website. The functionalities invented by the designer are tested by its users, and feedback is obtained by being present at meetings and by making agreements with relevant parties. Finally, an enormous amount of feedback is received through e-mail which results in collective value creation.

3. Design

The concept for the website was idealized by Anni Tüski in 2013. In 2005, she moved from Hungary, where she was working at the time, and returned to the Netherlands to care for her ailing father together with her family. Her father desired to be cared for at home and to remain there until the end of his life. Anni, living in Tilburg, became an informal caregiver for her parents who live in Utrecht.

In 2013, she realized that, as a caregiver, she spent considerable time searching for the correct information. The existing websites focusing on caregiving were confusing and did not provide specific answers to questions. Thus the idea was born to create a website that offers answers to three central issues: services, devices, and institutions.

In 2013, Anni Tüski wrote a business plan and submitted it to various authorities hoping to qualify for a grant. When that failed, she decided to get started as an entrepreneur. She founded a bureau named Hint and Wenk that is indicative of tips, information, instructions, advice, recommendations, and suggestions which is what she wants to achieve with the agency.

The website "Mantelzorg for Beginners" is the first project of Bureau Hint and Wenk. Anni Tüski recorded the concept for the website and the website name at a business agency. She subsequently constructed the website via Youtube in order to present the idea to the relevant parties. Anni encountered an increasing number of people on her path that assisted her along the way such as a marketing and communications consultant and an entrepreneurial coach who are all professionals who have advised and coached her on how she needs to progress and what steps she must go through as an entrepreneur.

She spent nine months locating suitable parties to jointly continue this citizen initiative, however, this was in vain. No one, neither businesses nor health care organizations, wanted to work together with her. Therefore, on November 6, 2014, the website was finally launched by Anni herself.

On LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook, Anni came into contact with people with the same interests and the same passion and has met informal caretakers who have tested the website. With their feedback she could, wherever necessary, modify the website and further elaborate it. It is a working model, and the site is being used extensively. Over the course of 2015, many questions have come in from visitors.

It is remarkable that approximately 50% of the visitors are not caregivers but, instead, are individuals who want to arrange care for themselves. This proves, once again, that people want to take their own direction in life and are looking for beneficial advice.

In regard to devices, an important question is whether it is best to purchase, borrow, or rent them is this is more applicable to customers . The website provides relevant information. Central to this transaction form is the sharing of information. A blog has been created in which knowledge is shared about family caregiving. Creation is obvious because, with the help of the website, the information is processed and converted to information for users. Services and knowledge are the most widely used transaction resources. Information provided by the site is not being sold but only shared. Maintaining the website takes time because at least three to four days a week is devoted to providing online information.

4. Value Proposition

The website "Mantelzorg for Beginners" offers visitors an information service. This service has been provided as a result of passion but also partly out of frustration. From personal experience, it became apparent that there was a significant need for such a website where all of the information is summarized and easy to locate. The passion of the designer is apparent as she wants to share a message that there a freedom of choice still exists; you have more options than you believe.

The website distinguishes itself from other healthcare platforms because all of the information is brought together in one place. There are other websites that have been developed that only focus on one particular aspect of caregiving. The website "Mantelzorg for Beginners" offers everything in one place, and the theme 'Living at home longer' is fully explored.
A number of components of "Mantelzorg for Beginners" are able to be copied, however, the database as it is formulated now is unique.
The websites Scouters (www.scouters.nl) and Alleszelf (www.alleszelf.nl) can be perceived as two competitors as they offer good information about devices, however, they provide little information about services and agencies.

5. Community

The Community of this NBM consists of two sub-groups: people who are already active in the healthcare world and website visitors. The first group is mainly communicated with via social media such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. People also meet at relevant gatherings. The second group is mostly contacted via e-mail.
It is a dynamic community. The primary means of communication are through the newsletter, blog, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.
A new blog series has been established that is called 'new thinkers in care' and, via this blog, the 'Mantelzorg voor Beginners' community can share information with each other and think together about how to make improvements in the world of informal caretakers.

6. Results

The economic value lies in the information that clarifies for people what the consequences of their choices will be for their own financial situation when purchasing new devices. It allows people to think about whether a new purchase will be worth it or not.
The social value is that people are participating in the changes. It contributes to WMO-transition and the new Health Insurance Act. People are able to better understand how these work. It not only makes them more aware of their own role and the direction they can take for themselves but also in the care of others.

Investing in information can be seen as a cost. The benefit in this aspect is that people can make their choices and arrange things more rapidly so as to reduce or prevent work overload. If people are well prepared to begin as an informal caregiver, they experience less stress.

However, there are also negative values in the sense that the website partly substitutes the work of other organizations that perceive it as competition. When people begin searching for devices and information themselves, they no longer require the assistance of the municipality, health insurance, or other companies which can be regarded as a negative value by these entities while Anni Tüski considers it as something positive.

7. Conclusion

By founding "Mantelzorg for Beginners", a beautiful social initiative has been created which produces multiple values. The NBM is still developing and is still searching for partnerships. For the founder, this coming year will be a challenge to determine how to proceed with the online platform. In the business plan, one of the goals was to begin a collaboration with another organization, however, thus far, this has not been successful. Anni Tüski is looking for ideas on this and remains in conversation with potential parties. She cannot continue to do the basic work alone. She has written to two colleges (in Tilburg and Den Bosch) to engage students in this project. That will certainly be a component of the new business model because, within a year, the initiative should have a permanent place somewhere.

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