Taking telco relief to the streets

When being a telco customer today makes you either confused or downright anxious, someone had to lead a better way forward. And that someone had to be Tele2.

To be the smallest of seven telecom operators on the mature Dutch market is tough. With a decent foothold on fixed telephony but a poor perception as a virtual mobile provider, Tele2 was ramping up its efforts, investing in increasing its performance and market share by building its own 4G network across the Netherlands.

Following a group-wide brand identity update, Tele2 was getting ready to establish a nation-wide physical footprint manifesting its future position. Boys Don’t Cry took on the challenge and formed a super-team with brand-, service design-and management experts and won the project in competition with both Dutch and English agencies.
So how do you conquer the main streets in a low-interest category? Together with a dedicated team of Tele2 managers we started out by getting under the skin of the real customers, learning from their joys and pains. Acquiring thorough insights through field work, interviews and co-creative survey exhibitions, it became clear that telco’s problem is not that it’s boring – but that it’s frustrating.

The emerging concept’s main focus was therefore to deliver relief to this frustration by three main customer experience principles guiding the work; Instilling confidence by truly seeing each customer’s usage and needs. Being clear and uncluttered by simple, understandable offers and carefully curated assortment. And finally to act seamlessly by ensuring communication consistency through all channels. All this taking place in a warm and empathic atmosphere, distanced from the often so techy vibe of the telco world.

Telco customers are not bored – they’re frustrated. The stores effectively had to relieve that frustration. By empathy, by understanding and by clarity.

Just like customers, most locations are unique with their own sets of potentials and problems. Armed with models handling different user needs, store sizes and varieties of services, a responsive design was gradually developed and continuously evaluated within the team and with segmented focus groups. The design also needed to carefully balance being a friendly partner in all-things-telco, having a cheeky and vibrant brand presence of a market challenger and manifesting the confidence and professionalism of a trustworthy provider.
A year after the whole team initially got together, the first store opened in Amsterdam and since then 14 cities across Holland have gotten their own brand new Tele2 store, with more in the making.

Making the store operation focus on relieving actual frustrations of being a telco customer also proved successful, with the retail business case exceeding its expectations by 175% and establishing Tele2 as a reliable player, here to stay.