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## Appendix

# Shaping product advantage

**How early-stage B2B SaaS startups can  
increase their product launch success by taking a  
customer- and competitive centred approach**

**COMPANY AND  
COMMITTEE**

**COMPANY  
LYNK**

**GRADUATION COMMITTEE  
ERIK-JAN HULTINK  
JEROEN COELEN**

## Appendices

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# I. Product introduction

Lynk acts like a 'shell' around SharePoint and offers specific features that make it the missing half for construction companies. All files are located at OneDrive, Microsofts cloud storage system. Using an API strategy makes it possible to still use all Microsoft 365 features, open Word/Excel/Powerpoint files directly in the cloud and collaborate together in them. The shell of Lynk specific features are easy Role Management, Approval flows, Ask-for-review flow, Project and personal task board, IFC viewer and a PDF annotator. Through the web of process flows and communication tools, Lynk aims to help construction project teams to up their game.

Figure 1 shows the main dashboard with all projects accessible by the viewer. Figure 2 shows the main document view, inside a project.

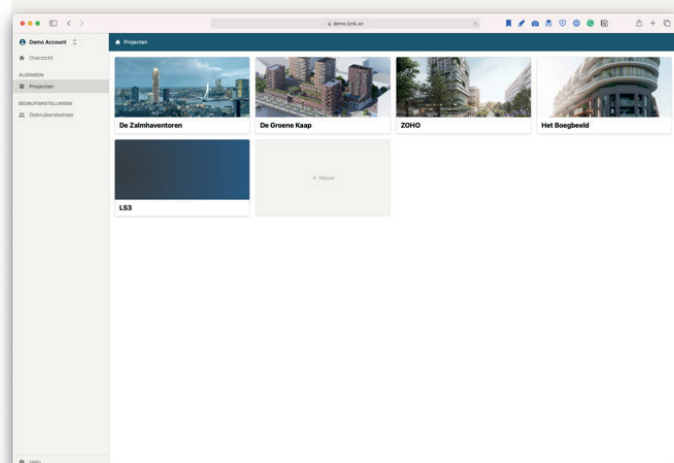


Figure 1 Lynk, main project dashboard

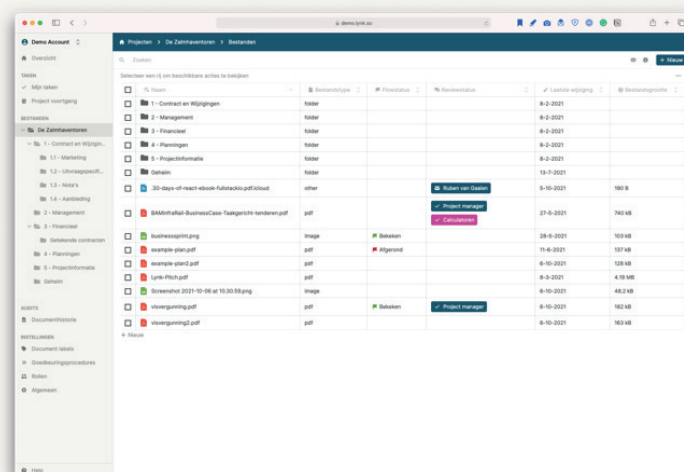


Figure 2 Lynk, file viewer inside project

Roles, figure 3 shows the roles dashboard where different groups can be made and both internal and external users can be invited to join the platform.

Labels, custom labels can be setup which can be given to documents. Labels can then be used as filter, and make managing large amounts of data, read 1000 documents, easier.

Approval flows can be custom designed by admins, taking multiple steps or the approval of multiple groups in one stage. Ask-for-review is a single step approval flow, send to a person or group. Any document can be assigned to a pre-setup Approval flow, or Ask-for-review flow. Figure 3 shows the configurator, and figure 4 the overview dashboard of all files in approval flows.

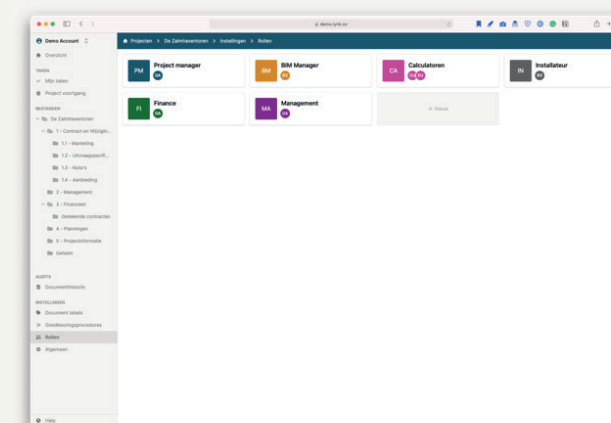


Figure 3 Lynk, roles dashboard

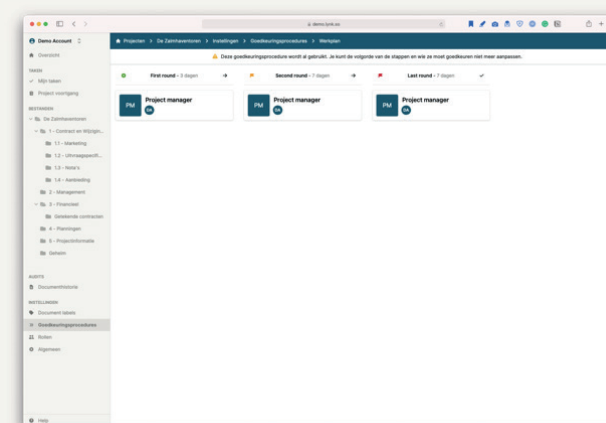


Figure 5 Lynk, custom approval flow configurator

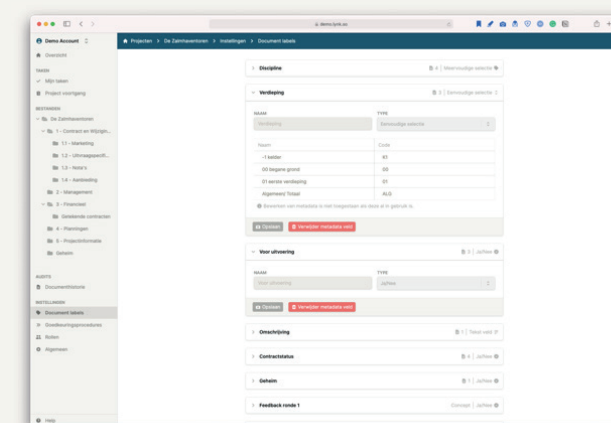


Figure 4 Lynk, custom labels dashboard

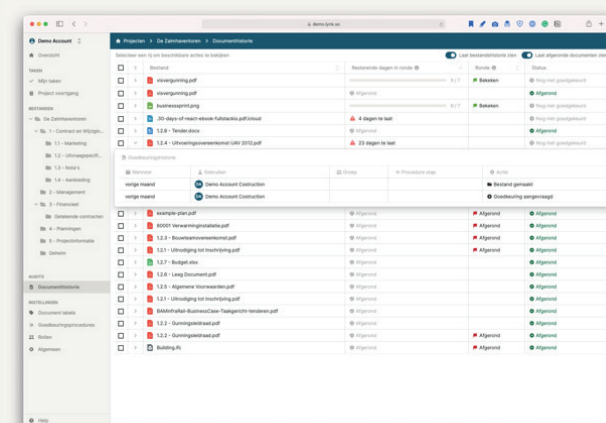


Figure 6 Lynk, approval flow overview

The project taskboard can be used to create task overview for teams. Tasks can be assigned to people and linked to documents. Bringing them together to create a projectbacklog -who did what? (Figure 8).

The personal task board received tasks from the approvalflows, ask for review, project taskboard and comments in PDFs (Figure 10).

IFC files (BIM 3D models) can be viewed right in the platform (Figure 9).

PDF's can be opened, annotated and commented live in the platform. Comments can be assigned to people (Figure 11).

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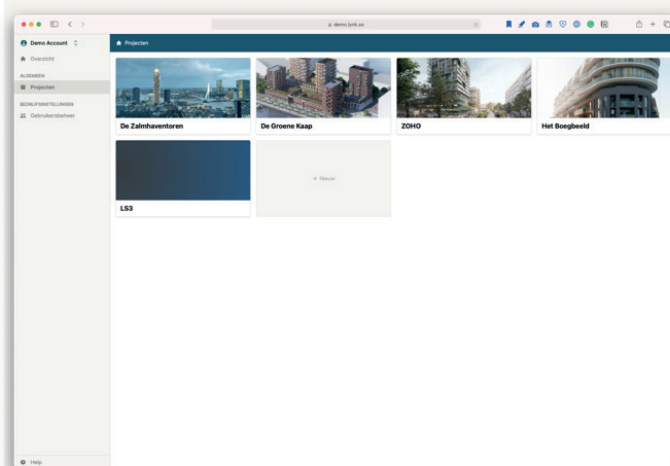


Figure 7 Lynk, Project taskboard

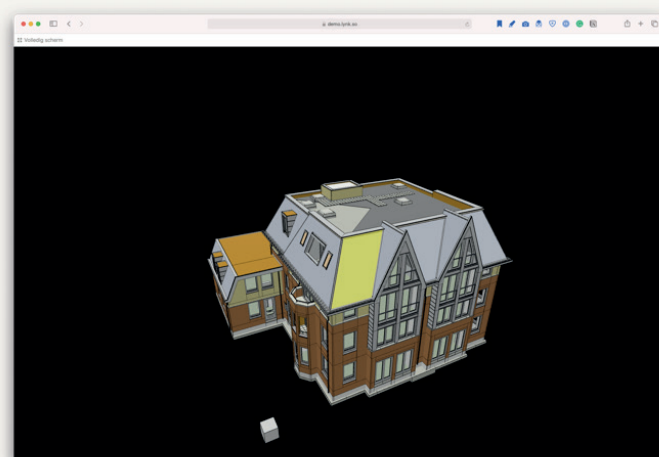


Figure 9 Lynk, IFC viewer

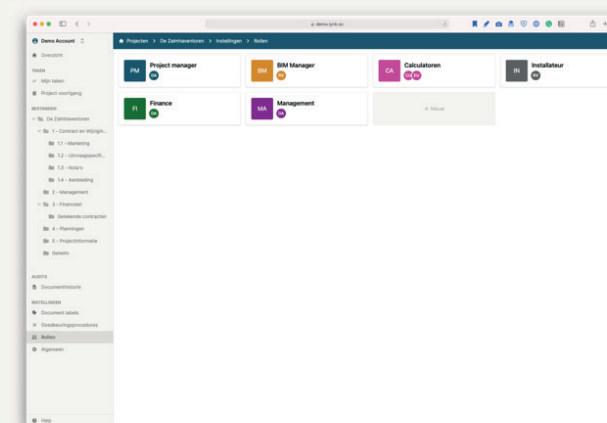


Figure 3 Lynk, roles dashboard

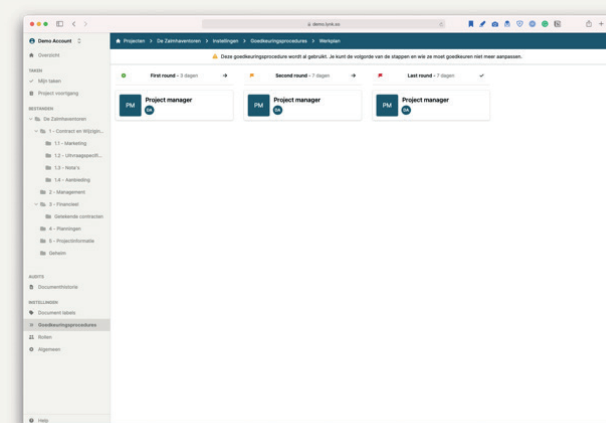


Figure 5 Lynk, custom approval flow configurator

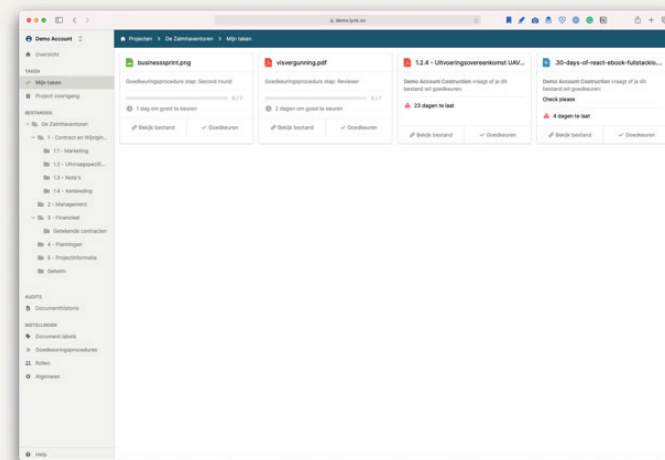


Figure 8 Lynk, Personal taskboard

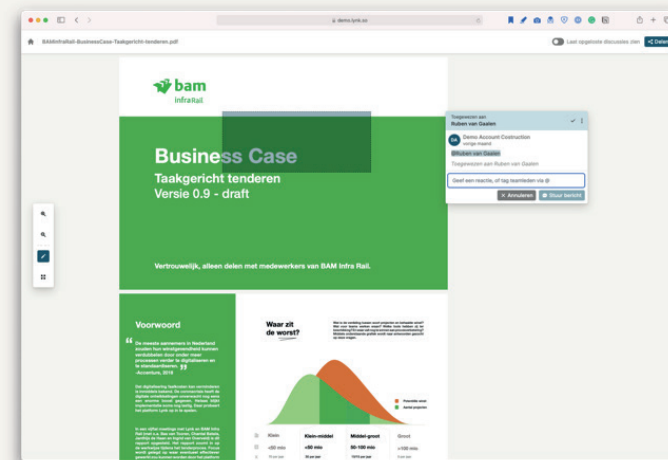


Figure 10 Lynk, PDF annotator

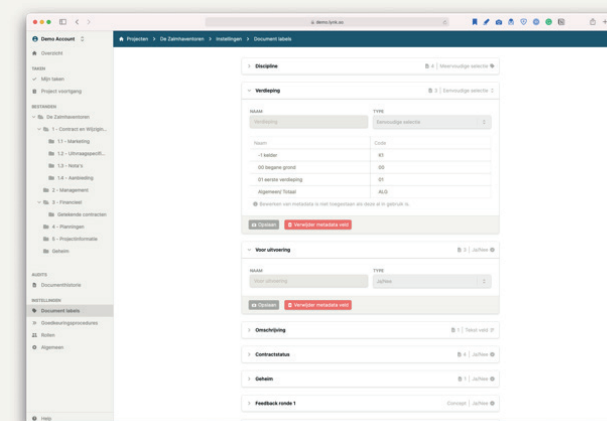


Figure 4 Lynk, custom labels dashboard

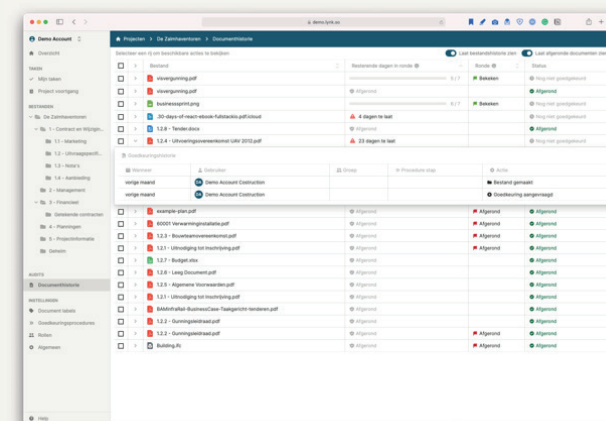
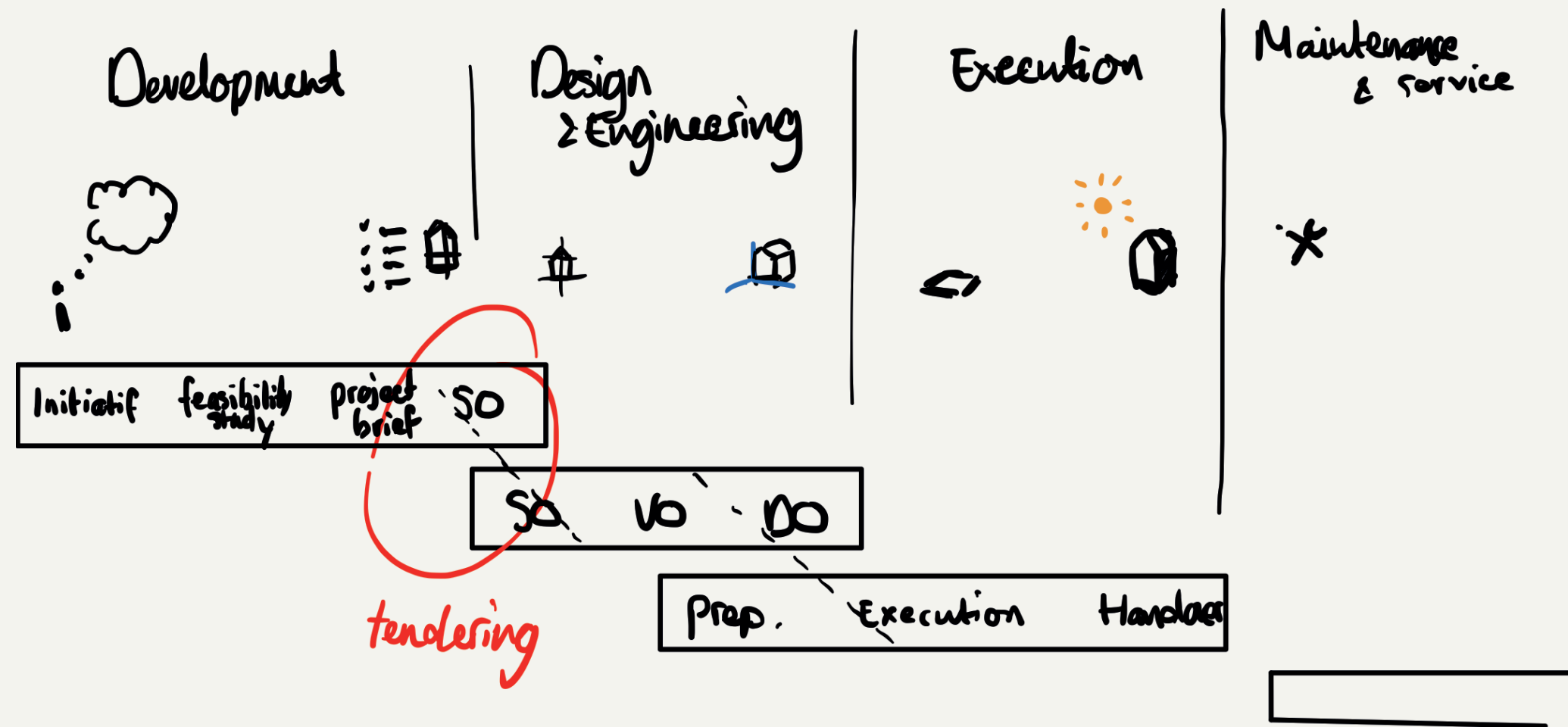


Figure 6 Lynk, approval flow overview

# II. Construction process

The construction process is characterised by four stages, 1) development, where ideas are turned into project requirements (and sometimes a sketch design), 2) Design & engineering, where the project brief is translated into specified design, 3) Execution, where the files are prepared for execution forwarded to the construction site and actually build and handed over to the buyer, 4) maintenance & service of the building.





# III. Initial brand positioning

## 4C analysis

### Customer

Project coordinators  
 "Je draagt zorg voor een tijdige inkoop(voorbereiding) en coördineert en controleert vervolgens de werk- en productietekeningen. Hierbij heb je een scherp zicht op tijd, budget, kwaliteit en veiligheid." Project coordinator vacature omschrijving.

Project owners, setting up projects and needing to delegate certain tasks, files in many different forms.

User: Teammembers of project coordination, Tender Management, Werkvoorbereiders, BIM managers.

In different types of companies, and sectors for that sake.

Can we segment on project size?

Companies that are using Office 365, sharepoint. Or the G-suite.

### Context

Construction shifting to more digital workflows. BIM for building files, design, simulation, everything in between.

There are many specific powerful tools made for construction needs, such as Solibri, 12Build, KYP etc.

O365 or G-suite for standard office documents such as sheets word documents, sheets and presentations.

Different workflows, different working function in different programs. The digital world has become a mess.

A missing glue between the silo's.

## 4C analysis

### Competitor

There are plenty of softwares available in the market. From complete standalone suits to software per task. On average the market is lacking behind in UX/usability. Next to the overload in functions and usability.

Category  
 Office 365 has many, many features. So much that it becomes complex and unuserfriendly. A full FTE is needed to develop the environment and get the most out of the environment. Sharepoint is not only for documents, but also news, communication etc. This results in confusion and fog in use.

Other PMS/DMS systems, such as Docstream, Acconex and 4Projects use their own storage and are standalone programmes. This reduces the usability with documents themselves, such as documents need to be downloaded before they can be worked upon. Furthermore these programme's lack usability and are previous generation architecture.

Generic  
 OneDrive, GoogleDrive, Dropbox and such have the possibility to share files. They give tools for folder sharing, or document sharing. They do not provide the functionalities to manage flows and more complex projects. These should always be accompanied with excel, or any other way to manage this.

Other Work/Project management systems such as Asana, Atlassian are also in this field of competition.

Budget  
 Pen and paper, post-its, notes app in phones etc.

### Company

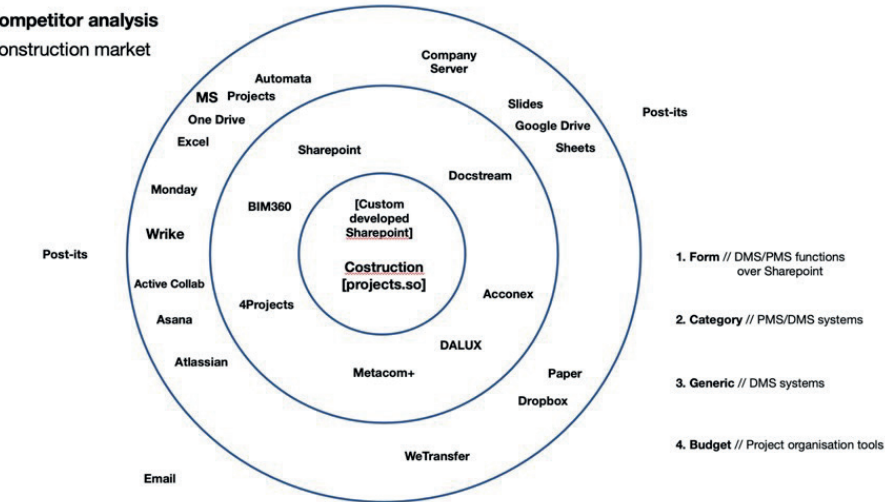
Young innovative group. Very tech driven.

Developers

Data-scientist

Designers

## Competitor analysis Construction market



## User stories

### old

#### Tender manager | DMS, email & meetings

Een tender wordt gezien op tendernet, de tender wordt bekeken op relevantie door een kernteam. Wanneer de tender wordt goedgekeurd, wordt een tender inschrijving ingericht. Hiervoor worden meerdere experts, mogelijk intern en extern, samengebracht om een voorstel voor het project te schrijven.

Er wordt intern bij het bedrijf een nieuwe projectfolder aangemaakt, een plan wordt gemaakt voor het schrijven van de tender en gedeeld onder de schrijvers van de tender.

Gedurende het schrijven van de tender moeten verschillende delen gecontroleerd worden door meerdere partijen. Dit wordt over de mail met elkaar gedeeld, over elkaar heen om goedkeuring op verschillende aspecten te krijgen.

De organisatie rond het document kan wat verwarrend worden, revisie beheer moet aandachtig gedaan worden om fouten te voorkomen.

Er wordt een eind document samengesteld, nogmaals rondgestuurd voor een laatste controle en uiteindelijk ingediend.

### new

#### Tender manager | Space, project, tasks & flows

Een tender wordt gezien op tendernet, de tender wordt bekeken op relevantie door een kernteam. Wanneer de tender wordt goedgekeurd, wordt een tender inschrijving ingericht. Hiervoor worden meerdere experts, mogelijk intern en extern, samengebracht om een voorstel voor het project te schrijven.

Een Spaces project wordt aangemaakt, en ingericht om met de benodigde interne en externe partijen samen te brengen rond de tender. Er wordt gezamenlijk een plan gemaakt en omgezet in taken binnen spaces, hier worden eigenaren en tijd deadlines aan gehangen.

Gedurende het schrijven van de tender worden verschillende delen gecontroleerd door meerdere partijen. Wanneer een taak gecontroleerd moet worden, kan deze door een documenten goedkeurings flow gestuurd worden binnen spaces.

Er wordt gezamenlijk gewerkt aan meerdere documenten, revisie beheer wordt automatisch door spaces gedaan, waardoor er minder dubbele documenten zijn en communicatie gemakkelijker wordt.

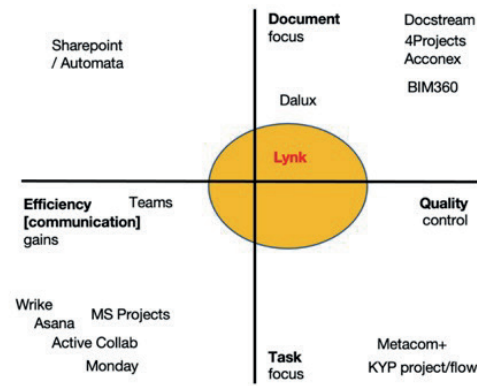
Wanneer de tender draft geschreven is, wordt er een eind document samengesteld, nogmaals door iedereen gecontroleerd en uiteindelijk ingediend.

**Positioning Market segmentation**

There are plenty of softwares available in the market. Software to help manage tasks, work, or to store and work on files. The merger is rare. Furthermore there is no 'workspace' for coordinating projects, tasks and files combined yet.

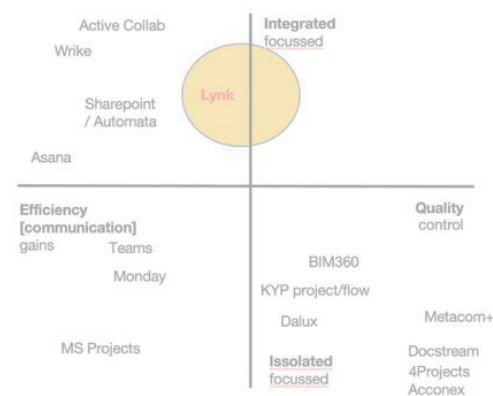
**Document - task | Communication - Quality**

Bringing together improved quality control, and communication efficiency, and bringing together document and task foci. This combination does not exist yet.



**Platform | Quality**

Lynk is a platform on which you connect your DMS system. Through Lynk it becomes easier to coordinate communication and quality control jobs.



**Brand DNA [spaces / construction // the cloud-based collaboration space]**

**Lynk makes embedding quality control into your workflow intuitive.**

Accessible and secure cloud workspaces for projects, collaborate effortlessly both internally and with your customers. Effortlessly embed quality assurance into your workflow and get a grip on your papertrail with tasks, approval flows and comments. Powerful task management, aligning and coordinating your team on the jobs at hand.

Lynk gives your team and partners the assurance to effortlessly work together and realize the best work you have ever done.

<b>Spaces</b>	<b>for teams</b>	easy collaboration
<b>Flows</b>	<b>for documents</b>	quality control
<b>Tasks</b>	<b>for people</b>	coordinating jobs at hand
<b>Tools</b>	<b>for documents</b>	empower documents [ifc viewer]

Brings together documents, flows and tasks to make collaboration and quality control easy.

**Purpose**  
We believe it takes a bit of *magic* to realize the best project you have done.



**Positioning**  
Lynk offers cloud-based collaboration spaces that are accessible and secure, embed quality control in your workflow, align teams and give the assurance to realize your next best project.

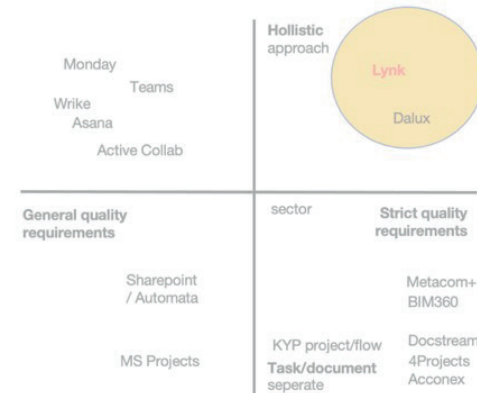
**Personality**  
Clear, approachable, innovative, smart, ruler archetype

**Positioning Market segmentation**

There are plenty of softwares available in the market. Software to help manage tasks, work, or to store and work on files. The merger is rare. Furthermore there is no 'workspace' for coordinating projects, tasks and files combined yet. As Kevin called it, 'Taakgericht-DMS'

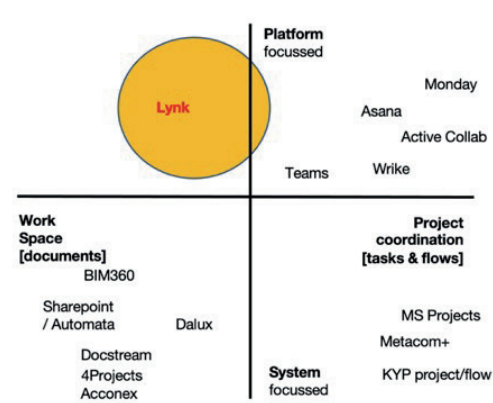
**Perspective | Quality requirements**

Competitors focus either on general office use, or strict requirement market sectors such as construction. Also the hollistic approach with documents and tasks merged is relative new and not every offering has this.



**Work coordination | Communication - Quality**

Construction offers customers the possibility to coordinate projects, make files accessible to partners, and control document flows. It attaches to other products [platform] and supports the coordination in the workspace.



**Brand Polarity**

How does lynk give you a competitive advantage?

[By providing an easy way to setup a secure collaboration space with your partners.] too much in sharepoint space

By providing an intuitive way to manage quality control through flows.

By providing an integrated way of merging tasks and documents.

Team collaboration in **spaces**

Quality control with easy to tailor **flows**

Work coordination with **tasks**

**Effortless & intuitive**  
[intuitive UX/UI]



**Secure**  
[API based]

**Control and**  
[quality assurance, communicate and follow the Papertrail]

**lynk makes**

- Teamwork more powerful and intuitive
- Quality control easy to embed into your workflow
  - Following the papertrail easy
- Creating a secure and accessible project environment easy



# IV. Product advantage assessment

## (Project) development,

Introduction, development activities are about setting the initial condition for a project to exist. Arranging project goals, finance, timeline and managing the initial partner execution. Project development teams might create the tender brief, on which Tendering contractors answer, or provide the initial brief for internal design & engineering teams to start their work. Furthermore, they guard the progress and quality of delivered work by contractors.

Targeted roles, Business Controllers, Lawyer

### Core JTBD,

- > Project developer: determining project boundary conditions at the start of a project (contracts)
- > Project developer: researching project partners, to be able to create the right offering
- > Project developer: managing legal obligations and environment permits of the project context
- > Contract manager: warrant and guard project progress in relation to contract agreements

### Challenges,

Contracts are agreements made between different parties. They are binding and should be guarded. Managing these agreements over different projects can be a complex job, because of the embeddedness of the agreements.

"Right now I have no way to quickly see within contracts and find upcoming due dates or indexes. I rely on my own notes, and have to go through contracts if I need to find something." P12. Business Controller

Contract negotiators are different people than the ones who warrant and guard them, this might result in a knowledge gap, which results in contracts not warranted, agreements missed.

"Problems arise due to lack of due diligence within the

company's processes. Contract negotiator, and contract manager have a different understanding of what the contract says" P19. Senior Lawyer

### Competitive alternatives,

Currently excel sheets are used to do practically everything.

The problem is that this creates copies of information, if new contracts come in, information from within the contracts need to be written down in several excels. If the information within that contract needs to be altered, the information in all excels need to be updated.

Each team member now makes separate notes of contracts, in their own way and space. This is great for personal use, but information is lost between team members and might create differences in understanding.

"I would like to make annotations WITHIN contracts. This will help me to be able to take action based on rich contextual contract information" P12. Business Controller

"The CFO knows all about our contracts, but if he goes that knowledge is lost and we would have real trouble." P12. Business Controller

Furthermore Excel does not create linked information. Meaning as the business controller means to say, he has no quick way to jump from the overview dashboard, into specific contract clauses.

Excel is an extremely free tool, which users like because it gives them the possibility to play around with the data.

In one of the interviews, an engineer prospect was probed about how they managed their contract workflow and noted that, "If you fix something for contract management that would be great, the process is a mess atm. PDF's are not really accessible in SharePoint or Teams." P11. New Business Director. Although not a clear goal, it did point to more potential challenges.

## Tenders,

Introduction, Tenders are the start of larger projects. Companies through tenders make a bid that captures their project proposal and through it win projects that the company can then execute. Tenders are competitive, have a high time pressure and set the ground for coming projects. Tenders are essential to companies that acquire new projects through bids (tenders). They are the lifeline of these companies. Continuous improvement, through optimization and problem tackling, is an important strategy for companies to improve their bottom line. Being able to write tenders 'sharper' and 'faster' is a competitive advantage for construction companies.

Tenders are about quickly analysing a dense information package -which is handed over by the customer to all participants-, 'making it own' and then writing a competitive proposal. It requires tight teamwork, since tenders usually last between 4-12 weeks, and are made with a team 4-20.

Targeted roles, Tender directors, Tender Manager, Project Engineer, Planners, Experts (e.g. legal, construction).

### Core JTBD,

- >Tender directors: Determine what tenders to write proposals for
- >Tender managers: Manage risks and opportunities to determine requirements that outline the proposal.
- >Tender managers: Coordinating work between team members and manage project progress.
- >Project engineers: Analyse incoming documents to determine clarifications and requirements.
- >Project engineers: Gather clarifications for question rounds.
- >Project engineers: Engineer out project details and deliver reports.

### Current challenges,

"The problem with a tender is that you get a WeTransfer with more than 100 folders full of files. You want to translate that directory to your own system. That is where the crux lies. In large projects you have a Project Controller, someone who translates all incoming documents, with their notes/comments. Maintaining the overview in communication and comments is critical. In smaller projects the overview is lacking." P4. Head of ICT

"Now, everybody is hobbying en does their work in their own way. We have to get back together on the highway, even though everyone might have their own exit." P5. Tender Director

"In tenders, it's always about requirements. You can interpret them differently. That could mean you take longer, or budget more engineering work, or more procurement. Misalignment is the source of Tender problems." P8. Project engineer

"You also want to roll out this structure in smaller [tender] projects. Right now you just skip a lot of things, it's more on gut feeling. Timesaving won't be the predominant improvement, you will be more in control, reduce failure cost. It will help you tender more precisely." P6. Tender Manager

Every team member has their own work method, and a shared workspace is lacking. This results in communication mistakes, missed understanding, which influences the 'sharpness' of the proposal, because of misinterpreted requirements. Impacting the bottom line. P5, 6, 8.

"Managing clarifying questions in a tender can be a frustrating job. I have to go through all the separate documents and gather questions in an Excel file... This takes me quite some time [2-3 days]" P8. Project Engineer

Shitty, frustrating job to manage clarifications, which costs a lot of time, and thus reduces the time available to the project engineers. If done habhasordously, missed clarifications can mean less sharp proposals, missed opportunities and double work due. P8

"I see overlap [between Lynk] with the targets within



## Product advantage assessment

[company] to tender more cheaply, and increase our digital capabilities (control) to improve and reduce failure costs" P6. Tender Manager

### Competitive alternatives

These teams live in the Microsoft Office workflow. Teams as central collaboration hub, reading all pdf documents offline, making notes in OneNote/Word/Excel.

Excel is used to make Readings lists, Tasks lists, Planning, Clarifications registers... Well practically everything is done in excel.

Using Excel mainly for notetaking, and analysing documents creates a lot of administrative work. In a project where time pressure is already high, and the devil is in the details this results in lower quality work. Excel does offer a very flexibel way of working, and a document that can be shared around.

Teams is starting to play a key role for construction companies, as more and more are transitioning to use it as their central workspace connecting it to OneDrive.

### Design/Engineering,

Introduction, engineers translate project requirements into specified designs. Through continuous iterative loops, engineers detail the designs, until finally ready for execution. Engineering projects take months to years, and span teams from a few to 100's of people. But the companies Lynk talked to span from 6-60 people.

Targeted roles, BIM Managers, Head of ICT

#### Core JTBD,

> Engineers: Translate requirements into specified designs.

> Engineers: Review work with colleagues, to warrant the quality of the work.

#### Challenges,

Detailing the design of a building requires a lot of specifying. Integrating the knowledge of multiple disciplines: such as structural-, heating & ventilation-, electrical engineering. Streamlining this process is a challenge, as each works with their own suite, and also spans different organisations. To help this complex collaboration process BIM has been invented. It is the standard 3D file format, that combines all the different types of aspects within a building, into one file and format.

"[Files go through multiple fases, on which many disciplines work] In the end all dimensions are added, the file has 150 versions. Version 30 was Preliminary Design, 80 Technical Design." P3. BIM Manager

Furthermore, warranting the quality of the work, and constantly improving the information hand-over between phases is a challenge. With each hand-over knowledge is lost, which increases the chance for failures and errors.

"You want to create synergies between different teams and disciplines. My vision is to see task and information more in processes. How does x contribute to y?. BIM is helping us to reduce information loss already in this direction." P1. BIM Manager

"Everything is in BIM360 now. Modelling is done in Revit, files in BIM360, with Workflows and Issue tracking all integrated. Next to that we are integrating our internal [Azure] DMS with BIM360, this will help us connect financial reports with contracts. And make document templates accessible." P4. Head of ICT

### Competitive alternatives

Large contractors use the complete suite from Autodesk in their workflow, this provides both Design and Document management software.

"I do not see the added value [of Lynk] compared to BIM360 with Approval Flows. The integration between the engineering flow, Azure is a big project with many stakes." P4. Head of ICT

For communication in BIM models, designers/contractors love Solibri & BIM collab. They offer Model Checking and Class detection.

"Solibri & BIMcollab are great. Solibri for Model Checking, and BIMcollab for Issue Tracking. Afterwards files are imported to Dalux through screenshots." P3. BIM Manager

"Making quick notes on PDF's is nice, but issue tracking is done in BIMcollab and works great for us." P1. BIM Manager

Teams is, as in Tender teams, as in other General Contractors flow taking a central space with Document Management as it is integrated with OneDrive.

### Execution,

The construction project has been designed, engineered, and now needs to be built (executed). Oftentimes there is a continuous handover between engineering teams and execution teams, files are prepared and communicated with the right parties (sub-contractors such as plumbers or electricians). The execution team has responsibility for managing the actual construction, its safety, planning and warrant quality. Execution (construction) projects can span months, or years and require the contracting of many sub-contractors. In this phase amount of stakeholders exponentially grows depending on the size of the project.

Targeted roles, BIM Manager, Project coordinators, work planners, sub-contractors

#### Core JTBD,

> Project coordinators, coordinate work of stakeholders on the construction site.

> Work planners, prepare documents for execution on the construction site.

> BIM Manager, manage 3D model of building to facilitate project progress

> Sub-contractors, construct project [sub-job] as assigned by general contractor

Challenges, getting the BIM (3D model) on the construction site.

"You know we have to solve real issues. Software should help us get all this embedded data from the BIM model on the construction site." P18. BIM Manager

"Failure costs not getting the right drawing in the hands of the right person, at the right time. Instead of printing, a digital version of the file is always up to date." P3. BIM Manager

### Competitive alternatives,

Autodesk, BIM360, BIM360 Field. Larger contractors

## Product advantage assessment

might have the complete autodesk suite which offers a Field application with which files are made more accessible on the construction site.

Dalux Field is a fast growing scaleup, that is relatively new in the Dutch market. Earlier in 2019 the Lynk team did not hear about this product from customers. But the product is gaining quick market share with some of the larger General Contractors.

"[We chose] Dalux because of WKW [law requiring construction companies to document as-designed & as-built building plans], but also to get BIM to the construction site. How can we get a digital drawing cabinet? Big part to do WKW" P1. BIM Manager

"We have found our dream DMS with Dalux. It is helping us get BIM on the construction site. Also all the subcontractors are enthusiastic about it." P3. BIM Manager

Product advantage, Lynk is not focussing 100% on execution atm. Dalux is. There is no product advantage compared to Dalux. Apart from system integration, where Dalux does not connect to SharePoint/OneDrive Lynk does.

### Consulting,

Introduction, advisory roles in larger projects for customers. Consulting projects are smaller projects that focus on generating new knowledge from relatively small briefs. Consulting can have a broad range, from design to engineering. Mostly engaged earlier in the overall construction process, where boundary conditions are not fully defined yet and little engineering has been done. Consultants through their work can help research the initial conditions of a project, or through expert engineering (for example structural engineering) help define the project in the design/engineering phase. Teams are mostly highly educated and are able to arrange their own work process, and tool setup.

Targeted roles, Consultant, Project Engineer.

### Core JTBD,

- > Research relevant new information, to be able to generate new knowledge.
- > Generate new knowledge, by bringing in own expertise.
- > Review work with colleagues, to warrant the quality of the work.
- > Make documentation (and presentation), to transfer created knowledge.

### Challenges,

in consulting work mostly reside in the complexity of research and engineering work done by the consultants.

"Complexity of the job, and gains, mostly reside in the engineering work itself. Projects are relatively short." P9. Consultant

Guaranteeing excellent work as output is important. Strict work checks & controls processes have been put up that have to be executed by team members.

"We follow the eighth eyes principle. Before a document is

sent out to the customer, it is first checked by a controller, then by the secretary's office (translated to company design) and finally checked by the project manager." P10. Project Engineer

"Every document is internally reviewed, within the team, by the project manager and then it is shared with the customer who also does an internal review round." P9. Consultant

### Competitive alternatives,

Consultancies have strict company processes -within documents & E-mail- that integrate the quality control process and approvals. These processes are company code, are thought to new employees and need to be met.

Teams is a central player again. But next to a communication hub that has files, tasks are also more widely used in consultancy teams. These are both easy to use, plug-and-play in current workflow, and simple, just simple task list that can be assigned to people -from that channel-.

Excel is also used to make checklists and plannings. Flexible in its use and unobtrusive.

# V. Sales assessment

## B2B selling assessment

### Navigating the buying centre

Apart from intensity, the focus is vital to close deals effectively. The founder sales team needs to learn to navigate the buying centre of their customers.

As B2B products have multiple stakeholders who influence the decision-making process, but not all are equal. Therefore, leads should be qualified to assess both problem-knowledge fit and influence on the decision making process. Sales should aim to understand user needs, align with technical buyer requirements and persuade a compelling business case to financial buyers. The sales team should aim to get an internal coach who can provide inside information and create support for adoption within each company.

As with intensity, due to the broad range of segments targeted a wide range of buying centres, roles and buying influencers is reached out to. This inhibits Lynk to develop a sales roadmap of whom to target with what. As each segment has completely different jobs, and each is looking for something else. But to analyse Lynk's practices still, the segments defined in the previous chapter are used to analyse the qualification of the leads Lynk approached and assess how they navigate the buying centre's.

**Project (real estate) development** had a small target group, focusing on users and decision-maker influencers. As these companies, and project teams, are smaller the user and decision-maker are the same.

"Well, I and the CFO whom I work with make the decision together" P12. Business Controller

The tender sales process focussed on Mid-line managers and users, e.g. Tender Director, Managers and Project Engineering, but did not influence the final decision-maker. As the Tender Managers are responsible for running smooth Tenders and are occupied with it entirely, they carry no responsibility and direct benefit for implementing new tools into their workflow. Furthermore,

no significant trend such as BIM seems to be influencing this sector.

"Yes, this sounds in line with our strategic targets. To improve and make tenders more effective" P6. Tender Manager

But in the end, the Tender Manager at P6 did not have a say to make the pilot a go. Nor did he 'pull' to get the product implemented.

**Engineering & Execution**, sales process focussed on Innovation people e.g. BIM Managers, IT Director these are both the managers of the users, heavy influencers of the purchase decision or final decision-makers. As the construction sector is going through the BIM transition, BIM managers/directors are made responsible for researching and implementing new software innovations that can help push the digital capabilities of construction organisations in the implementation of BIM.

"It is my job to integrate BIM and improve our processes, learn about our processes and find the right solutions to improve them." P1. BIM Manager

Although they are heavy influencers, not all are the final decision maker.

"Now we like this software [Dalux]. It is just extremely expensive, I just have to convince the director" P3. BIM Manager

"If we [Project coordinator, BIM Manager & Head of Development] like the software, we present it to the Director, who will discuss it with the board. Then we get the final yes." P2. Head of Development

In the consulting segment [engineering firms], Lynk contacted users and managers. These stakeholders could determine their workflow but were not the final decision-makers for company standards. While teams are free to choose their tools, they might be hesitant still to deviate from company standards.

"We are free to choose the tools that we like" P9.

Consultant

Some consultancies were stricter and offered a predetermined workflow with tools.

"We have all our projects on the company N:drive [Network drive], next to that we use Mail and Teams a lot. The larger projects are now being tested with SharePoint." P10. Consultant

Apart from the wide cast net, Lynk does not explicitly categorise their contact's as types of buyers and their influence on the decision making process. Explicitly qualifying customers will be an essential improvement to help navigate the buying centre. But also to label the feedback gathered from customers and more reliable inform Strategy and Development.

### Differentiative offer

After the right person is targeted, understanding Lynk's customer focussed co-founders should understand the customer's personal wins and business results they are hoping to achieve. A sales proposition should be made that 1) helps the customer create a personal win, 2) helps to improve the business process from current to the desired state. If no fit between the two can be seen, no sales proposition should be made, and the sales aborted.

In this step, positioning and personal sales skills come into play. Dissecting the successfulness of the step, therefore, is a bit more complex as data is mingled. Here we will examine the sales results by comparing Ruben and Roy's results. Ruben is the one who has closed more often with a positive response (4/7 over 0/4). Ruben contacted more Tender teams, which might show a positive effect as more product advantage was seen in that segment. But next to that, Ruben took more meetings with each successful proposition. In total, six meetings were held with P5, and four meetings with P6. In these meetings, a broad range of stakeholders was involved, from Tender Director to Project Engineer. In the conversations, Ruben adjusted the proposition to meet the companies their own goals. Having focussed on Tenders, and taking more time to talk to buying influencers people within the company while adjusting the proposition in every meeting to the people present in that meeting. Seen in for example, P6's

response.

Whereas Roy, for example, in the P2 meeting, did not gather enough information to make a fitting proposition (see autoethnographic text 2 at the end of this section).

In terms of the number of successful closes, the effect of product advantage comes into play. Where Lynk has more positive responses in Tenders (3 = p5,6,8) and project Development (though, n=1 == 0. While in the design & engineering phase and execution phase fewer positive responses are received (0 = P1,2,3,4,5,7). The sales results show that there is more pull in Development and Tenders than Design/Engineering and Execution.

### Doing things that don't scale

Throughout the process of acquiring first customers founders should put extra emphasis on 'doing things that don't scale. As startup you have are less reliable, trustworthy and have a lacking reputation this needs to be countered. This can be done by for example, offering benefits and services that are only possible in the early phases because of heavy costs and involvement by the founders.

Overall Lynk has done little things that don't scale. Apart from the intense sales effort, the mantra internally is to focus on doing things that do scale, are repeatable and usable in other situations. No offering to customers that show Lynk will go the extra mile has been made. For example, "We will work alongside you in a tender for 6 weeks if necessary". Lynk does offer customers to help help install the software and train employees, but that is pretty standard.

Although it might sound counter-intuitive, doing things that don't scale can help to close the deal, create closer relationships with its first customers and to gain in-depth customer and product knowledge. Lynk can improve this, by understanding what is holding back customers from trying the product and make an offer which won't scale to try to get them over the line and try out the product.

## Sales practice assessment

### B2B selling assessment Navigating the buying centre

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# VI. Launch plan evaluation

## Tender evaluation

The following quotes show the evaluation of the positioning, adoption friction and sales roadmap. Two new prospects were reached out to, and three customers sales conversations continued. For the new customers, the new discovery focussed approach was used (chapter 6). Insights are evaluated on the basis of Positioning evaluation (based on positioning designed in chapter 4), adoption friction (showing any underlying blockers to the adoption of the product), and sales roadmap (insights regarding who to target, and how).

## Positioning evaluation

Progression of ongoing sales conversations, and the response of new customers on the problem based pitch evaluated that there is a hot, valuable problem. In short; the amount of administrative work (managing clarifications, and requirements, and analysing all documents and revisions), while needing to analyse details is a common problem.

Lynk does try to solve, all problems to make a compelling offer; coordination of tasks, analysis of incoming documents, and clarification management into a 'Workspace'. This results in some adoption friction.

## Decision maker value proposition evaluation

Companies appreciate the user centred proposition of Lynk, and resonates with them. One Tender Director suggested that, "[Lynk] could create a flywheel effect of savings that help my people spend more of their bright minds on valuable work, and make their life a bit more fun." Tender Director P6-3.

## The information overload problem

As mentioned earlier the information overload in Tenders is challenging. But depending on the client of the tender project it can be bad, or horrible. As P23 told, "New versions of documents were send over... no clue what was new. I spend hours comparing files" and of course in the limit time there is to writing a proposal, the Tender engineer told "[Writing a proposal] turns into guessing game" P23.

Specifically managing requirements for a project is something no clear guideline or tool exists for. One new tender manager declaring that he was "Still looking for the best way, have a meeting about it tomorrow again" P8-1.

The relation between managing the analysis of the documents, clarifications between documents, and managing requirements is evaluated as the key problem. "When it is a guessing game, you of course are not able to write an effective proposal" P23, same as earlier mentioned by P8.

The consequences can be worse than just losing a tender. "It is even worse, you win tenders on the basis of misinformation... that is the starting point of failure costs" P4-2

These quotes highlight the core problem from different sources. Lynk's current feature set, with the PDF annotator, and viewer tabs tries to solve this problem, and customers do as we have seen see the potential value in them.

## Adoption friction

Sales conversations with companies progressed as they saw the added value of the product to their processes. Customers considered Lynk more deeply, and evaluated the fit for implementation. This has started to bring forward more factors that influence the product launch, as one customer cancelled a pilot, while another rejected further conversations due to lack of focus on tenders by them. The underlying groups evaluate some of the recurring and clustered insights regarding blockers to adoption.

## Perceived risks and need for security

In the sales conversation with P6 the tender team was enthusiastic about the product and possible value, but one critical breaking point in their decision not to adapt was data security.

Their IT manager explained, "On our internal SharePoint no external vendors are added. It is just not allowed. Adding a shell is a no-go for us at the moment. It is also difficult to manage with rights structure managed internally in our SharePoint/Azure environment" P6.

Due to a hack a year earlier they turned up their security requirements. Furthermore, high security requirements were necessary due to the perceived value of the information processed in a tender process "[security and vigilance is needed] definitely on these types of documents where we discuss new projects with customers. The organisations is extra reserved" IT Manager P6.

SaaS delivery brings extra perceived risks and need for security chapter 2.4 showed. These quotes emphasize the customers perspective on the risks associated with Tender information, and Lynk. The connection with SharePoint was thought to create extra accessibility and ease of use, but in this case it creates security risks that is a dealbreaker.

## Costly implementation due to routinisation of work

Changing workflow is frustrating and expensive for Tender teams. As Directors and head managers shared their view on change, and implementing new digital products.

"My calculation team had to change their workflow slightly, and they really hated it. I will be more careful next time implementing a tool that 'saves time' but is a extra burden for my team" it all comes down to the expertise and specific workflows people have and the setting that they have to operate in "their workflow [calculators] is rhythmic and they rely on being able to quickly provide answers" Tender Director P6-3.

"It primarily is a culture thing [holding back change]. Even with Teams, people can work in the exact same way as on the N-drive. You still, and again, need to explain why things are done differently" BIM Manager P5-2

"It is the thick middle layer in the sector, they say we have been doing it like this for 100 years and it works" Head Information Management, P4-3

Implementing new ways of working, is because of these reasons costly in construction projects. The current product design as full work suite requires a radical change of work approach for the users. In the sense that they can't use their File explorer, or current work method. They have to start working from Lynk. For the end user, this is experienced as dramatic and Tender Directors have to guard their team for too much change. Even if the added value of a new tools is big.

## Unclear solution responsibility

Implementation complexity which is why the initial broad project segment was left, also for Tenders seems to be a bottleneck. With tenders the problem is an unclear responsibility who can innovate, and in bigger corporates the responsibility for Tenders expands beyond a single company. It is not always clear who owns the innovation agenda - and thus the mandate to innovate- even though the budget might be accessible. The mandate could be the Tender Director, Data Departments or Information Managers.

The Tender Director at P6 recognising that we should have scaled up our conversation beyond his team "Lynk is broader than just [our division], so we should have gotten in touch with the responsible parent organisation earlier" Tender Director, P6-3

While at P5 the pilot agreed upon late march has not come of the ground yet due to Teams being implemented as order from higher-up. "[on orders of our parent company] Teams is being implemented, in the same water as you. I still see added value, but we might need to wait longer" P5-3

## Sales roadmap

The sales roadmap can be sharpened, and should be sharpened based on the new insights regarding buying roles, and implementation difficulty.

### Target role

Tender Director acts as economic and user buyer "If I see the value in it, I can look for a budget to innovate. If my finance guy says that budget is empty, I can move around some budgets and get it from recruiting or something." Tender Director P6-3. Furthermore, they agree on the added value.

IT Managers function as security guards and need to be convinced, "If there is value for business, we will look for ways to make it work" IT Manager P6, and P4 "We act in service of the business, first we have to determine if their is a need."

### Target organisation

Primary focus should be shifted towards organisations of which their main project income is through Tenders. As people might recognise the problem, but as P4 their main focus is not around Tenders, then the cost and risk of trying out a new work method doesn't weigh the cost.

"This is currently not our focus, so we have to decline your offer at this moment. But we might be in touch in the future" P4-2

But also, to take into account more organisation specific criteria such as their innovativeness but also financial- and organisational state.

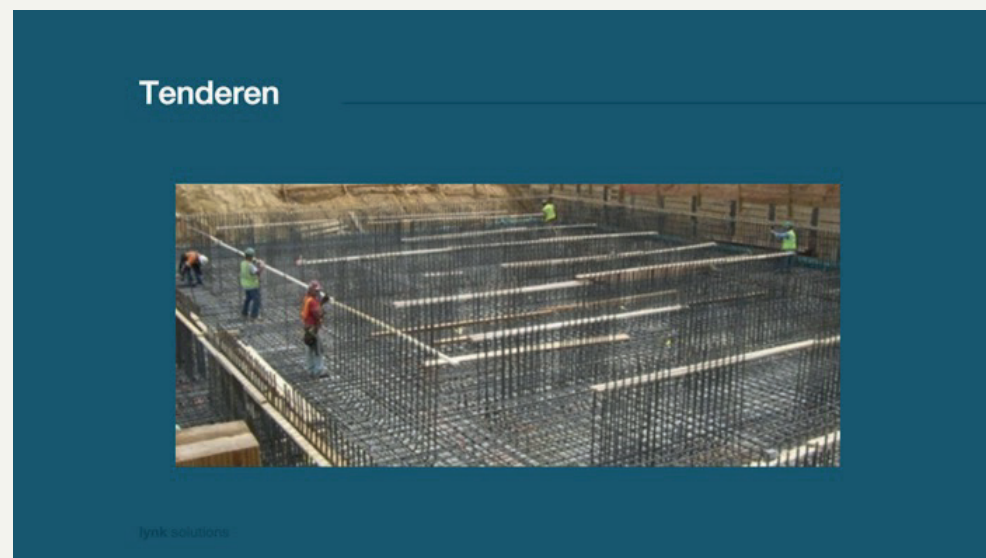
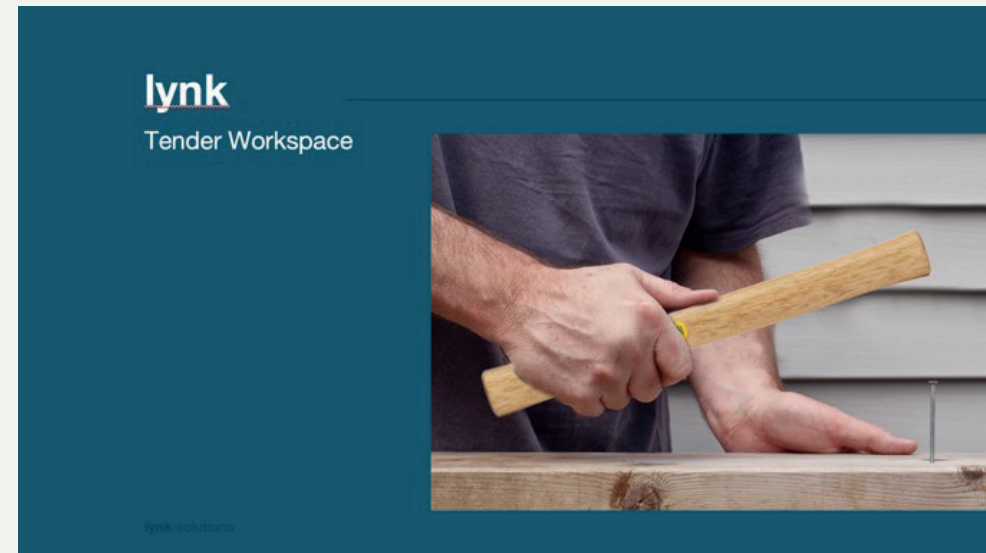
"That Lynk is the wrong product, is the wrong conclusion. It is still an interesting concept to develop further. Just our organisation is in a special time, a reorganisation and it is rethinking it's ICT strategy". Tender Manager P6-3

# VII. Customer pitch

Pitches capture the proposition from the customers point of view and take the structure of, 1) context – what is a tender anyways? 2) problem – what is the challenge? Why is this important? And what is the cause? - based on quotes, 3) proposition, positioned relative to current solutions.

a) Pitch template, Tender pitch

Some slides from the Tender pitch, same format was used for Contract Management pitch.





# VIII. Graduation brief

Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation



## Designing tactics & methods that help B2B startups develop effective Main Course go-to-market strategies

project title

Please state the title of your graduation project (above) and the start date and end date (below). Keep the title compact and simple. Do not use abbreviations. The remainder of this document allows you to define and clarify your graduation project.

start date 15 - 5 - 2021 25 - 10 - 2021 end date

### INTRODUCTION \*\*

Please describe, the context of your project, and address the main stakeholders (interests) within this context in a concise yet complete manner. Who are involved, what do they value and how do they currently operate within the given context? What are the main opportunities and limitations you are currently aware of (cultural- and social norms, resources (time, money,...), technology, ...).

Business-to-business (B2B) startups have unique challenges to overcome when developing and launching their product. Startups are all about developing their 'customer' and 'product' in an iterative and learning focussed way (Blank, 2005; Ries, 2011). The B2B market characteristic changes the practices needed to gain traction, for example; a stronger buyer-seller relationship -compared to B2C- (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995) and buying centres that influence the purchase decision (Johnston & Bonoma, 1981). Some B2B startups need the adoption of a widespread userbase within their customer's company to be successful. In other words, these startups aim for the Main course, instead of the Appetizer (Schuhmacher et al, 2018). This thesis aims to make the methods and tactics around developing an effective go-to-market strategy for B2B startups that want to enter the mainstream market, e.g. launch its product aimed at less innovative users, more tangible. With the goal to help the practice develop, by bringing theory into practice and increase the success rate of B2B startups.

This project is done in close collaboration with the B2B software startup Lynk. Lynk is designing a cloud-based project & document management platform for the construction sector, or software-as-a-service (SaaS). It has developed its first version of the product, and setting up pilots with key customers -medium-large sized general contractors in the Netherlands-. Lynk is looking to develop its go-to-market strategy and formalising its customer- and product hypothesis. It is in the need of an effective and evaluated go-to-market strategy that will drive adoption of the product, also with less innovative users in its customer's user group.

Stakeholders in this project, are a relatively small network. First off, as an SPD student, my relationship with the Master en my supervisory team is paramount, for guidance on the process, academic aspects and challenging me to work thoroughly. As co-founder of the startup Lynk, I have both freedom and mandate to execute projects. Responsibility within the startup around design and marketing lay around me, and one other co-founder. Throughout the thesis, the co-founding team of lynk should be kept up-to-date, and involved in either decision regarding implementation and sharing of knowledge generated in this thesis.

Opportunities. B2B startups that aim to launch in the mainstream market, getting adoption can be especially challenging. Generating knowledge on how these startups might overcome barriers could prove valuable. To guard this outcome, relevance for practice should be taken into account when creating deliverables from this thesis.

Limitations. Launch strategies and B2B marketing are large fields of literature. Special attention should be paid to scope the project. Second, being in the startup context makes that limited resources are available for the implementation of a go-to-market strategy -before a startup is supported by serious funding-. A way to attain cheap traction, adoption, is one of the key challenges and success factors of any startup and thus makes effective, practical knowledge extra valuable.

Regarding the stakeholder network, some extra effort will need to be put in to compensate for the lack of internal knowledge within the small startup. Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic is still going on, a large part -if not all- parts of this thesis will be done digitally with less chance to meet people in person. Because of this, most of the research and testing will need to be conducted online. But this also opens up possibilities of other ways of working and reaching out further than normally possible.

Blank, S.: The Four Steps to the Epiphany. CafePress, San Mateo (2005)  
 Ries, E. (2011). The lean startup: How today's entrepreneurs use continuous innovation to create radically successful businesses. Currency.  
 Håkansson, H., & Snehota, I. (1995). Developing relationships in business networks. London: routledge.  
 Johnston, W. J., & Bonoma, T. V. (1981). The buying center: structure and interaction patterns. Journal of marketing, 45(3), 143-156.  
 Schuhmacher, M. C., Kuester, S., & Hultink, E. J. (2018). Appetizer or Main Course: Early Market vs. Majority Market Go-to-Market Strategies for Radical Innovations. Journal of product innovation management, 35(1), 106-124.

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Initials & Name R. de Groot Student number 4749057

Title of Project Developing tactics & methods that help B2B startups design effective Main course go-to-market strategies

Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation



### PROBLEM DEFINITION \*\*

Limit and define the scope and solution space of your project to one that is manageable within one Master Graduation Project of 30 EC (= 20 full time weeks or 100 working days) and clearly indicate what issue(s) should be addressed in this project.

Designing an effective go-to-market strategy is essential for product success. In the B2B context, startups have to deal with unique barriers (as described in context) and some products need adoption of less innovative users, and thus need to gain adoption with mainstream users early on.

Literature and methodology that help startups navigate the uncertain phase between problem-solution fit, to shaping the product-market fit and formulating a go-to-market strategy is -especially for the B2B context- lacking. Knowledge about how to navigate these situations are mostly accounted to sales practices, resulting in implicit knowledge that one gains through experience.

This thesis aims to make literature around go-to-market strategies, B2B marketing in relation to startup methodology more tangible. Through a case study applying the generated knowledge and translating learning into a set of methodology and tactics that can help startups design an effective go-to-market strategy to enter the mainstream market.

### ASSIGNMENT \*\*

State in 2 or 3 sentences what you are going to research, design, create and / or generate, that will solve (part of) the issue(s) pointed out in "problem definition". Then illustrate this assignment by indicating what kind of solution you expect and / or aim to deliver, for instance: a product, a product-service combination, a strategy illustrated through product or product-service combination ideas, ... . In case of a Specialisation and/or Annotation, make sure the assignment reflects this/these.

**Through a deepdive and expert interviews make the elements of an effective B2B SaaS go-to-market strategy targeting mainstream markets tangible. By applying the learnings in a case study and through reflection develop a practical tactics and methods that help B2B startups find and develop more effective go-to-market strategies in less time.**

This project is made up of three phases. Bringing together literature, design, rich context data and reflection.

The first is a deepdive and expert interviews into go-to-market strategy, B2B marketing and Startup management literature, with the goal to bring together the different fields of knowledge and to make the insights tangible and inspirational.

Second, is with the generated knowledge to design an effective go-to-market strategy for Lynk, to bring theory into practice.

Last, through reflection on the development of the go-to-market strategy for Lynk, generate tactics and methodology that other B2B startups can use to develop their own effective go-to-market strategy, in less time.

IDE TU Delft - E&SA Department /// Graduation project brief & study overview /// 2018-01 v30 Page 5 of 7

Initials & Name R. de Groot Student number 4749057

Title of Project Developing tactics & methods that help B2B startups design effective Main course go-to-market strategies



# IX. Graduation brief

## Personal Project Brief - IDE Master Graduation



### MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL AMBITIONS

Explain why you set up this project, what competences you want to prove and learn. For example: acquired competences from your MSc programme, the elective semester, extra-curricular activities (etc.) and point out the competences you have yet developed. Optionally, describe which personal learning ambitions you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project, such as: in depth knowledge a on specific subject, broadening your competences or experimenting with a specific tool and/or methodology, ... . Stick to no more than five ambitions.

#### Bulletpoints,

- Extend my knowledge from product design, to product launch.
- Bring together literature and expert knowledge into something tangible and inspirational.
- Bringing theory into practice!
- Challenge myself in phasing my mindset, deepdive, creative, all the aspects to create flow throughout my project.

#### A letter to myself,

**Past**, me has experimented with many different forms, situations around the selling and making of products. I have multiple years of experience in doing sales and was introduced to the golden circle of Simon Sinek early on. During my design education, I have experimented with visionary design in the electives to freelance strategic design projects in a Corporate at Vanderlande and Social Design during my internship at ink. What I have experienced is the large differences between these different fields of design, the different perspectives around envisioning a new product/service. From communication and brand focus to user-centred and visionary focus.

**Future**, me would like to look back at this project as a consolidation of these different experiences. Bringing together the sales mindset, corporate collaboration, startup radicality and an entrepreneurial drive. I would like to see this as the first big stepping stone towards developing my own unique flavour of design and integrated that into the innovation process of lynk. Something of a blend between marketing, user-centred, visionary and learning-driven design.

**Present**, me sees this graduation as a big step. But also, as just the bringing together of things that I have done before. In this project, I want to put some extra attention to careful planning -in which I would like to grow-, to make this graduation project a success. Take another step into understanding the product creation process, from understanding customers to the creation of the product to actually launching a product and getting it in the hands of many -happy- users. My goal is bridging the gap between idea - to launch.

### FINAL COMMENTS

In case your project brief needs final comments, please add any information you think is relevant.

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Initials & Name R. de Groot

Student number 4749057

Title of Project Developing tactics & methods that help B2B startups design effective Main course go-to-market strategies

Roy de Groot  
4749057

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## **Appendix, Master Thesis Strategic Product Design, TU Delft**