





What will future customers want from their paper?

What will future customers want in terms of paper, quality, feel and form? That is probably the industry's million dollar question and it might be an impossible one to answer. But Holmen Paper is never afraid to tackle big, difficult or complex questions.

So how can we go about determining what future customers will want from their paper and what other useful knowledge and criteria customers have in reserve?

Holmen Paper Future Lab

The Future Lab is a concept that combines market surveys and round table discussions with interested parties from various industries. A key aspect of the Future Lab is also the scope to build and expand the network of people who like paper. The requirement for being involved is therefore that participants must have a shared interest in paper and its properties and benefits.

Together, the participants discuss everything to do with paper; what good paper feels like, future needs, the posi-

tion of paper, the importance of paper – basically what is expected of paper. Questions that are tackled include: How can we become a better supplier? What would customers like to see? How can we generate customer loyalty, create partnerships? Other questions for which joint answers are being sought are: How can we refine our products to meet customer needs? Can we adapt our products and create new products in line with customer wishes?

The Future Lab allows the company to see its business from a different angle

and with a different focus. Since the discussions are based on the intended users, it is possible to see the needs and requirements from the perspective of those customers and users.

“The challenge for Holmen Paper going forward is to expand its knowledge of trends and find out about users’ opinions, future requirements and needs regarding paper and its development. The Future Labs are an excellent means of doing this,” says Mikael Selling of Opticom.

Opticom has almost 20 years’ experience of this type of survey. Some of the key tasks of a Future Lab are to identify what will be required and expected from the supplier, to create and build up relationships, and to test and dis-

cuss new products and services in a constructive manner.

“We have carried out six Future Labs on behalf of Holmen. We had two meetings in France and two in the UK, and we met to discuss paper on one occasion in Germany and once in Sweden. It all went very well,” continues Mikael Selling.

Easier to listen to your customers

The Future Lab provides numerous benefits. You get a chance to place your ear to the ground and sound out the market. It also provides an opportunity to build long-term relations with key figures in the industry and other important stakeholders from the discussion groups. Holding these Future Labs also

sends a clear signal from the company that it cares about its customers and their needs, which is a vital factor. And showing such commitment also creates an opportunity to talk about the company’s visions and ambitions, which is at least as important.

“We’ve met everyone from wholesalers, retailers and advertising agencies to publishers, publicists and marketing directors and received plenty of quality feedback. And when we collated the results, we saw that the responses were remarkably similar, whatever the industry. Many people think this is an extremely attractive way of developing products and several believe that consumer driven product development is far better than simply being presented with a finished paper.



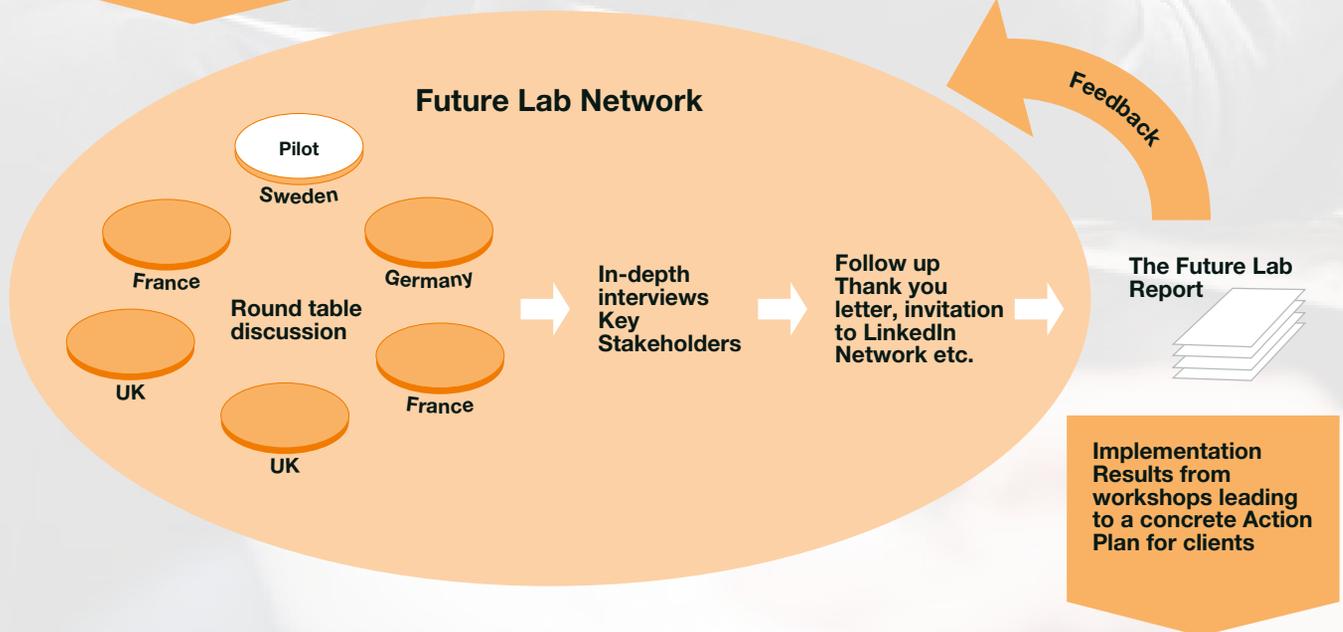
Mikael Selling



Jean-Philippe Zappa Managing Director of Culture Papier ►►

The Future Lab process

Project planning
Desk research
Design of study and content



So what do the future customers say?

The general view is that the requirements made of future products must be based more on the needs of the customers. Today – and tomorrow – customers want to be involved in developing products, rather than just choosing from the range of papers that the company has in its portfolio.

Print media not dead

Whatever the digital prophets say, print media are by no means dead. However, attitudes to paper are not the same as they were a few years ago. The approach was very different then, with the main channel for communications being paper-based, supplemented with a digital presence.

“There has clearly been a shift of emphasis in this area. Now paper is an active

choice. Paper has had to give way to the digital solutions that are the hub for many companies, and paper is perhaps used more to indicate status and economic might,” comments Mikael Selling.

However, many companies are returning to paper-based communications. A company that has achieved poor results from its digital campaign may well go back to paper. One strength of paper is that communications on this medium often go straight to the recipient, while the digital platform has to wait for a visitor to land on the site. This gives paper more of a push function for companies.

Paper stimulates our senses

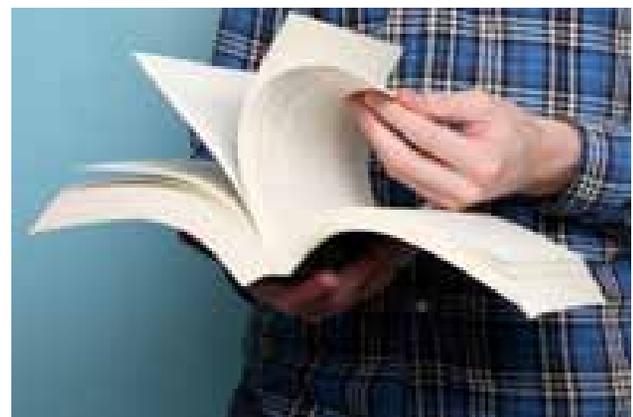
Another key advantage of paper is that it tickles our senses in a way that digital communications cannot. Paper stimu-

lates sight, hearing, feel and smell – it is unbeatable in this respect.

“The people we talk to see paper increasingly as a premium product, with the feel naturally playing a major role. The paper industry is generally quite passive, but customers expect a little more proactiveness from their suppliers. They want someone who can help them identify their need and offer the right product. In this respect, Holmen Paper has an important gap to fill.

Continued challenges

Work on environmental consideration is already well established at Holmen Paper, which is constantly making changes for the better. And the Future Labs clearly suggest that the environment is an issue close to buyers’ hearts.



The surveys also give clear indications about the direction that Holmen Paper should take and how we should react to the market and our customers. And that is exactly the direction we are going to take.



Frankfurt

Holmen Paper at World Publishing Expo

On 29–31 October, Frankfurt will play host to one of the year's most important trade fairs, the World Publishing Expo. Most people may know the fair in its previous incarnation as the IFRA Expo.

With the name change comes a widening of the focus. The industry is facing new challenges, with more and more media houses working on cross-media publishing, where communications that were traditionally published in print are now also being published in many of the new digital channels.

For Holmen's part, the World Publishing Expo gives us a chance to meet the whole industry and make important contacts with decision-makers, which is both exciting and extremely necessary.

Are you also going? Visit us in Hall 8, where we'll be offering informative discussions about our products and what we can offer you. As well as Holmen Paper's team, the fair will be attended by more than 8 000 visitors from over 90 countries.