ID 5010

my time at VALTECH

01.08.2018 to 31.10.2018

By

███████████

Strategic Design intern

██████

Mentored by

████████████████

Creative Strategist

Table of contents

Application process

Around the end of Q2 (January 2018) I decided that I wanted to do an internship in order to really put into practice everything that I have learnt during the first year.
Being an international student also for some practical reasons such as learning about the dutch/european way of working, figuring out if I will like to stay back in the Netherlands after the masters.

What I was looking for

With my previous background of UX and new knowledge and skills of strategic design I wanted to work for a company where I could combine and apply these skills. Yet focus more on growing as a strategic designer. Hence I consciously avoided applying for "UX/UI design" positions.
I wanted to work at the confluence of design/tech/business and was looking for a company where I could be involved in different small projects rather than just one focused project and also learn from the other on going projects. Hence I decided to look for consultancies and agencies.
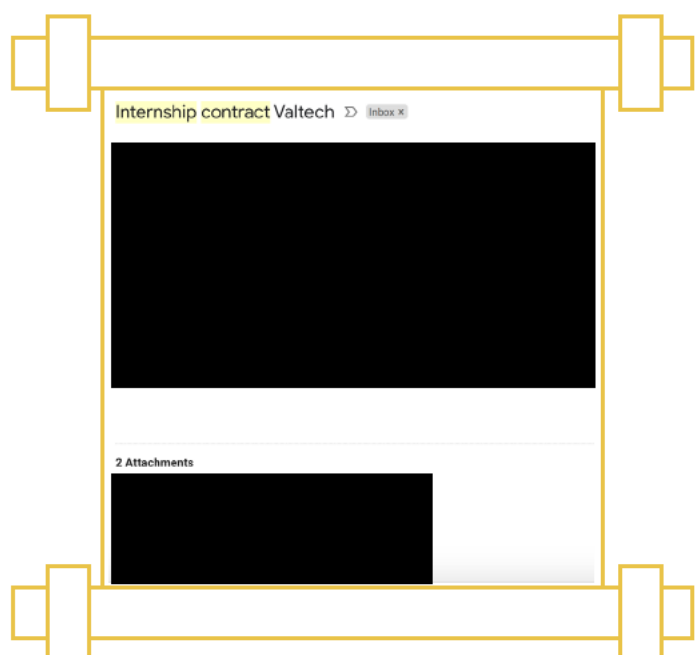
The process

- Update resume and portfolio
- Look for companies (online search, ask friends, professors, linkedin, internship board at faculty, IO business fair)
- Apply to an open position/Send in an open application
- Wait to hear back (this was the hardest part!)
- Phone interview
- In person interview
- Correspondence by email to figure out the practical details
- Sign contract
- Celebrate!

Tip from personal experience

I wanted to do the internship for 3 months from August to October 2018. I also wanted to confirm the internship before the official summer break started. For this reason I started applying to companies in the first week of April 2018.

However, I noticed that most companies started replying only after the second week of May. Hence I would recommend future students to start applying only in May to receive quicker and prompt responses from companies.

Personal Goals

Based on these I defined my personal learning goals as:

- Learn the strategic design and innovation framework followed in Valtech
- Learn about the different teams and departments in the company and how a strategic designer collaborates with these
- Learn new tools and methods for applying strategic design framework on projects
- Learn new softwares used in the company
- Experience the dutch working culture
- Make a more informed decision of a future in the Netherlands after master graduation

Overall I think I achieved most of the goals I set out with. Some of them, such as learning the innovation framework at the company, I was not able to implement on an end to end project because of the duration of the internship. However I did apply it to some of the work I did there.

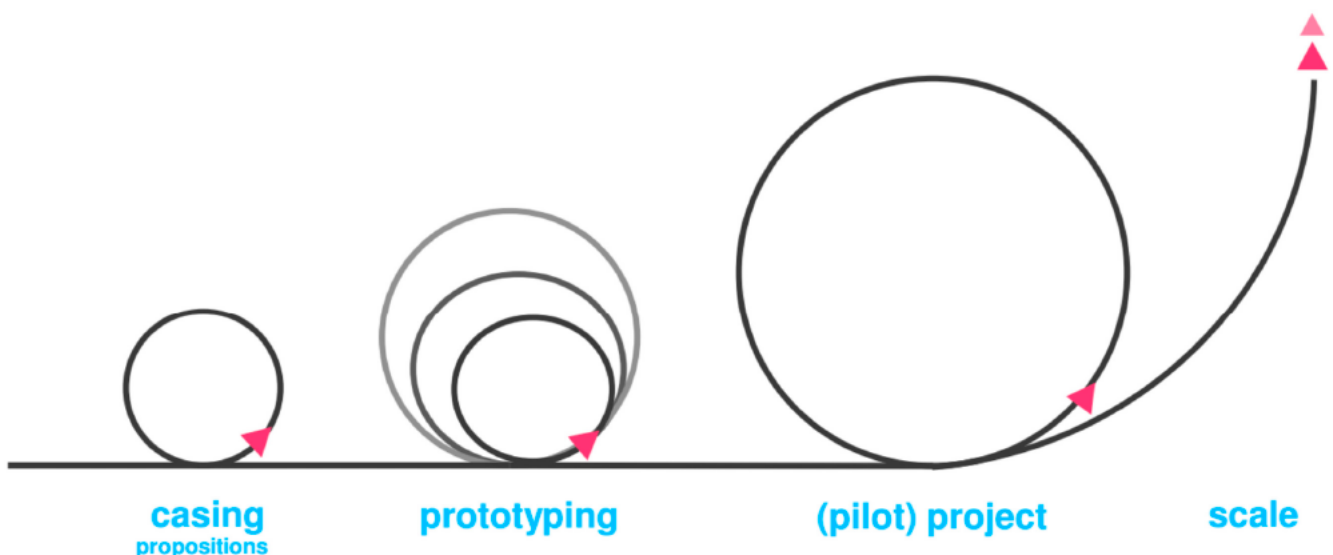My reasons for doing the internship were clear from the beginning.
1. Know the application and impact a strategic designer can have in a company
2. Know whether working and living in the Netherlands after graduation is something that I want for myself

the **Valtech Innovation** *framework*

casing
propositions

prototyping

(pilot) project

scale

(4)

Assignment

My internship was of a full time three months duration. Since I was keen on working as a strategic designer and not UX designer (as mentioned on page X) I did not work on one single project or assignment. Rather, true to the role of a strategic designer I was involved in various phases of different projects.

The things I worked on are:
1. Trend report - The slow movement
2. Colabs cycling - The local vs tourist cycling experience
3. Royal Haskoning - Digital Discovery and experience design

In the following pages I will explain and show examples of the work done for these various projects.

1

2

3

Company profile

Vision

From connected services to commerce platforms, Valtech provides with the tools you need to emerge as a leader in your industry.

"We believe that when applied with your customers in mind, technology creates value, builds relationships, and grows revenue."

About

Technology innovation and a shift towards a consumer-centric economy, the "economy of experience", have created unprecedented disruption for companies as they look to embrace the Digital era that will drive business transformation.

At Valtech they believe the most significant challenge companies face today – particularly large and established global businesses – is the constant state of change in this new economy of experience, as it requires organizations to innovate and grow since cost-cutting measures are no longer sufficient to compete and drive value. Founded in 1993 Valtech now has 2,700+ people with diverse skill sets across 30+ offices in 14 countries.

Hence they design and build unique experiences and run continuous improvement efforts and live, eat and breathe business transformation across the digital world.

Key offerings
- CX Strategy
- Connected Services
- Content & Campaigns
- Experience & Commerce Platforms
- Data Science
- Emerging Technologies

Some facts

25 years experience

1 unique culture

16 countries

39 offices

2500 digital minds

"

Grow relationships with your customers through our innovations

—

valtech_

Culture at Valtech

Valtech has four offices in the Netherlands at **Amersfoort, Amsterdam, Utrecht & Eindhoven**. During my internship I got the opportunity to work at the Amersfoort and Utrecht office. This was a great opportunity since it allowed me to experience the different office environments and also to interact with different people and teams.

The corporate culture at Valtech is indeed a nice one, since the offices are designed to have open and common working spaces. Which means you can interact with colleagues working on different projects and learn about those as well. It also made me feel at ease quite soon.

A warm welcome

1. Onboarding day

The company organized an onboarding day on 1st August to welcome all new employees and interns. This was a nice way to learn more about the company and get familiar with the place.

2. Keesdag

A day for all new joinees where we learnt about design thinking and the scrum set up used at Valtech and then applied it to a live case in multidisciplinary teams.
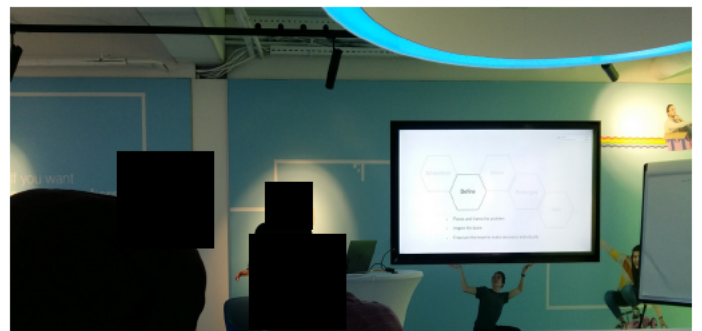
3. Heads Up Amersfoort

This is a quarterly stand up meeting that occurs in every office, where the Managing Director gives an open and upfront view of how business has been the past quarter, the tops and tips. Some people are also invited to present some of the ongoing work. It is a good way to bring the entire office together and ensure that everyone is on the same page.


4. End of summer BBQ

A fun event organized by the committee at Amersfoort office for all colleagues to get together and enjoy the sun and some beers. A nice way for me to get to know my colleagues in a very casual set up.

5. The farm, Amersfoort

This is a coworking working space created in the Amersfoort office. It is a space meant for conversations, discussions, brainstorms and even just a makers lab where people can experiment with creating stuff that is not for any client or project specific requirements.
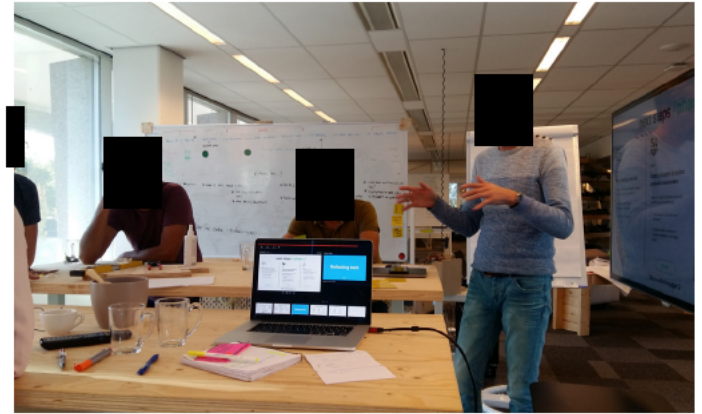
Overall culture

Overall the culture at Valtech was nice, comfortable and open.

However, I noticed one thing being one of the few internationals in the office. Most of the social conversations (at the coffee corner, lunch table etc) tend to happen in Dutch, and interrupting your new colleagues to ask them to speak in English is not that easy! However, I discussed this issue with my mentor and he was extremely supportive and understanding. And over time most people in the office did realise my lack of dutch speaking skills, and voluntarily conversed in English when I was around!

Learning the ways of Dutch culture

Tasks and projects

Role as Strategic Design intern

As a strategic design intern I was working at the forefront of innovation where I was *encouraged to be creative, empathic* and have a *view for the bigger picture* while still maintaining a *keen eye for detail.* I worked closely with the Creative Strategist and UX Manager at Valtech, Amersfoort.

My tasks and responsibilities included –
- Scouting for *new trends* and developments in the world
- Supporting *ongoing trend research* being conducted by my mentor
- Supporting the *Discovery phase of the digital strategy and experience design* for Royal Haskoning DHV
- *Designing wireframes and canvases* for stakeholder workshops and design studios
- Conducting *field research and synthesis of findings* for the Co labs cycling initiative.

1. Trend Research – The Slow movement

Brief

To look for new developments in the world that could point towards a macro trend. Analyse the driving forces of the trend and back it up with evidence and data. Advice how this trend impacts brands and clients.

Team

Process

1.

General developments — Social, Political, Economic } Milennials

2.

Spotting macro trends

Rise in minmalism

Embracing diversity

Doing social good

Innovating to zero

Attention economy

3.

Connecting the dots

Slow fashion — Slow food — *Slow movement trend* — Better world, Simple life, Micro homes

4.

Evidence and advice

¡ % €

Reflection

This was a really enjoyable activity for me. Reading about trends and happenings in the world and connecting the dots (by discussions and reflections) really helped me to see how trends develop and affect brands and consumers.

There were some moments when I felt stuck

and was unable to process the data further, because I wasn't sure what my next step should be! However, in this moment it was useful to discuss with my mentor to have him help and guide me.

Outcome
Report document

2. Co labs – The locals vs tourists cycling experience

Brief
Colabs is an initiative of Valtech Amersfoort which aims to help all employees –
- Do our work better
- Get inspired
- Have fun along the way
- Learn new things

As part of the design and digital marketing team, we took up a challenge to improve the cycling experience in the Netherlands to answer the following research question –
- How can we improve the safety and harmony between tourists and locals in Dutch biking areas, so that the frustration of locals reduces?

Team

Mentored by

Process

1. Define RQ	2. Define sub RQ	3. Planning
Brainstorm Desk research	*BrainstormR*	*esearch methods Teams*

6. Team alignment	5. Field research	4. Get go head
Disucss findings Next steps	*In Amsterdam Interviews Observations*	*Present to MD Budget Hours*

7. Redefine RQ	8. Redefine sub RQ	9. Field research
Brainstorm Desk research	*Brainstorm*	*In Amsterdam Interviews Observations*

10. Synthesis	11. It goes on
Discuss Next steps	*Internship ends*

Reflection

I worked with a team of UX designers and Digital marketers during this project. We conducted field research in Amsterdam and it was nice to learn the different methods and approaches that everyone on the team has. The brainstorming and synthesis sessions also brought a unique perspective on the topic. However, since this is an ongoing effort I was unable to see the project till the end but hope to be in touch with the team to know how it goes!

Outcome

I was part of the presentation to the Managing director @ Valtech Amersfoort and the Creative Director @ Valtech NL where we presented our research findings and made a pitch to go into the next phase of the project.
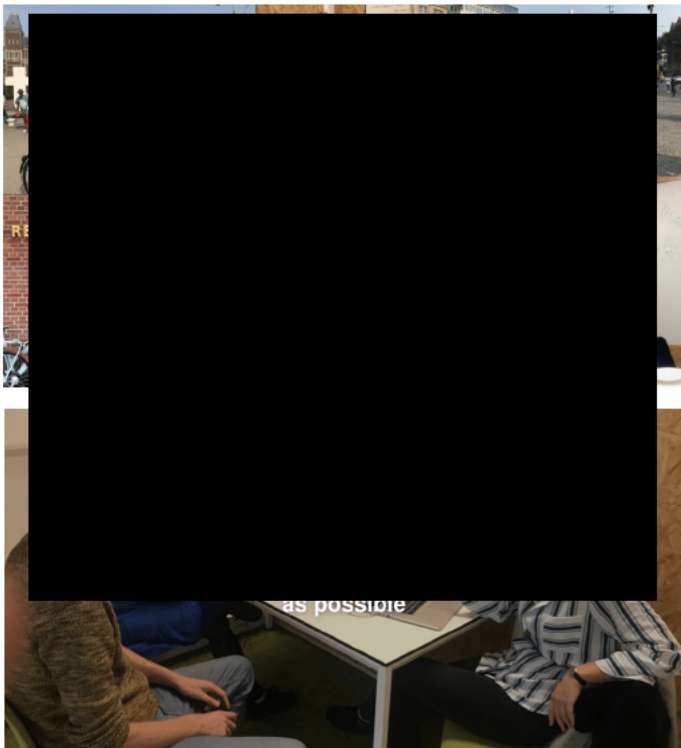
next steps / phase 3

Scenario 1: Research Report
Wrap up with a fancy infographic, displaying though leadership around the topic.
1. Write and design research document / infographic
2. Share with clients to show pro-activity
3. Continue with ideation if interested
4. Share with the outside world

Time: 3 persons / 15 hours p.p. = 65 hours

Scenario 2: Playbook
Answer the how might we's with solution sketches to include in the report.
1. Host a design studio with those interested (from agency and selected clients)
2. Create low-fidelity sketches of solutions originated in the design studio.
3. Share playbook with selected clients and the outside world.

Additional time needed for design studio & concepting + 35 hours = 120 hours

3. Royal Haskoning DHV – Digital discovery & experience design

Brief

Help Royal Haskoning DHV create the concept and foundation for a future proof corporate platform and advice on a fitting organizational model that meets their ambitions.

Team

Process

1. Explore
- Onboarding day
- Interviews
- Co-creation with Design studio

2. Create
- Design system
- Wireframes
- Digital toolkit
- Kitchen reviews

3. Define
- Concept validation
- Project roadmap & epics
- Technical recommendations
- Organizational recommendations

My role & responsibilites
- Creating the canvases to be used during the co-creation session
- Participating and co-facilitating stakeholder workshops
- Creating the flow and wireframes for the design system

- Assisting the design of the digital toolkit
- Presenting to the client

Outcome
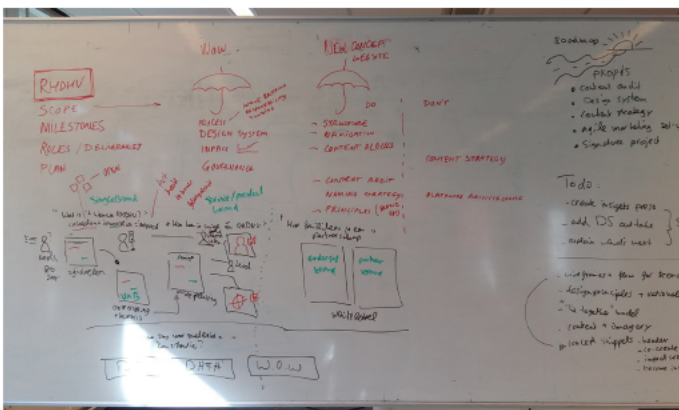

Participating in some co-creation

Stakeholders used the canvas created by me

UX & brand alignment workshop

Team brainstorm and discussion session

Some elements of the final deliverable

Reflection

Being a part of co-creation workshops with the client team was a great experience for me to learn first hand not only about their ideas, but also how to facilitate and manage such workshops. Discussions and brainstorming session with the Valtech team helped me understand how large scale projects work and how me, a strategic designer can contribute to them. Presenting to the client team was a great opportunity as well!

Overall, I think I was able to blend my UX and strategic design background to contribute effectively to this project. Some of my work presented to the clients was also well received!
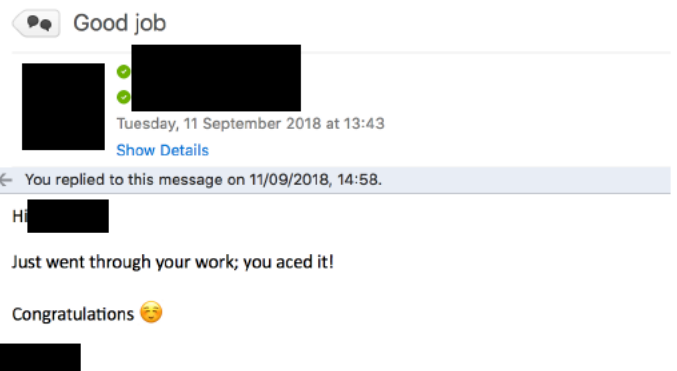
Experiences & insights

The main takeaways from the internship for me have been as follows:

1. Getting real world experience and exposure
2. Working with people in the industry and from different fields of expertise
3. Networking
4. Finding my first professional mentors in the Netherlands
5. Learning new tools and ways of working
6. Time away from the academic world also provided me with time to introspect on the learnings from the first year of the master and helped me to plan my way forward in terms of my thesis

Reflections on my personal learning goals (Ref pg 4) are as follows:
Overall, I think I have been able to understand and follow the innovation and design process used at Valetch. I have had the chance to interact with different people here to know how this is applied to projects. This framework was also used while working on the client project with Royal Haskoning DHV. It was interesting for me to learn the different phases of the process and also how these phases might need to be modified based on the client, timelines and budgets. At Valtech they extensively use Sketch and Principle while designing screens and wireframes. Hence while working on projects here I go the chance to learn these new softwares which I am sure will be useful to me in the future!

I got the chance to also explore and experience the dutch working culture. This has left me feeling quite positive about wanting to continue my career in the Netherlands after graduating from my masters. I especially like the importance given to work life balance here. I also appreciate the culture of openness that enables everyone to give their opinions and ask questions - even interns ;)

All in all, I am glad that I chose to do an internship during this quarter since I feel that now I am better equipped with real life experience and more insights into the kind of work I want to do as a Strategic designer.

The daily commute – Delft naar Amersfoort

Working at the clients office @ RHDHV

The working space @ Valtech Amersfoort

Connected playground @ Valtech Utrecht

Always happy when researching!

Very warm and positive goodbyes!

Feedback form

Mark as shown: ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ Please use a ball-point pen or thin felt tip. This form will be processed automatically.

Correction: ☐ ■ ☐ ☒ ☐ Please follow the examples shown on the left hand side to help optimize the reading results.

1. Review form internship

To be completed on paper by the company supervisor and to be sent on paper to the internship coordinator or to give to the student so the coordinator can schedule a meeting with the student to finalize the internship.

2. Student personal details

2.1 Student name

[redacted]

2.2 Student number

[redacted]

2.3 Programme   ☐ DfI   ☐ IPD   ☒ SPD

3. Organisation details

3.1 Name organisation and department

VALTECH / STRATEGY

3.2 Name company supervisor

[redacted]

3.3 E-mail

[redacted] @ VALTECH . COM

4. Internship

4.1 Short description of the intern activities

(TREND) RESEARCH, IDEATION   CLIENT MEETINGS
(UX)(DESIGN   STRATEGIZING
JOURNEY MAPPING
WORKSHOP FACIL. / DESIGN

4.2 Internship started on

Aug 7st 2018

4.3 Internship finished on

Oct 37th 2018

5. General skills

		insufficient	moderate	sufficient	good	very good	not applicable
5.1	Is the student able to deal with the responsibilities associated with the work?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
5.2	What is the level of the student's motivation, interest and enthousiasm?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
5.3	What is the level of the student's knowledge (theoretical and practical)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
5.4	Does the student show initiative?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
5.5	Is the student able to implement new skills and knowledge quickly?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
5.6	Is the student capable of working independently?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
5.7	What is the level of the student's productivity?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

6. Practical skills

		insufficient	moderate	sufficient	good	very good	not applicable
6.1	Does the student show practical skills?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
6.2	Does the student show a critical attitude?	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
6.3	Does the student show a logical and structured way of working?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

7. Reporting

		insufficient	moderate	sufficient	good	very good	not applicable
7.1	Is the student competent in writing a (scientific) report?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
7.2	Is the student able to distinguish relevant from irrelevant information?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

8. General remarks

		insufficient	moderate	sufficient	good	very good	not applicable
8.1	Did the student meet the expectations?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8.2 Do you have recommendations for the student concerning his/her personal and professional development?

try to be a little bit more pro-active in finding work

8.3 Can you imagine the student as a future colleague?

YES

		insufficient	moderate	sufficient	good	very good	not applicable
8.4	Overall performance of the student; please indicate the category:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

8.5 Place and date

Oct 31th, AMERSFOORT

8.6 ████████████████

8.7 ████████████████ in order to improve the Industrial Design Engineering training?

Get in

touch