



IT'S THE PASSENGERS, STUPID

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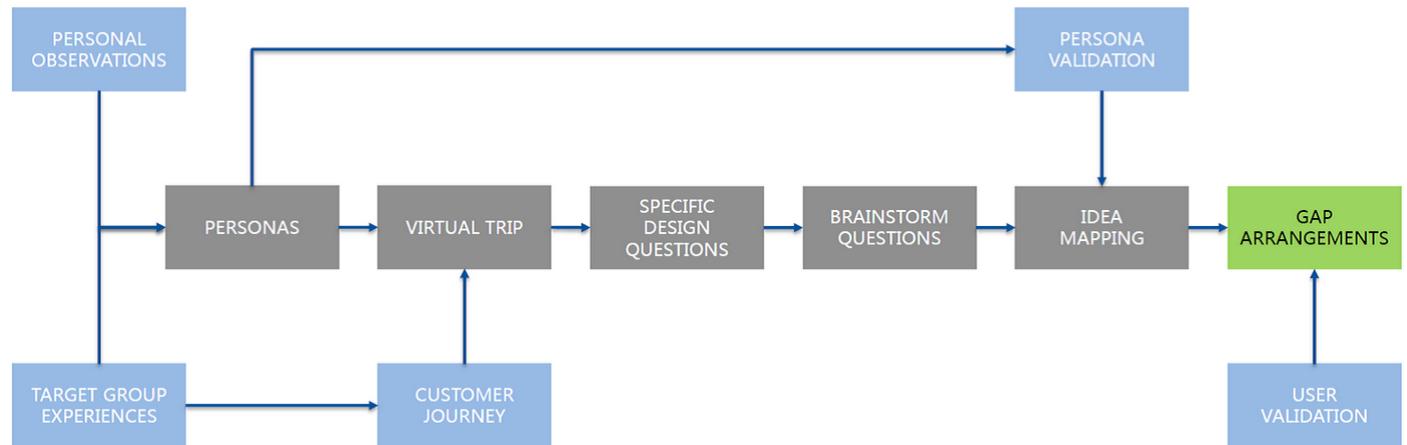
With waterborne public transport – as with any type of public transport – it's all about the passengers. All too often, designs of passenger vessels seem to aim at a 'one size fits all' approach. In reality that's the way to make a mediocre passenger experience combining characteristics required by differing groups of people without fully satisfying any of them.

Damen has come up with a way to ensure its public transportation vessels are tailored to hit the right spot for those travelling on them.

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

"It's a process based on the idea that form follows function," explains Damen product director ferries [Henk Grunstra](#). "First, we begin with research; looking into who exactly will be sailing on a particular route. Then we consider what their specific requirements might be. Following this we

brainstorm ideas on how to meet these requirements. Then we test the ideas in order to arrive at the solution.



“One of the first steps in all this is to gain a clear picture of exactly who our passengers are. To do this we develop what we have termed the ‘persona’ – an in-depth picture of our passenger, which we then take on a virtual journey to identify their needs and wishes.

TAKING THE PERSONA ON VIRTUAL JOURNEY

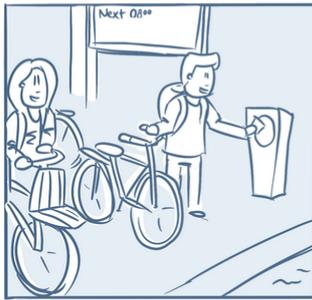
“An example could be students on a waterbus,” suggests Henk. “There are a number of clearly defined features to student travel – they often travel in groups for example, at set times of day. They are all going in the same direction and will be carrying baggage and, potentially, a bicycle. They will want a form of transport that gives them chance to catch up with their friends – to have some fun, maybe using their smart phones to share photos and videos.

“Even from just this summary evaluation we can extract a lot of information that will help us to design a relevant travel experience. We can define their goals – a speedy, dry method of transport that precludes too much cycling, in an environment that allows them to have fun with friends. Their motivations for taking the waterbus would also include subsidised travel.

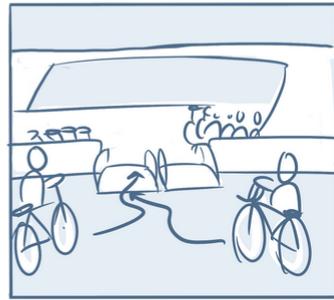
“Of course, we must also take into account the negative aspects – the frustrations that our passenger group may find in public transportation. Examples might be the frustration of going to

Students

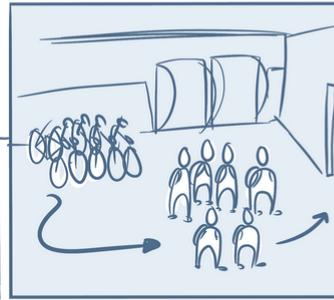
Tuesday morning 08:00 AM



Arrival @ Pontoon check in



Onboard & park bike



Park bike & look for a place to sit



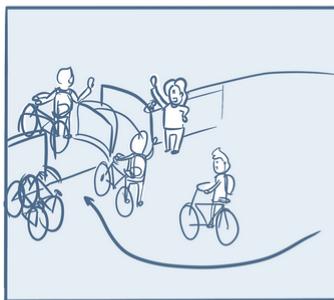
Sit in a seat with friends
- use Wifi
- bag under the seat



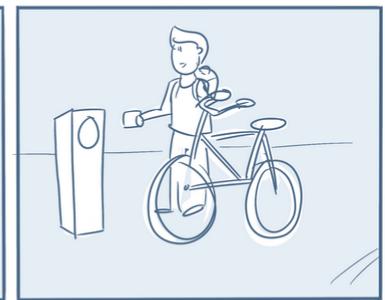
Approaching destination



Last minute walk to bike & throw away trash



Ramp opens and scholars disembark



Check out on shore

disembark and finding someone else's bicycle stored against yours. Or the wait for the waterbus itself – especially in inclement weather. There may well be a perception that seating may be uncomfortable and not allow them to be seated with their friends.

“Such information enables us to define the ultimate student passenger experience – in this case, for example, a [waterbus](#) with plenty of space for bicycles, a small number of fixed seats and additional foldable seating,” Henk explains.

“The findings indicate a move away from traditional bicycle storage, fastening the bicycle to a railing away from the seating area. A solution in this case could be the inclusion of flexible bicycle storage-flexible seating so that bikes can be placed close to the seating area where the passengers can keep an eye on them during their journey.

“The break with traditional seating also allows for the inclusion of large, comfortable bench-like seating so that groups can sit together during the journey, affording more social opportunities.

PUTTING THE PROCESS INTO PRACTICE

“Damen has used this philosophy on the design of the fully-electric ferries it is building for Ontario,” says Henk. “ We looked at the passengers who would use the Amherst island ferry. It was a combination of commuters, local residents and tourists – we considered even the subgroups of these; the tourists, for example, include those looking for a leisurely holiday and also those who were travelling to the island for hiking and cycling trips.

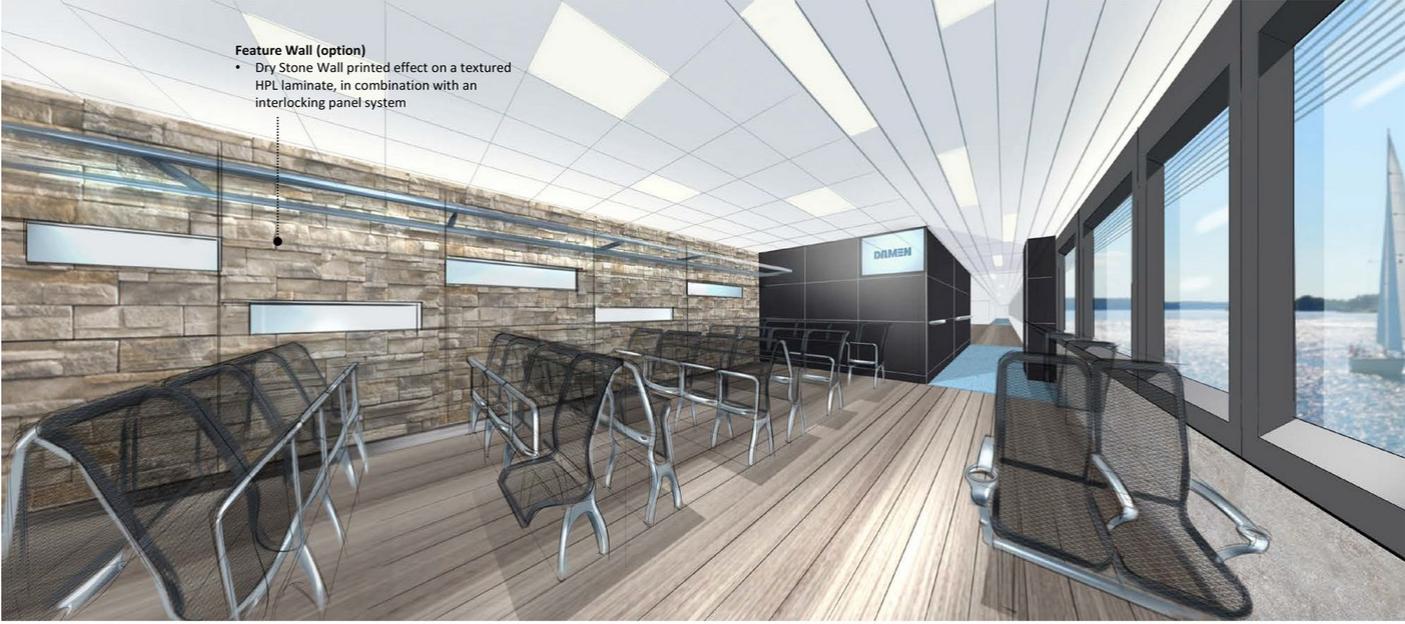
“We identified that all our passenger groups in this instance needed a practical space, a functional space. We therefore added heated waiting areas and washroom facilities. We also identified that, especially for the tourists, the external areas of the vessel had to be appealing so they could view the natural beauty they had come to see.

FOSTERING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

“Our brief also involved creating an experience that fostered a sense of community amongst the passengers and aligned the vessel with its operational environment. So, we looked at the cultural heritage of the island. Amherst has an abundance of drystone walling – the most significant concentration anywhere in Canada. Reflecting this, we developed an interior design featuring laminate drystone walls and featuring furniture in the colour of the island’s natural resources, all of which was finished off nicely with a wood effect floor.

Often when people think of Damen they think of standardisation. Standardisation though is about providing people with proven vessels – fast. What it’s not about is limiting clients’ choices – a Damen vessel can always be adapted to meet the requirements of any client. This is true of all sectors, but maybe none more so than public transport where there are so many varying factors in the requirements of the end user that we have become very used to tailoring our proven designs. Essentially this is what we do; we design and build vessels to meet the requirements of the end users – the passengers, without whom there would be no vessel in the first place,” Henk concludes.

Amherst Island



Feature Wall (option)
 • Dry Stone Wall printed effect on a textured HPL laminate, in combination with an interlocking panel system

ISLANDHUB V3



Abstract from the presentation "It's the passengers, stupid" by Henk Grunstra at the Canadian Ferries Association (CFA) in Saint John, New Brunswick 2019.