

31VOLTS

CASE #02

SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

EGYPT & NORTH EAST AFRICA





# JALLA, JALLA! IN ATTABA

Find out what really matters to end users and design solutions that match their needs. Create competitive advantage in the rapidly growing markets of Egypt and North East Africa.

Our client Schneider Electric Egypt & North East Africa provides energy and automation solutions for efficiency and sustainability. They combine world-leading energy technologies and services into integrated solutions for homes, buildings, infrastructure and industries.

With a yearly revenue of 25 billion dollars they are the world's leading company in their sector. We got to know Schneider Electric (SE) during a service design thinking workshop we hosted in Amsterdam. SE CEO's from 28 coun-

tries attended the event. During the informal aftermath a lively discussion got started about dealing with uncertainty and the possible failure of projects and about innovation and the importance of knowing your customer. After a while the Egypt & North East Africa CEO concluded:

*"I think I understand what you bring to the table. You find out what really matters to end users, as that is the only way to come up with solutions that work and create value."*



▲ We set up various customer journey maps



7. branding the district



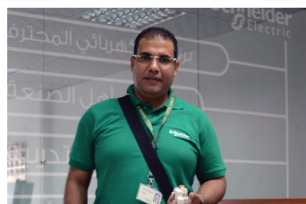
4. packaging



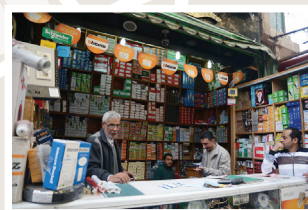
1. (un)loading spot



5. local transport



3. visibility on the street



2. showrooms

6. customer journey

parking lot

► Attaba district in Cairo  
The research area of  
Schneider Electric

## Two trips, 10 days, 6 challenges

A couple of months later one of our teams traveled to Egypt to start designing and innovating their services, processes and logistics for SE. Eventually we went to Egypt twice and worked in a total of ten days on three challenges. From processes in the local factory to designing the ideal customer experience for the showroom at the head office. We had to recalibrate our scales as Egypt's population is just short of 100 million people – and is growing 2 million each year. Massive investments are in place to keep infrastructure, housing and facilities up to speed with that rapid growth and development. These numbers

*“We had to recalibrate our scales”*

challenge companies like SE to step up their game. Companies that are most efficient and successful in fulfilling the rising need for materials, tools, equipment, skills and knowledge will create a serious competitive advantage. An added complexity to the challenge: most products that electricians work with were purchased at stores within the logistical nightmare of the city center of Attaba.

## Finding opportunities

As always, our first step was research. We took to the streets of Attaba, interviewed retailers, visited the construction site of a housing development site just outside the city and we talked to electricians. One of the preliminary results of that research was that there was real opportunity to find ways to support and educate electricians. Uncomplicating their jobs with easy and open access to knowledge, skills and the right products is a key differentiator in this market. The project resulted in a set of ideas that were all based on the guiding insight the team gained along the way. It struck us that we could look at the situation in Attaba with IKEA-eyes. With that mindset we could see the analogy in a customer route (an informal one, but still) that led across the city centre. Along the maze of different streets you find stores in product categories in a similar way that IKEA sets up its stores. There is even an (unofficial) loading area – although

quite dangerously situated at one of the city's busiest roundabouts. What if we brought IKEA's principles to safely and efficiently guide and nudge people to and through the area? What if SE experts were present in the streets wearing recognizable polo shirts (green is SE's color)? And what if we created a safe route to that loading area and what if we could mark off that area for loading purposes only? What if we made the entire experience 'easy as IKEA' for the end user? What if SE took the lead in all this?

## What SE has been able to accomplish with our ideas:

- ▶ A training center for electricians is now up and running.
- ▶ SE experts in green polo shirts are on the streets in Attaba. They help customers find their way to the right stores, give advice, and verify the quality of products (there is a lot of low-quality stuff from China on the market).



▲ SE-expert is ready to head out







### As for the other projects?

- ▶ We redesigned and improved the customer experience (CX) in the showroom at SE headquarters, based on the customer journey mapping we performed.
- ▶ In the factory it is not the paying client that visits but his (hired) engineering consultant for whom time is money too. By improving his stay and productivity SE creates happier and loyal customers.
- ▶ We showed that growing and improving the services side of business (particularly in the maintenance of up and running systems) is full of opportunities to showcase CE's core values and like quality, customer oriented, expertise, and customer care.
- ▶ Redesigning the Customer Care Centre made us focus on the employee experience. Egypt and North East Africa covers a big region with lots of cultural differences. Designing an approach to service such a wide variety of customers while also bringing together employees from across the region - that will be an ongoing challenge.

### Our takeaways

For our team it was extremely rewarding to be able to create a valuable connection between this multinational and their end user. In a matter of weeks we translated the gigantic challenges that Egypt faces in keeping up with population growth to specific and targeted actions and projects. SE can now lead those and other projects forward and take an active role in developing a smooth and efficient infrastructure to enable further growth.



▲ Employees from all over the region are brought together

# *We design for aspiring organizations that strive to be meaningful for people.*

**Design in the service of people. That's the shortest version to explain what we do. Designing is something you do for others, for users, customers and co-workers. That is why we always put people first; they shape our work.**

"But what do you guys actually design?" is a question we get a lot. The answer is not always clear-cut, especially when we are just starting a new project. What we can tell you is that the answer is not a product, a poster, an app or an interior. Nevertheless, things like that might very well be part of the solution.

So what do we do? We design the relationship between organizations and people. Those people can be customers, students, colleagues, patients, suppliers or users. That is why no project is the same in our line of work.

## **What's the real question here?**

We always start out with a thorough look at the problem at hand. That's how service design differs from other design approaches. What is the challenge we are dealing with? What is the perspective of the end user? Who is that user? And what's the real question we need to answer?

Approaching our work like that lands us in the most interesting places. We wandered the streets of Cairo, visited schools in southern Netherlands, researched the F-Terminal on Schiphol and had a meeting in the machine room of an elevator in Amsterdam. We followed potential museum visitors in the city of Utrecht, interviewed civil servants at a

Dutch ministry and talked to people seeking help with 'Slachtofferhulp Nederland' (Victim Support Netherlands). To just name a few of the things we do.

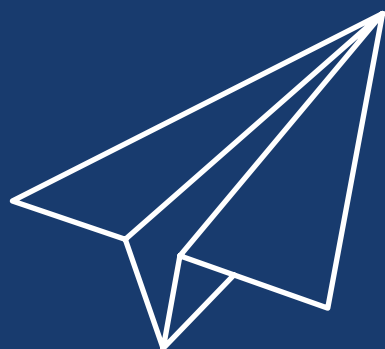
We research the way people interact with our client's organization and brand and we uncover what their desires and needs are. Only then can we find the opportunities for meaningful innovation. Those opportunities may lead to new or improved services, products, processes or business plans.

## **Design is a verb**

Design is the way we work, the way we approach any project, the way we find answers. Design is a verb, that much we know. We involve people in each step of our design process; from research to co-creation and from prototyping to implementation. Designing the future is a joint effort, powered by people.

The thing is, it's easy to design something or to come up with 'a solution'. "Solutions are not the problem," is what we keep telling each other. We will never start thinking about or working on solving a problem until we have a very clear understanding of the actual question. And about the experience of the end user. Knowing the real challenge, leads us in the direction of solutions that add value. How can we create that value for the end user and for our client? And even more important; how do we make that come true?

Only if and when we can see and measure the impact and success of our solutions, will we finish up a project.



**31Volts**

Schaverijstraat 11  
3534 AS Utrecht

info@31v.nl  
+31 30 8903220