Garden of Kairos

In Greek mythology, Kairos was the youngest and most rebellious grandson of Chronos. Kairos dared to walk unfamiliar paths, welcomed challenges, was always keen on new ideas and thereby brought about change, insight and turnaround.

Garden of Kairos takes inspiration from Kairos' way of life. The values that characterize Kairos also define our community—and each and every of its members, teams, initiatives and projects.

1   Garden of Kairos: a community to boost the digital transformation

Today's businesses need to navigate in complex landscapes: Ever more sophisticated technologies offer exciting possibilities but simultaneously ask for niche expertise and the cross-disciplinary combination of knowledge and abilities. This also requires new forms of organizing or new forms of bringing together the best people to do a job, including reaching beyond traditional organizational boundaries. Our community Garden of Kairos does precisely that: It brings together different organizations so that the business challenges of today's time can be tackled with joined forces.

Governed by flat structures and driven by participants' needs and ideas, Garden of Kairos provides members a space to explore and advance on the things that matter most in these days: Pushing for digital transformation and boosting productivity while always keeping an eye on the important human and organizational aspects. Members of the community create and test new ways of working together to tackle big challenges, develop ground-breaking insights and push each other forward.

2   What we work on: the key themes

So, what are the big challenges that we work on in Garden of Kairos? Overall, we aim to explore, test and implement new technologies in order to help the digital transformation of business processes, including product and service design. For instance, we aim to gain a better understanding of how companies can transform products into services or, more specifically, how they can move from selling physical products to selling digital services. For us, technologies are enablers of transformation, not just drivers. We therefore also consider how technologies affect people, the way we organize work and societal systems at large.

2.1   Enablers of digital transformation

In this theme, we focus on how new technologies can contribute to realizing digital transformation. We aim to understand the opportunities that new technologies can offer to companies and how exactly these new technologies can support companies' digital transformation.

For instance, technologies can:

- be enablers for automating supply chains or production processes,
- be game-changers for design processes (think of model-driven engineering, for example) or even for entire product lifecycle management systems (including change management), in which, amongst others, digital twins could play an important role
- offer completely new possibilities for how to engage with products and services (such as AI, machine learning, big data, blockchain, additive manufacturing, remote monitoring, VR/AR/XR, etc.)

2.2 From products to new value models

One characteristic of the digital transformation is the overall tendency to transition from physical products to offering services. Services are meant to improve customer experience and to increase customer satisfaction. Turnover is no longer generated through tangible matters but through more intangible and abstract ones, often over prolonged periods rather than at a single point in time. Think of Spotify subscriptions that replace CDs or swapfiets.nl, which offers guaranteed mobility instead of bikes per se (as Gazelle does). Both require payment for the service they are offering—whether that is via subscription as for Spotify or more on occasion as for swapfiets.nl—rather than asking customers to pay for a product. This does not mean that physical products vanish completely, but that they get integrated into more comprehensive and extensive value models that enable new variety and flexibility as well as new streams of revenue.

Our second theme therefore broadly focuses on how companies can realize these new value models, also in connection or collaboration with their customers and business partners. We want to uncover the opportunities this development offers, but also understand the possible threats companies might encounter.

2.3 The impact on people, organizations and society

The third theme is about the consequences of the digital transformation for people, organizations and society? How can we stay up to date about changes and developments, oversee potential consequences and make sure we are able to adjust on time? These are the broad questions we aim to tackle in this theme. More specific questions—that are by no means exhaustive—include:

- How can companies best deal with issues as training, informing, stimulating, collaborating and rewarding, both towards their own members but also towards business partners and customers?
- How can companies best train and equip their personnel but also other stakeholders to support and accelerate digital transformation and to instil new ways of thinking?
- Which capabilities are now required, and what are the skills that become superfluous? How can we make sure that capabilities are kept up to date?
- How can digital transformation impact corporate cultures and the relations companies have with external stakeholders? How do role patterns change and what are the implications on individual empowerment (think of user-generated content on social media, for example)? What are the new dependencies and possibilities that come to exist out of the digital transformation, including lock-in, new monopolies and providing services worldwide?
- Should company cultures change in such ways that members are open to new organizational models? And if so, how can we achieve that?
- Could a business become an organization that purchases services from (organized) employee groups (as in a guild)?
- How will the open source development model influence or even replace more traditional methods?
- How will payments and guarantees work in a digitized future? Micro payments? Block chain?
- And what about contractual, legal or ethics matters (e.g., IP, open source)? How do we arrange what we want / not want? How do we make sure we do the right thing, not just the best thing? What are the opportunities and threats of new models like open source development?
- How do we evaluate opportunities and threats which come along with a more service-oriented and service-driven society and community? Can and should companies shape end users' and customers' perspectives and opinions?
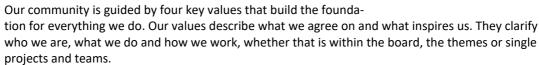
3 The community: A space to connect and grow

With Garden of Kairos we follow one key objective: Bringing together different organizations and individuals that push for digital transformation and boost productivity through joint efforts. We aim to provide a space where members can connect, discuss and collaborate in new and uncomplicated ways, driven by what matters on the content level. Organizing as a community allows us to be flexible and open and to adapt, grow and develop over time.

The community highlights the most important themes to work on (as outlined before) but then leaves it up to members to fill these themes with teams and projects—of course assisting whenever needed. This ensures that teams and projects can work with autonomy and flexibility but simultaneously have full access to the resources and networks of the community. With each team and project sharing back their insights, we expect our resources and networks to grow over time, step by step building an invaluable pool of ideas, expertise, connections and solutions.

Who started the community?

Garden of Kairos is initiated by participants of the E-PLM (Extended Product Lifecycle Management) projects. In the E-PLM proeftuin and E-PLM 2.0 projects, around 25 companies and institutions have been working on accelerating innovation through digitally using existing extended value chains. Both Key values guiding our community

Our community is guided by four key values that build the foundation for everything we do. Our values describe what we agree on and what inspires us. They clarify who we are, what we do and how we work, whether that is within the board, the themes or single projects and teams.

The key values are:

Daring

We dare to walk unfamiliar paths and to go new ways, both for what we work on and for how we work. The topics we work on are current, the solutions we develop are innovative and we are creative in finding the best ways to organize ourselves and get things done. We rather try, fail and learn than be the runner-up.

Engaging

We aim to set people into action and create energy and enthusiasm—among our members, but also in the world around us. We rather engage in one conversation more than missing out on being involved.
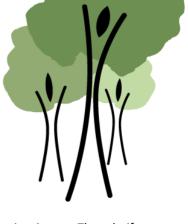
Connecting

Our community is all about connecting, whether that's individuals or organizations. We embrace cooperation and collaboration and aim to establish valuable relations. We are rather strong together, and rather many than one.

Open

Our community is open on the inside and outside. We ensure that insights are shared with all members across themes, teams and projects and we welcome new members and ideas from the outside world. We are rather inclusive than exclusive and always remain open to our environment.

3.1 Key processes pushing our community

We go new ways to boost digital transformation. The following four processes and activities are essential for that:

Inspiring and open discussions to set the agenda

Like Kairos, we have an eye for opportunities. We frequently discuss the themes and subjects we aim to work on, seeking inspiration and input inside and outside of the community. This results in roadmaps (travel guides) that outline the themes we focus on. Roadmaps are kept up to date and adapted to changes, trends and new developments.

Daring and actionable plans

The themes and subjects outlined in our roadmaps inspire concrete plans—for projects, assignments or other and new forms of cooperation and collaboration. On execution, plans realize valuable and useful results for community members and possibly even for our environment.

Communication and dissemination of ideas and findings

What is found out during agenda setting and project work will always be communicated, inside and outside of the community. We use personal communication, network meetings and digital media for communication and dissemination, to help put digital transformation into action.

A space to connect and grow

We make sure that our community is a lively and inspiring space where connections can be established, new forms of organizing and working together can be tested and valuable skills can be acquired (e.g., through trainings, internships or seminars). We stay in close contact with external stakeholders, national and international, to broaden our network and acquire funding and subsidies.

4 How to participate and boost your digital transformation?

Are you also keen to boost your digital transformation? To realize added value with it? To engage with other companies and help them with your insights or ask them for help with your challenges? And do our key values – daring, engaging, connecting, open – inspire you, too?

Then we invite you to join our community.

For more information, you can contact Peter van Bart (p.vanbart@gardenofkairos.com, +31 (0)53 480 30 40) or Martin Arens (m.arens@gardenofkairos.com, +31 (0)6 488 78 759). Both Peter and Martin are members of the Kairos Board.