

# **The importance of Hierarchies in the Albert Heijn**

## **Practice 3 Cultural Diversity**

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The ease of going to the supermarket and being able to ask the employees anything you might need or are curious about is not as simple as it seems, there is a complete hierarchy in the store which creates what certain employees are able to do or know. Customers most of the time are not aware of this which sometimes can cause awkward confrontations. With this proposal I want to address the hierarchies in the Albert Heijn and introduce a solution which creates more awareness about it amongst the customers that visit the supermarket.

The hierarchies in the store influence the way the employees behave tremendously, not only in interactions between employees but also in how they are able to help customers. The space I chose is the Albert Heijn I work at, on Oostplein which is in the city centre and has a different array of customers that visit the store.

By doing research about the hierarchies in the supermarket combined with my own knowledge I found out that the hierarchies influence the way different ranks of employees are able to be of service to different customers. There are a few aspects that go with this. For example; every rank has their own tasks, areas where they work in and knowledge about the store or the products. This means that some ranks are not qualified to answer questions or complaints from customers, however customers are currently not aware of this.

The hierarchy in the supermarket has a logical explanation which is, that by ranking the different tasks and responsibilities, the store is able to stay functional in a fluent motion. The classification ensures safety and importance amongst the employees. When feeling pressure or uncomfortable the lower ranks are able to pass a customer to a higher rank, who is able to assist the customer in a more professional and productive way.

This is something I see happening a lot more as of today because of the Corona Virus which has a lot of people feeling more irritated or more selfish, which puts itself onto the younger employees that are working in the supermarkets. These employees often do not know how to respond or handle this behaviour so for them having someone of higher rank allows them to escape the confrontation and not feel attacked.

I would like to make an intervention to queer the space with the result of creating more awareness about this hierarchy system. This is important to me because customers tend to forget that we, the employees of Albert Heijn, are also human beings with feelings and we work extra hard to please every customer that visits our store.

By creating flyers which connect the work schedule and purpose of different employees with the rank they are in and what this rank includes, I hope to achieve this awareness. Since everyone has to take a basket when they want to do groceries now a days, these flyers will be placed in every basket. This so the customers are faced with it every time they enter the store. To see the visual of these flyers, please look at attachment 1 on page ....

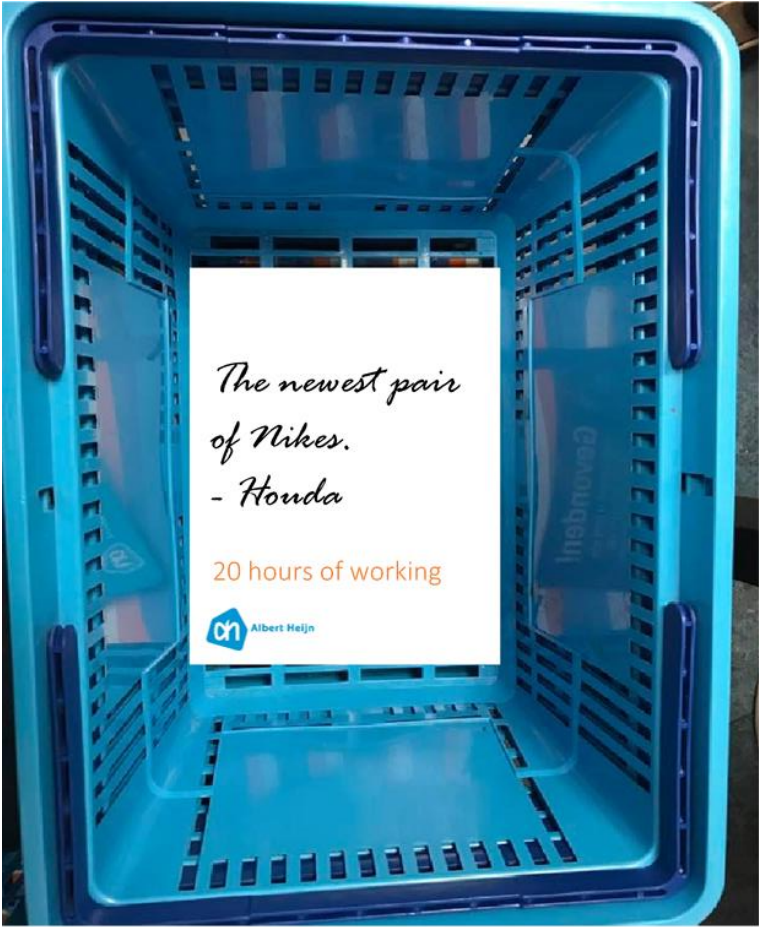
The planning of this intervention is that it starts as soon as possible, since it's a very current topic. The design for the flyers are already complete, maybe a few retouches are necessary but besides that they are done. So it would only be a matter of printing them and putting them in the baskets.

To conclude, I want to implement an intervention which sheds light on the hierarchies in the Albert Heijn in the form of a flyer which, besides the ranking of the employee, also shows how much the employees work and what they work for. Thank you for taking the time to read my proposal.

For my research and more information behind this proposal can be found on:

<https://cdp3albertheijn.hotglue.me/>

## Attachment 1



*The newest pair  
of Nikes.*  
- Honda

20 hours of working



### Cashier A:

As a Cashier you are the business card of the store, you are the person the customers see. So you make sure the checking out goes fast and carefully so the customers leave the store with a good feeling.

Limited access, only working in the check-out section of the store.



**I WORK FOR**

*Paying off my  
student loans.*

- Ramon

30 hours of working



### Cashier B:

As a cashier B you are able to stand at the service desk and on the selfscan plaza. You are able to open and close the store as well as guide and help the other cashiers/colleagues. You make sure you are polite and help customers when they have a complaint or want to bring/switch a product.

Access to the servicedesk and safe, main area is at the check-out section of the store.