



# EFFICIENCE

## FACT SHEET 6

Network of third-party digital inclusion locations located in shopping malls

**Efficienc**e  
SOLIDAIRE & CRÉATIVE



## PRESENTATION

Efficiency is a **non-profit organization** that began operations in October 2017 in Maubeuge (Nord, France). Building on its experience in the field of **digital inclusion through leading workshops** in partner organizations and providing certified training in basic digital skills, **the organization opened its first digital inclusion third-party space** in a shopping mall (Auchan Hypermarket) in 2021.



This project was made possible thanks to the **support of NHOOD**, the leading European shopping center company.

After a short-lived experiment lasting a few months, the third-place quickly found its audience.

Today, the association manages **three third-places located in shopping malls**. The **welcome is unconditional** (no age limit, socio-professional status, etc.). The third-places are available to both individuals and social integration professionals seeking **new tools to address the digital illiteracy of their beneficiaries**.

## Efficiency

### IN A FEW WORDS

- Non-profit association.
- Founded in 2017 in Maubeuge, Hauts-de-France.
- Design and management of digital support spaces within Auchan shopping centers.

### IN A FEW NUMBERS

12 employees

€600,000 budget

50 volunteers

10 volunteers

40 non-profit partners

3 third-party spaces in Hauts-de-France

1 third-party space in Île-de-France

8,000 beneficiaries per year

**First third place of digital inclusion established in a shopping mall in France**

The primary difficulty for beneficiaries is their **lack of digital literacy**, along with the fear of being scammed. Initial interactions are more often focused on **reassuring people about their capabilities** and giving them an overview of the possibilities. **The majority of spontaneous requests concern smartphone use**. This is why the gallery's telephone operators direct several people a day to the third-place to help them get started with their new equipment.

The fact that the association already existed facilitated the third-place's visibility. **Group workshops are regularly held there for beneficiaries of partner organizations**. As everywhere, the crowd attracts people.

Efficiency is careful to communicate, on its social media, about the diversity of the audiences the team is able to help (age, disability, entrepreneurs, job or training seekers, etc.).

The third-place offers fun activities **on Wednesday afternoons and a repair café on Saturday mornings**, but there are no specific slots for each category of situation. This goes a long way toward making the space welcoming and non-stigmatizing. A retiree can get help using their smartphone while a student brushes up on office tools, or an entrepreneur learns how to use social media to develop their projects.



## OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

A **third place for digital inclusion in a shopping mall** is a **first in France**. It was necessary to overcome the divide between commercial and non-commercial activities.

On the structural side, **it was necessary to adapt to the operating rules of a shopping mall** (opening hours, security).

Communication is also an issue Efficiency is constantly working on.

Indeed, it must be made clear that the structure is a free digital mediation service for all. This also requires an attractive weekly program of activities.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The Efficiency concept is based on **supporting local ecosystems**. The development of third places requires a needs assessment with local authorities and key stakeholders in the area.

The match between the local area and the proposed Efficiency solution triggers a process of **creating a new space dedicated to the inclusive digital transition**. Key stakeholders (nonprofits) and local and regional authorities are stakeholders in the process.



<http://>

**Want to know more?**

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## RESULTS AND IMPACTS

Among the beneficiaries, some use multiple resource structures (social centers, media libraries, community centers). The Efficiency third-place is where you can come and carry out **your own procedures with a digital mediator who monitors you for mistakes** and helps close pop-ups and other unwanted messages. The **beneficiaries don't really have time constraints** and know they can ask for repetitions as needed.

For example, we have an elderly person who arrived with just an old laptop she'd taken from her grandson and is very frustrated at no longer being able to manage her daily activities independently due to digitalization. After a year (maybe two), she's juggling multiple email accounts, is no longer afraid to communicate with institutions via her online accounts, and has even ended up buying a smartphone because "it's more convenient for using social media."

There are also examples of people in vulnerable situations who were not told that it was necessary to cancel their insurance policies for their old equipment online. This **represents several dozen euros per month saved for these beneficiaries** by learning how to assert their rights.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND ADVICE

Implementation times for such a project are very long (approximately 1.5 years for the opening of a third-party space). There are many procedures to follow, particularly regarding the safety regulations specific to shopping centers, which also depend on the scope of the developments to be carried out.

**The layout is very important** for the success of the space. **Ergonomic and movable furniture** is used to ensure both working comfort and the ability to accommodate a variety of configurations. A decor that is both welcoming and surprising is used to encourage familiarity and creativity.

The **diversity of the audiences being helped** is not always easy to achieve or maintain, but it is a **real added value for the third-party space**. Some beneficiaries go from being helped to being helpers, which is all the more beneficial for them in their digital learning process.

## VISION OF THE FUTURE

The concept is currently **being rolled out to other areas**.

Efficiency is drawing inspiration from the new challenges it has observed to improve its service offering. **Local areas** are increasingly interested in projects that enable their residents to **develop their skills**.

Increasingly, the organization is going beyond simply overcoming **barriers related to digital illiteracy**. The third place can become a space where the beneficiary can take the next step toward their development and independence, in safety.

