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Transformation through Service Design

Real-Time Service Design

by Lydia Howland

Go Deep or Go Home

by Joel Bailey

The New Seriousness of Design

by Lee Sankey

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Transformation through Service Design

One issue of Touchpoint each year is dedicated to the annual Service Design Global Conference, and this time we're proud to take a look back on the successful days we spent together in Cardiff in late 2013.

The numbers alone demonstrate that we succeeded in raising the bar yet again in terms of providing a stimulating and wide-ranging experience for the worldwide service design community. We had more participants than ever before (over 400), 64 speakers and presenters shared their thoughts, insight and experience from a wide range of disciplines and fields, and attendees were spoilt for choice with more than 50 sessions across the two days. The SDN Member's Day – traditionally held the day before the conference – was also our biggest yet, and a host of new faces were present to discuss the future growth and activities of the SDN (stay tuned to our Insider newsletter and social media, to hear how new initiatives such as special interest groups will take shape in 2014).

The conference was also the best documented yet, with professional videographers on hand to record every session. These were subsequently made available online – for free – to SDN members and non-members alike. If you attended the conference but missed a session, or if you didn't manage to make it to Cardiff, everything can be found by following the links from our website: www.service-design-network.org/conferences.

Whether or not you attended the conference, this issue gives you the chance to read more about the thinking and work behind a selection of conference events. Nick Leon (from London's Royal College of Art) kicked off proceedings on Day One with an existential question for service design itself: "Is service design another specialisation within the design discipline, or is it somehow reshaping design itself, transforming both what we mean by design and the role and responsibilities of designers?" (see page 18). IDEO's Lydia Howland also advocated "real time service design", sharing experiences from an African project, where designers followed the motto "fake it until you make it" (see page 37). And Geke van Dijk and Marie de Vos, from STBY's Amsterdam office, shared their work in improving Dutch rail travellers' journeys with two new service innovation; a project which went on to win the the Public Prize in the 2013 Rotterdam Design Prize competition (see page 46). Those three articles and many more await you in the following pages.

And if by the end of this issue you feel a pang of regret for missing our Cardiff gathering, we are pleased to announce that we have already confirmed the dates and location for the 7th Annual conference! Pencil them in your diary and watch for further announcements on registration and programming: We'll be meeting in Stockholm on 7-8 October 2014 (with the SDN Member's Day on 6 October). We look forward to seeing you there!

Jesse Grimes for the editorial Board

Birgit Mager is professor for service design at Köln International School of Design (KISD), Cologne, Germany. She is co-founder and president of Service Design Network and chief editor of Touchpoint.

Jesse Grimes has thirteen years experience as an interaction designer and consultant, now specialising in service design. He has worked in London, Copenhagen, Düsseldorf and Sydney, and is now based in Amsterdam with Dutch agency Informaat.

Alisan Atvur directs service design research and strategy at Propelland in Silicon Valley. Previously, he lead design strategy initiatives at frog, GE and InReality (a customer experience consultancy).

Magnus Bergmark is Business Strategy director at Experience Design firm Doberman. Starting as a web entrepreneur in the nineties, Magnus is today a senior consultant in service design and digital design with experience from client work in a broad range of industries.

Phil Goad leads Nile's service design practice and is a founder and co-chair of SDN UK. He's been consulting for over 10 years and has run teams at several leading agencies, where he's worked on insight, brand and service design challenges for a wide range of global clients.



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Feature

Transformation through Service Design

The Service Design Imperative



Nick Leon is head of service design at the Royal College of Art (RCA) in London. Nick began his career as an industrial designer at IBM, moving from designing products then services, through to developing entire new businesses in his role as business development director for IBM's Global Services division in Europe.

Is service design another specialisation within the design discipline, or is it somehow reshaping design itself, transforming both what we mean by design and the role and responsibilities of designers? Applying design practice to the other 80% of the economy, especially public services, which represent around half of that, is likely to stretch the boundaries of the discipline. But is design going further than that?

In this essay I will explore a greater context for service design, driven by unprecedented social, environmental and economic imperatives, the opportunities for service transformation that digital technologies present and the implications for redefining design itself.

We face unprecedented challenges at this time: stresses on the environment, shrinking resources for a growing and increasingly urbanised and ageing population, rising inequality and outdated financial systems. Our planet will not redesign itself: it will take the ingenuity of designers — blending design for people with technological innovation — to address these issues. Similarly, we are experiencing a unique combination of digital technology innovations, which in the last ten years have collectively surpassed all the innovations in information technology

in the previous four decades, from six billion mobile phone accounts globally to the rise of social media, the realisation of the internet of things and the exploitation of big data. We have tools to transform existing services and to innovate new ones, and the imperative for these innovations in the public realm, driven by need, and in the private sector, driven by global competition, are more intense than ever. However, governments are struggling to address these challenges, focusing their efforts on managing today's public services and the public purse rather than tackling the big social and environmental issues. The most innovative technology firms, as well as big mobile operators, financial services and global energy providers are shaping the way we live and interact, our culture and society and our environment, both positively and negatively, far more

than our politicians. These firms need innovation to survive, and the designer is crucial to their capacity to innovate. Never has design had such a powerful role to play, but seizing the opportunity comes with responsibility.

A VALUES-BASED FRAMEWORK

Designers cannot be agnostic with regards to these opportunities, as well as to the issues that are facing us. While our discipline has always focused on creating new levels of value for our clients and their customers, we also have to reflect on our values. Are our interventions adding to the challenges we face, or helping address them? Service design means engaging at a systems level, not just a component level. To make a meaningful impact requires designers with deeper and broader skills. It needs designers with the capacity to shape strategy, not just the form of products or the physical manifestations of a service touch point, or workflows.

The choices that designers make need to be value-based, not only about value creation. Designers must recognise the social and environmental impact of their design decisions, as well as seeking out opportunities to actively engage with these issues. As designers, we must combine the creation of value within an explicit framework of values. We

pride ourselves on being the ones most connected to society and contemporary culture, so it is a special responsibility that falls on us.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE — CONSEQUENCE OR INTENTION

Designers are taught to start by exploring a problem area at a systemic level, identifying opportunities for design intervention and framing the specific problem that they will address. We learn to start by designing the experience before figuring out the characteristics of the solution that resolve the problem. This experience-led design model is even more important in a world where services are the dominant form of consumption, the dominant sector for employment and the greatest contributor to our economy.

With a few notable exceptions, until now designers have mostly played a subsidiary role in the design of services. Designers are often involved in the design of the touchpoints of a service, individual products (and the interaction with them), communications and marketing materials, and interior, environmental and retail design. The user or customer experience has been a consequence of the design of the products, the processes and programming, the places and the skills of the people. This experience itself was not explicitly designed, rather it resulted

from the choices made in other design and technical disciplines. In other words, it was consequential not intentional. The opportunity for service designers is to turn this around, making the service experience intentional, and specify the systems, processes and organisation to fulfil it. As designers, it means we have to extend our service design skills and build expertise in systems design, organisational behaviour, strategy and change management.

DESIGNING FOR FOUR DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF VALUE

When we design services we need to understand not only users and the context in which they live their lives, but all the other people who have a stake in the solution or who interact with users, especially those who deliver the service. Services can only be delivered successfully if those who deliver them

- Are able to contribute value of their own to the service, enriching the service proposition and the recipient's experience
- Believe in the intrinsic value of the service for the user or society so that they are fully invested in the relevance and meaning of the service
- Feel valued by their organisation and its management to enhance their personal motivation and self-esteem
- Can align their personal values with the organisation's values

If any one of those four expressions of value is missing, the service experience will ultimately fail, and it is the designer's role to ensure all four expressions of value are present.

Because the people delivering the service need the capacity to convey value, as well as to create value for the recipient, personally, the service experience cannot be defined in a wholly deterministic way or by the blueprint alone. This requires designers to have expertise in organisational behaviour and management to ensure this is explicitly designed into the service proposition. People-centred design is not just about designing for

the recipients of the service. Designing for those who deliver the service can be equally important, as argued by Rosenbluth and Peters in their influential book, *The Customer Comes Second*, (Harper Collins, 1992).

NEW AND COMPLEMENTARY SKILLS

Service designers need to enrich their core discipline with complementary skills:

- **Systems design** to enable designers to deconstruct the current service and user experience and reconfigure, refresh or even replace it entirely with one that fits with the lifestyle of users or the operating environment of the organisation
- An understanding of organisations and organisational behaviour, so that designers can innovate the processes, practices and resulting organisations that will be responsible for the delivery of the total user experience
- **Business-model Innovation:** recognising that the propositions cannot be independent of the business model associated with the provision and delivery of the service
- **Design management:** because each touchpoint may involve different products, visual communications, the design of multiple interactions with physical and digital media, as well as the spaces, places and processes people will use to deliver the service, the service designer also has to be an expert design manager, focusing on the total user experience and coordinating all the other disciplines to achieve this goal.

TRANS-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS

Designing product/service systems and the business models that enable them means crossing boundaries between design disciplines, business and engineering. It means changes to the processes and practices, not just of designers, but rather how firms innovate and organise themselves. This has implicit challenges as we share different working practices and cultures, but it is crucial that designers create bridges to those disciplines, especially if they are to lead the innovation.

A FINAL REFLECTION

We are living in extraordinary times. The challenges of environmental and climate change, an ageing demographic, pressure on resources, rapid urbanisation and issues of social and economic exclusion require action. Our world is not going to get better on its own. Designers have the biggest-ever design job, as well as a responsibility to design a better world and the way we live on it. Every design choice is an opportunity to make design truly meaningful and to resonate with people's lives, as well as helping to transform our world. This requires designers to argue the case for change cogently, with compelling evidence and expertise on these complex issues, and to demonstrate both thought, as well as organisational leadership. ●

