

SERVICE DESIGN AS A SERVICE

WHY PROJECTS DON'T GET PAST IMPLEMENTATION

AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT



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AHO 2015

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Master thesis

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INTRO

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Executive Summary

“The biggest challenge service design faces is how to get things implemented”

- Senior Service Designer²

Service design is growing fast, and becoming a buzzword¹. Everyone wants holistic services, with the right customer experience and planned so the organisation can deliver on them. Service designers step right in to the world of MBAs and try to tackle these demands using the toolbox of design.

This project explores that challenge and what we service designers can do to have projects implemented in big organisations. We've interviewed over 60 people from 30 firms and organisations in both Norway and the United States and the prevailing view both from customers and service designers is to blame the organisation and client side for being limited by “immaturity” towards innovation, as well as inexperience with using designers “right”.

We fundamentally believe that the user is never at fault, so we cannot accept that the fault lies in the organisation. Instead we see the lack of successful implementations as a symptom of a weakness in service design. We think this is a much more positive outlook: If the problem is with us then it's ours to fix.

We started the project looking for what we service designers can improve to make our services easy to use, even for “immature” clients. In the end we have concluded that the problem is deeper than ease of use, and stems from unrealizable designs due to a lack of systematic evaluation of feasibility and viability.

We postulate that to get our designs through we need to earn trust by taking responsibility for making our designs viable and feasible, as well as desirable, and give the client sufficient proof of concept for all three. Only then should they trust the design and start an expensive implementation.

From our research we have suggestions for a revised design process, where the service designer takes responsibility for creating realizable designs and plans the project in accordance with change management theory. We hope this proposal and the insights gathered can help service design overcome the challenges we see. To achieve that goal we have also created and begun executing a plan for how we can spread the material and ideas.

¹ Sarah Ronald, SDN UK <http://uk.service-design-network.org/?p=239>, 20.11.14

² Except where explicitly allowed and required for context, we anonymise all quotes to make it easier to publish negative ones.



Candidates

**Jane Pernille Landa Hansen
and Daniel Sølund Jackson**

We're both industrial designers from the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, with specializations in systems-oriented service design.

We've spent a year and a half freelancing together as service designers, and we both have a year of psychology (Pernille from NTNU and Daniel from UiO). Daniel also has a year of economics from UiO and seven years freelancing as a web designer.

You can read more at
janepernille.com and **danieljackson.no**.

Scope

Improve the field and ourselves

Our goal was to use our diploma to make a contribution to the whole service design field.

We had heard that service design had problems with implementation, and wanted to use the four months available in our thesis to help. Contributing to solving such a hairy question would require talking to a wide array of people and giving something back to all of them could give them an incentive to use their time on us.

Ultimately the task of helping service designers would benefit ourselves as well. The problem seemed much too time-consuming once our hands were busy with a full-time job so we wanted to look into it before we left school.

Big, private organisations

To reduce the scope we have specified the scenario we look at to be service design as externals from a design agency, tasked with redesigning a large service in a big private organisation.

The scenario is chosen to drive the process: Big organisations are more complex and have a lot of other factors that can kill a project in unforeseen ways. This also makes knowledge in change management more important.

A change of existing service adds the dimension of having to consider an existing structure in the change process.

A private corporation has a profit motive, which we felt challenged service design more than the public sector.

We also have the opportunity to talk with people from big private organisations thanks to the Center for Service Innovation (CSI) - a collaboration between AHO, NHH, DNB, Telenor and Posten Norway.

Assuming we were wrong, going wide to tackle complexity

At the start of the process our hypothesis was that the blueprint, a map of a service structure, did not work well as an end delivery because it was hard to read and use - and that one reason projects weren't implemented was that the plan for what should be implemented, the blueprint, wasn't user friendly.

However, we assumed we were wrong and that the picture would be much more complex. Using systems oriented service design methodologies we started to expand the problem area.

We probed people in interviews to bring up their own issues with service design by asking broad questions like "What did you expect from service design? Did it match expectations?", "What could we do more of and what could we do less of?" and "Which deliverables or parts of the process were the most useful? Which didn't you use?" Although we made interview guides we have not used a strict structure in interviews, making them less comparable but covering much wider ground.

Through those and other broad questions we have uncovered hundreds of leads and followed dozens of them.

During the process we visualized, mapped, re-mapped and tried to understand the information that came up, looking for the actionable areas.

Singling out actionable areas

We wanted to find the issues we could impact with the resources we have available. Our original intention was to find a deliverable we could change, or a tool we could make.

As the process went on we uncovered what we see as deep flaws in our own knowledge of how to design services as well as service design as it's practiced by agencies. We therefore chose to spend more time researching. That left us with a much better base for decisions and recommendations, but fewer iterations on any designs and plans for impact. We feel this trade off was worth it.

In the end we've made a road map to improving three areas, and held a workshop with Service Design Network (SDN) where we attempted to introduce people to the problems we see. Central to our road map is that our material is spread to as many service designers as possible, and we've tried to make it easy to share.

In addition to the main findings the report also features an appendix with other reflections and findings from our research. We hope this can be as interesting to other service designers as it was to us.

The material will be distributed to everyone we have talked to and might become the basis of several workshops hosted by SDN Norway.

Structure

The project started formally January 2015 and spanned four months to the 11th of May 2015, and is a Industrial design master's thesis² at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Norway.

We spent most of that time interviewing 64 different people from all around the business and analysing what they said. In addition to interviews we've been observing five separate projects and processes in 11 workshops, as well as arranged two workshops ourselves. From all of that we've analysed different projects and processes, drawing conclusions and making reflections on what we think service designers could do differently to have a greater impact.

2 "Diploma", in AHO lingo

The report is split in two: The first part is the main narrative around three things we think are most important: One hidden strength, one major weakness and one low-hanging fruit. The second part is everything else, including more details on our process and who we've talked to.

The text is our current understanding, and at best a glimpse of the truth. We do not claim to have a complete picture of the field. It's written to be actionable for other service designers who can make use of the information we've gathered, perhaps especially junior service designers like ourselves. Our hope is that even with all it's limitations our research will help service design as a field talk about problems we see as fundamental.



MAIN FINDINGS

Our main findings are one hidden strength, one major weakness and one low-hanging fruit.

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HIDDEN STRENGTH

We're doing much more than service design, but we're not good at telling about it.

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Service design is confusing because it is many services

Most of the people we talked to seem to struggle to define service design in clear language. It's become such a prevalent thing that on the 28th of march the comic strip "Lunch", published in the national newspaper Dagbladet, ran the joke seen below.

We define the service "Service design" as a service where you pay for someone to purposefully shape a service using user-focused design skills and methods. However, we've seen agencies deliver several services labeled service design that do not fit this definition.

Our research suggests that much of the confusion about what service design is, and what you can use service designers for, stem from this mix of services under the same name.

We also think it's a hidden strength: Service design agencies do more than design services, and should communicate and sell those other services.

We've attempted to divide the services service designers provide over the next pages:

Lunch, as printed in Dagbladet. Photo by Jacksons mom. She's amazing.



The services of “Service design”

Service Design

Design a service. Make sure it's useful, usable, and gives the right experience across both the digital, human and physical channels - while making sure the service is both feasible backstage and viable for the business. The service is usually external and customer-facing, but can be internal and facing employees.

Closely related to user experience design and modern branding. Also related to sales, marketing, operations, and dependent on good touchpoint design, organisational design, and business design.

Service Concept art

Design a concept art service. Make sure it's inspiring and shows the organisation what could be. If it's feasible that's good, and it might transition from concept art to real design - but know your mandate. Real design requires a much deeper integration with the organisation as it's intended to be implemented.

Closely related to modern branding.

Organisational design

Design the internal workings of an organisation: Incentives, programmes for changing culture, work processes, training programmes, hiring processes,

strategy and change management. Making sure all of those are useful, usable and give the right experience. This is often included in Service design (as designing for services) in Norway, but separated as it's own design discipline at IDEO. We think separating it makes it clear that this is a useful service for any organisation, whether they deliver services or not, and is useful even when the organisation is not looking to change its customer-facing services.

Closely related to leadership and management, change management in particular.

Business design

Design or redesign of a whole business, for example a startup. How will it earn money? What should its value proposition be? How will it be structured? This is separated as it's own design discipline at IDEO, but would include designing the services of the new business and it's internal workings and organisational structure. We have not seen any service design projects doing this in Norway, but have heard service designers wanting to do it as a natural extension of designing for services. We also see that several agencies have added business designers to their payroll over the last few years, some who are former management consultants.

Closely related to entrepreneurship and all business fields.

Human service encounter design

Designing a single service encounter between two humans. Might be a phone call, might be over a desk.¹

Closely related to sales, customer care, interaction design and psychology².

Service User research

User research mapped along a service journey or multi-channel blueprint and seen in relation to touchpoints, actors, and other facets of a service. Focused on needs, expectations, experience and the pain points that occur when needs or expectations aren't met or channels don't cooperate. Not intended to design a service.

Closely related to anthropology and user experience design.

Design driven facilitation

Facilitate with visualization and designed tools to make it easy to have constructive meetings, workshops, and work flows through complex processes. This is used as a tool in service design, but we've seen it used to help manage any process, not just when the organisation wants to change a service, and think it's useful enough to be sold as it's own service.

Closely related to chaos pilots and systems oriented design.

¹ We're certain that there must be a discipline for this, but we don't know what it is.

² We got a tip that mnemonics in particular is useful for creating training programmes.

Advising and coaching in service design thinking

While in San Francisco we were instructed that coaching leaders in design thinking is useful for both the leaders and the agencies, as well as highly profitable for the design agencies. In this role the designer doesn't himself design a service, but is advising and coaching leaders so they are user and service aware when leading the organisation. He can also, like IDEO promotes, help the leaders "unleash their creative potential and become design thinkers" - so they can apply design thinking and a creative mindset to their normal problem solving.

Closely related to management consulting, design thinking, and leadership coaching.

Touchpoint design

Designing one channel or one touchpoint, while taking the whole service experience into consideration and trying to fit into an overall service experience vision. Delivered by a professional interaction designer, industrial designer, graphic designer, or similar design competency. Can also be labeled "using a service design mentality" or "service design methods", and does not design the service outside the competency of the designer.

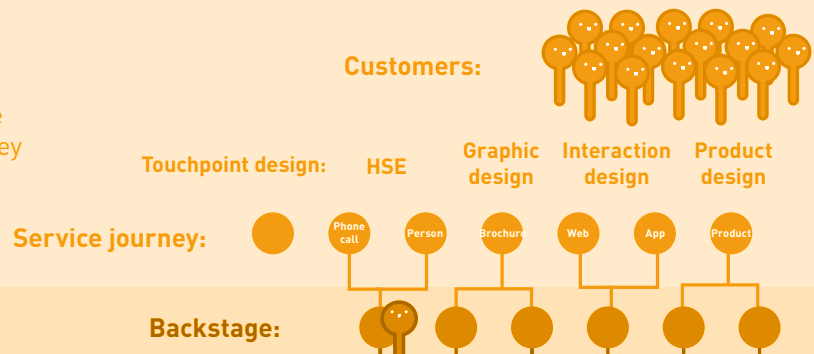
Closely related to user experience design, and all single-channel fields of design.

BD

Designing the business

SD

Designing the service journey

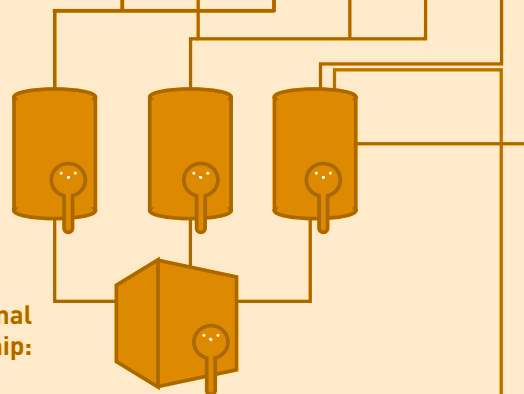


OD

Designing and changing the organisation

Organisational structure:

Organisational leadership:

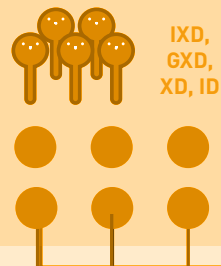


SD

Designing the internal service journeys

Employees:

Supporting systems:



Different service designers

Julie Zhou, product design director at Facebook, writes the following in a blog post on how to work with designers:

“Designers are different. Even a class of ‘all-star’ designers would think about problems differently. This is because design encompasses many things¹”.

She then groups designers roughly into three camps. It’s a simple model that might offend by being too simple, but we agree with Zhou that it’s useful - both to know what kind of designer you work with and to diagnose service design as a discipline. We have adapted her grouping for service design to make it clearer what types of service designer you might meet:

¹ <https://medium.com/the-year-of-the-looking-glass/how-to-work-with-designers-6c975dede146>, retrieved February 2015

Delight

Delight is all about the senses. The old “make it look good and feel good” of design. In service design this would be the designers who want to create experiences for people, and polish the orchestration until it shines. The “delight”-service designer is busy with details and how to align those details to make a huge, branded, experiential difference.



Usability

Usability is about making the service easy to use. Removing pain points and confusion, and user testing each iteration to find out if real people manage a use the service. The “usability”-service designer is busy with finding ways to ease users lives and make intuitive services that just work.



Offering

Offering is about creating the right service. Finding what users really need and if the current service solves the right problem, or if a different solution, perhaps with a different business model, is needed. The “offering” service designer is busy with understanding the systemic context of the service and solving ambiguous, complex problems.



Method or discipline?

We've observed that many focus on the tools and methods of service design as one of its defining characteristics. The blueprint, the service journey and AT-ONE have all been used to define service design by interviewees.

This shifts focus away from the design knowledge and competence that makes for good answers to the questions the tools pose. Many buyers have an ambition of learning service design internally, and seem to think that as soon as they've learned to map along a service journey then innovative and customer friendly services will follow.

The same seems true of some service designers coming from other design fields, who in our perception seems to lack knowledge that there is more to orchestrating an experience than designing isolated touchpoints along a timeline, and more to implementing a service than coding the applications it uses. The more we've researched about designing services the more it's clear that it's a discipline with specific domain knowledge, that takes a considerable amount of effort and time to learn and master.

A few buyers show a much deeper understanding of service design as a discipline, saying that they need experienced service designers not just service methodology. However, they struggle finding these experienced service designers. They might end up

filling positions with juniors who are either straight out of school or recently migrated from other fields, letting people without deep domain knowledge of service design define what service design is.

What can we do about this?

If service designers were better at communicating the actual competency we bring to the table we would make it more difficult to claim you're a service designer only because you've used the tools.

However, the demand is much higher than the supply. Every day new people repurpose themselves as service designers reading about the hype or recognizing themselves in some description. It might be that service design as practiced today actually is a method, although it would benefit from being a discipline.

Throughout this text we make some attempts at exploring what the domain knowledge of the discipline service design is and should be. It should be mentioned that we don't yet consider that we live up to that standard.

Divide and conquer

These divisions has made it easier for us to tackle the complexity of service design as a practice and is, we feel, clearer both for agencies and for buyers³.

We hope it will let agencies sell the correct service, setting the right expectations and assigning the right designers. We also hope it can let design as a field concentrate on what competencies are needed to truly deliver on these different services, without cultivating a mush of unspecialized do-it-all designers or falling for the trap that service design is a method or set of tools.

³ We have not tested this claim with buyers or agencies.



LOW HANGING FRUIT

Everyone is asking for numbers, but service designers don't measure.
That should be an easy fix.

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Evaluation of service design

No numbers no joy

Throughout our research we have heard people in the disciplines closest to service design - other designers and other service developers - be skeptical towards service design. Their clearest complaint is:

“Where are the hard numbers - the proof that it works?”

- Designer

With service design getting a lot of attention the skeptics are asking for numbers like:

- 1) Change in revenue
- 2) Change in profits
- 3) Change in customer satisfaction

Performing quantitative measurements requires deciding on what will be measured early in the project, so you can measure before and after. Usually the organisation already measures a number of things, but you might want to expand to more specific measures.

Measurement is the only real proof of concept for service design as a tool in service development and makes for great sales pitches later.

Did we achieve the goals?

With measurable goals and measurements done you can determine if the goals were achieved, and adjust the solution accordingly.

“I often wish the designers could come back a year later to do some adjustments.”

- Buyer

Many customers feel we should follow up after the project is launched and implemented to adjust a little, measurements can make that a powerful opportunity to find out what you do that works and what doesn't work.

You should measure your next project

Measuring is important

The lack of concrete numbers worries possible clients and some service designers, but is dismissed by devout buyers and service designers who are certain that the process works and feel traditional measuring is not necessary because the results should be evident, or that traditional measurements does not pick up on the value added. We disagree. Numbers are a universal language, and by having them we can communicate our worth to a broader audience.

In other change initiatives, quantitative measurement is the only way of evaluating whether or not the initiative was a success. Until we deliver the same numbers many people will not trust service design.

Measuring is easy ¹

We think measuring is a low hanging fruit for service designers. The only thing that has to be done is to cooperate with the client on finding what should be the measurable definition of success for this process, and make sure it is measured before and after.

Measuring is good

It's also a sweet fruit. Measure, and we can prove that service design works. Measuring the impact of your next project could be the single biggest thing you can do to contribute to service design.

¹ Given that one of our other major findings is that the two of us lack understanding of feasibility, that might of course be wrong



MAJOR WEAKNESS

Service design struggles getting further than pre-projects, and concepts are not getting implemented. We've concluded the problem is not in the presentation of the concepts, but in the quality. They lack the viability and feasibility needed to be realisable.

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Service design and implementation



70% of all change initiatives fail¹.

Change is hard.

We don't have any numbers showing that service design fails to get implemented more often than other types of service development.

What we do have is dozens of opinions from service designers, observers and clients that go like this:

"The biggest challenge for service design today is that service design as a method is associated with pre-projects"

- Jarle Strømme, Sopra Steria²

"Many service design projects are not getting implemented [...] over time, however, the ideas might resurface as inspiration"

- Senior Business advisor

"The biggest challenge for service design is getting implemented"

- Senior Service designer

From all our preliminary interviews and the interviews done in this project, it seems clear that service design has a problem with implementation. We therefore started digging into why service design projects and ideas did not make it.

¹ Hilde Dybdhals Johannesens Diploma, Designing Change. AHO 2014.

² <http://sterkblending.no/blog/2014/10/21/det-nye-gullet-tjenestedesign/>

Why implementation fails

Reasons we already knew about

Implementing a change means changing the engine while the airplane is in the air. You need to carefully consider how it can be done without disrupting the flow of the company as there is a limited time before you have too little altitude.

What is a failed implementation?

We define this as a project that should have been successful and would have improved the service, but that ended up losing its nerve or being stopped while being brought to market.

There are many reasons given for why implementations fail. These are the ones we already knew about before starting the project, and that interviewees have repeated:

Immature organisations

Is the organisation ready to use a customer centric approach like service design?

Both customers and service designers tell of organisations that are not ready for change or not rigged for change, where the culture, incentives, and power structure focuses on profit and internal systems, not customers and external experience.

No big organisation is monolithic. There will always be dissenting opinions and ways of working, and although the buyer might be open for service design the rest of the organisation might not. If so, we

might have to pitch differently to the organisation when trying to prove our concepts.

Too weak anchoring of the process and idea in organisation

“Psychology is the most important factor for change”

- Potential buyer

Through including people in the process we anchor it, both through helping people understand and be comfortable with the process and through creating ownership of the process.

If you don't have the right people involved you can end up with decision makers and gatekeepers who will distrust your concept because they did not make it. That means knowing who the right people are and getting them involved is fundamental to anchoring the process and idea, as per change manager guru Kotter's "Guiding coalition".³

In addition to getting gatekeepers involved the whole organisation needs to trust the process and concept if it's going to be implemented. That might mean involving more and more of the organisation and enlisting what Kotter calls an "army of volunteers".

³ Kotter's 8 steps to change: <http://www.kotterinternational.com/the-8-step-process-for-leading-change/>

Handovers to a new team

“The only way to succeed is to have the same team do the whole thing”

- Potential buyer

“The best handover is no handover”

- Management consultant

Several interviewees mention having a handover from one core team to another as the death knell for any project. In the handover a considerable amount of information is lost, not least about the intent of the project. They insist that you need a core team that stays throughout the whole process, while scaling up and down the non-core team according to project needs.

Should the service designer be part of that core team? We, and some buyers, think so:

“Having the service designers there for the whole process helps keep the nerve of the project”

- Buyer⁴

“You leave projects too early, you need to change your business model [so you can stay through implementation].”

- Buyer

The same is true of many of the people we have talked to on the designer's side. They are frustrated that they're not included in implementation and think that if only they had been there then they could solve the problems of concepts not being implemented or losing nerve.

Getting external service designers to stay throughout the entire process might be a hard sell. The people we interviewed at IDEO try to overcome the challenge by embedding the client's core team in the whole design process - taking them along for everything from user interviews to ideation, under the slogan "everyone can be creative". Each team member from the client is responsible for reporting back to the client's organisation, creating a momentum for change wider than IDEO could do alone.

This strategy makes the embedded team know the research, ideas, and process as well as the designers. Making them better suited to spread the change after IDEO has left.

Another technique used by IDEO is to coach a team of internals in the client's organisation in using the delivery, as a parallel process. That way they're ready for when it comes.

⁴ Who keeps service designers around

Reasons we add:

Usability of design deliverables

Both the written plans of the management consultants and the more visual huge PDFs of the designers seem hard to use and too inflexible to change when needed. And there will be a need to change the plans: Change initiatives are living beasts where circumstances change and nothing goes exactly as planned. The flexibility of the tools used to plan them is crucial.

Service design deliverables the way we do them at school are not well suited for change processes:

- Many are impossible to edit without Adobe suite, creating high barriers to use
- Format doesn't fit workflow : PDF (not .PPT or .DOC) and often oversized for office use
- Words and terms not business-lingo
- Structure not known or self-explanatory, hard to explain in rest of organisation.
- Structure doesn't fit workflow or silos: Who's responsible for which part? Where's my task?
- Client can't draw, gives barrier to add or edit drawings, as well as remove drawn points. It's a barrier to change when any change will be uglier and less visual.

Others tools avoid this: We've seen that Livework's multi-channel blueprints show clearly which silo (which channel) is responsible for which part of the experience⁵. Eggs' goal-oriented blueprint works as a to-do-list for what needs to be done to achieve the right experience. Adaptive Path use Excel for blueprints, so the client can cooperate on them.

*“No plan survives contact
with the enemy”*

- Moltke

5 And is very reminiscent of the business tool RIS - "Roller i Samspill"



Failure to convince that the project is worth the risk

“It’s really hard to tell a bad project from a good project”

- Senior Service Designer

The book “Rise of the DEO” claims designers are well suited for leadership in the modern age, in part because they are so risk-tolerant. However risk-tolerant designers might be, the decision makers still need to be convinced and it will take more than a hunch if the investment is big.

Decision makers are faced with people who want projects funded every single day. Their job is to separate the good from the bad, and they need to be convinced that the project is worth the risk more than the others they have been pitched to. Other teams, with business backgrounds, will bring numbers to the table. We designers are trained to bring stories - leaving calculating the monetary risks and gains to the decision maker. That might not be enough.

Ideas that aren’t realizable

Convincing decision makers that a project is worth the risk is a sales situation, and there will always be two sides to a sales pitch: The perceived value of the offer, and the actual value.

When starting our research we assumed that service design ideas were good, but did not get implemented because they were not presented in a format usable by the organisation. In essence we thought the value was good, but we had to work on the perceived value.

When we got the following quote it felt like a cold shower:

“If I’m going to be a little harsh I would say the service designers added no value in ideation because they lacked business understanding.”

- Management consultant

This hits the very basis of our identity as designers. If there’s anything designers should be good at, it’s coming up with great ideas that combine business viability with technical feasibility and user desirability.⁶ This person had been working with a reputable design agency over a long period on a common project, and described the ideas from the designers as so far from reality that they didn’t add any value, not even as inspiration.

⁶ See for example IDEO.com/about

**Service design has a
“business understanding”-problem**

At first we were intrigued, but not alarmed. Then we started to look through our notes:

“We can’t do anything outdoors, but service designers keep suggesting it. I wish they would understand what we can actually do”

- Buyer

“Externals need to base suggestions on business [...] and make concepts scaled for implementation”

- Buyer

“Service designers shouldn’t need to know about business, that’s the leaders’ table.”

- Buyer

“I wish designers would make plans for how we can administer the service”

- Buyer

“I see a lot of [service design] concepts that are very vague.”

- Buyer

“Service designers need to understand change management”

- Hilde D. Johannessen, AHO Diploma

What we found was that several observers and some clients had questioned the quality of service design deliveries and ideas:

One observer (a designer) had a client receive a service design from a reputable design agency, but had to make them return it. The client was initially pleased, because they did not know what to expect, but the observer saw the delivery as having “no content” and being on a level of “aggregated fluff” where nothing was truly designed or solved. At the second attempt the Service design delivery was much more concrete and came with what the observer saw as actual designs.

One user, a consultant working with service designers from another reputable agency, had hoped using service designers throughout the whole service development process would help make the services desirable, but found the service designers didn’t have tools for the whole process and dismissed service design as a serious tool beyond user research.

Others agree in various ways that business understanding and service design don’t always go together.

This is not to say that no one does realizable designs. One buyer said the service designers he used were good: They knew the organisation well and proposed smart and small changes that were possible to implement. However he had seen other agencies who presented things he would “never see as service design” that was “no better than the ideas ad agencies come with when they design services”.

Business understanding is fundamental

First time buyers are open to test out what service design is, and define their view of service design by that experience. Most buyers are pleased with the quality of the work, but after the first encounter many do not expect realizable ideas or designs - only 'concept art'. They therefore only hire service designers for early phase user insights and "inspiring and challenging ideas". One user, when prompted with what we would need to add to the project to be able to deliver a design that could be implemented, said "What you do is not service design. It's user experience design. Service design is hard numbers and facts."

We believe this view is extremely corrosive for service design and hurts the end result, even though the clients are pleased with the work. To us, design has to combine business viability, technical feasibility, and the user⁷. Only then can the designer come with ideas that both make it to market and deserve to go to market.

If designers "lack business understanding", and therefore aren't able to design within the limits the organisation and reality offers, then this is a huge and basic fault. As an example, imagine a product

7 Others might add social and environmental sustainability, like "Service design, from Insight to Implementation" by does. [Lavrans L., Andrew P. & Reason B. (c 2013). Service Design: from insight to implementation.]

designer that doesn't have an understanding of materials and doesn't understand how engineers work. That product designer would not be useful for anything but concept art.

Luckily we had courses in material technology and production methods when studying product design, and learned about costs, tensile strength, production methods and the difference between 5000-series and 6000-series aluminum alloys (the latter adds silicon). With this basic understanding of the engineers domain we are equipped to spar with the engineer and come up with creative products that can actually be produced. We do not feel we have the same level of "material" knowledge for services, and neither do other junior service designers we've interviewed.

Doesn't co-creation cover this?

Co-creation is supposed to bring the business side into the design process through workshops with cross-disciplinary participants, who together with the designers can come up with great and realizable designs. That certainly seems to work, but as one user said: "Having the right people in the room doesn't help if you don't know how to spar with them."

There's also a different problem: Knowing who the right people are. Without knowing who the right people are you might end up trusting the buyer to bring them in. That's taking a risk in organisations with silos, as the buyer might not know who is actually needed to cover every area of a service design. The buyer might not bring in people who are critical, and who can later shoot down the project because it's not feasible for their domain.

Isn't this just bad design? Good designers wouldn't lack business understanding.

Yes, we agree it's bad design. Unfortunately it comes from reputable agencies. Like this user experienced, seniority is no guarantee of business understanding:

"We first had some students in, then hired professional designers later. Strangely it felt like the professional designers understood less of the business than the students."

- User

We are certain that as long as many service designers deliver unfeasible designs, then trust and expectations for the whole field is eroded.

That means that even the agencies who do deliver feasible ideas are harmed by bad work done by others. In the words of one interaction designer complaining about the quality of service designs: "One customer told me he would stop using design altogether after an encounter with service designers".

Some service designers are described by clients as having excellent business understanding, with either backgrounds at business schools or business positions, or gained from long hands-on experience. We've also picked up that some agencies are taking steps to gain more business understanding. Some hire business people, others send their designers on business classes. That's good, but our current understanding is that service designers see business understanding as a bonus that you can have. We believe business understanding has to become a mandatory part of what's considered service design, as viability and feasibility is in all domains of design, and that this is a serious issue that the design community as a whole has to tackle if service design is to live up to its potential.

What is business understanding?

“It’s just common sense”

- Business law graduate

*“There’s no course in business understanding
- you just have to pick it up. It’s the sum
of all the different courses.”*

- Former business school student
and junior service designer

*“Business understanding is an intuitive understanding
of the economical connections in a company. How
the firm works, the organisation, the chain of
command, the value chain. How and where value
is created. If you understand how value is
created you have business understanding.”*

- Investor

We have no easy answer to what business understanding is. It encompasses all the different business fields, from branding to operations, leadership to economics. We think it should also include design. While researching it we quickly discovered it’s a much bigger topic than we could hope to learn in the time we had available.

Based on our current understanding we would divide business understanding in three:

Understanding the customer, understanding the organisation and understanding the production.

Understanding the customer

Who they are, what they're willing to pay for and how they feel. Their needs and desires. What are the different market segments, and which one of them can you can earn the most money from.

We think designers are strong here, and have an even bigger impact when working together with marketing to be able to add numbers to market segments and understand the economic basis for the user groups.

Understanding the organisation

How to get things done, internal politics, and change management. The company strategy and brand. Culture, leadership and incentive structures. The mandate of the project.

Our impression is that service designers have a weak understanding of the organisation, but know it's weak. Some work has been done on change management⁸ - and we know CSI is working on the "experience centric organisation"⁹ - but those are all cutting edge. The field seems to need an increased understanding of leadership theory and practice, from incentive structures to organisational psychology.

⁸ Designing Change. AHO 2014

⁹ A theory exploring experience centricity being the next competitive advantage after customer centricity

Understanding the production

The core value production and how it's run. Things like tools, buildings, employees and software used to deliver the service. Includes costs (both running costs and investments), revenue streams, limitations and regulations. The basic realities of what's actually being produced.

Our impression is that service designers have a common sense understanding that things cost money, but few tools or knowledge for different cost structures or revenue streams, nor knowledge about which investments would be required for changing a service.

We've seen plenty of service designers claim that "good experience gives good profits" but have not seen any service design deliveries show that the proposed service will make money and be worth the investment through subtracting costs from profits.

¹⁰

¹⁰ We have asked for deliverables in projects, but have not asked everyone specifically if there was a cost/benefit analysis. It might be that some of our cases include it, but that the designers and customers we've interviewed didn't include them.

How much business understanding do we need?

“What you do is not service design, it’s user experience design. If you want to do service design then you need a lot more [...] that’s hard numbers and facts.”

- User

“If designers want to be part of implementation then you have to come with suggestions to how your concepts can be implemented.”

- User

We do not claim service designers should become business people. Our strength is understanding the human aspects of a service and using that understanding to design. Just like the industrial designer needs to cooperate with engineers to bring products to market, so will the service designer need to cooperate with different people to bring services to market.

Our claim is that we at a minimum need to know enough about the different aspects of a business to know who these people are, when to bring them in, and how to spar with them. We need to know what’s missing from our concepts and what will have to be answered before the client dares send the project to a gate keeper.

On top of that we think that the more you know the more you can pull from when being creative, and we do not think you can be a great service designer without having a good understanding of business.

Is it enough to learn a framework?

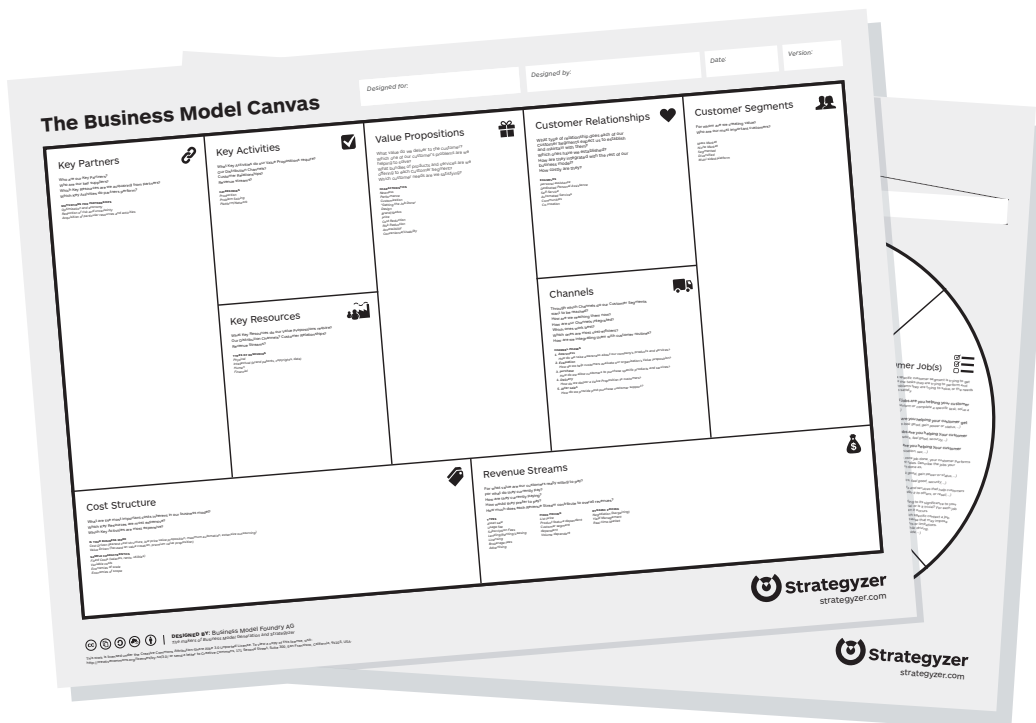
We know the Business Model Canvas from Strategyzer is popular amongst service designers, and although we’ve yet to encounter it used by business people we see tools like the BMC as an excellent way to learn the right questions. We’ve also realised that it doesn’t help you find the right answers: Just like going to a two day course on the service journey and AT-ONE does not make you a service designer - taking a two day course on the business model canvas will not make you a business graduate. The two day courses will however make it much easier for you to cooperate with and work alongside a service designer or business graduate, even if it does not give you the experience and depth needed to take good decisions.

We've tried a few frameworks during the process:

Strategyzers Business Model Canvas, Value Proposition Canvas and Environment Map.

These are deceptively simple, with only a few categories of questions. Accompanied by the books these are comprehensive frameworks asking hundreds of deep questions. We've tested the books and all three tools out on service design as a service.¹¹ It gave us a deep dive into different questions, but little guidance on what the right answers to those questions were.

They can be found on Strategyzer.com¹²



¹¹ Our results are briefly covered in the appendix.

¹² Reproduced for illustrative purposes only.

Business Innovation Design Canvas

This tool is made by designers and works on the same model as the business model canvas but expands it both by including the design process as a natural part and by asking more specifically for sales plans, pricing models, and milestones for the project.

We've not tested it out in full, but think their visualizations of which fields cover which parts of building a new business are useful for uncovering who does what.¹³

In order, from top left to bottom right:

Branding, lean startup, strategic foresight, innovation management, big data, design thinking, business model innovation and business planning.

It can be found on businessinnovationbydesign.com

¹³ Reproduced with permission



Both the Business Model Canvas and Business Innovation Design suites assume that you're making a new business or service, and do not take account of the extra work required to change a business. In addition neither tackle things like company culture or leadership theory, nor do they cover hiring or any HR discipline.

Other frameworks and theories try to cover what it takes to change:

Kotter's eight steps of change management

This linear process tries to describe the different steps an organisation should go through for a successful change. We've adapted the wording a little, but it goes like this¹⁴:



Kotter's model is criticized for showing change management as a linear and clean process, but as strangers to change management we feel he's refreshingly clear on what's needed in each step and it gave us start on what's needed to get a change through in an organisation.

¹⁴ Adapted from <http://www.kotterinternational.com/the-8-step-process-for-leading-change/>

Change management is hard

Change is hard, and even seemingly simple things like changing the software used by customer care requires careful managing and planning to be successful. Any substantial change to the external service will also require substantial change to the organisation delivering that service, and in the words of Graham Hill of Optima partners:

*"Simply using an empathic design approach is NOT ENOUGH to drive change. Managing change is not the same as getting staff involved in the new service design, implementing the new service, training staff how to use it and then expecting change to occur. Although all of this is necessary it is not enough and almost invariably leads to failure. As the old change management saying goes: Old Organisation + New Design = Expensive Old Organisation."*¹⁵

Johannessen argues that service designers have a role in change management, because the staffs experience of the change is an important factor in how successful it is:

"The experience of the change is of utmost importance and should be intentionally designed to promote the transformation"

- Hilde D. Johannessen, Diplom AHO¹⁶

That makes it even more important for us to know about it.

¹⁵ <https://www.linkedin.com/grp/post/1856454-5836460016420274180>

¹⁶ Designing Change, AHO 2014

What's covered by service design tools?

Parts of service design theory combines design and business understanding, especially from marketing and brand. The AT-ONE framework, for example, looks at stakeholders as the first of a series of workshops - and brand and value proposition under "Offering" in the third workshop. The book "Service design: From insight to implementation"¹⁷ talks about how you can use the service blueprint to map costs and make experience centric decisions on where to cut and where to invest. Plenty of service design tools and theory talks about the importance of co-creation to create buy-in and ownership, so designs can be anchored in the organisation.

Other aspects of the business side seems to be missing, also from theory: The book "This is Service design thinking"¹⁸ lists 25 different service design tools and goes through five service design cases - but apart from the business model canvas not a single tool or case mentions looking at cost or profit. No tool looks at organisational feasibility, or change management. The same is true for Roberto Tassis list of service design tools at servicedesigntools.org¹⁹. Not one of the 41 tools he lists asks about costs, willingness to pay, profit, feasibility (technical or organisational), viability, or change management.

We think it's clear that these things need to be covered, and that service design both as we practice it and in theory do not cover it.

¹⁷ "Service design, from insight to implementation"

¹⁸ "This is Service design thinking"

¹⁹ servicedesigntools.org

We need people with business understanding

Since our own tools and skills are not sufficient, we believe a good start is for service designers to bring business understanding into projects by hiring or collaborating with people who already have it.

There's three reasons for this:

The first is that although clients have business people internally that could and should be involved, the design team needs to be able to tell if the client has the necessary competence internally to do the project. To do that the design team needs good business understanding.

The second is that by working alongside management consultants designers will have someone to spar with when we design the backstage of a service, that is not only involved in this particular project but might have worked alongside the designer for some time. This will build bridges between management as a field and design as a field, and create powerful teams that can come up with great and realizable designs. This sort of mix is normal in product design, where design agencies like IDEO hire engineers. As an aside, IDEO and some Norwegian agencies also hire business people and use them as organisational and business designers.

The third is that if we don't take responsibility for the business side then someone else will have to do it, and they might not value the human aspects of the design. By bringing them in ourselves the

designer retains influence over the final design, and can make sure the right compromises are made throughout development and implementation.

Other consultants we've talked to agree, but have not succeeded in cooperating with service design agencies:

"We suggested a cooperation with service designers. A lot of people said no without understanding what we do"

- Management consultant

From junior senior designers it's generally been positive, but they've been unsure how to go about it:

"Yes I think that's a great idea, [but] I don't know who I should work with or what they would do."

- Junior service designer

Some seniors are positive as well, seeing the problem as one of management consultants keeping service design out:

"Service designers often have to struggle to get the position that management consultants have. They tend to "talk us down", perhaps to make sure we don't replace them? Truth is that we can't replace them – but we can strengthen the process if they let us."

- Senior service designer

However, some senior service designers have been negative when we've asked them if we need to collaborate with or hire people with other competencies:

"We can just learn it ourselves. How hard can it be?"

- Senior Service designer

This is both not surprising and surprising. Not surprising because we've met skepticism towards and attempts to distance service design from other consultants:

"[...] since we're not consultants in the traditional sense"

- Service designer, in workshop

"To me you're as much consultants as other externals"

- Buyer

It is however surprising, since bringing in different competencies is a core part of co-creation and service design, as we know design agencies agree²⁰. For us it seems natural to hire or collaborate with those who can bring the expertise we need, perhaps by forging strategic partnerships between agencies and consultancies.

²⁰ See for instance Halogen at <http://www.kjokkenfesten.no/2015/02/10/ulike-barn-leker-best/>



BECOMING SERVICE DESIGNERS

Design is more than desire. People, technology and business, or desirability, feasibility and viability, is a common model for describing the different and often competing worlds that need to be combined to create good designs.

We've used this lens on service design to understand the competences we must strive to master to become effective service designers.

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Desirability

Will people like it?

“How do we win the customers?”

- Buyer

Desirability is making sure the service both covers users needs, and also has that special something that makes it attractive. It should not only give a good experience but the correct experience for the brand, so it's consistent with the personality of the firm. Desirability is the strength of the designer, but also the domain of others who work to understand and move humans.

Mastering desirability means mastering Julie Zhou's "delight", "usability" and "offering". It means knowing and understanding people and what they really want, and goes beyond just answering functional needs. It includes different ways to affect, please, and even manipulate people to elicit the wanted experience and behaviour. Behavioural economics, psychology, game designers, improvised theatre, the hospitality business, sales theory, customer care theory, filmmakers and designers of all kinds have different and relevant takes on desirability.

We would like to expand it to include desirability for internal users, that it's delightful not only for customers to use but also for staff to deliver.

That means good leadership, understanding organisational psychology, and focusing on the staffs experience when implementing change¹.

Service design has tools for making services easy to understand and use (user journeys, pain points mapping, and user testing), and tools for making sure multi-channel services are coordinated (blueprints). As students having one year of service design education we feel that we lack the knowledge and vocabulary to go beyond usability and talk about the experience in a more meaningful way than "easy to use", "good" or "bad". In essence, we do not go deep enough into service aesthetics, and haven't yet seen service designers in agencies talk about the aesthetics of a service in a deeper way either.

We know there's work being done on this, specifically one PhD by Mauricy Filho on brand aligning services and a PhD by Ted Matthews on using ceremonial structures to create transformative services - both at AHO.

¹ Designing Change, AHO 2014



Feasibility

Can we make it work?

“After at first suggesting a huge change the service designers started coming up with really smart ideas: Those that were so small that there was almost no way they couldn’t get implemented. Those we can do, and all those small changes start to add up.”

- Buyer

Feasibility is answering the questions: Can we do it? How do we do it? What will it take?

To aid our own understanding we’ve divided feasibility in three²:

Technical feasibility

Technical feasibility is well understood in other fields of design. Interaction designers have to adapt their designs to what programmers can create. Industrial designers to the laws of physics and mechanical engineering. Graphic designers to the limits of paper and print.

All of those also apply to service design - depending on the touchpoints and channels the service encompasses. It’s the domain of engineers and systems architects, and since other designers have experience with it we should know to bring them in when working on their kind of touchpoints.

Organisational feasibility

Can the organisation really deliver this? Do we have the right people? How will we train them, and will we have to fight company culture? Will we get the changes past the union, and are they even legal?

It’s the topic of change management, organisational psychology, labour law, and leadership. Service design does not have tools for this, but as Johannessen writes we could and should play a role in making the change human friendly³. That requires that we bring in and cooperate with those who understand the inner workings of the organisation.

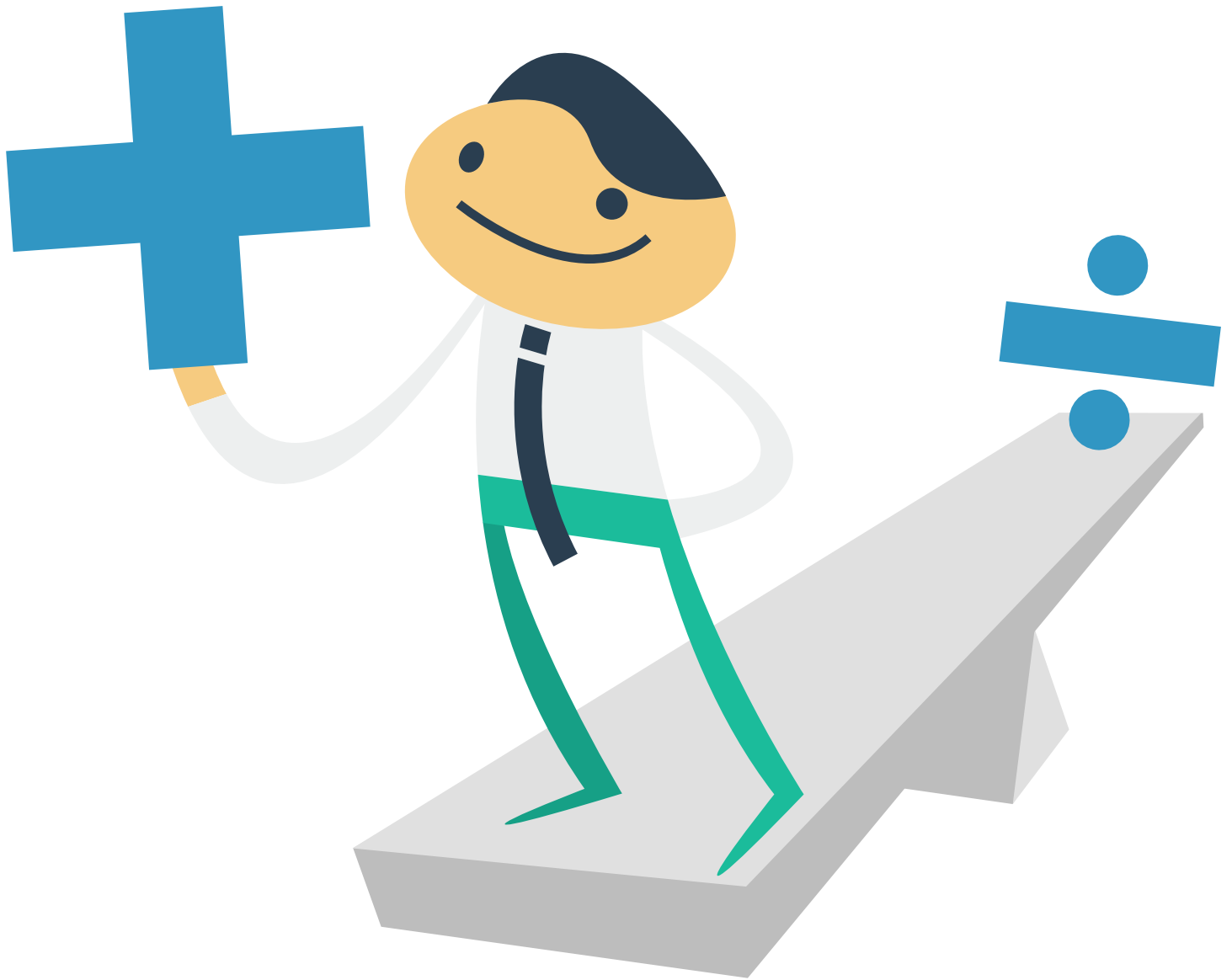
Logistical feasibility

Will the logistics of the service work? Will the staff have time to do everything that’s required of them? How can it be more efficient? Does the operation scale? Are there good enough communication channels between staff?

It’s the domain of operations, management science, and traditional service design. Service design has tools for this, both in the blueprints Lynn Shostack made in the 80’s and in testing out with real staff in real situations to uncover problems and iterate.

Mastering feasibility means being able to bend limitations to create services that no competitor is able to deliver. It’s all about making use of your material, the organisation, in a way that gives the greatest impact possible. It requires being able to use specialized expertise effectively and embed it in your processes.

² We’re using the word feasibility the way it’s used by designers and innovation thinkers, not as it’s used in management science where both viability and desirability in some form or shape would be included, like in the TELOS system.



Viability

Do the benefits outweigh the costs?

“I remember we tried out a new advertising agency. First thing they did was bring in an analyst who calculated the potential monetary gains we could have. That really impressed me, I had never seen that from creatives before.”

- Potential buyer

“A business case is nothing complicated. Anyone can make a simple one. You just have to make sure the numbers are realistic enough.”

- Business law graduate

Viability is not always about analysis, but about understanding when to analyse and when to not:

Viability is all about whether the investment is worth the cost.⁴

Will the service be self-sustained? What will the return on investment be? How will we fund the investment? Is there anything better we can invest in? How will we profit? Who's willing to pay? How and what? What are the risks in the project?

To a business addressing viability is addressing the costs, benefits and risks of keeping the current solution versus the costs, benefits and risks of the proposed alternatives. We understand it to be the domain of business analysts, controllers, economists, and other number crunchers - but according to one business graduate it's doesn't need to be particularly complicated:

“We don't need a cost-benefit analysis to know that we shouldn't make our customers angry.”

- SVP, financial sector.

Mastering viability means knowing how and where the money flows in the service, and how to shape those flows to the benefit of both the bottom line and desirability. It's finding and understanding the costs that can be cut and the investments that need to be made, as well as the incomes that can be had and the services you shouldn't tax. It's all about knowing how to realise the most value without hindering the creation of it.

It requires being able to use specialized expertise effectively and embed them in your processes.

⁴ That calculation will vary whether you subscribe to Milton Friedmans "Business is the business of business" or John Elkingtons triple bottom line. Elkington argues for taking social and environmental responsibility as well as ensuring profits. Friedman argues that the responsibility of business is to increase its profits.



ITERATING ALL THE WAY TO IMPLEMENTED

With desirability, viability and feasibility in place - what does it look like for the service designer to stay all the way through implementation? We've tried to answer.

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The process all the way through implementation

“We don’t have a language for implementation”

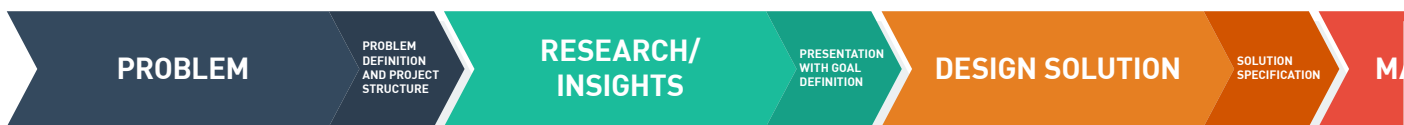
- Senior Service designer

Several service designers we interviewed expressed a desire to see the whole process from start to end. They wanted to build a vocabulary for the things that should happen in implementation, and get an overview of what’s in there. Coming from a product design background we know why:

Being aware of the production process changes the design process and results in innovative solutions that save money and create value in unexpected places.

Now, at the end of this project, we see the same potential in service design. We’ve therefore tried to visualize our current hypothesis of a best practice in our big organisation scenario and compared it with the understanding we had before this project.

OUR OLD PROCESS



OUR NEW PROCESS



Our old process

At the start of our research we imagined a good service design project looking something like the one below. The steps are linear to show the general categories of phases we thought a project would touch on:

After clarifying mandate and getting the problem from the client, the designers would do insight work, redefine the problem together with the client, design and prototype a fantastic new service through co-creation and workshops, create a blueprint of how that service will work, and then the organisation would implement that blueprint according to specification. In the end the service would be changed for the better.

Our new process

Throughout the project we have explored and mapped nine processes and cases, and looked into six more¹. These, along with our research on business understanding, make the basis for our new view of what a good service design project will look like, from start of insight through implementation to measuring and adjusting the finished solution.

It's a process where the service designer is a consultant coming to a big organisation and has a role all the way through, and it looks like the one below.

We've expanded both processes on the next page.

¹ These are in the appendix.



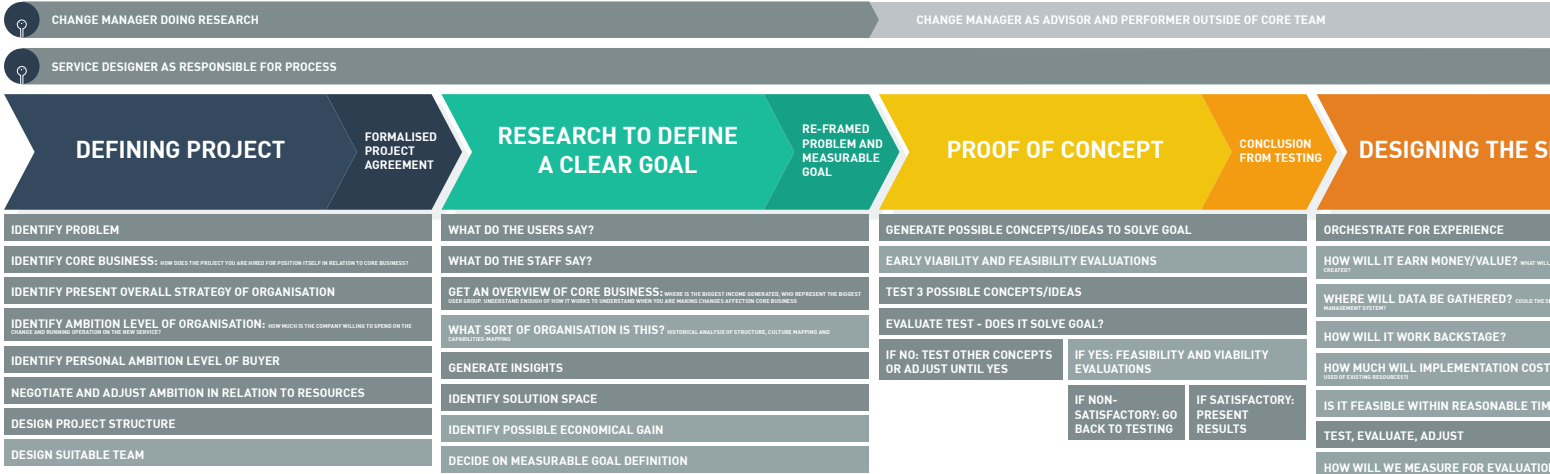
OUR OLD PROCESS

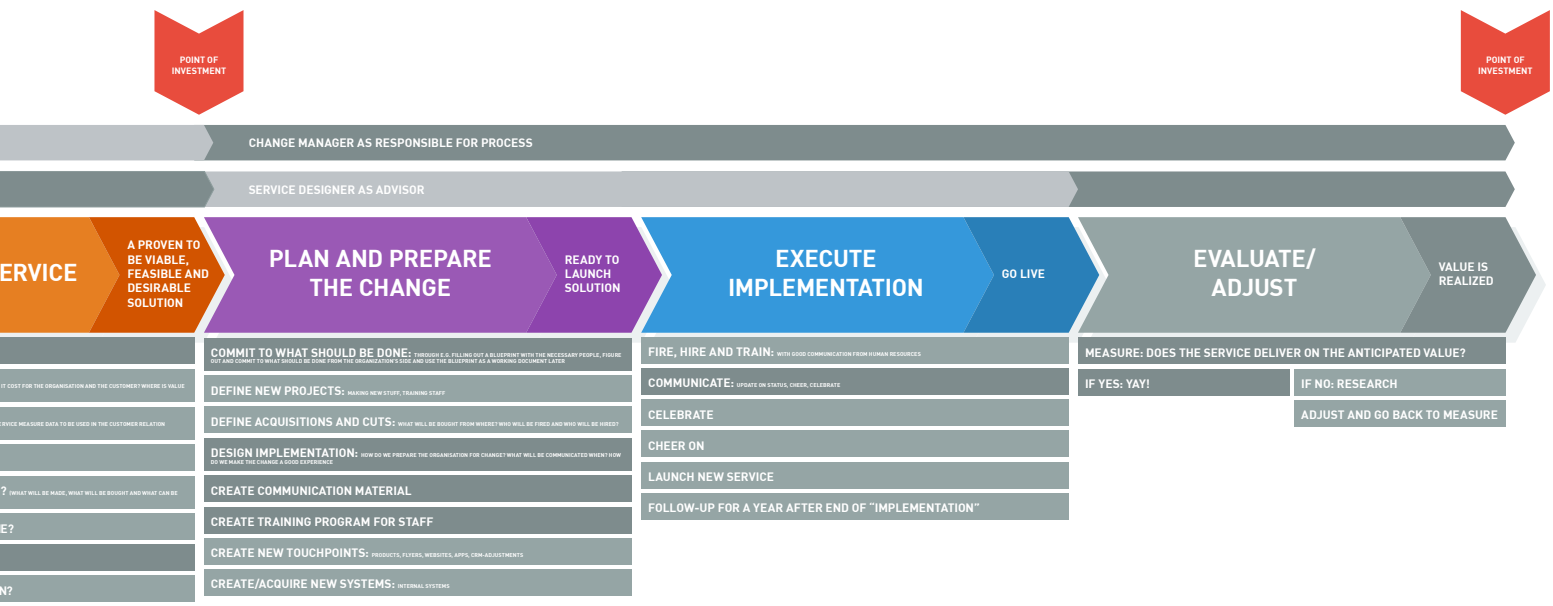
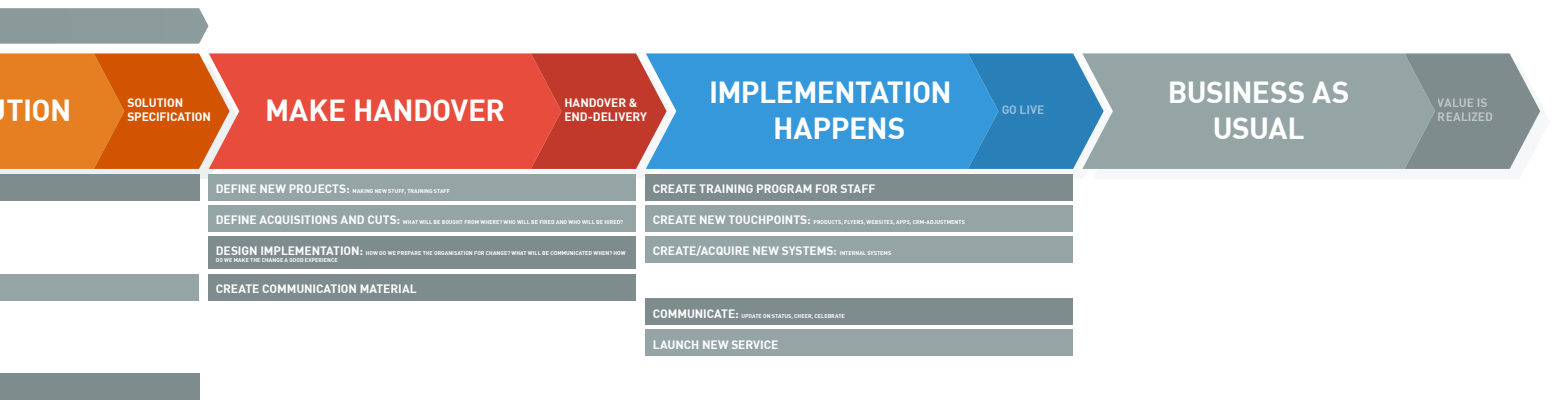
With detailed steps and service designers role



OUR NEW PROCESS

With detailed steps, change manager and service designers role and points of investment.





What's new?

This is not meant as a complete recipe on how to do service design, but a list of recommendations that we hope will inspire service designers to change their own processes. Our aim is not to accuse the field of missing everything on this list, but to show what we ourselves missed and how going through this project has changed our views.

We know the field is diverse and has different competitive advantages and specializations. That both means that different agencies and people already do parts of what we suggest, and that others might find our suggestions don't apply to them. Hopefully the others will find it useful.

What we have suggested is a maximized situation where many elements are present and the designer is along for the whole ride. This is for communication purposes: It is easier to remove what doesn't apply to your project than to add parts you don't know about.

The process is untested by us² and will definitely change as we mature as service designers. There is a lot of figuring out to do on some of the suggestions, and we see an opportunity to test and discuss some of these hypotheses through Service Design Network.

We've of course kept the iterations, user focus, creative methods, anchoring, co-creation and many other aspects of service design as we've been taught it at AHO. What we've changed is:

Adding a clear and measurable goal definition

The goal should be measured both before and after, as well as in follow ups.

Early analysis of potential economic gain

Show decision makers that there's potential to save and earn money by bringing in an economical analyst who gives numbers on what's lost to inefficiency, user confusion and lack of desirability. Cooperate with internal controllers³ for numbers.

Removed the journey as handover, added proof of concept

The proof of concept comes early in the process, and tries to answer: Can the concept achieve the goal? It should prove to a reasonable certainty that the concept is desirable, viable and feasible. This is the most critical point for reaching implementation: Here the decision maker is committing what may be huge sums of money - even if it's spent later.

In the case of a handover from the designers to an internal team the proof of concept will also arm the buyer to get support internally. It gives him the shield he needs by proving that it's feasible, and the weapon he needs by proving that it'll make money - all while giving him the words he needs to fight for desirability.

² But parts are tested in several of the cases and processes we've analysed

³ A controller is a person whose job is to pay attention to cost. He can help finding the numbers on e.g. customer acquisition cost and the cost of hiring and firing in that specific organisation.

The buyer needs all three to be able to convince decision makers internally without having the design lose its nerve or be stopped.

With proof of concept in hand, making communicable and detailed journeys or blueprints can follow as working tools after money has been awarded to the project - not as tools to sell the project to decision makers.

Thinking about change management from the start

Change is hard, even just for getting someone to use a new piece of software⁴. Respect that by planning for and thinking about it from the start. Have a change manager do research on the organisation early, and find out if what you plan is feasible. Mix in Kotter and other change management theories.

Core design team with new competencies

The core team should be constant, and cover the competencies needed to know who else to bring in for different phases. We're thinking the agency should be able to, through strategic partnerships and some hiring, cover the following:

Service designer - Desirability
Change manager - Organisational feasibility
Technical advisor - Technical feasibility
Operations advisor - Logistical feasibility
Business advisor - Business viability

By having the competencies internally in the agency, these people can be well versed in design thinking - making the process just as creative even though we would reduce the number of service designers.

With this team in place, early and systematic assessment of feasibility and viability as well as desirability can follow. This team will have the competencies to spar with and work alongside the internal guiding coalition, making it easier to bring in and co-create with internals.

Role of service designer: Switching between maker and advisor

At the start of the process the service designer is in a maker role, weaving the service together with the core team and making sure it's desirable, feasible and viable. Later on the service designer shifts to an advisory role, so that when other makers take over and compromises are made, sub projects are started for touchpoints, training of staff starts, and the implementation rolls out the service designer is there to keep and improve the nerve of the concept through implementation.

Other things we've changed:

- Reduced polishing of and changed use of design tools, like giga mapping and blueprints.
- Follow up after implementation to evaluate, measure and adjust the solution
- Forcing the client to reframe the project during research, making it a standard part of the process

⁴ Designing Change, AHO 2014

Zooming out: Our process + Kotter

A service design project is also a change management project¹, and we've tried to combine our new plan with Kotter's change management process²

Here the service designer assembles a core team and does a pre-project, crafting or finding an opportunity and proving that it can work, before starting building a guiding coalition of leaders with mandate to execute that opportunity.

Together with the guiding coalition and increasing numbers of other staff and customers they then research and design a new service based on the opportunity. During this process they redefine the goal, create proof of concept, and create a plan for change. The proof of concept comes before significant resources are being committed and becomes the major decision point for implementation.



¹ Designing Change, AHO 2014

² Kotter, www.kotterinternational.com/the-8-step-process-for-leading-change/

They then get started removing barriers to implementation and building the stuff needed to go live, here significant technical cost is incurred.

As soon as possible they start to change easy stuff to build momentum, and start affecting more and more employees - incurring manpower cost as people are trained and procedures have to be re-learned.

That momentum is then used to change the really hard stuff once the technical solutions are in place.

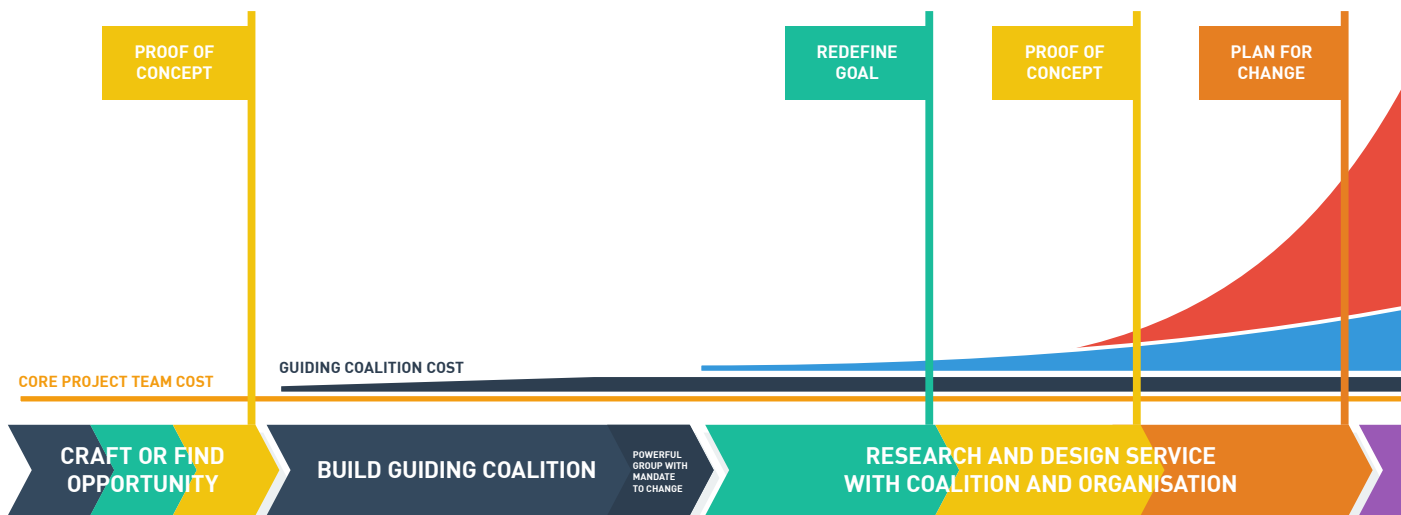
Afterwards they evaluate and secure the change, hopefully ensuring a changed organisation.



Our process + Kotter + Costs + Creative space

Expanding the model further with typical investment costs (technical and human) and a graph showing the hypothetical space for changing the solution, we get a clear picture of the overall context of the project, as we see it now:

This picture makes it clear why the proof of concept is so important. Change is expensive, and expensive is risky.



**CREATIVE SPACE:
HOW MUCH ROOM IS THERE TO
CHANGE THE SOLUTION?**

**TECHNICAL COST:
BUILDING AND BUYING
SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE**

**MANPOWER COST:
INVOLVING AND
TRAINING STAFF**

**REMOVE BARRIERS
AND BUILD STUFF**

**READY TO
LAUNCH
SOLUTION**

**CHANGE EASY STUFF,
GAIN MOMENTUM**

**USE MOMENTUM,
CHANGE HARD STUFF**

**EVALUATE AND
SECURE CHANGE**

**VALUE IS
REALISED**

What questions might the process need to answer?

A recurring theme in our interviews were people in the fields around us being exasperated with service design, describing us as having “grown up in a bubble” and being “naive” about both who else is doing service development, what they do, and what it takes to do service development.

Our attempt at bursting that bubble is to list questions that needs to be answered before a new service can be launched, and then asking if we know who can answer it, how they do it and what our role as service designers should be towards them.⁵

In addition to questions touching on viability, feasibility and desirability the list includes questions on project structure. The project structure questions are about clarifying aspects of the project’s position in the organisation. Such questions may help evaluate whether the project can become a full scale change program, or if we should advise the client to rescope the ambition to “concept art” or other inspirational activities.

We tested out an early version of this list with sixteen service designers in a workshop we held for Service Design Network. That workshop is described in more detail in the next chapter, but we got both positive and constructive feedback on what was missing and how it had expanded their view.

The list is a work in progress and a tool for discussion, and it goes like this:

⁵ We’ve also attempted to interview these people, but have only reached a few.

DESIRABILITY (HUMAN)

HOW WILL WE ATTRACT CUSTOMERS?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

HOW WILL THIS DIGITAL CHANNEL SHINE?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

IS THE EXPERIENCE FLUID ACROSS CHANNELS?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHAT DO THE USERS CARE ABOUT?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

ARE WE SOLVING THE USERS NEEDS?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

HOW WILL IT BE EASY TO USE?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHAT VALUE DO WE CREATE VALUE FOR THE USER?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

IN WHICH WAYS ARE COMPETITORS MORE DESIRABLE?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

DO THE USERS LIKE IT?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

DOES THE EXPERIENCE FIT WITH THE BRAND?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

IS IT DELIGHTFUL FOR THE USERS, DOES IT NEED TO BE?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

HOW WILL THIS HUMAN CHANNEL SHINE?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

FEASIBILITY (TECHNOLOGY)

CAN WE USE THE OLD ORG. STRUCTURE? WHAT MUST CHANGE?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

HOW DO WE MAKE THE ORGANIZATION READY FOR THIS?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

IS THIS LEGAL? DOES IT CONFORM TO REGULATION?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

WILL THE TRADE UNION OBJECT?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

WILL WE NEED TO FIRE PEOPLE? HOW DO WE LET THEM GO?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

WILL WE NEED TO HIRE SOMEONE? ARE THEY EASY TO FIND?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

WHAT SORT OF TRAINING WILL STAFF NEED?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

CAN THIS BE DONE ON TIME AND BUDGET?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

IS THE ORGANIZATION READY FOR THIS CHANGE?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■ NON

WHAT SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE IS NEEDED?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

IS IT TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

WHAT IS THE ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

WHO CAN BUILD THE SOLUTION?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

DOES THE ORGANISATION HAVE ANYONE TO OPERATE THIS?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

WHAT SORT OF ORGANISATION IS THIS? HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURE, CULTURE MAPPING AND CAPABILITIES-MAPPING

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■ NONE

HOW WILL THE CHANGE BE IMPLEMENTED?

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■ NONE

CULTURE: WHAT WILL BE ENHANCING AND WHAT WILL BE INHIBITING?

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■ NONE

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANISATION?

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■ NONE

WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION FOR CHANGE? (BURNING PLATFORM)?

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■ NONE

IS THE CHANGE AN EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION TO THE ORG.?

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■ NONE

WHAT ARE THE TRADE-OFFS IN THE NEW SOLUTION?

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■ NONE

IDENTIFY TYPE OF CULTURE IN ORGANISATION

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE ■ PARTICIPATE ■ LEAD/FACILITATE ■ DO OURSELF ■ NONE

VIABILITY (BUSINESS)

HOW SCALABLE IS THE BUSINESS MODEL?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHICH PARTS OF THE SOLUTION COSTS THE MOST/LEAST TO DESIGN?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHICH PARTS OF THE SOLUTION COSTS THE MOST/LEAST TO PRODUCE?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHICH PARTS OF THE SOLUTION COSTS THE MOST/LEAST TO MAINTAIN?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHICH PARTS OF THE SOLUTION COSTS THE MOST/LEAST TO OPERATE?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHAT'S THE SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM RISKS?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHAT CAN THE USERS TRADE FOR THE VALUE CREATED?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHEN WILL WE TURN A PROFIT?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHAT DIFFERENT WAYS CAN WE EARN VALUE ON THIS?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHO IS WILLING TO EXCHANGE VALUE FOR THIS? WHAT, AND HOW MUCH?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

WHY IS THIS COST HERE? CAN WE CUT IT?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

HOW MANY CUSTOMERS DO WE NEED?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

PROJECT STRUCTURE

WHAT IS THE INITIAL PROBLEM DEFINITION?

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

AMBITION LEVEL OF ORGANISATION

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

PERSONAL AMBITION LEVEL OF BUYER

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

OVERALL STRATEGY OF THE ORGANISATION

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

HOW CENTRAL IS THIS OFFERING TO THE BUSINESS?

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

IDENTIFY AVAILABLE RESOURCES

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

NEGOTIATE AND ADJUST PROJECT AMBITION IN RELATION TO RESOURCES

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

DESIGN PROJECT STRUCTURE

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

DESIGN PROJECT TEAM

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS:

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE

RE-FRAME: DEFINE A CLEAR, MEASURABLE GOAL

HOW/WHO CAN ANSWER THIS: DESIGNERS / PROJECT LEAD / HEAD OF STRATEGY

THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE DESIGNER:

ADVISE PARTICIPATE LEAD/FACILITATE DO OURSELF NONE



SERVICE DESIGN CAN CHANGE

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We want to inspire change:

1

We want designers to define what service design is and isn't, so users don't get confused. We think this will sell more services and make for happier clients.



2

We want service design agencies to build the competence needed to design: Desirability, viability and feasibility.



3

We want service designers and clients to start measuring the effect of service design.



4

We want service design agencies to be able to take responsibility for a whole design process: From insight to implementation and evaluation.



What resources do we have to achieve this?

Our leverage

As students we have a limited amount of leverage in the field. Through mapping actors in the field we have looked for two criteria: Those who define what service design is and those we can affect through our connections¹

From that actor map we have four vectors for leverage:

Our interviewees: We've talked to dozens of people all over the industry, that gives us a large and wide network for distributing ideas²

AHO: Our school defines service design through the research it does, students it sends out, the awards it gives and the business contact it has through networks like CSI and DOT.

DOGA: DOGA defines service design through awards and the advice given to businesses. We've talked to four people at DOGA and several around it.

SDN: Service Design Network is the trade network for service designers, and it's Norwegian branch is just starting up. We think it has huge potential for defining service design and being an arena where service designers from all agencies can solve problems together.

SDN is perfect for achieving the goals, not least since it was possible to leverage within the time frame we had left of the diploma.

Our material

From the diploma we have some resources that can be used to spread these ideas. Some of it more spreadable than others:

- The research and quotes
- The reflections
- Our suggestions
- The questions for viability, feasibility and desirability
- The visualized process and case maps
- The visualized new process

¹ The actors map is in the appendix

² Provided we haven't made a fool of ourselves to them - in which case it gives us a large and wide network of people criticizing us.

What have we done?

The interviews and discussions

The project itself, with its interviews and discussions, have impacted the field and started pushing for our goals - long before we defined them as goals.

SDN workshop

"I didn't know who to write on all the viability stuff, so I just wrote Money"

- Junior senior designer in workshop

On the 29th of April we arranged a workshop for Service Design Network at Designits headquarters in Storgata. The goal was to share the main findings and use the list of questions to test the attendees and either expand their view of what service development and design entails - or disprove our thesis that they lacked this information.

We did a short presentation of our preliminary findings ending in us needing more viability, feasibility and desirability. The task afterwards was to sort the questions we had prepared on a process and answering both when in the process it should be answered, who could answer it and which role the service designer should have.

The task fostered discussions, enthusiasm, and struggle. We got feedback from both seniors and

juniors that it had been really difficult, something we had also found out ourselves when we tried it out.

In addition to feedback on our proposed service design process we received some suggestions for the questions: "Money" was changed to "Value", and one senior service designer added that scalability of the business model was missing.

The feedback was neutral and positive after the workshop:

"I think the juniors got more out of it than us seniors, but that's OK"

- Workshop participant

"We're still talking about it. It felt like a teaser for your thesis and we all want to read it. I don't think anyone ever read mine."

- Workshop participant

Our major finding from the workshop is that the participating service designers think they should be consulted or help facilitate answering 93% of the questions, even when they don't know who else can help answer them. The only questions that they wanted to avoid answering were the ones who were clearly mathematical economics or legal.





What can we do next?

Our road map

We do not want to stop exploring or solving these issues when this diploma is delivered, and have made a road map for what we, and maybe you, can do:

Getting service design measured

Measure our next project, and increase the attention on and perceived value of measuring through SDN and DOGA. Explore if it's actually a low hanging fruit, and why it isn't done.

Defining service design and reducing the confusion

This requires collective effort to set boundaries on what service design is and what is other services provided by design agencies. At the very least a line should be drawn between service design mentality and service design as a discipline. We think SDN is a good arena for pursuing this.

Building competence in viability and feasibility

We can help create a series of workshops together with SDN, inviting different professions to talk and explore how we can work together. We can bring the list of questions to discussions with professionals, refining the selection and identifying who can and should answer, and we can help increase attention to feasibility and viability at AHO

Building competence in implementation and getting service designers there

Create feedback loops for how our suggestions and others works in practice, so the field can improve

them. Look at the DIP and other financial support structures and see how they can support designers beyond the early phases of a project.

Building competence in desirability

We want to start researching how other fields, like behavioral economics, theatre, sales, or psychology, understand behavior and motivations - and see what we service designers can adapt from them about how to orchestrate services.

What's your road map?

We think the issues we have described in this thesis are serious, and need collective action.

We think we service designers can make use of our hidden strength and make our services easier to understand. We think we can solve our major weakness by sharing the knowledge already in the field and opening up for the knowledge other fields bring, and we think we can pick the low hanging fruit, measure our results, and have numbers to bring to the next sales pitch.

In the end we all want to craft services that are desirable, feasible and viable. Services that impact real lives, solve real problems and create real joy. Taking the steps outlined in this thesis is our road to strengthening the field, and we hope it can inspire you on yours.



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PROJECT META AND PROCESS

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Using our resources

Time and access

Others have much more knowledge about service design than us, and others have much more experience. What we bring to the table in this project is access to a broad group of clients and agencies, and time to do the leg-work of interviewing them and compiling the findings. That access comes through having had the honour of working with a lot of great people, as well as spending endless hours writing and rewriting emails to people we have never met before.

We started with contacts in Eggs, Halogen, Livework, Bekk, Posten, Telenor, AHO and CSI and have both interviewed our contacts in those organisations and added people from NHH, Deichmanske, Designit, DNB, DOGA, Gjensidige, If, Kysthospitalet, Oslo University Hospital, PA Consulting, PwC, Red Ocean, Service Design Network, Destination Røros and Target Everyone.

We've also reached outside Norway and visited San Francisco to interview people at Stanford d.School, Adaptive Path and IDEO. While there we also interviewed people from the startup Kixeye and the investment firm Nautilus Ventures.

An overview of who we've talked to is included here, but the full list of interviews and topics are in a separate, confidential, report.

Interviews and shadowing

We've chosen to concentrate on in person interviews instead of more inclusive workshops or less demanding emails, since this is a business-to-business situation and we wanted people to be comfortable telling the truth about clients, agencies, colleagues, their own organisation and service design¹. We wanted enough interviews to be able to publish negative quotes without revealing who are behind them, and as a principle we have anonymised all quotes. In total we've interviewed 64 people from all corners of the field, most only once, but some several times.

While we have read some between interviews, we've chosen to concentrate on interviews over reading, as we wanted to diagnose the service as delivered in practice not as delivered in theory. What reading we have done has been useful to contrast reality with theory and is listed in the bibliography..

In addition to interviews we've been observing and shadowing service designers and clients in five separate processes across 11 workshops and meetings. Through this and two workshops we've arranged ourselves we have met dozens more people from a dozen more organisations, but do not include these in our numbers as we've only met them briefly and haven't talked long enough with them to know their views on the theme.

1 As we later found out is recommended in "Service design: From insight to implementation"

Who we've interviewed:

Client side

6 buyers. These are top-level management people. Three are marketing/brand from big, private sector organisations, three are in more operational roles in smaller, public sector, organisations.

10 non-buyer users who have worked with or on service design projects or deliverables, but did not buy it themselves. 9 of these are in some form of operational role, all work in or around big organisations.

5 internal service designers from Telenor and Adaptive Path. These are team leaders and managers for medium sized design teams inside big organisations.

5 who have not used service design, but are from the relevant market. Two are or have been Vice President or higher in big organisations, three are business graduates with varying backgrounds.

The client side is big organisation-heavy: 20 of those 26 work in Posten, DNB, Telenor, Nautilus Ventures, Gjensidige and OUS.

The client side is top-heavy: 7 are CEO or Vice President-level and 14 are seniors or in management.

Supplier side

9 service designers from the agencies Livework, Halogen, DesignIT, Eggs, Bekk and PwC, in addition to three who freelance. Six are involved in one or more of our cases.

2 interaction designers at IDEO, who plan and build digital services.

1 business designer at IDEO. Business designers use design thinking to create new business models, including services.

2 non-designers in design agencies at Bekk and Making Waves.

5 service design students at AHO. All on graduate level, with one year of coursing in service design and three years in product.

The supplier side interviews are polarized: 9 are top, senior or management, and 7 junior or students – with the remaining 3 in between.

Observers and supporting functions

4 business advisors from DOGA. These advise businesses on how to purchase and use service design.

1 from Service Design Network
SDN is the trade network for service design

1 business professor from NHH
NHH business professor involved in service design through CSI.

6 service design professors or researchers
All from AHO. Looking into CSI projects, DOT projects and Ph.Ds.

7 professors or researchers from other design disciplines:

1 design thinking (Stanford d.School), 1 graphic design, 2 interaction design and 3 industrial design (AHO). These give alternative views on good design practice and how Service design relates to it.

The observer side is design-heavy, with only one pure non-designer (from NHH).

Five parallel processes we've shadowed

We've had incredible help from people around us², and have been lucky enough to be invited to either participate in or be a fly on the wall in five parallel processes across 11 workshops, letting us participate in discussions and get feedback without arranging interviews or workshops ourselves.³

DNB 2020 Eggs/CSI (3 workshops, 30-ish participants)

We've been invited to and been a fly on the wall as Eggs has worked on and presented a concept for DNB. Through this we've talked to and listened to dozens of people from different levels of management in DNB, and interviewed two of them about their experience.

CSI: Experience Centric Organisation (2 workshops, 10-ish participants)

Been a fly on the wall as Center for Service Innovation, with representatives from top level Posten, DNB, Telenor and Bekk have together with academics from AHO and NHH discussed how to create an organisation that uses service design tools to become experience centric.

² Special mention to Berit Linquist and Kaja Misvær. They've been fantastic help.

³ These conversations are not included in the interview numbers, those are only for arranged sit downs of roughly an hour or more in length. In total, with both interviews and workshops, we estimate we've talked to or with over a hundred different people.

DOT/KS: Service design for municipalities (4 workshops, 15-ish participants)

Helped document and been a fly on the wall as DOT and AHO have, together with senior service designers from Livework, Designit, Halogen and Eggs, answered in workshops with representatives from KS and municipalities how the municipalities can use service design, based on prior cases. Gained several interviews and insight into 14 different cases.

SDN: Language of service design (1 workshop, 40-ish participants)

Service Design Network arranged this together with Halogen, Livework, Designit, KS, Eggs, different municipalities and PA consulting as a separate workshop talking about the confusions, annoyances and problems that exist between the public sector and service design – and how we can find a common language and overcome them.

Telenor Service Design Academy (1 workshop, 20-ish participants)

Workshop on how Telenor can measure design thinking, with leaders from all over Telenor globally and hosted by AHO. We helped facilitate and discussed service design with participants.

(Pictures)

Our own workshops

Introduction to service design (20-ish participants)

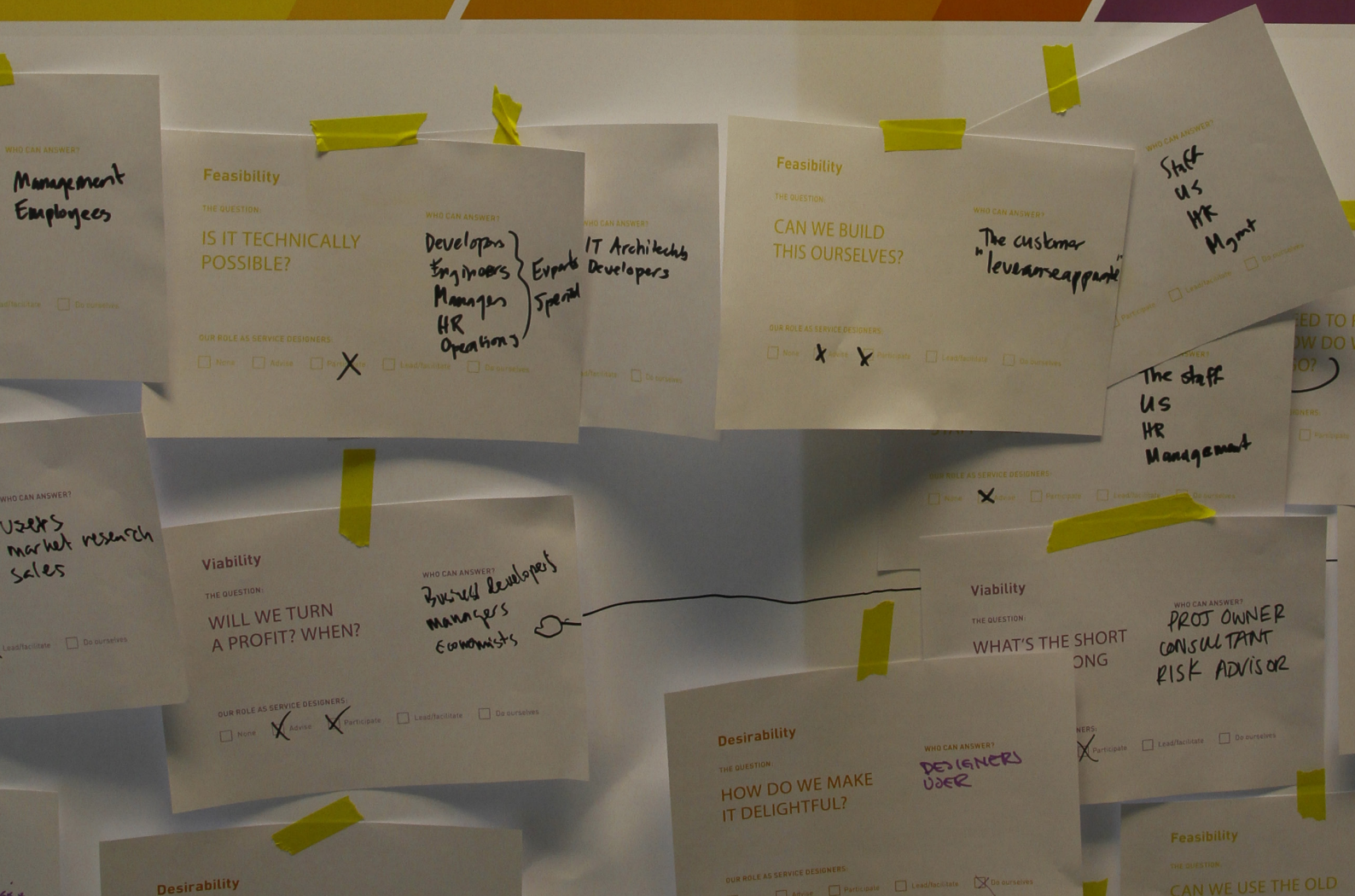
A back to basics "This is Service Design" two-hour workshop that we held for the first year AHO students as part of their curriculum.

It helped us define what service design is when introduced to junior designers.



SDN Workshop
(16 participants)

Arranged by us as an intervention in the field, trying to raise awareness amongst service designers about who we need to collaborate with to run a project all the way to implementation. 16 participants from design agencies and consultancies: Bekk, Uniform, Capgemini, Creuna, Eggs, Halogen, Hareide, Itera, Designit and Livework.

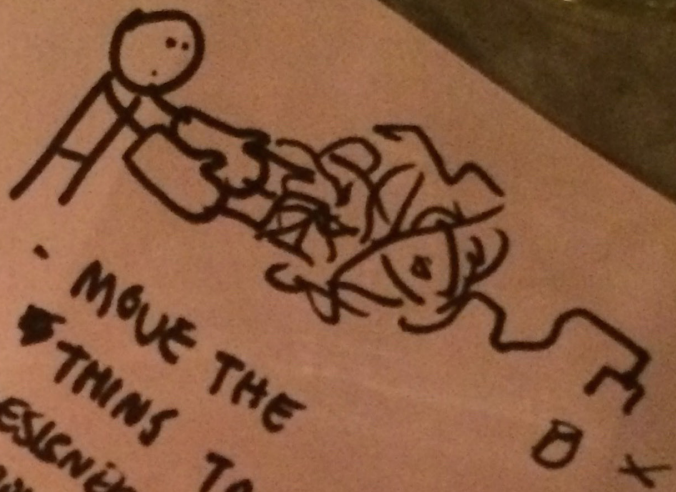


Visualizing and discussing

Throughout the process we have used discussions between ourselves and classmates to formulate and reformulate our views and through formulating it find what we understand and what we don't.

We have also visualized and revisualized concepts repeatedly, both to see if we understand them the same way and to have easy to understand visualizations to use as border objects in interviews.

We've used visualizations to structure interviews, for example by drawing simple journeys and asking about the experience in different phases, and we've used visualizations of what the interviewee says to let her correct us if we've misunderstood her.



- MOVE THE
↓ THINGS TO X.
(DESIGNER WORKS
THROUGH ORG.)

DESIGN FOR
SUPPORTING THE
RIGHT EXP.

MAURICH

Structuring and mapping

We have not concentrated on making a communicable giga map, but have instead used mapping and structuring as working tools:

Service journeys

Using rough service journeys and more detailed ones (including comparing cases on a service journey basis) we've structured and restructured our findings to look for actionable insights, insights that service designers can do something about.

Emotional graphs

Used emotional graphs in interviews to look for common pain points. Did however not do this on all interview subjects as it was difficult for people to draw an emotional graph for the generic process.

A simple before-during-after of our insights.
One of many journeys we've made.

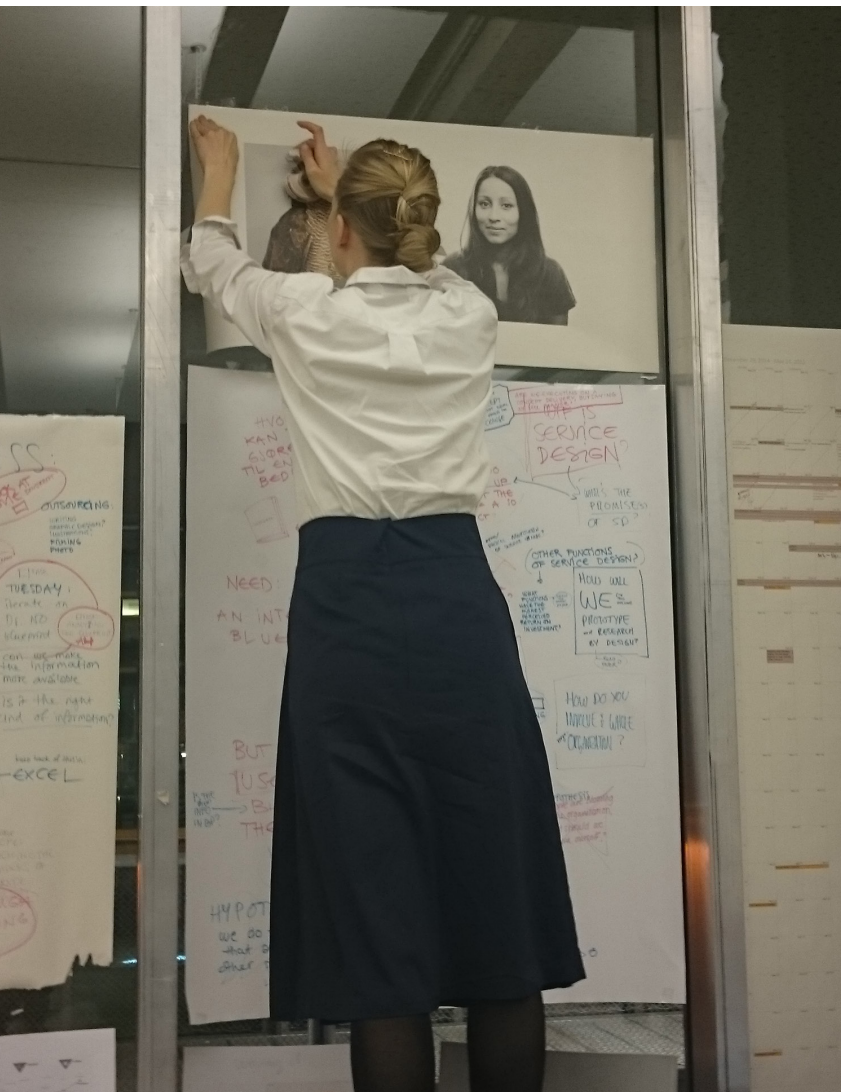


Rich design space

Kept our findings visible on the walls around our desks to create a rich design space.

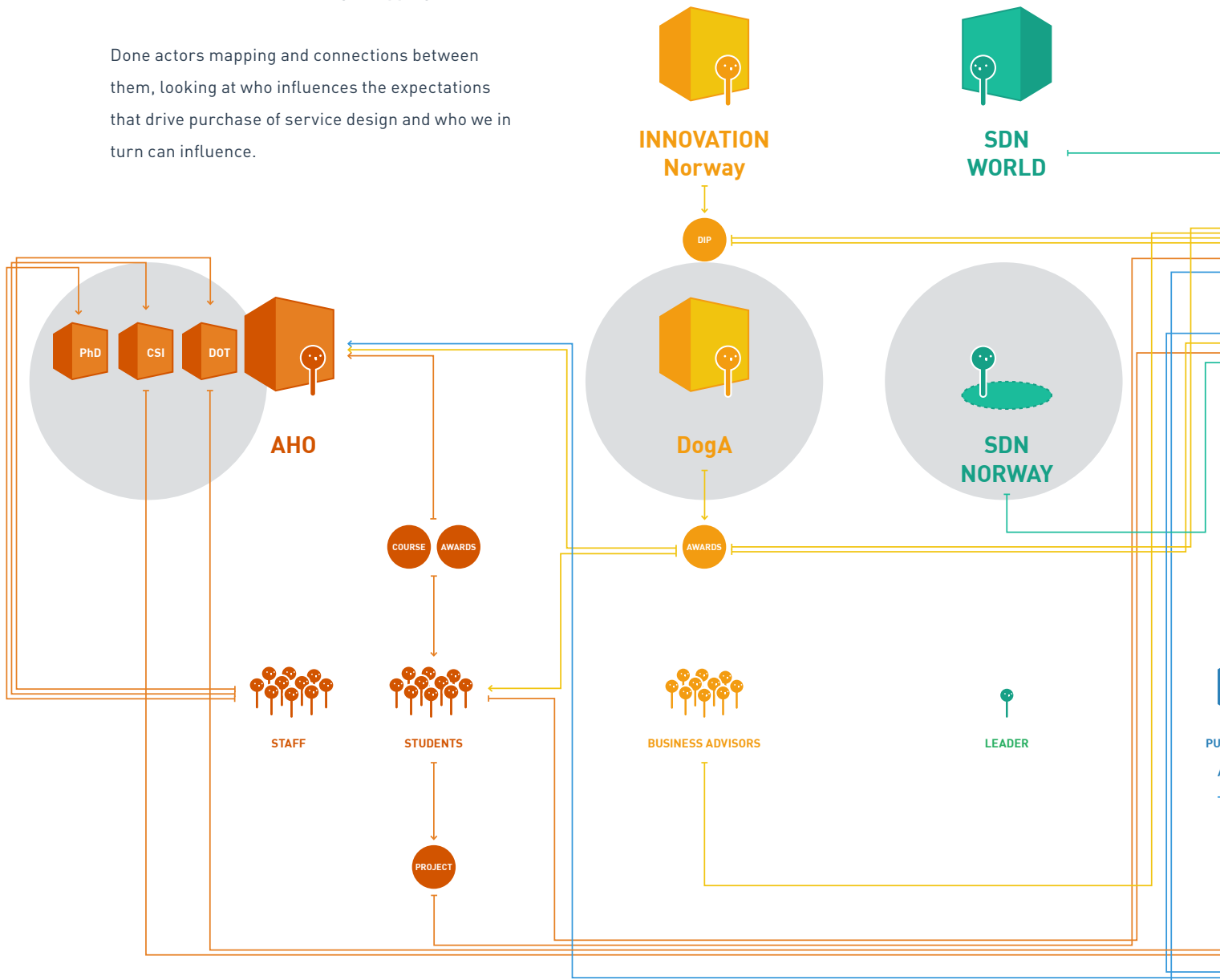
Even richer design space

When tackling particularly complex issues we've taken a big room and filled it up



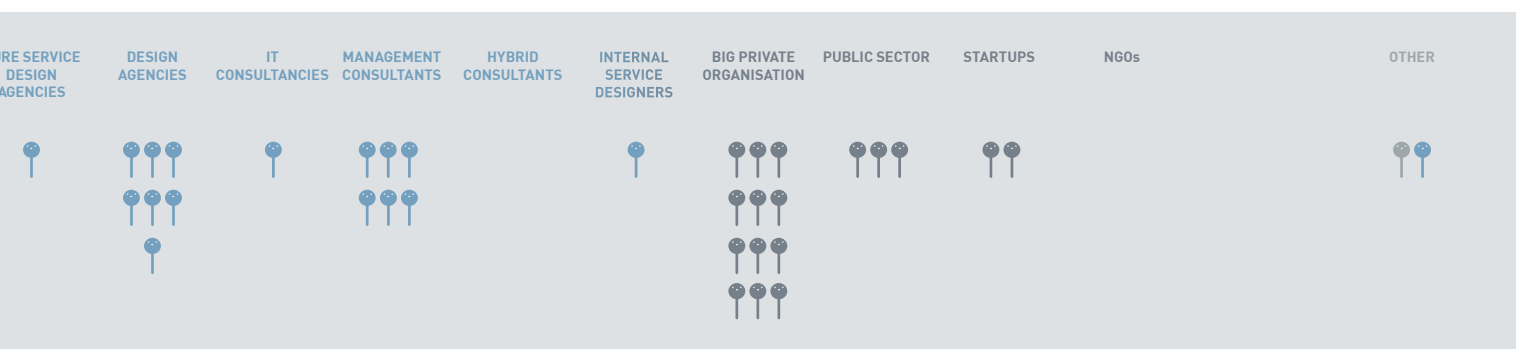
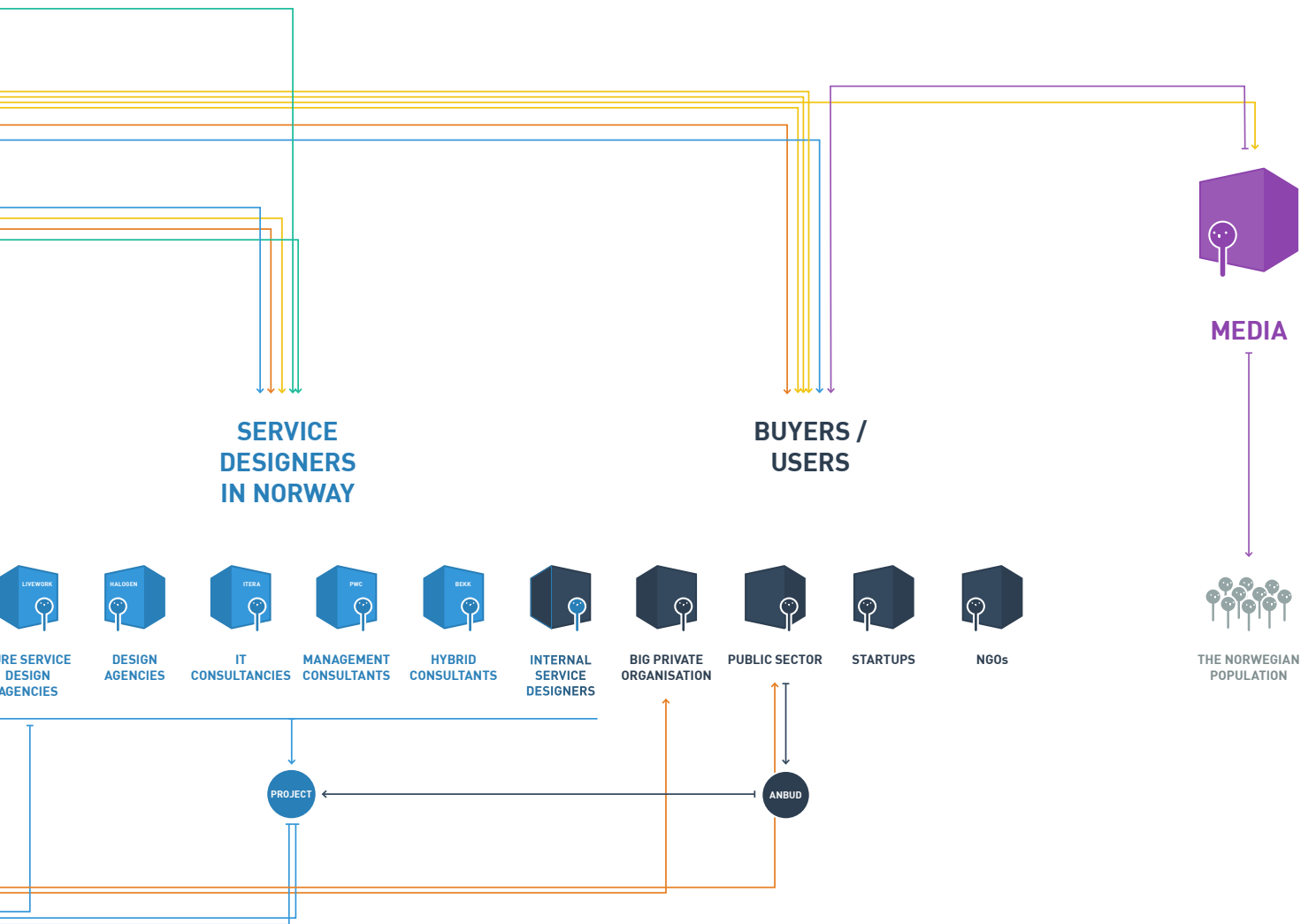
Actors and leverage mapping

Done actors mapping and connections between them, looking at who influences the expectations that drive purchase of service design and who we in turn can influence.



PhD	CSI	DOT	STAFF	STUDENTS	BUSINESS ADVISORS	SDN	FREELANCE DESIGNERS	PURCHASERS
1	1	1	5	5	3	1	2	1

PEOPLE WE'VE INTERVIEWED



Business analysis

Business analysis of Service design through Strategizers environment map, business model canvas and value proposition canvas. We used this primarily to learn the tools and see if they could teach us about business understanding.

Strategizers environment map, business model canvas and environment map filled out for service design

The image shows four hand-drawn posters on a wall, each containing a different business analysis tool. The posters are:

- MACRO-ECONOMIC FORCES:** This poster is divided into four quadrants: 'CIRCAL MARKET (CND) BOOM or BUST?', 'GDP (GROWTH?)', 'UNEMPLOYMENT RATE?', and 'CAPITAL MARKET'. It includes various graphs and sticky notes discussing economic indicators like GDP, unemployment, and capital market trends.
- KEY TRENDS:** This poster is divided into 'THREAT' and 'OPPORTUNITY' sections. It features a central diagram with 'TECHNOLOGY' at the top, 'SOFTWARE AS A SERVICE' in the middle, and 'INTERACTIVE SUPPORT' at the bottom. It also includes a 'BUSINESS MODEL' section and 'SOCIAL & CULTURAL TRENDS'.
- INDUSTRY FORCES:** This poster is titled 'INDUSTRY FORCES WHO ARE OUR COMPETITORS? (INCUMBENTS)'. It includes a vertical axis labeled 'HI' and 'LOW' with 'STRESS' and 'RESILIENCE' labels. It lists various industry players like 'INTERACTION DESIGNERS', 'DESIGN AGENCIES', and 'NEW ENTRANTS'. It also includes a section for 'SUPPLIERS & OTHER VALUECHAIN ACTORS'.
- MARKET ISSUES:** This poster is titled 'MARKET ISSUES' and 'ENVIRONMENT-MAP'. It includes sections for 'HYPER', 'CONFIDENCE', 'MARKET SEGMENTS', 'NEEDS & DEMANDS', 'SWITCHING COSTS', and 'REVENUE ATTRACTIVENESS'. It features various graphs and sticky notes discussing market dynamics and customer needs.

Process analysis

Nine processes we've visualized because they show something different. We've have pulled on these examples to understand better how others run successful projects. We have verification from seven, the others are anonymised. Those are our own interpretation and might not represent the company or case. One is still work in progress as the process is not yet finished.

In addition to these nine we've also interviewed people about another six cases, bringing the total number of cases and processes to 15. Through DOTs work we've also had access to 14 cases in the public sector, but don't count these as we unfortunately haven't been able to analyse these deeper than listening to their executive summaries.

Index and overview

Shape of symbol

The shape of the symbol represents different types of information

-  Activity performed by the project team alone
-  Activity together with client
-  A type of delivery

The phases of a project

The different colours on the icons represent different phases of a project

- Initiation of project/Before project
- Research
- Design
- Plan change
- Execute change
- Business as usual
- Pitch

Activities

-  Design / Make
-  Reframing of project
-  Executing a test
-  Adjust design
-  Evaluate / Measure
-  Define goal / Vision / Finalise
-  Choose
-  Measure or eval
-  Iterate / Refine
-  Ideation
-  Scale
-  Adjust
-  Holding a pitch or presentation
-  Visualisation / Creativity
-  Letting go
-  Person / Persona
-  Grit
-  Increased customer satisfaction
-  Understanding / Knowledge / Philosophy
-  Celebration
-  Research
-  Discression
-  Employees
-  Selection / Segmentation

The map to read the mappings

This index contains explanation for the symbols and system in the process mappings. And also represents all the different symbols that have been used in the mappings. This means the index can be used in two ways.

To understand the symbols and systems in the process mappings.

As a complete overview of all the different types of deliveries, activities, and steps taken in the different processes.

		Workshops	Deliveries
Observation	Write	Mapping workshop - getting a common understanding of status quo	Movie
Interview	Initiate	Ideation Workshop	Storyboard / Comic
Discuss	Change	Workshop to design/approve of a design of a service	Written Report
Advise	Communicate	Implementation workshop First workshop after delivery to plan the next steps in the process	Presentation
Meeting	Marketing	Workshop to design/approve of a design of a service	Map / Visualization
Plan something	Steal**	Workshop to design/approve of a design of a service	Recommendations and suggestions
A plan for change/ Implementation	Technology**	Meeting	Pilot / Elements of a prototype
Conduct a survey	Decision-making	A-workshop* about the people, actors, in the service	KPIs
Identify	Call	T-workshop* about the touch-points in the service	Plan for something
Analysis	Business / Funding		Business model
Mapping	Simplify		Website
Mapping of processes	Business as usual		Launch event

* These workshop relates to the AT-ONE-method developed by Dr. Simon Clatworthy. A series of workshop designed to give a good starting point for a service innovation process.

** Icon from the Noun Project

Implemented service design projects

Two in depth and specific cases of implemented service design projects where we talked to both sides of the project to cover the ground from design to implementation:

Both projects shared an intensive round of verification of the concept; assessing feasibility and viability together with people from the client organisation. When we asked the designers if this was a standard part of their process the answer was no.

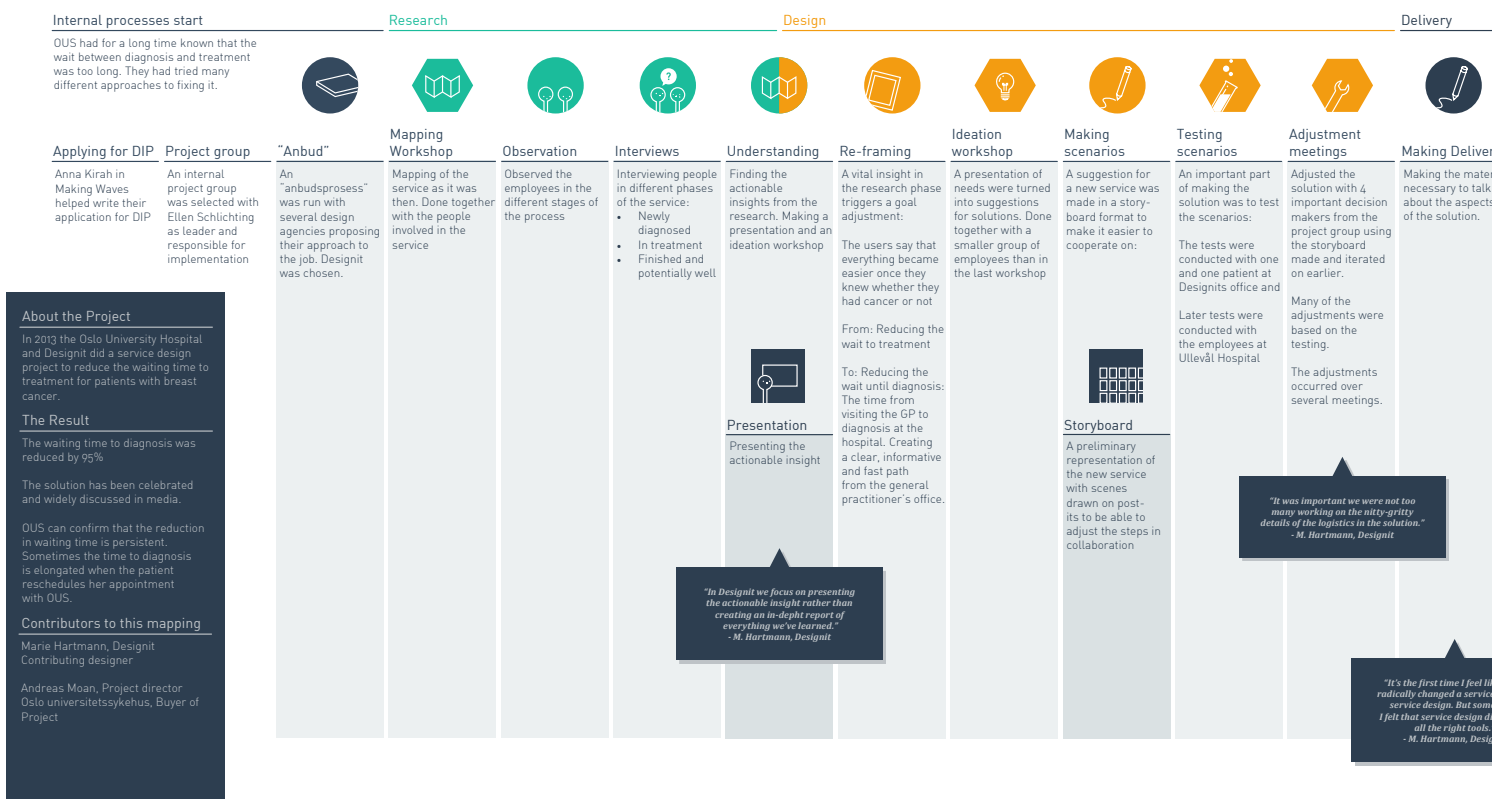
In both projects the project groups had mandate to change the whole service in question.

Both projects assessed an existing service offering with clearly defined goals for improvement

Both projects used testing to assess the user perspective.

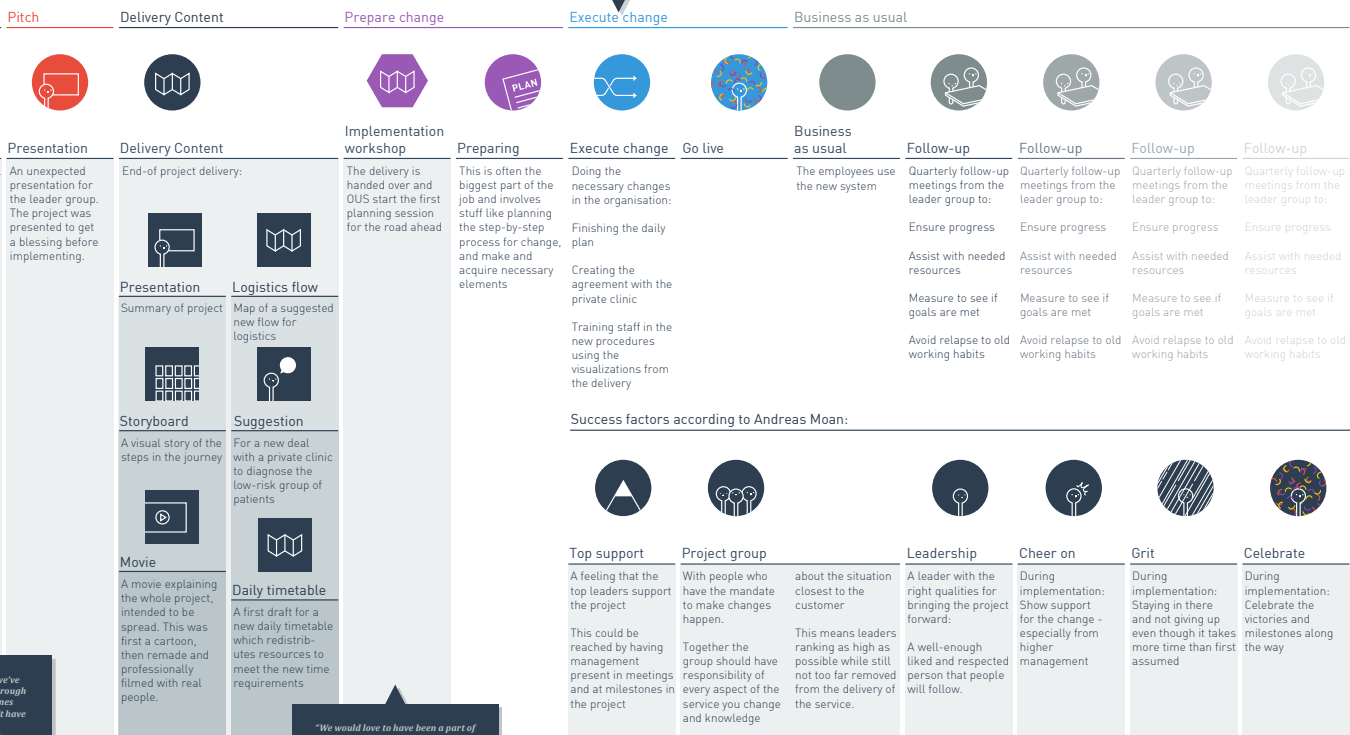
Both projects measured the effect, but on the client's initiative and with the clients people.

Case: Designit and OUS reducing the time until diagnosis of breast cancer



"The designers left the project too early. They should have had a part in implementation"
- A. Moan

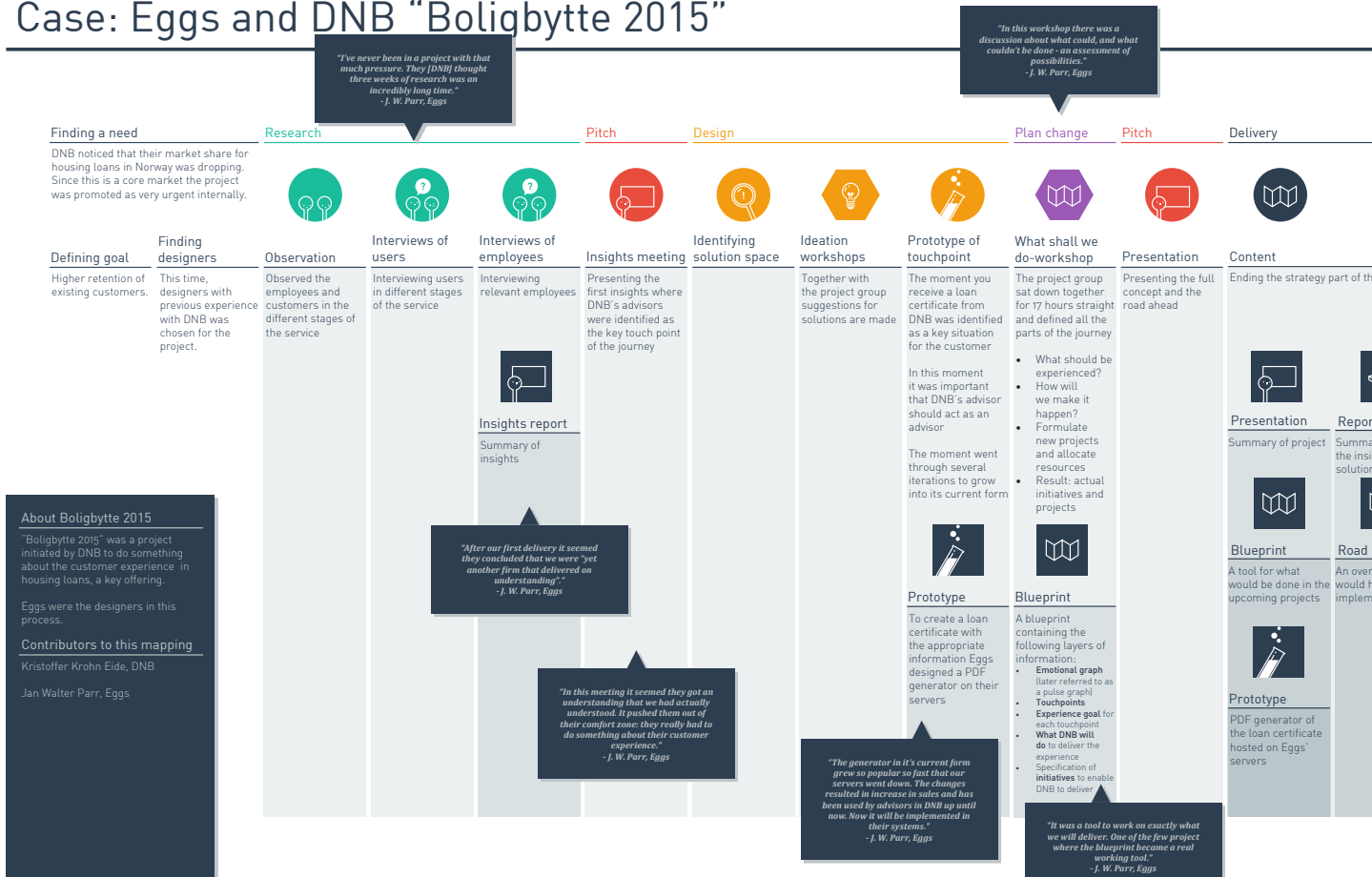
"If the designers were with us in the implementation I would have used them for visualizing and communicating where we were in the process and the road ahead."
- A. Moan



"We would love to have been a part of the implementation. But there was no funding for that through DIP."
- M. Hartmann, Designit

In EGGs and DNB “Boligbytte 2015” a prototype was made that was wildly successful and immediately adopted by the employees. Other examples, like Livework’s “God skolestart”, also show that prototypes are being adopted and spread. We think conducting a functional prototype is an implementation on a really small scale in itself, and that if the prototype is spreadable/scalable it will spread.

Case: Eggs and DNB “Boligbytte 2015”

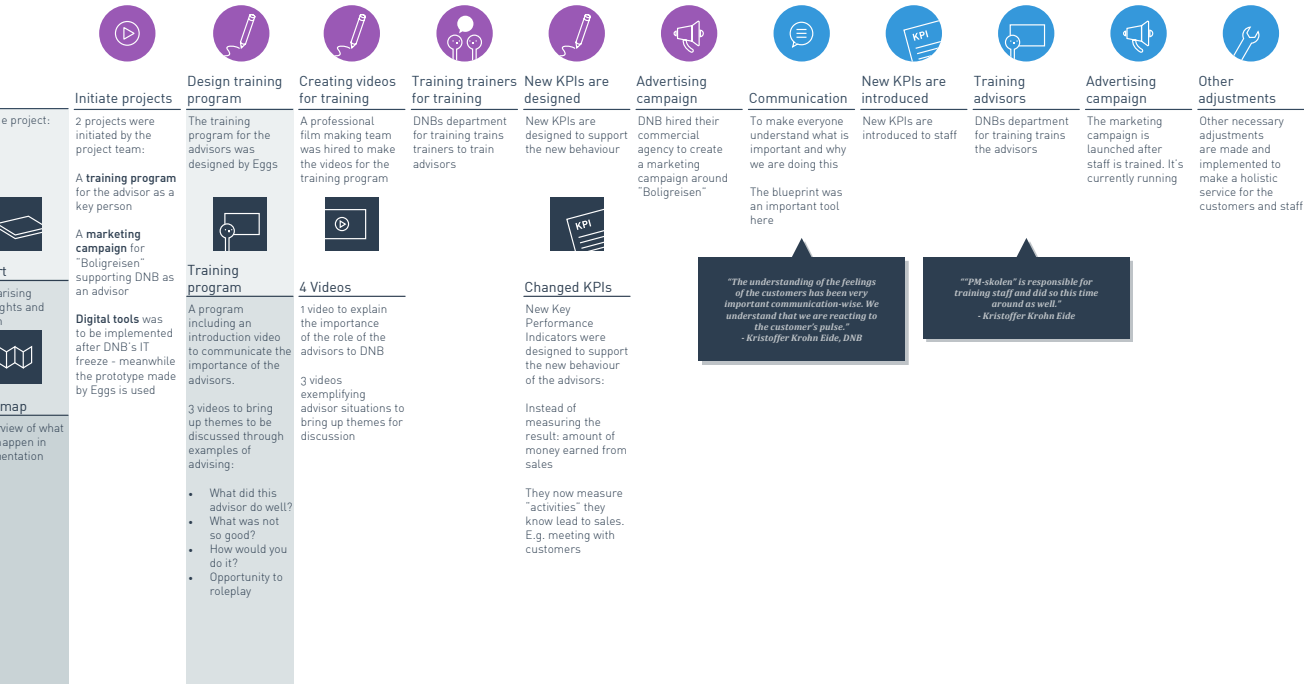


"It took some time before the organisation took us seriously. But when we got the right leader to support us, everything happened very fast."
- Kristoffer Krohn Eide, DNB

"To show the seriousness of the initiative we had the videos professionally made."
- Kristoffer Krohn Eide, DNB

Plan change

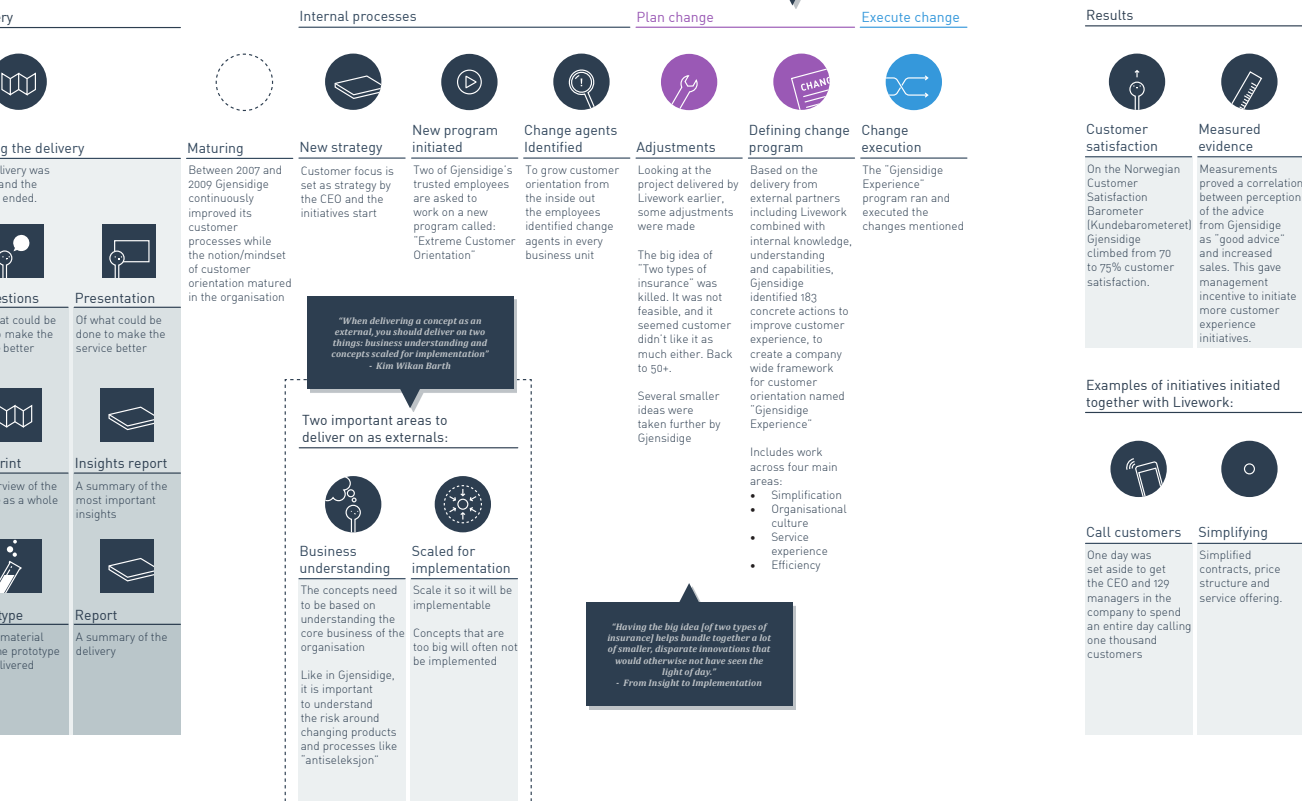
Execute change



"The understanding of the feelings of the customers has been very important communication-wise. We understand that we are reacting to the customer's pulse."
- Kristoffer Krohn Eide, DNB

"PM-skolen" is responsible for training staff and did so this time around as well."
- Kristoffer Krohn Eide

"The project from Livework was central to the internal understanding of the importance of simplification, a central element to the change program as a whole."
- Kim Wikan Barth

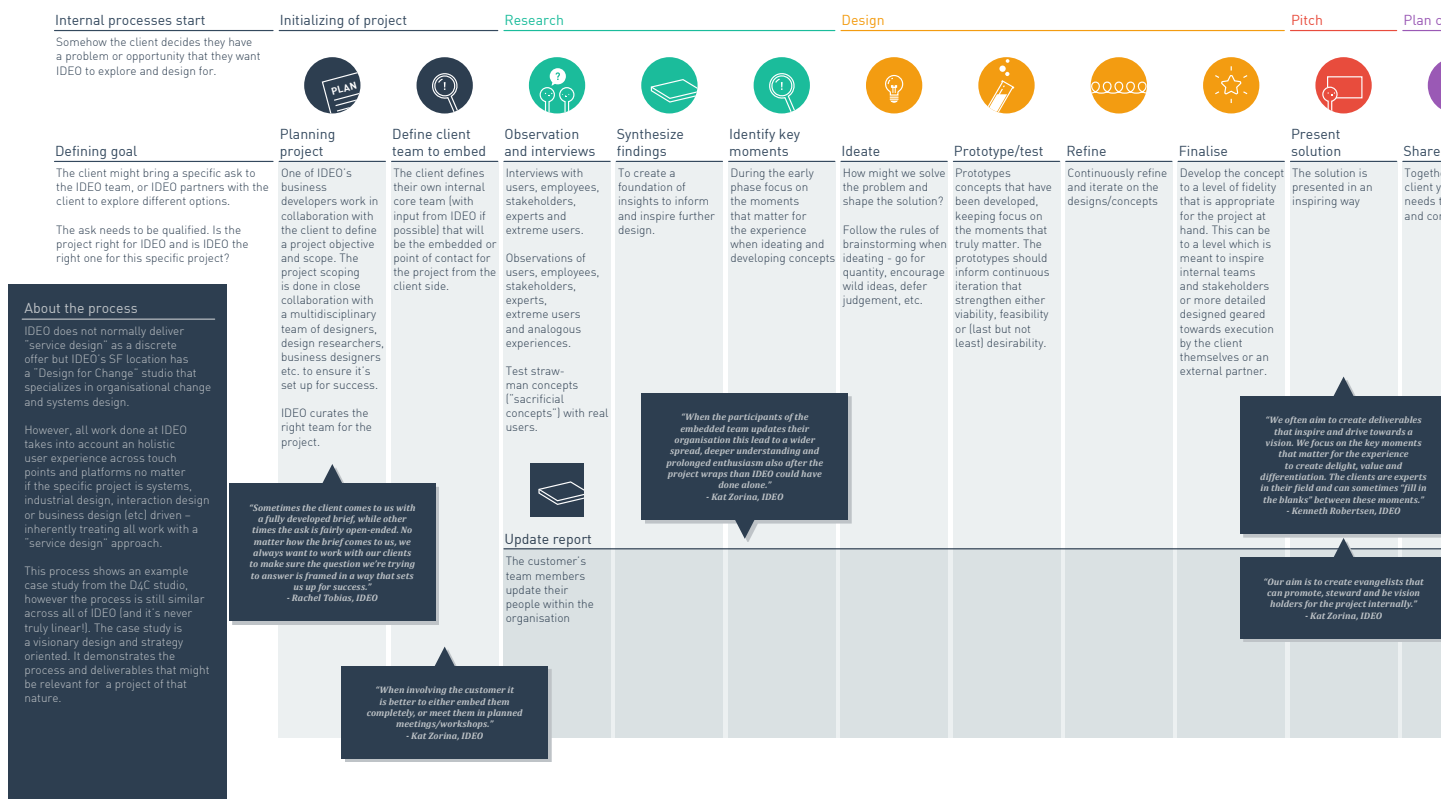


IDEO on designing a strategy and doing a launch event

Attempts to smooth out the handover situation by embedding a client's team into the designer's process, making them into "design thinkers" before leaving the client.

That embedded team is used to anchor throughout the process.

Example Process: IDEO on the delivery of a strategy and design vision



"We chose to make a web page because it can be easily distributed to all employees and deliver a consistent message"
- Kat Zorina

"IDEO has an incredibly diverse pool of employees that have deep knowledge in their field of specialty take part in a project depending on the needs."
Could be included at the end: They all have F-shaped skill-sets and can work also outside of their own discipline."
- Kenneth Robertsen, IDEO

Change | **Delivery**

PLAN

Create material
Create necessary material to support implementation and to inspire evangelists to spread the solution

Example delivery for a Strategy
The examples are taken from an example case where a strategy was created for the client

Illustrations To better communicate	Animations and/or video To better demonstrate and communicate value or experience	Business models To support viability of solutions or to inspire thinking outside the box about new revenue models the design might enable.
Web page A web page communicating the new strategy and what will happen now	Launch-event Launch events were created for the employees and the customers	Insights and design principles That informed the design and establishes credibility for the work internally.

Execute change

Launch-event internally
Launch the new strategy internally in an event.
IDEO might help execute the event

Distribute web page
The web page is made available to all employees through available channels

Launch-event externally
A campaign is developed to inform about the new strategy to relevant externals

The elements of a team

The philosophy
"Everyone can be creative" is the philosophy of IDEO. Thus they have multidisciplinary teams combining people relevant for the task at hand. Usually you will have designers (makers) and experts

Experts
The people with knowledge in some field:

- MBA's business design
- Magicians
- Anthropologists (design researchers)
- Surgeons
- etc.

Designers
The people with the skills to build and design stuff:

- Visual
- UX
- Industrial
- Strategy
- Developers
- Implementation

The different kinds of clients coming to IDEO

Innovation "We want to innovate."	Differentiation "We want to differentiate ourselves in the market."	Improve "We want to improve upon an existing product or service."	User base x "We want to capture 'x' new user base."
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Contributors to this mapping
 Kenneth Aleksander Robertsen, Interaction Designer, IDEO
 Kat Zorina, Interaction Designer, IDEO
 Rachel Tobias, Business Development Lead, IDEO

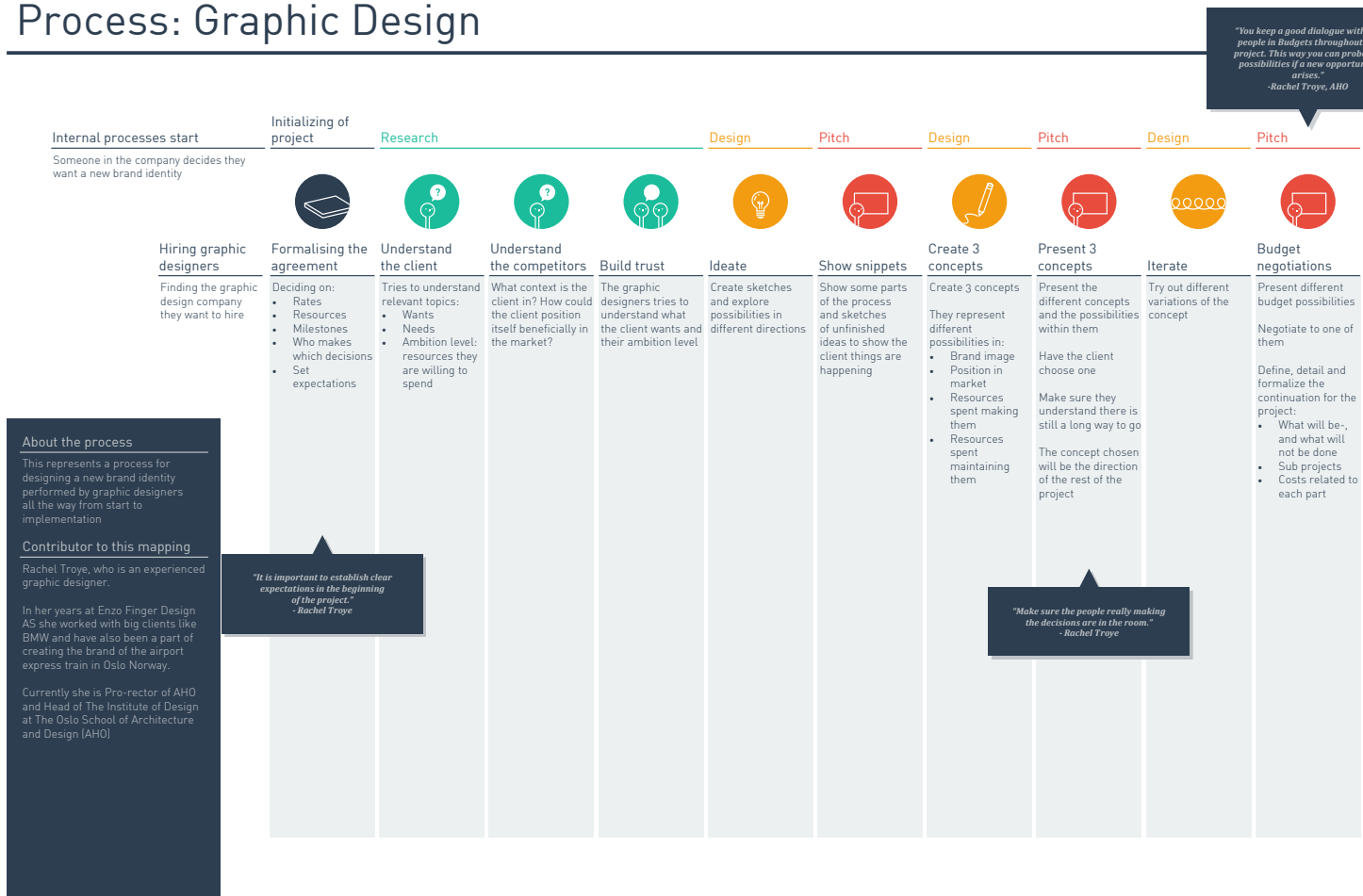
"We get a lot of different clients who wants to work with IDEO for different reasons. If I were to group them by those reasons right now I would maybe say that we have:
 We want to innovate
 We want to differentiate ourselves in the market.
 We want to improve upon an existing product or service.
 We want to capture 'x' new user base."
- Rachel Tobias, IDEO

Graphic Design on designing and implementing a new brand identity

Is a good example of tight client-designer-communication with a conscious relationship to positioning yourself politically to be able to pitch the important battles to the right decision-makers. Discusses different strategies to implementation.














Very conscious relationship to feasibility, desirability and viability and pitches different options in a way that addresses these aspects.

Process: Graphic Design



by the
the
the
city

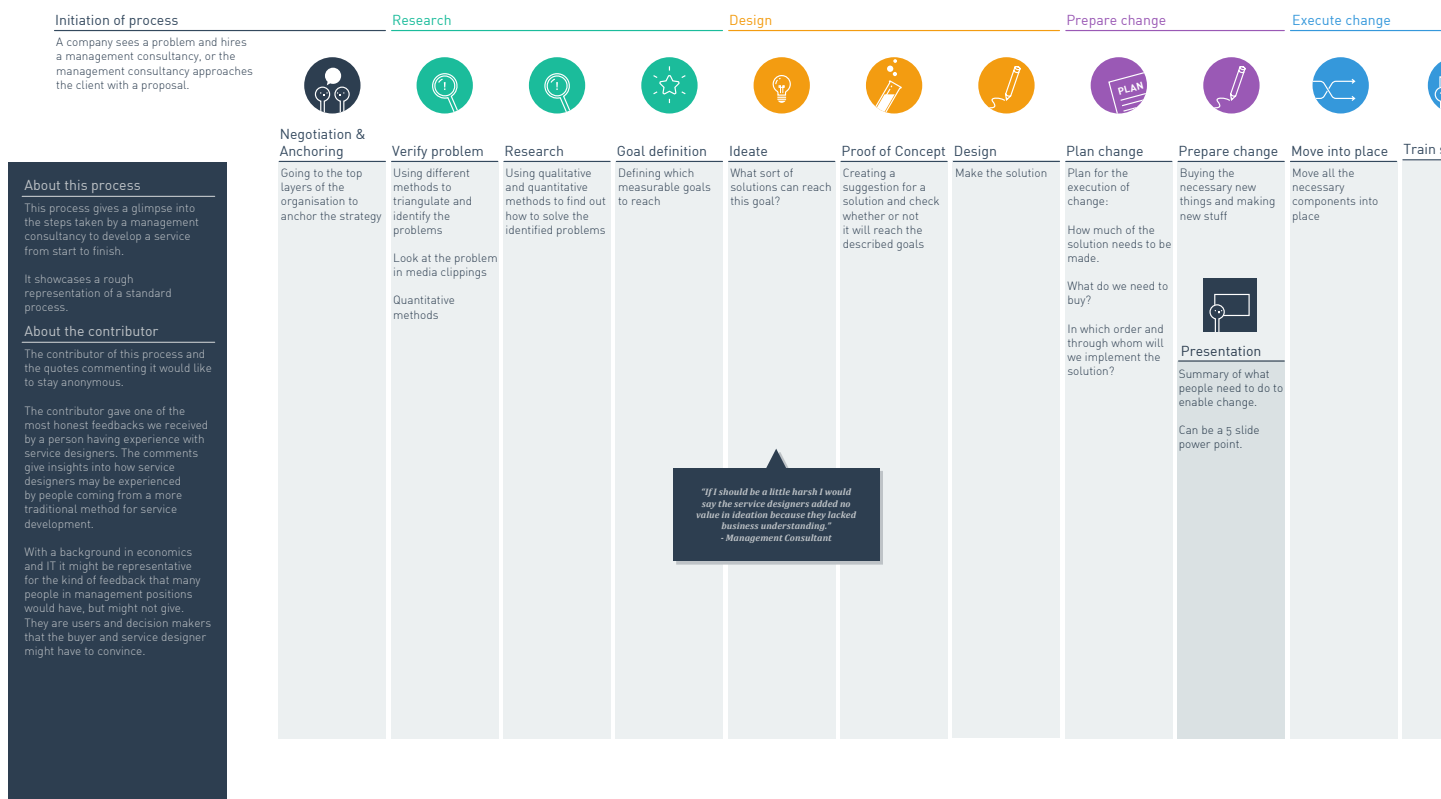
"The implementation could either be a smooth transition like here where the new material is being used when the old one is spent. Or an overnight reveal switching out and launching the identity at the same time for maximized effect. It all depends on the client's desired effect, ambition and economy."
- Rachel Troye

Design	Opportunity Pitch	Prepare change	Pitch	Design	Prepare change	Execute change	Business as usual					
 <p>Finalise the design</p> <p>The solution is presented in an inspiring way</p>	 <p>Opportunity budget meeting</p> <p>If opportunity arises, have a meeting with the Budget department to probe the possibilities</p>	 <p>Opportunity pitch</p> <p>If an opportunity has arisen and you find that there is a budget for it. You present the suggested changes in concept to the people who can make the decision</p>	 <p>Finalise plan for implementation</p> <p>Plan how the new brand identity should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produced Spread internally Launched externally 	 <p>Present the final design</p> <p>Present the final designs, plans for execution and estimated cost</p>	 <p>Small scale test and adjust</p> <p>Do a small production run and test out parts of the concept</p>	 <p>Produce material</p> <p>Order the making of the labels, stationary, posters and all other part of the brand identity</p> <div data-bbox="730 1473 794 1541" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>The graphic material</p> <p>All the material necessary for daily operations is handed over to the client</p> <p>Some material is sent directly to the producers</p>	 <p>Distribute</p> <p>Introduce the material to the necessary channels and train staff if necessary</p>	 <p>Summarize and celebrate</p> <p>Communication of how it goes along the way</p>	 <p>Official launch</p> <p>Introduce the material to the necessary channels</p>	 <p>Maintain</p> <p>If wanted updating of the graphic material can be made</p>	 <p>Adjust</p> <p>Necessary adjustments are made on request</p>	 <p>Make Brand Manual</p> <p>When the last kinks of the new brand is sorted out a brand manual is recommended to ease use and later add-ons by other graphic designers</p> <div data-bbox="1433 1473 1497 1541" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Brand Manual</p> <p>A manual to explain how to use the existing material and how to produce new material that will conform with the brand identity.</p>
						<div data-bbox="767 1731 986 1809" data-label="Text"> <p>"One often lets go of projects too early." - Rachel Troye</p> </div>						

General service development process from a management consultant

Dramatically lower attention to qualitative methods and user insight. Reframing to a clear, quantitatively measurable goal definition. Demands a proof of concept before committing resources: The proof of concept should show that the concept will solve the previously mentioned goal.

Process: A management consultant's service development process



	Business as Usual				No end delivery	
staff						
Launch	Go live with solution	Daily operations	Measure	Adjust	Delivery Content	
	Running the business	Does the solution solve the problems? Does the solution reach the goals? Does it realise profits?	Do adjustments until profit realisation and goals are met	There are several deliveries throughout the process, but the final delivery is a changed organisation		

What service designers are good at

Research	Visualisation	Creativity
The research is seen as really good and the way of working is something management consultants should learn from.	The visualisation is seen as a very powerful tool which shouldn't be underestimated.	The creativity gives a different take on things.

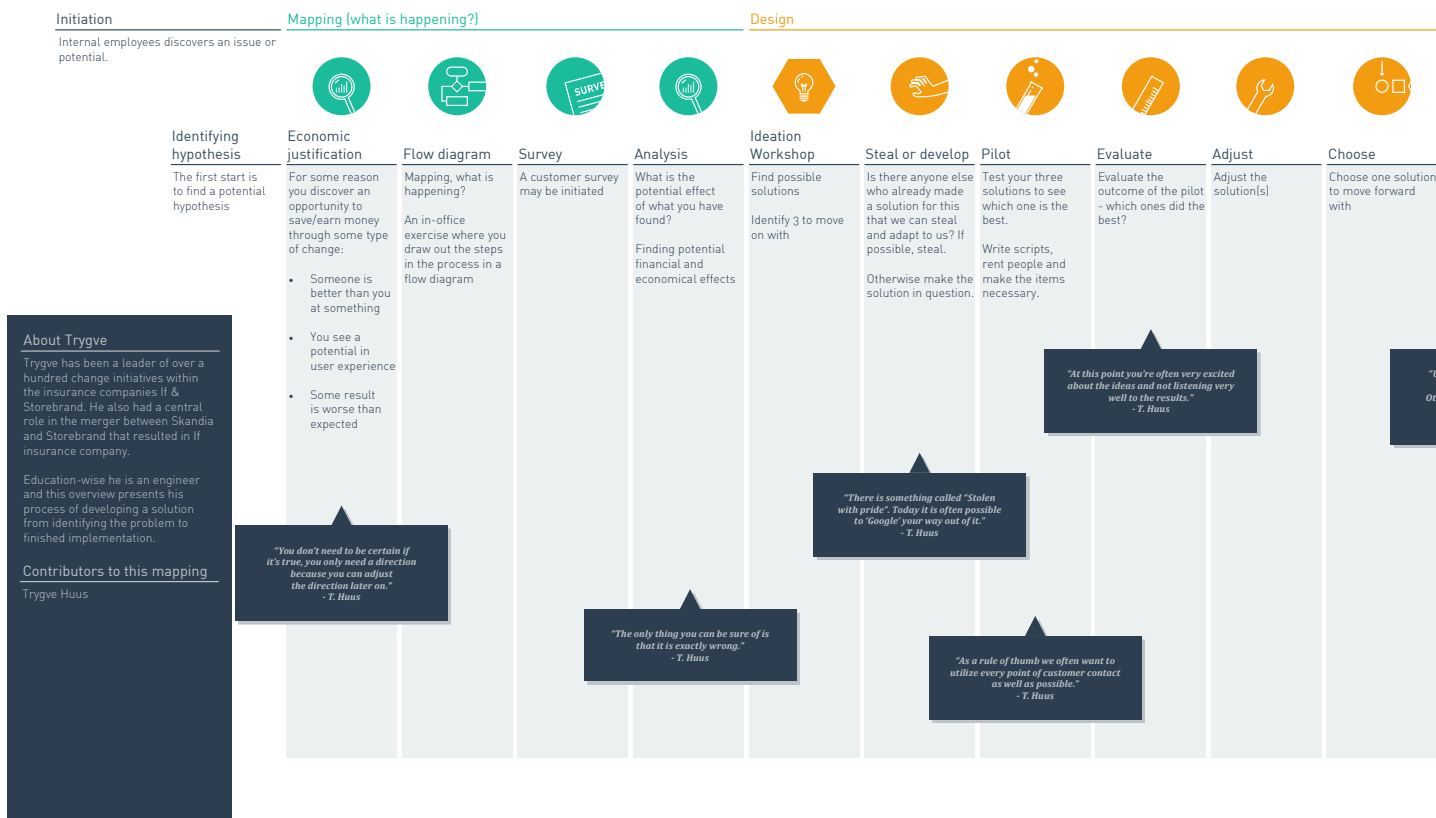
What service designers can be better at

Decision-making	Business	Letting go	Naivety	Discretion
Many decisions are based on intuition and hunches. It is not very trustworthy.	With lacking business understanding, the ideas from many service designers may come across as naive.	Service designers seem to want to own the whole process and doesn't seem willing to try to cooperate with other fields.	Service designers seem little aware of the landscape they work in and other proficiencies who do things similar to them.	Unlike other consultancy services, service designers seem to want to take the honor for the projects they are a part of. Instead of letting the customer get the positive attention.
<i>"My kind [economists] can get very annoyed if all decisions are based on hunches"</i> - Management Consultant			<i>"Service design seems to have grown up in a bubble."</i> - Management Consultant	

Change process in a big organisation

Bigger attention to analytics and economic justification of going through with the project.
 A money-rational approach to the design phase which opens for stealing concepts to be adjusted to fit the organisation
 Attention to confirmation-bias
 Techniques for how to disarm internal inhibitors to change.

Process: Trygve Huus about his change process in If & Storebrand



"Probably not so wise to have high profile consultants to make the solution or run the whole change initiative."
- T. Huus

Prepare change Execute change

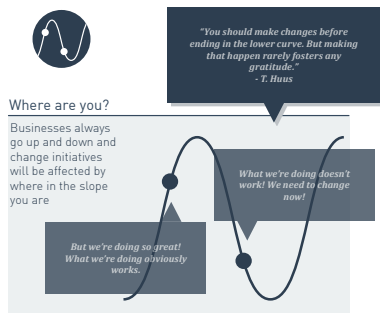
Plan change	Make solution	Communication	Training	Practical	Technical
Plan how it will be implemented	Sometimes it is made internally, other times with consultants	Good communication throughout is key Partner up with Human Resources (HR) for this	Training of staff to handle new tasks	Practical issues are taken care of	Implementing necessary technical tools, systems and equipment

Usually it is smarter when the organisation itself delivers. otherwise you have to deal with "Not invented here".
- T. Huus

Some tips and tricks about change

Where are you?

Businesses always go up and down and change initiatives will be affected by where in the slope you are

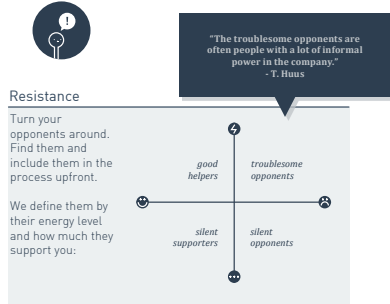


"You should make changes before ending in the lowest curve. But making that happen rarely fosters any gratitude."
- T. Huus

Resistance

Turn your opponents around. Find them and include them in the process upfront.

We define them by their energy level and how much they support you:



"The troublesome opponents are often people with a lot of informal power in the company."
- T. Huus

Small organisation who has used service design for over 8 years

A very rational approach to AT-ONE due to limited resources

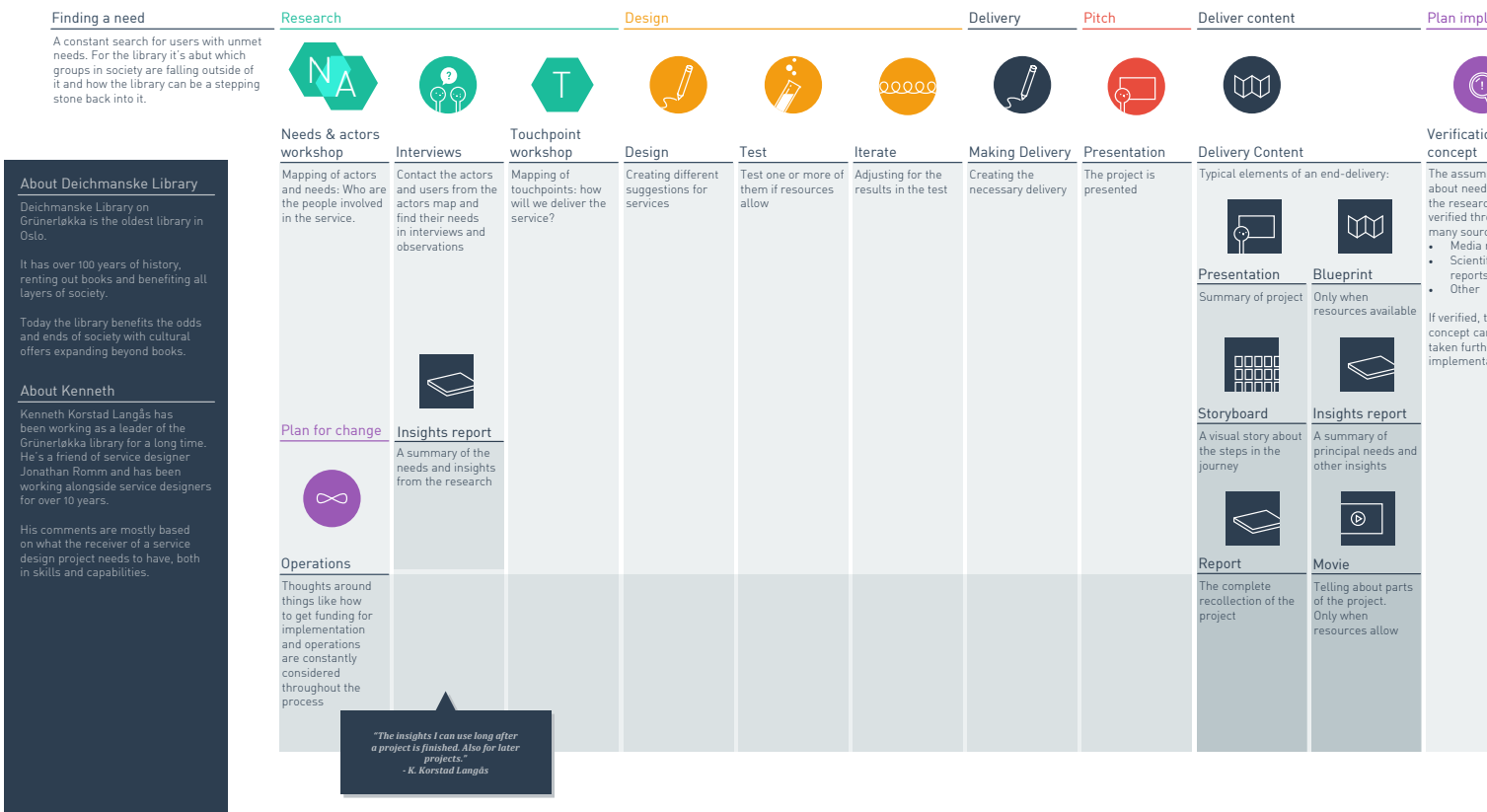
Attention to implementation all the way through as the leader has a complete overview of feasibility

Own verification of service design concepts before implementation

An attention to leaders' responsibility to have the right competence in change management and using service design

A service design process by Deichmanske, Grünerløkka

"The delivery from the designers is superb."
- K. Korstad Langås



Implementation	Execute Implementation			Business as usual
<p>Identify missing elements</p> <p>Find what is missing to make the solution possible to operate.</p>	<p>Get funding</p> <p>Apply for funding or formalise agreements with partners</p>	<p>Acquire and train</p> <p>Acquire necessary equipment/staff Train staff as necessary</p>	<p>Launch</p> <p>Launch the new service</p>	<p>Daily operations</p> <p>The project is implemented and daily operations are running as usual</p>

Success factors for a customer of service design, according to Kenneth Korstad Langås:

<p>Safe employees</p> <p>It is important for a leader to create a safe environment for change and ensure it is a part of the daily operations</p> <p>Positive feedback from the users are important to show that new services are important for the users</p>	<p>Leadership</p> <p>A challenge for service designers is if the leader lacks experience and competence with design and innovation processes. The processes needs a clearer anchoring in strategic leadership.</p>	<p>Mentality</p> <p>Being a bit like an entrepreneur helps. You are willing to try new things and innovate.</p>	<p>Grit</p> <p>During implementation: Staying in there and not giving up even though it takes more time and resources than first anticipated.</p>	<p>Holding two thoughts ...</p> <p>... in your head, but end up with a third.</p>	<p>Decision making</p> <p>As a customer of service design it helps if you make decisions as late as possible. Getting all factors on the table first.</p>
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Kenneth's tips on areas of improvement for service designers:

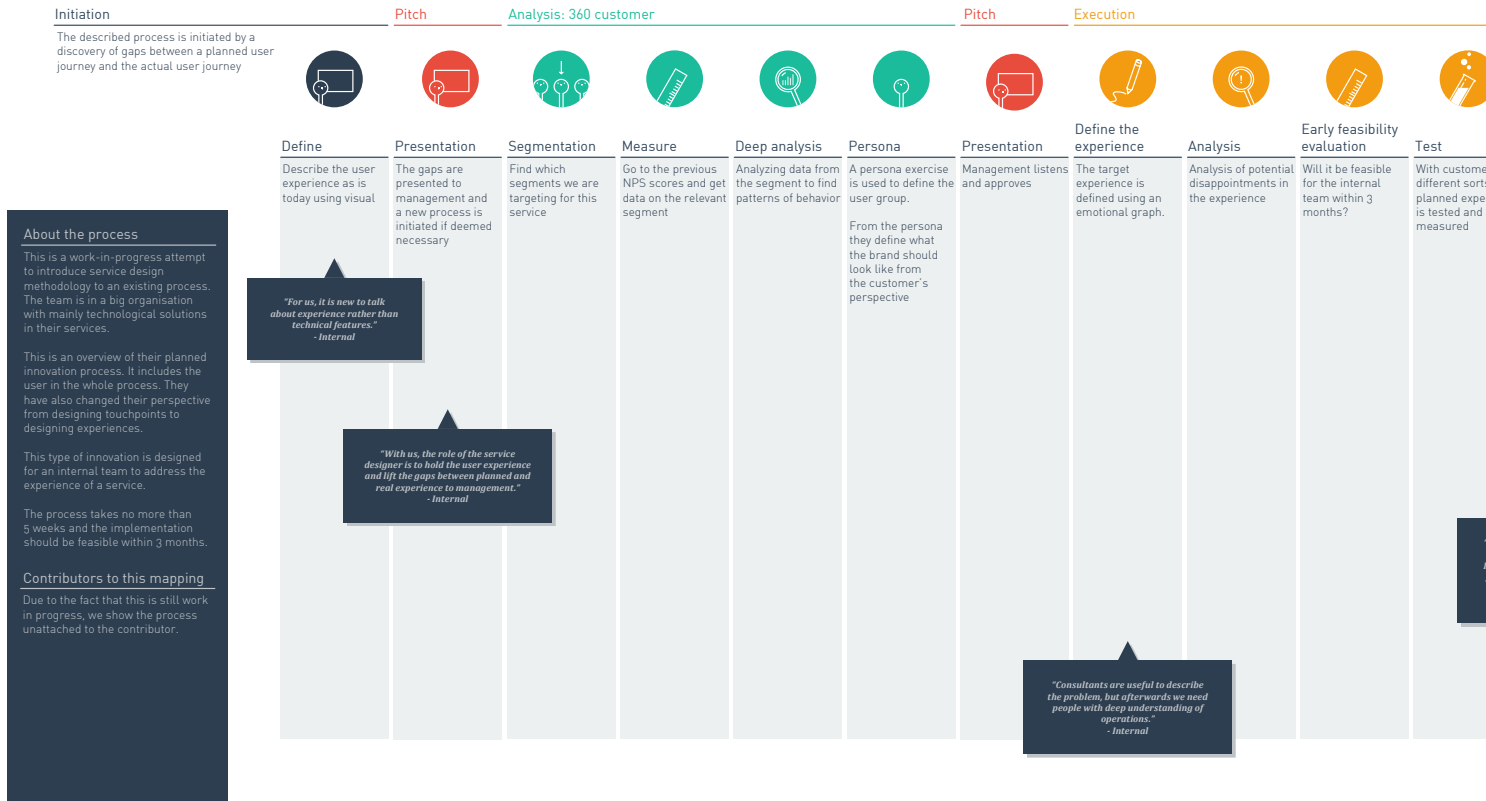
<p>Plan for operations</p> <p>More attention to how the solutions should be run in the day-to-day-business in regards to my resources.</p>	<p>Limitations</p> <p>Understanding of what cannot be done because of lacking resources</p>	<p>Evaluate</p> <p>To come back a year later and evaluate the situation.</p> <p>What is working well, what can be removed?</p>	<p>Adjust</p> <p>To help with adjusting the service after an evaluation.</p>	<p>Osterwalder</p> <p>You should read the "Business Model Canvas"</p>
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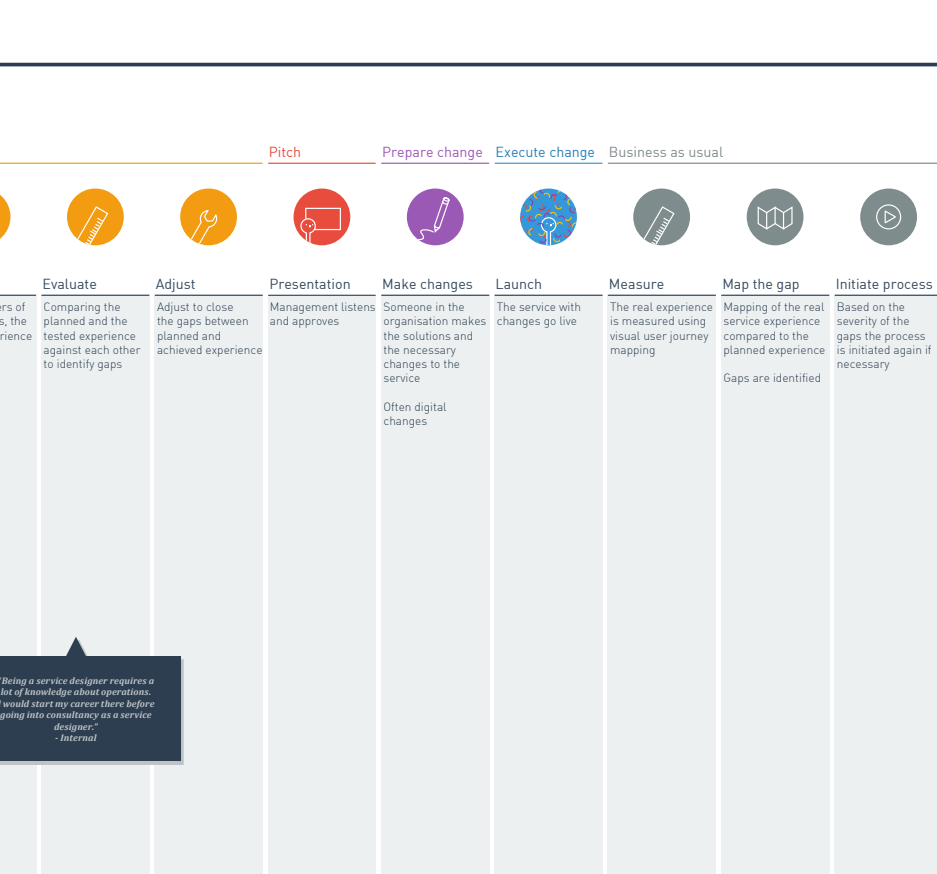
"Some of the concepts that come up are impossible for me to run with the resources I have."
- K. Korstad Langås

Big organisations plan for implementing service design in service development

- A standard service development process spanning three months with a handover situation
- An analytical approach to service design made to constantly evaluate and fix the experience in the organisation
- Showing the gates the internals have to go through in the process
- Early assessment of viability and feasibility

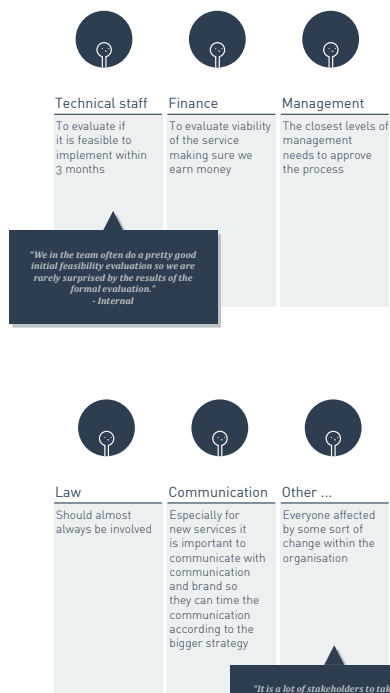
Process: Internal product development meets service design





*"There are a lot of stakeholders in service development. All affected by the change should be involved in the process."
- Internal*

Actors involved in the process



Illustrations

All major illustrations are done by the fantastic Andres B. at 27poker, Chile. We started out thinking that we would do them ourselves, but chose instead to spend our time on writing and compiling as much as possible.

We therefore put out a bid on the freelance site Elance.com asking for a talented artist to take quick sketches and turn them into something along these lines:



We had made these prior and they represented the style we planned to use. Andres improved on the style by adding his own twist, and we loved working with him.

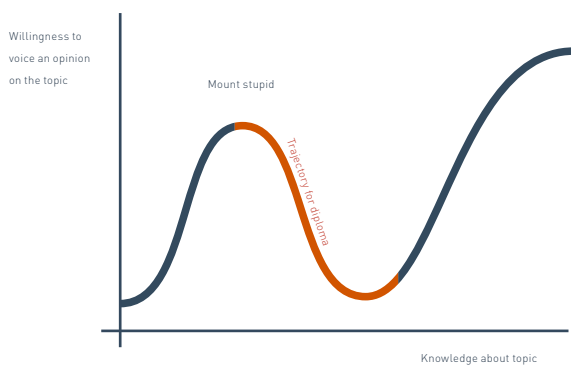
Over a weekend Andres received sketches from us like the one on the right, and turned out illustrations that we have used to strengthen our message.



From stupid to uncertain

When we started the thesis we had a clear idea of what we found problematic: The delivery (in the form of a blueprint or other big printed sheet of paper) did not seem easy to use, easy to store or fit in with the workflows we had seen companies use when freelancing. It felt like we were delivering a “service design”-focused service, not a customer-focused one, and we were pretty sure that we in four months could come up with something better.

However, the more we talked with people and the more we learned the less we felt qualified to voice an opinion on the matter. In essence, we were following the classic mount stupid curve:



At the start of the thesis we were firmly at the top of mount stupid. We had one-and-a-half years of experience with service design, mostly from AHO but also a little through freelancing together with Halogen, Livework and Eggs, and we felt that we

could say something important that others would have missed. That arrogance got deflated almost as soon as we started interviewing people.

While it's always funny to laugh at ourselves, there's a more important point here as well:

In normal client projects we as designers come in and quickly start learning about the situation, looking for just enough information to trigger action and ideas (opining). Through necessity we are working from the top of mount stupid. That's not necessarily a bad thing. In the words of Virgil: "They are able because they think they are able".

If designers are working from the top of mount stupid, that helps explain two of our findings: First, that observers and clients think we are naive. Second, that our clients and interviewees praise us for asking dumb questions. Both are describing someone on mount stupid, coming up with ideas that anyone with a little more knowledge would know to be unfeasible or challenging basics that others have stopped thinking about. Hopefully our own thesis does more of the latter and less of the first.

However, we've faced a challenge in this project. In a normal project we come to clients with our own base of knowledge and experience from design, and add that background to the minimal knowledge we gain about the clients world. That means the certainty we have standing on top of mount stupid

is based not only on basic insights from our clients field, but also on deep knowledge of our own. That combination makes for new ideas that no one entrenched in the customers industry would come up with. In our project, we do not bring substantially different backgrounds than the people already working in the field. In essence, we have no deep knowledge that we bring to the table along with our limited knowledge of the field we're working to design. What we do bring is time to do the research and access to cross-agency people and customers. That's been enough to get us down from the certainty of mount stupid, and we hope the findings we've had along the way is enough to make for an interesting read for others.

Research or opinion piece?

“Perhaps you should give us a taste of our own medicine: Tell us everything that's bad and how you're the only ones who can save us”

- Senior service designer

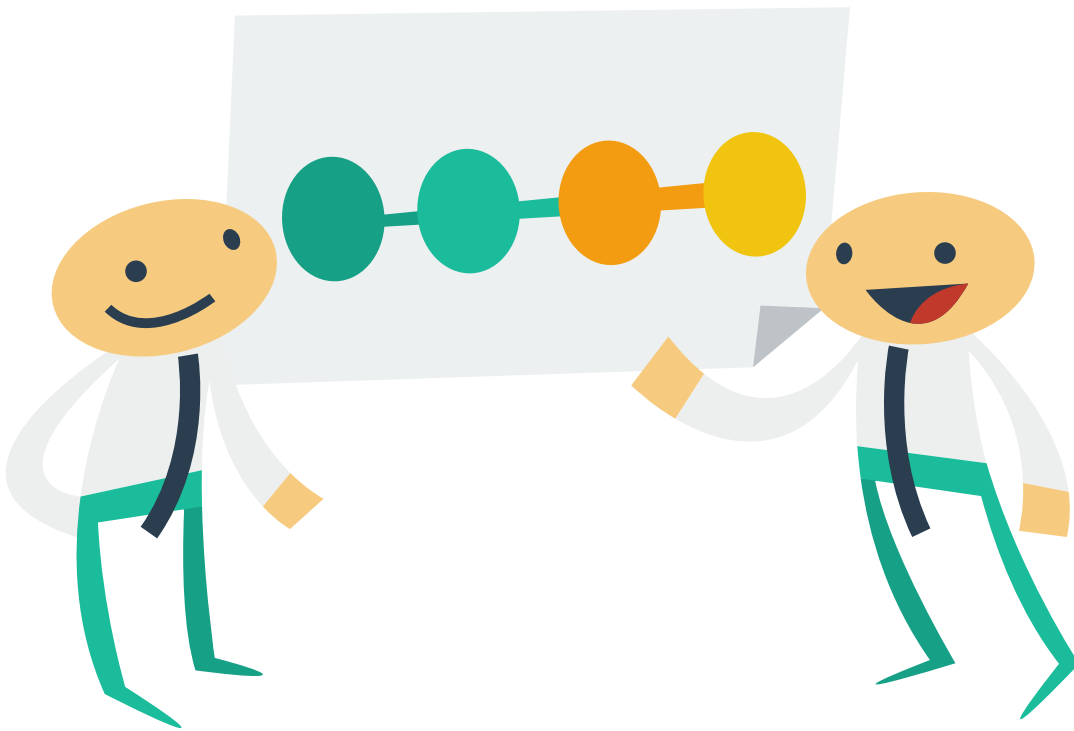
We are not trained as academics and will not pretend to be. As such this thesis is a mix of a traditional insight report as normally delivered by designers and a discursive take on the role of service design and where we think service design should be. It's not a research paper, and we have not limited our findings to those who hold up to academic rigour but instead limited them by what we think will be useful for the reader.



OTHER FINDINGS

When you go exploring you'll find some stuff.

Who buys service design?	129
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Process or product? What do you sell?	137
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Who buys service design?

“We don’t know enough about the buyers”

- Service Designer

“Buying design requires competence”

- Advisor at DogA

The person buying the service design, and their position in the organisation, greatly affects the project. Is it the service owner or someone who doesn't have mandate to change the service themselves? In several of the cases we have looked into the service designer will be hired from someone in brand, sales, or marketing, who see that the service doesn't live up to customers expectations but do not themselves have the mandate to change the service.

In these projects the service designer is not only tasked with coming up with a great design, but also helping the buyer getting that design through in the organisation. In addition, according to one designer, these projects usually have lower budgets than the ones bought by the people with mandate to change.

Big organisation or small organisation? Public or private? Which fields? It seems to us that most buyers are from big organisations who have services with usability problems and are not strangers to hiring consultants and externals to help them out.

They hire for different reasons:

- To understand their customers and the service seen from the customer's point of view.
- To connect with and win customers through user friendly services
- To help change company culture towards customer orientation and innovation by showing what could be
- To help change company competencies towards customer orientation and innovation by learning and adopting design methodology

We see a great need for service designers in big, private organisations, and the market for service design there seems to be growing. While a lot of service designers focuses on public sector, we have focused on private.

Many of these have defined brand strategies that require them to be customer oriented and have easy to use services, but have organisations that are divided into silos that don't cooperate, are not customer oriented, and deliver services that are hard to use. Bridging the gap between brand promise and brand reality is often central to buyers' motivations.

In addition to these big companies there is also a set of smaller buyers from smaller organisations. These might not normally afford service design (or any external consultants), but are either collaborating with schools and working with students or have been awarded design help through DIP projects or other pools of public money meant to spread innovation. These are looking to understand customers and design superior services without using any resources.

On service design

Trust in service designers

“Service design is seldom the basis for decisions in bigger projects”

- Design manager

We think it's natural that service design is not trusted to impact bigger projects as long as service designs are not evaluated in measurable ways. Feasibility and viability in service design projects does not seem to be systematically evaluated. Leaving the client to evaluate or simply trust the designer's instincts.

However, from our interviews it seems buyers expect customer insights and inspirational ideas, and trust us to deliver on those. They also trust us to know what we do, and as externals to come with “our way of working” and demand that everything is in place for our way to work. One user was surprised when we said we wanted to stay in the project throughout implementation and told us:

“You are the experts on your method, you have to make demands for what you need to be successful”

However, that might be easier said than done: One service designer complained that they did not get the access they needed for a project:

“We've asked for access a dozen times, but they never give it to us.”

The best cases we've seen come from agencies that have built up trust over time with a client; where both the client and the agency know each other well and understand each other. Then truly good work gets done, and realisable ideas come up. Trust seems essential to get anything realised, which is no surprise: Concept art and ideation is fun, harmless, and cheap. Implementation and change is scary, expensive, and risky.

Trust works on two separate layers here: One is trust from the buyer towards the specific agency or designer. The other is trust from the business field towards the service design field. The first builds on the latter, and the latter also makes it much easier for the buyer to evangelize service design internally.

Buyers who don't have a relationship with an agency turn to AHO, DogA, colleagues and other “impartial” actors help determine if a project is good or a designer is worth the risk.

The perception of service design

Service design is widely seen as an immature field that is still finding it's way, both by enthusiasts and critics. Enthusiasts are mostly service designers, buyers of service design and users of service

design, as well as researchers. They see service design as a good answer to how to innovate on customer friendly services, but worry about how they should use the designers best in an organisation.

Critics mostly come from related fields:

Management consultants, other designers (interaction and industrial) and design managers in agencies. They are annoyed and sometimes exasperated by service design concepts that lack substance and depth, both when you look at specific touch points and interactions (for the designers) or how feasible it will be for the organisation (for both designers and the management people).

Most of the people we've talked to have only experience with service design as done by one agency or even just one service designer, and their perception of service design is defined by that experience. The result is service design being perceived as everything from full blown business renovation to pre-project research and concept art.

“Service design has grown up in a bubble”

- Design manager

Other designers, design managers in agencies, management consultants and some users brought up that service design does not make use of expertise from other fields, nor do they know how much of what service design does is already covered by others - from anthropology to user experience

design and brand management. We know this is true for ourselves and other juniors, but have not been able to assess if it's true for senior service designers. The perception might simply stem from the field being so young that seniors are few and far between, or because many people claim to be service designers and treat the subject as a method suited for every problem in the world.

Innovation vs Improvement

“Service design isn't very innovative. It's usually incremental solutions.”

- Design manager

Is the project aiming to improve an existing service through removing pain points, or innovate and make something that offers something substantially new? Service design promises to be able to do both, but some interviewees feel that Service design has tools for improvement (the service journey and blueprint), but not for innovation.

That does not mean that service designers do not come up with innovative ideas, but we think showing the service as touchpoints along a journey makes it very easy to just rearrange existing touchpoints or add and remove touchpoints to the existing journey - instead of thinking outside the box and come up with an entirely different structure altogether. Other tools, like actor mapping, are well suited for coming up with “true innovation” - and we've also looked into tool sets for innovation proposed by William Cockayne of Stanford University.

Being internal vs external

Several interviewees think that you need to be internal to have the grit, time, knowledge and influence needed to truly change a service, through slowly changing the service provider from the inside. According to Robert Fabricant¹ design is becoming such a crucial part of business that it needs to be internal. The same conclusion has been drawn by both Telenor who have decided to build Service Design into to be one of its core competencies and IBM who are hiring a thousand designers² - making them the one of the biggest design firms in the world. Being internal gives you a deep understanding of the organisation, which is the material you are designing with, and makes you both better qualified to come up with feasible ideas and better positioned to get them through.

One interviewee questioned if service design should be delivered through the consultancy model at all. However, clients say being external means you can say things that internals wouldn't dare, and come up with ideas that internals wouldn't spot as the fresh perspective is a crucial ingredient. We would also add that the market for management consultants seems pretty OK, probably precisely because management is a core aspect of any business.

In our interview with Adaptive Path we discussed if the design-consultancy model was made for the graphic/product/interaction design-model and might not accommodate the long term relationship they think is needed to ensure real change. We think there might be a point to that.

One solution to this could be to plan a follow-up of the services you implement as a standard part of every service design delivery. It is maybe not a long-term commitment, but it allows for the designers to learn beyond implementation and the client could get a round of suggestions for adjustments in return.

What should the designer do in implementation?

What can service designers do in implementation? Some clients mention a use for visual communication and possibly facilitation to communicate to the customers of change about what have happened, where we are and what will come. They however struggle to come up with what else we should do. Other clients, who have used service designers in a different way, see the service designer as essential in keeping the nerve of the project intact.

¹ The Rapidly disappearing business of design

² <http://www.fastcodesign.com/3028271/ibm-invests-100-million-to-expand-design-business>

The strengths of service design

*“There’s power in knowing
what the customers want”*

- Service Designer

*“There’s serious power in knowing
what the customers want”*

- Buyer

The main strength of service design, as seen from both designers, customers and researchers, seems to be the ability to understand and communicate the human and emotional aspects of a whole service. In particular the needs and experiences of the customers.

This is strengthened by being able to make things tangible (making the invisible visible³) through visualizing and evidencing, both for communicating insights about the current situation and ideas for the future.

Visualizing is both impressive, exclusive and useful. It’s impressive because it’s exclusive - non-creatives have not drawn for ages and most aren’t even willing to try. It’s useful because it makes it easy to grasp concepts and ideas and thus help facilitate a discussion. It’s also useful because it’s

quick and can bring life to ideas on the spot. Most designers and buyers see being able to move from insights to concepts as a core part of design. Answering the “What do we do with this?” of customer research separates us from anthropologists, who are also good at understanding the human and emotional aspects of a service. To us it’s also core to calling service design a design discipline.

However, critics claim that the concepts and ideas lack a basis in reality and remain concept art at best, and service designers feel they too seldom get to move on from early concepts to “real design work” and implementation.

When we asked customers about what parts of the service they would buy again, they answer the research, making that research into actionable insights, and early ideation. In other words: The first stages of the service development process.

³ Lavrans book again

Tea pot model

A small model we made over tea. The different pots are different parts of the service, and the question is - where is the designer placed? Which interface is she working on?

All of these are interesting, but a little bit simplified we can divide it up into two: Customer facing and Organization facing.

Most designers are trained to face the end customers, making them happily pay for products

or services. Some are trained to face the employees - making them happy to work better through redesigned internal tools. Both of those are directly facing the users.

You could also be forming the organization itself as a design object, by being placed high up in management or between management and the organization. Here the designer indirectly affects the customers or end users by directly affecting the organization.



Spreading innovation

Once a good idea is implemented somewhere - how do you get it to spread to the rest of the organisation or even beyond the organisation? According to one buyer designers are well positioned to make spreadable innovations through convincing communication.

One example of this comes from the case Designit did with OUS (Oslo University Hospital) in their work on reducing the time until diagnosis of breast cancer. After the project a video was made presenting the case and the results. This video is self-contained and easy to send around or use when presenting the project.

Through the examples we have talked and heard about it seems that functional prototypes spread, as long as they are better than the existing solution. In essence they are being adopted as AD-HOC solutions.

Examples are from Livework's project "God skolestart" on early diagnosing of ADHD in kids starting their first year in school. The prototype was a binder with instructions and tables to fill out. The binder is self-contained and has been shared among the staff across the country.

The same happened in the DNB case Boligreisen 2015, where Eggs created a PDF-generator to aid in a crucial moment of the customer journey. The PDF-generator made a loan-certificate to the customer which prepared them for the rest of the journey of buying a home. And helped DNB consultants present extra services like insurance in a non-invasive way.

The generator was a huge success and was shared among the staff until Eggs' servers went down from the increased traffic. After upgrading their servers, DNB's advisors are still using what was supposed to be a temporary prototype.

All of this fits with Johannesens claim that change is easiest if it's possible to actually experience it.

Mapping different types of motivations for the buyer

How well do the customer feel they know the problem or solution?

We mapped different types of motivation together with IDEO as a quick exercise.

This model did not prove too useful for us, but we include it here for the sake of others who might find inspiration in it.

The “We have a solution - You make it”-customer.

This customer knows the goal and the means to get there. All he needs is someone to execute on the details. Not often seen in service design, but seen in product and interaction design. This kind of project does not explore the root cause of the problem or find alternative solutions.

The “We have a goal, but don’t know how to get there”-customer

This customer knows the goal. However, she needs to find a way to get there. For example “We want to make our services easy to use”. The problem definition (presumably that they aren’t easy to use) and causes of the problem is still on the table, but with the goal set any alternative goal definitions that arise from understanding the problem might be unwelcome.

The “I have a problem”-customer

This customer knows there’s a problem, but not how to solve it. The project needs to understand the cause of the problem and define the goal so the problem can be solved. Highly open project, and often a good fit for any type of design. For example: “We know customers aren’t signing up for our courses as much as they should. Why?” or “Waiting lines are long”,

The “You see if there’s potential”-customer

This customer hires in designers to see if there’s potential for innovation or improvement, without knowing beforehand if there is any. Few companies will do do this, but we heard examples of Google hiring teams of designers and saying “Here’s your budget. What can you come up with?” Here neither problem, nor goal, nor means are defined - but there’s a clear expectation of some sort of innovation.

Process or product? What do you sell?

“Service design creates the most value as a process tool. People want concrete things, but the value comes from the immaterial.”

- Design manager

“You have to promise something in the bid”

- Service designer

We have a hunch that the deliverable that you've sold in the start, and that's expected in the end makes it harder to focus on what might actually give the most return on investment: the process. A blueprint, report, customer journey, mockup, prototype or other form of deliverable can be worth less than what the organisation learned during the process and the mentality the organisation picked up.

Ironically, the deliverable is a product focused way of looking at the service, while process, coaching, facilitation is a service focused way of looking at the service. It's not (only) the end that counts.

We as designers should be able to make this immaterial service tangible and sellable.

Sales situation

A bidding situation forces design firm to promise concrete deliverables to get the job, even though service design methodology is favorable towards ambiguity in what deliverables will manifest themselves as the most useful and thinks the process has the highest return on investment, not the deliverables.

During the work

Defined deliverables makes the project less flexible and might force the project down ultimately unproductive paths. It also gives pressure to think about what's being delivered instead of thinking about the mindset being transferred or the methods being learned or the people being involved or what will be needed to actually implement.

All this and other important, but immaterial stuff is often impossible to know beforehand, and the project has to be flexible to adapt.

Jumping to concepts

The product mentality when service design becomes about making a blueprint or concept - not about the process, also shows up when the customer misreads where the real value lies and jumps on

early concepts or ideas without understanding that they're part of a process that will eventually get somewhere much better (or validate and improve the current idea). Just because something looks good doesn't mean it's good.

Final leg of project

With the end in sight the project has to focus on time-consuming deliverables rather than more pressing or important matters like onboarding important stake holders that will be needed later or being part of decision making that will determine the service.

After the project

After the project the delivery is a dead object and often doesn't live on beyond a few months. The real return on the investment might have been in all the workshops, coaching and facilitation that taught the organisation new methods and mindsets, and the expensive deliverables often end up not being used.

This is especially true for deliverables describing a service to be, which will change so much in implementation that the original deliverable is no longer useful, and often not updateable by the client.

However, insight reports and visualizations showing unchanging, core, aspects often live on.

About the blueprint

There are several different tools going by the name blueprint. Neither of them work as a technical blueprint for how the service can be built, and therefore shouldn't be used as an end delivery. They are instead working tools for the service development team to help coordinate the complex picture of a service.

We've seen one, used by Livework, that shows multiple channels at once and lets you coordinate the experience between them and the multiple backstage channels.

Another, used at AHO, shows a typical user journey (not showing several channels or options in parallel) and connects it to the processes backstage. This one aims to be an extended customer journey and used as a visualization of how the service should flow.

The third, used by Eggs, lines up experience goals and plans for how to achieve them with a user journey. Specifying the pulse for each step works as a guide to show which steps are more important. The experience goal makes it possible for employees to understand why they are assigned to do a specific action and enables them to be able to come with their own suggestions to reaching the goal.

A fourth, used by Deichmanske, is used to see who's responsible for which parts of delivering a specific event. In addition traditional blueprints like Lynn

Shostack's have an entirely different goal of timing and planning employee actions down to the second.

Everyone we've asked seems to agree the blueprint shouldn't be used as a hand over to implementation - but as a tool by the service development team when designing the service. This is contrary to what we've done in student projects, and a little counterintuitive compared to the technical blueprints from industrial design.

"The best thing is to fill out the blueprint with the client."

- Adaptive Path

Given that making a blueprint requires a lot of resources several interviewees and we suggest using the blueprint as a first step on implementation instead. From it you can define sub projects and a plan for implementation.

In a project where the client doesn't trust you enough to run a full scale project from the start, this suggests that an end delivery might simply be a proof of concept. A report of that there is- or isn't potential for a service concept to solve a specific problem and gain potential value. This means that the resources spent on blueprinting can be spent on other things instead. And the proof of concept could lie in the organisation for years as a piece of inspiration to revisit the service design agency once they feel ready to change.

On big organisations

To get things done in a big organisation vs a small organisation

“In big companies, you learn how to get things done in big companies. In small companies, you learn to get things done”

- Potential buyer

On what kind of organisation it is:

“Is the business playing to win, or playing not to lose?”

- Potential buyer

The use of consultants in a big organisation

“Sometimes the consultant is a tool to talk about difficult issues”

- Potential buyer

Consultants are hired for many reasons. Sometimes as a tool to get more suggestions on the table - to feel more secure about a choice already made. Sometimes to take a project to implementation. Sometimes just to feel innovative, where the intention was never to implement but to get inspired.

Often we see that the designers come in with the intention of implementing even when the circumstances are not laid out for it. This can end up in confused and disappointed clients and designers.



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Thank you
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