

When starting the project we wanted to experiment how storytelling can be applied in different phases of the project. We did not want to narrow ourselves to define precisely what we mean by storytelling. Loosely, we related it with meanings, experiential and emotional resonances and sense making without necessity for reasoning and facts. We have identified that story-inspired approaches raised our awareness to address aesthetic, emotional and experiential elements and solutions for all the senses. This is rather radical in public service environment in which the focus typically is in functional and generic solutions. Furthermore, storytelling approaches besides functioning as a strategy in different phases of the design process also served as a tool to create and manage the overall image of service contexts.

We have also identified critical concerns when focusing on storytelling approaches. First, storytelling is an open concept that can be applied and interpreted in various ways. How and at what stages these ways are connected to the design processes need to be studied. Second, we have also experienced that people have different strategies in how they consider storytelling as a starting point for design. For a scenographer creating a story is a novel approach, since their work normally starts with an existing story. For an industrial designer, writing an appealing story for brainstorming design ideas is not an easy task while for a screenwriter it is the core competence. Despite of the critical concerns, we see that storytelling strategy has relevance for designing services because stories can address and work with both intangible and tangible qualities of service experiences. A question for further research is how the service users can interpret ideas based on storytelling approaches.

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