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Design the impact

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Abstract

These days, operating in a globalised society means creating the certainty that everything, or almost everything, will work. It means comfort, and this often translates into uniformity and across-the-board expectations, producing reliable experiences and services. Within this context, companies and institutions have discovered **“service design”, embracing it on a massive scale because they see it as the way to design and produce the services society wants.** Services, or service designs, **have therefore become an inclusive system for all, a guarantee of fulfilled expectations, each and every time.** Service design is now the cornerstone of all companies. It has become an essential, almost industrial process based on people’s expectations. **However, this has produced a one-dimensional vision of service design. A functional vision.**

KEYWORDS: impact, need design, from strategy to life, relationship, positive experiences, beauty, challenges

Introduction

The adoption of the tools (customer journeys, touchpoints, personas, blueprints, etc.) and typical language of service design **have become procedures** that are standardising expectations. The risk is that, if everyone is using the same tools and techniques, we will all produce the same results and the same services with no sense of originality or difference. Our service has become one of many. We run the risk of our tools becoming matrices and goals instead of actually being there to help us continually re-design and rethink the true transformative objectives of the design, like a craftsman does by continuously polishing and forging his tools.

We are therefore faced with the risk of homogenisation, standardisation, cultural, creative and emotional impoverishment, loss of originality, the creation of soulless ideas, services and designs. Designs that leave no mark; designs and services that fail to excite or move.

Suddenly, we are all worse-off. We realise that we are no longer able to create anything unique or have a real impact on the lives of people and society.

Adopting service design techniques provides us with tools and gives us a common platform, but **how can we train people’s mindsets – their talent, how their minds are**

“configured” – in order to create a truly unique project? Which moments of service design will create an impact in the future?

A project creates an impact if its development involves:

1. **understanding *needs* and managing the *design* as an original perspective that accepts disruption**, by:
 - a. **implementing “*need design*”**. The designer’s top priority is to meet their customer’s needs. However, how many times, when talking to customers, sharing some snippets of work and life with them (dialoguing, collaborating, interpreting), have we discovered just how much more complex their need was, how much richer, how much deeper and how different? How much more interesting and challenging? The true top priority - the real need - was right there. **Performing “*need design*” means training the mindset** of all stakeholders involved to stimulate synergies between creative and analytical thought in order to develop practical solutions for real needs. Identifying needs and building a landscape of design opportunities is the primary challenge guiding the design.
 - b. **opting for multidisciplinary teams** that go beyond being designers. This enables us to develop critical thinking from a number of viewpoints and to break free from standardised thought.
 - c. ***not virtualising the end customer***. Designing services for people, not users. Thinking we are serving mere users means being under the impression that we are dealing with someone who just needs a tool, be that a product or a service: a convenient customer for those offering a ready-made process or package. A person, on the other hand, is a network of relationships.

Case study: How can we avoid virtualising the customer and meet their needs to create a useful yet unprecedented service for the automotive industry? In a context in which transport is changing, the company’s challenge was to include services based on a product with a strong, distinctive personality, focusing on the needs of its end customers, but not only. It had to listen to and interpret the needs of the entire ecosystem of service stakeholders. The project involved developing the Customer Experience: from the concept to designing the Customer experience, from planning the digital “presence” of the service - App and Landing interface and videos supporting the launch and physical presence – to communicating with and supporting the network of dealers and car parks. In order to avoid virtualising the customer, many tests were carried out with customers and potential customers, who were involved from the start of the planning process. These included exploratory workshops, surveys and field usability tests conducted directly with the service’s end users to understand their viewpoints and, in particular, the obstacles to service implementation.

2. ***beauty as an essential and creative need***.

Beauty is one of man’s basic needs. It is not the coincidental or clever result of some action or other. It is not a goal, but is always a starting point. Like a vital necessity or a meeting that changes the course of things. Dostoevsky wrote that humanity could not survive without beauty because “there would be nothing left to do in this life”.

Beauty is a human need that drives man’s actions, that produces design, the design of a meeting that transforms, that transforms us. Service designs must generate perceptual changes and changes of state, they should disrupt and surprise. **When beauty takes people by surprise, it frees the imagination and fosters new types of behaviour.** This is what we call ***design détournement***. Because if beauty is in the eye of the beholder, it certainly also has to be in the mind of the person designing it.

Case study: how can we design a service platform for children that will successfully engage several generations in order to provide real value? The quest for an aesthetic language was one of the keys that enabled people to relate to the service on an emotional level. Thanks to its content, communication, interface and engagement of the various stakeholders involved, the service surprised and appealed. The language enabled us to give it its unique edge, but also created opportunities for feedback and continuous engagement.

- 3. Service as a relationship. By following the project right through to its completion (*Execution*), we can shape ongoing relationships between Brand and People (*Lifecycle*).** People live in a network of relationships. And this network gives meaning to their experience. The most pressing demands people have – their most active, deepest needs – are those of understanding, acting and growing (transforming), using those relationships as a starting point. Therefore, for the service to be successful, it has to immerse itself fully in people’s relationships, guiding customers through to completion and planning alongside them. If designing a service means designing a relationship, then it means going beyond the concept and idea. In fact, the real challenge begins when we work on the *Lifecycle*, i.e. the day-to-day maintenance of the service so we can continue developing this unique relationship with the people involved.

Case study: How can we support and motivate people in a Sales Network every day by using an ongoing digital service?

*Through a community service that aims to maintain and develop **constant, high-value contact** with the network and **with individual agents**. The agents are provided with useful, exclusive **services, content and tools** through a **fast, reliable channel** for support, exchange, training on marketing and digital matters, communication, problem-solving, monitoring and sales activity. Engagement by Design is the essential ingredient to keep people’s motivation up by bringing the service to life every day and maintaining engagement through gaming activities.*

The mass adoption of Service Design has definitely made it possible to create more solid relationships between customer, company/brand and market. Future risks to avoid include:
- “virtualising people’s real needs”. Whether we like it or not, people are the only tangible element of a service. They are not simply users.

- “standardising the level of service”. We can no longer concentrate solely on function. Instead, we must attend to the customer’s needs and understand them. We have to accept the disruptive element which guarantees engagement and uniqueness in the method, in the planning process and in the design of the service and in its Lifecycle.

How will service design develop in the future? In the future, the difference will be between services that are effective and those that are not. “Nothing ineffective is of any value,” wrote Simone Weil. Effectiveness is a measure of what is happening, as we act and think in relation to the world, the company, work and the people involved.

Services are “relationships between people”, to be designed, nurtured and fostered within and outside of organisations. When a process is effective it tangibly and manifestly transforms the people, and therefore the company. The rest is just all talk.

About Logotel

Logotel is a Service Design Company that works collaboratively with companies to plan and foster business change. Its team of over 180 professionals (in Milan, Paris, Madrid and Brussels) designs and develops services on an international scale, from strategy and delivery to the “lifecycle” of projects. Logotel’s approach combines a variety of disciplines and skills, always “People & Design Focused”, making innovation practical, engaging the networks of organisations distributed throughout the local area and redesigning relationships between brands, internal and external customers to produce real impact. Logotel worked for more than 60 different customers in 2017; it involved 5,000 people in training projects and connected more than 80,000 with the 31 Content and Business Community Networks that

provide services and content, motivate, enable sharing and encourage participation. It launched the **Weconomy** project in 2010 with a network of over 200 people, 25,000 printed copies and 30,000 downloads. The project explores the evolution of the new collaborative economy. For 7 years, the **Logotel Horizon** project has been trialling multidisciplinary teamwork to shape the Future.