



ask a service designer 2021

Service Design Glossary

Actor

Any person involved in the creation, delivery, support, or use of a service.

e.g. a call center agent, an end user, or a VP of marketing

Artefacts

Physical service touchpoints.

e.g. the London Underground map

Backstage

The parts of the service that are 'behind the scenes' that a customer does not see or experience.

e.g. the kitchen of a restaurant, the kitchen staff, the produce delivery

Business Model

The way an organization operationalizes and delivers value, including revenue streams or resource exchanges.

e.g. a restaurant deciding to grow to additional locations using a franchising model

Channel

A medium for communication or delivery. Most services use more than one channel, often described as being 'multi-channel'.

e.g. phone, email, direct mail, website, store

Contextual Research

Investigation that takes place in the real world environment of the subject being explored.

e.g. interviewing and observing a cashier while on the job in a store

Entry Points

Instances of access to a service, where actors are able to join the service as customers, providers, or stakeholders.

e.g. a sign-up form on a website

Exit Points

Instances where actors leave the service as customers, providers, or stakeholders.

e.g. an unsubscribe link in an email newsletter

Front Stage

The parts of the service that a customer sees and experiences.

e.g. the teller's counter is a front stage part of a service where customers interact

Heuristics

Best practices, principles, or rules of thumb.

e.g. "Be easy to find" is principle one of Lou Downe's 15 Principles for Good Services

Journey Map

A visual representation (sometimes including photographs, quotes, and commentary) of a particular actor's experience with a service. Often time-based showing multiple channels.

e.g. document providing a narrative overview of an actor's steps and experience of getting a driver's license



Needs

A necessary and/or desired function or condition. Needs range from high-level to granular and from tactical to emotional.

e.g. requirement to be certified as legally allowed to drive, to be able to get from A to B

Partners

Other businesses or entities that help to produce or enhance the service or to deliver the service outcome.

e.g. a pop star might partner with ticketmaster to sell tickets to their show

Persona

A representation of a user group with shared needs and characteristics. Personas are the distillation of primary research with people.

e.g. "PR Manager Pandora" might be one of an email marketing company's personas

Places

The physical spaces or virtual environments through which a service is delivered.

e.g. the retail shop where products are sold

Processes

Workflows, procedures, rituals performed by the customer or employees throughout a service

e.g. the ordering process at a restaurant

Props (see also artefact)

Physical or digital artifacts (including products) that are needed to perform the service successfully

e.g. a hairdresser's scissors

Resources

Assets of many types including physical, knowledge, technological, monetary, and material, which are used to deliver a service.

e.g. seed funding for a new venture

Scale

A level or size of something in relationship to something else. Service design considers micro and macro scales, zooming in on particular touchpoints or interactions, and zooming out to holistic overviews of an experience.

e.g. a multinational brand provides service at a global scale

Service

An exchange of value, tangible and intangible. Services are often things that people use but do not own.

e.g. a system that facilitates car sharing

Service Cycle

The process by which actors engage with a service. A service cycle visualization considers all the phases in which an actor becomes engaged with a service. A service cycle differs from a journey map in that it takes the perspective of the entire system rather than that of a particular actor.

e.g. diagram showing the cycle of learning about a service, entering it, using it, and exiting or staying engaged

Service Delivery

The provision of a service.

e.g. the operations that position a car rental company to provide the service of car hire

Service Offering

The value that a service provides, or the need it serves

e.g. bike sharing offers the service of access to bikes without owning one

Service Safari

A research approach to experiencing a service by going to experience it first hand, taking an observational research mindset.

e.g. on a project about taking public transit, the team goes out to experience the transport options first hand by taking the bus or subway and gathering photos, notes, and observations throughout

Service System

The broader ecology of relationships, interactions, and contexts of a service.

e.g. all of the components, channels, resources, and touchpoints, internal and external, that facilitate the delivering of mail

Stakeholder

A person, group, or organization directly or indirectly involved or affected by a service.

e.g. the CEO of a company or a customer service representative in a call centre

Stakeholder Map

A visual or physical representation of the stakeholders in a service and the relationships between them.

e.g. a diagram showing the various people, groups, and organizations directly and indirectly involved in a service, representing relationships between them

Touchpoint

A point of contact between an actor and a service. Touchpoints may or may not be physical artefacts, and can include interactions, environments, and objects. They are the medium through which value exchanges happen.

e.g. a customer interaction with a call center staff person

Value Proposition

The promise of a benefit, feature or innovation that a service offers which is at the core of 'why' people engage or buy.

e.g. Wikipedia provides all of the world's information available on demand

Wayfinding

Methods for understanding and navigating within a service system or environment. Wayfinding artefacts within a service can be physical, informational, or environmental.

e.g. store signage that indicates what is found in each aisle