

DeThinkingService ReThinkingDesign

First Nordic Conference on
Service Design and Service Innovation
Oslo, 24th–26th November 2009

Bridging the gap between brand strategy and customer experience in services: the target experience tool.

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Summary

This paper describes work in progress for the development of a structured process that helps cross-functional development teams to bridge the gap between a company's brand strategy and experiences for customers. The process is aimed to assist and structure the very early stages of the service development process, the fuzzy front end. Further, it describes a tool that has been developed that can be used to assist this transformation, by scoping the 'target experience' for a proposed service. The tool uses role-playing, using professional actors to improvise upon key experience words such that behaviours and customer experiences are explored. The paper describes the theoretical basis for this work, the process and the tool itself, together with early reflections upon its use.

Introduction

One of the challenges of new service development (NSD) is to channel and transform the brand strategy of the service provider into service design experiences such that the strategic brand identity is reflected in the final customer experience. This is described as the semantic transformation (Karjalainen 2004) and is a difficult phase of a design process.

When a new service development team is created, there can be quite different knowledge and views within the team regarding brand and the company's brand strategy. This can lead to a poor fit between the designed new service and the intentions communicated by the brand.

In this paper we focus upon the early design phase in which high level design decisions are made. We base the paper upon the semantic transformation in the design process as described by Karjalainen (2004). This is further developed to fit into service development processes that can be used by cross-functional teams as described by Denison et al (1996).

The research questions covered in this paper

This paper presents research that explores and attempts to answer the following two questions:

- » How can a cross-functional project team transform a company's brand strategy into relevant customer experiences for new services
- » How can a team describe a desired experience for a service at the early stages of new service development (NSD)

To answer these two questions, existing models for the process of converting brand strategy into customer experiences were examined, and an adapted model created that specifically applies to service development. Based upon this, several tools to assist the process have been developed. This paper describes the theoretical basis for the model, and one of the tools that resulted from it - the target experience tool.

The context for this work

At the fuzzy front end of the innovation process

The work presented here focuses upon innovation at the early stages of the service development process. This has often been termed the fuzzy front end (Smith & Reinertsen, 1998) and describes the phase at the start of the NSD (New Service Development) process. The earliest phases of the development process offer the greatest opportunity for transformational innovation, and 66% of life-cycle costs are decided during this phase, whilst only about 5% of development costs are utilised (Berliner and Brimson, 1988). The fuzzy front end is increasingly being focussed upon by designers, as they are given a more explorative and open brief (Sanders and Stappers, 2008) and is seen as an opportunity to lift design up to a strategic and tactical level of an organisation.

Cross-functional development teams

Cross-functional development teams are now used in most development projects today. Such teams include relevant stakeholders, representing different functional areas within an organisation, and diverse disciplines. The process and tools described in this paper are aimed at assisting cross-functional development teams, where the team, together with designers, explore the brief and develop ideas together, through workshops. The cross-functional approach is described by Gladstein et al (1992) and Sethi et al (2001).

The AT-ONE project

This work is part of the AT-ONE research project. AT-ONE is developing process support for the NSD process, and tools that can be utilised in the workshops for each letter. This maps, ideates and conceptualises potential new services through workshops. This is called the AT-ONE method (Clatworthy, 2008).

Each of the letters of AT-ONE relate to a potential source of innovation in services, and the letters can be seen as a set of lenses through which a service can be viewed. The method therefore runs workshops with focus upon each of the following lenses:

- A - New combinations of ACTORS who together provide the service
- T - Coordination and development of TOUCH-POINTS

O - An understanding of what the service is actually OFFERING

N - The NEEDs that the service satisfies

E - The EXPERIENCE that the service gives the customer

Designing for customer experiences

Since services are intangible, time-based, and simultaneously produced and consumed, they are strongly experiential in nature (Hollins and Hollins, 1991, Fitzsimmons (2006) Looy et al, 2003).

The design of the customer experience is considered important to service success and is now incorporated in major service development approaches, for example Grönroos (2000).

Marketing has for many years focussed upon the Experience Economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) or Experiential Marketing (Schmitt, 2003), Emotional Branding (Gobe, 2001) and 4D branding (Gadd, 2001). Customer behaviour and emotional aspects of this has recently come into focus (Hansen and Christensen 2007, Ratneshwar and Mick 2005).

In Design, Interaction Design and HCI the area of user-experience design (referred to by some as UXD) has increasingly focussed upon the user-experience (Hassenzahl and Tractinsky (06), Desmet & Heckert (2007), Shedroff (1997). Within this area, the major focus is upon understanding emotions and experience and measuring emotions or experiences.

There is little research related to how to design for emotions or experiences and a particular lack of research looking at the design of experiences for services. There is a clear need for more research that looks into the process by which design strategy is transformed into service experiences.

Work in progress

This paper describes work in progress. The process has been developed over several years, whilst the tool described is still being developed. The process and tools developed in the project are used in realistic service design projects in two iterations per year.

Semantic transformation through design

The transition from strategic brand identity to tangible objects is termed the semantic transformation (Karjalainen, 2004). Although an important part of the development process, this has received little research attention. Karjalainen is one of the first to research the transition process, and has contributed knowledge about the process, related to case studies in the product design domain. He has developed a model for how this process occurs in the design of products based upon case studies from Nokia and Volvo. He describes the result of a successful semantic transformation in this way: "In an ideal case, the process results in a solution that involves total congruence between strategic brand associations and physical product manifestations" (p207). This is visualised in figure 1.

Karjalainen describes how product manifestations from a company help convey brand associations, and describes a positive circle in which "Physical product manifestations and brand associations are fused in dynamic mutual interaction" (p207).

This occurs when the expression of brand identity, in the form of products (in Karjalainen's case) help cement the image and reputation of the organisation within customers and culture, which in turn help strengthen the internal identity of the organisation. This interaction, helps align the organisation to the brand, and therefore forms a strong start-point for new development processes. Karjalainen shows

how this occurs in the form given to Volvos new car series in the ‘revolution’ process, and through the design of Nokia handsets ‘Definitely yours’.

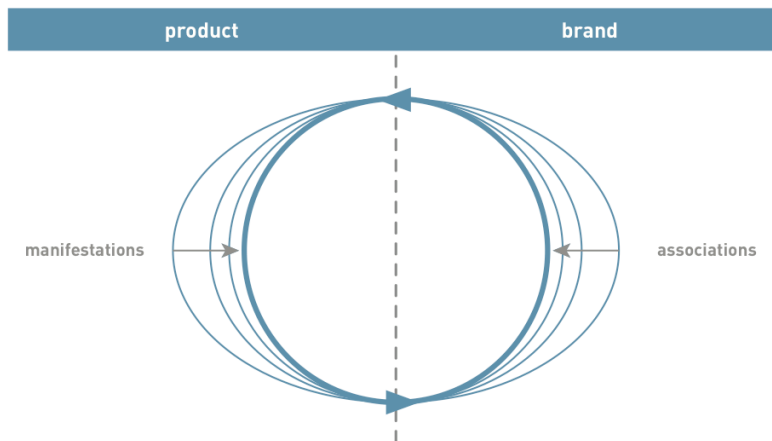


Figure 1: Karjalainen sees the result of a perfect semantic transformation as congruence between strategic brand associations and physical product manifestations. (From Karjalainen 2004 p207).

It is clear from his work that the tangible elements of a product should communicate the desired associations based upon the values and position of the company. Karjalainen’s view is that the transformation of associations into product, strongly contribute to the image and reputation of the organisation.

Semantic transformation for services

Does Karjalainen’s work also have relevance for services? As has already been mentioned, services exhibit some major differences from products, and therefore branding services is different to branding products. The specific aspects of services branding are described and discussed by De Chernatony (2003):

- » Employee behaviour is central to delivering the brand promise
- » The majority of service brands are monolithic
- » The delivery process is more important
- » Services have an increased number of contact points between customer and the brand making the service multi-tangible

The conclusion of De Chernatony’s work is that there is a clear difference between services branding and product branding, and that this difference primarily relates to the form of service delivery. De Chernatony adds, that there is a lack of research regarding service branding and its implementation. However, his work highlights the importance of linking the companies focused position and values to a consistent brand promise delivered through behaviours, processes and contact points. De Chernatony points to the importance of organisational culture and staff behaviour for brand success, and states:

“Successful services brands thus evolve from a unique culture which is revealed both in the brand and in the attitude and behaviour of staff as they represent the brand to consumers” (p1107). Further, “successful services brands are characterised by organisations with core values which are deeply embedded” (p1110).

When comparing services brands as described by DeCharnatony’s research to Karjalainen’s product brand research, there are clear similarities in the strategic brand approach. The main difference between services branding and product branding is the delivery. DeCharnatony highlights organisational culture, staff behaviour and the multiple points of contact of a service, whilst Karjalainen focuses upon the product as main point of delivery. It is clear therefore that the semantic

transformation for services requires a transformation into multiple touch-point behaviours, which again are the platform for customer experiences. The question of how to do this is however not described within service branding research, and we have therefore chosen to adapt processes for service transformation from the product branding domain, as described by Karjalainen.

The process of semantic transformation

We have chosen to base ourselves upon process descriptions that are primarily aimed at product-based branding and have chosen to merge two similar process approaches:

- » The process model described by Karjalainen (2004), which has a strong design basis
- » The process model described by Ellwood (2002) which is a more generic brand management process
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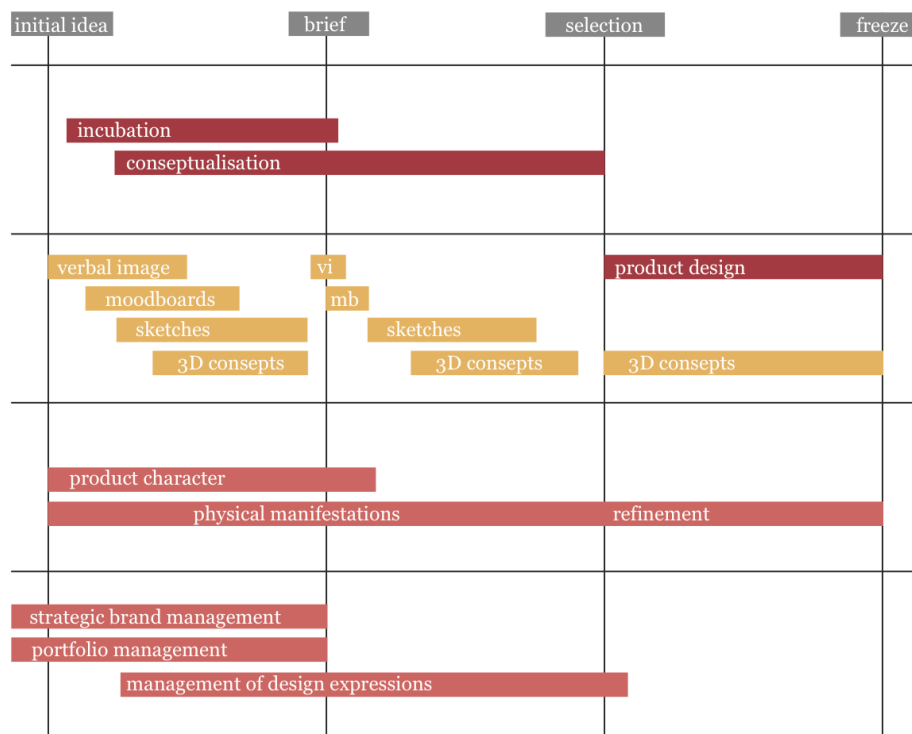


Figure 2: Karjalainen's visualisation of the semantic transformation process

Karjalainen (04) uses a transformation process model that is divided into three phases (see figure 2):

- » The strategic brand identity is communicated to the project team as desired strategic associations. In Karjalainen's cases, these are generally communicated in text form, but also are clearly ingrained within the organisational culture through the design heritage of the organisation.
- » The strategic associations are developed into product character through what he terms visual images (e.g. mood-boards).
- » The visual images are transformed into physical manifestations such as sketches and 3D concepts for new products.

During this process, a parallel strand of strategic brand management occurs, which has a role in managing design expressions. It is implied that this is a quality assurance process, although this is not explicitly explained.

Karjalainen does not go into detail regarding these phases in terms of a suggested process, nor does he suggest in what way the product character should be produced. According to Karjalainen, stages 2 and 3 are iterative and are cycled through several times before a range of concepts are suggested.

Ellwood (2002) uses a similar 3 stage process model that is more generic and does not specifically relate to design activities, or to a specific development process. He describes three stages, and uses slightly different terminology. His three stages are:

- » Description of brand DNA. His use of the term brand DNA can be described as very similar to Karjalainen's strategic brand identity (in fact Karjalainen uses the term DNA also).
- » Development of media neutral brand elements (brand theme, brand name, brand identity), also termed brand personality.
- » Development of media specific brand elements such as packaging, product, etc.

Common to both of these is the transformation from a core brand identity (mostly words, visual identity and culture) through the development of a project specific personality or character (visual representations), to sketches of how the final design might be.

For use in services, we have adopted much of the terminology used by Ellwood, and included elements from the process as described by Karjalainen. This, we feel, has given us a process that is relevant for service development, and cross-functional teams. We consider the term brand DNA as a good means of communicating the essence of a brand within a project team. We feel also that the term personality fits well with the application of brand to services, since personality and behaviour are closely linked. The use of the term brand personality, also communicates well within a service design project team, since it underscores the importance of behaviours in service provision.

Brand personality

Brand personality is defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" Aaker (1997 p347). Brand personalities are often characterised using analogies to people, objects and services. By giving the brand DNA associations with tangible and experiential things, this helps understand the brand, communicate the brand internally and helps the designer when aligning the finished design to the Brand DNA. Aaker has developed a theoretical framework of the brand personality construct and has determined the number and nature of dimensions of brand personality. She found five dimensions (sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness) and 42 traits, linked to these dimensions. We consider the combination of dimensions and traits are a good start when designing a service, since they assist linking the Brand DNA to tangible personalities, which can then be linked to objects and services. In a workshop setting, or in a project team, the brand personality is a very good means of forming a common understanding of the company brand in respect to a new service.

The process model utilised in AT-ONE

In the AT-ONE project, we have developed a project specific model that combines process elements from Ellwood and design aspects from Karjalainen, to take account of service specific aspects, such as behaviour, as described by De Chernatony. We call this model, the brand megaphone.

The model (see figure 3) takes the brand DNA of the organisation, and uses this as a basis to describe the brand personality that is desired for the service being developed. Once this has been described, examples of behavioural touch-points are prototyped, based upon this personality. Examples of such touch-points are telephone conversations, point of sale assistance etc.

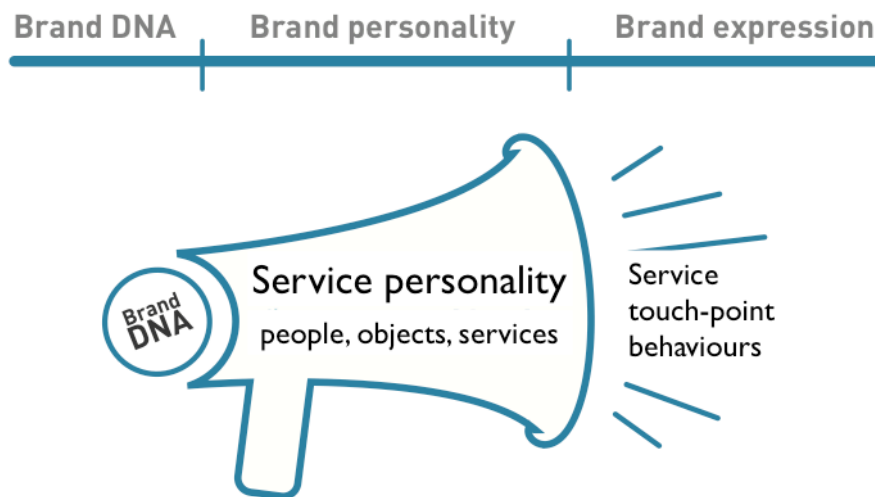


Figure 3: The brand megaphone model used in the AT-ONE project

This model forms the structure to assist the project team in the early stages of the NSD process. To assist with the process, several tools have been developed that cover different facets of service design, with focus upon the customer experience. Some of these are idea-generation tools, others help in the scoping and specification of a desired experience. The next section describes one of these, the target experience tool.

Describing a target experience

During the design process, decisions are made that will have influence upon the customer experiences once the service is launched. The designer aims to design a holistic service with service elements that consistently give a pre-defined experience to customers. However, the customers meet a service once it goes live, and after considerable development time and money has been invested. It is therefore important in a project to be able to understand the customer experience as early in the design process as possible. Jane Fulton Suri from IDEO introduced the term experience prototyping to describe this: "Increasingly, as designers of interactive systems (spaces, processes and products for people), we find ourselves stretching the limits of prototyping tools to explore and communicate what it will be like to interact with the things we design." Buchenau and Fulton Suri (2000, p424). Since then, this idea of experience prototyping has been developed further by service-designers in diverse forms.

Introducing the customer experience at the start of the project

In the AT-ONE project, we are introducing the idea of starting a project by defining the desired experience that a company wishes to give its customers, and then working backwards to decide how such a service can be produced - what should the offering contain, which touch-points should be utilised and how should they be designed? This is a form for reverse engineering based upon the

experience. The problem that we are attempting to solve in the project is “how can service experiences be scoped during the early stages of the design process, before the service design is even chosen”. The tool presented here is one of the AT-ONE tools for doing this, and is based upon role-playing as a means of scoping a desired experience.

Experience prototyping based upon role-playing a service

The goal of experience prototyping is to “allow designers, clients or users to ‘experience it themselves’ rather than witnessing a demonstration or someone else’s experience” (Buchenau and Fulton Suri 2000 p425). Suri describes methods as varied as probing, bodystorming and rapid prototyping. Since then, several methods for experience prototyping have been developed based upon acting out scenarios (Burns et al. 94, Buchenau and Fulton Suri 2000, Boess 2006, Boess et al 2007, Boess 2008).

In our case we are most interested in creating a common understanding within a project team regarding the relation between strategic brand and customer experience. Additionally we want to assist the team create a target experience, that can be documented. When initially using role-playing to assist this, we found that using project team participants to play the roles was interesting but did not give sufficiently detailed and nuanced experiences - we were basically not good enough at acting the nuances required for experience scoping. In addition, during the very early stages of development, many different service directions are still open. Solutions could be anything from self-service, virtual, mobile, fixed, bricks and mortar. Role-playing is often used to explore these alternatives and is effective in doing so. However, we wanted to find a way of describing and refining the kind of experience that was relevant to the brand, no matter what service direction was chosen later on in the process. We were not prototyping “the” experience, rather specifying a target experience. This is where our method diverges from traditional role-playing based experience prototyping. Traditional methods are aimed at exploring or evaluating an interaction or series of interactions for a specific service, rather than scoping a desired experience. We have therefore developed a tool that helps express brand strategy as target experience. To do this, we found that we needed to nuance experiences and required professional acting assistance.

Our usage aims specifically to help scope a target or ideal for how the brand strategy should be experienced, not to design the experience itself. Ideally, the results of our work would form part of a design brief that defines the desired experiential outcome, in terms of an experience target for the service, and presented as an experience (that can be experienced).

The target experience tool

The tool is described in step-by-step detail in appendix 1. It has the following 3 steps, which relate to the semantic transformation model described earlier:

- » Transforming brand DNA into a project relevant brand personality
- » Transforming the brand personality into target experience words and emotional take-aways
- » Enacting situations based upon experience words to develop, refine and describe an experience target

At the project level, step one sometimes has been completed within the organisation prior to the project start. However, we have found this activity to be a good means of gaining a common understanding of the importance of the brand strategy for the project.

The tool combines visual references in the transformation, but also behavioural or experiential references also. During step 1, mood boards are developed, together with other references that help develop a project specific brand personality. These references rely strongly upon use of analogy and

metaphor. In addition to this, the personality traits, as described by Aaker (1997) are used to choose words relevant to the organisation and project. Together these examples are used together to describe the personality that the service should have. The result of this activity is a shared understanding within the project team of the personality that the service should have.

Once this is complete, this personality description is used to choose key experience words. These words are based upon a set of words developed for desirability work at Microsoft (Benedek and Miner, 2002). Together with the key experience words, we note down the desired associations we would like the customer to receive, based upon the experience (see figure 4).

<p>Experience word: Romantic</p>	<p>Desired take-away: Dreamy, excited, warm, (sentimental), special, chosen, moved.</p>
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Figure 4: The experience words are enhanced by noting the associations related to the word

This then forms the basis for working with a professional who can act out scenarios based upon these words. We have found that it is a good idea to choose a reasonably wide spread of words at first, and then through successive iterations, nuance these, based upon the experience that each gives when played out. The ability to rapidly iterate and adjust the experience words and subsequently played experience, allows for the development of increasingly nuanced expressions. The team can then choose the experience term or terms they consider is best suited for the project. A typical workshop session to achieve this takes about a half day, provided preparations are made. We film the iterations, and edit the chosen film section(s). The combination of the experience words, accompanying associations and film, supported by the brand personality deliverables together create a target for experience that can form a specification for a project at the early stages. This forms a target, or guiding light for all later development work.

Discussion

So far, the process has been trialled using internal workshops and externally with one service provider. This section presents our experience with the model for the semantic transformation process and specifically the target experience tool. It discusses the tool in relation to other methods of enactment and suggests further areas for research and usage.

The research questions that we sought to answer through this work were:

- » How can a cross-functional project team transform a companies brand strategy into relevant customer experiences for new services
- » How can a team describe or scope a desired experience for a service at the early stages of new service development (NSD)

Does it assist cross-functional design teams with the semantic transformation?

The early stages of a project are phases in which the project is scoping its direction. It has a strategic mandate and explores alternative ways in which this mandate can be realised. To be successful in its context, the process for semantic transformation for cross-functional groups has to fulfil the following criteria:

- » It should lead to a high degree of congruence between brand strategy and service experience

- » It should address service-specific aspects, such as multiple touch-points, behaviours and organisational development
- » It should lead to a shared understanding of process and result

Regarding the first question, we have not yet trialled the process in projects that have resulted in launched services. We have only partial data therefore to review this criterion. The process has been used several times as part of the research project together with external organisations. However, each organisation has utilised the process to develop concepts rather than to launch services. The feedback from workshop participants, received from discussions and questionnaires do, however, point to promising results. This also raises major methodological questions, which as yet remain unanswered. How is brand congruence measured, and who judges it? This question is not covered by Karjalainen, and in the case examples he uses, it is the designers and not the customers that are interviewed and who make the judgements. Without a brand congruence measurement tool it is difficult to assess the process we have developed.

In terms of the second question, there are strong indications that the process does provide an articulation of customer experiences that are specifically relevant to services. The process focuses upon behaviours and touch-points specifically as part of the procedural steps and results in examples of customer behaviours and their related experiences. In relation to organisational change, Karjalainen describes semantic transformation as a means of strengthening the brand and brand heritage within an organisation. In the AT-ONE project it is early days to say, since such changes take a long time. Organisational change is a slow process and difficult to measure. In addition, the organisations we are working with are large, and we interact only with a small subset. Indications are however positive, although indirect. Evaluation questionnaires completed after each workshop give positive feedback, and each organisation we have collaborated with, is now working on implementing AT-ONE as part of its development process. This indicates that the organisations involved see a positive reward from using this structured process and wish to implement it across the organisation. Should this happen, then the likely result would be a strengthening of brand and brand heritage within the organisation and improved congruence between service and brand.

Does the tool help scope a target experience for the service?

The tool aims to create a target for the customer experience, based upon the brand strategy of the service provider. This target can then be used to guide development later in the design process, independently of the final solution that is chosen. Does it do this?

To be able to evaluate this requires two criteria to be met:

- » That the tool manages to successfully transform brand strategy into relevant experiences
- » The tool manages to communicate the experience internally within the project team and externally, during the whole project process.

Our initial evaluations of the tool suggest that both criteria are met, but further work is required to understand this in more detail. Feedback from brand managers who have used the tool suggest that the tool assists in the transformation of brand strategy into a relevant target experience. Further, discussion within the project team regarding the nuances of experience, suggest that the tool does indeed scope experiences as a form for target. However, the tool has received limited evaluation and a long-term evaluation has not been possible due to the constraints of the project. We have been unable to follow a NSD process from start to conclusion using this process or tool, and cannot therefore conclude as to its value later in a development process.

So far, we have had best results from enacting telephone conversations or simple single touch-point interactions rather than whole processes. This is because it allows us to focus upon understanding nuances of experience without having to choose the specific direction that the service should take. In

the fuzzy front end, multiple directions are being explored, and it is not possible to explore both multiple directions and multiple experiences within the time frame of a workshop. When we have moved from conversations to behaviours involving touch-points, we find that the tool rapidly becomes traditional bodystorming, in which the focus is upon exploring alternative directions or solutions, rather than the experience itself. The tool therefore changes from being a scoping tool, to becoming an idea generation tool, thus fulfilling a different role.

Is it different to other existing methods?

We consider this approach to be different to existing experience prototyping methods, and complimentary to them. Informance/bodystorming/role-playing approaches explore different situations and are focused upon exploring alternative service solutions - what the service could offer and how it could be offered. This tool has a different focus, it looks at the transition from a strategic brand to service experience at a high level, and results in an experience ambition or target that is independent of the final chosen service design. It explores nuances of experience and fine-tunes this. It is this fine-tuning through iterative steps that we consider to be unique to this tool and complimentary to existing methods.

Broader applicability as part of a brand handbook

Although aimed at assisting projects with scoping and way finding at the fuzzy front end of projects, we see that the tool may have a broader applicability in terms of communicating brand strategy internally within an organisation. At present, brand identity is presented mostly visually in a handbook and through brand heritage and behaviours are often not communicated. We feel that this limitation has historical roots in product-based organisations and is that there is potential to use service experiences as part of brand handbooks for services. The tool offers an opportunity to explain and show how brand transforms through personality into experiences. We feel that the target experience tool could therefore be a supplement to a brand handbook in addition to a tool for a project team. This is a direction we would like to explore in the future.

Further work

The process and tool described in this paper are work in progress towards a holistic approach to service innovation at the fuzzy front end of new service development. The process itself is central to AT-ONE, whilst the tool is one of many tools being developed. Both the process and tool show promise, although several areas require further development and evaluation.

The process has been utilised in several projects and over several iterations as part of a research project. This has given valuable input to its development, but has prevented its use in fully realistic development projects. Long-term evaluation of the process as part of strategic development projects would be the real test of the process, and we hope that this will occur before the end of the project. Of particular interest is the evaluation of whether the process helps a project team towards achieving brand congruence. More specifically, we would like to achieve a greater understanding of how the process can assist a team:

- » Gain an increased understanding of how brand relates to service
- » Gain an understanding of the link between brand strategy and customer experience
- » Gain an understanding of the consequence the customer experience has upon service perception by customers
- » Understand nuances in customer experiences and the consequences of this

The tool itself needs to be trialled in more projects to gain a greater understanding of its strengths and limitations. It also needs to be trialled over a longer process, to understand its value further downstream in the development process. We would also like to explore the use of the tool as part of an expanded brand handbook for a service organisation. This offers an interesting further development, and we consider it might become complementary to a project-based version. We would also like to explore the boundaries of the tool and understand the situations in which it changes from being a scoping tool to becoming an idea generation tool. At present, this boundary is unclear.

Conclusion

The transformation of brand strategy into service design is a phase that is not well documented or described in the research literature. The process and tool described here offer a structured process that helps a project achieve such a transformation during its early stages. Initial evaluations suggest that the tool assists with the semantic transformation from brand strategy to target experience, although further work is required to validate this. Additionally, the process seems to assist a project team create a common understanding of strategic branding, customer experience and to a certain extent design, early in a project. Further work is required to explore the use of the process and the tool, particularly over the long term.

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Appendix 1: Description of the target experience tool

Participants

The workshop participants are the project team and two (or more) designers. The team can be added to, if needed to ensure relevant stakeholders are represented. We recommend that the workshop is facilitated by a designer with good facilitation skills. Alternatively, an experienced facilitator can be used, but they have to have an understanding for design thinking and design

Facilitator



Cross functional team



Actor/Actress

We have used an actress who is trained in improvisational theatre, but are unsure how important this is.

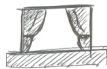
Planning the workshop



Preparatory documents

Preparation for the workshop entails collecting as much Brand DNA information as possible. General strategy, vision and mission documents will have been used during the earlier workshops and will be reasonably well known by this point. The goal here is to focus upon the brand and its transition to experience.

The outputs from the Offering workshop should be built upon, particularly any mapping or defining results.



Place

The only requirement is a room large enough for workshops with adequate space for acting out scenarios. This method does not require specific props to create realism. It is important to have a printer available very close to the workshop room, since multiple scripts will be produced and edited. We have used video as a recording technique, and recommend using a directional microphone to record the actor's voice.



Stage one - Summary of brand personality

The facilitator introduces the company brand personality through descriptions and visual examples. The examples should show personality through the following means:

- » examples of successful touch-points from the company that represent the personality
- » examples of products, people, images or services that represent the personality
- » the personality described in words, using the dimensions of brand personality (Aaker 97)
- » If these examples are not available, then the group should produce them together in the workshop.



Output

A written and visual summary of brand personality that can be used later in the design process.



Stage two - From brand personality to experience words

Based upon the brand personality from stage one, the group chooses experience words that they feel represent the brand as it should be experienced by customers. The group should be encouraged to take a broad approach at first and choose 5-6 different experience words that stretch the brand, yet are still faithful to the personality and DNA of the company.

We have based our experience words upon a list initially created by Microsoft for their desirability toolbox (Benedek and Miner 2002). They list 118 words and we have supplemented these and translated into Norwegian. Examples of our experience words and the full set of Microsoft words are presented in Appendix 1.

Many of the words do not describe experiences in themselves, so we have started to describe the desired experience we want the customer to 'take away' from the service encounter. This is done by simply creating a table (see example below):

Experience word: Romantic	Desired take-away: Dreamy, excited, warm, (sentimental), special, chosen, moved.
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Figure x: Example of experience word and desired 'take away' from a project with the Norwegian Lottery.



Output

A set of experience words together with desired experience/emotional take-away, presented in table form.



Stage three: Role-playing and scripting (iterative)

This is an iterative stage, in which role-playing and scripting are cycled through. We find it worth jumping straight into role-playing to get a feel for some of the words and how they work. This results very quickly in the need for a script and sometimes some primitive props.

The scripts need to be carefully worded to be precise enough to express the chosen words and take-aways.

This stage cycles through several phases as a spiral of playing then adapting the script. We find that once the experience words have been played or attempted, that they become nuanced a level. Some become merged, some removed as being irrelevant, and some become more precise. During this stage, we use the printer continuously, printing out new updated scripts, playing the script and adapting.

Below are example scripts simulating a telephone call informing of a medium sized lottery win. The experience word is shown in bold, and the script that is related to it below. Note, these are translations from the original in Norwegian, and some of the meaning has been “lost in translation”:

Pragmatic

Hello, I'm calling from the Norwegian Lottery to inform you that you have won 100 000 kroner in this weeks lottery draw. The money will be transferred to your bank account within two to three days.

Personal

Hi John, this is Anne calling from the Norwegian Lottery, and I have some great news to share with you. You have just won one hundred thousand kroner on your lottery ticket and we congratulate you warmly.

John, I will transfer the money to your account and it will be with you within a couple of days. Enjoy your evening.

Enthusiastic

Hi, is that John?

I have fantastic news for you. You're this week's winner of one hundred thousand kroner in the lottery. Isn't that amazing? There are so many things you can do with that money - imagine the possibilities. John, the money will be right with you and you will be able to blow it in a couple of day's -Congratulations!

We film this stage, and an edited video forms part of the final deliverable.

The group uses the iterations as a means to collaboratively focus and end up with one “target” word or word set.



Output

This stage outputs video footage of the role-playing, together with numerous sets of scripts, with final chosen experience words and scripts.



Stage 4: Final deliverable

This phase is tailored to the project but generally consists of putting together the brand personality result, together with the experience words and an edited video. Our experience is that a video showing the final chosen expression plus some of the ‘near misses’ works best to express the ideal experience and how this is different from other similar situations.



Output

The final deliverables from this part of the workshop are:

- » documentation of the brand personality, desired experience and experience take-aways
- » edited video
- » scripts supporting edited video
- »

Appendix 2: Dimensions of Brand personality

The five main dimensions:

- Sincerity (down-to-earth, honest, wholesome, cheerful)
- Excitement (daring, spirited, imaginative, up-to-date)
- Competence (reliable, intelligent, successful)
- Sophistication (upper class, charming)
- Ruggedness (outdoorsy, tough)

More detailed descriptions of each traits characteristics:

- Down-to-earth = down-to-earth, family-oriented, small-town
- Honest = honest, sincere, real
- Wholesome = wholesome, original
- Cheerful = cheerful, sentimental, friendly
- Daring = daring, trendy, exciting
- Spirited = spirited, cool, young
- Imaginative = imaginative, unique
- Up to date = up to date, independent, contemporary
- Reliable = reliable, hard working, secure
- Intelligent = intelligent, technical, corporate
- Successful = successful, leader, confident
- Upper class = upper class, glamorous, good looking
- Charming = charming, feminine, smooth
- Outdoorsy = outdoorsy, masculine, Western
- Tough = tough, rugged

From: Aaker 97: Dimensions of Brand Personality. Journal of Marketing Research. Vol 34 pp. 347-356

Appendix 3: The Microsoft Experience words (originally used for product reaction cards).

The complete set of 118 Product Reaction Cards				
Accessible	Creative	Fast	Meaningful	Slow
Advanced	Customizable	Flexible	Motivating	Sophisticated
Annoying	Cutting edge	Fragile	Not Secure	Stable
Appealing	Dated	Fresh	Not Valuable	Sterile
Approachable	Desirable	Friendly	Novel	Stimulating
Attractive	Difficult	Frustrating	Old	Straight Forward
Boring	Disconnected	Fun	Optimistic	Stressful
Business-like	Disruptive	Gets in the way	Ordinary	Time-consuming
Busy	Distracting	Hard to Use	Organized	Time-Saving
Calm	Dull	Helpful	Overbearing	Too Technical
Clean	Easy to use	High quality	Overwhelming	Trustworthy
Clear	Effective	Impersonal	Patronizing	Unapproachable
Collaborative	Efficient	Impressive	Personal	Unattractive
Comfortable	Effortless	Incomprehensible	Poor quality	Uncontrollable
Compatible	Empowering	Inconsistent	Powerful	Unconventional
Compelling	Energetic	Ineffective	Predictable	Understandable
Complex	Engaging	Innovative	Professional	Undesirable
Comprehensive	Entertaining	Inspiring	Relevant	Unpredictable
Confident	Enthusiastic	Integrated	Reliable	Unrefined
Confusing	Essential	Intimidating	Responsive	Usable
Connected	Exceptional	Intuitive	Rigid	Useful
Consistent	Exciting	Inviting	Satisfying	Valuable
Controllable	Expected	Irrelevant	Secure	
Convenient	Familiar	Low Maintenance	Simplistic	

From: Benedek and Miner (2002). Measuring Desirability: New methods for measuring desirability in the usability lab setting. Proceedings of the Usability Professionals' Conference, 2002.

Appendix 3: Examples of experience words, as used by AT-ONE

<i>Effektiv</i>	Stolt	Fornøyd	Fredelig
Nedlatende	Empatisk	SENTIMENTAL	Ulykkelig
Vennlig	<i>Kjærlig</i>	Pragmatisk	Deprimert
Stressende	Autoritær	<i>Romantisk</i>	Rolig
Sosial	Beskjeden	Sjalu	Anspent
Tiltalende	IVRIG	<i>Alene</i>	Bekymret
Fjern	Respekterende	Sexy	Aristokratisk
Brukervennlig	STOLT	Misunnelse	Nervøs
<i>Komplisert</i>	Pålitelig	<i>hjemkjær</i>	Ikke Fornøyd
<i>Personlig</i>	SKYLDIG	Ydmyket	UFULSTENDIG
Tids-oppslukende	Entusiastisk	SKAMFULL	IRRITERT
Attraktiv	<i>Glede seg</i>	Flau	Frustrert
Forutsigbar	LYKKELIG	DANISK	<i>Verdifull</i>
	MUNTER	REDD	Rett fram
	Glad	SKREMT	OVERVELDENDE