

Published research vs. business reality: Towards a common understanding of customer journey mapping

¹Markus Edgar Horneß, ²Marc Stickdorn

¹WorkPlayExperience; ²smaphy, myServiceFellow

Workshop theme

Scholarly literature provides various approaches to describe customer experiences throughout the “customer journey”. These approaches differ not only regarding their naming but also regarding their definitions, visualisations, scale and scope (A brief overview can be found in Segelström, 2013). Some scholars refer to the approach of service blueprinting based on the early work of Shostack (1982; 1984), Bitner, Ostrom, & Morgan (2008) propose a revised model of service blueprinting, others focus on certain aspects, such as Wreiner et al. (2009) or Sparagen & Chan (2008). Polaine (2009) presented Blueprinting+ visualising the experiences of various characters and highlighting the interactions between them (see also Aebersold, Polaine, & Schäfer, 2010). Other scholars refer to customer journey mapping (also known as experience journeys, user journeys or customer journey maps). Such customer journeys share a strong focus on the orchestration of touchpoints (Parker & Heapy, 2006). In one of the first service design books, Koivisto (2009) describes customer journey mapping. Other approaches are based on storyboarding and often derive from interaction design (Carroll, 1999; Goodwin, 2009; Cooper, Reimann, & Cronin, 2007).

However, service design practitioners rather use a combination of these methods since single methods cover only a limited view of the customer journey. They no longer reflect the daily reality and needs of service design practitioners. Hence, in this workshop we will briefly reflect on the existing approaches in academic literature and their strengths and shortcomings before co-creating a more general approach together with the participants. We will also clarify the context when to use customer journey mapping and when to resort to other tools.

The outcomes of this workshop will be used as the starting point for a wider discussion on customer journey mapping within the service design community. The workshop builds on the service design and business model framework presented in our previous workshop at ServDes 2012 (Stickdorn & Horneß, 2012).

Workshop description

Workshop Aim

The aim is that participants of this workshop will gain an overview on the academic body-of-knowledge regarding various approaches to visualise customer experiences. Participants should thereby reflect scholarly literature with service design practise. Building on their individual experience, practical examples and the presented approaches, the participants will co-create a more general approach of customer journey mapping based on the core components used in practise and described in literature.

Agenda

- 0:00 Introduction and challenge to map out an easy customer journey.
- 0:05 Participants are split into teams. Each team gets a manual how to map the given journey method. Coached by the workshop leaders they create their version of that journey.
- 0:30 Each team puts up their journey and quickly points out the main pains and gains of the method they used. All resulting journeys are put up on the wall as a customer journey gallery (together with the description of the specific method).
- 0:50 New teams are formed (group puzzle): the new teams have one member of the previous teams each (so each journey method is present in each tem).
- 0:60 Looking for common ground: Common principles and elements of the different customer journeys are identified by the teams.
- 0:70 Embrace the difference – looking for generalizing principles: The differences in the selected methods are identified. The teams are challenged to turn the insights into a more short generalized approach.
- 0:80 Wrap up: Synthesizing the results into a call for researchers to bridge the gap between research and practitioners for customer journey mapping.

Workshop outcome

Problems discovered and discussed during the workshop:

» **Definition issues:** There's no clear definition of central concepts (e.g. touchpoint). Often this is a big obstacle in the common co-design setting with customers and clients in service design projects.

» **Granularity and scope of journey:** Each customer journey can be looked at at different granularity (i.e. level of detail) and scope (i.e. focus on a high-level end-to-end journey map vs. focus on one -or few- critical touchpoints or channels). Customer journey mapping as a tool itself does not provide a clear guidance on granularity and scope. Therefore, often a common agreement on these issues during a co-design process is missing.

- » **Role of facilitation:** Customer journey maps as a tool cannot be seen as a method description or as a simply paper template, but rather as a boundary object that highly depends on facilitation.

Further workshop take-away:

- » Overview and understanding of existing approaches in customer journey mapping.
- » Understanding of the common features and differences.
- » A feel for a practical and more generalized approach that meets the need of service design practitioners.

This workshop served as a starting point for the co-creation of a whitepaper addressing the common problems of service design practitioners regarding customer (as well as employee or stakeholder) journey mapping.

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