STAKEHOLDER MAPS

VISUALIZING ALL ACTORS INVOLVED WITH A SERVICE

What is it?

A stakeholder map is a visual or physical representation of the various groups involved with a particular service. By representing staff, customers, partner organizations and other stakeholders in this way, the interplay between these various groups can be charted and analysed.

How is it made?

Firstly, a comprehensive list of stakeholders need to be drawn up. Besides interviews, this will usually involve a fair amount of desk research, as the aim of the map is also to highlight stakeholders that the service provider did not mention (or may not be aware of). In addition, it is important to reveal both the interests and the motivations of each stakeholder, with these also being incorporated into the map.

Once the list is complete the focus switches to how these groups are related to each other, and how they interact with each other. These connections should ideally be highlighted in a visually engaging way, as the aim throughout this process is to produce an easily accessible overview that can both identify pain points and explore areas of potential opportunity.

Why is it used?

The overview provided by stakeholder maps is a good way to highlight the issues concerning each stakeholder group. These groups can then be clustered together by their shared interests, allowing the service provider to deploy their resources more effectively when responding to problems and expanding their service. In a similar vein, groups can be categorized according to their importance and influence, with previousy neglected groups perhaps being reconsideredonce the influence they extert on others is revealed. The map thus visualise the complex situations surrounding most services, in which many actors have an effect on how well it is received and perceived. A comprehensive but accessible overview of stakeholders is integral to any attempts at improving engagement.

MARKETER - ACCOUNTER

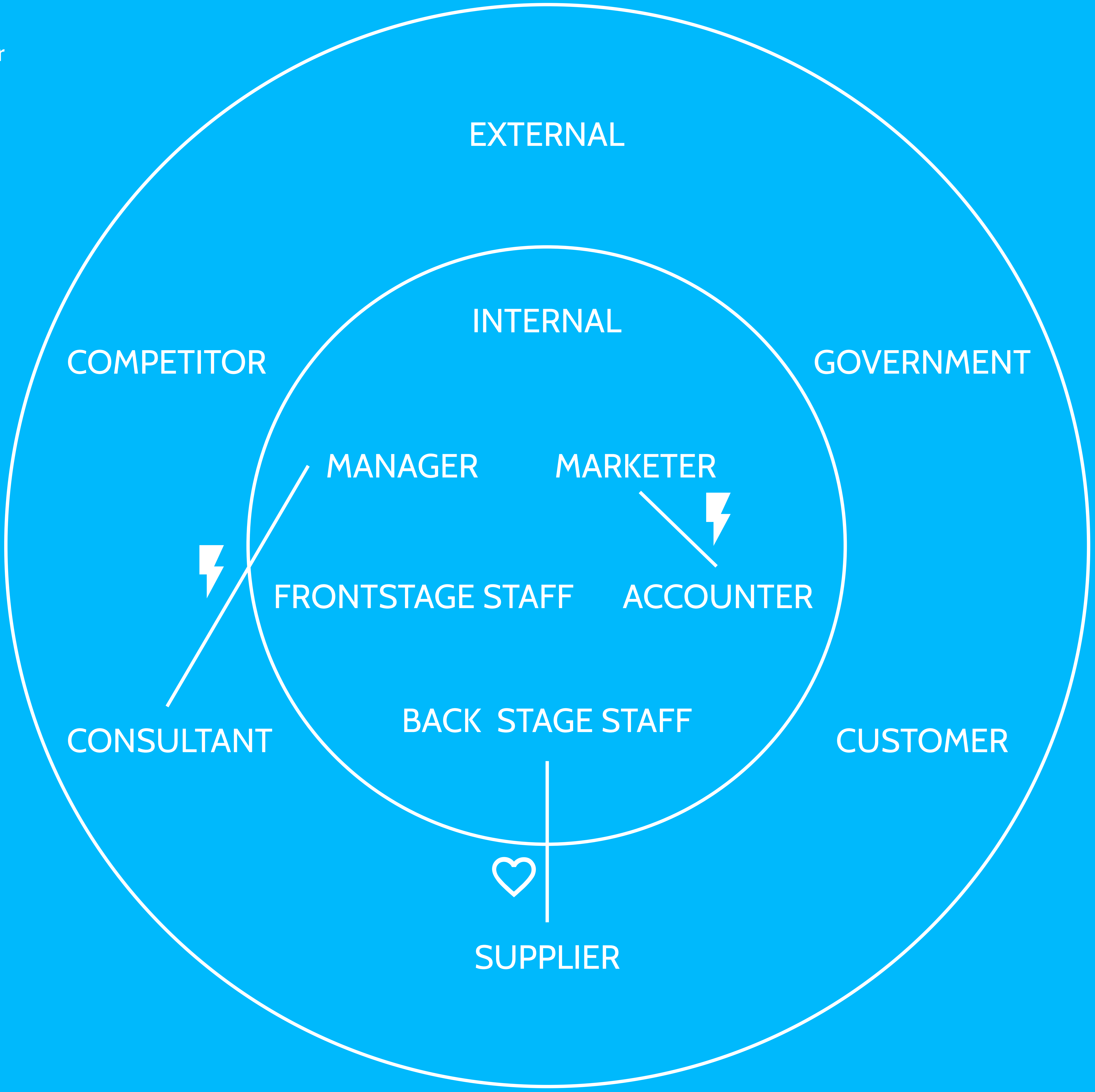
The marketer feels overheard by the accounter

MANAGER - CONSULTANT

The manager thinks that the consultant does not understand the company's culture.

BACKSTAGE STAFF - SUPPLIER

Backstage staff has a good relationship with the supplier.



SERVICE SAFARIS

RAISING AWARENESS OF SERVICE QUALITY

What is it?

During a service safari, people are asked to go out "into the wild" and explore examples of what they think are good and bad service experiences.

How is it done?

Anyone can be invited to join in on a service safari. People from the client team often find it very revealing. To conduct the service safari, only the simplest set of tools is required. As people are being asked to record their experiences, they need to be provided with some method of doing so; a dictaphone, a small video camera, or even just a notebook and pen. When it comes to choosing some services to expeirence, people are often sent to explore services in the same sector as their own organization. It is equally commo, however, to ask people to explore each and every service they come across, in an attept to define those factors common to any positive service experience.

Why is it used?

Safaris are one of the easiest ways to put people into the shoes of customers. Looking at a whole range of services allows people to develop an understanding of the common needs customers have, and the common problems that they encounter. These insighs can then be fully developed into opportunities for service innovations, and are often all the more resonant due to people feeling like they have generated them themselves.

STORYTELLING

COMMUNICATING SERVICE CONCEPTS THROUGHOUT ORGANIZATIONS

What is it?

Storytelling is a method for sharing insights and new service concepts. Compelling narratives can be constructed for all aspects of a company's service, from the lives of its customers, to staff experiences and the service experience it provides.

How is it done?

Storytelling situates new or improved services within a narrative context, using key insights and ideas to tell compelling stories from a variety of perspectives. Storytelling is often paired with personas in order to convey deeply resonant insights into user experiences. Narrative techniques can also effectively show how new service innovations affect all departments within a service provider.

Why is it used?

Telling a story makes a service proposition more compelling. Insights and ideas divorced from the context in which they were generated often lose their resonance as they filter through an organisation. When situated within effective and accessible narratives, by contrast, they are able to maintain their relevance, even when presented to people unfamiliar with how the project was conducted. Indeed, presenting the project itself in a narrative context allows people to follow much more closely the processes, which can help companies re-orientate their business and organisation around service design principles.

SHADOWING

GAINING REAL - TIME SERVICE INSIGHTS

What is it?

Shadowing involves researchers immersing themselves in the lives of customers, front-line staff, or people behind the scenes in order to observe their behavior and experiences.

How is it done?

Though the researcher will often try and remain as unobtrusive as possible, they may still employ a range of different methods to document their findings. Text, video, and photographs can all be used here, though a key consideration is always how to manage the "observer effect" - the influence a researcher may be exerting on the behavior they're observing simply by being present.

Why is it used?

Shadowing allows researchers to spot the moments at which problems occur. By observing such moments at first-hand, they can document problems, which the staff or customers involved may not even recognise as such. Spending time within the service environment is often the only way to develop a truly holistic view of how the service is operating, as it provides an intimate understanding of the real-time interactions that take place between the various groups and touchpoints involved. Shadowing is also a useful technique for identifying those moments where people may say one thing, and yet do another.

SERVICE BLUEPRINTS

VISUALIZING ALL ASPECTS AND ACTORS RELATED TO THE SERVICE DELIVERY

What is it?

Service blueprints are a way to specify and detail each individual aspect of a service. This usually involves creating a visual schemaatic incorporating the perspectives of both the user, the service provider ad other relevant parties that may be involved, detailing everything from the points of customer contact to behind-the-scenes processes.

How is it made?

Service blueprints are often produced collaboratively, as this is a great way to bring together the various departments or teams which may exist within the organisation of the service provider. As several different teams often have some influence upon service delivery, bringing them together to create a blueprint creates a shared awareness of each team's responsibilities. A collaboratie workshop is a very effective forum for this kind of co-creation, which is often aimed at constructing a "living" document that the teams of the service provider feel they own.

The notion of "living" document relates to the idea that a blueprint should ideally be preiodically revised. This can help ensure it remains consistently in touch with both the environment the service provider operates in, and the preferences of the users it caters for. Continually refocusing the blueprint around inevitable changes in people's lifestyle and motivations refines and improves companies' research activities, whilst reinforcing the need for the service provider to remaiin agile enough to respond to an evolving environment.

Why is it used?

By describing and outlining all of the elemens contained within a service, the blueprint allows the most crucial areas to be identified, whilst also revealing areas of overlap or duplication. Producing such a document collaboratively promotes co-operation and teamwork, and also helps to co-ordinate the people and resources the service provider has at its disposal. Service blueprints are able to show the processes that lie behind the critical service elements around which user experience is defined. They're often produced in draft form att the start of a service design project, in order to explore those aspects of the service that can be reviewed and refined. Once ideas and innovations have been formulated, the blueprint is further detailed and expanded at the implementation stage. This helps provide a clear roadmap for the actual service delivery.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPS

VISUALIZING HOLISTIC SERVICE PROCESSES

What is it?

A customer journey map provides a vivide but structred visualization of a service user's experience. The touchpoints where users interact with the service are often used in order to construct a "journey" - an engaging story based upon their experience. This story details their service interactions and accompanying emotions in a highly accessible manner.

How is it made?

Identifying the touchpoints where users interact with the service is crucial. These can take many forms, from personal face to face contact between individuals, to virtual interactions with a website or physical trips to a building. Constructing a customer journey map involved defining these touchpoints by generating user insights. Interviews work well here, but maps can also be documented by customers themselves - blog and video diaries provide insights into the user's own language, which always makes for an engaging set of materials when constructing the map.

Once the touchpoints have been identified, they can be connected together in a visual representation of the overal experience. This overview should be visually engaging enough to make it easily accessible to all, but should also incorporate enough detail to provide real insights into the journeys being displayed. This might mean basing the map around personas, so that the customers doing the journeying becomes far more than just names on a page. Basing the map around materials customers themselved have produced also helps facilitate empathic engagemet, which is crucial for conveying the myriad emotions that most journeys are made up of.

Why is it used?

A customer journey map provides a high-level overview of the factors influencing user experience, constructed from the user's perspective. Basing the map on user insight allows it to chart both formal and informal touchpoints. "Personalizing" the map - incorporating photographs along with personal quotes and commentary - can make it an even more immersive user-focused experience. The overview the map provides enables the identification of both problem areas and opportunities for innovation, whilst focusing on specific touchpoints allows the service experience to be broken down into individual stages for further analysis. This structured visual representation makes it possible to compare several experiences in the same visual language, and also facilitates quick and easy comparisons between aservice and its competitors.

SERVICE ROLEPLAY

SUPPORTING STAFF TO UNDERSTAND, EMBRACE AND IMPROVE SERVICES

What is it?

Just like theatrical rehearsal methods can be used to explore and generate ideas (see Service Staging), other drama techniques can be used to assist with their implementation. This generally involves interactive training experiences that help staff contribute to the improvement of the service experience.

How is it done?

Staff members are asked to enact several situations where they might come into contact with a customer. The roles in these exercises are highly interchangeable, with each participant switching between customer, staff, or manager as new ideas come up and are immediately tested. Prompt cards detailing a specific persona, problem, mood, or personal characteristic focus the exercises around specific insights, whilst recording them on video allows the participants to review and analyse each situation at a later date.

Why is it used?

Service Roleplay helps provide staff with the tools and training needed to meet customers' needs effectively. The insights underpinning tools like personas are translated directly to service touchpoints, building empathy with customers throughout the entire organisation. They also help staff members build up ownership over the innovations they're being asked to implement, as their feedback fine-tunes the introduction of new ideas.

CONTEXTUAL INTERVIEWS

GAINING IN - DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF STAKEHOLDERS

What is it?

Contextual Interviews are conducted in the environment, or context, in which the service process of interest occurs. This ethnographic technique allows interviewers to both observe and probe the behavior they are interested in.

How is it done?

These interviews can be conducted with customers, staff, and other relevant stakeholdeers. The interviewer visits the interviewee within the environment in which they interact with the service under review, and uses a combination of questions and observations in order to generate the desired insights. Participants are usually selected via a specialised recruiting process, which will take into consideration factors such as how to put the interviewee at ease. This point is crucial, as conducting a successful interview is dependent on making people feel comfortable sharing what are often intimate insights into their lives.

The interviewer will also often be faced with a number of potential locations. Here, it's important to take into account the environmental prompts that might help provoke a more in-depth discussion - discussing work routines is always going to be easier when the conversation takes place in the office where those processes are defined.

The interview will usually be documented via audio recordings and photographs, and may even be filmed - a technique which often produces richly engaging materials to present to the service provider and the wider project team.

Why is it used?

One of the key benefits of making an interview contextual is that it helps the interviewee to remember the kind of specific details that so often get lost in a traditional focus group setting. Most people are more comfortable providing insights into their thoughts and behavior when discussing these from within a familar environment, and these insights can be both validated and expanded upon by the observations of the interviewer - what people don't say is often just as valuable as what they do. Insights aren't just limited to the interviewee however. Contextual interviews allow researchers to also gain an understanding of the social and physical environment surrounding the service being examined. This helps generate a far more holistic understanding than is possible via traditioinal interviewing techniques.

CUSTOMER LIFECYCLE MAPS

VISUALISING CUSTOMERS OVERALL RELATIONSHIPS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

What is it?

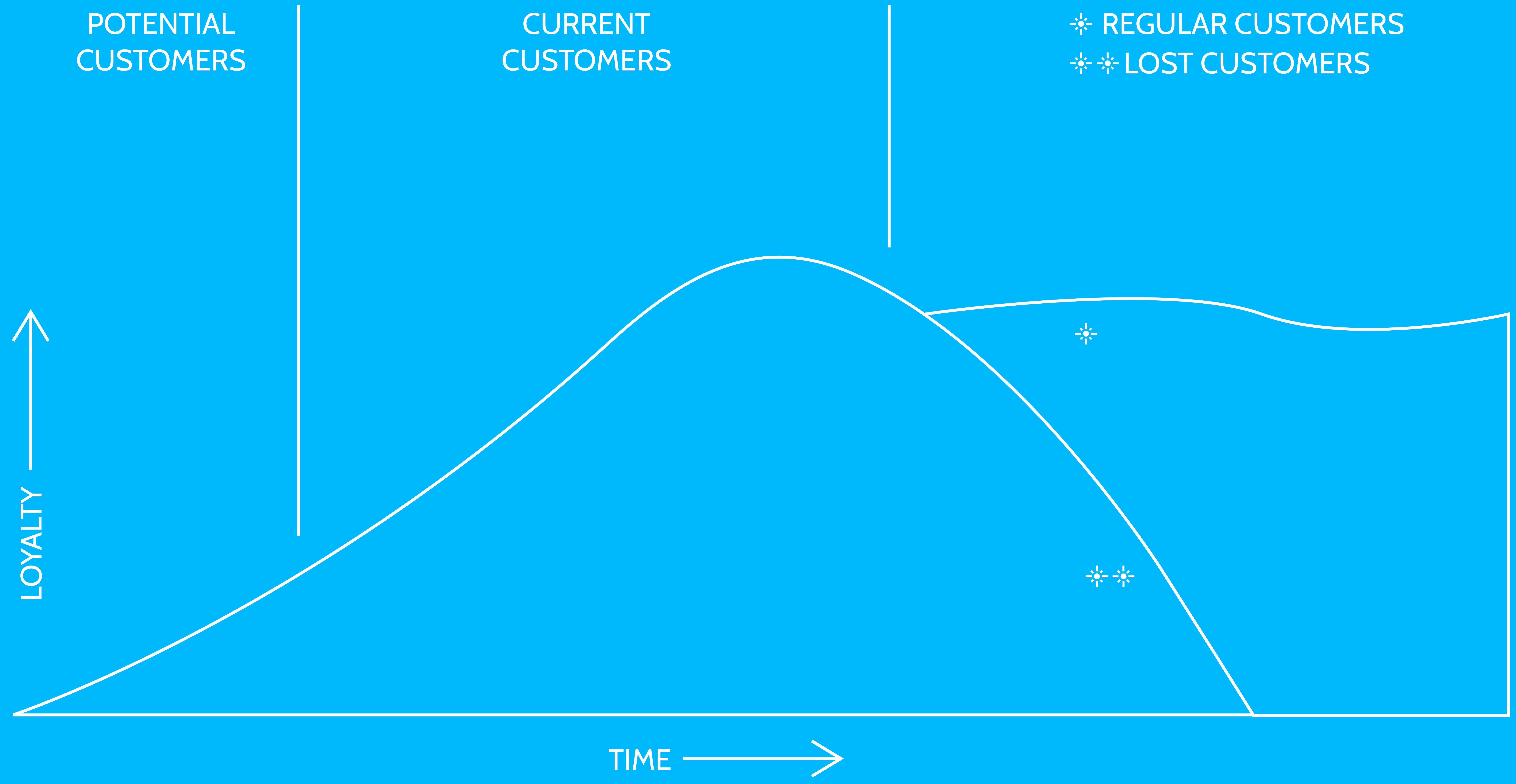
A Customer Lifecycle Map is a holistic visualisation of a customer's overall relationship with a service provider. This may include a series of customer journeys over time; from the customer's initial contact with a service, right through to the point where they eventually stop using it all together.

How is it done?

Known data about customers is visualised into a series of key events relating to their service usage. These represent the stages a typical customer will pass through when using a service. At each of these stages research material is incorporated into the map to provide insights into customers' drives and motivations.

Why is it used?

Generating this detailed overview of a customer's series of service journey allows companies to make more complete and balanced business cases, and develop more effective marketing strategies. The map allows service providers to present their customers with a holistic offering, as the lifecycles of several services can be synchronised around customers' evolving waants and needs; by understanding why their interaction with one service might cease, providers can develop and market new services which intuitively serve customers' changing desires.


POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS
CURRENT CUSTOMERS
REGULAR CUSTOMERS
LOST CUSTOMERS
LOYALTY
TIME

BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

CLARIFYING THE MATCH BETWEEN BUSINESS STRATEGY AND SERVICE DESIGN

What is it?

A Business Model Canvas is a useful tool for describing, analysing, and designing business models. It was developed by and popularised by the book Business Model Generation.

How is it made?

The canvas usually takes the form of a large table printed onto a writable surface. This table is split into nine sections, each of which is said to represent one of the "blocks" of a successful business model. The table can then be filled in collaboratively, with groups of people using sticky notes to sketch and model the various aspects of their business model.

Why is it used?

Increasingly popular, the canvas can be used in almost any sector, and can benefit service providers in a number of ways. Public sector organisations, for example, have used the canvas to help departments view themselves as service-focused businesses, whilst those organisations providing a range of different service offerings often use it as a focusing tool. Its key benefits - bringing clarity to an organisation's core aims whilst identifying its strengths, weaknesses, and priorities - allow it to provide an up-to-date "snapshot" of any organisation attempting to implement the results of a service design project.

5

THE FIVE WHYS

REVEALING SUBCONSCIOUS STAKEHOLDER MOTIVATIONS

What is it?

The 5 Whys are just those - a chain of questions used to dig below the outward symptoms of a user experience in order to uncover the motivations that are at its root cause.

How is it done?

The 5 Whys are usually addressed to explore a specific problem in greater depth. The person or team answering the questions has to produce a convincing explanation for each stage of the causal pathway leading back from the original experience or problem. Limiting this pathway to 5 stages prevents the process from losing relevance as it veers too far from the original question, but still provides insights into the underlying processes which may be exerting an influence.

Why is it used?

The 5 Whys are a simple, easy way to establish links between root causes and surface problems, and require very little preparation. This is useful for quickly gaining an understanding of complex issues, and in provoking those being questioned to go deeper when trying to explain common problems. The 5 Whys can be used in a wide range of circumstances. One benefit of definiing causality by stages for example is that it may include steps in a service process that the customer doesn't see, which can be of great benefit for organisation trying to classify problems as either interal or external.

CULTURAL PROBES

GAINING PROFOUND INSIGHTS INTO USER PERSPECTIVES

What is it?

Cultural probes are information gathering packages. Based around the principle of user-participatin via self-documentation, the probes are usually given to research participants for a prolonged period of time, during which they can produce richly engaging material for design inspiration.

How is it done?

The possibilities for innovation in the design of cultural probes are almost endless. They may be something as simple as a diary that the participant is asked to complete over a course of a set period. This might be complemented with a disposable camera, or a set of instructions designed to elicit the kind of behavioral reflection the researchers are looking for. Video can also be incorporated within the probe, with the participants following a simple script in order to self-document insights that are unreachable using traditional techniques..

Once the probe is sent out, it can still be "directed" by researchers remotely. Regular instructions can be sent by email or text message for example, meaning that the material gathered by the probe can be tailored around evolving aims of the project. Researchers can thus follow up on particularly rich insights without having to compromise the intimacy the probes achieve. The success of a probe is thus dependant not just on its original deisng, but on continually monitoring the insights it delivers in order to ensure it can adapt around new discoveries and changing priorities.

Why is it used?

In order to gain the most intimate insights, researchers need to be as unobtrusive as ppossible. Cultural probes allow inights to be generated without the researcher even being present. Simple scripts and instructions often complemented by prompts such as text messaging, can structure the information that is gathered in order to deliver effective and consistent results. The intimacy of the insights generated also serves to build empathy with the participants. Thee probes often provide a highly impressionistic account of people's beliefs and desires, whilst producing a richly evocative set of research materials. They are thus hugely effective in overcoming cultural boundaries, and bringing a diverse range of people and perspectives into design processes.

MOBILE ETHNOGRAPHY

GAINING USER - STRUCTURED DOCUMENTATION OF SERVICE PROCESSES

What is it?

Mobile ethnography can be defined as ethnographc research that takes place independently of geography. This usually means that the researcher is not present in person, but the technique differs from cultural probes in that instead of participant's being directed, the insights generated revolve around how participants choose to structure the research themselves.

Why is it used?

Having participants define their own touchpoints - and even rate their effectiveness - provides a user-structured image of how a service is operating. The materials produced are in effect digital sticky notes, which can subsequently be clustered and analysed in order to chart and reflect upon the trends that may emerge. The technique is not limited to eliciting feedback from customers; internal mobile ethnography projects can deliver revealing insights about staff processes, experiences and opinions.

How is it done?

Recent advances in technology allow mobile ethnography to be conducted in practically any environment. Equipping participants with smartphones, for example, allows them to gather time- and location-independent user-centered information. This might include the touchpoints where they perceive themselves to be interacting with a particular service, which they can then document using a combination of audio, text, photo or video.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

VISUALIZING ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES OF USERS

What is it?

A Day in the Life collates the research material pertaining to a particular type of customer (which may have already been collated into a persona) in order to create a descriptive walkthrough of their typical daily activities.

How is it done?

A Day in the Life can be presented in several different formats; simple graphics or a comic-strip are quick and easy to produce, whilst using video or photography produces a rich depiction of a user's everyday environments and routines. Regardless of the format chosen, the Day in the Life should incorporate as many of the insights gathered as feasible - the purpose is to provide an overview of a typical day, including what a customer is thinking and doing outside of their service interactions.

Why is it used?

A Day in the Life contextualises a customer's service interactions, allowing a great deal of background information pertaining to their thoughts and feelings when interacting with a touchpoint to be conveyed. Simply focusing on those instances where customers come into direct contact with a service ignores these contextual insights, whilst uncovering people's everyday problems and solutions provides a far more holistic view of their drivers and motivations - something that's integral to tailoring services effectively.

EXPECTATION MAPS

REVEALING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICES

What is it?

Making a Expectation Map involves investigating and charting what customers expect when they interact with a service. The map can either focus on one specific service, or take the more generalised form of analysing a particular service category.

How is it made?

The material used to construct an expectation map can come from a variety of sources. A first draft of the map can be quickly and easily developed from sources such as media coverage for example, with this then servising as a general indication of how a company is being perceived "out in the wild". Conducting original research meanwhile - i.e. in-depth interviews with customers designed to gather their reflections - allows the map to be more detailed and targeted around a particular area.

Why is it used?

Expectation mapping often serves as a diagnosis tool, drawing out those areas of service in need of attention from a customer-based perspective. Expectation maps that focus on a particular aspect of a service are a usefu way to define and review those areas where customers are regularly experiencing problems. An expectation map might be created in relation to what customers expect when contacting the service provider, by the telephone for example, with this being contrasted with similar maps of in - person visits or email correspondance.

PERSONAS

VISUALISING CUSTOMER GROUPS AS RECOGNISBLE ARCHTYPES

What is it?

Personas are fictional profiles, often developed as a way of representing a particular group based on their shared interests. They represent a "character" with which client and design teams can engage.

How is it made?

The most common way of developing personas is to collate research insights into common-interest groupings, which can then be developed into workable "character". The key to a successful persona is how engaging it proves to be, and thus a wide range of techniques - from visual representations to detailed anecdotal profiles - can be used to bring these characters to life. Most personas are developed from research insights gathered from stakeholder maps, shadowing, interviews and the like.

Why is it used?

Personas can provide a range of different perspectives on a service, allowing design teams to define and engage the different interest-groups that may exist within their target market. Effective personas can shift focus away from abstract demographics, and towards the wants and needs of real people. Even though the personas themselves may be fictional, the motivations and reactions they exhibit are real; personas are a collection of feedback elicited during the research stage of a project, and as such embody the real-world perceptions surrounding a company's service.

IDEA GENERATION

STRUCTURING AND INSPIRING BRAINSTORMS

What is it?

Ideation techniques are what service designers use to structure and inspire group brainstorming sessions. They usually take the form of simple exercises which can be used to stimulate group discussions, whilst also providing a structure within which to work. Mind-mapping, S.W.O.T. analysis and Six Thinking Hats are all examples of ideation techniques.

How is it made?

Different methods will obviously be used in different ways, but all will be centered upon generating momentum or reflection during group discussion sessions. This is something the service designer will most likely incorporate into the programme of any given discussion, after giving thought to which technique is most suitable in relation to the session's goals. Choosing the right ideation technique for the situation at hand is a crucial skill for any service designer to learn - as is being able to abandon a technique that's not delivering results in order to try something else.

Why is it used?

The range of different techniques has a different set of motivations for their use. Some for instance may be deployed as "ice-breakers", relaxing the participants so that they can take part in the session more fully. Others will provie prompts to imagination, or simple pointers around which the discussion can be organised. All have the goal of stimulating idea generation by allowing group sessions to work more smoothly.

WHAT IF...

EXPLORING CHALLENGING FUTURE SERVICE SCENARIOS

What is it?

"What if ..." is a question that service designers may pose in order to prompt exploration of even the most outlandish scenarios.

How is it made?

"What if..." differs from design scenarios in that it is generally used to explore wide-ranging changes rather than specific service experience situations. This often means presenting people with a challenging question on how their service would be affected by changes taking place at the technological, societal or cultural level. People are asked to explore such situations, and imagine the kinds of problems they would present.

Why is it used?

Asking "what would happen to your service if the internet went mobile?" at the start of the 21st century would have helped several service providers prepare for the problems they were about to encounter. Today, similar questions can be used to prepare companies for the wide range of changes likely to occur over the next few decades. Exploring such situations is often an effective way to isolate and analyse the key components from which a service is designed. Looking at how well a service could adapt to the potential problems of the future, helps focus attention on what it is doing right - and what could be done better - today.

DESIGN SCENARIOS

EXPLAINING KEY ELEMENTS OF SERVICE IDEAS IN STORIES

What is it?

Design scenarios are essentially hypothetical stories, created with sufficient detail to meaningfully explore a particular aspect of service offering.

How is it made?

Design scenarios can be presented using plain text, storyboards, or even videos. Research data is used to construct a plausible situation around which the scenario can be based. In order to lend added authenticity, personas can be incorporated within the scenario in order to orientate the situation being examined around a clearly defined character. Precisely what this situation is dependsd on the objetive of the scenario.

Why is it used?

Design scenarios can be used in almost any stage of a service design project. Problematic areas of current service offering might be developed into scenarios in order to brainstorm solutions; prototype scenarios examine potential problems new service ideas might encounter; "neegative" scenarios ask "How could things be made worst?" in order to provoke discussion on what's actually working well. All of these scenarios are able to help review, analyse, and understand the driving factors that ultimately define a service experience. Creating them in a group setting meanwhile encourages knowledge exchange between the various stakeholders involved.

STORYBOARDS

VISUALIZING CONCEPTS AND IMAGINED USES OF NEW SERVICES

What is it?

A storyboard is a series of drawings or pictures that visualise a particular sequence of events. This might include a common situation where a service is used, or the hypothetical implementation of a new service prototype.

How is it made?

Storyboards can be constructed in a number of different ways. The most common is the comic-strip format, in which a designer will create a series of illustrations that tell the story of the situation being examined. The designer will try and include as many contextual details as possible here, so that anyone viewing it will be able to quickly grasp what it is going on. The aim of the storyboard is to gain insgihts into the user experience being depicted. Either real-life or imaginary scenarios can be used, with the former occasionally being documented in photographs as opposed to illustrations.

When used in a collaborative or workshop setting, the storyboard should be able to convey the key aspects of a service or protoype in as straightforward a manner as possible. This often means presenting a short illustrated scenario in which the service is being used, which might incorporate several contrasting outcomes. This can then be presented to a group of designers or potential customers, with the aim of provoking a discussion about what seems to work and what doesn't.

Why is it used?

Storyboards do exactly what the title implies - they allow stories about user experiences to be brought into the design process. The kinds of stories used are those that provide a perspective on a service or prototype - they're a way to encapsulate the experiences of people using the service. By putting a service situation in its proper context - even if it's still a prototype that doesn't physically exist yet - storyboards can be used to provoke meaningful analysis, sparking discussions about potential problems and areas of opportunity. The process of creating them meanwhile forces designers into the shoes of the people using a service, which again helps to bring that perspective into the design process.

DESKTOP WALKTHROUGH

TESTING SERVICE CONCEPTS WITH SMALL SCALE PROTOTYPES

What is it?

A Desktop Walkthough is a small-scale 3-D model of a service environment. Employing simple props like Lego figures lets designers bring a situation to life, acting out common scenarios and helping develop prototypes.

How is it made?

The models are usually kept fairly simple, and developed out of insights into the service environment. Simple Lego buildings with labels attached can be used to build the "set", whilst the characters inserted can be based on staff and customer personas. Common situations can then be acted out by moving the characters around the model and simulating the interactions they may have.

Why is it used?

Desktop walkthroughs allow an iterative analysis of the situations depicted. The same scene can be acted out multiple times, and in several locations, with new ideas and refinements constantly being introduced to the simulation. Prototypes can also be tested using this method, as they're "brought to life" in a highly engaging manner. Walkthrough models provide a common language in which various people can access and co-develop a prototype, or analyse and restructure a problematic touchpoint.

SERVICE PROTOTYPES

TESTING SERVICE CONCEPTS WITH LIFE-SIZE PROTOTYPES

What is it?

A service prototype is a simulation of a service experience. These simulations can range from being informal "roleplay" style conversations to more detailed full scale recreations involving active user-participation, props, and physical touchpoints.

How is it made?

Usually some form of mock-up of the service system will be created. The prototype can vary greatly in terms of tone and complexity, but the common element will be the capacity to test the service solutions being proposed in something approaching a "real-world" environment. The prototype will generally be developed iteratively, with suggestions and refinements being constantly incorporated.

Why is it used?

Service prototypes can generate a far deeper understanding of service than possible with written or visual descriptions. The principle of "learning by doing" is prevalent throughout, with the focus on user experience meaning the prototype can also generate tangible evidence on which solutions can be founded. Prototypes also help iterate design solutions, as they can quickly incorporate and test the ideas and refinements they may provoke.

AGILE DEVELOPMENT

ADAPTING THE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT IN ITERATIVE STEPS

What is it?

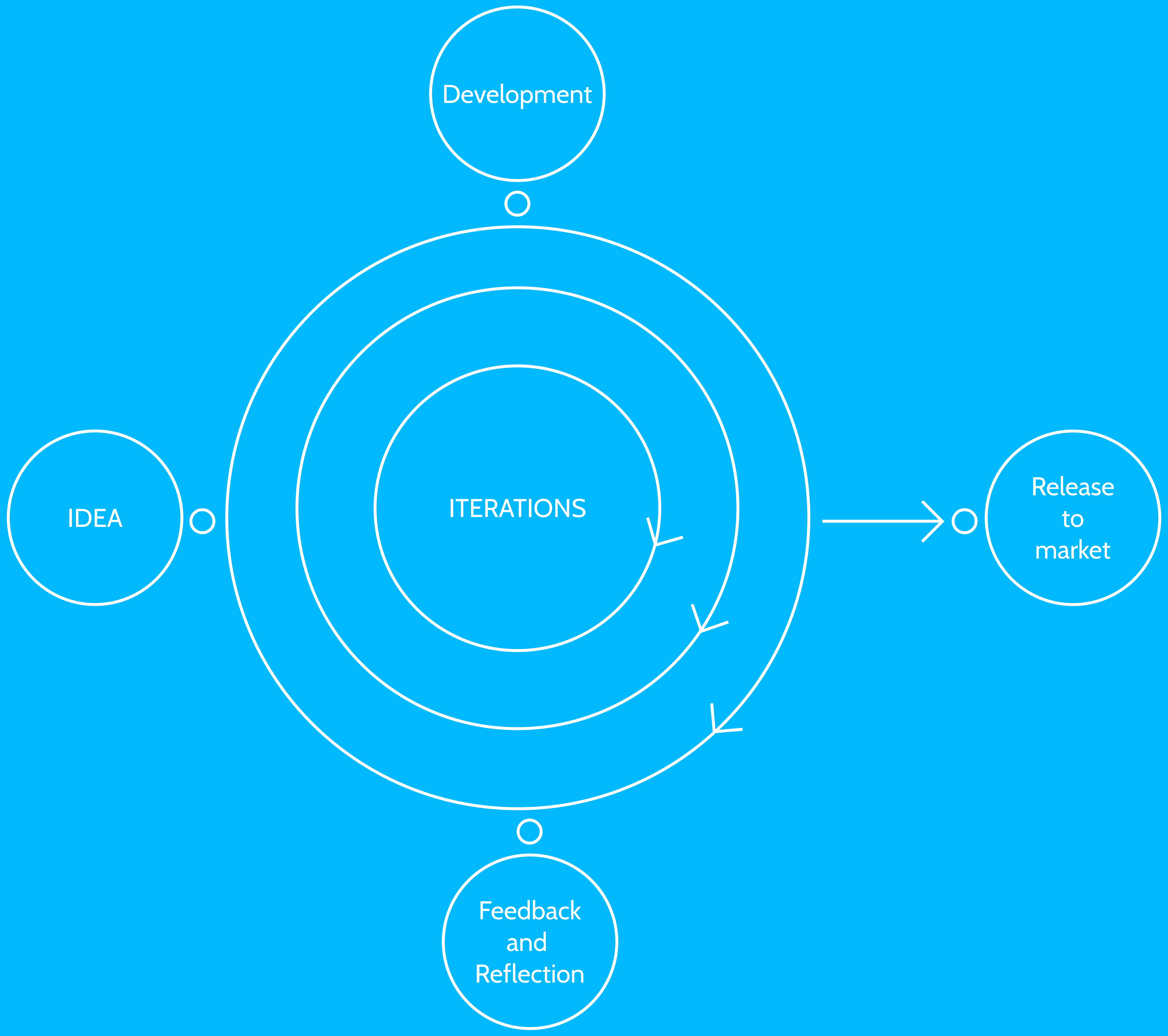
Agile Development is an iterative methodology that allows projects to grow and develop overtime, adapting around both the evolving needs of the client, and the research materials the project may generate.

How is it done?

Dervied from the world of software engineering, the approach is centered on several key principles. An agile project places emphasis on individuals and interactions over processes and tools, for example. This means that formalised methodologies are abandoned in favour of iterative approaches that can accommodate the input of a wide range of stakeholders. This allows a project to adapt and evolve as it progresses, instead of contraining it within a rigidly formalised methodology.

Why is it used?

Agile projects are able to remain in tune with a project's key objectives, even when the situations, environments, or personnel involved change. They can adapt around the responses and ideas provoked by the material gathered in the initial research stage. The materials that service design projects create arn't limited to a single, "correct" method of application; the key to a successful project is often working closely with client and design teams in order to develop a long-term framework for innovation. Agile projects actively adapt in order to assist with implementation and innovation.


Development
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and
Reflection

CO-CREATION

INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CREATION PROCESS

What is it?

Co-creation is a core aspect of the service design philosophy. It can involve anyone from staff, designers, executives or customers working collaboratively in order to examine and innovate a given service experience.

How is it done?

Co-creation is a principle that can be used in conjunction with many other tools in the service design toolset. Almost all of the methods in this toolbox can be adapted for use in a co-creative setting, and many of them are designed for precisely this kind of collaboration. Incorporating co-creation into an exercise successfully, however, still requires service designers to address a number of issues when planning the session. Various initial barriers to participation - fear of saying the wrong thing, principles - must be overcome, whilst the designer will often have to moderate the session in order to ensure that it generates the type of results that can be incorporated in the next stage of the process.

This moderation can be achieved at least in part by structuring a co-creation session effectively. The focus here should be on producing materials that can set the boundaries for a discussion, without constraining the possible responses of the participants. Knowing when to ask a generalised question in order to open up a discussion, and when to press a specific point in order to bring the focus back to the service under review, is essential in ensuring that co-creation sessions run smoothly.

Why is it used?

In one sense, co-creative exercises are a way to incorporate an open source development philosophy. This does not mean, however, that the design of a service becomes a "group decision", as the ideas and solutions proposed will always be iteratively filtered so that only the strongest, most resonant themes are developed into new prototypes and innovations. The co-creation session aims to explore potential directions and gathers a wide range of perspectives in the process. The results of the session will then be used as inspiration for the core design team, who need to develop and refine it further in the next stages of the design process. An additional benefit of co-creation is that it facilitates future collaboration, as it brings groups together and thus creates a feeling of shared ownership over the concepts and innovations that are being developed.