

Make it Clear

# Principles and benefits of service design for your organisation



# We are Make it Clear, and that's what we do.

Make it Clear is a London-based service design agency with a proven record of improving experiences for clients including Virgin Media, Google, Cambridge University Press, Thales and Orange. We create research-led solutions that focus on clarity to improve interactions, drive results and reduce costs.

Trading for over 20 years, we've worked on many different challenges relating to service design. We've designed guides for first-generation mobile phones, helped the UK Government understand customer expectations for IoT device security standards and supported clients in various industries to address fundamental challenges related to delivering outstanding experiences.

Take a look at the selection of case studies on our website to learn more, or if you'd like to get in touch, please send an email to: **[hello@makeitclear.co.uk](mailto:hello@makeitclear.co.uk)**





# Introduction

“Whatever you’re selling, at its core, service design is focused on delivering an excellent experience. This includes the people, processes and touch points involved in both providing and receiving a service. We’ve helped many clients use service design methodologies and outputs to positively impact employee and customer experiences.

Whether you’re creating a new service from scratch or looking to improve a specific area of interaction, applying service design principles can help focus your organisation’s efforts and deliver impressive results.”

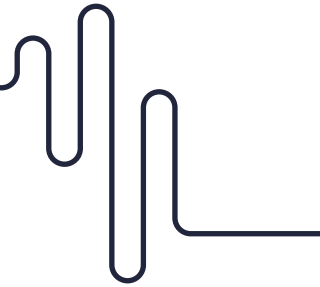
**Rick Harrison**  
Head of Strategy  
Make it Clear



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# What is service design?

“Service design is all about making the service you deliver useful, usable, efficient, effective and desirable” (Source: UK Design Council, “This is Service Design Thinking”).

A difficulty shared by many service design teams and practitioners is defining ‘what is service design’. Unlike other design disciplines there is no universally agreed definition of service design. Instead, we find service design teams and practitioners each have their own interpretation of what service design means. This creates an interesting variation of perspectives on common themes and contributes to service design being seen as an ever-evolving field.

Service design has a much broader scope than other areas of design, often encompassing other design disciplines such as user experience, interaction design and product design. A good example of this is shown by Richard Buchanan’s ‘Four Orders of Design and Disciplines’



**Systems +  
Environment**



**Interactions**



**Objects +  
Artefacts**



**Communications  
(signs + symbols)**

**“ Our approach to service design focuses on ensuring the service provides an excellent experience for those involved whilst being effective and efficient from an organisational perspective.”**

**Megan Cattley, Strategist**

"We're confident that service design principles can improve even the smallest interaction between an organisation and its audiences."

In practice service design involves understanding and defining the full experience journey of a user. Importantly, this means going beyond what is visible to the user, considering the people, processes and technology required 'behind the scenes' to deliver the service. Each touch point contributes to the experience to form a holistic view of the overarching service.



**“ Every great service or product should be created with users in mind. Typically users are seen as users of digital interfaces, but for service design a user is anyone using the service whether that is digital or physical. For example, a user may themselves be an employee, customer, service partner etc.”**



"From our experience we understand that it is not always possible or practical to impact all stages of a full service experience. Therefore we believe that this can be broken down and focus placed on smaller areas which can be grown over time while still applying the same service design principles. An example of this could be focusing on the Customer support experience of your users."

As stated by Nielson Norman, service design can be referred to as arranging, defining and optimising three core components: people, props and processes. This can be considered the who and why, the what, and the how of a service.

### **People (who is involved and why?):**

Within service design this includes anyone who is a part of delivering and interacting with a service.

### **Props (what are the touchpoints?):**

These are the digital and physical touch points which are interacted with as part of the service being delivered.

### **Processes (how is the service delivered?):**

This is essentially the 'how' of the service, the systems, workflows and processes that are carried out by users or internal teams.

Take staying at a hotel as an example. The "people" would include not only the person staying, but the reception staff, the cleaners, the hotel manager etc. who all contribute to the service of staying at the hotel. The "props" would then include things such as the website booking platform, forms to fill out upon arrival and the room service menu. The "processes" include things such as how customers are greeted on arrival, concierge, and the check-out process.



# Who should care about service design?

Cross-disciplinary by nature, service design can involve the design of physical artefacts and touchpoints as well as interactions and processes.

Service design impacts multiple channels and touchpoints, affecting a number of internal functions within an organisation. We've found the best service design projects involve multidisciplinary teams and seek input from relevant stakeholders with various levels of seniority.



**“ Using an agency can play an important role in helping to facilitate discussions with various stakeholders. Specialist service design teams often combine expertise from different disciplines including researchers, designers, strategists and marketers.”**

# Benefits of service design

## Put people at the heart of your organisation

A goal of good service design is to have a positive impact on everyone involved. Therefore inclusion of users and representatives from each relevant internal team is key throughout a project. Collaboration with internal subject matter experts can help to not only identify and define the 'how' but also the 'why' of service delivery.

- > Understand and empathise with user needs to guide decision making
- > Involve those who know the product/service and user best. These subject matter experts are given an equal voice no matter what their status
- > Empower internal teams with insights

“ Depending on the product or service, there may be an opportunity to involve users in a co-creation process. This can help to design a service with users at the centre as they will have direct input into decisions.”



## Gain a 360 view to help deliver a consistent experience

Service design takes a holistic approach, considering the full user experience across channels and touchpoints. Internally, this can help to break down silos across teams and improve efficiency of delivering the service. Externally, users experience an outstanding service that has a positive impact on the brand.

- > Map the wider service and identify pain points and opportunities

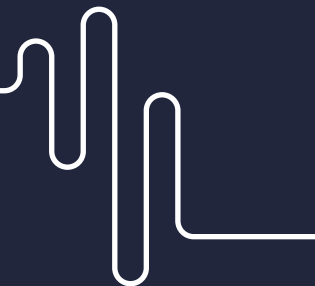
Break down silos across internal teams through shared ownership and aligned understanding

- > Standardise processes to deliver consistent results
- > Develop products with awareness of how they fit in to the wider customer journey

## Support feasibility in practice

A delightful user experience is the end goal, but it's vital to ensure it is not only possible but makes good business sense. Service design thinking considers the organisational and technological feasibility required for success.

- > Define and document operating procedures to increase effectiveness
- > Service blueprints can be used to not only implement processes but also to assess and maintain these as the service develops over time
- > Consider business and technical requirements or limitations



# Service design principles

We believe the following principles are key to guiding a successful service design project.

## 1 | Set clear objectives, purpose and actionable metrics

Consider the goals or vision of the service in the future, then work back to define actionable metrics that will help your organisation measure effectiveness. This not only creates clear alignment on objectives but setting actionable metrics can also support decision making. Set aside time and define the process for gathering feedback, reviewing metrics and sharing insights with the team.

## 2 | Consider the scale

Services can be large and complex, often spanning multiple channels and touchpoints. We recognise there can be instances where you can't impact every part of the service. We like to start by mapping the entire journey and then focusing on specific areas of improvement. Looking at smaller experiences within the wider service can help to foster a service design mentality and demonstrate the benefits.

## 3 | Define and deliver value

When developing a new service or iterating on an existing service, it should be based on real user demand and driven by the value it can provide them. Similarly, services should be developed to create efficiency and effectiveness within organisational processes.

#### 4 | Focus on your user(s)

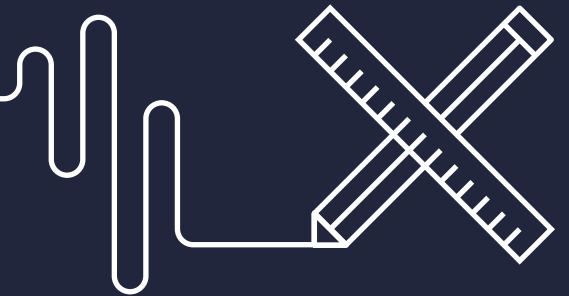
Understanding your user and gaining their input is key to success regardless of the industry you're in. Gather insights from users to understand their goals and motivations, behaviours, interactions and pain points. This will support creating an experience tailored to user wants and needs as well as to identify opportunities. Tools such as empathy mapping, personas and journey maps can be used to create an aligned understanding across teams and support maintaining a user-centred focus within the organisation.

#### 5 | Learn from stakeholders and teams involved

Gain insights from the people closest to the service. We suggest nominating representatives from teams which are involved in different stages of the service as well as those who impact decision making. This can include conducting discovery workshops or one-on-one interviews. Background materials such as staff manuals, customer quick-start guides or completing a service walk-through can also be useful ways to gather contextual information.

#### 6 | Foster an open and honest environment to contribute

It's important that all nominated representatives are encouraged to participate and be open with feedback regardless of their role or seniority. External facilitation from an agency can help support impartiality and give all stakeholders an equal voice.



## 7 | Be collaborative

Collaboration is a key component of service design. We involve chosen representatives in contributing to and reviewing developments at each stage. Collective will, interest and knowledge across teams is also integral to facilitating change within organisational processes and for successful implementation. Co-creation workshops can also be used to invite customers into the process and be part of designing a new or updated product/service.

## 8 | Keep in mind the business case

Services should be developed in alignment with a clear business case to ensure it is not only possible but makes good business sense. Whilst it is integral to understand and define business requirements and limitations, internal opinions and beliefs should not dictate the service or product.

Decision making should be user-focused. Personas are one tool which can support gaining a deep understanding of users and their needs, wants and motivations to guide decision making.

## 9 | Consistently refer back to the wider service landscape

Service design has a much broader scope than other design disciplines, taking a unified approach to each component which makes up a service. Therefore it is important to consistently keep in mind the wider context in which a service takes place. Service blueprints are an effective way of mapping the entire service process, outlining what is 'front stage' (visible to the user) and people, systems and processes backstage (invisible to the user) which are needed to make the service work. Service blueprints can be used to map the current service experience and also to map the future state.

## 10 | Tailor use of Service Design tools

There are many methods and tools available to take advantage of. It is important to take a strategic approach to the project and define which will provide most value.

## 11 | Measure results and iterate

Services should be first prototyped and an MVP delivered before being rolled out in full to gain vital user feedback on improvements. Change should then be ongoing, with no fixed finish line for improving services and experiences. Once the service has been designed and implemented it is best practice to continually learn, optimise and iterate. We recommend arranging regular reviews aimed at finding new opportunities or identifying pain points.



**“ When creating a new or updated service or an element of it, it is important to put in place onboarding and support processes for both internal teams and users. Consider what training may be needed to empower employees and what support is needed for existing and new users.”**

# Service design in practice

MARKETING



## Discover

User research  
Market research



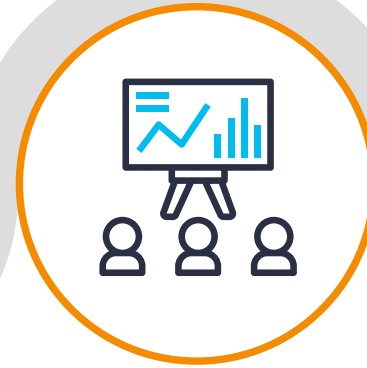
## Solution

User journey mapping  
Wireframes  
Co-creation workshops



## Implementation

Service blueprints  
Prototyping



## Optimisation

User research

MARKETING

# Key points

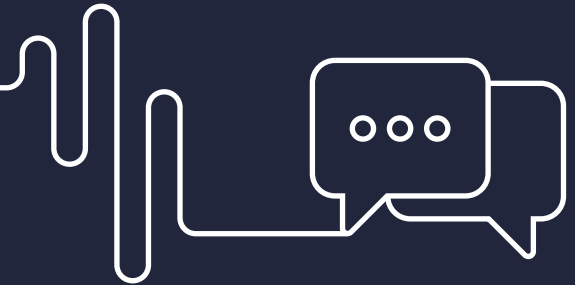
Service design can support your organisation to:

- > Focus in on problem areas and pain points
- > Identify areas of opportunity
- > Increase efficiency and effectiveness of processes
- > Take a holistic approach to creating a consistent customer experience
- > Develop user-focused touch points

As a specialist service design agency Make it Clear can help you get the most from service design:

- > Fresh perspectives
- > Input independent of internal teams
- > Multi-disciplinary teams

Whether you're looking to overhaul your service, create a new service or focus on fixing a small challenge we'd love to hear from you. Book in for a free 30-minute clarity consultation [here](#).



## References

[Service design 101](#)

[Demystifying Service Design — Part 1](#)

[The Principles of Service Design Thinking](#)

[BBH Service Design Handbook](#)

[The Future of Service Design](#)

[This is Service Design Thinking](#)

[Service Design & UX Design; Po-tay-to/ Po-tar-to or as umami is to salty\\*](#)

[What the f. @ \\* ^ is Service Design?](#)

# Thank you

Follow us on:



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