



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

# DESIGN FOR SERVICE

A framework for articulating designers' contribution  
as interpreter of users' experience

av

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## Abstract

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During the past approximately 15 years designers have paid increasing attention to service and changes in our society, resulting in a new design discipline – service design. In parallel, designers' contributions to service development and innovation have been brought forward, often emphasizing designers' capability of involving users, acting in and through multidisciplinary teams and using visualization skills in these situations.

Previously, most knowledge about development of new services has been treated within the service marketing and management discourse, where emphasis is put on customer integration in the process, and the co-creation of the value proposition - the service. Despite both knowledge spheres, design and marketing/management, have been deeply involved in the development of new service they have hitherto essentially remained unconnected.

The overall aim of this thesis is to further explore and develop the connections between design and service logic through development of the Design for Service framework. In addition, this thesis takes specific interest in designers' contribution as intermediaries between users and organizations in service design and innovation.

Pragmatist inquiry was used for interlacing theoretical comparisons and explorations in the field to advance the inquiry. A field study of a 10-month collaboration between a design firm and an industrial company, focused on a service design workshop with customers and the outcomes thereof.

It was found that the designers worked with users' stories as design material and rematerialized them as scenarios, instead of through anticipated visualization techniques. Narrative analyses brought forward how designers organized the users' different accounts into coherent stories and in so doing they highlighted conflicts experienced in the users' value creation practices. The capacity to propose possible futures is generally argued to be core in design practice, this was however not the strongest contribution in this case. Instead the re-materialization of existing situations was the real contribution. Through interpretation the users' experience was made relevant and actionable for the industrial company.

This thesis connects research in design practice, user centered design and service logic through development and refinement of a framework - Design for Service. The framework articulates designers' contribution in terms of value creation. Through this connection designers' contribution and service design are repositioned from a specific phase of service development to an interpretative core competence for understanding users and value creation in service innovation.