

RESOURCE · FOR FOUNDERS & OPERATORS ·

Service Design *Glossary.*

Essential terminology with practical examples for mapping — and improving — the *service experiences* behind your business.

TERMS

40 + 1

SECTIONS

05

FOR

Service Mapping & Blueprinting

BE BOLD · STAY BRAVE

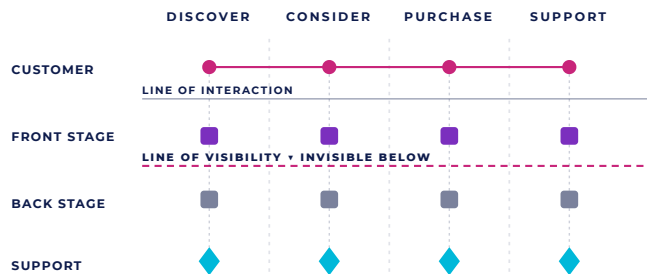
Service Design.

The practice of planning and organizing people, infrastructure, communication, and material components to improve service quality and interaction between service provider and customers.

Service design *makes invisible processes visible* — so they can be analyzed, improved, and optimized for both customer experience and operational efficiency. It is less a single deliverable than a way of seeing: the discipline of treating a service as a designed object, with edges, parts, and decisions that can be drawn, debated, and reworked.

♦ THE IDEA, VISUALLY

A service blueprint stacks what the customer sees on top of what they don't — separated by the line of visibility. Everything below is invisible to the customer, yet entirely responsible for their experience.



01 / READ

Term & Definition

Each entry opens with the term in uppercase, followed by a working definition.

02 / GROUND

A Concrete Example

Every term ends with a tangible example — so the concept attaches to something real.

03 / APPLY

In Your Next Map

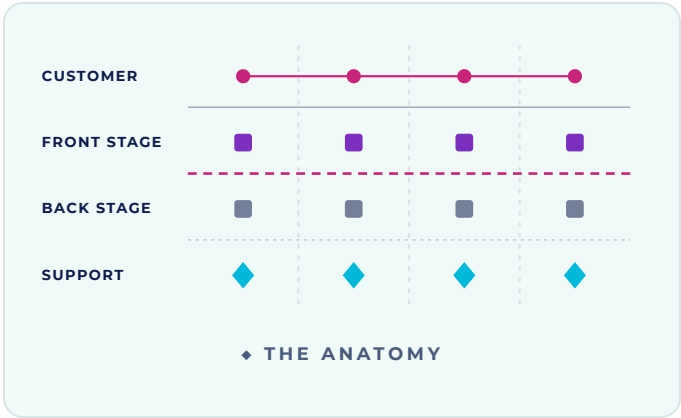
Borrow the language at your next blueprinting session. Shared vocabulary is shared clarity.

● SERVICE BLUEPRINT

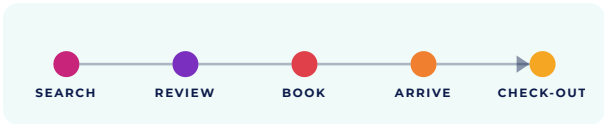
A diagram visualizing the relationships between service components, tied to customer touchpoints. The single most useful artifact for surfacing hidden hand-offs and dependencies.

EXAMPLE

Horizontal chart showing customer actions, employee tasks, and supporting systems at each stage of the journey.



● CUSTOMER JOURNEY



The complete sequence of experiences a customer goes through when interacting with a service.

EXAMPLE

Search → Reviews → Book → Arrive → Check out.

● SERVICE STAGES

The time-based phases of customer experience — from awareness through post-experience.

EXAMPLE

Discovery → Research → Purchase → Delivery → Support → Renewal.

● TOUCHPOINT

Any point of interaction between a customer and the service.

EXAMPLE

Website; email; phone call; physical location; social media; app.

● TOUCHPOINT MAPPING

Identifying and documenting all points where customers interact with your service.

EXAMPLE

Listing every channel: Instagram ad → Website → Email → Store visit.

● CHANNEL

The medium through which a customer interacts with a service or receives value.

EXAMPLE

Mobile app; in-store; phone; website; social DM.

● OMNICHANNEL

Service delivery across multiple integrated channels with seamless transitions.

EXAMPLE

Start on app, continue on desktop, pick up in-store.

● SERVICE ECOSYSTEM

The full network of people, organizations, tech, and resources that make a service possible.

EXAMPLE

A clinic visit: patient, clinic, insurer, lab, pharmacy.

● PERSONA

A fictional character representing a key customer segment, built from real research. Personas keep teams designing for someone specific instead of an abstract average.

EXAMPLE
“Busy Beth” — working parent, values speed, shops on mobile during her commute.



Busy Beth
WORKING PARENT • 38
Mobile-first. Shops between meetings.

TIME-POOR

VALUE-DRIVEN

MOBILE-FIRST

GOAL
“Get the kids’ gear and get back to work.”

♦ A PERSONA AT A GLANCE

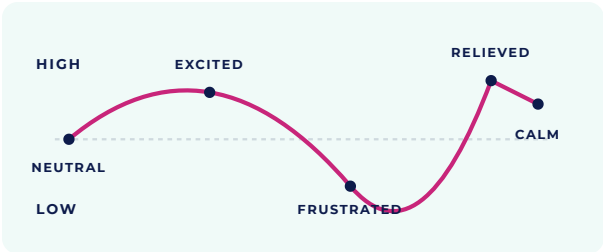
● EMPATHY MAP

SAYS “Why is this so slow?”	THINKS “I just want it done...”
DOES Abandons cart, retries.	FEELS Frustrated. Tired.

A tool for capturing what a customer says, thinks, does, and feels — to build deeper understanding.

EXAMPLE
A four-quadrant canvas filled in from user interviews and observation.

● EMOTIONAL JOURNEY



A mapping of customer feelings and emotional states throughout their experience.

EXAMPLE
Anxious → Excited → Frustrated → Relieved → Calm.

● PAIN POINT

A specific problem or frustration customers experience during their journey.

EXAMPLE
Confusing checkout flow; unclear pricing; no order tracking.

● MOMENT OF TRUTH

A critical interaction point that significantly impacts customer perception.

EXAMPLE
First impression entering a store; a support agent’s initial response.

● USER STORY

A short description of a feature or experience from the customer’s perspective.

EXAMPLE
“As a new client, I want a checklist so I know what to expect.”

● CO-CREATION

Involving customers or stakeholders directly in designing the service experience.

EXAMPLE
Inviting beta users to shape features; participatory workshops.

● DESIRABILITY

Whether customers actually want the service — one leg of viability & feasibility.

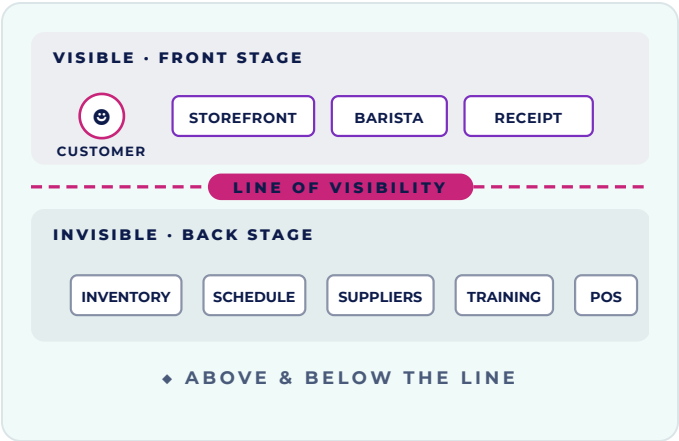
EXAMPLE
Validating demand before building; confirming the problem is real.

● LINE OF VISIBILITY

Separates front stage (what customers see) from back stage (hidden operations). Drawing the line forces a team to ask: *what does the customer actually witness right now?*

EXAMPLE

Barista makes coffee (visible) | Manager orders supplies (invisible).



● FRONT STAGE

Customer-facing aspects of service delivery that are visible and experienced directly.

EXAMPLE

Sales floor; customer service chat; website interface; reception desk.

● LINE OF INTERACTION

Separates customer actions from service-provider actions in a blueprint.

EXAMPLE

Customer clicks “Submit” (above) → System processes order (below).

● SUPPORT PROCESSES

Technology, systems, policies, and infrastructure enabling service operations.

EXAMPLE

CRM database; payment gateway; inventory system.

● BACK STAGE

Internal operations and employee actions invisible to customers but essential for service delivery.

EXAMPLE

Kitchen in a restaurant; warehouse fulfillment; payment processing.

● SWIMLANE

A horizontal row in a service blueprint representing a specific actor or system layer.

EXAMPLE

Customer row; front-stage staff row; back-stage ops row; tech row.

● PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Tangible or digital artifacts customers encounter during service delivery.

EXAMPLE

Website design; signage; packaging; receipts; branded emails.

● HANDOFF

The transfer of responsibility between people, departments, or systems.

EXAMPLE

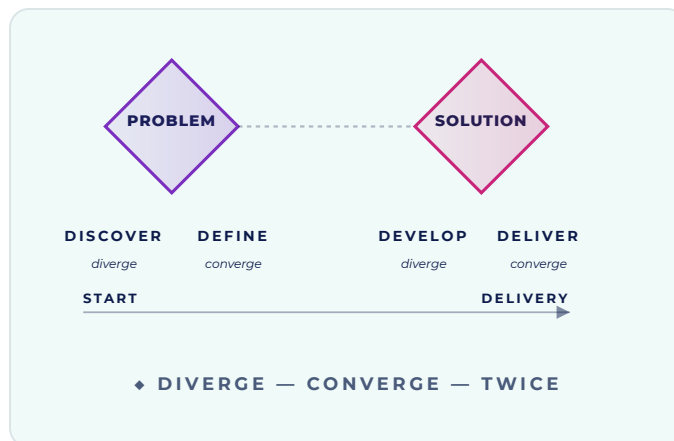
Sales → Onboarding; Online order → Warehouse → Shipping.

● DOUBLE DIAMOND

A design process framework with two phases: discovering the right problem, then developing the right solution. Each diamond is a *diverge*—then—*converge* move.

EXAMPLE

Phase 1 — research and insight gathering; Phase 2 — ideation and delivery.



● HOW MIGHT WE

HMW

A reframing technique that turns problems into open-ended design opportunities.

EXAMPLE

"Customers are confused at checkout" → "How might we make checkout feel effortless?"

● DECISION GATE

A point where customers make a choice that affects their subsequent path through the service.

EXAMPLE

Choosing delivery vs. pickup; selecting premium vs. basic plan.

● QUALITY CHECKPOINT

A verification moment to ensure service standards are met before proceeding.

EXAMPLE

Manager approves refund; QA reviews order before shipping.

● FAIL POINT

A specific location in the service where things commonly go wrong.

EXAMPLE

Payment gateway timeout; missed reminder; long wait times.

● PROTOTYPE

An early model of a service concept used to test ideas before full development.

EXAMPLE

Paper mockup of a new intake form; role-played service walkthrough.

● RECOVERY PLAN

A predefined process for responding when a service failure occurs.

EXAMPLE

A script for handling missed appointments; a refund policy for delayed delivery.

● FEEDBACK LOOP

A mechanism for capturing customer input and using it to improve service design.

EXAMPLE

Post-service survey; review requests; customer advisory boards.

● STAKEHOLDER MAP

A visual diagram of everyone who has a role in or is affected by a service — arranged by influence, proximity, or interest. Reveals dependencies that pure org charts hide.

EXAMPLE

Founders, staff, clients, vendors, and partners mapped in concentric rings — closest first.



● KPI

Key Performance Indicator

A measurable value demonstrating how effectively a service achieves its objectives.

EXAMPLE

Net Promoter Score; average resolution time; conversion rate.

● NPS

Net Promoter Score

A loyalty metric based on customers' likelihood to recommend a service, scored 0–10.

EXAMPLE

9–10 = Promoter; 7–8 = Passive; 0–6 = Detractor.

● SLA

Service Level Agreement

A commitment defining expected service quality, including response times.

EXAMPLE

24-hour email response; 99.9% uptime; 30-day refund policy.

● CES

Customer Effort Score

A measure of how much work a customer must do to get an issue resolved or need met.

EXAMPLE

Rating how easy it was to return a product on a 1–7 scale.

● VALUE PROPOSITION

The clear statement of how a service solves a problem and why customers should choose it.

EXAMPLE

"We turn invisible team problems into measurable results."

● INTANGIBLE ASSET

The invisible foundation behind outcomes — trust, culture, knowledge, relationships.

EXAMPLE

Staff expertise; brand reputation; client trust; institutional knowledge.

● AUTOMATION CANDIDATE

A process or task suitable for technology-based automation to improve efficiency or consistency.

EXAMPLE

Automated email confirmations; chatbot handling FAQs.

◆ WHEN YOU'RE READY TO MAKE IT REAL

Map it. Build it. *Brave it.*

A glossary is a starting line, not a finish. When you're ready to map the forces that actually drive your business — the trust, the friction, the moments of truth — we build the blueprint with you.

RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

Market Research
Audience Analysis
Asset Mapping

DESIGN & STRATEGY

Branding Strategy
Content Strategy
Technical Writing

EXPERIENCE DEV

Product & Service
Design
Web Development
Service Blueprinting

GROWTH & OPS

Social Media
Workshop & Training
Strategic Consulting

◆ BE BOLD. STAY BRAVE.

Calm in complexity, clarity in
ambiguity, *bravery in the intangible.*

GET AN ESTIMATE

WWW.BRAVEINTANGIBLES.COM

