roles of in-house service designers towards service implementation

Tim Overkamp\textsuperscript{a}, and Stefan Holmlid\textsuperscript{a}
\textsuperscript{a}Department of Computer and Information Science, Linköping University, Sweden

abstract

In this paper, we study roles that in-house service designs take towards service implementation. We frame implementation from a service-dominant logic and service systems perspective as shaping service system resources (people, language, organisation technology) for resource exchange and integration (i.e. value co-creation). We analyse interviews with nine in-house service designers and show how in-house designers work with shaping the four service system resource types. We discuss implications for in-house designers and (their) managers. We reflect on using service-dominant logic and service systems as a lens for analysing in-house designers’ efforts related to service implementation. We make suggestions for future research.

keywords

service implementation, service-dominant logic, service systems, shaping resources, in-house service designers

introduction

Implementation of service has been a topic in service research for several decades (e.g. Tax & Stuart 1997; Ponsignon, Smart & Maull 2012). In these works, the role of design in relation to implementing service is often limited (Holmlid, Wetter-Edman & Edvardsson 2017). In design research, recent works have looked at contributions that designers can make towards service implementation (e.g. Yu 2015; Calabretta, De Lille, Beck & Tanghe 2016). However, these works look at design consultants but not at in-house designers. On a general level, the work of in-house designers has been studied (Blomkvist 2015). In this paper, we look specifically at the roles of in-house service designers towards service implementation.

We frame service implementation from the perspective of service-dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch 2004; 2008; 2015). Service-dominant logic uses a markets metaphor to conceptualise value co-creation as exchange and integration of resources (Akaka, Vargo, & Lusch 2013; Chandler & Vargo 2011; Vargo & Lusch 2011). These markets are shaped by institutions (Edvardsson, Kleinaltenkamp, Tronvoll, McHugh, &

Service systems form the building blocks of such exchange networks (Maglio, Vargo, Caswell, & Spohrer 2009; Vargo & Lusch 2015). Resources in such service systems, and systems of systems, are people, technology, information (Spohrer, Maglio, Bailey, & Gruhl 2007) and organisation (Spohrer, Vargo, Caswell, & Maglio 2008). In line with the notion that resources always become (Chandler and Vargo 2011; Edvardsson, Ng, Choo & Firth 2013), we frame realisation of service as shaping the resources which are needed for successful value co-creation in a service system, so that these resources become available for exchange and integration (making value co-creation possible).

We use interview data to look at how in-house service designers work with shaping the four types of resources. We contribute with knowledge on 1) the roles of in-house service designers towards service implementation from a service-dominant logic and service systems perspective and 2) the use of this (market) perspective as a lens for analysing efforts related to service implementation.

**METHOD**

Between August and September 2013 we conducted semi-structured interviews (Creswell 2014) with nine in-house service designers about their work (see Table 1) and transcribed verbatim. In the data, we looked specifically for responses relating to shaping of resources regarding *people, language, organisation* and *technology*.

Table 1: The nine informants and the service organisations they work in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Nr. of employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>~2000-3 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>2.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>4.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>300.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D6</td>
<td>Denmark/Germany</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>13.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D7</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D8</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>10.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D9</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS

Interviewees mentioned work related to implementing a service mind-set as well as designing the service itself. The former included, for instance, developing service design competence in the organisation, facilitating internal design processes and involving internal stakeholders. The latter involved among others being a user advocate during development, doing user research and prototyping. D1, D3, D5 and D8 did both, others either focused on organisational development (D4 and D6) or the design of the service itself (D2, D7 and D9).

Some of the interviewees mentioned processes they considered important for successful resource shaping (e.g. convincing management), but did not specify their roles in it.

For some of the interviewees it was not directly clear what was meant with the question about how they worked with service implementation.

DISCUSSION

The interviewees thus worked with shaping all four types of resources (people, language, organisation and technology). When designers work with people, language, organisation, they work with implementing service as a mind-set in the organisation. If they work with technology, it is mostly implementing a singular service (solutions) (e.g. website, apps).

In-house designers can reflect on what types of resources they help shape today and where they can make additional contributions. From a market metaphor perspective, designers can consider the design of institutions (e.g. practices) that shape markets and resource exchange.

For managers of in-house designers, this shows a potential for design(ers) to contribute to implementation as another part of the development process than design of a service (Holmlid, Wetter-Edman and Edvardsson 2017). The outcomes of this study can help managers to determine how in-house designers can be involved towards service implementation and what they can deliver compare to design consultants.

Additional interviews would be needed to determine whether and how work of in-house designers towards implementation changed with respect to these interviews conducted in 2013.

We feel that the market metaphor and service system concept were not always helpful as a lens for our data set and our aim of looking at how in-house designers work with service implementation. It helped to make a
distinction between implementing a service mind-set versus singular service, but on a detail-level, it was hard to classify which of the four service system resource types were shaped through a certain activity of an in-house designer. This could be partly caused by a lack of clear definition of the resources types *people, language, organisation and technology*. Also, future interviews can aim to get designers to define more clearly what their activities do and do not include, to make it easier to determine what resources are shaped by their work.

**CONCLUSION**

This work presented how in-house service designers articulate their work towards service implementation in practice. We used service-dominant logic and service systems as lenses to analyse these activities.

The interviewees worked with implementation of a service mind-set and singular services, which shows a variety of possible contributions that in-house design(ers) can make in relation to service implementation.

Additional interviews with in-house designers are needed to further explore the work and contributions of design(ers) towards service implementation and the usefulness of the market metaphor and service system concept in service-dominant logic when analysing efforts related to service implementation.

**REFERENCES**


Edvardsson, B., Ng, G., Choo, Z. M., & Firth, R. (2013). Why is service-


