

Self-assessment by Thomas Brandenburg

SUBMITTED ON 27 APR 2022



A summary about me:

Thomas Brandenburg is the first in-house service designer at CDK Global, a technological solutions leader in automotive. He applies service design, human center and systems thinking to new products integrations and platforms. Prior to this position he has enjoyed lead designer roles for museum and retail environments.

Thomas is an IIT Adjunct Professor. He teaches service design, technology, and innovation courses. He facilitates students teams on many projects with community partners; Kohls Children's museum and Wilson Sporting Goods —to name a few.

Thomas is co-founder and board member of the SDN Chicago Chapter. He also serves on the accreditation committee.

I currently work as a/at:

Lead Service Designer, CDK Global, <https://www.cdkglobal.com/>

My LinkedIn profile:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/thomas-brandenburg-45844117/>

My social media channels:

5by5, 5 questions, 5 voices blog, <https://wordpress.com/view/goodbridge.studio>

Instagram, [thomasbrandenburgteaching](#)

My educational background:

MA Master of Design Methods, IIT Institute of Design

BFA Graphic Design, University of Illinois in Chicago

The following theories are the key components of my approach to service design:

The following principles guide my approach to service design:

Be holistic: Look end-to-end on the customer journey, understand the business operations that supports, also look theses customer and the business in an ecosystem with potentially new partners, new offering and new customers.
complex ecosystem is essential.

Be relevant: Ask if we solving the right problem for the right audience in the right way? Keeping users at the center of problem-solving while developing solutions and always remembering me-search is not research.



Be empathetic: Remembering that empathy doesn't end with user research. Actively listening to everyone and finding ways to collaborate throughout the project with different stakeholders paves the way for successful engagements.

Be an evidence builder: It's not enough to collect evidence through research and continued input through the project. Given that we are visual creatures having immersive artifacts that we build together helps us all shape the narrative.

Be goal oriented: Having clarity on the change/impact we would like to make helps everyone get on the same page. Developing clear KPI's and continually referring back to them in order to evaluate success and progress.

Be curious: Continual learning at the intersection of the world, design and human behaviors. Staying up-to-date on my craft and everything that impacts it.

These are the most relevant resources I base my work on and I recommend them as a body of knowledge in service design:

Service Design: From Insight to Implementation by Andy Polaine, Lavrans Løvlie, and Ben Reason

This is Service Design Thinking by Marc Stickdorn and Jakob Schneider

Service Design Show by Marc Fontein

Practical Service Design Blog by Megan Erin Miller and Erik Flowers

101 Design Methods: A Structured Approach for Driving Innovation in Your Organization by Vijay Kumar

I have X years of working experience in service design:

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My working experience in service design includes involvement in:

- Service design projects
- Service design consultancy
- Service design training

I have particular experience in the following service sectors:

Entertainment (in particular Museums) and Retails (Automotive, ecommerce, big box merchandisers)

I have conducted X service design projects that aim at creating improvements or innovations within organisations:

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These are the service design projects I have successfully delivered:

1.

Network security threats have increasingly been top of mind for automotive dealerships because of very costly security breaches. There have often been a cobbled together combinations of resources to manage and protect various aspects of their network and devices, but potentially costly gaps still exist. Service design was applied to achieve a holistic and time-sensitive digital service.

* August 2020 to Present

* CDK Global

* Security and Network Performance Dashboard

* Outcome: An innovative new desktop and mobile performance and security dashboard that integrates a suite of products to provide a holistic health scores. Furthermore it provides a cross-channel alert system

* impact: The dealer IT network and security dashboard is currently in pilot, but this new solution differentiator is expected to protect the \$10 million business, by reduce churn and increase renewal rates



2,

Dealer Management Systems DMSs are very costly and time-consuming (average 60 days) to install and get fully up and run, but they are the foundational to automotive dealership as a business. Service design was applied to try to make much need improvement to the overall implementation process.

* April 2019 to July 2020

* CDK Global

* Dealer Management System, DMS

* Outcome: Reduce error-prone touchpoints and repeat delays by documenting the experience over the year and collaborating with key stakeholders to resolve touchpoint issues

* Impact: Reduce friction of the DMS implementation process for each client to be under half the time; YTD operational saving to the business is upward of \$1.2M.

3.

Doc Cloud is a software tool used to power dealerships in the automobile industry. The aim of the initiative was to identify opportunities and obstacles to improve on, accelerate the implementation process and provide value to the client by providing product improvements.

* April 2019 to July 2020

* CDK Global

* Doc Cloud Implementation

* Outcome: Automation and more timely communication were applied to speed up and reduce errors in the review process, along with forms library enhancements.

* impact: Significantly reduced Doc Cloud installation time by one-third on critical tasks that were previously causing lengthy time delays. This crucial project was the keystone to achieve installations of the digital product across 1200 dealerships a year.

4.

Finding high-quality supplies promptly for science laboratories has been challenging for lab managers. Lesser quality supplies are a risk to spoil science experiments. The startup, HappiLabs, was founded to serve lab management to overcome these problems by being their purchasing agent. I applied service design to the end-to-end cross-channel business to improve the experience

* December 2019 to March 2020

* HappiLabs

* Retail B2B

* Outcome: identified existing painpoints in the customer experience and operations and developed digital service strategies for resolving them. Also, I created a future state blueprint for the ideal experience which is the roadmap for the company

* impact: Able to scale up the startup business to service more science labs, from 10 to 20 labs; Lab spending Management \$75 Million

* <https://www.happilabs.org/>

5.

The service experience challenge was how the Kohl Children's Museum might increase awareness and visitorship? The challenge was coupled with the fact that the museum resides in the Chicago's suburbs, and it was not easily accessible by public transportation.

* 2017-18

* Kohl Children's Museum

* Pop-Up Museum

* Outcome: From guiding IIT college students on a concept and prototype that inspired the museum partner to further develop the idea and implementing it, securing a 5000 SQ FT corner storefront in one of the main downtown streets to install a pop-up museum with four STEAM



activity stations. Also, the museum secured funding from several family foundations to be able to offer free admissions to the public.

* Impact: Despite the pilot pop-up museum being open for one month in the far northern suburbs, it attracted many visitors, including 45 field trips from schools in four towns in the surrounding area. The portal STEAM museum last rotated to other suburbs for families who did not have direct access to STEAM education

* SDN Case Study Library, <https://www.service-design-network.org/case-studies/going-beyond-museum-walls-a-service-experience-case-study>

6.

The aging in place customer journey for customers ages 60+ was evaluated for improvements over many business verticals. In-depth design research indicated that cross-channel enhancements to the pharmacy have the potential to provide the most impact.

* 2016-17

* Kmart

* Pharmacy Redesign

* Outcome: We made many enhancements, like introducing the pharmacist 1-on-1 private consultation area, better speed and accuracy of prescription fulfillment, and digital prescription reminder tools, to name a few.

* Impact: The pharmacy was awarded accreditation by The Healthcare Quality Association. In addition, according to the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) it was rated as the national leader in drugstore customer satisfaction for two years running.

* <https://brandenburgservicedesign.wordpress.com/pharmacy-redesign/>

I have provided service design training sessions and/or other educational experiences for X years:

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My philosophy as a trainer is:

I believe group work is the best approach for learning and service design activities.

There are many benefits which translate to preparing trainees to be more effective in the professional world.

At the outset of an exercise, one should outline the benefits, give context, and illustrate them with real-world examples. This helps manage expectations of purpose, outcomes, and outputs.

The introductory part of the session should be clear, concise, but kept short, because it is very important to give the groups enough time to get hands-on with the activity and be able to iterate.

All training session should always include discussion sessions. If time is limited then at the very least have one near the end of the work session.

This allows all the trainees to reflect, verbalize and have an exchange of what they did, the challenges they had, and what that they learned.

Aside from the assessment and feedback are given to the group work, I also provide opportunities for one-on-one consultations after the training. It is important the participants not to lose momentum after the event, in order to put in to practice SD tools and methods on the job.

These are the service design training sessions and/or other educational experiences I've facilitated within the last year:

- Spring 2021 & Fall 2021
- 16 wks each
- Design & Tech Entrepreneurship Workshop
- IIT, Illinois Institute of Technology students
- Community partners: R.A.G.E Skate Park, and Hot House Inclusive Theatre
- 48 students and 36 students

<https://www.coursicle.com/iit/professors/Thomas+Brandenburg/>

I mostly provide my training offerings in the following language(s):

English

I mostly provide my training offerings in the following countries/cities:



United States, Chicago

I cover the following topics during my training offerings:

- Definition of service design
- User research/deep customer insights
- Designing and conducting co-creation workshops
- Implementation of service design concepts
- Business model development
- Working with complex service systems
- Exploration of systems
- Service

My training participants typically have the following level of experience:

- Novice (new to service design)
- Fundamental (basic knowledge)

These are my favourite cases I use to inform participants about the impact and value of service design:

Museums & Education: N. W. Harris Learning Collection at The Field Museum 400 unique exhibit cases (mini-dioramas) and 50 hands on learning kits available for loan. They estimated the collections reached 65,500 students at schools or at their homes in the Chicagoland area. Other cultural institutions offer something similar, but The Field Museum collections program is the largest and oldest.
<http://harris.fieldmuseum.org/>

Social Responsibility: City Harvest has a long successful track record, now 35 years of rescuing nutritional food that from farms, restaurants, grocers, and manufacturers might be thrown away and redistributing the goods to those in need. This year collected 61 million pounds of good and delivered it 1.2 million struggling New Yorkers.
<https://www.cityharvest.org/>

Retail: Amazon's Prime Student is rolling this program to universities across the US. With an annual prime membership fee students can order products and receive them within 2 days (some cases within 2 minutes) in an amazon locker on campus.
<https://shoppermarketingmag.com/amazon-elbows-back-school-season>

These are the service design methods and tools that I use during my sessions:

I apply a five-point evaluation form for team and individual performance. I also have team members do a peer-review evaluation.

After successfully attending my training sessions, participants will typically be able to:

- Plan and execute gorilla to bonafide user research
- Learn how to distill user research into actionable customer insights and can be translated into a service offering
- Brainstorm and ideate to arrive a refined service concept
- Create physical and digital prototypes
- Map a user journey and blue print
- Build a business model to support the case for a service
- How to story tell in a presentation

I apply the following evaluation tools to make sure the participants have understood the content of my sessions and gained the expected competencies and skills:

I apply a five-point evaluation form for team and individual performance. I also have team members do a peer-review evaluation.



I systematically evaluate and improve my offerings based on feedback. These are examples of feedback that have led to improvements:

I received a tip from another facilitator, who said really get to know the participants you would be working with. This led to doing a short exercise with the participants at the beginning of the engagement, have them write down on the board or sticky note why are they are there, and what they hope to learn and do quick group share out.

I have participated in the following service design-related activities in order to stay up to date, share my experiences with peers and receive their supervision within the last 12 months:

- SDN Global Conference
- SDN Chapter Activity

I actively support the local or national service design community through:

May 2021 Co-organized an event with Atlanta Chapter, Co-creation: a reflection on what it means to our practice
2021-22 Co-organized a series of three events with Poland Chapter, Service Design Food Systems

I have participated as a speaker in the following events:

July 2020

Chapter event series: Designing for Learning Experiences

Service Design Case Study: Going Beyond The Museum Walls

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lightning-talks-designing-for-learning-experiences-registration-111566642832#>

Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sT_iEGe_240

Oct 2018

Chapter event at The Field Museum, Chicago: Learning from The Field Museum: Service Design and the Built Environment

Thomas Brandenburg & Alvaro Amat

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/learning-from-the-field-museum-service-design-and-the-built-environment-tickets-51446608190#>

April 2015

American Theological Library Association, Denver

Religion and Theology Digital Scholars: How They Research

and What Tools They Use

Thomas Brandenburg & Sipra Bihani

<https://atla2015.sched.com/event/2QTy/religion-and-theology-digital-scholars-how-they-research-and-what-tools-they-use>

I have published the following books/articles on service design and related fields:

n/a

Contact details:

Thomas Brandenburg

130 North Garland Court, Unit 1503, 60602 Chicago

tbrand3@gmail.com