

Self-assessment by Mário P. Ascensão

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A summary about me:

I am a Principal Lecturer at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (HH) within the Research and Development – Service Business Development & Design competence area. My responsibilities include teaching, supervising theses, training, R&D projects, and curriculum development. I teach bachelor and master level courses on the domains of design, the experience economy and branding. I am one of the leaders of the university's Service Experience Laboratory, LAB8, where I am in charge of the PLAY - Imagineering Experiences and Tool Factory commercial services of the laboratory. I also teach design courses at the University of Tartu Pärnu College. Over the years, I have played a central role in curriculum development and design for HH and international educational partners. I am a member of the audit team of the Portuguese Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education - A3ES.

I currently work as a/at:

Principal Lecturer, Haaga-Helia UAS, <https://www.haaga-helia.fi/en>

My LinkedIn profile:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mpascencao/>

My social media channels:

twitter.com/MpAscencao

My educational background:

PhD in Marketing, MA in Marketing, BA in Hospitality Management, Vocational Teacher Education Program diploma, Certified Experience Expert by the Lapland Centre of Expertise for the Experience Industry (now House of Lapland), Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE®), Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP®) by the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute, and Certified Facilitator of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Method.

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

I favour 'embodied experiential service design doing'. My approach to service design is influenced by the following components: first, service and service design is based on the primacy of the customer and follow a Customer-Dominant Logic (after Kristina Heinonen, Tore Strandvik, Karl-Jacob Mickelsson, Bo Edvardsson, Erik Sundström & Per Andersson), consumption is experiential (after Morris B. Holbrook and Elizabeth C. Hirschman), and involves social behaviours as theatrical 'performances' (after Erving Goffman, and Stephen J. Grove & Raymond P. Fisk), humans body is always active in any perception, and perception is a kind of thoughtful activity (after Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Alva Noë), emotions play a critical role in high-level cognition (after António Damásio), humans lives are significantly influenced by the conceptual metaphors (after Lakoff and Johnson), and lastly, intuition and the unconscious is the source of creative insights and complex decisions (after



Carl Jung, Daniel Kahneman, and Ap Dijksterhuis & Loran Nordgren). All these components are imbedded embedded in the various phases/spaces of the service design process.

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

- Moritz, S. (2005). *Service Design: A Practical Access to an Evolving Field*. London: Köln International School of Design. This book has been the default reading material for participants because of the clarity in explain the service design process.
- Stickdorn, M., Hormess, M., Lawrence, A., & Schneider, J. (2018). *This Is Service Design Doing: Applying Service Design Thinking in the Real World - A Practitioners' Handbook*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly Media. This book is great as it presents a different service design process, and provides a large number of tools.
- Penin, L. (2018). *An Introduction to Service Design: Designing the Invisible*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. This book informs the main definitions, theories and concepts related to the Service Design field, and it provides a good overview of the Service Design process and a wide range of case studies.
- Polaine, A., Løvlie, L., & Reason, B. (2013). *Service Design: From Insight to Implementation*. Brooklyn: Rosenfeld Media, LLC. This book is a good complementary resource and it offers practical guide to designing services whilst offering methods and case studies to help design, implement, and measure multichannel service experiences.
- Flu, M., Lovlie, L., & Reason, B. (2016). *Service Design for Business*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons. This book, written by experts at Livework, is a good handbook for an outside-in view of the organisations.
- Brown, T. (2019). *Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation (Revised, Updated ed.)*. New York: Harper Business. This book is good as an introduction to Design Thinking and IDEO's thinking.
- Lewrick, M., Link, P., & Leifer, L. (2018). *The Design Thinking Playbook: Mindful Digital Transformation of Teams, Products, Services, Businesses and Ecosystems*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons. This book describes how various industries, in particular those engaged in digital transformation, use Design Thinking and tools.
- Tuulaniemi, J. (2011). *Palvelumuotoilu (3rd ed.)*. Hämeenlinna, Finland: Talentum Media Oy. This is one of the first books to be published in Finland, in Finnish, and introduces basics of service design as a new way to develop user-centric services.
- Koivisto, M., Säynäjäkangas, J., & Forsberg, S. (Eds.). (2019). *Palvelumuotoilun Bisneskirja*. Helsinki, Finland: Alma Talent. This book, in Finnish, provides a practical approach about how to implement service design as part of the organizations' operations whilst presenting different illustrative service design cases.
- Service Design Network (SDN), <https://www.service-design-network.org/>
- Touchpoint - The Journal of Service Design, <https://www.service-design-network.org/touchpoint>
- Service Design Network podcasts, <https://www.service-design-network.org/podcast>
- Service Design Network YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/servicedesignnetwork>
- Design Council, <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/>
- IDEO Design Thinking, <https://designthinking.ideo.com/>
- Journal of Service Management, <https://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/journal/josm>
- The Design Journal, <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfdj20>
- International Journal of Design, <http://www.ijdesign.org/index.php/IJDesign>
- Design Studies, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/design-studies/issues>
- Harvard Design Magazine, <http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/>
- Service Design Podcast, <https://www.servicedesignpodcast.com/>
- Service Design Show, <https://www.servicedesignshow.com/>
- LAB8 – Toolkit42, <https://www.lab8.fi/tool-factory> As part of LAB8's Tool-Factory, I have put together an assemblage of 42 tools for our service design projects.

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 training

I have particular experience in the following service sectors:

tourism, leisure, retail, education, transport, healthcare

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:

Over the years, I have participated in about one hundred service design projects, in distinct roles (Project manager, trainer/coach, facilitator, designer, user insight specialist, cross-pollinator, etc.). Here are 8 examples of the last years:

- Example 1: [organization] HOK-Elanto Helsinki, S-Group's largest cooperative. [duration of project] 5 months, 2016. [topic/outcome/impact]

The project aimed to understand international customers' journeys (from need stage to after using a service), and to develop a service concept for four existing restaurants – each one of the restaurants - Kappeli, Zetor, Kaarna, and Salve – was re-conceptualised and service books provided. <https://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/current/articles/finnishness-fore-hok-elantos-restaurants>

- Example 2: [organization] Suomenlinna (UNESCO World Heritage Site) as part of the BLUE-project. [duration of project] 5 months, 2018.

[topic/outcome/impact] The aim of this project was to develop a new proof of concept-level of a digital travel service based on invisible elements of tourism that bring value to visitors. The result of the work was a manuscript and concept description of the AR concept.

<https://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/current/articles/bringing-suomenlinnas-hidden-stories-life-means-augmented-reality>

- Example 3: [organization] Kuopio-Tahko Markkinointi Oy as part of the BLUE-project. [duration of project] 5 months, 2018.

[topic/outcome/impact] The aim of this project was to develop an Augmented Reality service concept based on the tahko region's plans, which provides added value to users. The solution was a story-based AR service concept that improves the user experience of one of the routes in the Tahko region. <https://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/current/articles/augmented-reality-nature-trails-tahko>

- Example 4: [organization] The City of Imatra as part of the BLUE-project. [duration of project] 5 months, 2018. [topic/outcome/impact]

The aim of the project was to design a new digital tourism service concept based on the Imatra Rapids (Imatrankoski). The digital service concept was based on Augmented Reality and targeted tourists whilst increasing the sales of tourism companies in the area.

- Example 5: [organization] Helsingin Musiikkitalo Oy (Helsinki Music Centre) as part of the Helsinki Music Centre project where the staff of

several organizations who work together to provide services within the Music Centre were trained on service design. [duration of project] 5 months, 2019/20. [topic/outcome/impact] The project objective was to re-design the accessibility and guidance to events and services within the Music Centre so that visitors do not have to think about how to get to the place they want. The outcome was a visualised action plan/system of fixed and dynamic/temporary signage and other elements that helped visitors find the right place in different situations. <https://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/current/articles/creation-unified-service-brand-and-identity-helps-helsinki-music-centre-get-fame>

- Example 6: [organization] Agritek, manufactures and retails farm machinery and accessories. [duration of project] 5 months, 2019/20.

[topic/outcome/impact] The aim of the project was to develop a user-oriented digital service concept that enables the rental of tractors and machinery in Finland in cooperation with Agritek and resellers. The solution was an app that allowed users to rent tractors and other machinery and considered the need of distributing rental income.

- Example 7: [organization] Reima, the globally leading brand in functional kids' wear. [duration of project] 5 months, 2020.

[topic/outcome/impact] The project objective was to develop the company's brick-and-mortar sales process, raise the level of the customer experience and find emotional elements in the customer encounter. The result of the project was the service book which detailed a refined service concept, a circle of customer encounters that supports Reima Expert, the salesperson of the store.

- Example 8: [organization] Design District Helsinki (DDH) is an association of brick-and-mortar companies in Helsinki and a promoter of Helsinki design. [duration of project] 4 months, 2022. [topic/outcome/impact]

The goal of the work is to find out the usability of the Find service from the end user's point of view and to analyze the coexistence between the sites find.designdistrict.fi vs. www.designdistrict.fi. The work focused on the development of the digital experience from the user's point of view and produced a description of the user's experience path/journey with value to the user/visitor.

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:

Learning is socially constructed (co-created), phenomenological and multidisciplinary, therefore participants in my trainings are given opportunities to collaborate with each other, as well as with me, to learn by doing and gain expertise on service design. I encourage participants to take ownership of their learning and become empowered by their own learning and development as service designers. As I favour 'embodied experiential service design,' I see spaces are one pervasive component of service design trainings. This means I dedicated full attention to the arrangement of the training session space. Space contributes to participants creating encounters with other people and material things (e.g., tools). Creativity, as a central element in the service design training sessions, is shaped by the space participants use. As participants are invited to shape the session space, in turn that space shape the participants. Another important aspect is to create the proper conditions and awareness of the value of unconscious thoughts. Play(fulness) and the use of the body and drama is always sought. I consider a successful service design training session when the learning space, I have prepared in advance, stimulated, and inspired the participants. Another indicator is how much Leaning in, instead of leaning back, the participants demonstrate. Typically, participants are active, collaborative, and taking charge of the learning activities.

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

Here are examples of my fully or partially service design trainings of 2022/23:

- Haaga-Helia UAS, master education. 01-05/2022. Service Design. 10ECTS. 15 participants.
- Haaga-Helia UAS, bachelor education. 01-05/2022. Customer Experience Designer specialisation studies. 30ECTS. 20 participants.
- Haaga-Helia UAS, master education. 03-05/2022. From Services to Experiences & Transformations. 5ECTS. 20 participants.
- Haaga-Helia UAS, bachelor education. 03-05/2022. Managing Experiences. 9ECTS. 20 participants.
- Haaga-Helia UAS, master education. 03/2020. Imagineering with LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®. 5ECTS. 15 participants.
- Paul Bocuse Institute/Haaga-Helia UAS, Master education. 04-05/2022. Service Design & Product Development in Services. 10 ECTS. 22 participants.
- Paul Bocuse Institute/Haaga-Helia UAS, Master education. 04-05/2022. Developing and Managing Experiences. 10 ECTS. 22 participants.
- Haaga-Helia UAS, master education. 08-10/2022. From Services to Experiences & Transformations (Finnish version). 5ECTS. 20 participants
- University of Tartu Pärnu College, Master education. 09-12/2022. Design Sprint Methodology. 5ECTS. 20 participants
- Haaga-Helia UAS, master education. 09/2022-01/2023. Service Design (Finnish version), 10ECTS. 30 participants.
- Haaga-Helia UAS, master education. 01-05/2023. Service Design. 10ECTS. 15 participants.
- Haaga-Helia UAS, bachelor education. 01-05/2023. Customer Experience Designer specialisation studies. 30ECTS. 20 participants.
- Haaga-Helia UAS, master education. 03/2023. Imagineering with LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®. 5ECTS. 15 participants.
- Haaga-Helia UAS, master education. 03-05/2023. From Services to Experiences & Transformations. 5ECTS. 20 participants.
- Paul Bocuse Institute/Haaga-Helia UAS, Master education. 04-05/2023. Service Design & Product Development in Services. 10 ECTS. 22 participants.
- Paul Bocuse Institute/Haaga-Helia UAS, Master education. 04-05/2023. Developing and Managing Experiences. 10ECTS. 22 participants.
- University of Tartu Pärnu College, Master education. 02-05/2023. Process and Projects Management in Wellness Service Design. 5ECTS. 15 participants

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

English

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

Finland, Estonia, Greece, France, Portugal

I cover the following topics during my training offerings:

- History of service design
- Definition of service design
- Differentiation of service design to other approaches like design thinking, service marketing and service branding
- Service dominant logic
- User research/deep customer insights



- Designing and conducting co-creation workshops
- Creativity and ideation processes
- Visualisation techniques
- Facilitation skills for service design
- Prototyping of services
- Implementation of service design concepts
- Business model development
- Leadership/management of service design projects
- Building in-house service design capabilities
- Service design for cultural change

My training participants typically have the following level of experience:

- Novice (new to service design)
- Fundamental (basic knowledge)
- Advanced (practical application)

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

- Nordic Food China, <https://kuudes.com/nordicfoodchina/>
- People's Pharmacy, <https://www.service-design-network.org/case-studies/hellon-peoplespharmacy>
- Developing a Police Force's Digital Experience for Citizens, <https://www.service-design-network.org/headlines/fjord-developing-a-policeforces-digital-experience>
- Kitchen 2025, <https://www.ideo.com/case-study/designing-the-future-kitchen>
- Lufthansa's long-haul business-class service, <https://www.ideo.com/case-study/elevating-business-class-travel-with-personal-connection>

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

The mix varies with different cases or sessions: observations (e.g. direct and participant observation, non-participant observation, indirect observation), interviews (e.g. unstructured, semi-structured, structured, focus groups, narrative interviews), probes, customer journey mapping, empathy maps, persona maps, stakeholder maps, value proposition canvas, affinity diagram, design drivers, how might we, point-of-view, projective techniques (e.g. drawing and sentence completion), LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®, PLAYMOBIL®pro, lotus blossom, brainwriting, brainstorming, bodystorming, NAF–Novelty Attractiveness Feasibility, How-Wow-Now-matrix, Edward Bono's six hats, storyboarding, modelling service environments, role play, SAP Scenes, cardboard prototypes, wireframing, business model canvas.

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

participants will typically be able to:

- apply the key concepts, terminology related to service design and know service design principles and theories;
- use and combine different concepts, theories of service design and service design processes to develop their own frameworks;
- aware of the differences and similarities of service design and traditional service planning and is able to differentiate various models, theories and perspectives;
- demonstrate ability to evaluate and select models, methods/tools and reference frameworks suitable for the situation, and use them effortlessly;
- able to use with confidence these tools/methods: user interviews; Affinity diagrams, user persona(s) map; user journey map; point-of-view; value proposition canvas; how-might-we, lotus blossom; service blueprint; business model canvas;
- research users, stakeholders, service providers, trends, and contexts;
- collect, synthesize, analyse and utilize information and insights when developing a service design project for the target client-company;
- use information and insights to guide strategic direction or alignment
- understand the needs of users, client-company, and relevant stakeholders;
- select core user needs and design an innovative service concept for them;
- organise and run ideation workshops;
- prototype and present their services concepts;



- work autonomously and professionally in the development of services;
- provide development suggestions for other service concepts and service development plans that are planned.

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:

Participants perform a real-life service design case-project, and I support the progress along the way. As part of their service design case project participants complete assignments. Assignment-1 is related to service design process and different tools used. In this assignment participants explain in detail which service design process and tools were used and describe how they were applied to the real-life case. The assignment-2 is the Service Book about the new service solution. This assignment requires participants to make a presentation about the service solution. Assignment-3 is a peer-review, where participants familiarize themselves with the others team's project, and then review it and give constructive feedback in the form of an essay. The final assignment asks participants to create a case study from all the material about the case project.

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

Participants requested more information and guidance in using remote/online collaboration design tools. This feedback led to an investment and training of trainers in new online collaboration tools such as Miro.

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 National Conference
- SDN Masterclass
- SDN Chapter Activity

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

- Volunteer contribution to SDN;
- We, at LAB8, cooperate with SDN Finland chapter and its community.

I have participated as a speaker in the following events:

I have participated as a speaker in small and large events in the last years. Five examples are listed below:

- Changing the Hospitality Industry During/After the Pandemic. Hospitality Insiders Club. 24 September 2020. Hotel Kämp. Helsinki, Finland.
- Experimental Tourism and Thermalism. International Congress on Water. 20-21 September 2015. Universidade de Vigo. Ourense, Spain.
- Hospitality: A Stage of Dreams. Unión Hotelera del Principado de Asturias. III Congreso Nacional de Innovación en el Sector Hotelero. 6 November 2013. Oviedo, Spain.
- Experiential Learning. Teaching Academy Workshops at EuroCHRIE 2012 Annual Conference. 24 October 2012. Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. Lausanne, Switzerland.
- Experiential Tourism: From Finland with Love. AMFORHT World Forum, World Association for Hotel and Tourism Education Congress (Fórum Mundial AMFORHT, Associação Mundial para a Formação em Turismo e Hotelaria). "Experiential Tourism and Professional Education" ("Turismo de Experiência e Formação Profissional"). Convention Center at Senac University Center. 22-24 September 2010. São Paulo, Brazil.

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

- Tuomi, A., & Ascensão, M. P. (2023). Intelligent automation in hospitality: Exploring the relative automatability of frontline food service tasks. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 6(1), 151-173.
- Lassila, S., & Ascensão, M. P. (2022). Design for a better world through sustainable service design. *E-SIGNALS*.
- Pedro, R. M., Mendes, J., Matos, N. d., Ascensão, M. P., & Pinto, P. (2021). How tourists perceive, create and encode the memorable tourism experience. *Journal of Spatial and Organizational Dynamics*, 9(4), 296-325.
- Agapito, D., Pinto, P., Ascensão, M. P., & Tuominen, P. (2020). Designing compelling accommodationscapes: Testing a framework in a rural context. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*.



- Tuominen, P. P., & Ascensão, M. P. (2016). The hotel of tomorrow: A service design approach. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 22(3), 279-292.
- Pedro, R., Mendes, J., Matos, N., & Ascensão, M. (2020). A conceptualization of the senses, emotions, and memories in memorable tourism experiences. In: P. Pinto & M. Guerreiro (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Resident and Tourist Perspectives on Travel Destinations* (pp. 208-231). Hershey: IGI Global.
- Bastiaansen, M., Lub, X. D., Mitas, O., Jung, T. H., Ascensão, M. P., Han, D.-I., . . . Strijbosch, W. (2019). Emotions as core building blocks of an experience. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(2), 651-668.
- Ascensão, M. P. (2018). 3.1. From experiences to WOW luxury Experiences. In K. Adamsson (Ed.), *The Art of New Luxury* (pp. 31-38). Helsinki: Haaga-Helia ammattikorkeakoulu.
- Jung, T., tom Dieck, M. C., Rauschnabel, P., Ascensão, M., Tuominen, P., & Moilanen, T. (2018). Functional, Hedonic or Social? Exploring Antecedents and Consequences of Virtual Reality Rollercoaster Usage. In T. Jung & M. C. tom Dieck (Eds.), *Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality – Empowering Human, Place and Business* (pp. 247-258). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Weijsschede, J., Van Dongen, J., Ascensão, M. P., Marée, G., Lub, X., Bernasco, B. & Groen, B. (2017). Research and design thinking as synergy for innovation; exploring up to date approaches in hospitality and tourism management education. Theoretical/Academic paper presented at the 35th EuroCHRIE Annual Conference (EuroCHRIE 2017) - “Reach the unreachable – touch the untouched”. October 23rd–25th. Nairobi.
- Lub, X., Hover, M., Tuominen, P., Neveu, V., Marée, G., Ouwens, F., Sievers, K., Moilanen, T. & Ascensão, M. P. 2017. Santa gets a new Office: A case-study in using storytelling and service design to redesign a brand anchor. Paper presented at the 4th World Research Summit for Tourism and Hospitality – “Innovation, Partnerships, and Sharing”. December 8th–11th. UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management, Orlando.

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