Jari Koskinen

Service design

Perspectives on turning-points in design
Wellness and safety are mega-trends closely associated with innovation in service design. Slow-city and slow-food life philosophies are global trends. There are numerous natural opportunities for slowing down in an authentic, natural environment in Finland and Estonia. The dynamic increase of wellness tourism is mostly a question of marketing – the need already exists.
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The aim of this article is to outline overall understanding of the changes taking place in the field of design. In addition, it tries to determine how service design is linked to developing tourism and the tourist industry.

Background

In order to understand the current state of design, you must take a dive into history. In Finland, design is still defined by the era of great masters (such as Wirkkala, Aalto and Sarpaneva). On the one hand, their timeless pieces shed light on the field of design, but on the other hand, they also cast a long shadow over the whole area of expertise. An architect and a designer are still seen first of all as artists. Also, in the education of these professions, developing a personal touch is still emphasized.

There are many reasons for artistic approach. The leftist spirit of cultural societies derived from the 70s is still hovering over education, as many of the teachers in the universities belong to that generation. Anti-commercialism is deep-rooted among artists, and art that sells may be categorized as dirty and evil, whereas non-selling art is seen as the only form of real art. This same juxtaposition affects designers who see themselves as artists.

Then again, the opposition to globalisation and brands (‘No Logo - Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies’ by Naomi Klein, for instance) has had a strong influence on raising a new generation whose ethical and ecological values now shape consumer habits. We are talking about more aware, ethical consumerism. The increase in ecological and ethical awareness can be seen, for example, in the increased sales of products that are produced according to ethically sound principles, and in an increasing interest in ethical investment funds and various “green” products and services.

The significance of ‘genuineness’ and ‘honesty’ has always been emphasized in Finnish culture. Marketing has been commonly viewed as unnecessary self-praise and gloating. ‘Image-boosting projects’ have been compared to putting icing on a cake or getting a facelift. These kinds of characterizations underline people’s standpoints on the false nature of marketing. The general opinion is that marketing is used to make a product or a service more appealing than it actually is. In reality, you always get caught sooner or later if you tell a lie. So it is necessary to concentrate on real strong points and highlight them both in design and in marketing.

Of course there are also those – especially young people and young adults – who are interested in marketing and regard creative people working in the field as their role models. However, among common people marketing is more often labelled as sugary self-assertion. Intellectuals, that is, the scientific and cultural circles, are fond of pointing out that building a brand equals selling your soul to a capitalist social order. Often building a brand feels alien to architects and designers too because of its commercial nature. That is why surprisingly many architects and designers do not combine marketing and design in their everyday work.

One can of course ask what is so wrong about the situation. The problem is evident: design culture aiming at copying the personal touch of a designer does not fit well with improving the customer’s business. Designers seldom understand the customer’s or the customer’s customer’s (consumer’s) views and expectations. Attitude problems are also evident. Designers are prone to complaining...
that their customers do not understand the design process. They think that customers should be trained in this respect. This claim about customers’ lacking expertise is of course true, but an even bigger problem is that the designers themselves do not understand business profoundly enough. Also the value chains and production processes are unfamiliar to surprisingly many designers.

Design is not well known among the public. When I asked my friends (many of them are well-educated and modern people) what a designer does, they answered, “doesn’t a designer design cups?” or, in a more enlightened way, “an industrial designer creates meanings with a form.” These answers are united by an emphasis on industrial designing. This is because public opinion is that design is more or less synonymous with industrial design. Naturally this is not true. Design also includes graphic design or clothes design, for example. In other words, industrial designers have succeeded best in branding their profession.

Belittling visualisation is common and is partly related to the above-mentioned aspects of our cultural heritage. Visuality has at best been seen merely as a pleasant way to adore actual content. This phenomenon is especially strong in Finland, even though it is present globally. If we examine book publishing, for instance, it is easy to notice the subordinate status of outward appearance to the importance of the text. In reality, visuality is a central part of the content – whether this is the intention or not. With visuality, it is possible to support the emphases in the text – or visuality may have an interesting dialogue with the text, so that the text and the appearance are not even meant to go hand-in-hand.

As far as service design is concerned, the cultural heritage described above and professional traditions effectively prevent people from seeing service environments and the design of communication as an important part of content. On top of that, the still strong opposition to commercialism prevents a significant number of designers from noticing how service design could be linked to business.

The renowned Hilary Cottam, who has been honoured with the ‘Designer of the Year’ award in the UK, says that, for the first time, the design world can be seen as being divided into traditionalists and transformers. Cottam supervises the RED group established by the British Design Council. RED represents the final stage of the evolution of competence of design: educated, interdisciplinary and socially enlightened activity. RED projects that a significant shift in a paradigm is in process: the birth of a whole new discipline. The newborn, whose delivery they have been assisting in, is called transformation design (RED PAPER02 – Transformation Design, 2007).

The essential research topic of the CID working group operating under the auspices of the Finland Futures Research Centre (Turku School of Economics) is the evolution of competence in design, communication, marketing, marketing communication, digital communication and related technologies and sciences. The idea is to find out what kind of new competences have been created in the interfaces between professions, and how interdisciplinary the cooperation is between the different areas of competence.

Utilizing various methods of anticipation, CID gathers information on trends in changes in competences and weak signals. According to a preliminary analysis, a changing trend in the requirements of professional competence can be identified as a media-saturation of our environments and an increase in “intelligence”. The increased complexity of competence and conceptualisation can also be seen as a prominent megatrend.
In regard to design, the conceptualisation and increasing complexity of work is obvious. The amount of manual work and artistic activity decreases as the proportion of concept design and strategic development requiring more versatile know-how increases.

The theme of this article, service design, is essentially intertwined with conceptualisation and increasing complexity. In the evolution of competence, there is a gradual shift from product design to service design. This change can also be understood through the changes apparent in social structures. The service sector is in a state of dynamic growth in Europe.

What does increasing complexity mean in practice?

**First of all**, it means more interdisciplinary development work and networked cooperation. In the evolution of competence, for instance, a graphic designer used to work almost alone, and at best with one project manager and authors of text. Nowadays a graphic designer may be part of a team that includes representatives of new professions such as information architect (someone who organizes information into different media), interface designer, interaction designer, soundscape designer, animator, database designer, coder and multimedia copywriter, to name but a few.

**Second**, it means increasing scientific viewpoints in design processes. For example, since the 1950s, advertising agencies have used a method where art director and copywriter work are carried out in tandem. Recently advertising agencies have awoken to the use of professionals from different fields, especially in analysis stages prior to the actual designing. Sociologists, psychologists, and, from the natural sciences, brain researchers, for example, have all participated in developing brands. The concept of linking scientific expertise to advertising is not new per se, as Claude Hopkins wrote about it in his book ‘Scientific Advertising’ as early as 1923. However, Hopkins uses quite a free definition of what is ‘scientific’ – at times it is based on information derived from experiments, and at times it is based on his own deductions. Hopkins believed that no university-educated person could write an advertisement text that was meant to be read by millions. Perhaps this was because Hopkins did not have higher education. To this day, some of his comments are not only amusing but also to the point, “ad writers abandon their parts. They forget they are salespeople and try to be performers. Instead of sales, they seek applause.” Hopkins invented test marketing, the study of the effectiveness of text, and sending free samples to customers. He was also the first to offer real pre-purchase benefits. From the point of view of service design, it is interesting that Hopkins also wrote as early as in 1923, “remember the people you address are selfish as we all are. They care nothing about your interests or your profit. They seek service for themselves. Ignoring this fact is a common mistake and costly mistake in advertising.”

A prominent trend in recent years with regard to design has been that interaction design has become more prevalent.
Interaction design has been derived from developing graphic user interface (GUI). Interaction design concerns the interaction between a digital device and an individual user. In the evolution of competence, the increasing complexity of design is very tightly linked to improved consideration of potential users in the design process. The objective of interaction design is improved usability and creating experiences. In optimal cases, usability designers can rely on usability researchers from different fields, from engineers to sociologists and from psychologists to doctors. Furthermore, it must be noted that usability design is not restricted only to internet or mobile services and their digital devices; it may be part of the planning of any human system (organisation, environment, etc).

Nowadays, acquiring scientific knowledge is notably interdisciplinary. It is possible to gather information by anticipatory studies, for example, from socio-economical and socio-technological turning points, changes in values and attitudes, or in consumer groups’ lifestyles, and so forth. Traditional statistical research methods are now being challenged by various qualitative research methods that may be based on deep probing interviews, for instance.

The CID working group from the Finland Futures Research Centre was asked what an individual designer should read and what kind of development work he/she should follow. It looks as if it would be wise to open-mindedly go through articles, publications and discussions from other professional fields that touch on one’s own. Some interesting publications could be mentioned here to serve as examples so that the reader can get a glimpse of the great variety of the selection. Of publications I have read most recently, professionally the most interesting have been, for instance, ‘The Wisdom of Crowds’ by James Surowieck, ‘Critical Mass. How one thing leads to another’ by Philip Ball, ‘It’s Alive: the Coming Convergence of Information, Biology, and Business’ by Christopher Meyer and Stan Davis, and ‘Shadows of the Mind. A Search for the Missing Science of Consciousness’ by Roger Penrose. At times, you can also find astonishing publications from closely related areas: ‘The Tomorrow People. Future Consumers and How to Read Them Today’ by Martin Raymond, or ‘Blink. The Power of Thinking without Thinking’ by Malcom Gladwell. Sometimes it is nice to read something completely different. Michio Kaiku, who is trying to determine “the theory of everything”, displays possible alternative universes in his book ‘Parallel Worlds – the science of alternative universes and our future in the cosmos’. I hold it as a kind of a professional ideal to aspire to scholarship and education. Unlike what used to be the trend among design professionals, current design processes require a simultaneous increase in erudition and practical experience (a few years ago it was still common for professionals to think that a person teaching in a university, for instance, was teaching because they lacked practical skills).

A third example of increased complexity is the technologization that profoundly affects the basis of professional competence and development needs. Our environment is becoming more media-saturated. This means that in the near future, walls, ceilings, floors, sofas and tables will turn into forms of media. An example of this development is Lumalive by Philips (www.lumalive.com). An innovation based on LED technology will enable the conveying of
information, marketing and the use of moving pictures on T-shirts or even sofas.

Our environment is also becoming “smarter”. Recently there has been much discussion on the ubiquitous society. Finland is awakening a little late to this, although even people in decision-making roles foresaw this development. Japan and South Korea are actually the pioneering countries in ubiquity.

Those who want to improve professional skills are undoubtedly interested in hearing what skills would be useful in the immediate future in order to cope in the re-evolving fields of competence. What computer programs and technologies will be essential in designing more and more media-saturated environments? Which professions will take part in designing these smart, media-saturated and adjustable environments? These are questions that deserve more discussion. It seems that faster professions beat the slower ones to the punch. For now, only media artists have been paying close attention to previously mentioned theses, whereas, among design and marketing communication professionals, the potential of mediated environments is not yet understood on a large scale.

A good example of multiprofessionalism, multidisciplinarity and technologization is the Ambience Design Project by the CID group. The participants in the first stage of this TEKES (Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation)-funded project were the Decode Unit of the BIT Research Centre at Helsinki University of Technology, the School of Design at the University of Art and Design Helsinki, the Psychology of Digital Life group from the Department of Psychology at the University of Helsinki, and the CID group from the Finland Futures Research Centre at the Turku School of Economics. The Department of Public Health at the University of Helsinki, the Sibelius Academy, and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland have been invited to join the next phase. The basic idea of the project has been to gather a cross-disciplinary and multiprofessional working group for the systematic development of competence. The working group should do both practical design work as well as combine scientific information and skills within the design process.

Its aim is to form a new design paradigm, in which a culture that emphasizes aesthetics and the personal touch of a designer will move to an activity that combines more varied competence. During the first phase of the project, two multisensory spaces were designed and constructed at the usability laboratory of the Helsinki University of Technology: soothing and stimulating. Then, using medical and psychological research methods, the functionality of the soothing and stimulating space was evaluated based on data gathered from test subjects. The idea is to develop design competence across disciplines and professions, similar to how scientific knowledge is being accumulated, so that soothing spaces, for example, could from now on be designed based on existing research data derived from earlier test projects. The project is made more challenging because of the level of required adjustability. According to the well-grounded views of the project group, media-saturated spaces that increase wellbeing should be adjustable in nature. In the Ambience Design Project, right from the start, the aim has been to develop design competence that enables (with a mobile phone or some other digital device) the adjustment of ambience and communicative identity according to the needs of a certain person, group or situation. Because of this, media-saturated and adjustable environment requires more profound knowledge from design groups of technologies, programs and interfaces. Ambience design represents more complex interaction design.

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Fourth, besides visually heavy design, culture is now developing a multiprofessional design genre that promotes multisensory perception. This line of development means that other senses are being welcomed back on stage. Information and experiences of different senses have traditionally been conveyed by theatre, circus and other such events. In religious experiences and within religious institutions, incense and other sensory stimuli have been in use for a long time. The shows of Cirque du Soleil are a good example of the rebirth of multisensorism. In September 2007, their production Delirium was seen in Finland too. Cirque de Soleil stimulates all the senses. This
is evident in little details, all the way from lighting design to soundscape. The shows also mirror the previously mentioned trend: combining the competence of different professions and genres (theatre, circus, rock concerts, etc). In the field of marketing communication, multisensorism only really became an issue after the publishing of the book ‘Brand Sense’ by Martin Linstrom in 2005. This book is about 5D marketing, a method introduced by Linstrom.

In the Ambience Design project, the design teams develop smell or voice titles, for instance. The aim is to design different soundscapes for the needs of adjustable spaces. It is possible also to recognize a title designed for an organisation from these soundscapes, which can also take several forms and styles. It is notable that we are not talking about title melody but more sonic wallpaper-type ambient music – a sort of background noise that can be modified according to changing needs. This same logic can be taken to smellscape and designing smell titles. The idea is that, in the future, a company may be recognized solely by its title smell, title sound, or even by the form language that serves as its title. It is just as likely that an organisation might have a title for all senses.

Service design is already also being promoted from a perspective of sensory ergonomics. For several years now, Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences has been organising an annual contest on sensory ergonomics, Modo (www.kyamk.fi/modo).

Fifth, complexity is increased by the growing potential for personal customization. ‘Do your own brand’ thinking can be seen especially in the communication cultures of youth groups. In the near future, the customer will be even more tightly linked to design processes. In the most radical scenario, the customer may be solely responsible for designing a product, service, or even the communicative identity of a brand. For example, a media-saturated smart home may become a place where communicative identity may be constantly adjusted to suit specific needs.

Let us take a few examples from the present. The personal ring tone of a mobile phone is a classic example of personal customization. In Finland, the service contents of Sonera operator may be tailored to suit an individual customer’s needs. But this is just the beginning.
The d2c (dare to care) project ordered by the Finnish Red Cross is a good example of multi-faceted communicative identity. The name ‘d2c’ can be seen as a logo in numerous different visual genres. The project tried to communicate to different youth groups in their own style. The changing logo of the MTV3 TV channel is another example of a constantly adjusting identity.

Dakota Jackson, an interior designer who designed Dumb Box in SoHo, New York, shuffled the gallery, store, stage and public spaces in a whole new way. Making a purchase in the store has become an interactive cultural event, as it is possible – in addition to buying furniture – to witness designers working via intranet and to participate in the design process by commenting on it. Fashion and music is strongly present, but buying as a cultural and interactive experience has been achieved through a new kind of entity.

Building one’s own brand is an upcoming trend. Some people are even talking about the death of brands, but that kind of a notion holds a conceptual error. The pre-made “mass brand” is evolving into the building of a personal brand for an individual with the aid of mass brands that have turned into auxiliary brands. In this context, it is important to see that building brands takes place even when it is not done consciously.

Making a purchase becomes a personal experience. It is quickly becoming popular in Europe for a customer to purchase tailor-made laser-cut suits. Tom Ford from Gucci has announced that the company will invest in customizing clothing according to customer needs and wishes. The dictatorship of the designers and the seasons of the fashion world may be overrun by more democratic design.

There are many examples of tailoring and customizing. One of the research lines of the CID Research Group & Labin could actually be called everyday printing or the culture of printing. For some time now, in industrial design, it has been possible to print prototypes. It is also common in industry to utilize fast milling machines that manufacture (out of plastic or ceramics) three-dimensional objects. Now the possibilities of printing are spreading to cover other areas and in future even to reach the everyday lives of people.

In the field of medicine, there are now printers that can print out bones. If your jaw bone has been damaged, never fear - just print out a new one (printing better bones, McGill University). It sounds futuristic, but it is gradually starting to become common practice.

Adapted printers are also in use elsewhere. Homaru Cantu’s restaurant, Moto, in Chicago, is famous for its molecule gastronomy and printable food. Cantu prints edible pictures with a Canon i560 inkjet printer. Cantu predicts that, in future, people will have 2D and 3D printers at home for printing food. Cantu’s restaurant is futuristic in other aspects too; he uses lasers and industrial substances with which it is possible quickly to freeze hot food, and he may reshape dishes into surprising new forms. A portrait of Salvador Dali hangs on the wall of the restaurant with the quotation: “The only difference between a madman and me is that I am not mad.”

The new technologies in printing will change the everyday lives of people in many ways. Printing technologies enable customization; individuals may very well in the near future be able to print their own chair based on their own ideas. Similar ideas are being developed all around the globe. For instance, the ambience design project previously described is linked to customizable, smart and media-saturated environments. The objective is that people will find it increasingly easy to create and adjust their surroundings according to their needs. This line of development not only applies to media-saturated environments, but also to products, services, and, increasingly, to an ever greater portion of the communication of companies with their customers (such as extranet that customers may use to customize visually and communicatively according to their personal preferences). In the foreseeable future a company’s Brand Engine may produce various transforming communicative identities based on changing requirements.

Sciences, technologies and new instruments, methods and media are penetrating the working processes of professionals. It would now be useful to analyse and interpret the evolution of competence, so that all parties planning education could rely on up-to-date information.

Sixth, the increasing complexity can also be easily seen in conceptionalization. Within design, communication, marketing communi-
cation and digital communication, all kinds of strategy work have become more common. For years, advertising agencies have hired planners and strategy managers. Strategic development has also gained popularity in design, although this kind of expertise is still rare. In advertising and design agencies, a central idea has been that, through strategic competence, it is possible to reach executives in customer companies, whilst previously contacts were restricted to product, communication and marketing managers. Recently, ‘brand manager’ as a title has become more prevalent in customer companies. Some companies have even hired design managers too.

In developing strategy level competence, the emphasis should be on building a brand: linking design and marketing communication more broadly to developing business. There is some evidence that the significance of foresight is increasing. Active and constant anticipation promotes the dynamic development of organisations’ competitiveness and competence. The tools and methods of anticipation have been improved by future research communities and individual futurists.

**Seventh**, the increasing complexity is enhanced by the accelerated rhythm of life and work. There are several reasons for this. One of the most crucial ones is the option to move rapidly from one place to another. Television, internet and mobile communication devices have had an even bigger impact on this acceleration. Today people want services that are tailor-made for them, in the right place and right situation. This development enormously increases the difficulty of design work. On the other hand, for every action there is an opposite reaction. *Slow City* and *Slow Food* philosophy has gained global favour. Finland has excellent natural conditions for slowing down and pursuing tranquillity, if this were to be really understood.

**Eighth**, the increasing complexity means that there is a growing need for generalists. We need professionals with broad expertise. Providing a general overview is not easy. In overviews and generalisations lies a danger of oversimplifying, as not all themes or stand-
points can be included. On the other hand, broad understanding and vision is needed to bring order to the chaotic information flow, which is all the more difficult to decipher.

Recently there has been discussion on the importance of having renaissance people in all fields. We need professionals who understand the big picture and relations between issues. A book by Frans Johansson, ‘The Medici Effect – Breakthrough Insights at the Intersection of Ideas, Concepts, and Cultures’, is interesting in this respect. Johansson claims that “breakthrough ideas most often occur when we bring concepts from one field into a new, unfamiliar territory”. At this intersection, established ideas collide and are combined with concepts from other fields, disciplines and cultures, and cause an eruption of entirely new ideas. The Medici Effect shows us how we may reach the intersection and transform the ideas we get there into ground-breaking innovations.

Understanding the whole is needed since currently it is evident that new kinds of fusion of competences are taking place, totally new competences are being born and new types of professionals are becoming connected in networks. The situation is intriguing from the standpoint of developing competences.

In the end, natural selection will ensure that only the most persistent and able professionals will endure.

Towards Service Design

Discussions on the evolution of competence turn easily towards service design, because it is absolutely one of the evolutionary extensions of product design.

Only a few people know what service design consists of. The concept itself is ambiguous enough to arouse interest. On a Finnish website servicedesign.fi the concept is defined as follows:

‘Service design is designing experiences happening in time and space, which reach people through different touch-points.’ The original definition comes from servicedesign.org website: ‘Service
design: design for experiences that reach people through many different touch-points, and that happen over time.’

The Finnish translation, which was back-translated for this article, is slightly incorrect. The Finnish definition has a conceptual error. People’s images or experiences are not open for designing. The brand article of this book states the following: ‘image is a conception, which a brand’s target and interest groups and the general public have of the brand. Image is an ever changing conceptual collage of mental pictures the general public have of the brand evoked by communication, design and marketing and by rumours, gossip and other data and experiences from the information flow, which are difficult to control.’ In the same way an experience is an individual’s personal and complex situation, in which the original messages are being filtered through individual history, values, attitudes and previous experiences. Thus, we can design the service environment and all service related communication, but no the actual human experiences or conceptions.

Gillian and Bill Hollins’ book ‘Total Design. Managing the Design Process in the Service Sector’ has a definition which is rather more apt: ‘Service design can be both tangible and intangible. It can involve artefacts and other things including communication, environment and behaviours. Whichever form it takes it must be consistent, easy to use and have strategic alliance.’ (Hollins & Hollins 1991).

What then really is service design? The procedures and professional expertise in service design are still in their infancy, even internationally, so opinions on service design can vary a great deal. We can, however, present our educated views on what sort of content service design will emerge with during the next few years. Looking from this standpoint:

Service design is **designing service related communication**. The word ‘communication’ is understood here in its broadest possible form.

**Service design consists of:**

a) Designing service environment related communication (communication with several of the senses)  
b) Designing service process related communication (web pages, brochures and other marketing and communications material)  
c) Developing the communication of service personnel (personal communication skills, dressing etc.)

Service design is part of **developing an organisational brand** and/or **service brand**. Co-branding processes are also part of service design. In them, all **service related partnerships are linked communicatively together**.

The broader standpoint of service design is also related to the **notion of design** in the word ‘design’ in English. With that in mind, we can combine service design with an even more holistic entity of competence. We can thus combine service design professional competence with value-chain analysis and design, multidisciplinary
strategic planning and systematic foresight procedure. For me, it is essential that combining service design with \textit{service quality development and personalized service happens in a way that ensures that individuals receive their tailored services at the right place at the right time}. In developing service design competence, it is vital to include in the project multidisciplinary \textit{scientific and technological competence}. Widening the standpoint means transferring from visual communication and design culture to service design, which better \textit{takes into account the many senses of human beings}.

Service design should also relate to \textit{innovation processes} and service design competence should be linked more to \textit{innovative environments}.

There are many types of innovation and new types are constantly emerging: product innovation, service innovation, process innovation, social innovation, business model innovation, platform innovation, application innovation and so forth. The notion of innovation is now broader and more varied than before and at the same time competence, has developed in innovation environments, innovation systems and in innovation processes. Multidisciplinary brand building and service design competence is needed structurally as well as for innovation environments and innovation systems. Every type of innovation needs its own approach.

An innovation can also be a mixture of different innovation types. A service innovation could be a process innovation or a social innovation. One of the most interesting innovations is a social innovation, an innovation which can mean new modes of cooperation, networks or new business models. The number of social innovations will increase because our operation environments are becoming more and more networked.

Service innovations or social innovations have traditionally been difficult from a design standpoint, due to their immaterial nature.

One last observation concerning service design - in reality, there is no single canonized standpoint, way, dogma or procedure for service design. You can receive brilliant results using numerous routes. From the viewpoint of the evolution of competence the most important thing is that the diversity of competence culture grows. The more service design is developed from different standpoints and bases, the more it enriches the competence arising from service design.

\textbf{Service Design in Regard to Quality Development}

What is good design? Aestheticism has traditionally ruled quality assessment. Various beauty contests have been popular in industrial design, graphic design, architecture and even in marketing communication. The Association of Professional Graphic Designers in Finland, Grafia’s \textit{‘The Best of the Year’} competition is an example of these traditional beauty contests. Most contests and award ceremonies arranged in design circles have always mainly assessed aesthetic quality and whether the ideas have been brought out in an interesting or distinct way.

There are, however, groups of experts, who think highly of measuring efficiency. In marketing communication in particular, measuring efficiency has become important (cf. Claude Hopkin’s times) – whether it is measuring ROI or the commercial value of a brand. Effie is the world largest and most respected contest in measuring the efficiency of marketing communication. The professional operations of today often involve complex analysing systems with statistical and qualitative methods.

As a word, ‘quality’ has gathered extra weight, at least in Finland. Various quality certificates (ISO 9000 and others) have almost devoured the whole word. Laatukeskus, Finland Excellence, which supports the independent development of operations and sustainable competitiveness by Finnish organizations, has gained a virtual monopoly over the word ‘quality’.

Finland Excellence sees quality through the traditional benchmarking principle: ‘competitive Finland is composed of an efficient infrastructure supporting industries and organizations with a mature performance level. Organizations’ and communities’ perform-
ance and competitiveness is extensively affected by how long and systematically they have developed their operations.

Based on this, organizations can be divided into four groups: beginners / still passive, active developers (most of the businesses and communities belong to this group), branch tops and world-class organizations. The operational model of Finland Excellence is also based on this division.’ (Source: laatukeskus.fi, mostly in Finnish)

The standpoint of Finland Excellence (various quality systems and competence related to them) and its development model is very familiar in Finland. If you were inclined to be critical, you could say that, in a nutshell, the culture of development is finding out what others are doing to succeed and then copying them. The most common problem for Finns is copying others and being timid in their actions.

In Japan, the culture of constant development has its own name: kaizen. As far as services are concerned, the logic of constant development is no longer sufficient. The cycles of development have thus narrowed to such an extent (quarterly company reporting, fast product development) that we need to develop completely new standpoints and ideas. Quality should be measured by the capacity to innovate completely new services, while measuring the success of these services in the markets. From this angle, service design has more than enough challenge. Service design competence should be linked to innovation processes as part of brand building and other, broader development.

The image above shows an interesting working and process model, where diverse and multidimensional development is already begun at the idea phase. Right from the start, innovators or developers of new services and designers need a structured way to advance and the help of experts from various fields.

Following the process described earlier and using experts in various fields, there is naturally a need of financing or initial capital. The basic idea is to present to the financier or financiers a carefully prepared idea, concept or a prototype of an invention (a precursor of service innovation) already branded.

Ideas should already be confidentially tested and developed before moving into the invention phase. A solution to this is an idea clinic, where experts from various fields evaluate the ideas together with their inventor or brainstorming team. It is not only a feedback system, but also a development tool, which enables idea and concept analysis. On the one hand, the evaluation is based on information on what is presently happening at the customer interface and in the operating environment (see p. 52, foresight procedure), and, on the other hand, evaluation in the idea clinic is based on the experiences and insight of the resident experts. The model in the image means that ideas, inventions and innovations are being tested
Ethical and ecological consumption is growing fast. FT2N is a new Finnish brand combining Fair Trade, environmentalism, practicality and design.

and analysed at every phase of the innovation process in relation to the needs of potential customers, the standpoints of interest groups, usability and image factors. Conceptualizing, productization and strategic standpoints are also constant companions. Brand building (service design, communications, and marketing) begins as early as the idea phase, unlike in the traditional value chain in which design, marketing, communications and sales are brought in only at the end of the process.

Finally, I must emphasize the most central standpoint in developing services. James P. Womack’s and Daniel T. Jones’ article (on conceptual innovations) Lean Consumption (Harvard Business Review, March-April 2005) is pithy. Womack’s and Jones’ principles are:

1. Solve the customer’s problem completely by insuring that all goods and services work, and work together.
2. Don’t waste the customer’s time.
3. Provide exactly what the customer wants.
4. Provide what’s wanted exactly where it’s wanted.
5. Provide what’s wanted where it’s wanted exactly when it’s wanted.
6. Continually aggregate solutions to reduce the customer’s time and hassle.

Another internationally used standpoint on developing service quality originates from V. A. Zeitham’s, A. Parasurama’s and L. L.
Berry’s book *Delivering Service Quality: Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations* (1990). The name of the five dimensional evaluation method is RATER (the common reference to the five key dimensions of service quality as defined in the SERVQUAL method for measuring service quality).

**RATER:**
*Reliability.* Ability to perform the service dependably and accurately.
*Assurance.* Employees’ knowledge and courtesy and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
*Tangibles.* Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials.
*Empathy.* Caring, individualized attention given to customers.
*Responsiveness.* Willingness to help customers, provide prompt service and solve problems. (Utilizing feedback).

Quality development means that businesses systematically develop various quality systems, which enables the high level standardization of the service (uniformity). The newest requirement in developing great services is innovating entirely new services with contrast and uniqueness.

**Similar Difference**

I shall continue with the latter thought. If we were to describe only one aim for service design, it would be the creation of imposing uniqueness! Nothing is more annoying than services and products, which are similar everywhere. We need cultural diversity, even in Finland. Everybody expects positive surprises, but most service providers are unable to supply them.

From the philosophical side, the fact remains that most of us want to be different, but end up in similarity. Each of us is attached to several group identities, whether it is a national identity, a work identity or perhaps a club identity. Thus, we are often loyal to our backgrounds. Our personal values, attitudes and beliefs and those of our background community have an effect on how unique we dare to be.

'Cosmocrat' is an interesting concept from the standpoint of differentiation. It is a word coined by John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge in their book *Future Perfect: The Challenge and Hidden Promise of Globalization* (2000) to describe individuals who are amongst the global elite. The authors claim there are 20 million cosmocrats worldwide, of whom 40% live in the U.S. Usually they are the top executives of multinationals like GE or McKinsey and Company, a leading management consulting firm. On the other hand, they are entrepreneurs who take advantage of globalism to start new companies. Cosmocrats (or mediocrats) live a hyper mobile life. They value good-looking, easily used and serviced products and a continuous link to information and contacts wherever in the world they happen to be. Cosmocrats have a weak national identity. They are the new elite, which for a good reason can be called both cosmopolitan and aristocratic.

Upon closer inspection, the writers seem to note that cosmocrats dress alike and talk alike. This discovery is a direct repercussion from talk of the need and importance of cultural diversity. It appears that global business culture favours cultural uniformity (language, dress, customs etc.) in the name of efficiency and objectivity. Most marketing and communication by businesses is also characterized by caution and blue-grey surfaces, similar to picture bank photographs with artificial vividness.

Media researcher, Sam Inkinen, analysed this subject exceptionally well in his article: ‘Homo Creativus: observations on various contemporary concepts and the mystery of creativity’. The article begins the book *Minne matka, luova talous?* (*Quo vadis, Creative Economy?)* (2006). Inkinen writes: ‘For instance, an article in the *Financial Times* discussed the position of creative and thus very atypical people in organizations. The discrepancy between facades and actual reality is obvious. Both small and larger businesses speak highly of ‘thinking out of the box’, and how it is a goal we all strive for and a prerequisite for success. In practice, however, the situation is that if someone dares to think independently without following certain schemes, models and preconditions, the results are not pleasant. Therefore original thinkers and highly intelligent people are usually not the ones who best succeed in practical business life.’
Mediocrity is unfortunately often rewarded. The culture of average and resistance to change are hindrances to proactive development. The essential methods in regard to service design would be various creative follies and other joint sessions, where alternative paths and realities can be envisioned without restrictions.

**Design in Tourism – Path to Future**

The book at hand is based on the Design in Tourism project funded by the EU’s Interreg IIIA programme. The images below show the original service design viewpoints of the project as five circles. Service design should be developed through cultural, historical, social, organizational and physical circles.

The service design co-branding circle model, which came about as a standpoint in addition to the circle model, is shown below. Service design is closely associated with tourism and tourism industry development and especially with multilevel brand building.

In ideal situations, the brands from all circles are developed creatively and systematically. The CID research group has developed a **brand clinic** method, which a multidisciplinary team can use for analytical evaluation of the current status of brands from all circles and their future prospects from the standpoint of foresight. We feel that, at its best, brand building is multidisciplinary and multi-level and that it should be done in cooperation with the other players in the field of tourism.
In increasingly rapidly growing product and service development, it is especially important constantly to predict. It pays to find out what trends and weak signals exist. Some of the data will, however, become almost immediately dated. Foresight is not easy either. The difficulty of foreseeing is the subject of Nassim Nicholas Taleb’s new book ‘The Black Swan. The Impact of the Highly Improbable’ (2007). Taleb suggests that crucial events, such as new radical innovations or crashing markets are impossible to foresee. He likens improbable events, which are disturbing and difficult to foresee to black swans. As complexity grows, the number of these unexpected events grows too.

When all is said and done, future research is just the interpretation of present characteristics, which will probably grow in importance. Foreseeing preferably needs a multidisciplinary workgroup – members with long experience in the field of their study and, of course, methodological competence.

We often talk about ‘gut-feeling.’ When an expert has sufficient experience, it is because he has bathed himself for long enough in silent knowledge to recognize the weak signals of his own field. If we think about wines, we can say that a novice learns first to roughly recognize an excellent wine from an inferior wine. A master, however, can recognize even the most subtle nuances with surprising precision.

Walter Isaacson, who studied Einstein, says in his article in Wired magazine, ‘The World Needs More Rebels Like Einstein’ (2007), that originality and ideas and insight deviating from the mainstream are essential to innovations. Gathering information is not enough. Isaacson quotes the famous Einstein phrase, ‘imagination is more important than knowledge.’ From the standpoint of service design and related innovations, the most important thing is to create such innovation environments that support the development of radically exceptional ideas and concepts.

Epilogue

The editor of Viewpoint magazine, Martin Raymond, puts it excellently in the preface of the latest number (#21: The Future of Retail):

‘Convenience has killed the art of retail and in many cases it is killing our planet. It has also killed many shopkeepers, as malls and shopping centres and big-box retailers force them to close. But in the near future, we believe, this will change. The internet now looks after our basic requirements, so many of us are now turning to the real world once more for experiences that are unique and magical. Big-box brands, with their rambling logistics and ubiquitous footprints, are unable to deliver this need. So the task must fall once more to those with imagination, passion and ability to treat each of us unique and rare being (…). When everything is quicker and easier, the difficult experience will be the most rewarding.’

We need vision and courage. □
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