

The background is black with several colorful squares (orange, pink, yellow) and light blue arrows pointing in various directions, creating a dynamic, abstract layout.

A Guide to Service Blueprinting

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Exhibit I Blueprint for a Corner Shoeshine adapted by permission of Harvard Business Review. (Blueprint for a Corner Shoeshine) From “Designing Services that Deliver” by G. Lynn Shostack, January 1984. Copyright © 2016 by Harvard Business Publishing; all rights reserved.



A Guide to Service Blueprinting

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Welcome to Service Blueprinting

AS THE FOCUS ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE becomes more important, having a good picture of how your service operates in relation to what the customer is trying to do is paramount.

At Adaptive Path, we often refer to service blueprinting as the gateway drug to service design. A service blueprint is one of our quintessential service design tools, and along with experience maps, it's one of the common service design deliverables. It's an accessible tool that brings together various perspectives, silos, and projects in a visualization of how the current service works, or what will need to be in place for a future service vision to be realized. It's easy to learn but challenging to master. You can put one together in an afternoon to quickly move a project team forward. You can also spend weeks, months, and even years changing its scope, adding in more detail, or maintaining the services it documents. As our main focus is service design, we use blueprints on most of our projects, whether we're working on the definition of an entirely new end-to-end service offering or a zoomed-in service moment. We even apply them to better understand internal services and processes. While there certainly are limitations to the tool, we find it best to work within the foundational framework before adding and experimenting. That said, blueprints are evolving. We've seen some interesting adaptations to the traditional format.

In this guide, we'll share the fundamentals of service blueprints: what they are, why you should use them, how to create one, and how to use and maintain it. We'll share best practices and tips that will help you either get started with service blueprints or refine your practice if you've already made a few. Enjoy!

—JAMIN HEGEMAN



SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW

A Look at Service Blueprinting

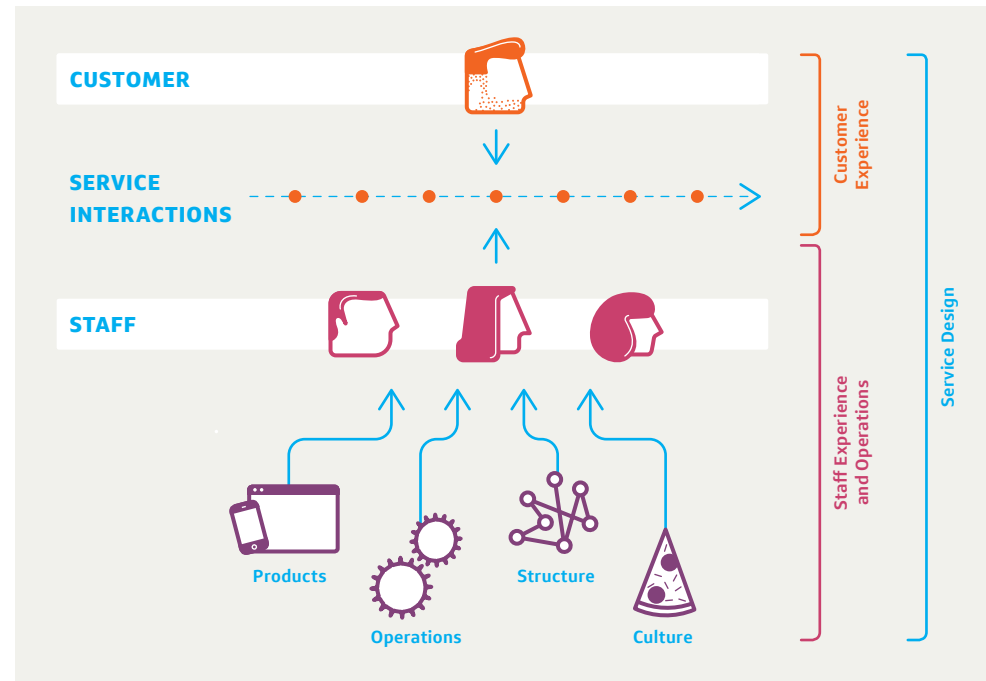
But first, let's
dig into what
service design is...

What is Service Design?

Service design applies design methods and craft to the definition and orchestration of products, communications, and interactions (i.e., service touchpoints), as well as, the operations, values, and structure of an organization. It requires looking not only at the customer experience, but also the business experience.

Service design differs from how many people think of user experience design (UXD). Service design examines value and experience from a multi-user perspective (customer, staff, and business), is largely agnostic to channel and medium, and connects experience delivery to the operations and technology that produce it. Though service design shares many tools and methods with other human-centered design fields, its additional perspectives and approaches help manage the complexity that comes with multiple dimensions of service experiences, such as experiences with multiple digital touchpoints or experiences that cross multiple channels and business silos.

It's also important to remember that service design isn't a new thing. Service providers have been designing services for years, but they haven't always included designers or a human-centered approach in those endeavors.



Core Principles of Service Design



HUMAN-CENTERED

Focuses on the people for which we are designing and extends beyond the customer to include the experience of staff and the business

CO-CREATIVE

Includes stakeholders and customers in the design and delivery of service experiences

ORCHESTRATED

Considers how the various elements and processes of a service organization should be aligned for optimal service delivery

TANGIBLE

Reveals the value and interactions of an intangible service through physical and digital touchpoints that can be seen and experienced

HOLISTIC

Looks toward the end-to-end experience, not just a single moment, service encounter, or experience stage

What is a Service Blueprint?

“Blueprints are the gateway drug to service design.”
—Patrick Quattlebaum

A blueprint is an operational tool that visualizes the components of a service in enough detail to analyze, implement, and maintain it.

Blueprints show the orchestration of people, touchpoints, processes, and technology both frontstage (what customers see) and backstage (what is behind the scenes). They can be used to describe the existing state of a service experience as well as to support defining and implementing new or improved services. While service blueprints resemble approaches to process documentation, they keep the focus on the customer experience while showing how operations deliver that experience.

The activity of service blueprinting creates a communal space where diverse groups—such as design, development, operations, business analysis, and frontline staff—can align on how the pieces for which they are responsible connect to create a greater whole. As a communication tool, the service blueprint highlights dependencies within the organization and provides the foundation for roadmapping and piloting the reinvention or creation of an experience. Through increased collaboration and intentional orchestration across functions, service blueprints increase the odds that an organization can deliver and maintain its envisioned experience for customers and staff.

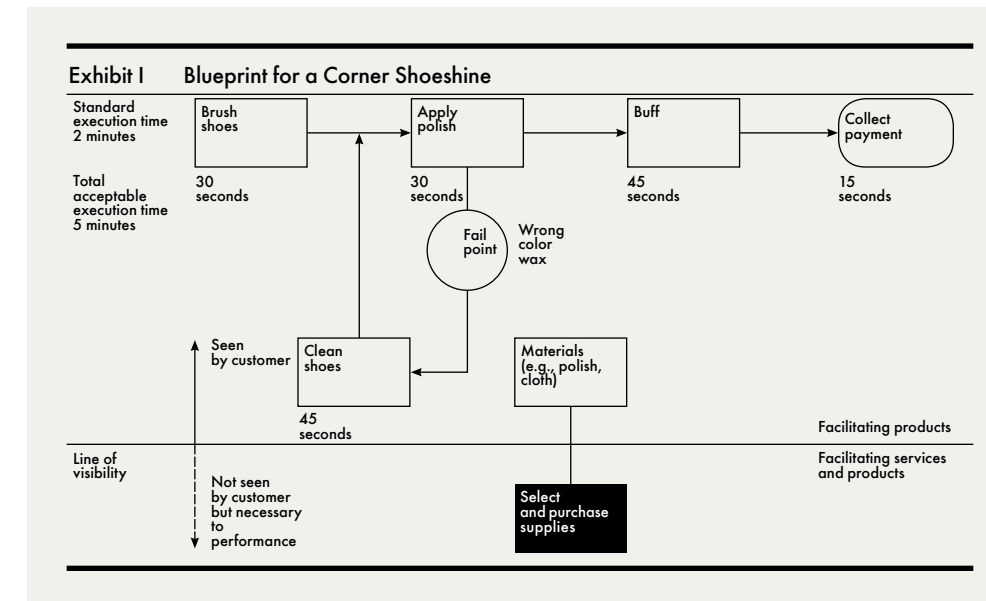


Evolution of the Service Blueprint

Service blueprints aren't new tools. They were originally proposed by Lynn Shostack in her 1984 Harvard Business Review article "Designing Services That Deliver" and have been evolving since. Her approach helped codify service delivery (traditionally viewed as intangible or ephemeral) as something that could be documented, measured, controlled, and systematically improved upon. Over the years, the service blueprint has dramatically evolved. Through the help of notable thought leaders and service innovators (such as Mary Jo Bitner), today's blueprints capture the customer experience while providing enough operational detail to document how a service is delivered. Blueprints capture the operational complexity of services without becoming mired in the detail of other business process modeling methods.

Today, service blueprints continue to evolve both visually and structurally as they're used with increasing frequency and in more diverse contexts.

The service blueprints we create today, although visually and structurally different, contain many of the same elements—time, flow, the line of visibility, actions, and operational components—as Lynn Shostack's original proposal, Exhibit I Blueprint for a Corner Shoeshine.



Adapted by permission of Harvard Business Review. (Blueprint for a Corner Shoeshine) From "Designing Services that Deliver" by G. Lynn Shostack, January 1984. Copyright © 2016 by Harvard Business Publishing; all rights reserved.

Why Use a Service Blueprint

With the explosion of digital products and touchpoints, service experiences are becoming more complex and challenging to orchestrate. Just think of all the ways you can interact with a bank, retailer, or even government now compared to 20 years ago.

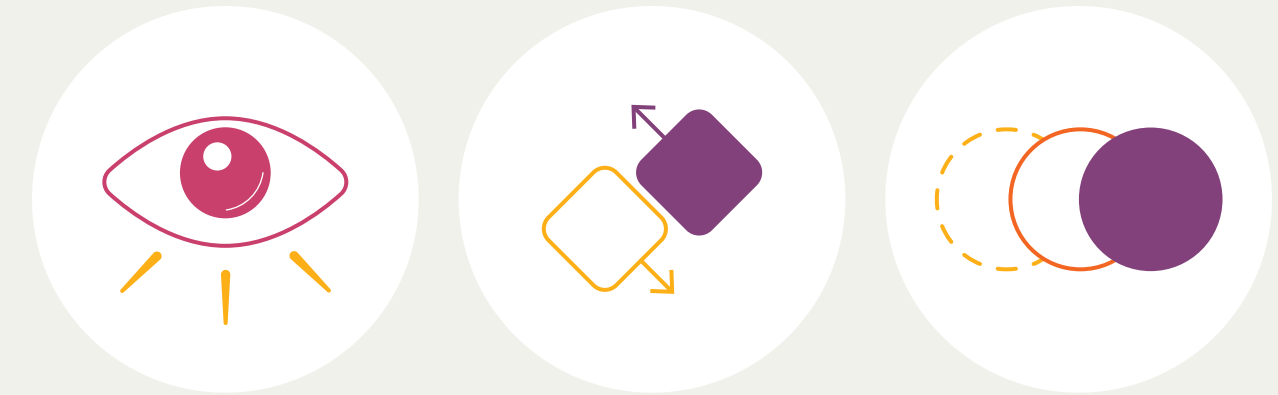
To help you solve for the complexity of today's service experiences and ecosystems, service blueprints help visualize, align, and prototype the components of a service. While blueprints are valuable for many reasons, we think these are the key benefits.

Visualizing service blueprints helps us to understand all the moving parts of a service—their interconnections, dependencies, and breakdowns. Visually communicating this knowledge to collaborators and stakeholders takes what was before an abstract concept and makes it tangible and easier to directly address.

By *aligning* end-to-end (and often cross-silo) perspectives on a service experience, service blueprints help organizations unite around a common understanding of how a service will function. This is particularly valuable when multiple teams, groups, and/or divisions need to come together to deliver on a service vision. Blueprints help ensure that, once built, the pieces of an experience will correctly fit together as intended.

Service blueprinting is also a great process for quickly *prototyping* service delivery approaches at a low level of fidelity. At any stage of the design process, blueprints can be used as canvases to capture insights and to explore business and operational viability for different solutions. They can also be used as scripts to facilitate and visualize customer flow and the architecture of the service experience.

The Value of a Service Blueprint



TO VISUALIZE...

- (Previously) intangible experiences
- Interconnections and dependencies between service components, technology, and operations
- Elements that are necessary for service delivery
- Current-state delivery breakdowns and opportunities
- Potential gaps and service breakdowns that exist in the end-to-end experience

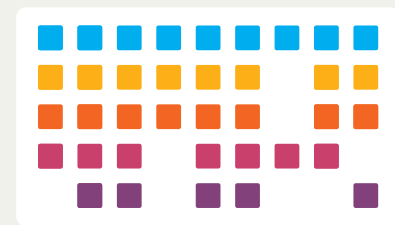
TO ALIGN...

- Multiple perspectives by providing a cross-silo view of how a service will be built and delivered
- Multiple collaborators by using a communal canvas where they can see the larger context of their work
- Understanding of how elements will connect to each other once built by their respective teams

TO PROTOTYPE...

- Common customer flows and interaction points for experience validation
- How multiple touchpoints will need to interconnect and the nature of the connections
- Impact and changes to operational processes necessary to realize an experience innovation
- Operational viability before investing in development

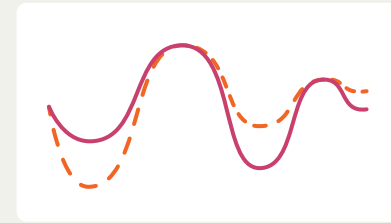
CURRENT-STATE BLUEPRINT



IDEATION



JOURNEY



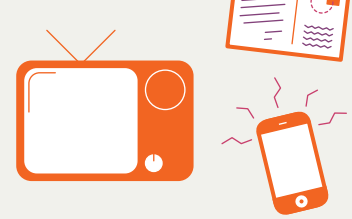
RESEARCH



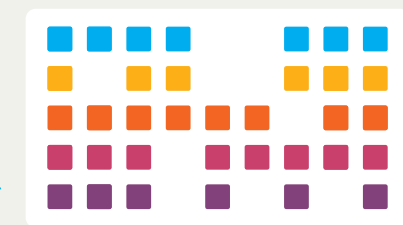
STORYBOARD



TOUCHPOINTS



FUTURE-STATE BLUEPRINT



Blueprinting Current and Future States

Because they focus on capturing the experience and operations of a service, blueprints can be particularly useful near the beginning and end of the design process, though they can be used throughout as needed.

At the beginning of a project, we like to use a current-state blueprint to capture the experience as it's presently delivered. This helps teams align on the current service state, capture observational and organizational knowledge, and identify existing service opportunities and breakdowns. This can be a powerful moment for an organization. Many teams we work with have never had the opportunity to see how what they each create interrelates and comes together to form a larger whole.

Toward the end of the design process, blueprints can be used to visualize the future state of a service. This helps teams communicate more effectively, plan the design of touchpoints, capture operational needs, develop roadmaps, and create planning documents.

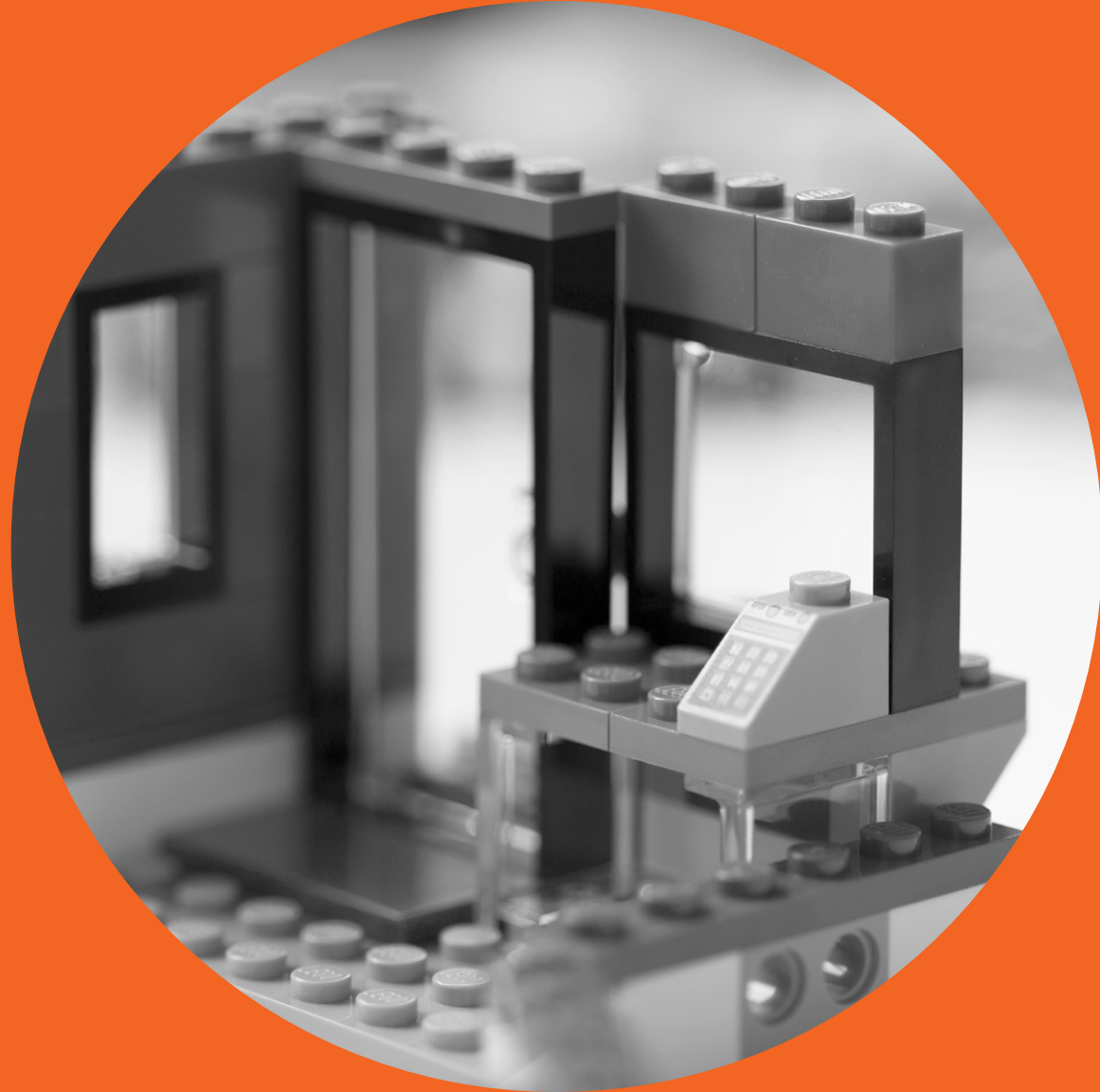
Once a new experience is built, blueprints can help future teams maintain the experience, just as an architectural blueprint helps a building engineer maintain a building.

CURRENT-STATE BENEFITS

- Documentation of existing operational and experience processes
- Identification of service breakdowns and pain points
- Cross-silo understanding of the existing service

FUTURE-STATE BENEFITS

- Communication and documentation of future-state experiences and operations
- Cross-silo coordination and planning of touchpoint creation
- Operational prototyping and development



SECTION TWO: CREATION

How to Make a Service Blueprint

Blowing people's
minds and turbo-
charging experience
orchestration

Frontstage Versus Backstage

“Without the intentional design of backstage systems and operations, the work of navigating them is outsourced to the customer.”
—Kendra L. Shimmell

At the core of service design and service blueprints is the concept of frontstage and backstage. In other words, these are the parts of the service that will be visible or invisible to the customer.

Consider a restaurant, for example. As a customer, there are many frontstage elements of the service that you can see—waiters taking orders, menus, food being delivered, and, of course, eating. But at the same time, there are backstage elements of the service that are hidden from view—chefs cooking, computerized ordering systems, deliveries arriving from food distributors, and so on. It’s this backstage activity and deciding how much to show your customers that can create a sense of magic and delight for your service experience. Think about all the service operations that are constantly working out of sight in services that are known for delighting customers. Amazon and Netflix recommendations offer items tailored to your tastes. Four Seasons hotel staff personalize and gracefully adapt to your every whim. A whole slew of new food delivery services get hot meals into your hands with the tap of a button. You don’t see the hard work and systems that make these services possible. The value these services generate just appears as if by magic, right when you need it.



PRO TIP NO. 1

Many service experience innovations start with a change to the backstage. These operational and process changes can have a substantial effect on both your staff and customer experience.



FRONTSTAGE



BACKSTAGE

The Building Blocks



PRO TIP NO. 2

When creating the elements of a blueprint, we find it helpful to be fairly specific, especially with the touchpoints. Not only does this help preserve clarity, but it helps to make the blueprint a more effective guide in the implementation phase of a project.

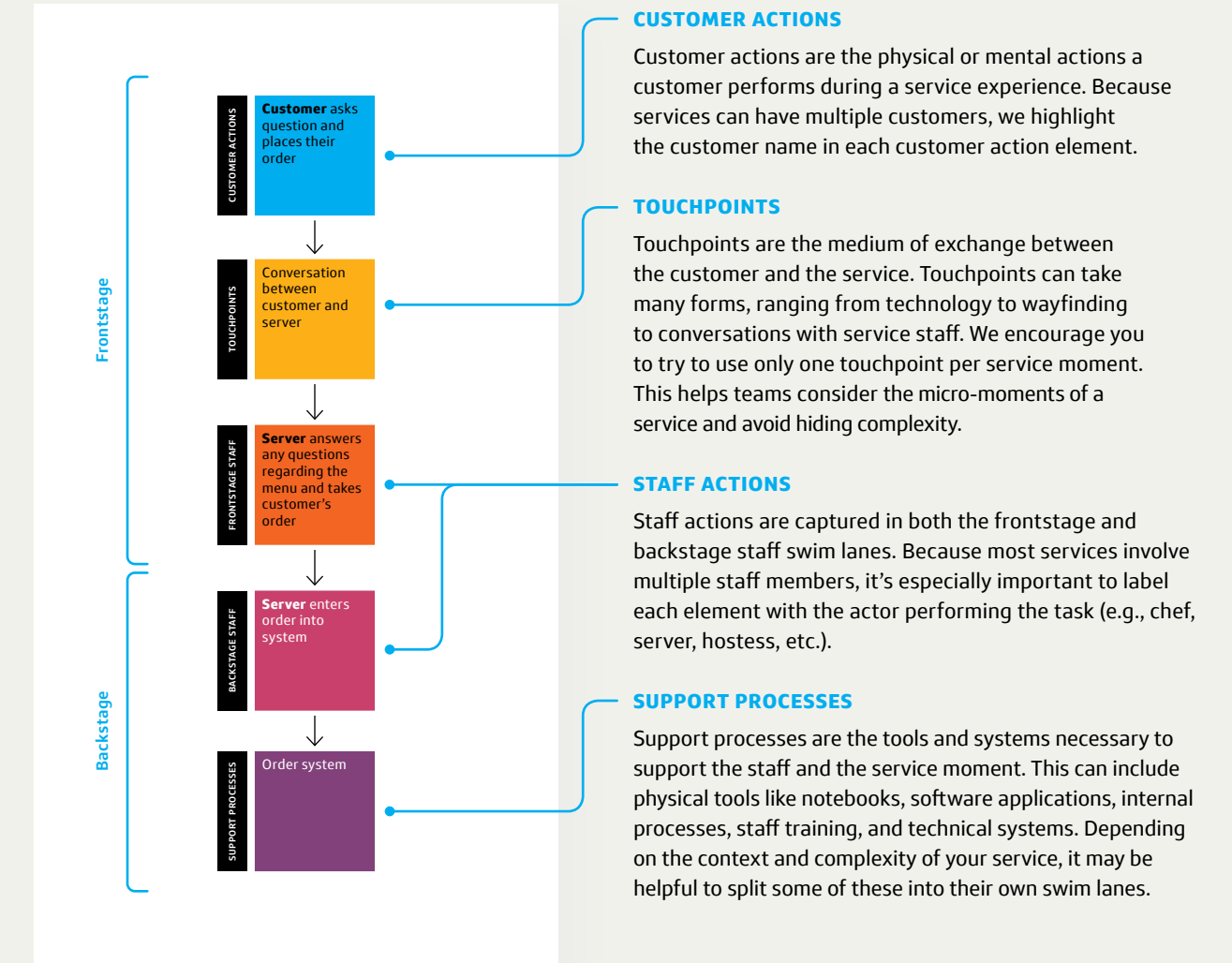
For example, don't just label a touchpoint as "app." Rather, add more detail, like "item selection screen," or "confirmation screen," etc. This way, you can have more informed conversations with partners who will help you build the experience.

Customers and their actions make up the top row, or swim lane, of a blueprint. The reason: we want to keep the focus on what we're asking customers to do and how their experiences will unfold across time. This creates a customer-centered lens through which to understand the intended experience and how it is delivered.

The next two rows show with whom, what, when, and how customers interact with the service. The second swim lane details digital, analog, and intangible touchpoints that trigger or respond to customer actions. Staff roles and actions are then placed in a third row to show customer encounters on the front stage.

The rest of the blueprint describes behind-the-scenes operations. These rows show how people, processes, and technologies make the service experience possible.

Elements of a Service Blueprint



Service Blueprint Structure

TIME

Service blueprints read from left to right, unfolding over time. If your experience contains different time scales, things that take a week versus a minute, these differences in time should be marked. It's easy to lose a sense of time when looking at a blueprint.

EXPERIENCE STAGES

To help give your blueprint structure, stages are used to denote the different experience phases. These stages may connect to your journey map or other organizational knowledge of the end-to-end experience.

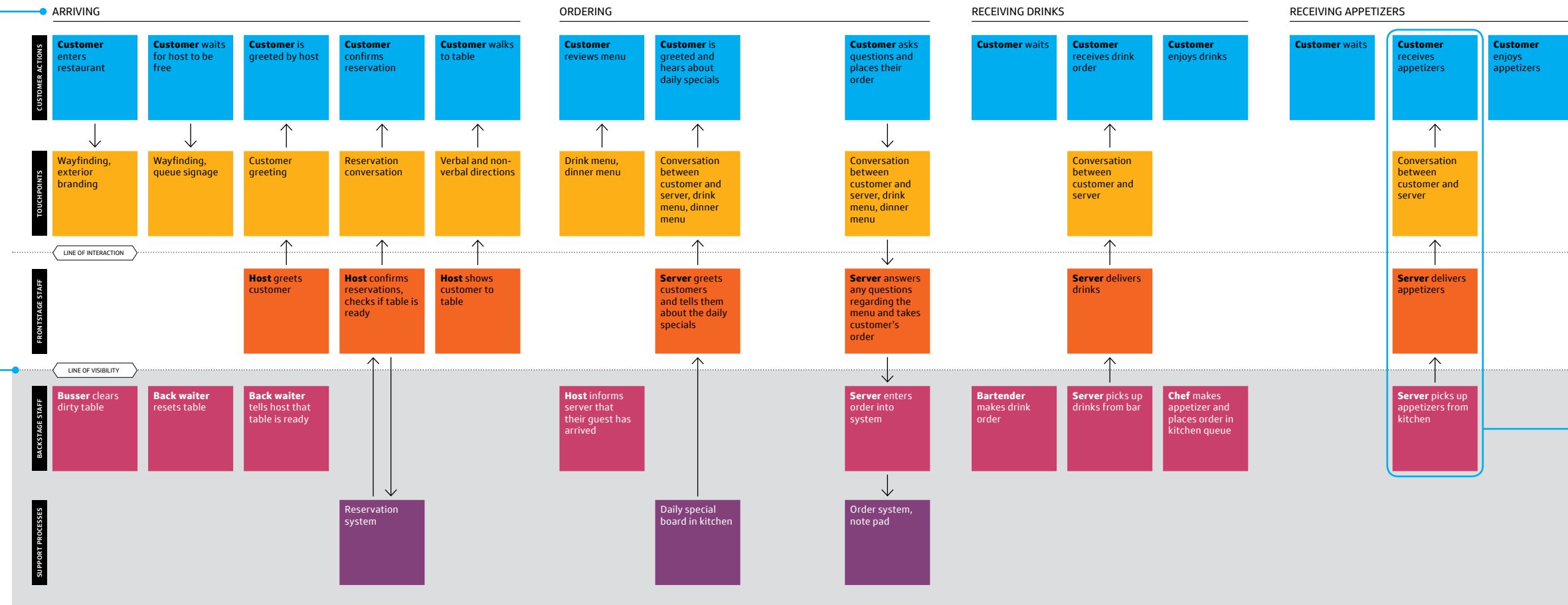
SWIM LANES

At the core of your service blueprint are your swim lanes. These horizontal rows capture and organize all the elements of your service experience.

THE LINE OF VISIBILITY

In service design and on a service blueprint, the division between frontstage and backstage is called the Line of Visibility. The elements you choose to show to your customer (and when) can have a profound impact on the experience.

Restaurant Service Blueprint: Drinks and Appetizers



THE LINE OF INTERACTION

Sometimes it's helpful to draw a line between what customers can and cannot directly interact with. This line is called the Line of Interaction. When blueprinting complex service exchanges with many touchpoints for customer and employee use, it can become difficult to determine which tools are for whom. The Line of Interaction clarifies these distinctions and illustrates this division on the blueprint.

SERVICE MOMENTS

The vertical columns, which represent service moments, encapsulate all service activities happening at a given moment in the service experience, both frontstage and backstage. It's important to map the backstage processes at the moment they start, even if they don't move above the Line of Visibility until later in the experience. For example, a server will be preparing your table before you arrive at a restaurant.

Attendees at UX Week 2015 build a current-state blueprint to help them identify opportunity areas and to better understand the experience they are redesigning.



Collaborating

One of the key benefits of a service blueprint is that it visualizes service experiences across silos. In doing so, a common canvas forms upon which multiple roles within an organization can see themselves and the parts of the experience for which they are responsible. Because of this, and the diverse organizational knowledge needed to construct them, service blueprints require participation across departments.

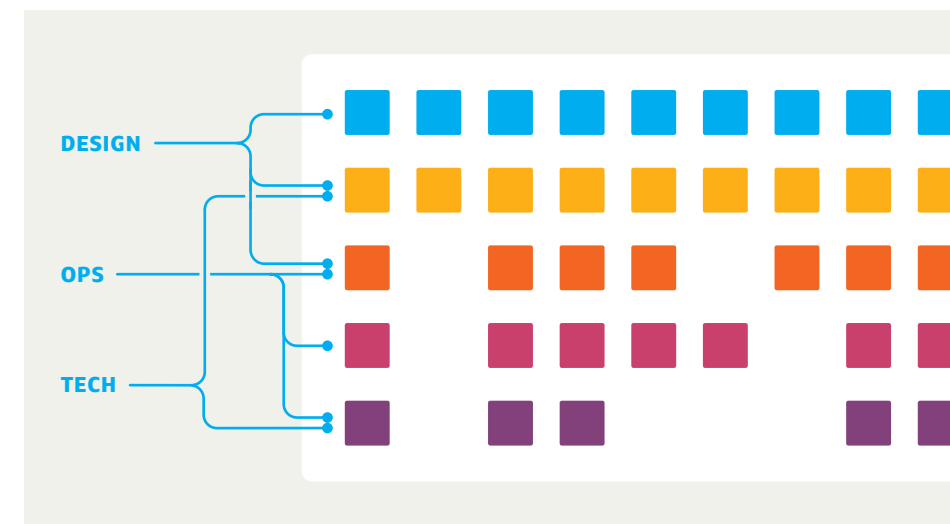
Assemble diverse teams and perspectives when creating a service blueprint. The makeup of this group will differ depending on where in the design process you are using the blueprint. Select collaborators who are knowledgeable about the areas you are blueprinting and the level of zoom in which you're working. We'll talk more about level of zoom on page 34.

Location matters. We find that it's best to bring the team together physically for the creation of the first draft. This is a powerful opportunity within an organization. Rarely do stakeholders get a chance to look across departments and see how their work connects to others. Working together cross-functionally contributes organizational knowledge that helps speed the creation of the first draft. Though we prefer doing this as a group and in person, it's also possible to achieve similar results through remote collaboration with the use of digital tools like Excel, Google Sheets, and RealtimeBoard.



PRO TIP NO. 3

Service blueprints are living documents. As you learn more about how your service works, you should update your blueprint to reflect your current understanding and where opportunities exist to improve the experience and underlying operations.



A cross-disciplinary team works together on a future-state blueprint, looking for potential hurdles before implementation and documenting service moments with outstanding questions regarding the intended experience.



OPERATIONS MANAGER

COMMUNICATION DESIGNER

DESIGN MANAGER

SERVICE DESIGNER

BUSINESS PARTNER

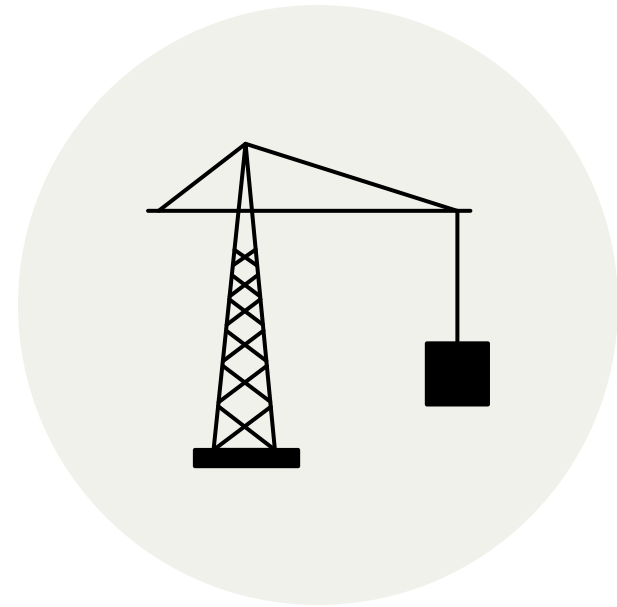
Building a Service Blueprint

“The process you follow should always be in service of the greater context.”

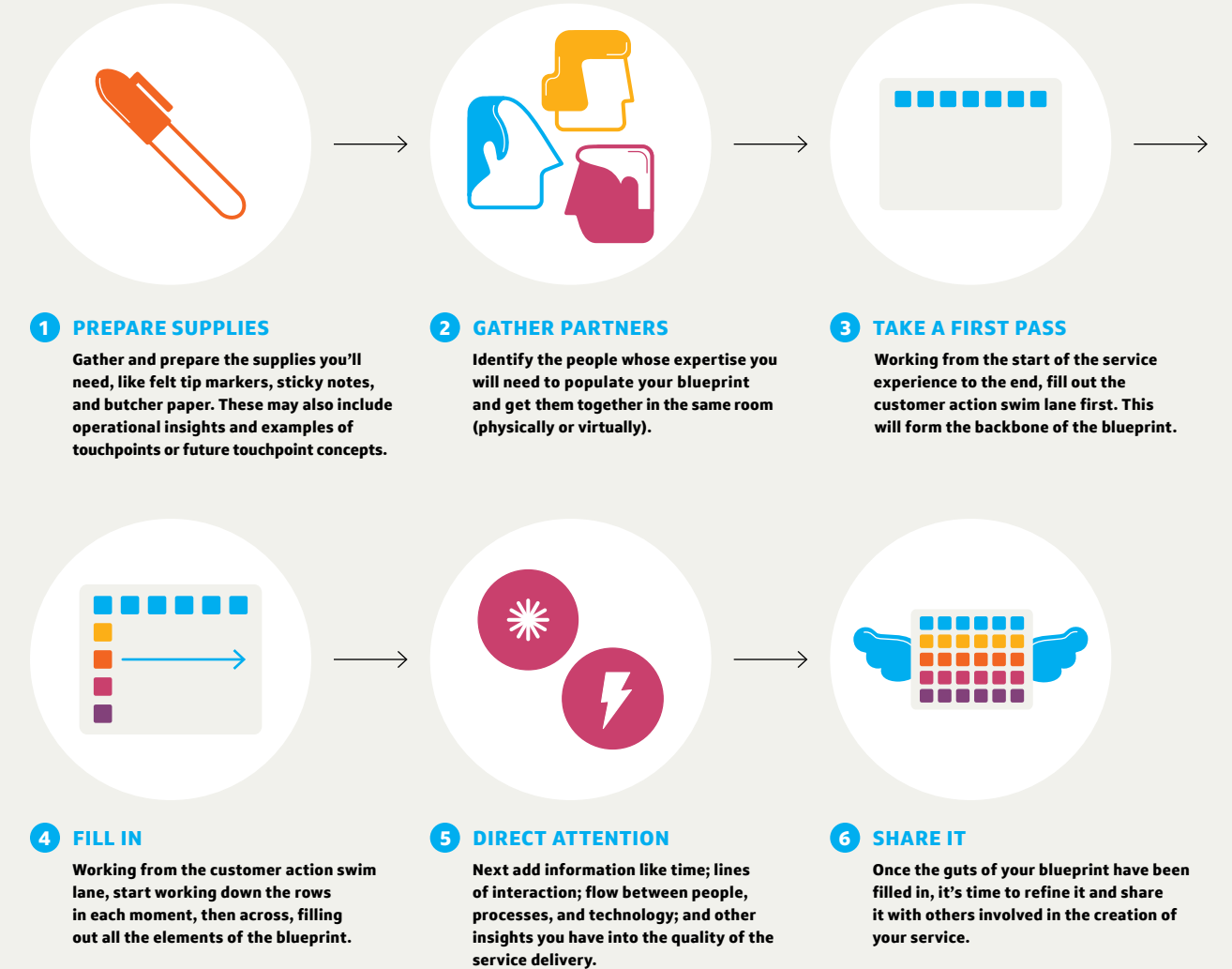
—Nick Remis

As with any collaborative technique, we recommend taking a structured approach to building your blueprints. This includes getting the right tools and people in place, providing clear instructions, and facilitating people through the activity from start to finish. *The Process of Building a Service Blueprint* diagram (at right) details a process we have found predictably leads to good outcomes.

Doing this method in person has advantages, but the same steps apply to digital workshops. Instead of paper and sticky notes, you will need to leverage collaboration tools that support creating visual diagrams in real time. Virtual sessions require even tighter facilitation to guide participants through the process. If holding a virtual session, we find it helpful to assign a facilitator in each location to help guide participants through the process.



The Process of Building a Service Blueprint



Levels of Fidelity

“The fidelity of your blueprint should match the fidelity of your understanding.

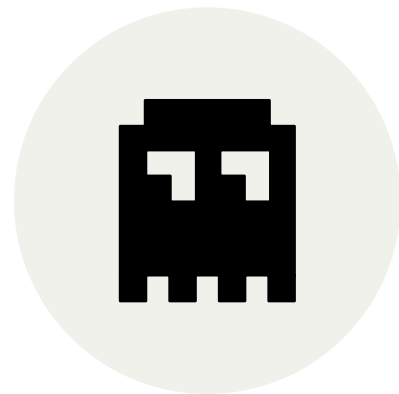
As you collaborate with experts across your business, add detail accordingly.”

—Kendra L. Shimmell

Given the amount of information contained in a blueprint, it’s important to consider the level of fidelity you need. This will be informed by where you are in your design process and your team’s communication needs.

As with other design tools, it’s best to start with a lower level of fidelity and work your way up to avoid getting bogged down. Rushing to a high level of polish can make your blueprint too rigid and hard to update, diminishing your ability to use it iteratively. We work at three different levels of fidelity in our blueprinting process, each with its own advantages (see the *Three Levels of Fidelity* diagram).

Using the data merge feature in Adobe InDesign, you can quickly move from sticky notes, through collaborative spreadsheets, to a polished service blueprint. See the Adaptive Path blog for more information on this process.

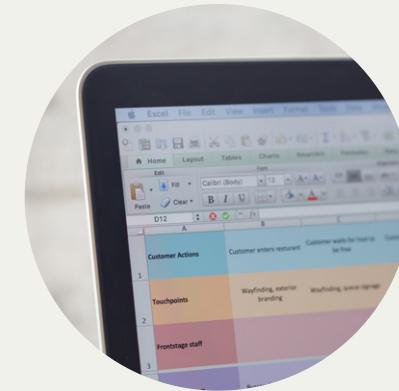


Three Levels of Fidelity



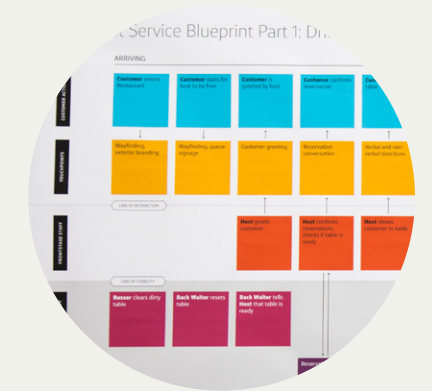
STICKY NOTES

At the early stages of the blueprinting process, sticky notes provide the perfect form factor to collaboratively build and easily refine your initial understanding of a service.



SPREADSHEETS

Spreadsheets provide an easy way to turn your sticky notes into a shareable document. Remote teams can also use spreadsheets to capture and asynchronously build different elements of the blueprint without requiring special tools. We often use spreadsheets to fine-tune of the language and labels of each blueprint element.



PRINTED POSTERS

A polished artifact can be produced once you’re nearing the end of your iterations. Common practices for this level of fidelity include: using different colors for each row, noting the Line of Visibility, detailing flow through the service, and naming stages of the end-to-end experience.

Determining the Level of Zoom

As you create your blueprint, it's important not only to consider the scope of the service but the level of detail you wish to capture as well. We call this the level of zoom. This is important because if you zoom out too far, your blueprint may become too general to be helpful. Similarly, if you zoom in too close, you can quickly become bogged down in details and overload your audience with information, resulting in people disengaging with your blueprint. The aim is to include a helpful amount of detail that reveals the workings of the service experience without overwhelming your audience.

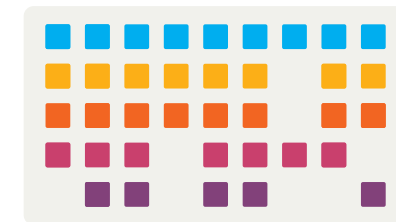
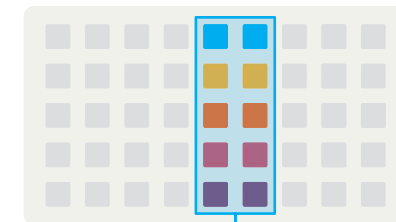
To determine the proper level of zoom for your blueprint, ask yourself what will help move your project or service forward. For instance, do you need to know if there is an account sign up process? Or, do you need to know every step of that sign up process? Start blueprinting. Then, step back and assess if the level of detail you have will support future steps in your project. If you are close to implementation or handing your blueprint off to others, you might need more detail to support specific use cases or requirements. In early stages, such as strategy or conceptual design, you likely can leave more granular customer actions and other details for later.

When managing the level of zoom, remember to create multiple service blueprints documenting different stages of the experience in varying detail or for documenting edge cases that differ from the ideal or common customer path. For example, we would document the ideal path of eating at a restaurant, then go back and create an additional blueprint showing what would happen if there were a mistake with the order.

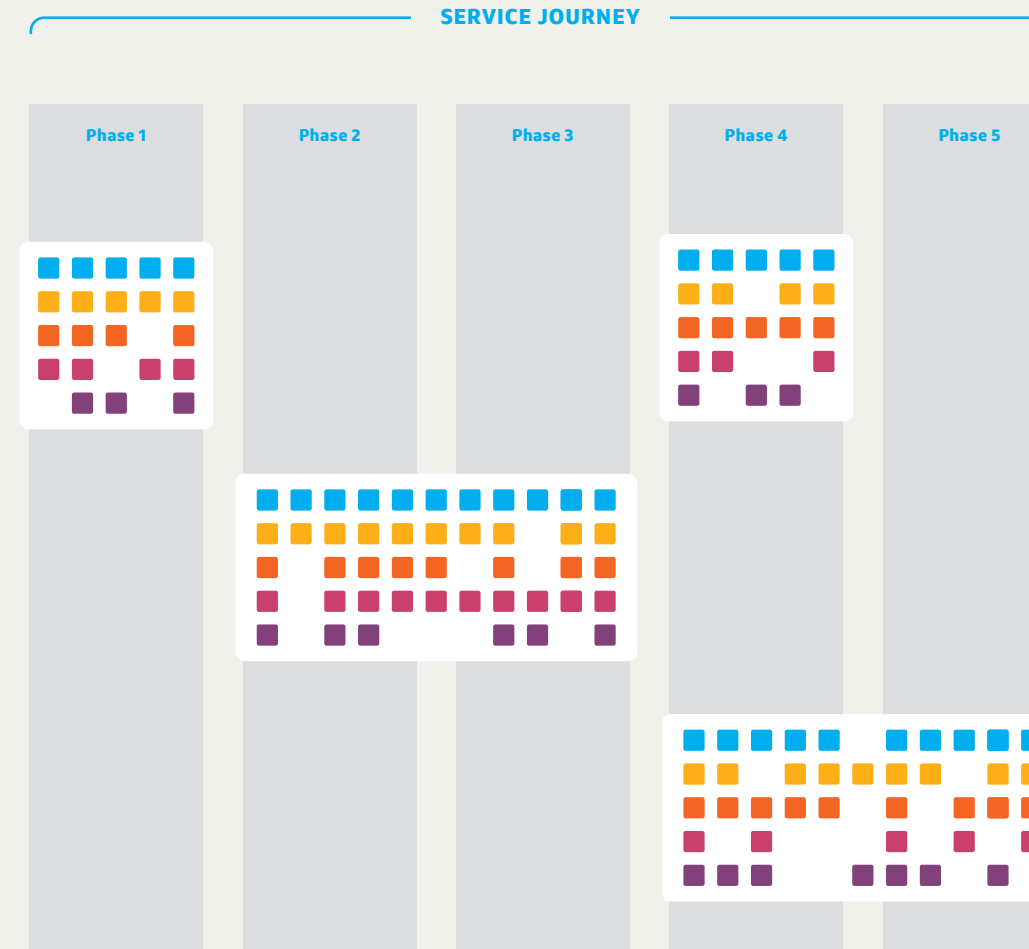
Remember to be linear too, following the most common customer path. As you find edge cases that break from the ideal path, make note of them and consider making edge case-specific blueprints if needed.

Determine your level of zoom by project context and stage of development. “Zoomed out” covers a large amount of the experience at a low level of detail. “Zoomed in” covers a small part of the experience at a high level of detail.

END-TO-END EXPERIENCE



SERVICE ENCOUNTER



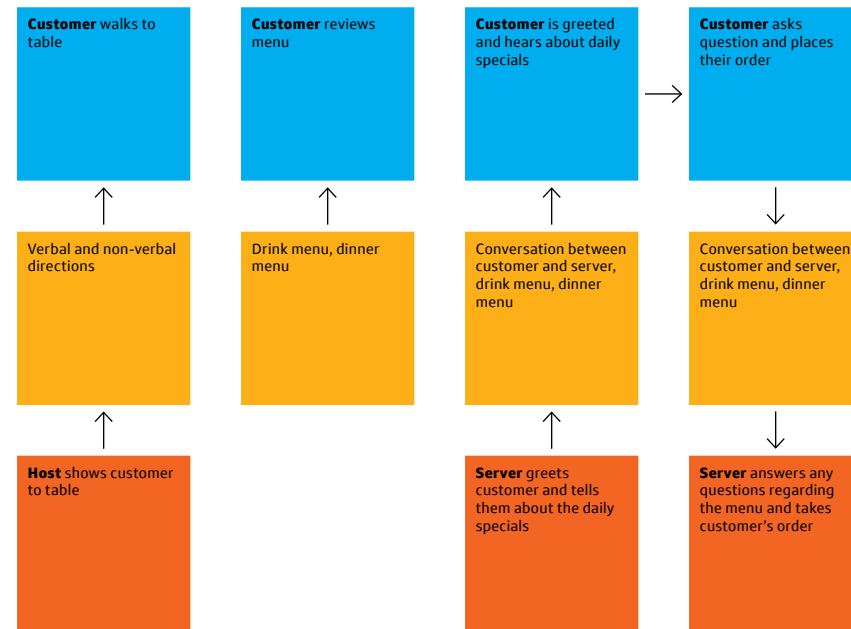
When blueprinting a multi-phase or multi-encounter service experience, multiple service blueprints can be used to explore and document the relevant areas of the experience while still balancing information density.

Flow Lines

Once you have filled out your blueprint with all the service elements, it's time to show how they connect. We do that with flow lines. Flow lines indicate directions of interaction and connections between elements within the blueprint—we represent these as arrows. These lines show where a particular interaction originates and what is affected or triggered as a result.

As you add flow lines, you will start to see more of the system emerge. Be prepared to spot missing elements and information as gaps are revealed in this process.

Flow lines start with the element that initiates the interaction, trace their way through the blueprint, and finally terminate naturally with the interaction or process.



PRO TIP NO. 4

If you're pressed for time when collaboratively creating a blueprint, the step of adding flow lines can usually be accomplished as a solo task following a blueprinting session. Once you've added the flow lines, share the resulting blueprint with the group for review and alignment.

Beyond the Basics

Once you have the service experience captured as a blueprint, you may decide that it doesn't show you how well your existing service is performing, either functionally or experientially. We bring this information into our blueprints through experimenting with layering on additional information captured via quantitative or qualitative research. As you add information, remember to constantly assess if these new layers of information are helping or hindering the communication of your blueprint.

The most common types of additional information are key moments, unsupported moments, and service breakdowns. By adding this information you can more effectively focus your efforts on the elements most in need of improvement.

ADDITIONAL DATA THAT CAN BE USEFUL TO INCORPORATE:

- Key moments
- Unsupported or missing elements
- Service breakdowns
- Satisfaction metrics
- Opportunity areas
- Customer and staff pain points
- Moments of customer delight
- Duration of moments

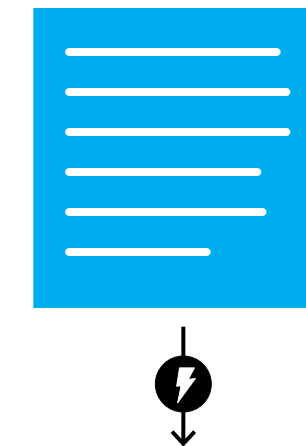
KEY MOMENT

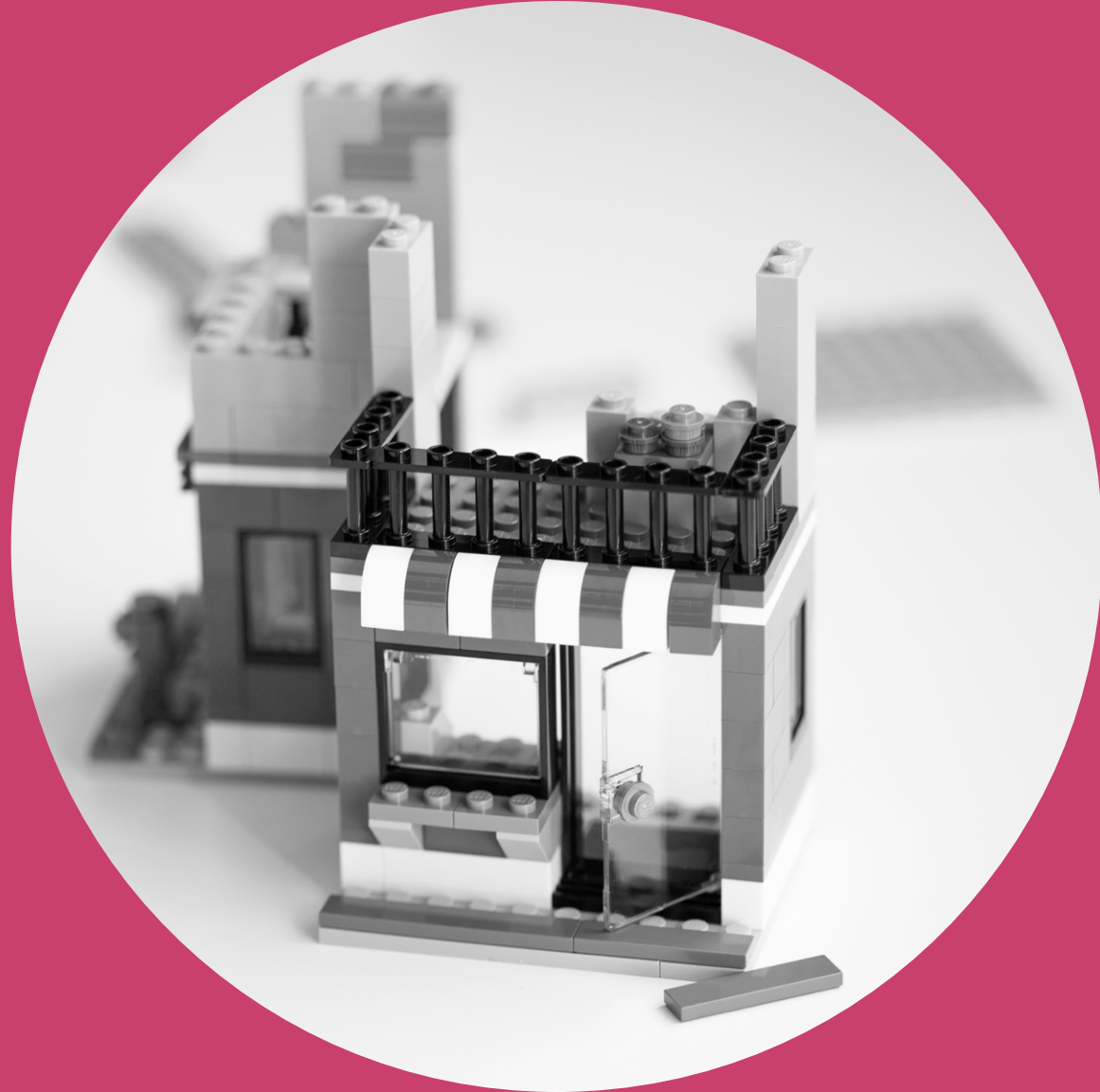


UNSUPPORTED MOMENT



SERVICE BREAKDOWN





SECTION THREE: IMPLEMENTATION

How to Use a Service Blueprint

Where the sticky part
of the sticky note hits
the road...map

Blueprint as Prototype

“Service Blueprints are inherently paper prototypes.”

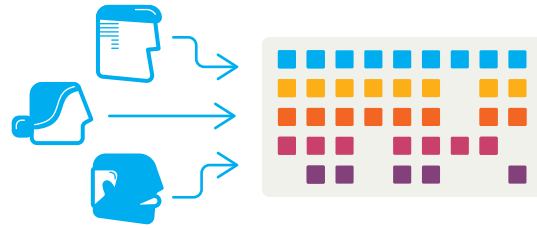
—Jamin Hegeman

It’s always hard to know how something will work until it’s built. Services are no different. Once you make a future-state blueprint, you’ve already made a paper prototype of your service, albeit in a low-fidelity manner. Without an expensive build-out, you can use your service blueprint to enact sections of the experience or conduct flow walkthroughs (known as service storming) to spot problems early and make adjustments quickly on paper. It’s easier to move a sticky note than an actual call center.

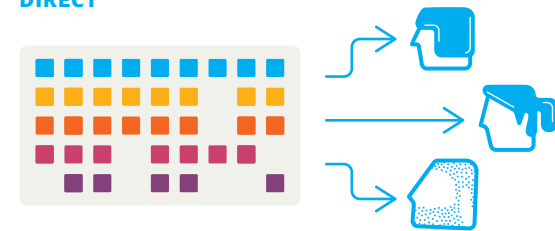
When prototyping experiences, blueprints can work in two different modes: capturing ideas that arise from the prototype or providing a script from which to work.

When working in concert with other prototyping techniques like service storming, co-creation, or experience prototyping, blueprints can support fast and iterative experience refinement. We use blueprints to capture the outputs of our generative activities like service storming, then transition to using them to orchestrate touchpoint creation and experience prototypes. Using this method, it’s possible for teams to quickly move from inspiration to operational and experiential understanding of the experience they’re designing.

CAPTURE



DIRECT



Blueprints should be combined with other methods to explore and define a service from different perspectives. In this example, participants at Adaptive Path’s UXI training used service storming to further prototype the flow through a service and what customers would feel, think, and do along the way.

Supporting a Vision

Blueprints are powerful tools, but their operational focus means they need support from other artifacts to truly bring an experience to life and clearly communicate a vision to others.

The tool we typically pair with a service blueprint is an experience story. An experience story paints the experiential and emotional picture, showcasing the core value, key moments, and desired emotions, while the blueprint fills in the operational details. Experience stories can take the form of storyboards, illustrations, videos, or narrated walk-throughs—anything that brings the experience to life and shows the value it delivers. This pairing is particularly strong because it can be challenging to see the service through the operational focus of the blueprint while also grasping how the service will be experienced by its customers and other actors.

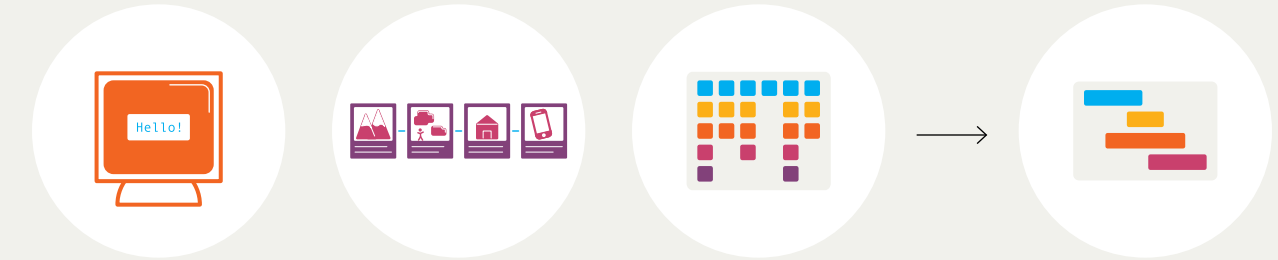
When crafting a service vision, we create a tight connection between the blueprint and the experience story, using one to drive the creation of the other, and sharing the same steps of the user journey between both artifacts. We then build upon the communication of the blueprint and experience story with the designed artifacts of the experience, showing additional details of key touchpoints. Once we have alignment, we create an evolution plan to show how elements of the blueprint are developed and implemented over time.

We recommend getting stakeholders and partners excited about the future experience you wish to create with artifacts like experience stories and touchpoint concepts. Once they're interested in creating the experience, we further extend the conversation by illustrating how it can be created and delivered using the service blueprint and roadmap.



For a project with a heavy emphasis on the physicality of the service experience, we add architectural diagrams to the experience story and blueprint combination.

From Service Vision to Implementation Planning



SERVICE ARTIFACTS

These are the tangible things that will be designed to support the desired experience. Service artifacts can include screen designs, touchpoint flows, and concept sketches, all the way up to higher-fidelity artifacts like interactive prototypes.

EXPERIENCE STORIES

From the customer's perspective, we tell a story of what the experience will feel like and the value they will receive. The intent of the story is to capture the key moments of the experience and provide an experiential "north star" around which to rally collaborators.

BLUEPRINT

By this point, we hope you understand what a blueprint is.

ROADMAP

Working from the service vision, a roadmap outlines the plan for the projects and efforts that are necessary to implement your service vision. It should show the evolutions to your service experience from MVP to ideal experience.

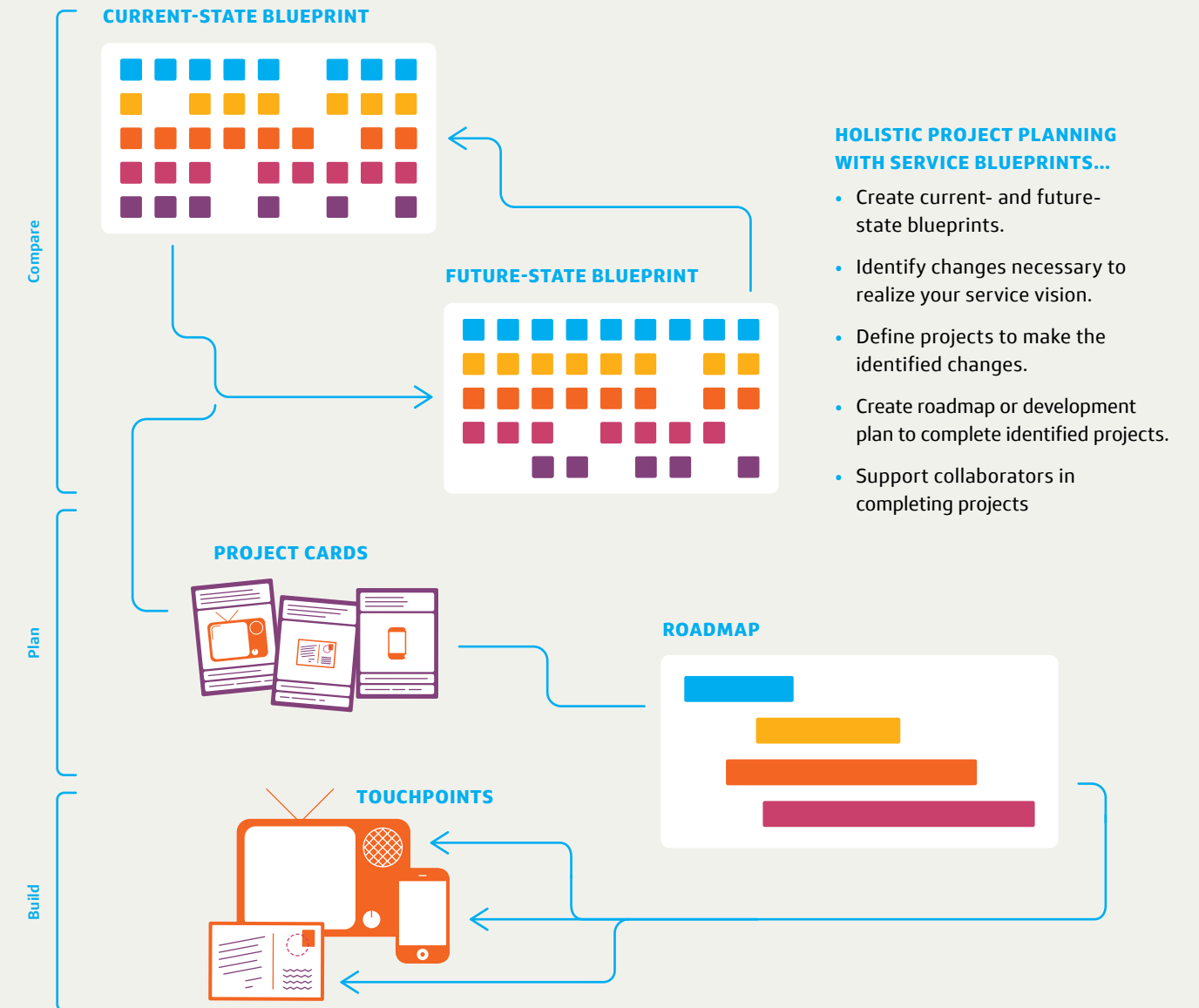
From Blueprint to Roadmap

A focus on innovation inevitably leads to this question: what will be required to bring our service to life? Without a blueprint, identifying the needed projects and necessary changes can be a daunting activity. Current- and future-state blueprints can be compared to identify how the service needs to change and how to accomplish that change. From this understanding, specific projects, owners, timing, and other details can be defined and assigned. In our work, we often create project cards with these details for use in planning workshops where we explore the sequencing and dependencies among potential projects. The result: a roadmap showing how the service will transform over time.

When undertaking this activity, it's best to have a small and influential group of collaborators—ideally the people who will eventually be responsible for overseeing the resulting projects. Engaging the important decision-makers during the blueprint comparison will enable you to move quickly, allowing you to be confident in your choices while speeding up the next steps.

We create project cards with easy-to-fill-out sections, like project title, touchpoint, channel, dependencies, owners, etc., to help with the process of identifying potential future projects. Using project cards ensures that you are capturing similar information for each potential project that you identify when comparing current and future states. This approach also allows you to begin iterating with the project cards immediately, moving on to prioritization and sequencing the activities needed to build an implementation plan or roadmap.

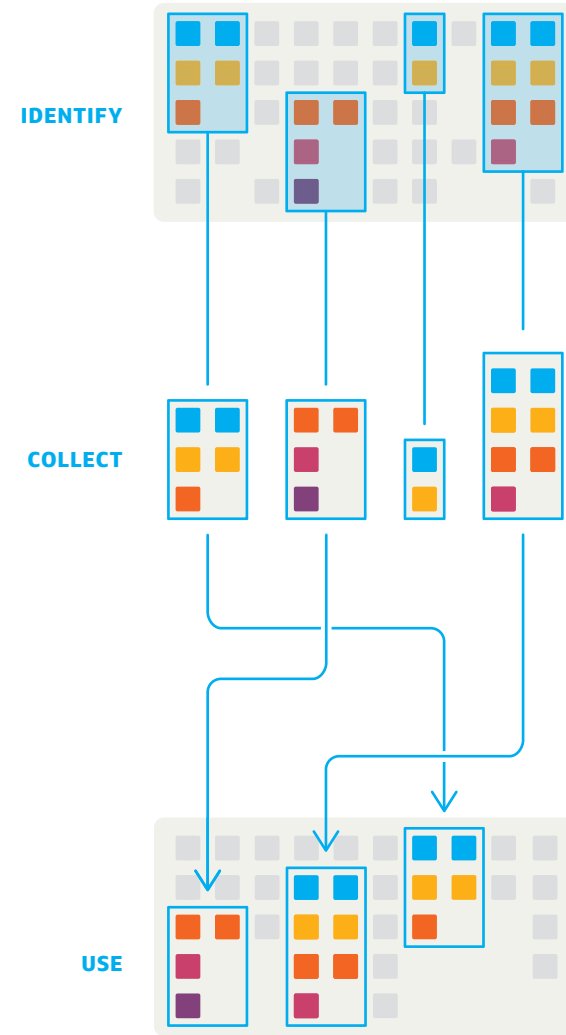
Don't forget to account for projects that will be necessary to train staff and change human processes. You should also include these activities in your implementation plans.



Service Patterns

Another benefit of creating service blueprints is that you can use them to identify service patterns: repeating elements within a larger service experience, similar to an interaction pattern, but at a much greater scale. This helps prevent the need to reinvent the wheel each time you create a new experience. It also supports alignment of both current- and future-state experiences while speeding up design and implementation efforts.

For example, a bank may confirm the deposit of funds into an account, confirm a successful payment on a loan, etc. All of the confirmation experiences should stem from a common service pattern. When capturing a service pattern, document information like the intent of the pattern, existing touchpoints, supported use cases, and of course, the section of the blueprint explaining the operational components. You'll want to tailor what information you capture to the service you're working on. If your service is highly digital, you should also consider capturing or linking to the code used. Using service patterns will start to drive experience consistency and alignment throughout your service experience while adding efficiency to the creation of new service experiences. You can think of service patterns as a library of existing experiences a company delivers that you can recombine and expand upon to innovate and create new experiences. Once a team starts creating and using service blueprints, it becomes easier to identify, shape, and share these service patterns with other parts of the organization.



Using early-stage service patterns from existing blueprints, Adaptive Path and Capital One designers look to create new experiences that could be achieved with the existing service capabilities.



CONCLUSION

The Future of Service Blueprinting

The best way to
predict the future is
to blueprint it



THE METHOD OF SERVICE BLUEPRINTING has evolved since its introduction over three decades ago. This guide represents a snapshot in time. We and others continue to improve upon how we create and use blueprints every day.

As of this writing, three trends will likely define where blueprints will head next. First, increasing experimentation with digital tools is aiding collaboration and maintenance. These tools offer greater access and flexibility for large and distributed teams. Second, disciplines such as process engineering have begun to see how blueprints can help connect value stream mapping and lean process design to customer experience design. This will lead to increased collaboration between experience and operational practitioners. Lastly, the very structure of blueprints continues to evolve. Interesting mash-ups between blueprints and journey maps, storyboards, architectural blueprints, and other artifacts reveal practitioners' desire to communicate the dependencies between how services operate and how people experience them. It has been exciting to see blueprinting increase in both popularity and in variety. These efforts will galvanize service blueprinting as a core method for cross-functional teams.

Trends aside, we hope we have delivered upon our intent in writing this guide: to share the fundamentals of blueprinting and to spark your own creativity and ingenuity to make the method your own. You can start with a few collaborators, some sticky notes, and a table or a wall. Where you take your practice from there, we're eager to see. Now, back to work on making service experiences more human!

—PATRICK QUATTLEBAUM

We hope you found this guide interesting, informative, and helpful in solving some of the problems that you face when creating service experiences. We encourage you to take this information not as the final word in service blueprints, but as a foundation for you to build on.

We would love to see how you improve the tool of service blueprinting and hear how you have applied this in your work.

Please share your thoughts with us at contactus@adaptivepath.com

Thank you to everyone who collaborated with us in making this guide with special thanks to Bryn Bowman, Dianne Que, Jessica Saia, and Katie Walker Wilson.

ABOUT THE ADAPTIVE PATH TEAM

We're experienced guides, strategic thinkers, design doers, teachers, and idea collectors. In 2014 we joined Capital One to design financial services that improve people's lives.

We'd love to meet you at our public training events and conferences such as LX, UX Week, The Service Experience Conference, and Service Experience Intensives.

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We're happy to announce our first guide to service blueprinting! This guide describes the value of blueprinting as a tool in the creation of great service experiences, illuminates the process of creating blueprints, and provides insight into how you can reap their value for your organization.

Need to know what a blueprint is? It's in here. Want to know how to make one? In here. Want to know how to get your stakeholders on board with next steps? In here too.

From essential elements to the finer points of evolution planning, this guide has everything you need to start creating and using your own service blueprints. We hope you find them as useful as we do!

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